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Levee

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LEVEE

by

Keya Vance

A thesis presented to the

Faculty of the Department of
Writing for the Screen
Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts in Writing for the Screen

April 30, 2024

FINAL THESIS
FEATURE SCREENPLAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Student Name: __Keya Vance_____

Thesis Logline: When his absent father comes back into his life with a cancer diagnosis, an arrogant star high school linebacker, hellbent on a college football scholarship, must choose between caring for his dying father and following his dream.

LEVEE

Title

A screenplay written and produced and presented to the faculty
of the Writing for the Screen MFA Program in the School of Film &
Television at Loyola Marymount University of
Los Angeles, California

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts

Writing for the Screen

By

Keya Vance

Student Name

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Writing for the Screen:

Keya Vance

Student Name

4/30/24

Date

David Clawson

SCWR 690 Instructor Name

Mary Kuryla

SCWR 691 Instructor Name

LEVEE

Written by

Keya Vance

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

LINEMAN CHUTE

Toes dance at the ready.

COACH BROWN (O.S.)

Go!

An explosive LINEBACKER, number 5, charges from the chute at full speed.

He hits PLAYER after PLAYER after PLAYER onto a crash mat.

SMACKS. GRUNTS. GROANS.

PLAYER (O.S.)

Ooo shit!

Anguish on their faces.

The linebacker, LEVEE "Hammerhead" (17), practices with violence. Hunger in his eyes. Big energy.

COACH BROWN (O.S.)

Good job! Good job, Levee.

COACH BROWN (50), an intense monument of a man, barks at his PLAYERS (17-18).

They blaze through step-over agility boards.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

Eyes up! Eyes up! Attention to detail.

A Player trips.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

What in the-- Eyes up! Get your head outta your ass!

50-YARD LINE

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

(points)

Run. Shuffle. Run. Shuffle.

Levee follows his direction.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

Get out of there!

Levee runs downhill. Looks back.

MILZ "Eagle" (17), star quarterback, whizzes the football.

Levee catches it. Clean.

Drills on the field with ASSISTANT COACHES:

PASS RUSH

COACH 2 (O.S.)
Open your hips!

SHORT ZONE BREAKS

COACH 3 (O.S.)
Hold your space. Hold your space.

HURDLE HOPS

A WHISTLE BLOWS.

The Players huddle around Coach Brown.

They take a knee.

He looks to his exhausted team.

COACH BROWN
So, good news, we'll be providing
transportation to camp.

LEVEE
(sotto)
Hell yeah.

COACH BROWN
For those of you who haven't paid,
you got two weeks. No exceptions.
That's two-seventy-nine for the
weekend, or five-hundred with a
meal plan.

Levee drops his gaze.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
Alright. Big game tomorrow. It
defines us. We haven't beat Arroyo
in ten years. We're six-and-oh, and
that's not bad, but let's go out
there and make it seven.

Players hang on his every word.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
What did we come here to do?

ALL PLAYERS

Damage!

COACH BROWN

What did we come here to do?

ALL PLAYERS

Damage!

COACH BROWN

Let's do damage, Boys. Tigers on three. One-two-three.

ALL

TIGERS!

Players head for the locker room.

Levee crosses to Coach Brown who picks up equipment.

LEVEE

Coach.

COACH BROWN

Yeah?

LEVEE

What if I'm not able to come up with the money in time for camp?

COACH BROWN

You don't go.

LEVEE

You think you could-- um. You think I could maybe borrow the money from you?

COACH BROWN

Oh-no. Learned my lesson in that.

LEVEE

Coach, I need this. I haven't--
(hesitates)

I haven't gotten any offers and I'm busting my ass on the field. My grades are good. I figure if I get in front of recruits, I'll at least be able to meet college coaches.

Brown nods. Faces him.

COACH BROWN

You're talented that's for damn sure, but don't put all your eggs in one basket. Getting recruited is going to take more than getting to camp. You can go to a hundred camps. Start putting your highlights together. Have something to send out to coaches.

Levee sighs. Brown pats him on the shoulder. Goes back to picking up equipment.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

LOCKERS SLAM. Players change out of uniform. Levee enters.

LEVEE'S LOCKER

Levee removes his shoulder pads.

Across from him, Milz has changed out of his uniform.

MILZ

What you talk to Coach about?

LEVEE

Oh, just about how I've been carrying y'all sorry asses all season.

Levee grins.

MILZ

Shut yo' arrogant ass up!

Milz hits him with a towel. Levee unlocks his locker.

MILZ (CONT'D)

Bro! Got something to show you.

Milz pulls a letter from his backpack. Hands it to Levee. He scans the letter. Excitement grows.

LEVEE

USC?

Milz's smile covers his face.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Nigga, USC?!

MILZ
 (loudly)
 D-1 bound baby!

The letter is passed around.

VARIOUS PLAYERS
 Aw, hell yeah/ Oh shit!

LEVEE
 Damn, Bro. What's that? Your third
 offer?

Milz nods.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
 Congratulations.

MILZ
 They want to set up a meeting.

They give each other dap. Brothers.

MILZ (CONT'D)
 It's happening.

Levee watches others congratulate Milz.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT - DAY

Levee rushes down the front steps.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - DAY

Levee runs down the streets.

His reflection catches in the foreclosed businesses.

A HOMELESS MAN preaches to all who walk by.

HOMELESS MAN
 (to Levee)
 Hey, man! You were there! The
 heavens opened up.

FRUIT SELLERS on the corners.

FRUIT SELLER
 Two for five. Two for five.

Levee rounds the corner.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Levee arrives out of breath. He looks up to see TY (10), still defined by his innocence, drawing in the dirt.

LEVEE

Ty!

Ty lights up. Glasses held together by tape.

An AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM HOST (30) watches them.

Levee signs Ty out.

HOST

He needs to be picked up on time.

LEVEE

It won't happen again.

HOST

You said that last time.

TY

(to Levee)

Look at what I drew.

HOST

I don't want to have to report this.

Levee gives her a look.

TY

Levee. Levee, look.

LEVEE

This is an after school program. You guys should expect people to get here late sometimes. Isn't there a grace period?

HOST

Late a few times is the exception. You've been late almost everyday the last couple of weeks. Almost an hour late is too late. If this will continue to be a problem, I suggest you make other arrangements--

LEVEE

(to Ty)

Let's go.

TY
But-- Wait-- It was a butterfly.

Ty WHINES as he follows after Levee.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT

The sun wanes.

SIDEWALK

Levee and Ty walk and pass his football to each other.

TY
Then, I tried to take the ball like
you taught me.

Ty throws to Levee. A wobbly pass.

TY (CONT'D)
Remember that? I tried it, but I
scratched him. He-he pushed me.

Levee pauses.

LEVEE
What did you do?

TY
I-- nothing I--

LEVEE
Don't let nobody push you around.

Levee passes him the ball. He barely catches it.

TY
I hate sports.

LEVEE
What position did you play?

Ty shrugs. Passes the ball.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
You don't have to love it, but you
need to pay attention. If you don't
know what position you're playing
how are you going to play well?

Levee passes it back. Ty misses. It bounces into the street.
Ty goes for it. A car SCREECHES to a halt.

Levee snatches Ty out of the street. Ty's glasses fall.
The DRIVER lays on the horn.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
(to Ty)
What are you doing?!

DRIVER
Get out the fuckin' street!

The DRIVER speeds ahead.

Levee still grips Ty's shirt. Both shaken.

LEVEE
I told you about that! You can't
just jump into the street! Pay
attention.

TY
I was trying to--

LEVEE
Don't do that. You hear me?

Tears in Ty's eyes. He jerks his arm to break free.

TY
Let me go.

LEVEE
I said, do you hear me?

TY
Yes! Dang!

LEVEE
Don't raise your voice at me.

He releases Ty.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
Get your glasses.

Ty listens. Levee gets his football.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
(re: the glasses)
Let me see.

Ty hands him the glasses. Levee checks them. Wipes them on his shirt. Hands them back.

He straightens Ty's shirt.

Ty holds his tears back.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
You good? Shake it off.

He's not but he nods.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DISHES CLATTER from the kitchen.

Cramped apartment. Family photo of four above the couch.

Levee and Ty enter, tossing their shoes near the shoe rack.

They round the wall to the--

KITCHEN

Wearing scrubs, VIVIAN (45), family anchor with twenty tabs opened at all times, stirs a steaming pot.

Ty wraps his arms around her waist.

TY
Hi, Mommy.

VIVIAN
Hey, Baby.

Levee looks through a stack of mail.

LEVEE
(sotto)
Damn. Nothing?
(beat)
Mama, how much money do we have
saved?

VIVIAN
We?

LEVEE
I need the money for camp. I have
transportation.

She cuts her eyes to Levee- *not this again.*

VIVIAN

You're not going to camp. And that money is for emergencies. I'm not paying all that money for training.

LEVEE

There's gonna be hella recruiters there. I need to get in front of these college coaches.

VIVIAN

Levee--

LEVEE

This my last year. Milz already got three offers.

Ty removes a paper from his backpack.

TY

(to Vivian)

Mrs. Richardson said I got all these wrong.

VIVIAN

You're not Milz.

(beat)

Focus on getting into Valley Community. There's nothing wrong with Valley. Go down there and get you a job at that new warehouse.

She takes the paper from Ty.

LEVEE

Are you serious?

VIVIAN

What? I went there.

LEVEE

I'm better than every senior player at Valley.

Levee chugs a water.

VIVIAN

(to Ty)

This a test? Why did she say you got these wrong?

Ty shrugs.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
So, you failed the test for no
reason?

TY
Well, she said I need to show my
work, but I know it's right--

Vivian's PHONE RINGS. She checks it. Unsaved number.

TY (CONT'D)
Who is it?

She declines the call.

LEVEE
Ma, I'll pay you back.

VIVIAN
With what money?

LEVEE
With the money I get when I'm
recruited. Don't you believe in me?

ANOTHER CALL. She answers.

VIVIAN
(into phone)
Hello.
(beat)
Wait-- Where?
(beat)
Okay. I'm on my way. O-Okay.

She hangs up. Drops everything

LEVEE
What happened?

VIVIAN
That was Bobby. H-he said-- Your
dad's in the hospital.

TY
Daddy!?

They all still.

LEVEE
Wait. Hold on.

VIVIAN
(sotto)
Oh god.

Vivian kicks into gear.

TY
Where's daddy?

LEVEE
What did Bobby say?

VIVIAN
I could hardly understand him, but
your dad's at St. Bernardine. I
have to go.

TY
Where's daddy?

LEVEE
(to Ty)
Go put your shoes on.

Ty listens. Vivian grabs her keys. Levee gabs his shoes.

INT. VIVIAN'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Vivian full of anxiety, switches lanes. A HORN. Ty jumps.
She looks over her shoulder.

VIVIAN
Oh I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't
see you.

Levee rides shot gun. He notices her trembling hands.

LEVEE
You want me to drive?

VIVIAN
Where's my phone? I need to call my
supervisor I can't-- I can't
believe this.

She runs a red light.

LEVEE
Slow down.

VIVIAN
(sharp)
I got it Levee.

She doesn't. Levee keeps an eye on her.

INT. COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY UNIT - NIGHT

Vivian rushes to the line, holding Ty's hand. Levee follows.

Levee looks around the packed waiting area.

A FATHER rocks a CRYING BABY.

A WOMAN MOANS, holding her cut leg.

A MAN vomits into a bowl.

Levee looks sick to his stomach. Vivian reaches the--

FRONT DESK

NURSE

Checking in or visiting?

VIVIAN

Hi, I'm looking for my husband,
Eugene Blackwood.

NURSE

(typing)
Date of birth?

VIVIAN

August tenth, nineteen eighty.

