

Football 257

Chapter 257 "Journalism is dead,"

[Fri, 01/03/2019]

"Lisa, it's Jason from Nike," Jason's voice was tinged with a sense of urgency. "We need to have a serious discussion about Rakim. We realize our recent decision to distance ourselves might have been premature, and we're keen to reestablish our relationship with him. We're prepared to offer him a new, more attractive deal."

Lisa's eyes narrowed as she listened. "Jason, I understand the situation, but you must realize why we might have some trouble trusting you or anyone else from your side. Your previous decision has had significant repercussions on my son's perceived value."

Jason Hart took a deep breath, the weight of the conversation pressing heavily on him. "Lisa, I get it. We made a mistake, and I am sincerely sorry for that. We didn't anticipate Rakim's swift recovery and the ensuing media storm. What we're offering now is a revised proposal that we believe reflects his value and potential."

Lisa took a moment to consider his words. The competition's vibrant atmosphere, filled with the clapping and cheering of enthusiastic parents and excited performers, contrasted sharply with the gravity of the conversation. "Alright, Jason. What exactly is this new deal you're proposing? I need to know that it not only makes up for the earlier missteps but also sets a solid foundation for the future."

Jason quickly detailed Nike's new proposal. "We're looking at a multi-year endorsement deal with significant increases in both financial terms and promotional opportunities. We also want to include performance bonuses and a commitment to support Rakim's community and charitable initiatives. We're prepared to offer him a prominent role in our upcoming campaigns and make sure that he feels valued and supported."

Lisa's expression remained skeptical. "And what about the public fallout from the interview? How does Nike plan to address the negative perception that has arisen from that added to the fact you distanced yourselves from him after the shooting whilst he was in a coma?"

Jason's voice grew more earnest. "We fully understand the public perception issue, and we're prepared to address it head-on. Nike is committed to being transparent about our mistakes and showing Rakim that we genuinely support his career. We plan to run a campaign that focuses on his recovery and success, highlighting his resilience and the support he's received from Nike. We want to turn this situation around by demonstrating our commitment to his long-term growth and success."

Lisa mulled over Jason's proposal, her gaze occasionally drifting to her daughter on stage, dancing with grace and confidence. Her thoughts drifted away for a second as she focussed on Emma's movements but the sound of Jason's breathing quickly brought her back to reality. "Jason, I'll need to discuss this with Rakim before making any decisions but I have to let you know that we are also looking at other options," Lisa said firmly effectively bringing this conversation to a stop before Jason could lobby her further.

As Lisa ended the call with Jason Hart, she glanced at her husband, Ben, who was busy watching their daughter's performance with a proud smile. Despite the cheerfulness of the dance competition, her phone kept buzzing with people trying to reach her. She decided just to turn her phone off, so she could finally be present at her daughter's competition. Whether her son would be signing a contract with any of these shoe brands would be left for later to decide.

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[Sat, 02/03/2019]

Emma, May, and Olivia sat cross-legged on the plush carpet of Emma's spacious bedroom, surrounded by a chaotic array of textbooks, notebooks, and colourful highlighters. The large windows let in the afternoon sunlight, casting a warm glow over the room's soft pastel decor. Framed pictures of the 3 and some of Emma's family can be seen hanging across her walls along with competition awards and cheerleading trophies.

A large mirror opposite the bed reflected the three friends, each lost in their own world of study. Emma, with her light blonde hair pulled into a messy bun, was hunched over her SAT prep book, her turquoise green eyes flicking back and forth across the page. Her pencil tapped rhythmically against the paper as she worked through a particularly tough math problem.

May, sitting next to Emma, wasn't as focused. Her peach-blond hair fell in waves around her shoulders as she lazily flipped through her own book. She had a hard time finding the energy to focus on doing well in her SATs ever since deciding to become an influencer. Her days were spent posting pictures on her social media and thinking of different ideas for videos to post on her MeTube.

"Why am I even doing this," She lamented with a tired sigh before continuing to tackle the calculus question in front of her. "Because your Dad said he'd only let you become a MeTuber if you get a 1560 on your SAT" Liv offhandedly responded not even looking up from her world history textbook.

May groaned dramatically, letting her head fall back against the wall. "Ugh, don't remind me, Liv. My dad is so unfair! Like, who even needs calculus to be a successful MeTuber? I bet none of those big influencers could solve these stupid integrals."

Emma glanced up from her book, a small smile tugging at the corners of her mouth. "But he agreed to help you financially as long as you enrol in a marketing course." she quipped already tired of her antics, always finding ways to get out of having to study.

"Exactly" Liv chimed in, finally looking up from her textbook with a raised eyebrow. "I don't plan on going to college either, Mum wants me to go pro after graduation,"

"Don't act like she is forcing you, you've been wanting to go pro since nursery days," Emma deadpanned throwing a pillow to Liv's face who was acting all pitiful.

Liv caught the pillow mid-air, laughing as she tossed it back at Emma. "Okay, yeah I can't relate only reason I'm taking this test is because Dad promised to get me a car of my choice depending on the score." she gleefully replied not at all minding the annoyed look she was getting from May.

"I think Emma and Jenna might be the only ones actually going to college after graduation. At least with tennis, I know what I'm doing." she continued with a more serious tone before turning to eye May in the latter part of her sentence. Her friend's sudden dream to become an influencer had caught all the by surprise.

At first, they all thought it was just one of her whims and after the shooting, no one really dared to say no to her. Which is half the reason why Live thinks her Dad even agreed to support her under the rule she get a degree. According to him if you are willing to make a career out of it you have to be willing to learn its technicalities.

"(Ahem) Yeah, it will be good to see her in person again when we both go to Cambridge," Emma said breaking the awkward silence created by Liv's comment, however, the other two seemingly didn't hear her as they continued to lock eyes.

"Is there something you want to say?" May asked her with a straight face, gone was her lazy demeanour from earlier as she sat up straight.

Her glare towards Liv seemingly intensified no longer willing to let those snide comments slide. She had been receiving shade from her for a while whenever she brought up what she wanted to peruse. Despite getting used to disappointed looks from adults to whom she told her plans too she hadn't expected the same from her friend. Thus she had been holding her tongue to keep the peace but now she finally had enough.

Liv seemingly not expecting her to call her out took a second to compose herself. "You know what there is," she stared off still maintaining her eye contact with May. "I'm tired of everyone giving you a free pass no matter how ridiculous you're being, become an influencer really what happened to your dream of becoming a journalist?"

Her words hung in the air momentarily with Emma trying her best not to breathe as the two seemed ready to fight. She didn't know how to stop this argument as it had been bubbling up for years but they usually made up rather quickly. However for some reason this time it was different as both of them didn't even acknowledge the tension till this moment.

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