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Coach Carter

By Mark Schwahn

Yeah! Nice job! Nice pass!
St. Francis High School
basketball phenom
Ty Crane,
who they recruited just last year,
is widely held as
the next LeBron James.
We simply know him
as ''The Crane.''
Come on.
Come on, y'all!
Timo, let's go man, come on.
Yeah, whatever.
Where you at? Where you at?
Pick him up! Pick him up!
- Hey, son.
- Hey.
Right here, right here.
- Blue ball!
- Good D, baby!
- Damn!
- What the hell are you doing, y'all?
- You took three steps this way.
- Yo, I put my fist up, man.
Yo, homey, look where you're throwing
the ball, man. Damn.
- Get your man!
- I knew it. I knew it.
Yeah!
St. Francis is up by 22.
Stay out of my way, bitch.
I own you.
- Oh, hell no!
- Bitch!
Let's go! Let's go!
Oh, no. Come on, guys, stop that!
- Let me go!
- Hey! Hey!
I'm good. Get off me!
Get off me, get off me!
That's it! Game's over!
Game's over!
Crane. Great game, great game.
Tell everyone out there what it

feels like to be the next LeBron James.

LeBron James?

I'm the only Ty Crane.

All right, you heard it here first,

'the only Ty Crane.'

Why do all the benchwarmers
always got something to say?

We watching the damn game,
that's why.

- You got a good view, huh?

- Yeah.

Ty Crane outscored
our whole team by himself.

- Wonder how that happened.

- We had nothing but 32 points.

I got 1 2 of them.

What did you get, Kenyon?

Just shut up, dog.

The Crane swooped down on you
and delivered a basket of beat-down.

He clowned you, dog.

- Yeah, you better shut the hell up.

- He had you on lock the whole game.

Lyle, why don't you shut your mouth
before I close it for good.

You didn't do shit either
the whole game.

What, homey?

I will slap the taste out your mouth!

- Can we all just get along?

- Shut your little ass up!

- You didn't even play!

- That's what I'm talking about.

- Shay, pass the ball, dog!

- You got two points in 1 6 minutes,

- that's why coach got rid of your ass.

- Exactly!

Timo, you was in the whole time,
you never even touched the rock.

You didn't do shit.

You might as well--

- Who was you passing the ball to?

- You were playing and didn't do shit!

Kenny Ray Carter, Richmond

High School all-American, 1 9 72.

Good to see you, sir.

I was really happy to see you
in the stands tonight.

I have to tell you, sir,

I haven't made up my mind yet.

As I've told you,
it's time for me to step down.

Last few years
have been really tough.

Well, losing's hard, sir.

This isn't about
losing games, Kenny.

I can't get them to show up
for school, for practice.

I can't get parents involved, and I'm
done chasing kids in the streets
and pulling them into the gym.

Yeah, it's a tough job.

Richmond is a tough little city.

When I saw you here tonight,
I thought, 'I got him. He's in.'

Well, actually,
I was here for another reason.

My son plays for St. Francis.

He does?

- Which kid was he?

- Well, you didn't see him.

- He's a freshman. He didn't play.

- That's great. Great school.

What, you wanna go?

- Hey!

- Lyle, bring it!

Let him go. You think everybody's
scared of you? I ain't scared of you!

Cruz, chill, man. Why you gotta be
trying to act all hard all the time, man?

God, I'm sick of you, man!

You know, that school was rough
when I went there.

It's way beyond that now.

Well, then, just forget about it.

Don't even discuss it again.

I can't quite do that. Coach officially

offered me the job tonight.
The clock's ticking.
And when you say ''offering job,''
there's usually money involved.
Yeah, there might be
a thousand bucks in it for me.
For five months of work?
Oh, well, you can't say no to that.
And the team, it's so bad.
Those boys,
they're so angry and undisciplined.
And besides, you know,
you don't have the time.
You're trying to open up
a second store.
Exactly, I don't have the--
Hell, I don't have any time.
And you promised to take
your girlfriend to Mexico.
And I'm definitely
keeping that promise.
There's no way
I'm not going to Mexico
and hanging out on the beach
with you in your bikini.
I can't take that job.
So when do you start?
- You should've spoken to me first.
- Why?
- It was a personal choice for me.
- So, what happens to me?
You still gonna come to my games?
I'll probably miss most of
your games, Damien. I'm sorry.
Then I'll go to Richmond
and play for you.
No.
Well, why not?
- Dad, you've always been my coach.
- This is a great school, Damien.
It puts you in a great position
for college.
Dad, I'm a freshman!
Just because I'm coaching

at Richmond,
it doesn't change our plans
for your future, all right?
Yo, my man, I need a vial, man.
You got that good dope? How much?
You forgot to bring your ID,
didn't you?
- I forgot it.
- Every day.
Good morning. Ken Carter.
- Thanks.
- Here you go, sir.
Hey, yo, what's up?
- Nice to see you again, Mr. Carter.
- You too, ma'am.
If the offer still stands,
I'd like to coach the team.
Well, I hope you're up for the task.
These young men need discipline.
The job comes with a \$1,500 stipend
and a major time commitment
for the next four months.
- I accept.
- Great.
We're thrilled to have you.
Gentlemen, I hate to be abrupt,
but I do have a budget meeting
I need to run to.
Mr. Carter, is there anything
you need from us?
Well, I just need about
- I'm all set.
- Ray, would you see to it
that Mr. Carter--?
Coach Carter gets these copies?
- Will do.
- Gentlemen.
I'm not saying this is
not gonna be a challenge,
but, Kenny, you know the deal here.
Just keep in mind,
these are good boys.
Guys! Guys!
Guys!

Now, as you know, I've been-- Hey!
You know I've been looking
for a new coach
to take over for me this season.
This is Ken Carter.
He went to Richmond.
He was a two-sport all-American.
Still holds records
for scoring, assists, steals.
Basketball scholarship to
George Mason University.
We're lucky to have Coach Carter.
Now, let's give him
the respect he's due.
- They're all yours, coach.
- Thank you, sir.
Good afternoon, young men.
As Coach White said, I'm your
new basketball coach, Ken Carter.
I guess I need to speak louder
so you can hear me.
I'm Ken Carter,
your new basketball coach.
We hear you, dog.
But we can't see you.
The glare from your
big, black-ass head
is hella shiny, man.
Damn, do you buff it?
Oh, you got jokes to go along
with that ugly jump shot of yours, huh?
First of all, if you need to know
my credentials,
as Coach White said,
they're on the wall there behind you.
Secondly, if basketball practice
starts at 3, you are late as of 2:55.
You, shooting the ball.
What's your name, sir?
Jason Lyle, but I ain't no sir.
You're not a sir.
Well, are you a madam?
- Little bitch. Bitch.
- As of now, you are a sir.

So are the rest of you.

'Sir' is a term of respect.

And you will have my respect
until you abuse it.

Mr. Lyle, how many games
did you guys win last season?

Like four wins, 22 losses.

- Sir.

- Sir.

I'm going to give you contracts.

If you sign and honor
your side of them,

we are going to be successful.

Damn, do I get a signing bonus
for signing this contract?

Yes, sir.

You get to become a winner.

Because if there's one thing I know,

it is this:

The losing stops now.

Starting today, you will play
like winners, act like winners,
and most importantly,
you will be winners.

If you listen and learn,
you'll win basketball games.

And, gentlemen, winning in here...

...is the key to winning out there.

This contract states that you will
maintain a 2.3 grade point average.

You will attend all your classes
and you will sit in the front row
of those classes.

- Yo, this a country-ass nigga, dog.

- Excuse me.

- Did you say something, sir?

- Worm was wondering,
are you some country church nigga,
with your tie on and all that?

- Right.

- That's what you wanna say, right?

And what is your name, sir?

I'm Timo Cruz, sir.

Well, Mr. Cruz and Mr. Worm,
what you should both know
is we treat ourselves with respect.
We don't use the word ''nigga.''
Are you some preacher man
or some shit?
Because God ain't gonna do you
no good in this neighborhood.
- I live in this neighborhood, sir.
- Sir.
Can you believe
this uppity Negro, sir?
Okay, Mr. Cruz...
- ...leave the gym right now.
- For what?
I'll ask you one last time
to leave the gym
- before I help you leave.
- Before you what?
Do you even know who I am?
From what I can see, a very confused
and scared young man.
Scared of who? Scared of you?
I'm supposed to be scared of you?
Nigga, I ain't scared of nobody.
I will lay your ass out.
I don't think so.
All right.
What you doing? Get off me!
Teachers ain't supposed
to touch students.
I'm not a teacher.
I'm your new basketball coach.
This ain't over!
Is there anybody else
who's not feeling this contract?
Come on, man, where you going?
I don't do high school contracts.
Tell us when you need
the real ballers.
I will do that, sir.
There goes our two leading scorers
from last season, man.
There goes our two leading scorers

from last season, man.
Then I guess we'll have new
leading scorers this season, huh?
Now, I cannot teach you the game
of basketball
until your conditioning is at a level
that allows me to do so.
Gentlemen, report to the baseline.
To the baseline!
I presume you all know
what suicides are.
So...
I saw the St. Francis game
the other night.
None of you have a problem
shooting the ball.
You all had a problem
getting up and down the court.
If you are late, you will run.
If you give me attitude,
you will do push-ups.
So you can push-up or shut up.
That's up to you.
- Yo, how many we gonna do?
- Sir.
Yo, sir, how many we gonna do?
Let's see how many you can do
in one hour and seven minutes.
Fellas, don't make me
commit homicide.
I said, suicides!
Put your hand on the line!
Put your hand on the line!
Damn, I can't keep this shit up, man.
I can barely walk.
- I know, my legs is hella sore, son.
- Need some Gatorade or something.
- There go your girl right there, son.
- Yeah.
Hey, what's with you and her homeys?
You gonna try to holler at them?
Man, I'm hollering
at both of the friends.
- Both of them?

