

Play Ball!

Rewrite by

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1

EXT. - STADIUM - NIGHT - RIGHT SIDE OF HOME PLATE

1

H.L. Haas is being held by his two attendants in front of a standing mic. The crowd is going crazy, yelling, screaming, standing; totally nuts.

H.L.

(into mic)

Ladies and Gentlemen. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce the person who's going to sing the national anthem.

A buxom woman with a gushing smile is standing next to H.L. The word "buxom" is putting it mildly. At the least her bust line is over fifty -- the reason the crowd has been going crazy.

H.L. turns and looks at her huge goods.

H.L.

Oh, say can you see Miss Jessica Hunbolt!!!

The crowd cheers even more as she walks up to the mic. She starts singing the worst version of the national anthem ever heard. H.L. just stands there staring at her bust -- along with the rest of the stadium.

2

EXT. - NASHVILLE STADIUM - NIGHT

2

Nashville Gulls catcher C.T. "Tug" Tugwell is crouched behind home plate, his face barred behind a bulky mask. A Memphis batter awaits the pitch. Home plate umpire Dennis Jackson looms in close, leering over Tug's left shoulder.

SLAP! A baseball smacks into Tug's glove. Tug holds the glove and ball in place as umpire Jackson straightens.

JACKSON

BAAAAALLLL four! Take your base, batter.

Tug stands, throws the ball back to his pitcher, and squats back into position again with Jackson crouching behind him.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

When did you first learn you had no
mother, Jackson?

The next Memphis batter steps into the hitter's box, gets
ready as Tug signals for the next pitch. BLAP! It arrives.

JACKSON

BAAAAA!

Same ritual. Tug, Jackson, and the Memphis batter get back
into their respective positions.

TUG

(to Jackson)

How does your father feel about you
being a homosexual?

Umpire Jackson instantly bolts upright, throws his hands in
the air signaling.

JACKSON

Time!

Tug bolts to his feet and starts to turn, but with bad
timing -- BLAP! The next pitch hits him smack in the crotch.
Tug drops like a sack of potatoes, groaning with
unprecedented agony. Jackson steps forward, looking down on
Tug.

JACKSON (cont'd)

No pitch. Time was out.

Billy Braxton and Max Baker help Tug off the field and back
into the Nashville Gull's dugout. The Nashville fans are
applauding. Tug tries to smile, show his appreciation. It is
a pitiful smile.

Billy Braxton is 23. He is Tug's roommate. Billy is a future
super star, the best hitter in the Southern League.

Max Baker is the Gulls' black first baseman. He doubles as
Tug's backup catcher.

C.T. "Tug" Tugwell is 33. He has been a minor league catcher
for eight years. Now he is the playing manager of the
Nashville Gulls. In the hot and humid Double-A Southern
League, the Gulls are dead last.

3 INT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT

3

Max and Billy deposit the agonizing Tug on the team bench. Max begins hurriedly putting catcher's gear on. He and Billy are suppressing grins over Tug's condition.

BILLY

Where does it hurt?

TUG

Very funny! If I have any kids they are going to be flat.

(to Max)

Come on, Max, move your ass! You're in.

BILLY

I told you not to wear aluminum foil as a supporter.

Max buckles the last strap to the shin guards. Laughing, he and Billy head back up the steps and out of the dugout to resume play.

Stevie, the Gulls' 10-year-old bat boy, cautiously approaches his pained hero.

STEVIE

You OK, Tug?

TUG

Yeah. I always double up like that, it's good luck.

4 EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT

4

Tug is managing from the dugout. The stadium scoreboard shows the Gulls are leading San Antonio 4 to 3. Tug paces gingerly. Stevie paces with him, emulating his every move and gesture; constantly underfoot. When Tug yells, Stevie yells.

TUG

Come on, let's go! Just three more outs and we hit the road a winner.

(CONTINUED)

STEVIE
(overlapping)
Let's go! Just three more outs!

TUG
Let's go, Mike. Push that pill past
their pine.

STEVIE
Push the pill past the pine, Mike.

Tug turns and Stevie bumps into him. They almost fall.

TUG
Stevie!

STEVIE
Sorry, Tug.

Tug begins pacing again, Stevie right behind him. Jackson
calls another ball. Tug groans and twists. Stevie does too.

TUG
Ball?!

STEVIE
Ball?!

TUG
Come on, Jackson. That pitch was
right in the wheelhouse!

STEVIE
Right in the wheelhouse, Jackson!

Jackson calls the next pitch a ball, also. Tug groans and
twists and once again. So does Stevie.

TUG
Jackson, I'll pay for your eye
surgery. That pitch was right down
the pipe!

STEVIE
You need eye surgery, Jackson!
Geez, right down the pipe!

5 EXT. - HOME PLATE 5

Jackson pushes his mask up, stalks a couple of strides toward the Gulls' dugout, pointing a menacing finger at Tug.

JACKSON

That's it, Tugwell! No more!

6 EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT 6

Stevie looks up at Tug in anticipation.

STEVIE

He pointed at you, Tug. Nobody points at you -- do they?

TUG

Why in the hell'd he do that?

Still moving gingerly, Tug comes up out of the dugout headed for Jackson, who moves to meet him halfway. As soon as Tug becomes visible from the dugout, the Nashville fans begin to cheer. Tug and Jackson immediately go nose-to-nose.

7 EXT. - HOME PLATE 7

JACKSON

You know the rules, Tugwell!

TUG

(overlapping)

Don't point your finger at me in front of my hometown fans, Jackson. I'll saw your finger off and you'll never be able to bowl again.

JACKSON

You can't question me from the dugout.

TUG

I don't care about that. Just don't treat me like a wiener in front of my people.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

-- Both of those pitches were out of the --

TUG

-- Don't point your finger at me when we're playing here --

JACKSON

-- Strike zone! You're gone if you do it again. And I got another finger for you --

TUG

-- Do I make myself clear?

JACKSON

-- Understood?!

TUG

-- OK.

JACKSON

-- Alright.

The two men separate. The fans give Tug a standing ovation, many of them chanting, "Mad Gull, Mad Gull!" The camera follows Tug back to the dugout. He waves to the crowd and does a somersault.

8

EXT. - STANDS

8

In the grandstands with a video camera trained on Tug is Kristi Wintergren, investigative TV reporter for "Inside Story," on assignment to cover the lower echelons of baseball in contrast to the glamour and million dollar players in the big leagues. She is 30 and extremely attractive. Her 26-year-old assistant is Carol Johnson, a perky, tom-boyish type.

CAROL

Why couldn't your dad have been a Paris dress designer instead of a great baseball coach?

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

Think positive -- this could be
fun.

Tug glances up at Kristi and, before disappearing off the field, gives her a dirty look. Kristi ignores Tug's antics.

9 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND

9

The Memphis batter hits the next pitch, a smashing one-hopper to the left of third baseman Billy, who spears the ball perfectly and throws the Memphis hitter out at first base.

10 EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT

10

TUG

Way to go, Billy! The miracle
potion is working.

STEVIE

That's one!

TUG

Two more and we're out of here.

STEVIE

(underfoot again)
Just two more and -- sorry!

TUG

Stevie, quit acting like a puppy
dog.

Tug begins his stiff-legged pacing again, Stevie right behind him. The next two Memphis batters line base hits into the outfield.

TUG (cont'd)

OK, OK! Let's get two.

STEVIE

Get two, double-play!

TUG

Be sharp now, doubleplay!

11 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 11

The next Memphis batter hits a perfect double-play ground ball toward the Nashville shortstop. The ball goes under the shortstop's glove and on into the outfield. Memphis scores another run.

12 EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT 12

Tug plunks to the dugout bench in exasperation. A la Tug, Stevie also plunks to the bench, planting his face in his hands.

TUG

These guys could legitimately park in handicapped parking. I'll be dipped.

STEVIE

Me too.

The next three Memphis batters get hits as fast as WAP! WAP! WAP! The base path looks like a track meet.

The other players in the Gulls' dugout begin to work their way toward end of the bench opposite the slowly boiling Tug. Even little Stevie Tug decides it is best that he just 'fade away,' moving to the other end of the bench with the players.

TUG

(to players on the field)

Are you jackasses auditioning to be monkeys on Animal Kingdom? For Christ's sake, shape up!

13 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND - POST GAME 13

Sportscaster Harry Bloom is interviewing Tug at home plate. The field is vacant now. A few straggling fans are in the grandstands.

Kristi Wintergren is still in her seat behind the Gulls' dugout. She has her camera apparatus wrapped up, ready to go, but she stays to watch the interview, albeit from a distance.

Tug is aware of Kristi, and her presence obviously makes him

(CONTINUED)

irritable and nervous.

BLOOM

The Gulls lost another tough one tonight, Tug. In fact, it was another tough week, losing five of six. With a little over a month left in the season, what do you think the Gulls' chances are of escaping the cellar?

TUG

Slim and none. We'll be growing mushrooms.

BLOOM

I know we've been over this before, but just what are the reasons behind such a horrendous year for the Gulls?

TUG

No players, rotten umps, and I think God is betting against us.

BLOOM

What about Billy Braxton and Bobby Deerlegs?

TUG

Two players --

BLOOM

And you don't like the umpires --

TUG

On my list of likes, umpires come after dead carp.

BLOOM

What?

TUG

I don't like umpires or Dracula, they both suck.

(CONTINUED)

BLOOM

Your running battle with the men in blue has become a major topic of discussion around the Southern League, if not the world of professional baseball in general.

TUG

You said we weren't going to get into that.

(to camera)

Welcome to the Benedict Arnold Show, folks.

Bloom forces a nervous laugh. Realizing he has been deceived into another awkward and embarrassing situation, Tug goes rigid. He glances back at Kristi and Carol, who are still watching with interest. They are far enough away that they cannot hear what is being said. Tug raises his voice.

BLOOM

Well, Tug. Let's face it, the issue can hardly be skirted. You've been kicked out of 28 games, fined --

TUG

Twenty-nine games. It's my hobby. Every man should have a hobby.

BLOOM

Twenty-nine. Fined four times, and you're under investigation by the American Association. How do you feel about all this?

TUG

(his last appeal)

Harry, this is getting old hat. You want something interesting, let me set you on fire.

BLOOM

Tug, the fans have a right to know about your baseball status.

Tug's anger rises. Bloom holds the hand mic under Tug's nose, as if in direct challenge. Tug again glances up at

(CONTINUED)

Kristi and Carol.

14 EXT. - GRANDSTANDS

14

Kristi and Carol are still sitting, watching and smiling, but unaware of what is going on.

15 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND

15

Something about their attitude stirs Tug.

TUG

I've been fined before. They can watch me, follow me, film me, whatever they want. They don't bother me. They ain't getting no cherry, that's for damn sure.

Bloom winces and yanks the mic from under Tug's nose, re-adjusting his "professional" voice.

BLOOM

What about Kristi Wintergren, from 'Inside Story?'

Tug grabs Bloom's hand, holding the mic stationary so he can talk into it. Bloom tries to pull it away, but Tug is much stronger. Bloom tries to talk over Tug.

BLOOM (cont'd)

(panicked)

Surely you're aware of the fact that she's been assigned by 'Inside Story' to cover the Nashville team, and she's focusing on your antics as the highlight of the story.

TUG

(overlapping)

Oh, you mean the beady-eyed broad with the flat chest who wears a Mike Wallace mask when she's alone?

BLOOM

Your on-the-field actions -- Tug, let go -- and --

(CONTINUED)

TUG

She don't mean nothing to me,
neither. She has the face of a
convent librarian.

BLOOM

(quickly overlapping)
Very attractive lady, actually,
Tug.

TUG

Looks like a stiff-legged virgin.

BLOOM

Tug, we're on TV.

Tug suddenly releases Bloom's mic. Bloom practically falls
down.

TUG

Yeah, Harry, I know. Maybe they'll
bleep me out with some organ music.
I love organ music.

Tug spins and stalks toward the Gulls' dugout. Bloom tries
to collect his dignity and save the show.

BLOOM

(forcing a laugh)
OK, sports fans, this is Harry
Bloom, live from Nashville Stadium,
where tonight Memphis up-ended the
Gulls nine to four.

Before stepping down into the dugout, Tug stops face-to-face
with Kristi and Carol, still seated in the first row behind
the dugout. Carol stands to gather the equipment.

TUG

Haven't you got anything better to
do?

KRISTI

(her smile fades)
Than what?

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Than follow me all over with that goddam camera.

KRISTI

Believe me, Mr. Tugwell, I'd rather be sitting in wet paint or standing on hot asphalt in my bare feet. I'd rather be laying on the beach back home in Daytona.

Kristi stands and starts to walk away, trailed by Carol. Tug walks parallel to her along the length of the dugout roof.

TUG

So what's stopping you?

KRISTI

You and your childish pranks. It's the angle my producer likes best.

At the end of the dugout roof, Tug stops. Kristi starts away from him up the entrance aisle. She does not look back.

TUG

What the hell's that supposed to mean?

KRISTI

Nothing YOU would understand.

Tug doesn't know quite how to respond. He watches the angered Kristi continue to disappear up the aisle. Then as he starts on down into the dugout, his lips are moving and we hear a series of computer beeps instead of his words.

16

INT. - SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - DAIS

16

Tug is sitting next to the speaker at the podium. He's wearing his best suit. This is a dinner to raise money for poor kids in Middleboro, Tennessee. On the wall behind the dais is a huge banner that reads, "THE MIDDLEBORO J.C.s WELCOME THE MAD GULL."

