

10 Lessons from Mom

by

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FADE IN:

INT. A SMALL BUNGALOW HOME - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (1993) - DAY

A young boy, CHAD, age five, sits on his bed reading Green Eggs and Ham. His bed fills up the majority of his room. The paint on the walls is peeling and he has no signs of a "normal" childhood bedroom. No posters, no desk, no baseball themed wallpaper; only a a stack of Dr. Seuss books beside his bed on the floor.

Chad finishes his book and climbs off his bed and stands at the window, looking out at his neighbourhood. He sees some kids outside playing street hockey, his eyes filled with sadness. Suddenly there is a loud slam (main door being closed) and Chad almost leaves his feet.

Chad can clearly hear yelling down below on the main floor. The yelling is muffled as he can't quite make out what is being said. Chad sits on the edge of his bed breathing heavily, almost to the point of hyperventilation. He jumps up towards the door and pauses. Heavy footsteps begin up the stairs towards his room. Chad's panic increases and tears start to form. He moves to the window and looks back as the footsteps get louder with each step.

INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - DAY

A man swings open Chad's bedroom door aggressively to find the room empty with the window open.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO - DAY

Chad sprints down the street as fast as he can. He doesn't look back once.

CUT TO:

INT. SOME BAR IN SOUTH SIDE - NIGHT

A young woman, LEANNE, age 21, is in the bar with two friends who are both female. Leanne's friend, BETH, is giving her a hard time about a guy in the bar.

BETH

Oh come on Leanne. You should go talk to him. He's gorgeous.

OTHER FRIEND

If you don't, I will.

LEANNE

That creep? Please.

BETH

You serious? If that doesn't pass for you, I give up. What I wouldn't do.

LEANNE

Yeah, but you're a slut Beth.

BETH

I am not. For the most part.

OTHER FRIEND

It's not like you have to sleep with the guy. It's called dating. Maybe you should give it a try.

LEANNE

Will you two shut up if I go over there and shut him down?

BETH

You have to give him a chance.

LEANNE

Whatever. I'll give him a very small window of opportunity. Then I'm drinking my beer in peace.

Leanne gets up, chugs her beer and walks over to the guy.

He is dressed somewhere between formal and casual and has the typical handsome features: squared jawline, stubble beard, black hair, dark eyes, fit, etc.

MAN

Hi.

LEANNE

You were staring.

MAN

Yeah I was. Sorry about that.

LEANNE

That's fine. What's your name?

MAN

Brandon.

LEANNE

Leanne.

BRANDON

What are you drinking?

LEANNE

Beer of course.

BRANDON

No vodka cran for you?

LEANNE

Yeah, I'm not that kind of girl. If you're buying, I'll take a thirty year Talisker.

BRANDON

Scotch woman? Wow.

LEANNE

Yeah. Why are you here by yourself?

BRANDON

No friends.

LEANNE

Not surprised.

BRANDON

Ouch. Looks like you're not giving me much of a chance.

LEANNE

I came over here didn't I?

BRANDON

Friends pressured you?

LEANNE

Maybe.

BRANDON

I live nearby. Didn't ask any friends to join me. This is a study break for me.

LEANNE

Oh yeah? Where you study?

BRANDON

Engineering at UC.

LEANNE

Ah. What will you be building?

BRANDON

Bridges.

LEANNE

Nice.

BRANDON

And you?

LEANNE

U of C as well. Business.

BRANDON

What made you decide on Business?

LEANNE

It wasn't what my parents wanted me to do.

BRANDON

You're such a badass. Rebellious your way into Business.

Leanne laughs and finally flashes a smile at Brandon.

LEANNE

It's not really what I wanted either. Met in the middle.

BRANDON

What did you want to take?

Leanne smiles and leans back.

LEANNE

Didn't want to take anything.

The waitress walks up.

WAITRESS

What can I get you two?

BRANDON

Two thirty year old Taliksers. Neat.

LEANNE

So, what do you like to do with your free time Brandon? Besides sitting at bars alone, staring at women from a distance.

BRANDON

Besides that? Oh I dunno, I like music. I sing a little.

LEANNE

Any instruments?

BRANDON

Guitar.

LEANNE

That can be either really hot or completely douchy.

BRANDON

Which is it for you?

LEANNE

I haven't decided yet.

Leanne and Brandon tap glasses and take a sip of the scotches. Brandon fights the bite of his, while Leanne truly

enjoys hers.

LEANNE
Damn that's smooth.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANDON'S BMW - NIGHT

Brandon and Leanne sit parked in front of Leanne's apartment complex. It isn't the most impressive area. Dated but still reasonably safe based on appearance.

LEANNE
Nice car. Parents buy it for you?

Brandon seems to get slightly defensive.

BRANDON
Nope. She's all mine.

LEANNE
Must be nice.

Brandon smiles and puts his arm around her. Leanne is completely comfortable with his move.

BRANDON
I had a good time tonight.

LEANNE
Yeah, I did too. You're okay for an eng student.

BRANDON
I appreciate that.

Brandon leans in for a kiss. Leanne smiles at the cliché moment that is taking place. She hesitates slightly and then reciprocates, moving in for this kiss.

They continue making out for about ten seconds, when Brandon starts to get a little handsy with Leanne. She moves his hands away a couple times but he continues to grope her. Leanne pulls away.

LEANNE
Brandon.

BRANDON
Something wrong?

LEANNE
Yes. You are feeling me up in your parents BMW and we just met. I like you, you've done well tonight. Can we just take it slow?

BRANDON
I like you too.

Brandon leans in again for a kiss. Leanne pulls back.

LEANNE
I think I should go.

BRANDON
What? Why?

LEANNE
It's late. I'll give you my number.

Brandon looks away.

LEANNE
Or what?

BRANDON
Don't even bother. Waste of time
anyway.

LEANNE
Excuse me?

BRANDON
Just another tease aren't you. You
wouldn't answer a call from me
anyway, would you? Bitch.

Leanne gets out of the car. She proceeds to walk around to
Brandon's side and knock on his window.

Brandon has a smug smile on his face. He rolls down the
window.

BRANDON
Yes dear?

LEANNE
Get out of the car?

BRANDON
Why?

LEANNE
Just do it please.

Brandon laughs to himself as he climbs out of the car.

BRANDON
What, you want to take things to
the next level and hold hands?

Leanne drops Brandon with a hard right hook. She kicks him
in the stomach, climbs on top of him, and punches him again
in the face.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O MALE
Lesson one. Don't be rude to
Leanne. Just don't.

--CONTINUE--

She gets up and walks to her apartment.

BRANDON
What the fuck?! You stupid crazy
bitch!

LEANNE
(to herself - walking
away)
Yup. That's me.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Leanne wakes up in her bed and looks at her alarm clock.
8:05 AM.

LEANNE
Shit.

She scrambles out of bed and starts throwing on some
clothes.

EXT. BUS STOP IN SOUTH SIDE - MORNING

Leanne looks at her watch. She is clearly on edge as she is
late for her morning class.

She looks to her left and spots a young black boy. He is
crying softly and looks incredibly panicked. He walks back
around the corner, as if looking for someone and then looks
back down the street they are standing on. Leanne tries to
resist saying something to the boy for a few moments but
then finally gives in.

LEANNE
Excuse me?

She seems to have startled the boy.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Are you okay?

The boy's face is stained with tears.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Are you lost?

The boy does not say a word. He just stands there, looking
up at Leanne.

LEANNE(CONT.)
(to herself)

Crap.

She looks over. Still no bus.

LEANNE(CONT.)
What's your name?

Still nothing.

LEANNE(CONT.)
Tell me something kid. I'm in a
hurry.

Chad looks up at Leanne's face. Her face goes from
frustrated to a bright smile.

LEANNE(CONT.)
Could you tell me where you live
maybe?

Chad nods no.

LEANNE(CONT.)
Well hey. I think you just gave me
a response. We are making some
serious progress little man.

The 99 bus pulls to a stop in front of Leanne. She takes one
step towards it and looks back at the kid who looks
incredibly worried and scared all over again.

LEANNE(CONT.)
(to herself)
Sick day, I guess.

Leanne walks back over to Chad.

LEANNE(CONT.)
You hungry?

A nod from Chad. Leanne extends her hand.

LEANNE(CONT.)
Let's go get some grub then.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTH SIDE DINER - DAY

Leanne and Chad sit across from each other in a booth. A
waitress approaches.

WAITRESS
What can I get for you?

LEANNE
What do you want to eat?

Chad looks down.

LEANNE (CONT.)

You want pancakes?

She gets a nod from Chad.

LEANNE

Pancakes it is. I'll have the omelet and we'll get two orange juice as well.

WAITRESS

Perfect. I'll be right back with your drinks.

Leanne puts her attention back on Chad.

LEANNE

What am I going to do with you?

Chad is looking out the window.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Your parents are probably terrified right now.

Chad gives Leanne a scared look.

LEANNE (CONT.)

What's wrong?

Chad looks back outside and spots a man across the street. He lets out a whimper and starts to breath heavily again. He gets low and scoots out of his side of the booth and sits up close to Leanne for protection.

Leanne notices the subtle bruising around his eye and then looks outside to see the man standing in the street doing a 360, as if looking for someone specific.

LEANNE

Did someone do this to your eye?
Was it that man out there? Can you please say yes or no?

CHAD

(whispering)

Yes.

LEANNE

Yes? Is that your foster parent?

Chad nods yes.

LEANNE

And he did this to your eye?

Chad cries softly and nods. Leanne puts her arm around the boy to comfort him.

Leanne looks back outside to find the man gone from the street. The door of the diner swings open and the man enters. He has a full shadowed beard and grey hair. She notices a distinct scar over his left eye and he walks with a slight hunch, and heavy footsteps.

As soon as he spots the boy next to Leanne, he scowls momentarily and then turns on a fake smile as he approaches.

Leanne moves around Chad, blocking him from the man. As the man is about to say something, Leanne cuts him off.

LEANNE

This your boy?

CHAD'S FATHER

It is. I've been looking for him.

LEANNE

My name is Leanne. You are?

CHAD'S FATHER

John.

LEANNE

Nice to meet you, John. I couldn't seem to get a word from your son. What is his name?

JOHN

It's Chad.

LEANNE

Chad has a bruise over his eye.

JOHN

Yes he does. We play a lot of baseball in the back yard.

LEANNE

Oh that's nice. You have a catch with your son. So cute.

John flashes another forced smile.

JOHN

Yup, that's right. He's a good kid except for him wandering off all the time.

LEANNE

An adventurous one is he?

JOHN

Yeah, that's right.

John reaches out for Chad.

JOHN (CONT.)

Let's go. You've caused this lady
enough grief for one day.

Chad pulls back.

JOHN (CONT.)

I won't ask again. He reaches in
more aggressively and Leanne cuts
him off.

LEANNE

Police are already on there way.
It's in your best interest for you
to get the hell out of here.

John staggers back in disbelief.

LEANNE(CONT.)

You think I'm stupid? My dad and
his lawyers will be so far up your
ass just 'cause I told them to. Get
the hell away from this boy.

The whole diner is in absolute silence, watching the young
woman make her stand.

JOHN

You'll regret this one you little
bitch.

LEANNE

Will I? What are you gonna do?

John laughs and walks out of the diner. Chad stands up and
hugs her leg. Leanne exhales.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leanne and Chad sit on the couch watching TV. Chad is just
looking up at Leanne, not paying attention to the
television.

LEANNE

You don't like this show?

CHAD

Can we have more pancakes?

Leanne laughs.

LEANNE

Yes. I can make you some pancakes.
What else would you like?

No response.

LEANNE

Juice?

CHAD

Yes please.

LEANNE

The manners are coming through and everything. Very nice! You know how to use the toilet, right?

Chad just smiles.

LEANNE (CONT.)

I'll take that as a yes.

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Leanne watches Chad eat his pancakes quickly.

LEANNE

(to herself)

What am I gonna do.

Chad finishes his bite of pancakes and looks up at Leanne.

CHAD

Please don't take me back.

Leanne leans over the table and looks at Chad for a beat.

LEANNE

(whispering)

I won't.

INT. CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES - MORNING

Leanne sits down in an office as Chad looks around the room. He pays particular attention to a picture of the social worker with her family at a ball game at Fenway park.

Leanne looks at the gold plate name tag on the desk, Susanne Triggs. Susanne walks in.

She is a very tall athletic women. She looks tired and worn out from a long days work but is still polite nonetheless.

SUSAN

Thank-you so much for calling Leanne. You definitely did the right thing.

Susan looks over at Chad, who is still locked in on the same picture.

SUSAN (CONT.)
(to Chad)
You like baseball Chad?

He continues to gaze at the picture.

SUSAN (CONT.)
(to Leanne)
We should probably talk alone.

Susan picks up the phone and dials a few numbers.

SUSAN (CONT.)
(on the phone)
Hey. Could you come to my office
and entertain this young gentleman
for ten minutes. Perfect, thanks.

There is an awkward pause between Susan and Leanne until a man comes into the office.

MAN
Hey there buddy. Can you come with
me for a second.

The boy looks at him and then back at the picture.

SUSAN
He likes baseball.

LEANNE
And pancakes. If you got any of
those.

MAN
(to Chad)
I like baseball too. In fact, I've
got a signed Greg Maddux ball in my
office. I don't normally let people
play with it but you can, if you'd
like.

Chad quickly walks out the door.

SUSAN
Thanks Ben.

Ben exits and closes the door behind him.

SUSAN
So. Leanne. You've had quite the
day I understand.

LEANNE
Yeah, it had its moments for sure.

SUSAN

Let me just take you through what would typically happen in a case such as this.

LEANNE

Okay.