- Yeah, because I need that.

You know, I need variety in my life.

I can't just have one girl.

You know what I'm saying?

I need both.

Hey.

- What's up, baby?

- How you doing?

Ladies, ladies, ladies. Y'all heard about that two-for-one special, right?

Two of you, one of me.

Now, that's special.

- Please. Whatever, Worm.

- Yeah, special ed.

- Get your arm off me.

- I like this fox.

You working that chinchilla.

But, look, baby, me and you...

You need to tell him to stop playing it so close. She don't even like him.

- Why not? Worm's the man.

- Worm is Worm.

Anyway, I got something for the baby today.

We don't even know if it's a baby yet.

I mean, it's kind of early.

You ain't even been to the doctor yet.

Hello? I passed the pregnancy test, Kenyon. Three times.

- These are kind of cute, though.

- I know, I got good taste, right?

Yeah, all right.

Precious little shoes.

Well, I got a little somethin'-somethin' for you too.

Thank you.

This definitely is a little something.

- Where'd you get this?

- Don't sleep on the 99 Cent Store.

Kenyon!

- What? What's up?

- What are you doing? Give me!

- Are you crazy?

- Are you crazy?
You got that for 99 cents?
I've been there.
You can get three brooms and a bucket
for 99 cents, with some toilet paper.
That's like thread.
That's not even half a shoelace.
Well, would you like to see me
in this shoelace?
Quick feet! Let me see quick feet!
Touch the floor! Stay big! Stay big!
Three push-ups and move.
One! Two! Three!
Let's go. Explode!
Let me hear you. Let me hear you!
Let me hear it.
Explode! Worm, explode!
Touch the floor! Touch the floor!
Give me five!
Just give me five! Push!
Push! Go! Go!
Let me hear you!
Come on, close out!
Explode! Let's go!
Sir, you're 20 minutes late.
That's ten suicides for the
whole team, 250 push-ups for you.
This ain't the track team, man.
Nor is it the debate team, Mr. Lyle.
But you're right.
And because you're right,
that's 20 suicides for the entire team
and you get the privilege
of joining Mr. Battle
- with 250 push-ups of your own.
- What, are you serious?
- Yeah.
- This is bullshit!
Good answer, Mr. Battle.
Johnny, tell him what he's won.
Because you gave
such a good answer
and you gave the coach attitude,
you win the bonus prize

of 500 push-ups!
And would you like to go
for the grand prize of a thousand?
No, sir.
To the baseline!
On my whistle! Let's go!
J.B., come on, baby.
I can't even move, son.
Like, every muscle on my body hurts.
- You can't say nothing to him.
- Why can't I say nothing to him?
I'm a white boy? Man, what the--?
Right here. Right here.
Get this dude right here. Get this dude.
Where you going, homey?
Where you going, huh?
- I ain't got shit.
- What?
Please don't shoot me, man.
Go on, take my bag, dog!
Run your shit, homey!
That's some bullshit, Cruz!
Yo, I'm gonna visit you in County, dog.
I'm just playing, B.
Look at you!
Damn! I seen y'all
walking from up the block
like somebody put a pipe
in your asses.
You all right, dog?
Look, y'all wasn't winning with me,
but y'all damn sure
look sad without me.
But you know what?
I'm gonna watch y'all play.
See y'all get your asses kicked.
Yo! I'd love to shoot the shit with
you bitches all night, but I gotta go.
- All right.
- Yo, who that, man?
That's my cousin, Renny.
I'm gonna check y'all.
Come on, let's go.
Yo, Worm, you need a ride?

- No, I'm straight, man.

- You sure?

- Yeah, I'm good.

- All right, my nigga.

- One love.

- All right, Lyle!

Don't let nobody else put a pipe
up your ass, or you might like it!

Hey, you was scared, huh?

I wasn't scared.

The state only requires
that they have a 2.0 average to play.

Now, you got in here
they need a 2.3.

If you have a 2.0, you have to score
at least 1 050 on the SA

to be eligible

for an athletic scholarship.

If you have a 2.3,

you only need 950.

Now, 2.3 is just a C-plus.

It shouldn't be that hard
to maintain a C-plus.

These boys are student athletes.

'Student' comes first.

It says they gotta wear
coat and ties on game days.

They don't own ties!

You gonna supply the ties?

There's a Goodwill

and a Salvation Army store
less than two blocks from here.

They got a box full of ties
for 50 cents apiece.

Yo, man, what you
trying to say, huh?

Oh, we too good to shop at the
Goodwill and Salvation Army, is that it?

- Yeah, I ain't that broke.

- This is crazy!

A dress code and they have to sit
in the front row in class?

- This is basketball, man!

- And basketball is a privilege, ma'am.

If you want to play basketball
on this team,
these are the simple rules
you have to follow
if you want to enjoy that privilege.

Now, if you decide
to follow these simple rules,
I need you and the boys
to sign this contract.

They can bring the contracts
to practice tomorrow.
If you come to practice.
I wanna thank you all for coming out
and showing your support,
and I hope I have your support
the rest of the season.

- Good night.

- Get up and leave like that?

Look, I have a hard enough time
getting my nephew to...

- How you gonna make them wear ties?

- I want the other coach back!

It's one of your contracts, sir.

I've amended that contract.

You require your players
to maintain a 2.3 grade point average.

I've committed to maintaining a 3.5.

You require ten hours of community
service, and I've committed to 50.

Any unexcused absences, any other
disciplinary issues at school,
you can nullify this agreement
and send me to any school you want.

And how many days do I have
to consider this offer?

None.

The second page
is a letter you need to sign
that confirms my withdrawal
from St. Francis.

- They know I'm leaving.

- What?

- You withdrew from St. Francis?

- I called Richmond.

- They expect me there in the morning.

- You called Richmond?

You should have spoken to me
about this.

It was a personal choice for me.

Well, I can fix all that in the morning.

Sir, please listen.

All I wanna do is play for you.

If I'm one of the top students
at Richmond,

I mean one of the top in the whole
school, and I have great SATs,

I can go to any college
in the country.

I'm asking you to trust me.

You really wanna do this, huh?

Okay.

Part of growing up
is making your own decisions
and living with the consequences.

And you will earn every minute
of playing time.

Open it, please.

Morning, sir.

My name is J. Lyle

They call me wild

It's all right

Kenyon's mom tonight

- Say what?

- You might think I'm wrong

But she's got these thongs

Hey, yo, yo, yo.

It's Malcolm X from St. Francis.

- Hey, yo, Malcolm!

- Whatever.

- What's up, man?

- What are you doing here, son?

- I transferred to Richmond.

- Oh, no, son, I think you're just lost.

Well, I am actually lost.

Can you tell me how to get to...?

Bel Air? Hey, yo, Worm,

tell your man Fresh Prince here

- how to get to his mansion.

- Fresh bitch.
I hope seeing you in this hallway mean
I get to see you on the court today.
I can't wait. With your five browns.
Everybody up.
Today we're going to play defense.
Sorry, sir.
Gentlemen, this is a new player,
Damien Carter.
He is my son, and he is late.
Sir, you owe me 20 suicides.
Sir, it's my first day of school,
I had to stay--
Basketball practice starts at 3.

As of 2:

Get changed in the locker room.
Do your suicides on the far side
of the court so as not to disturb us.
All right, gentlemen,
give me two lines!
Okay, young sirs, we're gonna
take it to the next level.
Everything I knew about basketball,
I learned from women.
I have a sister, her name's Diane.
She was always on my case
about every little thing.
Matter of fact, she still is.
'Turn down that radio!
You eat the last piece of cake?
Did you drink all the Kool-Aid?''
She was always in my face.
So when I call ''Diane,''
we're gonna play straight
man-to-man pressure defense.
Worm! No, no, no, no, sir.
Look at your defensive posture.
Come on. Split your man.
Back straight, butt down.
This hand guards against the passing
lane, this hand protects the crossover.
All right? Palms up!
Get your head in the game.

