

AMERICAN UNDERDOG
THE KURT WARNER STORY

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INT. WARNER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON A TV: JOE MONTANA drives down field in Super Bowl XIX for the San Francisco 49ers.

TWO BOYS sit in front of a small TUBE TV. **KURT (9)**, energetic and athletic, is glued to the screen, watching Montana's every move. His brother, **MATT (11)**, glasses and a natural bookworm, huffs as he watches. Mildly interested.

Sports TROPHIES cover the humble walls and shelves.

THE GAME ENDS. The 49ers WIN. Kurt fixes his eyes on the screen. On the celebration. On Montana -- and the number on the back on his jersey: **#16**. Then:

DUCT TAPE on the back of an old t-shirt doubling for a jersey. The tape forms the number **13**, with the name WARNER above it. Kurt smooths out the shirt, looks it over with a smile, and a dream. Then:

KURT

MATT!!

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EXT. WARNER HOUSE - SUNSET

A brisk mid-western day. **IN THE YARD**, Matt lines up as wide receiver. Kurt calls HIKE, then narrates his Super Bowl win.

KURT

Tie game with two minutes left.
Warner drops back. He rolls left.
Sees his man. Time running out
AND...

THROWS. But Matt breaks right instead of left and the ball DROPS in the grass. Kurt throws his hands in the air.

KURT (CONT'D)

What was THAT?? I said left! You
had ONE JOB!

MATT

Easy for you to say, this is all
you do well.

KURT

(ignoring him)
Let's go again.

MATT

It was fourth down, we lost!

KURT

No! There was a penalty. Go AGAIN!

Matt HUFFS toward the house, done.

KURT (CONT'D)

Where are you going? Get back here
and WIN THE SUPER BOWL WITH ME!

3 **INT. WARNER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Matt sits in front of the TV. Switches the dial to Channel 3
and plays COMBAT on ATARI.

THUMP! The football hits the wall outside and the TV goes
STATICKY.

MATT

Kurt, STOP!

Another THUMP!

MATT (CONT'D)

You're messing up the TV!!

4 **EXT. WARNER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Kurt hurls the ball again. WHAM!

MATT (O.S.)

STOP!

A beat up Honda Accord sputters into the driveway. Kurt's
mother **SUE (30s)** climbs out. Weary and tired, she wears a
work uniform and carries grocery bags.

Kurt runs to her, wrapping his arms around her. It's obvious
how much he loves her.

SUE

Hey baby. Who won the game?

KURT

49ers! Duh. Montana was amazing.
(rattling on as they walk)
331 yards, 4 touchdowns, he rushed
59 yards -- that's more than their
running back...!

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INT. WARNER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kurt and Matt clear space on the cluttered table for dinner. Mom pulls TV dinners from the oven with one hand, sifting through PAST DUE bills with the other.

Sue sits at the table with the two boys. Kurt holds up a SNEAKER, dirty and worn, a hole in the bottom.

KURT

Mom, I need new shoes.

SUE

Sneakers have to last the school year, you know the deal. Put cardboard in em'.

(off his look)

No whining. Now bow your heads.

(closes her eyes)

Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies. In the name of the Father, the Son --

Kurt's already taking a bite.

SUE (CONT'D)

Kurtis!

(he puts it back)

-- and the Holy Spirit, amen.

BOYS

Amen.

Kurt digs in.

SUE

How was school?

MATT

Got my report card. Four As. One B. Dad said I get a dollar for ever A!

SUE

How bout all As next time. Kurtis?

KURT

Where *is* dad? He was supposed to be here this weekend.

SUE

He had to switch. How's school for you?

Kurt hesitates. Matt jumps in.

MATT

Detention. Again. I had to sit and wait for an hour --

KURT

No, you didn't!

MATT

-- cause you're slow.

KURT

Faster than you!

MATT

I meant stupid!

This triggers something in Kurt - he punches Matt in the shoulder and Matt punches him back. Sue grabs them both.

SUE

BOYS! Enough! Eat your dinner, or so help me GOD!

Matt scowls at Kurt. But Kurt just stews. Then he STORMS OUT.

Mom shoots Matt a look. Then they hear it - THUMP! Against the side of the house.

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EXT. WARNER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Kurt holds the FOOTBALL. Eyes blurred with tears. Sue walks over beside him.

SUE

Throw for me?

Kurt shakes his head. Drops the ball to the ground.

KURT

Don't feel like it.

SUE

Hey. You don't get 'A's, So what? Neither did I. But you got a shelf full of trophies. All it takes is bein' great at one thing.

(picks up the football)

This is yours. But talent isn't enough, Kurtis. You have to work harder than everyone else. Never quit.

KURT
You and Dad did.

SUE
That's different. With
relationships... But don't let that
stop you. You have a gift, Kurtis.

She hands him the football.

SUE (CONT'D)
Maybe some day this ball will
define you.
(he looks up at her)
Then it won't matter what people
say. Cause you'll be the best. And
no one can argue with that.

She hands the ball back to him.

SUE (CONT'D)
I gotta get back to work.

She pats him on the back, then heads to her car. Thirty yards
away she stops. Turns back.

SUE (CONT'D)
Hey. Throw it to me.

KURT
I can't throw it that far.

SUE
Won't know till you try.

Kurt winds back, cocks his arms, and throws with everything
he's got. AS THE BALL FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, WE:

SMASH TO BLACK:

Giant letters scroll across the screen (in homage to ROCKY):

A M E R I C A N U N D E R D O G

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EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A FOOTBALL spirals in perfect SLOW MOTION. Finally CAUGHT by
a receiver for a 40 yard gain. The CROWD ERUPTS.

University of Northern Iowa. 1993

The UNI Quarterback steps to the line for the next play. BUT
it's not who we expect. Not #13. NOT WARNER.

The camera DRIFTS beyond the action to the UNI sidelines...
Past front line COACHES and players. Past DEFENSE huddling...

FINALLY settles at the distant bench. A player as far from
the game as possible. We see his Jersey: WARNER. #13.
Benchwarmer.

KURT (now 22), square jaw. Perfect archetype of a QB. Except
for the not playing part. His leg jackhammers up and down.
Impatient. He's dying to be on the field. Looks to the
scoreboard: IT'S LATE IN THE GAME. They're losing.

The UNI QB runs off the field after a three and out,
frustrated. Argues with **HEAD COACH ALLEN**, making excuses.
Kurt stands and calls out.

KURT
Hey Coach! Put me in and I'll win
for you. COACH!

Coach Allen trades a glance with him. Then looks the other
way and the moment is over.

KURT (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
I'm sick of it, Mom. I mean it, I'm
done!

8 **INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

Kurt is the last guy in the locker room. He clutches a
PAYPHONE in the corner.

SUE (O.S.)
No. You stay in the game.

KURT
There *is* no game. That's the
problem. I did everything right to
get here and I've been sitting on a
bench for four years. I can't get
on the field.

SUE
So find a way. No one said it would
be easy. Warners don't quit.

Kurt sighs, frustrated. Leans against the wall in silhouette.

10 **INT. KURT AND MIKE HUDNUTT'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

A college jock apartment. Beer-stained couches, clothes
everywhere, neon Bud Light sign on the wall.

ON THE FLOOR, Kurt sits in front of a stack of VCRs strapped to a mini TV. He toggles through GAME FOOTAGE, trying to cut together a reel.

Kurt's roommate emerges from his room in a plaid shirt and cowboy boots. This is **MIKE HUDNUTT (22)**. Six feet, 250 pounds wide, Kurt's best friend and anchor of the offensive line.

MIKE HUDNUTT

Okay. Pick one.

Mike holds up two giant belt BUCKLES.

KURT

Your buckles are like your music,
Mike. They're all the same.

MIKE HUDNUTT

How dare you? These tell two very
different stories. I'll take this
one. You wear the other.

KURT

What? No. I have work to do.

Kurt turns back to the VCR. Scrolls through: NUMBER 13, in his Panther uniform, dropping back and firing a bullet.

MIKE HUDNUTT

That's not work. Can't make a
highlight reel without highlights,
pal. Just sayin.

KURT

I have highlights.

MIKE HUDNUTT

You have one. One highlight.
Anyway, who you gonna send it to?

KURT

Scouts. Agents.

MIKE HUDNUTT

You really are delusional. The NFL
don't draft players that never
started a college game at a 1AA
school in Iowa.

(drops one of the buckles
in front of Kurt)

Come on - we're going out.

KURT

I will never wear that.

And...

11 **EXT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - NIGHT**

A country western bar. Flashing neon sign reads: "WILD E. COYOTE". Underneath it hangs a "LADIES NIGHT" banner.

Mike's Monster truck pulls into the parking lot, country music BLASTING from the stereo. In the passenger seat, Kurt SIGHS.

KURT

Turn it OFF. You're killing me, man.

12 **INT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - NIGHT**

Kurt steps into the smokey dive bar. He cringes, eyeing the giant DANCE FLOOR where dozens of cowgirls and cowboys are smack in the middle of a LINE DANCE.

Kurt shakes his head, instantly miserable. Mike slaps him on the back...

MIKE HUDNUTT

It's gonna be a fun night!

And heads off to greet his friends, leaving Kurt by himself. Looking very out of place in a t-shirt, jeans and sneakers.

As Mike stomps into the dancing crowd, Kurt heads straight for the bar. Within seconds, every BLONDE seems to be eyeing him. But Kurt can't be bothered.

LATER, the dancing continues, but Kurt hasn't budged. He just sips his beer, ignoring the women circling him. Then he looks to the DANCE FLOOR and his gaze lands on:

ONE GIRL. In the middle of the action. Short skirt, cowboy boots and spikey dark hair. She's brash and badass and funny all at the same time. This is **BRENDA MEONI (25)**.

Brenda dances with a HELL'S ANGEL three times her age, then spins away and joins a skinny rodeo guy, then moves on again, from guy to guy, but not flirting -- it's all about the dancing. And SHE'S GREAT AT IT. She lights everyone up around her, and Kurt is immediately captivated.

He steps closer, watching her. Then Brenda turns his way and THEIR EYES MEET...

And for just a split-second... EVERYTHING SEEMS TO STOP. The room goes quiet. Kurt is locked in. Doesn't even blink. Brenda meets his gaze, curious.

Kurt takes a step toward her on the DANCE FLOOR when:

BARTENDER (O.S)
All right y'all, line up, it's a
BARN DANCE!

Everyone scrambles, guys in one line facing girls in another. Hudnutt included. And Brenda still right in the middle of it all. Kurt retreats, back to the bar. Total fish out of water. But he keep his eye locked on Brenda. *Who is this girl??*

13 **EXT. NORTHERN IOWA STADIUM - DAY**

MID-PRACTICE. Kurt drops back in the pocket. He looks up to see the DEFENSE RUSHING HIM. And he panics. Kurt SCRAMBLES BACK.

COACH ALLEN
Stay in the pocket, Warner!

Kurt dodges to the sideline, but still makes a stellar throw. Caught 25 yards downfield. Kurt looks to the coach. Not impressed.

KURT (PRE-LAP)
You promised me. You promised if I
waited my turn I'd play.

AFTER PRACTICE, Kurt faces off with the Coach. Frustrated.

COACH ALLEN
My promise to this university is to
put the best out on the field.

KURT
If the best were on the field we'd
be winning! I can win for you, it's
what I've been doing my whole life!

COACH ALLEN
You know what your problem is,
Warner? Want me to sum it up for
you? Why you're such a tragedy? You
don't *stay in the pocket*.

KURT
What??

COACH ALLEN

You have the talent, loads of it.
But when things get hard, you bail.
You run from adversity. You don't
trust your team or my playbook.

(as Kurt tries to object)

Staying in the pocket means
standing your ground and taking the
hit, no matter how much it hurts.
That's what leaders do. And you're
not a leader.

KURT

That's not true! Give me a shot to
prove myself. Let me start one
game.

COACH ALLEN

Practice is where you prove
yourself. You don't deserve to play
in the game.

Coach walks away. Kurt chase after.

KURT

Coach, wait! Ten more games and my
dream is gone. I've been working my
whole life for this. PLEASE.

COACH ALLEN

You need to start thinking about
life after football, son.

Kurt steps in front of him, defiant.

KURT

No. I WILL NOT QUIT, sir. Just TELL
ME WHAT I NEED TO DO.

Coach studies Kurt. *This kid.* But there *IS* a fire in him.
THEN:

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EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

WHAM! Kurt gets SLAMMED hard by a MASSIVE DEFENSIVE END. He
hits the ground. Looks to the coach in confusion.

COACH ALLEN

Again!

Kurt shakes it off and lines up for a snap. Hike! Drops back
in the pocket and WHAM!!! Taken down again.

KURT

How many times we gonna do this,
Coach? Just... wanna pace myself.

COACH ALLEN

As many as I say. You take the hit.
No matter what comes at you. You
can throw, but you *cannot* leave the
pocket. You want your shot, you
take the pain.

MOMENTS LATER... WHAM!! Another BRUTAL hit.

NEXT ONE - Kurt gets off a haphazard throw, but still gets
drilled to the ground.

COACH ALLEN (CONT'D)

Who else wants to kill Kurt?

Hands go up everywhere, including HUDNUTT.

KURT

You're on offense, Mike.

MIKE HUDNUTT

I'll switch for this!

And... BAM! Kurt goes down again.

COACH ALLEN

Can you take it? Or you gonna quit?

He wills himself off the ground.

KURT

Just getting warmed up, Coach.

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EXT. HY-VEE SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - LATER

Mike and Kurt push their cart from the market, loaded up on
chips and donuts. Mike already chows down on a bag of Nachos.

Kurt limps along, sore, leaning on the cart. They pass a
STOCK BOY, hard at work unpacking a pallet. Mike nudges Kurt.

MIKE HUDNUTT

Could be worse, right?

He slaps Kurt on the back. Kurt winces. Glancing one more
time at the stock boy. As they approach Mike's truck:

KURT
Hudd, I need a favor. You're gonna
laugh.

MIKE HUDNUTT
Can't wait to hear this.

Kurt stops and turns.

KURT
Teach me to dance.

MIKE HUDNUTT
Dance?? Like... LINE dance?

KURT
No. Like that... you know, the Barn
Dance. For instance.

And sure enough, Mike LAUGHS. Loud. Milking it. Finally...

MOMENTS LATER The groceries are in the flatbed but the stereo
is BLASTING Tim McGraw. Mike leads Kurt through the Barn
Dance moves. Mike is still laughing. The stock boy watches
them, like *"What in the literal hell?"*

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INT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - NIGHT

Kurt still wears his normal jeans and t-shirt, but this time
he's sporting one of Mike's giant belt buckles. Mike GRINS.

MIKE HUDNUTT
You know how happy this makes me?

Kurt ignores him, scanning the crowd for Brenda. He steps up
to the bar, nods to the bartender, who's also the DJ.

KURT
You guys have daiquiris?

The bartender looks at him, deadpan. Kurt glances behind the
bar to a pin up CALENDAR and he does a double take. It's
Brenda. On the calendar. In a bright red shirt, jean shorts
and big boots - "Miss August".

Then he hears her voice and turns... THERE SHE IS. On the
dance floor, as always. Brenda spots him, too. As if she was
hoping.

KURT (CONT'D)
(to bartender)
Hold up, forget the drink!
(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)
Can you play one of those line
dances... No, wait, Barn Dance.
Please.

He drops a five on the bar. The bartender glances at Brenda.
He gets it.

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Alright! Barn dance, everyone!

A SONG STARTS and Brenda jumps into position. Kurt quickly
steps over, joins the line of men, facing off with the women.
He does his best to keep up, using the moves Mike taught him,
but his attention is mainly on getting to Brenda.

