



12 A turning point came when Tony Henderson, who allowed Michael to crash on his sofa, brought him along when he took his son Steven to enroll at Briarcrest Christian School on the other side of town. Oher ultimately was admitted as a special-needs case.

13 Another pivotal moment occurred during his first Thanksgiving break, when Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy spotted Oher as they drove past a bus stop near the school. It was snowing. Oher, then 16, was dressed in a T-shirt and shorts.

14 Sean, then a volunteer assistant basketball coach at the school who had met Oher at the gym, says Leigh Anne grabbed the wheel. Next came a U-turn.

15 "She cried the second she met him, and it was over," Sean recalls.

16 The Tuohys took in Oher, allowing him a safety net in their home in upscale East Memphis two blocks from the school. For months he came and went as he pleased, and Leigh Anne worried when he didn't spend the night. They hired a tutor to address severe academic deficiencies, paid his tuition and gave him a wardrobe and other essentials. Sean says the generosity was not the result of any epiphany or even as much as a family meeting.

17 "We think God sent him to us," Sean says. "Earthly explanations don't make sense."

Book description in dispute

18 About a year later, Oher moved in permanently with the wealthy white family. Before Oher's senior year in high school, the Tuohys — with daughter Collins at Briarcrest and a younger son, Sean Jr. — became his legal guardians.

19 "They've got big hearts," Oher says. "To take somebody from my neighborhood into your house? Nobody does that. I don't think I'd even do that. I'd help you out, but with a daughter and with all the violence and drugs where I come from ... they didn't have to do that. I owe a lot to them."

20 Oher, who quickly blossomed into a highly recruited college prospect, detests his depiction in Michael Lewis' book, which was released in 2006 and reached No. 1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

21 Lewis, who gained access as a longtime classmate of Sean Tuohy's, wrote that, according to Memphis

school system files, Oher had a "measured IQ of 80" when he applied to Briarcrest and he portrayed scenes in which Oher was uncommunicative in various settings.

22 After revealing at the NFL scouting combine that he didn't read the book, Oher did exactly that within the past few weeks.

23 "The part about me not being smart, that's the only thing that got to me," said Oher, who made the honor roll in 2006 and maintains that he is 15 credits shy of earning a degree in criminal justice. "He's got to sell books. But reading that, I went back and talked to him. I mean, how can anybody like that do the things I've done?"

24 Asked if his opinion fueled friction with the Tuohys, Oher said, "I can't let something that small cause a problem. Especially with people who helped me."

25 Sean says the book is "nearly 100% accurate" but suspects Oher doesn't account for changes in his makeup since the book was reported. He said Oher's grade-point average as a high school sophomore was 0.3.

26 "I guess that's not stuff he wants to remember," Sean says.

'Character and perseverance'

27 *I love you.*

28 Oher surely remembers that statement. It came from Leigh Anne when he was 18, and it was the first time anyone ever uttered those words to him.

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