

VERVE

SLAM!

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OVER BLACK -- a sultry voice erupts. You nudge your friend in the audience: "OH DAMN! Montell Jordan...this is my shit!"

"This is how we doooo it"

SMASH TO:

OPENING SEQUENCE

This is the MID-1990's, both cheesy and glorious: baggy pants and Reebok Pumps, Walkmen and Starter jackets...

SPECIFICALLY this is JUNE 14th, 1996 and there is one thing that the WHOLE WORLD is watching: Game 5 of the NBA FINALS!

It's Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls versus Gary Payton's Seattle Supersonics. The game EXPLODES on screen (in vintage Standard Definition): fade-aways, dunks, fast-breaks.

Now we're flying around CHICAGO. It's like a slow-mo sneaker commercial: the earth stands still as MJ soars to the hoop.

IN A LIVING ROOM -- A FATHER leaps up and RED POP-SECRET POPCORN flies off his lap. His SON screams in excitement.

IN A SPORTS BAR -- PATRONS go wild. High-fives, overflowing beer suds, and desperate pleas: "Come on Bulls!"

AT A STORE -- KIDS' faces pressed to the glass, bikes curbside, the game on TV's inside.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

And now to our hero: **JIMMY**. He's 15, lanky, a bit awkward -- adolescence is coming on hard. He's laser-focused on the game, in his tattered Bulls jersey and beat-up Air Jordans.

Next to him is **RUSTY**, 16, Jimmy's best friend. He's a fast talker, the ultimate bullshitter. But he is a loyal friend.

RUSTY

Jesus. We're getting totally fucked.

JIMMY

*Shhh...*there's still four minutes left. We're only down six.

RUSTY

I can't believe Jordan came out of retirement for this. He hasn't looked this bad since he was swinging a bat.

(MORE)

RUSTY (CONT'D)
 (looks at Jimmy)
 Dude, when are you gonna shave that
 little chico mustache?

Rusty pokes his finger at Jimmy's mustache, LAUGHING. Jimmy
 pulls away, doing his best to ignore him.

ON SCREEN -- Michael Jordan sinks a jumper.

MARV ALBERT
 (TV ANNOUNCER)
*This is Michael's first Finals
 appearance since his father passed
 away tragically three years ago...*

JIMMY
 Come on. We can still do this.

SKIDS (O.C.)
 Highly unlikely.

PAN DOWN. In a mess of paper is **SKIDS**. He's dorky,
 disenfranchised by life -- and engulfed in his work. Also,
 Asian.

RUSTY
 Skids, who told you to speak?

Rusty throws a chip at the little guy.

SKIDS
 Statistically speaking, the Bulls'
 win probability is...
 (doing the math)
 ...point-oh-seven.

RUSTY
 The same chances of you ever
 getting laid?

SKIDS
 Numbers don't lie. Idiot. At this
 point, on the road --

JIMMY
 Yo, enough! If Seattle creeps back
 into the series, anything can
 happen. But it won't. Because the
 Bulls are gonna win the title.
 (to himself)
 Because it's their destiny.

RUSTY
 Like I said, Skids: eat a dick.

Skids uses WHITE OUT on his papers. He SNIFFS some and SMILES like an addict. Jimmy looks at a WALL CLOCK, disappointed.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

At least Game Six is in Chicago. I don't know what I'd rather have: a ticket to a Finals game, or a night with Michelle Pfeiffer. I mean her in the Catwoman suit, not that "Dangerous Minds" lesbo teacher shit. How about you? Dude?

Jimmy barely hears him.

JIMMY

Yeah. Whatever.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

In walks CAROL, Jimmy's mom. Pretty and in her 40's. She tosses off her clerk's vest after a long day at work.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carol finds the boys, and sees half a pizza on the table.

CAROL

Good, you ate. Did they make a run?

RUSTY

Nah. This shit is done.

CAROL

Excuse me?

RUSTY

Sorry Mrs. M.

She leans down and kisses her son's forehead. Jimmy pulls away -- like teenagers do.

CAROL

Hello, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Hey.

He stays focused on the game. But Carol remains upbeat.

CAROL

I saw most of the first half at work. It was u-g-l-y.

ON SCREEN -- Seattle scores. It's down to the final minutes. Jimmy finally accepts defeat.

JIMMY
This sucks. Even the scrubs are getting time.

ON SCREEN -- a reserve player enters the game. The graphic tells us this is JAMES 'BUDDHA' EDWARDS, a role player.

CAROL
(sympathetic)
Oh, it's Buddha. He's not a *scrub*.

ON CAROL -- dazed. It's not entirely clear...but there is something about her and Buddha that we need to find out.

JIMMY SEES IT, a watchful eye on her as the BUZZER sounds.

Carol turns her gaze from Buddha to Jimmy. As their eyes meet she quickly looks away, and heads to the kitchen.

MARV ALBERT (V.O.)
Seattle takes Game Five. We'll see you Sunday night back in Chicago.

CAROL
Sorry guys.

Skids is already up, collecting his papers.

SKIDS
I gotta go see my grandma. If nobody reminds her to go to the bathroom, she'll shit herself.

Jimmy slumps over, dejected. Rusty pats him on the back.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

THE CAMERA IS INSIDE THE FRIDGE: Rusty opens it and looks in.

RUSTY
Okay we got OJ, purple stuff, soda...No Sunny D?
(overly dramatic)
What the hell, Mrs. M -- I thought you were cool!

He turns from the fridge just as Carol enters. She has changed her outfit, as if she is going out. Rusty notices.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Whoa. Hot mom alert.

Carol suppresses her grin. Rusty heads for the BASEMENT and Jimmy follows.

CAROL
One second, Jimmy.

Rusty senses she wants to talk to her son and heads downstairs, out of sight.

JIMMY
Another date night?

It's a sore subject between them, but Carol handles it.

CAROL
I'm allowed to have a life outside
of being your mom, you know.
(beat)
Can I get a hug?

JIMMY
Mom...

CAROL
No fighting. It's been a long day.

JIMMY
You practically missed the whole
game.

CAROL
I ran from work. And I made it
before the end, didn't I? Come on.

She puts her arms around him and he finally relents.

JIMMY
Don't miss the next one. They're
gonna win. I know it.

CAROL
We'll watch together. Promise.

Jimmy lowers his head.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Hey. I understand the whole moping
teenager thing, but you have to
tell me what's going on with you
lately.

When Jimmy looks up, his eyes are serious.

JIMMY

Sunday.

CAROL

Comes between Saturday and
Monday...what about it?

JIMMY

It's Father's Day.

She leans back, a raw nerve uncovered.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You promised you'd tell me.

CAROL

I promised I'd always be here for
you, too. And I have been. Aren't
we doing pretty good, me and you?

JIMMY

How am I supposed to know what kind
of man I can be if I don't know
where I come from?

She puts her face in her hands, then recovers with a smile.

CAROL

Go have fun with your friend. At
least let me imagine you're a kid
for a little while longer.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - JIMMY'S ROOM - LATER

We LOOK DOWN on Jimmy in bed, staring up. Rusty is on the
floor in a sleeping bag. As Rusty blabs, Jimmy ponders...

RUSTY

If you could bang any chick from
'Beverly Hills 90210' who'd you
take? Tiffani-Amber Thiessen for
me. Her tits quadrupled in size
since 'Saved By The Bell.'

ON JIMMY -- not paying attention.

JIMMY

She's never going to tell me.
She'll always have some excuse.

RUSTY

Dude, take it from me: having a dad isn't all it's cracked up to be. I see mine every day and it blows. "Rusty, chew your food. Rusty, stop using all your mom's lotion."

JIMMY

Come on. Let's go downstairs.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Rusty is back to his pontificating while he turns on the TV.

RUSTY

...It'd be a tough choice though, between Tiffani and Jennie Garth. I wanna find out if she's a natural blonde -- oh shit, it's my jam!

ON TV -- the classic music video for BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY'S "CROSSROADS" plays: the misty mountain, the hazy light, the fading ghosts of loved ones lost.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Let us bow our heads and acknowledge the greatest song of all time.

Jimmy gets lost in the video: men searching for meaning, re-connecting with loved ones...

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Check it:

(singing along)

Why they kill my dog and man I miss my uncle Charles y'all...

(breathes)

Someday, I'm gonna be as great as Bone Thugs. You know they got signed by freestyling backstage for Eazy-E? Did you even know that? All a man needs is one chance to seize destiny by the balls. Check this out, I'm making a demo.

From his backpack he pulls out a YAK-BAK: it's the classic plastic toy recorder with a big speaker. Rusty RAPS into it.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

They call me Rusty the Beast, I put you six feet deep. I got big artillery inside my Dungarees --

JIMMY

You've been rapping those rhymes
since sixth grade.

RUSTY

I'm getting my best bars down.
Gotta be ready when my number is
called.

JIMMY

Hopefully you don't chicken out
like all the other times.

RUSTY

You can't rush art, bro. I have to
perfect my flow.

JIMMY

Whatever. You brought the MJ tape?

RUSTY

Does RuPaul have a big black dick?

He pulls a VHS tape from his backpack. It's 'Michael Jordan's
COME FLY WITH ME.' He pops it in the VCR.

ON THE TV -- that fuzzy VHS blur. The cheesy title appears,
but then the tape FUZZES OUT and the image of MJ warps into a
scene of SOFTCORE PORNO.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Oh shit, I recorded Skinemax on the
wrong tape.

JIMMY

God damnit.

RUSTY

Sorry, I wanted to watch MJ, too.

He ejects the tape, then wanders off to a stack of BOXES.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

What is this shit down here anyway?

Jimmy walks over, his curiosity getting the best of him. One
box is marked 'CAROL'S KEEPSAKES.'

JIMMY

My mom's stuff from when she was
young. She used to travel a lot.

Jimmy rummages through. When he picks up a MANILA FOLDER several GLOSSY PHOTOGRAPHS fall out. He picks one up. It's an autographed portrait of CLYDE DREXLER, NBA Legend.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Clyde Drexler.

The portrait smiles back. Underneath the signature it reads:
"Candy, my good luck charm. Clyde."

RUSTY (O.C.)
Whoa. Who's Candy?

JIMMY
That was my mom's nickname. When she was in college. I think.

RUSTY
Oh.
(realizing)
Oh!

Rusty pulls out another photo. Jimmy does the same.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Charles Barkley. Signed, "You're the sweetest Candy I ever tasted."

JIMMY
Dominique Wilkins. "Can't wait until I'm back in town. There's no place like...
(looks up, disgusted)
...Candyland."

RUSTY
Holy shit. Do you know what this means?
(serious)
Your mom was a groupie ho.

Jimmy is in shock, going through the stack of photos one by one, a carousel of late 80's NBA greats.

He digs deeper and pulls out an autographed purple and gold sneaker that has to be a size 24 -- giant. They stare in awe.

JIMMY
Kareem!

RUSTY
Kareem!

Rusty finds postcards and sifts through them.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
I can't believe she knows these
guys! She never said anything?

JIMMY
Maybe she was a collector.

RUSTY
Yeah, a collector of NBA baller
jizz.

JIMMY
She wasn't a groupie. OK? She's not
like that.

At the bottom of the box is a BASKETBALL CARD of **JAMES
'BUDDHA' EDWARDS**. Jimmy grabs it and finds a folded PIECE OF
PAPER slipped into the plastic sleeve. He pulls it out.

As he reads, we hear the booming voice of Buddha Edwards:

BUDDHA (V.O.)
*"...so this is goodbye. I wish we
could finish what we started but
you pushed me away...I know I
could've been a great father.
Love..."*

The voice trails off. Jimmy finishes the sentence.

JIMMY
"...Buddha."

RUSTY
Holy shit.

Jimmy walks to a mirror. He holds the card up, comparing it
to his reflection. Tall, lanky, light skin...a definite
resemblance. Even his mustache is similar...

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jimmy and Rusty play basketball at a lowered hoop. Rusty
shoves Jimmy and DUNKS, then pounds his chest like a gorilla.

RUSTY
Ain't nobody in these streets can
check me!

JIMMY
That's not skill, that's being a
fat asshole.

A loud BEEP goes off.

RUSTY

Hold on. Someone's hitting me up.
Probably some slut. Or my mom.

Rusty un-clips a PAGER from his belt.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Damn. Never mind. It's those
Columbia House motherfuckers. I got
the CD's, you got my penny. We're
even, bitches.

SKIDS rolls up on his bike. Trying to be smooth, he hops off
while it's still rolling but he trips and nearly falls.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Fucking Pee Wee Herman with his
tricks.

SKIDS

Well, what's so important?

RUSTY

Like you had shit else going on.

SKIDS

Actually, I was on the verge of
perfecting my pill and cough-syrup
combo. Been experimenting for
awhile.

JIMMY

You are officially the shadiest kid
in the world.

VERN (O.S.)

Hey fags!

We WHIP PAN ACROSS THE STREET and see **VERN** (16). He's more
popular, more rich, and a total prick. He looks like an extra
in 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air,' with a sideways neon cap,
authentic Bulls uniform and all-red Bulls WARM-UP SUIT.

JIMMY

Vern.

RUSTY

Vern.

VERN (CONT'D)

You guys jerking each other off?

RUSTY

We're not the ones who popped a boner in gym class and then touched it on Dave Tranberg's leg.

Vern's composure changes -- suddenly flustered and upset.

VERN

That's not true! Like I would even talk to Dave Tranberg.

RUSTY

You're probably getting a stiffy right now thinking about him.

He rubs his nipples and blows kisses at Vern.

VERN

Whatever Rusty. Why you over at Jimmy's? Your parents run out of food stamps again?

He SNICKERS. Now Rusty's flustered, but Jimmy steps in.

JIMMY

He's at my house because he's my *friend*. Something you don't know anything about.

Vern huffs, then goes inside.

RUSTY

Fuckin' douchebag. The boner thing is a true story, by the way.

JIMMY

Forget him. Skids, listen--

RUSTY

(interrupting)

Jimmy's mom was an NBA groupie ho and motherfuckin' Buddha Edwards is his dad.

JIMMY

Can you not be a dick? For once?

(to Skids)

I don't have all the details. But it looks like my mom knew a lot of players back in the day. Including Buddha Edwards. And he might actually be my father.

Jimmy pulls out the LETTER and hands it to Skids, who reads it lightning-fast and hands it back, un-phased.

RUSTY

We also know that Charles Barkley referred to her 'sweet taste.' That means cunnilingus. Tongue on vagina. And he's an All-Star so you know he could find the clit.

Rusty demonstrates using a couple of fingers.

JIMMY

Skids, where'd Buddha play in '81?

SKIDS

Cleveland Cavaliers. He actually led the team in points and rebounds. Coincidentally, Bill Laimbeer was also on that team before they both went to the Pistons in 1988 --

RUSTY

Alright, we got it.

