

LASER TAG OPENING

A gigantic tailgate spreads across streets and parking lots in New Los City. The best and worst parts of college football and european soccer -- fans drink excessively, a huge group jumps and chants in unison around an opposing fan's RV, a man in a trenchcoat surreptitiously scalps hot dogs. High energy.

Lights up in the stadium: a giant LASER TAG ARENA. High walls, arching bridges, steep ramps -- a maze of blacklight and neon the size of a football field. Fans sing, wave giant flags, light flares. Unbeatable atmosphere for the championship game of the biggest sport in the top league: the Major Laser League Pew Pew.

The team enters, led by VIC TANGO. Big, strong, touch of grey in the beard. He gives a pregame speech to the team about the immortality of legacy, cementing their names in history with a win here today. With a championship, he'd surely be considered one of the greats. They listen with respect and when he gives instructions they follow with confidence.

The laser tag game plays out as a fast-paced sport, shifting between intense individual shootouts and organized team play. Sometimes silly but always taken seriously. There are laser rifles, laser handguns, laser grenades, a shield powerup. Players can pass guns and ammo between themselves. Each player has five lives a half, leftover lives rollover to the second half. Once whole team is eliminated, game is over.

Vic proves himself as a great player, but clearly a little old. He plays strong and leads his team well, but he tries to do too much -- he's too slow -- makes a costly mistake -- they lose... Fans, team shocked at the loss. He kneels alone. Devastating.

VIC GETS TRADED

Vic goes off the grid for the post-season, training and getting his mind right. He's spends it at a monastery, meditating with monks, training with sumos, picking bugs out of monkeys' fur.

When he comes back to New Los City, he goes straight to the stadium to start the pre-season strong, but his keycard is denied. He follows someone in and finds his locker has been cleared out. The owner rushes in, too late, admits Vic has been traded. Vic is shocked, who could replace him?

FLUSH! Enter: JAVIER SPAGHETTI. Younger, stronger, mullet. They square up. Javier calls him old, washed up, and they threaten

each other back and forth. Vic's old stuff gets brought in by security. Vic shows off symbols of his wins: a signed laser gun, his first baby tooth, a new sponsored glove prototypes.

Footsteps thunder down the hall: it's GRETCH, Vic's wife and agent/manager. She reams out the owner, who cowers behind Javier and reveals Vic was traded to Beigeland. They're the worst team in the league, a city that doesn't even care about laser tag, they love skeeball. Vic furiously throws his belongings at the owner, Gretch joins, and they're escorted out.

WELCOME TO BEIGELAND

Vic and Gretch step off the plane in Beigeland to exactly zero fans, led to a chauffeur with a three person tandem bicycle. Vic balks at the idea, spouting off his accomplishments and Gretch's, a multiple gold medal champion, successful sports agent, and smooth jazz saxophonist. The chauffeur isn't impressed.

With cute lil helmets, they reluctantly ride through Beigeland and see the city for the first time. It's drab. Boring. Skeeball lanes everywhere. A statue of a faceless, robed man with skeeballs orbiting his head. It's an odd place.

They get dropped off outside the stadium and meet the owner MONICA, who is changing things up to try to build a good team again, including hiring a respected grizzled veteran as a coach.

The gym. Monica introduces him to COACH, a lanky nineteen year yet treated with fearful reverence. His storied career (esports gamer) was cut short after a brutal injury (jammed thumb).

Beigeland veteran STU introduces Vic to the other players on the team, who of course are all specifically odd weirdos. None of the players are impressed or care who Vic is, except the new rookie YEONG-GEON "Young Gun" who reveres him.

The team works out with intimidating intensity. Vic joins the workout but can barely keep up. He latches on to Young, shows off his sick glove prototypes, but even the rookie is good. This team is better than he thought and a dark thought creeps in... maybe he actually is too old.

The season starts and their first game is against Vic's old team. Vic finally enters the home field laser tag arena... to basically no fans. Borderline sarcastic applause. Even the announcers sound nerdy and bored. The team plays poorly, individualistic. Just before halftime Javier takes a cheap shot that hurts Vic.

A physio conducts a concussion test. Gretch enters, concerned.

Vic reveals he's hesitant, he's not sure if he's good enough anymore. She lovingly but fiercely rips into Vic: he's one of the best to ever do it, and the best never quit. Vic agrees, fired up, smacking away the physio -- immediately a second physio jumps in to give the first a concussion test.

Vic enters the arena and appeals to the only fans in the crowd. He plays hard and gives the team a fighting chance but the team still narrowly loses. In the post-game interview, Javier jaws at Vic, who interrupts and declares he'll prove he's still the best by winning a championship in Beigeland or retiring in disgrace.

NEW ERA BEGINS

On a sports talk show, LOUD HOST argues with LOUDER HOST about what winning with this team would mean for Vic's legacy. ANOTHER HOST cowers, overwhelmed, hates being yelled at.

The next day, Vic enters the practice arena feeling good, confident. He's back in the news, back in the public eye, he knows he's the guy.

He leads a set of skill-based drills from his old days, and the players easily nail it. They're talented. They lead one they've been doing lately, and he struggles a bit.

Coach gets them to run some team drills, but Vic is pulled away by Gretch, sponsors pulled out of glove deal. As they talk, chaos ensues in the background, the team is at each other's throats. Vic doesn't see and feels good about the team.

At their next game, the team's skill is high but they play in isolation: impressive singular plays, selfish decisions. The team is losing. One of the opposing players, TUUFULI, is incredible, attacks like a man avenging his daughter. Coach remarks to the owner he wishes his players were like Tuufuli.

Soon after, announcement: the two teams have a trade mid-game. Stu literally just switches jerseys with Tuufuli. The Beigeland players are all oddly happy for and envious of Stu. Vic realizes: the players desperately want to be traded, so they work hard and play individually to show off their value.

After the loss, Vic explodes at the players for caring more about themselves than about winning and storms off. Coach finds him in the Beigeland trophy room (participation ribbons, dog training diploma, black & white laser tag photos, no trophies). They reflect on both the meaning/worth of trophies and the opportunity it presents them here in Beigeland, but wonder how they're going to win a championship if the players don't even care about

winning. Vic sees Tuufuli slamming his head into the wall, "I have an idea." Coach looks at an old photo, "Me too."

Next practice: an abandoned, graffitied facility, the one from the photo. Beigeland's first laser tag building. The team doesn't care about winning anyway so Coach makes them practice here.

Vic props up Tuufuli as some fierce warrior who's gonna take all the attention away from the players, they'll never get traded now. Tuufuli enters, sweet and meek as can be, with some lil sweet treats. Team loves it, friendly. Tuufuli plays an ice breaker game to get to know them, is uncomfortably vulnerable --

Vic interrupts, jumps into practice. Tuufuli flips a switch, fierce warrior as promised. But in the midst of his intensity, he teaches the players how to handle his kind of playstyle. They love it, buy in, the team starts to bond a bit, including Vic. Vic enjoys the moment, but realizes the team can be inspired for more, just not by him. How can he get them to follow him instead?

He looks up, shifts left. Spray paint across different building facets combine from this new perspective: across the entire building is a single piece of graffiti forming a robed figure.

SKEEBALL IS LIFE

Vic sits in the back of an electric crowd in a musty basement with some stands and two skeeball lanes. Nobody recognizes him. Players roll against each other until there's one winner left.

A hush comes over the crowd and EZEKIEL enters. Pale, no hair, beige hooded robe, leather bracelets, he enters serenely almost like a religious figure. The previous winner rolls, does pretty well. Ezekiel rolls, nails nine hundreds in a row, and revels in the cheers as the crowd erupts in awe. He shows them appreciation and notices Vic. Holds eye contact an extra moment, exits.

The crowd thins until it's just Vic, rolling skeeballs alone. Eventually Ezekiel appears behind him. Vic pretends like he's come as a fellow athlete, but reluctantly admits he's jealous and just wants everyone to love him and people to follow him. Ezekiel says he doesn't play for himself, he plays for the fans. He feels like a public servant, winning for the fans so they can feel the joy of victory together. He gives Vic one of his bracelets to represent that bond to the fans. Vic seems hesitant at first but agrees to set aside his ego to focus on the fans --

SPORTS AWARDS

LIGHTS! CAMERAS! CARPET THAT'S RED! Sike: Vic eats up the

attention at a red carpet event before the year's big sports award show. But he's quickly overshadowed by Javier and is shooed away. He wanders into a group of other has-beens, including his childhood laser tag idol. Vic begins nervously excited, but his idol describes his life in a way where he's clearly trying to brag, but it just gets progressively more depressing.

Award show. Monologue jokes, heartfelt speeches. At some point literally everyone around Vic holds an award. But then: the Team Impact Award. Vic stands, thinking he'll win for his time in New Los City, but actually Stu wins for a bunch of community service in Beigeland. Javier makes fun of him and Vic exits, embarrassed.

He sits alone at the bar, Stu shows up and consoles him. Talks city impact being bigger than team impact or stats. On the screen, they see Javier win the Individual Impact award and he mocks Vic openly. Stu invites Vic back to the VIP area of the event where they play a nostalgic arcade laser game together and talk about what makes Beigeland as a city and people so great.

Javier enters and challenges Vic at the arcade game. Vic is winning but goes for the high score and dramatically injures his trigger finger. Javier gets enough points to beat Vic, flippantly tosses Vic his award, and leaves. Vic lies crumpled on the floor.

WIN FOR THE FANS

At the hospital with Gretch, Vic learns his injury will keep him out till playoffs. He gets a cast that covers most of his forearm and hand, including Ezekiel's leather bracelet, with just the tip of his index finger barely sticking out the top.

The same sports show hosts as before comment on Vic's injury and playoff implications, but this time as a soft-spoken NPR show.

The team sits bored at a sports store where they would be signing autographs if anyone cared. The players try to brush it off but Vic gets them to admit it's embarrassing and that this isn't what they're playing for. He gives a rousing speech parroted mostly from Ezekiel and Stu and inspires the team to play for the fans and the city rather than themselves. "Was your childhood dream to be traded or to win a championship? We can win here!"

MONTAGE: the team plays together, bonds together (hangs, fun), and supports the city. New fans cheering energizes the team.

The team celebrates the longest win streak in team history (3). Vic hangs the jersey of the player of the game in the "rafters" of the locker room to inspire them to play for something more, to play to be remembered and revered in this city.

MONTAGE CONTINUES: wins, losses, more jerseys hung, the team bonds more (ice cream, slumber parties) and gains fans. Fans distract opposing players, throw food in their face, directly help team. After one game and a kid asks Young for an autograph. Young is touched, the injured Vic a little jealous.

At a laser tag place way out in the suburbs, the kids get excited when the team crashes a birthday party for fun PR. Jealous of the team getting fans when he's not playing, Vic plays really hard. He destroys the kids even left handed and ruins the vibe --

Gretch and Vic sit at a restaurant in silence. She's upset at him ruining his image and potentially reinjuring himself but he's defensive about proving he's great. She assures him once they make the playoffs he can prove himself again.

LAST MONTAGE: more wins, bonding (bury bodies, blood oaths).

MUST-WIN LAST GAME

Locker room. Last game of the season. Coach hangs up the last jersey, Vic's, for rallying the team to their best season ever. Vic wants to play but Coach wants him healthy for playoffs.

The game's against New Los City, a must win to make the playoffs. They play hard but Javier is too good, dismantling them. It's no longer a fun sport, it feels like war, borderline traumatizing. He toys with them, shooting his own teammates for a challenge.

Vic can't stand it, tries to shatter his cast -- obviously doesn't work -- obviously hurts like crazy -- gets it sawn off, revealing the bracelet, the fans. He rushes out, plays hard, plays for the fans... it's not enough, Beigeland still loses.

Vic gives a gracious half-hearted somewhat inspirational speech for their hard work this season, but -- turns out because Javier shot so many of his own players, their season kills for/against broke a tie-breaker and they barely scrape into the playoffs! Vic backtracks the speech faux-inspiration speech and they celebrate.

PLAYOFFS

On a daytime talk show, Vic and the team celebrate the first playoff berth in team history. It's going well until the host mentions that maybe one of them will get a glove sponsorship like Javier. When they show the ad for the glove, it's obvious Javier must have stolen Vic's prototype from his locker. Vic tries to argue it, and that he can't be replaced but the hosts don't care.

JK ONE MORE MONTAGE: Team wins through playoffs, gets some more

fans. Vic moves the jerseys to the main rafters to show that they all play for the city, but hangs his the most prominently.

Semi-finals. Jerseys high above, kinda soggy because Vic soaked them in oil so they'd "have a nice shine." The team plays well, plays hard. Vic plays selfishly to show the fans he's the best, frustrating the team. Vic hits the last shot and they barely win.

Still annoyed with Vic but excited for the win, the team celebrates, but Coach goes down: something's wrong. Vic doesn't notice and triggers fireworks. The jerseys catch fire and the whole stadium burns. Smoke, chaos, Coach is wheeled off --

Hospital. Coach is effectively dying of old age, may not make it. Fans leave flowers, notes. The team kind of pushes away Vic. Javier pays his respects in a public display, but then insults the team in private to Vic. He calls out Vic's vapid attempts to win fans, as if the city would care anyway. Javier's the new face of the league and Beigeland doesn't matter. Vic has no answer.

EMOTIONAL FALLOUTS

The same sports show hosts as before talk Beigeland's rise and expectations for the finals, but this time in a podcast studio where they open up more, show vulnerability.

Vic tries to take his mind off the game and hits the gym, but Young is already there. Young argues that Vic is still playing for himself instead of the fans. Vic feels betrayed by Young and Young feels ignored by Vic. The two go separate ways.

At the apartment, Vic wistfully watches footage of Gretch's old gold medal games -- rapid fire rock paper scissors wins, one after another. He admits to Gretch he feels like he has to win because otherwise he wouldn't be worthy of her. She's an olympic multi-gold medalist, a successful sports agent, makes a killer banana bread, and he hasn't won anything. Phone rings --

Hospital. Coach is in bad shape. He's surrounded by a few other teenagers: his old esports team. Vic sees that the fans have already moved on, but his teammates were the bonds that lasted. In the apartment, Gretch watches through the end of her gold medal videos: her celebrating alone.

THE FINALS

New Los City. Tailgate atmosphere like the beginning but dialed up even higher. Sequestered off to the side are the few Beigeland fans. They don't seem to know how to tailgate.

Tensions are high in the locker room, morale low. They're worried about Coach and know they got stomped last time they played Javier. Vic stands to give a speech but Young steps in and rallies the team, leads them out. Arena is filled with New Los City fans, a small section half-full of Beigeland fans.

Game begins. Young comes out swinging. Vic plays hard. Javier is laser focused. It's a close game but the scales tip toward New Los City. Young gets a dumb penalty going into the half.

Locker room. Team is losing steam, Young losing himself. A fan stumbles in, asks where the restroom is and just uses theirs. Vic finally loses it, rallies the team with a rousing speech that the fans don't matter, it's the team. This team has gone through it all, together. Who cares if random fans like you? Fuck the fans.

FLUSH! They kick the fan out, Young puts on Vic's prototype gloves -- he kept them from the first practice. The team storms the arena. They shoot lasers into their fans' eyes, t-shirts into their faces. Gretch screams and pepper sprays them and herself and the leftover Beigeland fans hurriedly leave.

They play hard, play together. Chemistry dialed in. Smooth plays. Assists. Headshots. No prisoners.

The game whittles down to just Javier, Vic, and Young. Young runs out of ammo, has to take cover -- Vic and Javier go one-on-one.

Javier tries to insult at Vic for playing for a pathetic city and team, but Vic doesn't care anymore, he's found a team that has meaning beyond how random fans compare him to others. Javier scoffs, thinks Vic has given up on being great.

Vic sprints toward Javier, slides, too short. Javier just shoots him... But from under Vic grenades roll out, kill Javier --

But Javier has one more life. Laughs in Vic's face. But he looks down... Vic's gun is gone. From behind -- Young -- headshot -- Javier's out. Young is the last one left, Beigeland wins!

The team rushes out and celebrates to stunned silence. Fans file out. Coach dies content. Javier is furious, embarrassed. Vic ignores the trophy to kiss Gretch, the true team for each other. The team raises the trophy as one and celebrates together to a stadium only getting steadily more quiet, more empty.

But they don't care. They won.
With each other. For each other.

CREDITS.