SUSAN

We will facilitate the boy while we do an investigation of his foster parents to see if they are fit to have the boy back. If -

LEANNE

Have him back? That's horse shit.

SUSAN

I understand your concern but these are the procedures in place. If there has been significant abuse, he will obviously be relocated. Don't you worry.

LEANNE

There has been abuse. The kid is terrified. That's why he ran. And I met the father, we talked about this. He had me scared, which isn't exactly easy to do.

Susan smiles as she appreciates Leanne's strength and independence.

SUSAN

We appreciate what you have done. I can assure you that this boy will be put in a home that does not involve abuse.

LEANNE

No abuse. That's great. The bar is set real high nowadays.

SUSAN

We can't guarantee that every foster home is going to be 100% perfection for a child. It's just not how it works.

LEANNE

So where does he stay while you investigate?

SUSAN

We will check in the system for any relatives he may have that would be fit to take him in.

LEANNE

He told me there was no one else.
No one he has met at least.

SUSAN

Right, well we will still do a
thorough check. And if nobody turns
up we will place him in a juvenile
home, separate from those in
placement there.

Leanne is upset with the information she is receiving. She
thinks for a moment.

LEANNE

Can he stay with me?

SUSAN

No, I'm sorry. Only if you were a
relative or a legal guardian.

Leanne bites her nails and looks out the window, uneasy.

LEANNE

How would I become a guardian?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - SOME STREET - 1 YEAR LATER - DAY

Chad is wearing a Chicago Cubs hat and is walking with a
baseball glove. Leanne walks next to him, also wearing a
Cubs ball cap.

GROWN MAN V/O (CHAD)

My mother is a woman of principles.
Straight down to her core. My God,
is she stubborn. She thinks she's
always right, although I suppose
most of the time she is. The great
thing about mom is you know what
you're getting. No bull shit, as
she would say. There is time for
fun and time for work, and she's
definitely shown me that there
needs to be an equal balance of
both. I do believe that the
education system across the
wonderful United States of America
should be be exposed to a text book
that contains important lessons
from my mother. Maybe a clean
version should be applied. Mom is a
female Red Foreman. White people
are funny.

Leanne and Chad round the street corner.

CHAD

Can I get on your shoulders?

Leanne crouches down and Chad climbs up.

LEANNE

Oh my god kid. How much do you weigh?

Chad laughs.

They continue to walk until the classic Wrigley field comes into site.

CHAD

Wooohhh. That's where the game is?

LEANNE

You bet. Best seats in the house kiddo.

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad and Leanne sit in the highest part of the nose bleeds.

CHAD

The players are like ants.

LEANNE

Yeah, they must have mixed up our seats. We will get better ones next time.

CHAD

Did you play baseball, Leanne?

LEANNE

Of course. I played on the boys team.

CHAD

Why didn't you play with the girls?

LEANNE

There was a lot more cheering routines than focussing on the game.

CHAD

Cheering routines?

LEANNE

Don't worry about it. But yeah, I loved playing baseball. You know what I liked the most?

CHAD

What?

LEANNE

The smell of fresh cut grass.

CHAD

Really?

LEANNE

Yeah, well. That and driving one back at the pitcher.

CHAD

Can we come back here?

LEANNE

You like it here?

CHAD

Yeah, it's fun.

LEANNE

Chad. I'd like to talk to you about something.

Chad is looking at one of the ice cream vendor guys moving up the aisle. Leanne gets his attention.

LEANNE(CONT.)

Do you like living with me?

Chad smiles.

CHAD

I like your pancakes.

LEANNE(CONT.)

Do you like me?

CHAD

Yeah. I like you Leanne.

Leanne smiles and looks away. She looks back down on the game.

LEANNE

Would you like to call me mom instead?

CHAD

Okay. Will you still call me Chad?

LEANNE

Do you want me to?

CHAD

I don't like that name.

LEANNE
Maybe we can switch it.

CHAD
Can I?

LEANNE
Sure.

CHAD
Can I be the hulk?

LEANNE
I'll let you think about it. It's a valid option. As long as it's not Jim Bullinger. Guys been throwing batting practice out here.

CHAD
That's okay. I like the hulk better anyway.

Leanne looks off with a distant stare.

CHAD
Leanne? (BEAT) Leanne?

LEANNE
I'm sorry who?

CHAD
Can I have some ice cream?

Leanne flags the guy down and hands Chad some money.

CHAD (CONT.)
Is this for you too?

LEANNE
Yes, please. Thank-you.

CHAD
Don't mention it.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Leanne and Chad knock on the door. Her mother, LOUANNE, answers the door. She appears to be a sophisticated woman based on how she is dressed.

LOUANNE
Leanne, come in.

LEANNE
Where is dad?

LOUANNE

Oh, he is out on a hunting trip
with Reg.

LEANNE

I thought he was going to be here
for the weekend.

LOUANNE

Sorry dear.

Leanne is already frustrated and there is apparent tension
in the room.

LEANNE

Aren't you gonna say hi to Chad,
mom?

LOUANNE

Yes of course. Hi Chad.

CHAD

Hi.

LOUANNE

I better go check on that roast.

Louanne walks into the kitchen, leaving Leanne shaking her
head.

LEANNE

You want to go outside and play?

CHAD

Play what?

LEANNE

Grab your ball glove from the car.
I'll meet you out there in five
minutes.

Chad exits.

Leanne walks into the kitchen.

LEANNE

Need a hand with anything?

LOUANNE

I think I have everything covered.
You must be a pretty good cook now.

LEANNE

Now?

LOUANNE

Lee. Don't make things so intense
all the time.

LEANNE

Well, mom. I think the circumstances are fairly intense.

LOUANNE

Oh?

LEANNE

Yeah. I know I'm twenty-two years old but you know I'm not an idiot.

LOUANNE

Of course you aren't. You're an incredibly bright girl. How is school?

Leanne is now fully pissed.

LEANNE

We already talked about this a month ago. I'm no longer in the program.

LOUANNE

That's a shame. Maybe you'll still have a shot at harvard if your father makes some calls.

LEANNE

Oh my God. You are impossible.

LOUANNE

What's the matter?

LEANNE

The matter, is that I don't want to be a lawyer mom. How many times do we have to go through this? And neither you or dad are emotionally equipped to deal with the elephant in the room. The elephant being a young black boy that I am going to adopt.

Louanne drops the plates from her hands into the sink.

LOUANNE

Why are you doing this?

LEANNE

Life isn't about a career.

LOUANNE

You can't adopt this child.

LEANNE

Why not?

LOUANNE

Because You'll have nothing left for yourself! That's why. No time to find a husband. No time to get an education. No time to live the life that you deserve.

LEANNE

Do you know what the system did to this boy?

LOUANNE

No, I don't. And I don't want to know, Lee. You think this is the only case? We've coped with change from law school. We really have. But this. This is too much.

LEANNE

Too much? I think it was too much for him. That's what I think. He was a god damn punching bag in that home.

LOUANNE

Make sure the next home isn't -

LEANNE

I don't want there to be a next home! I want his home to be my home! And I want my mom and dad to support me! 'Cause that's what parents are supposed to do.

Leanne is teared up. Louanne looks at her daughter.

LOUANNE

Please just trust me. This is me supporting you. I need you to live your life.

A beat.

LOUANNE (CONT.)

It's not just being a single mother at twenty-two with no education. Can you see any other issues?

LEANNE

What other issues?

LOUANNE

The boy is black. The world is not fair.

LEANNE

You would let something like that be a deciding factor?

LOUANNE

I'm not saying that for sure. But a factor nonetheless.

LEANNE

Is that why dad isn't here?

LOUANNE

What?

LEANNE

Is that why dad isn't here?

LOUANNE

You think that of your father?

LEANNE

Why isn't he here, mom.

LOUANNE

Your father doesn't know how to deal with this. Do you understand what we have been through as parents?

Leanne looks absolutely appalled.

LOUANNE (CONT.)

Leanne I'm sorry. I didn't mean what you think I meant.

LEANNE

I've gotta go.

LOUANNE

No, Leanne. Please stay.

Leanne rushes out and slams the door.

CHAD

What's wrong, Leanne?

LEANNE

We have to go. Please get in the car.

CHAD

Shouldn't I say goodbye to Grandma?

LEANNE

Next time, okay? Grandma isn't feeling good.

They both get in the car and pull out of the driveway. Leanne is fighting off the urge to cry. She finally shakes it off and looks over at Chad, who is looking into his ball glove.

LEANNE

Show me that curveball grip.

Chad does as he's told.

LEANNE

Nice.

There is silence as they continue driving down the highway.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Chad don't call me Leanne anymore.
You call me mom.

CHAD

Okay.

INSERT CUT: (FLASHBACK)

EXT. CAMPGROUND SOMEWHERE - DAY

Leanne (age 13), her parents, and her younger brother are all sitting outside of their camper. LUKE (age 8), is bugging Leanne.

LUKE

Come on! I'm bored.

LEANNE

I am too actually. Mom can we go down the trail?

MOM

We are going to be eating soon.
Can't it wait?

LEANNE

Please. I'll watch Luke.

MOM

Alright, don't take your eye off that boy. I know how he wanders.

LUKE

Awesome!

MOM

No wandering, Luke.

LUKE

I know.

LEANNE

Okay, let's go idiot.

MOM

Be nice.

Leanne and Luke leave the campsite.

EXT. BUSH TRAIL - DAY

Luke and Leanne wander through a trail in the bush. Leanne is taking her time, taking in her surroundings while Luke is more interested in trudging ahead, down the trail.

LEANNE

Hey! Hold up.

LUKE

Hurry up. I wanna get to the good part!

LEANNE

What's your rush?

LUKE

I told you, I'm bored.

LEANNE

You're always bored.

Leanne has her eye on Luke, until she notices something move through the trees. She walks a short distance off path and finds a deer standing in the opening. She slowly inches closer and closer towards the deer and gets within almost an arms length. She looks back to get Luke's attention but he is gone. When she looks back at the deer, it scampers off.

Leanne rushes back to the path and hurries forward.

LEANNE

Luke! Luke! Where are you?

Leanne keeps moving forward and then spots Luke standing over a cliff looking down at the water.

LEANNE

Luke! Get away from the ledge now.

LUKE

I'm just looking. Come here. You gotta see this.

LEANNE

No, you get over here. I just saw a deer. Come look!

LUKE

Serious?

Luke turns and a boulder underneath shifts causing him to fall. He tries to pull himself up but he has nothing to grab onto. He begins sliding back and Leanne jumps into action. She sprints towards Luke, dives, and they lock grips. Luke's legs are dangling over the side of the cliff as a couple small pieces of rock fall about 200 feet to the rocky waters.

LUKE

Pull me up!

LEANNE

I'm trying!

Leanne is pulling with all the strength she has but she is making little to no progress.

LUKE

Hurry, please!

LEANNE

Don't look down!

Leanne puts in another grunting effort to pull him up and gets no where.

LEANNE

I need you to grab hold with your other arm and help pull yourself.

LUKE

I can't!

LEANNE

Sure you can. One quick move. You have to now, Luke. Do it now!

Leanne can feel her grip slipping.

Luke makes the move with his left arm causing his right to slide out of her grip. Leanne snags his left hand, but only half of it. Slowly, Luke's hand slides out of Leanne's until finally. He drops.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LEANNE'S CAR - DAY

Leanne looks over at Chad and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. FORD TAURUS - MORNING

Leanne pulls up to an office building. The sign out front reads, JWR & Co. She pulls into her parking spot and sits in her car before getting out. She takes a moment and sighs.

INT. JWR ACCOUNTING FIRM - DAY

Leanne sits at her desk working on something on her computer. She is agitated with something that is not making sense to her.

A man enters and puts a stack of papers on her desk without saying a word. Leanne looks at him in disgust as he leaves the room.

Another man enters shortly after with another stack of papers.

MAN

I'm sorry Leanne. I'm an ass.

LEANNE

Huge ass.

The man smiles and drops the stack of papers on her desk in dramatic fashion.

MAN

You should let me make it up to you.

LEANNE

You're not gonna ask me out are you?

MAN

It would be that awful for you?

LEANNE

I'm sorry I was just teasing you.

MAN

So that's a yes?

LEANNE

It's a no. You're a nice guy and attractive in a dorky accountant sort of way. But I have my reasons.

MAN

Can I ask what those are?

LEANNE

You may not. Thanks for the additional work Ben.

BEN

Don't mention it.

Ben exits with disappointment. Leanne smiles to herself and continues working away.

Her phone rings.

INT. JWR ACCOUNTING FIRM - DAY

Leanne walks down the hallway and walks past four other men as she approaches a specific corner office. Name on the door reads, JACK JENSEN.

JACK

Leanne. Take a seat please.

Leanne does so.

JACK (CONT.)

You are behind with your work. I just wanted to make sure you were still invested into this company.

LEANNE

Well. Technically I'm not invested.

Jack stares at Leanne.

LEANNE (CONT.)

I'm working hard sir. I'm still learning.

JACK

We expect a certain amount of production. We can't be falling behind with our day to day operations. Everyone suffers then.

LEANNE

That makes sense sir. I guess the problem is that I'm having a lot of associates pass off work to me that has a lot of errors or certain factors left out altogether.

JACK

No, no. We don't place blame on colleagues.

LEANNE

I'm not placing blame. That's just the facts, sir.

JACK

Leanne, where do you see yourself with this company in five years?

LEANNE

I -

JACK

Because I think there is great opportunity for you to become a senior accountant.

LEANNE

Right, well I was hoping for more than that.

JACK

Such as?

LEANNE

Get my CA. Become partner.

Leanne's comment makes Jack uneasy.

JACK

Yes, well. I suppose there is always that chance.

Leanne's eyes narrow.

JACK (CONT.)

