

"ALL THE RIGHT MOVES"

Written by

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THIRD DRAFT  
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PLEASE NOTE:

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL REFERENCES TO "ROSLYN" OR "ROSLYN HIGH" HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO "WALNUT HEIGHTS" AND "WALNUT HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL" RESPECTIVELY.

THIS CHANGE IS EFFECTIVE THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPT AND HAS BEEN CLEARED THRU LISBETH ASCHENBRENNER.

"ALL THE RIGHT MOVES"

FADE IN

EXT. MILL - EARLY DAWN

1

A smoking, fire-breathing monster, looming in the chilling dark. An ugly, GIANT, roaring, spewing billows of smoke into a sick sky. It stands on a fetid gray river, by railroad tracks.

SHOTS OF MILL - OVER CREDITS

2-A-  
2-E

STAYING outside, ON the towering stoves and blast furnaces. The cranes, girders, long steel buildings. The fire, smoke, satanic heat. The WORKERS. A whistle blasts. Shift change.

STEEL WORKERS

3

old, young, black, white, men, women. A horde of exhausted figures come trudging out of the mill. Dark, haggard silhouettes, temporarily reprieved for sixteen hours. They walk with their mackinaws buttoned, collars up, heads down, into the impurities.

JOVAN DJORDJEVIC (Georgia-vitch)

4

POP is block stocky, enduring as the steel he's forged for 27 years. He walks with his eldest son, GREG. Greg is 22. He wears a black and gold knit Steelers cap. Carries a lunch pail with an American flag on it.

POP AND GREG

5

move through the guard gate toward the parking lot as it starts to RAIN.

OUT 6

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

The single bed still has somebody sleeping in it. A boy of 18, STEFEN DJORDJEVIC. The clock radio alarm goes off like a bomb. Stef gropes to turn it off. Finally does.

STEF

8

lies somewhere beneath the covers in a heap. On the wall above his bed are three pennants. Ampipe High. Penn State. Pittsburgh Steelers. About the room are various football trophies and plaques. And pictures. A bronzed football shoe. A Steelers poster. There's some textbooks, unopened, on a small desk. Some magazines. Sports Illustrated, Pro Football Weekly. Sport. Engineering Digest. And a book: Engineering Schools of North America.

STEF

9

kicks the covers off and sits on the side of the bed, rubbing his eyes and hair. He wears only a crucifix and white jockey shorts. He stands up, stretching his lean frame. The muscles ripple. Girls say he's so fine. Adorable. Dreamy. A snob. He walks to the window and looks out through the shade.

STEF AND HIS P.O.V.

10

RAIN splatters the window. It's still dark outside. A flatbed diesel goes roaring by below, headlights on.

STEF

...Who made this mess?

He turns away from the window.

STEF

11

stops and looks at a model erector set bridge. Stef designed and built it. He replaces one of the cars and goes to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

12

The Djordjevic house is one of the hundred lining the street into AMPIPE. The homes are identical. Sixty years old, three-story, high attic, steps up to a front wood porch. All in a row, side by side, touching except for a tiny alleyway in between. Some have "For Sale" signs in the postage stamp lawns.

'EIGHTY PONTIAC TRANS AM

13

pulls up in front. The car is fire red. Turbo-charged. A Burt Reynolds beauty. T-roof, mag wheels. The works. Pop and Greg get out. Start heading for the house as:

STEF

14

comes out of the front door. He's wearing jeans, old white pony high tops, his black and silver varsity jacket. On the back of his jacket is a snarling BULLDOG and the words AMPIPE FOOTBALL. His breath vaporizes in soft puffs. Resigned, he skips down the steps, holding his books as an umbrella.

STEF, POP AND GREG

15

pass each other, without much to say.

STEF

'Morning, Pop.

POP

'Morning, Stefen.

STEF

Greg.

Greg does not respond. Stef goes his way. They go theirs.

STEF WALKING IN RAIN

16

A yellow school bus passes, splashing water at him. He avoids the spray with a catlike move. There's traffic. They built this town ninety years ago. Gave jobs to everyone that came. Slavs, Poles, Irish, Serbs, Italians. Eighteen thousand jobs at one time. Now, that figure's in half, and it shows along the sidewalk Stef walks.

STATE THEATRE

17

boarded and closed. Like THE LAST PICTURE SHOW.

FURNITURE STORE

18

cheap bedroom and dinette sets on EZ LAWAWAY. There's a luncheonette, laundromat, bar. Lots of bars.

A CAR HONKS AND STOPS

19

A battered old Cadillac convertible with big fins and Ampipe decals and bumper stickers. The driver calls out:

BOSKO

Djordjevic!

Stef runs over to the opening door.

Cont.

STEF

Thanks.

Stops. There's five girls in the car. All ugly. It's a touch choice. Rain or them. He squeezes into the back.

The three girls in the back make room for him. Stef's dripping wet. He rubs the drops from his eyes and addresses a girl up front.

STEF

Chris, can I borrow the windshield wipers?

The girls giggle. The man driving looks at Stef in the rearview mirror. His name is BOSKO. Graduated Ampipe in '53. Played tackle. He's beefy, balding. Wears a little bulldog on his leather jacket. He's president of the Boosters' Club. Still wears his class ring.

BOSKO

Gonna beat Roslyn Heights?

STEF

Yes, Sir.

BOSKO

You'd better.

CAR

20

as it rides through town. Past a bar. Clothing store, United Steel Workers Hall. A town in trouble, growing old and poor.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

21

Built in 1910, it's a dungeon for education. A new wing was added in '62. Any new improvement referendums have been defeated by the taxpayers. The student body's dwindled to less than 500. The kids come staggering in.

STEF

22

leads the dash into school. Bosko runs right behind him. A white apron sticks out beneath Bosko's jacket and over his pants. It looks funny.

CUT TO:

## TROPHY CASE AT ENTRANCE

23

A giant display of football and trophies. Pennsylvania State Champions. 1940. 1951. 1953. 1960. 1964. 1970. On the wall, giant blown-up photos of football players past.

## KIDS

24

coming and going, hanging out before the bell. The uniform is Levis. No Sassoon. No Valente. No Jordache. They're clean kids. No dopers or burnouts. But they're sure horny. Girls and guys have their arms around each other, bodies pressing.

## HALL

25

Locker doors clang open and shut. The walls are brick and heated by steaming radiators. The floor is warped wood. The ceiling high with overhanging bulb lights. POSTERS taped all over the walls. Beat Roslyn. Slay the Knights. Bite the Knights. Bulldog Power.

## STEF

26

comes into school and goes down a corridor.

## BOSKO

27

continues straight down the hall. Sees three black FOOTBALL PLAYERS (SPEEDY, BIG MAC, FOX) standing by a locker. Bosko goes right to them, giving each an enthusiastic high-five, as he passes without stopping.

BOSKO

Hey, brothers!

## FOOTBALL PLAYERS

28

bemusedly watch this asshole bop down the hall. Speedy repulsively looks at his palm, wipes it off on Big Mac's jacket.

FOX

Give me a break...

CUT TO:

## STEF

29

comes down another hall, nodding to certain kids. He passes SHADOW, a black athlete. Shadow wears a football jacket and CHARLOTTE. She's all over him.

Cont.

SHADOW

Stevie Wonder, let's get it on!

STEF

Say, Shadow, you taking good care of Charlotte?

SHADOW

Definitely! She's my Black and Decker pecker wrecker.

CHARLOTTE

Shadow! Damn you!

She playfully smacks him in the balls. Shadow grabs her.

SHADOW

(to Stef)

Know how when people die they donate their heart, brain, eyeballs? I'm gonna leave my dick to Charlotte.

Charlotte squeals and hits Shadow as Stef smiles and keeps moving.

CUT TO:

LISA LIETZKE

30

17, cute, popular, a junior with good grades. Plays trombone in the Ampipe marching band. Lisa and Stef have been going steady since the summer. She stands with a group of her FRIENDS by a locker.

GINA

(sobbing)

I hate him so much. Why does he do this?

FRIEND #1

'Cause guys are such jerks.

LISA

If that's all he wants, he's not worth it, Gina.

FRIEND #2

That's all any of them want.

GINA

(cracking)

What should I do?

FRIEND #1

Fuck him, girl!

The girls break up. Lisa sees Stef coming.

LISA

Here comes my nervous  
breakdown. I'll see you guys  
later.

GIRLS

'Bye, Lisa.

She dashes off to meet Stef.

STEF AND LISA

31

can't wait to take the other in their arms. Their love is  
obvious. A soft kiss.

LISA

Hi.

STEF

Hi.

(meaning Gina)  
How come what's-her-face  
is crying?

LISA

Her and her boyfriend are  
breaking up.

STEF

Bet I know why.

(bit cutting)

Not all guys are as understanding  
as me.

LISA

I know that, Stef.

She takes his arm and leads him down the hall, noticing his  
wet clothes and changing the subject.

LISA

What'd you do, swim to school?

STEF

Part way. My chauffeur was  
late picking me up.

They move to see their friends.

BRIAN RILEY AND TRACY JAUSOVEC

32

BRIAN is 6'1", 200 pounds. Irish eyes, baby face. Put him on a football field and he kills. Brian is Stef's best friend and goes steady with TRACY. She's blonde and bouncy. Blue eyes. The all-American cheerleader, clean and pure as baby powder. She and Brian stand holding each other dearly, exchanging tender kisses. Stef and Lisa come up to them.

STEF, LISA, BRIAN AND TRACY

33

BRIAN

(to Stef)

Let me have the English.

Stef digs through his notebook. Hands Brian the homework.

STEF

There's a couple of them  
I'm not sure of.

LISA

How can you guys know all  
about punts and kicks and  
quarterback hand-ons and not  
know how to conjugate a verb?

BRIAN

What's a verb?

STEF

What's a hand-on?

A bell RINGS. Kids are scattering and running, darting into class. Stef takes Lisa in his arms for one soft kiss.

LISA

See you before practice?

STEF

(smiling)

After practice.

Lisa turns to get Tracy. She and Brian are kissing.

LISA

Tracy, come on!

Tracy lets go of Brian. She and Lisa go running down the hall together. Stef looks at Brian.

STEF

Well, brain pump, let's go  
hit the books.

Cont.

BRIAN

I can hit them, I just can't  
read them.

They go in different directions. Stef taking his time.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT HALL - BOSKO

34

starts going into a door as a FIGURE comes hurrying out.  
We do not see his face as he brushes past Bosko.

BOSKO

Coach Nickerson...

NICKERSON

Not now, Bosco. I'm late for  
class.

BOSKO

You comin' to our booster  
dinner...?

But the figure continues down the hall without answering.  
Bosko watches, then enters the dark room.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - DARK

35

JESS COVINGTON sits by the projector, looking at the  
black-and-white FOOTBALL film flickering on the wall.  
Covington is 50. Black. Assistant head coach. Teaches  
sophomore science. Has for 25 years. He glances up as  
Bosko comes in.

COVINGTON

Look at this kid run.

Bosko watches number 32, the tailback, take a hand-off and  
burst up the middle for 15 yards.

BOSKO

Alexander?

COVINGTON

Haven't seen a runner like him  
since Dorsett played.

Another play is ready to be run. The guards pull and lead  
number 32.

BOSKO

Those linemen look like  
refrigerators. Ever see guards  
pull like that?

COVINGTON

Not in high school.

The play goes for 35 yards and a touchdown. The camera follows 32 to the bench. He's white. His name's Alexander.

BOSKO

Roslyn ain't a high school. It's a factory. Hell, they got two thousand kids more than us.

COVINGTON

And six of them could play in the NFL.

BOSKO

Probably longer than Nickerson did.

The film spins out. Covington flicks on the lights. We SEE the room is all FOOTBALL. Players' charts. Clippings. Photographs. Game bills. Trophies.

BOSKO

You're coming tonight, aren't you?

COVINGTON

Me miss a free meal???

BOSKO

Bet Nickerson won't be there.

(beat)

We know he's looking for another job, and if he doesn't beat Roslyn this year, we'll give him a real reason to look.

COVINGTON

He's doing the best anyone could.

BOSKO

Maybe that ain't good enough, Jess! He's had five years to get us to the state finals!

COVINGTON

We're five and three. You can't expect him to do what they did years ago. The town's been hit hard. Ten years ago we had twice as many students.

BOSKO

Bullshit! Nickerson's not winning. You don't win, you don't stay.

Bosko leaves.

INT. TYPING CLASS

36

Everybody at their typewriters, fingers flying. The TEACHER is at his desk. A man in mid-thirties. Well-built and in shape. Styled hair, smartly dressed, Dior sweater. Doesn't look like he belongs here. He sits reading the sports page. There's a big sign on the wall: Roslyn is not our type!

MOVING UP A ROW OF STUDENTS

37

intently typing the assignment. The typewriters are old Royals. Near the end of the row we COME TO Stef. He turns to SALVUCCI, the boy sitting across from him. A well-built, muscular Italian kid who's team quarterback.

STEF

(low)

Come on, do it. I dare you.

SALVUCCI

Not now.

STEF

Come on, Sal.

SALVUCCI

No, I can't.

STEF

Sure you can. She's watching.

Salvucci looks over at CONNIE. A sexy blonde in a tight sweater. Connie steels a glance back and smiles. So do Salvucci and Stef.