Kurt cheats a few times, skipping the girl he's supposed to
do-si-do with, messing up the dance a bit, until finally --

He is FACE to FACE with her. Brenda raises an eyebrow.

BRENDA
About time.

He smiles. So does she. Kurt takes her by the hand and they
dance. He struggles to do the steps properly, while she is
smooth as silk.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
You don't look like a cowboy.

KURT
Cause I'm not.

BRENDA
So what are you, then?

KURT
Football player.

BRENDA
Do you have a name?

KURT
Kurt... Warner. And you are?

She looks into his eyes. Hmm.

BRENDA
Nope. Not yet.

Kurt is getting better. It comes time for the partners to
switch but he just spins past another girl and lands back in
front of Brenda. Over the music:

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Supposed to switch.

KURT
But I haven't gotten your name yet.

He causes another traffic jam. She just smiles and keeps dancing.

LATER. AT THE BAR. Brenda drinks a dark lager. Kurt nurses a daiquiri, complete with an umbrella. Brenda eyes it, judging.

KURT (CONT'D)
What?? I like what I like.

She nods. *Okay.*

BRENDA
So... football. Tell me about that.

KURT
How do you mean? What do you want to know?

BRENDA
Well, you described yourself as a sport. Must be pretty important to you. Why?

KURT
How about this, I'll answer your question if you answer mine....
Miss August?

He motions to the calendar. She laughs and nearly spits her beer.

BRENDA
That's ah... Well... it's a "Hot Pants" competition. First Thursday of every month. First time I won so... God, this is embarrassing.
(A look. A moment. Then...)
So football. Give me an honest answer and I'll give you my name.

Kurt nods. *Deal.*

KURT
Ok, so. Football is the first thing my Dad ever taught me, before...
Before he left. It helped me through a lot of hard times...
(beat)
(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)

You know. Single mom. Always struggling, never had enough. And I wanted.... more. To make something of myself. And football was all I was ever good at. As long as I had a ball in my hand, I felt like everything was gonna be alright. I felt... alive. I guess. Kinda like right now.

(she grins)

So it's more than a game for me. It's a chance to be proven worthy.

(beat)

Honest enough for ya?

BRENDA

It's a start...

(then)

Come on, more dancing!

She grabs his hand and pulls him back to the DANCE FLOOR.

MOMENTS LATER they're LINE DANCING this time. Except Kurt is facing the wrong way. Backwards. Looking right at Brenda. He's confident now, doesn't care about the moves.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Turn around!

KURT

I like this view better.

(to everyone)

She won't tell me her name.

He's being a ham, and everyone buys in. Except Brenda, who rolls her eyes. She steps forward and turns Kurt back around to face the right way.

AND NOW IT'S MIDNIGHT. They're slow dancing. And Kurt is very happy about it. The place has mostly cleared out. The night belongs to them. A slower song begins -- '*Fishin' in the Dark*' by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Brenda perks up.

KURT (CONT'D)

Okay. This one I actually like. And I hate country music.

BRENDA

Oh yeah? Well, I hate sports, so... guess it'll never work between us.

KURT

Guess not.

Kurt pulls her even closer. Brenda rests her head on his shoulder.

BRENDA
Why do you like this song?

KURT
Cause it's different. Like you.

Brenda smiles, then lifts her head to look Kurt in the eye. It's electric. Finally...

BRENDA
I'm Brenda.

KURT
Good to meet you, Brenda.

Brenda leans closer into him. They almost kiss, THEN -- the house lights start blinking.

BRENDA
And I gotta go.

She pulls away and heads straight for the back entrance.

KURT
Wait!

17 **EXT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Kurt catches up to Brenda as she opens the door to her rusty, 1979 Buick Regal. Two car seats in the back.

KURT
Can I at least have your number?

BRENDA
Trust me. You don't want it.

KURT
Why not?

BRENDA
Look, there's a few things you need to know about me. I'm divorced... and I got two kids.

She looks up at him. Honest.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
So if I never see you again, I totally understand.

She slides behind the wheel, starts her car and drives off. Kurt stands, speechless, unsure what just hit him.

IN THE CAR - Brenda checks her REAR VIEW, sees Kurt still standing there, fading off the distance. Fights the urge to turn the car around.

18 **INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT**

Brenda enters, still in a daze. Her mom, **JENNY JO (50's)**, sits in a recliner, baby **JESSE (1)** asleep on her shoulder.

JENNY JO
So? Was 'the guy' there?

BRENDA
He was, actually.

JENNY JO
And...?

Mom leans in, really wants the scoop. But Brenda just shrugs.

BRENDA
What's the point, Mom?

19 **INT. KID'S ROOM - NIGHT**

A small room, squeezed with two twin beds and a crib. Brenda lays the baby down, then kicks off her boots, exhausted.

Brenda snuggles next to **ZACK (4)** in a bed too small for the two of them. Zack feels for her hand, pulls it right over his heart. He whispers.

ZACK
Sing the song?

BRENDA
(singing)
*There came three gypsies to my
door, Inquiring after my lady oh,
One sang high and the other sang
low, And the third sang...*

ZACK AND BRENDA
Bonnie bonnie biscay oh...

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INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - MORNING

Morning rush. Brenda gets the kids ready. She wears an old robe, no makeup, hair a mess. **BABY JESSE** CRIES at the table. Refuses to eat apple sauce.

BRENDA

Eat your food and you can get down.

Jesse unleashed more FURY. Zack rounds the corner, hand touching the wall for guidance. It's obvious he's disabled, possibly blind, but it doesn't slow him down. He holds an old radio in his hand.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Over here, baby.

Zack hands her the radio. Swaying back and forth.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Is it broken?

ZACK

Broken, Mama.

BRENDA

I can't fix it right now. I gotta feed Jesse.

WHAM. Apple sauce sprays all over Brenda's robe and hair.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Jesse! NO! No.

Jesse LAUGHS now. More sauce on the walls. THEN:

A KNOCK on the sliding glass door, covered by vertical blinds. Brenda looks up. Totally confused.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Mom? Dad? Just a minute!

She twists the blinds open to reveal... KURT. Smiling. Holding a single ROSE. Brenda's eyes go wide. *What the hell??*

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Wha... Hi. Can you just. Ah...

Then she realizes what she's wearing. She brushes her hand through her hair. Feeling the apple sauce.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Just... Give me a minute.

She CLOSES the blinds before he can say anything.

OUTSIDE, Kurt waits. He looks around. Fiddles with the rose. Starting to feel pretty stupid.

KURT
Is this a bad time? I can come back
if...
(to himself)
This was such a bad idea.

Finally the blinds twist open. Kurt smiles, but NO ONE is there. Then the door unlocks and slides open.

Kurt looks down to see... ZACK. Still holding the radio. He reaches out and touches Kurt's jeans. His version of seeing.

KURT (CONT'D)
Hi. Where did your mom go?

Zack smiles. Takes him by the big finger and pulls him into the house.

ZACK
Come on.

22

INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Zack leads Kurt down the hallway. Kurt looks to the mess at the kitchen table. Apple sauce still drips down the walls. But Brenda is nowhere to be found.

ON THE MANTLE, Kurt notices PHOTOS of Brenda in full MARINE UNIFORM.

Zack walks to the door of the bedroom, points to a radio that sits beside the bed. It PLAYS COUNTRY MUSIC softly. Zack walks over and taps the working radio.

Kurt peers in at the unmade beds, crammed next to each other. Then Zack pulls him into the...

BATHROOM. Where he sets the radio on the counter. Mashing its buttons.

ZACK
Broken.

KURT
The radio?

Zack nods. Kurt looks it over. Spots a power cable dangling nearby. He plugs the radio in. Adjusts the antenna. STATIC.

Zack smiles. Turning the dial. Finding the same COUNTRY station. Kurt cringes at his choice of music.

KURT (CONT'D)
Country, really? They got to you,
too?

Zack nods. Then lays on the floor, on his back.

ZACK
I like it.

Kurt looks toward the hallway. *Where is Brenda?* Then he shrugs and lays down beside Zack.

KURT
I'm Kurt.

ZACK
I'm Zack.
(a beat)
I wanna be a black truck driver.

KURT
A what??

Suddenly Brenda's mom steps into the doorway, interrupting.

JENNY JO
Ah... What he means is he wants to
drive a black truck. Not the...
other way around.

Kurt looks up at her from the floor. Strange moment.

KURT
(awkward)
Hi. I'm here for Brenda.

JENNY JO
I figured. Otherwise I'd be, you
know, calling the police.

KURT
(chuckles)
Right. I'm Kurt.

He starts to get up but Zack grabs his arm. Keeping him on the floor.

JENNY JO
Ok, then. I'm Jenny Jo. The mom.

IN THE HALLWAY, Brenda emerges, looking somewhat presentable, holding Jesse. She makes eye contact with her mom, like "go away!" As they switch places, Jenny Jo takes Jess. Whispers.

JENNY JO (CONT'D)
Is that "the guy"? He's cute!

Brenda shoos her away, then hovers by the bathroom door. Peeks in, listening as Kurt and Zack talk.

KURT
I'm gonna play in the NFL one day.

ZACK
What's that?

KURT
The National Football League.

ZACK
What's that?

KURT
It's a game. That I love to play.
And if you're good enough, you can
play in the NFL.

ZACK
Are you good enough?

KURT
Yeah. Just need a chance.

ZACK
I need a chance.

KURT
To what?

ZACK
Drive my truck. We could drive to
your game.

They start to get up. Brenda jolt, makes for the kitchen. Kurt emerges with Zack tugging on his hand. Brenda pretends she wasn't eavesdropping.

KURT
Fixed the radio.

BRENDA
Oh, thanks. We have one in every
room. It helps Zack--
(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)
(shakes her head, anyway)
Ok, can I just be blunt?

KURT
Why stop now?

BRENDA
How do you know where I live?

KURT
Oh. Friend from the bar.

BRENDA
And... WHY are you here?

KURT
I wanted to meet your kids. Oh
and....

He holds up the rose. She takes it. Perplexed and intrigued.
Zack still holds Kurt's hand, swaying back and forth.

ZACK
Come on, Mark.

Kurt frowns, looks to Brenda. *Mark??*

BRENDA
(shrugs)
Ex-boyfriend. Don't ask. Listen, I
can't really -- I gotta get Zack to
physical therapy... I should go.

KURT
Physical therapy?

BRENDA
Yeah he's...
(looks at him like "can't
you tell?")
He's legally blind and is... well,
on his own journey.

KURT
Oh. Didn't notice.

For some reason, that blows her away.

BRENDA
But he's gonna show the world what
he can do.

KURT
I believe it. Well... I'll let you
go.

He heads for the door. Zack holds Brenda's hand, too and Kurt gets far enough away where he has to let go. It's a moment.

23 **EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY**

Kurt steps outside. Brenda joins him. She hands him a napkin. On it --

BRENDA
My number. So maybe call first next
time. Where's your car?

KURT
Oh. I walked.

BRENDA
From UNI? That's like three miles.

KURT
Yeah. Worth it!

He smiles, holding up the napkin. Then turns and walks away. She watches him go. Mind spinning.

24 **EXT. UNI STADIUM - DAY**

WHAM! Kurt goes down in another "Kill Kurt" drill. But this time he gets off a beautiful pass before being CRUSHED. He hops up, clapping. YES!

MIKE HUDNUTT
Why you grinnin' like an idiot?

KURT
Let's do it again. Come on guys!
Again!

Other players step up. Coach Allen watches from a distance.

25 **EXT. UNI STADIUM - GAME DAY**

GAME TIME. The opposition prepares to PUNT.

ON THE SIDELINES, Kurt is in his familiar spot, keeping the bench warm. He eyes the Coach, watching him argue with the STARTING QB. Suddenly, in frustration, Coach calls out:

COACH ALLEN
Warner! Next series is yours.

The other QB huffs away. Kurt double-takes.

KURT
Me?!

COACH ALLEN
Any other Warners out here?

KURT
No. Yeah..... Great!

Kurt hops up, heads for the sideline. Coach stops him.

COACH
You'll need that.

Points to Kurt's helmet. Still on the bench. Kurt grabs it.

FIRST DOWN. Kurt takes the hike. Drops back, surveys. The pocket collapses and he gets SACKED. He gets up and looks at Coach.

SECOND DOWN. Kurt HANDS OFF. The D LINE suffocates the tailback for a loss.

THIRD DOWN. Kurt drops back, surveys coverage. NOTHING. And here they come. The pocket collapses -- AND KURT RETREATS.

He darts left towards the sideline. Looking across the field as he goes...

JUST BEFORE he runs out of bounds he leaps and throws across his body to the OTHER SIDE of the field. Fifty yards later a WIDE RECIEVER catches it for a TOUCHDOWN. A PERFECT and IMPOSSIBLE throw. The crowd goes WILD. The STARTING QB is NOT happy. But the other players gape.

Even Coach raises an eyebrow. Kurt BASKS in the moment.

KURT
What I tell you, Coach?

COACH ALLEN
Still didn't stay in the damn pocket.

KURT
Got it done, though, didn't I?

26

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Brenda sits on the couch in a rare moment of peace and quiet. She looks out the window to her father **LARRY (60s)**, a large blue collar man, mowing the grass. Zack rides on his shoulders, loving every minute of it.

The phone RINGS. Brenda pulls it over by the cord. Answers.

BRENDA

Hello?

KURT (V.O.)

Hey there. I'm starting! Next week!
It's Kurt by the way. Warner.

KURT IN HIS APARTMENT. CROSS CUT.

KURT

You get my messages?

BRENDA

Yeah. All of them.

KURT

See, I called first. Good, right?

BRENDA

Very impressed.

KURT

I wanted to tell you, we won this weekend. 27, 12. I had fourteen completions, 300 yards.

BRENDA

Wow. That's a lot of numbers.

KURT

Good numbers. So let's celebrate.
Monday night. On a... date?

BRENDA

Yeah, what are we gonna do, walk?

KURT

Is that a yes? Sounds like a yes.
Hello?

Brenda hangs up, smirking.

30 **INT. KURT AND MIKE HUDNUTT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Kurt labels a folder "Project NFL." Stuffed with research on teams, contacts, etc. Then pins a "DAYS TO THE DRAFT" calendar on the wall. Marking a day off. Eyeing the DAY OF DESTINY, months away. He calls out --

KURT

Hey Hud... I need a favor!

27 **EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Kurt pulls up to Brenda's driveway in Hudnutt's monster truck. He HONKS and waits. Brenda steps out, confused.

BRENDA

What are you doing?

KURT

Got us a ride!

BRENDA

Kurt, I can't. I have the kids.

KURT

You're gonna make this really difficult, aren't you.

28 **EXT. DRIVE-IN - DUSK**

The truck is parked backwards with the bed open towards the giant screen. Zack is in the drivers seat, pretending to drive the truck. 'The Sandlot' plays loud over the stereo.

Kurt and Brenda sit in the back. Legs dangling from the truck bed. Jesse is asleep beside them on a pile of blankets.

KURT

So, you were a Marine?

(off her look)

I saw the pictures.

She nods, a little guarded.

BRENDA

That feels like another life...
That I don't really wanna talk
about.

Kurt just nods. Silent. Comfortable.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
It's.... kinda like a country song,
you know? Starts out great, then
everything goes to hell.

KURT
Well, you know I love country
music. Come on...

He gives her a look. A nod. A challenge. She meets his gaze.
Sighs.

BRENDA
Where do I even start...
(finding her way)
When I was maybe twelve, after
church this woman walks up to me
and says, "there's something really
special about you, Brenda. God is
gonna do something great with you."
And I... had the audacity to
believe her. So I had this dream of
becoming a Marine and marrying a
Marine and having little Marine
children. God and country all the
way. So I signed up. Right outa
high school.

KURT
What'd your parents think of that?

BRENDA
We... had some discussions. I won.
Always do. Shipped off to Boot
camp, defined myself. And then....
I met Neil. Perfect Marine. We were
the perfect couple. Whirlwind
romance. Marriage. I'm 20 years old
at the time. Zack was born a year
later.

(wants to stop)
Why am I telling you this?

KURT
Because you trust me.

BRENDA
Do I?

Kurt grins.

KURT
So... was Zack born blind?

Brenda hesitates, self-conscious again. Clearly not used to opening up. And not quite sure why she's doing it now. But --

BRENDA

No... he wasn't. Neil ah... dropped him when he was four months old. We rushed to the hospital, where we were told he suffered a traumatic brain injury and would be lucky to survive the night.

(with difficulty)

It was an accident. Just one of those things. And I wasn't even there. You know how helpless that feels?

Kurt just sits silent. Listening intently. Brenda goes off into a thousand yard stare.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I remember praying and praying and begging God in that hospital to save my baby boy. And he did. Doctors said his brain was like Swiss cheese. First of all, who says that? Who tells a mother that?? They said he would never walk, and yet...

(she smiles)

That he would never talk, and now I can't get him to stop.

Kurt nods to Zack in the driver's seat.

KURT

That he would never be a black truck driver?

Brenda LAUGHS.

BRENDA

He always finds a way to prove everyone wrong. And he's the love of my life.

(gathers)

Then, from bad to worse, when I was eight months pregnant with this one, Neil decided to cheat on me. So... yeah. I have trust issues. I've been hurt. You gonna hurt me, Kurt Warner?

(they share a gaze)

Told you my life's a country song.

KURT

I'm sorry.

BRENDA

Don't be... Look what it got me.
(looks to Jesse and Zack)
Sometimes beauty comes from ashes.

KURT

So... you still believe her? That church lady?

Brenda shrugs, bittersweet. Honest.

BRENDA

I'm tryin'.

29

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Kurt parks the truck. Walks Brenda to the house. Jesse asleep in one of his arms, holding Zack's hand with the other. Brenda can't help but notice.

ON THE PORCH, Brenda's parents wait for them. Larry wears a factory uniform, all blue collar grit. Jenny Jo smiles.

JENNY JO

Well, hey there!

BRENDA

Hi. Kurt, this is my dad.

KURT

Hello, sir.

As Larry nods, Zack runs to him.

ZACK

Papa!

Brenda's older sister **KIM** pops her head out. Admiring Kurt.

KIM

Well hi there.

BRENDA

Alright, back off. That's my sister.

KIM

(to Kurt)

Don't worry, I'm married.

Kurt smirks. Brenda swats everyone away.

BRENDA
Go! All of you.

Mom takes Jesse and they go inside, leaving Brenda and Kurt alone. Kurt steps close. Brenda goes a bit quiet.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
So... I'm trying to imagine a
scenario where any of this works.

KURT
What exactly?

BRENDA
You know? Us.

KURT
(grinning)
We're an 'Us'? Great news!

Brenda rolls her eyes.

BRENDA
You're a jock. I hate jocks.
And you're in college, Kurt, and
I'm.... not. And I've got two kids
and -- This is crazy.
(gazes at him)
It's... not gonna work.

KURT
You keep saying that.

BRENDA
I just don't want... I can't... We
should just...

And suddenly she KISSES HIM. Kurt is caught off guard for a beat. Then he wraps his arms around her and kisses her back. A long, potent kiss.

Finally they pull away. Brenda catches her breath. Then:

KURT
So. Tomorrow night?

BRENDA
Yeah.

31 **EXT. STADIUM - DAY**

Packed crowd. TONS OF ENERGY. Students, cheerleaders, fans.

ON THE FIELD. Kurt steps to the LINE in slow mo. Loving it. Ball in hand. He surveys. Takes a breath. HIKE!

32 **INT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - NIGHT**

The bar is packed. Everyone's eyes on the TV, watching the game. Where Kurt is dominating. Brenda sits at the bar. Glued to the screen.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...Warner continues to break
records, with 5 touchdowns today
and over 400 yards in the air...

ON THE TV: Kurt drops back. Let's it fly. TOUCHDOWN! The bar erupts. Brenda CHEERS. OFF THIS --

33 **INT. KURT AND MIKE HUDNUTT'S APARTMENT - DAY**

...NOW THE FOOTAGE PLAYS ON KURT'S TV. As he cuts together a new DEMO REEL. He ejects the tape. Labels it. Then looks to his DRAFT calendar.

"DAY OF DESTINY" is just two months away.

INT. KURT AND MIKE HUDNUTT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kurt holds the phone to his ear. Talking to a sports agent, **RICH.** Brenda and Hudnutt listen.

KURT
(into phone)
A few agents looked at me. Towards
the end of the season. And I hit up
Pro-Day at a couple other schools.
We're... too small to have one.

Brenda leans into the phone. Her face close to his. He kisses her quick. Mike snaps his finger and points, like "FOCUS!".

RICH (O.S.)
Six two, two twenty. Didn't start
till Year 5.... Why?

KURT
 Ah... Late bloomer? But I was
 Gateway player of the year. And our
 team was first in conference.

RICH (O.S.)
 Didn't seem to help your team in
 the playoffs.
 (beat)
 Look, it's rare that a 1AA player
 gets drafted...

Kurt and Brenda hold their breath. Waiting. Now Mike leans
 in, too.

RICH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 But let's see what we can do.

KURT
 Great! Thank you. I--

RICH (O.S.)
 Gotta grab this. Look forward to
 it.

CLICK. Kurt looks to Brenda and Mike, in shock.

KURT
 I GOT AN AGENT!

He PUMPS his fist and they all SCREAM.

36 **EXT. KURT'S MOM'S HOME - CEDAR RAPIDS - DAY**

Kurt pulls up to his childhood home in Hudnutt's black truck.
 Mom greets him on the porch, excited. Quick hug.

SUE
 Draft day!

37 **INT. KURT'S MOM'S HOME - CEDAR RAPIDS - DAY**

ESPN coverage plays on TV. Mom puts out a bowl of chips.

KURT
 Good thing you have cable, or I
 wouldn't even know if I got picked.

SUE
 Feeling confident?

KURT
Feeling nervous.

LATER. Kurt paces, on the phone with his Dad.

GENE (ON PHONE)
...Heck yeah, I'm watching.
Wouldn't miss it.

KURT
Thanks, Dad. Hey, I better go, it's
about to start.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Sue opens it to find --
BRENDA AND ZACK.

Kurt jolts, surprised. Zack barrels to him. Sue watches this little disabled boy run into her house, then she nods at Brenda. A bit cold.

KURT (CONT'D)
Hey, babe.
(shifts)
Mom, this is Brenda. And Zack.

BRENDA
Surprise. Thought you might like
some extra support.

SUE
Hello, there.

BRENDA
Hi! Great to meet you. Kurt's told
me all about you.

SUE
How nice. He hasn't said much about
you.

Kurt cringes a little. Instant tension.

THEY SETTLE ON THE COUCH as the draft starts. Zack walks right up to the TV, squints with his good eye.

KURT
Sit with me, Z-man. This is where
they pick the people who get to
play football.

ZACK
Pick Kurt. Pick KURT!

BRENDA
(whispering)
Quiet down, Zack.

Kurt looks from Brenda to his mom. Sue's disapproval is obvious. And here's Kurt, literally stuck in the middle.

ON THE TV - music and graphic play. Everyone HUSHES. Zack plops into Kurt's lap. He can't see the screen, he's just excited to be part of it.

Then PAUL TAGLIABUE, COMMISSIONER OF THE NFL, begins:

TAGLIABUE (ON SCREEN)
For the first pick of the 1994
draft, the Cincinnati Bengals have
picked -- Dan Wilkinson, defensive
tackle.

ZACK
Pick KURT!!

Brenda SHUSHES him again.

KURT
Ok, it's okay. I probably won't be
called before tomorrow.

BRENDA
Tomorrow?

KURT
Yeah. There's seven rounds of
picks, spread over two days. If...
when... I'm picked it'll be the
later rounds.

BRENDA
Oh. Tomorrow is Zack's birthday.
We're having a party. At the house.
Remember?

Kurt waves it off.

KURT
Right. Yeah, that's fine. You start
the party. I'll stop by as soon as
this is over.
(grins optimistically)
We can celebrate everything
together.

38 **INT. KURT'S MOM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

LATER. Sue does dishes, watching through the window as Kurt helps Brenda load Zack into her old Buick Regal.

MOMENTS LATER, Kurt enters the kitchen. Sue glances at him.

SUE
Sure that's a good idea?

KURT
What?

SUE
Single mom, two kids, it's no joke.
I would know.
(beat)
That's the life you really want?

She hands him a plate to dry. On Kurt... hesitating.

37 **INT. KURT'S MOM'S HOME - CEDAR RAPIDS - DAY**

THE NEXT DAY, Kurt sits alone. Glued to the TV. As...

ON THE SCREEN: They announce the LAST pick of the draft. Not Kurt Warner.

ON HIS FACE, as it sets it.

39 **INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - EVENING**

Zack's birthday party. It's a small affair. Just Brenda and her parents, Kim and **JOHN** (Kim's husband), little Jesse, and a few of Zack's preschool friends.

Kurt enters, clearly late. Brenda looks to him. Wondering... Kurt shakes his head. Brenda slumps sympathetically.

KURT
Sorry I'm so late. I just had to
watch to the end.

She tries to hug him. But he shrugs it off. It stings, but Brenda pivots to Zack.

BRENDA
He's been asking about you. Didn't
want to do the cake until you're
here.

Zack runs over. Kurt perks up for him.

KURT
Happy birthday, Z-man!

ZACK
Want cake?!

KURT
Of course I do.

LATER. Everyone chats, Larry runs Zack around the house on his shoulders. Kurt sits off on his own, poking at a piece of cake. Dejected. Brenda approaches.

BRENDA
You okay?

But he's off in his own world.

KURT
Fine. Think I'm gonna head out.

And he walks out. Brenda watches him go, disappointed. Then thinks better of it and follows.

40

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She chases Kurt into the driveway.

BRENDA
Yeah? Just like that? Just gonna run off?

KURT
What do you want me to say, Brenda?

BRENDA
You know. Dreams don't always look like you think they will.

KURT
Yeah. Well looks like mine is over. So.

BRENDA
Stop it. Hey. You know the motto of the Marines?

Kurt turns.

KURT
What?

BRENDA
Semper Fidelis. It means "always faithful". It means never give up. Never quit. So if this is your dream, what do you need to do, Kurt Warner?

Kurt looks at her, surprised. But it's working, she's getting through. Brenda continues, firm.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Cause I don't think you're gonna let this stop you. Just because it's hard. That's not the man that I....
(beat)
...that I'm....into. A little.

ON KURT. Deciding.

41 **INT. BRENDA'S BUICK REGAL - DAY**

Brenda drives. Kurt's next to her, in his UNI sweats. Upbeat. Revving himself up.

KURT
It's gonna be ok. Gonna be great. GREAT. I'm a free agent now. Teams are still filling out their rosters, I could still get a call.

BRENDA
Great. So you keep working out, don't let this slow you down.

KURT
Exactly... Hey, left! Gym's over there! Turn left.

BRENDA
Can't do that.

She TURNS RIGHT.

KURT
What?

BRENDA
Car won't turn left. I'm serious. It just dies.

KURT
But the gym's that way.

BRENDA
 Listen fella, if you turn right,
 and right, and right again, you can
 get just about anywhere.
 (grinning)
 Sometimes you just gotta find
 another way.

42 **INT. CEDAR FALLS DINER - NIGHT**

Kurt tears into one of THREE CHEESEBURGERS on his plate.
 Slurps a chocolate shake. NFL Folder open before him.

He's buried in STATS of various NFL franchises. Brenda just
 smirks. Admiring him.

KURT
 What?

BRENDA
 You're cute when you're focused.

Then A VOICE interrupts:

VOICE (O.C.)
 Kurt Warner! I have been looking
 everywhere for YOU.

It's a wondrous cross between a used car salesman and a
 revival tent preacher. Kurt and Brenda spin on their stools
 to face:

JIM FOSTER
 Jim Foster. It is my absolute
 pleasure to meet you.

JIM FOSTER (late 40s) shakes Kurt's hand up and down. Then
 bows to Brenda.

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)
 And you are?

BRENDA
 Brenda.

JIM FOSTER
 Pleasure to meet you. Did you know,
Brenda, that you're datin' the best
 damn quarterback in the whole state
 of Iowa?

BRENDA
 So he tells me.

JIM FOSTER

You don't believe him? You should,
cause it's true. Can I sit?

(he does anyway)

Look. The elephant in the room. Sorry
about the draft. But you have it all,
kid. The whole package. The world
just needs more time to see it.

KURT

(to Brenda)

See, he gets it.

JIM FOSTER

Yes. I do! And what if I told you
starting tomorrow you have a job
playing the game you love?

KURT

You a scout or something?

JIM FOSTER

No... I am the proud owner and head
coach of the Iowa Barnstormers!
Newest members of the Arena
Football League.

KURT

(deflates)

Right. You're the guy who invented
that whole arena concept.

JIM FOSTER

Last year I was commissioner of the
league. This year, I came home to
Iowa to start my own team. And I
want to build it around YOU.

Foster plops down a brochure for the Barnstormers. Cheesy and
small time in every way.

BRENDA

So it's arena... football?

KURT

It's not football babe, it's more
like a circus.

JIM FOSTER

YES! That's right. You get it!
People LOVE the circus.

BRENDA

I like the circus.

KURT
I play FOOTBALL. And I'm gonna play
in the NFL. This is for guys...
circling the drain.

JIM FOSTER
Tell you what, just think about it.
(to Brenda)
Get him to think about it. Here's
my card.

Foster drops four \$20 bills on the table. Then he leaves,
giving one more thumbs up out the door. Brenda looks at the
cash on the table, gives Kurt a look.

KURT
It's all the way in Des Moines,
Brenda. And it's NOT football.

43 **INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT**

Kurt and Brenda enter. Arms full with diapers and milk.

KURT
We did it! We got the Regal to turn
left! Just gotta throw it in
neutral.

Larry, Jenny Jo and Zack sit around the dinner table.

JENNY JO
Saved you some food.

KURT
Actually just ate.... But sure.

He digs into the roast and potatoes. Doesn't notice that
everyone is staring at him, until...

Larry clears his throat. Jenny Jo smiles. They trade looks,
like there's a joke Kurt isn't in on.

LARRY
How'dya think the Bears will do
this season, son?

KURT
Well, they fired Ditka. Probably
gonna get worse before...

He stops mid-sentence, drops his fork. Looks to Larry.

KURT (CONT'D)
 Did they call? Are you kidding me?!
Did somebody from the Bears call
here?!

Larry shakes his head, acting despondent.

LARRY
 No, they didn't call. I'm sorry...

A LONG BEAT as Larry milks it for all it's worth. Finally:

LARRY (CONT'D)
 The PACKERS called. They want to
 sign you.

Kurt's eyes go WIDE. Jumps from his chair. Everyone YELLS all at once. Off this, we CUT TO:

A CONTRACT. As Kurt signs his name. We pull out to reveal we're in:

44 **INT/EXT. GMC CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY**

It's not a sports contract, he's signing the title documents for a new car. A SALESMAN hands him the keys to a brand new, GREEN '93 GMC Jimmy.

Brenda and Hudnutt are along for moral support. Kurt beams.

KURT
 \$5000 signing bonus, baby! Pretty
 great, huh? And it's green...
 (waiting for their reaction)
 For Packers. Green Bay. Get it?

BRENDA
 Yeah, no we get it.

KURT
 Packer for life, baby!

HUDNUTT
 We get it, Kurt.

KURT
 That's why it's green.

INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Kurt and Brenda lay on the couch in the dark, kissing. Kurt grins at her.

KURT

So how does it feel to make out
with a professional athlete?

BRENDA

(beat)

It was better before you said that.

Kurt laughs, kisses her again, pulls his shirt over his head.
Just then... THE FRONT DOOR OPENS. Brenda's mom steps in.

JENNY JO

I have groceries.... Why are the
lights out?

Kurt bolts up. *Shoot!* He looks around -- nowhere to go. So he
runs for the WINDOW. Brenda tries to stop him, but he climbs
out into the yard like a busted teenager, pulling his shirt
on and tripping over his shoes. Brenda calls after him.

BRENDA

Yeah, run away, football player.

Really impressive!

(then)

Hi, Mom.

45

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Kurt is packed and ready to go. Shakes hands with Larry.
Gives Jenny Jo a hug. He bends down, picks up Zack.

Zack hugs Kurt extra tight. Clearly emotional:

ZACK

Bye, bye, Kurt. Do good.

Jesse FUSSES in Brenda's arms. Brenda hands her to Mom and
they all go inside, leaving Brenda and Kurt to say goodbye.

She kisses him. Deep.

KURT

You ever feel like your whole life
has been leading to one moment?

BRENDA

Then go make the most of it.

He looks into her eyes. Sees a tinge of something, maybe
fear. Something is off.

KURT

You okay?

BRENDA
 Yeah. I'm really happy for you...
 (carefully)
 Look, I know what this means. For
 you, your life - it's gonna change.
 It'll get busier, and bigger...

KURT
 Brenda. Hey. We'll figure it out.

She nods. Steeling herself. But won't make eye contact.
 Processing.

BRENDA
 Yeah, we'll figure it out.

Finally, she looks into his eyes. One last kiss and Kurt
 climbs into his truck. Brenda watches him drive away.

46 **EXT. HIGHWAY - WISCONSIN - DAY**

Kurt's new truck speeds through lush green Wisconsin farmland.

47 **EXT. ST. NORBERT STADIUM - DAY**

Kurt step into the stadium, where dozens of players warm up.
 BRETT FAVRE sprays bullets around the field. Kurt's jaw drops.

KURT
 Wow.

He spots REGGIE WHITE getting stretched out by a trainer.

KURT (CONT'D)
 Hey! Minister of defense. This
 is... SO cool!

Reggie looks over.

REGGIE
 Hey, kid.

Kurt puts out his hand, geeking out. But Reggie is mid-
 stretch. Not really a good moment to shake.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
 Can't really.

KURT
 Oh yeah, sorry.

Kurt ends up sort of patting Reggie on the head. It's really weird. Reggie just chuckles. Kurt shakes his head, humiliated. *Such an idiot.*

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS, as Kurt is put through the wringer with the other recruits. 7 on 7 drills, warm ups, laps, etc.

Kurt lines up behind center. Takes the snap, but before he can look up, he's rushed. Panicked, he throws... an incomplete.

KURT (CONT'D)
Damn, this is really fast.

REGGIE
Welcome to the NFL.

He pats Kurt on the head the same weird way and walks off.

LATER, Kurt stands on the sideline, brow furrowed from reading the THICK PLAYBOOK.

VOICE (O.C.)
Hey Pop! Pop Warner!

It's the quarterbacks coach, **STEVE "MOOCH" MARIUCCI (30's)**. Kurt hustles over.

COACH MOOCH
You're in.

Kurt immediately starts backpedaling.

KURT
Ah, Coach... I just got here. I don't really know the playbook yet...

COACH MOOCH
You don't want to go in?

KURT
Yeah. No, I just... Don't wanna blow it out there. I'll have it all down tomorrow.

COACH MOOCH
(moving on)
Detmer! You're in.

INT. MOOCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Kurt enters Coach Mooch's office. Mooch shakes his hand.

KURT
You wanted to see me?

COACH MOOCH
Yeah. Thanks for coming, Warner.
Wish you well.

Kurt stops. Confused.

KURT
Wait. What?

COACH MOOCH
We're letting you go.

KURT
I don't understand. I just got
here. You guys didn't even see me
play.

COACH MOOCH
We saw enough.

KURT
No. I'm sorry, sir, but... I'm not
leaving. Not yet. You can't cut me.

COACH MOOCH
You cut yourself.

KURT
Coach, please, I've worked my whole
life for this--

COACH MOOCH
You know how many times I've heard
that? If it was true you'd have
been ready to go on that field.
You're not. Good luck, son.

49

EXT. STADIUM TUNNEL - DAY

AT A PAYPHONE, Kurt is mid-conversation with his agent.

KURT
I don't know, you're the agent. I
mean what about Tampa Bay, San
Diego? There were other offers.
Can't you make some calls?

RICH (O.S.)
Teams are making cuts, not looking
to add players.
(MORE)

RICH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 And definitely not players like
 you. I just don't see a path
 forward. Sorry.

As that settles....

INT. KURT'S TRUCK - DAY

Kurt drives back, numb. Passes the sign "WELCOME TO IOWA".

KURT (PRE-LAP)
 I don't know what to do.

50 **EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT**

Brenda sits with Kurt. Her hand in his.

KURT
 I've called every team in the NFL
 and no one is interested. I wanna
 keep going, I do. But... look at
 me. I'm unemployed, I'm homeless...
 (off her look)
 Oh yeah, Hudnutt's movin' to Des
 Moines.

Brenda processes this. Gets a thought.

BRENDA
 Then... move in.

KURT
 What?

BRENDA
 With us. My family.

He looks at her. *You kidding?*

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 I'm starting nursing school. Could
 use a live in nanny. We're both
 gonna be struggling, so...

KURT
 Let's struggle together?

BRENDA
 Yeah. Together.

KURT
 What's your mom gonna think?

BRENDA
It's your mom I'm worried about.
That woman hates me!

They laugh.

51 **INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

Kurt carries boxes to the basement. Followed by Larry, with a port-a-crib. Then Brenda, hefting a mini-fridge. There's a carpet on one side, with a full-sized bed. Couch and a tv.

KURT
Thank you. For taking me in. Just a temporary --

JENNY JO
You'll be sleeping on the couch, right?

Larry waves it off. But Jenny Jo is clearly uncomfortable with this. Kurt shoots Brenda a look. *Told you.*

LARRY
We're happy to have you. *Stay as long as you like.*

BRENDA
Gotta run to class. I'll be home late. Zack comes at 3. Baby's sleeping.

KURT
I got this. Go!

52 **INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Zack and Kurt sit on the couch together watching football on TV, eating mac and cheese. Both of them *loving* it.

ZACK
Football!

KURT
Yeah Z-Man, you like it?

ZACK
How come you're not playing?

KURT
I didn't get picked.

Zack nods thoughtfully. Scratches at his eyebrow. Swaying back and forth.

ZACK

I pick you.

He holds up one of his trucks. Kurt's face fills with love for this kid. He takes the truck and they start playing.

53 **EXT. LONG STRETCH OF WHEAT FIELD - SUNRISE**

Kurt runs and runs, pushing himself. The sun rising behind him.

LATER, he throws a worn football over and over. Keeping his arm up. He's not giving up.

56 **INT. HY-VEE SUPERMARKET - NIGHT**

The same market Kurt and Mike shopped at earlier on. The cashier rings Kurt up. Diapers. Cereal. Etc.

CASHIER

Twenty-seven twelve.

Kurt opens his wallet, feeling the strain.

KURT

Hey, you uh... take food stamps?

The cashier eyes him, nods reluctantly. Kurt hands over an EBT card. Then he spots a NOW HIRING sign in the window.

CASHIER

Anything else for ya?

KURT

No, that's it.

He heads for the exit. Then stops, doubles back.

KURT (CONT'D)

Actually. Ummm... can I get an application?

57 **INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT**

The basement door opens. Brenda peeks down to find:

Kurt, laid out on the carpet, Zack in his arms. Both of them stone cold asleep. Zack has built a whole racetrack up and around Kurt's body, like Gulliver's Travels.

Brenda admires them for a moment. Then gently picks up Zack to put him to bed. Kurt stirs. Takes a breath. Opens one eye.

KURT

Hey, mama. Got a job today.

BRENDA

Yeah? Where?

KURT

Stocking shelves at the Hy-Vee.
Graveyard shift.

Brenda nods thoughtfully.

BRENDA

That must have been hard.

KURT

Guess sometimes you gotta do what
you gotta do... while you're
waiting to do what you're meant to
do.

He manages a genuine smile, and her heart fills with admiration for this man. Off this:

WEARY TEACHER (PRE-LAP)

You need to re-set your
expectations.

58

INT. KINDERGARTER CLASSROOM - DAY

Kurt sits with Brenda in tiny plastic kindergarten chairs. Facing off with a **WEARY TEACHER**. Larry leans against the wall, off to the side. Brenda is already worked up.

WEARY TEACHER

Most retarded children require a
special learning environ...

BRENDA

Hey! Zack is NOT retarded. Don't
call him that.

WEARY TEACHER

He's... developmentally disabled.
In my experience, he won't be able
to keep up with his classmates,
and... frankly, you shouldn't
expect him to.

KURT

But we do. We DO expect him to.
Look. Miss... Causey. Zack likes
this school, he likes this class.
We know what he's capable of, and
we're not just gonna pull him out
the moment things get a little
hard.

WEARY TEACHER

We may not have that choice. If he
falls too far behind...

KURT

Tell you what. We'll make sure he
doesn't, how's that sound?
(firm)
You do your job, we'll do ours.

Brenda exchanges a look with her father. Larry raises an
eyebrow. *Damn.*

59

INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kurt works with Zack -- drawing letters on a Magna-Doodle.
Zack is determined. But having trouble.

Brenda peeks in. Kurt writes something on the board.

KURT

Can you read that?

Zack squints with his good eye. He can't.

ZACK

What's it say?

BRENDA

(steps closer, reading)
"I love your Mama."

She looks to Kurt, surprised. Then rolls her eyes.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Really? THIS is how you're gonna
tell me you love me?

Kurt grins boyishly. *What??* She just shakes her head and walks out. As she goes...

BRENDA (CONT'D)
And yeah, when you stood up for him
today... That was super hot.

60 **INT. HY-VEE SUPERMARKET - NIGHT**

Kurt wears a clerk's apron, stocking groceries.

A WOMAN and her SON (10) push a cart past. She spots Kurt and pauses. Whispers to her kid, who wears a UNI jersey. Obviously recognizing him. Then her surprise turns to pity.

Kurt sees. Trying to shrug it off. But it stings.

61 **INT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Kurt enters, just as THE SUN RISES. Weary, he strips off his apron. BEYOND tired.

Morning rush hour. Brenda hurries to make a bag lunch. Her mom feeds the kids.

BRENDA
Gotta go. Back tonight at seven.
Date night?

KURT
Sorry. Shift starts at 6:30.

62 **EXT. STREET - MORNING**

Kurt runs the streets. Still training. Still believing. But WORN the hell down.

63 **INT. HYVEE SUPERMARKET - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT**

Cereal aisle. Kurt unpacks boxes of WHEATIES, each one with the FACE of Dan Marino on it. He stares at Dan's face. Like *"I could be that guy"*.

From down the aisle, another clerk, **MARSHALL**, calls out.

MARSHALL
Hey, Dan Marino! Pass me some
Wheaties.

Marshall laughs at his own joke. Kurt FLINGS a box at him, then grins mischievously.

KURT

Awright. You wanna play? Game on!

He pulls out a canister of Quaker Oats, then crouches behind a pallet like he's under center.

KURT (CONT'D)

Number 13 takes the snap, pump
fakes to the weak side, looks
downfield... And lets it fly!

Marshall takes the cue, breaks long toward the seafood counter.

Mr. Quaker spins in a perfect spiral toward Marshall's outstretched hands. Except **DEREK**, the night manager, walks by and -- SMACK! The canister hits him right between the numbers, spilling wild oats everywhere. Kurt cringes.

KURT (CONT'D)

I'll get the broom.

64

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The sun hasn't yet appeared. Brenda walks out to find Kurt throwing a football against the garage roof, like when he was a kid.

She watches him a moment. Steps up beside him.

BRENDA

Wondered where you were.

Kurt stops. Eyes on the ground. He speaks quietly.

KURT

Why would God give me this dream --
then not let me have it?

Brenda doesn't answer at first. Then:

BRENDA

Maybe you should ask Him yourself.

KURT

Yeah, I don't really do that.

Brenda moves closer.

BRENDA

Hey, listen to me. I've been through a lot, fit a lifetime of pain and regrets into a short number of years. So I know quite a bit about disappointment. And here's what I've learned... Our struggles, *they shape us*. They make our stories unique. You really want to be like every other football player out there? With the same old story?

He shakes his head.

KURT

No, but I want to *have* a story.

BRENDA

Then, what did your coach say? Stay in the pocket.

Kurt takes that in. Turns to her.

KURT

I just want one shot, you know? Just to prove...

BRENDA

Prove what?

KURT

That I'm good enough.

BRENDA

Kurt... I don't think a football game will ever be able to tell you that.

He lets out a breath, wrestling with that. Still unsettled. As the sun breaks through.

65

EXT. BRENDA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Kurt mows the lawn, Zack on his shoulders. Larry steps onto the porch with sweet tea. Watches them. Then:

LARRY

Kurt, steal you for a second?

LATER, they sit together out of ear shot, braving a cold fall wind. Zack plays in the leaves nearby. Larry's got his buck knife out, whittling a toy tractor.

LARRY (CONT'D)

We bought our dream home, son.
Down in Arkansas, close to Jenny's
family. Brand new ranch house. Two
car garage. Sitting right down the
road from the White River. Man,
that's good fishin'. So... we'll be
leaving soon.

KURT

That's... great, Larry. Really
happy for you.

LARRY

We were gonna do it a few years
back. But stayed because... well,
that's what was needed. Thing of it
is--

KURT

We're gonna need a new place to
live?

LARRY

I was hoping you'd say "we."
You two are good together. Brenda's
all stability, you're all dreams.
Would be nice to see her dream
again.

(stops carving)

Look, Jenny Jo would want me to ask
this. Good Christian family, after
all. You love her?

Without hesitation.

KURT

Yes sir, I do.

LARRY

Then what's holding you back?

Kurt goes flush, but he thinks it over.

KURT

I guess... I wanted to prove myself
first. Show her I could do what I
set out to do. Be... worthy of her.

Larry nods with respect.

LARRY

Hell Kurt, accomplishing one thing or another -- that's not what'll make you worthy of her. Life's not about what you can achieve, it's about who you can become. It's a journey, not an event.

(let's that sink in)

Just promise me this... that you won't take off when things get hard. And they *will* get hard. My daughter's been through a lot already, I can't watch someone break her heart again.

KURT

Yes, sir.

Then Larry nods to Zack, still playing in the leaves.

LARRY

And take care of those kids for me.

Kurt meets Larry's gaze, feeling the pressure of that. He nods and they shake hands.

66

INT. RENTAL HOUSE - DAY

It's winter now. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS to a humble rental home. Kurt leads Brenda and the kids inside. ZACK is 6 now, JESSE is 2. Toddling around.

KURT

Okay. We are walking through the front door. Ready?

ZACK

Ready!

It's a total SLUM. Peeling paint, casement windows, and VERY warped floorboards.

Zack inhales, taking in the smell. He puts his truck down, feels the first wall. Kurt and Brenda watch as THE TRUCK ROLLS DOWN THE CROOKED FLOOR TO THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.

ZACK (CONT'D)

I like it!

67 **EXT. THE RENTAL HOUSE - NIGHT**

It's snowing. Kurt rushes in from the car to the house, carrying groceries.

68 **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

He hands Brenda a bottle of pink antibiotics. Brenda and both kids huddle under the blankets on the couch, coughing and sneezing.

KURT
How's the fever?

BRENDA
Same.

Kurt puts groceries away, stares into the half-empty fridge. He shivers.

KURT
What happened to the heat? Did we pay the bill?

BRENDA
I dunno, Kurt. You said not to put it in the mail. Remember?

KURT
Dammit.

69 **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Kurt slams a kettle on the stove. Brenda steps in behind him, wrapped in her robe, holding a fussing Jesse.

BRENDA
I decided. I'm dropping out of school. Gonna get a job.

KURT
No. No way.

BRENDA
We can't make it on one income at minimum wage. We're buying groceries with food stamps and we still don't have enough.

KURT
I'll take more shifts.

BRENDA
Kurt, it's not working. *Nothing*
here is working!

KURT
You're not going to QUIT, Brenda!

BRENDA
It's what's NECESSARY.

KURT
No, STOP IT!
(gathers)
I have to believe there is
something I can do! That I'm not...
stuck on a bench watching a game I
can't change. So we are not giving
up. Understand?

Brenda nods, stunned. She turns and goes back to the COUGHING children. Kurt stands alone, barely holding it together.

70 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Patches of ice line the shoulders. The Jimmy speeds along a two-lane highway.

71 **INT. THE JIMMY - SAME TIME**

Kurt stares out the window, stuck in his own head. Suddenly, a THUNK sounds from the engine. Kurt grips the wheel. The power steering is gone. The car slows.

BRENDA
Kurtis?

Kurt guides the Jimmy off to the shoulder. He stares at the gauges. Swears to himself.

KURT
I think we're outta gas.

MOMENTS LATER Kurt and Brenda DIG in the seats for loose change. He finds a couple quarters. Moves on to the center compartment. Digs through wrappers and trash, excavates more coins. Brenda feels under her seat. Fishes out a dime.

KURT (CONT'D)
(counting)
Grand total? One dollar and seventy
seven cents.
(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)
 I'll be right back, alright?
 Everything's gonna be fine.

Zack nods, SHIVERING.

BRENDA
 (warms her hands, nervous)
 Be fast.

72 **EXT. THE TWO LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

Kurt half-runs down the road, keeping his bare hands in his pockets, breath visible in the freezing air.

He reaches an intersection. Looks left, right -- no gas station. He glances back, worried. Then continues on.

A COUPLE MILES LATER. His walking slows, face buried in his jacket. He's exhausted, and lower than low. Finally he looks up and sees a sign in the distance.

73 **INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT**

Kurt drops all his change on the counter. The ATTENDANT barely looks up.

KURT
 A dollar seventy seven on pump
 three, please.
 (then, realizing)
 Do you have gas cans?

ATTENDANT
 Yeah, five bucks.

Kurt's face drops. He turns to the guy, desperate.

KURT
 I just need to borrow a can. I'll
 bring it back.

ATTENDANT
 Sorry man, it costs what it costs.

KURT
 Listen. My family is out there
 freezing in a car on the side of
 the road. I swear to you...
 (reading his nametag)
 Edward, I SWEAR I will come back here
 and I will pay you back. PLEASE.

The attendant looks him over, finally relents. HE NODS.

74 **EXT. THE JIMMY - NIGHT**

Kurt SPRINTS through the freezing snow, fingers numb from the gas can. But he refuses to slow. ON HIS FACE, genuine fear.

He finally arrives. Rushes to the car. The windows are iced over. Looks like a tomb in there.

KURT

Brenda?

He pulls open the door. Brenda has both kids in her arms, under her coat like a blanket. They're all SHIVERING.

75 **INT. RENTAL HOUSE - NIGHT**

Zack and Jesse are asleep in their room. Kurt shuts the door behind him, his face a mask of worry and self-loathing.

IN THE LIVING ROOM, Kurt sits next to Brenda, who's wrapped in a blanket in front of a propane TANK with a heater, GLOWING RED.

KURT

You coulda died out there.

BRENDA

It's late, Kurt. Get some sleep.

Kurt blinks back the tears.

KURT

No. I promised your dad I'd take care of you.

BRENDA

Stop.

KURT

I'm a failure, Brenda. Stick with me and you'll freeze to death. I just... try and I try and I keep letting everyone down. I don't know why I can't catch a break!

Brenda turns to face him. Her voice level.

BRENDA

Hey. Semper Fidelis. No quitting, no running away, right?

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 We'll figure it out. Together. Now
 what do you need to do?

Kurt meets her gaze. Struck.

76

EXT. COW PASTURE PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

One by one, HAY BALES are lined up in an open pasture,
 forming the outline of a football field, 1/2 the size of NFL.

Gathered in the middle are a motley crew of PLAYERS. Has-
 beens and wannabes. There's a hulking defensive lineman
 called **TINY**. An intense, jacked-up linebacker covered in
 tattoos, **ALVAREZ**.

Jim Foster stands before the ragtag team, flanked by a
 muscled ex-NFL coach, **RED BRUBAKER (50's)**.

JIM FOSTER
 Fifty yards long, eight yard end
 zones. Eight men each side. But
 this is not a football field --

TINY
 Yeah, it's a cow pasture.

The guys LAUGH.

JIM FOSTER
 This is an arena for gladiators.
 For warriors who want a second
 chance. For true lovers of the
 game.

He walks up to the WALL of hay bales.

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)
 And this is the sideline. Yes, in
 our version of the game the
 sideline is a wall. It will pound
 and punish you, trust me. And right
 on the other side, within arm's
 reach, there are hundreds of
 screaming fans. In time you'll come
 to love that fact.

Jim pauses, looks BEHIND the players. Surprised to see...

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)
 Kurt... Warner.
 (Kurt waves)
 So, has hell frozen over? Or did you
 get tired of waiting on the NFL?

KURT

Both, sir.

JIM FOSTER

(smirks back at the players)
Forget everything you think you
know about football. No punts. No
turning back. All pressure. It's
football at the speed of Nascar.

(looks to Kurt)

Think you can handle that, Warner?

ON KURT, as he takes it all in, trying not to look
intimidated. He nods.

KURT

Time to find out.

Then, from behind him, we REVEAL...

MIKE HUDNUTT

Well, well. Look who's circling the
drain.

Kurt turns to find MIKE. He smiles, gives him a BEAR HUG.

MIKE HUDNUTT (CONT'D)

If we're gonna go down, might as
well go together!

LATER, IN THE PASTURE, Red runs the team through INTENSE
drills. They SLAM and ATTACK with a fierceness Kurt has never
seen. Alvarez SCREAMS like a crazy man, OBLITERATING anyone
in his path. And loving every second of it.

ALVAREZ

That'll wake you up in the mornin'.
That will WAKE YOU UP!

Kurt's eyes go wide. He steps up. Under center. HIKE. Drops
back. Gets immediately CRUSHED by Alvarez. Kurt GROANS.

ALVAREZ (CONT'D)

Feels good, right?? Pain feels
good!!

He smacks Kurt on the back, fired up. Red calls Kurt out.

JIM FOSTER

Three step, drop! Get rid of the
ball, Warner -- you look like
you're moving in slow motion!

Kurt struggles to orient. Looks to his three man line.

MIKE HUDNUTT
It's fast. You'll get used to it.

KURT
Hey. If this is where we practice,
where the heck do we play?

A giant GRIN on Mike's face.

77

INT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM - OPENING GAME

IN THE TUNNEL, Kurt gathers with his team, ready to enter.

LOUD MUSIC and indoor FIREWORKS assault them from the arena inside. Fans SCREAM for their favorite players, like the WWE. Kurt takes a deep breath. Mike slaps his back.

MIKE HUDNUTT
We call this place the House a'
Horrors!

Kurt leans close to hear over the ruckus.

KURT
What??

MIKE HUDNUTT
HOUSE OF HORRORS!

KURT
Why??

SMASH CUT TO:

78

THE OPENING GAME

It's ABSOLUTE MADNESS:

- Players are FLIPPED into the audience. BOUNCING off the foam pads, and right back into the action.
- Fans dressed like farm animals SCREAM at the players, throwing beer.
- FIST FIGHTS break out in the middle of the play. Alvarez RAGES on the field. CRUSHING any player he sees.
- Footballs BOUNCE off nets and back into the hands of the kickoff return specialists. Kurt just stares.

KURT
God help me.

FINALLY, Kurt has possession. He lines up under center. He drops back, gets SACKED before he can even look downfield.

NEXT PLAY. Kurt tries to bail from the pocket. It collapses before he can get away. He takes a hard HIT.

ON JIM FOSTER, PROWLING THE SIDELINE behind Red.

JIM FOSTER

Hey, Red. They got a lemon law for
quarterbacks?

IN THE STANDS, Brenda watches, cringing. Kurt catches her eye. Frustrated.

79

INT. "PERKINS" BAKERY - NIGHT

Kurt limps to a booth with Brenda and Zack. He groans painfully as he sits.

BRENDA

Is it bad?

KURT

Pretty bad.

ZACK

Can I see?

Kurt lifts his shirt a bit, revealing a large bruise on his ribs. Zack puts his hand on it - his way of "seeing". Kurt recoils from the pain. Then Zack takes Kurt's hand and puts it on a big nasty scrape on his elbow. Sharing injuries.

KURT

What happened, Z-man?

BRENDA

He took a pretty nasty fall
yesterday.

ZACK

(shrugs)

I'm ok. You're ok.

It's not lost on Kurt that the 6-year-old complains less than he does.

A WAITRESS sets down a giant cinnamon roll, topped with an entire stick of melting butter. Zack licks his lips, so stoked. Kurt sighs, venting.

KURT

I just have to find the rhythm, you know? Everything moves so fast, it's just... off. It doesn't feel like...

BRENDA

Football?

He looks up at her.

KURT

Yeah. Exactly.... You know only one arena player has ever made it to the NFL... I don't know, Brend. I hope this wasn't a mistake. I mean, we'll be living in different cities and... I just -- I don't feel like I belong here.

Brenda stops. That didn't sit well.

BRENDA

Yeah? Where do you belong? Stocking shelves? You know, you might want to try a little gratitude. And maybe some humility.
(off his look)
You're not above them, Kurt. They're your teammates. If you can't win here with them, you'll never win in the NFL.

Tension. Finally Kurt nods, but his eyes are on the table.

80

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - EVENING

The sun sets. It's ICE COLD, which doesn't faze Kurt. He's still out there, working with Red. The only other player is Mike, standing in for center. Jim Foster watches.

JIM FOSTER

Three steps, drop and throw.

Kurt takes a SNAP from Mike and drops back.

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)

No, you don't have time to drop back and settle. It's faster than that. Step and THROW.

He drops back again. Throws again. Jim calls out.

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)
 You're thinking too much, Warner.
There's no time to think.

HOURS LATER. It's dark. Kurt is still out there, alone.
 Dropping back and throwing at a painted square on a BARN.

81 **INT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM - NIGHT**

MID-GAME. Kurt lines up under center. Looks around. Takes a breath.

DROPS BACK. THREE STEPS. THROW. Perfect strike. 20 yard gain.
 Kurt rushes up to center. Glances around. HIKE. Another STRIKE.

And finally... TOUCHDOWN. The crowd CHEERS. Kurt beams.

82 **INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

Kurt packs up at his locker. Jim Foster strolls in, holding a wad of cash. He stops in front of Kurt, thumbs through \$100 bills.

JIM FOSTER
 Looks like you're getting the hang
 of it. Here.

He hands him a few bills.

KURT
 What's this?

JIM FOSTER
 Touchdown bonus. Three touchdowns.
 Three hundred dollars.

KURT
 You pay me... per touchdown??

JIM FOSTER
 I also pay you to WIN. Did you even
 read your contract?

On Kurt, and his REALIZATION. SMASH TO:

83 **INT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM**

- Kurt BOMBS one to the end zone.... TOUCHDOWN.

- Dances out of the pocket. Drills another one. TOUCHDOWN. A fan offers him a beer from the front row.

KURT
Thanks! But I'm working.

- TOUCHDOWN after TOUCHDOWN. LIGHTING.... IT.... UP. Kurt is a TOUCHDOWN MACHINE. From this:

KURT (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
It was amazing, Babe! I threw SEVEN touchdowns tonight.

84 **INT. RENTAL HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Brenda cradles the phone, tending to a fussing Jesse. Having a hard time hearing.

BRENDA
(into phone)
How many?

85 **INT. KURT'S DES MOINES APARTMENT - INTERCUT**

The players' apartment is a DUMP. Like a HOSTEL for football players. There's a party going on: players, cheerleaders, locals. All CELEBRATING. And Kurt in the middle, phone pressed to his ear. Yelling over the music.

KURT
Seven. SEVEN touchdowns. It was epic!

CHEERLEADER (O.S.)
The touchdown MACHINE!

Kurt plugs his other ear, moves off to the side.

KURT
We win next week, we're going to the Semi-Finals, babe. It's happening. And hey, are you getting my salary checks? I told them to send them straight.

ON BRENDA, frustrated. As Zack tries to take the phone.

BRENDA
Yeah, I got them, thanks.....
Sounds party-ish over there.

ZACK
(leaning into the phone)
Kurt! Where are you??

KURT
Z-man, hey pal!! I miss you so much!

ZACK
(straining to hear)
What??

BRENDA
(frustrated)
He can't hear you, Kurt. Listen, I should get the kids down. Are you coming home this week? Zack's been asking.

KURT
Can't, hun. We got practice. I was thinking, what if you come on Saturday. Bring the kids.

More CHEERS behind him from a drinking game. Brenda's heard enough.

BRENDA
I have to study this weekend. Look, I'm tired. Going to bed. Love you.

KURT
Wait!

She hangs up. ON KURT, frustrated.

86

INT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM - NIGHT

"GET READY FOR THIS" blares over the loudspeaker in the PITCH BLACK venue. Then cheerleaders light SPARKLERS. PYROTECHNICS blast. Kurt is FIRST MAN, ready to lead his team out.

JIM FOSTER (O.S.)
LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE!!

And the crowd goes WILD. Foster nods to Kurt.

JIM FOSTER (CONT'D)
Told you!

KURT
What?

JIM FOSTER
You'd love the circus!

Kurt can't help but SMILE. Kurt salutes, then CHARGES out onto the field.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Kurt Warner is something to behold.
They call him Houdini - the guy
manages to escape from any
situation. And he just keeps
winning. He's breaking new records
with every game...

IN THE NOSEBLEEDS, Brenda pushes through the HECTIC CROWD, toting Jesse and Zack. She covers Jesse's ears.

LATER. END OF GAME, KURT BOMBS one to the end zone. TOUCHDOWN! He's making it look EASY. The crowd FREAKS OUT.

87

INT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM - NIGHT

AFTER THE GAME, Kurt stands surrounded by fans, other players. Brenda tries to work her way to him, kids in tow.

BRENDA
Excuse me. Excuse me.

She gets bumped by people rushing ahead of her. Then STOPPED by a security GUARD.

GUARD
You need a wristband, Ma'am. For
the meet and greet.

BRENDA
No, I'm with Kurt.

GUARD
Yeah, you and everyone else. Still
need a wristband.

BRENDA
No, we're his family...

Then she looks down and realizes. Zack is gone. She instantly PANICS. Grabs Jesse's hand and pushes backwards through people.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Zack!! ZACK!!!!
(to anyone)
Have you seen my son.
(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 He's six, he's.... He's in a green
 sweatshirt. Anyone...?!!

She scrambles, frantic. Calling his name, pushing people out of the way.

Finally she spots Zack pressed up against a trash can, rubbing his eyebrow and rocking back and forth, scared.

ZACK
 Mama??... Kurt Kurt?....

Brenda rushes to Zack. Throws her arms around him. *Thank God.* She catches her breath, then looks through the crowd to Kurt. Still signing autographs. Oblivious.

KURT (PRE-LAP)
 I had no idea you guys were here! I
 thought you had to study.

88 **EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

The kids are asleep in the car. Kurt and Brenda stand outside, mid-argument.

BRENDA
 That's what "surprise" means, Kurt.

KURT
 Then why are you upset?

BRENDA
 I'm not. I just... I couldn't get
 to you and then I lost Zack. And,
 it's like... everyone else could
 and I couldn't, and...

KURT
 Because I didn't know you were
 coming. But babe... we WON. We're
 going to the Semi-Finals.

BRENDA
 I know. It was supposed to be
 different....

From across the parking lot, Alvarez calls out.

ALVAREZ
 Warner! Party's at our place, man.
 Come on!

Brenda goes cold.

KURT

I don't have to go to that.

BRENDA

Go ahead. We have a long drive back. You were great out there.

KURT

Yeah?

But it doesn't feel that way. She gets in the car and starts the engine. No kiss. EMPTY. Kurt just watches her drive off.

89

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Kurt grabs his stuff, SLAMS the locker, angry. Alvarez passes by, stops.

ALVAREZ

I feel for you, man.

KURT

How do you mean?

ALVAREZ

Dealing with all that, while we're doing all this? Must be rough with kids.

KURT

Oh, we're not... They aren't my kids.

ALVAREZ

Really?? Man, you crazy.

He pats Kurt on the back. ON KURT, as that sinks in.

90

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brenda plops on the couch after tucking the kids in. Lonely. CLICKS on the TV. *Sunday Night Movie* night. She looks to the phone.

JENNY JO (V.O.)

How's my baby girl?

91

EXT. LARRY AND JENNY JO'S HOUSE - INTERCUT

Brenda's parents sit out on the porch of their new home, listening to the sound of the nearby river.

BRENDA

Hey Momma. Just fine. How are you?

JENNY JO

Just waitin' on my Sunday Night
Movie. Miss watching with you.

(beat)

So what does "just fine" mean?

BRENDA

You know... just... fine.

JENNY JO

And how's Kurt?

A long pause.

BRENDA

Far away. I don't know.... maybe
I'm not for him, Mom. Or maybe he's
not for me.

Just saying it brings tears. Brenda stifles a SOB. Mom hears.

JENNY JO

Hey. Don't give up on yourself,
Brenda. God still has a plan for
you, that hasn't changed.

BRENDA

(through tears)

I don't know, Mom. I messed it all
up. The Marines, my marriage...
Zack. Everything. Whatever that
plan was, I don't think it applies
anymore.

JENNY JO

Listen to me, young lady. You are
strong, and beautiful, and worthy.
And you'll find someone who will
love you the way you deserve to be
loved.

Brenda wipes tears, trying to believe she deserves any of it.

BRENDA

Is Daddy there?

JENNY JO

Yes, and he says "Listen to your
mother."

Brenda laughs despite herself.

LARRY
(into the phone)
Love you, baby girl.

BRENDA
Love you, too...

92

INT. KURT'S DES MOINES APARTMENT - DAY

Kurt lies on his bed, alone. Tosses the football in the air, lost in thought. There's a KNOCK at the door. Kurt opens it to find Brenda. He's surprised.

KURT
Hey. No kids?

BRENDA
No kids.

KURT
Oh. Want to grab some lunch?

BRENDA
Actually. Can you sit for a few minutes?

Kurt hesitates. *Okay...*

IN THE LIVING ROOM. Brenda eyes the couches, tries to find one to sit on. They're all GROSS.

KURT
Sorry. Jim got us this furniture.
They pulled it from some flooded
hotel downtown.

Kurt lays a jacket down. But Brenda pulls up a chair across from him and sits. Takes a breath, gets right to it.

BRENDA
Listen, I just want to say this,
and get it out. And I want you to
know, I'm not angry.

Kurt tightens, already defensive.

KURT
Angry about *what?*...

BRENDA
I'm not. I'm not angry. I'm...
happy for you. For everything. For
what's happening in your life.
(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

(beat)

But it isn't working for *my* life.

Kurt is trying to catch up.

KURT

Wait, hold up, Brend.

BRENDA

Let me just finish. I've been through this before, you know that. And I can't do it again. I know where it ends. So let's just... skip to that part. Save ourselves a lot of time and tears.

Kurt stares at her, can't believe what he's hearing.

KURT

I'm not your ex husband, Brenda, give me a little credit.

BRENDA

I do. But Kurt.... you have a dream to chase. And you deserve to chase it without any baggage.

KURT

Oh, so this is you looking out for me? Give me a break, Brenda, just be honest. You're afraid, that I'm gonna bail on you, that I'll hurt you...

BRENDA

I'm afraid we're going to hurt each other! I'm just trying to be *responsible*.

That word triggers something in Kurt.

KURT

"Responsible?" Right. You need someone who can provide.

BRENDA

No, that's not...

He gets up and walks from the room. When he returns he's holding a jar stuffed with \$100 bills. Hands it to her.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

What is this?

KURT
My touchdown money.

She looks at him, confused. Hurt. This has gone all wrong.

KURT (CONT'D)
I get it. You're right.
(bitter)
So let's just do this now, get it
over with.

BRENDA
Are you *paying me...* to break up?

KURT
You broke up with me.

BRENDA
It was a discussion--

KURT
I gotta get to practice.

And he leaves, SLAMMING the door behind him. OFF her look--

COMMENTATOR (O.S.)
What a performance from Kurt Warner
tonight. Five touchdowns. 432 yards
in the air.

93 **INT. BARNSTORMERS STADIUM - SEMI-FINALS - NIGHT**

THE CROWD RUSHES THE FIELD as the clock RUNS OUT.

COMMENTATOR (O.S.)
And with that the newest team in
the league, the Barnstormers, are
going to the Arena Bowl for a
chance to win it all!

Amidst the celebration and chaos, Kurt is pulled in every
direction. Reporters, fans, surrounding him. Begging for
autographs. But Kurt is utterly lost. Then his gaze settles
on a woman in the stands. It's HIS MOM.

94 **EXT. IOWA BARNSTORMERS' STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

It's late. They sit on the back of Sue's flatbed truck. Kurt
drinks a beer, spins a football in his hand.

SUE
Shouldn't you be celebrating?

KURT
(raises his beer)
What do you think this is?

Sue chuckles. They sit for a beat. Kurt feels her watching him.

KURT (CONT'D)
What?

SUE
That's not the face of someone who
just made the Finals.
(then)
Where's Brenda?

Kurt shrugs.

KURT
Broke up.

She nods, already figured that out. But she doesn't look happy about it.

SUE
Winning doesn't always feel like
winning, huh?

KURT
Never has. No matter what I do, no
matter how hard I try, no matter
what I accomplish. Why is that?

SUE
Cause it doesn't mean anything if
you don't have someone to share it
with. I hope you don't think you
failed somehow, not playing for the
NFL.

Kurt scoffs, a little bitter.

KURT
This is my purpose. That's what you
always told me, right? This ball
"defines" me.

Sue looks at him, surprised. Realizing...

SUE
Kurt. That's not what I meant. You
were always good at it, sure. You
enjoyed it.

(MORE)

SUE (CONT'D)

But there's not a ball or a game or a stadium in this world big enough to *define* you.

(turns to him)

You've grown up to be a good man. Those are not easy to find, I would know. But I'm glad Brenda found one.

KURT

Thought you didn't like her.

SUE

I just... didn't want you to struggle the way I struggled.

(with difficulty)

But MY story doesn't have to be HER story. You love her, you've stuck with her, with those kids -- and I am so proud of you for that. She makes you happy son, I've seen it. She makes you *better*.

Kurt takes a breath, fighting emotion.

KURT

So what do I do?

SUE

Go get the girl, dummy.

95 **EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

Kurt speeds along a dark interstate.

96 **INT. RENTAL HOUSE - NIGHT**

Brenda washes dishes. Hears a KNOCK. She peeks through the window, sees Kurt. Surprised. He speaks through the door.

KURT

Can we talk?

BRENDA

We already talked.

KURT

Come on, Brenda. Please.

BRENDA

I don't think it's a good idea.

KURT
 You're really not gonna let me in?
 (no answer)
 Hello?

AN HOUR LATER, Kurt sits leaning against the door.

KURT (CONT'D)
 Would you please just let me in?

BRENDA
 We made a decision. I'm sticking to it.

KURT
 But what if it was a bad decision?

BRENDA
 Is that how you feel?

KURT
 I don't know, I just...

BRENDA
 Go home, Kurt.

KURT
 I'm not leaving.

BRENDA
 Suit yourself.

ANOTHER HOUR LATER, Kurt still leans against the door. Suddenly he hears COUNTRY MUSIC playing softly from inside.

He peers through the glass and sees Zack, RADIO IN HAND. He sets the radio on the floor for Kurt. Then taps on the glass.

ZACH
 (whispers)
 I have to go to bed.

And he scurries off. Kurt smiles bittersweetly.

97

INT. RENTAL HOUSE - DAWN

Brenda is up early. She peeks out the window to see:

Kurt, asleep on the porch in an old lawn chair. She SIGHS, quietly opens the front door. Kurt springs awake.

BRENDA
 I don't want to wake anybody.

Brenda's voice isn't angry. It's compassionate.

KURT

Brenda.

BRENDA

You'll be fine without me.

KURT

But I'm better with you.

BRENDA

It's okay. Just go.

She closes the door. He sighs.

98 **INT. KURT'S DES MOINES APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Kurt watches TV. *Sunday Night Movie*. The PHONE RINGS. He checks Caller ID. Smiles.

KURT

Hey, there.

BRENDA (V.O.)

Kurt...?

Kurt's smile drops. He can tell immediately something is off.

KURT

Brenda, what's wrong?

She talks through HEAVING SOBS, barely comprehensible.

BRENDA

Kurt... oh my God...! My
parents....KURT!!!

She's WAILING now, unable to speak. Kurt leaps up.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Just get here. PLEASE get here.

99 **INT. ARKANSAS HORIZON - MORNING**

Kurt drives as fast as he can. Worried. ON THE RADIO:

RADIO NEWS (V.O.)

A F5 tornado has swept through northwest Arkansas, leaving at least nine dead and dozens missing and injured... Thousands are still without power...

100

EXT. LARRY AND JENNY JO'S HOUSE - MORNING

Kurt pulls up to what was once Brenda's parents home. It's now just a concrete SLAB, surrounded by debris.

Brenda stands in the rubble, looking lost. Kim and her husband JOHN stand nearby. All of them in shock.

KURT

Brenda!

Kurt jumps from the car and rushes to her. She COLLAPSES into his arms.

BRENDA

This was their house! This was their house!

Brenda drops to her knees on the concrete.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I was just here, Kurt. Two months ago. This can't be real...

There's a step in front of them that once led to the front door. Kurt pushes away the debris. Inscribed in the concrete: "L+J Carney", then a heart.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

That's my dad's writing.

Brenda bursts into SOBS. Kurt sits beside her.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

WHY?? Why would He take them from me?? I'm sick of losing people! Sick of being let down!! I can't do it anymore....

Kurt tries calming her, but she HITS him, letting out her anger. He swallows her into his arms. Just holds her.

KURT

I got you.

101 **EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT**

Brenda, Kurt, Kim and John sit in a small circle of lawn chairs in a motel parking lot, drinking beers in silence.

Brenda holds a cracked photo of the family. The only one they found. She speaks softly, mostly to herself.

BRENDA
They're gone. Really gone....

A long pause, as she tries to make sense of her own words.
Then --

BRENDA (CONT'D)
At least we know where they went.
I'm trying to picture them up there
now. Together. No pain. No tears...
I'll bet they're dancing.

Kim nods. Brenda's eye fill with fresh tears. But they're different tears. She smiles, bittersweet. Then closes her eyes.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
(a whisper)
Thank you, God...

CLOSE ON KURT, amazed by this. That she can find a way to be grateful, even in this moment. Finally Kurt raises his beer.

KURT
To Larry and Jenny Jo.

They all raise a bottle. Brenda's gaze lingers on Kurt for a moment. Then she stands.

BRENDA
I need to check on the kids.

KURT
No, I got it. Stay.

102 **INT. MOTEL - NIGHT**

Kurt looks in on Zack and Jesse. Watches them sleep. He pulls the blanket up further over Zack. Softly:

KURT
I've missed you, buddy.

Kurt sits on the edge of the bed and lets out a breath. His first moment alone. He rubs his temples. Then his eyes....

And suddenly TEARS. Kurt sobs as quietly as he can.

Then, from behind him, small arms wrap around his neck. It's Zack.

KURT (CONT'D)
 Sorry, Z-man. Didn't mean to wake
 you, I just...

Zack doesn't say a word. Just wipes away Kurt's tears. And hugs him. Kurt clutches him tight and just BREAKS.

FROM THE DOORWAY, Brenda watches them hold onto each other. And somehow her shattered heart is mended just a bit.

103

EXT. THE WHITE RIVER - DAY

Brenda and Kim each carry an urn. They walk with Kurt and John on a path toward the river. Suddenly, Brenda stops and pulls Kurt aside.

BRENDA
 Ok, here's the thing.
 (he nods)
 I'm gonna remember this moment for
 the rest of my life. So the way I see
 it, if you're not gonna be with me...
 I don't want you in this memory.

Kurt nods again. *Okay.*

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 I mean it. It would be stupid that
 you were here. Right?

Kurt takes her hand. Looks her right in the eye.

KURT
 It's ok, Brenda. I'm gonna be here.

AT THE RIVER BANK, Brenda and Kim stand by the water's edge. Kurt and John beside them. Brenda's urn is open.

KIM
 Um... I don't know which one is Mom
 and which one is Dad.

BRENDA
 Well, this one's heavier, it's
 probably Dad.

They both SNICKER.

KURT

Ladies.

KIM

Maybe we just... mix them together?

The boys shake there heads. Brenda addresses her urn.

BRENDA

Mom... or Dad...

Kim SNICKERS again, so does Brenda. Then the tears start.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I miss you. And I love you. And
sometimes... there are no other
words to say.

She kneels down and spreads the ashes. They float, then dissolve into the water. Then Kim steps forward and opens her urn. She pours the urn, but UP and OUT instead of down.

The WIND kicks it back in her face.

KIM

Oh no!! UGHK, it's in my nose! My
nose!

Brenda busts out LAUGHING, tears still in her eyes. Kim sneezes.

BRENDA

God bless you, Mom!

KIM

It's Dad!

The girls cannot stop LAUGHING. Kurt tries to hold out, but fails. Brenda looks back at him, and her smile says it all.
I'm glad you're here.

104

EXT. MOTEL - MORNING

Kurt loads the kids into a cab, then turns to face Brenda. He wraps her in his arms. One of those long, warm moments.

BRENDA

Thanks for taking them. I'll be
back in a few days.

KURT

Least I can do. Whenever you're
ready.... See you at home.

Kurt waves goodbye to Kim and John, then ducks into the cab.

105 **EXT. RENTAL HOUSE - NIGHT**

John and Kim pull into the driveway. Brenda climbs from the back seat, bag in hand. She looks up to see:

Kurt standing outside the house, kids beside him. Brenda smiles. Confused. *What's up?*

106 **INT. RENTAL HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Kurt opens the door. The kids lead Brenda inside, excited.

BRENDA'S POV: The ratty old house has been transformed. Rose petals line the hall. Flickering candles lead to the backyard.

Brenda looks to Kurt. The kids GIGGLE. Zack leads his Mom slowly forward. Jesse follows behind, picking up the flowers.

OUTSIDE ON THE PATIO

A vase of roses on the table. And a boom box. Kurt whispers something to Zack, who grins and presses PLAY. Immediately: *'Fishin' in the Dark' plays.*

Kurt takes Brenda's hand and they start dancing. She buries her head in his shoulder.

KURT

Babe. All my life I defined myself by what I could do on that field. What I could accomplish, how many games I could win. But... I always came up empty. It was never enough. Like I was meant for something else. Something more. And you, you've been waiting all these years, for that promise. God's big plans for you.

(looks into her eyes)

What if it's this? Us. Together?

Kurt hits a switch that LIGHTS UP the backyard fence with Christmas lights that spell out: **"WILL YOU MARRY ME?"**

Brenda GASPS. Kurt gets on one knee. Holds up a little box.

KURT (CONT'D)

Everything I want in the world is right here.

(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter if I play football, or if I don't, or what I play or where. Because.... Winning isn't winning without you.

(beat)

I love you. And I want what you have, babe. Your faith, your strength. You make me--

BRENDA

Yes. Yes.

KURT

Wait. Let me ask the question. I haven't asked --

BRENDA

Then get on with it. God!

Now Kurt stalls. Turns to the kids.

KURT

How about you guys? Will you be my family? For real? Forever.

They both NOD. Giggling. He turns back to Brenda.

KURT (CONT'D)

Brenda Carney Meoni, will you--

BRENDA

YES!

KURT

Will you please let me finish?

BRENDA

NO!

And she KISSES him.

107

INT. BARNSTORMERS STADIUM - NIGHT

Super: **ARENA BOWL.**

Kurt, mid-game. Playing hard. Having a blast. The crowd is LOVING HIM. Chanting his name. Brenda SCREAMS for him in the front row, kids by her side.

Kurt throws a scoring pass. As he runs back mid-field, a **BUSINESSMAN** calls to him from behind the wall.

BUSINESSMAN

Hey, Kurt Warner! I want to talk to you after the game!

Kurt nods at the guy. *Sure, pal.* No idea who he is. But JIM FOSTER sees him and cringes. He knows EXACTLY who the guy is.

LAST DRIVE. Kurt has a heck of a game, but they miss the win by ONE FOOT. In Kurt's disappointment...

POST GAME, Kurt greets fans, Brenda by his side. The Businessman approaches.

DAVID GILLIS

Heck of a game for you, Kurt.

KURT

Well, it didn't help us win. I hate to lose, sir. Hate it for the team.

DAVID GILLIS

I'm David Gillis. We've been trying to reach you. We want you to come try out for us.

KURT

Try out?

Gillis waits for it to register. Kurt looks to Jim Foster, confused. Jim just shrugs.

JIM FOSTER

I've been... putting off his calls for a while. Can you blame me?

KURT

(back to Gillis)
I'm sorry, WHO are you?

DAVID GILLIS

I'm with THE RAMS.

On Kurt and his SHOCK.

108

INT. ST. LOUIS RAMS WAR ROOM - DAY

MIKE MARTZ, the Rams' offensive coordinator, sits with **DICK VERMEIL**, the head coach, and **JOHN RAMSDELL**, the quarterbacks coach. Vermeil studies the depth chart.

MIKE MARTZ

I don't get it, Dick.

DICK VERMEIL
I like him. It's a hunch.

MIKE MARTZ
Arena Football? You really think
that'll translate.

DICK VERMEIL
Character translates anywhere.

COACH RAMSDELL
GM likes his price. I think our
groundskeeper will make more this
season.

MIKE MARTZ
He's old, he's slow as molasses.
Frankly, he's below the standards
of this franchise.

COACH RAMSDELL
Got a howitzer for a right arm,
though.

MIKE MARTZ
Why are we even talking about this?
There is *no way* this guy makes the
team.

109 **EXT. CEDAR FALLS CHURCH - DAY**

KURT AND BRENDA'S WEDDING RECEPTION - A humble, old fashioned
potluck. Filled with family and friends. Including **KURT'S
DAD**. Kurt and Brenda dance. He's in a tux and she looks
STUNNING in her wedding dress.

LATER, Brenda leads Jesse (now 4) to the middle of the dance
floor. Hands her the mic. She turns to Kurt.

JESSE
Daddy, may I have this dance?

The crowd responds with a collective "AWWWWW" as the band
plays "Butterfly Kisses". Kurt LIFTS Jesse up and floats with
her across the floor, eyes filled with tears.

LATER, The DJ plays the song: "Thanks to the Keeper of the
Stars." Zack holds the mic and BELTS OUT every word. Kurt
stands next to his dad, listening. Both share a beer.

DAD
You make a great family. I'm happy
you found each other.

KURT
Thanks, Dad.

DADAT
(after a be)
I'm sorry I missed out on so much.
Especially when you were younger.

KURT
Dad. It's ok. You taught me what I
needed when you were there...
and when you weren't, actually.
(hugs him)
You're here now. That's what
matters.

END OF THE NIGHT. Kurt and Brenda dance, surrounded by their
friends. Admiring each other and the kids.

BRENDA
When do you go?

KURT
First light. Camp starts Tuesday.
(holds her close)
Look, I know it's a long shot...
and I know it's my last shot. So I
just wanna say, if this doesn't
work out. That's it. I'll put it
down. And I'll be okay with it.

BRENDA
So this is your "all in"?

KURT
(tucks her hair)
Well, *this* is my all in. But yeah,
something like that.

BRENDA
Then, Kurt. Do me one favor...
(leans close and whispers)
WIN THE DAMN THING.

His eyes light up. *Hell yeah!*

110 **EXT. MACOMB, ILLINOIS - RAMS TRAINING CAMP - DAY**

NFL Training Camp - the sequel. Kurt drives up and jumps from
his truck. Like a racehorse breaking from the gate.

ON THE PRACTICE FIELD

Quarterback TRENT GREEN is the clear number one. Kurt watches from the sideline as Trent takes all the reps. And makes the HARDEST THROWS. Kurt's not the only one with a strong arm.

Mike Martz claps from the sideline.

MARTZ
Way to sling it, Trent!

Martz steps close to Kurt. Doesn't make eye contact, just starts talking.

MARTZ (CONT'D)
Packers called you up once.

KURT
Yes sir. Long time ago.

MARTZ
How long did you last?

KURT
Not long enough.

Martz nods. *Exactly*. He steps close. Looks to Kurt's playbook.

MARTZ
Don't get too comfortable, Arena boy.

With that, he walks away. Another player, **ISSAC BRUCE**, steps up.

ISAAC
Don't mind Coach Martz. His bite is worse than his bark.

Kurt LAUGHS, grateful.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Let me know if you need anything.
I'm Isaac.

KURT
Man, I know who you are.

Isaac smiles and trots off.

111 **EXT. TRAINING CAMP FIELD - DAY**

Mike Martz has turned Kurt into his personal whipping boy. Berating him at every turn.

ON THE FIELD - INTERCUTTING

Trent makes a throw.

MARTZ
Good read, Trent. Good read.

Kurt makes *the exact same throw*.

MARTZ (CONT'D)
The hell you doing, boy?! Wrong
read. WRONG DAMN READ!

Kurt shakes his head. Isaac steps close.

ISAAC
Ride it out, rook. All in the plan.

Isaac points up, then pumps his fist over his heart. A symbol of faith. Kurt registers.

112 **INT. THE FILM ROOM - DAY**

The quarterbacks and receivers watch film. IN THE FOOTAGE, Trent throws a pass slightly BEHIND Isaac, the receiver. Martz freezes the frame.

MARTZ
Now let me tell you why Trent put
that ball there. He was trying to
protect you from getting hit.

MORE VIDEO. This time Kurt makes a near identical throw, slightly behind his receiver. Martz explodes.

MARTZ (CONT'D)
Kurt! You gotta hit him in stride.

KURT
Yessir.

MARTZ
What are you grinnin' about, Arena
Boy?

KURT
I don't know sir... Just wondering
why everyone moves so slow here in
the NFL.

A couple guys CHUCKLE at this. *Damn*.

Martz takes out a \$50 bill and sticks it to a chair with a piece of chewed gum. As he walks out --

MARTZ

This is for Warner when he learns
to throw a spiral!

ON THE FIELD. Kurt lines up behind JONES, his center. Jones flubs the snap. The ball SQUIBS away. Martz blows his WHISTLE, storms onto the field. Gets inches from Kurt's face.

MARTZ (CONT'D)

What the damn hell are you
thinking?! HOW CAN YOU DROP THAT?!

The other players look around. WTF? They know Kurt never even touched the ball. Not his fault. Martz points over at Jones.

MARTZ (CONT'D)

That man's risking his life for
you, EVERY SNAP!

More looks. Is Kurt just going to take it?

MARTZ (CONT'D)

And you don't have the dignity to
HOLD ONTO THE DAMN BALL!?
(Throws the ball at Kurt)
HOLD ONTO THE BALL.

Kurt takes a breath, but keeps his mouth shut.

KURT

My mistake. Won't happen again.

FROM A DISTANCE, Coach Vermeil watches. Isaac trots up beside him.

ISAAC

Just took a bullet for his team.
(raises an eyebrow)
You know what that is, Coach?
Leadership.

Vermeil nods. Taking it all in from a distance.

113

EXT/INT. THE TRANS WORLD DOME (RAMS STADIUM) - DAY

Kurt, in civilian clothes, walks out onto the turf of the gleaming new stadium. Looks up and around.

VOICE (O.C.)

Beautiful, isn't it?

Kurt turns to face Coach Dick Vermeil.

KURT

Yes, sir.

DICK VERMEIL

Kurt. From the first time I saw you
I thought *there's something special*
about that kid. Looks like I'm
gonna get the chance to find out.

He holds out his hand. Smiles.

VERMEIL

Welcome to the Rams, son.

Kurt shakes his hand, ecstatic. Then gives him a HUGE HUG.

114 **EXT. ST. LOUIS - NEW HOME - DAY**

Kurt walks Brenda through a spacious, brand new house. It's beautiful. She can't believe it.

KURT

Nice, right? Sits on four acres.

BRENDA

Kurt. We can't afford this. I mean
what if you get traded. Or
something worse...

KURT

Don't worry, it's not gonna happen.

BRENDA

How do you know that?

KURT

I'm trusting.
(with a grin)
Staying in the pocket. Isn't that
what you've been trying to teach
me?

BRENDA

Don't even.

He hugs her. She takes in the huge empty foyer.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Seriously, though. Can we even
afford this?

KURT
Hmmm, good question. Since I'm only
making league minimum... \$250,000.

Her eyes go WIDE.

BRENDA
DOLLARS?

And she practically tackles him.

115 **INT. TRANS WORLD DOME - NIGHT**

Game on. The Rams have the ball. TITLE:

ST. LOUIS RAMS EXHIBITION SEASON - AUGUST 1999

RAMS VS. CHARGERS

Trent Green drops back to pass, delivers STRIKE AFTER STRIKE to the Rams' fleet of talented receivers.

Kurt, #13 in his Rams uniform and wearing a headset, CHEERS from the sidelines next to Coach Ramsdell, watches Trent complete yet another perfectly threaded pass.

KURT
Way to throw, Trent! Way to throw!
What is that? Eleven in a row?

COACH RAMSDELL
(smiles)
QB on fire.

UP IN THE STANDS, Brenda sits with three other Rams WIVES, all clearly younger and better dressed. They wear gobs of jewelry, full makeup and tailored jerseys with their husbands' names on the back. Brenda is a fish out of water.

OUT ON THE FIELD, Trent stands in the pocket, releases the ball just as the Chargers' safety CRASHES INTO HIM.

Trent falls to the turf, clutching his knee. All the players react. Issac throws his fist into the turf.

ON THE COACHES. Dick Vermeil blinks. Martz's face goes white. The TRAINERS rush out. Trent is writhing in pain.

Kurt steps forward. Looking at the situation... then he glances up to the Jumbotron and realizes how bad this is. THE CAMERAS ARE ALL ON HIM. From this:

MONTAGE OF NEWS FOOTAGE. THE KURT WARNER DEBATE HAS BEGUN:

- Sportscenter. Every network and halftime report. Sports radio. The entire SPORTS NATION is talking about Kurt Warner.

SPORTSCASTER

The Rams hopes for a comeback
seasons just went down with Trent
Green.

SPORTSCASTER 2

There is NO WAY they trust their
franchise to a rookie from the
Arena Football league. They're
gonna have to recruit someone new,
and fast.

And ON and ON....

118 **INT. KURT'S NEW HOUSE - THE LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Not much furniture yet. The TV blares SPORTSCENTER. Knees bouncing, Kurt watches intently, just like the draft years earlier. But this time the TV has his picture on it.

Kurt watches and listens, taking it all in.

ESPN TALKING HEAD (ON SCREEN)

If you'd asked me a week ago with a
healthy Trent Green, I've got the
Rams going 8 and 8, but... Kurt
Warner behind center - they'll be
playing for the number one pick.

OTHER SPORTSCENTER GUY

Agreed. The stock boy is never gonna
cut it. But hey, maybe he can help
them shop for a new quarterback!

They LAUGH. Kurt's jaw tightens, then his gaze shifts out the window, to a new JOHN DEERE MOWER in the yard. He looks to Zack, playing with a BLACK TRUCK.

Then he looks back to the TV and... it takes everything in him... Turns it OFF. Takes in the silence.

KURT

Hey buddy. Want to do something
fun?

Zack nods. Kurt takes one last look at the TV, then...

119 **EXT. KURT'S NEW HOUSE - DAY**

The mower travels in a big circle in the yard. Zack WHOOPS and YELLS, sitting on Kurt's lap... DRIVING!

ZACK
I... AM... DRIVING!!!

KURT
Yes, you are.

ZACK
I wanna do it myself...

KURT
No buddy, you can't.

ZACK
I'M READY! I CAN DO IT!

KURT
I don't know if that's a good idea.

ZACK
BELIEVE ME!

KURT
Momma wouldn't like that.

ZACK
She's not here!

Kurt LAUGHS. Good point. He sees the excitement and sheer confidence on Zack's face.

120 **INT. CAR - LATER**

Brenda drives up to the house. Listening to the RADIO. HUFFING. Getting more angry with EVERY SENTENCE.

RADIO (O.S.)
Warner is a joke, there's no way...
No WAY Vermeil is gonna bet on him.

BRENDA
(yells to the radio)
Shut up, Jackass! You don't know my
husband!

Then she looks up and double takes. She sees -- ZACK DRIVING THE RIDER MOWER BY HIMSELF! She jumps from the car...

121 **EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS**

BRENDA
Zack!! Honey, no!

KURT (O.S.)
He's good! He's good!

Brenda spins to find Kurt on a lounge chair, drink in hand.

KURT (CONT'D)
Sit with me.

BRENDA
Kurt! Why would you let him do that?

KURT
He said he was ready... and I believed him.

