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We Are Marshall

By Jamie Linden

In the middle of Huntington,
West Virginia, there is a river.
Next to this river, there is a steel mill.
And next to the steel mill,
there is a school.
In the middle of this school,
there is a fountain.
Each year, on the exact same day,
at the exact same hour...
...the water to this fountain is turned off.
And in this moment, once every year...
...throughout the town,
throughout the school...
...time stands still.
Chris Griffen with a reception.
That is a first down.
But Marshall is all out of time-outs,
and the clock is now ticking.
If they wanna get another play off,
the Herd had better hurry.
Call it in, Red! Call it in!
-Griffen! Okay, Chris Griffen! Hustle up!
-I'm good, I'm good.
The Herd looks a little disorganized.
They're looking for a play from the sideline,
and they are almost out of time.
We are talking about seconds.
Marshall needs to get down and over--
-77-Victory. Go! Go, go, go!
-Yes, sir.
V, 77! V, 77!
Come on! Snap the ball!
Set!
Snap it! Snap it! Snap it!
Come on!
Hut!
Strong side! He's open!
He's open! Throw!
And that'll be it for the Herd.
That's right, the clock has hit all zeroes...
...and the Carolina faithful
are already on their feet.
So there you have it.
-It's all over, folks.

-Good game, Red.
Marshall loses a tough one,
17-14 to the East Carolina Pirates.
Red's got his work cut out for him.
Well, there goes my weekend.
Red'll be in the film room till Monday.
He'd better.
Your husband hasn't figured out
how to beat the 3-4 all year.
Co-captain Nate Ruffin
and cornerback Tom Bogdan...
...are two of four starters who were
left back in Huntington due to injuries.
Surprised to see you. Figured the chairman
of the school board would be at the game.
This place won't run itself,
you know that.
-Furnace ready for the tap?
-Yeah.
The next week is a must-win.
They're all must-wins, Gene.
No word yet on whether any or all of the
injured players will be available next--
Hey, Sandy, can I get
some more foil in here?
The score, 17-14, East Carolina Pirates.
Quarterback Teddy Shoebright....
I got it!
Hey, where's the flag?
Where's the flag? Flag on--
Fifty-five! Blocking in the--
--if that confusion on the Marshall sideline
at the end of the game...
...won't make that target on
Coach Tolley's back a little bit bigger.
I'm not gonna ask you guys again.
Dinner's ready.
That means you too, Keith.
Please, just a few more seconds?
Dad's not off yet.
He'll still be droning on about that game
when he gets home tonight.
Get out from under there,
Keith Morehouse.

I'm Gene Morehouse saying
good night, and go Herd!
Fellas...

...you gave a good effort out there today.

But let me be clear about this:

A good effort is not enough.

Now, I'm proud of you.

But I will not accept losing with you.

Because there's only one thing
they judge us on.

There's only one thing people remember.

And it ain't how we play the game!

Winning...

...is everything.

Plane leaves in an hour.

We'll be home by 8.

Plenty of time for y'all to do whatever
the hell y'all do on a Saturday night.

Now, see, Bogdan, the reason we lost
is because we weren't there.

Chocolate Thunder, White Lightning? We the
best defensive players in the conference.

I'm Chocolate Thunder, right?

Why you so scared to introduce me
to your girlfriend, then?

Listen, stop being so
overconfident, Ruffin.

All right, Rock, Paper, Scissors for tickets.

Let's go, right now.

It's okay. I'll get the popcorn.

East Carolina?

I mean, I can understand giving up

But East Carolina?

Well, you can't do nothing
about injuries, you know?

What happened? Is it broken?

It's dislocated.

What's wrong with you, Tom?

Come on, man. Gonna miss the previews.

Nineteen carries, 108 yards, Paul,
your boy Chris played a hell of a game.

I'd have taken the win any day.

Isn't that right, Don?

What, now, we didn't win?

You of all people, Don.
If you're not gonna listen to the game...
...you gotta know the result
so you can pretend you did.
-Well, I'm doing my best, Paul.
-You hungry?
No, thank you. I'm all set.
Lloyd? Usual for me tonight,
just more of it. I'm starving.
-You got it.
-Go ahead, excuse me.
Well, the board has asked me
to run a few ideas through you...
...about some potential improvements
to the university's physical plant.
There's Chris!
What took you so long to call?
Tell Joe he can't run it to the inside....
Slow down, Reggie. Just listen.
-I just need a favor, not your life story.
-What you need?
I need you to go get us a case
of Falls City Beer. Falls City.
-Go to the liquor store on Fourth. Yeah.
-Fourth Street?
-Hey, are the guys with you?
-Yeah, Reggie.
What is it, godd--?
That's right, Reggie. You carry the two
and you divide by the sum....
Yeah, math class is over.
Let's get on the plane. Come on.
-I'll see you in a couple of hours, right?
-You know you are.
-I'm gonna stay at my dad's house tonight.
-No.
He's gonna wanna go over his
post-game breakdown.
Sorry. We've been doing it
since I was a kid.
You gonna tell him about California, right?
Are you kidding? After a loss?
We want him in a good mood.
Yeah.

Don't worry. I will.
Just not this weekend.
Griffen! Let's go!
I love you, Chris Griffen.
Come on, Annie!
-Race you back.
-Let's go! Hurry up!
I'm coming!
What's this concert you're missing?
It's just my granddaughter's piano recital.
Man, she sure is cute when she does that.
That's the crap I missed
first time around with my boys.
Now they got kids of their own.
Anyway, got a long ride ahead of me.
Have a great flight.
Hutch, tell you what,
I'll do the recruiting trip.
You go home and see your granddaughter's
recital. I'm gonna do it. I'm doing it.
-Thanks, Red. All right.
-I'll see you on Monday morning.
Good man, Red.
You can grab me a beer back home.
Because if he keeps on pulling
and no money comes out....
-Good evening.
-Doris.
It's Red Dawson, calling from Greenville.
Could I trouble you to look and see
if Carole's home next door?
Sure doesn't look like it, Red.
Could you do me a big favor
and leave her a message for me?
Tell her that I gotta drive to Virginia
tonight on a recruiting trip...
...and I'm not gonna be home
till tomorrow.
-Got it.
-All right, you have a good night, now.
-All right, bye.
-Night, Red.
-You thinking about that girlfriend of yours?
-Yeah, coach.

Nice job, son.
Hey, that was a big hit today. Big hit.
I would've caught that pass
if I had my cross.
What'd you do with it?
You would've caught it if you had good
hands. Ain't that right, Shoebridge?
Hey, Gene, this is gonna sound a little
weird, but I need you to do me a favor.
Want you to scratch my back.
That target on there is starting to itch.
You can't believe everything
you hear on the radio.
Oh, yeah, I can.
All right, boys, let's sit up straight.
Tighten those ties, fix those collars.
-We are?
-Marshall!
Almost home.
This is Captain Dettro speaking.
Looks like we made good time
in spite of the weather...
...so if everyone could return to their
seats now, we'll be landing shortly.
Fill her up for you?
Yes, sir.
These peanuts look good.
I'll get a bunch of them too.
Sure. They're just 50 cents.
Help yourself.
Regular's on the left,
Cajun's on the right.
Incredibly, there has been
another plane crash....
How spicy are these Cajun...?
--in moderate rain and fog
in West Virginia.
What did he just say?
-Wait. Turn that up.
-No, what happened--
What did that say?
Early reports do not indicate
the condition of those aboard.
Excuse me, everybody....

