

"ONE MAGIC SEASON"

an original screenplay by

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EXT. THE BASKETBALL CENTER - NIGHT

A bustling state-of-the-art basketball arena.

INT. THE BASKETBALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A televised College Basketball game is being played. EARL THE REF whistles a foul on the HOME TEAM.

Their Coach steps onto the floor. YOUNG JIMMY O'GRADY, late 20s, tall, athletic and unkempt. He wears a rumpled coat and tie. An immediate technical foul follows.

YOUNG JIMMY

You're teeing me up? Is that what's happening, Earl? You stink!

EARL THE REF

I stink? You smell like a distillery, Jimmy. Sit down, before I toss you.

Young Jimmy turns green, and starts to wretch.

YOUNG JIMMY

Toss me? No... I'm going to toss --

The HOME CROWD reacts as Young Jimmy hurls on Earl.

EXT. ANY TOWN USA - EVENING

Sun sets over a blue-collar neighborhood of well-kept homes.

EXT. O'GRADY HOME - CONTINUOUS

A BOUNCING BALL is heard. Two girls play basketball in front of a garage with a backboard and hoop.

The smaller of the two scores. MACKENZIE "MAC" O'GRADY, a freckled-faced, 12 year-old, Irish American tomboy.

The taller girl catches the ball as it drops through the net. BRAHNA PAPADOPOULOS, a pretty, 12 year-old of Greek descent.

BRAHNA

Mac? Is this a good idea?

MAC

Well, Brahma. I have my doubts, but if you don't take a shot, you can't win the game. My dad taught me that.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Yes, I did.

JIMMY O'GRADY, late 30s, steps into view.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Come on ladies, let's go.

Mac shrugs in reaction to Brahna's worried stare.

EXT. MAIN BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

A pickup truck with truck bed tool box cruises the boulevard. Lettering on its side reads: O'GRADY'S MOBILE AUTO REPAIR.

INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mac and Brahna sit beside Jimmy on the bench seat.

MAC
Dad, about this plan of yours?

JIMMY
What's your concern, Mac?

MAC
That boys would rather play four on five, then pass the ball to a girl.

JIMMY
They'll pass it to you. It's why I'm coaching with Teddy.

BRAHNA
And, that's my concern. My dad?
Coaching basketball? I love him, but he's not a coach.

JIMMY
What your dad brings is enthusiasm.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The truck turns into a parking lot. A sign next to the entrance reads: MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER.

BRAHNA (O.S.)
With my dad, that's not always a good thing.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Brahna's father waits by his EV. TEDDY PAPADOPoulos, 40s and childlike. He waves as Jimmy pulls to a stop.

INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy and the girls watch as Teddy does a happy dance.

JIMMY

Well, you two will just have to trust
me. Mac? Have I ever let you down?

MAC

I'm a twelve year-old girl, dad. I
have a list.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Brahna climbs out of the truck to be greeted by her father.

TEDDY

Hi, tall stuff!

BRAHNA

Dad, don't call me that. I'm just
me, Brahna. Understand?

TEDDY

Sorry, Brahna. I'm just excited.

BRAHNA

Okay, but stop, please.

Jimmy and Mac, basketball in hand, swing around the truck.

JIMMY

Come on, Teddy. We're late.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy and Teddy hurry through the open doors. The sign hanging
above reads: YOUTH LEAGUE BASKETBALL DRAFT TONIGHT.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Fourteen COACHES sit, looking at DAN JOHNSON, 50s, wearing a
Parks Department staff shirt. He glances at his watch.

Jimmy and Teddy enter to take a seat at the lone open table.

DAN

Now, that we're all here, we can
start.

The coach next to them stands. LLOYD SKOLNICKI, 40s, tall,
narcissistic and insincere. He shakes Jimmy's hand.

LLOYD

Before we do, I have to shake hands
with this guy. Takes guts to coach a
couple of girls in this league.

ANOTHER COACH raises his hand.

ANOTHER COACH
Exactly how many girls are playing?
And, do we have to pick them?

DAN
Five. And no, you don't have to pick them, but I suggest you give these gals a fair shake.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Dan's VOICE OVER continues as the girls run the give and go.

DAN (V.O.)
They're pretty good.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Dan shakes an old top hat full of numbered chips.

DAN
Now, if there aren't any further questions, let's get to it.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - MOMENTS LATER

Mac toes the free-throw line. A frown overtakes her face. Brahma turns to see THREE BOYS approaching in the distance.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Dan holds the top hat out. Lloyd signals his deferral.

LLOYD
Wouldn't want it said I took advantage of the new guy.

JIMMY
Overconfident, aren't we, Skolnicki?

LLOYD
Doesn't matter when I pick, O'Grady.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Lloyd's VOICE OVER finishes as the boys arrive. The tallest smiles with mean intent. HOWIE SKOLNICKI, 12 years old.

LLOYD (V.O.)
My son is the league's best player.

Howie strides onto the court.

HOWIE
Hey Mac, why are you losers here?

MAC

You know full well why we're here,
Howie Skolnicki. Brahma and me are
going to be on the same team. And,
that's MacKenzie to you. Only my
friends can call me Mac.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy pulls a chip to hold up the NUMBER ONE.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Howie wrests the ball from Mac, and tosses it to FENTON RATLEY,
a tall and beefy 12 year-old. He smirks as Brahma steps up.

FENTON

Well, looky here, it's a Brahnasaurus.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Dan looks to Jimmy.

DAN

What's the team name going to be?

TEDDY

Can I pick the name, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Sure, Teddy, have at it.

Lloyd's assistant lights up. WADE RATLEY, 40s and burley.

WADE

I know, I know... the Sparks.

Laughter breaks out among the coaches.

LLOYD

You're a funny man, Wade Ratley.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Fenton waves the ball in Brahma's face.

BRAHNA

You're not funny, Fenton Ratley.

Brahma punches the ball free, and it bounds to COOPER LANG,
an 11 year-old mix of African American and Caucasian.

COOPER

Come on, guys.

(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)
Has to be something better then
picking on girls. Let's go get a
soda. I'm buying.

He bounces the ball back to Mac, and leads Howie and Fenton
away. Mac calling out turns him.

MAC
Hey! I'm Mac.

COOPER
Hi, Mac. I'm Cooper Lang. See you
around sometime.

Mac smiles as he catches up to the other boys.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Dan finishes filling the team names on the draft board,
spelling MAGIC above the first column.

DAN
Okay then, who's the first pick?

All eyes swing to Jimmy.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - LATER

The girls wait by the truck as their fathers join them.

MAC
How did that plan of yours work out?

JIMMY
Perfectly, starting with the name
that Teddy picked for us.

BRAHNA
What's that, dad?

TEDDY
The Magic.

The girls look at each other and smile.

MAC/BRAHNA
Cool.

TEDDY
Not as cool as Jimmy picking first.

MAC
Please, dad. Tell me you didn't.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING

Mac's VOICE OVER finishes as dozens of YOUTH PLAYERS shoot around. A boy with a perfect stroke sinks his jumper. ZAK CARSON, a 12 year-old Caucasian athlete.

MAC (V.O.)
He's a ball hog.

He is displeased to see the ball fall to Mac. She steps over, and presses it into his chest.

MAC (CONT'D)
Nice shot, Zak Carson. But, have you learned to pass yet?

ZAK
You weren't open, Mac.

MAC
I so was.

Jimmy steps in.

JIMMY
Let it go, Mac. You're teammates.

ZAK
Yeah, about that, Mister O'Grady. I don't know if I want to play with a girl again.

He smiles as Teddy and Brahma enter.

JIMMY
Not just a girl, buddy. And, it's not Mister... it's Coach.

Jimmy blows his whistle, and the gym goes silent.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I'm practicing now. If you're not on my team, please take it outside.

The gym empties around him as FOUR BOYS gather behind Zak.

ZAK
No way! Playing with one girl is hard enough.

His stare reveals Brahma and THREE OTHER GIRLS standing next to Mac. Teddy hovers behind.

ZAK (CONT'D)
But, all of them? Can't be done.

The heftiest boy looks the girls over with a skeptical eye. DARIUS WILLIAMS, JR., a tall 11 year-old African American.

DARIUS

Yeah. My cousin might be a baller,
but the rest of you girls? I'm just
not feeling it.

Darius' cousin waves a hand in his face. MO'NIQUE ADDAMS, a very tall, athletic and fierce 12 year-old African American.

MO'NIQUE

So ignorant, Junior. Us girls are
better than you boys.

The shortest boy shrugs his shoulders. BENNY HART, a bright eyed 12 year-old of East European descent.

BENNY

Who cares. I just wanna play the
game. Maybe even win a few.

The tallest boy, JOSHUA ABRAMS, a gangly, long armed 12 year-old Jewish American wearing glasses, shakes his head.

JOSHUA

We're not going to win a game.

TEDDY

Gee whiz, guys. You're wrong. We're
a good team.

BRAHNA

We really are.

MAC

That's right. My dad has a plan.

Jimmy meets their collective gaze.

JIMMY

And, it's a good one, if I can get
you past seeing he and she.

ZAK

Huh? What else is there?

JIMMY

I'm glad you asked, buddy.

He bounces the ball to his daughter.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Shall we show him?

MAC
Oh, I'd love to.

Mac displays her ball handling before draining her shot. Triumphantlly clutching the ball, she turns to her team.

MAC (CONT'D)
I'm MacKenzie O'Grady, but you can call me Mac, cuz we're teammates.

JIMMY
And, what do you see when you look at your teammates, Mac?

MAC
I see basketball players.

JIMMY
My daughter is an excellent basketball player, and the reason we are here. Who else has game?

Mo'Nique claps for the ball, and Mac snaps it to her. Working the post, Mo'Nique scores with a few dominate inside moves. She grabs the ball as it falls, and thumps on her chest.

MO'NIQUE
The name is Mo'Nique Addams. And, I most definitely have game!

She looks to ANANYA GUPTA, a tall and rail thin 11 year-old of Indian descent.

MO'NIQUE (CONT'D)
Okay, girl. Show them who you are.

Ananya takes Mo'Nique's pass, and buries a three. She takes another pass, and pulls up. Her jumper rattles home.

ANANYA
I am Ananya Gupta, and I can play.

Brahna steps up, and motions for the ball. She takes Mo'Nique's pass in the post to hit a quick turnaround. She scoops up the ball, and waves shyly to the team.

BRAHNA
Hi, I'm Brahna Papadopoulos, and I'm a pretty good basketball player too.

The smallest girl, STARLA MOON, an 11 year-old mix of Asian and Caucasian with pink ribbons in her hair playfully steals the ball away, and starts dribbling.

STARLA

You are so good. Now, I don't like to shoot much, but I still totally have a talent.

She puts on a quick show of ball handling mastery. Framing her face with jazz hands to end the performance.

STARLA (CONT'D)

Starla Moon. And, we are all so totally basketball players.

The girls gather behind as she offers the ball to the boys.

STARLA (CONT'D)

Are any of you?

Darius smiles brightly as he takes the ball from her.

DARIUS

Stand back, girls. I'm about to flex my game.

He digs in low before pivoting to miss. Unfazed, he throws up another shot, flexing as it rings the rim and falls.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

I'm Darius Williams, Junior. The basketball player of your dreams.

ROBBIE CÁRDENES, a tall and wiry, happy-go-lucky 11 year-old Mexican American steps up to imitate Starla.

ROBBIE

Totally.

They fist bump as the ball exchanges hands. Robbie drives the lane to chuck up a prayer that miraculously falls.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Hola chicas, Robbie Cárdenes has mad skills.

Joshua posts up to take the pass. He stumbles in the paint to miss a hook. He rebounds to put in the miss. The ball plunking him on the head to find his hands.

He pushes his glasses back in place.

JOSHUA

My name is Joshua, Joshua Abrams. And, I'm a basketball player.

Benny pulls the ball from Joshua's hands.

BENNY
Just gimme the ball, Big Bird.

He grumbles on his way to the wing.

BENNY (CONT'D)
A guy grows six inches over the
summer, and suddenly, he's a
basketball player?

Benny gives Joshua a last indignant stare as he sets his feet.

BENNY (CONT'D)
I'd kill for that kinda luck!

He shoots, crashing after the in-and-out heartbreaker to dive
on the loose ball as it rolls past.

BENNY (CONT'D)
I'm Benny Hart. And, I'ma good player,
cuz I love the game.

Zak steps forward.

ZAK
Ball.

He takes the pass, sticks a trey and turns to Jimmy.

ZAK (CONT'D)
I'm a real good player, but you can't
expect me to carry this team.

JIMMY
I don't expect you to carry us. I
expect you to stir things up.

ZAK
I don't know what that means.

JIMMY
It'll come to you soon enough, buddy.

Jimmy turns to Teddy, and nods.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Now, Coach.

Teddy pulls a whistle from his pocket to eye Jimmy.

TEDDY
I didn't want to lose it.

JIMMY
No. Wouldn't want that.

He is all smiles as he blows his whistle.

TEDDY
Okay Team Magic, two lines.

The kids form two lines, pointedly separated by gender.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
This isn't going to be easy, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Nothing worthwhile ever is, my friend.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

The kids are extremely sweaty, and near exhaustion as Jimmy has them running end of practice wind sprints.

JIMMY
This ends only when one of you quits.

He gets in the ear of each kid as they sprint past.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Benny, are you the quitter?

BENNY
Nadda chance, Coach.

JIMMY
Then, it's you, Joshua?

JOSHUA
No sir, not me.

JIMMY
Darius, Robbie, one of you?

DARIUS
I'll never.

ROBBIE
Me neither.

The girls preempt his query en masse.

STARLA
Totally not quitting.

ANANYA
Nor I.

MO'NIQUE
No way.

BRAHNA

No how.

MAC

Not ever.

Jimmy sights Zak taking up the rear.

JIMMY

Zak! We lead from the front!

Teddy greets Lloyd and his team, the THUNDER, as they enter.

TEDDY

Hi guys, we'll just be a minute.

LLOYD

Take your time. We're early.

FENTON

Hey dad, which ones are the girls?

WADE

Look for the sports bra, son.

Fenton scans the court to sight Zak.

FENTON

Hey, Carson! Is that a sports bra I see, or are you just wearing your jockstrap wrong again?

The bully, and his teammates break into laughter.

TEDDY

Hey now!

LLOYD

Loosen up, Papadopoulos. Just some lighthearted ribbing among men.

Zak shrinks, the LAUGHTER echoing in his mind as his parents enter the gym. BRUCE and BARBARA CARSON, 40s, good looking and fashionably preppy. He beelines their way.

The kids react to the sound of the WHISTLE with relief. Jimmy waves them over, and they drag themselves to the huddle.

STARLA

I totally don't do sweat.

JIMMY

We're playing basketball, Starla.

STARLA

But, we didn't do any passing.

ANANYA

Nor any shooting.

MO'NIQUE

Yeah, Coach. Your practice wasn't any fun. All we did was run.

Zak leads his parents over.

JIMMY

Nice of you to join us, buddy.

BRUCE

My son isn't joining this team. Not to be ridiculed all season again. So, you'll just have to trade him.

JIMMY

Yeah... that's not going to happen.

BRUCE

Then, Zak won't be playing at all. Come family, we're leaving.

BARBARA

No, I'll have a word with Jimmy.

ZAK

But, mom.

BARBARA

I'll have none of your buts, mister. Take your father to the car... now!

Zak and Bruce retreat, and Barbara steps over to Mac.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Hi, sweetheart. I see you're not alone this year.

Mac finds Brahma's hand, and in quick succession each girl reaches for the other until all five are linked together.

MAC

No, ma'am. I'm not.

Barbara eyes Jimmy.

BARBARA

All the girls?

Jimmy nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Good for you, Jimmy. Good for you.
When's next practice?

JIMMY
Tuesday.

BARBARA
Zak will be there.

Barbara walks away to turn back after a few steps.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You know, I think this is going to
be good... for both my boys.

She exits, and Jimmy turns to his team.

JIMMY
And, as for you, people. If you want
to get past all the running, then
the battle of the sexes ends today.
It's the only way this works. Now,
go home... and show up next practice
with your minds right.

The kids disperse in all directions.

TEDDY
Boy, Jimmy, there's a lot to teach.

JIMMY
But, what's youth sports without
things to teach?

The girls walk toward the exit as the Thunder takes the court.
Lloyd steps over to Jimmy as he scoops up the ball.

LLOYD
That's rough, guy. Your best player
wants to quit. You can't still really
believe that you'll be competitive?

JIMMY
We'll be plenty competitive.

LLOYD
Can't say I didn't warn you.

Lloyd walks away.

TEDDY
Jimmy? Promise me one of those lessons
to teach goes to him.

JIMMY
Oh, that's promise.

Cooper bursts inside to put frantic eyes on Mac.

COOPER
Hi, Mac. I'm late for practice.

MAC
You're playing for Lloyd Skolnicki?

COOPER
Yeah, he's my mom's boyfriend.

He runs up to Lloyd.

LLOYD
Cooper, you're late!

COOPER
But, mom is having car trouble, and
she was hoping you'd have a look.

LLOYD
What do I know of cars, kid? Now,
take a lap!

The guys join their daughters as Cooper starts his lap.

BRAHNA
Too bad, he seems like a nice boy.

MAC
Yeah, I'd rather have him on our
team, then Zak Carson.

JIMMY
Zak will come around, Mac. Just wait
and see.

Jimmy gives Lloyd a last look as he pushes the door open.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
It's all part of the plan.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy, ball in hand, steps out with Teddy and the girls. Teddy immediately points to a nearby ice cream truck.

TEDDY
Look, girls. I'm buying. You want
anything, Jimmy?

He shakes his head, something has caught his eye.

JIMMY

No, but thanks, big guy. I'll meet
you in the parking lot.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A woman surveys her car with animated disgust. PENNY LANG, late 30s and pretty. She pops the trunk to reach in, and come up with a pair of pliers.

She puts up a hand as Jimmy approaches.

PENNY

Stop! Please.

JIMMY

Looks like you could use a hand.

PENNY

You needn't concern yourself. My car
is just making a noise.

JIMMY

What kind of noise?

PENNY

A loud thumping noise, if you must
know. And, I have already determined
the cause, all by myself.

JIMMY

Please share.

Penny points to a metal shard protruding from the tire.

PENNY

There is a rather large piece of
metal stuck in my tire. A problem I
am about to solve.

JIMMY

With pliers?

PENNY

Oh, what would you know?

She yanks the shard free to fall flat on her rump. A HISSING follows as the tire deflates before her eyes.

She looks up at Jimmy, the opposite of his obvious amusement.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You knew that was going to happen.

He nods.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Yet you stood by, and watched?

JIMMY
You made it clear that you didn't
want my help.

PENNY
I guess, I was a little standoffish.

JIMMY
You are woman, and I heard you roar.

Jimmy offers his hand.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
If you promise I'll get my hand back,
maybe you'll let me help now?

He pulls her up, still holding hands as they lock eyes.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Hi, my name is Jimmy O'Grady.

PENNY
Hi, Jimmy O'Grady. I'm Penny Lang.

MAC (O.S.)
Cooper's mom.

The girls and Teddy step into view. Snacks in hand.

PENNY
Why yes, I am. And, to whom do I
have the pleasure?

MAC
I'm MacKenzie O'Grady, and this is
my best friend Brahma Papadopoulos
and her father, Teddy.

BRAHNA
Your son is nice.

MAC
Yeah, wish he was playing with us.

PENNY
Are you girls basketball players?

The pair nod proudly, and Penny looks to Jimmy again.

PENNY (CONT'D)
And, you are their coach. The father
that picked all the girls.

JIMMY
Not to change the subject, but do
you have a spare tire?

She shakes her head, and Jimmy bounces the ball to Mac.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Mac, would you?

MAC
I'm on it, dad.

BRAHNA
Coming with you.

TEDDY
Me too.

Penny watches as Brahma and Teddy follow after Mac.

PENNY
She's a precocious little thing,
isn't she, Jimmy?

JIMMY
You don't know the half of it.

EXT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Mac tosses the ball into the truck as they arrive.

TEDDY
Mac? I think your dad was making goo-
goo eyes at her.

MAC
Nah.

BRAHNA
I don't know, Mac. Sorta looked like
it to me.

MAC
You think?

They nod, and Mac turns to study her father talking to Penny.

MAC (CONT'D)
Then, here's how we'll play it.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy and Penny continue their conversation.

PENNY

So, I must ask. What was the thought process in picking your team?

JIMMY

Heart. All my kids have it, and ten hearts beating as one, cannot be defeated. That's the idea anyway. Now, I have to sell it to them.

PENNY

I don't doubt that you will, Jimmy O'Grady, because you just sold me.

The trio returns. Mac hands a can of tire sealant to Penny.

MAC

Here you go, Penny.

PENNY

Wow, MacKenzie. You saved my day.

MAC

I think we are going to be friends, so you can call me Mac.

PENNY

Okay, Mac it is.

BRAHNA

Jimmy? Can Mac spend the night?

TEDDY

Yeah, Jimmy? What do you say?

MAC

Please, dad?

JIMMY

Sure, Mac. If you're ready in the morning, then fine by me.

Mac gives her father a hug.

MAC

Thanks, dad. You're the best.

She turns to Penny.

MAC (CONT'D)

See you around, Penny.

PENNY

See you around, Mac.

Brahna and Teddy wave goodbye as Mac leads them away.

MAC
Okay, this is good.

Jimmy kneels next to the flat tire.

JIMMY
Alright, Ms Penny Lang. Let's say we
get you back on the road.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - LATER

The re-inflated tire rolls to a stop next to Jimmy, and his truck. Penny exits her car.

PENNY
I cannot thank you enough, Jimmy.

JIMMY
It was my pleasure.

PENNY
Well, Cooper must be worried sick by
now, but I would love to keep tabs
on this social experiment of yours.

JIMMY
I'd like that, but it's less a social
experiment. More a winning hand.

PENNY
Either way, I'll be rooting for you.

She walks away, his calling out turns her at the gym doors.

JIMMY
You know, Penny Lang. That makes
you... the team's first fan.

Penny beams at him before slipping inside.

EXT. PAPADOPOULOS HOME - MORNING

Mac waits out front of the ultramodern hillside home. Jimmy pulls up in his truck, and she climbs in. He pulls away.

INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy hands Mac a dress. She slips it on as they speak.

MAC
Why do we go to church every Sunday?

JIMMY

It was important to your mother.

MAC

I don't really remember her. Does that make me a horrible person?

JIMMY

No, sweetheart. You were just short of three when she left us.

MAC

Do you miss her?

JIMMY

Every day.

MAC

Do you think you'll ever be in love again? Cuz Penny seemed nice.

JIMMY

She did say that she wanted to watch us play.

Mac is all smiles as she finishes changing.

MAC

Do you think she actually will?

JIMMY

Yeah, Mac. I think so.

MAC

Wow, dad. Maybe this season won't be a total disaster after all.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

Mac bursts inside to join the team in a shoot around.

Jimmy follows to be intercepted by two African American women. SHANIQWA ADDAMS, late 30s, tall and striking, and her sister, TAMIKA WILLIAMS, mid-30s, buxom and compact.

SHANIQWA

You must be Coach Jimmy.

TAMIKA

The man with a plan. Question is, can you pull it off?

JIMMY

I know my way around a basketball court, ladies.

SHANIQWA

That we know, but straight up, you
feeling better now?

JIMMY

Haven't touched a drop in nine years,
if that's what you're asking.

SHANIQWA

That's good to hear. Do you have a
team mom?

Jimmy pointedly considers Teddy.

JIMMY

No, just the one hairy Godmother.

Shaniqwa shakes his hand.

SHANIQWA

Shaniqwa Addams. Your new team mom.
And, this is my sister, Tamika.
Mo'Nique and Junior are our children.

JIMMY

And, I'm looking forward to talking
with you further, but right now I
need to start practice.

TAMIKA

Hold on there, too tall. You haven't
asked me what I bring to the party.

JIMMY

Forgive me. Consider yourself asked.

TAMIKA

You see, I'm a Celebrity Blogger,
and you, and this team are a fabulous
story. I must be allowed to share it
with my many followers.

JIMMY

Sure. Can I start practice now?

TAMIKA

That would be fabulous!

Tamika steps past him with her smart phone.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Let's get started, children. Auntie
Tamika needs some pictures.

Shaniqwa nods in response to Jimmy's imploring stare.

SHANIQWA
I feel you.

She calls out to her sister.

SHANIQWA (CONT'D)
Girl? Best jump back here.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Shaniqwa's VOICE OVER continues as the team runs a layup drill.

SHANIQWA (V.O.)
And, let the man have his practice.

Practice continues as Jimmy puts the team through a variety of shooting, passing, man defense, and transition drills.

Zak pulls up to take a last lazy shot. The ball clangs off the rim, and a WHISTLE blows to end the practice.

The sisters join the kids as they gather around Jimmy.

JIMMY
We have all the ingredients needed for success. Next practice... we put them all together.

Tamika holds out her phone.

TAMIKA
Oh, that's good. Once more. This time for the camera.

Jimmy shoots a wide-eyed stare Shaniqwa's way. She nods.

SHANIQWA
Tamika girl!

EXT. ADDAMS HOME - NIGHT

An SUV sits in the drive of an upscale hillside home.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tamika sits at her computer. Shaniqwa enters.

TAMIKA
What about this for my blog's title?

Shaniqwa reads the computer screen. She eyes her sister.

SHANIQWA
Girl, that is genius.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

The team is split into mixed gender squads. Teddy gives the thumbs up as Zak pulls a last pinnie over his head.

TEDDY
All yours, Jimmy.

Jimmy bounces the ball to Zak.

JIMMY
Alright, let's run it.

Zak passes inside, and slices toward the hoop to collide with Benny. Joshua loses the ball as he trips over them.

Jimmy blows his whistle, and stares at the heap of boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Yeah... let's run it again. Maybe
iron out some of those wrinkles.

The boys struggle to grasp the movements required, making the installation of the offense a series of miscues, collisions, and errant passes. The practice ends as the WHISTLE sounds.

Jimmy waves the kids over, and Teddy leans in.

TEDDY
Was that as bad as it looked?

JIMMY
Let's just call it a work in progress.

Shaniqwa and Tamika step in with two boxes as the team gathers.

SHANIQWA
We have our uniforms, children.

MAC
Shaniqwa, ma'am? If it's in there,
can I please have the number four?

SHANIQWA
Why four, child?

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING

Mac's VOICE OVER answers the question as she banks in a layup wearing her new uniform. The number FOUR on her back.

MAC (V.O.)
It was my dad's.

The team runs pregame drills. Mac studies the 76ERS warming up at the other end. Shaniqwa steps in.

SHANIQWA
Where's your father?

Mac's eyes swing toward the main entrance.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy wearing a sports coat, looks into the trophy case glass, and fusses with his tie as Shaniqwa pops her head in.

SHANIQWA
You okay, Coach?

JIMMY
Yeah, just need a minute.

SHANIQWA
You got it.

Shaniqwa pops out, and a couple of beats later Penny enters.

PENNY
Well, I made it.

He opens the door for her.

JIMMY
Mac will be thrilled.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy escorts Penny inside as the REFEREES hit the BUZZER.

PENNY
That's your cue.

JIMMY
Yeah.

She straightens his tie.

PENNY
Knock them dead, Coach.

They trade a last smile before he joins his team. Penny scans the stands flush with SPECTATORS. A stunning woman waves her up. HELEN PAPADOPOULOS, 40's, tall and leggy.

Penny climbs the stands to sit with Helen. They shake hands.

HELEN
Helen.

PENNY

Penny.

HELEN

I see you came with Jimmy. You are with him, yes?

PENNY

With him? No.

Penny looks to Jimmy. The team huddles around him.

PENNY (CONT'D)

But, I am a fan.

Tamika videos as Jimmy takes a final measure of his team.

JIMMY

Keep the ball moving. We're working for layups, and open looks.

He puts his hand in, and the kids follow suit.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

On three. One, two, three --

The team chants MAGIC, and the starters take the floor.

Joshua is beaten on the jump, and the 76ers score on the break. Zak takes the inbound to drive into the teeth of the defense. He loses the ball, and the 76ers quickly score again.

Jimmy signals timeout, and the Referee blows his whistle. The kids huddle around him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Come on, people... play our game.

Zak scoffs audibly, and Jimmy locks eyes with him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Starla, you're in for Zak.

STARLA

No problemo.

In the stands, his parents see Zak sink into the bench.

BRUCE

I need to handle this.

BARBARA

No. I've made myself clear. Zak will handle this. All by himself.

The BUZZER sounds. Jimmy has nine hands on top of his. They chant TEAM, and take the floor.

Starla takes the inbound to drive up the court. She passes to Mac. Mac to Brahma. Brahma back to Mac for the score. The bench celebrates as the team goes on defense.

JIMMY

Alright, now find your man.

A 76er loses Benny for another easy score. Jimmy looks to the scoreboard. It reads: 76ERS 6 - MAGIC 2.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

The scoreboard reads: 76ERS 61 - MAGIC 32. The teams exchange fives to have Jimmy lead his to a side room. The kids file inside as Jimmy watches Zak pass his parents to exit the gym.

Bruce follows his son as Barbara walks over to Jimmy.

BARBARA

He's going to fight you, Jimmy. I'm trusting you to get it worked out.

JIMMY

That's the plan.

She smiles and walks away. He turns to find Tamika's phone in his face. His annoyance, plain to see.

TAMIKA

Coach Jimmy? You were just soundly defeated in your return to coaching. How does that make you feel?

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The team sits as Jimmy enters. Robbie breaks the silence.

ROBBIE

Is embarrassment an excuse to miss school? Because, I feel sick.

BENNY

Oh, quit your bellyaching. We just ain't playing like a team yet.

JIMMY

Yeah... I'm hoping you people still want to work on that.

BENNY

Nobody here is giving up on ya, Coach.
(MORE)

BENNY (CONT'D)
All we need to know is... when's
next practice?

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Teddy and the girls step out. Jimmy follows. Penny and Helen wait nearby, and the girls rush to them as Shaniqwa approaches.

SHANIQWA
You still good with this blog? After
tonight there's no turning back.

TEDDY
Best be sure, Jimmy. These things
can take on a life of their own.

JIMMY
I'm sure.

SHANIQWA
Good. Be seeing you in the funny
papers then.

She leaves, and the guys walk toward their girls.

TEDDY
So, Penny? You like her.

JIMMY
She's Mac's friend.

TEDDY
Mac's friend, my Aunt Fanny.

JIMMY
Don't make me take your whistle.

TEDDY
You wouldn't?

JIMMY
Oh, you better believe.

They arrive.

MAC
Look who's here, dad.

PENNY
Hi, again Coach. Rough game?

JIMMY
You could say that.

BRAHNA

Mom is taking us girls to brunch.

TEDDY

That's great!

Mac looks to her father for permission.

JIMMY

Do I have a choice?

HELEN

Oh, I love a man who knows his place.
Penny, you will join us, yes?

PENNY

I would, but my son has a game today.

MAC

Are you coming to our next game?
We'll play better. I promise.

PENNY

I have no doubt.

MAC

So, next game?

PENNY

See you there.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Tamika smiles. Her computer screen reads: BLOG PUBLISHED.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

Barbara marches Zak up to Jimmy as the team shoots around.

BARBARA

Go ahead, young man. Apologize.

ZAK

Fat chance. I'm sick of being bullied.

Zak pointedly takes a seat on the bench's end.

BARBARA

I don't know what else to do, Jimmy.
Except wait him out.

JIMMY

Then, that's what we'll do.

Barbara looks at her son.

BARBARA
Okay Buster Brown, have it your way.

She exits, and Jimmy is confronted by the sisters.

SHANIQWA
Easy to see that the boys are lost.
You have a plan for that?

JIMMY
Thought I'd explain things better.

SHANIQWA
You've explained things beautifully.
It's just at this age, girls can
hear, what boys must see.

Jimmy's wheels turn. Tamika reacts as it comes to him.

TAMIKA
Oh... oh... here it comes... bingo!

JIMMY
Really?

The sisters nod, and Jimmy turns to blow his whistle.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Alright, ladies. Setup on offense.

JOSHUA
What do you want us guys to do, Coach?

JIMMY
I want you guys to watch. Ladies, if
you please. Run our play.

The girls run through the play several times with precision.
Jimmy blows his whistle to survey the boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Can you guys do that?

The boys nod in agreement.

DARIUS
Yeah, now that we've seen it.

JIMMY
Alright then, gentlemen. Spot up.
Starla's running point for you.

They take their spots, and Jimmy nods.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Show me.

While not completely fluid, the boys and Starla cycle through the play without mishap. Jimmy blows his whistle.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Do you know what this means, people?

BENNY

Yeah, Coach. Means we're a team.

Starla throws her arm over Benny's shoulders.

STARLA

Totally.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

Penny and Helen cheer as Ananya takes Starla's pass to score on the CELTICS. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 51 - CELTICS 49.

The CELTICS COACH calls timeout, and the REFEREE blows his whistle. The Magic players bound off the court to leave the Celtics behind. Their Coach angrily rounds them up.

CELTICS COACH

Get over here, guys. You just gave up the lead to a bunch of girls!

The Magic bench heard every word.

MO'NIQUE

He's disrespecting us, Coach.

JIMMY

Yeah. What should we do about that?

MO'NIQUE

Adjust his attitude.

JIMMY

Good idea. Take us home, Mo'Nique.

Mo'Nique nods, and puts her hand in. Her teammates pile on.

MO'NIQUE

Respect on three. One, two, three --

The team chants RESPECT, and takes the floor. Jimmy scans the bench to catch Zak's eye. The youngster looks away, and Jimmy returns to the task at hand.

JIMMY

Alright, people. Let's earn it.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

Mo'Nique scores as the BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 63 - CELTICS 57. The kids celebrate.

Jimmy eyes Zak, still glued to the bench. He turns away to find Tamika's phone in his face.

TAMIKA

Coach Jimmy? You have that first big win. How does it feel?

He looks past her. Penny smiles at him from the stands.

JIMMY

Pretty special.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jimmy walks Penny to her car. Mac follows behind.

PENNY

Thank you for escorting me, Jimmy.

JIMMY

It's the least I can do for our number one fan.

Mac pretends to gag.

MAC

Hey dad, you said we were going to Cooper's next game, didn't you?

PENNY

He would love that.

She boxes Jimmy out to open the car door.

MAC

Then, it's a date?

Penny climbs inside.

PENNY

It's a date.

Mac closes the door, and Penny drives off.

JIMMY

What just happened here?

Jimmy follows Mac as she leads him away.

MAC

For our number one fan? Really? If that's flirting, then we need to work on your game. Until then, you'll just have to follow my lead.

EXT. ESPN STUDIOS - MORNING

A sports car pulls into a parking spot. A woman in a power suit gets out. DUSTY CRUZ, 30s, Asian American and pretty.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Dusty enters. A SPORTS WITH DUSTY logo dominates the wall behind the RECEPTIONIST. The woman holds up several message slips. Dusty walks past without a backwards glance.

She steps into the elevator as the doors slide closed.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

EUGENE, a pimply twenty-something holding a laptop, waits. The elevator doors open, and Dusty steps out.

EUGENE

Ms Cruz, you're ignoring my messages again.

DUSTY

Face facts, Eugene. Until you find something a girl can run with, she's going to ignore your messages.

EUGENE

Then, lace up your Nikes, Ms Cruz.

He holds up his laptop for her to see.

DUSTY

A kids basketball team?

EUGENE

Look closer.

Dusty smiles.

DUSTY

Come, Eugene. We have work to do.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

Jimmy and Mac climb the crowded stands to join Penny.

MAC

Hi ya, Penny.

PENNY

Hi, Mac.

Penny turns to Jimmy.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Hi, Coach. I'm glad you made it.

JIMMY

Should be fun.

The Thunder warms up for their game versus the WARRIORS. Cooper sets his feet and buries a shot from mid-range.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Mac says Cooper's pretty good.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

A REPETITIVE THUMP sounds, and Lloyd's last nerve frays.

LLOYD

Cut that out!

Howie stops banging his ball off the wall, and Lloyd switches gears as Penny, Cooper, Mac and Jimmy step from the gym.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

There you are, babe. The boy was worried about you.

PENNY

Really, Howie?

HOWIE

Can we go now?

LLOYD

Where are your manners, boy. We have guests.

Lloyd looks to Mac.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

So, sweetie? Do you really think that you can matchup against my boys?

MAC

That's dumb, Lloyd Skolnicki. I can hold my own against anyone in this league. Including your boys.

LLOYD

Boy, O'Grady. Your kid has some mouth on her.

JIMMY
Yeah... she got that from her mother.
Isn't it awesome?

PENNY
Well, yes. Cooper? Thank our friends
for coming please.

COOPER
Thanks, Mister O'Grady.

JIMMY
You were great, young man.

MAC
You really were.

COOPER
Thanks, Mac. I may have to go to
your next game. See what all the
fuss is about for myself.

MAC
That would be cool.

JIMMY
Say goodbye, Mac.

MAC
Bye, everyone.

Lloyd stares daggers as Jimmy leads Mac away.

LLOYD
That guy doesn't know the first thing
about coaching basketball.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - NIGHT

A clip of Young Jimmy, and his infamous career ending
confrontation with Earl The Ref plays behind Dusty.

DUSTY
Coach Jimmy O'Grady. His fall from
grace will be forever etched in the
annals of sport. Is he making a
comeback? I'm Dusty Cruz. Jimmy
O'Grady's next chapter when we return.

INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy stares at his television. In the background a phone
RINGS a few times. Mac enters, phone in hand.

MAC
It's Tamika.

He takes the phone, and puts it to his ear.

JIMMY
Tamika? I'm on TV.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sisters and their children sit in front of the big screen television. Tamika on her cellphone.

TAMIKA
I know. Isn't it fabulous?

She covers the phone to look at her family and whisper.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
He's a little fussy.

The commercial ends, and her attention turns.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
Ooh, Coach Jimmy. Just remember who made you famous again.

She disconnects from the call.

INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy looks at his disconnected phone.

JIMMY
But, I don't want to be famous again.

On the television Dusty returns from the commercial break.

DUSTY
Welcome back. I'm Dusty Cruz.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - CONTINUOUS

A retrospective of Young Jimmy's early college days as shoot first, last, and always, player starts to run behind her.

DUSTY
If you're a fan of college hoops,
then you have heard of Jimmy O'Grady.
His exploits as a player were
legendary. He led his team in scoring,
shots taken and shots missed. He
would not however, have a single
assist, nor win a game. Going oh,
and fifty in two years as a starter.

Images of a protest. COLLEEN MURPHY blocks him from entering the gym. He is captivated as the POLICE lead her away.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

But, a chance meeting at a protest over Title Nine would change his fortunes forever. Her name was Coleen Murphy, and O'Grady was smitten.

Tape plays of Young Jimmy as a pass first, shoot when it counts, player that leads his team to the big dance.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Then, came the change in O'Grady's game. As a senior he would lead the nation in assists, and his team to twenty and five. Securing a first ever seeding in the big tournament.

Images of Young Jimmy landing awkwardly during a drill. He crumbles to the hardwood, clutching his knee in pain.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

A tournament he would never play in, when an injury suffered during practice would end his playing days.

Tape of Young Jimmy's early coaching days sitting at the knee of Coach ARBUCKLE MCGINTY during a home game.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

His coaching career started the next season, when Coach Arbuckle McGinty brought him on as an assistant.

Images of the marriage ceremony, followed by the happy couple holding a NEWBORN MAC.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

With his future assured, O'Grady and Coleen tied the knot. The following March the couple welcomed a new addition. They named her MacKenzie.

Tape of Young Jimmy as a head coach rolls.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Two years later, O'Grady became the youngest Head Coach in college basketball history.

The video freezes on Young Jimmy, and slowly fades to black.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Then, tragedy struck. Coleen's life cut short by sudden illness. After a brief leave of absence, O'Grady returned to coaching, but rumors of heavy drinking grew persistent. Culminating in one of sport's epic meltdowns, when O'Grady infamously threw up on a referee during a nationally televised game. He was relieved of his duties the following day to withdraw from public view.

The black lifts to reveal video of Jimmy toasting the camera with a bottled water, followed by him coaching the Magic featuring Mac, and her four female teammates.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

That is until now. After nearly a decade, Jimmy O'Grady is reportedly sober, and coaching again. MacKenzie, now twelve years old is one of the stars of the team. And, she's not alone. In what is otherwise an all boys league, four other intrepid young ladies play prominent roles for O'Grady's squad.

A superimposed American flag flutters behind the team.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

America loves a good redemption story. And, I for one am rooting for Jimmy O'Grady, and his young team.

The retrospective ends.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The end of the broadcast plays out on the big screen.

DUSTY

You can root for them too at one magic season dot com. I'm Dusty Cruz. Goodnight.

Tamika, and her family, gather in front of the computer.

SHANIQWA

Go on now, girl. Have a look.

Tamika moves the mouse, and the computer "wakes" to reveal the ONE MAGIC SEASON website, and its 11 FOLLOWERS.

TAMIKA
Same as last night.

DARIUS
Momma? Refresh the page.

He places his hand over hers, and with a click of the mouse
the page "reloads" to reveal the website has 211K FOLLOWERS.

The family erupts in celebration.

INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy sits and stares blankly at the television. Mac turns it
off, and snuggles up to him.

JIMMY
Did I do the right thing, Mac?
Coaching this team?

MAC
Remember the list I told you about?
Well, I have another one too. And,
you, coaching this team, for me? Is
at the very tippy top.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - DAY

Jimmy and Mac climb from the truck. He is pulling on his sports
coat when the News Vans parked nearby catch his eye.

JIMMY
God grant me the serenity.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Tamika runs up to Jimmy and Mac as they walk to the building.

TAMIKA
Now, don't be fussy, Coach Jimmy.

JIMMY
I'm not. Do you know why?

TAMIKA
Because, my eyes are lying to me?

JIMMY
No, because you're handling this.

TAMIKA
About that. I've been faking it,
'til I make it.

JIMMY
Best get past that quick, Madam...
because you have arrived.

The REPORTERS start SHOUTING questions. Tamika nods, a new determination on her face as she turns to the gathering.

TAMIKA
All right, all right, quiet down! I
can only make the Coach available
for a minute, or two. So, who's first?

The RUDE REPORTER steps forward.

RUDE REPORTER
Who are you?

TAMIKA
I'm Tamika Williams, the team's Press
Secretary.

RUDE REPORTER
You're the mother writing the blog.

TAMIKA
Among my many responsibilities. And,
at the moment, I'm the woman asking...
who's next?

She points to the SKEPTICAL REPORTER.

SKEPTICAL REPORTER
Picking the girls smells like a stunt.
What's the angle, Jimmy?

JIMMY
I'm just a guy coaching his daughter.

Tamika nods to the PEPPY REPORTER.

PEPPY REPORTER
The nation's eyes are on you again.
Feeling any pressure?

JIMMY
Just hoping I don't throw up.

Laughter sounds. Jimmy waves goodbye, and opens the door for Mac. The LOUD REPORTER calls out to turn her in the doorway.

LOUD REPORTER
MacKenzie! What do you think about
your team's chances?

MAC
Stick around. We'll show the world.

The reporters shout again as Mac, Tamika and Jimmy duck inside.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The last SHOUTS of the reporters filter through the door as Jimmy pulls it closed to calmly turn on Tamika.

JIMMY
Tamika? Just how many people are reading that blog of yours?

TAMIKA
About a million, last I looked.

MAC
Get out!

TAMIKA
I know. Pretty soon this team is going to have its own shoe.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

The Thunder and the LAKERS play the final minutes of their game as Mac, Tamika and Jimmy enter. Penny and Helen sit in a section of the crowded stands that is thick with TOWNIES.

A group of TEEN GIRLS swoon as Jimmy passes. One stands.

TEEN GIRL
WE LOVE YOU, JIMMY O'GRADY!

Helen playfully nudges Penny.

HELEN
You have competition, no?

Penny turns to Helen, a beat behind.

PENNY
What? No. It's not that way.

HELEN
Darling? Does not your heart beat faster when he is near?

PENNY
He's not without his charms.

HELEN
And, this is not love?

PENNY
It's confusing, is what it is.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy looks perplexed as he surveys the kids.

JIMMY
I threw up on a Referee... on national television! Don't you people have questions?

DARIUS
It's not like it was a secret, Coach.

ROBBIE
Yeah, your YouTube video is epic.

JOSHUA
So, the Coach used to like his Manischewitz. He's over it now.

He looks to Jimmy.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
You are, aren't you?

JIMMY
I don't drink anymore. But, when I did, it wasn't Manischewitz.

JOSHUA
Mogen David?

JIMMY
Whiskey. Lots of it.

MO'NIQUE
But, you drank too much because your heart was broken, right?

JIMMY
True, but that doesn't excuse it.

BRAHNA
Well, I think that's kinda romantic.

ANANYA
Yes, Coach. You are a smoldering hunk of love.

STARLA
A total heartthrob, and the best coach ever.

BENNY

Yeah, I could almost kiss ya myself.
My last coach treated me like a
hemorrhoid. Something ya gotta deal
with, but would rather ignore. But,
not you, Coach. You treat me like I
was just one of the boys.

He looks to Mac, and the girls.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Well, ya know what I mean.

MAC

Yeah. We're all basketball players
here, and a really good team.

TEDDY

And, we're not even at full strength.

Everyone turns to Zak.

ROBBIE

What about it, All-Star?

ANANYA

Yes, Zak. Isn't it time you joined
us?

ZAK

You're doing just fine without me.

JIMMY

Alright, people. Let it alone.

The BUZZER sounds from behind the door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Benny, take us out.

BENNY

You heard the Coach. Let's go!

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

The crowd cheers as the team bursts through the door. Tamika
videos as they take the end opposite the KNICKS.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Teddy reacts to the CHEERING coming from the gym.

TEDDY

Will you listen to that.

JIMMY
We'll be a minute.

Teddy nods, and exits. Shaniqwa steps over.

SHANIQWA
I'll go see to Teddy.

JIMMY
Appreciate that.

Shaniqwa exits, and Zak confronts Jimmy.

ZAK
What do you want from me?

JIMMY
You heard your teammates. They're
waiting on you.

ZAK
My teammates hate me.

JIMMY
They don't hate you. They just want
to be made better. Great players
make everyone better, and you have
the goods to be a great player, Zak.

ZAK
They tease me you know.

JIMMY
Who? Those dimwits on the Thunder?

Zak nods.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
The best answer to that would be to
beat them on the court. This team
would be near-unstoppable if you
would lead it.

ZAK
I don't think I can.

JIMMY
I refuse to believe that. You just
have to find the courage to try.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS

Cooper and Lloyd climb the crowded stands to squeeze in next
to Penny and Helen. Cooper hugs his mom.

PENNY
Great game, love bug.

LLOYD
The kid took too many shots.

HELEN
He is a good player, no?

LLOYD
Who is this?

PENNY
This is my new friend Helen.

Lloyd takes Helen by the hand.

LLOYD
I see. Tell me, Helen. You were a swimsuit cover model, weren't you?

HELEN
When I was a teenager. How do you remember this?

He leers at her.

LLOYD
You have some very memorable attributes.

Jimmy and Zak enter to CHEERS. The KNICKS COACHES eye Jimmy.

KNICKS HEAD COACH
That's him all right. We've been snuck up on.

The team rallies around Jimmy as the BUZZER sounds.

JIMMY
Secret's out. We're good. Believe in that, people. It makes all we hope for possible.

He puts his hand in. Everyone piles theirs on top. The team chants MAGIC, and the starters take the floor.

Barbara and Bruce watch from the stands as Zak takes a seat.

BRUCE
Still think he'll give in?

BARBARA
He'll find a reason.

The Magic wins the tipoff. Three passes later Benny scores.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

The crowd COUNTS OFF the seconds as the ball finds Ananya behind the arc. She buries a three as the halftime BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 35 - KNICKS 20.

Jimmy leads them to the side room.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room fills with self-impressed CHATTER as the team streams inside. Tamika, a step behind, phone in hand. Shaniqwa follows to start handing out drinks.

Jimmy enters, and the room goes silent.

JIMMY

We're better than these guys. It's not really big deal to be up fifteen on them. But, it is an opportunity.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Howie waves his father down from the stands. Lloyd eyes Penny.

LLOYD

Come on, babe. Let's go.

The crowd cheers as the Magic emerge from the side room.

PENNY

You go on ahead, Lloyd. Cooper, and I are going to watch the game.

HELEN

Yes, and then we all go out to big lunch at Vincenzo's.

Helen takes Lloyd by the hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I am so happy you leave now.

LLOYD

I think you mean, happy to meet you.

HELEN

No. I say it right.

He pulls his hand away to get a kiss on the cheek from Penny.

PENNY

Call you later.

LLOYD
Sure, babe. Okay.

Lloyd climbs down to meet by his son. He looks past the boy to sadly stare at Penny in the stands.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
What's going on here?

HOWIE
I don't know, dad. But, there are reporters. Lots of them. And, they all want to talk about the Magic, and Jimmy O'Grady.

He glares at Jimmy.

LLOYD
Show me where, boy.

The BUZZER sounds, and the kids rally around their coach.

JIMMY
Alright, you know what to do.

DARIUS
I'm bringing the thunder, Coach.

JIMMY
Lightning brings the thunder, Darius.
Just be decisive with the ball.

Darius nods, and Jimmy eyes the other boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Use these extra minutes wisely,
gentlemen.

Jimmy puts his hand in. Everyone piles theirs on top. They chant MAGIC. Brahna steps up as the boys take the floor.

BRAHNA
You sure, Coach?

JIMMY
I believe in you.

BRAHNA
Yeah?

He nods, and Brahna smiles.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Lloyd finds the waiting reporters.

LLOYD
Who wants the scoop on Jimmy O'Grady?

The air is filled with SHOUTED QUESTIONS.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy watches as Brahma runs the play. Darius flashes to the hoop, and she hits him with a perfect pass for the score.

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 37 - KNICKS 20.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 64 - KNICKS 48. The crowd COUNTS DOWN as Mac dribbles up the court. She tosses the ball into the air as the final BUZZER sounds.

The team rushes onto the floor in spontaneous celebration.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Mac, Brahma, Helen, Penny, Cooper and Teddy stream past Jimmy as he holds the door open. Dan flags him down.

DAN
Jimmy? A minute please.

There is a COLLECTIVE MOAN from the group.

HELEN
It is lunch now, yes?

MAC
Yeah, dad. It's lunch now.

JIMMY
Can it wait, Dan?

Dan shakes his head.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy and Dan watch as Lloyd engages with the reporters.

DAN
The man's jealous.

JIMMY
He has no reason to be.

DAN
Then, that's not his gal you're with?

Dan waves Jimmy off before he can respond.

DAN (CONT'D)
That aside. This media blitz of yours
is costing the city some real money.
What's the end game, Jimmy?

JIMMY
Believe me, I'm as surprised by all
this as you are.

DAN
Then, you didn't pick all the girls
to create some kind of stir?

JIMMY
No. I picked all the girls, because
every guy involved discounted them.
Including you.

Jimmy waves Dan off before he can respond.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
We had similar draft grades for the
boys, but for the girls? Took me a
second, but it was obvious that you
used a different scale for them.

DAN
Of course I did. They're gir...

Dan catches himself, and lowers his head in shame.

DAN (CONT'D)
I was just trying to help.

JIMMY
I don't doubt that, but these girls
don't want help. They want respect.
Fairness. Equality. Mac's mother
wanted these things for her. I want
these things for her.

DAN
You really think you can win it all?

JIMMY
That's the plan.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy steps outside. The reporters on him. Mac, Brahma, Helen, Penny, Cooper and Teddy follow as he answers.

LOUD REPORTER
Is it true that your best player
doesn't want to play for you?

JIMMY
Now, where did you hear that?

Lloyd watches nearby, and Penny peels off to confront him.

PENNY
Lloyd? What are you doing?

LLOYD
Waiting on you, babe.

PENNY
Go home, Lloyd. You're being foolish.

She walks away, and Lloyd's eye starts to twitch.

INT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The group sits at a table cluttered by the remnants of their lunch. Their WAITER leaves the check. Mac stands.

MAC
Can we go make a wish?

PENNY
I can help with that.

Penny roots around in her purse to hand a coin to each child.

MAC/BRAHNA
Thanks, Penny.

The girls lock eyes, and giggle.

MAC/BRAHNA (CONT'D)
Jinx.

They run off laughing. Cooper and his mother trade smiles.

PENNY
Go ahead, Cooper. Wish big.

COOPER
Thanks, mom.

He hustles after the girls.

EXT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Cooper finds the girls waiting by the wishing well.

MAC
Do you like Lloyd Skolnicki, Cooper?

COOPER
Not particularly, Mac. Why?

EXT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The lunch group leaves the restaurant.

COOPER
Thanks for lunch, Helen.

HELEN
We'll do it again, yes?

Cooper nods, and Helen kisses Penny on the cheek.

HELEN (CONT'D)
And, you my lovely. I see you soon.
The children play next, yes?

PENNY
Sadly, yes.

TEDDY
It's too bad both teams can't win.

JIMMY
It doesn't work that way, big guy.

Penny coyly fiddles with Jimmy's tie.

PENNY
Well, that's very troubling, Coach.

Mac and Brahma's stare spurs Cooper into action.

COOPER
Jimmy? Mac says you can help me with
my shot. Will you?

JIMMY
Sure, Cooper.

He looks to his daughter.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
When were you thinking?

MAC
Tomorrow, after church.

INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - MORNING

Mac exits the confessional. A mischievous grin on her face.
Her father eyes her with mild disapproval.

JIMMY

You know, he knows that you're messing
with him, right?

MAC

Yeah, but it's fun.

INT. CONFESSORIAL - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy enters, and kneels down.

JIMMY

Bless me Father, for I have sinned.
It has been one week since my last
confession.

Hidden by a latticed opening, FATHER FRANK speaks.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

I'm listening, my son.

JIMMY

I covet another man's girlfriend.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

Girlfriend? Then, there's no marriage?

JIMMY

No. They're not married.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

The man must be Irish then?

JIMMY

Not even on his mother's side.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

Then, I can see no sin in it.

JIMMY

Are you sure, Father Frank? I don't
like the man much.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

But, you're fond of the woman.

JIMMY

Very much so.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

You needn't ask forgiveness for
finding love again. You just have to
thank your lucky stars.

JIMMY

Thanks, I needed to hear that.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

Warms the heart to be the bearer of such glad tidings, but I remind you, this is confession, not a therapy session. So, I say to you, Jimmy O'Grady. Go with God.

EXT. O'GRADY HOME - DAY

Father Frank's VOICE OVER finishes as a ball swooshes through the net of the hoop mounted on the garage.

FATHER FRANK (V.O.)

And, take your shot with this woman.

Penny and Mac watch as Jimmy coaches Cooper up.

JIMMY

Yes! Do that a hundred more times, and we'll call it a day.

MAC

You know, he's serious about the hundred more times.

PENNY

Oh my, I must go save my son.

Penny bursts onto the driveway to steal the ball from the guys. She waves Mac over.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I think we can take them.

A lighthearted game of two on two, boys verses the girls starts. Jimmy holds the ball out of Penny's reach.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Boy, just once I'd like to know what it's like to be so tall.

JIMMY

Alright, get up on my shoulders.

MAC

Go ahead, Penny!

COOPER

Yeah, mom! Go for it!

Jimmy drops to a knee.

PENNY
Promise you won't drop me.

JIMMY
I promise.

Penny climbs onto his shoulders, and Jimmy stands.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
So, how does it feel?

PENNY
Like I climbed a beanstalk.

He chuckles, and hands her the ball.

JIMMY
Go on, knock it home.

Penny drops it through, squealing as Jimmy playfully collapses to catch her in his arms. The grownups lay in a heap, laughing, and the children exchange a duplicitous smile.

EXT. O'GRADY HOME - LATER

Cooper and Mac shoot around. Penny takes Jimmy's arm as they slowly walk toward their children.

PENNY
You just spent more time with my son, then any man has in a long time.

JIMMY
He's a good kid.

PENNY
Goodness, I want to kiss you.

JIMMY
But... you shouldn't?

Penny shakes her head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Then, it can wait, until you should.

Cooper buries a twelve-footer as they arrive.

PENNY
Time to go, Cooper.

COOPER
Aw, mom! Can't we stay longer?

MAC
Yeah, Penny. It's spaghetti night.

PENNY
Another time, sweetheart. I have to
work some things out first.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - EVENING

Jimmy pulls on his coat to see that the team waits. Mac runs to join them as Tamika steps up, rocking a new business suit.

TAMIKA
Thought we'd arrive as a team.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

The team pushes past a crowd of NOISY REPORTERS.

JIMMY
You look...

Jimmy considers his next word, and Tamika interjects.

TAMIKA
Fabulous?

JIMMY
Took the word right out of my mouth.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

The CROWD roars as the Magic takes the floor. At the other end, the Thunder warms up. The cheering turns Wade's head.

WADE
You sure about this, Lloyd?

LLOYD
Oh yeah. Tonight his girls get their official welcome to boys basketball.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 54 - MAGIC 42. Brahna is knocked to the floor as she shoots. The Thunder's NUMBER TWENTY rebounds Brahna's missed shot.

Jimmy is all over the BAD REFEREE.

JIMMY
That's a foul!

Joshua blocks Howie's shot. Mac scoops up the loose ball to glide toward the easy bucket.

In the stands, Penny and Helen react as Howie takes out Mac from behind. The Bad Referee blows his whistle.

HELEN

The boys play too hard tonight. This is not right I think.

PENNY

No, it's not.

Cooper helps Mac up as Jimmy arrives.

COOPER

You okay, Mac?

MAC

I'll live.

JIMMY

Yeah?

MAC

Yeah, dad. I'm good.

Jimmy turns on the Bad Referee.

JIMMY

That never happens if you don't allow them to be thugs from the word jump.

BAD REFEREE

Just letting the boys play, Coach.

JIMMY

Oh, I understand now.

He squares off with Lloyd, and the benches clear.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You're with this coward.

In the stands his parents watch as Zak walks onto the court.

BARBARA

Looks like our son has finally found a reason to swallow his pride.

BRUCE

Yeah? What's that?

BARBARA

Chivalry.

Lloyd and Jimmy are nose to nose. Each team at their back.

JIMMY
You heard me. You're a coward!

LLOYD
Oh, put a sock in it, O'Grady!

Zak steps between them.

ZAK
I'd like to play now.

LLOYD
Why would you want to do that, kid?

ZAK
Because, I'm sick of bullies.

Howie gets a hard stare before Zak turns to Jimmy.

ZAK (CONT'D)
The best answer is to beat them on
the court, right?

JIMMY
That's right, buddy.

Zak looks to his teammates.

ZAK
I'm sorry, you guys. I've been a big
jerk, but I'm hoping you'll give me
a chance to turn that around.

BRAHNA
Everyone deserves a second chance.

STARLA
I totally agree.

JIMMY
Anyone disagree?

All eyes swing to Mac. She sighs.

MAC
Promise I won't regret this.

ZAK
I promise.

MAC
Okay then, Zak Carson.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Mac's VOICE OVER is heard as she takes a pass from Zak to score. The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 54 - MAGIC 44.

MAC (V.O.)
Let's play some basketball.

They retreat on defense.

MAC (CONT'D)
How did that feel?

ZAK
How'd what feel?

MAC
Your first pass. Did it feel weird?

ZAK
Just be ready. I'm stirring things up.

The Thunder bring the ball down, and work it inside to Fenton. Zak's well-timed double team causes the turnover.

Mac scoops up the ball, and passes ahead to Zak. He hits a racing Brahma with a perfect pass. She lays it up, and in.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 54 - MAGIC 46 as the Thunder works the ball up the floor to miss a three-pointer.

Jimmy and the Magic cheer as Zak pulls down the rebound. He drives up the floor to be stymied along the baseline.

Zak splits the double team to hit Mo'Nique. She pulls up, and shoots. The ball kisses the glass, and falls.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 54 - MAGIC 48. Lloyd signals for time, and the Bad Referee blows his whistle.

Lloyd regards his players as they gather around him.

LLOYD
Men? You're making me nervous.

Jimmy looks to his kids.

JIMMY
Look at their coach, people. You've got him scared.

TEDDY
This is a good thing, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Yes it is, my friend.

Lloyd holds a hand in. His players follow suit. None touch.

LLOYD
Remember, this game only honors winners. Figure out what you're doing, and don't let me down.

Jimmy puts his hand in, and the kids pile theirs on top.

JIMMY
Everyone knows what they're doing. Now... let's see if we can take this game from them.

Both teams CHANT loudly to break their huddles.

The crowd is electric around Penny and Helen as Howie inbounds to Number Twenty. Mac's immediate foul has Jimmy clapping.

HELEN
Mac has fouled. Why does Jimmy clap?

PENNY
He does seem oddly happy about it.

Above them, Barbara leans in.

BARBARA
He's out of timeouts, and fouling stops the clock.

PENNY
Doesn't that give them free throws?

BARBARA
Yes, but a free throw is only one point. Jimmy is hoping that one, or both, shots are missed, so they get the ball back as quick as possible.

PENNY
Does this work?

BARBARA
With under two minutes to go, it's their best chance.

Number Twenty hits the first free throw, and then misses the second. Mo'Nique rebounds to hit Zak with an outlet pass. Three quick passes, and Mo'Nique spins past Howie to score.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 55 - MAGIC 50. Howie inbounds the ball to Fenton. Brahma fouls him to stop the clock.

Fenton bricks his first free throw, then his second. Brahma rebounds, and fires a pass to Mac. She leads the fast break to take Zak's return pass in for the score.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 55 - MAGIC 52. Howie inbounds the ball to Cooper. Zak commits the quick foul.

Back in the stands, Penny looks up at Barbara.

PENNY
Which one is yours?

BARBARA
The one who just fouled. Yours?

PENNY
The foulee. Sort of makes me the enemy, huh?

BARBARA
I think we girls can rise above.

Helen offers her hand. Barbara takes it.

HELEN
I am Helen.

BARBARA
Easy to see that you're Brahma's mother. You're both so pretty.

HELEN
Oh, I love her.

Penny takes Barbara's other hand.

PENNY
Penny.

BARBARA
Barbara.

Cooper hits both shots from the charity stripe.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 57 - MAGIC 52. Mo'Nique inbounds to Zak. He quickly pushes the ball up the floor.

The kids swing the ball around to find Mac. She launches a three. Zak rebounds to put in the miss.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 57 - MAGIC 54. Fenton inbounds to Howie. Mo'Nique fouls him.

Howie buries his first free throw, and Lloyd calls timeout. The Bad Referee blows his whistle.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 58 - MAGIC 54. Lloyd looks at his team as they gather around him.

LLOYD

Congratulations, men. You're going to win, but I'm embarrassed for you that they came so close.

COOPER

They're pretty good, Lloyd.

LLOYD

They're losers, kid.

The kids huddle around Jimmy.

MO'NIQUE

We're not going to win, Coach.

JIMMY

No, Mo'Nique, we aren't. But, there are still victories to be taken from this game. We grew as a team tonight.

Jimmy puts his hand in. The kids pile theirs on top.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

And, I promise. We'll see them again.

Both teams CHANT loudly to take the floor. Jimmy has cleared his bench. He locks eyes with Zak to trade nods of approval.

Howie misses the shot. Joshua rebounds, and passes to Starla. She finds Ananya behind the arc. Her trey beats the BUZZER.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 58 - MAGIC 57. The Thunder watch numbly as the Magic gather in celebration.

WADE

He has them believing, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Let them have their belief, Wade. I'll take the win.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - NIGHT

A clip of a highly festooned headstone plays behind Dusty.

DUSTY

Who knew that the death of a coach
could bring such joy to an entire
community? Who indeed!

Video of the Magic celebrating after the loss starts to play.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

And, speaking of inspiring. Jimmy
O'Grady's team lost last night. So,
why are they celebrating? I'm Dusty
Cruz. The answer when we return.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A commercial plays on the big screen. Tamika's phone VIBRATES audibly as she watches with her family. She answers.

TAMIKA

Hi Coach Teddy. We're on TV again.
Isn't that fabulous?

INT. PAPADOPoulos HOME: PLAY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In a room filled with computer systems, Teddy speaks into a headset as he studies the team's website on a large monitor.

TEDDY

Can we talk about how fabulous?

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tamika continues the conversation.

TAMIKA

We can. Call me back after the show.

She disconnects from the call.

INT. PAPADOPoulos HOME: PLAY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Teddy yanks his headset off, and hurries from the room.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tamika and her family watch their big screen as Dusty returns.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - CONTINUOUS

Clips of the Magic verses the Thunder run behind.

DUSTY

Welcome back. I'm Dusty Cruz. Most
teams don't celebrate after a loss.
Then, there's Jimmy O'Grady's Magic.

Post game video of the team talking to reporters plays.

LOUD REPORTER

Mac? You lost. Why all the smiles?

MAC

The loss is a bummer, but we feel
good about where we're headed.

RUDE REPORTER

Is that because Zak Carson finally
decided to play?

ZAK

More like I finally came to my senses.

PEPPY REPORTER

Are you this team's best player?

ZAK

I play on the best team.

SKEPTICAL REPORTER

Five girls and five boys? The best?

BENNY

Ya gotta look past the parts, pal.

He pointedly addresses his teammates.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What should they see when they look
at us, people?

ALL THE KIDS

BASKETBALL PLAYERS!

MAC

That's what makes us the best.

The video ends, and Dusty steps in.

DUSTY

If you're not a fan of this special
team, then you're missing out. I'm
Dusty Cruz. Goodnight.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tamika's phone VIBRATES. She answers.

TAMIKA

You must really need to talk...
Okay... When can we expect you?

The front door BELL rings. She looks at her family.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
Guess who's coming to dinner.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A disheveled Teddy sits at the computer surrounded by Tamika and her family. Mo'Nique plucks a leaf from his hair.

MO'NIQUE
You have leaves in your hair, Coach.

TEDDY
I ran here. Took a few shortcuts.

TEDDY
I may be, but here's what I know. I know computer coding, and commerce. The team's fifteen minutes of fame is ticking away. You can do some real business if you act now. I can help you with that.

TAMIKA
You'll have to run some bona fides
by me before I'll consider it.

TEDDY
I wrote a software that runs in every computer in the free world. Then, I sold it for an ungodly sum of money.

TAMIKA Just how ungodly?

TEDDY

Third circle.

TAMIKA
I'm listening.

INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - LATER

A last keystroke, and Teddy leans back in his chair. Tamika and her family study the slick NEW WEBSITE.

TEDDY
These improvements will set you up
to have some real influence.
(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)
And, that's some big-time currency
in today's world. Now, all you need
is one more thing.

DARIUS
What's that, Coach?

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - DAY

Teddy's VOICE OVER answers as Darius takes Mo'Nique's pass.

TEDDY (V.O.)
A winning streak.

MONTAGE

-Darius powers past two Warriors to sink the highly contested two-footer. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: MAGIC WINS! The number of FOLLOWERS starts to climb.

-Starla weaves up the floor against the ROCKETS. She passes to Robbie. He lays the ball up, and in. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website with the headline: TWO IN A ROW! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs some more.

-The Lakers are a step behind as Benny swings the ball to Ananya. She drains the open three. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: IT'S THREE! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs more.

-The Knicks work the ball inside. Joshua rejects the shot. Brahma chases down the ball to hit Zak with an outlet pass. He passes ahead to Mac. She hits the jumper. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website with the headline: MAKE THAT FOUR! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs more, and more.

END OF MONTAGE

A KNICKS PLAYER slices through the defense to score on the 76ers. The scoreboard reads: KNICKS 56 - 76ERS 51.

Jimmy and the team look on from the doorway.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Are they, running our offense?

JIMMY
The whole game.

The 76ers miss a last shot, and the Knicks burst into celebration as the final BUZZER sounds.

The Magic surges onto the floor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Warmup, people.

TEDDY
You heard Coach. Give me two lines.

Jimmy drifts toward the Knicks Head Coach as his team finishes trading postgame fives with the 76ers.

JIMMY
A first win. Congratulations, Coach.

KNICKS HEAD COACH
Being honest, you deserve the credit.

JIMMY
How do you figure?

KNICKS HEAD COACH
We ran your offense.

JIMMY
I hadn't noticed. But, no matter.
Your team took a leap forward. That's not an offense. That's coaching.

KNICKS HEAD COACH
Thanks, Coach. That means a lot coming from you.

They shake hands, and Jimmy walks back to his team.

PENNY (O.S.)
GO GET 'EM, COACH!

Jimmy's head turns. Penny sits with Helen and Barbara. Bruce a row behind. Jimmy waves, and the CROWD around them reacts. He eyes his team as the BUZZER sounds.

JIMMY
You heard the lady, people.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

Jimmy's VOICE OVER is heard as Zak takes Joshua's return pass to score. The scoreboard reads: CELTICS 50 - MAGIC 64.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Let's go get 'em!

Robbie steals the ball. The CROWD COUNTS DOWN as the kids swing it around until the final BUZZER sounds.

The team celebrates. FREEZE FRAME. The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: THE STREAK HITS FIVE! The number of FOLLOWERS skyrockets.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING

Lloyd appears in the doorway, and beelines toward a stands packed with SPECTATORS. His eyes searching.

Penny sits between Helen and Barbara. Bruce a row behind. They see Lloyd climbing toward them.

HELEN

You tell him you breakup, yes?

PENNY

I did.

BARBARA

Men can be so dense.

BRUCE

Hey! Right here, Barb.

BARBARA

Not you, Pooh. You're the exception.

She rolls her eyes, and the women laugh as Lloyd arrives.

LLOYD

You having fun, babe.

PENNY

Lloyd? I told you it's over.

LLOYD

It's over when I say it is.

Bruce stands.

BRUCE

Okay, bud. Push on.

LLOYD

Or what?

BRUCE

Your fall may cause a scene.

Lloyd eyes Penny.

LLOYD

Now, it's over.

He retreats, and Bruce sits down to get a kiss from Barbara.

BARBARA

Ooh, Pooh. Come sit next to mommy.

Shaniqwa pulls NICK GRANT, 40s, tall, African American and well-dressed, up the stands. She introduces him to the group.

SHANIQWA

Hey, everyone. This is my man Nick.

PENNY

Hi, Nick. I'm Penny, and this is Helen, Barbara, and her husband Bruce.

Bruce stands to shake Nick's hand.

BRUCE

So, Nick? Where've you been? Could've used the extra testosterone around here, bud.

NICK

Sorry, work's had me in New York.

BRUCE

Yeah? What's the job?

NICK

I work for the NBA.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER

CHEERS fill the air as Starla brings the ball up the floor. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 54 - 76ERS 54.

She stops atop the key. The 76ers defense sags off of her, closing down all passing lanes, daring her to shoot. Starla's eyes narrow, considering the moment, before she let's it fly.

The ball hits home as the BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 56 - 76ERS 54.

Jimmy eyes Starla as the team mobs her in celebration.

JIMMY

Starla? I thought you don't like to shoot.

MAC/BRAHNA/MO'NIQUE/ANANYA

Doesn't mean she can't!

STARLA
Totally doesn't.

The team hoists her onto their shoulders. Tamika captures it all as Shaniqwa steps over with Nick.

SHANIQWA
Coach, this is my man, Nick.

They shake hands.

JIMMY
Nick Grant. You're Nick Grant.

NICK
I am.

JIMMY
Shaniqwa? Your man played power forward for Chicago.

SHANIQWA
I'm well aware.

JIMMY
So, Nick? How's retirement?

NICK
Wouldn't know. I'm here on business.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

An EXCITED CROWD celebrates. NEWSPEOPLE and CAMERA CREWS abound. The surrounding area thick with Satellite Trucks. A CABLE NEWSWOMAN, and her CAMERAMAN work near the door.

CABLE NEWSWOMAN
As you can see, the mood here is quite festive as we wait for America's newest social media sensations.

There is a CHEER as the team pushes through the doors. Nick follows. Tamika holds up a hand, and the crowd quiets.

TAMIKA
It's a school night, so let's get right to it, shall we?

CABLE NEWSWOMAN
Why is Nick Grant here?

TAMIKA
I'll let him tell you.

NICK

I'm Nick Grant, Senior Vice President of Public Relations for the NBA. The Commissioner has invited the Magic to play their championship game at this year's NBA All-Star weekend in Los Angeles.

JIMMY

And, we have accepted.

Penny, Helen, Barbara and Bruce join in the crowd's applause.

NICK

Now, we need the Thunder to accept to make it official.

LLOYD (O.S.)

You're on!

The crowd parts to reveal Lloyd.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I can think of nothing better then beating this guy again. The bigger the stage, the better.

He soaks up the BOOS as the Cable Newswoman eyes the camera.

CABLE NEWSWOMAN

Well, you can hear who this crowd is rooting for. Back to you, Dusty.

INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - CONTINUOUS

Dusty steps in.

DUSTY

There you have it, America. It's the Magic verses the Thunder in a City of Angels grudge match. I'm Dusty Cruz. We now return you to the NBA game of the night.

INT. AD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

An NBA game plays on a television on a wall thick with sports awards and memorabilia. It goes MUTE. FATHER LUIS REYES, 50s, tall and Puerto Rican, puts the remote aside.

He hits a button on a desktop intercom.

FATHER REYES

Please ring Father O'Toole for me.

INT. AD'S OFFICE: ANTECHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

MARY MARGARET speaks into the intercom. Block lettering on the door behind her desk reads: ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.

MARY MARGARET
Right away, Father.

INT. AD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mary Margaret's VOICE OVER crackles from the intercom.

MARY MARGARET (V.O.)
He's holding for you.

FATHER REYES
Thank you, Mary Margaret.

He swivels to grab the phone.

FATHER REYES (CONT'D)
Francis... I owe you a steak dinner.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING

Teddy and the kids shoot around. Jimmy steps in.

JIMMY
Alright, people. Let's play a game.

MAC
A game? Who are you, and what have you done with my father?

JIMMY
We're having fun today, Mac. Any objection?

Mac shakes her head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Good. I have just one rule.

MAC
I knew there was a catch.

JIMMY
Anyone can bring the ball up.

JOSHUA
Can we do that, Coach? Just have anyone bring the ball up?

JIMMY
You can dribble, can't you?

ZAK
Coach? Where do I spot up?

JIMMY
Anywhere you want, buddy. It's time
for you to --

ZAK
Stir things up.

JIMMY
Exactly! I'm turning you loose,
people. Get to an open spot, and run
the play.

MAC
That does sound fun!

JIMMY
Good. Here's the catch. There will
be no ticky-tacky fouls. Hand checks,
push offs and holds will go unnoticed.

MO'NIQUE
What's the point of that, Coach?

JIMMY
Our opponent plays dirty.

INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy's VOICE OVER finishes as Mac spins out of the hold Robbie
has on her pinnie to take a pass and score.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Best we remind ourselves now.

There are push offs, hand checks, bumps and holds, as well
as, crisp ball movement, fast breaks, contested buckets and
lots of fun in this hard fought scrimmage game.

Hoots and hollers sound as the game ends.

DARIUS
Yeah! I like bringing the ball up!

MAC
We sure play faster this way.

ZAK
Thanks, Coach. For everything.

JIMMY
You earned this. You all have.

Jimmy holds his hand out. Everyone piles theirs on top, and on a silent three count they chant TEAM.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I'll see you soon.

Benny gives Jimmy a hug. One by one, the kids follow suit.

BENNY
Love ya, Coach.

STARLA
Totally love you, Coach.

ANANYA
Yes, Coach. Love you.

JOSHUA
Me too, Coach.

ROBBIE
Yeah, sounds right.

Jimmy gets double hugged by the cousins.

DARIUS/MO'NIQUE
Love you, Coach.

Zak offers his hand, and Jimmy pulls him in. The two hug.

EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy, Teddy, and the girls step out. Not a reporter in sight.

TEDDY
The circus has left town, Jimmy.

JIMMY
It's just pulled up stakes. We'll catch up with it again.

Teddy gives Jimmy a hug.

TEDDY
One more game under the bigtop.

He throws an arm over Brahma's shoulder.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Come now, too smart, too pretty, and too tall. Let's do brunch.

Brahma pulls away, and Teddy instantly knows why.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I know, I know. It was a senior moment. I swear.

BRAHNA
A senior moment, dad?

TEDDY
Might even have been a stroke.

BRAHNA
Dad? I don't want a nickname. I'm just me. Not tall stuff, or legs, and especially not Brahnasaurus.

JIMMY
Brahnasaurus? Who calls her that?

MAC
The boys at school.

TEDDY
I had no idea, Brahma. I'm sorry.

BRAHNA
It's not easy being a tall girl.

TEDDY
Your mom is tall.

BRAHNA
Mom is beautiful, dad.

TEDDY
So are you. I'll bet those mean boys just have a secret crush.

BRAHNA
Eewh, dad. I just threw up in my mouth a little.

TEDDY
They're that mean?

BRAHNA
No, that short.

She busts out with a pained grin.

BRAHNA (CONT'D)
Promise me. No more stupid nicknames.

TEDDY
I promise. Brunch now?

Brahna nods, and Teddy turns to Jimmy and Mac.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
You guys coming?

JIMMY
No, big guy. You two go on ahead.

EXT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - AFTERNOON

Jimmy's VOICE OVER finishes as the Arena is established.

JIMMY (V.O.)
We'll see you in Los Angeles.

PAPARAZZI and PRESS line the red carpet entrance as two buses pull up to the curb. The doors slide open, and the Thunder streams from one bus, the Magic from the other.

Nick steps up to greet them.

NICK
Hi, everyone. Please follow me.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nick motions to a door marked: LOCKER ROOM.

NICK
Coach Skolnicki, this one's yours.

The Thunder files inside. Cooper stops in the doorway.

COOPER
Have a good game, everyone.

Lloyd grabs Cooper to push him inside the room.

LLOYD
Have a good game? Are you kidding
me? Get in there!

The door closes, and Mac turns to her team.

MAC
Oh, let's just kick their butt.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: MAGIC LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is all hardwood, leather, and pile carpet. New uniforms hang in private cubicles. Five blue with pink line one wall, and five pink with blue line the other.

Mo'Nique runs a hand past the row of pink-bodied jerseys.

MO'NIQUE
Who came up with these?

SHANIQWA
That would be Coach Teddy.

JIMMY
Really?

TEDDY
Yeah, I bought some stock.

MAC
Cool. Which one's mine?

SHANIQWA
Number four, of course. Come now, children. Find your number.

Starla tugs her jersey off its hanger.

STARLA
Found mine! Why's it blue inside?

TEDDY
It's reversible. Gives us choices.

STARLA
Totally easy choice for me, because like it says on my jersey.

Starla holds her jersey up. The name reads: PRETTY IN PINK.

STARLA (CONT'D)
I'm pretty in pink.

Benny wears his to reveal the name on back reads: ALL HEART.

BENNY
I gotta nifty name too.

Mo'Nique and Ananya show their jerseys. Mo'Nique's name reads: DOM'MO'NIQUE. Ananya's reads: NOTHING BUT NET.

MO'NIQUE
Mine is perfect.

ANANYA
Yes, quite perfect.

Darius, and then, Joshua show their jerseys. Darius' reads: BRINGS THE THUNDER, Joshua's: DOCTOR SWAT.

DARIUS
Yeah, I'm feeling it.

JOSHUA
Look, ma. I'm a doctor.

Robbie looks his over, perplexed. It reads: VELCRO VATO.

ROBBIE
Velcro Vato?

TEDDY
You stick to your man.

ROBBIE
Epic!

Zak's reads: STIRS THINGS UP.

ZAK
They are sharp.

Hiding hers behind her back, Mac looks beyond Teddy.

MAC
Yeah, but Teddy?

Teddy turns. Brahma stares at him. Her jersey unexamined.

BRAHNA
Dad? You promised. No nicknames.

TEDDY
No. I promised no stupid nicknames.

He holds her jersey up, stopping her mid-sentence.

BRAHNA
I've told you. I'm me. Just --

Brahma giggles happily, and hugs her father tight.

MAC
So? Don't keep us in suspense. What's it say?

She shows off her jersey. It reads: JUST ME.

BRAHNA
My dad is awesome.

TEDDY
You hear that, Jimmy? I'm awesome.

JIMMY
This I know.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: VIP ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Father Reyes enters. Nick steps up to lead him away.

NICK

Thanks for coming, Father. Let's get to your seat.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COURT-SIDE - MOMENTS LATER

The arena is filled to capacity. The HOLLYWOOD CROWD buzzing as Nick shows Father Reyes to his seat, and hands him a badge.

NICK

Here's your floor pass, Father. I'll see you after the game.

Nick exits. The Father sits down beside KEVIN BACON.

KEVIN BACON

A floor pass? Pretty cool. How'd you score that, Padre?

FATHER REYES

Friends in high places, my son.

KEVIN BACON

Yeah? Me too.

Next to Kevin Bacon sits OPRAH WINFREY.

OPRAH WINFREY

Hi, Father. What brings you here?

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: MAGIC LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mac's jersey reads: THE REASON as she ties her shoe, the team dressed, boys in blue, and girls in pink. Tamika pops her head in to catch Mac's eye. She shows off her new shoes.

MAC

Look, Tamika. The team has its own shoe. Teddy bought some stock.

TAMIKA

I know, and I brought you children a little something fabulous myself.

Tamika ushers CAITLIN CLARK and KEVIN DURANT inside.

MAC

Wow! Caitlin Clark, and Kevin Durant. You two are --

Mac looks around the room for a quick consensus.

ALL THE KIDS
The greatest!

CAITLIN CLARK
Thanks, kids. We think you are too.

KEVIN DURANT
And, everyone here is rooting for
you.

MAC
Everyone?

Nick enters.

NICK
It's game time.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The team files through the doorway to discover the way lined with the NBA's RISING STARS. The kids trade five with each as they head toward the basketball court.

The last calls out to turn them short of the entrance.

RISING STAR
Hey, Magic! Just do it.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - MOMENTS LATER

There are CHEERS as both teams take the floor to warmup at opposite ends. Jimmy and Lloyd join Nick as Dan is escorted onto the floor by a LAKER GIRL carrying an oversized cheque.

Nick speaks into a mic.

NICK
On behalf of the NBA I am honored to
present this check to Youth League
Director Dan Johnson. We are pleased
to support his wonderful program.

Dan receives an ovation as the Laker Girl leads him away.

NICK (CONT'D)
Now, let's play some basketball.
Good luck to both teams.

CHEERS fill the air as the BUZZER sounds.

LLOYD
See you in the winner's circle, loser.

JIMMY
Bit of an oxymoron, don't you think?

LLOYD
You know what I mean.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - MOMENTS LATER

Penny watches as Jimmy joins his team. He waves to the crowd, and she unwittingly waves back. Everyone notices.

HELEN
Oh, darling. You are so in love.

BRUCE
Yup, you got it bad, lady.

PENNY
Maybe.

Her friends stare.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Okay, you got me. I love him. I love
Jimmy O'Grady.

The HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE behind them scoffs.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE
You, and every woman here, hon.

BARBARA
Yes, but she actually knows him.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE
Yeah?

Penny nods, and the woman eyes her HOOCHIE FRIEND.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE (CONT'D)
Hear that, Muriel? She's with Jimmy
O'Grady.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COMMENTARY BOX - CONTINUOUS

From an elevated platform between the benches, Dusty, and play-by-play announcer, BETH MOWINS, overlook the court.

DUSTY
Hello. I'm Dusty Cruz, and my
broadcast partner today is, the one,
the only, Beth Mowins.

BETH MOWINS

It's great to be here, Dusty. There are sports stories that will live on in the hearts of Americans forever. Jimmy O'Grady, and his basketball team are one of these stories. They have captured the imagination, and an entire nation is rooting for one more miraculous win.

The crowd behind cheers as the BUZZER sounds.

DUSTY

It's the Magic verses the Thunder for the Championship.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lloyd puts his hand in. His players follow. Not a one touches. Jimmy holds his hand in. All his kids pile on. The teams CHANT to take the floor.

The first half is physical. The Thunder meeting every challenge with hard fouls. The girls ice-cold shooting has the Magic battling from behind throughout.

Ananya misses a jumper as the BUZZER sounds.

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 22 - THUNDER 31. Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER is heard as the teams head to the locker rooms.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

Can Jimmy O'Grady's team pull one last rabbit out of the hat? Or, has the magic finally run out on their Cinderella season?

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: MAGIC LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A dejected Magic team sits. Jimmy looks the girls over.

JIMMY

Ladies, you're tighter then a banjo string out there. What gives?

MAC

You heard, dad. Everyone here is rooting for us.

JIMMY

How's that different than back home?

STARLA

Everyone totally knows us there.

ANANYA
Yes, Coach. They are our friends.

Jimmy is at a loss, and Teddy steps in.

TEDDY
Hey, Jimmy. I have this.

JIMMY
Yeah? Team's all yours, Coach.

Teddy turns to take the measure of the girls.

TEDDY
Girls? The people out there have followed you online all season.

MO'NIQUE
Facebook friends aren't real friends.

TEDDY
Normally, but we've shared something very special with them. And, because of that, they have come to feel a great affection for this team.

BRAHNA
Are you saying they love us?

TEDDY
Just like back home.

BRAHNA
That's really neat when you look it that way, dad.

TEDDY
So? We're good then?

Mac looks around. The girls nod in collective agreement.

MAC
Yeah, that helps. Thanks, Teddy.

TEDDY
Great! Now, can all of you to do something for me.

BENNY
Sure, Coach. Just name it.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Light fills the corridor's mouth as Teddy's VOICE OVER answers.

TEDDY (V.O.)
Pick a color!

A CHEER erupts as Benny flies from the light clad in a pink-bodied jersey. His teammates follow, each wearing the color.

The second half action is fierce. Each team giving as good as they get. The girls renewed shooting touch, the difference, as the Magic methodically cuts into the Thunder's lead.

Mo'Nique sinks a free throw, and Lloyd signals timeout.

Beth Mowin's VOICE OVER narrates as the crowd stands in ovation. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 37 - THUNDER 42.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
The Magic have caught fire, and
everyone here is loving it. That is
everyone with the possible exception
of Thunder Coach, Lloyd Skolnicki.

In the Thunder's huddle.