THE SPEAKER

(backwoods Southern accent)
We have been very fortunate this

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)

year. We've raised twice as much money as ever before. This year, we sold enough tickets to supply our Boys' Club with uniforms for every single boy --

Huge applause.

THE SPEAKER

-- 200 baseballs --

Huge applause.

THE SPEAKER (cont'd)

-- And 20 aluminum bats.

More huge applause.

THE SPEAKER (cont'd)

And why were we able to raise all this money? Because of this man next to me.

(points to Tug)

A man of greatness. A man of kindness. A man of integrity. A man our kids can look up to -- Mr. C.T. "Tug" Tugwell.

The entire place stands up and cheers wildly. Kids, fathers, waiters -- everyone.

Tug stands slowly. He's moved. A tear rolls out of his eye.

17 EXT. - LOUISIANA HIGHWAY - LATE NIGHT

17

A clanking old school bus chugs through the night. On the side of the bus the words "NASHVILLE GULLS" are painted. A closer inspection exposes the past life of the rickety old bus; "FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHILDREN'S SCHOOL."

18 INT. - TEAM BUS

18

Players, duffel bags, and baseball equipment are stuffed everywhere inside the old bus. Nearly all of the players are asleep or trying to steep, but in the front seats Tug and Billy are watching the roadway with Ted, the bus driver.

Sitting behind Tug and Billy is Bobby Deerlegs, a 20-year-

(CONTINUED)

old Indian lad. He is a superb athlete. He is shy, but kind of childishly playful. Everybody likes him. He is accompanied everywhere by his uncle Johnny Hawkfoot, who is around 60. His uncle is quiet, pleasant, and is along kind of looking after Bobby, but also for the enjoyment of watching Bobby develop as a ballplayer.

BOBBY

I was thinking, Uncle John. Isn't there something in our Indian lore that might help to bring good luck to our team?

UNCLE

Yes, we have things that bring good fortune. At midnight, on the night of the third full moon, if you burn buffalo hair it is good luck. And, if you put pine bark under your lip during your honeymoon night, it brings joy to your marriage.

BOBBY

What could we do for this team?

UNCLE

What this team needs is Kalaka.

BOBBY

What's that mean?

UNCLE

Miracle. What this team needs is a miracle.

BOBBY

Maybe we should force feed everyone Miracle Whip.

UNCLE

What this team should do is kneel on a prayer rug, face west, clasp their hands, look toward heaven -- then get up and buy eight good players.

Tug turns around.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

I heard that. You guys watch what you say, or I'll stick some feathers up your tail.

They all laugh. Bobby starts looking out the window. Uncle Johnny settles back to nap.

Both Tug and Billy are just staring, their thoughts reflected in their dialogue.

TUG

Come on, Ted, Give us a laugh -- run over something.

BILLY

Too bad Stevie couldn't come.

TUG

That's the last time Bloom ever gets me on TV. I wouldn't trust him as far as I can throw Orson Welles.

BILLY

They trade Madison, get a nobody named Whittaker thrown in, send him to Phoenix, and call up Van Horn. Don't they ever know I'm here?

TUG

Probably punishing you for holding out.

BILLY

What do they expect, Me to break a leg or something? Every day I go unsigned, my price goes up. I'm running away with the Triple Crown. Lopez in homers is the only one even close to me.

(sighs tiredly)

I'm sick of these all-night bus rides, the cheap hotels, the toilets with no seats --

Billy notices that Tug is just staring. Billy at 23 is ten years younger than Tug, and is in his first year in the

(CONTINUED)

Southern League.

BILLY

What the hell, you're going up too,
Tug.

TUG

(ironic smile)

After eight years in Double-A ball?
I'll be going up the same day the
Pope gets married.

BILLY

You could -- as a manager or coach.
The Mad Gull, remember? It's
working. Every week you get a
write-up in Sporting News or
someplace. You're damn good, Tug,
the best I ever --

TUG

Ah, shit, Billy. Come on! We're so
far out they'll probably send the
whole team back to rookie ball. We
are starting to get CARE packages.
I don't know why we're doing this
badly.

Ted has to brake the bus. All kinds of bottles and beer cans
roll forward. Billy leans toward Tug, indicating the
bottles.

BOBBY

That could be one reason.

BILLY

Who have we got in the back,
Legionnaires?

Bobby leans back to look out the window. Tug looks at the
bottles.

TUG

What's the difference? A year from
now the '79 Nashville Gulls won't
be anything but a statistic: The
worst team in the history of the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

Southern League. If we were an Army, Ethiopia would beat us. A team managed by C.T. Tugwell, aka the Mad Gull.

The idea, the concept, is amusing after all, and Tug cannot help but begin smiling as he continues:

TUG (cont'd)

Nobody'll remember that I had a shortstop who could walk under a cow without touching the udder, a two hundred eight-five pound center fielder who snaps teeter totter boards, a right fielder who carried around a can of Black Flag in his back pocket, two relief pitchers who might as well throw their seeing eye dog at the plate as a pitch --

Billy and Ted also are laughing, glancing back to see if any of the sleeping players might be listening. Even Bobby chuckles. Tug, oblivious, continues:

TUG (cont'd)

Oh, yeah. We're doing so well, I figure for a big raise. Oakland will be after me to replace Martin by mid-September.

(the amusement subsides)

I'd like to bust that goddamned camera over that TV broad's head, Billy.

BILLY

She probably wouldn't feel a thing.

TUG

That camera bugs me. I'm not that hard to get along with, am I?

BILLY

Tug, you are a direct descendant of Attila the Hun.

Bobby leans forward.

(CONTINUED)

BOBBY

You make Cochise look like Pat
Boone.

A car passes with its horn blaring. Tug, Billy, and Ted crane the necks to look. It is a rental Ford Maverick. The driver is Kristi Wintergren. The Maverick pulls away in front of the bus. Several seconds pass.

TUG

I know what they're trying to do.
They're trying to drive me crazy.
Well, it's not working.
(slaps his face)
It's not working.
(slaps his face)
It's not working.

Tug slaps his face again.

19

EXT. - ALL-NIGHT TRUCK STOP CAFE - LATER STILL

19

Air brakes wheezing, the old bus cranks into the parking lot and grinds to a stop. Visible in the background is the Ford Maverick. Led by Tug and Billy, the Gulls' players begin sleepily filing out of the team bus.

PLAYER

(sleepy)
What sport are we in, again?

20

INT. - TRUCK STOP CAFE

20

Tug and Billy are seated at a booth, just finishing the last bites of their Trucker's Breakfast. The Gulls' players are scattered in twos and threes throughout the restaurant. Bobby and his Uncle are in a booth together. Carol is in a booth with two of the players. Kristi is seated at a booth in a corner opposite Tug and Billy.

BILLY

Looks like she's leaving. Go talk
to her.

TUG

Let her leave.

(CONTINUED)

(to Waitress)
Miss?

Tug holds up his coffee cup to a passing Waitress. She stops, and refills both cups.

WAITRESS
You boys with that football team?

BILLY
Possibly, but right now we're from Nashville, and it isn't football, it's baseball.

WAITRESS
Honey, I don't know nothing about no sports except they got a lot's of men and balls.

BILLY
In baseball we play with bats.

WAITRESS
Well there you go, sugar. Me and baseball got something in common.

She winks and moves to the next booth, occupied by Bobby and his Uncle.

BOBBY
The food in these places is murder.

UNCLE
Sometimes I think we should start a fire in the parking lot and cook the first thing that comes along.

Tug gets up and walks to Kristi's booth, coffee cup in hand.

TUG
Mind if I sit down?

KRISTI
I'm expecting a Swamp Game Warden.

TUG

Oh, sorry.

Tug starts to walk away, but she realizes, hesitates, and slides into the booth opposite Kristi. They sit, each sipping coffee, exchanging calculating looks.

TUG (cont'd)

(finally)

I guess you're heading for Tulsa.

Kristi nods.

TUG

My friend Billy thinks I should try to make friends with you, but then again, Billy wanted me to invest in a diaper service in Sun City.

KRISTI

Why don't you swallow a book of manners. Maybe then we could talk -- unless I'm too flat for you.

Tug cringes, realizing she heard at least a tape of the postgame show interview with Bloom.

TUG

Listen, what I said on the --

KRISTI

-- Makes no difference to me. It's your business if you want to make a spectacle of yourself every time you step in front of the public.

(even gaze)

My assignment has to do with minor league baseball. My producer happens to think you're a colorful part of it. Nothing more or less.

TUG

(confused a beat)

Fighting with umpires is what he likes?

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

The way you do it, it is. I think you're a little unfair.

TUG

I see. They're all goddamned angels, right? Playing harps and helping orphans? Jesus. You don't know what goes on down on the field.

KRISTI

I have an idea.

TUG

What, from playing softball?

KRISTI

I'll have you know I was a pretty fair weak-armed shortstop when I was a kid. And I wanted to play, but the boys wouldn't let me.

TUG

At least you're not a bra-burner.

KRISTI

I don't wear a bra.

TUG

You're showing the other end of sports. Instead of the players in the limelight making a million dollars a year, you're showing the bottom and your bosses have decided I typify this seedy end. Do me a favor, will you? Leave me alone, Finish your assignment. I'll give you some wax lips. I'm Tug Tugwell, the Mad Gull. I like being the Mad Gull, and if some walrus-bellied umpires don't, that's just too damned bad. I'm working on a career, a life -- mine. You don't know your ass from third base, and you're ruining my career.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

A dubious career, at best, Mr. Tugwell. I'm sorry I can't feed your machismo mentality, but you're a lifetime .235 hitter, in the minor leagues. The average age of the major league catcher is 26 years, 4 months. In five months you will be 34, and you have already spent eight years in the class Double-A Southern League -- which is an extraordinary testimony to mediocrity if I've ever heard one. The odds of you making it to the majors is something like 1,638,802 to one. You need a Himalayan mountain climber to guide you up to average. Whose ass and whose third base are we talking about now?

Tug stands.

TUG

The difference is that I want to be here and you don't. You must have slept your way to the bottom to get this assignment.

Tug storms away. Kristi glares after him.

21 INT. - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - NIGHT

21

There's a big crowd on hand. It's in between the sixth and seventh innings. The stadium Announcer grabs the mic.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the Nashville Gull management would like to remind you that next Friday night will be Diet Night. Anyone with a waist measurement of less than 30 inches will be admitted free. Don't forget.

The team owner, H.L. Haas, walks into the announcer's booth. He's held up by his two assistants, because he's drunk again.

(CONTINUED)

H.L.
 (to Announcer)
 Let me talk to them.

The Announcer is reluctant to give the mic over to this drunk. H.L. senses it.

H.L.
 Now!

ANNOUNCER
 (into mic)
 And now, ladies and gentlemen, it
 is a pleasure for me to introduce
 the owner of the Gulls, Mr. H.L.
 Haas!

The crowd cheers and boos. H.L. is helped to the mic.

H.L.
 On behalf of the entire Gull
 organization, I, H.L. Haas, would
 like to thank you people for coming
 out and supporting the Gulls on
 this, the first "Supporter Night"
 in baseball history. Let's all
 stand up and show those free
 supporters!

- 22 EXT. - GRANDSTANDS 22
 Everyone stands and starts waving a jock strap that says
 "GULLS" on it.
- 23 INT. - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH 23
 H.L. is smiling proudly. Everyone else in the booth is
 shaking his head in disbelief of the promotion.
- 24 EXT. - TRUCK STOP PARKING LOT 24
 Tug and Billy, their arms around each other fraternally,
 come dip-striding across the lot toward the team bus
 singing:

TUG AND BILLY
(in deep voices)
Yum, yum, eat 'em up! Yum, yum, eat
'em up!

25 INT. - TEAM BUS

25

Ted grins upon seeing them, releases the truck-style air-horn to the old bus, pops the doors open and sings along.

TED AND BILLY
(singing)
Oh, boy, feel 'em up! Yum, yum, eat
'em up!

The grumbling faces of Gulls' players appear to see just what in the hell is going on.

TUG
Gentlemen, I've figured out how we
can win. All we have to do is get
to Lourdes, France.

26 EXT. - LOUISVILLE STADIUM - NIGHT

26

BANG! BANG! A Gulls' runner and the ball arrive at first base simultaneously. The first base umpire, Waterbury, seems momentarily confused, then covers by casually turning and "breezing" a silent out call.

27 EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT

27

Tug drops his head.

TUG
I'll be dipped.

He starts onto the field. Waterbury awaits his stormy arrival with his arms folded across his chest.

TUG (cont'd)
I'm terribly sorry to disturb you,
Waterbury, you see to be enjoying
such a pleasant nap. As long as
your arms are folded, why don't you
just lie down and I'll put a lily
on you and we'll bury you. In the
meantime, I would like to point out
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

that you are missing quite a good game --

(moves nose to nose)

-- In fact, there was just one hell of an exciting play at first base!

(quiet again)

But then, a close play would only confuse you, Waterbury, so it's probably a good thing you missed it, you inept cretin! How many stupid shots do you have to take every day so you can walk around like a zombie?

WATERBURY

Did you call me an cretin, Tugwell?

TUG

I apologize, Waterbury. I shouldn't call you a cretin unless you have a dictionary and someone to read it to you. A moronic idiot, that's what I should have called you.

WATERBURY

Are you saying I can't read?

TUG

How the hell could you read? You can't even see!

Waterbury is now ready to fight, but, timely enough, Tug spins away kicking at the ground as he goes, much to the delight of the Louisville fans.

