

THE COACH OF LITTLE TRINITY

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT OUTSIDE OF CHURCH RECTORY - DAY

We see something orange spinning around. It's a basketball. YOUNG BOYS are playing basketball on an outside cement court. We hear the familiar sound of a basketball DRIBBLING. It flies through the air toward the basket and makes a CLUNK sound as it hits the net-less metal rim.

We notice the MONSIGNOR standing at a window of a large old house behind the basketball court. He is watching the boys play.

The BOYS are dressed in 1940's worn-out clothing. They are children of the Great Depression. They LAUGH as they play their game.

INT. MONSIGNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

There is a KNOCK at the door. The priest turns away from the window.

MONSIGNOR

Come in.

The door opens and FATHER SHAD enters. He is clumsy and a very ordinary looking man but has a great smile and attitude.

SHAD

You wanted to see me, Monsignor?

The Monsignor points at an over-stuffed chair sitting in front of his desk.

MONSIGNOR

Have a seat, Father. This is not going to be a pleasant. I'm afraid we are going to have to give up the high school basketball program. We don't have the money to pay for a coach.

SHAD

(Excited)

But Monsignor! I can coach the boys. It will be fun. You'll see.

MONSIGNOR

Father, you are as athletic as a pig in overshoes.

Shad puts his hands on the desk and looks the Monsignor in the eye.

SHAD

(Pleading)

Well that may be Monsignor, but we can't give up basketball. It's...it's...well it's un-Catholic not to have a basketball team.

Shad stands tall and walks around the room. He is trying to come up with an on the spot solution. He is anxious and agitated. He turns and points his finger to the heavens.

SHAD

(Very Animated)

Win. Lose. Who cares? It's about teaching values and sportsmanship. It's about trying. It's about competition and teamwork. The boys must have basketball. For God sake Monsignor, if we don't have basketball, the boys will go to public school!

The Monsignor is not moved and points at the chair.

MONSIGNOR

(Sternly)

Sit. It's about the budget. We don't have enough money to pay a coach. It's simple. No coach. No basketball.

Shad is deep in thought and ignores the chair. He walks toward the window and looks out. He watches the boys play. He turns and looks at the Monsignor.

SHAD

(Thoughtful)

We would have the money if we won more games. Now hear me out, Monsignor.

Shad turns and looks at the Monsignor.

SHAD

(Forceful)

If we won, more people would come to watch the games. That would mean more ticket sales and that would mean more money.

So let's face it. It's about embarrassment isn't it? Are you worried about getting ribbed if we lost all of our games if I coached? Is that why you want to quit?

MONSIGNOR

(Gruff)

No, of course not! I don't listen to those voices. We just don't have the money.

SHAD

Well then perhaps we should listen to other voices--the voice of faith we teach others to listen to and promise that an answer will come if you believe.

The Monsignor stands and put his fists on this desk and goes nose-to-nose with Shad.

MONSIGNOR

(Forceful)

Then listen carefully, Father. You can have your basketball team if you find me a good coach who will work for nothing. Otherwise, the program goes. You have until Sunday Mass when I will make the announcement.

Shad claps his hands with joy and almost skips out of the Monsignor's office. He turns as he opens the door.

SHAD

(Excited)

You just watch, Monsignor. A miracle is going to happen right here in Hartington, Nebraska. I promise!

EXT. KEN MILLER'S HOUSE - DAY

We see a two story white house with mature trees, a well kept lawn, a white picket fence, and flowers and bushes.

There are signs of small boys in the yard. A tricycle. A small football. A SCOTTISH TERRIER dog looks out the window while she sits on top of the couch behind the picture windows in the living room.

BUN (OC)

All right you birds, breakfast is almost ready so get on down here!

INT. MILLER KITCHEN - DAY

BUN is making pancakes. There are four plates. She has put four pancakes on one plate, two on the next plate, one on the third plate, and is cutting up a little pancake on the last plate. Bun spots the dog on top of the couch.

BUN

(LOUD AND STERN)

Penny! Get off of my good couch this instant. I have bridge club this week and I won't be having any dog hair on my good things.

There is sound of a boy RUNNING down the steps. Bun turns to see JOHNNY running into the kitchen.

BUN

Now just a minute, buster. You give your mother a good morning hug.

Johnny grabs Bun by the knees and hugs her. The dog BARKS and dashes between Bun's legs to chase Johnny.

BUN

(Angry)

Oh for the land sake will this dog ever get out from under foot!

Bun turns to find her her husband COACH KEN holding their INFANT SON up in front of her face. The boy is SQUEALING and LAUGHING.

BUN

(Smiling)

Well aren't you Mr. Happy today.

COACH KEN

Good morning. He's changed.

Bun takes the youngster and puts him in the high chair. The infant tosses pancake pieces at the dog who runs between her legs to get them.

Bun throws up her hands in frustration.

BUN

That's enough dog! Out!

Bun herds the dog to the back door and opens it. The dog runs out and tries to catch a squirrel. Bun closes the door and turns toward the table. Johnny is about to take his first bite.

BUN

(Stern)

Just a minute buster. Haven't we forgotten something?

Johnny looks surprised and shrugs his shoulders. Bun pulls her chair back, sits down, and folds her hands and bows her head and stares over her glasses at Johnny.

JOHNNY

Oh. Pray. Um. Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

BUN

(Smiling)

Very good job. Now we can eat.

EXT. FORD GARAGE - DAY

We see a man's hand stick a key into the lock on the blue wooden door and open it. The floor to ceiling glass windows SHUDDER as the door opens and closes behind him. The lights come on in the small two car showroom where a Ford sedan and a Ford pickup truck sit. Coach Ken walks toward the counter that separates the showroom from the parts department and turns on more lights.

The front door opens. Ken's brother DUANE walks in.

COACH KEN

Morning. You're early.

Even though they are brothers, Duane is a much different man than Coach Ken. Duane is a money man and is not the most

pleasant person. He is a gruff, direct and in-your-face type of person.

DUANE
(Forceful)
Did you sell this pickup?

COACH KEN
They want us to come down another \$50. I think we should let it go.

DUANE
We need to get the bank off our back. Offer \$25.

Coach Ken nods his head and walks out of the parts area and into the service area. There are buckets collecting rain water from roof leaks from rain the day before. He dumps some of the buckets and repositions them so they catch the drips before they get the work bench and tools wet.

The MECHANICS arrive and take up their work areas. Coach Ken OPENS the big doors as the small town come to life. Ford cars from the late 1930's and early 1940's arrive for service work.

Coach Ken walks back to the showroom and toward the front door. He turns and speaks to his brother as he walks out.

COACH KEN
I am going to the coffee shop.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Coach Ken walks out the front door and walks toward the Hotel Coffee Shop. The small town is bustling with activity. He waves at various car. Drivers HONK at him and wave back.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE RECTORY - DAY

Father Shad walks out of the Rectory and onto the porch. He stops and looks at the bright blue sky and takes a deep breathe of the morning air. He puts on his wide-brimmed black priest hat and walks down the steps. The screen door opens behind him and MRS. SHOEMAKER follows him onto the porch.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
(Loud and excited)
Father, take your umbrella. It's going to rain!

Shad turns to see Mrs. Shoemaker holding out his umbrella.

SHAD

It's a beautiful day Mrs.
Shoemaker. I won't be needing
that.

She shakes the umbrella at him.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Sternly)

It's going to rain, Father. I can
feel it in my elbow. Take this
umbrella.

SHAD

It's not going to rain. It's
beautiful outside. And if it does
rain, I will find a parishioner
with a car to give me a ride home.

Shad smiles, turns, and gently waves his hand in the air as if he was shooing an annoying fly.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

Well don't be late for lunch. Mrs.
Kathol brought us a nice chicken
and some sweet corn.

Shad walks down the hill toward the main street of town. A pickup SCREECHES to a stop and HONKS the horn. Shad jumps out of the way.

TEGAN KUCHTA is driving the truck. He rolls down the window and crosses his forearms on the window opening and grins.

TEGAN

Hi Father! Have you decided when
basketball practice is going to
start?

Shad looks sternly at Tegan and waves his index finger at him.

SHAD

(Admonishing)

Tegan Kuchta, you scared me half
to death. And no, I don't know when
basketball practice is going to
start. Perhaps I will know more
later in the week. Are you
planning to play?

TEGAN

Father, you know you wouldn't have
much of a team without me.

SHAD

That good, huh.

Tegan smiles, GUNS the motor, and GRINDS the truck into
gear.

TEGAN

(Cocky and smiling)

Better than that, Father. Want a
ride downtown?

SHAD

(Coughing)

No thanks. I am going to enjoy
God's great morning.

TEGAN

It's going to rain, Father. I can
feel it in my elbow.

White engine smoke from the old truck covers Shad. Shad
smiles and waves as the truck drives off. There is a loud
CLAP of thunder. Shad loos up and quickens his pace.

INT. HOTEL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

We hear heavy RAIN and see the front windows from inside of
the coffee shop. DOUG stands behind the counter dressed in
white with a long apron and a white cook's hat on his head.
The place is loud and full of cigarette smoke. Coach Ken
dashes through the door and takes a seat at front counter.

DOUG

(Smiling)

A little mud for my wet friend Mr.
Miller?

Doug slides a white cup and saucer and a napkin with a spoon
on it in front of Coach Ken.

COACH KEN

I just missed getting drenched and
a cup of your finest mud would hit
the spot.

Doug turns and takes the coffee pot off the burner and pours
the coffee.

DOUG

Nice rain yesterday and with this shower, maybe pocketbooks will loosen up a little.

COACH KEN

Well this is a tough year on the farm. I hope the rain helps out. It's pretty late in the growing season to do much good.

DOUG

(Laughs)

When it comes to farming, it's always to early or to late.

We see Shad dash up to the door. He fumbles with the handle and finally opens the door. Shad is drenched as he stands in the doorway letting some of the water run off of him onto the rug. Shad takes a seat at the counter next to Coach Ken.

COACH KEN

(Chuckling)

Father you're a little damp. Don't you have an umbrella or something?

SHAD

(Thoughtful)

Actually, my Sunday homily was going to be about Noah and I needed a little practical experience.

Shad puts his hand on Coach Ken's shoulder.

SHAD

(Comforting)

By the way, I was so saddened to learn of your father's passing last week. How are you getting along? Quite sudden wasn't it?

COACH KEN

Thank you. Yes, it was very sudden. Heart we think but we'll never know for sure. My brother and I will continue running the business. You should buy a new car so you won't end up getting so wet.

SHAD

Well as you know, we take a vow or
poverty, but if you take a good
low mileage horse in on trade,
give me a call.

Shad pulls out a small change purse and opens it. It has two dimes in it. Shad takes one out and puts it on the counter and raises a finger toward Doug who brings him a coffee service and pours him a cup of coffee.

DOUG

(Teasing)

Father, you should get an
umbrella. I knew it was going to
rain. I could feel it in my elbow.

Everyone LAUGHS. Shad gets a thoughtful look on his face. He turns his attention back to Coach Ken.

SHAD

You played some college
basketball, didn't you?

COACH KEN

Well you might say that. I had a
scholarship to play at Creighton
but with times being what they
are, my dad wanted me to come home
and help out.

SHAD

But, you were really quite a good
basketball player, right?

1ST. FAN is on his way out of the cafe and overhears the comment. He is a very outgoing and loud guy. He puts his head between Coach Ken and Shad.

1ST FAN

(Animated)

Good? Hell Father, he didn't need
the other four guys to beat ya. He
is the best player this town has
every produced. Hell, I would
still pay to watch him play.

1st. Fan pats Coach Ken on the shoulder and continues toward the door but stops and turns back.

1ST FAN
 (Apologetic)
 Sorry about my damn cussin'
 Father. I get excited sometimes.

1st. Fan dashes out the door and into the rain.

SHAD
 (Laughing)
 He's quite the guy, isn't he.
 Always so quiet in church but like
 an unleashed volcano when he
 leaves.

COACH KEN
 And just a bit exaggerated in his
 sports evaluation, Father.

SHAD
 (Serious)
 Not in this case. I think he
 understated things a little better
 than most and that's really why I
 am here. I really need your help.

Coach Ken puts down his coffee and notices Shad is very serious.

COACH KEN
 What kind of help, Father?

Shad looks around to make sure nobody is listening.

SHAD
 (Very serious)
 I need a great basketball coach.
 And frankly, I need you.

COACH KEN
 You want me to coach basketball at
 Trinity? Father, I am not Catholic
 and we have to plans to convert.

SHAD
 You are a good man with a great
 gift. The Monsignor is going to
 eliminate basketball because we
 can't afford a coach. There is
 only one man in this town who can
 help us. You.

COACH KEN

You want me to coach your
basketball team for free?

SHAD

Well not totally free, I will put
out the word to drop a chicken and
some produce by your house from
time to time.

COACH KEN

(Rubs his chin)

Well I will have to give this some
serious thought and talk to my
wife, of course. My brother won't
be too excited, I know that for
sure.

SHAD

(Twinkle in his
eye)

Ok, tell you what. How about a
hog? A butchered and cut up hog.
And they'll store it for you over
at the meat market. And I'll buy
the horse from your brother. Deal?

COACH KEN

(Very serious)

No, that's not it. You know how
religion is in this town and how
people can be sometimes.

SHAD

(Confident)

Religion didn't bring me here in
this rain. The Good Lord did.
Please think about it. This would
be good for all of us.

Shad stands and shakes Coach Ken's hand and pats him on the
shoulder.

SHAD

(Confident)

Think about it, please. Come up to
my office this afternoon if you
have time and we'll talk more.

Shad looks through the wet windows. The rain has ended. The
sun is out. He smiles, puts on his wet hat, and leaves the
cafe.

INT. MILLER HOME - DAY

We hear the FIRE SIREN going off to mark noon. The back door of the Miller home opens and Coach Ken comes through it. He enters the kitchen where Bun is frying a chicken for lunch. The infant is in his high chair eating some soft cooked peas.

BUN

(Loud)

Daddy's home. You birds get washed up and get over to this table.

We hear SCRAMBLING noise and the sound of WATER running (OC) for just a second or two just before Johnny runs into the room. He slides across the floor in his socks up to his mother and hold up his hands so she can inspect them. She looks.

BUN

OK, get situated.

Johnny dashes to his seat. Coach Ken walks over to his wife and hold up his hands. Johnny GIGGLES. Bun looks over the top of her glasses at him.

BUN

OK, you get situated, too. Dish up these potatos, please.

Bun hands Coach Ken a bowl of mashed potatoes. He puts some on each plate. Then he pour some gravy on the potatoes. She put the chicken pieces on a plate and places it on the table. Johnny grabs for a leg. Bun stops his hand in mid air.

