

SPENCER

Based on the life of Spencer Paysinger

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

GOD SHOT. Night. Soaring aerial OVER the City of Los Angeles. Sparkling. Magical. Zippping fast now, arcing low over...

SOUTH CENTRAL

Graffiti tagged street signs. Cement strip malls. A cop car, siren screaming, barrels past as we pick up on:

The drum of thick BASS from a chromed-out Lexus, packed with gang members, clearly looking for trouble as they roll past Crenshaw High School. Stadium lights gleam from the street...

A bright oasis in the dark.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

CUT TO:

GAME NIGHT - CRENSHAW HIGH

QUICK CUTS: Thunder of helmets crashing. Incomplete pass. Now a fumble. Scoreboard reads 21-17. Crenshaw is down.

SPENCER PAYSINGER, 17, African-American, huddles midfield with his team. Wide hands, quick feet, cocky; he is built for football. A marching band warbles in the distance as...

Spencer spots their Crenshaw QB break from the Coach.

SPENCER

Twenty bucks he calls the Niner.

Disgruntled chuckles ripple from the huddle as...

The beleaguered quarterback jogs in and calls the play:

CRENSHAW QB

*Gun Right Trips Niner.*

Groans. The Niner. Spencer's pissed.

SPENCER

Man, their safety's been sitting on that all night.

CRENSHAW QB

Coach called it, Spencer.

Spencer's eyes cut to the field as we go to --

**SPENCER'S FOCUS:** Time Slows. Sound disappears. Zeroing in on the feet of the defensive line, all tipping up on their toes.

Spencer's gaze snaps back to his team. Sound resumes.

SPENCER

Coach don't know shit. They're gonna blitz. Bringing the house at you. I'm running the slant, go off the Niner. You just need to get me the ball... And fast.

CRENSHAW QB

(warily eyes their coach)  
You don't score, we're dead.

Spencer's face splits into a cocky GRIN.

SPENCER

See you boys in the end zone.  
(then)  
Ready, Break!

ON SPENCER, steady. Always steady. In position.

Ball snapped, Spencer blasts down field. And, sure enough, the defense goes for the blitz, all closing in, lightening-fast, on the Crenshaw quarterback, who sees an opening and:

Hail Mary to Spencer. The ball whip-turns through the air.

Connecting with Spencer as he leaps high, landing for...

*Touchdown!*

But this is not *Friday Nights Lights*. It's not *Rudy*. It's South Central. And there's no end zone victory dance here. Because, seconds after Spencer scores...

GUN SHOTS RING OUT across the field.

PLAYERS, COACHES, even the MARCHING BAND instantly know what to do, dropping face first in the dirt to avoid the gunfire.

ON SPENCER

Frozen in the end zone. Ball still in his hand.

ON THE FOOTBALL

As it slips from his fingers, SLO-MO, into the grass.

SMASH TO:

POST GAME: COPS swarm beyond the 10-foot chain link bordering the field, crime scene tape rapidly unfurling around...

A BODY

Lifeless in the street under the glow of field lights.

180 to REVEAL

Spencer watching from a distance outside the locker room, duffle bag on his shoulder, brow tightly knit.

BILLY (O.C.)  
Spencer? Spencer Paysinger?

He whips around, on edge, as a man steps out of the shadows. African American, 40, ex-athlete build. This is BILLY BAKER.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Sorry, didn't mean to startle you.  
(eyes the body)  
That's just... One minute you're scoring, and the next...

SPENCER  
Another day in the neighborhood.

Here for a reason, forging on, Billy sticks out his hand.

BILLY  
Name's Billy Baker. Varsity coach at Beverly Hills High.

SPENCER  
(warily returns the shake)  
Beverly, huh?

BILLY  
That's right. Gotta say, you were impressive out there. Saw you check that last play...

SPENCER  
Had to shake it up. They were on their toes, gonna blitz.

Billy nod-smiles: rare insight at the high school level.

BILLY  
I'm gonna cut to the chase here, Spencer. I've had my eye on you. You've got strong hands, match up well against single coverage.  
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Saw film of your four touchdowns  
against Fairfax last season and...  
I want you to come play. For me.

SPENCER

Play for you?

BILLY

Play for me.

SPENCER

But you can't recruit. Those are  
the rules. Season started. I switch  
teams, I'm benched, three months.

BILLY

Not with me. I can get around it.  
(off Spencer's snort of  
disbelief)  
Look, I'm guessing you want to go  
pro one day... Am I right?

Spencer gives him a look: *You really have to ask?*

BILLY (CONT'D)

Then I can help. Crenshaw is a  
strong team. Beverly's had a few  
tough seasons, but we're solid. We  
can offer something Crenshaw can't.

SPENCER

Is that right?

BILLY

It is. We can offer you a great  
education... at a safe school.  
(eyes cut to the body)  
I know what it's like here. I went  
to school at Crenshaw. Even knew  
your dad, Corey, back when...

SPENCER

(cuts in, on edge)  
I don't have a dad anymore.

BILLY

I-- I'm sorry to hear it.  
(recalibrates)  
Look, I used to play in the NFL,  
just a few years, blew out my knee.  
But I still have connections. I can  
get you in front of D-1 coaches  
when the time is right. I promise  
you.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

I can make your NFL dream a reality. But I can also promise, from experience, every player out there is just one injury away from needing a back-up plan. And a back-up plan, I can give you.

Presses a business card in Spencer's hand. Eyes the card:

SPENCER

Appreciate the offer, but...

Spencer glances at the field, then back at Billy.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

This is where I belong.

Pulls his headphones on. Billy sinks, watching him go as we:

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - NIGHT

CUE SOME: Old school rap, pumping in Spencer's head phones as he makes his way down Crenshaw Avenue...

Gated store-fronts. Loitering teens. A brightly painted BBQ joint with old-timers playing cards out front.

Spencer cuts down a side street and up the front walk of a small box of a house. Paint peeling. Aluminum shutters.

INT. SPENCER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lands on his bed. Headphones still on, music still blaring, eyes trained on his bedroom wall, which is...

Plastered in football posters: Randy Moss, Jerry Rice, Junior Seau. A teen's shrine to his NFL heroes.

Pulls out Billy's card. Off Spencer's conflicted stare, he crumples the card, sirens WAILING in the distance, as we...

SMASH TO:

**TITLE CARD**

INT. SPENCER'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Warm, morning light filters through blinds OVER... the deep sleep of a teenager who played his heart out last night.

WOMAN (O.C.)  
*Spencer! Time to get up!*

Tired eyes blinking open. Spencer rolls over with a GROAN.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A hand cranks the hot water knob. Spencer yawns, pulls back the plastic shower curtain, climbing in and... he HOWLS.

INT. PAYSINGER KITCHEN - MORNING

QUICK POPS: Eggs scramble. Toast pops. Bacon microwaving.

A plate lands in front of DILLON PAYSINGER (10, precocious, thick bottle glasses. Mini-Urkel with a comic book fetish.)

DILLON  
 (mid-ramble)  
 And she's this bad ass space bounty  
 hunter, but she's also a spider  
 person with eight legs and, like,  
 a whole bunch of eyes. And she's  
 totally hot.

AUTUMN PAYSINGER. 38, ready for work in her LAPD clerk's uniform, cleans the egg pan in a hurry. Stops, blinks.

AUTUMN  
 Wait. What are we talking about?

DILLON  
 Saga, mom. Are you even listening?  
 There are only two kinds of people  
 in this world. People who read  
 Saga. And people who don't. You  
 don't want to be the latter.

AUTUMN  
 (okay?)  
 I'll keep that in mind, Dillon.

Spencer lands at the table, freshly-showered.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
 Look who decided to get up.

SPENCER  
 Well, I'm definitely up now.  
 (amused look)  
 No hot water again--?

AUTUMN

Just behind on the gas bill, that's all. It's fine, I get paid this week. Besides...

In unison, they're heard this one before...

SPENCER

A cold shower now and then is good for the soul.

DILLON

A cold shower now and then is good for the soul.

AUTUMN

(playful eye roll)  
Smart asses.

EXT. CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (TO ESTABLISH)

Grates on the windows. Chain link at the entrance.

COOP (PRE-LAP)

*Beverly Hills??*

INT. CRENSHAW HIGH - CONTINUOUS

Pick up on Spencer pushing his way through the seen-better-days halls of Crenshaw High, teeming with students.

Beside him, his best friend TIANA COOPER, aka "Coop." At first glance, you might miss that she's, well, a she. Low rider pants, latest Jordan's, over-sized men's button down.

SPENCER

Crazy, huh?

COOP

You tell your mom?

SPENCER

Nah, you know how she gets.

