

FINAL SCORE

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INT. SPORTS NATION NETWORK BULLPEN - NIGHT

CLOSE UP- A half-eaten home-run themed cake that says: "So long Marty!"

A retirement party is being held in an office populated by chattering SPORTS ANCHORS. They huddle around CELIA (40s), who silences them for the next trivia question.

CELIA

Ok here we go! Who was the oldest college football player to win the Heisman?

One hand goes up. We only see the impressed, yet annoyed faces of her colleagues.

CONFIDENT VOICE (O.S.)

After spending six years in the Blue Jays farm system, Chris Weinke transferred to FSU in '96, and in 2000 he won the Heisman during his senior year at the ripe age of 28, making him the oldest college football player to do so.

This is HARPER (30s). She's as intelligent as she is vain.

CELIA

Just a name would be fine, Harper.

HARPER

Oddly enough Weinke didn't win the national championship in his Heisman season, but in his junior year, FSU defeated Virginia Tech-

She's interrupted by a series of "Boos" and "Oh shut ups!" Celia hands Harper a Brett Favre bobblehead, adding to her growing pile of sports memorabilia.

CELIA

Yeah, yeah ok. Just take the Favre bobblehead.

HARPER

Score!

MARTY (65) can't take his eyes off the bobblehead.

MARTY

Couldn't we wait till after I retired to auction off my stuff?

SMASH TO TILES: FINAL SCORE

INT. FINAL SCORE STUDIO - NIGHT

Marty sits next to Harper behind a snazzy studio desk. Her delivery is poised and business-like as she finishes.

HARPER

...and with that victory Jazz move to 4th in the West with a 101-98 victory.

MARTY

Well it's Friday and it's time for this week's "Sack Attack!"

OTS: Novak Djokovic swings a tennis racket.

MARTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We take you to the ATP Finals where Novak Djokovic shanks this serve off, not one, but TWO pairs of nards.

TV MONITOR: A replay shows a tennis ball lining into a tennis fan's crotch and then BOUNCING off into another's. They both wince in pain. It replays again and again.

MARTY (CONT'D)

There's the first sack attack aaaand... POW! There's the sequel. Now that's a double doink. A real twinning situation. Do the math: One tennis ball, two sacks, four nuts, endless pain.

A few crew members cover their laughter.

HARPER

Thanks for that, Marty.

OTS changes to Deon Jackson's wildly athletic highlights.

HARPER (CONT'D)

And finally, the man who always gave us a story, legendary wide receiver, Deon Jackson, announced he'll ditch the Chargers mid-season for an early retirement. Deon finishes his career with 132 touchdowns and more than 1,000 receptions.

MARTY (O.S.)

But lets not forget about his 6
arrests, 13 ejections, and
countless memorable quotes.

TV MONITOR: A shirtless Deon is interviewed post game.

DEON

Who said I'm a cancer in the locker
room? Mark my words: I'm gonna find
out which one of my untalented,
ungrateful, untalented teammates
said that!

BACK TO THE STUDIO:

MARTY

(chuckling)

I'm going to miss that guy.

HARPER

And we're going to miss you. As
many of you know this is Marty's
final broadcast at Final Score.

(to Marty)

You've revolutionized sports
broadcasting. From all us, thank
you for proudly leading the way for
the past 26 years.

MARTY

Well I'm honored to leave the show
in such good hands.

Harper grins a little too wide.

MARTY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be lost without all this.

(on the verge of tears)

Signing off one last time, I'm
Marty White.

HARPER

And I'm Harper Price. Goodnight
from Final Score. And thanks for
being part of our team.

NEWS MUSIC plays them out. CREW readjusts equipment. Harper
struts through the studio double doors...

INT. SPORTS NATION NETWORK HALLWAY - MORNING

...and emerges in a new outfit. Harper's got extra swag in her step this morning. DANIELLE (20s) a giddy P.A., spots Harper and joins her fast pace.

DANIELLE

Is that sports feminist icon,
Harper Price I see?

HARPER

Thank you, thank you. Props to
Billie Jean King and Lisa Leslie
for breaking the glass ceiling.

DANIELLE

Yeah right. They can't hold a
candle to you! We're gonna be
sweeping up shattered glass for
weeks.

HARPER

Try not to cut yourself.

INT. YOU'RE WRONG STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Harper and Danielle pace through the "You're Wrong" Studio.

