

The Longest Yard

by

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Happy Madison Prods.

MTV Films

Paramount Pictures

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DARKNESS

SFX: BREATHING. Heavy. Hard.

SMASH CUT IN:

STEADY CAM POV - - FOOTBALL FIELD

You're the kick-off assassin. And you're running. Fast.

Tracking over the 50...the 40...the 30...

Darting through a wedge of opposing players, your head on a swivel...searching...searching...searching...

And then, there, up ahead...Him. Your target.

Poor bastard.

You meet the ball-carrier with all the subtlety of a chainsaw as SOUND EXPLODES us into - -

EXT./INT. PRO PLAYER STADIUM - - MIAMI - - NIGHT

And not just any night...MONDAY NIGHT.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)

A capacity crowd on hand tonight,
and you can feel the excitement in
the air...

82,503 rabid fans. Shouting. Salivating. SCREAMING.

RAPID-PAN ACROSS FAN FACES...Men, women, children. Fists pumping, feet stomping, MUSIC thumping.

Welcome to the number one sport in the number one country on planet earth. Mom, apple-pie, and football.

TOM BRADY

Under center. HIKE. First play from scrimmage, the QB takes a five-step drop...unleashing a picture perfect BOMB...

...Which we TRACK through the air, an NFL Films highlight-reel come to life, and - -

MATCH CUT TO

A TELEVISION SET

Well-dressed men and women scattered about, sipping beverages watching the game, as we WIDEN to see we're in a - -

INT. LARGE ROOM - - ESTATE - - CONTINUOUS

But we're not there long because the CAMERA's retracting like a dyslexic rocket, MOVING through throngs of the pretty and the powerful, on our way out the double-doors - -

EXT. MANSION - - FRONT ENTRANCE - - NIGHT

A party. A *Miami Beach Party*. Somebody call *MTV Cribs*.

Scantly-clad gals cavort with the overfed and undernourished, a procession of pricey cars sit beside a platoon of valets.

FAVOR NIKKI

The owner of this estate; an aging beauty hanging onto her looks (and doing one helluva job, thank you).

GUEST

Congratulations on your big night,
dear. Where's Paul?

NIKKI

Oh, he's inside...somewhere. ^^

But beneath the plastic smile...she's not so sure.

INT. FIRST FLOOR - - MANSION - - ON NIKKI

Trundling up the stairwell, given vaunted view of the expanse below. Sweeping the scene for someone.

NIKKI

(under her breath)
Where the hell is Paul?

CUT TO

PAUL "WRECKING" CREWE

The All-American man, he's a confluence of intensity, toughness and sarcasm...but he's seen better days. Life has tried to break him, but this man can't be broken.

INT. BACK ROOM - - NIGHT-CLUB - - CONTINUOUS

- - Crewe enters to see several out-of-shape, sartorially-challenged, MEN assembled around a poker table...

BENNY, the stout owner of the joint, pipes up...

BENNY

Jesus, Crewe, we're playing here...how long's it take to piss...?

CREWE

I was just enjoying the time away
from you...

Crewe spots a scantily-clad WAITRESS to his left. He motions for another beer.

And slides into his spot. Suspiciously eyeing the pile of chips he's amassed. A man unaccustomed to good fortune.

As the DEALER deals to Benny and Crewe, the last two guys left in the game, Benny is suddenly struck by an idea.

BENNY

(as if just realizing)
Oh, shit...game's on...
(then)
Hey, Jake, flip the TV on and move
it over here, will ya'...
(claps)
Dolphins, baby...

Jake slides the mobile TV next to Crewe - who averts his gaze. Breathing a bit heavier as he starts to play his hand

JAKE

Hey, Crewe, lookit' that: It's the
same two teams from your famous game.

Crewe tics a glance Jake's way; a silent "fuck you"...

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wasn't it on "Monday Night Football",
too? Man, that's funny, huh?

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON CARDS

A' la "The World Series of Poker", we see Benny has an Ace
and a King, Crewe a 7 and a 4.

And Crewe looks at his hand, the game echoing in his ear
before he shoves all his chips into the proverbial pot.

CREWE

All in.

Ooohs and Ahhhhs from the assembled. Chairs scoot forward

BENNY

Alright, alright...
(squints across table)
I'm betting you got nothing, Crewe...

He shoves all his chips to the middle of the table as they
both flip their cards over. Benny smiles.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Lookie there...

Jake deals the flop. 3 cards: 3. 6. 9. Different suits..

And the fourth card...a 7. Crewe smiles. He now has a pair. The River card - a king - changes his fortunes, however.

Now Benny has the upper hand, raking in all the chips, leaving Crewe with nothing.

But this fact seems to trouble him little, Crewe already plotting his escape, hungrily eyeing the exit...

BENNY (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be like that,
stay...we'll start over...

But Crewe yearns to leave this place and all it conjures...

CREWE

See ya', ladies...

And he bails. Never once looking at that goddamn TV.

STAY ON THE POKER PLAYING MEN

JAKE

Why'd you turn the game on? - You
knew he'd bail...

BENNY

Exactly. No way in hell I was going
down to that loser.

EXT. ESTATE - - MIAMI BEACH - - NIGHT

Crewe disgorges from a CAB, VALETS collectively kidding him...

VALETS

Hey, Nikki's looking for you...Ooh,
you in trouble now...

Crewe slaps palms with the valets. Enters the ornate - -

INT. DINING HALL - - ESTATE - - ON CREWE

Knifing through the throng of party-goers on the stairwell.

NIKKI. Spots him from the 2nd floor. Snatching a vodka-tonic off a passing tray(chugging it fast), greeting Crewe with:

NIKKI

Where have you been?

Her booming, inebriated, voice draws a crowd...

CREWE
(overlapping; low)
Here we go...

NIKKI
You know this is a big night for me;
Eric and Kamiko are here from *European*
Vogue...all you had to do was show
up and smile, you prick.

CREWE
(smiles)
Here I am.

NIKKI
If I'm gonna pay your way around
here, you may as well do something.

CREWE
(swallowing anger)
Can we talk about this in private?
Please.

She sighs in concession as Crewe leads her into another room.
No, not a room - a closet.

Which Crewe promptly closes. And locks from the outside.

NIKKI (O.S.)
Crewe...? Crewe. CREWE.

CREWE
I'm, uh, going for help...

NIKKI (O.S.)
LEMME OUTTA' HERE, YOU SHIT-HEAD!

He stops. More amused than offended:

CREWE
I think the love's gone out of our
relationship.

EXT. LINCOLN AVENUE - - MIAMI BEACH - - NIGHT

The strip. Where every night feels like Spring Break.

MUSIC blasts from tricked-out cars, flossing on the shaw as
Crewe rolls by in a DODGE INTREPID, and we - -

CUT TO

INT. CROBAR - - AT THE BAR - - WIDER VIEW

Crewe maneuvers his way through the throng of pretty people,
motioning to a sultry Latina BARTENDER for a drink...

The crowd parts, enabling Crewe to discern the TV suspended behind the bar...

One guess what's on (mercifully, there's no volume)...

Unable to escape his ever-present demons, Crewe steadfastly averts his gaze from the ubiquitous football game.

VOICE (O.S.)

Way I see it you owe me a drink.

A belligerent sports fan, MEL (think Mel Kiper) sits in the corner. Crewe forces a smile. Hopes the guy goes away.

MEL

(nods to TV)

I lost 300 bucks on that game...How much you make off it?

(Crewe grins *fuck you*)

No, seriously, I'd like to know...

CREWE

I'm just trying to have a nice, peaceful drink, pal...

But Mel can't let it go...

MEL

I'll tell ya' what: I'll leave you alone. All ya' gotta do is tell me the truth...

(Crewe's silent)

Just admit what you did. Come on...

Crewe stares back, alternately docile and defiant...

MEL (CONT'D)

Thing is, you couldn't even make it look good. Throwing four of the worst interceptions in recorded history. I mean, honestly, thinking back...it was so freakin' obvious.

And while we don't yet know what this guy's talking about, we know it angers Crewe. Fighting primal urges.

MEL (CONT'D)

Hey, look: I ain't a reporter. I won't tell no one.

(off Crewe's steely gaze)

Okay, okay...You don't gotta admit it. I'll take your lead: I'll *plea-* bargain down to you buying me a drink. How's that?

If that's what it'll take to shut this guy up...

CREWE
 (to bartender)
 Carmen? Hook our friend up here...
 (low)
 ...He needs some cheering up.

MEL
 (to Carmen/bartender)
 Gimme some 18 year-old Scotch.
 Courtesy of my pal, Pete Rose here...
 (back to Crewe)
 Shit, you oughta' buy the whole
 goddamn bar a drink...

Crewe feigns deaf. Grinds his teeth.

Mel: Pushing. Pushing. Pushing.

MEL (CONT'D)
 Ain't you gonna toast with me?
 Crewe sighs. Bows his head. Grabs a glass. "Fine."

MEL (CONT'D)
 To the man who brought disgrace and
 dishonor to the greatest sport in
 the world...Cheers!

And Crewe clinks his glass against the man's - hard - spraying
 our surly friend with Scotch, and - -

MEL (CONT'D)
 Hey, what the - -!
 He hops off the stool, pissed. Hurling a wide hay-maker -
 that's blocked by Crewe...

Whump. Crewe gut-punches the pud.

Mel hits the floor, the fold of his shirt frayed open,
 exposing a MIAMI PD BADGE, as we PRE-LAP:

NIKKI (O.S.)
I'm gonna rip your balls off, Crewe.

INT. GAME ROOM - - CLOSET - - CONTINUOUS

Kamiko enters. Heeding the desperate cries, he opens the
 closet - - a rabid Nikki spilling out. Hair askew. Make-up
 mashed. Staggering to her feet on a broken heel. Shrieking:

NIKKI
 I'm gonna kill him!

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - - ESTATE - - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki bee-lines for the CUBAN VALETS...

NIKKI
HEY. Julio, Fidel, whatever the hell
your names are...

Valet #1 speaks to Valet #2 in Cuban.

VALET #1
(subtitled)
I can't stand this bitch.

VALET #2
(subtitled)
I'd still bang her.

VALET #1
(subtitled)
Put a sock in her mouth first.

They chuckle to themselves before Nikki gets in their grill.

NIKKI
What did you say, you little freaks?

VALET #2
He says that you are a beautiful
woman, and very classy, too.

NIKKI
Listen to me: I know you're all pals
with Crewe. Did you let him take my
car?

Valet #2's silence is telling.

Nikki snarls. Grrrrrr. Slaps open her cell.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
You wanna play, Crewe?... Let's
play...
(into cell)
Yeah, I wanna report a stolen
vehicle...It's Paul Crewe, the loser
quarterback...

SFX: The inhuman ROAR of a finely-tuned machine.

EXT. CROBAR - - NIGHT

Crewe pulls the Dodge Intrepid out...

INT. DODGE INTREPID - - CONTINUOUS

CU ON STEREO as Crewe's hand clicks it ON. And cranks it UP.

Eminem's updated version of Lynrd Skynrd's classic "Saturday
Night Special" sent forth...

Appropriately emboldened, Crewe ROCKETS through the strip.
Leaving this day behind him until...

FLASHING SIRENS. In the rear-view.

CLOSE ON CREWE'S EYES, inflating.

CLOSE ON THE STICK-SHIFT as Crewe hammers it down.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - - A VAUNTED VIEW

The Dodge Intrepid blazes down the populous strip, dodging
in and out of slow-cruising cars...

Looking left, looking right, Crewe spots a hole in the line,
and - VROOOOOOOOOOM!

Darts around a truck which subsequently blocks the police
cars in. A clean getaway.

We HEAR the car-phone CHIRP(os) to life, and CREWE hits
"Answer" on the hands-free phone.

CREWE

Yello?

Wheeling down Lincoln Avenue, the rear-view EMPTY, we HEAR:

NIKKI (V.O.)

Crewe, you better get your useless
ass back here right now.

Traffic comes to a stop. A motorcycle cop appears (POV) coming
up on his left...leaving Crewe no choice but to head into
oncoming traffic...

CREWE

Can't really talk right now...

Heading straight for a delivery truck which quickly turns to
avoid a head-on collision, sitting on his HORN.

NIKKI (V.O.)

What's going on? Was that you honking
or someone honking at you?

Crewe takes a tight right turn...

CREWE

That was me, I hit it by accident.

The Dodge flies down an alley, bottoming out as Crewe
screeches onto the next main road...

NIKKI (V.O.)

I heard that. If you get one goddamn
scratch on that car...

And Crewe veers away from downtown, several of Miami's finest cruising into frame (REAR-VIEW MIRROR POV).

Crewe slams the hammer down, as we...

INT. STUDIO - - KABC - - CONTINUOUS

A local news station. A puff-pastry of a man slumps at his desk, belatedly heeding the SQUAWK of a - -

POLICE SCANNER (V.O.)

(filtered)

...High-speed chase, all available units respond...

He reaches for a red phone, as we PRE-LAP the thwack-thwack-thwack of a helicopter, and...

INT. DODGE INTREPID - - MOVING

Crewe hunches forward. Makes sure his seat-belt's on tight as TWO MORE COP CARS join the fun...

CREWE

(terse)

Everything's fine. Gotta go, bye.

A MEDIA CHOPPER enters the fray as we blur by swamp-land, the city strip a mere memory, the Marina fast approaching.

This is getting serious. Fast.

VOICE (O.S.)

Breaking news..

INT. CROBAR - - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON BIG-SCREEN TELEVISION

Post-game wrap-up cedes to the NEWS, "live" coverage of a "High-Speed Chase". The Dodge visible from CHOPPER POV.

Dancers stop dancing. Drinkers stop drinking. Particularly riveted when they hear:

LOCAL ANCHOR (O.S.)

(on TV)

...We're receiving word now that the driver is none other than former Dolphins quarterback Paul Crewe...

ON THE BIG-SCREEN we see a FOOTBALL CARD shot of Crewe in his glory days, before we - -

MATCH CUT TO

INT. STUDIO - - KABC - - CONTINUOUS

And we're "live" with a smarmy local anchor...

LOCAL ANCHOR

Crewe was, of course, indicted on federal racketeering charges for his alleged involvement in fixing a 1999 game against the New England Patriots.

On the screen behind the anchor, see FOOTAGE of Crewe leaving a courthouse, Johnny Cochran flanking him, before we - -

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. DODGE INTREPID - - MOVING

And he gains a significant lead on the cops, rocketing past -

MARSH-LAND(OUTSIDE)

An empty stretch leading onto a narrow one-lane BRIDGE...

The phone CHIMES. Crewe hits "Answer".

CREWE

(into car-phone)

What!?!

INT. STUDIO - - KABC - - CONTINUOUS

On the screen behind the anchor, we see a PHOTO of Crewe. On the cover of "Sports Illustrated". With the words "BANNED" stamped across his face.

LOCAL ANCHOR

...While Crewe never admitted to the point shaving scandal, he ultimately plea-bargained down to 5 years of probation and accepted a permanent ban from the NFL.

INT. DODGE INTREPID - - MOVING

And Crewe's lids narrow as he beholds something up ahead(OS), the car slowing markedly. What the...?

CREWE

(into car phone)

Hang on...

CREWE POV: We see nothing but road through the windshield, the Dodge slowing, nonetheless...coming to a halt...

CREWE (CONT'D)

Oh, shit...

He lays on the HORN(OS).

INT. STUDIO - - KABC - - CONTINUOUS

LOCAL ANCHOR

(on TV)

An interesting development here...

The anchor does his best to stifle a laugh, as we...

INT. DODGE INTREPID - - STATIONARY - - ON THE BRIDGE

CREWE POV: Peering through the windshield before we TILT DOWN to see an object in front of the car. No, not an object.

A GOOSE AND HER ENTIRE FAMILY

Wandered in from the nearby river. Staying stubbornly still. Glaring collectively up at Crewe, defiant.

NIKKI (V.O.)

What's going on?!

CREWE

Get outta' the road.

He HONKS again. REVS the engine.

The goose doesn't move.

NIKKI (V.O.)

I want your shit outta my house - -!

Crewe tears the phone out. Flings it at the goose...But he ain't moving.

Crewe slaps the car in "Park". Exits the vehicle...

LOCAL ANCHOR (O.S.)

Legendary tough guy, Paul Crewe...

INT. STUDIO - - KABC - - CONTINUOUS

LOCAL ANCHOR

...Stopping for...geese.

EXT. BRIDGE - - CONTINUOUS

Crewe steps closer - before the Goose snaps - scaring the living shit out of our boy. Articulated by the spotlight of

A POLICE CHOPPER

Hovering above...and with it, a cavalcade of cops descend on Crewe....wrestling him to the asphalt.

LOCAL ANCHOR (O.S.)
 ...For the legion of football fans
 who remain angry that Paul Crewe
 never served jail-time, well, those
 people are smiling tonight....

FADE TO BLACK:

JUDGE (V.O.)
 You Paul Crewe stand convicted of
 the following charges: Reckless
 Endangerment, Grand Theft Auto,
 Driving Under the Influence,
 Assaulting a police officer and
 Disturbing the Peace - all violations
 of your federal probation.
 (deep breath)
 This court hereby sentences you to 3
 to 5 years in federal prison - -

HEAR the gavel of justice CRACK down, as we - -

HARD CUT IN:

CLOSE ON STEAMING-HOT ASPHALT

WIDEN to see an upside down BUS. Rumbling closer, as the
 CAMERA rights itself, and we see we're on an - -

EXT. OPEN ROAD - - WEST, TEXAS - - DAY

The BUS blurs by the one-lane highway, as we - -

HOP ABOARD THE

INT. BUS - - MOVING

FAVOR PAUL CREWE

Clad in a red jump-suit endemic to the Texas Penal System,
 he stares at the vast country-side, trying to ignore -

THE WHISTLING(os)

Coming from close by. A mangled version of a country ditty.
 Finally, Crewe looks over to see the guard across the aisle.

Shiny shades on his face, a shotgun on his shoulder, this is
 GUARD ROMANOWSKI; a human hand-grenade with a bad haircut.