COOP

I'm telling you, that woman does not play. Autumn finds out, your black ass'll be eating mayonnaise sandwiches, dating Becky with the Good Hair by the end of the week.

SPENCER

What is it with white people and mayonnaise?

COOP

Right?

Just then a group of tough-looking GANG GIRLS pass in the hall. Big hoop earrings, head-to-toe red, a ton of 'tude.

COOP (CONT'D)

(winks at one)

Booty's looking juicy, Shasta.

Shasta shoots her a bird, keeps walking. Off Spencer's look:

COOP (CONT'D)

What?

SPENCER

Coop, those girls roll with Shawn.  
You really wanna mess like that?

COOP

*Please.* That weak-ass banger  
wannabe can't touch me...

(off his side eye)

I got you for backup.

She winks. Spencer can't help himself, laughs.

INT. CLASSROOM - CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

ON Spencer seemingly hard at work at his desk in the over-crowded and under-funded classroom...

TILT down to reveal: Spencer's actually sketching football plays. Intricate. Almost geometry-like in precision.

A teacher pauses at his desk, passing out graded tests. At the top of Spencer's paper, an A+.

TEACHER

Nice work, Spencer. As usual.

Slides the paper under his notebook. Back to his plays.

INT. CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Class dismissed. Spencer rounds the corner and spots...

Coop in a head-lock. A pair of GUYS (red shirt here, red bandana there -- a matching set to the hallway gang girls.) We're gonna safely assume that one of them... is SHAWN.

SPENCER

*Hey!... Hey!*

Spencer sprints to Coop, pulling her safely out of the fray.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

You beat up on females now, Shawn?

Shawn spins: we instantly recognize him as one of the gang guys cruising Crenshaw in the open just before the shooting.

SHAWN

Female my ass. She-male's more like it...

*Oh no he didn't.* A look between Spencer and Coop as Shawn turns back down the hall. Spencer could let it go, but...

Instead, he DIVES for Shawn. Fists fly.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL

ON Spencer, eye slightly swollen.

PRINCIPAL

They jumped you? Outta nowhere?

Reveal the jaded Crenshaw principal at his desk now.

SPENCER

That's right.

A lie, but Spencer wears it well.

PRINCIPAL

And your little friend? Tiana Cooper? She was just standing there, no part in it at all?

SPENCER

No, sir.

The principal gives him a look, knows what's up.

PRINCIPAL

That girl's lucky to have you.

(beat, sighs)

Spencer, this is your third fight this year. Grounds for suspension.

SPENCER

But, we got Washington next week.  
Dorsey week after that. I can't  
miss those games, if I do...

PRINCIPAL

Which is why I pulled some strings.  
Again.

(off Spencer's relief)

But this is the last time, you hear  
me? Need to get yourself straight.

Spencer nods, resigned, heads for the door.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Oh, and Spencer...

(he turns back)

Hell of a game last night.

EXT. CRENSHAW HIGH - DAY

Coop waits as... Spencer exits the front gate, pissed.

COOP

What happened?

SPENCER

Almost got suspended is what  
happened. You hit on that girl  
again, I will beat you myself.

COOP

(re: his eye)

You're just mad 'cause you're a  
little less pretty now.

SPENCER

Yeah, that's it.

Just then -- A CAR PULLS UP in front of the school.

**TIME SLOWS** as Spencer spots Shawn in the car, window rolled  
down. Spencer's eyes cut to Coop, then back to the car as --

Shawn lifts his hand and... MIMES shooting a gun. The car  
peels away. Off Spencer, rattled.

EXT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - DAY

Spencer ambles up the front walk, half-glancing at a glossy  
Mercedes parked at the curb, heading inside to find...

INT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Autumn waiting at the door. Hands on her hips, don't-bullshit-me expression on her face. This must be about that fight.

SPENCER  
I can explain.

AUTUMN  
You don't have to. Coach Baker  
already explained everything.

Wait. What? Spencer steps inside the living room to find...

BILLY  
Hey, Spencer.

... Billy Baker sitting on the couch beside Dillon. Shit.

QUICK TIME CUT:

Autumn paces in front of Billy and Spencer now, Dillon perched on the arm rest near Billy, pretending to read.

AUTUMN  
How could you not tell me, Spencer?

SPENCER  
Mom...

AUTUMN  
Do not "mom" me right now.

SPENCER  
(spins on Billy)  
So, that's how it is? I say no and  
you just go around me?

BILLY  
Spencer, I--

AUTUMN  
He didn't "go around" anything.

Holds up the crumpled business card Billy gave him.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
Found it under your bed... Which I  
wouldn't have if you picked up your  
own damn laundry. I called him.

SPENCER  
Ma, I'm *happy* where I'm at.

AUTUMN

Happy? Is that right--? You think I didn't hear about that shooting over at Crenshaw last night--?

(eyes narrowing)

You think I can't see that bruise on your face? What did you do?

SPENCER

It wasn't my fault.

AUTUMN

Never is, is it?

BILLY

Maybe if your father...

SPENCER

Told you, I don't have a father.

A loaded look between Billy and Autumn.

AUTUMN

Corey left a few years back. Left to coach college ball in Nevada.

BILLY

That -- that's a shame.

DILLON

It's okay. I mean, Spencer's real emo about it, but I've moved on.

AUTUMN

Emo? Where did I get you from?

DILLON

I'm just giving him the back story. He brought me a Fanta.

Spencer wide-eyes his little brother: *pipe down, please.*

AUTUMN

You been breezing by at Crenshaw, barely crack open a book. You're smart, Spencer. You're special. And you could make something of your life beyond just football...

SPENCER

(defensive)

Football is my dream. You may not believe in that dream, but I do.

AUTUMN

You think I don't know why you don't wanna take this shot? You don't want to be like your dad... You're proud of who you are. Of where you come from. And I'm proud of you for that. But choosing not to be something? That's not really choosing. You tell me I'm wrong.

She's speaking the truth. Spencer glances at Billy.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Tell me going to Beverly isn't the right thing for you, Spencer.

He can't. Off his look of acceptance...

INT. METRO BUS - DAY

FIND Spencer, on the public bus, as he makes the LONG COMMUTE from South Central to Beverly Hills. From cement street poles to swaying palms. From block-y corner stores to Rodeo Drive.

Just an hour on the blue line, but the change is stark.

ON Spencer's face in the window, Beverly Hills rolling in...

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - DAY

Spencer, on foot now, crossing the parking lot past a line of shiny BMW's and candy-colored Fiat's.

Wary side-glances from gathered STUDENTS, as we reveal...

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH.

Big, open windows. Spanish architecture. Freshly cut grass. No chain link. Spencer takes it all in, overwhelmed.

It isn't a just different school, it's a different universe.

Deep breath.

SPENCER

Here we go.

Off Spencer, his life about to change...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Welcome to Beverly Hills High... Spanish tile floors. Beamed ceilings. The student body is diverse, but the one thing they all have in common... is the inescapable look of privilege.

A sea of STUDENTS part to reveal Spencer and Billy walking. Spencer takes in the scene around him, blown away, as:

BILLY

You're here on an academic permit. Which can be revoked at any time if you don't maintain your GPA. Which, from what I saw on your records, isn't an issue. Exceptional grade average, above grade level testing. You won't miss a day of play with this. But we've also got a strict code of conduct... no fights. Or it's over. One and done. You hear?

SPENCER

I hear you.

Billy stops. Levels Spencer with a warm smile.

BILLY

Look, I know you had some behavior issues at Crenshaw. Had my share of fights there back in the day. But it's time to put that behind you. I believe in you, Spencer. And I believe you can make this work.

Probably the most fatherly thing Spencer's heard in years.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'll see you at practice later.  
(claps a hand on his back)  
Welcome to Beverly.

Off Spencer, feeling a tiny ray of hope...

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - SAME

ON a two-door sports car (red, nice rims) in the parking lot.

INSIDE - A guy and girl are heavily making out. It's hot. They're hot.

This is JORDAN BAKER (17, star QB, think Steph Curry) and his girlfriend HADLEY RAINS (smells like money, says Mean Girls is a classic.) Just when we think they'll be late for class--

A THROAT CLEARS, annoyed.

The pair part to reveal OLIVIA BAKER (Zoe Kravitz look-alike, attitude, nose ring, thick eye-liner, also Jordan's sister).

And right now, she's trapped in the back seat of the little two-door, and she's not fucking happy about it:

JORDAN  
Yes, Olivia?

OLIVIA  
You really want to make me late my first day back, Jordan?

HADLEY  
(eye rolls in rear view)  
Like you care about school.

JORDAN  
Hadley...

