

TEENER BASEBALL

by

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BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: THIS STORY IS INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS. NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE YOUNG, FOOLISH, AND RIDICULOUS.

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY - DAY

Close up of a city entrance sign, green with white lettering that reads: "REEDVILLE." In small letters at the bottom of the sign: "POP. 1311."

Near the city sign is a billboard denoting state high school championship victories. The board lists many accolades from track and field, basketball, and football, but years of baseball honors dominate.

Half of the billboard exclaims: "Home of South Dakota State 'B' Teener Baseball Champs! 1980 - 1986, 1988"

In the distance the sound of a baseball on a metal bat CLANKS, and CHEERS rise from the Reedville Baseball Park.

SUPER: 1989

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - DAY

HEAD COACH IRVIN WILLIS stands up from the bench and claps his hands. The loudspeaker announces the next batter.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

Now batting for Clarkston,  
centerfielder, Whitney White.

COACH WILLIS

Come on fellas, show some life out  
there! Let's hear some chatter!

Coach Willis is the sixty-five year old head coach of the fourteen to sixteen year-old Teener baseball team. He paces the dugout with a limp. He sits for a moment and bends his leg backwards at the knee and reties his shoe.

COACH WILLIS

Ok, Trent, keep throwing strikes!

Coach Willis smiles.

COACH WILLIS

One thing about losin' my leg to diabetes, it's easy to tie this here shoe.

Coach Willis readjusts his artificial leg just below his knee. His uniform shows the pounds, as it is for most aging men. Coach Willis spits some tobacco and a little stained drool escapes the corner of his mouth.

COACH WILLIS

Fire strikes, Trent!

EXT. REEDVILLE BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The PING of a hard single to left field RINGS out and the members of the dugout snap their heads around to watch the ball. GARY HILLMANN, the Reedville left fielder, charges the ball, but doesn't get his glove down in the deep grass and the ball scoots by him.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - DAY

COACH SHOE

(yelling)

Gary! What are you doing?

GROANS are heard from the dugout as two runners score. COACH BOBBY SHOEMAKER, twenty-five years old, is a high school teacher most of the year, but has the summers free to help coach baseball and play a little amateur baseball himself. Everyone calls him COACH SHOE or SHOOZ.

COACH SHOE

Our best player can't even field a simple ground ball.

COACH WILLIS

Relax. It's our first game. There's a little rust on everything.

Coach Shoe sits back on the bench, shakes his head, and rolls his eyes as he heaves a big sigh.

COACH WILLIS

(yelling)

Shake it off, Trent. Just keep throwing strikes. Hey! Let's hear some chatter out there!

The side is retired and Reedville fielders come to the dugout.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE DUGOUT - DAY

Coach Shoe steps out of the dugout and cuts Gary off as Gary tries to get to his batting gear.

COACH SHOE

What are you doing out there?

GARY

What?

COACH SHOE

That ground ball? You let two runs in on that stupid play!

Gary tries to get around Coach Shoe, is blocked.

GARY

Hey, Coach, I'm trying to get my batting gloves here, I'm up third, and...

COACH SHOE

And I'm asking you a question! What the Hell were you doing out there?

GARY

Well, the grass is pretty tall and thick, I just missed it. I didn't get my glove down.

Gary looks quizzically at Coach Shoe. Coach Shoe looks at Gary and points. He is fuming.

Coach Shoe's mouth moves, but no words come out. He gets nose-to-nose with Gary as Gary won't back down.

COACH SHOE  
(pointing at Gary)  
Rahhhhhhh!!!

Gary leans back as Coach Shoe flails his arms.

COACH WILLIS  
Jesus, Bobby! Relax!

Coach Shoe stares at Gary a bit longer before jogging over to the first base coaching box.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

Gary reties his shoes and adjusts his stockings. Gary is the All-American sixteen year old boy, good looking, charming, athletic, everything you need to be noticed.

DAVE BROWN, sixteen years old, sits next to Gary as Gary dons his batting gloves and helmet. Dave, still wearing all his gear, is the catcher and Gary's best friend.

DAVE  
What was that about?

Dave is in his typical jovial mood. Dave is husky with a round freckled face. He is a large target, a good-sized backstop that makes for a quality catcher, his light batting skills aside. Sweat streams from his face as usual from even the mildest exertion.

GARY  
I have no idea and I don't really care.

DAVE  
I wonder what got up his butt.

Gary stands and holds out his hand as Dave slaps him five. He heads out of the dugout to the on-deck circle.

EXT. OUTSIDE DUGOUT - DAY

Gary looks over his shoulder into the dugout and winks.

GARY

Let's pound these Clarkston  
assholes. Come on Trent! Start  
us off with a hit buddy!

TRENT THOMPSON, sixteen years old, the pitcher and  
leadoff hitter steps to the plate and promptly cracks a  
single up the middle. The rout is on. The hits come  
from up and down the Reedville lineup.

The afternoon turns to dark.

EXT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

Towering lights illuminate the field. Coach Willis and  
Coach Shoe talk in the dugout as the second game of the  
double-header drags on.

COACH WILLIS

What is it between you and  
Hillmann?

COACH SHOE

He's such a cocky little shit. I  
can't stand him.

COACH WILLIS

A bit like you were?

COACH SHOE

I just don't want to see another  
1987.

COACH WILLIS

Oh for Christ's sake, you gotta  
lighten up, Shooz. That was two  
years ago.

COACH WILLIS

(yelling)

That-a-baby, Gary! Way to throw  
strikes.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Gary winds up and throws a fastball for strike two. He gets the ball back from his catcher, Dave.

DAVE  
(squatting)  
Let's put him away here, buddy.

Gary looks in as Dave signals a two for a curveball. Gary winds and delivers a slow sweeping curve to the left-handed batter who watches it curve over the plate and the umpire excitedly screams.

UMPIRE  
Strike three!

Gary and Dave jog off the field.

EXT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

COACH SHOE  
Everyone was embarrassed.

COACH WILLIS  
What are you talking about? We got second place last year! Just cuz, we didn't win the championship...

Coach Willis spits.

COACH SHOE  
I'm just saying,  
(pause)  
Some people are starting to talk. They say you're slipping.

COACH WILLIS  
Yeah, we win seven championships in a row, then we get second place. Suddenly, I can't coach.

Coach Shoe reads the batting order from the scorebook.

COACH SHOE

Aric up, Fitz on deck, Larry in the hole! Let's get some runs and ten-run rule 'em!

Coach Shoe turns back to Coach Willis.

COACH SHOE

I'm just tellin' you what I heard.

COACH WILLIS

Those kids learned more from that championship loss than all the championships won combined.

Coach Shoe shrugs.

COACH WILLIS

Jus' drop it.

EXT. ON DECK CIRCLE - NIGHT

LAWRENCE THOMPSON, fourteen years old, Trent's younger brother, and right fielder stands next to ARIC CARSON and FITZ as they get ready to face the Clarkston pitcher in the bottom of the inning. Lawrence tucks his oversize-fake gold chain in his shirt.

LAWRENCE

Yo, dogs, git yoselves on and I'll drive you in and put an end to this game. You feel me?

FITZ

Larry, you do realize that you are not Black? You are not an African American; you are white.

Patrick Fitzgerald, a.k.a. FITZ, fifteen years old, is average Joe on the team. He just gets things done with average looks, average strength, and average ability. His ruddy complexion and dark hair with a tinge of red along with his freckles, give away his Irish heritage.

LAWRENCE

Yo, call me MC Lawrence. That's the way I roll.



ARIC  
(rolling his eyes)  
Ok, Larry. We'll set the table  
for you, you clean it up.

ARIC CARSON, fifteen years old, is the son of a wealthy farmer. He has the best everything: new Chevy Camaro, custom equipment, i.e. aluminum bat, spikes, and glove. Aric is big and developed for his age.

LAWRENCE  
(pumps his fist)  
Solid.

Lawrence holds up his hand and Aric slaps him five, but Lawrence grabs his hand and pulls him in for a quick hug.

ARIC  
(panicking)  
What is happening?

Lawrence does the same for Fitz. Fitz and Aric are caught off guard by the hugs and look at Lawrence with pained looks.

FITZ  
What the Hell was that?

Lawrence gives a nod and smiles.

LAWRENCE  
Go up there and get a knock,  
brother.

Fitz and Aric get on base and Lawrence comes to the plate with Reedville up by eight runs in the bottom of the fifth inning.

EXT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

COACH WILLIS  
(yelling and clapping)  
Ducks on the pond, Law-dog!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The pitcher stretches and checks the runners on first and second. He grooves a fastball to Lawrence who launches it on a line to right-center field.

EXT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

COACH SHOE

Woo-hoo!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Aric and Fitz score easily as the throw comes to third and Lawrence slides in ahead of the throw.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

That's the ballgame folks. Ten run rule in the bottom of the fifth.

The teams form lines and meet at home plate and shake hands.

INT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

In the excitement of victory nobody notices Coach Willis still on the bench with his chin on his chest. Tobacco stained saliva runs from the corner of his mouth.

TONY

C-c-coach?

TONY OSMOND, fifteen years old, the overweight first baseman with a slight stutter is the first to notice Coach Willis not celebrating. He goes to the dugout and gives Coach a shove. Coach slumps to the bench.

TONY

H-h-help! Somebody help! Coach is down!

Reedville POLICE CHIEF RICKY WALLS is in attendance and rushes to help the Coach. He grabs his radio and calls for the ambulance.

ANNIE

Uncle Irv!

ANNIE WILLIS, sixteen years old, Irv's niece and scoreboard operator/announcer rushes from the press box down the stairs to her uncle's side. The crowd presses forward.

GARY

Come on people, give Irv some room. The ambulance and EMTs got to get in here.

Annie is a natural beauty, wearing no makeup and letting her shoulder-length, brown hair with a bow on top fall around her face as she bends over her uncle.

ANNIE

He's breathing. I bet he didn't check his blood sugar, it's probably his diabetes.

GARY

What are you, a doctor?

ANNIE

No, but I want to be one someday.

GARY

Really?

The ambulance and EMTs arrive to load Coach up and take him to the hospital. Coach has come around from the I.V. fluids in his arm.

COACH WILLIS

Hey, Annie, make sure you get my stuff and take my car home.

ANNIE

Yes, Uncle Irv. I'll pick up Aunt Daisy and meet you at the ER.

COACH WILLIS

(laughs)

I think we need to make these games five innings all the time instead of the standard seven. Maybe then I wouldn't forget to eat.

ANNIE

(smiling)

I'll put a call into the commissioner.

EXT. PRESSBOX - NIGHT

Annie collects the scorebook, shuts down the scoreboard, and locks the press box. Gary catches Annie as she shuts the clasp on the press box lock.

GARY

Hi. I'm Gary Hillmann. I didn't introduce myself earlier. You're Irv's niece?

ANNIE

Howdy. I'm Annie.

They shake hands.

GARY

I can close this up if you need to go see your uncle.

ANNIE

No, I'm done.

GARY

Listen, I'd sure like to talk to you some more, you know about medical school and stuff.

ANNIE

I don't know.

GARY

You know, it's weird. I didn't know Irv had any nieces, especially as pretty as you. Why are you here?

ANNIE

(laughs)

I'm closing the press box.

GARY

No, I mean in Reedville.

ANNIE

I'm here for the summer. I got several jobs through Uncle Irv, so I'm staying with Uncle Irv and Aunt Daisy.

GARY

Can I call you? You know, so we can talk?

Annie grabs a pen from the scorebook and grasps Gary's arm. She writes her phone number on it.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gary catches Dave as he throws his gear into the back of his Ford Fiesta.

DAVE

Where the Hell did you disappear to?

GARY

Do you know Annie, Irv's niece?

DAVE

Sure, she works at the Red Horse Café and also at the swimming pool this year.

GARY

How did I not know this stuff?

Gary flashes his forearm with the phone number on it in front of Dave's face as Dave searches his duffle bag for his keys.

GARY

I gots her numba.

DAVE

Wow, you don't waste time.

GARY

You know it.

DAVE

Dude, I overheard something,  
please tell me it ain't so.

Dave stops his search.

DAVE

I'm sorry, but I heard your mom  
say something about a packet from  
Kirtland. Isn't that a prep  
school out West?

GARY

Oh shit. I guess word's out.

(pause)

I'm thinking about going to  
Pepperdine and this is a good prep  
school.

Dave's feelings are hurt, but he covers a wince well.

DAVE

You're gonna leave me...to fend for  
myself?

GARY

What can I say? You're tough  
enough. Promise me you'll keep  
this under your hat for as long as  
you can.

DAVE

No problemo. Hey, good game  
tonight.

GARY

Thanks you too. You're a great catcher. We should work on your hitting a bit though.

DAVE

Yeah, I definitely need to hit it harder.

GARY

That's what she said.

Gary laughs at his own joke as Dave shakes his head.

GARY

I'm outta here.

DAVE

Later, dude.

Dave drives away and Gary tosses his stuff in his 1980 Ford F-150 pickup and spins out of the parking lot.

EXT. BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The team takes batting practice against Coach Shoe. Tony holds court with his usual graphic stories as the team shag balls hit around the field. The players are in practice attire that ranges from blue jeans and t-shirts to shorts and tank tops.

TONY

Gee, Dave, who was that woman who dropped you off? I'm sure I'm not the first to say this, but your mom is smokin' hot!