We stretch further down the aisle to see that Crewe's the
 only inmate on-board. *Hmm.*

Discomforted by the manacles constricting his ankles and
 wrists, he shifts in his seat. Stares at the empty expanse.

CREWE POV (TRACKING PAST) OUTSIDE: It's like driving through a time warp, passing an antiquated gas-station with a '57 Chevy out front, a confederate flag on its hood...

...Not far away: A trailer park with an umbrella has been modified into a rust-ridden Diner...

The guard's shotgun fixes on Crewe...

GUARD ROMANOWSKI

Ain't she beautiful...

Crewe belatedly realizes Romanowski's referring to the murky monolith coming into view in the distance. Crewe's new home.

EXT. ALLENVILLE PRISON - - CREWE POV - - CONTINUOUS

A federal fuck you. A menacing monolith.

The bus pulls through the castle gates...

BACK ON THE BUS - - MOVING

GUARD ROMANOWSKI

On yer' feet, superstar...

But Crewe's distracted by his new home, deaf to Romanowski.

A shotgun stabbed in his ribs changes that.

The muscle-head proceeds to prod Crewe down the aisle...

GUARD ROMANOWSKI (CONT'D)

You one lucky sumbitch, Crewe...

Crewe shifts a pointed glance to the shackles on his person.

GUARD ROMANOWSKI (CONT'D)

See, the Warden loves his football...

'Fact he was on the winning side of your little thing...

CREWE

(low)

Great.

GUARD ROMANOWSKI

...But I wasn't.

At the open door, Romanowski's boot shoves Crewe out...

EXT. ALLENVILLE PRISON - - SOUTH GATE - - DAY

SPLAT...onto the dirt. Face first. A nasty fall.

GUARD ROMANOWSKI

(laughing)

Welcome to Texas, superstar...

CAPTAIN KNAUER (O.S.)

Dwayne. I'll take it from here...

A voice like a buzz-saw, we RACK FOCUS to...

CAPTAIN KNAUER. 40 and quarterback-size, his features subsumed behind a hat and mirrored sun-glasses. He holds a shotgun.

Crewe grapples to his feet. Squints at Knauer. Sifting through his memory banks.

CAPTAIN KNAUER (CONT'D)

You used to wear number 11, right?

Well, there'r only a few numbers you need remember here. "A100082".

That's your new name. "3". That's how many meals provided you. And "zero". That's how many chances you get to screw up. We clear?

CREWE

(a wry salute)

10-4.

EXT./INT FENCED-IN TUNNEL - - PRISON - - MOMENTS LATER

Knauer leads Crewe towards the edifice up ahead...

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Don't recognize me, do ya'?

CREWE

Honestly, I've never actually clicked onto one of those gay porn sites.

Thought about it, just to, you know, see how they do it...but I figured if someone found out about it then I might be considered gay myself...

Unamused, Knauer removes his sunglasses. Turns to face Crewe. And memory hits Crewe like a blitzing linebacker.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Ray Knauer...

They emerge from the tunnel, given better view of the yard.

CREWE (CONT'D)

'Bunch of your teammates from the University of Miami are probably locked up in here, huh...good way to keep in touch - -

But then Crewe screeches to a stop. Stunned by what he beholds. For, you see, this is a tale of two cities...

On one side, the yard: Predictably dreary and full of decay.
On the other-side: A well tended field and work-out facility.

CAPTAIN KNAUER
No inmates from my playing days...a
coupla' guards, though...
(come to think of it)
...Which may not be such a good thing
for you, a Florida State grad...

CREWE
Don't worry, I never graduated...

Crewe takes note of the GUARDS perambulating about. Christ,
if they all aren't Adonis-like creatures - -

VOICE (O.S.)
This the football guy?

A WOMAN stands inches away. Sneaking up on Crewe.

CAPTAIN KNAUER
'Yup.

WOMAN
Warden's waiting.

She turns. Walks away like a pleasant mirage...

CAPTAIN KNAUER
We'll be along in a minute...I gotta
finish processing the prisoner.

Knauer proceeds to drag Crewe into a corner...

CAPTAIN KNAUER (CONT'D)
You know, we got a fine prison guard
league down here. It's like a company
soft-ball team - Texas style. 8
prisons from 3 states play for the
championship. Very serious. Now
the warden, he's gonna ask you to
help out...

CREWE
What could I - -?

- - WHOMP. His sentence cut short by a baton. In his belly.
Knocking him to his knees. Taking the wind out of him.

CREWE (CONT'D)
(coughing)
What the hell...you do that for...?

Knauer helps him back up...

CAPTAIN KNAUER

When the warden asks you, what're
you gonna say?

CREWE

Asks me what - -?

- - WHOMP. This time the baton strikes...lower. Every guy
in the audience winces.

Crewe crumples like a broken lawn-chair, his voice inaudible.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

You're gonna tell him "no". Got it?
We don't need your kinda' help.
You're gonna tell the warden you
want nothing to do with his football
fantasies, y'understand?

CREWE

(defiant)

...Not entirely.

Knauer delivers the hardest blow yet...And Crewe hits the
deck like a bag of bricks.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Okay...now I got it.

SFX: The umbrageous burp of a BUZZER.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - - WARDEN OFFICE - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe's whisked in, Knauer assisted by a steroidal beast
named GUARD FERIGNO (with a grizzled and granular voice that
makes Darth Vader sound like Richard Simmons).

We note a meticulous and empty front desk, as we HEAR:

WARDEN HAZEN (O.S.)

Paul "Wrecking" Crewe!

INT. OFFICE - - PRISON - - MOMENTS LATER

WARDEN HAZEN (50's)

On his feet. Damn excited, too. Extending a most hospitable
hand to Crewe - who eyes Knauer before reciprocating.

A Southern gentlemen, he's not your standard tough guy but
you still don't wanna cross him.

WARDEN HAZEN

Quite a feat getting you here, Mr.
Crewe. May I call you Paul?

CREWE

Sure. Your first name...?

WARDEN HAZEN

Warden.

CREWE

(low)

Hm, your parents musta' known...

And Crewe notices the wall: A glass-case filled with trophies and football memorabilia...

MOLLY HARMON(30's)

Stands in the doorway. Remember the girl we met earlier?

MOLLY

I'm sorry to interrupt...

WARDEN HAZEN

That's quite alright...

(to Crewe)

This is Molly Harmon, my personal assistant and savior...

(to Molly)

Mr. Crewe here is a football legend...

MOLLY

We've met.

(then; to Warden)

Warden, that conference call with the Governor's been moved up to noon.

She exits, Crewe watching her go before remarking to Hazen - -

CREWE

You sure her name's not Warden too...?

WARDEN HAZEN

(launches right in)

There are two things we take very seriously in the state of Texas: Prison. And football. We play a little of the latter here. Semipro - but fully serious. And we're rather good...

He nods to a FRAMED LOCAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, a B&W photo of Hazen holding a trophy in front of a football team...

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

...But not good enough.

(back to Crewe)

5 years without a Division Championship. 5 years.

(MORE)

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

(then)

I've worked hard, pulled strings, called in quite a few favors, to get you here. Paul. Because I'm confident you can give us that extra-edge...

(the bottom-line)

We'd like your help.

Crewe tics a glance to Knauer - who snarls ever so slightly.

CREWE

I haven't played in six years, Warden. Don't really want to...

WARDEN HAZEN

Oh, you wouldn't be playing, Paul. We believe you could help as a sort of..."consultant". Help bring your expertise to the squad.

CREWE

Thank you...

(another look at Knauer)

No.

Hazen moves closer, intensity doing battle with affability.

WARDEN HAZEN

I assure you, your time here will be much easier - and faster - if you participate. Your sentence is 3 years, correct?

CREWE

18 months with good behavior.

WARDEN HAZEN

Then you see my point...

CREWE

(a beat)

I just wanna do my time. And go home. Thank you. No.

Hazen inhales deeply. Staring at his guards when he says:

WARDEN HAZEN

If you'll excuse us, Mr. Crewe.

Off Hazen's white-hot eyes...

OUTSIDE HAZEN'S OFFICE - - MOMENTS LATER

Ferigno chains Crewe to a specifically designed pole attached to the wall, restricting his movement...

And Crewe waits for Ferrigno to return to Hazen's office (os) before shuffling over to Molly at her desk. As far as the manacles allow. Feigning nonchalance:

CREWE

So, uh, what d'you do for fun around here?

MOLLY

(head bowed; still typing)

Occasionally we have executions...

BACK IN THE OFFICE - - SAME TIME

Hazen "confers" with Knauer and Ferrigno.

WARDEN HAZEN

I did not exhaust resources to have that man say "no" to me, gentlemen, is that clear?

His tone is civil...his eyes are not.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

It's your responsibility to make sure he...reconsiders.

Knauer nods in empty abeyance, swallowing anger.

OUTSIDE HAZEN'S OFFICE - - MOMENTS LATER

Ferrigno and Knauer cross to Crewe and begin to unlock him.

CREWE

(to Molly)

...Well, okay...good chatting with ya'.

Molly smirks, never looking up from the computer-screen as the guards lead Crewe from the premises...

CREWE (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna go hang out with these fellas - -

BAM! - Knauer smacks Crewe's head into the door-frame.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Owwwwww.

INT. CAFETERIA - - PRISON - - MORNING

Breakfast. Cons and Cretans slink down the buffet-line, scouring inedible delicacies...Crewe among them...

CREW POV: Looks left: An Asian Thug glares. Looks right: A Black dude scowls. Looks dead ahead: A cook blows a kiss.

COOK

Only the finest for you, superstar.

He plops a clump of fowl oatmeal on Crewe's plate.

Crewe squeezes out a fake smile before moving on...

...And while there are cliques/gangs/factions everywhere, cons are united by one thing: Each is disgusted upon sight of Paul Crewe.

Crewe angles towards a table with only a LONE PRISONER at it. About to sit down, when - -

LONE PRISONER

That's taken.

(Crewe shifts to
another seat)

That one, too.

(Crewe shifts again)

That one, too.

CREWE

Well, how 'bout you tell me which
one's not taken?

LONE PRISONER

You could'a robbed banks, sold crack,
stole your grandmother's pension
checks, and no one would'a minded,
but messing with football? - That's
un-American.

Crewe's speechless - saved by an inmate seated alone at a table who motions over. A friendly voice - -

CARETAKER

You can sit over here...

Crewe moves closer, settling in beside CARETAKER(Chris Rock).

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

(introducing himself)

Caretaker...

CREWE

(a beat; a hand)

Paul Crewe.

CARETAKER

Actually knew that already. Been
following you since your Freshman
year at Florida State.

CREWE

You play?

CARETAKER

Me? No no no. I was so bad in sports, I actually got picked *after* the white-kids...Had to adapt, y'understand?

(taps head)

Learn the game *inside* the game.

Crewe's silent. Still acclimating to the environs.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Place ain't so bad. You just gotta know the right people...And the good news is: You already know me.

(sweeping glance)

Whatever your pleasure, I can...facilitate. You want Ecstasy, some crystal-meth, maybe...?

RACK FOCUS to a table: Tattooed Hispanic men cavort.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

...I can go to the Latin Kings - You even want Prozac - shit, I know how you white boys are, always battling that depression shit...

CREWE

Kind of you to offer, but...

CARETAKER

Porn? I can go to...

FAVOR ANOTHER TABLE: White skin. Black hearts.

CARETAKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...The Aryan Low Riders. They got a system where they tape Playboy centerfolds to their boyfriends' backs when they got 'em bent over. Those boys have quite the imagination...

CREWE

Please don't tell me shit like that...

CARETAKER

I can also get the really important stuff: Soft toilet paper...or for McDonald's - I can go to my boy, Fat Eddy.

FAVOR FAT EDDY. Sneaking bites from a quarter-pounder.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Trust me, you're in here long enough,
it's the little things you miss...

They share a forlorn smile, Crewe already missing his freedom.

CREWE

I got a question for ya'...

(slides work-card
over)

What the hell's "swamp detail"...?

CARETAKER

Don't worry, ain't no geese out there.

CUT TO:

THE GRILL OF A BUS

Crashing into frame (CAMERA POV), halting with the groan of
brakes, the emission of fumes...

WIDEN TO SEE the side-door slap open as if a school-bus...

EXT. BACK-WOODS - - ALLENVILLE PRISON - - DAY

PRISONERS. File out. Onto the mud-soaked terrain.

CREWE. Exits last, donning knee-high BOOTS which hinder his
gait. Made more difficult when GUARD FERIGNO shoves him out -

SPLAT. Crewe lands face first in a prominent puddle.

Crewe. Spits mud. Sniffs oxygen. Stands.

CREWE

That never gets old for you guys,
does it?

Ferigno shoves him again. Pushing him towards - GUARD
ROMANOWSKI - who hands him a shovel and a word of warning:

GUARD ROMANOWSKI

(big smile)

Careful out there, Crewe...

Crewe glances ahead. Sees several men wading into the - -

SWAMP - - MOMENTS LATER

And Crewe's taken his place beside them, Caretaker shoveling
mud and vines from the clogged swamp.

Romanowski and Ferigno are joined by several other guards,
all of whom watch from the side, rifles at the ready...

Among them we notice GUARD BLIER, a burly bear of a man with a walrus mustache and a permanent scowl.

CREWE

What's with the boots - river's 2 inches deep.

CARETAKER

River's not what you wanna be worrying 'bout; boots are for something else...
(dramatic beat)
Snakes.

CREWE

Say what - - ?

CARETAKER

Slimy bastards like to lunge. 'Can usually hear 'em PLOP in the water. One particular region can't be protected, though...
(gestures to groin)
Although some guys'r so horny in here, a snake on the dick ain't such a bad thing, you know what I'm sayin'?

Before Crewe can respond - -

GUARD FERIGNO

Shut up over there!

Crewe swallows his Adam's apple. Gulp. And he continues to work...but can't quite get something off his mind - -

CREWE

(a whisper to Caretaker)
Are they, uh, poisonous, those snakes?

CARETAKER

(a nod)
Coupla' guys have gone down...'Course Warden don't mind; less mouths to feed means more cash for his football freaks.

Crewe proceeds to scoop the swamp with considerably more caution, head on a swivel. Eyes swimming inside his skull.

Caretaker stifles a laugh. Right before he throws a small rock behind Crewe - who jumps on reflex.

And Caretaker can stifle his LAUGHTER no more...

CREWE

Funny...

Crewe notices a LARGE INDIAN MAN glaring at him. Nodding to Caretaker with an inquisitive and arched brow:

CARETAKER

Big Bob.

CREWE

What's his deal?

CARETAKER

He don't like the white men...

CREWE

The whole stealing their land thing?

CARETAKER

No, the whole stealing his wife thing...Some white dude was banging his lady. Big Bob over there made a meal out of him. Beat him unconscious with a spoon before stabbing him 147 times with a fork. Then cutting his throat with a butter-knife.

CREWE

Didn't solve the problem?

CARETAKER

(a shrug)

He's still working through it.

Crewe smiles at Big Bob. Gets nothing but rage in response. And Crewe turns away. Resumes shoveling.

Utterly oblivious to the SNAKE rising up behind him.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Uh, Crewe? Snake...

CREWE

Cut it out, man...

CARETAKER

Crewe.

Something about his tone grabs our boy's attention...

...Leading Crewe's gaze to the enormous and ascendant SNAKE. Inches away. HISSING. Ready to strike, before - -

- - Crewe WHACKS it back with his shovel, displaying cat-quick reflexes...in the process splattering mud directly into the face of...BIG BOB.

And the Indian waits nary a second to - CHARGE Crewe.

What follows will not be mistaken for a Jackie Chan movie.
THIS IS A BRAWL. A sloppy slug-fest of dirt and limbs.

THE GUARDS

Watch. Laugh. Enjoying the hell out of this excursion...

And amazingly, despite ceding 100 pounds, Crewe's one feisty bastard, holding his own with the belligerent Bob...

The inmates take note of the fire in Crewe, gaining a modicum of silent respect for him, before...

A DODGE RAM PICK-UP TRUCK pulls in, Captain Knauer stepping out - inspiring GUARDS FERIGNO and ROMANOWSKI to wade into the swamp...swinging batons like Kent State...

Whack. Whack. Whack.

Big Bob is mercilessly smacked down, timbering like a tree...

Romanowski turns his attention to Crewe, punching him in the small of the back. Once, twice, three times - -

Knauer hustles over, eager to get his own licks in; raising his truncheon to inflict some damage, before - -

- - Crewe catches it. Shoves Knauer back into the river as - -

A CAVALCADE OF GUARDS

Swarm in. Devouring Crewe. Subduing him with superior force. Knauer straddles over him, soaked to the bone.

CREWE POV: Knauer's baton crashes down, bringing **DARKNESS**.

FADE UP:

EXT. HOT-BOX - - LONG SHOT - - DAY

A wire-shed in the center of a dirt field. Bolted shut directly beneath the merciless sun.

Quaintly known as "THE HOT-BOX", it's not for the claustrophobic or sane.

Pearls of filthy sweat trickle down PAUL CREWE's face, his empty food tray covered with dirt and maggots. As we - TIME DISSOLVE TO:

CUTS: Crewe: Suffering. Sweating. DELIRIOUS. And Crewe looks outside: Nothing to see until A FIGURE fills frame.

SKITCHY RIVERS (POV)

Crewe's startled. Staring at the archaic man.

SKITCHY RIVERS

Hey, Paul Crewe, Skitchy Rivers.
Nice to meet you, I'm a big fan. I
came by yesterday to tell you but
you were delirious.

CREWE

...Tell me what?

SKITCHY RIVERS

See, I been in the hot-box a few
times myself. What you gotta do is
rip off small pieces of your clothes
and stick 'em in your ears while you
sleep so the maggots don't crawl in
and eat your brains...

CREWE

Good to know...

SKITCHY RIVERS

Should stick some pieces in your ass-
hole, too.

Crewe winces - especially when he spots Knauer approaching...

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Afternoon water-break...

Indeed, he holds a cold cup of water in hand. Crewe tries
not to lick his lips.

CAPTAIN KNAUER (CONT'D)

Thirsty, Crewe?