SALVUCCI

37-A

slides out of his seat and sits at the desk behind Stef. It doesn't have a typewriter. Salvucci stretches his legs out, clasps his hands behind his head and looks at Connie. Concentrating on her, he closes his eyes.

STEF, CONNIE AND SOME OTHER KIDS

37-B

keep stealing glances back.

SALVUCCI

37-C

keeps his eyes shut tight, concentrating, concentrating until:

THE DESK TOP RISES

37-D

OUT38-  
42

TEACHER

43

starts coming up the aisle to check the assignment.

STEF

43-A

starts typing, while whispering over his shoulder to Salvucci:

STEF

Sal...Sal.

But Salvucci stays with his eyes shut, the desk top still up.

The Teacher's getting closer. Without turning, Stef reaches back and WRAPS on Salvucci's desk.

Salvucci doubles over in AGONY as the Teacher is upon them.

TEACHER

You have something to share with us, Salvucci?

SALVUCCI

(a gasping moan  
of anguish)

Can I leave the room?

The Teacher nods.

STEF

Cramps.

The class cracks up. The Teacher turns to Stef.

TEACHER

Okay, Djordjevic. Less mouth and more fingers.

Stef smiles and resumes typing.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM

44

A cement and brick cave in the bowels of the bleachers. Tin lockers line the walls. Pieces of tape identify whose locker it is: Shadow. Pac-Man. Speedy. Bashful. Tank. The windows are boarded with wood. Pipes hang across the low ceiling. An old whirlpool sits in the corner leading to the showers. Various motivational signs are posted about: "BY FAILING TO PREPARE, YOU ARE PREPARING TO FAIL."

THE PLAYERS

45

Thirty-odd teen-age boys in various stages of dressing for practice. They sit on the benches, young Apollos, getting into practice uniforms. A portable radio echoes through the room, speakers blaring. The blacks keep time as they dress.

BRIAN RILEY

comes charging through the door, rushing over to Stef. Grabs him close.

BRIAN

Stef, guess what I got? Guess what I got?

STEF

Bad breath.

BRIAN

An invitation to visit the University of Southern California!

STEF

SC? You're going to SC!

BRIAN

On a full fucking scholarship! All I have to do is maintain my outstanding 2.0.

STEF

You can do that if you cheat.

SHADOW

(black safety)

The motherfucker's going Hollywood.

The boys come over to Brian, congratulating him.

SPEEDY

(black corner)

Better take us with you, Riles.

MOUSE

(black safety)

That's right, man. We make you look good by backin' your ass up.

FOX

(black defensive end)

I got a brother in California. San Quentin.

BRIAN

I'll play in the Rose Bowl. I'll never have to shovel snow again.

SALVUCCI

We're talking Los Angeles, man. Like far out, blow my mind, I can relate, have a nice day, that's not my thing, whatever turns you on.

BRIAN

Sunshine. Nude girls on the  
beaches. Movie stars. I'm gonna  
get 'em all!

PLAYERS

Oh, man...  
Listen to this bullshit now.

FOX

(black receiver)  
You going to Hollywood, Riles, you  
better learn to dress.

BIG MAC

(black defensive end)  
And dance.

FOX

That's right, man. You got to be  
cool, you know.

He starts dancing in place, real easy.

PAC-MAN

Show me how to do that, Fox.

Pakowski is a 200-pound defensive end. He's in his socks and  
jock. Stands next to Fox and tries emulating his moves, which  
of course he can't.

FOX

Just slide, man. Do like this.

PAC-MAN

Like this?

FOX

No, stick your chest out. Make  
your heart pop. Boom!

Pac-Man is a klutz.

FOX

Damn, Pac-Man, watch me now! Your  
heart be beatin' -- make it pop!

Stef joins in. So does Brian and Salvucci. And Tank.

STEF

Show me that.

Cont.

Shadow and Speedy start teaching.

SHADOW

Here, bring your right foot up,  
and your right hand up, like  
you're a puppet.

TANK

Watch me, Speedy.

George Nicatancous is a 220-pound fullback. He can run, but  
he can't dance.

SPEEDY

No, man. You got white man's  
disease!

STEF

How do I look, Mouse?

MOUSE

Horrible. No wonder you guys are  
always getting beat on defense.

SPEEDY

Just be gliding. Make your body  
move smooth, you know.

SHADOW

Riles, you get to Hollywood, you  
ain't ever gonna be one of them  
exotic male dancers.

BRIAN

Good.

SCENE

47

The clumsy white football players in various stages of uniform  
dress, doing an ELEPHANT DANCE as:

NICKERSON ENTERS

48

We SEE he is the TYPING TEACHER. He stands there, totally  
imposing, looking like Vince Lombardi.

The dancing instantly stops. Everybody but Stef. His back is  
to Nickerson and doesn't know he's there. The box gets turned  
off. Stef stops his steps. Turns. Nickerson stares about the  
room. At Stef.

Cont.

STEF

Dancing's good for football, right  
Coach? Can't afford aerobics.

NICKERSON

(sternly to everybody)  
Five minutes.

COACH'S OFFICE

49

A small room with a desk, blackboard, four lockers, bulletin  
board. On the desk, a photo of Nickerson's wife and child.

COVINGTON

50

in his sweat pants, windbreaker. Nickerson storms in.

NICKERSON

Did you know what was going on  
out there?

COVINGTON

Yes.

NICKERSON

And you didn't stop it?

COVINGTON

They were just having fun.

NICKERSON

This ain't a school dance. We  
have a football game against  
Roslyn Heights to prepare for and  
this is what we're gonna do!

(moves over to  
blackboard; starts  
diagraming a play)

If we play them straight up, we'll  
get our ass blown out. But...what  
if we neutralize their running game  
and dare them to pass? What if we  
take away their edge on us by moving  
our lineman a yard off the ball and  
just submarine them every play?

COVINGTON

A goal line defense the entire game?

NICKERSON

They'll never expect it. By  
shutting down the lanes, we take  
away their blocking assignments.  
When Alexander gets up to the line,  
he'll just be tripping and falling  
over this pile of people.

COVINGTON

And if he tries to break it  
outside...

Nickerson shows us what happens.

NICKERSON

Our linebackers and corners are  
right there to contain him. If they  
throw the ball, our safeties are  
too quick for them.

COVINGTON

Nobody's ever tried it.

NICKERSON

If it works, we're geniuses. If  
it doesn't, what have we got to  
lose?

COVINGTON

Our lives.

NICKERSON

It'll work.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

51

The turf is muddy from the rain, deep in puddles. The Bulldogs are on the field, practicing. Offense running plays at one end, defense at the other. TOWNSPEOPLE hang over the fence, watching the practice. Factory workers, mothers, they applaud and yell at good plays.

TWO MEN - MUSIAL AND CROWELL

52

Their neat dress sets them apart from the locals. Musial wears a Stetson. Both are in their late thirties.

DEFENSIVE UNIT

53

Nickerson is working with the front four as the others watch. The players are in a four-point stance, low, arms out, chin straps nearly touching the ground. We SEE their black helmets are chipped and battered from years of hitting. Little Bulldogs adorn the helmets, awards for outstanding plays. Covington holds a football, playing the opposing quarterback. Four players hold tackling dummies.

NICKERSON

Get your nose down there, Pakowski.  
Get it down, eyes on the ball.

FRONT FOUR

Big Mac, George, Pac-Man, Inky. Cleats digging, ready to SPRING.

NICKERSON

Slant inside! Attack the legs of the man in front of you! Maintain your area.

(kicks Big Mac  
in the butt)

Get your ass down, MacDonald.

COVINGTON

Ready. Hut. Hut.

Covington moves the ball, and the players DIVE forward, driving low into the tackling dummies, driving them back.

NICKERSON

Okay, okay! That was good!

The players get up, looking at each other in strange ways.

PAC-MAN

(whispers)

What's Coach doin'?

BIG MAC

Don't ask me, man. Just do it.

PAC-MAN

(indicates Musial  
and Crowell in  
grandstand)

See who's watching us?

SHADOW

Not us, man. Nickerson.

Stef goes to Nickerson.

STEF

Coach, this is what we're going to practice?

NICKERSON

That's right, Djordjevic, this is what we're going to practice.

(pause)

Riley!

BRIAN

Yes, Coach.

Nickerson puts his hand on a tackling dummy in the backfield.

Cont.

NICKERSON

This is Alexander. He's your assignment. Wherever he goes, you take him.

BRIAN

Yes, Coach.

NICKERSON

He goes to take a crap, you go with him.

BRIAN

Yes, Coach.

NICKERSON

That's your only responsibility.  
(challenging)  
Can you handle it?

BRIAN

(right back)  
Yes, Coach.

Stef looks at Brian. Alexander's in for a tough night.

NICKERSON

Corners and safeties!

Stef, Shadow, Speedy, and Bashful come forward.

NICKERSON

I want you playing right up with the linebackers. Anything that moves, you hit. They can't run on a seven-man front. I want you to dare them to throw on you.

SHADOW

All right!

Brian EXPLODES, crazed:

BRIAN

Who we gonna beat!

EVERYONE

Roslyn!

BRIAN

HOW WE GONNA BEAT 'EM?

Cont.

EVERYONE

BAD!

NICKERSON

(to Covington)

Keep running it and don't stop.  
 Keep them here all night till  
 they get it right.

NICKERSON

55

steals a glance over at the grandstand to Musial and Crowell. Nickerson is very attentive to their presence as he goes over to his offensive unit.

CUT TO:

PRACTICE FIELD - HOURS LATER

56

It's dark. The team's been practicing by the HEADLIGHTS of the townspeople's CARS. The boys finish their laps and slowly trudge off the field, helmets in hand. They're exhausted. We SEE Lisa go up to Stef and Tracy to Brian. Lisa carries her books and a trombone case.

SUZIE NICKERSON

57

By far the most beautiful woman in Ampipe. She met her husband in her junior year at North Carolina State. Suzie waits at the fence, looking out at the players and their girl friends.

SUZIE

58

smiles as she sees her husband come towards her. They exchange a soft, tender kiss. Twelve years of marriage and they're still very much in love.

SUZIE

How was practice?

NICKERSON

Great. Those guys from Cal Poly  
 stayed the whole time.

SUZIE

(eager)

And...?

NICKERSON

We're gonna go grab a few beers.

SUZIE

Oh, Vern!

Cont.

NICKERSON

They know I can recruit this area. I got a real shot at defensive backfield coach. It's down to me and a guy from Aliquippa.

SUZIE

It'll be you. When will they decide?

NICKERSON

After the season. If we beat Roslyn, I know it's mine.

(takes her hand)

We're getting out of here, Suzie.

SUZIE

I know you'll get it. I just know you will.

NICKERSON

Please, honey. Don't count on it yet.

SUZIE

I can't help it. Everyone's so cold to us here. And the kids in Angela's school have been teasing her about you again. She says they say bad things about her daddy.

NICKERSON

Well, she won't have to take that crap anymore. We'll all be out of here. I know how to beat Roslyn. This is the game that does it for us, Sooz. I told you when I took this job that it wouldn't be forever. These bastards think they're getting rid of me? Well, I'm getting rid of them!

They hug.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

59

Stef, Greg, and Pop sit at the small table, finishing dinner. The television is on. They eat and watch "FAMILY FEUD."

GREG

Two thousand workers are being laid off at the Johnstown plant.

POP

I heard.

GREG

And twelve hundred here.

POP

Rumors.

STEF

(to Greg)

Can I use your car Saturday night?

GREG

I'm worried about losing my job  
and all you can think about is  
trying to get laid.

STEF

Jealous, big brother?

GREG

You could have a Cadillac and you  
still couldn't screw Lisa.

STEF

Screw you!

Greg leaps to his feet swinging and Stef lunges for him as Pop  
jumps between them yelling in Yugoslavian.

POP

Kezirshpsi! Bastavitch!

They let go as Pop whacks them both. They all sit down in  
silence and continue eating while watching "Family Feud." Then:

STEF

(to Greg)

What about the car?

GREG

When you help make the payments  
you can use it.

POP

I want to watch this!

They turn their attention to the TV set.

TV

60-  
62-X

The contestant is doing good.  
One more question for \$10,000.  
He answers it correctly.  
Gets mobbed by his family and relatives.

GREG

Ten thousand dollars! We oughta go on that.

STEF

Yeah, the gorgeous Djordjevics. We'd be great! Get Uncle Mita, Uncle Boro, Aunt Zlatica, Cousin Jevto...If we win, we could buy new names.

POP

Smart ass!

Pop pops him across the back of the head. SMACK! Stef jumps up, throwing his white paper napkin at Pop's feet.

STEF

Personal foul! Unnecessary roughness!

POP

...Sit down and eat.

Stef does as the DOORBELL RINGS.

STEF

I'll get it.

He dashes into the:

LIVING ROOM

63

Stef opens the door for FRAZIER SMITH. Early thirties, a chiseled six-footer. Tie and jacket, neatly styled hair.

STEF

Mr. Smith.

SMITH

Stef, how are you?

Greg goes past them, up the stairs.

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM

64

Stef, Pop and Smith sip coffee.

SMITH

You've got a boy you can be proud of, Mr. Djordjevic. We'd like him to come to Delaware.