NURSE

Your name?

VIVIAN

Vivian Blackwood.

NURSE

Can I see your ID?
(checks it)
Thank you. Looks like he's
currently getting an MRI and he
doesn't have a room, so--

VIVIAN

Doesn't have a room?

NURSE

Yes, all of our beds are full, so
please bear with us.
(re: the boys)
Are they minors?

VIVIAN

Yes.

NURSE

I'll let you know when you can go
back and see him.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Vivian.

They turn to BOBBY (50), sketchier than an Etch-A-Sketch.

WAITING AREA

Bobby holds his fist out to Ty. He pounds back.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(to Levee)
Wassup, Black?

VIVIAN

How's he doing?

Levee gives a silent 'sup.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I ain't mean to scare y'all but ya
Pops scared me.
(chuckles)
You know?

VIVIAN

What did the doctor say?

BOBBY

Shit, I don't know. I guess they
runnin' test. I just--
(checks phone)
I need to get out of here. Got
business to tend to. Tell G to call
me. Oh wait--

Bobby takes car keys from his pocket. Hands them to Vivian.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

These his.

Vivian rolls her eyes.

They watch Bobby leave.

MOMENTS LATER

The family now seated. Ty clings to Vivian. Levee studies
Vivian. Protective.

LEVEE

(quiet)
What are we doing here?

VIVIAN

What?

He looks around.

LEVEE

What are we doing here? Why are we here?

(beat)

You don't-- We don't owe him this.

VIVIAN

Levee, don't start. We need to know what's going on with him.

Levee scoffs.

NURSE (O.S.)

Vivian Blackwood?

Vivian turns to the Nurse.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You all can come back now.

Levee shifts in his seat. Vivian and Ty stand.

VIVIAN

You not coming?

Levee eyes her.

EMERGENCY UNIT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

SQUEAKY SNEAKERS. BEEPS. DINGS. COUGHS.

Vivian scans the room numbers. Ty's eyes glued open.

Levee behind them, watching the PATIENTS. Many without beds.

Levee watches Vivian stop in front of a room. Ty runs inside.

TY (O.S.)

Daddy!

EUGENE (O.S.)

(raspy)

Hey, Baby boy.

Levee catches up. Now behind Vivian.

Levee locks eyes with EUGENE (43), a limp man once built like his linebacker son holds faint yellow eyes and sunken cheeks. Something eats away at his body.

Levee steps in front of a frozen Vivian, blocking her view.

LEVEE

You don't have to go in there.

TY (O.S.)

Are you okay?

LEVEE

Ma...

EUGENE (O.S.)

I will be. I missed you, boy.

LEVEE

Don't go in there. He left us, not the other way around.

TY (O.S.)

Are you coming home with us?

LEVEE

He's the man that called you all kind of bitches. And had us looking for him for days. Had you crying for days, Mama.

This hangs in the air.

She looks up at Levee. Tears in her eyes.

VIVIAN

He's still your father.

She steps around him into--

EUGENE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Vivian stands at the foot of the bed, taking in her husband.

EUGENE

Hi.

She has no words.

Levee watches from the hallway.

A DOCTOR (60) knocks on the open door.

DOCTOR
Hello. You must be the family.

He reaches out a hand to Vivian. She shakes it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Dr. Gates.

VIVIAN
Vivian.

DOCTOR
(to Eugene)
How's the nausea?

EUGENE
Better.

DOCTOR
Well, Mr. Blackwood, I have good
news and bad news.

He looks from Eugene to Vivian.

VIVIAN
(to Ty)
Go with your brother.

TY
But I want to be with daddy.

VIVIAN
Go.

Ty whines. Makes his way to Levee in the--

HALLWAY

The Doctor closes the door behind Ty. Levee watches through
the glass.

He can't make out what the Doctor says, but he watches
Vivian's devastated reaction.

INT. VIVIAN'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

The traffic lights catch in Vivian's silent tears.

LEVEE
When are you going to tell me what
he said?

She looks up at the rearview. Ty fights sleep in the back. His eyes close.

VIVIAN

I don't want Ty knowing, but your dad has an aggressive form of lymphoma.

LEVEE

What's that?

VIVIAN

A form of cancer.

She looks over to him. His eyes harden.

LEVEE

Are you going to let him move back in?

VIVIAN

Levee--

LEVEE

Just tell me now. I don't need any more surprises.

VIVIAN

You saw him.

LEVEE

Ok! And?! He-- It's been two years!

Ty shifts in the back.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Two years.

VIVIAN

He doesn't have anywhere else to go.

LEVEE

How about he go back to where he came from? Did he say where he went?

VIVIAN

Levee, he might not even be here this time next year.

(beat)

What if it was me? Huh? What if it was me?

LEVEE

You wouldn't pull no shit like that.

VIVIAN

Watch your mouth.

LEVEE

We were just figuring it out. Think about it--

VIVIAN

He's going to need around the clock care when he starts chemo.

Levee takes this in.

LEVEE

So, I ask for money to help further myself and I can't get that, but he comes back and you ready to drop everything? Like that? I'm not dropping everything for someone who doesn't care about me.

They arrive to--

I/E VIVIAN'S CAR/LEVEE'S HOME - NIGHT

Vivian pulls into a marked parking space. The car idles in front of a worn apartment complex.

LEVEE

Regardless of what happens to him, I'm getting out of here.

VIVIAN

The world doesn't revolve around you, Levee.

They stare at each other.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LEVEE'S ROOM - NIGHT

On the bottom bunk, Levee groans in his sleep.

QUICK FLASH

Eugene's yellow eyes. Sunken cheeks.

BACK TO SCENE

Levee tosses and turns.

QUICK FLASH

A healthy Eugene snatches Levee out of his bed.

BACK TO SCENE

Levee jerks awake. Tears flood him.

Looks around, catching his breath. A nightmare.

He reaches around for his phone. Finds it. 4AM. Unread text from "C"

He unlocks his phone.

INSERT - PHONE

Text from "C": *How are you?*

His previous text to "C": *My dad came back.*

Levee types: *Can I see you?*

He hovers over send, but deletes the text.

BACK TO SCENE

He locks his phone. Rolls over.

VIVIAN'S ROOM - DAY

Puffy eyes, Vivian's been up all night. In full fixer mode, wearing the same scrubs from the night before.

She flips through the torn dated envelopes, bills, insurance files, and cash on her bed.

A knock on her door.

VIVIAN

Come in.

Levee opens the door, squinting from the light.

LEVEE

What you doing?

VIVIAN

Trying to see where we're at with all of this.

(MORE)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Worried that your dad's insurance
won't cover his chemo.

He moves closer to the bed. Eyes everything.

His eyes land on the money.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Reach down there and get me my
document case.

He does.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to have to pull a double
and get Eugene between shifts, so
you'll have to pick Ty up from
school.

LEVEE

I can't be late. If I'm late I'll
miss the bus.

VIVIAN

Then you can't play today.

LEVEE

What? It's like the most important
game of the season.

She thumbs through the document case.

VIVIAN

Then take him to the game.

LEVEE

See, this is what I'm talking
about. It's like you don't care--

VIVIAN

Is he up?
(calls out)
Ty.

She heads to the boys' room.

Levee looks at the money. He looks to the door.

VIVIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ty. You have to get up, Babe.

Levee picks the money up. Counts it. Over \$400.

VIVIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Hey. Come on.

Light pours in from the hallway.

He puts the money back.

E/I. DONUT SHOP - DAY

The morning rush. Family owned. The DOOR CHIMES.

Levee and Ty come in. The DONUT MAN (65) notices them.

DONUT MAN
 Good morning, Boys.

Levee puts his hand up - *hello*. Ty breathes on the window, salivating.

DONUT MAN (CONT'D)
 The usual?

LEVEE
 Yeah. Thanks, Benny.

The Donut Man bags donut holes.

DONUT MAN
 The Tigers look good this year. You have any prospects yet?

The Donut Man hands them the bag of donuts.

LEVEE
 Not yet.
 (beat)
 Hey, Benny, you need any help around here? Like someone to maybe clean up or help you serve? I need to make some money.

DONUT MAN
 Not at the moment, but I'll keep you in mind.

Levee holds out a dollar.

DONUT MAN (CONT'D)
 It's on the house.

He smiles at Levee.

LEVEE
Thanks, Man.

DONUT MAN
Make us proud.

Levee nods. Ty stuffs a donut hole into his mouth.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

WEIGHTS THUD and CLANK. CHATTER and MUSIC.

PULL-UPS

Levee completes reps. Milz keeps count.

MILZ
Twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five. That's one-fifty.

Levee hops down.

LEVEE
Ahh! All grind, no luck, baby.

MILZ
Finish telling me what happened.

SIT-UP BENCH

Milz does crunches. Dumbbell in hand.

LEVEE
Bro, he was in there looking like Fifty Cent in that one movie.

MILZ
Not Fifty Cent, Bro.

LEVEE
I'm serious.

MILZ
Damn. That's fucked up.
(beat)
I would say you can stay at my crib, but you know how moms is.

LEVEE
Just have to get through the season. Get recruited. And get out of raggedy ass San Bernardino.

Milz hands him a 50 pound dumbbell. Levee makes it look easy.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

At least my mom ended up giving me
some money for camp.

MILZ

That's what's up.

LEVEE

Yeah. But I'm short.

Milz doesn't bite.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I hate to ask, but do you think you
could spot me like fifty bucks?
I'll pay you back.

MILZ

I got you.

LEVEE

Good lookin'.

MILZ

Fasho.

Milz takes the dumbbell from Levee.

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach Brown watches football tapes. Door open.

LEVEE (O.S.)

Hey, Coach.

He looks up at Levee.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Got the money for camp. Well, I
have some of it.

Levee places the money on the desk. Brown counts.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I'll have the rest of it before
camp.

COACH BROWN

Good.

Brown puts the cash in an envelope. Turns back to the football tapes.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

SECURITY GUARDS watch STUDENTS (15-18) like prison guards.

Levee and Milz walk the halls, envied and wanted.

GIRL (O.S.)

Hey, Levee.

Levee smiles at her, watching her walk past.

He turns around. Double takes to--

CHANTELLE (16), honor student blossoming into herself. Levee's best kept secret. Milz's sister.

She approaches. Holds out a notebook.

CHANTELLE

You forgot this after our last session. It'd be great if you could cancel before you miss the tutoring session.

LEVEE

Oh my bad. Thanks.

He takes the notebook. She looks between the two of them.

CHANTELLE

Also, the pool for tonight's game is leaning sixty-forty.

MILZ

Bye.

CHANTELLE

Most people are betting on Arroyo.

MILZ

Bye, Chantelle.

CHANTELLE

Good luck.

She smizes. Walks past them.

MILZ

Annoying ass.

Levee turns to catch one more glance. She looks back at him.

INT. MATH CLASS - DAY

Quiet. Students work. A TEACHER passes back tests. Levee and Milz sit in the back, studying handwritten football plays.

A math test lands on his desk. He closes the notebook.

TEACHER
You're improving.

Levee looks at his test. He earned an A-.

He eyes Milz's C-.

The BELL RINGS.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Complete the chapter six test for homework.

Levee rushes to gather his things.

MILZ
Where are you going?

LEVEE
(to Milz)
Have to go get Ty.

MILZ
(confused)
Right now? The bus leaves in thirty minutes. So, you bringing him to the game?

LEVEE
If I have to.

MILZ
Coach ain't gonna let that fly.

LEVEE
We'll see.

Levee jets out of class.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - DAY

Levee runs through the streets. He's fast.