Annette said you look funny
when you're getting dressed.
Bye, Carole.
Say hello to your husband for me.
-This is Lloyd.
-See you, Lloyd!
What's happened?
Hey!
-Hey, you going to the airport?
-Yeah, get in.
All right. I'm getting in. Hold on.
All right, good.
-Hey, did they say anything?
-Hey, come on!
No one's going in there.
I can't let you up there.
-Get that truck up the hill!
-Come on!
Hey, Randy!
Come on, keep going, come on.
Hey, watch the hose!
Got the president of the university here!
Oh, my God in heaven.
Oh, my God.
Come on.
Let's go.
-Hey, get behind the ropes!
-Just tell us the name of the airline!
-If I knew anything, I'd tell you!
-Just look at the front of the plane!
Son, there is no
front of the plane anymore.
Bring another hose down here!
No, stay back. Stay up there! No!
-Let's go!
-Nate! Nate Ruffin!
This our boys' plane?
This our boys' plane?!
It's so terrible.
You didn't get my message?
Marshall University in West Virginia
is in a state of shock today...
...following the terrible tragedy of last
Saturday night's crash of a chartered airline.

Seventy-five people died in the wreckage.
The football team, the coaches...
...and some prominent residents
traveling with the team....
These were beautiful young men...
...and it's just a tragedy
that is beyond all comprehension.
No one of us will ever
enter this stadium...
...without thoughts of them.
And so, our Lord, grant them
eternal rest and peace...
...which enables them
at this very moment...
...to look upon us here
and smile and be with us.
This is our faith, this is our hope.
Amen.
Those were not welcome days.
We buried sons...
...brothers...
...mothers...
...fathers...
...fiancs.
Clocks ticked, but time did not pass.
The sun rose and the sun set.
But the shadows remained.
When once there was sound...
...now there was silence.
What once was whole...
...now is shattered.
Have you mentioned this
to any of the other board members?
A few. Most of them
would prefer not to think about it.
I can understand that sentiment.
It doesn't make sense to rush
right back into it, you know?
Our coaching staff, gone.
Our athletic department, gone.
So many of our boosters, gone.
We'd have to start
all over again from scratch.
My God, we don't have the resources

or the manpower right now.
I know all the reasons
to suspend the program, Paul.
I'm just surprised to hear it
coming from you.
This town just didn't lose
a football team, Don.
We lost doctors, lawyers,
city councilmen.
We lost fathers, sons, husbands.
How many kids lost a parent?
How many kids lost both parents?
-Twenty-eight.
-Wouldn't be a game anymore, Don.
Be a weekly reminder of what we've lost.
And I just don't see how that would
do anyone in this town any good.
Somebody's going to
have to tell them, Paul.
All your scholarships will still be honored.
Boys, it's very important that
we take a collective breath, as a town...
...and figure out the
proper course of action.
And you think the proper course of action
is ending the program?
I didn't say we were going to end the
program, I said we are going to suspend it.
Look, under the best of circumstances,
it takes years to build a team...
...and, well, these are not
the best of circumstances.
The NCAA will not let freshmen play...
...and they are the only players
we have besides you.
When we do bring the program back, we
want to make sure we're able to do it right.
If. That's what you mean, right?
If they bring the program back?
This ain't right, Dr. Dedmon.
It ain't fair!
I understand your position, son.
I will personally pass on your concerns to
the board before they make their decision.

Why can't I pass on
my concerns myself?
Well, unfortunately, board of governors'
meetings are and always have been...
...closed-door.
Come on!
Everybody up! Let's go. Come on.
Reggie, put down the stick. Come on.
I need y'all to listen.
Now, as of 15 minutes ago,
we ain't got football no more.
If you gonna be Marshall,
you gonna be Marshall right now.
Earn your stripes.
Now, I want the two of you
to go with Randy...
...and get every cheerleader and every girl
you can possibly find...
...and get them here at 5:00. The two
of y'all, I need you to go with George...
...and find every cat in them frat houses
and get them here at 5:00.
Go, now, go!
I need you on this one, Reggie.
I need you, man.
Find every person y'all met
in freshman orientation...
...and I need them here at 5:00.
All right? Come on! Now! Come on!
-Five o'clock!
-Nate.
-Yeah.
-Come here a sec.
Hey, I heard that some
of the guys are wavering.
-Wavering?
-Yeah, they're just kind of....
No, no, no. What you mean? What you
talking about? Who's wavering, Tom?
They don't feel it's the right thing to do
right now, step out on that field.
It's the only thing to do, Tom.
This about our teammates, man.
Now, I need to know

who you talking about.

No one, man.

Five o'clock. All right?

-Yeah.

-Yeah.

-You all right?

-Forget it.

I was just having some thoughts.

I'm ready, man. Let's go.

-We gonna get this team back, man.

-Yeah.

Okay, I think we all know

why we're here today.

What I'd like to do first....

Excuse me, young man.

Excuse me, this is a private meeting.

I don't mean to interrupt, sir, but I think there's something y'all need to hear.

If you have anything to say, we'll set up a time for you to come by my office.

Oh, no, sir. I ain't got nothing to say.

But they do.

We are Marshall! We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

Paul.

We are Marshall!

We are Marshall!

It's the right thing to do, sir.

Son, we do not have a team.

We do not have a staff.
We don't even have a damn
athletic director. May he rest in peace.
Frankly, son, I wouldn't know
where to begin.
Well, you can start with a coach, sir.
We are Marshall! We are Marshall!
We are Marshall! We are Marshall!
We are Marshall! We are Marshall!
We are Marshall!
Hey, Mr. Boone.
Annie, honey, come here.
You don't have to come back
to work right away.
Take some time for yourself.
The job will be waiting when you get back.
One thing I don't need
is more time for myself.
I just want things to get back to normal.
Hi, Mr. Griffen.
It's good to see you.
Glad you're not giving up the booth.
I've been coming here every day
for 30 years. No reason to stop now.
I think you should have this back.
Chris gave it to you.
Yeah, he did.
But you gave it to your wife first.
And then you passed it down to him...
...so I'm passing it back up to you.
It should stay in your family.
What family?
Annie...
...you keep it.
Wear it. And every morning
you put it on, you think of him.
-Don.
-Red.
What are you working on there?
Well, I been promising Carole
a new shed for a while now, so....
No time like the present, I guess.
Red, I've got an offer for you.
I was afraid you might.

Mrs. Dawson, if it had been me...
...I don't even know how I'd make it out
of bed in the morning.
Let him build a hundred sheds.
Hello, this is President Donald Dedmon.
We've decided to go ahead
with our football program next season...
...and your name was the first
on a list of potential candidates...
...for the head coaching position.
Well, no, I completely
understand. I just....
You were the first one
on my list, so I....
No. No, we decided
to bring the program back.
Yes, it wasn't an easy decision.
No, that's totally understandable. I....
Well, thank you very much for...
...well, taking the time
to at least talk with me about it.
As I've been told,
you had a great career at Marshall and....
Yes, thank you.
No, I understand.
No, I....
Please, it's....
Hey, honey?
You ever been to Huntington before?
Mouth closed, Peter. Thank you.
West Virginia?
No.
Why?
Just curious.
-Hey, Peter.
-Yeah?
Been quieter than I would've
guessed this morning.
Ernie Salvatore called from the Herald.
Says he wants to talk
if you have a moment.
Oh, and there was another call.
A Jack Lengyel called
from the College of Wooster.

