LITTLE BROTHER
by
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Based on a previous draft by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE CAR - 3 AM - (CHYRON "FIFTEEN YEARS AGO")

We’re watching an episode of “COPS.” OFFICER RAPPAPORT is in his cruiser outside a suburban home. From inside the house we hear someone passionately belting out an a capella version of Smoke on the Water.

OFFICER RAPPAPORT
...then we got a call from a neighbor saying the family that lives here’s been at Disney World for a week, so this house should be empty.
(re: the singing)
This guy’s probably on X or something.

INT. SUBURBAN FAMILY ROOM

We travel with Officer Rappaport and his partner in the familiar COPS style as they investigate. They find TEENAGE JUSTIN sprawled on the floor wearing GIANT HEADPHONES as he devours a bowl of Cap’n Crunch and sings.

TEENAGE JUSTIN
...smohhhke on the waaaaaterrrrr!

BIG bite of cereal. Looks up. Notices the two policeman.

TEENAGE JUSTIN (CONT’D)
Is there any chance this house is owned by a very understanding gay cop couple?

OFFICER RAPPAPORT
No sir.

TEENAGE JUSTIN
That’s cool.

He BOLTS. But his headphones fall around his neck, the chord pulls taut and he is JERKED VIOLENTLY TO THE FLOOR.

OFFICER RAPPAPORT
Okay, hands behind your back...

Title card:

LITTLE BROTHER

The familiar Smoke on the Water “Da Da Dah, Da Da DA Dah” continues through Justin’s headphones, as we dissolve to...
INT. REINSDORF MUSIC - LESSON ROOM - DAY

...fingers plinking out the same familiar riff on one string of an ACOUSTIC GUITAR. Our hero TIM REINSDORF (30s, Jason Bateman if he were in a band) is patiently demonstrating to his bored hipster pupil SCOTT, 14.

   TIM
   Now why don’t you try it?

   SCOTT
   Because I have GarageBand.

Scott touches his iPhone, and an impressive electronic version of Smoke on the Water starts up.

   TIM
   Let’s pick up here next week.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC - STORE - A MINUTE LATER

A “Sam Ash” type store that sells guitars, CDs, computer gear. Scott’s mom SUZANNA awaits Tim and Scott.

   SUZANNA
   Good lesson?

   TIM
   He’s really coming along. And what a charmer.

ANGLE ON: Scott, slack-jawed.

   TIM (CONT’D)
   Lead singer material. Mark it down.

A scruffy CAT runs in the open door. Tim looks at his wife (and store co-owner) KATIE. She’s an optimistic sort who has possibly worked here one day too many.

   TIM (CONT’D)
   Katie, are you still feeding those strays by the loading dock?

   KATIE
   No.

The cat tips over Katie’s purse. Out spills cat food.

   KATIE (CONT’D)
   They give the store character.

   TIM
   They peed on my coat.
KATIE
(changing subject)
Hey, so one of us needs to go pick up
Sam from football.

SUZANNA
I don’t know how you guys do it.
(conspiratorially)
If I worked with my husband we’d drive
each other crazy.

TIM
(by rote)
KATIE
(by rote)
Haha yeah, a lot of people say that but it’s good.

Suzanna starts to pay. Katie points her to ODETTA, a 17 year old cashier with an Aubrey Plaza level of enthusiasm.

KATIE
Odetta will take care of you.

Seeing Odetta, Scott turns on the playa charm.

SCOTT
What up, girrrl? How you livin’?

ODETTA
Nope.

KATIE
(to Tim)
So you want to pick up Sam?

In response, Tim strums some minor chords on his guitar.

KATIE (CONT’D)
Aw, you made up a little sad song.

TIM
(unhappy)
I don’t want to go to football.

KATIE
(cajoling)
Honeyyyy... I’m sorry you’re not a sports guy. But your daughter is.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

SAM (Samantha), a pint-sized ten-year-old girl in football pads, about to kick a field goal. She waits determinedly as ALEJANDRO, her holder, counts off the snap.
ALEJANDRO

Ready...

An array of snarling, chubby ten-year-old linemen wait to rush. One of them finishes up a JUICE BOX, crushes it against his helmet, tosses it.

ALEJANDRO (CONT’D)

Hike!

The ball is snapped. Sam gets the kick off, but a sizeable lineman grazes her, and she goes down. In the bleachers, Tim winces. The kick just misses wide right. Sam pops up, none the worse for wear, only disappointed at the miss.

SAM

Aw!

INT. TIM’S CAR

They drive home, Tim still not crazy about what he saw.

TIM

Took a little tumble out there, huh?

SAM

(excited)
Did you see how close I came? There was only one field goal last season and that kid was totally roided up. Coach Andre said I could be the first girl to ever kick one.

TIM

Ha, yeah. That would be great.

(then)
Some of the guys look a little... bigger this year, huh?

SAM

(snorts)
You mean fatter? Yeah.

TIM

Hey, we’ve talked about body image, let’s not focus on their weight.

(then, off her look)
I’m just saying, if you ever feel you know... scared. I mean, you don’t have to play football.