LLOYD
They only have one player. And, he's
wearing pink!

HOWIE
They're better than you think, dad.

Lloyd eyes his son with disappointment.

LLOYD
You're an embarrassment, boy.

He angrily turns on Cooper.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Cooper! You're benched.

COOPER
Me? What for?

LLOYD
Your attitude poisons my team.

Number Twenty mouths HIS TEAM. The Other Players shrug.

WADE
But, Lloyd? Cooper's the only starter
that's not in foul trouble. We need
him out there while the others sit.

LLOYD
And, play the scrubs? Not even for
an ESPY.

He scans his bench. His eyes land on Number Twenty.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Number twenty, you're in.

NUMBER TWENTY
I have a name, Coach.

LLOYD
Just try not to be worthless.

The Thunder chants WIN to take the floor. The Magic still huddles as the FEMALE REFEREE steps over.

FEMALE REFEREE
Putting a team on the floor, Coach?

JIMMY
Yes, ma'am. We'll be there.

Jimmy takes a last measure of his team.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Keep pounding the rock inside.

The kids search each other's face in uneasy silence.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
What now, people?

MAC
Well, we were hoping that you'd turn us loose. Let us have some fun.

BRAHNA
Like you promised.

JIMMY
I did promise, didn't I?

The kids nod.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Alright then, people.

He puts his hand in, and the kids follow.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Let's have some fun.

A silent three, and they chant MAGIC.

Set free in these final minutes, the Magic team uses quickness, and guile to run their way past their thuggish opponent. Fenton is whistled for a foul.

Lloyd eyes the scoreboard. It reads: MAGIC 51 - THUNDER 49. He signals for time, and the Female Referee blows her whistle. She escorts Fenton to the Thunder's bench.

FEMALE REFEREE
That's five on him, Coach.

Fenton wilts under Lloyd's withering stare.

LLOYD
You disappointment me.

Lloyd turns on the team.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
You all do!

WADE
Lloyd? Howie is a whistle away from fouling out too. For goodness sake, put Cooper back in.

LLOYD
Look, Wade. I'm the coach. You're just a guy who's son should be better then he turned out to be. Got it?

WADE
Yeah, I got it.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Penny, Helen, Barbara and Bruce see that Cooper still sits.

HELEN
Cooper still sits. Something is wrong, yes?

PENNY
Yes, with his coach.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lloyd grabs Howie as the BUZZER sounds.

LLOYD
Show me you're not a loser, boy.

Howie pulls away to take the floor. He bearhugs Brahna as soon as she is handed the ball to be whistled for his fifth.

Lloyd is dumbstruck as Howie takes a seat on the bench next to Fenton and Wade. The Female Referee snaps him out of it.

FEMALE REFEREE
Coach? Who you putting in?

He scans his players.

LLOYD
Cooper! I'm giving you another chance.
Don't let me down.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Beth Mowin's VOICE OVER is heard as Penny, Helen, Barbara and Bruce react to Cooper sprinting onto the court.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
Cooper Lang has reentered the game.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Cooper steps up on Mac. Zak sets a pick on him as Mac takes Brahma's inbound pass to hit the open jumper. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 53 - THUNDER 49.

Lloyd throws his hands up in disgust.

LLOYD
Oh, I give up.

Cooper signals timeout, and the WHISTLE sounds. The team gathers around him. Lloyd is stupefied as Howie and Fenton get up to join the huddle. The Other Players follow.

Wade shakes his head as Lloyd sinks into the empty bench.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
It's mutiny. Mutiny I say.

Lloyd's surrender does not go unnoticed.

TEDDY
Looks like Lloyd's quit.

JIMMY
But, his team hasn't. Cooper can
shoot the lights out.

Jimmy eyes Robbie.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Robbie? Make him work for it.

In the Thunder's huddle.

HOWIE

They'll probably put Cárdenes on
you, Cooper. I would.

COOPER

Yeah, here's how we handle that.

Jimmy takes a final measure of his team.

JIMMY

I said it before, and I'll say it
again... I love you. You're a magic
bunch, people.

The BUZZER sounds, and Jimmy puts a hand in. The kids follow.
Chanting MAGIC as they break their huddle. They take the floor
to pass the Thunder Players returning to their bench.

Lloyd glares as they take seats nearest to Wade.

LLOYD

All of you have ruined this for me.
You bunch of bums.

Cooper takes the inbound to be dogged by Robbie as he pushes
the ball up the floor. He stops and swings it away. Three
more passes, and the Thunder scores on a give and go.

Teddy turns to Jimmy.

TEDDY

Jimmy?

JIMMY

I saw, Teddy.

Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER calls the action.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

Oh my! The Thunder just took a page
out of Jimmy O'Grady's playbook to
cut the lead to two.

Mac bodies up on Cooper as they set up for the inbound.

MAC

You ran our play.

COOPER

I'm not going to lay down, Mac.

She pushes off to receive Brahna's pass.

MAC

We wouldn't be friends if you did.

Mac passes to Mo'Nique. She floats a pass to Zak. He runs under it to pass back to Mac. She lays it up, and in.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
The pass is to Addams. She lofts the ball ahead to Carson. He runs it down, and dishes back to MacKenzie O'Grady on the fly. She scores!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 55 - THUNDER 51.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's a four point Magic lead with just over three minutes to go.

Cooper works down the floor, Robbie all over him.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Cooper Lang has the ball. Robbie Cárdenes giving him quite a battle.

His team cycles through the play until the ball finds Cooper again. He lets fly to drain the contested three.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Thunder swings the ball around the key. Lang has it at the wing. He shoots, and hits the three!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 55 - THUNDER 54.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Magic's lead is one.

Lloyd sits up, suddenly interested.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Thunder are a different team with Lang back in the game.

Jimmy works the sideline as Zak walks the ball up the floor.

JIMMY
Find the open shot.

The Magic sets up. Mo'Nique breaks open, and Zak fires her the ball. She spins into the paint to score.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
The Magic are on offense. Zak Carson fires a pass to Mo'Nique Addams. She spins into the paint, and scores!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 57 - THUNDER 54.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Magic are up by three.

Robbie mirrors his every move as Cooper works down the floor to shoot the ball. His trey rattles home, and Lloyd stands.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Lang brings it down. Cárdenes is in his hip pocket. Lang pulls up to launch another three. It's good!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 57 - THUNDER 57.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The game is tied with a minute-twenty to go.

Jimmy signals for calm as Zak walks the ball up again.

JIMMY
We're okay. Just run the play.

The kids run their offense until the ball finds Brahma underneath the basket. She banks her shot in for two.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
Carson swings the ball to O'Grady. She passes to Cárdenes. He bounces the ball into Addams. Brahma Papadopoulos is knocking at the backdoor. Addams feeds her for two!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 59 - THUNDER 57.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Magic retake the lead with twenty-eight seconds on the clock.

Cooper dribbles down the sideline to be trapped by Robbie. He scans the floor. A Magic defender is in every passing lane.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Lang drives down the sideline. Stymied by Cárdenes! He picks up his dribble. The Magic doing a great job closing down those passing lanes with fifteen seconds to go.

Number Twenty pops open.

NUMBER TWENTY
Here! Here!

He takes Cooper's pass and pivots to face the defense. Both teams grappling as the Thunder run their last play.

Jimmy works the sideline. Everyone on their feet.

JIMMY
Stick with your man!

Cooper cuts the lane. Robbie right with him. The crowd starts to COUNT DOWN as Number Twenty makes his pass.

The ball flies toward Cooper as he works out of the paint. Robbie pokes the pass away, and Lloyd slumps into his chair. The ball bounds past the arc to find Number Twenty again.

Cooper points to the basket.

COOPER
Shoot it! Shoot it!

Number Twenty closes his eyes to heave the ball at the basket. The shot sailing over Mac's outstretched hand.

Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER makes the final call as the ball banks off the glass, and falls for the miracle three at the BUZZER.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
It's good!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 59 - THUNDER 60.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And, this magic season is over! The
Thunder win, sixty to fifty-nine.

Mac falls to her knees as the Thunder celebrates. High tops steps into view, and Mac looks up. Howie offers his hand.

HOWIE
Hey, MacKenzie. Respect.

MAC
Do me a favor, will you?

Mac takes his hand, and he pulls her up.

MAC (CONT'D)
Call me Mac.

HOWIE
I'd like that.

Cooper steps in to hug her.

COOPER
Mac! You were great.

MAC

You were pretty amazing yourself,
Cooper. Congratulations.

COOPER

Could've gone either way.

MAC

Glad to hear that, cuz I think we
should go best of five.

COOPER

Would you settle for a high five?

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Helen, Barbara and Bruce eye Penny as the teams trade five below.

HELEN

But, darling? You must.

BARBARA

Helen's right, Penny. Go tell Jimmy
how you feel.

The Hollywood Hoochie leans over again.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE

If you don't, hon. I will.

BRUCE

That is not going to happen.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

POLITE APPLAUSE sounds as Nick steps into the circle, mic in hand. A Laker Girl carrying a large trophy at his side.

NICK

What a phenomenal game. To the fans
in attendance, and across the nation,
thank you for being a part of it.
Now, the Thunder. To Coach Skolnicki,
and his players, congratulations.

The Laker Girl holds the trophy out for Number Twenty.

NICK (CONT'D)

You are League Champions!

There are GASPS as Lloyd boxes the boy out to steal it away.

LLOYD

I knew you'd come up big, kid.

NUMBER TWENTY
Yeah, Coach? What's my name?

LLOYD
Is that really important?

NUMBER TWENTY
No, Coach. You got your trophy.

A deluge of BOOS rain down as Lloyd holds the trophy aloft.

LLOYD
I'm the best!

The crowd cheers as the Laker Girl ushers Lloyd from sight.

NICK
And now, the Magic. You may not have been victorious today, but you have won our hearts all the same.

Lloyd watches from the shadows. He hugs the trophy tight.

LLOYD
Yeah, but I'm holding the trophy.

Nick waves Father Reyes over.

NICK
We may not have a trophy for you, but we do have something special to share with everyone here.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COURT-SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Father Reyes high fives Oprah Winfrey, and then, Kevin Bacon as Shaniqwa and Tamika step up to invite him onto the floor.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Shaniqwa and Tamika escort Father Reyes to center court.

NICK
Coach, this is Father Luis Reyes.

JIMMY
To what do I owe the honor, Father?

FATHER REYES
A mutual friend of ours, Father Francis O'Toole, sent me your way.

MAC
Father Frank?

FATHER REYES

That's correct, young lady. And, he told me that your father is the man for the job. I've come to agree. You see, I'm with Saint Agnes Prep, and we need a basketball coach.

MAC

The all girls school back home?

FATHER REYES

Do you think he'd be interested?

MAC

Dad?

JIMMY

What's the team's name?

FATHER REYES

The Lady Lambs.

Jimmy shakes Father Reyes' hand.

JIMMY

Well alright, slap a skirt on me.
I'm a Lady Lamb.

The CHEERING rocks the stands, and Lloyd's eye twitches.

LLOYD

Ha! Big deal.

Nick puts his arm around Jimmy's shoulder.

NICK

Wow, Coach! That's a big deal.
Anything you'd like to say?

The arena goes SILENT as Jimmy takes the mic.

JIMMY

What's youth sports without things to teach? Commitment, self discipline, mental toughness, teamwork, sportsmanship and resilience. These are the things that sports, done right, teaches our children. The measurement of a winner is not by victory alone, but in the all out effort in pursuit of that goal. That's what makes a winner. And, I am very proud of my team.

Penny's shouts turns Jimmy's head.

PENNY (O.S.)
JIMMY! JIMMY!

He sees her climbing down the crowded stands.

JIMMY
PENNY!

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy wades into the crowd. Penny beams to see him coming. The crowd parts as they meet.

PENNY
I think we should now.

JIMMY
Why now, Penny Lang?

PENNY
Because I love you, Jimmy O'Grady.

JIMMY
I love you too, Penny Lang.

They kiss, and the crowd cheers loudly.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Mac and Cooper high five as everyone on the floor celebrates. Lloyd groans as his trophy falls apart in his arms.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COMMENTARY BOX - CONTINUOUS

Beth Mowins and Dusty look down on the celebration.

BETH MOWINS
Now, that's a fairytale ending.

DUSTY
Just goes to show you.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS

The duo's VOICE OVERS wrap it up as the kiss continues.

DUSTY (V.O.)
Sometimes you lose the game, but you
still win at life. I'm Dusty Cruz.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
And, I'm Beth Mowins.

DUSTY/BETH MOWINS (V.O.)
Goodnight.