

R E C

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - EST.

An average white pickup truck drives down a small interstate highway.

Southern pines line the road. Beautiful oranges and reds color their wicks, clearly deep into the fall.

A voice emitting from a car radio sounds off.

RADIO VOICE 1 (O.S.)

You must be on drugs!

RADIO VOICE 2 (O.S.)

Look, look, look. All I'm saying is that it's time for Coach Knox Chamberlain to go. Southwest Arkansas State has the lowest win percentage in it's history since joining the Southland Conference and that's not a result of realignment. That's on the coaching staff.

RADIO VOICE 1

But you have to admit, some of it has to be on the players.

RADIO VOICE 2

Well whether it's the players or not, he's got an 8-25 overall record and this year he'll finish 2-10, guarantee it.

RADIO VOICE 1

I think you're avoiding the question here.

RADIO VOICE 2

Again, the players don't matter. He's steadily declined all three years and the man right now has the second worst recruiting class in the conference. I don't know how much else to say it, AD Alan Kershaw must be livid by now. Knox Chamberlain HAS TO GO.

RADIO VOICE 1

(chuckling)

Alright, okay.

(MORE)

RADIO VOICE 1 (CONT'D)

Well you heard it here first. We'll be right back with another special guest to talk about SWASU's basketball season. Stick around on Texarkana Q 103 FM.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

KNOX CHAMBERLAIN, 44, in full coaching gear - a long sleeve polyester shirt and workout khakis, stares at the radio and turns the volume down.

He glances at EDDY CRAWFORD, 39, African American, nearly matching outfit, driving and glancing.

Knox turns to the window, raising a pocket JIM BEAM bourbon to his mouth.

Knox leans over to offer it to Eddy but Eddy quickly denies.

KNOX

How far are we from Tyler?

EDDY

'Bout an hour and a half away still. Knox, we left 15 minutes ago...

KNOX

(checking watch)

I just want to make it for the free dinner special at the hotel at this point.

Eddy switches the radio station, turning up the volume as out of date rap music blares into the truck's atmosphere to violently change the tone.

TITLE CREDITS: REC

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Knox and Eddy pull up to a run down house with a chain fence "guarding" the front of it.

Eddy looks at his phone with a text from 'Ms. Kara' saying "I hope y'all don't mind but I haven't prepared anything for supper".

Knox answers his own phone.

INT. AD'S OFFICE - SAME

ALAN KERSHAW, 58, wearing quality athletic jacket and pants, speaks to Knox on speakerphone. He leans in the back of his reclining office chair in his rustic, well-decorated, wooden office.

KERSHAW

You haven't gone in have you?

INT. TRUCK - SAME

KNOX

No, still in the truck.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

KERSHAW

Just want to remind you how important this recruit is for our rankings. He was a three star last year, he's got a lot of potential as far as--

KNOX

--Alan.. Alan. I've done my scouting okay, that's why we're at his house right now.

KERSHAW

Well I'm not sure you have, coach. Have you looked at our recruiting class?

KNOX

Coach? Since when have you called me coach? I know what we're up against here, this kid's mom loves us. He's ours as soon as we walk out the door.

KERSHAW

Knox.. We've got to capitalize on--

Knox peers out the window and sees MS. KARA, mid to late 30s, African American, waving at Eddy and Knox from her porch.

KNOX

Oh, wait, Alan. Mom's here. Gotta go.

KERSHAW
 (raising voice)
 Text me when you're done! And Knox!

Kershaw glances at the phone for a second, picks it up to make sure, then casually tosses it down on his desk again.

END CONVERSATION

INT. KARA HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Eddy and Knox, smiles abound, sit on two small, beat-down chairs across a couch where KENAN HAYES, 17, and his mom, Ms. Kara, are.

She places two glasses of water down for the coaches.

Eddy immediately converses with Kenan as Knox talks to his mom.

Amongst Knox's conversation with Ms. Kara, Kenan and Eddy's conversation is indecipherable, but audible.

KNOX
 'Preciate the hospitality ma'am.
 So, I know we talked on the phone earlier. But, does he? Does he have a decision yet? I mean where are you on all of this?

MS. KARA
 Well, I'll be honest with you Coach Chamberlain... Kenan rarely takes advice from me. He's learned to be a lot more independent over the years. And trust me, I been tellin him all about swassoo [SWASU] and how it's a good school and the coaches will take care of him.

KNOX
 Right, right.

MS. KARA
 But. It just hasn't... resonated like I wanted to. For the most part he's already halfway committed to another school.

KNOX
 Which school?

MS. KARA

Coach...

Knox leans back in his chair.

KNOX

We'll I jus...

MS. KARA

Coach. It's still worth it to talk to the boy. He just a kid. You know they all flip flop.

KNOX

Right, but I just figured how you said he's always respected your decisions. It'd be the easiest way. And you know we'd take real good care of him.

MS. KARA

I know! And I told him I said 'boy, you know the coaches gonna hold you down. You can even get a degree. He said 'Momma I don't need no degree, I just wanna play'. And that's when I told him. 'Just promise me you'll at least talk to the coaches when they come visit'. So that's what I got for you. He's right there. He seems to love Coach Eddy.

Eddy and Kenan share a brief, disingenuous laugh.

KNOX

Alright.

INT. HALLWAY OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Knox stares at the kitchen where Eddy and Ms. Kara are talking - this time barely audible.

Right next to Knox is Kenan, unimpressed.

KNOX

Look son, I just want to hear it straight from the horse's mouth. Why don't you want to come to our school? Your momma loves it, we've got solid academics and you'll receive plenty of playing time. I thought you were interested--

KENAN

--My moms got her decision and I got mine, coach. I don't know what else to say.

KNOX

But why?

Kenan looks over at the hallway and sees his mother is still distracted.

KENAN

(near whisper)

You really want to know?

KNOX

Yes!

KENAN

You just didn't offer me as much. Plain as shit.

KNOX

What do you mean? We offered you just like every other school that offered you-

KENAN

No. No, coach. Not like that. I'm saying.

Kenan checks again.

KENAN (CONT'D)

You didn't offer me AS MUCH.

KNOX

What exactly are you saying, son?

KENAN

I'm not gonna say it in front of my moms.

KNOX

She's over there. She's not gonna say anything.

KENAN

I told you I'm not gonna say it, coach. Man that's the end of the discussion, alright? I already told you enough.

KNOX
LSU? Arkansas? SEC school, I bet.
Is it Texas?

Kenan and Knox deadlock.

INT. TRUCK - LATER

Eddy stares at Knox who is in the passenger seat, yelling. He takes off his ball cap, slamming it down on the dashboard.

KNOX
Fuck! Shit!

EDDY
You gonna pop a vessel.

Eddy puts the car in drive, slowly peeling away.

EDDY (CONT'D)
Screamin like you on the toilet for
two hours again.

Knox lets it go like an anger management technique.

KNOX
It's alright, buddy.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - DAY

All the assistant coaches, including Knox and Eddy are shuffling through paperwork and getting ready for a meeting at a round table with a projector and a board in the background of a room that looks like it reeks of chalk.

Kershaw, this time in a suit, takes a step in and knocks at the door. He points at Knox.

KERSHAW
Coach.

For the most part, the coaches continue their prep, but take a little notice of what's currently happening.

INT. AD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kershaw strolls in and stops, seeing ANGELA BRYANT, 34, the athletic academic counselor, seated in one of the chairs across his desk.

The office is adorned in leather, wooden frames, and dusted card stock documents.

KERSHAW
I thought we said 4 o' clock,
Angela.

Angela stands up.

MS. BRYANT
You said when you get a moment--

KERSHAW
--Well clearly right now isn't the
moment.

Angela exits, unexcited.

Knox follows Kershaw into his office and takes the seat next to where Angela was sitting.

Kershaw leans up in his chair directly across his desk from Knox.

KERSHAW (CONT'D)
So, how are the kids?

KNOX
Couldn't be better.

KERSHAW
We need a top recruiting class,
coach.

KNOX
First off, again, why the coach?
Secondly, I'm working on it. Right
now, our approach is still on the
parents. We're having a meeting
right now that you just pulled me
out of to discuss our strategy-

KERSHAW
I don't give a shit about the
approach or whatever the sam hell
you're talkin' about.

KERSHAW (CONT'D)
I've got the boosters up in my ass
right now. In fact, this is the
third year they've been inside my
ass.

KNOX

If we hired that new medical staff I suggested last season, they probably could've checked that out for you.

KERSHAW

I don't think you're hearing me.

KNOX

Oh I hear you.

KERSHAW

No, you don't godammit.

(beat)

We need the top class this year, Knox.

KNOX

Hah. I know you're an idealist Alan, but--

KERSHAW

--No, Knox. I mean it. Three horrible seasons are bad enough. We used to make bowl games every year before we joined this conference, and it put us on the national map. Now, I thought I hired a coach who could handle that.

KNOX

Excuse me? I **can** handle that. This.

KERSHAW

I'm not asking for much. Let's work together here. Honestly, I'll do whatever it takes. I'll wax poetic to the donors about your years before you got here. Whatever. But I can't support a losing coach. Before--

KNOX

--He's gone!

Knox lifts up his arms, questioning.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna apologize for not being Cotton Meyers. He'll probably be coaching in the NFL next year.

KERSHAW

It's a fair opportunity is all I'm saying.

KNOX

Heh. Alan, you're killing me right now. We're 11th in the rankings. We're literally ONLY above Houston Baptist, how the hell am I supposed to do that? It's almost Thanksgiving and our season's virtually over.

KERSHAW

Knox.

KNOX

I mean I can maybe get us above McNeese but you're asking a lot here. Plus, I want to spend more time with my family for the holidays and-

Kershaw stands up, fisting his desk.

KERSHAW

(projecting)

I've been asking NOTHING of you so far. What coach with a record like yours stays?

KNOX

We're rebuilding.

KERSHAW

Get me that number one class... or I'll find me another Cotton Meyers,
(pause)
Coach.

KNOX

Alan can we talk about--

KERSHAW

I've got nothing else to talk about. It's plain and simple. Now if you can please leave my office. And shut the door on the way out.

Knox gathers his cap, gazing at Kershaw before standing up and turning.

He exits the room, slamming the door.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - LATER

A modest house with tons of family items decorate the crevices.

Knox and TRACY, 43, shining southern beauty, dressed down, sit across from DELILAH, 9, cute and toying with her food, and DIXIE, 17, with what looks like school clothes still on, texting.

Tracy texts over the table and puts her phone down.

She clinks her glass accidentally on the dining ware.

TRACY

So how'd the coaches' meeting go? A little earlier today than normal, huh?

KNOX

How bout we just talk about something other than football, daddy's a little worn out.

Knox turns to the kids.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Delilah, here have some sausage.

DELILAH

(pretending)

Oh no I'm a vegetarian now...

KNOX

Is that right? Well then.

Knox grabs another bowl.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Have some of this asparagus.

Delilah clenches her teeth.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Dixie what happened at school today? How'd your test go?

DIXIE

That was yesterday, but I got a 96. Chemistry's surprisingly easy. Oh and hey could you pick me up from Nicole's on Sunday?

KNOX
Hm. What time?

DIXIE
Like 10 am. I don't like staying
there that long.

KNOX
Ah, sorry sweetie I can't. I'll
still be getting back from a
recruiting weekend.

DIXIE
But dad the season's over.

Tracy laughs.

TRACY
Dixie your father still has two
games left.

DIXIE
Well no I'm not saying that. I
just...

KNOX
I'd love time off, but we don't
exactly have the best, um...
recruiting class right now and
daddy has to focus on that.

DELILAH
Wait, so you won't be home for
Thanksgiving to carve the turkey?

Knox lets out a laugh beneath the pain.

KNOX
Of course I will, baby. Just
remember to cut his head off before
I get there.

Tracy, Knox and Delilah let out a heartfelt laugh. Dixie
smirks and rolls her eyes.

DIXIE
Ew, dad. You always make that joke.

The family continues their harmonious laughter.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Tracy wipes her hands dry after washing dishes and Knox grabs a beer out of the fridge.

TRACY

So what really happened today?

KNOX

(sipping)

What do you think? It's finally happening.

Knox looks at the counter and sees plenty of bills on the top.

TRACY

You're kidding right? You told him about the rebuilding?

Knox picks up a mortgage bill, glancing at Tracy.

KNOX

Are we behind?

TRACY

Are they seriously going to fire you?

KNOX

Baby, I told you. We can't get behind on this. We already don't have enough for Dixie's college fund saved up.

Knox shakes his head, setting his beer down.

TRACY

I know that, Knox. But it's too high right now.

KNOX

I told you we shouldn't have bought this one. The next neighborhood has a market value that's practically doubled--

TRACY

--KNOX!