Now we have Delilah.
She was my childhood sweetheart.
Sir, was she hot?
Oh, yes, sir.
She was steaming hot.
But she was the devil.
That girl was evil.
I remember once she tricked me
into stealing brownies
from Christ the King
First Baptist Church bake sale.
She smiled
and got her way out of it,
while I damn near had to wear
a pillow on my butt
for a month
before I could sit down.
Delilah, gentlemen.
She's our trap defense.
Take notes, freshman. This is as
close as you gonna get to playing.
Come on, come on. Move, move!
Delilah! Delilah! Delilah!
Now, I know you're all
concerned that
we didn't work
on our offense during practice.
We have all season to do that.
But what did we do in practice,
Mr. Stone?
- Run.
- That's right.
So, what do you think I want you
to do on offense tonight?
- Run?
- Correct again.
I want you to run.
I want you to run every second
that clock is ticking, all game long.
Put him back on the bench!
Rebound! Rebound!
Let's go, let's go, let's go!
Nice pass, baby!
Push it! Push it!

- Screen.
- Screen, baby. Screen. Screen.
- Worm.
- Let's go, Worm.
Stay alert! Pick him up right there!
- Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah!
- What's the call, ref?
White four, fifth.
He's out of the game.
- Oh, ref, come--
- That's his fifth foul, coach.
- Time, sir.
- Time out, white.
Bad call, ref!
That was a jump ball, damn it!
- Time out, white.
- Come on, fellas.
Come on, huddle up. Hustle up.
Get over here.
All right. Huddle up, huddle up.
- Carter, you're in.
- But, coach, he a freshman.
You wanna coach?
All right, take a deep breath, guys.
Come on, deep breaths.
- You tired?
- No, sir.
Those guys are exhausted.
That's why this guy's gonna miss
that free throw.
When he does,
Worm and Lyle are our first option.
Push the ball. Go hard to the hole.
Everybody attack the boards, got that?
- Yes, sir.
- All right, Richmond on three.
- One, two, three!
- Richmond!
- All right, let's out, all right?
- Step it up, let's go!
Look alive out there.
All right, guys, you're in better shape
than they are. Push it.
Box out, box out.

One shot.

Kenyon, right here. Kenyon!

- Come on! Come on!

- Come on, baby!

All right.

Kenyon!

- Worm!

- Yo, yo.

Oh, yeah!

Yeah! That's what I'm talking about!

- Tight pass, baby. Nice pass, dog.

- It was all you.

A win like that don't mean nothing,
because they can't play anyway,
you feel me?

Okay, Shaq, so you dominated
down low tonight. Any thoughts?

I dropped a 20-piece.

Kobe played his game.

We the champions
till we ain't the champions no more.

- Junior Battle.

- Undefeated until...

Yo, man, on the real,
that was the worst game
I've ever seen in my life.

I thought that shit would never end.

I was dying in the bleachers.

That's right, you were in
the bleachers, weren't you?

We were on the court
handling our business.

That's right. We 1 -0, bitch.

Yo, on the real, Hercules is weak, B,
and y'all barely beat them.

Damn, Timo,
why you throwing salt, man?

We undefeated. Show us love, son.

Yeah, that's right, we undefeated.

I'll knock all y'all off.

- Yo. I'll check y'all later, all right?

- All right.

Yo. Let's do this.

- What's up?

- Here's two bundles.
- All right.
- Yo, be careful. The block is hot.
Yo, I got you.
- How you doing, man?
- Chilling, man.
You look good.
Got some paper for you.
Now we're talking, yeah.
How you living, Timo?
I'm good.
- You all right? For real?
- Yeah.
- Here, take some.
- I'm all right.
No, no, no, take some, please.
You did good, man.
You're doing good, bro.
- Thank you.
- Don't thank me, thank you.
You earned it.
Take a nickel bag, okay?
Go get yourself something, man.
- I'm gonna see you?
- Yeah, next week.
Okay, I'm gonna see you.
- Keep it up.
- Yeah.
Hey, Shaqua, Denise, holler at me.
Rafeca, I see you looking.
Ain't nobody
thinking about you, Worm.
- Oh, okay.
- Gentlemen,
let's review the Hercules game,
shall we?
Yo, yell out my numbers, sir.
Mr. Worm, you were five and four.
No, sir. I had 12 points
and eight assists, sir.
No, sir, Mr. Worm. You had five
turnovers and four missed free throws.
Now, we're talking
about fundamentals here.

Until we learn them, I'm adding
a practice every morning at 6 a.m.

- Six a.m.?

- We shot 56 percent at--

Mr. Cruz.

Are you lost, sir?

What I gotta do to play?

Mr. Cruz, you do not want to know
the answer to that question.

Now, as I was saying,

as a team,

we shot 56 percent from the line.

From now on,

before you leave my gym,

you must pay an exit price of 50

made free throws before you can go.

- What?

- That's everybody.

- Come on.

- That's a lot of free throws.

Okay, Mr. Cruz.

Before you can play on this team...

...you owe me...

...2,500 push-ups...

...and 1,000 suicides.

- Damn.

- Damn.

And they must be

completed by Friday.

- He ain't finishing that by Friday.

- He ain't making that.

Today's flavor:

- Now we talking.

- Now, I have a sister.

Her name is Linda.

Linda is smart, she's political.

Well, actually, she's radical.

Linda's got a big Afro.

Linda is our pick-and-roll offense.

Before we get into that,

let's warm up.

Give me a lay-up line.

- Let's go.

- All right.
Let's do it.
- Damn, how many sisters he got?
- Who knows.
- Come on, get two more over here.
- Break it out.
- Let's go, guys.
- Energy, guys, energy.
We got this, let's go.
- I'm open.
- I got him, I got him.
Right here, right here.
I'm open. I'm open.
I'm sorry.
- All right.
- Hey, hey, hey.
- Come on.
- It's not my fault.
- He was early.
- Hey.
Yes, it's important to move
without the ball,
but you gotta be patient
on the weak-side screen.
Set up your man
and come off his shoulder hard. Okay?
Okay. Switch it up.
We got it, come on.
Let's go. Let's get it.
- And call out them picks.
- Yeah, yeah, all right.
What is your deepest fear,
Mr. Cruz?
That you're inadequate?
Give up, Mr. Cruz.
Go home.
All right, I want seven passes
before you shoot.
- Seven.
- All right.
- I got him. I got him.
- Get that ball in there.
You know your task is impossible
before Friday, right?

Move.

Work it, work it.

Run it back.

What time your mom getting home?

She doesn't get off for another hour.

Oh, that's Myles.

What?

Say, ''Hi, Uncle Kenyon.''

Say, ''Hi.''

All right, don't worry about it.

He'll go back to sleep
right after his bottle.

Right, boo-boo?

Yeah, probably in time
for your mom to get home.

Or when your cousin get back
from getting her hair fried and dyed,
like she can afford all that shit.

It's her baby anyway.

Well, my mother had to work
a double shift,

but they cut her overtime.

And my cousin,
don't be trying to dis her.

You said we'd be alone.

You call this alone?

Well, that's why we need
our own spot.

Did you turn this off?

- Yeah, it was boiling.

- Oh, come on.

Well, turn it down, not off.

This is milk, butter and cheese.

We can't afford to waste this.

And hold him up.

Making the baby's bottle for Myles.

All right, Myles, here we go.

Gotta cool off a minute.

Ever think about what you were
gonna do before you were pregnant?

What you mean,
going to junior college?

Yeah.

I mean, yeah, I thought about it.

I could go later, I guess.

You have to get some work
after you have the baby.

Me too.

- So I'll work.

- How you gonna go to school?

Why you asking me
all these questions?

And you gotta put your hands
under his arm.

You gotta sit him on your chest.

Hold him.

- I am holding him.

- You ain't doing it right.

You gotta soothe him, Kenyon.

Look...

I don't know how to do this.

You'll get it.

Right?

Look, I gotta help my mom
with some stuff.

- See you later, all right?

- All right.

Call me later, okay?

Later.

All right, keep it riding on somebody.

- Don't get lost in there.

- Move it. Move it.

Stay with your man.

- Box out, box out!

- Position.

Guys...

Up. Up.

Hey, hey, hey.

You don't get to your man, stand,
watch the ball.

When the ball goes up,
get in good defensive position,
get your body on your man
and explode to the ball.

All right? Let's go.

Run it. You got it.

- Go on, do it.

- Forward pass. Forward pass.

- Work it.

- There you go.

Mrs. Fenton, the police are telling a very different story.

I wish you would.

Yes, ma'am, I'm here all week.

Mr. Carter, how are the boys?

Oh, they're great, ma'am. We're 1 -0.

Very good.

How may I help you?

Well, I had my boys sign contracts requiring them to meet certain academic standards.

Yes, I believe one of the faculty members mentioned that.

Very interesting scare tactic.

Well, in order for that to be successful,

I need their teachers to fill out weekly progress reports so I'll know how the boys are doing in their classrooms.

- Okay.

- Well, I haven't received anything from their teachers.

I don't see how this ties in to your job as the basketball coach, Mr. Carter.

Well, I took this job with the understanding I could do it my way.

And you can.

Our next faculty meeting is in two weeks.

I'll remember to bring it up.

Why, that would be great.