BUN

(Forceful)

Not yet, buster. We have Grace to say and you are saying it. Now let's fold our hands and be grateful.

The family folds their hands and bow their heads as Johnny says Grace.

JOHNNY

Come Lord Jesus be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

BUN

Very good

Johnny makes another grab for the leg and gets it. He holds it up proudly.

Bun looks at Coach Ken.

BUN

So how is your day going?

COACH KEN

Good if you want a free hog.

BUN

(Suprised)

A hog! We don't have any place for a hog!

COACH KEN

(Laughs)

No, it will be cut up and stored at the meat market.

BUN

Did the meat market buy a new truck or something?

Coach Ken puts his fork on his plate and pushes back a from the table. He looks at Bun.

COACH KEN

(Seriously)

Not exactly. It's a down payment for coaching.

BUN

(Curious)

Coaching what?

COACH KEN

They asked me to be the high school basketball coach.

BUN

(Curious)

Jefferson High needs a coach? What happened to Coach Johnson?

COACH KEN

Nothing. Father Shad has asked me to coach at Holy Trinity.

Bun waves her hand in the air as if she is choking on food.

BUN
(Forceful)
You can't do that. We're not
Catholic. We're Luthern.

COACH KEN
(Argumentative)
And before Luthern, I was a
Congregationalist. But they don't
care about all of that. They want
me to coach basketball, not teach
religion.

Bun says nothing for a few seconds. She looks distant.

BUN
(Troubled)
Oh, I don't know about this. What
will our friends say? What will
the family say. I don't know about
this at all.

COACH KEN
Well Father Shad said the
Monsignor will eliminate
basketball because they can't
afford a coach. He believes I am
their only hope.

BUN
Do you want to coach those kids?

Coach Ken takes Bun's hand. Johnny stops eating and looks at
his dad. There is silence in the house.

COACH KEN
(Softly)
You know how much I love
basketball. You know how much I
wanted to coach basketball. I
didn't get the chance.

Well, there are boys, right here
in this town, who won't get the
chance to play basketball because
of the times. That would be wrong
if I stood back and let that
happen when I could help out.

Bun looks at him and says nothing for a few more seconds.
Johnny senses the importance of the moment. He looks back
and forth between his mother and father waiting for
something to happen.

BUN
 (Softly)
 Then do it.

EXT. RECTORY PORCH - DAY

We see a hand forming a fist about to knock on the door. The gesture is very tentative for a minute and then finally, a sharp KNOCK or two. The door soon opens and Mrs. Shoemaker is there.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
 (Very Pleasant)
 Oh, Mr. Miller is it? How are you?
 Come in, please!

She is wiping her hands on a kitchen towel.

COACH KEN
 Hello, Mrs. Shoemaker. Is Father
 Shad here?

She puts her index finger to her lip and thinks for a second.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
 (Thoughtful)
 Let me think. Oh yes! He's in the
 sanctuary.

She comes out on the porch and looks toward the Church next door.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
 Just go over there and I am sure
 you will find him.

COACH KEN
 (Politely)
 Thank you.

Coach Ken walks down the steps and down the walk. He stops to notice boys playing basketball on the cement court next to the rectory. He watches for a couple of second and looks down. He looks back up and smiles and he turns and walks toward the church doors. He opens the door and walks in. Shad is walking down the main aisle. Shad smiles and claps his hands.

SHAD
 (Excited)
 Wonderful! You have made your
 decision. Let's talk in my
 (MORE)

SHAD (cont'd)
office.

Shad turns and motions for Coach Ken to follow him into the confessional.

COACH KEN
(Surprised)
Father, that's the confessional,
isn't it?

SHAD
(Smiling)
Only for Catholics. We can visit
in private in there.

Mrs. Shoemaker enters the Church just as Coach Ken and Shad enter the confessional. She is stunned and then smiles and darts out of the door. We see her scurry back to the Rectory and open the door. She runs to a corner phone stand and picks up the phone.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
(Very Excited)
Clara, get me Florence
Klindschmidt please.

INT. PHONE COMPANY OFFICE - DAY

We see CLARA, a matronly lady, in front of an old telephone exchange board. She pulls up a connection line, inserts it, and pushes a button. A lady (OC) answers. Clara listens in.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
(Excited and
whispering)
Florence, this is Bessy. You will
never guess what I just saw.
Father is taking confession from
that nice Mr. Miller, the Ford
dealer!

Clara looks around to make sure no one is watching her or listening to her. We can hear GARBLED CONVERSATION coming from the phone.

MRS. SHOEMAKER
No, he's not Catholic. I think he
is one of those Methodists or
something but perhaps he is
converting. Wouldn't that be
wonderful!

We see Clara reacting to what she hears. Clara stops listening to that conversation and starts making calls to her friends. The rumor spread all over town.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

SHAD steps into the pulpit in his Sunday vestments.

SHAD

I was thinking about doing my homily about Noah's Ark today. In fact, I was thinking about it last Tuesday when I got drenched in that wonderful morning thunderstorm. Praise be to God for the beautiful rain.

The congregation LAUGHS and APPLAUDS.

SHAD

And praise be to God for Noah. Was Noah Catholic? Only Noah's mother will know for sure.

The congregation LAUGHS again.

SHAD

But, without Noah, we all would have drowned.

Good people, we are drowning again. The times are tough and I know you are doing your absolute best to keep the parish going.

Thank you for the chicken and sweet corn. And, I know you are stretched to the limit.

We have had to look at ways to bring our needs within our means and it appeared that we might have to eliminate our basketball program. We just couldn't afford a coach.

A muffled GRUMBLING comes from the congregation. We see some of the teen boys looking at each other in disbelief.

SHAD

Tough times often test the souls of men and these times are testing us...and the soul of a very

(MORE)

SHAD (cont'd)

special man. He's not a Catholic man. He has not only answered our call for help, but a call of his own.

There will be basketball at Holy Trinity this year because our new coach has offered to coach for free. He is with us today with his family.

Please welcome our new basketball coach, Ken Miller.

Shad motions for Coach Ken and his family, seated in the front row, to stand. APPLAUSE starts slowly from a few boys and then becomes THUNDEROUS.

The teen boy throw their hands up in a victory sign above their heads.

INT. FIRST PRACTICE - DAY

We see seven teenage boys sitting on the bench in the city auditorium. They are all wearing white t-shirts and white gym shorts and new tennis shoes except for FLEMING who has his farm work boots on. Coach Ken stands in front of them.

Coach Ken looks at the boy's work boots.

COACH KEN

What's your name son?

FLEMING

(Shy)

Fleming, Sir.

COACH KEN

Just call me Coach. So, you haven't had time to get some shoes?

Fleming looks down at the floor then back up at Coach Ken.

FLEMING

(Embarrassed)

I can't afford shoes, Coach. My family doesn't have any extra money. My dad doesn't really want me to play basketball.

Dad says I have more important

(MORE)

FLEMING (cont'd)
things to do. But, I want to play.
I will do my chores when I get
home.

Coach Ken looks at the boy for a second and then sits down next to him on the bench and takes off his shoes.

COACH KEN
Well, for now, we don't need shoes. You go down to the store tomorrow and tell them to give you some shoes and put them on my account. You can help me clean up the place after practice for payment. OK?

Fleming smiles and nods his head yes. The other boys look at each other and take off their shoes. Coach Ken notices and smiles.

COACH KEN
That's lesson one. It's called teamwork. Basketball isn't about you. It's about all of us. Now for lesson number two. Conditioning. Ten laps around the court. Got it?

We see the boys running around the basketball court and because they are all in socks, they are sliding all over the place. The boys are LAUGHING and hamming it up.

Coach Ken places a series of folding chairs down the center of the court about six feet apart. After the ten laps, the boys gather around him, some bend over and put their hands on their knees as they try to catch their breath.

Coach Ken opens the ball bag and the school's four basketballs fall out. Some of the boys grab the balls and start to dribble them. Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
No shooting yet. We are going to work on fundamentals.

HOESING raises his hand. Coach Ken points at him.

HOESING
(Curious)
What do you mean, fundamentals, Coach?

COACH KEN

That's a good question. By fundamentals, I mean basic skills like ball handling and dribbling and passing.

Plus, we will learn strategy. Basketball is a game of strategy.

Tegan raises his hand.

TEGAN

Whol, what do you mean by strategy?

COACH KEN

OK, Tegan, who is Dwight Eisenhower?

TEGAN

Whol, he was um like the top general during the war.

The boys SNICKER and the coach smiles.

COACH KEN

That's right. He was. Now what was his job?

TEGAN

Whol, he decided what the army did.

COACH KEN

That's right, he decided strategy. Basketball is a game of strategy. Each player is like an army and we look for opportunity when we play the game. We look for mismatches and weakness, just like Eisenhower did.

Instantly, Coach Ken passes the ball to Fleming who is off to his right. Fleming didn't expect the pass but caught it. He has a surprised look on his face.

COACH KEN

Sometimes, Eisenhower used General Patton, just like I used Fleming just now.

Coach Ken walks over to Fleming and takes the ball from him and just as suddenly, he bounce passes the ball past a slow reacting Tegan to Hoelsing who is standing behind Tegan.

COACH KEN

And sometimes, Eisenhower used General Bradley to get the job done.

In other words, Eisenhower was a manager. That's what our guards do. They are managers of our attack and it is their job to get the ball to our other generals who have the best chance to attack and score. Understand?

Coach Ken takes a ball and walks to the end of the chairs.

COACH KEN

But, before Eisenhower was a general, he was a private and he did basic training. These chairs are basic training for you guys.

What I want you to do is dribble the ball on one side of the chair and cross over to the other side of the next chair. Go all the way to the end dribbling with your right hand and then come back doing the same thing with your left hand. When you come back to this end, pass the ball to the next guy in line. Got it?

The boys look at each other and shake their heads yes.

COACH KEN

Ok, Tegan. You start. Go.

Coach Ken passes the ball to Tegan who starts the drill but his feet slide out from under him because of socks sliding on the floor.

Tegan falls down. He is angry. He rips his socks off and stands up and continues the drill. Coach Ken takes off his socks. The boys notice and do the same. By the time Tegan completes the drill, the next boy is sockless and ready.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - DAY

We see two table of ladies playing bridge. The conversation at one of the tables is about Coach Ken's new job.

BRIDGE PLAYER 1

So how did all of this come about, Bun?

Bun arranges her newly dealt bridge hand.

BUN

Two hearts. Well the young priest came to Ken and asked for help and Ken wanted to do it.

BRIDGE PLAYER 1

Just like that? They must be in real trouble up there.

BUN

Oh girl, we are all in real trouble. These are tough times.

BRIDGE PLAYER 2

Three diamonds. So, you are converting to Catholicism? It's all over town that you did.

Bun looks over her glasses at her partner.

BUN

(Frustrated)

Oh for heaven's sake! Where did you hear that?

This isn't about a new Catholic recruit. This is about a poor parish needing a basketball coach and a good one is available. It's a good lesson for all of us. Help thy neighbor. Pass.

BRIDGE PLAYER 2

Well Betsy Mitchell told me that she heard Gloria Taylor telling Francis down at Fornash Grocery that someone saw Ken confessing to that young priest.

BUN

Well girl, you've got it I think. Pass. And no, Ken hasn't confessed to anyone. Well, maybe me. He had

(MORE)

BUN (cont'd)
 a private chat with the priest in
 there and it is obvious why one
 needs a private place in this
 town.

BRIDGE PLAYER 1
 Pass. Well it will be fun to see
 what happens. Who knows, maybe
 Trinity will play Jefferson in the
 County Tournament.

Bun arranges her dummy hand and gets up from the table to
 pour coffee.

BUN
 Oh dear God spare us from that!

Bun pauses with the coffee pot.

BUN
 I just hope they play well and
 it's a good experience for Ken. It
 broke his heart to have to leave
 college and not get the chance to
 coach. He spirit is just glowing
 over this.

BRIDGE PLAYER 1
 He'll do a wonderful job. I just
 wish my Jay was older so he could
 learn and play for him.

BRIDGE PLAYER 2
 (Questioning)
 And how will Mother Miller take
 this? You know how Ken adores her.

Bun continues to pay attention to her guests. She stops and
 puts the coffee pot down on a small table and puts her hand
 on Bridge Player 2's shoulder.

BUN
 (Thoughtful)
 Let's just say there will be a lot
 of cobs hitting the side of the
 barn.

The room fills with LAUGHTER.

EXT. MOTHER MILLER'S HOUSE - DAY

We see a new car drive into the long driveway of stately large wooden house with beautiful grounds. Coach Ken sets the brake and gets out of the car and walks across the grass to the steps leading to the back door. He opens the door and enters without knocking.

COACH KEN

(Loud)

Hello? Mother?

Coach Ken walks through the kitchen to the living room. He can hear someone coming down the steps from the upper floor. MOTHER MILLER enters the room.

COACH KEN

(Apologetic)

Oh. I'm sorry. Mom. Did I wake you?

She reaches the last step and Coach Ken steps up to give her a kiss on the cheek. He shows great respect for her.

MOTHER MILLER

Well if it isn't my new Catholic son coming to call. How are you?

COACH KEN

(Questioning)

Catholic son? Where did you come up with that?

Mother Miller takes his arm and makes her way to the chairs in the living room and sits down.

MOTHER MILLER

(Concerned)

It's all over town, you know. You were seen in the Catholic Church giving confession or something.

Coach Ken sits down slowly. He is surprised by the comment.

COACH KEN

That's just a bunch of gossip. I did not covert. I was just meeting with Father Shad, that's all.

MOTHER MILLER

Why? Is he buying a car?

Coach Ken is nervous about telling his mother about his decision to coach the team. He is not sure whether Mother Miller will approve and he would like her approval. She is the leader of the family and is well aware of his lost dream of becoming a coach. Coach Ken stands up and looks out the bay window.

COACH KEN

He wants me to coach the Holy Trinity basketball team. They can't afford a coach and I told him I would.

MOTHER MILLER

(Mildly upset)

You are going to coach a bunch of Catholic kids? And just how do you think you will make a living for your family being a free coach?

Coach Ken looks back at her. He can tell she is not pleased about his decision.

COACH KEN

I will be coaching a bunch of Catholic kids after the garage is closed at night.

MOTHER MILLER

(Snidely)

And that wife of yours has approved? How about Duane?

Coach Ken turns and looks at her. He is offended.

COACH KEN

Why don't you like her? I love her dearly and she is a great mother. Lots of people in this town love her, both Protestant and Catholic. As far as Duane goes, if we make money, he's happy. He could care less about my coaching dream.

