

SORE LOSERS

Written by

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EXT. COMISKEY PARK - HOME DUGOUT - DAY

Various Chicago White Sox BASEBALL PLAYERS sit on the bench and lean against the dugout railing, watching the action on the field.

The game is tied 2-2, with bases loaded.

SUPER: Comiskey Park, July 1987.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...number twenty-three, left fielder
Dickie Koslowski...

The home crowd cheers.

DICKIE KOSLOWSKI, 40, the stocky backbone of the team, pays no attention to the announcer and squats down near the back of the dugout, a quarter in his hand, focused on the back wall where several other quarters lay on the floor.

Two teenage BATBOYS bend over next to him, hands on their knees, watching closely.

The team manager, LARRY, 57, standing outside the dugout, pokes his head in.

LARRY
Dickie! You're up! When you're done
stealing kids' lunch money, we have a
baseball game to win!

DICKIE
Keep your pants on, skip! Gimme a
second!

Dickie tosses the quarter, and it bounces toward the wall--
the coin rolls around on its edge, and settles. His quarter
is closest to the wall without touching it.

DICKIE (cont'd)
Ha ha! Pay up, suckers!

BATBOY #1
Seriously? Didn't you just sign a
half-million dollar contract?

BATBOY #2
Yeah! And what kind of lowlife takes
food out of the mouths of babes?

Dickie extends his open hand toward the boys, and waits.

Defeated, the two boys slap a couple dollar bills and change into Dickie's open hand.

DICKIE

Nothing sweeter than another man's
money jingling in your pocket, boys.

Dickie puts the money in his pocket, snickering to himself.

He pulls out a bat. Larry pulls him aside and puts his arm around his shoulder.

LARRY

Listen, Dickie...if you let this game go to extra innings, I swear to God I'll go back into my office, get my gun, put it in my mouth, and blow my goddamn brains out. And I'll pin a note to my shirt that says "Dickie Made Me Do It", scrawled in red marker. Haunting, isn't it?

Dickie flashes haughty grin back at him.

DICKIE

One run coming right up, skip.

He smacks Larry on the butt, and strolls out to home plate.

LARRY

Don't toy with me, Dickie Koslowski!
I have a very fragile psyche!

EXT. COMISKEY PARK - HOME PLATE - DAY

Dickie stands ready, waiting for the next pitch, ever-so-slightly crowding the plate.

The pitcher takes the sign from the catcher. He winds up, and throws a fastball high and inside.

Dickie shifts slightly forward and moves his head just enough where the ball ricochets off the side of his helmet, knocking him to the ground.

The umpire awards Dickie first base, sending in the winning run.

The crowd goes wild, as the opposing catcher and manager argue with the umpire.

Dickie dusts himself off and saunters back to the dugout.

LARRY

Can't just get a simple base hit like a normal person, can you?

DICKIE

I already have the batting title locked up. I wanted that "hit by pitch" record.

LARRY

There is something wrong with you. In your brain.

Dickie throws his head back and cackles, disappearing into the dugout, amidst high-fives and pats on the back from the rest of the team.

EXT. DOOGAN'S PUB - BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

DOOGAN, 57, a red-faced dumpling in a leather jacket counts out large bills from a cash box, behind a wooden desk.

Dickie stands in front of the desk, chomping a cigar, giggling with glee as he watches him count the money.

DOOGAN

What a crock of shit. You were crowding the plate. Plain and simple.

DICKIE

Damn right! Nothing plain and simple about it, either. It takes an extra-large pair of brass cajones to face that chin music, pal.

DOOGAN

Yeah, well you've got to be a special kind of stupid to stick your head in the way of a fastball just to win a little dough.

Doogan finishes counting and slaps the cash into Dickie's waiting hand.

DICKIE

Stupid like a fox!

Doogan grimaces.

DICKIE (cont'd)

What's the line for our game against the Orioles tomorrow? I'm thinking of a parlay of going for three hits-

DOOGAN

No line. No parlay. That's it. I'm done.

DICKIE

You retiring or something? Sunny Florida will burn that pink Irish mug of yours in two seconds flat.

DOOGAN

I'm Australian, you fuck! And I'm out of money now. You took my last five grand.

DICKIE

"A dingo ate me Lucky Charms"? What kind of bookie runs out of money?

Doogan glares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Oh I know, one that bets against me!

Dickie brings the wad of cash up to his face.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(talking to the money)

I guess we'll have to find another home for you, little guys.

Doogan clenches his jaw, his face reddening.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Too bad you're a descendant of murderers and thieves -- the luck of the Irish could've saved you!

Doogan leans forward.

DOOGAN

How about you bugger off, fuckstick, before I cut your bloody eyes out?

DICKIE

See? That still sounds Irish to me.

Doogan leaps to his feet and pounds on the table.

DOOGAN

Get the fuck out!!!

Dickie leaves, holding his hands up in mock fear, chuckling to himself.

Fuming, Doogan picks up the phone on his desk and dials, stabbing his fat fingers into the keypad.

DOOGAN (cont'd)
 (into phone)
 Hey. Yeah. It's me. I got a hot tip
 for ya.

INT. DICKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dickie sits at the kitchen table in his bathrobe, reading the newspaper.

His wife BABS, 36, sturdy elegance wrapped a kitchen apron, cooks bacon and eggs at the stove.

His runty, precocious son DICKIE JR., 8, chows down on a bowl of oatmeal, his head buried in a giant hardcover edition of The Guinness Book of World Records.

Dickie flips to the sports section. His eyes widen.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER SPORTS SECTION

Headline reads "Slugger Koslowski Suspected Of Illegal Gambling"

DICKIE
 That son of a bitch!

BABS
 Language please!

The phone rings.

BABS (cont'd)
 I'll get it, potty mouth.

Babs glides across the kitchen and answers the phone.

BABS (cont'd)
 (into phone)
 Helloo? Koslowski residence. Yes,
 he's here. One moment, please.
 (to Dickie)
 It's for you, honey. The league
 bigwigs in New York.

DICKIE
 Crap.

BABS
 Language!

Dickie snatches the phone.

DICKIE
 (into phone)
 Dickie here, go. Yeah, I saw it. So
 what? Can't we just-. Fine, I'll be
 there tomorrow.

Dickie slams down the phone.

BABS
 Everything okay, dear?

DICKIE
 I have to go to New York tomorrow. To
 straighten some things out.

INT. MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - DAY

High-rise corner office with floor-to-ceiling glass windows,
 filled with baseball memorabilia and Texas knickknacks.

Behind a glass top desk sits WALLACE BUFORD, 52, a tall,
 skinny man in a suit one size too big for him. He's got a
 baseball glove on one hand and a baseball in the other. He
 plays catch with himself, looking up at the ceiling.

Dickie knocks on the open office door.

DICKIE
 Mr. Commissioner?

Wallace sets the ball and glove on his desk, and springs out
 of his chair, extending his hand to greet Dickie.

WALLACE
 Dickie Koslowski! It is a pleasure to
 finally meet you in person. Please.

He sweeps Dickie into the office, closing the door behind
 him, and gestures for him to sit. Dickie sits in the lone
 chair in front of the desk, and Wallace sits back down
 behind it.

WALLACE (cont'd)
 I saw the game yesterday. How's your
 head? You took quite a shot to the
 ol' melon there.

DICKIE
 I'm good, sir. We won the game, so
 that's all that matters.

WALLACE

All that matters, indeed! Say, call me Wally.

DICKIE

Sure, Wally.

WALLACE

Getting hit by pitches, sliding head-first...I've always admired your blatant disregard for the safety of your own face in order to win a baseball game. Big fan. You're a risk taker. Some would say gambler...

DICKIE

Okay, I know where this is going-

The phone rings.

WALLACE

Hold on, one second.

Wallace picks it up.

WALLACE (cont'd)

(into phone)

Hello! Yes. Yes, I know. I'm going to tell him! Jeez!

He hangs up the phone.

WALLACE (cont'd)

Ugh, Major League Baseball owners. Aren't they just the worst? Real pains in my ass. All they think about is money! I owned a minor league team after I sold the meatpacking company-

DICKIE

Tell me what?

WALLACE

Listen, man. I'm just a figurehead, so don't shoot the messenger on this.

He leans forward toward Dickie.

WALLACE (cont'd)

Wanna bet what I'm going to say?

DICKIE

Not really.

WALLACE

C'mon, put a twenty down on it. Let's make things interesting.

Dickie leans back in his chair and stares back at him.

The phone rings again. Wallace snatches it and puts it to his ear.

WALLACE (cont'd)

(into phone)

I'm doing it already! Goodbye!

He slams the phone back down, grumbling.

He composes himself and turns back to Dickie.

WALLACE (cont'd)

I really hate to be the bearer of bad news, but your playing days are over. Effective immediately.

Wallace stands up and paces back and forth.

WALLACE (cont'd)

There. I said it. Don't hate me, man. They've had you under investigation for months. Nothing I could do.

DICKIE

No, no, no. You think I'm fixing games, is that it? I can explain-

WALLACE

Nah, man. I get it. You've got that hunger inside, gnawing at you. You've got to scratch that itch, get some of that sweet, sweet action. You can't help yourself.

DICKIE

Sir, I don't have a gambling problem. If anything, I have a competition problem, but what's wrong with that?

WALLACE

I love your spunk, and personally I'm not really one for pot-calling-the-kettle-black-type situations, but according to the owners and rules of Major League Baseball, you've been a bad boy, and that's just how it is.

DICKIE

I don't bet on games, Wally. I always bet on myself. Me! Nothing else!

WALLACE

A bet is a bet. No exceptions, and they want to come down hard, to make an example out of you.

Dickie stands up and stabs his finger into Wallace's face.

DICKIE

You can't do this to me! I'm going to get my lawyer, we're going to the Players Union, and we're going to fight this!

Wallace throws up his hands and shrugs.

WALLACE

It really is a shame, too. I was rooting for you to break that all-time hits record next year. But hey, at least you got that season "hit by pitch" record. Well, probably, anyway. You never know what could happen the rest of the way.

Dickie's face reddens, his whole body tightening.

WALLACE (cont'd)

Hey, cheer up, friend. You know what always makes me feel better? How about we head down to Aqueduct and play the ponies?

Dickie turns to leave.

WALLACE (cont'd)

Okay, how about the OTB just down the street? Don't make me go alone! That place is full of degenerate lowlifes!

Dickie slams the door behind him as stomps out.

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dickie Jr. and Babs sit around the coffee table, working on a puzzle.

Dickie is on the phone and paces back and forth.

DICKIE

(into phone)

What?! They can't just do that can they? "Rule #21." That rule is bullshit. This isn't in the spirit of the rule, they just want to screw me. Isn't there some legal mumbo jumbo magic you can work here? Shit. Well, I wasn't going to lie about it. Yeah, no kidding. Thanks anyway, Reuben.

Dickie hangs up.

BABS

(not looking up from
the puzzle)

I'm guessing that wasn't good news.

DICKIE

A bunch of bullshit is what it was!

BABS

Language!

DICKIE

Gosh darn-...ungrateful...sons of-...
mother-

Dickie's whole body tenses and thrashes, as he punctuates every word by stomping his feet.

BABS

I don't know why you're getting all bent out of shape. We've got plenty of money and, at the very least, you never have to go back to godforsaken Baltimore.

DICKIE

No offense, honey, but you don't know what the hell you're talking about.

BABS

Oh no? Drunk, rowdy fans yelling at you. The press always giving you a hard time. Belligerent umpires. All I'm saying is why put yourself through the headache of all that?

DICKIE JR.

Yeah, Dad. Literally. From all the balls that clunk you in the head.

Babs chuckles to herself.

DICKIE

Good one, son. Hardy-fucking-har!

BABS

Hey! Language! C'mon, now. It's family time.

DICKIE

(ignoring her)

They need me! Just wait, they'll come crawling back to old Dickie! And in the meantime, I can do whatever I want! I could learn Japanese, build ships inside of bottles...crap like that!

BABS

That's right! And the best part is you can spend your summers with us-

Babs covertly points and tilts her head toward Dickie Jr.

BABS (cont'd)

-instead of a bunch of tobacco-chewing cretins.

Dickie scowls and shrugs at her, not getting it.

BABS (cont'd)

Maybe you could start by helping us with this puzzle?

DICKIE

How do you win?

BABS

When you finish the puzzle, everybody wins.

DICKIE

Ehh. Where's the fun in that? Now, if you get me another puzzle, I'll race you. Then we'll have something going!

DICKIE JR.

This is supposed to be relaxing.

Babs and Junior turn back to their puzzle.

DICKIE

Those sneaky bastards have been trying to get me out for years. I play the game the way I want, not how they want me to play it.

Dickie plops down in a recliner and mumbles to himself.

After a moment, he jumps up and hovers over their puzzle.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Hey, how about a game of Monopoly?
That's fun, right? Junior, you can be
the top hat if you want...

DICKIE JR.

I think we're good, Dad.

DICKIE

Alright...

Dickie slowly backs away, back to his chair, and plops back down again.

After another moment, he leans forward and cranes his neck to get a good view of the progress on the puzzle.

He jumps back up and marches out of the room.

He returns with a different boxed puzzle under his arm, and sits down on the floor cross-legged next to his chair.

He spies the progress on the rival puzzle again, and dumps out all of his own puzzle pieces in front of him.

He rubs his hands together and sifts through the pieces.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Game on!

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER

Dickie sits alone on the floor, still working on his puzzle.

BABS (O.S.)

Honey, come to bed already! It's
after midnight!

DICKIE

I'm almost done! I just have to
finish this stupid bird's head!

He looks through the remaining pieces, but isn't finding what he's looking for.

DICKIE (cont'd)

You know, you had an advantage! It
goes a lot faster with two people!

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dickie sits at the head of the table, wearing a green visor and dealing out cards to a group of BRIDGE CLUB LADIES.

Babs enters with a full tea service, and stops in her tracks when she sees what's going on.

BABS

Dickie Dear, this is ladies bridge club.

DICKIE

I talked the gals here into a game of seven-card stud.

She puts down the tea service and glares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

What? You can play the next hand. I'll spot you the buy-in.

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Babs sits on the couch, watching a soap opera on TV.

Suddenly, an old car tire smashes through the window behind her. Startled, Babs screams out.

Dickie sticks his head through the now-broken window.

BABS

Dickie! What on earth?!

DICKIE

Oh sorry, honey. Billy from across the street bet me I couldn't throw this tire over the roof, and it just slipped out of my hand.

Babs glares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

What? Don't worry, I can fix it.

INT. DICKIE'S GARAGE - DAY

Dickie spray paints a big number twenty-three on the side of their station wagon.

Babs exits the house, carrying a full kitchen garbage bag. She sees what he is doing, and gasps. Stunned, Babs drops the bag, spilling trash all over the floor.

BABS

My car! Dickie, what possibly-!

DICKIE

There's a demolition derby tonight down at the county fair, and I needed a car right away.

Babs glares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

What? This wagon is tough as a tank. I'll tell you what, if I don't win, I get you another one.

INT. DICKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Babs cooks bacon and eggs on the stove. She checks the clock on the wall, slides the contents of her pan onto a plate.

Dickie Jr. sits at the table, reading the same Guinness Book of World Records again, eating a bowl of cornflakes.

Dickie hobbles in, lets out a big yawn, and sits down at the table.

DICKIE

(rubbing his neck)

Whew, feels like I got hit by a truck. I was thinking this morning-

Babs plunks the plate down in front of him, and fills his empty mug with coffee.

BABS

You'd better eat up or you're going to be late.

DICKIE

Late for what now?

She pulls out two baseball caps and puts them on both Dickie and Dickie Jr.