(to Jimmy)

You were born in Cleveland. And you're a gangly motherfucker with a questionable amount of blackness, like him. It adds up.

Skids touches Jimmy's arm, examining the skin.

SKIDS

Your skin tones are pretty similar.

Jimmy grabs the ball and holds it for a BEAT.

JIMMY

My mom won't tell me the truth. Fine. But maybe he will.

RUSTY

What? You gonna call him up?

(pantomiming phone)

Hello, NBA? I'd like to report myself as an illegitimate child of one of your players. What's that? Get in line? Hello? Hello?!

JIMMY

We know where he's gonna be. Game Six. Here in Chicago. Tomorrow...

Jimmy dribbles the ball. His gears are turning...

SKIDS

Most likely the final game...

RUSTY

You wanna go to the game? That's your plan?

JIMMY

He could retire after this game and I'd never know where to find him. What if this is my only chance?

(beat)

I'd finally know where I came from. But I need your guys' help.

RIGHT THEN -- their attention is grabbed by an approaching CHEVY LUMINA. Mariah Carey's "Fantasy" BLASTS out. The car is filled with GIRLS singing their hearts out. In front is LAUREN, blonde hair blowing in the breeze. TIME SLOWS. Lauren looks at Jimmy and sings for him -- only him. Jimmy stares, mouth agape. The song resonates like none other before...deep in his loins.

LAUREN

...a sweet, sweet fantasy baby...

The car pulls into Vern's driveway.

SKIDS

Was that real?

RUSTY

Jimmy's penis thought so.

JIMMY

That was a sign...

RUSTY

Come on bro. Lauren's an inexperienced prude. If we're going to the city, I'll show you *real* women. Who are into penetration. With lube. And accessories.

SKIDS

Oh God, here we go again...

JIMMY

The Sin Bin.

SKIDS

The Sin Bin.

RUSTY

Fucking-A-right. My brother said
there's a chick there with three
tits like in Total Recall! Look!

He pulls out a crumpled FLYER that he brings everywhere.

ON THE FLYER --

"THE SIN BIN: Where Throbbing Fantasies Cum into Reality"

Jimmy grabs the flyer.

JIMMY

We're going to the city for the
game. Not to get herpes.

RUSTY

You wanna find your old man. I
wanna find a good woman. It's not
always all about you, you know. Am
I really the only one remembering
that getting laid is an essential
rite of passage to manhood?

Rusty pulls out a CONDOM and shows it off. On the wrinkled
wrapper, inscribed in Magic Marker: "Rusty's Baby Blocker"

RUSTY (CONT'D)

I always roll with this. Just in
case I fall into some. Also, my
brother said they give discounts to
virgins, so you two will be good.

Carol comes out to the driveway.

CAROL

Jimmy --
(beat)
What is that?

Rusty shoves the condom back in his pocket.

RUSTY

Nothing.

Carol grabs the FLYER from Jimmy's hand.

CAROL

Where'd you get this?

Rusty grabs it back.

RUSTY
Why? You know about it?

Carol stares daggers. Across the street, Vern's overbearing father **TED** steps outside. Polo shirt, slicked hair -- he is a fast-talking suburban yuppie.

TED
(yells)
Hey there, Carol. Heck of a day,
huh?

Carol straightens her blouse, wanting to look her best.

CAROL
Hi Ted. Sure is.

TED
Say, what are y'all up to later?
Feel like joining our pool party?

Vern steps outside and shoots his father a look.

VERN
DAD.

TED
Vern's having a lil' birthday bash.
Your should come over.

CAROL
That sounds like fun. Right, boys?
(back to Ted)
Thanks so much for the invitation.

Carol smiles. This is a man she could see herself with. But Jimmy, Vern and Rusty can't believe what they just heard.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE: a raging POOL PARTY. GIRLS sit atop boys' shoulders and CHICKEN FIGHT. Vern dunks into an inflatable basketball hoop.

LAUREN and TWO GIRLS walk in bikinis as our boys stare.

RUSTY
What's up, ladies? Can I get you a
drink? A Crystal Pepsi, perhaps?

They pay him zero attention.

BEHIND THEM -- Vern SNAPS A TOWEL at a BOY who SHRIEKS.

CAROL mixes with other PARENTS. And here comes Ted.

TED

Carol. So happy you came. You look fantastic, by the way.

CAROL

Thanks Ted. You really know how to entertain.

TED

I do what I can for Vern. He deserves the best.

Vern SPLASHES Ted from the pool.

VERN

Hey dad, where's the cake? I'm starved.

Ted looks at Carol sheepishly.

TED

That's my cue! He knows what he wants. Just like his old man.

His eyes linger on Carol for an extra beat. Then he forces a LAUGH and slinks away. Carol blushes.

OUR BOYS are apart from the party. Skids constructs an impressive balloon animal. Jimmy remains fixated on Lauren.

RUSTY

Your fixation is creeping me out. At least go talk to her.

JIMMY

What am I supposed to say?

RUSTY

Break the ice. Girls like it when you're funny. They like it when you're rich, but they also like it when you're funny.

Jimmy stays frozen.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Fine, I'll do something.

(announcing)

Behold, the Amazing Skids, a nickname I bestowed upon him after he shat his pants at the fourth grade science fair.

One of the girls, SHANNON, laughs.

SHANNON

Probably from all the pills. Jimmy,
why do you even hang out with him?

Skids overhears, but pretends like he's clueless. LAUREN
grabs Shannon's arm.

LAUREN

Come on. Quit being a bitch.

Lauren leads Shannon away, then turns back to Jimmy and
mouths 'I'm sorry.' Jimmy is frozen.

RUSTY

I think she just said "I'm horny."

TED (O.S.)

Everybody! Gather around please.

NEAR THE POOL -- Ted sets a huge CAKE on a patio table. The
icing is a custom photo: it's Vern, shirtless.

TED (CONT'D)

Before we have our cake --

VERN

My cake.

TED

Right. *Your* cake. Before that, I
want to give Vern a very special
present.

He hands Vern an ENVELOPE. The little tyrant tears it open.

VERN

I knew it! I knew you got 'em!

As he holds up **THREE GLEAMING RED TICKETS**, the heavens open,
golden angels SING, HARPS are STRUMMED...

VERN (CONT'D)

Tickets to GAME SIX!

Everybody OOH'S and AHH'S. We move in CLOSE on Jimmy and
Rusty -- their mouths drop.

JIMMY

Son of a bitch.

RUSTY

Cock sucking mother fucker.

Back to TED, beaming with pride.

TED
Today's your birthday, but
tomorrow's special because it's
Father's Day. And there's nothing
I'd rather be doing than spending
the day with you.

ON JIMMY -- affected by this speech. His eyes go downward.
Carol catches Jimmy's reaction. She SIGHS, helpless.

TED (CONT'D)
There are three tickets. One for
you, one for me, and one for
whichever friend you choose.

Jimmy LOOKS UP with renewed hope. Vern smirks, feeling the
power. He looks from face to face. When he gets to Jimmy, his
eyes gleam cruelly, then sweep by. Jimmy is deflated. Vern
points at a BOY, who lights up and walks forward.

VERN
I choose Dave Tranberg.

Rusty SCOFFS as everyone else CLAPS politely.

LATER -- Skids drinks a BEER discreetly. Jimmy sees Ted and
Vern hugging. He eyes Carol, standing alone. He walks off.

SKIDS
Vern must've been to a hundred
games before. Doesn't seem fair.

RUSTY
Yeah, dude. And tomorrow's Father's
Day? It's like fate. If Buddha's
his dad, tomorrow's the day he's
meant to meet him. Has to be. We've
gotta do something.

Rusty watches Ted and the tickets like a hawk.

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The MISSION IMPOSSIBLE theme kicks on. As Ted goes upstairs,
Rusty pokes his head around a wall. Ted returns, HUMMING,
tickets no longer in hand. Rusty ascends the stairs silently.

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy has changed into his SWIMSUIT. He looks in the mirror, regains his composure. Breathes deep, chest high, and exits.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy sees Ted chatting with Carol across the yard.

TED

You know what this party needs?
Some champagne. You with me?

CAROL

I'd love that, thanks.

BACK TO JIMMY, looking away. He PLUNGES into the water.

UNDERWATER -- all silent. Jimmy opens his eyes and sees LAUREN. She swims by him and he looks over her body, wide-eyed. She just smiles back, aware of what she is doing.

BACK POOLSIDE -- Vern nudges Dave Tranberg before swiping Jimmy's CLOTHES and running off.

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - TROPHY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rusty creeps inside. What he sees is incredible: SIGNED BASKETBALLS, framed BASKETBALL CARDS, AUTHENTIC JERSEYS. In the corner, there's a life-size MICHAEL JORDAN CUT-OUT.

RUSTY

Shitballs.

Rusty stares at the cut-out like it's Jesus himself. He goes to the DESK and looks through the drawers.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Come on. Where are those tickets?

Rusty thinks. He stares at the Michael Jordan cut-out. MJ's back hand is pointing down and behind him.

ON RUSTY'S EYES as they follow the hand to A WOODEN BOX. The box has a picture of VERN on its lid.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Bingo.

He opens the box, and a GLOW comes out.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Thanks Vern, you fucktard.

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Skids sits on the BOTTOM STAIR, rolling a joint. He sees Ted walking straight for him and shoves the joint in his pocket.

TED
Slide over, champ. Man stuff going on.

Skids stares up at him, silent.

TED (CONT'D)
Oh. You're the handicapped one.

He goes to one side of Skids, who suddenly blocks him.

SKIDS
Why are you going upstairs?

TED
To get some bubbly. What do you care?

SKIDS
(yelling so Rusty hears)
WHY WOULD YOU KEEP YOUR BUBBLY UPSTAIRS, SIR?

TED
Hey -- retarded or not, this is my house. Get out of the way.

He shoves Skids with his foot and walks past. Skids grabs his leg and holds on for dear life, then SCREAMS.

SKIDS
(loud)
Rusty?! HAS ANYONE SEEN RUSTY?!

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - TROPHY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tickets in hand, Rusty's face drops. He hears Skids SCREAMING and Ted's FOOTSTEPS. His eyes dart around the room.

ON THE MJ CUT-OUT -- it's across the room. No time.

OUT THE WINDOW NEXT TO HIM -- the pool below.

ON THE DOORKNOB -- it begins to turn...

RUSTY

Shit.

RUSTY DUCKS OFF SCREEN.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - UNDERWATER

Jimmy and Lauren swim toward each other as children's kicking legs dangle between them. Suddenly, Shannon BURSTS into the water between the two lovers, disrupting the moment.

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Ted descends, Skids is shocked that Rusty wasn't caught. A SIGH OF RELIEF.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy emerges from the pool, out of breath. Lauren gives another glance as Shannon pulls her away. Jimmy watches, then notices Vern.

ON VERN -- as he recites the letter from Buddha to the crowd.

VERN

(mocking)

*... My greatest hope in life has
always been to end up with a woman
as beautiful as you, inside and
out. But now I won't have that
chance...*

Jimmy runs over as the KIDS SNICKER.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - LEDGE - MOMENTS LATER

OUTSIDE -- Rusty stands frozen along a narrow ledge...

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy reaches the group. He takes A BEAT to gather himself.

JIMMY

Quit it, Vern.

VERN

No way, this is too good.
(continues reading)
(MORE)

VERN (CONT'D)
*I know I could've been a great
 father. Love...Buddha*
 (to Jimmy)
 Isn't that romantic?

JIMMY
 Stop being a dick.

VERN
 Or what? You gonna go crying to
 your dad? Oh that's right...you
 don't have one.

JIMMY
 Give it back!

VERN
 Give what back? This love letter to
 your slut mom?

JIMMY
 What'd you say?

VERN
 You heard me. She probably takes
 two at once.
 (eyes closed, miming)
*Mmm...when I get my chance, I'll be
 like --*
 (mimes sex)

With no warning, Jimmy CLOCKS VERN. As Vern's hands grasp
 his nose, blood SQUIRTS through his fingers.

CAROL
 (running over)
 Jimmy!

Jimmy RIPS THE LETTER out of Vern's hand. Carol grabs him.

CAROL (CONT'D)
 What has gotten into you? Apologize
 this instant!

Furious and humiliated, Jimmy pulls away. He stares at her
 for a beat. Then he turns his back and storms off.

Carol stands dumbfounded. Vern slumps to the ground in tears.
 Ted puts a hand on Carol's knee.

TED
 They'll be okay. Teenagers. One
 second everything's fine, the next
 the sky is falling. You know?

BEHIND HER, Rusty FALLS from the sky, SPLASHING the pool.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - JIMMY'S ROOM - LATER

Jimmy is on his bed, the LETTER crumpled up beside him. The door bursts open and in comes Rusty, soaking wet, with Skids.

JIMMY
Where were you guys? I thought
you'd have my back.

He throws the letter across the room.

RUSTY
Our bad, man. We were a little
preoccupied getting these...

Rusty whips out **THE TICKETS**.

JIMMY
You didn't --

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Rusty shoves the TICKETS down his pants.

CAROL (O.S.)
Jimmy?

JIMMY
One second. Uh...we're naked.

Rusty gives him a look. Jimmy shrugs. Rusty pulls off his shirt and wraps a BEDSHEET around his waist.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
OK.

Carol opens the door and surveys the strange scene.

CAROL
What is wrong with you?

JIMMY
He called you--

CAROL
I don't want to hear it.
(to Rusty & Skids)
You boys go on home. Jimmy won't be
leaving the house for a while.

RUSTY
Okay, sure thing. And by the way,
you're right.
(MORE)

RUSTY (CONT'D)

(to Jimmy)

Inexcusable! I'm going to call you tomorrow morning at nine sharp to remind you how awful you behaved. I'll call you from the park.

For good measure, Rusty WINKS.

SKIDS

(picking up on it)

Me too. I'll be with him. Scolding you, for behaving like a thug.

RUSTY

We're not even mad, bro. We're disappointed.

Skids fake spits on the ground in disgust as they exit. Carol and Jimmy share a BEAT, both fuming.

CAROL

Is this about tomorrow? Trying to punish me because you have to spend Father's Day with your mother?

Jimmy turns away from her, refusing to look her in the eye.

CAROL (CONT'D)

It's tough for you. I get it. But guess what? It's tough for me too. That's no excuse for you to act like an idiot. That's *not* how I raised you. I wish there was a man around here. He'd be wearing you out right now.

JIMMY

Who needs a dad? Men are like candy, right? Just eat 'em up, and spit 'em out.

Surprised and hurt, she walks out.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Early morning light. Carol pays bills.

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- Jimmy sneaks by with his BMX bike. As Carol looks up, HE DUCKS. When she looks down, HE POPS UP.