Says he may be interested
in the open coaching job.
Wooster.
Where in the world is Wooster?
Does it really matter?
Okay, now, let's show Dr. Dedmon
how it's done here.
Run hard, knees high. Play till
the whistle blows. 1 7-Razor, on three.
On three, 1 7-Razor.
Hut, hut, hut. Go, go, go!
There he goes. There he goes.
Oh, first down!
-You see that? Oh, yeah.
-Is he all right?
Hey, 32, are you all right?
All right, go kill your brother.
Now, you see that? Point is,
that tree wouldn't have been there...
...if you had a fullback blocking for him.
And that is why I'm a fan
of the Power 1 Formation.
Well, I'm sorry, I'm afraid I haven't the
faintest idea what a Power 1 Formation is.
Oh, you don't?
Oh, thank you, dear.
-You're welcome.
-Power 1 Formation...
...is just your basic offensive scheme.
Put the fullback in front of the tailback.
Now, frankly, Jack, I don't care to know.
Actually, I'm confident that I'm better off
not knowing what one is, I think.
Well, Dr. Dedmon, on that,
we will have to agree to disagree.
Thank you.
Jack, there is one thing I need to know...
...and please excuse me if I seem blunt.
You are the first person I've interviewed
who is not an alumnus.
And, well, since you called us...
...I have to ask what your angle is, Jack.
You've got a great setup here.
You have no ties to Marshall.

Why do you want this job?
Who in their right mind
would volunteer for something...?
Son, don't put that in your mouth.
No, put it down. That's right.
-It's not an outrageous question, I think.
-What's he gonna do?
He's gonna put it in his pants?
I bet he puts it in his pants.
-Son, don't put that in your pant-- Sandy!
-I got it. Peter.
I'm sorry, excuse me.
Well, I was just wondering if you had
given this any thought at all...
...before you asked me to drive 200 miles
out here to see you.
A little bit, yeah.
Little bit.
Well, all right, then.
I have a long ride home...
...and I should be getting on with it.
You thank your wife for the lovely dinner.
-Are you sure? Okay.
-Yes, thank--
Thank you.
Say, Don?
You wanna know why
I picked up the phone? Is that it?
Frankly, I do.
-It's not gonna be complicated.
-Jack, I've had four months of complicated.
I just need honest.
When I heard about
what had happened, your situation...
...the only thing I could think about
was the four of them.
I thought about how much
they mean to me...
...and about how bad it would hurt if....
Well, if I was to lose them.
Then I thought about a team...
...and a school...
...and a town...
...that's gotta be hurting real bad.

And I thought, hell...
...maybe I can help.
So I called you.
Yeah.
I guess that's the only real 'why' I got.
Right there.
Touchdown.
Ladies and gentlemen...
...please welcome the new head coach
of our Thundering Herd...
...Jack Lengyel.
Hi there.
Thank you.
I am honored to be the new head
football coach here at Marshall University.
Also would like to say a big thank you
from myself, my wife and our three kids.
We drove in from Wooster last night.
Arrived at our new home here.
Electricity worked,
the water pressure was high.
There was a six-pack of beer in the fridge
and a pound cake on the counter.
Four for four.
We appreciate the hospitality, we really do.
Any questions?
-Coach?
-Yes, sir.
Ernie Salvatore, Herald-Dispatch.
Now, realistically, coach,
what are your expectations for the season?
Well, I can tell you this...
...if it's a miracle you're looking for...
...well, you should keep looking, because
you're gonna end up disappointed...
...and I'm gonna end up out of a job.
Follow-up, coach. Follow-up.
One quick follow-up, coach.
What would you say to
the family members in the community...
...who feel that putting the team back
on that field might be disrespectful?
I am a football coach.
That is what I do

and that's why I'm here.
I guess that's it.
I have no idea.
What kind of answer was that?
How many clichs...?
Are there any other questions?
This guy won't make it.
So this is my varsity team, huh?
There was four of us...
...but one of us ain't here,
so I guess it's just three.
Okay.
I'm Coach Jack Lengyel, guys.
Normally, I'm bad with names,
so the good news is...
...I may actually be able
to keep you fellas straight.
Nate, is it?
Okay, now, hold on
while I commit this to memory. Nate.
As in Nate the Great.
Date, late, escape. Wait. Nate.
McDrake.
I got it. Locked.
Kid I went to grade school with.
See, that's a little word-association trick
I learned. Helps jog the recall.
I read about it in Redbook.
And I tell you what, it really works, too.
Well, we're in this together now, boys.
I'm not going anywhere,
and that's a promise.
Already got one name down.
Soon as the wife gets things
settled at the house...
...y'all are coming over for supper,
and I'll get the other two.
We are Marshall.
It's a new day, men.
I like those boys, Don. I do. I do.
The thing is, I'm gonna need
Oh, that I can't help you with, I'm afraid.
Well, actually, you can, Don.
You see, I need you to petition

the NCAA for me.
Ask them to make an exception.
Allow us to play freshmen.
Now, it's the only chance we have
to get any edge on recruiting...
...much less put a full football team
on the field.
I mean, we are way behind here.
Well, you know the NCAA
better than I do, Jack.
They're rigid as a board.
They don't make exceptions.
Usually true.
Yeah.
Hey, you know, my son, he crapped
his pants yesterday. Now, he's 4.
All right, now, my wife is out shopping,
so I had to clean him up.
She got home. I told her what happened.
She says, 'I can't believe it.'
I said, 'I can't believe it either.'
The kid's 4 years old...
...he shouldn't be doing that shit.'
Pun intended.
You know what she says to me?
She says, 'Jack, no, not that.'
I can't believe you finally
changed a diaper.'
What are you talking about?
There's a first time for everything.
Hey, I know you.
In the middle. Yes, I do.
Ask me your name. Go ahead,
I won't even look. Ask me your name.
-What's my name?
-Nate Ruffin.
Team co-captain. Eleven interceptions
in only seven games last year.
Redbook.
Stuff really works.
Hey, we can do this, doc.
What are those, I -by-5s?
One-by-sixes.
They don't look that wide from down here.

-Saw you guys play once.
-Did we win?
It was the Ashland game.
Well, that'd be a no, then.
Well, you guys looked pretty good
till the fourth quarter.
Probably should've gone to the nickel.
You know, you're probably right.
You know, I appreciate you
coming out here to see me...
...but they already came out here to ask me
back and I already told them that I'm not...
-...coming back, so....
-Yeah, I heard. I heard about that.
Just thought I could make you
a better offer.
You know, they asked you
to be the head coach.
I want you to be the assistant coach.
I think that's a demotion, Jack.
Well, maybe.
Maybe not.
I mean, it's the same duties,
practically, just less pay.
Same hours. Less responsibility.
Same team, less pressure.
I tell you, Red, you know,
the cupboard is pretty bare.
And I could use some recruiting help
from someone who knows the area.
You know, Carole and I
moved here two years ago. It was...
...spring of '69.
They had hired me as a receivers coach...
...but when I got here, they told me
I was in charge of recruiting too, so....
That first year I went out
and I got us 20 kids.
Went to 20 homes.
Sat in 20 living rooms.
And I promised 20 mothers
that I'd look after their sons.
It'd have been the class of '73.
There's not one of them left.