BABS

I signed you both up for Little League.

Huh? DICKIE

DICKIE JR.
Both?

BABS

I ran into Jeanette at the grocery store, and it turns out little Joshua's team needs a coach after Mr. Sorento had another heart attack, so with all the free time you have now-

DICKIE JR.

I dunno-

BABS

The poor dears haven't won a game all season. A real big leaguer such as yourself is uniquely suited to turn these young men into winners-

DICKIE

Ehh-

BABS

Not to mention, Junior here has always wondered what the appeal of baseball is to you-

DICKIE JR.

(to Babs)

That was said to you in confidence.

BABS

(to Dickie, ignoring Dickie Jr.)

So now's your chance to show him.

Dickie leans back in his chair and strokes his chin.

DICKIE

Winners, eh?

He snaps forward in his chair and shovels the contents of the plate into his mouth.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(mouth full)

I'll do it!

Dickie wipes his mouth with his sleeve, takes his plate to the sink.

Dickie Jr. shoots Babs a dying look.

BABS
(whispering to Dickie
Jr.)

I haven't had a moment's peace since
your father got home, and if I have
to throw you under the bus to make
that happen then so be it.

His mouth drops in horror.

BABS (cont'd)
(to Dickie Jr.)
Do your mother a little favor, would
you, dear?

His eyes narrow back at her.

DICKIE JR.
(whispering)
Alright, but you owe me, lady.

DICKIE
C'mon, Junior. Game time.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Dickie stands along the first base line, watching closely as
an eight-year-old pitcher throws the ball toward the plate.

The batter, KENNY, 8, turns away and winces as the ball
passes him by.

DICKIE
(calling out)
C'mon, keep your eye on the ball,
Kenny! It's not going to bite ya!

The pitcher throws again, Kenny turns away, and the ball
hits him in the back.

Kenny drops the bat and breaks out in tears as he shuffles
to first base.

DICKIE (cont'd)
(calling out)
Good eye, Kenny!
(to himself)
Jesus Christ.

Dickie looks down at his scorecard.

DICKIE (cont'd)
 (calling out)
 Junior! You're up!

He looks down the dugout bench, and all of the players are missing, including Dickie Jr.

Dickie walks behind the dugout and sees Dickie Jr. running in circles with his forehead holding a baseball bat to the ground.

The rest of the LITTLE LEAGUERS are circled around him, counting out loud.

LITTLE LEAGUERS
 Twenty-nine! Thirty!

Dickie Jr. crumples to the ground, dizzy, and the whole team cheers and laughs together.

DICKIE
 (to himself)
 Jesus Christ.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

Dickie's team is out on the field.

MUSTACHE KID, much bigger than the rest with hint of a mustache on his upper lip, steps up to the plate from the opposing team.

DICKIE
 (calling out to the
 other team's coach)
 Time out! Hey coach! Are you telling
 me this kid is eight years old?!

The OPPOSING COACH, stands up from the bench.

OPPOSING COACH
 He's a little big for his age, so
 what?!

DICKIE
 Big for his age, my ass! I can see
 that gorilla's mustache from here!

Not sure what to do, Mustache Kid drops his bat and turns toward his coach. His hairy lip quivers and he bursts into tears.

OPPOSING COACH

(to Dickie)

You see what you did?! Happy now?!

DICKIE

(to himself)

Jesus Christ.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

Dickie leans back against the fence, his team still out in the field.

An EAGER PARENT looks on as a small RUNTY KID stands at the plate, barely able to hold the bat.

Dickie turns to the parent.

DICKIE

Hey, twenty bucks the kid muffs it.

EAGER PARENT

That's my son.

DICKIE

Do you want the action or not?

The pitcher throws the ball. The runty kid swings and misses by a mile.

DICKIE (cont'd)

See? Told ya.

EAGER PARENT

You're a real piece of shit, you know that?

The parent bangs his hand against the fence and walks away.

DICKIE

(to himself)

Jesus Christ.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - LAST INNING

Dickie's team is down 3-2 with two out. Dickie's team is up-to-bat with a runner on third base.

The pitcher throws the ball, and the batter hits a ground ball that dribbles past the pitcher.

The base runner looks at Dickie, waiting for instructions.

DICKIE
 (to the base runner)
 Go! Go! Damn it! Go!

The kid takes off as fast as he can toward home plate.

The short stop fields the ball and throws it home to the catcher.

DICKIE (cont'd)
 (to the base runner)
 Slide! Slide! Head-first, goddamn it!

Despite the terrified look on his face, the kid reluctantly does what he is told, and dives head-first into home plate, where the catcher is waiting for him. Behind him, the teenage UMPIRE focuses on the play.

The runner's head launches straight into the groin of the catcher.

Both kids scream in pain and burst into tears, but the catcher manages to hold on to the ball.

UMPIRE
 You're out!

Dickie throws his hat down and stomps on it.

DICKIE
 Jesus fucking Christ!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - DAY

Dickie loads bags of bats and helmets into the back of his station wagon. Dickie Jr. is off to the side of the car playing with a yo-yo.

RON
 Hey, Coach! You got a second?
 Tough ballgame out there today.

DICKIE
 Yeah.

RON
 Tell me about it. We've all been there.
 (much louder so everyone can hear)
 Listen, big fan of yours. Not so much the illegal gambling, of course-

DICKIE

What can I do you for you, Ron? We've got a loser's pizza party to go to.

RON

Right. Right. I won't take up too much of your time.

Ron leans in closer.

RON (cont'd)

Now, this isn't coming from me, don't shoot the messenger here - like I said, I'm a huge fan of yours. It's the team sponsors - Dave from Dave's Hardware, Mac from Mac's Oil & Muffler, Frank from Frank's Finer Foods - those guys are the real honchos of the operation, and there's been a bit of an uproar about your coaching, tactics, and general presence around the ball field.

DICKIE

So?

RON

I know, right? What a bunch of babies. But they did decide that it would be best for everyone if you no longer participate in any more league activities.

DICKIE JR.

Does that mean I don't have to participate in any more league activities either?

DICKIE

(to Dickie Jr.)

Quiet, Junior! No one's talking to you.

(to Ron)

You're banning me? Is that what you're saying?

RON

In so many wor-

DICKIE

I ban myself first! Ha! There, I said it! I'm banned!

RON

Okay. But you and I could still hang out. We could go for a beer and swap stories about the major leagues-

DICKIE

You played in the majors?

RON

No, but you did. And you could tell me how to find a bookie and how to gamble without my wife finding out-

Dickie pokes Ron in the chest, backing him up a step.

DICKIE

You're barking up the wrong tree, friend.

(to Dickie Jr.)

Get in the car, Junior.

DICKIE JR.

Yay! Pizza time! Pizza time!

They both get in the car and drive off, leaving Ron in a cloud of dust.

EXT. DICKIE'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

The door swings open and Dickie stumbles out onto the porch.

Dickie Jr. jumps on a pogo stick in the driveway. He's not very good at it, but is clearly having fun.

BABS (O.S.)

(to Dickie)

Stay there and keep quiet until my stories are over!

(to Dickie Jr.)

Keep an eye on your father and make sure he doesn't get into any trouble.

DICKIE JR.

Okay, Mom.

DICKIE

(calling back to Babs)

You're raising our son to be a narc!

Dickie plops down on a patio swing and pouts.

He watches Dickie Jr. with his pogo stick and sighs.

DICKIE JR.
Dad, count my bounces!

Dickie Jr. gets on the pogo stick and immediately falls off.

DICKIE
We'll call that "one".

DICKIE JR.
Hey Dad, guess how many bounces the Guinness Book Record is?

DICKIE
What is that, a trick question?

DICKIE JR.
C'mon, Dad. Seriously. Give me your best guess.

DICKIE
I dunno, fifty-seven?

DICKIE JR.
206,864.

DICKIE
Sounds like you have a lot of practicing to do.

DICKIE JR.
I just want to beat my personal best.

DICKIE
How many is that?

DICKIE JR.
Two.

He tries again.

DICKIE
One. Two.

He falls off. Still having fun, he gets back on and tries again.

DICKIE (cont'd)
One. Two. Three.

He falls off again, this time smiling proudly.

DICKIE JR.
Hey, I got to three!

DICKIE

You gotta keep your weight centered.
It's all about balance.

Dickie Jr. tries to get back on the pogo stick in the most awkward way possible.

Dickie grabs it, stopping him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

No, no, no. Let me show you. You're making me crazy.

Dickie Jr. lets go and stands off to the side.

Dickie puts one foot on the pogo stick, ready to jump on.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(climbing onto the
pogo stick)

I had one of these when I was a kid.
You just gotta keep your weight-

Dickie immediately falls off.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(climbing onto the
pogo stick)

You just gotta keep-

He falls off again.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(climbing onto the
pogo stick)

You just-

He falls off again.

DICKIE JR.

Not so easy, is it?

DICKIE

Would you give me a minute? I'm getting my bearings here.

(mumbling to himself)

Stupid friggin' kid's toy.

Dickie tries one more time, and finally finds his balance, now bouncing with ease.

DICKIE (cont'd)

See? You just gotta keep your weight centered over the damn thing.

DICKIE JR.
Holy shit, Dad! You're a pogo genius!

BABS (O.S.)
(from inside the
house)
Language!

BILLY, 10, the kid from across the street, rides over on his bike, watching Dickie bounce up and down.

Billy's dad, GERALD, 42, rakes leaves in their front yard.

BILLY
Hey Mr. Koslowski, do you have my
five dollars?

DICKIE
(still bouncing)
Can't you see I'm bouncing here?

BILLY
Why?

For fun.	DICKIE JR.	DICKIE
		I dunno. To see how many I can do?

BILLY
Yeah well, a bet's a bet, Mr.
Koslowski.

DICKIE
C'mon, that tire slipped out of my
hand. How about double or nothing?

BILLY
What's your fancy?

DICKIE
I'll let you pick it.

BILLY
Okay. How about I bet you can't
bounce one hundred times in a row on
that thing without falling off.

GERALD
(calling out)
Billy, don't bet Mr. Koslowski to do
things! He has a sickness!

DICKIE
 (calling back)
 No I don't, Gerald!
 (to Billy)
 Pssh. That's easy money.

BILLY
 We'll see.

They shake hands, Dickie still bouncing on the pogo stick.

DICKIE
 (still bouncing)
 Junior, start counting.

CUT TO:

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - MINUTES LATER

Dickie continues to bounce on the pogo stick, only now he's showing off by jumping in circles around Billy.

DICKIE JR.
 (counting the bounces)
 Ninety-nine. One hundred. Dad, you did it!

DICKIE
 Boom! Feels good!

BILLY
 Pssh. You hustled a ten year old.
 Good for you.

DICKIE
 I'm just getting warmed up! Junior, how many did that world record guy do again?

DICKIE JR.
 206,864, and it took him twenty hours and thirteen minutes.

DICKIE
 You hear that, Billy? That's not even a full day!

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

A weary Dickie bounces on the same pogo stick, trying desperately to stay balanced and awake.

An official GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR watches closely, clicking a hand tally counter with each bounce.

Babs, Dickie Jr., Billy, and various people from the neighborhood, watch from the background, where large digital stopwatch reads "21:14".

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR
(looking down at the
counter)
We have a new world record!

Dickie raises his fists in victory, letting go of the pogo stick. He falls backward, landing on the grass, his fists still raised.

DICKIE
Junior! What else can we do?!

EXT. DICKIE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Dickie rolls a log with his feet, floating in his pool. Off to the side is the same adjudicator, holding a stopwatch.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR
(looking down at the
stopwatch)
We have a new world record!

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Wearing roller skates, Dickie jumps rope. The adjudicator clicks a hand tally counter with each jump.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR
(looking down at the
counter)
We have a new world record!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

The adjudicator looks down the street, then down at a stopwatch.

Dickie runs by, while simultaneously hula-hooping.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR
(looking down at the
stopwatch)
We have a new world record!

EXT. DICKIE'S FRONT YARD

Dickie Jr. tosses apples in the air toward Dickie, who slices them in half with a samurai sword. The adjudicator clicks a hand tally counter with each slice.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR
(looking down at the
counter)

We have a new world record!

Dickie and Dickie Jr. bow to each other and high-five.

INT. ESPN TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Television cameras roll on Dickie and sportscaster ROY GREENBERG, 38, a mouth full of white teeth poking out of an Italian suit, seated in chairs across from each other.

ROY

There are those who say, 'If "Shoeless Joe" Jackson had worn shoes, his name would be Dickie Koslowski.' What do you say to that, Dickie?

DICKIE

I would say I was a better hitter.

ROY

Really? That's it?

DICKIE

Technically, we both broke the rules and paid dearly for it, blah, blah, blah, even though I never did anything bad like fixing games. But that's all in the past for me now.

ROY

Two months ago.

DICKIE

Yeah. I've moved on to bigger and better things.

ROY

Right. About that. Let's talk about your new endeavor.

DICKIE

Yes, thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ARNOLD CESARIO, 39, *Lesiure Suit Larry* come-to-life, sits on a black leather couch wearing a velour tracksuit with a bowl of hot peppers in his lap.

Various framed certificates, photos, and plaques related to different Guinness Book records adorn the wall behind him. He closely watches Dickie's interview on TV, mechanically devouring the peppers and sweating profusely.

With each finished pepper he makes a tick mark in a notebook beside him.

One hand continues to shovel peppers into his mouth, and he picks up a cordless phone and dials with the other hand.

ARNOLD

(into phone)

Turn on ESPN. No, not the Wide World Of Sports. The cable channel. Yeah, you see him? That's the guy.

BACK TO:

INT. ESPN TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Roy looks down at his notes. Dickie leans back in his chair.

ROY

It says here you've managed to make or break over fifty Guinness World records.

DICKIE

I'm just getting started, Roy.

ROY

And how much have you gambled on it so far?

DICKIE

How much have you gambled on this interview?

ROY

I don't understand. Do you mean my reputation or-?

DICKIE

The stock market's a form of gambling, but no one ever asks about that, do they?

ROY

Not sure where you're going there, but I gotta tell you, I didn't know the Guinness Book was actually still a thing. Does anyone really pay attention to that anymore?

DICKIE

My son does. He's the one who encouraged me to get started with the whole thing.

ROY

And how old is your son?

DICKIE

He's eight.

ROY

(into the camera)

If you've just joined us, I'm here with Dickie Koslowski, former Chicago White Sox slugger now sadly reduced to entertaining eight-year olds like a down-and-out birthday clown.

Dickie sits up and leans forward toward Roy.

DICKIE

Hey, watch it-

ROY

Dickie, let's be honest - is this all just a desperate cry for attention now that you're out of the Major League spotlight?

DICKIE

Absolutely not. I am not just baseball. I am winning. You can take me out of baseball, but I'm still a winner, and all winning energy has to have an outlet. Every record I get is a victory to me, and it is mine until you come and get it.

ROY

Have you thought about channeling that "winning energy" into an apology to Major League Baseball and all the fans, so you could possibly become reinstated and eligible for the Hall Of Fame?

DICKIE

Why would I want to do that? Baseball is dead to me.

ROY

C'mon, Dickie. This is beneath you.

DICKIE

What do you want me to say? They can keep me out of the Hall Of Fame, but they can't keep me out of the Guinness Book.

ROY

(addressing the camera)

Well, there you have it. A defiant Dickie Koslowski, kicked out of Major League Baseball in disgrace, and now content, I guess, to fade away from our collective consciousness, where we can forget all of the hurt feelings, sadness, and disgust. And perhaps we should thank him for that.

(turning back to Dickie)

Thanks for being here tonight, Dickie.