EXT. PLAYGROUND BASKETBALL COURT - MORNING

Jimmy pulls up. Skids is standing atop Rusty's bike pegs.

RUSTY
We really gonna do this?

JIMMY
Shit yeah we are. This is our time.

RUSTY
Alright, inventory. Lay it all out.

They pull out various items from their backpacks.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
OK. We got a Whatchamacallit Candy Bar, fifty-eight dollars, some Silly Putty, and Jolt Soda. And most important of all:

He drops the TICKETS on the pile.

JIMMY
Let's do this!

INT. VERN'S HOUSE - TROPHY ROOM - DAY

Ted enters, BEAMING. Behind, Vern walks in with a black eye.

VERN
The seats better be good!

Ted unlocks the BOX and his face drops.

VERN (CONT'D)
What? What happened?

Vern looks to the ground and spots Rusty's CONDOM. He picks it up and reads the wrapper, anger filling his face.

VERN (CONT'D)
Aaahh!!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Close on RUSTY on his bike singing at the TOP OF HIS LUNGS:

RUSTY
Wu-Tang Clan ain't nuttin' to fuck with!

Jimmy, Rusty, and Skids ride past a sign: "GO BULLS!"

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Carol opens the door and faces Ted and Vern. Ted holds up the CONDOM -- "RUSTY'S BABY BLOCKER."

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jimmy's bike tire SCREECHES to a stop. We PAN UP to see Lauren jogging with Shannon.

RUSTY

Ladies. Looking tight. Shannon, I had a dream about you last night. Here's a hint: you were amazing.

SHANNON

Revolting. Seriously, gag me.

RUSTY

We can make that happen.

This breaks through Shannon's tough exterior, and she LAUGHS.

LAUREN

Vern deserved that yesterday. I'm glad you hit him.

JIMMY

Yeah, well. We got even.

Rusty pulls out the TICKETS.

LAUREN

You stole those? He's going to flip!

JIMMY

You wanna join? Hop aboard.

He motions toward the bike pegs. The girls LAUGH.

LAUREN

Maybe when you get a real ride.

As they jog away, Lauren smiles back at Jimmy.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

We'll be looking for you on TV...

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carol sits across from a peeved Ted and Vern. She rests her head in her hands, exhausted.

TED
Obviously, Jimmy lacks male
guidance. That's not your fault!
You're a woman...alone...

Carol shifts uncomfortably.

TED (CONT'D)
Maybe I can help?

CAROL
What do you have in mind?

TED
He needs a role model. I know a
thing or two about raising a good
boy. Why don't we go find them
together?

Ted pats her knee and SMILES.

CAROL
Okay. I'd appreciate that. My guess
is they're probably headed to the
train station.

EXT. LARGE ROAD - LATER

The boys whiz past a sign with an arrow: "TRAIN STATION"

Behind them, TED'S CAR appears. THROUGH TED'S WINDSHIELD: we
see the boys. Vern jumps up.

VERN
There they are! Get 'em!

Ted HITS THE GAS and heads straight for them.

THE BOYS NOTICE THE CAR flying at them.

RUSTY
Ah shit. Bogies on our six!

Ted sticks his head out the window.

TED
Stop right there, boys!

Jimmy looks up ahead. He can see the station. A long EL-TRAIN is pulling in fast.

JIMMY
Follow me!

The boys pull out in front of the car and Carol shrieks.

CAROL
Careful!

She GRABS the wheel and the car SWERVES as the boys cross the road. They cut through grass and dirt, pedalling hard.

VERN
They're getting away! Do something!

THE BOYS reach a fence that separates traffic from the trains. They hop off the bikes.

RUSTY
Climb!

All three climb the fence and drop to the other side.

TED'S CAR screeches to a halt and the adults jump out.

CAROL
Jimmy! Come back here!

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The boys reach the tracks. They must cross them to reach the station. But ANOTHER TRAIN is coming in FAST.

JIMMY
It's do or die, boys. Let's go!

SKIDS
Or do and die. Fuck it!

They take off RUNNING across the tracks. The train is BEARING DOWN ON THEM, the HORN BLASTING.

Skids TRIPS and FALLS. Jimmy turns back and picks him up.

The train is ALMOST ON THEM. Rusty turns back to his friends, urging them on. It's gonna be close...

EXT. LARGE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Carol grips the fence and watches in horror as the train flies through the station. Then it's finally gone and behind it is revealed...Jimmy standing safely on the platform.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy and Skids dust themselves off.

RUSTY
Born to be wild!

They hop onboard the train just as the doors close.

INT. TED'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ted shifts the car into gear.

TED
(reassuring)
We'll beat the train to the city.
Don't worry.

He PEELS OUT into sudden GRIDLOCK TRAFFIC. Out the windows of every vehicle is a BULLS FLAG.

Ted slaps the wheel, frustrated.

VERN
God damnit! Way to go dad.

INT. EL TRAIN - LATER

Our heroes settle into the train. Onboard are all types of PASSENGERS: it's the melting pot of Chicago.

RUSTY
The game starts at five-thirty. And
we can't miss the intros.

Very faintly, we can hear MUSIC building. It's familiar...

RUSTY (CONT'D)
You know what I'm talking about.

He stares at Jimmy intently.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
*Da-na-na-na, na-na-na-na / Da-na-na-na,
na, na-na-na-na...*

We hear the music under his voice, that classic intro from all 90's Bulls games: "Sirius" by the Alan Parsons Project.

A CROWD forms around Rusty. Suddenly, EVERYBODY is chanting.

EVERYBODY
*Da-na-na-na, na-na-na-na / Da-na-na-na,
 na, na-na-na-na...*

Skids comes in with the BASS DRUM.

SKIDS
BA-DUUUUMMMMMM....

Rusty holds his hand up like a microphone. The energy in the train has reached a fever pitch, with everyone on their feet CLAPPING AND SINGING. When Rusty speaks, it's hard to tell if it's him or legendary PA announcer RAY CLAY...

RUSTY
 "And now, the starting lineup, for
 your Chicago Bulls!"

Everybody CHEERS WILDLY. Jimmy high-fives a PASSENGER.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The EL TRAIN rolls by as the music FADES OUT.

FADE OUT:

INT. EL TRAIN - LATER

The journey continues. Jimmy and Skids stare out the window. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRAIN, Rusty pulls out the TICKETS.

Next to him is a sweet looking OLD LADY. This is **BLANCHE**.

BLANCHE
 Going to the game?

RUSTY
 You bet your ass.

BLANCHE
 Hmm. Okay. Good luck with that.
 Because those look fake, son.

RUSTY
 (incredulous)
 What? No way, lady. These are
 legit.

BLANCHE
(smiles)
Okay...

RUSTY
Why would you say that?

BLANCHE
I've been around the block a couple
times. Let me see the barcodes...

He eyes her for a moment, then shows her the tickets.
Quickly, she snatches them and slips them in her PURSE.

RUSTY
Um...ha ha. I need those back.

BLANCHE
Pardon?

Rusty looks at her blankly. Then --

RUSTY
Do you have dementia or something?

She smiles at him innocently and returns to her book.
Suddenly, he REACHES for her purse. She CLUTCHES IT.

BLANCHE
(her voice raising)
Kindly leave me alone, young man.

A few passengers notice the commotion. Rusty smiles meekly
and lets go. He leans in close to avoid making a scene.

RUSTY
Listen, you old bitch, I've got no
problem sending you back to the
nursing home in a body bag.

BLANCHE
You have some mouth on you.

Rusty SNAPS. He grabs her purse. It's a full-on TUG-OF-WAR.

RUSTY
Give me back those tickets!

Jimmy and Skids rush over.

JIMMY
What the hell are you doing?

EVERYONE onboard notices the scene.

BLANCHE
 (at the top of her lungs)
 Rape! This young boy is raping me!
 He's trying to bend me over!

A group of hardcore THUGS makes their way over.

THUG 1
 What the FUCK? Are ya'll really
 perpetuating the stereotype of
 young males in Chicago? I'm sick of
 this misrepresentation, man.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

QUIET. The EL TRAIN comes to a stop. The doors open, and out fly RUSTY, JIMMY, and SKIDS, tumbling onto the platform.

A CHEER goes up and the doors shut. The boys see Blanche in the window: she grins and holds up her MIDDLE FINGER. In her other hand she holds their TICKETS. Then the train is gone.

JIMMY
 What the fuck was that? You lost
 the tickets?

RUSTY
 She seemed sweet. She tricked me...

Skids spits BLOOD.

SKIDS
 That was one evil geriatric.

RUSTY
 I jumped out a window for those
 tickets.

JIMMY
 Shit...
 (beat)
 Okay. Let's just regroup. We know
 what she looks like, right?

RUSTY
 Yeah, like a whore with dentures.

JIMMY
 I'm serious. You'll recognize her,
 right?

RUSTY
(shrugging)
Yeah. Sure. Definitely.

JIMMY
So we get to the stadium and we
find her before she can sell 'em.
And when we do, we go after her
together. Got it?

Rusty nods, embarrassed but glad to take Jimmy's lead.

INT. TED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Carol is becoming more concerned by the second. She stares ahead as they inch along through traffic.

VERN
If we don't get those tickets back,
you better buy some more, dad.

TED
Let's cross that bridge when we get
there. What do you say, bud?

VERN
Hey Mrs. Marshall, is it true that
Jimmy's dad abandoned him?

TED
(forced laughter)
Whoa! Hey, let's talk about
something else.

CAROL
No. No that's not true at all...

VERN
Oh. OK.

A beat.

VERN (CONT'D)
So who's Buddha?

Carol WHIPS her head around, shocked.

CAROL
What? What did you say?

Vern smiles evilly -- he struck gold.

VERN

Nothing.

Vern leans forward and cranks the radio, blasting "Ruff Ryders Anthem" by DMX:

DMX

(over radio)

*Niggas wanna try (what!), niggas
wanna lie (what!)...*

TED

*Music these days...it's so
different.*

EXT. SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO - UNDER THE EL TRAIN - LATER

The boys trudge along, the occasional LOCAL giving them looks. There is an eerie and sinister feeling.

SKIDS

(oblivious)

If you divide Perceived Value by
Actual Value, and combine that with
Past Performance Index, you'll find
the best five to have out on the
floor at any one time. Every game,
there's an opportunity for Longley
to get an easy bucket. If I could
just be on the bench and tell
Phil...

RUSTY

Stop, you're hurting my head.

JIMMY

I didn't even know this part of the
city existed.

RUSTY

Um yeah this is what they call
"socio-economically challenged,"
aka dangerous and poor as shit.

Instinctively they walk faster. As they go around a corner --

EXT. SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

-- they CRASH into a **GIANT MAN**. He must be seven feet tall,
with a gray beard (think Bill Russel). He scowls, holding a
CHAIN LEASH to THREE FEROCIOUS DOGS, BARKING and SNARLING.

RUSTY
Dude! Sasquatch!

SKIDS
And the Hounds of Hell!

They cower in fear. The man LOCKS EYES with Jimmy. When the GIANT MAN speaks, it is the booming VOICE OF GOD.

GIANT MAN
The path to destiny is filled with signs. A great man heeds those signs. The road will be tough, but if you face an obstacle, do not give up. Find a way to go over it, through it, or around it.

Skids and Rusty exchange puzzled looks, trying not to panic.

RUSTY	JIMMY
Um...okay?	Thanks?

GIANT MAN (CONT'D)
The greatest journey is inward, to find out who we are destined to be.

Jimmy takes a brave step forward, raising his chin.

JIMMY
We're on a great journey right now.
(beat)
Do you know how to get to the United Center?

The man nods his head slowly.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Great. Thanks. Which way?

The man POINTS to his right. He then looks UPWARDS when he speaks, as if receiving his words from the heavens.

GIANT MAN
Champions do not become champions when they win, but in the hours, weeks, months, and years they spend preparing. The victorious performance is only a demonstration of their championship character.

SKIDS
Wow...are you a guardian angel?

Rusty nudges Jimmy to LOOK UP where the Man was just looking:

A GIANT BILLBOARD -- Michael Jordan, lit like a God, extending his arms out like Jesus on the cross. The speech the man just delivered is WRITTEN IN TEXT beneath the image.

THE GIANT MAN -- now looks more like a homeless man.

GIANT MAN

You have any spare change? I haven't eaten in days.

(re: the dogs)

Neither have my pups.

RUSTY

So you're not a prophet? You're just a looney homeless guy?

The dogs JUMP at the boys. Rusty SCREAMS.

JIMMY

Sorry sir. We don't have much money. But we do have something you can eat, if you want it.

Jimmy nudges Skids who digs in his backpack and brings out the WHATCHAMACALLIT CANDY BAR. Skids breaks it in half and offers it to the Giant Man, who gently accepts.

GIANT MAN

Mmm...more than a mouthful! Very kind of you. My pups'll kill for chocolate.

He tosses a piece. The dogs SWARM like piranhas. Once it's devoured, they LEAP toward the remaining chocolate in Skids' hand. The boys SHRIEK and RUN for dear life.

EXT. SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy rounds a corner and sees the traffic go by. Then he gets an idea and runs into the street, waving his hands. Coming right at him is a BUS that SCREECHES to a halt.

The door opens to reveal the driver, **ARGYLE** (30's). He's cool, with sunglasses and a black suit and tie.

ARGYLE

You crazy? I almost flattened you.

JIMMY

We're lost and we need a ride to the United Center. Please.

ARGYLE
Man, I'm late as it is.

SKIDS
Can't you see we're helpless
juveniles?

Argyle lets this sink in. And for some reason he says:

ARGYLE
OK. You're lucky I happened to
drive by right at this exact
moment...get in. But stay up front.
You hear me?

They climb in happily. The door closes and the bus takes off.

INT. TED'S CAR - DAY

The car pulls into the train station. Vern continues to sing, blasting The Fugees, "Ready or Not."

VERN
*Ready or not, here I come, you
can't hide...*

TED
(yelling)
According to the timetables, it
should pull up right about...

OUTSIDE -- the train pulls in.

TED (CONT'D)
Now.

Carol, Ted and Vern watch as the passengers pile out. As the final passengers exit the train, the doors close. Carol scans the crowd desperately. No sign of the boys.

CAROL
I've got a bad feeling about this.

TED
They must've gotten off.

Ted puts out a reassuring hand.

TED (CONT'D)
It's okay. They're teenage boys.
They're tougher than you think.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

The bus cruises into downtown. The boys are still panting from their recent fright.

RUSTY

Holy shit. Thank you sir. That was horrifying back there. I thought I shit myself, hand to God.

ARGYLE

The whole world is trying to get into this game. You got tickets?

JIMMY

We did. We lost 'em.

ARGYLE

I think if you're meant to get somewhere, you find a way.

RUSTY

We have to get in. We're going to meet this guy's dad. James Edwards. We're gonna surprise him.

ARGYLE

Buddha?