SAM

(for the millionth time)
Dad, I want to play football. And I’m not scared.
TIM
Okay.
The subject is dead for now. A beat as they drive.

TIM (CONT'D)
That Blankenship kid’s a porker, huh?

SAM
Yeah, but it’s genetic.

TIM
Not cool on my part.

INT. KITCHEN
Sam and Tim enter to find Katie cooking dinner. “Food Network” blares on a small flat screen TV on the wall.

TIM
You’re home?

KATIE
It’s slow at the store, Odetta’s got it covered.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC - SAME TIME
Odetta listens to her iPod and reads Us Weekly as the outside metal gate rolls down on a CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER
It says open ‘til eight!

INT. KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

KATIE
Anyway, I had a dinner idea, I wanted to cook.

Tim notes the TV screen is splattered with red sauce.

KATIE (CONT’D)
Sorry. Emeril pissed me off.

SAM
Can I play Madden until dinner?

Sam turns on the game and puts on a wireless headset.

TIM
Hey you know what? It’s been a long time since you and me jammed.

(MORE)
TIM (CONT'D)
Right? How about we kick out “Big Rock Candy Mountain” like we used to?

SAM
I kinda wanna play Madden.
(then, into mic)
You there, Joshua?
(then, smiling)
Really? Trash talk on the coin toss?

Sam happily plays. Tim slumps a little. Katie notices.

KATIE
You go play too. Nice dinner coming.

INT. TIM’S STUDIO
A killer music studio. No windows, walls covered with foam panels. A poster of a mid-80s band, “Two 2 Too,” hangs nearby and we see that Tim was the very 80s front man.

CLOSE on amplifier switches being flipped “ON.” WIDE on Tim with an impressive electric guitar. And it’s going to be LOUD. And he strums... the opening jangle of “This Charming Man,” by The Smiths. It’s not loud, just dainty and ridiculous. But Tim is good. He closes his eyes and sings.

TIM
Punctured bicycle/On a hillside
desolate/Will Nature make a man of me
yet?/When in this charming car/this
charming man...

He opens his eyes to find Katie an inch away.

TIM (CONT’D)
Yah!

KATIE
Mail from your dad.

TIM
YAH!

INT. KITCHEN
Tim sits staring at the envelope. A beat.

KATIE
I think the idea is to open it.

TIM
I think the idea is to not disappear forever when your son is five.
KATIE
True but he’s your only family. Aren’t you curious what Grampsy Vince has been up to?

TIM
Grampsy Vince?

KATIE
I tried to give him a cute name, just open it.

Tim sighs, then finally does so. He reads.

TIM
“Sorry I haven’t been in touch.”

KATIE
(impressed)
Ooh, “sorry.”

TIM
“I’m unable to leave Australia due to my ongoing incarceration.”

KATIE
(still upbeat)
Ooh... AustrALia.

TIM
“The time has come for you to...

He stops, stunned. Katie can’t stand the suspense, grabs the letter and skims it over. Whoa.

KATIE
You have a brother?

INT. PRISON WAITING ROOM

Katie and Tim sit staring at a giant sign reads “SAN DIEGO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.”

TIM
I guess he takes after my dad.

KATIE
This actually isn’t as bad as I thought it would be.

TIM
Really? So the guy over there watching you and pleasuring himself, you had that factored in?

Katie looks down a hall to see a GRIZZLED INMATE staring at her through a cell door window, as we hear rhythmic BANGING.
KATIE
He’s probably just exercising... against the door.

Katie moves to the other side of Tim.

KATIE (CONT’D)
Anyway look, your whole life you’ve had no one and now you have a brother.

TIM
First of all, half-brother. From a one night stand. Second of all...

A hulking PRISONER suddenly LEAPS at them as he is being escorted by. His two guards yank him away.

TIM (CONT’D)
Second of all, that. Actually, let’s make that “first of all.” Half-brother second, LUNGING Psycho first.
(as we hear more rhythmic banging, to Grizzled Inmate)
And don’t worry, you’re still in the mix! Did not forget about you.

ANOTHER GUARD steps in and addresses them.

ANOTHER GUARD
You here for Justin Munger?

INT. PRISON VISITING AREA

JUSTIN (now late 20s, think Michael Keaton in “Night Shift”) approaches. Tim and Katie stand.

JUSTIN
Hey kids. I’m Justin.

TIM
Tim.

KATIE
Katie.

Justin’s already distracted by the sight of his prison buddy EDDIE being visited by his wife.

JUSTIN
(shouting across)
Hey Eddie. Eddie. Tell her what I said about the Samoan in the shower.

TIM
Did anybody tell you why we’re here?
JUSTIN
Church group, right?

Loud laughter from Eddie’s wife.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
(to Eddie’s wife)
Yeah?

TIM
The reason we’re here –

JUSTIN
(to Eddie’s wife)
You like that one?
(to Tim)
Look, I’m not saying “wasted journey”
but I already kind of promised the
Jehovah’s Witnesses.

TIM
We’re not with a church group.