Thank you, ma'am.

Thank you, sir.

Bring it in, guys.

Let's go, hustle up.

Yo, bring it in, y'all.

All right, that's it for today.

We have a game tomorrow, so get some rest tonight.

And remember,

ties and jackets tomorrow.

Clyde.

Mr. Cruz.

I'm impressed with
what you've done.

But you came up short.

You owe me 80 suicides
and 500 push-ups.

Please leave my gym.

Thanks, Clyde.

Gentlemen, see you tomorrow.

I'll do push-ups for him.

You said we're a team.

One person struggles,
we all struggle.

One player triumphs,
we all triumph, right?

I'll do some.

I'll run suicides too.

I'll do some too.

Clyde, keep count.

Call me when they're done.

Defense! Defense!

Push it. Push it. Move, move!

Let's go.

Ball, ball, ball.

Ball, ball, ball.

- Yeah!

- Go.

Move your feet, move your feet.

Go, defense. Go.

Good job. Good job.

- Worm.

- White ball.

Palms up, move your feet, right?

Come out. Come out. Come out.

- Mr. Cruz!

- Good game, boy.

Hey, hey.

What is your deepest fear,
young man?

Go on.

Why he keep saying that, 'What's
your deepest fear?' What that mean?

Come on, let's go.

Let's go. Let's go.
Move. Move. Move.
No, one more pass.
Hands up.
Three points, Cruz!
What the hell are you doing, Cruz?
You allergic to lay-ups?
You do that again and you're going
to be glued to the bench.
- Swing it.
- Right here.
Come on, last kick.
Kick it in. Kick it in. Let's go.
You can't guard me, can you?
What you gonna do?
- Can't do nothing about it, can you?
- Delilah. Delilah.
Come on, come on, come on.
- Shot.
- Yeah, Jason.
Kenyon, pose for me.
- Smile.
- Kenyon! Maddux! Get back!
Just play the damn game.
Linda, Linda, Linda!
There he is. Yeah.
That's me, baby.
That's me. I did that.
I drew that up. Yeah.
Run it again.
All right, 1 -4, 1 -4.
Linda, Linda, Linda!
All day, baby. All day!
Can't stop that.
Can't stop that!
- Hey, coach, your shoe's untied, sir.
- Thank you, Mr. Worm.
Look at that bow. Look at that.
I tied that. I tied that shit.
Can I get something on the bow?
Let me get some.
Are you crazy?
What is wrong with you?
What's wrong with all of you?

Since when is winning not enough?

Playing hard not enough?

No, you have to humiliate
your opponent.

Taunt him after every score.

You won four games last season.

Four.

What gives you the right
to taint the game that I love
with trash talk and taunting?

What gives you the right to wear
Richmond on your chests
and act like punks?

- Coach, they were jawing too.

- So?

You can't show some class?

Act like a champion?

You owe me 500 push-ups apiece.

On the line. Now.

- Damn.

- Oh, man, come on.

Listen, shorty, I'm just gonna be real
with you, okay?

You're my girl.

I get out on that court
and everything is just getting crazy,
all I gotta do is just think about you.

Mr. Lyle.

Why aren't you in...

- ...geometry?

- I'm going there right now, sir.

- Sir, this is Betty.

- Bella.

Bella. Bella. This is Bella, sir.

Go to class.

Don't forget that these projects
are due at the end of this week.

- So if any of you need extra time--

- Excuse me, sir. Are you Mr. Gesek?

- Yes.

- I...

...don't see Junior Battle
in this class.

Junior Battle is like a solar eclipse.

We rarely see him, but when we do,
it's always special.

Thank you.

'Surprise arrival to the poll
is Richmond High at 19th.'

- Top 20, baby.

- We're 19th, dog.

'The Oilers have posted
a perfect 9-0 mark,
winning on the road against
perennial powerhouses
Xavier and Baxter Union.'

Junior, you should read
the rest of this.

They blowing you up
in this paper.

- Come on, man, read it.

- Man, you know he can't read.

- Man, shut up.

- Shut up, Maddux.

'Richmond center has been big
as the Oilers are 'boyed.'
Buoyed. The word is 'buoyed.'

'Buoyed by Junior Battle's
See, that's my big nigga
right there, son. Hey.

If you was any bigger,
you'd be my bigger nigga.

Sit down. Sit down!

'Nigger' is a derogatory term
used to insult our ancestors.

See, if a white man used it,
you'd be ready to fight.

Your using it teaches him to use it.

You're saying it's cool.

Well, it's not cool.

And when you're around me,
I don't wanna hear that shit.

- We clear?

- Yes, sir.

- Yes, sir.

- Yes, sir.

Yes, sir.

Mr. Worm,

what is it you want
out of this basketball season?
To win that state championship, sir.
Well, who won the state basketball
championship last season, Lyle?
Hell if I know, sir.
Does anybody know?
Okay.
What's your father do for a living,
Mr. Lyle?
My father's in jail, sir.
Well, I'm sorry to hear that, sir.
But that doesn't have to be your life.

My point's this:

I have four seniors on this team,
Junior, Lyle, Kenyon and Worm.
All of whom I think can play
basketball at the college level.
College.
That's a viable option for all of you.
But you have to perform in the
classroom to have that chance.
You have to have a vision.
Tell me, how do you
see yourselves?
ESPN, baby.
That reminds me, Mr. Battle.
Mr. Gesek tells me he doesn't
see you in his classroom very often.
Yeah, we cool, though, me and him.
Mr. Gesek is a big basketball fan.
Well, as of now, you're suspended.
Oh, you can practice,
but you can't play
until Mr. Gesek tells me
you're caught up in his class.
And that's a shout out
to the rest of you.
You signed a contract.
You made a commitment.
Now, I have your schedules and I'll be
getting reports from your teachers.
If you don't perform in the

classroom, you will not play.
What's up with that?
Sit down, Mr. Battle.
All right, that's 500 push-ups.
Man, this is bullshit!
We won those games, not you.
That's 1 ,000 push-ups
for Mr. Battle, Clyde.
You wanna try for 2,000?
Young man, think about the choice
you're making if you walk out that door.
To the baseline.
All right. How about LaQuisha,
if it's a girl.
LaQuisha? Okay, yeah, the ghetto
called and they want they name back.
Girl, LaQuisha? Be for real.
You might as well call the baby
Food Stamp.
You're stupid.
All right, I was thinking
I could call her Harmony.
- I like Harmony.
- Harmony, oh, that's good. I like that.
- What did Kenyon say?
- Please, he want a boy.
- Figures.
- Speaking of Michael Jordan...
Yo, what's wrong with a girl?
Yeah, dog, boys grow into men,
and men ain't worth the trouble.
Don't you have someplace to go?
Something to do?
Guess he wants me all to himself.
See you later.
Don't forget,
I need your notes for history.
- All right, I got you.
- Yeah. See you later.
I bought us tickets to the dance.
Why you telling these
loudmouth girls about the baby?
Now everybody's gonna know.
People are gonna know, Kenyon.

- It's not people's business, Kyra.
- Why you jumping down my throat?
What's wrong with you?
Look, me and coach been talking,
and he thinks I can play college ball.
All right, so?
So how am I gonna do that
and raise a baby?
I don't know. I mean,
I'm not saying it won't be hard.
Hard? It's already hard.
The kid ain't even here yet
and I'm worried
about how I'm gonna feed it,
how I'm gonna pay for this and that.
Everything.
- I'm not ready.
- So, what are you saying?
You want out?
Is that what you're saying?
Go ahead and say it.
Look, if I wanted to be out,
I would've been out by now, Kyra.
That's not it at all. I love you.
I wanna be with you.
Yeah, as long as it's convenient.
I'm thinking about
what's best for us.
You're not trying to think about
what's best for both of us,
you're thinking about
what's best for you.
You don't want me to have this baby.
You wanna leave Richmond.
You wanna go play college ball.
So guess what?
We ain't got to be ready enough
for nothing, all right?
I'm ready enough to do what
I gotta do all by my damn self.
So you can take these
and go to the dance yourself.
Progress reports?
You're the basketball coach.

Look, ma'am, we talked about this.

I don't see what the problem is.

Do you know what the API is,

Mr. Carter?

No, I don't.

The Academic Performance Index.

They judge schools on a scale
of one to ten, ten being the best.

Do you have any idea
where Richmond falls on that scale?

No, ma'am, I have no idea.

We're a one, Mr. Carter, and have
been for the last seven years.

The state rewards schools
for their performance.

So every year I have less money
to pay faculty and staff.

- Look, ma'am--

- Can I ask what it is you want?

- I want my boys to go to college.

- College?

Mr. Carter, Richmond graduates
the higher percentage being girls.

Now, in my very educated opinion,
you have 15 players on your team,
you'll be lucky to graduate
five of them.

I'm sorry, ma'am,

but I don't agree with you.

Look, these boys signed contracts.

Maybe if you'd read one of them--

Your job is to win basketball games,

Mr. Carter.

- I suggest you start doing your job.

- And your job is to educate these kids.