RUSTY

You heard of him? He's kind of a scrub.

(to Jimmy)

No offense.

EXT. SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO - AVENUE - DAY

The bus heads straight for THE UNITED CENTER -- the monumental home of the Chicago Bulls.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Rusty and Jimmy look through the windshield at the stadium.

RUSTY

There it is!

SKIDS

It's huge!

JIMMY

It's amazing.

ARGYLE

I have to drop you a little ways
away so I don't get in trouble. You
can walk the rest.

RUSTY

Who do you drive around in this
thing, anyway?

ARGYLE

Oh, nobody important.

EXT. CHICAGO - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The bus stops and the door opens. The boys file out.

JIMMY

Thanks, mister.

ARGYLE

Name's Argyle. And you're welcome.
Good luck getting inside. Might not
be the same way you thought it
would be, so keep your eyes open.

Jimmy listens intently, sensing something about Argyle.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PAVILLION - AFTERNOON

Our boys walk slowly, taking in the scene. And what a scene
it is: the ECSTATIC CROWD; KIDS with their PARENTS; HUSTLERS
selling souvenirs; COPS on HORSEBACK; and everywhere the
frenetic energy of championship Sunday.

Out front, bathed in GOLDEN LIGHT, is the shining STATUE OF
MICHAEL JORDAN. Hand extended, legs scissored apart in that
classic pose, flying to an unseen basket.

Jimmy, Rusty, and Skids approach the statue reverently.
Things QUIET DOWN, as if nobody else is around.

JIMMY

We made it.

Rusty DROPS TO ONE KNEE and bows his head. Jimmy and Skids
stand by his side, totally awestruck.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

His Airness.

SKIDS

Mister Money Michael Jordan.

RUSTY

We stand here asking you for the strength, courage, and fearlessness to enter this arena which you have made your temple. Grant us just a single drop of your greatness, so that we may bring my best friend Jimmy to who might be his biological father.

On JIMMY'S FACE, mouth agape, eyes wide...

RUSTY (CONT'D)

We wish it was you who knocked up his sexy mom --

JIMMY

Dude.

CAMERA P.O.V. -- A REPORTER. Behind her, we see our boys.

FEMALE REPORTER

It's pandemonium here at the United Center, where in just a few minutes the Bulls will tip off Game Six. This is definitely the place to be.

She turns and comes face to face with the boys.

FEMALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Young man, would you have a word with us?

Jimmy looks unsure but Rusty prods him forward.

RUSTY

Are we on TV?

The reporter turns from the camera and lowers the mic, and when she does her smile drops.

FEMALE REPORTER

Don't be a dipshit, kid. Just smile and wave.

Back to the camera, her smile returns instantly.

FEMALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

What are you most looking forward to in tonight's game?

JIMMY

Um...I just want to see the team do well and win.

Jimmy looks back at the STATUE. MJ looks down at him. He hears the voice of the GIANT MAN.

GIANT MAN (V.O.)
The greatest journey is inward, to
find out who we are destined to be.

Jimmy GRABS the microphone, surprising the reporter.

JIMMY
And I'm looking forward to seeing
my dad on the court. James Edwards.

REPORTER
Your father is Buddha Edwards?

JIMMY
That's right. He doesn't know I'm
here and I'm gonna surprise him.
Because it's Father's Day.

Rusty looks at his friend, amazed. Jimmy steps back, letting what he has just done sink in.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lauren and her friends sit around the TV. She can't believe her eyes when she sees Jimmy. They all point and SCREAM!

ON THE TV -- Rusty GRABS THE MICROPHONE.

RUSTY
Chicago FUCKING RULES!!!

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PAVILLION - AFTERNOON

A CHEER GOES UP around them. Rusty pulls Jimmy aside.

JIMMY
Seize destiny by the balls, right?

RUSTY
Hell yeah. Now let's go find that
old bitch.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PARKING LOT - DAY

Argyle's bus pulls up and the doors swing open.

ARGYLE
Game time, gentlemen.

And out step: THE CHICAGO BULLS. We stay on Argyle's face as the players exit, their waists at his eye-level. All we see are AIR JORDANS, warm-ups, bags, etc. Until we PAN UP to JAMES 'BUDDHA' EDWARDS. Epic mustache. Argyle high-fives him.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)
Looking good, Buddha. Good luck out there, baby.

On the back of his bus, we see a giant BULLS LOGO.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - FRONT ENTRANCE

A JUMBOTRON plays Jimmy's interview. It's outside, by people milling about. Carol appears. She looks up and sees Jimmy on screen and a GRAPHIC: "Son of James Edwards"

CAROL
Oh my god.

Carol notices the STATUE behind the boys. Then Ted and Vern appear, also watching the screen.

CAROL (CONT'D)
The statue.

Carol takes off in a SPRINT.

TED
Carol! Wait for us!

EXT. UNITED CENTER - FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Our boys walk amongst the SWARMING CROWD. Just behind them, Carol RUNS BY. She spots the FEMALE REPORTER, and GRABS her.

CAROL
The boys you just interviewed.
Where'd they go?

FEMALE REPORTER
Get this lady off of me! Security!

CAROL
Where are they? Please, just tell me which direction.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The boys scan the crowd for Blanche. Skids grabs a LADY, tugging at her sleeve.

SKIDS

Have you seen this woman? She's dangerous. Please!

Skids holds up his NOTEBOOK. It's a crude stick-figure drawing. It could be Blanche if you squint right...

LADY

Good heavens!

ON JIMMY -- he climbs a railing and scopes out the masses.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PAVILLION - MOMENTS LATER

Ted strains his neck, looking for Carol to return.

VERN

Dad, enough of this shit. We're missing the game!

TED

Son --

VERN

Come on! Just buy some tickets from a scalper. And try to score with Mrs. Marshall later.

Vern points to a SHADY SCALPER off to the side. He is dealing with BLANCHE, the old lady thief...

EXT. UNITED CENTER - OUTSIDE STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Ted and Vern walk towards the scalper as Blanche walks away, counting a STACK OF MONEY.

TED

Hey pal. How much for two?

SCALPER

Your lucky day. Two large.

TED

Not bad. Here's two-hundred.

SCALPER

Two-grand, motherfucker. Don't forget this is a game with some histori-acal connotations.

TED

Um, you mean historic --

VERN

Dad, come on. Cough it up.

Ted pulls out a big wad of money and gets two tickets in return. He inspects them. They seem familiar...

Then he looks up and notices CAROL.

TED

Actually, better make that three.

As he reaches for more money, he stops.

TED'S POV -- Carol chats with a TALL MAN with a buzz cut.

Wait a second, is that...

ON CAROL --

DAVID ROBINSON (O.C.)

Candy? Is that you?

Carol stares up at NBA legend DAVID ROBINSON.

CAROL

(flustered)

David Robinson. Oh my goodness.

They hug.

DAVID ROBINSON

How have you been? It's been years.

CAROL

Fine. Just...I'm actually looking for my son.

DAVID ROBINSON

You're a mom? Didn't see that coming.

CAROL

I guess we all grow up. I'm sorry, I'd love to talk but I need to find him. He might be inside already.

DAVID ROBINSON

You need a ticket? My agent didn't make his plane. Take his.

CAROL

That would be amazing. Are you sure?

He hands her a ticket.

DAVID ROBINSON
C'mon. Anything to help you.
Come sit with me later.

ON TED AND VERN -- they see Carol with the ticket in hand.

VERN
Is that The Admiral? Whoa! Look how
tall and muscular he is!

Ted looks a little sad.

TED
That's enough, Vern.
(to the Scalper)
Forget about that third ticket.

Ted and Vern walk toward the stadium, and meet Carol.

TED (CONT'D)
We're going inside, Carol.

CAROL
(confused)
Oh. Okay. I'll keep looking.

TED
(cold)
FYI, we haven't discussed a
punishment yet, but we will. I'm
out even more money now.

Carol nods, acquiescing.

CAROL
I understand. So what about driving
back?

TED
(re: ticket)
Looks like you have plenty of
friends around here. I'm sure you
can find a ride.

She doesn't know how to respond. Ted and Vern walk off,
leaving Carol alone.

VERN
(to Ted, gleeful)
I bet she already gave him a ride!

EXT. UNITED CENTER - MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

From his vantage point, Jimmy SPOTS BLANCHE.

JIMMY
(pointing)
There she is!

The boys take off running.

SKIDS
Somebody stop that old hag!

Blanche sees them -- and DARTS for the entrance. The boys fight through the CROWD and reach the door just as Blanche goes through the turnstile.

SKIDS (CONT'D)
She's got our tickets!

At the turnstile they are HALTED by the GIANT HAND of a guard: **MOOSE**. He's a big, bald oaf who lives to uphold the 'law' of the stadium.

MOOSE
Hold up, squirts.

JIMMY
That lady stole our tickets!

MOOSE
Sure. And Phil Jackson's my spiritual guru.

BLANCHE
I've never seen these boys in my life, officer.

MOOSE
I'm not a policeman, ma'am.

BLANCHE
Could have fooled me. Such authority.

She strokes his arm creepily.

SKIDS
(sotto)
This bitch is a pro.

Blanche enters the stadium, then looks back at the boys and FLIPS THEM OFF. Again.

VERN (O.S.)
Well look who it is.

Ted and Vern appear. Vern is all smiles. Ted means business.

TED
Little thieves. You should be
ashamed. Trying to rob an old woman
now? What's next? Banks?

JIMMY
I can explain --

TED
Save it. You're lucky that we have
to go inside and witness history.
But there'll be plenty of time to
deal with you tomorrow, young man.
You are going to learn discipline.

VERN
So you idiots lost the tickets?

JIMMY
They were stolen.

VERN
How about you call up your famous
daddy to get you inside?

TED
Find your mom. And go home.

VERN
(hisses)
You'll always be on the outside.
And I'll always be courtside.

The three boys stand dejected as Ted and Vern disappear.

MOOSE
Move it along, punks.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - SIDE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The boys search for another way in. Jimmy spots the SCALPER.

JIMMY
Excuse me. We need help. Someone
stole our tickets. Do you have any
extras?

SCALPER

I'm so sorry. Here. Take these.

He holds out tickets. Then he PULLS them away and CACKLES.

SCALPER (CONT'D)

I look like a charity?

Jimmy pulls out some wadded bills.

JIMMY

We've got fifty-eight bucks, man.
That's it. Come on, please take it.

SCALPER

Two grand, bitch.

RUSTY

Two grand? Are these magic tickets
that blow me and get me high?

EXT. UNITED CENTER - OUTSIDE STADIUM - EVENING

The JUMBOTRON goes DARK and the INTRODUCTION MUSIC begins like earlier on the train, but now the boys stand forlorn.

JIMMY

How are we going to get two
thousand dollars?

ON SCREEN is SCOTTIE PIPPEN.

SKIDS

Pippen will get double-digits in
the first quarter.

This gives Rusty an idea.

RUSTY

You sure about that?

SKIDS

You should know by now that I have
an inclination for analytics. I'd
bet my last dollar. If I had one.

RUSTY

We do. We have fifty-eight dollars.
And there's somewhere that we can
turn that into more. A lot more.

LOW ANGLE ON RUSTY as he relishes in having a terrific idea.
He pulls out the FLYER: **THE SIN BIN.**

This is either a brilliant idea, or batshit crazy. Rusty leads them off, then crumples the flyer and drops it to the camera, CUTTING TO BLACK:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - EVENING

A dark alley, the SOUNDS of the stadium echo in the distance. The boys walk through as Rusty delivers the plan.

RUSTY

This isn't the type of spot with a big sign. But my brother said it's four lefts, a right down the alleyway, past the fire escape...

Below street level, hidden in the shadows, amidst a heap of yesterday's newspapers, there is an ominous RED DOOR.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Don't judge a book by its cover. Or a whorehouse-slash-gambling den by its sketchy entryway. We get in, put Skids to work and we'll have two grand in ten minutes! With time left over to get our peckers wet.

JIMMY

This better work.

RUSTY

Just let me do the talking.

SKIDS

You always do the talking whether we let you or not.

RUSTY

And have I ever let you down?

Jimmy and Skids don't hesitate:

JIMMY

Yes.

SKIDS

Yes.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - SIDE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Carol walks around the side of the stadium, ready to give up. Just then, a piece of paper rolls across her feet: THE SIN BIN FLYER.

EXT. THE SIN BIN - NIGHT

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK. A peephole cover slides open.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE is RUSTY flanked by Jimmy and Skids. He holds up their CASH. The peephole slides closed.

RUSTY

Hell yeah. This is about be like a
Puff Daddy video.

The door opens. The boys walk into a dark, dank hallway.

INT. THE SIN BIN - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Smoke wafts around a BAR. On one side shady OLD MEN sit at card tables. Off to another side DRINKERS sit with HOOKERS. The whole place is dimly-lit and in need of a makeover.

SKIDS

More like a Ron Jeremy video.

JIMMY

This place looks like it has AIDS.

GAMBLERS glance at them. A WAITRESS walks by and WINKS.

RUSTY

Whatever, let's go get that paper.

A BOOKIE stands behind a glass window.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

We'd like to make a bet, my good
man.

BOOKIE

(looking them over)
Got a baby-sitter with you?

RUSTY

Yeah. His name is Andrew Jackson.

He slaps down two TWENTIES. Bookie decides to entertain them.

BOOKIE

Big spenders, eh?

SKIDS

Put that down on Pippen to go for
double digits in the first.

BOOKIE

A prop bet. I can respect that. OK.
Ten to one.

He slides a slip to Rusty. Just then, a BEAUTIFUL GIRL walks by. Dark hair, pouty lips, dripping with sex.

(NOTE: This girl needs to be played by Tiffani-Amber Thiessen, or another 90's DREAM GIRL).

DESTINY

Hi there, fellas.

They are MESMERIZED. She bends over to touch Skids' nose, allowing them a full view of her ample cleavage.

DESTINY (CONT'D)

Aren't you adorable.

SKIDS

And you, as well.

Rusty steps in.

RUSTY

Hi. I'm Rusty, aka Rusty The Beast.
And I've been told I'm an
incredible lover.

DESTINY

(giggles)

I bet. Well I'm Destiny. How about
you come find me later?

She saunters off, letting them check her out.

RUSTY

Destiny. If that's not a sign, I
don't know what is.

JIMMY

Focus. Remember why we're here.

ON THE TV -- the Bulls explode into a fast break.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

ON THE COURT Scottie throws down a DUNK. The crowd CHEERS as Ted and Vern squeeze through to their seats, next to BLANCHE.

She eyes his WALLET in his back pocket. SMIRKS.

BLANCHE

Hello there. What a fine way to
spend Father's Day with your son.

TED

Doesn't get better than this, does
it?

ON THE COURT -- Scottie Pippen glides in for another basket.

