

THE TWELFTH MAN

by

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(Based on the musings of Paul Shirley)

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First Draft

COLD OPEN

EXT. RURAL FARM, BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

A YOUNG BOY stands on a dirt court, facing a hand-made HOOP. It's something out of Larry Bird's childhood. An unseen ADULT VOICE narrates:

VOICE (O.S.)
It's a familiar fantasy. Most young boys
have had it.

The boy begins DRIBBLING, doing his own PLAY-BY-PLAY.

BOY
Seven seconds left. Home team is down by
one. Seven, six, five...

VOICE (O.S.)
Of the millions of boys who have this
fantasy, only a few hundred will ever
make the pros.

BOY
Three, two, one...

The boy JUMPS, preparing to shoot. Just as he's about to release, everything FREEZES, mid-frame.

VOICE (O.S.)
I'm one of the few who have made it. I'm
a professional basketball player.

INT. PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL ARENA - EVENING

The arena is pulsating - a combination of sport anthem, stomping feet, and clapping hands. A SCOREBOARD fills us in: "*:07 seconds left. Visitors: 102. Home team: 101.*"

VOICE (O.S.)
That little boy's dream is my reality.
Right now, a real crowd is going crazy.
A real seven seconds is left. A real
home team - my team - is down by one.

CLOSE on a HEAD COACH, diagramming a play. His PLAYERS huddle around him. We slowly PAN the players' faces...

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So who am I, you ask? Which intense,
sweat-covered face belongs to me?

The camera WHIPS over, landing on a player in warm-up gear, four feet away. This is ADAM RUMP, 28. He isn't paying attention to the coach. He WAVES at camera.

ADAM (V.O.)

That's me. What am I doing? Well, right now, I'm trying to decide if the girl in row two, section 104 is looking at me.

We realize now: Adam wasn't waving at camera - he was waving past it, at a WOMAN in the stands. The woman WAVES back. Adam smiles. But something's off. He looks to his right, at the court-side seats beside the bench.

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

Nope. She's looking at the kid from *Malcolm in the Middle*.

ON FRANKIE MUNIZ. Waving. Smiling like a pig in shit.

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

Don't worry, I don't need to pay attention. I'm the last option for that final shot. You see, I never play. There are twelve players on every team. I'm the twelfth man.

As the huddle breaks, a player throws his TOWEL toward the bench. It lands, sweat-drenched, on Adam's face.

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

Little boys don't fantasize about my life. If they did...

EXT. RURAL FARM BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

That little farm boy UNFREEZES releasing his shot. We follow the ball as it arcs toward the hoop. SWISH! The boy starts jumping. Celebrating. Suddenly, we WHIP over to ANOTHER BOY, sitting on a bench beside the court. He CLAPS slowly, bored out of his mind.

OTHER BOY

(monotone)

Awesome. Way to go. Yay.

END COLD OPEN.

ACT ONE

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA - CONTINUOUS

We pick Adam back up on the sidelines.

ADAM (V.O.)

How does one become a twelfth man? Well, for me, it started with my father.

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

We watch a LOOMING FATHER from the POV of an unseen boy.

ADAM'S FATHER

Listen to me, Son. I was a star two guard in high school. Might have gone pro but I knocked up your mother, couldn't afford college. I need to live my dreams through you now. I don't want to sound like a bad father, but if you become one of those kids who does school plays, I'll kill myself. Happy Birthday.

He holds out a BASKETBALL (with bow). TWO SMALL HANDS reach out. PULL BACK revealing a THREE YEAR OLD ADAM.

INT. ADAM'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

PAN a dresser of TROPHIES and HAPPY PHOTOS of Adam playing: he's clearly a kid who lived for the game.

ADAM (V.O.)

Luckily, I loved basketball. I was damn good, too. Got a scholarship. Made *Sportscenter* a few times. Then I graduated. Sadly, I hung up my hi-tops. I assumed I would go no further in basketball. Then I met Marty.

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK (ONE YEAR LATER)

Adam sits at the kitchen table opposite his father and a nebbishy looking man. This is MARTY (45).

MARTY

You hear sports agent, you think *Jerry McGuire*. Look at me, Adam. I'm not Tom Cruise. My wife?

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT' D)

Her face looks like Renee Zelwegger's foot. But I think you can make a living in the league. I won't promise to make you a star. You're too white. Too slow. You were a McDonald's All-American? Good for you. Second Team All-Big Ten? Mazel. To the league you're no more than eye crust. Toe-cheese. A festering sore on--

ADAM

Got it.

MARTY

On the bright side: you can shoot and you're cheap. Someone gets hurt, I get a team to sign you to a ten day contract. After two of those, they have to cut you or sign you. They'll cut you. Then you go to the next place there's work. Like a migrant worker. Follow?

Adam thinks about this, imagines...

EXT. HOME DEPOT - FANTASY SEQUENCE

Adam (in uniform) stands with other WHITE PLAYERS (also in uniform) outside a Home Depot. A PICK-UP pulls into the lot. The players (including Adam) start SCREAMING and run to the car. The DRIVER lowers the window.

DRI VER

I need a two guard, a small forward, and a center.

All the players start raising their hands, "Me, Me!"

DRI VER (CONT' D)

You. You. And You.

Adam and two other happy selections hop in the back of the pick-up. The truck rides off.

ADAM (V.O.)

Marty kept his promise.

We see Adam sitting on a BENCH, wearing a RED WARMUP.