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*
*

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Levee dashes up the steps and into--

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FRONT DESK - DAY

An ASSISTANT (30) sits behind a high counter. She peers up from her work at Levee. *

LEVEE *

Hi, I'm here to pick up my little brother. *

ASSISTANT *

His name? *

LEVEE *

Ty Blackwood. *

She looks at the clock, then to Levee. Types on her computer. *

He eyes the clock, tapping his finger on the counter. *

ASSISTANT *

Your name? *

LEVEE *

Levee. *

ASSISTANT *

You're not listed as Ty's emergency contact, so unfortunately I won't be able to release him to you without a note from-- *

LEVEE *

Who's his emergency contact? *

She draws her attention back to the computer. *

ASSISTANT *

Says here, Vivian and Eugene Blackwood. *

Levee shakes his head. *

LEVEE *

Okay, well like I said, I'm his brother. I'm the main one that picks him up from the after school program, so what are you talking about? *

ASSISTANT *
I can give Vivian a call. *

LEVEE *
I don't have time. Look, there's um- *
- there's a family emergency. *
(beat) *
It's our dad. He's in the hospital. *

She looks skeptical. *

ASSISTANT *
One moment. *

She dials a number on her desk phone. Holds it up to her ear. *
Levee's patience grows thin. *

ASSISTANT (CONT'D) *
I'm sorry, but Vivian did not pick *
up. *

LEVEE *
Exactly. She's unavailable. That's *
why I'm here. *

ASSISTANT *
Again, I cannot release Ty to you *
without-- *

Levee blows her off and leaves. *

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY *

A desperate Levee runs back to school. *

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/SCHOOL BUS - DAY *

Brown and Assistant Coaches monitor the Tigers load the bus. *
Levee runs up out of breath. *

COACH BROWN *
Where the hell have you been?! *

LEVEE *
Sorry, Coach. I had to go get-- *

COACH BROWN *
You got two minutes. Get your *
uniform or get left behind. *

Levee takes off to the locker room. *

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DRIVING - DAY

Levee plops down next to Milz.

MILZ

What happened with Ty?

Levee waves this off.

LEVEE

My momma got it.

MILZ

Oh cool.

(to everyone)

Y'all ready to get this win?

PLAYERS

Hell yeah.

Milz stands.

MILZ

I said, y'all ready to get this win?!

ALL PLAYERS

YEAH!

MILZ

Tigers on three. One. Two. Three.

EXT. ARROYO FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Tigers in a huddle.

PLAYERS

TIGERS!

Tigers break out of the huddle and run to the--

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

3rd Quarter. Tigers up by a touchdown. Arroyo in possession.

Levee scans the crowd. He spots a SAN DIEGO STATE RECRUITER.

Levee digs into the grass. Eyes dart left and right.

ARROYO QB *
 Blue forty-two! Blue Forty-two! *
 Hike! *

Arroyo QB looks to throw. Scrambles. Levee finds a break in *
 the pocket. Charges. *

Levee tackles Arroyo QB. *

LEVEE *
 I'm here all night, baby. *

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE *

ARROYO QB *
 Hike! *

TWO ARROYO GUARDS hold Levee. *

Arroyo QB throws downhill. The ball zips through the air. *
 ARROYO WIDE RECEIVER catches it. *

LEVEE *
 Dammit! *

ARROYO FANS ROAR. First down. *

20 YARD LINE *

ARROYO QB *
 Hike! *

Arroyo QB stays in the pocket. He throws it. *

Levee dives in the air. Connects with the tips of his *
 fingers, but loses the ball like a hot potato. *

Levee throws a fit. *

LEVEE *
 I had that! *

COACH BROWN (O.S.) *
 Play the fucking game, Levee! *

SIDELINE *

Milz shakes his head. *

20 YARD LINE

ARROYO QB

Blue nineteen! Blue nineteen! Hut--
hut--

Levee steps over the line. Flag on the play. WHISTLE.

REFEREE

Offsides. Offense number five. Five
yard penalty.

LEVEE

Bullshit. Come on man!

LINE OF SCRIMAGE

Ball is snapped.

Levee rushes Arroyo QB.

Arroyo throws a touchdown.

FIELD GOAL

Kick is good. Arroyo takes the lead.

Levee fumes from the--

SIDELINE

He watches the game, the clock, and the Recruiter. Anxious.

THE FIELD

Milz throws a first down.

Milz gets sacked.

Milz needle and threads the ball. Tigers fire to the end
zone. Touchdown.**SIDELINE**Levee puts his helmet on. Heads for the field, but he's
stopped by Coach Brown.

COACH BROWN

Jared.

A PLAYER takes Levee's spot. *

LEVEE *

Wait--Coach. *

The game continues. *

LEVEE (CONT'D) *

Why you take me out? *

Levee's eyes dart to the USC Recruiter. *

LEVEE (CONT'D) *

I'm good. I can play. Coach! *

Milz and other Tigers snap their attention to Levee. *

LEVEE (CONT'D) *

I need to play. *

4th Quarter. Levee rides the bench. *

Milz finishes the job, leading the Tigers to a victory. The end of their ten year defeat. *

Levee's reaction torn between joy and frustration. *

INT. ARROYO VISITOR'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT *

The Tigers celebrate. High on their win. Levee smiles. *

Levee opens a locker. Checks his phone. His smile fades. 20 missed calls from Vivian. *

LEVEE *

(sotto) *

Shit. *

Coach Brown stands in the hallway. *

COACH BROWN *

Milz. *

(beat) *

There's someone here to meet you. *

MILZ *

Who? *

Levee watches Milz join Brown. Levee moves to get a better look down the hall. The SDSU Recruiter shakes Milz hand. *

Levee slams the locker shut. *

EXT. ARROYO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

FANS find their cars. Levee walks towards the bus.

CHANTELLE (O.S.)

Levee.

Chantelle catches up to Levee. He keeps walking.

LEVEE

Oh. Hey.

CHANTELLE

Good game.

LEVEE

Thanks.

CHANTELLE

Lost a lot of money tonight.

She laughs. He's not amused.

CHANTELLE (CONT'D)

You guys going to party tonight?

LEVEE

I'm going home.

Beat.

CHANTELLE

You okay?

LEVEE

I'm fine.

CHANTELLE

You sure?

(beat)

I can give you a ride. I drove.

LEVEE

I'm good.

He gets on the school bus.

CHANTELLE

Oh... kay.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Levee enters to Ty playing a keyboard on the floor.

TY

Hi, Levee.

Eugene kneels, separating clothes from a suitcase.

Levee removes his shoes, then rounds the corner to the--

KITCHEN

Levee warms leftovers.

TY (O.S.)

I learned that song.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Which one?

TY (O.S.)

Listen.

Ty plays. It's rough.

Levee sits at the table with his food. He glances at Eugene.

EUGENE

How was the game?

Levee scrolls on his phone.

TY

Do you know what song it is?

EUGENE

Uhh let me see. Ain't No Sunshine?

TY

How'd you know?

Eugene laughs at Ty. Playfully swats his head.

Eugene stands. Crosses to the table.

EUGENE

Ay, umm... I'm sure you probably
already heard a mouthful from your
momma about leaving Ty today, but I
wanted to give you my number so
that it doesn't happen again.

Mouthful of food, Levee snorts.

LEVEE

So that doesn't happen again?

(beat)

What are you going to do? You going to pick him up like you were supposed to do two years ago?

Levee laughs. Ty stops playing the piano.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Why don't I have your number?

EUGENE

Just take my number down.

LEVEE

I'm not taking shit from you.

EUGENE

Woah. Hold on--hold on. I see you got some hair on your chest and you smellin' yourself, but you need to slow your roll, buddy.

LEVEE

I'm not your buddy.

EUGENE

What you wanna get off your chest? What's up?

LEVEE

Nah--Nah--Come on. This your show. You got the floor. Tell us where you been?

Eugene looks from Levee to a sad Ty.

EUGENE

Went to a few places. Played some gigs. Made some money with Bobby.

LEVEE

And probably tricked it all in the streets following a dummy like Bobby. How much you make?

Eugene turns back to his suitcase.

EUGENE

'Bout time for you to go to bed, Ty.

TY *
But I'm not sleepy. *

LEVEE *
It's funny how you got around for *
so long, but somehow ended up down *
the street. And sick. *
(beat) *
And now you want to be friends. *

EUGENE *
Come on, Ty. *

Levee steps to Eugene. *

LEVEE *
No-no-no. Hear me out. *

Levee taps Eugene's chest. *

LEVEE (CONT'D) *
I don't need no friends, but I need *
some money. *

Eugene grins. *

EUGENE *
'Course you do. *

Euege pulls out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket. Taps *
one loose. Grins at Levee. *

EUGENE (CONT'D) *
What you going to do to get the *
money, Levee? Hm? *

Eugene goes to light a cigarette, but Levee knocks it from *
his hand. *

LEVEE *
Ty has asthma. *

EUGENE *
I let you say what you want, but *
you gone keep your hands off of me. *

Levee gets in his face. *

LEVEE *
I am? What you gonna do? *

Eugene puckers his lips. Kisses. *

Levee pushes Eugene's chest. Hard. The wall breaks his fall. *

Ty cries.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Get out! Coming in here lying and
shit. Get the fuck out!

EUGENE

Put your hands on me again and
that'll be the last time you touch
anybody.

*
*
*

LEVEE

Fuck you. Fuck this.

Levee pushes past Ty.

LEVEE'S ROOM

Clothes everywhere.

Levee grabs a duffle bag from under his bunkbed.

Tosses in clothes, cleats, computer, chargers.

VIVIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Searching for the money he saw earlier, Levee goes for the
documents case.

VIVIAN'S CLOSET

He looks through purses. The shoe boxes. Nothing.

Back in the--

ROOM

He checks the drawers. Jackpot. He pockets some of the money.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT

Dogs BARK. Ambulance sirens WAIL.

Duffle bag over his shoulder, Levee looks at each street
sign. Looks around.

He tries his phone. Dead.

He walks to a--

CITY BUS STOP

A STRANGER rushes by.

LEVEE

Hey, excuse me. What time is it?

The STRANGER ignores him. Levee waits.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Levee rides.

A MAN stares at him.

Levee breaks his gaze. Keeps his bag close.

A half-naked WOMAN talks to herself.

Each stop feels longer and longer.

EXT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Levee gets off of the bus.

EXT. MILZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A nice neighborhood.

Levee eases to a window. KNOCKS.

No answer.

KNOCKS a little louder.

LEVEE

(loud whisper)

Milz.

(beat)

Milz!

KNOCKS.

A BED CREAKS on the other side.

The blinds twist open.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

It's me.

Groggy, Milz opens the blinds. Then the window. He removes the screen. Routine.

Levee climbs through the window.

Levee replaces the screen, closes the window, and the blinds.

INT. MILZ'S HOUSE - MILZ'S ROOM - NIGHT

Everything in place. Sports lover. College bound athlete.

Milz tosses Levee a pillow before collapsing onto the bed.

Out like a light.

LEVEE

Good lookin', Bro.

Levee sets his bag down. Removes his shoes and pants.

He charges his phone.

HALLWAY

Levee tip toes.

Rows of family photos and sports awards on both walls.

A SHUFFLE and faint LAUGH from the living room.

Levee freezes.

He peeks around the corner.

Computer screen glow highlights Chantelle's hair.

KITCHEN

Levee inches towards the living room.

This can hold Levee's apartment.

He gets closer to Chantelle on the couch.

LIVING ROOM

She wears head phones. Unaware of Levee.

He crouches behind the couch.

She LAUGHS.

He sees she's watching Instagram videos.

He reaches his hand out, but stops. Considers his next move.

He eases to the edge of the couch. Slowly begins to stand.

She catches a glimpse. JUMPS OUT OF HER SKIN.

CHANTELLE

Oh my-- You scared the shit out of me.

Levee tries to stifle his laugh. It kills him.