I know it's not easy off the start, but lets keep the focus moving forward. If you find there are too many errors off the bat, send it back to your colleague.

LEANNE

They might not be very receptive of that, sir.

JACK

We have an honorable group here. They will be fine with that. After all, we are all on the same team here.

LEANNE

Of course. Thank-you sir.

Leanne is clearly biting her tongue.

She walks out of the office and we see three other men glance at Leanne at different times as she makes her way back to her office.

INT. LEANNE'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Leanne is stressed as she works. She dials the phone.

LEANNE

(on the phone)

Hey Ellie. Can you watch him for another hour? Okay, thanks so much. Sorry to do this to you again, I know you probably have better things to do. Okay. Okay, see you soon.

Leanne spins around in her chair to look out the window. The parking lot is completely empty except for her shitty car.

EXT/INT. OUTSIDE NEIGHBOURS HOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne walks up to the the door and knocks. An older woman quickly answers.

LEANNE

So sorry Ellie.

ELLIE

Oh please. If it was someone else I'd maybe be a little crusty. But for you...No problem dear.

LEANNE

He didn't give you any trouble?

ELLIE

Not at all. He's a good boy.

LEANNE

Yeah.

Leanne hands Ellie some cash.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Tomorrow I have time to take him over to day care.

ELLIE

Okay dear. Have a good sleep.

LEANNE

Thanks.

Leanne and Chad walk over next door around the back side of the house. They enter into a basement suite.

CHAD

I want pizza.

LEANNE

(sounding exhausted)

No, we aren't having pizza. It's bedtime.

CHAD

But I'm hungry.

LEANNE

You want a sandwich?

CHAD

No.

LEANNE

Well then you aren't that hungry.

Chad sulks and turns on the TV.

LEANNE (CONT.)

No TV. You are going to bed.

Leanne turns it off.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Do you want me to make you that sandwich?

CHAD

No.

Chad goes into his room in a foul mood.

Leanne walks outside the door and opens the mail. She begins looking through the pile when Chad walks out.

CHAD

Hey Leanne?

Leanne keeps her back turned to Chad.

CHAD

Mom?

LEANNE

Yeah?

CHAD

Could you read to me, please?

After the another terrible day, Leanne's heart melts.

LEANNE

I could do that. What are you feelin'? I'm guessing something of the Dr. Suess variety?

Chad smiles and nods.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Okay. Crawl into bed, I'll be there in a minute.

She continues to look through the mail and finds a package from the Adoption Center of Illinois.

Leanne opens it and begins to read. As she is reading through a smile takes over her face. She is overtaken with emotion.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT

Lesson number two. Family is the most important thing in life. It is a privilege, not a right.

Leanne continues to enjoy her moment. She wipes the tears away and walks towards her son's bedroom.

LEANNE

Okay, what are we reading?

CUT TO:

EXT. LEANNE'S BACKYARD (RESIDENTIAL AREA CHICAGO) - SIX YEARS LATER

Leanne crouches down and holds out her catchers mitt. Chad stands 56 feet away lined up to pitch.

CHAD

I throw a lot harder this year mom.
You sure you shouldn't wear a mask?

LEANNE

Yes, I'm sure. How about you worry a little less about me and a little more about this so called "heat" you can bring.

CHAD

Don't be lame.

LEANNE

I'm not lame. I'm expecting that fastball of yours to be lame. Come on, let's go.

Chad starts from full. He brings his glove up to his face (but not over his head) as he winds up and delivers a fastball straight into Leanne's catchers mitt.

LEANNE

Not bad. I want eight out of ten for strikes.

Chad throws his ten pitches.

LEANNE

Did you bring the sunflower seeds out?

CHAD

No.

LEANNE

Dude.

CHAD

Sorry.

LEANNE

Go get them, please.

CHAD

Fine.

Chad runs in the house. Leanne walks over and grabs her sons glove and baseball. She smells the glove (her name is written on the glove in black sharpie).

INSERT CUT: (FLASHBACK)

EXT. BALL PARK (WE SEE A NATIONALS CHAMPIONSHIP BILLBOARD OUTSIDE THE PARK) - DAY

Leanne, age 17, stands on the mound. She is wearing a USA uniform. She stares down the approaching batter and proceeds to take signs from her catcher. She is satisfied with the first sign given.

Leanne winds and fires. Swing and a miss. Leanne gets set quickly. No hesitation. She delivers another swinging strike. She catches the ball from the catcher and walks back past the mound. The scoreboard shows 3-2 USA in the 9th.

Leanne walks back to the mound and gets ready to throw one final strike to end it.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. LEANNE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Chad runs back outside with a bag of sunflower seeds.

CHAD

Here.

Chad hands her the sunflower seeds.

LEANNE

Put the mask on.

CHAD

What? Why?

LEANNE

Why you think?

CHAD

I don't think I need the mask.

LEANNE

Oh you don't think hey? Just put it on.

Chad does what he's told.

Leanne winds and fires a dart, snapping the catchers mitt. Chad quickly removes the mask.

CHAD

How did you do that?

LEANNE

I told you I played.

CHAD

Yeah, but. You're a girl.

LEANNE

A damn good one. Better be nice.
Unless you wanna get beat up by a
girl.

CHAD

You're being lame again.

LEANNE

Yeah, sorry.

Leanne throws the glove back to Chad.

LEANNE (CONT.)

You ready for the big start
tomorrow?

CHAD

I guess so.

LEANNE

You guess so? Aren't you excited?

CHAD

Yeah.

Chad still doesn't sound very convincing.

LEANNE

What's wrong?

CHAD

Other kids on the team.

LEANNE

What about them?

CHAD

They don't like me.

LEANNE

Why don't they like you?

CHAD

I don't know.

LEANNE

I think I do.

CHAD

You do?

LEANNE

I'm thinking they are jealous. You
improved a lot from last year. They
feel threatened.

CHAD

I don't know.

LEANNE

You don't have to worry about them.
For now, you focus on pitching.
That's all you need to worry about.

CHAD

So I don't have to do my homework
then?

LEANNE

Which subject?

CHAD

History.

LEANNE

I wouldn't worry about that.

CHAD

Seriously?

LEANNE

Yeah, it already happened. Who
cares?

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT

Lesson three. History involves
events that have already taken
place.

Chad laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

Leanne sits in the empty bleachers. She takes a handful of
sunflower seeds as she watches her boy run foul pole to foul
pole.

A vehicle pulls into the parking lot. It looks to be the
coach as he unloads all of the gear and his son climbs out
of the SUV.

Leanne continues to watch as Chad begins stretching in left
field. The coach and his son run out just past the shale
infield into left field and begin playing catch without even
acknowledging Chad. He finishes stretching and jogs into the
dugout.

Other vehicles start arriving as the game is now only about
forty minutes away.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

The players are all seated on the bench as the coach stands up to give them instructions.

COACH
Okay, guys. You remember all the signs? Belt is -

TEAM
Bunt.

COACH
Arm is -

TEAM
Steal.

COACH
Hat -

TEAM
Take a pitch.

COACH
Face

TEAM
Hit and run.

COACH
Arm swipe twice.

TEAM
Nothing's on.

COACH
Good. James you ready to start?

Chad is shocked. (James is the coaches son)

CHAD
Coach, I thought I was starting.

COACH
Yeah, we had to make an adjustment for this game bud. We will try and work you in for an inning later. James fits the match-up for today.

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

The coach meets with the umpire and the other coach at home plate. They go over some quick rules and then shake hands. Chad's team, the Hawks, take the field.

Leanne watches from the bleachers and notices her son is not taking the mound.

LEANNE
(under her breath)

What?

Leanne takes a handful of sunflower seeds and looks around observing all of the parents in the bleachers. One of the mothers sitting next to her eyes her up.

WOMAN
Hi. I'm Lori.

LEANNE
Hey. Leanne.

LORI
Who's your boy?

The woman seems to be very proper with her tone and the way she is dressed.

LEANNE
Chad. He's on the bench right now.

LORI
Oh. I'm not sure if I have seen him before.

LEANNE
He's the black one.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT
Lesson three. So, mom just doesn't like paying much attention towards race. I understand that could sound bad. Let me clarify with an example. I came home from school upset the one day as I felt I was being treated at a disadvantage in gym class by my clearly racist phys-ed teacher. Mothers response; "If the color of someone's skin is going to take priority in his actions, it is safe to say he won't achieve much. I want you to focus zero percent on people's race. Now you have a 100% of your time to accomplish something great." Gym teacher was surprisingly nice to me the rest of the school year. Perhaps there was a follow up conversation I didn't know about.

CUT BACK:

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

Lori isn't quite sure how to respond to Leanne.

LORI

Oh I see.

LEANNE

He was supposed to start the game.
Seems coach pulled a fast one on a
twelve year old.

LORI

The coach is my husband.

LEANNE

Oh. Yeah I'll have to have a chat
with him.

Lori is incredibly uncomfortable.

Both their attentions fall back on the game. In the first
inning of work the bases are loaded with only one out.

LEANNE

I'm by no means one of those
mothers that thinks my son is the
greatest at everything but...This
kid is all over the middle of the
plate. This is gonna be a blow out
after three innings.

LORI

The pitcher is my son.

Leanne squints at the mound.

LEANNE

Oh shit. That's right. I'd be happy
to show him a few things.

Lori raises her eyebrows and looks away.

LEANNE (CONT.)

I'll get a better look down low.

Leanne gets up and heads towards the back stop.

LEANNE

Let's go fiver, throwin' smoke,
nothin' but strikes now kid.

The pitcher strikes the batter out.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Atta be. It's just baseball five.
Deep breath, same thing. Whatchya
say fiver, let's punch him out.

A young, handsome, somewhat rugged man watches Leanne with
her chatter. Leanne finally notices him noticing her. Leanne
gives him a head nod and gestures if he wants any of her
sunflower seeds. The man walks over.

MAN

You played.

He takes a handful of seeds.

LEANNE

Sorry?

MAN

You must have played.

LEANNE

Oh yeah, USA baby.

MAN

College?

LEANNE

Under eighteen.

MAN

Different direction after that?

LEANNE

That is exactly right.

MAN

Jason.

LEANNE

Pleasure to meet you, Jason.
Leanne.

They shake hands.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Which is yours?

MAN

Second base. Nephew actually.

LEANNE

Oh so you aren't an annoying,
obsessed parent.

MAN

God no. Just the cool uncle. That
is it.

LEANNE

Must be nice.

MAN

You?

LEANNE

He's riding some pine right now.

MAN

That's too bad. Position?

LEANNE

He's got good hands. Should probably be at second base.

She flashes a smile at Jason.

LEANNE (CONT.)

No, but he's a pitcher. Got that natural arm action. Wide frame and lanky. He has potential anyways.

JASON

Think he'll come out of the pen today?

LEANNE

Something tells me he will come in as a mop up role.

JASON

Twelve years old and players are getting labeled already.

LEANNE

Yeah, pretty crazy. That's the way it is though.

JASON

Can I buy you a hot dog?

LEANNE

Yeah, I could take a hot dog from you.

Jason gives her a funny awkward look.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Shut up.

They begin walking over to the concession stand.

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

Jason and Leanne sit in the bleachers eating their hot dogs. The scoreboard shows Tigers 11, Hawks 3. The pitcher (which is no longer the coaches son) walks another batter and the coach comes out with Chad following behind him.

JASON

That's your son?

LEANNE

Adopted. Don't tell him, okay?

Jason is unsure of the joke. Leanne laughs.

JASON
Wow. When did you adopt him?

LEANNE
About six years ago.

Chad walks the first batter.

JASON
So what do you -

LEANNE
(shouting)
Right after him Chad!

Leanne continues looking forward, watching her son.

LEANNE
(to Jason)
His release is high. Gotta get on top of it. I'm an accountant.

JASON
You should be a scout.

LEANNE
Don't tease me with that idea.

JASON
You would actually love that, wouldn't you?

LEANNE
I got other things on the go Jason.

JASON
Of course. Nothing wrong with being a fan/coach.

LEANNE
(sarcastically)
I suppose. Fingers crossed that he becomes a super star. Twenty mil a year. That's really what it's all about. That's why we're here.

JASON
Yes, of course. It's all about treating sport as a career at all costs.

LEANNE
Damn straight.

Leanne finishes her hot dog.

LEANNE (CONT.)
You only bought me one. You think I'm on a diet?

Jason laughs. Leanne keeps her straight face.

LEANNE

No, I want another one though. This ones on me. One second.

Leanne walks down to the fence. Chad throws another ball. Count sits at 3-0 to his second batter faced.

LEANNE

(shouting out to Chad)

Hey! Use your legs off that mound.
We just went through all of this.
Focus before every pitch!

Chad gives an embarrassed nod. All of the parents stare at Leanne as she watches on.

One strike looking. A second follows. Third is a swing and a miss for the strike out. Leanne walks away to the concession smiling. Jason is impressed. He jumps out of his seat to catch up with her.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

The kids all clear out of the dugout. Most of them leave in groups as Chad walks out last all by himself.

Leanne stands there waiting.

LEANNE

See what happens when you listen to your mother?

CHAD

Yeah, yeah. Did you have to yell that though?

LEANNE

I won't have to if you do what you were taught next time.

Jason approaches. As he walks over, the coach walks out of the dugout.

JASON

Hey -

Leanne holds her hand up stopping Jason from speaking.

LEANNE

Coach.

Coach stops and turns around.

COACH

Yeah.

A beat.

COACH

Sorry...I forget your name.

LEANNE

It's Leanne.

COACH

Right.

LEANNE

Chad thought he was starting today.
What happened there?

COACH

We made the decision last night to switch to James. Figured it was a better match up that's all. It was good we got Chad in later. I think he could be really good for us as a reliever.

LEANNE

Did you call him last night?