MOTHER MILLER

(Condescending)

Well she is your choice, not mine, so I will stay out of it. And as long as you help Duane, I will stay out of that, too.

Your father would not be happy about this. He knew what people think in this town and how to keep

(MORE)

MOTHER MILLER (cont'd)
religion out of it. You are going
to make it tough for us to sell
cars by doing this.

Mother Miller stands and walks toward the kitchen. She pours
water into the pot to make some tea.

MOTHER MILLER
Would you like some tea?

We see the door shut. Coach Ken is gone.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT IN AUDITORIUM - DAY

The boys are winded from running their 10 laps. Coach Ken
blows his WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
OK, guys. Lets line up in a
straight line facing me. Be about
two feet apart.

Coach Ken has a basketball under his left arm and BOUNCES it
a couple of times. The boys get in a line.

ZIM jostles for the first position in line.

COACH KEN
Now I am going to pass the ball to
Zim on the left end of the line
and he is going to pass it back to
me.

Then I will pass it to Tegan and
he will pass it back to me. We
will go all the way down the line
and then repeat until I make an
error, which probably won't
happen.

In the remote chance it does, we
will rotate around and Zim comes
over here. Got it?

The boys grin and LAUGH at Coach Ken's explanation.

COACH KEN
Ready. Go!

Coach Ken passes the ball to Zim who passes it back. Coach
Ken passes to Tegan who passes it back. As they continue the

drill, the auditorium door opens.

WINK comes in and climbs up a few rows in the bleachers and sits down. Wink watches intently. Fleming, the last player in the line looks at Wink and takes his attention off the pass drill just as Coach Ken passes the ball to him. The ball hits Fleming in the face.

COACH KEN
(Concerned)
Fleming. You OK?

FLEMING
Um yeah. I'm OK. Sorry.

COACH KEN
OK. Zim, you come out here and take my spot. You can keep the spot until you make a bad pass or you don't catch the pass to you.

Remember, get into your player position...low center of gravity; feet about shoulder length apart; hands in front of your chest with your elbows bent slightly. In this position, you can move quickly and you can catch the ball better. Got it?

Zim comes out of the line and takes the ball. He BOUNCES it a couple of times and then looks at Wink in the bleachers. The other boys notice, too.

Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE and the drill begins.

COACH KEN
Put some zip on it Zim. They'll pick you off if you don't.

Coach Ken watches the drill until Zim flubs a pass. Coach Ken points at Tegan to take Zim's spot and Zim returns to the line.

COACH KEN
HOESING, bend your arms a little more so your hands are located straight out from the center of your chest.

Hoesing makes the changes just as the ball comes to him. He catches it quickly and passes from the new position with more quickness.

COACH KEN

There ya go! Much better. Doesn't that make it easier?

Hoelsing smiles and nods his head yes just as the ball arrives again. Hoelsing zips it back. You can see a smile and his confidence is growing. Finally, Tegan makes an error.

COACH KEN

OK, speed it up. Catch it and zip it.

The drill quickens. Coach Ken changes the drill to a bounce pass. The rounds are made again. Coach Ken changes the drill to alternate between a bounce pass and a chest pass. The boys are having a good time but are getting pretty winded.

Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE. Just as he does, Wink gets up and leaves.

COACH KEN

Now we are going to practice the most important shot in basketball, free throws. A game can easily be won or lost on how well you shoot free throws. And the secret to shooting free throws is in your follow-through.

Coach Ken takes the ball and goes over to the free throw line. He BOUNCES it a couple of times to get the feel of it. Then he looks at the basket and executes a perfect "swoosh". He does it 5 more times.

The boys watch with their mouths open.

COACH KEN

Now we are going to divide up into two groups. One will have three and the other will have four. Stand in a straight line and count off.

Tegan is first in line and hollers out "1". Zim is second and hollers out "2". They go down the line to 7.

COACH KEN

Ok, 1,3, 5, and 7, you guys go to the far goal. 2, 4, and 6 you guys stay here. We'll put 2 on the free throw line and 4 and 6, you guys are rebounders for now. Got it?

The boys line up as instructed. As they do, we see the auditorium door open and Father Shad enter. He sits down on the bleachers. Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE and the free throw drill starts. He sees Shad and walks over and sits down next to him.

SHAD

Well how's my favorite coach doing? Free throw day, huh?

COACH KEN

They are coming along just fine. Still doing fundamentals but they are coming along great.

SHAD

Excellent! Have you picked out your position players?

COACH KEN

Tegan is the quickest but Hoelsing may be a sleeper. I have him holding the ball and passing correctly. When he gets comfortable and a little more confident, we could have a great pair of guards.

I need to work with the Fleming boy individually. He's our big guy but he doesn't really use his size and I need to get him to realize his value. Then we will be in pretty good shape.

It's a little early to tell.

SHAD

I suppose so. Well the parish is abuzz about it. The kids are really excited and so are the parents. I am surprised you don't have any spectators.

HOESING

(Excited.)

Coach I got my 10!

Hoelsing trots over to the two men. He is all smiles.

COACH KEN

Good job.

Shad claps his hands over his head.

COACH KEN

We did have one visitor today. He came about ten minutes into the practice.

SHAD

Oh? One of the parents?

COACH KEN

No, a boy. A teenager the same age as our kids.

SHAD

(Curious)

I wonder who? All of the boys that I thought would want to play are here.

Fleming is at the free throw line and can't make one. He takes five shots and misses all of them. Coach Ken watches and then excuses himself from his conversation with Shad and trots over by Fleming.

COACH KEN

Ok, let's try something. I want you to pick out a spot about a foot above the rim on the bang board.

FLEMING

Right in the center?

COACH KEN

Yup. Right in the center.

FLEMING

OK, got it.

COACH KEN

Pretend you are bouncing a raw egg off that spot. You have to put it up there with enough force to get there, but you don't want to smash the egg.

Fleming looks at Coach Ken for a second and then turns his attention to the spot on the bang board. Fleming concentrates. He bounces the ball three times, spins it in his hands, and launches a gentle shot that barely touches the bang board and goes in.

COACH KEN

(Happy)

That, my boy, is called touch, Now
do it 9 more times.

Fleming smiles as the pass comes back to him. He does it
five more times before a miss.

Shad puts his hand on Coach Ken's shoulder.

SHAD

Looks like things are coming along
nicely. How is your business
going?

COACH KEN

Slow. My brother isn't thrilled
about this but he will get over
it.

SHAD

Well you are doing the Lord's work
so I am sure things will improve.
See you later.

Shad leaves. Coach Ken turns and walks over to the closest
rebounding position as Fleming continues to shoot free
throws. Coach Ken jumps and rebounds for Fleming. Fleming is
having a great time. Fleming is much taller than Coach Ken
and can't help but notice how high his coach can jump.

FLEMING

Coach, how to do get those high
rebounds like that?

COACH KEN

It doesn't matter how high the
ball is.

FLEMING

Huh? I don't get it.

COACH KEN

All you have to do is believe you
can go up there and get it.

Fleming looks at the coach. He is puzzled.

FLEMING

Coach, can you show me how to get
up there?

Fleming watches intently as his coach shows him how to stand properly, hold his hands and how to jump. Then Coach Ken puts Fleming inside the key and starts throwing balls at the back board. Fleming is soon snatching balls out of the air above the rim. Fleming is LAUGHING at his new found ability.

Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
OK, put out the chairs.

The boys start putting a line of chairs down the center of the court. All of the boys are hustling except Tegan.

COACH KEN
Tegan. Let's see some hustle.

Tegan stops and looks at the coach. He is frustrated.

COACH KEN
What's wrong Tegan?

TEGAN
(Frustrated)
Whol, we have been running around these dumb chairs for days now, Coach. What's the point of this? We're tired.

Coach Ken looks at him for a minute. Then he looks at the other boys. He can see they all think the same thing.

COACH KEN
Put the chairs away and all of you stand between me and the far basket.

Coach Ken looks at each one of them and starts to gently BOUNCE the ball.

COACH KEN
Now, stop me.

Coach Ken takes off down the court around each boy, passing the ball behind his back and dribbling with each hand. None of the boys can stop him. Coach Ken reaches the far end and dunks it.

The boys are flabbergasted. They stand with their mouths open looking at each other and the coach.

COACH KEN

That's why I have you do chairs.
Got it?

The boys shake their heads no, still in disbelief of what they have just seen. Coach Ken walks off the floor and out of the door with a basketball under his arm.

INT. HOTEL CAFE - NIGHT

We see five of the seven boys and three cheerleaders are crowded into three booths in the small cafe. A variety of potato chip packages are on the table along with a few bottles of Coke. SINATRA MUSIC is playing in the background. BECKER pulls on Tegan's arm.

BECKER

Was that who I think it was in the bleachers watching us practice today?

TEGAN

Yeah, that was him. I heard he was back. Nothing but trouble.

BECKY turns her head when she hears Tegan and Becker talk. She injects herself into the conversation.

BECKY

Who's back? Who's watching practice?

BECKER

(To Becky)
That convict.

CHEERLEADER 1 leans across the booth to hear the conversation.

BECKY

(To Tegan)
What convict? You had a convict watching practice and nobody did anything?

TEGAN

He's not a convict. He was in reform school for something.

BECKER

Well that's a convict isn't it?

TEGAN

A convict is somebody in prison
you goofball.

Becker and Tegan get into a friendly shoving match and stop
just as the cook looks up from reading the newspaper.

BECKER

Well what is he then?

STEVENS

Maybe he is reformed.

BECKER

Well, I don't want him reformin'
around me.

BECKY

(Anxious)

Who are you guys talking about?

TEGAN

That Winkleman kid.

BECKY

What about him?

Tegan puts down his Coke and turns to Becky.

TEGAN

He showed up at practice and
watched us for a while and then
left. He wasn't there very long. I
don't think Coach noticed him.

BECKER

Well I noticed him. And I hope to
hell he doesn't come back. He's
trouble.

STEVENS

How do you know he's trouble? You
don't know anything about him.

BECKER

He was in reform school wasn't he?
That's enough for me.

STEVENS

Yeah but he is out and he is back
here and that tells me has paid
whatever he was suppose to pay
back.

The cafe door opens and Wink walks in. Wink looks at the three booths full of kids. Wink smiles and then takes a seat by himself at the end of the counter. Doug walks up to take his order.

WINK
(Politely)
May I have a well done hamburger
and a Coke, please?

DOUG
Want pickles and onions on it?

WINK
No thank you, Sir. But some ketsup
would be fine.

Doug stares at him for an uncomfortable second or two and then walks back to the kitchen.

GOEDEN leans over the booth whispers to Becker.

GOEDEN
Is that him?

BECKER
That's him. Now he is ruining our
place.

The girls strain for a better look at the boy at the counter. They don't notice that Wink is looking at them in the mirror hanging on the wall.

BECKY
(Worried)
Is he dangerous or something? Will
he try to kill us?

STEVENS
No, of course not. Gees. He just
got into trouble and got sent to
reform school. It's nothing.

BECKER
Reform school is nothing? Not at
our house. My dad said if I ever
got sent to reform school, he
would never talk to me again.

STEVENS
I bet he would.

BECKER
I bet he wouldn't!

STEVENS
Nah, your dad is a nice guy. He
wouldn't leave your side just
because you made a mistake.
Everyone makes mistakes.

BECKER
Who fed you that crap?

STEVENS
That everyone makes mistakes?

BECKER
Yeah.

STEVENS
Coach did.

BECKER
When did Coach tell you that?

STEVENS
When I lost my haying job for
being late last Saturday. He told
me it's what you learn from the
mistake that's important. I
learned you can't be late if you
give your word.

BECKER
Well you can have this guy. I
don't want nothin to do with him.

Doug brings Wink's hamburger and Coke just as the other
teens leave. Wink is alone at the counter. SINATRA MUSIC is
playing in the background.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

We see Bun through the glass door of the little grocery
store. She has Johnny with her.

BUN
(to Johnny)
Now you keep your hands outta
stuff in here. Mr. Forinash will
not be happy with us if we create
a mess.

Bun unzips Johnny's coats, picks out a cart, and starts doing her grocery shopping. As they move around the store, various customer greet her and some snub her.

Johnny reaches for an apple when Bun isn't looking, He pulls one off of the bottom of the produce rack which starts an apple avalanche.

BUN
(Very Surprised)
Oh dear!

Bun scrambles to try and catch the apples as they roll down the produce rack and head for the floor. Wink steps in front of her and with the quickness of a cat, catches and repositions the apples so none fall on the floor.

BUN
Why thank you! We would have had apples bouncing all over the place if it weren't for you.

Wink smiles and walks down the aisle. The store owner, MR. FORINASH, comes up to see what the commotion is all about.

FORINASH
(Very Concerned)
Are you OK Bun?

BUN
The Calvary was already here! That nice young man caught all of the apples before they had a chance to fall on the floor. You should give him a job!

Forinash smiles politely and watches Wink leave his store.

FORINASH
Did you find everything you needed?

BUN
Yes, yes I did. Thanks to that nice young man, I didn't have to buy as many apples as I thought I would have to buy.

Forinash laughs. He pushes the cart to the checkout stand and rings up the sale.

FORINASH

Well that will be \$3.49 Bun. Would you like one of our boys to carry your things to your car?

BUN

Actually, the car is at the garage so if you could put them on delivery and slide them in the back door, that would be fine.

FORINASH

(Concerned)

You leave your house unlocked?

BUN

Why sure. There's nothing to worry about in this little town. We know everyone and the neighbors watch each other.

FORINASH

Did you know that boy who helped you just got out of reform school?

BUN

(Surprised)

Why no I didn't! He was so polite.

FORINASH

You can't be to careful.

Forinash takes a \$5 bill from Bun and makes change. He marks up the sack for delivery and hands it to one of the grocery boys.

FORINASH

You and the boy have a nice day.

BUN

(Friendly)

And you too, Mr. Forinash.

Bun bends over and zips up Johnny's coat and walks out the door.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - DAY

The boys are sitting on the basketball court in a semi-circle. Coach Ken is sitting on the first bleacher. He is holding a clipboard.

COACH KEN

Ok, listen up. Today we are going to start playing basketball. Unfortunately, we don't have enough players to play complete offense and defensive teams. So we are going to concentrate on offense today.

I am going to assign positions. These assignments are based on your performance so far and as we get better, things could change. But one thing never changes. We are a team. We win as a team. We lose as a team. Got it?

The boys look at each other and nod they understand.

COACH KEN

A basketball team has five players. Two guards. Two forwards, and a center. The center is easy. That's Fleming and you will soon see why.

The starting guards are Tegan and Hoelsing. I haven't picked out starting forwards yet so play hard.