She CHUCKS a pillow at Levee. He catches it.

CHANTELLE (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

He puts a finger over his lips. Body shaking from his laugh.

CHANTELLE (CONT'D)

Idiot.

LEVEE

Your face. You were like--

Horribly mocks her.

CHANTELLE

No, I wasn't.

LEVEE

(laughing)

Oh shit.

He lands on the couch. She punches his side.

CHANTELLE

What are you doing here?

LEVEE

Why are you up so late?

CHANTELLE

I'm studying in my house.

LEVEE

Studying IG?

She turns the computer away from him.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

No, let me see.

He reaches out. Touches her hand. Beat.

He plays with her fingers.

She stares at their hands.

CHANTELLE

You're not going to tell me why you came over here in the middle of the night?

LEVEE

Couldn't sleep.

He smiles.

CHANTELLE

Yeah, right.

She pulls her hand away. Back to her computer.

LEVEE

I'm sorry about earlier. After the game. I had a lot on my mind.

CHANTELLE

Sooo, do you want to talk about it? About what you texted me yesterday?

A light flicks on in the hallway.

Levee hits the ground.

Chantelle looks to the

HALLWAY

Her robed MOTHER stands there, squinting.

MOTHER

Who are you talking to?

CHANTELLE

Nobody.

MOTHER

Go to bed.

Her Mother walks to the

REFRIDGERATOR

Pours a glass of lemonade.

CHANTELLE

Looks down at Levee. His eyes closed.

Her Mother's slippers shuffle back to her room.

Levee lets out a breath. She laughs at him.

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

Levee gives Coach Brown the rest of the money for camp.

LEVEE

Can I ask you something?

*
*

Brown looks up from counting the money.

*

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Why'd you pull me out in the fourth quarter?

*
*
*

COACH BROWN

You're a part of a team, Levee.

You're not the team.

(beat)

You held the bus up and you were off your game.

*
*
*
*
*

Brown pulls a medical waiver and minor release form from the drawer and slaps it on the table.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

Get that signed by your parents and get it back to me. Can't get on the bus without it.

Levee grabs the forms.

LEVEE

But, I already have a physical.

COACH BROWN

All players are required to get a sports physical signed at least within a week until the start of camp.

Levee glosses over the forms and sees PHYSICIAN CONSENT.

INT. VIVIAN'S JOB - NURSING HOME - DAY

Levee searches for Vivian. STAFF walk and feed RESIDENTS.
Some smiles at him.

STAFF

Hi, Levee. Long time no see.

LEVEE

Hi, Mrs. Winfrey. You know where my
mom is?

STAFF

She's making her rounds. Check in
room three.

NURSING HOME - ROOM 3

Vivian changes the bedding.

LEVEE (O.S.)

Hey, Ma.

She turns to see Levee in the doorway. Frustrated, she turns
back to her work.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about yesterday.

Levee sees a RESIDENT in a wheelchair watching Vivian.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I tried calling you earlier but...

VIVIAN

Ok, Mr. Whitiker. All done. Ready
to get back in bed?

The Resident stares at her, confused. Vivian wheels the
RESIDENT over to the bed. She helps him slowly get in bed.

LEVEE

You need help?

Vivian carries cleaning supplies into the--

RESIDENT'S BATHROOM

Levee follows her. Vivian cleans. He pulls out the medical
waiver and minor release from Brown.

LEVEE

I need you to help me get a
physical for camp. We leave in a
few days.

She looks at him through the window.

VIVIAN

Where'd you get the money?

LEVEE

Borrowed it from Milz.

(beat)

Oh and you gotta sign too.

VIVIAN

What kind of example are you
setting for your brother?

LEVEE

I told you I couldn't pick him up.

(beat)

Ma, I just need you to help me with
this one thing. I figured out the
rest.

VIVIAN

He watches everything you do. Hangs
on your every word.

He averts his eyes.

LEVEE

Well I'm showing him what it looks
like to go after what you want.

VIVIAN

Levee.

LEVEE

If you not gonna make the
appointment for me, just give me my
insurance info. I'll call myself.

She goes back to cleaning.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Are you going to help me or not?

VIVIAN

You seem to have it all figured
out.

She watches him leave.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - DAY

Every seat filled. Levee waits in line. A MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST works the desk.

Levee makes note of her name tag: ANGELICA

Finally his turn. He smiles at her.

LEVEE
Hi, Angelica.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST
Hi. How may I help you?

LEVEE
I would like to get a sports physical.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST
First time with us?

LEVEE
Yes.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST
Do you have insurance?

LEVEE
Oh, yes. I have Medi-Cal.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST
Can I see your insurance card?

He checks his pockets.

LEVEE
I don't have it.
(grins)
I'm sorry.

She types on her computer.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST
That's fine. Without proof of insurance the physical will come out to one-sixty-five.

His mouth drops.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
And let's see here. The earliest appointment we have is for January seventh.

LEVEE

Two months!?

He shakes his head, looking around the packed room.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LEVEE'S ROOM - DAY

Levee leans over his knees, holding the consent forms. His door opens. He hides the forms. Looks over to Vivian.

VIVIAN

Ty. Wake up, baby.

Ty yawns.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Come on. You have to get ready.

TY

What?

VIVIAN

I made you breakfast.

Ty makes his way from the top bunk. Her back to Levee--

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

(to Levee)

Send me the address to that camp.

Vivian and Ty leave.

Levee draws back to the forms. He forges Vivian's signature.

HALLWAY

Levee stands at the bathroom door. Eugene coughs viciously on the other side.

LEVEE

I need to get ready.

Eugene continues.

Then a THUD. Sounds like Eugene fell. Levee waits.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Shit.

The doorknob turns.

EUGENE (CONT'D) *
(calling out) *
Vivian. *

Eugene stumbles out. Levee backs up, avoiding contact. *

BATHROOM

Levee notices the bloody tissue in the trashcan.

EUGENE (O.S.) *
Vivian! *

LIVING ROOM

Levee waits for Ty to put his shoes on. Eugene comes in. *

EUGENE *
Ay, you think you could take me to *
my appointment? Don't think I can *
drive today. *

LEVEE *
Oh um--I-- *

EUGENE *
You don't gotta stay. You can just *
drop me off. Take my truck and *
swing back and get me on your way *
home. *

LEVEE *
I can't be late and I'm leaving for *
camp after school. *

Eugene gives him a look. *

EUGENE *
Alright, man. Don't worry about it. *

Eugene kisses Ty on the forehead. *

EUGENE (CONT'D) *
Have a good day, baby boy. *

TY *
You too. *

Levee and Ty leave. *

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/CHARTER BUS - NIGHT

Players load onto the bus. Levee hands Coach Brown his consent forms. Brown scans the forms.

Levee sees Milz arrive with his Mother and Chantelle. They approach the bus.

LEVEE
About time, Nigga.

Milz's Mother cuts her eyes at him, disgusted by that word.

LEVEE (CONT'D) MILZ
Oh, sorry Mrs. Williams. Yeah. Yeah.

Milz gives hugs Mother and sister.

MOTHER
Be safe.

CHANTELLE
Bye, Levee.

He waves at her.

MOTHER
(to Brown)
I just have a few more questions.

The boys get on the bus.

INT. CHARTER BUS - DRIVING - NIGHT

The chaos of excited teen boys. Levee and Milz sit together.

MILZ
Yeah, that recruiter's gonna be there.

LEVEE
That's what's up. I'm leaving with three offers. Minimum.

MILZ
Bro, imagine we get into the same school.

LEVEE
That'll be live. You thinking about going to San Diego State?

MILZ

Open to it. You remember my cousin,
Rodney?

(off Levee's nod)

He played there for a minute before
gettin' drafted.

(beat)

They got good coaches.

(beat)

And the baddies! Have mer-have mer-
have mercy.

Levee laughs.

LEVEE

You stupid. They got bad bitches
everywhere.

MILZ

'Bout to get me one this weekend.

They dap each other up.

EXT. CHARTER BUS/SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Levee gawks at the manicured campus. Feels like another world
compared to where Levee comes from. It is.

CAMPERS hail from all over California.

SDSU STADIUM

COLLEGE COACHES rep their schools.

Levee is in awe of the 25,000 seat stadium. He lines up with
the LINEBACKERS to weigh in with a CAMP LEAD.

CAMP LEAD

Two-forty.

Another steps up.

CAMP LEAD (CONT'D)

Two-thirty.

LEVEE

(sotto)

Damn.

CAMP LEAD

Two-thirty-five.

Levee steps on the scale. *

CAMP LEAD (CONT'D) *
Two-hundred. *
(chuckles) *
A little small there, boy. *

LAUGHS from the others. Levee steps off the scale. *

DRILLS - MOMENTS LATER *

Campers train hard. Sprints. Tackles. Blocks. *

Campers outperform Levee. Faster. Stronger. Ferocious. *

Anger rising. He pushes himself to exhaustion. *

SIDELINE *

Levee gets water. Milz joins him. Hyped compared to Levee. *

LEVEE *
(between breaths) *
Fuckin' killin' me. *

MILZ *
You got it, bro. *

Milz pats him on the butt before leaving. *

A FULLERTON COLLEGE RECRUITER dressed in blue and gold *
approaches Levee. He eyes the FC on the polo. *

The man reaches a hand out. *

FC RECRUITER *
Tim Edwards. How are you? *

LEVEE *
Levee Blackwell. *

FC RECRUITER *
You look good out there, Levee. *

LEVEE *
Thanks. *

FC RECRUITER *
Real strong. *
(beat) *
I'm one of the assistant coaches at *
Fullerton College. *

The Recruiter hands his card to Levee. *

FC RECRUITER (CONT'D) *

Looking forward to tomorrow's game. *

Levee nods. *

FC RECRUITER (CONT'D) *

Keep in touch. *

They shake hands. Levee takes another look at the card. *

INT. SDSU DORM ROOM - NIGHT *

Levee researches Fullerton College. *

A SHOWER RUNS. Milz sings in the shower. *

MILZ *

(singing) *

Have I told you I love you? *

LEVEE *

(sotto) *

Fullerton junior college. *

Levee's face twists in disapproval. *

MILZ *

(singing) *

Have I told you you still mean the *

world to me? *

INSERT - LEVEE'S COMPUTER *

He goes down FJC's roster and schedule. *

More wins than losses, but it's-- *

BACK TO SCENE *

LEVEE *

(sotto) *

All junior colleges. *

The SHOWER STOPS. *

Milz comes out in a towel. *

MILZ *

It's all yours. Hurry up. *

Levee focuses on the computer. *

MILZ (CONT'D)

What you doin'? We gotta leave in
like twenty minutes.

LEVEE

I'm good, man. Y'all go ahead.

MILZ

We didn't come all the way out here
to stay inside. It's our first
night as *college students*.

Milz grins.

LEVEE

We're not college students.

MILZ

Melanie and her friends don't know
that.

(re: Levee's computer)

What you lookin' at anyway?

Milz steps closer, but Levee shuts his computer.

LEVEE

Nothin', man.

Awkward beat, then Milz places a hand on Levee's shoulder.

MILZ

We all got that problem.

LEVEE

What you talkin' about?

MILZ

Porn will be here when we get back.

Levee chucks a pillow at him.

LEVEE

Shut up! I'm not watching no porn,
dumbass.

Milz laughs.

MILZ

For real, man. Don't leave me
hangin' tonight.

LEVEE

Nobody forcin' you to go out. I
might hit the weight room.

