

THE G.O.A.T
Season 1, Episode 5
"Home Game"

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TITLE: HOME GAME

FADE IN.

EXT. TUCKAHOE LAKE, MARYLAND - DAY

Lake Tuckahoe is quiet this morning. Only a few boats dot the calm surface.

Near the center of the lake, in a matte green Fishin' Country USA boat, sits Harold Gray. He tilts back a beer can, finishes it and tosses it in the boat.

Gray casts his lure and settles in.

And waits.

And waits.

And waits.

An eagle cries in the distance.

Gray shakes the line a little. He spits into the water.

And waits some more.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOMAN FARM, NORTHERN VIRGINIA - DAY

Backup catcher Haywood Doman owns a small farm in Virginia. The farmland is lush and green, a few horses graze here and there. The main house is surrounded by several smaller buildings and a grain silo.

Doman rides across the hilly fields on a four-wheeler. His two SONS, young teens, follow on their own four-wheelers. Everybody is filled with joy.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC'S 8 BALL TAVERN - DAY

Second baseman Derrick Speck feels right at home in a dirty, dingy dive bar. There are only two pool tables and Speck has set up camp in the corner behind them.

Speck takes a drag from a cigarette and chases it with half a mug of beer. He's on his third pitcher, with two empties on the shelf. A clock on the wall says it's not even 2 p.m. yet.

Speck smacks a hundred onto the pool table.

SPECK

Who's next? Time to play some 8
ball!

A YOUNG GUY who definitely isn't going to beat Speck accepts the challenge. Speck grins.

SPECK (CONT'D)

That's what I'm talking about!

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEX LEVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Captain Alex Levin works in the garden in her back yard. She uses a spade to dig into the rich soil and she transplants a chrysanthemum from a pot.

The rest of the garden is filled with flowering plants of all colors. There aren't any edible plants, everything is purely ornamental and aesthetic. Everything is perfectly in its place and the garden is perfectly manicured.

CUT TO:

INT. SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

Reporter Sharon Alligood walks through the Museum of Natural History, looking at the deep sea exhibit and its scary monsters. She's fully dressed up as if she were at work.

She stops to marvel at a giant squid in a glass case.

Bench Coach Craig Glover walks by with his son, DANIEL. He notices Alligood and they exchange a knowing smile and a nod.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

SUPER: First Inning

The ST. LOUIS WOLVES are visiting the Statesmen. Kendrick is pitching and faces off against the first St. Louis batter, GUNN. The count is 2-0.

Kendrick nods to catcher Savoy Bishop. Kendrick winds up and throws a fastball down the middle for strike 1.

Kendrick pitches again, this time the ball breaks down and away. Gunn swings and misses. 2-2.

Kendricks throws the same pitch, but this time Gunn holds back. Ball three.

Kendricks throws a fastball straight over the plate. Gunn isn't even close. The leadoff batter goes down.

The B*stards of Section B are particularly rowdy today. Richard Smith starts a chant for Kendricks.

B*STARDS
Strike 'em out Kendricks, strike
'em out! Strike 'em out Kendricks,
strike 'em out!

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fourth Inning

Kendricks throws a fastball to the hitter GUILLAUME which is called for strike three.

Kendricks pumps a fist as Bishop rockets the ball to Pulsipher at third.

Glover walks over to scout Ferd Langwieler.

GLOVER
That sure seems like a lot of
strikeouts. What's he got?

Langwieler double-checks his stat sheet.

LANGWIELER
That was nine... no, THAT was 10.

Glover whistles.

GLOVER
Already?

LANGWIELER
Yep.

Bench warmer Albert Whaley looks on with a scowl.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Sixth Inning

Third baseman Winston Pulsipher steps up to the plate. He looks uncertain. The St. Louis pitcher, RAMIS, confidently stares him down.

On the bench, Hitting Coach Alvin Huebner and Pitching Coach Vernon Howell sit next to each other.

HOWELL

He's 0-2. Hasn't even made contact.

HUEBNER

Scouting report says he's got some work to do at the plate.

Further down the bench, third baseman Chuck Chester overhears this. He turns to Whaley.

CHESTER

I can't believe this is the guy we're benched for.

WHALEY

(angrily)
Screw off.

Glover overhears this and walks down towards them. Pulsipher notices the exchange from home plate.

GLOVER

Chester. Get ready. We're probably going need you to pinch hit.

Whaley glares at Glover then down at Huebner and Howell, who stare back. Whaley bites his tongue and the coaches turn back to watch the game. Chester moves towards the bat rack.

On the field, Ramis gets Pulsipher to swing and miss for strike three.

Howell and Huebner exchange a concerned glance.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Seventh Inning

Kendricks nods at Bishop and throws a fastball. The batter, LAFARGE, swings wildly. Not even close. Strike three.

In the dugout, Langwieler checks his stat sheet.

LANGWIELER

That's it. 10 in a row. 20 total.

Everyone in the dugout is impressed. Whistles and cheers. SCOTT POMPEY, a Black man in his early 20s listens in.

POMPEY

What's the record?

GLOVER

Those ARE the records. He just tied
two records.

Pompey looks around the dugout, which is eerily silent. Even the B*stards are silent in the stands. Pompey leans towards Glover.

POMPEY

(whispers)

Why is everybody so quiet,
shouldn't we be pumped up?

Glover shakes his head.

GLOVER

Nah, no reason to get in his head.
Leave him be, we'll congratulate
him after the game.

Whaley overhears this and walks over towards Kendricks, passing Huebner on the way.

Whaley stops and hovers over Kendricks, who is zoned out, concentrating on whatever process is going on in his head.

WHALEY

Guess you tied the record?

Kendricks ignores him.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

You nervous about breaking it?

Kendricks looks up at him, almost in a rage. Everyone else in the dugout turns to look at Whaley. They are incredulous.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

No score. You worried you'll get
the record and still lose the game?

Kendricks jumps to his feet, but Huebner is faster. Huebner grabs Whaley by the shoulder and spins him around.

HUEBNER

You're done. Hit the showers.

WHALEY

What? I didn't--

HUEBNER

Get out of here. Now.

Glover joins him.

GLOVER

You're done for the day.

Whaley stands firm. Huebner moves to force him to leave.

Gray spits.

GRAY

Get out of my dugout or get out of
my stadium. One or the other.

Stunned silence from everyone.

Whaley takes the walk of shame to the locker room as everyone
stares at him. Except Kendricks, who is back in the zone. No
one sits within 10 feet of him now.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Eighth Inning

The game is 0-0 with one out. The new pitcher, FOXX, warms
up.

Pulsipher walks towards the dugout steps, wearing his helmet
and holding his bat. Huebner puts a hand on Pulsipher's
wrist.

HUEBNER

Sorry, son. We need to pinch hit
here. You can hit the showers.

HOWELL

Top-notch defense today. Good
effort.

Pulsipher looks from man to man. He shrugs and takes off the
helmet.

HUEBNER

Chester, you're up.

Chester quickly springs to his feet and grabs a helmet and
bat. Whaley stews at the end of the bench.

Chester goes onto the field and starts taking practice
swings. After a few, he steps into the batter's box.

Foxx throws a fastball for strike one. Chester nods to
himself.

Foxx winds up and throws a curve. Chester swings too early
and hits an easy grounder to third. Chester jogs to first.

But the third baseman, PRICE, boots the grounder and the ball dribbles into foul territory.

First Base Coach Chris Lawthon goes ballistic.

LAWTHON

What the hell, Chester? The ball is in play!

Chester looks over and sees Price chasing down the ball and he speeds up. He rounds first, but Price has already gathered the ball.

Chester goes back to first. Lawthon swats him on the arm repeatedly with his cap.

In the dugout, Gray jumps to his feet and starts pacing back and forward.

GRAY

Get him off my field!

Huebner walks onto the field to talk to the umpire.

GRAY (CONT'D)

I'm about sick of this shit. Who hasn't played in a while that will actually run the damned bases?

WHALEY

Put me in, coach.

Gray waves him off.

GRAY

I need somebody that can run.

GLOVER

Pompey, sir.

Gray stares at him for a second. Glover shrugs. Gray turns to Langwieler, who nods.