Now for the moment, everybody but Tegan and Hoelsing line up in the passing drill. Do chest passes first, then bounce passes. Zim, you be the point. Got it?

The five boys get up and form their line of four with Zim as the point and start the drill. Tegan and Hoelsing remain sitting on the floor.

COACH KEN

So what do you think a good guard does?

TEGAN

Whol, he brings the ball in and brings it down the court and takes all of the long shots.

COACH KEN

Not exactly. Remember Eisenhower. You are the generals that are going to position your army for
(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
the best attack at the basket.

That means you have to be the best ball handlers. And, that's why I picked you two. Your primary job is to move the ball around the floor until you find someone open and who can make the best percentage shot.

HOESING
What do you mean best percentage shot, Coach?

COACH KEN
Good question. Would you agree that the closer you are to the basket, the better your chance of making the shot?

HOESING
Well, yeah I suppose so.

COACH KEN
Well that would be your best percentage shot--the easiest shot for you to make, right?

The two boys look at each other and nod their heads.

TEGAN
So you don't want us to take shots?

COACH KEN
I didn't say that. If you feel that you are in a position to take the best shot that has the best chance to go in, then take it.

As they continue to talk, the door opens. Wink enters the gym and climbs halfway up the bleachers and sits down. Coach Ken doesn't notice but Tegan and Hoelsing do.

COACH KEN
Another thing, speed sometimes kills a game. It's your...

Coach Ken notices he has lost the team's attention as they look at Wink. Coach Ken turns and looks.

COACH KEN

Hey. Pay attention. We have a lot of work to do.

The boys return their attention to Coach Ken.

COACH KEN

As I was saying, you don't need to be in a big hurry to get the ball down the court unless we are down to the last few seconds.

Most of the time, you should slow the game down and watch how the defense is reacting to everyone and where our guys are. That's when you start moving the ball around to find a clear lane and a good shot.

Look for mismatches. Look for other players who are not guarding our guys very close. Look at reaction time and speed of the defense. When you see those mismatches where we can use quickness, or height, or ability to get a better percentage shot, get the ball in there. Understand?

The boys nod and Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE.

COACH KEN

OK, do your 10 free throws. 1,2,3,4 at that end. 5,6,7 at the other end. Go!

The boys split up, grab the balls, and head for their respective goals. Coach Ken looks at Wink and walks over to him.

COACH KEN

What's your name son?

WINK

Brian, Coach Miller. Brian Winkleman.

COACH KEN

You like basketball?

WINK

Yes sir Coach Miller. I love basketball.

COACH KEN

Are you going to start attending school at Holy Trinity?

WINK

Yes sir, I started today.

COACH KEN

Do you want to be on our basketball team?

The boy grins. He is very excited.

WINK

Yes sir, Coach Miller, I really want to be on your team!

COACH KEN

Well go down to the locker room and find the locker with my name on it. There is a pair of white shorts and a t-shirt. Put them on and get back up here in a hurry.

The boy dashes down the bleachers and out the door. The BLEACHER RATTLING noise startles the boys shooting free throws. Everything stops.

COACH KEN

What? Are we practicing time outs or something? Let's get busy out there.

Wink returns wearing the white shorts and t-shirt and socks. The boys stop and stare.

COACH KEN

OK guys. This is Brian Winkleman. He wants to be on our team.

Brian, you go shoot free throws with those three guys. Your number is 8 from now on. Make 10 free throws in a row and you get to go to the showers.

Wink runs over and takes his position on the key next to Stevens. When his turn comes, Wink makes 10 quick free throws and is the second one to leave for the showers. Coach Ken pretends not to notice until Wink trots by him.

COACH KEN

Nice work, Brian.

WINK

(Smiling and happy)

Thanks Coach!

INT. MILLER HOME - NIGHT

Bun is putting the infant in his high chair when the BACK DOOR RATTLES. It's locked. Johnny runs to the door and turns the lock.

JOHNNY

Daddy!

COACH KEN

Hey Johnny. How's my boy?

JOHNNY

Fine.

COACH KEN

(To Bun)

What's wrong with the door?

BUN

Well I think maybe we should start locking the house up. With all of this commotion going on, I think it's the smart thing to do.

COACH KEN

What commotion?

BUN

Well I was at the grocery store today and Johnny grabbed an apple and the rest started to spill out onto the floor and a nice boy helped me catch them before they did but gracious, I found out he was a convict.

Bun puts her hand on the kitchen counter and looks at Coach Ken.

BUN

What is this world coming to when we have convicts running around in the grocery store?

COACH KEN

(Teasing)

I don't know but your convict shoots free throws better than any kid I have ever seen.

BUN

You have seen this boy shoot free throws? Where?

BUN

At practice, I put him on the team.

BUN

(Anxious)

Oh for the Pete's sake! That convict is on your team?

Coach Ken takes off his coat and sits down at the table.

COACH KEN

His name is Brian Winkleman. He was in reform school. He has served his time and as long as he keeps his nose clean, I will treat him just like the other boys.

BUN

Just like that?

COACH KEN

Just like that. In fact, Brian and Father Shad are coming for dinner in about ten minutes. What are we having?

BUN

(Upset)

They are coming here? Tonight? For this?

COACH KEN

What is it?

Coach Ken opens the over door and looks in.

BUN
Baked chicken and rice.

COACH KEN
Sound perfect. Can we feed the boys first so we have room at the table?

Bun is speechless and glaring at Coach Ken. She dishes up two small plates for the boys.

COACH KEN
Now you guys clean your plates and you can listen to funny radio when you are done. OK Mom?

Coach Ken looks at Bun with a sheepish grin. Finally, Bun tosses her kitchen towel into the sink and stomps off into the living room. She sits down and holds her head for a second then gets up and comes back into the kitchen.

BUN
Well he was very nice and helpful to us in the store today. Maybe Mrs. Lubeley made an apple pie today.

I saw her in the store buying apples and lard. I'll go and see if she did and if she will give me a couple of pieces.

Bun hurries out the back door and soon returns with an apple pie just as there is a KNOCK on the front door. Coach Ken opens the door with Johnny and the dog at his heels.

SHAD
Good evening Kenneth. I hope this is not too much of an intrusion.

Bun comes to the door. She is bubbly and smiling.

BUN
Why heavens no, Father. We are delighted to have you. Nothing special for dinner mind you.

SHAD
Why thank you, Bun. I gather you have already met Brian.

Wink pokes his head out from behind Shad and waves.

WINK

Hi again Mrs. Miller.

BUN

Nice to see you again, Brian. Come in. Come in!

JOHNNY

You caught all of the apples!

Wink scoops Johnny up and holds him in his arms.

WINK

That's right little guy. What's your name?

JOHNNY

Johnny!

WINK

Well my name is Brian but my good friends call me Wink.

JOHNNY

Can I call you Wink?

WINK

You sure can because we're friend now. Right?

Johnny hugs Wink. Wink puts Johnny down and holds his hand.

BUN

Come in and sit down. Dinner is ready so I will need to excuse myself and set the table. Make yourselves right at home.

WINK

Thank you Mrs. Miller.

Shad takes a seat in the family rocker and Brian sits down on the couch. Johnny sits next to him. Brian brushes Johnny's hair.

COACH KEN

So did you get the shoes, OK?

WINK

Yes sir, thank you. I will pay you back as soon as I can.

SHAD
 (Curious)
 Pay him back for what?

WINK
 Coach told me to go to the store
 and get some tennis shoes so I
 could play and put them on his
 account.

Bun hears the conversation and stares over her glasses at
 Coach Ken.

SHAD
 And they let you do that?

WINK
 Well the store owner was a little
 hesitant knowing my background and
 all, but he said if it was all
 right with Coach Miller, it was
 all right with him.

Wink tries to laugh but it came off as very nervous.

COACH KEN
 (Supportive)
 Put those shoes to good use and
 your past with be a very distant
 past very quickly.

SHAD
 Indeed. And from what I have heard
 from your former school, you are a
 top notch athlete.

WINK
 There were a lot of talented kids
 at reform school. Some of the
 moves that some of the kids from
 Omaha could do were amazing.

COACH KEN
 You have had some actual game
 playing experience?

WINK
 Just games out in the yard during
 our free time, Coach. Nothing
 structured.

Bun enters the room and motions for all to come to the
 kitchen.

BUN

OK dinner time. Everyone to the table.

All get up and go into the small kitchen table and seat themselves. The little boys are playing in the living room.

WINK

Oh that smells good, Mrs. Miller. I haven't had good home cooking in one year, eleven months, and 26 days!

There is a slight pause and then LAUGHTER.

BUN

Well you just dig in and enjoy yourself. But we must pray.

Johnny hears the word "pray" and runs into the room, stands by Brian and bows his head.

JOHNNY

Come Lord Jesus be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed including Wink. Amen.

Wink and Shad make the Sign of the Cross and begin to eat.

BUN

Well Brian, how have people been treating you since your return?

Coach Ken looks at Bun and there is a difficult silence at the table.

BUN

What? Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have pried into your affairs, Brian.

WINK

That's OK, Mrs. Miller. I expect to be put under the microscope a little bit. I made a mistake and people know that.

SHAD

Indeed. But you have paid for your mistake and and people should remember that, too.

BUN

Do you have a warm place to live
and some good food?

Bun passes the dish of chicken to Brian.

WINK

Yes, I have a room at my brother's
place.

COACH KEN

How about your schooling? Are you
all set with your classes and
things?

SHAD

Actually, I would say he is a bit
ahead of the students here. The
schooling he got at the state
school was pretty good.

Perhaps a little light on religion
but we can catch up on that, right
Brian?

Wink smiles and continues to eat.

COACH KEN

Do you think you will be able to
get along with the team members?

WINK

Sure. I need to prove myself just
like they do. I need to learn some
playing skills, just like they do.
And I need to compete, just like
they do.

I think I can earn their respect
by earning a position, just like
they have to.

If you treat me the same as them,
things will work out.

Bun looks at Coach Ken and then at the Shad. She is
obviously impressed with what Wink has just said.

BUN

Brian, that's a very mature
outlook. You should be commended.

WINK

Thank you Mrs. Miller. I have had
a long time to think about things.

Bun gets up from the table since everyone seems to be
finished. She clears the dirty dishes.

BUN

How about a nice piece of apple
pie, Father?

SHAD

Delightful! I haven't had apple
pie for months!

Bun puts a piece of apple pie in front of the Shad and turns
her attention to Wink.

BUN

Well I wish I could say I made it
but this is some of Mrs. Lubeley's
pie. I should have made a pie
since Brian and I had a good look
at most of the apples at Forinash
Market.

WINK

(Laughing)

You were actually pretty quick
with your hands when those apples
started falling, Mrs. Miller.

BUN

Thank goodness. There were enough
apples on the move to make a dozen
pies!

Bun puts a slice of pie in front of Brian and Coach Ken. She
pours coffee.

WINK

So Coach Miller, will my past be a
problem for you?

COACH KEN

Can you play basketball?

WINK

Sure, I think so.

COACH KEN

Can you keep your nose clean?

WINK

Yes.

COACH KEN

Do you have a thick skin?

Brian looks at Shad. He is not sure he understands the question.

WINK

What do you mean, thick skin?

Shad wipes his mouth with a napkin and raises a finger in the air.

SHAD

If I may, I would like to answer that one. You are going to hear a lot of comments about your past. Some may make you very angry.

That's exactly the reaction that type of person wants--they want to get under your skin, or make you angry. You will have to be able to let those comments go by and not act on them. That's what he means by having a thick skin.

BUN

People can be very unfair, Brian. You will be carefully watched.

Wink looks at Bun and then at Shad. He looks down at the pie and then shifts his gaze to Coach Ken.

WINK

I want a second chance. I want to play basketball. And I will do what it takes to accomplish that goal.

COACH KEN

Well then I don't see any problem.

Father Shad pushes back from the table.

SHAD

Well we should be going. Bun, thank you so much for the dinner and the hospitality. And thank Mrs. Lubeley for the pie. Both were wonderful!

Wink takes the hint and hurries with his last bite of pie. He pushes his chair back and stands.

WINK

Yes, thank you for having me. And thanks for allowing me to play on the team, Coach. I promise I won't let you down.

Brian sticks his hand out toward Coach Ken. Coach Ken shakes his hand, looks him in the eye, and pats him on the back.

Shad and Brian turn and head for the living room.

BUN

I am so glad you came over tonight. Please feel free to stop by anytime. We loved having you both.

As they enter the living room, Johnny runs up and grabs Wink by the leg.

JOHNNY

Bye Wink.

WINK

(Smiling)

Bye buddy. Thanks for the dinner, Mrs. Miller. I will see you at practice tomorrow, Coach.

Wink and Shad leave. Coach Ken closes the door and looks at Bun.

COACH KEN

Well?

BUN

What a nice boy!

INT. AUDITORIUM BASKETBALL FLOOR - DAY

We see the boys running laps. There is a little shoving and pushing going on between Hoelsing and Wink. It isn't friendly. Hoelsing throws an elbow and Wink gets a bloody nose.

Coach Ken blows his WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
 (Loud and angry)
 All right, everybody on the bench.
 Now!

He takes a towel and tosses it to Wink who wipes his nose.

COACH KEN
 What happened here?

WINK
 (Hurried answer)
 Nothing coach. It was just an
 accident.

HOESING
 (Sheepishly)
 Yeah. Um accident.

COACH KEN
 Look, we have a game in exactly
 three days. If you guys are not
 going to work as a team, then get
 out of here and I will find some
 players who want to work as a
 team. Got it?

The boys look at each other and down at the floor for a
 second.

Coach Ken puts his hand on his hips and stares at the boys.
 He is clearly annoyed at what has happened. He looks
 intimidating as he walks along the bench.

HOESING
 We got it, Coach.

WINK
 Got it, Coach.

Coach Ken relaxes a bit and turns back to his clipboard and
 the plan for the day.

COACH KEN
 Ok, we are going to do a chair
 drill today without the chairs.
 Two of you are going to take the
 ball down the court and one of you
 is going to be in between.

The guy in between has to run
 backwards and try to pick off the
 passes between the other two.
 Those two cannot hold the ball

(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
more than two dribbles, got it?

The guys nod and make comments that they understand the drill.

BECKER
(Raises hand)
Coach, does the guy in the middle have to stay in the middle or can he get in the ball handler's face?

COACH KEN
You can do anything except foul. The object here is to learn how to pass between each other on offense, and to pick off the ball of defense.

Hoelsing and Wink are first up on offense. Tegan, you are in the middle on defense. Go.