DAVE

Shut up. You're a dick. You're talking about my mom!

TONY

Seriously, why are you so fat, when your mom has that kick ass body?

The sound of aluminum bat on ball CLANKS in the back ground.

DAVE

Tony, you would definitely know fat.

TONY

Hey, I'm big boned! If you know what I mean?

Tony grabs his crotch.

DAVE

That you are penally challenged? Yes, we know what you mean.

Gary fields a ground ball and throws it back to FIN SWENSON, shagging balls for Coach Shoe. Fin, fourteen years old, is one of the young players new to the team this year; ashen blonde, almost albino, Fin is tall, and wiry-strong.

DAVE

Did you hear anything about Irv?

GARY

He's fine. Just his diabetes. I guess he was too excited about the first game of the year and forgot to test his blood sugar.

TONY

He's gonna be back, right?

GARY

He's just gonna be out a couple days.

TONY

Thank God! I don't think I could handle Shooz. He's been just a complete dick.

GARY

Tell me about it.



The group watches a ball fly over their heads.

GARY

He jumped all over my shit last night when I missed the ground ball in the outfield.

TONY

That was hilarious. You looked like a pee-wee player.

Tony imitates the whiff on the ground ball and shocking expression when reaching in his glove and the ball isn't there. Everyone has a good laugh.

GARY

Well, Jesus, the fucking grass in the outfield is practically knee high.

Coach Shoe is out of baseballs and the team gathers up the balls as Dave heads in to take his swings in the batting cage.

EXT. DUGOUT STEPS - DAY

Coach Shoe has gathered the team together.

COACH SHOE

A quick update on Coach Willis. He's fine and should be back after a couple days rest.

A car pulls up in the parking lot.

LAWRENCE

Yo, is that Coach Willis?

Everyone turns to look and they see Coach Willis walking toward the field with a young man. Coach Willis finally limps up to the dugout flashing a tobacco covered grin to everyone.

COACH WILLIS

Hey, fellas. Let me introduce you to Chuck Fisher, our newest player.

CHUCK FISHER is a big kid for fifteen years old. He is six feet tall and muscular with dark eyes that might be considered a little beady.

COACH WILLIS

Chuck's mom, Lorraine, asked me to introduce him. So, welcome aboard Chuck!

COACH SHOE

Are you Lou Stevens' boy?

CHUCK

(voice cracking)

He's my step-dad. My mom just married him. We live on his farm by the river.

COACH SHOE

I gotcha. Hey, welcome. We just finished with some hitting, but I can crank 'er up again if you want to take some swings.

CHUCK

Sure.

COACH SHOE

I was just updating the team on your status coach, but it looks like your presence speaks for itself.

COACH WILLIS

You're a brilliant man, Shooz. Very observant.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The players scatter and Chuck grabs a helmet and bat and steps into the batting cage.

Coach Shoe lobs the first pitch in like a slow pitch softball and Chuck cranks it to the playground out of the practice field.

TONY

Holy shit! Did you see where that ball landed?

DAVE

Relax, that was a lob ball.

Coach Shoe throws faster and faster and Chuck drives balls everywhere with many bouncing off fences.

Irv looks on from behind the batting cage.

COACH WILLIS

Looks like we got ourselves a "Natural" here.

INT. RED HORSE CAFÉ - DAY

Several members of the team are playing pool at the Red Horse Café and Recreation Center. The older men sit at a large table and drink coffee discussing the latest news.

Tony racks the balls for a game of pool as Gary and Dave have challenged Tony and Fitz to a friendly game. Gary is ready to break.

TONY

Why don't we make it interesting, say for five bucks?

Tony moves the rack away from the balls and Gary blasts the cue ball into the triangle of billiard balls. Tony turns his back for a moment to hang the ball rack.

DAVE

Keep your money Tone.

The eight ball rolls slowly into the corner pocket. As Fitz, leaning on his cue stick, and Tony stand slack jawed watching.

DAVE

Wow, I don't think I've ever seen  
that before!

Gary flashes a broad smile.

GARY

Like my grandpa always says,  
"better to be lucky than good."

GARY

(shrugs)

Dude, check out the twins.

Gary points to Fitz and Tony still stunned by the turn  
of events.

GARY

You know, you two slack-jawed  
yokels could pass for brothers if  
not twins.

DAVE

(laughs)

Fitz's new nickname: Tony-Twin.

GARY

Well, boys, it's probably for the  
best that we had a short game. I  
am going over to the swimming pool  
to talk to Annie.

DAVE

What makes you think she'll talk  
to you?

GARY

Hey, she's a captive audience.  
She's stuck working. She's not  
going anywhere.

DAVE

Good plan.

Lawrence plays a pinball machine in the corner as a  
couple of young girls giggle by his side.

GARY  
(yelling)  
Yo, Lawrence!

Lawrence turns and acknowledges with a nod. Lawrence's attire is baggie oversized jeans mysteriously defying gravity, a wife beater tank top, fake gold chains, dark Elvis Presley sunglasses, and finally he sports a bandana on his head.

LAWRENCE  
(yelling)  
'Sup, G?

Gary signals Lawrence to come over. Lawrence rubs each girl's shoulder.

LAWRENCE  
Ladies, take over my game.

Lawrence struts over as if he has a jungle beat going through his head.

LAWRENCE  
Yo, G!

Lawrence extends his hand and Gary clasps it and they pull in for a quick hug.

GARY  
MC Lawrence, I need you to do me a solid, soul brother.

LAWRENCE  
What you talkin' bout? Anything for you, G.

GARY  
I'm off to lay down my rap with that fine lady, Annie. So, I need you to partner up with Dave here to play some pool in my place.

Gary reaches in his pocket and slaps four quarters on the pool table.

LAWRENCE

I got your back, bro. Good luck  
with the lady.

Lawrence and Gary bump fists as Tony grabs the rack to  
start a new game. Gary heads out the door.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

The team rides in a big yellow school bus with the words  
"school" covered by duct tape. They bounce along down  
the highway. Players lean forward toward the aisle as  
Gary and Tony stare at each other in silence. Nobody  
says a thing.

ARIC

(whispering)

Come on, Tone.

Tony and Gary stare at each other expressionless. The  
players WHISPER amongst themselves. Most players wear  
shorts and t-shirts; some players are in various states  
of wearing their uniforms.

DAVE

Times up. Gary is victorious in  
this round of the "sick off."

Tony blinks along as he stammers.

TONY

D-d-damn it!

Half the players CHEER, half GROAN as Gary is recognized  
as the winner. The players relax and sit back in their  
seats. Gary imitates Tony, exaggerating every blink and  
stutter.

GARY

Th-th-that's the b-b-best y-y-ya  
can do?

TONY

Sh-sh-shit. You're the best,  
Gary.

GARY

You know what they say about imitation, it's the sincerest form of flattery, but when I imitate your stutter, I'm just mocking you.

TONY

I-I-I don't know where you come up with this stuff.

GARY

Hey, I'm just lucky you have a sister that's a whore. It's like an eternal spring of sick commentary I can draw from.

TONY

How can I top your line about, Jan's snail trail? It's j-j-just unfair.

GARY

I thought you might jump on Dave's mom, but I hear everyone does that.

Tony slaps Gary five. Dave rolls his eyes and shrugs.

DAVE

What did I do to draw your wrath?

TONY

Face it, Dave; your mom's a hotty. She's a lightning rod and I'd like to strike her with my lightning.

Tony stands and swivels his hips. And everyone has a good laugh. Tony sits back in his seat and digs through his duffle bag and gets out his baseball jersey. As he puts his jersey on, a tube of eye black falls to the floor and rolls near Gary's feet.

TONY

Hey, Gary, throw me the eye-cock.

GARY

What?

TONY

The eye-cock, the tube of eye black next to your foot. Y-y-you know, the anti-glare stuff?

GARY

What are you talking about? Eye-cock?

Gary reaches down and grabs the tube.

TONY

Any n-n-noun in the English Language can be substituted with the word cock. In this case, eye b-black already has a "C-K" at the end, so it makes a lot more sense.

GARY

(sarcastically)

Yeah, it makes total sense.

Gary tosses the tube back to Tony. Tony opens the cap of the tube that is like a lip balm applicator and makes a line on each cheek.

TONY

The t-t-tube itself is cock shaped and when you turn the knob at the end, it looks like a black dick coming at you. H-h-h-hence, eye-cock.

Tony holds up the tube.

TONY

(yelling)

Anybody else? Eye-cock?

GARY

(laughing)

I like to save my eye-cock for a little closer to game time.



INT. FRONT OF THE BUS - DAY

Coach Willis has his artificial leg detached, but still inside his uniform, bent the wrong way so he can tie his shoe while sitting normally on the bus seat. Coach Shoe drives the bus. Both coaches are oblivious to the players' escapades.

INT. BACK OF THE BUS - DAY

ROCK MUSIC PLAYS on a stereo system.

GARY

Can we get back to playing some cards? I need a little more money for the concession stand when we get to Bridgewood.

A group of players squeezes into the seats along the aisle as cards are dealt and coins CLANK into a baseball cap acting as the change pot. The song "Love and Affection" by Nelson PLAYS on the stereo.

TONY

C-c-crank it Lawrence!

Lawrence cranks the stereo and when the chorus arrives the team sings along with the song, substituting in the words "cock and erection" for the title lyric "love and affection."

EXT. BRIDGEWOOD BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The team plays well and wins the first game. They lose the second game of the double header with the substitute players playing most of the game.

EXT. RED HORSE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The team bus returns from Bridgewood game as the brakes SQUEAK to a stop. The players exit the bus for their cars lined up in the parking lot. Gary and Dave exit the bus and walk to their cars.

DAVE

Looks like you got comp'ny.

Annie is waiting in the passenger seat of Gary's truck.  
Music from the radio DRIFTS from the truck.

GARY

See you tomorrow, Dave.

Gary gets in the truck's driver side.

INT. GARY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

GARY

I see you found the key.

ANNIE

Your ultra secret key hiding spot,  
under the driver's floor mat, was  
no match for my brilliant mind.

GARY

Why are you here so late?

ANNIE

Uncle Irvin is coaching, so  
somebody has to shut things down  
at the café. How was the game?

GARY

We split. Our backups need some  
work, but I think we're pretty  
good.

Annie stares at Gary.

GARY

Listen, do you need a ride home?

ANNIE

Yeah, but let's not go quite yet.  
Maybe we can...talk.

Annie leans over and kisses Gary.

GARY

I'm listening...

EXT. BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Batting practice wears on in the early afternoon. Coach Willis and Coach Shoemaker stand behind the batting cage as the hitters take their swings against Fin.

COACH WILLIS

I want to get J.W. some playing time.

COACH SHOE

Why? He's terrible.

COACH WILLIS

I want to see if he can play at all. We need some people in reserve if we get dinged up a little.

COACH SHOE

I'm pretty sure J.W. is not cut out for this game.

J.W. KEATS, a nerd on every level, stumbles around a batting practice fly ball and awkwardly settles under the ball only to have it pop out of his glove.

COACH SHOE

(shaking his head)

See? This level has surpassed his ability.

COACH WILLIS

He tries hard. Effort goes along way in helping motivate teammates.

Out in the field Tony is up to his usual antics fielding a few batting practice balls, but mostly stuttering his way through stories, flailing his arms and gyrating oddly in order to embellish his tale.

COACH WILLIS

What do you think of the team so far, Shooz?

COACH SHOE

Best team in the north part of the state by a mile, near as I can tell.

COACH WILLIS

I would agree.

COACH SHOE

Could use some more pitching.  
(nods toward the pitcher)  
How about Fin out there?

COACH WILLIS

I don't want to rush him. Maybe keep his innings at a minimum, he's young. How about Chuck?

COACH SHOE

I suppose.

A CLANK of a metal bat is followed by the sick deep THUD of horsehide on flesh. Fin takes a solid shot off the side of his head. He crumples.

COACH SHOE

Shit!

Coach Shoe sprints to Fin who is laying knocked out cold flat on his back.

The team gathers around, and Fin regains consciousness.

FIN

(looking up)  
Hey, everybody.

COACH SHOE

(sighs)  
Oh, good. I thought maybe you were dead.

FIN

What happened? Hey, everybody.

Fin tries to sit up but is woozy.

COACH SHOE

You took a shot off the side of  
your head.

FIN

Hmm. I don't remember that. What  
was I doing?

COACH SHOE

Umm, throwing batting practice.

Coach Shoe looks up wide-eyed at Coach Willis.

COACH WILLIS

Shooz, take Fin home. Talk to his  
folks and make sure he gets a  
doctor's appointment.

Coach Shoe helps Fin to his feet. Fin is very wobbly as  
they walk toward the parking lot.

COACH WILLIS

Chuck, get up there and throw  
some. Who's up? Somebody get in  
the cage!

Batting practice resumes.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Bobby Shoemaker is moonlighting; playing some amateur  
baseball with the local Reedville team.  
Shooz steps up to the plate and on the first pitch he  
drives the ball deep into the darkness.

COACH SHOE

All right!

Coach Shoe circles the bases and touches home.

UMPIRE

Geez, Shooz, you are on fire.

COACH SHOE

What can I say? I've been eating  
my Wheaties.

Coach Shoe heads back to the dugout to high fives from teammates.

EXT. REEDVILLE BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Reedville Teeners are out in the field on defense. A high pop fly floats to centerfield where Chuck jogs in and positions his glove at his waist for a basket catch. Gary runs to back up the play from leftfield.

CHUCK

I got it!

The ball bounces off the tip of Chuck's glove and Gary grabs the miscue and throws the ball in to the infield.

GARY

What the Hell are you doing?

CHUCK

I'm sorry, man.

GARY

Sorry? Catch the ball with two hands like you are taught!

CHUCK

You're right. You're right. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

Gary runs back to his position in left field and shouts over his shoulder.

GARY

I don't want to hear it. You just do as you're taught.

The inning ends and the team runs to the dugout; everyone except Chuck. Chuck walks to the dugout and is the last to arrive.

GARY

Let's show some hustle!

Chuck reacts with innocence. He grabs the front of jersey as if saying, "Me?" Gary approaches Chuck.

CHUCK

What did I do?

GARY

Where do I start? You're hot-dogging cost us two runs; then you lollygag all over the field embarrassing us.

At the end of the bench Coach Shoe stands, but Coach Willis gestures him to sit.

COACH SHOE

You want to handle it?

COACH WILLIS

Let's just let it play out. They got to police themselves.

Gary gets in Chuck's face, but Chuck won't back down.

GARY

If you don't want to be part of this team, then just get out now.

Chuck stands and nods.

CHUCK

You're right, Gary. I'll do better.

GARY

I don't want to hear your lip service! Just do it!

Gary turns away as the dugout is tense and silent.

GARY

Let's get some runs!

Gary claps his hands, sits on the bench, and dons his batting gloves.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Chuck hangs out with younger teammates, JESSE FORD, a small for his age boy, and TURNER JACKSON, a dark featured version of Jesse. Jesse and Turner are both fourteen years old. The three boys stalk the candy aisle in the empty store.

CHUCK

(whispering)

Ok, you guys go up and talk real loud as you grab a couple Cokes, I'll lift us some candy bars.

JESSE

I don't know, man. My mom will be pissed if I get in trouble.

CHUCK

How can you get in trouble for talking? I'm doing the stealing. Now go.

TURNER

Come on, Jess.

Jesse and Turner raise a ruckus as they grab sodas from a cooler near the cash register. Chuck eyes the clerk and when she turns her attention to the sale, he begins grabbing the candy bars and shoving them in his pants.

CLERK

That's sixty-two cents.

The boys pay and leave.

INT. CAB OF CHUCK'S TRUCK - DAY

The boys drive down the street with Chuck at the wheel. Chuck reaches into his pants and begins to pull out candy bars.

TURNER

No way!

Chuck looks through the windshield and sees the city water tower.



CHUCK

You guys up for a real adventure tonight?

Turner and Jesse look at each other.

JESSE

Sure, I guess.

Chuck points to the water tower.

CHUCK

Tonight is a rite of passage for young men. We're going to leave our mark on the water tower.

TURNER

Whoa, man. I don't know if that's a good idea.

JESSE

Chuck, you think that's a good idea?

CHUCK

Come on, are you scared?

JESSE

Yeah!

CHUCK

It's gonna be awesome. We're going to turn the "Home of the Reedville Cardinals." Into the "Home of the Bluebirds."

Chuck points to the back seat.

CHUCK

Check it out; I already got some blue and orange paint. We'll do it real subtle. We'll just repaint the bird. I bet nobody even notices for a couple days!

EXT. BRAYTON BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The Brayton Teener team is in the division above Reedville. The baseball field and dugout are considerably nicer than Reedville's. Coach Willis and Coach Shoe stand in the dugout watching the team on defense.

COACH WILLIS

How's the amateur league treating you?

COACH SHOE

It's all right.

COACH WILLIS

Modest. I hear you're yanking home runs out left and right.

Reedville turns a perfect double play to end the inning.

COACH SHOE

Hey! Way to go, boys!

The Coaches clap as the team hustles off the field.

COACH WILLIS

Whigger, you hit for Hillmann and go to leftfield.

LAWRENCE

(pointing to himself)  
Are you talking to me?

COACH WILLIS

Yeah, who'd you think I was talking to? Get up there, Whigger!

COACH SHOE

Uh, Coach, you might want to lay off that nickname.

COACH WILLIS

What's the big deal? That's what I hear everyone calling him.

Coach Shoe leans in and whispers to Coach Willis. Coach Willis' expression changes and he nods.

COACH SHOE

...so, that's why we refer to him in public as Lawrence.

COACH WILLIS

Gotcha.

(turns to Lawrence)

You deaf, Lawrence, get up there and hit!

Lawrence takes off up the steps and grabs a bat. Coach Willis shrugs and looks at Coach Shoe.

COACH WILLIS

The team seems to be playing pretty good, eh?

COACH SHOE

Things seem to be comin' round fine.

The Reedville team pounds the bigger city team of Brayton in the midday double header.

INT. REEDVILLE TEAM BUS - DAY

The team bus pulls into the Red Horse parking lot after the Brayton game where the Chief of Police is waiting.

CHUCK

What are the cops doing here?

GARY

Irv is the Mayor, so he's the Chief's boss. Something must be going on.

Irv exits the bus and begins talking to the Chief. The team has moved over to the side of the bus to observe. A couple players gather their stuff and begin moving to the front of the bus.

CHUCK

They are pointing at something.

Irv shrugs and the Chief points both hands toward the water tower.

GARY

I'm getting off the bus.

Gary gets up and grabs his bag and moves out.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUS - DAY

The Chief and Irv are still talking.

CHIEF

So, our beautiful, red cardinal looks like a bluebird!

COACH WILLIS

Let me guess, you have no suspects.

CHIEF

Shoot, I don't even know when it happened. They did a pretty good job.

Chuck passes by the Chief and hears the bluebird reference.

COACH WILLIS

God damn, Chief, you figure out who did this! I love that red bird!

Coach Willis spits his tobacco at the Chief's feet.

CHIEF

I'm on it Irv, I, um, er, Mr. Mayor.

MONTAGE - GARY AND ANNIE ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY

- Pool - Annie works as a lifeguard; Gary pretends to drown as Annie has to dive in and rescue him.
- County Fair - Annie and Gary enjoy a ride on the Ferris Wheel.
- Fourth of July Fireworks - Annie and Gary sit close under a blanket.

EXT. REEDVILLE BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The team plays catch to warm up for the game. Gary, Tony, and Dave are all adjacent to each other as they toss the ball to their partners. Lawrence approaches the group as the warm-up tosses wind down.

LAWRENCE

My dad said he heard a rumor that Shooz signed a thirty-day minor league contract and was heading out.

GARY

What?

LAWRENCE

I'm serious. I swear.

Lawrence raises his right hand.

DAVE

Why in the Hell is he still here then?

TONY

It must have been only a rumor.

FIN

I saw in the paper Shooz had hit something like twenty home runs in fifteen games this month in amateurs.

TONY

Holy crap! Maybe it is true. Gary, go ask him.

GARY

Forget it. He'll be all over my ass. You do it.

The group stares into the dugout where Coach Shoe is chatting with Coach Willis.

INT. DUGOUT - DAY

Coach Shoe looks at the group just standing around and waves them into the dugout.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - DAY

With Reedville out in the field on defense, Fin sits in the dugout keeping the scorebook. He is not watching when the opponent's left-handed batter fouls a baseball through the dugout opening.

COACH SHOE

Look out!

It is too late. Fin takes the ball right off the side of his head and the book flies in the air as he slumps to the dugout floor.

COACH SHOE

Lawrence, get some ice.

Lawrence runs for the concession stand as Coach Shoe helps Fin. Fin is woozy as he gets up and sits down on the bench as Lawrence returns with a bag of ice. Fin puts the ice on his head.

FIN

Here, Lawrence, you keep the stupid score book.

LAWRENCE

No problemo.

Reedville trounces the opponent in a double-header. The team is firing on all cylinders. The game ends and the teams shake hands. The field has cleared out and Coach Shoe and Coach Willis are the only ones left putting equipment away.

COACH WILLIS

I saw your name in the paper again. Two more homeruns. Wow.

COACH SHOE

Yeah, I wanted to talk to you about that.

COACH WILLIS

What, you need some hitting tips?  
I don't think I can help you  
there.

Coach Shoe laughs.

INT. COACH SHOEMAKER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Coach Shoe arrives home after the game to his dark house. He flips on the light and starts unbuttoning his uniform shirt. His phone message light is blinking. He presses the button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hey, Bobby, this is Barry Nelson  
with the River Dogs. I need to  
know if you want to sign that  
thirty day contract. We could use  
you. Give me a call back.

The machine BEEPS. Coach Shoe picks up the letter with the contract and takes the contents of the envelope and stares at it. Coach Shoe sits and flips through the contract again.

EXT. DOWNTOWN REEDVILLE - NIGHT

Barricades block Main Street Reedville for the Sunflower Days Festival. Tonight is the street dance. A country band PLAYS LIVE MUSIC. Gary and Annie stand in the crowd swaying to the music.

ANNIE

You guys have this festival every  
year?

GARY

Sure.

ANNIE

It's fun.

Dave, Tony, and ZACH STIKKER emerge from the crowd having located Gary. Zach, fourteen years old, is a younger Teener player and neighbor of Dave. Zach is average size, but a good second baseman for a first year Teener.

GARY

What's up Dave?

Gary slaps Dave five.

DAVE

We're huntin'. We've located the herd; now we're puttin' on the stalk.

Dave points to a group of girls.

GARY

I wish I could come with ya, but I've been tagged by this one.

Gary pulls Annie close.

GARY

Yeah, it was like Wild Kingdom. She shot me with a tranquilizer dart and the next thing I know I got this big radio collar around my neck.

ANNIE

Yes, but you loved it.

GARY

At least you guys are giving them a sporting chance, you know; bringing Tony along. He's like woman repellent.

TONY

I'm feeling lucky tonight.

Gary holds his hand to his ear.

GARY

Shhh. Did you hear that? Some girl just screamed; she's realizing that her desperate attempt for company may leave her no choice but Tony.



TONY

The Tonester doesn't mind a p-p-pity hand job.

DAVE

Which hand will you be using tonight there, Tonester? Your left or your right.

Tony reaches deep into this front pocket and digs around.

TONY

H-h-h-hey, Dave, I got something right here in my pocket for you.

Tony pulls his hand out of his pocket with his middle finger extended and waves it in front of Dave's face.

TONY

Y-Y-You can keep it.

DAVE

(smiles)  
With pleasure.

TONY

Sh-sh-shut up. Let's go; time's a-wasting!

GARY

See you later.

DAVE

Not if we can help it. Wish us luck.

Dave and the other guys disappear into the crowd heading towards the girls.

GARY

(yelling)  
Good luck!

Annie stares at Gary.

ANNIE

Do you realize that your friends are grotesquely rude, and you become just like them when they come around?

GARY

And your point is?

Annie shakes her head. Gary grabs Annie's hand.

GARY

What do you say? Should we try to get up by the stage and dance?

ANNIE

Sure.

Gary and Annie disappear into the crowded street.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - DAY

It's 9:00 am and the doorbell rings. Gary's mom, MARY HILLMANN, answers the door to find Annie. Mary Hillmann is 40 years old, petite, with short cropped hair.

MARY

Hi, Annie. Come in. Gary's still asleep. I'll go get him up. You guys were out late last night, but it's time for him to get up.

ANNIE

I just wanted to drop off his stuff. Gary left his shoes in my car when he put his boots on. He thought he could dance better in his boots versus his basketball shoes.

MARY

Oh yeah? How did it go?

ANNIE

As it turns out, he can't dance in any footwear.

Mary laughs.

MARY

Have a seat. I'll go to the  
basement and get him.

Annie sits at the counter on a stool. Mary returns from  
the basement.

MARY

Did you want some orange juice?

ANNIE

Sure. Did you go to the dance  
last night?

MARY

We went for an hour or so. Harry  
is golfing in some tournament this  
weekend in Brayton.

Gary emerges from the basement a little bleary-eyed.  
Mary pours two glasses of orange juice.

GARY

Hey, what are you doing here?

ANNIE

I had your shoes and your hat and  
didn't know if you'd need them  
immediately.

GARY

Oh. Thanks.

MARY

Well, I have to head up to the  
Church for an hour or so. We are  
hosting the potluck tomorrow.  
Don't forget.

GARY

(rolling his eyes)  
Ok, Mom.

Mary grabs the keys to her car and starts out the door, but stops. She turns and grabs a large envelope from the desk.

MARY

I almost forgot. Here is the final registration packet for Kirtland Prep Academy. You need to fill it out right away.

Mary sets the envelope on the counter in front of Gary and turns to go.

MARY

See you later.

Mary leaves. The shock of Mary's prep school comment is written all over Annie's face. Annie reaches for the envelope and looks at the return address and crest as she traces her finger over the embossed lettering.

ANNIE

I don't understand. You're leaving Reedville?

Annie sinks lower onto the stool.

GARY

I was going to tell you, but I was waiting for a better time.

A tear runs down Annie's cheek.

ANNIE

When is the best time to break my heart?

GARY

I'm sorry, I should have told you. This is very important to me. This prep school may get me into the best universities in the world.

ANNIE

I can't believe this.

Tears stream down Annie's face.

ANNIE

I can't...

(pause)

I just...

(pause)

I was telling Uncle Irv and Aunt Daisy that I would like to move here for the school year. They said they would talk to my parents.

Gary moves to try to hug Annie, but she pushes him away.

ANNIE

Don't. Don't you dare.

Annie gets up to leave.

GARY

Annie!

Annie runs to the door. The sobs starting to shake her body as she wipes her eyes. The door slams.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Batting practice has wrapped. Gary tosses his gear in the back of his truck as Dave stows his equipment in his car.

DAVE

It's gonna be a hot one today.  
You want to hit the pool this  
afternoon?

GARY

I can't. Annie will be there.

Gary kicks off one of his spikes and hops around on one foot while trying to slip on his hi-top basketball shoe.

DAVE

What? You guys broke up?

Dave unties his spike and rummages through his bag for shoes.

GARY

She found out I was going to leave for prep school and flipped out. She won't return my calls.

DAVE

Do you want me to talk to her?

Dave finds a pair of beat up flip-flops in his bag and tosses them on the gravel parking lot. Dave pulls his socks off and slips on his flip-flops.

GARY

I'm not sure what she thought was going to happen. The way she acted you'd thought we were engaged to be married.

DAVE

I'll talk to her.

GARY

I don't know; it probably won't do much good.

DAVE

(shrugs)

It can't hurt.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

The swimming pool is crowded on a hot afternoon. Kids jump in from the side and splash. Dave is on the diving board and cannonballs into the pool with a tremendous splash. Annie looks on from her lifeguard chair. Dave climbs from the pool and approaches Annie.

DAVE

Hey, Annie, how'd ya like my cannonball?

Annie sits on her chair not looking at Dave, but watching the pool.

Annie twirls her whistle on it's lanyard around her finger in one direction and then the other as it wraps around her finger. Annie has a serious look on her face.

ANNIE

Hi, Dave.

Dave stands, dripping wet, next to the elevated chair looking up. Annie is tan and tone. She wears her bikini swimsuit to expose as much skin as possible. Her sunglasses shield her eyes and she has zinc to protect her nose.

DAVE

Gary, says, "Hi."

Annie takes a quick look at Dave and then continues to scan the pool.

ANNIE

(sarcastically)

You're his messenger-boy now?

DAVE

Nope, just a good will ambassador.

ANNIE

I don't need one.

DAVE

Listen, Annie. How do you think I felt when I found out he might leave? He didn't say anything to me; Gary's Mom said something to my mom.

Annie again glances quickly at Dave and back to the pool.

DAVE

I told him I heard a rumor he was leaving. He confirmed it, and he asked me to keep it quiet.

Kids in the pool wrestle with each other and Annie blows her whistle.

ANNIE

(yelling)

Stuart, Mikey! You are out of the pool for ten minutes! I warned you once already.

The ten-year old kids begrudgingly climb out of the pool and lay down on the warm concrete.

DAVE

Like I said, how do you think I felt? Gary and I have been friends since we were born and he never said "boo" to me about leaving.

ANNIE

If he can't share important things with people that care about him that's his problem. He can deal with it by himself.

Annie looks down at Dave.

ANNIE

Why is he like that?

DAVE

He's just that way. I guess he doesn't want a lot of drama or to hurt people's feelings. Or, he doesn't want to get hurt himself.

Dave shrugs.

DAVE

I guess it's a defense mechanism.

Annie stares out across the pool. She shakes her head.

DAVE

Anyway, you don't see me shunning him for this and I don't think you should either. He's a good guy.



Dave starts to walk away. Annie blows her whistle.

ANNIE  
(yelling)  
Dave, no running!

Dave turns around with a quizzical look on his face. Annie finally smiles a bit and waves Dave off. Dave waves back.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Another practice is over and the players put their gear in their cars. Gary chats with Dave parked next to him.

GARY  
How's your calf?

Dave flexes his leg.

DAVE  
I'm sure it will be fine.

Zach pulls up on his mo-ped motor scooter with his duffle bag slung over his back. The sound of a REVVING car engine interrupts the conversation.

ZACH  
Hey, guys. What time does the bus leave for the conference tournament?

GARY  
Be there at 9:45 am, we leave at 10:00 am.

ZACH  
Sounds good.

Zach pulls away on his mo-ped to the sound of Aric's REVVING Camaro engine. Aric spins his tires and backs out in front of Zach. Zach swerves, but crashes into the back end of Aric's car.

DAVE  
Oh my God!

Aric jumps out of his car.

ARIC

What the Hell are you doing?

Dave and Gary run over to help Zach who is holding his arm. Zach is starting to cry.

ARIC

You dented my fucking car!

Aric inspects the damage to his car. Gary stands up and marches over to Aric.

GARY

You're worried about your car?

Gary shoves Aric, and Aric looks scared.

GARY

You could'a killed Zach!

ARIC

Take it easy, Gary. I'm sorry.

GARY

You're sorry? Tell it to the cops, douche bag. I'm calling the police.

ZACH

It's ok, Gary. I'm all right.

GARY

Bullshit. Look at your mo-ped. It's totaled.

ARIC

Don't worry about it; I'll get Zach a new mo-ped. You're right this was my fault. I'll take care of it. We don't need the cops.

DAVE

Hey, Zach, get in my car. I'll take you home.

ZACH

Thanks, Dave. Just forget the cops. I'm fine.

GARY

Are you sure?

ZACH

It was just an accident.

Zach tries to pick up his bag, but can't lift it.

ZACH

Damn it! My wrist.

DAVE

I'll get your bag.

Dave helps Zach get in the car and throws his bag in the back seat.

GARY

I'll load up your mo-ped in the back of my truck and get it to your house.

Gary grabs the busted up mo-ped.

GARY

Aric, help me load this up in my truck.

Gary scowls at Aric.

ARIC

It was my fault. I was just fucking around. Now my dad's gonna kill me for denting the car.

GARY

Live and learn.

They load the mo-ped in the back of Gary's truck.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

The team boards the bus to head to the conference tournament. Zach shows up with a cast on his wrist.

GARY

Oh my God! You broke your wrist?

Zach holds up the cast.

ZACH

Yeah.

Everyone looks at Aric; a few people rip their hats off their heads and whip them at Aric.

ARIC

It was an accident! I said I was sorry! Ow.

Coach Willis ambles back from the Red Horse to the bus and climbs up the stairs into the bus.

COACH WILLIS

Chuck's not going to make it. I just talked to his step-dad, and they are in the middle of the wheat harvest and field work.

J.W.

That's bullshit! My dad let me go, and we're doing the same thing.

COACH WILLIS

Take it easy. We'll be fine. Let's go, Shooz.

Coach Shoe starts the bus and they roll out of the parking lot.

INT. BACK OF THE TEAM BUS - DAY

The team plays some nickel and dime poker as the bus bounces down the highway. Tony throws down his cards as he loses again.

TONY

F-f-f-fixed! That game was fixed!

GARY

T-T-T-Tony! You should be fixed. That's my recurring nightmare, a herd of fat baby Tonies roaming the streets devouring all food in sight.

A good laugh goes through the bus.

TONY

Y-y-y-ya' want some of this? B-b-b-bring it on!

GARY

Luckily for all of us, nobody wants any of that. So, thankfully we are not in any danger of little Tonies.

Most of the bus laughs.

DAVE

It is true.

TONY

St-s-s-st-stay out of this, Dave. This is between me and Gary.

DAVE

Whatever dude.

GARY

I'm in no mood for a "sick off," Tony. So, unbunch your panties and relax.

TONY

Sc-Sc-Sc-Sc-Scared?

GARY

I just don't want to go up against your big family today.

Gary points at Tony.

GARY

You got you, Tony-Tone-Tonester.

Gary points at Fitz.

GARY

You got Tony-Twin.

Gary points at Dave.

GARY

You got, Tony-Twin 2.

DAVE

Hey.

GARY

Sorry, Dave, but you guys are the same proportion.

DAVE

Fine.

Gary points at Fin.

GARY

Tony-Twitch, the spastic Tony, also known as Ghost-Tony.

Gary points to Jesse.

GARY

Then there's Tony-Dick, the little guy, representing your micro-penis.

Gary signals toward Turner.

GARY

Don't forget Tony-Smell. Enough said about that. Last, but not least, Tony-King a.k.a Tony-Douche.

Gary points to Aric.

GARY

Aric, what can I say? You are the  
Toniest. And I don't mean that in  
a good way.

Aric stands and bows in acknowledgement.

TONY

Hey! That hurts. B-b-b-but, you  
forgot you. You are Tony-Sick.  
You got the sickest, gutter mind.

Gary laughs and gives Tony a high five.

GARY

I guess we'll call it a draw.

The song "Girl You Know It's True" by Milli Vanilli  
starts up on the stereo.

GARY

Crank it Lawrence!

Lawrence cranks the music.

LAWRENCE

These guys are going to be bigger  
than The Beatles.

GARY

(laughs)

Yeah, and there will be a Black  
President in our lifetime.

LAWRENCE

You really think so?

GARY

That's called sarcasm, son.

Lawrence busts his best Milli Vanilli moves.

EXT. CLARKSTON BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The first Conference Tournament game is underway with  
runners at first and second, Gary is at the plate, and  
nobody out. Gary stands in ready to swing.

COACH WILLIS  
Hillmann, Hillmann! Hey, G MANN!

Coach Willis, coaching at third base, wants Gary's attention.

GARY  
Time out!

The ump grants time, and Gary steps out and looks toward Coach Willis. Coach Willis is standing in the coaching box grabbing his belt buckle. Gary looks quizzically at Coach Willis.

GARY  
(whispering to himself)  
Oh, no. Not the bunt sign.

Gary steps back in to the batter's box. Coach Shooz claps loudly in the first base coaching box. The pitcher stretches and delivers to the plate and the base runners take off. Gary bunts the ball in the air back to the pitcher.

COACH SHOE  
Baccck! Get Back!

The pitcher catches the ball turns to second and throws the ball to the shortstop who tosses the ball to first base turning a triple play. The Clarkston dugout and team go crazy in celebration. Gary drags himself back to the dugout. Coach Shoe jogs by Gary

COACH SHOE  
Show some hustle!

Reedville is getting shellacked by Clarkston 9-2 in the fifth inning. Gary comes to the plate. He takes a pitch for a strike and takes two hefty swings and strikes out.

COACH SHOE  
Hustle back!

Gary tosses his bat aside and rips open the Velcro on his batting gloves. He flips his helmet towards the bat rack and the helmet bounces off its earflap high into the air.



COACH SHOE

Lawrence, you're in for Hillmann!  
You're done, Hillmann, grab some  
bench.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

Gary knows he was wrong; he sits in the dugout next to  
Coach Willis.

GARY

Sorry, coach.

COACH WILLIS

(waves his hand)

Ahhh. Don't worry about it.

Coach Willis pats Gary on the leg.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Dave steps into bat. He watches two strikes go by.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

COACH WILLIS

Come on, Dave! What are you  
waiting for, a lollipop?

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Dave takes a hefty swing and misses, striking out.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

COACH WILLIS

You're ok. You're doing a heck of  
a job catching, Brownie!

Coach Willis leans over to Gary.

COACH WILLIS

Can we get Dave some hitting help?

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Reedville plays defense; a little pop-up rises over second base. J.W. staggers under the ball and drops it. He picks the ball up and throws it into the crowd.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

COACH WILLIS

That's ok, J.W!

Coach Willis claps and sits on the bench.

COACH WILLIS

Jesus, J.W. Can't Catch. Can't throw. Can't hit. Can't run. Balls are too big. Dick's too short.

Everyone on the bench snickers quietly.

COACH WILLIS

Shooz! Didn't I ask you earlier this year to play J.W. more to see if he could handle it?

COACH SHOE

Yeah.

COACH WILLIS

Does it look like he can handle it?

COACH SHOE

No, Coach.

COACH WILLIS

Well, we need to figure out how to replace Zach and his broken wrist.

COACH SHOE

Will do, Coach.

GARY

Why don't we give Lawrence a chance at second base?

COACH WILLIS

Shooz, talk to Lawrence and give him some ground balls at second.

COACH SHOE

I gotcha, coach.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Reedville loses the game and shakes hands with Clarkston. The team loads up the bus. Coach Shoe starts the bus and drives forward a bit, but stops and turns the bus off. He gets up and addresses the team.

COACH SHOE

You call that an effort out there today? I'm embarrassed.

Coach Shoe points towards Gary.

COACH SHOE

Bunting into a triple-play. Fu-u-u-u-c-c-k-k. Might as well hand it over to them on a silver platter.

Coach Shoe returns to the driver's seat, starts the bus, and drives forward. The team sits quietly.

GARY

Wow. A truly inspirational speech.

The tension is broken.

GARY

Let's play some cards.

The stereo is cranked and the cards are shuffled. Warrant's "Cherry Pie" blares loudly.

INT. GARY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Gary opens a large envelope with the Kirtland Academy emblem embossed on the outside. The letter attached to the class catalog opens with the word "Congratulations."

EXT. BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The team readies for batting practice. The players play catch to warm up their arms. Coach Willis has the schedule for the Region Tourney.

COACH WILLIS

Everyone gather 'round here!

The team closes in around the coach.

COACH WILLIS

Looks like we caught a break. You have a chance at redemption. We drew Clarkston in the first round, so now you can makeup for your flop in the Conference Tourney.

The team collectively MURMURS affirmation.

COACH SHOE

I have the schedule on a handout for everyone after hitting. Let's get some good rips in the cage today. Be sharp. Dave, you hit first. I'll throw to you.

The team scatters to shag balls as Shooz tosses to Dave. Dave is in a major slump. Whiffing at batting practice speed pitches and when making contact, rolling dribblers down the third base line.

TONY

(yelling)

Jesus, Dave. Give us some action out here!

Dave waves at a couple more pitches.

TONY

(yelling)

Thanks for the cool breeze, Big Man!

Dave steps out, shakes his head in disgust, and gets back in the cage.

After a series of dribblers in the dirt to shortstop, Tony moves to that area. Gary trails after him.

TONY

(yelling)

Here's the deal, Dave. I am going to stand here and give you a clean shot at my gonads. All you have to do is hit a line drive and you will cripple me for life.

Tony throws down his glove and shoves his hips forward. Tony cups his hands and yells.

TONY

Free shot!

Tony points both hands at his groin.

GARY

(yelling)

Dave, take that new bat that I've been using. It's a little lighter and brand-spanking new. I think you'll like it.

Dave exits the batting cage and grabs the new bat. He takes one practice swing and steps back in the cage. Shooz lays a fat pitch down the middle and Dave cracks the ball on a line right at Tony.

Tony freezes in surprise and at the last second Gary snags the ball in front of Tony's groin. The momentum of the ball takes Gary's glove into Tony's crotch and he buckles over.

TONY

(squeaks)

No!

GARY

I don't know why I did that. I could have let it go and prevented the world from being tortured by a plague of little Tonies.

The team is falling down laughing as Dave points at Tony with his new bat. Tony lies on the ground flat on his back covering his balls with his hands.

TONY

No need to thank me, D-D-Dave.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Practice ends for the day and Coach Shoe has called the team around him.

COACH SHOE

Guys, I have an announcement. I signed a thirty day contract to play minor league ball down in Iowa. I hate to leave, but this might be my one and only chance.

LAWRENCE

I knew it!

A MURMUR goes through the team. Coach Shoe raises his hands to quiet everyone.

COACH SHOE

I talked with Coach Irv. Sammy, my brother, will help out.

DAVE

Good luck, Coach.

COACH SHOE

Thanks, Dave. I have a request before I go. Hutton is hosting the state tourney. That is where I grew up. So, it would give me great pleasure to hear that you won the championship in my home town.

A CHEER goes up from the team. Gary steps forward and shakes Coach Shoe's hand and a line forms behind Gary as everyone shakes Coach Shoe's hand.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

The team is loaded on the bus and ready to depart for the Region Tourney. Coach SAMMY SHOEMAKER, Bobby's brother, a rough around the edges, older, near-carbon copy of Bobby is at the wheel.

SAMMY

Ready, Coach?

COACH WILLIS

Yup, let's get 'er in gear.

Sammy starts the bus and puts it in gear. Chuck's car makes a sliding stop in front of the bus and Chuck's mom jumps out of the car's driver's seat.

COACH SAMMY

Holy shit!

Sammy slams on the brakes throwing everyone on the bus for a lurch. Coach Willis steps off the bus to talk to Chuck's mom. Chuck gets out of the car with his gear. Everyone on the bus goes to the side of the action to see what is going on.

EXT. OUTSIDE TEAM BUS - DAY

COACH WILLIS

Hi, Ms. Fisher.

LORRAINE

Hi, Irvin. It's actually Mrs. Stevens now, but call me Lorraine, please.

COACH WILLIS

Ok, Lorraine.

LORRAINE

I had a little talk with Chuck's step-dad and found out that the tournaments are still going on. We've been busy, and well, when I found out that Mr. Stevens had prevented Chuck from playing, I about blew a gasket.

Chuck steps close to his mom.

LORRAINE

So, if it's not too late, I'd like to have Chuck join the team again. It wasn't his fault he missed the other games.

COACH WILLIS

I see no problem. Step aboard Chuck.

Chuck jumps on the bus.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

Chuck raises his arms in victory.

CHUCK

(yelling)

I'm back, baby!

Chuck takes a seat in the back to high fives.

EXT. OUTSIDE TEAM BUS - DAY

Lorraine hugs Coach Willis.

LORRAINE

Thanks, Coach. If anything comes up, you call me, not Mr. Stevens. And please let me know the times of all the upcoming games.

COACH WILLIS

Sure, Lorraine.

Coach Willis climbs on the bus and Coach Sammy fires up the engine and pulls out of the lot.

EXT. YORK BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

MONTAGE - REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

-Reedville players score on hit after hit.

-Reedville players make amazing defensive plays



EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

FIN

I'm going to the concession stand.  
Coach you need something?

COACH SAMMY

No, thanks.

Fin exits the dugout.

EXT. YORK BASEBALL FIELD CONCESSIONS - NIGHT

Reedville crushes its opponents on its way to the Regional Tournament Championship and earning a trip to the state tournament. Fin stands in line at the concession stand looking at the menu. He moves to order.

FIN

Let me see...

The CLANK of the metal bat RINGS in the background and people SHUFFLE around the concession stand.

FIN

(scratching his chin)

I will have...

A foul ball curls over the netting and CONKS off of Fin's head dropping him in front of everyone at the concession stand.

FIN

Why is this happening to me?

Blood trickles down Fin's forehead as the bean-ball-foul has split his skin under his hair.

FIN

Could I have some ice? And a hot dog...

(pause)

Please?

Fin heads back to the dugout with ice on his head and his snack in hand.

EXT. YORK BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

MONTAGE - REGIONAL TOURNAMENT WRAPS UP

-The final out is recorded and Reedville players celebrate around the winning pitcher, Chuck.  
 -Fin jumps around holding ice on his head.  
 -After the game, many players jump and wrestle on their beds in their hotel room damaging furniture.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It is 3:30 am. A commotion occurs in the parking lot. Police car lights flash and reflect off the windows. Chuck is drunk and arguing with a POLICE OFFICER as another cruiser pulls into the lot.

CHUCK

I didn't do anything!

OFFICER 1

Son, please put your hands on the car.

CHUCK

I don't understand!

OFFICER 1

Put your hands on the car.

Chuck complies; Officer1 cuffs Chuck, and searches him.

CHUCK

What did I do?

OFFICER 1

We received a disturbance call and I pulled into to see you kicking the Coke machine.

CHUCK

It's illegal to get a Coke? The machine took my money.

Players are emerging from their rooms bleary-eyed looking at the spectacle that is Chuck.

OFFICER 1

Have you been drinking son? You reek of alcohol.

CHUCK

No.

(pause)

Maybe a little.

The officer takes a pint of whiskey from Chuck's oversized shorts pocket. Only a few drops remain in the bottle.

COACH WILLIS

What's going on, Officer? He's one of our players.

OFFICER 1

This boy is under arrest for disorderly conduct, underage consumption, and public drunkenness. You can bail him out tomorrow.

Chuck is loaded into the back of the police cruiser.

INT. RED HORSE CAFÉ - NIGHT

The Reedville Teener players and their parents have gathered at the Red Horse. Coach Willis stands in front of players and parents.

COACH WILLIS

We have received a bill from the motel in York. As most you know, there was damage to many of the rooms. Broken chairs, beds, and whatnot.

Parents nod their heads while players try not to make eye contact with any adult.

COACH WILLIS

We divided the bill amongst the players and it comes to forty-eight dollars apiece.

Gary gets up and walks to where his parents are sitting in a booth. HARRY HILLMANN, Gary's father sits with his wife. Harry is a 40-year older version of Gary.

GARY

This is ridiculous. My room didn't have any damage, why should I pay?

HARRY

It's ok. I appreciate what you're saying, but this is a team. Go ahead, we'll handle this.

GARY

No.

Gary goes to the middle of the room.

GARY

I have something to say. Dave, Zach, Fin, and I had no damage to our room. I believe that we should not be penalized.

Silence reigns and all eyes are on Gary as walks and sits with Dave in a corner booth. The crowd MURMURS and CONVERSATIONS break out full force. A few moments later Coach Willis stands again.

COACH WILLIS

We have reached a consensus, and each player will be assessed forty-eight dollars for the damage.

Gary shakes his head in disgust.

COACH WILLIS

I'm now going to ask the parents to leave as the team has a decision to make.

The parents leave and the team gathers around Coach Willis.

COACH WILLIS

Fellas, I have always tried to let the team police itself.

Coach Willis shrugs.

COACH WILLIS

I debated over this, but I finally decided I would indeed let you be judge, jury, and if necessary, hangman, on this decision.

Coach Willis pauses and looks over the group.

COACH WILLIS

Chuck, come over here.

Chuck moves front and center.

COACH WILLIS

Everyone knows what happened at the motel. Chuck do you have anything to say?

Chuck looks around at his peers. He is a little shaky, but steadies himself.

CHUCK

I'm sorry, guys. That's it. I know I embarrassed everyone, and I'm really sorry.

COACH WILLIS

I'm going to ask Chuck to leave, and the team will vote on whether he remains on the Teener team. Ok, Chuck, step outside please.

GARY

Chuck, just so you know, I'm voting to kick you off the team.

Chuck hangs his head as he walks out the door.

COACH WILLIS

Anyone have anything to say?

GARY

I think I've made it clear where I stand. I will be embarrassed to play in the state tournament with him on the team.

Gary points in the direction Chuck departed.

GARY

I like to win as much as the next guy, maybe even more. But, knowing that we are a laughing-stock and that we will do anything to win; nope, that's not for me.

Gary pauses and looks at everyone.

GARY

You guys vote the way you want.

COACH WILLIS

Any other comments?

(pause)

All right, a simple majority rules, those in favor of keeping Chuck on the team, say aye.

MOST PLAYERS

Aye.

COACH WILLIS

Those against Chuck remaining with the team, say nay?

GARY, DAVE, ZACH, AND FIN

(together)

Nay.

COACH WILLIS

Chuck stays with the team.

Gary turns to leave in disgust.

GARY

See ya, Dave. I gotta get out of here.

Gary hustles out the door to his truck.

EXT. RED HORSE CAFÉ PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gary is almost at his truck. Annie, who was waiting tables, has followed Gary out, but stays back a short distance.

ANNIE

Aren't you going to say, "Hi"?

GARY

Sorry. Hi, Annie.

ANNIE

I missed you. I thought about it a lot, and I'm sorry. I had these great expectations and I...

(pause)

I'm sorry.

GARY

I should have told you right away. But, I wasn't even accepted yet. I just got the final notice the other day. I made it.

ANNIE

Congratulations!

GARY

Thanks. It's a big deal for me.

Annie comes closer to Gary.

ANNIE

How about a congratulatory hug?

GARY

Sure.

Annie steps forward and Gary hugs her, but Gary breaks it off quickly.

GARY

Sorry, I gotta get away from here.  
I just can't be around these guys  
right now.

ANNIE

Can I come with you?

GARY

What? Don't you have to work?

ANNIE

I'll just ditch. Uncle Irv can  
close down tonight.

GARY

All right, jump in.

Gary and Annie drive away. They head out into the  
country away from the lights of town. They park on a  
secluded approach.

EXT. BACK OF GARY'S PICKUP - NIGHT

Gary and Annie lie down in the back of the truck looking  
at the stars. A falling star streaks across the sky.

ANNIE

Wow! Did you see that?

GARY

Yeah. Beautiful.

Silence as they both stare straight up at the sky.

GARY

I have something for you.

ANNIE

I know. I can feel it against  
my leg.

GARY

What? No! Get your mind out of  
the gutter. I'm trying to be  
serious.



ANNIE

God, I'm just kidding. Take it easy.

Gary props himself on his elbow and reaches into his pocket.

ANNIE

So help me God, if you pull your hand out of your pocket with your middle finger raised and flip me off, I am going to give you a fat lip.

GARY

(laughs)

What is with you?

Gary pulls out a medallion on a chain from his pocket.

ANNIE

What is it?

GARY

It's a Saint Christopher medal. My Grandpa gave it to me. Saint Christopher is the patron Saint for travelers and it's supposed to be for good luck.

ANNIE

I can't take this.

GARY

I want you to have it. I want you to always remember this summer.

Gary puts the chain over Annie's head.

GARY

I know it's kind of gaudy, but you don't have to wear it. I used to just keep it in my bag with my baseball stuff and rub it for luck before the game.

Gary lies on his back and looks at the sky.

ANNIE

Thanks.

Annie looks back to they sky and reaches for Gary's hand.

ANNIE

I know we have different journeys  
ahead of each of us and I  
shouldn't have gotten angry.

Annie stares straight up into the sky. Gary shifts his  
eyes a bit to see Annie.

ANNIE

I was just enjoying things so  
much. I didn't want it to end.  
That envelope broke the spell for  
me and I just lost it.

Gary looks skyward again.

GARY

I guess that's why I didn't say  
anything either. I didn't want  
the spell to be broken.

Annie and Gary lie silently enjoying the night sky.

EXT. BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The team gathers around the coaches.

COACH WILLIS

Settle down, fellas. Coach Sammy  
has the details on the State  
Tournament. Take it away, Sam.

COACH SAMMY

You probably are aware the  
tournament is in Hutton. The team  
will be staying in Yankton.

TONY

Where the Hell is Hutton?

COACH SAMMY

Near Yankton, i.e. we are staying  
in Yankton.

FIN

Is that near Rapid City?

COACH SAMMY

What? No! Don't you know  
anything about South Dakota  
Geography?

TONY

I think it is pretty obvious we  
don't.

COACH SAMMY

Well, just tell your parents the  
team will be staying in Yankton.  
More importantly...

Coach Sammy stops. Coach Sammy looks at each player.  
He looks at Coach Willis, who gives him a nod.

COACH SAMMY

We have an opportunity.

Coach Willis looks on nodding in agreement.

COACH SAMMY

I have looked at the tournament  
schedule and in this single  
elimination tournament; we are the  
favorite.

Coach Sammy paces a little. Dave and Gary look at each  
other and shrug.

COACH SAMMY

We can win this thing, but it's  
going to take concentration. So,  
let's start today with this  
batting practice.

Coach Sammy puts his hand out.

COACH SAMMY

Everybody put your hand in on  
mine; concentration on three, one,  
two, three...

Everyone puts their hand in the middle and echoes Coach  
Sammy as they push their hands down.

ENTIRE TEAM

(together weakly)  
Concentration!

COACH SAMMY

All right, I'll throw to the first  
four batters let's get somebody in  
the cage!

The huddle breaks up and the players disperse to shag  
balls for batting practice. Coach Willis is alone with  
Coach Sammy on the mound.

COACH WILLIS

Don't worry. They'll warm up to  
ya.

Coach Willis slaps Coach Sammy on the shoulder and walks  
towards the back of the batting cage.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD OUTFIELD - DAY

Dave, Gary, Tony, Fin, and Lawrence are clustered  
together shagging batting practice balls. The steady  
CLANK of the metal bat meeting CLANGS in the background.

GARY

Is it just me, or is Sammy weirder  
than Shooz?

Tony, leaning on his favorite bat, throws his glove down  
and picks up his bat and takes a few practice swings out  
in the field.

TONY

Yeah, what the hell was that all  
about? His big speech and  
inspirational "hands-in?" We've  
never done that before.

Dave fields a ground ball and throws it in.

DAVE

He's a motivator. Man, he seems to take this stuff seriously. I hope he doesn't stroke out on us.

Tony stops swinging and hits the bat handle down to remove the doughnut-shaped weight from the bat.

TONY

Hey, not to change the subject, but did you hear about that guy that got his dick stuck in a barbell weight?

DAVE

What are you talking about?

TONY

I heard it on the news, Paul Harvey or something. His cock swelled up and they had to do some surgery to drain the blood or something. National news!

Everyone groans and winces at the thought.

TONY

That kinda happened to me once.

GARY

What, you got your dick stuck in a weight lifter? What was his name?

Dave high fives Gary as everyone laughs even Tony. The butt of the joke, laughs, but, then Tony pouts.

GARY

I'm sorry, go ahead and tell your dick story.

Tony perks back up.

TONY

Anyway, my mom was babysitting this little kid. And he had one of those little pyramid type toys with the rings of increasing size and different colors.

DAVE

Yeah, I've seen 'em. Oh no. Don't tell me.

TONY

I took that toy to the bathroom and well, let's just say one of those rings was destroyed. Thank God they were just plastic and...

GARY

Enough! We get the picture.

INT. GARY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Gary eats cereal and reads the newspaper in the morning. A KNOCK draws Gary to answer the door. Annie, sobbing, throws herself at Gary and he catches her in self defense.

GARY

Oh my God! What's wrong?

ANNIE

(sobbing inconsolably)  
He's dead! He's dead.

GARY

What, I don't...I can't understand you.

ANNIE

(sobbing)  
Uncle Irvin. He's dead.

GARY

Oh, no.

Gary grabs Annie and holds her.

ANNIE

He just never woke up this morning. Aunt Daisy had to go to Brayton early for her eye appointment. And when Uncle Irv didn't show up at the Red Horse, I ran home to check and...and...

Annie sobs uncontrollably.

ANNIE

He was cold.

GARY

Oh, God. I'm sorry.

EXT. BASEBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The team sits in the bleachers. The shock of the Irv's death subdues the usual jostling and joking.

CHUCK

I can't believe this. First Shooz takes off, now Coach Willis is gone. Here we are, stuck with Sammy.

ARIC

Shhh. Sammy's coming.

Coach Sammy approaches from his car in the parking lot.

COACH SAMMY

Sorry I am late. I realize nobody wants to be here.

Coach Sammy looks at the long faces.

COACH SAMMY

I do have some announcements. Aric's dad volunteered and will be helping coach at State. Yes, we are still going. There is no question Coach Willis would have wanted us to compete.

Coach Sammy paces in front of the team.

COACH SAMMY

I will need all your jerseys. We are going to have black arm bands and patches sewn on them to honor Coach Willis.

The players nod.

COACH SAMMY

Also, I did talk to Daisy just before I came here. The funeral will not be until next week after the tourney.

Coach Sammy pauses, debating whether to say anymore. He fights watery eyes and a little tremble in his lip.

COACH SAMMY

(voice cracking)

One more thing, Coach Willis was my coach too, but more than that he was someone we all could look up to. So, let's remember him that way, as a man who loved baseball.

Players start to stand.

COACH SAMMY

If anyone wants to hang around and take some hitting you are welcome to. Just remember, the bus leaves at 9:00 am tomorrow.

Everyone stays and gets some extra batting practice.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

Coach Sammy drives the bus down the highway as they head to the State Tourney. The team sits quietly with some ROCK MUSIC in the background. The players have divided up into their usual card playing groups. Today it's just Spades. The bus begins to slow down.

DAVE

Hey, why are we stopping in Westland?



SAMMY

I just got to pick something up.

The bus stops at the one gas station in tiny Westland. Sammy runs off the bus into the gas station and returns to the bus with an army duffle bag and a suitcase.

DAVE

What's with the luggage? Did we get some new equipment?

LAWRENCE

New, lucky bats, perchance?

Everyone on the bus is looking at Sammy stowing the gear in a seat.

CHUCK

Come on, Sammy. What's up?

A THUMP emanates from the front of the bus. The team, distracted by Sammy's mysterious baggage, looks up and around Sammy. The team collectively GASPS.

CHUCK

Coach Shoe?

COACH SHOE

Hey, guys. I gotta day or two off, so I thought I might help coach.

A cheer goes up from the team. Coach Shoe smiles and sits in the driver's seat. He fires up the bus and they pull back on the road.

INT. DAIRY QUEEN RESTAURANT - DAY

The team has stopped for some hot eats, cool treats. Tony, Fin, Gary, and Dave stand at the counter and contemplate what to order. Fin is first to decide and he orders and grabs his wallet.

TONY

What the fuck is that?

Tony has a stunned look on his face as he points at Fin's wallet.

FIN

It's just my billfold.

TONY

I-i-i-is that Kenny Roger's face  
on your billfold?

The conversation has been noticed by Gary and Dave, who are both eager to comment.

FIN

Yeah. What about it? My mom gave  
it to me!

Gary grabs Fin's hand and turns it for a better view of the wallet.

GARY

(laughing the words)  
Kenny Rogers!

DAVE

Fin, seriously. What are you, six  
years old?

Gary, Tony, and Dave shake their heads.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

Dave, Gary, and Tony are already on the bus when Fin makes his entrance licking on an ice cream cone.

Gary, Tony, and Dave form a TRIO and break out singing together:

TRIO

(singing)

You got to know when to hold 'em,  
know when to fold 'em, know when  
to walk away, know when to run.

Everyone has a good laugh.

GARY

Fin, from this day forward, you  
will be known as "The Gambler."

Gary shakes Fin's hand.

DAVE

That's not a hard and fast rule,  
we may also refer to you as Kenny,  
Roger, or Roge; and we expect you  
to respond appropriately.

Players are still laughing.

GARY

Hey, Lawrence, what do you say?  
Can we get some country music on  
that stereo in honor of our  
special guest, Mr. Kenny Rogers?

Lawrence tunes the radio and The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band  
chimes in with "Fishin' in the Dark." The team is  
relaxing and returning to form. Lawrence cuts the  
country twang off and blasts Eazy-E's "Eazy-Duz-It" as  
the bus rolls down the highway.

INT. FRONT OF THE TEAM BUS - DAY

Coach Shoe is at the wheel, Sammy leans forward.

SAMMY

This is the music these guys  
listen to?

Coach Shoe shrugs.

The expletives fly from Eazy-E's rap. And Sammy shakes  
his head.

SAMMY

God, I'm getting old.

EXT. HUTTON BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Reedville is playing the final game of the first night of  
the State Tournament.

The players are introduced wearing the black arm bands and patches with the initials of Coach Willis on their uniforms. The players gather in the dugout before taking the field.

COACH SHOE

One more thing before we hit the field.

Coach Shoe grabs the equipment bag and pulls out a helmet with a big bulls-eye painted on the top. Arrows point to the bulls-eye and on the front, in large letters is written "FIN."

COACH SHOE

Fin, step up here.

Fin comes to Coach Shoe's side.

COACH SHOE

Coach had this helmet done up special for Fin as a joke, but in honor of the Coach, I'd like Fin to wear it this first inning.

Everybody has a good laugh and relaxes a bit.

COACH SHOE

All right, hands in. On three, Cardinals. One, two, three!

The players reach their hands into the pile and on three plunge their hands down.

ENTIRE TEAM

Cardinals!

The team takes the field on defense.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

It's a quick couple innings on defense behind Chuck's outstanding pitching. In the bottom of the second, Dave comes to the plate and digs in. Dave takes a mighty swing to no avail at the first pitch.

DAVE

Damn it!

A lone voice in the crowd cries out.

VOICE (OS)

Watch the ball all the way!

Dave digs in again, but steps out and turns toward the catcher.

DAVE

What a brilliant Idea! Watch the  
ball all the way!

Dave steps in mumbling to himself as the catcher gives him a wry smile.

CATCHER

That your hitting coach up there  
in the stands?

The catcher squats down.

DAVE

Just one of my many adoring fans  
and critics.

The pitcher looks in for the sign, winds, and throws. Dave catches the pitch flush, and he drives it deep to straight away center field. He admires it a little and shrugs as he hustles around the bases. He crosses home plate and looks at the catcher.

DAVE

I guess I just need to watch the  
ball all the way.

Dave runs the gauntlet of congratulatory high fives and pats on the helmet.

COACH SHOE

Thatta boy! Way to get us  
started. The slump is ova'!

The flood gates open for the Reedville offense and the Cardinals chalk up eight runs in the next three innings.

In the bottom of the fourth Tony comes to the plate and hits a dribbler down the third base line. The throw takes the first baseman off the base, but he tags Tony out. Gary is sitting next to Dave on the bench observing the play.

DAVE

He should've divven.

GARY

What?

DAVE

He shoulda divven. He probably would have gotten in under the tag.

GARY

Divven? Let me guess, you're going to be an English Professor someday.

DAVE

(laughs)

What? Isn't "divven" the past perfect participle tense, or something, of "dive?"

Gary laughs and shakes his head as Tony returns to the dugout. Everyone tells Tony the same phrase one by one.

GARY

Tony, you should have divven.

COACH SHOE

Yeah, Tone you should have divven.

FIN

I'm not an expert, but I would have divven.

Zach holds up his cast.

ZACH

I would have divven, but sometimes that could lead to injury.

CHUCK

There's no doubt in my mind, I  
would have divven.

The bench is in riotous laughter at the ongoing joke.

SAMMY

It is definitely a divven  
situation.

Tony is clueless about what is so hilarious.

TONY

I-I-I-I know, I know! I sh-sh-  
should have d-d-d-divven!

Everyone roars with laughter.

TONY

Wh-wh-wh-what the Hell is so funny!

GARY

Dave. He's making up words to add  
to the English language. Today's  
word is "divven." Let me use it  
in a sentence for you: You should  
have divven into first base.

Tony takes his batting gloves off and sits down.

The Reedville team is relaxed and scores another six runs  
to put the ten-run-rule into affect as they breeze by  
Lewiston. The teams shake hands at home plate and  
Reedville players gather around Coach Shoe.

COACH SHOE

Good job tonight, boys. This is  
what we want. We want to play in  
the last game every night. Semi-  
finals tomorrow. Let's get out of  
here and get some rest.

EXT. HUTTON BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The stands are filled to capacity for the semi-final  
game.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

It is the semifinal game against Red Lake. Lawrence looks into the dugout of Red Lake and points.

LAWRENCE

Holy shit! They got a Black guy on their team. Check it out.

Dave puts his arm around Lawrence.

DAVE

That's ok. We got you, so let's call it a draw.

LAWRENCE

But, I'm not really Black!

TONY

Close enough. Jesus, Lawrence, relax.

LAWRENCE

I don't know how you guys can be so calm about this.

DAVE

Let it go, Larry.

Lawrence sits on the bench rocking front to back nervously.

COACH SHOE

Gather 'round everyone. Just like last night. Focus. Concentrate. We can do this.

COACH SHOE

All right, Trent, you ready to pitch?

TRENT

Ready as I'll ever be.



COACH SHOE

Gary you'll be the first reliever,  
if necessary. Hands in everyone.  
Cardinals on three, one, two,  
three...

Everyone puts their hand in and plunges it down on three.

ENTIRE TEAM

Cardinals!

EXT. HUTTON BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The team takes the field on defense. Trent is struggling to throw strikes. The game wears to the third inning and Reedville is down eight to two in the bottom of the third inning. Chuck grounds out to third base and comes back to the dugout.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

CHUCK

God damn it!

Chuck slams down his batting gloves and puts his head in his hands as he sits on the bench.

CHUCK

We're done.

GARY

What did you say?

CHUCK

I said, we're done.

GARY

Get the fuck out of here!

Chuck looks blankly at Gary. Gary points.

GARY

You heard me. Get the fuck out of this dugout before I throw you out. We don't need that attitude.

Chuck stands up and moves out of the dugout down the foul line. Lawrence drives a ringing single up the middle. Jesse walks on four pitches. The dugout starts to get into it. The Reedville crowd comes to life.

EXT. HUTTON BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

COACH SHOE

Come on, Dave. Ducks on the pond.  
Ducks on the pond.

Coach Shoe claps wildly from his third base coaching box.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

Chuck has come back to the dugout and is standing against the screen clapping.

CHUCK

Come on, Dave! Come on Big Man!

Gary glares at Chuck, but remains silent. Dave wastes no time and drives the first pitch deep over the leftfield wall. The dugout goes crazy as the lead is cut to three runs.

CHUCK

MVP! MVP!

Chuck is the first out of the dugout to congratulate Dave. Dave sits on the bench and starts to put his catcher's gear on.

DAVE

I should have divven into home.

A ROAR of laughter goes up from the Reedville dugout as the crowd looks on curiously. The inning ends and Gary relieves Trent on the mound.

Two innings go by and each team exchanges three runs making the score 11 to 8 in the bottom of the fifth. Lawrence is leading off the bottom of the fifth.

GARY

Come on Lawrence, show 'em how a  
Reedville Soul Brotha plays ball.

Lawrence drives a solid single to right field. Jesse follows with a solid single up the middle, putting runners on first and second nobody out.

COACH SHOE

Let's go, Dave. Level swing now.  
Line drive somewhere.

Dave, liking the first pitch, gaps a line drive rope to left-centerfield. Lawrence scores easily, chains bobbing as he rounds third. Red Lake's lead is cut to two runs at 11 to 9. Red Lake changes pitchers as Turner steps to the plate with Jesse and Dave on base.

COACH SHOE

Turner, come here.

TURNER

Time out!

Turner meets Coach Shoe half-way down the third baseline.

COACH SHOE

Take a couple pitches here.

TURNER

Sure thing Coach.

The first pitch sails inside and cracks off Turner's hip as he is unable to get out of the way. The bases are loaded for Tony.

COACH SHOE

Ok, Tone. Drive the ball some  
place.

Tony takes a ball, outside and then a ball skips in the dirt where the catcher makes a nice play. The count is two balls and no strikes.

COACH SHOE

Be smart up there now, Tony.

The pitcher sets and delivers. Tony uncoils a mammoth swing on a grooved pitch driving the ball over the center field wall in a monumental home run. The crowd goes crazy as Reedville takes the lead 13 to 11.

INT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

Tony paces the dugout drinking a cup of water. He flexes and Zach checks out his bicep and pretends to have a camera and take pictures as Tony poses.

GARY

I can't believe we are seeing  
homeruns like this in Teener  
baseball.

TONY

I-I-I have been working out.

Fin makes a motion as if masturbating.

FIN

We know Tone; with both hands.

The dugout has a good laugh, and Tony does a spit-take as he drinks his water. The side is retired and Gary returns to the mound.

EXT. PITCHING MOUND - NIGHT

Gary is struggling to throw strikes. He has one out in the top of the sixth and one on.

INT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

Coach Shoe looks at Sammy. Sammy looks at Fin

COACH SHOE

Fin, get some warm-up tosses in.  
We might need you.

Fin jumps from the dugout and J.W. grabs a catcher's mitt and Fin warms up. Coach Shoe calls time and walks out to the mound.

EXT. PITCHING MOUND - NIGHT

Coach Shoe reaches the mound.

COACH SHOE

How you doing?

GARY

Terrible. I can't throw a fucking strike.

Coach Shoe heaves a big sigh.

COACH SHOE

I got Fin ready. We'll pull Jesse, move you to left and get Fin in here to finish.

GARY

Sounds like a plan.

Gary hands the ball to Coach Shoe and heads to left field. Coach Shoe signals to Fin, and Jesse runs to the dugout to a round of applause while Fin jogs in. They high five each other as they cross paths.

COACH SHOE

You the man, Fin. Just like batting practice. The defense is right there behind you.

FIN

Sure thing Coach.

Fin takes his warm-up tosses and is ready. The Red Lake batter steps in and Fin stands on the mound.

GARY

(yelling)

Ken-nee Ro-gers!

Laughter bursts from the Reedville dugout and players on the field. Fin laughs and his gum flies out his mouth. Fin steps off the rubber and gathers himself. He picks up the dirty piece of gum, thinks better of it, and tosses it down.

GARY

(yelling)

Come on, Gambler!

TONY

Come on, Kenny; make 'em fold 'em.

CHATTER from around the field rains down. Fin sets and fires. The batter lines to a diving Lawrence at second base. Lawrence gathers himself and picks off the runner at first base, who had strayed too far. The side is retired. Reedville players sprint to the dugout.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

GARY

Let's get some insurance runs.

Gary dons his helmet and batting gloves as high fives are slapped by everyone.

EXT. BATTER'S BOX - NIGHT

Gary is leading off the inning, and doubles to the gap. Chuck follows with a single and Gary scores. Gary points to Chuck at first base acknowledging the RBI and Chuck points back at Gary.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

GARY

(yelling)

That a way, Chuck!

Gary trades high fives with everyone in the dugout.

GARY

One more inning. Come on Fin!

The side is retired; Reedville up 14 to 11.

EXT. PITCHING MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Fin returns to the mound for the bottom of the seventh inning, the final inning of the semifinal game. The leadoff batter steps to the plate and takes a called strike and then a ball outside. Fin winds, and lays a breaking pitch on the outside corner.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

COACH SHOE

I told Fin to lay off the breaking balls.

Coach Shoe winces as the ball is lined into a leaping Tony's glove.

COACH SHOE

Hey! Tony, way to sky!

The next batter steps in and is fooled badly on two breaking balls in the dirt and is down quickly no balls and two strikes. The third pitch is a high fastball, and the batter pops it up to Dave right at the plate.

The crowd CHEERS wildly sensing the end is near. Time is called from the Reedville dugout as Coach Shoe goes to the mound. Dave comes from the catcher's position to join the mound meeting.

COACH SHOE

You ok, Fin?

FIN

Sure.

COACH SHOE

Just enjoy the moment. Listen to the crowd cheer.

Fin looks around into the crowd.

FIN

It is kinda awesome.

A big grin forms on Coach Shoe's face and is reflected by both Dave and Fin.

COACH SHOE

One more thing; lay off the breaking balls a little. You're going to give me a heart attack the way you lob that spinner up there.

Coach Shoe jogs back to the dugout and the batter is announced over the speaker.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

Now batting for Red Lake, the center fielder, Lyle Snell.

DAVE

This is the leadoff guy, so bring  
your good stuff.

Dave returns to his position behind the plate and gives  
Fin the signal for fastball. The hitter swings and  
drives a line drive to leftfield where Gary picks it at  
his shoe top with a nice running catch. The game is over  
and Gary continues to run to the mound to congratulate  
Fin.

GARY

I knew we could count on somebody  
with a nickname of the Gambler.

Gary gives Fin a high five and hands him the ball.

GARY

Keep the ball as a souvenir.

The teams form a line at home plate and shake hands.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

The team listens to Coach Shoe give the final  
instructions for the night.

COACH SHOE

Great game tonight, the best  
comeback under pressure I have  
ever seen! But, we're not done.  
Get some rest tonight when we get  
back to the hotel.

The players nod in agreement.

COACH SHOE

Tomorrow night we are up against  
the home team, Hutton. The crowd  
will definitely be in their favor.

Coach Shoe smiles.

COACH SHOE

All right, get your hands in.  
Cardinals on three, one, two,  
three...



ENTIRE TEAM

Cardinals!

The team sacks the equipment and heads to the bus as fans and parents congratulate them.

INT. TEAM HOTEL - DAY

It is championship game day. The team is relaxing by the hotel pool and swimming. Tony enjoys the hot tub, as other players enjoy a game of shuffleboard on the pool deck.

TONY

Hey everyone! Check it out! It's like a dream come true!

Tony sits in the hot tub with his trunks expanded by the bubbles. He points proudly to his full trunks. His smile disappears when he sees Fin in a Speedo standing on the pool deck.

TONY

Holy shit, Fin! That is a large bulge ya got there in your trunks.

FIN

Thanks for noticing!

Fin reaches into his trunks. Tony ducks away trying to cover his eyes. Fin pulls out a baseball.

FIN

I'm working on the grip of my new pitch, a knuckle-curve; so I keep a baseball with me at all times.

Several players grab Fin and haul him towards the pool.

FIN

What are you doing? I can't swim!  
No!

ARIC

Fin, nobody in America wears a Speedo. You gotta be dunked.

FIN

No! I can't swim!

The boys toss him in the pool and Fin flails.

FIN

Help! Help me!

The players look on and laugh as Fin panics.

FIN

Help!

DAVE

Fin, the water's like four feet deep. Stand up!

Fin stops flailing and stands up in the shallow water.

FIN

Oh, never mind.

EXT. HUTTON BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Series of Shots:

- 1) The players warm up by playing catch
- 2) Each team is introduced
- 3) The National Anthem is sung
- 4) The teams take the Teener sportsmanship oath

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

Coach Shoe has gathered the team in the dugout, but before he can say anything, he is interrupted by a voice from outside the dugout. It is the HUTTON COACH

HUTTON COACH (OS)

Good luck tonight, fellas. You too, Shoemaker; home boy.

COACH SHOE

Thanks, you too.

The Hutton Coach leans over the rail, raises his hand, and wags an admonishing finger at the team.

HUTTON COACH

I'll tell you one thing, when we get you down tonight, there will be no big comeback like last night.

The Reedville players stare at the Hutton Coach as he waves his finger back and forth before the group.

HUTTON COACH

Ok, good luck.

COACH SHOE

Uh, yeah.

The Hutton Coach turns and jogs away.

COACH SHOE

Yeah jog away, ya jackass.

Coach Shoe points at the opposing dugout behind him with his thumb over his shoulder.

COACH SHOE

Thank you, gracious host team.

SAMMY

They ain't no fucking Martha Stewart.

CHUCK

(standing and yelling)  
Let's kick their asses!

COACH SHOE

Chill out, Chuck.

Chuck sits down.

CHUCK

Sorry.

COACH SHOE

I want you to know that I'm very proud of you all, and I am very proud to be here with you.

Coach Shoe pulls some battered and Scotch-taped papers from his pocket and holds it up high.

COACH SHOE

This is the minor league contract  
I signed.

Coach Shoe passes it to Dave.

COACH SHOE

Go ahead, pass it around; take a  
look at it. I played for the Iowa  
River Dogs.

Coach Shoe waves at the team to pass the contract around.

COACH SHOE

(smiling)

Funny thing was I couldn't bring  
myself to stay away. Of course  
when you start out one for twenty,  
maybe you're not cut out for pro  
ball.

The papers are handed down through the team.

COACH SHOE

But, this is what I want to do. I  
want to be a coach just like Coach  
Willis.

The players in the dugout are frozen; their attention is riveted to Coach Shoe.

COACH SHOE

My point is, yeah we're honoring  
Coach Willis, and yes, I may  
someday wonder about my  
opportunity in the minors.

Coach Shoe pauses for a moment.

COACH SHOE

You might play for your parents,  
your girlfriend, the spirit of  
Coach Willis, whatever. Ultimately  
you answer to yourself. You have  
to be able to live with yourself  
knowing you gave your full effort.

Coach Shoe points his finger at the team and sweeps it  
back and forth.

COACH SHOE

You go out there and give it all  
you got, and win or lose you can  
be proud of what you've done.

(pause)

Win or lose.

Coach Shoe pauses.

COACH SHOE

That's all I ask of you tonight;  
just give it all you got.

It is quiet for a moment.

COACH SHOE

Chuck?

Chuck leaps from the bench with a towel waving.

CHUCK

(screaming)

Let's kick their asses!

The team lines up for the ceremonial application of the  
eye black. Tony is the applicator. First in line is  
Gary. Tony uses the eye black and draws a line under  
each eye.

TONY

May the eye cock go with you...

Gary grabs the eye black and lines Tony's cheeks.

GARY

...And with you.

Gary hands the eye black back to Tony who proceeds to draw the eye black on each players' face. Gary approaches Coach Shoe.

GARY

You in, Coach?

COACH SHOE

What the Hell are you guys doing?  
And what the Hell is eye-cock?

GARY

It's just eye black. You know  
Tony, God only knows what's in  
that kid's head. You in?

COACH SHOE

Let's do it.

Coach Shoe and Sammy get their cheeks marked with eye black.

EXT. PITCHING MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Fin is on the mound to start the game.