GRAY

Pompey!

He leaps to his feet.

POMPEY

Yes, sir?

Gray waves his arm towards the field and resumes pacing.

GRAY

Get in there and show these half-assers how to run.

Chester comes in from the field and Gray very clearly snubs him. Chester face drops and he heads into the showers.

CUT TO:

Alfredo Brito is up to bat. He has a 2-0 count.

Foxx fires a fastball, but Brito drives it to the left-field gap. Pompey had a huge start and easily makes it to third as Brito pulls into first with a single.

In the dugout, everyone but Whaley is super-excited.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Now THAT'S how you run the bases.

Gray takes his seat again.

CUT TO:

Rookie Mario Gay steps up to the plate. He is confident.

Foxx tries another fastball and Gay drives it to deep right field. An easy second out, but Pompey scores and the Statesmen go up 1-0.

Back in the dugout, Pompey is mobbed by players and coaches, everyone except Whaley, who sulks at the end of the bench. And Kendricks. He's in the zone.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Ninth Inning

Kendricks takes the mound. The crowd stands and cheers. Kendricks blocks them out as much as he can, but he's lost a step and it takes him a bit to get back to the mound.

The first batter, CONNERS steps to the plate.

CUT TO:

Kendricks throws a pitch down and away. Umpire Winston Stanley isn't impressed.

STANLEY

Ball four.

Kendricks doesn't react. Connors runs to first.

HUEBNER
He's losing it.

HOWELL
He's still got gas in the tank.

CUT TO:

Kendricks' pitch bounces just short of the plate.

STANLEY
Ball four.

Kendricks still doesn't react. The crowd, on the other hand, mostly sits down.

HEUBNER
You gotta pull him.

HOWELL
Youngblood is ready.

Howell gets up to call the bullpen.

Gray spits.

GRAY
Let him stay in.

Howell sits down with no real reaction. Huebner, though, crosses his arms and stares at Gray.

HUEBNER
He's thrown eight straight balls.
The last one bounced over the
plate. Well not the PLATE per se,
but it definitely bounced before it
got to the plate.

GRAY
He stays in.

HUEBNER
We need the win.

Gray spits.

GRAY
Nah. This game doesn't matter.

Huebner throws his hands up in disgust.

HUEBNER
There's your hall-of-famer, guys.

He slow claps for Gray.

GRAY

Him getting that record will
inspire the team AND the fans.
Winning a single game won't. Now
sit down before I have you removed.

Huebner considers the challenge. He makes eye contact with Howell, who shakes his head "no."

Huebner sits down.

Gray spits.

Kendricks throws a fastball that the batter, WINGO, never even thought about swinging at. His first strike of the inning. He lets out a breath. He relaxes.

Kendricks throws a fastball that is a little too high, but Wingo swings higher, hitting a chopper to Pompey, who is playing third.

Pompey easily fields the ball and turns the double play. The crowd roars back to their feet. The bench does, too. Even Whaley gets a little excited before he catches himself and goes back to being grumpy.

CUT TO:

Kendricks throws a low pitch that Bishop has to drop to the ground to stop from getting to the backstop. Connors jogs back to third, he was ready.

The count is now 2-0 to the batter, BURNETT.

BISHOP

Time.

Bishop runs out to the mound.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

How you doing?

Kendricks nods and grunts.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You got this?

Kendricks glares at him.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Calm down. I know you do. I'm just stalling.

Kendricks relaxes.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
 You got this. Strike this mother
 fucker out.

Kendricks' eyes grow huge.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
 What, you never saw Major League?
 Hank Aaron was HILARIOUS in that
 one.

Kendricks waves him away, but he's laughing.

CUT TO:

Kendricks throws a fastball. Burnett isn't even close. He stares at Kendricks, a little fear shows on his face. The crowd loves it.

Kendricks throws a curve. Burnett isn't any closer on this one. The crowd goes crazy. No one can even hear the strike call.

Kendricks throws one more fastball. It's good enough. Burnett walks away, head down, an image that will appear as a poster in later episodes.

The Statesmen mob Kendricks as the fans lose their minds.

OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STUDIO - DAY

This commercial is old, played from a VHS tape.

Conan Jones stands in front of a bad green screen shot of the Washington Monument. He is dressed like a barbarian: shirtless, a loin cloth, fur-lined boots, furry shoulder pads and a Statesmen team cap. He holds a baseball bat like a club. If you look close enough, you can see that the bat has a thin crack in it.

JONES
 Hi, I'm Conan "The Barbarian" Jones
 and my favorite thing to do is mow
 down batters.

He takes the bat and snaps it half over his knee. It clearly breaks along the pre-existing crack.

JONES (CONT'D)
 But after I'm done bashing the
 opposition...

He tosses the halves of the bat over his shoulder.

JONES (CONT'D)
 ...there's nothing I love more than
 traveling the country and checking
 out famous sites.

The bad green screen behind him changes to Mount Rushmore.
 Jones picks up a book and holds it up, the title is "The
 Barbarian Guide to National Monuments."

JONES (CONT'D)
 And there's no better source for
 the best info on national parks and
 other amazing places across the
 country, including...

The green screen switches to the World's Largest Ball of
 Twine in Darwin, Minnesota. Jones turns and fakes looking at
 the ball.

JONES (CONT'D)
 Wow, I'll bet even the New Jersey
 Titans could hit that one.

He winks at the camera.

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
 If you're pitching against Cam
 Kendricks and the D.C. Statesmen,
 May the Fourth be with you.

MAJOR

Opposing pitchers crying out "May Day" every time Kendricks steps up to the plate.

Video of Kendricks hitting a massive home run.

INESTA

Kendricks has driven in a run in 17 consecutive games, a new USBL record.

MAJOR

Opposing pitchers are hoping they can get the slugger out before Mother's Day, so they can secure that dinner invite and their moms don't give the invite to Kendricks instead.

Inesta laughs.

INESTA

Our field reporter, Sharon Alligood joins us now.

Cut to a shot of Alligood standing outside National Stadium.

ALLIGOOD

Thanks Inesta, always good to see you and Major together.

Inesta raises an eyebrow.

MAJOR

Sharon, as the Statesmen move into first place for the first time in three years, can you give us a rundown on the early league standings.

ALLIGOOD

Certainly, Major. The Statesmen now sit atop the Eastern Conference, two games ahead of the New York Smashers and Boston Colonials.

Images of the earlier Statesmen-Colonials brawl.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)
 Barring any massive shifts in performance or significant injuries, the Eastern Conference will come down to those three teams, who already have a double-digit lead over the rest of the conference.

Images of the Texas Angels and the Atlanta Peaches playing.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)
 Meanwhile, in the Southern Conference, things are much more muddled. Texas and Atlanta are in the mix, but so are the Nashville Blues and Miami Blades. Any team that can reach .500 has a chance to win the conference...

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

"Kentucky Derby winner Cardiomyopathy won't run in Preakness"

"S. Stone wins final warm-up before French Open"

"After consecutive top 5 finishes Rogen ready for PGA Championship"

"It's official, hottest summer ever"

"Griffey grabs pole position for Darlington"

"Unrest in Puerto Rico continues to grow"

"Wild Night investigations launch in D.C., Maryland and Virginia"

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
 I'd like to welcome you to the show tonight, but we're dealing with such a challenging subject, greetings seem flippant.

An insert screen shows various shots of vandalized buildings as Brack keeps talking.

BRACK (CONT'D)

In what authorities are calling "Wild Night," the nation's capital was the site of dozens of incidents of vandalism, destruction of property and violent assault. More than 30 people were hospitalized in what appear to be coordinated, but random, attacks. Mayor Elizabeth Fair said that the damage can't be fully calculated yet, but will exceed \$1 million, making this shameful display one of the worst...

The last image we see in the inset is of a government building with a stencil of the now-familiar blood red demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

INT. SPORTS CENTRAL STUDIO - LATER

Inesta and Major walk away from the Sports Central desk slowly, lingering to chat with each other.

MAJOR

Good show. As always.

INESTA

You were pretty on point yourself.

Major smiles. Confidently.

MAJOR

This is good isn't it.

Inesta smirks.