MILZ *
Man, whatever. I see you limpin'. *

Milz heads back into the bathroom. *

MILZ (O.S.) (CONT'D) *
Fuckin' square. *

Levee opens his computer. *

EXT. SDSU STADIUM - DAY *

Day two. *

Fully padded Campers wear either a red, blue, orange, or *
green jersey. Four teams. *

Coach Brown watches with other Coaches from the stands. *

Levee huddles with the green team. Defense. Milz huddles with *
the red team. Offense. *

WHISTLE BLOWS. *

They break out of the huddle. *

MILZ *
You think you can keep up? I see *
you limpin'. *

LEVEE *
Boy, I'm about to embarrass you. *

MILZ *
Come on man, I taught you *
everything you know. *

LEVEE *
Just play the game. *

Levee gets in position with the kicking team. *

The balls is kicked. Levee rushes downhill. The ball is down *
at the 25-yard line. *

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE *

Levee and Milz eye each other. Milz shows his mouth guard. *

MILZ *
Green nineteen! Sunday! Sunday! *
Sun! *

Ball is snapped. Milz throws. Caught by a RUNNING BACK. Levee *
tackles the RUNNING BACK. *

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE *

MILZ *
Blue forty-two! Blue eighty! Get *
back! Get back! Set! *

Ball is snapped. Levee rips through the pocket. Sacks Milz. *
He's helped to his feet. *

Levee full of energy back down at the-- *

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE *

MILZ *
Green eighty! Green eighty! Sunday! *
Sunday! Sun! *

Ball is snapped. Milz scrambles. Levee charges from Milz's *
blinds side and hits him hard. The ball fumbles. *

Levee dives for the ball. Takes it and runs. *

WHISTLE. *

Levee slows down. Turns and sees Milz on the ground. *

Milz lies flat on his back in agony. *

Campers take a knee. *

An ATHLETIC TRAINER runs to Milz's aide. *

Levee approaches. Milz's GROAN gets louder. His anguish, *
unflinching. *

LEVEE *
Get up, Bro. *

Levee reaches his hand out. *

TRAINER *
Where does it hurt? *

Milz can't form words. *

LEVEE *
Milz. *

TRAINER *
(into walkie) *
We might need a stretcher. *

LEVEE *
Milz, get up. Come on. *

Levee touches his arm, but Milz jerks it away. *

TRAINER *
Can you stand? *

MILZ *
My god. Fuck! *

Brown joins them. *

COACH BROWN *
Let's try to get you on your feet. *

Tears in Milz's eyes. *

LEVEE *
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Fuck. *

Brown and the Trainer help Milz to his feet, but he can't *
stand on his own. His GROAN turns into haunting SCREAM. *

A CLAP unfurls from the Campers as Milz is helped off of the *
field and beyond the sideline. *

Levee watches, frozen and helpless. *

Milz disappears beyond the stadium's double doors. *

Levee's teammate from school check in with him. *

TIGER 1 *
He'll be alright. *

WHISTLE. *

The game continues. *

Levee rips his helmet off and throws it. *

EXT. CHARTER BUS - DAY

Coach Brown checks his roster. The Tigers pile onto the bus.

Levee approaches Brown.

LEVEE
 Ay Coach, you heard anything about
 Milz yet?

Brown keeps his eyes on his roster.

COACH BROWN
 Let you know when I do.

LEVEE
 Is he okay?

COACH BROWN
 Can't say.

Brown looks over the brim of his glasses. Levee takes a step
 onto the bus.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
 If you pull anything like that
 again, you can kiss your football
 career goodbye.

LEVEE
 It was an accident.

Levee swallows the lump in his throat.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
 I played the game.

Brown shakes his head. He focuses back on his roster.

INT. CHARTER BUS - DAY

Levee gets on the bus. Met with glares.

He looks for a seat. Takes a lone seat in the back.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - NIGHT

Levee barges in. Slams the door. His attitude stops his
 family's dinner. All eyes on him.

VIVIAN
 What wrong?

Consumed with himself, he heads for--

LEVEE'S BEDROOM

He slams his door. Throws his duffle bag to the ground.

His door opens. Vivian watches him pace.

VIVIAN

First of all, when you come in this house you speak. Secondly, you slam this door again and you won't have a door.

Levee checks his phone. Missed calls from Chantelle.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

And I don't know who you think you are, or what's gotten into you, but if you think you can steal from me and do what you want, you got another thing coming.

He puts his hands up.

LEVEE

Momma, please. I can't do this--

VIVIAN

If it wasn't for your dad, I would've came down there and snatched your ass outta that camp. You have no regard for anybody but yourself.

He tries to pass her, but she lays a hand on his chest.

LEVEE

Come on, man. I just got back I-I--

VIVIAN

You stole my money to go all the way down there and what did you come back with? Look like you just got a bigger attitude to me.

She notices his wet eyes.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

What's wrong? What happened?

Iron jaw.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Levee.

She gives him a moment to tell the truth.

LEVEE
Just leave me alone. Please.

VIVIAN
You need to let football go.

LEVEE
Are you crazy?

VIVIAN
Watch your mouth.
(beat)
With the bills piling up and your
dad's chemo, you need to get a job
and help me out around here.

LEVEE
I'm so close.

VIVIAN
Close? Close to what, Levee?

LEVEE
To getting recruited.

VIVIAN
And how do I know that?

LEVEE
I met a couple of college coaches
who are interested in me.

VIVIAN
If you keep this up, and you don't
have a job come graduation, you'll
have to get out.

He sits on his bed, leg bouncing.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
I've had enough of you running
around chasing after football.

He sees Eugene standing in the doorway. Just as thin as the
toothpick he uses to clean his teeth. Levee eyes Eugene's
chemo port.

EUGENE
(to Vivian)
Your food getting cold.

VIVIAN
 (to Levee)
 Let it go.

She leaves.

EUGENE
 So, what you do?

Levee declines a call from Chantelle.

LEVEE
 I ain't do shit.

Eugene picks and sucks his teeth.

Levee checks his phone.

INSERT - PHONE

Text from Chantelle: *What happened to my brother?*

BACK TO SCENE

Levee throws his phone across the room.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
 Fuck.

EUGENE
 Mm. Pretty upset for somebody who
 ain't did shit.

Levee slams the door on Eugene's face.

LEVEE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Levee tosses and turns in his sleep.

His STOMACH BUBBLES. He MOANS, rubbing his stomach.

He gets out of bed and sees his door has been removed.

LEVEE
 (sotto)
 Oh my fuckin' god.

Levee drags his feet down the--

HALLWAY

LAUGHS come from the--

BATHROOM

Levee peeks in through the cracked door.

At the sink, Eugene lathers his head with shaving cream. Ty watches him from the toilet.

TY
Why does your hair look spotty like that?

EUGENE
'Cause of medicine.

TY
(eyes wide)
Is my hair gonna be like that when I take medicine?

EUGENE
What? You don't like it?

Ty shakes his head.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
You don't?
(off Ty's look)
I think we should make your hair like mine.

Eugene laughs. Grabs the razor. Ty smiles. Squirms.

Levee pushes the door open. Ty jumps.

LEVEE
I need to use the bathroom.

Levee notices Eugene's hand tremor. Levee's STOMACH BUBBLES.

EUGENE
You gotta take a shit? Go use ya momma's bathroom.

LEVEE
Man, come on. I don't want to wake her up.

VIVIAN (O.S.)
I'm already up.

Levee whips his head to Vivian, walking down the hallway.

VIVIAN'S ROOM - DAY

Vivian gets ready for work. Levee walks out of her bathroom.

LEVEE

Can I stay home from school? I don't feel good.

VIVIAN

What's wrong? You never miss school.

LEVEE

My stomach is messed up.

VIVIAN

Come here.

She touches his forehead and neck.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

You don't feel hot. You think you caught something at camp?

LEVEE

Couldn't really sleep.

VIVIAN

Well, if you're going to be home today, take your father to his appointment.

LEVEE

Why? He can drive.

VIVIAN

Doctor said he shouldn't be driving after chemo. And it's the least you can do.

LEVEE

Well, if I take him, can I get my door back?

The DOORBELL RINGS. They share a look - *who's that?*

LIVING ROOM - DAY

Levee answers the door. A somber Coach Brown stands on the other side.

LEVEE
(confused)
What's up, Coach?

COACH BROWN (O.S.)
Hi, Levee. Can I come in?

Levee lets Coach in. Coach nods to Vivian.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
Good morning, Mrs. Blackwell.

VIVIAN
How are you? Have a seat.

He sits on the couch. Eugene and Ty come from the back.

COACH BROWN
(to Eugene)
Hi.

VIVIAN
This is Levee's father, Eugene.

Coach Brown stands and shakes Eugene's hand.

COACH BROWN
Coach Brown. Good to meet you.

EUGENE
Likewise.

Ty eats breakfast at the kitchen table. Eugene joins him.

LEVEE
What you doing here?

Brown sits on the couch. His eyes study the floor.

COACH BROWN
Well, uh, I-- I wanted you to hear
it from me first.

This gets Vivian and Eugene's attention. Brown's eyes flick
up to Levee.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
I know how close you and Milz are.

Levee's heart races, his chest caves with each breath.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
 I hate to have to tell you this,
 but he... Milz is paralyzed from
 the waist down.

LEVEE VIVIAN
 What? (gasps)
 Oh my god.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
 How? What happened?

Brown looks from Vivian to Levee.

COACH BROWN
 Oh, I'm sorry. I thought--

LEVEE
 (to Vivian)
 Where are your keys?

Levee searches the coffee table, kitchen counter.

VIVIAN
 What are you--

LEVEE
 I need to go see him. Where are
 your keys?

Levee charges to--

VIVIAN'S ROOM

He searches her dresser. Nothing.

He pulls her purse from her closet. Vivian comes in and
 snatches it from him.

VIVIAN
 Stop!

LEVEE
 Just give me the fuckin' keys!

EUGENE (O.S.)
 Ay-ay-ay.

LEVEE
 Matter of fact, just take me over
 there. I need to go see him.
 I need to go see Milz.

Eugene and Ty come in.

EUGENE

Don't be yellin at ya momma.

Levee rushes to the --

LIVING ROOM

TY (O.S.)

What's wrong with Levee?

Brown looks up at a frantic Levee.

LEVEE

What hospital is he in? Can you take me?

The family joins them.

COACH BROWN

Look, I know this is hard to hear.

LEVEE

Just tell me. Where is he? I'll walk. I have to tell him it was an accident.

VIVIAN

(to Brown)

What-what's going on?

COACH BROWN

Milz took a hard hit from Levee at camp.

Vivian stands stunned. Eugene lets out a heavy sigh.

LEVEE

It was just a game. Momma.
(voice breaks)
I gotta go see him. Please.

Vivian stares at Levee, her heart breaks with his.

VIVIAN

What did you do to that boy?

LEVEE

It was just a game!

This rings in the air.

EUGENE

Ay, man, give it some time. Give him some space.

LEVEE

What are you talking about? That's the dumbest shit you could say. *Give it some time.* How has that worked out for you?

EUGENE

There ain't nothing you can say to change the situation. You think he wants to see you right now?

Levee stares daggers.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Huh? Your sorry don't mean shit to him. All he knows is that you fucked his life up and you have to sit with that shit.

Silence.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

(to Ty)

Put your shoes on and get your backpack.

Eugene heads for the door. In one swift motion, Levee snatches him and pins him to the wall.

VIVIAN

Let him go.

EUGENE

What you gonna do, big man? Hm?

Ty's hits to Levee's leg are futile. Levee stares into Eugene's eyes. A blind fury.

COACH BROWN (O.S.)

Levee, don't do this.

Levee jabs Eugene in the jaw. Hard. He falls to the ground.

Vivian immediately at his side. Eugene touches the blood on his lip. Looks up at Levee. Grins.

Levee goes after Eugene again, but Coach Brown pulls him to the front door.

LEVEE

I hate you.

Brown pulls Levee outside.

LEVEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I hate you!

A crying Vivian helps Eugene to his feet.

VIVIAN

(to Eugene)

Why would you say that to him?

Eugene jerks away.

EUGENE

You know I'm right and he knows too. He needs to grow up.

VIVIAN

Both of you do.

Eugene checks his lip.

EXT. LEVEE'S HOME - PARKING LOT

Brown attempts to console a fired up Levee.

LEVEE

I swear to god.

COACH BROWN

Walk it off. Walk it off.

Levee stops pacing and looks at Brown.

LEVEE

That's my best friend.

(steps closer)

Coach. That's my-- Best. Friend.

A tear runs down his cheek.

Vivian runs over and pulls Levee in for a hug. Squeezes him. His arms limp by his side. Eyes fixed on Brown.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Passing period buzzing with STUDENTS. Levee walks the halls, shrinking under his hoodie.

He makes it to his locker. Changes his books.

Closes the locker. Looks over his shoulder. Double takes.

He sees Chantelle in the sea of Students.

He takes off in the other direction.

MATH CLASS

The TEACHER drones on at the front of the class. Levee focuses on the clock. STUDENTS on their phones. Some sleep.

TEACHER (O.S.)

A polynomial is an expression consisting of indeterminates and coefficients. Who can give me an example of a binomial?

Levee looks to Milz's empty desk next to him.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Anyone?

Crickets.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Levee?

Levee looks at her.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

What's an example of a binomial?

LEVEE

Oh--I-I don't know.

She tilts her head, confused. She looks around her class, then gives up. She writes on the board. Levee's eyes back on the clock.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Can I go to the restroom?

TEACHER

Class is almost over.

LEVEE

I really have to go.

TEACHER

You can wait like everybody else.

He deflates.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A binomial is an--

Levee swings his backpack over his shoulder and walks out of class before the Teacher can say a word.

STUDENT (O.S.)
(confused)
Okay. What the fuck?

HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Levee rushes. Looking over his shoulder. He makes it to--

COACH BROWN'S OFFICE

Levee barges in. Brown looks up from the pile of paperwork on his desk.

LEVEE
Can I see the video from my games?

Brown removes his glasses.

COACH BROWN
Thought you were taking some time off.

LEVEE
Nah, I'm good. I'm gonna make my highlight reel like you told me.

COACH BROWN
I see.
(then)
Look, I know you had high hopes of getting recruited, but at this point--

LEVEE
Please don't do that. I'm not asking for advice.

Brown takes a good look at him. He tosses a sticky notepad onto the desk.

COACH BROWN
Write your email. I'll send you the link to the cloud.

The BELL RINGS.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Tigers suit up. Pregame hype: MUSIC. CHATTER. CHANTS.

Levee comes in.

Heads turn. The CHATTER rolls to a WHISPER.

Player 1 bumps into Levee as he walks to his locker.

LEVEE

What's up?

Player 1 looks Levee up and down.

Levee unlocks his locker. PREACHER PLAYER approaches him.

PREACHER PLAYER (O.S.)

Hey man. I'm s--

Jumpy, Levee turns around.

PREACHER PLAYER (CONT'D)

Didn't mean to scare you. Just wanted you to know that I'm sorry about what happened with Milz.

LEVEE

Oh... Yeah. Me too.

Levee suits up for the game.

MOMENTS LATER

Coach Brown comes in.

COACH BROWN

Listen up.

Tigers take a knee. He scans the team.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

You boys are in the final stretch. And as you all know, things have taken a turn for us. Some folks are counting y'all out. Emotions are high. Disappointment. Doubt. But needless to say, we're playing for something bigger than ourselves.

The Team hangs on his every word.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

You know what you need to do. Hit!
Hit! Hit! All night. Offense. Hit!
Defense. Hit! Every time that ball
snaps. Hit. Let's go get the win
for your teammate. Your friend.
Your brother.

Hunger and pain swirl among the team. Levee hangs his head.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

This ones for Milz. Tigers on
three. One-two-three--

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The Tigers rip through their banner and spill onto the field.
FANS shake the stands. The BAND doesn't miss a beat.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

LET'S GO TIGERS!

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

Milz Williams, number twenty-one,
will be missed tonight. Number fifty-
five, Robert Towns, sure does have
big shoes to fill.

SIDELINE

Levee eyes the opposing beefy team, THE RATTLEERS.

He scans the stands. Signs read: Go Tigers! Get Better Milz!

His eyes land on Chantelle. She stares right back at him,
swallowing the distance between them.

*
*

KICKOFF

TIGER RUNNING BACK catches the ball.

Advances thirty yards. Tackled.

Levee watches Milz's replacement, QB 55 (17), shift on his
feet--

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

QB 55
Red forty-two! Red forty-two! Set-
hike!

The balls is snapped.

QB 55 looks to his right. Elbows up. SACKED! WHISTLE.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)
Towns is down! He's going to have
to move faster than that.

COACH BROWN
Come on.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
Aaron Atkins with the sack. A
dancing bear.

Levee shakes his head.

QB 55 lines up back at the--

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

QB 55
Blue nineteen! Blue nineteen! Set-
hike!

Snapped ball.

QB 55 in the pocket. Spots his RECEIVER. He Passes. WHISTLE.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)
Pass incomplete to Maverick.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

QB 55
Blue nineteen! Blue nineteen! Set-
hike!

Snapped. Long pass.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
And the pass is intercepted!

RATTLER tackled at the fifty-yard line.

SIDELINE

Levee puts his helmet on. Ready for the Defense and Offense to switch. He runs on the field.

COACH BROWN (O.S.)

Levee!

He turns to Brown who waves him off the field.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

Jared, get out there.

TIGER LINEBACKER takes Levee's place.

LEVEE

(to Brown)

What are you doing?

Brown focuses on the game.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Coach.

He looks up at Chantelle who is still watching him.

*

FIFTY-YARD LINE

Rattlers in possession of the ball. The ball is snapped
HELMETS CONNECT.

WHISTLE.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

First down for the Rattlers.

SIDELINE

LEVEE

Coach, are you serious?

COACH BROWN

Have a seat.

LEVEE

This is bullshit.

On the--

FIELD

Rattlers Quarterback throws a--

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
Touchdown! A beautiful pass to Joey Daniels.

End of the first quarter WHISTLE.

Levee eyes the score.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)
Rattlers, fourteen and the Tigers have yet to get on the board.

LEVEE
Put me in. Let me win this for you.

ON THE FIELD

QB 55 is SACKED! SACKED! and SACKED!

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
This is turning out to be a long night for the Tigers. Looks like star linebacker Levee Blackwell is riding the bench tonight.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)
Let's see if they can turn it around in the second half.

WHISTLE. THIRD QUARTER.

LEVEE
Put me in, Coach. I can play both sides.

Brown focuses on the game.

Rattlers score. CHEERS rumble the ground.

Top of the Fourth Quarter scoreboard reads: 0-21.

Tigers Offense switches with Defense.

COACH BROWN
Levee.

Levee rushes over to Coach Brown.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
Don't fuck this up.

Levee puts his helmet on and runs to the--

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

RATTLER QUARTERBACK
Blue ninety! Blue ninety. Hut-hut-
hike!

Levee finds an opening. Runs and obliterates Rattler
Quarterback. Ass to the grass.

LEVEE
This my house!

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
And that is number five, Levee,
Hammerhead, Blackwell, folks! Coach
Brown has let him out the cage.

Levee lines up. Digs into the grass.

RATTLER QUARTERBACK
Red twenty-two! Red twenty-two!
Hut-hut-hike!

Light on his feet, Levee shuffles. Ankle breaker.

He runs. LEAPS and picks the ball. Runs downhill, gaining
twenty-five yards.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
Interceptiiiiioooon!

Levee stays in the game, playing both Offense and Defense.

Levee flips a Rattler over his back.

Levee catches the ball. Runs.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2
First touchdown of the night for
Cajon Tigers!

The CROWD goes wild. Levee does a victory dance then pretends
to slice his throat.

WHISTLE. Flag on the play.

REFEREE

Unsportsmanlike conduct. Number five. That penalty will be enforced on the kickoff.

Levee approaches the Ref.

LEVEE

Fuck that, man! That's bullshit.

Preacher Player pulls Levee away.

TIGER'S FIELD GOAL

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

And the kick is good.

Final quarter. Ten minutes on the clock.

Levee plays hard. It's like he's been training for this his whole life. Because he has.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

This is the best comeback we've seen all season from the Tigers.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

Just like that we're tied. Twenty-one. Twenty-one.

Rattlers line up for the field goal.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

Just twenty yards. Oh and it's a fake!

Levee sacks Rattler Quarterback, causing a fumble.

The TIGERS RUNNING BACK recovers the ball and sprints downhill. Tackled at the ten-yard line.

WHISTLE.

Thirty seconds on the clock.

LEVEE

HELL YEAH! LET'S GO, BABY! LET'S GO!

Levee celebrates with his Team.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)
Looks like the Tigers may win this
thing.

QB 55 pats his helmet, looking to his left and right.

QB 55
Green eighty! Green eighty! Set-
hike!

The ball is snapped. Levee blocks for him.

A dime pass to Tiger Running Back. He tumbles into the--

END ZONE

Fists raised, Levee loses his mind in celebration. He runs downhill. That's game.

STUDENT ANNOUNCER 1
A narrow victory for the Tigers.

Levee nearly tackles Coach Brown, trying to pick him up.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

High on their win, the Tigers trample into the locker room.

FAN
Good game, Boys.

LEVEE
Thank you.

CHANTELLE (O.S.)
Levee!

Levee stops in his tracks. His joy sours. Head on a swivel, but he doesn't see her.

CHANTELLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Levee.

He looks up and sees Chantelle descend the stands.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Levee Blackwell?

Levee turns to--

LANCE ACKERMAN
Lance Ackerman head football coach
with Georgia State.

LANCE ACKERMAN (55), slicker than his shiny shoes, holds his hand out. Levee shakes his hand.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
That was a hell of a comeback.

LEVEE
Thank you.

Levee turns back to see Chantelle. She waits.

LANCE ACKERMAN
My assistant coach had a lot to say about you after seeing you at the Letterman Camp in San Diego.

LEVEE
(smitten)
Oh yeah? That's what's up.

Levee looks back at Chantelle again.

LANCE ACKERMAN
I'm here for the weekend and I'd love to sit down with you. Unless--

He looks to the stands where Chantelle was.

LEVEE
Oh no-no-no. I'm good. Let me get changed.

Lance nods. Levee heads into the locker room.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Levee enters the front door with Lance.

LEVEE
Momma?

LANCE ACKERMAN
(re: shoes at the door)
Should I?

LEVEE
Nah, it's cool.

Lance keeps his shoes on.

Levee rounds the corner to the--

KITCHEN

Ty works on homework at the table while Vivian stands over a hot stove.

TY
Hey, Levee.

VIVIAN
(to Levee)
Come finish this for me.

LEVEE
There's someone here to meet you.

VIVIAN
What?

She notices Levee's antsy excitement.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Who is it?

LIVING ROOM

Lance holds his hand out to Vivian.

LANCE ACKERMAN
Lance Ackerman.

She eyes his shoes. Brow raised. She doesn't shake his hand.

VIVIAN
I'm cooking. Sorry.

LANCE ACKERMAN
Ma'am, your son has tremendous talent.

VIVIAN
And what do you want to do with it?

Lance grins. Looks from Vivian to Levee.

LANCE ACKERMAN
A straight shooter. Okay.

VIVIAN
Yeah I have to get off to work. I don't have time.

(MORE)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

(to Levee)
Go finish the food.

Levee swallows his sigh. Listens.

LANCE ACKERMAN

I coach at Georgia state and I think Levee would be an asset to--

VIVIAN

Wait, Georgia?