So let me ask you, Jack:
How am I supposed to look a mother in the
eye and promise her anything ever again?
I don't know, Red.
I just don't think I could
take that field again, Jack.
Is that the Ohio Valley Coal line?
The same one that went off the tracks
near Akron last winter?
Yep. That's the one.
Back on track.
Well, listen,
if you're able to figure it out...
...door's always open.
It was a pleasure meeting you, Red.
Nice meeting you.
I'll keep that defensive-nickel
package idea in mind...
...for my fourth quarters in the future.
Maybe get a few more W's.
One-by-six, huh?
Yup.
Same coverage, less boards.
Hey, Tom.
Guess we got us a coach, huh?
Hey, look.
When they first roomed us together
freshman year, I wasn't too sure about you.
You know? But we stuck it out,
and now you're my best friend.
I mean, remember freshman two-a-days?
I'm puking my guts out and
I wanna quit football and you won't let me?
Now, you never gave up on us
out there on the field...
...and I'm not gonna give up on you now.
Tom, man.
It's our team. Now, they left this to us.
It's up to us! It's on our shoulders, man.
I need you with me, Tom.
I should've been with them, Nate.
-Look, Tom, I understand, and I feel--
-No, you don't! You don't, Nate! You don't.
What you talking about?

I overslept.
That's why I wasn't on the plane, Nate.
I overslept.
I wasn't hurt or sick.
And I should've been there.
I should have been with them!
I'm sorry. I just can't play football
right now. Okay? It's not in me.
I can't do it, you understand that, right?
Look at me.
I'm sorry.
Tom.
Thought you might like some dessert.
Thank you, Annie.
I'm gonna get you some silverware.
Yup.
Game day.
Yup.
So I'll give you one year.
Well, if that's all the time we've got,
we'd better get started.
Coach Mickey Jackson.
Coach McNally.
Coach Riley.

First line:

I assume you have it, Luann.
It's somewhere in Kansas City.

Salutation:

As I am sure you are aware, we....
I'm gonna take a road trip
southeast of here...
...and go get this Shaw kid
down in Martinsville.
I'm gonna take a shot at Gibbs.
Go get us a quarterback, coach.
-Jake. Red Dawson.
-Yes, sir?
I know coaches from quite a few schools
have already come to talk...
...about your son playing football for them.
I hope that he hasn't made his mind up.
Ain't no way he's made up his mind yet.

Wait, there he is, right there.
Oh, what's the good word, coach?
No? Shit.
Truman Andrews. Here we come.
Shit.
Luann?
Sir?
Has the NCAA returned
any of my calls yet?
No.
Six, seven, eight, nine, 10,
Kids that we wanted who are now
in West Virginia. Who's that?
Bob Lambert. West Virginia.
Shit.
Twelve. West Virginia.
Red, we gotta broaden our
recruiting base or something.
We gotta get creative about...
...who we're going after,
where we're going after them...
...and how we're going after them.
Isn't that right, doc?
Good morning, Red.
Well, how are we doing?
West Virginia will be
competitive next year.
Yeah, very.
How about you?
Well, Jack, I haven't heard anything
positive back yet.
And I think I've done everything I can.
Maybe we need more time.
I don't know.
Time's the only thing
we don't have, Don.
I mean, hell, it's already April.
Time is not our friend.
Let me ask you a question.
Now, are you married?
Yes, I am. 25 years in May.
Twenty-five years. I am willing to bet...
...that you didn't propose over the phone.
No, I didn't.

Okay. And I know damn well
that she didn't say yes in a letter.
-Jack?
-Doc?
-No, Jack. I know....
-Yes. Doc?
You can do it.
You're an outlaw. Pioneer.
Gunslinger.
This is a whole new game, doc.
You....
You.
There's a first time for everything, Don.
If we're gonna survive, this has
to be one of those times.
And you're the only man that can do it.
Excuse me, sir? Excuse me,
I'm sorry to bother you like this...
...but my name is Don Dedmon,
I'm president of Marshall University.
May I speak with you
for a moment, please?
What are you doing in Kansas City, Don?
My town, my school, we're hurting.
We want to play football,
and we cannot do it without your help.
Please.
Guess who's going to change our diaper.
Yeah!
Get him!
Need a little help here, Red.
He's heavier than you think.
He's all wet.
He's all wet.
Approved.
'You will be allowed to play freshmen
at Marshall University.'
-What's that right there? What's that?
-Here, put me down.
That is signed by the president right there.
There he is. Stamped.
Doc, we're gonna get us a football team.
And that is why we are offering
your son something...

...that no other school in the country can.
Immediate and substantial playing time
as a freshman.
Time! I like the kid
who made the lay-up.
This is the one I wanna talk to, right here.
What's your name, son?
Ball, ball, ball!
-That was a hell of a hit.
-Thank you.
-Coach Dawson, from the football club.
-Bobby Jordan.
-Ever play any football? None at all?
-No, sir.
-No Pop Warner, no high school?
-No. Just baseball.
Groovy. Come on, man.
Hey, let me rap to you.
Hey, how you doing?
Hey. What's up, man?
Strong finish.
That's a good-looking board.
Good-looking board.
I'm tired of flying.
Marshall Thundering Herd all-freshmen
team, led by quarterback John Cady...
...handing the ball off
to the ever-talented Lucas Booth!
He runs to the inside,
and who's on the outsider wing?
Terry Gardner catches it,
pitches to Tennis Rice...
...who's going downfield to
tight end Sam Boteck.
I've never been.
-Crazy. In four years?
-Yeah.
-The bonfire.
-I've never been.
-Everyone's been to the bonfire.
-I haven't.
-Do you eat marshmallows?
-I love marshmallows.
-You've gotta come to the bonfire.

-Annie, order's up.
-Ask her to come.
-I will, I will.
-Here you go.
-Thanks.
-Can we have some silverware?
-Sure.
-Some guys have all the luck.
-Sorry?
Your fianc. He's a lucky guy.
-Can you drive? Yeah.
-Yeah. We'll leave about 8?
Keith? It's your turn
to set the table!
He's not here, Mom.
-Where is he?
-I don't know.
Okay, guys. First things first.
Feel a connection to the guy next to you.
Hand on a knee, hook an arm,
whatever it is.
Come on, Herd.
Look around, because these
are your teammates, young men.
They're made up of three
returning varsity members.
Randy Linden, George Olson, Nate Ruffin.
Fifteen freshmen turning sophomores.
And the rest of you, true freshmen...
...very first time in college football
and walk-ons.
Are you gonna play too, Tom?
Remember, this is a game called football,
let's get to work. Let's go.
We are going to be running
the Power I, gentlemen...
...which obviously starts
with a quarterback.
-Red, what are my choices?
-Dave Walsh.
Solid athlete. Solid arm. Solid kid.
Okay.
Who else?
-Jack, that's it.

