

FADE IN:

EXT. SINGER RANCH - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING: an old brick one story ranch, sitting on a semi-wooded single acre lot.

Muffled domestic violence resonates from within the weathered home; The crashing of plates, and the toppling of chairs.

INT. SINGER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JASON(6), and his older brother MARK (9) sit in front of a black and white TV watching a tape of the 1986 World Series. Sitting in the cluttered room of second hand furniture, they try to ignore their ***parents yelling*** in the other room.

BURT (O.S.)

You're a weak Woman. Stupid and weak.

Mark turns his head towards the apparent commotion.

JANET (O.S.)

(Yelling)

Just Leave. Leave us alone!

BURT (O.S.)

There is no us without me. How you gonna' take care of those devils on your own?

The paternal dispute seems to be growing even more physical.

The heavily intoxicated BURT emerges from the kitchen to the living room. His wife JANET lies on the floor right behind his feet. She holds her stomach in pain.

Jason now turns his head to see Burt, peering right at him and his brother. Mark slowly grips Jason's leg.

Burt approaches them wobbly yet hastily.

BURT (CONT'D)

Letting them sit in front of that box all day.

(Loud for Janet)

Gonna' turn their minds to mush.

The boys watch as Burt reaches behind the TV set.

THE SCREEN *displaying a ground ball hit to Bill Buckner* suddenly cuts to black before we can see if he made the play.

The boys have yet to make a peep as they are in total fear of their father.

BURT (CONT'D)
Stand up ya' little maggots.

Mark and Jason are frozen. Their lack of compliance makes Burt get physical with them, forcing them to their feet.

BURT (CONT'D)
I said get up.

BACK TO JANET: lifting herself to her hands and knees. A old wooden cross necklace dangles from her neck, as she watches Burt push the boys towards the door.

BURT (CONT'D)
Generation of watchers and not do-
ers. Thanks to that god-damn TV.

EXT. SINGER RANCH - CONTINUOUS

A *large flood lamp* is switched on to reveal Burt, leading the boys over to a WOODEN SHED. The wall of the shed is riddled with small dents. He shoves Jason to the ground.

BURT
You're on deck.

Burt shoves Mark against the shed, and picks up an old weathered baseball bat.

BURT (CONT'D)
Watching never got nobody nowhere.
Batter up.

SINGER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

Janet makes it to her feet with the help of the small dinette set. She looks THROUGH THE WINDOW: as Burt reaches about 20 paces from Mark with a handful of rocks. Burt winds up and hurls one at Mark, who dodges it without swinging.

BURT
Swing God-dammit!

Jason *flinches* in fear from the THUMPING of rocks hitting the shed wall again and again.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY EMERGENCY - NIGHT

SUPER: 15 years later

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

An older MARK SINGER lies unconscious on a hospital bed. A pretty severe gash continues to bruise on the side of his temporal lobe. *PULL BACK* to see his heart rate monitor.

...BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

THROUGH A WINDOW: TWO CRYING WOMEN hold one another while looking at Mark from the hall. It is apparent that the younger of these women is pregnant (early trimester). A DOCTOR stands at their side informing them of something, but they continue to weep uncontrollably as they focus on Mark through the window.

...BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

CUT TO:

INT. OLE TOWN ROAD BAR - MORNING

A YOUNG MAN walks into an empty bar. He holds a clear plastic bag with a few belongings inside it: A cell phone, wallet, shoe laces, pack of gum, an old wooden cross necklace.

A FEMALE BARTENDER (NADINE) takes chairs off the tops of tables at the back of the room. She watches as the young man plops his bag on top of the bar and takes a seat on a stool. She walks behind the bar to serve him.

NADINE
Morning. Coffee?

The Young Man, whom doesn't appear to be in the most cheery mood looks up and notices the beautiful Nadine.

YOUNG MAN
Two shots of your favorite liquor.

NADINE
It's a bit early, I'll just stick with the coffee.

YOUNG MAN
Okay... Can I still have the two shots?

Nadine, a bit embarrassed grabs a bottle of whiskey.

NADINE

Sorry I thought you meant...

He reaches into the plastic bag to find his wallet. She notices and recognizes the bag, seeing its contents.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Rough night?

She fills two glasses as he puts his credit card on the bar. He grins as if to say "yes", then takes the first shot. She notices his *bloody knuckles* when he tosses the first one back.

NADINE (CONT'D)

What happened to the other guy?

The Young Man looks at her strangely and then notices his knuckles.

YOUNG MAN

How do you know I didn't punch a wall?

He tosses back his second shot.

NADINE

They don't arrest people for punching walls.

The Young Man looks down at the clear bag.

YOUNG MAN

Get a lot of losers in here huh?

NADINE

None this early.

He pushes forward the two empty glasses and she fills them without hesitation. She then takes his card off the bar and turns around to face the register. He takes his third shot, then reaches into the bag for his cell phone. It's dead.

YOUNG MAN

Hey, you wouldn't happen to have a charger back there, would you?

Nadine turns and sees him holding his phone. She places the card down and then takes the phone from him. She walks over to the other end of the bar and plugs it in. She then grabs the *remote* in front of her and turns on the overhead TV.

He holds his fourth shot in his hand, and looks up at the TV that is displaying a NEWS REPORT: *of a severe car crash.*

CLOSE ON SCREEN: A car is flipped off the side of the road. Another is completely mangled.

The Young Man tosses back his fourth shot in reaction to the news report. Nadine looks up at the monitor and sees the crash.

Just then a picture of Mark Singer's face pops up on the TV screen. He is wearing a New York Mets cap and Jersey.

SUBTITLES READ: Local legend Mark Singer involved in severe car crash, night before Major League debut.

The Young Man's eyes open wide. Suddenly his phone charging at the other end of the bar turns on after gaining an initial charge. It begins to buzz and ring out of control.

NADINE

Woah. Looks like someone was worried about you.

He looks to the news report just a *short beat* longer. He gets up off the stool abruptly, grabs his bag, rushes to the end of the bar to get his phone and makes for the door. Nadine is utterly confused as to what just happened.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Hey, you left your tab open!

He exits the bar hastily without looking back. She narrows her brow confused, then grabs his card off the back counter and looks down at it.

CLOSE ON NAME: **JASON SINGER**

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY EMERGENCY - DAY

Jason (the Young Man from the bar) rushes through the entrance of the emergency room, ignoring any and all hospital personnel. A SECURITY GUARD catches up to him.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir you have to check in.

Jason, still on the move--

JASON

Mark Singer. Where is Mark Singer?

From a few rooms down there's a yell--

DIANE (O.S.)

Jay!

Jason looks in the direction of his name being called out, and sees the pregnant woman (DIANE) and his mother (JANET) consoling one another just down the hall. He runs over to them as DR. DOLLAND, near by, waves off the Security Guard following Jason.

Both women are still quite shaken up.

JASON

What's going on? What happened?

JANET

Jay where have you been? We tried calling you all night.

DIANE

(Still in much distress)

He was in an accident. They say they don't know when he'll wake up.

Jason hugs both women letting them cry on each shoulder for a beat. Diane looks down, noticing that Jason's shoes are missing their laces.

Dr. Dolland stands before them.

DR. DOLLAND

Hi, you must be Jason. I'm Dr. Dolland.

JASON

What's going on? He's comatose?

DR. DOLLAND

I'm afraid so. He suffered a pretty severe concussion inducing a state of unconsciousness. How long this state lasts is entirely up to him.

The women begin to cry again, especially Diane. Janet moves to console her, as Jason and Doctor Dolland step off to the side by the window into Mark's room.

JASON

How long can he be out for?

DR. DOLLAND

Comatose states as critical as your brothers can range in the matter of months.

Jason's eyes grow large, as he was not expecting that.

DR. DOLLAND (CONT'D)
 Unfortunately Mr. Singer, it is not
 the coma that I am worried about.
 I'm aware Mark was a professional
 athlete.

CLOSE ON Jason, in total nervousness of where this is going.

JASON
 What are you sayin' Doc?

DR. DOLLAND
 In addition to the coma and several
 lacerations, your brother suffered
 a traumatic spinal injury,
 partially severing multiple
 vertebra. Now there are ways to
 repair the severed nerves to an
 extent, and I expect him to regain
 function of his legs, but-

JASON
 -He'll never be able to play ball
 again.

Doctor Dolland frowns sympathetically.

DR. DOLLAND
 Not professionally.

Jason looks *THROUGH THE WINDOW* at his brother lying
 unconscious in a bed.

DR. DOLLAND (CONT'D)
 We are very sorry. If there is
 anything that I myself, or any of
 the staff here can do for you and
 your family please let us know.

As Jason steps closer to the window his *REFLECTION IN THE
 GLASS* grows clearer, enough to see tears form in his eyes.

INT. SINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Thick RAIN DROPS THUD on the roof above as a wet Jason walks
 Diane and Janet into the house. All of whom appear
 understandably grim.

JASON
 Go get some sleep Ma'.

Janet walks toward her bedroom and turns back to Jason.

JANET

Is he going to be okay Jay?

JASON

Come on, it's Mark we're talking about.

Jason gives his mother a fake smile to help put her mind at ease. Janet tries to look hopeful and enters her bedroom.

DIANE

I should probably get some sleep too.

Diane heads down the hallway. She also stops and turns to Jason.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Ya'know Jay? There's just one thing that I can't seem to make sense of.

JASON

What's that?

DIANE

He was supposed to be on his way to the airport, but when his car crashed he was going the wrong way.

PUSH IN on Jason as this bit of information throws him. He doesn't respond.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Jay?

JASON

(Snapping out of it)
Umm, maybe he forgot something.

DIANE

Maybe. I just feel - I don't know. He was so excited to finally get called up ya'know? Mark wouldn't turn around for nothing.

JASON

Did his driver say anything?

DIANE

The crash knocked him out too.

Jason, needing a moment to himself to process this information.

JASON

I don't know Diane, but all this stress can't be good for my nephew.

Jason smiles, as Diane forces a smile and rubs her belly. She *nods* and heads to bed still quite skeptical. Jason stands frozen for a *beat* then turns to the kitchen door.

EXT. SINGER RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Jason walks out of the house and into the mid-night downpour. His hands on his head, and his eyes bulging out of their sockets. For some reason his heart has sunk to the pit of his stomach as if he has learned that the tragedy is his fault...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: DAYS EARLIER

A Kansas State Collegiate newspaper drops on a desk. TABLOID READS: *The band can't play without its Singer in 8-0 loss.*

A suited Mark stands in front of COACH WILLIE RHODES's desk.

COACH RHODES

What am I supposed to do with this? He's bailing on practices, showing up hung-over. He missed a game for crying out loud.

MARK

He's been pulling this crap his whole life. His way of sticking it to our dead father.

Mark looks at Coach Rhodes's trophy case.

COACH RHODES

Between you and me, he's the most talented player I've ever coached.

Mark looks from the case back to Rhodes with a smirk.

COACH RHODES (CONT'D)

No offense to you.

MARK

No trust me, I've made peace with my little brother being better than me a long time ago.

COACH RHODES

If it was anyone else I would have-

MARK

-Cut him.

This holds Coach Rhodes in silence.

MARK (CONT'D)

I've been trying to knock some sense into my brother for too long now. I don't know what it will take to straighten him out, but you have a team to run. So cut him.

Coach Rhodes doesn't respond verbally. He takes a *silent beat*, then he gives Mark a single saddened yet respectable pout and nod.

EXT. KANSAS STATE BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - DAY

Jason exits a building rather abruptly carrying a duffle bag. He walks into the parking lot and passes the WILDCAT BASEBALL TEAM getting on a large bus. With their bags packed for a road game, some look to him as he does them.

Jason looks away in anger. He tosses his bag on top of a nearby trash can and then walks over to his *motorcycle*. He puts on his helmet and turns the ignition over. Revving his engine, he pulls out of the parking lot.

Coach Rhodes watches as Jason rides away, most of the PLAYERS do as well. Jason doesn't look back.

INT. FRAT PARTY - NIGHT

One heck of a party is underway, as COLLEGE STUDENTS play drinking games, do keg stands, funnel beers through bongos, and dance to extremely *loud music*.

Jason stands rather drunk at a beer-pong table with a ball in his hand about to shoot. He has one cup left, as a few PARTY-GOERS stand around watching. One in particular is a CUTE BLONDE whom he locks eyes with.

JASON

(To Blond)

Blow on this for me darling?

OPPONENT

Shoot the ball already.

The blonde seductively blows on the ball while looking into Jason's eyes.

JASON
 (To opponent)
 In a rush to lose?

A few Ooos are heard around the table. Jason stands sideways and looks into the Blonde girls eyes. He holds eye contact as he shoots the ball directly into his opponents cup.

The surrounding party-goers go nuts for Jason's no look shot for the win. Jason hardly celebrates as he continues to look into the Blonde girls eyes. He winks at her, she blushes.

JUMP TO:

EXT. FRAT PARTY FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

The party is still very much alive as Jason flirts with the blonde on the porch. She laughs as he touches her arm. Just then, a sober student (NATHAN) walks up the porch stairs looking for someone.

NATHAN
 (Loud)
 Kiyra?

The blonde turns her head to Nathan, who then spots her. Without hesitation, Nathan grabs Jason's arm turning him around.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 What are you doing with my girl?

KIYRA
 (Surprised)
 Nate?

Jason, a bit intoxicated--

JASON
 (To Blond)
 This your boyfriend?

NATHAN
 Yeah I'm her boyfriend.

He pushes Jason, whom stumbles back, but only a mere step.

JASON
 Look bro I didn't know.

NATHAN
Don't call me bro, Loser.

JASON
Excuse me? You don't even know me
man.

NATHAN
Yeah I do. You're that screw-up
pitcher who bailed on the game
against Michigan last week.

Nathan steps to Jason who stands firm.

KIYRA
Take it easy Nathan.

NATHAN
Shut up Kiyra.

JASON
So you know me. Who the heck are
you?

NATHAN
I'm the med-student studying for
his boards, and not some loser who
got cut from his baseball team,
boozing his talent away and trying
to hook up with other peoples
girlfriends.

JASON
Woah Doc, we were just talking,
there is no need to-

NATHAN
-to what?
(Laughs)
You athletes are all the same. You
win some genetic lottery and can
throw a ball. Then suddenly think
you're better than everyone with
some phony sense of entitlement.

Jason is at the point where he can't keep his cool. Kiyra
grabs Nathan's arm.

KIYRA
Come on Nate, let's go inside.

Nathan is about to turn around when--

JASON

Hey Nate. How's that Carpe Diem
tattoo your girlfriend has on her
inner thigh?

Kiyra's eyes open wide. Nathan stands shocked.

NATHAN

(To Kiyra)

You messed around with him you
slut?

Nathan shoves Kiyra and turns to Jason. He winds up his fist and throws a jab right at Jason's head. Jason ducks it and socks Nathan in the ribs. The two wrestle, tossing each other into the wall of the house and the railing of the porch.

PARTY-GOER

Fight!

As Jason and Nathan continue to go at it, a *ROWDY CROWD* starts forming around them. It seems Jason is holding his own quite well as the two fall to the ground with Jason on top.

Nathan reaches up and grabs Jason's collar, ripping off his small wooden cross necklace that was hiding under his shirt. Off this, Jason pulls back his fist to drill Nathan once more when--

POLICE SIRENS SOUND!

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Jason stands in the cell with his body up against the bars. The outside phone is extended through the bars to his ear as he hears it ringing. Again only some dried up blood on his knuckles and no real bruising from the fight.

JASON

Come on pick up.

The call is answered as Jason reacts.

JASON (CONT'D)

Hey Mark. Yeah it's me. I umm. I
kinda' need your help.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MARK'S TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Mark sits in the back seat of a car, dressed once again in a suit.

MARK

What did you do this time Jay?

Mark listens and doesn't respond for a *beat*. When he does--

MARK (CONT'D)

Save it.

Mark hangs up the phone. He stares out of the window. His mind can't seem to leave his brother. He looks up at the sky.

MARK (CONT'D)

What is it gonna' take?

He shakes his head side to side, then knocks on the divider between him and the driver (OMAR). It lowers.

OMAR

Yes Mr. Singer?

MARK

(Unhappy)

I'm sorry, we're gonna' need to make a stop before the airport.

OMAR

You sure? Don't want you to miss your flight.

MARK

Yeah. Do you know how to get to the Manhattan County police station?

Omar nods and the car slows. He makes a U-turn.

MARK (CONT'D)

(To himself)

Oh little brother.

The car rides on for a short while in the other direction. Mark looks down at his phone and starts dialing a number. Suddenly a *beam of light* fills the car. Mark looks up squinting.

TIRES SCREECH!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY OPERATING ROOM - DAY (MONTAGE BEGINS)

Mark lies face down on a operating table as a team of SURGEONS and NURSES prepare for surgery.

INT. MANHATTAN COUNTY HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jason, Diane, and Janet sit for what seem like endless hours. Janet clutches her rosary beads. Diane squeezes Jason's forearm tightly.

JANET

(Mumbling to herself)

Lord, please send my boy back to me. Please.

Jason looks over to his mother as she repeats her short prayer over and over.

EXT. KANSAS STATE CAMPUS - DAY

As STUDENTS and PROFESSORS walk and socialize on the quad, Jason walks *doomed and gloomed*. A few flirtatious girls pass him and show interest. He doesn't seem to even notice.

TWO BOYS wearing Kansas State Wildcat tee-shirts snicker at him as they pass. Jason doesn't care, just walks on.

EXT. KANSAS STATE PRACTICE FIELD - CONTINUOUS

As the Division One team practices, Jason strolls along, just outside of the outfield fence looking in. COACH RHODES spots Jason, but he quickly returns attention to the players.

INT. SINGER HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON a stack of mail, sitting atop a table. RACK FOCUS to the front door opening. In enters Jason, to find the house quiet and empty.

JASON

Anyone here?

No answer as he spots the stack of mail. The top envelope bares the seal of Kansas State University. Jason walks over and grabs the letter. He tears it open and begins to read.

CLOSE ON WORDS: Athletic scholarship has been revoked.