COACH

Sorry?

LEANNE

Well if you make a change like that, he expects a call. He went through all the preparation to start. Not come in and clean up a mess that was left.

COACH

It's pee-wee baseball miss. We can't take this too seriously.

LEANNE

No, certainly. Only when it's your son starting the big games.

COACH

You're way out of line.

LEANNE

I'm not asking for equal playing time for everyone on the team. I know that's not how it works. This is a competitive league. I've been through it myself. I'm asking that you play the players that deserve to be out there.

COACH

Exactly what I'm doing. And I'll keep running the team that way. Is that all?

LEANNE

For now.

COACH

Alright then.

The coach picks up the bag of equipment and walks away.

Jason stands there awkwardly.

LEANNE

Don't be awkward.

JASON

Sorry. Uhh. I was going to ask you out. You know, like on a date. But now I'm way too intimidated by you.

LEANNE

Well. That's too bad. I'll see you around Jason.

JASON

Wait. Of course I would still like to ask you out. Mcgregors Saturday night?

LEANNE

I can't. I don't do that sort of thing.

JASON

Eat a meal with another person and have wonderful conversation throughout the night?

LEANNE

Yeah that. I'll see you at the next game?

JASON

Yeah, okay. I'll bring some better material next time.

Leanne is walking away. She turns back.

LEANNE

Won't make a difference.

She turns back and puts her arm on her sons back as they approach her shitty Ford Taurus.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTH SIDE ELEMENTARY - DAY

Leanne sits out in the hallway on a bench beside her son. Chad throws a ball up and down as they wait.

The teacher comes out.

TEACHER
Leanne?

LEANNE
Yeah.

TEACHER
Come on in.

They enter the class and take a seat at the table they had set out for parent teacher interviews.

TEACHER
Chad have you been keeping your mother up to speed with everything we've been doing?

Chad shrugs.

LEANNE
Some. I'm sure not all.

TEACHER
Of course. Well, Chad has been great. He is a pleasure to teach and he definitely stays out of trouble. We appreciate that.

LEANNE
Great. Where should we start?

TEACHER
Well. There are obvious strengths and weaknesses when it comes to Chad's academics. I need more effort from Chad with his mathematics. It's normal to have some students that struggle to keep up each year, especially with math. I just want to make sure he doesn't fall too far behind.

LEANNE
Do you have some drills we can practice at home?

TEACHER
Of course. I'll go through some with you before you leave. But I mean Chad is doing just fine in other areas. Very strong in his reading and writing.

LEANNE

He's loved to read since he was little.

TEACHER

That's great.

LEANNE

Any thing else we should cover?

TEACHER

Chad I just want to have a word in private with your mom before you guys leave. Can you wait outside?

Chad hesitates and then walks out without saying anything.

LEANNE

Is there a problem?

TEACHER

I just wanted to get a better feeling for what he is like at home. He is so quiet at school.

LEANNE

Yeah, seems to be pretty quiet with his baseball team as well.

TEACHER

I'd sure like to see him interact with some of the others more. I'd just like him to smile more, as cheesy as that sounds. I want him to enjoy himself.

LEANNE

Yeah. But nothing in particular has happened?

TEACHER

Well no. He's just very timid that's all. I don't see him play with any of the other kids. Can I ask if his father is around?

LEANNE

Chad is adopted. I took him in about six years ago.

TEACHER

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm embarrassed for not knowing.

LEANNE

No worries.

TEACHER

How old are you? Sorry, all I mean is you look so young to have adopted six years ago.

LEANNE

I'm twenty-eight. Chad was a runaway. I found him on the street and...well the rest is history I guess.

A long beat.

TEACHER

Leanne I don't really know how to ask this...

LEANNE

He was abused, yes.

Leanne's eyes half fill with tears.

TEACHER

Physically?

LEANNE

That much I know for sure. Could be even worse. It's hard to get him talking about those times.

Leanne's emotion increases.

TEACHER

I'm sorry to bring up such a sensitive topic Leanne.

LEANNE

It's okay.

TEACHER

Can you maybe encourage him to socialize more? Make an effort to make friends?

LEANNE

Yeah, of course. I'll do what I can.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Leanne scrubs dishes in the sink as she looks out her window into the back yard.

Chad has one of those small trampolines laid on it's side. On the tramp there is white spray paint outlining a batters box with each quadrant sectioned out. Chad winds and fires a pitch into the tramp as it springs the ball back to him.

Leanne looks worried as she watches her son continue to pitch.

EXT. LEANNE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Leanne walks out into the backyard.

LEANNE
What's your count at?

CHAD
I dunno.

LEANNE
You should be keeping track bud.

Chad throws another pitch.

LEANNE (CONT.)
I want to talk to you for a second.

CHAD
Did I do something wrong?

LEANNE
No of course not. Why would you think that?

Chad shrugs.

LEANNE (CONT.)
You know I don't like it when you shrug. Speak please.

CHAD
(frustrated)
Okay.

LEANNE
You love baseball, hey?

Just the word baseball sparks a smile for Chad, but it quickly fades.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Yeah, that's what I figured. It's a beautiful sport.

Leanne sits in the grass.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Come on. Sit with your mom.

Chad sits.

LEANNE
Are you happy?

CHAD

What do you mean?

LEANNE

I mean are you happy?

CHAD

I guess. Sometimes.

LEANNE

What about when you aren't playing baseball?

CHAD

I dunno.

LEANNE

Did I tell you that I played on a boys team when I was your age?

CHAD

Maybe. I forget.

LEANNE

Yeah. I was starting to get pretty good. I was so excited for my first practice. I was really nervous about joining the team, especially being the only girl. I showed up and I could just sense that nobody wanted me there. After all, who wants a girl on their team. I'll either be a weak link or I'll embarrass some of them by being better. All I wanted was to play ball and be friends with my teammates. But that didn't happen. Even the coach didn't like having me with his group of boys.

CHAD

What happened?

LEANNE

I only played a few innings of our first two games.

CHAD

Did your mom or dad ask coach to play you more?

LEANNE

No buddy. They didn't like me playing ball neither. They wanted me to only worry about school. (BEAT) So I quit. Went back to join the girls.

CHAD

You probably would have been better
than the boys I bet.

LEANNE

I think so too. Do you ever feel
the way I did?

CHAD

Sort of.

LEANNE

Kinda sucks hey?

CHAD

Is it because I'm black?

Leanne looks shocked suddenly.

LEANNE

Holy shit you are black! I didn't
notice before.

CHAD

You shouldn't swear.

LEANNE

Sorry. I'm not sure if that's why.
There are lots of black boys on
other teams. Should I be saying
African American?

CHAD

Black is okay.

LEANNE

You know what I think you should
do?

CHAD

What?

LEANNE

I think you should smile more.
Maybe talk to some of the other
players. Have some more fun.

Chad already gets scared by Leanne's suggestion.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Would that make you uncomfortable?

CHAD

What if they don't like me. Or get
mad at me?

LEANNE

Then you tell them to lighten up and relax. I'd like you to make more friends. Don't be a loner like your mom.

CHAD

You're not a loner.

LEANNE

I do have you. But you're twelve.

CHAD

I'm wise beyond my years though.

LEANNE

Yeah, yeah you are. Well here is a piece of advice wise guy. Life is too short to cut yourself off from people. It's a lot more fun to share your life with others. The ones worth keeping around. I didn't do so well with this. You can do better.

CHAD

Fine. I'll talk to people.

LEANNE

Yes! Lovin' the energy.

Chad and Leanne share a laugh.

LEANNE

Do you remember much before me?

CHAD

I guess.

LEANNE

I want to ask you a question. Think you can handle that?

CHAD

I know what you want to ask.

LEANNE

How's that?

CHAD

I can just tell.

LEANNE

Well?

A long beat.

CHAD

Yeah. He hit me a lot.

LEANNE

There are some real bad people out there.

CHAD

But you found me.

LEANNE

No, no. You found me.

Leanne hugs her son.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT

Lesson four. Don't let bad experiences hinder your ability to trust.

--CONTINUE--

LEANNE

Did you fart?

CHAD

No.

LEANNE

Must have been me.

CHAD

Gross!

LEANNE

I'm hungry. Would you like something healthy or a pizza with extra cheese?

CHAD

Healthy.

LEANNE

We're getting pizza with extra cheese.

CUT TO:

INT. BALL PARK - DAY

Chad sits in the dugout and ties his cleats. Another boy enters the dugout and sits at the other end of the bench.

Chad looks up to say something then holds off. He reaches for his glove and baseball out of his bag.

CHAD

(to the boy)

Do you want to warm up with me?

BOY

Oh uhh. I normally warm up with James.

CHAD

Okay.

Chad looks away discouraged. He regains his confidence and turns back.

CHAD

Come on. I wanna show you my curveball.

BOY

Does it actually curve?

CHAD

Yeah it's starting to. I've been working on it for a little while now. Come on let's go.

BOY

Okay.

Leanne is reading some book about baseball. Jason approaches.

JASON

Looks like your boy is friends with my nephew now.

Leanne looks at the field, seeing Chad show the other boy how to throw a curve.

JASON (CONT.)

I'm thinking we drop them off at a movie and go out for dinner tonight. What are your thoughts on that?

LEANNE

I thought I made myself clear the other day.

JASON

The other day?

LEANNE

When you asked me out.

JASON

I don't recall this.

LEANNE

Oh no? You were babbling. Searching for words. Came across very desperate. You don't remember?

JASON
Must have been another guy. I
didn't ask you out.

Leanne looks back out at her son playing catch.

LEANNE
(quietly)
Fine.

JASON
What was that?

LEANNE
I'll do dinner. Calm down. Don't
let the estrogen pump too fast
there Jason.

JASON
Estrogen?

Jason flexes his bicep and puts it up to Leanne's face.

JASON (CONT.)
That look like estrogen to you?

LEANNE
Looks like you've done a few arm
curls.

JASON
I visit the gym from time to time.

LEANNE
You're forearms in particular look
quite strong.

JASON
Why thank you.

LEANNE
The right more so than the left.
Why is that?

JASON
Masturbation joke. Nice.

LEANNE
Meh.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Leanne opens the door. It's Jason.

JASON
Hey. Ready?

LEANNE

Yes, I am ready.

Ellie sits on the coach reading a novel.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Thanks Ellie.

ELLIE

Stop thanking me.

LEANNE

Okay, it's just implied from now on.

ELLIE

Yeah, yeah. Go.

Chad walks out from the kitchen.

JASON

Hey Chad.

CHAD

Hi.

LEANNE

Okay, be good.

CHAD

Yeah.

LEANNE

Okay.

INT. JASON'S JEEP WRANGLER - NIGHT

LEANNE

I love Jeeps! Good start Jason.

Jason rolls the top down.

JASON

Oh look at that. Starry night.

LEANNE

(sarcastically)

Oh my God. So romantic.

JASON

Right?

LEANNE

Woah man. You're going the wrong way. Mcgregors is east.

JASON

Oh I forgot to tell you. Change of plans.

LEANNE

Oh really? What's the plan.

JASON

Like I'm gonna tell you.

LEANNE

You're not gonna park in a remote area are you. I've dealt with that situation before.

JASON

What? No. Let's talk about that though.

LEANNE

No. I'm not ready to scare you off just yet.

JASON

Another time then.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S JEEP WRANGLER - NIGHT

In the distance they can spot Wrigley field.

LEANNE

Whaaaat. Are we going to Wrigley?

Jason raises an eyebrow.

LEANNE (CONT.)

We can't get in.

JASON

No?

LEANNE

You have a guy? You have a Wrigley guy?

JASON

Settle down.

They pull into a parking lot near one of the main entrances. A man stands there waiting.

As they approach -

JASON

I have a Wrigley guy. Head of security.

LEANNE

(under her breath)
So aroused right now.

JASON
What's that?

LEANNE
Exciting.

They get to the gate.

MAN
Welcome to Wrigley Field. Please
follow me.

As they walk, Leanne's eyes are all over her surroundings.
Jason just watches her and smiles.

LEANNE
I've been here so many times and it
never gets old.

JASON
Lots hey?

LEANNE
Oh. Hey. This is awesome don't
worry.

They walk down a big set of stairs and take a couple turns
and walk down a long tunnel.

JASON
Ever had the field to yourself?

The tunnel opens up and they walk out on to the field.

Leanne doesn't say a word. She looks at the empty stands and
walks out to the mound. She gets into position and Jason
gets in the batters box. She winds and delivers and -

JASON
Oh! Get up ball, get up!

LEANNE
What are you talking about? Take a
seat pal. Busted you high and in
with the fastball.

JASON
You're talking nonsense. Hey. Look
at center.

Out at center field a man stands at the girl barbecuing.

JASON (CONT.)
Burger or dog?

LEANNE
You just get me.

JASON
Better than a fancy meal/interview?

LEANNE
Much better.

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - NIGHT.

Jason and Leanne lie in center field looking up at the stars. Jason moves in closer. Leanne smiles at his approach. She turns over onto her side and Jason slowly moves in for the kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEANNE'S HOUSE (DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE) - SIX YEARS LATER - DAY

Jason walks out of the house and pauses on the front steps. He looks upset; ashamed even. He gets in his Jeep and drives off.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Leanne stands at the entrance with the hand on the door. She is crying.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

Leanne is watching her son pitch. She looks to her right and picks out a few men who are clearly scouts. She looks to her left and spots the same thing.

LEANNE
Come on Chad! Same plan! Take this guy now, here we go kid!

Chad snaps off a 12-6 curve that completely freezes the batter. Leanne doesn't even cheer. She always has a cool look; like she's always studying what's taking place rather than just enjoying the moment.

One of the scouts approaches Leanne and sits next to her.