HADLEY  
What?

OLIVIA  
You're right. I don't. But I'd rather choke out on a handful of benzos right now than watch you eat my brother's tongue for breakfast.

Hadley climbs out of the car in a huff. Jordan sighs.

JORDAN  
Can't you just be cool for once?

OLIVIA  
Cool like you, Jordan? I'll pass... I hear disenfranchised losers are making a big comeback this season.

JORDAN  
Noted. Just... try to be a little more positive this time. It could be a fresh start for you after...

*After what?* But Olivia is already out of the car.

JORDAN (CONT'D)  
*Good talk!*

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

REVEAL - a state of the art high school science lab.

Spencer enters, warily slides into a desk. Kids vaguely take notice, turn back to their convos. For the most part it's a pretty low-key entry. Affable teacher smiles at the class...

MISS ALLEN

Alright, listen up! I want you all to do a search on chromosomal DNA and make a slide on how it connects with last week's work on protein...

Students grab LAPTOPS out of their bags, backpacks, etc...

Spencer blinks. Laptops? He glances down at the yellow note pad on his desk, self conscious. MISS ALLEN leans in with:

MISS ALLEN (CONT'D)

Spencer, right? It's okay. Just pair up with one of your classmates and they can get you up to speed...

Spencer looks to his left, the guy doesn't make eye contact, protectively slides his laptop away. Jerk.

OLIVIA (O.C.)

Hey, Todd...

Laptop jerk looks over his shoulder. REVEAL Olivia seated directly behind Spencer. Shoots Todd a fuck-you smile.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Keep watching that Logan Paul feed.

Then, to Spencer:

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

You can share with me. Although, I'll warn you, my chromosomal DNA knowledge is nonexistent at best.

Grateful smile from Spencer as he slides in beside her...

SPENCER

I might be able to help with that.

Starts clicking on her computer. Off her surprised smile.

EXT. CAFETERIA COURTYARD - DAY

FIND Olivia, in goth-gorgeous cruise director mode, giving Spencer the tour now. And it's clear, she hates it here.

OLIVIA  
Salad bar, fro-yo machine, they  
serve sushi on Fridays...

SPENCER  
*Hold up. Sushi on Friday?*  
(dead pan)  
Crenshaw we get sushi on Monday.

Is that a hint of a smile on her face?

OLIVIA  
Smart AND funny. I'm impressed.

Spark between them igniting, when...

Spencer clocks BLAIR FAISAL - making her SLOW-MOTION cross of the cafeteria. Beautiful. Breezily confident... A Persian American Princess toting a Goyard bag full of honors books.

Lots of piece-y deliciousness: lips, hips, almond eyes. And let's toss in some *Love* by Kendrick Lamar.

Olivia checks his stare, sighs, then gives him the 411.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)  
Blair Faisal. Puts the "it" in It-Girl. Brains, bod, and a black Amex. Word is, her cousin was in the original Shah's of Sunset and got re-cast because he couldn't keep up with all the drama.

Spencer's eye catches Blair's for the slightest beat. Beverly just got a whole lot more interesting. Moment interrupted as:

JORDAN (O.C.)  
You must be Spencer?

Jordan appears. Gives Spencer's hand a friendly pump.

JORDAN (CONT'D)  
Jordan Baker. QB. Team Captain.

SPENCER  
*Baker? As in --*

JORDAN  
Yeah, coach is my dad.

OLIVIA  
He's barely been here a day,  
Jordan, let the guy breathe.

JORDAN  
See you've met my tortured, alt-  
left sister. Real ray of sunshine,  
isn't she?  
(then)  
I'll take it from here, Olivia.

Olivia sinks as Jordan corrals him off, Spencer turns back --

SPENCER  
Thanks for the tour.  
(point, wink)  
Sushi on Friday?

OLIVIA  
It's a date.

He grins back. And off he goes. GROANS to herself.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)  
*It's a date?* Jesus, Olivia.

CUT TO:

THE ELITE TABLE - Jordan makes the introductions:

Hadley (doesn't look up from her phone), Blair (sweet smiles at them), JJ (Gentle giant, offensive tackle) and ASHER (oozes golden boy privilege, our cock-sure wide receiver.)

JORDAN  
Looks like you and Asher here play  
the same position.

SPENCER  
Receiver, huh?

ASHER  
(arrogant AF)  
That's right. Broke the school  
record for receptions last season.

SPENCER  
Me, too.

Tense beat. Blair jumps in, breaking it up with a friendly:

BLAIR  
So, how you liking Beverly so far?

SPENCER

It's good... I guess.

BLAIR

I think you'll really like it here.  
Just give it a chance.

Smiles between them.

SPENCER

Yeah, I'm sure it'll grow on me.  
Probably gonna take some time,  
that's all.

Asher clocks the connection and plants a protective kiss on Blair's cheek. Looks like the magical slo-mo girl is taken.

JORDAN

Far cry from Crenshaw, am I right?

Hand up for a "brotherly" pound. Asher eye rolls.

ASHER

Quit acting like you know Crenshaw,  
Jordan. You grew up off Mulholland.  
(back to Spencer)  
So, lay it on me. Crips or Bloods?

SPENCER

(pissed)  
Excuse me?

ASHER

Dying to check out a Crip walk for  
real. Only seen one on You Tube.

JJ

Asher...  
(through a bite of sub)  
You wouldn't know a Crip walk if it  
bit you in the damn, white ass.

ASHER

Eat me, JJ.

JORDAN

(deflecting)  
He's joking. Ignore him.

SPENCER

Didn't sound like a joke to me.

ASHER

Don't be so sensitive.

SPENCER  
*Sensitive?*

Pushes away from the table, anger getting the best of him, fists clenched. Quickly checks himself, or he'll blow this.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
 Thanks for the welcome. But I think I'll eat alone.

And off he goes. Blair gives Asher a look.

ASHER  
 What? I was making conversation.

BLAIR  
 You were being an ass.

Blair grabs her bag, heading after Spencer...

JORDAN  
 Careful, Ash. New star player might steal your girl. And position.

Hadley finally looks up from her phone, clueless...

HADLEY  
 (re: Jordan)  
 Isn't QB, like, the most important?

He lays a deep throated kiss on her. Make-out in progress:

JJ  
 I saw this on pornhub.

EXT. SCHOOL STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

Blair finds Spencer on the school steps, eating alone. Plops down beside him with an apologetic --

BLAIR  
 Sorry about Asher. I know how he comes off, but he's really not so bad once you get to know him.

SPENCER  
 Is that right?

BLAIR  
 I think he's just intimidated by you. I think they all are.

SPENCER

Those guys? With their Yeezy's and their man jewelry? They got it made. Me? I took three buses to get here today. I've been wearing my cousin Ray's hand me downs since I was born. And Ray loves him some polyester. Nobody likes polyester.

Blair laughs, charmed.

BLAIR

Okay, fine. But aren't you, like, this crazy good football player?

SPENCER

(modest shrug)

I do alright. You just gotta see the field...

To illustrate: glances back at the cafeteria courtyard.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

There.

ON a guy winding through tables, lunch tray in hand.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

That guy. Gait's off. Loose hands. He's about to fumble.

The guy wobbles, tray crashing to the ground. Food flies. Blair quickly whips to Spencer, wide-eyed.

BLAIR

How did you do that?

SPENCER

Happened the first time I picked up a ball. Twitch of a finger, a look, a tick. Everyone has a tell.

BLAIR

Do me.

He blinks at this.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Read me, or whatever it is.

Playfully tosses her hair, bats her lashes, strikes a pose.

SPENCER

You're like... a Defensive Back.

BLAIR  
 (laughs)  
 Gee, thanks.

SPENCER  
 I mean, you're confident. Smart.  
 You like attention, like to call  
 the plays.  
 (she nods at this)  
 But that's not the most interesting  
 thing about you. Saw it the minute  
 you crossed the room. Way your eyes  
 check to the left... You're lonely.  
 And Defensive Backs? They play on  
 an island. Always by themselves.

A beat, she just looks at him, blown away. Swallows hard.

BLAIR  
 I-- should really get to class.

Heading out, clearly covering her unease. Turns back--

BLAIR (CONT'D)  
 I'm glad you came to Beverly.

SPENCER  
 Me, too.

And for the first time, he really means it.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

IN PROGRESS: Billy sitting across his desk from PRINCIPAL  
 LANNON (60's, tense, Richard Branson without the charm.)

BILLY  
 New kid's a game-changer, Ed...  
 Team's gonna be strong this year,  
 we're gonna put up some points.