Waterbury follows several steps, then turns back. Tug turns and flails his foot in the direction of the now back-turned umpire. Unfortunately for Tug, he kicks so hard and high that he falls flat on his rear end. The Louisville fans are uproarious. Getting back on his feet, Tug's lips move and we hear computer beeps playing "Mary had a Little Lamb." This continues as Tug kicks his way back to the dugout. He glares into the Louisville grandstands as he goes. There sit Kristi and Carol, grinning and applauding.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

Was that from Swan Lake?

TUG

Swan Lake? That sounds like a good place for you to go skin diving for carp.

Kristi is laughing as Tug disappears under the roof of the dugout.

28 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND - LATER

28

The scoreboard reveals that the Gulls are losing 14-0 in the bottom of the fourth inning.

The Gull pitcher serves up another home run ball.

From his position behind home plate, Tug shakes his head in disgust as the batter circles the bases. Tug squats down for the next batter. The umpire holds his hand up.

UMPIRE

Time!

He points down to the Gull bullpen. Johnny Hawkfoot is doing a rain dance.

UMPIRE (cont'd)

Tugwell, you want to explain that?

TUG

Oh, that's Hawkfoot. He's dancing for rain. This game still isn't legal.

UMPIRE

Well, tell him to stop. The bullpen is for throwing, not dancing.

The opposing manager, Nelson Harris, joins them.

NELSON

What's going on down there, Tugwell? Tell that man to sit down.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

He's trying to wash out all your runs, Harris.

Harris bursts out laughing.

UMPIRE

I want him to stop.

Tug points to the rule book in the Umpire's back pocket.

TUG

There's nothing in rules that says you can't dance in the bullpen.

HARRIS

Let him dance. Tugwell, you're nuts.

Harris returns to the dugout. He's laughing his head off. When he gets into the dugout, he tells the rest of the team what's going on. They all laugh. Suddenly, there's a huge clap of thunder. The laughter stops. More thunder and lightening. The skies open up with a huge deluge of rain. The Louisville team is in shock. The Gulls run down to the bullpen and congratulate Johnny Hawkfoot.

29 INT. - TEAM BUS

29

Looking through the windshield, we see the highway signs passing:

WELCOME BACK! KENTUCKY GREETES YOU.

WELCOME TO ARKANSAS, LAND OF THE RAZORBACKS!

30 INT. - ARKANSAS LOCKER ROOM OF THE GULLS

30

The Gulls are seated randomly around, dressed in their uniforms ready for the coming game. Tug paces before them.

TUG

In case everyone has forgotten, we are the Nashville Gulls, and we are a professional baseball team. Every time we take the field, our careers are on the line. We've been a disgrace to the city of Nashville.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

We've even been a disgrace to the name "Gulls," and gulls fly over garbage dumps.

31 EXT. - ARKANSAS STADIUM - NIGHT 31

The American flag flutters in a gentle, sweltering Arkansas night breeze to the last notes of the national anthem. A cheer rises from the Arkansas crowd.

32 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 32

The Gulls' pitcher is winding up to throw his last warm-up pitch. He stops mid-windup to slap a flying insect away from his face.

Tug and the umpire, Biddy, are set as the Arkansas batter digs in for the pitch. Little black specks are visible.

The Gulls' right fielder is furiously spraying Black Flag at the swarm of insects surrounding him as the ball sails over his head.

Tug is jumping up and down and around umpire Biddy.

TUG

I called Time!

BIDDY

You can't call Time! Only I can call Time!

TUG

I called it, and you have to give it to me. Time was out!

Biddy simply zips his lips, refusing to discuss it. Tug stops his gesticulating and glares.

TUG (cont'd)

I'll get you for this, Biddy. The game is under protest.

BIDDY

You want to protest the game?

TUG

I want to protest the game.

BIDDY

I refuse your protest.

(moves to wisk plate)

Let's play ball!

TUG

Now I know what's attracting all
these bugs. Sonofabitch!

Tug throws his hat on the ground and jumps on it. He steps back and starts to pick it up. He changes his mind and jumps on it again.

33

EXT. - NASHVILLE DUGOUT - LATER IN THE GAME

33

Arkansas is doing nearly everything right. Nashville is doing nearly everything wrong. Tug, standing in the dugout, starts out to take his position at the start of an inning. Behind him, Kristi is hovering over and against the dugout roof.

KRISTI

(calling)

Tugwell!

TUG

(turning)

What is it?

KRISTI

Read it and find out.

Tug reluctantly steps over and takes the Mail-Gram. It's a message from Kristi's station.

THIS IS TO ADVISE YOU THAT TUG TUGWELL HAS BEEN FINED \$200
BY THE LEAGUE COMMISSIONER. IT JUST CAME OVER OUR WIRE
SERVICE.

Tug looks blankly at Kristi.

TUG

What's this for?

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

Bumping Franklin Blanchard, among other things.

TUG

Did they find out from your show?

KRISTI

No, Franklin filed a report.

TUG

But you probably supported it.

KRISTI

I told them what I saw, yes.

TUG

But you don't know what you saw.
(with growing frustration)
Couldn't you think of a worse time to give this to me?

KRISTI

I though you'd want to see it.

TUG

Why the hell didn't they tell me in person? This is bullshit!

Biddy walks toward Tug.

BIDDY

Let's go, Tugwell! Speed it up!

Tug spins and shoots an evil look at Biddy. He wads up the letter as he walks toward home plate, then he turns and wings the crumpled-up letter in the direction of Kristi and Carol.

Kristi's dark eyes flash in response.

Biddy and Tug move on to home plate. Biddy smiles wryly at Tug's fury.

BIDDY

We haven't got all night for your love life, Tugwell. We have a game to play. Coming down!

(CONTINUED)

Tug takes the final warm-up pitch and hums his throw-though to second base as hard as he can, then goes back into his squat. Bidy looms in behind him, smirking still behind his mask. Tug signals with one finger, meaning fastball.

BIDDY (cont'd)
A man your age passing love
letters.

The pitch blisters in.

BIDDY (cont'd)
BAAAAA!

TUG
What?!
(turning)
Are you crazy? That was grooved.
This guy --
(pointing to batter)
-- stinks. He should have put that
in Mississippi.

UMPIRE
Ball, Tugwell. And those better be
the last words I hear come out of
your mouth.

Tug and Bidy get back into position for the next pitch. It's right down the middle again.

BIDDY
BAAAAA!

Tug turns red, but doesn't say anything.

TUG
Time.

Tug runs to the mound. He calls in the infield. They gather around the mound.

TUG (cont'd)
Time for an Olé pitch. Number
three.

The players nod and everyone returns to their positions.

(CONTINUED)

The pitcher winds up. Everyone in the infield yells "Olé!"
The batter fouls the pitch off.

BIDDY
(scratching his head)
Olé? What's that?

On the next pitch, everyone, even the outfield, yells "Olé!"
The batter fouls it off.

BIDDY
Tugwell, what's this Olé! stuff?

Tug doesn't answer. The pitcher winds up and throws a low
hard fast ball. No one yells "Olé". Tug moves out of the way
and yells "Olé!" The ball hits the Bidy in the balls. He
rolls around in agony, as the team laughs big.

TUG
Who wants the ears?

34 INT. - BEER BAR - NIGHT

34

Bobby and his Uncle are at a table eating near a TV set,
watching a Lone Ranger rerun. We hear the William Tell
Overture.

UNCLE
The Lone Ranger -- that program
sure makes us look bad. Tonto's
just like Step and Fetch It.

BOBBY
Uncle Johnny, what can they
sentence you for blowing up the
Lone Ranger?

35 INT. - TEAM BUS - NIGHT

35

As usual, Tug and Billy are sitting up front, both awake.
They are tired now, seem almost hypnotized by the
repetitious rhythm of the highway rolling under the bus.
Again, they pass a highway sign:

ARKANSAS THANKS YOU FOR COMING, HURRY BACK!

36 EXT. - BALL FIELD - NASHVILLE - DAY

36

Kristi is standing in the field with a hand mic, filming her report on minor league baseball.

KRISTI

(to camera)

Minor league baseball. The difference between this and "The Bigs" is astronomical. The Reggie Jacksons make \$500,000 a year. The Mike Schmidts make \$750,000 a year. The Dave Parkers make over \$1,000,000.

Kristi holds the mic in front of H.L. Haas, who's barely standing with the help of the usual two assistants.

KRISTI

Mr. Haas, how much does a big name like C.T. Tugwell make in a year?

H.L.

With bonuses?

KRISTI

With bonuses.

H.L.

(proudly)

About, or in, the neighborhood of let's say \$4,597.81.

KRISTI

Including the fines?

H.L.

With the fines, which are from the League office --

(thinking)

-- I'd say he owes me about \$3,874.16.

KRISTI

(to camera)

There you have it; an example of the poverty of minor league

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)

baseball.

H.L.

(interrupting)

Hey! Hold it. I spend big bucks on
minor league ball.

(pointing)

Just look at my new scoreboard.

37 INT. - PRESS BOX - NIGHT 37

H.L. is passed out in his private booth. His two attendants
are napping, too.

38 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 38

Billy swings and hits a home run. The crowd goes nuts. They
haven't seen one in a long time. Billy rounds the bases to
stunned applause.

39 INT. - PRESS BOX 39

The attendants wake up, see what happened, and quickly
revive H.L.

ATTENDANT #1

Home run! Home run!

He shakes H.L.

ATTENDANT #2

They finally hit one!

H.L. looks up in a stupor.

H.L.

What?

ATTENDANT #1

Hit the board!

He points to the panel of buttons in front of H.L.

ATTENDANT #1 (cont'd)

Home run!

H.L. starts pressing the buttons.

40 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 40

Fireworks start to go off. A pinwheel shoots off skyrockets high over the stadium. The crowd loves it.

41 INT. - PRESS BOX 41

The attendants are smiling at the sound of exploding fireworks. So is H.L. Suddenly, H.L. passes out again. His upper body and head activate every button on the control panel. The attendant's faces register shock. They pull him up, but too late.

42 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 42

There's a huge explosion. The centerfield bleachers blow up. The few people sitting there fly up into the air. They land, like spears, head down, up to their waists in the infield, their legs kicking in the air. Skyrockets start flying into the stands. The fans start fleeing the disaster in panic.

A vendor is bending over giving a hot dog to a woman. A skyrocket hits him in the rear, causing him to shove the hot dog down her throat. She swallows and burps and screams.

A guy opens the door to the men's room and runs in. A skyrocket flies in.

43 INT. - MEN'S ROOM 43

A guy is sitting in a stall. The rocket flies in and bounces around in the stall. We see his feet jumping around like crazy.

44 EXT. - BASEBALL DIAMOND 44

Rockets hit empty seats and blow up. The fans are running away screaming.

CUT TO:

45 INT. - HOLIDAY INN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 45

The screen is in silent black-and-white as home plate umpire Teddy Smith juts his chin and shouts at Tug. Smith then points to his chin. Tug knocks the umpire on his can. The screen goes black.

(CONTINUED)

The house lights come up revealing we have been watching the product of Kristi's camerawork and the re-enactment of the Tug/Smith rhubarb.

TUG

He was out.

(smiling)

But so was the ump. Where'd you get this film?

SINGLETON

These are Miss Wintergren's films from her 'Inside Story' show.

Tug is mauling a double dose of chewing tobacco, his right cheek is bulged at least an inch. He is surrounded by Barney Singleton, Leon Templeton, and Clarence Byleven. They represent the American Association, the Texas League and the Association of Minor League Umpires, respectively.

The house lights go out and the screen is black again. Silently, Tug and an anonymous home plate umpire are going chin-to-chin. Tug walks away and the umpire follows him, his lips flapping furiously. The umpire turns to walk away and Tug turns to follow him, his lips spewing saliva. The umpire turns and they go nose-to-nose again. Finally, Tug is kicking dirt on the umpire's pant legs. The umpire kicks dirt on Tug's uniform. Tug kicks the umpire in the shins. The umpire kicks Tug in the shins. Tug winces, and kicks him again. The umpire shows no reaction, but kicks Tug again. They kick each other several times, until Tug is hopping and jumping, trying to avoid the flying steel-toed baseball shoes on the Third-Reich-marching grinning umpire.

The screen goes black and the house lights come up on the scene. Tug is slumped in his chair.

TUG

I forgot the sonofabitch was wearing shin guards.

SINGLETON

I hope, Tug, that you're not misconstruing Miss Wintergren's role in what is happening here. She has merely been on assignment from her program, and it was the program

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SINGLETON (CONT'D)

that OK'd our use of these films.

TUG

Yeah, well. You tell her program
I'm going to smash in her camera
with a fungo bat.

Tug's tobacco-chewing pace begins to slow as he looks from
stoic face to stoic face. Tug starts to get up to leave.

TUG (cont'd)

Well, guys. Thanks for the
screening.

(no response)

I gotta team to take care of. We
play a game in less than three
hours.

(silence)

Barney?

SINGLETON

(hesitatingly)

I'm afraid you don't, Tug.

(clears his throat)

You're suspended.

Tug stiffens, nearly swallowing his tobacco, then nearly
gags on nearly swallowing.

TUG

Suspended? For how long?

SINGLETON

(a beat)

The rest of the season.

Tug leaps to his feet, slamming his fists to the table top.

TUG

To hell with that, Barney. Fine me!
Fine the shit out of me! Anything!
I'm 33! I can't afford to miss the
rest of the season! My team needs
me -- they can't lose without me.

(CONTINUED)

SINGLETON

It's -- it's more than that, Tug.
Actually -- Clarence and the others
wanted a lifetime suspension.

TUG

Sure. Those assholes would fry me
in the chair.

SINGLETON

Suspension, and certainly the film,
speaks for itself, but they --

TUG

Come on, Barney. Give me a break!
You know how --

BARNEY

(balls at last)

Shut up, Tug!

Stunned, Tug does.

BARNEY

They've accepted the terms of an
alternate proposal that the
suspension be lifted in time for
Spring Training next year if you
will attend --

(clears his throat)

-- and graduate --

(and again)

-- from Harry Wendelstedt's School
for Umpires.

TUG

(back on his feet)

WHAT?! I'd rather fry in the chair!

SINGLETON

(matter of factly)

Tug, you're also going to have to
umpire a month after that.

TUG

Me? Squatting in a blue suit?

(CONTINUED)

Tug's face is nearly beet red as he leans palms flat on the table.

TUG (cont'd)

And just where might you fine,
upstanding gluteus maximuses
suggest I umpire a month in the
middle of February?

BARNEY

(looks up)

The Mexican League.

Tug swallows the rest of his tobacco chaw, chokes, and gags. He is turning from beet red to spinach green. Still gagging and for the moment unable to speak, try as he might, he slams his fists to the table top three times. BAM BAM BAM!!

TUG

(hoarsely)

You can shove this idea up your
duffel bags. I know my rights! I'll
get a lawyer. If you think you can
pull this off you're crazy. When
I'm finished suing this league, you
won't own a jock strap!

Tug turns and starts for the door, stops and turns back.

TUG

I'll be in uniform tonight. And if
anyone takes it away, I'll catch
naked.

He storms out of the conference room slamming the door behind himself. It whangs open again. He returns to slam it again. It whangs open again. He returns and kicks the door, foot and wood coming together nastily.

Walking as though he either A) broke every toe on his right foot or B) broke the whole foot itself or C) broke the entire leg, Tug tries to storm down the hallway.

46

EXT. - PORCH OF AN OLD FOLKS' HOME - DUSK

46

Five very old men are sitting on the porch. They're in rocking chairs, but they're not rocking. They're not

(CONTINUED)

talking. They are just staring straight ahead, sadly wondering why they are still alive.

Tug approaches. He's walking home dejectedly. He reaches the porch. He smiles at the five old guys. No one smiles back. He walks up the steps, reaches into his pocket, pulls out a baseball. It's autographed by every player on the Gulls. The old man looks at it. He smiles. He looks up at Tug and smiles bigger. He starts rocking happily. Tug repeats the gesture with the other old men. Each reacts the same way. Tug leaves and waves good-bye. The old men look down the sidewalk as Tug walks homeward. Each old man waves happily at Tug. They are holding up the autographed balls and looking at them proudly, rocking all the while.

HARRY BLOOM (V.O.)
The suspension of playing manager
C.T. Tugwell --

CUT TO:

47 INT. - BILLY'S OLD FORD - EVENING

47

Billy is driving as he and Tug listen to the radio report.

HARRY BLOOM (V.O.)
(over radio)
-- has enraged Nashville baseball fans, who have continued to support a losing team in record numbers largely because of the animated antics of their catcher/manager. It is feared a scene of near riotous proportions is imminent with the Mad Gull's expected arrival at the stadium tonight.

Billy flicks off the radio and looks at Tug.

48 EXT. - NASHVILLE STADIUM PARKING LOT - EVENING

48

Three hundred or more Gulls fans are milling in a semicircle near the Team Gate entrance. Most are young. They have armed themselves for the predicted scene with rotten fruits and vegetables.

On the other side, eight security officers guard the Team

(CONTINUED)

Gate Entrance. They are armed with high-pressure water hoses.

A chorus of boos greets Singleton, Templeton, and Kristi as they wedge through the crowd, then through the guards to enter the stadium. Kristi, however, stops, turning to survey the mob. Obviously, she did not expect anything like this.

KRISTI

Are these people serious?

GUARD #1

Is the Pope Polish?

KRISTI

Surely they don't like Tugwell.

GUARD #2

You're right, lady. They love him. He's the only exciting thing to happen to Nashville since Hurricane Howard.

KRISTI

Except Tugwell does more damage.

Suddenly, there is a rousing cheer from the fans.

49 EXT. - HILL OVERLOOKING THE STADIUM

49

Tug and Billy step out of Billy's old Ford and survey the scene in the parking lot.

TUG

Guess they mean business, Billy.

50 EXT. - TEAM GATE ENTRANCE

50

Everybody is silent in waiting anticipation.

51 EXT. - HILL OVERLOOKING THE STADIUM

51

BILLY

What are you going to do, Tug?

TUG

(reflective pause)

What we both know I have to do.
Veer a bit to the right when you
pull out.

Billy nods, and gets back into the car as Tug turns with the rider's side door.

52 EXT. - BILLY'S FORD - CROWD'S POV

52

as it starts rolling down the hill towards them, the doors closing on either side as it gathers speed.

53 EXT. - PARKING LOT

53

as the Ford pulls in. Tug supporters run to meet the approaching car. They swarm around the old Ford, walking along beside it.

FAN #1

Where's Tug?

OTHER FANS

Where's the Gull?! Where's Gull?!

Billy eases the Ford cautiously through them, parking in his designated space. He grabs his equipment and gets out. He strides for the Team Gate with the disappointed fans engulfing him.

FANS

Where's the Gull? Where is he?

BILLY

He's not coming.

FANS

He was with you! We saw him.

BILLY

No, he wasn't. No, you didn't. Let
me through, please.

As Billy hits the DMZ, the fans stop. Billy continues for the stadium entrance. He passes a confused Kristi.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Nice going. Real good.

KRISTI

But I --

Billy brushes past. Kristi turns with him, then back as he just continues on. She looks hurt.

54 EXT. - HILL OVERLOOKING THE STADIUM

54

Tug is sitting Indian style on the spot where he was standing. In the evening dusk he is too far away to be visible from the stadium. He just watches.

55 EXT. - TEAM GATE

55

The fans are grumbling angrily. One young man cocks his arm and lets fly an overripe tomato.

GUARD #1

(to Kristi)

You'd better get out of here.

Kristi heeds his advice and peels through the guards just as the fruit fest begins. An egg flies, then a water balloon, and then a tomato. The water hoses are turned on. There is shouting and running and throwing and hosing, but no one will get hurt during this release of frustrations.

56 EXT. - HILL OVERLOOKING THE STADIUM

56

Tug is walking away from the stadium. He can hear the commotion behind him. He grins. They asked for it, they got it.

57 INT. - BILLY AND TUG'S APARTMENT - DAY

57

Tug and Billy are watching a rerun of "The Bad News Bears" on television, drinking beer, and munching pretzels. After the Bad News Bears' Tanner Boyle is called out sliding into second base, he argues furiously with the umpire.

TUG

The little shit was safe, ump! Kick him in the ass, kid! That a boy! That kid could start for the Gulls.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

So what did the lawyer say?

TUG

(feigning uninterest)

What the hell does he know?

BILLY

They got you by the balls, huh?

TUG

No, they repossessed my balls. They not only can keep me off the field, I can't even go near the stadium.

58 INT. - TUG'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

58

The doorbell rings. Tug gets up -- he's half in the bag -- and answers it. Johnny Hawkfoot, the team mascot, is standing there. He has a suitcase with him.

TUG

(startled)

Johnny. What the hell?

(sees suitcase)

Hey, I didn't ask you to move in, did I? I wasn't that drunk last night.

JOHNNY

Come. We go. Follow me.

TUG

Go? Go where? It's two in the morning.

JOHNNY

We solve Mad Gull's problem. Come.

TUG

Not now. I'll talk in the morning.

Johnny opens the suitcase. It's filled with bottles of Wild Turkey. Tug's eyes light up when he sees the whiskey.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Wherever you want, Johnny. Let's go.

Tug grabs his hat and coat. Johnny closes up his suitcase. Tug walks out. The door closes. Tug points to the suitcase.

TUG (cont'd)

Shouldn't you be handcuffed to that?

59 INT. - JOHNNY'S CAR - NEXT MORNING

59

Johnny is driving his old car along a highway in Iowa at a high rate of speed. Tug is passed out in the back seat surrounded by empty whiskey bottles. The one in his hand is half empty. In his sleep he reflexively tries to take a swig, pouring whiskey all over his face and chest. This wakes him up. He sits up quickly, looking at the unfamiliar flat landscape. He looks at the empty bottles. He looks at Johnny driving at a high rate of speed. Each new sight makes it harder for him to figure out the puzzle of what's happened. He shakes his head. All that does is loosen the alcohol from his brain.

TUG

Johnny? What?

JOHNNY

Everything is fine. Don't worry.

TUG

Where, how? Explain.

Tug holds his head and moans in deep pain.

JOHNNY

You talked all night. You want some more talk medicine?

Johnny points to the rest of the liquor in the suitcase. Tug looks at it. He almost gags.

TUG

Where are we?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Iowa. Almost to Sucomsa.

TUG

Sucomsa?

JOHNNY

Land of my people.

TUG

Your people? Hey, I got enough trouble with my people. Why are we going to your people?

JOHNNY

Because they'll help you understand your people. Believe me, they know what it's like to be fucked around.

TUG

(shaking his head)

Why'd you give me that fire water?

He lies down in the back seat and settles into a nap.

60

EXT. - RESERVATION - LATER

60

From the top of the hill we see a shot that pans a huge oil field -- derricks, tanks, refinery equipment, and lots of it. Johnny's old car kicks up dust as it rockets down the dirt road of the reservation.

61

INT. - JOHNNY'S CAR

61

Johnny still has a determined expression on his face. Tug is sitting up in the big seat, fully sober. The sight of the oil-rich land has him hypnotized. He rubbernecks in awe.

TUG

This -- is the reservation?

JOHNNY

Our fathers called it black water. We turned it into black Cadillacs.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Then why do you hang out with the team? You got all this.

JOHNNY

Your people taught us. When you have money, find a stupid hobby.

TUG

I thought you people got all the shitty land.

JOHNNY

It is shitty -- all the way to the bank.

62 EXT. - RESERVATION

62

The car brakes into a dirt lot. The houses surrounding it are shanty-like normal poor Indian reservation type.

TUG

How come no lawn? Pools? Circular driveways? Where's the parking attendant?

JOHNNY

All are waste. We're smarter than that. This is just a front.

TUG

Huh?

JOHNNY

We came in on the back road. Over there is main entrance.

TUG

You mean no one else sees the oil?

JOHNNY

Yes. Welfare people only get to see this part of the reservation.

TUG

Why do you need welfare?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Forked tongue means bonus money.

Tug laughs.

TUG

Hey, I enjoyed the tour. Even though I can't remember it. How do I get back?

JOHNNY

By speaking to Owl Eyes.

63 INT. - - ECU OF A PAIR OF PIERCING EYES

63

The camera pulls back to reveal an elderly Indian walking with Tug in the woods. Tug is trying to rub the Wild Turkey out of his eyes.

OWL EYES

Tell me more.

TUG

That's it, Owl. Or should I call you Mr. Eyes?

OWL EYES

Call me anything. Feel comfortable.

TUG

Al?

OWL EYES

Fine. So, you were a manager and a catcher. Popular, then Great Commissioner says, 'Leave baseball or go to umpire school.'

We see that they are walking up to a bluff overlooking the oil field. They stop.

TUG

Beautiful.

Owl Eyes puts his arm around Tug.

(CONTINUED)

OWL EYES

Hey, this is fine, but once, my people had everything all the way to the coast.

TUG

I know. It was a tragedy.

OWL EYES

For a while. Then, we were offered this piece of horrible land. Either get killed or take this. We took this. It's not so horrible now.

TUG

With all your money, why do you stay here in this kind of life?

OWL EYES

This is my kind of life. If you had five million dollars, would you leave baseball?

Tug stares. He shakes his head "No."

64

EXT. - DAYTONA BEACH AIRPORT - AFTERNOON - KRISTI

64

is standing near the National Car Rental desk nervously watching the arriving passengers.

Amidst other passengers, Tug moves into the small terminal building, takes up a position at the S-shaped conveyor belt to await his luggage. He becomes aware of being watched, turns, and sees Kristi. She smiles. He turns back.

TUG

(to himself)

Give me a break, will you?

His suitcase arrives. He yanks it up, turns and heads for the front exit. Kristi cuts across, follows closely in his stride.

KRISTI

Hi!

(CONTINUED)

TUG
Hello. Goodbye.

KRISTI
Like a ride into town?

TUG
No thanks. The league will fine me
if I don't crawl the whole way.

65 EXT. - FRONT OF THE TERMINAL

65

Tug comes out with Kristi on his heels. He moves along the sidewalk looking for a taxi.

KRISTI
It's eight to twelve dollars by
cab, depending on whether you get
the straight shot or the scenic
tour.

Tug stops, sighs in frustration. Kristi smiles.

KRISTI (cont'd)
I promise I won't try to seduce
you.

TUG
Good, I'd rather be seduced by an
alligator. Look, deep down, way
deep down, I don't dislike you.
It's just my whole situation, and
you're part of it.

66 INT. - KRISTI'S TR7 (INTERCUT WITH EXT DAYTONA BEACH)

66

Daytona Beach is warm and muggy even in January. Kristi has the convertible top down. Tug stares straight as she drives.

KRISTI
I owe you an apology.

TUG
That'll do a lot of good.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

And I might add that you owe me one as well.

TUG

Oh, really?

KRISTI

I don't mean about the suspension. I had nothing to do with that.

Tug looks at her for the first time since entering the car. It is not a friendly gaze. Kristi braces herself to continue.

KRISTI (cont'd)

I thought you were just a creep. Some adolescent, hot tempered jerk running and screaming and throwing things for who knew what reasons. Maybe part of it was my own attempt to justify what I was doing, I don't know. It isn't a nice feeling, doing a report on someone else in trouble.

(smiles at Tug)

Even if that someone else does seem intent on getting himself into as much hot water as is humanly possible. You still don't feel all that good about yourself.

TUG

Drop me off at the alligator farm.

Kristi grins. Tug gives a fake smile. Kristi determinedly braces herself to say what she came to say.

KRISTI

Anyway, after awhile I started getting the idea that you couldn't be as bad as I thought you were, not the way all the people in Nashville thought about you. Plus the fact that everywhere I went I was being treated like the Boggie Creek Creature, and --

(CONTINUED)

(in frustration)

-- I talked with Billy Braxton and he told me a lot about you, and I also met your family.

TUG

So what business is my private life of yours?

KRISTI

I checked all of the umpires, and special cases. When you were nine you used to steal bottles off the Wylie's back porch and trade them in at Vic's Market for Nehi grape and Corn Chips.

TUG

Cheese puffs.

KRISTI

Corn chips.

TUG

I also liked malt balls.

KRISTI

Necco Wafers.

TUG

(slumps)

Jesus Christ.

Kristi pulls into the Sea Dip Motel and stops. Tug looks around the premises as if he had just been delivered to Stalag 13.

KRISTI

Home, sweet home.

TUG

I hope the warden is a nice guy.

Tug climbs out of the TR7, reaches back for his suitcase and duffel bag.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Was that the straight shot or the scenic tour?

KRISTI

No charge.

TUG

It's been heaven.

KRISTI

No "Thank you?"

TUG

(sincerely)

Yes, thank you.

Kristi drives off.

67 EXT. - KRISTI'S TR7 - MOTEL ENTRANCE 67

Kristi stops to check traffic before pulling out, but instead pulls the Triumph out of gear to just sit for a second. Her feelings are mixed -- her eyes are damp. She collects herself quickly and eases into traffic.

68 EXT. - SEA DIP MOTEL 68

Tug walks out of the motel office, moves down the row of rooms looking for a specific number and stops before Room 12. He raps lightly on the door then pushes it open.

69 INT. - ROOM 12 69

Scott Simpson, a lithe, muscular 29, is doing sit-ups with his feet stuck under one of the double beds.

Tug enters, flips his suitcase and duffel bag to the floor next to the available bed, then plunks down on it, watching Scott.

SCOTT

-- ninety-nine, hundred.

(stands)

You believe that, you'll believe anything. Sorry, but if I break my rhythm I'm finished.

(CONTINUED)

(offers his hand)
Scott Simpson. And, not to be rude,
I know who you are. C.T. Tugwell,
the Mad Gull, right?

Tug pulls back from the handshake, eases back to sit on the bed with his back against the wall. He is reserved, suspicious of Scott, who begins stretching to loosen up from exercising.

TUG
What's wrong with the knee? You
been doing too many Al Jolson
impressions?

SCOTT
I was hoping it didn't show much.

TUG
It doesn't.

SCOTT
Skiing. Aspen, Colorado. Forgot my
pilot's license. Still pulled off a
beautiful three-point landing,
except that I left my leg behind.
Two pins and a steel plate.
(stops stretching)
Do me a favor, OK? I don't want
anyone to know. The leg's fine, but
if they knew about it, it might
hurt my chances.

He moves to flop exhaustedly on his bed, lies staring at the ceiling. Tug just sits and gazes distractedly, his thoughts on what the next six weeks have in store for him.

SCOTT
I read the Sporting News every
week. You got more ink out of the
Texas League than the Orioles got
winning the American League East.

TUG
Hurt your chances of what?

SCOTT

What was that? Oh, getting a professional umpiring assignment, what else?

(realizes, grins)

The way you feel you probably don't understand that.

TUG

(turned off)

You're right. I don't understand that.

70 EXT. - HARRY WENDELSTEDT'S SCHOOL OF THE UMPIRES - MORNING 70

Various establishing shots of the spacious and unpretentious layout, including five baseball diamonds, Quonset hut dressing rooms, lunchroom/classroom, etc. More than a hundred students and a dozen instructors mill the grounds, chatting.

71 INT. - UMPIRING SCHOOL OFFICE - MORNING 71

Tug is sitting across the office desk from owner-operator Harry Wendelstedt.

WENDELSTEDT

(sarcastic)

I'm thrilled to have you with us, Tugwell. Aren't you thrilled to be here?

Tug puts his hand under his shirt over his heart and flicks his shirt like a heart beating.

TUG

I'm either excited or I have a frog in my pocket.

WENDELSTEDT

If you think you don't like me, Tugwell, try to imagine how mutual the feeling is.

TUG

Thank god I've got imagination enough for both of us. They say

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

nobody's perfect, but you are a perfect idiot.

Wendelstedt's jaw tightens. Tug is not about to give an inch, but neither is Wendelstedt.

WENDELSTEDT

You'll be here at eight-thirty every morning, with the "regular" students. You will do everything they do, but you will do it the way we tell you to. There will be a minimum of three hours classroom study every day, which I will personally supervise. You'll be tested on the complete rulebook of baseball and --

TUG

That how long it took you to learn it, Wendelstedt? Three hours a day for six weeks?

(Wendelstedt just glares)

Is that all?

WENDELSTEDT

No, it isn't. You can put the "Mad Gull" to sleep, Tugwell, because one display of temper, one thrown bat or helmet or kicked shin, one anything and you're gone. Which means no Mexican League, no Spring Training. No more baseball.

(grins)

Sad. Very sad, Tug, but if you want to play ball, you have to play ball.

TUG

You can cut out the cute shit, Harry, and save on the song and dance, because I don't want to be here any more than anyone else wants me here. You all leave me alone, and I'll leave you all alone, do the job and be gone.

(CONTINUED)

Tug gets up, moves to the door, starts to open it.
Wendelstedt is grinning.

WENDELSTEDT

You'll find that a few of our
instructors are old pals of yours.

Tug is pushing the door open. He starts to turn and --

CUT TO:

72

EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - MORNING

72

BONG! A "Big Bird" lands smack in the middle of Tug's face.
It is the tall, fat, 40ish John Hipperson, who is called the
Big Bird because of his hooking British nose.

TUG

Well, if it isn't John Hipperson.

HIPPERSON

Hello, sweetheart. Remember me?

A ritual Tug and Hipperson have experienced many times
before, nose-to-nose they circle and stalk, down the steps
and into the open spaces, each talking continuously, agog
young umpiring students clearing the way.

TUG

The fastest nose in the east. I
hear the zoo saw your nose and
wanted to breed you with an
anteater.

HIPPERSON

I've waited two-and-a-half years to
get even.

TUG

Did you take your lard shots this
morning?

HIPPERSON

For all those times in the Texas
League.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

You still using a relay team to put your belt on?

HIPPERSON

And now, the baby Gull flutters right into my nest.

TUG

Hey, Hip. Can I store some hams in your nose?

HIPPERSON

With no screaming-meemie tomato-throwing idiots to look out for him.

TUG

You're real interesting, Hipperson. Excuse me while I take a No-Doz.

Mike Sherzer, another of the instructors, somehow manages to wedge between the two men.

MIKE

Alright. It worked. Nice work, John, Tug. We got everyone's attention. John, Tug?
 (quickly to students)
 Everybody, third base bleachers, Diamond 1!

There is a hesitant exodus for the Diamond 1 bleachers, Tug and Hipperson squeezing Mike between them trying to get at each other.

MIKE

(harsh whisper)
 Alright, come on now. John! Tug!
 Come on, we've got the students to think about.

Tug spins and strides away following the others in the direction of the designated bleachers. Mike continues restraining the larger Hipperson, who is forcing him backwards.

(CONTINUED)

HIPPERSON

Good to have you aboard, Tugwell!
Wanna bet you don't make it?

MIKE

Come on, John. Please.

HIPPERSON

For the Tampa game. The El Paso
game. The hard boiled egg that hit
me. In Nashville. The Jackson game!

Mike clamps his hand over Hipperson's mouth. Fifty feet
away, Tug turns back. He is grinning.

TUG

Let him go, Sherzer. I'll break his
nose and he'll have to go to a
construction company to get it
fixed.

Tug laughs, turns and continues. Hipperson gives one last
surge against Mike, then stops struggling.

73

EXT. - DIAMOND 1 BLEACHERS

73

Wendelstedt has managed to get the attention of the students
away from Hipperson and Tug. Tug slips past Wendelstedt, who
is addressing the students from the field level.

WENDELSTEDT

Good to see you all here! Are you
all glad to be here?

STUDENTS

Yeaaah!

Tug edges his way to a seat high and far down the left field
side of the bleachers, above the other students. Scott
Simpson moves from his seat to climb up and join him.

WENDELSTEDT

Who came the farthest to get here?

STUDENT #1

Denver.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT #2

Seattle.

MIKE SHERZER

Japan?

In the front row a small, wiry Japanese student, Fujiwano Nakahoma, blushes. All eyes are on him, and he hesitantly stands.

FUJI

Oh, no actrury, I just move to Ros Angeres.

The students and instructors laugh. Fuji, not understanding English well yet, looks around to discern if he is being laughed with or at.

74 EXT. - TWO SHOT - SCOTT AND TUG

74

SCOTT

What the hell was that all about?

TUG

Old friends. He was glad to see I could make it.

SCOTT

(catches on)

You could have been seriously injured.

TUG

If he'd have fallen on me, I'd have been flattened.

They suddenly realize the attention focused on them.

WENDELSTEDT

You'll all be happy to know we have a celebrity in our midst. For you umpiring enthusiasts, sitting high and to the left --

(heads turn)

-- the practically famous C.T. Tugwell, perhaps better known as the --

(CONTINUED)

(as if choking)
 -- Mad Gull.

Tug pastes a smile on his face in response to the confused, scattered applause.

WENDELSTEDT

Tugwell is perhaps best known for his internationally recognized wit. To this day his most famous quote is heard on the baseball fields of America every day; 'I are a baseball player.'

The students roar in derisive laughter. Tug puts a handkerchief over his hand. He removes it like a magician, and his middle finger is straight up.

WENDELSTEDT (cont'd)

(point proved)
 What are we, men?

STUDENTS

(scattered, uncertain)
 Umpires.

WENDELSTEDT

I must be hard of hearing.

STUDENTS

Umpires!

Wendelstedt and the other instructors give unifying and solidifying cues and the students cheer their first day enthusiasm.

75

EXT. - TUG AND SCOTT

75

TUG

How come you're not cheering.

SCOTT

Oh, I am -- in here.
 (indicates his heart)
 What about you?

(CONTINUED)

TUG

I only cheer when I'm wearing my
Boy Scout hat.

In the background behind the bleachers an airport limousine rolls into the gravel parking lot and two travel-weary young women climb nervously out.

In the bleachers, heads begin to turn curiously.

The first woman is 24-year-old Bertha Mae Boom. Bertha is six-foot, large boned, not pretty, not ugly. She carries herself like a line backer.

The second woman is 21-year-old Sunny Moon. Sunny's every move exudes sex, and she knows it.

The students utter scattered cat calls and whistles.

STUDENT

(to girls)

Could I see you for a moment? I've
been on a raft for 30 days.

WENDELSTEDT

I see our two female students have
finally arrived. Down, men, down.
Behave yourselves.

76 EXT. - DIAMOND 1 - LATER THAT DAY

76

Mike and two assistants are fungoing ground balls to individual students to grad their playing ability. In the background on the other diamonds, the same evaluating process is under way, approximately thirty students at each diamond.

ANDERSON

Anderson!

MIKE

Alright, Anderson.

Mike fungoes a ground ball and Anderson charges the ball, scoops it up, juggles a bit, fires it to an awaiting student standing on first base.

(CONTINUED)

ANDERSON

Can I try again?

MIKE

No, that was good.
(to his assistants)
Ten?

They nod in agreement, record the number ten on their clipboards sheets.

In this line, Bertha Mae Boom is third from the front, with Sunny Moon near the middle, her attention on Tug, who is next-to-last.

77 EXT. - BLEACHERS IN DIAMOND 2 - KRISTI AND CAROL 77

are sitting watching the evaluation process. Both are interested in Tug.

CAROL

He's as handsome as Adonis.

KRISTI

He's backwards enough to be a Greek, all right.

78 EXT. - DIAMOND 1 TESTING 78

BAKER

Baker!

MIKE

Go for it, Baker!

The same process is repeated.

MIKE (cont'd)

Seven? Seven. Next?

Bertha is already in position and waiting.

BERTHA MAE

Boom!

Mike and his two assistants exchange looks, obviously not pleased having women present.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

A hot one, Boom.

He hits a ground ball toward Bertha Mae. She scoops it up and smokes it across the diamond so hard that the uncertain student at first base catches it and the power knocks him over.

MIKE (cont'd)

Put her in the group with Tug.
He'll love that. It's the moose
mating season. Maybe he'll get
lucky.

Bertha Mae lumbers down the line for the end. The student ahead of Tug, a chubby kid named Arnold Smalley, sticks his foot out and trips her.

Bertha Mae sprawls to the ground about as ungracefully as is possible. Kill is written on her face when she pops back to her feet and stalks the culprit.

Tug steps back clearing her path to the withdrawing Arnold Smalley, but Bertha Mae stops in front of Tug, mistakenly blaming him. And for the second time on his first day back at school, Tug is on the short end of a nose-to-nose confrontation. Bertha Mae glares at Tug for a moment, then punches him in the stomach.