SCOUT
Excuse me mam. You are Chad McDermot's mother right?

LEANNE
That's me.

SCOUT
My name is Todd Walker. I am a scout for the Atlanta Braves.

LEANNE

Nice to meet you Mr. Walker.

SCOUT

He's come a long way this year.

LEANNE

Wait till he grows into that frame.
A lot more miles per hour in that
arm. Just hiding.

SCOUT

We are inclined to agree. I'll cut
to the chase. We are very
interested in your boy and we
expect to get him in the upcoming
draft.

LEANNE

What round you thinking?

The scout is taken aback.

SCOUT

Well we need to get in a room and
figure that out but I just wanted
to let you know.

LEANNE

I appreciate that Mr. Walker.

SCOUT

You can tell he has had some good
coaching. His mechanics are near
perfect. Did his father play?

LEANNE

He sure did.

SCOUT

Is he here today?

LEANNE

You're lookin' at him Mr. Walker.

The old scout smiles.

LEANNE (CONT.)

I taught that boy everything there
is to know about throwing a
baseball.

After a long beat -

SCOUT

Well. Thank you for your time. I'm
sure we'll be in touch.

LEANNE

Yes, thank-you.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALL PARK - DAY

The team sits in the dugout after the win. Everyone is having fun and chatting about the successful game.

Chad sits beside a couple of guys who appear to be good friends of his.

FRIEND

You threw five curveballs in a row to that guy. Who does that?

CHAD

Hey it worked. When are you gonna stop questioning my brilliance, Figs?

FIGS

See all the scouts out there?

CHAD

There were?

FIGS

Of course there were dumbass. This is one of the best tournaments in all of North America for high school.

CHAD

Shit. If I had known that I wouldn't have given up those two hits.

OTHER FRIEND

You're getting too cocky. I don't know if I like you anymore.

CHAD

Aahhhhh come on Jonesy. What would you do without me? I'm your only black friend. You wanna go back to having no black friends?

FIGS

That's racist Jonesy.

CHAD

Very.

JONESY

You're comin' tonight I hope?

Chad thinks about this for a moment.

CHAD

I dunno fellas.

FIGS

Oh come on! We just won it all man!
We are baseball superstars,
probably gonna get drafted, we are
incredibly handsome, and all of the
girls at this party are wantin' to
roll with us.

CHAD

Roll with us?

FIGS

Yeah, roll.

CHAD

You're an idiot.

FIGS

Chad. Nicole Serison is gonna be
there. I know for a fact she wants
to hook up with you. The whole
school knows it. SO obvious.

CHAD

Nicole Serison? You serious Figsy?

FIGS

I wouldn't joke about this.

Chad pauses for a a beat -

CHAD

Martin Figeroula. Will you take me
to this party?

FIGS

It would be an honor, my taller,
more handsome friend.

CHAD

You've made the sale Figs. I'm
coming.

JONESY

There is a keg too.

CHAD

Sales been made. Fellas. Let's
leave a little bit to the
imagination. What's the matter with
you two?

The three walk out of the dugout and say goodbye to some of
the other players.

Leanne stands outside waiting for Chad.

LEANNE

(to Chad)

Took you long enough. Hey boys.

BOYS

Hey Mrs. Mcdermot.

LEANNE

Let's get going. I'm gonna make dinner.

CHAD

Oh, that's okay I'm gonna stay at Figs tonight.

LEANNE

You are?

CHAD

Yeah. Is that okay?

LEANNE

Not really. You have a final exam Monday. You were at his place all week.

CHAD

I'm pretty much ready for it.

LEANNE

Pretty much. How about you come home and hit those books.

The boys stand there awkwardly. Leanne looks over at them.

FIGS

We'll wait for you in the car Chad.

LEANNE

No, that's fine. Go. Get to bed at a decent time. I just want you to finish strong. That's all.

CHAD

Yeah. I will.

Chad walks off with his friends. Leanne is clearly frustrated.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne sits on the couch with a glass of wine. Across from her sits one of her friends, DONNA.

DONNA

I'm really sorry Lee. He just left?

LEANNE

Like magic.

DONNA

Does Chad know?

LEANNE

Not yet. I don't know how much it would effect him to be honest. That boy has been in his own world the last couple years.

DONNA

How you mean?

LEANNE

Well he doesn't admit to it often but I know he's sniffing out every party there is. I used to think, or support...

DONNA

Support what?

LEANNE

The fact that someone should go after what they truly want.

DONNA

And you don't think Chad should do that?

LEANNE

A scout talked to me today.

DONNA

And?

LEANNE

He has to go to college. I don't want him signing on out of high school. Or bailing half way through college.

Donna stares blankly back at Leanne.

LEANNE (CONT.)

If they draft him and offer him a contract, college won't be an option for him. I just know it.

DONNA

You think they will.

LEANNE

Honestly. Trying not to be subjective. If he puts in the work I think he will.

DONNA
That's a good thing though.

LEANNE
Yeah. I dunno.

DONNA
He's in high school. High school
kids party.

LEANNE
He's been so distant.

DONNA
You're worrying too much.

LEANNE
Yeah.

DONNA
Let's get drunk.

LEANNE
Medium.

CUT TO:

INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad is being held upside down by his legs as he holds on to the top of a keg. A friend has a bong up to Chad's lips. Chad then proceeds to do a keg stand as he chugs beer for fifteen seconds. The majority of the party has their eyes on Chad as they chant the seconds passing.

Everyone cheers when Chad taps out.

CHAD
Weeeeeoooooo!

The cheers continue.

Chad does an imitations of Frank the tank from "Old School".

FIGS
(to Chad)
How drunk are you?

CHAD
Not drunk enough Figsy. Fetch me a
drink good sir.

FIGS
You're gonna be a puddle. I like
it!

Jonesy runs up with no shirt on, a lay around his neck, and lipstick applied.

CHAD
Where were you?

JONESY
I don't know.

The three laugh.

FIGS
Oh man. Can't wait to go to college
with you guys. I love both of you
dearly.

Figs steals a full drink out of a nerdy looking kids hands
and gives it to Chad. Chad accepts the drink and they
continue their conversation.

FIGS
I mean I know this is alright
but...College girls! College girls
Jonesy! I'm sick of these ones.

Two girls walk by disgusted.

JONESY
Nice Figs. Why don't you tell the
whole party we are gay next.

FIGS
Pfff. They'll be back.

JONESY
You get your acceptance letter yet
Chad?

CHAD
Yeah, I actually did.

JONESY
That's awesome! The tripod stays
together.

CHAD
I'd rather just collect that
signing bonus after I get drafted.

FIGS
I'm with you brother.

JONESY
Figs. Come on.

FIGS
What are you sayin'?

JONESY
You know what I'm saying. You ain't
no Chad.

FIGS

You don't think I could make it?

Figs feelings are clearly hurt.

CHAD

No he's not saying that. He's an infielder and I'm a pitcher. You can't compare us at this point.

Chad pats Figs on the back.

CHAD (CONT.)

I'd love to go to bed with one of you tonight, but I still think we should scout the talent tonight gentlemen.

CUT TO:

INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad walks upstairs and down the hall towards the bathroom. As he approaches he hears some noise coming from the bedroom. Originally he assumes it's a standard hook-up but then he hears an upsetting, "DON'T".

He takes a couple steps and leans up against the closed door to the bedroom. As he listens...

GUY

Come on, what's the big deal?

GIRL

I hardly know you.

GUY

So? I know you come to our games. I've seen you.

GIRL

Yeah, so does the rest of the school.

GUY

I know you like me.

GIRL

I don't want to Greg.

GUY

I think you do. Just tell me to stop then.

After a short beat -

GIRL

I can't. Please stop...Greg stop!

GUY
What's your problem?

GIRL
Get off me!

Chad has had enough at this point. He swings open the door. The girl falls onto the bed while Greg stands across from Chad.

GREG
What the hell man. Room's occupied.

CHAD
Yeah I see that. Sounding very consensual in here.

GREG
What did you say? How about you piss off and mind your own business?

Chad hesitates.

GREG (CONT.)
We got a problem?

CHAD
Are you gonna leave this girl alone?

GREG
Buddy. I'll do whatever I want. She's in here with me. Not you.

CHAD
You're a football player right?

GREG
Yeah.

CHAD
Figures...Here is a glimpse of reality for you. You are a moron and you will not make the pro's. Once rejection finally sinks in you will have no education and no clue what the fuck you are doing with your life. You will proceed to live with your mother for ten years as you clutch onto the past as the only dates you are able to line up are from Lincoln High. They will see that you still live with your mother and never call you back. You will have maybe two friends and all you guys will talk about is how cool you were in high school. Oh

(MORE)

CHAD (cont'd)
and you will probably do steroids
and lift some weights. That might
be the highlight for you.

GREG
Are you lecturing me? You're a
nigger.

CHAD
And we both know all niggers are
stupid.

GREG
Yeah. We do.

CHAD
Great. Glad we are on the same
page. So you'll be leaving now
then?

Greg steps forward up close to Chad.

GREG
How about you make me leave?

Chad hits Greg with a right. He staggers back and then
charges at Chad. He side steps him and Greg crashes into a
dresser.

CHAD
Woah, woah. We are guests in this
house. Let's take this outside.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT
Lesson five. If you are a guest,
you better damn well treat the host
with respect and gratitude. Don't
be an ass.

--CONTINUE--

Greg starts to get up and Chad runs away. Greg chases after.
The girl sits on the bed smiling.

Chad walks through a crowd of drunk teens and grabs a drink
from the same nerdy kid as before. He chugs it as he can see
Greg on his tail.

Chad gets outside and comes to a stop and waits for Greg to
come bursting through the door.

GREG
I'm gonna kick your ass!

Some other football players gather around to cheer their
buddy on. Figs and Jonesy rush outside.

FIGS

Ohhh shit. This is not good.

JONESY

What is he thinking?

CHAD

(to Greg)

Oh come on Gregory. Can't we just get along?

GREG

You're fucking dead.

Greg takes his shirt off and gets ready to throw fists.

CHAD

What are you doing?

GREG

Let's go!

CHAD

Why did you take your shirt off?

Greg charges at Chad and misses with a right hook but lands a body shot. He then catches Chad with a left and tackles him to the ground. Greg lands a couple more hard shots while he is on top.

FIGS

(to Jonesy)

Should we get in there?

JONESY

I dunno. I think so!

Chad squirms a leg free and kicks Greg in the face. He gets up and waits for Greg to get up.

FIGS

(shouting to Chad)

What are you doing?!

Greg wipes blood from his face and charges back at Chad. Chad stands him up with a hard jab to the face and a hook to the midsection. Greg is hunched over and Chad transitions all his weight into one final punch.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT

Lesson six. If you have to fight.
You should fight.

--CONTINUE--

Chad clocks Greg with an upper-cut sending him to the ground. Greg is out cold. His football buddies crowd around.

The party cheers.

JONESY

Holy shit.

FIGS

Oh no. I think I pissed my pants a little.

Jonesy dumps a little beer on his crotch.

JONESY

Just beer man.

FIGS

Thanks.

Chad gives his friends a look of surprise when the cute girl from earlier (the one he rescued) walks up to him and with no hesitation, kisses Chad.

His friends watch proudly as they kiss.

FIGS

Are we living in a teen movie?

JONESY

Yes we are.

Suddenly, a beer bottle is tossed hitting Chad in the head.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Leanne sits at the kitchen table sipping a cup of coffee.

Chad enters.

LEANNE

Why are you up so early?

CHAD

Couldn't sleep. Wanted my bed.

LEANNE

Good God you stink.

CHAD

It's not that bad.

LEANNE

You smell like a brewery. And shit.

CHAD

Thanks.

Chad tries to rush passed his mom.

CHAD (CONT.)
I'm gonna take a shower.

Leanne notices blood in his hair.

LEANNE
Woah, woah. Whats with your hair?

She grabs him by the arm to stop him. She then notices a hospital wrist band. Leanne's eyes start to well up slightly.

LEANNE (CONT.)
What happened?

CHAD
Don't freak out. It's nothing.

LEANNE
It looks like you were in the hospital and you didn't call me.

CHAD
I didn't want to wake you.

LEANNE
No. That's bull-shit Chad. You know you should be calling me.

CHAD
I'm fine. I don't want to fight again. Can I just shower and sleep?

LEANNE
No! You can't!

CHAD
Mom, calm down.

LEANNE
Sit down. Now.

Chad sighs and sits down at the kitchen table, expecting a big lecture. Leanne walks over and looks at his head.

LEANNE
Jesus. There's like eight stitches. Do you have a concussion?

CHAD
Mild.

LEANNE
What happened?

CHAD
It doesn't matter.

She hits him in the shoulder.

CHAD
I got hit with a beer bottle okay!

LEANNE
Why?

Chad says nothing.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Why?

CHAD
I got in a fight.

Leanne sighs. She gets up and walks to the sink. She pours a glass a water and puts it in front of Chad.

After a beat -

LEANNE
How'd you do?

CHAD
What?

LEANNE
Did you win?

Chad smiles.

CHAD
Yeah, I did actually.

LEANNE
Did you have a good reason?

CHAD
Yeah mom. I did.

LEANNE
Well alright then.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad walks out of bed from his nap and stops. He peaks into his moms room and finds her crying. He walks away feeling guilty.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT
Lesson seven. Your mother cares.
She cares a lot. More than anything
else in fact. No matter how much
you argue, don't forget that.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad is watching TV in the living room. Leanne walks out and looks at the cut on his head. As she's leaving the room -

CHAD

Hey.

LEANNE

Yeah?

CHAD

Where's Jason? Haven't seen him around in a while.

LEANNE

He's gone.

Leanne walks into the kitchen. Chad gets up and follows.

CHAD

What do you mean gone?