The players take their position. Coach Ken passes the ball to Hoelsing. Tegan immediately runs up to Hoelsing but Hoelsing throws a BOUNCE PASS under Tegan's arm to Wink. Tegan goes after the ball and Wink. Wink DRIBBLES but Tegan slaps the ball away. Coach Miller blows the WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
Wink, why did you lose the ball?

WINK
I don't know, Coach.

COACH KEN
You lost it because you were watching the ball and not Tegan. You need to know where the other players are and develop confidence in your ball handling ability enough that you don't need to look at the ball.

OK. Same group. Start over. Go!

Wink DRIBBLES the ball twice as Tegan runs to him. Wink throws a high pass to Hoelsing. Tegan runs after Hoelsing, but before he gets there, Hoelsing passes the ball back to Wink. Tegan runs at Wink but Wink pivots and passes to Hoelsing who makes a layup.

COACH KEN
Nice move. Good layup. Goeden
inside, Stevens in the middle, Zim
outside. Go!

The next three start the drill. Stevens intercepts the pass
from Zim.

Coach Ken blows the WHISTLE.

COACH KEN
What happened Zim?

ZIM
I threw a bad pass I guess.

COACH KEN
Stevens, come here. Stand there.
OK, Zim, you were here. Stevens
had his arms up and you threw a
high pass.

He was in perfect position to
intercept it. If you had used a
bounce pass under his arms, he
would not have had a chance to get
it. Got it?

ZIM
Yeah, got it.

COACH KEN
Look at what's happening around
you and anticipate. Throw a head
fake and watch what the player
does.

Use your balance to throw off
their balance. Then, take
advantage of the opportunities you
get. Got it?

ZIM
Got it!

COACH KEN
OK Zim on the outside. Let's see.
Fleming. You take the middle.
Goeden take the inside. Go.

Coach Ken looks up from his clipboard and winks at Fleming
as Fleming sets up between the other two boys.

Tegan trots over by Stevens and looks at Stevens and whispers.

TEGAN
(Smiling)
Fleming is going to fall right on
his butt. Bet you a Coke.

Stevens looks at Tegan and smiles just as the Coach blows the WHISTLE.

Fleming moves in on Zim who bounce passes to Goeden. Fleming adjusts but arrives late just as a pass goes over his shoulder back to Zim. Fleming stumbles a little but keeps his balance just as Zim pulls up and launches a jump shot. Fleming turns, watches the ball, and leaps into the air and grabs the ball before it gets to the rim.

TEGAN
(Mouth open)
Gees! What was that!

STEVENS
(Laughing)
That was you losing a Coke!

Coach Ken chuckles as he looks at Fleming. Fleming is amazed with his own performance.

COACH KEN
I think we have a center. OK, free
throws and hit the showers.

Tomorrow we are going to do some
four on four work so we can
practice both offense and defense.

I am really pleased with your
effort.

The boys break, four to each end and start free throw practice. Bun comes through the door with the boys. Johnny runs over to his dad but Wink scoops him up and tickles before he gets there. The boy GIGGLES.

WINK
How's my little buddy today?

JOHNNY
(Giggling)
I'm fine Wink!

WINK

Should I stuff you up in that basket or give you to your dad?

JOHNNY

Daddy!

He puts the boy on his shoulders and trots over to the coach.

WINK

Got a package for you Coach.

He slips the boy off his shoulders and gives him to the coach and rejoins the three other boys at the free throw lane.

GOEDEN

(To Teagan)

Well check out Mr. Brown-noser.

TEGAN

Yeah, I heard he was over at the Coach's house last night with Father Shad.

GOEDEN

You watch, he'll win his starting guard position with brown-nosing and not ability. You just watch.

COACH KEN

(To Goeden)

Less talk and more baskets please.

Soon, all of the boys are headed for the shower. Fleming is the last to leave. The coach walks over and puts his hand on Fleming shoulder.

COACH KEN

You surprised a few people tonight. Did you surprise yourself?

FLEMING

Kinda Coach. But I just did what you told me I could do. I went up and got it. Thanks!

COACH KEN

Yes you did. You certainly did.

INT. RECTORY - DAY

Shad comes out of his office. He is in a big hurry.

SHAD

(Hollars)

Mrs. Shoemaker! Mrs. Shoemaker
are you in the Rectory?

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Agitated)

Land sakes, Father. I am right
behind you. You don't need to
holler out like that. The
Monsignor is taking his nap.

Shad turns to find the housekeeper standing right behind him
with her hands resting on her hips.

SHAD

Oh, excellent! There you are. Can
you get your sewing kit and meet
me outside please? We are going
to the Auditorium for a while.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

Why are we going to the Auditorium
and why would I need my sewing
things?

SHAD

Just get your things and I'll tell
you later. Meet me outside with
Sister Mary Elizabeth.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Quizzing)

Sister Mary Elizabeth is going
with us?

SHAD

Yes, if we ever get going. Now
please, let's make tracks so we
can get this project done.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

What project?

Shad gently takes her by the shoulders and turns her toward
the door.

SHAD

Hurry along now.

Shad hurries down the porch stairs. A young nun in full habit waits for him at the curb.

SISTER MARY

Hello Father.

SHAD

Hello Sister Mary. Mrs. Shoemaker will be along in a minute. Have you seen the Kuchta boy and his truck?

SISTER MARY

Why no Father, I haven't.

We hear a MOTOR REVVING and GEARS GRINDING, (OC). Soon, the old truck comes around the corner and parks in front of the Rectory. Mrs. Shoemaker comes out of the rectory with her sewing bag. She is hurrying and somewhat stressed.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Grumpy)

We are not all going to fit into that old truck, Father! And that boy may not have enough sense to drive properly anyway.

Shad takes Mrs. Shoemaker by the arm and guides her around to the passenger door of the truck. He opens the door and helps her into the seat.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Agitated)

Where are you and Sister Mary Elizabeth going to sit? Is there another car coming? Is this boy safe?

SHAD

Yes, yes, Mrs, Shoemaker, we'll all be safe and the boy is an excellent driver.

Shad goes to the back of the truck and drops the tailgate. He pushes some tree limbs out of the way and brushes off the tailgate and motions for the sister to sit down. She does. He sits down next to her.

SHAD

(Loud)

Ok Tegan, let her rip! I mean, drive on. Carefully of course.

The boy gives a thumbs up through the window, GRINDS the old truck into gear and lets out the clutch. The truck leaps forward and then goes down the street with the nun's habit flapping in the breeze. Mrs. Shoemaker clutches her sewing kit for dear life. The truck parks in front of the Auditorium.

Tegan helps Mrs. Shoemaker out of the truck, takes her by the arm, and helps her up the steps. Shad fumbles with some keys and finally opens one of the big doors. They follow him to the locker room. It smells musty and it shows on Mrs. Shoemaker's face as she looks around.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

What filthy place is this Father?

SHAD

It's our basketball team's locker room and we have a lot of work to do here, Mrs. Shoemaker.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

What kind of work?

Shad opens an old box and takes out some tattered red and white jerseys. They are torn and the number needs to be re-stitched. They are dirty and smell.

SHAD

This kind of work, Mrs. Shoemaker. We need to come up with 8 sets of jerseys and 8 pairs of shorts.

Mrs. Shoemaker takes the jersey and holds it up to the light. She examines it carefully and then another one. Shad puts his head through one of the jerseys as she holds it up.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Disgusted)

These are beyond repair, Father. And, they are too filthy for young boys to wear.

SHAD

Surely there is no sewing and cleaning project beyond your ability, Is there?

She looks at the Father and then at the nun who has a big smile on her face.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

You'll have to call Bessie Rossiter and Buela Finch, too, to help me if you want these stitched and washed properly. They smell ta high heaven!

Shad claps his hands and smiles. He shakes Mrs. Shoemaker's shoulders as he starts out of the little room.

SHAD

And a good smell that is! Sister Mary and Tegan are at your service Mrs. Shoemaker. Just ask them to fetch what you need.

Mrs. Shoemaker nods her head yes as she opens her sewing kit and starts to thread some white thread through her sewing needle. Shad dashes up the steps and is very delighted with himself. He hears Mrs. Shoemaker barking orders to Tegan.

MRS. SHOEMAKER

(Stern and filtered)

Now young man, do you know where Buela Finch and Bessie Rossiter live and can you go get them and not scare the life out of them bringing them back here like you did me?

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Coach Ken comes in as usual for his morning coffee and takes a seat at the counter.

DOUG

Morning Ken. Coffee?

COACH KEN

Yes sir, please Doug.

Doug brings the napkin, cup and spoon and pours the coffee.

DOUG

Word on the street is you are going to kick the crap out of St. Francis tomorrow.

COACH KEN

Well they seem to be a pretty good ball club from what I hear. And my boys are a bit new at this so who

(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
 knows what will happen. I hope
 they just play as well as they
 can. That's all I can ask.

Doug leans down on the counter and looks Coach Ken in the
 eye.

DOUG
 (Almost whispering)
 What folks really want is for you
 and Jefferson to face off in the
 county championship game.

COACH KEN
 That's five weeks off, Doug. I
 will be pleased with a win
 tomorrow.

JEFFERSON DAD walks by and stops. He looks at Coach Ken in
 an aggressive way.

JEFFERSON DAD
 So you and your Catholic boys are
 playing St. Francis, huh. Well I
 hope you get the crap beat out of
 you.

Coach Ken turns around on his stool and is about ready to
 stand up 1st Fan steps in front of him.

1ST FAN
 (Stern to
 Jefferson Dad)
 That might happen but if you don't
 get your ass through that door
 right now, you'll get the crap
 kicked out of you.

The two men go nose to nose for a minute.

DOUG
 Now now, boys, we'll have none of
 that in my place. Take it out on
 the street if you've got a beef.

Coach Ken stands up and puts his arm in front of 1st Fan and
 looks Jefferson Dad in the eye.

COACH KEN
 Let him talk. The boys and I will
 have our say on the basketball
 floor.

JEFFERSON DAD

You forgot where you came from you
Catholic lover. I hope you get
beat.

COACH KEN

Come watch the game and sit on the
St. Francis side. You will have
plenty of friends there, I'm sure.

Jefferson Dad turns and walks out of the cafe. He bumps into
Shad and says nothing to him. Shad barely notices the snub
as he spots Coach Ken.

SHAD

Ah there's my favorite coach! You
should see what Mrs. Shoemaker and
her two lady friends are doing
with the old uniforms. They looks
almost brand spanking new!

COACH KEN

Good deal. Now I hope they play
like old veterans.

The men LAUGH and sit down and continue talking and drinking
coffee. The Jefferson dad stands outside and glares through
the window at them.

INT. AUDITORIUM LOCKER - DAY

Coach Ken walks into the locker room. The boys are suiting
up for the final practice before their first game.

COACH KEN

OK, listen up. This is the
starting lineup for tomorrow.
Tegan and Hoelsing at guard; Zim
and Stevens at forwards; and
Fleming at center.

There are only eight of us so you
are all going to play so be
prepared to go in at anytime.

He picks up a brown box from under the bench and opens it.

COACH KEN

Here's our uniforms. No, they
aren't new. But keep in mind, Mrs.
Shoemaker and some other ladies
were sitting here most of the day
(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
to get these ready for us.

Work it out who gets what number.
I think we should start a
tradition and wear your shirt to
class and around town on game day.

Just don't get into a fight and
ruin the shirt with a bunch of
blood. Got it?

The boys look at each other and LAUGH and look back at the
coach.

COACH KEN
Eat something light tomorrow at
about five or so. Get a good
night's sleep tonight.

That means in bed before ten
tonight. And yes, maybe I will
drive downtown after that to see
if you got the message.

Remember, win or lose, we do so
with class. I repeat, we do so
with class. It does no good to
participate in sports if you are
not going to be a sportsman.

Don't let me see you throwing any
punches. Don't let me hear you
using any foul language. You
represent Holy Trinity and I
expect you to represent it well.

Zim raises his hand. The coach stops and points at him.

ZIM
Lots of Catholic teams pray and
make the Sign of the Cross before
they play and when they shoot free
throws and stuff, but since you
are not Catholic, do you want us
not to do that?

COACH KEN
I want you to practice your faith
and honor it. Don't ever be afraid
of who you are. Be proud of it.

Tegan raises his hand.

TEGAN

Um, what time do you want us to be here?

COACH KEN

Tip-off is at seven so be here at six. I want to be doing pre-game workout upstairs at 6:30.

Any more questions?

The boys look at each other and indicate no to the coach.

COACH KEN

OK, pick out a number and a pair of shorts and be upstairs in ten minutes. We are going to do a light workout; just a few layups and a couple of laps.

The coach turns and leaves the room. Stevens looks in the box and takes out the eight shirts. The numbers are 3,8,11, 15, 16, 20, 21, and 22.

TEGAN

They all the same size?

STEVENS

Looks like it except for 22. It's kinda long.

FLEMING

Well then that one is mine.

GOEDEN

I want 3.

Stevens throws 22 to Fleming and 3 to Goeden.

TEGAN

I want 8.

ZIM

So do I!

STEVENS

Anybody got a coin? That's the only fair way to decide.

Becker digs into his pants pocket and comes up with a penny and hands it to Stevens.

STEVENS
 (To Tegan)
 Call it in the air.

Stevens flips the coin in the air.

TEGAN
 Tails!

The coin LANDS on the floor.

STEVENS
 It's heads.

Stevens picks up the shirt with 8 on it and tosses it to Zim.

TEGAN
 Just toss 'em out. Who cares. It's
 just a number.

The others nod in agreement. Tegan ends up with 21; Becker with 11; Stevens with 20; Goeden with 16. Shirt 15 sits on the bench.

STEVENS
 Wink, here's your shirt. Number
 15.

Wink is going through the remaining shirts in a big box in the back. Finally, he pulls out a tattered one. The number is 25.

WINK
 I am going to wear this one.

STEVENS
 You can't wear that one, Wink.
 It's all ripped to crap and it
 stinks! Gees.

WINK
 I'll fix it and wash it tonight.
 It will be fine.

Stevens shrugs his shoulders. The rest of the boys put on their shirts and head for the court.

Coach Ken is looking at his clipboard when the boys come in. He doesn't pay much attention as they start doing laps.

FLEMING
 How many laps, Coach?

COACH KEN

Five. Then split up and shoot layups for a bit. He looks up as the boys run by and then he notices the shirt Wink is wearing.

He waits until after the laps are done.

COACH KEN

Wink. Come here for a second.

Wink drops out of the layups and trots over to the Coach.

COACH KEN

Wasn't there a better shirt in the batch than that one? It's pretty beat up.

WINK

I want this one, Coach. I'll wash it and fix it up tonight. I promise.