INESTA

It's not bad. Definitely had worse.

Major grins.

MAJOR

You could have better.

She looks him in the eye, studying him.

INESTA

Could I?

MAJOR

Yes, you could. Saturday night. Dinner.

Inesta smiles.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kendricks sits in a conference room, waiting.

Ashley Hernandez walks in confidently, followed by her PERSONAL ASSISTANT.

ASHLEY

Cam?

He nods and stands to shake her hand.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

(to the assistant)

Coffee.

KENDRICKS

That's me.

They shake hands.

ASHLEY

Ashley Hernandez. I'm your new press liaison.

They both sit. The assistant brings Ashley her coffee.

Kendricks sits on the edge of his seat, gripping the front of it. He doesn't smile and he isn't having fun.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

There's a lot we can do to jump start your career, but one of the first things, and we can get this done quickly, is to get you that first endorsement.

Kendricks doesn't reply.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

The team is hot right now. You're hot right now. This is going to be an easy sell.

She smiles a big, confident smile. Kendricks sits dead-faced.

Ashley frowns and tries again.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Let's try to figure out what TYPE of endorsement you'd like to have.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Let's dig into your personal
interests. What are you into?
Sneakers? Hater-ade?

Kendricks shrugs.

Ashley sighs in frustration.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Where are you from? Maybe we can
use that.

KENDRICKS
No.

She's taken aback.

ASHLEY
I'm sorry. I don't understand--

KENDRICKS
No.

He stands up.

ASHLEY
I need to know what kinds of things
you want--

He walks out.

KENDRICKS
Whatever. You figure it out.

She sits in his wake, mouth agape.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM FRONT OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Ashley walks out of her office, a frown on her face. At the same time, Brito walks into the office, carrying a thick folder filled with various papers.

Ashley freezes when she sees Brito. So does he.

They both smile.

ASHLEY
Hey... uh... can I help you?

BRITO
I'm sure you can.

ASHLEY
What do you need?

BRITO
A good dinner, red wine and great
companionship.

ASHLEY
How about Saturday at 8?

BRITO
I... uh... we might have a game.

ASHLEY
You don't.

BRITO
How do you know?

ASHLEY
It's my job to know.

Brito nods.

BRITO
Alright then. Dinner on Saturday it
is.

They both smile as there's nothing left to say.

ASHLEY
Why are you actually here?

Brito frowns. Ashley gestures to the folder in his hand. He
looks down and is embarrassed.

BRITO
Oh... sorry... turning in some
medical paperwork.

ASHLEY
That is NOT my area. I'll see you
Saturday.

Ashley walks back into her office, a hidden grin on her face.
Brito simply stares after her.

INT. PDDC BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

Levin leads the briefing. Standing next to Levin is JEREMY
SPENCER, a white male in his 20s. He looks like any other
white male cop in his 20s.

LEVIN

The mayor has increased our budget and this is the first of our plans for expanding our team. Everyone, meet Jeremy Spencer.

Applause. Spencer takes a seat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

Now, on to the good news.

Expectant rumbling and grumbling.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

Thanks to the work of Officers Bill Tucker and Mitchell O'Reilly, we now have not just one, but TWO suspects.

Gasps. Then cheers. People pat Tucker and O'Reilly on the back.

Levin tacks pictures of the two suspects to the board. Both are mugshots of Black men in their early 20s.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

These two are Clifford Byars and Pervis Till. They are our top priority. They are our killers. Go get them.

Eversmith and Cody look at each other. Eversmith raises an eyebrow.

INT. PDDC BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Brice Eversmith and Officer Cody Paige sit in the basement, The Setup lays dormant.

EVERSMITH

Bullshit.

Cody laughs.

CODY

Obviously.

EVERSMITH

No way guys like that did these crimes.

CODY
No way cops like that solved this
case.

Eversmith laughs. Cody doesn't. She's tense.

EVERSMITH
Really?

Cody nods.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)
You want to talk about it?

Cody shrugs.

CODY
You know Vivian Carlton?

EVERSMITH
Hah! That hack?

Cody relaxes. A bit.

CODY
Yeah, I've been dealing with
mandatory counseling.

EVERSMITH
What happened?

CODY
Fucking Tucker.

Eversmith nods knowingly.

CODY (CONT'D)
You think Carlton is tight with
Levin and them?

EVERSMITH
Without a doubt.

CODY
I kinda picked up on that.

Cody takes a deep breath.

EVERSMITH
This why you got forced counseling?

Cody nods.

CODY
But I saw what I saw.

Eversmith leans forward to listen more actively.

CODY (CONT'D)
I don't want to get into the
details...

EVERSMITH
You don't have to.

Cody relaxes a bit more.

CODY
I used to be partners with Anne
Snell.

Eversmith sneers at the name.

CODY (CONT'D)
Agreed. Well, we arrived at a call.
Report of a young Black male
"illegally"...

She uses air quotes.

CODY (CONT'D)
...selling individual rolls of
toilet paper.

EVERSMITH
Defund the police.

CODY
Right? Anyway, Tucker and O'Reilly
got there first. O'Reilly was going
door-to-door talking to businesses
on the street. But Tucker...

Cody takes a deep breath.

CODY (CONT'D)
...Tucker was "investigating" the
suspect. The suspect didn't like it
and told Tucker as much. Tucker
proceeded to assault the man...

Eversmith's face is overcome with grief.

EVERSMITH
Oh no.

CODY

By the time I made my way to them,
Tucker was done. O'Reilly was back.
The sus... Tim. Tim Gray. He had...
HAS a name.

EVERSMITH

How bad was it?

CODY

Two weeks in the hospital.
Permanent vision loss in one eye.

EVERSMITH

I hate this place.

CODY

You aren't the only one. I checked
up on him a while back. He's
struggling. Drugs. Petty crime. Did
some time, but is out. For now.

EVERSMITH

And you told Levin?

Cody nods.

CODY

Complete waste of time.

EVERSMITH

Yeah.

CODY

Now I'm on the departmental hit
list.

EVERSMITH

Me, too. But don't worry. I got
your back. And I'm smarter than all
of them combined.

Cody laughs.

CODY

Thanks. We have to stick together.

INT. WASHINGTON GAZETTE BULLPEN - LATER

Reporter Shirley Muldoon sits at her desk. She is not having
a good day. She's got bad posture, a grim look on her face
and she's restless.

Her phone rings.

SHIRLEY
Muldoon?

She nods.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Yeah. I'm familiar with it.

Her eyes git bigger.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Yes. I can meet you. Where? When?

On her notepad, she writes down "The Pinch 9:30 Punk Rap Karaoke."

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
I'll be there.

She hangs up.

Immediately she texts Chad.

SHIRLEY (TEXT) (CONT'D)
CODE RED! Source has hot tip. Need
to meet. TONIGHT!

Chet responds quickly.

CHET (TEXT)
K.

Shirley gives her best side eye.

SHIRLEY (TEXT)
Need backup. Could be sketch.

CHET (TEXT)
K.

SHIRLEY
9:30. DON'T BE LATE!!! Not sure if
safe.

Beat.

Beat.

Beat.

CHET
K.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

SUPER: Sixth inning

Jones stands on the mound, winded. He's losing 5-2, with the visiting SEATTLE COBRAS in the lead.

Jones yawns. He throws a pitch and gets the batter, STILES, to swing and miss for the strikeout.

Jones takes his glove off and tucks it in his armpit. He grabs his throwing elbow and rubs it. He winces.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Seventh inning

Jones is out of gas, but he gives no sign that he's ready to come out of the game.

He throws the best pitch he can, but the hitter, MCKAGAN, easily drives it to right field and scores two more runners, 7-2 Cobras.

Jones rubs his elbow again as Howell walks to the mound. Howell signals the bullpen and Jones hands him the ball with relief.

As he walks off the field, Jones looks up into the stands and sees a hand-scrawled sign that reads "McDaris Is Right." Jones cocks and eyebrow and goes into the dugout.

He looks around, but can't find Kendricks.

JONES

Anybody seen Kendricks? He's getting hate mail in the stands.

He gestures towards the sign. A few people lean out to see it.

GLOVER

He's got the day off. Private stuff.