PRINCIPAL LANNON  
 You better. Because, as you are  
 well aware, the boosters provide  
 funding for our sports program...  
 for your football team. Funding  
 that'll dry up fast without a title  
 this year. And without one...

BILLY  
 I'm out of a job? Is that it?

PRINCIPAL LANNON  
 Nobody's talking changes right now.  
 We just need to turn this around.

Lannon heads out, the weight of this season now heavy. Off the RING of Billy's cell, picks up with a forced, bright...

BILLY  
 Hey, honey.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - **INTERCUT**

Meet LAURA FINE-BAKER (power litigator, honey-blond ambition in a Gucci power suit) marching up the courthouse stairs.

LAURA  
 How's she doing?

BILLY  
 She'll be fine, Laura.

LAURA  
 I know, just remember what they said. Family support is paramount.

BILLY  
 I hear you.

LAURA  
 And go a little easy on Jordan.  
 Between Olivia getting back and the crushing pressure of a new season.

Laura pulls out a pack of cigarettes, a beat, crumples them.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
 Oh, and Billy? In Your Corner.

BILLY  
 I'm in your corner too, hon.

LAURA  
 Not you. It's the new slogan for my District Attorney campaign...  
 What do you think? Do you love it?

BILLY  
 Love it. Gotta go, practice in 5.

LAURA  
 But...

CLICK. Laura sighs, longingly eyes the crumpled pack of cigs.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Practice in progress. Spencer takes the field, ego riding high, all eyes on him now. Billy claps it out.

BILLY  
Let's do this, boys.

QUICK POPS: Ball whizzing past Spencer's head. Slipping through unsteady fingers. Reads Jordan wrong, goes right instead of left. He's struggling to grasp their offense.

Billy watches from the side-line, frustrated.

ON SPENCER

Rattled, as he lines up again.

JORDAN  
Too much heat for you?

SPENCER  
(fuck you)  
Nah, not enough.

Jordan glares at this. Shit just got personal.

ON BILLY

Jogging on to the field now. And he's got a new plan.

BILLY  
Okay, we're gonna mix this up...

JORDAN  
Sorry if my throw isn't where it needs to be today, I just...

BILLY  
It's fine.  
(blows past Jordan, ouch)  
Spencer, you ever played safety?

SPENCER  
No. Why?

BILLY  
I want you to give it a shot.

SPENCER  
Change my position? I just got here. Why would you do that, I--

BILLY  
I have my reasons. Trust me.

SPENCER  
(digging in)  
But, I don't play defense.

BILLY  
You play what I tell you to play.

SPENCER  
(now he's pissed)  
I came here to score touchdowns.

BILLY  
No. You came here to play football.  
Am I right, or am I not?  
(no answer)  
You got one of two choices, son.

Points at the bright, white line at the edge of the field.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
You can either be on this side of  
the line... Or this side.

Meaning... on the field, or on the bench.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
What's it gonna be?

SPENCER  
*This is bullshit!*

Spencer yanks off his helmet and stalks off the field.

JORDAN  
(aside, to Asher)  
Looks like your position's safe.

ON ASHER

Ball snapped. He sprints wide, makes a beautiful, one-handed grab. Grins over at... Spencer, now seated on the bench.

ASHER  
Better get comfortable there.

Asher and Jordan jump, chest bump, as Spencer seethes.

Off Spencer, off to a very rocky start...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - NIGHT

To establish. The glare of an LAPD helicopter spotlight circling angrily above takes us to...

EXT. VAN NESS PARK - SOUTH CENTRAL - NIGHT

Spencer and Coop sit at the edge of Van Ness Park. The small parking lot borders a rundown community center. A late night spot to drink, hang out, look for trouble, etc. In progress:

Spencer rants, passing a paper-bagged forty to Coop.

SPENCER

I'm playing with a bunch of guys who don't want me, for a coach who said he had my back then moved me off to defense. And I'm supposed to, what? Play along? Help them win their season?

COOP

Then don't.

He gives her a look.

SPENCER

Throw the season?

COOP

Make it your season. You'll find a way. I know you will. Don't let some lily-white coach tell you--

SPENCER

He's black.

COOP

Oh. Well, then maybe he's right.

Off Spencer's side eye, Coop grins --

COOP (CONT'D)

For real though. Black, white, plaid, it don't matter. Just do you. You got the goods, on the field and off. Knew it the minute I met you, right here in this park, first day of travel ball.

Spencer takes a pull off the forty, turning this over.

SPENCER

I don't know, Coop. That place  
just isn't who I am. It ain't me.

Coop eye-rolls, gestures at the run-down park...

COOP

And this is? I don't think so. You  
decide who you want to be.  
(as this lands)  
Now, I've got one question for you.

Spencer looks over, waiting for Coop to lay some wisdom...

COOP (CONT'D)

Who would you rather do -- Nicki  
Minaj or Cardi B?

Because what better way to lighten the mood then with a round  
of *Who Would You Bang?*

SPENCER

Cardi B, hands down.

COOP

Kim K or Beyonce?

SPENCER

Bey all day.

Fist bump.

COOP

Now tell me about those Beverly  
Hills girls...

SPENCER

(a beat)  
They're skinny.

Off their laughter... Coop suddenly goes tense, her eyes now  
trained across the park at: The group who roughed her up in  
the open. Shawn and his crew, a couple of the girls from the  
hallway. All staring at her.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

They still messing with you?

COOP

(a lie)  
Nah.

SPENCER

Coop.

COOP

It's nothing. I'm good.

Spencer eye balls Shawn... who leers back, taunting:

SHAWN

Can I help you? Mr. Beverly Hills?

COOP

(aside)

Just leave it.

SPENCER

Stay here.

He moves for Shawn, hackles up --

SPENCER (CONT'D)

You leave her alone.

SHAWN

Or what?

SPENCER

Or I'll remind you of that beat  
down I gave you in sixth grade.

SHAWN

That was a long time ago. Try it  
again and see what happens....

SPENCER

Maybe I will.

Just when things look like they're about to go very wrong --

The WHOOP of a cop SIREN cuts across the parking lot, cruiser  
pulling in. As everyone quickly evaporates...

SHAWN

Watch your back, Beverly!

Off Spencer, still caught up in this world...

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

ON Jordan in his room, gaming on his flat screen... a room  
not entirely unlike Spencer's - NFL posters dot the walls -  
only instead of tacked up, they're framed, perfectly mounted.

A beat, then --

JORDAN

Hey.

Reveal Billy standing in his bedroom door. Slight smile.

BILLY

Wasn't really working out there today now, was it?

JORDAN

Telling me. Your shiny new toy couldn't shake the corner.

BILLY

He'll get there.

(patient)

In the meantime, I need a favor. I need you to take Spencer under your wing. Get him up to speed with the team... Bring him in to the fold.

JORDAN

Why me?

BILLY

You're team captain, aren't you? That's the job. Unless you don't want it anymore.

Tension between them clear. He's about to go when --

JORDAN

What is it with you and this kid anyway? Why do you even care?

BILLY

There by the grace of God, Jordan. The life you live? It's good. I come from Spencer's neighborhood, it's a tough go. Million ways you can go wrong... He needs a chance. And I'm asking you to give him one.

Billy's out the door. Off Jordan, taking this in...

EXT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - DAY

ON Jordan in his shiny, red sports car parked at the curb. Music pumping, pricey sunglasses on, taking in the street - kind of anxious. A group of guys in a front lawn eye him.

The passenger door YANKS open. Jordan startles.

It's Spencer. Gives him a look as he lands in the car.

SPENCER  
What the hell are you doing?

JORDAN  
I'm pickin' you up!

Spencer snatches the red beanie off Jordan's head.

SPENCER  
In your red car. In your red hat.  
You look like a Blood's poster boy.  
Gonna get your head blown off.

Jordan gulps, glances nervously at those guys across the street, then back to Spencer. Who grins at his own joke.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
I'm kidding.

Amused look from Jordan. Off these two, tension broken...

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

That iconic shot: North Beverly Drive in all its palm lined splendor. A Rolls Royce cruising. Estates with wide lawns.

JORDAN'S RED SPORTS CAR zips in to view, music still pumping, as: Spencer soaks it all in from the passenger seat.

Pulling up a gated, hillside driveway now to reveal...

THE BAKER MANSION

Spencer gawks as they climb out of the car. Yard workers dot the verdant lawn. There's even a fountain. Holy shit.

SPENCER  
Someone kill Nicole in that house?

Off Jordan's laugh...

INT. KITCHEN - BAKER MANSION - DAY

Laura and her campaign manager, ELAINE (late 20's, a Laura Fine mini-me, Tracy Flick all grown up) review campaign posters as Olivia watches, perched on a stool, mid-salad.