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

Over the last six years, I've had short stints in Chicago...

A new image: the same shot, but now Adam wears a BLUE WARM-UP. As Adam lists cities, we alternate warm-ups.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Phoenix. Boston. Minnesota. New
 Jersey. In between I played all over
 Europe. And most recently: Russia.

INT. RUSSIAN BASKETBALL COURT - FLASHBACK

A RUSSIAN COACH (wearing a raccoon hat) SCREAMS at Adam in guttural RUSSIAN. Finally he stops. After a beat:

ADAM
 I can't understand a word you're saying.

The coach SCREAMS something else. Adam waits, then...

ADAM (CONT'D)
 I'm freezing.

The coach stares at him blankly.

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA - BACK TO PRESENT

Back where we started during the open. Adam looks dazed.

ADAM (V.O.)
 After Russia, a guy on Cincinnati got hurt. I got two ten day contracts. In five days my second one ends. Then they'll cut me. When they do, I'm done. The kid who loved playing basketball is gone, replaced by a twenty-eight year old with a really sore ass. I've had enough.

The arena BUZZER sounds, snapping Adam out of it.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Hey, game's over. Wonder if we won.

The COACH storms past Adam, CURSING VIOLENTLY.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I guess not.

INT. ARENA TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Adam stands behind a line of players, waiting.

ADAM (V.O.)

Here's the most awkward part of my job.

CLOSE on a tough looking GREY-HAIRED MAN, 50's. He shakes the hand of a PLAYER.

GREY HAIRED MAN

Good effort tonight, Son.

The camera FREEZES on the man.

ADAM (V.O.)

Pete Cavanaugh, GM of the Crash. Once a great player, now a crappy GM. Rumor has it he'll soon be replaced by his protege:

CLOSE on an attractive young woman, early 30's. She stands next to Cavanaugh, shakes the hand of a player.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

Great defense down the stretch, Ricky.

The camera FREEZES on her.

ADAM (V.O.)

Lindsey Sinclair, Assistant GM. When she gets Cavanaugh's job she'll become the most important woman in pro sports. And the hottest. Imagine Angelina Jolie was into basketball instead of Cambodian babies, that's Lindsey Sinclair.

Adam approaches them, next in line.

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

Here comes the awkward. What do they say to a guy who hasn't played? And how do I respond? Here it comes. Wait for it...

The awkward moment. Finally, Cavanaugh tries...

PETE

Tough one.

ADAM

Yeah.

Silence. Adam nods at Lindsey. She nods back. Adam nods at Cavanaugh. He nods back. After a painfully long beat, Adam walks past them, effectively exiting.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The locker room is impressive. Lockers form a "U" around a giant PLASMA TV and ERASE BOARD. Adam sits at his locker, changing. All around, extremely athletic PLAYERS do the same. Most listen to headphones.

The HEAD COACH storms in (Pete and Lindsey stand to the side). As he SCREAMS, the players all tune him out.

COACH
YOU SHOULD BE EMBARRASSED! YOU SHOULD
WANT TO KILL YOURSELVES!

We FREEZE, catching him in a twisted facial expression.

ADAM (V.O.)
Sonny Nolan. Head Coach of the
Cincinnati Crash.

We cut to a RECORD BOOK. The page reads, "*Most Wins, Coaching.*" The name "*Sonny Nolan*" is at the top.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The winning-est coach in league history.

ANOTHER PAGE, labeled, "*Most Losses, Coaching.*" Again, "*Sonny Nolan*" is at the top.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Also the losing-est.

BACK TO SONNY, frozen mid-scream.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You see, Sonny Nolan is not a good coach.
He's not a bad coach, either. He's just
been around a very long time.

We break from the freeze.

SONNY
WHAT WAS THE PLAN? WE KNEW WE DIDN'T
HAVE ROLLINS CAUSE HE WAS ATTENDING TO
PERSONAL MATTERS.

ADAM (V.O.)
Tested positive for marijuana.

SONNY
WE KNEW WE HAD TO GET TO THE BASKET AND
BE ATHLETIC!

ADAM (V.O.)
No white people were going to play.

SONNY
IF YOU WOULD JUST PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION
TO ME AS YOU DO TO YOUR WALKMANS...

ADAM (V.O.)
I-pods.

SONNY
MAYBE WE'D HAVE WON THE GOD DAMN GAME!
SO WHY DIDN'T WE GET THE BALL TO WALKER!?

Adam looks over towards a PLAYER. We FREEZE.

ADAM (V.O.)
Our superstar: Nate Walker. First night
here he invited me to his penthouse hotel
suite. I know what you're thinking...

INT. PENTHOUSE - FANTASY SEQUENCE

Adam waits at the door. Nate opens it. Adam enters,
revealing total debauchery. Half-naked, beautiful women.
Booze. Music. Masseuses. People throwing money in the
air. Lighting hundreds on fire for shits and giggles.

ADAM (V.O.)
Once again, that's the fantasy...

INT. PENTHOUSE - FLASHBACK

Adam waits at the door. Nate opens it. Adam enters,
revealing a bunch of large men holding hands in a circle.

ADAM (V.O.)
...and here's the reality.

NATE
Welcome to our prayer circle.

ADAM
Oh, Jesus.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - PRESENT

PLAYERS exit. Everyone walks by Adam, ignoring him.

ADAM (V.O.)
I wish I had cool stories about hanging
with superstars, but I rarely talk to
teammates. Well, except one.