I suggest you start doing yours.

Well...

...we had another good week.

Yeah, business is very good, Kenny.

But I'm on my own.

You're never here.

- It gets crazy.

- Look, I appreciate everything you do.

And I promise you-- We're closed.

--as soon as the season is over,
I will be here for you.

Mr. Carter?

- I'm--

- Junior Battle's mother.

Yes, ma'am, I remember you.

Willa. Willa Battle.

How may I help you, ma'am?

Mr. Carter, I got a phone call today
from a coach at a junior college
in Sacramento.

Now, they wanna see

Junior play this Friday.

Well, that's great, ma'am,

but Junior broke some rules--

And I agree with them.

I'm not here to argue
with your rules.

I'm not.

Almost two years ago now,
Junior's older brother, Anton, was...

...killed, and it's been confusing
and hard for me and for Junior.

After you lose a son...

...every time the phone rings,
your heart stops.

Now, I'm not asking
for special attention.

I agree he needs to get straight
with his classes.

But the idea of junior college
had never even occurred to my son.

Now, I could move to the Hercules
school district, and he could play there.

- But moving is not gonna solve--

- But I want him to play for you.

Look, I'm not gonna stand here
and say I know how it feels
to lose a son, because I don't.

And I do appreciate you
putting your trust in me.

But I need to hear that from Junior.

He in the car.

Junior!

Go on.

I'm sorry for what I said and did
at practice,
and I promise to get caught up
with my classes, sir.

Look me in the eye, sir.

Everything inside me tells me
if I take you back,
I'd be making a mistake
and you'll make a fool of me.

No, sir.

You owe me 1,000 push-ups
and 1,000 suicides
before you can play.

I'll see you at practice tomorrow.

Thank you, sir.

And you gonna do
every last one of them.

Quitting basketball like you pay rent.

I don't know who you think you are.

The next time you make a decision,
you better ask me first.

Yo, Junior,

you did your thing tonight, man.

- Good looking out, yo.
- Yeah, good shot, Junior.
- Yeah, no doubt.
- Gentlemen, listen up.

I just received a call from the director
of the Bayhill Holiday Tournament.

You have been invited.

- Yeah!
- Yeah, baby!

Now, I have more good news.

I spoke to Principal Garrison today.
She informs me that your teachers will
have your academic-progress reports
prepared by the end
of holiday break.

Sir, our grades are tight, yo.

Yo, not only are our grades
all right, coach,

- but we undefeated, homeboy.
- Yeah!

We undefeated
We undefeated
We undefeated
We undefeated
We undefeated
We undefeated

Big ups to everybody who came out to
the Richmond High winter dance, y'all!
Get down!

So give it up for the new
kings of Richmond, y'all!

Yeah! Give it up, baby!

Yo, we 1 2-0, y'all,
and I just wanna say
I wanna see all the beautiful people
up at that tournament.

You know!

Y'all gonna wanna see the look on
the faces of them rich fancy-schoolers
when the Richmond Oilers
roll into town.

Holla!

Kyra, what are you thinking?

You can't drink!

- You're pregnant, girl.

- Stop.

It's soda, all right?

So why don't you just go
back downstairs
and find one of your little girlies
to freak with.

It ain't even like that.

Some girl just danced up on me.

- That ain't shit.

- Whatever.

You shouldn't be here.

If you're serious about this,
you need to check this bullshit.

Because if not--

If not, what, Kenyon? You wanna hold
my hand through an abortion?

- Is that what you want?

- I don't know what I want.

You so damn sure you wanna

have this baby,
why don't you tell me how
it's gonna be.
Everything's great, right?
Your cousin is 19 with two kids
already, Kyra.
It's great?
It was great when we
was getting down.
You ain't having no second
thoughts about that.
You loved me
when it came to that.
Look, Kyra, I can't tell you
what to do,
but I look around and I see exactly
how I don't wanna live.
Paycheck to paycheck?
Dead-end job?
You make it seem like everything's
gonna be all good,
like everything's so wonderful.
You don't care about me.
You just wanna go to college,
play ball and forget about me.
- Kyra, that's not even how it is.
- I don't care what you say.
- I'm having this baby.
- And then what?
You got everything figured out, right?
So tell me what comes next.
The third and final day of
the 22nd Bayhill Tournament
finds the host team, Bayhill,
trying to win the championship against
the surprising Richmond Oilers.
Defense! Defense!
Get your hands up!
Get that ball!
Richmond uses their last timeout with
- and Bayhill up by six.
- Time out!
Come on, man.
We still in the game. Come on.

Don't panic.
We're six down with 1 :20 left, right?
We've been in these guys' ass
the whole game.
We can do this.
- This is our time, right?
- Yeah, yeah.
All right, set up the 1 -4.
Run Candy.
Damien's gonna hit the three.
Kenyon, Lyle,
set a hard screen down here.
When he hits the three,
go right into Diane.
Pressure the inbound pass.
Suffocate that pass.
I want the ball back!
- Come on, baby, lock up.
- Hands in.
- Let's go.
- ''Our time'' on three!
- One, two, three!
- Our time!
Come on, let's go.
One, two, three, Cougars!
Let's go, guys!
- Hands up! Hands up!
- Ball, ball, ball, ball!
Watch him!
- Watch your back! Come in!
- Watch the screen!
Make the shot, Damien!
Diane! Diane!
Defense!
Go, go, go. Ball, ball, ball.
Right there, right there. I got him.
- Off him, man. Off him.
- Richmond's ball!
Richmond's ball!
Yeah!
Kenyon! Kenyon!
Hattie Jean! Hattie Jean!
Hattie Jean, Hattie Jean,
Hattie Jean!

- D up!
- Check! Check!
- Get there!
- Right there!
Get back! Get back! Get back!
Move your feet!
Move your feet!
A foul, ref!
Right wing, Kenyon, wing!
Richmond takes the lead
for the first time in the game,
Slow the ball down!
Slow the ball down!
Let's go, Cougars, let's go!
Defense! Defense!
- That's a charge! Driving!
- Basket's good!
The basket counts,
and the Cougars have tied the game.
That was a bad call, ref!
- Basket counts! One shot!
- That's a charge!
- Foul's on red five. On the block.
- Don't tie me like that!
Coach! Please get back in the box.
Please get in the box?
Please get your head in the game!
Give me a break!
Cruz. In for Lyle.
- Kenyon! Damien!
- Sub, for five.
Let's go.
Listen, we got nine seconds left.
Get the ball, push it hard.
The ball's coming to you, Kenyon.
Run Linda. Run Linda.
You be open, all right?
Let's go. You can do this.
Do it. Let's go.
Come on, sirs. Hurry.
Let's go, guys! Let's go!
Let's go! Let's go!
One shot.
Backboard D!

Backboard D!
And the Bayhill Cougars take the lead
with nine seconds left.
Go to war, Miss Margaret,
this is a tight one.
Let's go, let's go!
Linda! Linda!
Watch the pick! Watch the pick!
Stop the ball! Stop the ball!
It's not there! It's not there!
To the hole! To the hole!
Watch it!
D up, man!
Yeah!
It's all right, man.
- Nice game. Nice game.
- Good game, coach. Thank you, sir.
Rich what? Richmond!
Rich what? Richmond!
Rich what? Richmond!
Line up! Line up!
Let's shake hands.
That's what I'm talking
about, coach.
- Way to go, Lyle. Good game, son.
- Love you, Dad.
Ladies and gentlemen,
I now present
the 22nd Annual Bayhill Tournament
championship trophy
to Richmond High School.
Hey, number three.
- Nice game.
- Thank you.
Okay, cool.
- All right, come on.
- All right.
Watch his door.
Yo, yo. Come on, man, let's go.
Load up, load up.
Tonya, guess what.
We won the whole thing.
That's right, 16-0.
Oh, and here's the best part:

Your second-favorite man was MVP.
Wait, wait, wait, wait.
I shouldn't tell you that.
He should tell you.
I'll wake him up so he can tell you.
Hold on.
Why don't you try their doorbell
with your ghetto self. Move.
Can you reach that?
- Look at this place.
- Glad you guys could come.
Oh, you know, we try to be
up in here, baby.
Yo, what's up? This is a nice crib.
Know what? He must be
in somebody else's room.
Like I was saying, you know,
I'm Junior Battle. I'm the man.
- That's what I'm talking about.
- I know.
- So you ain't got no boyfriend?
- Maybe.
Yo!
You looking for your team?
Yes, sir.
Oh, baby. Hard biz.
Know what I'm saying?
This is my style right here.
I'm amazing. Feel me, Lyle?
Hey, yo, Lyle.
Let me get a coochie juice.
I got you, dog. I got you.
- Yo, Worm!
- What up, dog?
- Damien!
- Yeah?
I'm open!
Damien!
- Damien, are you drunk?
- No. I don't drink.
- Sorry about the thing.
- It's okay.
- I see you!
- I see you too.