LEANNE

He left.

CHAD

For good?

LEANNE

Yeah.

CHAD

Are you okay?

LEANNE

I'm fine.

A long beat.

CHAD

Are you sure?

LEANNE

You actually care?

CHAD

Well, yeah.

LEANNE

I'm really okay. These things happen.

Chad doesn't know what to say.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Aren't you hanging out with the boys tonight?

CHAD
What are you doin'?

LEANNE
I uh, I don't know.

CHAD
You want to go out for a late
dinner or something?

Leanne is shocked by Chad's behavior.

LEANNE
Maybe another night. I'm kind of
tired tonight.

Chad stands there looking at his mother, finally paying
attention to her feelings.

She looks at him as if to ask "what?". Tears form in her
eyes.

Chad quickly walks up and hugs his mom and holds tightly.

CHAD
I'm sorry.

Leanne kisses Chad on the forehead. Chad lets go.

CHAD (CONT.)
Supper?

LEANNE
How about I cook for you?

CHAD
Okay, I'll help.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad grabs another slice of homemade pizza.

CHAD
How's work?

Leanne laughs to herself.

LEANNE
How's work?

CHAD
Yeah.

LEANNE
It's alright I guess. You know...A
scout talked to me the other day.

CHAD
Seriously?

LEANNE

Yeah. You wanna know what he said?

CHAD

What?

LEANNE

The Atlanta Braves want to draft you.

Chad's face lights up. He quickly fights off the urge to ask more questions.

CHAD

That's great. But seriously, work is just okay?

LEANNE

Well I'm an accountant, Chad. It's not exactly exhilarating.

Chad has guilt wash over his face.

There is a long beat.

LEANNE (CONT.)

We haven't really talked much about your plans. Are you still wanting to go to Cal state?

CHAD

I don't know. Can we talk about you for once?

LEANNE

You need to decide soon.

CHAD

Well it's only a half ride there. Ole Miss is offering a full.

LEANNE

But you want to be with your friends in California?

CHAD

Yeah, maybe.

LEANNE

What's wrong Chad?

Chad looks down.

CHAD

I don't know what to do.

LEANNE

Do you still like baseball?

CHAD

I love it.

LEANNE

Then that's all that matters.

Chad seems surprised.

LEANNE (CONT.)

When you go to sleep at night, what do you think about? And let's keep it G rated please.

CHAD

Baseball. I think about baseball. And being on stage singing next to Darius Rucker. You know, cause he's black too.

LEANNE

Right. Well then what are you unsure about? Either decision you make is a good one. Either way, you need to be playing baseball.

CHAD

What do you think?

LEANNE

Ole Miss will be easier on my bank account. I'm just kidding. At this point, trust your instincts. The rest will all fall into place.

CHAD

Thanks, Leanne.

LEANNE

Don't be a jerk.

CHAD

Thanks mom.

LEANNE

No problem.

CHAD

You don't like your job.

Leanne has no response.

CHAD (CONT.)

Is that because of me?

LEANNE

Why would you say that?

CHAD

Well, you dropped out of school
because of me right?

No response.

CHAD (CONT.)

I'm sorry.

LEANNE

Hey. That was my choice. And it was
the right one. You know what I did?

CHAD

What?

LEANNE

I followed my gut when everything
and everyone told me not to. And I
was happy because of it.

CHAD

And what about now?

LEANNE

What about now?

CHAD

Shouldn't you find something you'd
like?

LEANNE

Well. It's been a while. Accounting
is all I have that would pay
enough.

CHAD

Too bad. You love baseball.

LEANNE

Yeah. I should be playing for the
Cubs.

Chad has a subtle light bulb moment.

CHAD

I imagine the Cubs have
accountants.

LEANNE

Yeah. I haven't been employed in
the sports world before though. I'd
never get hired.

CHAD

I don't know about that. Look at
your track record as a player. And
you've worked at one of the top

(MORE)

CHAD (cont'd)
firms in Chicago for ten years. You
should do this.

LEANNE
Chad, come on.

CHAD
You're doing this.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - EIGHT YEARS LATER - DAY

Leanne gets out of her car and walks into Wrigley Field.

INT. LEANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Leanne talks on the phone about collecting payment from a corporate sponsor. On her desk we see a picture with her and Chad when he was a little kid. Her walls are decorated with Cubbies memorabilia along with a few pictures of her and Chad.

She hangs up the phone, leans back, and smiles.

INT. LEANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Leanne looks up at the clock in her office, which reads 12:05 PM.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Leanne stands by herself in the bleachers watching the Chicago Cubs do an infield.

A man on his phone walks out of the tunnel towards Leanne. He looks young and is quite handsome. He pulls off the business look perfectly. He ends his call and stands next to Leanne.

MAN
How are we looking?

LEANNE
Shitty.

The man laughs.

MAN
What do you think we need?

LEANNE
More power. Better performances from our starting rotation. More speed in the outfield. Putting it nicely, our bullpen needs a facelift. (BEAT) We need better pitching, hitting, and fielding.

MAN

Is that all?

LEANNE

I think it's time for a new GM to be honest.

Leanne smiles.

MAN

I don't know if I agree with that.

LEANNE

So, you new to the corporate team? I haven't seen you around.

MAN

Oh, uh no. I'm -

LEANNE

I know. I'm messing with you. I don't believe we have officially met.

MAN

Jed Hoyer. General Manager of the Chicago Cubs.

LEANNE

Leanne McDermot. Accountant.

JED

Pleasure to meet you Leanne.

LEANNE

Likewise.

JED

So we have your overall standpoint. Any specifics?

LEANNE

Someone needs to light a fire under Baker and Arieta. I like them. Garza doesn't seem to have that action on the ball like he used to. I'd trade him.

JED

We just got him here.

LEANNE

Yeah. I know.

JED

Infield?

LEANNE

I like our infield. Did anyone tell Navarro that he has to workout in the off-season? I think he got fatter.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT

Lesson eight. If you are overweight you should work-out and eat less. Then you will be less fat. Not that hard, just put the fork down.

--CONTINUE--

JED

My God, he is fat.

LEANNE

Yup. Parker looks good. Looks like he put on about fifteen pounds of muscle. Velocity has come way up. You're gonna want to bring him into more games this season.

Jed is thoroughly enjoying Leanne's opinions and company.

JED

You like baseball Leanne?

LEANNE

Just a little.

JED

You played?

LEANNE

Yeah. I played.

JED

Why do you like it?

LEANNE

The purity. It all seems simplistic enough but it's not just a sport. It's an art form, you know? I like that fact that you can strike out three times in a game and still be the hero when it's all said and done. It's a game of moments. That's why I like baseball Mr. Hoyer.

JED

The smells, the sounds, -

LEANNE

The smell of freshly cut grass in the morning or the sound of a ball being hit on the screws.

JED

Yeah.

LEANNE

Yeah.

JED

Do you like being an accountant Mrs. McDermot?

LEANNE

I like being here.

They watch the boys turn a couple double plays.

JED

Would you be interested in doing some scouting? Apparently I could use an extra set of eyes.

LEANNE

You serious?

JED

I am.

LEANNE

You know I technically haven't done any scouting?

JED

Oh, but you have. I think you've been scouting your whole life. Come to my office Friday at five. We'll talk.

LEANNE

See you then.

As Jed walks away.

JED

Their will be no raise involved.

LEANNE

That's okay. I've been stealing over the years.

JED

Perfect.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD AS AN ADULT
Lesson nine. If you truly want something, surrender your heart to it. You must always be honest about what you want out of life. If you can do that, life will give it to you.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S CAR - DAY

Leanne drives through the city as she calls her son.

LEANNE

Hey.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI BRAVES BALL PARK - DAY

Chad is walking to his car in full uniform with his bag slung over his shoulder.

CHAD

Oh, Hey Leanne.

LEANNE

Don't be an ass.

CHAD

What's up?

LEANNE

Got some news you might find interesting.

CHAD

Please tell me I've been called up.

LEANNE

Sorry. But your mother has been called up.

CHAD

What?

LEANNE

You're talking to a scout of the Chicago Cubs.

CHAD

No I'm not.

LEANNE

I'm actually serious.

CHAD

Holy shit, mom. That's insane. How?
Can you get me a job?

LEANNE

You just stay focussed and get that
fastball over the corners. Then
we'll talk trade.

CHAD

I can't believe this...
Congratulations.

LEANNE

Thanks.

CHAD

We need to celebrate. I'll come to
Chicago after our next road swing.
Gonna have a couple days.

LEANNE

Okay, I'm just getting home. Talk
soon.

CHAD

Yeah, yeah. Bye.

They both hang up and Chad sits in his car. He laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - TWO YEARS LATER

Leanne is cooking supper. She is making a stir fry type dish
in a large fry pan on the stove. She opens the fridge and
grabs a beer and then crashes on the couch in the living
room as supper cooks.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne is staring blankly at the TV. The phone rings.
Finally on the third ring she snaps out of her trance and
walks over to the phone. Her meal is clearly burnt to a
crisp as smoke begins to fill the kitchen. She pauses and
stares at the phone with a confused look on her face. She
then answers without saying hello first.

LEANNE

(to caller)

No. No I'm not interested.

Leanne hangs up and pauses again. After a beat, she realizes
the burnt food. She quickly walks over and pulls the pan off
the burner. She rubs her head as if having a bad headache,
then turns off the burner and walks back into the living
room.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Leanne wakes up to her cell phone ringing bedside. She wipes her eyes and answers.

LEANNE

Hello?

A man responds.

MAN

Where are you Leanne?

LEANNE

Who is this?

MAN

It's Larry.

LEANNE

Oh, yeah. What's up Larry?

LARRY

We are ready to leave. We're waiting on you.

LEANNE

Waiting on me? It's Saturday.

LARRY

No it's Sunday. And we are going to watch our AAA boys in Iowa.

LEANNE

What?

LARRY

You alright?

LEANNE

Oh yeah, shit sorry. I guess I got my days mixed up.

LARRY

We can come pick you up. Or are you feeling sick today?

LEANNE

No. I'm fine. So uh -

BEAT.

LARRY

I'll come pick you up then.

LEANNE

Yes, thanks Larry.

LARRY

Okay. See you in twenty.

LEANNE

Bye.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - STILL MORNING

Leanne has a bag packed by the door. She stands in the living room going over in her mind if she has everything she needs. She goes back to her room to grab her notebook off of the dresser. She opens it up and we see various player reports. She gets to an open page and begins writing something down. There is a knock at the door. Leanne heads out the door with Larry as all of the lights are left on along with the fridge door being left open.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry sits on his couch drinking a Budweiser. He turns away from the TV as something seems to be bothering him. He dials his phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. JACKSON MISSISSIPPI - FENIAN'S PUB - NIGHT

Chad is at a pub with his teammates. Pitchers of beer cover the long table.

CHAD

Chad here.

LARRY

Hey Chad. It's Larry calling.

CHAD

Oh hey Larry.

Chad gets up from the table away from his teammates.

CHAD

What's up?

LARRY

At first I thought it wasn't my place but I wanted to talk to you.

CHAD

Is everything okay?

LARRY

I just spent the weekend with your mother scouting in Iowa.

CHAD

What's up?

LARRY
She was just actin' strange.

CHAD
Strange? Like how?

LARRY
She seemed confused.

CHAD
About what?

LARRY
About everything, Chad. It's hard to explain. She just didn't seem herself. She was irritated and her whole approach to scouting this weekend was not the same.

CHAD
Okay. Well I'll give her a call.

LARRY
Yeah. Please do.

CHAD
Thanks Larry.

Chad hangs up the phone and looks over at his group having a blast making fun of one of the rookies. They chant as he drinks three shots in a row. The rookie gets up from his chair and pukes halfway to the bathroom all over a waitress's shoes.

WAITRESS
Tommy! I told you not to feed the rook fuckin' shots!

TIMMY
Sorrriiisss Isabelle!

TIMMY (CONT.)
(to Chad)
McDermot get over here.

Chad walks over to the table.

CHAD
I gotta go fellas.

TIMMY
What are you talkin' about?!

CHAD
I gotta call my mom.

Timmy and a couple others laugh. Chad's facial expression shuts them up quickly.

TIMMY
Everything alright?

CHAD
I dunno.

EXT. JACKSON MISSISSIPPI - FENIAN'S PUB - NIGHT

Chad stands in the parking lot waiting for his mother to pick up. No answer.

CHAD
Come on.

Chad stares out into the night and like a knee jerk reaction, gets in his car and spins out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Chad walks through the front door without knocking. He slams it shut and walks into his moms room. She is in bed sleeping.

Leanne wakes up.

LEANNE
Chad! What are you doing here?

CHAD
Came to see you.

Leanne gets out of bed and hugs him.

LEANNE
How long has it been now?

CHAD
About four months I think.

LEANNE
How's everything at school?

CHAD
School?

LEANNE
I mean with the team.

CHAD
You alright mom?

LEANNE
Yeah, I'm fine.

CHAD
Why aren't you at work?

LEANNE

Just taking a little sick day
that's all.

CHAD

How was your weekend?

LEANNE

It was fine.

CHAD

I got a call from Larry.

LEANNE

Why would Larry call you?

CHAD

He said he's worried about you. You
were acting strange this weekend?

LEANNE

What? How would he know that?

CHAD

Cause you were with him all
weekend.

LEANNE

Oh - yeah I know but how would he
know if I'm strange or normal. He
doesn't know me that well sweety.
Not like we are drinking buddies.

CHAD

Sweety?

LEANNE

Why you giving me the third degree?

Leanne walks passed Chad and into the living area. As Chris
follows he notices a mess in the kitchen.

CHAD

Since when do you leave a mess?

LEANNE

I told you I'm sick. How long are
you staying for?