Reluctant, she sits next to Kurt. Then watches for a minute as Zack drives in circles. She smiles.

KURT (CONT'D)
Take it in, Brenda.
(beat)
That's a blind boy driving a truck.

BRENDA
Tractor. And it's not black.

KURT
Close enough.

122 **INT. MIKE MARTZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Kurt stands in Martz's office. Waiting. He glances at all the pictures, memorabilia and swag on the walls.

Finally Martz storms in. Looks Warner up and down.

MARTZ
Sit down, Kurt.

KURT
Thank you, sir. I'd prefer to stand.

Martz checks him. Interesting.

MARTZ
Go ahead, then. Tell me.

KURT
Tell you what?

MARTZ
Why a team worth eight hundred million dollars should put a stock boy in the driver's seat. Because you threw some touchdowns in a little football arena?
(Doesn't faze Kurt)
Sorry to burst your bubble, Warner, but you passed your expiration date. You're too old to be a rookie, too green to be a pro. You don't belong here.

KURT
You're wrong, sir. Just give me a chance and I'll prove it to you.

MARTZ
You're gonna make us the laughing stock of this league. You're gonna embarrass yourself, every member of this team and every fan in this city.

KURT
That's not true.

MARTZ
You do not have what it takes. That's what I believe. So why in the world should I give you this shot?

Kurt meets his gaze. Doesn't blink.

KURT
Because this is my time, sir. I know who I am and I know why I'm here. I've earned this. I've waited for it, I have bled for it, and I am ready for it. And I will not let you down. You give me the ball and I will win for you.

With that, he walks right out the door. Martz sits for a long beat. Then he nods. Smirks. Picks up the PHONE. And dials.

MARTZ
Hey coach... He's ready.

IN HIS OFFICE, on the other end, Vermeil lowers the phone...
a SMILE crosses his face.

123 **INT. RAMS PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY**

Dick Vermeil faces a room full of reporters. There's a BUZZ in the space. Questions flying at him. "What's the next move?" "Can you tell us your plan?".....

Vermeil waits for it to quiet down. He leans into the mic.

VERMEIL

As a team, as a franchise, we have
made a decision. And we stand by
our decision.

(firm)

We will rally behind Kurt Warner...
And we will play good football!

FLASHBULBS POP. The place ERUPTS with questions.

124 **EXT. TRANS WORLD ARENA - NIGHT**

The parking lot is filled with Rams fans pre-gaming.

Super: Season Opener. Rams Vs. Ravens. September 12, 1999

AN ARIAL SHOT OF THE PACKED STADIUM. It plays on a TV SCREEN
in:

125 **INT. WILD E. COYOTE BAR - SAME**

Where Hudnutt and the other arena players watch at the bar.
Warner's picture flashes on screen and they all YELL.

126 **INT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

Brenda rushes in high heels down the cavernous halls to the
restricted area. Flashes her pass to a guard.

127 **INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The Rams players file out. Kurt hangs back. He lays out his
jersey, with the name WARNER on the back. #13. Smooths his
hand over it, just like when he was a kid.

BRENDA'S VOICE (O.C.)

I do love a man in a uniform.

Kurt turns back. His face lights up.

KURT

What are you doing -- how'd you get in here?!

BRENDA

I needed you to hear this before you went out on that field. It's from our son.

She pulls a piece of paper from her purse. Flattens it.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

"To my daddy Kurt Kurt. You fix all my radios. You walk to the gas station in the snow. You never give up on me. You never give up. You play your football game. I drive my truck. Love, Zack."

Kurt wipes his eyes, overwhelmed.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

That little boy has defied all odds, every time. Proved everyone wrong. And so can you.

(proud)

You helped me believe again. That all things are possible. Now it's time to prove it to yourself.

Kurt beams. He carefully takes the paper and tucks it inside his pocket.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

You nervous?

KURT

Terrified.

She takes his face in her hands.

BRENDA

Go show the world what I've known all along.

A long and beautiful kiss.

Kurt stands tall amidst his band of brothers. They run out one-by-one as the ANNOUNCER calls their name.

Kurt takes a deep breath. He catches Isaac Bruce's eye. Who pumps his chest and points at Kurt. Finally:

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Number 13 -- KUUURT WARNER!!

As Kurt runs out onto the turf, he points two fingers to the sky. Takes in the CHEERS, the spectacle, the sold out crowd. This is it. He made it.

IN THE STANDS, Brenda joins Kurt's Mom and Matt. And on Matt's other side - Kurt's father. They're on their feet, SCREAMING and CHEERING. Sue gives Brenda a hug and Brenda points down at Kurt:

ON THE FIELD, Kurt runs to the Rams sideline, helmet in hand.

MOMENTS LATER, the National Anthem is sung. Kurt stands. Hand over his heart. And everyone CHEERS. Kurt finds BRENDA in the stands. Blows her a kiss. Vermeil walks right up to Kurt.

VERMEIL
You ready for this, son?

Kurt nods. Pumped. Then he looks across the field to the Raven's linebacker. **RAY LEWIS, #52**. He's an absolute BEAST. Staring daggers at Kurt.

RAY LEWIS
You're all mine now, rook. ALL
MINE!

Kurt swallows. OFF THIS:

THE RAVENS KICK OFF. The football spins end over end as:

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.)
Here we go! Rams versus Ravens.
Brand new season! And you know
Vermeil is taking a ton of heat for
betting the farm on a kid whose
resume is, well...

COLOR MAN (O.C.)
...non-existent?

A SERIES OF PLAYS

Kurt lines up behind center, barks out the count, then hands off to Marshall Faulk, who gains two yards off the tackle.

ON THE RAVENS DEFENSE, RAY LEWIS shouts out instructions to his teammates.

Kurt drops back for his first pass. Lewis blitzes from the left side, around a lineman and SLAMS KURT TO THE GROUND.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.)
Ray Lewis with the sack.

As Lewis climbs off Kurt:

RAY LEWIS
You don't belong here, Arena Boy!

Kurt pops up, shaking it off. Runs back into the huddle.

ISAAC
Hey, man. Look at me...
(locks in with Kurt)
Here's what I know. You were born
for this moment! You can do this! I
know you can.

Kurt nods. Pumped. Gets into position.

KURT
Z-42, slot back on two.

NEXT PLAY. Kurt drops back, has protection, fires a BULLET to Isaac for a gain of 22 yards. Another STRIKE, again to Isaac, for 13.

IN THE STANDS, Brenda CHEERS. Kurt's MOM and DAD exchange a look - so damn proud.

ON THE FIELD, Kurt threads the needle to AZ AKIM, for a first down.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.)
Warner, getting into a nice rhythm
here. 1st and goal from the 7.

Kurt pump fakes, throws a slant to Faulk that is --

INTERCEPTED BY RAY LEWIS

Kurt sprints back, attempting a tackle. He misses, but one hand grabs Lewis' jersey, slowing him down enough for more Rams to stop him. Lewis PREENS for the audience. Beats his chest. Mocks Kurt.

RAY LEWIS
Eatin' you for dinner, rook!

Kurt walks off the field. Deflated. He paces. Losing confidence.

Suddenly AN ASSIST runs over to him, holding out a phone. Kurt takes it, looking up to the PRESS BOX. **TO MARTZ.** Where he calls plays from the Eagle's Nest.

KURT

Yes, sir.

MARTZ

Warner, listen to me. You know why I was so hard on you for so long?

(beat)

I had to pressure you as much as possible. Had to know if you were ready. And guess what? You ARE. I would never have put you on that field if I didn't believe you were a champion. Now get back out there and DRIVE. GET IT DONE.

Kurt jumps back to his feet. *Let's go!*

NEXT SERIES

Kurt walks to center. Surveys. Takes a breath...

KURT

(to himself)

You got this.

IN THE STANDS.

BRENDA

You got this.

HIKE! Kurt marches his team downfield. FAST. At the SPEED of Arena Football.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

Warner looking very composed. Got the Rams back in scoring position.

COLOR MAN (O.C.)

You know he told us before the game that even though he hasn't played in the NFL, in the Arena League you have to score on every possession. He said he loved the speed of the game. And he's bringing that speed right now...

Kurt runs the play action to Faulk, then sends a beautiful HIGH ARCING PASS to the tight end ROLAND WILLIAMS, who **CATCHES IT at the back of the end zone!!**

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.)
First career TD for Kurt Warner!

IN THE STANDS, Brenda throws her arms around Sue, **FREAKING OUT!** Sue beams.

SUE
Can't argue with that!

AT THE BAR, the place **ERUPTS!** Hudnutt raises his beer.

AT HOME Zack listens, glued to a radio. Jumping up and down.

ANOTHER QUICK SERIES

KURT to Marshall Faulk for 40 yards.

KURT with a nifty shovel pass to Az Akim for 17 yards.

CLOSE ON KURT - **he seems to move in Slo Motion** as he scans the field, past the defense, then fires a bullet to --

ISAAC BRUCE, WHO CATCHES IT for their 2nd touchdown.

Kurt nods to himself, his face focused and alive. He looks to the stands again, for Brenda. WE SEE HER JUMPING AND SCREAMING, hugging everyone, unaware Kurt is watching. He grins to himself, then turns back to the game.

TV ANNOUNCER
Warner is lighting it up here in his NFL debut. With completions to seven different Rams receivers.

ANOTHER PASS, a gorgeous fade to Tony Holt for a 20 YARD TD.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Touchdown. BAM! Twenty yards! Kurt Warner put that right where only he could catch it!

COLOR MAN
Rams 27. Ravens 10. With less than three minutes left, I think that's gonna seal the deal.

FINAL PLAY. Rams have possession.

IN THE STANDS, Brenda looks at the scoreboard, then to Kurt on the field. Puts her hands to her face in disbelief. He's about to win it!

BRENDA
Oh... My... God.

ON THE FIELD, Kurt walks up to center. Isaac and the other players pat him on the head.

ISAAC

This was YOUR GAME Warner. So keep that ball!

Kurt smiles, catches the hike, then takes a KNEE to run out the clock. As the CROWD CHEERS, we cut to -

CLOSE ON KURT'S FACE, through his helmet, down on one knee, he closes his eyes....

AND EVERYTHING STOPS, ALL SOUND FADES AWAY.

And in this incredible, life changing moment, he silently prays...

KURT

Thank you.

Then Kurt opens his eyes and EVERYTHING RUSHES BACK. Crazy fans rush the field. Teammates hug and celebrate.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

This game was about one thing...
Kurt Warner and how well he stood
up to the pressure.

COLOR MAN (O.S.)

28 of 44. 309 yards. Three
touchdowns. Incredible! Absolutely
Incredible!

Players run to Kurt to congratulate him. But he has only one thing on his mind...

KURT

Brenda!
(looking for her)
BRENDA...

WITH THE GAME BALL IN HIS HANDS, he pushes past his teammates, through the CHAOS, through raving PRESS wanting to get a comment -- pausing only as Coach Vermeil pats him on the back and smiles --

COACH VERMEIL

Well done, son. Well done.

KURT

Thank you for believing in me,
Coach.

-- and Kurt continues through, fighting against the tide, searching.

IN THE STANDS, Brenda runs down toward him, calling his name, racing for the field, where...

KURT FINALLY SPOTS HER --

-- and JUMPS up to the railing. Brenda leans over and Kurt hands her the winning game ball. She's absolutely BEAMING.

He draws her in close, face to face. It's just the two of them now. He speaks over the crowd, tears in his eyes.

KURT (CONT'D)

I don't know where we go from here.

I don't know what happens next...

but THIS. We did this. We did it TOGETHER!

(kisses her)

I LOVE YOU!

Brenda smiles through her own tears.

BRENDA

I love you, too, babe. WE DID IT!

It's a moment of sheer victory. A lifetime of struggles, of pain, of dreaming -- as he pulls her in for a KISS. And from this, we.....

FADE TO BLACK.

But it's not over yet.

OVER BLACK, sound RUSHES back in. CHEERING CROWDS. COMMENTATORS, one after the other, each more energetic than the last, blending into a chorus covering a season of victories - **"THE GREATEST SHOW ON TURF."**

TV ANNOUCER 1 (O.S.)

This is perhaps one of the greatest underdog stories in the history of sports...

TV ANNOUCER 2 (O.S.)

The Rams, who were all but dismissed after the injury of Trent Green are now headed to the Super Bowl...

TV ANNOUCER 1 (O.S.)
 Kurt Warner, the lowest paid
 athlete in the league and a former
 stock boy has just been named the
 MVP of the Season!

The CHEERS build and build and BUILD....

TV ANNOUCER 2 (O.S.)
 And the Cinderella story of Kurt
 Warner all... comes down... to
 THIS...

129 **INT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

Kurt sits on the bench. Just like we met him. ANGLE ON the
 name on his jersey: WARNER. #13.

WIDEN TO REVEAL.... IT'S THE SUPER BOWL!

SUPER: SUPER BOWL XXXIV. RAMS VS. TITANS - JANUARY 30, 2000

Kurt stands. Surveys. Takes a breath. Clutches his rib cage
 in pain. Walks toward the field. Steps up to Coach.

COACH VERMEIL
 How's the ribs?

KURT
 Still broken. But we've come too
 far not to finish this.

He looks to the SCOREBOARD that shows the game tied up, 16 to
 16. Two minutes remain. A situation worthy of Dan Marino.

COACH VERMEIL
 Damn right! Couldn't ask for a
 better script. LET'S GO WIN IT
 RIGHT NOW!

Kurt walks onto the field. A man born for HIS MOMENT. Trades
 a glance with Isaac Bruce.

FINAL HUDDLE. Kurt takes the snap. Protecting his ribs as he
 steps back, looking for his window.

KURT POV - things slow down as the Titans' defense CHARGE
 DIRECTLY FOR HIM, ready to crush him.

CLOSE ON KURT - as he breathes, staying focused, waiting for
 his moment. FEET PLANTED.

IN THE STANDS, Brenda watches, just as focused. She whispers.

BRENDA
Stay in the pocket, Warner...

And he doesn't budge. Rears back to THROW. Here comes the rush. Knows he's gonna take a HIT, and LETS... IT... FLY.

AND IN THIS MOMENT, we quickly FLASH BACK TO KURT AS A KID, throwing the ball against his house...

JUST AS #90 Jevon Kearse crashes into him. AND KURT HITS THE GROUND HARD. He quickly sits up and looks. The ball SPINNING IN THE AIR. OFF THIS --

WE CUT TO ACTUAL GAME FOOTAGE.

And watch as the real Isaac Bruce catches it and runs it into the endzone. "THE RAMS WIN THE SUPERBOWL!"

WE STAY WITH THE REAL FOOTAGE NOW.

The real Kurt Warner, as he runs to the real Brenda in the stands. She leans down and he kisses her.

AFTER THE GAME. Kurt talking to reporters. Thanking God. Thanking his teammates. Thanking Brenda. His family. Raising the silver Lombardi HIGH INTO THE AIR.

An underdog. A champion.

TEXT OVER BLACK:

Kurt Warner's touchdown throw in the 1999 Super Bowl broke Joe Montana's all time post-season pass record. He was named the MVP of the game.

The Rams' 1999 season, known as "The Greatest Show on Turf", is still considered one of greatest underdog stories in the history of sports.

Kurt was inducted into the NFL hall of fame in 2017. He is widely considered to be the best undrafted NFL player of all time.

Kurt and Brenda are happily married to this day. They have seven children.

THEN... one final shot. Home footage of a high school graduation. It's Zack, receiving his diploma.

Zack graduated High School in 2012. Proving everyone wrong. Again.

AND WE END ON the real Kurt and Brenda cheering in the crowd.