JUSTIN
(shouting across room)
Eddie, you want to talk to this guy
when you’re done? He’s with a church
group. Turn your life around.
(to Eddie’s wife)
You, it’s too late.

Big laugh from Eddie’s wife. Justin cackles, now totally not
paying attention to Tim and Katie.

TIM
(to Katie)
It’s going great.

Katie nudges him to continue.

TIM (CONT’D)
So my father wrote me about a...
relationship he’d had with a woman who
wasn’t my mother. There was a child.

Justin pulls the picture closer, concentrating.

JUSTIN
You know who this looks like?
(off Tim’s nod)
Is this Sasha’s kid? What does she
need, money? Okay,
(drawing closer)
I just made parole.
(MORE)
Now there’s a possible bank job. It’s only in pencil, but--

TIM

No--

JUSTIN

I want to be a father to this child.

TIM

You can’t.

JUSTIN

We’re short a driver.

KATIE

(blurting out)

This picture is of you!

JUSTIN

Wait. Go back.

KATIE

The woman Tim’s father had the... encounter with. That was your mother.

JUSTIN

Which... would make us...

JUSTIN (CONT’D)  TIM
Brothers!  Half brothers.

Justin locks Tim in an awkward embrace across the table.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)

I’m not alone.

At this, Tim softens slightly.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I always wanted a brother.

TIM

(self-deprecating smile)

Well, I’m it.

JUSTIN

(acknowledging shortfall)

Still.

GUARD

No touching.

JUSTIN

He’s my brother.
TIM
Half brother.

JUSTIN
(to the Guard, in disgust)
First time I ever met him, you think
he’s going to be bringing me drugs?
(to Tim, confidential)
Did you?
(off Tim’s shake of head)
You didn’t know.
(then, becoming emotional)
Nothing about this moment surprises
me. Not a thing. I’ve led a hard
life, I won’t lie. But what always
kept me going was that I knew one day,
my Dad would send someone, some
savior...
(dramatically)
...to take me home.

Justin is now WEEPING. Tim is a bit alarmed and at a loss.
He looks over at Katie, who is completely touched and caught
up in the moment. She beams and nods “yes.”

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

EXT. PRISON GATES

Tim and Katie stand by their car as a jaunty Justin is let out with his box of belongings.

KATIE
Of course it’s only for couple of days. But he’s got no place else to go, nobody else to turn to.

TIM
I’m sure he’s got other... jail folk, right? You know, guys who are “on the lam?” Like, a Morgan Freeman guy waiting in the Caribbean with Krugerrands?
(off her look)
I admit I’m kinda out of my depth here.
(genuinely puzzled)
Seriously, what’s a Krugerrand?

The Hulking Prisoner stares menacingly from the yard as Justin joins them and throws his belongings in the car.

JUSTIN
Bye Schneider!
(to Katie and Tim)
Prison bully. Never bothered me though. First day inside, I punched him right in the mouth. Of course in my case he punched me back and now I have mostly all new teeth.
(singsong)
“On the houuuuse!” Thank you, taxpayers!
(then, grandly)
Let’s go home.

Tim is looking back at the imposing Schneider.

TIM
(puzzled)
Schneider? Jewish guy?

JUSTIN
I know, right?

INT. KITCHEN

Katie’s prepared a gourmet spread. Justin eats, in ecstasy.

JUSTIN
What the hell is this???
KATIE
Salmon?

JUSTIN
The things they’ve come up with.
(one chef to another)
I was the best cook in my cell block but this “salmon” totally beats my “armpit grilled cheese.”

KATIE
(pleased)
I make it with a special garlic butter.

SAM
How long were you in jail?

TIM
Sam, I’m not sure that’s--

JUSTIN
No, it’s all right. A family should have no secrets.

TIM
Actually, we’re cool with secrets.

JUSTIN
When I was twelve, I would break into houses just to pretend what it would be like to be in a normal family. They sent me to juvenile detention.

KATIE
Aw.

JUSTIN
From then on it’s been a little of everything I guess: theft, larceny, petty larceny, grand larceny...
(giggling)
Doesn’t even sound like a word any more. Larceny. Larceny. LARceny.
(suddenly very serious)
Assault.

TIM
(quickly)
So what are your plans now?

JUSTIN
(with resolve)
Change.

Justin gets up, plate in hand and walks away from the table.
TIM
How about... accommodation-wise?

JUSTIN
Change myself. Change my life.

TIM
(calling after him)
Are there like hostels, half way houses? Somebody “on the lam” who could put you up in like, a rail car? How’s it work?
(then, to Katie)
Did he take his plate into the bathroom?

Loud urinating starts up from through the open door of bathroom down the hall. Sam stifles a laugh.

KATIE
(still pleased)
He just doesn’t want to let that salmon out of his sight.

TIM
Of course he likes your cooking, he’s been in lockdown for fifteen years. Or it is lockup? Okay that’s it, after dinner I’m jumping on Google.

JUSTIN (O.S.)
I’m going to have to avoid high risk environments. And I don’t want to be like “house rule” but cash and credit cards, you don’t want to leave lying around in the open. Substance wise, a glass of wine, a joint, don’t feel self-conscious.
(returning, plate in hand)
(to Sam, intent)
No crack, Sam. Seriously, never.
(savored reminiscence)
It is such a good buzz. Sooo nice...

Justin kind of stares off into space. Awkward silence.

KATIE
Well that’s a good lesson.
(to Tim)
You wanna show Justin where he’s staying?

Justin picks up the entire platter of salmon and a side dish.
JUSTIN
Let’s roll.

TIM
Dynamite.

INT. TIM’S STUDIO
Tim leads Justin in.

TIM
So it’s really only for a day or two--

JUSTIN
Oh my God!

Justin sprints around, touching everything, turning dials and flipping switches like a two-year old.

TIM
Yeah, don’t...
(as he tries to stop Justin)
I designed and built this whole studio. Kinda where I go to escape. That’s why I really think if you can hook up with some jail folk, I mean, that’s a thing, right?--

Justin sees the guitar.

JUSTIN
You’re a musician?

TIM
I was in a band, briefly.

JUSTIN
Never heard of them.

TIM
That wasn’t the name of the band. We weren’t called “Briefly.”

Justin sees the poster of “Two 2 Too.”

JUSTIN
Is this the band? Wait, is that you?

TIM
(a little proud)
It is.

JUSTIN
No it’s notttt!
TIM
Actually yeah, it is.

JUSTIN
No it’s nottttt!

TIM
Really, it’s me.

JUSTIN
No it’s--

TIM
Let’s agree to disagree.

JUSTIN
I want all this one day.
(scary determination)
I want everything you have!!
(off Tim’s apprehensive look)
That’s why I have to stay straight,
brother. I want a house, a salmon
wife and a sweet guitar like this!

Justin straps on the guitar.

TIM
Um, do you play?

JUSTIN
(of course)
Do I play?

Intrigued, Tim flips on the power. Justin whales away. It’s
total noise. Couple seconds then Tim flips off the power.

TIM
So, no.

JUSTIN
I do not play.

TIM
(re: guitar)
So, I’m gonna take that.

Tim removes the guitar and carries it towards the door.

JUSTIN
I picked up a little harmonica in prison.

TIM
(fake enthusiasm)
We’ll jam sometime. Hope the couch
isn’t too uncomfortable. See you in
the morning, Justin.
I can’t thank you enough, Tim. And don’t worry about me. Compared to prison, this is heaven.

Tim smiles politely. Then flips off the OVERHEAD LIGHTS which go off IN SECTIONS. He shuts the door, and we hear a SERIES OF HEAVY LOCKS SNAP SHUT. Justin sits in darkness.

A beat, then we hear soft harmonica warbling.

INT. KITCHEN

Katie is about to leave as Tim and Justin eat.

KATIE
I’m leaving. You and your brother--

TIM
Half-brother.

KATIE
You and Justin have fun at Sam’s game.

JUSTIN
Can’t wait! Who’s Sam again?

KATIE
The girl?

JUSTIN
The girl! Of course.

TIM
(to Katie)
Make sure Odetta orders more iPods and wireless headsets.

JUSTIN
(very interested)
IPods and wireless headsets?

KATIE
We own a music store.

TIM
(to Justin)
A store you can never go to.

JUSTIN
It’s both of yours?
TIM
When we got married, we decided to
work together because we couldn’t bear
the thought of spending all day apart.

JUSTIN
(touched)
I hope someday I love someone that much.

KATIE
(sans enthusiasm)
Yeah, the store’s great.

She exits. Tim calls after her.

TIM
Don’t feed the cats!

The door slams. Tim looks at Justin who just smiles.

TIM (CONT’D)
So Justin. What’s our employment plan?

JUSTIN
Well, a friend of mine said if I ever
get out, he has work upstate. A
slaughterhouse. He said he could get
me in as a chicken killer.

TIM
Nice.

The doorbell rings and Justin gets up.

JUSTIN
Yeah, I’m good with my hands.
(mimes strangling)
I have a really tight grip.

TIM
Good to know you’ll be bringing pro
skill to that operation.
(then)
Hey uh, I can get the door...

Justin opens it. Tim watches, confused, as a young Asian
woman, JASMINE, walks in in a coat and short dress. Justin
directs her down the hall to Tim’s studio.

JUSTIN
Heyyyyy, thanks for coming out. We’re
just down the hall.

Tim follows slowly, listening as they head into his studio.
JUSTIN (CONT’D)
You look terrific.

JASMINE
Thanks.

JUSTIN
No ’cause you looked great on the website but you never know. So there’s a couch, surprisingly comfortable...

Suddenly from upstairs, we hear:

SAM
Dad, we gotta leave for the game!

Tim ducks into the studio and shuts the door...

INT. TIM’S STUDIO
...so he’s inside with Justin and Jasmine.

JUSTIN
Tim, how big is your shower?

TIM
Did you... is this... an escort?

JUSTIN
(to Jasmine)
Is that what you prefer? I know “whore” has fallen out of favor.

JASMINE
Whatever.

JUSTIN
Escort it is, Tim. Good call.

TIM
Justin, this is... not okay.

JUSTIN
No?

TIM
Not on any level.

JUSTIN
Look, I probably should’ve told you this: I’m a very sexual person. And I’ve been locked up for twelve years.

TIM
Sam is upstairs.
JUSTIN
Sam?
  (then, remembering)
Oh my God, Sam.
  (to Jasmine, explaining)
The girl.

TIM
Yes, the girl.

JUSTIN
You’re right. Sorry, this is a huge learning curve for me.
  (to Jasmine)
Is there any way you could come back on a weekday before three?

TIM
No.

JUSTIN
Is Sam not in school? Oh Tim, don’t let her go down my path.

SAM
(from behind the door)
Dad, my game, we have to go!

JUSTIN
(shouting to the door)
Stay in school!

JASMINE
I’m gonna need fifty dollars.

JUSTIN
(to Tim)
Have you got forty-five dollars?

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD
Justin and Tim sit watching Sam’s game.

JUSTIN
You should have let me haggle.

TIM
Great and then what? Her pimp mack shows up and we all get bitched?
  (off Justin’s confused look)
Let’s just watch the scrimmage.

JUSTIN
I played football all the time in prison.
  (MORE)
Quarterback for the Aryan Brotherhood. I don’t subscribe to their beliefs but they needed an arm.

HEATHER, a pretty, sweet, single mom, sits down next to Tim.

HEATHER
Hi Tim.

TIM
Hey, Heather.

HEATHER
Did I miss anything important in the “preseason full pads scrimmage?”

Tim chuckles. Justin stares hungrily at Heather.

JUSTIN
I’m Tim’s brother, Justin.

TIM
Yeah. Half-brother, actually.

Hi.

HEATHER
Hello.

Heather turns back to the game. Justin continues to stare.

TIM
I don’t know what look you’re going for, but if it’s “murderous,” you’re nailing it.

JUSTIN
(reverently hushed)
Tim this... angel is who I need in my life. Who is she? What’s she into?

TIM
Well, she’s a single mom, so I’ll bet she’s into gainful employment.

JUSTIN
Funny, she doesn’t seem stuck up.

Back on the field, Sam’s team, the PANTHERS, scores a touchdown. A heavy-set LION parent, BLAKE stands up.

BLAKE
You gonna keep letting them clip us like that, ref?!
TIM  
(sighing, to Heather)  
Heyyy, it’s Take-It-Too-Seriously-Guy.

HEATHER  
(for their ears only)  
Yeah, sit down, Blake.

Justin nods, taking this as a cue.

JUSTIN  
(calling over)  
Yeah, sit down, Blake, ya  
(this would be bleeped)  
Fuckin’ bitch motherfucker or I’ll slit your goddamn throat!

Shocked silence as all the parents turn and look at Justin.

TIM  
Hey. Not prison.

JUSTIN  
Right. Sorry everybody.  
(to Blake)  
Don’t worry about your throat. It’s cool. No need.

On the field, Sam’s about to kick an extra point. Another array of chubby, determined lineman await. An ABNORMALLY HUGE ten-year-old, ETHAN, grins meanly. Justin notices.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)  
He’s a fat one.

ETHAN  
I’m gonna block that flippin’ kick, ding-dang it!

Justin looks at Tim, puzzled.

TIM  
Mormon.

JUSTIN  
Ah.

ALEJANDRO  
Hike!

The ball is snapped. Sam strides forward but Fat Ethan is fast. He dives and BLOCKS the kick, narrowly missing Sam.

BLAKE  
All right, Ethan! Way to flippin’ go!
Then a MONTAGE of Sam punting/kicking, with various Lions swooping in to block each. They seem to come from everywhere, especially Ethan. Tim shouts help, to no avail.

**TIM**
On your left! No, your right!

INTERCUT Justin valiantly hitting on Heather: showing off his tattoos, offering her cigarettes, demonstrating his physique by doing chin-ups under the bleachers.

Finally, one last extra point attempt by Sam.

**ALEJANDRO**
Hike!

But the ball sails past Alejandro. Sam picks it up, then freezes as Big Ethan rampages towards her. He TACKLES HER TO THE GROUND HARD. Tim reacts, stunned.

**JUSTIN**
(cheering)
Yeahhhhh!
(then off Tim’s look)
Sorry, which team is Sam?

Ethan stands over Sam and does a little sack dance/song.

**ETHAN**
Oh yeah/uh-huh/the Ethan-ator strikes/Ding-dang it!

Tim bolts from his seat and down to the field.

**TIM**
Hey get away from her!

Ethan, puzzled, runs back to his huddle.

**TIM (CONT'D)**
Are you okay, Sam?

**SAM**
I’m fine. Get out of here, Dad!

The Ref comes running over.

**REF**
No parents on the field.

**TIM**
How about getting... Fat White Albert off the field? Did you see what he did?
BLAKE
(yelling from the stands)
Aw, bull shitake mushroom, Tim! That was a clean play!

TIM
Clean play? She’s the kicker.

