

A SHOT AT FAITH

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STATION - PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

On a dark and mist-shrouded night, BETSY CRAIG, 21, spiked hair, tattooed, dials.

TWO-YEAR-OLD MITCHELL clings to her leg.

SUPER: "1999"

BETSY
(frantic)
Please...please pick up.

MITCHELL
Mommy.

BETSY
Wait.

MITCHELL
Mommy.

BETSY
Quiet!

INT. AMANDA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A flickering light illuminates piles of dirty dishes as an off-center ceiling fan loses a battle with wafts of cigarette smoke.

AMANDA, 23, southern drawl, answers.

AMANDA
What?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

BETSY
They're after me.

AMANDA
Who is it this time?

BETSY
Can I crash there...'til this passes over?

AMANDA
I guess, but--

EXT. BUS STATION - PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

A slow moving black sedan passes. Two men stare. The car continues, then stops. Tires screech in reverse towards Betsy.

BETSY

Oh God!

The phone receiver swings as a dial tone blurts loudly.

AMANDA

Betsy!

A toddler's shoe is left behind on the sidewalk. A man exits the car. He scans in both directions, places the shoe in his pocket. The car speeds off.

FADE TO BLACK.

A horn blares.

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

COACH FARRAR, 50s, trim, receding hairline, thrusts his hands into the air.

SUPER: "Canaan, Kentucky 2014"

Canaan's home crowd cheers riotously. The score is 73-72.

MITCHELL, now 17, and 6'3", high-fives fellow teammate ANDRE THOMAS, 17, black.

Twelve seconds remain on the clock.

Opponent Central Catholic and Canaan head to their respective team benches.

COACH FARRAR

Listen up! Run "Clear Forty-one." Mitchell, they haven't stopped you all night. Let's go!

A referee's WHISTLE shrieks. The CROWD stands, cheers as both teams break from their huddles.

A rotund HIGH SCHOOL ANNOUNCER sits courtside. He wipes his forehead.

HIGH SCHOOL ANNOUNCER
Folks, it's a one possession game.
The winner goes to the state
tournament.

The referee hands the ball to Canaan.

Andre receives the inbound pass. He dribbles to the top of the key.

Mitchell comes off a double screen. He is passed the ball.

Canaan's players clear out with five seconds left. Mitchell drives, pulls up, he shoots...

HIGH SCHOOL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Oh my! Central Catholic goes back to
State for the second year in a row.

INT. TEAM LOCKER ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

GREG HOLLIS, 30s, a towering college scout, stands outside Canaan's green and white locker room entrance.

Players enter.

Mitchell slinks past. Head down. Towel draped around his neck.

GREG HOLLIS
Mitchell Craig?
(extending his hand)
Greg Hollis. Commonwealth
University.

Mitchell slowly looks up.

GREG HOLLIS
Sorry about the game.

Mitchell dries his face.

GREG HOLLIS
We'd love for you to consider the
Raiders. Here's my card.

Mitchell takes the card. He glances at it, then tries to hand it back.

GREG HOLLIS
You could really help us.

MITCHELL
But I missed.

GREG HOLLIS
Even Jordan didn't make them all.
Keep your head up son. We'll be in
touch.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The decor is 1970s with green shag carpet. Empty beer cans
are scattered, rabbit ears protrude from the outdated TV.

Mitchell is just coming home.

Betsy Craig, now 36, belly button ring, bleached hair,
watches television from the tattered couch.

Mitchell sets down his gym bag.

MITCHELL
We lost.

Betsy takes a swig of beer, a drag from her cigarette.

BETSY
Re-runs. I hate re-runs!

Mitchell hands Betsy an original, masterfully drawn card.

MITCHELL
It's for Mother's Day.

Betsy grabs it. Looks it over.

BETSY
Purty. Thanks.
(beat)
I need my pills.

MITCHELL
I'll get them.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell opens a cupboard door over a sink full of dirty
dishes. He retrieves a medicine bottle.

MITCHELL
It's empty.

Betsy grabs the pill bottle out of Mitchell's hand.

BETSY
Dammit!

She throws the bottle.

MITCHELL

Mom?

She glares at Mitchell.

BETSY

Don't you understand! I need my
medicine!

(beat)

Okay look, I'm sorry.

Betsy opens the fridge. Reaches for another beer. A jagged
scar covers her wrist.

MITCHELL

Can't you get more?

Betsy paces.

BETSY

Not without a prescription.

Betsy types a text message. She takes another swig of beer.
Her cell phone chirps a text alert. She reads.

BETSY

I'm goin' out.

MITCHELL

When will you be back?

Betsy grabs her purse.

BETSY

I'll let you know.

MITCHELL

I love you.

The front door slams shut.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Mitchell stares straight ahead as he walks with Andre.

Throngs of students push their way down the locker-lined
hallway before the next class period.

ANDRE

You haven't said a word.

MITCHELL

Mom took off again.

ANDRE

That sucks.

MITCHELL

I've called everyone.

ANDRE

Another binge?

Mitchell shrugs.

A hulking FOOTBALL PLAYER and several large teammates approach. They block Mitchell and Andre.

ANDRE

Come on, guys.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

Sorry about the loss.

MITCHELL

Thanks.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

The team fought real hard. Made us proud.

The other players shake their heads in agreement.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

See you at the lake this summer?

ANDRE

If I can get him out of the gym.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

Maybe you could show me that behind-the-back pass?

MITCHELL

Anytime.

The players step aside.

Mitchell and Andre continue to walk.

MITCHELL

We should have gone to State.

ANDRE

No one's blaming you. You carried us all season!

Andre stops at a water fountain. He drinks, then looks back up at Mitchell.

ANDRE
Don't worry about her. Okay?

Mitchell nods.

The hallway bell rings. Students hurry past to their next class.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mitchell studies at the kitchen table. A knock bounces off the door.

MITCHELL
Sergeant Perez?

SERGEANT PEREZ, late 40s, burly, military-close haircut, turns down the volume on his portable radio.

SERGEANT PEREZ
I have some bad news. It's your mother.

MITCHELL
What happened?

SERGEANT PEREZ
We locked her up again. Public intoxication and resisting arrest.

MITCHELL
Can I see her?

SERGEANT PEREZ
She's still drying out.

Mitchell leans against the kitchen counter.

SERGEANT PEREZ
Almost had to tase her.

Mitchell begins to pace.

MITCHELL
She's been drinking a lot.

SERGEANT PEREZ
My dad was a drunk until mom fired a shotgun over his head. Sobered him up real quick.

Mitchell spots his Mother's Day card lying under the kitchen table. He picks it up.

MITCHELL
It doesn't make sense.

SERGEANT PEREZ
Some people drink to forget. Others,
to kill the pain.

MITCHELL
I've tried to help her.

SERGEANT PEREZ
Your mom is stubborn. It'll take
time.

INT. COACH FARRAR'S OFFICE - DAY

Light from a small window bounces off team photos, trophies,
and a banner that reads, "Defense Hurts."

Mitchell stands in the doorway. Coach Farrar sits behind a
faded walnut desk. He motions for Mitchell to enter.

COACH FARRAR
Have a seat.

MITCHELL
Am I in trouble?

COACH FARRAR
Depends.

Coach Farrar pulls a large metal container out from under his
desk. He opens it. Numerous scholarship offers pour out.

COACH FARRAR
These coaches are driving me nuts!

Mitchell sifts through the stack. A "who's who" of college
names are seen. He pauses, then pushes the envelopes to the
side.

MITCHELL
I'll probably stay here.

Coach Farrar leans back in his chair with his arms folded.

COACH FARRAR
Let me guess, your mother?

Mitchell squirms in his chair.

COACH FARRAR
It's time you thought about
yourself.

MITCHELL
But, I feel guilty about leaving
her.

COACH FARRAR
She can handle it.

Mitchell walks over to his team's regional runner-up trophy
on a corner shelf.

COACH FARRAR
It burns at you, doesn't it?

MITCHELL
We should have won!

COACH FARRAR
And you should have been triplets.
Would've made my job easier.

Mitchell spins back around.

MITCHELL
We were so close!

COACH FARRAR
You've got another chance.

Farrar picks up a random scholarship offer from the pile on
his desk.

COACH FARRAR
Most of these teams have played in
or won the national tournament.

Mitchell eyes the stack of envelopes. He looks back at the
trophy.

COACH FARRAR
Any favorites?

MITCHELL
I've always liked Louisville College
and Carolina State.

COACH FARRAR
Anyone else?

MITCHELL
Hoosier U.

Telephone buzzes.

Coach Farrar holds up a finger. He reaches for the phone.

INT. COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY - COACH DAVIES' OFFICE - DAY

COACH DAVIES, 60, thick silver hair, gruff, puffs on a pipe as he reclines in his high-back leather chair. His office is corporate, immense, with championship memorabilia scattered throughout.

COACH DAVIES
Dave! Glenn Davies.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

Coach Farrar points to the phone and mouths, "Commonwealth University!"

COACH FARRAR
Well, you're in luck. Mitchell is sitting right here.

COACH DAVIES
Has he signed yet?

COACH FARRAR
He's still undecided.

Mitchell sits back down.

COACH DAVIES
One of my scouts watched your regional final. He was very impressed.

COACH FARRAR
I'm listening.

COACH DAVIES
I'd like to offer Mitchell a full scholarship on the spot.

COACH FARRAR
I'll talk with him and see what he thinks.

COACH DAVIES
I've got a kid from Maryland that's ready to sign if Mitchell doesn't.

COACH FARRAR
We'll be in touch.