FOREIGN VOICE (O.S.)
What's up, Playa?

In front of Adam is a very tall, young foreigner. He has
a strong Slavic accent. This is OGGIE PETROVIC (19).

ADAM
Oggie, you have to stop saying things
like "Playa." They teach you those
expressions so they can make fun of you.

OGGIE
Ni gga, please.

ADAM
Much better.

The camera FREEZES on Oggie.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Oggie Petrovic. Last year's number one
overall draft pick. His selection was
memorable, mainly because it almost ended
the career of ESPN's Stuart Scott.

INT. DRAFT BROADCAST - ONE YEAR AGO

ESPN'S STUART SCOTT and HIS PARTNER sit behind a desk.

STUART SCOTT
We're seconds away from the first pick in
the draft. The life of one lucky young
man is about to change.

PARTNER
Wonder who that's going to be?

They LAUGH. Obviously they already know. We ZOOM in on
an impressive YOUNG MAN.

STUART SCOTT (O.S.)
They're saying Tre Walters is the next
great one. And soon he'll be a multi-
millionaire. Here's the Commissioner.

ON STAGE the COMMISSIONER takes the podium. Tre Walters
remains on screen in a small BOX in the corner.

COMMISSIONER

With the first pick in the 2005 draft,
the Cincinnati Crash select... Oggie
Petrovic, from Slovenia.

Silence. Then... pandemonium. The crowd goes BERSERK.
The camera WHIPS around, searching for Oggie. Finally,
it finds him: wearing a horrible double breasted SUIT,
hugging TWO MINIATURE SLOVENIAN PARENTS who are crying.

The camera returns to Stuart Scott. He's speechless.

STUART SCOTT

What the fu--

The screen goes BLACK, censored.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - PRESENT

We're still frozen on Oggie.

ADAM (V.O.)

Oggie barely plays. He's still too raw.
Meanwhile, Tre Walters is the hottest
star in the league. Needless to say:
Oggie Petrovic is the least popular
Slovenian man-child in Cincinnati.

Break from the freeze. Oggie stares at Adam, hopeful.

ADAM (CONT'D)

What, Oggie?

OGGIE

May I be at your house with you?

ADAM

(correcting)
May you *come* to my house.

Oggie takes this as an invitation.

OGGIE

Thank you. I will.

Adam SIGHS, exasperated.

ADAM

You have a four million dollar mansion.
Why do you always want to be at my place?

OGGIE
My house is too big. It makes me scary.

ADAM
Your height makes you scary, Oggie. Your
fifteen syllable last name makes you
scary. Your mansion SCARES you.

Oggie smiles.

OGGIE
Your home is nicer.

ADAM
That's not really true.

The screen fills with a SNAPSHOT of a huge mansion.
There's a lake in the backyard. A CHYRON reads: *Oggie
Petrovic's Estate. Estimated value: \$4,300,000.*

A SECOND SNAPSHOT - Adam's place. A second CHYRON reads:
*Adam Rump's Temporary Corporate Housing. Estimated
value: \$930/month (utilities and basic cable included).*

BACK TO SCENE. Oggie still looks at Adam, hopefully.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I have to pick up my little sister at the
airport. She's visiting for the weekend.

Oggie immediately gets excited.

OGGIE
I can drive, please?

ADAM
(correcting)
Can I drive, please?

Again, Oggie misunderstands.

OGGIE
But I have a new car.

INT. OGGIE'S PHANTOM - MINUTES LATER

A \$340,000 Rolls-Royce Phantom. Oggie has tricked it
out, obviously misled. Rims. DVD screens everywhere.
The car sits waiting at the AIRPORT CURB. Adam, opens
the GLOVE COMPARTMENT. He pulls out a huge wad of CASH.

ADAM

Oggie! You have like fifteen thousand dollars in your glove compartment!

OGGIE

In case of... how do you say? Emergency?

ADAM

What kind of emergency? You see a condominium you just need to have?

Adam SIGHS. He puts the cash back away.

OGGIE

So, I have a dream last night. I dream you make the team for rest of the year.

ADAM

Won't happen. To make the team, I have to prove my worth. To prove my worth, I have to get playing time. I don't get playing time, so I'm deemed worthless. And I get cut. Always happens.

OGGIE

We have saying for this type of talk in Slovenia: if you think that a grandmother is to get the heart attack... this is when she gets shot by the Serbians.

ADAM

I'll tuck that one away. (THEN) I'm serious, Oggie. I'm looking forward to being done with professional basketball.

OGGIE

You lie. I can tell. You still wish to make the team. You have the hope.

ADAM

No hope. Maybe once, but they beat it out of me. Ever see *Shawshank Redemption*?

INT. BOARD ROOM - FANTASY SEQUENCE

FIVE MEN and WOMEN sit at a table. The door opens. Adam ENTERS, wearing a basketball uniform, handcuffs, and leg irons. It's the exact scene from *Shawshank Redemption*.

MAN

Sit.

Adam sits obediently.

MAN (CONT'D)

We see by your file you've served ten days of a ten day contract?

ADAM

(al a Morgan Freeman)

Yes, Sir.

MAN

Do you feel you've contributed?

ADAM

Oh, yes Sir. Absolutely Sir. I mean I played real hard in practice. I can honestly say I'm a better player. No longer a danger on the basketball court, that's God's honest truth.