Whaley crosses his arms and scoffs. Jones shrugs and heads towards the locker room.

CHESTER

Must be nice.

POMPEY

Some people just don't appreciate all this enough.

PULSIPHER
Ain't that the truth.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jones sits with Dr. Carter, who looks at an x-ray of Jones' elbow.

DR. CARTER
Nothing new. But it's certainly not
getting better.

Jones winces as an ASSISTANT rubs Meat Heat on his elbow.

Kendricks walks into the room and toward his locker. Whaley jumps up and makes a beeline for him. Kendricks spots him right away.

KENDRICKS
What do YOU want?

WHALEY
I'm sick of you screwing up this
team.

Kendricks laughs.

KENDRICKS
Apparently you read the standings
as well as you play baseball.

The room quiets down and turns to watch.

WHALEY
Yeah, but it's not worth cheating
to get there.

Kendricks gets serious.

KENDRICKS
Watch your mouth.

WHALEY
Why?

Beat.

WHALEY (CONT'D)
You juicing?

Kendricks shifts to a boxing stance and immediately punches Whaley directly in the nose. There's an audible crack and blood starts gushing from Whaley's broken nose.

Whaley falls to the ground, wailing in pain.

Speck and Ronnie Pitts pull Kendricks back, but only half-heartedly. Speck is laughing.

Team owner Leah Owens walks into the locker room and stops short.

OWENS

Jesus Christ.

She turns and walks back out.

EXT. ANDRE CHARLES DAY SPA - DAY

Jamelle Lewis pulls into the parking lot and gets out of her car, a Nissan Altima. Gayle Martin gets out of a parked car and they hug. The hug lingers.

From across the parking lot, Applegate takes photos of Lewis and Gayle hugging.

The two women break the hug and walk towards the front door. Lewis shows a notable limp.

GAYLE

What's up with your ankle?

LEWIS

Tweaked it playing tennis.

Gayle flashes an exaggerated frown.

GAYLE

You okay?

LEWIS

I'm about to be.

She opens the door and they go inside, laughing.

INT. ANDRE CHARLES DAY SPAY - MOMENTS LATER

Private investigator Mr. Applegate walks towards the front door, watching the women register at the desk. He quickly runs around the side of the building.

CUT TO:

Applegate has definitely done this before. He very carefully and quietly makes his way towards the back of the building and up to the windows without being seen.

His spot behind the building is hidden by a hedge that is tall enough to block the bottom half of the windows.

He carefully peers inside.

APPLEGATE

Jackpot!

He lifts his phone up and starts snapping pictures.

Inside, Gayle helps Lewis disrobe. Lewis returns the favor. Both women are fully naked.

Lewis is still limping, so Gayle helps her lay down on the table. Gayle gives Lewis a friendly peck on the cheek.

APPLEGATE (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

He drops down and dials Owens.

APPLEGATE (CONT'D)

Hey. We need to meet. ASAP. I struck gold.

Inside, Gayle goes and lays on the other table. In walk two VERY BEEFY MEN wearing tight shorts and tight shirts with the words "Staff Masseur" embroidered across the front.

APPLEGATE (CONT'D)

On my way.

He leaps up and sneaks back around the side of the house, never looking inside again.

INT. CHUCK CHESTER'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Chester sleeps in a dark hotel room, with the bright sun trying to sneak through the heavy curtains. The room has been trashed. Many parties have happened since the last time the room was cleaned.

The alarm on Chester's phone goes off. He ignores it.

It keeps beeping. He pulls a pillow over his head.

It keeps beeping. He lets out an exasperated groan and rolls over.

He picks up the phone and checks it. It's 4 p.m. He rolls back over and goes back to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. RONNIE PITTS' HOME GYM - DAY

At home, Pitts has an extensive gym. The room is filled with equipment (Peloton, Stairmaster, Bowflex) and free weights.

Pitts sits on a bench doing curls with 50 pounds of weight. In the corner, a TV plays Fox News, but Pitts is busy watching his own muscles.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHEAL WEISMAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Reporter Michael Weisman wears a designer track suit that has never, ever seen sweat. He has a earphone plugged into one ear as he talks on the phone.

WEISMAN

What did she say?

He writes notes on a pad.

Across the room, three TVs are on with the sound off. Each is tuned to one of the major news networks. His home computer is connected to multiple monitors, each has multiple windows open to various sports and news websites.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)

You confirm that with the head office?

Weisman writes some more.

The doorbell rings and Weisman turns to look out his office window to see a DELIVERY MAN at the front door with MANY packages. Weisman waves to the delivery man and goes back to writing.

CUT TO:

INT. VERNON HOWELL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Howell stands in his kitchen wearing slacks and a cardigan. Before him is a big mixing bowl and the various ingredients to make sourdough. He stares at them, befuddled.

HOWELL

Is it supposed to smell like this?

Howell's wife, RUTH, walks into the kitchen. She laughing with him, not at him.

RUTH

It's supposed to have a variety of
smells.

Howell lifts up a smaller bowl with the spongy sourdough
starter and sniffs it.

HOWELL

Smells like stinky feet.

Ruth smiles.

RUTH

That means it's ready.

Howell raises an eyebrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT FALLS NATIONAL PARK - DAY

Outfielder Jason Doster scrambles up a small boulder, stands
on top and looks around.

DOSTER

This was the right idea.

Third base coach Terrence Kimbell joins him atop the boulder.
The boulder sits atop a small-ish mountain in Great Falls
National Park. They are a little off the main path, but not
too far. A few other people pass by on nearby trails. The
sound of the unseen falls can be heard in the background.

KIMBELL

Just don't slip. Coach would kill
me if his leadoff man got hurt on
my watch.

Doster grabs Kimbell around the waist and pulls him in for a
kiss.

DOSTER

I don't fall. I dive or I stay on
my feet.

Kimbell laughs. Doster cuts the laugh off with a kiss.

DOSTER (CONT'D)

Is there anything higher around
here?

KIMBELL

NO!

They laugh.

KIMBELL (CONT'D)
Besides, this place closes at
sundown and I'd like to avoid the
rush.

Doster stares around the park, nobody else is visible. He
laughs.

EXT. THE PINCH - NIGHT

Shirley stands outside the Pinch, waiting. She looks around
nervously. Checks her watch. Checks her phone. Chad isn't
coming.

She goes inside.

INT. THE PINCH - CONTINUOUS

Shirley walks into the basement of the Pinch, which is
currently hosting Punk/Rap Karaoke Night.

She looks around, but doesn't see anyone she recognizes or
who seems to recognize her. She steps up to the bar, where
Annie is working.

ANNIE
The usual?

SHIRLEY
Yeah. Anybody in here looking for
me?

ANNIE
Nope.

Annie hands Shirley a PBR and moves to serve another
customer. Shirley takes a sip of the drink.

A hand taps her on the shoulder. She spins around
defensively.

Applegate stands before her.

SHIRLEY
Who the hell are you?

APPLEGATE
Calm down, I'm just the messenger.

He holds up a large envelope.

SHIRLEY
What's that?

APPLEGATE
It's what I called you about.

SHIRLEY
What is it?

He shrugs.

APPLEGATE
Didn't open it. I'm just a delivery man.

She raises an eyebrow.

APPLEGATE (CONT'D)
A VERY well-paid delivery man.

SHIRLEY
Who paid you?

He chuckles.

APPLEGATE
Can't tell you that. Maybe this will help.

He hands her the envelope.

SHIRLEY
This isn't filled with anthrax or anything is it?

APPLEGATE
Guess you'll find out.

He picks up a glass of Scotch from the bar and finishes it. He tosses a \$20 on the bar, nods to Annie and walks out. Shirley stares after him. She sips her PBR.

Once he's gone, Shirley immediately opens the envelope and pulls out the contents. The first is a newspaper article from the Miami Dispatch. The headline reads "Cult murder shocks city."

Behind it is a report from the Miami-Dade Police Department. She flips through the pages and reads the most important passages: "...two bodies...", "...no blood...", "...severed head...", "...no suspects...", "...possible cult connections...."