POP

To play football.

SMITH

And get an education.

POP

How do we know?

SMITH

We'll do everything possible to see that he gets his diploma. If he's having problems in his studies, we have tutoring to help him get his degree. Our people graduate, Mr. Djordjevic. And when they do, we have alumni all over the country that offer outstanding career opportunities.

(turns to Stef)

Stef, we'd like you to come visit our campus. Look at the living conditions, the academic setting. Meet the other coaches and players. We have a good opportunity for you. We have financial aid for you. It's a chance to play at a school where people really care about you.

STEF

Well...I like your school, Coach. You've got a good program...Only, there's some other schools I'm more interested in.

SMITH

They can't give you any more than we can. Probably not as much. You want to play pro ball?

STEF

Me? Hell no. There's not much call for 5'10" white cornerbacks in the NFL, but I know I can do the job in college.

SMITH

Yes you can. You hit like a truck. What are you looking for, Stef?

STEF

I just want to trade football for a degree and still be able to walk. I'll give you my body for four years and that's it. I'm gonna be an engineer. Your school's good, but it doesn't really offer the courses that suit me best.

Greg comes down the stairs, stops -- stays listening.

SMITH

Stef, I've checked your grades.  
A B-minus average is not going to  
get you an academic scholarship.  
You need football.

STEF

I know that.

SMITH

Well, we offer a BA in  
Engineering.

STEF

(awkwardly)  
...You offering anything else?

Pause. Smith gets up.

SMITH

Maybe you do belong at another  
school.

They all get up.

POP

(embarrassed)  
Mr. Smith...because my son is good  
at football, he has opportunities  
that otherwise would never be his.  
Thank you for coming to my house  
and offering them to him.

They all shake hands. Smith starts to leave. Stops. Turns  
to Stef.

SMITH

I know what you're thinking,  
what you're looking for. And maybe  
I don't blame you. But if  
things fall through, you've got a  
place with me whenever you want.  
I want you to know that.

STEF

Thanks. I appreciate it.

He leaves. Pop looks at Stef like he's crazy.

POP

I think you should go see this  
school.

STEF

You heard. All they're gonna give me is room, board, tuition. I know guys are getting cars, jobs, even some cash.

GREG

Well if you get some cash you better put it in your pocket 'cause the mill may not be here when you flunk out!

POP

Gregory, shut up.

STEF

(to Pop)

Look, I checked Delaware out. You know what their engineering program is? Four courses in ditch digging and that's what they call a major program? That's bullshit! I want a real engineering program and God damn it, I'm gonna get it!

Pop and Greg look at him. A horn HONKS outside. Stef grabs his jacket and heads for the door.

STEF

That's Lisa.

POP

Stefen!

He stops.

POP

You get an education. You can't count on the mill anymore.

STEF

Don't worry, Pop. I'm gonna get a good scholarship to a good school.

GREG

They haven't exactly been beating down the door.

STEF

Just wait 'til they see me in the Roslyn game.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEEL MILL - A LONG SHOT DOWN - NIGHT 65

The fire and flames glow in the foggy night, like eerie, orange reflections of hell.

PULL BACK TO A CAR 66

Lisa's Oldsmobile, parked on a secluded hillside, off the road in amongst the cold, bare trees.

INT. CAR - STEF AND LISA 67

They're stretched out in the front seat making out. Hot, heavy-duty. One hand's up her sweater. The other's rubbing her jeans crotch. They're both getting carried away.

STEF AND LISA 68

really going at it, bodies rubbing, sliding. He reaches down, inside her jeans. She's gasping.

LISA  
Stef...Oh, Stef...

She writhes beneath him, nails digging.

LISA  
No...No, don't...

He's smothering her with kisses. Her neck, ear.

LISA  
Please, Stef...Stop.

He can't.

STEF  
I love you. I love you so much.

He swallows her with his mouth, and his fingers probe inside her jeans. Her body jerks and twists, but she's caught.

LISA  
Oh! No!

He starts licking her breast. She's going crazy.

LISA  
Stef...Stef...

He rubs her hand on him. They're both boiling over, ready to explode. This is it, there's no stopping now.

LISA

69

snaps back with a harsh sudden BOLT.

LISA

NO!

(shoves him  
off her)

No, Stef! Stop!

Lisa sits up, tries to catch her breath, fix herself up. Stef's a mess. He looks at her. They're both confused. Afraid. Dizzy. Frightened. Quivering.

LISA

(soft)

I want to go home...

Stef looks at her. Unsure what to do. Neither is she.

LISA

...I think we should go.

STEF

Yeah...Okay.

She hits the ignition.

LISA

Stef...

He ignores her.

LISA

Look at me. Don't be mad.  
Please...

STEF

I'm not mad.

They drive away.

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S CAR - NIGHT

69-A

Coming down an Ampipe Street.

LISA

I'm sorry...I shouldn't have  
let it go that far.

Cont.

STEF

Guess not.

LISA

...Am I going to see you tomorrow?

STEF

I don't know, Lisa. This always happens.

LISA

It's just too scary.

STEF

I don't understand. The whole school's getting laid and half of them don't even like each other. I love you, and you're scared.

Car stops at light.

LISA

It's that...you're leaving, and I'm staying.

STEF

What does that have to do with now?

LISA

Everything...it's not right for me, Stef.

STEF

Will it ever be right?

LISA

I don't know.

STEF

Well, give me a call when it is.

He opens the door and gets out of the car.

OUT 70-  
71

MONTAGE - STEF

72-  
72-F

walking through town. It is evident throughout the SEQUENCE that Stef feels alienated from the whole world of Ampipe. Every store has a stuffed toy bulldog and a Beat Roslyn sign. Stef passes a bar. Peers in. Music. Dancing. Cheating. A COUPLE comes out, on their way home for sex. He walks on, passing:

30

BOSKO'S BUTCHER SHOP 73

It's painted on the glass window. And it's not kosher.

STATE LIQUOR STORE 74

Some teen-age kids trying to get ID and money for a buy.

STEF 75

sees Nickerson, Musial and Crowell come out of the Serbian Club. Musial has an arm around Nickerson.

INT. TEEN-AGE HANGOUT 76

Teen-agers attack the video games. Others neck in their booths. Stef sits in a corner, alone. He sips his soda, lost in thought.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 77

Stef's in bed. Sheets rustle. Greg pokes his head in the door. He's leaving for work.

GREG

Stef.

STEF

Hun?

GREG

Don't jerk off in bed.

Greg shuts the door.

END MONTAGE

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

78

Nickerson is working with the front four. Each boy drives down, submarining into a dummy held by two baby-faced junior high players. Nickerson never lets up.

NICKERSON

Drive! Get low! Go for the knees!  
Hit hard! Hurt somebody!

The play's over. Nickerson leaps on George.

NICKERSON

What the hell's the matter with  
you Mantzaris!

Nickerson WHACKS him on the helmet. George recoils.

GEORGE

Nothing, Coach.

NICKERSON

Nothing? Nothing!

Nickerson shoves him back, then YANKS him forward by the face mask, nearly breaking the boy's neck.

NICKERSON

You're slow! You're not moving  
off the ball! You look like shit!  
Is that nothing?

GEORGE

No, Coach.

NICKERSON

You want to play against Roslyn?

GEORGE

Yes, Coach.

NICKERSON

Then you show me and give me all  
you can, or I'll play someone  
that will!

GEORGE

Yes, Coach.

NICKERSON

You're a bulldog! You're mean!  
Ugly! Vicious! Mad! Growl!

Cont.

GEORGE

Grrrrr! Grrrrrr!

NICKERSON

You bite! You dig! You claw!  
You crawl! You want to go to  
college or you want to stay  
here all your life?

GEORGE

College, Coach.

NICKERSON

Then get down there and play the  
way you've been taught!

GEORGE

Yes, Coach.

They all get down in their submarine stance, growling like  
a pack of mad junkyard dogs.

NICKERSON

79

walks past a BOY ON CRUTCHES whose leg is in a cast.  
Nickerson flips him a football as he walks by.

NICKERSON

(encouragingly)

Next year, Mike.

CUT TO:

VARIOUS SHOTS

80

of the team preparing for Roslyn. The practice is bone-breaking.  
They hit, block, run, tackle. Nickerson drives them mercilessly.

STEF

81

totally intent, working on pass defense. The receiver goes  
deep. Stef's with him. The ball is there but instead of  
knocking the ball away Stef:

LEVELS THE RECEIVER

82

a hard clean hit. The pass goes incomplete. The onlooking  
townspeople applaud.

NICKERSON

83

comes rushing up to Stef.

Cont.

NICKERSON

Go for the ball! Hit the ball,  
not the man! I've told you and  
told you, and told you! Go for  
the ball! If you hit the man too  
soon you're gonna draw a penalty.  
Can you learn that, Djordjevic?

STEF

(defiantly)

I had the coverage. I made the  
play!

Nickerson grabs him by the jersey.

NICKERSON

You make the play the way you're  
told Goddamit or you don't play  
for me!

He shoves Stef away and leaves.

CUT TO:

WIND SPRINTS

84

Last drill of the day. It's dark and late. The headlights  
are on again. The team's in four lines, offense and defense.  
A relay race. Fifty lung-bursting yards with a football.  
The defense has a slight lead, and Stef's running anchor.  
Mouse is anchoring the offense.

STEF

85

takes the ball and RUNS. He's got a step on:

MOUSE

86

a 5'4" black speedster.

STEF AND MOUSE SPRINTING

87

Their lines cheer them on. Both boys have blinding speed.  
They come down the field like Herschel Walker. Mouse is  
gaining. Gaining. The last 15 yards they're running stride  
for stride and cross the goal line together. Dead heat.

STEF AND MOUSE

88

pulling themselves up. They gasp for breath, chests heaving.  
They turn and walk back to the others. Stef sticks out his  
hand. Mouse squeezes it.

Cont.

MOUSE

Know why the brothers are so fast?

STEF

Why?

MOUSE

'Cause the lions and tigers got  
all the slow ones.

Stef shakes his head. It hurts too much to smile.

NICKERSON

89

calls the team around him. The boys are exhausted. It's  
been a brutal practice. They can feel the hot showers.

NICKERSON

Anybody quitting?

ALL

No, Coach!

NICKERSON

You quit on this football field  
today, tomorrow you'll quit in  
school. You'll quit your job  
someday. You'll get married  
and you'll quit on your wife.  
Once you've said I quit the  
first time, it's easier to say  
it the second time.

(looks around)

Do we have any quitters here?

ALL

No, Coach!

NICKERSON

Good! Because since nobody won  
the race, everybody does five laps.

The players look at each other in disbelief.

NICKERSON

Djordjevic, you do six.

Stef looks at him and starts jogging. Covington comes up  
to Nickerson.

COVINGTON

Why so tough on Djordjevic?

Cont.

NICKERSON

He's a wise-ass kid. He has to do everything his own way. He's got talent but he's just using football to get something else.

COVINGTON

Aren't you?

NICKERSON

I'm using football for football. It's my life.

Covington puts an encouraging arm around Nickerson and glances up at Musial and Crowell in the stands.

COVINGTON

Relax, Vern. They're gonna give it to you.

NICKERSON

Christ, I hope so.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - ANGLE ON POP - NIGHT 90

comes up to the MAIN GATE bar and goes in.

INT. MAIN GATE 91

Pigs knuckles in a bottle, 90¢ shots, sawdust on the floor, faded photographs of steelworkers and Ampipe football teams of years past cover the wall. The TV is on but nobody's watching it. A dozen or so men are at the bar. Pop sits at the end, by himself.

BARTENDER - HENRY 92

comes over to Pop, glad to see him. In the b.g. Bosko and buddies are singing Ampipe fight songs and some other guys just drink and don't say a word.

HENRY

Joe. How ya doin'?

POP

(shaking hands)

Fine, Henry.

HENRY

It's good to see you. You never come around no more.

Cont.

POP  
No.

HENRY  
(opening a beer)  
You should get out once in  
awhile.

POP  
I should.

They look at each other.

HENRY  
She was a good woman, Joe.

Pop nods. Henry smiles and pounds the bar counter.

HENRY  
Remember when you two did the  
polka on the bar and you fell  
off?

Pop remembers.

POP  
Henry, I need someone to work  
for me Friday night.

HENRY  
Geez, Joe. Friday night. That's  
the Roslyn game. Nobody's gonna  
switch.

POP  
I have to watch my son play.

HENRY  
How's Stef doing?

POP  
He's going to college. A  
scholarship.

HENRY  
That's great.

Pop gets up.

POP  
Well, if you hear of somebody.

HENRY  
I'll find someone.