COACH KEN

Ok, but if it doesn't look any better than it does now, you wear the other number. Got it?

WINK

(Smiling)
Got it, Coach.

INT. FIRST BASKETBALL GAME - NIGHT

The bleachers are full of fans from both schools. The cheerleaders are lined up by the door and the team enters. The crowd erupts with APPLAUSE and CHEERS. The team starts doing layup drills as Coach Ken goes to the scorer's table with his line-up information. The other team enters to APPLAUSE from their fans. Their coach comes over to the scorer's table.

The two coaches shake hands and visit for a second or two. Two referees come in and shake hands with the coaches. One ref blows a WHISTLE and takes the game ball to center court. Both teams go to the bench for final instructions.

COACH KEN

OK, don't get in a big hurry. Get the ball and bring it down court and work it around until you get a good shot. Wait for the good shot.

(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
You are generals, OK? Go!

STEVENS
Should we pray now, Coach?

COACH KEN
Sure. Go ahead.

The boys circle around and do the Sign of the Cross and say a short prayer. They break and five go to the floor. The other team breaks and goes to the floor.

Fleming and the opposite center shake hands at center court. The ref steps in with the ball and throws it up in the air. Fleming tips it to Tegan. The opposite team runs to defend its goal as Tegan brings the ball down court.

Tegan passes the ball to Hoelsing. Hoelsing looks around and stops as he crosses center court. He passes it back to Tegan. Tegan is abeam the key and pulls up and takes a jump shot. It's an air ball. The other team recovers and through snappy passing, go down court and score an easy layup.

COACH KEN
(Encouraging)
Take your time! Work the ball and wait for a good shot! Be generals!

Tegan passes the ball in to Stevens. Stevens DRIBBLES the ball down court using a high rolling style dribble. He is stiff-legged as he comes down the court. The opposing player comes up and challenges him. He slaps the ball away from Stevens and gets control of it and make an easy layup.

TEGAN
(To Stevens)
What are you doing? Protect the damn ball. Geesh.

STEVENS
(To Tegan)
You ain't so hot either.

TEGAN
Well I ain't that bad, God dammit!

The ref hears the comment and blows his WHISTLE and charges Tegan with a technical foul. The crowd BOOS. Coach Miller waves his hand at Wink.

COACH KEN

(To Wink)

In for Tegan. Take your time.
Bring it down and work it around
and look for a good shot. Got it?

Wink nods his head. He goes to the scorers table and sits
kneels down in front of it. The other team's player is alone
at the foul line and makes the technical shot. The HORN
blows and Wink trots out onto the floor and points at Tegan.

Tegan raise his hands in disgust and heads for the bench and
sits down at the end. He puts a towel over his head and
looks at the floor. Coach Ken reaches over and pulls at his
jersey. He bends over two players, and talks to Tegan.

COACH KEN

(To Tegan)

Learn anything?

TEGAN

Yeah, I gotta big mouth, Coach.

COACH KEN

What about ball handling?

Tegan takes the towel off of his head and looks at the
coach.

TEGAN

Whol, what do you mean?

COACH KEN

You guys are standing stiff as a
board out there. Get into a
position where you can move and
dribble properly.

You have the quickness to do a lot
better than that. And take your
time! There is no hurry right
now. Take your time!

TEGAN

Whol, Coach, we are behind five ta
nothin'. Don't we have to catch up
quick?

COACH KEN

You will if you take your time and
wait for good shots and get back
down on defense quickly. You won't
if you take bad shots and watch

(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
 them run by you. Got it?

Wink brings the ball down and is slowing the game down. There are cat-calls from the crowd calling him "jail bird" but he doesn't pay any attention. He works the ball around and it comes back to him just as a lane opens up to Fleming under the basket. He executes a BOUNCE PASS and Fleming makes the layup.

COACH KEN
 (To Tegan)
 Ok, get back in there and keep
 your mouth shut. Got it?

TEGAN
 Got it, Coach.

Tegan gets up and goes to the scorers table to check in. Wink comes out.

COACH KEN
 (To Wink)
 Good job in there.

The team improves their scoring and ball handling but by halftime, they are down by 13. They look dejected in the locker room. Coach Ken talks to them about the game so far.

COACH KEN
 The difference in this game right
 now is you guys are stiff. You
 don't put yourselves into a
 position where you can react
 quickly.

They are beating us in every phase
 of the game. They are beating us
 because you are not relying on
 good fundamentals. Let's get back
 to good fundamentals. And, let's
 have some fun. Got it?

TEGAN
 Whol, do we looks that bad, Coach?

COACH KEN
 No you don't look that bad. You
 look tense. You look stiff. You
 look like you are not having fun.
 You look like you are afraid to
 lose. Loosen up, concentrate on
 good fundamentals, have fun and
 (MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
guess what will happen?

TEGAN
We'll win?

COACH KEN
Time will tell. But I can assure you of one thing, you will become a good basketball team. If you play to your potential and a little beyond, that's all I can ask. Now let's go up there and get back in this game. Go!

The boys file out of the dressing room and hurry up the steps to the playing floor. Coach Ken grabs Fleming by the arm.

COACH KEN
You've had a great first half. Now take ownership under the basket. Their guy doesn't have near the ability you have. Get position on him. Use your body to block him out. Get in his face. Got it?

FLEMING
(Smiling)
Got it, Coach.

The boys are able to move within 5 points of the other team but that is as close as it gets. They lose 43-48.

Father Shad comes up to Coach Ken as he heads for the door.

SHAD
A good start none the less.

They hear a voice from the crowd.

ANGRY FAN
Stick to selling cars. You are a lousy excuse of a coach.

JEFFERSON DAD
Maybe you need some more jail birds. Or maybe you need to get rid of the one you have.

SHAD
Pay them no mind.

He pats Coach Ken on the shoulder.

SHAD

So, what did you see?

COACH KEN

Fundamentals need more work. They weren't having fun. I think we have some good players, maybe even a couple of great ones but they need to have more confidence in their ability.

SHAD

Anything I can do to help?

COACH KEN

Maybe you could join me on the bench and keep the positives going.

They can get pretty down on themselves and when I am concentrating on the game, I don't pass on positive compliments that will help them develop their confidence.

SHAD

I can do that!

COACH KEN

Great. Well I need to say a couple of things before they get in the showers and on their way. They played a good first game. I am optimistic.

Shad waves goodbye as the coach goes to the locker room. The crowd continues to file out into the night.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The crowd is gone as Coach Ken walks up the steps to the main doors of the auditorium. Bun stands by the door, holding Johnny's hand.

BUN

Are you disappointed?

COACH KEN

No, not really. They just need more work on fundamentals and need to loosen up a bit.

JOHNNY

(Sad)

Daddy, you lost.

He kneels down to his son so he can look him in the eye.

COACH KEN

Yes we did, son. Sometimes that happens and sometimes that will help you be better. And when that happens, you will win.

The coach puts his hand out, palm up, and the boy slaps it.

Coach Ken pushes the door open and they walk to the car parked by the Ford garage. The car has two flat tires.

COACH KEN

(Angry)

Great. Just great. I wish those cowards would look me in the eye when they have something to say.

He takes out his keys and walks over to the garage opens the showroom door.

COACH KEN

We'll leave the car here and I will have the guys deal with it in the morning. I'll get something else. Wait here.

He looks around to make sure there are no threats as he enters the showroom. Soon, one of the big blue doors opens and he backs the wrecker out onto the street. He grabs Johnny and puts him in and helps his wife get into the cab. He gets in and backs up and starts down the street.

As they pass the grocery store, he sees a boy DRIBBLING a basketball in an empty parking lot. It's cold outside and he wonders about the boy but needs to get his wife and son home. They drive through town and arrive at the house. He grabs Johnny and they go inside.

COACH KEN

I'll be back in a few minutes.

BUN

(Concerned)

Where are you going at this hour?

Coach Ken doesn't answer. He walks out into the night.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Coach Ken climbs into the wrecker and drives away. Soon, he drives into the grocery store parking lot. The headlights light up Wink who is still there DRIBBLING the ball. Wink stops dribbling and looks at the truck as Coach Ken gets out and walks over to him.

COACH KEN

What are you doing out here at this hour? You should be home in bed.

WINK

I know, Coach but I need to practice so we can get better.

COACH KEN

Well for now, go home and get to bed. There will be plenty of time to practice next week.

Coach Ken turns around and walks back toward the wrecker.

WINK

But Coach, I don't want to be as good as the other guys, I want to be as good as you. Show me how to dribble. Please?

Coach Ken stops and turns around. He looks at the boy standing in the night air with a big smile on his face. His breath is white against the cold night air.

COACH KEN

Give me the ball.

Wink passes the ball to him.

COACH KEN

I keep telling you guys to get in a position where you can do two things, move quickly and control the ball.

That means you have to bend your knees, keep your feet about

(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
 shoulder wide, and keep your hands
 in front of you so you can react.

He watches Wink change into that position and at the same time, he throws a hard pass at him. With the quickness of a cat, Wink catches the ball.

COACH KEN
 Now dribble it and come at me.

The boy starts to DRIBBLE the ball but he is rolling it. The coach slaps the ball away.

COACH KEN
 You are rolling the ball up here
 not dribbling down by your waist
 where you can control it better.

Plus, are using the palm of you
 hand to control it. Use the touch
 of your fingers and keep the ball
 low to the ground and close to
 you, like this.

Coach Ken DRIBBLES the ball and as he does, he moves the ball closer to the ground until the ball is just a couple of inches above the concrete.

COACH KEN
 You can't do this when you roll
 the ball. You can when you feel
 the ball in your fingertips. Got
 it?

Wink smiles as he watches the exhibition.

WINK
 I think so.

Coach Ken passes the ball to Wink. Wink DRIBBLES with the new technique. He gets down to about a foot above the pavement before he loses control.

COACH KEN
 Good. That's good! Can you feel
 the difference?

WINK
 Yeah!

Coach Ken looks around and notices the end of the lot has posts surrounding the lot about four feet apart.

COACH KEN

Practice going around these posts until you can do it quickly and not lose control. With each post, dribble the ball a little lower. You will learn how to control it better. Like this.

Coach Ken takes the ball from him and trots over to line up with the posts. He starts the drill just as described and at the end he is DRIBBLING about a foot above the pavement. He looks at Wink as he does a BOUNCE PASS behind his back to Wink. Wink is amazed.

WINK

(Softly)

Wow.

COACH KEN

No wow about it. It's practice. It's determination. Develop your skills. Then you'll have the confidence to be a great player.

Coach Ken walks back to the running wrecker and opens the door. Before he get in, he looks back at Wink.

COACH KEN

Now don't stay out half the night. Go home and get some rest. You can't dribble a ball if you freeze your fingers off. Got it?

Wink smiles and puts the ball against his side and looks at Coach Ken.

WINK

Yeah, I got it Coach. Good night!

Coach Ken gets into the wrecker and backs out of the lot and starts down the street. Wink watches and then he lines up with the posts and starts the drill. He loses control of the ball after three posts but immediately goes back and starts over. He keeps going and trying.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

DOUG

Coffee Ken? Or do you need a piece of raw meat for your wounds?

COACH KEN
 (Laughs)
 Coffee is fine, Doug.

Doug pours the coffee and leans down on an elbow.

DOUG
 Well what did you think? Can you
 whip them into shape to beat
 Jefferson in the county
 tournament?

COACH KEN
 That's so far away right now, I
 don't even have a reasonable
 answer for you.

A passing man butts in.

JEFFERSON DAD
 You ain't got an answer for
 anything. You ain't nothing but a
 jail bird Catholic lover and a
 piss poor excuse of a coach in the
 first place.

Iffn' you even get by the first
 round of county, Jefferson will
 beat your bunch of bums by thirty
 points.

Doug straightens up and looks at the man.

DOUG
 Now none of that stuff here. Out!

The man stares at Doug for a second. Coach Ken turns around
 in his seat and starts to get up but Doug grabs him by the
 shoulder.

DOUG
 Don't bother, Ken. I am sure he is
 in a hurry to leave.

The man looks at Coach Ken and back at Doug and leaves the
 cafe just as the COUNTY SHERIFF walks in.

SHERIFF
 Just the man I want to see.

The sheriff pats Ken on the shoulder and sits down at the
 counter next to him.

DOUG

You ain't going to arrest him for losing a ball game are you?

SHERIFF

(Laughs)

No, just need to chat with Ken for a second.

Doug pours the Sheriff a cup of coffee and goes about his business.

COACH KEN

Did you see the game last night?

SHERIFF

No, got called out on a car wreck over by Fordyce. Didn't get back until after the game.

COACH KEN

Anyone hurt?

SHERIFF

A few cuts and scrapes. Nothing big. Lucky bunch. There were three of them and they rolled a couple of times.

Say, that Winkleman kid is on your team isn't he?

COACH KEN

Yup. I think he's a good kid and he could be a great basketball player.

SHERIFF

Well maybe not for a couple of days. He got roughed up pretty bad last night.

Coach Ken puts down his coffee cup and pays very close attention to the Sheriff.

COACH KEN

Is he OK? How bad is he? I saw him maybe midnight or so?

SHERIFF

No, this happened early this morning. He was bouncing a basketball in the market parking lot and someone went after him

(MORE)

SHERIFF (cont'd)
with a baseball bat. He's over at
Doc Dorsey's place right now.

Coach Ken gets up and hurries out the door. The Sheriff follows. They walk the block to Doc Dorsey's office.

COACH KEN
(To receptionist)
Is Brian Winkleman in with the
Doc?

The RECEPTIONIST nods and points down the hallway at the second door. Coach Ken and the Sheriff walk down the hall to the treatment room. DOC DORSEY is just coming out.

COACH KEN
How's Brian?

DOC
Well if he wasn't such a tough
young kid, I would say he was not
to good. But he has mostly
bruises. He could have a cracked
rib but I got that taped up. Go on
in. He's getting dressed.

The Doc pushes the door open. Brian is buttoning his torn shirt and looks at the Coach Ken and the Sheriff. He forces a smile. He is in some pain.

COACH KEN
What happened?

WINK
(Struggle to laugh)
I walked into a baseball bat,
Coach.

COACH KEN
Who did this?

WINK
I don't know him. I didn't get a
good look at him anyway.

COACH KEN
Look, if you know who did this,
tell the Sheriff. We don't need
people like that walking the
streets.

Wink buttons his shirts and slaps off the exam table. He reaches for his coat but flinches when he tries to put it on. Coach Ken grabs the coat and helps Wink put it on.

SHERIFF

Son, if you know who did this,
tell me.