Knox immediately turns to her as Tracy grabs him by the arm.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Cut it out with the boring shit.
What did Kershaw say? You're
getting fired?

KNOX
No.

Tracy lets out a sigh of relief.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Well, yes.

Tracy's eyes laser him.

KNOX (CONT'D)
But only if I can't get... the
number one class. By signing
period.

TRACY
What are we at right now?

KNOX
11.

TRACY
Okay out of?

KNOX
12.

TRACY
(scoffs)
Fuck.

Knox grabs his beer, taking a few hefty gulps.

A buzz sounds off on the counter - Tracy's phone. Knox
reaches for it and Tracy cuts him off from it.

TRACY (CONT'D)
I got it. Probably just Veronica.

Knox nods. He grabs the bills and tucks them under his arm as
he takes a final swig, slamming it on the counter. He
saunters out of the kitchen.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - DAY

The coaches continue their prep and banter before actually
beginning. However this time, they're trying to settle down a
little bit.

Knox looks at his phone and reads a TEXT from a parent.

MR. SIMMONS

"Hey coach I don't know if you heard but Ive been trying to get Devon to come to SWASU like his daddy did but that don't look like happening this time around. Sorry coach. No hard feelings"

Knox wipes his face down and storms out of the meeting room.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Knox gets the pocket Jim Beam from his drawer and takes a couple swigs.

Eddy comes into the office to interrupt.

KNOX

Please leave, Eddy.

EDDY

Come back to the meeting, what's wrong?

KNOX

Eddy, I'm. Please, just.

(beat)

We just lost another one.

EDDY

It's just one. And guess what, the quicker we get this shit over with the quicker you get your whiskey and I get to my wife and kid.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

All the coaches are prepared and crowd-staring at Knox who is the only one standing, ready to address.

KNOX

So as you may have heard or not heard. I, um. I've now been notified by our Athletic Director that I will be fired before the beginning of next season.

The coaches react from murmurs to a small town hall meeting.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 IF! If... we cannot secure the
 number one recruiting class.

More banter.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 Now, I know that would most likely
 mean they'll get a new head coach
 and all of us will be replaced. We
 don't exactly have the best record
 on our resumes... BUT, we still
 have a chance.

COACH RHYMES, 45, interjects.

RHYMES
 And how do we do that?

KNOX
 Well, I think we can just grind it
 out and put all our efforts into
 the recruiting aspect--

COACH VALDEZ, 40s, interjects again.

VALDEZ
 --What aspect? We're so far down in
 the rankings.

KNOX
 Well what do you suppose we do
 Valdez?

COACH BOONE, early 30s, takes over.

BOONE
 If I may... I think what we should
 focus on is a different technique.
 You know? I think appealing to the
 parents isn't exactly what the
 kids... appreciate, nowadays.

KNOX
 Right. Our approach is off and
 we're bleeding recruits left and
 right.

Everyone nods in agreement.

BOONE

Knox, I bet if you let me come on one of your house visits or trips out of city, I'd be able to connect with these rec--

KNOX

--You're not there yet Boone. Eddy and I have been doing this for much longer than you have.

BOONE

But I'm young, and if we switch methods, maybe some of these commits-

Rhymes chimes in again, causing Boone to sit back in fluster.

RHYMES

True. We're losing commits as well. I agree. But how are we supposed to win? We follow all the rules, we've said the rebuilding story a dozen times.

The coaches laugh for a brief second.

VALDEZ

Yeah, I don't know why they don't believe that one since the year before we got here Cotton Meyers won the conference championship. Like how the hell are we still rebuilding?

A louder sound of laughter fills the room.

KNOX

Well hey now, he moved on and so did the school. It's a new conference.

VALDEZ

But how do you recover if you're doing everything you're supposed to but still fail?

Knox pauses, pondering for just a moment.

KNOX

What if we didn't follow the rules?

The coaches look at each other.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Hm? What if we didn't?

Knox smacks the table in affirmation, almost bright idea-like. He quickly storms out of the meeting room and down the hallway. Eddy follows suit.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eddy walks fast and chases after a surprisingly quick Knox.

EDDY
Knox are you serious about this?

KNOX
I don't know yet. Think I might try something.

EDDY
What the hell am I supposed to tell them?

KNOX
Tell 'em whatever you want. Tell them the meeting is over. Or just tell them to keep doing what they're doing. I'll report back.

Knox enters his office and shuts the door. We hang on Eddy for a moment.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Boone looks at the other coaches who offer a few murmurs. He shakes his head, grabs his bag and gets up.

VALDEZ
Hey, Ted.

RHYMES
Where you headin' son?

BOONE
Shit is useless. We're all gonna get fired anyway. See if he even notices I'm gone next time.

Boone packs everything up and opens the door to exit. On the other side is Eddy about to enter. They exchange looks as Boone glances back at the coaches before storming out.

EDDY
(projecting)
Hey! Coach Boone!

RHYMES
Just let him go, Eddy.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - LATER

Knox sits at his desk taking notes as two players, JERALD WATKINS, 21, and TRAVIS DAILY, 20, knock on the door that is wide open to let Knox know they're there.

Knox looks up.

KNOX
Come on in.

The two players take seats by Knox's desk, settling in.

KNOX (CONT'D)
How are y'all?

JERALD
Coach, finals killin' us.

KNOX
I thought finals were in a couple weeks.

TRAVIS
Yeah, but we're so behind on that shit.

Knox concentrates on what he's writing on his computer.

KNOX
Well why are y'all bothering me about it? Talk to the counselor.

JERALD
Mi' Bryant?

TRAVIS
Coach, Miss Bryant doesn't know shit.

KNOX
(not serious)
Hey... watch your language. You know that's not true, we have great academic resources for our athletes.

TRAVIS

Right.

JERALD

Coach, what you doin' for
Thanksgiving?

Knox stops to finally look up and take a breath.

KNOX

Hmm.. Good question. Cut some
turkey maybe. Get on this
recruiting trail.

TRAVIS

We're getting O-Linemen, right
coach?

KNOX

Just let me worry about that.

JERALD

Coach, ain't anybody tell you to
step your game up? We at like dead
last in the rankings?

KNOX

Eleventh. And look who's talking
shit! You're a four star recruit
and I got your ass to come here.

Travis covers his mouth and utters an "Ooooh!".

JERALD

Hey, to be fair though, I wasn't
originally gonna come here. More
like a last resort kinda thing.

KNOX

Really? You never told me that.

JERALD

I mean I couldn't really.

Travis and Knox perk up - a little more intrigued now.

KNOX

Uhuh?

JERALD

I mean at the other major schools
all the staff and shit had the
visits A-1, like frat parties and
weed and all bunch of free shit.

(MORE)

JERALD (CONT'D)

But I was mad 'cause they uh, NCAA started threatening investigation from the only school I actually wanted to go to and--

KNOX

--Wait, wait, you said. Wait the coaches were doing all this?

JERALD

Nah. GA's mainly. I mean I don't know for sure if the coaching staff had an idea behind it, but I dunno how they couldn't. I guess that's how they cover up. Get the assistants to do it.

TRAVIS

Bro, that's the dumbest story I've heard.

JERALD

Man, shut the fuck up. Wasn't you like a one star recruit?

Jerald and Travis playfully tussle and laugh.

KNOX

What exactly did you do at these visits? Besides all the weed and partying? What schools were they?

JERALD

Coach, I can't be tellin' everything. You know that.

Knox settles back in his seat, returning to his computer.

TRAVIS

Hey we should prolly head to class.

JERALD

Fasho. Aright coach.

KNOX

Okay.

(pause)

Ey close the door on your way out.
Thanks.

Knox picks up his phone and places it to his ear as the door slams as the players leave. We don't hear a single greeting or word from Knox.

INT. POPE HOUSE - EVENING

Knox sits in a living room on a sofa chair as a hand comes in the frame, setting down a glass of water.

Suddenly, CHRIS POPE, 18, sizeable athletic build, sits down across from Knox.

KNOX
Preciate it. Long drive.

CHRIS
Which is why I'm curious.

KNOX
About what?

Chris folds his hands and legs.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Oh. Right. Well you're a fantastic kid Chris, I'd always make the drive to come visit.

CHRIS
But coach.
(smirking)
You called me. And you know I'm committed to Southwestern.

KNOX
Really? Well, that's not what I've been hearing through the grapevine.

CHRIS
Rumors are rumors, Coach Chamberlain.

KNOX
Chris, I know you were high on our list and I'm damn positive it was the other way around too.

CHRIS
Heh. Yeah. Unfortunately my mom isn't here this weekend. She has a church retreat, so I'm not sure what I can offer you.

KNOX
Well I just wanted to reach out and extend a little offer myself. It's a recruiting event, so I thought you yourself might be interested.
(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

We're only inviting world class high school athletes, so I figured you fit the bill.

CHRIS

You sure my mom ain't supposed to be here? Sounds like a permission thing.

KNOX

Nah, I mean. Obviously tell her. But, I think it's best you know what we're offering first before you fully commit to doin' it. And then maybe you'll consider telling your mom about it.

CHRIS

Look, coach. You know I'll always hear anything you got to say, because we cool. You're like one of the best coaches out there despite what the records say. I just...

KNOX

Chris, I know what you're gettin' at, but just hear me out. This is an **exclusive** event.

Chris looks behind him.

CHRIS

How bout we go out back? It's a nice day.

Knox lets out a noiseless belly chuckle.

KNOX

Beautiful weather right now, you're right. That sounds like a good idea.

They follow each other out a screen door to the porch.

INT. EDDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddy, on speakerphone with his wife, pencils hanging on both ears, exhausted.

EDDY

Hey baby.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - SAME

VERONICA CRAWFORD, late 30s, holds her son, C.J., 2, in her arms as he plays with her hair.

She walks around the house, which looks similar if not in slightly worse condition than Knox's.

VERONICA

You gettin' off late?

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

EDDY

I'll be home soon, actually. Sorry I missed your calls. I've just been on the computer all day, and my eyes are getting sore.

VERONICA

Well, I just wanted to go over something really quick with you. I know you've been really busy with work, so we haven't had much time to discuss it. But, I'm thinking we need to make a decision on C.J.'s day care. It's a lot.

Eddy shakes up a bit to wake himself up.

EDDY

(not buying it)

Hmm. Okay.

VERONICA

I know we need the money, but we can't throw half of it away to the damn day care. Let me stay at home. At least just for a couple months. We can rely on your income for now.

EDDY

How, mama? How will we do that?

VERONICA

Please don't right now Eddy, we've talked about this plenty of times. This doesn't have to be my decision. But honestly...

EDDY

I'm sorry... Ugh. I just, don't want you to have to quit your job.

Eddy sighs, checking his phone.

VERONICA

Babe, I understand. But it's what I want to do. You already said they're bringing you back for another season.

Eddy cringes and sees a text he received a few hours back from XANDER WAITES.

He opens it and it reads: "Hey coach, I just want to tell you thank you for everything you and SWASU have done for me especially after committing to y'all but as of now I'm opening my recruitment back up."

EDDY

Hey, Veronica. I'm gonna have to call you back. I'll be home as soon as I can. Just got this important e-mail I need to take care of real quick.

VERONICA

Okay, but what time you think? Eddy?

END CONVERSATION

INT. EDDY'S OFFICE - SAME

Eddy hangs up the phone and calls Knox, bringing his phone up to his face this time.

EDDY

Knox. Bad news. Of course. I wouldn't call you this late if it was good.

(pause)

Well, we got a fresh O-Lineman on the D-List.

Eddy pulls the phone away to look at it as Knox erupts with volume.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DELILAH'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Knox hangs up the phone, going back to helping Delilah with her homework on her bed, books spread about.

DELILAH
Who was that?

KNOX
Just coach Eddy.

Knox looks at Delilah's papers, examining.

DELILAH
Okay. Should we move on to algebra?

KNOX
I thought we were sticking to
grammar.

DELILAH
Grammar's easy. And it's language,
dad.

KNOX
I'm sorry baby, I think I might
just retire for the night, you can
finish the rest right?

DELILAH
What? But you never help me with
homework.

KNOX
(stern)
Look, Delilah, honey I just have to
go deal with this work right now.
I'll be back up in maybe an hour if
you're still up?

Knox gets up, edging closer to the door.

DELILAH
But you always!

Knox turns around over his shoulder for a moment to hear what
else she has to say. He grabs hold of the door.

DELILAH (CONT'D)
Just go.

KNOX
Sorry.

He calmly closes the door, exiting.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Knox steps into the kitchen as Tracy sits at the bar, writing notes on a piece of paper.

Knox grabs a beer from the fridge, frustrated.

KNOX

Fuck!

Knox slams the beer on the counter, throwing his ball cap on the ground.

Tracy doesn't react an ounce.

