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RIVERSIDE

Shutout

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Keith Richard Beshwate

June 2013

Thesis Committee:

Professor Stu Krieger, Chairperson

Professor Robin Russin

Professor Charles Evered

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The Thesis of Keith Richard Beshwate is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

## Acknowledgements

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This is dedicated to my wife, my family, and Matt Bush.

FADE IN:

EXT. FLORIDA HIGHWAY (BLURRY) - AFTERNOON

RED/ORANGE DUSK on the skyline.

A full size BLACK SUV swerves across lanes down the road.

INT. BLACK SUV (BLURRY) - SAME TIME

Surrounding the unknown DRIVER are ALCOHOL BOTTLES and TRASH.

Driver takes a large GULP from one bottle, tipping his head back.

A GLIMPSE of his eyes, RED and TIRED.

Driver tries to set the bottle down, it falls to the passenger floor. Driver wipes his mouth.

Suddenly, APPLAUSE builds. Driver chuckles, his enjoyment of the noise rising simultaneously with the building volume, until--

CRASH. The applause continues.

BLACK OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LONG BEACH WARRIORS HOME OFFICE - DAY

A press conference, surrounding the head table, REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS, they applaud.

SUPER: EIGHT YEARS EARLIER

JASON REED (18), strong silent type, doesn't want to get too cocky, stands in a suit, shaking hands with ERIC MAYS (50s), general manager of the Long Beach Warriors Major League Baseball team.

On Jason's side sit: DENNIS REED (late 40s), Jason's father, puts baseball before his own life, and MARTHA REED (late 40s), Jason's mother, levelheaded, wants her family to be happy. They smile and clap for their son.

In the audience sits JEFFREY REED (mid 20s), Jason's older brother, cocky, loud, partied through life.

ERIC  
Alright, that'll do for the pictures.

Eric and Jason sit, as do the rest of the press.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Thank you everybody for coming out today to witness one of the great young talents landing here in the city of Long Beach. The entire Warriors home office and I would like to congratulate Mr. Reed on his fine accomplishments throughout his time at the high school level, and we are fully committed to making him the star we know he can be. Now, I'd like to pass it over to Jason for questions.

Reporters LIGHT UP with a barrage of questions, Eric chooses REPORTER #1 out of the crowd.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Reed, how do you feel about passing the college level for the shot at professional ball?

Jason remains SILENT for a moment, clears his throat. He's noticeably shy, sweat drips from his forehead. Before he can respond--

ERIC

I can assure you that our Minor League system is fully equipped to handle fresh talent. A lot of our franchise's future is riding on this signing, and we expect the most from Jason's abilities.

REPORTER #2 shoots up.

REPORTER #2

Mr. Mays, you've made landmark deals in the past, but this one tops them all: a three-point-five million dollar signing bonus, the second largest in Warriors history. Is this the right investment this team needs?

Eric chuckles, slaps Jason on the back. Jason looks at his parents, who are both smiling at him. Jason forces a smile.

ERIC

Look, we're not going to spend all day talking about how completely confident we are in this decision. Let's talk about how excited we are to have arguably one of the most exciting talents since A-Rod. Does that sound okay?



MURMURS from the press, REPORTER #3 stands.

REPORTER #3  
Mr. Reed, I think there's only one  
thing everyone here wants to know:  
are you ready for this?

Jason, still nervous, moves towards the microphone, when--

JEFFREY  
(shouting)  
Of course he is, he's Jason-fucking-  
Reed!

The crowd turns to Jeffrey.

Some members of the crowd laugh, others are shocked,  
Photographers take pictures of Jeffrey.

JASON  
Yes.

Everyone turns to Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
But you won't believe it until you  
see me on the field.

Several CAMERA FLASHES flood the stage. Eric gestures for  
Jason to stand.

ERIC  
That's enough for today. I'd like  
to officially welcome Mr. Jason  
Reed to the Long Beach Warriors!

APPLAUSE from the crowd and Jason's parents. Jason SMILES  
wide with Eric as the CAMERA FLASHES nearly blind his vision.

Jason, Dennis, Martha, and Jeffrey stand, exit.

EXT. LONG BEACH WARRIORS HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jason, Dennis, Martha, and Jeffrey rush through the parking  
lot, arriving at a run-down MINI-VAN and hopping in.

Dennis starts the car, pulls away.

INT. MINI-VAN - AFTERNOON

Jason, in the far back, changes quickly into a CAP AND GOWN.

MARTHA  
Slow down, honey, we have time.

DENNIS  
You kiddin' me? It's already four  
forty-five.

JASON  
Just pull into the staff lot, they  
won't mind.

Dennis makes a hard right through an intersection, shifting  
everyone in the car.

DENNIS  
You looked great up there, Jason.  
We're all very proud of you.

MARTHA  
Wait to congratulate him until  
after the ceremony.

DENNIS  
No, he deserves it now.

JEFFREY  
Even I graduated, Mom. Little J's  
gonna be a fucking star.

MARTHA  
Language!

DENNIS  
Leave 'em alone, Martha. It's a big  
moment.

Jason finishes changing, Dennis pulls into a PARKING LOT.

EXT. LONG BEACH SENTINEL HIGH - SAME TIME

The Mini-Van SCREECHES towards the entrances, dozens of  
families walking toward the entrance, scared by the car.

MR. LOCKE, high school teacher, rushes up to the van.

MR. LOCKE  
You can't... Reed, get out here,  
now! We're already running behind.

Jason throws the Mini-Van door open, hops out in full  
graduation attire.

JASON  
Ready.

MR. LOCKE  
Damn well better be.

DENNIS  
Okay to park here?

MR. LOCKE  
No!

MARTHA  
My son doesn't walk until we get to  
see him. Where's the closest  
parking spot?

Mr. Locke sighs, points

MR. LOCKE  
Behind those pillars, staff lot. I  
didn't tell you to park there.

Martha motions for Jason to come to the window. She plants a  
fat KISS on his cheek.

MARTHA  
I love you, honey.

DENNIS  
We're proud of you son.

JEFFREY  
Kill that shit!

MR. LOCKE  
Mr. Reed! Now!

Jason waves his family goodbye, follows Mr. Locke.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jason walks past his classmates, many of them stare, some  
star struck, others with disdain. Mr. Locke places Jason in  
his spot in the processional.

Jason spots and waves at fellow TEAMMATES, none of whom seem  
excited to see him.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Caps FLYING, signs boast students names, "Class of 2004,"  
etc.

On the field, Jason reunites with his family, they all hug.

JEFFREY  
I mean, congrats and all little  
bro, but that was fuckin' boring.

JASON  
Looks like you made it out okay.

DENNIS  
What a day!

MARTHA  
We need a picture.

Martha taps the shoulder of a MALE PARENT.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Excuse me, could you take a picture  
of our family.

MALE PARENT  
No problem.

Martha hands Male Parent a camera, the family gets in a pose,  
all smiles.

MALE PARENT (CONT'D)  
3... 2... 1...

CLICK. The flash goes off. Male Parent hands Martha the  
camera, takes a long look at Jason.

MALE PARENT (CONT'D)  
No shit, you're Jason Reed? Did I  
just take a picture of Jason Reed?

DENNIS  
One and only!

Male Parent walks up to Jason, shakes his hand HARD.

MALE PARENT  
Congrats, son. It's been too long  
since the Warriors were worth a  
shit. Hope you can turn it all  
around.

DENNIS  
Oh, it's a sure thing, sir. My  
boy's gonna be the next A-Rod.

MALE PARENT  
Well, congratulations. And good  
luck.

Male Parent walks away. The family begins to walk away as  
well.

Suddenly, KYLE, a teammate of Jason's, comes up.

KYLE  
Hey Jason, the team's taking a group picture. Wouldn't be everyone without you.

DENNIS  
You're damn right!

MARTHA  
Dennis!

JASON  
Sure.

Jason and Kyle walk over to the TEAMMATES, posing for family pictures. High volume of FLASHES go off once Jason shows up, standing at the edge of the group.

Martha takes some shots with her camera.

DENNIS  
Why the hell isn't he front and center?

MARTHA  
Knock it off.

DENNIS  
I'm serious!

MARTHA  
Don't spoil the moment. I'm sure Jason's fine.

DENNIS  
Well, it's their loss.

Jason continues to smile, pictures taken, flashes.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (BASEMENT) - NIGHT

A converted den/game room with sports memorabilia and trophies everywhere.

Jason, Kyle, and a few other teammates are gathered, some talking, others watching the Long Beach Warriors game on television, the Warriors are winning.

Dennis and Jeffrey come downstairs, each with two 6-packs of BEER in their hands.

DENNIS  
Alright guys, gather around.

Jason and the other guys look over at Dennis and Jeffrey, some eyes light up, "Sweet," "Awesome."

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Now, men, you're to a point in your  
lives where everything changes, and  
it's time to start paving the way  
for your future.

Jeffrey starts passing out the CANS to the team.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Some of you will play ball, others  
will go on and do great things. But  
I want to especially congratulate  
my son for his success in baseball  
at the high school level, and his  
future at the professional level.

Jeffrey gives Jason a TALL CAN of beer, bigger than all the  
others.

JEFFREY  
(whispers)  
Drink up.

DENNIS  
You earned it son, I couldn't be  
more proud. So, let's raise our  
cans to your future. May you all be  
happy in life, and love what you  
do. Cheers!

The guys raise their cans, Jason raises his tall can, takes a  
big drink.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (BASEMENT) - LATER

Cans piled up on the table, Jason and Dennis sit on the couch  
as highlights from the Warriors game play on the TV.

Dennis wraps his arm around Jason, can in the other hand.  
Jason clutches his own can.

DENNIS  
Son, I cannot put the words  
together to tell you how proud I am  
of you, and how much I believe in  
you.

JASON  
Thanks, Dad.

DENNIS  
Don't just "Thanks, Dad" me, I'm  
serious. You've got it all, Jason.  
I'd kill for a shot at the majors.  
You point out the guy, I'll buy the  
gun.

Dennis laughs, Jason smiles.

JASON  
What if--

DENNIS  
Nope. Don't. Just be your best, and you'll never have questions. Doubt will kill any confidence you ever had in yourself.

Dennis finishes his can, Jason follows suit.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Couple more left.

JASON  
It's already almost midnight, I gotta be at the airport by five.

DENNIS  
All the more reason to celebrate with your old man.

Dennis POPS open the can, hands one to Jason.

Dennis holds out his can, Jason CLINKS it, they drink.

INT. AIRPORT (SECURITY CHECK) - EARLY MORNING

Jason gives Martha a big hug, Martha is teary-eyed. Jason goes to give Dennis a hug, but receives a firm HANDSHAKE instead. He takes it, Dennis giving Jason a thumbs up.

Jeffrey gives Martha a hug, Dennis a pat on the shoulder.

Jason and Jeffrey walk away, Dennis smiles, Martha sniffles.

EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA) - EARLY MORNING

A RENTAL CAR pulls up to the facility, Jeffrey driving, Jason gets out of the car, opens the trunk, takes out his BAG, shut the trunk lid.

Jason begins to walk away, when--

JEFFREY  
Hey!

Jason stops, turns.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Make some friends, let's celebrate tonight.

Jason nods, walks towards the facility. Jeffrey speeds off.

INT./EXT. - TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - MORNING

Jason enters the field from the clubhouse, wearing his baseball uniform, black jersey, glove in hand.

Various players warm up on the field, playing catch, stretching, etc.

COACH FIELDS (50s) and COACH EDMUNDS (60s), in polo shirts and shorts, watch as Jason takes in the scene.

FIELDS

Reed!

Jason SNAPS out of his stare, rushes over to Fields and Edmunds, stands in front of them in military fashion.

JASON

Coach Fields and Coach Edmunds, I'm ready for training.

FIELDS

Relax, Reed, we're not invading Kuwait. Here's how it works: you're gonna stretch, warm up, make nice with your teammates, take batting practice, play a simulation game, and call it a day. We'll check out your fundamentals, see where you need work, and go from there. That work for you?

JASON

Yes, sir.

FIELDS

Good. Get out there.

Jason nods, takes a few steps away, looks out. Everyone seems to have a partner for catch. Jason begins his stretches.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - LATER

As Jason finishes stretching, he's approached by two players. PETE GOLDBERG (early 20s), really happy to be there, and HARVEY GUNNER (mid-20s), believes the more serious he is, the better his odds are of making it. They wear white jerseys.

Jason doesn't notice them for a moment, then looks up.

PETE

'Sup superstar?



JASON  
What?

HARVEY  
You've been stretching for almost  
half an hour.

Jason continues.

JASON  
I didn't notice.

HARVEY  
Coaches did.

Harvey points, Jason looks, Fields and Edmunds are staring  
right at them.

JASON  
Shit.

PETE  
Need to toss? I always could use  
the extra warm up.

HARVEY  
You're gonna blow out your arm.

PETE  
It's not a watermelon, it's a  
baseball. You down, millionaire?

Jason stands up, shakes out his arms and legs.

JASON  
You say it like it's an insult.

HARVEY  
He's just jealous.

PETE  
A little bit. C'mon, before Field  
and Edmunds kick your ass.

Jason grabs his glove, runs out with Pete. Harvey watches  
them toss, strolls over to Fields and Edmunds. They all stare  
as Jason and Pete toss the ball.

HARVEY  
If he's getting three million, and  
I'm getting... a lot less, how do I  
ever expect to climb the ladder?

FIELDS  
Impress the owners.

HARVEY  
Fair enough.

They continue to watch.

EDMUNDS  
Get back to practice, Gunner!

Harvey rushes off.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - MIDDAY

Harvey takes batting practice, mostly line-drives to left field, a couple pop ups.

Pete stands behind Jason, who's next to bat.

PETE  
Home grown hero, huh?

JASON  
Maybe.

PETE  
Everyone likes a good story. I truly believe that's part of the reason we get drafted. Any talent you lack can be made up in the details.

JASON  
So what's your story?

PETE  
Easy, I'm Jewish.

Jason turns, confused.

JASON  
What?

PETE  
C'mon, Jews in baseball. Doesn't happen. I'm a big draw.

JASON  
I guess.

Harvey takes his last swing, exits the cage.

Jason steps in, digs into the dirt of the batter's box. He adjusts his gloves, grips the bat, stares down at the pitcher's mound, where Coach Edmunds stands.

Edmunds winds back, makes his first pitch.

Swing... WHOOSH. Jason comes up with nothing.

Laughter fills the field, someone yells out "Strike!"

Jason readjusts, gets ready for the next pitch.

Swing... CRACK. The ball SAILS towards the center field wall, just barely clears it.

Some teammates clap, some scoff. Pete cheers. Harvey smirks.

Jason readjusts, ready for the next pitch.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - AFTERNOON

White Jerseys on the field, Black Jerseys in the dugout.

Jason sits on the bench, watching the game alone. Others lean on the railing facing the field, or talk to other teammates.

GARY RICHARDS (late 30s), a veteran pitcher, stands on the mound, delivers a fastball.

SMACK. It hits the catcher's glove.

UMPIRE  
STRIKE THREE!

The White Jersey Batter walks back to the dugout. Coach Fields turns to the bench.

FIELDS  
Reed, take a swing.

Jason looks up.

JASON  
Now?

Fields doesn't answer. Jason rushes over to the equipment rack, grabs a HELMET and BAT, and leaves the dugout.

As Jason heads to the batter's box, Harvey whistles out to Richards from second base.

HARVEY  
Give him an introduction!

Richards nods, turns back, faces home plate.

Jason gets into his stance at home, nothing special, but he shakes just slightly, taking deep breaths.

Catcher signals for a fastball, middle outside of home plate. Richards shakes it off. Catcher then signals a fastball inside.

Richards sets, gets into his wind-up, and...

WHOOSH. Right at Jason's head. Jason DIVES out of the way.

Black and White jerseys laugh, Catcher tosses the ball back to Richards.

FIELDS  
Alright, you had your fun. Now give  
him something to hit.

Jason shakes it off, gets back into his batting stance.

Catcher calls for a fastball outside, Richards once again sets, wind-up...

SMACK. Right into the umpire's glove.

UMPIRE  
STRIKE!