He offers up the water - before pulling it back. And dumping
it out. Chuckling as it sinks into the soil.

CAPTAIN KNAUER (CONT'D)

Guess you'll just have to wait 'til
the next one...

And Crewe looks at Knauer, seething. Then:

CREWE

Skitchy, do me a favor? Tell
Caretaker I need a meeting with the
Warden...

Crewe glares back at Knauer, before we - -

CUT TO:

WARDEN HAZEN

Seated, in profile. Gaze fixed OS when he says:

WARDEN HAZEN

So what d'you think, Mr. Crewe?

EXT. GUARD PRACTICE FIELD - - PRISON - - WIDER VIEW

Untarnished turf. Bright white-lines. Stadium lights.

IN THE BLEACHERS

Crewe sits beside Hazen, MOLLY behind them...

ON THE FIELD

GUARD FERRIGNO moves the blocking-sled up and down the field, his impossibly muscled body moving at great-speed...

CREWE

I think it's great how you've managed
not to get caught up in the whole
steroid testing thing...

Hazen offers a stiletto smile. Then:

WARDEN HAZEN

Nice to see the hot-box kept your
sense of humor in tact. Imagine
what a few more days could do?

Crewe measures a glance back at the field and its behemoths.
We see Knauer running pass patterns with receivers...

CREWE

Where'd you find these guys?

WARDEN HAZEN

Recruiting, my boy, recruiting.

CREWE

(joking)

What, the scraps of NFL cut-down
day?

WARDEN HAZEN

Some. Others don't get drafted at
all. When their dreams end, they
need a place to go. A job. Money.
Security.

(turns back to field)

Most of all, a chance to keep playing
the sport they love...See, I'm a big
believer in creating win-win
situations, Mr. Crewe. And it would
seem, by your presence here, so are
you...

Crewe nods. Summoning the strength to ask - -

CREWE

So what's the problem, how can I help you...win?

WARDEN HAZEN

You might find this difficult to believe, but some folks here in the prison league don't like me very much...They thought it might be funny to schedule the defending league champs as our first game. And me, I thought an old pro like yourself might have some training-camp tricks, drills, insights, to offer up...give us that extra-edge.

CREWE

(chews on it)

Is this the type of practice you do until the 1st game?

WARDEN HAZEN

Uh-huh...

CREWE

Okay. Well, here's what I would do: Find some low-end team to knock the living shit out of...

(nods to guards)

Better than beating on blocking dummies all day. In college, we'd open every season against Appalachian State or some slack Division II team.

(off Hazen: "Huh?")

You know, a gimme game. Get the kinks out. Get everybody's confidence up. Big difference between practice speed and game speed.

FAVOR HAZEN, the wheels spinning in his head...

CREWE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't know what sad-sack team you could wrestle up in this part of Texas, but...

WARDEN HAZEN

Wait Crewe. Wait one minute. I like the way you're thinking...

Hazen turns to face Crewe, inspired.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

We'll play our pros against the cons...

CREWE

...You have a convict team here?

WARDEN HAZEN

We will. After you assemble one to play the first game against us.

Even Molly takes note of that. Stops writing. Looks up.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

And you, Mr. Crewe, are gonna be the quarterback.

Crewe looks at him. And LAUGHS nervously.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

It'll be nice to see you throwing the deep ball again...

And Crewe realizes he's serious...

CREWE

That's crazy...

(gestures to field)

...Those monsters'll kill me...

WARDEN HAZEN

In this prison, sometimes you've got to go along to get along.

CREWE

Well, I just wanna go along, do my 18 months and be done...

WARDEN HAZEN

18 months was before you assaulted the walking boss...

Crewe ganders at Hazen, trapped. Resigned.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

You'll have 3 weeks to assemble a team and train them. It'll be a good test for my secondary.

CREWE

We can't test anybody. What do we get, an hour a day?

WARDEN HAZEN

(sweeping gesture)

I'll make sure the boys allow you suitable freedoms within these walls to get your team together, and to practice.

(MORE)

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

Don't make me look bad, though - an escape attempt will be dealt with in the harshest manner possible.

(stands)

Should you need anything, anything, Paul, you come to me, okay? We'll figure it out together.

(a clap on the back)

Only your best effort will be appreciated...

And WE FOLLOW HAZEN as he descends the bleachers, walking past a sweaty Knauer on the field with a sincere:

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

Good job, Captain. You got yourself a game.

BACK WITH CREWE AND MOLLY

CREWE

This is a bad idea...

MOLLY

Really? Maybe you shouldn't have thought of it.

And with that she exits. Leaving Crewe alone. And rattled.

EXT. YARD - - PRISON - - DAY

Recess. For cons.

CREWE keeps to himself, leaning against a fence, eyeing the SHARPSHOOTERS stationed in the watch-towers above...

...Glancing back down to see CARETAKER(POV)surreptitiously handing an unseen item to an acne-addled inmate.

And Crewe pushes off the fence. Strutting over to Caretaker, stopping when he hears the WHISTLES sent his way from a gang of TRANSVESTITES on the margins.

The leader, the belle of the ball, MS. TUCKER, swishes over to Crewe. A voice very much like Chris Tucker...

MS. TUCKER

(confident)

I know all the other gangs are gonna be recruiting you and shit, but ya' gotta think about joining our squad. We got a lot to offer: Loyalty, brotherhood and free lip-gloss...

CREWE
Thanks, I'll, uh, take that into
consideration...

As Crewe begins to walk away...

MS. TUCKER
(upset)
Come on, Crewe, we need some white
boys to balance us out!

Crewe moves on, sneaking up on Caretaker - who completes a
transaction with a "client". Crewe guessing:

CREWE
Prozac?

CARETAKER
Nope. "Clearisil". That boy needs
the shit, too.

CREWE
Well, now I need something.

CARETAKER
"Listerine"?

Crewe's about to speak. Stops. Thinks. Then:

CREWE
Seriously?

CARETAKER
Nah, I'm just messin' with ya'.
(then)
What's up?

CREWE
The warden's scheduled a game; Guards
against the Cons.

CARETAKER
Wha - -? Cons don't have a team.

Crewe locks back. Arches his brows ever slightly. *Exactly.*

FADE TO:

A SHEET OF PAPER

As it's scotch-taped to a BOARD...

"FOOTBALL TRY-OUTS. Recess. Tomorrow."

PULL-BACK to see CARETAKER disseminating a stack of pamphlets,
tapering the walls, floors, everything.

INT. CAFETERIA - -, PRISON - - CONTINUOUS

PAN DOWN THE TABLE of Cons as we listen in...

FAT EDDY
(munching on french-
fries)
...Just another way for these bastards
to beat on us...

PAN PAST a kinetic creature named - -

BRUCIE
Thas' the beauty of it, we can beat
on them, too.
(thoughtful beat)
I like it...I like it.

STOP PAN ON CARETAKER, at the end of the table.

CARETAKER
Worst that can happen is you break a
leg or some shit. That happens?
You get outta' swamp detail.

The man beside him, BIG TONY, a stocky stump from Jersey...

BIG TONY
Got cable and shit up in the
infirmary, too...
(wistful; heaven on
earth)
...Cable and air-conditioning.

It sounds so enticing that several cons grunt approval.
Considering the proposal, before - -

A SHADOW. Falls over the table. DEACON MOSS. A tall and
strong African-American, he crumbles the pamphlet in hand.

DEACON MOSS
Bitch-ass sold his own teammates
out, what he gonna do to you fools?

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAY

Crewe and Caretaker step onto the sodden field. Untamed
grass. Hard dirt. No chalk-lines.

CREWE
(droll)
Well, this is inspiring...

CARETAKER
Wait 'til you see our equipment...it's
the used shit from the guards. Best
we could get on short notice.

And so, they ascend a sizable hill, given view of
THE PRISONERS (CREWE POV)

Who've turned out for try-outs. A raw and rough-hewed bunch, they lounge and loiter about except for BRUCIE - who runs alongside Crewe, stopping in front of him. Dropping.

And pumping out 10 quick push-ups. Hopping back up. Staring Crewe in the face with palpable pride.

CREWE
(what to say?)
You're strong?

Brucie grins big as Crewe moves on.

Despite the pathologies at work, if you look closely, you'll see promise; a few men with preferable dimension and demeanor.

Crewe's vision strays to the nearby WEIGHT-LIFTING AREA. And DON SAPP. Utterly ENORMOUS, he lifts a huge amount of weight over his head.

And Crewe looks to Caretaker.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Shouldn't he be over here?

EXT. WEIGHT AREA - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe and Caretaker approach Sapp...

CREWE
Hey, how ya' doin'?
(Sapp's silent)
How much, uh, weight is that?

Sapp drops the weight. The world rumbles.

SAPP
(baritone burr)
450.

Crewe nods. Swallows. Refocuses:

CREWE
We're putting together a football team...you look like you might fit in.

SAPP
I like football.

CREWE
Great. Good to hear.
(MORE)

CREWE (CONT'D)

Try outs are today. We put flyers
up everywhere. Why didn't you come
out?

Sapp stares at the ground as if in search of lost change.

SAPP

I, um...I'm not really a good reader.

CREWE

That's alright. I'm not much of a
reader either. You Caretaker?

CARETAKER

Hell no. That shit's for rich people.

Sapp relaxes a bit. Even grins.

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe takes stock of his "team". BLOWS a whistle:

CREWE

Okay, everybody gather 'round
here...come on...

A slothful bunch, they take their sweet-time...

CREWE (CONT'D)

Don't mean to rush you now...don't
wanna pull a muscle moving too fast...

They finally settle onto the rickety benches...

Crewe flips a football in the air as he moves back and forth,
rather lackluster and matter-of-fact. Starting one of those
assignments your heart's not in...

CREWE (CONT'D)

Um...we're gonna have some fun out
here...I'll be your quarterback,
your coach, your captain...

(he stops; out of
things to say)

Okay. Let's, uh, see what we got.

(blows whistle; turns
to Caretaker)

We'll grade 'em on a scale of one to
ten...

Caretaker holds a clip-board and a pen, wondering:

CARETAKER

What d'we start 'em off with?

SAME SCENE - - LATER

TRACK WITH CREWE, Caretaker by his side, as he stalks past cons doing old-school SIT-UPS as fast as they can. Grading the first felon:

CREWE
5...
(another)
...7.

Crewe halts beside Big Tony. Still struggling to complete his first sit-up.

CREWE (CONT'D)
One.

CARETAKER
(to Big Tony)
Stop hanging out with Fat Eddy...

With that, Big Tony THUMPS back to the grass, exhausted.

ANOTHER DRILL - - LATER

TIRES aligned to calibrate dexterity and speed...

CREWE
Okay, come on now...

He points to the first in line...who begins...

CREWE (CONT'D)
6...

Brucie goes next, earning an - -

CREWE (CONT'D)
...8...

A puddly inmate goes next, barely able to complete the obstacles. Falling face first.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Zero.

CARETAKER
(scribbles in pad)
Can we go lower?

ANOTHER DRILL - - LATER

A heavy-bag has been propped up for blocking drills...

Off Crewe's WHISTLE, the first man smacks the bag - unprepared for the recoil that WHACKS him back...

CREWE
5...
(MORE)

CREWE (CONT'D)
 (next in line)
 ...7.

DON SAPP gets in an awkward 3-point stance. Bursting out with the whistle...proceeding to knock the bag off its hinges.

Crewe and Caretaker stand, stunned. Then:

CARETAKER
 Would that be a ten...?

CREWE
 (awed silence; a nod)
 That would be a ten.

Sapp, not the sharpest of tools, looks at the detritus of his deed. Offering a contrite shrug:

SAPP
 Sorry.

SAME SCENE - - LATER

Scrimmage time. In the huddle, Crewe instructs his charges...

CREWE
 This game's pretty simple,
 fellas...you people block...you do a
 button-hook...I'll take care of the
 rest...

They approach the line in dissembled fashion. Then:

CREWE (CONT'D)
Hike.

And the line blocks with the snap of the ball, until a punch is thrown. Then another. In a matter of seconds, there are no less than 5 hockey fights.

Jerseys pulled over heads. Knees in nuts. Knuckles in noses.

Flustered, Crewe SPIKES the ball to the ground as...

...Caretaker WAILS on the whistle - to no avail. The fights continue as Crewe stomps off the field, and we...

EXT. YARD - - PRISON - - DAY

Hazen and Molly stride through the populous playground, the cons staring at the warden, full of venom...

WARDEN HAZEN
 Ms. Harmon, do you know why it is
 that I can walk through here,
 (MORE)

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)
surrounded by violent felons,
completely unafraid?

MOLLY
Because there are 16 high-powered
rifles protecting you...?

Indeed, a slew of sharp-shooters peer down from watch-towers.

WARDEN HAZEN
Because these men, they fear, and
most of all, respect me...

Several cons flip Hazen the bird as he passes...

MOLLY
You know, the guys going out for the
team seem genuinely excited about
playing football...It's a great way
to further their rehabilitation...

WARDEN HAZEN
(who cares?)
It could work out that way...

MOLLY
Trust. Discipline. Team-work. It's
the core of what you're trying to do
here...

Hazen mulls that over, instantly pensive...

WARDEN HAZEN
You know, Ms. Harmon, I never thought
of it that way. This is downright
progressive thinking. I'll bet it
can even catch on...and it'll all
have started here. At Allenville.
By Warden Hazen.

He stops. Smiles. Happy visions running through his head.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)
...Not a bad thing to have on one's
resume.
(then; turns to her)
Maybe we should share this great
news with some of our "close
friends"...

Off Molly, seeing where this is headed, we...

EXT. FIELD - - POST PRACTICE - - DAY

The prisoners recede from the field; the walking wounded...

CREWE AND CARETAKER

Sit on a slivered bench, elbows to knees. Things even more dire than they imagined. Until Caretaker looks up to see - -

A SHADOW

Stretched across the torn field...belonging to NATE
SCARBOROUGH. An imperious man with a barely discernible limp.

NATE
(extends hand)
Nate.

He's got a voice borne of alkaline and angst, a vice-grip.

NATE (CONT'D)
Looks like you could use some help
out here...

CREWE
No offense - Nate, is it?...but you're
a little...seasoned.

NATE
(a chuckle)
Never heard it put like that...Not
to play, Superstar; to coach. Nate
Scarborough.

Crewe realizes he's in the presence of...

CREWE
Oh...Nate Scarborough. Of course we
could use your help. How many titles
you get at Oklahoma?

NATE
Three. But that was a long time ago...

A sad echo of his former self, he's gaunt and hollow-eyed.
Until he starts talking...

NATE (CONT'D)
I been in this place over a decade,
waiting for a chance to get back at
these sadistic sons of bitches...I
been watching these guards play,
scouting 'em out. Waiting. For
this.

Crewe trades a look with Caretaker. Liking this cat already.

CREWE
Well, Coach, as you can see we don't
exactly have the cream of the crop
to work with here...

INSERT - On the bench. Players snack. Sleep. Smoke.

NATE
Put our heads together, we'll figure
something out...

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - - THE NEXT DAY

Crewe veers from the pre-practice warm-up jog, shouting back to his teammates:

CREWE
10 more laps...

Caretaker, Nate and Skitchy fall in step with Crewe before -
Guard Blier steps in front of an entry-way.

GUARD BLIER
Where you dick-wads going?

CARETAKER
Equipment room.

GUARD BLIER
I don't even know why you're doin'
this...You're gonna get crushed.

CREWE
Just doin' what the warden wants...If
that's a problem, maybe we oughta'
go and interrupt him.

A deliberative beat. Blier steps aside.

INT. OFFICES - - ALLENVILLE PRISON - - MOMENTS LATER

The fellas move past the "Equipment" room towards a door
marked "Records".

CREWE
How we gettin' in here?

Caretaker grins. Knocks in rhapsodic fashion on the door.

CARETAKER
I think you got a fan...

The door opens, a woman emerging...

LYNN RUIZ. She's an administrative executive for the prison.
Too much woman, not enough dress, she beams on sight of Crewe
who ganders up at her like Jack beholding the bean-stalk.

LYNN
(lids aflutter)
I'm honored to help out, Mr. Crewe.

CREWE
Paul, call me Paul...

LYNN
(shakes hand)
I just loved your underwear commercial. My ex-husband wore tightey-whiteys - he didn't fill them out quite as well as you, though...

CREWE
(nervous chuckle)
Oh, you know Hollywood, special-effects and what not...

LYNN
Oh, I doubt that very seriously, Paul.

Crewe, unsure how to respond to that, realizes he's been left alone with Lynn. Gulp.

He ducks into an open door with a terse:

CREWE
Thanks for your help - -

INT. RECORDS - - PRISON - - MOMENTS LATER

Greeted by an incessant HUM, the fellas wade through...

NATE
Hazen's got files on every inmate.
Bastard's even got a ratings system...

A COMPUTER SCREEN

Blinks to life as Caretaker slides into a desk-chair.

ON THE SCREEN

AN INMATE'S FACE (Big Tony) appears, several STARS beside his malicious mug-shot.

CREWE
...Three stars?

NATE
It's a simple enough system - Hazen's own personal Black Book. The more prone to violence the inmate is, the more stars by his name. It's a danger-meter, you might say...

CARETAKER
Iemmc check something out...

He punches up his own file. Next to CARETAKER'S picture - -

CARETAKER '(CONT'D)

No stars?

CREWE

Ooh, you're a dangerous fella...

CARETAKER

(squints at screen)

I gotta shiv somebody or something.
This shit's embarrassing...

CREWE

Come on, let's move on. We only got
a few minutes in here...

NATE

(points to screen)

This little cutie, he got in a
boundary dispute with a nosey
neighbor.

CARETAKER scrolls down.

CARETAKER

Resolved it by burying the guy.
Half on his land, half on the other.

CREWE

That's reasonable...

CARETAKER

(points to screen)

Oh shit, check his pal out...

ON THE SCREEN: A fearsome inmate we'll soon meet named LYNCH.

And Nate beams with palpable pride.

NATE

We're not gonna be the most talented,
boys...but we'll sure as hell be the
meanest.

EXT. YARD - - PRISON - - MORNING

Recess in full-effect, we TRACK with Crewe and Scarborough
as they move past card-playing cons...