BLAKE
She had the ball, so she got tackled. That’s what football is. I mean I’m sorry if she’s...

TIM
What? A girl?

BLAKE
Well, yeah. I mean I don’t care if she plays but... girls get tackled too.

TIM
Oh really? Well...

Tim is momentarily stymied as the parents all watch. He notes the players, who seem to loom over Sam.

TIM (CONT'D)
You know what? You’re right.
(then)
Sam, come on, we’re going home.

SAM
What???

TIM
No more football. Get your stuff.

SAM
Dad...

TIM
I mean it, Sam! Get your stuff and let’s go!

Sam can’t believe it. She strides off, outraged. Tim tries to recover from the scene he’s just made. Justin approaches.

JUSTIN
That was the most horrible thing I’ve ever seen. And I’ve made soup in a toilet.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

INT. KITCHEN

Tim, Sam, and Justin arrive home. Katie is again cooking.

    TIM
    Why aren’t you at the store?

    KATIE
    Odetta’s got it.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC

Odetta makes out with her BOYFRIEND as a line of customers holding all kinds of musical instruments wait to check out.

About six CATS eat food from a bowl on the counter.

INT. KITCHEN

    JUSTIN
    That smells amazing, Katie, is that “salmon” again?

    KATIE
    That is actually “chocolate,” but good guess! How was the game?

    SAM
    Dad’s a jerk!!

She storms upstairs.

    KATIE
    What happened?

    TIM
    She just about got killed today so I said no more football.

    KATIE
    Tim...

    JUSTIN
    Can I say something?

    TIM
    No. Oh, unless you want to talk about the hooker you invited over?

    KATIE
    What?
JUSTIN
Tim, I thought we agreed on “escort.”

TIM
It doesn’t matter! Look, you can’t stay here, okay? This is not working.

JUSTIN
But... we’re family.

TIM
We have the same father! That’s all. A criminal who I have absolutely no memory of, who left when I was five, apparently to cheat on my mom with your mom and make you. So we’re not family, we’re just related by asshole.

Justin gets a very sad look on his face. He trods down the hall to Tim’s studio. Tim turns to Katie.

TIM (CONT’D)
Listen...

LOUD ANNOYING NOISE from the studio.

TIM (CONT’D)
Off the guitar, Justin!

The noise stops. Tim looks at Katie. Can’t deal.

TIM (CONT’D)
I’m going to the store.

Tim bolts out, leaving Katie there. On the TV, Emeril.

EMERIL (ON TV)
Bam!

Annoyed, Katie tosses a mango at the TV. It hits and the screen falls off the wall.

KATIE
Damn it.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC
Katie enters. Odetta is at the register with her magazine. Through a window, we see Tim is in the lesson room.

ODETTA
He’s all up in my stuff today.

KATIE
What’s he got you doing?
ODETTA
Oh, now you’re gonna start?

Best not to pursue this line of questioning, so Katie moves on.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC - LESSON ROOM

She enters to find Tim strumming a mournful tune.

TIM
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains/There’s a land that’s fair and bright...

KATIE
(sympathetically)
Oh...
(joins in somewhat off-key)
And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth--

TIM
That’s actually the next verse.

KATIE
(correcting herself)
There’s a lake of stew/And of whiskey too--

TIM
Now you’re too far... go back...

KATIE
Camptown ladies sing this song--

TIM
Not everybody’s musical.

KATIE
Just put the guitar down for a sec?
(hes does)
Now, I know you were trying to look out for Sam, but you can’t decide this all by yourself.

TIM
You’re right. I’m sorry. But what the hell is she doing?

KATIE
What do you mean?

TIM
Football. Where does that come from? You’re not a sports person. The only sport I like is Minecraft...
KATIE
...which is not a sport...

TIM
...which should be a sport because I am great at it.
(then, clearly bothered)
We're like strangers.

Tim opens a case to put the guitar away, then stops, contemplating.

KATIE
Look, Sam's different. That's what's great about her. You're different too. You're not strangers, you're just... sides of a coin.

A beat as he just stares down at the guitar case.

TIM
Yeah.

KATIE
Okay.

TIM
There's a cat turd in here.

KATIE
Sorry.

TIM
It's all right.
(then)
Wait, when you left, did you lock Justin in the studio?

KATIE
Lock him in? What?

Panicked, Tim bolts out the door with Katie following.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC - STORE - CONTINUOUS

Tim and Katie run out. Odetta flips a switch and the outside metal gate starts rolling down.

INT. KITCHEN

Tim rushes in and sees the kitchen TV hanging off the wall. He turns to Katie.

TIM
Look what he did!
Tim continues to his studio where he...

**INT. TIM’S STUDIO**

...finds everything in its place. Even Justin’s clothes are folded as though expecting a cell inspection. Okay. Now what? He exits into the hallway where he sees...

**INT. TIM AND KATIE’S BEDROOM**

Katie sitting on the edge of the bed. Through a large picture window, she watches Justin and Sam THROWING THE FOOTBALL around in the backyard. Tim sits down next to her.

Justin and Sam are having a great time. Justin knows what he’s doing. He directs patterns, hits her with the pass.

   **KATIE**  
   This is nice, Tim.

   **TIM**  
   Yeah.  
   (with a sigh)  
   First time he hasn’t seemed like a criminal.

Katie chuckles. She puts her head on his shoulder and they keep watching the nice tableau. We hear the jangly opening strains of the actual Smiths and “This Charming Man.” And Tim’s eyes grow wide...

**EXT. BACKYARD – FLASHBACK – 1985**

Tim, five years old, runs around the backyard in the same pattern as Sam.

   **FIVE-YEAR-OLD TIM**  
   Dad! Pass it!

We see TIM’S grizzled but grinning DAD, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, with the football.

   **TIM’S DAD**  
   Go further!

A SKI-MASK and a GUN fall out of his jacket.

   **TIM’S DAD (CONT’D)**  
   Whoopsy!

Tim’s Dad hastily gathers and re-hides the offending items, then throws the ball. Five-year-old Tim bobbles it comically.

   **FIVE-YEAR-OLD TIM**  
   Aw. Pass it again!
A large car with tinted windows has pulled into the driveway.

TIM’S DAD
Later, okay?

FIVE-YEAR-OLD TIM
Okay!

Tim’s dad gets in the car and it rolls away. Five-year-old Tim picks up the ball and throws it. Not pretty.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD TIM (CONT’D)
Mom, can I play Atari?

*This Charming Man/He knows so much about these things*....

INT. TIM & KATIE’S BEDROOM – PRESENT DAY

Tim’s mouth hangs open. He looks at Katie who is obliviously munching on something.

KATIE
(mouth full)
I made cupcakes, you want one?

EXT. BACKYARD

Tim is relating his revelation to Justin, Katie and Sam.

TIM
It all just came flooding back.
Football. He loved it. As a matter of fact, Sundays were the only time he wasn’t out causing trouble because he’d be in his chair watching the games. The remote in one hand and a shotgun in the other.

JUSTIN
(fondly)
A real American.

TIM
Look, I don’t have any connection to him, so I guess... you’re it.
(to Sam)
And you’re it. And you know... that’s something. Something good.

Katie and Sam smile. Justin is very moved.

JUSTIN
I want to live in your house forever.
TIM
Not a chance. But can you help Sam
not get killed out there?

SAM
I can play?

TIM
Well, Uncle Justin got the football
gene. Let’s see if he can help you
avoid all those big tackler guys.

JUSTIN
(touched)
Uncle Justin.
(to Sam)
Who are you playing on Saturday?

SAM
Same as last week, the Lions. Except
this game counts.

JUSTIN
(some sort of odd coach mode)
Lions!!! It counts!!!
(then)
Okay. This isn’t about football. This
about respect. And the way you
get respect is to find the biggest,
baddest bully and punch him right in
the mouth.
(to Tim, about to protest)
I’m speaking metaphorically.
(back to Sam)
Speaking literally, you should kick
him in the nuts.

TIM
No.

JUSTIN
It’s perfect because she’s already
kicking.
(demonstrating to Sam)
You just angle it a little--

TIM
I just thought you might know some
football way she can protect herself.

JUSTIN
This is a foot balls way.
(nods wisely)
TIM
Please stop nodding.

SAM
Dad, I don’t need to protect myself. That’s why we have equipment.

JUSTIN
No equipment in the world protects against what I am suggesting.

SAM
Dad, I’ve got shoulder pads, leg pads, a helmet... what else would I need?

Tim suddenly has an idea.

INT. REINSDORF MUSIC

Tim is furiously working with a SOLDERING IRON. Reveal he is installing something inside of SAM’S FOOTBALL HELMET. Pan over to see an opened package labeled “WIRELESS HEADSET.”

Odetta watches skeptically from the register. As do the cats.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Tim is furiously playing Madden 12. A montage where we see play after play after play... He just keeps going.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

The Panthers and the Lions again on the field. Tim, Katie, Justin sit glumly. Heather (the single mom) is nearby. The scoreboard: Lions 28, Panthers 0. On the field, some Lions throw a Panther back for a loss. Our old friend Ethan pops up to do his sack dance.

BLAKE
Get ’em Ethan, you son of a biscuit!

KATIE
(under her breath)
Stupid Mormons.
(calling)
Don’t worry Panthers, the snack is homemade chili with a veggie option!

On the field, Sam and the kicking unit run on.

TIM
What’s going on? She can’t kick a field goal from there. It’s too far.
KATIE
I guess Coach Andre figured nothing else is working.

TIM
Okay... here we go.

He puts a WIRELESS HEADSET on his ear. Gives it a tap.

TIM (CONT’D)
Can you hear me honey?

On the field, Sam taps the side of her helmet, talking to Tim via the headset he soldered in.

SAM
Yeah, Dad.

We see the usual lineup of snarling lineman.

LION’S COACH
Ethan, hang back!

Ethan grins, and trots back to the five yard line.

ETHAN
Ha! I’m gonna return your ding dang kick for a friggin’ T.D.!