They take him in. Stamp a form: "*DENIED.*"

INT. OGGIE'S PHANTOM - PRESENT

Oggie looks sad.

OGGIE

Well, if you do retire, I will be sad. You are my best friend of America.

ADAM

I wish you'd stop saying that, Oggie. We've known each other for fifteen days.

OGGIE

I will, how do you say? Grow on you.

Adam SIGHS, exhausted. There's a TAP on Adam's window. Outside stands a cute, high-energy girl. This is Adam's sister, SAM (22). Adam lowers the window.

SAM

Holy crap this is a cool car!

ADAM

Hey, Sam.

Excited, Sam opens the back, jumps in. Looks around.

SAM

Seriously, Adam. I mean, holy crap! Is it yours?

ADAM
Yes, and this is my nine foot Slovenian chauffeur.

OGGIE
Wait till you see this.

Oggie turns on the windshield wipers and SQUIRTS wiper fluid. He turns back toward Sam, as if this is the aspect of the car that's going to "wow" her.

ADAM
Wow, Oggie. It was worth every penny.

Sam COUGHS, hoping for an introduction.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Oggie, my sister, Sam. Sam, Oggie.

OGGIE
The chair heats the butt, too.

SAM
That's hot.

OGGIE
(SERIOUS) Yes, it is.

They smile. Adam looks back and forth, disbelieving.

ADAM
Okaaaay. Sam, that's all you've got for the weekend?

Sam THROWS a DUFFLE bag up front, on her brother's lap.

SAM
Almost.

Sam EXITS, throws SUITCASE after SUITCASE into the back.

ADAM
(HORRIFIED) I'm concerned.

INT. ADAM'S CORPORATE APARTMENT - LATER

Corporate, sterile, and cramped. Oggie STACKS Sam's bags. Adam sits opposite Sam, who is mid-explanation.

SAM
Daddy already expects me to have a full-time job! I just graduated college!

ADAM

Well, fourteen months ago.

SAM

Adam, how am I going to be of value to a company if I don't know my own self-worth? I have to find myself. Daddy doesn't understand that. So I'm going to live with you for a while until I get my feet under me. My famous big bro.

ADAM

Sam, you can't move here. In four days I'm going to be cut.

SAM

You won't be cut.

OGGIE

This is what I tell him.

Adam is getting exasperated. Oggie gets an idea.

OGGIE (CONT'D)

If you need a home, I have mansion.

SAM

You have a mansion?

OGGIE

Yes.

SAM

And a Rolls-Royce?

OGGIE

Yes.

ADAM

You're not moving into Oggie's mansion!
Oggie hasn't moved into Oggie's mansion!

Sam turns toward Oggie.

SAM

Ignore him. And he's not getting cut. My brother is just modest. Growing up he was a God. In high school, I was always Adam's little sister. It wasn't easy.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

In my case, being the younger sibling of a prodigal son caused me to develop an inferiority complex and an almost obsessive desire to please my father, which I could never do, so in a mislaid attempt to define an identity for myself, I became wildly promiscuous, i.e., a "slut." (THEN, EXPLAINING) I minored in psyche for two semesters.

Oggie looks at her.

OGGIE

I must take you to my homeland to meet my Nana.

Sam nods, smiles, as if touched.

SAM

Ah, you're sweet. (THEN, TO ADAM) I'm staying. When you make the team, you'll need a personal assistant.

ADAM

I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE THE TEAM!

Adam takes a deep breath, calming himself.

SAM

Geez. Someone needs to get laid. You're a professional athlete and you're like, celibate. I should have nineteen illegitimate nieces and nephews by now.

Oggie nods, agreeing. Adam closes his eyes, beaten.

INT. TEAM PLANE - NEXT DAY

This charter makes first class look like economy. Adam stares ahead at the back of Lindsey Sinclair's head.

ADAM (V.O.)

While Sam settled in, we headed to Chicago on an overnight road trip. I used the time to think about what I'd do with my life in four days and to look at the back of Lindsey Sinclair's perfectly shaped head.

A finger TAPS Adam's shoulder. We reveal Oggie.

OGGIE

Maybe you put in a nice word for your sister? Tell her you're my best friend of America?

ADAM

You're gonna insist on calling me that, aren't you?

Adam turns back forward toward Lindsey. She's up front with Pete Cavanaugh. Oogie notices Adam's gaze.

OGGIE

Love is hard thing. You have the hard thing for Mrs. Lindsey, no? Like I have the hard thing for your sister?

ADAM

Remind me to sign you up for one of those English as a second language classes.
(THEN) Wonder what they're talking about?

INT. CHARTER AIRPLANE - ADAM'S FANTASY

We're on Lindsey and Pete Cavanaugh, in the first row. A CHYRON reads: "*What Adam imagines they're talking about.*"

LINDSEY

I don't know, Pete. I'm just so damn horny. Know what I need? A bench warmer. We could lie in bed all day, drink beer, and make love till we fell asleep on top of one another, completely spent.

PETE

You should consider Adam Rump.

A new CHYRON: "*What Lindsey is really talking about.*"

LINDSEY

I don't know Pete. I'm just so damn frustrated with Sonny. He's losing control of the team.

PETE

It'll work itself out.

LINDSEY

It won't. Singleton's in his doghouse, he should be in the rotation. If not, we need to waive him and clear cap space--

PETE
 Okay, okay. We'll talk to him about
 Singleton. But right now, I'm wiped.

Cavanaugh leans back in his seat, closes his eyes.

LINDSEY
 I guess I'll just pleasure myself.

ADAM (V.O.)
 Okay, that last part was me again.

INT. CHARTER AIRPLANE - PRESENT

Adam smiles to himself.

OGGIE
 Why not go to talk to her?

ADAM
 I should just go up to Lindsey Sinclair,
 a woman I've never spoken to, a woman on
People's Most Beautiful and *Time's* Most
 Influential, and my boss, and flirt?

OGGIE
 And maybe say they should not cut you.

ADAM
 Sure. Piece of cake.

OGGIE
 I talk with Mrs. Lindsey and Mr. Pete all
 the time.

ADAM
 Well, they're paying you fifty-two
 million over seven years. It makes sense
 to check in with you from time to time.

Adam leans back into his seat. Oggie shakes his head.

OGGIE
 Love is hard thing.

ADAM
 (QUICKLY) Please stop.

INT. CHICAGO HOTEL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Adam walks toward an ELEVATOR, taking in PEOPLE in the LOBBY.

ADAM (V.O.)

My last road trip. Soon I'll be one of these people. A businessman, maybe? Nah, I hate business. A lawyer? Probably too late for law school. Think. Life after basketball. What are the options for an ex-pro athlete?

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - FANTASY SEQUENCE

A CHYRON: "OPTION #1." Adam stands before an OLD WOMAN.

ADAM

Welcome to *Rump's Car Dealership*. I bought it in my hometown hoping my name would be familiar. But people have short memories and I'm barely scraping by.

The woman looks at him.

WOMAN

You're tall.

ADAM

Thank you.

INT. SPORTS BAR - FANTASY SEQUENCE

A CHYRON: "OPTION #2." Adam tends bar, talking to a MAN.

ADAM

Hey, there Big Fella. Welcome to *Rump's*, a sports bar filled with memorabilia from my playing days. We're struggling to stay afloat and I'm addicted to Vicodin.

The man takes him in.

MAN

You're tall.

ADAM

Thank you.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - FANTASY SEQUENCE

A CHYRON: "OPTION #3." Adam sits at a folding table next to a basketball court. He talks into a crappy mic.

ADAM

Hello, Wichita. Welcome to another exciting game of Southeast High School basketball. I'm Adam Rump and I'm four seconds from taking my own life. I'm here with my broadcast partner, a fifteen year old sophomore from the AV Club.

Adam's broadcast partner looks at him.

PARTNER

You're tall.

ADAM

That's what I hear.

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL/ELEVATOR - PRESENT

Adam steps onto the empty ELEVATOR, and hits "30." The elevator door starts closing, then reopens. Lindsey and Cavanaugh ENTER. They all nod. Uncomfortable silence. Cavanaugh goes to press a button. We FREEZE.

ADAM (V.O.)

And I thought after games in the tunnel was awkward? Please let them be on two. Two. Two. Two....

Unfreeze. Cavanaugh hits "28."

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

Dammit.

Cavanaugh nods awkwardly at Adam. Adam nods back. No one knows where to look. Unbearable. The slow ride upwards begins. Another awkward set of nods.

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

This is fate, right? Who am I kidding: I'm not ready to run a car dealership in Peoria. And now I finally have a captive audience with the GM's - one chance to make an impression on them. On Lindsey Sinclair! What do I have to lose?

Adam smiles, TAPS Lindsey's shoulder.

ADAM (CONT'D)

So... who do you think is going to play more tomorrow: me or you?

Silence. Cavanaugh turns around, looks at Adam as if to say, "What the hell did you just say?" But Lindsey, ever so slowly, ever so slightly, smiles. Charmed, maybe?

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

Holy crap. She smiled. I swear to God, I saw teeth. Stay calm.

LINDSEY

You practiced hard this week. Keep it up.

DING. Floor twenty-eight. They turn to exit.

ADAM

That actually went well! Is it possible I actually have a chance to make this team!? Is it possible I actually have a chance with her!?

Lindsey and Cavanaugh turn. Adam freezes, realizing what he's just done: he said that all ALOUD. He explains:

ADAM (CONT'D)

I meant to think that.

Lindsey smiles slightly, but clearly she's weirded out. Cavanaugh too. They EXIT. As Adam bangs his head on the elevator wall, we...

END ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

EXT. ADAM'S CORPORATE APARTMENT - NEXT EVENING

Adam, carrying a bag, fumbles with his KEYS at the door, then ENTERS. Inside, Sam sits at a makeshift CUBICLE, filing her nails and wearing a HEADSET.

ADAM

What the hell is going on?

SAM

How was Chicago?

ADAM

We lost, I didn't play, and I humiliated myself in an elevator. What the hell is going on?

SAM

If I'm going to be your full-time assistant, I need an office.

ADAM

In the middle of my living room?

SAM

You don't have a lot of space. It was here or your bedroom.

ADAM

What about the guest room?

SAM

That's my room. I don't want to live where I work. Jesus, Adam.

ADAM

Sam, I have two days left--

The phone RINGS. Sam puts her hand up: ("one minute").

SAM

Adam Rump's office.

She gives Adam a THUMBS UP, proud of herself.

SAM (CONT'D)

And may I ask what this is regarding? Hold one moment, please.

She places the phone on hold, turns to Adam.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mommy's on the phone.

Adam shakes his head, non believing this.

ADAM
I'll call back.

Sam picks the phone back up.

SAM
Can I have him return? Okay. Very good.
Love you, too. Kiss Buster for me.

Sam hangs up, smiles expectantly at Adam.

ADAM
Really great.

SAM
Thanks.

ADAM
So, my agent's in town. I'm meeting him
at a bar near the arena for a drink.
Wanna come? You can take notes or
something.

SAM
Can't. Just made plans with Oggi e. (OFF
HIS LOOK) What?

ADAM
The kid's nineteen, Sam. He's homesick,
and he doesn't know which way is up. He
can't handle you.

SAM
Adam, I get it. You're worried me dating
Oggi e will make you uncomfortable.
Relax. It wasn't uncomfortable when I
dated your buddy Mike, was it?

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

A TEENAGE ADAM walks in the front door, wearing a
backpack. He looks toward the couch where Sam is
straddling an unseen GUY. Young Adam looks nauseous.

ADAM
Hey.

SAM
Mommy wants you to clean your room.

ADAM
Okay.

GUY
Yo, Dude. Wanna get something to eat
after I finish here with your sister?

ADAM
I guess.

BACK TO:

INT. ADAM'S CORPORATE APARTMENT - PRESENT

Adam tries to clear the image from his head.

ADAM
Yeah, that wasn't uncomfortable at all.

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - LATER

An upscale restaurant. Adam sits at the bar next to his agent (who we met earlier): Marty.

MARTY
I checked with Pete. Goes without saying,
but he's cutting you. Said something
about a weird comment in an elevator?

ADAM
They're not signing me because of that?

MARTY
Oh, no. They're not signing you because
of your lack of any significant
contribution to the team. Sorry, I
should have made that clear. The weird
elevator comment just came up in
conversation.

Adam nods, understanding.

MARTY (CONT'D)
There's a German team that's interested.
I can try and work something.

ADAM

I'm done, Marty. I haven't had a permanent girlfriend or a permanent address for six years and why? So I can sit on a bench five days a week? I can't do it anymore.

Adam stands, SHAKES Marty's hand. Marty eyes him, sees he's not changing Adam's mind. He nods.

MARTY

I'll make calls to the cable outlets. Maybe someone needs an ex-player who can actually speak coherent English.

ADAM

Thanks.

Marty tips an imaginary cap.

MARTY

Gotta head down to Ohio State. There's a 6'7 white kid who just might be average enough to sign with me.

Marty EXITS. Adam finishes his drink and turns to go. Walking out he spots her at a table - Lindsey Sinclair!

ADAM (V.O.)

There she was. Lindsey Sinclair, sitting alone at Haggerty's - the same bar I'd chosen to meet Marty at. It was fate.

EXT. CHARTER PLANE - EARLIER

Lindsey exits the plane with Cavanaugh.

PETE

You heading to the office?

LINDSEY

Nah. Gonna stop by the Haggerty's, have a drink, and go home.

They continue down the stairs. We REVEAL Adam, right behind them. He's been listening.

ADAM (V.O.)

Okay, so maybe it wasn't fate. Still...

BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - PRESENT

Adam approaches. Lindsey looks up, sees him. She quickly puts her head down, avoiding eye contact. Without stopping, Adam marches right by her. He sits two tables away. She doesn't realize he's still there. Then...

ADAM

I'm sitting over here because I figured a woman in your position wouldn't want to be seen in public with a player. Figured it would be, I don't know...

LINDSEY

Inappropriate?

ADAM

Exactly. But two people sitting two tables away? That's simply coincidence.

Lindsey smiles slightly.

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

Look at that! I don't know why, but officially knowing my career was over? It was making me, almost... smooth.

A WAITER approaches Adam.

WAITER

Can I get you a drink, Sir?

ADAM

Beer. The good stuff. I've decided to start getting fat.

WAITER

Very well.

ADAM

And a drink for the lady over there who I don't know.

Lindsey seems unsure how to deal with Adam. The waiter looks at her expectantly. She succumbs...

LINDSEY

Johnny Walker, rocks.

The waiter EXITS. Adam waits for a moment, then...

ADAM
Is that real?

LINDSEY
What?

ADAM
Drinking Johnny Walker, rocks. Do you really like that?

Lindsey looks surprised that Adam's still talking to her.

LINDSEY
I ordered it, didn't I?

ADAM
But do you like it? Or do you just order it to go along with the whole badass-hot-chick mystique?

That's enough for her. She turns toward Adam, serious.

LINDSEY
Adam, I'm not sure if you're drunk or just completely out of your mind, but I think you should probably leave before you wake up tomorrow realizing you've talked this way to your boss--

ADAM
You're going to cut me tomorrow. So technically, you're only my boss for another twenty-four hours. And I'm not drunk, I'm just in a Morgan Freeman at the end of Shawshank kind of mood where he tells them to go ahead and stamp their forms, Sonny, cause he just doesn't give a damn anymore. Wanna know why? Because I'm twenty-eight years old, twenty-four hours from quitting basketball, and I have no idea what I'm going to do for the next sixty-odd years of my life. And if you're telling me there's not some drink out there like a Sea-breeze that you prefer to Johnny Walker Rocks, one that you're afraid to order it because it makes you look like - pardon the expression - "a girl", then you're full of it.

Lindsey raises a brow, a bit shocked. We FREEZE on her.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I was taking control. According to the poll of career-oriented hot chicks in this week's *Maxim*, women want a dominant man. In boxer briefs. With nice hands.

Break the freeze. They sit there in silence. For a long time. Then, almost embarrassed, Lindsey admits:

LINDSEY
 Piña Coladas. I like Piña Coladas.

ADAM
 So order one! Who cares if you look girly?

LINDSEY
 I'm not worried about looking girly. It's December in Cincinnati. I'm worried about looking like an idiot.

The waiter returns, hands Adam his beer.

ADAM
 The lady changed her mind. She'll have a Piña Colada.

WAITER
 (CONFUSED) Very well, Sir.

ADAM
 And I'll take that.

Adam grabs Lindsey's Johnny Walker.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Thank you, *Maxim*.

Adam motions "Cheers" at Lindsey and takes a sip of hers. Immediately, he COUGHS and SPITS it up everywhere, disgusted by the taste. Lindsey can't help but LAUGH.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - ONE HOUR LATER

Lindsey and Adam still sit two tables apart. But now, Lindsey's table is filled with empty PINA COLADA GLASSES. Lindsey is tipsy. She's loose, a different person.

LINDSEY
 You see the weather report?

ADAM
(PLAYING ALONG) They're predicting rain.

LINDSEY
Thank God I brought this.

Lindsey takes a DRINK UMBRELLA from the table, holds it over her head like a real umbrella. They LAUGH.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Anyway, I got the job in the Crash's PR department after school. They told me...

Lindsey goes into a strange IMITATION of a man.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
"You're a girl. You want to get into sports, work in PR." That's my impression of "they" by the way.

ADAM
It's very good. You sound just like them.

LINDSEY
Thank you.

Lindsey takes a big sip of her Piña Colada.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
So I just made sure I got to do Pete Cavanaugh's PR. I impressed him. I'm actually a pretty impressive girl when--

Lindsey grabs her head.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Brain freeze. Brain freeze.

She sits there in that weird state of brain freeze. Finally, it passes. She continues, not missing a beat.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
So, eventually, he made me his assistant. Then assistant GM. Took me under his wing. And now, I'm better than him. And the only way I get my dream job, the only way I become the first female GM in all of sports - is if my mentor gets fired.

ADAM
And so you drink alone.

LINDSEY
And so I drink alone. How sad.

Lindsey shakes her head, snapping out of it.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
So why did you say you were quitting,
Adam? Don't you like playing basketball?

ADAM
I do. I hate admitting it, but I love
the game. And I'm good at it. No matter
what I say: I'm a damn good basketball
player. I'm one of the best four hundred
basketball players in the entire world.
But I never get to play. I guess I just
feel like most people do. Under-
appreciated at work. Marginalized. On
top of that, have a new job every month.
I haven't lived in the same place or
dated the same girl for more than eight
weeks. And it's pointless to hope for
more. I just can't do it anymore.

Lindsey shakes her head.

LINDSEY
If it's any consolation - you are good.
I watched you play in college. I watch
you practice. I wish we had room on the
team, but when Wilkens comes back--

Adam waves her off. Excuses her from the awkward
apology. Lindsey stands. Adam, a gentleman, stands too.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I should go.

ADAM (V.O.)
Do it! Now! Don't let her walk away!

Adam blurts it out.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'd like to take you out sometime,
Lindsey. Not just for Piña Coladas,
either. A meal. With food. Where we
sit at the same table.

Lindsey shakes her head. Reality has set in.

LINDSEY
I don't date ball players, Adam.

ADAM
Yeah? Well, starting tomorrow, I'm not a ball player anymore.

Lindsey thinks about this. Smiles slightly. Flirting?

LINDSEY
Then maybe you should ask me again tomorrow.

Lindsey grabs a mini umbrella from the table, puts it over her head like it's raining, and EXITS.

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA - NEXT EVENING

Once more, the arena is pulsating.

ON THE SCOREBOARD. Just like the beginning. A similar situation: "*:04 seconds. Visitors: 99. Home team: 98.*"

IN THE HUDDLE, Sonny Nolan diagrams one final play.

OFF TO THE SIDE, Adam looks around, not paying attention. Taking it all in. This time, Oggie stands next to him. Adam seems strangely... giddy.

ADAM
This is it. My final four seconds. I'm excited. As soon as this is over, I'm going to ask out Lindsey Sinclair. Then I'm going to get a real job. A good one. One where I actually get to do what I'm being paid to do.

Adam holds out his hand, SHAKES with Oggie.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It's been a pleasure sharing my final game with you, Oggie.

Oggie, overwhelmed with emotion, pulls Adam into a HUG. The BUZZER sounds. Players file past. Adam nods at them, still caught in the hug.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Huh. My last game. Wonder if we won.

Sonny Nolan storms past, CURSING, just like earlier.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Guess not.

INT. ARENA TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Adam waits in line. Once again, Pete Cavanaugh and Lindsey wait to offer encouragement to each player.

ADAM (V.O.)
Best part of being cut? The GM finally has something to say to me after the game.

Adam gets up to them. Cavanaugh looks Adam in the eye.

PETE
I'll need to speak with you privately in ten minutes.

ADAM
I know.

Lindsey smiles at Adam, sadly. Adam smiles back big, gives Pete a huge THUMBS up, and EXITS.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Adam sits at his locker. Sonny Nolan storms in (with Lindsey and Pete trailing). As before, he EXPLODES!