EXT. THE PINCH - MOMENTS LATER

Shirley exits the Pinch. She's in a hurry. She has a story to tell. She rushes down the block and the next opens up into a park that covers several square blocks. Lights ring the outside of the park and along the pathway through the middle, the rest of the park has dark patches.

SHIRLEY

Dammit.

She cuts through one of the dark patches. She hears footsteps from the nearby sidewalk and turns to look.

A dark figure leaps at her from the other direction, knocking her to the ground. She struggles to push him off, but isn't strong enough.

He reaches to choke her and she finally gets a look at ABRAHAM's face. He wears dark jeans and a black sweatshirt with a hoodie. He's a white man in his mid-20s. On his neck is tattoo of a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

Shirley brings up her knee and smashes it into his groin. He recoils and falls to the ground. The image of the ram is on the back of his sweatshirt, too.

She doesn't give him a chance to get up. She kicks him in the face and he falls backward and onto the grass. She brings a foot down HARD on his outstretched hand with a CRUNCH. He howls in pain.

She runs and doesn't look back.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

SUPER: Fourth Inning

Kit Riggins stands on the mound, he looks worn out. His uniform is dirty, he's sweaty, the scoreboard reads 4-3 for the Seattle Cobras.

He throws a pitch to the batter, WILSON, but it's low and away. The umpire, William Smith, holds up a 3-1 count.

CUT TO:

Riggins throws another pitch, well outside. Wilson walks to first.

CUT TO:

Riggins looks to the scoreboard, one out. He looks around the infield, runners at first and second.

He takes a deep breath and the sound drops away. He throws a curve that gets the batter, CORNELL, to hit a chopper to third. Chester easily fields it, but throws wildly to Speck.

Speck comes off the bag, the runner is safe. Without missing a beat, Speck turns and throws to first, but Kendricks has already stepped off the bag. He catches the throw, but runners are safe on every base.

Riggins drops into a crouch, he can't believe what he just saw.

RIGGINS

You've got to be kidding me!

Chester and Kendricks are both trying to laugh the play off. They are the only ones laughing. Kendricks still has the ball and he turns towards the outfield and shakes his head while still laughing.

Wilson takes off from third base towards home.

BISHOP

Throw it!

RIGGINS

Get in the game!

The Statesmen bench goes crazy in response. Kendricks turns and throws to Bishop, but it's too late. The score is now 5-3 for Seattle.

CUT TO:

Riggins takes a deep breath, but the sound doesn't drop out. He tries again. Nothing.

He winds up and throws a pitch that the batter, AMENT, drives to center field for a single. Two runs score.

Riggins turns and throws his glove towards first base. Kendricks doesn't catch it.

CUT TO:

Riggins stands on the mound, looking dejected. Howell holds out a hand and Riggins gives him the ball.

Riggins trudges towards the dugout, head down. Omar Wheeler runs in from the bullpen.

CUT TO:

Wheeler throws a fastball that lands for strike three against the batter, WEST. He gets out of the inning, but the score is now 7-3.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fifth Inning

Bishop stands at the plate, the bases are loaded and there are two outs.

The pitcher, HENDRIX, throws a fastball that doesn't sink. Bishop gets big eyes as he swings and hits a towering shot that hooks foul.

Hendrix gets a new ball from the umpire. He gets set. He throws a brushback pitch, but Bishop is too slow to get out of the way. The ball hits him in the shoulder.

Bishop trots to first as Speck scores from third. The score is now 7-4 Cobras.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Ninth Inning

Kendricks has the childhood dream. Ninth inning. His team trails 7-4. Two outs. No balls. 2 strikes. Bases loaded.

The entire team and coaches (except for Gray, of course) are on the top of the bench, rally caps on. Whaley is notably absent. Wheeler, in particular is practically bouncing out of his shoes.

The pitcher, RAY, throws a fastball. But it isn't as fast as he hoped. Kendricks almost smiles. Then he deposits the pitch in the right field stands. The stadium erupts.

Wheeler runs over to Langwieler.

WHEELER

Is that it? That's officially it?

LANGWIELER

It sure is.

Wheeler whoops and bounces around the dugout like he just won a championship.

Bishop steps to Langwieler, taking off his batting gloves. His bat is still under his arm, helmet still on his head.

BISHOP
What's that about?

LANGWIELER
He just got his 10th win.

Bishop is puzzled.

BISHOP
This year? Is that even possible?

LANGWIELER
Career.

Bishop nods in approval.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Kendricks walks into the locker room. Riggins, who still hasn't showered, sits on a bench, seething.

RIGGINS
What the hell was that clown show?

KENDRICKS
Man, I'm hitting .421 AND leading the team in wins. What else you want ME to do?

RIGGINS
Learn how to play defense.

The team quiets down and turns their attention to the duo.

KENDRICKS
Back off, man.

RIGGINS
You suck.

Riggins starts bouncing with rage.

KENDRICKS
That's what your mom said last night.

Scattered laughs, but not many. Riggins springs from the bench and rushes at Kendricks.

Kendricks is ready, though. Again he shifts into a boxing stance and lands a blow to Riggins' face before the pitcher even knows what hit him.

Riggins swings wildly and Kendricks sidesteps it. Then he lands three quick blows to Riggins' face. Riggins staggers, he's barely able to stand.

Jones and Bishop pull Kendricks away. Riggins staggers a few steps then falls to the ground, landing on his ass.

JONES

Bit much, wasn't it.

Kendricks yanks himself away from Jones and Bishop and walks out of the locker room. Dr. Green scrambles to help Riggins.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - LATER

Howell sits across from Owens. Howell looks worn down.

HOWELL

You saw it. They were both fighting, but, well Riggins started it.

OWENS

And he's struggling on the mound.

HOWELL

And Kendricks is already a lock for Rookie if the Year and is in the running for MVP.

Owens takes a sip from her whiskey.

OWENS

He's gotta go. Gray agrees, I assume?

HOWELL

I wouldn't be here if he didn't.

Owens raises an eyebrow.

CUT TO:

Huebner sits across from Owens. Huebner shuffles in his seat.

OWENS

What's with all the fighting? Your boy okay?

HUEBNER

He is ON the field. Some of the
guys just don't like him much OFF
the field.

OWENS

What about you?

HUEBNER

He's won more games for us than
Riggins and Whaley combined. I like
winning.

OWENS

I like that about you.

HUEBNER

It looks like we should make a
change before things get worse. Fix
the problem before it gets bigger.

OWENS

Our weak spot is definitely third
base. Ideas?

HUEBNER

We've tried everything we could.
The cupboard is pretty bare.

OWENS

What about Kendricks? He can do
everything else.

Huebner thinks about it for a second.

HUEBNER

With all due respect, his defense
is worse than Pulsipher or Whaley.

OWENS

Chester?

HUEBNER

He's an accident waiting to happen.

OWENS

Ideas?

HUEBNER

I'm thinking trade.

Owens shrugs.

OWENS

Shakes things up. Gets press. I'm open to it. Names?

HUEBNER

There are a few guys available for the right trade, but I think we need to go big.

OWENS

I like big. Who?

HUEBNER

Gus Bennett.

OWENS

From your old team?

HUEBNER

The Hawks are fighting it out for last place. They'd be willing to part with him. We can send them Riggins, Whaley, some minor leaguers.

OWENS

Will they take Whaley?

HUEBNER

They'll certainly take him or Chester. They need lots of help and they know they can get multiple players who upgrade spots in exchange for Bennett.

OWENS

He is leading the league in RBIs...

Beat.

OWENS (CONT'D)

You talk to Gray about this?

HUEBNER

Not yet. I don't trust his judgement as much as I trust yours.

Owens stares at him for a moment.

OWENS

I'll make the trade. Keep up the good work.

HUEBNER

I will.

OWENS

Who knows, there might be a managerial opening around here next year...

Huebner nods knowingly.

CUT TO:

Applegate sits across from Owens. He's almost bursting with excitement.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Well, whatever it is that you're so excited about, let's see it.

She's a little excited and hopeful, herself.

He hands her an envelope. She opens it, trying to hold back her grin.

She pulls the pictures out. They show Gayle and Lewis hugging, kissing on the cheek and nude, but nothing more.

Her face turns to a frown. She looks in the envelope for something else, but it's empty. She tosses the envelope and pictures on the table.

OWENS (CONT'D)

That's it?

The smile finally leaves his face.

OWENS (CONT'D)

This shit isn't scandalous. This is useless.

APPLEGATE

But I thought--

OWENS

I don't discriminate against lesbians. What kind of asshole do you think I am?

APPLEGATE

But you said--

OWENS

And Jamelle Lewis is NOT a lesbian.

He picks up the pictures and shows them to her again.

OWENS (CONT'D)
Get out of here. One more chance.

He reaches to take the pictures. She smacks his hand away.

OWENS (CONT'D)
Do some real work. Or you're fired.

He turns and walks away.

EXT. CHAD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shirley knocks on Chad's front door. No answer.

In a huff, she knocks again. A few seconds later, Chad opens the door.

CHAD
(sleepy)
Yeah?

Shirley glares at him.

CHAD (CONT'D)
What?

SHIRLEY
You really don't remember?

Chad yawns.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Check your texts?

He doesn't have to.

CHAD
Aww, shit! I... uh... fell asleep.

SHIRLEY
I got attacked.

Chad snaps awake and he puts an arm on her shoulder.

CHAD
Are you okay? Who was it?

She pushes him away.

SHIRLEY
No. I'm mad.

CHAD
You should be. I would be.

She pounds both her hands on his chest. He winces.

SHIRLEY
I'm mad at you, you idiot.

He's wounded.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
You were supposed to be there. I
told you it wasn't safe. I could've
been killed.

Chad droops in shame.

CHAD
I'm sorry.

She didn't expect that.

SHIRLEY
It's not okay, but I'm past it.
Next time either show up or let me
know.

CHAD
I will. How'd you get away?

SHIRLEY
Online self-defense course. Kicked
has ass.

CHAD
Yeah, you did!

He invites her in.

SHIRLEY
Now, let me tell you about the
symbol that was tattooed on his
neck AND on his hoodie.

CHAD
What the hell?

They go inside.

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 this week's Sunday Sports Chat Show.

Next to Weisman is Tessell.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)

With me today are four of our regular panelists: David Tessell from the Chicago Dispatch-Times...

TESSELL

Greetings from the Windy City.

WEISMAN

...Sharon Alligood of NBS...

ALLIGOOD

Thanks again for having me back.

WEISMAN

...Ricky Womble of the Los Angeles Defender...

Womble waves.

WOMBLE

Great to see everyone again.

WEISMAN

And Dwayne McDaris of the New York Union-Journal.

MCDARIS

Bazoooooooooom!

Weisman turns and looks into the camera.

WEISMAN

Okay, first question. And I'll keep asking it until I get a real answer.

Laughter.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)

Are the Statesmen for real NOW?

More laughs.

TESSELL

Absolutely.

WOMBLE

I mean, it's not for certain, but the results kinda speak for themselves.

ALLIGOOD

Not only are they 38-13, they're 20-5 in May. That's incredible.

MCDARIS

I mean, they have a pretty good squad, but they have some glaring holes that are definitely going to come back to bite them.

ALLIGOOD

Let me guess. Kendricks?

MCDARIS

Yes, Kendricks, of course. But I was talking about third base. What the hell's going on there? And that starting rotation? You've gotta be kidding me. I'm not the only one saying this--

WOMBLE

Yeah, he's got his own followers now, they call themselves "McDaris' Minions."

WEISMAN

They pay me to make us move on.

MCDARIS

People like the questions I ask.

WEISMAN

Speaking of starting pitching. Riggins was designated and they called up Chaka Purvis. An improvement?

MCDARIS

Smartest move the Statesmen have made in this joke of a year. Riggins is 3-6 on the season. Pathetic.

ALLIGOOD
For once, I agree with Dwayne.

Laughter.

MCDARIS
Be still my heart.

ALLIGOOD
I mean, it's not "pathetic," but
Purvis is doing better.

WOMBLE
He was certainly kicking ass in the
minors.

TESSELL
Three straight wins, combined 27
strikeouts. He's playing with
children.

WEISMAN
So that leads to the question. Can
the Statesmen get even better?

ALLIGOOD
Absolutely. If they solidify the
starting pitching--

TESSELL
The bullpen is tight.

ALLIGOOD
Yes. But third base is a glaring
hole.

WOMBLE
They have three guys and can't get
one professional player out of
them.

MCDARIS
It's been one of the more
entertaining things to watch this
season. I posted this video of all
the errors set to the Keystone--

WEISMAN
Dwayne, you are arresting the
development of this show and we're
going to commercial.

Laughter.

INT. ASHLEY HERNANDEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendricks sits across from Ashley Hernandez, she has a huge grin on her face.

ASHLEY

I got it. You're about to get paid.

Kendricks is interested.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I've been on the phone all week. Several companies are interested in you. Here is the one that offered the most.

She slides a folder across the table. He opens it to see details of the deal she has negotiated on a summary sheet that sits atop a contract. He scans it.

KENDRICKS

\$5 million is good.

ASHLEY

I thought so.

KENDRICKS

ThunderBrew? What is it, some kind of beer or spiked seltzer?

ASHLEY

Energy drink. Like Hater-Ade, but with more energy.

KENDRICKS

I like the sound of that. Let's do it.

He shuts the folder. Ashley pulls a bottle of champagne and two glasses from below the table.

ASHLEY

Let's celebrate!

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Owens, Lewis and Lekebra Benjamin walk into the conference room as a unit, almost marching, with Owens in the lead. Already at the table are Mary Billups, in her wheel chair, and ALTON NIX, a Black man in his 50s, with gray hair at his temples.

They shake hands and are seated.

OWENS

As always, you are welcome at National Stadium any time.

BILLUPS

Thank you for hosting us. I wish that we were here under better circumstances.

Owens shows no emotion. Benjamin is concerned. Billups rolls her chair closer to the table.

BILLUPS (CONT'D)

Alton is here to make sure that the players' interests are represented in this discussion.

NIX

Leah.

OWENS

Alton.

Billups takes a deep breath before she starts.

BILLUPS

We need to have a discussion about violence.

Owens frowns. Lewis smiles.

BILLUPS (CONT'D)

I've been hearing rumors of some locker room and dugout problems.

OWENS

Nothing special. Typical "boys will be boys" stuff.

NIX

No worries, this isn't an investigation.

Owens sits up straighter and pays even more attention.

BILLUPS

Combining those reports with all this Wild Night stuff and I'm worried that this will affect the fans.

NIX

And the players.

BILLUPS

Paying fans.

OWENS

These things concern me as well.

BILLUPS

We need to know that you have things under control.

OWENS

Let me assure you--

BILLUPS

If this got out of hand and brought us bad press...

OWENS

I have everything--

BILLUPS

You'd better. Your ownership of this team was granted under protest. It was sustained by the barest of margins.

Owens gets the message. She looks at Nix.

OWENS

And you?

NIX

I agree with her.

He grins. She can barely contain a sneer.

EXT. STAN LOMBARDI'S HOUSE - DAY

Lombardi is having a cookout in his large back yard. More than a dozen ADULTS stand around while half a dozen KIDS play in the pool. Notably NONE of his teammates are present.

Lombardi mans the grill, a Bud Light Lime in one hand and massive tongs in the other. Burgers, chicken, a few veggie burgers roast on the grill.

LOMBARDI

Scottie, let's see that cannonball again!

WILLIE, a 10-year-old boy with sandy hair runs across the yard and leaps into the deep end, expertly executing a cannonball to cheers from the adults.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY BALLROOM - DAY

Grady Duhart, an large gold Jesus piece hanging from his neck and a Bible in his hand, stands before a room full of Catholic University freshmen.

DUHART

To be honest, I never expected the lord would lead me down a path towards professional baseball, but I thank him every day for these blessings...

Murmurs of assent and amens.

DUHART (CONT'D)

...and I am humbled by the opportunities being a professional athlete gives me to minister the gospel...

The audience of mostly white, mostly male, mostly athletic young men pays rapt attention.

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD, OLNEY, MARYLAND - DAY

Ferd Langwieler stands just outside his team's dugout, talking to a little league player, THOMAS. The bases are loaded and Thomas is about to step up to the plate.