An older, very odd and small dude named UNGER hobbles past...

UNGER

Hey, Paul, team's looking great -
and so are you.

(MORE)

UNGER (CONT'D)
 (then; low but insane
 as he walks away)
Every guard should die.

CREWE
 Thanks for the support. Nice talkin'
 to you...

NATE
 (before Crewe can ask)
 Unger. Resident pyromaniac.

CREWE
 And he seemed so well adjusted...

Crewe takes note of Skitchy Rivers, collecting equipment.

CREWE (CONT'D)
 Caretaker, how long's Skitchy been
 in for?

CARETAKER
 Hard to say; nobody was here before
 him. 'Was supposed to be paroled in
 '82...but he had a run in with the
 warden.

CREWE
 Meaning what?

CARETAKER
 Meaning Skitchy knocked him out.
 Ain't never gonna see the outside
 again.
 (then)
 Come on, around this corner...

They move towards a new part of the yard we've not yet seen.

NATE
 Let's see what you remember about
 recruiting....

EXT. CAGE AREA - - MOMENTS LATER

And they emerge from a tunnel to see Guards Shockey and Knauer
 unshackling an inmate, MARTINEZ (we recognize his face from
 the computer scene).

It's a strange sight; several inmates amassed around a STEEL-
 CAGE. Gearing up for something.

CREWE
 (to Caretaker)
 What is this shit?

CARETAKER

Breaking in a new recruit.

Shockey shoves Martinez towards the cage, poking him along with the working end of his truncheon...

GUARD SHOCKEY

...Move it, dirt-bag.

Shockey stabs him extra-hard in the back - spurring Martinez to whirl around, grab the truncheon, ready to brawl, before -

CHUT-CHUT(OS)

The sound of Knauer's racked shotgun. Trained on Martinez - who wisely stops in his tracks.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

See that? Good choice. You're not as dumb as you look.

Martinez glares at Knauer before entering the cage. A matador awaiting his bull, he looks at a GATE at the end of the cage -

- - Which abruptly opens, a ROTTWEILER sprinting out, rabid.

Fearsome. Foaming. Lunging - -

- - at Martinez - who smacks him to the ground...the Rotty hops up, makes another run - only to be knocked down again.

The 3rd time, the Rotty clamps onto Martinez's exposed forearm, driving his jaws into the inmate's flesh. Grrrrrrrr.

But Martinez stares blankly, appearing not to be in pain. He just slowly wrenches the animal off. Then wrestles it to the floor. Pinning the Rotty on his back, as we...

FAVOR CREWE AND CARETAKER

CARETAKER

Gotta break 'em in, see. Prison dog program. Supposed to help with rehabilitation. They take the worst stray dogs in the pound, have these guys tame 'em, train 'em, and make 'em house-broken and shit.

Caretaker leads Crewe's gaze to the training grounds where another inmate(LYNCH)instructs a row of mangy mutts.

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

There's the graduating class...

Lynch commands 4 disciplined dogs through a series of tricks before giving them each a treat and rolling on the ground alongside them, talking 'baby talk'. Crewe interrupts--

CREWE
Looking good...

LYNCH
(hops to his feet;
proud)
100% graduation rate. All placed in
good homes. Never had one come back
yet.

And for a moment, Crewe forgets why he's here. Caretaker
brings him back with a helpful elbow. Pssst.

CREWE
Uh, we're putting together a football
team and we thought - -

MARTINEZ (O.S.)
Not interested.

MARTINEZ steps up, walking the now calmer Rotty - who has a
choke collar around his beefy neck.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
(to Crewe)
S'okay...you can pet him.

Crewe's less than enthused, skittishly eyeing the dog. Knows
this is a test. Finally:

CREWE
Okay...

He slowly and reluctantly puts out his hand and gingerly
pets the dog...and the dog playfully licks Crewe. Awwwww.

Crewe looks to Caretaker, encouraging him to follow suit.
Caretaker nods an adamant "no".

But Crewe won't take no for an answer. He stares even more
vigorously at Caretaker. Coaxing with his eyes: "Do it".

Reluctant but resigned, Caretaker slowly reaches out before - -

- - The Rotty ROARS - sending Caretaker back. Martinez and
Crewe laugh. Caretaker grumbles:

CARETAKER
Dog's a goddamn racist.

Martinez latches the Rotty to a pole.

CREWE
Before we go, lemme tell you guys
one more thing...

And Crewe strolls off with Martinez and Lynch, leaving Caretaker alone with the Rottweiler.

CARETAKER

Hey, there, pal...want a treat?

He looks left, looks right. The coast clear, Caretaker feeds the beast a fistful of Prozac, as we...

FAVOR CREWE WITH LYNCH AND MARTINEZ

CREWE

...I thought you'd like to know
Shockey and Knauer are playing for
the guards...

The inmates simultaneously stop. Trade interested eyes.

LYNCH

What positions they playin'?

CREWE

Tight end. Quarterback.

MARTINEZ

(grinning)

Looks like we'll be on defense.

Crewe smiles. Mission accomplished.

FAVOR CARETAKER

The Rotty's now PASSED-OUT cold. He hurries away.

CARETAKER

(to Martinez)

Good job...you already turned him
into the mellowest Rotweiler I ever
seen.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - THE NEXT DAY

Nate and Caretaker watch players warm up, an eye on Lynch.

CARETAKER

Martinez is tough but you sure about
his dog-loving buddy?

Nate shrugs. Leads his gaze back to the field, as we see - -

BRUCIE

Trotting across the middle of the field running a
slant...Crewe fires a strike off a 3 step drop, before - -

CRUNCH. Lynch nearly decapitates him with a thrashing elbow.
The receiver remains on the ground. Twitching.

NATE

Pretty sure.

Crewe walks over to Brucie...

CREWE

...little help? Medic?

UNGER (O.S.)

MEDIC! MEDIC!

Unger runs out. A little too enthusiastic.

UNGER (CONT'D)

(to no one in particular)

Let's get a medic out here, for God's sake!

(blood curdling scream)

HELP!

NATE

The ever helpful Unger wants to be our manager...

UNGER

I can help more than you know, Paul...

CREWE

Sorry Unger, slot's filled; Caretaker's manager...

Caretaker waves in the BG, inspiring Unger to explode:

UNGER

SCREW HIM AND SCREW YOU!

CREWE

Although, with those kinds of people-skills you do make it tough...

SAME SCENE - - LATER

Brucie limps off as the team lines up for another play...

CARETAKER

(re: arm)

How's she feel...?

CREWE

Like a "shc"...

He turns back and looks over the defense, Nate among them. Demonstrating defensive techniques.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Nike.

Crewe takes a 5 step-drop...scans the field...

Sapp breaks through the middle, HOWLING - spurring Crewe to duck under him, looking down field...

...But receivers are covered, Crewe holding the ball, until - -

- - HE'S CREAMED BY MARTINEZ. Ouch.

And Crewe picks himself off the wet-grass, grumbling displeasure as Nate sidles over...

NATE

Receivers'r slow as shit. They can't get open, Guards'll blitz 'ycr ass all day long...

Crewe removes his helmet...

CREWE

We need to find some speed. I never been hurt playing this game, not gonna start now.

CARETAKER

Brothers boycotted. Said some shit about you I don't wanna repeat.

CREWE

Well, they can't hate me more than they hate the guards...

Caretaker looks back, shrugs, not so sure.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - - YARD - - DAY

Welcome to the asphalt jungle. No blood, no foul. INMATES play serious ball. 4 on 4.

Bumping. Grinding. Hacking.

Every player's black, until...CREWE steps into frame.

FAT FDDY

Whatchou' doin' here? This ain't no squash court, Fester.

CREWE

Just wanna talk to you fellas...

Deacon grins a gummy grin. Swaggers closer. Inches away.

DEACON MOSS

We ain't interested in playing with no crooked-ass punk. Take your pasty self and go...

A chorus of grunts affirm Deacon's assessment, a wall of brothers assembled. Staring collective daggers into Crewe.

Among them we take note of a gold-toothed cat with an oversized afro. Watching from the periphery.

CREWE

You'd be playing against the guards...

DEACON MOSS

What, so you the lesser a' two evils? -
I'll take no evils.

(then)

Tell you what: You want us to play
on your team...?

CREWE

That's why I'm here.

DEACON MOSS

Well, I want you to play on my court.

It takes Crewe a moment to figure out what that means...

CREWE

Wanna play horse?

DEACON MOSS

One-on-one.

(a big grin)

You beat me, we'll join your little
team. But when you lose, I don't
wanna see your ass 'round here no
more...

Crewe's giving up a several inches and pounds, but...

CREWE

(peels off sweatshirt)

Let's do it.

MOMENTS LATER...

ON CREWE. As he stretches out.

DEACON MOSS (C.S.)

Game's to eleven, winner's outs,
call your own fouls...

Deacon takes the ball out, waiting for Crewe to step up -
before blowing by him. JAM. 1-0.

The crowd laughs rowdily, slapping palms in early triumph.

And this time Crewe gives him room...Deacon backs Crewe in,
posting him up...closer to the basket...

Completing the play with - CRACK - an elbow to Crewe's face, and an uncontested lay-up. 2-0.

DEACON MOSS (CONT'D)

Got something to say?

Crewe wiggles a loose tooth.

CREWE

(peace sign)

Two-zip.

And Deacon begins to manhandle Crewe yet again...pushing him back-back-back - before Crewe abruptly moves laterally like a matador skirting a bull...

...Deacon, unprepared, loses the ball. Out of bounds.

CREWE (CONT'D)

(faux innocent)

Would that be my ball?

The brothers goad Deacon on with a chorus of oohs and aahhs...Deacon smiles along with them.:No worries...

Crewe launches a jump-shot, CLANGING off the rim - but he hustles around Deacon for the rebound before - Deacon leaps over his back, sending Crewe into the pole. An obvious foul.

DEACON MOSS

Did I get ya'...?

CREWE

(wipes blood off lip)

I didn't feel nothin'...

He bounce-passes the ball back to Deacon, as we - -

HARD CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A nasty dunk over Crewe...
- Crewe spins. Nails an old-school hook-shot.
- CARETAKER and NATE sidle up to the fence, watching...
- Deacon hits a base-line jumper...
- Crewe fakes - gets Deacon off his feet - before he ducks under for an easy 2.
- Crewe drives around Moss - who whips him around, flinging him to the asphalt...

And Crewe remains on the asphalt. On all fours. Spitting blood in seeming surrender...

Moss nods. Grins. Begins to walk off, before - -

CREWE

Your ball...

And he manages to stand on gelatinous legs, as we - -

FAVOR CARETAKER AND NATE

CARETAKER

Thought he didn't wanna get hurt...

NATE

It's not about "hurt"...it's about pride.

BACK TO GAME

DEACON MOSS

Game point, y'all...

Deacon takes the ball out, driving hard to the hole - before Crewe strips him clean...but:

DEACON MOSS (CONT'D)

Got 'it.

Crewe stops. Considers. Nods without protest.

So, alas, Deacon takes the ball out. Fakes an outside shot, driving around Crewe for a vicious...SLAM-DUNK.

CREWE POV: Again we're one with the asphalt. Staring up at Deacon and his cohorts.

DEACON MOSS (CONT'D)

Game.

Crewe staggers to a self-generated stand. Finds himself surrounded by brothers...

DEACON MOSS (CONT'D)

Now take your goose lovin' ass and
scram back to the land of crooked
white boys...

And, indeed, Crewe's about to take his marbles and go, when -

VOICE (O.S.)

Hold up.

EARL MEGGET. The gold-toothed dude we glimpsed earlier, steps forward, his afro dwarfing his compact body.

MEGGET

Y'all got a running-back?

His boys GRUMBLE disapproval...

Megget's North Carolina drawl drowns them out:

MEGGET (CONT'D)

No disrespect, Deacon, but I wanna
play me some football...

(nods to Crewe)

Any man takes that kind a' beating
out here, I can't wait to see how he
plays a contact sport.

Crewe grins big. *If you can reach one person...*

EXT. ALLENVILLE FEDERAL PRISON - - SOUTH GATE - - DAY

CLOSE ON HAZEN

Patting his tunnel-tested, perfectly coifed, head of hair.
Making himself camera ready...

A LOCAL REPORTER steps into frame, microphone thrust in
Hazen's face...Molly stands in the BG...

LOCAL REPORTER

Warden Hazen, what inspired this
unique game between the inmates and
the guards?

Hazen turns to face the camera with an Aqua-Fresh smile.
Going over the cue cards in his head.

WARDEN HAZEN

Well, Lindsey, this isn't about credit
or congratulations...this is about
giving men a second chance, providing
them with an opportunity to rise
above themselves, to move beyond the
bars that contain them...to learn
the merits of discipline, honor and
respect through the wondrous team-
sport of football...

He waxes eloquently on, as we...

INT. CREWE'S CELL - - D BLOCK - - NIGHT

CREWE. Lies on his cot - now furnished with stylish sheets
and a fluffy white pillow. An ice-pack on his cheek.

CARETAKER (O.S.)

Crewe...

Crewe's eyes blink open. *Where'd that voice come from?*

CREWE
Caretaker? Where the hell are you?

CARETAKER (O.S.)
Right here...

CAMERA SLOWLY WIDENS to see Caretaker in the next cell...

CARETAKER (CONT'D)
...I made a few inner-cell trades.
Got the space right next to you,
neighbor.
(then)
By the way: How're the sheets I got
you...?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY:

CREWE
Snuggly.
(out)
You couldn't a' picked a different
pattern?

Only now do we see the sheets: A pattern of THE JACKSON 5.

CARETAKER
Jackson Five is bad-ass, man...
(croons an off-tune
song)
...I don't give a shit what that
family's done...those little freaks
can sing.

Crewe can't help but grin. Then:

CREWE
You know, Caretaker, I don't think
I'd be doing too good in here without
you...

CARETAKER
Ah, you'd be fine. Most a' the guys
in here forgot about your past
already.
(beat)
They want you to help them win this
thing.

Crewe thinks on that, a moment of candor...

CREWE
"Win"? I just wanna survive...

CARETAKER

I hear ya'...keep all your teeth,
get on back to South Beach, right?
Guy like you must have it pretty
good down there.

CREWE

(a beat; low)

Yeah...

And he clicks the light OFF, as we - -

CUT TO:

A TATTERED SNEAKER

Slicing through the untamed and untended grass. Moving FAST.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - WIDER VIEW

MEGGET

Runs wild, spinning out of Sapp's grasp like the reincarnation
of Walter Payton. Zipping into the end-zone.

CREWE claps. Looking to Nate on the sidelines before noticing
that Megget holds a shoe in one hand. A torn shoe.

Megget chucks it to the side. Loses the other one, too.

CREWE

Too fast for our shitty shoes...

MEGGET

S'all good, superstar...never had
shoes growing up 'til I up and thieved
my first pair.

CREWE

Hey, manager, how 'bout we get some
decent cleats for our star running
back?

CARETAKER

I'll see what I can do...

Megget smiles. Not used to people taking care of him.

MOMENTS LATER...

FAVOR MEGGET from his tailback spot...Unfazed by the lack of
footwear, barefoot and blazing, he runs past the sidelines
where we - -

STAY ON UNGER

Who jots notes on his hand, muttering madly to himself. He notices Crewe eye-balling him, doing his best to look inconspicuous before stumbling away...

INT. LOCKER-ROOM - - GUARDS - - LATER

Post-practice, behemoths wade through in towels. More muscles on display than the Fulton Fish Market.

ON THE BOARD, we see a LEAGUE SCHEDULE posted, listing the 8 other Prison Guard teams slated in the months ahead...

Unger ambles in, understandably skittish. Particularly when KNAUER spots him. Forcibly herds him to a corner.

Unger's distracted by something(OS) in the lounge area...

UNGER

You guys have *Madden 2005*?

Knauer's in no mood. Grabs his jaw. Sets it straight.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Focus.

UNGER

(gulp)

They got a new threat. A running back. Megget.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

He's good?

UNGER

Fast. Really, really, fast. I mean, he's so fast that - -

Knauer's ice-pick eyes stop him short. Unger goes gulp.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Got it; he's fast. Why don't you show me your speed - and get your psycho-ass outta' here.

Unger wisely flees as Knauer concocts a plan, and we...

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAY

The offensive team huddle up as Crewe readies to head out - -

MS. TUCKER

Crewe!

CREWE

(stops; turns)

Oh, hi there...

MS. TUCKER

Me and the fellas been waiting for you to come around. It's been a very long and disappointing period. If you don't decide soon, we may just offer the slot to someone else...

CREWE

Okay, okay...

(trotting off)

I'm still thinking about it.

MS. TUCKER

(calls out)

Thanks Paul!

Tucker turns to see Caretaker staring at him.

MS. TUCKER (CONT'D)

Jealous? - You had your chance, baby.

THE OFFENSIVE UNIT

Huddles up, Crewe on a knee as he ganders at his troops.

CREWE

Right 32 Dive with a right flare motion. Double tight.

CREWE POV: The team stares back, collectively confounded. Crewe might as well be speaking Latin.

CREWE (CONT'D)

You line up on the right side...you go in motion on my heel...you run a slant pattern...and you guys block.

They nod understanding, already disassembling before - -

CREWE (CONT'D)

On two, on two...BREAK!

But Crewe's the only one who yells "Break", muttering:

CREWE (CONT'D)

Okay, we'll work on that...

Crewe surveys the defense, finding Lynch up tight on the line...lifting his heel...watching as Megget goes in motion.

The back-field empty as - - hike.

And Crewe gets about 2 and a half steps before - he's DEVoured by several defenders.

The offensive-line peers down at Crewe, supine and surly:

CREWE (CONT'D)

Well, somebody help me the hell up.

Several linemen do...Crewe hobbling over to Caretaker, trying to work the kinks out of his battered body...

CREWE (CONT'D)

If we're not gonna have any receivers,
we gotta get a blocking back to stay
in and protect me.

Caretaker ponders as Crewe stuffs a pad back into his shoulder

NATE

Anybody we haven't tried for yet?