INT. THE SIN BIN - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

CHEERS go up. Now the joint is PACKED and in a FRENZY, with
the Bookie working like mad. Rusty HIGH-FIVES an old-timer.

RUSTY

Boom! That's ten.

JIMMY

Cash it in, Rusty.

Excited, Rusty runs off. Skids beams proudly as GAMBLERS slap
him on the back. The BARTENDER serves up a BEER and a WHISKEY
to Skids. He points to a DISTINGUISHED GAMBLER, who nods.

GAMBLERS

Bomb! Bomb! Bomb!

Jimmy claps along with them. Finally Skids drops the shot
into the beer like a pro and CHUGS it. Everybody CHEERS.

SKIDS

Delicious!

DISTINGUISHED GAMBLER

Hey kid, you got any more tips?

SKIDS

I might. If you've got another one
of those tasty beverages.

The gambler signals to the bartender. MORE DRINKS come. Rusty
reappears holding the CASH: it's a lot, but...

RUSTY

It's only five hundred. What else
you got, Skids?

They lean in, and the other gamblers lean in, too. Skids
crunches the numbers in his head.

SKIDS

Kukoc will get the last basket of the quarter.

JIMMY

He's been terrible. Are you sure?

SKIDS

Does Raggedy Anne have cotton tits?

Skids DOWNS a shot.

LATER --

It's nearly the end of the quarter. The ENTIRE SIN BIN is watching every dribble. They OOH and AHH with each twist.

JIMMY

Come on, Toni. Get the ball back.

ON SCREEN -- Kukoc catches the ball. We hear the announcer:

MARV ALBERT (O.C.)

...Kukoc, dribbling away from the basket...thirty seconds to go...

Kukoc takes a fade away -- it BRICKS off the rim. There is a collective GROAN in the bar.

JIMMY

Shit.

ON SCREEN -- the Supersonics lose the ball. THE CROWD CHEERS. RON HARPER of the Bulls dribbles up the court.

RUSTY

Pass it!

Harper passes to Kukoc. Top of the key. He drives --

The CROWD RISES in anticipation --

Kukoc slices to the basket and LAYS IT IN!

THE BAR GOES BALLISTIC. CHEERS and WHOOPS. Jimmy hugs Skids.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Alright!

Rusty hustles off with the betting slip. Gamblers congratulate Skids, who is now SWAYING from so many drinks. Distinguished Gambler KISSES SKIDS on the mouth. He pulls back with a drunken GRIN.

AT THE BOOKIE COUNTER -- Rusty turns away with a WAD OF CASH.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
 Alright. Two grand. Nice doing
 business with you.

BOOKIE
 Hey kid. You didn't come just to
 lay bets, did you?

The bookie jerks his head toward the BACK DOOR. We PAN and PUSH IN...and there is DESTINY, beckoning with a seductive finger. At this moment, Boyz II Men's classic 'At The End Of The Road' sings through the speakers...

Rusty is MESMERIZED. His greatest weakness is exposed. As if drawn by a tractor beam, he walks to her.

DESTINY
 Hello again. Come in and play.

Rusty turns, sees his friends surrounded by gamblers. A BEAT of hesitation. Then he follows her into the darkness.

INT. THE SIN BIN - PLEASURE PALACE HALLWAY - NIGHT

A hall lined with GLASS DOORS. As Rusty passes, he sees a GIRL in every room. They smile for him, undress for him, kiss the glass for him. Rusty plays it cool:

RUSTY
 Hello. Hi. How's it going?

A DOMINATRIX slaps her WHIP at the glass and GROWLS.

INT. THE SIN BIN - PLEASURE PALACE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

At the center is a circular bed, surrounded by huge mirrors.

Destiny pours a drink, then turns to Rusty with a CHERRY in her mouth. She drops it from her lips and into his drink, then hands it over. Rusty is already about to blow his load.

He sits back on the edge of the bed and gets comfortable, sipping his drink like he's done this a million times.

RUSTY
 Nice room.
 (re: the mirrors)
 I like the view.

DESTINY
Is this your first time?

RUSTY
What? Of course not.

DESTINY
I meant, your first time here?

RUSTY
No, no. It's just been a while.
(beat)
I've been on the road. I'm a
rapper. Kind of, uhm, building my
career.

He puts on an air of importance, but all pretense drops when
Destiny straddles him.

DESTINY
A thousand gets you whatever you
think you can handle.

Rusty pulls out the money and counts it. Has second thoughts.

RUSTY
Shit.

DESTINY
What's wrong?

RUSTY
My friends. I promised them...see,
we have to get tickets to the game.
That's what this money is for.

DESTINY
What game?

RUSTY
The Bulls game! Jeez do they keep
you locked up in here?
(realizing)
Actually, don't answer that.
Plausible deniability.

DESTINY
Oh that basketball game. Well maybe
I can help.

She pulls out an envelope, opens it and reveals THREE
TICKETS. Shining red just like the others.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
A client gave them to me. I can't
use them. Too many things to *do*.

Rusty eyes them hungrily.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
How about two thousand, and I give
you these. Plus *everything* else.

Destiny slides a hand down to her crotch. Rusty's breath quickens, and he looks between her and the money in his hand. When she leans in and puts her breasts in his face, he can't hold out any longer. He hands over the cash. She slides the tickets in his pocket.

RUSTY
Dreams really do come true.

INT. THE SIN BIN - DAY

At the bar, Jimmy and Skids cavort with GAMBLERS.

GAMBLER #2
How'd you know about this club?

SKIDS
Our friend. He's been trying to get
laid since he could walk.

GAMBLER #2
Good for him. I wasn't comfortable
with my sexuality at all when I was
your age. He must be very mature.

JIMMY
Rusty? He's just obsessed with
chicks.

The gamblers exchange glances and stifle a LAUGH.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Where is Rusty, anyway?

INT. THE SIN BIN - PLEASURE PALACE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Destiny turns on USHER's, 'Nice and Slow.'

She dances. Rusty lays back, a grin plastered on his face.

DESTINY
Take off your clothes, fatty.

RUSTY
Can you maybe not call me that --

DESTINY
Take them off!

RUSTY
Yes ma'am.

He rips off his clothes, revealing his NINJA TURTLES TIGHTY-WHITIES. He searches his pants pocket. Finally gives up.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Hey, do you have any Magnums?
Must've lost mine.

She ignores him and keeps dancing. She unhooks her bra clasp and it slides down, revealing her perfect breasts.

Destiny pulls his hands onto her and he strokes her with all of the inexperience he can muster.

DESTINY
Tell me what you like about me...

She KISSES HIM, then nibbles his ear. RUSTY'S HANDS explore.

RUSTY
You've got great...skin. So soft.
And your back is...wide. Yeah, I
like that. Such broad shoulders.

ON RUSTY -- eyes closed, not even knowing what he's saying.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
I love how your thighs grip me. So
strong. Let's get these panties
off. Yeah. That's it. And I love
the smell of your hair. And your
dick. It's even bigger than mine --

His eyes SHOOT OPEN. He realizes what he just said. And we're close up on his face as he SCREAMS:

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

He TOSSES Destiny to the floor and leaps to his feet. His dream TRANSFORMS INTO A NIGHTMARE.

DESTINY
(her voice suddenly deep)
What's the problem, big boy?

Rusty grabs his pants and takes off. As he sprints down the hallway, he notices one GIRL WITH A MUSTACHE. Another ADJUSTS HER JUNK. The whole time he's SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER.

INT. THE SIN BIN - DAY

The back door BURSTS OPEN. Rusty flies out in his underwear.

RUSTY
Chicks with dicks! RUN!

Everybody LAUGHS as he SPRINTS, only in his underwear.

JIMMY
You've got the money?

RUSTY
These girls aren't girls and I've
been scarred for life!

The DISTINGUISHED GAMBLER WINKS and blows a kiss to Skids.

SKIDS
Here's to not remembering any of
this.

Skids downs another SHOT, barely able to stand.

ON THE TV -- Dennis Rodman eats up a rebound.

MARV ALBERT (O.C.)
*Midway into this second quarter,
but you get the sense that the
drama has just begun.*

EXT. THE SIN BIN - MOMENTS LATER

Rusty FALLS into frame, shirtless -- having tripped as he yanks up his pants. Jimmy and Skids are right behind.

JIMMY
What the fuck happened man?

RUSTY
Everything was cool. Lights were
low. Music was on. Tits were
out...next thing I know, her
schlong is in my hand.

He thinks about it, then VOMITS behind a dumpster.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
 (beginning to cry)
 That isn't what I meant when I said
 to grab destiny by the balls.

Skids, barely able to walk, also PUKES.

JIMMY
 Jesus. Come on, get a hold of
 yourselves.
 (grabs Rusty's shoulder)
 What about the money? Tell me you
 have the money.

Rusty recovers.

RUSTY
 OK, I'm going to man up and put
 everything that just happened
 behind me. Let us never speak of it
 again. Ever! Because I have
 something better than money.

He pulls out the TICKETS. Everyone goes silent. Rusty
 breathes deeply, sizes up his friends. He nods proudly.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
 Let's go to this fucking game!

The boys excitedly jog away from the camera. We linger on
 them until they turn a corner.

We SLOWLY PAN to the adjacent street and suddenly: a pair of
 SHOES enter frame. PAN UP to reveal Carol. She looks down.

CAROL'S P.O.V. -- the RED DOOR of THE SIN BIN.

INT. THE SIN BIN - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Carol enters warily. She takes one look at the place -- every
 man (including Destiny) is still DYING OF LAUGHTER. ON THE
 BAR, a line of shots.

DESTINY
 Poor kid was hung like a third
 grader.

Attention turns to Carol. Destiny steps toward her.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
 Looking for a good time, lady?

CAROL
I'm looking for my son.

ON THE GROUND, Carol spots Rusty's 'BONE THUGS' T-SHIRT.

CAROL (CONT'D)
I think they've been here.

Destiny sees that Carol is looking at the shirt.

DESTINY
What're you gonna do, ground 'em?

Some SNICKERS from the others.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
They're big boys. How about you get
in your minivan and go home?

Carol's face changes. She steps to the bar and takes a shot,
SLAMMING the glass down. She wipes her mouth and glares.
Destiny can tell that she's dead serious.

CAROL
I'm going to find my son.
(stepping to Destiny)
Where are they?

All the men lean away. A beat. Destiny looks her up and down,
then stares in her eyes, finding a new respect for her.

DESTINY
(re: the TV)
In a few minutes, we might see them
on there.

ON THE TV -- the game returns from commercial.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - MAIN ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

ON THE TICKETS IN JIMMY'S HAND. He leads the pack,
triumphantly striding toward us. Spot lights swirl and the
ROAR OF THE CROWD gets louder.

They reach the turnstiles. Jimmy holds out the tickets to the
USHER...but at the last second MOOSE steps in and grabs them.

MOOSE
Counterfeit. It's my job to know
these things.

Moose inspects the tickets, smells them, then TEARS THEM UP.

JIMMY
No way. This can't be happening.

MOOSE
You got hosed, boys.

Rusty EXPLODES in an animalistic rage.

RUSTY
I GRABBED A MAN'S DICK FOR THOSE
TICKETS, YOU SON OF A BITCH!

Moose looks at him with disgust.

MOOSE
Gross.
(re: the tickets)
If you had half a brain, you mighta
noticed this --

He holds up one of the ripped tickets. BIG and BOLD on the
front the team name says: CHICAGO DULLS.

JIMMY
Wait, we have money. We can buy
more. Real tickets. Two thousand.
Show him, Rusty.

He taps Rusty on the arm. Rusty looks at him sheepishly.

MOOSE
You're outta luck. Maybe the next
time we have a once-in-a-lifetime
dynasty...oh that's right, there
won't be a next time.

He SHUTS THE GLASS DOOR in their faces. Jimmy turns to Rusty.

JIMMY
You have the money, right? So we
can buy some more tickets and go in
another way?

Rusty drops his head and mutters:

RUSTY
I got tickets. I had tickets.
That's what we were trying to get.

JIMMY
You spent it? Every dollar? Tell me
you have something left!

RUSTY

Look, it was an accident...

We see Jimmy's dreams come crashing down. This time, with a sense of finality.

JIMMY

You spent all our money on those fake tickets? I can't fucking believe this.

Jimmy storms off. We stay on Rusty, feeling like shit.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - OUTSIDE STADIUM - LATER

Jimmy sits on the edge of a fountain, his head in his hands. The GAME plays on the JUMBOTRON behind him. Rusty paces.

RUSTY

Let's put our heads together and think. What if we snuck in? We go around back, find the garbage chute and climb inside. Yeah...Skids can hoist me up and then --

JIMMY

(under his breath)
Shut up, Rusty.

RUSTY

-- we can try to --

JIMMY

Shut up!

Rusty stops in his tracks. Jimmy's never reacted like this. An awkward silence. We hear MARV ALBERT in the background.

MARV ALBERT (O.S.)

Rodman scores and lets out an emphatic scream! Bulls up by seven at the end of the first half...

JIMMY

We didn't come here so you could get laid. We came to find my dad. I guess you forgot when you were losing everything we worked for. AGAIN.

Rusty sees how serious Jimmy is.

RUSTY
It's not like I did it on purpose.

JIMMY
We don't get in, you chalk it up to another big idea that didn't pan out. Like your stupid rap career. And you go home to your parents who probably haven't even noticed you're gone.

That stings.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
What about me? I'm supposed to find my dad. And now I'm not gonna because you're a horny asshole. I should have known you wouldn't give a shit. 'Cause you only think about yourself. And guess what: friends don't do that. Come on, Skids.

A RANDOM GIRL walks by Skids, who's slurring his words:

SKIDS
Gimme your number. I'll add up the digits until they equal sixty-nine.

Jimmy pulls him toward the stadium, leaving Rusty behind.

At Rusty's feet, a program with MICHAEL JORDAN smiling on its cover. Rusty kicks it and walks off, alone.

FADE OUT:

EXT. UNITED CENTER - BACK ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Rusty, still shirtless, dials a pay-phone.

On the other end, we hear an ANSWERING MACHINE PICKUP. It's Rusty's voice on the machine.

MACHINE (O.S.)
Leave a message for me or my family. Or don't!

RUSTY
Mom? Dad? You guys there?
Anyway...I'm in the city. I'll be home...sometime.

He hangs up. Hanging his head, he turns down an alley adjacent to the stadium.

Then he hears faint MUSIC. Not just any music, but the most inspiring anthem of the 90's, its ephemeral melody floating toward us. A song everybody knows, and Rusty adores:

"CROSSROADS" by BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY. And it gets louder...

SLOW-MO -- Rusty must be dreaming, because straight ahead are FIVE MEN in a circle, engulfed in smoke. It feels surreal.

He's closer now. He stares. It's real. They're passing a blunt. It's really them...