Catcher tosses the ball back to Richards. Jason gets back into his stance, grips the bat tighter than before.

Richards sets, wind-up...

CRACK. Jason sends the ball down the left field foul line. He races to first, and around to second.

Pete, in left field, gets to the ball, quickly tosses it in.

Jason sees the throw, it's close. He gets down for the slide just as Harvey gets the ball.

Dust FLIES around them, Harvey applies the tag, Jason's foot on the bag.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)  
SAFE!

Jason CLAPS his hands, excited. Harvey nearly argues, but instead throws the ball back to Richards, who stares down Jason as he stands up, wiping himself off at second base.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - AFTERNOON

Jason walks off the field with Pete and Harvey, Coach Fields waiting for him at the dugout entrance.

FIELDS  
Hold it, Reed.

Pete and Harvey continue down the steps.

JASON  
Yes, sir?

FIELDS  
How'd you feel out there?

JASON  
Not bad.

FIELDS  
That's exactly what I thought.  
Something to remember: if you twist  
your ankle sliding into second  
here, you're not winning any games  
for the Warriors. You're only  
hurting yourself. Be careful out  
there. Prove yourself the safe way.

JASON  
Yes, sir.

FIELDS  
I'm not your math teacher, Reed.

JASON  
Sorry... coach?

FIELDS  
Reed.

Fields walks down into the dugout, Reed follows into the locker room.

EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - NIGHT

Jason walks out of the facility with Pete and Harvey. Parked by the entrance is Jeffrey.

JEFFREY  
What the fuck, Jason? I've been  
waitin' out here for an hour.

Jason gives Jeffrey a "don't embarrass me" look. Pete and Harvey chuckle.

PETE  
So we'll see you tomorrow?

JASON  
Bright and early.

JEFFREY  
What about tonight?

They look at Jeffrey.

HARVEY  
What about it?

JEFFREY  
You guys wanna hang at our place?  
Have a couple beers, cook some  
meat.

JASON  
I don't know, I'm pretty tired.

JEFFREY  
C'mon, you're a pro now! Live the  
life!

Jason looks at Pete and Harvey.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Our treat, guys.

Pete SHRUGS his shoulders, Harvey nods stoically.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Sweet, just follow me out of the  
parking lot.

Pete and Harvey walk off, Jason gets in the car.

JASON  
Don't screw this up.

JEFFREY  
How am I gonna do that?

JASON  
Just don't get crazy.

JEFFREY  
It's all good, little bro. Made  
some acquaintances at the complex  
today, should be a good time.

Jeffrey pulls away, Jason rolls down his window, watches the  
training facility fade in the rearview mirror.

INT./EXT. JASON'S APARTMENT COMPLEX (POOL AREA) - NIGHT

Jason, Jeffrey, Harvey, Pete, and various apartment renters  
surround the pool and the barbecue, some are in the pool.

Jeffrey cooks hot dogs/hamburgers on the grill, a collection  
of bottles surrounding his feet.

Jason sits by Pete and Harvey, looking into the pool at the good-looking girls in the pool.

HARVEY  
Arizona's got talent.

PETE  
I gotta meet my neighbors.

JASON  
So, how long you guys been with the team?

PETE  
Harvey's been here about two years.  
I've been here about nine months.

The girls in the pool continue to splash around. The guys stare as Jason tries to make conversation.

JASON  
Any moves up the farm system?

PETE  
Double-A once. Flew fifteen-hundred miles to see one pitch.

HARVEY  
Hit Triple-A Kettleman once. Even turned a double play. That ended quickly.

Jeffrey comes over, gives each of the guys a drink, stares at the girls as well.

JEFFREY  
Right, guys?

PETE  
Not wrong.

JEFFREY  
And yet you're not talking. What's wrong with you little bro?

JASON  
What do you mean?

JEFFREY  
You kiddin' me?

JASON  
What am I supposed to say?

JEFFREY  
Shit...

Jeffrey turns to the girls in the pool.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Hey, ladies!

The girls look at him.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Food's almost ready. In the  
meantime, have you met these dudes?  
They're baseball players with the  
Long Beach Warriors.

The girls swim over to the guys, smile brightly. One of them,  
KAYLA (20s), blonde and beautiful, speaks up.

KAYLA  
Really?

JEFFREY  
No doubt. And my little brother  
here? He just got signed with a  
multi-million dollar bonus.

JASON  
Jeff!

Jeffrey shakes Jason's shoulder. The girls get out of the  
pool, sit at the ends of their lounge chairs, Kayla sits next  
to Jason.

KAYLA  
I'm Kayla.

Kayla sticks out her hand. Jason shakes it.

JASON  
Jason.

KAYLA  
What position do you play?

JASON  
Shortstop.

KAYLA  
Good, you're fast. Hopefully not  
too fast.

Kayla laughs, Jason smiles, forces out a chuckle. Kayla grabs  
Jason's beer, takes a drink, and hands it back.

INT./EXT. JASON'S APARTMENT COMPLEX (POOL AREA) - LATER

Empty plates and beer bottles fill a table surrounded by the  
guys and Kayla.



Kayla sits in Jason's lap while Jason finishes off his latest bottle. He sets it on the table sloppily, he's drunk.

Pete and Harvey sit next to their girls, who aren't nearly as invested in them as Kayla is to Jason.

Jeffrey also finishes the last of his beer, also drunk.

JEFFREY  
Well, that's the last of the supply.

HARVEY  
That's alright, I think I gotta head home.

PETE  
Yeah, me too. Another early day tomorrow.

Pete and Harvey stand up.

PETE (CONT'D)  
See you tomorrow, Jason.

JASON  
Pete! Harvey! No, you can't leave!

HARVEY  
You should probably go to bed too, man. Set an alarm.

JASON  
Alright, alright, take care guys.

Pete and Harvey walk away. Jeffrey shakes in excitement.

JEFFREY  
It is gettin' COLD out here!

JASON  
Probably should turn in.

KAYLA  
Aw, that sucks.

JASON  
Well, you live here, I live here. I definitely want to hang out again.

JEFFREY  
No!

Kayla and Jason turn to Jeffrey.

JASON  
Jeff?

JEFFREY  
This night ain't over. Come on,  
let's go.

JASON  
We're not driving anywhere.

JEFFREY  
Of course not! There's a bar around  
the block. Quick walk. What do you  
say?

Jason looks at Kayla, who smiles and nods "yes".

EXT. MCDUGALS BAR - NIGHT

Jeffrey, Jason, and Kayla walk up to the entrance, neon signs  
and blacked out windows. At the door stands a BOUNCER (30s),  
big and deadpan, watching the obviously drunk trio walk up.

BOUNCER  
IDs?

Jason reaches for his slowly, but is stopped by Jeffrey, who  
walks up the Bouncer.

JEFFREY  
Listen, my brother, do you know who  
that is?

Bouncer stares at Jeffrey coldly.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
That's Jason Reed. Long Beach  
Warriors number one draft pick  
mother fuckin' Jason Reed. At YOUR  
bar. So please, let's have a good  
time, maybe he'll throw a shoutout  
to the local establishment.

Jeffrey starts to walk by, Bouncer stops him.

BOUNCER  
Nope.

Jeffrey smiles, turns to Jason and Kayla, mouths "I got  
this," turns back to the Bouncer.

JEFFREY  
C'mon, man. You close in an hour.  
We'll be in and out.

BOUNCER  
Nope. You and mister mother fuckin'  
Jacob Weed need to get the fuck  
out.

JEFFREY  
Firstly--

Bouncer GRABS Jeffrey by the collar, holds him up. Jason rushes up, pulls Jeffrey back down. Bouncer lets go.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Get your fuckin' hands off of me!

JASON  
Let's go, Jeff.

JEFFREY  
Nah, fuck that!

Jason pulls Jeffrey away, Kayla joins them.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
We're gettin' in.

JASON  
How?

Jeffrey looks around, spots a side door by a handicap lane and guard rail. Jeffrey walks over to it, Jason follows, Kayla stays behind.

JASON (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

JEFFREY  
It's fine. Get your girl.

Jeffrey starts to hop it. Jason waves off Kayla. Jeffrey gets over the railing, tries to open the door. It's locked.

JASON  
Get down here!

JEFFREY  
I'll get it open.

Jason grabs the rail, jumps over it, tries to get Jeffrey to come down, when--

BOUNCER  
Hey!

Bouncer walks over to them. A crowd of people come out of the bar, stare at what's happening.

JASON  
No, wait--

BOUNCER  
I warned you mother fuckers to leave.

JASON  
We are, right now.

JEFFREY  
Fuck you, bitch!

Bouncer rushes over to them, pulls Jeffrey down from the railing, and SLAM! Throws him to the ground.

Jason jumps back down.

JASON  
Leave him alone!

Jason RUSHES into Bouncer, but Bouncer immediately grabs Jason by the head and puts him in a headlock.

Jason struggles to get out of it, then--

BITES the Bouncer, who SCREAMS in pain.

SIRENS sound, as two police cars rush up to the scene. Kayla fades into the crowd of people, cops pull apart Jason and Bouncer, Jeffrey remains on the ground.

Jason is THROWN against the railing, handcuffed, as is Jeffrey.

INT. DRUNK TANK - EARLY MORNING

Jason and Jeffrey sit on a bench amidst a gang of drunks. Jeffrey attempts to sleep on Jason's shoulder, Jason rubs his eyes and cheeks.

A JAIL GUARD comes to the cell door, unlocks it.

JAIL GUARD  
Reeds! Get up.

Jason shakes Jeffrey awake, they stand up, exit.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Jason sits in the room with GERALD MOOR (40s), Jason's agent, and BARRY SOLE (40s), Jason's attorney.

Gerald looks through his PDA, while Barry reviews the case file.

GERALD  
This is a god damn mess.

BARRY  
Jason, don't say a word. We'll get  
you out of here and straight to the  
complex.

GERALD  
Assuming the complex will take him.

BARRY  
Why are you even here?

GERALD  
To make sure this shit storm  
doesn't cost us a lot of money.

JASON  
What about Jeff?

Gerald and Barry go quiet. The door opens, in walks CHIEF  
HENSLEY (50s). Barry stands, nudges Jason to follow suit.  
Gerald remains seated.

Barry shakes Chief Hensley's hand, as does Jason.

BARRY  
So, Chief, are we just looking at  
the felony assault charge?

CHIEF HENSLEY  
Public intoxication as well.

BARRY  
Come on, Chief, let's not  
completely destroy the boy's future  
on such a small claim. What was his  
B.A.C. at the time of arrest?

The Chief remains quiet, mumbles.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
What was that? Because according to  
this report, it was a point-zero-  
four. Pretty low for his size.

CHIEF HENSLEY  
He's a minor.

BARRY  
He's eighteen.

CHIEF HENSLEY  
He's underage.

BARRY  
It's a low blow.

Chief Hensley sighs.

CHIEF HENSLEY  
We'll consider dropping it.

GERALD  
Nice moves, lawyer-man.

CHIEF HENSLEY  
Excuse me, who are you?

GERALD  
Gerald Moor, the kid's agent. We  
got a meeting with the front office  
in a few hours, gotta catch a  
flight. We good to go?

CHIEF HENSLEY  
For now.

Gerald immediately stands, signals for Jason to follow.

Chief Hensley continues as Gerald and Barry gather their  
things.

CHIEF HENSLEY (CONT'D)  
Mr. Reed will need to be back in  
three weeks for a court hearing.

Gerald snickers.

GERALD  
That won't happen. Take care,  
Chief.

Gerald holds the door open for Jason and Barry. They leave.

INT. POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

Gerald and Barry walk next to each other, Jason behind them.

GERALD  
Alright, we're headed to Long  
Beach, got a flight in an hour.

BARRY  
Let me know what happens.

GERALD  
Only if you beg.

BARRY  
You're such a prick.

JASON  
What about Jeff?

They continue to walk, don't turn to Jason. They move through the doors of the police station--

EXT. POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

--and continue down the steps of the building.

BARRY  
Team bailed him, this time. He should consider himself lucky.

JASON  
So he's coming home with us, too?

BARRY  
That's up to your parents, team's not gonna spring for a flight.

GERALD  
Just worry about you, right now. You're in a lot shit. Time to manage it.

Gerald gets a cab, opens the door.

BARRY  
Jason, call me as soon as you get out of that meeting.

GERALD  
Go ahead, Jason, get in.

Barry hands Jason his card, Jason takes it, gets in the cab. Gerald follows suit, the cab pulls away, Barry walks away.

Just as they leave, Jeffrey walks out of the police station, alone. He looks around, doesn't know what to do.

INT. ERIC MAYS OFFICE (WARRIORS HOME OFFICE) - DAY

Jason sits between Barry and Dennis, across from Eric. Eric reviews the case file, talking on the phone.

Jason rubs his thumbs together, nervous. Eric hangs up, sighs.

ERIC  
Well, the team president is not happy, nor should he be.

BARRY  
What's the verdict?

ERIC  
Indefinite suspension.

Jason remains silent.

DENNIS  
What?!

BARRY  
The kid just got on the field.

ERIC  
And he's being made an example. My  
hands are tied.

DENNIS  
He's your star player!

Eric closes the case file, focuses on Dennis.

ERIC  
Mr. Reed, we could talk all day  
about morals and just punishment.  
At the end of the day, Jason  
screwed up, and he has to be  
penalized. He will remain suspended  
from training until the dust has  
settled and we feel he's learned  
his lesson.

Dennis stands, can't handle it, leaves. Barry checks his PDA.

BARRY  
Your camp make a statement yet?

ERIC  
We're about to.

BARRY  
Play up the brother.

JASON  
What?

BARRY  
Peer pressure, make Jason the  
victim.

JASON  
It's not Jeff's fault.

BARRY  
Doesn't matter. You're high  
profile, he's not. Do it.

Eric nods in agreement, picks up the phone.

ERIC  
Sarah, get me PR.



Eric pulls back the receiver.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Go home, spend some time indoors,  
and don't talk to anyone.

Barry stands, Jason follows, they exit the office.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

The house is clean but noticeably worn down.

Jason sits next to Martha on the couch, Dennis sits on a chair by them. Everyone is silent.

Martha clutches a balled up tissue, she stares at the phone. Dennis clutches a whiskey-colored drink.

JASON  
He'll call.

MARTHA  
How do you know?

DENNIS  
I hope he doesn't.

MARTHA  
Dennis!

DENNIS  
He got my son into trouble on the first day, he should take some time to think about this. And we shouldn't be so quick to accept him back home, he's screwed up too many times.

They remain quiet.

BEEP. Jason gets a TEXT MESSAGE. The Caller ID reads PETE.

The text displays: JUST HEARD, SORRY MAN.

MARTHA  
Jeffrey?

JASON  
No, Mom.

DENNIS  
Good. I'm gonna check with the junior college, see if you can't practice with them.

JASON  
Dad, I can't. It's in the contract.

DENNIS  
Fuck the contract, you ain't goin'  
soft just because your ass got in a  
bar fight.

MARTHA  
Leave him alone.

Dennis downs the remainder of his drink.

DENNIS  
I'm just looking out for his best  
interests. If he wants a future, he  
needs to maintain focus and stay  
fit. Right, son?

Jason doesn't speak, replies to the text with: SEE U SOON,  
HOPEFULLY.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - MORNING

SUPERTITLE: ONE MONTH LATER

Jason walks out of the dugout and onto the field. A sea of  
players stare at him as he begins his stretches.

The voice of a LOCAL REPORTER is heard.

LOCAL REPORTER  
And in possibly optimistic news for  
the Long Beach Warriors, their  
first-draft hopeful Jason Reed has  
returned to the Arizona Rookie  
League after a month-long  
suspension as the result of a bar  
fight.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - MORNING

Jason fields some grounders to shortstop.

LOCAL REPORTER  
Local police report that the  
charges against Reed have been  
dropped.

(MORE)

LOCAL REPORTER (CONT'D)  
Now, general manager Eric Mays says  
that their multi-million dollar  
hometown hero is ready to get back  
into action, and will be kept under  
close supervision by the team's  
staff.

Jason misses one grounder, it rolls into the outfield. He  
turns back towards home plate.

INT. TRAINING FACILITY LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jason gets dressed next to Pete.

