

THE G.O.A.T
Season 1, Episode 3
"Opening Day"

Written by
Kenneth Quinnell

334 19th St. NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
quinnelk@gmail.com
850-339-4600

TITLE: OPENING DAY

FADE IN.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - OPENING DAY

The sun is barely on the horizon. A lone car pulls into the lot of National Stadium and parks in the closest spot to the front of the employee parking lot.

Out steps Leah Owens, team owner.

She walks up to the front door of the stadium's professional offices, unlocks it and walks in.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - CONTINUOUS

Owens steps out into the concourse and walks to the edge so that she can stare out onto the field.

The rising sun glints off the dewy morning grass. Owens stares in awe.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

General Manager Jamelle Lewis walks out the administrative office doors and jumps into her car. She drives off.

CUT TO:

Owner Leah Owens stands in her office, peering out the window towards the parking lot. She sips whiskey from a glass.

She watches as Lewis drives away in a midsize sedan.

She turns towards an ornate clock on the wall and notes that it is only 10 a.m.

She has another sip of whiskey and pulls out her phone.

She taps and slides a few times and comes upon the name "Applegate, P.I." She calls him.

CUT TO:

Team President Lekebra Benjamin's office is nice, but noticeably more spartan and minimalist in decoration. No pictures, no personalization, very businesslike.

Except for the Peloton in the back of the office, away from the window.

Benjamin rides. Intensely. Determined. Going somewhere.

CUT TO:

Manager Harold Gray sits in his office, his feet up on the desk. A record player spins vinyl. The sounds of some spacier Pink Floyd track waft through the room, joining the smoke of Gray's cigar.

He takes a sip of fine Scotch from a cheap glass and savors it all.

CUT TO:

Bullpen Coach Justin Tannehill and Pitching Coach Vernon Howell work with today's starting pitcher, Kit Riggins, in the bullpen.

Riggins fires a fastball to backup catcher Haywood Doman. Tannehill points towards Riggins' shoulder and Howell nods along.

CUT TO:

In the dugout, Bench Coach Craig Glover leans back and gets in a pre-game nap.

CUT TO:

Third Base Coach Terrence Kimbell lays down the third base chalk line. He's focused and precise, making no mistakes.

CUT TO:

First Base Coach Chris Lawthon limps down one of the administrative hallways, wincing with each step. He nods towards an ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT and hovers awkwardly, waiting for the staffer to walk around the corner.

One the Assistant is gone, Lawthon pulls out a flask and takes a swig. He feels a wave of relief and sighs.

CUT TO:

A private room somewhere inside the stadium serves as a makeshift chapel, with a golden cross, a statue of Jesus and various candles.

Hitting Coach Alvin Huebner and Pitcher Grady Duhart kneel in prayer.

CUT TO:

In a dark and dusty room filled with books and papers, Head Scout Ferd Langwieler watches video, weary-eyed.

He yawns and looks at his clock. It's almost noon.

He turns back to the video and fast forwards.

CUT TO:

The digital scoreboard comes to life. The line is empty, but the Statesmen are playing the New York Smashers today.

CUT TO:

In the outfield, a GROUNDSKEEPER rides a lawnmower parallel to the curve of the infield.

CUT TO:

In the dugout, a BAT BOY stacks several individual bats into Ronnie Pitts' slot in the rack.

CUT TO:

Across the stadium, MASKED EMPLOYEES spray down seats with sanitizer.

CUT TO.

In a concession stand, a MINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYEE scoops popcorn into paper tubs.

CUT TO:

In another concession stand, another MINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYEE dumps a bucket of ice into a soda machine.

CUT TO:

In a stadium bar, a BARTENDER stocks a cooler with metal beer bottles.

CUT TO:

In a concourse, a CUSTODIAN pushes a broom.

CUT TO:

In another concourse, another CUSTODIAN puts a new bag in a trash can.

CUT TO:

Inside the front gate, MINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYEES take programs from cardboard boxes and stack them on tables.

CUT TO:

At the gate, a security guard, MARKY FROST, a Black man in his 30s, and a TICKET TAKER exchange a laugh as they wait.

CUT TO:

Inside a ticket booth, a TICKET SELLER pulls up her shade, ready for the first fans.

The ticket takers and ticket sellers and security guards stare down the empty city block, waiting for the first fans to appear.

And here they come. First one, then three, then dozens, then many. Men and women. Adults, children, seniors. Black, white, brown. They are excited, decked out in varying combinations of red, white and blue and they are ready for a ball game.

As fans flood into the stadium, Frost gives instructions.

FROST

No ID, no beer or wine. No COVID-20 card and you MUST wear a mask.

He starts to repeat himself.

CUT TO:

Far enough away from the stadium entrance to not get busted, various VENDORS offer up unofficial merchandise.

Some have unofficial shirts and caps and buttons and signs related to the team. The standard fare.

Another has a board with various team-related COVID face masks. Some even for other teams. Masks are so common that there are vendors selling non-team versions as well.

At the end of the row of illegal vendors, a transaction takes place. A nondescript man, JACOB, wearing a t-shirt with a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns on it steps up to a SHADY VENDOR and hands him a stack of cash.

The Shady Vendor hands him a fake vaccination card.

Jacob moves down the line and buys an official team cap from a legal vendor.

He steps up to the TICKET TAKER, shows his vaccination card and hands over his ticket. The Ticket Taker rips it and Jacob goes into the stadium.

CUT TO:

Jacob mills about the concourse, looking at merch and scanning food booths.

He walks into the bathroom, waits his turn and then goes into the stall.

He sits on the seat without taking down his pants.

He pulls a sticker from his jacket pocket, peels the backing and sticks it on the stall wall.

The sticker has a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns on it.

Jacob smiles, flushes and leaves the stall.

CUT TO:

The fans cheer loudly, glad to be back in a baseball stadium. They continue to cheer throughout, excited just to be ABLE to cheer.

In the owner's box, Owens and Benjamin stand up as MARY BILLUPS, an elegant white woman in her 50s, rolls into the room in a state-of-the-art electric wheelchair. On the back of her seat are multiple stickers supporting the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

OWENS

Lekebra, I assume you've seen Mary Billups, our esteemed league president, on television.

Benjamin shakes Mary's hand.

BENJAMIN

I'm familiar with your work.

BILLUPS

Nice to meet you. I see the team is off to a great start this year.

BENJAMIN

(grinning)
We do our best.

OWENS

Hopefully we'll treat you to some
good baseball today.

BILLUPS

Look forward to it.

CUT TO:

The New York Smashers team bus pulls up to the visiting
players entrance. The players start filing off. They are big
and powerful men.

CUT TO:

Catcher Savoy Bishop exits the locker room and winds his way
through the stadium's labyrinth until he's near an isolated
equipment closet.

He looks around nervously. He pulls his headphones over his
ears and hits play on his phone. Prince's "Purple Rain" album
starts to play.

PRINCE

Dearly beloved...

Bishop pulls a "necklace" out of his pocket. It consists of
twine strung with the teeth of various animals.

He starts kissing each tooth individually. Nothing gross,
just a little smack of the lips.

CLOUD (O.S.)

Bishop?

Bishop hits stop on his phone.

CLOUD (CONT'D)

What you doing there?

Bishop slowly turns around to see rookie outfielder Ajax
Cloud.

BISHOP

Uhh... getting ready for the game?

CLOUD

You asking me?

Bishop shakes his head.

CLOUD (CONT'D)
So what's that you got there?

Bishop finally relaxes.

BISHOP
I'm a hunter.

CLOUD
I'm not familiar with... uh...
hunting. Why do you have those...
uh... teeth?

BISHOP
Yeah, they're... umm... like
trophies?

Cloud nods nervously.

Bishop holds up one of the teeth.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
See this one here is mountain lion.

Cloud is a little impressed.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
And this one is a bighorn sheep.

Cloud raises an eyebrow.

Bishop holds up each tooth and introduces them.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Elk... pronghorn... swift fox...
Southern flying squirrel...
Bailey's Eastern woodrat and this
last one is a Northern long-eared
bat.

Cloud is flabbergasted.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
They're for luck. Like I don't
think that like I channel the
spirits of the animals or nature or
any of that, just luck.

CLOUD
So you kiss them?

Bishop shrugs.

CLOUD (CONT'D)
Well, good luck. I guess.

Bishop turns away and hits play. Prince's "Purple Rain" album starts to play.

PRINCE
Dearly beloved...

He starts kissing the teeth again.

CUT TO:

Conan Jones sits in the locker room actually having an ASSISTANT apply Meat Heat to his throwing shoulder. Jones pops a couple of pills in his mouth then downs a shot of vodka to wash them down.

CUT TO:

In the locker room, Cam Kendricks leans against his locker with headphones on. His hat is pulled down and he might actually be sleeping.

CUT TO:

A group of relief pitchers do yoga in an empty room. They include Clint Youngblood, Shawn Derby, Krishna Malay, Omar Wheeler and Eddie Parker. Their dogs are downward.

CUT TO:

In the locker room, pitcher Grady Duhart silently prays over a Bible.

Nearby, rookie outfielder Ivan Pasco looks on with reverence. A Catholic, he crosses himself then pulls a golden necklace with a cross from beneath his jersey and kisses it before tucking it back in.

CUT TO:

In a stadium bathroom, Derrick Speck, Hector Delarosa and Tommy Shotwell crowd around the counter. Third baseman Chuck Chester uses his considerable bulk to hold the door closed.

Shotwell chops up coke on a small handheld mirror.

Speck leans in with a rolled-up \$20 bill and snorts a line. He hands it to Shotwell, who does the same.

Shotwell turns to Delarosa and offers him the rolled bill.

Delarosa looks around the room. He hesitates.

Then he grabs the bill and takes a line.

CHESTER
Shit yeah! Gimme that!

He reaches for the bill while Speck drinks from a flask.

CUT TO:

In the stadium gym, outfielder Ronnie Pitts lifts massive amounts of weight, particularly for game day.

The far end of the room is reserved for rehab and medical exams. One of the team doctors, DR. GREEN, a woman in her mid-30s, is running Harrell Flowers through a series of tests to make sure he's ready to play.

CUT TO:

Alfred Whaley walks into the dugout and checks today's lineup, which Gray has posted on the wall near the entrance to the locker room.

He scans the list, but he's not a starter today.

He turns to walk away and Craig Glover comes into the dugout.

WHALEY
What's with this shit? I hit fifth all of last year? Now I'm on the bench. Again?

GLOVER
Better to be on the bench than in the stands.

Glover shrugs, but Whaley isn't buying it.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
The quickest way back into the lineup is to be a team player. It's a team sport.

Whaley frowns.

WHALEY
Whatever.

Whaley walks back into the locker room.

Glover shrugs.

CUT TO:

Kit Riggins stands in front of a bank of bathrooms in the concourse. An INTERVIEWER and a CAMERAMAN are focused on him.

INTERVIEWER

You're back after missing most of last season, but you say you're fully healed now...

Riggins nods.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

...do you think you're going to be able to recapture the form that got you 12 wins as a rookie two years ago?

Riggins smiles.

RIGGINS

Definitely. The whole time, I focused on my health. My diet. I ate...

Delarosa, Shotwell, Speck and Chester come out of the bathroom door, freshly coked up. They see Riggins getting interviewed and they grin and laugh to each other.

They rush at him and Chester yanks Riggins' pants to the ground and they run off howling. Riggins scrambles to cover up. The camera keeps rolling.

END MONTAGE.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - LATER

The stadium is packed with fans in red, white and blue, the players are on the field, Opening Day has begun. National Stadium is a recently-built park. It is clean and pristine, with quirky angles and lots of plants growing throughout the structure.

Behind home plate is a plaque that says "D.C. Statesmen, Established 1879."

Across the outfield wall are 17 pennants that say "Eastern Conference Championships." The most recent is from 2013. There are NO world championship banners.

Along the third base line, Barney Baseball frolics with fans.

On the mound stands the president of the United States, STEDMAN WINFREY. He winds up and throws an almost good first pitch. The crowd politely cheers as Winfrey waves.

The National Anthem, as played by a MILITARY BRASS BAND, ends.

UMPIRE

Play ball!

Riggins stands on the mound, done with his warm-up pitches and ready to play the game.

Kendricks is playing first base today.

Riggins throws his rosin bag at the ground as hard as he can and toes the rubber.

He nods at Bishop's call and gets ready.

He lifts his glove up to his mouth and talks to the ball.

RIGGINS

Please. For Jenny.

He rockets a fastball for a strike against the Smashers leadoff hitter, LEDGER. The game is underway.

RIGGINS (CONT'D)

Please. For Andy.

Riggins gets a called second strike.

RIGGINS (CONT'D)

Please. For Monte.

A wicked curve drops under Ledger's bat and he walks back to the dugout.

CUT TO:

The next batter, HINES, stands at the plate.

RIGGINS (CONT'D)

Please. For Pam.

The ball apparently doesn't like Pam, because ball four puts Hines on first.

CUT TO:

The next batter, JOEL, stands in the box.

RIGGINS (CONT'D)

For Jenny.

Joel tees off on the pitch and hits a line shot that Kendricks dives for and catches.

The baserunner, Hines, is well off the bag, and easy unassisted double play.

But Kendricks throws to second like there was nobody on base. He's throwing around the infield in celebration. Hines scrambles back to first base safely.

The rest of the team is baffled.

In the dugout, reactions aren't any better.

GRAY

What am I watching here?

HOWELL

Your guy is killing me here,
Huebner.

Huebner stares intently at the field, ignoring those staring at him from either side.

CUT TO:

Riggins has a 2-0 count on the batter, a massive power hitter named ALDA. Riggins is clearly rattled.

He forgets to talk to the ball.

He throws the pitch and he realizes that he forgot the superstition. His throw comes off slow and right over the middle of the plate.

Alda blasts a shot to right field that never had a chance of staying in the park. 2-0 Smashers.

The entire time Alda rounds the bases, Riggins glares at Kendricks.

CUT TO:

On a 3-1 pitch, Riggins gets the batter, VAN BUREN, to hit a weak grounder to Speck, who easily throws to Kendricks for the last out.

Riggins sprints off the field, making sure to LEAP over the foul line.

Once in the dugout, Riggins goes to the end away from the coaches and hurls his glove, full strength, at the Hater-ade jugs, knocking one over.

Kendricks steps into the dugout and Riggins makes a beeline for him.

Glover is the first off his feet, but several players jump in, too and hold Riggins back. Kendricks stands his ground, chin up, which only enrages Riggins more.

They pull Riggins away.

HUEBNER
(to Kendricks)
Sit down.

Kendricks stares HIM down for a few seconds, thinks better of it and has a seat.

OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. LAKE ACHERUSIA - DAY

SUPER: Lake Acherusia, Fishin' Country USA, Saturday morning

A wide shot of the very remote and tranquil Lake Acherusia on a calm, crisp fall morning. A small, simple but VERY NICE fishing boat sits alone in the middle of the lake. On the side is the logo "Fishin' Country USA."

Harold Gray sits in the boat. He tilts back a beer can, finishes it and tosses it in the boat.

He casts his lure and settles in.

And waits.

And waits.

And waits.

An eagle cries in the distance.

Gray shakes the line a little.

GRAY
Yep.

Gray spits into the water.

SUPER: Fishin' Country USA/Exclusively at REI

INT. SPORTS CENTRAL STUDIO

Sports Central starts up with lots of whooshes and flags and sports images and bald eagles and such.

This leads us to the very futuristic and busy Sports Central set. Blue is the dominant color. At the desk are Inesta Morgan and Major Sumrell.

INESTA

Welcome back.

MAJOR

We thank you for watching Sports Central.

INESTA

Well it might be Good Friday, but not for New Orleans pitching.

MAJOR

It wasn't easy, but it was Big, as Cam Kendricks celebrated National Walk to Work Day with four base on balls in five at bats.

INESTA

And he hit ANOTHER home run in that fifth at bat.

MAJOR

Another one.

INESTA

Despite an above average number of rainouts this early in the season, D.C. leads their division in win percentage after a 7-1 start.

MAJOR

And that came two days after Kendricks became the first Statesmen player to hit for the cycle in 17 years.

INESTA

And with arch-rivals New York on the docket today, will the Statesmen's early success be SMASHed on the altar of hype? Or will years of a one-sided rivalry be trashed?

Major breaks character. He REALLY loves Inesta's joke. He composes himself.

MAJOR
 (still chuckling)
 Apologies. I think you just smashed
 my funny bone.

Inesta smiles subtly.

INESTA
 When she shoots, she scores.

Major is impressed.

MAJOR
 Yes she does.

He tidies up his cue cards.

MAJOR (CONT'D)
 And now let's turn to our favorite
 field reporter, Sharon Alligood,
 who will preview the defending
 champion New York Smashers.

CUT TO:

Sharon stands outside the home stadium of the New York
 Smashers, Madison Cube Garden.

SHARON
 Thanks, Major. It's long been a
 truism in the USBL that there's no
 such thing as rebuilding in New
 York, there's only reloading. The
 Smashers...

FADE TO BLACK.

During the show, the crawl at the bottom of the screen shows
 the following messages, on a loop:

"Anti Hero leads Oscars with 7 nominations"

"McQueen wins Costco 500 in photo finish"

"Secretary of State Sterling Cooper says 'no sanctions for
 North Vietnam after latest bombing'"

"WBB: Florida State Tarpons visit White House to celebrate
 second straight national title"

"'No arrests imminent' in National Mall graffiti case"

"Puerto Rico: Governor denies wave of kidnappings; says
 tourists welcome"

"Three CFB players hospitalized Saturday after collapsing in heat; all in stable condition"

INT. NBS NEWS STUDIO

Jeffrey Brack sits in the NBS News Studio, which is a lot less busy and more professional than the Sports Central set. Blue is still the dominant color, although it's softer here.

BRACK

Welcome to NBS Nightly News. Today has been a turbulent day across much of the country, the oppressive heat setting records from coast to coast, but our lead story is the growing unrest in Puerto Rico, as independence fighters have increased their violent tactics in recent weeks...

EXT. COLLINWOOD APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A lime-green VW bug pulls into a parking spot in front of the Collinwood Apartments. From the driver's side a BOUNCY BLONDE in club clothes bursts from the vehicle. A tall MUSCULAR BLACK MAN emerges from the passenger side in a more reserved fashion.

The Man comes around the side of the car and the couple walk towards the apartment building arm-in-arm.

MUSCULAR BLACK MAN

So, what'd you think?

BOUNCY BLONDE

It was fun, but I think I liked Fast 11 better.

MUSCULAR BLACK MAN

The one with Elizabeth Warren?

She nods enthusiastically.

BOUNCY BLONDE

She kicked ass.

MUSCULAR BLACK MAN

Did you know she actually has a black belt in...

He stops short. He grabs the Bouncy Blonde by the shoulders and turns her so they lock eyes. She's afraid.

BOUNCY BLONDE

What is it?

MUSCULAR BLACK MAN

Don't look.

She struggles to turn and look. He holds her and shakes his head.

She keeps pulling and he lets go, not want to hurt her.

She turns and stares at the small porch next to their front door.

Their lawn chairs have been tossed out into the grass.

In the center of the porch is the severed head of a dirty, older white man. Drawn in blood around him are various unknown symbols and words. No other body parts are visible.

The Bouncy Blonde screams.

EXT. COLLINWOOD APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATER

A black and white police car pulls in and parks next to the VW Bug.

Officers Anne Snell and Steven Beck get out of the car. The Muscular Black Man and the Bouncy Blonde stand far away from the apartment building, hugging each other.

SNELL

Where is it?

The Muscular Black Man nods towards the porch.

As they approach the building, they see the head. Beck turns and vomits into the grass. Snell grabs her walkie talkie.

SNELL (CONT'D)

This is Snell. We're out at Collinwood. We've got another one.

Snell and Beck exchange a worried look.

INT. PDDC BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

A wide shot of the empty briefing room, the lights out.

Administrative Assistant Rita, wearing a name tag, walks in.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

Rita finishes filling up a coffee pot and puts it in the maker. She flips the switch to "brew."

CUT TO:

She takes an already-opened double sleeve of Styrofoam cups. She takes them all out and stacks them on the counter. She puts the empty back in a drawer.

CUT TO:

Rita takes a stack of paper cones and sticks them in the dispenser next to the water cooler.

CUT TO:

She goes down each of the rows and places pens and briefing books out for each officer.

CUT TO:

Rita checks on the coffee. It's almost full. She reaches down to a cabinet below the coffee maker and pulls out two cups. One is filled with stirrers, the other with packets of non-dairy creamer.

CUT TO:

From another cabinet, she pulls out a bag of napkins and sets them on a table near the coffee maker.

CUT TO:

The room is empty. Rita walks in carrying two dozen donuts. Dunkin', of course.

She puts the boxes on the tables and opens them.

CUT TO:

Rita leans against the counter, eating a Boston Creme.

CUT TO:

She finishes up the Boston Creme, wipes off her hands and throws the napkin in the waste basket.

She walks away. Stops. Comes back.

And grabs a cruller.

CUT TO:

Rita checks her watch. She confirms it with the clock on the wall.

She walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

A CUSTODIAN comes in and checks each of the three trash cans throughout the room.

Rita supervises.

He passes the first two, which are empty. The third, however, has Rita's napkin. He looks up at her.

She nods.

He reaches into the can and pulls out the napkin. He holds it up to her.

She smiles.

He carries it out of the room.

CUT TO:

Officer Mitchell O'Reilly comes in and makes a beeline for the donuts.

Several other cops come in.

Rita crosses her arms and smiles.

END MONTAGE.

Captain Alex Levin gives the latest all-staff briefing.

LEVIN

By now, you've all heard.

Murmurs.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

At this point, there is no reason to believe that these crimes are connected, BUT we're not going to close any avenues off.

Officer Cody Paige is not at all convinced that they're unconnected.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

I know you've all been working overtime hunting down leads.

(MORE)

LEVIN (CONT'D)
I want to know ANYTHING that might
be connected. Let's hear what
you've got.

Silence.

Officer Bill Tucker raises his hand.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
Tucker. It's not a grade school
classroom.

Tucker is a bit wounded.

TUCKER
I took down a tip when I was
working the phones.

LEVIN
Don't keep us in suspense.

TUCKER
Victim #3 on our board? An Officer
Sheehan down on the South Side was
near the victim's house BEFORE our
potential window. He called in a
suspicious activity report that
night, but nothing came of it. He
kept an eye on the suspect for a
bit, but nothing developed.

LEVIN
That all?

TUCKER
Sheehan reported that the man was
"walking awkwardly as if hiding
something in his sleeve." He
described the suspect...

Tucker looks down at his notes.

TUCKER (CONT'D)
The witness said: "He looks like
your dad." Then the officer in
question said "He looks like my
dad?" Then the witness shook her
head. Then the officer in question
said "Whose dad?" And the witness
said "Anybody's dad."

LEVIN
Is that all?

Tucker scans his notes for an long period of time.

TUCKER

Yes sir it is. At this time.
Definitely.

He pauses awkwardly.

Levin nods at him and Tucker sits down with an aw shucks grin.

LEVIN

Okay, what else have we found? I want everything on the table and then we'll narrow it down from there. No surprises or twist endings, just good procedural work.

Nods and murmurs of assent.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

Good. Whatta we got?

CUT TO:

Snell reads from her notes.

SNELL

Video camera from victim #7's workplace recorded a man who knocked on the door. Suspicious, he was wearing a sling on his arm and carrying a box somewhat haphazardly. The victim was seen assisting the man with the box.

LEVIN

Any identification?

SNELL

No, the suspect stayed with his back to the camera. As if he knew it was there. Too low resolution to get any real details.

CUT TO:

Rita walks in and hands Levin a piece of paper.

Levin reads it and frowns.

LEVIN

This isn't a real tip. That's EXACTLY what the Ted Bundy witness said. Leave the police work to the officers.

Rita slams the door on her way out.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

That's it. No real leads beyond that. Yet. We have a lot of work to do here people.

Cody frowns.

INT. WASHINGTON GAZETTE BULLPEN - NIGHT

It's late at night in the Gazette bullpen. A CUSTODIAN empties trash cans.

Except for Shirley Muldoon, the reporters have all gone home. She finishes typing a story, clicks save and smashes the enter button.

The Custodian empties another can into his cart.

Shirley swivels in her chair, away from the computer screen and towards a massive greenish tome, "The Baseball Encyclopedia." She opens it and the book almost plops open, it's so big.

SHIRLEY

What the hell do you do with a "whip" in baseball?

She leans back contemplating the idea, but not coming up with anything.

The Custodian empties another can.

Shirley digs back into the book, flipping large sections at a time. But every page is just more numbers, column after column of a code she can't begin to comprehend.

The Custodian empties another can.

Shirley closes the book, gets up and walks out.

The Custodian watches her. Then he empties another trash can.

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - LATER

Chad walks down the stairs. Shirley follows.

He flops down in his office chair. She pulls up a chair to join him.

SHIRLEY

I tried. I can't. Tell me everything YOU know about baseball. Like what the hell do you do with a whip?

Chad cocks an eyebrow.

CHAD

A whip?

She nods enthusiastically.

SHIRLEY

That's what the Baseball Encyclopedia said. A whip.

CHAD

(chuckling)
Not A whip. Just WHIP.

SHIRLEY

That's what I said.

CHAD

No, WHIP.

SHIRLEY

Is this the part where you tell me the second baseguy's name is "What?"

CHAD

I don't know.

SHIRLEY AND CHAD

Third base!

Laughter.

SHIRLEY

Seriously, what's a whip?

CHAD

The acronym W.H.I.P. stands for "walks plus hits divided by innings pitched."

Shirley shakes her head.

SHIRLEY
Nope. I'm done.

She gets up and walks out of the room.

Chad stares after her, mouth agape.

And stares.

And stares.

Shirley peeks her head back in.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
You really thought I was gone,
didn't you?

CHAD
You ARE gone.

SHIRLEY
Let's talk more about murders.

CHAD
You ARE gone.

SHIRLEY
More interesting than baseball.

Chad isn't convinced.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Hell, maybe we can actually help
people.

CHAD
I believe that's your job, not
mine.

SHIRLEY
Do you even have a job?

CHAD
I am a freelance--

SHIRLEY
So, no, then.

He throws a stress ball with the name "Red Sheep Ranch" at her, but it sails over her head.

INT. NBS NEWS STUDIO

Leah Owens sits on the studio set, across from Dwayne McDaris.

MCDARIS

Thank you again for joining me.
It's good to have you in the
studio.

OWENS

First live guest in a while?

MCDARIS

More than a year.

OWENS

It's been a tough year.

McDaris writes something in his notes.

MCDARIS

Speaking of tough years...

McDaris smiles sarcastically at her.

He waits until she returns the smile.

She doesn't at first.

Finally she cracks.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

How is it that you haven't fired
Harold Gray yet?

Owens' eyes grow huge.

OWENS

So we're going there now?

MCDARIS

If you don't mind?

Beat.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

Viewers want to know.

He gestures towards the camera.

Beat.

OWENS

Then let's go. What do YOUR viewers want to know?

MCDARIS

Harold Gray?

OWENS

You have a thing for him don't you?

MCDARIS

My job is to tell the truth. If your manager is bad at his job, it's my job to talk about it.

OWENS

I guess it is.

MCDARIS

Then answer the question.

Owens takes a deep breath.

INT. JAMELLE LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jamelle Lewis stands in her dining room, drinking a glass of red wine, watching Owens and McDaris on a large TV.

She isn't watching for fun and her eagle eyes are focused on the screen.

INT. NBS NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

McDaris flips through his notes. He leans back and crosses his legs.

MCDARIS

So, if what you are telling me is true, then you barely even run this team?

OWENS

Why would I lie?

MCDARIS

I can think of a few reasons, but I don't think you ARE lying.

He scrutinizes her for a moment.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

Not to me.

She sits stone-faced.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)
How did it get like this?

OWENS
I am playing the hand I was dealt.

MCDARIS
So what would you do differently?

OWENS
If I were in charge?

McDaris nods.

OWENS (CONT'D)
Much of the weakness starts at the top. If I were in charge, I'd be laser focused on removing that weakness.

MCDARIS
C'mon, name names! Gray?

Owens laughs harshly.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)
Lewis?

OWENS
If I WERE inclined to improve the team...

MCDARIS
Aren't you so inclined?

Owens smiles.

OWENS
I don't like to talk so much about such... private matters. You can rest assured that, whatever Augustus' wishes were, I am fully dedicated to fulfilling them.

McDaris considers something for a moment. He decides to go for it.

MCDARIS
Speaking of Augustus...

Owens frowns.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

I have some questions about where your family fortune came from. According to my research, Augustus owned the Red...

OWENS

I told you in advance my family was off limits.

She gets up and walks off the set.

MCDARIS

(looking into the camera)
Okay, folks... I guess that's the show for today? Finishing out the hour will be... Charlie?

He holds his hand up to his earpiece.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

...Mighty Mouse reruns. My favorite.

INT. JAMELLE LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lewis walks across the room and sits down at her desk. She boots up her laptop.

A call comes in on Lewis' Bluetooth headset. Her phone sits on the counter. "

LEWIS

Hey. About time you called.

GAYLE (O.S.)

You watching this shit?

LEWIS

I wish I weren't.

While she talks, Lewis opens the Tor dark web browser on her laptop.

GAYLE (O.S.)

Are you getting fired?

Lewis laughs.

LEWIS

No. She can't fire me.

GAYLE (O.S.)
What?

LEWIS
Augustus.

GAYLE (O.S.)
He always had a bit of a thing for
you.

LEWIS
Not like that.

GAYLE (O.S.)
I don't know. For a while I was
SURE you were gonna be the Black
Anna Nicole Smith.

LEWIS
You are a child.

GAYLE (O.S.)
At least I'm not a NASTY child.

In the Tor browser, Lewis brings up a webpage. It is completely gray, has no text and simply shows a place for a user name and password.

GAYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You gonna quit?

Lewis logs into the site.

LEWIS
I'm thinking about it.

GAYLE (O.S.)
Really?

LEWIS
Yeah. This place is going to shit.
And Owens is trying to throw me
under the bus.

GAYLE (O.S.)
Why are you still even there then?

LEWIS
Baseball.

GAYLE (O.S.)
There are other jobs in baseball.

LEWIS
Not with the Statesmen.

On the screen opens a blank e-mail form with no identifying information, not even a "To" or "From" field, just a box to type text.

Lewis types: "Let's meet."

She hits send.

GAYLE (O.S.)
You still there?

Lewis closes the browser window.

LEWIS
For now. I'm still here for now.

INT. ALEX LEVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Cody sits across from Levin, who is not happy.

LEVIN
What is it this time?

Cody clears her throat.

CODY
I've been thinking...

Levin rolls her eyes.

CODY (CONT'D)
I want a bigger part of this case.
I want to be useful.

Levin stares at her.

CODY (CONT'D)
I'm serious.

Levin takes a deep breath.

LEVIN
You have already been given an
assignment for this case.

Beat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
It's a very important one.

CODY
To get Eversmith? I already did
that.

Levin smiles.

LEVIN
No, your assignment is to work with
Eversmith. You two are kind of a
brain trust on this case.

Cody stares at Levin.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
Anything else? You got what you
asked for.

CODY
I... uh...

She gives up. She stands to walk out of the office.

LEVIN
Has SHE told you about "The Setup"
yet?

Cody shakes her head.

Levin laughs and waves her away.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
Go ahead and get out of here. I
have real work to do.

INT. PDDC BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Detective Brice Eversmith stands outside the door waiting for
Cody. Cody walks from Levin's office, biting her lip to hold
back her anger.

EVERSMITH
Come with me.

Cody starts to refuse, but Eversmith turns and walks towards
the elevators.

Cody has no chance but to follow.

EXT. GREYS' STADIUM, NEW MEXICO - DAY

A small minor league baseball stadium is pretty packed for today's game between the Blattsville Millstones and the Roswell Greys. Alien merchandise and images dominate the Greys' stadium.

Chaka Purvis mows down a batter to end the inning and runs into the dugout.

INT. GREYS' DUGOUT - LATER

As Purvis comes into the dugout, the other minor league players congratulate him like he's a major league all-star.

He grabs a cup of Hater-ade and sits on the bench. Three of his teammates, LANGLEY, BYERS and FROHIKE, crowd around him.

LANGLY

You're killing it out there.

Purvis nods.

BYERS

Seriously, you won't be here much longer. Can I get your autograph?

Laughter.

FROHIKE

Did you meet him?

Purvis looks up.

PURVIS

Kendricks?

Frohike nods. The others lean in eagerly to hear tales of Kendricks.

Purvis notices.

PURVIS (CONT'D)

Yeah... Hell yeah! I was there when dude walked onto the field and just starting beating down the pitching staff...

They get super excited and now Purvis is more popular, too.

INT. PDDC BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eversmith and Cody walk down the dirty and dusty stairs, hip to hip. Eversmith leads Cody down a dark hall to a door. She pulls out the keys and opens it.

Eversmith walks in and turns on the lights. The room is cobwebby and has been unused for some time. Half the room is filled with battered and abandoned boxes and furniture, half is clear except for a desk and a bank of VERY modern and nice computers, even though they're covered in dust.

CODY

Nice office they gave you.

EVERSMITH

It's a shithole.

Cody chuckles.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

But it has "The Setup."

Eversmith gestures extravagantly towards the computers. Cody isn't impressed.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

Wait till I turn it on.

Eversmith grins as she boots the computers. She walks to a filing cabinet near the wall, opens it up and pulls out a rolled-up mat of some sort.

She brings it towards the desk and unrolls it with a massive grin.

CODY

What, are we playing video games?

Eversmith laughs.

EVERSMITH

Kinda.

The mat has a grid of black lines on it, 16 rows by 16 rows. From the end is a USB line. Eversmith plugs it into the closest computer.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

You been paying attention in briefings?

CODY

Of course.

EVERSMITH

Really?

Beat.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

They've got nothing.

CODY

They had several tips come in. Some of them sounded promising.

Eversmith laughs.

EVERSMITH

Every "clue" they had was stolen from Ted Bundy or some other serial killer.

Cody frowns.

CODY

You mean we have a copycat.

Eversmith stares at her.

EVERSMITH

No. We have nothing.

CODY

They're ALL cranks?

EVERSMITH

Yes. This isn't some prestige TV show where some mad genius is taunting the cops with clues or something.

The computer finally boots up.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

The only evidence we have are the DISPLAYS.

CODY

Displays?

EVERSMITH

Yep. The killer, or killers, are setting up a display.

The grid on the mat lights up. A 3-D image of the first crime scene appears on the table, but it's just the room, the murder evidence isn't visible.

Cody's mind is blown.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

The murders clearly did not take place on site. The forensic evidence rules that out. The body parts and blood were displayed in a very specific way.

The details of the crime populate the 3-D image. Blood and guts appear around the room, leading us to the pattern we saw in the first episode.

CODY

Why haven't we been using this?
I've never seen anything like it.

EVERSMITH

NOBODY has seen anything like it.
It's proprietary.

CODY

This is some Tom Cruise Minority Report shit here.

EVERSMITH

Nobody cares.

Cody shakes her head.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

You ever read Moneyball?

CODY

Saw the movie.

EVERSMITH

Close enough. You know what it was about?

CODY

Baseball.

EVERSMITH

No.

Cody KNOWS it is about baseball.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

It's about America in general and American institutions in specific.

Cody cocks her head to the side.

CODY

What?

EVERSMITH

What we are dealing with are minds
that are stuck in the past.

CODY

Like the baseball guys?

EVERSMITH

Exactly.

Beat.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

Levin give you the old "brain
trust" line?

Cody is shocked.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

You bought it, didn't you?

CODY

I... uh... a little.

EVERSMITH

I did, too. Anyway, this thing is
WAY better than you think.

CODY

Oh yeah?

EVERSMITH

Yeah. It uses some pretty intense
scanners. This won't show us what's
inside drawers or anything like
that, but it's a 100% recreation of
anything that was visible when it
got scanned.

CODY

But they already went over
everything?

Eversmith stares at her.

EVERSMITH

That been your experience with the
PDDC?

CODY

It has not.

EVERSMITH

Mine, either. Let's take a look.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - DAY

Harold Gray sits across the desk from Leah Owens. He's in uniform, wears his cap and has shades on inside.

GRAY

I'm going to ask you one more time,
let me fire them?

She stares at him.

OWENS

You're serious?

He nods.

GRAY

I am.

OWENS

Like the season has already started
and you actually want me to fire
the hitting and pitching coaches?

He nods.

GRAY

I do. You could bring back MY guys.

She chuckles.

OWENS

You really are headed straight for
Pittsfield aren't you?

GRAY

I imagine I'll get there before you
do.

Beat.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Ma'am.

She squints.

OWENS

Don't you have a game to lose?

He chuckles.

GRAY
You ever see the movie Major
League?

OWENS
I have a PhD, what do you think?

She smiles as she takes a sip of whiskey.

GRAY
Check it out sometime, you might
find it interesting.

OWENS
I'll pick it up from Blockbuster on
the way home.

GRAY
I'm sure you will.

Gray WANTS to spit, but he doesn't.

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Chad stares at Shirley.

CHAD
Are you planning on going home
tonight?

SHIRLEY
You trying to get rid of me?

CHAD
What gave you that clue?

SHIRLEY
I'm wired. Too much to think about.

Beat.

CHAD
So you're going to meet the cop
then?

SHIRLEY
Yeah.

CHAD
Sounds about right. You can't get
this stuff out of your head.

Shirley shakes her head.

SHIRLEY
Don't I know it.

Chad shrugs.

CHAD
Okay, so let's figure it out and
then we can get back to baseball.

SHIRLEY
So I don't get fired.

CHAD
So you don't get fired.

Chad reaches up and tilts his monitor so that Shirley can see it too.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I made a spreadsheet of where to
start.

He did. It's on the screen.

Shirley gives him a smirk and then leans closer to the screen.

SHIRLEY
You crack the case yet?

CHAD
I have some theories.

Shirley laughs.

SHIRLEY
Show me.

He does.

EXT. CHAD'S HOUSE - LATER

Shirley stands in front of Chad's house. Her phone is ringing.

JONES (O.S.)
Hello.

SHIRLEY
It's Shirley.

JONES (O.S.)
What's up?

SHIRLEY
So this Kendricks guy made the
team?

JONES (O.S.)
Yep.

SHIRLEY
And that inspired you to come back?

Jones laughs.

JONES (O.S.)
Something like that.

SHIRLEY
Can you get me a pass?

JONES (O.S.)
Don't you already get a press pass?

SHIRLEY
Meh. Very little access. Get me the
whole layout?

Jones chuckles.

JONES (O.S.)
I'll see what I can do.

INT. SUNDAY SPORTS CHAT SHOW STUDIO

The lights shine down on host Michael Weisman and his guests.
Behind him is a giant sign that says: The Sunday Sports Chat
Show.

WEISMAN
Hello everyone and welcome to the
Sunday Sports Chat Show.

Next to Weisman is Sharon Alligood.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)
With me today are four of our
regular panelists... Sharon
Alligood of NBS...

ALLIGOOD
Thanks for having me.

WEISMAN
Ricky Womble of the Los Angeles
Defender...

Womble waves.

WOMBLE

Great to see everyone.

WEISMAN

Edith Merman of the Philadelphia
Inquisitor...

MERMAN

Thank you for having me.

WEISMAN

And Dwayne McDaris of the New York
Union-Journal.

MCDARIS

Bazooooooooooooom!

Weisman turns and looks into the camera.

WEISMAN

Okay, first question. Have the
Statesmen finally gotten the upper
hand against their arch-rivals the
Smashers?

MERMAN

I wouldn't quite jump on that
bandwagon yet.

WOMBLE

Is it even a rivalry if only one
team ever wins?

Laughter.

MCDARIS

It's totally not real. The only
reason they're doing well is that
other teams are struggling because
of COVID-20 protocols. Like, these
useless performative rituals that
everyone is fumbling around trying
to comply with are taking good
teams down.

ALLIGOOD

Are you kidding?

MCDARIS

No, I think the research is pretty
clear that--

ALLIGOOD

How are we still listening to this?
It's not even remotely accurate.
Not a single player on the Smashers
missed a single game. They're
essentially the same team that won
the championship last season--

WOMBLE

They actually upgraded at catcher
and right field.

ALLIGOOD

They're BETTER than last year, and
the Statesmen swept--

MCDARIS

I wouldn't expect you to
understand. Baseball is a game of---

Weisman waves his arms.

WEISMAN

Next question! Are the Statesmen up
for sale?

WOMBLE

No chance.

MCDARIS

They aren't worth anything.

Laughter.

ALLIGOOD

From what I'm hearing, it's
definitely on the table.

MERMAN

I've heard similar.

MCDARIS

I've heard NOTHING.

WEISMAN

Is Chaka Purvis ready to come back
to the bigs? Can he help the
Statesmen?

WOMBLE

He looks to have matured quite a
bit.

MERMAN

Yes, I think he'll be a starter before the all-star break.

ALLIGOOD

He has been dominant in the minors, his control problems seem to have been worked out.

MCDARIS

I'm not sure he'll provide much of a boost, but D.C. can surely use him.

WEISMAN

Last question, and I'm going to keep asking about this guy until he goes away or proves us wrong. Cam Kendrick? Real deal or flash in the pan?

MCDARIS

Ugh. This guy can't be for real.

WEISMAN

Are you suggesting what I think you're suggesting?

MCDARIS

Not yet.

ALLIGOOD

He homered in his first eight games. 11 dingers. That's impressive.

MCDARIS

Too impressive.

HERMAN

But can he handle playing in the field?

WOMBLE

That boner on opening day was laughable.

MCDARIS

A lot of what is going on in D.C. is laughable.

ALLIGOOD

Notably, the Statesmen came back on opening day because Kendricks hit a three-run blast. He screwed up, sure, but they came back and got Riggins the win, 6-2.

WEISMAN

And, again, that was against the best team in the USBL. That HAS to mean something.

INT. MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

The players walk through the airport and the second people spot Kendricks, they mob the team. Everybody wants selfies and autographs. While waiting for Kendricks, the fans get autographs from the other players.

Bishop signs a frozen package of sausages.

BISHOP

Thanks man, you should try the new Faux Vegan sausage.

Two teen girls giggle and say they will.

Bishop hands them the package and when he looks up, he sees McDaris, talking to a group of other reporters.

The color drops from his face and Bishop rushes at him.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You!

The reporters all look up to see the LARGE baseball player coming at them.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You that guy from the sports talk show?

McDaris looks at the other reporters and then at Bishop.

MCDARIS

Uh... yeah? I think so.

Bishop gets up in his face. The other reporters back away. Some of the baseball players start to notice the altercation.

BISHOP

You on there making fun of me and my family?

McDaris shakes his head.

MCDARIS
What are you talking--

BISHOP
I saw you. On that chat show!

MCDARIS
The Sunday Sports Chat Show?

Bishop is angry enough that spittle hits McDaris in the face.

BISHOP
That's the one. You were on there
joking about my family's sausage
farm.

MCDARIS
I have no idea--

BISHOP
The commercials. You and your
buddies were laughing about them.

MCDARIS
Savoy Farms? I've never even seen--

BISHOP
Then how'd you know the name?

MCDARIS
I heard it on the Sunday Sports--

Bishop's teammates come over to intervene.

BISHOP
That's right, where you and your
buddies thought it was a joke. I
remember what you said. Your EXACT
words were "Well, I'd be DADGUM
crazy to punish my heart--"

McDaris is baffled.

MCDARIS
But I didn't--

Bishop punches McDaris in the face, knocking him to the ground. The players pull Bishop away and they quickly make their way towards the plane.

As his reporter friends help him up, McDaris stares after Bishop, clearly not the "forgive and forget" type.

INT. PDDC INTERROGATION ROOM

Cody escorts Shirley into the interrogation room and they sit on opposite sides of the table.

SHIRLEY

Thanks for meeting with me.

CODY

It is my duty to respond to citizen inquiries as much as confidentiality laws and other rules allow me. If I--

SHIRLEY

Is it this room?

Cody stares at her.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

You know, that makes you talk so OFFICIAL?

Cody frowns.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Loosen up. It's just us girls.

Cody's frown deepens.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

It's not an interrogation...

Cody looks around at the room.

CODY

Isn't it?

Beat.

CODY (CONT'D)

So you're a blogger?

Shirley nods.

CODY (CONT'D)

What am I doing with my time?

Cody half-jokingly moves to leave.

SHIRLEY

Wait. Do you know how I got started?

Cody stops, turns around and sits down again.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
(smiling)
You do, don't you?

CODY
I agreed to meet you, didn't I?

Shirley nods.

CODY (CONT'D)
I do my homework. So, you helped
out with the Hines case?

SHIRLEY
I did. Back in my "web sleuth"
days.

CODY
And you're more than that now?

SHIRLEY
I write for the Gazette.

CODY
I thought you were a blogger.

SHIRLEY
The Gazette has a blogger.

Cody stares at her.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
It's not the medium that matters. A
blog is just a tool. Same as a
newspaper.

CODY
So what happened?

SHIRLEY
In college, they taught us how to
use databases. As a private
citizen, you can access a LOT of
databases. Put two and two
together...

CODY
Good work. I'm sure you gave some
comfort to the family.

SHIRLEY
A little. But less than you'd
think.

Beat.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Well, less than I thought.

Cody is shocked.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
You, on the other hand...

Cody is speechless.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
...you know exactly what it's like.

CODY
How did you...?

SHIRLEY
I do my homework, too.

CODY
Did you ever meet them? The people--

SHIRLEY
From WebSleuths.com?

Cody nods.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
No. I work solo, I'm not much for
posting in those forums. Too many
false positives. Not enough
reporters.

Beat.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Did they actually find the killer?

Cody tears up a little.

CODY
Yeah... my mom met the guy at a
roadside bar. Just some random guy
she met at the wrong bar on the
wrong night.

SHIRLEY
I'm sorry.

Cody wipes her tears away.

CODY
It's why I became a cop.

SHIRLEY
Did it work out?

CODY
Not in the fucking slightest.

INT. HAROLD GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray sits at his desk, checking over an old-school scorebook with recent games hand-scored.

A knock at the door.

GRAY
Come in.

He's barely audible. Nothing happens.

GRAY (CONT'D)
COME IN!

The door opens and Alvin Huebner and Vernon Howell walk in.

Gray nods at the chairs. The two men sit.

GRAY (CONT'D)
I guess we should all talk, huh?

Howell nods. Huebner frowns.

GRAY (CONT'D)
I'm not going to mince words. I don't want you here.

Howell and Huebner exchange a look.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Decision wasn't mine. I had my guys...

HUEBNER
With all due respect, your guys weren't getting the job done.

GRAY
I'm not here to debate the resumes of men 10 times your worth.

(MORE)

GRAY (CONT'D)
I'm here to get any elephants out
of the room. If you don't like it,
you know where the exit is.

HUEBNER
How dare you...

HOWELL
Shut up, you idiot.

Huebner is shocked.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
To be clear, you both suck at this
job and I'm the hell out of this
fiasco after the season is over.

GRAY
The disrespect is mutual. I'd fire
you both if I could. I can't. So we
have to figure out a way out of
this.

They stare him down.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Are we clear?

HOWELL
Yes sir.

HUEBNER
Peachy.

GRAY
I would. But I can't. So we're
stuck with each other.

Howell and Huebner exchange a look.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Your guys on the plane to Miami?

Howell nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Yours?

Huebner nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Let's win these games.

Huebner laughs. Howell glares at Gray.

EXT. INGEN FIELD, MIAMI - DAY

SUPER: Vernal Equinox, Miami

InGen Field is packed as the home team MIAMI BLADES host the Statesmen.

SUPER: Sixth Inning

Jones is pitching and it's not going great. It's the sixth inning and the score is tied 6-6. Jones has given up 11 hits.

The massive right fielder, HIAASEN, has a 1-2 count and there are two runners on with two outs.

Jones takes a deep breath and throws a SLOW change that Hiaasen swings way too early at and strikes out. Jones walks SLOWLY back to the dugout.

CUT TO:

Bishop stands in the batter's box. The Miami pitcher, CALDERON, nods to the catcher, ISAAC.

Calderon throws a breaking ball that doesn't break and Bishop gets a good swing. It's deep. Left fielder SECADA leaps for the ball, but it lands just over the outfield fence.

Bishop pumps his fist like he just won a championship.

The Statesmen take a 7-6 lead.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Ninth Inning

It is the top of the ninth, and Miami's star closer, MORGAN stands on the mound. He's an intimidating presence from the mound with his steely glare and a massive beard that reaches almost to his navel.

There are two outs, the bases are loaded and D.C. continues to lead 7-6.

Morgan fires the first pitch and Kendricks swings and misses. The crowd starts getting louder.

Morgan hits 98 on the next pitch according to Ferd Langwieler's radar gun. Kendricks launches a ball to deep left, but it hooks foul. The crowd lets out a sigh of relief.

The crowd is super loud as Kendricks has two strikes. Morgan's pitch hits 100 this time.

Kendricks rips it foul down the third base line and deep into the corner, out of play.

Morgan turns to his teammates and waves at them to shift left. They do.

Morgan sets. Fires another fastball.

Kendricks drills it down the RIGHT field line. Right fielder Hiaasen breaks the other direction and slips. The ball rattles deep into the corner and bounces away from first baseman LE BATARD who gave chase.

Three runs have already scored and Kendricks has rounded second by the time Le Batard gets to the ball.

Third Base Coach Terence Kimball waves Kendricks around third and he never slows down.

Le Batard throws for home, but he's too deep to get there in time and Kendricks scores. The Statesmen go up 11-6.

Kendricks crosses home plate and is mobbed by his teammates.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH, MIAMI - NIGHT

The team walks through a busy South Beach party crowd. Most of the team is here, led by Delarosa, Speck, Shotwell and Alfredo Brito. Kendricks reluctantly goes along with the pack, which is already starting to get rowdy.

Bishop is at the center of the crowd. Kendricks lingers at the rear. He's not comfortable being in public.

People start to recognize them and fans point and whisper among themselves.

Speck hands Bishop a flask. Bishop shrugs and takes a sip. He spills some on his chin and wipes it off while Speck and Chester laugh at him.

BISHOP

I never had a flask before. Never needed one. Like there's like a backwash or something...

Everyone laughs. Except Kendricks.

The players walk up to a glowing neon pinkish-red night club, Carnero Rojo, in a sea of attractive people. The line to get in is long.

Speck and Bishop gather around Kendricks.

SPECK

C'mon man, you gotta get us in!

BISHOP

I definitely want to go in there.

SPECK

Second basemen don't get to skip the line.

Kendricks relents.

He walks up to the BOUNCER, who is actually smaller than him. The people waiting in line start to recognize Kendricks.

Bishop and Speck watch.

BISHOP

You think he can get us in?

SPECK

Look.

The Bouncer grins as Kendricks autographs his clipboard.

Kendricks waves the other guys in and they make their way inside. They stop because Kendricks doesn't follow.

BISHOP

C'mon.

SPECK

What are you doing? The party's in here.

Kendricks thinks for a second, clearly coming up with an excuse not to go inside.

He smiles.

KENDRICKS

Nah, the party's out here.

He waves his open arms at the line of people waiting to go inside. They go wild.

Kendricks walks down the line and points at two BEAUTIFUL WOMEN and one VERY PRETTY MAN, none of whom know each other.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

You... you... and you.

All three enthusiastically jump out of line. Kendricks doesn't take them inside. He gestures to the team's driver.

CUT TO:

A limo pulls up. The driver hops out and Kendricks invites the three attractive people into the limo. They crowd in excitedly.

He winks at Bishop and the guys and gets in.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
To the Fontainebleau!

Speck shrugs and the players laugh as they go inside.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - NIGHT

Whaley stands outside the players' entrance to the stadium with a security guard Marky Frost.

FROST
What did you say you left behind?

Whaley scrambles for an answer.

WHALEY
Uh... my... um... Rolex.

Frost nods.

FROST
Shit, those are expensive. I'll have to mark it on my chart.

He holds up a clipboard, then opens the gate.

FROST (CONT'D)
I'm gonna lock you in and I'll be here.

Whaley nods.

FROST (CONT'D)
Call me when you're ready.

WHALEY
I will.

Whaley walks in and Frost locks him in.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In the locker room, Whaley stands at his locker. He looks around, but he's alone.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his Rolex. He puts it on.

WHALEY
(awkwardly loud)
Oh, here it is.

He looks around again. No one.

He crosses the locker room and tries the door knob to the manager's and coaches' offices.

It's unlocked.

He looks around one last time, opens it and goes in.

Whaley walks down the hall until he reaches Head Scout Ferd Langwieler's office.

He reaches for the knob.

INT. FERD LANGWIELER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Whaley shuts the door behind him and tiptoes across the room. He goes directly to a filing cabinet and scans the labels until he finds one labeled "Active Roster."

He pulls it out and thick file folders of each of the players fill the drawer.

He flips through the folders until he finds one labeled "Kendricks, C." He pulls it out and sets it on the desk.

He sits in the chair and starts flipping through the relatively thin folder.

He walks over to a photocopier and starts copying everything in the file.

Once the small stack of copies is done, Whaley puts the folder back in the drawer and shuts it.

He turns around to leave and there stands a custodian, JANICE, a Black woman in her early 30s.

Janice is frozen, staring at him, gripping the handle of a mop. Only the bucket stands between her and Whaley.

WHALEY

Hey... uh... what's your name?

She nods towards the nametag that says Janice.

Whaley squints to read it.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

Hey... Janice.

Beat.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am?

She nods.

JANICE

You play for the team.

He grins and nods.

WHALEY

Exactly. I just need to pick up some... stats. Like you know, for the upcoming games.

He waves the stack of copies at her. She grips the mop tighter.

JANICE

You need them this late at night?

Whaley clears his throat and looks up at the clock. It's nearly 3 a.m.

WHALEY

Yeah, I.. the team is in Miami and they need them as soon as they can get there.

Beat.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

What are YOU doing here so late?

She panics.

JANICE

I work on the late shift.

Whaley looks at the clock again.

WHALEY

You the only one on the 3 a.m.
shift?

She starts to back out of the room.

JANICE

I was a little... late earlier.

She turns and walks down the hall. Whaley follows.

JANICE (CONT'D)

I gotta finish up so I don't get in
trouble.

He glares after her.

WHALEY

See that you do. You wouldn't want
to get in trouble.

She doesn't look back as she turns the corner

Whaley watches for a moment then turns and runs.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Janice sets the mop aside and walks over to a corkboard labeled "Employee Message Board." Among the various business cards is one for Monika Aro, a shop steward with UNITE HERE. Janice pulls out her phone and dials Monika's number.

JANICE

Monika? Something weird just
happened. There was this creepy
guy...

INT. FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL - LATER

A closed hotel door in a ornately decorated hallway.

The door opens and the three people Kendricks' picked up on South Beach file out of the room, clothes, hair and make-up mussed. Kendricks kisses each of them as they leave.

He's completely naked.

INT. SOUTH BEACH NIGHT CLUB - LATER

Back on South Beach, Bishop and his other teammates are dancing it up in a disco.

Bishop is NOT a good dancer, but he is a professional baseball player, so he's surrounded by attractive women. This is the peak of the player partying for the evening.

A WAIFY BLONDE dances up on Bishop. He grins.

She leans in close and whispers into his ear.

He's taken aback and slowly dances away from her towards a group of DISCO DANCERS. They're all women in their early 30s who are overly-made up and under-dressed. They're all VERY into Bishop.

He's totally into them.

The Waify Blonde shrugs and walks away.

EXT. FONTAINBLEAU HOTEL - LATER

Kendricks, now fully dressed, walks out of his hotel room.

CUT TO.

Kendricks crosses the lobby and out into the night.

As he's leaving, Bishop and one of the attractive Disco Dancers are entering the hotel.

BISHOP

Hey, Cam!

Kendricks doesn't hear and heads out. He's on a mission.

The Disco Dancer playfully swats Bishop on his shoulder.

DISCO DANCER

Hey! Are you here with him or ME!

I mean, she is pretty hot.

BISHOP

Baby, I'm all about you!

He leans in and they kiss. They almost fall with the momentum and the break into laughter as they head into the elevator.

Bishop briefly stares after Kendricks, but the Disco Dancer pulls him into the elevator and REALLY starts kissing him.

INT. INGEN FIELD - NIGHT

The last few fans file out of the stadium.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

The Ticket Seller's booth, the shades down and door locked.

CUT TO:

The front gates are closed. Bags of trash sit by the turnstiles.

CUT TO:

Program tables are empty and vacant.

CUT TO:

A CUSTODIAN empties a trash can in the concourse. He tosses the bag onto the back of a truck. He jumps in and ANOTHER CUSTODIAN drives them away.

CUT TO:

A BEER DELIVERY MAN puts several empty kegs onto his truck.

CUT TO:

Ice machines sit empty.

CUT TO:

Leftover popcorn has been put into large bags and sits outside a concession stand.

CUT TO:

A CUSTODIAN pushes a long broom along a concourse.

CUT TO:

As some STADIUM EMPLOYEES gather trash from the stadium seats, others spray down EVERYTHING.

CUT TO:

The bat bin in the dugout is empty now, a few broken bats litter the ground below.

CUT TO:

A GROUNDSKEEPER drives his truck through the bullpen wall and parks it.

CUT TO:

The scoreboard lights go black.

CUT TO:

Wide shot of the stadium. The lights go out.

END MONTAGE.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside the locker room, Jones sits on a doctor's table, getting massaged by an ASSISTANT.

DR. CARTER, a man in his 40s, walks in holding a clipboard. He's frowning.

DR. CARTER

Any reason you've taken so long to
come see me?

Jones shrugs.

JONES

It's just baseball.

Dr. Carter flips a page.

DR. CARTER

This would appear to be more than
"just baseball."

He counts something on the page.

DR. CARTER (CONT'D)

You have six things here that are
of serious concern.

JONES

Only six?

DR. CARTER

You're having a lot more fun here
than I am.

JONES

C'mon, doc, it's not that bad.

DR. CARTER

Yet.

JONES

I've fought through minor injuries
my whole career. Never missed more
than one game in a row.

Dr. Carter flips another page, then puts the clipboard down.

DR. CARTER

I'm not sure you're going to be
able to keep up that record. Not at
your age.

Jones frowns.

Dr. Carter pulls out an x-ray and lights it up. It's a
picture of Jones' shoulder. He stares at it.

JONES

What is it this time?

DR. CARTER

Nothing major, but the type of
thing that might wear on you over a
full season.

Jones grumbles.

DR. CARTER (CONT'D)

You're going to have to take it
easy.

JONES

Isn't there anything you can give
me to help?

The doctor laughs.

DR. CARTER

Wake up, man. Nothing legal.

Jones considers it.

DR. CARTER (CONT'D)

Now, if you want a recommendation
for a good retirement planner...

Fireworks go off outside.

Jones flinches.

The doctor laughs uneasily.

FADE OUT.