Series of shots:

- 1) Reedville and Hutton both go down in order the first inning.
- 2) Game action of players swinging and fielding
- 3) Hutton players cross the plate and the scoreboard shows the runs put on the board.
- 4) Hutton scores two runs in the bottom of the second inning and two runs in the bottom of the third inning.
- 5) The left-handed Hutton pitcher is mowing down all Reedville hitters.
- 6) Fin gives up a two-run homer in the bottom of the fourth inning.
- 7) The Hutton Coach claps wildly, hoots, and hollers at the runs scored.
- 8) Fin is relieved by Gary, who gets the side out.
- 9) Scoreboard shows: Hutton 6 Reedville 0.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

Coach Shoe paces the dugout in front of the team.

COACH SHOE

It's the top of the fifth inning.  
We got this at bat and two more.

Coach Shoe is talking quickly and firmly as he paces

COACH SHOE

Chuck, you're pitching the rest of  
the way. You got to shut 'em  
down, buddy.

Chuck stands and salutes.

CHUCK

You got it coach.

COACH SHOE

Who we got up?

Sammy reads the lineup.

SAMMY

We got Gary up, Chuck on Deck,  
Tony in the hole.

EXT. BATTER'S BOX - NIGHT

Gary digs in at the plate. The Hutton pitcher sets and delivers. Gary rips the ball down the first base line into the outfield. Gary digs for extra bases and slides into third just ahead of the throw as Coach Shoe lies on the ground signaling Gary to slide.

The Reedville crowd finally has something to CHEER.

COACH SHOE

You didn't see me trying to hold  
you at second base?

GARY

The play was in front of me. It  
was a triple all the way.

Coach Shoe shakes his head and pats Gary on the rear.

COACH SHOE

Watch the passed ball; we need  
your run to break the ice.

Chuck comes to the plate and the pitcher working from the stretch fires the first pitch at Chuck's feet. Chuck skips the rope over the ball as the ball heads to the backstop. Gary breaks to the plate and scores the first run of the game for Reedville without a throw.

COACH SHOE

Good job, G Mann!

The Hutton Coach visits the mound to calm his pitcher and quickly returns to the dugout. Chuck digs in and laces the next pitch to the gap for a double. The Reedville crowd cranks up the CHEERING.

COACH SHOE

That-a-way, Chuckie!

Tony comes to the plate and grounds a ball behind second base where the shortstop makes a nice play to throw him out, but Chuck gets to third base with one out.

COACH SHOE

It's ok, Tone! Come on, Law-Dog!

Lawrence comes to the plate and pops out to the second baseman bringing Dave to the plate with two outs.

COACH SHOE

Come on, Dave. We need this  
runner at third!

Dave settles into the box and takes a strike. Dave steps out takes a deep breath and adjusts his batting gloves.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

The entire Reedville team is at the dugout screen,  
CHEERING.



GARY

He's going to take him deep.

ZACH

I wouldn't doubt it.

EXT. BATTER'S BOX - NIGHT

Dave, steps back in the box, the pitcher sets and delivers. Dave is on time and lines the ball straight back through the box. The ball catches the pitcher flush on the knee and dribbles toward the Hutton dugout. Chuck scores and Dave legs out a hit.

The Reedville players and crowd CHEER momentarily until they see the pitcher on the ground writhing in pain. The Hutton Coach is out instantly to check on his player. The pitcher is up trying to walk it off, but he has a pronounced limp.

The Umpire calls time and allows the pitcher to take a few tosses. The pitcher declares he is ok to go and Fin steps in. The score board shows Reedville 2, Hutton 6.

COACH SHOE

Time out!

Fin and Coach Shoe meet half-way down the line.

COACH SHOE

Make him throw you a strike.

FIN

Will do.

Fin steps in and takes four straight pitches all balls and walks. The Reedville crowd builds its CHEERING again. Turner follows with a walk, loading the bases for the light hitting Jesse.

The Hutton Coach starts to come out of the dugout, but the pitcher waves him back. Jesse looks down at Coach Shoe.

COACH SHOE

(shouting)

Make him throw you a strike.

Jesse nods and steps in the box. The pitcher grooves a fastball and Jesse turns on it, pulling it down the third base line for a bases clearing double.

The Hutton Coach emerges from the dugout; head hung down, and walks to the mound. He calls in the left fielder to pitch and brings another player off the bench as he walks to the dugout with his injured top pitcher. The crowd gives the limping pitcher a nice round of APPLAUSE.

The new pitcher throws one pitch to Trent, who grounds to shortstop for the third out, but the momentum has swung to Reedville, down only one run 6 to 5 in the bottom of the fifth.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Chuck takes over pitching and strikes out the side against the bottom of the Hutton line up. It takes only twelve pitches. Chuck strolls leisurely from the mound back to the dugout.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

COACH SHOE

We got the top of the line up again. Let's put this game away right now!

SAMMY

This ain't the same team without their good pitcher. Let' step on their throats and piss all over their home town celebration!

CHUCK

Hear, hear!

COACH SHOE

Hands in here, Cardinals on three, one two, three...

The players put their hands in the pile and plunge their hands down on three.

ENTIRE TEAM

Cardinals!

Coach Shoe pops out of the dugout and strolls to the third base coaching box.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Series of Shots:

- 1) Gary singles to start the inning
- 2) Chuck singles and moves Gary to third base
- 3) Chuck steals second base
- 4) The Hutton Coach makes a pitching change
- 5) Tony singles and Gary and Chuck score
- 6) Scoreboard shows Reedville ahead for the first time:  
Reedville 7, Hutton 6.
- 7) Lawrence walks

Dave approaches the plate with runners at first and second.

EXT. REEDVILLE DUGOUT - NIGHT

CHUCK  
(shouting)  
M-V-P! M-V-P! Come on everyone!

The dugout chants M-V-P much to the chagrin of Dave.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Dave digs in as the pitcher checks the runners. The pitcher delivers and Dave is out in front of the pitch, and hits a long foul ball down the left field line.

COACH SHOE  
Straighten it out, Big Man!

Dave resets, and the pitcher checks the runners; he delivers another pitch that Dave is ready for. Dave unleashes a mighty blast over the left field wall. The left fielder doesn't even have a chance to move.

Series of Shots:

- 1) Dave rounds the bases
- 2) The scoreboard shows Reedville ahead 10 to 6
- 3) Dave is mobbed in the dugout
- 4) Reedville tacks on two more runs

- 5) Reedville is finally retired
- 6) The sides change
- 7) The scoreboard shows Reedville 12 Hutton 6.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Chuck takes the mound in the bottom of the sixth inning and jams the first hitter with a weak ground out to Tony at first base. The second batter works the count full before flying out to shortstop. The third batter strikes out to end the inning.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Series of Shots:

- 1) Hutton changes pitchers again
- 2) Reedville scratches together two more runs
- 3) The inning ends and the scoreboard shows 14 to 6

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Chuck takes the mound for the bottom of the final inning and immediately strikes out the first Hutton batter with a sidearm fastball.

Chuck tries another sidearm fastball and drills the next hitter in the ribs to put a runner on first. A strikeout, but a passed ball puts runners on first and second with one out. Coach Shoe calls time out and heads to the mound to meet with Chuck and Dave.

COACH SHOE

Relax, gentleman. Focus on the hitter. That's it. Let's wrap this baby up.

Coach Shoe jogs back to the dugout.

Chuck checks the runners and fires home. The batter smashes a ground ball to Lawrence at second base. Lawrence makes a flailing stab of self defense at the ball and is shocked to see the ball in his glove.

LAWRENCE

Holy shit!

Lawrence turns and shovels the ball to Trent at shortstop. Trent steps on second base and then relays on to Tony at first base. The four to six to three double play turned to perfection caps the Reedville victory.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND/FIELD - NIGHT

Reedville celebrates on the mound. Gary and Chuck have a simple handshake. Coach Shoe and Gary share a gentlemanly handshake.

Things come to a sense of order and the teams meet at home plate and shake hands. Most of the Hutton players have tears streaming down their faces.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

Ladies and gentleman, your 1989  
State B Teener Baseball Champs!  
The Reedville Cardinals!

The Hutton Coach is unable to speak and tears stream down his face as he congratulates the Reedville team. Trophies are handed out to each player on the championship team. The Announcer breaks in over the loudspeaker.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

Your attention please. The  
ballots are in and Dave Brown of  
the Reedville Cardinals has been  
named the tournaments Most  
Valuable Player!

A mighty CHEER goes up from the Reedville crowd. Dave collects his trophy to the ROAR of approval from the team. The parents and fans move in for photos of the team and to congratulate the players. Annie appears in the crowd and makes a running leap into Gary's arms.

GARY

Annie? I didn't know you were  
here.

ANNIE

We closed the Red Horse and I came down with Aunt Daisy. I couldn't miss the championship game. Congratulations!

GARY

Thank you!

ANNIE

Thanks for the greatest summer ever.

The Saint Christopher medal dangles from Annie's neck.

GARY

I'll never forget it.

Annie and Gary hug as almost seventy percent of the Reedville population celebrates with the team as the party continues under the lights as seen from high above.

ROLL CREDITS

Nelson's "Love and Affection" begins to play. The Teener team sings along as they ride the team bus with their customized lyrics. The credits roll on the side.

EXT. GARY'S DRIVEWAY NEXT TO HIS TRUCK - DAY

Gary and Dave are talking as Gary packs his suitcase into his parent's 1987 Oldsmobile Ninety-eight.

DAVE

You heading out?

GARY

Yeah, my parents are going to drive me out to Albuquerque and drop me off at Kirtland Prep.

Dave shakes Gary's hand. The frame freezes on Dave.

SUPER: DAVE BROWN NOW DIRECTS RUSH LIMBAUGH'S EXCELLENCE IN BROADCASTING (EIB) MERCHANDISING AND ALSO MANAGES THE EIB SOFTBALL TEAM.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

An older Dave hits a slow pitch softball and rounds first base in a waddle.

INT. RED HORSE CAFÉ - DAY

Lawrence plays pinball in his ghetto gangster attire while two young girls watch. The frame freezes on Lawrence.

SUPER: LAWRENCE THOMPSON IS NOW A MEMBER OF THE SECRET SERVICE ASSIGNED TO PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PROTECTION DETAIL.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. STREET - DAY

A dark-suited, sunglasses-clad, older Lawrence runs beside a limo.

Credits continue to roll to the side.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Chuck and Aric inspect the damage to Aric's Camaro from the moped incident. The frame freezes on the two kneeling in front of the dented fender.

SUPER: ARIC CARSON AND CHUCK FISHER BOTH BECAME PARTNERS IN AIG INVESTMENTS AND WERE SUBSEQUENTLY ARRESTED AND CONVICTED OF SECURITIES FRAUD.

INT. NEW YORK LUXURY HIGH RISE OFFICE - DAY

In slow motion; Aric and Chuck, now in their 30's, dressed in fancy suits and ties are shredding documents. FBI agents in blue wind breakers break through their office door. A framed photo of the AIG softball team falls to the floor and breaks.

INT. RED HORSE CAFÉ - DAY

Annie is taking an order from a customer. The frame freezes on a smiling Annie.

SUPER: ANNIE WILLIS, M.D. IS AN ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON WITH THE PRIMARY PRACTICE ASSOCIATED WITH MINNESOTA PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS METRODOME - DAY

Annie watches the Minnesota Vikings football game from the sidelines as part of the training staff.

INT. RED HORSE CAFÉ - DAY

Trent, Turner, Fin, and Jesse dig into a pizza. The frame freezes.

SUPER: TRENT THOMPSON, TURNER JACKSON, FIN SWENSON, AND JESSE FORD EACH CONTINUE TO WORK ON THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILY FARMS.

EXT. REEDVILLE SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

The four older men, Jesse, Trent, Turner, and Fin play softball with the Reedville water tower in the background.

EXT. K-MART STORE IN BRAYTON - DAY

Tony, wearing his red K mart vest, pushes carts toward the front door. The frame freezes on Tony running after a stray cart.

SUPER: TONY OSMOND IS THE ASSISTANT MANAGER OF K MART IN BRAYTON AND HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL DEFENDANT OF THREE SEXUAL HARRASSMENT LAWSUITS.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

An older and nearly 400-pound Tony runs the bases in a softball game.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Bobby Shoemaker instructs the students as he points to a map of South Dakota. The frame freezes on Coach Shoe tracing the Missouri River.

SUPER: COACH SHOEMAKER TEACHES AND COACHES AT REEDVILLE HIGH SCHOOL.

EXT. REEDVILLE BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

An older Coach Shoe argues with an umpire.



EXT. DRIVEWAY NEXT TO GARY'S TRUCK - DAY

Gary places a for sale sign on his truck. The frame freezes on Gary shrugging as he backs away and looks at his old truck.

SUPER: GARY HILLMANN IS NOW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF G MANN PRODUCTIONS IN LOS ANGELES.

INT. MODERN HIGH RISE BUILDING - DAY

An older Gary, wearing an expensive suit and tie, sprays glass cleaner on his glass office door with the designation "G MANN Productions" painted on the door.

The credits roll on the full screen for a moment before the Teener team bus is shown singing the chorus of "Cherry Pie" by Warrant. The team has customized the lyrics to include:

"She's my cherry pie,  
Smells like fish,  
I don't know why."

FADE OUT.