CARETAKER

Well, there is one guy I didn't see
on the computer.

CREWE

We'll go see 'im after practice.

CARETAKER

This cat? You ain't gonna find him
in the General Population.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON SIGN: "DEATH-ROW "

INT. CELL BLOCK E - - WIDER VIEW

SEHORN, a cornerback-sized GUARD, unlocks a vaporized and enormous security door...

....Ushering Crewe down an interminable corridor - from which
A POUNDING NOISE echoes.

They move past vacant cells, the POUNDING growing steadily
louder as we approach the last cell, and see - -

IAN TURLEY

A hulking homicide behind Plexiglas. And here's the thing:
The sound is the result of Turley slamming his fists, kicking
his feet, into the wall. Chipping away. Brick by brick.

CREWE

What's he do that for?

GUARD SEHORN

Nobody's ever had the guts to ask
him.

Sehorn WHACKS his baton against the glass - -

Turley stops. Turns. Snarls. If not for that thick, bullet-proof glass, you'd run for the hills...

CREWE
Hey, how ya' doin', buddy?
(nothing from Turley)
Is that Tai-Chi?

Turley's silent...Turley's often silent...he returns to his work on the walls. Pounding away.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Mr. Turley?

Still, nada.

Crewe clears his throat. Aborts mission.

CREWE (CONT'D)
I'll just...come back during his rec time...

INT. HIGH-SECURITY GYM - - REC TIME - - LATER

In belly-cuffs, Turley plays ping-pong. By himself. The full-table folded up.

Crewe watches. Hesitant, but...

CREWE
You know, you take the table down,
we can play together...

Turley says nothing. Keeps playing against the wall.

Crewe approaches. Cautiously. Then:

CREWE (CONT'D)
I'm just, uh, gonna take it down,
okay...?

Indeed, he does, enabling the two to play each other...

CREWE (CONT'D)
You wanna serve...?
(Turley says nothing)
Okay, I'll serve...

And they begin an easy rally...back and forth, back and forth.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Listen: We're starting a football
team.
(silence)
...You like football?

They continue to rally, Turley's silence daunting...

CREWE (CONT'D)

O-kay...Be a great chance for you to interact with a good group of guys, get out from here for longer than 10 minutes a day...

The rally continues...Turley silent as stone...

CREWE (CONT'D)

(running out of angles)

We have to be chained in here...but out there, for a little while, we can be free...

Still nada from Turley, the rally continuing. Then:

CREWE (CONT'D)

We'd be playing the guards...

Click-click-click. The sound of the ball puttering on and off the table. Turley's interested.

Emboldened, Crewe leans closer.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Guess who's on the team?

Crewe gestures to Sehorn. And for the first time, Turley's stoic expression gives way to a sunny smile.

TURLEY

Yeah, I'd like to play.

INT. CORRIDOR - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe strolls back to Sehorn - who permits him re-entrance through the vapor-lock door.

CREWE

He was a tough sell...but I think he's in.

Sehorn betrays no emotion, until - -

CREWE (CONT'D)

I gotta tell ya', he got pretty excited when I told him you were playing...

(a wink)

You can thank me later...

GUARD SEHORN

How 'bout I thank you now?

THWACK. Crewe's elbow. Smashed by Sehorn's truncheon. And Crewe folds into a fetal ball, clutching his arm in pain...

CREWE
You're...welcome...

Before Sehorn can deliver another blow - -

MOLLY (O.S.)
Guard - what's going on?

MOLLY. In the doorway. Seeing Crewe. Seeing Sehorn.

GUARD SEHORN
(to Molly)
Inmate Crewe was just leaving...

He recedes, offering a taunting smile to Crewe as he goes.
Leaving Crewe and Molly behind.

MOLLY
You okay?

Crewe straightens up. Feigns nonchalance:

CREWE
Yeah...good.

And he steps from Cell Block E, flanking Molly as they walk...

CREWE (CONT'D)
Just got myself a huge blocking
back...

MOLLY
Couldn't you put together a team
without mining death-row?

CREWE
Turley's a sweetheart compared to
the guards here...

MOLLY
(looks at guards;
concedes)
Some of them can be a bit...over-
zealous.

CREWE
Caretaker says they use the Rodney
King video as an instructional tape...

She nearly laughs at that, loosening up a bit...

MOLLY
This place can make you crazy after
a while...

They come to Crewe's cell block, a GUARD opening the bar-
gate for Crewe to step through...

CREWE

Well, why don't you get out?

He turns to face Molly just as the door CLANGS closed, formidable bars between them...

CREWE (CONT'D)

You're one of the few people who can actually leave.

And he exits with that, as we HOLD ON MOLLY, and...

INT. LIBRARY - - PRISON - - DAY

A small, withering place. Where knowledge goes to die...

MEGGET stacks books on a brittle shelf(his work detail), as we take note of Deacon and several others at a nearby desk.

We also take note of Guard Romanowski by the door. *Hmm.*

Megget continues to stack books as GUARD BLIER appears at the end of the aisle, twirling his truncheon. Using it to turn the security camera towards the wall.

Megget sees him from the corner of his eye. Keeps stacking.

SHOCKEY. Materializes on the opposite side of the aisle, effectively trapping Megget - who still seems oblivious...

...A feat made all the more amazing when the guards begin to SLAP their batons against the fat of their palms. In rhythm

They stop inches from Megget. Close enough to smell.

GUARD BLIER

Any books you'd recommend, inmate?

Megget inverts into himself, assuming a passive stance...

MEGGET

No, sir...not much of a reader...

GUARD BLIER

Come on now, Maggot, I seen you in here readin'. Hell, you requested this detail...

MEGGET

It's the quiet I like, sir...

Blier and Shockey are joined by 3 MORE GUARDS...

MEGGET (CONT'D)

Maybe, y'all would enjoy *this*...

An original copy of Malcolm X's "By Any Means Necessary"...

And Blier actually considers it before flipping the cover to see a PHOTO of the author on the back-side...

GUARD BLIER

What the hell kinda' book is this?

MEGGET

Historical. Sir.

GUARD BLIER

(to Shockey)

Check this bullshit out...

(back to Megget)

Why would you think I'd wanna read

'bout a bunch a' niggers....?

He hands the book to Shockey - who promptly tears it in half. It takes every ounce of Megget's energy not to react...

GUARD BLIER (CONT'D)

(in Megget's face)

Does the "N" word offend you, Maggot?

MEGGET

(awesome restraint)

No, sir.

GUARD SHOCKEY

Hell, they call each other niggers

all the time in them songs...

Blier flings a pile of books to the floor. *Oops.*

GUARD BLIER

I'm sorry 'bout that. You mind
fetching those for me, boy?

Megget calmly picks the books up. Places them back. Not about to let this bastard have the satisfaction of his rage.

Blier and Shockey trade eyes: *What's it gonna take?*

Shockey, not the sharpest of men, steps closer still.

GUARD SHOCKEY

Bet you'd like to hit us, huh?

MEGGET

Hit you, sir? 'Course not. Y'all
are my friends.

They consider the possibility that Megget's retarded. Conceding defeat as Blier flings an entire shelf down...

MEGGET (CONT'D)

(as they leave)

I'll get that, 'suh...no problem...

Only after the guards exit, do we glimpse Megget's incandescent eyes. He begins to angrily pick the books up, never noticing DEACON MOSS - who peaks in from the aisle.

Having borne witness to the whole sickening episode.

He proceeds to assist Megget, stacking books in silence before their eyes finally meet in symbiotic suffering. HOLD.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAY

Full-contact scrimmage. Crewe under center, glances back at Turley, lined up at full-back...

CREWE

You know your responsibility?

Turley nods affirmation from his stance, eyes focused ahead.

As Crewe barks calls at the line, we note his substantial (and creative) padding before - hike.

Crewe takes a 7 step drop...but we STAY ON TURLEY - who simply stands. And waits, head on a swivel, until - -

- - Sapp breaks through the line, bee-lining for Crewe before Turley unfurls a compact but lethal KARATE KICK. Whap.

Sapp goes down in a heap of bones and bad intentions, his face-mask torn loose, dangling, his nose swollen.

SAPP

He broke my nose...

Sapp thinks about bum-rushing Turley. Wisely opts not to.

SAPP (CONT'D)

I don't wanna play no more...

CREWE

Jesus, it's football, man...

SAPP

He broke my nose!

CREWE

Yeah, I got that...

(then)

Here, lemme see...

Sapp removes his protective hands...revealing a busted beak.

CREWE (CONT'D)

No worries...

CRACK. Crewe resets the nose-bone without word or warning...Once the shock and pain subside for Sapp...

SAPP
...How's it look?

CREWE
Smashing.

Caretaker steps in(SAPP POV). Studying Crewe's handiwork.

CARETAKER
Yeah, definite improvement.

Sapp smiles. Until he remembers Turley...

SAPP
(points to Turley)
He did it on purpose...

CREWE
No, he didn't.
(turns to see Turley
grinning)
Well, maybe he did...
(to Turley)
Will you apologize? Please? "

Turley frowns at Crewe. Looks at Sapp. Finally:

TURLEY
Sorry.

CREWE
See that? He's really sorry. Isn't
that wonderful?

SAPP
(salvaging pride)
He said he was sorry...I got him to
say he was sorry...

LYNCH
Yeah, and we're all really
impressed...

Sapp slugs back to the huddle, before we - -

CUT TO

INT. OFFICE - - ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - - DAY

CLOSE ON THE GUARDS' PRACTICE FIELD(UNKNOWN POV)

Which we realize Warden Hazen has a perfect view of from
behind his desk. He watches with admiration and pride, hands
behind his back like a general surveying a battlefield.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Warden?

He turns to see MOLLY in the doorway...

WARDEN HAZEN

(motions her in)

I'll tell you, I think this year's team could be our best yet...A fine group of athletes.

MOLLY

(who gives a shit?)

Oh. Good.

(then)

Well, keeping with that, you got a call from ESPN 2. Apparently they picked up the local newscast about the game...they wanna have a conversation.

WARDEN HAZEN

(interest piqued)

A conversation...?

MOLLY

Sometimes they televise big high-school games; or CFL games...thought the Pros versus the Cons might have a certain "human interest" value.

WARDEN HAZEN

Which means what...?

Two words:

MOLLY

Paul Crewe.

WARDEN HAZEN

Televising the game, huh...?

(almost to himself)

That might help my visibility with the registered voters a' this fine state...

(then; looks up)

Let's get those TV folks on the phone, shall we...

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAWN

CREWE runs a play-action pass, a timing pattern, but Brucie doesn't turn around - the ball bouncing off the back of his helmet. And into Lynch's hands. Intercepted.

Crewe turns around, tells Nate:

CREWE

We got a week 'til the game and we
can't run a simple pass play? Megget
can't carry the team by himself.

Crewe notices Caretaker grinning. Snaps:

CREWE (CONT'D)

What the hell you so happy about...?

And Caretaker simply points...and Crewe simply looks...

POV: Over the hill, the sun setting behind them, we see 6
sizable SHADOWS stretch across the grass. Coming our way.

The brothers. Ready to join the fight.

Megget smiles, reunited with his pals. DEACON MOSS leading
the march. Stepping right up to Crewe with - -

DEACON MOSS

You throw anything besides footballs
in this here game and you gonna wish
yer' ass was in the hot-box...

CREWE

Good to know...

DEACON MOSS

(struts past)
Les' do this shit...

MUSIC UP, before we - -

QUICK MUSIC MONTAGE - - SERIES OF SHOTS

- Moss snares a pass over several defenders. Like watching
a dog go after a Frisbee. Serious hops.
- Megget runs a sweep, blazing down field...
- Fat Eddy throws a nasty cut-block.
- Deacon Moss hurdles over a defensive-back...for a touchdown.

PICK-UP SCENE:

As Moss and his pals congregate in the end-zone. The fellas
begin an impromptu RAP...

FAVOR CARETAKER AND CREWE

CARETAKER

Things are looking up, my friend...

CREWE

Still got one more headache to deal
with...

He gestures to the sidelines - where we see UNGER furiously
jotting notes down...

CARETAKER

Any ideas?

CREWE

Just one.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - - LONG SHOT - - MORNING

The distant specter of TWO MEN on a leisurely stroll,
Allenville Federal Prison a mere memory...

CLOSER IN...

We see Crewe accompanies Warden Hazen on his morning walk.

And lest you think the Warden over-confident, from this angle
we take note of the 3 shotgun wielding guards and the
bloodhounds staggered behind them...

WARDEN HAZEN

...Our little game is garnering quite
a bit of interest, Crewe...seems
ESPN 2 wants to televise it.

Crewe frowns, less than enthused about this prospect. Super.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

In fact, I was even thinking about
having a prisoner spend some time in
the broadcast booth. See, I'm all
about helping men reach their
potential, Crewe.

CREWE

You're a great humanitarian, Warden...

Hazen remembers who he's talking to. Gets down to business:

WARDEN HAZEN

We've given you quite a few liberties,
Mr. Crewe, what else could you
possibly want. Problems with the
team?

CREWE

Team's great. It's certain...
elements.

WARDEN HAZEN

(a sigh)

If only we had access to better equipment...

CREWE

Actually, this "element" would be Unger. Inmate Unger.

WARDEN HAZEN

(feigns dumb)

Oh, is he on your little team?

CREWE

No, sir, I believe he's on yours; working for Captain Knaeur, gathering information.

Hazen stops, his security detail halting with him...nothing heard but the BARKING of Dobermans, until - -

WARDEN HAZEN

What're you telling me...?

CREWE

I'd like Unger removed from the practice field.

Hazen narrows his lids, leaning closer to Crewe as if a frog he's about to dissect. Finally:

WARDEN HAZEN

You don't actually think you have a chance at winning, do you...?

CREWE

No. But the men do. And that's just what I want 'em thinking...

WARDEN HAZEN

Just when I suspected I had you figured out, Crewe...

CREWE

I don't follow...

WARDEN HAZEN

Exactly. You *don't* follow. You do your own thing...You don't give a shit 'bout anyone or anything but Paul Crewe...so why this sudden concern?

Crewe looks back, unsure how to respond...

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

In the time you've been here, Crewe, you haven't made or received one call, haven't so much as opened a shred of mail...You don't care about a goddamn thing in this life or the next. You mean to tell me, you give two shits about these slime-balls? - The man who never cared about college or the pros, or his friends or family, now you care? I don't think so...

Crewe is visibly stung. The truth hurts like that. And after a recuperative beat, his anger comes out in sarcasm - -

CREWE

Maybe I've finally found the sense of family I been yearning for all these years. I have you to thank for that, Warden. And, gosh, my new family sure would be grateful if you booted Unger off the field.

Hazen stares daggers into Crewe. Grrrrrrr.

WARDEN HAZEN

I'm gonna walk ahead now 'fore I lose my sense of Southern decency...
(nods to guards)
Boys'll take ya' back.

Crewe nods to the "boys" - who, along with their ferocious dogs, salivate at the prospect of time alone with Crewe.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

(calls back)
And as for your request, Mr. Crewe:
You'll have my answer soon enough.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAY

CLOSE ON THE FIELD, FLOODED. Already a mess, the grass is now buried beneath 2 inches of filthy water...

CREWE regards it with a knowing smirk (bruises and blemishes mar his face from his earlier encounter with the guards.)

CREWE

Caretaker, you hear anything about rain last night...?

CARETAKER

Hell, no; bone-ass dry everywhere else...

They cast a glance up at the clear skies, before we...

INT. WATCH-TOWER - - PRISON - - DAY

Guards Knauer, Ferigno and Blier chuckle.

BACK TO THE PRACTICE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

THE CONS stand behind Crewe, shell-shocked. *Fight or flight?*

And Crewe stares at the field, anger brewing. Knowing exactly who's responsible, he murmurs:

CREWE

Hazen.

Turning back to face his charges, a heretofore unseen intensity in his eyes.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Alright, fellas. This is it; the cross-road. The Warden's trying to break our spirit. Expects us to just turn and run at the first sign of adversity. But we got a choice. We can forget about today's practice, wait 'til the field dries up, make it up tomorrow...But lemme say this: The Warden doing this? Flooding the field? Tells me something: The man's scared. And you know what? He should be. 'Cuz I got news for you: We're winning this thing.

Nate and Caretaker trade surprised expressions...

NATE

Did he just say *winning*...?

CARETAKER

Someone musta' crawled up his ass...

CREWE

...So. Who wants to practice?

A big, fat beat...

...Before TURLEY sprints into the oceanic depths, unleashing a battle-cry worthy of "Braveheart", diving across the field like a little kid on a water-slide...

And after a moment, his teammates follow suit, HOWLING defiantly as Crewe grins back at Nate.

NATE

Well, you're on the goddamn team, too. What the hell you waiting for?

Crewe plunges into the soaked sediment, as we - - FADE TO

SAME SCENE - - LATER

LONG-SHOT: They scrimmage with heretofore unseen enthusiasm. Like little kids splashing through the mud. For the very first time resembling a blessed thing: A TEAM.

INT. WATCH-TOWER - - PRISON - - CONTINUOUS

Guards Knauer, Ferigno and Blier watch the Cons' practice from up on high. They're no longer laughing.

POST PRACTICE - - LATER

Nate, Crewe and Caretaker recede from the field, watching Deacon Moss pick sticky mud from his pads and orifices...

DEACON MOSS

Bitch-ass wants to play rough; huh...?

CREWE

So it would seem...

DEACON MOSS

Well, hell, we convicts, right?

(sly grin)

Maybe it's 'bout time we started acting like it.

A smile trickles across Crewe's face...spreading to Nate and then to Caretaker, before we - -

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS (MUSIC MONTAGE):

- DARKNESS punctured by 3 shards of light - specifically flash-lights, blistering in your face...

- CARETAKER. Slips a shiv into a door-knob. Jiggles. Click. Nate stays in the hallway, on lookout, as Crewe and Caretaker enter...

- MEDICAL OFFICE. Caretaker hunches behind a computer, Crewe over his shoulder...

CREWE

What exactly we looking for...?

- AN X-RAY of a broken-leg. In the hands of Nate as he holds it up to the light...smiles mischievously.