TRACY

Calm down. What's the issue? What'd Delilah do?

KNOX

It's not Delilah. I lost a commit today. Probably puts us last in the rankings. I'm done.

Knox steps over to a part of the kitchen where a cross hangs. He grabs the medium sized CRUCIFIX and gently brushes his fingers across it.

TRACY

Maybe you should take a break for a second. Go talk to your daughters.

KNOX

I'm tryin', Trace.

(beat)

Any good news at least on those bills?

TRACY

Is there ever?

(beat)

I'm tellin' you.

KNOX

I just helped 'Li with her homework.

TRACY

No. The other one. Ask her about college or something. Or her boyfriend...

Tracy goes back to writing.

Knox sips his beer, grabs a football off the counter, then shuffles away out of the kitchen.

Once he does so, Tracy pulls her phone out, checking messages.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Knox knocks at the door, and immediately enters without a response.

A bevy of textbooks are sprawled out across the bed.

Dixie types loudly on her laptop.

DIXIE
What's up?

KNOX
Mind if I come in?

Knox, beer in hand, saunters in anyway.

DIXIE
Everything okay?

KNOX
I.. Pff.. I was just about to ask you that, actually.

DIXIE
Well, yeah.

KNOX
So... books.

Knox picks up a textbook and nods his head.

DIXIE
Dad.

KNOX
(quickly)
I heard you have a new boyfriend.

DIXIE
Dad.

KNOX
What's his name?

DIXIE

We've been dating for over a month.
His name's Brian.

KNOX

You never told me that.

DIXIE

I mentioned it a couple times in
passing.

KNOX

Right. You know the whole...

DIXIE

It's fine. It's the off-season.

Knox sets his beer down on her dresser.

KNOX

Yeah, but I understand I need to be
here more.

DIXIE

Dad, really it's fine.

KNOX

Why haven't I seen Briiii-?

DIXIE

Brian. He doesn't have a car so we
usually just chill at his house.

DIXIE (CONT'D)

So work's getting better, right?

KNOX

Getting better?

DIXIE

Mom told me about you almost losing
your job. And... How my college
fund--

KNOX

--Woah woah. Hang on.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Dix, you said it already, it's the
offseason. But, your college fund?
Mom told you what happened?

DIXIE

Just that you guys need help right now and you needed to dip into my savings.

KNOX

No, it was a mixup. Your mom just got confused. Everything's good. Don't worry. Because if you start to worry, then I will... next thing you know rumors start flyin' around and...

Knox sees Dixie's concerned face.

He smiles, hugging her.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Come here.

Dixie comes in for an embrace.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Love you.

DIXIE

Love you too. G'night.

Knox grabs his beer and heads for the exit, closing the door.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Knox wipes his face, chugging his beer and then gasps for air.

EXT. KNOX'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddy comes up to Knox's door, pausing when he hears voices.

Mostly muffles protrude through the door, but Eddy hears a few sequences of audible words.

VOICE

This Saturday?

MUFFLE.

VOICE (CONT'D)

And he's a four star recruit?

MUFFLE.

VOICE (CONT'D)
What's in it for us?

Eddy's licks his lips nervously before entering the door.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - SAME

Eddy prances in and sees two frat guys, TODD, 22, and GOMEZ, 21.

EDDY
Coach.

KNOX
I'll send you guys the schedule.
The uh.. Itinerary I mean. Thanks
for coming in.

The frat guys play along.

GOMEZ
Alright, coach. Thanks.

The two fraternity brothers exit as Knox smirks it off.

KNOX
Walk-ons.

Eddy sets down a portfolio of papers on Knox's desk.

EDDY
Right. Well, speaking of walk-ons,
the offensive coaches and I were
thinking of implementing some new
schemes. Particularly a power-I
package.

KNOX
Eddy, are you kidding me right now?
What the fuck?

Eddy picks up his papers.

EDDY
I thought you said I have open
door?

KNOX
No!

EDDY
But, wait... you said.

KNOX
I'm not talking about the open
door! What the fuck did I say about
scheme?

EDDY
Well...

KNOX
There won't be any scheme if we're
all fired before spring fucking
camp!

There's a brief, tension-filled pause.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Now the only football terms I want
to hear from now on are: recruit,
commit, and 1st place.
(mocking)
I could give a shit less about
power-I, shotgun spread, a fuckin'
four tight end package. Or
whatever.

Eddy grabs his portfolio, and understandably walks out with
his head a little lower than normal.

KNOX (CONT'D)
And tell the coaches the same shit
I just told you.

Knox pulls out a drawer and picks up an empty Jim Beam pocket
handle. He attempts to finish off the bottom droplets into
his mouth but fails.

He tosses it in the trash.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Knox waits in line with two pocket Jim Beams in his hands.

CASTLE, 39, creepy, stands in front of him with a BACKPACK on
and an odd assortment of an outfit, attempting to purchase
two large handles of vodka.

The cashier, DONNY, late 50s, distracted by the last guest,
looks up, stares him down.

DONNY
Seriously? You think I'd let you
buy anything in my store? What did
we talk about?

CASTLE

What? You said I couldn't be in front of your store anymore. Why don't we make a little barter?

DONNY

I told you to stay out of the parking lot in front of my store. Don't you think that might mean to stay out of my goddamn store too?

The cashier grabs the two bottles and puts them underneath the counter.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Go on. Git.

The creepy man shakes his head, trotting off.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Fuckin' druggie.

Knox, slightly appalled by the situation, walks up.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Hey coach.

KNOX

Hey Donny. What was that all about?

DONNY

Oh him? He's just a meth head. Or drug dealer or sum'n. You want a bag for these?

KNOX

Uh, please.

Knox can't help but stare outside at the creepy man who pulls out a cigarette and smokes it.

Knox pays the cashier as he follows Knox's eyeline.

DONNY

Ah shit is he not leaving?

Knox puts a hand out, grabbing his purchase in the process.

KNOX

I'll handle it.

DONNY

You sure? I mean, I got a shotgun.

KNOX
No, I... I got it.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Knox calmly walks over to the creepy gentleman around the corner who appears lonely, sad.

KNOX
Hey, what's your name?

Castle blows out a puff.

CASTLE
Rick.
(beat)
But my friends call me Castle.

KNOX
(extending hand)
Knox Chamberlain.

CASTLE
I know who you are. Coach.

Castle smiles eerily.

KNOX
Hey keep that on the...

KNOX (CONT'D)
Listen, I wanted to know why I've never seen you around the store. Seems like you and Donny have some trouble, but I've been coming here for a while and like I said, never seen you.

CASTLE
Yeah, well.

Beat.

KNOX
Where do you get your drugs?

CASTLE
(scoffs)
For professional or recreation?

KNOX
I'm not usin' em.

CASTLE
Well, then, I don't think I can
give out that information.

KNOX
C'mon, Rick.

CASTLE
Castle.

KNOX
Castle. Rick Castle. C'mon. I'll
buy you liquor.

CASTLE
Why would you wanna do that?

KNOX
I dunno. Seems like we could be
friends.

CASTLE
Seems like we come from two
different worlds.

Castle blows another puff of smoke.

KNOX
What do you need the liquor for?
I'll buy it for you, no charge.
Just tell me where you get your...
weed. And coke from.

Castle throws his cigarette on the ground.

CASTLE
First off, you don't even know if I
have either of those. Secondly...
(pause)
I'll consider your offer. But don't
ask me what I need it for.

KNOX
Okay.

CASTLE
And don't assume you think you know
who I am.

Knox looks over to the side, desperately avoiding Castle as
he gets in his face.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

By the way, I'm a big fan of the team.

KNOX

Oh. That's great.

CASTLE

Yeah. Could switch the offense up a little, you know, I like the old pro-style we used to run, but that's just my two cents.

KNOX

Everyone's a critic.

CASTLE

Heh. I like you coach. Let me let you in on a... pretty well known secret around here. I'M my OWN supplier. And since it seems you don't really know what the fuck you're getting into here, I'll share another secret. The 'weed' and the 'coke'. It's more than those two handles of vodka I need.

Knox nods subserviently. Castle checks if the coast is clear.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Alright. We'll make this trade. But if you need any more, you'll have to start a tab if you can't pay immediately. And I almost never give out tabs, so consider yourself lucky.

KNOX

This will only be a one time purchase trust me.

CASTLE

I'm not sure you know what you're getting into. Some of the things I do aren't for the faint of heart.

KNOX

You know, they say football's a violent sport. And I think football's a tough sport, don't get me wrong. It is violent, but beautiful. Mentally, physically, you always have to prepare for the unthinkable.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

I think I'm very fucking aware of what I'm getting into.

Dead silence.

CASTLE

Kay. Well, follow me, I'm double parked in the alleyway.

Knox nods and walks with Castle.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - YARD - AFTERNOON

Gomez and Todd address a few of their fraternity brothers who are building a couple security measures on the gate of their frat house, adorned already in decorations.

GOMEZ

So yo guys, we got a high schooler coming to the party tonight, so heads up.

The guys who are building look around.

FRAT GUY

Why? Wai--for what?

GOMEZ

He's a football recruit here for a visiting weekend and we were asked to show him a fun time. Show him what the school's about. 'Student activities' and, yeah.

TODD

Point is, when you see him, and you'll know it because he'll be the only 6'4" dude you don't recognize at the party. Make sure you're a little chill with him. Act like he's a rush.

GOMEZ

Right, and maybe football games might be worth tailgating next year, so...

Gomez and Todd trail off.

TODD

And don't worry about letting him in, I'll be there out front when he gets here. Just stay on your toes.

The frats return back to work, denim and all.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Knox is parked far away in his truck but in eye shot of the frat party. He's dressed abnormally, borderline not recognizable.

He sees Chris Pope, the recruit from earlier, step in to the party, greeted by Todd.

Knox takes a swig of Jim Beam and starts his car, driving off.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We see Chris Pope greeted very friendly by Gomez at the front door of the house with two girls next to him.

They all meander into the house, shutting the door.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - DAY

Knox types on his computer before checking his phone.

He looks at his short messages with Castle that are mainly just directions to Castle's house.

All of a sudden, Knox gets a text from Chris Pope. He opens it and it reads: "Hey coach, just want to say I had a great weekend super dope visit! you know where I think I might actually be going next fall? Haha."

Knox's mouth is agape as he sets the phone down. He grabs his ball cap and takes it off, exhaling with excitement.

Eddy opens the door to his office and comes in, disgruntled.

EDDY

Can I talk to you?

KNOX

Hell yes you can. Guess what? I got good news.

EDDY

What the hell is so funny? Did your daughter get into Harvard or some shit?

KNOX
Eddy, you'll never believe.

EDDY
Oh I'll believe. I'll believe anything at this point. Did you hear?

Knox's excitement turns to confusion.

KNOX
Hear what?

EDDY
A recruit was spotted at a frat party this past weekend.

KNOX
Hmm. And how do you know this?

EDDY
Bregman's brother is in the fraternity and went to the party. Told me they said a recruit was coming. Matter of fact, they actually went to the same high school.

KNOX
So, you're saying no administration saw, just a player's brother?

EDDY
Well, yes.

KNOX
Well you want to hear some good news?

(pause)
That recruit was there. Bregman was right.

EDDY
Where's the good part?

KNOX
Eddy you know how I said I'd work on something for this recruiting trail?

EDDY
Uhuh?

Knox looks over.

KNOX
Close the door.

Eddy reaches back and shuts it, still bewildered.

KNOX (CONT'D)
So... I got a text from Chris Pope
a few minutes ago.

EDDY
He's committed already.

KNOX
Yeah.
(smirking)
To us.

EDDY
You flipped him? How?

Knox stares at him for a moment, waiting for him to catch.

EDDY (CONT'D)
Oh.. Uh uh. No way. You. That's
some illegal ass shit, Knox.

KNOX
Shhh!

Knox stands up. They both convert to a harsh whisper.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Well hang on, now. This is
perfectly legitimate. All we're
doing is hosting a recruit. They
have parent permission to see the
school. There's nothing wrong with
that. Now, with that being said,
you're the only person I would tell
about this. I can't trust any of
the other coaches, just yet. They
won't... understand the process.
(beat)
Besides, you know what kind of
commitment from a recruit like that
does for our rankings?

Eddy embraces a minor panic attack.

EDDY
Knox!
(loud whispering)
Knox! You're gonna get us all
fired.

KNOX

No... I won't Eddy. LOSING. Will get us fired. Not having this class will get us fired. Now, I told you, I'm abiding by all the rules. We WILL NOT be in any shit for this.

EDDY

I'm not that kind of coach, I'm not that kind of, man. What the hell am I supposed to say? I'm on board? Let's pull out the party van, boys! Ready to be the big man on campus and fuck some coke and prostitutes?

