

RESURFACED

Written by

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OVER BLACK

MICHAEL (V.O.)

When I was eleven-years-old, I  
decided I was going to be the  
greatest athlete of all time.

INT. THE WATER CUBE, BEIJING - NIGHT (2008)

The swimming venue for the Beijing Olympics. It's bright,  
colorful -- and PACKED. The crowd is on its feet, ROARING.

SUPER: BEIJING 2008

Eight swimmers frantically butterfly for home. In the middle  
of the pool, MICHAEL PHELPS is in a dead heat with Serbia's  
Milorad Cavic. NBC Commentator ROWDY GAINES gives us the TV  
play-by-play -- he's absolutely losing his mind.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

Cavic is swimming tough! Phelps  
coming up in lane five! I don't  
know if he's gonna catch him!

Phelps and Cavic touch the wall at the exact same time -- too  
close to call.

Michael turns to look at the scoreboard. Pulls off his  
goggles. Moment of truth.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.) (CONT'D)

He gets it done again! He did it!  
He did it!

Michael slaps the water, flings his hands in the air.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.) (CONT'D)

One one-hundredth of a second! One  
one-hundredth of a second! Michael  
Phelps has won eight gold medals at  
the Beijing Olympics!

Michael throws his arms around a teammate in the next lane.

The crowd is screaming. Pure joy.

INT. THE WATER CUBE, BEIJING - NIGHT (2008)

Michael stands atop the podium, watching the Stars and  
Stripes rise above the arena.

He cries as the national anthem crescendos, then raises both hands in the air and waves to the screaming crowd.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

And by the time I was 23, I was.

He is literally on top of the world.

INT. THE WATER CUBE, BEIJING - NIGHT (2008)

The crowd shrieks with delight as Michael climbs the bleachers, but Michael only has eyes for his mother.

DEBBIE PHELPS, late 50s, is crying, reaching for her son. He wraps his arms around her and kisses her cheek, then drapes his gold medal around her neck.

Mother and son smile at each other -- they did this together.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

It's funny, we spend so much time thinking about our dreams, about how we're going to achieve them, about what it's going to feel like when we do.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT (2014)

We cut abruptly away from the noise and the light and the joy. Michael, now 29, is curled up in the fetal position on the floor of his childhood bedroom.

SUPER: BALTIMORE 2014

He looks nothing like the Michael Phelps we saw in Beijing.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

We never stop to think about what happens once it's over.

INT. LONDON 2012 PRESS CENTER - MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A press conference at the conclusion of the 2012 London Olympics. It's standing room only, reporters and photographers squeezed into every inch of space.

SUPER: TWO YEARS EARLIER. 2012 LONDON OLYMPICS.

Ten members of USA Swimming, the most dominant team in the world, sit at a long table at the front. It's a star-studded group, and every swimmer wears multiple medals.

But the press is only focused on one person -- Michael Phelps.

Michael's seated at a place of honor in the middle, four golds and two silvers draped around his neck. Although London hasn't been the same record breaking medal haul as Beijing, he's still the most decorated athlete of the Games.

REPORTER 1

Michael, amazing job here in London. I think we're all excited to know, what do you plan to do next?

MICHAEL

(casually leaning into the microphone)

I'm gonna get some sleep.

The reporters all laugh, eating out of the palm of his hand. They're from all over the world, but Michael is *the* major draw of these Olympics for each and every one of them.

His teammates watch him, some with admiration, some with jealousy. We might notice 15-year-old KATIE LEDECKY -- a name card on the table tells us who she is. She's wide-eyed and a little star-struck, her own gold medal around her neck.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. There's definitely a lot coming up in terms of travel and promotional events and all that. And once things settle down a bit, I'm looking forward to finally taking a break. Just have some fun, sort of see what comes next.

Reporter 1 jumps in with a follow-up.

REPORTER 1

You're 27-years-old, and you've already achieved more than most people do in a lifetime. You've won 22 total medals, four more than your nearest challenger, a record that will likely never be broken. What could you possibly do in the future to top all of that?

Michael stares at him, unnerved -- and annoyed.

MICHAEL

I, uh...yeah, I think...

He shrugs, plays it off.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I guess we'll find out.

The reporters laugh. He reaches for the plastic water bottle on the table in front of him, takes a big sip, as if to end the conversation.

REPORTER 2  
Michael, congratulations on a fantastic Olympics. We all know your mom has been your biggest fan throughout your career. How does she feel about you retiring?

MICHAEL  
Well, she's a little upset, cause she's always wanted to go to Rio, but I promised her we'd go there on vacation instead. I think it'll be less stressful for her.

The whole room laughs again.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
But yeah, I -- it's gonna be different for all of us, I think. I'm really grateful to have had the support of my family, and of course my coach, and my country for all these years.

In the back of the room, Michael's long-time coach BOB BOWMAN, late 40s, an unassuming man in glasses and a USA Swimming polo, folds his arms across his chest, ill at ease.

REPORTER 3  
This question is for Missy Franklin. Missy, this is your first Olympic Games. Can you talk about what it's like to be on a team with an athlete like Michael Phelps?

MISSY FRANKLIN, 17, bubbly, five medals around her neck, smiles graciously.

MISSY  
Absolutely, it's been really inspiring to be a part of USA Swimming with Michael and all these incredible veterans...

Missy keeps talking, but we're focused on Michael. His phone vibrates with a text, and he digs it out of his pocket, glances covertly at it.

It's from NICOLE. All it says is "Congratulations."

It's just one word, but it's a punch in the gut.

REPORTER 4

Michael, this is your fourth Games, and you're sort of the elder statesman of this US team. Do the younger swimmers come to you for advice?

Michael shoves his phone back in his pocket, puts his game face back on.

MICHAEL

I think...once you're at this level, everyone is just really professional. I don't feel like anyone needs my advice so much...

In the back of the room, we follow Bob Bowman as he slips out.

INT. LONDON PRESS CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Bob closes the door behind him, heads down the hall -- towards the exit.

He can't take this anymore.

He's stopped by Canadian coach RANDY BENNETT, a friendly man in his 50s who claps him on the shoulder.

RANDY

Congrats, Bob. Hell of a meet.

BOWMAN

Yeah, thanks. You too. Ryan had a great race.

RANDY

Hard to believe Michael's really done this time! It's gonna be a whole new life for you, eh?

BOWMAN

Honestly? These last four years have been impossible. I'm glad it's over.

INT. LONDON 2012 PRESS CENTER - MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MICHAEL

I haven't gotten to see much of London yet, but I'd really like to get up to Scotland and play a few rounds at St. Andrews. I'm actually hoping Usain Bolt will join me and we can settle who's really the greatest athlete in the world.

Everyone laughs.

A London 2012 OFFICIAL stands up before more reporters can grab the mic.

OFFICIAL

All right, we have time for one more question. Yes, you.

She points to a reporter in the back.

REPORTER 6

Thank you. Michael, looking back on your career, what would you say your legacy is?

Michael pauses, thrown.

MICHAEL

I -- look, my legacy -- I guess I just feel like...I mean, I've won 22 Olympic medals. I think that speaks for itself.

OFFICIAL

All right, thank you everyone. Thank you all so much for coming.

The press conference breaks apart. The reporters chatter among themselves as the swimmers slowly file out of the room.

Katie Ledecky walks out beside Michael.

KATIE

It's gonna be so weird to not be training anymore, huh?

Michael's already pulling off his medals -- like they mean nothing. He shakes his head.

MICHAEL

Fuck no. I'm never swimming again.

SMASH TO:

As the credits roll, we see a montage of Michael's fabulous post-Olympic life:

- At the GOLDEN GLOBES, Michael poses for photographers on the red carpet, a pretty blonde hanging on his arm. Fans shriek, reporters yell his name.

- We quick cut to a series of BILLBOARDS:

\* Michael, biting into a giant Subway sandwich, towering over the flashing lights of Times Square;

\* Michael, in nothing but a swimsuit and goggles, hawking Under Armour over the crowded streets of Shanghai;

\* Michael, wearing his Team USA sweats, displaying a Visa card over the boulevards of Paris.

- At A HILTON BALLROOM, we catch back up with the real live Michael, who's at a promotional event. He signs one, two, three, four 8x10 photos of himself.

- At an event at the WILLOWBROOK MALL, thousands of fans MOB Michael as he walks towards an AT&T store.

- At the MGM GRAND CASINO, Michael sits at a poker table, a big pile of chips stacked in front of him. He laughs, fist bumps one of buddies as he wins another hand.

INT. DRAI'S HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Michael parties with a group of friends (or hangers-on) at one of the hottest nightclubs in LA. These include DYLAN, BRENDAN, and KYLE -- all late 20s, all frat bros.

The club is packed with Instagram models, B-list actors, and wannabe tech billionaires, but Michael's the biggest celebrity of all.

He chats with a hot blonde girl at the bar. She's a little drunk, and she clearly doesn't recognize him -- it's *nice*.

MICHAEL

So a Dior campaign, huh? That's pretty cool. Was it fun?

MODEL

Yeah. What do you do?

Michael stares at her -- he has no idea how to answer that.

MODEL (CONT'D)

For work? Like your job?

MICHAEL

I'm a -- you know I do a lot of different things, I guess. I'm...

The model studies his face.

MODEL

You look really familiar. Like I've seen you -- are you an actor?

Dylan nudges him -- rescuing him.

DYLAN

Hey, isn't that Nicole?

He points to a beautiful brunette outside on the terrace. This is NICOLE JOHNSON (27). She's smart, compassionate, a former Miss California -- and very much the one who got away.

All the guys turn to look.

BRENDAN

Oh man, what's she doing here?

Michael sees her, and freezes. The music fades out to a low background hum.

He's suddenly nervous -- but he still gets up and leaves his friends without a word, walks out the doors to the terrace...

EXT. DRAI'S HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - TERRACE - NIGHT

...where Nicole sits at a high-top table, sipping a cocktail with RAYNA, late 20s. It's quieter out here, calmer, and Nicole is laughing -- until she spots Michael.

She's stunned to see him there, and not sure what to do.

NICOLE

Michael. Hi.

Michael's drunk -- and still seething over the impersonal text she'd sent him in London. The combination of alcohol and hurt makes him mean.

MICHAEL

Well, this is quite a coincidence.

Nicole swallows hard, tries to smile.

NICOLE

You remember Rayna?

Nicole's friend is less than thrilled to see him. He doesn't even look at her, leaning in close to Nicole.

MICHAEL

I got your text, in London.

Nicole shifts, putting some distance between them. She glances at Rayna, uncomfortable having this conversation in public.

Rayna takes the hint.

RAYNA

I'm gonna...go grab another drink.

Nicole waits until she walks away.

NICOLE

Listen, I didn't mean to -- we just hadn't spoken in so long. I wasn't sure if you'd want to hear from me.

Michael shrugs. He doesn't say anything, but he doesn't leave either.

Nicole tries to change the subject, tries to keep the conversation friendly.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

So what are you doing in LA?

MICHAEL

Just promotional stuff. I'm shooting a commercial for Omega, and then going to the Oscars on Sunday. And tomorrow I'm having dinner with Prince Harry.

NICOLE

Well, sounds like you've got it all figured out.

MICHAEL

And, you know, I've been hanging out with this girl here, so...

He waves at the blonde by the bar -- the one he just met.  
He doesn't even know her name.

NICOLE  
Another blonde, huh?

MICHAEL  
Guess that's more my type.

Nicole stares at him, hurt flickering across her face.

Michael immediately feels a pang of guilt -- he's gone too far.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Look--

Nicole sets down her drink, picks up her purse.

NICOLE  
I should go find Rayna.

She slides off her chair, and walks back into the club without another word.

Michael watches her go. A beat.

MICHAEL  
Shit.

He thinks about going after her, but he can't seem to move.  
We stay on him as--

PETER (PRE-LAP)  
So now that all the post-Olympic craziness is dying down, I wanted to talk about some of the new offers we've gotten.

INT. OCTAGON MANAGEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Michael sits across the desk from his agent, PETER CARLISLE (40s). Peter has worked with Michael since long before he'd won a single Olympic medal.

The office is decked out with cherry-wood furniture and modern art -- it's the workplace of someone who has been very, very successful.

There's a huge, framed poster of Michael on the wall, screaming in delight after winning the 100 butterfly at the 2008 Olympics.

PETER

There are a few up and coming brands from Baltimore, if you want to check those out.

Michael flips through the documents Peter hands him, uninterested -- and maybe a little disappointed. He's slouched in his chair, surly and irritable. He's grown a beard, and gained some weight -- a far cry from the hero in the poster.

PETER (CONT'D)

And there are a couple charity events that sound fun. There's a golf pro-am thing with Tiger I thought you might like.

Michael doesn't even smile. He drops the stack of contracts on the desk.

MICHAEL

Is this what I'm supposed to do for the rest of my life? Go to charity events and sell almond milk?

Peter takes this in.

PETER

You know, we always talked about putting swimming on the map -- and you've done that.

Michael nods, but it's not right.

MICHAEL

I know. I thought -- but I just, I wanted...

He can't seem to articulate it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I just don't know what I'm doing anymore, you know? It's like...like I don't feel like *me*.

Peter nods, understanding.

PETER

There's always a bit of a comedown after the Olympics, right? You gotta give it some time, let things settle.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

It feels like more than that this time.

Peter considers this -- maybe a little worried.

PETER

So let's figure out a game plan, then.

Michael looks up at him warily.

PETER (CONT'D)

You've just announced your retirement, and you still have all these companies who want you representing them. It's really amazing.

MICHAEL

I know.

It's everything he thought he wanted -- except it's not.

PETER

We only have to take on things that you really feel passionate about, things that are gonna make you happy. You've got so much you're gonna be able to do with this legacy you're building. This is just the beginning.

Michael doesn't quite believe him, but he agrees anyway.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Okay.

Peter smiles.

PETER

Good. How about I come to Baltimore in a few weeks? We can sit down and talk about your interests, your goals. See what we can do with those.

Michael looks at him, overwhelmed.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael drags two suitcases up to his apartment, finally back from weeks of travel.

He finds a stack of three bankers' boxes waiting outside his door. The top one is labeled "MICHAEL - FAN MAIL."

He ignores the boxes, unlocks the front door.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Michael's two-bedroom apartment is remarkably average for a massively successful multimillionaire -- West Elm furniture, Baltimore Ravens posters in plastic frames on the walls. There's no evidence of his success anywhere -- no medals or trophies, no framed photos with presidents or rock stars.

Michael drops his bags on the ground and stands, exhausted, taking in the silence. It's unnerving.

His phone chimes in his pocket. He fishes it out -- a voicemail from FRED (Michael's dad).

Michael stares at the screen. Finally, he swipes to delete the message without even listening to it.