BERTHA MAE

Ever do anything like that again,
you little creep, and I'll kick
your ass up around your ears.

She turns and jogs away as Tug receives the short end of a rousing derisive cheer. Smalley cowers another step or two as Tug turns his glassy-eyed gaze on him.

79

EXT. - MINUTES LATER

79

it is Tug's turn.

MIKE

Alright, Tugwell. Let's see what
you can do.

Sherzer blisters a ground ball at Tug. Tug confidently moves

(CONTINUED)

in to field it, but at the last second, the ball bad-hops and hits him nastily in the groin. There is a beat wherein Tug's reaction is clearly discernible that this is exactly the best he might have expected.

TUG

(barely audible)

Not again. I'm gonna have no family at all.

He drops slowly to his knees. Sunny Moon, in all her voluptuous radiance, is there to coo over him.

SUNNY

Owiee-owie-owiee! Oooooohhhh, that hurts!

TUG

How would you know? That ball would have missed you completely.

80 EXT. - RUNDOWN USED CAR LOT - EVENING

80

Tug is standing with Mabel, the 50ish, rotund car saleswoman. They are dubiously looking at a beat-up 1962 Studebaker Lark.

MABEL

Needs motor mounts. Go around a sharp turn too fast, the engine slips and pulls the accelerator to the floor, and you're off in the 500.

TUG

(facetiously)

I could be killed. Who's been driving this car, Leon Spinks?

MABEL

(serious)

No doubt about it.

TUG

Can't go fifty, but I'll bid thirty.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Your life, my rent that's due --

She holds out her hand. Tug gives her the thirty dollars, takes the keys, looks at the Lark and takes a deep breath.

TUG

It was either buy this car or else
buy a large pitcher of beer and a
pizza.

81 INT. - STUDEBAKER LARK - NIGHT

81

Tug drives the old clunker out of town. He follows a scarcely used roadway, finally turns off it onto a tractor path crossing an open field. He stops, and surveys the space before him.

TUG

Giddyup, cowboy.

Not knowing exactly what to expect, he eases his foot down on the accelerator and pumps the Studebaker forward. When the speedometer reads a wobbly 45 he cuts the steering wheel and learns what he came to learn. There is a thunk with the shift of the engine, a ZZTT as the gas pedal is whapped to the floor and Mabel the car saleswoman was not wrong.

TUG (cont'd)

Holy shit!

Tug and the old Stude are off to the races. The tires spin as the engine whips instantly into maximum RPMs and Tug is riding a wild steer in dirt-throwing, tree-skimming circles, headlights spraying 360 degrees faster than Tug can count.

He finally manages to find the clutch and pop the transmission into neutral then hit the key to kill the engine. The old Stude spins to a dust-swirling silent stop. Tug just sits, thinking that the old Studebaker is a lot like his life at the moment. He flicks the radio on, eases the old Lark back to the highway and returns to Daytona Beach.

TUG

Maybe I can drive this car on
"That's Incredible."

82 INT. - UMPIRE SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

82

The students are already restless and yawning as Wendelstedt begins classroom study with the basics of the baseball.

WENDELSTEDT

(holding one up)

A baseball weight five to five and one-eighth ounces, about the same as a hockey puck. Does anyone know the circumference?

EAGER STUDENT

Nine inches!

Sunny Moon squeals. The classroom breaks up.

83 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - LATER - ESTABLISHING

83

that the students have been divided into eight groups of about twenty each, and that these groups are spread out with individual instructors over the primary four diamonds. Groups are based on abilities, and other things.

Because Group 8 is the designated least-likely-to-succeeds, with a couple of exceptions -- Scott, Bertha Mae and Tug. There are two primary instructors for Group 8, Hipperson and Sherzer. Sherzer is taking roll call.

In the background, at all times the normal umpiring school activities will be visible as we follow Tug and his group.

MIKE

Boom.

BERTHA MAE

Yeah.

MIKE

Bambino Elias.

ELIAS

Aqui.

MIKE

Goose, Georgie.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Present.

MIKE

Moon.

SUNNY

Ooooo.

MIKE

Save it, will you, Sunny? Nakahoma?

FUJI

Hrere.

MIKE

Ruth, Reggie.

REGGIE

Yeah, yes.

MIKE

(looking up)

I thought that was a candy bar.

RUTH

Without nuts.

Sunny squeals.

MIKE

Save it, will you, Sunny?

84

INT. - CAFETERIA - DAY

84

All the students are eating their lunches from metal trays. They're at tables that seat eight. Tug is sitting at a table with Scott, Fuji, Bertha Mae, Sunny, Arnold, Bambino, and Sammy.

Tug tries to cut into a piece of meatloaf. His knife bends. Frustrated, he picks up the meatloaf and throws it down on his plate. Scott notices.

SCOTT

Hey, soften it up with some gravy.

Scott passes the pitcher of gravy to Tug. Tug takes the

(CONTINUED)

pitcher, looks inside it, and makes a face. He pours a substance on his meat that looks like motor oil.

TUG

What grade is this gravy -- 30 weight?

Tug pushes his plate away.

Arnold has piled up other people's rejected meatloaf on his plate. He's chewing away with his teeth making crunching noises.

ARNOLD

I'll take it.

Tug shoves his plate down to fat Arnold.

TUG

I'm already sick of this food.

BERTHA MAE

I only wish I knew what it was.

TUG

Filet of second base.

Everyone laughs.

SCOTT

Yeah, I'm even afraid to play with it. It might eat my fork.

More laughter.

TUG

(to himself)

Play with it. Play with it. Great idea, Scott. Let's play ball!

Tug grabs Scott and a pitcher of gravy.

TUG

C'mon everybody, let's play ball!

As Tug passes Arnold, he grabs his plateful of meatloaf and hard rolls.

(CONTINUED)

ARNOLD

(upset)

What?

TUG

You too, Arnold.

Arnold gets up and follows Tug and the rest of them to the open area near the food counter. No one's sure what's going to happen. Tug pours a spot of gravy that's about six inches in diameter on the floor.

TUG (cont'd)

Home plate.

He pours three more spots, one for first base, second base and third base. He's made a baseball diamond in the middle of the cafeteria floor. He runs to the cafeteria counter and grabs a large loaf of French bread and hands it to Scott.

TUG (cont'd)

Batter up!

Scott falls in, and starts waving the "bat" over the gravy home plate.

SCOTT

Put it in here, pitch!

Tug walks back a few paces. He's carrying the plate of meatloaf and hard rolls.

TUG

(to the others)

Hit the field!

Everyone gets into the normal baseball positions. The rest of the students look on from their tables in disbelief. Tug lobs a piece of meatloaf. Scott swings and hits it off the back wall. He runs to first and steps in the gravy. The outfielders scramble for the meatloaf. One of them picks it up and fires it to second. Scott slides in kicking up gravy and meatloaf into the nearby table. The table stands up in shock.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Bertha Mae, grab a bat.

Bertha Mae grabs a french bread loaf. Tug lobs in a hard roll. Bertha Mae lines it off the back of a student's head. He's knocked out, and he falls face-first into some Jello. The Jello doesn't move. His nose rests on top of it like it was a block of wood. Bertha runs to first. Scott slides home and squirts gravy into the cook's suit.

TUG (cont'd)

Bambino!

Bambino grabs the long loaf, and pauses to point off to "left field". Tug lobs some meatload. Bambino hit it squarely. A kitchen aide is walking into the cafeteria with a huge bucket of floor cleaner. The meatloaf hits him in the face. He falls over, throwing the bucket of soapy water over his head. Wendelstedt, Mike and Hipperson are behind him. The bucket drenches them. All the students run back to their seats as if nothing had happened. The drenched umpire crew enters and stares around at everyone.

85

EXT. - GROUP 8 - LATER

85

Mike is leading the group in calisthenics. Everyone is propped forward on one leg, stretching the other out behind.

MIKE

Get those muscles loose. We don't want any injuries.

Bertha Mae is hulking against thick leg muscles. Bambino Elias, who understands little English, has the wrong leg forward. Sunny is limberly doing the splits and grinning. Scott is trying to hide favoring his leg. Tug is stretching, trying to ignore everyone else.

HIPPERSON

Bambino -- left leg!

ELIAS

(cheerfully)

OK!

He continues, wrong leg forward. Hipperson speaks privately with Sherzer.

(CONTINUED)

HIPPERSON

How do you say left, in Spanish?

MIKE

(stretching with group)

I don't know.

HIPPERSON

Abajo?

MIKE

I think so. Yeah, that's it.

HIPPERSON

Bambino! Abajo! Abajo leg!

Confused, Bambino obediently lays flat out on the ground and whistles.

HIPPERSON (cont'd)

(to Mike)

I think it's arriba.

(to Elias)

Bambino! Arriba, arriba leg!

Obediently, Bambino jumps to his feet and salutes, awaiting further orders.

HIPPERSON

Nevermind.

Group 8 is lined in two rows of ten before Hipperson, who is demonstrating the out call.

HIPPERSON (cont'd)

You're out!

(relaxes)

Everybody -- You're out!

Hipperson and Mike cringe upon witnessing the twenty different impersonations of "You're Out!" The Big Bird moves forward.

HIPPERSON

Tugwell, that was terrible. Try it again.

(CONTINUED)

TUG
(reluctantly)
You're out!

HIPPERSON
No no no, Tugwell. You're not
trying to catch a fly. Like this --
You're Out!

TUG
You're out!

HIPPERSON
Louder.

TUG
(angry)
Hey, asshole, you're out!

HIPPERSON
(looming close)
Apparently I'm not making myself
clear, Tugwell. One hundred times,
and I want the entire compound to
hear ever word with perfect
clarity.

Tug's lips move and we hear computer beeps in the tune of
"Jingle Bells."

HIPPERSON
(nose-to-nose)
What'd you say?

TUG
I doubt you understood it. I think
you had your head filled with mud
this morning.

HIPPERSON
Two hundred times.

TUG
Go suck a cactus.

(CONTINUED)

HIPPERSON

(closer still)

Apparently you've already forgotten the rules, Tugwell. It makes no difference to me. It just depends on how badly you want to be back in Nashville next season. Two hundred times! Then, two laps around the entire compound! Then report back to me!

The veins bulge in Tug's neck and his teeth grind. Hipperson fades into a wry smile.

HIPPERSON

Begin now.

Hipperson steps back. Tug stands as if he will refuse, then he thrusts forward, throws his thumb into the air.

TUG

You're out!

HIPPERSON

Only one-ninety-nine to go.

TUG

You're out! I'll get you for this Hipperson. You're out!

Throws his middle finger into the air.

HIPPERSON

Not bad, not bad. You'll make a fine UMPIRE yet.

TUG

You're out! You're out!

Group 8 is playing an intra-squad game, while in the background Tug is exhaustedly repeating the You're out! call.

Later, the activities and ambiance of the school are further established under a panning shot with Tug as he jogs two laps around the entire compound until the shot stops momentarily on Kristi and Carol seated in the bleachers of

(CONTINUED)

Diamond 4. Carol says something and Kristi laughs. In natural motion she looks up, accidentally catching sight of Tug jogging.

Tug sees Kristi looking at him and laughing. Kristi quickly turns back to her business, but Tug does not notice as he continues.

CAROL

He looks a lot like Larry.

KRISTI

No he doesn't.

CAROL

In some ways.

KRISTI

Maybe.

CAROL

Larry was such an ass. I never could figure out why you married him.

KRISTI

Larry wasn't such an ass.

CAROL

OK, he was just a geek then.

KRISTI

He was a terrific guy, really.

CAROL

If he was so terrific, why did you leave him?

KRISTI

Every other girl in town thought he was terrific, too. And was willing to prove it. He might as well have put a revolving door on the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL

I would have gone for him, too, if I'd ever gotten the chance.

KRISTI

You're the ass, Carol.

CAROL

Temper, temper. There's no sense being sensitive about it now. The bull is out of the barn.

KRISTI

(looking off)

I'm not sensitive about it at all. It was no big thing. Larry and I just couldn't live together, so he went his way, and I went mine. Come on, we have work to do.

Kristi ends the conversation by shutting out Carol, focusing on the student umpires. Carol looks at Kristi briefly, then returns her attention to the playing field also.

86 EXT. - PARKING LOT - EVENING

86

With the buses loading in the background, Tug and Scott get into the old Studebaker and drive away slowly.

87 INT. - STUDEBAKER

87

Tug is so angry from his punishment that he just stares straight ahead as he drives. Scott just shakes his head.

SCOTT

For six weeks you have to put up with this crap?

TUG

(in fast, high voice)

It doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me.

SCOTT

(laughs)

I think I know where I can get you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)
a seersucker straitjacket.

88 INT. - BEER AND PIZZA HOUSE - NIGHT

88

The remnants of a pizza spread around the table between them, Tug and Scott are in the middle of their third pitcher of beer. There is music in the background, and kids playing pinball, etc.

SCOTT

She's all over you every chance she gets. I mean, what are you waiting for?

TUG

I'll be ready for her when the Pope gets married.

SCOTT

I'd take her in a minute.

TUG

I'm not that lonely yet. I think she's a little thick.

SCOTT

So? You want a rocket scientist or a nice looking chick you can work on?

Tug levels his gaze as Scott, leans hazily, surreptitiously closer. Scott's brows tighten in tipsy concentration.

TUG

I don't trust her. I mean, what kind of a name is Sunny Moon? Maybe she's a religious leader?

SCOTT

(understanding)
Maybe it's a stage name.

TUG

Does she know first base from third base? No. Know what I think? They hired her to screw me up.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT

That could be exactly it.