Lance nods.

LANCE ACKERMAN

With talent like Levee's, he can go all the way to the NFL.

A GRUNT and THUMP comes from the bathroom.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Dammit!

Vivian jumps on it, but Levee follows, stopping her.

LEVEE

I got it, Momma.

HALLWAY

Levee stands at the bathroom door. Listens.

LANCE ACKERMAN (O.S.)

We're willing to offer Levee a full ride athletic scholarship.

Eugene GRUNTS.

VIVIAN (O.S.)

Georgia is too far.

BATHROOM

Levee opens the door to see a naked Eugene holding his head in the bathtub. Breathing hard. Squeezing his eyes closed.

EUGENE

Shit.

Levee turns his head away, then looks back at Eugene.

LANCE ACKERMAN (O.S.)
 There are a few different ways we
 can support his transition making
 it easy on the whole family.

LEVEE
 You alright?

Eugene tries to cover himself.

EUGENE
 Close the damn door!

LEVEE
 Do you need help?

EUGENE
 Get out!

Levee rushes out, closing the door behind him.

LIVING ROOM

Levee slips back inside.

VIVIAN
 (to Levee)
 Let me go help him.

LEVEE
 He's good.

VIVIAN
 (to Lance)
 So you see his talent, but he's
 more than that. He's immature. He
 lies. He--

LEVEE
 Damn, Momma. What you doing?

VIVIAN
 Lance needs to know what he's
 dealing with.

LEVEE
 Let me get a chance first.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 Mrs. Blackwell, I've seen and heard
 a lot of good things about your
 son. That's what brought me here.

(MORE)

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

But it's not lost upon me that he has a temper.

(to Levee)

Now, anger is good for a game like football, but you have to learn to harness it. Can you do that?

(off Levee's nod)

Can you?

LEVEE

Yes, Sir.

LANCE ACKERMAN

Ma'am this isn't an official offer, but we want to sponsor an official campus visit for Levee to come to Georgia State.

LEVEE

Really?!

Lance pulls out two plane tickets. Hands them to Vivian. Levee takes them.

LANCE ACKERMAN

It'll be a weekend visit. We'd like Levee to get a chance to feel out the campus, meet the coaches, and the other players. It's important that he makes the right decision.

He grins.

VIVIAN

And what's that?

LEVEE

Going all the way to the top!

LANCE ACKERMAN

(chuckles)

We can't promise you the world, but we can promise Levee an excellent education. Athletic training.

Character and professional development at one of the top schools in the nation.

Eugene walks in with a slight limp in his gait, still holding his head.

EUGENE

Who's this?

LEVEE

Let me help you, Dad.

Eugene gives Levee a look - *Dad?*

Levee disappears into the kitchen.

LANCE ACKERMAN

Lance Ackerman.

Lance shakes Eugene's hand.

EUGENE

Eugene.

VIVIAN

A recruiter from Georgia State.

Levee returns with a bag of frozen peas. Holds them out to Eugene. He looks from the bag to Levee.

EUGENE

I'm good.

LANCE ACKERMAN

I'll be in touch.

(re: his card)

Feel free to contact me anytime
with questions or concerns.

LEVEE

Thank you so much. Let me walk you
out.

LANCE ACKERMAN

Pleasure to meet you all.

Levee opens the door for him. Frozen peas still in his hand.
They leave.

Vivian shakes her head.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LEVEE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning. Levee hasn't slept. His eyes glued to his--

INSERT PHONE

Research on Georgia State football team.

Levee clicks on MESSAGES. He hovers over Milz's name.

He clicks "Milz"

Types: Hey Bro.

Deletes it.

Types: I'm sorry Bro.

Deletes it.

Types: It's happening...

Deletes it.

BACK TO SCENE

Levee locks his phone. Stares at the ceiling.

LIVING ROOM

Levee shuffles in. Eugene drinks a cup of coffee.

They look at each other.

Levee crosses to the refrigerator.

Eugene lets out a nasty cough.

EUGENE

Shit.

Holds a tissue over his mouth. Levee watches. Looks painful.

Eugene looks at the tissue. Speckled with blood.

Eugene struggles to put his shoes on. He stands. Not nearly as strong as he was when he arrived a couple of months ago.

LEVEE

Can I take you?

EUGENE

What?

LEVEE

Can I take you to your appointment?

Eugene looks at him. He reaches the front door.

EUGENE

Come on.

LEVEE

Let me get dressed real quick.

EUGENE

Hurry up.

Levee listens.

E/I. EUGENE'S TRUCK - DAY

Eugene heads for the driver's side.

EUGENE

I'll drive.

LEVEE

You sure?

Eugene starts the car.

MOMENTS LATER - DRIVING

The two drive in silence. A frosty morning.

Eugene pulls out a pack of cigarettes. Lights one.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I don't think you should be smoking.

Eugene takes a long drag. Exhales. Levee cracks the window.

EUGENE

And I don't think you should be going to do whatever you plan on doing when you drop me off.

Levee looks at him. Eugene grins.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

You think everybody is stupid. I know you. You came from me. You might as well tell me where you're tryna go.

Eugene glances over at Levee who focuses ahead.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Ok. How about this? I'm not going to chemo.

LEVEE

What? Why not?

EUGENE

Haven't gone in three weeks. Now, your Momma doesn't know that, but the insurance stopped paying for it. Seem like that shit makes you sicker than the cancer anyway.

Levee wrings his hands. Eugene takes another drag.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I've accepted my fate. Have you?

Levee coughs.

LEVEE

Can you put that out?

EUGENE

What's your plan, Levee?

LEVEE

What?

EUGENE

What's your plan? I seen how you acted with that recruiter.

LEVEE

What you want to hear? I'm going to play football.

EUGENE

Okay, and what else?

LEVEE

(annoyed)

And make money. And graduate. And make more money.

EUGENE

You get injured your first year there.

LEVEE

I won't.

EUGENE

But let's say you do. You get injured and you lose your scholarship.

LEVEE

Why do you gotta do that?

EUGENE

Just tell me your plan. You lose your scholarship and then what?

LEVEE

I'm not getting injured. I've never been injured so bad that I couldn't play.

EUGENE

You know who could say that just two weeks ago?

Levee thinks for a beat.

LEVEE

Fuck you.

Eugene nods.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Why do you hate me?

Eugene puts his cigarette out.

EUGENE

What about this one? You become a star. Get drafted. All the money. The women. Whatever. But you're too paranoid to let anyone in. Too mean to be loved. You get sick and--

LEVEE

Let me out, man. I'll walk home.

Levee unlocks the door. Eugene locks the doors.

EUGENE

If you'd listen long enough, you'd realize I'm trying to keep you from becoming somebody you hate.

Silence.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Levee, you don't have to like me. I'm sure that ship has sailed. But I need you to promise me one thing. Whatever you do, take care of your Momma and Ty.

He looks over to Levee.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

At the end of the day, none of that
other shit means anything if you
don't have them.

This lingers for a while.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Now, where are you going?

Levee swallows.

LEVEE

I was... I was, uh, going to try to
see my friend.

Eugene shakes his head.

EXT. MILZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Eugene waits in his truck.

Levee rings the DOORBELL. He looks through the window.

He rings the DOORBELL again.

Nothing.

He KNOCKS.

Nothing. He takes a step back.

The door UNLOCKS.

Chantelle answers.

LEVEE

Hi, Chan.

She stares at him.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Is Milz home?

He pulls the plane tickets from his pocket.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I uh--I wanted to-- I'm going to
Georgia. Georgia state.

(beat)

I leave in two weeks to check it
out.

(beat)

(MORE)

LEVEE (CONT'D)

I was thinking, uh... I know you really like Georgia and um-- Maybe you can go with me.

Awkward silence.

CHANTELLE

Are you stupid?

LEVEE

What? I--

CHANTELLE

You've been avoiding me for weeks and now you come over here to tell my brother that you're going to Georgia?

(beat)

Are you seriously that selfish?

LEVEE

He--I--I just wanted to-- I wanted him to know that--

She swings the door, but he grabs it.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Who is it?

LEVEE

I'm trying to apologize.

CHANTELLE

He doesn't want to see you.

Levee swallows this.

He looks over Chantelle's shoulder to see the grim look of disdain on Milz's Mother's face.

He drops his hand from the door.

LEVEE

Mrs. Williams, I-I--

MOTHER

You got some nerves showing up to my house.

LEVEE

It was an accident.

CHANTELLE

Just go.

MOTHER

You better not step foot over here
ever again.

She steps to Levee.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You took a part of my son that I'll
never get back. You know that?

(beat)

I oughta press charges.

Chantelle pulls her arm.

CHANTELLE

Mom--

MOTHER

I've been had your card picked,
Levee. I didn't want Milz around
you no way. There's nothing more
dangerous than an insecure boy.

Chantelle pulls her inside. Slams the door shut.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Nothing but a jealous snake.

Levee looks from the front door to Milz's bedroom window.

He marches through the flowerbed to Milz's window. BANGS.

LEVEE

Milz!

BANGS.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Milz!

Eugene gets out of his truck. Limpes over.

Milz's Mother flies outside.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Milz!

MOTHER

I'll call the police if you don't
get away from my house.

LEVEE

The police?

EUGENE

Let's go.

LEVEE

The police?

MOTHER

Give me fifty feet.

EUGENE

Get in the car. Now.

Levee looks to Eugene.

INT. EUGENE'S TRUCK - DRIVING - DAY

Eugene steals glances at Levee who fights back tears.

Eugene opens his mouth to say something but stops himself.

Eugene turns the RADIO on.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - LEVEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Levee packs his duffle bag.

VIVIAN (O.S.)

You can still fit these.

Vivian enters, holding long johns.

LEVEE

Nah, I'm good.

VIVIAN

Just take them.

LEVEE

It's a couple of days.

VIVIAN

You don't know cold like Georgia cold.

LEVEE

I've been in the snow before.

VIVIAN

Take them, so you'll have them. If you don't wear them, fine.

Levee packs sneakers, then zips the bag. She gives him a look, then tosses the long johns on the bed.

She crosses to leave--

LEVEE

Alright.

He shoves them into his bag.

VIVIAN

You don't have to make everything so difficult.

LEVEE

Sorry. I... I wish you were going with me.

They avoid eye contact.

VIVIAN

I can't leave Ty with your dad. You're dad's not doing--

LEVEE

Yeah, I know.

VIVIAN

But answer the phone when I call and send me pictures. And pay attention to your surroundings. To everything. Let me know when you land, and to the hotel, and the school--

LEVEE

Ma, I know. I got it.

She gives his arm an affectionate squeeze, then she hugs him.

INT. ONTARIO AIRPORT - NIGHT

Levee checks his boarding pass: Ontario to Atlanta.

Levee walks through--

TSA SECURITY LANE

He boards the--

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Welcome.

He finds his window seat. Stows his duffle bag.

MOMENTS LATER

Levee stares out the window.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)
On behalf of the Captain and your
entire crew, it is our pleasure to
have you abroad. Enjoy your flight.

IN THE SKY

Levee watches a sparkling California shrink below him.

He rests his head and closes his eyes.

INT. ATLANTA AIRPORT - DAY

Levee searches the sea of people for someone. His eyes land
on a sign: Levee Blackwood.

Levee approaches the ASSISTANT COACH (45) wearing a GSU hat.

LEVEE
Hi.

ASSISTANT COACH
Levee?

Levee nods.

ASSISTANT COACH (CONT'D)
Welcome to Atalanta.

They slap palms, dap.

INT. ASSISTANT COACH CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Levee takes in everything, eyes wide. Tree lines for miles
and miles. BLACK PEOPLE everywhere. Atlanta skyline.