DANIELLE

Ok, I want to pull some notes for
your first solo broadcast. What are
you thinking? Only covering female
sporting events? No! A televised
bra burning? WAIT! Castrating Ben
Rothlisberger live on air?!

(beat)

Sorry, sorry. My therapist and I
are working on it.

HARPER

This is the start of a new era,
Danielle. I'm bringing hard news
back to this network.

They stop to peer into the taping where two balding best
friends ROB and BOB (both 40s) continue to bicker.

ROB

Welcome back to "You're Wrong".
Let's jump back into it. Bob,
you're stranded on a deserted
island, who ya got: MJ or LeBron?

BOB

Gosh that's tough...I'm gonna take LeBron.

ROB

YOU'RE WRONG! Not only is Jordan more clutch under pressure, he's been tested by the most competitive era of the NBA!

BOB

Most comp-? Are you delusional? Rob, here's a message in a bottle. It starts with a 'Y' ends in a 'G' and in between is 'ou-wron.'

ROB

Huh?

BOB

YOU'RE WRONG!

Back to Harper and Danielle.

DANIELLE

Yeah I guess we could use a bit more hard news around here.

INT. INSIDE SCOOP STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

They continue discussing through the "Inside Scoop" Studio.

HARPER

I mean I love Marty, but sports purists don't need top 10 lists and celebrity gossip. They want recap and analysis.

DANIELLE

You think Celia would go for that?

They peer into a taping hosted by pretty boy MICHAEL (20s).

MICHAEL

Now I have it on good authority directly from Mike Trout... 's brother, who's best friend, Garrett, has a cousin... and his barber's girlfriend told me that Trout wants out of Anaheim. You heard it here first folks!

INT. RING THE BELL STUDIO

Harper and Danielle pace through the "Ring the Bell" Studio.

HARPER

When's the last time this network aired intelligent analysis?

DANIELLE

Yeah! Instead of Lingerie Football League highlights!

HARPER

Final Score is the flagship of SNN. And I'm the only one who can bring it back.

They peer into a taping with slacker Alex (30s). He's surrounded by four PANELISTS on TV monitors.

ALEX

This week disgraced former pitcher John Rocker publicly demanded his pregnant girlfriend "Get rid of it." Squad, 30 seconds on the clock, where do you stand on a woman's right to choose.

All four panelists SHOUT over each other.

HARPER

(to Danielle)

See what I mean.

INT. CELIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Harper giddily knocks and opens the door. Celia is multitasking making copies and talking on the phone. She gives Harper the "one sec" finger

CELIA

...Uh-huh. Yeah of course. Oh I can't wait. Ok, you got it!

Celia hangs the phone and returns to her copies.

HARPER

Don't you have an assistant to help with that?

We see TIFFANY (19) mindlessly playing on her phone with earphones in, feet up on the couch.

CELIA

Oh uh, Tiffany doesn't like to be bothered with mundane tasks. It's just better if I do it.

(to Tiffany)

Right girlfriend?

Tiffany blows an impressive bubble and pops it.

CELIA (CONT'D)

God I'm terrified of her.

HARPER

Ok! I've got so many ideas for our new format. Now, let me ask you this: What do sports purists want?

CELIA

Deon Jackson!

HARPER

What? No, they want recaps.

CELIA

Harper. We got Deon Jackson! Can you believe it?

HARPER

I've interviewed plenty of head-cases before.

CELIA

He's not a guest. He's your new cohost!

Harper freezes.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Yeah, I just talked to the brass upstairs. They signed him over the weekend! He'll be over here in two hours to get oriented. Eeeeeek!

HARPER

Right, but no. Because I was going to be the first... um...female solo anchor at SNN-

CELIA

Totally! And that is going to be so great one day. But Deon is pure ratings gold! Plus who better to do those boring recaps than a star like Deon!

Harper pauses Celia's hand on the copier.

HARPER

Celia, I've been the heart of this network for the last eight years. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

CELIA

But it *is* broken- well estimated to be.

Celia grabs a stack of papers with charts and graphs.

CELIA (CONT'D)

You're the brains. But Marty was the pizazz. Without him, projected ratings and ad sales are trending south.

HARPER

I can turn up the pizazz.

CELIA

Sure! But the good news is that since we got Deon, ad sales have doubled overnight!

HARPER

I feel like you're not hearing me.