TUG

(nodding slowly)

She's supposed to get me in the sack so they can give me the sack.

SCOTT

Those dirty bastards.

TUG

Is that the way you want to be, Scott? Like 'them?'

SCOTT

Shit, I'm beginning to wonder.

(freezes)

Oh, oh.

Tug turns to look, and turns back with a grimace. Camera focuses over them to Kristi and Carol, with Hipperson and Mike entering. It appears that they have had a drink or two also.

Hipperson and Sherzer move up to the counter for beer. Kristi and Carol notice Tug and Scott, pretend they don't and take a table.

Scott leans closer, flicks his head to denote Kristi.

SCOTT

She watches you like a hawk every day.

TUG

(sarcastic)

We're in love. The Gull and the Hawk. Maybe we can lay an egg.

SCOTT

You better hope she's in love, because I think the story she's doing isn't going to do you any good.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

(shaking his head)

No, you just don't know what's been going on.

(looks at Kristi)

I don't know what she sees in him, anyway.

Scott looks back at Kristi again, then back at Tug. He senses.

SCOTT

So what do you care?

TUG

(he does)

I don't.

Time passing sequence on two kids playing an arcade machine. Two mechanical cowboys jump up and down while the boys make them shoot at one another. One of the cowboys is hit, swoons, falls and disappears into Boot Hill as a musical computer plays "Pop, Goes the Weasel."

Tug and Scott are working on yet another pitcher. They suddenly become aware of Kristi approaching across the rather crowded, but not noisy room. Hipperson and Sherzer are not visible.

KRISTI

(teasing)

Are we still talking?

SCOTT

I was just leaving --

TUG

No you weren't.

(loudly, for others)

Listen, lady. You're going to have to stop following me around --

Kristi's mouth drops open.

TUG

Why don't you just leave me alone?
If you're going to go around

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

picking up men, you're just going
to have to get used to being
treated like that.

Scott and Kristi are stunned, but Tug is having trouble keeping a straight face in his inebriated state. Kristi looks around tch-tching faces looking away from her, and the embarrassment swells. Her eyes meet with Carol's. Carol is just grinning.

Kristi picks up Tug's half-full pitcher of beer and pours it slowly over his head. He stops grinning. Kristi rejoins Carol, and they start their exit. Ironically, Kristi is laughing.

CAROL

Good ol' Kristi. Always picks men
who treat her like dirt.

KRISTI

He is dirt. You could plant
geraniums in him. If that's the way
he wants it, that's the way it is.

Kristi starts out. Carol grins, following her.

CAROL

You mean it's over before it
started?

KRISTI

That's about the size of it.

CAROL

(facetiously)
Then he's fair game?

KRISTI

(grins)
I didn't say that.

89 INT. - OF MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

89

The hall is empty. Everyone is in his room for curfew. Hipperson walks down the hall with a flashlight. It's his usual bed-check. He knocks on a door and opens it. He shines the light on each bed. Two bodies squirm from the shock of

(CONTINUED)

the light in their faces. Hipperson closes the door and moves on to the next room. He repeats the process. Two more bodies squirm. He goes to the next door. He opens it and shines the light on the beds. There is no movement. He walks in and shines the flashlight point blank in the eyes of Tugwell. It's a dummy. He pulls back the covers, grabs the dummy and throws it to the floor. He shines the light over to Scott's bed. Another dummy is in it. Hipperson nods his head.

HIPPERSON

Good. They're going to pay heavily for this.

Hipperson smiles sadistically.

90 EXT. - BALL FIELD - BERTHA MAE AND SUNNY - DAY

90

BERTHA

That Hipperson.
(shaking her head)
He's the cruelest creature on this earth.

Sunny, standing next to Bertha, buries her head into Bertha Mae's shoulder.

SUNNY

I can't watch anymore.

CUT TO:

91 EXT. - THE FIELD

91

Tug and Scott are in harnesses that are attached to ropes that are pulling a set of bleachers across the field. They're struggling like Roman slaves. The bleachers are barely inching along. Hipperson is backing away looking at them.

HIPPERSON

Pull!! Pull!! Pull!!

TUG

(to Scott)

I'm going to make that bastard suck the yoke out of a rattlesnake egg.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT
 (struggling)
 Yeah. I'm going to pluck all his
 hair out from the waist down.

Hipperson walks up to them.

HIPPERSON
 Stop! Halt! You boys need a rest.

Scott and Tug fall to the ground, exhausted.

HIPPERSON (cont'd)
 You boys are doing real good.
 Almost half-way to the other side
 of the field.

Wendelstedt walks over to Hipperson.

WENDELSTEDT
 These guys are something else. I'd
 like to get a closer look for the
 second half of the pull.

HIPPERSON
 Sure, Harry. Be my guest.

Hipperson turns and points to a seat in the bleachers. Fat
 Harry walks up to them and sits down.

HIPPERSON (cont'd)
 Alright you mules. Get up. It's
 time for you to live up to your
 name, Tug. Now -- Pull!! Pull!!

Tug and Scott get up and start pulling the bleachers again.

TUG
 (to himself)
 Hipperson, you're dead for this.

It's bed-check time again. The hallway is silent. Hipperson
 routinely enters the hall with his flashlight. He knocks and
 opens the first door. He shines his flashlight in. All is
 well. Same with the second room. The third room, Tug's is
 not so well.

93 INT. - TUG'S ROOM

93

Flashlight in hand, Hipperson checks Scott's bed. No one is in it. Hipperson triumphantly walks over to Tug's bed and shines the light on the pillow. He sees a lumpy figure under the sheets. Pulling back the bedcovers, Hipperson finds himself face to face with an alligator, decked out in an old-fashioned sleeping hat.

94 INT. - HALLWAY

94

Tug and Scott are outside the door. They slam the door and block it from the outside. From inside the room, we hear the sounds of a struggle, and the crashing of the alligator's tail as it lashes against the furniture. Hipperson is screaming. Tug and Scott smile. Hipperson dives through the window, breaking it.

95 INT. - UMPIRE SCHOOL CIASSROOM - MORNING

95

ON TUG sitting in his usual seat at the back. He looks just rotten, incredibly hung over.

WENDELSTEDT (O.S.)

When you call a balk, you do it
like this --

(voice booms)

"BALK!!!"

Tug winces painfully, his temples throbbing.

TO SCENE of Wendelstedt grinning over the heads of the other students at Tug.

WENDELSTEDT

You never just go "balk" because no
one will believe you -- you'll find
yourself in the middle of one
helluva mess --

96 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - LATER

96

CLOSE ON TUG, his face "typical" again, covered with a mask. He looks double rotten. BLAP!!! A baseball smacks off the mask, drops to the ground.

SCENE OF TUG on his knees with Hipperson and Mike standing, holding several baseballs, "demonstrating" the importance of

(CONTINUED)

not blinking when hit in the mask with a speeding baseball.

HIPPERSON
Notice how Tugwell blinked?

SCOTT
(doing his best)
I didn't see him blink --

HIPPERSON
(firmly)
He blinked.
(back to students)
Let's try it again and see if he
does any better --

Mike hands Hipperson another ball and The Big Bird under-
hands it solidly off the mask covering Tug's face. Tug bobs,
wavers.

HIPPERSON
Nope, he blinked again --

SCOTT
I didn't see him blink. His eyes
are too red to blink.

HIPPERSON
Yes, he did blink, Scott.
(to students)
Tugwell should do much better,
having been a catcher for so many,
many years.

Hipperson grins, slams another ball off Tug's mask.

HIPPERSON
No, he's still blinking, but with a
little work we can overcome this
problem. Concentrate, Tugwell.
Concentrate!

He slams another ball off Tug's mask. Tug will never let
Hipperson catch him out drinking late again. Sunny Moon
steps protectively forth.

(CONTINUED)

SUNNY
 (to Hipperson)
 You're mean.

HIPPERSON
 You're nEXT. -

TUG
 You know why Hipperson never
 blinks?

SUNNY
 Why?

TUG
 The ball never reaches his mask. It
 gets stuck on his beak.

Wanting no part of this action, Sunny steps back into her spot with the others. Hipperson takes another ball from Mike.

97 EXT. - TUG'S POV

97

through the mask as Hipperson's hand comes into view releasing another larger-than-life-sized ball to smash against the bars.

98 INT. - TUG'S CAR - EVENING - CLOSE UP

98

ON THE DOOR FRAME as the door slams. Tug slumps miserably in the rider's side seat. Scott is driving.

TUG
 (groans)
 Real slow. My hair hurts.

SCOTT
 I don't understand this motor mount bit.

TUG
 Just drive real slow -- take my word for it --

99 INT. - SEA DIP MOTEL, ROOM 12 - NIGHT

99

Tug is lying on his bed with an ice pack draped over his throbbing forehead. There is a light KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

TUG

Yeah -- it's open --

The door cracks open and SUNNY'S FACE APPEARS.

SUNNY

How do you feel?

TUG

(sitting up)

Like the wrong end of a horse I bet on once --

SUNNY

(giggles)

Did it win?

TUG

No. It went off at ten-to-one -- came in at a quarter-to-two.

100 INT. - COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

100

Empty excepting two girls at a table across the room, a couple of employees and Tug and Sunny.

TUG

-- So Bruce, your manager --

SUNNY

-- We 're engaged.

TUG

And lover --

SUNNY

Almost engaged, anyway --

TUG

Almost lover --

(CONTINUED)

SUNNY

Oh, no. We go all the way.

TUG

Anyway, it was Bruce's idea that you come to umpire's school, to get some publicity for your modeling career?

(shakes his head)

And I thought I was here for an asinine reason.

SUNNY

(pause)

How can I get in the news?

TUG

How can I stay out of the news?

Sunny is humorously depressed.

SUNNY

They hate me at the school. I'm so dumb and stupid.

TUG

No, you're not dumb. You're starting to get the hang of the game.

SUNNY

You know something? I think I am starting to understand baseball. Like yesterday when I slid into a home run.

Tug cannot help but laugh. Realizing what she said, Sunny grins.

101 EXT. - SEA DIP MOTEL - LATE NIGHT

101

Tug stops outside his room, looks at Sunny, pushes the door slowly open. Sunny smiles warmly, kisses Tug lightly, almost brotherly.

(CONTINUED)

SUNNY

No thanks.

She scampers off down the breezeway for her room. Tug watches until she is safely inside, then enters his own room.

TUG

Thanks a lot.

102 INT. - ROOM 12

102

When Tug enters, Scott is peeking up from behind his bed, looking disheveled, sleepy, embarrassed. Seeing this, Tug laughs. Scott grins sheepishly, climbs back into bed.

SCOTT

No go, huh?

TUG

No go? I better go sleep in the ice machine, for her safety.

SCOTT

Don't feel bad. I don't think Hipperson did any better.

(Tug perks up)

I saw him dropping what's her name off around midnight -- not even a goodnight kiss.

TUG

Were any of her undergarments hanging off his nose?

SCOTT

(sensing)

No, hey -- Kristi's a real nice lady.

Tug begins undressing noncommittally.

TUG

Nice enough to enjoy this?

He points to his pouch.

103

EXT. - OF WENDELSTEDT'S CAMP BEDROOM - NIGHT

103

From outside his ground-floor bedroom window, the camera dollies in and through the window, we see Harry Wendelstedt is in a deep sleep. The camera zooms in to a small speaker under Harry's bed. The camera follows the wire leading from the speaker. It leads outside the window to a microphone that is resting in a flowerbed. A hand picks it up. The camera pulls back; It's Tug, kneeling next to Wendelstedt's window. He signals with his hand for the others to join him. The camera pulls back. We see Scott and Fuji moving a table closer to Wendelstedt's window. On the table is a slide projector. Tug signals for them to stop. They set the table down on the grass. Fuji looks over the slide projector -- checking to make sure everything's all right. Fuji gives Tug the high sign. Tug points his finger back at Fuji. Fuji turns the projector on. The camera zooms in and shows an image of Babe Ruth being projected against the far wall in Wendelstedt's room. The slide of Babe Ruth is one of him from the later years -- with his big belly and big bat.

Tug holds the mic up to his mouth, imitating Babe Ruth ala the ghostly guest.

TUG

Harry. Harry.

Wendelstedt rolls around in his sleep. He's semi-conscious.

WENDELSTEDT

What -- ha -- ?

TUG

Harry, this is the Babe.

WENDELSTEDT

(eyes closed)

Who? The Babe?

TUG

The Babe, as in Ruth.

WENDELSTEDT

(in sleep)

Babe -- The Babe -- Ruth --

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Yes. I've come down to tell you
that I've been watching you -- in
action.

WENDELSTEDT

You have? How am I?

TUG

You stink, Harry.

WENDELSTEDT

What? You're not Babe Ruth. He's my
idol.

TUG

Harry, open your eyes quickly, for
just a second, and then close them.

Wendelstedt follows "The Babe's" orders.

WENDELSTEDT

(hysterical, eyes closed
tight)

It is you -- The Babe. What's
wrong? Why me?

TUG

You're fat. You drink too much
beer. You eat too many hot dogs.

WENDELSTEDT

But so did you, Babe.

TUG

I did it for orphans -- to make
them feel good.

WENDELSTEDT

I'll do it for orphans, too. But
there aren't any around.

TINY

Your students are like orphans.
Treat them that way.

(CONTINUED)

WENDELSTEDT

I will, Babe. I will, Babe --

Tug signals Fuji to turn off the projector. Tug, Scott and Fuji flee laughing as we hear --

WENDELSTEDT (cont'd)

I will, Babe -- I promise -- I will, Babe --

104 INT. - SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

104

Wendelstedt is teaching Group 8.