	37
INT. GYM - PEP RALLY	93
The old small gym is ready to break apart from all the kids and all the CHEERING. Students fill every nook and cranny. The entire student body is here, clapping and cheering.	
SIGNS	94
cover the brick walls: BEAT ROSLYN. BITE THE KNIGHTS. SILVER AND BLACK ATTACK. BULLDOG MEAT. Streamers and balloons hang from the ceiling, the railing.	
CHEERLEADERS	95
fire the crowd on. We SEE Tracy, Charlotte and Gina leading the cheers. POM-POM GIRLS prance and jump as the:	
SWING MARCHING BAND	96
in the corner of the gym floor, strikes up the snappy "Soul Beat." The 50-piece band ROCKS the joint. Drums, tubas, sax, clarinets, TROMBONES. They're great.	
LISA	97
swinging her trombone.	
GYM	98
Everyone's singing and cheering. The school spirit is <u>incredible</u> . Confetti and cut-up paper rain down on the floor.	
FOOTBALL TEAM	99
Stef, Brian, Shadow, Pac-Man, Speedy, all of them in their black game jerseys. They're lined against the wall, removed, chewing gum, watching, waiting to go on. Stoic gladiators. Down the line, the coaches.	
STEF AND BRIAN	100
Brian pulls Stef aside.	

BRIAN  
Come here, listen, I gotta  
talk to you.

STEF  
What?

BRIAN  
If I tell you this, you promise  
you won't say anything?

STEF  
Okay.

BRIAN  
You swear you'll never repeat it.

STEF  
(impatiently)  
Yeah, yeah. What?

BRIAN  
Tracy's pregnant.

Stef looks at him, stunned.

CUT TO:

TRACY CHEERING 101

She does a great LEAP, coming down in a SPLIT on the gym floor.

CUT TO:

STEF AND BRIAN 102

STEF  
Tracy...? You're kidding,  
aren't you?

BRIAN  
I wish to God I was. What  
should I do?

STEF  
I don't know...You've already  
done it.

CUT TO:

BULLDOG 103

comes running across the gym floor. This is PIPER, the school mascot. He's pulling a cheerleader on a leash. Piper is squatty, fat, mean-looking and muscular. Wears a spiked collar. He BARKS out at everyone, saliva drooling down his jowls. Seeing him, the kids ERUPT. There's total mayhem and chaos. The cheerleaders do cartwheels.

CUT TO:

STEF AND BRIAN 104

BRIAN  
I'm not ready for no kid.

Cont.

STEF

Neither is she. You should have used protection.

BRIAN

I did.

STEF

How does she feel about an abortion?

BRIAN

Not very good.

CUT TO:

BOSKO

105

at the microphone at Center Court. He's dressed up.

BOSKO

This rally, this game, isn't just for the students. It's for the town! For the mothers, and the fathers and the steelworkers! And here is the man that's gonna bring us Victory and make Ampipe what it used to be, Coach Nickerson!

CUT TO:

STEF AND BRIAN (OVER THE APPLAUSE FOR NICKERSON)

106

STEF

Brian you can't ruin your life and hers. You do whatever it takes, but you can't wreck everything you've wanted and worked for.

BRIAN

No...

STEF

Even if you have to get married, you can still go away to college and play football. They'll give you married student's dorms...a job...baby sitters...

BRIAN

Yeah.

Cont.

Stef grabs him, assuringly.

STEF

Brian, nothing is gonna stop us.  
We're getting out of here! We're  
gonna get out of here!

CUT TO:

NICKERSON AT MIKE

107

NICKERSON

I don't have to tell you how much  
this game means to us.  
Roslyn Heights is undefeated.

The students boo and jeer.

NICKERSON

Roslyn Heights is ranked third  
in the State.

More boos.

NICKERSON

Roslyn Heights has its own  
Nautilus room.

Boos.

NICKERSON

They've got a tennis team! A  
swimming team! They even have  
a golf team!

Boo boo boo.

NICKERSON

For boys and girls!

Boo.

NICKERSON

But they don't have a football  
team like we got!

Screams, cheers, whistles.

NICKERSON

And they don't have a student  
body like we got! And we're  
gonna beat them 'cause we're  
Ampipe. And Ampipe teams win  
football games!

The gym is shaking. The FOOTBALL TEAM runs out on the floor and lines up behind their Coach. The applause is DEAFENING.

NICKERSON

Offensive Captain and quarterback,  
Vinnie Salvucci!

Salvucci runs up to the mike.

SALVUCCI

I just want to say I know the  
team's ready to play, and we're  
gonna kill 'em!

They're going crazy.

NICKERSON

Defensive Captain and middle  
linebacker, Brian Riley!

Brian takes the mike.

BRIAN

This is the biggest game of  
our lives, and we're gonna  
win it for you!

BAND PLAYS THE ALMA MATER

108

Everyone puts their arms around the person next to them and starts singing and swaying.

STUDENT BODY SINGING

109

One last final cheer as the song ends, and the kids start filing out of the gym as the BAND BLASTS "Soul Beat."

GYM EMPTYING

110

The kids go quickly, for school's over now. The band stops playing and departs. The gym floor is BURIED UNDER with confetti and papers. Some kids start wrestling in the stuff, throwing paper at each other as if it were snow.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. ROAD - DAY 111

The road into ROSLYN HEIGHTS. Two yellow Ampipe High School BUSES come down the road.

CUT TO:

INT. TEAM BUS 112

The players sit solemnly. Chew gum and look out the window. The bus passes a:

ROADWAY MOTEL 113

The marquee sign declares: WE LOVE OUR KNIGHTS.

NICKERSON 114

sits up front by the DRIVER, who flicks on the windshield wipers. It's starting to drizzle. Nickerson stares out the window.

CUT TO:

BUSES 115

coming into Roslyn now. Wendy's Burgers. Colonel Sanders. Long John Silver. Baskin Robbins. Radio Shack. They're all here. The buildings are clean. Modern. A different world from Ampipe.

LITTLE KIDS 116

stand on the sidewalk and watch the buses pass. They yell obscenities and give the finger. The buses roll on.

SIGN ON STREET 117

An arrow points to COLISEUM.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM 118

seats ten thousand every game and is always sold out.

PLAYERS' BUS 119

pulls around in the parking lot and stops. The players start getting off. The rain is light, but steady.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM

120

clean and spacious. Red carpeting. Large lockers. A trainer's room. All in red and gold.

SHADOW

(looks around, awed)

Sure some college team don't  
play here?

They move to their lockers. Start to undress. The DIGITAL CLOCK on the tile wall reads 5:12.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS

121-  
121-F

Getting ready. Ankles are taped. Hands taped. Players stretch, bend. Gladiators preparing for battle. Bare bodies, wet with anticipation. Hip pads are pulled on. Shoulder pads laced.

STEF

122

lies on the floor in football pants, T-shirt. Helmet for pillow, stares at the ceiling. His eyes are a small valley, empty and far away. We've never seen him look like this.

PAC-MAN

123

turns from his locker and calls down to Big Mac, who has his TAPE DECK PLAYING.

PAC-MAN

Turn that box off!

BIG MAC

Turn you off, man!

Pac-Man comes at him.

PAC-MAN

What'd you say?

BIG MAC

You heard me.

Pac-Man leaps at him. Both go down, swinging, being pulled apart by their teammates. Pac-Man pulls himself away and goes back to his locker.

CUT TO:

LOCKER ROOM - LATER

124

Everybody in uniform now. The clock reads 7:24. The team listens to their coach's every word.

NICKERSON

Well, boys...it's time to strap on.

(beat)

Got your friends, your families, Joe Paterno, a lot of college coaches out there watching you tonight.

(beat)

You are about to play Roslyn Heights in a game of football! Nothing you ever do again in your lives will be as important.

(beat)

You will win this game tonight, not by being bigger or stronger or richer or smarter, but by trying harder, working longer, and wanting it more than they do!

(holds up white miniature plastic FOOTBALL)

Now you all know what this is! You all got one. Every boy born in Ampipe is given one at birth. But not every boy gets to play football for Ampipe.

(getting stoked now, moving about)

This is your chance! This is it! You don't get another! Here it is! Right here! Right now! Everything we worked for! You give everything you have, you're gonna win! You don't you lose. It's that simple.

(pauses; looks at them)

Now you know what they think of you. You know what they call you.

ON THE PLAYERS

125

NICKERSON

You're the dagos, the polaks, the slobs, the micks. You're all niggers! Everybody looks down on us! They think they're better than us. Well, they're not! This is your chance to show them. You go out there and block and tackle, and run and hit! Forty-eight minutes! It's our game! And we're gonna win it! Aren't we?!!!

The players EXPLODE, screaming. They gather around Nickerson dropping to one knee, arms around each other in prayer.

TEAM

Our Father who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy  
Kingdom come, Thy will be done...

They BURST from the huddle and charge for the door, a pack of crazed psychopaths.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT 126

As the first Ampipe players come running onto it, the Ampipe rooters break into cheer as the BAND PLAYS.

STEF AND PLAYERS 127

come pouring over to their side of the field, fists raised high.

LISA 128

plays her trombone in the band, but she watches Stef.

TRACY, CHARLOTTE AND GINA 129

doing cartwheels with the Cheerleaders.

GREG AND POP - BOSKO AND BUDDIES 130

in the Ampipe section with friends and dates. Flasks are passed.

MUSIAL AND CROWELL 131

They're here too, in a row of 30 other men, all with binoculars, clipboards, notebooks.

STEF AND BRIAN ON SIDELINES 132

POUNDING each other on their shoulder pads, butting heads. Crazed bulls. They stop and look up into the stands at the row of recruiters.

BRIAN

Jesus, Penn State, Pitt,  
there's that guy that talked  
to me from Arizona.

STEF

It's showtime, buddy.

KNIGHT IN GOLD ARMOR

133

comes riding into the stadium. He's on a magnificent white Arabian. The Knight comes galloping around the field as the Roslyn band PLAYS "The William Tell Overture." The packed stadium goes totally wild.

KNIGHT

134

dangling at the end of his lance, a stuffed toy bulldog. He RIDES behind the Ampipe bench.

PIPER

135

pulls on his leash, BARKING at the horse as it races by.

ROSLYN TEAM

136

comes CHARGING out of their tunnel. Their Cheerleaders and Band form a line. The players wear gold jerseys, red numerals, red pants, GOLD SHOES, gold helmets.

SCOREBOARD

137

electronically flashes "GO KNIGHTS GO."

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT - FOOTBALL ON TEE

138

It gets kicked. WHOP!

LONG SHOT - KICKOFF

139

Twenty-two players moving. Ten thousand fans screaming.

The ball sails through the night.

ROSLYN RECEIVER

140

catches it on the five and gets tackled on the thirty. The team comes on the field.

ROSLYN HUDDLE

141

Only two black players. A large fullback to block for Alexander, and a speedy wide receiver.

QUARTERBACK

Okay, here we go. Slot left, thirty-six power, on two.

## AMPIPE DEFENSIVE UNIT

142

watches Roslyn come up to the line of scrimmage and line up.  
The Quarterback points his finger at Riley.

## QUARTERBACK

You, Riley! We're comin' at you,  
motherfucker!

## BRIAN

Come on! Here I am!

The FRONT FOUR take their submarine stance. Low. Arms out.  
Noses off the ground.

## QUARTERBACK

Down. Set. Ready.

Brian comes right up on center. Stef and Speedy move in.  
Seven-man front.

## QUARTERBACK

Hut! Hut!

## PLAY

143

Alexander takes the handoff and EXPLODES straight ahead. Runs  
right into a pileup of fallen bodies. Gets gang-tackled by  
Brian, Stef, Jaws, and Shadow. Gain of a yard.

## AMPIPE PLAYERS

144

get in their huddle. They hold hands. There's a great rush.

## PLAYERS

Okay! Okay!  
It works!  
All right!  
We are happening!

They all line up again.

## SAME PLAY

145

Same results.

## ROSLYN HUDDLE

146

## QUARTERBACK

Strong right, thirty-eight sweep  
on one. And everybody block  
God damnit!

PLAY 147

Alexander takes the pitchout and starts to sweep right. His pulling guards get submarined. He tries to break it wide outside. Bashful and Speedy hit him out of bounds. Roslyn sends in their punter.

PUNT 148

Roslyn kicks the ball to Mouse, who returns it for a short gain.

ROSLYN LINE COACH 149

has his linemen together. The COACH wears headsets.

COACH

What the hell's going on out there! Why can't you block those little sons of bitches?

GUARD

Coach, they're driving at our legs.

COACH

Well block them anyway!

A manager comes over with a tray of green cups. GATORADE. The players grab them.

AMPIPE PLAYERS 150

Nickerson's patting their butts, encouraging them.

NICKERSON

That's how we do it, guys. Good defense. Big D!

AMPIPE DEFENSE 151

On the first play, Salvucci rolls out on a quarterback option and gets dropped for a 5-yard loss.

SERIES OF SHOTS OF GAME (MIS-EN-SCENE) 152-  
152-E

The Ampipe offense can't move the ball, and the submarine defense continues to shut down Roslyn Heights. It's a war in the trenches between schoolboys. Punishing. Painful. Bodies fall.

ROSLYN PLAYER 153

A lineman lies writhing on the ground, screaming in pain. The players back away as the Coach and DOCTOR come running onto the field. They examine his twisted leg. It's broken. The stretcher is brought out and the player gently lifted onto it. They take off his helmet. The boy is baby-faced and crying. Stef and Ampipe players watch solemnly as the player is wheeled off. The crowd applauds. He's put into an ambulance as the game continues.

GAME 154

Roslyn's ball on Ampipe's 40.  
The handoff to Alexander.  
He breaks tackles.  
Bursts into the open.  
Stef's after him.  
The only one with a chance.  
But catches him too late.  
Touchdown.