CHAD

I dunno. I came to make sure you
were okay.

LEANNE

I'm fine.

Chad takes a long look at his mother.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Quit looking at me like that.

CHAD
I'm gonna make you some soup.

Chad moves into the kitchen and starts cleaning up the big mess.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad gets up from the couch and walks into his mother's room. She is sound asleep. He just watches her with a worried look on his face. He sees her notebook on the night stand and opens it up.

As he looks through some player reports that are dated in order, Chad notices some irregular entries. The dates become out of order and a lot of the player reports are incomplete. He flips to the back of the notebook and notices a small stack of papers tucked away in the back.

He reads:

April 5th - "Some strange things have been happening. It's been going on for about a week now. Most days I feel like my energy is drained so badly. It can't be depression can it? I'm not a depressed person. I scout for the Chicago Cubs. I've never been much of a journal type of girl but what the hell. May as well."

April 12th - "Is it just me or is my attention span getting worse? I feel like I can hardly focus. I've burned more than one meal now. What's even scarier is that I can't remember how many."

The next entry has no date listed.

"I'm so forgetful. I need to do something about this. Fuck Leanne...What is happening?"

June 15th - "I forgot about the journal. Everything gets worse and worse. I think I have alzheimer's. At age 38. I think I'm 38. I should tell Chad, but I can't. I can't put this burden on him. He has a baseball career to worry about. This is my last entry."

Chad puts down the book and after a beat, he walks over to his mother (whom is still sleeping) and pulls the covers over her and exits.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Leanne is dressed and ready to go to work.

Chad is cooking breakfast.

CHAD
Good morning.

LEANNE
Good morning my son.

CHAD
Where are you going?

LEANNE
To work.

CHAD
No, you aren't. I called in sick
for you.

LEANNE
Why?

CHAD
Because I want to spend the day
with you.

LEANNE
That's nice but I have to get to
work, Chad. And don't you play
today?

CHAD
I talked to my coach already. He
knows.

LEANNE
Let's do something when I get back
from work.

CHAD
No. Mom. We need to talk.

LEANNE
Sorry if I seemed forgetful last
night. Just a little stressed, you
know?

CHAD
I read your journal mom.

LEANNE
Which journal?

CHAD
Your journal.

LEANNE
Oh.

CHAD
How come you haven't told me any of
this?

LEANNE
Wouldn't do either of us any good.

CHAD
How can you be that selfish?

LEANNE
I'm old. These things happen.

CHAD
You're forty years old.

LEANNE
I've been more active lately. They
let me use the gym at Wrigley. It's
helping.

CHAD
Did you go to the doctor?

A long beat.

CHAD (CONT.)
You don't remember, do you?

Still no response.

CHAD (CONT.)
We should go today. Together.

LEANNE
Don't be silly.

CHAD
This is serious.

LEANNE
(snapping back)
I know it's serious. I'm not
stupid.

CHAD
Could have fooled me.

LEANNE
What the hell is a doctor gonna do
for me? Not like a broke my leg.

CHAD
If this is dementia, we should act
now. There are treatments that can
help.

LEANNE
I'll take care of all that.

CHAD
No you won't!

Leanne starts to tear up.

LEANNE

I don't want you to have anything to do with this.

CHAD

I'm your son.

LEANNE

I know but - I can't hold you back from your baseball.

CHAD

It's just baseball.

LEANNE

No it isn't just baseball.

Chad clearly notices Leanne draw a blank for a full three seconds. Her attention goes back towards Chad, as tears are no longer existent. Chad can watch her mind churn for thoughts.

CHAD

Mom. We will figure this out together.

LEANNE

Sorry, what were you saying?

Chad is at a loss for words. He is unmistakably heartbroken.

CHAD

Sit down.

Leanne does as she is told.

LEANNE

Oh shit! What time is it?

CHAD

8:15. Why?

LEANNE

I gotta get going.

CHAD

Where?

LEANNE

To work.

CHAD

No mom. I called in sick for you remember?

LEANNE

Oh yeah...Why did you - you know?

CHAD
 Yes I know. We were just talking
 about it.

LEANNE
 Yeah, right.

Chad struggles not to cry.

CHAD
 Why didn't you tell me sooner?

LEANNE
 I couldn't.

CHAD
 Why?!

LEANNE
 (half shouting)
 Because I love you and I'm not
 letting you take care of me while
 my brain shuts down!

BEAT.

LEANNE (CONT.)
 You're just a kid still, got your
 whole career ahead of you.

CHAD
 I'm twenty-eight. I'm not a kid
 anymore. And it might be time to be
 honest about what my career is now.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Leanne walks away from Wrigley and gets into her car.

INT. LEANNE'S CAR - DAY

Leanne is driving around and makes a couple right turns back
 to back and looks around confused. After a couple more turns
 she pulls over to the side of the road, clearly lost and
 unable to find her way back home. She starts to cry.

After she settles down she calls Chad.

LEANNE
 Let's go to the doctor.

CHAD
 What's wrong?

Leanne chokes up again.

LEANNE

I'm lost.

CHAD

You can't find your way home?

LEANNE

No.

CHAD

Just tell me the street name and
the house number you are parked in
front of.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

In the entrance we see the Chicago Cubs team changing out of their dirty uniforms after practice.

INT. MAINTENANCE ROOM - DAY

Across the hall and around the corner we see a maintenance crew of about five guys having coffee.

INT/EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

A lawn mower drives through an open gate and out onto Wrigley Field. As the lawn mower turns right to head into the outfield we see Chad driving with headphones in.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad is raking the mound. He then grabs the handle of a hose and starts spraying it down.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad paints the third base line.

INT. LEANNE'S HOME - DAY

Chad walks towards the front entrance and can hear noise in the back. He switches his route and walks around back.

A young boy, maybe ten, stands in the back yard with one leg up and arm cocked back ready to throw a pitch. He remains stationary in that position, while Leanne stands behind.

LEANNE

(to the boy)

Okay bring your glove hand up. Yup.
Pointing it at your target. As you
come through your throwing motion
(assisting the boy) keep your glove
hand tucked at the waist as you
rotate.

The boy follows through the motion with out throwing the ball.

LEANNE

Okay good. Your throwing arm is too straight though. You will lose power on your throw. Bend that arm. Lead with that elbow and drive through the ball. Full extension at your target.

Leanne helps him through the motion and then notices Chad.

CHAD

Coach.

LEANNE

Hey.

CHAD

Good day?

LEANNE

Yeah. Good day.

CHAD

These backyard clinics gonna be a regular thing?

LEANNE

What else would I do?

CHAD

Fair enough.

LEANNE

I should be working with you too.

Chad gets a frustrated look (thinking his mother still thinks he's playing).

LEANNE (CONT.)

Don't get your panties in a wad. I know you aren't playing. But you should be.

CHAD

Mom we've talked about this.

LEANNE

Not enough.

Leanne looks back at the boy and fights for thought.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Where were we?

BOY

I have to go home. Can I come again tomorrow?

LEANNE

Of course you can. I'll be here.

BOY

(Chad)

Bye.

CHAD

See ya later.

LEANNE

What a nice day. We should have a backyard beer.

CHAD

You shouldn't drink alcohol.

LEANNE

I forget most things anyway. Let me enjoy a beer.

CHAD

Fine.

EXT. LEANNE'S BACKYARD - SUNSET

Chad and Leanne sit in lawn chairs in the backyard quietly drinking their Budweiser.

CHAD

What else did you do today?

Leanne stares out towards the back fence.

CHAD

Mom.

Still nothing.

CHAD (CONT.)

Leanne.

LEANNE

Yeah?

CHAD

What else did you do today?

LEANNE

Cut the grass.

Chad looks at the long grass.

CHAD

Thanks. How is Jeffrey looking?

LEANNE

Who is Jeffrey?

CHAD

The kid you have been teaching how to pitch.

LEANNE

What? Oh. I don't know. Fine.

CHAD

That's good. You happy?

LEANNE

Of course I am. Beer is cold. Got my own backyard. My son. Why wouldn't I be?

CHAD

Good, mom. Good.

LEANNE

Are you happy?

CHAD

Yeah.

LEANNE

You lying to me?

Chad laughs.

CHAD

I'm not lying.

LEANNE

You miss playing. It doesn't take much to see that. I'm loosing my marbles and I see that.

CHAD

You're not loosing it.

They both take another sip of the beer.

CHAD

You think I should still be playing?

LEANNE

Yeah. Don't you want to?

CHAD

Maybe.

LEANNE

That's a yes my boy.

Chad looks at Leanne and smiles.

LEANNE (CONT.)
What?

CHAD
Nothing.

LEANNE
You want me to call your coach?

CHAD
I don't think they'd take me back.

LEANNE
(confused momentarily)
What you mean?

CHAD
Cause I'm not -

LEANNE
Right sorry. Yeah.

Leanne takes a frustrated sip of her beer.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Do you want to play?

Chad takes another pull from his beer.

CHAD
Yes. I want to play.

LEANNE
Then that's what you will do.

CHAD
But mom.

LEANNE
I know.

Leanne reaches out and grabs Chad's hand. The two stare out at the setting sun.

LEANNE (CONT.)
You have a girlfriend yet or did I forget who she is?

CHAD
No girlfriend mom.

LEANNE
You gay?

CHAD
No mom. Not gay.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad walks towards Wrigley wearing a full suit and tie.

INT. MAINTENANCE - FRANKY CARTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad knocks on the door.

FRANKY

Chad, come in.

CHAD

Hey Franky.

FRANKY

What can I do for you kid?

CHAD

You could double my wage, you old prick.

FRANKY

Anything else? A hand job perhaps?

CHAD

No. I'm abstinent. Or just gay according to my mother.

FRANKY

Hey. I'm not judging. I've got a gay nephew. He likes antique shopping.

CHAD

Is that right?

The smile fades from Chad's face.

FRANKY

What's with the suit?

CHAD

I gotta quit.

FRANKY

Taking another kick at it?

CHAD

Yeah. I have to.

FRANKY

Good.

CHAD

I was that bad of a worker.

FRANKY

You were entertaining
though...Anytime you want to come
back to Chicago. Jobs yours.

CHAD

Anytime?

FRANKY

I'll just fire someone if I have
to. I hate most of your generation.
Shouldn't be too hard.

CHAD

Thanks Franky.

EXT. CHAD'S OLD FORD TRUCK - DAY

Chad drives away from Wrigley with a big smile on his face,
followed by a nervous exhale.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO - DAY

Chad walks beside his mother as they follow a nurse into a
room. It is large and spacious; pretty much like a cozy
apartment.

LEANNE

Not to shabby. Backyard?

NURSE

Yes of course Leanne. We have a big
open area for activities.

LEANNE

You have your glove here?

NURSE

My glove?

LEANNE

Your ball glove?

NURSE

Oh I don't play.

LEANNE

Oh.

NURSE

So Leanne, we want you to be
comfortable. If you need a hand
with anything just hit your buzzer
here.

LEANNE

I don't like being lazy.

NURSE

Don't worry about that. Meals can be brought to your room or you can come out to the dinner area. Meals at eight, one, and six.

LEANNE

Who controls the big screen out there?

NURSE

Whoever.

LEANNE

Better be some Cubs fans here.

NURSE

I'm sure there is. It's a young crowd. You will enjoy it I'm sure.

A hundred year old man walks at a turtle pace passed her room.

LEANNE

What the fuck you consider old?

Chad bursts out laughing.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Thank-you nurse...Jackie. I may be forgetful but I can still read.
(read her nametag)

NURSE

Let me know if you need anything.

CHAD

We should be fine.

The nurse exits.

Chad looks out the window, upset.

LEANNE

I'll be fine.

CHAD

Who's gonna visit you?

LEANNE

I have friends you know. I'm not a complete loser.

CHAD

This doesn't feel right.

LEANNE

It is right. This is the hand we have been dealt. I think we've played our cards just fine. Don't you?

CHAD

Yeah. We've done okay.

LEANNE

You're gonna play in the majors. Don't stop until you do. Promise me that.

CHAD

Mom. -

LEANNE

Please promise me that.

CHAD

I promise.

LEANNE

And then when you sign your million dollar contract get me the hell of out of this shit hole.

Chad tries to respond.

LEANNE (CONT.)

I'm joking. This is fine.

Chad is still upset.

LEANNE (CONT.)

You can't live backwards my boy. Life only moves forward. Keep pushing.

CHAD

Okay.

A long beat.

CHAD

You alright then?

Confusion sets in on Leanne's face.

LEANNE

Shit.

CHAD

What?

After a beat -

LEANNE

Where are we?

CHAD

It's alright. This is your new home remember?

LEANNE

This is not my home. You're scaring me, Chad.

CHAD

It's okay. Sit.

Chad walks Leanne to the edge of her bed and sits down next to her.

CHAD (CONT.)

You know how you have been forgetful lately?

LEANNE

Has it been that bad?

CHAD

Not great. That's okay though. You have dementia, but we have it under control.

LEANNE

I'm sorry.

CHAD

Don't be sorry.

LEANNE

You're still going to play ball though right?

CHAD

Yes, don't you worry. I'm playing.

LEANNE

Good. Good. Are you staying for the day or are you leaving soon?

CHAD

I actually have to hit the road soon. Long drive.

LEANNE

Yeah. You should get going then. Give me a hug.

Chad gives her a quick hug.

CHAD

Okay, I'll call you either tonight or in the morning.

LEANNE

Good boy.

Chad can find any words.

CHAD

Bye.

LEANNE

See you soon.

Chad walks out slowly and closes the door. He tries like hell to fight the tears off but cracks.

After catching his breath he turns back and opens the door, rushes up to his mom and gives her a hug.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Good God. I think you cracked one of my ribs.

Chad holds.

LEANNE (CONT.)

Are you okay?

Chad lets go.

CHAD

Yes. I'm fine. I will talk to you later okay?

LEANNE

Okay, good luck.

CHAD

Thanks.

Chad exits.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAD'S OLD FORD TRUCK - DAY

Chad gets to his truck. He puts the keys in the ignition and starts to cry.

He regains himself fires up the engine and takes off down the road.

INT. LEANNE'S ROOM (ASSISTED LIVING) - DAY

Leanne looks out her window, smiles, and closes her eyes as she envisions her son having success in baseball.

EXT. PEARL MISSISSIPPI - BALL PARK - DAY

Chad stands on the mound and strikes out another batter. The scoreboard shows Braves 2, Montgomery 0.

INT. BALL PARK - ANNOUNCERS BOOTH - DAY

ANNOUNCER 1

Another one down for Chad McDermot.
What a season it has been Mr.
McDermot. Only four outs remain in
this stellar performance. If you
are joining us now, it's been a
tight one folks.

ANNOUNCER 2

And yet not really. As McDermot
delivers a fastball for a strike,
we look at the hit column for
Montgomery and find a goose egg.

ANNOUNCER 1

Don't you dare say it.

ANNOUNCER 2

Four outs away for Chad McDermot.
What a game and season it has been
for this minor league veteran.

INT. BALL PARK - DAY

Chad winds and fires a curveball.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BALL PARK - ANNOUNCERS BOOTH - DAY

ANNOUNCER 1

Two strikes away. That curveball
has caused fits for them all day
long.

ANNOUNCER 2

It sure has. The wonderful
supporters of the Braves are now on
their feet in anticipation.

INT. BALL PARK - DAY

Chad delivers another curveball. Swing and a miss.

He gets the ball back and walks slowly to the mound.

The catcher shows 1 for the fastball. Chad waves him off. 2.
Yup, that's the one.

Chad exhales and starts again from the full. The pitch is
delivered and the batter swings over top of the curve yet
again. Chad throws his arms in the air as his catcher
charges towards him. Chad is tackled to the ground as the
crowd goes wild.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAVES DRESSING ROOM (NEXT DAY) - DAY

The team walks out of the dressing room for another game.

MANAGER
McDermot. Hold up.

The skip waits for the rest of the team to clear out.

MANAGER (CONT.)
Enjoy this game from the bench,
okay?

CHAD
I always do.

MANAGER
But this time you gotta pack your
bags after. Need you in Gwinnet for
tomorrow nights game.

CHAD
You serious?

MANAGER
I'm serious. I don't want to see
you back here, okay?

CHAD
I'll do my best. You that sick of
me skip?

MANAGER
I am. Okay, let's go win another
one. A winning streak would be nice
just once in a while.

CHAD
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO - DAY

Leanne sits in a recliner, watching the Cubs game in the
main living area.

The old man from before sits next to her.

OLD MAN
How are you doing today, young
lady?

LEANNE
I'm good Merve. And you?

OLD MAN

I woke up this morning. That's a win in my books.

LEANNE

And it only took you twenty minutes to get from your room to this TV.

OLD MAN

Should we test are luck at the casino?

LEANNE

I don't think that would work so well for me. Not as sharp as you Merve.

OLD MAN

Maybe we can find something else to pass the time.

LEANNE

I'm not sleeping with you.

OLD MAN

Wouldn't be so bad would it?

LEANNE

And of all the conversations, I'm sure I'll remember this one.

OLD MAN

You'd remember sleeping with me that's for sure.

LEANNE

It'd be hard to forget, Merve.

Nurse approaches Leanne.

LEANNE(CONT.)

Test your luck with nurse Jackie.

NURSE JACKIE

I've got your son on the phone Leanne.

Leanne takes the phone.

LEANNE

Hello.

CHAD

Hey.

LEANNE

How'd you make out other night.

CHAD
Not too bad.

LEANNE
Seven full?

CHAD
Complete game.

LEANNE
That's great news.

CHAD
Oh, and it was a no-no.

LEANNE
Come one!! Are you kidding me?

CHAD
I'm not kidding.

LEANNE
You have to get called up after that.

CHAD
Already did. On my way to Gwinnet.

Leanne puts her arms up in the air and all the old residents look at her.

LEANNE
Where uh - when...

CHAD
Still there mom?

LEANNE
Chad?

CHAD
Yeah. It's me.

LEANNE
How are you doing?

CHAD
I'm great mom. Pitched a no-no last night. I got called up to AAA.

LEANNE
Please don't tell me this is a joke.

CHAD
No joke. One step closer.

LEANNE
I'm so proud of you.

CHAD

I gotta go catch a flight. I will call you tomorrow though, okay?

LEANNE

Okay, bye.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAD'S APARTMENT - GWINNET - TWO YEARS LATER - NIGHT

Chad's eyes are almost closed as he lays on the couch with ESPN on. He continues to flirt with sleep.

ESPN ANCHOR

And the Chicago Cubs made a couple deals today. Future considerations going to Seattle for cash and center fielder Austin Jackson. Also a minor league deal; the Cubbies have acquired starting pitcher Chad McDermot from the Atlanta Braves system for cash. Let's move on to some highlights. The Blue Jays taking on the Red Sox today and it was a beating of some kind. The bats were alive for the Jays as they -

Chad is sitting up looking at his TV screen in disbelief.

His phone rings.

CHAD

Hello?

MAN

Chad. How are you doing?

CHAD

I'm good. Who is this?

MAN

Jed Hoyer. General Manager of the Cubs. I didn't wake you did I?

CHAD

Funny you mention that. ESPN just woke me.

JED

So you know that you belong to the Cubs now?

CHAD

I do.

JED

You've had a nice season so far.

CHAD

Thank you sir.

JED

When did you pitch last?

CHAD

I was due to start tomorrow.

JED

Okay. Sorry for not getting a hold of you earlier. It's been a busy day.

CHAD

That's okay.

JED

Could you get packed up and hop on a flight tomorrow?

CHAD

I don't really own much. Shouldn't be a problem. Should I book my flight to Iowa or did you guys already do that?

JED

No, no. We are taking care of that.

CHAD

Okay thanks so much. I'm grateful for the opportunity.

JED

You've earned it. But Chad...

CHAD

Yeah?

JED

I'm not booking your flight to Iowa. I'm booking it to Chicago.

Shock hits Chad. Then a smile across his face.

JED (CONT.)

Are you okay with that?

CHAD

I'm okay with that.

JED

I'll keep you on the same timeline. It will work perfectly.

CHAD

Same timeline?

JED

For your start. Tomorrow. We've got you penciled in against the Cards.

CHAD

I can't believe this.

JED

Believe it.

CHAD

Does this have something to do with my mother?

JED

This is the majors. We can't do favors for anyone. You've had an excellent season and we need an arm to eat some innings. With that said, your mother is an amazing woman. That's just a bonus.

CHAD

Thank-you for saying that.

JED

Hey no problem. Our office will call you back right away with your flight details.

CHAD

Perfect.

JED

Welcome to the Chicago Cubs, Chad.

CHAD

Thanks. See you soon.

Chad hangs up. He stands up and fist pumps multiple times; followed by an incredibly weird dance. He then reverts back to the traditional manly celebration.

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad walks through a tunnel up to the maintenance room. He pokes his head in and spots Franky.

FRANKY

I knew you'd be back. Works all done for the day though. You're late.

CHAD

Works not finished yet Franky.

FRANKY

That right?

CHAD

That's right. Stick around will ya?

Chad exposes his ball bag.

FRANKY

I can do that. Good luck kid.

Chad exits and walks towards the dressing room. He walks in slowly and looks around in awe; like he's still a kid.

One of the players approaches.

PLAYER

McDermot right?

CHAD

Yeah.

PLAYER

Anthony Rizzo. Welcome man.

CHAD

Thanks.

RIZZO

How you feelin'?

CHAD

Like this is a dream. And like I might throw up on you.

RIZZO

Relax man. Just do what you do. You'll be fine.

The manager, JOE MADDEN, walks out of his office.

MADDEN

Hey Chad. Welcome.

CHAD

Thanks.

MADDEN

Are you still ready to start? We can have you go next game if you need an extra day.

CHAD

No I'm ready. Been ready for a while now.

MADDEN

That's good to hear. Do what you gotta do to prepare. Be loose out there. I want you to enjoy this, okay?

CHAD

I'll try.

MADDEN

What I always tell new guys, is to go out on the field before the game gets going. While it's still quiet.

CHAD

I can do that?

MADDEN

Yeah. Get your gear on a walk out. You've got a couple hours before game time.

Chad walks up the steps and the general manager, Jed Hoyer, stands there waiting.

JED

Chad. Nice to meet you.

CHAD

You too. This is insane.

JED

I know, right? Such a classic ball park.

Jed admires the scenery.

JED (CONT.)

Nine innings or what?

CHAD

Oh no problem.

JED

Hey, I got someone here who wants to see you.

Chad looks at the seating down the third base line and there sits his mother looking at him.

Chad walks over and sits down next to his mother nonchalantly.

CHAD

Leanne.

LEANNE

I'm proud of you.

CHAD
How are you feeling mom?

LEANNE
I'm fine.

CHAD
It's good to see you.

Leanne is fighting tears.

LEANNE
I love you. My black boy.

Chad hugs his mother.

CHAD
Now what?

LEANNE
You throw a shut-out.

Chad laughs.

CHAD
I'll do what I can.

LEANNE
That works for me.

Chad lets out a big exhale.

LEANNE (CONT.)
You should go get ready.

CHAD
Yeah.

Chad exits.

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The seats are filled. Leanne and Jed are now surrounded by fans.

LEANNE
Who are the Cubs playing again?

JED
Cardinals.

LEANNE
It was nice of you to invite me.

JED
I'm a nice guy.

LEANNE
What's the occasion?

JED
Your son is playing.

LEANNE
That would be nice.

JED
No. Leanne. He is. I traded for him.

LEANNE
You're not joking are you?

JED
Nope. You're about to watch your son start a major league ball game.

LEANNE
Thank-you so much Jed. I knew he would get here.

JED
No problem. Do you need a drink or something?

LEANNE
No I'm fine.

A beat.

LEANNE (CONT.)
Who are they playing again?

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The managers finish up at home plate with the umpires and Chad walks out to the mound all by himself. The rest of the team stays on the bench, putting the spotlight on Chad. He begins warming up.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The lead off hitter steps into the batters box. Chad looks out at his mother watching.

Chad steps on the mound and delivers his first pitch. Fastball over the heart of the plate. The batter takes for a strike.

Chad throws his second pitch; a curveball. Strike Two.

Chad's third pitch is up and in, brushing the hitter back.

Chad takes the sign from his catcher. He drops a nasty curve ball, swing and a miss. Strike three.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Top of the eighth. Chad walks another batter to load the bases.

He waves over his catcher and holds his hand up to boldly say to his manager "please don't pull me".

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - ANNOUNCER BOOTH - DAY

ANNOUNCER 1

McDermot desperately wants to stay in this game as we just saw him put up his hand towards his manager. He wants this so badly.

ANNOUNCER 2

The pitch count is still in reasonable shape. He's sitting at 85.

ANNOUNCER 1

Still though. I would have assumed Madden would have gone to one of the set up men on this one. Crazy.

ANNOUNCER 2

Chad McDermot. What a roller coaster ride his life has been over the past 24 hours I'm sure. And hopefully he can get out of this jam and pick up the W.

ANNOUNCER 1

McDermot and Navarro seem to have a plan in place now as they get set to get the final out of the inning. Bases loaded.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Chad is soaked in sweat. He turns away from the mound and grimaces from lingering pain in his arm.

He sets and grunts as he delivers a fastball past the batter. Strike one.

Chad gets the ball back and quickly gets set. He delivers another fastball high in the zone. Swing and a miss.

The catcher gives him the 2. He shakes him off and takes the fastball sign. He winds and delivers a hard fastball in on the hands. Swing and a miss. Strike three.

Chad fists pumps and yells with enthusiasm as he gets out of the jam. He yells into his glove as he walks off the field.

Chad goes straight to the manager once he enters the dugout.

MADDEN

Had enough?

CHAD

I gotta finish this.

MADDEN

Well. Then finish it.

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The Cubs last batter pops up for the final out. The scoreboard reads 4-3 in favor of the Cubs.

Chad takes the field and the entire crowd gets on their feet for a standing ovation.

The first batter steps in. Chad has a dark intensity burning in his eyes.

He throws a fastball and it's hit to short. Routine play. Out number one.

The second batter swings on the first pitch as well, flying out to center field.

The third batter walks into the box. Chad looks over to his mother along the third base line. He walks back to the mound slowly.

First pitch is a curveball that the batter takes for a strike.

Chad looks around at the crowd; still standing. He delivers another curvball in the dirt that the hitter swings over top of.

Chad waives off the catcher. He wants another curveball. He comes set and snaps off a hard breaking curveball. It catches the corner back door. Strike three. Game over.

As soon as Chad finishes his stride for strike three he start walking over to his mother. The rest of the team gathers near the mound as Chad walks away.

Jed helps Leanne out onto the field just in time as Chad gives her an emotional bear hug.

They both shed tears as the hold each other, embracing the beautiful moment.

--FREEZE FRAME--

V/O CHAD

Lesson ten. Love me, your mother.
Always. (BEAT) I mean I didn't push
(MORE)

V/O CHAD (cont'd)
you out of my, you know, but I
still raised you. A woman of words
my mother is.

--CONTINUE--

LEANNE
Good game son.

CHAD
Did I meet your expectations?

LEANNE
And then some.

Chad and Leanne walk out to the middle of the infield to
celebrate with the rest of the team.

FADE OUT:

THE END.