WINK

I really didn't get a good look,
Sir. He came at me from the back.
I really don't know.

SHERIFF

Well if you remember something,
you come tell me, OK?

Wink nods his head and he follows the sheriff out the door.

COACH KEN

I'll give you a ride home.

WINK

Can I get a ride to school? I want
to go to class.

COACH KEN

OK, but if you start to feel bad,
have the school call me and I will
come and get you, OK?

They leave the doctor's office and walk across the street to the car. Coach Ken opens the passenger door for Wink. Wink gets in. Coach Ken looks across the street at the Sheriff who has backed out of his parking place and stopped.

SHERIFF

If you can get anything out of
him, let me know. I need to visit
with that kid beating coward.

Coach Ken nods yes and gets into the car. They drive to the school. Coach Ken helps Wink out of the car and opens the door for him. His teammates surround him. Coach Ken goes back to his car and drives off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A month has passed. It's winter and it is snowing outside. Coach Ken walks into the coffee shop.

DOUG
Coffee there Coach Ken?

COACH KEN
Yes, sir buddy.

Doug brings Coach Ken's coffee and napkin and pours. Then he leans down on his elbow to visit quietly.

DOUG
Word is you have a new offense cooked up using Wink and you are going to clean Jefferson's clock in the tournament. Is Wink healthy and ready to go?

COACH KEN
Better check your sources a little closer. I haven't seen Jefferson play but I hear they a good ball team right now. And yes, Wink is ready to go. He's fine.

DOUG
You haven't lost since that first game. Your kids are six and one. They are really playing great ball. Especially Wink. Where did that kid learn how to dribble a basketball like that?

COACH KEN
In the grocery store parking lot, I think. He works hard at it and frankly, I am really surprised at what he has done. That's quite a climb for a kid on the bottom rung.

Doug looks around to make sure all of his customers are served properly. He makes eye contact with Jefferson Dad.

DOUG
Did they ever get that guy who beat him up?

COACH KEN
No. I think Wink knows who did it. He has something to prove and is proving it on the basketball court.

Jefferson Dad gets up and takes his coffee to the seat next to Coach Ken.

DOUG

Opps. Company coming.

Coach Ken looks around and sees the man coming.

JEFFERSON DAD

Mind if I sit here?

COACH KEN

No, suit yourself.

JEFFERSON DAD

My son plays for Jefferson.

COACH KEN

I heard that. I understand he's a pretty good little guard.

JEFFERSON DAD

Yeah, I am pretty proud of him. Keeps his nose clean. Gets good grades. Headin' for college next year.

COACH KEN

Well that's good. That's what it is all about.

JEFFERSON DAD

No it ain't. It's about winning. Life is about winning. Losers get pushed to the side like that reform school kid you got playing.

There's plenty of good kids out there, who keep their noses clean. Why are you so stuck on that jail bird kid?

COACH KEN

Life is also about second chances. There isn't a person breathing air that hasn't made a mistake. Even kids who make big mistakes deserve a second chance. When a kid works as hard as this kid has, he'll get a second chance from me.

The man stands up, lights a cigarette, and blows the smoke down into Coach Ken's face.

JEFFERSON DAD

Well maybe in your jail bird loving world, but you guys are going to learn a lesson in the finals. Our kids are going to teach you a thing or two about basketball.

COACH KEN

The finals in the county tournament are a long way off. Laurel and Randolph may teach us both a thing or two. But, if the two teams get there, I am sure it will be a great game.

JEFFERSON DAD

It'd be a better game if you bench that jail bird and give one of your good kids a chance to play. The jail bird has had his chances if you ask me.

The man holds an uncomfortable stare for a few seconds and then turns and walks out the door. As he leaves, the Sheriff walks in and sits down next to Coach Ken.

SHERIFF

Well now, Coach. If there was any bettin' money around for the finals of the county tournament, where do you recon it'd be?

COACH KEN

In the bank earning interest.

The Sheriff laughs as Doug arrives with his coffee.

SHERIFF

Lotsa talk out there about you and Jefferson in the finals.

COACH KEN

That's what the last guy just told me and I will tell you the same thing I told him. Don't forget Randolph and Laurel are both playing good ball. Both of us could get knocked out in the first round.

SHERIFF

Well I seriously doubt it but that's why I am in the criminal catching business and you are in the hell catching business.

COACH KEN

Ain't that the truth. Say, did you ever come up with a good candidate for beating up Wink?

The Sheriff turns and looks out the front door. There is no one there.

SHERIFF

Well I think he just left. I can't prove it but my money is on him and your boy isn't willing to give him up. He just doesn't want to cause any problems.

COACH KEN

Well the guy is living his kid's life, that's for sure. I wouldn't want to be the kid's coach. You really think the guy would stoop that low?

SHERIFF

I do. Be careful around him. He has a short fuse and I think if his kid get showed up in the tournament, he could cause some problems. I'll keep a close watch on him but be careful.

Coach Ken stands up and put a tip on the counter. He takes a last sip of coffee and puts the cup back on the counter and pats the Sheriff on the shoulder.

COACH KEN

Well I better go sell some Fords. Good to see you and I will keep what you said in mind. Come over some night and have dinner.

SHERIFF

I'll do that! Jail food can get a little bland and I am sure Bun is a good cook.

Coach Ken puts on his Fedora and leaves the cafe. He walks down the street to the intersection and crosses over for the

short half block to the garage. He waves at Doc Dorsey and a couple of cars that HONK at him as they drive by.

INT. AUDITORIUM-RANDOLPH - DAY

It's the semi-final round of the county tournament. Jefferson has already won their game against Laurel. Coach Ken is talking to his players before the game start. The crowd is raucous.

COACH KEN

Remember to take your time. Move the ball around and look for a good lane and a good shot. Get back on defense quickly and get your hands up. Got it?

The boys nod and say "got it" back to him and he steps out of the circle. They say a prayer and make the Sign of the Cross and break and take their positions on the floor. The ref throws the ball up and Fleming tips it back to Tegan.

Tegan brings the ball down court and passes to Wink on his right. Wink's defender comes up on him. He dribbles low and switches hands, pivots around the man and hands the ball to Geoden going in for an easy layup.

They quickly move back on defense. As the Randolph player comes across the centerline with the ball, Wink sees he is rolling the ball high and slaps the ball away from him. Tegan gets the ball and a layup.

A series of plays happen that put the team up by 11. The lead stays that way for most of the half.

COACH KEN

Stevens in for Wink. Becker in for Zim. Go!

The boys jump up and go to the scorers table and check in. The Wink and Zim come out. Coach Ken throws towels to both of them.

COACH KEN

(To Wink)

Great ball handling. That's the way to do it.

Some in the crowd notice Wink's ball handling, too.

DOUG

(To 2nd Fan)

Wink is going to get that number 25 retired if he keeps handling the ball like that.

2ND FAN

You know that's Ken's number from high school, don't you?

DOUG

(Surprised)

No! I didn't know that. Well the kid is doing it justice.

Without Wink in the game, the lead soon shrinks to 7. It's finally halftime. The team leaves the floor with a 27-20 lead and go to the dressing room.

COACH KEN

(To the team)

You guys are playing great! Just keep it up. Keep your hands up on defense and make sure you are in a position to move. On offense, take your time and move the ball around until you have a good shot.

Be patient. Got it?

Stevens raises his hand. Coach Ken points at him.

STEVENS

Coach, these guys are playing dirty. They are throwing lots of elbows and stuff. Can we get 'em back.

COACH KEN

Get 'em back by beating them on the scoreboard. And remember, the one who retaliates is usually the one who gets caught. Let's don't give up points on stupid stuff. Any more questions?

The boys look around and at their coach. No one has any questions.

COACH KEN

OK, keep it up. You're playing great. Tegan, Wink, Zim, Hoelsing and Fleming start the second half. Get up there and do some
(MORE)

COACH KEN (cont'd)
warm-ups. Go!

The boys bolt out of the dressing room and up to the main floor. Coach Ken follows them.

The game resumes with Wink putting on a dribbling clinic for most of the 3rd quarter. The team's lead increases to 15. They eventually win by 13. 53-40. They have sealed a final game against Jefferson for the county championship.

INT. HOTEL CAFE - NIGHT

The boys pile through the door of the Cedar Cafe with their girl friends. They are laughing and happy after defeating Randolph.

Unlike the past times, Wink is a big part of the group. His past is a distant memory for the guys.

TEGAN

Zim, that was a great shot at the end. Man, you couldn't have timed that pass any better with Wink. Unbelievable. Just unbelievable! We will kill Jefferson if we keep doing that.

Tegan messes up Zim's hair and then looks at his palm.

TEGAN

Gees. You got enough butch wax on your head?

They look around for a couple of booths and notice players from the Jefferson squad and their girls are also in the cafe.

TEGAN

(Loud to Jefferson
players)

You guys should be home resting up for us.

FLEMING

Tegan, shut your big mouth. We don't need to get something started.

Tegan pushes Fleming playfully.

TEGAN

Aw, I am just playing with their heads a little.

HOESING

As long as we don't have to play with their fists a little. Look, I gotta get home so I am going.

TEGAN

Stick around. We are going to have some fun. We won for crying out loud!

HOESING

Nah, I am going to bed. Coach said get some rest so I am going home.

Tegan leans on Hoelsing's shoulder.

TEGAN

Ok, puss out then. We ain't stayin long. Stick around, please?

HOESING

Nah, I'm going.

BECKER

Yeah, me too. I got chores to do in the morning.

Tegan puts his forehead next to Becker's forehead.

TEGAN

Well don't be lettin no cow step on those quick feet.

Becker smiles and gently staps Tegan on the top of the head and follows Hoelsing out the door.

WINK

Yeah, I think I am going to call it quits, too.

TEGAN

(Frustrated)

Man, you ain't got to worry about no cow.

STEVENS

(Laughing)

Don't be so sure of that, Tegan.

TEGAN

Oh! I forgot about Francie the cow with the big boobs that was all over you after the game!

WINK

(Smiles)

No, Francie the cow is all your's, Mr. Personality. I am headed for the sack alone. Night.

Wink smiles and pushes the cafe door open and walks out into the night. It's cold with snow flurries and the wind is blowing. He zips up his jacket--a light jacket not designed for the weather--and starts walking. He walks by the hotel and decides to take a shortcut through the alley and across the parking lot toward the house where he is staying.

As he enters the alley, a car pulls in behind him. He steps to one side to allow the car to pass but the car slows down to a crawl. He turns to look and see the driver. The lights blind him. The car stops. A man gets out and reaches for something behind the seat.

As the man gets in front of the car, the headlights illuminate a baseball bat the man is bouncing in his hand. Wink starts to run but steps in a hole and twists his ankle. The man catches up with him.

JEFFERSON DAD

Here you jail bird son-of-a-bitch.
I got another present for you.

The man raises the bat and prepares to swing at Wink. Wink covers his head. Just then, the back door of the coffee shop opens and Doug comes out with a trash can.

DOUG

(Loud and angry)

Hey! What the hell is going on here?

JEFFERSON DAD

(Loud)

This ain't none a yur concern. Go back into yur cafe and mind yur own business!

There is the sound of a REVOLVER cocking behind the man.

SHERIFF

Well it is my concern. Ya put that
bat down and get your hands up
right now!

The Sheriff is standing in front of the man's car with his
gun drawn. The man looks back. He drops the bat and follows
the Sheriff's orders. The Sheriff cuffs him and leads him
back to his car.

DOUG

(To Wink)

You OK Wink?

WINK

Yeah, I just twisted my ankle a
little when I tripped.

Doug lifts the ankle. Wink grimaces in pain.

DOUG

Can you wiggle your toes?

Wink looks down at his foot. The lights from the car show
his sock moving.

DOUG

That's good. Let's get you inside
and put some ice on it.

Doug helps Wink up into the cafe. He puts Wink in a booth
and gets some ice and towels and puts the ice on the ankle.
The cafe is closed and empty.

The Sheriff enters the cafe.

SHERIFF

Is he OK?

DOUG

Looks like a sprained ankle. I put
some ice on it. Don't look broke
or anything.

Doug goes to the cash register where the phone is located.
He picks up the receiver.

DOUG

Doris, get me Kenny's house. Kenny
who? How many Kennys do we have in
this town? Kenny Miller, that's
who.

There is a pause as he listens to the response from the operator. He stares at the ceiling.

DOUG

I know it's late, Doris. Just put me through and don't listen in. Hello...Bun? Is Kenny handy?

Doug looks back at the boy. He can tell he is in some pain.

DOUG

Kenny. This is Doug at the Coffee Shop. I've got Wink here. He has sprained his ankle and needs some tending to.

Doug listens to Kenny's questions.

DOUG

Well, I am sure you know more about those things than I do. There's a big difference between a farmer stepping in a hole and twisting an ankle and your star basketball player doing it.

That's why I am calling. You want us to take him over to his place or bring him to yours?

DOUG

OK, we'll be there in a little while. Yeah, me and the Sheriff. Well, the Sheriff will fill you in on what happened. No, he got him this time. OK, we'll be there in a little bit.

SHERIFF

What's the plan?

DOUG

Kenny wants us to bring him over to his place. He's calling Doc Dorsey to come over and look at the boy's ankle.

SHERIFF

OK, well ca'mon son. Let's get ya into Doug's car.

Wink stands on his good foot. He tries to put pressure on the other foot but it is too painful.

DOUG

Now don't be doing that, boy. Stay off that foot and let the ice do its thing. You might be makin' matters worse. Just put your arms around our necks and let us walk you out.

WINK

OK, do you think I will be able to play tomorrow night?

SHERIFF

Hell son, don't worry about that. Just be grateful you have a tomorrow.

They walk the boy out to the car and drive off.

INT. MILLER HOME - NIGHT

We hear a KNOCK on the Miller house door. Ken goes to the door and opens it. Doc Dorsey enters the house with his little black bag.

BUN

You beat your patient here, Doc.
Can I get you anything?

Doc takes off his coat and lays it over a chair.

DOC

Well maybe a pan of warm water and a bar of soap to start with.

They can hear a car pull up in front of the house. Soon, Doug, supporting Wink, are coming through the door.

DOC

Put him down here on the couch.
Bun, have you got some towels I could use so I don't get your couch all wet?

She puts the pan of warm water and a bar of soap on the living room table and goes back for the towels.

DOC

Well, let's have a look.

Doc takes off the towel full of ice. His glasses are slid halfway down his nose as he gently lifts the foot so he can see better.

DOC
Wiggle your toes some.

Wink slowly wiggles his toes.

The doc puts his palm under the front part of his foot.

DOC
Now press down with the front of
your foot.

Wink pushed up on his elbows and tries to press down with his foot. He does but his face shows a lot of pain.