NATE

Seeing as how it already broke once, oughta' be a lot easier the second time...

- CARETAKER. Slips through another door. Entering the locker room - where he snares new CLEATS from the guards' lockers.
- PRACTICE FIELD. Nate paces, pointing to an x-ray as he demonstrates the proper way to..."break a shoulder".
- CARETAKER hands a beaming Megget a new pair of cleats. And Megget looks positively overwhelmed, sliding them on, clapping hands with Caretaker in excitement.
- PRISTINE FIELD. The guards scrimmage. Angry white men.
- CONS' PRACTICE FIELD. Skitchy conducts a savage seminar, waving an x-ray of a skull as he goes...

SKITCHY RIVERS

...The walking boss has had 6 concussions in 5 years of college ball. 'Specially susceptible to these...

...He produces a set of BRASS KNUCKLES.

SKITCHY RIVERS (CONT'D)

You wanna just - WHAP - to the underside of the chin...then just tuck 'em back in here...

He stuffs the weapon down the front of his pants.

- PRACTICE FIELD. Caretaker sidles up to Crewe post-practice.

CARETAKER

Some folks interested in joining the team...

CREWE

Now? Christ, s'a little late.

CARETAKER

(points OS)

Tell them, loverboy...

Crewe turns to see "them": 6 TRANSVESTITES. Arms akimbo, hips cocked, attitudes inflamed. Ms. Tucker at the front.

MS. TUCKER

Okay, Crewe. You win. We're joining your gang. Just don't gloat.

- CONS' LOCKER-ROOM. Megget and Moss replace cleats with super-sharp metal SPIKES. They bump knuckles. Trade grins.
- GUARD'S LOCKER-ROOM. Ferigno puts a prescription bottle onto the shelf. We see it's marked: "Winstrol V"(a steroid)

- LATER. Lights-out, MOSS periscopes into frame. Empties the pills from the "Winstrol V" bottle into his palm...

...Replaces them with pills from a bottle marked: "Estrogen." Giggling to himself as he puts the bottle back.

- CREWE'S CELL. Crewe and Caretaker chug moonshine, swap stories. Laughing.

- CONS' PRACTICE. UNGER watches...before Ms. Tucker and the TRANSVESTITES sidle over, stroking his chest...Chasing him away...Crewe and Caretaker trade a smile...

- MESS-HALL. The team assembled at a 'long-table. Waiting. CHEERING when Caretaker enters frame, a tray of enormous cooked chickens under bountiful arms...

And Crewe stands, proposing a toast, as we PICK-UP SCENE:

The raucous cons quiet down, all eyes on their leader...

DEACON MOSS

To Paul Crewe...for making this shit-hole a little more tolerable."

They collectively clink glasses, rowdiness resuming as Crewe settles back down beside Caretaker. A beat.

CARETAKER

What would you say if I could get you film from the Guards' games last year...? From Hazen's personal stash, no less...

LONG BEAT.

CREWE

You actually waiting for an answer?

Caretaker measures his words carefully. Finally:

CARETAKER

Thing is, well...this might require a certain...sacrifice.

And now we notice the table's gone quiet, cons chuckling as they listen in on the conversation...

CREWE

How so...?

Caretaker looks at Crewe with utter empathy, before we - -

MATCH CUT TO:

CREWE

Only now he looks nervous. GUARD BLIER glares. Let's him pass. And Crewe treads gingerly down a HALLWAY like a death-row inmate on his way to the electric chair...

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - - WIDER VIEW

Crewe stops. Mutters under his breath:

CREWE
Be strong...you can do this...

And so he enters the office to see...LYNN RUIZ. A beat. And she hands him a stack of tapes.

CREWE (CONT'D)
(gulp)
Thanks.

She offers a glass of wine...Crewe readily accepting. Downing it in dogged pursuit of alcohol-induced numbness.

LYNN
(runs a finger along
his cheek)
I bet the girls just eat you up...
(peeling his jump-
suit top off)
...Hurry, we only have 15 minutes.

ON CREWE: 15 minutes...not so bad...

LYNN (CONT'D)
...But boy am I gonna make 'em all
count.

She produces a pair of tighty-whities. Hands them to Crewe.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Put these on, baby...and do that
famous pose.

PUSH IN ON CREWE'S horror, eyes enormous, before we...

INT. FILM-ROOM - - LATER - - NIGHT

Not just any night...MOVIE NIGHT. Inmates howl at the showing of "Lost in Translation", making lewd gestures every time Scarlett Johanson appears on screen...

SHOCKEY stands guard by the back. Bored to death, he leaves.

CARETAKER

Nods to Skitchy - who hustles to the door. On lookout.
Another glance is sent to Big Tony - who stands and summarily
shuts the movie OFF...

And Caretaker stands atop his chair, presiding over the unruly
inmates, urging them to quiet down.. Sapp keeps talking.

CARETAKER

Shut the hell up!

SAPP

Don't yell at me...I don't like to
be yelled at...

CARETAKER

Alright...

(low; a whisper)

Sit your Frankenstein-ass down...

OVER CON LAUGHTER(os) - -

SAPP

"Frankenstein"'s okay...I just don't
like to be yelled at...my daddy used
to yell at me...

Turley pats him on the back, consoling...

And the cons gradually quiet down as we take note of Crewe,
slumped low in his chair, a look of intense trauma etched
across his face.

CARETAKER

(with a laugh)

Crewe, you okay over there...?

CREWE

(matter-of-fact)

No...no, I'm not okay...

CARETAKER

(to the room)

Before we watch the guard's football
film from last season - -

BOOS(OS)erupt from the assembled...

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

...We got a special presentation
courtesy of our very own Paul Crewe...

He nods to Big Tony - who slips tape in...

CHEERS(OS)as Caretaker sits next to Crewe. Slaps his knee.

CREWE

What the hell you talking about...?

Caretaker grins. And points to THE SCREEN - where an image materializes. A ghastly image.

ON SCREEN (shot from a security camera): CREWE. In his underwear. In the warden's office.

Striking "that famous pose": One leg up on a couch, an elbow propped atop it, Crewe offers a sly smile and an arched brow.

STAY ON SCREEN

As Lynn Ruiz enters frame to HOWLS(OS) of inmate delight. She begins to shed clothes as we mercifully - -

FAVOR CREWE AND CARETAKER

CREWE (CONT'D)

Now I gotta relive this shit...?

In the BG, we see Lynn mounting Crewe. Tossing him around like a chew-toy. *The horror.*

BIG TONY

Say this, my boy's a team playa'...

CHEERS (and laughter) erupt as Crewe sinks into his seat...and we take notice of UNGER slumped low in the corner. Watching.

CREWE

Okay, okay...I gotta say, my new girlfriend did take care of me.

(Over laughter)

She said if you clowns made fun of me, to show 'em this. Skitch...

Skitchy produces a video of his own. Hands it to Big Tony who switches tapes...

ON TV: We see surveillance footage of Caretaker.

CARETAKER

What the...

ON TV: Ms. Tucker enters frame. And begins to apply lip-gloss to Caretaker...

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Turn this shit off.

ON TV: Ms. Tucker leads Caretaker out of frame...

CARETAKER (CONT'D)

Nothing happened...

(over laughter)

I was selling her finger nail-polish!

Off the rowdy laughter, we...

INT. WATCH-TOWER - - PRISON - - DAY

A claustrophobic bungalow, Captain Knauer confers with Unger. Ferigno stands in the BG. Arms crossed, eyes intense.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

...So those degenerates are watching our film, huh?

UNGER

(yup)

Got all of last season...

GUARD FERIGNO

We ain't been scouting them, that's some bullshit...

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Seems to me, we oughta' do something to make this right.

(then)

Maybe make sure Crewe doesn't play...

He shifts a purposeful gaze Unger's way:..

UNGER

I can't go near their field, sir...those, those bitches, they...they did things...

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Doesn't have to happen on their field. Be creative. Maybe, come game day, Crewe spends some time in the infirmary...who knows...

GUARD FERIGNO

You know what'd be good? - Grab a pipe and bust his arm.

Ferigno's voice raises 3 octaves on the word "arm".

Both Knauer and Unger squint at him: *What the fuck...?*

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Jesus Christ, man.

Ferigno, equally befuddled, clears his throat before we return to our regularly scheduled program...

UNGER

I got it...I know just what to do.

Unger grins, pleased to help out, before we...

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - DAWN

- - DEACON MOSS bursts through, high knees, chin to his chest sprinting right past THE CAMERA and into the end-zone...

Nate BLOWS the whistle, signifying the end of practice.

NATE

Alright, everybody bring it in...Come on you candy-asses, HUSTLE...

And the sun recedes into the Coca-Cola colored sky as Crewe and Nate stand in the center of a team huddle. CLAPPING.

The players look on, perplexed by this football tradition...

But the rhythm's catchy (and it's easy to dance to), and in no time, everyone's CLAPPING. An infectious beat.

Growing progressively louder, carrying over to - -

INT. CORRIDOR - - CELL BLOCK C - - CONTINUOUS

Empty save UNGER who slinks surreptitiously down the hall, head on a swivel. Up to no good.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

CLAPPING. Louder. Faster.

INT. CORRIDOR - - CELL BLOCK C - - CONTINUOUS

Unger slips into a corner cell, unnoticed.

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

Players really getting into it now, fired up...

INT. CELL - - BLOCK C - - CONTINUOUS

Unger grabs a boom-box off a shelf. Replaces one of the batteries as we realize we're in Crewe's home, and the - -

CLAPPING STOPS(OS) before we...

EXT. PRISONER'S PRACTICE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

The players are generally jubilant as they leave the field from their final practice...Caretaker in the lead...

Crewe ambles off last, shouting ahead:

CREWE

We meet tomorrow for the pre-game meal at noon...Don't be late...

Nate falls in beside him...

NATE

'Least we don't gotta worry 'bout
'em carousing the night before the
game...

CREWE

(sweeping glance)
Where'd Caretaker go...?

INT. CELL BLOCK C - - CONTINUOUS

Caretaker, a bounce to his step, enters his cell. Tearing open a brown-bag wrapper on the bed to reveal...

A FRAMED PHOTO

Of Paul Crewe. Dropping back to pass. #11. Florida State Seminole jersey on. Halcyon days.

BACK ON CARETAKER, a proud smile, he takes the gift into...

INT. CREWE'S CELL - - CELL BLOCK C - - CONTINUOUS

...Finding a nice spot for the photo on Crewe's barren shelf, he winces at the country MUSIC warbling from the boom-box...

CARETAKER

(sotto)
Cracker shit...

Finally, Caretaker clicks it OFF - as we shoot inside the stereo(think CSI) return to see - igniting a short-circuit that instantly engulfs him in flames.

UNGER steps briefly into frame from outside, kicking the cell-door shut. Effectively locking Caretaker in, as we - -

PICK-UP ON CREWE AND TEAMMATES

Responding to the inhuman SCREAMS, running in, forced to watch their friend BURN to death...

Off Crewe, the conflagration reflected in his eyes, we - -

FADE TO

EXT. CEMETERY - - ALLENVILLE FEDERAL PRISON - - MORNING

OVERHEAD SHOT: The team amassed around Caretaker's HEADSTONE.

ANOTHER ANGLE

collectively mournful poses: Heads bowed, hands crossed.

Except for Crewe - who glances defiantly back at the prison. Off his incendiary eyes, we...

INT. CAFETERIA - - LATER

SILENCE.

Still clad in funereal garb, prisoners loiter listlessly about. No one sure what to say or do.

So quiet and introspective that every eye takes note when CREWE rises and walks across the room. Voice soft, soulful:

CREWE

Listen up.

Everyone does. Scooting up straight. In need of leadership.

CREWE (CONT'D)

I'm not about to stand here and tell you what you should or shouldn't do 'cuz, well...hell if I know. But we all know what the Warden wants us to do. And, well, for what it's worth, I got a hunch what Caretaker would want us to do...

He plants a hand on a large CARDBOARD BOX. Announcing:

CREWE (CONT'D)

Caretaker's last gift to the team...

Without ceremony or sentiment, Crewe begins tearing the box open. With some difficulty.

Turley rises. CLICK. Flips open a butterfly SHIV. Which he proceeds to slice the box open with...

Crewe nods "thanks" - before reaching in and retrieving a black jersey with two words on the back: *"Mean Machine."*

CREWE (CONT'D)

Caretaker promised he'd get us some gear...

(low)

...I guess he found us a name, too.

And slowly a CHANT builds in the room, bouncing off the barren, brick walls...

"Mean Machine...Mean Machine...Mean Machine..."

Until all at once, the men raid the box like little kids on Christmas morning...grabbing desired numbers and helmets.

Crewe and Nate trade a meaningful look: *"No turning back."*

FADE TC

JIM ROME

Doing his radio-show before we PULL-BACK to see he sits in a booth inside - -

EXT. MILHOUSE STADIUM - - DAY - - WIDE SHOT

A sizable high-school stadium, the parking lot packed...

JIM ROME (V.O.)
We're here deep in the heart of
toothless country...

EXT. UPPER DECK - - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA RIPS AROUND THE RIM OF THE STADIUM

Fans devouring hot-dogs, vendors hawking beer and peanuts...

JIM ROME (V.O.)
...From a simple Texas high-school
stadium...

PAN ACROSS A RETINUE OF SHARP-SHOOTERS. Assembled at every angle. High-powered rifles at the ready.

JIM ROME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...That's been retrofitted for today's
event...

SEE barbed-wire, razor-sharp fence around the playing field.

JIM ROME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
When Travis said he wanted to drag
me here, I thought he was brain-dead
from talking to too many Raider fans.

INT. PRESS-BOX - - CONTINUOUS

JIM ROME
But this could shape up to be an
epic day. Hot-dog vendors and high-
powered rifles, I love the
combination. And apparently so does
ESPN 2...

Sending us to...

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

See a BRENT MUSBERGER-type who we'll refer to as - -

BRENT MUSBERGER
Week-in, week-out, we see sport
competition take many forms...but
today, we'll be bringing you a sports
competition like I've never seen...

EXT. VIP PARKING - - STADIUM - - DAY

The behemoth GUARDS exit a luxurious team bus...

BRENT MUSBERGER (V.O.)
The Semi-Pro Allenville Federal prison
guards will be taking on...

INT. VIP PARKING - - SOUTH SIDE - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

Cons file out of a rickety, rust-ridden bus...

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
...The very prisoners they guard.
And if that weren't interesting
enough, the prisoners are led by...

LOW CAMERA ANGLE - Crewe exits the bus, a glory shot; 10
feet tall and bullet-proof.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...Former NFL MVP, Paul Crewe.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER
The Prisoner's team - -

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
- - Mean Machine.

WIDEN to see...BIG BOB(the enormous Indian inmate Crewe
brawled with)seated beside Brent. In sport-coat and tie.

BRENT MUSBERGER
Thank you.
(then; resuming)
"The Mean Machine" has quite a
mountain to climb today...
(turns to face Bob)
And with a special game, folks, comes
a special broadcast, as I'm joined
in the booth by...
(off cue card)
..."Big Bob". An actual inmate at
Allenville, making his professional
broadcast debut.
(beat)
Say "hi" to the folks, Bob-o.

Big Bob simply stares back, unblinking.

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)
O-kay. While Bobby's resting his
vocal chords, we're gonna take a
quick commercial break...

Brent removes his headphones, off the air. Speaking to Bob as if addressing a Ritalin-deficient 6 year old...

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)
 This job, Bob? It's give and take.
 So when I call you in...g'ahead and
 talk to the folks out there. And
 try really hard not to interrupt,
 okay?

Big Bob slowly turns to face Brent. If looks could dismember

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)
 Unless you, uh, feel the need to...

INT. LOCKER-ROOM - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

FAVOR CREWE, hunkered on a stool in front of his locker. Psyching up for the battle ahead. Just like old times.

GUARD ROMANOWSKI (O.S.)
 LISTEN UP, shitheads...

Romanowski. In the doorway. Spurring Crewe to stuff the jersey back into his cubby...Directing his full-attention to

GUARD ROMANOWSKI (CONT'D)
 Warden Hazen on deck...

2.3 seconds later, WARDEN HAZEN steps into the room. Donning his best suit, his worst smile. An imperious presence.

WARDEN HAZEN
 Gentlemen. Thought I'd come by with
 a little public service announcement:
 The Texas Marshalls were kind enough
 to supply us with a dozen of their
 finest sharp-shooters. So for those
 of you considering going AWOL at any
 point before, during, or after today's
 contest...
 (matter of fact)
 ...You will be shot in the head.

He lets that news settle in around the room before his Texas-sized smile returns with a jolly:

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)
 Now let's have some fun out there...

He exits. Leaving the men to marinate in the silence. HOLD.

And Nate distributes black WRIST-BANDS to be worn in tribute

NATE
 For Caretaker.

Cons slip the bands over wrists, arms, ankles, as we PRE-LAP -

WARDEN HAZEN (O.S.)
We're just so honored to help you
and your fine organization...

EXT. SOUTH GATE - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

An unabashed photo-op, Hazen shakes hands with a "Scared Straight" official, a giant banner behind them...

WARDEN HAZEN
(all charm)
I'd like nothing better than for you
folks to put people like myself and
this prison out of business...

He turns purposefully to his left, offering a smile for the
Cameras recording this manufactured moment.

Molly watches, studying Hazen a bit more closely, as we...

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

Brent and his co-pilot peer down at the field...

BRENT MUSBERGER
...So we're just about underway here.
Any predictions, Bob?

BIG BOB
(long pause)
Mean Machine.

Brent arches a brow to his producers outside the glass,
struggling to fill the empty air...

BRENT MUSBERGER
Yes, um, Mean Machine, indeed...

Brent chuckles nervously. *What to say?* HOLD ON SILENCE.

CUT TO

TIGHT ON SEVERAL HEART-SHAPED ASSES

Shake-shake-shaking to the MUSIC. Cheerleaders. But don't
get too excited because they turn to face CAMERA...