DICKIE

Hold on, wait just a second. You don't get the last word. You know what? You'll see. I'll get the record for having the most records. After I'm done with it they'll have to call it *Dickie's Book Of World Records*. I'll have so many, you won't be able to forget me even if you wanted to!

Dickie tears off his microphone and stomps out of the studio.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

ARNOLD

Time to take our friend here down a notch. Pride goeth before a fall!

He slams the phone down, and stares a hole through the TV.

Pushing through the pain and sweat, breathing heavily, he chomps down even harder on each pepper. He shovels them in even faster, as his mouth expands into a maniacal grin.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

A crowd of onlookers and handful of TV reporters and cameramen gather around a section of the blocked off street.

All eyes are on Dickie, wearing a stars-and-stripes crash helmet, straddling the world's tiniest motorcycle.

Down the street next to an equally tiny ramp, stands the Guinness World Record Adjudicator.

Off to the other side of the ramp is Dickie Jr., ready to give his dad the "go" signal.

DICKIE JR.

(calling out)

Ready, Dad?!

His hands gripping the motorcycle handlebars, Dickie tries to respond with a hand signal, but his hands are somehow stuck to the grips.

He struggles to get his hands free and realizes he's also stuck to the tiny seat.

He stands up and tries to shake off the little idling motorcycle glued to his body.

Suddenly flames erupt from the gas tank, engulfing Dickie's upper body in a small, but still dangerous fireball.

Dickie Jr. runs to the house and brings back a garden hose. He sprays his dad down, extinguishing the fire.

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Through the still-broken window, Babs drives by on a riding mower as she cuts the grass.

Dickie slumps on the couch and flips through the channels on TV, his hands bandaged and face singed. He stops on *ESPN*, where *Sportscenter* is in-progress.

SPORTSCENTER ANCHOR #1 (ON TV)

And finally tonight, a cool taste of hubris for Dickie Koslowski, who defiantly vowed, in a recent interview with our own Roy Greenberg, to get more Guinness World Records than anyone else.

They show an amateur video clip of the accident.

SPORTSCENTER ANCHOR #1 (ON TV) (cont'd)

This is his most recent record attempt - the world's longest jump with the world's tiniest motorcycle.

SPORTSCENTER ANCHOR #2 (ON TV)

And instead he now has the record for world's toastiest balls.

Dickie turns off the TV and tosses the remote onto the coffee table in front of him.

DICKIE

(to himself)

Assholes.

The doorbell rings.

Dickie grumbles his way to the front door, and opens it.

INT. DICKIE'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH TIBBLES, 37, a beanpole of nervous energy in a crisp white shirt and suspenders, stands holding a large briefcase open displaying various kitchen cutlery.

Dickie leans back to close the door.

DICKIE

Not interested-

JOSEPH

That's what my mama said to my daddy, and nine months later I was born. Shake a hand, make a friend?

He extends his hand. Dickie doesn't shake, and holds up his bandaged hands.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Oh, right. Sorry about that. My name's Joseph. You can call me Joe, Joey, J.T., just don't call me late for dinner.

DICKIE

Dickie.

JOSEPH

Nice to meet you, sir.
(leaning in,
whispering)
I know what happened.

DICKIE

What? Who are you?

JOSEPH

Joseph Tibbles, sir. Door-to-door seller of fine cutlery. These knives right here? Best thing since cake and ice cream.
(leaning in,
whispering)
They're watching you.

Dickie cranes his head around Joseph, and looks down the street to the left, then to the right.

DICKIE

Listen Slim, I don't know what you're trying to pull with this mumbo jumbo sales pitch, but I've had about enough-

JOSEPH

Sir, you don't have to buy anything today, looks are free. Give me a minute of your time, and you can tell me to beat it like Michael Jackson.
(leaning in,
whispering)
It's about the records.

Dickie glares back at him.

DICKIE

Hmmph.

JOSEPH

Fantastic. Do you believe in miracles?

(MORE)

JOSEPH (cont'd)

I'll show you a steak knife cut straight through a soup can, and you can even keep the soup after.

Dickie ushers Joseph inside. He peeks his head out, quickly looks again down the street, and shuts the door.

INT. DICKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Joseph sets up his wares on the kitchen table, including a can of soup ready to pop open with a large chef's knife.

Impatient, Dickie crowds him and gets in his face.

JOSEPH

Do you have a bowl for all this soup? My mama raised me never to waste any food-

DICKIE

You need to start answering some questions. Who's watching me? How do you know about all this?

JOSEPH

I have to say you are the first person I've talked to that wasn't the least bit interested in seeing a can of soup get cut in half by the world's sharpest chef's knife. Do you want to go through life as that guy? I told you it's the best thing since cake and ice cream.

Dickie snatches a bowl from the cupboard and plunks it down onto the table. He steps back and crosses his arms.

DICKIE

Okay, fine. Show me the soup can bit.

Joseph proudly saws into the can with the blade, and the soup pours into the bowl.

JOSEPH

Paint me green and call me a pickle if that knife didn't just cut through that can like melted butter. Who's hungry for lunch?

DICKIE

That actually is pretty impressive.

JOSEPH

Why can't the bankrupt cowboy complain? He ain't got no beef. But these steak knives-

Dickie steps forward and gets back in his face.

DICKIE

No! Enough bullshit! Tell me what this is all about, or I'm going to cut your friggin' head off.

JOSEPH

Alright, alright, alright. The Guinness World Records...it's not what you think. It's a dark, dark, world, man. That incident you had with the cute little motorcycle? That was your warning.

DICKIE

Warning for what? What are you talking about?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. COME BACK INN RESTAURANT - DAY

A younger Joseph serves food to a table of smiling diners.

The restaurant is packed with people, and he works the happy crowd like a politician as he weaves through the room, waiting on other tables.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

My family owned a restaurant, "The Come Back Inn" (because that's what they wanted people to do), where I waited tables, hoping one day I'd get to run the place. Have some of my ideas in the kitchen, you know.

EXT. COME BACK INN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - DAY

We pan past a handful of local TV news crews where Joseph, with a giant napkin tucked into his collar, sits at a buffet table draped with a red-and-white checkerboard tablecloth.

In front of him, on an equally-giant plate, is the biggest hamburger you've ever seen, which he's halfway done eating.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

Besides waiting tables, I would also do certain things to help promote the restaurant. I know I don't look like much, but I can eat. I can eat a lot. So we had this idea where we could invite all the local media and stage these eating challenges, where I would eat giant versions of things we had on our menu.

MONTAGE - COME BACK INN RESTAURANT

- Man unbuttons his pants as he eats a giant ribeye steak.
- Kid eats giant ice cream sundae that's so big we can't see his head behind it.
- Woman is served a giant cheeseburger and can't figure out how to pick it up with her hands.

JOSEPH (V.O.) (cont'd)

A big selling point of our restaurant was our large portions, and this was a way to highlight that. The things I was eating got so big that we called the Guinness World Record people to see if we could drum up even more publicity out of it.

MONTAGE - JOSEPH'S GUINNESS WORLD RECORD PHOTOS

- Joseph holds up a plaque, his face covered in barbecue sauce, standing behind a plate piled high with rib bones.
- Joseph holds up a plaque with one hand, and picks corn out of his teeth with the other, standing behind a plate piled high with corn cobs.
- Joseph and an adjudicator share a wishbone, while Joseph holds up a plaque with his other hand, standing behind a stripped-clean Thanksgiving turkey.

JOSEPH (V.O.) (cont'd)

Unfortunately, that's also how I met Arnold.

INT. COME BACK INN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joseph winds his way through the busy dining room, checking in on tables, and stops at a lonely table for one.

Arnold sits back in his chair, arms crossed, a now-empty plate in front of him.

JOSEPH

Whoa! Where'd all that food go so fast? You got a wooden leg or something?

ARNOLD

What can I say? I'm a professional.

Joseph checks his watch.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

Fourteen minutes. I bet that's some kind of record.

JOSEPH

I mean...for the general public, yeah...I can do it in ten, but I work here so I'm not eligible.

ARNOLD

You don't say.

JOSEPH

But hey, everyone who manages to finish our signature 'Great Kodiak Cheeseburger' in under thirty minutes eats free, so hats off to you!

ARNOLD

Great! Then I guess I'll take the check please!

Joseph smiles and shoots him a knowing wink and finger gun. Arnold laughs a little too long and a little too loudly.

Still chuckling to himself, Arnold reaches for his wallet.

JOSEPH

Oh, sir...that's not necessary-

ARNOLD

No, I insist! I came here to give you a tip, so I am going to give you one.

Arnold stands up, pulls out a crisp bill from his wallet and folds it in his hand.

He stands toe-to-toe with Joseph, completely silent, and stares him in the face for a moment.

Unsure what to do, Joseph stares back, motionless.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

Take the tip, Joseph. Eating's my thing. Don't bite off more than you can chew.

Arnold tucks the folded bill into Joseph's shirt pocket. He pats him on the head and strolls out.

Joseph pulls the money out of his pocket and unfolds it.

INSERT - FIFTY DOLLAR BILL

With "STAY OUT OF THE GUINNESS BOOK OR ELSE!" written on it.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

To be honest, I paid more attention to the fifty dollar bill itself than what was written on it. People write goofy things on money all the time. Just like my six years in high school, I should have paid more attention.

EXT. COME BACK INN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - DAY

The same TV news crews point their cameras again toward Joseph, sitting behind the same table, flanked by a World Record adjudicator, surrounded by a crowd of onlookers.

In front of him is an enormous pile of chicken wings.

The adjudicator clicks a stopwatch, and Joseph tears into the wings. After just the first bite, he sweats profusely and his face twists in agony.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

The unfamiliar searing pain in my mouth told me something was wrong, but I scarfed up those wings like no tomorrow. I wasn't going to let my family down. Meemaw Cookie always said, "First we eat, then we do everything else."

Arnold steps out of the shadows, to the front of the crowd.

His lips curl into a sneer as Joseph's agony reflects back in his mirror sunglasses.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Joseph lays in a hospital bed, catatonic.

A doctor speaks in hushed tones to his parents, and his mother lets out a wail and bursts into tears. She buries her head into his father's chest as he comforts her.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

The doctor said the damage to my mouth parts was so severe, extreme eating of any kind could result in a fatal hemorrhage. Competitive eating was over for me. My diet would need to be simple, bland, and solely for sustenance for the rest of my life. To top it all off, I fell short of breaking the record of most chicken wings eaten in an hour by two wings...a record held to this day by Arnold Cesario, the same man who had visited me the week before.

BACK TO PRESENT

Dickie crosses his arms and cocks his head to one side.

DICKIE

Wait a second, aren't chicken wings supposed to be spicy?

JOSEPH

First of all, I like my wings savory barbecue. Second, why would I add a degree of difficulty on top of something already difficult? It's not the Chicken Wing Olympics. Those wings were tainted to send a message, just like your little motorcycle "mishap", and they were tainted by none other than Arnold or one of his cronies.

DICKIE

Sorry about your mouth, but you had a few spicy chicken wings. So what?

JOSEPH

You don't get it. I never attempted another record, I never did another eating challenge. Those were our bread and butter to promote the restaurant, and eventually without those, we had to close up. I never became a chef, and instead became the door-to-door purveyor you see today.

DICKIE

Is that a sad story?

JOSEPH

To some people it is.

DICKIE

So why come to my house and cry to me about it?

JOSEPH

Besides the fact that you seem like a man who can appreciate the value of superior cutlery, I don't want you to make the same mistake I did. These people hate competition, and will stop at nothing to eliminate it.

DICKIE

So, what then? Let's say I did back off and forgot all about the Guinness Book. What am I supposed to do then?

JOSEPH

Have you ever thought about a career in direct-to-consumer sales of fine kitchen products? You can make your own hours, and our company offers a very competitive benefits package-

DICKIE

Oh, no, no, no. That's not what we do here. I've had enough of people pushing me around and telling me what I can and can't do lately. Arnold thinks he can bully me? I've taken hundred mile-an-hour fastballs to the head. On purpose. I'm going to turn the tables for once on these sonsofbitches, and you're going to help me.

JOSEPH

Hey man, I don't have a dog in this fight. I'm just a messenger. And trying to make a living. But maybe if you made it worth my while...the Deluxe Cordon Bleu set, perhaps...?

Babs walks in through the back door, wiping her brow, Dickie Jr. right behind her. They spot the knives and light up.

DICKIE JR.
Sweet knives!

BABS
Ooh! Those are nice!

An expectant Joseph turns to Dickie.

DICKIE
(to Joseph)
Fine.
(to Babs)
Yup. Happy Birthday, Babs. This is my
new friend Joseph. We have to go.

Dickie grabs Joseph by the arm, and ushers him out.

JOSEPH
Joseph Tibbles, purveyor of fine
cutlery. Pleasure to meet you, the
lawn looks beautiful, ma'am!

INT. ARNOLD'S CAR DEALERSHIP - CONTINUOUS

Below a sign that reads "Arnold Cesario's World Record
Cadillac Chevrolet, Home Of The King Of The Guinness Book",
Dickie strolls through the double glass front doors, and
surveys the showroom.

All of the sales staff in offices that surround the showroom
see him and freeze.

Arnold strides out from a back office, and makes a beeline
straight for Dickie.

ARNOLD
Mr. Koslowski, is it? How can we
help you today?

DICKIE
Well, you see...I had this little
motorcycle, and it mysteriously burst
into flames.

ARNOLD
(mock concern)
Oh no!

DICKIE
And, unfortunately, it was my only
mode of transport.

ARNOLD
That is so sad.

DICKIE

Yeah. So here I am. Looking for a car.

ARNOLD

Are you looking for an equally tiny car? I'm afraid we don't sell those. You might want to check with the local clown college.

DICKIE

Nah, I was thinking more along the lines of one of those giant boats that ride so smooth I won't even feel it when I plow through someone who tries to fuck with me.

ARNOLD

Ahh, a Cadillac man. A man after my own heart. Let me show you the Fleetwood.

Arnold ushers Dickie over to the car, and holds the driver's side door open.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

Please.

Dickie slides behind the wheel and sinks down into the plush leather seat, staring straight ahead.

Arnold saunters over to the other side and eases into the passenger seat, matching Dickie's forward gaze.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

How long are we going to do this dance?

Dickie lights up a cigarette with the car's cigarette lighter, and takes a long drag.

DICKIE

(taking in the interior)

This is pretty nice.

ARNOLD

How'd you find me?

DICKIE

I got a tip from a cutlery salesman.

TIMOTHY, 28, a burly mechanic, appears through the passenger window.

His bald head and arms are completely covered in tattoos, and his face has more piercings than you'd think was humanly possible.

TIMOTHY

Everything okay here, Mr. Cesario?

ARNOLD

We're fine, Tim. Thank you. We're just about to go for a test drive.

Timothy scans Dickie, grunts, and withdraws out the window.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

World record for the most piercings in a human face, can you believe it?

Dickie puts out his cigarette in the ash tray.

DICKIE

Is that supposed to scare me? Tell Pinhead I'm sorry he didn't get enough love from daddy.

ARNOLD

How about we take the Fleetwood out for a spin, whatta ya say?

DICKIE

Sure, why not. Let's get nuts.

INT. ARNOLD'S CADILLAC FLEETWOOD - DAY

Dickie and Arnold cruise down a suburban street.

DICKIE

Did you do it?

ARNOLD

What if I did? The pertinent question is "*Did you get the message?*".

DICKIE

You must be a real big-shot.

ARNOLD

I'm King of the Guinness Book. Turn right here.

Dickie ignores him and drives straight ahead.

DICKIE

I'm still getting the feel of how this baby rides.

ARNOLD

You don't like being told what to do, do you.

DICKIE

Nope.

ARNOLD

Me either. Hey, are you hungry?

DICKIE

I could eat.

ARNOLD

Pull into that burger joint over there. You can't get the true feel of a car until you take it through the drive-through.

Dickie slows down and pulls into the restaurant entrance.

INT. ARNOLD'S CADILLAC FLEETWOOD - DAY

Parked in the parking lot, leaning back in their seats, Dickie and Arnold chow down on burgers and fries.

ARNOLD

1972. That's when I got my first record. A hot dog eating contest at the beach on Fourth of July. Once I knew I was the best in the world at something, I was hooked.

DICKIE

(mouth full of food)
I like winning.

ARNOLD

Why not just go down to the YMCA for some pick-up basketball?

DICKIE

My son really enjoys the Guinness Book.

ARNOLD

Have you ever thought about being a pitch man? A lot of former ballplayers do it when they retire.

DICKIE

You want me to come work for you?

ARNOLD

I was thinking of it as more of a partnership. You'd fit in very well with what World Record Cadillac Chevrolet is all about.

DICKIE

I never wanted to be known as a barker shilling another man's wares.

ARNOLD

I get it. You've got your heart set on the record. I can respect that.

Dickie takes another bite of his burger.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

The problem is only one of us can have it.

DICKIE

You want to compete? Let's do it fair and square.

ARNOLD

I compete the way I compete. If you don't like it you can always take your ball and go home.

Dickie takes a long sip from his oversized soda.

DICKIE

When I first got to the majors, there was this closer for the Pirates -- Ernie Skoog. Had a flamethrower of a fastball and a real nasty streak. The sonofabitch would throw at his own mother's head if he thought she was crowding the plate. Most guys were afraid of him, including me, and he knew it. He could smell it on you. It was the second game of a double-header, I wasn't crowding the plate, but I was a rookie so he thought he'd swing his big ol' dick and bean me just for being there.

ARNOLD

Isn't that the guy who went to jail for punching a police horse on St. Patrick's Day?

DICKIE

Yeah, that's the one. Anyway, when I came to, I dusted myself off and stood there for a second. I was okay. I looked back up toward the pitcher's mound and I didn't give a fuck what he did from then on. He couldn't stop me from getting on base after that.

Dickie slurps the rest of his soda, and turns toward Arnold.

DICKIE (cont'd)

I don't give a fuck about what you, tattoo face, the bearded lady, or any other freaks you've got crawling out of the woodwork try to do -- you can't stop me from getting that record for the most records.

Arnold leans back in his seat and finishes his soda. He rolls down the window and tosses out the empty cup.

ARNOLD

Let's head back.

Dickie starts the car and pulls out onto the road.

EXT. ARNOLD'S CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Dickie pulls into the dealership parking lot, and parks in an empty space.

DICKIE

I gotta say, I think I'm more of a Lincoln man.

As Dickie reaches for the door handle, Arnold locks the doors.

ARNOLD

Do you really think you're the first guy to come along with a pogo stick and a dream? Look around you. They don't call me the king for nothing. All of this is Guinness World Records. The dealership. My employees. My customers. This is my life. This is my livelihood.

Dickie claps him on the shoulder.

DICKIE

I'll tell you what -- just so there are no hard feelings, once I get the record you can use my name on your sign. It could be good to have a former ballplayer promote this place.

Dickie opens the door and leaves. Arnold stays in the car, motionless, staring out the front window.

INT. DICKIE'S CAR - HOURS LATER

Dickie parks in his driveway, and gets out, carrying some grocery shopping bags.

As he walks toward the house, he spots Arnold sitting on the porch with Dickie Jr., leafing through the Guinness Book together.

He drops the bags, and sprints toward Arnold.

DICKIE JR.

Dad! Dad! Mr. Cesario gave me an autographed copy of next year's Guinness Book! It's not even out yet!

Dickie throws a haymaker square into Arnold's jaw, knocking him to the ground.

DICKIE JR. (cont'd)

Dad! No!

Babs backs out the front door holding a serving tray with two glasses and a pitcher of lemonade.

BABS

(singing)

Who's thirsty for lemonade?

She turns around and screams in horror, seeing Dickie strangling a helpless Arnold around the neck.

DICKIE

Stay away from my family! I'll kill you!

She drops the tray, shattering it, spilling lemonade everywhere.

BABS

Dickie! What are you doing?!

She grabs Dickie by the shoulders and throws him off Arnold with super-human strength.

She helps a wobbly Arnold up to his feet.

BABS (cont'd)
I'm so sorry, Mr. Cesario. Are you okay?

ARNOLD
(rubbing his jaw)
I'll be fine, ma'am. Pleasure to meet you. You have a lovely home.

Dickie Jr. stares a hole through his dad.

DICKIE JR.
(to Dickie)
Why?! Why did you do that?! He was just showing me all his new records!

ARNOLD
(to Dickie Jr.)
Enjoy the book, son.

Staring at the ground, Dickie Jr. silently nods, and clutches the book to his chest.

Arnold backs away from the porch, staring back at Dickie, his bloodied mouth flashing a shit-eating grin.

ARNOLD (cont'd)
See you in the Guinness Book, Dick.

Dickie roars at him like a wounded bear.

DICKIE
I'm the goddamn king! Not you!

BABS
(to Dickie)
Have you lost your mind?! You're like some kind of rabid animal!

Across the street, Gerald looks over to see what all the ruckus is about.

GERALD
(calling out)
Everything okay over there?

DICKIE
Eat shit, Gerald!

GERALD

Okay then!

Gerald goes back to watering his flowers.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A hearing is in-session. On one side, a very-bandaged-up Arnold sits behind a table. On the other side is DICKIE'S LAWYER sitting behind a matching table next to Dickie.

ARNOLD'S LAWYER stands in front of the witness box, where the neighbor Gerald is in mid-testimony.

A hulking JUDGE sits behind the bench, leaning back in his chair and staring up at the ceiling.

GERALD

I was watering my flowers, minding my own business, when I heard a ruckus across the street. When I inquired to my neighbor the nature of said ruckus, I was told...to eat shit.

ARNOLD'S LAWYER

And, sir, is that neighbor here in the courtroom today?

GERALD

(pointing at Dickie)
Yes. That's him over there.

ARNOLD'S LAWYER

Let the record state the neighbor in question had been identified to be the defendant, Dickie Koslowski. Nothing further, your honor.

Arnold's lawyer sits down.

JUDGE

Alright, the witness may step down.

Gerald leaves the witness box and exits the court room.

DICKIE'S LAWYER

Excuse me, your honor? Do I get to cross-examine the witness or...?

JUDGE

No. Shut up.

The judge sighs and turns his attention toward Dickie.

JUDGE (cont'd)
Dickie fuckin' Koslowski.

DICKIE
Yeah?

JUDGE
You know how much money I lost when you assholes blew that 3-2 series lead against the Orioles? I was gonna get me a new boat. O-for-fucking-four that last game? Give me a break.

DICKIE
I had an off night. What can I say?

JUDGE
You know what I think? I think you threw the game, you degenerate piece of shit.

DICKIE
Everyone's entitled to their own opinion.

JUDGE
You know what else I think? Arnold Cesario is a pillar of our community.

Arnold turns toward Dickie and beams with pride.

JUDGE (cont'd)
All you ever did is take too many fastballs to the head and get kicked out of Major League Baseball. And then you go harass this man at one of his many places of business? Do you have any places of business? No, you don't. The mayor gave him the key to the goddamn city. Did you know that?

DICKIE
Yes. Yes I did know that.

JUDGE
You will not come within one hundred yards of this man. And you know what else? I don't like you doing the Guinness Book. It was perfectly fine, wholesome fun until you showed up. You should be ashamed of yourself. I'm hereby banning you from coming within one hundred yards of any Guinness World Record-related event.

DICKIE
You can't do that!

JUDGE
(leaning forward)
Tell me what I can't do again. Go
ahead. Tell me.

Dickie's lawyer quickly shakes his head at Dickie.

Dickie tightens his mouth and manages to keep it shut.

JUDGE (cont'd)
That's what I thought. Get the hell
out of here, and stay off my ESPN,
you bum! You owe me a fucking boat!

INT. DICKIE'S CAR - DAY

Dickie cruises down the highway and spots a gas station
across from a big box hardware store.

EXT. BIG BOX HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Dickie pushes a shopping cart full of empty gas cans out to
his car, whistling to himself.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Dickie fills each gas can, still whistling the same tune.

INT. DICKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Babs and Dickie Jr. sit around the kitchen table, waiting.

We hear the front door open and close.

DICKIE (O.S.)
Hey, hey, the Chinese buffet has
arrived! Come and get the moo-shu
pork while it's hot!

Dickie enters the kitchen carrying bags of Chinese take-out.

DICKIE
What's this all about? You guys got a
book club meeting or something.

He laughs at his own joke. Babs and Dickie Jr. stare at him.

BABS

Dickie, please sit down. We need to talk.

Dickie lays out the food onto the table. He opens the container of egg rolls and takes one out.

DICKIE JR.

Dad, could you please-

DICKIE

(gesturing with the
egg roll)

Do you mind if I eat while we do whatever this is? I'm starving and the egg rolls are gonna get cold.

Dickie goes to take a bite, and Babs snatches the egg roll out of his hand.

BABS

No. No eating.

DICKIE

Wow. Okay. Must be very serious.

BABS

(to Dickie Jr.)

See? I told you he'd think this is all just a big joke.

DICKIE JR.

(to Babs)

Take it easy, Mom. Let's give him a chance. Dad can do anything he sets his mind to, right Dad?

DICKIE

Uh, sure.

BABS

Hmmph.

DICKIE JR.

(to Babs)

Do you want to go first?

BABS

(to Dickie Jr.)

No, you go. I need to get my thoughts together.

DICKIE

Listen, before we get started I just want to say that court today was a big eye opener for me. A real wake-up call.

Babs and Dickie Jr. look at each other.

BABS

What happened in court today?

DICKIE

Well, I got a restraining order slapped against me. It sounds bad, but it's fine.

DICKIE JR.

Like chicken pox?

DICKIE

Yeah, kind of.

BABS

Don't teach our son that a restraining order is the same as a mostly-harmless childhood disease.

DICKIE

(to Dickie Jr.)

Your mom's right. It is very serious.

(to both of them)

Which ties in to what I'm trying to say: as I sat there, with the judge yelling at me, I thought, you know, punching people out on the front lawn...I don't want to be that guy.

BABS

Right...

DICKIE

So, that's it. What did you guys want to talk about?

BABS

Oh, uhh, we wanted to talk to you about how, ever since you got kicked out of baseball, you've been out of control with over-competitiveness to the point of tearing this family apart.

DICKIE JR.

Yeah, Dad. It's been really bad.

Dickie opens and inspects several of the food containers, checking which is which dish.

DICKIE

I completely agree! What did you have in mind to fix it? Personally, I think I could use a little help with that!

BABS

We were thinking church-

DICKIE JR.

-or a psychiatrist...if the Power of God doesn't work.

DICKIE

Why limit ourselves, and not try both? I always wanted to learn what makes myself tick and prostrating myself to a higher power could help me gain some much-needed humility.

BABS

Oh. Okay.

DICKIE JR.

Good for you, Dad.

(to Babs)

That was easy.

BABS

Yeah...

Dickie opens another Chinese food container.

Babs sniffs the air.

BABS (cont'd)

Do you smell that? Smells like gasoline.

DICKIE

What? I don't smell anything.

DICKIE JR.

(leaning toward
Dickie)

Yeah, Dad. I think it's you. It's really strong.

Dickie goes to the kitchen sink and turns on the faucet.

DICKIE
 (vigorously washing
 his hands)
 Oh, you know what? I did fill up the
 car on the way home. That must be it.

Dickie sits back down to eat again.

BABS
 I can still smell it. It's like it's
 soaked into your skin.

DICKIE
 That is so weird that I don't smell
 it, but I guess I should just go
 change my clothes!

Dickie gets up and marches out of the kitchen.

Dickie Jr. digs into the egg rolls.

BABS
 (to herself)
 Hmm.

DICKIE JR.
 (mouth full)
 Good egg rolls.

EXT. DICKIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dickie, clad in a ski mask and all in black, peers out from
 behind his garage, and looks left and right.

With the coast clear, he sneaks over to his parked station
 wagon, carrying a full gas can in each hand.

He loads the cans into the back carefully and quietly as he
 can, setting them neatly next to a bunch of identical cans.

JOSEPH (O.S.)
 (whispering)
 Dickie, don't do it, man.

DICKIE
 (whispering)
 Hey! Who's there? You don't know me.
 I've got a ski mask on.

Joseph crawls out from underneath a nearby bush.

JOSEPH

C'mon, man. I know this is your house.

DICKIE

Joseph? What are you doing here?

JOSEPH

Stopping you from making a big mistake.

DICKIE

What do you know about it?

JOSEPH

I knew you were going to do something stupid, and guess what, you're doing something stupid.

DICKIE

Yeah, well, you don't even know it's me, so...

JOSEPH

Hey, I know how it is. I wanted to get revenge against Arnold, too.

DICKIE

And this time someone has the balls to actually do something. I'm going to set a new World Record tonight - the biggest new car bonfire.

JOSEPH

You don't want to do that.

DICKIE

Why? He's not gonna be there so the restraining order isn't a problem.

JOSEPH

All he's going to do is collect the insurance money and you go to jail. Arnold's a sneaky bastard, so you best be clever. If the brute force approach always worked, a gorilla would be president.

DICKIE

What about *Planet Of The Apes*?

JOSEPH

Those are some next-level apes. You're acting like a primitive caveman ape. Hasn't even invented fire yet.

DICKIE

Oh yeah? This ape's got a trunk full of gasoline.

JOSEPH

The point is do you want to simply inconvenience the man and go to jail, or do you want to scar his ass for life and laugh about it over a cool lemonade when you get away with it?

DICKIE

I love me some lemonade, but what's the actual plan?

JOSEPH

Listen, you're not the only one who wants to give Arnold his just deserts -- I always wished I could get revenge against him, myself, for ruining our family restaurant. What if we joined forces against our common enemy? Something like this needs careful planning. You only get one shot at the king before he cuts your head off.

DICKIE

Okay, so we team up. I'm still not hearing any actionable ideas.

JOSEPH

Step one is go back inside your house and go to sleep.

DICKIE

Great plan.

JOSEPH

You need to be patient and not get kicked out of your house. Go back inside before your wife wakes up. I'll see you at church on Sunday.

DICKIE

How did you know I'm going to church?

JOSEPH

I'm in these neighborhoods, man. I get all the goings-on.

DICKIE

Well, I guess I'll just go back inside with my dick in my hand and call it a night.

JOSEPH

(unloading the gas cans)

And I'll take all this gas off your hands, if you don't mind. It's a little suspicious to have a horde of full gas cans laying around.

DICKIE

Leave me at least one. I gotta mow the lawn tomorrow.

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dickie rolls his garbage can past his car, down to the curb in his Sunday best.

Babs and Dickie Jr., also in their Sunday best, walk through the garage toward the car.

Billy rides up and stops behind Dickie's car.

BILLY

Hey Koslowski, you got a line on anything, chief? What's the action?

DICKIE

No more bets, Billy. Take a hike, would ya? I shouldn't even be talking to you.

Dickie looks back at Babs. She turns her head and narrows her eyes toward them.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(way too loudly)

You know, little boys like you shouldn't be gambling, especially on the Lord's Day! You should be getting ready for church!

BILLY
 (to Dickie)
 I don't know what your angle is here,
 man, but that's fucking pathetic.

Billy waves to Babs.

BILLY (cont'd)
 Hi, Mrs. K!

BABS
 Hello, Billy.
 (to Dickie)
 C'mon, Dickie get the lead out. Don't
 make me late for our first service.

BILLY
 Let me know when you get your nuts
 back from your old lady.

Billy rides off, cackling to himself.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - DAY

Various PARISHIONERS mill about after Sunday service.

Standing just outside the church door is Reverend VIRGIL
 SUGGS, 54, a gentle giant whose robes don't quite hide his
 thick neck covered in tattoos.

He warmly greets his flock as they exit the church. Babs and
 Dickie Jr. approach, with Dickie in tow.

BABS
 That was a wonderful sermon,
 Reverend.

VIRGIL
 It was lovely to have you and your
 family here with us today.
 (gesturing toward
 Dickie)
 This strapping young man here must be
 Dickie.

DICKIE
 (extending his hand)
 Uh, yes, sir. Nice to meet ya.

The two men shake, Virgil's meaty paw completely engulfing
 Dickie's hand.

VIRGIL

"...and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured."

Virgil pulls Dickie in closer.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

I know a man who's got demons when I see him.

Dickie pulls himself free, grimacing and massaging his hand.

DICKIE

Is that right?

VIRGIL

(to Babs & Dickie Jr.)

Has he got demons?

BABS

Yes, definitely.

DICKIE JR.

Yeah, kind of.

Suddenly, Virgil grabs Dickie in a bear hug, easily lifting him off the ground.

VIRGIL

The power of Christ compels you!

Dickie squirms in vain, until Virgil gently sets him down.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Did that do anything for you?

DICKIE

I think one of my ribs cracked.

VIRGIL

Ehh, it never really works like it does in the movies. But you know what's really great place for exorcising demons, though? The softball field. Our church league team could really use a ringer like yourself.

Dickie instinctively opens his mouth to respond, but catches himself and turns to Babs.

BABS

Oh, I dunno, Reverend. We're trying to avoid competition of any kind right now. For the sake of the family.

DICKIE

Right. Yup. What she said. My hands are tied.

VIRGIL

Of course, of course. But the good book says sometimes one must confront one's demons head-on.

DICKIE JR.

Does it say that, though?

VIRGIL

I'm sure it does somewhere.

Dickie surveys the flock gathering on the church lawn, and spots Joseph, talking to an elderly couple.

Joseph meets his gaze and waves him over.

DICKIE

I gotta go say hello to someone.

Dickie ambles over toward Joseph.

VIRGIL

(calling out to him)

When you're ready to expel those demons Dickie Koslowski, you know where to find me!

EXT. SOUTH SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Joseph waves goodbye to the couple and turns to Dickie.

JOSEPH

(still waving)

That old timer is going to cut his fingers clean off, God love him.

DICKIE

You never stop working it, do you?

JOSEPH

On the seventh day He rested, but not me. Call me Larry Flynt cuz I'm a hustler, baby.

DICKIE

Right.

JOSEPH

Besides, every new customer is also a new friend, and every friend can be a new customer. It's a beautiful duality of commerce and camaraderie.

DICKIE

That's wonderful. How about the beautiful duality of tearing our mutual friend a new matching asshole? What's your brilliant plan for that?

JOSEPH

The only plan on Sunday is God's plan, but I do have an idea you might like - we're going into the chicken business.

DICKIE

What do I know about raising chickens?

JOSEPH

Restaurant. Chicken restaurant. Maybe even a whole chain of 'em.

DICKIE

I should've held on to that gasoline.

JOSEPH

Don't worry, we're still going to burn something of his, alright.

DICKIE

What? The roof of his mouth? C'mon man, how're we going to get Arnold?

JOSEPH

(whispering)

Shhh! Keep your voice down! Arnold's got friends everywhere. You never know who's listening.

A NEARBY PARISHIONER overhears them, and turns around.

NEARBY PARISHIONER

Say fellas, are you guys talking about Arnold Cesario?

Dickie and Joseph exchange a look.

DICKIE

Uhh, yeah, I was just telling my friend here about the deal he gave me on my new Eldorado.

He claps Dickie on the back of the shoulder.

NEARBY PARISHIONER

Oh yeah! Hell of a car.

DICKIE

Yup, sure is.

JOSEPH

Yup.

NEARBY PARISHIONER

Alright then. God be with you!

The parishioner turns back to his people.

JOSEPH

See what I mean? Look, I promised we'd put a world of hurt on the man, so on God's day of all days, have some faith that we'll do just that. You know that strip mall out on River Road?

DICKIE

Yeah, that's where I get my hair cut.

JOSEPH

Look for the vacant restaurant spot. That's where we're gonna be. Meet me there this afternoon.

DICKIE

(feeling the back of head)

Maybe I'll go in for trim so at least it won't be a total loss.

JOSEPH

You do that. Well, I best be moving on, and rub a few more elbows. Lots of silver flatware to be sold amongst the faithful. Peace be with you!

Joseph leaves and approaches a young newlywed couple.

Babs and Dickie Jr. walk up.

BABS

Was that the nice young man who sold us the knives?

DICKIE

Yup. Apparently we're going into business together.

BABS

That is just wonderful. I knew church would set you on the right track.

DICKIE

I do need something productive to occupy my time, after all.

Dickie Jr. proudly claps his dad on the shoulder.

DICKIE JR.

I'm proud of you, Dad.

DICKIE

Thanks, son.

INT. VACANT STRIP MALL RESTAURANT - DAY

Painting tarps cover all of the tables and chairs. Kitchen appliances are strewn about the space, wrapped in plastic.

Dickie enters through the front door.

DICKIE

(looking around)

Hello?

Joseph jumps out from behind a refrigerator, wearing a chef's hat and wielding a large cleaver.

JOSEPH

Ah ha! Gotcha!

Startled, Dickie clutches his chest and stumbles back a couple steps before catching his breath.

Joseph doubles over laughing.

DICKIE

Jesus Christ! You almost gave me a heart attack! Is that the plan? We're going to scare him to death?

JOSEPH

(still laughing)

Oh my god, you should've seen your face!

DICKIE

You lure me out to an old Pizza Hut with promises of revenge just to shoot some *America's Funniest Home Videos* bullshit? That's low, man. I'm getting more gas cans and doing this my own way.

Dickie turns to walk out.

JOSEPH

No, wait! The camera is part of the plan, but it's not what you think!

DICKIE

What is it then? You're killing me.

JOSEPH

Arnold will suffer a most public humiliation, where he cries like a baby in your very own establishment, and through the miracle of modern consumer-grade video we will document it all to expose him as a fraud.

DICKIE

So we're going to put him on *America's Funniest Home Videos*...

JOSEPH

Not quite, but did you ever see the one where the kids tricked the grandpa into eating that hot pepper?

DICKIE

That's a classic! His face was so red and then he fell over, grabbing for the glass of water!

JOSEPH

It'll be like that, but instead of a hot pepper, it'll be the spiciest chicken ever created, hottest in the world, on the menu in this...our... chicken restaurant. And instead of falling over, his taste buds will be literally melted off.

DICKIE

Okay, but where do we get this magic chicken, Rumpelstiltskin?

JOSEPH

You best watch your mouth before guessing my name because I've made it my life's work, studying and perfecting a family hot sauce recipe so hot it'll ruin your life.

Joseph pulls out a plain, nondescript jar out of his pocket, full of a red sauce that looks like it could be glowing.

DICKIE

C'mon, seriously? How hot could that be?

JOSEPH

Oh, you wanna try it?

DICKIE

I mean, I think I should. There's a lot riding on that sauce being legit.

JOSEPH

Don't say I didn't warn you.

Joseph opens the jar, dips a toothpick into the sauce, and carefully hands it to Dickie.

Dickie snatches the toothpick and slides it into his mouth.

The wry smile from Dickie's face disappears almost immediately, as his face turns bright red and sweat rolls down on his forehead.

DICKIE

Make it stop! Make it stop!

JOSEPH

It can't be stopped. You just have to let it run its course.

Dickie doubles over, his hands on his knees.

DICKIE

Oh my god! This is gonna burn right through me!

Joseph sighs.

JOSEPH

Can I finish telling you the plan?

Dickie recomposes himself the best he can, still suffering.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Now, we have the chicken. Here's where the camera comes in: we get this whole debacle on tape, and when we broadcast it to the world, his so-called "King of the Guinness Book" status will, no doubt, be called into question.

Dickie wipes the sweat from his brow, and takes a deep breath. He looks out the front window, off into the distance, as the gears turn in his head.

He suddenly bursts into maniacal laughter.

DICKIE

How can he still be the king if he can't finish a measly chicken wing? He'll be a laughingstock! He'll be ruined...or have to change all of his signage at the very least! Maybe even get run out of town, with no taste buds to boot!

Joseph crosses his arms, and leans back, pleased.

DICKIE (cont'd)

There's just one problem: they tricked the grandpa by telling him it was candy. How are we supposed to trick that slippery bastard into coming in here and eating your super hot chicken?

JOSEPH

That's easy. What do people like most in whole world?

DICKIE

I get it, "sex sells", but we can't have strippers in here. Babs would murder me.

JOSEPH

Get your brain outta the gutter, man, this is a family place. I'm talking about free stuff. We say, "If you can finish our world's hottest wings, you eat for free."

DICKIE

So, you think that Arnold is going to come out here, sniffing around for a free meal on my dime, unable to resist a world record challenge?

JOSEPH

That's how we get him.

DICKIE

Could work. Might work.

Dickie paces back and forth, muttering to himself. He turns back to Joseph.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Let's hold the phone for a minute. This is all well and good, but what do you really need me for? You picked out this spot and you've got the chicken recipe. Surely you're not including me in this little conspiracy out of the goodness of your heart.

JOSEPH

Like I told you, I'm a businessman, and I see a potential for mutual benefit. First of all, I'm a door-to-door cutlery salesman, man. I don't have the money for this. I need an investor. And more importantly, I need some name recognition. Ain't no one coming down to Joseph's Hot Chicken Shack, but people, especially certain people, just might turn out for Dickie Koslowski's World's Hottest Chicken Spot.

DICKIE

Yeah...that rat bastard won't be able to resist coming down here just to stick it to me.

JOSEPH

Would you be able to, if the tables were turned?

DICKIE

Hell no. That's exactly what I'd do. We'll have to work on that name, though.

JOSEPH

Whatever you want. You can have your
revenge, and I can have my dream of a
chain of hot chicken restaurants.

Dickie turns and looks off through the window again.

DICKIE

(still looking out
the window)

Let's do this damn thing.

Dickie turns back and thrusts out his hand, and the two men
shake on it.

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Babs and Dickie Jr. relax on the couch, watching TV.

DICKIE (O.S.)

It's 3:10! My commercial is on! Turn
to channel seven!

Dickie darts in and snatches the remote off the coffee
table.

BABS

Hey, we were watching that!

DICKIE

I'll change it back in a minute!

Dickie changes the channel, where a commercial comes on:

ON TELEVISION

A stereotypical grandmother in a muumuu and curlers stands
at a stove, frying chicken in a pan.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Tired of your mama's old chicken?

BACK TO SCENE

DICKIE JR.

What's wrong with Mom's chicken?

Dickie shushes him.

INSERT TV COMMERCIAL

A cartoon boxing glove flies and punches her in the face,
sending her flying out of the scene.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Bored to tears with the Colonel's
 herbs and spices?

A Colonel Sanders look-a-like stirs a bowl.

The same boxing glove flies in and punches the Colonel in the face. Cartoon tears stream down his face, and he cries like a baby.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Then come on down to Dickie's World
 Record Hot Chicken Spot, where our
 chicken will knock your ass out...
 with flavor!

Close-up of steaming platter of chicken wings.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 And for those of you who think you
 can take the heat, try Dickie's World
 Record Wing Platter, slathered with a
 wicked sauces so oppressively hot we
 had to call it "The Man". Don't
 believe us? Don't take our word for
 it. If you can finish the whole plate
 without crying uncle your entire meal
 is free!

Close-up of Dickie's World Record Hot Chicken Spot logo.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Are you ready to meet "The Man"? Get
 your affairs in order and roll out,
 down to Dickie's World Record Hot
 Chicken Spot.

Dickie leans in from the side, superimposed on top of the image, and gives the camera a thumbs up.

DICKIE (ON TV)
 And tell 'em Dickie sent you!

INT. DICKIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

BACK TO SCENE

Dickie stands in front of the TV and turns back to them.

DICKIE
 So, what'd you think?

BABS
Seems very hostile.

DICKIE
Ehh, I like to call it "playfully
challenging".

BABS
I don't get it. Why chicken?

DICKIE
Why not chicken? It's delicious.

DICKIE JR.
(to Babs)
It is pretty delicious.

BABS
When you said you were starting a
business, I thought maybe you'd open
a nice, calm, respectable sporting
goods store or something like that.
You're not exactly the Ray Kroc type.

DICKIE
(to Dickie Jr.)
More like Ronald McDonald, am I right
son?

(to Babs)
I'm sure you never thought I'd be the
church-going type, either, but here I
am, baby. There's nothing wrong with
starting a humble chicken restaurant,
is there?

BABS
No, as long as it's for the right
reasons.

DICKIE
Fast food is the backbone of American
entrepreneurship. I also need to
occupy my time between Sundays, so
what's better reason than that?

BABS
My concern is this turning into yet
another over-competitive thing,
especially involving Arnold Cesario.

DICKIE

Just because this could be a way around that stupid restraining order doesn't mean this has anything to do with Arnold Cesario.

BABS

Dickie Koslowski, if you get thrown in jail over this, I swear to God...

DICKIE

Don't worry, no one is going to jail.
(to Dickie Jr.)
I'm not going to jail.

Babs crosses her arms and stares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)

I've got no hard feelings about the whole thing. It's a free country. If Arnold wants to come down and get his tastebuds melted off trying to get a free meal, he is more than welcome.

BABS

Uh huh. But you would enjoy that, wouldn't you?

DICKIE

I think I would enjoy that happening to anyone who thinks they can just waltz in and get a free meal.

BABS

Sadism isn't a good reason to start a business.

DICKIE

That's exactly what they told Henry Ford, and look at us now...having a good ol' time out on the open road, going to drive-in movie theaters and the like.

BABS

Wasn't the automobile invented in Germany-

DICKIE

Well, all this talk is making me hungry. Would anyone be interested in following me into the kitchen some delicious samples from Dickie's World Record Hot Chicken Spot?

DICKIE JR.
I knew I smelled something good.
Knock our ass out with flavor, Dad!

BABS
Language!

DICKIE JR.
What? The commercial said it.

DICKIE
Yeah, Babs. The commercial said it.

Babs grumbles as Dickie leads them into the kitchen.

INT. DICKIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Several different boxes of chicken, indicating their spiciness, are laid out on the table.

Dickie Jr. reaches for a box with The Grim Reaper on it, labeled "The Man".

DICKIE JR.
Ooh, I want to meet "The Man"!

Dickie snatches the box from him.

DICKIE
Easy, son. Not so fast. This is serious stuff. Smell it first. You'll know what I'm talking about.

Dickie opens the box and presents it to them.

DICKIE (cont'd)
Behold!

Dickie Jr. and Babs lean in, and both recoil back.

DICKIE JR.
Whoa! It burns my eyes!

BABS
Oh my god! What on Earth?!

DICKIE
See, I told you. I watched Joseph making it, putting all kinds of weirdo chili peppers in there, wearing gloves and safety goggles. You don't want that in your mouth.

BABS
 (rubbing her eyes)
 My Lord, what kind of sick person
 would enjoy that?

DICKIE
 It's enjoyable like climbing Mount
 Everest is enjoyable -- it's not fun
 but you have a sense of
 accomplishment at the end of it. If
 you want to enjoy your food, you can
 try the mild, medium, or tangy sweet.

Dickie Jr. pokes around the other boxes to investigate.

BABS
 I certainly could've done without
 that. Why would you bring such a vile
 thing into this house?

DICKIE
 I was proud of it and wanted to show
 you guys the cool box and everything,
 and give you a hint of what's in
 store for these poor saps who think
 they have what it takes.

BABS
 Well, get rid of it. It's awfully
 unpleasant.

Dickie takes the offending box and goes out to the garage.

DICKIE
 (mumbling to himself)
 It's supposed to be unpleasant.

He throws the box in the garbage can and kicks the lid shut.

INT. DICKIE'S WORLD RECORD HOT CHICKEN SPOT - DAY

Dickie peeks out the front window through the blinds, while
 Joseph cooks back in the kitchen.

JOSEPH
 Any sign of him yet?

DICKIE
 Not yet. How's that sauce coming?

JOSEPH
 Oh, it's killer, man!

INSERT - JOSEPH'S HANDS

pouring the contents of a small vial with a skull and crossbones on it into a saucepan.

BACK TO SCENE

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Hey, you better step away from that window. If he sees you, you're gonna spook him. You can't come within a hundred feet of the man, remember? Didn't you bring a disguise?

DICKIE

Yes, thank you, I remember. And no, we never talked about disguises.

JOSEPH

You're a grown man, I assumed you knew you needed a disguise for this.

DICKIE

What about you? Where's your disguise?

JOSEPH

I don't need one, I'll be in the back cooking, fool!

DICKIE

Calm down, already! Let me just run down to the year-round Halloween store really quick.

JOSEPH

You better hurry your ass up. It's almost lunch time.

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dickie Jr. rides his bike in circles around the parked station wagon.

Babs walks to the end of the driveway, carrying a bag of garbage to put in the curb-side garbage can.

She opens the lid and gasps.

INSERT - INSIDE OF GARBAGE CAN

a dead raccoon lays on top of a torn-open garbage bag, next to the half-eaten box of chicken that Dickie threw out.

BACK TO SCENE

Babs stuffs the garbage bag into the can on top of the raccoon and slams the lid shut.

BABS
Junior, get in the car.

DICKIE JR.
What's wrong?

BABS
Your sonofabitch father made some
real bad chicken.

DICKIE JR.
Aww, man. I knew it was too good to
be true.

Dickie Jr. drops his bike in the driveway, and they both jump into the station wagon.

The car starts up, lurches backward out of the driveway, and speeds down the street.

INT. DICKIE'S WORLD RECORD HOT CHICKEN SPOT

Dickie struts back and forth, modeling his new ensemble for Joseph - a long-haired wig, beard, and sunglasses.

DICKIE
(in vague Texas
accent)
What do you think of this?
(singing)
*Every girl's crazy 'bout a sharp-
dressed man...a-haw, haw, haw...*

JOSEPH
Sure. ZZ Top works here. Why not.

A shadow approaches the front door.

JOSEPH (cont'd)
Someone's coming! Showtime!

Joseph scurries back into the kitchen.

A shadow approaches the front door.

The door swings open, and it's Gerald.

GERALD
You fellas open?

DICKIE
(sighing)
Yes...

Gerald plops down in an empty booth.

Dickie brings him a menu.

GERALD
(pointing to a
picture of Dickie on
the menu)
Hey, you know I live across the
street from this guy? Can I get the
neighbor's discount?

Gerald chuckles at his own joke.

DICKIE
Nah, man, but how about a platter of
our World Record Hot Wings? If you
can manage to finish the whole plate,
it's free!

GERALD
(perusing the menu)
No, sir. Spicy food gives me the
runs. Let me take a look at what else
you have.

DICKIE
Sure. Whatever. Take your time.

Dickie goes to wipe down another table.

The front door cracks open, and Arnold peeks his head in and
looks toward Dickie.

ARNOLD
Is he here?

DICKIE
Who, man?

ARNOLD
Your boss. The owner. He can't be
here if I'm here. That's the law.

DICKIE
Nah, man. He's not here. He's just
like a figurehead or something, man.

ARNOLD

Cool. Cool. Let's get ourselves a free lunch, Tim.

Arnold strolls in, followed by his man Timothy.

Dickie ushers them into a booth, and gives them each a menu.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

We already know what we want. We want to "meet The Man".

DICKIE

Are you sure, dude? I'll tell you what, it's awfully goddang hot.

ARNOLD

We know what we're doing. We're professionals.

DICKIE

Alright, man. You got it.
(calling back to the kitchen)

Two World Record Wing Platters, coming up!

He goes back to the kitchen and returns with two steaming platters of chicken wings, along with a video camera.

He serves the chicken to the two men, and starts filming.

ARNOLD

Say friend, what's with the camera?

DICKIE

Don't mind me, enjoy your lunch. This is for them Guinness Book fellers. I reckon if you send them this tape, you could get your name in their crazy book.

Arnold gives a knowing look to Tim, and then back to Dickie.

ARNOLD

Sure. I reckon we might.

Babs and Dickie Jr. burst in through the front door, right behind a man about to take a bite of chicken-

DICKIE JR.

Look, Mom! There he is!

BABS
Mr. Cesario! Don't eat-

The man turns around, and it's Gerald.

GERALD
(mouth full)
Oh, hey Babs. Chicken's not bad!

BABS
Shut up, Gerald!

Babs scans the restaurant, spots Arnold, and darts over to his table with Dickie Jr. right behind her.

Arnold picks up a chicken wing and opens his mouth-

BABS (cont'd)
Arnold! Don't eat that!

ARNOLD
Why? You afraid I'm gonna get a free lunch off of your dumbass husband?

DICKIE
(dropping the accent)
Goddamn it, how'd you know it was me?

ARNOLD
What?

Dickie pulls off his beard and sunglasses.

DICKIE
How did you know it was me?

Arnold bursts into laughter, and Timothy follows suit.

ARNOLD
Are you fucking kidding me? This is your place, right? That's what I meant.

DICKIE
Ohhhh. I get it now...

ARNOLD
Idiot.
(to Babs)
Besides having fake beard hair in it, why can't I eat this no-doubt-weak-ass chicken?

BABS
It's poisoned!

DICKIE
What? It's not poisoned. You don't know what you're talking about.

BABS
Would you take off that ridiculous wig? It's very unsettling.

Dickie tears off the wig.

BABS (cont'd)
A raccoon got into the trash and ate that chicken you threw out.

DICKIE
So what?

BABS
It was dead on top of the garbage!

DICKIE
A raccoon eats super spicy hot chicken, what else would you expect? They're not supposed to eat that.

DICKIE JR.
That's true, Mom...

ARNOLD
First you violate the restraining order, and now you try to kill me? You're a dead man, Koslowski-

Joseph strides out of the kitchen, beelining toward Arnold.

JOSEPH
How'd you like the chicken, bitch?! Was it spicy enough-?!

Everyone stares back at him. Joseph takes in the scene and notices he hasn't taken a bite.

JOSEPH (cont'd)
Oh, he didn't eat it yet.
(to Arnold)
What's the problem? Why didn't you eat the chicken?

ARNOLD
She told me not to.

BABS
It's poisoned!

DICKIE
It is not! Do you know how stupid you sound right now?

JOSEPH
(to Dickie)
How did she-? What did you tell her?

DICKIE
I didn't tell her anything! What would I tell her?

ARNOLD
(to Joseph)
Hey, do I know you? You look familiar...

BABS
Dickie Koslowski, how could you?!

DICKIE
What did I do? I wasn't hiding anything from you! It's just really super spicy hot chicken! Honest!

She stares back at him.

DICKIE (cont'd)
Okay, I was hiding something. But I wasn't trying to kill anyone. It's just so spicy that it will literally melt off your taste buds. That's all.

Dickie grabs a wing off of Arnold's plate.

DICKIE (cont'd)
But since you're so suspicious, just to prove how wrong you are, I'll take one for the team and have one myself-

Dickie leans in to take a bite, and Joseph slaps the wing out of his hand.

JOSEPH
Are you crazy?! Don't eat that!

DICKIE
Why?

JOSEPH
It's poisoned, you fool!

BABS
You son of a bitch!

Babs socks Dickie square in the jaw, knocking him back.

DICKIE
(massaging his jaw)
Ow! Goddamn it! Have you all lost your minds? All I wanted to do was melt his taste buds off and ruin his reputation as King of the Guinness Book for sabotaging my mini motorcycle.

Everyone silently looks away from Dickie.

DICKIE (cont'd)
Oh, come on!

ARNOLD
First of all, that's physically impossible. You can't melt someone's taste buds off with hot chicken.

JOSEPH
Oh, you think so, do you?!

Joseph opens his mouth wide and sticks out his tongue, for all to see. It's a nightmare of scars from old blisters and sores, his tongue bleached a blotchy pink-white.

JOSEPH (cont'd)
(still with his mouth wide open)
Look at it! Look at it!

Everyone looks and recoils away in disgust.

ARNOLD
Yeesh. That...is nasty.
(to Dickie)
Okay, well...second, I didn't sabotage your motorcycle.

DICKIE
Bullshit! You knew I was coming for your records, so you wanted to make sure I wasn't going to be a threat!

ARNOLD
That may be, but why would I rig a motorcycle when the ramp may or may not have already been rigged to explode when you ran over it?

DICKIE

Well, if it wasn't you, then who else would want to do that to me?

Everyone except Joseph looks up at the ceiling and ponders for a moment.

All heads slowly turn toward Joseph.

JOSEPH

Okay! I admit it! It was me all along! How else was a humble cutlery salesman going to avenge his family honor?! I needed to recruit your help through a common enemy!

DICKIE JR.

Diabolical!

DICKIE

Son of a bitch!

BABS

I'm still confused. Did the raccoon eat poison chicken or not?

JOSEPH

(pointing to Arnold)

The only chicken I ever poisoned was his. I would never poison a raccoon. I'm not a psychopath.

ARNOLD

(to Joseph)

Oh yeah, now I remember...you're that lightweight kid who came after my chicken wing record a few years back. What was your name again? Jimmy? Johnny?

JOSEPH

Joseph! Joseph Tibbles! Eat it! Eat the chicken!

Joseph lunges over the table and tries to force-feed Arnold the tainted chicken.

Timothy intercepts Joseph, lifts him up by the shirt, and slams him to the ground.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Noooo!!! Forgive me, Daddy!!!

EXT. DICKIE'S WORLD RECORD HOT CHICKEN SPOT - LATER

Two POLICE OFFICERS escort a handcuffed Joseph toward a squad car.

Just outside the front door of the restaurant Arnold faces Dickie. Babs and Dickie Jr. stand off to the side.

ARNOLD

I'm cutting you a break this time, Koslowski. I don't want to embarrass you in front of your lady. But if you come within a hundred feet of me again, you're going down.

Timothy pulls up in a brand new Cadillac. Arnold opens the passenger door and slides down into the plush leather seats.

Arnold gives a flirty wave to Babs, and the car pulls away.

Dickie turns back to Babs and Dickie Jr., and approaches putting on his best face.

DICKIE

Phew! Dodged a bullet there, boy! It wouldn't have looked too good if the guy who has a restraining order against me died in my own restaurant.

Babs glares back at Dickie, while Dickie Jr. looks away.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(to Dickie Jr.)

Hey, c'mon buddy, it's all good... your dad didn't accidentally kill your guy Arnold Cesario, so that's cool, right?

DICKIE JR.

Everything you touch turns to shit! Fucking pathetic!

DICKIE

Whoa, whoa, whoa, partner-

DICKIE JR.

(to Babs)

I'll go wait in the car.

Dickie Jr. trudges off, head down.

Dickie shoots a helpless look to Babs.

DICKIE

Uh, "language"?

BABS

No. You don't get to say that.
Especially when he's absolutely
right.

DICKIE

Okay, I'll talk to him-

Dickie takes a step, and Babs pokes him in the chest.

BABS

No. That's it. You're done.

DICKIE

Hold on just a second-

Babs pokes him in the chest again, pushing him back a step.

BABS

No. And I want a divorce.

Babs spits at Dickie's feet and stomps off. Dickie winces,
rubbing his chest.

Gerald strolls over to Dickie.

GERALD

Back in the doghouse, eh Koslowski?

Gerald chuckles to himself. Dickie's face reddens, still
watching Babs walk away.

GERALD (cont'd)

Listen, in all the hubbub I didn't
get to finish my meal. Any chance I
could get store credit or something?

Every muscle in Dickie's body tenses up.

DICKIE

Gerald, you need to get out of here
before I snap your fucking neck.

Gerald scowls and scurries away. Dickie plops himself down
on the curb, his head in his hands.

EXT. FUNWAY FAMILY FUN CENTER - BATTING CAGES - DAY

Wearing a cutoff sweatshirt with horses on it, Virgil bats in one of the many cages. He swings as hard as he can at each pitch, and whiffs every time.

On the last ball, he finally connects and crushes it.

VIRGIL

Hell yeah! That's what I'm talking about!

He wipes the sweat pouring down his face, and looks around to see if anyone was watching. No one is.

He notices a crowd gathering around one of the other cages.

Over the murmuring of the crowd, he hears the pitching machine pitch a ball followed by a thunk that isn't a bat.

Another ball. Thunk. Another ball. Thunk.

Virgil leaves his cage, and maneuvers through the crowd. He sees Dickie standing at bat, every pitch hitting him in the helmet.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Dickie! What're you doing, man?!

DICKIE

I thought it might be nice to take some baseballs to the head.

Virgil drops his bat, goes over to Dickie's cage. He yanks him out of the batter's box.

VIRGIL

That's it! Show's over, folks! You should be ashamed of delighting in another man's self-flagellation!

The crowd boos.

DICKIE

"Self-flagellation"?

VIRGIL

You're taking balls to the head, man. Most people use a bat.

DICKIE

Any hack can do that. Besides, those pitching machines are bush league. I can barely feel-

Dickie's knees buckle under him, and Virgil catches him just before he crumples to the ground.

DICKIE (cont'd)
Whew! Whoops-a-daisy.

Virgil throws one of Dickie's arms over his shoulders, and ushers him out.

DICKIE (cont'd)
I came here to feel like a winner again, but instead I feel like a complete loser.

Some remaining ONLOOKERS stare at Dickie and get in his face as they walk by.

Dickie hallucinates and sees them as the Fruit Of The Loom gang.

ONLOOKER #1/FRUIT OF THE LOOM APPLE
You suck, Koslowski!

ONLOOKER #2/FRUIT OF THE LOOM GREEN
GRAPES
We could've won the pennant this year if it wasn't for you!

Virgil shoves The Apple and punches The Grapes in the face.

VIRGIL
Go play some skeeball, you damn hooligans! Can't you see this man is hurting?!

DICKIE
Wow, you punched out The Green Grapes. I never liked that guy.

VIRGIL
Let's get you home.

DICKIE
Babs kicked me out. She said I'm a bad influence. I'm just going to go to some hotel. Or my car. Whatever.

VIRGIL
No, sir. I know a cry for help when I see one. Don't worry, Father Virgil is on the case.

Virgil scoops Dickie up, cradling him like a baby.

Dickie notices one of Virgil's giant biceps around him.

DICKIE
Hey, how much you bench?

INT. CLERGY HOUSE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dickie lies out cold on a small bed, with a bag of frozen peas plopped on his forehead.

He stirs and slowly wakes up.

DICKIE
Where am I?

He grabs the bag off of his head.

DICKIE (cont'd)
And why are there peas on my head?

Virgil stands at the side of the bed.

VIRGIL
That's the only thing we had left in
the church freezer after the potluck.

He snatches the bag away from Dickie.

VIRGIL (cont'd)
I need those for dinner. You like
peas?

DICKIE
Sure.

VIRGIL
Dinner's almost ready. When you get
your feet under you, come on
upstairs.

Virgil exits up the stairs.

Dickie sits up in the bed and rubs his head and eyes. He stands up, still a little wobbly, and trudges up the stairs.

INT. CLERGY HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dinner table is set for two. Virgil brings in various dishes and sets them on the table family-style.

Dickie shuffles in and sits down, waiting to serve himself.

VIRGIL

I called your better half. She gave me the rundown of the situation.

DICKIE

That I'm a fucking idiot?

VIRGIL

I wouldn't use that language in the Lord's house, but that basically sums it up. We had a nice little chat.

Virgil sets down a platter of pork chops on the table, and sits down.

Dickie peruses the dishes on the table. He reaches out to stab a pork chop with his fork off of the platter, but Virgil holds up his hand, interrupting him.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

We say grace first in this house. Care to do us the honor?

DICKIE

Nah, you go ahead.

Virgil closes his eyes and bows his head. Dickie's stomach growls, but he goes along with it.

VIRGIL

We thank thee, Lord, for this delicious food, especially these thick, juicy pork chops. Amen.

Virgil opens his eyes and lifts his head.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Let's eat.

He grabs the various serving dishes, and serves himself.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Please. Help yourself.

Dickie loads up his plate, including two big pork chops.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

What's your endgame?

DICKIE

I dunno, I'm starving. I'll start with two and go from there.

VIRGIL

No, constantly making everything into a competition. Where does it end?

DICKIE

It doesn't. It's what I do. It ends when I die. Or maybe not even then, depending on what happens in the great beyond. But that's your area, you tell me.

VIRGIL

So, loading up your plate like that, is that part of it? Trying to prove something? Seems to me like your eyes might be bigger than your stomach.

DICKIE

Are you challenging me to an eat-off?

VIRGIL

No, I was just-

DICKIE

Because I'll eat your ass under the table.

VIRGIL

They're big pieces of meat. Are you sure you can finish all that? Usually I'd have leftovers for at least a couple days if I hadn't had you over for dinner.

DICKIE

These little chops? I'll chow those down before you eat half of yours.

VIRGIL

I'm not challenging-

DICKIE

Three-two-one, go!

Dickie stuffs his face as fast as he can. Virgil crosses his arms and watches.

Sweating and breathing heavily through his nose, Dickie stuffs the last piece of meat into his mouth.

VIRGIL

I guess you beat me.

DICKIE
(mouth full)
Yeah, I did.

Dickie leans back in his chair, proud of himself, still chewing.

VIRGIL
Hmm. Well, I better eat mine before
it gets cold.

Virgil takes another bite. He leans back in his chair and closes his eyes, savoring every moment as he chews.

VIRGIL (cont'd)
Mmmh. So tender and juicy. Just
oozing flavor. Mmmh, mmmh, mmmh.

DICKIE
Yeah...it was pretty good, I guess...

VIRGIL
It's a shame you devoured yours so
quickly! Forgive me, Lord, but god
damn that is tasty! Mmmh!

DICKIE
Is there any left?

VIRGIL
Cooked? No, that's it. I've got some
in the freezer, but it takes hours to
properly slow-cook these babies.

DICKIE
Maybe I could have just a little more
of yours...?

VIRGIL
Why would I do that?

DICKIE
Because you're a generous man of God?

VIRGIL
That's true, I am that. But I also
care about you Dickie Koslowski, and
want to help you. Would giving you
one more piece really be helping you?

DICKIE
Yes...?

VIRGIL

Are you still hungry?

DICKIE

No...not really...I just saw how much you were enjoying the pork...

VIRGIL

You could have enjoyed your pork just as much as I enjoy my pork right now, but you're so scared of losing at anything, you miss out on what's really important.

DICKIE

Huh. I guess I am a fucking idiot.

VIRGIL

You simply lack humility, and without humility man cannot grow and learn.

Dickie furrows his brow and stares back at him.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

The first step is getting comfortable with losing. Losing so much that it ain't no thing, no matter how badly you get your ass kicked.

DICKIE

Is this part of some twelve step program or something?

VIRGIL

All due respect to A.A. and whatnot, I personally think twelve is too many steps. I mean, "Making amends"? What is that? If atonement is what you're after, that is between me and my maker, thank you very much.

DICKIE

So...get comfortable with losing.

VIRGIL

That's where we start.

Dickie takes a deep breath.

DICKIE

Okay. Whatever it takes. I've gotta get back with my family.

VIRGIL

One step at a time, partner. Become a gracious loser, be able to handle playing for our church softball team, and then, maybe, hopefully, get back in your family's good graces.

DICKIE

Come on, man. Again with the softball?

VIRGIL

Therein lies your problem, Dickie Koslowski. You think you're too good for softball. You're arrogant. You overestimate your abilities. Filled with hubris, as our Greek brothers would say. All of which leads to sleeping in a church basement and failure to appreciate a truly magnificent piece of pork!

DICKIE

Okay, okay. I'll do it.

VIRGIL

That's the spirit! We start tomorrow!

Virgil goes back to his meal and takes another bite.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Mmmh!

Dickie scowls.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Sorry, I can't help it. I really outdid myself today.

DICKIE

I'll wait outside until you're done.

Dickie gets up and leaves.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER REC ROOM - DAY

Dickie sits at a table playing checkers with a YOUNG KID.

The kid makes his move and double-jumps Dickie's pieces.

YOUNG KID

King me.

Dickie flips the table over and storms off.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK CHESS TABLES - DAY

Dickie sits at a chess table, his head in his hand, across from a CHESS HUSTLER pondering his next move.

The hustler makes his move.

CHESS HUSTLER

Checkmate.

Dickie sweeps all the pieces off the board and storms off.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB PATIO - DAY

Dickie sits at a table playing cards with a middle-aged COUNTRY CLUB LADY.

The lady lays down her hand.

COUNTRY CLUB LADY

Gin.

Dickie picks up and throws the deck, cards fly everywhere, and he storms off.

Virgil stands to the side, arms folded, and shakes his head.

INT. GRADE SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Dickie stares at a FOURTH GRADER across a table, playing Battleship.

FOURTH GRADER

B-...five.

DICKIE

You sank my battleship!

Dickie flips over the table and storms out.

INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - DAY

Dickie sits with a group of SENIORS playing bingo.

Virgil stands to the side, arms folded, and watches.

One of the seniors raises their hand.

SENIOR #1

Bingo!

Dickie tears his card in half and stomps on it.

DICKIE

Oh my god, I can't take this!

VIRGIL

Do it again.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Dickie gets down in a stance, waiting to receive serve from a buff TENNIS PLAYER, while a CHAIR UMPIRE looks on.

His opponent serves. Dickie lunges toward the ball, but can't get to it. Ace.

CHAIR UMPIRE

Game. Set. Match-

Dickie smashes his racquet on the ground and storms off.

INT. SOUTH SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - DAY

Virgil and Dickie kneel in silent prayer, side-by-side.

INT. SUMO WRESTLING RING - DAY

Dickie faces off against a SUMO WRESTLER twice his size.

The two men circle each other in the ring as a JAPANESE REFEREE watches closely.

The giant wrestler charges straight at Dickie, sending him flying out of the ring.

The referee screams something in Japanese and holds up the wrestler's arm as the winner.

Dickie tears off his loincloth and storms out.

INT. FINE ART AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

Dressed in a suit and tie, Dickie sits in a gallery bidding on a painting.

Dickie and a RIVAL BIDDER alternate raising their numbered paddles, outbidding each other.

The rival bidder raises his paddle one more time. Dickie grits his teeth.

AUCTIONEER

Going once...twice...sold to the gentleman on the left.

Dickie breaks his paddle over his knee and storms out.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Dickie hunches down, receiving serve again from the same tennis player, as the same chair umpire looks on.

The tennis player serves, and Dickie lunges at it but can't reach it again. Ace.

CHAIR UMPIRE

Game. Set. Match...

Dickie sits down on the court where he stands. Virgil walks over from the sidelines.

VIRGIL

He's better than you, isn't he?

DICKIE

I guess...

VIRGIL

And that's okay.

Dickie grumbles to himself and stomps off.

INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - DAY

Dickie sits with the same group of seniors playing another game of bingo.

One of the other seniors raises their hand.

SENIOR #2

Bingo!

DICKIE

(pleading with his bingo card)

Why?! I was one away! One away!

Virgil walks over from the side and sits down next to him.

VIRGIL

The numbers are random...anyone can win, right?

DICKIE

I guess...

VIRGIL

And that's why it's fun, right?

Dickie grumbles to himself, and stomps out.

INT. SOUTH SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - DAY

Virgil and Dickie kneel side-by-side, reciting a prayer in Latin and performing the Sign of the Cross on their chests.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER REC ROOM - DAY

Dickie plays checkers again with the same young kid.

The kid makes his move and jumps over all of Dickie's remaining pieces.

DICKIE

Wait...how'd you-...damn it!

The kid looks up at Virgil and shrugs.

VIRGIL

(to Dickie)

There wasn't a prize for winning, was there?

DICKIE

No...

Dickie sits back in his chair and stares back at his opponent for a moment. He leans forward.

DICKIE (cont'd)

Good...game.

Virgil raises his eyebrows. Dickie grumbles to himself and trudges out.

Virgil smiles and nods.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Virgil and Dickie wearing matching baptism robes, stand in the middle of a local river, the water up to their waists.

Dickie leans back, and Virgil dunks him under the water.

INT. FINE ART AUCTION - DAY

Dickie sits in the gallery again, trading bids on a painting with the same rival bidder.

The rival puts in one more bid. The auctioneer looks to Dickie. Dickie shakes his head.

AUCTIONEER

Sold! To the gentleman on the left.

Dickie stands up and shakes his rival's hand.

DICKIE

Congratulations. It's a fine piece.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK CHESS TABLES - DAY

Dickie plays chess against a handful of other CHESS PLAYERS simultaneously.

Dickie goes down the line as each opponent makes their move.

CHESS PLAYER #1

Checkmate.

CHESS PLAYER #2

Checkmate.

CHESS PLAYER #3

Checkmate.

Dickie surveys each chessboard. He goes down the line to each opponent and shakes their hand.

DICKIE

(to Chess Player #1)

Well played, sir.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(to Chess Player #2)

Well played, sir.

DICKIE (cont'd)
 (to Chess Player #3)
 Well played, sir.

INT. CLERGY HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dickie and Virgil sit at the dining table eating another pork dinner.

Dickie is intensely focused on his chewing. Virgil raises his glass.

VIRGIL
 I'd like to make a toa-

Dickie, still chewing, holds his hand up and interrupts him.

DICKIE
 (mouth full)
 Mmmh! You really can taste so many flavors! Black pepper, and paprika, and mustard, and oregano...ooh, is that coriander?

Dickie keeps chewing, searching for more flavor.

VIRGIL
 Will you please just swallow already so I can make my damn toast?! It's not a competition.

Dickie gulps down the pork and sits back in his chair.

DICKIE
 Right! Oh god, you're right! That's it, I can't play softball tomorrow. What was I thinking? I'm going to fall back into my old ways and mess things up again-

Virgil pounds on the table.

VIRGIL
 Dickie!

Dickie snaps to attention.

VIRGIL (cont'd)
 You are not going to screw this up for me-...I mean, your church is counting on you-...I mean, don't worry about if you're a total loser now-...I mean, in a good way.
 (MORE)

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Damn it, you interrupted my toast, my brain is all scrambled now.

DICKIE

Sorry. Go ahead.

Virgil composes himself. He raises his glass again, and Dickie follows suit.

VIRGIL

To Dickie: you've become the biggest loser that I know, and that makes you a real winner in my book. Hear, hear!

DICKIE

I never thought being called a "total loser" wouldn't bother me.

They clink their glasses together and take a drink.

VIRGIL

You've come a long way, partner, and tomorrow is graduation day. In front of all of our family, friends, and two entire congregations you will return to the diamond from which you were once banished, reborn as a magnanimous sportsman.

DICKIE

Wait a second. Are Babs and Dickie Jr. going to be there? Oh man, you didn't tell me that!

Dickie stands up and paces around the table.

VIRGIL

They're part of the church, why wouldn't they be there? Besides, I thought you wanted to get back into their good graces. What better way to do that than show off what a changed man you are.

DICKIE

I get it, but this is super high-risk. One more screw up, and that's it. Finito. Dones-ville. My marriage will be over, and I'll have pissed away the only real connection I ever had with my son.

VIRGIL

Cheer up. It's not so bad. The good news is that your family already thinks you're an idiot, so expectations are very, very low for you. There's really no way you can make this any worse than you already have. It's all upside, my friend.

DICKIE

There is not a more forgiving soul than Babs, but there is nothing more important to her in this world than Dickie Jr. If she is convinced that I'm a bad influence on him, she'll never have me back again. Simple as that. And why would I blame her? Junior's still in his formative years, and the last thing I would want burned into his brain is that his dad is a good-for-nothing loser.

VIRGIL

I was going to wait until tomorrow to surprise you, but I did some convincing of my own -- after a little gentle arm-twisting, Dickie Jr. agreed to join us and play alongside his dad-

DICKIE

Oh no...

VIRGIL

Since church league rules stipulate that you have to have a certain number of kids on the team, I figured who better than Dickie Jr.? He's gotta be a chip off the old block.

DICKIE

He's really not. And that's probably a good thing.

VIRGIL

Look how modest you are! I'm so proud of how far you've come.

DICKIE

That's great and all, but you're really setting me up for failure here, man. I couldn't even coach him in little league without making a huge ass of myself.

VIRGIL

I don't know what you think you're waiting for, but your boy isn't getting any younger, and it would be a damn shame if you let the best opportunity you're going to get pass you by because of your own fear.

Dickie stares out the window.

DICKIE

It's Ernie Skoog all over again.

VIRGIL

The Lord as my witness, if you cause any harm to a single hair on a single horse, I swear to God, Dickie Koslowski-

DICKIE

No, no, not that. You're right. Just like I did then, I need to face this head-on. I'm not going to get a better shot at redemption than this.

VIRGIL

Amen, brother! I set the table for you, all you need to do is eat.

Dickie plops back down in his chair and sighs.

DICKIE

No problem, I'll just do one the thing that I've never been able to do in my entire life.

VIRGIL

Gotta start sometime. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Win or lose, you'll be fine. Obviously, we'll try our hardest to win. But... there's no shame in losing. It's not if you win or lose, it's how you play the game. Nothing wrong with playing the game to win, though. Someone's got to win, right? Might as well be us. But...totally okay if it's not. We all shake hands afterward and go out for ice cream. It'll be fun.

DICKIE

Sure, yeah. It'll be...it'll be..."fun".

EXT. MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Dickie Jr. all ready to go, wearing a brand-new uniform, stands off to the side and swings a bat as hard as he can. His swing still needs some work, but doesn't look half bad.

Wearing the same uniform, Dickie approaches.

DICKIE

Hey, hey there, slugger. Fancy meeting you here.

DICKIE JR.

Pastor Virgil's been hounding me for weeks, and mom said I should support the church...so here I am.

DICKIE

Swing's looking good.

DICKIE JR.

I watched a bunch of your old tapes, just trying to copy how you do it.

DICKIE

Oh, that explains it. For a second there I thought I was looking in the mirror!

DICKIE JR.

So, is it helping?

DICKIE

I mean, your swing looks good, but actually hitting the ball-

DICKIE JR.

No, the stuff you're doing with Father Virgil. Is it helping?

DICKIE

I think so. I hope so.

DICKIE JR.

I heard you were sumo wrestling.

DICKIE

If that's what you want to call getting flattened like a pancake over and over again by a giant fat man, then yes I was.

DICKIE JR.

Are they as fat as they look on TV?

DICKIE
Remember that world record pumpkin we
saw? Like that, but surprisingly
quick on its feet.

DICKIE JR.
Whoa.

Babs walks up behind Dickie Jr.

DICKIE
Hey there, Babs.

BABS
Dickie.

DICKIE
(to Dickie Jr.)
Anyway, eye on the ball, keep your
head down, and...have fun out there.

DICKIE JR.
Yeah, okay. You, too.

Dickie Jr. trots away, practicing his swing.

Dickie flashes a smile to Babs. Unimpressed, Babs walks off
toward the bleachers.

Virgil sees the cold shoulder given, and approaches Dickie.

VIRGIL
Stay the course, my man. You'll
impress her yet.

Sensing danger, both Dickie and Virgil turn around to see...

SLOW MOTION: Arnold, dressed in the opposing team's uniform,
saunters over, twirling a bat like a pimp cane.

END SLOW MOTION.

ARNOLD
What's up, fags?

DICKIE
(under his breath)
Oh no, no, no...

ARNOLD
Oh yes!

VIRGIL

Brother Arnold. So nice to see you again.

He claps Dickie on the back. Dickie tenses up.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

I think we'll be giving you a run for your money this year.

ARNOLD

Oh? I see you got yourself a ringer. Good for you.

Virgil can't help let a shit-eating grin wash over his face as he massages Dickie's shoulders.

Beads of sweat trickle down Dickie's forehead.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

Did your ringer tell you that I have a restraining order against him where he can't be within a hundred feet of me, effectively disqualifying him from this competition?

The blood drains from Virgil's face. He turns to Dickie. Dickie shrugs, speechless.

VIRGIL

(whisper shouting, to Dickie)

A restraining order?! Are you fucking kidding me right now?!

DICKIE

It's a long story. I didn't know he was going to be here. Well, I guess that's it, good luck-

Dickie turns to walk away, but Arnold puts his hand on his chest, stopping him.

ARNOLD

Not so fast there, buckaroo.
(to Virgil)

I don't give a shit about the restraining order. I'm just fucking with you lightweights. I want you to play. Ringer or no ringer, I'm going to kick both your asses today. Because why? Because I've got some ringers of my own.

Arnold puts two fingers in his mouth and whistles. Two twin burly young women - TARA, 21, and TRISHA, 21 - both wearing the opposing team's uniform, file in behind Arnold, arms folded behind their backs.

ARNOLD (cont'd)
Meet the "Hammer Twins".
(to Tara and Trisha)
Girls, tell 'em what's what.

TARA
Sir. I set the NCAA Division One Women's Softball record with ninety-six home runs this past season.

TRISHA
And I set the NCAA Division One Women's Softball record with a batting average of .589 this past season. Sir.

Virgil grits his teeth. Dickie sizes them up, hands on hips.

DICKIE
(nodding)
Very good.

Virgil slaps him across the chest. Dickie winces.

ARNOLD
Thank you, ladies. Why don't you go finish warming up.

Tara and Trisha turn on their heels and jog away.

ARNOLD (cont'd)
I hope you brought snacks because there ain't no slaughter rule up in this piece!

Arnold backs away, giving them double finger guns.

ARNOLD (cont'd)
(singing the Double
Mint gum jingle)
*Double your pleasure, double your
fun! It's the right one, Double Mint
gum!*

Arnold struts back to the opposing dugout, singing and loudly cackling to himself.

DICKIE

I'm gonna freak out and I'm gonna lose it. I'm gonna freak out and I'm gonna lose it, all over again, in front of Babs and Dickie Jr, in front of everybody. That'll be it for me, man. Game over.

VIRGIL

Okay, okay, just calm down. He's just trying to mess with you. With us. Remember you are a true sportsman, unattached to any particular outcome.

Dickie paces back and forth.

DICKIE

All that shit with chess, and the bingo, and fucking sumo wrestling -- that's not like this. Something about the guy makes me crazy. I gotta get outta here. One softball game is not worth it. I'll have to find some other way to get my family back.

Virgil grabs him by the jersey with both hands, lifting Dickie off the ground.

VIRGIL

"One softball game"?! This game is but for the glory of our church in His Name, and Babs and Dickie Jr. are here in support of said church. If you walk away now, a quitter, what kind of example will that set for your boy? And why would Babs want a spineless coward like that in her life? Still think one game isn't worth it?

DICKIE

Sorry. I'm sorry. I'll pull myself together. I don't want to disappoint anyone.

Virgil sets him back down on the ground. Dickie deflates.

VIRGIL

That's right, you don't. Now grab a bat and focus up. You're hitting clean-up so I want to see home runs out there, not some piddly-shit base hits.

(MORE)

VIRGIL (cont'd)

Oh, and put a smile on your face and have some fun, will ya? People are watching.

DICKIE

Sure thing.

Virgil claps him on the shoulder, and ambles back to the dugout, whistling to himself.

Dickie looks toward Arnold-

CLOSE UP of Arnold's face bobbing up and down.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Arnold straddling atop the backs of The Twins, doing pushups in unison. He holds his bat like a rifle and pretends to shoot back at Dickie.

Dickie turns and looks over at Dickie Jr. practicing his swing. Dickie Jr. sees his dad watching and waves back at him. Dickie nods and returns a half-hearted wave.

He surveys back up into the bleachers and sees Babs staring straight at him, stone-faced. He swallows hard.

MONTAGE - MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD

- A MIDDLE-AGED LADY bends down to field a dribbling ground ball, and the ball rolls up her arm and hits her in the face.

- Tara swings and smashes a ball over the fence.

- Arnold's employee Tim fields a ground ball, and throws a wild throw toward first base that sails into the parking lot.

- Dickie swings and smashes another ball over the fence.

- Dickie Jr. swings and misses. The umpire calls him out.

EXT. MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER

Arnold stands at home plate, up to bat. A World Record Adjudicator stands next to the catcher and umpire.

The next pitch comes, and Arnold bunts the ball as lightly as possible, the ball landing less than an inch in front of home plate.

ARNOLD

Time out!

The World Record Adjudicator pulls out a ruler and measures the distance between home plate and the ball.

WORLD RECORD ADJUDICATOR

We have a new world record!

ARNOLD

Yes!

Arnold nods to the umpire.

UMPIRE

Play ball!

Arnold takes off running toward first base. The catcher picks up the ball and easily throws him out.

ARNOLD

Donkey dicks!

MONTAGE - MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD

- Dickie Jr. swings and pops straight up, in front of him. The catcher stands up and the ball falls into his glove.
- Trisha swings and blasts one over the left field fence.
- A fly ball drops between two confused MARRIED OUTFIELDERS, who bicker about which one was supposed to catch it.
- Dickie swings and smacks a home run over center field.
- An oafish WEEKEND WARRIOR chugs around third base with a full head of steam. He tries to slide at home plate, but trips over his big feet, smacking face first into the dirt.

EXT. MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER

The scoreboard shows Dickie's team down 19-18, with two out.

They have runners on second and third, and Dickie Jr. is up.

He gets up from the bench, grabs a bat, and heads toward home plate.

DICKIE JR.

Well, wish me luck...

VIRGIL

(to umpire)

Time out!

Virgil grabs the back of his jersey, stopping him.

VIRGIL (cont'd)
 (to Dickie Jr.)
 Sorry, son. It's not your time.
 (to Dickie)
 Dickie, get out there and pinch hit
 for Junior. One more hit and we win
 this sucker.

Dickie looks down at his son. Junior shrugs and trudges toward the end of the bench.

DICKIE
 (to Dickie Jr.)
 Hold up, son.

Junior stops and turns to Dickie, not sure what to do.

DICKIE (cont'd)
 (to Virgil)
 He doesn't want a pinch-hitter.
 (to Dickie Jr.)
 Look alive. You're up.

Dickie pushes his chest out a bit and turns to Virgil.
 Virgil advances toward him.

VIRGIL
 (to Dickie)
 Excuse me? I'm the coach. I make all
 the decisions, not you. What is your
 problem?

DICKIE
 In the bottom of the ninth, with two
 out and runners on, a chance to win
 the game with a walk-off hit is the
 most fun to be had in this sport, and
 I will not deny my son that.

VIRGIL
 Okay, I get it. "Having fun"...very
 important. "Being a gracious
 loser"... yes, for sure. But...if you
 can avoid losing altogether that is
 also a great thing. C'mon, man. One
 more at bat, one more hit, and we can
 finally beat these mega-church
 assholes for once and go out for ice
 cream as winners.

DICKIE

There's nothing wrong with wanting to win, but you can't throw the people you love and the people who love you under the bus to do that. At the end of the day, it's just a game, and I'm really disappointed that you, of all people, don't recognize that.

DICKIE JR.

It's okay, Dad. You can bat for me. I'd probably just let everybody down, anyway.

VIRGIL

See?! He doesn't mind! And Babs won't either. Everybody loves a winner!

DICKIE

(to Dickie Jr.)

No, son. It's not okay.

(to Virgil)

Not gonna happen, pastor.

Virgil's upper lip quivers as tears well up in his eyes.

VIRGIL

But why?!

Dickie puts a hand on his shoulder.

DICKIE

I think we both know why.

VIRGIL

Yeah...

Virgil puts his head on Dickie's shoulder and sobs.

ARNOLD

(calling out)

Hey, what's going on over there?! Is someone crying?!

DICKIE

(calling out)

Shut up, Arnold! We're having a moment!

Arnold mock cries to his bench.

Dickie pats Virgil on the back. Virgil wipes his nose on his sleeve, sits down in the dirt, and quietly cries to himself.

DICKIE JR.
 (looking at Virgil)
 Is he okay?

DICKIE
 He'll be fine. Now, your swing is
 looking real good today, so keep
 doing what you've been practicing.
 Just wait for a pitch you like and
 let it rip. Now go get 'em.

Dickie pats him on the butt, and Dickie Jr. trots out toward home plate.

DICKIE (cont'd)
 And have fun!

DICKIE JR.
 Okay, Dad!

Dickie Jr. steps up to the plate, focused.

He lets a couple pitches go by.

DICKIE
 (calling out)
 Good eye, Junior!

The pitcher throws another pitch, and Dickie Jr.'s face lights up. This is his moment.

He swings as hard as he can, just like he practiced, and smashes a line drive into the gap-

Virgil stops crying and wipes away his tears in disbelief-
 Trisha dives for the ball, her body completely outstretched-
 Everyone holds their collective breath for a split second-
 -until the ball smacks into the center of her glove. Game over.

UMPIRE
 Yer out! That's game!

VIRGIL
 Goddamn it!

EXT. MEGA CHURCH SOFTBALL FIELD - AFTER THE GAME

Players from both teams congregate on the side of the field.

Dickie shakes hands and congratulates some of the opposing team. Dickie Jr. runs up to him.

DICKIE JR.

Holy shit, Dad! Did you see me?! I totally crushed it! It was awesome!

DICKIE

Sweet swing, son. Couldn't have done it better myself.

Babs approaches them.

DICKIE (cont'd)

(to Babs)

The kid looked good out there today.

BABS

Too bad that moose had to catch it.

DICKIE

Ehh, it's okay. There's nothing like cranking a ball dead nuts on the sweet spot, right Junior?

DICKIE JR.

Hell yeah!

Dickie mimes a home run swing and watches his imaginary ball sail over the fence.

BABS

(to Dickie)

It's weird to say this, but thanks for looking out for the boy today.

DICKIE

And why wouldn't I?

BABS

Do you really want me to answer that?

DICKIE

No, I do not.

Dickie looks down at the ground for moment.

DICKIE (cont'd)

I'm sorry for being such a jackass all these years. I don't know how else to say it.

BABS

I hear you.

DICKIE JR.

Hey Mom, can Dad come out for ice cream with us?

BABS

I suppose so. As long as he behaves himself.

DICKIE

Cool...

BABS

Don't do that.

DICKIE

Sorry.

Arnold strolls up to them with The Twins in tow.

ARNOLD

Damn, looks like I win again! In your face, Koslowski!

DICKIE

What, in my face?

Stumped, Arnold's brain short-circuits for a moment, then an idea washes over him.

ARNOLD

This!

Arnold does some sort of victory dance, mostly consisting of wild hip thrusts and punching the air accented by grunting.

Everyone else silently stares as his dance goes on way too long.

DICKIE

Yeah. Well...congratulations.

BABS

What an ass clown.

DICKIE JR.

Language!

BABS

What? I'm sorry, he is.

The Twins step around a still-dancing Arnold, up to Dickie.

TARA

Sir, we just wanted to say we're both big fans of yours. It was an honor to share the field with you today.

TRISHA

Yeah, absolutely. We thought you got a raw deal from MLB Commissioner, and hope someday you'll take your rightful place in the Hall Of Fame.

DICKIE

Thank you, ladies. I appreciate that. Good job today. Well, my family and I are going to celebrate a game well-played over some ice cream. See you around.

Dickie, Babs, and Dickie Jr. all leave together.

Arnold turns toward The Twins.

ARNOLD

So, girls...ice cream, eh? How 'bout it? Get ya some victory cones? I'm buying...

TARA

No offense, Mr. Cesario, but we only did this because our dad asked us to.

TRISHA

Yeah, because you gave him a sweet deal on the Corinthian leather seat upgrade in his new El Dorado. We're square now, so...bye, Mr. Cesario.

They both turn on their heels and walk away together, leaving Arnold all by himself.

Arnold desperately looks around for a friendly face. He spots Tim in the parking lot, about to get into his car.

ARNOLD

(calling out)

Hey Tim! Don't go for ice cream without me, you fucker!

Arnold chases after him.

On their way to their car, Dickie, Babs and Dickie Jr. see Virgil still sitting in the dirt, crying, now the only person left on the field.

BABS

I think we should find a new church.

EXT. DICKIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dickie kicks back in a lawn chair, drinking a beer, while Dickie Jr. bounces on a pogo stick nearby.

Billy rolls up to Dickie on his bike.

BILLY

I thought Babs kicked your ass out.

DICKIE

Well, I'm working my way back in.

BILLY

Ehh, I bet you'll find a way to fuck it up somehow.

DICKIE

We'll see. I hope not.

Billy scrunches up his face and turns his head sideways, like a confused dog.

BILLY

Hello? I said, "I bet you..."...

DICKIE

I know you did, Billy. God love ya.

He tussles Billy's hair.

BILLY

What the hell happened? You used to be beautiful, man.

DICKIE

Finally wised up, I guess.

Billy scowls, and slowly rides away, shaking his head.

GERALD

Hey, was that a condescending hair-tussling going on over there?

DICKIE

God damn it, Gerald! Just fuck off already! We were having a moment!

GERALD

Okay then, sorry to bother!

Babs pokes her head out of the front screen door.

BABS
Dinner's about ready, boys.

DICKIE JR.
(bouncing on pogo
stick)
Hold on, Mom! Let me finish bounc-

He falls off the pogo stick.

DICKIE JR. (cont'd)
Okay, I'm done.
(to Dickie)
Hey Dad, did you see me? I got six
that time!

DICKIE
Hey, that's double what you had
before! You're getting pretty good at
this.

Dickie puts his arm around him, and they walk back inside
their house together.

THE END