Eddy gets a little too loud, and Knox shushes him again.

KNOX

It's not like that and you know it.

EDDY

How am I supposed to tell my family about this? My wife? What happens if someone finds out?

KNOX

First off, I won't let anyone come after your family because I sure as hell won't let them come after mine. Second, and it better for sure be the last fuckin' time I say this, no one will find out because there's nothin' to find. Now, I know you've been wanting to talk scheme and everything lately and sure, I know we'll be better next year with our returning starters and you taking over as playcaller. But...

EDDY

But what?

KNOX

(looks around)
I don't know about you, but my family can't exactly afford for me to lose my job.

EDDY

Mine can't either.

Knox lays his hands on Eddy's arms.

KNOX
Which is exactly why I'm so
confident no one will find out
about what I'm telling you RIGHT
NOW.

Eddy wipes his face, messing up the position of his ball cap.

EDDY
I'll think about it.

KNOX
Thank you, Eddy. Thank you, dear
Lord Jesus Christ.

Eddy sighs, walking out of the office. He raises his voice
once he opens the door just a bit.

EDDY
I said I'd think about it.

Knox raises his voice to a normal tone as well as Eddy walks
out and down the hallway.

KNOX
Well you better think quick, we got
big visits in Northern Louisiana
this weekend!

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Knox walks out of the same liquor store as before with a
basket of alcohol bottles staggered in it. He has his phone
in his free hand held up to his ear.

He puts the basket on the ground next to his truck and
responds.

KNOX
I know. I know. But she can take
out loans. Hell, we can probably
afford the first two years wherever
she wants to go with the money in
there now.

Knox spots something at the corner of his eye as Castle
appears in his typical uniform, backpack included.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Trace. I hear ya, but that's not
gonna make a difference. I got a
huge weekend in Louisiana and I
need to invest a little bit.

Castle walks over and looks at all the bottles in the basket and Knox makes a questioning thumbs up. Castle nods and responds with a thumbs up and then a beckoning hand motion.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Hey babe, I gotta go. Just don't tell Dixie anything. It's a small dip in funds, won't happen again.

Knox gets in his truck, loading the bottles in the passenger seat and leaving the basket on the ground.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - LATER

Knox brings in all the alcohol bottles to the front porch, his hoodie up and sun glasses on. Castle comes out to grab a few bottles and brings them in.

CASTLE

Hah. You.

KNOX

What?

CASTLE

You just, look like you're actually buying drugs for the first time.

KNOX

It's... um...

Awkward pause.

CASTLE

Well come on in, let's start a tab.

Knox grabs the last of the bottles and looks both ways. He walks in and they shut the door.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - MORNING

Knox packs in a few small water bottles into a gym bag.

Eddy knocks on the door that's already open.

EDDY

You ready? Whatchu packin'?

KNOX

Oh, just some.. Mouth guards. Gear mainly.

EDDY

What?

KNOX

Just to show the recruits what kind of gear we have for next season.

EDDY

Did we get a sponsor I'm not aware of?

KNOX

They probably don't know the difference.

Knox ushers Eddy out of the office and into the hallway. He locks his door.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - SAME

Knox and Eddy walk side by side as Knox lowers his voice a little bit, but not to a whisper by any means.

KNOX

Alright, so I've thought about it and I say our approach is this: we've got a big recruiting event with a ton of highly touted recruits and that'll propel us to the top of the rankings, maybe second, maybe even first. Competitive with Lamar at least.

EDDY

Are we even considering parents?

KNOX

Not at all. That's old school. And too well-mannered, frankly.

EDDY

I don't know, Knox. Do we really have to prepare this kind of event.. I feel like if we took our old approach we'd still be fine. At least until we're at a last ditch effort.

Knox takes Eddy by the shoulders with urgency.

KNOX

Eddy. Listen to me. This is it. We're here.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

This IS our last ditch effort.

(beat)

It's just a one time event, okay?
All the major recruits we need,
then we can go back to the old
strategy if we still need that
number one spot. Look, we're a
small school. We don't have the
endowment of the other D1 colleges.
NCAA won't investigate, they don't
give a shit. It's a normal thing
colleges do, hostin' events.

Knox turns to keep walking and Eddy slowly follows.

EDDY

Let me just tell my wife it'll be a
long weekend at least, she's with
the baby.

Eddy pulls out his phone and sees an unread text from
Veronica that says: "CJ >>> work" with a kissing emoji.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Actually.

Knox looks over at Eddy.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Fuck it. Let's go.

KNOX

Alright, that's what I like to
hear.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Knox takes a fat swig of his Jim Beam.

Eddy steers as highway lights flicker inside the truck every
few seconds.

Knox takes a deep breath, glance-checking his phone.

He has an unread message from Dixie saying: "I'm praying for
you. Go out there and give it your all".

KNOX

Eddy pull over.

EDDY

What?

KNOX
Pull over!

Eddy quickly pulls to the side of the country road.

EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Knox opens the passenger door and vomits all over the grass and pavement.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT - SAME

EDDY
Couldn't wait--
(checks phone)
10 minutes?

Knox settles back in his seat, giving Eddy the death stare.

Knox turns up the radio as out of date rap music blares, continuing through the upcoming montage.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Knox and Eddy checking into the hotel at night.
- 2) Knox and Eddy waking up and preparing with a couple small bottles of orange juice.
- 3) Knox and Eddy arriving at the first recruit's house, ready to go.

INT. THORNWELL HOUSE - DAY

The house displays an array of family pictures and trophies stacked in a corner.

The coaches each receive a glass of water from MS. THORNWELL, mid 40s.

ARTHUR THORNWELL, 17, sits across them on a couch.

KNOX
'Preciate it ma'am. Lovely house.

Everyone peers around for a second, wondering what the hell he's talking about, but then realizing he's just being polite.

MS. THORNWELL

Y'all need me to get you anything else before we get started?

KNOX

Oh, no ma'am. We're fine.

EDDY

Ms. Thornwell, would it be alright if we talk to Arthur a few minutes alone before we have a.. 'Family discussion'?

MS. THORNWELL

Sure. But why?

KNOX

We just want to talk a little bit of scheme since we're changing the offense next year and Arthur's a wideout and all.

ARTHUR

Athlete.

KNOX

Right.

(beat)

Typically, our parents hate hearing about all this strategy stuff. It's got nothing to do with playing time or anything that important really.

MS. THORNWELL

Oh, I mean. That seems okay. I don't mind.

Ms. Thornwell seems planted, not ready to leave.

EDDY

I mean, feel free to stay. I just wanted to go in depth about the power-I package and how we'll throw in a few more sets for screen passes and what we might do on fourth down whether Arthur will have anything to-

MS. THORNWELL

Ah. I get it. Now I understand why they leave.

Ms. Thornwell chuckles, the coaches joining in laughter as well.

Ms. Thornwell nods as she stands up and exits.

MS. THORNWELL (CONT'D)
Let me know if you need anything!
Arthur don't say anything dumb.

Arthur sighs as Ms. Thornwell goes outside in the backyard.

ARTHUR
So... what--

EDDY
--You recently decommitted from
Central Arkansas right?

Knox takes a sip of water, which turns into a few gulps.

ARTHUR
Yeah.

KNOX
Arthur. We just want to say, I know
you've kept in touch with Eddy and
everything, but we just want to say
that. In fact, let me change that.
I, personally, just want to say
that I see you as a valuable part
of our offense next season.

ARTHUR
What you mean?

EDDY
Ever heard the term wide receiver
1?

ARTHUR
Yeah.

KNOX
Well say, I know a couple sites got
you at three stars. But I think
that's a bunch of trash. I say
potentially five.

ARTHUR
Heh. You and every other school.

KNOX
Well it's a good thing you're
three.

Arthur looks confused, almost offended.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Because if not, we wouldn't be able to have that much of a shot at you. Us being in the Southland Conference and all that.

Arthur recovers, agreeing.

EDDY

But, you know, we'd love to have you at our SWASU Annual Visit.

ARTHUR

Wait, I thought you said you were doing some power-I shit?

KNOX

C'mon, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Right. Wide receivers? Power-I?

EDDY

Exactly.

ARTHUR

So SWASU Annual? Never heard of that.

EDDY

Oh, well we wait until the most exclusive recruits are available and then.

Eddy lets out a bloop noise.

ARTHUR

Can you...

KNOX

Elaborate?

ARTHUR

Yeah.

KNOX

There's certain challenges that come with facing the pressure of college football and also studying at a Division 1 university.

EDDY

(nodding in sequence)

To be more specific: Girls.

(MORE)

EDDY (CONT'D)

Parties. Recreational periods.
Things some athletes might expect.
We want to see who can handle the
pressure of **distraction**, really.

Arthur chuckles, leaning in. He looks back to see if his mom is coming in anytime soon.

ARTHUR

Y'all are lying.

KNOX

Oh no, we are not. I can assure you
one thing.

ARTHUR

You did. You did actually want to
talk about scheme.

They all let out a chuckle.

The sound of a FIDDLE plays (non-diegetically) as all three get up, dancing around a little bit and shake hands, hugging Arthur. The music bleeds through the next sequence.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Knox and Eddy arriving at a new house
- 2) The coaches greeting new moms and recruits.
- 3) Knox and Eddy sitting down with a recruit, explaining, inaudible.
- 4) Knox and Eddy hugging the recruits, rejoicing in excitement.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Knox and Eddy laugh aloud as they eat up a plate full of burgers and fries.

EDDY

Hah, and did you remember the?

KNOX

She had no idea! Power-I, momma!
They gon' run power-I for me!
That's the funniest shit.

EDDY

You know I was serious about that
scheme though right?

KNOX
(serious)
Really?

EDDY
Fuck no.

They laugh again as Knox gets a call from Kershaw on his phone.

KNOX
Uh oh. AD alert.

Eddy pounds a handful of fries in his mouth, raising his eyebrows mockingly.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Hello?

INT. AD'S OFFICE - SAME

KERSHAW
(livid)
SWASU annual?

INT. DINER - SAME

KNOX
Word sure travels fast.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

KERSHAW
Yeah, you're not the only one who has contacts with these parents.

Knox rolls his eyes, staring at Eddy, mouthing 'Fuck'.

KNOX
Yes, we're having a small get together for recruits. It's good, it'll help with rankings.

KERSHAW
That's not exactly why I'm concerned. Why didn't you run this by me?

KNOX
Can't you be happy a little bit? We have great recruits coming to this.
(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

Plus we'll be back tomorrow, so do we have to talk now?

KERSHAW

Happy? How? You think the boosters just all of a sudden go away? You think the records just get wiped because the season's over?

KNOX

Look, I'll explain everything to you when we get back tomorrow. It's late. Quit worryin'. If you want me to get this number one class for you, I suggest you let me do my job for once and stop micromanaging.

KERSHAW

I'm just concerned, Knox. You never do anything like this.

KNOX

Well, maybe we have to do things a little different around here to get shit done. Like you said.

Kerhsaw paces back and forth.

KERSHAW

Okay.

(beat)

You're right. But get back with me once you arrive in Arkana.

KNOX

Will do, sir.

END CONVERSATION

Knox hangs up the phone. He raises his eyebrows and smirks at Eddy, taking a heavy bite of his mouth-watering burger.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - YARD - NIGHT

Todd greets a few people out front as their house is nearly in party mode, music blasting, plenty of open space still.

Todd checks his phone and answers a call. He walks out of the gate of the house and through the street.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - CORNER STREET - SAME

Todd hangs up the phone and meets Eddy with a small gym bag. Eddy is in similar disguise gear to Knox when on a mission.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dixie checks her phone and sees a text from Brian.

Brian says, "Hey my friend knows about a frat party tonight at SWASU and we're going. Randy."

Dixie responds: "Isn't Randy a football player?"

Brian responds: "Yeah, he said a couple other players are going."

Dixie considers for a moment, then responds to Brian: "Come pick me up? My dad won't care, just meet me out front."

Brian responds quickly: "On my way."

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - LATER

Knox, rocking a hoodie, sips on a beer on his porch chair. He pulls out his phone and makes a call.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - SAME

Gomez answers.

GOMEZ

Yeah? Hey.

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - SAME

KNOX

Hey, just checking in. Everyone there? You got enough of everything? Coach Crawford meet you?

INT. FRAT HOUSE - SAME

GOMEZ

If we get anymore we'll get shut down.

Gomez plugs his other ear as music fills the room. In the background, girls are taking shots with obvious recruits.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - YARD - CONTINUOUS

All of a sudden, Gomez goes over to the side to exit the house, but as he does so, Delilah and BRIAN, 17, enter the house.

They're instantly greeted by Brian's friend RANDY, 18, who hands them two SHOTS OF LIQUOR. They all cheers.

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - SAME

Knox perks up.