-That's it, 1 0?
That's it, coach.
All right, guys.
Competition breeds improvement.
Now, we need options here.
Let's look around, keep our eyes open.
We need legs, hands and a decent arm.
Right there. Who's 86?
That's Reggie Oliver.
Receiver from Alabama.
Bear Bryant called me personally,
actually, to recommend him.
-You wanna try him out at QB?
-Unless you think it's a bad idea.
-Let's push them to the limit, men, huh?
-Right, coach.
Come on, hit it, now!
Check!
Not good, coach.
James, James. Get over here.
That's supposed to be a post route.
-Post?
-Post.
You do know the difference between a
post route and a flag route?
No, coach.
All right, all right.
You see the big goalpost there?
That's why they call it a post route. Post.
You head right to that post.
Cut 1 0 yards, to the post.
See the big pylon down
at the corner of the end zone?
That's what we call a flag, all right?
So when you're running the flag route...
...1 0 yards to the corner of the end zone,
to the flag.
-All right? All right.
-I got it.
Do it again.
Come on! Let's go!
Nice speed, Booth! Nice speed!
Nice speed. Shalhoop. Hey.
-What are you doing?

-Oh, I kick the ball, coach.
But after you kick it, son,
you're still a football player.
Good job, George. Good job, George.
Come here, come here.
-What's your name, 51 ?
-My name's Creole.
Creole. This Redbook's
taking me only so far.
Urbanek, I need names. Last names on
everyone's helmet. All right? This afternoon.
Now, Creole, the man outweighs you
by 75 pounds. Okay?
When you're hitting him up high...
...he'll beat you and you'll be
on your ass every time, all right?
You gotta come in here,
you gotta get him low.
Get him in the legs, okay? That's how
you'll keep him from coming through.
-Stay low on him. Low, man.
-What should I do if he goes low?
Good question. George says,
what does he do if he goes low?
Five-one comes low.
Head slap and you're around him.
Like that. You see that?
Head-slap the shit out of him.
-Give me second team, McNally.
-We don't have a second team, Jack.
Shit. Okay, yeah, we do
have a second team. Jackson! Urbanek!
Lengyel, McNally, Dawson...
...line up here.
Offensive line, watch this.
-Coach, you don't have any pads on.
-Now, you just play ball, Olson.
Quarterback's still standing.
Big on big.
We can run an offense.
We can save a young man's life.
Come on, now. Power I. Big on big.
We got a huge problem
on the O-line, coach.

I don't think it's because
the defensive line is so spectacular.

No. No.

Men. Power I. You know I'm a fan
of it, that's why I brought it here.
I have learned in the last two weeks
that it is not working.

So as of right now, the Power I
goes in the trash...

...along with every flea-flicker,
double reverse...

...and every other trick play
that you may have in your playbook.

Get rid of it.

Men, it is time to simplify. Ball.

So put our heads together here.

What is the simplest offense...

...that you have ever run
and actually won a football game?

Any idea's a good idea. No right or wrong
in here today, men, let's talk it out.

Well, there's always the Veer.

The Veer. That's interesting.

Talk that out, Red.

Well, the Veer's an option offense.

Spreads things out.

Takes the focus off any one man.

It's designed for teams that don't
have a strong offensive line.

Now, that is us in a nutshell.

Well, who runs it that we can talk to?

Bill Yeoman came up with it
at Houston...

...but other than West Virginia,
no one really runs it outside of Texas.

-West Virginia runs the Veer?

-Yeah.

Jack, that's crazy. We're rivals.

You think they'll invite us to lunch
and hand over their playbook?

They don't have to take us out to lunch.

We'll pick some up on the way.

Morgantown. The Veer. I like it.

Eight-time Southern

Conference Champions, Red.
Jack? Jack, I gotta tell you,
I really don't think this is your best idea.
-Red! Good to see you again.
-Oh, coach.
-How are you?
-How are you?
-And this must be?
-Coach Jack Lengyel.
Jack. Bobby Bowden.
Pleasure to meet you.
It's a pleasure to meet you.
Bobby, thank you for taking
the time with us today.
-My pleasure, not a problem.
-All right.
Yes, sir.
So I can't wait to hear.
What can I do for you boys?
Well, the thing is...
...coach...
...we're thinking about adopting
the Veer this year.
Now, I understand that to be
your bread and butter, as it were.
We're just hoping that we could
come down here and maybe...
...you could give us a few pointers.
-Pointers?
-Tips.
Advice. Anything that you'd
be willing to show us.
Well, we'd really appreciate it. You seem
to be the man who runs it so well.
He's good.
-You're the best at the Veer.
-That's what they say!
I'm coming straight to the man.
Reg, I got your burger.
-Chili on the fries?
-They were out.
Come on, Stretch. Gonna be a rough year
if that's the best you can do.
What?

Playbooks. Research. Game film.
Need anything copied or dubbed,
just see Kitty down the hall.
Coach, you serious?
Sure. We don't play y'all this year,
so, what the heck? Have at it.
Just make sure you put everything back
where you found it.
Deal.
You grow them big down in Huntington,
I'm telling you.
Oh, guys. You get hungry,
there's a lunch spread next door.
Help yourselves.
You hungry, Red?
I'm gonna watch some film.
Let me see those things.
I'm you. I'm you.
Well, that's not dumb.
Their quarterback's gotta
have ice in his veins...
...but he's gotta still be able to make
decisions until the last possible second.
Give me that ball!
Give me the ball! He scores! Go, Herd!
Oh, look at that hit.
Every time he commits.
He gets the option to get the ball outside.
Hey, guys.
Sorry. We're looking for coach.
Not in here today, guys.
Sorry, coach, we just came
to watch some film.
You told us to meet with you
after practice.
-Next one.
-Yes, sir.
Colors clash a bit, don't they?
That's first class, coach.
First class.
You guys take all the time you need.
Your offense, 1 2.
Show me how it's done, now.
Black-1 8! Set! Hut!

Move! That's it!
That's it, go! Move! Go! Move!
Go! Move!
Coach Red Dawson, looks a little something
like the Veer, doesn't it?
Little bit. Little bit.
I like it.
One more time.
Go to your right side.
They don't look half-bad, coach.
Don't look half-bad left or right, Ernie.
Did you see that?
I did. I was playing around
with the numbers last night.
You know the average age of a starter
in college football these days?
-No idea. Go!
-20 years, 10 months.
Now, you know the average age
of your players?
-No.
-18 years, seven months.
That'd be us, Ernie.
The Young Thundering Herd. I like it.
Oh, I like that.
Do you mind if I use that?
Hell, no. I'm already making T-shirts.
What you think about this?
'The Young Thundering Herd.'
I like it, George!
Can you get me one of those?
We've practiced.
We have a plan.
And now it's game day.
Nate Ruffin,
are you the captain of this team?
Yes, sir, I am, coach!
Well, why don't you take us
onto that field?
Everybody up! Come in here!
Now, 60 minutes! We play till the whistle
blow! And you know how we do.
-We are?
-Marshall!