STADIUM ERUPTS 155

The Knight gallops around the Coliseum. Fans scream. The  
BAND PLAYS. The extra point is good. 7-0 Roslyn.

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD 156

7-0 at halftime.

CUT TO:

SECOND HALF KICKOFF 157

A fog's rolled in. It's raining steadier now. Mouse receives  
the ball and runs it back to the 40. Almost broke it.

MORE SHOTS OF GAME 158

The fighting continues for the precious yards. Ampipe has to  
punt. Roslyn takes over on their 35.

AMPIPE DEFENSE 159

The field's getting muddier, chew-up chunks of turf.

The submarine defense is even more effective. Alexander runs  
the first play for no gain. FUMBLES. But Roslyn recovers.

SECOND DOWN 160

The Roslyn Quarterback fakes to Alexander up the middle.  
Drops back to pass.  
Throws to his wide receiver, who's open on the sideline.  
Stef comes from nowhere.  
Intercepts.  
Instantly grabbed by Roslyn player, Stef starts to go down.  
Laterals off to Shadow.  
Who goes down the sideline for a touchdown.

SHADOW 161

gets mobbed by his defensive unit. He clutches the ball high  
and runs to his bench, where Nickerson and the rest of the team  
mob him. The extra point is good. The game is tied 7-7.

## GAME CONTINUES

162

It goes back and forth between the 20s, but now Ampipe's defense is weakening. Alexander gets the ball and yards on most every play. Three yards. Four yards. Three more. First down. Six yards. Five yards. First down.

## AMPIPE DEFENSE

163

slowly yielding, being pushed back. A steady march in the mud. The momentum is all Roslyn's.

The stadium is shaking as the electronic scoreboard FLASHES GO GO GO! Another first down at Ampipe's 15.

## AMPIPE HOLDS

164

Roslyn has to settle for a FIELD GOAL and leads 10-7.

## NICKERSON

165

paces the sidelines, looks up at the:

## SCOREBOARD

166

There's 9:48 in the game.

DISSOLVE TO:

## SCOREBOARD

167

still 10-7, but only 4:05 remaining. Roslyn has to punt.

## ROSLYN KICKER

168

takes the snap and BOOMS one.

## MOUSE

169

catches it and barely avoids a diving Roslyn tackler.

Mouse is being chased to his right.

Gets a block.

Cuts back.

Feints, spins, weaves

and is GONE

74 yards.

Touchdown Ampipe!

## AMPIPE BENCH

170

goes wild. Total insanity. Mouse is buried under by his teammates and Nickerson.

51

EXTRA POINT 171

is converted. 14-10, Ampipe, with 3:30 to go.

KICKOFF 172

is run back to the 30. The teams take the field.

AMPIPE DEFENSE 173

Stef, Brian, Shadow, Big Mac. They all know it's up to them, and that's the way they want it.

FIRST PLAY 174

Pass goes incomplete.

SECOND PLAY 175

Speedy has a pass go in and out of his hands. A sure interception but for the RAIN, which is coming down in TORRENTS.

THIRD PLAY 176

Alexander runs a draw for fifteen.

NEXT PLAY 177

Pass complete for twelve.

NEXT PLAY 178

Psss complete for twenty. The defenders are slipping.

NEXT PLAY 179

A BOMB down the right side.

But Stef is with the receiver, stride for stride. The ball is there. Perfectly thrown, for the goal line.

STEF 180

times his LEAP precisely. As the ball lands in the receiver's hands, Stef LEVELS HIM with a breath-sapping HIT. Ball and receiver go FLYING. A great play.

PENALTY FLAG 181

comes sailing out of the official's pocket. He points at Stef. Pass interference.

STEF 182

picks himself out of the mud and can't believe the call.

STEF

OFFICIAL

You hit him too soon, son.

STEF

No! Come on!

But the Ref is impervious. The ball is spotted inside the 5. First and goal to go. Everyone in the stadium is on their feet, screaming. Not one person has left, even though it's raining buckets.

NICKERSON

183

in a RAGE. He grasps his throat with his hands in a choking gesture and screams at the Official.

NICKERSON

Choker! Choke artist! You live here? How much you bet on the game, choker? That receiver your nephew?

He kicks the turf, the bench, on fire.

NICKERSON

God damn that kid!

AMPIPE DEFENSIVE HUDDLE

184

Rain beats off their helmets. Their jersey numbers are obliterated with mud. They look like troglodytes. Their breath vaporizing is rapid puffs, through their caged faces. They all hold hands. Hands raw and swollen, bleeding, caked with mud.

STEF

The fuckin' ref!

BRIAN

Shut up! He called it!

BIG MAC

They ain't scorin' on us.

BRIAN

That's right! We're gonna stop them!

SHADOW

Right here!

PAC-MAN

No more. Not one inch more!

STEF

We can do it!

AMPIPE CHEERLEADERS 185

Bundled in jackets against the rain, they lead the crowd:

CHEERLEADERS

Dee-fense!  
Dee-fense!  
Dee-fense!

They turn to watch the game, pretty faces filled with anxiety and tension. Tracy CROSSES herself.

ROSLYN TEAM 186

snaps out of the huddle, coming up to the line.

QUARTERBACK

Here's where you mill honkies  
go back where you belong.

BIG MAC

You ain't scorin'!

PAC-MAN

You're sorry, man! This is  
Ampipe you're playin' against!

The Quarterback sets his team. The defense digs down low.

FIRST DOWN 187

Alexander comes straight up the middle. There is a JARRING CONCUSSION OF COLLIDING BODIES. The SOUNDS hurt. The bodies untangle. The ball is placed on the 3.

SECOND DOWN 188

Same play. Again the smashing pileup of muscle and bone. The ball is placed inside the 2.

AMPIPE DEFENSE 189

wait on their knees, in the mud and rain, for the enemy to attack again. Here they come.

THIRD DOWN 190

Again Alexander gets the call, driving down inside the ONE, where the ball is placed a foot from the goal.

AMPIPE BENCH 191

Nickerson, Covington, all the players standing on the sidelines. They can only watch and pray and yell encouragement.

## AMPIPE DEFENSE

192

Stef. Brian. Pac-Man. Shadow. All of them. One more time.  
They have to stop them one more time.

## FOURTH DOWN

193

The teams line up.  
The ball is snapped and handed to Alexander.  
He DIVES over for the goal.  
Met in midair by Brian and Stef,  
who drive him straight back with a vicious hit.  
Alexander lands on his churning feet and starts driving  
forward. But black jerseys have pieces of him and aren't  
letting go, and Alexander the Great falls  
short of the goal.

## HILARIOUS EXHILARATION

194

The Ampipe players leap into each other's arms, joyously  
embracing. The linesman marks the ball and indicates it's  
Ampipe's ball. The Roslyn offense dejectedly walks off the  
field. The Coliseum is silent, except for the Ampipe section  
that's going crazy.

## AMPIPE DEFENSE

195

come RUNNING off the field. As they pass their offensive unit,  
they all do hugging dances and leaping high-fives.

## NICKERSON

196

has an arm around Salvucci and gives him instructions:

NICKERSON

Nicatanous. 22 blast.

SALVUCCI

Right, Coach.

Salvucci runs onto the field. Nickerson looks up at the  
scoreboard. Twelve seconds remaining. He turns his attention  
to his players and hugs them, congratulating each boy, shaking  
their hands. Then they turn to watch Salvucci run out the final  
play.

## SALVUCCI

197

takes the snap.  
Hands the ball to the fullback, but  
FUMBLES THE BALL.  
It's loose, behind him, squiggling around.  
Bodies DIVE for it.  
A Roslyn player recovers in the end zone.  
Touchdown.  
Roslyn wins.  
Game's over.

A STUNNED SICKENING SILENCE 198

sweeps over Ampipe as the Roslyn players hug and embrace. Their bench empties, players pour onto the field, as do the fans. The Roslyn players have their forefingers raised high. Number One. The Ampipe offense stays where they are, not believing it, not coming in.

AMPIPE BENCH 199

Nickerson, Covington, Stef, and the players. Dead.

SCOREBOARD 200

EXPLODES in a dazzling display of FIREWORKS, lighting up the rainy night as the Ampipe team starts slowly for their locker room. Heads down, hearts broken.

NICKERSON 201

slowly, dejectedly starts walking off the field. He glances toward the stands and sees:

MUSIAL AND CROWELL 202

closing up their notebooks. They turn away from him and go.

CLOSE ON NICKERSON 203

As he painfully watches Musial and Crowell go, Nickerson knows it's all over for him, that he's no longer their choice.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM 204

The players come straggling in. They drop on the benches and sit like zombies. A helmet gets thrown across the room. A locker punched.

STEF 205

takes a spot on the bench. He is shivering, soaked through. Muddy, bloody. He hangs his head in his hands. The room fills up. It's quiet, but for the sobs and sniffles.

NICKERSON 206

comes in. Stands in the center, looking at his players. A long pause. He starts to speak. Says nothing. Shakes his head in disgust. Stares at Salvucci, who's taking it the hardest of all. He looks up at Nickerson through a river of tears. Nickerson turns and walks away as Salvucci breaks down crying.

NICKERSON

206-A

heads for the coach's room. He opens the door and enters as a towel gets thrown and a voice screams:

VOICE

(o.s.)

Shut the fuck up!

NICKERSON

206-B

wheels about and EXPLODES at Salvucci:

NICKERSON

Cry you sonuvabitch! You got reason to cry! You cost us the game! You choked! You quit! Cry!

STEF

...He didn't quit.

Nickerson looks at him.

NICKERSON

What did you say?

STEF

He didn't quit...none of us quit.

(tears start, lets his emotions out)

We beat them up and down that field, and they know it. And maybe the scoreboard don't say we won, but we did. We played our hearts out, and we don't have nothing to be ashamed of! It was a fluke. A goddamn fluke. You got no right to say any of us quit!

NICKERSON

If you had listened to the way I coached you Djordjevic and not done things your way, they'd have never had the ball down there in the first place and we'd have won the game!

STEF

We'd have won the game if you had Salvucci fall on the ball! He didn't quit! We didn't quit, you quit!

Cont.

Every eye is on him. Stef swallows. Looks down at his muddy shoes.

NICKERSON

Turn your stuff in and get out of here. You're through.

He turns and goes. Stef watches him.

CUT TO:

STEF UNDRESSING

207

He tears the clinging jersey off over his shoulders. Throws it into a pile of dirty laundry that's building in the center of the room. Brian, Fox and Shadow come up to him.

STEF

Was I wrong? I wasn't wrong, was I?

SHADOW

No, man, you weren't wrong. He was wrong.

FOX

Be cool, man. Wait till Monday. We'll talk to him. He'll put you back on the team.

BRIAN

We all wanted to say that.

STEF

Yeah, but you didn't. I did.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLISEUM - NIGHT

208

The Ampipe players come out of the Coliseum. A few friends and family wait for them. They talk in small circles. Stef comes out and people turn to look at him as he heads for the team bus.

INT. BUS - STEF

209

comes up the steps, starts down the aisle. Nickerson's in the front seat and stops him.

NICKERSON

Where you going?

Cont.

STEF

To sit down.

NICKERSON

This bus is for players. You  
ride back with the cheerleaders.

Stef stares at him. Turns and goes out to the band bus.

STEF AT BAND BUS

210

realizes that Lisa's in there. Sees her at the window. He  
can't ride back with the band and cheerleaders. No way. He  
starts walking on when:

LISA

211

comes running out of the bus, calling to him.

LISA

Stef, Stef!  
(runs up to him)  
Is it true what I heard happened?  
Is it true?

STEF

(brushes her aside)  
Go away, Lisa. Please, just go  
away and leave me alone.

He turns and walks off. Lisa fights back her tears and returns  
to the bus. Her friends are watching through the windows.

STEF

212

sees an Ampipe couple making out in the parking lot. He knows  
it's an Ampipe 'cause of the pennant on the CB antenna. He goes  
over to their pickup truck. Raps on the window. The couple  
stop kissing. The GUY lowers the window.

GUY

Yeah?

STEF

Give me a ride?

GUY

...Get in the back.

GIRL

You guys suck.

Stef hops in the back like a dog. Braces against the cab.  
The truck starts and drives away in the night rain.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN GATE - NIGHT

213

The bar is PACKED with Ampipe rooters. It seems everyone came here after the game.

It's a surly, rowdy crowd and it's Friday night. Country music blares from the jukebox. The girls look as tough as the guys in their vests and jeans. Some guys wear their Ampipe letter jackets, now several sizes too small.

MOVING THROUGH

214

We hear bits and pieces of bitching-second guessing-Monday morning quarterbacking. Bosko is leading a particularly drunk and angry group, that in the old west would be a vigilante mob.

BOSKO

Why the hell didn't Nickerson just take a safety and punt it out of there?

KUROWSKI is a big, tough sonuvabitch steelworker. 215

KUROWSKI

'Cause he's a dumb shitty coach, that's why! Ain't we ever gonna beat those rich pricks again?

ED

Not as long as Nickerson's here!

BOSKO

And that ain't gonna be long!

GREG AND POP AT BAR

216

Sit on stools, being crowded and squeezed by people behind them.

POP

What does this mean, his being kicked off for disciplinary reasons?

GREG

It means his big mouth finally got him in real trouble.