KNOX

What? High school girls? I didn't invite any. What the hell did we say?

Knox sets his beer down and stands up.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Oh fuck. I'll call you back.

Knox heads inside.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Tracy meanders around the bar counter, apparently writing something down.

Knox huffs in, breathing hard.

TRACY

You okay?

KNOX

Where's Dixie?

TRACY

She told you, she's with Brian.

KNOX

But.

TRACY

Are you sweating?

KNOX

Tracy, I just want to know where my daughter is, why does it matter if I'm sweating?

TRACY

What? All of a sudden you're concerned about where your kids are?

KNOX

Where the hell is this coming from?

TRACY

Oh c'mon Knox. The 'recruiting weekends'. You scurryin' back to our room as soon as you get off work.

KNOX

What the hell are you talking about?

TRACY

Forget it. You.

(beat)

You're sitting on the back porch and all day you haven't said a word. I'm supposed to just magically find out where Dixie went?

KNOX

So I'm the bad guy right now? For.. For what? You know Dixie told me you told her I was dipping into her college fund. And about me losing my damn job. I had to tell her that her mom fed her a bunch of bullshit.

TRACY

It's not about that, Knox.

KNOX

Well, what's it about?

TRACY

I'm here every day playing mom. Fact, I'm playing both parents. And then out of nowhere, after we tell you you're always at the office, you decide you wanna play daddy?

KNOX

You think I can't provide for my family?

TRACY

I just want to know what's going on. A little communication, that's all.

KNOX

I'm goin' to bed.

Knox walks away.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Knox stares at himself in the mirror, making faces. The silence in the room is deafening.

Knox reaches down and opens the cabinet beneath the seat. He kneels and reaches inside, pulling out a small bag, unzipping it and taking out a bag of pills and another baggie of powder.

Knox looks around the corner to see no one.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Knox sets the bigger bag down on the bed and closes the bedroom door. We see nothing.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - EVENING

The coaches utilize their pre-meeting time to prepare and talk like usual.

Knox, barely awake, unapologetically pours a little bit of Jim Beam in his coffee cup while no one (or so he believes) is looking.

Meanwhile, the coaches wrap up their conversations and are ready to start, a couple of smiles abound.

VALDEZ

Hey Knox, you lookin' a little depressed for occasion.

KNOX

Where's Boone?

The coaches crack a chorus of chuckles.

RHYMES

You know he's been absent lately.

KNOX

Why?

VALDEZ

You had a long weekend coach?

RHYMES

Yeah Knox, I thought that Louisiana trip was last weekend.

KNOX

Not exactly in the mood, Valdo.
Why is no one answering my question?

The coaches let out a few more laughs.

KNOX (CONT'D)

What the fuck is so funny? What'd I miss? Eddy?

EDDY

It could be the hoodie, but if I had to guess... it's probably the fact that you don't know.

KNOX

Know what?

Knox perks up and the coaches all respond in a chorus of "oh's".

Eddy shakes his head. He pulls out his phone and scrolls for a couple seconds, handing it to Knox.

EDDY

You check out the rankings, lately?

Knox, stonefaced contorts.

RHYMES

Looks like that Louisiana trip paid off.

KNOX

Third?

VALDEZ

Is that not good enough?

KNOX
 That's... that's amazing. Not good
 enough? We got a damn three star
 recruit on here. Three others.
 We're in the running.

The coaches match Knox's excitement.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 We're in the running. Eddy we
 fucking did it!

Knox jumps up and hugs Eddy.

EDDY
 So can we finally start talking
 scheme in one of these meetings?

RHYMES
 Yeah like what we're gonna do with
 these receivers we got now!

KNOX
 Are you fucking serious? No, we're
 not gonna talk scheme. This is just
 the beginning. We need COMMITS.
 Third ain't first.

EDDY
 But--

KNOX
 Once we reach our goal, gentlemen.
 Then we can talk scheme.
 (pause)
 But for now--

A knock at the door. Kershaw pokes his head in.

KERSHAW
 Coach. In my office.

KNOX
 Can it wait til we actually start
 the meeting?

KERSHAW
 No. Now.

Knox reluctantly follows.

INT. AD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kershaw grabs a stress ball and toys with it in his hand.

Knox twiddles his fingers.

KNOX

You see the rankings?

KERSHAW

Haven't been keeping up much.

KNOX

You'd probably be surprised if I told you the same. Just been grinding away, hoping the results will show, but guess what we're at.

KERSHAW

I know.

Kershaw stops toying with the stress ball.

KNOX

Hm?

KERSHAW

We're third.

KNOX

Oh, okay. Well, I figured it's pretty great once Eddy showed me. All the coaches are--

KERSHAW

--That's not why you're in here.

KERSHAW (CONT'D)

I got a tip from one of the basketball players who was, at a frat party this past weekend. Saturday, to be exact.

KNOX

Okay.

KERSHAW

Said he saw one of his old high school buddies there.

KNOX

Is this one of your anecdotes?

KERSHAW

No this is very real. And that high school buddy... Guess what? He's still in fuckin' high school.

Knox pretends. The tension is **thick**.

KERSHAW (CONT'D)

Kid said he was there just to check out the campus, actually happens to be a football player. I also have reason to believe there might be some other football players there his age. Maybe some recruits. Now, I can't confirm that last one.

KERSHAW (CONT'D)

But... it's a solid notion. AND, I wanted to bring you in here and ask you if you happen to know anything about this?

Kershaw is enjoying this.

KNOX

(offended)

Really Alan? After an incredible recruiting weekend in Louisiana you're gonna go ahead and accuse me of some shit like that? Try and take away from our success?

KERSHAW

Speaking of that trip... you know where that basketball player was from?

Knox throws his hands up.

KNOX

Kentucky?

KERSHAW

Shreveport.

Knox nods. Now he knows.

KNOX

Lotta great recruits come out of Shreveport. Based off our weekend, I might go ahead and say Northern Louisiana might be the next hub.

KERSHAW

Oh really?

KNOX

Where is this coming from? Baseless accusations like that? Pardon, but you sound a little like my nine year old right now.

KERSHAW

Excuse me?

KNOX

You know how rough it is trying to pull off this class like you asked me to do? Why the hell would you think I'd be cheating? I wouldn't have bags under my eyes from all these late nights because of cheating. We wouldn't have one of the worst records in football during my latest tenure here because of cheating. We wouldn't be an FCS school in a small town with big dreams and tears every season because we were cheating.

Knox takes a light breath.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I mean shit, if only it were that easy.

Knox stands up and turns to walk out. He closes the door as he steps away.

Kershaw sits back in his chair and grabs his stress ball.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - LATER

Knox pulls out his pocket Jim Beam out from his drawer underneath his desk.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eddy paces down the hallway, then heads in one direction. He comes up on a door and knocks.

A normal "Come in." presses through the door. Eddy turns the handle and sees Knox.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - SAME

Knox types on his computer suspiciously.

KNOX
What's up?

EDDY
Kershaw meeting?

Knox points his finger behind Eddy. Eddy turns around and closes the door.

Knox immediately stops typing.

KNOX
Barely got through it.

Eddy sighs in relief.

KNOX (CONT'D)
He was so close to figuring it out.
(pause)
I think we should lay low together.

EDDY
(sarcastic)
Really?

KNOX
I just mean, maybe no more parties. Just lay low on that part. It's almost Christmas. We got the recruits we wanted, we're in a good spot right now. I think we can take a break to breathe and focus on our families. Kershaw will soon forget about everything, and plus: I don't want to have to do any hard recruiting in January with him breathin' down our back.

EDDY
So, again, not focusing on scheme, not even focusing on recruits. Just calming down.

KNOX
Yeah. But after Christmas we gotta pick it up and make that last month stretch our bitch.

EDDY
Okay.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Knox purchases a case of VODKA bottles.

DONNY

You know I haven't been questioning it lately, but... you switchin' up liquors on me?

KNOX

Since when did you become a fuckin' detective?

DONNY

What?

KNOX

Can you just... ring me up, Donny.

Donny backs off as if he just offended a diva.

DONNY

Also what's with the quantity? You know, just because vodkas for pussies don't mean it gets you any less drunk than Jim Beam.

KNOX

Donny, what'd I just say about questions? Shit, man.

Knox drops a few 20 dollar bills down on the counter.

DONNY

What bit you in the ass?

INT. TRUCK - LATER

Knox picks up his phone and makes a call as he drives.

KNOX

Dixie. Hey. How's Lila? Perfect. Well, can you tell mom I won't be home in time for Christmas Dinner. I'll just be a little late, so maybe postpone it just a bit.

Knox swerves a little.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Nothing. And what do you mean I have to tell her? You're better at that kind of thing.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)
She what? That's... I'm not even
with her, though.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Alright, whatever. Just plan
accordingly I guess then.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Delilah watches TV as Dixie hangs up the phone.

However, Dixie picks up the phone again.

DIXIE
(flirty)
Hey.

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - LATER

Brian sneaks around the back of the house and taps on the
cold, barely visible window when he sees Dixie in the
kitchen.

She smiles, checks back on Delilah watching TV and opens the
back door, letting Brian in.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They both sneak around as Delilah catches them heading around
to Dixie's room.

DELILAH
Hey.

DIXIE
Hey... don't tell mom and dad?

Delilah tilts her head.

DIXIE (CONT'D)
You ever get to watch TV this much?

Delilah rolls her eyes.

DIXIE (CONT'D)
Thanks Li'.

INT. DIXIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dixie and Brian enter the room, making out. They both aggressively sway on the bed, continuing their love affair.

Dixie backs off.

BRIAN

What?

DIXIE

(opposed)

What am I thinking...

BRIAN

(befuddled)

You said I could come over?

DIXIE

No I mean. Why are we doing it in my room? Let's do it in my parents room, the master.

BRIAN

You sure we have enough time?

Dixie scoffs.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brian and Dixie renew their routine 'make out on the bed session' as before. Only, this time, the clothes are sliding off.

Brian backs off this time. He reaches in his back pocket, pulling out a condom.

DIXIE

Oh good you finally bought some.

BRIAN

Well, no, remember I just never have them on me. This was Mike's, he gave me one from his car.

DIXIE

How long has he had it?

BRIAN

Said like a year or two, but I don't think they expire. Should be good.

DIXIE
(facepalm)
No. We're not using that. Let me
check if my parents have some.

BRIAN
You think that might be a little
weird if you took one?

DIXIE
No idea. Never exactly borrowed a
contraceptive from my parents
before.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - SAME

Dixie searches through the medicine cabinets quickly and then
the cabinets below the sink. She takes a few minutes.

Brian checks his phone, not even attempting to offer help.

BRIAN
Find anything?

She continues searching and then finds a small gym bag with a
drawstring on it. She shrugs and opens it, taken aback by
what's inside.

She pulls out a bag of ecstasy tablets and another with
nuggets of marijuana.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
(not looking)
Dix?

Dixie smirks, turning around to face Brian and show what
she's found.

DIXIE
Well, might not be a condom, but...
guess it never stopped us before.

BRIAN
Oh shit.

Dixie motions her head to the side, indicating.

Brian scurries over to lock the door as Dixie throws the
baggies over to Brian, closing the cabinets.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Knox knocks, blowing out cold air. Castle opens it.

CASTLE
We settling up?

KNOX
Nah. Nah I can't right now, just
coming to get my next order.

CASTLE
Order? You haven't paid your last
couple bills. What'd you think this
is a drive in?

KNOX
I told you I'd have it by signing
day in February. We had a deal.

CASTLE
I told you I almost never start
tabs.

KNOX
Look, whatever you have, I'll take
it. And I'll settle that debt as
soon as I can.

CASTLE
I can't give you the normal.

KNOX
Shit. Alright, that's fine. I don't
have much time.

Castle comes out a little, letting the door close.

CASTLE
Yeah, don't you have to be
somewhere? Like with your family?
On Christmas Eve?

KNOX
I don't have time to explain.

Castle pulls out a cigarette and lights up.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Please, I'll take whatever you got.
Just whatever's in the back pack.

Castle opens his door and throws his backpack inside.

CASTLE

I don't have what you need in there.

KNOX

Okay, well, I've bought just about everything you have. Can I just get a short supply? Won't run up the tab or anything.

CASTLE

It's already ran up.

Castle lets out a puff.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

You know, you're lucky you've been getting me all hyped up, lettin me in on the secrets for next season.

Knox lets out a nervous chuckle.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

How'd you remember I'm a sucker for an offense that snaps under center?

Knox shrugs, clearly freezing.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Come on in, coach.

Castle waves him in. The door shuts.

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Tracy pulls into the driveway, getting out. She peers over to the street and sees a car that strikes her attention.