...Revealing MS. TUCKER. The Transvestites have found a way
to help the team. In scantily-clad outfits, with shiny pom-
poms, they go through a routine. Led by - -

MS. TUCKER
*"We're the Mean Machine, we're glad
to know ya'/We're gonna kick your
ass and then we'll blow ya'..."*

"THE BAND" - comprised of a bass-drum and tuba player - strike up a horrendous chord, as - -

THE CONS

Burst from the tunnel. Led by Paul Crewe...blazing right past the Guards' sidelines...

THE CROWD BOOS. Already picking favorites...

Crewe stops. Notices Nate behind him. Clad in a uniform.

CREWE

What the hell you doin'?

NATE

You think I came all this way to watch? I wanna hit these sumbitches.

CREWE

Then you better hope we get a big lead, Bubba.

SFX: The SHRIEK of the opening whistle."

CUT TO:

A FOOTBALL

As it's booted through the air...landing in the arms of SEHORN who violently collides with a wall of cons before he's brought down at the 30 yard line...

EXT. ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Knauer steps under center for the opening play of the game...

The tight-end, PERRY, is spread right wide...Martinez stepping outside with him...man-to-man.

CREWE. Watches from the sidelines, Nate beside him...

CREWE

What the hell's Martinez doing?

ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

Martinez steps away from Shockey. Clearly blitzing, he's practically in the Guard's back-field.

Knauer audibles out, and - -

Hike. Martinez, a bull to a matador, blasts past the linemen, blood-lust in his eyes, bee-lining for Knauer...

...Who looks dead-to-rights before he drills a pass to a wide-ass open Shockey, and - -

- - Gets positively SMASHED by Martinez - the impact of the hit muted by Shockey's trot into the end-zone. Touchdown.

7-0. Already.

The Guards. Celebrate.

The Cons. Grumble.

Sprawled beside Knauer, Martinez pokes fingers through the quarterback's face-mask. Unseen by the refs.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
Wow, folks, one play in and the Guards
are on the board already. I gotta
tell ya', that Martinez seemed...

IN THE BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)
...More interested in hitting the
quarterback than covering his man.

Big Bob giggles like a schoolgirl when he says:

BIG BOB
He hit 'em good...

BRENT MUSBERGER
Nice to see you smiling, Bob...

BIG BOB
Thanks, Brent...

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe. Under center. Barking signals.

Turley. Behind him. Hearing nothing but the voice in his head telling him to get Sehorn (the strong safety).

Hike. Crewe drops back to pass...only Turley abdicates his position, missing out towards Sehorn - who never sees him coming, until - uh-oh. It's too late.

Turley destroys Sehorn, a hit Ray Lewis would envy.

RACK FOCUS back to Crewe. Under siege. Trying to avoid the rush, stepping up into the pocket before -

- - A demonic defensive-end, JOE RICE, tomahawks the ball from Crewe's grip...the defense scavenging the grass...

Guards' ball.

And Crewe staggers to a stand, ambling over to a grinning Turley - who only now disengages from the woozy Sehorn...

CREWE

Okay, you got him...Now protect me.

Turley frowns. Silently vows to do better.

EXT. ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Knauer, still dazed from the Martinez hit, under center. On the cons' 22 yard line.

Hike. Lynch covers a wide-receiver down field - until he's distracting by the crossing tight-end, Shockey(his nemesis)

...Lynch leaves his man, launches himself at Shockey, driving his knee into the tight-end's right leg, as he lets his man streak past...

And we HEAR the sound of breaking bones - soon deafened by the sounds of celebration. In the end-zone. Touchdown.

14-0.

Just. Like. That.

EXT. IN THE STANDS - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

Hazen explodes onto his feet with fist-pumping fury, elated.

BACK ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

Shockey. Sprawled on the grass, writhing. His leg shattered.

Two medics hustle out with a stretcher, wheeling him off as Ferigno trollops alongside, near tears:

GUARD FERIGNO

Are you okay? Oh, God...please...

GUARD SHOCKEY

Jesus...get the hell 'way from me,
you freak...just get back there and
win the goddamn game.

He swats the emotionally wounded Ferigno away, as we...

EXT. ON THE SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe holds a team meeting before kick return. Fired-up:

CREWE

Listen up: Get your heads outta'
your asses.

(grabs Lynch's face
mask)

You want revenge? Get it on the
scoreboard. Beat 'em out there...

(MORE)

CREWE (CONT'D)
 (points to scoreboard)
 ...And up there. Play hard and play
 SMART. A broken leg is gonna heal, a
 loss to the Mean Machine lasts
forever.

He studies their faces, his intensity infectious.

TURLEY
 (head bowed)
 Sorry, guys...

LYNCH
 Yeah, me, too...

CREWE
 Come on now. HANDS IN.

Dozens of paws in the center of this impromptu team huddle.

CREWE (CONT'D)
 Mean machine...on 3. 1-2-3 - -

TEAM
 - - MEAN MACHINE!

They break in disjointed fashion, before we - -

CUT TO:

A HIGH KICK-OFF

Landing right in Megget's bread-basket...breaking along the
 right side-line with some great blocks from Big Tony and Fat
 Eddy, finally brought down across the 50 yard line.

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe takes a knee in the center of the huddle. Staring
 right at Deacon Moss when he says:

CREWE
 Left Flex 89 Zoom Y Post. Get
 open...ball'll be there.
 (looks at Turley)
 I'll have plenty of time, right?

Turley grunts affirmation as they BREAK from another
 uncoordinated huddle...

...Hustling to the line...Crewe surveying the defense...seeing
 single-coverage on Moss. Perfect.

Hike. And for the first time, everyone does what they should:
 The linemen block, Turley picks up the blitzing Sehorn -
 knocking him on his back as Crewe launches a gorgeous BOMB...

...Tracking the ball through the air...

...And Moss clearly has his man beat - until the defensive-back snags his jersey. And yanks it violently down. Holding Moss back...

The ball sails just in front of Moss - who'd catch it if he had use of his limbs. Straight-up molested.

Moss spins to the referee - who had a perfect angle on it. The ref doesn't so much as flinch. No penalty(!).

In the stands, Hazen offers the ghost of a grin...

DEACON MOSS

You blind bitch, I went to jail for less than that.

Now the ref throws his flag...

DEACON MOSS (CONT'D)

There you go...

But not for pass interference...

REFEREE

(signaling)

Unsportsmanlike conduct.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)

What a turn of events...

IN THE BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)

...From a sure touchdown to second down and a country mile. Wow.

IN THE HUDDLE - - MOMENTS LATER

CREWE

Alright, let's keep our composure.
Right Sweep 32 Dash.

At the line, Crewe spins, pitching back to Megget - who turns up-field - before Sehorn grabs his face-mask...nearly rips his head off as he drags him down. No call.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Hey, what the hell we gotta do, ref?

NATE

Guy committed manslaughter out there.

The head ref stares back, an imperceptible smile.

Now Crewe's pissed. BACK IN THE HUDDLE:

DEACON MOSS
Can't win with this crooked-ass
bullshit...

CREWE
I got an idea...Listen up - -

He begins to share his plan, as we...

AT THE LINE - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe drops back to pass as MOSS slants across the middle,
stopping directly behind the REF.

Crewe. Missiles a pass. Into the ref's testicles. Ouch.

The ref crumbles to his knees, eyes bulging, crotch burning.
Hits the grass like a wet tea-bag.

INT. PRESS-BOX - - CONTINUOUS

NFL writers react with an empathetic wince...

The crowd collectively *OOOHS*, as we AUDIO MATCH CUT TO - -

BACK IN THE HUDDLE - - MOMENTS LATER

Over childish LAUGHTER - -

CREWE
Same play.

At the line: Hike. Indeed, it's deja-vu all over again...the
already wounded ref taking another one. In the nuts.

EXT. SIDELINES - - SECURED PRESS AREA - - CONTINUOUS

Jim Rome's face contorts, summarizing the situation with:

JIM ROME
Ouch.

BACK ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

The ref writhes in the grass, BRAYING like a baby sheep.
Crewe crouches down, an altruistic hand on the ref's shoulder

CREWE
(hushed; faux sweet)
How 'bout you start calling a fair
game...? How's that sound?

REFEREE
(a gasp)
Sounds good...

EXT. SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe emboldens the "D" before they trot back out...

CREWE

Let's hold 'em fellas, come on now...

Nate looks over at Crewe with a knowing grin, as we CUE
MUSIC (think P.O.D's "Alive"), and - -

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS (MUSIC MONTAGE)

- Knauer runs a play-action pass, sprinting out before he runs into a wall - no, not a wall. A MAN. SAPP.

- Megget calls fair-catch on a punt-return. Gets smashed by a several Guards. More important: Gets a penalty-flag. Megget gets up grinning.

- On the sidelines: Nate says something to Big Tony and Sapp. Sends them onto the field...

- Big Tony executes the Nate maneuver. Breaks a guard's shoulder. / Sapp cracks a lineman on the chin with a pair of brass-knuckles, drops them in his pants. Concussion city.

SPLIT-SCREEN: Two stretchers brought onto the field.

- CU ON SCOREBOARD: End of 1st QTR. Guards 14 Cons 00.

- Knauer tosses a screen-pass - before Martinez drills the tailback - the ball popping up in the air and into Lynch's hands. Mean Machine ball.

- Megget runs for a 12 yard gain, bowling over backers.

- Crewe fires a bullet to Moss...15 yards on the play.

- Crewe drops back to pass, ducking under the blitzing Drake before he scrambles like John Elway, and we - -

PICK-UP SCENE - - STOP MUSIC:

EXT. FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

Crewe sets up in the pocket, launching a perfect 35 yard bomb to Moss in the deep right corner...touchdown.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BIG BOB

SHIT YEAH!

BRENT MUSBERGER

That we don't say, Bob...

BACK ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

In the end-zone: Moss and his posse do an elaborate dance routine emulating a prison-break...

Crewe joins them with twice the enthusiasm(half the rhythm). Ms. Tucker struts over. Shows Crewe how it's done.

IN THE BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER (CONT'D)
14-7 Guards...A return to form for
Paul Crewe, flashing that familiar
smile on the sidelines...

EXT. SIDELINES - - CONTINUOUS

The demonic D takes the field after the kick-off...

In the defensive huddle: Martinez tells the team:

MARTINEZ
(with lisp)
Keep the center off me. They run
that same play, I'm gonna destroy
that racist son of a bitch...

Knauer. Hands off to BLIER on a dive-play right up the middle Sapp takes several linemen out...Blier running into the hole - that Martinez quickly fills. Nearly cutting Blier in two with a devastating clothes-lines tackle/UFC move.

Sapp and comrades form a semicircle around Blier. Then:

SAPP
I think you broke his friggin' neck.

ON THE SIDELINES - - CONTINUOUS

Nate stands with Moss, Crewe and Megget...

NATE
I think he broke his friggin' neck...

IN THE BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER
(mesmerized)
He broke his friggin' neck.

BIG BOE
Watch the language, Brent.

BRENT MUSBERGER
(catching himself;
back to form)
You're right, Bob.

From the vaunted view of the booth, we see Blier on the stretcher, his hands and feet moving.

No broken neck, but a battery of medical ailments...

Moss and Megget venture onto the field for a closer look...

MARTINEZ
(bumps knuckles with
the brothers)
'Was for my boys...

Megget hollers to Blier as he's carted away...

MEGGET
I'll send you some books in the
hospital...

TIME CUT TO:

IN THE HUDDLE - - ON CREWE

CREWE
These bastards have been over-pursuing
all day. Remember that play we
practiced in the mud...?

MOMENTS LATER...Time running down on the first-half clock,
Crewe and the offense break huddle. Hike.

Crewe tosses a sweep to Megget - who hands off to Moss - who
tosses back to Crewe...a funky trick play.

Crewe rifles a frozen rope to a streaking Megget - touchdown

The Cons erupt on the sidelines, jubilant, as we - -

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON TELEVISION image of Crewe celebrating before we
WIDEN to see LYNN RUIZ, feet propped on the desk, watching.

LYNN
Thas' my boy...

IN THE STANDS - - CONTINUOUS

ESPN cameras lock on Hazen(projected on the teleprompter),
the Warden given no choice but to grin. And bear it.

WARDEN HAZEN
(somebody shoot me)
Wonderful...wonderful...

CU ON SCOREBOARD: Guards 14 Cons 14 00:00. Half-time.

INT. HOME LOCKER-ROOM - - MOMENTS LATER

The lethargic GUARDS file in, heads bowed, MURMURING to each other in angry dissension. In striking contrast to - -

INT. TUNNEL - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

- The HOWLING Cons. Slapping palms. Bumping chests. Pumped CREWE

Jogs in last, most excited of all. Until he spots...HAZEN.

EXT. STANDS - - CONTINUOUS

Molly slaps OFF her cell. Looks around for the Warden. She asks a nearby guard:

MOLLY

Where'd he go? - ESPN wants to know
if they can get him for a quick half-
time interview...

INT. SHOWERS - - STADIUM - - MOMENTS LATER

SILENCE periodically punctured by the *drip-drip* of an unseen faucet...a sound almost as unnerving as the sight of HAZEN.

WARDEN HAZEN

What in the hell're you doing out
there?

He asks this of the just entered - -

CREWE

Playing football...

WARDEN HAZEN

I never said anything about winning.

CREWE

We're not winning.

(big smile)

Not yet, at least.

Hazen breaches the gap between them, fists balled tight.

WARDEN HAZEN

You got yourself in quite a
predicament, Crewe...

His confidence unsettles Crewe. Renders him silent.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

See, its just been brought to my
attention that Unger's in custody
for the murder of Caretaker.

CREWE
(overlapping)
Good.

WARDEN HAZEN
Yes, good. Only he claims to have
had an accomplice. Claims that you
knew about it. Hell, he even says
that you sent Caretaker to your cell.
Know what that makes you?
(before Crewe can
answer)

An accessory. Captain Knauer says
he saw you planning it with Unger.

CREWE
That won't stand up in court.

WARDEN HAZEN
It won't have to. In here? I'm
judge, I'm jury. And in your case...?

INT. TUNNEL - - STADIUM - - SAME TIME

Molly moves down the corridor, searching for Hazen, hearing -

WARDEN HAZEN (O.S.)
...I'm executioner.

Molly stops outside - -

INT. SHOWERS - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

WARDEN HAZEN
Sure I know I can't literally execute
you. But I can keep you here for
the next 20 years.

Crewe bows his head, options fading fast. Finally:

CREWE
What d'you want...?

The acute eye will notice a curious SHADOW stretching across
the tile-floor. Molly(OS) listening in.

WARDEN HAZEN
I want you to lose. The bigger the
margin, the better.

Crewe glares back, eyes like embers. Finally:

CREWE
(teeth grit)
I can't.

Hazen grins. Knows he's got him by the balls.

WARDEN HAZEN

'Course you can. After all, you've had plenty of practice...

Crewe burns inside, his thoughts instantly turning to...

CREWE

But the men. It's bigger for them than it is for you...

WARDEN HAZEN

Oh, that's where you're wrong. You know who it's biggest for? You.

(off Crewe's silence;
a shrug)

O-kay...

(walking away)

...Have it your way. You'll spend the rest of your shitty life in here.

The shadow's gone, frightened off by Hazen's footsteps...

CREWE

Alright.

(Hazen stops)

I'll do it.

(Hazen turns, smiles)

But you gotta promise not to run up the score and embarrass us after I give you your lead.

WARDEN HAZEN

Heavens, no. That would be bad form.

CREWE

And I don't want my men hurt. You get the lead, you coast...

Hazen wipes at a faux tear; amused by Crewe's compassion.

WARDEN HAZEN

Fine. After I get my 2 touchdown lead.

And he turns to go, a cherubic smile on his face, before - -

CREWE

I messed up. A lot in life.

Words so soulful that Hazen stops. Keeps his back to Crewe.

CREWE (CONT'D)

But I only have one regret: That you're not out there with us...to get what's coming to you.

Warden gulps. Shakes it off. Then:

WARDEN HAZEN

The only thing coming to me is
victory, Crewe. And I have you to
thank for that.

Crewe eyes the wall. Considers punching it. HOLD.

INT. TUNNEL - - STADIUM - - CONTINUOUS

Nothing heard but the rhapsodic CLICK-CLACK of cleats on
asphalt as the guards trot past, Knauer stopping for - -

WARDEN HAZEN (O.S.)

Captain...a word, please.

Hazen steps from the shadows, the prince of fucking darkness.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Don't worry, Warden, we'll take care
'a business.

WARDEN HAZEN

I already have.

(off Knauer: "Huh?")

I've guaranteed us a win.

...A proposition that doesn't sit well with the competitive -

CAPTAIN KNAUER

We can win this on our own - -

WARDEN HAZEN

A man in my position doesn't leave
things to chance, Captain.

Brow beaten, Knauer nods acquiescence...before he can trot
back onto the field like the good soldier he is - -

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

Here's how it'll go: After you've
got a comfortable 2 touchdown lead?
Do not let up. Inflict as much pain
as humanly possible. I want these
felons to understand who owns them.
We're gonna send a message, Captain
Knauer. Are we clear?

CAPTAIN KNAUER

(a beat)

Yessir.

SFX: The ebullient ROAR of the crowd.

CUT TO

PAUL CREWE - - TRACKING SHOT

Emerging from the tunnel, darkness ceding to light, fans CHEERING, won over by his gritty brand of play.

Crewe straps his helmet on, tugs it tight. Averts his eyes. Feigns deaf. Knowing full well...they wont be cheering long.

IN THE STANDS - - CONTINUOUS

Hazen settles in beside Molly - who can barely summon the strength necessary for a surface smile.

WARDEN HAZEN

Lookin' forward to this...

He claps with newfound confidence, as we...

ON THE SIDELINES - - CONTINUOUS

The cheerleaders perform an impressive (and disturbing) routine, replete with hip thrusts and high-kicks.

NATE rallies the troops, stalking the sidelines like a madman.

NATE

Come on now, fellas, we got the momentum, don't let up...

Crewe sits on the bench, away from the team; preparing himself for the unseemly task ahead.

SFX: The BLEEP of the second-half whistle.

CUT TO:

A HIGH-ARCHING KICK

The ball tumbling into the arms of Megget - who bursts through defenders as if they were standing still, finally brought down at the Guards' 39 yard line.