-Now, let's take it to the field!
-Yeah!
And here they come,
the Young Thundering Herd of Marshall!
Jack! Jack!
Game day.
Welcome to Morehead, Kentucky,
where the Morehead State Eagles...
...take on the Thundering Herd of Marshall
University in their 1971 season opener.
The Marshall Thundering Herd
was marked by tragedy last season...
...but they are back in the saddle
with a new coach, a new team...
...and for the first time in NCAA history,
true freshmen in their lineup.
And now, ladies and gentlemen, the
Morehead State Eagles are taking the field.
-How you feeling?
-Feeling good, coach.
Feeling good.
Go! Go! Go! Go!
Go! Go! Go!
Oh, no.
That's a clip! Where's the clip on that?
That's a clip, ref!
It's all right. It's all right.
They hit him low. All right?
They hit him low. All right?
I'm all right. I'm all right.
We hope he didn't re-injure his shoulder...
...but I could hear the hit
from up here in the press box.
Number 25, Nate Ruffin,
got blindsided and...
--could not stop the return man.
And now, with the extra point,
Morehead State is leading 29-6.
The Marshall faithful
cannot be happy now.
Oliver! Oliver! Strong right!
Switch! Switch!
Forty! Set! Hike!
Damn it.

That's a shame.
Gotta look him off.
If you look him off....
And you don't have to throw it.
You had 20 yards in front of you.
Hut!
-Ball! Ball!
-Get on the ball!
That ain't a pitch,
you gotta get me the ball.
-If I make the pitch, catch the ball.
-You gotta get it to me.
We gotta shake it up here.
We gotta start blitzing our linebacker.
That's a hard hit on number 29. Twenty-nine
is down and he's not getting up.
I don't see number 29 on my roster here.
There's just so many new faces on this
Marshall University Thundering Herd team.
Can you shake it off or not?
Dawson! Dawson!
What do you think?
We gotta get three points.
We don't get any points on the board,
we'll lose them.
All right, we need our three.
It's gonna help out the morale.
Send the kicking team in. Let's go.
Gotta end this game with three points.
Yeah. Send them in.
Kicking team, let's go.
Dawson. Send them in!
Call it in, Red!
Call it in!
Send them in!
Kick it! Kick it!
Field-goal unit! Let's go!
Let's go!
These kids do have plenty of heart,
but just not enough skill or experience...
...to compete at this level.
And with this loss...
...next week's first home game against
Xavier University won't be any easier.

The Xavier game will be the first
home game since the devastating crash...
...that killed 75 players and fans.
After this painful loss,
the Marshall faithful must be wondering...
...if they've done the right thing.
Pick it up.
Pick what up?
Pick my jersey up?
It ain't your jersey, it's Joe Hood's jersey.
Now, pick it up.
-Who's Joe Hood?
-You don't know him.
I'm not gonna ask you again.
Now, pick it up!
Look, man, I came here to play ball, and I'm
gonna be as respectful as I can be...
...but I'm the one playing
for this team now. I'm number 33.
That's my jersey.
I'll do whatever I want with it!
Hey, break it up! Break it up!
Listen to me, break it up right--
Well, Meckstroth's ankle's just a sprain,
so he should be better by Saturday.
And Meadows' hamstring, it's okay too.
What about Ruffin's shoulder?
What'd the doc say?
Well, it ain't good.
I think we better sit him, Jack.
Well, he's not gonna like that.
Well, he ain't gonna like trying
to write with the other hand, either...
...and that's what he's looking at
if he keeps going.
Okay, well, let's see what he can do
in practice. Thank you.
Split right, 434-Z-Slant.
Let it develop and trust it.
Trust it. Make the play. Go.
Here he comes, D!
Forty-two! Set, hut!
What's your problem?
We're on the same team!

Make them commit.
Make it so. Make it so.
Set, hut!
Hey! Break it up! Break it up now!
I can't take that!
Man, you want some of me?
Get back there!
Get back in the huddle!
All right, let's go.
Fourteen! Set, hut!
That's it. Walsh, did you see that?
That's success!
Ruffin!
Ruffin! What the hell
is the matter with you?
Just playing till the whistle blew, coach.
Bullshit!
You think you're the only one
who has a right to be pissed off?
You think you're the only one
that's had it rough?
Ruffin, get up. Get up, Ruffin.
That's enough.
Go water down.
-Oliver, you okay?
-Yeah.
Where are you going?
What the hell are we
doing out there, Jack?
We're trying to run a Veer.
We're trying to get ready for Xavier.
Really?
Feels a lot more
like Bloody Knuckles to me.
I mean, it feels like we're just
punching walls out there, Jack.
I mean, we're not actually helping them.
We're bringing the worst out in them.
Shit, we're bringing the worst out in me.
And for what?
So that we can collect pity applause
in front of every college in the conference?
You didn't know Rick Tolley.
I did.

And on the day that he died, he said...
...the only thing that they judge us on,
the only thing that counts, is winning.
Nothing else matters.
So, what do we do?
How are we honoring their memory?
We put together a team
that doesn't win. Can't win.
Not this week, not this season.
Hell, maybe not ever.
We're not honoring them, Jack.
We're disgracing them.
I'm done.
Don't bench me, coach.
-Jesus, Nate, have you even slept?
-Not now.
Not before our first home game.
Now, look, Nate, your shoulder
is in bad shape.
The rest is gonna do it some good.
No. No, it ain't.
The rest ain't gonna do it good.
Nate, I'm not questioning your courage
or your drive, okay?
-My shoulder's fine.
-This shoulder?
It's ready to take the field?
It's ready for hits?
-My shoulder's fine.
-Yes or no?
-My shoulder's fine. Yeah.
-This one?
-Can it take hits like that?
-My shoulder's fine.
Gonna be a lot harder than that.
My shoulder's fine.
Talk to me.
Oh, coach.
That was my team.
They left it in my hands.
Oh, Nate.
No, no, no, they did not.
No.
They just left.

Then why?
Why, coach?
Why?
I don't know.
The board voted you out this morning.
What? May I ask why?
Come on, Don.
You were always a temporary solution.
You said it yourself after Roland resigned.
You were just a Band-Aid, remember?
Is this about the football program, Paul?
The crash just cut too damn deep, Don.
It's not just the team that's bleeding.
It's not just the school.
It's the entire town.
Do you have any idea
what it's like for Annie right now?
She can't read the paper.
She can't watch the news.
She can't even go to work
without being reminded of football...
...which reminds her of the crash,
which reminds her of my dead son!
Paul.
This isn't about football, is it?
And this isn't about Annie.
And this isn't about the town, Paul.
This is about the loss of your son.
And I'm sorry.
But until you find the strength
to deal with that pain...
...nothing's going to get any better.
No matter how many presidents
you fire, Paul.
Just about closed. Sorry.
My wife tells me you've got
the best apple pie in Huntington.
Depends on the apple.
Well, do you mind if I try?
Hey, Annie.
-Annie Cantrell?
-Yeah.
-Thank you.
-You're welcome.

Mr. Griffen?
I don't believe we've been
formally introduced yet.
I'm Jack Lengyel.
Thank you.
I understand Don Dedmon
lost his job this week.
He's well-qualified, he'll find a place.
You know, if you have a problem
with anything that happens on the field...
...blame me, not him. I'm the coach here.
And what happens out there
is my responsibility, not his.
You're not from here,
you weren't here last November...
...so I don't expect you
to understand this.
This is not about what happened
on that field.
This is about what happened
to this town.
This is not a game.
I'm real sorry about your son,
Mr. Griffen.
He was a hell of a running back.
I bet you were real proud.
Please don't talk about him
like you knew him.
I was proud of him,
and I'm still proud of him.
He was right, you know.
-Who was right?
-Your boy Tolley.
Winning is everything
and nothing else matters.
I mean, I've said that
so many times myself...
...I've lost count. You know?
And it doesn't matter in what sport,
and it doesn't matter what country...
...any coach who's worth a darn
in this business believes those words.
Fact.
And then I came here.