SONNY
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE TALKED ABOUT NOT GETTING CAUGHT IN THE HALF COURT TRAP? HOW MANY TIMES!?

ADAM (V.O.)
Twice.

SONNY
I'M GETTING SICK WATCHING YOU PLAY! DO YOU KNOW WHY I CAME OUT OF RETIREMENT TO COACH THIS TEAM!?

ADAM (V.O.)
Four years, six million dollars.

SONNY
I CAME TO COACH A GROUP OF MEN! AND YOU KNOW WHAT I GOT?

ADAM (V.O.)
A bunch of raw nineteen year old kids who skipped college or left after one year so they could sign million dollar contracts?

SONNY
A BUNCH OF GIRLS!

The room is silent. Nate (the star) steps forward.

NATE
Coach? Maybe we should pray? Try and
channel the Lord?

SONNY
I DON'T WANT YOU TO CHANNEL THE LORD! I
WANT YOU TO CHANNEL A JUMP SHOT! CAN YOU
CHANNEL A JUMP SHOT FOR ME?

Nate's feathers are ruffled. He steps toward Sonny.

NATE
What'd you just say?

A player steps forward, puts his hand on Nate.

PLAYER
Relax, Man.

Nate slaps his hand off his shoulder.

NATE
Get your hand off me.

Suddenly, almost in a daze, Adam stands.

ADAM
It's my fault.

Everyone stops. They turn to look at Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)
This is all my fault. The entire losing
streak. Last week against New York, I
saw that Nate was thirsty but I was way
late handing him his Gatorade. Then,
against Detroit, Ricky needed a towel and
I handed one to Dale. Dale wasn't even
sweaty. And tonight? I didn't cheer
like I'm capable of cheering. My throat
got sore and I let it get the best of me.
I let the team down. This is my fault.

ON OGGIE. His mouth hanging open. In fact, everyone's
is. Nate. Sonny Nolan. Cavanaugh. Lindsey. And then,
it happens. Nate CHUCKLES - half amused, half confused.
Another player chuckles. Then someone laughs. Then
Sonny Nolan actually laughs. Soon everyone is laughing.

The bomb that was about to go off? It diffuses. Adam could care less. He marches right up to Cavanaugh.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'll be in the weight room. Let's get this over with.

Adam EXITS, leaving Cavanaugh stunned. Lindsey smiles. Cavanaugh turns to her. She quickly loses the smile.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - TEN MINUTES LATER

Adam sits on a weight bench. He's clearly been waiting a while. Cavanaugh ENTERS. Lindsey follows him in.

PETE
I came to thank you for your hard work and to tell you we have to let you go.

Adam knew this was coming. He STANDS, extends his hand.

ADAM
Thank you for the opportunity, Sir.

But, Cavanaugh doesn't take Adam's hand.

PETE
However, my protege' here claims to see something in you. She says you practice hard. And I don't know what the hell that was in there, but maybe you can be a positive force in the locker room. Plus, you're a cheaper twelfth man than Wilkens. We won't take the salary cap hit with you that we do with him. At least that's what she says: I can't understand that damn salary cap.

Adam looks at him confused.

PETE (CONT'D)
We'll be calling your agent tomorrow and signing you for the rest of the season.

ON ADAM. Staring at Cavanaugh blankly with a look that says: "You've got to be kidding me."

PETE (CONT'D)
Congratulations.

Now Cavanaugh EXTENDS his hand. Dazed, Adam shakes. Pete EXITS. Lindsey shakes Adam's hand and follows. At the last moment, she stops. Cavanaugh is gone.

LINDSEY

It goes without saying, but we'll just pretend last night didn't happen.

Adam nods, still too stunned to speak.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Adam.

Lindsey turns to leave. Adam finally finds his voice.

ADAM

So you know: this is by far the greatest length a girl has ever gone to get out of going on a date with me.

Lindsey LAUGHS, but quickly catches herself. She simply smiles, one again business-like. It can't be between them. She EXITS.

INT. ADAM'S CORPORATE APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Adam ENTERS, flicks on a light. Oggie STIRS on the couch. He's been sleeping there, under a blanket.

ADAM

Scared to sleep at home again?

OGGIE

It's okay?

ADAM

Yeah.

Oggie sits up a bit.

OGGIE

I hear, how do you say, a rumor?

Adam smiles and nods. Oggie smiles huge, excited.

OGGIE (CONT'D)

You hoped for this, no? Like I said?

ADAM

I guess I did. I guess they haven't beaten all the hope out of me just yet, Oggie.

OGGIE

Really?

ADAM (V.O.)
Probably not.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Definitely.

ADAM
Just don't tell anyone. I have to keep up an air of superior, sarcastic self-deprecating wit.

OGGIE
I do not know what this means, but I will not tell. I will keep the secret. After all, you are my best friend of America.

Adam smiles. He just won't let up on that.

ADAM
Well, then I guess that makes you my best friend of Slovenia.

Oggie breaks into a huge puppy dog grin. We FREEZE.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What the hell. If I'm gonna be a pro basketball player, I need to get a posse. He's what I've got.

We break freeze.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Sleep tight, Oggie.

Adam EXITS. Oggie smiles. He looks back, making sure Adam is gone. Once he is, SAM EMERGES from his blanket.

SAM
That was like the sweetest thing ever.

OGGIE
Yes.

Sam lies back down. Oggie lies down with her.

SAM
You need to be out of here by 7:30 AM. I want to open the office by eight.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW