

The Sixth Man Of The Year

By

Zachary Neptune

Based on a true story

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHRISTIAN CARTER, 18, and DARNELL JERMAINE, 17, approach a nearby basketball court where they pass by an athletics advertisement for signing day. Christian begins casually shooting around while Darnell rebounds for him.

Christian is suddenly interrupted by an incoming phone notification. He grabs his phone from his pocket only to be fixated on the screen of his phone.

Darnell leaps into the air as he extends his arms out for the rebound. He then makes a swift chest pass in the direction of Christian, not realizing he's preoccupied.

DARNELL

Oh, my bad! You good?

CHRISTIAN

(beat)

I just heard back from one of the schools.

DARNELL

That's music to my ears. So what's the scoop?

CHRISTIAN

It's Kevin Ware bad, a roster spot opened up.

DARNELL

Well, If this isn't the best Cinderella story you've ever heard, I don't know what is.

CHRISTIAN

I mean, what are the odds, I'd only have myself to blame for leaning on false hope.

DARNELL

You miss a hundred percent of the shots you don't take.

CHRISTIAN

Like I haven't heard that before.

DARNELL

The only thing stopping you from being great is your poor perception of yourself!

CHRISTIAN

Sorry, it's not like your future depends on this.

Christian grabs his bag and storms off.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

CUT TO:

Basketballs bouncing in a gym.

INT. FACILITY - DAY

CHRISTIAN walks along a narrowing path as he notices a gym of 15 players 19-22, tall, lanky, and athletic, as well as the head coach BRUCE SMITH, 45.

BRUCE hands CHRISTIAN a clipboard with a sign-in sheet attached to it. Listed above are three categories. Name, high school, and position.

CHRISTIAN writes his credentials on the sign-in sheet and hands the clipboard back to Bruce before making his way into the gym.

EXT. GYM - DAY

As Bruce waits for another player to show up. The players who showed up early shoot some balls around.

As Christian reaches the court, the surrounding players casually glance in his direction.

Christian laces his shoes up, takes the court, and sinks two consecutive three pointers.

Christian looks around to see if Bruce acknowledged him. When Bruce notices, his attention is drawn to the door.

ALEX, 18, 6'6 walks into the gym with his head held high, his shoulders back, and his chest out. There's a tense pause which causes BRUCE to drop his clipboard.

PLAYER 1  
Wow! We got Alex Hayes to a tryout?

PLAYER 2  
He's overrated.

Bruce approaches Alex.

BRUCE  
You're late Hayes.

ALEX  
Sorry. My mom--

BRUCE  
Excuses, excuses. Are you Kyrie Irving  
& Is the earth now flat?

ALEX  
No coach.

BRUCE  
Then get with the program.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Gather in!

The players gather around Coach Bruce

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Good afternoon gentlemen, thanks for  
being here. As many of you may know,  
my name is coach Smith, and All I ask  
of you today is to play your game and  
make a name.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
(Nods head)  
Capeesh.

PLAYERS  
Capeesh.

BRUCE  
Three players to a basket.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Christian, player 1, & Alex are partnered up at a basket.  
Player 1 tosses a tennis ball off the backboard while Alex  
and Christian fight for the rebound.

Alex is able to box out Christian with ease as he snatches the tennis ball midair and gives Christian a stare down.

Christian guards Alex in the low post as coach Smith passes Alex the ball, he quickly drop-steps to the basket for an easy layup.

Player 1 pushes the ball up the court on the fast break alongside Alex on the right wing. As Christian defends the two offence players in transition, Player 1 lobs the ball up to Alex for an alley-oop dunk.

Christian falls backwards, hitting the ground hard, while Alex steps over Christian, imitating the Famous Allen Iverson stopover.

Christian and Alex stand on the baseline. Christian sprints past a cone placed on the foul line while being closely guarded by Alex. Once Christian passes the cone, Coach Smith passes the ball to Christian, indicating the game is live.

Christian catches the ball and reverse pivots, which temporarily stuns Alex. He attacks the basket hard and gets cut off on his way to the hoop. He then quickly Euro steps around Alex for an acrobatic finish.

Christian stands on the baseline while Alex stands on the free throw line. Coach Smith rolls the ball in the direction of Alex, and Christian sprints towards him in an attempt to stop Alex from scoring. He eventually battles Alex in the post and tips the ball loose.

Christian stands on the baseline accompanied by Alex, Alex acts as a defender while Christian acts as an offensive player. Christian dribbles to the sideline and centre, creating a zigzag motion while being closely guarded by Alex.

Christian breaks Alex off the dribble, causing him to stumble.

Alex is enraged and fired up.

END MONTAGE:

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Good work, Carter. What a way to pick up the pace.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks coach.

Bruce blows his whistle.

BRUCE  
Get some water.

The players disperse.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Hayes! Bring it in. Are you really  
getting out played by the second  
coming of Muggsy Bogues?

There's an awkward silence between Alex & Bruce. Bruce puts his hand behind his ear, indicating that he's waiting for a response.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
(Waves finger in a circular motion)  
Let's turn the page.

ALEX  
Yes coach.

INT. FACILITY - LATER

The players rush to the center circle.

BRUCE  
Sideline.

The players line up on the sideline as they get their height, wingspan, and standing reach measured. Alex is third last, player 1 is second last, while Christian is the last.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
6'6, 6'8, 8'2. Good stuff Hayes.  
(Beat)

Smiles & gives a thumbs up

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
6'10, 7'2, 9'2.  
(Beat)

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
(displeased face)  
5'5, 5'7, 7'6.

The players line up along the center line to record their vertical leap.

Christian is first in line, he rushes to the jump tester, winds his arms back, but Before he elevates he notices a

Sharp pain in his right calf.

Christian records a score of 20 inches and hobbles off.

BRUCE  
Are you alright, Carter?

CHRISTIAN  
Yes coach.

Alex smiles

BRUCE  
Let's proceed.

Next in line is player 1, he rapidly approaches the jump tester, gets low, and generates power in his legs for the explosive two-foot hop. In the end, he receives a score of 30.

Last in line is Alex, he sprints towards the jump tester and powerfully soars into the air as he receives a score of 50.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Now that's a jump!

All the participants applaud Alex for his display of excellence.

Christian is vexed.

Alex winks at Christian.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Quit it Hayes, let your game do the talking. Don't make me repeat myself.

ALEX  
yes coach.

BRUCE  
Glad to see we're on the same wavelength.

INT. FACILITY - EVENING

Players jog towards the baseline.

BRUCE  
Get ready to go to hell and back  
(beat)

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Because the real test starts now.

The players are awestruck.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
The multistage fitness test is the  
true measurement of resilience.

An automated voice counts down from 5.

Christian and Alex are hunched over in an athletic stance.

They lock eyes with one another shortly before departing.

CHRISTIAN (V.O)  
(Shakes head)  
Sigh.

Alex shrugs his shoulders.

The automated voice shouts Go.

Players sprint from baseline to baseline as each level gets faster.

Countdown

A few players begin struggling to keep up, they eventually quit all together, and Coach Bruce shows them to the door.

Christian and Alex are neck and neck as they are approaching the nearest baseline.

As the tension rises, Christian begins to sweat profusely.

Alex breaks away from Christian.

Christian is on the verge of collapsing. He flows in and out of consciousness.

Christian falls shortly after.

Cut to:

Players rushing towards the locker room.

Christian is last amongst the group.



The players breath heavily.

Player 1 pushes the Locker room door open.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

Christian is furious, he slams a basketball against the wall and tosses his bag and water bottle before sitting down on the bench.

CHRISTIAN  
(Hands on Head)  
AAAAAAAhh!

Christian's wristband falls off his wrist.

Some players begin making their way back to the gym after taking a sip of water.

Alex sits on the opposite bench. He takes a sip of water and wipes his sweat from his forehead before heading back to the gym.

Alex does Vince Carter's signature dunk contest celebration and throws the towel he used to wipe his sweat at Christian.

ALEX  
It's over.

Christian sheds a tear.

He wipes the remaining tears from his eyes with his t-shirt before heading back to the gym.

As Christian makes his way back, he steps on the wristband that fell off of his wrist.

Christian picks up the wristband and reminisces on Darnell's words of wisdom.

Christian finds his way back to the gym.

INT. FACILITY - AFTERNOON

BRUCE  
That was a long break, is everything okay?

CHRISTIAN  
Yes coach.

BRUCE

Alright then, let the fun begin.

The Players smile amongst their peers.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Lets play a quick game to 21 the  
losers pack the balls away.

Coach Bruce splits the players into two teams.

The players match up against their opposing side.

Alex and player 2 face off against one another for the jump  
ball.

Coach Bruce tosses a basketball between Alex and player 2.

Montage:

Christian gets the ball on the left wing and drives  
aggressively towards the hoop.

He then stops on a dime and steps back as he generates power  
from his legs.

As Christian's body raises upwards he hits Alex with a pump  
fake and pass fake.

Christian makes a jump shot and does Michael Jordan's famous  
shrug.

Alex brushes off the humility.

Christian pushes the ball up the court and finds his trailing  
team mate.

He throws a no look pass to his teammate for the assist.

Alex is guarding Christian at the top of the three point line  
.

Christian hits Alex with a killer crossover.

Alex makes a speedy recovery.

Christian goes up for the left handed floater.

Alex springs into the air and goes for the block.

Alex's finger tips graze the basketball.

Christian scores.

Darnell Cautiously peeks his head through the window of the gym door.

DARNELL  
(makes fist)  
lets gooo!

Darnell quickly hides.

Alex is in disbelief.

player 1 calls for a screen at the top of free throw line.

Alex sets the screen.

Christian gets caught in the screen.

Alex rolls towards the hoop, gets ball, and scores.

Alex catches the ball in the high post he drives to the basket with the intention of going for the scoop finish.

Alex quicky pivots around catching Christian off guard.

Alex scores.

Christian catches the Ball in the corner.

Alex and Player 1 trap Christian causing him to turn the ball over.

Alex throws a full court pass to his team mate for the assist.

A score board appears and cycles through a series of numbers.

the game is tied.

Christian breaks his defender of the dribble for the game winning basket.

The ball rims out.

Alex and his team celebrate.

INT. FACILITY-EVENING

Players begin to leave.

Coach Bruce approaches Christian holding a basketball as he packs the balls away.

BRUCE

Do you need a hand?

CHRISTIAN

I wouldn't mind at all.

Christian Smiles hesitantly.

Bruce puts the basketball in the bag while Christian holds it.

BRUCE

you got heart kid.

CHRISTIAN

you really think so?

BRUCE

I know it when I see it.

Christian Smiles.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I don't do this often but I think you got what it takes to be coaches assistant.

Christian nods his head.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Would you be interested?

CHRISTIAN

Yes sir.

Bruce and Christian shake hands.

The end.

FADE OUT: `