LANGWIELER

Look at the scoreboard.

Thomas does. It says "Home 3, Visitor 0."

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)

Richie is pitching. We've got a lead. There's no pressure.

Thomas isn't certain.

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)

Have we practiced for this exact moment?

Thomas nods.

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)
That means you know what to do?

Thomas nods and then makes his way to the batter's box.

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)
You got this.

Thomas steps up and casts a steely eye at the PITCHER. He takes a couple of practice swings and gets set.

The pitcher throws and Thomas lines a shot to right center that clears the bases. Langwieler cheers loudly and gives each runner a fist bump after the cross home plate.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS LAWTHON'S DEN - DAY

Chris Lawthon sits in a La-Z-Boy in his den. He talks on a landline.

LAWTHON
Yes, honey. I'll do the exercises.

He looks down at the neon pink ankle weights strapped to his legs. Doesn't lift them.

LAWTHON (CONT'D)
Your father knows what he's doing.

Beat.

LAWTON
I know. I love you.

He hangs up and sighs. He looks down at the ankle weights again. He easily lifts his left leg, no problem. Does a quick five reps.

Then he looks down at his right leg. He reaches for the end table and grabs a glass of whiskey and takes a big gulp.

He struggles to lift his right leg. He grunts and gives up. He takes another sip of whiskey.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HATER-ADE CENTER - NIGHT

The arena is packed for the latest Washington Fog Horns hockey game. Fans are decked out in red, white and blue. The game has just started and the score is 0-0.

Annie and Dan from the Pinch walk into the arena and make their way to mid-tier seats. They are fully decked out in matching Fog Horns jerseys and jeans. They carry popcorn, hotdogs and sodas and are VERY happy to be away from work.

One of the HOCKEY PLAYERS takes an early slap shot, but the crowd groans as the shot goes high and wide. Dan almost drops his popcorn as he leans to try and force the puck into the net.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEAH OWENS' MANSION - NIGHT

Owens sits on her couch, on the phone. She takes a sip from a glass of red wine while she listens.

OWENS

Yes, a hundred thousand shares.

Beat.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Yes.

She hangs up and chugs the glass of wine.

She runs out of the house and jumps into her car.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Owens pulls into the parking lot of a relatively low-rent apartment complex. More pick-up trucks than hybrids.

She parks, locks her Lexus and goes directly to the front door of a first-floor apartment. She rings the bell and waits a few seconds.

The door opens to show a stunning Black woman in her early 30s, GRACE, with short hair dyed red. She wears lingerie and not much else.

OWENS

You have time for a session?

GRACE

For you, honey? I ALWAYS have time.

They engage in a deep, sensuous kiss.

Grace invites Owens in and locks the door behind her.

EXT. DOLBY THEATER - DUSK

On the Red Carpet, stars make their way into the Dolby Theater for this year's Oscars.

A black limo pulls up to the edge of the carpet and Kendricks gets out, in a classic black tux.

Kendricks walks down the red carpet and the paparazzi go wild for him. He's a little taken aback by it, but he rolls with it and plays it up for the fans. The fans go crazy.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - LATER

The Oscars ceremony's theme this year is "A Salute to Movie Musicals." Musical notes and other music-related imagery dominate the theater and stage.

Here have a series of cameos of famous people at the Oscars ceremony. They don't have to be household names, but should be recognizable faces. They're all dressed up in the finest clothes and some are nominees.

As Kendricks walks through, most people don't know him. But there are some baseball fans in the room and they are excited. Famous people that the audience recognizes are in awe of the baseball player.

EXT. ROBINWOOD FARM - NIGHT

Somewhere in the middle of Virginia sits the Robinwood Farm, which dates back to the Colonial War. Tonight it's the location of a massive party. People arrive in significant numbers.

INT. ROBINWOOD FARM - CONTINUOUS

Jones and Bishop walk through the party.

JONES

Let me introduce you to Reid Carlin, he throws this party every year.

BISHOP

I heard about it last year. I
didn't get invited...

JONES

Some... things happen at these
parties, so they tend to wait until
they know you're "cool" before
inviting them.

Bishop's takeaway is that he's "cool."

JONES (CONT'D)

Here he is now.

Jones gestures to REID CARLIN, 60s white male. Carlin drinks
directly from a bottle of red wine.

JONES (CONT'D)

Reid, I'd like you to meet our up-
and-coming catcher, Savoy Bishop!

Bishop shakes Reid's hand.

REID

The sausage king of Nebraska?

Bishop grins.

CUT TO:

Jones and Bishop walk out the back door of the house to see
the entire bullpen of Eddie Parker, Omar Wheeler, Krishna
Malay, Hector Delarosa, Shawn Derby, Tommy Shotwell and Clint
Youngblood.

Standing near them, sharing a joint, is Betty Billups. She
smiles when she sees Bishop.

JONES

Look at this motley band of mother--

SHOTWELL

Hey man, just call us the Reliever
Party Patrol.

Laughter.

JONES

I will call you no such thing. Hand
me that.

He gestures towards the joint.

JONES (CONT'D)
My bones ache.

Betty hands him the joint and she sidles up to Bishop.

BETTY
Hey you.

Bishop grins.

Jones takes a hit and passes the joint to Parker.

BISHOP
Good to see you, Betty.

Laughs.

BETTY
Nice to see you, too, Mr. Bishop.

Bishop gets it. Slowly, but he gets it.

Parker blows a big cloud of smoke in Bishop's face and he coughs. More laughter.

BISHOP
I don't smoke this stuff.

Laughs. Parker passes the joint to Derby, who ALSO takes a big hit and then blows it in Bishop's face. More laughs.

BETTY
Hey, make sure to find me later.
I've got to go make a phone call.

She walks away. Bishop, who is already starting to get high, stares after her.

BISHOP
Okay Betty.

The guys laugh.

PARKER
Somebody's got a girlfriend.

Bishop is puzzled.

BISHOP
You mean she's a lesbian?

By this time, they're laughing AT him, not with him.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Oh, you mean me.

More laughs. Wheeler, who now has the joint, takes a big hit and blows MORE smoke into Bishop's face. He coughs again and waves the smoke away.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
I'll see you guys later...

He turns towards the rest of the party, not sure of which way to go.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Betty!

He walks away to more laughs.

CUT TO:

Prince's "Purple Rain" album starts to play.

PRINCE
Dearly beloved...

Bishop stumbles through the party and comes across Lombardi, Pitts and Pulsipher who chat while holding red solo cups.

PULSIPHER
What's up with that Whaley guy?

Laughter.

BISHOP
You guys seen Betty?

They ignore him.

PULSIPHER
I guess I took his job, right?

BISHOP
Dude, Whaley TOTALLY wants to kill Kendricks.

PULSIPHER
You serious?

LOMBARDI
Fuck yeah!

PULSIPHER
You think he'd really do it?

PITTS
Probably not. His bark is louder
than his bark.

Laughter.

CUT TO:

Brito stands talking to Jones. Bishop stumbles into them.

BRITO
Hey man!

Brito takes the drink from Bishop and chugs it.

BRITO (CONT'D)
Waste not, want not... said Jesus!

Jones laughs. Bishop stumbles on.

JONES
(to Brito)
So she asked YOU out?

BRITO
I know, right?

CUT TO:

Chester stumbles through the party. A stumbling Bishop collides with him and they knock heads. They laugh and rub their heads.

CHESTER
Hey, Bishop. I lost my shit.

BISHOP
Yeah, me, too. Those guys...

He points in the direction of the weed smokers.

CHESTER
No man, I lost my shit! Seriously,
where is my shit?

Chester stumbles away. Bishop looks around, finds he's alone, and keeps moving.

CUT TO:

Bishop steps outside where people congregate near a keg in a big rubber trash can.

Doman stands talking with some other PARTY GOERS. Bishop weaves his way towards them.

BISHOP
Hey, I know you!

DOMAN
No shit. I'm your back-up.

BISHOP
You're not a back-up, Hipsterface
Soulpatch! Can I call you
Hipsterface Soulpatch?

He leans on Doman, who does, in fact, have a soul patch.

DOMAN
I'd prefer you didn't.

Bishop laughs awkwardly.

BISHOP
Okay... I'll remember that... for
later.

DOMAN
I doubt it.

The Party Goers laugh as Bishop continues on in his search.

CUT TO:

Standing away from everyone else is Pompey. He's holding a red solo cup and sways back and forth. Bishop walks up to him.

BISHOP
Dude, you are super drunk.

Pompey shrugs.

POMPEY
I'll have what I'm having!

Pompey takes a big gulp from a red solo cup. Bishop laughs and stumbles on.

CUT TO:

Bishop stumbles into the kitchen, not even sure what he's looking for anymore. Flowers and Pulsipher are chatting near the sink.

PULSIPHER
Dude, you don't look so good.

BISHOP
I'm super-duper fine.

He trips over his own feet, steadies himself and leans against the counter to support himself.

PULSIPHER
Have some water.

He reaches into a cooler and grabs a bottled water and hands it to Bishop. Bishop waves it away.

BISHOP
What is that shit?

Pitcher Harrell Flowers takes the bottle and removes the cap. He hands it to Bishop.

FLOWERS
Water, it's good for you!

Bishop takes the bottle and takes a couple of sips. He winces as if it were alcohol.

BISHOP
That's nasty.

He puts the bottle on the counter and shambles away.

CUT TO:

Bishop stumbles down the hall. A line waits for the bathroom. Pitts comes out of the bathroom.

Doster is next line. He exaggeratedly waves his hand to blow the smell away.

DOSTER
I smell dead people!

Laughter.

CUT TO:

Bishop wanders into the dining room where Speck digs through a cabinet filled with expensive liquor. He is fucked up already, but he wants more.

As Bishop stumbles in, Speck finds a bottle of Toko Ultraluxe Saki.

SPECK
Fucking perfect!

He quickly pours shots for himself and Bishop. He offers the shot to Bishop. Bishop waves it off, covering his mouth to stop from vomiting.

Speck laughs.

SPECK (CONT'D)
You ain't shit, Shinola!

Bishop stumbles away as Speck takes both shots.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBINWOOD FARM, BEDROOM - LATER

Bishop and Betty lay side-by-side on the bed, above the covers, fully clothed.

BISHOP
There's a legit chance I'm an idiot savant.

Betty laughs.

BETTY
Calm down, it's just weed.

BISHOP
I've never smoked weed before.

BETTY
Obviously. You didn't smoke it now.
You're contact high.

BISHOP
That sounds bad. Am I gonna die? Is this gonna be forever?

More laughter. Betty sits up and starts softly rubbing Bishop's temples. He closes his eyes, smiles and lets out a soft moan.

BETTY
Tell me about this home run? It was some kind of big deal?

BISHOP
Yeah! I helped us win. Again.

BETTY

Don't people hit home runs all the time?

BISHOP

Hah! If they're great. Or on steroids.

BETTY

How many home runs have you hit?

BISHOP

Like ever?

BETTY

Well, yeah.

BISHOP

I don't like to talk about it.

BETTY

That's weird. Why not?

He turns away from her.

BISHOP

You'll laugh.

She laughs.

BETTY

I promise I won't laugh.

BISHOP

Yes, you will.

BETTY

Hey, I'm serious. I promise I won't laugh.

BISHOP

You promise?

BETTY

Cross my heart and all that crap.

She does, in fact, cross her heart.

BISHOP

Okay... It was my first time.

She laughs.

BETTY
You never hit a home run before?

BISHOP
Maybe once. In high school.

BETTY
Come here.

She pulls him close and they kiss. Tentative at first. Then deeply.

They both fall back onto their backs with large grins.

They each start to fade. Their eyes flutter. They fall asleep.

EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - NIGHT

After the Oscars is the Vanity Fair Party. Kendricks walks in, spots the bar and makes a beeline.

KENDRICKS
Give me several shots and then give me several more shots.

CUT TO:

Kendricks finishes up the last shot and set the glass on the bar. He signals the BARTENDER, not even getting out of line. Some of the below the line workers standing in line are upset, but not enough to do anything about it.

The bartender hurries to Kendricks, smiling.

BARTENDER
More shots?

KENDRICKS
No. Give me something classier.

BARTENDER
Can you be more specific?

KENDRICKS
Surprise me.

She walks off in a huff.

TINA (O.S.)
Wow. Can you get me one of those?

Kendricks awkwardly spins to see: TINA WARREN, late 20s, short blonde hair, a popular actress. She has had noticeable plastic surgery and has sizable implants.

Kendricks smiles.

KENDRICKS
Absolutely. I can do that.

He signals the bartender, who comes over quickly.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
Make that two.

BARTENDER
Two of what?

He ignores her.

KENDRICKS
So...

TINA
So...

KENDRICKS
What's a famous actress like you doing in a place like this?

She laughs politely.

TINA
If you're going to run lines on me, remember that I've worked with two Oscar-winning writers. You're going to have to do better than that.

The bartender brings her drink and she takes a sip.

KENDRICKS
Are we giving notes now?

Tina laughs.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
That's what you call it, right?

TINA
I know you, you know.

KENDRICKS
Oh yeah?

TINA
I watch baseball.

He's impressed.

TINA (CONT'D)
I mean, I'm a Smashers fan, but...

He playfully boos her.

KENDRICKS
I thought the actress who played
your sister in "Obsession Peak" did
a great job. It's a shame she
didn't get nominated.

TINA
She did.

KENDRICKS
Shame that movie didn't get more
nominations.

TINA
It did. She's nominated for
supporting actress. I'm nominated
for actress.

KENDRICKS
I know.

He takes a sip of his drink. Tina laughs.

TINA
So, you like to play games OFF the
field, too?

KENDRICKS
It's more fun that way.

TINA
If you have the right players.

Kendricks chuckles.

KENDRICKS
You know a lot of players?

TINA
Enough.

Tina reaches for her very tiny purse and opens it. She pulls out a credit card-sized object and sets it on the bar.

KENDRICKS
That your room key?

TINA
It is.

He smiles. She can't hide how much she likes his smile.

KENDRICKS
So, we should...

He nods towards the door.

TINA
(smiling)
That's pretty forward of you.

KENDRICKS
I've never heard anyone use that
word outside of a TV show.

She laughs.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
I'm a no-pressure kind of man.

He reaches to pick up his drink and casually brushes his hand
against hers. Her finger quivers.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
How about this? I'll hold my hand
out for five seconds.

She smiles.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)
You pick up the key. If you would
like me to join you in your hotel
room, drop the key...

He opens his hand and locks eyes with her. She picks up the
key and dangles it over his outstretched hand.

It swings back and forth, about to fall. She holds it with
the tips of her fingers, a sly smile on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBINWOOD FARM, BEDROOM - MORNING

Bishop and Betty lay in the bed together. They are fully
entangled, but still fully clothed.

BETTY
Nobody ever didn't try to sleep
with me before.

Beat.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Are you gay?

BISHOP
Not that I know of.

BETTY
Are you a virgin?

BISHOP
Not really.

Betty raises an eyebrow at that one.

BETTY
Then why?

BISHOP
I don't want it to just be about
sex.

BETTY
Don't you like sex?

BISHOP
Of course!

BETTY
Good.

Beat.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Then why?

BISHOP
You ask a lot of questions.

BETTY
You answer a lot of questions.

BISHOP
What?

BETTY
You answer.

He still doesn't get it.

BETTY (CONT'D)
I ask questions of all these
people...

She waves her arms around the wreckage of the party.

BETTY (CONT'D)
And no one ever gives me real
answers.

BISHOP
That's rude.

BETTY
Well, they know who my parents
are...

BISHOP
Who are your parents?

BETTY
Exactly.

BISHOP
What?

BETTY
You don't know who they are.

BISHOP
Huh?

She smiles. He's a little lost, but he likes the smile, so he
returns it.

BETTY
I like you.

The smile becomes a grin.

BISHOP
Yeah?

BETTY
Yeah.

BISHOP
Let's go to breakfast.

BETTY
Okay.

Beat.

BETTY (CONT'D)
But you do like to have sex?

BISHOP
Oh, of course. Hell yeah!

BETTY
Good. Let's go.

FADE OUT.