He pulls a beer out of the fridge. Cracks it open, sits down on the couch.

He opens the "Notes" app on his phone. He's started a note called "OTHER THINGS."

The list is blank.

Michael stares at it. He can't seem to come up with anything.

He opens the phone's browser, pulls up Australian swimming legend Ian Thorpe's Wikipedia page, and scrolls down to the "Post-swimming career" section.

It's only two lines. Not at all inspiring.

He tosses the phone aside. Reaches for the remote, turns on the TV. He flips through a couple channels, turns it off.

He gets up. Paces back and forth.

He picks up the phone. Scrolls through his contacts. Stops briefly on Nicole -- but keeps going.

Finally, he settles on a name. Dials.

MICHAEL

Hey. I just had a great idea.

EXT. GRAND VELAS LOS CABOS - POOL - NIGHT

Michael lounges on a deck chair, Corona in hand, at a fancy, beachside pool in Cabo. It's lit up with fairy lights, a soft breeze blowing through the palm trees.

On the beach behind him, a party RAGES -- American spring breakers earning their reputation. Michael's back with his friends from the club, Dylan, Kyle, and Brendan. They're watching the action -- and getting hammered.

DYLAN

Oh, man, this brings me back.  
Spring break senior year, Cancun.  
So fucking sweet.

KYLE

We went to Punta Cana. Place was  
*lit*. Brendan probably doesn't  
remember any of it, he was so  
wasted the whole time.

BRENDAN

I was not!

DYLAN

What about you, Phelps?

Michael scoffs.

MICHAEL

I never went on spring break.

KYLE

Never?

MICHAEL

Course not. I never got to do any  
of that stuff. I was always  
swimming.

Brendan slams his beer on a table and strips off his shirt.

BRENDAN

Yo, Kyle, how long you think I can  
hold my breath in there?

Kyle snorts, cracks open a new beer.

KYLE

Like ten seconds, bro. Max.

BRENDAN  
You gonna save me if I drown,  
Phelps?

MICHAEL  
No fucking way, man, you're on your  
own.

Everyone laughs. Brendan CANNONBALLS into the water.

KYLE  
Fucking idiot.

BRENDAN  
No, I'm serious. A hundred bucks  
says I can hold it for like, two  
minutes.

DYLAN  
Yo, Brendan, I'll give you a  
hundred bucks if you race Phelps.

KYLE  
I'll double that.

BRENDAN  
Do I gotta beat him?

DYLAN  
Hell yeah, I'm not giving you a  
hundred bucks for getting your ass  
kicked.

Michael laughs, rolls his eyes.

BRENDAN  
Fuck off man, I'm not racing  
Michael Fucking Phelps.

DYLAN  
Let's make it interesting -- you  
swim one lap, Michael swims two.

Michael's already up, shotgunning the rest of his beer,  
stripping his T-shirt off. He can't resist a bet.

MICHAEL  
Easiest two hundred bucks I ever  
made.

BRENDAN  
Aw, hell no, you can't swim twice  
as fast as me. You're not even a  
swimmer anymore.

Michael glares at him.

MICHAEL

You got my money ready, Dylan?

KYLE

Ah, fuck yeah!

DYLAN

Ready, set...go!

Michael's wearing khaki shorts, but he dives right in.

And underwater, time...slows...down.

It's quiet, and peaceful, and all Michael can hear are the sounds of his hands smoothly entering the water, of his own easy breathing.

We see, in flashes, Michael's life in the water, the joy it brings him:

- He's six-years-old, cannonballing into the pool, his sisters shrieking as he splashes them;
- He's nine-years-old, winning his very first race, his mom screaming her head off as if it's an Olympic final;
- He's 15, hunched over the lane line, staring, wide-eyed, at the scoreboard after qualifying for his first Olympics;
- He's 22, playing in the ocean on a tropical island with Nicole, swinging her around, kissing her...

Back in reality, Michael executes a perfect flip turn, then propels off the wall, dolphin-kicking for home like it's an Olympic final. He drives to the finish, instinctively checks to see if he's won.

Brendan is nowhere in sight.

His buddies are laughing and heckling wildly in the background, but the noise is muted in Michael's head.

That felt good. That felt *right*.

EXT. GRAND VELAS LOS CABOS - BEACH - NIGHT

Michael sits on the beach in the darkness, alone. We can hear the distant sounds of the party, still going strong.

He opens the notes app on his phone, pulls up the note from earlier -- "OTHER THINGS."

There's still nothing listed.

Michael stares at it.

He's not going to find anything else.

INT. BOB BOWMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The familiar Nokia ringtone startles Bowman from sleep. He fumbles for the lamp on his nightstand, then for his phone.

He wakes up immediately when he sees the caller ID.

BOWMAN

Are you okay?

We intercut with Michael, alone on the beach.

MICHAEL

I started swimming again! I mean --  
I wanna start swimming again!

Bowman sits up and reaches for his glasses. Looks at his bedside clock -- it's 3:08 AM.

BOWMAN

Michael...

Michael's too drunk to care that it's the middle of the night, too high on his idea.

MICHAEL

Yeah, listen. I swam tonight. And I  
wanna swim -- I wanna go to Rio.

Bowman rubs his forehead.

BOWMAN

How much have you had to drink?

MICHAEL

I'm not that drunk, okay? I'm not  
drunk! It's all...I just wanna swim  
again.

BOWMAN

Michael...look, when you're back in  
Baltimore, let's talk, okay?

MICHAEL

Bob, come on!

Bowman hangs up on him. He sets the phone back on the bedside table, then stares at it, half expecting it to ring again.

He's worried.

BACK TO MICHAEL. He types out a text to Bowman: "I'm not finished yet."

He stares out at the dark ocean.

Something has changed.

INT. THE FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPER: SPRING 2013

Michael sits across the table from Bowman -- sober, clean-shaven, and deadly serious.

His coach, however, is not convinced.

BOWMAN

You're 28. You've been done for a year. Your heart's not in it. Why not move on?

Michael struggles to respond.

MICHAEL

Look, I've tried to figure out other things, and I just...there's nowhere else I'd rather be, okay?

He tries to smile, tries to play it off like a good thing, but Bowman sees right through him. Michael scrambles to persuade him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

There's more I wanna do. No one's ever won four golds in the same event, right? And I really think I can go faster in the 200 fly...

It's bullshit, and they both know it. Bowman shakes his head.

BOWMAN

Michael. You are the greatest swimmer that ever lived. You went out on top. It's a happy ending. Why ruin that with some sort of half-assed comeback?

Michael thinks about this for a long moment. Finally--

MICHAEL

This is all I know how to do.

Bowman takes that in. It unsettles him a bit.

A waitress arrives with their meals. Michael manages to smile at her.

Neither man touches the food.

BOWMAN

Michael, you can't swim forever.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but I can still swim now.

BOWMAN

Sooner or later, you're going to have to figure out what comes next. Find something outside of the pool.

MICHAEL

That's not -- I know that. But I've probably got a few good years left, so why not keep going while I can?

Bowman's still skeptical, so Michael goes in for the kill.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I need this.

Bowman sighs. He can't say no to Michael.

Michael smiles with relief.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I promise you, this time will be different.

INT. MEADOWBROOK POOL - DAY

Michael stands by the side of the pool, *vomiting* into a trash can.

We are at the Meadowbrook Swim Club, an eighty-year-old Baltimore institution. Meadowbrook has been Michael's home for nearly two decades, and it's seen him through a lot of highs and lows.

This moment appears to be one of the lows.

Bowman claps him on the back unsympathetically.

BOWMAN

You might want to try getting more than three hours of sleep a night. Maybe lay off the benders in Cabo?

MICHAEL

Fuck off, Bob.

He stalks off toward the locker room.

INT. PHELPS FAMILY DINING ROOM - EVENING

The remains of a family dinner cover the dining room table in Debbie Phelps' home, the house where Michael grew up. It's solidly blue collar, and despite Michael's success, very little has changed here in the last thirty years.

Michael's entire family is crowded around the table -- his mother DEBBIE (60s, sweet, strong, and fiercely protective of Michael), along with his sister WHITNEY (33), her husband BOB, and their two children (TAYLOR, 7, and CONNOR, 5); and his oldest sister HILARY (36) and her boyfriend DOUG.

DEBBIE

Does anyone want more cake?

HILARY

I'm so stuffed.

WHITNEY

Everything was delicious, Mom.

CONNOR

I want more cake!

Everyone laughs.

WHITNEY

I think you've had enough, buddy.

DOUG

I mean, can you blame him?

Michael pushes the remains of his cake around his plate, oddly on edge, disconnected from the warm, loving family surrounding him.

TAYLOR

Mom, can we go shoot baskets?

CONNOR

Yeah, please?

BOB  
I'll go out with them.

WHITNEY  
Just fifteen minutes, okay? It's getting late, guys.

TAYLOR  
Do you wanna come play, Uncle Michael?

MICHAEL  
Sorry, Taylor. Not tonight.

The kids run from the table, followed by both Bob and Doug, leaving just the immediate Phelps family. They're all watching Michael cautiously.

HILARY  
You've been quiet.

MICHAEL  
I'm just tired. Everything was really good, Mom.

At everyone's uncertain looks, he bristles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I'm back to two-a-days, okay? You know how it is.

WHITNEY  
Is it good being back? Are you enjoying it?

Michael shrugs unenthusiastically.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. It's great.

Whitney and Hilary exchange glances.

WHITNEY  
We had lunch with Dad last weekend.

Michael takes this in. Looks away.

MICHAEL  
Could you please tell him to stop calling me?

HILARY  
Michael--

MICHAEL

I don't want to talk to him, okay?

Everyone falls silent. Not sure what to say.

INT. PHELPS FAMILY KITCHEN - EVENING

Michael washes dishes as his sisters say goodbye.

TAYLOR

Bye Grandma!

Debbie hugs her granddaughter.

DEBBIE

I love you, sweetie. I'll see you  
at your soccer game.

TAYLOR

Bye Uncle Michael!

Michael smiles, waves goodbye.

Whitney kisses her mother's cheek.

WHITNEY

Bye, Mom. I'll call you tomorrow.

She stops at the sink.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

We were gonna go apple picking next  
weekend, if you want to come? I  
know the kids would be thrilled.

MICHAEL

I'm out of town next weekend.

WHITNEY

We can wait till the following week  
if that's better.

MICHAEL

Yeah, maybe. I'll see.

Whitney sighs.

WHITNEY

Call me, okay? Connor and Taylor  
ask about you all the time.

Michael swallows, feeling guilty.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I will.

Michael keeps washing dishes, alone. We can hear Debbie closing the front door as Whitney and her family leave.

She joins Michael at the sink, watching him carefully.

DEBBIE

Michael, I'm your mother. I can tell when something's wrong.

Michael shrugs her off, intently focused on the dishes.

MICHAEL

Nothing's wrong, Mom. I've just got a lot going on.

DEBBIE

Have you talked to Nicole?

Michael gives her a look, then goes back to washing dishes.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You're in LA all the time. Maybe you should call her. Get together.

MICHAEL

Drop it, Mom.

Debbie chooses her words carefully.

DEBBIE

I just thought it might be good to see her. You always seemed happiest when you were with her.

MICHAEL

I told you. I'm fine.

DEBBIE

And I was just wondering how she's doing. I was watching *Real Housewives* last night, and I was thinking of her.

Michael rolls his eyes, but he softens, just a little.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Now, if you would watch *Real Housewives* with me instead, then...

Michael shakes his head, but he laughs. Debbie smiles. She reaches over and turns off the sink, then pulls him in for a hug. She's a lot shorter than him, but she makes it work.

We get a glimpse of Michael's face over her shoulder -- he looks like a sad little boy.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You know you can talk to me about anything, right?

MICHAEL

I know, Mom.

Debbie pulls away to look Michael in the eye.

DEBBIE

You don't have to go back to swimming if you don't want to. If it's not making you happy.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

(quietly)

I just don't know what else to do.

EXT. PHELPS FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Michael closes the front door behind him, and walks out to his white Land Rover, parked in the driveway. He climbs into the driver's seat and sits there, staring out the windshield.

Thinking.

We fade to black...

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

...then fade back in on Michael, standing on the sidewalk outside an office building in Downtown Los Angeles. He's got two Coffee Bean cups in his hands.

SUPER: SPRING 2014

He waves to Nicole as she walks out of the building.

MICHAEL

Hi.

He's relieved to see her, but she only nods, gives him a tight smile.

NICOLE

Hey.

MICHAEL

Thanks for meeting me. I, uh -- I got you a coffee.

He hands her the cup.

NICOLE

Thanks. I've only got a few minutes though. I have to get to a meeting in Burbank.

(beat)

Sorry.

Michael shakes off the disappointment.

MICHAEL

No, that's okay. I know it was last minute. I'll, uh...I can walk you to your car.

Nicole shrugs. Starts walking.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I, just, um -- since I was out here, I thought maybe we could...

Nicole gives him nothing. Michael hesitates.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I was a jerk last time.

Nicole stops walking. Turns to stare at him.

NICOLE

So you felt the need to swing by a year later and...was that an apology?

MICHAEL

I didn't mean to hurt you.

Nicole doesn't say anything. She starts to walk again. Michael keeps babbling.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I came out here to film a commercial and I thought maybe in person might be -- I'm really sorry.

NICOLE

Okay.

MICHAEL

Okay?

NICOLE

What do you want me to say? We're not together. You wanna be an ass, be an ass. It doesn't matter to me.

Michael takes this in. Somehow, no matter what he says, it always manages to be the wrong thing.

He takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL

I just -- I miss you. And I thought -- I know I was an idiot. But...I thought maybe we could try again. I want to get back together.

NICOLE

No, you don't. You're lonely and you're bored, and you think that I'm somehow gonna make you feel better. And I'm sorry, but that's just not fair.

Michael swallows hard. They keep walking in silence.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK POOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Michael runs across the Meadowbrook parking lot, dragging a tire behind him. He's dripping sweat, practically wheezing.

He crosses a line on the pavement, then hunches over, GASPING for breath. Around him, the rest of his teammates are walking it off, ready to go again.

They're all younger. Stronger. Hungrier.

BOWMAN

Nineteen-three.

Michael cringes.

MICHAEL

Fuck.

BOWMAN

Yes, well, it would be helpful to come to practice more than three times a week. Going again in 20.

His teammates prepare for another interval. Michael remains hunched over, hands on his knees.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

Ten.

Michael doesn't move.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

Set...go.

The rest of the team takes off, sprinting all out with heavy tires harnessed to their belts. Michael's still staring at the ground.

Bowman sighs, not sure what to do.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

Michael...

Michael stands up. He takes off the belt hooking him to the tire and drops it on the ground. He walks past his coach, towards the locker room, without a word.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael sits on the couch, drinking alone, in silence.

