

Turning the Tide

Screenplay
by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - DUSK

AERIAL MOVING

As a sweltering Fall night settles upon LEGION FIELD in Birmingham, Ala., fans fill the stands in anticipation of a huge college football game. It's the season opening contest between two national powerhouse programs--the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA and the UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.

Scores of revelers in RVs tailgate in the parking lot. Many fly Confederate flags. Half-drum grills put forth huge plumes of smoke. A line of car headlights extends for miles. Fans are in line to get into the venue. The stadium lights are just warming up, and excitement fills the air.

TITLE: SEPTEMBER 12, 1970, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA.

EXT. LEGION FIELD STANDS - CONTINUING

A SERIES OF ANGLES

Streams of fans, overwhelmingly outfitted in the crimson color of their Alabama football team, move up and down the aisles. Concession vendors hawk their wares. The vast majority of the Bama faithful are white as are the police officers on hand for security. Most of the vendors are black, as are the maintenance crews and janitors

ANGLE ON JANITOR

A black janitor sweeps debris into his dust pan. A white sorority girl carelessly tosses her cup on the ground in front of him. The janitor shakes his head and sweeps it up without a word.

PA ANNOUNCER (Voice Over)
Welcome football fans to Legion
Field--the home of your Alabama
Crimson Tide!

The early-arriving crowd lets out a tremendous ROAR. Various shouts of ROLL TIDE! are heard throughout the stands. The Alabama Million Dollar Band THUMPS.

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(continuing)
Tonight your University of Alabama
Crimson Tide welcomes the Trojans
of the University of Southern
California.

The crowd BOOS loudly.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

A SERIES OF ANGLES

As the boos die down, we see the football teams involved in pre-game warm-ups. Various drills take place all over the brand new turf. There are WHISTLES BLOWING, coaches SHOUTING, players GRUNTING, an AUDIBLE BUZZ in the stands.

ANGLE ON QUARTERBACK DRILL

USC starting QB JIMMY JONES(#8), badly under throws his receiver. He is upset with himself. Jones is a handsome black player. His 6'1" frame supports a sinewy build with a dexterity reserved only for the very best athletes. Currently he is battling some nerves.

Assistant CRAIG FERTIG, a young enthusiastic coach who played QB for the Trojans just a few years earlier, has seen this kind of thing before. He motions for backup QB MIKE RAE to pick up the drill. Fertig pulls Jimmy aside.

COACH FERTIG
(concerned)
Jimmy, what's the matter with you son? You're short on every throw. You gotta relax. Come on.

JIMMY
OK, coach.

COACH FERTIG
Alright then son. Get back in there and let me see you fire it.

Coach Fertig slaps Jimmy on the butt. Jimmy hustles back up to the line of scrimmage where a ball boy tosses him a football. He barks out the signals, takes a five-step drop and throws a perfect strike to his receiver on an out route. The receiver catches it, stops quickly and turns up field.

EXT. KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY

WIDE ESTABLISHING

The Kappa house is a large 1920's craftsman typical of old Los Angeles. The letters KAY hang slightly crookedly above the door. The yard is mostly unkept. The wood siding could use some paint.

The Kappas are having a party to celebrate the opening of the football season and to listen to the game. The VOICES of the radio announcers doing pre-game can be heard from the giant speakers in the backyard.

EXT. KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY BACKYARD - CONTINUING

The backyard contains some ratty lawn furniture, a BBQ, a table filled with picnic items and various plates of food. A large gathering of black college-aged men and women are mingling, eating, drinking.

ANGLE ON KAPPA MEMBER-MOVING

The young man is wildly sprinting an out route at full speed. He is not an athlete of the caliber of the players we've just been watching. As he makes his cut, a football comes at him at high speed and nails him in the chest. The ball bounces off of his body, and he can't stop his momentum, running into a group of fellow members pouring beer from the keg. Beer goes flying in the air. The men fall to the ground in a heap.

WIDER

Partygoers are doubled over in laughter watching this scene unfold. A group of girls at one corner of the yard watch with amusement; all except DEE DEE WALKER, who appears distraught and is not paying attention.

Dee Dee is a very attractive black student. She has beautifully soft features and flawless skin. She wears the No. 8 jersey of her boyfriend, QB Jimmy Jones. Normally Dee Dee is light-hearted and fun, but not today. She stares absently off into the distance. Her girlfriend pushes Dee Dee playfully.

ANGLE ON GIRLS

GIRL ONE
(laughing)
Dee Dee, I sure hope Jimmy's guys
catch better than that tonight.
Otherwise he's in big trouble.

DEE DEE
I'd be happy if that's the only
trouble he has.

GIRL ONE
Girl you need to lighten up. Those
boys are going to be just fine.

Dee Dee is not so sure.

ANGLE ON PILE OF FRATERNITY GUYS

They hassle each other as they get to their feet.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - DUSK

Pre-game drills continue. More people are in the stands.

ANGLE ON USC DEFENSIVE LINE DRILL

Giant linemen push up off the ground and off of each other roughly. Things are heating up as kickoff approaches. TODY SMITH(#73), is a massive black defensive tackle. He uses his 6'5", 250-pound body to push away one of his teammates roughly but playfully. He lets out a big loud LAUGH that's really more of a YELL.

Tody is loose. Tody is always loose, even if sometimes it's to cover his concerns or insecurities. Assistant coach MARV GOUX runs this drill. Goux is as fiery a coach as there is in college football. His job is to be tough and make sure that his players are tough. He is the heart of Trojan football.

COACH GOUX
(yelling but pleased)
Tody you better save some energy
for game time! Or those Tide boys
might run right over your butt!

TODY
 Don't you worry coach; the
 Wrecking Crew is gonna take care
 of business tonight! There ain't
 no one in Alabama can stop *me*!

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT-MOVING

Alabama Head Coach PAUL "BEAR" BRYANT walks from his usual spot against his goalpost toward midfield. He is in his late 50s with deep tan lines and a face that always wears a serious look. Coach Bryant is worshipped in this part of the country. The Alabama crowd CHEERS WILDLY for their hero.

USC Head Coach JOHN MCKAY stands at midfield. McKay is a small man who carries himself with the air of a battlefield general. McKay is younger than Bryant, but his full head of white hair makes him look older.

The two legends, both dressed in coats and ties, shake hands. It is apparent that the men are good friends.

COACH BRYANT
 Your boys sure look good John.

COACH MCKAY
 They seem a little wound up to me
 Paul. But I figure they're as
 ready as they're going to be.

COACH BRYANT
 Well y'all had to travel a long
 way to get here. We'll see what we
 can do to show y'all some southern
 hospitality.

Coach McKay squints knowingly at Coach Bryant.

COACH MCKAY
 I'm sure you will, coach. I'm sure
 you will.

The two coaches laugh and slap each other on the shoulder.

INT. DAVIS FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The extended family and friends of USC starting tailback Clarence Davis is gathered to listen to the big game in their modest home in a typically poor black Birmingham neighborhood. There's a big picture of Clarence in his No. 28 USC football uniform on the table. A small transistor radio CRACKLES with the sound of the Legion Field CHEERS.

Black women, including Clarence's AUNT LOUISE, are serving heaping plates of barbecue. Louise wears an apron over a dress that has seen better days. She is in her mid-30s with a pleasant if overburdened face. Small children run around the room making all kinds of racket.

Black men, including Clarence's UNCLE LENNY, sit on couches in work shirts. Lenny is a strong looking man in his 30s.

He wears the angry look of someone struggling to make ends meet without being given a fair chance to do so. Despite his scowl, Lenny is harmless.

ANGLE ON MEN

UNCLE LENNY
 (agitated, to Louise)
 You better settle those kids down
 before kickoff now. It ain't every
 day Clarence gonna play football
 on Legion Field. And I intend to
 be able to hear it.
 (to kids)
 I mean it. You kids go outside
 now. I ain't gonna have you makin'
 all kinds of racket 'round here.

ANGLE ON KIDS

They stop in their tracks. They're used to taking orders from their dad. They look to their mom for help.

AUNT LOUISE
 (to kids)
 Go on. Get outta here like your
 daddy told you.

The kids scurry out the front door. Clarence's aunt shoots a disapproving look toward her husband.

AUNT LOUISE
 (continuing; to
 husband)
 And you better settle down or
 you'll have a heart attack before
 half time.

EXT. LEGION FIELD STANDS - DUSK

ANGLE ON GROUP OF ALABAMA SUPPORTERS HIGH UP IN THE STANDS

We are focused on four very large, youngish men wearing no shirts. Each man has a letter painted on his chest in Crimson Red that put together spell T-I-D-E. Their faces are also painted in Alabama colors. They are on their feet absolutely SCREAMING at the top of their lungs.

ALABAMA "E" FAN
 (to his friends)
 The Bear's gonna get him some dark
 meat tonight!

The men rough house each other and continue pounding beer.

EXT. BIG MAMA'S HOUSE - DUSK

WIDE ESTABLISHING

It's a tattered old bar set in a downtrodden part of Birmingham--the black section. It's near the stadium. A broken neon sign flickers that reads BIG MAMA'S HOUSE. But the only letters that still glow with neon spell BAMA.

INT. BIG MAMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUING

VARIOUS ANGLES

BIG MAMA is the large black woman who owns the joint and works there serving beer and whiskey. The football pre-game show PLAYS on the RADIO in the background. The bar is filling up quickly with black folks of every shape and size.

Three old black men sit at the bar, SHORTY, ROY and ERNIE. They dress as if they still live in the 1940s. The men clearly know each other and likely meet here every evening.

ANGLE ON MEN

SHORTY

Y'all know that the Southern
California backfield is all black?
Can you believe that?

Ernie and Roy exchange exasperated looks.

ERNIE

For Pete's sake shorty. Everybody
know that. Why you think all these
black folks in here tonight?

ROY

It sure ain't for the atmosphere.

The men laugh loudly at this joke. Big Mama overhears the comment and begins stomping angrily toward Roy.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - DUSK

Pre-game drills continue. The stands are just about full now--more than 72,000 strong. The Alabama Million Dollar Band is revving up the crowd even more with the SCHOOL FIGHT SONG.

ANGLE ON FULL OFFENSE VS. FULL DEFENSE DRILL

USC quarterback Jimmy Jones and USC fullback SAM "BAM" CUNNINGHAM(#39), wait their turn to work into the drill. Sam is a young player and a bit shy. Although he's only 19, his 6'3" body is fully developed and very muscular.

Both men are breathing heavily and soaked with sweat. Sam is nervous about playing in his first college football game. Jimmy scans the expectedly white crowd.

JIMMY

(jokingly)

Geez Sam. There sure ain't a whole
lotta brothers here tonight. We
must be missin' some serious
barbecue somewhere.

SAM

(nervous)

Yeah man. This sure ain't L.A.

JIMMY
We'll be alright. Just keep
focused, play hard and mind your
business.

Sam gestures toward the overflowing stands.

SAM
I just hope all those white folks
up *there* mind their business.

JIMMY
Don't worry about that. You just
worry about remembering the plays
and knocking heads.

The offensive and defensive huddles break. Both men line up to re-join the action. USC starting middle linebacker JOHN PAPADAKIS(#67), is defending. He is undersized for a middle linebacker. His posture is very erect and he puffs out his chest. Papadakis surveys the offense and calls out defensive signals, moves players around.

ANGLE ON PAPADAKIS

PAPADAKIS
Strong right! Strong right! Watch
the X man!

Jimmy takes the ball from the center. Sam leads through the hole and starting tailback CLARENCE DAVIS takes the handoff. There's a tremendous COLLISION between Sam and Papadakis.

EXT. LEGION FIELD STANDS - CONTINUING

A group of Alabama supporters make their way to the front row of seats very near the drill. Wives and kids, including an upset little boy of about eight who carries a giant balloon, squeeze down the aisle. Two men in matching "Crimson Tide" shirts watch the action as they sit down, trying to pay attention while organizing the seating arrangements.

ANGLE ON MEN

FIRST MAN
Those big niggers are hittin' hard
man. I tell you what.

SECOND MAN
(to his boy)
Bobby, if you don't get that
balloon outta my face I'm gonna
cut it loose ya hear?!

The boy WHINES and his mother moves the balloon out of the way. The boy would do it but his hands are sticky with cotton candy, which he is wiping all over his white Bama t-shirt.

SECOND MAN
(continuing; to first)
You just wait til those niggers
get a taste of our boys' hittin'.

Just then the little boy's balloon POPS with a tremendous CRACK! The family is startled.

On the field the Trojans walk up to the line of scrimmage. At the sound of the POP, all of the USC players--especially the black players--duck as if they fear a gunshot.

ANGLE ON JIMMY JONES

In a quick moment, Jimmy and Sam exchange nervous looks.

JIMMY

Damn...

Sam acknowledges Jimmy's concern. He's in a slight crouch position and nervously scans the crowd for signs of trouble. He looks high up into the stands and is blinded by the giant stadium lights and squints.

ANGLE ON FAMILY IN THE STANDS

The little boy begins to WAIL loudly.

POV SAM

It's impossible to see anything but the bright white glow. The boy's WAIL continues in the b.g.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

ANGLE TIGHT ON TRAIN WHISTLE

The boy's wail dissolves into the loud DRONE of a locomotive's WHISTLE piercing the air of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

ANGLE ON YOUNG BOY-MOVING

TITLE: January 1967

A black boy about 15 years old jumps off of the porch of his rundown house, which is set hard against the tracks. His clothes are worn and too small for his already muscular teenage physique. He wears a tattered jersey with the No. 21.

As the locomotive slowly approaches, the boy starts running at full speed. He's trying to outrun the train. As the train pulls even, he's keeping pace quite well.

A SERIES OF ANGLES

The boy's determined face. His rapidly moving feet as they kick up dust. The locomotive wheels spinning.

INT. LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON ENGINEER AND ASSISTANT

The white ENGINEER and his ASSISTANT are leaning out the window SHOUTING for the boy to run faster. The boy looks up from b.g. Both men wear engineer's overalls and caps.

TIGHT ON BOY'S FACE

The muscles of his jaw tighten with determination as he digs a little harder. It becomes astonishing how fast the kid is.

ANGLE ON ENGINEER AND ASSISTANT

In b.g., the boy begins to pull away from the train, which is slowing down as it approaches a road intersection. We can see billboards alongside the tracks advertising Paul "Bear" Bryant Volkswagen.

ENGINEER ASSISTANT

The boy can flat out move can't he?

ENGINEER

Shoot, it makes me tired just looking at him. He's out here every damn time we pass by.

The assistant gestures toward the boy.

ENGINEER ASSISTANT

Ol' Bear could use some wheels like those this year.

ENGINEER

It's bad enough they're lettin' 'em go to school now. There's no way they're lettin' 'em in the locker room too.

ENGINEER ASSISTANT

I'm just sayin' Alabama could use all the speed they can get.

ANGLE ON WHITE TRAIN PASSENGERS

A young white boy has his face pressed against the window glass in amazement watching the black kid run.

YOUNG BOY

Mama! That little nigga boy is runnin' as fast as our train!

Several passengers hear the boy and look out the window as well. OOHS and AAHS.

WIDER

The train, with the boy leading by about 10 yards, nears the road crossing as the gates lower and BELLS warn cars of the oncoming train. Just before the lead locomotive reaches the road, the boy cuts quickly in front and over the tracks. It's very close, but the boy is safe.

He attempts to stop but his momentum causes him to stumble into the front of a fancy car driven by a well-to-do white couple. The boy puts his hands on the hood to brace himself. The couple stares at the startled boy. The man honks, and the couple exchange disparaging looks.

The boy, huffing with exhaustion, begins to walk slowly back toward his house. White train passengers, who have witnessed the incident, stare down upon the boy as the train rolls by. The boy looks at the ground as he shuffles home in the dust. The various white faces flash past quickly in the train windows like the flicker of an old film.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA - DAY

White faces flash by quickly.

TITLE: University of Alabama Quad, Tuscaloosa, January 1970

POV OF SINGLE BLACK STUDENT

He receives a few sideways glances. He's trying to be polite but it's very crowded. He's an outcast here.

TIGHT ON FACE OF SINGLE BLACK STUDENT

The lone black student weaves his way through a sea of white college kids.

WIDER

This student is absolutely the only person of color on this campus. He continues to negotiate the quad like a salmon swimming upstream, making his way past groups of whites.

INT. COACH BRYANT'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

POV BEAR BRYANT

Coach Bryant looks down upon the quad from his upper story office and watches the black student walk through campus. The brim of his hounds tooth hat shakes with disappointment.

COACH BRYANT

Boys, I've just hung up with the
NC-double-A.

ANGLE ON OFFICE INTERIOR

Coach Bryant turns away from the window toward a few of his assistants, including BUD MOORE and HOWARD SCHNELLENBERGER, who are gathered for a mid-day meeting.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

It seems that they've decided to
allow every program in the country
one extra game for this season.

COACH MOORE

Why in the hell they'd go and do
that for coach? Our damn season is
long enough as it is.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER

They're doing it for money, why
you think? One extra game means
more money for everybody.

COACH BRYANT

Well, now, I suppose you're probably right Howard. But the fact is, I gotta decide who we want to play before we start practice this spring. I was thinkin' maybe I ought to call up Coach McKay over at Southern Cal and see if he'd like to bring his boys down here.

There's an uncomfortable silence in the room as the assistant coaches shuffle around and stare at their shoes.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

What the hell's the matter with y'all?

COACH MOORE

Shoot coach. Those boys didn't lose a game all last year. They're likely to tear us apart.

COACH BRYANT

What kind of nonsense are talking Bud? Are you saying that you don't think we can compete with USC?

COACH MOORE

Well coach that's not exactly what I'm saying.

(beat)

It's just that not too many folks around here gonna be happy about all those black kids coming into Birmingham. *Especialy* if they start whoopin' on us.

COACH BRYANT

You boys let me worry about that. You just worry about doing your jobs and getting our kids ready for a tough ballgame.

The assistant coaches look at one another uneasily.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

How's the recruiting going with Mitchell?

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER

I met with his mama last week. Train's ready to join the Tide right now. I just didn't know if the university--*or the alumni*--was ready to offer him a scholarship.

COACH MOORE

Yeah, coach, them good ol' boys will be all over us if we decide to sign John Mitchell right now.

COACH BRYANT
I'm ready. Get him signed.

The assistant coaches look at each other with surprise.

TWO SHOT OF ASSISTANTS

Coach Bryant turns back toward the window and the scene below in the quad. The assistants walk out of the room together.

COACH MOORE
 What's he up to?

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
 Got me.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - MORNING

WIDE

USC assistant coaches Marv Goux and DAVE LEVY walk from separate directions past Tommy Trojan, USC's famous statue in the middle of campus. There are several students milling about and on their way to class. Black students walk and talk with white students.

The coaches cross paths just in front of the giant bronze sculpture and both are in a rush. They acknowledge each other as both hurry to a morning meeting with Coach McKay. The coaches ascend the stairs of the student union building.

INT. USC STUDENT UNION HALLWAY - CONTINUING

They go up the stairs and down the hallway. They come to a door that reads: John McKay, Head Football Coach. The men pause before entering. Levy KNOCKS on the door.

COACH MCKAY (O.S.)
 Come in!

INT. COACH MCKAY'S OFFICE - MORNING

ANGLE ON COACH MCKAY

Coach John McKay sits at his desk with a giant stack of newspapers. It looks as if he's been here a while. He has a section of the paper in front of his face, cup of coffee. He reaches for his coffee and his hand disappears behind the paper as he drinks it. The two coaches wait at the door.

COACH MCKAY
 You guys gonna sit down or what?

ANGLE ON MEN

The two men quickly grab seats and pull them up near coach's desk. John McKay runs the show here. He finally puts down his newspaper to face the men. He's chomping on a cigar.

COACH MCKAY
 Good morning gentlemen.

Both men MUMBLE greetings.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
Davey, remember we got that
fundraising deal down in Long
Beach tonight. Pick me up at six.

COACH LEVY
Got it coach.

COACH MCKAY
Look, real quick, I got a call
from Coach Paul Bryant this
morning. He wants me to come down
and do some hunting with him this
weekend. Marvey, pick me up from
the house Friday morning. I need
to be at the airport at seven.

Coach Goux grimaces. Levy's glad he's off the hook.

COACH LEVY
What did Coach Bryant want?

COACH MCKAY
Well I think it might have to do
with our extra game this Fall.

Both assistants look at each other with surprise.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy Jones lives in a fairly nice apartment. There are
sports posters and press clippings on the wall. The place is
fairly clean, especially for a male college student.

It might be said that it benefits from a woman's touch.
Dishes are done. Bed is made. Little clutter. It's clear why
as Jimmy's girlfriend Dee Dee straightens up a stack of LP
records. One of Dee Dee's favorite songs begins to PLAY on
the turn table. It's a soulful SONG by Marvin Gaye.

ANGLE ON DEE DEE

Dee Dee begins to sway to the music. She sashays across the
living room toward the bathroom.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT BATHROOM - CONTINUING

Jimmy stands in front of the mirror without a shirt, picking
out his hair. He looks a little melancholy. He's not sad,
just distracted.

DEE DEE
Man, I love this song.

Jimmy continues to stare into the mirror and forces a small
smile when he sees Dee Dee dancing in the reflection.

JIMMY
Of course you do baby, it's
Marvin. Did you have time to iron
my shirt?

Dee Dee is fully into the song now. She moves toward Jimmy to try and get him to dance with her. He turns to face her as she dances seductively before him.

DEE DEE
(amorously)
Yes. And I picked up your filthy
apartment and I did your dishes
and I made your bed. Now bring
your sexy body in the living room
and dance with me.

She gently grabs Jimmy's arm and attempts to pull him into the living room. Jimmy goes along reluctantly.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUING

Jimmy and Dee Dee make it to the living room and begin a slow dance, but Jimmy isn't into it. He tries to pull away.

JIMMY
Dee Dee I need to finish getting
ready. We're late.

Dee Dee won't give up. She pulls him back into the dance.

DEE DEE
You got time baby. Just one song.

Jimmy resists lightly.

JIMMY
I really don't feel like dancing.