CREWE

Trots onto the field...lining up on the ball...no-huddle.

Dropping back to pass...Moss wide open...Crewe skips it at his feet. Incomplete pass.

CREWE POV - - MOMENTS LATER

Scanning the defense...the crowd...his teammates...Hike.

STILL POV

We drop back to pass...lofting a pass that hangs for an eternity - before Sehorn steps in, and - - interception.

And Crewe's the only one between Sehorn and the end-zone, stumbling over phantom grass, watching as Sehorn rumbles in for an uncontested - -

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER

Touchdown!

(to Big Bob)

Wow. The first mistake Crewe's made all day...

FADE TO - Extra-point attempt...good.

CU ON SCOREBOARD: *Guards 21 Cons 14 3rd Qtr*

NATE (O.S.)

Short memory, kid...come on now, shake it off...

THE SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

DEACON MOSS

Come on, playa'. We'll get this shit back...

Nate and teammates offer Crewe words of support and confidence. Only makes it hurt worse.

IN THE STANDS - - CONTINUOUS

Molly shifts in her seat, watching as Hazen flags a vendor.

WARDEN HAZEN

Some popcorn, Ms. Harmon?

MOLLY

No, I'm having stomach problems...

He's too busy scarfing buttered popcorn to care...

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe. Drops back to pass. Megget bursts open in the flat, wide-ass open...but Crewe holds onto the ball...

NATE

HE'S OPEN!

Crewe pumps a few times, then goes down just before the defense can get to him. A 15 yard loss on the play.

Nate kicks a water-bottle high into the air, flustered. A few Cons grumble to one another.

NEXT PLAY: Crewe pitches back to Megget - only the toss is behind him...Megget bobbles it...fumbles it...scooped up by

GUARD FERIGNO

And returned for a - you guessed it - touchdown!

HAZEN springs up like an uncoiled jack-in-the-box, belatedly realizing that...Molly's gone.

He shrugs imperceptibly. Eats fervently.

CREWE. Limpes off the field to an avalanche of BOOS, players eyeing him with increasing apprehension.

Nate barrels over to Crewe as he sits on the bench.

NATE (CONT'D)

Just what the hell are you doing out there?

CREWE

I'm done.

The Cons eye Crewe suspiciously, whispers turning to words.

CREWE POV: We drape a towel over our head, ushering in a world of DARKNESS - before CHEERS(os)bleed through...

No choice but to remove the towel(STILL POV)and see - -

KICK-OFF RETURN: A low squib kick as we FAVOR BIG TONY - who gets positively mauled by 3 guardsmen.

The play dead, Big Tony gets up - before Romanowski drills him in the back. Leaves him battered.

And Big Tony remains on the field. Until 2 teammates help him to his feet, carting him off...

Angry, Crewe looks into the stands for Hazen. *This wasn't part of the deal.*

And Megget ambles over to Crewe, disgusted:

MEGGET

I believed in your bullshit.

Crewe averts his eyes, as if staring into the sun.

MEGGET (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'd have a hard time looking at me, too...

Megget walks off...

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

BRUCIE

In the huddle. Taking over for Crewe. Addressing the team:

BRUCIE
 Alright, Crewe's playing like shit,
 that's his problem. I'm gonna bring
 us back. We're gonna win this shit
 with or without his ass. Right 32
 Flex Dive Motion. On three, on three.
 BREAK!

As they move from the huddle, Brucie drops to the grass.
 Pumps out five push-ups. Hustling up to the line.

BRUCIE (CONT'D)
 READY SET...BLUE 81! BLUE 81! Hike-
 Hike-HIKE.

He fumbles the snap. GUARDS RECOVER.

Brucie. On the ground.

BRUCIE (CONT'D)
 My bad.

Cons recede from the field, dejected.

ON THE SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

Deacon Moss makes his way over to Crewe...

DEACON MOSS
 If this is your dedication to
 Caretaker...don't dedicate shit to
 me. Punk-bitch'.

Again Crewe can't meet his white-hot gaze.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
 The guards in command here as we
 close on the fourth quarter...

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Hike. Knauer hands off to the full-back up the middle - but
 wait. He stops. Pitches back to Knauer. A FLEA-FLICKER.

And Knauer flings a bomb to a wide-out for a - -

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Touchdown!

And Crewe's stunned, glimpsing into the stands - where Hazen
 steadfastly avoids his gaze.

CU ON SCOREBOARD: Guards 35 Cons 14

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
And that's concludes the 3rd quarter.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
And how quickly things have gone
awry here for Crewe and his team...

IN THE BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

Big Bob no choice but to conclude...

BIG BOB
Can't trust the white man.

EXT. ON THE SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

The Cons. In disarray. A mob. Before the riot. Casting a collectively baleful gaze at Crewe - who looks at...

BIG TONY(POV). On a stretcher. Tended to by medics.

BACK ON CREWE, the incredible shrinking man...

ON THE FIELD: Defense comes on a JAIL-BREAK BLITZ...Brucie holding on to the ball - -

NATE
THROW IT!

- - Too late. Brucie's crushed by an avalanche of Guards.

NATE (CONT'D)
(to Crewe)
How d'you like that? 21 point lead,
the bastards are blitzing.

Crewe keeps his head bowed. Until he spots a familiar face holding the down marker. A weather beaten face.

And Crewe rises. And ambles over to...SKITCHY RIVERS.

CREWE
Can I ask you something? When you
hit the Warden? - Was it worth it?

Rivers hesitates nary a second. With a toothless grin:

SKITCHY RIVERS
Every. Fucking. Second.

Crewe nods. Grins. Just what he thought.

And with that, he limp/jogs back onto the field.

HAZEN. Watches with furrowed brows. *What the...?*

CREWE. Enters the huddle to a confluence of CHATTER. All of it directed at him. None of it complementary. And he endures it all, until - -

CREWE
Alright, ENOUGH.

And they fall silent at the first sign of fire in this man.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Red Right 89 Double tight. On one,
one, BREAK -

Another uncoordinated break leads us to the line...Crewe calling "Hike"...dropping back - But no one blocks as - -

- - Crewe gets about 2 steps before Romanowski devours him.
Crewe staggers up, limping back into the huddle.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Okay. We got that out of the way.

He calls another play, before we go back to - -

THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe under center, calling "Hike" - JAIL-BREAK BLITZ...the line clearly letting the defensive linemen through as...

...Crewe miraculously avoids the rush...one man against 11, he manages to actually gain a few yards.

The cons take note of his effort.

CREWE (CONT'D)
(to ref)
Time out.

And Crewe takes a knee inside the huddle, catching his breath.

CREWE (CONT'D)
Okay.
(a deep breath)
I know everyone knows this already,
but I never said it out loud. Not
yet.
(an emotional beat)
I threw that game. I did it.

Only angry eyes, furrowed brows, stare back...

CREWE (CONT'D)
And not a day goes by that it doesn't
eat at me. I found myself in a bad
way with some worse people.
(MORE)

CREWE (CONT'D)

Lost on everything you can imagine.
But I never messed with football
until that game. My game. After? -
I wish they killed me instead...

(eyes stare coldly
back)

The warden says he'll pin Caretaker's
murder on me; told me I'd do 20 years
if I didn't throw this game...

(sweeping glance)

Well...looks like I'm gonna get to
know you fellas a lot better..

A beat. And slowly hands start to assemble in the center of
the huddle. As sentimental as cons can get. Then:

CREWE (CONT'D)

Right Double Tight XY Cross. On
two, on two.

And for the first time, folks, they break huddle in unison.

AT THE LINE. A new intensity. Linemen bearing down.
Receivers itchy for the rock. Eyes unblinking. SILENCE.

Until:

Hike. Perfectly choreographed, everyone launches at once.
FAST. Crewe tossing a post corner pass for a 20 yard gain.

Players hustle to the ball, gaining momentum, as we - -

CUT TO

SERIES OF SHOTS (THE DRIVE):

- Megget up the middle, 5 yard gain.
- Crewe runs a draw. 4 yard gain.
- Quarterback sneak. 3 and 1. No gain.
- In the huddle: Crewe ganders at his teammates...

CREWE

Okay, fellas we need this. 'Little
playground action here...

- Crewe runs another quarterback sneak - only this is no
ordinary QB sneak, Crewe has his back to the line - before
he covertly hands off to Megget...

...Who sneaks around the pileup, blurring along the sideline
before he's knocked out at the 2 yard line...

MOMENTS LATER...

Crewe. In the huddle.

CREWE (CONT'D)
You guys ready for the bulldozer?

TEAM
YEAH!

Break.

MOMENTS LATER...

Crew takes the snap, running a trap to TURLEY - who bulldozes down the line, carrying 4 tacklers on his back...into the end-zone - - TOUCHDOWN.

CREWE

Jogs into the end-zone to celebrate with his teammates. Pointing to a certain someone in the stands...

WARDEN HAZEN

Cameras fixed on him, is forced to wave "cheerfully" back.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
And the cons get back in the game...Guards up, 35 to 21.

FADE TO(LONG-SHOT)- - Kick-off return...The Guards get smashed at the 29 as Knauer takes the field.

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Knauer steps to the line - hike - spinning to hand-off - before he trips due to a hand on his ankle, tearing him down like an oak tree - Martinez.

And Knauer fumbles the ball...dozens of bodies crashing in frenzied pursuit of the pigskin.

A straight-up scrum.

Refs sort through the tangle of limbs, everyone waiting as...

...Guards and Cons are yanked from the pile, one by one, until only one man remains...Lynch.

The Cons recover at their own 28 yard line.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER
Cons recover!

Brent hugs Big Bob - who pats him on the back.

LONG-SHOT (BROADCAST BOOTH POV) Crewe and the offense trot onto the field, before we...

IN THE HUDDLE - - MOMENTS LATER

CREWE

This next little ditty comes courtesy
of my playing days in Miami, fellas...

The offense listens intently, as we...

ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

Hike. Crewe drops back...fires a bul'let to Megget - who just before he's tackled to the ground...

...Pitches out to MOSS. The classic HOOK-AND-LADDER play.

Moss turns on the after-burners, blazing in for a - -

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)

TOUCHDOWN!

IN THE STANDS - - CONTINUOUS

Hazen simmers as Molly applauds.

WARDEN HAZEN

I see you've picked sides...

MOLLY

I'm just rooting for a good game.

(pointed)

Isn't that what you wanted?

THE CONS

Go berserk on the sidelines, believing the impossible. Their greatest enemy; THE CLOCK: 2:21 left. Guards 35 Cons 28

ON THE SIDELINES - - CONTINUOUS

Nate instructs the kick-off team:

NATE

This next play ain't about technique.
S'about attitude. So we better have
the edge. Y'all ready?

KICK-OFF TEAM

YEAH!

IN THE BROADCAST BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER

With 2:21 left, it appears the Cons
are gonna attempt an onside kick...

BIG BOB

A wise choice, Brent. If they kick deep here, with their limited time-outs, the Cons would get the ball back with less than 30 seconds on the clock - and that's, of course, assuming they hold the guards to 3 and out...

BRENT MUSBERGER

(taken aback)

Very good, Bob.

BIG BOB

(a pro)

Thanks, Brent.

BACK ON THE FIELD - - MOMENTS LATER

The ball booted high in the air, just enough time for Turley, Martinez and Lynch to absolutely pulverize the poor recipient

Turley falling on the ball. Recovered at the Con 35.

ON THE SIDELINES - - CREWE

Slides into his helmet, turning to Nate with:

CREWE

How many time-outs left?

Nate holds up one finger.

VOICE (O.S.)

Coach...

FAT EDDY

On the bench, supine. Leg lifted in the air. Vaulting off the bench - before his gelatinous knees give way.

FAT EDDY

I'm okay...I'm okay...

He tries to stand again...hits the deck. Knees shot to shit.

CREWE

I need a tackle!

Crewe turns around. Sees Nate. Grinning.

VAUNTED VIEW - - CONTINUOUS

The entire offense, Nate included, take the field. As one.

WARDEN HAZEN

Pushes past spectators, trampling over a little boy in his fervor...stomping onto the Guards' sideline, oblivious to the cameras that intermittently track him...Grabbing Knauer -

WARDEN HAZEN

Do something.

CAPTAIN KNAUER

Looks like we might have a game after all, huh...

ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

Crewe checks the defense, sends Moss in motion - hike.

FAVOR NATE who delivers a nasty chop-block, taking out 2 linemen as Crewe drills a pass to Megget for a 10 yrd gain.

The clock ticks down: 39... 38... 37...

Nate calls "time-out".

AT THE LINE - - MOMENTS LATER

Crewe takes the snap, sprinting right, throwing on the run to Moss - who steps out at the 37...

28 seconds on the clock.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - - CONTINUOUS

Lynn Ruiz. Watching on TV.

LYNN

There's the Paul Crewe I fell in love with...

BACK ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

No huddle, the Cons line up on the ball, the guards scrambling in confused fashion, unprepared for - hike.

Crewe drops back...slipping free of tacklers...firing a frozen rope to Megget - who's tackled at the 8. In bounds.

The clock, alas, ticks away. 17... 16... 15... 14...

Crewe, all field general now, gets his exhausted team to the line in order to SPIKE the ball. Stopping the clock at "8."

IN THE HUDDLE - - MOMENTS LATER

CREWE

...This is it, all or nothing. On two, on two...

Except instead of shouting "break", they hoot "Mean Machine".

Crewe takes the snap, handing off to Megget - who hands it to Moss on the REVERSE...

CREWE AND NATE

Lead the charge, side-by-side, a pair of battering rams...chaperoning Moss...barreling over backers on their way into...THE END-ZONE.

Touchdown.

FANS GO BERSERK, their love affair with Crewe fully realized.

BRENT MUSBERGER (O.S.)
What an amazing comeback, folks...the
cons a mere extra-point away from
overtime...

CU ON THE SCOREBOARD: *Guards* 35 *Cons* 34

ON THE SIDELINES - - MOMENTS LATER

The biggest huddle you've ever seen. Looks more like a convention. One man in the middle of it all...

CREWE
Team vote: We go for the tie or the
win?

Teammates trade eyes, everyone afraid to speak. HOLD. Then:

MEGGET
Hell, what would Caretaker do...?

Crewe meets somber eyes with Nate. HOLD.

MOMENTS LATER...

The field-goal unit and Crewe trot out for the extra-point.

CREWE

Takes a knee, in preparation for the snap. Studying the defense(POV). Snarling. Salivating. Sadistic.

Hike. Crewe receives the snap, placing the ball down, before -
PICKING IT UP AGAIN. Pulling a Charlie Brown.

Only now Crewe finds himself with the ball. And without blockers. Dead to rights.

But instinct kicks in, a ferocious and determined look on Crewe's face as he eludes a swarm of defenders...

Time interminable, he shakes free of a tackle...gets a gnarly block from Turley...sprints down the left-hash - 3 backs gaining on him with advantageous angles...

Before Crewe reverses field, a Sportscenter worthy juke that leaves defenders in the dust...

One man to beat. Standing at the end-line. ROMANOWSKI.

Crewe, ceding 100 pounds, goes right at him - barreling through the behemoth - A MOMENTOUS COLLISION...

...That has both men timbering to the grass like felled oak trees. Landing in...THE END-ZONE.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - - CONTINUOUS

BRENT MUSBERGER
Capping an amazing comeback! How
'bout that Bob? - -

But Big Bob's no longer there...

ON THE FIELD - - CONTINUOUS

ON CREWE. On his back. Motionless. Blinking himself awake, serenaded by the sound of FANS CHEERING(OS)...

...Before he's hoisted onto his feet by Megget and Moss...the rest of the team gathers in celebration before - -

BIG BOB

Rushes Crewe - this time not to beat Crewe down, but to PICK HIM UP...Lifting him high in the air. On his broad shoulders...The king of the cons...

CAPTAIN KNAUER enters frame. A BEAT.

CAPTAIN KNAUER
Good game, Crewe. You kicked our
ass.

CREWE
Thanks... Now you guys are ready for
the season.

A moment of mutual respect until Crewe focuses on something across the field(OS)...

And begins to tread over the grass.

WARDEN HAZEN (O.S.)
Where the hell's he going?

Hazen. Turns to Molly.

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)
That's not the way to the Cons locker-
room...

(MORE)

WARDEN HAZEN (CONT'D)

(then)
He's escaping...

MOLLY

No, he's not...

Crewe continues walking towards the exit. *Where is he going?*

Hazen motions to the snipers high above. Points to Crewe.

WARDEN HAZEN

He's escaping...SHOOT HIM!

MOLLY

No!

WARDEN HAZEN

(points at Crewe)
SHOOT HIM! SHOOT THAT MAN!

MOLLY

Noooooo!

A SNIPER

Peers down, Hazen's urgent demands ringing in his ear...

SNIPER POV: Crewe approaches the exit. In the cross-hairs.

CLOSE ON TRIGGER-FINGER: Inching closer...and closer...

SNIPER POV: Crewe stops. And picks up...a football.
Positioned not far from the exit.

THE SNIPER'S FINGER eases off the trigger...

And Hazen turns to see the ESPN camera crew beside him.
Capturing the whole thing.

The real Hazen. Live and in color.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

(to Hazen, you idiot)
It's the game ball.

Does she have the courage...? YES.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

And don't think I didn't overhear
your little half-time extortion deal.

WARDEN HAZEN

I haven't the slightest idea what
you're talking about...

MOLLY

Well, here's a deal for you: Crewe does his minimum sentence and I let you keep your job and your shitty-ass football team. And by the way? I quit.

With that, she swaggers off, passing Crewe with a simple:

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Great comeback.

CREWE

Thanks.

And he saunters towards Hazen. Stops. Stares. Grins.

A LOADED BEAT

Crewe stuffs the game-ball into the Warden's burgeoning belly.

CREWE (CONT'D)

Stick this in your trophy case.

And Crewe strolls over to Nate - who drapes a paternal arm around Crewe's neck...

...The two melding in with the rest of the team as they tread from the field as one, and we FREEZE-FRAME, and slowly...

FADE OUT: