

TRUE COLORS

by

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FIRST DRAFT

October 23, 1987

PROLOGUE

Football cleats are churning up chunks of muddy turf. A high school football player is straining, looking over his shoulder, then stretching, diving, reaching to catch the football which barely eludes his fingertips. He crashes to the ground. Frustration. Despair.

TITLE: NOVEMBER 1955

FADE IN:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

This is without a doubt the crappiest looking high school football field ever. It is empty and sad, but it is everything.

DINO (V.O.)

If this isn't the worst fucking high school you've ever seen, I don't know what is. Valley champions practically and look at it for chrissake. Look at that fuckin' football field. Shit, man. I was in Ligonier where my cousin lives one time and -- beautiful, fuckin' beautiful. But this place... What do you want me to say? School won't spend a dime to fix up the field. Coach thinks it's hard-ass to leave a game with your face bleeding. Typical... all I can say is that's fuckin' typical... you know? Kee-rist, all this whole town is is a place to go if you want to get your teeth broke. That's about it.

(long pause)

Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The greenest, plushest, most beautiful turf you've ever seen. We've flashed forward in time to the day of the big game. DINO is talking to LARKIN as they are standing, waiting for the opponents to come to the line. Larkin towers over Dino. Dino is normal, even short. Larkin is a huge, soft, giant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

You're gonna shift on this play,
okay? Don't let 'em screw you
up. We're gonna blow right
through the line... okay? Shift
and go. Shift and go.

OPPOSING QUARTERBACK

We go off tackle. Over that
pudge. It's fuckin' there.
Brrrreak.

Walks up to the line, calls signals. The QUARTERBACK'S
POV. Dino's POV. Larkin's POV. Lots of tension.

The ball is snapped.

Larkin is hit with a cross body block as he shifts.
The back gains about twenty yards off tackle. The
opposition is laughing and pointing at Larkin. Humili-
ation.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Football practice, scrimmage. The players are wearing
old maroon practice uniforms. CODY and Dino are stand-
ing waiting for the offense to come to the line. Cody
is huge and black. Dino is his small, white shadow.

CODY

(half-singing, half-
moaning to no one
in particular)

The offensive line is set.

The ball is snapped.

Cody shifts easily... dances through the line... pushes
a blocking back out of the way and gives the ball and
the quarterback a playful bear hug.

COACH'S WHISTLE.

COACH

(screaming)
Washington! You're not trying.
You're dumb. This is dumb. The
way you're playing as big as you
are. It's just dumb!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COACH (CONT'D)

What, what, what do you call that, huh? What, what, what was that a hit? Is that hitting? What? I want an answer! I want an answer. I want an answer. I w-w-want an answer. Tell me wha -- this don't count? It don't matter what? You telling me it don't matter. This here don't matter?

CODY

(softly)

Fuck it!

COACH

Get out of here. Go. Get out of here. Get out. Go. I don't want you here on this field. Go. Get out of here. Just get out of here. Now go. I don't want to see you around here. Go. Get. Go. Go. Go. Get out of here. I don't want you. Get out.

Cody walks slowly off the field. The Coach shouts after him. Everyone on the field gapes in disbelief. (There goes our only chance.)

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

PLAYERS talking as they leave the practice field, Dino is among them but separate and silent. CAMERA is CLOSE on Dino as he, along with the rest of the Players on the team, plod off the field.

PLAYER

Fuckin' Cody... man. He's in the shitter... hunh?

Dino says nothing, spits in the dirt ahead of him.

PLAYER

Why would he do that? This week... you know... he knew what would happen... telling Coach to "Fuck it." He did it on purpose. You know him, Dino... he do it on purpose or what?

Dino says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PLAYER

Don't you think Coach'll let him back on the team?

PLAYER

Who knows? He's fuckin' wild. He don't know.

PLAYER

Cody's fucked.

PLAYER

Yeah... well Cody screwed himself ... he knows it was gonna happen with the swearing. You know, he did it on purpose.

PLAYER

Nah... Cody's wild. He don't even know what he's doing. He don't give a shit. What's he gonna give a shit about? I mean what the fuck is it to him?

PLAYER

Coach aced Nolan and Nolan ain't back.

PLAYER

Fuck Nolan. Nolan is a whole different story. You don't need a Nolan. You can make an example outta Nolan. Nolan was on the edge... you know? You...

PLAYER

Mark's gone.

PLAYER

Yeah well fuck Mark... too. They both of them don't add up to one half of one Cody Washington. You gotta bend the rules for someone that can bring you a conference championship. Am I wrong? I mean face the facts... right? All Cody did was say the fuck word. Alright? Coach coulda pretended he didn't hear it? The whole thing got outta fuckin' hand.

PLAYER

Larkin'll have to play for Cody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PLAYER

That's the joke of the hemisphere.
You think Coach don't know that's
a fuckin' joke?

PLAYER

Larkin's a lard ass.

PLAYER

What's gonna happen to you, Dino?
You'll get fuckin' kilt.

Others laugh.

DINO

(exploding)

Look, you cocksuckers, I heard
this same shit when Coach kicked
Mark off the team. Mark! You
guys never ever realized how much
that egotistical motherfucker hurt
this team. Selfish prick! Well,
Eugene came out of nowhere and
played his ass off! Larkin'll do
the same if you give him a fuckin'
chance. If I hear any more of
this kind of horseshit from you
guys, I'll tear out your fuckin'
assholes!!

The Player is looking at Dino with his mouth open. He looks incredibly stupid. Dino catches his look and it makes him even more furious. He swings his helmet with all his might, catching him directly in his midsection, doubling him up and making him crumple to the ground, moaning. Dino storms away. The other Players look on, stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

somewhere near the school. A young boy, fair and skinny, is walking home. His books are under his arms. From the opposite side of the street, a guy who is absolutely plastered takes three steps forward and one step back followed by a strange, forceful lurch in the young boy's direction. The boy is DINK, a young friend of Dino's. The man is Dino's father, DOMENIC.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOMENIC

Dinkie... Dinkie... little dickie
dinkie... come here. Little
dinkie, come here.

(suddenly enraged because
Dink is ignoring him)

Come here. You little shit.

DINK

I gotta go... my momma... said I
gotta... Mr. Denone.

DOMENIC

I'm looking for Dino.

(he stumbles back on
his heels and then
rights himself)

Where's the little prick... Dink?

He laughs stupidly.

DINK

He's prolly at football.

DOMENIC

Oh... oh... well... you tell Joe
Fuckin' Touchdown... right? Fuck
him. You gonna tell him that?

DINK

(frightened)

Yes.

DOMENIC

Now who's the faggot his mama's
going around with like a two-
dollar whore?

DINK

I don't know.

DOMENIC

You find out or I'll fuckin' kill
you, little dinkle fuckin' dick...

Dink stands scared and quiet as Mr. Denone lurches out
of his way down the street to where the barrooms are.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

The craggy field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Back behind the Players who have just walked off. Out in the middle is the Coach. He's punching out an imaginary enemy. His assistant, MR. JOHN GAETA, looks on.

COACH

Dino runs the show on Saturday. I don't care if Larkin ain't worth the powder to blow him to hell, that's the plan. That's it. That's it. That's it.

JOHN

Okay.

COACH

Fuck it? Fuck it? What's fuck it... bullshit. What's that mean, John? What's that supposed to mean?

JOHN

"Fuck it." I don't know... Coach... it doesn't have to mean anything, you know?

COACH

What he said... what he meant was: You, me, the team, the school, the championship ain't worth his piss. That's what "Fuck it" means... John. I was this far...

(holds up his fingers to show just how far)
... this far from beating the crap outta that boy. The only thing that stopped me was that I knew... I knew that if I started hitting him I wouldn't have stopped until he was dead. Dead. Fuck it. I'll show him what fuck it means.

JOHN

C'mon... c'mon... calm down a little bit.

COACH

You try to build something... it works... we gotta championship to play for... you know... you do all that with respect and discipline. I don't know... don't let me get too crazy, John. God almighty...

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Greek's. A greasy spoon diner hangout. It's empty prior to the rush of students. THE GREEK, himself, is "breaking in" a young girl on her first day. EXTREME CLOSEUP of the girl -- a beautiful mulatto girl named PEARL. She's Cody's half-sister.

THE GREEK

Didn't the girl tell you you're supposed to de-grease the grill before supper? Didn't the girl from lunch tell you that you were supposed to do that?

PEARL

She told me she did it.

THE GREEK

No. She checked the fryer. She changed the gas on the fountain. You're supposed to do the grill. You understand? The grill cook is gone from 2:30 to 3:00. Whoever comes in at 2:30 does the grill. She didn't do the grill. Alright? You bend over here and see if there's some de-greaser under that grill. Is there?

Pearl bends over, then stands up quickly as it becomes apparent that The Greek isn't really looking for the de-greaser.

PEARL

She told me she did it. Dammit!

Pearl knocks dinner plate off counter.

CUT TO:

BOOTH IN GREEKS

Doris and her girlfriends are sitting around talking about boys and school and stuff. Doris is a sweet girl... pretty and nice. She is the exact opposite of Dino -- blonde and fair vs. dark. They have been going steady since freshman year.

GIRL

Joey told me that he loved me.

DORIS

He did? He did not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

Well... what he said was... he really, really liked me and he wasn't sure but he thought he might even love me.

KATHI

What did you say back?

SUSAN

I told him I wouldn't say I loved him until I was sure that he loved me.

DORIS

I wouldn't be afraid a bit to tell Dino I loved him.

KATHI

Your father would kill you if he heard that.

DORIS

I don't care. I wouldn't even tell him.

Another girl, MARY, enters booth, excitedly.

MARY

Did you hear that Cody Washington just got kicked off the football team? Mrs. Stout just told me.

KATHI

But he's so good.

MARY

He used a swear word at the coach. Now Wayne Larkin's playing instead. She just told me.

Other girls mockingly in unison.

GIRLS

Wa-ay-ne. Hee-hee-hee --

KATHI

He tried to feel Doris up in Algebra.

DORIS

Kathi!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHI

That's what you said.

DORIS

We were sharing the same book
'cause I forgot mine and he felt
like he was trying to feel me with
his elbow. That's all I said.
Don't you tell that to Dino.

MARY

Mrs. Stout said we have to think
of a Wayne Larkin cheer for the
game because she wants all the
starters to have their own cheers.

DORIS

What rhymes with Larkin?

KATHI

Parkin.

All the girls laugh.

MARY

Shhh-hhh-hhhh. Here he comes.

The diner is now filled with a chaotic, youthful ROAR.
The boys from the football team enter.

PLAYER

I gotta take a leak... I'll be
right back.

PLAYER

Greek.

PLAYER

Hey, Greek.

More guys from the football team enter along with the
cheerleaders.

Dino enters alone.

He passes by to a booth where DORIS, and her girl-
friends are sitting. One of the girls gives up her
seat next to Doris for Dino. Dino sits down and grabs
Doris' cola. He takes out the lipstick-stained straw
and takes a sip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO
(gagging)
Cherry Coke? Cherry Coke! You're
sick.

DORIS
So I hear... uh... Cody's not on
the team.

DINO
Yeah. Yeah. But that could
change. One day with Larkin's all
it takes. That's all. You know?
One time...

Dino watches Pearl as conversation continues around
him. Pearl is barely visible through window into
kitchen.

CUT TO:

LARKIN

at the counter. He's wearing his varsity football
jacket with the gray vinyl sleeves. A cowlick has
risen on the back of his head from wearing the football
helmet. He's eating a basket o' burgers and drinking a
cola. Nobody from the team is sitting with him.

Wham! Dino claps Larkin on the shoulder from behind
forcing a dribble of ketchup and grease down his chin.

DINO
Larkin... eat up... Larkin!
(to himself)
Saturday you're fuckin' dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERVICE STATION - EARLY EVENING

Schapper's Sunoco Service Station. Dino works here
after school. Today he's late because of practice and
shit. SCHAPPER keeps walking out to the end of the
island and looking down the street. He goes inside and
turns on the exterior lighting. The island lights.
The neon LUBITORIUM sign over the lube bay. The neon
Sunoco diamond on the roof. The CUSTOM BLENDING sign
in the main window. The GO WITH CONFIDENCE shield at
the far corner of the property. Dino pulls up in his
1951 Mercury with his young helper, Dink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCHAPPER

You're almost an hour late, Dino.

DINO

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Practice and I had to pick up Dink. You know.

SCHAPPER

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Let me talk to you for a second here.

DINO

Sure.

SCHAPPER

Dino... how old is that friggin' kid, Dink? Jesus... I told you I can't have youngsters walking around with gasoline pumps. What is he? Twelve?

DINO

Shi... He's 16 years old. He don't handle money. He don't screw around. He can take down a transmission in the dark, for chrissake. Whaddya want?

SCHAPPER

Look it... Dino... he's not 16.

DINO

Alright. Alright. He's however old he's supposed to be.

SCHAPPER

I'm not gonna argue it... alright. He's your night assistant -- anybody asks, he's your night assistant. I'll be down Russo's later if you need me.

Dino watches as Schapper pulls away. He's sort of lost in thought when Dink says:

DINK

I saw your father today... Dino.

DINO

Yeah... was he shit-faced?