Dee Dee begins to notice that something isn't right with Jimmy. Normally he would be all over her. She gently grabs his face and turns it toward her own.

DEE DEE
Jimmy, is something the matter?

Jimmy averts her eyes and pulls away somewhat more strongly. He moves slowly over to the couch and sits.

JIMMY
I guess I'm just a little messed
up with spring ball starting soon
and classes and stuff.

Dee Dee follows him to the couch and sits down next to him. She's concerned because Jimmy is normally very upbeat, especially about football.

DEE DEE
What do you mean? I thought you've
been looking forward to getting
back together with the guys.
(beat)
Jimmy? You there?

Jimmy looks as if he's struggling to reveal thoughts that he didn't want to admit, even to himself. He takes a deep breath and faces Dee Dee.

JIMMY

I *am* looking forward to seeing the guys. I'm just not sure they're looking forward to seeing me.

DEE DEE

(surprised)

Jimmy Jones, what are you talking about? USC was undefeated last year, and you were the quarterback. They should send a limousine over here every day to take you to practice.

JIMMY

Dee Dee, you read the papers. Everybody says the team won last year despite me. They talk about the defense, the running game. And tonight we got to go to that damn fundraiser where there'll just be a bunch of old white folks who think Mike Rae should be the quarterback.

DEE DEE

Jimmy, you're the leader of this team. You're just a little stressed about tonight. You got nothing to worry about. You know you're the best quarterback on that field!

Jimmy becomes more agitated.

JIMMY

No! I don't! I don't know that Dee. I don't know if I got it, okay? There's more pressure this year because people *expect* this team to win, and I'm the one who's supposed to take 'em there. I just don't know if I can do it.

DEE DEE

Well, I hope the time comes when you figure it out for yourself. But as far as I'm concerned, you'll always be number one.

Jimmy stares into her eyes. He's amazed by her belief in him.

DEE DEE

(continuing)

Now go on and finish getting ready.

Jimmy turns slowly and walks toward the bathroom.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT BATHROOM - CONTINUING

Jimmy puts on his shirt and begins to tie his tie. He stops and looks at his face in the mirror. His eyes are filled with self-doubt and a hint of fear.

EXT. FIGUEROA STREET - DUSK

Jimmy's car pulls onto Figueroa, which borders the USC campus. He sees a hulking figure down by the corner standing next to a clean Olds Cutlass with the hood up. It's Sam Cunningham. Jimmy pulls over.

JIMMY
Cunningham, what's up man?

SAM
I was tryin' to get down to that dinner, and my car stopped running.

JIMMY
Get in, I'll run you to a phone so we can get it towed to your place.

SAM
Nah, I'll get it later.

JIMMY
I dunno man. I wouldn't leave my car around here at night.

SAM
Nobody's gonna steal it.

JIMMY
You're more trusting than I am.
We're late, let's go.

Sam gets in the back seat.

JIMMY
(continuing)
This is my girlfriend Dee Dee.

DEE DEE
Nice to meet you Sam, Jimmy's told me a lot about you.

Sam smiles sheepishly.

DEE DEE
(continuing)
Don't worry big guy, most of it's good.

Sam's smile becomes a big grin.

EXT. LONG BEACH YACHT CLUB - NIGHT

WIDE

The LBYC is an elegant gathering spot for USC's well heeled alumni. Expensive cars pull up to the valet. Shimmering lights hang in strings across the front of the building. Men in suits and women in fancy dresses mingle in front of the door smoking and holding champagne glasses. There's a large sign sitting on an easel that reads: USC FOOTBALL "SPRING FLING" BANQUET.

ANGLE ON JIMMY'S CAR

Jimmy, Dee Dee and Sam pull up in Jimmy's beat up Chevy Impala. It's out of place among the fine vehicles on display. As the car loudly sputters in front of the valet stand, several alumnns cast sideways looks. The car BACKFIRES LOUDLY as everyone exits the vehicle. Dee Dee is startled, but Sam doesn't even break stride. Jimmy sheepishly hands his keys over to the valet.

ANGLE ON JOHN PAPADAKIS

Linebacker John Papadakis is chatting with a group of alumnns near the door. He is dominating the the conversation like he always does, arms flailing, very animated. Pap wears a coat that barely buttons over his muscular physique. He is quite good looking with his tan Greek features. He excuses himself from the group and excitedly greets his friends as they make their way toward the door.

PAPADAKIS

Hey, it's about time you guys got here. I've been going it alone.

Jimmy is the first to greet Papadakis. They give each other a big hug. Papadakis does a lot of hugging.

JIMMY

Greek, you're never alone.

PAPADAKIS

What can I tell you? I'm friendly.

JIMMY

That you are my friend.

Pap shakes Sam's hand.

PAPADAKIS

Hey Sam.

Sam nods. Pap gives Dee Dee a big hug.

PAPADAKIS

(continuing)

Hello beautiful. Let's go inside.

INT. LBYC DINING ROOM - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON PLAYER TABLE

Everyone takes their seats. The table is very animated. Conversation flows freely. Laughter. There are some other players seated. CHARLIE WEAVER, a giant black defender, BOB CHANDLER, a white wide receiver. Clarence, others.

ANGLE ON PODIUM

MC

Ladies and gentlemen. The Long Beach Trojan Club is proud to welcome tonight one of football's greatest coaches...John McKay.

VARIOUS ANGLES

There is loud applause from everyone in the room as they begin a standing ovation. At the players' table, Papadakis stands up and implores the other players to do the same. The marching band thumps loudly.

ANGLE ON COACH MCKAY MOVING

He takes a long drink from his glass and pushes away from the VIP table amid the applause. He enjoys the appreciation but he's slightly embarrassed. He's already trying to get the crowd to calm down as he approaches the podium. Coach McKay stands at the microphone as the cheers subside.

COACH MCKAY

Enough already. I need you folks
to save some of that enthusiasm
for the Coliseum.

The crowd chuckles collectively. McKay turns his head around in an exaggerated motion to face the MC who has taken his seat at the other VIP table.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing; jokingly)
And what do you mean one of
football's greatest coaches?

Everyone laughs. Shouts of "THAT'S RIGHT!" and "YOU TELL HIM COACH!" come from the crowd. The MC silently apologizes.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)
If you don't believe me, just ask
those guys over there.

Coach gestures to the players' table. Everyone turns to look and laughs even harder. The players clap enthusiastically.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)
But seriously, we're encouraged
about this year's team. We have
some very talented returning
starters. We're coming off a great
season and we feel we have a
strong nucleus that will allow us
to continue that success...As long
as they listen to what I say.

More laughter. Players react.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)
As many of you know, Jimmy Jones
returns at quarterback. We expect
Jimmy to be even better this year
because a sophomore naturally
expects to improve with experience.

Reaction from Jimmy. He looks at Dee Dee. She smiles.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 Jimmy's got some help on the
 offensive side with Clarence Davis
 and Bob Chandler returning along
 with a veteran offensive line.

Clarence reacts.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 We also have some exciting
 newcomers on offense including a
 big ol' fullback that you all will
 probably be hearing a lot about--
 his name is Sam Cunningham.

The crowd cheers the players again. Sam is embarrassed.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 I do have an important
 announcement to make. The NCAA has
 decided to add an eleventh game to
 our schedule for this season.

The crowd cheers madly. The players are shocked.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 What I can't tell you yet is who
 or where we're going to play.

The crowd gasps.

EXT. DUCK BLIND - LATE AFTERNOON

WIDE

Bryant and McKay, decked out in full duck hunting garb, carry long barreled shotguns and trudge through a soggy marsh. Coach McKay is decidedly tired of looking for ducks, which seem to have completely avoided this part of the country.

Coach Bryant settles down among some reeds that are acting as a natural blind. He scans the sky through binoculars for the evasive birds. McKay is impatient.

COACH MCKAY
 Paul, I'm beginning to think there
 is not a single duck in the state
 of Alabama. We've been all over
 this damn marsh. And worst of all,
 my flask is almost empty.

COACH BRYANT
 Yeah. I'm about ready to head in.
 You want some Jack?

Coach Bryant offers Coach McKay his flask.

COACH MCKAY

No. You know I don't drink that stuff. It makes my stomach hurt.

Coach Bryant shrugs and takes a big hit from his flask.

COACH BRYANT

John, before we start back, I want to ask you a question.

Coach McKay faces Bryant as both men crouch in the weeds.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

You know how much respect I have for you and your USC program.

COACH MCKAY

Sure, Paul. I feel the same way about Alabama. Always have.

COACH BRYANT

I know you do. Between us we've won half of the national championships in the last decade. With the NCAA adding an extra game this season, I think it's high time our teams got together.

Coach McKay seems to have seen this coming.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

I'd like to offer the USC Trojans \$100,000 to come down here to Alabama and play my team this year.

Coach McKay smiles approvingly.

COACH MCKAY

I think that's a fine idea Paul. But I'll only agree on one condition. The Tide must travel to Los Angeles next year. And I'll guarantee \$150,000.

COACH BRYANT

Well, shoot John, it's a date.

The men toast with their flasks in a show of genuine satisfaction. Just then several DUCKS QUACK from nearby, surprising the men. They look at each other startled and Bear fumbles to get his gun focused skyward. He aims and fires TWO SHOTGUN BLASTS. The ducks continue flying merrily along. The gunfire has not disrupted them in the least. Bryant is unfazed, he starts to reload his gun.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

John, I believe you might just be witnessing a miracle.

He turns to face McKay in mock astonishment.

COACH MCKAY
What are you talking about?

COACH BRYANT
Well it can only be a genuine
miracle that you're watching dead
ducks flying.

Both men laugh heartily.

EXT. ALABAMA PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

WIDE OVERHEAD

It's a typically hot muggy day in Tuscaloosa. The Crimson Tide practice in full pads. Bear Bryant stands in his tower observing the exhausted men below. The players surround a drill called "The Pit." Two massive defensive linemen are paired against offensive linemen. Players all around the circle are SHOUTING and CLAPPING.

TIGHT ON OFFENSIVE TWOSOME

The faces of the men are wrrenched in agony. Their eyes are locked on their opponents across the line. A loud WHISTLE SHRIEKS quickly. The two men fire off the line and collide with the other two men at full force. After several seconds of battle, the drill erodes into a fight. There are several insistent WHISTLE SHRIEKS and coaches rush in.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
All right! All right! Break it up!

COACH MOORE
Knock it off!

The men are forced apart. There's a lot of pushing and shoving. It's an intense situation.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT MOVING

Coach Bryant has descended from his tower and walks over.

COACH BRYANT
Okay boys, that's enough.

The players respond immediately to the voice of Coach Bryant. There is silence very quickly.

COACH BRYANT
(continuing)
That's it for today gentlemen.
Before I let you go, I want y'all
to gather round here now.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The team assembles dutifully around their leader. They are all paying attention. This is a well-disciplined outfit.

COACH BRYANT

Boys, I appreciate your effort out here today. We had a good practice. You worked hard. Now as some of you may know, we have been given the opportunity to add an extra game to this fall's schedule. I have arranged for us to open the season at home against the University of Southern California Trojans.

A murmur runs through the exhausted team. Some players are very excited. Some give each other looks of surprise.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

Settle down. This is a good football team. You will have your work cut out for you. You better be ready for a tough football game come September. That's it.

The players struggle to their feet and begin to amble off the practice field. There are audible reactions to the news they've just been given.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

WIDE ESTABLISHING

The entire USC team is standing on the goal line shoulder to shoulder. They are in shorts, shirts and helmets on a gloriously sunny day. They are lined up for sprints.

TIGHT ON FACES-MOVING

As each face is revealed, it's apparent that the players are very tired. The big lineman huff and puff the loudest. Some guys have their hands on their knees. Some have their hands on their hips. About every fourth face is black.

WIDE OVERHEAD

Assistant coaches are lined up on the sideline from the goal line about every 20 yards all the way to the other goal line. Coach WILLIE BROWN is at the starting line with his whistle in hand and poised at his lips. Coach Brown is an athletically built black man and former USC running back.

COACH BROWN

Lineman!

The offensive and defensive lineman crouch slowly into their stances. Coach Brown BLOWS his WHISTLE sharply. The big guys roll off the line and take a while to get up to speed. Assistant coach JOE GIBBS stands at the 50 yard line. Coach Brown watches the big men cross the 50.

COACH BROWN

(continuing)

Backers and tight ends!

The linebackers and tight ends take their stances. Coach Brown BLOWS his whistle sharply again. The start is a bit quicker with this group, but not much.

COACH BROWN
(continuing)
Backs and receivers!

The players who remain at the goal line take their stances. Another short WHISTLE. This start is noticeably quicker. These are the fast guys on the team, and most are in better shape than the previous two groups. Sam and Jimmy get off the line much faster than the rest. By the 40 yard line, Sam has pulled away from Jimmy. Both cross the goal line well ahead of the pack.

As they finish, a few players go to a knee in an effort to catch their breath. Coach Goux runs from his spot near the goal line to the group of players.

COACH GOUX
Stand up! Anyone else takes a knee
and you'll run 10 more!

The players struggle to their feet. A black player helps one of his white teammates off his knees. Coach McKay motions to Coach Levy. Levy walks over to the group BLOWING his WHISTLE.

COACH LEVY
Okay, guys. Gather round.

The players stagger over toward Coach Levy and Coach McKay.

COACH MCKAY
Men, you can take a knee now.
You've earned it.

Coach Goux frowns.

COACH GOUX
Helmets stay on!

COACH MCKAY
Alright now. The press is all over me with questions about our extra game. I'm gonna announce tomorrow that we will be traveling to Birmingham, Alabama to play the Crimson Tide on September 12th.

There are some excited shouts from many of the players. It takes a little while for the group to calm down.

COACH GOUX
Alright! Knock it off!

The players stop talking and focus back on Coach McKay.

COACH MCKAY
I don't have to tell you that this
is a big game.
(more)

COACH MCKAY (cont'd)
Alabama may have been a little
down last year, but they'd like
nothing more than to show the
country that football is better in
the South. Tody, are you gonna let
them do that?

Tody Smith stands up.

TODY
No way coach!

The players react with whoops and hollers to Tody.

COACH MCKAY
Well alright then. We're back here
at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - DAY

USC players in various states of dress are grab-assing around
the locker room. You can hear singing in the shower, plenty
of noise in the form of conversations and shouts. Clarence,
Jimmy and Sam have lockers near each other.

SAM
I think I might enjoy a little
Southern hospitality.

JIMMY
You better ask Clarence about that.

SAM
Clarence, you ever been all the
way down to Alabama.

Clarence doesn't answer.

JIMMY
CD was born in Birmingham, man.
He's a regular Colonel Sanders.

Jimmy and Sam laugh at the joke. Clarence does not.

CLARENCE
Yeah, I still got family back
there. They ain't gonna believe
we're coming down to play.

SAM
You're kidding? I didn't know you
was a Southern boy. Then you'll
feel right at home.

CLARENCE
Not really.

There's an ominous tone to Clarence's words. He leaves.

SAM
What's that all about Jet?

JIMMY

Well, Clarence's family back there ain't got it so good. That's one reason he came to LA. He wanted to get away from all that mess.

SAM

Mess?

JIMMY

It's the South man. You see all the trouble on TV. Black folks fightin' for everything they get, which ain't much. That stuff's for real. No lie.

SAM

Yeah, but we're just goin' down there to play football. How bad can it be?

JIMMY

Let's just say you wouldn't want to have car trouble in Birmingham.

EXT. DAVIS FAMILY DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

There's an old beat up Ford truck on blocks in the driveway with two human legs sticking out from underneath. A telephone RINGS inside the house.

Lenny Davis is busy working on his truck and expects someone else to answer the phone. The phone continues to RING, and Lenny is pissed he has to stop his work. He attempts to slide out from under the truck and bangs his head on the tailpipe.

ANGLE ON LENNY-MOVING

UNCLE LENNY

(to himself)

Dagnabbit! Where'd everybody go?

Lenny struggles to his feet rubbing his head. He yanks open his screen door and rushes inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DAVIS FAMILY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Lenny stumbles through the door and across the room.

UNCLE LENNY

Alright, I'm coming.

Lenny picks up the phone and sits in a chair. His hands are covered in grease and he gets it all over the receiver.

UNCLE LENNY

(continuing; into phone)

Yeah, this is Lenny.

CLARENCE'S VOICE

(through the phone)

Hey Uncle Lenny, it's Clarence.

UNCLE LENNY
(into phone)
Well I'll be! Clarence Davis, you
haven't called this house in
months! What you been up to boy?

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Clarence is sitting across from Coach Brown using the
telephone on his desk.

CLARENCE
(into phone)
Hey listen, I can't talk long. I
just wanted to let y'all know
we're coming out there this fall.

UNCLE LENNY'S VOICE
(through the phone)
You mean your Mama's finally gonna
get her behind back down here for
a visit?

CLARENCE
(into phone)
No, I mean, yeah, she'll probably
come out. But what I meant was
that my football team is coming to
Birmingham to play Alabama.

UNCLE LENNY'S VOICE
(through the phone)
Are you messin' with me!?

Clarence has to hold the phone away from his ear. Coach Brown
smiles as if he expected this reaction.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DAVIS FAMILY HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUING

Lenny jumps to his feet pulling the phone off the table and
on to the floor. He's very excited.

UNCLE LENNY
(into phone)
Wait 'til I tell the boys at the
shop. Those boys are gonna
flip!...You think you can get your
old Uncle Lenny some tickets?...

CLARENCE'S VOICE
(through the phone)
No, man. I doubt it.

Uncle Lenny is a little disappointed, but expected as much.

UNCLE LENNY
(into phone)
Yeah I hear you, that's cool.
Listen, I don't want you spending
all your money, I'll let you go.

Lenny hangs up the phone and begins to pace around his living
room not really knowing what to do.

Aunt Louise enters through the screen door carrying a bag of groceries.

AUNT LOUISE
Lenny Davis what in the world are
you doing in my living room with
those dirty clothes on?

Lenny stops pacing and stares at her with a wildly dumb look on his face. He is still in shock about the news.

UNCLE LENNY
Louise, I just hung up with
Clarence out in California. His
team is coming down here to play
Alabama this fall!

Louise puts down her groceries. She's pleased that Clarence is coming, but she doesn't see why Lenny is so excited.

AUNT LOUISE
That's great. Are his Mamma and
them all coming down?

Lenny can't believe that Louise asked this question.

UNCLE LENNY
I don't know woman. But the fact
is, the black man has never played
football in Legion Field against
Alabama, especially none of my kin
folk! People 'round here won't
believe this!

She understands this is a big deal, but she's not about to get all worked up about it.

AUNT LOUISE
I can't believe you're getting
grease all over my carpet. Get on
outta here now.

INT. USC MEETING ROOM - DAY

Coach Fertig is running a pre-practice quarterback meeting with several of his athletes. Jimmy Jones is present, as is MIKE RAE, JIM HEUMANN and DAVE BOULWARE. They wear practice pants with pads, cleats and undershirts. Helmets and shoulder pads sit on the ground by each player. Each QB studies his playbook while Coach Fertig scribbles on the blackboard.

ANGLE ON COACH FERTIG

Coach Fertig is diagramming a pass play on the board. He continues diagramming as he's talking.

COACH FERTIG
(in mid sentence)
...and Chandler should be open
across the middle every time.
Assuming Graf is protecting your
backside, this route goes for a
big gain. No problem.

The players stare at the chalkboard with glazed-over eyes. Jones stifles a yawn just as Fertig turns to face the group.

COACH FERTIG
(continuing)
Am I boring you Jimmy?

JIMMY
No coach. I'm sorry. I was up late studying last night.

RAE
(kidding)
You mean you were up late with that girlfriend of yours.

The other QBs laugh, but Jimmy doesn't find it so funny.

JIMMY
Yeah, she was there. We were helping each other get ready for finals. We have Anatomy together.

RAE
Is that what they're calling it these days?

The guys crack up again. Jimmy gives Rae a more serious look this time. Rae decides to leave it alone.

COACH FERTIG
Alright that's enough. You guys have 10 minutes to get on the field. Jimmy, you'll be sharing first-team snaps with Rae this afternoon.

Jimmy is noticeably upset by this development. The situation is not lost on the other QBs. Everyone grabs their gear and files out of the room. Jimmy hangs back.

JIMMY
Coach, why you givin' away my reps?

COACH FERTIG
Don't worry Jimmy. Coach McKay just wants Rae to get a chance to work with the first team. We have to have him prepared in case something happens.

Jimmy, already feeling vulnerable, isn't so sure Coach Fertig is being completely honest.

JIMMY
You mean in case I get demoted to second team like the papers say I should be?

COACH FERTIG
Jimmy, first of all, you were our team MVP last year.
(more)

COACH FERTIG (cont'd)
 You take care of business and you
 won't have any problems. Second,
 stop reading the damn papers. Most
 of those reporters don't know what
 they're talking about.

Jimmy is not happy. Coach Fertig pats him on the back. Jimmy
 grabs his gear and slowly leaves the room.

INT. BIRMINGHAM BARBERSHOP - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

Five white Birmingham locals sit around an old barbershop.
 Earl is getting his hair cut. Phil the barber checks his work
 in the mirror.

BARBER
 ...it sure was nice of your wife
 to send over that pie, Earl.

EARL
 She was happy to do it, Phil. You
 know we picked them apples right
 from the back yard.

BARBER
 It was sure good ala mode.

The barber swivels his chair around toward the front window.

POV EARL

Outside the window, a black couple strolls by arm in arm.
 They seem very happy.

EARL
 Will you look at that crap. Them
 niggers walk by your window like
 they own the place. Pretty soon
 they'll be coming in here to get
 their hair cut.

BARBER
 It'll be a cold day in hell when
 that happens.

VIRGIL
 Yeah, well hell must of frozen
 over. Did y'all hear Bear is
 lettin' all them niggers from
 Southern Cal come down here and
 play the Tide at Legion Field?

The men all GRUMBLE and express their disgust.

TOM
 Well they are an integrated team.
 And I heard they're pretty good.

VIRGIL

I don't care how good they are,
one nigger is too many.

