

37U PASSION

A Rowe Show Sketch

Written by

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EXT. THE FIELD -- MORNING

CLOSE ON: ASHTON (37), jaw clenched, eyes scanning his men.
Sweat. Intensity.

ASHTON

I'm not going to sugarcoat this...
tomorrow is the most important day
of your life. I don't care if your
kid is graduating; I don't care if
you are getting married. You are
going to cancel that shit!

WIDE SHOT --

REVEAL:

A public park. Scattered in a loose semicircle, DOWN ON ONE
KNEE: a dozen GROWN MEN. This is a flag football team.

ASHTON

Guys, we came from all over the
country to be here to kick some
blue-collar ass! Their color might
be blue, but our necks are RED!!!!

A scattered set of noises from the men - like they're being
sent into D-Day. One touches a photo of his family. One
silently mouths a prayer. One is icing his hamstring while
nodding.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM -- SAME DAY

TOMMY (14), already in bed, sits up, upset. MARK (37) sits on
the edge of the bed, quiet -- trying to hold it together.

MARK

You have to talk to me.

Nothing.

MARK (CONT'D)

I can't leave like this.

TOMMY

Please, Dad... just stay. You don't
have to go.

MARK

You mean the world to me, Tommy.
But this --

TOMMY

(cutting him off)

If I mean so much to you... then why go? Why miss out on my eighthgrade graduation!?

MARK

Tommy, you'll have other graduations. This team might not get another season.

Tommy turns, tear-stained.

TOMMY

But Dad, I have been hearing these noises. And I don't know what to do.

MARK

Tom--

TOMMY

Just listen to me, please. There was a rhythm to it. It has to mean something! Like a ghost trying to talk to me!

Mark shakes his head sadly.

MARK

Tommy... nobody's sending you messages. This is an old house; it makes noises.

TOMMY

You don't believe me?! It was intentional! It was saying *Stay...*

Mark takes this in.

MARK

You know, after you came along, your mother said something I didn't really understand -- she said, 'I look at the baby, and I see myself as they'll remember me.' She said, 'It's as if we don't exist anymore, like we're ghosts, like now we're just there to be memories for our kids.' Now I realize -- once we're parents, we're just the ghosts of our children's futures.

TOMMY
You just said ghosts don't exist.

MARK
That's right. I can't be your ghost
right now -- I need to exist.

Beat.

MARK (CONT'D)
My men are depending on me.

Tommy buries his head on his dad's shoulder.

MARK (CONT'D)
I will be back.

Mark reaches into his pocket. Struggles to pull out a smushed
three-ring BINDER.

MARK (CONT'D)
There are things in here, Tommy...
things you're not ready to
understand. Hell, half my guys
aren't ready. But one day, when
you're older -- when you've lived --
you'll open this. And you'll know
who your father was.

Tommy hurls the binder with rage. He can't even look at his
own father.

TOMMY
I don't want it. I want you.

Tommy rolls over and begins to cry.

MARK
(emotional)
I love you forever, and I am coming
back.

Mark walks out slowly.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

CLAIRE (35) is waiting by the door. She looks at him -- she
already knows.

CLAIRE
Is missing Tommy's graduation
really worth this? He looks up to
you.

(MORE)
Even if you go out there and win
your game -- who's going to know,
Mark? Who?... Genuinely who.

MARK
(already walking out)
The world will know.

He gets in the car. And starts the engine.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tommy jumps off the bed, grabs Mark's binder off the floor,
RUNS outside.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON: Mark, emotional -- driving off. We hear a

COUNTDOWN...

VOICE (V.O.)
TEN... NINE...

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Tommy bursts through the front door. Binder in hand --

TOMMY
DAD!! DAD??! DAD!?!

VOICE (V.O.)
EIGHT... SEVEN...

But Mark is far down the road. Tommy is screaming for his dad
as Claire holds him back.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

He opens up the glove compartment. We see a medal that reads -

"SECOND PLACE 37U FOOTBALL REC LEAGUE".

VOICE (V.O.)
SIX... FIVE...

EXT. SMALL FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY -- MID GAME

The park is practically empty.

VOICE (V.O.)
FOUR... THREE...

We pan to reveal: a REF in a striped shirt, counting the rush. A flag football game is in action. Mid-celebration, a forty-year-old man dances and screams one inch from Mark's face.

MARK
Timeout.

Nothing. The ref is tuned out.

MARK (CONT'D)
(passionate)
TIMEOUT!!!!

WHISTLE.

REF
(bored)
Timeout, blue. Last one, blue.

ASHTON
(to his team)
Bring it in boys!

Final drive. Game on the line.

ASHTON (CONT'D)
(looks at Mark)
We have to run it.

Teammates exchange looks. Someone actually gasps.

MARK
(visibly nervous)
You sure?

Ashton nods. He has just given his soldiers orders.

Huddle breaks. The camera follows Mark.

This is the moment.

Ready...

Set...

MARK (CONT'D)
BLUE! BLUE 42! Readdyyyy. *Tommy*
Special! Hike!

Mark shuffles back. Fakes a deep ball.

It's a trick play. Mark pitches it to the receiver. He breaks off formation, wide open, streaking for the end zone.

The ball spirals through the air. Mark reaches up...

Caught.

...Mark's flag pulls -- LATE.

A GROWN MAN collides into Mark at full speed.

BOOM. The ball pops out of Mark's hands.

VOICE (V.O.)
(fading away)
TUDALOO! TUDALOO!

BLACK.

INT. SPACE VOID - LATER

Mark, still in uniform, floats in blackness.

He DESPERATELY reaches out towards a wall, trying to slow himself. He finally STOPS. Looks around, catching his breath.

The wall is TIGHTLY PACKED PAPER...PAGES...BOOKS. As seen behind a bookshelf... He peers through the bookshelf. It's Tommy's bedroom.

MARK
(confused)
What? Is that Tommy?

He bangs against the bookshelf. Trying to get to his son.

MARK (CONT'D)
Tommy! TOMMY!!

He continues to pound the shelf.

MARK (CONT'D)
Don't let me leave Tommy.

YOUNG TOMMY (14) looks up.

MARK (CONT'D)
(pounding the shelf)
No! No! No!

Tommy turns to the noise. Mark looks at his fists. He begins to realize...

MARK (CONT'D)
(realizing)
Gravity. Gravity travels through
space and time...

He starts knocking, but deliberately now.

INTERCUT: Tommy in bed listening to the knocking coming from his bookshelf.

Mark pulls away. Trying to gather himself.

Then... he notices. Each wall of the void is Tommy's bedroom. A different day. A different year. He claws his way along the wall to the next wall.

MARK (CONT'D)
(to himself)
It's not just one of him.

His tone shifts. Softer now. Less panic. More clarity. Beat.

He begins searching. Scraping along the walls, faster and faster, across every version of his son. Suddenly --

CLAIRE (V.O.)
(faintly in the distance)
Tommy! C'mon, Tommy.

He hears and follows Claire's voice. He looks through the bookshelf --

INTERCUT:

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Much older Tommy. Standing at a big whiteboard, drawing X's and O's.

CLAIRE
Tommy, it's 3pm on a Wednesday.
Please do something. You are too
obsessed with this football thing.
You have to make something of your
life; you're thirty-seven years
old. Don't end up like your father.

No response.

Claire sighs and leave.

BACK TO MARK

MARK
(realizing)
He's thirty-seven years old.
(beat)
He's eligible for the league.

Then it hits him.

MARK (CONT'D)
I thought they chose me. They never
chose me. They chose Tommy.

Beat. The full weight of it.

MARK (CONT'D)
(screaming into the void)
TO WIN THE 37U CHAMPIONSHIP!

He is now clear on what he needs to do. He pulls himself back to the shelf where the binder waits. He begins to push.

MARK (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Come on, come on...

BACK TO TOMMY

The binder slides. Falls. Tommy turns his head. Reaches down and opens it, slower this time. His face changes. Not confusion anymore. Recognition.

It's not just a binder; it's a playbook. *It's Mark's playbook.* He frantically flips through it. He runs from the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tommy bursts in.

TOMMY
Mom! Mom!

Claire sits on the couch.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

It was Dad. It was *his* playbook. It was there all along, right in front of me.

CLAIRE

(annoyed)

Whatever gets you out of the room.

Tommy turns to the whiteboard, already dense with formulas and X's and O's. He steps back. Looks down at Mark's playbook. Erases it all in one motion. Written in the center, alone:

"THE TOMMY SPECIAL"

Beneath it, he draws the play. Three arrows and a squiggle. He stares at it.

Something settles in him. Relief. Pure joy.

BACK TO MARK

He watches Tommy study the playbook. His chest swells.

He mouths along with the play Tommy's reading.

Then, around him, everything begins to change. The layered realities. Every version of Tommy, every timeline. All of it. They collapse into one. The looping images slow. Settle. A single reality remains.

SMASH TO BLACK:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Beeping monitors. Mark wakes, groggy, disoriented. A DOCTOR stands over him.

DOCTOR

Don't get up too fast. You are technically sixty years old now.

Mark, dazed, looks around the room. Out the window, the world looks exactly the same as it always has.

MARK

(weak)

Where... where am I?

DOCTOR

Home.

A beat. Mark looks outside. A whistle. Kids playing. A sign, half-visible:

"...FIELD."

MARK

Nice of them to name the field
after me.

DOCTOR

(confused)

The field wasn't named after you...

Mark smiles at this. The door opens.

Tommy walks in. Thirty-seven. The same age Mark was the night he left. They lock eyes. They embrace. Long.

MARK

Tommy, it was me. I was your ghost.

TOMMY

I know.

(beat)

Nobody believed me. But I knew
you'd come back.

MARK

How?

TOMMY

Because my dad promised me.

Tommy pulls back. Reaches into his pocket. Presses something into his father's hand. It's a medal.

"FIRST PLACE -- 37U FOOTBALL REC LEAGUE"

Mark stares at it. Overcome.

He grips his son's hand.

MARK

You figured it out...

Tommy nods through the tears.

TOMMY

The Tommy Special.

A long beat. Neither man moves.

FADE OUT.

THE END