For the first time in my life...
...hell, maybe for the first time
in the history of sports...
...suddenly, it's just not true anymore.
At least not here, not now. No.
You see...
...Red, it doesn't matter if we win
or if we lose.
It's not even about
how we play the game.
What matters is that we play the game.
That we take the field,
that we suit up on Saturdays...
...and we keep this program alive.
We play the game, Red,
and I'm telling you, one day...
...not today, not tomorrow,
not this season...
...probably not next season either,
but one day, you and I are gonna wake up...
...and suddenly we're gonna be like
every other team in every other sport...
...where winning is everything
and nothing else matters.
And when that day comes...
...well, that's when we'll honor them.
We've got a team meeting
tomorrow morning, Red.
Got a little field trip planned
for the boys...
...and, well, we'd love
to see you there, coach.
We'd love to see you there.
Seven on the goal line. Tough on....
Secondary C five through eight.
D can prevent kicking game onside
and kickoff.
Game day.
Yes, it is.
I left your ticket on the kitchen counter.
I would appreciate it if you could make it
to the game before halftime.
One time. I missed kickoff one time
and you'll never let me forget it.

No, no, no, I won't.
Because if I don't see you
in the stands, honey...
...I don't know, I get all out of whack,
you know?
-I'll be there.
-I know you will.
How big a crowd do you think you'll get?
-Well, after last week, I don't know.
-Yeah.
-Hey, buddy.
-Hey.
I'll race you to the 'newspaper.'
-The what?
-Newspaper.
-When, right now?
-Yeah.
I don't know. Maybe!
Get him! Run!
Hey, hey, hey--
Hey, coach!
-Lengyel!
-Win, Coach Lengyel!
-What day is it, son?
-Game day.
-What day?
-Game day!
Time to play until the whistle blows.
-See you on the field.
-See you there!
Hi, Mr. Griffen.
Does nobody eat in this town anymore?
Not today, anyway.
You should go.
Oh, no, my shift ends in a few hours.
It's no big deal.
That's not what I meant.
Come on.
Let's take a walk.
I don't think your customers will mind.
Do you know I was baptized
right here in the Ohio?
Swam in it all the time when I was a kid.
When I was away at the war...

...I'd fall asleep at night
to the sound of this water.
When my wife died,
I'd lay awake to the same sound.
Whenever I see this river,
I know I'm home.
This is my home, Annie.
You were going to California
with my son.
-How long have you known?
-I'm his father, I've always known.
You should go, Annie.
Things have changed now.
I mean, I have responsibilities,
I have a job.
And you.
-You're all alone. I can't--
-Oh, stop, stop. You can't put that on me.
You've gotta go out there
and live your life.
If you don't leave now, you never will.
You're all out of excuses, Annie.
You can't stay for me
and you can't stay for your job.
Why not?
Because when I tell your boss
you left that restaurant unattended...
...he's gonna have to fire you.
Grief is messy, Annie.
Makes you do things you regret,
sometimes things you'll always regret.
I don't. I don't regret it.
-I don't.
-I'm not talking about you.
Go, Annie. Go.
For those of you who may not know...
...this is the final resting place
for six members...
...of the 1 970 Thundering Herd.
The plane crash that took their lives
was so severe, so absolute...
...that their bodies were unable
to be identified.
So they were buried here, together.

Six players...
...six teammates...
...six sons of Marshall.
This is our past, gentlemen.
This is where we have been.
This is how we got here.
This is who we are...
...today.
I wanna talk about our opponent
this afternoon.
They're bigger, faster, stronger,
more experienced...
...and on paper, they're just better.
And they know it, too.
But I wanna tell you something
that they don't know.
They don't know your heart.
I do. I've seen it.
You have shown it to me.
You have shown this coaching staff,
your teammates.
You have shown yourselves
just exactly who you are in here.
Now, when you take that field today...
...you've gotta lay
that heart on the line, men.
From the soles of your feet, with every
ounce of blood you've got in your body...
...lay it on the line
until the final whistle blows.
And if you do that...
...if you do that...
...we cannot lose.
We may be behind on the scoreboard
at the end of the game...
...but if you play like that,
we cannot be defeated.
Now, we came here today to remember...
...six young men...
...and 69 others...
...who will not be on the field
with you today.
But they will be watching.
And you can bet your ass...

...that they'll be gritting their teeth
with every snap of that football.

You understand me?

How you play today...

...from this moment on,

is how you...

...will be remembered.

This is your opportunity
to rise from these ashes...

...and grab glory.

-We are--

-Marshall!

-We are--

-Marshall!

-We are--

-Marshall!

The funerals end today.

Marshall! Marshall! Marshall!

Today, the Big Green is finally
back in Huntington...

...in front of a capacity crowd

here at Fairfield Stadium.

Number 19, Jake Crawford,

Xavier's all-American tailback...

...fields the ball and takes off downfield.

Crawford still untouched at the 30, the 35.

This kid's got speed, doesn't he?

He sure does. Just one man to beat.

-It looks like Morehead State all over again.

-Oh, gosh.

-They come with a huge hit.

-That's how you hit somebody!

Nice looping!

All right. All right,

tighten up, D, tighten up.

Good job, good job!

Nice lick. Nice save.

Sophomore Reggie Oliver

takes the field...

...and leads the offense

on their first possession.

Set, hut!

Hut!

Punt! Punt. Punt team.

Come on, cover it!
Just the punter to beat.
-The shoestring tackle by Bill Shalhoop!
-That's playing till the whistle blows.
You kick it and you play defense.
Good job, Shalhoop.
All right, let's go. Let's get a stop.
Crawford gets a step on Ruffin.
And makes another catch
for another first down.
Boy, I'll tell you what, that hurt shoulder
sure looks like it's affecting Ruffin.
-That kid knows he can't go to his right.
-He's playing to it. Keep an eye on that.
-Split six, cover one. Ready? Break!
-Break!
We've got a scoreless game,
and Xavier has great field position...
...but they're in a race against the clock
with only 25 seconds till halftime.
Hut!
-Right side!
-Make the hit!
Ruffin with a giant hit.
-Ball! Ball! Ball!
-The ball is loose!
Go, go, go!
-Nice hit. Nice ball.
-Nate, you all right?
-Can you get up, Nate?
-Hold on, 25.
I'm sitting him the second half,
no matter what.
-Let me tell him. Let me tell him.
-You got it, you got it.
Mickey Jackson!
Good. All right.
There's enough time on the clock
for one last play before the half.
Need a 37-yard field goal.
Marshall's kicking game was spotty at best
last week against Morehead.
Blake, come on!
Let's see what Lengyel

decides to do here.
We're kicking it.
Let's go, we're kicking it.
This is an awfully long kick
for sophomore Blake Smith...
...a walk-on from Marshall's soccer team.
The kick is good!
Hey!
-That's groovy, baby!
-That's groovy, baby.
I don't believe it.
The Young Thundering Herd...
...has a 3-0 lead
as they take it into halftime.
Hot damn,
he's liable to make that from 50.
Good call.
Stick around.
We've got a dogfight on our hands...
...as Xavier is certainly
a second-half team.
-We are--
-Marshall!
-We are--
-Marshall!
Damn it, coach, I said I'm all right.
Nate, you're sitting.
You can't do that, coach.
I gotta cover I 9.
Nineteen's got six catches
for 95 yards, Nate...
...and it's because he knows
you can't go to your right.
-We got two more quarters of football.
-Yes, we do. Yes, we do, Nate.
But you've done enough.
Coach, I've been going to my right
all day--
You see what's going on out there?
Nate, that's all because
you never stopped pushing.
-We got two more quarters of football.
-You've done enough, Nate.
You've done enough.