EARL

I don't know what's gotten into
Ol' Bear, allowin' this to happen.
But the brotherhood is pretty
upset. I ain't sayin' there's
gonna be trouble, but I ain't
sayin' there ain't either.

TOM

People gonna be lookin' at Bear a
whole different way.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - DAY

ANGLE ON JIMMY

Jimmy stands in full pads in front of a mirror staring at
himself. There is significant fear and doubt in his eyes.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

The intensity of this spring practice is noticeably higher
than a normal off-season workout. Players are flying around
the field. The hitting is brutal. Coaches are constantly
evaluating, and competition for starting jobs is fierce.

ANGLE ON SIDELINES

Jimmy runs over to the sidelines after a full-squad play. He
stands with Mike Rae and Coach Levy.

COACH LEVY

OK. Jimmy. Split right, 28 pitch.

ANGLE ON JIMMY-MOVING

Jimmy nods and runs on to the field. Coach Levy walks over to
Coach McKay and Fertig. Jimmy joins the huddle.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE HUDDLE

JIMMY

Alright listen up. Split right, 28
pitch on two, on two, ready break!

WIDER

The team breaks and CLAPS in unison. They turn and jog to the
line of scrimmage. Jimmy walks up under center.

JIMMY

Blue 22! Blue 22! Hut! Hut!

The ball is snapped and guards ALLAN GRAF and WAYNE YARY pull
from their interior spots to lead the sweep around right end.

Jimmy pitches the ball low, but Clarence is able to pick it up off of his shoetops, barely avoiding a blitzing linebacker. Charlie Evans lead blocks. The two scout team backers fill their holes just as Graf and Yary arrive at full pace. The collision is tremendous, but very one-sided. Both defenders go flying backward having suffered two perfectly executed and simultaneous decleats.

ANGLE ON COACHES

Coach Levy blows his WHISTLE LOUDLY to stop the play. He motions for Jimmy to come to the sidelines.

ANGLE ON JIMMY

As Jimmy jogs toward the sideline he passes Clarence.

CLARENCE

You tryin' to get me killed Jet?!

Jimmy seems irritated by the comment. He jogs over to McKay.

COACH MCKAY

Jimmy, what was that son. All you got to do is get CD the ball. He knows what to do with it.

JIMMY

Sorry coach. The ball slipped.

Jimmy wipes his hands with the towel that he has hanging from his belt.

COACH FERTIG

That's no excuse Jimmy. It's gonna be hot and humid down in Birmingham.

(toward sidelines)

Rae!

Mike Rae runs over to the coaches. Jimmy moves aside reluctantly. Fertig instructs Rae.

COACH FERTIG

(continuing)

We're gonna run the post we talked about before practice. On one.

Rae runs on to the field. Jimmy stands in the b.g. He's angry about about being replaced. His frustration is evident.

JIMMY

Coach Fertig, my hands are just a little sweaty. It's hot out here.

COACH FERTIG

Well if they're too wet to get a pitch to the half back, how are you supposed to complete a pass 20 yards downfield?

It's a rhetorical question.

ANGLE ON FIELD ACTION

Mike Rae takes the ball from center, drops back and hits SAM DICKERSON with a perfect pass. Players CHEER and CLAP. A few players give each other looks as if to say, "I told you."

ANGLE ON SIDELINE

Jimmy seethes. Sam is standing next to him.

SAM

Don't worry about it man.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Jimmy rotates back into the action. He stands in the middle of the huddle. He's shaky at best. Dickerson is purposely not paying attention. Jimmy tries to take control.

JIMMY

Dickerson, man, listen up.

DICKERSON

Just worry about yourself and call the play.

It's a tense moment. A few of the linemen nod and grumble in agreement. The situation is not lost on Jimmy. He glares at all 10 guys in the huddle.

JIMMY

G-91, X-fly. On one.

The team breaks the huddle and lines up. Jimmy takes the ball and drops back to pass. The protection is good and there is little pressure. But instead of throwing the ball, Jimmy hesitates too long. He gives the defenders time to shed their blocks, and he is sacked.

The team huddles up again. Lineman JOHN VELLA is mad.

VELLA

We can't block forever Jimmy! You gotta pull the trigger!

Jimmy is a little taken aback.

JIMMY

No one was open man!

VELLA

Well then you gotta either run or throw the ball away!

JIMMY

Don't tell me what to do! Shut up and get in the huddle!

Jimmy's anger is bubbling to the surface. Just then Dickerson enters the huddle.

DICKERSON
I was wide open! Throw the ball!
What are you scared of?!

JIMMY
I ain't scared of nothin'! Just
get in the huddle.
(beat)
Pro-right, 60-Tiger. On two!

The team lines up and Jimmy takes the snap. He drops back quickly and purposely throws a bullet that hits Dickerson flush in the back of the helmet before he can make his cut. The receiver is knocked down hard by the ball. The coaches are upset.

COACH MCKAY
Fertig! What is he doin' out there!

COACH FERTIG
I don't know coach.

Dickerson springs up off the ground and makes a beeline for Jimmy. Jimmy prepares to take him on. Before Dickerson reaches the QB, several lineman grab the players and hold them back. There's a lot of shouting and harsh words. Coach Fertig runs toward the melee.

COACH FERTIG
(continuing)
Both of you knock it off! Jimmy,
what the hell was that! Both of
you take a seat and cool off! Rae!

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

Coach Brown sits at his desk going over some papers. Clarence sticks his head inside the door.

CLARENCE
Hey coach. You gotta a minute?

COACH BROWN
Yeah CD, come on in.

Clarence shuts the door and sits down.

CLARENCE
Coach, you're from the south just
like me. What do you think it's
gonna be like down in Birmingham?

COACH BROWN
I think Alabama is gonna try and
kick our butts, that's what I
think.

CLARENCE

That's not what I'm talking about.
I don't know if I wanna go down
there. My family left Alabama for
a reason, and I'm not so sure
about goin' back.

Coach Brown thinks for a moment.

COACH BROWN

Listen Clarence, I'd be lyin' to
you if I told you I hadn't thought
about that also. But the only
thing we can really worry about is
coming together as a football team
and playing with as much heart and
fire as we possibly can. We can't
control what other folks gonna do.

CLARENCE

Well that's what I'm saying.
They're still lynching niggers
down there!

COACH BROWN

Clarence, if there was really
anything to worry about, you think
Coach McKay would take you guys
down there? He has every assurance
from Coach Bryant that everything
will be fine.

Clarence gets up to leave. He's not satisfied.

CLARENCE

I hope you're right coach.

Clarence leaves the room. Coach Brown looks after him with
concern. He wants CD to feel better, but he's not sure he
believes what he just told the young man.

EXT. ALABAMA PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES FIELD LEVEL

The hard hitting characteristics of the University of Alabama
football team are displayed in series of quick shots. There
are brutal collisions between lineman. A fullback leads
through an interior hole and smashes a filling linebacker. A
defensive back flattens a scout team receiver who has
stretched out to catch a pass. Coaches scream at players.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT

Coach Bryant stands with his coaches. It's the end of
practice, and all of the players have gathered around.

COACH BRYANT

Boys, there was some good hitting
out here today.
(more)

COACH BRYANT (cont'd)
 But you're gonna have to show a
 lot better effort if you hope to
 compete against this USC team next
 fall. And I mean sustained effort
 for four quarters. Branson, you
 know why the papers called their
 team the Cardiac Kids last season?

DAVID BRANSON, the team's top returning receiver, stands up.
 He speaks slowly and with a thick southern accent.

BRANSON
 I don't reckon I know why Coach
 Bryant. But I figure it's because
 them niggers ain't got no heart.

Several of the player's hoot with appreciation. Coach Bryant
 and his staff are not pleased.

COACH BRYANT
 Shut the hell up! All y'all! The
 reason is because they came back
 in the fourth quarter to win half
 their games last year. Do I need
 to remind any of you that we won
 only six games last season?! If
 this team had a little more heart
 maybe Auburn wouldn't have kicked
 your asses so bad. Now get the
 heck outta here!

The players slowly rise and make their way off the field.

COACH BRYANT
 (continuing)
 Branson, get over here.

Branson knows he's in trouble. But he can't show his fear in
 front of his teammates. Plus he's just stupidly cocky enough
 to keep a smirk on his face. He walks over to Coach Bryant.
 Coach Schnellenberger and Coach Moore stand nearby.

COACH BRYANT
 (continuing)
 Son, I expect you to be a leader
 on this team. The young guys look
 up to you. I can't have you saying
 stupid stuff like that.

Branson isn't particularly bright. He shows no remorse.

BRANSON
 Coach, my daddy always told me
 there ain't no nigger capable of
 standing with a white man. They
 just ain't got it in 'em.

COACH BRYANT
 Son, out here on this football
 field, I'm your daddy...and your
 mama.

(more)

COACH BRYANT (cont'd)
 What I'm telling you is that no
 matter how you feel, you keep your
 mouth shut. Ya hear?

BRANSON
 Yeah coach.

COACH BRYANT
 Now git.

Branson walks away from the coaches.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
 Coach, you want me to run him
 extra before practice tomorrow?

COACH BRYANT
 Nah. It wouldn't do him any good.
 It was my fault for calling on his
 country behind in the first place.
 When folks are plain ignorant you
 can't scold 'em, you gotta teach
 'em. We'll run 'em all extra

INT. JIMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Jimmy and Dee Dee sit in his car waiting in line at a drive
 through restaurant. Dee Dee sits close.

DEE DEE
 How was practice today Jimmy?

JIMMY
 Not so good. They're givin' my
 reps away. I had to split time
 today with Mike Rae.

DEE DEE
 What's wrong with that? Isn't that
 normal?

JIMMY
 (defensively)
 No, it's not normal! Not if they
 think I'm the starter! It's just
 like the papers say.

DEE DEE
 I think a little competition is
 healthy.

JIMMY
 (more upset)
 What do you know about it!?

DEE DEE
 Nothin' I guess.

Dee Dee gazes out the window as the attendant hands over the
 food. She's slightly upset by his comment.

EXT. JULIE'S BAR - NIGHT

WIDE ESTABLISHING

Julie's is a relatively nondescript building from the outside. There are hand-painted murals along its stucco walls depicting famous scenes from Trojan football games of the past. A small neon sign reading JULIE'S is mounted just above the single door.

INT. JULIE'S BAR - CONTINUING

The bar's interior is dark. There are booths along the wall and short round tables scattered throughout the floor space. Most are filled with students blowing off steam. Trojan memorabilia hangs from all of the walls and ceiling. The proprietor, Julie, works behind the bar pouring drinks.

ANGLE ON COACHES TABLE

Coach McKay sits at one of the tables with his back against a far wall. USC coaches Brown, Goux, Fertig and Levy are there. There are several empty cocktail glasses on the table. Coach McKay puffs on his cigar. Goux scowls as usual.

COACH GOUX

So Fertig. What in the heck's wrong with Jones?

COACH FERTIG

I don't think anything is really wrong with him. He says his back still hurts a little bit, but I think he may just be feeling a little pressure.

COACH LEVY

He better be feeling some pressure. Mike Rae is right on his butt.

COACH BROWN

He's been spending a lot of time with his girlfriend, but I doubt that has anything to do with it.

COACH GOUX

It looks to me like someone's got Jimmy the Jet by the balls. He's distracted, and the other players sense it too. They're losing confidence in him.

Coach McKay has been listening to this conversation quietly. He bolts forward now in reaction to Goux's statement.

COACH MCKAY

Then it's a *real* good thing that the only person who needs to have confidence in him is me!

None of the other coaches say a word. They recognize McKay's seriousness about the subject. It's an awkward moment.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 Rae has looked good this spring,
 and we're lucky to have him as our
 backup. But Jones is our QB.

The coaches still don't respond.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 I'm getting outta here. Willie,
 let's go.

Coach McKay and Coach Brown get up to leave. Brown hasn't finished his drink, but it doesn't matter. When McKay is ready to go, it's time to go.

ANGLE ON COACH MCKAY-MOVING

Several students shout greetings to the coach. He ignores them mostly. Without stopping, he calls across the bar.

COACH MCKAY
 We'll see ya Julie.

JULIE
 Callin' it an early night coach?

COACH MCKAY
 Yeah, the company in here stinks.

ANGLE ON COACHES TABLE

The coaches left at the table hear clearly what coach said. They give each other surprised looks.

COACH GOUX
 What got into him?

COACH FERTIG
 Jimmy's his guy.

COACH LEVY
 He's just a little wound up about
 this Alabama game. Beating Bear
 Bryant means a lot to him.

COACH GOUX
 It means a lot to all of us. And
 to the University. That's why our
 guys have to be on the same page.
 The only way that's gonna happen
 is if our QB puts them there.

COACH FERTIG
 Jimmy will be fine.

COACH GOUX
 He better be.

Julie comes over to the table with a tray full of vodkas.

JULIE
This one's on me boys. It looks
like you could use 'em.

INT. WILLIE BROWN'S CAR - NIGHT

Coach Brown is driving Coach McKay home. McKay sits silently smoking his cigar and staring out the window as the vehicle moves slowly through nighttime Los Angeles.

COACH BROWN
Coach, you remember when we went
down to SMU in '62?

McKay doesn't say anything. Brown continues.

COACH BROWN
(continuing)
Well, you know that mostly the
whole Southwest Conference was
still white in those days.

COACH MCKAY
It didn't seem to bother you too
much then. You had a bunch of
yards that game if I remember
correctly.

COACH BROWN
Yeah, well, even so, we were
nervous going down there. And
Texas isn't nearly as bad as
Alabama. Some of the guys have
expressed concerns to me, and I
can't say that I blame them.

COACH MCKAY
Willie, listen. I need you to help
me on this. The black players look
up to you, and they will believe
you. You must tell them to focus
on football. You must tell them
that the man across the line from
them is not a white man, but a
football player. And he's a
football player who's looking to
take their head off. If we start
worrying about other things, we
could be in some serious trouble
on that field.

COACH BROWN
I'm doin' what I can coach.

COACH MCKAY
Okay then.

Coach McKay turns to stare out the window again. The car is passing through a particularly rough part of Los Angeles. There are homeless people gathered along the street. The homeless people are black and white.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

Jimmy and Dee Dee chat in between classes. They stand close together and there's notable tension.

DEE DEE

Jimmy, I've been planning this dinner for weeks! Why would you wait until now to tell me that you can't make it?!

JIMMY

I gotta lot I'm dealin' with right now. It'd be nice if you were a little more understanding.

Dee Dee's mad. She takes a moment to compose herself.

DEE DEE

This is what I'm talking about when I say you have a problem with communication, Jimmy. I can't help you with whatever's bothering you unless you talk to me. Tell me. What are you afraid of?

JIMMY

I'm not afraid of nothin'! This is just somethin' I think I need to work out on my own.

Dee Dee is hurt that he won't confide in her. She looks as if she might start crying.

DEE DEE

Why don't you just call me when you have the time.

Dee Dee walks away quickly before Jimmy can respond. Jimmy is mad at himself. He walks away in the other direction. Coach Brown, jogging across the quad, calls after him.

COACH BROWN

Jimmy hold up!

Jimmy stops and lets Brown catch up.

JIMMY

Hey coach.

COACH BROWN

I need to talk to you about a couple of things Jet. The coaches got together last night, and there's some concern about where your head is right now.

JIMMY

(a little mad)

There ain't nothing wrong with my head.

COACH BROWN

Well, there's talk that you may be wilting under the heat of bein' the general. There any truth there?

JIMMY

I'm not worried about bein' no general, I feel more like I'm competing for a job. It's frustrating.

COACH BROWN

You don't have the luxury of bein' frustrated man! The fellas see you gettin' down on yourself and it don't look good. You gotta play your way through it.

JIMMY

That's easier said than done coach. I just can't seem to relax out there. I feel like I have to prove myself every day.

COACH BROWN

(angrier)

Well, you do!

The moment is heated. Jimmy drops his head in disappointment. Coach Brown recognizes that his QB feels bad. He puts his hand on Jimmy's shoulder.

COACH BROWN

(continuing)

Everything's gonna be cool. Coach McKay thinks you can handle it. That's why you are where you are.

Jimmy eyes Coach Brown skeptically. It's important to Jimmy that Coach McKay believes in him. Brown changes gears.

COACH BROWN

(continuing)

There's somethin' else. I didn't really want to get into this but now I guess I'm gonna have to. I've heard that the fellas are worried 'bout playin' down in Alabama in the fall.

JIMMY

Yeah, they're trippin'. We're all trippin'!

COACH BROWN

I need you to get a handle on this Jimmy. Step up and take the bull by the horns. They *will* listen to you, especially the young guys.

Jimmy takes it all in. He's still not sure.

INT. FANCY BIRMINGHAM RESTAURANT - EVENING

VARIOUS ANGLES

Coach Bryant and his wife MARY sit at a table with the GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA and his wife. The waiter is pouring coffee. Everyone is laughing at a joke that Bear just finished. The Governor takes a sip.

GOVERNOR

Paul, I wish we could do this more often.

COACH BRYANT

Yessir, it's been too long.

GOVERNOR

Coach, I've been in your corner for many years.

COACH BRYANT

(interrupting)

And I thank you for that.

GOVERNOR

And I'd like to remain there for many more. But we might have a bit of a problem with you opening up with Southern Cal.

Bear pushes away from the table slowly and lights a cigarette. He looks at his wife. Both expected this.

COACH BRYANT

You bet we might. That's a heckuva good football team. Undefeated last year.

GOVERNOR

(irritated)

That's not what I mean Paul. You might've bitten off more than you can chew here. You should've checked with me before you scheduled that game. I've been gettin' a lotta phone calls from some pretty angry folks. And I can understand why they're mad. You're job could be on the line here.

Coach Bryant stands abruptly. He's mad. He leans in close to the Governor.

COACH BRYANT

Is that a threat?!

Others in the restaurant take notice. Mary Bryant is concerned but not surprised.

GOVERNOR

I just don't know if I can protect you on this one. It seems to me that you got one of the best jobs in America. You wouldn't wanna jeopardize all that now would ya?

Bear snuffs out his cigarette. He towers over the Governor.

COACH BRYANT

I didn't realize that I needed to check with you about scheduling my football team.

He takes his wife by the arm and they start to walk out. The governor calls after him.

GOVERNOR

I'm just tryin' to help!

COACH BRYANT

Well I don't appreciate you tellin' me how to run my program!

GOVERNOR

(yelling after him)
The Tide better win that game!

INT. STUDENT UNION DINING ROOM - DAY

Jimmy and Sam are having lunch together in the busy grill at the Student Union. Sam seems worried about his QB.

SAM

Yo Jet. You're in another world man. What's goin' on?

JIMMY

Nothin' much really.
(beat)
My position brings a lot of pressure man.

SAM

(jokingly)
Nah!? You're kiddin'?!

JIMMY

No, I'm not kiddin'. There's a lot that happens off the field that you don't see.

SAM

Well I may not understand everything you gotta do. But I do understand this: You're a black man playin' a white man's position. I know it ain't been easy for you. Way I figure it, if you can handle your business as well as you do, I can handle just about anything that comes my way.

JIMMY
I don't know if I've handled
things all that well.

SAM
Hey, Dickerson was way out of
line, man. I'd follow you
anywhere! Because I know that when
the pressure's on, you're gonna
come through.

JIMMY
Football is a team game Sam.

SAM
And every team needs to rely on
somebody when things get tough.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

SERIES OF ANGLES

Players practice in full pads. All drills are done with maximum effort and intensity. Lineman drive powerfully a seven-man sled. Defensive backs backpedal and turn to cover, etc. Throughout it all, coaches scream at players to pick it up. The intensity of the drills increases as the montage progresses. Skirmishes break out.

ANGLE ON JOHN PAPADAKIS

One player who embodies the maximum effort put forth is starting linebacker John Papadakis. He flies around the field with abandon. His motor is always running. Pap barks commands during a full-squad drill.

PAPADAKIS
Tody! They're coming right at you.

Papadakis taps Tody Smith on the left hip to get him to adjust slightly to the right, which he does. Jimmy is under center surveying the defensive formation.

JIMMY
Troy 14! Troy 14! Hut! Hut! Hut!

Interior linemen Graf and DAVE "BRUNO" BROWN double-team Tody. Tody stands up to try and muscle through the block. This does not work, and the two linemen drive Tody clear out of the hole. Papadakis is now fully exposed and Sam, at fullback, is headed straight for him. Pap has virtually no time to react, and Sam delivers a crushing block that sends him flying.

As the play ends, Tody is still grappling with his blockers. In his frustration, Tody grabs Graf by the facemask and begins to yank him around. The two get into it pretty heavily. Bruno, attempting to stop the fight, grabs Tody around the waist.

Papadakis, fuming with having been smashed by Sam, notices what's going on.

In a rage, he sprints to the melee and spears Bruno in the back sending the lineman crumpling to the turf in agony. It's a severely cheap shot.

WIDER

Coach Brown is about to intervene, but Jimmy is sprinting toward the fight. Coach McKay stops Brown.

COACH MCKAY
Hold on Willie.

Jimmy wedges himself in between these two massive lineman who are engaged in a brutal clench. It's a dangerous situation. Jimmy does not hesitate.

JIMMY
Come on you guys! That's enough!
Knock it off! Tody let go!

After more shouting and a few more seconds of wrestling, the two men are separated. Jimmy holds back the incensed Tody.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Get it together!

TODY
Let go of me nigger!

JIMMY
Be cool man! Take it easy.

The other players notice Jimmy's assertiveness. Trainers run over to attend Bruno. Coach Goux sprints up to Papadakis and grabs the linebacker harshly by his facemask.

COACH GOUX
What the hell was that Papadakis!
You never hit a man from behind
with your helmet you dumb
sonofabitch!

Pap tries to pull away from Goux, but the coach is a strong man. Goux raises his right hand in a fist and lowers it violently across the top of Papadakis' helmet, striking the crown with the full force of his knuckles. The blow sends Papadakis reeling. Goux raises his fist again. He is livid.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Did you hear what I said?!

Papadakis calms down. His anger turns to shame.

PAPADAKIS
Coach, coach, I'm sorry. I didn't
mean to...

Coach Goux pushes Papadakis away by his facemask.

COACH GOUX
I expect more out of you John.

Bruno stands appears to be fine. The rest of the team stands around dumbfounded. Some are wondering what happened. Some are upset. Papadakis is crushed with embarrassment. The incident is very out of character for him.

Coach McKay walks toward the action.

ANGLE ON COACH MCKAY

COACH MCKAY
Okay, quiet down now.

Most of the players get down on one knee. Some remain standing. The team forms a semi-circle around Coach.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
We've been going at it pretty hard out here today. I know things are intense. I like the enthusiasm. But I shouldn't need to remind you that we are all on the same team. It's important, especially in the heat of battle, that you all keep your heads.

Papadakis looks up at McKay with tears in his eyes. He lowers his head again. Coach feels he has made his point.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
The final depth chart for this Saturday's Spring Game will be posted in the locker room tomorrow afternoon. That's it.

The players rise and begin to make their way off the field. Papadakis runs over to Bruno to apologize.

PAPADAKIS
Dave, man, I'm so sorry. I don't know what came over me.

BRUNO
Greek, I know you're not mean spirited. It happens when things are cranked up. Forget about it.

Papadakis wraps his arms around Bruno in a massive hug of relief and thankfulness. Bruno nods and leaves. Papadakis stands by himself, astonished at Bruno's generosity. Jimmy has been hanging back to see how things would play out. He walks over.

ANGLE ON JIMMY AND PAPADAKIS

JIMMY
Pap, everything cool?

PAPADAKIS
Yeah, man. Bruno's a great guy. He's as solid a teammate as there is, and I almost screwed it up.

JIMMY

That was really unlike you man.
You can't be pullin' stunts like
that. You're one of the defensive
leaders, you can't be doin' that
kind of crap!

PAPADAKIS

You're right Jimmy, I know.

INT. COACH BRYANT'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach Bryant sits behind his large mahogany desk looking through some papers and smoking a cigarette. His office is neatly appointed with fine furniture and various awards. The intercom speaker on his desk BUZZES.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

(over speaker)

Coach Bryant. Those boys from the
Tuscaloosa Citizen Council are
here to see you.

COACH BRYANT

Send 'em in.

Coach Bryant puts away his papers, stands up and straightens his jacket. His secretary KNOCKS on the door before opening it to let in a group of five men. The men are all between 45- and 65-years-old and very white. They are all in ties and short-sleeved shirts and hold their hats in their hands.

The spokesman of the group is JIM LESTER. The large cowboy hat in his hand is black.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

Boys. Thanks for comin' all the
way out here to see me.

LESTER

Coach, we certainly appreciate you
havin' us this afternoon.

COACH BRYANT

Now, what can I do for you?

Coach Bryant motions for the men to sit down. Bear sits on the edge of his desk. Lester looks nervous but resolute.

LESTER

Coach, we have some concerns about
the game you've scheduled with
Southern California this September.

COACH BRYANT

And what concerns would those be
Mr. Lester?

LESTER

Well, sir, many of the players on
that team are colored.

COACH BRYANT

That's a very astute observation there Jim. No wonder they made you president of the council.

One of the council members laughs a little too loudly. Lester looks at him disapprovingly. The man shuts up.

LESTER

Well. The thing is. We just don't like the idea of our boys mixing it up with a bunch of nigras. Especially not on Legion Field.

The other four council members nod and murmur in agreement. Bear's expression turns from amusement to serious. He rises from his spot on his desk and now towers over Lester.

COACH BRYANT

Mr. Lester, let me set you straight on one thing right away. These are not your boys, they are my boys. I'm the one who decides who they mix it up with and where. I suggest that if you can't accept that fact, then the Tuscaloosa Citizen Council should stay home on September 12th.

Lester is taken aback by Bear's reaction.

LESTER

Uh, well, Coach Bryant. It's not just the council that's been making noise. I've heard from some of the boys in the brotherhood that are thinkin' about organizing a protest.

Bear's serious look now turns to anger. He crowds Lester, which causes him to step back and sit down hard on a nearby chair. Bear looms over him.

COACH BRYANT

Mr. Lester, let me make myself very clear here. If I hear about any of you white sheets organizing a rally around this game, I will hold you personally responsible.

LESTER

(excitedly)

But coach, those nigras just don't belong on the same field as the Tide. They just ain't worthy.

COACH BRYANT

I would think, then, that if you consider the white race to be so much better, so much more superior than any other, then you misguided sonsabitches would welcome the opportunity to prove so on the football field.

LESTER

But...

Coach Bryant isn't about to let him defend his outrageous position. He's now virtually shouting.

COACH BRYANT

Could it be, Mr. Lester, that you and your *council* are afraid that USC, with their black players, just might be as good as people say? That they might come down here and embarrass your boys?

LESTER

Well...uh...no...I mean...

COACH BRYANT

Because I'll tell you right now that we are not afraid!

There is silence for several seconds. Coach Bryant calms down.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

I think you boys know your way out.

The men scramble to exit the office. Coach Bryant turns his back on the men and walks around his desk. BUZZES intercom.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing; into box)

Wanda. Call the coaching staff and tell them to be at my house tonight for supper.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy and Dee Dee begin to tandem fold a white sheet from a pile of clean laundry. In the background, the Jerry Butler song "NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP" plays on the radio. Jimmy snatches the sheet from Dee Dee and snaps her behind with it. She shrieks.

DEE DEE

Jimmy stop it!

JIMMY

Come here girl. Gimme some lovin.'

DEE DEE

Not the way you been treatin' me lately. Forget it.

JIMMY
 I'm sorry baby. I know I haven't
 been myself. I feel like you're
 the only good thing I got goin' on
 right now. I'm not gonna screw
 that up. I'm just tryin' to keep
 it positive. You taught me that.

DEE DEE
 (playfully)
 Well it's about time you listen to
 something I say.

Dee Dee begins to sing the lyrics of the song to Jimmy. They start dancing. Jimmy smiles for the first time in a while.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER

Several black USC players, including Sam and Clarence, sit around a table at Jimmy's apartment playing dominoes and fooling around. Their mood is light. There is much joking and laughter. Jimmy and Dee Dee sit in front of the television watching a news report. They're horrified by what they see on the screen.

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)
 Two more homes belonging to black
 families were bombed last night in
 Birmingham, Alabama.

Jimmy strains to hear the report over the racket that his friends are making.

JIMMY
 (yelling)
 Hey! Shut up you guys!

The urgency in Jimmy's voice causes the guys to fall silent. They move over to the couch to see what's on the news.

ANGLE ON TV SCREEN

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)
 In the middle of the night, two
 separate explosions rocked this
 predominantly black neighborhood.

The camera pans across a bloody and brutal scene.

ANGLE ON PLAYERS

The glow of the television illuminates their shocked faces.

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)
 (continuing)
 The Ku Klux Klan has taken
 responsibility for the destruction
 and for the deaths of six people,
 including two children. This
 section of Birmingham is known as
 Dynamite Hill, so named for the
 rash of bombings that have taken
 place here over the years.

The players stare at the TV in stunned silence. No one says anything for several moments. Dee Dee's eyes are filled with tears. The last face is Sam's. His look confirms that the stark realization of the circumstances has set in.

ANGLE ON TV SCREEN

The news camera is close on a black woman wailing with grief. She stares at a burning cross in her front yard.

INT. COACH MOORE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alabama Coach Bud Moore and his wife BETTY sit in front of their television set. The same wailing black woman and burning cross are on the screen. Coach Moore has his arm around his very upset wife.

BETTY MOORE

Bud, I told you those KKK boys are crazy! I swear two of 'em tried to run me over at the market today. What do you think they're gonna do as that game gets closer? I'm scared to death!

COACH MOORE

Betty, we have no way of knowin' that what happened at the market has anything to do with our football game.

BETTY MOORE

I'm not willing to take the chance that it does! And if you cared about your family, you wouldn't be either.

INT. BRYANT'S HOME - NIGHT

Coach Bryant and his coaching staff sit around the well appointed dining room inside Paul and Mary Bryant's home. Mary clears the dishes.

MARY BRYANT

Paul, don't you keep these boys here all night. I'm gonna clean up now and let y'all talk.

COACH MOORE

Mary, it sure was kind of you to have us over on such short notice. Everything was wonderful.

All of the coaches agree. Mary smiles.

MARY BRYANT

It's no problem at all.

She disappears into the kitchen. Coach Bryant pushes away from the table and lights a cigarette.

COACH BRYANT

It seems to me that we're causin' a stir with this ballgame against USC. Y'all know about the Governor's position, and I told a couple of y'all about my meeting today with that backwards citizen's council. I think we need to clear the air amongst ourselves. Anybody that's got somethin' to say, now's the time.

There's an awkward silence. Finally Coach Moore speaks.

COACH MOORE

Well coach, I'm just not sure if playin' this game is worth the hassle. I mean folks around here just don't like it.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER

I can't walk down the street without someone given me their two cents about it. I just fear that the backlash might harm the program. If we lose fan support, it could set us back.

Coach Bryant is quiet. He surveys his coaches faces.

COACH BRYANT

Is that how most of y'all feel.

Most of the men nod and murmur. Coach Pat Dye speaks up.

COACH DYE

I'd never be one to tell you how to do things coach, but my kid's been gettin' grief at school. I've had to sort things out with the principal a coupla times. My wife is scared to death.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER

My wife was down at the post office the other day, and she come out, and all four of her tires were knifed flat. She called me practically hysterical.

COACH MOORE

One of them boys knocked over Betty's grocery cart with his truck. Darn near hit her. She's convinced it's no accident.

INT. BRYANT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUING

Mary listens intently to the conversation through the door.

INT. BRYANT'S HOME - CONTINUING

Coach Bryant snuffs out his cigarette.

COACH BRYANT

(not mad)

I'm sorry that y'all been havin' problems. Tell your families that everything's gonna be alright.

(beat)

However, my feeling is that our team can't get better if we don't play the best competition. USC is as good a team as there is out there. I realize that there's gonna be some ruffled feathers, but I gotta tell you--I DON'T CARE! This is about football! This ain't politics! Any cracker that would give up on the Tide or hassle y'all because we go up against some colored players ain't worth havin' as a fan anyhow. This game will not set our program back...this game will help our program go forward! And forward is where I intend to go.

The men can't really say much. Bear moves toward the kitchen.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

Now I appreciate all y'all's views on this, but we gotta be on the same team. No one can intimidate us. Thanks for comin' over. Again, I'm sorry your families are having difficulty. I'll make some calls and see what I can do. I'll see y'all tomorrow.

The men rise and leave in silence.

INT. BRYANT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bear walks through the door. Mary finishes up the dishes.

MARY BRYANT

Is your meeting over already Paul?

Bear leans back against the counter. Head down. He's drained.

COACH BRYANT

Mary, It's rough goin'. I sure hope I'm doin' the right thing.

Mary walks over to him. She wraps her arms around her husband.

MARY BRYANT

Nothin' you've ever done has been more right. They'll see.

INT. COLISEUM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

ANGLE ON JIMMY

Jimmy is alone in the locker room before the Spring Game. He's sitting slumped on his locker bench wearing no shirt and football pants. His cleats are untied. His shoulder pads and helmet sit on the ground next to him. Jimmy is staring at a mirror straight across the aisle. His eyes reveal that he's still extremely scared and unsure of himself.

EXT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM SPRING GAME - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

About 4,000 fans sit in the south side of the stadium. Almost everyone wears some sort of USC clothing. The USC Song girls perform cheers for the fans. The Spirit of Troy Marching Band plays fight songs. The famous Trojan white horse Traveler trots along the sidelines.

The entire USC football team waits together in the entrance to the locker room tunnel. The offensive players are in their cardinal jerseys and the defense is in their whites. There is a lot of enthusiasm from the coaches and the players.

WIDE

The whole team emerges from the tunnel and runs onto the field. The fans cheer wildly. The band strikes up. The starters huddle up on the turf, the reserves head for the north sidelines away from the crowd.

ANGLE ON INSIDE OF USC OFFENSIVE HUDDLE

All eyes are on quarterback Jimmy Jones. Jimmy tries to project confidence, but it's not working.

JIMMY

OK fellas. This is what we've been practicing for all spring. Everyone knows what they're supposed to be doing. Let's show 'em what we got.

There is a focused silence.

JIMMY

(continuing)

First play. Strong left, 28 option on two. On two. Ready, Break!

WIDER

All players yell BREAK together and the offense hustles up to the line. Across the line, Papadakis is vocally moving his defenders around. Jimmy, under center, surveys the field.

JIMMY

(continuing)

Blue 14! Blue 14! Hut! Hut!

The ball is snapped and Jimmy sprints down the line with Clarence trailing for the option pitch. The defensive end closes on Jimmy and tackles him for a loss before he can pitch the ball. His hesitation to toss to Clarence has cost the offense valuable yards.

ANGLE ON SIDELINES

Sam and Coach Levy stand next to Coach McKay, who's not happy.

COACH MCKAY
(to himself loudly)
Pitch the ball Jimmy!

Sam winces.

ANGLE ON INSIDE OF USC OFFENSIVE HUDDLE

A couple of replacements take their spots in the huddle, and a wide receiver tells Jimmy the next play. Jimmy leans in.

JIMMY
Sorry about that fellas. Alright,
alright. Split left, 44 Z-post. On
one. Ready, Break!

Jimmy comes up under center. He looks over the formation.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Ollie 32! Ollie 32! Hut!

Jimmy takes the snap and drops back. He makes reads. The coverage is good and he doesn't see anyone open.

The line can't protect any longer. Tody and Charlie fight through their blocks and both are on a beeline for Jimmy. Both defenders dive and Jimmy ducks quickly, somehow avoiding the tackle. He directs two linemen to lead block. Jimmy makes some good cuts. It's a big gain. The crowd CHEERS.

ANGLE ON SAM

Sam takes a play from Coach Levy and runs on to the field. He gets to Jimmy as the rest of the offense huddles.

SAM
You keep doin' what you do bro! I-
right 34 belly.

Jimmy appreciates the support, but he's still playing scared. He leans into the huddle.

JIMMY
I-right 34 belly on two, on two.

The huddle breaks and the formation sets. Jimmy takes the snap and turns to hand quickly to Sam. There's no hole, but it doesn't matter. Even though several players get a hand on Sam, he breaks through tackles and bounces off of defenders toward the outside. He then kicks on the speed and outpaces everyone else. It's an inspired run. Touchdown!

The crowd cheers wildly. The band immediately stands up and PLAYS FIGHT ON! The song girls do their thing.

The defense is beside itself. Coach Goux runs on to the field to chew some ass. Papadakis takes the brunt of his ire.

Sam is mobbed by his offensive teammates. Jimmy is especially pleased and impressed.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Quick shots of the Spring Game progression. Sam blows a linebacker out of the hole. Jimmy gets sacked. Mike Rae plays extremely well. He hits Chandler with a long bomb. He scrambles for a first down. Jimmy throws an interception under pressure.

Jimmy and Sam stand on the sidelines late in the game.

JIMMY

(upset)

I knew this was gonna happen! I've been losin' reps all through spring and now I'm losin' playin' time. It's not fair!

SAM

Jet, man, it ain't a big deal. Coach needs Rae to work with some of the starters to see how good he can be. He's just evaluatin' man. He ain't keepin' you down.

JIMMY

It is a big deal! How am I supposed to show how good I can be if I'm standin' here on the sideline?

SAM

They know how good you are.

ANGLE ON COACH LEVY

Coach Levy gets the nod from Coach McKay to wrap things up. Levy walks on to the middle of the field and BLOWS his WHISTLE LOUDLY. A referee tosses him the football. Levy waves up to the pressbox for the coaches to come down.

COACH LEVY

Ok! Everybody on me!

Players congratulate each other for a game well played. Coach McKay slowly makes his way to the group.

COACH MCKAY

Gentleman. Outside of a few lapses in concentration, I think you did some nice work out here today.

Players shout in agreement. Jimmy broods.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)

Settle down. The good news is that this marks the end of a solid 20 days of spring practice.

The players cheer more loudly. Hoots and hollers from all.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 The bad news is, now you all have
 to get summer jobs.

Players all boo and hiss.

COACH MCKAY
 (continuing)
 Those of you that still haven't
 arranged for work, see Coach Goux
 before school lets out. Now, most
 importantly, I don't want any of
 you wasting the hard work we've
 put in this spring. Keep working
 out, stay in shape, don't get
 lazy. I want everyone back here in
 top condition so we can go down
 South and take it to the Tide.
 Marvy, you got anything to add?

Goux moves to the center of the circle.

COACH GOUX
 Anybody who comes back fat and
 slow will be dealing with me!

It's kind of a joke, but not really.

COACH MCKAY
 That's all. Enjoy the summer.

Everybody yells in approval. Some players throw their helmets
 in the air. Many of them walk over to the stands to sign
 autographs and see their families. Sam is swamped by well
 wishers. Coach Fertig and Jimmy walk together near the melee.
 Fertig has his arm around the quarterback.

COACH FERTIG
 Jimmy, you had a great day today.

JIMMY
 It was a little short for my
 liking coach. I was just startin'
 to get comfortable, and then I get
 taken out.

COACH FERTIG
 Jim, we got no worries about your
 ability. Rae needed the work and
 we can't risk you gettin' injured.
 But don't forget that we're all in
 this thing together

JIMMY
 Then why do I feel left out?

Jimmy walks away. Coach Fertig shakes his head.

INT. COLISEUM PRESS ROOM - DAY

A group of about 10 reporters sits in the audience awaiting
 the arrival of Coach Mckay. The press room is spartan.

A few folding chairs. A blackboard. A table at the front of the room. Behind the reporters is a large window that reveals the Coliseum turf far below and the LA skyline in the distance. Coach McKay enters the room and takes the seat at the table.

COACH MCKAY

Hello boys. So nice of you to come. Furillo, the walk up didn't kill you did it?

FURILLO

No coach, I took the elevator.

COACH MCKAY

You lazy bastard. I did too.

The reporters laugh.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)

OK, who has a question?

Reporters raise hands. Coach nods. Writer Loel Shrader stands.

SHRADER

Coach, Sam Cunningham looked unstoppable out there. Will he start at fullback against Alabama?

COACH MCKAY

Well, Loel. There's a lot of evaluating to be done between now and Birmingham, but Sam is a major reason why I consider this to be the best sophomore class I've ever had at USC. He's mature physically well beyond his 19 years. And he's been very impressive in practice. But as you guys know, with younger players, we have to see how they react mentally and emotionally once the real battles begin. I think you'll be hearing a lot more from Sam Cunningham.

More hands. Coach points. Reporter Doug Krikorian stands.

KRIKORIAN

Coach, Clarence Davis had 25 carries today and this was a *scrimmage*. Are you worried about giving him the ball so often?

COACH MCKAY

Why? The ball ain't that heavy. Besides, I didn't know Clarence had joined a union.

Everyone laughs. More hands go up. Reporter John Hall stands.

HALL

Coach, what are your thoughts about taking your team down to play an all white Bama squad and the atmosphere that's likely to surround Legion Field?

Coach McKay had not really prepared to answer this question. He pauses to think over his response.

COACH MCKAY

Listen guys. We've never discussed this issue before, and in past years we've played Georgia Tech, SMU and Georgia. I don't seem to remember too many black players or fans on those teams.

Reporters nod and chuckle in agreement.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)

But the bottom line is, I'm just a football coach. Am I worried about the safety of my players? No. Coach Paul Bryant is one of the smartest men around. He knows what he's doin'. I can only control what goes on between the lines.

They want to ask more questions but McKay is ready to go.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)

Sorry guys, that's it. Enjoy your summer. We'll see you in the fall.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - DAY

ANGLE ON CONSTRUCTION SITE

Pap, Jimmy and Sam toil in the hot sun pushing overloaded wheelbarrows full of concrete. They are laborers on the second level of a campus building construction project. Below the work site, there's a rally in progress. Vietnam War protestors carry signs like, Hell No We Won't Go and Give Peace a Chance.

ANGLE ON PLAYERS

The guys stop to take a break. Pap spies a pretty girl protester.

PAPADAKIS

(yelling down to her)

Hey baby! You're too pretty to be so angry!

Pap HOWLS like a hound dog.

PAPADAKIS
 (continuing; to guys)
 You guys see that little cutie?
 She's got a set of missiles on
 her.

JIMMY
 I guess it's been a long time
 since you've been with a girl, eh
 Pap? You're actin' like a
 construction worker.

PAPADAKIS
 Well I am.

All the guys laugh. Sam and Jimmy push Pap away.

PAPADAKIS
 (continuing)
 But that gal could sure make me
 stand at attention.
 (to girl)
 Hey, can I ride in your VW bus to
 San Francisco!

The girl looks up at Pap and offers a mean gesture. Sam and Jimmy look at Pap dumbfounded.

JIMMY
 What is your problem?

SAM
 Yeah, why are hassling that poor
 girl?

PAPADAKIS
 Oh, I forgot. No one hassles
 anybody in Santa Barbara.
 Everybody's just laid back on the
 beach.

Jimmy and Pap laugh at Sam. Pap walks away. Sam grins sheepishly.

SAM
 That's not true.

JIMMY
 I know it's not. Coach Goux came
 from Santa Barbara, and he's not
 the nicest guy in the world.

Sam nods knowingly. They laugh.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 But you haven't exactly had it
 rough up there.

In the b.g., Pap is still hassling the girl.

SAM
Yeah, I guess I've been pretty
lucky.

EXT. ALABAMA GOSPEL CHURCH - DAY

WIDE ESTABLISHING

It's a sweltering summer Sunday in Tuscaloosa. Heat rises from the dirt road that runs lazily through this poor part of town. A brick walkway leads up to the open front door of a shabby old church. The sign out front reads: TUSCALOOSA BAPTIST CHURCH.

INT. ALABAMA CHURCH - CONTINUING

A SERIES OF SHOTS

The all-black congregation is small but boisterous. Everyone is on their feet swaying to the sounds coming from the large gospel choir. It's hot and muggy. Lenny Davis, Louise Davis and their children sit in the front pew. As the song ends, the congregation claps and shouts in appreciation.

ANGLE ON MINISTER

The old MINISTER LONNIE JOHNSON rises from his seat on stage and walks to the podium. He wears a three-piece suit despite the heat and carries his Bible.

MINISTER JOHNSON
Praise the Lord! I'd like to thank
y'all for coming out here today.
Thanks to Ms. Tracy and her choir
for another outstanding service.
We'll see everybody next Sunday.

WIDER

As everyone stands and begins to leave the church, Lenny hangs back to speak with the minister.

ANGLE ON LENNY AND MINISTER

UNCLE LENNY
Minister Johnson. Can I speak with
you for a second?

The minister shakes the last hands of his well-wishers and turns to face Lenny.

MINISTER JOHNSON
I'm so glad to see the Davis
family in church today. How you
doing Lenny?

UNCLE LENNY
I'm doing just fine sir. I was
hoping I could ask you a favor.

MINISTER JOHNSON
Of course.

UNCLE LENNY

Well, you're aware, of course,
that my nephew Clarence is coming
out here with his football team in
a few weeks.

MINISTER JOHNSON

Yes.

UNCLE LENNY

Well, I was wondering if you might
put in a good word with the man
upstairs for those boys.

Minister Johnson is amused. He smiles.

MINISTER JOHNSON

Now, Lenny, you know we don't ask
the Lord for such favors.

Lenny looks disappointed and slightly embarrassed. Minister
Johnson puts his hand on Lenny's shoulder.

MINISTER JOHNSON

(continuing)

But just between you and me, I've
been praying for 'em since I heard
they were coming to Birmingham.

He gives Lenny a big smile. Both men laugh.

MINISTER JOHNSON

(continuing)

You know, Lenny, He'll listen to
you too.

Lenny considers this comment thoughtfully.

EXT. SAM CUNNINGHAM'S SANTA BARBARA HOUSE - DAY

Sam emerges from the front door of his parent's small
bungalow in Santa Barbara. He's carrying three large boxes
stacked up high. The load looks very heavy, but Sam handles
it without a problem.

MR. CUNNINGHAM waits at the car for Sam to approach. He, too,
is a big man, but nowhere near the size of his son. Mr.
Cunningham reaches up for the top box and struggles under its
weight as he loads it in the trunk.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Geez, Sam, you trying to kill your
old man?

SAM

Sorry, Dad. If I don't get outta
here soon I'm gonna hit traffic
getting back to L.A.

Mr. Cunningham strains to transfer the second box into the
trunk. Sam puts in the third. Mr. Cunningham closes the trunk.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Before you go, your mom and I
would like to talk to you about
something.

INT. SAM CUNNINGHAM'S SANTA BARBARA HOUSE - CONTINUING

Sam and his dad sit on the couch in the family's modest living room. MRS. CUNNINGHAM walks from the kitchen carrying a tray with three glasses of iced tea. She's a pretty woman in her late 40s. Her frame is lean under a casual dress.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM
Sam, we're sure gonna miss you
around here.

SAM
I'll miss you too mama. Now what's
this all about? I gotta get going.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Well, son, we wanted to talk to
you about your trip to Birmingham.

SAM
What about it?

MRS. CUNNINGHAM
Well we're worried about you going
all the way down there. I mean,
it's so far away, and...and we
just want you to be careful.

SAM
(exasperated)
Careful about what Mama? We just
goin' down there to play ball.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Well, Sam, we know that's all it
is to you, but not everyone thinks
the same way.

SAM
I don't care about what anyone
else thinks. All I want to do is
get this first game under my belt
and not get yelled at too much.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM
Sam, just be careful where you go
down there and who you talk to.

SAM
I'm not goin' down there to
socialize Mama.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
I know, I know...

SAM
I think I can handle this. I'm a
grown man, you know.

Sam walks over to his mom and puts his arm around her.

SAM
(continuing)
Don't you worry mama. Everything
will be okay.

EXT. PI KAPPA ALPHA FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

WIDE ESTABLISHING

PIKE is white fraternity at USC. Their house is majestic; big white columns frame a huge front porch. Banners hang from upper floor windows welcoming the brothers back from summer. It's late on the Friday night before football summer training camp starts. PIKE is having a big open party. A preponderance of attractive college girls are dressed in revealing summer clothes. Almost all of the girls are white.

INT. PI KAPPA ALPHA FRATERNITY HOUSE - CONTINUING

VARIOUS ANGLES

The large dining room has been turned into a dance floor. The party is in full swing and there's barely room to move. Football players and fraternity members Allan Graf and Allen Gallaher have invited several teammates to the party including Jimmy, Sam, Tody and Pap.

GALLAHER
I'm happy you guys could all make
it. How was your summer?

SAM
Man, we pushed concrete all over
campus. It was a drag.

PAPADAKIS
Yeah, but look at these guns!

He flexes his biceps. He gets hassled.

JIMMY
I'm glad I don't have to do that
for the rest of my life. What'd
you guys do?

GRAF
I worked in the movies as an
extra.

PAPADAKIS
Yeah it looks like you been
sittin' around all summer.

Pap motions to Graf's oversized belly. Graf bucks up and runs into Pap with a chest bump.

GRAF
(kidding)
You wanna piece of this?

All the guys laugh. Sam watches the action on the dance floor.

SAM

Hey, check out Tody. He's gettin'
his groove on over there.

Tody dances with three white girls. He's the center of
attention. He shows some surprising dance moves.

PAPADAKIS

I'd like to see him move that well
on the football field.

A group of PIKE fraternity members watch Tody from the top of
the stairs. They are very drunk. They are not pleased.

PIKE MEMBER ONE

What's that big jackass doing?

PIKE MEMBER TWO

Hey, man, that's Tody Smith. Graf
and Gallaher invited him.

PIKE MEMBER ONE

I don't care who he is. I don't
like him coming into our house and
acting like he owns the place.

PIKE MEMBER THREE

Man, calm down. You're just pissed
because he's dancing with your ex.

PIKE MEMBER ONE

That's not the only reason!

The big white man takes off down the stairs before any of his
brothers can stop him. He pushes his way through the crowded
dance floor and heads straight for Tody.

Tody has his back to the approaching aggressor, who cold
cocks him, which sends Tody reeling. In a second, the guy is
on top of him swinging wildly. The dance floor clears as
partiers scream and shout.

Two more PIKES jump on Tody and the group takes him to the
ground. Tody musters all of his strength and shoots up to his
feet, throwing two of the guys several feet in the process.
More PIKES join the fray and the group overpowers Tody.

The football players sprint across the dance floor to help
Tody. They begin throwing fraternity guys off of their
teammate. They aren't fighting, they're trying to stop the
assault. Graf and Gallaher attempt to hold back the mob.

PAPADAKIS

(shouting)

Knock it off! Get outta the way!

Gallaher does his best to keep anyone else from joining in.
One guy grabs a chair behind Sam and is about to hit him.

JIMMY

Sam! Duck!

Jimmy dives across and knocks the fraternity guy to the ground. Sam is unharmed.

SAM
Thanks bro.

Tody is able to get up and he's incensed. He has taken out several PIKES and he's looking for more. Pap grabs Tody in a huge bear hug to stop him. Tody is struggling to get away, but Pap is able to get him to calm down somewhat.

JIMMY
Come on big guy, let it go. Forget these guys, let's get outta here.

Graf and Gallaher hold back their fraternity brothers.

GRAF
Hey guys, we're sorry about this.
We can't control all the drunks.

Jimmy and Sam come over and help John lead Tody out the front door. Several fraternity guys lie bleeding on the floor.

GRAF
(continuing)
See ya on Monday.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

OVERHEAD

The entire USC football team is in the middle of a brutal set of conditioning drills during summer double days. The men wear t-shirts, shorts, cleats and helmets. There are five separate stations set up. It's a very hot day.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Coach Goux is in charge of the "Packer" drill. This is where the entire group of players runs in place until coach blows his whistle. Players hit the deck chest first and then push their bodies off the ground and back up to running as quickly as possible. Goux is merciless with this group of lineman. It's agonizing to watch.

COACH GOUX
Let's move it ladies! Get off the deck! No resting Yary! Let's go!

There are MOANS of pain and exhaustion. Goux walks up and down the row of men shouting. The subject of his wrath at the moment is offensive tackle MARV MONTGOMERY.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Come on Monty! You're barely moving! You need to get some of that baby fat off of you son!

Montgomery is 6'6" and as such he towers over the coach. He focuses his eyes straight over his head and struggles to get his knees higher. Goux BLOWS his WHISTLE sharply.

The men drop again and struggle back up with varying degrees of success. Goux screams at Montgomery the entire time.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Get up Montgomery! Move your
carcass!

Montgomery finally rises and attempts to jog again. With Goux back in his face, Montgomery's eyes glaze over and the big man collapses in a heap. Goux stands over him.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Get up Montgomery! This isn't nap
time!

Montgomery is out. The heat has finally got him, the other players stop running in place and gather around him. Goux pushes them back in line.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Who told you guys to stop! Keep
running! Go on!
(to sideline)
Jack! Get over here!

Head trainer JACK WARD runs over. Ward is mid-40s with a cigarette behind one ear and a racing form in his pocket.

JACK WARD
You kill another one coach?

COACH GOUX
Not yet. But I'm workin' on it.

Ward kneels down to attend to Montgomery. He unsnaps his helmet and pours water on his face. Montgomery eventually comes to, dazed. Ward cracks a smelling salt and waves it under his nose. Montgomery's eyes widen and he bolts up.

INT. USC TRAINING ROOM - DAY

WIDE

The training room is in a frenzy. It seems nearly every player on USC's team has some kind of ache or pain. They limp about the crowded space in various states of dress--most are wearing nothing but shorts or jocks.

ANGLE ON ICE BATH

In one corner, several USC lineman sit in a huge metal tub filled with water and ice. It's a tub made for four, but currently there are six guys squeezed in. It's comical.

Allan Graf, John Vella, Allen Gallaher, Bruno Brown, Wayne Yary and Gerry Mullins shiver together in the freezing water. Tody and Charlie Weaver approach the tub looking to get in.

CHARLIE
 Oh man...what is this, some kind
 of orgy? Y'all look like a bunch
 of horny eskimos.

Charlie cracks up at his joke. The guys in the tub laugh.
 Tody barely acknowledges the joke. His demeanor is much more
 sullen than normal. Graf speaks for the group.

GRAF
 (joking)
 Sorry guys, this tub is for
 offensive lineman only. No
 defensive players.

All of his tubmates chortle in agreement. Charlie plays along.

CHARLIE
 Oh, that's cool. I thought it was
 for slow, fat white dudes.

Big laughs from everyone. Charlie slaps Tody on the back.
 Tody glares at him.

CHARLIE
 (continuing; joking)
 Or maybe y'all just don't want any
 brothers in the tub. You're afraid
 some of our quick black moves
 might rub off on you, and coach
 will turn you into a defensive
 end, eh Big Al?

GRAF
 I wouldn't care if you guys were
 orange. There ain't no more room
 in here.

Bruno begins to get up.

BRUNO
 That's OK. I'm gettin' out anyway.

GRAF
 Yeah, alright, me too.

Both men get out. Gallaher follows. Charlie hands them towels.

CHARLIE
 That's more like it.

Tody and Charlie ease themselves into the freezing water.
 It's a slow process. Yary moves over to make room.

YARY
 Tody, I heard you had some trouble
 over at the PIKE house.

Tody's expression suggests he's still brooding over the fight.

TODY
 Yeah, I was doin' my thing, and a
 bunch of those frat boys jumped me.

CHARLIE
That is messed up.

TODY
Tell me about it. There were a lotta dudes, man. I coulda been killed.

MULLINS
I think these double days might kill me. Goux is all over me.

VELLA
He's all over all of us. Coach is fired up big time.

YARY
It's only been five practices and I feel like I've been through a whole season already.

CHARLIE
And we haven't put on pads yet.

MINI-MONTAGE SUMMER CAMP

Players in pads huffing through drills. A bunch of big collisions. Coaches screaming. Players in agony. Jimmy fumbles the ball from center. Jimmy overthrows Cunningham in the flat. Jimmy runs out of the pocket and barely gets back to line of scrimmage.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE COACH MCKAY'S OFFICE - LATER

Jimmy stands for a moment outside of McKay's office to gather himself. He takes a deep breath. He looks defeated. Jimmy knocks softly on the door.

JIMMY
Coach McKay?

COACH MCKAY (O.S.)
Come in Jimmy.

INT. COACH MCKAY'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Jimmy walks into the office and remains standing. He doesn't really know what to do. McKay smokes a cigar.

COACH MCKAY
Have a seat son.

Jimmy sits down. He appears dejected.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
I'll get right to the point Jimmy. You've had some difficulty out on the football field lately.

Jimmy drops his head.

JIMMY

I know, Coach, I've been tryin'.
Really. I just can't seem to get
it together out there.

COACH MCKAY

I'm not worried about your
physical ability. I know you're a
great quarterback son.

Jimmy perks up a little.

COACH MCKAY

(continuing)

I'm worried about your lack of
confidence and how that's
affecting your ability to lead
this team.

(beat)

We're going into a very hostile
situation next week in Alabama.
This team needs to know they can
rely on you to handle it. Not
physically, but mentally.

JIMMY

Coach, I've been trying to get a
handle on things, but I can't get
anybody to listen. They don't
believe in me. I'm afraid their
minds are made up.

COACH MCKAY

Jimmy, that's your problem. You
can't be afraid. Of anything. If
you want this team to respect you,
if you want them to follow you,
you must show courage in all
situations. The great Coach
Lombardi once said that conquests
are won primarily in the *hearts* of
men. And once you have won their
hearts, they'll follow you
anywhere. But to win their hearts,
you must *show heart*.

(beat)

I know you're a little down right
now, Jimmy. It's going to take all
of your courage to get back up.
You're my starter, I believe in
you. I need you to stand up and
show me you believe in yourself.
I know you can.

Jimmy is encouraged by McKay's words.

INT. GRAF AND GALLAHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's the Thursday before Alabama game week and double days
are nearly over. Graf and Gallaher are in their Trojan Hall
dorm room. Jimmy appears in the doorway.

JIMMY
 Hey you guys. Thanks for
 protecting my backside. Great job
 today.

Jimmy then notices Gallaher is fully dressed.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 Gallaher you always sleep in your
 clothes? We got bed check in a few
 minutes.

Gallaher blows him off.

GALLAHER
 Yeah I know.

JIMMY
 Who's checking tonight?

GRAF
 Goux.

Just then they all hear a door slam way down the hall. Goux
 is on his way. Jimmy's eyes widen.

JIMMY
 I'm outta here. See ya tomorrow.

Jimmy disappears down the hall. Graf gets under the covers.

GRAF
 You better get ready for bed.

Gallaher is looking anxiously out the window.

EXT. TROJAN HALL DORM - CONTINUING

There's a small car idling in the parking lot. Inside is a
 cute girl staring back impatiently.

INT. GRAF AND GALLAHER'S ROOM - CONTINUING

GALLAHER
 I got get outta this place.

GRAF
 Are you crazy?

GALLAHER
 I'm dyin'. My girl is waitin' for
 me. I ain't got much time.

GRAF
 Why don't you at least wait until
 after he checks and then go?

Gallaher looks quickly out the window.

EXT. TROJAN HALL DORM - CONTINUING

The car backs out of its parking space, preparing to leave.

INT. GRAF AND GALLAHER'S ROOM - CONTINUING

GALLAHER

Dude she's leavin'! I'm goin'. I haven't seen her in two weeks. I'm outta here.

GRAF

It's your funeral.

GALLAHER

I don't care. I can pull it off.

Gallaher gets up and pulls the blankets off his bed. He starts fluffing up his pillow. Graf sits up.

GRAF

What are you doing?

GALLAHER

I'm going to bed.

Gallaher walks over and grabs a stand-up lamp set in the corner, lays the lamp on his bed and stuffs clothing around it. He puts the covers over the lamp. It looks like a body.

GALLAHER

(continuing)

There. I'm sleeping.

GRAF

You're out of your mind.

GALLAHER

See ya later.

Gallaher's shadow climbs out the window into the night.

INT. JIMMY AND CLARENCE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy and Clarence are in the room down the hall from Graf and Gallaher. Jimmy hears the ruckus of Gallaher climbing out his window. He goes to look outside and sees the big man sneaking away from the building. Jimmy almost calls out to Gallaher but decides against it. There's a loud knock at his door, and he jumps back into bed.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - NIGHT

Coach Goux opens the door into the room.

COACH GOUX

Hey fellas. How ya doin' tonight?

Jimmy and Clarence are already in bed with the lights out.

CLARENCE

Good coach.

COACH GOUX

Jimmy, you've done well this summer. Clarence keep runnin' hard.

Both guys mumble thanks, and Goux continues down the hall. He reaches Papadakis and Carter's room. He opens the door.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Pap, Kent, you guys in bed?

Pap and Kent are in bed.

PAPADAKIS
Yeah coach, we're out.

COACH GOUX
Nighty night ladies!

Both guys laugh and grumble.

INT. GRAF AND GALLAHER'S ROOM - CONTINUING

Graf lays in his bed when he hears Goux coming down the hall. The KNOCKS get progressively louder. The footsteps are very close now. A look of panic comes over his face.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Coach Goux approaches Graf's door and KNOCKS loudly. He opens the door and takes a step inside.

COACH GOUX
Ten o'clock. You guys settled in?

Goux looks around the dark room. Graf rustles around.

GRAF
Yeah, coach.

Goux's gaze turns toward Gallaher's bed.

COACH GOUX
Gallaher. You asleep?

There's no response.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Gallaher?

Still nothing. Coach Goux flips the light switch on the wall. The lamp that has been doubling as Gallaher's body turns on under the covers. Goux's face starts to turn red.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
What in the world!? Graf, what's up with Gallaher!?

Graf squints at Goux.

GRAF
(attempting humor)
I dunno coach. I guess he's all fired up for tomorrow's practice.

Goux's rage subsides a little bit. He cracks a small smile.

COACH GOUX

Very funny Graf! I can't believe this. You tell Gallaher that no matter what time he gets back here, he's to go see Coach McKay.

GRAF

Sure coach, I'll tell him.

COACH GOUX

I don't care how late it is!

Coach Goux leaves the room and slams the door. He can be heard CUSSING and CHUCKLING as he continues down the hall.

EXT. TROJAN HALL DORM - LATER

The shadow of Gallaher stumbles across the grass toward his dorm room window. He is drunk. He bumps hard into the wall and feels his way toward his window.

INT. GRAF AND GALLAHER'S ROOM - LATER

Graf is awakened by Gallaher's loud entrance. Gallaher's figure clamors through the window although he's trying to be quiet. He knocks several items from the desk in a racket. Graf sits up from his bed.

GRAF

What time is it?

GALLAHER

Shhh. I dunno. I think it's around one o'clock.

Gallaher clumsily tries to undress. Graf gets up and flips the wall switch. Gallaher's bed illuminates.

GALLAHER

(continuing)

Uh oh...

GRAF

That's right you idiot. Goux came in here and did the exact same thing. You're screwed. You're supposed to go see Coach McKay right away.

GALLAHER

It's too late man.

GRAF

Goux said it doesn't matter what time. You're supposed to go see coach. I would do it if I were you.

Gallaher is stunned. He's busted.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAWN

Gallagher is monitored by a football assistant in the morning light. He's bear crawling slowly around the deserted field.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA PRESS ROOM - DAY

Coach Bryant stands at the podium in the midst of his weekly press conference with local reporters. Several of the newsmen raise their hands to ask questions. Bear calls on one.

COACH BRYANT

Next question.

REPORTER ONE

Coach Bryant. We're gettin' an awful lot of letters at the paper from Bama fans who are upset about your opener.

COACH BRYANT

(irritated)

Yeah, I been readin' those.

REPORTER ONE

Do you have any reaction?

COACH BRYANT

Yeah. I wish you'd stop printing 'em.

There's some tension lifted, but the reporter presses.

REPORTER ONE

Do you intend to continue avoiding the issue?

This makes Bear mad. He stares hard at the writer.

COACH BRYANT

I avoid nothing. I believe my record speaks for itself.

REPORTER TWO

Then you won't comment on the effect this game might have on your players and the community?

Bryant realizes that he must address the issue. And he's not happy about it.

COACH BRYANT

Let me tell y'all first off. I don't think there would be any issue if y'all didn't make it such a crisis. But my first responsibility is to my football players. We are trying to develop not just superior athletes at Alabama, we're trying to develop superior human beings.

(more)

COACH BRYANT (cont'd)
 Every day at Bama we're turning
 boys into men. Part of that
 transformation is learning to deal
 with all kinds of people and all
 kinds of situations. We must teach
 them to recognize the difference
 between perception and reality.
 This game is an opportunity for
 them to do that. We need to play
 the best teams out there. Playing
 in an opener like the one against
 Southern Cal will make our team
 better, but more importantly, it
 will make our players better men.
 That's all I have to say about it
 right now.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

ANGLE ON JIMMY JONES

It's the first day of game week. Things are intense. Jimmy is
 under center against a skeleton scout team defense. He takes
 the snap and drops back quickly. He makes two reads and turns
 to dump the ball off to Clarence in the flat.

ANGLE ON COACH FERTIG

COACH FERTIG
 Atta boy Jimmy! Great read.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Sam lined up at fullback. Papadakis encouraging teammates.
 Everything is very intense. Coaches yelling at players.

ANGLE ON SAM CUNNINGHAM

Sam takes a fake handoff from Jimmy up the middle. A pass
 play develops and Sam does a button hook over the middle.
 Chandler does a square in from his wide receiver position,
 and Jimmy nails him in the chest with a good pass. The scout
 team linebacker pops Chandler and the ball springs loose.

Sam beats everyone to the football, scoops it up and delivers
 a crushing hit to a defensive back attempting to tackle him.
 The defender goes flying and Sam takes it in for a score.

ANGLE ON COACH MCKAY AND LEVY

Coach McKay stands with Coach Levy observing the play.

COACH LEVY
 I tell ya coach. Sam just keeps
 getting better everyday. He's a
 cut above.

COACH MCKAY
 The kid's very impressive Davey.
 But game conditions are a whole
 lot different than out here.
 (more)

COACH MCKAY (cont'd)
It'll be interesting to see how he
handles the pressure.

Levy walks in from the sideline and BLOWS his WHISTLE loudly.

COACH LEVY
Okay, that's it! Gather around!

Everybody meets at midfield. Coach McKay stands in the middle.

COACH MCKAY
Gentlemen. I would like to commend
you on a good first practice.

The guys are tired. Coach Goux stands near McKay.

COACH GOUX
It's game week ladies! Let's hear
some noise!

The players HOOT and WHISTLE with enthusiasm.

COACH MCKAY
That's right. I know it feels good
to finally be practicing for an
opponent. Let's keep working to
minimize the mistakes and come out
here and do it again tomorrow.
Make sure all of your stuff is
cleared out of the dorms. Get
plenty of rest.

The team starts to get up and leave the field.

COACH GOUX
Gallaher! You ain't going anywhere
yet. Let's go!

Gallaher drags himself toward the endzone to begin his bear
crawls. Jimmy approaches Tody, Charlie and a few other black
defenders who walk together.

JIMMY
Hey fellas! Hold up.

The men slow down to let Jimmy catch up.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Hey. A bunch of us are getting
together tonight at my place. I'd
like you guys to join us.

Tody looks at Charlie with suspicion.

TODY
A bunch of who? Your offense? I
don't mingle with the offense.

JIMMY
Just do me a favor, come over okay?

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Sam gets dressed after practice. Jimmy, already dressed, walks around to various black teammates to make sure that they'll be at his house later. He approaches Sam.

JIMMY

You're coming over right Sam?

SAM

Yeah, definitely.

Jimmy sits down near Sam's locker.

JIMMY

You're really starting to make a name for yourself out there man.

SAM

Shoot Jimmy, I'm lucky I remember where to line up half the time. You make it look easy.

JIMMY

Are you kiddin' me? You're the most naturally talented football player I've ever seen. You can play and you know it.

SAM

That's nice of you to say, man, but I gotta lot to learn to get to where you all are.

JIMMY

You'll get there.

Sam seems as if he'd like to get something off his chest.

SAM

You know, that's why I like bein' in the same backfield with you guys. You, Clarence, Charlie are always encouraging me, helpin' me.

(beat)

I never figured I'd tell you this, but you're one of the reasons I came to USC.

Jimmy is touched by the sentiment.

SAM

(continuing; joking)

Plus, Coach Goux said he'd break both my legs if I didn't.

JIMMY

He said that to me too!

Both players laugh.

SAM
Yeah, Coach Goux sure knows how to
get his point across.

INT. JIMMY JONES APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dee Dee sits on the couch reading a magazine. Jimmy rushes around getting everything ready for the meeting. Dee Dee notices his sense of purpose.

DEE DEE
Jimmy, you haven't stopped running
around here all night. What are
you up to?

Jimmy doesn't really slow down.

JIMMY
I'm just trying to get things
ready around here. All the fellas
are coming over.

DEE DEE
What for?

JIMMY
I wanted to get everybody together
before the trip for kind of a
players-only type of meeting. I
decided to have it here.

Dee Dee breaks into a big smile. She gets up from the couch and walks over to Jimmy. She forces him to stop for a second and gives him a hug.

DEE DEE
Baby, I'm so proud of you. I know
how hard you've worked on the
field and to get those guys to
respect you. And now look, you're
still the starting quarterback
just like I knew you'd be. You're
their leader.

JIMMY
Yeah, I guess things are working
out okay. I couldn't have done it
without you baby. Thanks for
believing I was number one.

They kiss and hug for a few moments. Jimmy then playfully pushes Dee Dee toward the door.

JIMMY
(continuing)
But now you gotta go. Sorry.

Dee Dee mockingly frowns and comes back to give him one more quick kiss. She's out the door.

INT. JIMMY JONES LIVING ROOM - LATER

There are about a dozen black players gathered in Jimmy's living room. They are sitting on the couch, floor. Jimmy is standing by the door about to get things started. Just then Tody barrels through the door, and it whacks Jimmy.

JIMMY

Geez, Tody. Take it easy.

TODY

Hey, I showed up didn't I? Now what's this all about?

Other guys nod and SNORT in agreement. Dickerson seems particularly annoyed. Jimmy raises his hand to quiet everybody down.

JIMMY

Here's the deal. I thought it would be a good idea for us to get together and talk about the trip.

TODY

What's to talk about? Ain't we gonna just go down to Alabama and whoop up on some white boys?

Many guys shout and laugh. Tody is serious. Jimmy doesn't laugh. He tries to gain control again.

JIMMY

I don't mean the game. We know what to do on the football field. I'm worried about all the other stuff that could happen out there.

Charlie Young stands up.

CHARLIE

Yeah, man. I been thinking about that. Now I ain't afraid of no man, but I ain't never been around 70,000 angry white folks before.

Clarence Davis stands up.

CLARENCE

Well, it ain't just in the stadium, it's the hotel, town...

JIMMY

We just need to stay cool and, most of all, stick together. If we don't go lookin' for trouble, it's likely we won't get none.

Sam is taken aback by the seriousness of the conversation. He studies the faces of his teammates.

SAM

I'm all for stayin' outta trouble.

TODY

I'm not gonna go lookin' for trouble or nothing like that, but I'm gonna be prepared. You don't see any brothers playin' down there do ya? I won't be taking any grief from nobody.

JIMMY

You won't have to worry about takin' nothin' so long as our eyes are open and we back each other up.

SAM

Right on. I'm with ya.

EXT. USC PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The tension and enthusiasm for Saturday's game is increasing in equal proportion.

ANGLE ON DEFENSIVE HUDDLE

John Papadakis is a step back from the huddle, receiving defensive signals from Coach Goux on the sideline. He ducks inside the huddle to relay the information.

PAPADAKIS

Okay men. I'm going in. Omaha 432. Mike blitz. Omaha 432. Mike blitz. Ready, break!

The huddle BREAKS as one and the defense ambles up to the line. The offense breaks its huddle and comes to scrimmage. Papadakis is hopping around all over the place. He fakes into one hole to try and draw the lineman into a penalty. He backs off. He does it again. The scout team quarterback looks over the defense and begins to call signals.

SCOUT QB

Red 15! Red 15! Check. Check. Blue 27! Blue 27! Hut! Hut! Hut!

Papadakis inches up to the line again. As soon as the ball is snapped he fires into the two gap. He's through it before the scout linemen can get out of their stances.

The QB pitches the ball to the tailback and Pap almost intercepts the pitch. As it is, he's on top of the running back as soon as the guy can gather in the ball. Pap makes a strong tackle for a five yard loss. His teammates are around him immediately. Pap jumps up with typical enthusiasm.

PAPADAKIS

That's what I'm talking about!

Tody bumps chests with him.

TODY

You're one bad Greek sombitch!

Coach Goux BLOWS his WHISTLE and walks toward the melee.

COACH GOUX
 Alright! Great play! Take five.
 (to sidelines)
 Let's get some water over here!

Student managers run on to the field with bottles of water and pass them around to the defense, most of whom have taken a knee. Papadakis remains standing and refuses the water.

PAPADAKIS
 Listen up for a second. I want each and every one of you to know something. I love this defense. I consider each one of you my blood brother, and I cannot wait to go into battle with you on Saturday.

TODY
 Oh here we go. Hail Caesar!

The rest of the guys crack up. Pap smiles.

PAPADAKIS
 Caesar was Roman you moron.

Tody shrugs. Pap is not through.

PAPADAKIS
 (continuing)
 Seriously though. It will be my honor to shed blood for the Trojans in Birmingham. On me, let's get a defense.

All the men gather around Papadakis with their hands in the middle of the circle.

PAPADAKIS
 (continuing)
 One, two, three...

GROUP
 DEFENSE!

EXT. USC GYM - DAY

Practice has just ended on the Thursday before USC travels to Birmingham. The team is walking from the practice field to the gym and their locker room. The players are in shorts and shoulder pads and carry their helmets.

At the entrance to the gym they can see and hear the THUMPING SOUNDS of the Spirit of Troy marching band. The band, dressed in full uniform, finishes "Fight On!", the Trojans signature song. The Song Girls are there as well. They dance in unison as the team approaches. It's a pre-trip rally for the team.

The band, known for its fun-loving attitude, raises their arms and holds their fingers in the "V for Victory" sign. Shouts of FIGHT ON! come from most members. Band director ART BARTNER is on top of a ladder and leads the festivities.

BARTNER
Fight On! Gather around guys.

The team gathers in a circle and is surrounded by the band and cheerleaders.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The band PLAYS various Trojan songs. The players are into it. They SHOUT and dance and goof off. They ogle the beautiful Song Girls. Bartner is animated as always.

BARTNER
(to team)
Trojans! We can not tell you how
excited we are that football
season is finally here!

SHOUTS and DRUM RIFFS from the band.

BARTNER
(continuing)
And we want to wish you the very
best luck in the game this weekend
against the big ugly Bear and his
overmatched Crimson Tide!

Louder SHOUTS and DRUM RIFFS from the band. Bartner turns to face his group and raises his baton.

BARTNER
(continuing; to band)
Conquest! One! Two! Hut! Hut! Hut!

The band LAUNCHES into the famous USC song, "CONQUEST". All of the players raise the "V for Victory." It's a song that always fires up everybody. In the middle of the song, the band begins to lead a procession into the gym and through to the locker room.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

The players follow through the halls and into the "Dungeon". As the group enters the main locker room, all of the assistant coaches are waiting against the far wall. The band files in and lines the perimeter of the room.

The song ends as the last members of the team file in. The players yell with great enthusiasm. A RHYTHMIC CHANT. Coach Goux stands up on a table in preparation for a speech.

COACH GOUX
Quiet!

The players and band are immediately silent.

COACH GOUX
(continuing; intense
calmness)
Gentlemen. I'd like to talk to you
about conquest.

The players listen intently. There is no fooling around. Goux pauses for effect.

COACH GOUX
(continuing;
intensity rising)
A conquest is the act of
conquering. It's the act of going
into another man's house and
taking everything he has.

Some players agree with vocal "YEAHS" and "THAT'S RIGHT."
Goux becomes more animated.

COACH GOUX
(continuing;
increasing intensity)
Now, when we go into Birmingham,
Alabama on Saturday, we will be
looking for a conquest.

More SHOUTS from the players. DRUM RIFFS from the band.

COACH GOUX
(continuing; yelling)
I said we will be looking for a
conquest!

The players all SHOUT agreement this time. LOUDER DRUMS.

COACH GOUX
(continuing; arms
wave wildly)
When we set foot on Legion Field,
our goal will be to take
everything that the Crimson Tide
has ever had!

The players are really starting to get into it now.

COACH GOUX
(continuing; yelling)
We will take their hearts and rip
them from their chests!

LOUDER YELLING. Goux raises both hands into a claw position.

COACH GOUX
(continuing; louder)
We will crush their desire!

Even LOUDER. Tody Smith jumps up on the table and starts
stomping around. The BAND THUMPS LOUDLY.

COACH GOUX
(continuing)
Shut up! Shut up!

Every player is immediately silent, as is the band.

COACH GOUX
 (continuing; louder)
 We will torch their confidence and
 rob them of their will to be on
 the same battlefield!

The players don't contain their enthusiasm. Tody reaches down and grabs Pap's hand. He pulls his teammate up on to the table. Both begin stomping around with tremendous furor.

COACH GOUX
 (continuing)
 Quiet!

Immediate silence.

COACH GOUX
 (continuing; louder
 than ever)
 But the most important thing we
 will take in our conquest is the
 pride of the Tide! And the reason
 we will be able to do these things
 is because we are the University
 of Southern California Trojans!

It's now a frantic melee. Guys are SHOUTING at the top of their lungs. Sam yells to Jimmy.

SAM
 This is awesome! I'm ready to play
 right now!

JIMMY
 (knowingly)
 Wait til you get to Birmingham.

GROUP
 We are! 'SC! We are! 'SC!

This SHOUT continues for several rounds. It's very loud. Players SHOUT in each other's faces. This is the release of a six months worth of anticipation for this game.

Eventually, all that can be heard is sustained yelling. The band STRIKES UP "FIGHT ON!" and everyone joins in with the LYRICS. Players are jumping up and down in a frenzy. The guys on the table are stomping their feet rapidly. The feet move so fast that they're nothing but a blur.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES

It's very quiet on board the Trojans' United charter flight to Birmingham. All of the players wear blue blazers, slacks and red ties; their travel uniform. Many players sleep or look out the window, some play cards.

Coach McKay and Coach Levy sit together in the front of the main cabin. McKay has a cocktail on his tray and he reads the paper. Goux and Fertig sit directly behind them.

Tody Smith sits by the window up front with the seniors. He seems fidgety. Charlie Weaver sleeps in the seat on the aisle next to him. Tody unbuckles his seat belt.

TODY
Hey Charlie, wake up man, I gotta
take a leak.

Charlie grumbles and moves moves his legs out of the way to let Tody get by. As big as they both are, it's quite a squeeze to make it past.

TODY
(continuing)
Shoot bro, can't you just get up.

CHARLIE
Shut up man, I'm sleepin'.

Tody finally makes it into the aisle. He looks around the cabin nervously. He reaches up and unlatches the overhead bin and grabs his carry-on bag. Tody then makes his way down the aisle to the bathroom.

INT. AIRPLANE BATHROOM - CONTINUING

Tody struggles to get his massive frame and carry-on bag into the tiny stall. He sets his bag on the sink and looks at himself in the mirror. Beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

Tody then unzips his bag and reaches inside. He puts his hand under some extra clothing and feels around on the bottom. His hand finds the butt of a small handgun. He pulls out the gun and holds it in front of his face. He eyes the gun nervously.

EXT. BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY

ANGLE ON MOBILE STAIRCASE

Two black runway workers scurry to roll the stairs in place at the door of the parked United plane. The heat and humidity are stifling. The men sweat through their clothes.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - CONTINUING

A stewardess pulls down on the airplane door handle and leans against the swinging door. The door swings open. The bright light from outside is blinding. Coaches exit.

Jimmy is the first player out the door. Shading his eyes from the glare, he can't believe what he sees.

EXT. BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT TARMAC - CONTINUING

The Alabama Million Dollar band stands in formation in full uniform. The Bama cheerleaders are on the tarmac as are about 50 officials, press and well wishers.

As soon as Jimmy appears on the top of the staircase, the band breaks into "Fight On!" the Trojan fight song. The players are astonished at the reception. Many raise the "V for Victory" sign and smile at each other in surprise as they descend on to the tarmac. It's surreal.

Two giant charter buses idle nearby. Each has a big sign draped along its side that reads USC TROJAN FOOTBALL TEAM. Two cops sit on their motorcycles with lights flashing. The team assembles along a red carpet set out just for their arrival and listen to the band. The coaches are chatting with Alabama officials, accepting paperwork and room keys.

When the band stops, everyone applauds. The coaches gesture for the players to board the buses. Jimmy and the offense get on one, the defense boards the other. They wave in appreciation to the band.

INT. OFFENSIVE BUS - CONTINUING

As players find their seats, the driver puts the bus in gear and pulls away. As if on that signal, the band breaks into "Dixie", the quintessential song of the South. Coach McKay chuckles softly. Everybody enjoys the joke. Jimmy looks out his window to see the band waving goodbye.

EXT. BIRMINGHAM STREETS - CONTINUING

The cops and the two charter buses pull out of the airport and on to the streets of surrounding Birmingham. The neighborhood is decidedly run down. This is the black part of town. The players stare from their windows in awe at the remarkably shabby conditions.

Another thing that's striking is that the inhabitants of nearly every house are out on their porches waving wildly at the buses. The black citizens of Birmingham have been awaiting the arrival of USC's integrated team for months. It's almost like a holiday. Some porches have signs reading GOOD LUCK TROJANS! and GO USC!

INT. OFFENSIVE BUS - CONTINUING

The Trojans are shocked. Jimmy and Clarence sit next to each other up front looking out the window.

JIMMY

Clarence, what's this all about?
Aren't we in Alabama?

CLARENCE

My uncle told me this was a big deal out here, but I had no idea it was *this* big a deal.

Sam overhears their conversation.

SAM

Man, oh, man.

WIDER

The bus continues through town toward the team hotel. The poverty is starkly apparent. The bus comes upon the run-down local high school. The out buildings are in ruins. A rusted-out chain link fence runs around the perimeter of campus. There is a band practicing on the dirt football field. They number about 25 or so members.

These are all black kids with instruments well beyond serious usefulness, even for this part of town. The kids see the buses. They wave and yell.

INT. OFFENSIVE BUS - CONTINUING

The bus is quiet. This is a big game, the coaches don't stand for any foolishness. But it seems even more quiet than usual. The dire circumstances of the town and the poverty-stricken high school band weighs heavily on the players.

WIDER

The buses continue to roll in silence. The environment outside becomes more affluent. Fewer people of color. The people on the street now don't wave and cheer.

Up ahead the team can see their hotel. It's a mid-level Holiday Inn. The ratty marquee out front reads WELCOME TROJANS. The bus pulls in front of the lobby.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY AREA - CONTINUING

There is no welcoming party here. In fact, everyone outside of the help is white. Coach Goux passes out keys to everyone.

COACH GOUX

(to everyone)

You've got some time before dinner. Get some rest, stay out of trouble. Be in the lobby by six. Nobody's late.

Most of the guys hustle off to their rooms. There is an eerie feeling of being watched, especially for the black guys. It's obvious that several of them have decided to stay close to each other. In fact, they travel in packs.

Groups of white people and families whisper among themselves. Bruno and his black teammate BILL HOLLAND stand together in the lobby chatting about the hotel.

A little white boy and his mother walk through the lobby slowly among all of these giant men. She holds his hand. As they pass Bruno and Holland, the little boy stares at Holland.

LITTLE BOY

Gee, mamma, there sure are a lot of niggers on this team.

The comment is clearly audible. It's not said with malice, it's more of a matter-of-fact statement from the kid. His mother looks quickly at Holland. She corrects her boy.

MOTHER

It's not niggers, son. They like to be called "nee-groes".

Holland shakes his head and lets it go. Bruno is stunned.

BRUNO

Jeez, Bill. I'm so sorry. I don't know what to say.

HOLLAND

Hey, don't worry about it man.
That's the way it is. I have to
put up with that in L.A. too.

INT. PAPADAKIS AND CARTER'S ROOM - CONTINUING

John and his roommate Kent Carter are settling into their small room. Carter is a light-skinned black linebacker with fine features. He's already taken off his coat, tie and shirt and he hangs them in the closet. The muscles of his chest and shoulders are well defined. He's a good looking guy.

CARTER

Man, I can't stand wearin' this
thing. I feel like I'm going to a
damn funeral.

Papadakis lies on his bed, still dressed, eyes closed. There's a series of QUICK KNOCKS at the door. Pap gets up and looks out the window. His eyes widen in surprise.

PAPADAKIS

It's a bunch of little kids.

Pap opens the door to reveal three small white children. One boy is about six. His brother is 12 and his sister around nine. The kids look anxious, like they're on a scavenger hunt.

PAPADAKIS

(continuing; amused)
Hello there. What can I do for you?

The youngest kid is obviously fearless. He's very southern.

YOUNGEST BOY

Are there any USC niggas in here?

Pap is shocked and amused. He looks back at Carter, who chuckles in surprise and bewilderment.

CARTER

They're sure is!

Carter motions for Pap to open the door, which he does. The kids stumble through the entrance. They stare across the room at Carter in wonderment. Carter is smiling.

CARTER

(continuing)
How y'all doin'?

The kids are slack-jawed. None of them say anything. After a moment, the youngest boy sort of sleep walks toward Carter. He gets right in front of him and, of course, barely reaches the tall man's waist. He stares up at his face.

YOUNGEST BOY

Are you a nigger?

Carter reaches down and lifts the boy up in the air. He holds him straight out in front of him so they're face to face. The boy is not scared, he's mesmerized. Carter looks in his eyes.

CARTER
I am a black man, yes.

Carter shifts the boy to his hip, as if he were an infant.
The boy's brother and sister remain at the door in shock.

LITTLE GIRL
What am I gonna tell my mama and
daddy?

PAPADAKIS
Tell them the truth.

The little boy's eyes are locked on Carter's. Carter takes
the little boy's hand gently and wipes it across his own face.

CARTER
See, it doesn't come off.

The boy turns his gaze to his own hand. It's a touching
moment. His brother and sister haven't moved.

LITTLE GIRL
My mama and daddy ain't gonna
believe this.

PAPADAKIS
Neither will mine.

Carter sets the boy down with care. He excitedly runs back to
his siblings. Carter is pensive. He resumes his unpacking.

CARTER
Go on now. Git.

The kids scurry out the door. Carter seems quite affected.

CARTER
(continuing)
The saddest thing I've ever seen.

No sooner are they gone then Jimmy Jones bursts through the
opening. He's out of breath.

JIMMY
Pap. I want you to come with me!
There's trouble!

PAPADAKIS
What is it!?

JIMMY
I'll tell you on the way.

Pap follows Jimmy out the door.

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Jimmy is moving fast down the hall. He stops at the end and
turns to face John Papadakis.

JIMMY
 I just came from Tody's room and
 he's in there with about 10 guys.
 (beat)
 Half of them have guns.

Papadakis is stunned and, for once, speechless.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 You're the defensive captain.
 Between the two of us, I hope we
 can talk some sense into them.

John is touched that Jimmy would include him. He's also
 frightened at what might await.

INT. TODY'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUING

Despite the fact the Tody has been in his room for only 30
 minutes, it's a total disaster. There are 10 black teammates
 sitting and standing. The players pass around several
 handguns. Some observe the weapons with pride, some are
 scared. Tody hands his gun to one of his teammates.

TODY
 Be careful with that. It's loaded.

There's a knock at the door. The guys hide most of the guns.
 Some show defiance, thinking it might be just the people they
 are afraid of. Tody walks over to the door with his gun
 behind his back.

TODY
 (continuing)
 Who is it?

JIMMY (O.S.)
 It's Jimmy.

Tody opens the door slowly to let Jimmy and John inside.

TODY
 What do you want?

Things are tense.

JIMMY
 We need to talk.

Tody sits back down on his bed.

TODY
 Keep it short.

JIMMY
 Listen, this gun thing is a bad
 deal.

TODY
 Yeah? So what?

John has been itching to talk. He can't hold back any longer.

PAPADAKIS

This isn't just a bad deal, it's
the worst thing that could happen.

Charlie Weaver is very close to Pap.

CHARLIE

Greek. Would it surprise you if
one of those rednecks took a shot
at one of us? And it ain't gonna
be you, it's gonna be us. We got
a right to protect ourselves.

Many in the group murmur agreement. John takes a deep breath.

PAPADAKIS

As a matter of fact, it would not
totally surprise me.

(beat)

But what you have the *right* to do
is to show these people that
you're not a punk. What in the
world do you think would happen if
one of you was caught with a gun?
Or fired one? That's exactly what
these bastards expect from you.
All they need is one incident and
they win! Where are you then? What
will that prove?

Some of the guys seem to be getting it. Jimmy takes charge.

JIMMY

You guys have to listen to me. I
admit, I'm scared. We're all
scared. This is a hostile
situation. But you must...WE as a
team must show that we are not
intimidated! And we do that on the
football field! We don't do that
with guns.

(beat)

If you think it's intimidating to
come in here and play football,
how do you think the black folks
that live here must feel? What
sort of courage must it take to
live like this every day of your
life? We owe it to them and to
ourselves to stand tall. To show
heart.

(beat)

You need to take all of the anger
and fear that you feel and use it
tomorrow! That's the way to get
back at them! Show them that we
are not the kind of people they
expect us to be. That we will not
back down. Who'll stand with me?

Jimmy walks to the center of the room. He extends his arm
straight out, his hand forms a fist.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Who's with me!

Pap walks to the center and extends his fist to touch Jimmy's. Their arms remain straight out. There's a moment of hesitation from the other players. They look at each other.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Who stands with me!

Charlie joins Jimmy and Pap. One by one, the others in the room join in. Tody is the last holdout. Finally he throws his gun into his bag and joins the group. He touches his fist.

EXT. LEGION FIELD - DUSK

POV SAM CUNNINGHAM

The pop from the balloon still rings in Sam's ears. It's impossible to see anything but the bright white glow as he squints up into the lights. His nervous gaze returns to his teammates in the final stages of pre-game warm ups.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT AND COACH MCKAY

Bear and McKay are at midfield finishing up their pre-game greetings. The noise inside Legion Field is deafening. The coaches must talk very close to be heard.

COACH BRYANT
(serious)
John, this is a special night
that's a long time comin'.

His sincerity is notable.

COACH MCKAY
I know Paul, I know. Good luck.

The men shake hands genuinely. McKay starts to walk toward his team. He points at Coach Levy to wrap it up.

COACH LEVY
Alright guys let's go! Final play,
then let's take it in.

All of the players line up on the goal line behind the starting offensive huddle.

ANGLE ON BRYANT

Coach Bryant walks slowly toward the locker room tunnel. The fans go crazy as he nears the sidelines. Each section rises to applaud as he passes by them. It looks like a wave. Bear tips his trademark hounds tooth hat in acknowledgement.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

The huddle breaks and everyone trots to the line. There is no defense. Chandler splits wide right. Jimmy is under center.

JIMMY
Green 45! Green 45! Hut! Hut!

The ball is snapped and Jimmy drops back seven steps. The lineman all fake pass block. Chandler sprints down the sideline on a streak. Jimmy lets fly a beautiful spiral that hits Chandler in stride about 40 yards downfield. All of the Trojans cheer. The Bama crowd boos as if it were a real play.

Chandler flips the ball to the referee and joins his teammates as everyone jogs toward the tunnel. They must pass close by the Bama team finishing up their pre-game drills.

Sam is lagging behind the rest. As he reaches the Tide's offensive players, one of Bama's big linemen steps out in front of him.

BAMA LINEMAN
What you think boy? I bet you're
scared outta your head to play the
mighty Alabama Crimson Tide in
front of all these people aren't
you.

Sam recognizes that the man is trying to intimidate him. He smiles a little and points toward Coach McKay.

SAM
You see that the little white
haired dude standing over there?

The lineman looks toward McKay.

SAM
(continuing)
That's the only thing I'm scared
of on this whole field.

Sam jogs off to the tunnel leaving the lineman stupefied.

INT. ALABAMA LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

Things are pretty loose in the Tide camp. It's not completely unfocused, but there's a certain level of cockiness. It's exciting as well.

Coach Bryant isn't completely happy with the attitude. The team quiets down as Bear moves to the front of the room.

COACH BRYANT
One of the things that we've tried
to instill in y'all is that
football is more than a game. It
goes beyond the blockin' and the
tacklin' and the runnin' and the
hittin'. Football is a test of
character. A man without character
will be exposed on the football
field. The contest is an
opportunity to prove what's in
your heart. That's especially true
of tonight's ballgame.
(more)

COACH BRYANT (cont'd)
 We are about to face a team with
 a lot of weapons. They've got
 size, they've got speed, they've
 got depth. We are certain to face
 some adversity. But you never know
 how a horse will pull until you
 hook him to a heavy load. It's
 gonna be how we pull together
 tonight that will show what we're
 made of. You will remember this
 football game for the rest of your
 lives. Any questions?

There are none.

COACH BRYANT
 (continuing)
 Alright then. Let's go win this
 game!

The team rises with a SHOUT and exits quickly.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

A small collection of black Alabama locals have gathered
 outside the stadium. Although they don't have tickets to the
 game, they have come down here to be part of the action.
 Their mood is festive. Everyone is listening on the RADIO.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON JIMMY

Jimmy has found a quiet spot in the locker room to gather his
 thoughts. There's a mirror on the wall. The QB stares at
 himself in full, game-day uniform. His eyes are filled with
 confidence and pride. He takes a deep, satisfying breath and
 nods to himself. He's ready.

Jimmy grabs his helmet and walks toward the main room where
 the team is gathered to listen to Coach McKay.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The attitude in here is much more intense than in the Alabama
 team room. Everyone seems to be focusing on the task at hand,
 There is no fooling around, it's very quiet.

COACH MCKAY
 Gentlemen, this evening you will
 be playing perhaps the most
 important game of your college
 careers. There's a lot at stake
 here. I know we've worked you hard
 coming into this contest, but you
 have to be hard sometimes to get
 the most out of people. And we
 have to be tough sometimes to get
 the most out of ourselves. You've
 earned this opportunity.
 (more)

COACH MCKAY (cont'd)
 It's a position that many men wish
 they could be in and that many
 more wouldn't be able to handle.
 It's often difficult to realize
 the gravity of a situation while
 you're involved in it. Don't
 underestimate this one, take
 advantage of it.

(beat)
 I believe one of your teammates
 has something to say.

McKay nods toward Jimmy. Jimmy nods back at him and stands up.

JIMMY
 Guys, I don't have to tell you
 that there aren't too many folks
 out there tonight that's gonna be
 on our side. But you don't need to
 be afraid. Take a look around you.

The players look at each other. Jimmy paces the room.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 It's the guys in this room that
 you're gonna have to rely on. Who
 are you gonna stand with? It's
 gonna take every one of us giving
 our best effort to succeed out
 here tonight.

Guys get more excited. Jimmy's intense.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 We want our school to be proud. We
 want our families to be proud. But
 above all, we want to be proud of
 ourselves for the courage we
 display here tonight. I will hide
 behind nothing. I pledge to you
 all right here, I will leave
 everything I have out on that
 field.

The team shouts in agreement. Coach Goux is busting at the
 seams. His face is red. He raises his "claw" hands.

COACH GOUX
 Let's remember why we came all the
 way down to this swamp! We came
 here to conquer! We came here to
 bleed! We came here to win! Now
 let's go out there and play like
 Trojans!

The team jumps to their feet and reacts with LOUD WHOOPS.
 Weaver punches a locker. Papadakis, his helmet strapped on,
 slaps his head with his hands. Jimmy and Sam give each other
 a solidifying nod.

JIMMY
Let's do this.

EXT. KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

The fraternity party BBQ has settled down somewhat. Everyone is intent on listening to the game. Some people are clearing paper plates. Guys toss the football around.

Dee Dee has placed her chair right next to one giant stereo speaker. She is noticeably fidgety. She actually looks like she wants to throw up. Her girlfriends are concerned.

GIRL ONE
Are you sure you can handle this
Dee Dee?

DEE DEE
I just wish they'd get the stupid
game started.

EXT. LEGION FIELD - CONTINUING

WIDE OVERHEAD

The stadium is in a frenzy. The excitement is palpable. The teams are lined up for the kickoff. Bama is receiving.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Okay folks, here we go. Ron Ayala
is set to kick...

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

The referee BLOWS his WHISTLE and cues USC's Ayala(#5). Ayala drops his arm and runs up to kick the ball. THE GAME IS ON!

THE VOICES OF THE RADIO ANNOUNCERS CARRY THE ACTION.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Ranager takes the ball two yards
deep in the endzone. He eludes one
man at the 10 and cuts right. He's
to the 20 and run out of bounds at
the Alabama 24 yard line.

The tackle by Papadakis(#67) and Weaver(#84) is violent. They head butt enthusiastically. It's a good start for USC.

ANGLE ON BAMA OFFENSE

Alabama comes out in a slot left I-formation. Scott Hunter(#10) is the quarterback.

HUNTER
Tide 41! Tide 41!

The ball is hiked. Hunter hands to Musso(#22) who cuts toward the middle where he's demolished by Pap and Weaver again. The two tacklers jump up excitedly. Pap slaps Weaver's chest hard.

PAPADAKIS
All night Charlie! All night!

ANGLE ON BAMA OFFENSE

Hunter is back at the line of scrimmage.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Alabama's slot left on third down.
Hunter takes the snap and drops
back. He fakes a short out pass
and immediately he's dropped for
a big loss by USC's Willie Hall!
The Tide'll punt.

Hunter throws the ball to the turf in disgust. The USC defense is jubilant.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

The offense waits patiently to take the field. All of the preparation and anticipation comes down to this. Jimmy(#8) and Sam(#39) stand together.

JIMMY
Alright, Bro. Watch your back.

SAM
You know it.

The men slap hands.

ANGLE ON USC HUDDLE

Everyone is looking intensely at Jimmy. He's their leader.

JIMMY
OK fellas. You know what to do. On
one, on one. Ready break!

From the left hash, they line up strong left in an I-formation. Jimmy is under center. Clarence is at tailback and he shifts right into split backs.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Monster 32! Monster 32! Hut!

Jimmy fakes a dive to Charlie Evans(#33) and drops to pass.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The Trojans are passing on first
down...Jimmy Jones has Davis wide
open in the flat...The ball is
thrown well over Davis'
outstretched arms.

INT. PRESS BOX COACHES AREA - CONTINUING

Coach Fertig and Coach Brown are watching the game through binoculars. They are surrounded by paperwork and coffee cups. Both wear headsets.

COACH FERTIG
 That play was wide open!
 (to Coach Brown)
 I sure hope that boy calms down.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON USC HUDDLE

Jimmy's mad at himself, but he's not discouraged.

JIMMY
 I'm sorry Clarence. Great play
 guys. Next time.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC lines up strong-right-I on third down and five. The backs split and Gerry Mullins(#86) shifts out wider from his tight end position. Jimmy drops back and looks for a receiver. The coverage is good, and Jimmy comes under significant pressure.

He scrambles and thinks about running. But he sees Mullins across the field and makes a tough throw to get the ball to him. It's a great catch! First down. The crowd groans.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Coach McKay is showing much more enthusiasm for the play than we're used to seeing from him.

COACH MCKAY
 That a boy Jimmy!

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC is lined up strong right, split backs with Sam Cunningham on the right side.

JIMMY
 Cannon 98! Cannon 98! Hut! Hut!

Jimmy turns left and hands the ball to Sam over left tackle on a draw. Sam cuts off of a good block by Clarence and rambles inside the Bama 25 for a first down.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Holy cow Mike! I think you
 could've run through that hole.

ANGLE ON SAM

Gallaher and Bruno help Sam up from the turf.

SAM
 (joking)
 Hey, you guys think you might give
 me little more room to run?

The big men proudly escort Sam back to the huddle.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC breaks the huddle and jogs up to the line.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The tailback Davis shifts over
behind the left tackle. Jones
takes the snap and hands to
Cunningham off the left side.
Cunningham hurdles a defender and
is up the field! He pushes off of
one man and it's open to the goal
line! Touchdown USC!

The crowd is much less enthusiastic.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
How about that!? USC just marched
right down the field as if the
Tide wasn't even there! The young
sophomore Cunningham, in the first
two carries of his college career,
has 38 yards and a score! Not a
bad debut so far Mike.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Jimmy is enthusiastically in Sam's face, mask to mask.

JIMMY
I told ya! I told ya boy! Keep it
up!

Sam is sort of in shock.

SAM
I'll keep tryin' man.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

The black locals are going nuts outside the stadium. The
crowd out here seems to be growing.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON BAMA SIDELINE

Coach Schnellenberger is livid. He's in the faces of the
whole defense. He's got two guys by the facemask.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
What the hell was that! They ran
right through you!

In the background USC snaps for the extra point. The ball is
mishandled, and Ayala is tackled for a loss

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
(continuing)
Well at least we can tackle the
kicker.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Jimmy is drinking water and holding a telephone to his ear. Guys walk by and slap him on the shoulder. The Bama offense has the ball in the background. Jimmy is communicating with Coach Fertig in the booth.

COACH FERTIG'S VOICE
(over the phone)
OK, Jimmy. Nice drive son. You're a little amped up. I just need to you to crank it down a little and keep moving the ball.

JIMMY
(into phone)
Right, coach. Is Coach Brown there?

COACH FERTIG'S VOICE
(over the phone)
Yeah, hold on.

ANGLE ON COACH BROWN WITH THE PHONE

COACH BROWN
(into phone)
Yeah Jimmy. What is it?

JIMMY'S VOICE
(over the phone)
Keep giving Sam the ball.

Coach Brown just smiles and hangs up the phone.

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads USC 6, ALABAMA 0

ANGLE ON ALABAMA OFFENSE

The Bama 11 look a little shell shocked. Hunter brings the offense up to the line. Two receivers split wide right. The backs are in an I. Musso takes the handoff on the right side. He pops through and gains seven. A good play.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Now that's Alabama football!

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads THIRD DOWN AND ONE

ANGLE ON ALABAMA OFFENSE

Musso gains a hard two and a first down. The crowd goes crazy.

ANGLE ON BAMA HUDDLE

Musso is hyped up. Hunter is in charge.

HUNTER
Alright Johnny. Good tough run. Boys, let's keep goin'.

The huddle breaks and Bama lines up. Bama runs three quick plays, an overthrow of Bailey, a short Musso gain and an overthrow to Musso. Hunter is discouraged.

ANGLE ON USC DEFENSE

Papadakis runs right to Tody Smith.

PAPADAKIS
Stay in his face all night!

ANGLE ON BAMA SIDELINE

Bear Bryant looks on with mixed emotions. He didn't think that USC would be quite this good, yet he knows fans are taking notice of their dominance. He stands with Hunter.

HUNTER
Man, coach. Those guys are flyin' around the field.

COACH BRYANT
You keep the offense going forward
Scotty. I think we can get to 'em.

Coach is not entirely convincing. Bama punts in b.g.

ANGLE ON USC HUDDLE

Jimmy takes the play from a receiver who has rotated in. He has the attention of his offense.

JIMMY
OK fellas. We're going with the
roll out sweep keeper. On two, on
two. Ready, break!

The offense jogs up to the line. Jimmy surveys the defense.

JIMMY
(continuing)
Jet 14! Jet 14! Hut! Hut!

Jimmy rolls out to his right and tucks the ball. He's around the corner for a gain of nine. He takes a big hit. He winces.

EXT. LEGION FIELD STANDS - CONTINUING

A couple of middle-aged "good ol' boys" sit on the edge of their seats near the front row. They cheer the tackle.

GOOD OL' BOY ONE
Well I'll be, Billy. They finally
put a hat on someone!

GOOD OL' BOY TWO
Yessir, I believe they did!

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads FIRST AND TEN

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

Bob Chandler(#10) is in the slot to the right. Jimmy drops back and hits him with a bullet over the middle. Gain 14.

INT. PRESS BOX COACHES AREA - CONTINUING

Coach Fertig is on his feet.

COACH FERTIG

That's what I'm talking about!

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads FOURTH DOWN AND FIVE

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC jogs up to the line.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Well, USC is well within field goal range. It's fourth down and five, Mack what do you make of this decision to go for it?

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Shoot, they haven't been stopped yet. I like it.

Jimmy passes to Chandler. Chandler trips. Incomplete.

ANGLE ON BAMA DEFENSE

The Alabama defense celebrates for the first time tonight.

MINI MONTAGE - BAMA GETS STUFFED

Musso nailed for no gain by Hall(#83). La Bue(#39) stuffed by Smith(#93), Vella(#75) and Weaver. Hunter overthrows Bailey.

Bama lines up to punt. The kick goes to Troy Hudson(#43) who runs it right back up the middle for a big return.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Mike, the Trojans are doin' it on offense, defense and special teams.

The USC offense trots on to the field. They congratulate the punt return team going by. The offense huddles.

JIMMY

OK guys, we're knocking on the door. Let's get this thing in.

Jimmy brings the team up to the line. He pitches the ball to Clarence out right. Clarence turns the corner and rambles to the Alabama's 20. The defense piles on and gets a flag.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Wow, Mike. Bama might be getting
 a little frustrated out there.
 That late hit will cost them.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT

Coach turns his back on the field in disgust.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

The Trojans are at the line of scrimmage. Jimmy rolls out
 right and keeps it. He gains seven and is nailed again.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 First and goal now for the Trojans.

Clarence and Sam line up in split backs. Jimmy hands to Sam
 who follows Clarence over the left side. He's met at the goal
 line by three defenders and carries them into the endzone.
 Touchdown USC! Bruno and Jimmy are the first to greet Sam.

BRUNO
 Atta boy Sammy!

SAM
 Hey, it's easy running behind you
 big man.

ANGLE ON FANS IN THE STANDS

Most in the Bama crowd are very quiet. Some hurl insults. Sam
 runs off the field as the team lines up for the extra point.

RUDE BAMA FAN ONE
 Keep running back to California
 nigger! They ain't no reason for
 you to get cocky!

Sam smiles and waves politely.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DAVIS FAMILY HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUING

The Davis family is ecstatic with the progress of the game.
 Uncle Lenny is happy but nervous.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

Alabama is back on offense, deep in its own territory.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 USC leads here 12-0 nearing the
 end of the first quarter. Bama
 will give it another go on
 offense. They've had some success
 on the ground, but Coach Bryant
 has decided to bring in Neb Hayden
 at quarterback. Maybe he's just
 trying to give the offense a lift.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Yeah Mike. Hunter came in here
 with a banged up shoulder. He may
 have taken a shot.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 So Hayden now barking out the
 signals. He takes the snap and he
 drops back to pass. There's no one
 open, so Hayden outlets to La Bue
 behind the line of scrimmage. La
 Bue gets a block and he's upfield!
 And he drops the football! It's
 loose and John Papadakis jumps on
 it! Trojan football deep again in
 Alabama territory!

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 My word, Mike. It's just getting
 worse for Alabama.

ANGLE ON PAPADAKIS

Pap celebrates with his teammates. He tucks the ball under
 his arm and sprints across the field to Coach Goux. Pap
 tosses the ball to Goux. Goux smiles. Pap is beaming.

PAPADAKIS
 There you go, coach!

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads FOURTH DOWN AND FOUR

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC has the ball on Bama 22.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Mack, the Bama defense has
 stiffened. It looks like USC will
 go for the field goal this time.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Yeah Mike, I think this is the
 smart play. Bama has shown some
 real toughness on this drive.

Ayala boots it through.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

The crowd outside the stadium has swelled now to nearly 1,000
 local black citizens. They are all cheering wildly. It's loud.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

Angle on scoreboard

THE BOARD READS USC 15, ALABAMA 0. 13:30 LEFT IN THE HALF

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

The game has moved along. USC has the ball again at their 46.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
I tell you what Mack, it seems
like every time we look up USC has
the football.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
That's a testament to this Trojan
D. They have just completely shut
down Alabama.

The team jogs to the line. Jimmy hands to Clarence over left
tackle. He's into the secondary, and the ball is stripped.
Alabama recovers.

The Tide faithful can finally celebrate and they do so
exuberantly. The players on the sidelines also celebrate. The
Tide coaches seem to breath a collective sigh of relief.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DAVIS FAMILY HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUING

Uncle Lenny is beside himself. He grabs the radio off the
table and stomps out the front door. The other Davis family
members look at each other stunned.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON ALABAMA OFFENSE

The Crimson Tide offense appears to have renewed purpose.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Coach Bryant has brought Hunter
back into the ballgame. Thanks to
the turnover, the Tide are inside
USC's half of the field for the
first time. Hunter rolls out to
the left, looking to go downfield.
He fires over the middle, and
Bailey is there! He makes the grab
and it's a Tide first down!

The crowd goes wild!

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Jimmy has his arm around Clarence's shoulder. Clarence is mad
at himself about the fumble. Play continues b.g.

CLARENCE
Man! All I could see was daylight
and pop! The ball's gone.

JIMMY
Hey, don't worry about it. Our
defense will shut 'em down, and
we'll be right back out there.

ANGLE ON BAMA OFFENSE

The Tide is back at the line quickly. Hunter makes a nice
pass to Doren.

Then he fires a great ball over the middle to Bailey. The Tide is inside the USC 10 yard line. Bailey's teammates swarm him. The USC defense looks confused.

ANGLE ON USC DEFENSIVE HUDDLE

Tody Smith is livid. He's yelling at the defensive backs. Papadakis tries to rally the troops.

PAPADAKIS

Hey Tody, man, take it easy. We need to keep it together. Let's buckle down and keep them out of the endzone.

ANGLE ON ALABAMA HUDDLE

The Alabama players jump around and hit each other's helmets. Scott Hunter takes control.

HUNTER

Alright. Alright, here we go. Strong left 26 blast on one, on one. Ready, break!

The Bama offense jogs up to the line.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

So here they are deep in USC territory. Hunter is lined up in front of a three-man backfield. The halfback Musso takes the handoff over the left side. He meets a wall at the goal line and bulls his way over for a touchdown!

ANGLE ON LEGION FIELD STANDS

The stadium absolutely erupts with joy. The Million Dollar Band strikes up the fight song. The Alabama cheerleaders scream and dance. Fans hug one another with glee.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Well, I'll be darned. It looks like Alabama might belong on this field after all. They're within one score of the Trojans in what until this point was a very lopsided contest.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT

Bear shows about as much enthusiasm as he ever will.

ANGLE ON FIELD LEVEL

Alabama lines up for the kickoff. Clarence takes the ball in the endzone and is making a good return. Then he's hit hard and the ball pops out. Luckily it bounces to the Trojans.

The crowd let's out a groan of disappointment.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 I can't believe that Mike.
 Clarence Davis nearly gave another
 one away there. USC was very lucky
 on that play.

EXT. DAVIS FAMILY DRIVEWAY - CONTINUING

Uncle Lenny jumps around the driveway with the radio held tight to his ear screaming and hollering. Aunt Louise and the kids come rushing out the screen door.

AUNT LOUISE
 Lenny, are you alright out here?

UNCLE LENNY
 Alright?! Damn, woman, Clarence just fumbled again! I can't stand it anymore! I gotta go down to that field! Come on, y'all are comin' with me!

Everyone gets in the back of the truck and they speed off.

MINI MONTAGE - USC RE-TAKES CONTROL

USC begins a nine-play drive that methodically moves down the field. Short hard runs by Lou Harris(#29), Mike Berry(#23), Evans, Sam and Jimmy.

ANGLE ON SAM AND JIMMY IN HUDDLE

Jimmy has his arm around Sam's shoulders.

JIMMY
 I bet you didn't think you would play this much huh?

SAM
 No way.

ANGLE ON SIDELINES

Quick shots of the USC sideline appreciating the action. Shots of Bama sidelines wincing. USC takes the ball all the way down to the seven.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Mack, this has been a very impressive drive. The USC offensive line seems to be in complete control.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 They've used five different ball carriers as well. It's tougher to defend against fresh legs.

USC's offense breaks the huddle and lines up at the seven.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 The Trojans line up strong left
 with an I-backfield. Jones pivots
 and hands to Charlie Evans off of
 left tackle. Evans is through the
 hole and he meets Rowell at the
 goal line. Evans churns and he
 carries the linebacker into the
 endzone! Touchdown Trojans!

ANGLE ON LEGION FIELD STANDS

Alabama supporters are disappointed and angry. They throw
 programs and hats on the ground. They yell at the USC players
 and at the Bama players.

ANGRY BAMA FAN
 I bet Old Bear wishes he had a few
 of them big nigras of his own
 about now.

THE BOARD READS USC 22, ALABAMA 7. 13:30 LEFT IN THE HALF

As the halftime gun sounds, security guards move to the
 perimeter of the field to prevent any incidents. USC players
 look nervously toward the fans.

The Bama players are angry too. But they are more
 embarrassed. Both teams head for their locker rooms. While
 extremely happy about their play in the first half, several
 of the black Trojans stick pretty close together and watch
 each others backs.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

The mood in here is expectedly upbeat. No one is goofing
 around, but there is a genuine feeling of satisfaction and
 enthusiasm for having been rewarded for a lot of hard work
 and sacrifice. The coaches feel it as well.

Papadakis is visiting with his defensive teammates, making
 sure they all maintain focus. Coach Brown speaks with Sam,
 Jimmy and the rest of the backs.

COACH BROWN
 Outside of Clarence droppin' the
 football twice, is there anything
 that surprised you guys out there
 so far?

SAM
 Yeah coach, I didn't figure our
 line would open holes so big.

JIMMY
 The way you're powerin' through
 'em, it wouldn't matter.

INT. ALABAMA LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

There is dead silence in Alabama's locker room. It's the type
 of silence that normally accompanies a loss.

The team's attitude is more defeated than just down by two touchdowns. Coach Bryant and his coaches enter the room.

COACH BRYANT

Boys, you ought to feel awfully lucky right now.

Many players who have been hanging their heads look up in confusion. They were expecting to be chewed out.

COACH BRYANT

(continuing)

That's right. You've been thoroughly outplayed, but y'all are only down by two scores. Now I know you wanted to do better in front of your mamas and your daddies, but damn it, this thing ain't over by a long shot! The way I see it, you can keep your heads up and keep fighting or you can pack it in and really embarrass yourselves. And anyone who's thinking about packing it in doesn't belong on my football team. So let's go.

There are hints of enthusiasm from the players. Some SHOUT and pound lockers, but it seems as if most didn't really buy coach's speech. The jolt of enthusiasm likely springs from their desire not to embarrass Coach Bryant.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

Uncle Lenny's pickup truck pulls into the Legion Field parking lot. To his amazement, there are more than a thousand local blacks gathered near the stadium. The group includes Big Mama, Shorty, Roy and everyone else from the bar. Many are holding radios, it's like a party. It seems that Lenny wasn't the only one to be motivated to come down.

UNCLE LENNY

Well I'll be...

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads THIRD DOWN AND ONE.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSIVE HUDDLE

The Trojan onslaught has not let up. They have the ball on their own 20. Jimmy and the offense are smiling. Clarence jogs in from the sidelines with the play. He speaks closely to Jimmy's ear hole.

CLARENCE

Strong left, 24 blast.

Jimmy takes the information and turns to the huddle.

JIMMY
 OK fellas, it's Clarence's turn
 again. You guys keep them holes
 wide open. Strong left 24 blast on
 two, on two, ready break!

The offense jogs up to the line. Jimmy takes the snap, hands
 to Clarence off of left tackle. He gains an easy six.

ANGLE ON ALABAMA DEFENSIVE HUDDLE

All 11 players look dog tired. The pounding that they're
 taking from this USC line is excruciating. Team captain TOMMY
 WADE and tackle Don Harris speak for the whole defense.

WADE
 Man alive! They're running a
 different guy every play. How many
 big ol' backs they got over there?

HARRIS
 Yeah, man. They seem to be just
 reloading them guys. Buckle 'em up
 tight boys. Let's stop 'em.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

Jimmy rolls weak side and keeps it. He gets 13 yards to the
 Bama 37. He's nailed hard by Wade and McKinney.

EXT. KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY BACKYARD - CONTINUING

The party is in full swing, but most are paying attention to
 the game on the radio. Many CHEER as the play-by-play
 announces the first down.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Jones takes another shot at the
 end of that play. In fact, it was
 a little late. He's gonna feel
 that one after this game.

All Dee Dee can hear is the comment about Jimmy taking
 another hit. She winces painfully. Her girlfriend puts an arm
 around her shoulder in sympathy.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSIVE HUDDLE

Jimmy is holding his side noticeably. He takes the play from
 a receiver and leans into the huddle.

JIMMY
 OK guys, I need your help on this.
 Keep them guys off me. Trips
 right, back screen on one, on one
 ready break!

The offense jogs to the line. Jimmy calls the signals and the
 ball is snapped. Jimmy rolls out right and the whole defense
 follows him. He turns and throws back left to a wide open
 Clarence.

Three lineman are out in front of him and Gallaher throws a great block that takes out two defenders. Touchdown!

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Oh, buddy! Did you see that big
ol' lineman make that block
downfield?! He cleaned house!

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

Lenny jumps around and hugs Louise. It's crazy.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON ALABAMA SIDELINE

The clock has run down to late in the third quarter. In the b.g., Ayala converts another field goal to make the score USC 32, Alabama 7. Coach Bryant talks solemnly with Scott Hunter and backup Neb Hayden.

COACH BRYANT
Scotty, I'm puttin' Neb back in.
I don't want to risk any more
damage to your shoulder.

HUNTER
Come on coach. I can play.

COACH BRYANT
I appreciate your effort son. It's
time to step aside.

Hunter drops his head and Hayden runs on to the field.

ANGLE ON ALABAMA OFFENSIVE HUDDLE

Neb Hayden looks around at his weary teammates.

HAYDEN
Boys, we've been whooped up on out
here tonight. All I can say to you
is, I don't want to leave this
field feeling as bad as I do.
Let's get something going.

His teammates nod. Alabama breaks the huddle.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The Tide has brought in Neb Hayden
at quarterback. It may be Hunter's
shoulder has gotten worse.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
I think Ol' Bear just may want to
light a fire under his offense.

Hayden takes the snap and drops back. He lets fly a bomb down the right sideline which finds Ranager inside the 10.

ANGLE ON ALABAMA SIDELINE

The Bama players are jubilant. The fans in the b.g. can be seen leaping with joy.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
I guess that fire's been lit! It's
a little too late though.

Bama is back at the line of scrimmage.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Hayden under center. He's passing
again. He's flushed out of the
pocket and looks for Bailey in the
endzone! He fires it in there and
Bailey makes the grab! Touchdown
Alabama Crimson Tide!

The Alabama offense all rush to congratulate Bailey in the endzone. Hayden is the most enthusiastic.

ANGLE ON ALABAMA SIDELINES

Scott Hunter is cheering as loudly as anyone.

ANGLE ON SCOREBOARD

The board reads USC 32, ALABAMA 13; 1:30 LEFT IN THE THIRD

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

The Trojans' expressions are focused and unaffected by Alabama's success.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
They're up by 19 in the fourth
quarter and John McKay still has
his first teamers in there Mack.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Yeah, McKay is good friends with
Bear, but he has no intention of
letting the Tide back into this
football game.

The Trojans come up to the line in split backs. Jimmy hands over the left side to Sam. Sam sprints through another giant hole and delivers a huge blow to three defenders.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
I don't know if Adkinson is gonna
get up after that.

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Mike, Sam Cunningham has been
absolutely unstoppable tonight. In
his first varsity effort, the
young man has 135 yards in 12
carries and two TDs.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Coach McKay and Coach Levy stand together.

COACH LEVY
So coach, how long we gonna leave
these guys in there?

COACH MCKAY
We'll take 'em out soon Davey. In
fact, next offensive series, put
in the second team.

COACH LEVY
Right coach.

Coach Levy walks down the sidelines to round up the reserves.
In the b.g., Ron Ayala kicks a field goal.

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That makes the score USC 35,
Alabama 13.

MINI-MONTAGE - BAMA STOPPED FOR GOOD

Big hits by USC's Vella, Weaver, Papadakis. Defenders still
very fired up to make hits. Bama punts.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

Mike Rae leads the second teamers from the huddle.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
So McKay decides his first team
has inflicted enough damage on the
Tide. Mike Rae comes in at
quarterback.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINE

Jimmy and Sam stand together. Jimmy cheers loudly for the
second-team offense and Mike Rae.

JIMMY
Keep it goin' Mike!

SAM
(kidding)
I guess you're not worried about
him takin' reps now are you?

MINI-MONTAGE - SECOND TEAM SUCCESS

Big gains by MIKE BERRY. Big gains by BILL HOLLAND. Rae
scrambles for yardage. It looks like the first team.

ANGLE ON USC OFFENSE

USC breaks the huddle. They're on the Alabama six yard line.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Mack, the Trojan reserves have
 marched down the field like they
 were the first team. What's going
 on down there?

COLOR COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Well, it's the accumulation of
 being outplayed all game Mike.
 These Bama guys just can't compete
 against USC's depth.

Rae drops back and scrambles to find a receiver. He spots
 Holland wide open and hits him for a TD. The USC offense
 celebrates in the endzone.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 So it's USC 42, Alabama 13 and you
 can shut the door on this one.

ANGLE ON LEGION FIELD STANDS

The black janitor who picked up after the careless sorority
 girl sees her standing nearby. He gives her a regal and
 confident smile. She looks away.

ANGLE ON USC SIDELINES

Jimmy, Clarence, Papadakis and Sam stand together cheering
 the second team offense. Papadakis has his arm around Sam.

PAPADAKIS
 I tell you what big guy. You
 played a hell of a game today.

CLARENCE
 Yeah, Sam, you were unbelievable
 out there, boy!

SAM
 Aw, man. All I had to do was run.
 You saw them holes. It's the big
 guys that did the job.

Jimmy smiles like a proud big brother. Sam returns with a
 look of appreciation. Jimmy gets the group's attention.

JIMMY
 Hey, shhh. Be quiet.

Jimmy gestures toward the stands.

JIMMY
 (continuing)
 You guys hear that?

Clarence, Sam and Pap don't know what he's referring to.

PAPADAKIS
 What are you talking about Jimmy?
 This place has been dead silent
 since the kickoff. I think you
 took too many big hits.

JIMMY
No, man. That's what I'm saying.
Listen out *there*.

Jimmy gestures past the stands to the area outside of the stadium where the black locals are gathered. The players can hear the CHEERS from the jubilant fans outside the stadium from inside a silent Legion Field! They stare at each other unbelievably. Sam looks toward the top of the stands into the stadium lights.

SAM
Well, I'll be. I guess not
everyone's against us.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AND SURROUNDING AREA - CONTINUING

There are nearly 1500 black Alabama locals celebrating like it's Mardi Gras. It's an unbelievable scene.

ANGLE ON JOHN "TRAIN" MITCHELL

Mitchell is now a well built black teenager standing among the crowd. He wears his high school football jersey, No. 21. Mitchell is not hollering like the mob that surrounds him. He stares into the sky at the blaring stadium lights. A look of hope and tears fills his eyes. As he rotates his tall frame to take in the rest of the scene, the name TRAIN is revealed in block letters on the back of his jersey.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

The timekeeper's GUN FIRES signaling the end of the game. As USC's team begins to leave the field they witness an amazing thing. The Alabama fans all stand to applaud the effort of the visitors. One fan nudges his buddy.

BAMA FAN
It's a good thing Bear and McKay
are good friends. Otherwise it
might've been 72-0.

EXT. KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY HOUSE BACKYARD -
CONTINUING

Dee Dee and the whole fraternity are whooping and clapping in celebration of the Trojan victory. She looks much more relaxed. She hugs her friend with joy and relief.

EXT. LEGION FIELD AT FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUING

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT

Coach Bryant jogs toward the middle of the field to meet Coach McKay in the traditional post-game handshake. The two men shake hands warmly.

COACH BRYANT
John, you have a very special
football team on your hands.

COACH MCKAY
Thank you Paul. They played very well tonight.

COACH BRYANT
I want you to know how much it means to me that you made the trip out here. You'll never know how much you've done for the University of Alabama program.

Coach Bryant puts his arm around McKay's shoulder.

COACH MCKAY
You're welcome Paul.

The two men start for the locker room with their arms around each other's shoulders in a display of genuine affection.

INT. USC LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUING

The Trojans are in full celebration. Everyone has their helmets in their hand over their heads or hold up the "V for Victory" sign. They are SINGING the USC rally cry "FIGHT ON."

GROUP
Fight on! For old 'SC. Our men
fight on to victory! Our alma
mater dear, looks up to you, fight
on and win for old 'SC, fight on
to victory, fight on!

LOUD CHEERS. The coaches get them to quiet down.

COACH MCKAY
OK, settle down a little.

The group falls silent.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
I don't have a whole lot to say.
I just want you all to know that
I'm proud of you. And you should
be proud of yourselves. You worked
hard to get here and tonight you
came together as a team. You
distinguished yourselves as
Trojans.

The players CHEER.

COACH MCKAY
(continuing)
Coach Goux?

COACH GOUX
Guys, we came out here and did
exactly what we said we were going
to do. We conquered those
sonsabitches. Now they understand
the pride of the University of
Southern California Trojans!

The group GOES WILD!

Coach Fertig taps Coach McKay on the shoulder.

COACH FERTIG
Coach, Paul Bryant sent word that
he was hoping to borrow Sam
Cunningham for a few minutes.

COACH MCKAY
What do you mean he wants to
borrow him?

COACH FERTIG
I think he wants to take him over
to the Alabama locker room.

Coach McKay is surprised but accommodating.

COACH MCKAY
I guess so. You go with him. Make
sure we get him back.

Coach McKay and Coach Fertig smile at each other. Fertig
walks over to Sam, who's talking with Jimmy.

COACH FERTIG
Sam, Coach Bryant would like to
have a word with you over in the
Alabama locker room.

Sam, still in football pants, cleats and a sweat-soaked half-
shirt, doesn't get it.

SAM
Why's that coach?

COACH FERTIG
I don't know, but I'll go with
you. I'll meet you at the door.

Fertig walks over to the door to wait for Sam. A stunned
Cunningham turns to Jimmy

SAM
Jimmy, I don't know if I wanna go
over there. Come with me.

JIMMY
No, man, this is your time.

SAM
Why's he want just me? We did this
as a team.

JIMMY
Yeah, but you played at another
level tonight. I guarantee they
never seen nobody like you before.
Now go on.

Jimmy pushes Sam toward Fertig.

INT. LOCKER ROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Coach Fertig KNOCKS quietly on the entrance door to the Alabama locker room. Coach Bryant himself opens it.

COACH BRYANT
Sam, thank you for coming over.
Please follow me.

Sam just nods respectfully. He's doesn't know what to say. He follows Bear into the Alabama locker room. The scene there is surreal. The entire Alabama football team is on one knee in full uniform. No one has changed, and it's dead silent. Coach Bryant motions for Sam to stand next to him in front of the group. Sam does so. Coach Bryant faces his team.

COACH BRYANT
(continuing)
Boys, this is Sam Cunningham,
number 39.

The Alabama team stares up at the massive black man with bruises on his body and slits of blood on his limbs. Coach Bryant lets the sight sink in.

COACH BRYANT
(continuing)
This, gentlemen, is what a
football player looks like.

There are several moments of reflection from everyone.

COACH BRYANT
(continuing)
I want every one of you to come up
here and shake Sam Cunningham's
hand.

Without a moment's hesitation, Scott Hunter walks up to Sam as the rest of the team lines up behind him. Hunter grabs Sam's hand and shakes it genuinely.

HUNTER
Sam, you're a hell of a running
back.

SAM
Thank you.

One by one, every Crimson Tide player walks by and shakes Sam's hand. Some congratulate him. It's a turning point for many of these young Southern boys.

ANGLE ON COACH BRYANT

Coach Bryant stands with Coach Schnellenberger observing this amazing development. Coach Schnellenberger is awed.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
Coach, I never thought I'd see
something like this.

He turns to face Bryant, realizing something.

COACH SCHNELLENBERGER
 (continuing)
 You knew this would happen didn't
 you?

Coach Bryant stares straight ahead, giving no indication.

ANGLE ON SPORTS REPORTER

A reporter standing nearby has overheard the coach's comments. He writes furiously on his notepad. He's approached by another sportswriter. The sportswriter gestures toward Sam.

APPROACHING SPORTSWRITER
 That boy sure put on a show
 tonight didn't he?

WRITING SPORTSWRITER
 He did more than that.

APPROACHING SPORTSWRITER
 What do you mean?

WRITING SPORTSWRITER
 Sam Cunningham and the Trojans
 just may have done more for
 integration in 60 minutes than
 Martin Luther King was able to do
 in 20 years.

EXT. USC LOCKER ROOM EXIT TUNNEL - CONTINUING

USC's buses wait idling in the tunnel with the team on board for their ride to the airport. Clarence hugs his Uncle Lenny. Aunt Louise and the kids are crying. Two motorcycle cops wait at the front with lights flashing.

Sam is the last one out. He rushes on to the offensive bus, which is waiting for him.

INT. OFFENSIVE BUS - CONTINUING

Jimmy motions for Sam to sit down next to him.

JIMMY
 So what happened in there?

Sam is still in a state of shock.

SAM
 You have no idea, man.

Under the Otis Redding song "A CHANGE IS GONNA COME," the buses begin to move up the tunnel. As they reach the exit to the street, an amazing scene unfolds. The black locals, who were outside the stadium listening to the game, are lined up on both sides of the street. It seems their number has doubled. The line of people goes on for miles. Some hold candles. Some are crying. All anticipate the Trojans' passage.

As the buses reach the people, their cheers rise. The players stare from their windows in awe of the new fans. Fans walk politely toward the slow-moving buses just to touch them.

The bus is absolutely silent. Jimmy sees an old black man who looks like he might be crying. His wrinkled face and deep-set eyes seem to be looking straight at the stunned quarterback.

JIMMY
I had no idea...

AERIAL MOVING

As the scene is revealed from above, it appears that there are thousands of people lining the street leading away from Legion Field. The flashing lights of the police vehicles escort two dark buses as they wind through a roadway illuminated by hope.

TITLE: ALABAMA FINISHED 6-5-1 IN 1970 WITH BEAR BRYANT'S LAST ALL-WHITE TEAM.

TITLE: USC FINISHED 6-4-1 IN 1970 AND MISSED OUT ON A CHANCE FOR A FIFTH STRAIGHT ROSE BOWL.

TITLE: IN 1971, JOHN "TRAIN" MITCHELL BECAME ALABAMA'S FIRST BLACK FOOTBALL PLAYER WHEN HE HELPED THE CRIMSON TIDE BEAT USC, 17-10, AT THE LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. ALABAMA FINISHED THE 1971 SEASON WITH AN 11-1 RECORD.

TITLE: USC FINISHED THE 1972 SEASON 12-0 AND WAS VOTED THE UNDISPUTED NATIONAL CHAMPION WITH WHAT MANY CONSIDER THE GREATEST COLLEGE FOOTBALL TEAM IN HISTORY. SENIOR SAM CUNNINGHAM WAS THE STAR OF THAT TEAM.

TITLE: JOHN MCKAY'S TROJANS ALSO WON OR SHARED NATIONAL TITLES IN 1974 and 1978.

TITLE: BEAR BRYANT LED HIS FULLY-INTEGRATED FOOTBALL TEAMS TO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 1973, 1978 AND 1979.

FADE OUT:

CREDITS AND ROLL OUT