POP

Will this hurt his chance for a scholarship?

GREG

Hell, yes. If word gets around that he's got a bad attitude, he'll be lucky if he gets any offers at all.

60

MAN - PETE

217

Who's had a bit to drink himself, taps Pop on the shoulder.

MAN

Hey, Djordjevic. That dumb fucking kid of yours cost us the game.

POW

218

Pop decks the guy with one punch. He's out for the count. Pop gets off the stool and shoves his way through the crowd.

OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - STEF - NIGHT

219

Walks along the empty street leading into Ampipe. He pays no attention to the TWO CARS that go speeding by. One of the cars skids to a stop.

BOSKO'S CADILLAC

220

Comes fishtailing down the wrong side of the street in reverse so it's alongside Stef. The door gets thrown open.

VOICE

Come on!

A hand pulls him in. The car spins off.

INT. CAR

221

Confused, Stef looks at the men, as Kurowski slaps a pint of booze into Stef's hand and Bosko floors it. Stef takes a belt.

CUT TO:

INT. NICKERSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

222

He's in bed with his wife. It's late and he still hasn't fallen asleep. He turns and twists restlessly.

SUZIE

Go to sleep.

NICKERSON

I can't.

SUZIE

It's over. Forget it.

NICKERSON

How? I blew the game. I had it won, and I lost it!

Cont.

SUZIE

Don't blame yourself. It's not your fault.

NICKERSON

That's just it, Suzie. It's all my fault! I failed you. I failed my players. I failed myself.

She holds him, comforting him. Then...

SUZIE

Does this mean we're going to lose the Cal Poly job?

NICKERSON

God, I'm sorry.

SUZIE

I love you.

She clings to him.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICKERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

223

The Cadillac and the other car pull up to the curb, lights out. Nine men move quickly and quietly for the house.

STEF

224

Watches the men. He looks around, sees some TRASH BAGS on the sidewalk. He grabs one of them and BREAKS IT all over the lawn, covering it with garbage.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM

225

Nickerson lies on his back, reliving every play, softly to himself.

NICKERSON

All I had to do was tell Salvucci to fall on the ball...

SUZIE

Please, Vern. You're driving yourself crazy. There's nothing you can do.

ANGELA NICKERSON

226

The cutest little five year-old girl with blonde ringlets and sleepy blue eyes comes groggily into their room in her strawberry pajamas.

ANGELA

Daddy, Daddy.

NICKERSON

Angela, what is it honey? Come here.

ANGELA

There's men playing outside. They woke me up.

Nickerson looks at Suzie, and gets out of bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICKERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

227

Stef is grabbing another trash bag. Starts to dump it on the lawn when he sees something that makes him stop. He drops the bag. Goes over to the nice custom VAN parked in the driveway, Kurowski is moving around the van, with a can of SPRAY PAINT, and Bosko is SLASHING the tires with a big butcher knife.

STEF

What are you guys doing?

(grabs Bosko's arm)

Bosko, you crazy? Come on, stop it.

You can't do that!

BOSKO

You want to try and stop me?

Stef backs away, realizing this is not where he should be, and wanting no part of this.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE

228

Nickerson is unlocking the front door. Opens it..

DEAD CHICKEN

229

Hangs by its straggly neck, looking him in the face.

NICKERSON

230

Sees a group of men running away. Two wear Ampipe football jackets. Nickerson starts after them, screaming.

Cont.

NICKERSON

You bastards! You dirty bastards!

But they jump in a car and peel off. Nickerson whirls around. A lone figure in a football jacket goes flying out of the shadows. Nickerson is startled to see that it is STEF. But Stef does not know that he has been seen.

NICKERSON

231

The figure vanishes. Nickerson stands there, staring. Then turns and walks back to his house. Stops and looks at his van. The tires are slashed. Sprayed on the side: 16-14. Sprayed on his house: FOR SALE.

SUZIE

232

Stands in the doorway, in her nightgown, looking out, horrified. Nickerson comes up to her and she throws her arms around him and breaks down crying.

SUZIE

I hate it here, Vern. I hate it,  
I hate it! Take me out of here.  
Please, take me away. Anyplace!

NICKERSON

I will honey. I will.

He leads her inside. The door closes behind them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

233

Stef and Brian come onto the field. Stef is in street clothes, holds his books. Brian's in full pads.

BRIAN

Did you pick up the trig tests?

STEF

Yeah.

Stef digs through his notebook.

BRIAN

How'd you do?

STEF

Eighty-one.

BRIAN

What'd I get?

Cont.

STEF

Read it and weep.

He hands Brian the paper who reacts joyously.

BRIAN

I aced it!

He proudly shows his grade. 68!

STEF

(sees Nickerson)

Well, wish me luck.

BRIAN

I'll come talk to him with you.

STEF

No, stay out of it. He'll probably  
throw you off too.

Stef heads for Nickerson.

CUT TO:

NICKERSON

234

On the sidelines watching his players stretch and warm up.  
Stef comes up to him.

STEF

Coach Nickerson...

Nickerson glances at him. Looks back to the field.

NICKERSON

What is it?

STEF

...I just wanted to tell you. I'm  
sorry about what I said after the  
game. I didn't mean nothing, and,  
well, Friday's the last game, and  
it's at home, and being a senior,  
well, I really want to play it,  
Coach. It means a lot to me, you  
know. I feel real bad about what  
happened, and I was hoping maybe  
you'd put me back on the team.

NICKERSON

No chance. Now get away from me  
before I forget you're just a punk  
kid.

Stef looks at him.

STEF

Forgiving, aren't you...

NICKERSON

Look you sonuvabitch, don't open your Goddamn mouth to me! I know you were at my house. I saw you, you coward! Now get the hell away from me!

They stare at each other. Stef is stunned by this.

STEF

(awkward)

Look, I'd like to explain.

NICKERSON

There's nothing to explain.

STEF

But there is.

Nickerson moves across the field. Stef follows.

STEF

They picked me up on the road. I tried to stop them. You gotta believe me. Please. All I did was dump some garbage.

Nickerson stops short.

NICKERSON

You were there. You were a part of it! I was right about you all along. Get the hell away from me.

STEF

But...what about the last game? Please, just the last game?

NICKERSON

You've had your last game. You can spend Friday night throwing bricks through a church window.

Stef looks at him.

STEF

...You are fucked.

Cont.

NICKERSON

No, pal. You are.

Nickerson wheels off and goes. Stef watches.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - BAND PRACTICE - DAY 235

The Band practices on a muddy field. It's a cold, gray day. In the distance, billows of smoke rise from the STEEL MILL smokestacks. The Band Members are dressed in warm parkas and jackets.

MR. BILLINGSLY 236

Is the band director. He's leading them through an old Glenn Miller, "In The Mood."

BAND - LISA 237

They look good and sound sensational as they go through their formation, swinging their horns and lifting their legs. Someone goofs and they crack up.

BILLINGSLY

This isn't funny! Take it back to the middle now, and do it right! Make those pivots sharper! Look like you're in the Bulldog Swing Band.

STEF 238

Sits up on a knoll, watching the Band practice, waiting for Lisa, who looks up at him. He smiles at her. She doesn't smile back.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - LATER 239

Band practice is over. The members pack their instruments. Stef comes up to Lisa.

STEF

Hi.

LISA

(cold)

What are you doing here?

Cont.

She's packing her trombone.

STEF

I never realized you guys practice so hard. You're good.

LISA

How would you know? You've never even watched us.

STEF

Yeah, I guess that's right.

LISA

All the times I've seen you play, and you've never seen me play once.

STEF

Well, I was busy. I was always in the game but since I won't be doing that anymore, I thought I'd join the band.

She starts walking. He follows.

LISA

Nickerson didn't take you back, huh?

STEF

No.

LISA

I hope peeing on his lawn was worth it.

STEF

No. He saw me.

LISA

You asshole! How could you be so stupid!

STEF

I know. It wasn't one of my smarter moves. But Lisa, listen, I tried to stop it.

LISA

(sarcastically)

Oh, I can just see Nickerson believing that.

Cont.

STEF

I don't give a shit what Nickerson believes! I don't need him! I've got the grades, the ability. Nickerson can't stop me. I'll get my scholarship.

He reaches for her trombone case, taking it from her. They walk a few steps.

LISA

(soft, more to herself)

Guys get football scholarships, girls get ignored.

STEF

They can get an academic scholarship.

LISA

Sure. If they're National Honor Society, student body president, have a 4.0, and their family's on welfare. I'd like to go to college and study music. I'm good, and I love it.

STEF

Well, maybe you can.

LISA

I can't afford it, so I'm going to secretarial school! I'll be a secretary or be married.

STEF

(concerned)

Aren't you going to wait for me?

LISA

You're going to college for four years. You'll get your scholarship, be a football hero, meet some new girl...

STEF

I don't want to meet nobody else. I love you. Besides, I could go to a boy's school.

LISA

There's girls in every boy's school.

Cont.

STEF

Well, when I'm not playing football, I'll be studying or working. I won't have time for girls.

LISA

Oh, bullshit. All you guys think about is football and getting laid. I want to be something! I'm as good as you are in what I do, and there are no rewards, no future. It's not fair.

STEF

Well, don't blame me. It's not my fault if there are more football fans than trombone fans.

LISA

If you didn't have your football, you'd be in the same boat I'm in. Then you'd see how funny it is.

He takes her and holds her.

STEF

I'm not trying to be funny. Lisa I'm sorry about the way I acted. I was wrong. I'm sorry. Don't be mad at me. Not now. Please. I need you. I do. And I'll never pressure you about that again. Never. I promise.

LISA

Yeah. I'm sure...

She kind of smiles. He does too.

STEF

Want me to come see you play at the game Friday night?

LISA

No, you don't have to. I understand why you wouldn't want to be there.

STEF

(soft kiss)

I love you.

Cont.

LISA

Love you too.

They walk on, arms around each other.

CUT TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE

240

Practice is over. Nickerson is seated with Salvucci, who's half-dressed in his duty uniform.

NICKERSON

Quitting school's a dumb move. You gotta get your grades up.

SALVUCCI

What for?

NICKERSON

So you can graduate.

SALVUCCI

I don't need a diploma, I need a job. My dad's laid off, my brother's laid off. We're hurtin'.

NICKERSON

Without a high school education you're gonna go straight from here to the gutter. Now you're too good a kid. You do what it takes Goddamnit and you stay in school. That's how you help your family make it, okay?

SALVUCCI

(not convinced)

...Okay.

The door opens. SHERM WILLIAMS comes in. Mid-30s. Black. Neatly dressed. Boston College sweater.

NICKERSON

I'll see you later.

SALVUCCI

Thanks, Coach.

NICKERSON

I know you're no quitter.

Salvucci leaves as Nickerson greets Williams with a warm smile and handshake.

WILLIAMS

Who's buying the beer tonight?

NICKERSON

Sherm, what are you doing here?

WILLIAMS

Came to do some recruiting in the area.

NICKERSON

That's right. You guys got a big one this week.

WILLIAMS

Yeah. Playin' Pitt. Hey, Nick, I understand you came up with a hell of a defense against Roslyn.

NICKERSON

Yeah.

WILLIAMS

Congratulations. Lots of people talking about it.

NICKERSON

Well, it almost worked.

WILLIAMS

Listen, I want to see some film of Riley, Djordjevic, and Pakowski.

NICKERSON

Sure. But don't waste your time with Djordjevic.

WILLIAMS

Why? I hear the kid's tough.

Nickerson leads Williams to the projector in the corner of the room.

NICKERSON

Attitude's all wrong. He'd never fit in with your program. Believe me, you don't want him.

WILLIAMS

If you think so...

Cont.

NICKERSON

Now, I got a kid here with some  
real ability. Speedy Wilson.

He racks up some film.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

241

Stef is on the couch, watching TV. Pop comes out of the  
kitchen, with his lunch pail, dressed for work.

POP

There's some pork chops for you.

STEF

I'm not hungry.

Pause.

POP

If you drive me to work, you can  
have the car tonight. Go out  
with Lisa.

STEF

She's at the game. Everybody is  
but you and me.

Pop looks at his son with concern. Starts to leave. Stops.

POP

Stefen.

STEF

Yes Sir?

POP

I don't want you to ever work  
night shift.

He goes out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMPIPE STADIUM - WIDE SHOT - NIGHT

242

The lights are on. The game ready to be played. We HEAR  
the band playing the National Anthem. O.s.

CUT TO:

LISA PLAYING 243

Cheeks puffed, blowing her trombone. She's so cute.

ANTHEM ENDS 244

The crowd of six thousand roars o.s. They want blood.  
Lisa marches off with the band.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 245

Stef is sprawled on his bed, working on some engineering drawings.

STRANGE SOUND 246

Comes filtering in from the street. Stef HEARS it. Listens.  
It's a familiar sound. An INSTRUMENT of some kind. A horn,  
playing a SONG. "Mr. Touchdown U.S.A."

STEF GOES TO THE WINDOW 247

Looks down on the sidewalk below.

LISA 248

Is SERENADING him with her trombone. A one-girl band.  
She finishes.

STEF 249

Comes down the stairs. Goes to the front door and opens it.  
Stands APPLAUDING Lisa. She takes her band bow, sweeping  
low.