BONE-THUGS-N-HARMONY!!!

Rusty can't believe it. He stops. Frozen.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Bone Thugs. No fucking way.

The five members -- Krayzie, Layzie, Bizzy, Wish and Flesh -- take no notice of Rusty as they rehearse their harmonies.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
YO!

ON BONE THUGS -- RUSTY APPEARS in the middle of their circle, disrupting their session. He locks eyes with KRAYZIE BONE. And he RAPS, reciting the iconic verse from "Crossroads":

RUSTY (CONT'D)
*Let's bring it all in for Wally,
Eazy sees uncle Charlie, Little Boo
but God's got him, and I'm gonna
miss everybody...*

The rappers stare at him, his eyes steely like a boxer ready for the fight of his life.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, I've waited
my whole life to meet you.

A BEAT. And then Krayzie holds out the blunt. Rusty takes it, nods solemnly, and hits that blunt like he's the weedman!

KRAYZIE BONE
My nigga.

A STAGE MANAGER emerges from a door in the alleyway.

STAGE MANAGER
Five minutes to show time. We need
you in position in three.

Layzie Bone looks deep in Rusty's eyes.

LAYZIE BONE
You wanna roll with us, lil homie?

RUSTY
You serious? You mean get me inside
for the game?

BIZZY BONE
Yeah, man. C'mon. What's your name?

RUSTY
Rusty.

BIZZY BONE
(singing)
It's Bone and Rusty, Rusty. It's
Bone and Rusty, Rusty...

They all walk in to the stadium and Rusty follows, barely
able to comprehend what is happening.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jimmy helps Skids navigate through the rows of cars.

ARGYLE (O.C.)
My man!

Jimmy turns and sees Argyle polishing his BUS.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)
Thought you'd be inside.

JIMMY
Yeah. We tried.

SKIDS
The man is keeping us down!

ARGYLE
Where's the fat kid with the loud
mouth?

Jimmy shrugs.

JIMMY
We all just...gave up. We're going
home. Separately.

Argyle stops what he's doing and walks toward them.

ARGYLE

When you're down and out, it's easy to fall apart. A great team sticks together through the tough times. Anyway, I thought you had someone to see in there.

JIMMY

I don't even know if Buddha's my dad. I was just trying to find out.

Argyle nods. He feels like a sage to us.

ARGYLE

You know, I've never been in there either. I just drive people to the games, then drive them home. They need me so they can get to the game. I need them so I can do what I do. I don't need to go in there to do what I do. I belong out here. But other people...they belong in there. Even if it's only one time.

Jimmy takes this in. He thinks he understands.

JIMMY

We tried. But we got stopped again and again.

ARGYLE

You run into the Moose?

SKIDS

That guy's a total dick.

ARGYLE

He's just small-minded, that's all. But maybe there's another way...

A BEAT.

JIMMY

Can you get us in?

ARGYLE

Now you're thinking. If you get in, are you gonna talk to Buddha?

Jimmy nods.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)

Come on then.

EXT. UNITED CENTER - VIP ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Argyle leads them to the VIP door, guarded by an USHER.

USHER

Argyle! My man, what's good?

ARGYLE

All good, all good. Big one
tonight. Get these two in for me?

He puts Jimmy forward, who smiles.

USHER

Oh, you're the kid I saw on TV!
(beat)
Shit, it's a packed house...

ARGYLE

I'll be driving around the Laker
girls when they're here next
season. You know I got you...

This piques the Usher's interest. He unlatches the rope.

USHER

Alright. I never saw you. Got it?

JIMMY

Thanks.
(to Argyle)
Who are you anyway?

ARGYLE

Just a man doing his part. I never
knew my pops either. Go on, kid.

He waves and then disappears back to the parking lot.

SKIDS

Wow. He's so mystical...

CAROL (O.S.)

Jimmy!

Jimmy spins and sees her. She runs, elated to have finally
found them. She stops at the rope that blocks the entrance.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Thank God you're okay.
(catching her breath)
Look, I know why you're doing this,
but if you come with me I'll tell
you everything. I promise.

Jimmy glares at her. He shakes his head.

JIMMY

You should've told me a long time ago.

CAROL

I'm sorry. I thought I would be enough for you. I thought we'd be enough for each other.

Jimmy pulls out the LETTER. Carol takes the paper, recognition flooding over her.

JIMMY

You thought I would never find out.

Carol is hurt, upset, and momentarily shamed by her son.

CAROL

It's complicated, Jimmy. We can talk about it, and I'm sure we'll work it out. But now, you need to do the right thing. We need to make it right with Vern, and with Ted --

JIMMY

(yells)

What about making it right with me?

That really stings Carol.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

If you were ashamed of where I came from or who you used to be, you should have at least told me.

CAROL

I'm not ashamed. I love you.

JIMMY

So tell me now. Tell me the truth.

A BEAT. Carol can't bring herself to say anything.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. I'm going to find out for myself. Come on, Skids.

He shakes Skids, who has fallen asleep against the wall.

SKIDS

Hi Mrs. M.

They go in. Carol tries to follow, but the Usher blocks her.

CAROL
Jimmy, wait! Please.

MOOSE walks up as Carol is pulling out her ticket.

MOOSE
Miss, this is a VIP entrance.
Regular entry is around front.

Carol shows her sexy ways for the first time by leaning in close to Moose.

CAROL
Can you make an exception just this once? I really need to get in here.

Moose is momentarily flustered but recovers quickly.

MOOSE
If every rule had an exception,
this world would be chaos. That is
why rules exist. It's my job to
enforce these rules and --

CAROL
Okay forget it!

INT. UNITED CENTER - BACK TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

The tunnel is packed with DANCERS and EXTRAS. Rusty follows BONE THUGS past the commotion. On the court ahead, a STAGE.

FLESH-N-BONE
Pretty dope, isn't it kid?

Rusty nods, awestruck.

KRAYZIE BONE
Look how far we've come. From
nothing. But we had a dream...and
we stuck together.

BIZZY BONE
We each have our own voice, but
we're stronger as a unit than we
could ever be apart.

WISH BONE

When a man got a voice, and
something to say, it's our
responsibility to let the world
hear it.

RUSTY

You guys are my heroes. Ever since
the first time I saw you on MTV,
I've wanted to be just like you.

All five members stick their hands together like a team about
to hit the court. Bizzy Bone leads a chant:

BIZZY BONE

Bone, bone, bone...

As the chant concludes, they head to the court.

RUSTY

Hey, Wish?

Wish Bone stops at Rusty's voice.

WISH BONE

Yeah?

RUSTY

I'm sorry about your dog. And your
Uncle Charles. I miss him too.

Wish nods knowingly.

WISH BONE

Thanks, homie. We all take losses.
It's about how we bounce back.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STANDS - NIGHT

TED and Vern sit watching the court. The lights DIM.

PA ANNOUNCER

*Ladies and gentlemen, for your
halftime entertainment, please
welcome the midwest's own Grammy-
winning recording artists, Bone
Thugs-N-Harmony!*

The crowd goes NUTS. Vern lights up.

VERN

Sweet! I love these guys!

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - CONTINUOUS

The MUSIC KICKS ON as the LIGHTS bring the stage to life. The sweet, sweet sounds of Bone Thugs in their prime.

Rusty emerges from the tunnel, taking in the huge CROWD. He's in heaven. He bobs his head, mouthing the lyrics.

ON STAGE --

Bone Thugs perform. THEN -- as Wish Bone prepares to sing, he erupts in a COUGHING FIT. Hunched over, he can't breathe.

ALL OF THE MEMBERS look at him -- PANICKED.

Layzie notices Rusty singing along.

LAYZIE BONE
Hey lil' man! Get out here!

RUSTY
Who, me?

LAYZIE BONE
Yeah. Come on!

Wish Bone looks up at Rusty, helpless. He hands him the mic.

WISH BONE
(barely able to speak)
You got this?

Rusty takes the mic, looks at it, considers the moment.

Bone Thugs looks on expectantly. Rusty steps forward, the weight of what is happening showing on his face.

The STAGE MANAGER is miffed: "What's this?"

RUSTY
Chicago, let me see your hands up!

A WILD CHEER goes up. Rusty starts RAPPING his heart out, singing Wish Bone's verse to perfection.

We see Rusty from LOW ANGLES, like a superstar in a Hype Williams video.

He finishes the verse...spent. He pants like he just ran a marathon. He glares menacingly like he just annihilated a small village. Rusty raises his hands. The crowd goes WILD.

KRAYZIE BONE
 Give it up for my main man!
 (hushed)
 What's your rap name?

RUSTY
 Rusty Bone?

KRAYZIE BONE
 I don't think so.

RUSTY
 Ok. Rusty the Beast.

KRAYZIE BONE
 (to the crowd)
 Rusty the Beast!!

CHEERS. Rusty DROPS THE MIC. He goes to exit the stage but TRIPS on the mic cord and FALLS off.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STANDS - NIGHT

Vern sits in PURE SHOCK. The crowd goes NUTS all around them.

VERN
 You gotta be shitting me...

INT. UNITED CENTER - TROPHY HALLWAY - NIGHT

The BUZZ OF THE CROWD is DISTANT. Jimmy and Skids walk alone. It is church-like. On the walls are PHOTOS of Bulls glory.

SKIDS
 This is amazing.

Jimmy points to a sign with a big arrow: HOME LOCKER ROOM.

JIMMY
 He might still be in there.

INT. UNITED CENTER - BULLS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Empty. Jimmy and Skids gaze at huge wooden lockers.

JIMMY
 Damn. Must have just missed them.

But they are still in Mecca. They read out the name plates as they walk by the lockers...

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 ...Scottie Pippen...Steve Kerr...

SKIDS
 Toni Kukoc...Ron Harper...

JIMMY
 Michael Jordan...

They stop at the locker of the greatest who's ever played...
 Jimmy comes to the last locker. Looks at the name.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 James Edwards.

INT. UNITED CENTER - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Carol enters with her ticket and rushes toward the stands.

INT. UNITED CENTER - LOCKER ROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The boys turn a corner, and there is commotion. CAMERAMEN surround the BULLS PLAYERS -- all in a circle.

JIMMY
 Look, it's them!

Before they can make a move that way, the team huddle breaks and the players exit the tunnel and run out onto the floor.

We can just spot the BALD HEAD of BUDDHA EDWARDS.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 Buddha...

MOOSE (O.C.)
 Going somewhere?

MOOSE steps out between the boys and the players. Behind him, the team disappears as the doors SHUT.

ON JIMMY -- eyes-wide. He was SOOOO close.

MOOSE (CONT'D)
 Trespassing is a felony. You know what they do to peckerheads like you behind bars?

Jimmy and Skids back-up slowly.

JIMMY
You don't get it. This is bigger
than you. This is destiny. You
can't stop me. I won't let you.

MOOSE
Wanna bet?

JIMMY
Skids...run!

Jimmy BOLTS and Skids follows, but Moose is on their tail.

INT. UNITED CENTER - TROPHY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy and Skids emerge into a hall. At the end is an alcove,
where orange light spills out, beckoning them forward. They
rush toward it.

Seconds later, Moose rounds the corner and finds:

Jimmy holding a CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY above his head.

MOOSE
(little girl voice)
That's 1993!

JIMMY
One more step, it gets smashed.

Moose gulps.

MOOSE
You wouldn't...

JIMMY
Try me.

Moose tests him by taking a step forward. Then Jimmy THROWS
the trophy right at Moose's FACE. THWACK!

Moose makes a fantastic grab and clutches the precious gold,
blood flowing from his nose. BUT THE BOYS ARE GONE.

MOOSE
(yelling)
I'm going to get you...however long
it takes. I will bring you down!
(to himself)
Well, as long as it's before the
end of the fourth quarter.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

Carol emerges into the vast expanse of the stadium. The court shines below. The full house BUZZES with excitement.

She looks for Jimmy but isn't sure where to start. And then she sees him: ON THE JUMBOTRON. There is a VIDEO MONTAGE playing and it includes the clip of Jimmy being interviewed. The theme of the piece is "The NBA Family Cares."

ON SCREEN: Jimmy talks to the reporter. The graphic flashes underneath him, 'Son of James Edwards.'

JIMMY (ON SCREEN)
I'm gonna surprise him. Because
it's Father's Day.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - CONTINUOUS

SCOTTIE PIPPEN looks up at the screen. He raises an eyebrow at BUDDHA, who is also staring up. Edwards is SPEECHLESS.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYERS' TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

We are BEHIND Jimmy and Skids as they emerge into the PACKED STADIUM. Jimmy looks across to the team bench.

JIMMY
There he is.

ON BUDDHA, smiling.

Behind Buddha, MOOSE appears. He spots Jimmy. Immediately, he YELLS into his walkie-talkie.

The boys head back up into the tunnel. Up ahead, they see two SECURITY GUARDS. BLOCKED.

There's a door to one side. Jimmy YANKS Skids inside.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - MOMENTS LATER

From the baseline, the Bulls MASCOT -- **BENNY THE BULL** -- walks to the tunnel, passing CHEERLEADERS (called the LUV-A-BULLS). Each, of course, is gorgeous.

The mascot walks with a bit of a list. From inside his costume comes his MUFFLED VOICE as he waves to the crowd.

MASCOT
Yeah, Go Bulls...you rich pricks.

He BURPS, then looks at one cheerleader.

MASCOT (CONT'D)
Hey Shawnda. New rack looks great.

She smiles but says through her teeth:

LUV-A-BULL #1
Fuck off, Mark.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYERS' TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The mascot HIGH-FIVES a SECURITY GUARD.

MASCOT
I need a drink.

SECURITY GUARD #1
What else is new?

The MASCOT enters the SAME DOOR the boys just ran into.

INT. UNITED CENTER - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MASCOT takes off his COSTUME to reveal he is nude except for BIKINI BRIEFS. He's sweaty, pot-bellied -- disgusting.

He BURPS. Then he pulls out a FIFTH OF VODKA. He CHUGS, sets the bottle on the counter and enters a stall.

On the GROUND LEVEL we see his briefs drop. We PAN to reveal JIMMY AND SKIDS crouching beneath the counter. Skids grabs the vodka.

INT. UNITED CENTER - VIP SUITE - NIGHT

A PARTY rages in the plush suite. Rusty sips cognac and eats hors d'oeuvres. Layzie Bone sparks up another blunt.

LAYZIE BONE
You with us for the rest of the
game? We'll all be here together
till the champagne runs dry.

RUSTY
Jeez, you guys do everything
together? That's real friendship.

KRAYZIE BONE
Hell yeah. Dogs for life.

Rusty EXHALES and COUGHS, then gathers himself.

RUSTY

I would stay...but I need to get back to my own friends. I fucked up. I gotta make things right. Honestly, as amazing as it is to be with you multi-platinum rap stars...I wish they were here.