EXT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tracy walks down the house hallway and hears cheerful Christmas music playing. She approaches the door slowly and knocks on it really quick before opening it.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - SAME

Dixie, Brian, and Delilah are all around a speaker, listening to music while playing a board game and laughing.

DIXIE

Hey mom.

DELILAH

Hi mom!

TRACY

Hey...

Brian waves and stands up.

BRIAN

Hi Mrs. Chamberlain.

DIXIE

Mom, Brian was in the neighborhood
and he just stopped by for a sec.

BRIAN

Yeah, I was just about to head out.
Didn't mean to come over uninvited.

TRACY

Passing by? Randomly on Christmas
Eve?

They all nod.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Okay. Well, no need to rush out.
Stay as long as you want, Brian.
(beat)
Dixie, where's your father?

DIXIE

On his way. Where were you at
again? I didn't know what to tell
him.

TRACY

Where'd he say he was?

DIXIE

Uh, not sure. I forgot. Probably
getting more beer or something.

TRACY

Sounds about right. Alright, well
let's go eat some dinner. Brian,
really it's okay if you want to
stay.

BRIAN

Oh no thank you, I should be
getting home.

TRACY

Okay.

Tracy and Brian exit the room. Dixie gets up but Delilah holds her arm.

DELILAH

(soft)

You owe me one.

Dixie rolls her eyes.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The TV plays a warming, family Christmas movie as laughs echo in the background.

We see the Chamberlains gathered around the tree and living room, watching TV.

Knox, a beer in his hand. Delilah wrapped around Tracy and Dixie texting but laughing along, mostly genuinely.

The fireplace blazes as it sets the scene.

Knox finishes the last of his beer and shakes it around. He gets up and walks into the kitchen. Tracy sees this and gets up to join him.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Knox starts the microwave with a popcorn bag inside.

Tracy strolls in.

TRACY

I saw two new presents under the tree... What'd you do?

KNOX

To be honest, I feel like something might happen soon. Like a miracle.

TRACY

(making fun)

Oh uhuh. So miracles involve taking money out of our daughter's college fund to go buy her and your other daughter Christmas presents the night before?

KNOX

Hey... Don't joke with me, missy.
I'm pretty confident we might
actually get this number one class.

Tracy sighs, hugging him.

TRACY

I know, I just wish you were around
more. Like at least on time for
dinner.

KNOX

Hey, I heard you were late too.

TRACY

Yeah well.

The microwave sounds off and Knox turns around to get it,
letting the fumes out.

KNOX

Mmm... butter.

They both head back into the living room. A buzz sounds off
in Knox's pocket, and he checks it before following Tracy all
the way.

It's from Eddy saying: "Hey. Got one more. Think that puts us
close to second. Early Present from one of our new commits.
Merry Christmas."

Knox lets out a sigh of relief.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Tracy brushes her teeth in her night gown on and Knox comes
in with a santa hat on, shirtless, wrapping himself around
her.

TRACY

Can I help you, Santa?

KNOX

You know what I want for Christmas?

Knox gropes Tracy.

TRACY

I don't think Santa gets his own
wish list.

Knox takes the hat off, kissing her neck.

KNOX
What about now?

Tracy shakes her head, spitting and rinsing her mouth.

TRACY
I think I might sit this one out,
coach. Not feeling it tonight.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Knox leans on the doorway between the bedroom and bathroom.

KNOX
You positive?

TRACY
Mhm.

Tracy checks her phone.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Damn. Did you hear about that
university scandal? Up in Virginia.

Knox's eyes dart back and forth.

TRACY (CONT'D)
(reading)
Veronica shared me this article,
apparently some baseball coaches or
trainers or something got caught
taking their players to a strip
club. It's all over the news now,
you should check it out.

KNOX
Crazy what you can get away with
nowadays.

TRACY
Well no, they didn't get away with
it.

Tracy looks earnestly at Knox.

KNOX
You know right now might be pretty
terrible timing. With all that.
But.

Knox reaches down and opens the bottom cabinet under his
sink, grabbing out a gym bag and pulling out a bag of pills.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Santa didn't forget about all his girls.

TRACY
Is that.. Ecstasy?

Knox nods his head.

TRACY (CONT'D)
You bought ecstasy? Knox.. Why?

Knox searches, mildly upset at her response.

KNOX
(awkward)
I just kinda miss you, us, and I feel like I've been stressed as shit and you have too. I didn't want to get our two kids anything if we can't have a little... Christmas cheer.

Knox sighs in disappointment, throwing the bag of pills on the counter.

TRACY
Wait.

Tracy walks over to Knox and stares at him intimately. She kisses him.

Tracy steals the baggie, shaking it. She takes him by the hand and leads him to the bed.

Knox breaks off for just a second and walks over to lock the bedroom door, scurrying back to her on the bed, kissing her.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

Knox closes his truck door and blows out a puff of smoky, cold air with his hoodie and hat on. He sees a text from Kershaw but ignores it.

He puts his phone back in his pocket, throwing his gym bag over himself and walking forward.

INT. KNOX'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Knox sits at his desk, longing at his computer. He scrolls through his e-mails to check and sees one pop up from Kershaw with the subject: "You get my text?"

Knox sighs, opening it.

The email reads: "It's officially the middle of January, Knox. Standard Checkup. Anything to show for that number one class yet? Didn't think so. Just a usual reminder that signing day is in two weeks, since you apparently don't know. Oh and, remember the athletic code of conduct."

Knox closes the e-mail and puts his face in his hands.

A knock echoes from his door. He looks up and sees Angela Bryant standing at the door.

MS. BRYANT

Hey. New semester schedules. Just coming in for that required meeting we have to have.

KNOX

Oh, right. Yeah, come on in.

MS. BRYANT

Everything okay?

KNOX

Yeah, just. Kershaw. Up in my ass like a sandpaper dildo right now.

MS. BRYANT

Jesus. It's like you're my spirit animal.

KNOX

What the hell do we get done in these meetings anymore? I mean, I feel like we have so much of an academic standard for these athletes it's hard to get anyone that can actually hold on to a football to want to come here.

MS. BRYANT

You're right. That 2.5 GPA requirement is really holding back our prime athletes from not finishing their three-a-days.

Knox scoffs at her.

KNOX

I mean, it's Southwestern Arkansas State University. Not Stanford.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

Is it not taxing on you to get Buckwheat from Memphis who grew up in a trailer and can run a 4.2 40 to finish readin' his Chaucer on time before finals?

MS. BRYANT

(shrugging)

Yeah. But I love that challenge.

KNOX

Really? Then why do I see you stressed as shit looking like the crypt's keeper half the time.

MS. BRYANT

It's Kershaw. The man's an asshole. All he cares about is the goddamn boosters and their opinions. He's a puppet.

Knox meanders over to close the door and then comes back quickly to his desk, leaning on it.

KNOX

So... You have a little resentment I see.

MS. BRYANT

You think? It's one thing to finally work at your alma mater doing what you've always wanted to do, but then you get here and your boss is one of the worst AD's in the history of the program.

KNOX

Damn. You know, I've never really liked the guy since I was hired. Pretty sure he's gonna come by my office at some point today and give me shit about not already winning the national championship.

A knock from outside of the door vibrates through the room.

Knox and Angela snap as Knox mouths "oh fuck" to her. He quietly comes up to the door and opens it slowly.

Eddy steps in with a portfolio.

KNOX (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

Angela sighs in relief.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I'm in a meeting.

EDDY
Uh, I'm sorry...

MS. BRYANT
Honestly, I'll just come back after lunch.

KNOX
Wait.

MS. BRYANT
I mean, really it's fine. I just need you to sign a couple papers. Like the usual 'meeting'.

Angela gets up and walks out. Eddy looks at Knox with a formidable stare.

KNOX
Whatever. What're we lookin like?

EDDY
Well we're still sitting at number 2. It's gonna cut close since we got that big weekend next week and after that it's pretty much just keeping in contact.

KNOX
Alright.

EDDY
But, Knox... it's gonna be tight. I mean, we're talkin about getting pretty much all these recruits to beat out Lamar. You got anything planned?

Knox, frustrated, paces about.

KNOX
Kershaw's had his dick out lately making sure we don't do anything "illegal".

EDDY
How long has he known?

KNOX

He doesn't know. There's nothin' to know.

EDDY

I'll work on something for now.

KNOX

Please. Let me know if you find anything.

EDDY

You good?

Knox doesn't respond. Eddy gathers his portfolio and shrugs, closing the door on Knox.

Knox takes a swig from his Jim Beam underneath his desk.

EXT. ATHLETIC WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Jerald Watkins sits on a bench performing CHEST FLIES. He finishes a set then looks forward.

JERALD

As far as my goals for next season? Just trying to become a Thorpe award finalist. Probably my biggest goal so far, but you know what they say, dream big, ain't it right coach?

Across from Jerald is Knox, grinning.

KNOX

That's right.

JERALD

Nah but. I don't know what else to tell you about recruiting. I been texting all the recruits I can. Plus we lookin pretty clean this year, number 2 and all.

KNOX

It's not about the participation. I trust you and all the other guys, but um. I know you mentioned one time in my office about how you were recruited by other schools.

JERALD

Oh all that?

KNOX

Yeah, I just was curious, I mean I'm not gonna apply any of those techniques, I just want to get inspired on what kind of angles I should get at.

JERALD

I mean, that was all too long ago. Besides the partyin' and shit? Wasn't really much. You know, they got all kinda false promises about everything. You know, degrees, NFL, money was the big one, things like that. Playing time. The usual. Mostly lies. But at least I knew the women and weed was real.

Jerald laughs, and Knox pretends to join along.

JERALD (CONT'D)

Ey look coach, I have to go actually. I got an academic meeting wit Mi' Bryant. I can't miss that shit neither, damn grades here a bitch.

KNOX

I understand.

Jerald rises, wiping his face off with his sweaty, heather grey, athletic tank.

JERALD

Prolly shouldn't tell the recruits about that GPA requirement. Kids all lazy these days.

Jerald steps away. Knox, epiphany-struck.

EXT. ADVISOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Knox cautiously knocks.

Travis opens the door and we see Angela sitting at her desk.

KNOX

Oh, sorry, I didn't realize-

MS. BRYANT

Oh, no he was just on his way out.

TRAVIS

Hey coach.

Jerald leaves and Knox nods, entering.

INT. ADVISOR'S OFFICE - SAME

Knox walks in to her office: a wide array of plaques, accolades, graduate degrees, certificates, etc.

MS. BRYANT

So, I just need you to sign those last few papers.

Angela brings out a portfolio.

KNOX

Sure, but I was wondering if we could discuss a few things, first.

Angela perks up, intrigued.

MS. BRYANT

Hmm.

She leaves the portfolio unopened.

MS. BRYANT (CONT'D)

Okay.

KNOX

What are um, what are your policies on tutoring for student athletes? Do you have other students or is it just other advisors?

MS. BRYANT

Well, we have a lot of students who volunteer for these kinds of positions, actually.

KNOX

Awesome.

MS. BRYANT

Yeah, is there...

KNOX

What kind of qualifications do you have for these student tutors? Can coaches talk to them? I think I'd like to meet a few ahead of time.

MS. BRYANT
Before signing day?

Knox twiddles his thumbs, pondering.

KNOX
You want to grab a drink after
this?

Angela scoffs, flattered.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I'll sign all your papers. I just.
Want to know a little more about
this academic monitoring thing with
student athletes.

Angela looks behind Knox and double checks to make sure the
door is closed.

MS. BRYANT
(quiet)
Coach. I think I know what you're
asking.

KNOX
(playing dumb)
Yeah.

MS. BRYANT
(pause)
What kind of 'questions' are you
looking to get answered? And--

KNOX
--The price?

MS. BRYANT
Uhuh.

KNOX
Look. I can't offer you money.
Can't offer you drugs.

MS. BRYANT
What?

Knox laughs awkwardly.

KNOX
It's just a joke... What do you
want?

MS. BRYANT
You seem desperate.

KNOX
Well I...

Angela bounces back and forth on her chair's suspension.

MS. BRYANT
What I want *is* pretty obvious, I thought.

KNOX
That's a big ask. How can I be so sure you'll put up your end of the bargain?

MS. BRYANT
(leaning in, smirking)
We uphold a standard GPA requirement and I'm the only head bitch in charge of a D1 university's athletic counseling department. I've got kinesiology grad students begging for tutoring credit at my full discretion, and I handle all my own paperwork.

Beat.

KNOX
Okay. I'll pull all my resources if you hold up your end.

MS. BRYANT
Count me in, then.

INT. TRUCK - LATER

Knox tidies up just a smidge, reading texts. He has one from Castle responding to his "hey" with "cash or nothing coach, this is the last fucking time".

He puts his truck in Drive, backing out.