DINK

I guess maybe. He might have been a little stoned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

Whattya think? A little stoned,
my ass. Of course he was drunk.
He's the town's fuckin' drunkard.
Jesus, Dink. Why don't you face
the fuckin' facts. A little
stoned. Bullshit.

DINK

Yeah... alright... well... he was
drunk then. He wants me to find
out who the guy is he's seen with
your mother. I can't do that,
Dino. I don't want to do that.

DINO

Ah, Jesus. Listen. Just tell him
my old lady's seeing some guy from
Homestead... some guy named Kenny.
Okay? She knows him from work.
Alright. Tell him that.

DINK

Good. Okay. Yeah. Thanks. Your
old man said he'd kill me if I
didn't find out for him.

DINO

He's not gonna kill you. Jesus...
Dink.

CUT TO:

INT. LARKIN'S HOUSE - EVENING

A neat little dining room in a neat little house. MRS.
LARKIN is a doting mother. MR. LARKIN is quiet and ob-
livious.

MRS. LARKIN

Eat some more, Wayne.

LARKIN

Nah... I'm kind of full.

MRS. LARKIN

You play that football and the
coach makes you work so hard that
you get sick to your stomach.

LARKIN

Ma!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. LARKIN

You get hit in the head and it makes you feel sick-ish.

LARKIN

Ma. I'm pretty much finished now. I'm going to my room.

MRS. LARKIN

Do you have diarrhea?

LARKIN

Ma-a-a-a. Geez. No.

MRS. LARKIN

If you do... I have something you can take for that. Do you want some Pepto Bismol?

LARKIN

I don't need any, Ma. I'm just going to bed because I feel like lying down.

MRS. LARKIN

I wish you wouldn't play that football. Why can't you play tennis? Nobody gets hurt playing tennis.

LARKIN

Ma... nobody plays tennis. Nobody... fairies... maybe... that's all.

MRS. LARKIN

Alright. Alright. Alright. I just hate to see my baby...

She turns away as if to keep from sobbing. Larkin goes to his room... a big, big, scared kid.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

There's a big police car at the pumps.

POLICE OFFICER

You just fill it up... son.

Dino disappears around back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)
Dino... what you got your little
elf working now? Jesus.

DINO
Nah... shit. He just does the
legwork. I'm still doing the
paperwork.

Dino peers out at the pumps. Writes up a dummy re-
ceipt. The Police Officer gives Dino a five... Dino
gives the Police Officer a ten from the cash register.
Dino puts the five in his pocket; the Officer puts the
ten in his. A petty little scam that Dink watches from
the island in front of the station.

POLICE OFFICER
Dino... we picked up some
contraband... some dirty pictures,
dirty movies and shit. Fuckin'
broad's spread-eagle... playin'
with themselves and shit. You
want any?

DINO
I don't know. I don't think so.

POLICE OFFICER
Shit. I could sell 'em to you and
you could sell 'em to whoever you
want. Make a little money on it.
What the fuck?

DINO
I don't know. You playing cards
tonight?

POLICE OFFICER
Yeah.

DINO
Bring 'em by tonight... we'll take
a look.

The Officer returns to his cruiser and says to Dink:

POLICE OFFICER
Nice job on the windshields...
kiddo. Jeez... you did the
mirrors... too. Nice.

Police Officer drives away. Dink walks over to Dino.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINK

You're cheating out loud... Dino.

DINO

What?

DINK

You're cheating right out of the cash register.

DINO

Oh... Jesus... that. Don't you think Schapper knows? All he cares is he gets a piece of it. Man... you're such a fuckin' baby, it drives me crazy. Just take care of the bays and keep your fuckin' nose out of everything else. My car needs an oil change.

DINK

Yeah... just so you know something... Dino... I don't want anything to do with it. Okay?

DINO

Yeah... right. That's okay. That's great. Okay. Sure. I'll be out back.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - EVENING

Russo's Bar and Grill. It's a typical old man's bar. One entrance for women, one entrance for men. It's supertime. There are only a few patrons left. A couple of steelworkers, DOMENIC DENONE -- Dino's father -- and Mr. Schapper. Domenic Denone is sitting, snarling almost to himself as he rocks back and forth at the bar. Schapper is animated if a little rubbery in his speech. He's talking to the BARTENDER about a picture that appeared on the sports page of the local newspaper.

SCHAPPER

That's Domenic's kid. Right? Domenic? Right? That's Domenic's kid. He can't even talk. It's your kid, Domenic. That's a picture of your Dino.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCHAPPER (CONT'D)

Christ... he works down my place.
I just this minute seen him.
That's Domenic's... Billy-boy...
That's Domenic's kid. My kid
don't play football.

BARTENDER

Okay... okay. I thought your...
your boy played on the football
team. I know'd Domenic's kid did
... I thought you had a boy on the
team, too.

SCHAPPER

Nah... nah... my kid don't play.
He got polio...

BARTENDER

I didn't know that. Sorry. I
didn't know that. Geez. My big
mouth.

SCHAPPER

Oh... no... Shit. No. He got
polio, yeah. He was swimmin' up
in the rusty water up by the...
mill -- I don't know -- that's how
they said some kids got it. They
say-ed that that used to cause it
sometimes... you know. I don't
know.

BARTENDER

I didn't know... that... uh... or
I'd never of a mentioned it.

SCHAPPER

Yeah. That's okay. Whatever will
be.

Domenic Denone stares straight ahead... unblinking.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION - BACK ROOM - EVENING

A few MEN are seated around a card table. Dino blasts
through the door like a freight train right into the
middle of a conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PLAYER

Did Marty get killed or did he just die?

PLAYER

Jeezus, Dino... get the fuck in here and deal.

PLAYER

We gonna let the gimoke deal?

DINO

Just hold on to your ass... Jesus, you'll be lookin' for it soon enough.

PLAYER

Fuckin' deal... Dino. I gotta win some money back.

DINO

What else? Seven... six... six... five... jack and the dealer takes a ten. Jack takes a five. Fifteen showing and he stays. Seven takes a six. One more?

PLAYER

The thing with Marty is he got hurt at work, but he died at home. Shit.

DINO

Bust. Six takes a six. One more? Bang. Red six takes a lady and bust! Dealer takes a jack. Twenty-one wins. No twenty-one?

PLAYER

Fuckin' a-hole... man.

PLAYER

Your old man musta taught you cards. Shit.

POLICE OFFICER

You never seen pictures like these. I got 'em out in the cruiser. It's fuckin' contraband.

PLAYER

Hey, Dino... I was looking in a magazine today...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PLAYER (CONT'D)

... you know what WOP means... no offense, Dino... it means without pecker.

DINO

Fuck you. Aw shit. Curtis' got fuckin' blackjack.

The deal changes.

PLAYER

Cody got dumped off the team today ... that's what I heard.

DINO

Yeah... so... you got ears.

PLAYER

So who's playin' next to you on Saturday?

DINO

Fuckin' Wayne Larkin. What d'you care... you're not out there. Hit me. Twenty-one. Fuck that, Curtis, you gotta stay on seventeen. Tell him... those are the goddam Las Vegas rules.

PLAYER

Jesus... you're definitely screwed without Washington. He's the whole fuckin' line. It's gotta be even money without Cody.

DINO

Bullshit. We can't win. It's not your ass. I'm telling you, Curtis, you can't take a bump. Washington ain't that fuckin' spectacular. He gets a lot of credit because of his brother.

PLAYER

I know Larkin. They live over on O'Melia Terrace. I know Larkin. The old man's a machinist.

PLAYER

Joe Washington... that's Cody Washington's brother?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CURTIS

What do you know. You never been to Las Vegas. You think you're Wyatt Earp?

PLAYER

Hit me. Aw... shit. Dammit. He was screwing some white broad at Ohio State. Right. So what's Joey Washington do now? Just hang around?

PLAYER

Shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANKIN BRIDGE - EVENING

Cody is sitting next to a pier under the Rankin Bridge. It's past sunset but the sky is still light. He adjusts a portable RADIO. He has a paper bag and a gym bag with him.

RADIO MAN (V.O.)

This is your Bossman, Porky Chedwick, coming at you from W-H-O-D, Homestead. Your Platter Pushin' Poppa... the Daddio of the raddio playin' the hottest... and the coolest sounds around. Comin' up next is Dizzy Gilles-a-pee and the great, late Bird, Charlie Parker, playing together...
 "'Round Midnight."

Cody takes a swig of wine and adjusts the mouthpiece on a tenor saxophone he has taken out of the gym bag. He plays along with the radio. From a distance we can only hear him.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM IN GAS STATION - EVENING

Card game. Time has passed. The deal passes back and forth.

PLAYER

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

Guts? Anybody wanna play guts?
John-Wayne-Fuckin'-Guts-Poker.

PLAYER

Jesus... Dino.

DINO

C'mon. One hand. Jesus.
Winner's hand. Right? Put up
your winnings. C'mon, what-the-
fuck?

PLAYER

Alright.

PLAYER

Okay.

DINO

Alright. Alright. No openers.
Nothing wild. What do I got?

PLAYER

Gimme one.

PLAYER

I'm fine.

PLAYER

Deuce.

DINO

Three of a kind. Hahahahahaha.
Shit fuckin' luck, man.

PLAYER

Fuck this, you little Wop prick.
Dammit.

DINO

Fuck you... you want your little
fin back. Here. Go buy yourself
a fuckin' dirty picture from Stan.
Stan... give Leo a blow job
picture. Here's five dollars.

PLAYER

You little fuckin' meatball.

DINO

Yeah. You know I can beat the
shit out of you, Leo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Leo -- no response.

DINO (cont'd)
Take Stanley's little picture.
Get in your car. Go back to your
fuckin' zoo. And don't ever come
back here again... you fuckin'
shitbrain.

Dino starts putting the cards and booze away. End of
game.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER - EVENING

Pearl leaves diner... alone.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Dino slips some bills to Dink.

DINO
Here's for being a good guy.

DINK
You don't have to --

DINO
Go pull the car out of the lube
bay while I lock up out back.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Rear of the station. "Gents" room door. Dino checks
door. It's unlocked. He opens it. Inside the bath-
room is Cody... taking a leak. A bottle of sweet,
cheap wine in a brown bag is sitting on the shelf under
the mirror. His saxophone, in a canvas gym bag, is
standing up in the wash basin.

DINO
(shocked)
Jeezus!!... you scared the shit
out of me. What are you doin'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CODY
(smiling)
Had to pee.

DINO
Yeah... well, who the fuck goes
across town to take a leak? Hunh?

CODY
I wanted to talk to you... but you
was playing cards. I ain't on the
team no more... Dino.

DINO
Hey. You know... I think all you
have to do is come to practice
tomorrow. I mean... kiss his ass
a little bit... uh, you know... he
can't permanently throw you off
the team... Christ. This whole
fuckin' town would probably croak
themselves.

Cody shakes his head. Dink honks the car HORN from
around the front.

DINO (cont'd)
(in Dink's direction)
Alright. Alright.
(to Cody)
What's this shit?
(grabs the wine bottle
and takes a swig)
Tastes like fuckin' paint.

CODY
I ain't gonna play.

Dino says nothing. Cody nods as if to show how serious
he is.

DINO
Well, that's selfish as shit.
You're gonna leave me with fuckin'
Larkin? Jesus...

Cody sips his bottle. Dink honks the HORN again.

DINO (cont'd)
(loudly but not
so Dink can hear)
Alright. Alright. Fuck you,
Dink.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (CONT'D)

(looks at Cody)

I don't know what the fuck's the matter with you. You're gonna lose everything... scholarships... money... everything.

CODY

I got my saxophone. Who needs a scholarshit!

Cody laughs softly to himself.

DINO

You're nuts... nobody does that, Cody. You're fucked up.

There is a moment of understanding between them.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Dino's car. Dink is waiting.

DINK

What took you so long?

DINO

There was a drunk in the shithouse.

DINK

Really?

DINO

Nah... just kidding. I had to take a leak. You wanna drive the car home?

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S CAR - EVENING

DINO

You can drive home.

DINK

Really!

DINO

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINK

Alright. Okay. Uh... great.

DINO

What the fuck... you know how to drive, don't you?

DINK

Well... I've driven before.

DINO

So drive, for chrissake.

DINK

Okay... alright. Let me see.
Uh... uh.... ahh... here we go.
Okay.

DINO

What're you going this way for?

DINK

Uhm... uh. Fleet's awfully bumpy with the trolley tracks and the potholes and all. It's really bad on the suspension. You don't know how much of a privilege it is for me to be driving a fine car like this.

DINO

Jesus... you're nuts... you know that?

DINK

I like cars. Gee... you know something... that valve is still a little noisy even after I changed the oil. Listen. Well... not too bad. Nothing really.

DINO

Dink... be careful! Watch it!

DINK

(goes into a
panic stop)

What! What?

DINO

Ah, nothing... I just thought I saw something. Never mind. I thought that was my old man for a second.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINK

Geez...

DINO

Nah... just kidding. C'mon...

(long, silent

pause)

Your parents don't mind you coming home this late at night?

DINK

Nah... not as long as I got my schoolwork done... that's all.

They pull up in front of Dink's house. The lights are on.

DINO

Jesus Christ... they wait up for you every night... too?

DINK

Well, you know... either my mother or father. Thanks for letting me drive, Dino. I'm sorry if I made you mad at me earlier... okay?

DINO

Yeah... yeah... yeah. Forget it. Nice. Take it easy. Don't forget your little booster seat.

He hands him the pillow that he sits on to see over the wheel.

CUT TO:

MOVING SHOT

Dino drives through town to home.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S HOUSE - EVENING

GRANDMOTHER

(has a very deep,
smoker's cough and
a very craggy voice)

It's 11:30!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

(under his breath)

Shit!

(then)

Yeah... sorry, Nana. Had to work late. Go back to sleep.

GRANDMOTHER

I'm awake. I've been all alone all night. Your mother isn't home yet. Ah-hhh-em.

DINO

Yeah, well... I'm home now. So go to sleep.

GRANDMOTHER

I'm staying awake. Your mother is not going to bring that -- excuse me -- boyfriend of hers into this house.

DINO

Okay. G'night.

GRANDMOTHER

Yeah. Have you been drinking? It smells like liquor -- pardon me -- over there by the door.

DINO

No. I been working all night, Grandma. I gotta go to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S FRONT HALL - ONE HOUR LATER

Dino's MOTHER returning from her date. It's an hour later, but the exact same scene is played out as between Dino and his grandmother. Dino's mother returns and Dino's grandmother interrogates her.

GRANDMOTHER

It's 2:30!

MRS. DENONE

I'm sorry, Mom. I lost track of the time. Go to sleep.

GRANDMOTHER

I can't. I've been alone all night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Domenic, cough, cough, didn't get home until just an hour ago. Aaarrgh... ahem... excuse me. You think I'm your night watchman?

MRS. DENONE

Okay... Mom. I'm sorry. I don't want to wake up Domenic.

GRANDMOTHER

Have you been drinking? Cough. It smelled like liquor when you came in.

MRS. DENONE

No.

GRANDMOTHER

How about your little boyfriend... what's his name... was he drinking?

MRS. DENONE

Go to sleep... Mom.

GRANDMOTHER

What is he? Is he a jeweler?

MRS. DENONE

No... Ma.

GRANDMOTHER

I thought he was a jeweler. I never saw a man who wore so much jewelry. Is he a... gangster?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A street near Cody's house early the next morning. A young ASSISTANT COACH pulls up in front of Cody who is standing on the corner.

ASSISTANT COACH

Coach said you still need a ride to school in the mornings.

Cody shrugs and looks away. He doesn't know how to react.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK KID IN CAR
Coach didn't say he was off the
team permanent.

SECOND BLACK KID
Cody told the coach to fuck...

Everybody turns to look at him.

CODY
My mama's down sick.

ASSISTANT COACH
How'd she get so sick?

Cody shrugs.

ASSISTANT COACH (cont'd)
So you're not coming to school?

Cody shakes his head.

ASSISTANT COACH (cont'd)
Well... alright, then... but you
better be here home with your sick
mama if the truant officer comes
by. You unnerstand?

Car pulls off. A couple of kids wave out the back
window to Cody. Cody stands and watches, then walks
down the hill.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Mother and Grandmother are sitting at the kitchen table
talking as Dino arrives.

MRS. DENONE
I know, Mama. It's not right.
We're gonna have to do something
where either Dino and me or one of
us is home when you're home so you
don't get left by yourself.

GRANDMOTHER
I burned my hand on the fry pan...
I was alone... hunh? Yes. I was
alone. I was alone and you were
with that Jew gangster whatever
his name is. Hunh? I'm right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. DENONE

He's not Jewish and he's not a gangster, Ma. Okay? Oh... there's my handsome boy. Good morning... sweetheart.

(stands up to give
Dino a hug)

Oh, gosh. Let me feel that muscle. Did you come in late last night... too? Poor baby. You work too hard... with football and school and your job.

GRANDMOTHER

He smelled like wine when he came in. Hunh? I have a very strong sense of smell. He was drinking wine. Don't you think he was working hard. He's taking the same -- the same path his father...

MRS. DENONE

Enough of that... alright. That's just enough.

GRANDMOTHER

If you think you can cut me off like that... when I have something to say in this house, I expect to be able to say it. Hunh?

Mrs. Denone looks away, embarrassed.

GRANDMOTHER (cont'd)

Tskkk. Keep your head in the sand. You have breakfast without me.

She leaves the table angrily.

DINO

Ahem.

(long pause)

Uh... Cody Washington got kicked off the team yesterday... the big, colored kid.

MRS. DENONE

(somewhat irritated)

Well... you're the best one on the team anyway. So what's it matter whether some nigger kid plays or not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

Yeah. Alright.

MRS. DENONE

What? You're strong... you're smart... it's about time people took notice of you. Why should they be looking at some colored boy?

Grandmother coughing from the bedroom.

MRS. DENONE (cont'd)

(sweetly)

Oh. Uhm. Don't be late tonight... Nicky. I promised Nana... okay... we wouldn't leave her all alone every night like we've been doing. Alright, love bug?

Dino shrugs.

MRS. DENONE (cont'd)

You gotta try. Are you gonna try... honey?

DINO

Yeah, sure... I'll try. Sometimes things come up... you know?

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Pearl is sitting naked, arms folded in her lap, on her bed listening to a conversation that her mother is having outside the window with the NEIGHBOR LADY. Pearl occasionally mimics something her mother says... or reacts in some way as she starts getting dressed to go to school.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.)

Yeah. U-hunh... tha's true. Doctor tole her she'd had about the biggest tumors that a person can have and there wasn't nothing she could do about them nasty tumors but let nature take its course -- by which he meant to let them get growed in her body until they choke all the life outta her -- she went to...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pearl pretends to choke herself.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.) (cont'd)
 ... she went to the Reverend
 Miller's Special Saturday Prayer
 Service last August and now the
 doctors is saying, "Oh... you
 never had tumors... we just
thought you might have tumors.
There was never any real tumors
 there." Them tumors gone. Dat's
 where them tumors went. God took
 them away. But them doctors...

Pearl leaves the room and returns. Hears her mother
 still going on about the tumors and rolls her eyes.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.) (cont'd)
 ... what them doctors say... them
 tumors was never there. That's
 how they are. They's sooner
 contradic' theyselves than believe
 in the power of the Almighty.
 Than believe the Bible's own
 words...

Pearl is getting dressed.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.) (cont'd)
 ... which words say, "Grace is the
 gift of faith by which we all
 healed. Amen."

NEIGHBOR LADY (O.S.)
 Amen.

Pearl mouths the words in a mocking way.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.)
 And this Saturday... Reverend
 Miller as't if I could sing at
 this self-same prayer service
 because he like the sound of my
 singing voice from the time I was
 singing at Bible Baptist for
 Reverend Moultrie. So, isn't that
 nice? Why, sure I will, Reverend
 Miller. I be glad to sing for
 you. And he said you ain't gonna
 be singing for me... you'll be
 singing for Jesus. Singing for
 Jesus. I never heard it put that
 way... Reverend Miller...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pearl is applying lipstick. She has really nice lips.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.) (cont'd)
 So... come Saturday... your truly
 will be singing for Jesus... and I
 want you to come and Pearl.

Pearl combs her hair.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.) (cont'd)
 And Cody and Joey. 'Cause what I
 think is Reverend Miller know'd we
 all need the healing touch of
 Jesus Lord and he done ask me to
 call it down for all o' us. Don't
 you think? I just know. I just
 know.

NEIGHBOR LADY (O.S.)
 You're never gonna get Cody and
 Pearl to go to a prayer service.
 Not on a Saturday. Them two will
 never sit still for that.

MRS. WASHINGTON (O.S.)
 I know they'll come because it
 ain't jus' me that's calling them.
 (gestures heavenward)
 Don't you know?

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

DORIS
 My story is called The Gift Of The
 Magi. I'm not sure how to say it,
 Mrs. Barnes. Is it Magggi or
Ma-gi.

MRS. BARNES
Ma-gi.

DORIS
 Oh. The Gift Of The Ma-Gi...
 which are like the wisemen who
 visited Jesus on the night he was
 born. But this isn't about
 them. It's about a mother... I
 mean a husband and wife. The
 action takes place in 1910.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS (CONT'D)

Uh... the narrator is omniscient... which means he sort of knows how things are gonna turn out but he doesn't let you know. You just know he knows how things are gonna turn out because he's sort of like God is. How God knows that things are gonna turn out. And the girl is like... has I mean... has beautiful hair that comes all the way down to her waist and people always compliment her about her hair and the husband has a beautiful watch that his father gave him and that his father gave him. It's Christmas time but they don't have any money so they can't buy each other presents. Uh... so the mother... I mean the wife sells her hair to a wig maker to buy her father... I mean her husband a chain for his watch. And the ironical part is the husband sells his watch to buy combs -- real special combs... for his wife. So when Christmas comes... his wife has short hair so she doesn't need the combs and the husband doesn't have his watch so he doesn't need the chain. And what I think the real gift of the Magi is is that they realize how much they love each other that they would give up so much -- he really loved his watch and she was so proud of her long hair -- but they gave it up so that they could show each other that they loved each other. The gift was that they loved each other.

PULL BACK to reveal that the entire class is bored shitless.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

Music class. MISS BRITTANICK, the music teacher, is lecturing on music appreciation by reading from the back of an album jacket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS BRITTANICK

For the young Tchaikovsky, Winter Dreams was not all a sentimental work. Even as he grew older and more mature, he was angered by critics who would call his first major symphony overly romantic. Listen and tell me what images go through your mind. Let your mind wander with the music.

She begins PLAYING it on a record player. She sees Dino absentmindedly staring at an attractive blonde student.

MISS BRITTANICK (cont'd)

What images were going through your mind as you were listening... Mr. Denone?

DINO

I can't... uh... it was personal.

Girls in the class titter.

MISS BRITTANICK

Well... maybe we can reveal something to the class about your fertile mind. To see how your romantic vision compares with Tchaikovsky, what is it that you dream about... in the winter... Mr. Denone?

DINO

(a long pause)

I dream... about being warm... going swimming... driving alone at night with the windows rolled down... Winter I dream about summer... Summer I dream about winter.

MISS BRITTANICK

Isn't that fascinating?

DINO

I don't dream about romantics... Miss Brittanick. If that's supposed to be the right answer.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOSEUP - DUMONT TV SET - DAY

Howdy Doody is talking to Buffalo Bob. Cody is watching it, enthralled. PULL BACK to reveal Cody watching the TV set in an appliance store window. A withered, tiny MAN bursts out of the store.

STORE MANAGER

Boy... boy. No, no. You can't watch that television set. Go on. I don't want you loitering in front of my store.

Cody stares at him without moving.

STORE MANAGER (cont'd)

Go on. I don't want you in front of my store. Are you gonna buy that television set? Hunh? Go on, boy. Get along.

Cody turns and leaves without saying a word.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Doris and girlfriend are walking together.

DORIS

I left my notebook in music class.

They get to the door. It's locked. Through the wire glass insert they see Miss Brittanick screaming like a banshee at Dino. Miss Brittanick hears the noise at the door and quickly turns. She is incredibly upset.

DORIS (cont'd)

Oh... my... she's mad.

The girls walk away. Doris looks back over her shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Guidance Counselor's office. Pearl is talking over the results of her aptitude test with the school COUNSELOR. MOVE IN VERY TIGHT on Pearl as we hear the Counselor's voice. The Counselor is a woman -- she seems very compassionate and helpful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COUNSELOR (O.S.)

You have a very high mathematical aptitude... which is very unusual for a... girl... Does that sound right to you, Pearl?

PEARL

I guess so.

COUNSELOR (O.S.)

Do you like... uh... I mean... what subjects do you like? Uh... math... science?

PEARL

I guess.

COUNSELOR (O.S.)

Well... what would you like to do when you get out of high school?

PEARL

It don't really matter... ma'am... nobody's gonna let me do what I want anyway. Colored people think I'm too white... white people think I'm too colored. It don't matter what my aptitude is... nobody's saying: Pearl... come do this... we want you to do that. My brothers played football. My mama goes to church. I'm stuck in the middle... that's all.

COUNSELOR (O.S.)

Do you have a boyfriend? Do you like boys?

PEARL

My mama don't want me having no boyfriends because she think that it's sinful or something. You know? Boys come up to me a lot... some boys... you know? But they ain't looking at me 'cause they want a friend, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. RUSSO'S BAR AND GRILL - MID-AFTERNOON

The bar is filled with steelworkers, either just beginning or just ending a shift.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TWO MEN are talking at the bar. Mr. Denone is there with his head on the bar.

BARTENDER

Domenic... Domenic... c'mon. You can't just sit there like that. You okay? Domenic, I'm not gonna serve you no more. He's the worst.

POLISH STEELWORKER #1

See... what it was with my cousin Joseph... He couldn't get into the States... the quotas were filled ... so he got into Canada... stayed with a family, sent money back to Poland. Then he later brought his wife over. She was a nice woman, I got a picture of her. I used to go up there fishin' with my cousin Ted and I'd see him. He loved to see us and talk in Polish... he never learnt English very good. He said it made him tired to speak English. He was a proud man. The Polish people are very proud... he was knowledgeable... very well-read... used to carve things. He never came down here to visit. He was bitter about the U.S. because they wouldn't let him in. "Why are the gates closed?" he used to say. If they didn't want him as a citizen, he didn't want to visit. Then his wife died and he moved back to Poland.

POLISH STEELWORKER #2

Why'd he do that?

POLISH STEELWORKER #1

Well. All the time he was there he couldn't make one friend. It's not like here where there's a Polish community, church, clubs... stuff.

POLISH STEELWORKER #2

What happened to him?

POLISH STEELWORKER #1

I think he died! I used to send him care packages and stuff, but ... Yeah, I guess he died there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Polish Steelworker #2 shakes his head, sadly.

POLISH STEELWORKER #1 (cont'd)
Yeah, it's too bad... it's too
bad. America's not for everyone
... It's not everyone's
opportunity.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Football practice. All the boys are standing in a circle pre-practice, fooling around. They play a game called "Who's Afraid?" One guy gets the football and says:

PLAYER
I gotta ball now who's-afraid-
who's-afraid-who's-afraid? Yo!
Steven's afraid.

He heaves the ball at him. STEVEN must catch it without flinching. Then Steven gets to throw it.

STEVEN
Oh yeah. I'm no 'fraid, I'm no
'fraid. Who's-afraid-who's-
afraid-who's-afraid -- ahhhhhh --
Dino's afraid.

He heaves it to Dino.

DINO
Who's afraid... who's afraid...
who's afraid... who's afraid...
Larkin... Larkin... Larkin...
Larkin...

Dino makes it look like he's gonna throw it ferociously at Larkin, then he gently lobs it. Larkin flinches... looks away... and the ball drops softly to the ground off his stomach.

PLAYERS
(in unison)
Larkin's afraid... Larkin's
afraid... Larkin's afraid...
LarkinLarkinLarkin
LarkinLarkinLarkinLarkinLarkin.

The chanting reaches a crescendo. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whistle BLOWS.

Coach walks very slowly among the circle of boys who had been intimidating Larkin.

COACH

God Almighty! This is real bull!
Is that what a team is to you?
Dino? Is that what a team is to
you? Is this how you're going to
pull the team together after
what's-his-name? I can't even
remember his name. I got a bad
memory for prima donnas. I should
forget the whole bunch of you.
The whole bunch of you should go
home right now and tell your
mothers and fathers that you're
losers. Mama, I'm a loser.
Daddy, your little boy is a loser.
I ain't no good, Daddy. I'm a big
fat zero. The prep school boys
are much better than I am. I see
what I just saw here and I see a
bunch of mean little losers. I
thought you could lead this team
... Dino... but looks like you're
just no good without what's-his-
face. God Almighty. You guys
make me sick.

(big sigh)

Alright, Mr. Gaeta will run you
through Saturday's defense. I
don't even want to look at you
bums until you start playing like
a team.

MONTAGE - PRACTICE

An NFL highlights sort of MONTAGE of practice, calls,
scrimmage. The team looks sharp, then...

DINO

Larkin... you gotta shift on that
play. I told you that.

Whistle BLOWS.

COACH

How in the name of God did you
miss that block... Larkin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARKIN

I thought it was Dino's block.

It's a deliberate lie and Dino is really pissed.

COACH

Nonsense! That's absolute nonsense! Do you think we'll ever win another game if we have one guy blocking and ten guys watching? This team wants to lose. You guys are one stupid excuse after another. Boy... you get me mad, Larkin. I can't believe you said that. I cannot believe you said that. And you think that makes it alright...

LARKIN

Sorry.

COACH

Don't make it worse, Larkin. You... you... go run laps until I tell you to stop... and don't expect that to be too soon. The rest of you losers... go home and tell your mommy and daddies they can skip the game on Saturday unless they're big prep school fans. Get out of here... you bums.

The team starts to shuffle off the field. Dino goes up to Larkin.

DINO

I'm gonna nail your ass... Larkin. I didn't miss no fuckin' block.

LARKIN

I know that. I didn't mean it the way it sounded. I didn't know what to say.

Larkin and Dino glower at each other. Larkin turns to begin his laps.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Dino leaves Larkin and walks across the field toward where the parking lot is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On his way, he stops to watch the cheerleaders practice on a small, square patch of grass behind the end-zone. The cheerleader practice area is hidden on three sides by the cement stands, the wall between the playing field and the parking lot, and the metal posts that support the scoreboard. It's a very sheltered, almost private, area. Dino can see the girls, but the girls can't see him. This makes it a very sensuous scene although you can still hear NOISE AND SHOUTING from the fields and CHEERS AND LAUGHTER from the cheerleaders. It's like watching a woman bathe or dress. Dino's monologue carries the entire scene.

DINO

Doris is really really really nice... pretty... you know? Her old man thinks she should be going out with some douchebag from Penn or Princeton or something. That's what it is.

(long, long sigh)

Her old man? I mean, Jesus H. Christ... I think if he sees me in his living room again he's gonna take out a gun and shoot me. He don't know me. He don't care. I could be from Harvard... in his eyes I'll always be the fuckin' guinea down at Schappers. Short-guinea-fuckin'-greasemonkey. That's all he'll ever see... Asshole.

(long, long pause)

You know? What it is... what I'm really trying to say is -- there's no fuckin' hope... that's all I'm trying to say. Alright?

Dino watches Doris for a while longer in silence.

EXT. DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

The parking lot at the Greek's. Dino meets a skinny black KID walking through the parking lot. He looks like he just got beat up.

ROACH

Din-din.

(Translation: Dino, Dino.)

DINO

Jesus. What happened to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Roach talks a peculiar kind of rag-time that's real hard to understand, plus he sort of sways and dances while he speaks. He's a 100% original.

ROACH

(subtitles)

I'm in Munhall gottahode-abadasses.

(Translation: I was in Munhall and some badasses got ahold of me.)

DINO

Shit.

ROACH

It jusloolikeithurtdon't-
hurlikeitlook.

(Translation: It just look like it hurt, it don't hurt like it look.)

DINO

Shoooo.

ROACH

KenidomydancinonSaddytelldem-
dumgirlsfuckawaydowndere.

(Translation: Can I do my dancing on Saturday and tell those dumb girls to fuck away down there.)

DINO

I don't know what you're saying.
Christ.

ROACH

Nomannomannoman. Do this.

Roach goes into a semi-erotic, semi-Elvis cheerleading routine.

DINO

You are softer than a fuckin'
grape, Roach. You are really
strange. No wonder you get beat-
up... doin' that queer shit.

ROACH

Jusachanman. Dodadanceman.

(Translation: Just a chance, man. To do my dance, man.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO
Hey... I don't have nothin' to
say about it. Ask one of the
cheerleaders.

ROACH
Twobucksman?

(Translation: Two bucks, man?)

DINO
Yeah... sure. Here.

Dino pulls his wallet out of his duffle bag, gives
Roach two dollars and watches as Roach skips off.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Greek's. A lot of conversation going on similar to
earlier scene. Dino stops at Doris' booth and bops her
on the head in a friendly way. Then he goes up to the
fountain where Pearl is working. He is hesitant to
make eye contact.

DINO
Can I have a coffee shake?

CUT TO:

ANGLE - BOOTH

filled with guys from the football team.

JOE
(the quarterback)
'Nother half-hour or so and Larkin
ought to be finished... hunh?
Christ, it's scary lookin' at his
fat, shiny ass in front of you.
Puhleeze let Cody come back.

BOGDAN
(the center)
Give him a break... will ya. You
can tell he's scared shitless.

JOE
Yeah... but he's not weak... you
know. He's a strong bastard.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOE (CONT'D)

He just don't have any guts. You know. And he don't know what he's doing half the time.

AL

Coach was right about dumping on him... you can't do that. We gotta build him up.

Dino arrives at the booth.

JOE

That's Dino's friggin' job... right, Dino?

DINO

What?

JOE

You gotta make Larkin into another Cody Washington by Saturday.

Self-conscious laughter around the table.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

The football field and track. Larkin runs heavily through his last lap and caves in on the bench.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Grandmother is sitting by herself. The RADIO is playing in the b.g.

CUT TO:

EXT. CODY'S HOUSE - FRONT STOOP - EVENING

Cody is talking to his older brother... JOE, a former football player on the high school team.

JOE WASHINGTON

Let me see yo' hands.

Joe throws him a football real fast. Cody catches it cleanly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOE WASHINGTON (cont'd)
 Man... those are boy's hands. Let
 me see yo arm.

Cody throws the football about 75 yards in a tight
 spiral.

JOE WASHINGTON (cont'd)
 Fu... you gonna be a state
 champeen with a arm like that?
 That's a boy's arm.

Cody shrugs, then picks up a handful of small stones
 and starts throwing them, one by one, down the street.

CODY
 Not gonna play on a champeenship.
 I'm not on the team no more.

JOE WASHINGTON
 Why'd you do that?

CODY
 I dunno.

Stone "TINGS" off a streetlight about a block and a
 half down the street.

JOE WASHINGTON
 You skip a practice?

CODY
 Nah.

A stone "BINGS" off a stop sign at the end of the
 block.

JOE WASHINGTON
 You mouth off?

Cody shrugs and nods. "TANG," a tin can about 100
 yards away rolls off the curb.

JOE WASHINGTON (cont'd)
 Man. Man oh man.

Cody doesn't say anything. "DINK," a stone hits an
 empty mail box 150 yards away.

JOE WASHINGTON (cont'd)
 Did you say you was sorry or
 anything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cody makes a funny mouth noise while spitting through his teeth.

JOE WASHINGTON (cont'd)

Jee-sus. Man... you just don't know what you're doing, do you?

Cody nods and smiles broadly.

CODY

Charlie Parker and Cody Washington together at the Apollo Theatre.

"CRASH" a Pepsi bottle breaks on a front stoop 75 yards away.

CUT TO:

INT. MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Dark. Classical MUSIC is playing. (Mahler would be good.) Miss Brittanick and her lover are in bed.

MISS BRITTANICK

(a seductive, whispery interpretation of Mahler like her class-room lesson)

If I close my eyes... and listen to that music... I see a dark, dark woods. There are beasts in the woods. And we see them as if they were animals in a child's nightmare. Their eyes are glowing ... they hiss jealously... they are restless because today... walking through the forest... they saw a man. And tonight... they talk among themselves in envy -- of this beautiful hard body... smooth and hairless. They argue who was closest to him. Who saw him first? Who felt his breath? Who smelled him coming? Who was this who walked through our woods? A man... a boy... a god... a Daedalus... Achilles? Do you see how the music describes his walk ... his gesture... his sense of himself? Do you see that? Do you see how this room is like that forest? Without light or shadow? And how I am like these beasts in the forest --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As they make love, a SERIES OF CUTS reveals what's going on throughout the town at the very same moment. Synchronicity.

CUT TO:

PEARL BOARDING A BUS

CUT TO:

MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM

CUT TO:

BAR

Dino's father drinking.

CUT TO:

DINK

Pumping gas at the station, working around as if wondering where Dino is... when's he coming back?

CUT TO:

MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM

CUT TO:

THE APPLIANCE STORE WINDOW

CUT TO:

MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM

CUT TO:

A BUNCH OF GUYS AT RUSSO'S

CUT TO:

MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM

CUT TO:

THE RANKIN BRIDGE

The football field, the high school, the train trestle.

CUT TO:

MISS BRITTANICK'S BEDROOM

Miss Brittanick standing at the bathroom sink, looking carefully at herself in the mirror. She turns to Dino in bed.

MISS BRITTANICK

(coldly)

Dino... before you leave... would you mind taking the garbage down to the street for me? You're a sweet thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANKIN BRIDGE - EVENING

Dino is driving across the Rankin bridge. A hot car pulls alongside and an impromptu drag race begins. The other car's driver misses his shift to third and Dino beats him easily... laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS, HOUSES, STORES IN DINO'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

We see everything that Dino makes reference to. We get a real feel for the town. We hear the RADIO playing in his car. Sometimes Dino sings along to a tune. It's like we're visiting his neighborhood for the weekend and Dino is showing us around. Dino is O.S. during the whole scene.

DINO (V.O.)

This is my town. It's not the greatest fucking town... but it's my town. You know what I mean? I mean I say a lot'a things about Ligonier being beautiful and all but I wouldn't never want to live there. Everybody in Ligonier thinks they're fuckin' great. So sometimes... even if I say Braddock sucks... I really don't mean it. I'm really pretty loyal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The guy that lives in that house there used to have electric trains. He was a good shit. A retarded kid lives in that house. His mother and my mother used to be pretty good friends before my parents got divorced. Then we moved in with my grandmother and shit. So I hardly ever see anybody around here any more. We used to live toward the end of the street there. My uncle's barber shop used to be right there -- now it's a dentist but that used to be his place. I used to sell yum-yums down there. The guy that owns that radio and TV store there? He's a prick. My old man bought a radio from him one time so we could listen to the World Series and the fuckin' thing never worked right and the guy wouldn't fix it. That sucked. You know Miss Brittanick? I used to shovel coal for her furnace and she used to walk around upstairs in her underwear. Christ... I was only fourteen. She's an alky too, I think. I also think she's a nympho to tell you the truth. I don't know. Batting practice, right? Fucking batting practice. Anyway, that's the coal company I used to work at. Before Schapper's. I used to play football in that park over there. I got a concussion one time. I hit my head on that friggin' cement bench there. See it? There's the Greek's. The high school's up that way. I've had the same football coach since I was in midget football. Can you believe that? Same fuckin' guy. I'll bet you a million dollars Cody plays on Saturday. I know him like a book. Oh... that's Doris' house there. Nice... hunh? That's pretty much the whole fucking town. It ain't bad. It ain't that fuckin' bad.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Guidance counselor's office. Dino is discussing the results of his aptitude test with the school counselor -- very similar to Pearl scene earlier. VERY TIGHT on Dino.

DINO

So I don't know. I got an uncle who's got a barber shop business in Ligonier. My mother's boyfriend owns a car dealership in Homestead. I could work at Schapper's Sunoco. I don't know. You know? I'm not going to college so...

COUNSELOR

What about your football?

DINO

What about it?

COUNSELOR

You were all-conference last year... your coach says he would give you a good recommendation. You could go to... you could probably go to Penn State... Slippery Rock... Duquesne... Clarion.

DINO

No way I'll get a scholarship to one of those schools. They're football schools. Those guys look at me. I never scored a touchdown ... never handle the ball... if they're looking for a defensive guy, they look at Cody. You know, I mean there's one game left. Nothing I can do to change it.

Bell rings. Dino gets up.

CUT TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

The Coach talks with Joe Washington.

COACH

I know why you're here and let me tell you something...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COACH (CONT'D)

... you better beat some respect
for authority into your little
brother or he's gonna end up
playing football in prison.

JOE WASHINGTON

He ain't bad... Coach. He's
just...

COACH

I'll tell you... the day I let a
17-year-old kid tell me to... f--
off is the day I quit coaching.

JOE WASHINGTON

Look... he didn't mean it. He
told me he didn't mean it. And
now he's too embarrassed to
apologize. He's scared of you...
he's scared of what the other
players will say. You know...
he's a kid. He don't know.

COACH

I don't know what I can do...
Joe. I don't think I can do
anything for him. He don't
respect me... he don't respect the
team... he don't respect the
discipline. I don't think I can do
anything. What would you do?

Joe sighs.

COACH (cont'd)

How come your mother don't come to
the games anymore? She used to.

JOE WASHINGTON

She got this thing about church
and I don't know. She don't have
much time. You know... that's
part of it...

COACH

Yeah... well, I appreciate your
coming by... but I don't know what
I can do for Cody.

JOE WASHINGTON

You can do whatever you want...
but, you ain't God.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Football practice. The stands are kind of full -- suggesting a lot of interest in the game coming up. TWO COLLEGE SCOUTS are shooting the shit; some parents are watching; recent alumni home early from college or off early from work; Dink is there; Roach, half a dozen newspaper type people, cheerleaders, etc. etc.

COLLEGE SCOUT A

Oh... years and years ago... I saw this fellow Cody Washington's brother play up at Swissvale. I believe he went right after that year to Penn State... it might have been Ohio State and then he ended up screwin' some white chick... that type of shit.

COLLEGE SCOUT B

I heard this fuckin' Cody -- here -- won't be playing at all.

(longish pause)

No way I'm staying the weekend to look at a Dartmouth-style quarterback and a hundred-thirty pound guard. Fuck that.

COLLEGE SCOUT A

Who won the Lehigh Valley Conference last Saturday? Did you go up for that? There's a quarterback up there -- supposed to be a Johnny Unitas type.

COLLEGE SCOUT B

Oh... he's gone... gone straight to Alabama. Coach Bear Bryant flew up himself... took the boy's family out to dinner... flew them all down to Alabama the next morning... put a new fuckin' Oldsmobile in the old man's driveway. They think he's gonna make their program down there.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Football practice is breaking up. Dino and Larkin are having a pushing contest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

You don't even know what you're supposed to do. You don't even know the play book. And the worst part of it is you don't even give a shit.

LARKIN

The reason I don't know the play book is because I almost never play. You can't just memorize it without ever using it.

DINO

Bullshit. You don't know what the fuck you're doing. And the second thing is you're fuckin' scared shit. You play like you got air between your legs.

LARKIN

Dino...

DINO

What... pussy? We're gonna get our asses kicked and you don't give a shit.

Larkin makes no response.

DINO (cont'd)

Why don't you go home, crawl into your mama's lap.

LARKIN

(enraged)

Don't you ever make fun of my mother. You say one more thing about my mother and I'll fucking kill you. You're just a fuckin' Dago and I don't care what you think.

Larkin... tears in his eyes... storms off. Then stops and turns to Dino.

LARKIN (cont'd)

And you don't worry about me on Saturday. Alright? You worry about yourself. You don't have to worry about me.

Larkin pauses and looks Dino in the eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

Okay.

(pause)

I'll make you a deal.

(pause)

We'll put our backs up against each other, right? And we'll both fuckin' kill 'em. How's that?

Dino offers his hand. Larkin looks for a long moment then they shake, sincerely. They walk off.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

The Coach is sitting behind a small desk talking to his assistants.

COACH

Who's the recruiter from Duquesne?

JOHN

D'Allesandro.

COACH

No. Not D'Allesandro. He's not the guy from Syracuse, is he?

JOHN

I thought you said Duquesne.

COACH

No, I said Syracuse.

JOHN

His name is uh... his name is... let me think... Taraschi... Bobby Taraschi. That's the guy.

COACH

Yeah. That's it. That's it. He was here today. Did you see him?

JOHN

No I didn't.

COACH

Yeah... he was here. He wanted to see Cody Washington. I told him and he said he's not interested in staying the weekend if he can't see him play. I don't know. What am I leading up to... John?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

You want Cody back on the team?

COACH

Ahhh... yeah. That's it, John. Really. Really! I hate to do it but Joey Washington come see me -- you remember Joey -- I don't know. You can do it fairly... you bring him back. Let him put his uniform on for the game. Put him in the second half. Let Larkin start it off. You know... like that.

(long pause)

Anybody think that's wrong? Tell me if you think that's the wrong thing to do.

Noncommittal mumbling.

COACH (cont'd)

God Almighty... I mean... crap... you can bite your nose to spite your face but I don't know what that does. Can you talk to Cody before tomorrow... John?

JOHN

Well, he hasn't been going to school this week. He told me his mama is down sick. But I'll see.

COACH

Yeah... well, try to talk to him. You gotta talk to him somehow. Or talk to Joey if you can get a hold of Joey. Like I said, he was here today... so he's around.

JOHN

I'll straighten it out, don't worry. We'll get it straight.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER - EARLY EVENING

Dino leaning against the hood of his car in front of the Greek's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A Jaguar XK-120 pulls in front of the restaurant. Dino has never seen anything like it. A fat guy gets out, goes to the Greek's. He returns later with a pack of cigarettes. He lights one, gets back in the car and takes off. Dino is absolutely mesmerized by the car... the SOUND of the engine... everything.

Mr. Denone walks out of the shadows breaking his reverie.

DOMENIC

Dino.

Mr. Denone whispers very strangely, like a ghost, a shade.

DINO

(jumps, startled)

Jesus... Pop... for crissake...
what're you doin'?

DOMENIC

Here I am. Right here.

Dino says nothing.

DOMENIC (cont'd)

You can look for me down
Russo's. You can look for me up
the VA. You can look for me at
The Iron Gate. The Open Door.
The Eagles. I'm not there... I'm
right here, with my son.

Dino looks confused.

DOMENIC (cont'd)

(long pause)

Who's the queer your mama's going
around with?

DINO

Ah... Jesus Christ... Dad.

DOMENIC

I seen him down Russo's -- seen
him, smelled the bastard -- he
wears enough goddamn Aqua Velva to
fuckin' I don't know what.

DINO

He's just some guy... that's
all. He's got money. He don't
beat her up. She...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOMENIC

It wasn't a fuckin' divorce, it was a fuckin' annulment... by the way.

DINO

Alright.

DOMENIC

(long pause)

Figget it. Figget it. I love looking at you. You're a fuckin' Adonis. A Greek fuckin' statue. A living... phhhew. You don't care.

Mr. Denone turns and walks away from Dino.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - EVENING

A row of storefronts on a city street. Mr. Denone picks up a broken 2x4 from an empty lot and as he goes down the street he methodically breaks every store window on the block until a police patrol car pulls up alongside of him and takes him away.

Seen from a long distance.

CUT TO:

INT. BILL'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Dino is lifting weights in Bill's garage. BILL is a body builder, tattoo artist, ex-con, creep, womanizer, street philosopher, fuck-off, auto-mechanic, survivor. Bill walks in while Dino is lifting. Pearl is with Bill.

BILL

I didn't know you was here, Dino. Pearly... include yourself out. What you benching now, Dino?

DINO

About two hun...

BILL

Pearly. Screw. Take a walk. Hunh? Here... get me a pack of Viceroy's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEARL

Get your own cigarettes.

Pearl storms out of the garage.

DINO

Jesus... you didn't have to kick her out.

BILL

She's the colored girl down the Greek's... not the Queen of Araby. You gotta butt? No, you don't gotta butt. I gotta butt. I hear the coon got his ass kicked... hunh?

DINO

Yeah.

BILL

You can't win without him, can you?

DINO

I don't know.

BILL

You'll win. You know why? You don't even know why. You'll win because you got fuckin' pride, man. Fuckin' pride. You are the fucking best... man.

(long pause)

And don't fuckin' forget it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dino driving down Braddock Avenue. He sees Pearl. Taps his horn. She looks away. He taps the horn again and pulls close to the curb. She looks over.

DINO

I'll give you a ride if you want one.

Pearl looks at Dino and his car suspiciously... then climbs in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEARL
I live down the projects.

DINO
I know. I drove Cody home there.

An uncomfortable silence for a couple of minutes as
Dino drives.

DINO (cont'd)
I told Bill he didn't have to kick
you out the way he did.

PEARL
He ain't nothin' and nothin' can't
hurt me... I'm a Miss Nobody. How
can nothin' hurt a nobody?
(she laughs)
He jus' thinks God made him the
boss... that's all.
(pause)
You know... Cody thinks yo' mad at
him.

DINO
I... I'm... uh...

PEARL
He ain't been to school or even at
home.

Another long silence. Conversation is difficult.

PEARL (cont'd)
I seen you looking at me down the
Greek's... Dino... What was you
looking at? Hunh?

DINO
I don't know.

PEARL
I know what you was looking at...

She laughs. Pearl flies out the door and half runs to
her house. Dino waits until she's inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATE EVENING

Dino runs through the gears in his car smiling at the smooth-running engine. As he stops for a traffic light, flashing lights appear in his rearview mirror.

DINO
Aw... shit. Bullshit!

CUT TO:

STAN THE COP

walking to Dino's car.

STAN
(muffled and confidential; we can hear only phrases)
Didn't look like there was nobody to talk to in the house... what we've got here is a problem... your father was arrested earlier... sometime around ten or ten-thirty, he hanged himself... allegedly... I don't know if it means much to you, but I certainly would like to extend my deepest sympathy.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING

Mr. Denone's body is being pulled off a prison cot by paramedics and put onto a stretcher. There's no blanket over the body... his pants are soaked with urine... his leather belt is still loose around his neck... his hands are all cut up from the broken glass.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grandmother sitting alone in her chair in the dark. Nothing but night SOUNDS.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHAPPER'S SUNOCO - NIGHT

Dino and Dink together. The lights going out. They walk to Dino's car together. Dink seems to be trying to say something to Dino.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUSSO'S BAR - NIGHT

Couple of younger steelworkers leaving. We can faintly hear friendly argument about the game.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dino's mother is outside Kenny's car leaning in, awkwardly kissing him good night.

CUT TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Coach working at 16mm game films. Mr. Gaeta is sitting nearby nodding off.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD TRESTLE - NIGHT

Dino's car is on the middle of the rusty trestle. He is leaning on the edge of the railing staring out at the tracks. He seems to have been there a long time. He is holding a small snapshot in his hands. He slowly looks down at the photo and then lets it fall from his fingertips. The photograph flutters slowly to the tracks as Dino gets into his car. The CAMERA MOVES toward the photo and we see it is a picture of Dino's parents. It is a beautiful sunny photograph and they are younger and beautiful. Dino's father is holding a five-year-old Dino in his arms. It is the happiest we have seen him... in his daddy's arms.

DINO (V.O.)

(long, long pause)

I love trains. I love fuckin' trains. I love that trains is so big that nobody'd dream of fuckin' with it... you know... so powerful people just kind of respect it. I love knowin' you can go on a train and go someplace else. I love that. I love the idea of getting the fuck out-a-here whenever you want. Nobody to mess with you. That's what I love.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I love that shit. Just arrowin'
down the train tracks. Past the
rich houses. Past the poor
houses. Past the niggers. Never
giving a shit and everybody just
standin' along the side admiring
the way you look and the way you
move and the power you got. All
the way along the tracks, all the
way to who the fuck-knows.

Dino looks directly into the smokestack of the loco-
motive as it passes under the bridge.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Students are moving from their lockers to class. We
hear parts of conversations... all about Dino's father.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC CLASS - MORNING

Miss Brittanick is addressing the class. Dino's chair
is conspicuously empty.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach is pacing around the tiny office. Mr. Gaeta is
sitting on a folding chair in the corner near Coach's
desk.

COACH
This is a terrible thing, John.
God Almighty, a terrible thing.
What could have possessed the
man? God Almighty. That poor
boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANKIN BRIDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Cody is finishing the last strains of the blues. As he
pulls the sax away from his mouth and hears the sound
decay across the river he turns and sees Dino standing
there, a large gym bag next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO

Pearl told me you thought I was mad...

(pause)

I brought your stuff.

CODY

What stuff?

DINO

Your football stuff. Helmet, pads, jock... stinks. Shoes... stuff.

CODY

Wha' for?

DINO

What for?... What for?

(pause)

Let me tell you somethin': you are fucked up! My mother is fucked up!

(Dino's rage builds)

And my daddy... my poor daddy is really fucked up!

(starts to sob but in a rage still)

... and I'm tellin' you, you fuckin' nigger, you aren't gonna let me get fucked up! You're gonna come to the fuckin' game and sit there in your fuckin' uniform... maybe the coach'll get the message, maybe he won't. But I ain't lettin' you cocksuckers fuck me up!

Dino is in a controlled hysteria. He picks up the bag and hurls it into Cody's lap. He looks at Cody and then grabs Cody's saxophone and smashes it on the side of the pier, hurling the neck as far out into the river as he can. It has happened so fast Cody can only watch. Dino then crashes down on the bank next to Cody, tears of rage streaming down his cheeks. Cody reaches over and hands Dino his paper bag with the wine bottle. Dino takes a long swig.

DINO (cont'd)

Jesus Christ! You still drinkin' that same shit! Jesus, Cody! It tastes like paint!

They both fall back against the pier, laughing!

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Players are gathered around waiting for practice to begin.

BOGDAN

Do you think he'll come to practice?

AL

I dunno. His old man was a mess. I dunno if Dino even liked him. I just dunno.

BOGDAN

I never know what to say... you know? What can you say? When Victor's old man died we just sort of ignored it.

AL

Yeah... but... it wasn't even the season then. You can't fuckin' ignore something like this. Christ, we were practically there when it happened. You know.

LARKIN

If it were me I'd be embarrassed if you made a big deal.

One of the players, Joe, the quarterback, spots Dino walking upfield. They all stand there awkwardly. Then Larkin breaks away from the crowd.

LARKIN (cont'd)

Dino! Yo! Dino!

He leaves the group to walk toward Dino... the rest of the group follows. They shake hands spontaneously and huddle together as to support and comfort Dino. There is a joy and intimacy to this that is very real and beautiful.

CUT TO:

INT. THE IRON GATE

A steelworker's bar. PAN a long shelf filled with hard hats... some painted... names on them... MUSIC and NOISE. ISOLATE on TWO HOSPITAL ORDERLIES -- wearing hospital greens -- having a drink before their shift.

ORDERLY A

I hope nobody croaks themselves tonight, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORDERLY B

Ugh.

ORDERLY A

I couldn't eat at all today. Even today at lunch I still couldn't eat. Not even a sandwich.

ORDERLY B

I went home last night and had two drinks and I still couldn't sleep. I just kept seeing him... ugh... I still see him.

CUT TO:

SLOW PAN - BROKEN STOREFRONT WINDOWS

... Mr. and Mrs. Larkin and Wayne drive by in their Studebaker.

CUT TO:

INT. DINO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mother, Grandmother and Dino and Doris sitting in perfect silence in the living room. The doorbell RINGS.

GRANDMOTHER

(cruelly)

What's she crying for? What are you crying for... silly little girl... cough.

MRS. DENONE

Mother...

DINO

She's my girlf...

DORIS

Because it hurts me too.

The doorbell RINGS.

DINO

I'll get it.

DORIS

Maybe I should go now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. DENONE
No, you stay. People need
friends.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wayne Larkin on the front steps. Mr. and Mrs. Larkin waiting in the car behind him. Wayne is holding a baked ham... rolls... potato salad... etc. on a platter. Dino answers the door.

LARKIN
My mother... ahem... wanted to bring this over to the house for your mother. She thought maybe you wouldn't have time to cook with all that's been going on. Okay, I'll see ya.

DINO
Hey... wait... thanks. Thanks for bringing it over.

LARKIN
Okay.

DINO
Okay.

Wayne nods... opens his mouth as if to say something... then turns and goes down the steps.

CUT TO:

INT. CODY WASHINGTON'S HOUSE - MORNING

The kitchen. Mrs. Washington, Joe Washington, Cody and Pearl are all sitting at the table. CAMERA IS TIGHT on Pearl as scene opens.

Mrs. Washington is O.S. Pearl is reacting to what she hears. CAMERA THEN PANS the whole table, finally landing on Mrs. Washington.

MRS. WASHINGTON
It says in the Book of Solomon
what those things are.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

It says those things are vexations of the spirit... such things as fancy clothes are... un-churched ... music is... dancing is. And the vexations is because they mean you cannot know Jesus with them things on your mind. And so you leave the devil take them vexatious things down to his own place.

PEARL

All I want to get is a dress like I saw in the advertising. Jesus ain't gonna mind if I wear a new dress...

MRS. WASHINGTON

(with sharp, self-righteous anger)

And what I'm saying is they is things which will bring you close to Jesus and things what take you away from Jesus and when you dress in a way that provokes a man's lust you are taking you'self away from Jesus and you are taking that man away from thinking of Jesus...

Pearl looks away, resentful and resigned.

JOE WASHINGTON

It's just a dress and that ain't worth fightin' over... Pearl. You and Mama can't be fighting over everything all the time.

CUT TO:

INT. RUSSO'S BAR AND GRILL

The BARTENDER is talking to one of the old-time regulars.

BARTENDER

(pours two shots)

Here's to Domenic. God spare him his sadness.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREEK'S - EVENING

Larkin is standing outside. He sees Dino approaching.

LARKIN

Hey! Dino, I was sure you'd make it to the dance.

DINO

I'm comin' very close to sayin'... fuck it!

LARKIN

Yeah... I'm just too... you know... too nervous about tomorrow and shit to stay at home. How you doin'? How's your mother and stuff?

DINO

(sort of surprised
and touched that
Larkin asks)

Good... good thanks. Funeral's Monday. Out in Ligonier -- where my uncle lives.

LARKIN

Practice was pretty sharp today with those fuckin' TV cameras and shit, hunh? Did you think so? Didn't you?

Dino is looking at Pearl. Larkin notices.

DINO

Hunh? Yeah. Yeah... that was pretty sharp. Down the gas station fuckin' Schapper told me he saw me on the sports news.

LARKIN

I feel good about tomorrow... Dino. I mean I really feel like I can do it. I fuckin'... I just fuckin' feel it. Like my fuckin' groin tickles. Did you ever have that?

DINO

We'll beat 'em out of their fuckin' jockstraps... Wayne-o.

LARKIN

Yeah. You're right. Fuckin'-A.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doris arrives.

DORIS
I'm here! Oh, Dino, I'm sooo glad
you came.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - EVENING

The band -- it's a band called the Roman Numerals.
VERY TIGHT on lead singer. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal
other couples. Dino and Doris are dancing.

DORIS
This is the nicest night of my
life... the music's perrrf...

DINO
Yeah.

Doris sings softly along with the band.

DINO
Doris?

DORIS
Yes?

DINO
Never mind.

DORIS
No. Say it.

DINO
Would... uh you like to stay? Or
I'll give you a ride home.
Whatever you want. I just all of
a sudden... I can't stay. I can't
stay because I feel really sick.

DORIS
Well... ah... I don't know. Uh...
maybe I'll... I think I'll stay.
Are you sure you're all right? Is
it... is it... because of your
father?

DINO
No... ah... I don't know. I just
started feeling crummy.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (CONT'D)

But uhm... I'm really glad you're going to stay. That makes me feel better. That makes me feel a lot better.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING

Parking lot outside the gym. Dino walking to his car. He climbs into the front seat, then stops. His father's Ghost is sitting in the front seat.

GHOST

Hey... you whoremaster... You'll go to hell for what you're thinking. Hahahahaha.

(pause)

Touch my hands.

Dino leans over, puts his hands in his father's hands.

GHOST (cont'd)

Yeah. Yeah. My son. How could I have gone away without saying goodbye? Ahh... I didn't know I was gonna do it until I did it. It's easy to kill yourself. It almost happens by accident. Jesus... you're a beautiful boy. How could I have lost you? I grieve... Dino... in death I grieve because I lost you.

(long pause)

God doesn't punish you for much... Dino. Most of the stuff you'd think He'd be pissed off about He don't even care about. He's mad at me because you were my gift and I didn't ever see what a valuable thing He gave me. That's the only thing He got mad about. Didn't care if I was divorced. Didn't care if I spent too much time at Russo's. He was mad at me for losing my gift. Now all I can do is watch you -- I can never be with you... you see? Don't you see? That's my hell.

SFX: TAP TAP TAP

CUT TO:

EXT. DINO'S CAR

Pearl is standing outside the window of Dino's car, bent over, looking in.

PEARL

You okay?

DINO

(looks at Pearl,
says nothing,
then speaks)

You want to go for a ride?

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - EVENING

Dance. Football players are standing in a circle near the door to the dance floor. They sort of mildly harass anybody who comes in or goes out as they bullshit among themselves.

FRESHMAN BOY comes along from the corridor.

PLAYER

I gotta check your fly, please.

FRESHMAN

Wha?

PLAYER

I gotta see your fly before you go into the dance.

FRESHMAN

Get out.

PLAYER

I am gonna get fuckin' ossified tomorrow night... win or lose... I gotta bottle of Bacardi... a fuckin' six-pack of Coke. Sayonara.

PLAYER

Dino leave?

PLAYER

Yeah.

Girl walks by. Guys all give her the eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PLAYER

I tell you... I do not want to be in fuckin' Dino's shoes tomorrow. He's gonna be fuckin' working his ass off once those guys figure it out that the only thing between them and a fuckin' touchdown is Wayne Larkin. Jeezus.

FRESHMAN BOY walks by.

PLAYER

Fly.

FRESHMAN

What?

PLAYER

Check your fly, please.

Freshman checks his fly, nothing wrong.

PLAYER

Thank you very much. Christ, that fuckin' Larkin dancing with Doris? Talk about a fuckin' insult.

CUT TO:

LARKIN AND DORIS

in the middle of the dance floor talking.

LARKIN

I used to not like Dino... but now... uh... now I think he's a real good egg. Ahem. You know... some of the other fellows are going over to the Greek's. If you want to go over there I'd be glad to walk you. I gotta be home pretty soon... I won't be able to sleep... but I gotta try.

DORIS

No... no I don't think so.

LARKIN

Oh... okay... g'night.

He leans over to kiss her... awkwardly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Ooooooh. What are you doing?

LARKIN

I don't know what I was thinking of. I'm sorry. Lookit. Don't tell Dino... alright... Oh... Christ.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dino and Pearl are driving fast down a highway. The windows are rolled down... it's an Indian summer night. Harvest moon. The RADIO is playing loudly.

DINO

I love driving. That's what I love the best.

PEARL

I love getting dressed up and going dancing.

DINO

Fuck that... driving is fuckin' it. I seen this car. I never seen nothing like it. It had to be like French or something. Jacquar. Is that French?

PEARL

I don't know.

Dino muttering to himself alternate pronunciations. Jacqueer, Jag... Jac... I don't know.

PEARL (cont'd)

What do you hate?

DINO

What do I hate? Christ. Being short. Being Italian. My grandmother living with us. The smell of the school when you open the door in the morning. Getting jerked off. Work. The smell of the fuckin' mills on a hot day. People telling me what to do. That little fuckin' tapping sound in the engine. Rich kids.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (CONT'D)

Music class -- I don't know. What do you hate?

PEARL

I hate being left out. I hate that nothing ever works out for me. My mother. Never being happy. Nobody asking me to the dance. Not having anybody. The Greek. School. I don't know... You ever kiss a colored girl, Dino? You ever touch one? Hunh? I know you like me... why don't you tell me? Why? Hunh? You screw your music teacher... hunh?

CAMERA MOVES OUTSIDE the car and like a soul chasing a star to heaven moves up and up over the car until it is just a shape and then just dots of red and white light and then gone -- as if swallowed -- by the cool, dark night.

PEARL (V.O.)

You be too embarrassed to tell me ... to tell that you like me.

(laughs)

Because you're just a nobody like me. You're a nothin' and a nobody. And you'll never do nothin' for nobody.

DINO (V.O.)

That ain't true. That just ain't true. It ain't the truth at all about me.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - EVENING

Russo's Bar and Grill. The SCOUT is boasting to a regular about the players he's seen and recruited.

SCOUT A

Shit... yeah. I scouted him. I scouted Joe Reeves. I scouted fuckin' Gilliam... Mirenzi. Two guys I scouted out of Vandergrift are playing proball. McKeesport -- two or three guys from out of McKeesport -- do you know Tommy Ramsey? Well... He was Swissvale. But... Liddle... I scouted Liddle when he was at Wilkinsburg. Now he's pitching for the Giants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGULAR

Did you ever scout Unitas?

SCOUT A

No. I never scouted Unitas. But I did scout Kosko for Duquesne.

REGULAR

No shit... Kosko... really?

SCOUT A

Oh... yeah.

REGULAR

How was Kosko... was he a good shit?

SCOUT A

He was decent. I scouted Don Hoak; he was a real good shit. He'll probably play for the Eagles. 'Course he's a decent third baseman... too... he could end up with the Athletics. Dalrymple... Covington.

REGULAR

Christ... you know fuckin' everybody.

SCOUT A

Yeah... Listen... speaking of local talent... I wouldn't mind scoutin' some tail... you know what I mean?

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The A.M.E. Pentacostal Church. CLOSE ON Joe, Cody and Pearl who are sitting closer to the front. It's not a traditional church. It's more of a storefront-style meeting house of the type you see in the black section of many large cities. We HEAR the voice of Reverend Miller.

REVEREND MILLER

Surely as the Lord made the blind man to see and the deaf man to hear and the leperous man clean so shall He be here with us today.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND MILLER (CONT'D)

For our faith shall bring us the
Lord's grace and that grace shall
bring us healing.

(bends over to
one of the faithful)

The man here has an asthmatic
condition and so I pray you, Lord,
to clear his lungs. Hallelujah,
hallelujah.

The choir breaks into song.

CUT TO:

CHOIR

as Mrs. Washington moves forward to begin her solo.

MRS. WASHINGTON

Reverend... I'm not praying for no
physical healing. I'm praying for
my family. I'm praying to heal
what's separating us from each
other and making it hard for us to
talk to each other. God knows our
troubles. God know what's keeping
us apart.

She steps back, nods to her children, then steps
forward and begins to sing.

TIGHT on Pearl, her face softens as she is moved by her
mother's singing. Something happens. A miracle?

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The county football field. Beautiful turf. Nice
stands. The wind is blowing some papers around. The
stands are completely empty. We hear Mrs. Washington's
solo over this whole scene.

MRS. WASHINGTON (cont'd)

Ane he will raise you up on
eagle's wings, and bear you on the
breath of dawn, and make the sun
to shine on you.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

A groundskeeper is talking to a security GUARD. They spot a solitary figure walking slowly across the middle of the field.

GUARD

Hey. You. Get off the field!

He runs toward the figure. Cody.

GUARD

(approaching)

Get off the field. You can't be on the field.

CODY

I'm s'p'osed to be on the field.
I'm on the team.

(he gestures to
the "B" on his
letterman's jacket)

I'm jus' a little early.

Cody looks around the stadium.

CODY

... Now, where's the locker room?

The speechless Guard gestures toward a passageway at the middle of the stadium.

CODY (cont'd)

... Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY LOCKER ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Cody, fully dressed, sitting in the middle of the locker room.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Braddock players filing off a rented bus. A rag tag bunch. Across the way Walnut Grove players are getting off their own beautiful dark green bus. They are neatly dressed in ties, blazers, and gray slacks. The Braddock players laugh and point disrespectfully. The coach whacks one or two on the back of their heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (V.O.)

I hate Walnut Grove so much it's not even funny... man. All my life it's been guys like that. Their rich parents give them everything they want. Nice cars, nice clothes, nice houses. What do they need this goddam game for? This is our game. This is all we got. If those guys win it's one more thing. One more thing... man. Please, God... don't let them take this from me. I'll do anything You want. This is all I'll ever ask. Don't let them take this from me. Please, God. Amen.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

As each player walks in, each is surprised to see Cody. Cody is silent with his head bowed which sort of cuts off any communication. Nobody knows whether Cody is supposed to be there or not. Larkin enters. His mouth falls open. He's shocked, surprised, and hurt all at the same time. Does this mean I don't play after all? The Coach is observing all this and using it.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD STANDS - LATE AFTERNOON

As they begin to fill up. Pre-game activity. Lots of people drinking. Roach is talking to Mrs. Costello -- the coach of the cheerleaders. Roach talks in a kind of peculiar ragtime, constantly moving and swaying as he speaks.

ROACH

Nomamamamamama. Do it like this.

Roach goes into his semi-erotic, semi-Elvis cheerleading routine.

MRS. COSTELLO

You just go back and sit down. This is for cheerleaders only.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROACH
Jusachanman. Dodadanceman.

Roach continues dancing.

MRS. COSTELLO
I'm not going to allow that.
There are children at this game.
Go back to your seat.

ROACH
Like this. Like this.

Does another dancing routine, somewhat less suggestive.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - PRE-GAME

Coach is talking to one of the players.

COACH
Do you have a younger brother...
plays Pop Warner?

PLAYER
Yes, sir.

COACH
Looks awfully good... played
against my nephew this morning.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - PRE GAME

Walnut Grove Coach is giving his pre-game speech to a group of boys who have the look of posture and privilege... a marked contrast to the Tigers. The Coach has the bearing of an army officer.

COACH
It's been a long, trying season,
men. And you have given up much
to be here on the threshold of
victory. You've taken on the
burden and hard work, pain, and
personal sacrifice for this
achievement.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COACH (CONT'D)

Now that you have victory upon your doorstep you mustn't let it slip away to the unworthy. You must seize what is yours by birthright and prove that discipline and order and heritage prevail. So go and make your families proud. Make this a moment that will live in your hearts and minds forever. Reverend, would you lead us in prayer?

CUT TO:

INT. TIGERS' LOCKER ROOM - PREGAME

COACH

I wonder if there might be a way to get a small light out on the field near the bench. I always end up... late in these evening games without enough light. Is there some way we can get something out there?

ASSISTANT

You know... some of the teams use those Coleman lanterns. That seems to work out.

COACH

Sure... that'd be fine. Yeah... one of those.

ASSISTANT

Yeah... well... maybe I shouldn't have said anything cause I don't know where I can get one tonight.

LARKIN

My father has one in his car...
ahem.

COACH

(completely ignores
Larkin)

Well... if you can find one... get it. If you can't, you can't. John... let's go talk for a minute... alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Exit Coach and Assistant. Dino shakes his head.

LARKIN

I don't think I'm gonna get to
play.

His voice cracks with tears of frustration and
nerves. Cody slowly rocks on his bench with his helmet
on.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD STANDS - EARLY EVENING

Roach is screwing around, showing the cheerleaders some
moves. Mrs. Costello keeps chasing him away but he
keeps coming back. Joey Washington is standing against
the cyclone fence behind the home bench. Next to him
is Pearl. The two scouts, some reporters, yearbook
photographers, etc. are also standing there. Lots of
people drinking.

PEARL

I think I'd rather sit up there
than stand down here, Joey.

JOE

Why?

PEARL

I just do is all.

CUT TO:

MRS. DENONE

as she steps gingerly past a bunch of guys getting
shitfaced on beer and peppermint schnapps and sits down
next to the only "safe" looking person in the
vicinity... Mr. Larkin.

MRS. DENONE

I think I know you... does your
son play on the team?

MR. LARKIN

Yes... Wayne Larkin.

MRS. DENONE

Oh... you're Mr. Larkin. Oh... is
Mrs. Larkin here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. LARKIN

No... she always stays at home.
It's too rough for her in the
stands.

MR. DENONE

I wanted to thank her for the ham
platter she sent over.

TWO SCOUTS in the stands.

SCOUT A

I thought I was dead. Giant
fuckin' coon in a white dinner
jacket. I don't know if he was
her fuckin' pimp or her boyfriend
or what. Anyway nothin'... not
even a handjob. And worse of all
I stayed at a friggin' Quality
Courts last night. They used to
be good hotels. Fuckin' no radio.
No soap. I wake up with a
friggin' bun on. This better be
some fuckin' game. Where'd you
stay last night?

SCOUT B

Well... Paul Sahobey asked me to
scout a semi-pro game for him up
in McKeesport. There's a guy that
plays there they like. So I went
up... stayed at a place... nothing
special. Clean.

SCOUT A

You pick up freelance scouts like
that all the time?

SCOUT B

Well... not all the time... Just
sometimes a guy'll ask me to drop
in on a practice or see a game for
him. Twenty bucks... thirty
maybe. And plus I knew a lot of
these guys from when I used to...

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen... boys and
girls... coming onto the field
now... from Sewickley... The
Walnut Grove Swordsmen. And...
ladies and gentlemen... boys and
girls... from Braddock... The
Braddock High School Tigers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An empty bottle of Four Roses flies across the field and breaks against a helmet lying on the ground next to the visitors' bench.

CUT TO:

GROUP OF GUYS

who threw the bottle. NELSON and Mary Alice are sitting behind them... students from Walnut Grove Academy.

NELSON

You do that again and I'll see that you're thrown out.

GUY

You're a douche. You're a fuckin' douchebag. Aaaaaaaa. "I'll see that you're thrown out." Faggot.

He pops him one great shot in the mouth and nose. Nelson is bleeding like crazy.

GUY (cont'd)

Fuck him.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

The Walnut Grove Swordsmen will elect to receive.

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON DORIS THROUGHOUT

This is Dino's cheer.

CHEERLEADERS

D... E... N... O... N... E.
He's honest and true...
He's a Tiger through and through...
DE-NONE... DE-NONE... He's the guy
that's gonna bring it home.
Yay-aaaaaaaaaaa-DINO!

CUT TO:

BALL

being placed on the tee by Kramer, the kicker. He looks back at his guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Looks across the line to the Swordsmen. Looks to the sideline at the Coach. Looks to the end zone at the Channel 6 TV truck. Up in the stands on the other side of the field. BLAMMO... He kicks off.

Returned to the thirty-five yard line.

CUT TO:

SOMEWHERE BEHIND THE STANDS

Where the cops and the ambulances would be are the guys who popped Nelson. STAN the Cop is talking to them. The ambulance guy is fixing Nelson's nose. Mary Alice is standing there with Nelson's blood on her coat.

GUY

He said he was gonna fuckin' throw me out. Fuck him.

STAN

Watch your mouth.

Crowd roars.

CUT TO:

FIRST PLAY FROM SCRIMMAGE

As Walnut Grove is in the huddle Larkin and Dino are on the defensive line.

DINO

I know they're gonna run the first play at you. Don't try to fire in, just stand your ground and I'll nail the cocksucker. Don't try to be a fuckin' hero. Just stand your ground and tie up your man... you hear me?... you hear me?

Larkin nods nervously. The Walnut Grove offense comes to the line. The players get down in their stances.

DINO (cont'd)

Nail that zitface, Wayne.

The Walnut Grove player is distracted for a tiny instant as the ball is snapped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Larkin ties him up and Dino slithers in to make the tackle. Two yard loss, the next play is run off the other side for a three yard gain. Incomplete long pass. Punt. Eugene fields the punt then runs to the sidelines and hands off to J.R. who reverses the field and rushes 75 yards. Touchdown! Extra point good. Braddock 7 - Walnut Grove 0.

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON LARKIN

as we hear the cheerleaders. He's so proud you think his chest is gonna burst.

CHEERLEADERS

L... A... R... K... I... N. He's
honest and true he's a Tiger
through and through. LAR-KIN
LAR-KIN. He'll send Walnut Grove
to the PARK-KIN lot.
Ya-yyyyyy-ayyy WAYNE!

FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOY

crying hysterically. He's been separated from his parents.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Will the mother and father of a
small boy wearing blue pants and a
red coat whose name is... excuse
me a minute... whose name is
Steven, please come to the stadium
office in the rear of the
visitors' section. Will the
parents of a small boy... about
four-years-old... named Steven,
please come to the stadium office
at the rear of the visitors'
section.

(off mike)

We'll find your mama.

CUT TO:

FIELD

Walnut Grove settles down. Drives methodically upfield, mostly over Larkin. Third and two on the Tigers' thirty-five.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO
Bogdan, you and Larkin shift right
before the snap. Remember when I
call it... shift.

The teams line up.

DINO (cont'd)
Shift!!!

Larkin and Bogdan move. Larkin's man is startled and
drives forward. The play is a mess. WHISTLE blows and
the drive is stopped. Dino laughs to himself.

CHEERLEADERS
LO-CO-MOTIVE. STEAM. PULL
TOGETHER TEAM. LOCO-MOTIVE.
LOCO-MOTIVE STEAM STEAM STEAM.
WHOOOOOOO-OOOOOOO. TIGERS!
TIGERS!

CUT TO:

WALNUT GROVE COACH

screaming at his quarterback on the sidelines.

Braddock takes over and after a couple of first downs
the quarter runs out.

Braddock 7 - Walnut Grove 0

Second Quarter. Braddock's luck runs out. Walnut
Grove runs at Larkin and Larkin's desire starts to run
out. Near the end of the half -- Walnut Grove 13 -
Braddock 7.

DINO
Wayne-o, you're lettin' 'em push
you all over the fuckin' place.
Shit. You're bigger'n him, stick
the fucker.

Larkin cannot answer... just wheezes, uncomfortably.

DINO (cont'd)
Well, then, hold the cocksucker,
do anything. Jesus.

On the next play Larkin awkwardly holds his opponent.
WHISTLE. Fifteen yard penalty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DINO (cont'd)
(shaking his head)
Jee-sus, Wayne.

Tigers have to punt. Kramer nails one over the receiver's head. Fumbles. Great coverage. Braddock recovers. First and goal on the seven. Two runs, right side. No gain. Braddock huddle.

JOE
Dino, through you, off tackle left side on two.

DINO
(out of huddle)
Wayne, you got to kill that cocksucker one time. You got to nail him good. Be a hero, we need this play. One time, baby. They are stackin' the right side. Nail the cocksucker and you got pussy for life, man!

Larkin is silent. They slowly get into the stance. Larkin looks his man in the eye.

LARKIN
I'm comin' at you, shitbrain. I'm gonna knock your head right through your asshole.

Dino can't believe his ears. The ball is snapped. Larkin's man fires out at him, completely ignoring the play. Larkin backs up quickly and his man stumbles and crawls after him trying to kill him. Eugene bursts through the enormous hole. Touchdown. Larkin's man looks at Larkin, then turns to see the result of the play. Dino pounds Larkin, laughing. Time runs out.

Halftime -- Braddock 14 - Walnut Grove 14

CHEERLEADERS
WE'RE GONNA BEAT WALNUT GROVE.
WE'RE GONNA BEAT WALNUT GROVE.
WE'RE GONNA PUT 'EM IN THE BUS.
WE'RE GONNA SEND 'EM DOWN THE
ROAD. BEAT WALNUT GROVE!!!!

CUT TO:

STANDS

PEARL
I thought Cody was s'posed to play.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOE

Cody'll play. They just don't need him yet.

PEARL

Well... I ain't staying much longer if Cody don't play.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen... fall is a time when nature shows its true colors and now showing you their true colors are the Twirl-A-Gigs from Central High School, coached by Mrs. Marie Stout to song "Autumn Leaves"...

CUT TO:

THE TWIRL-A-GIGS

Twirling to "AUTUMN LEAVES."

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen... will the owner of a 1951 Chevrolet Sedan Deluxe, license number BYY-495, return to your vehicle... your lights are on.

CUT TO:

THE SCOUTS

SCOUT

What did I tell you the first day I seen you here? All they got without fuckin' Cody Washington is a sawed-off guinea guard and a halfway decent Ivy League-type quarterback. There's nothing else here. It's a waste of time to even watch it. And Walnut Grove? Forget it. Most of these guys are fuckin' juniors. And besides that -- even if they're good -- they all go to fuckin' Harvard or Yale anyway. There's nothing here to see... except for the friggin' Twirl-A-Gigs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCOUT

I don't agree with you. That Joey Wilson kid... the quarterback kid... he's got a lot of maturity. He's playing in a tough division. I don't see him as strictly Ivy League. No, sir.

A beer can comes whizzing down from the stands, hits Scout in the shoulder, spilling beer all over him and his friend.

SCOUT

Jesus Christ. Can you see who threw that? Hunh?

CUT TO:

A FIGHT

in the stands. From the general area where the beer can came from.

CROWD

Go-go-go-go-go-go-go.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Anyone... throwing cans or bottles... or any other object onto the playing field or in the stands will be asked to leave. We repeat.

CUT TO:

INT. TIGERS' LOCKER ROOM - HALF-TIME

Boys are padding around whispering... laying on the benches... The Coach and his assistants are in their private room.

DINO

(to Larkin)

You're doing fuckin' great.

(to Cody)

Isn't he, Cody? Tell him. He's doing fuckin' great.

CODY

(nods)

Stick 'em... Larkin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILL

Eat shit... you peckerhead.

Some of the guys on the Tigers turn to each other and laugh. The kicker loses his concentration and sets up again. Dino is doubled over practically.

A squibbler.

Dino falls on it. Tigers' ball at the 49-yard line.

Both teams set up at the line.

Draw play. Tigers fumble. Walnut Grove picks it up for a touchdown.

CUT TO:

PLACEKICKER

setting the ball up. This time the hoots and jeers are relentless. He calls time-out. His coach is furious with him. (Like Ditka with Doug Flutie last year.) A new guy goes in to kick. The crowd tries to psyche him out. Guys on the Tigers team are laughing.

Blammo.

Out of the end zone. Tigers ball on the 20.

Larkin is badly beaten on three plays which lead to a fourth down and 18 situation. Time out.

CUT TO:

SIDELINE

Coach pulls the team around.

COACH

God almighty! You're all completely out of focus. It's terrible. Now... let's execute a fly pattern to Al. We'll look like we're set up for the punt. Go! Go! Go! Let's go, come on, boys.

Second half. Braddock's luck has run out. Two methodical touchdowns. Late in the third quarter.

Walnut Grove 26 - Braddock 14

CUT TO:

CODY

sitting on the bench.

CUT TO:

ASSISTANT COACH

Mr. Gaeta looks at Cody then toward the Coach. He wants to suggest something but can't find a way to break into the Coach's silence.

CUT TO:

WALNUT GROVE HUDDLE

PLAYER 1

We shut that dago up!

PLAYER 2

That tub is a real pussy.

Zitface agrees. He's been intensely quiet. Methodically pounding Larkin.

PLAYER 1

Wonder why they're not putting that coon in?

PLAYER 2

He's probably a pussy, too.

Zitface is quiet during this exchange, obviously something on his mind.

Both teams are set. Tigers' ball.

Blammo.

Gain of three yards in a giant pile up.

Larkin struggles slowly, slowly to his feet. He feels his nose. It's soft and broken and bleeding like a son of a bitch. The front of his uniform is practically covered with his own blood. He quivers with pain and anger.

Both teams are set.

Larkin fires off, completely destroying that side of the line... pushing his opposing lineman into his linebacker and then pinning him to the ground. Larkin hangs over the lineman, letting the blood from his nose drip on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARKIN

I hate you. I'm gonna kill you.

Larkin's rage so completely scares the shit out of the opposing lineman that he practically jumps out of his way on every play.

Larkin is pushing him around like a pat of butter on a hot waffle. The Tigers score.

End of the third quarter.

Walnut Grove 26 - Braddock 21

The crowd picks up the chant -- "Lar-kin, Lar-kin."

ROACH'S CHEER

DADADADADADADADADADADA. LARKIN.
LARKIN. LARKIN. DODODODODODODODO.
LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN.
RAMAMA MAMA. LARKIN. LA-RRRRRRR-
KIN. LARKIN. LARKIN.
KILLDEMMAMABABY. LARKIN. LARKIN.
COMEONLEMMHEARYASAYIT. LARKIN.
LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN.
LARKIN.

The whole stands join in for the first time.

ROACH'S CHEER (cont'd)

LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN. LARKIN.
LARKIN.

CUT TO:

OPPOSING TEAM'S BENCH

WALNUT GROVE COACH

(screaming)

What did 43 say to you? You look
like you got rigor mortis out
there.

PLAYER

He said he hated me and he was
gonna kill me.

WALNUT GROVE COACH

And you believe him? He's a
second string tackle, for crying
out loud. He's not gonna kill
anybody.

CUT TO:

COACH

on the sidelines talking to John Gaeta.

COACH

The coach at Walnut Grove...
what's his name? Rudy, is it?

JOHN

Something like that.

COACH

Rudy I think. I always thought
that was a funny name.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

A special note to parents... The
Pick Six raffle for the
Oldsmobile, courtesy of Kenny
Loomis Olds of Central Avenue in
Homestead will be held on
December 8. You still have time
to purchase your Pick Six tickets
from any parent representative...
at the Knights of Pithias Hall...
at Schapper's Sunoco on Green
Street... at Russo's Tavern and
Grill... The Greek's Ice Cream and
Sandwich Parlor... or at Kenny
Loomis Oldsmobile in Homestead.
Thank you. At the third
quarter... the leading rusher is
Tigers' quarterback Joe Wilson
with 92 yards on the ground. Once
again, a reminder... anyone found
throwing bottles... cans or any
other object on or near the
playing field or in the stands
will be subject to ejection.

CUT TO:

KRAMER

placing the ball on the tee. He does his ritual look
left... look right... look ahead... look back. Then...

Blammo!

A towering end over end kick. Larkin is covering the
kick-off. He's clipped badly as he goes for the
tackle. There's a pile up. His leg is pushed in two
different directions. He gets up from the pile.
Falls. Gets up again. Falls. Gets up again.
Falls. His leg is thoroughly broken.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Time-out. Stretchers. Ambulance on the field... the whole bit.

CUT TO:

MR. LARKIN AND MRS. DENONE

in the stands.

MRS. DENONE

I'm sure he's okay because...
look... it looks like your son's
talking to him.

MR. LARKIN

He doesn't play that often...
that's how you get hurt... if you
don't play that often. Allzit
takes is one play... and... I
better go down to the field...
excuse me.

CUT TO:

PLAYING FIELD

Joe... the team captain... comes back to report to his
players from Larkin's side at the ambulance.

JOE

Man... he's passed out and he's
puking. His old man's here. He
wants 'em to call a priest.
Man... his old man's crying and
all... ooooh...

All the boys huddle together. No one knows what to say
or do. The ambulance slowly pulls off the field...
SIREN and lights going. The Coach and his assistants
go back to the bench. The team... bloody and beat up
themselves... stand as if to confront the coach.

COACH

(very defensively)

Wayne is going to be okay. He's
got a badly broken leg and he's in
shock because of the pain but he's
going to be okay and... uh...
well, maybe it's my fault. I knew
he was tired... uh... I could see
that. Cody... I'd like you to go
in for the rest of the quarter.
Let's go.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - CODY WASHINGTON

He doesn't budge. Then slowly -- very slowly -- he gets up.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen... Cody
Washington entering the game for
Larkin. Washington.

CUT TO:

JOE AND PEARL

CUT TO:

ROACH

CUT TO:

OPPOSING BENCH

CUT TO:

SCOUTS

CUT TO:

TWIRL-A-GIGS AND CHEERLEADERS

CUT TO:

CODY ON THE LINE

Blammo!

Cody pushes aside his man like nothing. Tigers gain ten yards on every play -- a simple off tackle play.

Cody is a phenomenon. Walnut Grove tries putting two and three men on Cody but it doesn't change a thing.

They stop Walnut Grove cold with a devastating defense and take over with just enough time left to move downfield and score. If they give up the ball or fail to score, the game is lost.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They gobble up huge chunks of yardage using the same play: handoff to Eugene through the hole opened up by Cody and Dino. Eugene is exhausted but courageous. After getting through the hole and into the defensive backfield he always gives an extra effort that gains a few more yards. He is in a daze.

Nobody talks and there is no other play. They will take no chances.

Finally, there is time for one last play. The ball is on the three yard line. As the Tigers line up there are seven seconds showing on the clock. The teams are exhausted. The clock ticks down as Jonesy calls off the snap cadence. Everything is so quiet that his choirboy voice resounds clearly to the farthest reaches of the stadium, ECHOING off the stands.

The ball is snapped.

Cody and Dino explode off the line perfectly, hitting their men, opening up the same gaping hole they have during the entire drive.

Eugene explodes off his mark and drives toward Joe for the handoff.

The referees watch intently. There has been no penalty. No offsides. No holding.

Kramer snaps the ball perfectly, feeling it slap securely into Joe's grip.

The coaches see the hole open and can visualize the remainder of the play. The score. The victory.

But the impossible happens.

While driving to block his man, Kramer's foot slips. Joe trips and stumbles in the middle of the handoff. The ball bounces off Eugene's knee and squirts crazily toward the end zone. All the linemen are facing the defense and don't realize what has happened. Eugene dives desperately for the ball, crawling along the ground but it eludes him. Joe is pinned in the backfield. Kramer is on the ground looking at the ball helplessly beyond him. Cody has driven his man into the middle of the end zone away from the play, his own skill and power have neutralized him.

There is a pile up in the end zone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The referee blows the play dead. The clock has run out. The game is over. Whoever has the ball at the bottom of the pile is the victor.

The only thing anyone can see is the crowd of players at the goal line. Slowly the players unpile and join the crowd. The referee disappears from view of the crowd, bending over toward the last remaining players in the pile.

Suddenly, over the heads of the surrounding players, the referee's hands shoot up.

Touchdown!

As the Tigers pound each other joyously, Cody is silent, bent over the fetal figure clutching the ball. It is Dino. He has finally touched the football. He is clutching it in a death grip. No one will ever get it away from him.

Cody gets up and reaches down, picking up Dino's unmoving body effortlessly. Cody carries him off the field, Dino still clutching the ball, afraid to open his eyes.

Afraid that it is all a dream!

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - MONDAY

Closed doors of a small church in Ligonier. Two FUNERAL DIRECTORS are standing on the steps smoking. One looks into the church through the crack joining the two doors.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Five minutes. Did Vin say whether they wanted them flowers sent to the house?

Funeral Director shrugs his shoulders as he takes a long, last drag.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (cont'd)

Oops. Shit. Here we go.

They both pull open the doors. Boys on football team, as pallbearers, exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dino and his mother exit.

Grandmother, by herself, exits.

Coach exits.

Assistant coaches exit.

Cody and Pearl exit.

Mr. Denone's brother and his wife exit.

Other unidentified people exit.

Wayne Larkin -- with his mother and father -- wearing an enormous leg cast -- exits with great difficulty, hobbling out the door.

The doors close.

DINO (V.O.)

Fuckin' Wayne was a prince, man.
Talk about rising to the occasion.
For once things fuckin' worked out
instead of being completely...
ah... you know what I mean.
Things usually suck and when they
don't, it's a great fuckin'
surprise. To me anyway.
(long pause)
Yeah.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLES ROLL, END SCENE.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Cleats turning up the turf, a high school football player -- we know, now, that it is Dino -- is straining, looking over his shoulder, reaching and reaching for a football that is in a slow, perfect spiral. This time, he catches it.

THE END