Laura is, inexplicably, wearing an apron over her Gucci suit, as a housekeeper, RITA (pint-sized, Latina) cooks behind her.

ELAINE

Early polls have Martin 20 ahead.

LAURA

Martin is a hack. He's a two term D.A. more interested in conviction rates than doing the right thing.

ELAINE

Maybe so. But his message is landing. He feels relatable.

LAURA

And I'm not relatable?

Olivia snorts laughs, chokes on her salad. *Yeah, no.*

ELAINE

I mean, you went to Stanford. Your law offices are on Rodeo Drive...

OLIVIA

And you drive an Escalade.

LAURA

This is why Hillary lost.

OLIVIA

Please tell me you're not comparing yourself to Hillary right now?

A look from Laura. Well, if the pant suit fits...

Laura spots Jordan and Spencer entering the kitchen now.

LAURA

There you boys are!  
(big smile)  
And you must be Spencer.

SPENCER

Yes, ma'am.

She wraps him in a big bear hug. Olivia smirks, amused.

LAURA

I am just SO happy to meet you. You are all Billy's been talking about lately... Isn't that right, kids?

JORDAN  
 Sure is.

OLIVIA  
 Bromancing-the-Stone.

LAURA  
 Let me ask you something Spencer.  
 And I want you to be honest, okay?

OLIVIA  
 Careful. She's a crier.

LAURA  
 I'm making my famous gazpacho  
 recipe right now...

Spencer clocks Rita making the gazpacho. Okay?

LAURA (CONT'D)  
 But I need to know a few things  
 first. Any allergies?... Gluten?  
 Dairy? You aren't paleo, are you?

SPENCER  
 (head scratch)  
 When it comes to food, the only  
 thing I am is hungry.

Elaine smiles. He's adorable. Laura produces a flier.

LAURA  
 The football moms all meet once a  
 week. Let your mother know, okay?

Off his polite nod, pocketing the flier.

JORDAN  
 We're gonna hit it, mom.

LAURA  
 You do that! Whatever that is.

Spencer quick-smiles back at Olivia as the boys head out.  
 Rita hands Laura a bowl of gazpacho with a look.

RITA  
 Now that kid. Is relatable.

Elaine gives a nod; *yes he is.*

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Jordan and Spencer step out in to the backyard, a tropical  
 paradise in the hills looking over the city as we spot...

A TURQUOISE INFINITY POOL

Beautiful, tan, fit bodies lounge in chaises. Blair, Asher, Hadley and JJ... as Rita comes out with a tray of drinks.

Off Spencer, blown away.

JORDAN  
Team ritual. You in?

HARD CUT TO:

OVERHEAD SHOT

Spencer. Eyes closed. Pulling up and away to reveal... he's on a swan float now, bobbing in the sun in the infinity pool. This is the life. And he's embracing it.

Glances up at Blair on a chaise. Cute in her one-piece.

They lock eyes as...

Spencer climbs out of the pool. Time slows. Pool water drips. Blair peers over her sunglasses, intrigued --

Spencer's gaze never leaving Blair.

Which Jordan curiously clocks...

Looks over at Asher, obliviously sunning. He stands, heading inside with a final look back over his shoulder as...

Blair takes a seat beside Spencer, edge of the pool.

BLAIR  
Come here often?

SPENCER  
Every Wednesday after the club.

Off her laugh...

INT. KITCHEN - BAKER MANSION - DAY

Jordan emerges from a pair of Sub Zero's, beers in hand. Heading out back to the pool when --

He hears Billy's voice from the other room.

BILLY (O.C.)  
I'm telling you, Ed, you can stop looking for my replacement. You're gonna get your winning season...

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

We see a wall of photos, trophies, etc... from Billy's college and pro career as he paces, tense, phone to ear.

BILLY

What? No--. He just needs time to adjust. You think I hauled my ass down to Crenshaw every Friday night for a month out of the goodness of my heart? Whipped up some bullshit smart kid permit because I care about molding young, urban minds? I wouldn't have recruited him if I had anyone else with his potential.

BACK IN THE HALL

Jordan, tucked behind the door, hearing everything.

BILLY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Look, bring the Booster's down on Saturday. I'll show you what he can do. Spencer... is gonna bring it home for us. Trust me on that.

Off Jordan, expression darkening...

EXT. BACKYARD -

Jordan comes out, sidles up to Asher... who has now taken notice of Spencer and Blair talking beside the pool.

ASHER

You seeing this?

JORDAN

(dark)  
Yeah.

A beat. Still hurting from what he just heard.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

We need to get rid of him.

Asher grins. Hot boys scheming in swim trunks.

Off Spencer, in their cross-hairs...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - THE NEXT DAY

ON Spencer and Olivia eating together on the school stairs...

And, in case you're curious, it's Sushi Friday. Science book spread out on the step between them. In progress:

SPENCER

(excited)

You see it there? The chromosomal DNA is coated with histone protein. It's this spool that the DNA winds itself around. It protects it. It's like... a garden hose. The protein is essentially coiling the hose.

A beat, Olivia blinks, blown away.

OLIVIA

I have no idea what you just said. But we are SO gonna ace Biology.

Looks over at him with a smile:

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

So, how was it hanging with the steroid set yesterday?

SPENCER

(steroids?)

Are you--?

OLIVIA

No, but I like to mess with Jordan.

SPENCER

What's up with you two anyway? Y'all don't seem very close.

OLIVIA

I mean, we used to be close. The closest. He was always my best friend. But then... high school happened. He became a big football star and I became... this. The social pariah of Beverly High.

SPENCER

Aw, c'mon. You're cool.

OLIVIA  
Says the new kid. Shocking, I know,  
but nobody's super eager to hang  
out with "sober girl" post-rehab.

Rehab? So that's what everybody's been dancing around.

SPENCER  
Elaborate.

OLIVIA  
Boring story. Got involved with the  
wrong guy, then the wrong girl...

Girl? Spencer raises a brow.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)  
Relax. Just went down a bad path.  
Tried to drown it out with pills.  
My parents freaked and here I am...  
(bats her lashes)  
75K and 90 days later. Good as new.  
That's Beverly Hills for you. Just  
throw some money at the problem.  
(non-committal shrug)  
But, hey, it's fine now...

Gives her a look.

SPENCER  
Is it?

We see this land with Olivia. A tiny-emo beat, then --

OLIVIA  
You know, you're the first person  
to even ask me that?

He grins. We love them; they're like a sweet odd-couple.

SPENCER  
So, about that wrong girl?

OLIVIA  
Oh my god, you're such a guy.

BLAIR (O.C.)  
Spencer?

Blair slides up. Olivia sinks. So much for their moment.

SPENCER  
Hey.

BLAIR

Hi.

Awkward beat. Then, noticing...

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Hi, Olivia.

OLIVIA

(ugh)

Blair.

BLAIR

(back to Spencer)

So, I'm throwing a little party at my place tonight. My parents are in Dubai. Again. Anyway, it's kind of a... start of the season thing. I was hoping you could make it? I mean... if you can?

She's cute. He's smitten. All nervous energy between them:

SPENCER

Yeah, sure. I'll come by for a bit.

BLAIR

You do that. I'll text the address.

Blair moves off. Olivia shoots Spencer a look.

SPENCER

What?

OLIVIA

A) She's taken. B) Those parties? I've been to my share. And not in a good way. I'd steer clear.

Off Spencer, eyes on Blair as she walks away...

INT. GYMNASIUM - BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - EVENING

Autumn, still in her LAPD clerk's uniform, explodes through a set of double doors to find... the GYM packed with a sea of football jersey's. All focused, steely eyed, competitive.

These are the FOOTBALL MOMS.

A woman, KELLY, (fake boobs, she'll happily give you the name of her plastic surgeon if you ask) is on stage at the mic:

KELLY  
 Julie's on bake sale. Barb's  
 handling banner making, and --

CLANG! The metal gym doors slam behind Autumn. Heads turn.

KELLY (CONT'D)  
 (right in to the mic)  
 Interviews for the school security  
 guard are being held in Room Six.

Excuse me? Autumn plants her hands on her hips.

AUTUMN  
 I'm not a security guard. My son  
 is a player here... I was told the  
 football moms were meeting?

A beat, covering for the micro-aggression with a tight:

KELLY  
 Well, you're late. Have a seat.

Autumn slides in at the end of an empty row. A beat. And  
 then - Laura pops in beside her, leaning in with a whisper:

LAURA  
 Ignore her. She's awful. I don't  
 think I've seen her blink since  
 that last hideous round of Botox.  
 (not missing a beat)  
 You must be Spencer's mother?  
 (off her nod)  
 Laura Fine. Coach Baker's wife.