WISH BONE

That's beautiful, man. Family is all we got in this world, ya dig?

RUSTY

They were trying to get in the stadium. I should help them.

Krayzie Bone pulls out a VIP PASS.

KRAYZIE BONE

Take this.

Bizzy Bone tosses Rusty a T-shirt.

BIZZY BONE

And this too. See you at the Crossroads.

They all DAP.

RUSTY

(somber, softly)
I'm gonna miss everybody...

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYERS' TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Moose spots the bathroom door and approaches, his hand gripping his flashlight like a nightstick.

INT. UNITED CENTER - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Moose THROWS OPEN the door. The MASCOT is standing at the sink, fully costumed, washing its uncovered hands. Then he exits. A NOISE comes from the stall.

Moose creeps to the door and RIPS it open to find --

The mascot, passed out on the toilet with his briefs around his ankles, a cigarette hanging from his mouth. He wakes up.

MASCOT

The fuck?

He KICKS Moose in his balls. Moose stumbles back.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYERS' TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

The MASCOT COSTUME stumbles awkwardly down the tunnel. We realize that inside are JIMMY and SKIDS, with Jimmy on top of Skids' shoulders in classic hijinks style.

JIMMY

Hold steady!

SKIDS

I'm trying!

As they pass an OPEN DOOR, a HAND suddenly reaches out and grabs the suit, pulling them inside.

INT. UNITED CENTER - MAINTENANCE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

The mascot suit squeezes into the tight space. And now we see that the hand belonged to one of the LUV-A-BULL cheerleaders. She peels off her outfit, revealing her spectacular body.

SEXY LUV-A-BULL

Time for a costume change. My favorite part of the night.

She pushes up against the suit.

INSIDE THE SUIT -- Jimmy gets an up-close view of her boobs.

JIMMY

Oh my god.

The Cheerleader spins around.

SEXY LUV-A-BULL

Give it to me like last time. With the suit on, you hot dirty bull!

JIMMY

(to Skids)

What do we do?

SEXY LUV-A-BULL

Give it to me!

Skids doesn't think twice. He pulls one of the arms off the suit and reaches out hungrily, grabbing her breasts.

SEXY LUV-A-BULL (CONT'D)

Yes! Yes!

SKIDS

It's like a water balloon filled
with Jello!

From the court, a BUZZER SOUNDS, breaking up the moment.

SEXY LUV-A-BULL

Shit. We have to get out there.

(beat)

You better be here after the game.

She doesn't notice the adolescent arms sticking out of the costume as she gets dressed. Quickly, she is out the door.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYER'S TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The LUV-A-BULL exits, straightening her skirt. A beat later, the mascot suit wobbles past the SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Fucking lush.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - MOMENTS LATER

The mascot costume stumbles ahead toward the court.

SKIDS

There!

On the bench, there is Buddha.

SKIDS (CONT'D)

We're headed for Buddha!

JIMMY

No. Wait.

SKIDS

There's zero chance he gets into this game. That bench is the only place you know you'll be able to find him. After it's over, anything could happen.

ON THE HEAD -- we see Jimmy through the eyes. He knows Skids is right. He glances up and sees the CLOCK ticking away.

CLOSE ON THE COSTUME BODY -- a small HOLE is cut out at the crotch. Through it, we can see Skids' eyes.

SKIDS (CONT'D)
Ah, that's better.

The BUZZER sounds again.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Time-out, Supersonics!

The LUV-A-BULLS run on the court, pulling the costume along.

LUV-A-BULL #2
(to the Mascot)
Try not to fuck up again.

JIMMY
What?

The cheerleaders lead the costume by its hands. They take center court and strike a pose, ready to dance.

MUSIC BLARES. COLORED LIGHTS cut across the stadium. All the cheerleaders start their choreographed dance.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Move around, Skids! Dance!

Skids makes a mess of the dance and BUMPS INTO a cheerleader.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Sorry!

ON THE SECURITY GUARD -- he taps his PARTNER.

SECURITY GUARD #3
Will you look at this guy?

SECURITY GUARD #2
Yeah. He's been hammered all night.

The cheerleaders BEND OVER in front of the costume. Skids freezes. Right there is a cheerleader's big, juicy BOOTY.

SKIDS
Whoa...

Skids reaches his arm out from the hole and SLAPS the girl's butt. She turns back, startled.

ON THE SIDELINES -- the TWO REFEREES shoot each other a look.

A WIDE SHOT -- the mascot costume with Skids' little arm sticking out, looking like a BIG PENIS.

ON THE REFEREES -- they look at each other again.

REFEREE #1
True to form: hung like a bull.

THE COSTUME -- a cheerleader pushes it over. The boys tumble.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PLAYERS' TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

MOOSE sees the mascot flailing about. He realizes what's going on. And he is PISSED.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - CONTINUOUS

The costume stumbles back to its feet.

SKIDS
I don't feel so good.

WIDEN OUT -- the costume SWAYS as the girls finish the dance.
The cheerleaders walk by the boys to get off the court.

LUV-A-BULL #3
You're such a piece of shit.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Carol walks around the stands. Exhausted, she takes a moment to rest and sees the mascot on the court.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - CONTINUOUS

The mascot costume comes to a halt, bent over.

JIMMY
Hang on, Skids. Just get us off the court.

SKIDS
I don't think I can...

AT THE ANNOUNCER'S TABLE -- MARV ALBERT calls the action.

MARV ALBERT
Benny the Bull seems to be taking a breather before we resume action here. Such a fan favorite.

BACK TO THE COSTUME -- Jimmy is frantic inside.

JIMMY
 Whatever you do, don't --

But he's too late. Skids PUKES and the vomit PROJECTILES OUT OF THE HOLE in the costume. It looks like the mascot is PISSING A HUGE STREAM ALL OVER THE COURT.

A collective GASP goes up from the CROWD.

THE REFEREES nearly puke themselves.

The BULLS PLAYERS are speechless.

And then MOOSE TACKLES THEM in the middle of the court. They SLIP in the puddle of puke and slide across the court. When Moose stands, he's covered in SICKLY VOMIT.

MOOSE
 Gotcha, you little bastards.

He pulls up the costume and HAULS THE BOYS AWAY.

Two TOWEL BOYS argue over who has to clean it up...

MARV ALBERT (V.O.)
*What a mess as we enter the fourth
 courter!*

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The girls all cringe at the mess on TV. Lauren looks closely for any sign of Jimmy...

INT. UNITED CENTER - VIP LEVEL TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Rusty sees Jimmy and Skids being pulled away below.

RUSTY
 No fucking way...

INT. UNITED CENTER - DRUNK TANK - NIGHT

Moose pushes Jimmy and Skids into a holding cell.

MOOSE
 Thought you could outsmart me, huh?
 Stupid kids can't beat The Moose.

He wipes off the puke with NAPKINS. He's a total mess.

JIMMY

Look, the game's almost over. Can't we just go watch the end? And then you can arrest us or whatever you have to do. I get it, you're doing a job. But it's *GAME SIX*.

Moose is unmoved.

MOOSE

Do I look like an asshole to you?

SKIDS

Um...

MOOSE

Shut up!

Moose goes through the BACKPACK, removing all of the items. He pulls out the YAK-BAK, and hits the big PLAY button.

RUSTY

(through speaker)

*I like big booty bitches, make 'em
sixty-nine me, deep in a booty is
where you might find me --*

Moose fumbles with the device and finally turns it off.

MOOSE

What is wrong with you kids?

Then he pulls out the JOLT COLA. Opens it and CHUGS IT.

MOOSE (CONT'D)

Thanks. Needed that.

He smirks. His RADIO BUZZES and a crackling voice comes out.

RADIO VOICE

Moose, code eight-two. Over.

Moose stands and walks to the door.

MOOSE

Damn it! Duty calls. See you after the game, with the police.

INT. UNITED CENTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Rusty flashes his VIP PASS to a GUARD, covering his face as Moose walks by. Moose shoots a glance, but then his face TWITCHES...and he keeps walking.

INT. UNITED CENTER - PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Jimmy paces and Skids sleeps, while the crowd ROARS faintly above. Then the DOOR OPENS and in steps RUSTY.

RUSTY

Don't you two look adorable.

Jimmy faces him. Steely-eyed and unforgiving.

JIMMY

How'd you get in here?

RUSTY

Is that any way to greet your savior?

A BEAT. Rusty finally drops his persona and shows his PASS.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

While in the comforts of my VIP suite, I saw you and thought you could use a hand.

(talking fast)

Got the hook up. And you'll never believe from who. After I left you guys, I met BONE THUGS!

JIMMY

You're full of shit.

RUSTY

Am not. Jesus, do you want me to help you or what?

JIMMY

You should've been helping me the whole time.

RUSTY

What the fuck do you think we've been doing?! I stole those tickets, risking my life. Skids won that money. We've almost been killed like ten times! And all of it was to help you!

(beat)

We stick together because we're better together. *That's* why we're friends. My parents don't give a shit, Skids has to wipe his grandma's ass, and you don't have a dad. Big whoop! We have each other.

SKIDS

It's true.

He's awake! And he pulls out the fifth to take a swig.

SKIDS (CONT'D)

I've been sinking into addictive behavior, all stemming from the lack of guidance in my life. Seeing you pursue your dreams...it's inspired me. I need to make a change.

He nods off again and then lurches back awake.

SKIDS (CONT'D)

But a little gratitude would go a long way, you know? Or else this fragile thing we call friendship...

He THROWS the bottle against the wall, SHATTERING the glass.

SKIDS (CONT'D)

...could shrivel up and die.

RUSTY

I know I fucked up. I'm sorry. But if Buddha really is your dad, he's part of the greatest team ever. That means you will be, too, in a six degrees of Buddha Edwards type of thing. And I want to be a part of that with you.

Jimmy looks at them both, realizing they're right.

JIMMY

You guys have always had my back. I'm sorry I don't always see that. Even if Buddha isn't my dad...nothing changes for me. But if you're not my friends, everything changes. I'd be like Vern.

SKIDS

Handsome, strong, and confident?

RUSTY

No, a friendless dickhead.

JIMMY

That's not who I wanna be.

(beat)

(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)
My father might be out there.
There's no god damn we're giving up
now!

RUSTY
Fuck yeah!

He rushes forward and hugs Jimmy awkwardly through the bars.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
This is awkward.

MOOSE (O.C.)
I think it's cute.

Rusty whirls around to face MOOSE standing in the doorway.

MOOSE (CONT'D)
(speaking in ultra-speed)
Thought I wouldn't recognize you?
Well, you're wrong. Dead wrong.

He moves forward and grabs Rusty by the collar, all the while giggling an odd, idiosyncratic, high-pitch CACKLE.

RUSTY
Dude. Rodney King and shit.

Moose unlocks the cell door and shoves Rusty inside. In the commotion, SKIDS walks over nonchalantly.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
So much for my heartfelt speech
getting us back on track.

MOOSE
(still giggling)
How's it feel? To be in here when
everyone else is out there?

Then he TWITCHES. Shakes his head. TWEAKS OUT FOR A SECOND.

RUSTY
Whoa, you alright?

Moose is TWEAKING.

MOOSE
Shut up! I said SHUT UP! Quiet. No
more. Zip the lips. Zip!

SKIDS
He'll be running out of steam in
about 3, 2, 1...

MOOSE

Jokes on you, nutsack. I'll never
run out of steam. I'm the Moose.
The biggest, baddest, most thorough
son of a bitch who ever --

HE FREEZES in mid-sentence. His entire body drops.

SKIDS

-- kapow.

JIMMY

What was that?

SKIDS

Kapow. The pill and cough-syrup
combo I've been working on. Jolt
Cola, Ritalin, Nyquil. Ten minutes
of extreme hyperactivity followed
by a severe crash. It's my
masterpiece.

RUSTY

Great work, Skids. But
unfortunately, we're still stuck in
this god damn cell.

SKIDS

I've been wondering. Am I
constantly underestimated because
I'm a minority?

Skids pushes the cell door and it OPENS. He reaches into the
DOOR LOCK and pulls out a wad of SILLY PUTTY.

JIMMY

Silly putty. Skids, you're a
genius!

Rusty looks at Skids and then, begrudgingly:

RUSTY

I'll give it to ya. You are much
more than the super shady geek that
we take you for.

Skids beams. The boys step over Moose's body and exit.

INT. UNITED CENTER - HALLWAY

In the hallways beneath the court, the boys walk together.

RUSTY
There isn't much time. What are we
going to do?

Jimmmmy stops them. It's time for a brief pep-talk.

JIMMY
You know what? We're at Game-
fucking-Six. Let's watch some
basketball!

RUSTY
That's what I'm talking about!

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

We are behind the boys as they come into the stadium. The
place is ROCKING. Sheer PANDEMONIUM.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

Ted and Vern CHEER along with the rest of the crowd.

TED
We're going to see a championship
celebration! None of your friends
will be able to say that.

A POPCORN VENDOR walks down the aisle.

VERN
Dad, I want popcorn.

TED
Sure thing, son.
(to the Vendor)
We'll take some!

Ted pulls out a twenty and hands it to BLANCHE to pass down
to the Vendor. Blanche slips it in her own pocket.

TED (CONT'D)
Excuse me, ma'am. That's for the
popcorn. Please pass it down?

BLANCHE
Pardon?

TED
The twenty dollar bill you just put
in your pocket --

Ted reaches for her pocket.

BLANCHE

Take your hands off me! HELP!

Ted panics, raises his hands in the air. A POLICE OFFICER takes notice. He radios for backup and approaches quickly.

BLANCHE (CONT'D)

He grabbed me. He's a pervert!

POLICE OFFICER

Sir? You need to come with me.

TED

This is a big misunderstanding --

POLICE OFFICER

My show! Do NOT raise your voice!

TED

I wasn't --

POLICE OFFICER

That's it, sir, I warned you.

Lightning fast, the officer MACES him. Ted flails in pain. The officer pulls him away, using a TAZER like a cattle prod. The drunken crowd takes notice and all join in BOOING him.

He looks back at Blanche through mace tears. She smirks at him...and then FLIPS HIM OFF.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

The boys watch the game. SCOTTIE PIPPEN misses a shot.

JIMMY

They gotta put this thing away!
This is too close for comfort.

Skids listens to him, thinking...then he walks off.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Skids slips under a railing. Gets to the edge of the court.

He walks behind the CHEERLEADERS, all the way to the BENCH. He pulls out his NOTEBOOK and SCRIBBLES something. Then taps the shoulder of a white-haired coach, TEX WINTER (a legend).

SKIDS
Mr. Tex Winter, sir?

Tex Winter turns from the game action to Skids who is holding out his NOTEBOOK. **(This is the moment for an amazing WIDE shot compositing Skids into actual old game footage)**

Tex Winter takes the notebook. OVER HIS SHOULDER we see a diagramed TRIANGLE crisscrossed with arrows, X's, and O's.