- I see her!
- Why don't we go swimming.
- We're going swimming?
- Yeah.
Hey, I'm going swimming!
I'm going swimming!
You're going swimming
with the MVP!
MVP!
This water's probably
cold as hell, shorty. I don't know.
And swimming ain't my cup of tea,
baby. Know what I'm saying?
Heated. Probably 90 degrees.
- We don't have bathing suits.
- Right.
Neither do we.
Oh, so it's like that?
Show me the money, then,
know what I'm saying?
- Damn!
- Since it's like that.
Oh, damn. Yeah, that's nice.
- Damn!
- You are looking right.
I like that.
You guys coming?
We're getting in there.
I gotta take my chain off
so it don't turn green.
Oh, man, I can't believe this.
Heaven!
Excuse me.
- Can I help you?
- I'm Ken Carter,
coach of the Richmond High
basketball team.
Richmond?
- You're a little lost, aren't you?
- Well, I'm looking for my son.
The cab driver told me he dropped
the team off here for a party.
Excuse me.
Oh, my God, is that--?

Oh, my God, it's Susan's dad.

You see your son?

Yes, sir, I do.

Damien Carter.

Get your ass out of that pool.

Yes, sir.

Richmond High players, let's go!

- Coach!

- Hey, Worm, where did you go?

Worm?

What up, coach?

I got somebody I want
you to meet.

Now, I just met her,
but she is fine as hell.

- Her name is...

- Susan!

- Susan. He right!

- Oh, shit.

My daughter, Susan.

You are not going to like
what happens in practice on Monday.
You think you've run for me before?

I come to your rooms to celebrate
with you, and you sneak--

I end up taking a road trip

to the suburbs,

where I find my

drunk-ass point guard

on top of Daddy's little princess!

Actually, I was on the bottom, coach.

She was on the top.

Worm, do you wanna be

on this team?

Because you're about six words

from getting kicked off

and kicked off the goddamn bus!

Cruz, open your eyes!

Ghetto hoop stars!

Signing autographs

and humping the honeys!

Well, I'm gonna show you

what humping is.

Coach, we won the tournament.

We undefeated.
I mean, ain't that what you wanted?
Winners?
Oh, no.
Oh, no, no, no.
Oh, no!
God--!
You guys are awesome!
What's up, Cruz?
I don't know.
Coach giving us a day off, I guess.
Yo, I don't even know where
the library's even at.
- I bet you don't.
- ''Library's at''?
He don't know
where the library's at.
Quiet.
Quiet!
Gentlemen, in this hand,
I hold contracts
signed by me and signed by you.
In this hand, I hold academic-progress
reports prepared by your teachers.
We have six players failing
at least one class,
eight players getting incompletes
based on attendance.
Gentlemen, you have failed to up--
No, I'm sorry.
We have failed.
We have failed each other.
Now, there are some of you
who have upheld this contract.
But know that we are a team.
And until we all meet the terms
of this contract,
the gym will remain locked.
- Locked?
- What?
- What you mean, locked?
- What, like for the day?
- He must mean for the day.
- Mr. Thompson,

Mr. Gesek and Miss Sherman have
generously volunteered their time
to help us reach our goals.

But, coach, I have a 3.3.

That's good, sir.

Do you score all the points
for the team too?

We are the Richmond Oilers.

Do you know what Oilers
stands for?

Sir?

Know that you're not just
walking out on me.

You're walking out on them.

I had to beg you.

And then I ran all those sprints.

I did all that shit.

I killed myself for you, sir,
to get back on the team.

This is bullshit.

You put a lock on the gym and forced
them to meet you in the library?

- Are you crazy?

- Miss Garrison.

I'm surprised you know
where my office is.

Take the lock off that gym.

My phone hasn't stopped ringing.

Maybe someone on the other end
of that phone

has a solution to our problem.

Your intentions are good, Mr. Carter,
but your methods are a bit extreme.

You painted an extreme picture.

No one expects them to graduate,
no one expects them to go to college.

So you take away basketball,
the one area of their lives

- where they have some success?

- Yes, ma'am.

And you challenge them
academically?

- Yes, ma'am.

- And what if they fail?

Then we've failed.
Unfortunately, Mr. Carter,
both you and I know
that for some of these kids,
this basketball season
will be the highlight of their lives.
Well, I think that's the problem.
Don't you?
- Good morning, Coach Carter.
- Good morning.
Quite the Pandora's box
you've opened.
Oh, I get all the blame now?
Let's just say I'm happy to give you
all the credit.
I've got every news reporter in town
waiting to speak to you.
Got a press conference set up
around the front of the gymnasium.
Coach Carter has taken the lockout
to the next level
by canceling last night's game.
Richmond forfeited the game,
making it their first loss of the season.
And for now,
the lock remains on the gym.
Here he comes.
Here he comes now.
Coach Carter! Coach!
Can I get a question?
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
I'd like to thank you for your patience.
At this time, I'd like to introduce
Coach Ken Carter.
You may direct
your questions to him.
Mr. Carter, is it unfair to the players
whose grades qualify them to play?
Basketball's a team sport, sir.
We support each other
on and off the court.
Anybody still think coach
bluffing now?
I feel like running right up

in the middle of all those reporters
and telling them I think this
is bullshit, son.

Maybe you should've gone
to class, Lyle.

Maybe you should kiss my ass, dog.

My grades are fine, homeboy.

- It's Junior they should've locked out.

- Maybe Junior will kick your ass out.

- Why don't you try spelling it, then.

- Chill, chill, chill, man. Damn.

- Junior, if you need help, I'll tutor you.

- Man, I don't need no help.

Well, he ain't lock us out
for no reason.

We been tripping lately, man.

All y'all know it.

How do you think the community's
gonna react to this lockout?

I'm not really sure. I hope
they'll support these young men.

What, man?

No, man, it's just funny, dog,

because, Junior, man,

you thought it was bad all us knew
your dumb ass was failing science.

Now the whole world about to know
your dumb ass failing science.

- Man.

- Hey, man.

And you have Fremont this Saturday,
the biggest game on your schedule.

Now, Richmond is gonna riot
if you forfeit that game.

Saturday is a long way off.

We'll see what happens.

Thank you all for coming.

That's all the time I have right now.

I have to get back to work.

Coach, have you talked to any
of the parents?

Thank you for your time,
ladies and gentlemen.

I'd like to remind you that classes

are in session,
so as you leave campus,
please do so quietly.
I ain't turning the cheek.
He come up in my 'hood,
I'm serious, it's on.
- Young sirs.
- It's always been like that.
It's been a long day.
Reporters. Media everywhere.
Let's take this time to say whatever it is
we want while the doors are closed.
You have the floor.
This is about us.
Man, this shit ain't about us.
This is all about Coach Carter.
We're the basketball team.
All I see is you on TV,
getting famous, eating that shit up.
- Is that all you see?
- It's all I see.
You ain't lying.
Well, let me tell you what I see.
I see a system that's designed
for you to fail.
Now, I know you all like stats,
so let me give you some.
Richmond High only graduates
And of those that do graduate,
only 6 percent go to college.
Which tells me, when I walk down
the halls and I look in your classrooms,
maybe only one student
is going to go to college.
'Well, damn, Coach Carter, if I ain't
going to college, where I'm gonna go?''
Now, that's a great question.
And the answer for young
African-American men in here is this:
probably to prison.
In this county,
between 18 and 24 get arrested.
So look at the guy on your left.
Now look at the guy on your right.

One of you is going
to get arrested.
Growing up here in Richmond,
you're 80 percent more likely
to go to prison than college.
Those are the numbers.
Those are some stats for your ass.
Now, I want you to go home...
...and look at your lives tonight...
...and look at your parents' lives...
...and ask yourself, 'Do I want better?'
If the answer is yes,
I'll see you here tomorrow.
And I promise you...
...I will do everything in my power
to get you to college
and to a better life.
I don't understand this.
It's a letter, how can it be a number?
How are balancing
those equations coming?
- I can't do this.
- Hold on. Come on, son.
Don't give up yet, son.
Here's a story out of California
that's getting national attention.
The entire boys' basketball team
at Richmond High School
has been benched.
The highly ranked Oilers have
a perfect season on the court,
but some players were
in big trouble academically.
And in an unprecedented move,
Coach Ken Carter canceled practice,
locked the gym and sent his players
straight to the library.
Now, at the start of the season,
I understand you made all of
your players sign a contract
before they could join the team.
What exactly were the conditions
of that contract?
The contract states that

the players must maintain
a 2.3 grade point average
and that the players must
attend all their classes
and sit in the front row
of those classes.

Well, Coach Carter, it's an
unusual strategy, and a risky one
in a sense, in light of
your team's winning record,
but I think there's gonna be a lot of
people out there pleased to learn
that at least somebody still cares
about the concept of a student athlete.
Thanks a lot for joining us today.

I'm sorry to disturb you.

I'm Coach Ken Carter of the Richmond
High School basketball team.

Oh, yeah.

I need to ask you a favor.

My team is studying in the library,
and I've been trying to tell them
that brains and beauty
are a perfect combination.

Know what I'm saying?

I mean, I'm Worm, baby.

How would you like
to watch the Worm work?

Hey, where did you get
that backpack?

Watch out, Too Short.

Why study earth science
or history or algebra?

Getting good grades in those subjects,
combined with basketball skills,
can get you into college.

Girl, you should've bought it.

I would've worn it.

You selfish son of a bitch.

You snake.

- Miss--

- No, no, don't 'miss' me, snake.

Mr. Carter, you remember me?

Now, after all the things that my son

has been through for your team,
for you to go lock up
this gym like this, how dare you...
Open up the damn gym!
Let the boys play!
What's up, little cousin?
How you doing?
Got something for me?
That's what I'm talking about.
Hey, hey. Put it down, man.
- You Coach Carter, right?
- Yes, sir.
- Yeah? Check this out, man.
- Hey, hold on, man.
- Yeah. How you like that?
- Oh, hell no.
- What? What?
- You wanna get out the car?
- Let's talk about this.
- Ain't nothing to talk about.
Just open up the gym, man.
Let them boys play.
Trust me, you don't want me
out this car.
Yeah, see? Yeah.
- Get on!
- Don't be no punk.
Say what you gotta say.
- Come on back, punk.
- Dad. Relax. Relax, let it go.
No, I ain't letting nothing go.
These people in Richmond--
Goddamn it!
- Relax, Dad.
- Damn it!
Relax, relax. Chill out.
It's over. It's over. All right?
He doesn't mean anything. It's over.
Let it go.
Come on, get back in the car.
Let's go.
I think you know who she is,
but she's got a friend.
I mean, dog...

You gotta hook me up.
Why I always gotta hook him up?
Sound like I'm the Love Connection.
Just start a conversation.
I'll take care of it.
- Yeah.
- Yes, girl.
You don't remember me, do you?
But, see...
I was just ready to duff Duke out.
- Some serious shit.
- You should have did it, man.
You talking all that shit, just do it.
Know what I'm saying?
- You let somebody do that to you.
- I let him?
- Yo, Oscar, man.
- What?
Don't go nowhere. I'll be right out.
- I gotta talk to you.
- I already told you...
- No. You guys is kind of passing...
- I know I'm fine.
But I'm not feeling myself,
I'm feeling you.
Hey, I'm gonna holler at my boys
across the street for a quick minute.
Come on, man. Hurry up, man.
- All right.
- You know who we are, then?
- Here they go.
- What do we have here?
- The Three Stooges from Richmond.
- Punk, punk, punk.
- Larry, Co and Dummy.
- Bitches.
Dummy and dumb and dumber.
I mean, what the hell
is the bitchman from Richmond
doing on our side of the turf?
You garbage.
I can't believe y'all won.
- Shut up, woman.
- Don't be--

I don't understand how y'all won.

- Y'all wack-star niggas.

- Y'all wacked.

Wacked.

Yo, shut your bitch ass up.

- I don't wanna hear you talking shit.

- Homey, you a benchwarmer!

Get the hell out my face, whitey!

Let's do it, homey.

Let's do it, homey.

- What you trying to do?

- He got a piece, man.

You feel me right now, huh?

You feel me right now?

- Y'all brought a gun.

- Pinole homey. Feel me?

Keep it up the block, homey.

I'm right here, homey.

I'm right here. Right here.

It's all good. Y'all brought a gun!

Pinole!

Bitch-ass...

Pinole, right?

- Are they serious?

- I'll knock his braids out.

Nice to see the fight in you, dog.

- Know what I'm saying?

- Appreciate the backup.

Word.

I'm gonna see y'all later, all right?

- All right, homey.

- Good looking.

No doubt.

- I'm gonna check y'all.

- You got this.

This is my paper, man.

I'm not playing with you.

Then why don't you stop

getting in my face.

Renny!

Renny!

I can't believe--

He was just standing there.

- Renny!

- Oh, shit.
- Come on. Help me. Call 91 1 .
- Call 91 1 , man.
Yo, I need a phone.
I need something...
I just need you
to stay with me, okay?
Hold his head up.
Somebody help me!
- Cruz?
- I wanna come back, coach.
- What's going on?
- I wanna come back on the team.
What the hell happened?
They shot him.
Renny. They shot Renny.
I mean, we was just there.
We was just there.
Everything was good.
- Come inside. Come on.
- Everything was good, coach.
I mean, you know...
Come inside, son.
- Come on.
- You don't understand.
I wanna come back on the team.
What do I gotta do to play?
Don't worry about that, son.
Just come inside.
Whatever you want me to do,
I'll do it, okay?
Okay. Okay.
Okay. I got you.
Come on. Come on,
you're back with us now.
I can't believe they shot him.
Just come inside now, all right?
- Come on.
- I just wanna be on the team.
Come on. Come on.
Whatever you want me to do,
I'll do it, okay?
The state only requires a 2.0 GPA
for participation

in extracurricular activities.

- Yes, ma'am.

- And according to your contract,
the players are agreeing
to maintain a 2.3?

That, among other things.

Yes, ma'am.

- Other things like...?

- Attending all classes,
sitting in the front row
of those classes,
and wearing a tie on game day.

I see. Mr. Carter,

does the lockout include
practices and games?

And do you have
a set period of time?

There will be no basketball, ma'am.

Please. Quiet, please.

That includes practices and games,
until we as a team
reach the agreed-upon GPA.

Please, quiet.

Please, quiet.

Quiet.

Thank you, Mr. Carter.

In the interest of time, I'd like to open
this board meeting up for comments.

As a teacher, I was offended
when asked by a coach
to provide progress reports.

Nowhere in my contract does it say
that I have to do so.

It creates more work.

This lockout has brought
negative media attention
that questions our abilities
as educators.

End this madness. End this lockout.

I'm Jason Lyle's uncle.

That boy lives to play ball.

Comes to school every day now.

You take away basketball,

God knows what he'd be into.

Yesterday, he canceled
the Fremont game.

Now, that's the biggest game
of the year.

I have scouts coming
to watch my boy play.

- Me too.

- These boys are 1 6-0.

This whole school, this whole
community, is behind this team.

Everybody goes to every game.

Basketball is the only thing
that these boys have got.

Are we gonna let Carter come in here
and take that away from them?

- No!

- I don't think so.

Not gonna happen.

- I'd like to make a motion.

- Yes, Mr. Walters?

I move that we remove Mr. Carter
as head basketball coach.

Order, please. Order.

This board does not have
the authority

to terminate employment
of a staff position.

Then I move we end the lockout
and let the kids play.

I second the motion.

- Okay.

- If I may?

Yes, Mr. Carter.

You really need to consider
the message

that you're sending these boys.

It's the same message that we
as a culture send to our pro athletes,
which is that they are above the law.

Now, I'm trying to teach these boys
the discipline that will inform their lives
and give them choices.

If you endorse the fact

that I 5-, I 6- and I 7-year-olds

don't have to honor the simple rules
of a basketball contract,
how long do you think it'll be before
they're out there breaking laws?
Now, I played basketball
at Richmond 30 years ago.
It was the same thing then.
Some of my teammates
ended up in prison.
Some of them ended up dead.
I took this job because
I wanted to effect change
in a special group of young men,
and this is the only way
I know how to do that.
If you vote to end the lockout,
you won't have to terminate me.
I'll quit.
Good.
Thank you, Mr. Carter.
The board now recognizes
five voting members.
In this instance, we will be accepting
the vote of Principal Garrison as well.
Now, I put to those members
the vote on whether or not
to end the lockout.
All those in favor
of ending the lockout
will raise their right hand
when called upon.
I will vote first
by not raising my hand.
Principal Garrison?
Valerie Walker.
Benson Chiu.
Parent rep, Mr. Cepeda.
And Ms. Nyugen.
- Yes.
- Thank you.
The lockout ends with a vote
of 4 to 2.
If there's no other business,
this board meeting is adjourned.

Thank you all for coming.
Mr. Carter.
Are you sure you wanna do this?
Look, I know we haven't always seen
eye to eye,
but you've done such a great job with
these boys, it seems wrong to just--
Look. No offense, ma'am,
but all the work I did with those boys
was negated when they ended
the lockout.
I don't think that's true, I--
The board sent the message
loud and clear.
Winning basketball games
is more important
than graduating from high school
and going to college.
I'm sorry, I just can't support
that message.
Sir, they can cut the chain off the
door, but they can't make us play.
We've decided we're gonna finish
what you started, sir.
Yeah, so leave us be, coach.
We got shit to do, sir.
Our deepest fear is not
that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that
we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
that most frightens us.
Your playing small
does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened
about shrinking
so that other people
won't feel insecure around you.
We were all meant to shine,
as children do.
It's not just in some of us,
it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people

permission to do the same.
As we are liberated
from our own fear,
our presence automatically
liberates others.
Sir, I just wanna say thank you.
You saved my life.
Thank you, sirs.
All of you.
Academic-progress reports,
young men.
These things are...
...unbelievable.
I know you've been trying.
I guess there's only one way
to say this.
Gentlemen, we've reached our goal.
Let's play ball.
Rich what? Richmond!
Rich what? Richmond!
Rich what? Richmond!
Hustle back. Get back, get back.
Set it, Worm. Set it.
Watch baseline.
- Take it.
- Take it, come on.
- Yes!
- Find a man. Find a man.
Swing it, swing it.
Go, go, go.
Go, go.
Come on!
Go Richmond!
Hold the ball, hold the ball!
Nine, eight, seven, six,
five, four, three, two, one,
see you!
- Great game, coach.
- Good game.
Richmond returns from their lockout
and keeps their streak alive
at 17 games.
A team that won only four games
last year is now a Cinderella team

that has to be thinking
that there's a chance
of getting the phone call
to come to the dance.

