

"The Catch"

An unexpected friendship changes the course of young
inner-city boy.

16-DE09-W54

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY 1

A well dressed African-American MAN in his late twenties walks down a crowded sidewalk. He stops at a coffee vendor and orders a drink. He gets a text which reads: "I'm so proud of you. Go get em! -Tracy". The barista hands him his drink. A stuffed football strikes his foot. He bends down to pick it up. A small BOY (6) stands with his Mother at the bus stop. He nervously stares at the man.

MAN
Is this yours?

BOY

Nods his head yes.

MAN
Catch!

The Man tosses the ball. Camera follows ball in mid flight. Fade out.

2 EXT. OAKLAND CA - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 2

Nine-year-old RONNIE KINGSTON catches a football and charges towards his three friends KENNY (8), Trevor (8) and ANDRE (9). They all crash into each other and wrestle Ronnie to the ground.

RONNIE
Alright! Alright! Get off me!

TREVOR
You need to work on your speed
Ronnie, we took you down easy.

KENNY
Ya Ronnie, my brother told me if
you want to run real fast? Just
pretend one of those police dogs is
behind you.

They all laugh except for Ronnie. He wipes the back of his neck with his shirt.

RONNIE
Dang, Andre! Why do you have to
sweat on me so much.

Andre holds his hands up in saintly pose.

ANDRE

Most people would welcome my heavenly moisture.

They all laugh again, except Ronnie.

RONNIE

Man, shut up. Give me that ball Trevor!

Ronnie snatches the ball.

OK, lets see who can kick the ball the furthest. Me first.

Ronnie lines up the ball and gives it a strong kick. A police car turns the corner and the ball bounces under the car. The ball is crushed by the police cars back tire. The boys all let out a collective groan.

TREVOR

Nice one Ronnie!

OFFICER SANTOS, a medium build Hispanic male, gets out of his car. He picks up the deflated ball. The ball reads: "To Ronnie, Love Pop" in faded ink. Ronnie walks over to the curb and slumps on the sidewalk. His head between his legs.

OFFICER SANTOS

You know you boys really shouldn't be playing in the street. Which one of you is Ronnie?

The boys nervously stare at each other. Andre slowly points his finger to Ronnie.

OFFICER SANTOS

Alright, you boys be more careful and stay out of the street.

Officer Santos walks over to Ronnie.

OFFICER SANTOS

Excuse me, Son? Is this your ball?

RONNIE

Ya it's mine.

OFFICER SANTOS

You know it's pretty dangerous to be playing football in the streets. Maybe you and your friends should go playing down at the park.

RONNIE

Park is a lot more dangerous than the streets.

OFFICER SANTOS

Right, look I'm sorry about your ball. I'll pick you up a new one, you going to be around tomorrow?

RONNIE

It's whatever, man.

Ronnie walks away with his deflated ball. Officer Sanchez walks back to his car. G-MA, an elderly women, yells to Officer Santos from her porch.

G-MA

Don't break your promise to that boy!

OFFICER SANTOS

Excuse me?

G-MA

If your going to get him a new ball, don't break your promise.

OFFICER SANTOS

I wont. You know him?

G-MA

Grandson.

OFFICER SANTOS

He lives here?

G-MA

Mmm, hmm.

OFFICER SANTOS

If his Dad is around I would like to...

G-MA

His Daddies not here no more. One of your boys in blue shot him dead two years ago. His Mom left not too long after.

OFFICER SANTOS

I'm very sorry.

G-MA

My Son was no angel, but he loved his boy. That football you crushed was the last thing he ever gave him. So like I said, if your going to get him a new one, don't break your promise.

OFFICER SANTOS

You have a good day, Mam.

G-MA

Mmm, hmm.

3 EXT. OAKLAND CA - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

3

The next day Officer Santos pulls into the neighborhood. He parks and opens the trunk of the police car. Ronnie sits on his porch.

OFFICER SANTOS

How you doing Ronnie? Where are your friends at?

RONNIE

I got no ball. That means no friends to play with.

OFFICER SANTOS

Come here real quick? I want to show you something.

Ronnie walks over to the car. Inside the trunk he sees a brand new football.

RONNIE

That's mine?

OFFICER SANTOS

It's yours.

Ronnie pulls out the football and walks back to his house.

OFFICER SANTOS

I've got a little bit of time. What do you say we break that ball in?

They toss the ball back and forth.

OFFICER SANTOS

You know, the key to catching the ball is that you have to be ready for it. If you can't catch, you can't score.

RONNIE

So is that like when you catch people on the street? You keep score of how many you get to lock up?

OFFICER SANTOS

Ronnie, it's never a joy to take people to jail, at least not for me it isn't.

RONNIE

Ya, whatever.

Officer Santos walks past G-MA who is watering her grass.

G-MA

Thank you.

OFFICER SANTOS

If there's anything else he needs?

G-MA

What he doesn't need is more fear in his life, he needs a Father. He doesn't need capitol punishment, he needs consistency.

OFFICER SANTOS

Consistency?

G-MA

Yes, someone whose belief in him wont expire.

G-MA walks back to her porch. Officer Santos gets back in his car.

OFFICER SANTOS

Consistency huh?

He gets out of his car and walks over to Ronnie.

OFFICER SANTOS

Hey Ronnie, I'll tell you what? How about every Thursday I come down here and we throw the ball around?

RONNIE

You wanna hang out around here? What's the catch?

OFFICER SANTOS

No catch, other than we would be playing catch. I'll be here every week, you have my word.

RONNIE

Well, if that's how you want to spend your time?

OFFICER SANTOS

It is. Oh, and Ronnie? Hold me to it.

RONNIE

What do you mean?

OFFICER SANTOS

When somebody gives you their word, you hold them to it. And if they break it? Don't be afraid to correct them.

RONNIE

You want me to correct you? Man, you're the weirdest Cop I've ever met.

OFFICER SANTOS

See you next week.

We see a montage of scenes. Officer Santos meets Ronnie every Thursday to play catch. Most of the time it's just with Ronnie, but Kenny, Andre, and Trevor join in at times. We see moments where Ronnie is smiling and laughing, but also moments where his temper still flairs.

4

EXT. OAKLAND CA - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

4

Officer Santos launches the ball. The boys all scramble to catch it. In the confusion Ronnie trips over Kenny's feet and falls hard to the ground.

KENNY

Sorry about that Ronnie. You OK!

Ronnie gets up and pushes Kenny to the ground.

RONNIE

Man, why don't you watch where your going!

KENNY

What's your problem! You ran into me!

Officer Santos gets in between them.

OFFICER SANTOS

Alright. Alright that's enough! Ronnie, it was just an accident.

RONNIE

No, screw this!

He storms off to his porch steps.

OFFICER SANTOS

OK fellas. That's it for today.

5 EXT. RONNIE'S PORCH STEPS - DAY

5

Officer Santos sits next to Ronnie on the steps. Ronnie is still fuming with his head down.

OFFICER SANTOS

Did you know that I used to have a son?

RONNIE

Used to?

OFFICER SANTOS

He got sick, cancer sick. He was about a year younger than you.

RONNIE

Did he like football to?

OFFICER SANTOS

He did. He was a real fighter, lived a lot longer than the doctors expected him to. I was so angry when he died, the rage was destroying me from the inside out. It was causing me to forget why he lived. You have to let go of the anger, Son.

RONNIE

Officer Santos?

OFFICER SANTOS

Yeah?

RONNIE

Did you know the cop that killed my Dad?

OFFICER SANTOS

No Ronnie, I didn't. I believe that happened about a year before I transferred to the department. You want to talk about it?

RONNIE

Well, I guess I don't hate the man. I just wish I could of had the chance to tell him that my Dad wasn't a bad person. I guess I also wish that I could have told my Dad that all cops aren't bad either. Maybe he would still be here.

OFFICER SANTOS

Ronnie, I think whatever it is you're carrying in your heart? This world needs more of it.

RONNIE

Officer Santos? Do you think that since I don't have a Dad and you don't have a Son. Maybe that's why we met?

OFFICER SANTOS

I think maybe you're right.

RONNIE

Are we still playing ball next next week?

OFFICER SANTOS

You have my word.

They bump fists together.

6

EXT. SANTOS HOME - BACK PORCH - EVENING

6

The sun sets. Officer Santos sits on his back porch. His wife TRACY joins him.

TRACY

You seem more relaxed than usual.

OFFICER SANTOS

I met this kid while on patrol, been spending time with him. He's a

OFFICER SANTOS
 fighter, but he's got a lot of
 heart. Kind of reminds of.. (Chokes
 up)

Tracy wraps her arms him.

TRACY
 I know you miss Alex, but you can't
 bring him back.

OFFICER SANTOS

Wipes tears away.
 I know. I just feel like maybe I
 can be something to this kid.
 Something

(Beat)

consistent.

Tracy kisses him on the head.

TRACY
 I love you. Don't be out here too
 late.

7 EXT. OAKLAND CA - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 7

A week passes. Ronnie paces the street.

RONNIE
 Where is he? He's never late.

8 EXT. OAKLAND CA - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 8

Another week passes. Ronnie sits anxiously on his steps.

G-MA
 He's probably just busy Ronnie. He
 is a Cop you know?

RONNIE
 He gave me his word G-Ma! His word!
 Well I'm gonna hold him to it.

He storms of the steps.

G-MA
 Ronnie! Where you going!? Ronnie!

9 INT. OAKLAND CITY POLICE DEPT. - LOBBY - DAY

9

Ronnie burst through the lobby doors.

RONNIE

Where is he! Where is he huh!?
Where is Officer Santos!

OFFICER COOPER

OK, OK young man calm down. What's
the problem?

RONNIE

Officer Santos was supposed to be
there to play catch. He gave me his
word! Now where is he!

OFFICER COOPER

Alright, come with me to my office.

She walks Ronnie behind the front counter and into her
office.

10 INT. OAKLAND POLICE DEPT. - OFFICE - DAY

10

OFFICER COOPER

What's your name?

RONNIE

My name is Ronnie.

OFFICER COOPER

So you're Ronnie. Sweetie I'm very
sorry to be the one to tell you
this, but Officer Santos was killed
while on duty.

RONNIE

(Crying) What? What you mean!? No
that can't be true. We were
supposed to play catch, he can't be
dead! (Sobbing) He gave me his
word, we were supposed to play
catch.

Officer Cooper holds Ronnie in her arms.

11 INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

11

Ronnie and G-Ma sit in the very back of the Cathedral for Officer Santos funeral. The place is packed shoulder to shoulder. Almost every Police Officer is present.

FATHER AMADO

As we close I would like to call up Tracy Santos who would like to share some final words.

TRACY

(Crying) Thank you, Father. Thank you all for honoring my husband here today. It's very evident that he touched a lot of lives. I would like to read a letter that was found on my husband when he passed, but before I do, is there a young man named Ronnie here?

The entire audience looks around in curiosity. G-MA looks at Ronnie and gives him a nod. Ronnie stands and nervously walks to the front of the sanctuary. He stands in front of Officer Santos casket.

TRACY

I'm so glad you're here Ronnie. I believe this letter is meant for you.

She unfolds the letter and begins to read.

TRACY

Dear Ronnie, If you're reading this it means that something unfortunate has happened and regrettably I won't be around to play catch with you any more. I want you to know that throwing the football around with you was one of the greatest honors of my life. You gave me a sense of hope that I never thought I would feel again. I have peace knowing that someone like you is in this world. I know I had to be tough on you at times, but it's only because I believed in you so much. I truly hope I was able to help you find a better path. Remember to always be ready to catch the good things that come your way, grab hold of them and run with all your Heart. I love you, Son. - Oscar Santos

12 INT. SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY 12

CUT BACK TO THE WELL DRESSED YOUNG MAN IN SAN FRANCISCO.

SECRETARY

Ronnie Kingston? If you're ready
for your interview? They can see
you now.

Ronnie stands to his feet.

RONNIE

I am ready.

He walks past a sign on the wall reading: Invictus Attorney
and Law.

13 EXT. OAKLAND CA -SANTOS HOME - FRONT PORCH 13

Tracy sits on her porch. She gets a text from Ronnie. It
reads: "Interview went great. I know he would be proud.
Thank you for everything. -Ronnie"

FADE OUT

The End.