His eyes go wide. When he lowers the notebook, SKIDS IS GONE. He looks everywhere, then finally leans down the bench:

TEX WINTER
Hey Phil. Call a time-out.

A WHISTLE BLOWS.

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

ON SKIDS as he walks up into the stands. BEHIND HIM the game resumes, as LUC LONGLEY puts in a basket.

Skids takes his place next to his friends as the crowd ROARS.

MARV ALBERT (O.S.)
Whatever Phil Jackson drew up, it worked. The Bulls are running away with this one! History in the making!

INT. UNITED CENTER - DRUNK TANK - NIGHT

Vern and Ted are despondent as they are pushed inside the cell. There is only the sound of VERN CRYING. Ted pats him on the shoulder and then they TRIP. They look down:

Moose still lies on the floor. He comes to life.

MOOSE
What -- where -- who --

POLICE OFFICER
Moose?

INT. UNITED CENTER - STADIUM - NIGHT

The place is going BALLISTIC.

RUSTY
Ten seconds, dude!

The three friends put their arms around each other and count down at the top of their lungs:

THE BOYS
Five, four, three, two, one!

The FINAL BUZZER SOUNDS. CONFETTI rains from the rafters. STRANGERS HUG, PARENTS KISS BABIES, GROWN MEN CRY. It's the MOST JOYOUS MOMENT imaginable in sports cinema history.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Bulls win! Bulls win! Your 1996 NBA
Champions!

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lauren JUMPS with her friends, totally elated!

INT. UNITED CENTER - NIGHT

Jimmy, Skids and Rusty hug each other. It feels like a dream.

JIMMY
Come on, we gotta get down there!
Time to grab destiny by the balls!

ON THE COURT -- people are pouring in, surrounding the players and coaches.

IN THE STANDS -- CAROL scans the crowd for Jimmy.

INT. UNITED CENTER - COURT - MOMENTS LATER

The boys burst onto the court into the WILD CELEBRATION. MICHAEL JORDAN rolls on the ground, clutching the ball. This is a classic scene in NBA history, and our boys are in it.

CLOSE ON JIMMY -- he looks around. Sees FATHERS AND SONS hugging: old men, young men, boys, toddlers. This is a beautiful moment of male bonding, and everywhere he looks it seems that everybody is in on it...except him.

MARV ALBERT (O.S.)
*And this is Father's Day. You have
to imagine that Michael Jordan
feels extra special about this one.*

Jimmy spots MICHAEL JORDAN in tears. But he doesn't walk over to him. He just watches. And the confetti keeps raining down.

RUSTY
Do you see him?

Skids stumbles, looking everywhere.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Dude? Do you see him or what?

And then a swarm of SECURITY and CAMERAMEN push through, crowding the boys off to the side.

Jimmy climbs up on the scorer's table, the mayhem feels OVERWHELMING. Carol SPOTS him.

The boys see Carol, the only person turned toward them in the entire arena. She smiles at them weakly.

CAROL
You're OK. All of you. Thank God.

Jimmy is spent. And it shows.

JIMMY
Mom....yeah, we're fine.

RUSTY
Hi Mrs. M.

The celebration is MOVING TO THE TUNNEL.

JIMMY
I didn't find him. I didn't get to talk to him.

With a look of motherly comfort, she recognizes he isn't running away any longer. He's happy to see her.

CAROL
I want you boys to come with me.
You're not in trouble. OK?

Jimmy takes one last look around the court, then NODS.

INT. UNITED CENTER - LOCKER ROOM HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carol leads the boys past the PRESS and FANS.

JIMMY
Where are we going, mom?

CAROL
Just trust me.

Then DENNIS RODMAN runs toward the door of THE LOCKER ROOM.
He STOPS IN HIS TRACKS when he sees Carol.

DENNIS RODMAN
Oh damn. Candy Carol! Looking good!

CAROL
(laughing)
Thanks Dennis. You were great
tonight.

Jimmy and Rusty can't believe this.

DENNIS RODMAN
Haven't heard you say that since my
rookie year. You partying with us
tonight or what?

CAROL
Yeah. Gotta bring these guys in
with me though.

DENNIS RODMAN
That's no problem. I love kids.
Especially other peoples. They all
yours?

CAROL
Just this one.

She pats Jimmy's back.

DENNIS RODMAN
Cool. Not mine, right?

CAROL
Definitely not.

RUSTY
You can be my dad if you want to,
Mr. Worm.

DENNIS RODMAN
This is the best girl you'll ever
meet. Known her since way back.
Come on, ya'll.

They follow Rodman into the locker room.

INT. UNITED CENTER - BULLS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CHAMPAGNE SPRAYS. Carol and the boys are hardly able to believe their eyes. Coach TEX WINTER notices Skids and hoists him up. Skids pops a bottle of champagne and guzzles it.

Carol is instantly welcomed. She LAUGHS with SCOTTIE PIPPEN, then disappears into the group of players.

RUSTY

She's known all of them this whole time and she never told us.

JIMMY

She didn't want me to think...that it was true.

Carol emerges from the pack with JAMES EDWARDS. The tall man walks toward Jimmy, smiling.

CAROL

Jimmy, this is Buddha.

(beat)

I'll leave you two to talk. Just for a minute. OK?

She squeezes them both on the arm and then joins Rusty off to the side as the celebration continues around them.

BUDDHA

Your mom is a wonderful woman. I met her a long time ago, when I was a young man.

JIMMY

Like 15 years ago, right?

BUDDHA

I know what you're thinking. I saw you on the big screen tonight. You give a hell of an interview. And your mom just gave me this.

He holds up the LETTER.

BUDDHA (CONT'D)

It's a strange thing to see your own thoughts after so many years.

JIMMY

Is it true? Are you my dad?

A BEAT. Buddha shakes his head.

BUDDHA
No son, I'm not.

Jimmy handles this just fine. He looks over to Carol.

JIMMY
I understand now. She's just been
trying to do the right thing.

BUDDHA
You're lucky. She's the one who
loves you, and roots for you.
That's who we want with us during
the big moments. For me that's my
teammates. For you...it's not some
guy you've never met who happens to
be your father. It's your mom, who
gave up this crazy life for you.
And your friends, who got you into
a heap of trouble from what I hear.

JIMMY
Yeah, you're right. Thanks, Buddha.
(beat)
You guys have an amazing team.

BUDDHA
I've been part of some good ones.
But this right here, I'll remember
for a long time.

JIMMY
(grinning)
Me too.

ON DENNIS RODMAN --

DENNIS RODMAN
Let's fucking party!!!

EXT. UNITED CENTER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

THE PARTY POURS OUTSIDE where ARGYLE waits with his bus. FANS
LINE THE METAL BARRIERS. Carol and the PLAYERS head toward
the bus. Jimmy, Rusty, and Skids are behind them.

JIMMY
Argyle?

ARGYLE
Hey! You find what you were looking
for?

Jimmy puts his arms around his friends.

JIMMY

Yeah. It was right here.

MOOSE (O.C.)

Thought you could get away, did ya?

One final obstacle: the boys face Moose, who towers above, while the players walk on with Carol. Moose is disheveled, dirty, and furious.

ARGYLE

Moose, you still picking on kids?
What's wrong with you?

MOOSE

Doesn't concern you, bus driver.
This is my turf. You understand?
MINE!

JIMMY

(to Argyle)

It's okay. I got this.

(to Moose)

You might be able to take one of
us. But not all three of us.

They stand shoulder to shoulder, ready to do whatever it takes to defeat Moose one last time.

MOOSE

You don't think I can't kick three
little asses at once?

SUDDENLY THE GIANT MAN from the Southside appears behind Moose, his DOGS by his side. The boys collective gazes turn upward, and Moose turns around.

GIANT MAN

When facing an obstacle, do not
give up. Find a way to go over it,
through it, or around it.

(whispers to the boys)

In this case, go around it.

The boys nod in unison, and then scurry around Moose.

Before they go, SKIDS reaches into his pocket and pulls out the remaining piece of the WHATCHAMACALLIT CANDY BAR.

SKIDS

Hey, Mr. Moose. Catch.

Skids TOSSES the candy bar and Moose catches it. Instantly, the three dogs POUNCE on him. The CROWD GOES WILD.

ON JIMMY AND THE GIANT MAN -- as Moose fights for his life.

JIMMY
Thank you sir.

GIANT MAN
May your journey end in victory.

JIMMY
It already has.

The boys walk to the bus when they hear VERN:

VERN
Hey assholes! You're in deep shit.
We're gonna sue!

VERN and TED are hauled past by SECURITY, their hands cuffed.

RUSTY
Really? You look a little tied up.

TED
Carol, this is no way to parent.
Please, help us!

Carol walks up to him until they are face to face.

CAROL
I've raised a fine young man. And
I'm proud of him.
(beat)
We don't need any help from you, or
anyone else.

Behind her, the BULLS PLAYERS emerge, led by BUDDHA.

BUDDHA
We're all proud of him.

The boys see their heroes backing them up. But Vern is LIVID.

VERN
Did you find his deadbeat dad? Or
you out here looking for another
player to fu--

BOOM! -- Jimmy CLOCKS VERN. He goes down in a heap. The whole crowd GASPS. That was a PUNCH! This time, Carol SMILES.

JIMMY

That's my mom you're talking about.

Jimmy has a menacing look on his face, and he turns to TED, who cowers and starts to cry. The crowd LAUGHS as he's dragged away.

Carol hugs Jimmy, and the whole group boards the bus.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

PARTY! Biggie's "Hypnotize" plays as the scenes unfold. The boys share LAUGHS and champagne. They dance like maniacs.

A few players make advances at Carol, who pushes them away playfully. It's nothing but fun.

Argyle BOBS HIS HEAD, cruising the streets like a boss.

EXT. CHICAGO - CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The players and our boys hang out the windows. Across the city, EVERYONE is celebrating. We see a MONTAGE of joyous moments in SLOW-MO like we did in the opening of the film:

IN A BAR -- DRUNKEN PATRONS HUG and CLINK their glasses.

IN A HOUSE -- YOUNG BOYS jump, SCREAMING.

IN A RETIREMENT HOME -- OLD PEOPLE, close to tears.

EXT. CHICAGO - STREET - NIGHT

Jimmy and Rusty look out. They spot BLANCHE walking.

RUSTY

Hey bitch!

He sprays champagne all over her. Jimmy and Rusty laugh, then FLIP HER OFF as the bus rolls by. Redemption.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lauren sits with her FRIENDS watching the TV. Outside, she hears a HONK and the thumping of RAP MUSIC.

She opens the curtains and looks out.

SHANNON (O.C.)

What is it?

EXT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

AT THE FRONT DOOR -- Lauren emerges, smiling from ear to ear.

LAUREN'S P.O.V. -- The huge bus is in her driveway. THE BUS DOOR opens and out steps JIMMY. He holds out a hand.

JIMMY

Got myself a ride. How about it?

Rusty and Skids appear, Skids CHUGGING CHAMPAGNE.

LAUREN

Oh yeah.

Jimmy takes her hand and they jump on the bus.

FADE TO:

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - JIMMY'S ROOM - MORNING

We FLOAT past the BULLS POSTER, then we sink down to SKIDS and RUSTY passed out, CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES at their sides. Skids has a PENIS drawn on his face, next to it is scrawled "Dennis Wuz Here." We PUSH UP to JIMMY. He rolls awake.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Jimmy enters, disheveled. Was last night even real? He looks at himself in the mirror. Nods.

He inspects his MUSTACHE, then takes the BUDDHA EDWARDS CARD from his pocket and looks at it one last time. Sets it down.

He pulls out shaving cream and a razor. Begins to shave.

LATER -- Jimmy cleans up. He feels a little older to us.

EXT. JIMMY'S DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Jimmy sits on the stoop, holding a basketball. The sun shines on the hoop in his driveway.

Rusty emerges, barely awake. Skids is next, holding his head.

SKIDS

So this is a hangover?

RUSTY

Shh...your voice is like someone ramming a dildo into my eardrums.

A loud BEEPING sound. Rusty pulls out his PAGER.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
It's my mom. I should probably get
home. Come on, Skids.
(to Jimmy)
Hey man. Destiny.

JIMMY
Grabbed it by the balls. Thanks
guys. I really...

He searches for the words to express his gratitude.

RUSTY
That's what friends are for, right?

CAROL walks out.

CAROL
G'morning boys.

RUSTY
Good morning, Mrs. M. Thanks for
the hook up last night.
(realizes)
Wait...I didn't mean --

CAROL
I know what you mean.

RUSTY
I'm gonna grab my stuff.

SKIDS
And I'm going to take this
opportunity to apologize for
anything I don't remember doing.

Rusty pulls Skids inside. As Carol sits next to Jimmy on the stoop, she messes with his hair. Jimmy pulls back.

CAROL
I forgot. You're all grown up now.
(beat)
I was thinking...we could call him
today. Your real dad. If you want.

A BEAT. Jimmy lets this sink in.

JIMMY
Who is he?

Carol SIGHS.

CAROL

I was in love with Buddha. I know that now. But I messed it up, and your father entered my life. I thought he cared about me. About us. But he didn't. Not as much as he cared about himself. I was ashamed -- of myself, for being so stupid. But the thing that matters is, he gave me you.

JIMMY

Last night...you could have had that life if you wanted it, right?

CAROL

Yes. But when you came along, the only thing I wanted was to take care of you. Maybe I'm crazy lately, trying to meet someone. For so long, you've been the only man I wanted in my life.

(beat)

And guess what? You're the only man I need.

They both laugh to ease the tension.

JIMMY

No need to call anybody. I'm good.

She nearly cries, but holds it together.

CAROL

I love you.

JIMMY

I know. I love you too.

She opens the door and Skids pokes his head out.

SKIDS

Um...you should probably see this.

Skids walks out with his backpack. Rusty joins. Skids pulls out the BULLS CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

RUSTY

Oh shit.

SMASH TO BLACK:

CREDITS ROLL:

- Vern and Ted in CITY JAIL. Vern, now with TWO black eyes, sits next to DESTINY and the DISTINGUISHED GAMBLER. Destiny strokes Vern's cheek. And he kind of likes it...

- Rusty is on stage. He raps to the CROWD, hands up in the air, having a great time.

- Skids in a SUIT at a table. WIDEN OUT to reveal the BULLS LOGO on the wall and TEX WINTER across from him. Skids signs a CONTRACT and they shake hands.

- The Bulls VICTORY PARADE. The PLAYERS ride a big FLOAT. In the crowd is Jimmy, flanked by Carol, Rusty, and Skids. On the float, MICHAEL JORDAN gives a thumbs-up and Jimmy gives one back. Then Jimmy and the others disappear into the crowd.

THE END