Are we gonna be all right, coach?
Yeah. We're gonna be all right.
Yeah, we're gonna be all right.
Thanks for joining us
back at halftime, folks.
You know what's hard to fathom?
It's hard to believe this is even possible...
...but Jack Lengyel
has the Marshall Young Thundering Herd...
...a team of freshmen, of transfer students,
of walk-ons...
...a team of nobodies and no ones...
...somehow are beating the Xavier Pirates
after 30 minutes of football.
Well, that is true,
but I gotta believe that, at some point...
...speed, size and experience will prevail.
Come on, Booth!
That's the way to start the second half!
This Young Thundering Herd looks like
they're ready to play.
-44-X-Punch. Let's go.
-Break!
Nineteen, set, hut!
-Big hit on Oliver...
-Ball!
...who loses the ball. Xavier scoops it up.
Let's go!
He's on the 30...
...the 20...
...touchdown, Xavier!
And just like that,
Xavier takes the lead, 6-3.
It's okay! Come on!
-You're still the captain of this team.
-Yes, sir.
I'm gonna need you to be that captain
from the sideline.
Set, hut!
-Yeah, baby, let's go!
-Come on, let's go!
-Great call.
-All right?
Twenty-two!

All right. Yeah.
It's your team now.
Set, hut!
Nice flag route by Bill James.
He's got one foot inbounds.
That's good for a first down.
-Yeah! Come on!
-Thought you were a basketball player.
If he doesn't pass, give it to Woch.
If he does, tuck it.
-Tuck it and go.
-It's up to you. Go.
Oliver in with the play.
They're close, folks, very, very close.
Just four yards
from a Thundering Herd score.
Come on, Reggie.
Touchdown, Reggie Oliver!
And Marshall grabs the lead right back,
9-6...
...with eight seconds remaining
in the third quarter.
Let's go!
That's what it looks like on paper
right there, doesn't it?
If Marshall can hold on
for a little while longer, folks--
But there's a complete pass to Crawford!
Go, go, go!
He breaks free.
And he's in the end zone.
Touchdown, Xavier.
Oh, my. What a dagger to the heart
of this Marshall team.
And with the extra point, Xavier has
taken the lead back from Marshall...
... 13-9 with one minute left to play.
-We are--
-Let's go, Marshall! Come on!
Marshall has time
for one last-ditch effort...
...but they'll have to march
all the way downfield into the end zone.
-A field goal will not be enough.

-Thirteen! Set, hut!
Oliver breaks loose.
He's in the open field!
Go, go, go!
Something's happening here
for the Thundering Herd.
Down, down, down! On the ball!
We got one time-out, coach.
-1-1 3! 1-1 3!
-Run your offense. Run your offense.
Set, hut!
Oliver holds the ball, rolls out,
and is sacked.
That's gonna be costly
as the clock keeps tick--
No, wait, he got rid of it!
He got rid of it!
A huge gain for the Herd!
Marshall marches upfield,
but with less than 30 seconds left...
-...time is running out for the boys in green.
-Time-out. Time-out.
Marshall calls their last time-out.
Come on, Marshall!
Zero time-outs. We need a touchdown
to win. Here's the play:
Fire left, 422-Z-Rocket, all right?
Martin, Johnson or Linden.
After you catch the football,
if you cannot score, get out of bounds.
If you do not get out of bounds,
everybody get to the line...
...Coach Red Dawson's got the winning play
coming in, all right?
There is no huddle from here out.
-Do you believe?
-Yes, sir!
-Do you believe?
-Yes, sir!
-We are--
-Marshall!
This is it, folks.
Okay.
Gotta get out of bounds

to stop the clock.
-Get out of bounds!
-Get out, get out, get out!
Clock is still ticking. He didn't make it!
He's still inbounds.
-Clock's running, clock's running.
-Call it in. Take us home, Red. Call it in.
Gardner, Gardner! All right.
Split right, 21 3 Bootleg Screen.
Bootleg Screen!
-Get it off!
-Snap it.
Snap the ball.
Snap it. Snap it.
It's good! Gardner catches the ball!
Touchdown! Touchdown!
I can't believe it! I can't believe it!
Marshall has won!
The Young Thundering Herd has won!
They have done the unthinkable!
-We scored?
-Marshall has beaten Xavier!
This is an exciting day, folks! Incredible!
The skies parted
and Marshall took command!
They proved that they were men today,
that they were a team!
-We did it! We did it!
-Marshall wins!
Marshall wins in a barnburner, folks!
They're gonna remember this one
for decades!
Lengyel! We did it!
We did it! We did it! We did it! We did it!
-Oh, gosh.
-Little tradition.
At the end of a game, we always give
the ball to the most valuable player.
That's for you.
Jack, I'm not one of the players.
I know, Don.
We're Marshall. We'll take anybody.
Thank you. Thank you, Don.
The following week,

Marshall lost to Miami of Ohio, 66 to 6.
They would only win
one more game in 1971.
Jack Lengyel resigned as head coach
in 1974 with a record of 9 and 33.
He went on to become athletic director
at the Naval Academy.
He's now in the Hall of Fame.
Donald Dedmon accepted the presidency
at Radford University...
...where he remained
until he retired in 1994.
Gene Morehouse's son, Keith,
followed in his father's footsteps...
...and became a broadcaster
for Marshall football...
...where he still remains today.
Reggie Oliver started every game
at quarterback for the Thundering Herd...
...until he graduated.
He eventually returned to Marshall
as an assistant coach...
...and now lives in Ohio.
Nate Ruffin moved away from Huntington
after graduation...
...got married and started a family.
In 2001, after a prolonged illness...
...Nate passed away at his home
in Arlington, Virginia.
But he would return to Huntington
one last time...
...for a final reunion
with his old teammates.
Red Dawson kept his word and left the team
at the end of the year.
He never returned to football.
Well, congratulations, Coach Dawson.
Well, thank you, Jimmy.
Congratulations to you too.
I didn't mean to keep you waiting.
I just....
Red, you didn't keep me waiting.
Come here.
Nobody here wants to go home either.

Marshall lost more football games
in the '70s...
...than any other program in the nation.
But yet, football remained.
In 1984, the Herd had their first
winning record in 20 years.
They followed it
with eight conference titles...
...five straight bowl wins
and two national championships.
From the ashes, we rose.

-We are--

-Marshall!

-We are--

-Marshall!

-We are--

-Marshall!

-We are--

-Marshall!

Marshall! Marshall! Marshall!