EXT. ATM MACHINE - LATER

Knox, hoodie and sunglasses on, steps up in line to the ATM machine, he makes a withdrawal of \$1000 and takes the cash, placing it in his wallet before looking both ways.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Knox stands in front of Castle's door with his gym bag around his arm.

Castle opens the door just enough to check. The door swings slowly out, all the way. Castle steps out and shuts it.

CASTLE
You got a lot of fuckin' audacity
showing up, Coach.

Knox, unzips his gym bag revealing - TWO STACKS OF MONEY.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
Couldn't have texted first? I don't
even have dinner ready.

Knox zips his gym bag up, unresponsive, still serious.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
Come on in.

Knox and Castle walk in, finally we see the inside of the house.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - SAME

The place is trashed with magazines, and other random posters across weak wood panelling.

Castle settles down in a recliner, throwing his backpack on to the nearby couch and grabbing a mug to drink from.

Knox remains standing, but he lets his bag down on the couch.

KNOX
Can I ask you a favor?

CASTLE
Depends, what kind of--

KNOX
--Why don't you really tell me what
you have in your backpack?

Castle's pauses before slamming his mug in disgust.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I mean, you've never told me.

Castle stares expressionless, brooding.

INT. EDDY'S OFFICE - EVENING

Eddy is on the phone as he checks the rankings on his computer, showing SWASU at number 3 in the Southland Conference.

EDDY

Nah. Just another decommit. Yeah.
Dropped a little bit but... I'll
probably have to call Knox soon.
Yeah. Tell CJ daddy loves him.
Okay, Love you. Mhm.

Eddy dials.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Hey kid. Sorry to report right now.
Okay, shit. Well I didn't know!
Called to tell you we got another D-
lister, sorry.

(pause)

I know it's not fair! We just have
to work some miracles this weekend.
Okay. I will, I will.

Eddy hangs up, tossing the phone on his desk. He swells up and throws his hat against the wall, trying to keep it together.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN

Tracy washes the dishes. The sound of a door opening and closing finds its way through the kitchen.

Suddenly, Knox enters the kitchen and takes his coaching hat off.

TRACY

Where you been?

KNOX

Just a really long day at work.
Kershaw. Eddy. The damn school
counselor.

(beat)

It'll all be over soon.

Tracy turns to him, clearly upset.

KNOX (CONT'D)

What?

TRACY

You know anything about a withdrawal?

KNOX

What do you mean, withdrawal?

Tracy pulls out her phone, scrolling, and then hands it to Knox who examines it.

TRACY

The bank e-mailed me about an overdraft from our emergency fund. From an authorized user. At an ATM.

KNOX

Shit. It was an accident. I meant to take it from... Dixie's college fund.

TRACY

Yeah well guess what.

KNOX

How was I supposed to know? And why do we only have \$1000 in there?

TRACY

We haven't exactly had the income to keep that account loaded.

KNOX

Trace. C'mon.

TRACY

Why are you taking out a grand from our daughter's savings anyway? We gotta pay fees on it, now, you know that right?

KNOX

What do you want me to say? I'll pay the fee off.

TRACY

I'd apologize to your daughter. It's not me that you're screwin' over.

Knox walks to the edge of the kitchen, taking a glance at the crucifix above the kitchen wall before turning away.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dixie types on her laptop. Knox knocks on the open door and walks in.

DIXIE

Hey.

Knox comes over to sit down at the edge of the bed.

KNOX

Hey. What you working on?

DIXIE

This math assignment. What's up?

KNOX

I just wanted to see what you've been up to.

Dixie smiles, but it quickly dissipates.

DIXIE

Uh. Not much, I guess.

KNOX

You guess?

DIXIE

Dad.

Dixie breathes in and out with little smoothness.

KNOX

What's wrong? You okay? Math that hard? Is it the AP math? Like calculus or somethin'?

DIXIE

Can I tell you something? If you promise not to tell mom?

KNOX

Sure, sweetheart. What's up?

DIXIE

I uh... I went to a party recently.
(beat)
At the college.

KNOX

Oh... That's not too bad. But you shouldn't do it again. Can't trust college kids.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

They're basically just high school students that got too old.

DIXIE

Dad... I saw a recruit there.

Knox shifts in his seat.

KNOX

How'd you?

DIXIE

Brian knew him. But Brian had to leave early and I wanted to stay. So, I was getting to know the guy.

(breaking)

Like, hey. My dad, you know. He's a coach.

Dixie can't look at Knox. His nostrils flare, knowing where it's headed.

KNOX

No.

DIXIE

Dad, he. I said no, but...

Knox looks up, his eyes reveal the dehydrated tiredness of staying awake for months.

Knox can't look at Dixie in her own eyes, but instead comes in to embrace her.

KNOX

Dammit.

Dixie hugs him hard.

DIXIE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to go. I didn't know.

Knox releases a hand to bang the bed a couple times in anger.

KNOX

Of course not. This is my fault.

Knox backs off look at his daughter.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I was just trying to get a leg up on recruiting.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)
I mean it when I say this is the
worst mistake of my life.

DIXIE
(hugging)
I haven't told mom.

KNOX
I'll handle this. Okay?

He hugs her one last time.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'll fix all of this.
Okay? You listen to me. I'll make
this right.

Dixie nods, teared up.

Knox pushes his chin up, hoping to stop the tears from
falling as well.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN

Knox enters the kitchen where Tracy writes down a few things
on a note pad, looking beautiful and ready to go out.

KNOX
Trace, can I talk to you?

Tracy rushes a few things.

TRACY
Can it wait 'til later?

KNOX
Uh, it can't actually.

TRACY
Your coaches' meeting starts in
like 20 minutes. Text it to me.

KNOX
Tracy, we need to talk.

TRACY
If it's important, we can talk
about it later after girl's night.
Veronica's already here--

KNOX
--Tracy!

Tracy gives him a pat on his cheek. It's close to a slap, but held up enough to look like a loving pat.

TRACY

Not now, Knox. Later.

She lets go, patrolling out of the kitchen as Knox stares in awe at what just happened.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Knox pulls up to a sidewalk and lets out a huge exhale.

He takes his phone and dials.

KNOX

Eddy. Hey, listen. I'm gonna be a little late to the coaches' meeting. Grab a head count for me would ya? Alright.

Knox hangs up.

He gets out of his car and slams the door, walking up to the gates of a house - the same frat house that hosted the parties from earlier in the semester.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - STREET - SAME

Knox fixes his hat and charges the wooden fence gate, breaking through it.

He marches up the path and up the steps to the front door of the house and knocks.

We see everything happening from the window of the truck, which is parked literally in front of the house.

Todd answers the door and Knox takes his hat off, grabbing him by the shirt and picking him up and into the house. Knox shuts the door.

Shouting bleeds through the walls, although the language is indecipherable.

Thuds and slams occur, with the shouts resuming. This happens for a couple dozen seconds.

The door flies open and Knox charges out, leaning over to pick up his hat and fix it on himself.

KNOX
(yelling)
That's horse shit!

Knox makes his way back to his truck.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Knox takes out his pocket Jim Beam and takes a fat swig.

The blood on his knuckles shine from the gleam of moonlight.

He chokes up and tries desperately to hold back a full breakdown as the pocket handle swings back and forth without a cap in his hand dangling over his steering wheel.

Knox rolls down his window and throws the pocket handle out before it's finished. He puts the truck in Drive and steers off.

EXT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - LATER

Knox strides down the hall and nearly arrives to the door before it opens.

It's Eddy, and no one else.

KNOX
Where's everyone?

EDDY
Meeting just ended. Practically
half the staff here.

KNOX
Yeah I guess at this point they
won't even bother to text. They're
cowards.

EDDY
I think they're just really
concerned that we won't get the
number one class. I mean I guess I
understand them. Doesn't look good
for them and morale is down.

KNOX
I know what they're doing.

EDDY
What? What're they doing? Because
I'd like to know.
(MORE)

EDDY (CONT'D)

We been practically hiding everything from them. We should've expected this.

KNOX

Look, they don't give a shit anymore? That's not my problem. They're as useless as the severance check they'll get from this backwards budget excuse of a school.

EDDY

The fuck are we supposed to do?

KNOX

Get one more shot.

Knox strides back down the hallway.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I'll uh. I'll see you tomorrow. 6 am.

(excited)

Last weekend!

Knox claps and turns back to smile.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Knox throws a couple recruiting outfits lazily into a gym bag as Tracy sits on the bed, checking her phone.

TRACY

You hear what Delilah said today when we went grocery shopping?

KNOX

How would I know that?

TRACY

(unfazed)

I dunno. Just thought she might've told you.

Sudden silence.

TRACY (CONT'D)

So today I talked to Veronica and did you know they stopped taking CJ to daycare?

KNOX

Hey, I'm... gonna take one last withdrawal from the college fund. And I'll pay it back in full. This is the last weekend. I'll talk to Kershaw about the budget for next season too.

TRACY

It's fine Knox I trust you.

KNOX

Alright. W-- thanks?

TRACY

Sure baby.

CUT TO:

LONG SHOT - KNOX AND EDDY CHECKING INTO THE HOTEL AT NIGHT

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Knox and Eddy settle in their respective sides of the room.

Eddy has his side desk light on, reading plays out of his portfolio on his bed.

KNOX

Hey Eddy. Can I ask you something?

Knox leans in to turn on his own night light.

Eddy stops what he's doing.

EDDY

Sure.

Eddy stations his portfolio down on the desk.

KNOX

Boone ever tell you what he does when he misses coaches' meetings?

Eddy shrugs.

EDDY

Not sure if it's any different from any of the other coaches.

KNOX

Yeah, but... He was the first to start the whole skipping parade.

Eddy tosses his hands up as if he gives up.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Could you do me a favor?

EDDY

(joking)

You want me to follow him and figure it out or something?

Eddy stops chuckling to himself and turns seriously to Knox.

EDDY (CONT'D)

He's young. He's still inexperienced. He doesn't know how to handle all this pressure of bad seasons, because he's only come from winning programs. Sure we need coaches to come in clutch and help us out in times of need, but like you said, at this point they're worthless.

Knox raises an eyebrow.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Plus, it doesn't help that all he wanted to do was come out and recruit with us. Connect with players more than just the college visits.

KNOX

How is that my fault? I've told all my coaches that you're the only one I trust on these trips.

EDDY

Don't fuckin' yell at me, Knox. I'm just as concerned as you are.

KNOX

Look, it was just an idea. Didn't mean to...

EDDY

Why are you so concerned?

KNOX

I dunno. Just want to keep things
in control, you know me.

Knox sighs and reaches down under the night stand desk to
excavate for his pocket handle of Jim Beam.

He offers it to Eddy.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Night cap?

EDDY

Have I ever said yes to it?

KNOX

Suit yourself.

Knox turns his light off, chugging the bottle.

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - DAY

Eddy and Knox get out of the truck and Eddy comes over to
Knox for their routine.

KNOX

Alright, quick gameplan for the
last one. This is it here.

EDDY

I got it. I know.

KNOX

Okay, remember, focus on the
academics, that's it. That's all
we're selling at this point. These
boys don't have to worry shit about
grades.

EDDY

Remind me again how you pulled this
off. Angela know about this?

KNOX

We had a little agreement. It's
just tutoring. That's all. Plus she
has the hate of a thousand suns for
Kershaw.

EDDY

You're incredible.

Eddy very lightly jabs Knox's shoulder with his fist.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Hey remember when we used to focus on the parents? Back in the day, I guess you could call it. When we'd practically rehearse what we'd say to them. "Oh, yes Ms. Johnson, a diploma, a steady curfew, and plenty of playing time. Our three virtues."

Knox and Eddy share a warmhearted chuckle. Knox looks sober for the first time in a while.

The door to the house opens and MS. DAVIS, 40s comes out, waving.

Knox and Eddy look at each other, smiling.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

They both walk up to the house and greet the mom warmly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rap music blares in the room as Eddy and Knox prance around slowly, jamming a little to the beat as they crank down a few beers that reside in their hands.

They cheers and grin from cheek to cheek.

EDDY

That was probably the easiest sell so far. Why didn't we try that from the beginning?

KNOX

Because I'm an idiot.

EDDY

(loud)

I didn't know Angela had the balls.

Knox matches Eddy in volume.

KNOX

I don't think she does have balls. But she sure does know how to negotiate!

They both bob their heads and then Eddy points his beer at Knox.

EDDY
You know what this calls for?

KNOX
Hm?

Eddy switches the song to country which blasts through the speaker. Eddy moves his body to the guitar strum as the song progresses.

EDDY
Heyy...

KNOX
Hell, you actually listen to this
shit?

EDDY
I'm from a small town in Texas with
less population than your back
hairs, bro.

Knox chuckles, shaking his head and rolling his eyes.

Knox feels a vibration and takes a swig from his beer before looking at his phone and opening up the text.