Doc holds his leg with one hand and the ankle with the other and moves the ankle to the left.

DOC
That hurt?

WINK
(Loud yelp)
Yes!

Doc moves the ankle in the opposite direction.

DOC
How about that?

WINK
(Loud yelp)
YES!

DOC
Sprained all right. Not broken I
don't think.

Doc balances the wash pan between his knees and uses the soap to create a good lather. He gently washes the boy's foot. He looks closely at the swelling starting to appear and some bruising.

DOC
I'll wrap it up for tonight. Keep
the ice on it and bring him by in
the morning and we'll have another
look.

Doc wraps the ankle. He opens his bag and takes out a pill bottle from inside and measures out four pills. He puts them into a small brown envelope.

Doc closes his bag and gets up. He picks up his coat and puts it on. He hands the pill envelope to Bun.

DOC

Give him two of these now and two more in the morning.

He looks around and takes some pillows from the couch and puts them under the boys leg to elevate it.

DOC

Make sure this leg is elevated. That will keep the swelling down.

Doc sticks out his hand and shakes hands with Coach Ken and Doug.

DOC

Well Coach, you may have to win tomorrow night without this one.

WINK

I'm playing tomorrow!

Doc looks at his patient and smiles.

DOC

Well the spirit is good. But let's check the foot again tomorrow.

Doc walks out the door and into the night.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Tegan trots through the main door at school and catches up with Zim and Stevens. They are all carrying books and wearing their numbers. The halls are full of students.

TEGAN

(Concerned)

Is it true?

STEVENS

Is what true?

TEGAN

Wink got beat up again last night!

STEVENS

I didn't hear that.

Stevens looks at Zim who shrugs his shoulders. Father Shad enters the building behind them. Tegan turns to Father Shad.

TEGAN

Father, did Wink get beat up last night?

Father walks up and puts his arms behind the boys as if he was herding them down the hall.

SHAD

Well Wink has had an accident. He sprained his ankle.

STEVENS

(Stunned)

Does that mean he isn't going to play tonight?

SHAD

Right now, we don't know. Coach Ken is taking him to the doctor this morning for a checkup. We'll know more later today.

Now you guys get to class and focus on your studies, OK?

Shad steps ahead of the boys and speeds his way down the busy hallway. The boys stop and look at each other. They are joined by Fleming and Hoelsing.

TEGAN

We're screwed.

FLEMING

Why?

ZIM

Wink broke his leg!

STEVENS

He did not! I bet he sprained his ankle trying to run from that guy who has been trying to kill him.

FLEMING

Kill him? Gees, can he play tonight?

ZIM

They don't know. Coach is taking
him to the doctor. We're screwed.

TEGAN

Yeah. We're screwed.

A bell rings and the boys enter a classroom to start their
school day.

INT. THE FINALS - NIGHT

It's a few minutes before the final game with Jefferson. The
locker room is very quiet as the boys finish dressing. The
door opens and Wink comes in on crutches and in street
clothes. His foot is wrapped. It's the final sign to the
boys that their star player isn't going to be playing.

Coach Ken comes in behind him and Father Shad follows.

COACH KEN

(To his team)

Athletics is like life sometimes.
It isn't always fair. It isn't
fair because Wink isn't going to
get to play tonight. But that
doesn't make any difference in a
few minutes.

Coach Ken looks at his team; taking time to look each player
in the eye.

COACH KEN

You can stay in that defeated
attitude and we'll lose. Or, you
can remember that you played as a
team and you will win as a team
if...each one of you steps up
tonight and plays better
basketball than have you ever
played before.

TEGAN

But Coach, Wink is good. He is
really good. We need him.

COACH KEN

Well then, you will have to be his
replacement. You will have to be
that good. You will have to be
really good. Can you do that?

TEGAN

Whol, yeah we can try.

COACH KEN

There is not enough time to try.
There is only enough time to get
it done or let it haunt you for
the rest of your lives.

You'll have to be better than you
ever have been before. Show them
how we control the ball. Wait for
good shots. Get back on defense.
Control the game. Be generals.

Athletics isn't always fair. But,
athletics will help you reach
higher and do more than you ever
thought you could. Now get
upstairs and warm-up...and win.
Go!

The boys quickly move out of the dressing room and up the
steps to the main floor.

SHAD

Well said my friend.

COACH KEN

We'll see if it takes.

Coach Ken, Father Shad, and Wink go upstairs. As they enter
the playing floor, Coach Ken sees Mother Miller sitting with
Bun and Johnny. She smiles and waves. The Monsignor is
seated at the end of the bench.

COACH KEN

(To Wink)

You sure you want to sit on the
bench? Your foot is going to be
exposed to more injury?

WINK

Coach, I'll be fine. I need to be
with my team. I'm fine, really.

The boys finish their warm-ups and come over to the Coach.
Wink joins the circle on his crutches.

COACH KEN

We'll beat them with good ball
handling. Wait for a lane to open.
Be patient. Get back on defense
quickly. Got it?

For the first time, the guys hold hands, including Wink, and say their prayer. Then, they make the Sign of the Cross, holler "go it!" and the five starters go to their positions.

The ref tosses the ball up and the game begins. It is extremely LOUD in the Auditorium and it is packed. Jefferson gets the tip and their point guard does a long pass down court to another player speeding toward the basket. He beats Fleming and scores an easy layup.

Tegan brings the ball in. Jefferson uses a full court press. Tegan looks for Zim. The Jefferson player slaps the ball away, gains control, and makes the layup. Tegan is angry. He brings the ball in again and tries to go coast-to-coast but is called on a charging foul.

Jefferson brings the ball down and moves it around. The Jefferson guard takes a jump shot and makes it. In minutes, Jefferson has a six point lead. Trinity has yet to make a basket.

COACH KEN

(To Stevens)

In for Tegan. Slow things down.
Take your times. Move the ball
around and wait for a good shot.
Got it?

STEVENS

(Intimidated)

Got it Coach.

Tegan comes out and puts a towel over his head. He is really frustrated. Coach Ken grabs him by the knee to get his attention.

COACH KEN

(To Tegan)

Don't get comfortable. You're
going back in in a minute.

TEGAN

Coach, I am playing too shitty to
go back in.

COACH KEN

I want you to slow the game down.
Take your time. Get better
position and dribble the ball.

Keep it low and make them foul you
if they want it that bad but move
that ball around until you find a
lane and can feed it.

You are the general out there. Now
lead. Got it?

Tegan stares at the Coach for a second or two.

TEGAN

Whol, yeah I got it but...

COACH KEN

No buts about it. You are the best
player on the court. Now get out
there and prove it. Got it?

Tegan looks at his Coach and is stunned by what he has just said. A look of confidence comes over his face as he stands up. He looks at Wink who slaps his palm. Tegan goes to the scorers table and checks in. Stevens comes out. The team is down ten points.

Zim BOUNCES the ball in to Tegan. Tegan stops and DRIBBLES a couple of times and then starts to trot down the court. The defender comes up on him. He lowers his body slightly, and DRIBBLES from left to right hand and then pivots and executes a pass to Zim coming around and into a lane inside of the key. Zim takes a jump shot. It goes in.

The team runs back on defense. Tegan is showing more confidence. The Jefferson offensive player comes at him fast. Tegan plants himself. Zim steals the ball and passes it in to Tegan.

Tegan DRIBBLES down the right side of the court. He spots Fleming moving in on the basket and fires an overhead pass to Fleming just as he jumps at the basket. Fleming gets the ball and dunks it. The crowd erupts. The lead has been cut to five. The spread holds until halftime as each team trades baskets.

The boys sit on the locker room bench and listen to Coach Ken.

COACH KEN

You are playing good. You have done a great job of controlling the ball. You are waiting for good shots. Just be patient.

They're good. In fact, they're really good. We have to keep them running and wear them down. Get them tired and we will have a good shot to win this.

The boys are glued to what he is saying. They are confident.

COACH KEN

We are going to come out on a fast break. Crisp passes down the court. Make them run to catch up. Quick ball movement around the key. Make them adjust quickly.

Let's get in their faces and frustrate them. Let's create some turnovers and some quick points before they can make adjustments. Got it?

They laugh a little for the first time. They are getting loose.

COACH KEN

We can win this game if we make them play our game and you stop playing their game. Take control of things and take your time and take good shots. Got it?

The boys run back up the stairs and start their second half warm-ups.

The Jefferson student body starts to sing a chant based on the Notre Dame Fight Song. The words go "Cheer Cheer for Old THS...You keep the convicts, we'll take the rest."

Tegan and Goeden walk toward them but Stevens pulls them back.

The boys form a circle around Coach Ken. He looks at them in silence and says nothing. He turns and sits down on the bench. The boys understand and look at each other. In unison, they HOLLER "Got it!" They are determined as they take the court.

Jefferson gets the tip. The boys execute a full court press and soon get the ball. Hoelsing streaks down the sideline and Tegan feeds him the ball and sets up a screen as he turns and comes in for the layup. He make it.

Jefferson brings the ball in again against the full court press. The guard throws it down court but Fleming jumps into the air and picks it off. He tosses the ball to Zim at half court who sees Tegan in the corner and passes it to him. Tegan makes a move for a layup but the defender has arrived in front of him. He lets the defender run by, pulls up, and makes a jump shot. The two teams continue to trade shots with the advantage never going over 3 points.

Finally, it is late in the second half. There are only seconds to go and Jefferson leads by 1. The Jefferson coach calls time out.

The players go to their respective benches.

COACH KEN

You're doing great. Keep the pressure up!

Goeden trots up to Tegan.

GOEDEN

(To Tegan)

Tegs, which kid's dad attacked Wink?

Tegan looks at the Jefferson players.

TEGAN

20.

GOEDEN

Let him get by you on my side and then get the ref's attention.

TEGAN

(Confused)

What? Huh? Why?

GOEDEN

Just do it!

The ref blows his WHISTLE and the players return to the floor. Jefferson brings the ball in. They quickly move down court with quick passes. Tegan comes up on number 20. He lets him by on the outside toward Goeden.

Then Tegan throws up his arms and waves at the ref.

TEGAN

(Loud)

Hey Ref. Ref!

The ref looks at Tegan just as Goeden throws an elbow into 20's face. The kid stops, holds his nose as it starts to bleed.

TEGAN

(Points at 20)

Ref Ref!

The ref turns to look at 20 just as the boy throws a round house punch at Goeden. Goeden steps away and the punch misses. The ref blows his WHISTLE and make a technical foul sign with his hands.

REF

(Loud)

Technical foul! 20. Jefferson.
Player is ejected from the game.

The crowd boos as the player goes to the bench and the coach puts a towel over his bloody nose. Goeden goes to the line and makes the free throw. The score is tied. The other boys gather by Coach Ken.

TEGAN

(Laughing)

Coach is right! Second guy always
gets caught. Did you see Goeden
nail that stupid son-of-bitch!

Tegan LAUGHS and turns to go back on the court and runs nose-to-nose into the other ref who puts the "T" sign right in Tegan's face.

REF

Technical foul. 21 red.
Unsportsmanlike conduct.

TEGAN

Ah shit ref! I was just kidding.

The ref blows his WHISTLE and makes the ejection sign. Tegan puts his hands on his hips. His mouth opens but before he can speak, Wink grabs him by the back of his shorts and pulls him back on the bench. Wink puts his hand over Tegan's mouth and a towel over Tegan's head.

Tegan sits down. Father Shad lifts the towel. Tegan looks at Shad sheepishly.

SHAD

(Stern)

After the game, meet me in the
confessional and bring your
Rosary. You are going to need it!

Shad drops the towel back down over Tegan's head as the game resumes. Stevens has replaced Tegan. The Jefferson player makes the technical foul shot. Jefferson leads by one.

Jefferson brings the ball in successfully. Stevens comes up on his man but the guy quickly passes. Zim comes up on that guy.

COACH KEN

(Loud!)

Foul him! Foul him now!!

Zim looks at the Coach but his man passes back to the other guard. Stevens slaps it away. The two Jefferson guards retreat to protect their goal as Fleming speeds down the court and jumps from the free throw line toward the basket. Stevens puts the ball up high over him. Fleming reaches up above his head and grabs the ball and dunks it. The clock goes to zero and shows a one point Trinity win.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Forty years have passed. An old priest enters a small chapel at a funeral home. There is an open casket surrounded by a wall of flowers. Coach Ken has passed away. A big spray of red roses stands at one end of the silver metal casket with a card that reads, "Deepest Sympathy and Love. Your Basketball Teams."

An old man's hand with a priest's ring on the ring finger gently grasps the edge of the casket. It's Father Shad.

SHAD

Well now, this was a sudden exit.
If you only knew how many hearts
grieve this day. Including mine.

Shad places his hand over the his old fiend's hands. He gently pats them.

SHAD

(Tearfully)

Those were exceptional times,
weren't they? You, a Protestant
with such a great athletic gift
and no place to use it. Me a
priest with such a great need.

(MORE)

SHAD (cont'd)

If you were Catholic, I would
nominate you for Sainthood. You
preformed a miracle in this town.

Shad wipes tears from his face. He removes his prayer book
and his purple silk stole from his jacket pocket.

SHAD

(Emotional)

There would be some that would
give me holy heck for what I am
about to do here, but I am going
to do it anyway. You deserve the
final rights, even though I doubt
you will need them.

I have never known a more decent
man than you, and even though you
were not a pillar of your church,
you have secured your place on the
bench with the Good Lord.

In fact, I would be willing to bet
the Monsignor has crossed Catholic
Boulevard and walked over to
Protestant Way just to say hello.

You lived a good and wonderful
giving life. Thank you my dearest
of friends.

Shad kisses his stole and puts it around his neck. He makes
the Sign of the Cross on the Coach Ken's forehead. He opens
his prayer book and quietly recites the final rites of the
Catholic Church. There are tears running down his cheeks. He
steps back and pauses for a final look at his old friend. He
turns and walks away.

EXT. OUTSIDE BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Once again, we see the orange color in front of us. Soon, it
begins to twirl in the hands of a young boy. Another boy
guards him as he makes a break for the basket.

Next to the court, we see a bronze statue of Coach Ken and
two boys. He has a basketball under his arm. We hear a
voice-over.

VOICE (OC)

(Voice Over)

Coach Ken Miller coached the boys of Holy Trinity High School for eight years. During that time, he never took one cent in salary.

Little Holy Trinity High did survive the tough times and became one of Nebraska's most respected high schools, Cedar Catholic High.

Even after all of these years, the parish of Hartington still remembers their volunteer basketball Coach Ken Miller.

And so do his boys.

FADE OUT.