The apartment is a mess -- the coffee table is covered with empty beer cans and takeout containers, and there's a stack of unopened mail on the floor. There's a Ravens game muted on the TV, but Michael isn't watching.

Beside him on the couch, his phone buzzes. *Mom.*

Michael wants to answer. He wants someone to talk to.

But he can't.

He lets it go to voicemail.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK POOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Michael pulls into the parking lot of the Meadowbrook Pool. He puts the car in park and kills the engine, but he doesn't get out.

He watches as a little boy, maybe six years old, holding his mom's hand, skips gleefully past his car, towards the front door of the swim club.

The kid looks so *excited* to be going swimming. It's a type of happiness Michael doesn't think he'll ever find again.

Michael turns the car back on. He drives away.

INT. HORSESHOE CASINO - NIGHT

Michael's at a poker table at Baltimore's glittery Horseshoe Casino. We see quick glimpses of him drinking, gambling, losing -- desperately trying to get lost in the noise and lights and activity.

*He looks miserable.*

He digs his phone out of his pocket, finds a text from Bowman -- "Can you come by my office in the morning?"

Michael flags down a waitress, holds up his glass.

MICHAEL

Can I get another one please?

He puts the phone away. Ignoring it.

EXT. HORSESHOE CASINO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Michael climbs into his white Land Rover, awkwardly fumbles with the seatbelt.

He checks his phone for texts -- nothing. We see on the screen that it's 1:07 AM. Tuesday, September 29, 2014.

Michael stares at the phone for a long moment. He pulls up his text chain with Nicole. We see a string of stilted, uncomfortable text messages, failed attempts to reconnect.

Michael shakes his head. It's hopeless.

He tosses the phone onto the passenger seat, turns the key in the ignition, and PEELS out of the parking lot, tires SQUEALING.

INT/EXT. MICHAEL'S LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Michael drives down the highway, Migos' FIGHT NIGHT blasting through the car, LOUD, way too loud. We're tight on Michael's face -- he's zoned out, barely paying attention to the road.

The car SPEEDS UP, lurches around a Jeep, *narrowly* avoids an approaching tractor trailer.

The truck lays on the horn, but Michael doesn't react. He doesn't seem to really be there.

*There's nothing for him anymore.*

He ZOOMS into a two-lane tunnel, speeds aggressively past one, two, three, four cars before DARTING back into his lane, *just* missing an oncoming pick-up. Around him, cars SWERVE out of his way, honking frantically.

Michael doesn't even notice.

He GUNS the accelerator harder, coming up *fast* on a UPS truck. The speedometer CLIMBS as he moves closer and closer to the truck.

We hold tight on his face. It's blank. Emotionless.

Another truck honks, so loudly it sounds like a train coming at us. Michael doesn't flinch.

Instead, he closes his eyes.

For a brief, horrifying moment, we think he's trying to end it all.

But suddenly, a SIREN jolts us -- and Michael -- out of it.

He glances in the rearview mirror -- FLASHING BLUE AND RED LIGHTS.

Fuck.

Michael's eyes dart around the car, checking his mirrors, the speedometer, his phone.

Heart POUNDING, he eases the car back down, slowly gliding to a stop by the side of the road. He turns off the music.

The siren cuts out. The door of the police car SLAMS shut.

Michael sits, terrified, waiting.

Reality sets in.

INT. BALTIMORE POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Michael stands in front of a blank wall, eyes red and bloodshot, getting his mugshot taken. He flinches as the camera flashes.

INT. BALTIMORE POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Michael sits on a bench in a cell. Lost. Alone.

EXT. BALTIMORE POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

Debbie waits in the parking lot outside the police station, anxiously watching the front door. Finally, Michael emerges -- disheveled, mortified, and *sad*.

DEBBIE

Michael.

She goes to hug him, but he shrinks back, shakes his head. He can't even look at her.

EXT. PHELPS FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

Bowman climbs out of his car in front of the Phelps family's small, split-level house. It's on a quiet, suburban street -- but today, the whole block is lined with news vans.

All the major networks are there, and they've got cameras and lights set up. Reporters do stand-ups on the front lawn, while photographers pace, waiting for the money shot.

Bowman ignores them, but a TV REPORTER with a microphone spots him.

REPORTER 7

Coach Bowman! Do you have anything to say?

The other reporters follow, like locusts, shoving their microphones in Bowman's face, crowding into his personal space. Lights FLASH, cameras CLICK -- it's a MADHOUSE.

REPORTER 8

Mr. Bowman, we're getting reports that Michael has been charged with drunk driving and--

REPORTER 9

Bob, have you been able to talk to Michael about--

REPORTER 10

Baltimore PD issued a statement saying Michael's blood alcohol was almost twice the legal limit--

Bowman keeps his mouth shut, pushes through to the front door.

INT. PHELPS FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Debbie sits on the couch, flanked by Whitney and Hilary. They've all been crying. Bowman paces in the corner, too keyed up to sit.

Debbie is shattered, devastated. She can barely speak. The others watch her anxiously.

BOWMAN  
How fast did they say he was going?

HILARY  
84.

BOWMAN  
In a 45?

HILARY  
Yeah.

BOWMAN  
Jesus.

DEBBIE  
We just have to be grateful that he didn't hurt himself.

WHITNEY  
Or someone else.

HILARY  
(she can barely say it)  
Do you think he was *trying* to hurt himself?

They all sit in silence, contemplating that. It's too awful to think about.

Debbie's eyes fill with tears yet again.

Upset, she gets up and leaves.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Michael is curled up on the floor of his childhood bedroom, in the dark. We can hear his mother crying down the hall.

It's hard to listen to.

He climbs unsteadily to his feet, and moves the curtain aside, just a few inches. He BLINKS against the light, but as his eyes adjust, he sees a few dozen paparazzi, camped out on the front lawn.

The photographers are laughing, joking. This is fun for them.

Michael lets the curtain close.

His phone BUZZES in the pocket of his sweatpants. It's a text from FRED: "Are you okay? Is there anything I can do?"

Michael looks at it, emotions warring within him until -- he CHUCKS the phone at the wall. HARD.

INT. DEBBIE PHELPS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Debbie sits on her bed, landline phone pressed to her ear, waiting for the call to connect.

NICOLE (O.C.)  
Hello?

DEBBIE  
Nicole, it's Debbie.

We intercut with...

INT. NICOLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

...where Nicole is sitting on her couch, watching the news. Michael's arrest is the top story.

She mutes the TV.

NICOLE  
Debbie. How are you holding up?  
(beat)  
How's Michael?

DEBBIE  
It's not good. He hasn't left his room in two days.

Nicole swallows hard. She doesn't know what to say to that.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
Look, I know how much he's hurt you, and -- I'm not defending him. But Nic -- he *needs* you.

She takes a deep breath. She needs to do this for her son.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Michael has spent his entire life swimming. He never got to grow up in a lot of ways, and you have been the only normal thing in his life. You are the only one who saw him beyond the pool, and I need...I need him to see that too, because otherwise...

She trails off, unable to finish the sentence, the thought.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I think you might be the only one he'll really talk to.

Nicole struggles to keep breathing.

NICOLE

I'm so sorry, Debbie. I just -- I can't. I can't do it anymore. It's too hard.

Debbie closes her eyes. It's not what she wanted, but...

DEBBIE

I know.

NICOLE

Please take care of yourself, Debbie.

DEBBIE

You too, sweetie.

We stay with Nicole as she ends the call, drained.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Michael's still on the floor, propped up against his twin bed. There's a knock on the door, but he doesn't look up.

Whitney enters anyway. She's got a sandwich for him.

WHITNEY

I thought you might be hungry.

Michael shakes his head.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Michael, you've gotta eat something.

He doesn't respond. She sets the plate on the bedside table, sits down on the floor next to him.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Have you talked to anyone? Any of your friends, maybe?

Michael shakes his head.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Look, I know you're not gonna want to hear this. But Peter found a place, a treatment facility. It's not -- no one is saying you're an alcoholic.

MICHAEL

I'm not.

WHITNEY

I know. But this isn't like that. It's -- they do intensive therapy. They've got people there who could help you deal with all this shit--

MICHAEL

But what's the point? What's even the point?

Whitney studies him, tries a different approach.

WHITNEY

Michael, you made a mistake. You did something stupid, yeah, but you'll figure it out.

Michael stares ahead, eyes empty.

MICHAEL

Everything good is over.

WHITNEY

What do you mean? You have your whole life ahead of you.

Michael tries to look at his sister. He can't manage it.

MICHAEL

Exactly.

INT. NICOLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's after midnight in LA, but Nicole is awake, lying in bed, scrolling distractedly through Twitter. She jumps when the phone lights up with Michael's picture -- the two of them in happier times.

She hesitates, then picks up anyway.

NICOLE

Hi.

There's no answer on the other end. All she can hear is breathing -- maybe crying.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Michael?

We intercut with Michael, in his dark room. He's on the floor, arms wrapped around his legs -- holding himself together.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

He's really sobbing now. Nicole sits up in bed.

NICOLE

Michael, I'm...

She listens to him cry, fights back her own tears.

MICHAEL

I don't -- I don't think I want to be alive anymore.

NICOLE

Michael, don't. Please, please don't.

She makes a decision. Gets out of bed and goes to her closet.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm on my way, okay? Michael, please -- I'm on my way.

She's already throwing clothes into a backpack.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Michael hasn't moved much from the last time we saw him. He's still lying on the floor, staring at the ceiling.

There's a quick knock, and then the door opens.

It's Nicole.

Michael sits up, stares at her like she might not be real.

She smiles at him sadly, and he breaks down. He buries his face in his hands, shoulders heaving.

Nicole sinks down to the floor, wraps her arms around him, and lets him cry.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - EVENING

The room is slowly darkening as the sun sets. Michael's all cried out, but Nicole is still there, sitting beside him, gently combing her fingers through his hair.

She spots a PHOTO STRIP on Michael's nightstand, the kind you get at the mall -- four cheesy black and white snapshots of Michael and Nicole in younger, easier days.

Nicole smiles. Reaches over to pick it up.

NICOLE

I can't believe you still have this.

Michael allows himself a ghost of a grin.

MICHAEL

That was our first date.

NICOLE

Second, technically.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

That interview doesn't count.

NICOLE

I've always counted it. First time I'd interviewed a guy wearing only a Speedo.

MICHAEL

You came in the middle of practice. I didn't have time to change.

NICOLE

I think you just wanted to show off your abs.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

I mean...

Nicole laughs affectionately.

They sit in comfortable silence. Their smiles fade, as the current reality sets in.

NICOLE

Michael, you have to go to that therapy program.

Michael shakes his head -- less adamant, but still unsure.

MICHAEL

I don't think I can do it.

NICOLE

Of course you can.

She takes his face in her hands, forces him to look her in the eye.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Do you remember when we first met? It was right after the 2007 World Championships. When you'd won seven golds, but someone messed up the relay, and all everybody was talking about was how maybe eight golds was just impossible. Do you remember what you said to me?

Michael shakes his head.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You told me that when everyone else thought you couldn't do something, it just made you want it more.

She smiles.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

And I remember watching you prove them all wrong in Beijing and thinking you could do *anything*.

MICHAEL

This is different.

NICOLE

It's not. Michael, everything you've achieved? It's amazing. It's crazy, all the things you've done. But you are so much more than just a great swimmer.

She sighs, shaking her head sadly.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I mean, I've always known that. But you have to know it too.

Tears spill down Michael's cheeks again.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You hit a bump in the road. That's part of being human. It happens to everyone -- and you're no different!

She brushes a tear off his cheek.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

And it's okay to need help dealing with it.

Michael lets this sink in.

INT. MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's late, but Michael still isn't sleeping. Instead, he's wandering through his bedroom.

He sifts through a shoebox full of medals and ribbons from long-ago swim meets.

He picks up a framed photo off the dresser -- Michael, Whitney, and Hilary, ages seven, eleven, and thirteen. They're wearing matching blue and white swimsuits, all proudly showing off medals, SMILES lighting up their faces.

He sets the frame down. His eyes catch on the photo strip of him and Nicole. They both look so *happy*.

Michael stares at it.

He knows what he needs to do.

INT. PHELPS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Debbie, Nicole, Bob, Whitney, and Hilary are all gathered around the kitchen table. They're picking at bagels and fruit, but no one's really eating.

It's totally silent. It feels like a wake.

Debbie looks up.

DEBBIE

Michael.

Michael stands in the doorway. His eyes are red and puffy, and he's wearing a ratty T-shirt and a holey pair of sweatpants -- but he's upright, and out of his room, for the first time in days.

MICHAEL

Okay.

Debbie glances at Nicole, not understanding.

DEBBIE

Okay?

MICHAEL

I'll go.

EXT. THE MEADOWS PARKING LOT - EVENING

Nicole pulls a rental car up to The Meadows, an in-patient rehab facility, and Michael's home for the next 45 days.

The sun is setting over the beautiful purple mountains of Arizona. The sky is a riot of colors, the palm trees and cacti glowing in the evening light -- but Michael doesn't notice. He stays in the car, *shaking* in the passenger seat.

Nicole kills the engine, waits for him.

MICHAEL

I'm really scared.

NICOLE

I know.

She reaches for his hand, and he holds on for dear life.

After a moment, he looks down at their joined hands.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

She smiles. Nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You are the only person who has ever really understood me. And if you can't be here when I get out...I understand that, but--

NICOLE

Michael--

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

You don't have to say anything. I just wanted you to know -- I don't know where I'd be without you.

Michael leans over, kisses her cheek. He takes a deep breath, and forces himself to get out of the car.

Nicole watches him walk away. Her eyes brim with tears, but she forces herself to hold them back.

INT. THE MEADOWS - MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

A nurse (PAULA, 40s), opens the door and flips on the light switch. Michael follows her inside.

The room is small and stark -- white walls, simple wood furniture. There are no paintings, no plants, no signs of life -- just a bed, a desk, a chair, and a stack of books.

Michael takes it in, sets his duffel bag down.

MICHAEL

Thanks for -- thanks.

PAULA

I need to go through your bag.

MICHAEL

My bag?

PAULA

I have to check for contraband.

Michael is stunned, but -- he doesn't seem to have a choice. He gestures towards the bag, takes a step back.

Briskly and efficiently, Paula removes every single item in the bag. She shakes out each article of clothing, checking to make sure nothing is hidden in pockets or folds.

Michael watches, humiliated, shrinking, as she thoroughly inspects his underwear, his sneakers, his toiletries.

Finally, she holds up a safety razor and a travel-sized bottle of mouthwash.

PAULA (CONT'D)

I have to take these. There are no alcohol-based products allowed.

Michael nods, numb.

PAULA (CONT'D)

And I'll need your phone.

MICHAEL

My phone?

PAULA

Cell phones are not permitted. You can use the payphones in the hall to call your family.

MICHAEL

What if someone needs to get in touch with me? My agent, or--

PAULA

He can call the main line. We'll pass on the message.

With no arguments left, Michael reluctantly pulls out his phone. He hesitates, before finally handing it over.

Paula slides it into her pocket, sets a photocopied sheet of paper on the desk -- Michael's new schedule.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Your first group therapy session is at 7:00 AM. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria at 6:30.

MICHAEL

Okay.

PAULA

Get some sleep, all right?

She closes the door behind her. Michael sits down on the bed beside his small pile of belongings. Looks around the room.

INT. THE MEADOWS - MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night, and Michael can't sleep.

He sits at the edge of the twin bed, hunched over, defeated.

He looks around the dark, silent room. It's totally empty -- he's totally alone. He glances over at the alarm clock on the bedside table -- 2:37 AM.

He leans back against the wall, staring up at the ceiling. It feels like the walls are closing in on him.

We fade to...

INT. THE MEADOWS - MICHAEL'S ROOM - MORNING

The lights flicker on. Michael groans, rolls over.

PAULA  
It's time to get up, Michael.

MICHAEL  
Go away.

PAULA  
It's 6:00. Group starts in an hour.

MICHAEL  
I'm not a morning person.

PAULA  
I'm sorry to hear that, but the schedule is the schedule, and we expect everyone to follow it.

Michael doesn't move.

PAULA (CONT'D)  
Get dressed, Michael. Breakfast is in thirty minutes.

She closes the door behind her.

Michael yanks the pillow over his head.

INT. THE MEADOWS GROUP THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A group of seven men, all ages and ethnicities, sits in a circle of chairs in a nondescript conference room. There are no windows, no decorations, no distractions.

The men sip coffee, chat amongst themselves -- they all seem friendly and relaxed.

Except for Michael. He's sullen and uncommunicative, slouched in his chair with his arms folded across his chest. Still pissed about being woken up so early.

The facilitator, JEFF, is a brusque, no-nonsense man in his early 50s. He's in the corner of the room, wrapping up a conversation with ANTHONY (30s), who we'll soon come to know as Michael's personal therapist.

Michael can feel them watching him. Talking about him. Anthony gives him a smile and a nod.

Michael glares.

JEFF

All right, guys, let's get started.

Jeff takes a seat in the circle. The conversations peter out, the men respectfully turn their attention to Jeff.

ANTHONY

Have a good session everyone!

Several of the men wave as he slips out of the room.

JEFF

As you can see, we have a new member of the group this morning. This is Michael.

They ad-lib hellos, nice-to-meet-yous.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Michael, why don't you tell us a little about yourself.

MICHAEL

I'm good, thanks.

The silence is tense, awkward. Jeff reads the hostility, and eventually nods.

JEFF

Okay, we'll come back to you later. For now, maybe someone could tell Michael what we've been talking about in our last few sessions.

GAVIN, late 30s, a natural leader, speaks up.

GAVIN

It's great to have you here,  
Michael. Over the last couple  
weeks, we've been focusing on...

But Michael doesn't care. He tunes out Gavin's words and slumps further in his chair.

INT. THE MEADOWS CAFETERIA - EVENING

The Meadows cafeteria is crowded with patients (both male and female), sitting in groups and pairs, chatting and laughing.

Except for Michael. He's alone, scowling at the wall, pushing institutional pasta around a plastic plate.

He notices two men at another table, trying not to stare at him. Clearly recognizing him. He pulls his hoodie up, hiding his face.

INT. THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael walks to his room, alone. He's almost there when DAVE, 40s, runs down the hall, yelling over his shoulder.

DAVE

I'll be right there!

He almost runs right into Michael.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Sorry! Sorry!

Michael shakes his head. Continues towards his room.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Michael, right? A bunch of us were  
gonna go play volleyball. You wanna  
come?

MICHAEL

No thanks.

He slides into his room, closing the door quickly behind him.

INT. THE MEADOWS - MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Once again, Michael tosses and turns in bed, unable to relax. He adjusts his pillow, kicks the blanket to the floor.

He sits up, throws his head back against the wall. *Fuck.*

He gets up and paces the room. Flips open a book from the stack on the desk, closes it immediately. He desperately looks for something, *anything*, to distract him.

There's nothing.

INT. THE MEADOWS CAFETERIA - DAY

Michael sits at breakfast after another sleepless night, staring at an unappetizing plate of scrambled eggs.

Gavin sets his coffee and waffles on the table, takes a seat. Michael doesn't even look up.

GAVIN

You mind if I join you?

Michael says nothing.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

I'm Gavin. I'm in your therapy group -- we met yesterday.

MICHAEL

(flatly)

Great.

GAVIN

Look -- I know how hard it is at the beginning. We've all been through that. And I know--

MICHAEL

Gavin, you said your name was?

GAVIN

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Do me a favor? Leave me alone.

He shoves his chair back, stands up and walks away.

INT. THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael's on the phone with Peter.

PETER (O.C.)

Everything's good. I'll leave a message if anything comes up, but--

MICHAEL

I know, I just wanna make sure we don't lose momentum. I know everyone's starting to plan Rio ad campaigns, so I want to make sure they know I'm still coming back.

We intercut with Peter, who's walking his dog. He sighs.

PETER

Michael--

MICHAEL

And actually, I thought my comeback might be a good angle for that reality show pitch we got.

PETER

Don't worry about that, okay? You just focus on yourself, on therapy.

Michael rolls his eyes.

MICHAEL

Look, I'm here, okay? What more do you want from me?

PETER

Well, you've gotta give it some actual effort.

MICHAEL

This is a bump in the road. That's it. I'll get this over with, and then we can get right back out there.

He nods, trying to convince himself.

INT. THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael walks down the hall, back toward his room. He passes the common room, where a bunch of the guys from this therapy group are watching Monday Night Football.

Michael walks past them, intent on solitude -- but suddenly he freezes.

He can't handle another sleepless night, alone in his room.

He turns, and heads tentatively back to the common room.

INT. THE MEADOWS - COMMON ROOM - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Michael hesitates in the doorway.

Gavin glances up, nods a hello, then turns back to the game.

Michael looks around, still unsure. Finally, he sits down on a lounge chair in the corner of the room, as far away from everyone else as he can get.

INT. THE MEADOWS - COMMON ROOM - LATER

Michael's finally relaxing, just a little bit, getting into the game.

On TV, the Denver Broncos receiver leaps for the ball and misses wildly, tumbling to the ground. The group groans.

ERIC

You gotta be kidding me.

Eric is a serious, tough cop in his 30s, wearing a Broncos T-shirt. The rest of the guys take the opportunity to mock him.

DAVE

You know the Broncos always find some way to blow it.

Eric throws a pretzel at him. The rest of the guys crack up.

COMMENTATOR (ON TV)

And that brings us to the end of the third quarter here in the Mile High City. Let's send it back to the studio for a look at what else is happening in the world of sports. Bryant?

ERIC

I'm gonna grab some more popcorn. Anyone want anything?

There are general murmurs of thanks or no thanks.

A splitscreen photo of Michael appears on the screen -- on one side, he's on the podium in London, gold medal around his neck, waving to the crowd.

The other side is a mugshot.

Michael freezes.

BRYANT

USA Swimming has announced that 22-time Olympic medalist Michael Phelps has been suspended from competition for six months after his arrest last week in his hometown of Baltimore. He will also not be eligible for next summer's World Championships in Russia.

Michael sits up straighter, his eyes fixed on the TV. This is news to him, and it hits him like a ton of bricks.

BRYANT (CONT'D)

Phelps was pulled over for going nearly twice the speed limit. He's been charged with DUI and excessive speeding.

One by one, the guys turn to look at him.

BRYANT (O.C.) (CONT'D)

This could be a crushing blow to Phelps' hopes of swimming in one last Olympics in Rio in less than two years.

Someone finally mutes the TV.

Michael avoids everyone's eyes. Stumbles to his feet.

He's halfway to the door when--

DAVE

Man, you think that's bad? I got busted tryin' to steal a penguin from the Cleveland Zoo.

Everyone laughs. Michael pauses.

GAVIN

What the hell were you gonna do with a penguin?

DAVE

I was gonna give it to my girl! She was going on about how penguins mate for life -- I thought it was romantic!

Michael's mind is spinning, but despite himself, he turns around. Watches as the guys turn on Dave, good-naturedly teasing him.

GAVIN

That has gotta be the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

ERIC

No wonder she won't answer your calls.

DAVE

I'm serious, dude, I got grand theft rookery on my record now.

Gavin quietly makes eye contact with Michael, nods towards the couch. After a moment, Michael lets himself sit.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Seriously man, drunk driving? The only reason you should even be thinking about leaving this room is because you are not yet on our level of batshittery.

Michael almost -- *almost* -- cracks a smile.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah?

DAVE

Oh yeah. This guy tell you how he ended up in rehab? He went streaking across the entire city of Chicago.

ERIC

It was not that far. It was only from Hyde Park to Navy Pier.

DAVE

Hyde Park to Navy Pier!

Michael smiles -- just barely.

The guys keep laughing, joking. Michael doesn't join in -- but he also doesn't leave.

INT. THE MEADOWS GROUP THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Back in group therapy, the same seven men sit in a circle. Michael's still slouched in his chair, embarrassed and hurt -- but the hostility is gone.

JEFF

Do you think you *don't* know how to be a better father, Gavin?

GAVIN

I mean...no, of course I do. My dad was never there for me, and I know how bad that felt. And I *don't* want to be like him, but...I don't know, sometimes it just seems easier.

Michael snorts. Everyone turns to look at him expectantly -- it startles him. *Fuck it.*

MICHAEL

Doesn't seem like it's so hard to *not* be a shitty father. If you're not a selfish asshole.

JEFF

Could you elaborate?

Michael sighs, frustrated.

For a long, uncomfortable moment, we think he might refuse to speak. But finally--

MICHAEL

My dad, he dumps my mom, okay? I was seven. And then he comes to the 2000 Olympics -- it's my first one, I'm 15, and it's all exciting and new, and *right* after my race -- he introduces me and my mom to his new *wife*. He didn't even tell me he got married, and he brings his new wife to *my* Olympics.

He shakes his head, anger building inside of him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And I'm supposed to be like, cool dad! Guess you didn't want your fucking *son* at your wedding. And by all means, come ruin *my* big day with this bullshit. I was *fifteen*, and this was my first international meet! And instead of being able to *enjoy* it, I have to pretend to be happy for my fucking asshole father and his new goddamn--

A beat. Everyone is staring at him. Michael retreats, suddenly self-conscious.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Sorry. I--

JEFF

Don't apologize. Thank you. We've been waiting for that.

Michael looks away, embarrassed.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Did you ever tell your father how much that bothered you?

MICHAEL

No. Why would I?

JEFF

Michael, one of the things we talk about here is asking for what we need. People can't read our minds.

MICHAEL

Okay, but seriously -- he surprise introduced me to his new *wife* at the *Olympics*!

JEFF

I'm not defending it. I'm not saying it was the right thing to do. All I'm saying is, he might not know how much it upset you. And he won't unless you tell him.

On Michael. He's never thought about it this way before -- and he doesn't want to.

JEFF (CONT'D)

All right, we've gotta wrap this up for today, but before we do, I need to award this week's Saguaro stick.

He reaches down, picks up a beautiful wooden walking stick.

JEFF (CONT'D)

For those of you who are new here, we award the Saguaro stick every week to the person who exhibits exceptional leadership qualities, as chosen by the rest of the group. These include resilience, patience, empathy, and accountability. I'm proud to award this week's Saguaro to Gavin.

Michael watches, curious. The group members all applaud as Jeff presents Gavin with the stick.

EXT. THE MEADOWS - POOL - DAY

Michael's wandering aimlessly through the manicured grounds, when his eyes catch on the pool.

It's tiny -- the kind you'd find at a hotel, only a few meters long, shaped like a bean -- but it's gorgeous. It GLITTERS in the sun.

A few other patients are hanging out, enjoying the cool water -- laughing, joking. One man swims slow laps back and forth.

Michael STARES at the pool.

ANTHONY (PRE-LAP)

You told me at our intake session  
that over the past few years,  
you've hated swimming.

He turns around and walks away.

INT. THE MEADOWS INDIVIDUAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Michael sits on the couch at his individual therapy session. There's nowhere to hide in this one, no group to defer to, and he can't stand it.

His therapist, Anthony, looks at him expectantly.

ANTHONY

When was the last time you really  
enjoyed it?

MICHAEL

When I was a kid, maybe.

ANTHONY

And then what happened?

MICHAEL

I won 22 Olympic medals.

Anthony smiles, but doesn't take the bait. He waits for Michael to give more than the bare minimum. At last--

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Once I started winning, swimming  
was a means to an end.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I wanted to be the best in the world -- there was nothing fun about it.

ANTHONY

So when you won eight gold medals in Beijing -- did that feel good?

Michael thinks about it, shakes his head. The memory, the achievement, the glory -- it doesn't make him happy.

MICHAEL

I think I just felt relieved. And then like...I don't know. I did it, and then what? It's all just downhill from there.

ANTHONY

Why did you want to swim in the first place? When you were a kid, just starting out, what made you want to go to the pool every day?

Michael thinks for a long moment.

MICHAEL

The first time I took a swim lesson, I hated it. Wouldn't put my face in the water.

He smiles, just a little.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But then once I figured it out, it was like...I was free. I can't explain it, I just...it was *right*. And I never felt like I fit in anywhere, you know, at school, and then my parents were separating and everything was so confusing, but in the water, I could just...be me. I don't know.

Michael catches Anthony watching him, listening. Suddenly uncomfortable, he deflects.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And I won a lot, so...I liked that.

Anthony smiles, but doesn't say anything. He waits for Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Back then, there was no pressure,  
no expectations. No one cared. And  
I guess -- I mean, I can never have  
that feeling back.

ANTHONY

Why not?

MICHAEL

Because I'm "Michael Phelps," and  
it's my fucking job. And if I'm not  
an Olympic swimmer anymore, then  
what's even the point?

Anthony sits with that for a moment.

ANTHONY

Michael...do you think being a  
swimmer is all you are?

Michael doesn't know how to answer that question.

INT. THE MEADOWS - ART ROOM - DAY

In the art room, a small group of patients, including Dave,  
are hard at work painting, drawing, collaging.

Michael watches them, his own posterboard blank.

AMELIA, late 50s, gentle and calm, the art therapist, slides  
into the chair beside Michael, holding a stack of magazines.

AMELIA

I thought these might give you some  
inspiration.

Michael smiles wanly, picks up one of the old *Vanity Fairs*.  
Flips through it absently.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You don't need to overthink it,  
okay? Any images, or words, or even  
just colors that show us who you  
are, how you see yourself -- just  
clip 'em out. Super simple.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

She walks away to check on another patient. Michael glances  
at Dave's poster -- it's an edgy, artistic mosaic of magazine  
clips and construction paper shapes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Wow. That's really good.

DAVE  
Thanks, man. I used to like to make  
shit. Carving wood and like  
furniture and stuff like that.  
Before I started using.

MICHAEL  
How do you know what to put on?

Dave shrugs.

DAVE  
It's just stuff I like, I guess.

Michael stares at him blankly.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
You just gotta let inspiration come  
to you, man.

Michael studies Dave's intricate collage. He turns back to  
his own blank posterboard. Overwhelmed.

EXT. THE MEADOWS - POOL - MORNING

It's early in the morning, and the sun is barely illuminating  
the sky. Michael sits on a deck chair by the side of the  
pool, staring at it. Thinking about it.

Finally, he SLIDES in, and swims a lap -- no goggles, no cap,  
just him and the water. The pool is tiny, and it only takes  
three strokes to get from one end to the other.

He stops on the wall, processing.

It feels good. He keeps going.

ANTHONY (PRE-LAP)  
You thinking of flying away?

INT. THE MEADOWS - INDIVIDUAL THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

Michael stares out the window at the cactus garden outside.  
He watches as a bird lands on the window, peeks inside, then  
flits off into the sunset.

He realizes Anthony's asked him a question, startles to  
attention.

MICHAEL  
Sorry, what?  
(beat)  
Sorry.

Anthony smiles.

ANTHONY  
You've been sitting there for  
fifteen minutes. Anything you want  
to share with the class?

MICHAEL  
I was thinking about Bob.

ANTHONY  
Your coach?

Michael nods.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Are you guys close? You and Bob?

Michael pauses. He's never thought about it that way before.

MICHAEL  
I don't know. Yeah, I guess. He,  
um...I was not the easiest swimmer  
to deal with.

Anthony laughs.

ANTHONY  
How so?

MICHAEL  
I'd skip practice when I didn't  
feel like going. He'd piss me off,  
and I would...I could be kind of a  
dick.

ANTHONY  
Yeah?

MICHAEL  
I wouldn't do the workouts he  
assigned, or I'd refuse to sit next  
to him on a plane. Once I raced him  
out of the parking lot.

ANTHONY  
In a car?

Michael nods sheepishly.

MICHAEL  
Probably wasn't a great idea.

ANTHONY  
Why do you think you did those things?

MICHAEL  
There was always something about him -- I'd just get so mad at the stupidest shit. I don't -- I can't explain it.

Anthony shakes his head, not willing to let him get away with that.

ANTHONY  
I think you know why.

Michael shakes his head. Turns away.

MICHAEL  
I just...Bowman's the one who taught me to how to like, wear a tie. Change a tire. Shit like that, you know?

ANTHONY  
He was like a dad to you.

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

ANTHONY  
Do you think that might be why you get so angry at him? Maybe because he was there, and your dad wasn't?

MICHAEL  
Why would that make me *mad*?

Anthony shrugs.

ANTHONY  
Maybe you have to ask yourself -- who are you really mad at?

Michael considers this.

INT. - THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael stands by the bank of payphones in the hallway. Other patients talk to their loved ones alongside him, but Michael can't seem to do the same.

He takes a deep breath, yanks the receiver off its cradle, and dials before he can lose his nerve.

It rings once...twice...three times...

BOB (O.C.)

Hello?

Michael lets out a breath.

MICHAEL

Hi. It's me.

INT. MEADOWBROOK POOL - BOB'S OFFICE - EVENING

Bob's in his office at the Meadowbrook Pool, writing out workout plans. He immediately sets his pen down.

The walls of the office are covered with photos of Bob and his swimmers. Many of them are of Michael through the years. On Bowman's desk is a framed candid of him and 15-year-old Michael, celebrating after his first Olympic Trials.

BOWMAN

Michael. How are you?

We intercut with Michael, clutching the payphone in the Meadowbrook hallway.

MICHAEL

I'm good, I'm -- I'm doing okay.  
Better.

BOWMAN

That's good. I'm glad.

MICHAEL

I'm -- look, I'm not...I don't  
really know how to...

He takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Is what I want to say.  
I'm sorry.

BOWMAN  
For driving drunk?

MICHAEL  
No, for -- well, yes, I'm  
definitely sorry about that. But  
I'm more -- I'm sorry for the way I  
treated you. I've said a lot of  
nasty things to you, and -- I was  
wrong.

Bowman takes that in. Nods.

BOWMAN  
I appreciate that.

MICHAEL  
You were always there for me, and  
I...I didn't know how to deal with  
that. I mean, you did all the  
things my dad was supposed to do,  
you know? You taught me to *drive*.  
What coach does that?

BOWMAN  
I've regretted it ever since.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL  
Yeah, think of all the trouble we  
could have avoided if you'd bought  
me a bike instead.

Bowman chuckles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I don't know what happens next with  
swimming, or just my life, but...I  
want you to be part of it, whatever  
it is.

Bowman sighs, relieved.

BOWMAN  
I want that too.

It's a start. Michael smiles to himself.

EXT. HIKING TRAILS - DAY

Michael walks the trails around the Meadows with Gavin.

MICHAEL  
You nervous about leaving?

GAVIN  
Scared to death.

Both men smile.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
I really want this time to be different. Feels like I don't have that many chances left, you know?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

GAVIN  
My ex-wife wasn't thrilled about revisiting our custody arrangement, but she's willing to let me see Josh.

MICHAEL  
That's great.

GAVIN  
Yeah. I guess...I can't take back what happened, you know? I wish I could, but...all I can do is try to be there for them this time and hope they're able to forgive me.

Michael takes that in. He thinks about forgiveness.

MICHAEL  
I'm sure -- I mean, yeah. You can't go back and...

He takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I'm sure when they're ready they'll let you back in.

GAVIN  
You got a girl at home?

Michael thinks about this.

MICHAEL  
I'm not sure. Kind of, but...I don't know.

Michael's far away, worrying -- what *is* he going to do if Nicole's not there when he gets out?

Gavin decides to lighten the mood.

GAVIN  
I'm sure when she's ready she'll  
let you back in.

Michael laughs. Smacks him playfully in the chest.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Seriously though. When you get out  
of here -- you gotta tell her how  
you feel.

Michael nods.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. I will.

They keep walking in comfortable silence.

GAVIN  
You know, I wasn't sure I should  
tell you this, but Josh, my son --  
he really looks up to you.

Michael stops walking. What?

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
We watched you in Beijing --  
probably every race. Josh was  
seven. I think he had a poster of  
you on his wall. He thought you  
were a superhero.

Michael doesn't even smile.

MICHAEL  
Well, I'm not.

Gavin raises an eyebrow.

GAVIN  
Michael, you're a good guy, so  
don't take this the wrong way,  
but...yeah you are, man.

Michael shakes his head. Starts walking again.

INT. THE MEADOWS INDIVIDUAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Michael paces back and forth, muscles coiled with pent-up frustration.

ANTHONY

(bemused)

So you're mad because Gavin's son had a poster of you on his wall?

MICHAEL

I'm not *mad*. I'm just...I'm not a fucking hero!

ANTHONY

Michael, what are you really angry about right now?

MICHAEL

Look at me! I'm in *rehab* for fuck's sake. I can't be this superstar that everyone wants me to be.

ANTHONY

So?

MICHAEL

So? Why should kids look up to *this*?

ANTHONY

Do you think that's the only version of you worth looking up to? The unbeatable superhero athlete?

Michael's thrown by the question.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Michael, your flaws -- everything you've been through? It makes what you've done even *more* incredible. It reminds the rest of us that it's okay to fail, it's okay to mess up.

Michael takes that in.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You've got an opportunity to resurface here. Start over. Be whoever you want to be, whoever you *really* are.

Michael listens, nodding. Finally understanding.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

And the Olympics -- they're gonna go on whether you're there or not. But your *life* is gonna go on too. And you can choose to have the Olympics be the only thing that matters. Or you can choose to have it be just part of your life.

That lands with Michael.

*He wants more.*

EXT. THE MEADOWS - POOL - MORNING

It's early in the morning, and the sun shimmers across the water. Michael swims HARD through the tiny pool -- stroke, stroke, turn. Stroke, stroke, turn. He looks good.

He stops on the wall. Takes a few deep breaths. Looks at the crystal clear water in front of him.

He rolls onto his back, takes a few easy, relaxing strokes, staring up at the brilliant blue sky. Thinking.

INT. THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Michael stands in the hallway, payphone to his ear.

MICHAEL

So Eric -- he's the one from Denver, I told you about him? Anyway, Eric's moving to DC when he's done here, so I told him to come visit. I thought we could have him over for dinner one night.

DEBBIE (O.C.)

Of course. That would be wonderful.

Dave claps Michael on the shoulder.

DAVE

Hey, man. We're playing volleyball if you wanna join when you're done.

MICHAEL

I'll be there in a few. Thanks, Dave.

DAVE

Is that your mom?

Michael nods.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
Hi Mama Phelps!

Michael shakes his head, laughing, as Dave walks away.

DEBBIE (O.C.)  
It sounds like you're making some  
really good friends there.

Michael grins.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. I think I am.

INT. THE MEADOWS CAFETERIA - EVENING

Michael eats dinner in the cafeteria -- this time, he's sitting with Dave and Eric.

DAVE  
So is that the next step?

MICHAEL  
Yeah, I think so. We started the  
foundation after Beijing to teach  
kids how to swim, you know, water  
safety and living a healthy life.  
That type of thing.  
(beat)  
But I'm just starting to feel like  
maybe it's not enough.

ERIC  
That's great, Mike.

Michael glances across the room, and sees a new patient, DAMIEN, 20s, skinny and shaking, sitting by himself.

MICHAEL  
Hey, guys, I'll be right back.

He gets up and walks over to Damien's table.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You mind if I join you?

Damien doesn't say anything. Michael decides to sit anyway.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I'm Michael. You just get here?

DAMIEN  
Last night. Yeah. Damien.

Damien's eyes don't stray from his untouched plate of food.  
It's a familiar look.

MICHAEL  
I just wanted to say... well, if  
you need anything, just ask.  
Everyone here wants you to succeed,  
you know?

Damien snorts bitterly.

DAMIEN  
I don't think you can get me what I  
need.

MICHAEL  
Well, yeah, I can't get drugs or  
alcohol or anything like that.

DAMIEN  
No, I don't have any clothes. They  
brought me here straight from jail.  
This is all I got.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL  
Oddly enough, that is one problem I  
can fix.

INT. THE MEADOWS GROUP THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Damien sits next to Michael at his first group session,  
dressed in head to toe UNDER ARMOUR (Michael's sponsor).

JEFF  
As I think you all know, today is  
Michael's last session.

Michael smiles. Proud -- but a little sad.

MICHAEL  
I could never have gotten through  
this without all of you. I was  
really scared to come here, but  
now...I think it's gonna be hard to  
leave.

DAVE

Here here.

ERIC

We're gonna miss you, Mike.

Jeff picks up another Saguaro stick.

JEFF

And on that note, it's time to award this week's Saguaro stick. If you've just joined us, every week, the group chooses to honor the member who has best demonstrated leadership qualities. And this week, the vote was unanimous.

He holds out the Saguaro stick ceremoniously.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Michael, I think I speak for all of us when I say we appreciate your leadership. And we're going to miss having you here.

Michael accepts the stick, speechless.

He looks around the room at the faces of these strangers who have become like brothers. They're all smiling. Applauding.

He smiles back at his friends -- his new family.

INT. THE MEADOWS - MICHAEL'S ROOM - EVENING

Michael packs up his room, folding clothes and stacking them in his duffel. He gently places the Saguaro stick on top, zips the bag closed.

He looks around the small, empty room. It doesn't feel as threatening as it did 45 days ago -- it feels like home.

He shoulders his duffel. Time to face the world.

INT. THE MEADOWS - HALLWAY - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Michael walks slowly down the hallway, taking in the Meadows one last time. He spots Damien, walking out of the common room, still in head-to-toe Under Armour. Damien gives him a smile and a nod.

INT. THE MEADOWS - FRONT DESK - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

At the front desk, Paula is waiting, Michael's phone in her hand. She holds it out to him with a grin.

He smiles back.

PAULA

Looks like you became a morning person after all.

MICHAEL

Only for you, Paula.

He winks at her, then heads for the door.

EXT. THE MEADOWS PARKING LOT - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Michael emerges from the facility, scrolling through his phone for the first time in six weeks. He looks up and notices the sun, setting over the Arizona desert. Just like when he arrived, the sky is a watercolor painting, and this time, he stops to take it in.

He spots Debbie, standing by a rented Honda. For a second, his face falls -- no Nicole.

But he pulls it together -- he's genuinely thrilled to see his mother.

He walks towards her, and they fall into each other's arms.

DEBBIE

I missed you so much.

She kisses his cheeks, repeatedly. Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

I missed you too, Mom.

DEBBIE

You look good! You look...

She doesn't want to say better. Michael gets it.

MICHAEL

Thanks. I feel a lot better.

Debbie grins, unable to contain her relief. Her son is here, and safe, and smiling, and they're together.

DEBBIE

Listen, honey, Nicole wanted to be here.

Michael's stomach flips. He tries to keep from imagining the worst.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Her grandmother died on Sunday. She had -- it sounds like a stroke, I think. But the funeral is tomorrow, so she went out to Colorado a few days ago.

Michael doesn't hesitate.

MICHAEL

Can you drive me to the airport?

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS CEMETERY - DAY

A few dozen mourners are gathered around a grave, watching as the coffin is lowered into the ground. One of them is Nicole, wearing a simple black dress, clutching her mother's hand.

She looks up to see Michael, standing by a tree across the cemetery. He's wearing jeans and a buttondown -- it's all he had -- but he's *there*. Through her tears, she manages a smile.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS MEMORIAL PARK - DAY

Michael and Nicole stroll along the lakeside. It's a warm, clear fall day -- the occasional runner or cyclist moves past, but Nicole and Michael are in their own world.

Nicole looks at him, smiling.

NICOLE

You look good.

MICHAEL

I feel good. A lot better.

NICOLE

Thank you for being here. It means a lot.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry you ever thought I wouldn't be.

He takes her hand, laces his fingers through hers.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
How's your mom holding up?

NICOLE  
She's okay. It just happened so suddenly that I think everyone's kind of in shock.

MICHAEL  
And you? How are you really?

Nicole shrugs.

NICOLE  
She lived a good life, you know? And I know she wouldn't want us to be sad, so I've just been telling myself that we're supposed to be celebrating her life.

She pushes tears out of her eyes.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
But I just keep thinking that like, she's not gonna be at my wedding. She's never gonna meet my kids.

Michael stops walking, pulls Nicole into a hug. She holds on tight.

Finally, she pulls away. Manages a watery smile.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
I'm really happy to see you though.

Michael smiles, relieved.

MICHAEL  
I'm so happy to see you too.

NICOLE  
How was it?

MICHAEL  
It was good. It was...helpful.

NICOLE  
I'm really glad.

MICHAEL  
I -- there's this pain that I had just never processed.  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
And I think I realized...I'm still  
dealing with my dad leaving. I  
think I'm learning to handle that.

He thumbs the tears off her cheeks.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
But losing you...I'm not sure I  
could handle *that*.

Nicole stares at him, wide-eyed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I know I hurt you, and I never  
wanted that. I always thought -- if  
I let you get too close, if I let  
you see too much of the real me,  
then you would hate what you saw.  
Because...I did.

NICOLE  
Michael...

MICHAEL  
No, just wait, I have to...

She lets him talk.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I thought that if I let you see all  
those ugly parts, then I would lose  
you. And I lost you anyway.

He looks down at her fingers, laced through his.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Look, I know this probably isn't  
the right time or place, but...God,  
45 days felt like forever, and I  
promised myself that when I got  
out, I would tell you how I feel.

He smiles, almost to himself.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I kinda promised Gavin too.

NICOLE  
(confused)  
Who's Gavin?

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

I'll tell you all about him. About everything.

He takes a breath. Refocuses.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

What I should have said, that night at the nightclub, was that none of those girls meant anything, and I should have told you that day in LA that I wanted to get back together because you are the only person who has ever *really* mattered to me. And I -- I understand if you don't want to be with me, and I know I have to prove that I can be a better man. But I need you to know how much I love you. That you're it for me.

He takes a shaky breath. He's done everything he can.

Nicole's eyes search his. Michael's heart is pounding.

She leans forward and kisses him.

EXT. PATAPASCO VALLEY STATE PARK - DAY

The trails are covered in snow as Michael and Bowman hike through a beautiful winter wonderland.

SUPER: JANUARY 2015

BOWMAN

So she's in Baltimore?

MICHAEL

Yeah, she got here yesterday. She's gonna stay with me for now, and we'll see how it goes. And hopefully...I mean...

BOWMAN

I'm really happy for you.

Michael nods. He's happy too. He stops to take in the sight of a gorgeous frozen waterfall.

MICHAEL

How's everything going? How's the team doing?

BOWMAN

Everyone's solid. Chase was home for break, he looks terrific.

MICHAEL

You still got him doing those fly drills, with the tennis ball?

Bowman laughs, bemused.

BOWMAN

You don't need to worry about my coaching, okay? I do just fine. What about you? What are you up to?

Michael grins, starts walking again. Bowman follows.

MICHAEL

I've been really leaning into the foundation. I think that's what I wanna focus on. We're gonna hire a new person who can help us incorporate some mental health stuff into the water safety program.

BOWMAN

That's great.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I think it's important. And actually -- Nicole and I talked about her maybe coming over to run it with me, so...fingers crossed.

Bowman smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And then Peter's setting up a press tour, so I can talk about what happened. Depression, what I learned in therapy. I thought -- I don't know, maybe me talking about it can help other people.

BOWMAN

Well, look at that.

Michael nods, genuinely proud.

MICHAEL

I just -- I want to use my status for something more important, and I think -- I don't know, we spent so many years worrying about my brand, and I realized I just want my brand to be *me*. Who I really am.

BOWMAN

I'm really proud of you.

Michael smiles, moved.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

You been swimming at all?

MICHAEL

I have. Every day, actually.

BOWMAN

Are you thinking of coming back? You know I understand if you want to move on, but...Trials are only 18 months out.

Michael hesitates.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

No pressure either way, of course.

MICHAEL

You know, I think...I'll always miss it. And maybe I'll regret this, but...I just feel like I have more I want to do right now.

BOWMAN

Well, the door is always open.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

Bowman smiles.

BOWMAN

It seems like you're in a really good place.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I think I am.

INT. TAGLIATA - EVENING

Nicole sits in a casual Italian restaurant, scrolling through her phone, sipping a glass of wine -- waiting.

MICHAEL

Sorry, sorry!

Michael jogs to the table, kisses her on the lips, and slides into his seat. His hair is still wet.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late. How was your day?

NICOLE

It was good. Good swim?

Michael gulps some water, nods.

MICHAEL

I went longer than I planned and all of a sudden it was 6:00. I'm not used to just swimming whatever I want I guess.

He flips open his menu, stuffs a piece of bread in his mouth.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm starving. Mmm, this bread's good!

Nicole watches him thoughtfully.

NICOLE

Are you enjoying it? Just swimming for fun?

MICHAEL

Oh yeah. It's awesome. No drills, no splits to hit, and I never have to swim breaststroke if I don't want to.

Nicole laughs.

NICOLE

So I thought about what you said. About the Foundation.

Michael looks up hopefully.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

NICOLE  
And you're right. I've always loved  
working with kids.

She grins.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
Education was my Miss California  
platform, as you may recall.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL  
Of course I do.

NICOLE  
I haven't felt particularly  
fulfilled in my career these last  
few years. And...this is a way I  
could really make a difference.

MICHAEL  
So...

NICOLE  
So let's do it. Let's run it  
together.

Michael's like a little kid. He can barely contain his excitement. He leans across the table, kissing her again, and knocking over her wine glass.

He pulls away, both of them laughing.

MICHAEL  
Sorry! Ah, shit. I got it.

Nicole's not bothered though -- she's just happy he's happy.

She watches Michael run off to the bar to get some napkins. Wondering if he really is as settled as he seems.

INT. MEADOWBROOK POOL - DAY

Michael hoists himself out of the pool, shakes out his hair, and pulls a towel off the bench. He sits down, tugging off his swim cap and drying his face.

A folded towel lands on the bench beside him. He looks up to see his friend ALLISON SCHMITT, 24, enthusiastic, friendly (and a six-time Olympic medalist), grinning at him.

MICHAEL

Schmittty!

Michael's thrilled to see her. He jumps to his feet, throws his arms around her. She laughs, pushing him away.

ALLISON

Ewww, you're all wet!

MICHAEL

I missed you! How's it going?

ALLISON

I'm good! You look great. Wait, are you getting back into it?

MICHAEL

Oh, no. I'm not training. I'm just, you know, trying to stay healthy.

He pats his rock-hard abs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Don't wanna get fat in my old age.

Allison laughs. Sure.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Bob tell you Nicole moved in?

ALLISON

No way! Seriously? That's awesome!

MICHAEL

Yeah, we're pretty excited.

ALLISON

That's great, Michael. I'm really happy for you guys.

Michael grins.

MICHAEL

Thanks. Yeah, I feel like everything's finally coming together.

(beat)

So what's going on with you? You're moving to Arizona with Bob, right?

ALLISON

Yeah, I am. Just through the Olympics, see how it goes.

MICHAEL

I can't believe you guys are all leaving.

ALLISON

We'll be back. Somehow we always seem to end up back in Baltimore.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

ALLISON

Did you see what Katie swam last week? 1:55.7.

MICHAEL

Holy shit. I'm not sure I could swim a 1:55 right now.

Allison rolls her eyes, laughs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

She's swimming the 200 now?

ALLISON

Oh yeah. She's gonna win eight golds in Rio. Be the next you.

MICHAEL

Oh, to be 17 and training for your second Olympics.

Allison laughs. Gestures towards the pool.

ALLISON

I gotta start warming up, but let's hang out soon, okay? I wanna see Nicole.

MICHAEL

Yeah, that'd be great. I'll call you.

She smiles at him, pulls on her swim cap.

ALLISON

I'm really glad you're home.

Michael watches her jump into the pool. A little wistful.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Michael sits on the couch, laptop on his lap, watching the NCAA Swimming Championships on TV. Behind him, the Saguaro stick hangs on the wall.

Nicole, just back from a run, pulls a bottle of water out of the fridge, comes around to see what Michael's up to.

NICOLE

Stuff for the press tour?

Michael's mostly watching the meet, not totally focused.

MICHAEL

What? Oh, yeah. Peter's getting close on dates, so I'm trying to put together talking points.

There's a roar from the TV. Michael turns back to it eagerly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Holy shit, that kid is *good*.

Nicole takes this in. She sits down on the couch beside him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He won the 200 fly, too. I think he's a freshman. It's insane.

NICOLE

I've been thinking.

She takes the laptop from his hands, sets it on the coffee table. Mutes the TV.

Michael waits for her to talk. Suddenly worried.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Do you want to go back to swimming?

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

What are you talking about?

NICOLE

You miss it. I know you do. And that's okay. It's okay to not be done with it yet.

Michael lets this sink in.

MICHAEL  
I do miss it.

Nicole smiles, encouraging him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I feel like...I have everything I need. I have you, I have my family. We're building this foundation together -- and I love all of that. But I still...I can't help wanting to race.

NICOLE  
Then you should do it. Look, you can be a whole person without swimming. You know that now, right?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

NICOLE  
But you can be a swimmer too. It's okay to do both.

Michael hesitates. But he wants this.

MICHAEL  
The Trials are in 15 months. That's just -- I don't know if it's enough time. And I'm gonna be *thirty* soon.

NICOLE  
So? You're Michael Phelps. You can do anything.

MICHAEL  
And Bowman's taking the job at ASU. We'd have to move to Arizona.

Nicole shrugs. Smiles.

NICOLE  
Well, as you know, I'm a hot weather girl.

Michael kisses her.

MICHAEL  
I love you.

She kisses him back.

EXT. ARIZONA - ESTABLISHING

We arrive in sunny Arizona with a series of establishing shots:

- Cacti standing tall under a brilliant blue sky;
- A wide open road leading to Monument Valley;
- Michael, floating on his back in the Arizona State University pool. It's outside, sparkling in the hot desert sun -- a very different feel from Meadowbrook.

INT. MICHAEL AND NICOLE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Michael's at the kitchen table in his new house in Arizona, working on his laptop. There are still boxes scattered across the room -- they haven't quite gotten around to unpacking.

SUPER: FALL 2015

Nicole walks in the front door, and Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

Hey! Marissa sent over the new curriculum for the water safety program. You wanna see?

NICOLE

Cool, yeah. How was practice?

MICHAEL

I'm such an old man, Nic. These college kids are talking about like Snapchat, and all these bands I've never heard of, and I'm just like, I'm 100-years-old.

She smiles, but it doesn't reach her eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And they don't get tired! We do these killer sets, and they're ready to go again immediately, and I can't get my heart rate down.

Nicole nods, but doesn't respond. She sets her bag on the counter, kicks off her shoes, carefully straightens them by the door. She's nervous, avoiding his eyes.

Michael notices. He stops talking, suddenly anxious.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

NICOLE  
So, I, um...I don't know quite...

MICHAEL  
Nicole.

NICOLE  
I'm pregnant.

Michael just stares at her, not sure he's heard correctly.  
Nicole panics.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
I know -- we didn't plan this, and the timing is terrible. The baby's due right before the Olympic Trials, and I did not want to have to put this on you now, but when I--

Michael leaps out of his chair and cuts her off with a kiss.

MICHAEL  
We're gonna have a baby?

She laughs, relieved at how thrilled he is.

NICOLE  
We're gonna have a baby.

He wraps her in a hug. We can see on his face as the reality settles in. He's genuinely excited -- and totally petrified.

INT. MICHAEL AND NICOLE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nicole's fast asleep, but Michael can't seem to shut his mind off. He lies in bed beside her, hand splayed across her stomach.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - DAY

Michael touches the wall, followed by two other swimmers in quick succession. He sinks into the water, distracted.

Both swimmers take off again after just a few seconds of rest. Michael doesn't seem to notice.

BOWMAN  
These are on one minute, Michael!  
What are you doing?

Michael looks around. Realizes he's alone, when he was supposed to have started again with his teammates.

MICHAEL

Sorry.

BOWMAN

Get going!

He does.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Michael's loading his swim bag into the trunk of his car after practice, when Bowman jogs up to him.

BOWMAN

Hey!

Michael startles -- he hadn't even noticed him coming.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

What was that today? You've got eight months, Michael. You can't afford off days.

Michael sighs. Gives in.

MICHAEL

Nicole's pregnant.

Bowman's eyes widen. He softens.

BOWMAN

And -- is that good?

Michael smiles sadly.

MICHAEL

I've always wanted kids. I -- yeah, it's really good.

BOWMAN

So what's the problem?

Michael closes his eyes. Tries to rein in his emotions.

MICHAEL

What if I don't know how to do this?

Bowman takes this in. He leans against the trunk of the car, next to Michael.

BOWMAN

I never had children. You know that. I guess I just...

He shrugs.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

I can't give you advice on how to be a father, but...you've always been like a son to me. And I know that the things I learned from you -  
- they made me a better person.

Michael looks at him, surprised.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

My favorite part of coaching -- I mean seeing you stand on top of that podium so many times, and all the records, that's been amazing. But the best part of coaching has been watching you grow up. Getting to be a part of that.

Michael's eyes fill with tears. Bowman smiles.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

There are no medals for parenting, you know? You just gotta show up. And if your kid grows up to be one iota as special as you are, well... I think you'll have done a pretty fantastic job.

Michael blinks away the tears.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

BOWMAN

I love you, Michael. You know that, right?

Michael nods.

MICHAEL

I love you too.

Bowman pulls Michael into a hug.

INT. MICHAEL AND NICOLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Michael walks in the front door to find Nicole on the couch, reading *The Girlfriend's Guide to Pregnancy*.

MICHAEL

Hi.

NICOLE

Hey. How was practice?

Michael drops his bag by the front door and sighs.

Nicole sits up a little straighter.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MICHAEL

I just -- the baby is due right before the Trials. And I -- I don't feel ready for any of it.

NICOLE

The baby or the Trials?

Michael shrugs. Either. Both.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Michael. Even if you don't feel ready now, when the time comes, you will. You'll be ready for all of it. I know it.

She stands up. Goes to him.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

We're in it together. The baby, the foundation, the Olympics. It's you and me. Always.

Michael takes in her words. Nods.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - EARLY MORNING

Michael stretches on the deck, alone. It's still dark out. Bowman walks in, surprised to see Michael already there.

BOWMAN

You're here early.

Michael grins, tugs on his swim cap.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I realized that...I'm gonna have a new little fan to impress at Trials.

Bowman smiles.

BOWMAN

Well I guess we've got work to do.

Michael nods. He jumps into the water, leading us into a montage of really fucking hard work:

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - DAY

Michael butterflies furiously down the pool, Bowman on deck with a stopwatch. He touches the wall, gasping for air.

BOWMAN

57.4!

Michael throws his head back in frustration.

INT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Michael bench presses until he can no longer lift the bar. A trainer eases it onto the stand.

Beside him, one of his younger teammates is having no such trouble.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A doctor runs an ultrasound wand over Nicole's growing belly. Michael watches in awe as the baby appears on the screen.

INT. OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER POOL - DAY

Michael practices start after start after start, Bowman calling out corrections each time.

INT. SOUTHWEST AIRLINES - DAY

Michael sits in a window seat, working on his laptop.

PILOT (O.C.)

Folks, we're about to begin our descent into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport...

Michael smiles, closes his computer.

INT. ONCE UPON A CHILD - DAY

Michael and Nicole, now five months pregnant, shop for baby clothes -- they're laughing, teasing each other, looking through piles of adorable, tiny T-shirts and onesies.

Nicole holds up an Arizona Cardinals onesie -- Michael vetoes it immediately, shocked she would even suggest it.

INT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Michael sits with his whole body in an ice bath, shivering.

INT. MICHAEL AND NICOLE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Michael walks into the kitchen to find Nicole working at her laptop. He kisses her head, slides in beside her.

She's creating a PowerPoint presentation. We catch a glimpse of a slide: THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR CHILDREN UNDER 14 IS DROWNING.

She clicks to the next slide: EMOTIONAL WELLNESS: TAKING CARE OF YOUR MIND IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY.

Michael grins, flipping through it, impressed.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA POOL - EVENING

Eight swimmers butterfly for home. Michael's way behind.

SUPER: FOUR MONTHS TILL THE OLYMPIC TRIALS

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Michael just let the race get too far ahead of him in that first 50.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

You know, he's thirty-years-old, and you've got six or seven American guys who are among the best in the world at this event.

Michael touches third. He turns to look at the scoreboard, sinks down in disappointment.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

I think the question you've gotta  
be asking is, is Michael Phelps  
still *Michael Phelps*?

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

The Trials are gonna be a real test  
for him, that's for sure.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - DAY

Michael jumps into the pool, hugging a ten pound weight to his chest. He takes a deep breath -- then starts dolphin kicking with it.

It looks *hard*.

INT. HILTON BALLROOM - DAY

Michael, wearing a suit, gives a presentation in front of a ballroom full of people. He gestures at a PowerPoint, the one we saw Michael and Nicole working on earlier.

He's passionate. Engaged.

From the back of the ballroom, Nicole listens, mouthing the words along with him, nodding as he hits the key points.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY - PARKING LOT - DAY

Michael and a dozen young swimmers sprint through the parking lot, dragging tires behind them, sweating under the blazing sun.

EXT. PHOENIX BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB POOL - DAY

Nicole talks animatedly to a group of kids at a Boys and Girls club. They're dressed in swimsuits, ready to jump in the pool -- and they're all watching her, laughing at her jokes, hanging on her every word.

Michael sits behind the kids, watching her with pride.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY POOL - DAY

Michael lies on the pool deck, too exhausted to get up.

EXT. PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Michael kisses a very pregnant Nicole goodbye as she drops him off at the airport.

He picks up his bag, turns to leave -- then comes back for one more kiss.

INT. OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER POOL - DAY

We come out of the montage at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, where Michael is *sprinting* for the wall. He touches, then hunches over the lane line, gasping for air.

BOWMAN

56.1!

Michael flips over onto his back, still wheezing.

Bowman's thrilled.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

That last 50 was a 27!

Michael nods, slowly, taking that in. It's *fast*.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

And you thought you couldn't do that workout.

Michael grins.

Allison comes running onto the pool deck, phone in hand.

ALLISON

There you are!

Michael's instantly on alert.

MICHAEL

What's going on?

ALLISON

Nicole couldn't reach you. She's in labor.

Michael looks up at Bowman. Both are shellshocked.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS AIRPORT - DAY

Bowman's car screeches up to the airport. Michael is stumbling out before they've even come to a complete stop.

BOWMAN

Text me when you get there!

But Michael is already halfway to the terminal.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Alone on a private jet, Michael paces back and forth.

He hunches over, hands on his knees. For a long moment, we think he might throw up.

He stands up, goes back to pacing.

We've never seen him this nervous before.

A flight attendant comes back with a cup of tea, sets it on a tray by Michael's seat.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I thought this might help.

Michael manages a smile.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

And congratulations. I know it's overwhelming. But being a parent -- it's the best thing that ever happened to me.

Michael calms down, just a little.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Let me know if there's anything we can do for you.

She heads back to the cabin.

Michael collapses into his seat, a mess of emotions. He takes a sip of the tea.

In just a few hours, he's going to be a *dad*.

Suddenly, he pulls his phone out of his pocket. Makes a call, and waits for it to connect.

MICHAEL

Hi, Dad. I'm -- yeah. Yeah, I'm -- I just wanted to let you know... Nicole's in labor.

A smile breaks out across his face.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I'm on my way now. I will, yeah --  
I'll keep you posted.

INT. MATERNITY ROOM - DAY

Michael practically runs into Nicole's room. She's in bed, hooked up to IVs and monitors.

MICHAEL  
Is it -- it's really happening?

Nicole nods, trying to breathe.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Wow. Okay. And they said -- I mean,  
he's not supposed to be here for  
three weeks, are they sure--

He really takes Nicole in for the first time. Tears are streaming down her cheeks.

Michael's so used to Nicole being his rock that for a second, he's thrown. But he quickly recovers -- he stumbles into the chair beside her bed, takes her hand.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Hey, hey, it's okay. Are you --  
does it hurt? What can I do?

Nicole shakes her head. She's terrified.

NICOLE  
This is all just -- I didn't think  
that -- I don't think I'm ready. I  
don't know -- I can't do this. I...

Michael smooths her hair back, kisses her forehead. Takes charge.

MICHAEL  
You are Nicole Phelps. You can do  
*anything*.

Nicole manages a watery smile. Michael kisses her lips, thumbs away her tears.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
If I'm ready for this, then you  
definitely are.  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You've carried me through  
everything these last few years,  
and if you can do that -- I *know*  
you can do this.

He laces his fingers through hers, smiles at her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You're gonna be such a good mom,  
Nicole.

Nicole cries out as a contraction grips her. Michael gently coaches her through it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
That's it, you got this. I'm with  
you, okay? It's you and me, Nic.  
We're in it together. Always.

We fade to...

INT. MATERNITY ROOM - NIGHT

...a few hours later. Michael is still by Nicole's bedside, only now there's a tiny, swaddled baby BOOMER in his arms.

His son.

Nicole dozes in her hospital bed, while Debbie sleeps in a chair in the corner, but Michael can't take his eyes off the baby. He can't stop smiling.

He tugs his phone out of his pocket, connects a FaceTime call. Bowman's face pops up on the screen.

BOWMAN  
Is he here?

Michael holds out his phone so that Bowman can see Boomer, cuddled against his chest.

MICHAEL  
Hey, Boomer, there's someone I want  
you to meet.

Boomer scrunches up his face, turns away -- not interested.

BOWMAN  
Oh, he's beautiful.

MICHAEL  
Bob, this is Boomer. Boomer *Robert*  
Phelps.

BOWMAN

Robert?

Over FaceTime, we can see Bowman's eyes fill with tears.

MICHAEL

We wanted to name him after the  
best man I know. Congratulations,  
Grandpa.

Boomer starts to cry. Michael cuddles him close. The whole world seems right.

INT. MICHAEL AND NICOLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael holds Boomer in his arms, rocking him gently back and forth. The baby's asleep, but Michael won't put him down.

MICHAEL

I've gotta go back to Colorado to  
train with Grandpa, Booms. Just  
until the Olympic Trials. But we're  
gonna FaceTime every day, and I'm  
gonna come home to see you next  
week.

He kisses the baby's forehead, soaking him in.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You're my boy, you know that? No  
matter what. I'll always come back  
to you.

Nicole watches them from the doorway, smiling. Finally --

NICOLE

The cab's here.

Michael blinks back tears. He doesn't want to go.

He turns back to Nicole.

MICHAEL

Am I doing the right thing?

She smiles. Presses her palm to his cheek.

NICOLE

You've got three more months of  
work, and then we get to spend the  
rest of our lives watching this  
little boy grow up.

Michael nods, but he's still reluctant. He studies his baby's sleeping face.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

This is the only time in your life you're going to get to swim for your son. And he's going to be so proud of you.

She leans up and kisses him.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm so proud of you.

Michael smiles. Kisses her again -- one last time.

INT. CENTURY LINK CENTER, OMAHA - DAY

Michael walks onto the pool deck at the Century Link Center. It's decked out in red, white, and blue, with signs welcoming us to the 2016 UNITED STATES OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS.

The pool is still and calm, the 18,000 seat arena empty and silent. Michael takes it all in.

He's here. He made it.

INT. HILTON OMAHA - LOBBY - DAY

Michael sits in the corner of the hotel lobby, a safe distance from the chaos around him.

The Hilton is bustling -- swimmers and fans waiting to check in, competitors greeting each other with hugs and well wishes.

A group of teenagers and college kids, all dressed in their swim team jackets, are sprawled over a few couches. They're acting their age -- flicking each other with goggles, making fart noises, punching each other.

This is Michael's competition.

SUPER: JUNE 2016. THE OLYMPIC TRIALS.

Michael's phone buzzes with a text, and he glances down. It's from Gavin -- a photo of him and his son Josh, wearing matching USA Swimming T-shirts.

"Kick ass, Mike!" the message says.

Michael smiles.

He looks up and spots Nicole, walking through the front door, baby carrier in hand. He RUNS to her.

NICOLE

Hi!

He kisses her, hard. Then looks down at the carrier, where Boomer is awake, and squirming.

MICHAEL

Hey, little man!

While the teenagers laugh and joke around him, Michael picks up his baby, and cuddles him close.

INT. CENTURY LINK CENTER, OMAHA - EVENING

We're tight on Michael's face -- focused, ready, determined.

But deep down, his stomach churns with nerves.

We pull back slowly to find him behind the starting blocks, whipping his arms back and forth, trying to stay loose.

Seven lean, sculpted men are lined up beside him, all doing the same nervous dance. For most of them, this is the biggest race of their lives.

Michael doesn't even glance at them.

As we pull back further, we see that the stands are packed, and teeming with excitement. Debbie and Nicole sit front row center, surrounded by Michael's family -- his sisters, Hilary and Whitney, their husbands Doug and Bob, his niece and nephew, Taylor and Connor, and his agent, Peter. Boomer is strapped to Nicole's chest, wearing red, white, and blue ear defenders and a onesie that says "Team Daddy."

The TV commentators, DAN HICKS and ROWDY GAINES, take us through the off-screen play-by-play.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Welcome back to the United States Olympic Team Trials, where this capacity crowd is finally going to find out whether Michael Phelps will get the chance to defend his gold medal in the 100 meter butterfly in Rio next month.

Michael strips off his sweats, dumps them in a basket. He adjusts his swim cap, positions his goggles.

DAN HICKS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Now the average age of the seven other finalists here? 23-years-old. Phelps turned 31 on Thursday. He's been competing at the US Olympic Trials since before some of these kids learned to swim!

By the side of the pool, Bowman paces anxiously back and forth, forcing himself to breathe.

This is it.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

That's right, Dan, and it's been a roller coaster of an experience for Michael just to get here. He's back with a whole new attitude for this Olympics, saying this time, I want to be here.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

And this time he's got seven-week-old Boomer cheering him on from the bleachers.

In the stands, Nicole and Debbie clasp hands. Boomer squirms in Nicole's arms, and she kisses his head, smooths his hair.

STARTER

Swimmers, take your marks.

The swimmers climb onto the blocks.

Michael adjusts his goggles one last time. Shakes out his arms. Gets in position.

The arena goes silent as the starter readies his pistol.

Nicole is practically holding her breath.

Michael stares down the water. The moment seems interminable.

The gun goes off, and there's a SPLASH as the swimmers dive in. The crowd ROARS.

We follow Michael underwater. Below the surface, everything is calm, the sounds of the cheering crowd muffled. Michael's kick is smooth, confident, easy.

We break the surface, rejoining the noise and the chaos -- and see that Michael is way behind.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Phelps is all the way down in lane seven, an unusual position for him.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

Yeah, Michael had only the sixth fastest time in yesterday's semis, which means he is racing all the way outside. And that is a position he is definitely not used to.

By the side of the pool, Bowman is practically living the race with Michael, his whole body tense.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.) (CONT'D)

He's going to need to find his legs this last fifty and outsprint these kids to the wall, because he will not be first going into this turn.

And indeed he is not. Michael is visibly behind half the field as they come in for the turn.

In the stands, Nicole bounces Boomer up and down, barely breathing.

NICOLE

(under her breath)

Come on come on come on come on.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Tim Phillips looks good in lane five. Stubblefield has the lead, and Phelps turns in fourth. Remember, only the top two will punch their ticket to Rio.

Michael slingshots off the wall, dolphin kicking for all he's worth.

In the stands, Debbie is screaming her head off, as if Michael can hear her.

DEBBIE

Go! Go! Go Michael! Go!

We see the race from above -- the six middle swimmers are literally neck and neck as they barrel down the pool. It's way too close to call -- any one of them could win it.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

And look at this race! This is going to come right down to the wire! Oh my goodness! Here we go again!

With twenty meters to go, Michael is gaining speed and strength. He's *cruising* through the water -- but the rest of the field is hanging on!

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Phelps is kicking it in in lane seven!

The crowd is SCREAMING. Bowman can't help himself -- he joins right in.

BOWMAN

That's it! That's it! Come on! Come on, Michael!

Ten meters to go...five...three...it's still too close to call!

For just a moment, everything slows down. The arena disappears, and all that's left is Michael and the pool. All he can hear are the sounds of his own breathing, of his hands slicing through the water.

He breaks the surface. Just one more stroke...

Michael touches the wall, turns to the scoreboard.

The moment stretches out as he gazes at the board, waiting for the results to come up. The whole arena holds its breath.

And suddenly Michael's name appears on top of the scoreboard!

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

And he does it!

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

He did it! He did it!

Michael slaps the water, thrilled. In the stands, Debbie jumps up and down, brushing tears out of her eyes. She throws her arms around Hilary, pumps her fist in the air. Boomer cries, and Nicole hugs him, laughing with joy and relief.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Once again, Phelps proves that when it's all on the line, he's got something special.

Michael hugs the swimmer in the next lane, then turns to the stands to see his family celebrating.

A smile breaks out across his face. He did it.

INT. HILTON OMAHA - MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Michael combs his hair in the bathroom mirror, then pops back into the room.

MICHAEL

I've gotta head back to...

He stops in his tracks. Nicole and Boomer are both fast asleep on the bed. He watches them for a moment, unable to keep the smile off his face.

This is his future.

INT - CENTURY LINK CENTER - POOL DECK - NIGHT

Michael stands beside NBC Reporter BOB COSTAS as a technician clips a mic to his Team USA polo.

The cameraman frames the shot, and a PA holds up his hand.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Okay, we're on in 5...

He counts them in.

BOB COSTAS

Welcome back to the US Olympic Swimming Trials. Once again, I'm Bob Costas, and we appreciate you being with us. I'm joined by 22-time Olympic medalist Michael Phelps, who has just qualified for his fifth Olympic Games. He'll be swimming three individual events and as many as three relays in Rio next month.

He turns to Michael.

BOB COSTAS (CONT'D)

Michael, you said it yourself, this was your last competition on American soil. Is this the way you wanted it to go?

MICHAEL

Oh definitely. I really wanted my last home race to be a win. I know I've got a lot to work on if I want to be on top of the podium in Rio, but right now, I'm happy to go out on a high note here.

BOB COSTAS

You're 31-years-old, competing against guys who are a decade younger than you. And you've only had about 15 months of training!

Michael laughs sheepishly.

MICHAEL

I was actually saying to my mom this morning, you know, at my first Olympics I was closer to Boomer's age than I am now, which is pretty crazy.

BOB COSTAS

That is hard to believe. As we've been saying all week, in a lot of ways it's harder to win the US Trials than it is to stand on the podium at the Olympics. So, tell us, how hard was it to get here?

MICHAEL

Yeah, it was pretty hard.

Bob laughs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Like you said, I'm older now, and that means everything is a little more difficult, and recovery takes longer. And yeah, I haven't had that four years of training like I had in Athens or Beijing, but I've got that passion for the sport back, and I think that's more than making up for what I've lost in terms of strength.

BOWMAN

You've talked a lot about all the work you've done in therapy. Can you tell us the difference that's making as you head into this final Olympics?

Michael takes in the question. It's a tough one.

MICHAEL

I think...for a long time I tried to hide the things that made me human. I was afraid to show the world who I was, I was afraid to be vulnerable. And that made everything harder, you know -- swimming, my relationships, and just the way I felt about myself.

He lets that settle for a moment.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Four years ago, I couldn't wait to retire because I hated swimming so much. And this year -- I'm ready to retire because I love it. I came back, I gave 100 percent, and I'm going out with no regrets.

BOB COSTAS

So who wins in a 100 fly -- Michael Phelps, Beijing 2008, or Michael Phelps today?

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

You know, that's a good question. I've certainly got a lot more miles on me now, maybe some more fatigue, but -- I do know that Michael Phelps today is gonna enjoy the experience a hell of a lot more.

BOB COSTAS

Good luck to you, Michael. We're excited to watch you in Rio.

MICHAEL

Thanks, Bob.

EXT. RIO DI JANEIRO OLYMPICS - ESTABLISHING

Over thumping samba music, we arrive in Rio Di Janeiro, Brazil, host of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games:

- We see beauty shots of Rio from above, with Christ the Redeemer towering over the mountains and the harbor;

- On Copacabana Beach, Olympic athletes and tourists climb onto the giant Olympic rings and pose for photos;
- Athletes march into the Opening Ceremonies, mugging for the TV cameras;
- Michael, carrying the American flag, leads Team USA into the stadium, beaming with pride;
- The torch ignites, and fireworks explode over the stadium.

EXT. RIO TRAINING POOL - DAY

The music fades as it takes us to the training pool. Michael climbs out after practice, accepts a towel from Bowman.

BOWMAN  
How's the shoulder?

MICHAEL  
It'll hold up.

He towels off his face, noticing the swimmer in lane two, completing a hard butterfly lap. He nods toward him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Who's that?

The kid stops on the wall for a few seconds -- he doesn't even look old enough to shave.

BOWMAN  
That's the Schooling kid. From Singapore.

MICHAEL  
Oh, right. The NCAA champion.

BOWMAN  
He's gunning for your 100 fly gold.

Michael grins, shakes his head. He turns back to Schooling, smoothly cruising down the pool.

He's good.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE ATHLETES' CAFETERIA - DAY

Michael sits in the bustling Athletes' Cafeteria with four of his young teammates: TOWNLEY HAAS (19), JAY LITHERLAND (20), CAELEB DRESSEL (19), and BLAKE PIERONI (20).

They're all first time Olympians, they're all so young -- and they've all grown up idolizing Michael.

They're also all totally overwhelmed by the excitement of the Village.

BLAKE

Holy shit, that's Usain Bolt.

The Jamaican superstar is indeed standing by the sushi bar, doing his signature "lightning bolt" and taking selfies with a group of (much shorter) gymnasts.

JAY

Yo, I swear to God, I saw Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving in the gym this morning.

Michael grins, unfazed, but enjoying their enthusiasm.

TOWNLEY

Dude, who cares about Usain Bolt? Everyone's staring at *us*. We're eating lunch with Michael fucking Phelps.

Michael laughs, but it is true -- half the cafeteria is staring at them.

CAELEB

I mean, yeah, but no offense, Michael, we've been with him for weeks now. And I just want--

JAY

We know what you want.

TOWNLEY

Bro, maybe you should focus less on your Serena Williams fantasy and more on making the relay final.

MICHAEL

Nuh uh, you focus on the heats.

BLAKE

Who do you think they'll put in the final?

MICHAEL

It doesn't matter. Heats come first, and you're definitely swimming the heats, so you focus on that.

He does his best Gene Hackman.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

There's a, um, tradition in tournament play. Do not talk about the next step until you've climbed the one in front of you.

The kids all laugh, but they exchange confused glances -- they have no idea what he's talking about. Michael looks at them, shocked.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Seriously? *Hoosiers*? None of you have seen *Hoosiers*?

CAELEB

Is that that basketball movie?

MICHAEL

*That basketball movie?*

He stares at them, flabbergasted, and we cut to...

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE MOVIE THEATER - DAY

...where the entire United States Olympic Swim Team is gathered to watch *Hoosiers*. It's the climactic state championship scene -- Hickory is down 38-40, with thirty seconds to go in the fourth quarter.

Michael leans over to Katie Ledecky, who's sitting next to him.

MICHAEL

Have you seriously never seen this movie?

KATIE

This came out like, way before I was born.

MICHAEL

Katie, this is a *classic* -- oh! Watch this! Guys, this is the--

CAELEB

Shut up, Mike, you're ruining the movie!

Michael smiles. Shuts up.

The whole room cheers as Jimmy sinks that critical basket.

INT. PHELPS FAMILY RIO HOUSE - DAY

Michael walks into the rental house and finds Nicole and his mom lying on a playmat on the floor beside Boomer. The baby's on his tummy, flailing his arms, trying to crawl.

NICOLE

Look at that, Boomer! Daddy's home.

Boomer gives Michael a big, toothless grin, and Michael immediately relaxes. He lies down on the floor beside them, all the stress and pressure forgotten.

Nicole watches them, smiling.

This is what matters.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER - EVENING

Rio's Olympic Aquatics Center is packed to the gills with spectators, athletes, and media from around the world. This is the hottest ticket of the Olympics -- the final individual race of Michael Phelps' career.

Once more, the NBC commentators, Dan Hicks and Rowdy Gaines, set the stage for us.

DAN HICKS (O.C.)

Thanks for joining us back at the Olympic Aquatics Center here in Rio, where you can feel the intensity in the air.

In the media zone, more than 100 photographers crowd together, cameras poised and ready to capture the moment.

DAN HICKS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

And that is because tonight's 100 meter butterfly is the final individual race of Michael Phelps' legendary career.

In the stands, the entire US Swim Team has gathered to cheer Michael on. We see Allison Schmitt, Katie Ledecky, and all the young men who have grown up worshipping Michael.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

That's right, Dan, although, you never know with Michael. Tokyo 2020 just might be in his future.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER READY ROOM - EVENING

Backstage, Michael sits on a folding chair in the ready room, Beats headphones drowning out the nervous energy around him.

Bowman clasps his shoulder -- Michael looks up. Takes the headphones off.

BOWMAN

Last one, old man. You ready?

Michael nods.

MICHAEL

Hard to believe, huh?

They share a smile. Proud. Relieved. And this time -- sad it's over.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Thank you. For everything. I never could have done this without you.

Bob shakes his head. No thanks necessary.

BOWMAN

Give 'em hell.

MICHAEL

I will.

BOWMAN

And make sure you throw your arms forward on the entry.

MICHAEL

Get outta here.

Bob grins. Michael pulls his headphones back on, shaking his head. He's totally relaxed.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER - EVENING

Out in the arena, Debbie and Nicole sit front and center, as usual, Boomer strapped to Nicole's chest -- he's in a Team USA onesie and his iconic red, white, and blue ear defenders.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

Michael is the three-time defending champion in this event, but as you may recall, this has always been a bit of a tough race for him.

## INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

In a small but homey apartment, 15-year-old JOSH sits on the couch, watching on TV.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

In 2004, Michael beat his teammate Ian Crocker by .04 seconds.

JOSH

Dad! It's about to start!

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

And then four years later in Beijing, he out-touched Serbia's Milorad Cavic by point oh-one of a second -- that's the length of a fingernail!

Gavin hurries into the room with a bowl of popcorn. He sits down beside his son.

## INT. DAMIEN'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

In another living room, Damien watches with his parents and younger sister. He's wearing his Under Armour hoodie.

ROWDY GAINES (O.C.)

Four years ago in London, he rallied from seventh at the turn to just nip South Africa's Chad Le Clos and Russia's Yevgeny Korotyshkin at the wall. Le Clos is back for another shot here tonight, and I can tell you, he is *gunning* for revenge.

Damien smiles proudly.

## INT. THE MEADOWS - COMMON ROOM - EVENING

In the Meadows common room, a large group has gathered to watch. We won't recognize most of the patients, but we might spot a few familiar faces, including Jeff, Anthony, Paula, and Dave, back for another round of rehab.

Dave's got a Saguaro stick in his hand. He pumps it in the air enthusiastically.

DAVE

Whoo! Let's go Michael!

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER READY ROOM - EVENING

Michael's jamming to his music, rolling his neck back and forth -- calm, ready.

A few feet away, JOSEPH SCHOOLING, 21, swings his arms anxiously, shakes out his legs, bounces up and down. He's clearly nervous -- this is his first Olympic final.

Michael notices -- remembers *his* first Olympic final. He gets out of his chair.

MICHAEL

Hey.

Joseph startles. His eyes widen -- *Michael Phelps* is talking to him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Just wanted to say good luck.

The kid's face breaks open in a huge smile.

JOSEPH

You don't remember me, do you?

Michael frowns, thinking about it. Shakes his head.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I'm Joseph. Schooling. We actually met in Beijing.

Joseph tugs a laminated photo out of the side pocket of his swim bag -- thirteen-year-old Joseph, posing with his idol, Michael Phelps, at the 2008 Olympics.

Michael stares at the picture.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I started swimming because of you.

Michael takes this in.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I'm really glad you came back. It wouldn't be as special without you here.

Michael's eyes fill. He tries to stay focused -- because in that moment, he finally gets it.

That's his legacy.

MICHAEL

We should take another one after  
the race.

Joseph grins.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER - EVENING

The crowd is practically breathless with anticipation as the  
giant screens around the arena change to the next race:

MEN'S 100M BUTTERFLY FINAL

The announcer brings in the competitors, one by one.

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

In lane eight, representing France,  
Mehdy Metella.

Mehdy Metella emerges into the arena, waving to the crowd.  
He's met with polite applause.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER READY ROOM - EVENING

Michael's got his game face on, swinging his arms back and  
forth, back and forth. In his own world.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER - EVENING

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

In lane seven, representing the  
United States of America, Tom  
Shields.

Tom Shields waves to the crowd as he walks to his lane.  
Again, the spectators respond with scattered, respectful  
applause.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER READY ROOM - EVENING

Michael takes a deep breath. This is it.

INT. OLYMPIC AQUATICS CENTER - EVENING

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

In lane two, representing the  
United States of America--

The crowd goes absolutely BALLISTIC. The noise is deafening, drowning out Michael's name as he walks into the arena.

Michael is overwhelmed by the welcome. He looks around at 15,000 people on their feet, screaming his name. He forces himself to hold it together.

The remaining swimmers are announced, but it's all background noise to Michael. He towels off his block. Strips off his sweats, drops them in the basket. He shakes out his arms, his legs, then glances towards the stands.

Nicole is in the front row, sitting beside his mom, Boomer strapped to her chest. He's awake and alert, and Nicole holds his hand and makes him wave.

Michael smiles. Whatever happens in this race -- it doesn't matter.

He's already won.

He adjusts his cap, repositions his goggles, just like he's done a million times before.

He climbs onto the blocks.

STARTER

Swimmers, take your marks.

The arena descends into total silence.

Michael stares at the open expanse of water in front of him.

For a brief second, we see a flash of the future: Michael in a pool, teaching Boomer to swim.

The buzzer SOUNDS.

Michael EXPLODES off the block as the crowd ROARS.

And we cut to BLACK.

Title cards tell us:

MICHAEL PHELPS WON A SILVER MEDAL IN THE 100 METER BUTTERFLY. HE LOST TO JOSEPH SCHOOLING BY TWO TENTHS OF A SECOND.

We see a photo of Michael with Schooling, medals around their necks, huge smiles on their faces.

HE WON HIS OTHER FIVE EVENTS IN RIO, WHICH HE CONSIDERS HIS FAVORITE OLYMPICS.

We see a photo of Michael celebrating with his teammates after winning the medley relay.

MICHAEL FINISHED HIS OLYMPIC CAREER WITH 28 TOTAL MEDALS, 23 OF THEM GOLD. THE NEXT ATHLETE ON THE ALL-TIME LIST HAS 18.

We see a photo of Michael with all 28 of his medals.

MICHAEL AND NICOLE MARRIED IN 2016. THEY HAVE THREE BOYS.

We see a family photo of Michael, Nicole, Boomer, Beckett, and Maverick, playing in the pool.

BOB BOWMAN COMES OVER FOR DINNER SEVERAL NIGHTS A WEEK TO PLAY WITH HIS GRANDCHILDREN.

We see a photo of Bob, teaching the older two kids to swim.

THE MICHAEL PHELPS FOUNDATION NOW PROVIDES SWIMMING LESSONS AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES TO MORE THAN 50,000 KIDS.

We see a photo of Michael leading a learn-to-swim program.

MICHAEL IS STILL IN THERAPY, AND HE REMAINS CLOSE WITH THE FRIENDS HE MET AT THE MEADOWS. HE AND HIS FATHER NOW TALK REGULARLY.

We see a picture of Michael with his father and his kids.

HE STILL SWIMS EVERY DAY.

THE END