It's from Castle saying: "done".

EDDY (CONT'D)
Everything good?

KNOX
Yeah, just... Just Kershaw.

Knox replies back: "done?"

Castle texts back: "night coach"

Knox nervously tosses the phone back.

EDDY
You tell him to fuck right off
we're getting the number one class,
right?

KNOX
Yeah, I thought he... I dunno.
Probably just nothing.

Knox bobs his head to the rest of the country song, Eddy joining him. They cheers again, CLINK.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The trees are grey, lifeless. Knox clears his throat.

EDDY
You hungover at all?

Knox turns to him with a bored look. Knox's phone rings and he picks it up.

KNOX
Hey Angela. Yeah.

Knox jumps up in his seat quickly with a jolt.

KNOX (CONT'D)
What is it?

Knox's eyes dart back and forth as he brushes his hat up on his head to give himself some air.

KNOX (CONT'D)
No. You're. No. I...

Eddy glances over.

Knox turns away from Eddy. He pauses.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Let's talk when I get back. I don't
know what else to say right now.
Okay.

EDDY
What was that?

Knox lays his phone down between his legs.

KNOX
Kershaw's dead.

Knox, expressionless, stares back at Eddy who is surprisingly not as dumbfounded as one would presume.

KNOX (CONT'D)
(shock)
Multiple stab wounds to the back
and neck.

EDDY
Oh fuck.

KNOX
I...

EDDY
 Knox, it'll be okay. Did they say
 anything else? Like who killed him?

Knox interrupts what would be further questioning by Eddy with a quick haymaker to the dashboard.

He takes a few more jabs at it with a few grunts of expression mixed in as well. The huffing has transitioned into soft wails.

EDDY (CONT'D)
 Knox take it easy man. We'll figure
 this out. What is wrong with you?

KNOX
 He didn't have to die, Eddy.

EDDY
 What are you talking about?

KNOX
 (rhetorically)
 What's going on?

Eddy reaches out an arm to grab Knox and pat him.

EDDY
 Hey... at least we probably won't
 lose our jobs now.

Eddy forces a smile, hoping to cheer him up.

Knox stops wiping his face, peering at Eddy with intense confusion and disappointment.

KNOX
 What...?

Eddy responds with an upset look of his own. He doesn't answer but instead returns to the wheel.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE - DIXIE'S ROOM - LATER

Dixie lies on her side on top of her bed, face completely flustered as if she's been crying. Delilah plays with her hair to comfort her.

DELILAH
 Dix?

DIXIE
 Hmm?

DELILAH

You never asked me your question.

DIXIE

Oh right sorry.

A brief lull.

You ever have friends that don't protect you or have your back when you need them to?

DELILAH

Yeah, all the time. Macy thinks that when the other girls are laughing at us that it's no big deal. I don't think she understands bullying.

DIXIE

Wait, at school?

DELILAH

Sometimes. But even sleepovers too. She says we're outcasts, whatever that means. I think we should just step up to them.

DIXIE

Maybe being outcasts isn't such a bad thing, Li.

DELILAH

But why?

DIXIE

I don't know how to explain it. When you get older you'll start to understand that life isn't always about impressing other people.

They both remain silent for a brief moment, unfortunately broken by Dixie's cell phone ring.

DELILAH

It's dad.

DIXIE

Tell him I'm not here.

DELILAH

(answering)

Hey daddy.

(MORE)

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Yeah, Dixie's asleep she can't talk. Um.. No mom isn't home. Okay. Love you too. Bye.

Delilah hangs up.

DIXIE

Thanks.

DELILAH

Welcome.

Delilah hugs Dixie as they rest on her bed.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Knox's truck pulls up into Castle's driveway.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Knox, hat on, hoodie around him, pulls out his phone.

He texts Eddy: "Don't cancel the coaches' debrief tonight, we'll focus on remembering Kershaw and how to move on at this time."

Eddy responds: "Knox, are you fucking serious?"

Knox replies: "Dead"

He puts his phone away and gets out of the truck, marching up to the front door.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - SAME

Knox knocks on the door and after a couple seconds, Castle answers, smiling.

CASTLE

Hey, my man!

Knox grabs him by the shirt and pulls him into the house.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - SAME

CASTLE

What the hell, man? What's your deal?

Knox takes his hands off of him.

KNOX

What's my deal? What's my-- What the fuck were you thinking?

CASTLE

We're talkin about the A.D., right?

KNOX

No, old miss Myrtle across the street.

CASTLE

You told me to not take no for an answer. Get the job done by all means.

KNOX

(pointing)

That is not what I said. Nor what I meant.

CASTLE

Well whether you said it or meant it or whatever, I did what was needed.

Knox spits.

KNOX

He didn't need to die.

Beat.

CASTLE

You know after I beat the shit out of him and he was just layin' there on the ground, all he kept saying was 'finish me off.. I'll never quit'.

Knox gets in Castle's face.

KNOX

So you stabbed him?

Castle gets right back in Knox's face.

CASTLE

He wouldn't lay down.

(beat)

So I made him.

KNOX

You know you cost me my job? You
put everything in jeopardy.

(pause)

You fuckin' crackhead.

Castle punches Knox in the face, but not enough to take him down. Knox's body frame seemingly dwarfs Castle's.

Knox responds with a right hook, landing. Castle falls back but onto his couch.

He uses the bouncing leverage to charge and tackle Knox.

Knox, yells while they're tussling.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I thought I could trust you.

Castle gets a little more leverage while Knox uses his energy on speaking. He kicks Knox in the face and concusses him for a few seconds.

Castle reaches over to grab what's in his backpack and pulls out a gun.

Knox jumps over and tackles Castle, ramming him in his face with a few hearty punches.

The gun falls by the side of them.

Castle, delirious, reaches about, searching for the gun.

Knox grabs it instead, and stands up.

He cocks it and aims it at Castle execution style.

Castle knows at this point, there's nothing he can do, at least physically.

CASTLE

I should've never given you drugs.

Knox shakes the gun a little in his hand, nervously.

KNOX

Do you kill for sport or for fun?

CASTLE

(breathing heavy)

I honestly didn't mean to kill him.
One thing just led to another. It
was the wrong move and I'm--

BAM. BAM. Knox pulls the trigger, ending what could've been a lighter finish to a conversation.

Knox, trembling, searches about the room. He takes the gun with him and hides it under his hoodie, walking out of the house.

Castle lies there, blood gushing from his mouth, jaw, and neck.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING

Knox, looking fairly clean with only a scratch or two on his face stomps down the hall and into the coaches' meeting room.

INT. COACHES' MEETING ROOM - SAME

Eddy sits at the table with a few of the coaches. Most of them are there.

Eddy gets up.

EDDY

What is this about? What is there to discuss? Why can't we just go to the faculty meeting if it's about Kershaw?

Knox takes a good look around.

KNOX

(to himself)

Only a couple missing spots. Huh.

Knox turns to Eddy first, but faces back to the room.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I think you're right Eddy, we'll call it. I just wanted to check on my personnel, but... also say a few quick words. So how 'bout this--

RHYMES

--Hey Knox. I mean, we're all here. Might as well have the meeting.

KNOX

Dear Lord.

The few coaches glance at each other and presume a devout pose.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I know we all make mistakes in our lives. Some of us come to you in a time of need and some of us come to you in a time of forgiveness. Lord please forgive me for not making Kershaw's last days better ones with his earthly wishes. May his soul rest on your footsteps and may his family find your divine light through this challenging time. And... please shed that light upon our school as well. And our coaches. In your name.

The coaches half-heartedly respond with an "Amen."

KNOX (CONT'D)

Amen.

(pause)

Um. Alright, well. Sorry about the last minute ordeal. You're free to go. See y'all at the faculty meeting.

KNOX (CONT'D)

No I think I just made a mistake. You're free to go. Sorry about that.

Knox turns to walk out of the room. The coaches look at each other in utter confusion.

Eddy closes his eyes for a brief few seconds and tilts his head up.

He opens his eyes as if he's figured something out.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Knox's truck pulls up across the street and gets out. His hoodie fully zipped up as he approaches the front door with his gym bag.

He takes a swig of Jim Beam, observing the edge of the door and windows to see what's going on inside the house.

Loud, passionate country music echoes through the house and bleeds a little through the front door. Knox shakes his head and kicks in/body rams the door which takes a few attempts.

He slowly treks in, and surprisingly enough isn't immediately greeted by anyone.

Before he can get more than a couple steps through he hears, "What's going on? Hello?"

Knox turns the corner into the next hallway, the country music still playing, but lowered.

He sees Coach Boone in nothing but his underwear, weilding a shotgun, and a door half open behind him with no lights on and the music now silenced.

BOONE

Knox? Coach? Did you just break my
fucking door in?

Knox ignores him. He struts passed Boone and into the room where the music emits it's tune.

Knox turns on the light and sees Tracy under the blankets, terrified.

TRACY

Knox, I can explain this. Please
don't do anything and just...
listen.

Knox turns around and sees Boone who keeps his shotgun up after lowering it a little.

BOONE

Hey don't touch her. This isn't her
fault.

Knox chuckles nervously before waltzing back into the hallway where he originally came in.

BOONE (CONT'D)

We can talk this through. It's a
lot better option than breaking my
door down.

Knox, angry, unzips his gym bag and digs into it, reaching for his GUN.

BOONE (CONT'D)

Knox?

Knox holds the gun, massaging it for a moment with his fingers inside the bag, not revealing it quite yet.

Tracy steps out behind Boone, still shocked.

TRACY

Knox, can we just.. Please.

Knox stares only at the gun, letting go of it finally and zips up his bag.

BOONE
What's in the bag?

KNOX
Nothing.
(calmly)
Put the gun down, Boone. It's not
necessary anymore.

Knox surveys Tracy for a hard second, espying back at Coach Boone.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I'm leaving.

BOONE
You better fix my fuckin' door
Knox.

Knox turns around.

KNOX
Really, son? What're you gonna do?
Shoot me? Might be more worth your
while to just call the police.

Knox walks up to the door, barely on hinge still, and opens it wide, staring back at Boone.

BOONE
Don't you dare slam that door,
Knox.

Boone steadies his shotgun.

TRACY
Ted, put the fucking gun down,
already, he's leaving.

Knox smiles.

Boone grits his teeth.

Knox's smile turns into a frown of disgust.

Stalemate.

KNOX
That's coach.

Slam.

BOOM!

The deep burst of shotgun shell protrudes through the door, which swings open from the pressure. Knox collapses to the ground. His feet still in the door way.

We focus for a brief moment in on Boone's face - expressionless, the gun now completely lowered to his side. The room's sound is exactly what Boone hears - nothing.

Tracy cries out at Boone who can't hear her. She collapses to the ground, not knowing what to do.

Now, we finally see Knox, but from Boone and Tracy's perspective, far away. He's on his side now, almost completely still.

A heart monitor sound fills the noiseless air, which...

FADES TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

MUSIC spits out into the dead air, practically inaudible, from a dated radio device.

Knox lies on his bed with tubes around his body and stitching around his side. He blinks, waking up. The heart monitor echoes amongst the silence.

Next to him sits Eddy who is still in his standard coaching attire. He smiles as Knox wakes and turns to him.

EDDY

Howdy.

KNOX

I had a dream you'd be here.

(beat)

Am I still in that dream? Because this sure doesn't look like Heaven.

EDDY

(light chuckle)

No it's not a dream. You're alive. And awake.

KNOX

What day is it?

EDDY

Wednesday I think.

KNOX
You know what I mean.

EDDY
I know...

KNOX
So tell me.

EDDY
I think you might want this before
you find out.

Eddy pulls out a pocket Jim Beam.

EDDY (CONT'D)
(smiling)
I snuck it in for you.

Knox lets out a dry, noiseless laugh.

KNOX
Thanks, but what for?

EDDY
Do you ever need a reason?

KNOX
That bad?

Eddy is devoid of emotion.

Knox looks at Eddy for a couple seconds, peering his way up to the ceiling.

He reaches over to grab the pocket handle from Eddy and Eddy returns it to him.

After giving it a brief eyelock, Knox reaches under the hospital bed and disposes of the Jim Beam in the musty, yellow trash can.

Tears form steadily in Knox's eyes.

Knox reaches over and changes the channel of the radio and turns up the volume. Voices bludgeon the space.

RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)
Q 103 FM, caller on the line. H-
yello.

CALLER (V.O.)
Howdy.

RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)

How's it going? So are you for or
against Knox Chamberlain turning
himself into school administrators
even though he just provided this
program the best recruiting class
it's ever seen?

CALLER (V.O.)

Who's gonna say it at this point? I
mean, talk about a legendary season
gone wrong before it even starts--

Smack.

MUSIC violently cuts back in.

CUT TO BLACK.