Back in the stands:

JUSTIN
It actually sounds dirtier somehow.

KATIE
Come on, you can do it, honey! First girl to kick a field goal!

She looks at Tim with his headset.

KATIE (CONT’D)
Are you sure you’re going to be able to help her?

TIM
Honey, I played thirty-six hours of Madden, I’ll be able to clue her in to any possible play.

ALEJANDRO
Hike!

The ball is snapped.
(immediately panicking)
Mother of God, what’s happening??

A LARGE LINEMAN breaks through the line. Sam sees she’s got no chance to get the kick off.

SAM
(to Alejandro)
Pitch it, pitch it!

Alejandro pitches the ball to Sam. The Lions rush towards her. Tim turns to Justin.

TIM
This wasn’t in the game!

JUSTIN
Tell her to head for the sideline!

TIM
(into mic)
Head for the sideline, sweetie!

Sam does so, lineman in pursuit. Justin then gives instructions that Tim repeats into his mic.

JUSTIN
Cut left!

TIM
Cut left!

Sam does, leaving a couple Lions in the dust.

JUSTIN
Spin!

TIM
Spin!

She neatly rolls away from another.

JUSTIN
Straight-arm!

TIM
Straight-arm!

Sam straight-arms an oncoming tackler.

JUSTIN
Nice!
TIM

Nice!

Only one Lion awaits. Ethan. He grins as he sees Sam heading for the goal line. His expression changes to confusion as Sam heads RIGHT TOWARDS HIM.

ETHAN
(to himself)
What the fudge?

JUSTIN
Spin!

TIM
Spin!

But instead, Sam BOWLS ETHAN OVER. Touchdown. The Panther crowd goes nuts. Sam stands up and spikes the ball, triumphant. Tim high-fives Justin. Blake stands up.

BLAKE
Come on, ref! There were like five penalties on that play!

HEATHER
Shove it up your ass, Blake!

JUSTIN
(to Katie)
An angel, I tell you. Straight from heaven.

TIM
Great job Sam!

Ethan climbs to his feet. Sam KICKS HIM IN THE NUTS.

JUSTIN
Yeahhh!!

TIM
No!

JUSTIN
(immediately)
No!

INT. KITCHEN

They eat a sumptuous lunch prepared by Katie.

TIM
So, suspended for one game, that’s not so bad.
SAM  
(proudly)  
First girl ever suspended.

KATIE  
The first of many firsts.

TIM  
You scored a touchdown, that’s really the part to focus on.

SAM  
Yeah, Coach said I can be a running back!

TIM  
(not thrilled)  
Yeah...

A horn honks outside.

JUSTIN  
Uhp, that’s me. Gotta go.

Justin begins to stuff food items into his pockets. Tim reaches over and stops him.

TIM  
What do you mean, that’s you?

JUSTIN  
The chicken killing gig? Those are my friends, here to take me.

TIM  
Oh. Uh, okay.

JUSTIN  
But how can I leave behind the best food in the world?  
(picking up an entire plate of ham)  
Can I have this?

KATIE  
(touched)  
Of course.

Justin heads out the door with the ham. Katie, Tim and Sam walk over and watch through a window. Two sketchy guys, CLIFTON and BRODY, lean on a car that has tinted windows. A weird look comes over Tim. This seems familiar. Then they get a glimpse of a GUN in Brody’s waistband.

KATIE (CONT’D)  
Those guys don’t seem like chicken killers. They seem... bad.
SAM
Why does half-uncle Justin have to go?

TIM
Well...

Katie looks at Tim. He shrugs helplessly.

TIM (CONT’D)
He needs a job.

KATIE
He can work in the store!

TIM
Ohhh.. I don’t know about that. Plus you work in the store.

KATIE
I don’t want to work in the store!
(off his surprised look)
I’m sorry. I love you. But I can’t work there anymore because I slightly slightly hate it with a passion.

TIM
You hate it?

KATIE
I didn’t used to but... look it’s your thing honey. I’m going to do something else.

TIM
Which is...?

KATIE
I’m gonna be a chef!

TIM
What?

KATIE
Yeah! I’m gonna go back to school and, and, get a degree, and... do it!

TIM
When were you going to tell me this?

KATIE
Now! I mean, I just thought of it now. But now! I mean... what do you think?

Tim looks at Katie. She’s glowing, caught up in the rush of this idea. And suddenly to Tim it all just seems right.
TIM
Let's do it!

Tim strides outside. Through the window we watch (we can’t hear anything). Tim motions for Justin to come inside, explains the plan. Touched, Justin hugs Tim. Inside, Katie smiles proudly at Sam.

KATIE
You got a good daddy, Sam. He loves his family.

Justin apologizes to Clifton and Brody. But they are not happy with Justin’s decision to stay. They talk to Justin and Tim with increasingly threatening gestures. Justin and Tim apologize. Clifton and Brody advance slowly on them as they talk. Justin and Tim start to back around the car. Katie turns to Sam, still smiling.

KATIE (CONT’D)
Sweetie, can you dial 911 for me?

END OF SHOW