Autumn curiously clocks her; *this is Billy's wife?*

AUTUMN  
 Nice to meet you.

LAURA  
 Look, these football moms? They're  
 bananas. They're gonna come at you  
 hard for volunteer hours, but you --  
 (manicured hand on her arm)  
 You're gonna say no.

AUTUMN  
 I am?

LAURA  
 You are. None of them work. And boy  
 do they ever judge you for it...  
 (over-share)  
 (MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)  
 Throw a kid in rehab on that fire?  
 Might as well be the anti-Christ.

Some women glance back at Laura, she fake-smiles, waves.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
 Important thing, is to not let them  
 rattle you. Women like us? We have  
 a lot to juggle.

Autumn clocks the Rolex on Laura's wrist. "Like us"?

AUTUMN  
 Appreciate the advice.

LAURA  
 (offers a piece)  
 Nicorette?

AUTUMN  
 I'm good.

Off Autumn, taking in the sea of well-heeled moms...

EXT. BEL-AIR - NIGHT

To establish. A glimmering mammoth of an estate.

INT. BEL-AIR ESTATE - NIGHT

Party in progress. And it's out of control. Football players going wild. Hot girls everywhere. Snow machine pumping. An ice sculpture bong. Lines of crushed up Adderall on the bar.

*Spencer cautiously enters the fray...*

This place is a Trump-like palace. Gold and cream for days. There's even an elevator. Spencer enters, floored, as: JJ streaks past in a thong, bottle of Dom hoisted in the air.

JJ  
*Shine bright like a diamond!!*

Spencer blinks. What the hell was that?

QUICK TIME CUT TO:

Spencer, alone in the corner, feeling out of place in the chaos. Maybe Olivia was right? Maybe this was a mistake?

Checks his phone and sees a missed text from Coop: *Meet you at the park?* Spencer quickly fires back: *On my way.*

Is about to head out when... he spots her. Blair. Can't take his eyes off of her. Smiles as she crosses.

SPENCER

Quite the set up.

BLAIR

I know. Little nuts. Kind of opened the flood gates on this one. Are you having fun at least?

Shakes his head. Nope. She laughs.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

You should introduce yourself. Get to know some people.

SPENCER

You mean the bougie babies of Beverly Hills--? Selfies, shots, snapchat. Repeat. Think I'll pass.

BLAIR

You're being a little judge-y.

SPENCER

Am I?

He points at... Hadley, drunk-dropping-it to "My Humps".

BLAIR

Okay, *Adderall Diaries* over there isn't a hill I'm gonna die on. But maybe, *just maybe*, we're not all as basic as you think? You can keep standing in the corner, not fitting in. Or you can make an effort.

A wink as she goes...

EXT. VAN NESS PARK - NIGHT

Bass from a car stereo. Kids smoking, drinking. This is the polar opposite of our over-the-top Beverly Hills party.

FIND COOP, still no sign of Spencer. Checks her phone. Just then, she spots Shawn and his guys across the park.

COOP

(pulling her hood up)

*Don't-see-me-don't-see-me.*

Worried look from Coop as they turn in her direction...

INT. BEL-AIR ESTATE - NIGHT

Back at the party. Spencer is on his way out the door, when -- Jordan hooks a friendly arm around him.

JORDAN

Don't tell me you're leaving? The night is young. And the team managers are dying to meet you...

SMASH TO:

ON Spencer, Jordan and Asher standing in front of a HOT TUB.

SPENCER

Those are the team managers?

JORDAN

All three of them.

REVEAL: said TEAM MANAGERS. It's triplets. In bikinis.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Meet Piper, Eden and Lorelei.

ASHER

They're triplets.

SPENCER

Yeah, I got that.

(then)

What *exactly* do they manage?

Just then, Blair steps up with a round of tequila shots.

BLAIR

As requested...

Jordan snatches up a pair of shots, offers one to Spencer:

SPENCER

We've got practice tomorrow.

JORDAN

Oh come on, it's *Saturday practice*. Just a few drills... It's no big deal, trust me.

Jordan slides a look at Asher. Spencer definitely shouldn't trust him. And he definitely should've clocked that look.

He can read people, he should read this.

But Spencer's distracted. Because this girl? She's his kryptonite. Spencer glances between Blair and the shot.

A beat. And then, he DOWNNS THE SHOT to CHEERS as...

We see Jordan discreetly dump his own shot on the ground.

ON BLAIR

An aside to Asher, out of Spencer's earshot...

BLAIR

Look, I agreed to throw this party.  
Got Spencer here like you asked...  
(uh oh)  
What are you and Jordan up to?

ASHER

Just trying to welcome the new guy.

EXT. VAN NESS PARK - NIGHT

Back at the park now. Where Coop's attempt to make herself invisible -- is failing. Shawn strides up to her, bad news in a pair of Dickies. The danger is real, palpable.

SHAWN

I see your boy's not here?

COOP

I'm good on my own.

Strikes an unaffected stance. Shawn smiles, sees through it.

SHAWN

Your friend, Spencer, thinks he's a big man now. Off with his fancy new friends. Leaving you alone.

(eyes her)

The girl-boy thing freaks me out, but I like your spirit, Coop. I can keep you safe with Spencer gone.

COOP

I'm not interested, Shawn.

Off Coop, heart pounding. Where's Spencer...?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEL AIR ESTATE - NIGHT - SAME

QUICK POPS through the night:

- Blair and Spencer playing champagne "beer" pong.
- JJ doing keg stands with two of the triplets.
- Jordan plying Spencer with more tequila shots.
- Hot tub time. Spencer clocks Asher kissing Blair. He sinks just as Lorelei, one of the triplets, leans in with a smile.

SMASH TO:

INT. BATHROOM - BEL AIR ESTATE - NIGHT

Hands groping, a skirt lifting as... Spencer stumbles in to the bathroom with Lorelei. Tequila + Teens = Bad choices.

Make out in progress, Spencer catches sight of his reflection in the mirror. He pauses, pulling away, clearly blitzed.

LORELEI

You okay?

Nope.

We can see that he's feeling the pain, regretting this whole night already, reflection coming in and out of focus as we...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - DAY

Spencer's pained expression, hang-over in full effect. Sun glaring. Sweat dripping. Fully suited up in pads.

Jogging on field, people in the stands, confused look at JJ:

SPENCER

Thought this was just drills?

JJ

Nah, man. Scrimmage day. Booster's are here, showing 'em what we got.

Shit. Blinks at JJ who, inexplicably, seems on his game.

SPENCER

How are you even here? You were still doing keg stands at 2 A.M.

JJ  
 Because this...  
 (slaps his gut)  
 Is a fuel tank for a love machine.  
 Nut up, Buttercup.

POPS OF SCRIMMAGE IN PROGRESS:

Spencer (head throbbing, still not up to speed in this new position) is clearly struggling. Blows his coverage, pass caught... Guarding Asher now, who jukes him out... They're burning him with deep routes, taking him off his feet.

ON BILLY

Exchanging a look with a very not pleased Principal Lannon sitting in the stands with a handful of perplexed BOOSTERS.

BACK ON SPENCER

Catching his breath, woozy. Asher looks over.

ASHER  
 Get it together, man. You smell  
 like a party bus.

JORDAN  
 (stepping in)  
 More like tequila and regret.

They both chuckle. Spencer's brow knits as it hits him...

SPENCER  
 Hold up. You set me up, didn't you?  
 Last night... I thought...

ASHER  
 Thought what? That we were a team?  
 Friends? The only reason you were  
 even at that party was because we  
 told Blair to get you there.

SPENCER  
 (anger rising)  
 To haze me? Make me look bad? You  
 got me confused with someone else.

ASHER  
 Then go back to Crenshaw.

And on that... Spencer SHOVES Asher. Fists clenching, moving forward again, about to take a swing, when --

A HAND YANKS HIM BACK

It's Billy. Eyes cutting to the principal in the stands.

BILLY

I will not let you blow this. One  
fight, and you're out. Game over.  
(spins to Jordan)  
And you? You're better than this.

JORDAN

Do not put this on me. You worked  
this whole thing... Admit it. It's  
all a lie. Even his permit to be at  
this school is a lie... A lie you  
put together to save yourself.  
(to Spencer now)  
You think he cares about you--? He  
doesn't. He's trying to save his  
job. That's what matters. Not you.

Spencer reels, wounded. Jordan whips back to Billy now:

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Because that's what it's always  
about, isn't it, Dad? Your job.

BILLY

(angrily cuts in)  
*That's enough, Jordan!* We'll talk  
about this when we get home.

Jordan looks away, ashamed.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

ON Spencer, pulling on his clothes, post-practice. A throat  
clears. Spencer turns to find Billy standing behind him.

And he's made his decision...

SPENCER

I quit. I'm done here.

BILLY

Don't do this...

Reaches for Spencer, he pulls away, angrily.

SPENCER

You lied to me.

BILLY

No. I didn't.

SPENCER  
 (bullshit)  
 I'm not here to save your job?

BILLY  
 My job is on the line every day.  
 It's more complicated than that.

SPENCER  
 That right?

BILLY  
 My son clearly overheard a phone  
 call. A call trying to sell the  
 principal on our season. On you. I  
 was just trying to help...

SPENCER  
 I didn't ask for help. Might  
 recall, I wasn't knocking down  
 Beverly's door. You came. Said  
 you'd get me to my dream, then I  
 got here and you changed my  
 position. The position that I'm  
good at. *How is that helping?*

BILLY  
 Because you see the field. In a way  
 that few players ever do. And I  
 made you a promise that first night  
 we met. That I would get you to  
 your dream, to the NFL. But in  
 order to do that, I need you to see  
 the field from every angle. Because  
 when you do, you'll be unstoppable.

A beat as this lands.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 I'm just getting to know you, but I  
 can see it, plain as day, you are  
looking for a fight. Your whole  
 life, every bad decision you make  
 is 'cause some asshole walked out  
 when you were a kid. But the path  
 you take now, that's up to you.

And with that, Billy exits. Off Spencer, reeling...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. SPENCER'S BEDROOM - PAYSINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Spencer lays on his bed, staring up at his NFL poster dotted wall. His dream suddenly feels further away than ever.

Picks up his phone and TEXTS Coop: *It's me. Again... I'm done at Beverly. Coming back to Crenshaw.*

Three dots appear. Then disappear. Spencer sighs.

EXT. BAKER MANSION - NIGHT

Billy sits pool-side, nursing a scotch. A disappointed--

BILLY

I asked you to step up...

As Jordan takes a seat beside him near the pool.

BILLY (CONT'D)

... bring Spencer in the fold. I asked you to give him a chance.

JORDAN

Yeah, and I heard you. And I know why you did it. Stop pretending.

BILLY

What're you talking about?

JORDAN

He's the real deal, right? He's gonna "bring it home" for you.

BILLY

Jordan...

JORDAN

Tell me I'm wrong. Tell me I'm enough on that field. Tell me I'm black enough to make you proud.

Billy blinks at this.

BILLY

You really think Spencer is any different from you?

JORDAN

He is, and you know it. When people ask him to "check the box?" White, black? Great player, not? He has the answer... What box do I check?

BILLY

You draw your own box.

JORDAN

It's not that easy. Not for me.

Jordan storms away. Off Billy, taking this in...

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - NIGHT

Lights, noise, the movement of the city all RAPIDLY time lapse from night to day. A warm morning glow, over...

EXT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Spencer exits to find, Coop, arms crossed on the porch.

COOP

You ain't quitting.

SPENCER

Coop...

COOP

I wanna show you something.

EXT. VAN NESS PARK - SOUTH CENTRAL - DAY

ON a basketball court full of GUYS (mostly middle-aged) all crushing it. Dunks, dribbles, dodging. They're on fire.

COOP

You see these guys?

Spencer smiles at the sight of it. These guys are amazing.

SPENCER

Yeah, they're great.

COOP

No, they used to be great... Now they're just stuck. Because they didn't take their shot when they had it.

Gives her a look. *Subtle.*

COOP (CONT'D)  
You like how I did that?

SPENCER  
I just can't keep living with a foot in two worlds, Coop. Feeling like I don't belong in either...

COOP  
Then don't belong. Take the best of both and boss up. Remember that t-ball coach we had? The bald guy with the dad jeans?

SPENCER  
Marcus.

COOP  
(snaps, that's right)  
Marcus... Remember what he used to say? Why race horses wear blinders?

In unison:

SPENCER	COOP (CONT'D)
So they can run their own race.	So they can run their own race.

Both smiling at the memory for a beat, then --

SPENCER  
I don't know if I can do it.

COOP  
You can. And you will. Because if you give up, I'll give up...

A beat. He looks over, face etched with concern.

SPENCER  
What about you?

COOP  
What about me?

SPENCER  
Shawn--? If I'm not here...

COOP  
(eye roll)  
Guy's all talk. I got it handled.

Off his skeptical look...

COOP (CONT'D)  
He backed off. I promise you.

They sit there for a silent beat, watching the guys play.

COOP (CONT'D)  
Spence, if I had a tenth of your talent, I'd forget this place and bounce. Anybody would. Think about Dillon. Your mom. You could give them a better life. I will not let you throw that away.

He looks at her, moved.

COOP (CONT'D)  
And when you're living your best life, rocking it in Super Bowl confetti one day, just remember your friend Coop set you straight. And she's dying for a Ducati.

She winks. Off his smile...

INT. BAKER MANSION - DAY

Laura opens the door. Reveal Spencer on the other side.

LAURA  
Well, look who it is. You here to see the kids?

SPENCER  
I'm here to see Coach.

Off Laura's smile, leading him inside. Spencer CLOCKS Jordan (et al) hanging out in the living room...

Blair is there. Her eyes find Spencer and, he looks away.

INT. KITCHEN - BAKER MANSION - DAY

ON BILLY at the kitchen counter. And, yes, he's eating some of Laura's "famous" gazpacho. Lost in his thoughts, when --

LAURA  
Honey? Someone here to see you.

Billy turns as Spencer steps in to the kitchen beside her.

QUICK TIME CUT:

Billy and Spencer, alone at the table now.

BILLY

What can I do for you, Spencer?

Spencer takes a beat, then looks Billy in the eye:

SPENCER

I want to play in the NFL. I want a life better than the one I've been living. What drives me to play... is my anger. That's what you see between those white lines. You were right about my dad. I'm angry he left. Angry because I have to fight for every damn step I take. Angry my mom can't pay the bills. I want to do better for her. For Dillon. And Beverly'll help me do that, football or not... So, I will play any position you tell me to. But before I do, I need the truth... Why me?

Deep breath, Billy comes clean.

BILLY

Because I wanted to win. I thought having this team, this life, would make up for what I lost when I blew out my knee. And I was looking for a player to help me do it... It wasn't out of the goodness of my heart. It was selfish. But then I saw you out on that field. And... you reminded me... of me.

(a beat as this lands)

You say you play because you're angry? I'm asking you to play for something bigger now.

Off Spencer, his future in the balance...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

PAN DOWN the line of players preparing for battle... Past JJ fully focused at his locker. Past Asher applying eye black. Past Jordan pulling on a wrist band, to REVEAL...

SPENCER. Suited up. Concentrated. He's made his choice.

BILLY  
*Bring it up!*

Side eyes from his teammates as Spencer circles up.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Tonight we set the tone. And you  
 boys know what it's gonna take to  
 get it done, so I'll save the big  
 speech for when you need it.  
 (then)  
 Play big. Play to win.

The team trees it up, hands connecting in the air.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 BH on three. One, two, three --

ALL TOGETHER  
BH!

On that, the locker room doors throw open to reveal:

THE FOOTBALL FIELD

Lights paint the green, band playing, cheerleaders in flight,  
 fans going nuts. Warm look between Spencer and Billy as--

Spencer steps out in to a BLAST OF STADIUM LIGHTS.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

PANNING THROUGH THE STANDS, past Laura and Olivia, few rows  
 over now to... Hadley and Blair.

ON AUTUMN (Dillon beside her, winks at a high school girl.)

Autumn LOCKS EYES with Spencer as he jogs on field. She gives  
 a proud nod: *you can do this*. Spencer nods back as we...

CUT TO:

GAME IN PROGRESS - *Beverly vs. Chatsworth.*

Pads colliding. Cleats churning. Fingers dirt-caked.

With every touchdown, every yard gained by Beverly... the  
 opposing team is on them, matching their effort, scoring.

Chatsworth's all-star linebacker (#7) is a beast... A  
 defensive MVP, taking out Beverly players left and right.

Beverly can't seem to pull ahead.

ON THE SCOREBOARD

Down by five. Thirteen seconds left in the fourth quarter.

ON JORDAN

A bullet to Asher, who catches and, under pressure, takes it out of bounds. Eight seconds on the clock now.

ON SPENCER

At the side-line near Billy, as we go to--

**SPENCER'S FOCUS:** Time Slows. Sound disappears. Zeroing in on that defensive beast, #7, favoring his left foot slightly.

Spencer's gaze snaps back to Billy. Sound resumes.

SPENCER

Seven's hurting. Keeps pulling up on his right hamstring after every play... Asher needs to run a pick on him. Jordan rolls right, he can bring it in for the win.

A beat, Billy eyes cutting between #7 and Spencer.

BILLY

Think you can shake him?

SPENCER

I know I can.

Billy WAVES a time out, signals Asher to the side line.

BILLY

Spencer's in.

ASHER

Why?

BILLY

(re: #7)  
Did you see it?

ASHER

See what?

BILLY

That's why.

Points at the bench. Off Asher, seething, side-lined...

IN THE HUDDLE NOW

Spencer jogs in, slight nod from Jordan.

JORDAN  
Ready for the heat?

SPENCER  
Always.

JORDAN  
*X Pick QB Roll Right. Ready?*

ALL TOGETHER  
*Break!*

The guys break the huddle and run to the line.

Jordan is making his checks. Spencer looks on while flanked out wide. JJ is on the line, calling out the safety rotation.

JJ  
Down weak, Down weak, Cover 3!

ON JORDAN

The ball is hiked. Spencer sets his eyes on #7 and begins his route as... Jordan rolls right, the massive defensive lineman closing in, barreling toward Jordan, about to take him out.

Jordan braces for the hit as...

SPENCER FLIES IN, taking on the thundering tackle, fully sacrificing himself. Jordan sidesteps the collision and...

Touchdown for the win!

BILLY  
I'll be damned --

Fans go crazy. Players rush the field. Billy watches on proudly, Autumn beams, the team all celebrating.

But then, Jordan notices...

SPENCER, slow to get up, wind knocked out of him. Dazed.

Jordan breaks free and jogs over. Reaches out a hand --

JORDAN  
Coach might keep you on defense  
after that hit.

SPENCER

Nah, you're not getting rid of me  
that easy. Besides--

Pulled to his feet with a grin.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I'm too pretty for defense.

Off their smiles... No speech. No sappy apology. Everything  
handled on the field. At least for this one night.

ON OLIVIA

Moving to congratulate Spencer as he jogs off the field, but  
her FACE FALLS as... Blair unknowingly intercepts.

BLAIR

Congratulations.

SPENCER

Thanks.

BLAIR

Look, I-- I'm sorry about what I  
did. The whole getting you to the  
party thing. I just -- I hope you  
know, I wasn't trying to hurt you.

SPENCER

(genuine)  
It's fine.

BLAIR

It's not. Maybe let's start over?  
(holds out a hand)  
Friends?

SPENCER

Yeah. Yeah, we can do that.

Takes her hand. They shake. But... her fingers linger.

OFF Spencer, interest piqued all over again.

BENEATH THE BLEACHERS

Olivia crosses through the shadows, celebration still raging  
over-head, light smattering of confetti falling in SLO-MO.

OLIVIA

Thanks for meeting me.

REVEAL... Hadley (Jordan's GF) as she takes a deep vape hit.

HADLEY  
Anything for you, Olivia.

Pushes a PILL BOTTLE into Olivia's palm. That's not good.

HADLEY (CONT'D)  
Thought you were done with this?

Olivia shrugs. Backslide, but the guy likes the other girl.

Hadley slips close to Olivia now, their lips touching. And... it's on!! Hands groping, bodies pressing, then --

OLIVIA  
(pulls back)  
Hadley. We can't do this.

HADLEY  
We already did.

*Whaaat?* Yep, Hadley was the girl Olivia told Spencer about.

OLIVIA  
And it was a mistake.

Off she goes. Hadley takes another hit, blows a smoke ring.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - MONDAY MORNING

SLO-MO POPS: sneakers walking, high-fives, faces beaming.

A football hero's welcome as Spencer enters Beverly Hills High post-win. His face bright, grinning ear-to-ear, finally finding his way in this new world. All is right. Until--

BILLY

Rounds the corner, eyes locking with Spencer. Face drawn.

BILLY  
We have a problem...

Off Spencer, face falling as:

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Chatsworth is contesting your transfer permit.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - BEVERLY HILLS HIGH - DAY

ON Spencer, voices warbled in his ear, coming in to focus:

BILLY

(on fire)

We're not gonna take this laying  
down. We're gonna fight it.

Spencer looks up, Billy and Principal Lannon across from him.

PRINCIPAL LANNON

How--? They're accusing us of  
recruiting. Which is off limits.  
You gonna tell me it's not true--?

BILLY

He's a straight A student.

PRINCIPAL LANNON

And that's why the football coach  
went down to Crenshaw to recruit  
him? Because he's smart? That's  
not gonna fly. Not with the board.  
(an idea)  
What if he moves to the zip code?  
They won't have a leg to stand on.

Billy looks at Spencer, hopeful --

SPENCER

My mom can barely afford to give me  
lunch money. You think she can  
afford to move us to Beverly Hills?

BILLY

We can figure this out.

SPENCER

How? Face it, Coach, it's over.

He's right. Looks between the men. Billy feeling the guilt.

And then it hits him:

BILLY

What if there's another way?

Off Spencer, hearing him out...

INT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT: Spencer and Autumn sit, either side of the couch.

AUTUMN  
You sure about this?

SPENCER  
No. But it's the only way to stay.

AUTUMN  
Living in Beverly Hills?

SPENCER  
Just during the week. That way I'll  
qualify for the district.

A beat, processing:

AUTUMN  
With Coach Baker?

SPENCER  
With Coach Baker. And his family.  
On weekends I'll be home. With you.  
(levels a look at her)  
If you don't want me to, I won't.  
Just say the word and I'll --

AUTUMN  
No. I asked you to give yourself a  
chance at something more. And if  
this is the only way to do it...

Spencer spots Dillon stepping in to the living room. He  
looks just the tiniest bit teary.

DILLON  
(biting back the feels)  
Way I see it? You gotta go. It's  
what's best for you, Spencer.

Puts an arm around his big brother, super sincere.

DILLON (CONT'D)  
Also, can I have your room?

SPENCER  
Definitely -- not.

Off their smiles...

INT. BAKER MANSION - NIGHT

FIND Laura pacing in the kitchen, phone to her ear...

LAURA

I realize that, Elaine. Let's run  
the numbers on some new slogans,  
get me a sit-down with the mayor.  
And about that relatability issue?  
I think I might have an answer...

BILLY (O.C.)

*He's here.*

The relatable kid has arrived...

CUE: GANGSTA'S PARADISE (on the nose, but wait for it) --

EXT. BAKER MANSION - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Spencer being greeted at the door by the Baker's. A nod  
with Billy. A friendly (lets hope) hand shake from Jordan.  
Motherly embrace from Laura, her motives not entirely pure.

EXT. VAN NESS PARK - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Coop, climbing in a car with Shawn and his crew, clearly  
up to no good. Swallows her unease. But Spencer's gone now,  
and it's what best for him. Time to take care of herself.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Jordan, landing on his bed. A text comes in: *Thanks for  
that tip on the Crenshaw recruit.* Jordan quickly hits delete.  
Lays back on his bed. Looks like he's gonna be a problem.

INT. BEL AIR ESTATE - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON, slippered feet padding across a marble floor. Blair,  
microwave hot-pocket in hand, sits at the end of a regal  
dining room table. Loneliest little rich girl in Bel-Air.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Asher entering a shitty apartment in the 90210. Dad passed  
out on the couch with a whiskey. Asher pulls a blanket over  
him. Flops down, defeated. Football is his only way out, too.

INT. BAKER MANSION - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Spencer stepping inside a plush guest room - easily four times the size of his tiny room back home - RAP MUSIC RISING.

A beat, then Spencer leans out in the hall to see...

OLIVIA, holding up her phone, playing: Gangsta's Paradise.

OLIVIA  
Welcome to Beverly Hills.

Off Spencer's grin...

INT. PAYSINGER HOUSE - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

ON Autumn, pausing outside Spencer's empty bedroom door now, her heart aching. Just then, a KNOCK at the door.

CUT TO:

Autumn opens the front door to find... BILLY BAKER.

BILLY AUTUMN  
Autumn. Hi.

He gives Autumn a pained look.

BILLY  
We need to tell him the truth.

Ummm. WTF?

AUTUMN  
We can't... Billy, he can't ever know. If he finds out, he'll leave Beverly and throw away his chance.  
(resolute)  
This is what's best for Spencer.

Off these two, what secret are they keeping?

INT. BAKER MANSION - NIGHT (END MONTAGE)

ON Spencer taking a seat on the edge of his new bed... gaze drifting out the window now, the lights of L.A. sparkling in the distance below, rap music rising.

You can almost see South Central from here...

END OF PILOT