CELIA

I know! This is going to be the best thing that has ever happened to us, Harp! You'll see.

Harper finally caves.

HARPER

Fine. But I'll be rooting for him to fail every step of the way.

CELIA

That's the spirit! Deon's coming over this afternoon. Maybe pick him up lunch to be nice.

TIFFANY

(taking out ear buds)
Grab me a Caesar salad.

Celia gives Harper a begging look.

CELIA

It's just easier if you do it.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

The anchors commiserate in the break room. Rob and Bob are still at each other's throats.

ROB

So let me get this straight. You'd take the '61 Yankees over the '75 Reds?

BOB

Mantle was in his prime!

ROB

And Johnny Bench wasn't? Bob, we're off camera so you know I truly mean this when I say, YOU ARE WRONG!

BOB

Bench was overrated!

ROB (CONT'D)

Your mom is overrated!

ALEX

Harp, a little help over here.

All eyes turn to Harper eating at a far table. They soak in her every word.

HARPER

Boys, don't be fooled by the Mantle-Maris home run race. Flash means nothing against substance of the Big Red Machine. They had a better run differential, batting average-

BOB

Not ERA!

HARPER

AND ERA. 3.37 to 3.46. Look it up if you want. Statistically the '75 Reds are hands down better.

Harper angrily chomps on her sandwich.

ALEX

Harper's right.

BOB

Didn't think of it that way.

Michael picks up on Harper's gloom and heads over.

MICHAEL

What's eating you up?

HARPER

Well it's just- with Marty gone, I was looking forward to being a solo host. But then they hired Deon Jackson who doesn't have any-

BOB

WHOA! Did you say Deon Jackson?!

ALEX

He's working here?! When does he start?!

HARPER

Today.

ROB

Today? TODAY?! The Deon Jackson!

MICHAEL

Oh sweet Jesus! I need to change. Is there anything in my teeth?

They scatter leaving Harper alone. She drops her sandwich.

HARPER

Well I've lost my appetite.

Alex scurries back in to grab the sandwich.

ALEX

Yoink.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

"No Problem" by Chance the Rapper plays as an actual bat mobile pulls in the lot.

As the driver gets out, we see close ups of Gucci boots, a Rolex, Dolce & Gabana suit with initials DJ on collar. This is DEON JACKSON (36). A star amongst stars. We track him from behind as he struts in slow motion towards the front doors.

INT. SPORTS NATION NETWORK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Deon glides through the hall, the anchors fawn over his presence.

Rob and Bob battle each other to get a selfie with Deon.

Danielle begins to faint. Michael has to choose between catching her or fixing his hair. He chooses the hair.

Alex tosses a football, Deon makes an effortless Odell Beckham Jr. catch. Alex literally drools at the sight.

INT. CELIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Harper and Celia are editing a script when...

DEON (O.S.)
Get ya popcorn ready!

We finally see Deon's charming face as slides in.

CELIA
Deon! Hi! Wow you're gorgeous.

DEON
I know. I conquered football, and now it's time for me to conquer... all of television.

CELIA
I just got weak in the knees. Harper hold me.

Harper sternly offers a handshake.

HARPER
Hi Deon. I'm Harper Price.

DEON
I know who you are! You called my last contract "undeserved and detrimental to the Chargers."

HARPER
It was. The Chargers went 3-14.

DEON
And I led the team in salary. Boo-ya!

Deon chest bumps Celia.

CELIA
Oh you guys are gonna be perfect together! The brains meets the pizzaz. I can feel our viewership rising as we speak!

Deon notices Tiffany.

DEON
 What's up, girl? Can you snag Deon
 a Smart Water?

Tiffany shoots Deon daggers.

DEON (CONT'D)
 Never mind. I'll get it.
 (to Celia)
 She's scary as hell.

Celia nods in rapid agreement.

INT. SPORTS NATION NETWORK BULLPEN - EVENING

Harper hands Deon a stack of papers across the desk.

HARPER
 Ok Deon, memorize these stats quick
 as possible. We're leading off with
 a live Brent Young interview. I
 wanna see if we can corner him into
 admitting the Pacers are tanking.

DEON
 Oh snap! I know Brent! We're angel
 investors in the same exotic dance
 club!

HARPER
 (at a loss for words)
 Did you hear anything I said?

DEON
 We named it Tight Ends.
 (waiting for a response)
 Cause of football!

HARPER
 Yeah I get it.

DEON (CONT'D)
 Hold that thought.

His phone RINGS. Deon picks it up.

DEON (CONT'D)
 Manny! How's my favorite agent?
 (to Harper)
 Packers are begging to sign me.
 (back to Manny)
 Talk to me buddy.

HARPER
 Wait. I thought you were retired.

DEON

(whispering to Harper)
Yeah but Green Bay is offering me
so much cash I might not be able to
turn it down, ya dig?

HARPER

That's big of you.
(realizing)
Wait, so you'd be leaving then?

DEON

Ha! Don't you know how PR stunts
work? Gotta keep 'em wanting more.

HARPER

Right.

DEON

(back to the phone)
Alright bro, call me when they have
an official offer. Peace Manny!

Deon hangs up and begins heading out.

DEON (CONT'D)

Time to make plays, baby! Let's do
this!!!

HARPER

Hey! You didn't read any of my
notes!

It's too late. Deon's gone.

INT. FINAL SCORE STUDIO - NIGHT

Harper and Deon sit poised at the desk mid-broadcast.

HARPER

Before we get to Mavs-Spurs
highlights, we begin tonight with a
satellite interview with Pacers
power forward Brent Young.

SPLIT SCREEN: Final Score STUDIO/BRENT in practice facility.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Welcome Brent. The Pacers have
dropped 12 of their last 15, nearly
in last place now. How do you get
back on a winning streak?

BRENT
(bored)
I'm just giving 110 percent.

HARPER
Okaaay. Mike Taylor was benched
with five minutes left in a tight
loss to the Lakers on Saturday. Any
idea why he wasn't in?

BRENT
I was just giving 110 percent.

HARPER
But he's the team's top scorer!

BRENT
Oh. Mike's just giving 110 percent.

Harper looks down at her notes. This is not going well.

HARPER
(flustered)
Oh....um....ok...

DEON
Hey Brent, what's up playa?

BRENT
Deon, is that you?

DEON
You already know! Hey you should
draft that Collins kid from Duke.

BRENT
I know! That dude's got handles.

HARPER
Whoa! Brent can you say that again?

BRENT
(snapping)
I already told ya lady. I'm giving
110 percent.

DEON
You and Collins would be
unstoppable next year.

BRENT
Between you and me, this year is
trash. We should do anything to get
Collins. Cut our losses, ya know?

DEON

True, true. Got to think long term.

BRENT

Exactly. If we have to lose, we have to lose. We need that pick.

Harper is befuddled by the blatant admission.

DEON

Ok, that's our time. Best of luck my man!

BRENT

See you at Tight Ends!

INT. SPORTS NATION NETWORK BULLPEN

MATCH CLOSE UP- a half eaten football "congratulations" cake.

A celebration party is being held for Deon. The man of hour is surrounded by a pack of worshiping anchors.

ALEX

Deon! You just like straight up got Brent to reveal the Pacers are tanking. That NEVER happens!

DEON

I don't know man. People just have a way of opening up to me. I'm like a people whisperer.

ROB

Deon, let me tell you about my ex-wife!

INT. CELIA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harper watches Deon celebrate from a distance in disgust.

HARPER

I can't believe this crap. You saw him go off script. We've got to get rid of him.

CELIA

Yeah right! Twitter is exploding right now. Come to think of it, I'm exploding.

HARPER

Eww Celia. People only tolerate this because they think he's so cool. He's not! He's reckless and you know it.

CELIA

But people love his charisma!

HARPER

Are you high or something? Charisma? You want me to ask Brent which Kardashian he wants to date?

CELIA

Marty would ask it.

HARPER

Well I'm not Marty! I'm trying to bring a little journalism back to this network.

CELIA

Watch it Harper. You're brilliant, but it wouldn't hurt to turn up the spunk a little.

HARPER

The spunk?

CELIA

The razzle dazzle. The moxie. The cajones!

HARPER

(gesturing to her groin)
Well Celia, as you can tell, I don't have "cajones."

CELIA

Sorry Harp. The viewers have spoken. We're giving Deon more air time. Get used to it.

Celia heads off to join the others in celebration.

HARPER

Celia, c'mon!

As Harper sulks, she spots Tiffany sprawled out on the couch.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Have you been here the whole time?

TIFFANY

Yeah, so?

HARPER

Oh...sorry. I'll uh close the door.

INT. FINAL SCORE STUDIO - THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Welcome to Harper's Hell. She sits by helpless as Deon takes over the show with a series of off-the-rail comments.

MONDAY:

DEON

Golf isn't a real sport. Anything you can do in khakis is basically a hobby.

TUESDAY:

Deon conducts another "hard-hitting" NBA interview.

DEON (CONT'D)

Hey which Nets cheerleader do you think is hotter: Mallory or Amy?

STEVE

Ohh that's tough. What about Stephanie?

DEON

I totally forgot about Stephanie!

Harper face palms.

WEDNESDAY:

Deon trails off into his own world.

DEON (CONT'D)

So my third Bugatti had to be emerald green because-

His phone rings. Deon picks it up mid-broadcast.

DEON (CONT'D)

Hold up folks. Looks like the bidding war for Deon is back on!

THURSDAY:

Deon breaks down a football play with an electronic pen on the screen. His drawing is starting to look scandalous.

DEON (CONT'D)
So Mack's showing blitz here, and
Fuller's got no help on Diggs-

HARPER
Deon, please don't draw a penis.

DEON
That means Cousins needs to ID the
matchup and target Diggs.

HARPER
Deon don't-

DEON
So now it's bombs away baby!

His finished drawing looks exactly like a penis.

DEON (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Oh my God! It looks just like a
dong! I did NOT see that coming!

Harper snaps a pencil in half.

EXT. PARKING LOT - THE NEXT MORNING

Harper marches through the parking lot on her last nerve. She attempts to give herself a mental pep talk.

HARPER
(to herself)
You got this Harper. Don't let him
rattle you. Be better. Just be
better.

Harper comes to a screeching halt. She spots Deon on the phone and rushes behind a tree to eavesdrop.

DEON
(on the phone)
Manny, what do you mean the Packers
aren't offering a max contract?...

Harper ears perk up.

DEON (CONT'D)

...But they don't know the Chargers
let me go. Negotiate with them!...
Hey I do NOT have an ego problem!

Deon slams his phone, collects himself, and marches through
the front doors. Harper emerges from the tree in shock.

MARTY (O.S.)

Juicy stuff, huh?

SURPRISE! Marty comes hopping out of the bushes.

HARPER

Aghhh! Marty? What are you doing?

MARTY

Can't seem to find my key fob. You
have an extra one?

HARPER

You've got to go home. Have you
been here this whole time?

MARTY

There's an A-Rod coffee mug that's
priceless. It's right next to the
scanner. Can you bring it down?

HARPER

I have enough on my plate. Have you
seen the show? They're letting Deon
take over. I feel like the rug is
being pulled right under me.

MARTY

Ahhh the old new kid on the block
quandary. You know I recall a
similar feeling when a certain up-
and-coming anchor joined the scene.

HARPER

Really? Me?

MARTY

And you know what I did?

HARPER

You realized that the team is
stronger than an individual and our
strengths compliment each other?

MARTY

Sort of. I sabotaged you every chance I got.

Harper cocks her head in confusion.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Think about it. Who do you think messed with your teleprompter before shows? Or stole your lunch out of the fridge? Or when I told you it's pronounced "baroll" instead of "B-Roll."

HARPER

God, I didn't realize you were so threatened by me.

MARTY

But you know something, Harper? It didn't work. For as much as I tried to undercut you, you were a natural, couldn't be stopped. Deon on the other hand, ranked the Cowboy's cheerleaders in order of perkiness. He can't be that hard to take down.

HARPER

It feels so sleazy.

MARTY

Yep. Well some mighty fine gossip just fell into your lap. In our industry, we call that a touchdown.

HARPER

No, I just-- I gotta go.

Harper stomps off towards the building.

MARTY

(calling after her)

Suit yourself. Don't say I didn't warn- wait no!

The door shuts. Marty calls after her.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Ahh dang it. I need that key fob!!!

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

The men have another one of their typical lunch debates.

ROB

Bob you're embarrassing yourself.
The best college team would not
beat the worst NFL team.

BOB

Alabama is unstoppable! They've got
like six first rounders!

ROB

You're wrong! Hey Harp, little help
over here.

HARPER

Ok listen up. Alabama may have
future pros, but they're not pros
yet. Everything improves under NFL
training. Decision making, 40-time,
strength. You'd be crazy to pick a
bunch of college kids over that.

BOB

Good point. They're still
kids.

ALEX

She's right. Thanks Harp.

Deon slides in from the break room door.

DEON

I'm gonna have to disagree. When I
was in college, I was twice as good
as those dudes in the NFL. Talent
is talent.

HARPER

Deon you're not serious, are you?

DEON

Oh I'm serious baby. At the U, we
scrimmaged against the Dolphins.
Must've had like 400 yards
receiving.

Everyone oo's and ah's. Not Harper.

BOB

Good point. Talent *is* talent.

ALEX

Alright, I'm convinced. College
players CAN beat pros.

MICHAEL

Deon, tell us about that scrimmage.
How many touchdowns did you catch?

DEON

Well I'd like to, but Deon's got to
take a leak.

ALEX

I'm coming with!

ROB

Me too!

The men follow Deon towards the bathroom.

HARPER

Guys! C'mon. Hold up!

They follow Deon into the bathroom, Harper tries to catch up until... BANG. The door shuts in her face. Harper stares at the men's bathroom logo as their muffled banter continues.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

Harper's had enough. She storms up to Danielle's cube.

HARPER

Hey I need a favor.

DANIELLE

What's up Harp! Whoa, you look
rough. Wanna hit this Jose Canseco
pillow? It helps me.

HARPER

No thanks. Actually I was hoping
you could set up this interview for
tonight.

Harper hands over a name and a number.

DANIELLE

Packers GM George Quinn? He and
Deon going to talk out his contract
live on air?

HARPER

Yeah, I guess so. Deon said it
would be a fun chance to riff.

DANIELLE

Deon's said that?

HARPER

For sure! But he doesn't want anyone to know. So spontaneous. Let's just keep it between us!

DANIELLE

(debating)

You got a pretty mischievous look on your face... But you are my feminist hero. Sooo...Ok! You got it Harp!

INT. CELIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Harper peeks into Celia's office. Only Tiffany is there, feet up on the couch.

HARPER

Psssst. Tiffany. Hey!

She looks up unamused.

TIFFANY

What.

HARPER

I need a favor.

TIFFANY

Nah.

HARPER

Wait! I need you to keep Celia busy before tonight's show. Okay? For uh, I'm just doing something special and I don't want her to worry or... get involved.

TIFFANY

Sounds shady. I'm out.

HARPER

No! It's not shady at all. It's special.

Tiffany puts her headphones back on. That's it. Harper FUMES over. She marches up and RIPS the headphones off.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Listen up! I got you this job! They were going to hire some jerk off named Chadley and I pushed for more women in the office.

(MORE)

HARPER (CONT'D)

I'm the reason you get to put your feet up every day and get paid! You owe me!

TIFFANY

(rattled)

No one's every spoken to me like that.

HARPER

I still have Chadley's resume on my desk. And I'm not afraid to use it.

Tiffany gulps.

INT. FINAL SCORE STUDIO - NIGHT

Pre-broadcast Harper looks around the studio- Deon's talking angrily on the phone with Manny. Up in the booth, Celia helps Tiffany look for her earrings. Behind the set, Danielle gives Harper a wink. The plan is in motion.

Deon mopes over and joins her at the desk.

DEON

(dejected)

Hey uh, let me take a look at that Knicks-Bulls box score.

HARPER

You never check the box score.

DEON

Yeah well, I just figured you know, I'd try the whole... be a team player thing.

HARPER

Wait. Are you messing with me?

DEON

It's like, back when I was on the Giants. Travis Jones started taking over some of my routes. So I was gonna mess with his playbook before the wildcard game. But then I decided not to. And together we won a super bowl. Good thing I changed my mind. Coach would have probably cut all of us.

HARPER

WHAT.

Harper's dumbfounded by the accuracy of his comments. The guilt gets her thinking.

DEON

Sorry Harp. I'm gonna step it up.

HARPER

Hey Deon, I-

DANIELLE

And we're live in five, four, three-

Harper is wide-eyed as the production begins.

DEON

Welcome to Final Score. I'm Deon Jackson alongside Harper Price.

HARPER

Uh... Thanks. Hello.

DEON

We've got Knicks-Bulls highlights in a sec, but first, an interview with Packers GM... *George Quinn?*

SPLIT SCREEN: Final Score desk and GEORGE QUINN from home.

GEORGE

How ya doing Deon?

Deon's a deer in headlights. Harper shrinks.

DEON

Um... good. What's up?

GEORGE

You tell me, superstar.

DEON

(nervous)

Ha, yeah. Good one. Yeah I'm retired now. Doing the TV thing.

GEORGE

Really? Because I keep getting desperate calls from your agent-

Harper jumps in.

HARPER

George! Packers have a lot of weaknesses heading into the playoffs. What can you do to improve?

GEORGE

We've got the best D in the league. And a solid chance to secure home field advantage. I'd say we're feeling very confident as is.

HARPER

Uh-huh.

GEORGE

Hey I thought you wanted to talk about all the rumors that Deon-

HARPER

Oh for sure! A lot of rumors out there. Hey! Any of your players sleeping with the Kardashians?

From the booth, we see Celia perk up.

GEORGE

I have no idea. That's highly inappropriate. I thought we were here to talk about Deon.

Harper begins to panic. Deon knows he's cornered.

HARPER

Deon, uh yes. Of course. Well- you say your team is set. But uh, pretty weak at wide receiver. If you could get a receiver like him, that'd be great huh?

GEORGE

(laughing)

You mean a head-case like him? Sorry, no offense.

Deon feels the camera zoom onto his sweating forehead. Harper scans her brain for an idea...

HARPER

Did you know that Deon averaged 91 yards a game last season?

GEORGE

Yeah, so what?

HARPER

Well he did it despite three
quarterbacks with a passer rating
that's at the bottom of the league.

GEORGE

(kind of impressed)

Oh.

HARPER

And he was doubled on more than
half of his receptions. Averaged
18.5 yards after the catch and had
a team best 11 touchdowns.
Meanwhile, the Packer's rank 20th
in passing. You're a run heavy
offense that relies too much on
Jerome Curts. You're one injury shy
of being one and done and you know
it. And even if you only care about
running the ball, Deon's backs
averaged 3 more yards a carry when
they ran to his side of the field.

DEON

And I lead the team in salary!

Harper elbows him.

DEON (CONT'D)

I mean. I uh, I played injured for
most the season and still caught
over 70 percent of my targets.

GEORGE

Wow. Well uh, sounds like I have a
scout to fire. Maybe we have some
discussing to do. What do you say
Deon?

Harper gives Deon a subtle wink. He smiles at her and turns
to the camera.

DEON

I'm retired George.

GEORGE

What?

HARPER

What?

DEON

I don't know how these rumors got
started. But I'm moving forward
now. Not back.

GEORGE
(confused)
Well alright. If you say so.

Deon exchanges a nod with Harper.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
This was a huge waste of my time.

Deon takes offense to that. A squiggly electronic line shows up on screen over George's face.

HARPER
Deon don't.

He's drawing with the electronic pen. It's looking like...

HARPER (CONT'D)
Deon, no.

It's a penis.

HARPER (CONT'D)
C'mon Deon.

DEON
Looking good, George.

GEORGE
(checking his face)
What's going on? Do I have a booger
or something?

HARPER
We'll be right back after these
messages.

INT. FINAL SCORE STUDIO - LATER

Celia rushes over to the desk during commercial break and hugs Deon and Harper.

CELIA
The brains and the pizzazz. I love
it! Deon, what a drawing! "Penis
face" is trending on twitter!

HARPER
Great.

CELIA
We should do this to every guest!

HARPER
No we shouldn't.

CELIA
Right, of course not.
(holding in a shriek)
Ah! You guys are such a great team!

Celia bounces away checking her phone.

HARPER
Hey so, sorry about the whole
ambush thing.

DEON
You know something Harper? That's
the most a teammate has ever stood
up for me. Thank you.

HARPER
My pleasure. I can't believe I'm
saying this, but you actually show
a lot of promise.

DEON
You really think so?

HARPER
Yeah, I mean half the job is...
pizazz.

Deon smiles.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Now the other half? I'd be happy to
show you how to prep so you can
defend yourself next time. Maybe
later tonight?

DEON
Oooo I'd love to but I have a
"meeting" tonight at Tight Ends.
Taco Tuesday! You should come!

HARPER
Ugh, I'll pass.

The cameras swivels over, the red light on turns on, Danielle
signals over, Harper forces a smile.

HARPER (CONT'D)
And we're back.

CUT TO CREDITS.

