

INT. GYM - BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

The sound of sneakers squeaking against hardwood maple floors overlaps with the roar of an electric crowd.

Close up we see forearms skillfully dribbling a basketball, threading it between defenders.

We switch from their wrist...to their legs...and finally---their face. This is ALEX (20s, athletic), locked in.

The clock is winding down. The crowd swells, swallowing everything else in its reach. A teammate is yelling for the pass but Alex doesn't hear him.

Alex rises to take the shot.

The ball arcs...

...and CLANGS OFF THE RIM.

The horn rips through the gym. The scoreboard freezes with the final score: HOME 24. GUESTS 26. Alex stands frozen...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GYM - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

PRESENT DAY

...Alex in front of the hoop. Arm still in a shooting follow through. The ball gently rolls off the side of the court. The echo of the horn dissolving into silence.

After a beat, Alex retrieves the ball and gets back in position. They dribble into the shot this time, then...CLANK.

The ball hits the baseboard.

Miss after miss.

They grunt in frustration, then CHUCK the ball at the wall and storm off towards the sideline.

A BOOK BAG rests on the floor. Alex digs inside and pulls out their PHONE. They swipe into their messages until we land on a thread between them and a "MONÈT."

Their thumb hovers over the voice memo.

Alex slips on their AirPods and presses play.

MONÈT (V.O.)

Hey, Alex. I know last night didn't end the way you wanted. But look. When the game was on the line, you put your team on your back and took the shot. So what if it didn't go in? It will next time. Just take a breath and do the work.

Alex jogs back onto the court and starts figure 8 dribbling.

MONÈT (V.O.)

Go one rep at a time. Find your rhythm...

Alex starts two-ball dribbling.

MONÈT (V.O.)

...And block out the noise.

We pull back to focus on the AirPods while they're in motion.

MONÈT (V.O.)

No matter what, I'm proud of you.

Now, Alex is form shooting.

The basketball arcs then swishes cleanly through the net. They launch again. SWISH. Again. SWISH.

MONÈT (V.O.)

You got this.

They look like a machine who knows of only three functions: rhythm, release, repeat.

And they keep going.

END