JASON  
Harvey's up in triple A?

PETE  
Yeah. Backup middle infielder. Says  
it's at least cooler in Santa  
Barbara than it is here.

JASON  
Very true.

Richards walks over to Jason and Pete, stares them down.

RICHARDS  
How's it goin', rook?

Jason buttons up his shirt.

JASON  
Just fine.

RICHARDS  
Well we're all glad to have you  
back.

Richards, louder, gets the team involved in the conversation.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
In fact, I got you something that  
I'm sure will come in handy.

Richards reaches into his pocket, holds up a PACIFIER. The  
team laughs, Richards laughs as well.

Richards tries to hand it to Jason, who doesn't take it.  
Richards throws it on the ground at his feet.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)  
It'll be on the ground when you  
want it. Perfect spot for you.

Richards chuckles to himself, walks away. Pete picks up the pacifier, examines it.

PETE  
You know what?

JASON  
He's a dick?

PETE  
Well, that.

Jason laughs.

PETE (CONT'D)  
But the fact that he had to go to a children's store to buy this pacifier for you is pretty far reaching for a pretty lame gag.

JASON  
Whatever, I'm not gonna sweat it.

PETE  
Excellent. Drinks?

JASON  
I probably shouldn't.

PETE  
Look, you and me, my place, a couple beers.

Jason finishes getting dressed, grabs his bag.

JASON  
You're buying.

PETE  
Definitely.

JASON  
Just gotta head home first.

Jason gives Pete a fist bump, leaves.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jason eats a bowl of cereal, watching a LB Warriors game.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Curious, Jason sets his bowl down, stands, wipes his mouth. He walks over to the door, opens it.

It's Jeffrey.

JEFFREY  
Hey, little brother.

JASON  
Jeff? Where the hell have you  
been?!

JEFFREY  
Around, man, around. It's all good  
though. Had some friends nearby,  
I've been crashing with them.

Jason takes out his CELL PHONE.

JASON  
I gotta call Mom.

JEFFREY  
Nay, man, she don't need to know  
what I'm doing. Just relax.

Jason stops, looks at Jeffrey, notices BAGS under his EYES  
and CHAPPED LIPS.

JASON  
Well--

JEFFREY  
You gonna make your family stand in  
the doorway?

JASON  
Sorry.

Jason steps aside, Jeffrey comes in. Jason closes the door.

JEFFREY  
So, how does it feel to be back?

JASON  
Look, I'm gonna have to tell Mom  
and Dad sometime soon. They're  
gonna be pissed if I don't say  
anything.

JEFFREY  
In time, man. But for now, let's  
have some fun. Let's go out.

Jason looks at the clock on his wall, it's 11:30.

JASON  
It's kinda late for me.

JEFFREY  
Man, no it's not. I know what we  
did wrong last time.

JASON  
Got drunk and fought a bouncer?

Jeffrey sits, ready to lay out his plan.

JEFFREY  
Nah, man. We didn't provide a tip. It's simple. Give the man at the door a little cash, he lets us in, no questions asked. We just gotta hit an ATM on the way and we're golden. Maybe pull out a little extra for drinks, cabs, maybe hit a strip club, late night food. Then I was thinking tomorrow we could hit the mall, you know? Get some new clothes, sunglasses, maybe a new TV, xBox, you know? Really do it up right. And the best part is: you don't gotta worry. 'Cause you're gonna get more. Play the way you do, hit the Bigs, you'll be rollin' in it. Why not invest in the lifestyle now so that you can coast in it in the future, you know? You know what I mean?

Jason takes all of it in, starts to smile a little.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Got you thinkin', right? C'mon, let's go.

Jeffrey wraps his arm around Jason's shoulders, leads him towards the door.

\*MONTAGE\*

- 1) Jason and Jeffrey do shots with many others at a bar.
- 2) At the mall, the brothers shop for clothes.
- 3) Jason, in a rookie game, strikes out. He sulks back to the dugout, everyone visibly upset.
- 4) Jason dances at a club, drink in hand.
- 5) Jason fields a ball, tosses it towards first base, goes over the first baseman's head.
- 6) Jason misses an alarm clock BUZZ, bottles surround his bedroom floor.
- 7) Jason takes batting practice, not connecting with the ball.

\*END MONTAGE\*

INT. COACH FIELDS OFFICE - DAY

Jason sits across from Coach Fields and Coach Edmunds. Jason is nodding off, Fields and Edmunds wait patiently.

Dennis enters the office.

JASON  
Dad?

DENNIS  
Yep, they called me. Flew me in too. Thought you might need some supervision around here.

FIELDS  
Thank you for coming in, Mr. Reed.

DENNIS  
Please, Dennis. Save the 'misters' for the professionals.

Dennis slaps Jason's shoulder then shakes the coaches' hands.

FIELDS  
Let's just cut to the problem--

DENNIS  
Problem? You didn't get arrested again, did you?

FIELDS  
No, no. Not yet, anyway. Your son's been very... active, socially, around town.

DENNIS  
How so?

FIELDS  
He's been out with the players. Drinking. Going to clubs.

Beat.

DENNIS  
I didn't know that.

FIELDS  
It's affecting his play. Jason's been late to several practices, his performance has slumped on the field and in the batter's box, and he seems disinterested in play. I don't know about you, Dennis, but I take my work seriously.

(MORE)

FIELDS (CONT'D)

Your son needs to understand that this isn't just a game, it's a job. One he could eventually be fired from.

Jason's head flies back, he chuckles. Dennis doesn't.

DENNIS

Stop it, son. They mean business.

JASON

I'm doing fine.

DENNIS

How so?

FIELDS

Well if you consider a two-twenty batting average with a two-fifty on-base percentage "fine," I guess I want to play in your league, Jason.

DENNIS

Alright, alright, let's be civil here. So the boy doesn't have much of a bat. Yet.

FIELDS

He's also committed thirteen errors in the span of twenty games.

Dennis looks at Jason, who's still nodding off. Dennis smacks Jason in stomach, Jason sits up.

DENNIS

I'm sorry to hear that, coach. And I can promise you, I'd like to help out in changing both his game and his attitude.

JASON

So now you're staying?

DENNIS

Whatever it takes to get you in line. But I'm wondering if my boy hasn't told you something.

FIELDS

What's that?

DENNIS

He can pitch, too.

CUT TO:



INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - DAY

The field is clear. Jason stands on the mound, in his street clothes from earlier.

Pete crouches down at home plate, suited up.

Fields, Edmunds, and Dennis stand in the front row of the bleachers. Fields holds a clipboard, Edmunds barely holds up a radar gun. Dennis folds his arms.

DENNIS  
Ready, son?

Jason nods, looks at Pete. Pete slaps his fist into his glove, dust flying off of it.

Jason gets into his set.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Give 'em the heater, son!

Jason takes a DEEP BREATH. He winds, up, throws--

SMACK. Dust flies off the catcher's mitt. Pete immediately stands, dropping the ball and shaking out his hand.

Fields, in disbelief, looks at the radar gun. It reads: 97.

FIELDS  
Holy shit. He's got an arm.

DENNIS  
Surprised he never told you.

Pete replaces the mitt back onto his hand, crouches down.

Jason grabs another ball. He sets, winds up, throws--

SMACK. Dust flies. Pete remains calm for a moment, still numb from the last pitch. He then stands, and examines his hand.

Fields checks the radar gun: 98.

FIELDS  
This is perfect. Our pitching pool's been a little shallow lately.

DENNIS  
Nice job, son!

Dennis gives Jason a thumbs up, Jason tips his cap.

Pete takes off his catcher's mask.

PETE  
Yep, don't want to be a catcher.

He walks over to Jason, they head towards the dugout.

INT. LESS ROWDY BAR - NIGHT

Dennis and Jason sit by themselves, a beer each. They are quiet, staring silently into the bar counter.

DENNIS  
I'm glad I'm here. See you on your way to stardom.

JASON  
Pretty glamorous, huh?

Dennis checks the room, fairly empty, save a couple stragglers.

DENNIS  
That's okay. You shouldn't be out looking for all the bullshit that seems like fun. Build now for your future. It's gonna be bright.

JASON  
Think so?

DENNIS  
Have to. I trained you.

Dennis takes a big drink, Jason follows his lead.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
So, where's Jeffrey?

Jason remains silent, Dennis waves to the BARTENDER for another round.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
I know he's with you. Probably at your place. I know you, son. You're not out spending your money all over the place without a devil on your shoulder.

JASON  
You wanna see him?

DENNIS  
Yes. But I ain't gonna tell him what to do. He's a grown man. I love him, but Jeffrey.... He's kind of like a runaway dog. When he gets loose, he gets excited and goes nuts.

(MORE)

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
And if you chase if him, he's just gonna keep running away. But, if you keep your ground, there's a chance that he'll come back home.

JASON  
You think he'll come back?

Two new beers arrive, Jason finishes his.

DENNIS  
At this point, it's a risk I'm okay with taking.

Dennis checks his watch.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Now, let's finish these, go home, and hope that tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your baseball career.

JASON  
Sounds good.

Dennis and Jason sit quietly, staring at the bar.

HEATHER (21), sharp and cute, takes a seat at the end of the bar, orders a beer. Dennis notices her, nudges Jason.

DENNIS  
See that?

Jason looks over at Heather, then at Dennis.

JASON  
Thought we were going home.

DENNIS  
Maybe instead of spending all your time with your brother, you can start spending some time with the ladies. Come on, what woman wouldn't want to date a star.

JASON  
I'm not a star.

DENNIS  
She doesn't know that.

JASON  
Come one, finish your drink and let's go.

DENNIS  
So you're not gonna go talk to her?

Jason looks at her, sighs.

JASON

No.

Dennis stands, smiling at Jason. Jason shakes his head "no," can't help but smile.

Dennis walks smoothly over to Heather, sits. She glances at him, doesn't engage.

DENNIS

Now, you have to tell me, what's a girl like you doing in here?

Jason buries his head into his arms on the bar.

HEATHER

A girl like me?

DENNIS

Look around. You see the kind of people in here?

Heather surveys the room, mostly older men and women.

HEATHER

It's just convenient.

DENNIS

How so?

HEATHER

I work around the block.

DENNIS

Oh yeah? Where's that?

Heather smiles, noticing Dennis's attempt.

HEATHER

I'm not going to tell you!

DENNIS

Why not?

HEATHER

Well, contrary to how old you may think you are, it's the twenty-first century, and I'm not looking for a stalker.

Dennis smiles back at her, nods in agreement.

DENNIS  
Okay, okay, you're right. Didn't  
have to hit me where it hurts, but  
I get it. Now, what about my son  
over there?

Dennis points at Jason, who lifts his head, smiles,  
embarrassed.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
He's a baseball star.

HEATHER  
Really?

DENNIS  
Yessir.

HEATHER  
What's his name?

DENNIS  
Jason Reed.

HEATHER  
Never heard of him.

DENNIS  
That's not to say you won't.

HEATHER  
Uh-huh.

Heather takes a drink, stares at Jason, who avoids her gaze.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
And, as a baseball star, does he  
always send his grandfather over to  
get a girl's number?

DENNIS  
Whoa! Do I look that old?

HEATHER  
Sorry, so sorry. Great grandfather,  
maybe?

Dennis and Heather share a laugh. Jason steals a look at  
Heather, falls in love.

DENNIS  
Well, maybe to make it up to me,  
you can give me your number to give  
to--

JASON  
That's it, I can't let this go on  
any longer.

Jason stands, walks over to them. He moves towards Heather.  
Beat. He sticks out his hand.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm Jason.

HEATHER  
Heather.

She shakes his hand.

JASON  
This is my dad, Dennis.

Dennis and Heather shake hands.

HEATHER  
Quite the team, here.

JASON  
I didn't want you to think I  
couldn't come over here and ask you  
for your number myself. Sorry for  
bothering you. C'mon, dad.

Jason helps Dennis up, they start to walk away.

HEATHER  
Hey!

Jason and Dennis stop, turn around.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Does that mean you don't want my  
number?

Dennis smiles, Jason is speechless. Heather walks up to him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Give me your phone.

Jason obeys. She punches in her contact info, gives the cell  
phone back to Jason.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Thank you, both, for throwing a  
curveball into my night. Call me.

Heather walks away. Dennis wraps his arm around Jason, guides  
him through the exit.

INT./EXT. TRAINING FACILITY (SCOTTSDALE, AZ.) - DAY

Jason stands on the mound, ready to pitch. All eyes from the  
dugouts are on him.

Pete stands at the plate, ready in his batting stance.

PETE  
Show me what you got.

The CATCHER calls for a FASTBALL.

Jason sets, wind-up, the pitch--  
SMACK. Into the catcher's mitt.

UMPIRE  
STRIKE!

Pete is frozen in the batter's box, looks back at the ump.

PETE  
Not too low?

UMPIRE  
At the knees.

Pete steps out of the batter's box, adjusts his batting gloves.

The Catcher tosses the ball back to Jason. He reclaims his position on the mound.

Pete steps into the batter's box, gets in his stance.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--  
SMACK. WHOOSH. Pete swings and misses.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)  
STRIKE!

Pete taps his bat to his cleats. Catcher throws the ball back to Jason, who smiles.

PETE  
I got this next one.

Pete gets in his stance. Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--  
CRACK. Harvey POPS UP the ball to the infield.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Dammit!

Pete slowly jogs towards first. The ball is caught with ease.

UMPIRE  
Out!

PETE  
No shit.

Pete jogs back to the dugout where Fields and Edmunds examine Jason.

EDMUNDS  
Start or relief?

FIELDS  
I say we let him go four next week,  
see how he does.

The next batter comes into the box. Jason sets, wind-up--

INT. TRAINING FACILITY LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

SMACK. Pete shuts the office door closed.

Pete walks over to Jason, stone-faced.

JASON  
Everything alright?

PETE  
Nope.

Beat. Pete tosses his gear into his bag.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Even better, I'm going to triple-A!

Jason smiles, high-fives Pete, who's ecstatic.

JASON  
Congrats!

PETE  
Thanks, I... I don't know what to  
bring with me! Fuck!

JASON  
Who cares, man, this is a big deal.

Jason's enthusiasm wanes quickly.

PETE  
I gotta call my parents. No! My  
college coach. No! All those  
bastards from my high school team.

Pete looks at Jason.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Dude, don't be a downer. You're  
Jason fucking Reed.

(MORE)



PETE (CONT'D)  
You're gonna hit the majors before  
I even play a full game ANYWHERE.

JASON  
I know. I just want it to happen  
faster, you know? You get that rush  
of signing and contracts and  
joining the team, and then you wait  
in limbo for God knows how long.

PETE  
You'll get your time. But, tonight,  
we're going out. I'm on a red-eye  
tomorrow and I'm not flying sober.

JASON  
I'll join you, dude, but I can't go  
hard tonight. Gotta stay focused.

PETE  
Fuck that! You're buying me drinks,  
you're buying yourself drinks.  
Plus, this is an excuse to bring  
that chick out that you talked to.

Jason shakes his head, stands.

JASON  
Why would I bring her?

PETE  
Because you always, ALWAYS include  
the girls you wanna bang in times  
of drunken celebration.

Jason laughs, Pete turns to the team.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Hey guys, we're going out tonight,  
because I'm taking off tomorrow!

Some slight reaction, no one really cares. Jason is  
embarrassed for Pete, speaks up.

JASON  
And the first rounds are on me!

The team perks up a beat, gets excited. Pete smiles.

PETE  
Call that girl.

Jason nods, picks up his bag.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jason opens the door, Jeffrey is on the couch, watching TV.

Jeffrey doesn't acknowledge Jason.

JASON  
What's up, man?

Jeffrey doesn't respond.

JASON (CONT'D)  
We're going out tonight. Pete's  
leaving for Triple-A tomorrow,  
gonna hit the bar with the team.  
You in?

JEFFREY  
Sounds boring. Let's go to the club  
instead.

Jason sets down his bag, sits on a chair next to the couch.

Jeffrey's focus remains on the TV.

JASON  
Pete's leaving tomorrow. Plus, I  
wanna hang with the team. But I  
want you there too, so get dressed,  
let's go.

JEFFREY  
Man, fuck that. I'll just go out by  
myself then.

Jason considers confronting Jeffrey, walks away instead, into  
the kitchen.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Hey, Jason? Can you hook me up with  
some cash?

JASON  
How much?

JEFFREY  
Couple hundred.

JASON  
What the fuck for?

JEFFREY  
For going out tonight. Ladies at  
the club don't wanna buy their own  
drinks, let alone ones for me.

Jason sighs, pulls out his wallet. No cash.

JASON  
Sorry, don't have any on me.

JEFFREY  
We'll stop at an ATM on the way  
out.

Jason's had enough.

JASON  
No, we won't.

Jeffrey takes his gaze off of the TV, looks at Jason.

JEFFREY  
What?

JASON  
I'm not going to the ATM.

JEFFREY  
Then how will I get money?

JASON  
You don't have anything?

JEFFREY  
I don't need to, you have it.

JASON  
That's not gonna work anymore,  
Jeff.

JEFFREY  
The fuck you mean? You gonna treat  
your older brother like a mooch?

JASON  
No, I'm gonna treat a mooch like my  
older brother and have the fucking  
sense to cut him off for his own  
good.

Jason walks towards his bedroom, Jeffrey follows him.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Jason starts to get dressed. Jeffrey stands at the doorway.

JEFFREY  
That's how it's gonna be?

Jason doesn't respond.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Fine, I'll go out with you and your  
lame ass friends.

JASON  
I don't want you to.

JEFFREY  
You invited me!

JASON  
Well, you're not coming. And you're  
not staying here, either.

Beat. Jeffrey looks around.

JEFFREY  
What did Dad say to you?

JASON  
I covered for you, man. Dad came  
and went without even the slightest  
hint you were around. I should've  
told him.

JEFFREY  
He tell you to kick me out? He tell  
you to get me to go home? Well fuck  
that, I don't need them, and I  
don't fucking need you!

Jason continues to get dressed, doesn't respond.

Jeffrey walks out of the bedroom. Jason puts on a shirt.

SLAM. The front door. Jason pauses, listens. Silence.

INT. ROWDY BAR - NIGHT

Jason, Pete, and various other teammates crowd a section of  
the bar, taking shots, talking to women, etc.

Jason, tipsy, takes out his phone, looks at the screen.

Pete makes his way over to Jason.

PETE  
No go?

JASON  
She said she'd be here.

PETE  
(playfully)  
Why are you lying to me? Huh? You  
little fucker!

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)  
I'm leaving in a few hours, and the  
last thing I'm gonna remember is  
you lying about some girl?

Pete starts to playfully punch Jason, Jason fights back.

JASON  
She'll be here, man!

PETE  
Yeah, well, until then, you're  
going hard with me. Bartress! Two  
shots on his tab!

Pete points at Jason, who smiles, laughs. Just then, Heather  
walks in, dressed in a jacket and medical scrubs. Pete  
notices her before Jason does.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Hope that's not her, because I'm  
all over that if not.

Jason looks over, smiles wide and throws his arms in the air  
for a hug. Heather is a little surprised, but plays along.

JASON  
Hey! You made it!

They hug.

HEATHER  
Sorry, I had to finish some work.

JASON  
What kind of work?

HEATHER  
I'm a nurse.

JASON  
That's cool. That's cool!

PETE  
I'm Pete.

They both look at Pete, who's smiling, obviously more drunk  
than Jason.

JASON  
My boy's leaving me.

PETE  
Promoted. Triple-double-quadruple  
A!!!

The teammates cheers him, continue their partying.

JASON  
I'm really, REALLY glad to see you.  
Lots of dudes in this bar.

HEATHER  
Well, as long as you feel  
protected.

Jason's phone RINGS. He shows it to Heather.

JASON  
Excuse me

HEATHER  
You can't just leave a lady once  
she's gotten here!

JASON  
One minute. Please.

Jason smiles, walks away.

EXT. ROWDY BAR - NIGHT

Jason steps out, opens his phone to answer.

JASON  
Hello?

FIELDS (O.S.)  
Reed. Sorry for calling you so  
late.

JASON  
It's fine, sir. What's up?

FIELDS (O.S.)  
You're getting the start tomorrow  
night.

Jason mouths YES to himself, excited.

FIELDS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You there, Reed?

JASON  
Yes sir, very excited.

Jason DANCES around outside.

FIELDS (O.S.)  
Good. There's gonna be a couple  
farm league managers watching. Get  
some sleep tonight, and come out to  
warm-ups ready to pitch.

(MORE)

FIELDS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
We're capping you at seventy-five  
tosses, so use them wisely. You got  
that?

Jason stops.

                  JASON  
Yes sir, loud and clear. Thank you.

                  FIELDS (O.S.)  
Get some rest.

                  JASON  
See you tomorrow.

Jason hangs up, RUNS back towards the bar. He stops, opens  
his phone.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Dennis sits on the couch, watching a BASEBALL GAME, drinking  
a beer. Martha CLEANS in the kitchen.

The phone RINGS.

Martha walks around the kitchen counter, answers.

                  MARTHA  
Hello?

INTERCUT ROWDY BAR AND REED FAMILY HOME

                  JASON  
Hey mom!

                  MARTHA  
Jason? Why are you calling so late?  
Is everything alright?

Dennis turns, interested in their conversation.

                  JASON  
I'm getting the start tomorrow!  
Pitching! Wanted to see if you guys  
would come out?

                  MARTHA  
That's great! But I don't think we  
can. Your father works in the  
morning and we can't afford a  
flight.

                  JASON  
I'll fly you out! You gotta see me  
play.

Dennis looks at Martha, confused.

MARTHA  
(to Dennis)  
He's starting tomorrow!

DENNIS  
Really?! Well, pack a bag, we leave  
in the morning.

MARTHA  
(to Dennis)  
Dennis, we can't afford it, and I'm  
not letting our son pay our way.

DENNIS  
That's how this works. We take care  
of him for eighteen years, he  
returns the favor.

Dennis takes the phone out of Martha's hand.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Son?

JASON  
Hey, dad. Mom tell you?

DENNIS  
We're there. Just tell us what time  
to be at the airport.

JASON  
I'll let you know as soon as I get  
home.

DENNIS  
Where are you?

JASON  
Out with some friends.

Jason rubs his hand on his head, nervous.

DENNIS  
You better get your ass home soon  
if you're starting tomorrow.

JASON  
I will, I will. Don't worry.

DENNIS  
It's our job to worry.

JASON  
Well, either way, I'll email you  
the info later, and see you  
tomorrow.



MARTHA  
(into the phone)  
We love you son!

DENNIS  
I'm proud of you, Jason.

JASON  
Thanks, guys. Love you too.

Jason hangs up, goes back into the bar.

INT. ROWDY BAR - NIGHT

Jason enters, walks up to Heather and Pete, each holds a beer bottle in their hand.

PETE  
...I mean, it's a pretty big deal,  
but I'm not--

JASON  
Pete, stop boring her.

HEATHER  
He was keeping me company, unlike  
someone else.

Pete gives a hearty OOOOOOOHHHH!

JASON  
You wouldn't treat a starting  
pitcher like that, would you?

PETE  
You're not a starter.

JASON  
I am tomorrow!

PETE  
No shit!

JASON  
Yeah!

PETE  
Fuck, and I have to leave.

JASON  
I'll catch up to you.

Jason turns to Heather.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You wanna come?

HEATHER  
Seems like a pretty big deal. Sure  
you want me there?

JASON  
Of course! My parents are coming  
too.

HEATHER  
Whoa, slow down.

JASON  
I want you to see me play.

HEATHER  
And I want a proper date.

JASON  
How about a double date? After the  
game. You, me, and my parents.

Heather thinks.

HEATHER  
What time?

JASON  
Five.

HEATHER  
I'll be there.

JASON  
Knew you would. Bartender!

Jason orders a couple drinks.

\*MONTAGE\*

- 1) Jason and Pete play billiards. Pete BREAKS the rack.
- 2) Jason shows Heather how to shoot billiards.
- 3) Teammates begin to arm wrestle. Pete loses.
- 4) Jason arm wrestles Richards, wins.
- 5) Jason arm wrestles Pete, wins.
- 6) In fades, the bar empties.

\*END MONTAGE\*

INT. ROWDY BAR - LATER

Jason and Heather sit at a nearly empty bar. Jason looks exhausted, Heather is fine.

JASON  
How are you... so awake?

HEATHER  
Long shifts. It's a conditioning process.

Jason looks around the bar.

JASON  
Seen Pete?

HEATHER  
He's in the bathroom.

JASON  
He okay?

HEATHER  
Oh, he stopped drinking a couple hours ago, still has to get on a plane. You, on the other hand, should get home.

JASON  
Yeah. Shit, I gotta buy my parents plane tickets.

Pete exits the bathroom, refreshed.

PETE  
Alright, my cab should be here soon. You alright Jason?

JASON  
Ti...

Beat.

HEATHER  
I think he's tired.

PETE  
I'll have the cab drop him off at home.

HEATHER  
Probably for the best.

Heather and Pete lift Jason, he starts to walk, they guide him out of the bar.

EXT. ROWDY BAR - NIGHT

Jason, Pete, and Heather stand outside, it's cold.

The CAB pulls up, Pete turns to Heather, sticks out his hand.

PETE  
It was a pleasure. Keep hanging  
with this guy and you'll see me  
again.

HEATHER  
Bye, Pete.

They shake hands, Pete goes for the HUG. Heather complies.  
Pete gets into the cab.

Jason turns to Heather. Heather grabs his face.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Remember: buy the plane tickets.

JASON  
Roger.

Jason gives Heather a THUMBS UP, she lets go of his face.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'll see you tomorrow?

HEATHER  
Yes.

Awkward beat. From the cab--

PETE (O.S.)  
C'mon, dude, I hugged her.

Jason and Heather laugh. Jason goes in for the HUG, Heather  
hugs back.

As they pull apart, Jason leans in--

They KISS.

Jason pulls back, smiles, as does Heather.

HEATHER  
Well, there's that.

JASON  
Goodnight.

HEATHER  
Goodnight.

Heather walks towards her car. Jason watches.

PETE (O.S.)  
Finish your stare already, we gotta  
go!

Jason gets into the cab, closes the door. The cab drives  
away.

INT./EXT. ROOKIE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Jason stands on the BULLPEN MOUND, looking out to the empty  
seats. A CATCHER stands opposite on the other end of the  
bullpen, Fields and Edmunds watch from the bench.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK. Solid fastball. Jason CRINGES slightly.

FIELDS  
You alright, Reed?

JASON  
Fine, sir.

Jason sets again, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK. Less velocity. Jason nearly cringes again, hides it.

Fields walks up to Jason, pats him on the shoulder.

FIELDS  
Just give me seventy-five pitches  
tonight, and I promise you'll be on  
your way up. Management's trying to  
get their star onto the mainstage,  
give 'em a reason why they should.

JASON  
Can't wait.

Fields walks back to the bench, Jason, subtly, clutches his  
pitching arm, specifically his elbow.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jason finishes changing into his UNIFORM. He rubs his elbow.

Suddenly--

DENNIS  
Hey son!

Dennis and Martha are right behind Jason, who's SURPRISED.

JASON  
How did you guys get down here?

Martha HUGS Jason, Dennis follows suit.

DENNIS  
Just told 'em we wanted to pop down  
for a minute and wish the starting  
pitcher good luck! Or break a leg?

MARTHA  
Why would you say that?

DENNIS  
I- I don't know what to say. What  
do you say to someone you love  
whose making the leap into stardom?

JASON  
Thanks?

MARTHA  
Honey, you go out there and do your  
best, whatever that may be. We'll  
be cheering for you.

JASON  
I'm glad you guys came.

DENNIS  
Shit, free flight, free food, and I  
get to do my favorite thing in the  
world: watch my son pitch. So, what  
kind of leash are they giving you?

JASON  
Seventy-five pitches.

DENNIS  
Don't be afraid to use 'em.

Awkward beat.

MARTHA  
C'mon, Dennis, let Jason get ready.  
It's ninety percent mental, right?

DENNIS  
Of course.

Martha KISSES Jason's cheek, Dennis waves.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
See you after the game.

They exit. Jason smiles, waves. Richards comes up to Jason.

RICHARDS  
Mommy and Daddy wishing you good  
luck?

JASON  
Shut up, man.

Richards laughs, walks out.

Jason stretches out his elbow, WINCES in pain. He looks around, no one in sight.

Jason reaches into his bag, grabs ADVIL. He takes the pills, grabs a WATER BOTTLE, takes a big GULP from it, WINCES again, and puts it back.

Jason grabs his glove, and heads out.

INT./EXT. ROOKIE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Jason's team is at bat, as Jason sits in wait on the bench, wearing a JACKET around his pitching arm.

Jason stands, goes to the railing, watches the game. He looks out to the stands, spots Dennis and Martha.

Fields walks up to Jason.

FIELDS  
You're gonna be fine, Reed. Show  
your stuff out there.

UMPIRE (O.S.)  
STRIKE! OUT!

FIELDS  
Dammit, alright men, let's hold 'em  
off.

The team HUSTLES out to the field.

Jason makes his slow walk to the pitcher's mound. Dennis and Martha lead a ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

Jason arrives at the pitcher's mound, red-eyed and nervous.

He locks eyes with the CATCHER, gestures for a practice pitch.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK. A solid throw. Jason WINCES, but not as harshly as before.

Jason sets again, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK. Again, Jason WINCES, only minor.

JASON  
(to himself)  
Play through this.

UMPIRE  
Batter up!

The team gets into their positions behind Jason.

YOUNG PLAYER steps up to the plate, gets into position.

Catcher calls for a FASTBALL. Jason, hesitant, nods.

Jason gets into his set. As he does, he spots Heather in the stands, watching him.

Jason takes a DEEP BREATH, wind-up, the pitch...

CRACK. Jason CLUTCHES his arm in pain as the ball SAILS slowly over the Umpire's head.

Dennis and Martha stare on in horror. Heather covers her mouth, stands.

FIELDS  
Time, blue!

UMPIRE  
Time!

Catcher, Fields, and PLAYER MEDIC rush out to the mound. Jason grinds his teeth.

FIELDS  
Son, what's the matter?

JASON  
I'm fine.

FIELDS  
Like hell you are!

PLAYER MEDIC  
Can you lift your arm?

Jason does, attempts to hide the pain. Player Medic examines his arm.

The crowd waits in silence.

JASON  
Lemme throw a pitch.

FIELDS  
Are you insane?



JASON  
I can prove it, I'm fine.

Fields looks to the Player Medic, who disapprovingly shakes his head.

FIELDS  
Can't risk it, Reed. C'mon.

JASON  
Coach, please--

FIELDS  
It's for your own good.

Fields looks over to the BULLPEN, signals for a new pitcher.

Jason, Player Medic, and Fields walk off the mound towards the dugout.

The crowd APPLAUDS in support. Dennis rushes out, Martha behind him. Heather remains seated.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jason lays on a bed, in pain, Dennis and Martha at his side.

DENNIS  
You'll be fine, son. Happens all the time.

Jason is silent.

MARTHA  
Is there anything I can get you, honey?

Nothing.

DENNIS  
Come on, your mother is talkin' to you. Answer.

MARTHA  
It's fine, Dennis.

Beat. Suddenly, DOCTOR WHITELY (40s) enters, folder and x-rays in hand.

DENNIS  
Hey, doc.

DOCTOR WHITELY  
Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Reed. And hello to you, Jason. How are you feeling.

JASON  
Lotta pain.

Doctor Whitely takes out the x-rays, puts them up on the scanner, and turns on the light.

DOCTOR WHITELEY  
I reviewed your scans, and there appears to be damage to the ligament in your right arm.

Jason and Dennis both sigh, Martha is confused.

MARTHA  
What does this mean?

DOCTOR WHITELEY  
Well, the most viable option for your son will be an ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction surgery. It will take 8-14 months for recovery.

DENNIS  
It's Tommy John, dear.

MARTHA  
Is that good?

Jason loses it.

JASON  
Fucking Christ, no, it's not good. My career's fucking over.

DENNIS  
Son!

DOCTOR WHITELEY  
Jason, several players have gone on to be very successful at the professional level after UCL reconstruction. I highly recommend that you consider the procedure if you have any intention of continuing your baseball career.

Jason is silent. Beat. Then--

JASON  
Obviously, I'll do it. As soon as fucking possible, please.

Doctor Whitely sighs, nods his head.

DOCTOR WHITELEY  
I'll check for the next available date.

Doctor Whitely exits the room.

DENNIS  
Look, Jason, I know this isn't good, but it could be worse. You gotta control yourself, son. Don't be disrespecting your doctor and your mother. Grow up and act like a god damn adult...

Dennis's speech fades out as Jason stares at the x-ray, the world around him tuned out.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is nearly empty. Jason sits in one of two chairs, his arm in a cast and sling.

Beneath Jason is a bottle of WHISKEY.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Jason takes a SWIG from the bottle.

JASON  
Come in!

Heather enters, looks around. Jason doesn't turn to her.

HEATHER  
Jason?

JASON  
Who else? Have a seat.

Heather sits down, confused.

HEATHER  
Before you say anything, I know what you're going through right now is tough, and we weren't really anything to begin with, so it's okay with me if we leave it at that.

Jason smiles, chuckles.

JASON  
No... No! No way! Why would I give up on you so easily? Over a busted arm? Nay.

HEATHER  
So, what's going on then?

Jason takes a drink from his bottle. Heather is visibly uncomfortable with it.

JASON  
Well, for starters, I'm sorry. I don't know why it took me so long to call you.

HEATHER  
It's... okay, Jason. You had a lot on your plate.

JASON  
Secondly, I'm moving out. Obviously.

Jason laughs, prompting Heather to laugh.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm going back to Long Beach for a while, rehabbing and spending time with my family. God damn, it seems like I just got here.

HEATHER  
I know. It sucks. We just got started.

JASON  
Well, that's why you're thirdly. Or, I mean, you're first-- priority... God, this shouldn't be so hard.

Jason reaches for Heather's hand, she obliges.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I want to keep this going.

Heather looks away from Jason for a moment.

HEATHER  
With me?

JASON  
With only you! Who else? Plus, I got so much cash still, I'll be out here all the time to see you.

HEATHER  
Promise?

JASON  
I'll swear by it. And I'll definitely drink to it.

Jason takes another drink from the bottle, gestures to Heather to take one. She shakes her head.

HEATHER  
I've got work soon.

JASON  
Understandable.

Jason stands, guiding Heather up by her hand.

JASON (CONT'D)  
So, let's make this work.

HEATHER  
You're something else.

JASON  
Of course I am.

Jason moves in, they kiss. Jason wraps his arms around Heather, still clutching the bottle.

They release.

HEATHER  
Jason?

JASON  
Yeah?

HEATHER  
Don't lead me on. Seriously.

JASON  
I wouldn't.

HEATHER  
Get better.

Heather hugs Jason, kisses him on the cheek. She exits.

INT. REED HOME (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

Dennis enters the house, a duffle bag in his hand. Martha follows, then Jason.

Jason stares around, uncomfortable.

Suddenly, from around the corner--

JEFFREY  
Hey, little brother!

Jason nearly falls back. Dennis sits on the couch, Martha goes into the kitchen.

JASON  
Whoa! Where the hell have you been?

JEFFREY  
Hangin' with a couple friends.  
Finally couldn't take not hearing  
from them, so I came home.

MARTHA (O.S.)  
I'm just glad he's somewhere safe.

JASON  
(whispers to Jeffrey)  
What about you and dad?

JEFFREY  
We're cool. He chewed my ass out  
for a while, but it's all good.

DENNIS  
Jason, come on. The Warriors game's  
about to start.

JASON  
I think I'm gonna lie down for a  
bit, dad. Feeling tired.

Martha enters, a glass of water for her and a beer for  
Dennis.

MARTHA  
It's not the drugs, right?

JASON  
Mom, I'm fine.

DENNIS  
Rest up, then.

JEFFREY  
(whispers to Jason)  
And later we'll head out, get some  
sympathy from the ladies at the  
bar.

Jason doesn't respond, goes to his room.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (JASON'S ROOM) - DAY

Jason sits down on his bed, sets his bag on the ground. He  
rubs his eyes with his free hand, then reaches down and  
unzips the bag.

Jason pulls out a zip-loc bag containing several MINI BOTTLES  
of alcohol. Jason opens it, pulls one out, DOWNS IT.

Jason grabs one more, sets the zip-loc bag down, opens the  
bottle, finishes it, and lays onto his bed, staring into the  
ceiling.

\*\*MONTAGE\*\*

1. Jason wakes up, drinks four more mini-bottles.
2. Jason and Jeffrey at the bar, having fun, obviously drunk.
3. In the doctor's office, Jason has his cast removed, happy.
4. Jason meets Heather at her home. They hug, excited to see each other.
5. Jason and Heather go out; at dinner, Jason gets progressively drunker, Heather walks him out of the restaurant.
6. Jason, in practice sessions, tries to throw, no use.
7. Jason wakes up in Heather's car on the way to the airport, she drops him off, she's visibly upset.
8. Dennis opens his front door, Jason is sleeping on it, bottle in hand. Dennis drags Jason into the house.
9. Jason stumbles out to the community college practice field, ready to pitch, attempts, but still can't do it.

\*\*END MONTAGE\*\*

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (JASON'S ROOM) - MORNING

Jason sleeps. A HAND shakes his arm. Jason slowly wakes up, sees Pete and Harvey standing over him.

PETE  
Jesus, you smell like a Latino  
grandmother's armpit.

JASON  
Pete? Harvey?

HARVEY  
Wake up, sunshine.

JASON  
What are you guys doing here?

HARVEY  
Surprise visit.

PETE  
We've been in your living room for  
a couple hours now waiting.

Jason slowly rises, sits up in his bed.

JASON  
Breakfast?

HARVEY  
It's two. Lunch.

JASON  
Shit. Gimme ten minutes.

Jason attempts to stand up, falls back to the bed, and bounces up again. Pete and Harvey walk out.

INT. DINER - DAY

Pete and Harvey sit across from Jason. Jason wears sunglasses, eats his meal slowly.

HARVEY  
Your dad tells us you've been hittin' the bars pretty hard.

JASON  
Just tryin' to enjoy some time off.

PETE  
How's rehab been?

JASON  
Bullshit. I throw one bad pitch and they shut me down. If they'd give me a chance to warm up I'd be lights out.

Jason continues to eat. Harvey and Pete look at each other.

HARVEY  
So, believe it or not, we're both going up.

Jason stops. Smiles.

JASON  
Yeah?

HARVEY  
Starting roster.

PETE  
Gotta get you out to a few games, man. We'll all be in the same area.

JASON  
Cool.

Jason goes back to his meal.



HARVEY  
Thanks for the congrats, man.

JASON  
What the fuck do you want me to say? Way to hit the majors and rub it in my face.

PETE  
Whoa, hold on. We're not gloating, dude. We're here for good, and we wanted to check on our friend.

JASON  
Then why didn't you call?

HARVEY  
Are we your girlfriends, Jason?

PETE  
Harvey, hold on--

HARVEY  
No, we came down to see how he was doing, and he's shoving our success in our faces because he fucked up his arm. If he was an adult, he'd fucking deal with it and move on instead of pissing his opportunity down a dirty bar bathroom urinal.

Jason chuckles, somewhat maniacally, continues eating.

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
What the fuck's so funny?

JASON  
It's just funny to me.

HARVEY  
What?

JASON  
That you forgot who I am. First overall draft, biggest signing bonus to the team. You'll still be spitting seeds in the dugout by the time I break out, Rookie of the Year season, MVP, Cy Young. So say whatever shit you have to now, because it won't matter in a year.

Jason takes a big bite. Harvey takes out his wallet, throws cash on the table, and walks out. Pete sighs.

PETE  
What the hell is wrong with you? You're out of control.

JASON  
I know exactly what I'm doing.

PETE  
It doesn't look like that.

Jason picks up Harvey's cash, tosses it at Pete.

JASON  
I don't need this shit. And I don't  
need another mom and dad. So you  
guys enjoy your time on the bench,  
and I'll see you soon.

Pete shakes his head, gets up, and walks out. Jason continues  
to eat, the diner patrons staring at him.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jeffrey and Jason sit in a booth, beer bottles around them.

JASON  
Thanks for coming here with me.

JEFFREY  
Man, I told you. Fuck those guys.  
You're gonna be way better than  
them.

JASON  
I know.

JEFFREY  
You're a fuckin' legend, bro. High  
school to pros, straight shot.

They finish their beers.

JASON  
I know what I wanna do.

EXT. LONG BEACH SENTINEL HIGH (SPORTS FIELD) - AFTERNOON

Jason pulls into the parking lot, CRUNCHES into the curb.

Jason and Jeffrey get out. Jason takes a drink from a large  
bottle of WHISKEY. He hands it to Jeffrey, who also drinks,  
then throws the bottle back into the car.

On the field, a few high school students play Lacrosse.

Jason and Jeffrey stumble towards them. STUDENT #1 spots  
them, stops playing.

JASON  
'Sup, shitheads?

Jason and Jeffrey laugh, over the top.

STUDENT #1  
We'll be done in a little bit.

They go back to playing.

JEFFREY  
Hey!

They stop. Student #1 turns to them, as do the rest of the high school students.

STUDENT #1  
What?

JEFFREY  
Don't you know who this is?

Jeffrey points as Jason. Student #1 shrugs.

STUDENT #1  
No.

JEFFREY  
That's Jason Reed, bitch. Sports legend.

STUDENT #1  
Who?

Jeffrey and Jason act "shocked". Jason approaches Student #1, gets in his face.

JASON  
You want an autograph, man?

STUDENT #1  
Come on guys, let's go.

The high school students follow Student #1, start to leave.

JASON  
Hey, wait up!

They stop, turn. STUDENT #2 speaks up.

STUDENT #2  
Dude, let's just go.

JASON  
You can't just walk away from greatness.

STUDENT #1  
I don't even know who the fuck you  
are, man. Just leave us alone, the  
field's yours.

JASON  
I don't WANT the field.

Jason walks up to Student #1, Jeffrey follows.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I want you to bow to me.

Jeffrey laughs, the high school students do too.

JEFFREY  
BOW!

STUDENT #1  
Fuck off!

JEFFREY  
Ooooooooooh!

Jason stumbles up to Student #1, gets in his face.

JASON  
I told you to bow down.

Suddenly, Student #2 RUSHES at Jason.

SLAM. Student #2 hits Jason with his LACROSSE STICK.

The other high school students run off.

Jason stumbles in pain. Jeffrey RUSHES at Student #1 and #2.

JEFFREY  
Come here you fuckin' punks!

Student #1 and #2 try to escape. Jeffrey reaches Student #1,  
PULLS him to the ground by his shirt.

Jeffrey chases down and reaches Student #2, TACKLES him.

Jason goes to Student #1, LANDS on top of him.

SMACK. SMACK. Sounds of punches and cries come from the  
field. Jason and Jeffrey continue to beat up the Students.

Finally, Jeffrey stops, goes to Jason, and pulls him away.

Jeffrey and Jason rush to the car, get in, start it.

Jason backs out, and, before leaving, shouts out the window--

JASON  
I'm Jason FUCKING Reed!

Jason and Jeffrey laugh as they speed off, crashing through a SCHOOL SIGN and over GRASS before continuing down the road.

POLICE SIRENS ring out.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC MAYS OFFICE (WARRIORS HOME OFFICE) - MORNING

Jason and Dennis sit across from Eric. The mood is dark.

ERIC  
Ultimately, the decision was unanimous. I'm very sorry this didn't work out.

Beat.

DENNIS  
Come on, Mr. Mays. I know other players get into this kind of trouble.

ERIC  
Unfortunately, Mr. Reed, this case is one of a kind.

Dennis sighs, Jason is unresponsive.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
On behalf of the Warriors organization, we wish you luck in free agency, Jason.

Eric stands, sticks his hand out. Jason ignores it, walks away. Dennis turns, he and Eric watch Jason leave.

INT. HEATHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Heather opens the door to see Jason.

HEATHER  
Jason?

Jason walks in, hugs Heather tightly. Heather hugs back.

JASON  
God, I missed you.

HEATHER  
What are you doing here?

JASON  
I just needed to be somewhere I  
felt loved.

Heather pulls back, looks away from Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You're not happy to see me?

HEATHER  
I don't even know who I'm looking  
at anymore.

JASON  
It's still me, here. Same guy you  
always knew.

HEATHER  
No, not even close. I'm just tired  
of trying to keep up, Jason. I get  
all of my news about you from ESPN  
before you tell me, and every time  
you visit me you're escaping  
something. I can't be that person.

Jason backs out of the apartment, into the hallway.

JASON  
So because I couldn't text you  
before you read it on the news, you  
don't want to be with me anymore?

HEATHER  
Were we ever really together? You  
call me occasionally, almost always  
drunk. You show up here, we go out  
or stay in, and you drink. You only  
want to talk about yourself and  
your problems. I feel like your god  
damn psychologist.

Beat.

JASON  
Is that all?

HEATHER  
Jason, if I didn't care about you,  
I wouldn't be worried. You have a  
problem.

JASON  
It sounds to me like you're the one  
with the problem.

Heather's eyes tear up.

HEATHER  
You're an alcoholic.

JASON  
No I'm not!

HEATHER  
I want you to get better.

JASON  
(ignoring her)  
I like to have fun, unlike you.

HEATHER  
I didn't think you'd be able to  
handle it.

Jason SLAMS the outside wall.

JASON  
How am I not handling it?!

Beat.

HEATHER  
Goodbye, Jason.

Heather closes the door.

JASON  
Heather, wait. Heather!

Jason POUNDS his fist into the wall.

INT. JASON'S CAR - NIGHT

Jason drives away, obviously upset. He approaches a liquor store, pulls into the parking lot.

INT. JASON'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Jason continues down the road, taking drinks from a mini-bottle of liquor.

He finishes one, tosses it into the backseat, and grabs another. He opens it, takes another drink.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S CAR - MORNING

Jason sleeps in his car, mini-bottles surrounding him.

A loud MOTORCYCLE RACES past his car, startles Jason awake.

Jason rubs his eyes, looks down: a large VOMIT stain on his shirt.

Jason throws empty bottles into the backseat. He reaches into his bag, pulls out another bottle.

He starts the car.

INT. SHOPPING MALL (CLOTHING STORE) - DAY

A CASHIER rings up T-SHIRTS. Jason stands on the opposite side of the counter, sunglasses on, slouching.

He signals to the Cashier to hurry up, hands the Cashier his debit card.

The Cashier rings it up, bags the shirts, hands it to Jason. Jason smiles, turns, walks away. As he does, the clinking of the mini-bottles rattles in his pockets.

INT. SHOPPING MALL (MAIN) - DAY

Jason stumbles through the mall, passing multiple stores, the bag of shirts in his hand.

Jason reaches into his pants pocket, pulls out a mini-bottle, without regard for being in public. He downs the bottle in one gulp. Mall patrons stare him down, he ignores them.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Jason gets into his car. He finishes the mini-bottle in his hand, then starts the car.

Jason backs out slowly, but doesn't look behind him.

CRUNCH. Jason backs into another car.

Jason quickly puts the car in drive and starts to leave, before--

CRASH. He runs into another parked car. The mall parking crowd looks at him, including a MALL SECURITY OFFICER, who RUSHES towards him.

Jason DRIVES away, narrowly avoiding people in the parking lot aisle. He makes a sharp turn, then--



SLAM. Jason runs his car dead center into a LIGHT POLE.

The Mall Security Officer reaches the car. He attempts to open the door, but Jason holds it closed.

MALL SECURITY OFFICER  
Sir, are you alright? Let me in!

A CROWD forms around the scene.

Suddenly, a POLICE CAR pulls up. Two POLICE OFFICERS exit their car, walk up to Jason's car.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
What's going on?

MALL SECURITY OFFICER  
He hit a couple cars and then the light pole, and he won't get out.

Police Officer #1 knocks on Jason's window.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
Sir, step out the vehicle, slowly.

Jason doesn't move.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)  
Sir, we will use force if need be.

Nothing.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)  
Alright, let's do this. Sir, I would cover your face.

Police Officer #2 stands behind Police Officer #1.

SMASH. Police Officer #1 BREAKS the driver-side window with his BATON. He unlocks the door and pulls out Jason, who struggles.

Police Officer #1 SLAMS Jason to the ground, handcuffs him.

Jason yells, slurring:

JASON  
I don't care! I don't FUCKING CARE!

Jason cries, continues as two more POLICE CARS arrive. Along with them are NEWS VANS.

Jason is DRAGGED by Police Officer's #1 and #2 to their Police Car, Jason continues to cry and scream.

PULL OUT TO:

TELEVISION SCREEN: Footage of Jason's arrest and the scene at the Mall flash on the screen.

SPORTS REPORTER

Nightmare first-round overall draft pick Jason Reed, recently released by the Long Beach Warriors, is in yet another mess. Earlier today, he was arrested for DUI charges, and several counts of hit-and-run. The video here shows evidence that, apparently, there is crying in baseball.

PULL OUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION (JAIL CELL) - NIGHT

Jason sits on a metal bench, alone. He rubs his face with his hands, muttering incoherently to himself.

FOOTSTEPS. From down the hall.

Jason looks up as Martha and Dennis arrive. Both are visibly dismayed, Martha near tears.

JASON

Thank God, I couldn't call anyone for bail. Heather just--

DENNIS

Stop. Just stop. We don't need your story.

JASON

Where's the guard? Open the door.

DENNIS

We're sure as hell not here to let you out, son. You've had your share of trouble, and the lesson's about to be learned.

Jason stands, walks over to the bars.

JASON

But, Dad--

DENNIS

No. We only came to make sure you weren't hurt.

Jason realizes the sincerity.

JASON

Mom?

MARTHA  
Honey, you always have a home with us.

DENNIS  
But you're gonna have to find your own way there.

JASON  
Fine, forget it, I'll call someone to bail me out with my own money.

MARTHA  
You don't have any.

JASON  
The fuck you mean I don't have any?

DENNIS  
Watch your language!

MARTHA  
There's only seven-hundred dollars in your account.

Jason SLAMS the bars with his hand, walks back over to the bench and leans his hands against the brick wall.

DENNIS  
Good luck finding your way out.

MARTHA  
I'm sorry, Jason. I love you.

Dennis and Martha walk away. Jason rushes back to the bars.

JASON  
Wait, come back! Come on! You can't just leave me here!

Martha nearly turns back, but Dennis encourages her to continue.

Jason remains at the bars, his frustrations finally giving way to tears.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SUPERTITLE: THREE MONTHS LATER

INT. RANCHO SOBRIO (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

A group sits in a circle, all wearing varying degrees of WHITE clothing. They focus on--

Jason, more composed and healthy than before, has the floor.

JASON  
--It mostly had to do with my need  
to fill the void. The larger the  
void, the more I drank.

A GROUP LEADER directs him.

GROUP LEADER  
Would you say you've committed your  
life to sobriety?

Beat.

JASON  
I don't know.

GROUP LEADER  
Why?

JASON  
Because the reasons I drink are the  
same reasons I stay sober.

The group ponders that thought.

GROUP LEADER  
And that's always the battle.  
Choosing to remain in good  
conscience rather than unconscious.

The group laughs, Jason doesn't. Group Leader stands, reaches  
into his pocket.

GROUP LEADER (CONT'D)  
Jason, I'd like to give you this  
chip as a symbol for your  
dedication to remaining alcohol  
free for the past three months.

Group Leader hands Jason a GREEN CHIP. Jason takes it, looks  
it over, admires it. The group CLAPS.

INT. RANCHO SOBRIO (CONFERENCE ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

The meeting is over. Others in the group chat, Jason starts  
to walk away, but is stopped when he locks eyes with--

HANK CRAWFORD (50s), kind man with just a little more  
seriousness than smiles, approaches Jason.

HANK  
Mr. Reed?

JASON  
Jason, please.

Jason sticks out his hand, Hank shakes it.

HANK  
It's a pleasure to meet you, my name's Hank Crawford, and I'm here as a recruitment representative and triple-A team manager in the farm system for the Florida Foxes. Can I have a few minutes of your time?

JASON  
Of course.

Jason gestures for Hank to follow him.

INT./EXT. RANCHO SOBRIO (COURTYARD) - DAY

Jason and Hank sit across from each other, a coffee cup in front of each.

Jason holds a flyer that reads: TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC.

HANK  
Basically, we'd get you more suitable care than you receive here, and, alongside the rehabilitation, we would help you to possibly revive your baseball career.

JASON  
So you want to just sign me and hope I get better?

Hank clears his throat.

HANK  
Listen, I came out here personally because I don't believe you're a gamble. You're a kid with some amazing talent that hasn't been on display due to a series of unfortunate events. You've got the potential. And, no, any sort of contractual signing would only arise if you demonstrated full and proper rehabilitation at the clinic. But, I can guarantee you that, if you show me the stuff I've seen in your practice videos, you'll hit the pro-game in no time.

Jason looks over the flyer again.

JASON  
I don't know if I'm ready to play  
again.

HANK  
(leans in)  
Hell no you're not! But you can be.

Jason sets down the flyer, takes a sip from his cup.

JASON  
Can I have a week? Think about it?

HANK  
Of course. Offer's on the table for  
one week.

Hank stands up, grabs his drink. Jason stands as well.

HANK (CONT'D)  
You know, it doesn't matter how bad  
someone's story is, everyone gets a  
shot at turning it around;  
rewriting their future as a tale of  
overcoming obstacles. It just takes  
the confidence to believe there's  
still progress to be made.

Hank sticks out his hand. They shake.

HANK (CONT'D)  
I look forward to hearing from you.

JASON  
Thank you.

Jason watches as Hank walks away.

INT. RANCHO SOBRIO (GAME ROOM) - DAY

Jason plays a game of SOLITAIRE with CARDS at a table.

Suddenly--

HEATHER (O.S.)  
Always playing alone.

Jason looks up. Heather sits down at his table, smiles.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Hi.

Jason sets down the deck of cards.

JASON  
I can't believe you're here.

HEATHER  
Or, "hi" too.

JASON  
Seriously. All the way out here? Is there some kind of nurses convention?

Heather laughs, Jason smiles.

HEATHER  
No. Far from it. I just-- haven't been able to get you off of my mind.

JASON  
Really?

HEATHER  
Really. I called your parents, introduced myself properly, considering you never did, and asked for your info.

JASON  
And of course they just gave it to you.

HEATHER  
Naturally.

JASON  
Are they that gullible? Or are you just that good?

Heather leans forward, puts her hand on Jason's hand.

HEATHER  
I want to be honest with you up front: I'm not here looking for a relationship. I've just always felt this urge to tell you that there's still someone on this planet that isn't your family that still believes in you.

Beat.

JASON  
(serious)  
You mean-- you came 400 miles to tell me something you could've texted?

Heather is shocked, pulls back. Jason smiles.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm kidding.

A sigh of relief from Heather, she smiles.

HEATHER  
You've changed. A lot.

Jason looks away, around the room.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
For the better.

Jason stares at her. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the TOP OF THE LINEUP flier.

JASON  
There's this rehab clinic for  
baseball that--

HEATHER  
Do it.

Beat.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Don't think twice. Just do it. In  
fact--

Heather pulls out her cell phone, slides it across the table, through the cards, to Jason.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Call them.

JASON  
Now?

HEATHER  
Either that, or you can wait for  
another multi-million dollar  
contract to fall in your lap.

Jason looks at her, she smiles.

JASON  
Ouch.

Heather laughs. Jason opens the phone, and, as he looks at the flier, dials the number.

Heather collects the cards on the table, organizes them into a stack. Jason watches on as he holds the phone to his ear.

JASON (CONT'D)  
(to Heather)  
Did I tell you I was done?

HEATHER  
Nope. We're gonna play something.



Heather shuffles the deck, Jason watches, still listening.

EXT. AIRPORT - MORNING

Jason empties out his luggage from the trunk of a cab.  
Heather helps him.

Jason closes the trunk lid.

JASON  
Alright, this is it.

HEATHER  
Yep.

JASON  
Don't get any ideas about trying to  
fly out there and see me and spend  
time in the beautiful Deep South.

Heather laughs.

HEATHER  
I don't know how I'll resist.

Jason smiles, goes to Heather. They hug, a deep embrace.

JASON  
Thank you. I don't think I'd've  
gotten back on track to play ball  
again without you.

HEATHER  
Thank me later, when you're in the  
spotlight.

They let go, still holding each other at the waist. Jason  
stares at Heather, she stares back.

After a beat, they KISS. It's brief, but emotional.

JASON  
Bye.

HEATHER  
Goodbye.

Jason grabs his luggage, walks through the entrance doors.

Heather stands, momentarily watches Jason leave.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (HALL) - DAY

Jason and Hank walk down the hall. Jason holds one bag, Hank  
holds the other.

HANK  
So, you know, there's mechanics and warm-ups and whatnot. You'll have access to all of the workout facilities and training areas.

JASON  
Eat, drink, and sleep baseball, right?

HANK  
It's not all play and relaxation here. You're gonna have to do work, too. Just like everyone else.

JASON  
Like what?

HANK  
Mopping the cafeteria, serving the cafeteria food, clearing out the cafeteria-- mostly has to do with the cafeteria.

Jason laughs. They arrive at a door.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Here we are.

Hank takes out the key, hands it to Jason. Jason takes it, and opens the door--

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (JASON'S ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Jason and Hank enter the dorm-style room, barely decorated and furnished.

Jason sets his bag down by the dresser, Hank puts the other bag in the closet.

Jason takes in his surroundings.

HANK  
You know who once stayed in this very room?

Jasons shakes his head.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Gary Richards.

JASON  
Shut the fuck up!

Hank takes slight offense. Jason realizes.

JASON (CONT'D)  
No, sorry, I mean-- really?

HANK  
Yep. Cleaned up in a little under a year. Right before he returned for his Cy Young season.

JASON  
Never knew. Man, he's an asshole.

HANK  
Yep. Unfortunately, we don't rehab personalities. We try, but it's not our specialty.

Hank laughs at his own joke. Jason sits on the bed, tests its durability.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Whoa, don't get comfortable. We gotta go.

JASON  
Where?

HANK  
Cafeteria.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (CAFETERIA) - DAY

Jason mops the floors while Hank watches. Jason's the only one in the room working.

Suddenly, the doors fly open, and several PLAYERS enter. Each Player holds a SNO BALLS snack in their hand.

Jason looks around, the Players surround him.

JASON  
What's up, guys?

HANK  
Oh, that's right. Sorry, Jason. Tradition.

Hank walks away, towards the wall.

JASON  
What?

PLAYER #1 initiates.

PLAYER #1  
Welcome to the bottom. Now!

All the Players FIRE their Sno Balls at Jason, who dances around, trying not to get hit. They make a large mess.

The Players laugh and applaud. Hank walks towards Jason, who's covered in the Sno Balls pieces.

HANK

It doesn't get any lower than this.

The Players laugh, and walk away. As they leave, Jason smiles, continues to clean.

EXT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (BASEBALL FIELD) - DAY

Jason stands on the pitcher's mound in the bullpen while Hank watches from the side. A tethered slat of rubber backstop hangs at the end, an outline on it marking the strike zone.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SLAM. The ball hits about three feet above the diagram. Jason winces slightly in pain.

HANK

Well that's your problem.

JASON

What?

HANK

You're in pain.

JASON

No shit.

Hank stares down Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)

Sorry.

HANK

I mean, you had major surgery to your arm, you haven't thrown in months, and when you try, your arm hurts. What does that mean?

JASON

My chances are slim?

HANK

No! We gotta rethink your delivery.

JASON

But I've only thrown one way my entire life.

HANK  
And how'd that turn out?

Jason looks down.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Sorry.

JASON  
You really think it'll make a  
difference?

HANK  
Won't hurt to try, right?

Jason nods his head in approval.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (JASON'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Jason lays on his bed, reads a book that details pitch  
delivery, with diagrams.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (CAFETERIA) - DAY

Jason sits with Player #1, looking through the book. Meals  
sit in front of them, Jason's plate untouched.

JASON  
So you hold your leg up and--

PLAYER #1  
Release the ball as soon as it your  
foot hits the ground.

JASON  
That's almost impossible.

PLAYER #1  
Every pitcher that's mastered that  
delivery has played in the majors.  
Guaranteed.

Player #1 eats his meal.

JASON  
But you gotta stay closed, right?

PLAYER #1  
Definitely.

Jason examines the design. Hanks enters behind him.

HANK  
You're on cleanup today, Jason.

JASON  
Got it.

Hank smiles, walks away.

EXT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (BASEBALL FIELD) - DAY

Jason and Hank are back again. Hank holds a radar gun, aimed at Jason. Jason attempts the new delivery--

SMACK. The ball hits just above the diagram.

HANK  
What the hell was that?

JASON  
Somethin' I was looking in to.

HANK  
It looked pretty.

JASON  
Yeah?

HANK  
Yeah. But it only went fifty-three miles an hour.

Hank shows Jason the radar gun result. Jason is upset.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (WEIGHT ROOM) - DAY

Jason bench presses while PLAYER #2 spots him.

PLAYER #2  
--and so, when it got to the point that I was rushing down into the clubhouse to do a line every third inning, I knew I needed to get my ass in rehab.

Jason continues to do his reps, pushing really hard.

PLAYER #2 (CONT'D)  
But it's good, you know. Being clean, feeling healthy. My main problem is that now I'm way, WAY behind the pitch.

Jason does his last rep, sets the bar back.

PLAYER #2 (CONT'D)  
But as soon as I started looking for curveballs and changeups, BAM! I found my stride.

Jason laughs, wipes off his face.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (JASON'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Jason sleeps on his bed, his book lies open on his chest.

Player #1 opens his door.

PLAYER #1  
Jason, you wanna come with us--

Player #1 notices Jason's asleep. He leaves.

EXT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (BASEBALL FIELD) - DAY

Jason on the mound, Hank to the side, radar gun in hand.  
Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SLAM. Hits dead center. Hank, impressed, shows Jason the  
radar gun reading: 85 MPH.

INT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (RECREATION ROOM) - DAY

Jason sits in front of the TV, watching a Long Beach Warriors  
vs. Florida Foxes matchup. An ANNOUNCER talks on the screen.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Looks like they'll be bringing in  
Harvey Gunner to pinch hit for the  
pitcher's spot.

Jason looks on, spots Harvey as he walks to the batter's box.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Harvey Gunner, two-oh-seven hitter,  
two-twenty-four off the bench, will  
try to make some noise for the  
Warriors tonight.

Harvey stands, nervous, ready for the pitch.

SLAM. Harvey watches the first one go by, a strike.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Gunner takes a dead center  
fastball.

Jason watches with curiosity. The pitcher sets.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
The pitch--

SMACK. A dribbler back to the pitcher. Harvey half-heartedly runs it out before being thrown out.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And a soft shot to the pitcher will  
close out this inning. It's  
Warriors two, Foxes five.

Harvey enters the dugout, THROWS his helmet in anger. Jason notices Pete on the bench. Pete tries to console Harvey, but Harvey blows him off.

The TV goes to commercial.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Buncha losers.

Jason turns around to see Dennis, Martha, and Heather. Jason stands, hugs Martha and Heather, Dennis still watching the television, ignores him.

MARTHA  
Oh, honey, we wanted to surprise  
you. You look so good!

JASON  
I feel really good.

MARTHA  
You can't call?

JASON  
Mom!

HEATHER  
I barely hear anything from him.

JASON  
Sorry, I've been kinda busy.  
Where's Jeffrey?

Martha goes quiet.

MARTHA  
He left again. It doesn't matter.  
What matters is we're here now.  
What have you been doing?

DENNIS  
Probably watchin' this team suck.  
They needed you, son.

Beat.

JASON  
Good to see you too, dad.



MARTHA  
(whispers to Jason)  
He's a little cranky. The doctor's  
told him he had to stop drinking.  
It's his liver.

Jason looks over at Dennis, who doesn't bother to look at him.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Well, we're here now!

Jason spots Hank walking through the room.

JASON  
Hank!

Hank stops, walks over to Jason and the family.

HANK  
Jason, just who I was looking for.

JASON  
Hank, these are my parents, Dennis  
and Martha, and this is my--

Jason looks at Heather.

MARTHA  
Don't be shy, she's your girlfiend!

JASON  
Thanks, Mom.

HEATHER  
Who also has a name. It's Heather.

HANK  
Nice to meet you, Heather. Dennis,  
Martha, kudos.

Hank shakes all of their hands, looks at Jason.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Might not be the greatest timing,  
but some of the Foxes reps are  
here, and they want to talk to you,  
maybe see your stuff.

JASON  
Now?! Alright!

DENNIS  
You wanna play for Florida?

MARTHA  
Dennis!

JASON  
I'll get my stuff right now.

HANK  
Let's meet on the field in twenty minutes.

Hank walks away, Jason grows excited.

JASON  
You guys wanna see me pitch?

DENNIS  
Worked out all the kinks?

JASON  
Completely different.

MARTHA  
Where can we watch?

JASON  
Just go out to the field and have a seat in the stands. I'll be out there soon.

MARTHA  
Okay, see you there.

Martha drags Dennis away. Heather walks up to Jason.

JASON  
I'm so glad you're here.

HEATHER  
Me too.

JASON  
I wanna talk to you later. Just you and me.

HEATHER  
Not while you're parents are here!

JASON  
No, *talk*. Seriously.

HEATHER  
Okay.

They KISS.

Heather leaves. Jason walks in the opposite direction.

EXT. TOP OF THE LINEUP CLINIC (BASEBALL FIELD) - DAY

A group of three BUSINESS MEN (NEAL, BOYD, and CHRIS) stand by the pitcher's mound, dressed in business casual attire, next to Hank.

Martha, Dennis, and Heather make their way to the stands, sit down, look out at the field.

They look around, waiting, then spot Jason jogging towards them, dressed in his uniform, glove in hand.

Jason finally arrives at the pitcher's mound.

JASON  
Hi, sorry, it took me a minute.

HANK  
Gentleman, I'd like to introduce you to Jason Reed. Jason, this is Neal Clarke, Boyd Gill, and Chris Hicks. They're recruiters for the Florida Foxes.

Jason shakes each of their hands.

JASON  
It's a pleasure to meet you. Thank you for the chance.

NEAL  
Alright, kid, let's see what you got.

Neal and Boyd remain where they are, while Chris, with his radar gun, and Hank walk towards and behind the backstop. Once they arrive, Chris aims his radar gun at Jason.

Neal holds a clipboard, Boyd watches on.

Martha and Heather grow nervous, Dennis is on edge.

MARTHA  
(yells)  
Throw it hard, son!

Dennis playfully smacks Martha on the arm. Neal and Boyd both look at Dennis, then back to Jason.

JASON  
My parents.

BOYD  
That's fine. Why don't you show us your fastball?

JASON

Sure.

Jason digs in on the mound. He sets, wind-up, pitch--  
SMACK. A strike. Boyd and Neal are impressed.

CHRIS

(yelling)  
Ninety-one!

NEAL

Impressive.

BOYD

What else do you have?

JASON

I've got a solid slider, and I'm  
developing a sinker.

BOYD

Let's see the slider.

Jason sets, the wind-up, the pitch--

SMACK. Another strike.

CHRIS

(yelling)  
Eighty-five!

NEAL

Can you tell us about your stance?

JASON

It's a combination of a few  
different techniques. I synchronize  
the release point with the landing  
of my lead foot so that the  
velocity of the pitch increases  
while altering the batter's  
perception of the--

BOYD

You had Tommy John a year ago. Feel  
any pain?

Jason clears his throat. Chris and Hank step out from behind  
the backstop.

JASON

Not at all. That's why I switched  
up my delivery.

HANK

Kid's a solid middle reliever,  
Boyd.

Neal and Boyd are joined by Chris. They turn away, discuss privately for a moment.

Hank gives Jason a THUMBS UP, Jason looks out to his family. Martha and Heather are nervous, Dennis is quiet.

The business men turn back around.

NEAL  
It's a very interesting delivery.

BOYD  
How many innings you feel you could go?

JASON  
Probably three to four.

NEAL  
There's a few home single-A games comin' up in a couple weeks. Let's test you out there.

Jason can't believe it, the three men are unfazed.

JASON  
You mean, you're signing me?

BOYD  
We'll draft a contract for you tonight, get you into Tallahassee as soon as next week.

JASON  
Thank you! Thank you!

Jason shakes their hands, turns to Martha, Heather and Dennis.

JASON (CONT'D)  
(yells)  
They're signing me!

Heather and Martha cheer, Dennis barely nods his approval.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jason, Heather, Dennis, Martha, and Hank all sit in a booth, menus in hand.

A SERVER comes to the table.

SERVER  
How's everyone doing tonight?

JASON  
Great, thank you.

SERVER  
Can I get you started with some drinks?

MARTHA  
I'll just have an Iced Tea.

JASON  
Same here.

HEATHER  
Water, please.

HANK  
Just water for me.

Dennis remains silent for a moment.

SERVER  
And for you, s--

DENNIS  
I'll have a pale ale. Need my ID?

Dennis laughs alone, sets down his menu.

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
What, can't take a joke?

SERVER  
I'll have that right up for you.

MARTHA  
Miss? He'll just have water.

DENNIS  
No, I'll have a beer.

MARTHA  
Honey--  
(whispers)  
The doctor said--

DENNIS  
Oh, to hell with him. We're on vacation.

MARTHA  
Your liver doesn't take a vacation!

JASON  
Mom.

Everyone looks to Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
One won't kill him.

Martha looks at Jason coldly but accepting. Dennis smiles.

DENNIS  
I knew he was smart.

SERVER  
I'll be right back.

Server walks away. An uncomfortable silence.

HANK  
So, Jason, I guess you need to  
start apartment-hunting in  
Tallahassee.

JASON  
I can't believe it. I can't thank  
you enough, Hank.

HANK  
You've always had the potential.

Dennis scoffs.

JASON  
What's up, dad?

DENNIS  
You think he's you're biggest fan?

JASON  
I didn't say that.

MARTHA  
Dennis, stop.

DENNIS  
Fine, you know what, you're right.  
You don't need me.

JASON  
What are you talking about?

DENNIS  
Sure, you just came out of the womb  
with all that talent, and eighteen  
years later, you made it.  
Naturally. No help.

JASON  
Dad, you know how much you mean to  
me. I thank you more than everyone  
else.

DENNIS  
Then why would you throw away the  
delivery that took you to the top?

Heather and Martha exchange a glance. Hank is visibly  
uncomfortable.

JASON  
Seriously?

DENNIS  
It was perfect. Now you look like a  
damn fool.

JASON  
You're right, it was perfect. Until  
it cost me my arm and I had to  
start from the bottom.

HEATHER  
Jason, don't--

JASON  
Surgery repaired me, not you. Rehab  
repaired me, not you! And Hank, and  
Heather, and Mom supported me and  
cheered me on through it all, not  
you! So don't think for a second  
that you got me to this point.  
Because your role in my life ended  
the moment you walked away from my  
jail cell.

Beat. Dennis is silent.

The Server returns, begins to set drinks down. She sets the  
beer down in front of Dennis, and, noticing the tension,  
leaves.

Everyone stares at the glass of beer.

Finally, Dennis latches on to it. He leans forward, staring  
at Jason.

DENNIS  
You're here because you fucked up.

Dennis raises the glass, and takes a drink. Jason stands up,  
and walks away. Heather rushes after him.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jason walks through the parking lot, upset. Heather rushes  
after him.

HEATHER  
Wait!



Jason turns around, Heather continues towards him.

JASON

It's always about him. It's always been about him. And then, when it's finally time for him to take some fucking accountability, he turns it all around and blames it on me. I'm not gonna listen to that.

HEATHER

And you don't have to. But you've changed for the better, Jason. And it's only effective if you face your problems head on. Not only do you owe it to your mother and Hank, who are probably already dead from the awkward tension, but you owe it to yourself to face the world and say, "this is who I am, deal with it." Don't let him ruin you.

Heather stands immediately in front of Jason, rubs his arms.

JASON

I just don't know if I can face a man who would willingly order a beer around a recovering alcoholic, let alone for his own health.

HEATHER

That's who he wants to be. The fact that you care enough to want to help him shows you still love him. But, sometimes, people aren't willing to change.

Heather hugs Jason, he hugs her back, tightly.

They let go, Jason stares at Heather.

JASON

Move to Tallahassee with me.

Heather stares, shocked.

JASON (CONT'D)

Shit, I didn't want it to come out like that, under these circumstances. But it did. So, move in with me.

HEATHER

I-- have my career, my family--

JASON  
Well when I make it to the majors,  
you won't need your career, and  
we'll move your family.

HEATHER  
All of them?

JASON  
All of them.

Heather laughs, Jason smiles.

JASON (CONT'D)  
So?

Beat. Heather kisses Jason. She backs away.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Sooooo....?

HEATHER  
Yes. But only if you come back in  
there with me and we have a decent  
dinner.

JASON  
Deal.

Jason grabs Heather's hand, they walk back to the entrance.

EXT. SINGLE-A TEAM FIELD - NIGHT

A league game, two men on base.

Jason wears the Single-A Jersey, stands on the pitcher's  
mound. He gets the signal from the CATCHER.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK.

UMPIRE  
STRIKE!

The BATTER looks back at the ball, then out towards Jason, in  
disbelief.

INT. TALLAHASSEE APARTMENT - DAY

Jason enters, followed by Heather, who covers Jason's eyes.  
Once they are fully inside, Heather UNVEILS Jason's eyes.

Jason sees the apartment, fully decorated. Heather is excited, Jason sees the area with all of his baseball trophies and awards. He's impressed.

EXT. AIRPORT - MORNING

Jason kisses Heather, takes his bags, and walks into the terminal.

EXT. DOUBLE-A TEAM FIELD - DAY

Different stadium, different uniforms. A RUNNER on first.

Jason SWEATS profusely. He gets the signal from the CATCHER. Jason sets.

Jason checks the Runner, who leads off far from the first base bag.

Jason quickly CHUCKS the ball towards the FIRST BASEMAN.

The FIRST BASE UMPIRE holds up his fist.

FIRST BASE UMPIRE  
He got 'em!

Runner argues with the First Base Umpire, Jason and First Baseman exchange a celebratory "high-five."

INT. TALLAHASSEE APARTMENT - DAY

Heather goes to the door, opens it.

It's Jason, a surprise. He has flowers in one hand, his baseball bag in another.

They hug and kiss.

EXT. TRIPLE-A TEAM FIELD - NIGHT

Different stadium, different uniforms.

In the crowd, Heather watches from a close by bleacher seat.

Jason stands on the mound, the bases loaded. LARGE BATTER stands in the batter's box.

The CATCHER gives Jason the signal. Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

CRACK. The bat BREAKS into pieces, and the ball dribbles towards Jason.

Jason quickly picks it up, turns and throws to the SECOND BASEMAN. Second Baseman taps second base with his foot, then quickly tosses the ball to the First Baseman.

First Baseman makes the catch, the First Base Umpire signals an OUT.

The crowd goes wild. Heather launches out of her seat, claps.

Jason's teammates run up to him, each giving him a congratulatory high-five, pat on the shoulder, etc.

INT. TRIPLE-A TEAM FIELD (CLUBHOUSE) - NIGHT

Jason changes into his street clothes. Several other players change in the background.

Suddenly--

PETE (O.S.)  
Well, look who it is.

Jason turns to see Pete, he's shocked. They hug, happy.

JASON  
Pete! Dude! What're you doing here?

PETE  
Came to say hello!

JASON  
Really?

PETE  
Fuck no! I got traded, put in the Triple-A team.

JASON  
It's good to see you, man. How's everything been? How's Harvey?

PETE  
Things could be better, but at least I'm still in the game. Harvey-- let's just say he and I shouldn't have made the big leagues together.

JASON  
Oh. Sorry, man.

PETE  
Hey, it's the nature of the game. We're both passionate players, and it just got the better of us. But, it's weird going from LB to Fl--

The Manager's Office Door opens, Hank sticks his head out.

HANK  
Reed! Get in here.

Jason looks at the Manager, then at Pete.

JASON  
I'll be right back.

Jason walks to the Office, enters.

INT. TRIPLE-A TEAM FIELD (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Jason enters, closes the door behind him. Hank sits behind a desk, looking through paperwork.

HANK  
Have a seat.

Jason sits, Hank sets down the paperwork.

JASON  
You callin' me Reed now?

HANK  
Just in front of the newbie.

JASON  
He's a good friend, go easy on him.

HANK  
Look, Jason, I know it's already the middle of September, expanded rosters closed and all that bullshit. But I wanted you to hear it first from me that-- in the twenty-twelve season-- YOU will be on the opening day roster for the Florida Foxes. Congratulations.

Jason is stunned, elated, speechless.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Say something!

JASON  
I can't! Other than-- why the hell would you tell me now so I'd have to think about for the next six months!

Jason laughs, as does Hank. Hank extends his hand across the desk for a handshake. Jason takes it, they shake.

HANK  
Tell Heather, tell your parents,  
just don't tell the world. If you  
do, I'll personally ensure you  
never make the major leagues.

JASON  
I promise. Thank you so much, Hank.

HANK  
You've earned it. I just sat back  
and watched.

Jason stands, tips his cap to Hank. Hank smiles, Jason exits.

INT. TRIPLE-A TEAM FIELD (CLUBHOUSE) - CONTINUOUS

Jason smiles, looks up and sees Pete staring back. Pete  
smiles back, Jason's smile fades.

JASON  
Let's go out tonight.

Pete nods.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT BAR - NIGHT

Jason sits next to Heather and across from Pete. Pete holds  
up a BEER BOTTLE, Heather and Jason hold up ICED TEA.

PETE  
To the pitcher deepest in the  
Florida Foxes twenty-twelve  
bullpen, Mister Jason Reed.

CLINK. They all chuckle, drink, and set their drinks down.

Heather looks at Jason.

HEATHER  
I'm so proud of you, baby.

PETE  
C'mon, you can do that later.

They laugh.

HEATHER  
Been good, Pete? Last time I saw  
you, you gave me probably one of  
the grossest kisses of my life.

Jason chuckles.

PETE  
I've definitely gotten better. Lots  
of practice on the pro circuit, if  
you know what I mean.

JASON  
I can't believe it's been three  
years since then.

They fall silent with memory.

PETE  
Jason, if you take only one thing  
away from our conversation tonight,  
I want it to be this: it's good to  
see you sober, man.

JASON  
Thanks.

PETE  
It's taken you further than I think  
you ever could've gotten, and I  
like this grown-up version of  
Jason.

JASON  
Still haven't gotten there. We'll  
see.

PETE  
You'll be fine.

HEATHER  
Alright, let's lighten the mood.

The conversation fades out.

EXT. TALLAHASSEE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jason supports an extremely buzzed Heather on his shoulder.  
They walk towards his apartment from the parking lot.

HEATHER  
You don't think I could play?

JASON  
I didn't say that.

HEATHER  
You did, I know you did.

They laugh. They turn a corner--

At the front door is Jeffrey. He finishes his bottle in a brown paper bag, uses the wall to help him stand up. He's obviously loaded.

Jason and Heather stop, their mood instantly changed.

JASON  
Jeff? What--

JEFFREY  
Hey, little brother! How's it been?

JASON  
Where have you been? How'd you find me?

Jeffrey laughs, struggles to maintain balance.

JEFFREY  
You're almost there, man. To the top! I'm here tryin' to get on that ride. Family's family.

HEATHER  
(to Jason)  
Let's call your parents.

JEFFREY  
Fuck no! Don't call them! Don't-- call them!

Jeffrey nearly falls, Jason rushes over to help.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
See, bro. You wanna help me out. I wanna support you. Let's do it for each other.

Jason looks back at Heather, who's scared.

JASON  
I'm gonna call Mom and Dad.

JEFFREY  
No! Don't turn on me, man. They don't want me!

JASON  
You can't be here, Jeff. You need help.

JEFFREY  
You can't take care of me?

Beat. Jeffrey realizes the hesitation, backs away from Jason.



JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Fine, fuck you then! I get it, got  
your girl, got your career, no room  
for family.

JASON  
You know what-- fine, leave. I  
don't need your bullshit right now.

Jason walks back to Heather, holds her. Jeffrey stabilizes.

JEFFREY  
That's right, hide behind your  
woman. Fuck you, Jason! FUCK YOU.  
Think you're all big and shit. I  
don't need you.

Jeffrey turns around, still muttering to himself. Heather  
starts to walk towards him, Jason grabs her arm, stops her.

HEATHER  
He needs help.

JASON  
He'll find it somewhere else.

They both watch Jeffrey walk away. An AIRPLANE SOUNDS...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE (BUSINESS CLASS) - DAY

Jason, in a suit, sits window-seat, staring at the skyline.  
The seat next to him is empty. Jason's visibly nervous.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches him.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Would you like a drink, sir?

Jason turns to the Flight Attendant, thinks for a moment.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL (GATE) - DAY

Jason, with his carry-on bag, exits the gate doors. He takes  
out his cell phone, turns it on.

On the screen flashes FOURTEEN MISSED CALLS and a VOICEMAIL,  
from MOM.

Jason listens: Martha sounds like she's been crying - "Honey,  
call me back."

Jason quickly hangs up the Voicemail, calls Martha.

INT. REED FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM) - MORNING

RING. RING. Martha answers the phone, teary-eyed.

MARTHA  
Hello?

INTERCUT AIRPORT TERMINAL AND REED FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM)

Jason walks towards BAGGAGE CLAIM.

JASON  
Mom, what's up?

MARTHA  
Jason-- my baby boy--

Martha starts to tear up, sniffles.

JASON  
What's wrong?

MARTHA  
It's Jeffrey, honey.

JASON  
What? Did he hurt you?

MARTHA  
They-- he was found. Police found  
him. He-- he-- he's gone.

Martha breaks down. Jason stops in the middle of the walkway, tries to shuffle out of everyone's way.

Jason reaches the wall, leans his back against it, and slides down.

JASON  
Where?

MARTHA  
What?

JASON  
Where was he found?

MARTHA  
In Florida. Near you. We think  
maybe he was trying to find you. He--  
- he choked--

Jason's head hangs, he curls up.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
They're-- bringing him to us.

JASON  
I can't-- I can't come, Mom.

MARTHA  
What do you mean?

JASON  
I have a job, Mom. I'm on my way  
right now. I can't do this right  
now!

Dennis enters, snatches the phone out of Martha's hand.

DENNIS  
You don't have to come, son.  
Jeffrey was a fool, and in no way  
should he interfere with your life.

MARTHA  
Dennis, stop! It's his brother!

DENNIS  
He almost ruined his life, and he's  
not going to delay him any more.  
Jason? Stay. I know we had our  
troubles, son, but that's nothing  
compared to your opportunity.

Dennis hands the phone back to Martha. She sniffles.

MARTHA  
Sweetie?

JASON  
Yeah, Mom?

MARTHA  
I'm sorry.

JASON  
For what?

MARTHA  
For your brother. For your father.  
For everyone.

JASON  
You shouldn't apologize.

MARTHA  
I know I shouldn't. But I want you  
to know that someone knows that all  
of this is hard. And you're so  
strong. Stay strong, baby.

JASON  
I will, Mom.

MARTHA  
I'll be calling you.

JASON  
Okay.

MARTHA  
Love you.

JASON  
Love you too.

Jason and Martha hang up their phones.

INT. SPRING TRAINING (BEDROOM) - DAY

Jason sits on his bed, alone. He holds his cell phone open, staring at it.

Finally, he dials.

INT. TALLAHASSEE APARTMENT - DAY

Heather sits on the couch, reading. Her cell phone rings, she looks at the caller ID, answers happily.

INTERCUT TALLAHASSEE APARTMENT AND SPRING TRAINING (BEDROOM)

HEATHER  
Hey, baby! Flight alright? Thought you'd be there an hour--

JASON  
Hey, there's something I gotta tell you.

Heather sets down her book, sits up.

HEATHER  
What's up?

Jason takes a deep breath.

JASON  
Jeff's dead.

Beat. Silence. Heather covers her mouth.

HEATHER  
Oh my god. What happened?

JASON  
He was found-- he choked to death.

HEATHER  
I'm so sorry. Where was he found?

JASON  
In Florida. Near us.

Heather goes from upset to angry.

HEATHER  
Oh my god. Jason, we could've helped him. We could've stopped him.

JASON  
Really? That's what you've got to say? Not sorry or anything?

HEATHER  
I'm sor--

JASON  
Look, I've already decided to stay out here. I gotta get ready.

HEATHER  
You seriously don't want to go back home for your brother's funeral?

JASON  
This is too important.

HEATHER  
Family's important, Jason! You'd rather take your career over your own family?

JASON  
Jeffrey would do the same thing.

HEATHER  
I'm not talking about him. What about your parents?

JASON  
They'll be fine.

HEATHER  
They need their son with them.

JASON  
You think you know?

Jason stands, begins to pace.

HEATHER  
I just want what's best for--

JASON  
Well, what's best for me is to be  
here. And what's best for you is to  
respect that.

Heather goes quiet.

HEATHER  
Okay.

JASON  
Good.

HEATHER  
Talk to you later.

Heather hangs up. Jason throws his phone onto the bed.

The door opens, Jason looks up, it's his roommate DAVID (late 20s). David brings his bag inside.

DAVID  
Hi, Jason?

Jason nods.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Nice to meet you.

Jason doesn't respond.

INT. SPRING TRAINING FACILITY (FIELD) - DAY

Jason, wearing a FLORIDA FOXES jersey, stands on the pitcher's mound.

A MAJOR LEAGUE BATTER stands in the batter's box. A CATCHER gives Jason the signal.

Jason sets, wind-up, pitch--

SMACK.

UMPIRE  
STRIKE! OUT!

Major League Batter looks at Jason, walks back to his dugout, upset. The Florida Foxes team walks off the field.

COACH ROGERS (50s) pulls Jason aside in the dugout.

COACH ROGERS  
Kid, I'm impressed.

JASON  
Thank you, sir.

COACH ROGERS  
You look a little unfocused out there. Everything alright?

JASON  
Of course, sir.

Coach Rogers stares into Jason's eyes.

COACH ROGERS  
Alright, good. Get used to that jersey, you'll be in the bullpen opening day.

Jason tries to smile.

JASON  
Thanks, coach.

Jason walks down to the dugout, sits.

INT. SPRING TRAINING (DORM BEDROOM) - LATE NIGHT

Jason sleeps, as does David.

Suddenly Jason's CELL PHONE buzzes. Jason wakes, looks at it. David shifts in his bed, pulls the blanket over him.

Jason answers.

JASON  
Dad?

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Hey... son.

Dennis sounds drunk. Jason gets out of bed, walks to the patio door, opens it.

INT. SPRING TRAINING (DORM PATIO) - CONTINUOUS

Jason closes the door behind him.

JASON  
Dad, it's like one in the morning.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Oh, really? It's only ten here. Anyway, how-- how you been? How's the game?

JASON  
Good, good. How was the, uh--  
funeral?

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Small, over. Anyway, how's your  
arm? Feel like you can go all  
season on it?

Jason sits on a patio chair, rubs his head with his hand.

JASON  
Yeah?

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Great, son. I'm-- so very, very,  
very proud of you.

Beat. Dennis takes a deep breath, a drink of something.

JASON  
Dad?

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Yeah, son?

JASON  
You know, one day, this is all  
going to be gone, and I'm just  
going to be your son.

Beat. Jason holds his breath.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Keep your arm stretched. Don't push  
too hard.

Jason quivers. His voice breaks.

JASON  
I love you, Dad.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
My boy's in the majors. I can't  
believe it.

Jason stands.

JASON  
Goodnight, Dad.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Good luck, son.

Jason hangs up the phone, looks out at the city view.



INT. SPRING TRAINING (DORM BEDROOM) - MORNING

Jason wakes up, shaken by David, who stands, bag in hand.

DAVID  
Hey, I'm taking off to the  
facility. Need a ride?

Jason sits up, takes a breath, stretches.

JASON  
Day off today.

DAVID  
Cool. I'll see you later.

David starts to leave. Jason stops him.

JASON  
Hey, David?

DAVID  
Yeah?

JASON  
Can I borrow your car?

David looks down at his keys, then back to Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm runnin' out of clothes, wanna  
hit the mall. Is that cool?

David hesitates.

DAVID  
Sure. Get dressed now, you can drop  
me off.

JASON  
Five minutes.

Jason gets out of bed.

EXT. SPRING TRAINING FACILITY (FIELD) - MORNING

David exits the BLACK SUV. Jason drives off.

INT. FLORIDA MALL - DAY

Jason walks through the mall, a couple of bags of clothes.

As he passes a Burger Restaurant, he spots the Long Beach  
Warriors game on. Jason walks towards the restaurant bar.

INT. BURGER RESTAURANT - DAY

Jason checks out the game, an intense moment. A BAR PATRON notices Jason standing there, looks up at him.

BAR PATRON  
Warriors suck.

JASON  
They're okay.

Bar Patron takes a closer look at Jason, realizes.

BAR PATRON  
Hey, you're that new pitcher--  
Jacob Reed, right?

JASON  
Jason.

BAR PATRON  
Oh, god, I feel like an idiot.

JASON  
It's all good.

Jason sticks out his hand, the Bar Patron shakes it.

BAR PATRON  
Let me buy you a drink.

JASON  
Oh, no, thank you.

BAR PATRON  
Come on, please? One day I'll need  
the story that I bought a major  
league pitcher a beer.

JASON  
Really, I--

BAR PATRON  
Bartender!

A BARTENDER looks towards the Bar Patron, who points at his beer bottle.

BAR PATRON (CONT'D)  
Two more, please! Sit down, son.

Jason looks up at the television screen. ZOOM IN on the baseball action on the screen--

INT. BURGER RESTAURANT - DAY

ZOOM OUT of the action as the pitcher on the screen makes the last out.

Jason and Bar Patron sit at the bar, several bottles around them. They high-five each other, both tipsy.

BAR PATRON  
What a game!

JASON  
Well played.

BAR PATRON  
You'll be doing that soon!

JASON  
Nah, not for a while.

BAR PATRON  
I've seen your stuff, man, you look good.

JASON  
Thanks. I gotta get out of here.

BAR PATRON  
Yeah, me too. It was good meeting you, Jason. Good luck in the future.

They shake hands, Bar Patron walks away. Jason turns around and leaves, his bags of clothes on the seat.

EXT. FLORIDA MALL (PARKING LOT) - DAY

Jason walks towards his car. He opens his phone, dials. A few rings, reaches the VOICEMAIL.

HEATHER (O.S.)  
Hey, it's Heather, leave me a message!

BEEP.

JASON  
Hey, baby! It's your boy! I'm sorry about all that shit from before. You were right, family's important. I can't wait to see you. I love you.

Jason hangs up, gets into the Black Suburban. He fumbles with the keys, eventually starting the car.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Jason walks out with a black bag full of mini-bottles. He downs one, throws it aside in the parking lot.

INT. BLACK SUV - DAY

Jason swerves a little on the road. He reaches for another mini-bottle, opens it, and drinks it, continually swerving.

On the other side of the road, he spots a Gentleman's Club.

Jason continues down the road.

JASON  
Fuck it!

Jason makes an ILLEGAL U-TURN right through traffic, SIDE-SWIPING a car. Jason continues back down the road, no one follows him.

Jason is unfazed by the accident, continues into the parking lot of the Gentleman's Club.

INT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAY

It's dark and seedy. Several dancers are on different tables and the stage.

Jason enters, walks straight to the bar. The CLUB BARTENDER approaches him.

CLUB BARTENDER  
What can I get you?

JASON  
Man, get me a fuckin' beer.

Club Bartender ignores the rudeness, gets Jason his beer.

CLUB BARTENDER  
Four dollars.

Jason pulls out his wallet, grabs a FIFTY DOLLAR BILL, throws it at the bartender.

JASON  
Keep the change.

Club Bartender, still annoyed, takes the money.

Jason turns around with the beer in his hand. A DANCER with drinks on a platter walks by.

JASON (CONT'D)  
'Sup, girl?

DANCER  
Hey, honey?

JASON  
Ever been with a professional?

DANCER  
Excuse me?

JASON  
EVER FUCKED AN ATHLETE?

Dancer begins to walk away, Jason grabs her arm.

DANCER  
Get the fuck off of me!

JASON  
I wasn't done talkin' to you.

DANCER  
Well, I'm done with you.

Dancer starts to leave again, Jason grabs her again, this time THROWING her to the ground. Drinks spill everywhere.

DANCER (CONT'D)  
What the fuck!

Jason laughs, downs his drink. He reaches behind the bar, grabbing ice cubes. He begins to throw them at her.

JASON  
You wanna listen to me now?

A BOUNCER approaches him, grabs Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Let me go, mother fucker! I'm a fuckin' star!

They continue on their way out. Club Bartender helps Dancer stand up, cleans.

EXT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAY

Bouncer SHOVES Jason out of the club.

BOUNCER  
Don't come back!

JASON  
I wouldn't come back to your shitty  
fucking club!

Jason stumbles back to his car. The Bouncer watches him.

JASON (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Stupid mother fucker, thinks he can  
treat me like shit. Doesn't he know  
who I am?

Jason gets into the Black SUV.

EXT. FLORIDA HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Jason pulls out of the parking lot, nearly hitting two more cars. He continues down the road, in between lanes.

INT. BLACK SUV - AFTERNOON

Jason drives towards the RED/ORANGE skyline.

Jason opens another mini-bottle, takes a big GULP from it, tosses it into the backseat.

He continues down the road, other drivers avoiding him.

Jason wipes his mouth, looks ahead. He smiles.

MEMORY FLASH: Heather's face, smiling.

MEMORY FLASH: Harvey and Pete, laughing.

Jason searches for another mini-bottle.

MEMORY FLASH: Martha kisses Jason on the cheek.

MEMORY FLASH: Hank applauds his performance.

Jason downs another bottle.

MEMORY FLASH: Jeffrey and Jason sitting in jail.

MEMORY FLASH: Dennis and Jason CLINKING cans, cheers.

Jason drops the bag of bottles. He leans down to grab them, gets up.

MEMORY FLASH: Jason gets the final out. The crowd around him APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

APPLAUSE and CHEERS continue. Jason chuckles, his enjoyment of the noise rising simultaneously with the building volume, until--

CRASH.

BLACK OUT.

SUPER: JASON REED WAS ARRESTED ON MARCH 22ND, 2012. HE WAS CHARGED WITH TWO COUNTS OF DUI WITH PROPERTY DAMAGE, ONE COUNT OF DUI WITH SERIOUS BODILY INJURY, ONE COUNT OF LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT WITH AN INJURY, ONE COUNT OF DRIVING WITH A SUSPENDED LICENSE, AND TWO COUNTS OF LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT WITH DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.

SUPER: JASON HIT A 72-YEAR OLD MOTORCYCLIST ON ROUTE 41, RUNNING OVER HIS HEAD AS HE FLED THE SCENE. JASON WAS ARRESTED THREE MILES AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THE INCIDENT WITH A BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT OF .18, ALMOST THREE TIMES THE LEGAL LIMIT.

SUPER: JASON WAS HELD ON \$440,000 BAIL, AND INITIALLY PLED NOT GUILTY TO ALL COUNTS. LATER, HE ACCEPTED A PLEA BARGAIN, RECEIVING A 51-MONTH PRISON TERM, REFUSING A 3-YEAR SENTENCE WITH 7-YEAR PROBATION TO ALCOHOL ISSUES. HE FACES A \$5 MILLION CIVIL SUIT FROM THE FAMILY OF THE MOTORCYCLE VICTIM.

SUPER: JASON IS CURRENTLY AT HAMILTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION. HE WAS RELEASED FROM THE FLORIDA FOXES AT THE END OF THE 2012 SEASON, AND HAS YET TO PARTICIPATE IN A MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL GAME.

FADE OUT.