STEF AND LISA 250

Hug outside.

STEF

What are you doing here? Why  
aren't you at the game?

LISA

I don't want to see the game if  
you're not playing.

He kisses her gently, and they walk up the porch steps.

INT. HOUSE 251

She puts the trombone down.

Cont.

LISA  
I froze my buns off out there.  
He kisses her and holds her ass.

STEF  
That warm you up?

LISA  
Mmm...getting there.  
(beat)  
What were you doing in your room?

STEF  
Working on some drawings.

LISA  
Show me.

They skip up the stairs, hand in hand.

INT. BEDROOM

252

Stef and Lisa come in. She sees the SKETCHES. Holds one up. We SEE the bridge design.

LISA  
What's this supposed to be?

STEF  
What I've been playing football  
for all my life.

LISA  
Where's your dad?

STEF  
Work.

LISA  
Greg?

STEF  
At the game.

LISA  
We're alone.

STEF  
Want to invite somebody?

Cont.

LISA

No...

She kisses him. They plop on the bed. Their bodies lie side by side, pressing together, burning. The kiss continues to build. She rolls over on her back. He's on top of her. They're still kissing. It's getting heavy, like always.

LISA

253

Gets quickly aroused, but TEARS AWAY and gets on her feet. Stef lies on the bed, gasping for breath, looking up at her.

LISA

254

Stands there looking at him. Slowly takes off her white gloves with the finger tips cut off. Then Lisa starts UNBUTTONING her uniform jacket. She takes it off. Eases the SUSPENDERS off the shoulders. Kicks off her shoes without untying them.

STEF WATCHING LISA UNDRRESS

255

She pulls the thick SWEAT SHIRT up over her head. She's now in long john thermal tops. Lisa slides out of the pant uniform. She's wearing long john bottoms. Slides out of those. Panty hose and panties. White socks.

LISA

256

She takes the top off. Down to her bra. Takes off the socks. Pulls down the panty hose and stands before Stef now in her underwear. Removes her bra. He reaches for her, and she gets back on the bed with him. One soft gentle kiss, and she slides under the sheets.

STEF

257

Peels off his clothes in two seconds and is in bed with her.

STEF AND LISA MAKE LOVE

258

It's beautiful. It's tender. It's wonderful. Just as Stef erupts in climax a CHOIR starts singing a Christmas carol

CHOIR

(o.s.)

Oh, little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

259

The school Glee Club is on the stage, which is decorated for Christmas. They continue singing and we SEE Lisa, Tracy, Brian, Big Mac. Angels in their gowns.

SEATED IN CORNER OF AUDITORIUM

260

Stef, Shadow, Pac-Man, Speedy, Salvucci, Tank all listening to Mouse.

TANK

So you gonna go there?

MOUSE

I think so. I just want to check out Jacksonville before I decide.

Shadow leans over to Stef.

SHADOW

What about you, hoss? You hear from Syracuse or any of them yet?

STEF

No.

SHADOW

Well before too long, it's gonna be letter of intent day.

STEF

I know...The last school I visited was Roslyn Heights.

SALVUCCI

Fuck school, man. Fuck school, fuck Christmas.

Stef looks at him.

CUT TO:

INT. TYPING CLASS - LATE DAY

261

Stef sits alone in the room, pecking out a letter, 20 wpm. Sparse Christmas decorations are up.

THE LETTER

262

Dear Coach Wiatt: Since I haven't heard from you I thought I'd write to tell you I am still very interested in visiting your fine school.

OUT263-  
264

EXT. TRACY'S HOUSE - DAY

265

Some remnants of black snow on the small lawn. We SEE middle-aged couples going into the house bringing gifts. Yugoslavian music can be heard from inside. No Christmas decorations tell us time has passed. That, and Tracy's slightly bulging belly.

STEF, LISA, BRIAN AND TRACY

266

all dressed up. Tracy's in a simple white dress that her mother made.

LISA

So where you guys going on your honeymoon?

TRACY

Pittsburgh.

BRIAN

Gonna see the Penguins play the Flyers.

TRACY

(facetious)  
Aren't we lucky?

STEF

Can I come too?

TRACY

I'm surprised you're not.

She and Lisa go off into the house.

BRIAN

I hear Nickerson's got that coaching job after all.

STEF

Yeah. The guy from Aliquippa got a better offer.

BRIAN

And I'm loading trucks for Tracy's uncle.

Brian has a can of beer in his hand. Stef takes it from him.

STEF

(a toast)  
To the bride and groom.  
(smiles)  
And the baby. Nazdravlja.

Cont.

He takes a drink.

BRIAN

You know, Tracy always wanted a large wedding in a big gown.

STEF

Every girl does.

BRIAN

The way we wanted to play for the Steelers.

CUT TO:

OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

267

Parked in the woods, overlooking the Steel Mill.

INT. CAR - STEF AND LISA IN THE BACKSEAT

268

making love with more intensity, more sexuality than the first time. They've obviously been practicing and are quite good at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER

269

Having finished, Stef and Lisa lie under a blanket. They kiss softly, squiggling for room.

LISA

(dreamily)

I wonder what it'd be like to do it in a big king-sized bed with sheets and pillows.

STEF

Like Brian and Tracy?

LISA

What's so wrong with that?

She kisses him, nibbling his neck. He stares off.

LISA

What are you thinking of?

STEF

Bosko.

Cont.

LISA

...How romantic.

STEF

I'm scared, Lisa. Nickerson's blackballing me. I thought I didn't need him, but I was wrong.

LISA

If we were married and some kid trashed our house, what would you do?

STEF

I gotta have Bosko talk to him and tell him the truth.

LISA

Bosko'd never do that.

STEF

I'll make him. I'll beg him. I'll kiss his ass.

LISA

(smiling)

That's some kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN GATE - NIGHT (LATER)

270

A sparse crowd, but Bosko is at the bar with some of the guys, including Kurowski.

KUROWSKI

You tell me how a guy can work in the mill, then turn around and buy a Japanese car?

BOSKO

That's biting the dick that fucks you.

PETE

We gotta have a quota on imports.

STEF AND LISA

271

enter the bar and come up to Bosko.

STEF

Bosko, can I talk to you?

Cont.

BOSKO

Sure. What do you want?

STEF

Your help. Nickerson's ruining my chance for a scholarship. He saw me at his house that night. I need you to tell him I wasn't really a part of it.

BOSKO

Well neither was I...

Stef looks at him. Bosko smirks.

STEF

Look, you're the only one that can help me.

BOSKO

I can't do nothin'.

STEF

Yes you can. Please, you have to.

BOSKO

I don't have to do shit.

STEF

I know that, Bosko. But without you, I'll never get to college.

BOSKO

So?

STEF

I sure as hell don't want to join the Army, and I don't even know if I can get a job working in the Goddamn...

Stops. Realizing. Looks at the men.

BOSKO

Yeah? The Goddamn what?

STEF

(soft)  
...mill.

BOSKO

Like your old man and your brother.

Cont.

STEF

No...I...

BOSKO

And my father and his father before him. And everybody else that made this town what it was! You too good for that or something?

STEF

No...it's not that I'm too good. It's just that I've always had my heart set on leaving and going away to school.

BOSKO

What's the matter...?  
(touches Lisa's cheek)  
You tired of Polack pussy?

STEF GOES FOR BOSKO'S THROAT

272

but Kurowski catches Stef with a right to the ribs followed by a driving left that sends Stef sprawling across the barroom. Lisa screams and lunges for Bosko who grabs her and holds her from behind, his hand across her breasts.

STEF

273

staggers back for Kurowski and takes two more hard punches and is about to get more but:

HENRY THE BARTENDER

274

vaults over the bar and intervenes. He holds a sawed-off baseball bat and is ready to use it if necessary.

HENRY

Hold it! That's enough!

Kurowski smiles. Bosko lets go of Lisa who rushes over to Stef. Some other bar patrons come over to see if he's okay. He's alive.

STEF AND LISA

274

Arms around each other, they go outside.

STEF

276

leans against a car, half retching, gasping for breath. Lisa wipes some blood from his mouth and looks at him with great concern.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

276-A

A four-door Plymouth pulls up in front and TWO MEN get out. They are good-sized, and could be college recruiters, except their suits are J.C. Penny and they're both smoking. They flick their cigarettes aside as they:

ENTER THE SCHOOL

276-B

The Men move quickly down the empty hall. Kids are in class.

MEN

276-C

come up a flight to the second floor and head down the hall. They are now with the school PRINCIPAL.

CUT TO:

CLASSROOM

276-D

Lisa and other students, among them Salvucci. The class is history. Civil rights.

As soon as he sees the Men come in Salvucci LEAPS out of his seat. The Men split up going after him. Salvucci breaks for the window diving over his confused classmates. One of the Men is upon him. Salvucci tears away and goes for the door only to get viciously grabbed by the other Man, right in front of:

LISA

276-E

who watches horrified as the fighting Salvucci is subdued by the two Men. The Men yank Salvucci to his feet and take him away in handcuffs.

CUT TO:

NICKERSON

276-F

comes walking up the stairs as the Men lead Salvucci down them. Salvucci looks at Nickerson for help.

Nickerson grabs one of the Men.

Cont.

SALVUCCI

Coach...Coach!

NICKERSON

What's happened? Where are you taking him?

MAN

To jail.

NICKERSON

What for?

MAN

Armed robbery. He knocked over a Seven-Eleven.

Nickerson steps back, shocked. Salvucci looks back at him as he's lead away.

SALVUCCI

Coach...Help me.

But there's nothing the Coach can do now.

Nickerson hears one final last plea.

SALVUCCI

(o.s.)

Coach!

CUT TO:

EXT. NICKERSON'S HOUSE - THAT AFTERNOON

277

A cold, gray afternoon. Lisa comes to the door. (Same clothes as previous Scene.) Rings the bell. School's out. Lisa has her books. Suzie opens the door.

SUZIE

Yes?

LISA

Mrs. Nickerson, my name is Lisa Lietzke. Can I talk to you?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - LATE DAY

278

Stef is on the phone. The tiny table is covered with his college application notes and letters. He looks very discouraged as he finishes his conversation.

Cont.

STEF

...Well, if one opens up or something, I'd appreciate it if you kept me in mind.

(listens)

Thanks, Coach.

He slowly puts the phone down. Looks through the list. Dials another school.

CUT TO:

SUZIE AND LISA WALKING - DAY

279

FROM up here, we can SEE the town, the mill.

LISA

Please believe me, Mrs. Nickerson. I know Stef. He's not cruel. He'd never deliberately hurt anyone.

SUZIE

He's a football player, Lisa. They're trained to hurt.

LISA

(pleading)

He's a boy. And he wants to go to college and be something. And your husband's preventing that from happening because of a few foolish minutes! And that isn't fair.

Suzie studies her. Lisa wipes away a tear. They walk a few steps in silence.

LISA

Tonight's the letter of intent party. The only recruiter that'll take Stef is the U.S. Army.

SUZIE

(smiles)

Funny about football players, Lisa. Underneath all those pads and muscle, they're just little boys looking for attention. I suppose that's why we love them.

(beat)

What are you going to do, Lisa? Are you going with Stef?

Cont.

LISA  
I'm a junior.

SUZIE  
And after you graduate?

Lisa points to the town below.

SUZIE  
You know, if he leaves here, you'll probably lose him.

LISA  
I can't help it...I love him.

Suzie looks at her.

SUZIE  
I was madly in love with someone in high school. We were going to get married after graduation. But the Army took him. So I went to North Carolina State and met Vern.

LISA  
You went to college?

SUZIE  
I have a BA in English.

LISA  
How'd you do that?

SUZIE  
I made up my mind I wanted it.  
(beat)  
What do you want, Lisa?

LISA  
Stef...And to study music.

SUZIE  
Then go after them, Lisa. Once Stef leaves here, no matter how much he loves you, he won't come back.

LISA  
...Whatever happened to the boy in high school?

Cont.

SUZIE

Tommy? He's back in Parkersburg.  
I haven't thought of him in a  
hundred years. God I loved him.

LISA

No more than I love Stef.

Suzie looks at her and smiles. Puts her arm around her.

OUT 280-  
283

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN 284

Stef's on the phone.

STEF

When you were at my house, you said  
if things didn't work out, I'd  
always have a spot with you. Well,  
they haven't worked out, Coach, and  
I want to come to Delaware. I  
really do. I've never wanted  
anything so bad in my life.

He listens.

STEF

But why not? Coach? You said I  
could always count on you. Coach...?

But Coach is no longer on the line.

STEF 285

hangs up and sits there beaten, destroyed, dejected. Doesn't  
move. Then he slowly gets up and heads for the stairs.

STEF 286

trudges up the steps, going to his:

BEDROOM 287

Drops on his bed. Sits there awhile, thinking. He looks  
about, gets up, and:

RIPS THE ROOM APART 288

TEARS the pennants off the wall.  
 THROWS the football trophies at the door.  
 DESTROYS his model bridge in a furious assault.  
 SMASHES everything to pieces he can get his hands on and then he too breaks.

COLLAPSES CRYING 289

on his bed, face buried on the pillow, not knowing that:

POP 290

stands in the doorway, watching. He's in Jockey shorts, face lathered with shaving cream. He looks at his son, wanting to help, yet not knowing what to say and not able to do anything, he turns away.

STEF 291

stays there, sobbing.

OUT 292-  
296

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 297

It's PARTY TIME. Seniors celebrating getting their treasured football letters of intent. The house is packed with kids. There's cases and kegs of BEER everywhere. Music. Making out.

SHADOW ON PHONE 298

Joyously slams down the receiver. He's surrounded by a bunch of the players.

SHADOW

(screams)

I'm going to Grambling!

High-fives and embraces everywhere.

PAN TO STEF 299

standing in a corner, drinking a quart can of beer. He's with Lisa, Brian, Tracy, who's showing more baby belly. The girls talk. The boys talk.

Cont.

STEF

(referring to Shadow)  
He always wanted Grambling.  
I'm happy for him.

(beat)

Brian, you could have gone to college, played football. I couldn't, you could. Why didn't you?

BRIAN

I got responsibilities now. A wife, a child to take care of. Football's a game for boys. I'm not a boy anymore.

STEF

No, I guess not.

BRIAN

And you know something, Stef...  
I'm kind of glad.

Stef nods, takes a long slug of beer.

BRIAN

What about you?

STEF

Well, I'm gonna pick up some money working Saturdays.

BRIAN

Yeah...? Doing what?

STEF

(embarrassed)

The filter room.

BRIAN

Cleaning the fucking stacks?

STEF

Pop had to pull strings to get me that...at least it'll keep me in condition.

TRACY

For what?

STEF

College ball. Next year.

Cont.

BRIAN

Great.

Brian and Lisa exchange looks, recognizing Stef's bravado. It hurts. Tracy puts her arm around Brian.

TRACY

Honey...

BRIAN

(to Stef)

I have to take her home so she can rest.

Lisa and Tracy hug each other.

LISA

Call you later.

TRACY

Don't drink too much or you'll look like me.

Stef and Lisa watch them as:

MOUSE PASSES

300

He's holding a small TEAPOT, the spout in his mouth as if inhaling it. He offers it to Stef and Lisa.

MOUSE

Want to smoke a little pot?

Stef smiles sadly as Mouse drinks the beer in the teapot.

CUT TO:

LISA PLAYING THE PIANO

301

She's banging out a snappy rock 'n' roll song, surrounded by a group of kids singing along. Damn, she can play!

OVER TO STEF

302

who's drinking beer straight from the keg. A fat boy pumps it out and the beer pours down into Stef's open mouth.

CUT TO:

STEF AND FRIENDS

303

sit in the living room, getting shit-faced. Stef the most. He holds Lisa and a FOOTBALL and drinks beer out of a big glass vase.

STEF

In the beginning, the earth was all green grass, stretched out forever. And then, one day a pig appeared and ate so much grass he popped open and twenty-two men and a woman came out of his stomach. So they stitched the pig up and blew him up and started tossing him around. The men were called Gods.

GIRL

And what was the woman called?

STEF

Owner.

The girls cheer. Stef takes a long gulp of beer from the vase. Lisa watches with great concern, and pity.

STEF

So, the woman made uniforms for the Gods to wear, and to tell the Gods apart, she put numbers on their jerseys. Then, on the second day, the Gods built a stadium. On the third day, they added lights and announcer booths. The fourth day they put in a parking lot and TV cameras. On the fifth day they put up goal posts and yard lines. On the sixth day, they created the seasons; fall and winter to play games, spring and summer for practice and knee operations. On the seventh day, thousands of people came to watch, and they were called fans and had to pay money. And a whistle blew and they played football.

PAC-MAN

(leaping up)

All right, let's do it!

STEF, SHADOW, SPEEDY, FOX, TANK, MOUSE AND BIG MAC 304

instantly LINE UP on offense and defense. OTHER PLAYERS see and run over, taking their positions on the floor. Mouse is over the ball, calling an audible:

Cont.

## MOUSE

Blue, fifty-three, Blue,  
fifty-three. Ready hut, hut!

He whirls and hands off to Tank, who CRASHES straight ahead behind his blockers. Furniture goes flying as Stef and Shadow tackle him into a coffee table that SHATTERS.

## FOOTBALL PLAYERS

305

lie on the floor, laughing. Some kids pour beer over them. They stay there, reliving their days of autumn.

CUT TO:

## STEF BEING LED UPSTAIRS

306

Big Mac and Tank hold him up. Mouse leads the way over the bodies making out on the steps. Stef is sweaty drunk. Lisa watches from the foot of the stairs.

## MOUSE

Watch out, comin' through.  
Emergency. We got a sick man  
here!

Stef moans as they lead him over the bodies making out on the steps.

## SHADOW

Beer's bad for you, man. All those  
nitrosamines.

Stef staggers on into the:

## BATHROOM

307

His friends give him room. He stands weaving.

## FOX

My grandma had the same look right  
before she died. White.

## TANK

Go ahead and barf out, else you'll  
explode.

Stef gags and leans against the sink, bracing.

## SHADOW

Not in there!

He spins Stef away. Stef turns to the BATHTUB and throws the CURTAIN back, revealing a:

COUPLE MAKING OUT

308

He's on top of her, in the tub, dry-humping away.

GUY

Hey, what the...?

Stef starts GAGGING above them. The couple scramble out of the tub as Pac-Man pulls Stef toward the toilet and holds his head over it.

FOX

Pro puke on two, now. Ready, set!  
Hut! Hut!

Stef starts to vomit (o.s.); and as he does, Shadow breaks into the Budweiser commercial.

SHADOW

(sings)

'Here comes the Bud,  
Here comes the King,  
Here comes the big Number One,  
Boom boom boom boom.'

Pac-Man picks it up, singing:

PAC-MAN

'Miller tastes too good to hurry  
through...'

TANK

(singing)

'Here's to good friends, tonight  
is kinda special...the beer you  
pour, must be something more...'

BIG MAC

Less filling!

FOX

Tastes great!

BIG MAC

Less filling!

FOX

Tastes great!

Cont.

Stef's done. He looks at them, frothing at the mouth, drooling, eyes crossed, his head hanging on the bowl.

MOUSE

'When you're out of Schlitz,  
you're out of beer!'

ALL

Yeah!

Stef slumps into the toilet. Mouse flushes it.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

308-A

Stef sits slumped at the counter having coffee, trying to sober up. The residue of the night is quite apparent. The clock on the wall shows 11:30.

STEF

308-B

fumbles for some change, gets off the stool, and heads for the door, passing:

NICKERSON AND SUZIE

308-C

seated in a booth. The cluttered table shows they've been there for some time. An awkward pause as all eyes lock. Stef continues for the door. Stops. Comes back to them.

STEF

Mrs. Nickerson...I was at your  
house that night it got messed up...  
I'm sorry...I really am.

Suzie nods. Stef almost starts to go, but turns to Nickerson.

STEF

Coach, you did it. Thanks.

Stef heads for the door. Nickerson and Suzie watch him. Suzie stares at her husband with an "I told you so" look.

NICKERSON

308-D

thinks. Then slides out of the booth, going for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

308-E

Stef's walking down the street and Nickerson comes after him.

Cont.

NICKERSON

Djordjevic.

Stef keeps walking.

NICKERSON

I want to talk to you.

STEF

We got nothin' to talk about.

Nickerson falls in alongside him.

NICKERSON

Where you going.

STEF

No place.

NICKERSON

I'd like to --

STEF

Mouse is going to Morgan State.  
Tank's going to Furman. You're  
going to Cal Poly. Everybody's  
going somewhere but me. I'm  
staying right here in this  
Goddamn town! You've seen to  
that! You made Goddamn sure of  
it!

NICKERSON

Why don't we --

STEF

(pulling away)

Leave me alone! Get the hell  
away from me.

NICKERSON

I want to help you!

STEF

Help me??? You've helped me enough.  
Lying about me. Blackballing me. I  
don't want no more of your help. I  
apologized months ago but you weren't  
man enough to accept it. You think  
you've stopped me, but you haven't  
stopped me, Nickerson. No way am I  
quitting. I'll get a job, save some  
money. I'll go to college and play  
football too. And I'll do it without  
sticking up a Seven-Eleven.

That hurts Nickerson and Stef sees it.

STEF

Yeah, Coach. Help Salvucci.  
You've already sentenced me.

NICKERSON

I --

STEF

You sit in your little office  
with your charts and films,  
controlling people's lives. This  
one here. This one there.  
Scholarship. No scholarship.  
What right do you have? Who are  
you to have that kind of power?  
You're a high school coach. A  
teacher...You're no God.

They look at each other. Stef turns and walks down the  
street. Nickerson watches him go.

FADE TO:

INT. MILL

309

We're INSIDE now deep in the monster's bowels. LOUD  
deafening NOISES. RINGING, vibrating machines, slamming,  
whining, crying in pain. It's gigantic, scary, satanic.

STEEL PROCESS

310

We START AT the heating furnaces where men with long rods  
roll solid rounds of six-foot pipe out of the furnaces. The  
rounds are a phosphorous orange and get shot down a chute,  
spinning on rollers. As it spins, it GROWS in length.

TWO MEN - PLUGGERS

311

Behind the apron, heat shield, breathing mask and hard hat  
we SEE Pop and Greg. The flaming rounds of pipe come at  
them burning at 2400 degrees. Pop takes a 50-pound bullet  
and jams it in an end of the pipe with a heavy pair of  
tongs. The plug bores through the spinning, lengthening  
round and the pipe shoots away as another round slides down  
to them.

CUT TO:

BLAST FURNACE

312

Down beneath the fire of Hell we SEE some MEN doomed to try and clean the accumulation of months of soot and dirt and grime. The men are old winos, and bums. Obvious part-time labor brought in four times a year for this cleansing, shit-detail no steelworker would take. Amongst the laborers, is:

STEF

313

drenched in sweat and grease, hacking off the leavings. His back breaks. His brain fries. His body melts. God, it's awful.

OUT 314-  
316

CUT TO:

EXT. MILL - SHIFT CHANGE

317

The zombielike workers trudge out.

OUT 318

STEF, POP AND GREG

319

come through the gate. Stef carries a LUNCHBOX. They walk wordlessly along the fence when:

LISA

319-A

comes up to them. Stef's surprised and happy to see her.

LISA

Hi.

STEF

(kissing)

Hey, baby.

LISA

Mr. Djordjevic. Greg.

POP

Lisa.

They keep walking. Stef has his arm around her.

STEF

You bring pizza?

LISA

Now, Stef, don't get mad.

Cont.

STEF  
Why should I...  
(getting mad)  
get mad.

He sees NICKERSON up ahead, waiting for him.

LISA  
Stefen, listen to me. You gotta  
listen. Don't blow!

STEF  
What's he doing here?

LISA  
I brought him.

STEF  
Why?

LISA  
He's been trying to find you all  
day. Just talk to him.

STEF  
No.

LISA  
Yes! You have to. I want you to!  
I love you, Stef. You have to get  
out of here! You have to go after  
what you want! Next year, I'm going  
to!

She SHOVES him towards the approaching Nickerson.

STEF AND NICKERSON

320

An awkward exchange.

NICKERSON  
Djordjevic...

STEF  
...What do you want?

NICKERSON  
You to come play ball for me at  
Cal Poly. Full scholarship.

Stef looks at him, quizzically.

Cont.

STEF

You want to run that by me again...

NICKERSON

Look I'm sorry for what I did to you. I had no right. I thought I had a reason but I was wrong. But whether you believe me or not, don't turn down this chance. If you blow this, you're not gonna hurt anyone but yourself and...

(looks at Lisa)

...those that care about you.

STEF

(chuckles)

You're just doing this to make yourself feel better.

NICKERSON

Hell yes, that's part of it. But so what? Hey, what does that matter to you? Sign.

He holds a pen and a form letter.

STEF

(making sure)

Full scholarship? Cal Poly,  
San Luis Obispo?

NICKERSON

You got it. A Goddamn good engineering school. Sign!

Stef looks at Nickerson. At Pop and Greg. Then at Lisa, smiling and nodding encouragement.

STEELWORKERS

321

have formed around them. There, watching in the crowd is Kurowski, the guy that beat Stef up. Stef looks at Kurowski's beer gut, his hard hat.

OUT

322-

323

STEF

324

points at Kurowski, cocks his lunch pail like a football and tosses Kurowski a perfect pass. Stef moves to Nickerson, looking him dead in the eye, offering his hand.

Cont.

STEF  
Thanks, Coach.

NICKERSON  
Thank you, Djordjevic.

Stef signs the letter.

LISA, POP AND GREG

325

watch bursting with pride. Pop turns to the smiling Greg.

POP  
Where is this, San Luis Obispo?

GREG  
Somewhere west of Ampipe.

POP  
He really is a good boy.  
(embracing Greg)  
Both my sons are.

They go over to:

STEF

326

Pop and Greg hug him dearly as the passing Steelworkers shake his hand and congratulate him.

STEF

327

turns from the men, and rushes to:

LISA

328

They joyously embrace in each other's arms. Stef looks at her dearly.

STEF  
What'd I ever do to deserve you?

LISA  
(smiling)  
What makes you think you do?

They passionately KISS as Lisa victoriously throws both her arms high in the air.

TOUCHDOWN!

FADE OUT

THE END