Is Richmond headed
for the state tournament?
So, what else y'all gonna do
at the park when you go?

- Seesaw.
- Seesaw?
- You're gonna seesaw?
- Yeah.
- Who's gonna push you?
- My mommy's gonna push me.

Yeah?

That's good.

I wish I could go with you.

- Come on, baby.
- But I'll see you later, okay?
- Bye.
- Bye.

How you been?

Good.

You look good.

Thank you. So do you.

Considering.

You know, everything's been crazy,
with the lockout.

Yeah, it'll be all right.

For sure.

Can we sit down somewhere?

I've been trying to get my head
straight about things.

A lot of things. Especially us.

- Kenny, I--
- Kyra, just listen.

Please.

For a long time, it's just been
my moms, my boys and you.

And that's what I counted on.

I'm trying to count on myself now,
and I'm all right and shit,
it's just, without you,
nothing good feels as good.

It's like I'm missing
some happy part of me.
I got you something.
And it ain't from the 99 Cent Store.
Shut up.
- They gave you a scholarship?
- Yeah, baby, a full ride.
Oh, my gosh. That is crazy.
Oh, my gosh.
I know you gonna kill it up there.
No, we gonna kill it up there.
I told them about you and the baby.
They wanna help us.
Kenyon...
...there is no more baby.
I decided not to go through with it.
Kyra.
I had a choice to make,
so I made it.
For me, Kenny.
Well, when...?
Why didn't you tell me?
I would have gone with you.
I'm so sorry.
Kyra, I'm so sorry you had to
go through that by yourself.
My mom went with me.
But I think that...
I think you should go to school
and play ball and do your thing.
You know?
I want that for you. And that's real.
I think you should be all you can.
I want you to come with me.
Kyra, I love you.
I want you to come with me.
- You serious?
- I'm serious.
- Oh, my God.
- I love you.
I love you too.
Ken Carter.
I understand, sir.
All right. Thank you, sir.

We're in.

That's what I'm talking about.

Guys, guys, guys. Now, listen.

It's not gonna be easy.

It's gonna be a long road.

- We're a really low seed.

- Who did we get, coach?

St. Francis.

St. Francis?

Coach, they ranked number one
in the state.

Hey, yo, Junior, man, don't worry
about Ty Crane, dog. You'll get him.

We got this. That's all right, baby.

One game at a time. We got this.

- All right, guys.

- It's on.

- Bring your A game, young man.

- Yes, sir.

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen,
to the first round of the CIF playoffs.

St. Francis is one of the best
high school teams in the nation,
with Ty Crane

believed to be a shoo-in
for the top NBA draft pick next year.

On the other side of the court
is Richmond,

a team that's had
a media-worthy season as well.

Richmond High has never played
in a state tournament.

Let's go. Let's go, let's go.

- Settle down, settle down.

- 1 -4!

Ball, ball.

Move, move.

Good shot, baby.

- Get back, get back.

- Run motion. Run motion.

Motion 44.

Right here, right here. Swing it.

Force him left. Force him left.

You gotta force him left.

The baseline's another defender.
D up!
Better get somebody else to hold me.
I'm dropping 50.
Set up!
Come on. Get on him, get on him.
Get over here and help.
He shouldn't be scoring.
Get back, get back. Bring it in.
Get back, get back.
Find your man, find your man.
Now, watch out. Watch that trap.
Watch the trap. Motion. Motion.
That's the one.
That's it. Yes! Yes!
S-C-O-R-E! Score! Score!
Ball, ball. Ball, man!
Lyle, stop the ball.
Less talk out there.
Come on, come on, come on.
Let's go, Richmond!
You gotta help Junior
on the weak-side pick.
- Delilah! Delilah!
- Defense! Defense!
- Defense! Defense!
- Delilah! Delilah!
Delilah! Delilah!
- Get there, get there.
- Trap, trap, trap. Left side, left side.
- Use the pick, use the pick.
- I got it.
- Yeah! That's what I'm talking about.
- Foul, number three.
- Hold up.
- Number three.
- Mustangs, bring it in. Bring it in.
- Count the basket.
- Damn.
- Timeout, sir. Time.
Come here, come here. Damn it.
Come on, guys,
keep up the defense!
Come on, what you gonna do?

We still in this game.
Come on, fellas.
Gentlemen, you told me
you deserved to be here.
Well, you're not playing like it.
All season long,
we played our game.
Right now, you're playing theirs.
When we step on the floor,
every second that clock is ticking,
we are pedal to the metal.
We run the ball.
We pressure the ball.
And most importantly,
we control the tempo of the game!
We make them play
Richmond Oiler ball.
Worm, you can take this kid.
Force him left,
and when he crosses over,
you jump him.
Damien, push the tempo.
Kenyon, Lyle, crash the boards.
Cruz, when you're in the game in
transition, take that jumper you love.
Junior, just keep doing
what you're doing.
Hold on to that monster.
You do those things, gentlemen,
and I guarantee you,
at the end of the game,
we will be there.
All right, hands in.
- Game time.
- All right, take control of this game.
Who's gonna win this game?
One, two, three, Richmond!
Let's go. Let's do this.
One, two, three, Mustangs!
- Get up, get up.
- Go, go, go.
Yes.
- Reach-in foul.
- That's the only damn one.

- How you gonna call that on me, ref?
- Good call, ref.
Cruz. In for Kenyon.
- Ball, ball, ball, ball.
- Run it, run it, run it.
Get back, get back!
Everybody get back.
Yeah! Come on!
Get back, get back, get back.
Ref, you gotta call that.
This is my house.
- Push, push.
- Can we get a call?
Take care of the ball, man.
I'm gonna catch my breath.
Come on. Get back, get back.
Swing it right here. I got it.
Charge.
- Go get them, boys.
- Yeah, baby.
Charge, number 30. Red ball.
Come on, ref,
you wasn't even there.
- Red ball, red ball. Red, red, red.
- Yes. Yes.
- Richmond's ball.
- What?
Okay, let's go. Let's go.
- Red ball.
- Junior, good block!
- I know that's a foul.
- It's all ball.
- What are you talking about?
- What's up, man?
Knock his bitch ass out.
Calm down, man.
We're still in the game.
Come on.
- Ease back.
- Bring it in. Bring it in.
Get out of my way, man. Get off me.
Let's go, let's go.
All right, baby, it's all us now.
It's all us. Let's go.

They're standing on the edge of a cliff.
All we gotta do is push them off.
We're gonna run Candy.
Worm, you gotta sell them
the pass to Damien.
Junior, we come to you
on the weak-side seal.
But, gentlemen,
just because you deserve this
doesn't mean they're gonna
give it to you.
Sometimes you gotta take
what's yours. You ready to do this?
- Hell, yeah.
- Let's go.
- All right, hands in.
- Come on, take this.
Richmond on three.
One, two, three, Richmond!
- Careful of the foul, all right? Let's go.
- I got you. 1 -4, 1 -4!
- All right.
- Defense! Mustangs!
Let's go, let's go, let's go.
Candy! Candy!
Ball, Damien.
- Move, move.
- Help, help.
Get back, get back, get back!
Junior, get back!
Hands up!
Yeah, that's what I'm
talking about, baby. Yeah!
Mustangs! Mustangs!
Hold on, hold on. Let me down,
let me down. Battle, Battle! Battle!
You're real, man.
I mean that. All right?
All right? Keep your head up, baby.
Well, not quite
your storybook ending, huh?
Not for us, anyway.
But you men played like champions.
You never gave up.

And champions
hold their heads high.
What you achieved goes way beyond
the win-loss column
or what's gonna be written
on the front page
of the sports section tomorrow.
You've achieved something
that some people
spend their whole lives trying to find.
What you achieved
is that ever-elusive victory within.
And, gentlemen...
...I am so proud of you.
Four months ago, when I took
the job at Richmond, I had a plan.
That plan failed.
I came to coach basketball players,
and you became students.
I came to teach boys...
...and you became men.
And for that, I thank you.
If someone walked in this door
right now
and offered me the coaching job
at any school in the state of California,
you know which team I'd choose?
St. Francis?
I'm just saying, man.
Kenyon?
- Richmond?
- Rich what?
- Richmond.
- Rich what?
Richmond.
- Rich what?
- Richmond.
- Where we from?
- Richmond!
- What's my hometown?
- Richmond!
- What do we love?
- Richmond!
- Rich what?

- Richmond!