

MEET THE CAST OF

HIT COUNT

CHRIS LYNCH

ARLO BRODIE is blessed with all the gifts to succeed in high school. Yet despite his size, speed, strength, athleticism, general likability, and competence, Arlo's future is clouded. Arlo loves sports, especially football, and in ninth grade his talent and skills explode. All he wants is to be on the football field, getting hit hard and hitting back harder. For four years, Arlo goes from win to win, becoming "Starlo" along the way, denying the injuries that come with the championships.

LLOYD BRODIE, Arlo's older brother, was a gifted and tough defensive back until his own head injuries forced him to quit contact sports. Growing up, Lloyd taught Arlo his rules for making his way in this world. First, don't show weakness to anyone. Second, do whatever job you're assigned with more intensity than anybody else. And third, whoever your man is, you hit that poor chump quicker and harder than he ever thought possible. Hit him real hard, and he might not even remember you. Hit him even harder than that, and he will think about you, maybe for the rest of his life.

Arlo's mother, **EMMA**, was once a passionate sports fan. But the nearer the violence gets to the people she loves most, the more her position changes. Emma obsessively maintains a file full of data on sports-related brain trauma and its long-term ramifications. Emma remains a fan at heart, but can no longer support contact sports and the harm they have caused her sons.

Arlo's father, **LOUIS**, is a great deal less conflicted than Arlo's mother. He loves the game of football and is immensely and openly proud of what Arlo does. Louis's relationship with Lloyd, which was once just as strong, has been strained since Lloyd washed out of organized sports. The closest Louis and Lloyd come to reliving the relationship they once had is when two sad, angry, disappointed versions of themselves throw punches at one another in the hallway.

SANDRINE, often called Sandy, is Arlo's on-and-off girlfriend. She is a quality athlete herself, running for the cross-country team. Sandy loves Arlo, but she is also outraged by Arlo's football exploits and his apparent disregard to pain, injury, and permanent disfigurement. Sandy cannot bear to watch the games, so she puts her relationship with Arlo on hold every football season.

DINOS is Arlo's best friend. He's on the football team, and even though he's nowhere near as good as Arlo, they establish an instant appreciation for one another. Dinos and Arlo balance each other out. Dinos likes to enjoy himself. If football fits into that, great. If it doesn't, great. Arlo would be incapable of uttering that second "great." Dinos's humor is something that overly serious Arlo needs. It helps keep him grounded when his perspective becomes skewed.

COACH FISK is Arlo's coach at both the junior varsity and varsity levels. He struggles to find a balance between keeping Arlo safe and healthy, and keeping his finest player aggressive on the field as he leads the team to championship games.

JAMIE MCALPINE has run the old-school boxers' club/gym since before he retired from his own career as a mediocre but beloved regional boxer. Arlo feels at home in Jamie's gym.