ASSISTANT COACH (O.S.)
Your first time?

LEVEE
Yeah. It's so green.
(beat)
It's like the air is different.

It is.

INT. FANCY HOTEL - DAY

Levee enters to a room dripping with Georgia State University merchandise.

LEVEE

Oh shit.

He smiles at the sign: WELCOME HOME, LEVEE!

Snaps a picture. Sends it to Vivian.

Searches through the load of snacks.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Hell yeah.

He holds up the panther shirt.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

(reading)

Be the change.

He sprawls out on the bed, cheesing ear to ear.

INT. GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Assistant Coach shows Levee, dressed in GSU gear, the state of the art locker room. Three times the size of his high school locker room.

LEVEE

This is huge.

ASSISTANT COACH

Renovated it a few years back.

LANCE ACKERMAN (O.S.)

You made it.

Levee turns to see Lance.

They shake hands.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

How are you?

LEVEE

Great.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 (re: Levee's GSU gear)
 Looks good on you.

Levee smiles.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Hope you've been enjoying the
 campus.

Assistant Coach gets a call. He checks it.

ASSISTANT COACH
 I have to take this.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 Thanks, Fred.

Levee looks around.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 What do you think?

Levee shakes his head, searching for the words.

LEVEE
 It's clean.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 Yeah?

Lance grins.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Follow me.

Levee listens.

EXT. CENTER PARC STADIUM - DAY

The 25,000 seat stadium swallows Levee. Stunned, he stops.

Lance walks ahead to the--

FIFTY-YARD LINE

Levee joins Lance.

LEVEE
 This is-- Wow-- I...

Levee breathes into his hands, warming them. Lance chuckles.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 You'll get used to it.
 (re: Levee's phone)
 Here.

Levee hands his phone over. Lance snaps a photo of Levee.

LEVVE
 Wait-wait.

Levee poses. Lance snaps mores pictures. Hands him the phone.

LEVVE (CONT'D)
 Thanks.

Lance looks around the stadium like a proud father.

LANCE ACKERMAN
 I'm sure you have other prospects,
 but this can be all yours, Levee.

Levee lets out a breath. Nods.

Lance pats him on the shoulder, then leaves.

Levee crouches. Smooths his hand over the turf. Looks up at the goal post.

PRE-LAP: MARCHING BAND DRUMS

EXT. CENTER PARC STADIUM - NIGHT

GSU Game night against UTAH STATE.

MARCHING BAND and CHEERLEADERS in sync.

The stands bleed blue and white with FANS chanting GSU's fight song.

Levee's eyes dance in wonder from the--

SIDELINE

FANS
 (singing)
 Fight panthers! To victory. Our
 Voices yell. You'll hear us mighty
 and strong. We're from the A-T-L.
 We're gonna give them hell!

Levee looks over at a laser-focused Lance, then to the scoreboard. GSU Panthers in the lead.

THE FIELD

Levee glues his eyes to GSU LINEBACKER. Bigger and stronger than Levee.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

UTAH QUARTERBACK
Blue fifty-two! Blue fifty-two!
Hike!

GSU LINEBACKER sacks UTAH QUARTERBACK just feet in front of Levee. Reminiscent of the hit that paralyzed Milz.

The excitement in Levee's eyes hardens into a cold trance.

LANCE ACKERMAN
Good job! Good job! Way to stick
him.

Levee snaps out of it. CLAPS. CHEERS with the crowd.

INT. GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Animated PLAYERS change out of uniform, hyped from their win. Levee fits in with them.

LEVEE
Man, the way you were on ol' boy
all night. Smack! Smack! Smack!
Whooped 'im.

Lance watches Levee amuse them.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
Sheesh. Sent 'im limpin'! That boy
got up like this.

Levee mocks a limp.

PLAYER
You a fool, man.

LEVEE
Every time he wipe his ass from now
on, he gotta think about you.

LANCE ACKERMAN (O.S.)
Levee.

Lance waves over to his--

LANCE'S OFFICE

Presidential. Levee scans the awards in the glass casing. National championships. Coach of the Year. Broyles Award.

Lance sits behind the desk. He leans back and covers his mouth as if uncertain about something.

LEVEE

What's up?

LANCE ACKERMAN

What are you doing out there?

Levee shifts on his feet.

LEVEE

Oh... I was just celebrating with the team.

Lance leans on his desk.

LANCE ACKERMAN

You know, I was thinking.

(beat)

What do you think about celebrating with the team, permanently?

Levee vacillates between surprised and confused.

LEVEE

For real?

Lance slides papers to Levee.

Levee picks the papers up.

INSERT FORMS

A four year athletic scholarship.

BACK TO SCENE

LANCE ACKERMAN

I was going to wait until tomorrow, but in the spirit of victory...

Levee can't believe what he's holding. He swallows the lump forming in his throat.

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Look it over with your folks. We'll reconvene in two weeks to further discuss the terms and sign.

(MORE)

LANCE ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Now, you'd still have to apply but,
we'd love to have you here if you
decide to call G-S-U home.

LEVEE

Coach... I-- Man. Thank you. Thank
you. You don't know what this means
to me.

Lance stands. Shakes his hand.

LANCE ACKERMAN

You earned it.

Eyes wet, Levee looks at Lance.

EXT. CENTER PARC STADIUM - NIGHT

Levee grips the scholarship contract in one hand and his
phone in the other.

It RINGS, waiting for Vivian to answer.

Goes to voicemail.

LEVEE

Come on. Come on.

He calls again.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Momma. They offered me a
scholarship.

(beat)

Huh?

(beat)

Wait. I can't hear you.

(beat)

Momma-- when?

(beat)

When?

His joy stripped by what he hears.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'm coming.

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

A NURSE wraps a visiting wristband around Levee's wrist.

ICU HALLWAY

Levee walks the cold, narrow, sterile hallway.

EUGENE'S ROOM

An exhausted Vivian stands over Eugene's bed, restraining his hands. An endotracheal tube protrudes from his mouth.

Ty watches, helpless.

VIVIAN
Eugene, you're okay.

TY
Levee.

Ty runs to Levee who stands in the doorway. Levee scans the tubes running to the ventilator.

VIVIAN
He just woke up.

LEVEE
(to Vivian)
What are you doing?

VIVIAN
He's trying to take his tube out.

Eugene looks at Levee, pleading with his eyes.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
If he doesn't relax they're going
to have to put restraints on him.

Levee steps to the bed. Eugene reaches for his arm.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
(to Eugene)
It's helping you breathe.

Eugene smacks the bed, trying to sit up. He pulls at his IV.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Don't! Levee, help me.

Levee stands frozen.

A blunt DOCTOR comes in.

ICU DOCTOR
Hello.

He sanitizes his hands and checks his chart.

ICU DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Blackwell, I'm Doctor Temple.
You're in the hospital. If your
wife didn't bring you in when she
did, you would be dead.

(to Vivian)

The cancer has spread to his lungs.

This sucks the air out of the room.

Eugene grabs Levee's hand. Opens his mouth wide.

VIVIAN

Can he breathe on his own?

LEVEE

He doesn't want to be here.

VIVIAN

What?

LEVEE

He doesn't want to be here.

VIVIAN

And what choice does he have?

LEVEE

Momma... He doesn't want to be
here.

(beat)

He stopped going to chemo.

VIVIAN

What you mean stopped going?

LEVEE

(to Doctor)

When can we take him home?

ICU DOCTOR

There's no easy way to say this,
but you all need to prepare for the
worst.

LEVEE

Let's take him home.

VIVIAN

I'm not doing that.

ICU DOCTOR

We'll have to monitor him for the next few days. He'll need chemotherapy. His oxygen level is at eighty percent. We can consider removing him from the ventilator at ninety percent.

(beat)

In the meantime, he needs rest.

He leaves.

VIVIAN

What good is it going to do if we take him home?

LEVEE

He said the chemo was killing him. I just think...

(beat)

You trying to control everything. Even cancer.

(beat)

He doesn't want to be here.

TY

Is daddy going to be okay?

Levee looks down at Ty, with no answers.

EXT. LEVEE'S HOME - DAY

Vivian wheels Eugene to the bottom of the stairs. Levee lifts him and carries him inside.

Ty follows.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - VIVIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Levee lays Eugene in Vivian's bed.

EUGENE

(hoarse)

Thanks.

Levee pulls away.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

He--

LEVEE

Hmm?

Eugene coughs, wincing at his sore throat.

Motions for a pencil.

Levee looks for a pen and paper. Hands it to Eugene.

Eugene scribbles on the paper. Levee reads it.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Georgia?

(beat)

Oh yeah, um-- I got in.

Eugene nods. His expression hard to read.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Well, I mean they offered me a scholarship.

Vivian enters.

VIVIAN

You need anything?

Eugene shakes his head.

LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Levee, Ty, and Vivian eat dinner. It's quiet.

TY

What do you call three trees?

VIVIAN

What?

TY

A trio.

Ty smiles, looking around the table.

TY (CONT'D)

You get it?

Eugene COUGHS in the room.

VIVIAN

So, what did you think about Georgia?

Levee shrugs.

LEVEE

It's nice.

Levee pokes at his food.

VIVIAN

You going?

LEVEE

I mean yeah. I'm not getting recruited anywhere else.

Eugene MOANS. Vivian goes to check on him.

TY

You get it?

LEVEE

What?

TY

Three trees. A trio.

Levee nods. His thoughts miles away.

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

Levee sits across from Coach Brown who studies Levee's scholarship contract.

COACH BROWN

Yeah--this... Everything looks good. This is huge.

He looks up at Levee.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

What does your family think?

LEVEE

They haven't looked at it.

COACH BROWN

Well, this is something to be proud of... You excited?

Levee nods.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

You sure?

LEVEE

Yeah.

COACH BROWN

A tiger is going to Georgia!

Levee grins. He takes the contract.

Levee's phone VIBRATES. He silences a call from Lance.

LEVEE

Honestly, Coach, I... I don't know
if I should go.

COACH BROWN

Why not?

LEVEE

Something just doesn't feel right.
My dad is dying, and it's kinda
like I'm watching my mom go with
him.

(beat)

And-and I don't know if they're
going to approve my request to
defer my acceptance. This is my
dad, man.

Brown nods.

COACH BROWN

Sorry to hear that. Those are the
kind of things we can never really
prepare for.

(beat)

My unsolicited advice, spend all
the time you can with your dad.
You'd have months before you have
to make the move, but Levee... To
play at a D-1 school like Georgia
State is a once in a lifetime
opportunity.

Levee shrinks at Brown's resolve.

INT. LEVEE'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Levee removes his shoes. He rounds the corner--

KITCHEN

Vivian leans on the counter, crying.

LEVEE
 (anxious)
 What happened?

She wipes her face.

LEVEE (CONT'D)
 Mom.

She takes a deep breath.

VIVIAN
 Just tired... Really tired, Levee.

Levee watches her.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
 Where's your brother?

LEVEE
 After school program. Thought it
 might be good for him right now.

Levee chugs water.

VIVIAN
 (re: Eugene)
 He's having a bad day.

LEVEE
 Did you turn him?

VIVIAN
 I couldn't.

He looks to the hallway.

VIVIAN'S ROOM

Levee approaches Eugene's hospital bed.

He takes the wet towel next to the bed and gently dabs
 Eugene's lips, then applies vaseline.

LEVEE
 I'm going to turn you, okay?

Slow blinks. Eugene stares at the ceiling.

Levee uses the sheet to turn Eugene onto his side.

Levee notices Eugene's trembling hand reach out.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

What?

Levee takes his hand.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

What?

Eugene squeezes Levee's hand three times.

LEVEE (CONT'D)

Oh, I... I love you too.

Levee smiles at Eugene.

FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD: LEVEE

THE END