WENDELSTEDT

If you intend to umpire, remember that you are expected to be perfect when you begin, and then to show constant improvement. Tugwell, do you agree with that?

TUG

I agree that there's room for improvement.

WENDELSTEDT

Tugwell thinks all umpires are stupid, don't you, Tugwell?

TUG

Take off the hat and show them the air hole in your head.

WENDELSTEDT

Tugwell forgets that we -- that umpires -- can never be right, unless the play simply speaks for itself. All right Tugwell, I'll give you another chance. What happens every time there's a close play?

TUG

(shrugs)

The umpire calls it wrong.

The students chuckle, anticipating Wendelstedt's anger. But

(CONTINUED)

Wendelstedt is not angry.

WENDELSTEDT

Actually, Tug is half right. Because the umpire is always half wrong. Only one team and its fans will agree that the umpire called the bang-bang play correctly. To the other team and its fans we are, to use one of Tug's endearing terms, "blithering idiots."

TUG

No. You're comatose blithering idiots.

105 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

105

Tug sees Scott talking with Wendelstedt. Scott appears to be upset when he walks away, striding angrily toward the practice fields. Tug joins him in stride.

TUG

What's the problem?

SCOTT

I asked if I could get out of that looney Group 8 so I could have a chance.

TUG

And?

SCOTT

(stops, faces Tug)
Did you tell them about my knee?

TUG

You know better than that.

SCOTT

Then it has to just be because of you. Look, Tug. I like you and every thing, I mean, you're really an OK guy. But, I came down here hoping to get a professional assignment. Over two weeks have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

gone by and I'm still stuck with
the group they're trying to get rid
of.

(forced resolution)

I don't want you to talk to me
anymore. While we're here, at the
school.

TUG

Sure. I understand.

Scott offers a look that says he is sorry for what he has
decided, then walks away. Tug watches him go, turns seeing
Kristi heading briskly for Diamond 2. He moves to cut her
off, but is forced to join her in stride also.

TUG (cont'd)

I owe you an apology.

KRISTI

(a la Tug)

Sit on your apology.

She continues without breaking stride. Tug stops, is alone
again.

TUG

(to himself)

I can't sit on my apology, but you
can.

106 EXT. - SERIES OF SHOTS - ESTABLISHING

106

that 95% of the umpiring students are involved in legitimate
umpiring school drills and study.

that Scott and Bertha Mae are discouraged, indeed, enraged,
over being stuck with the bumbling Group 8. They watch the
other diamonds and activities longingly.

that Tug is quite often seen running laps.

that Kristi, against her will, is occasionally looking Tug's
way, wherever she finds herself. Carol notices and goads her
with grins and silence.

107 EXT. - GROUP 8

107

is uniformly practicing "Safe" and "Out" calls, with Bambino Elias confused and making the calls backwards, signaling "Safe" while calling "Out" and vice versa.

MIKE
(exasperated)
Elias -- Do it again.

ELIAS
(signaling Out)
Usted es safe!

MIKE
No, Elias --
(demonstrating)
Usted is safe!

ELIAS
Si . . . y . . .
(motioning Safe)
Usted es Out!

MIKE
Elias, look. Usted es safe! Usted
es out!

ELIAS
I do that!
(wrong again)
Usted es safe! Usted es out!

MIKE
(hopelessly frustrated)
Yeah, that's good. Sure, why not?
Usted es safe -- usted es out. Good
luck in the Polish minors.
(aloud)
Goose! What the hell are you doing?

108 EXT. - HIPPERSON

108

is equally frustrated, his patience waning as Sunny takes off from first base headed for second, but when Tug's throw beats her there and Arnold Smalley drops the ball, she just keeps right on running for third base. But when Smalley

(CONTINUED)

picks up the ball and throws it there well ahead of her, Sunny just cuts across the infield headed for home plate.

HIPPERSON

For Christ's sake, Sunny! What the hell are you doing?

SUNNY

Trying to score a home run.

HIPPERSON

You can't score a home run on a stolen base.

SUNNY

Oh. I thought the great Babe Cobb used to do that.

HIPPERSON

No. You should have stopped at second.

SUNNY

(indicating third)

Isn't it better to be over there?

HIPPERSON

Not if he has the ball.

SUNNY

But if he had it --

(points to third)

-- then he wouldn't.

Sunny points to home plate.

HIPPERSON

(pissed)

Yes he would.

SUNNY

Tug wouldn't tag me out, would you, Tug?

HIPPERSON

Five. Everybody take five. No, ten! Take ten.

109 EXT. - ANGLE ON TUG 109

turning away so Hipperson won't see him laughing.

HIPPERSON (V.O.)

Two laps, Tugwell.

110 EXT. - GROUP 8 - LATER 110

Fuji Nakahoma hits a ground ball and runs to first, but the throw beats him there and he is called out by umpire George Goose. Fuji does not agree, jumps at George.

FUJI

Rout?

GEORGE

(intimidated)

Out.

FUJI

JeAH!

Fuji strikes a karate pose and Georgie curls, covers his head with his arms.

MIKE

Hey hey hey hey HEY!

Startled, Fuji whips around directing the rigid-handed karate pose at Mike, who curls, covers his head with his arms.

FUJI

JeAH!

MIKE

(retreating)

OK. Safe.

Tug shakes his head. Umpires! Unbelievable.

Sammy Zulumombianski, a regular Group 8 member, tries to score but is called out by home plate umpire Bertha Mae. Disagreeing, Sammy leaps to his feet and leaps at Bertha -- a mistake.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

Out? I was safe, you dumb broad.

BERTHA MAE

What did you say?

She meets Sammy's leap, and knocks him on his buns.

SAMMY

Hey, she doesn't need a chest protector.

Arnold Smalley tries to steal second base. He starts his slide from about thirty feet, and ends up fifteen feet short of the base. Scott disgustedly walks over and flips the tag on him. Umpire Bambino Elias comes running up to make the call, signaling that Arnold is safe.

ELIAS

Usted es out!

In frustration, Scott draws the ball back as if to throw it at Bambino. Second baseman Fuji leaps forward, strikes a karate pose.

FUJI

JeAH!

In utter exasperation, Scott just turns and walks away.

SCOTT

What the F--?

A computer tone bleeps out the last word.

Sammy Zulumombianski is catching. Bertha Mae is pitching. Bad news for Sammy, since Bertha Mae remembers his earlier assault. She winds up slowly, throws the ball so hard that it knocks Sammy flat on his can.

SAMMY

I need a body cup.

Tug is becoming increasingly unable to quietly accept the absurdities. He begins to jump and shout, move nose-to-nose scaring the hell out of the inept members of Group 8.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

(to Sammy)

What the hell do you mean, strike?
Good thing I caught it. The bat boy
would be a bat girl.

(to Arnold)

You're terrific, Arnold. Blind, but
terrific. She was safe by five
feet.

(to himself)

Reminds me of my honeymoon.

(to Goose)

Do you have a note from your
mother? Does she know you're out
all by yourself?

(to Sunny)

Safe? Come on, Sunny. It was a
force play. He doesn't have to tag
the runner.

(to Fuji)

What are you talking about, Fuji?
He dropped the ball!

(takes out plate brush)

I better dust off your brain.

Tug brushes off Fuji's head. Fuji hints that he is about to
strike a karate pose.

FUJI

I say he rout.

Tug takes a step toward Fuji. Fuji does strike a karate
pose.

TUG

Fuji, that stuff may be good for
wood and cinder blocks, but not me.

Fuji chops Tug on the shoulder, and is instantly sorry. Tug
just stands staring at him, the only indication that the
chop hurt like hell being an involuntary blink.

FUJI

Oops! Sorry, Trug --

MATCH CUT TO:

111 EXT. - BLEACHERS - TUG

111

Tug sitting in the bleachers, just blankly overlooking Diamond 1 and Group 8, which Mike is leading in the "Balk" call. Tug's sore shoulder is drooping. At field level, Hipperson approaches.

HIPPERSON

You're blowing your cool, Tugwell.

(clicks his tongue)

Shame, shame, shame --

Tug lets his blank gaze drift down to Hipperson. Tug's mind is many miles away. Hipperson laughs, walks away. Tug gives him the finger. He choses the wrong hand, however, and his shoulder and arm are in pain.

TUG

Great. Now I'll have to give my
finger a whirlpool.

112 EXT. - PARKING LOT - EVENING

112

Tug is sitting in his old Studebaker waiting for Scott. But then he sees Scott in line to get on one of the buses. He then sees Kristi, Hipperson, and Mike headed for their parked cars. They are laughing, talking rapid-fire. Hipperson has his arm around Kristi's shoulders; she has hers around his waist. Tug tiredly turns the key to ignite the old car, and drives away from the school.

113 INT. - SEA DIP MOTEL ROOM 12

113

Tug is lying on his bed with Scott slowly packing what clothes he has scattered around the room into an old leather suitcase.

TUG

Who's your new roommate?

SCOTT

Bob Mayes. He's in Group Two.

TUG

Mayes -- the guy who has the Bible sayings on his shin guards? He's one of their pet students.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT

Yeah. One of the top two or three
in the school, I think.

(stops, looks up)

Tug --

TUG

(hands up)

Hey, I understand. You can't sleep
cause I scratch my athlete's foot
all night.

SCOTT

(laughs)

It's just that I love baseball and
I want to stay in it. And since I
can't play, this is my only chance.

TUG

(smiles)

In a way I'm doing the same thing.
We just see things from a different
angle, that's all. Done?

SCOTT

Done.

Tug swings his feet off the bed, stands and offers his hand.
Scott takes it, does not release.

TUG

I hope you make it. Then some day
you'll be working behind me and
blow a few calls and I'll kick you
right in the caboose and derail
your chemical units.

SCOTT

(grins)

Then I'll kick you back, and we'll
start throwing punches, grab each
other and go down to roll around in
the dirt and everyone'll go crazy
thinking we're killing each other.
But we'll really be making plans to
meet after the game for a few
beers.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Your first buy. By then we'll need
Lite.

SCOTT

It's a deal. Lite.

114 INT. - DAYTONA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

114

A progressive folk group entertains in the background. Some dancing, but mostly just singles meeting, talking, sipping exotic drinks.

Tug sits alone at a table. He is watching the motion passively, his thoughts inward. A Cocktail Waitress swoops ebulliently over him. He returns a mechanical smile.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

How you doing?

TUG

I'm having a fuel shortage.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

Scotch-soda? Scotch-rocks?

Tug nods and she bustles away to another table. He turns his attention back toward the band, becomes aware of being watched, turns, looks. His eyes meet with those of a pretty redhead sitting at an island bar. She flips her hair, looks casually away. Tug turns back, rolls the ice in his drink with his finger, looks up and back again. The redhead is again looking back. This time she smiles Tug smiles.

115 EXT. - CLUB ENTRANCE - ANGLE ON KRISTI AND CAROL

115

They look around the crowded music lounge, checking the place out. Carol sees Tug, nudges Kristi, who looks.

CAROL

He'll probably think you're
following him.

KRISTI

(turns away)

I don't care what he thinks.

Carol spots the redhead.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL

Looks like he's about to get something cooking -- in case you're interested in evening up the score.

Kristi turns around.

CAROL (cont'd)

Looks like she's ready to simmer his meat balls.

116 INT. - CLUB - ANGLE ON TUG

116

as the Cocktail Waitress arrives with his fresh drink. He points to the redhead and the Waitress nods. A little time passes and Tug looks up at the redhead again. She doffs her fresh drink, sips from the straw seductively, her way of saying thank you. Tug grins, gets up and wedges his way through bodies to where she is seated. The redhead's name is Rose.

ROSE

Hi. Thanks for the drink.

TUG

Anytime.

(looking around)

This place is really alive. I've been here in Daytona almost three weeks and didn't even know it was here.

(points outside)

The neon revolving bed fooled me.

(looks back)

I'm Tug.

ROSE

Yeah, it isn't bad. Good group. I usually go over to Top O' the Surf. Rose. Tug? I never knew anybody named Tug before. Is that Hungarian?

TUG

Missouri mulian. Rose, is that French?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

(seriously)

I think it's German. Is it just me,
or is the room really spinning in
circles?

TUG

How many of those have you had?

ROSE

Strawberry Maggies?

(titters, touches Tug)

Quite a few. I'm getting really
polluted.

TUG

Polluted? Don't worry. I have a
catalytic converter in my pocket.

Tug is almost humorously offering his best look of male
seduction. Rose sips suggestively from her straw, her eyes
promising.

TUG (cont'd)

We could do it together.

She slips off her stool, a movement bringing her body-to-
body with Tug, looks up close into his eyes, smiles.

ROSE

We could, couldn't we? I mean, I
guess nobody's going to stop us --

TUG

I wouldn't think so --

She is so close that Tug accepts the invitation, and their
lips brush. Their lips brush again. Rose's lips begin to
part for more --

KRISTI (O.S.)

Melvin? Melvin!

Tug is suddenly being shaken. Along with Rose, he hazily,
numbly turns. His eyes roll when he realizes Kristi --

(CONTINUED)

TUG
(to himself)
But then I've been known to be
wrong before --

Kristi is standing indignantly akimbo. IN THE B.G. behind her, Carol can vaguely be seen. Carol is already laughing.

KRISTI
I think it's time we went home,
Melvin! The babysitter has school
in the morning, remember? Or are
you too drunk?
(to Rose)
Who are you!?

ROSE
Who are you?!

KRISTI
Well just who do you think I am,
dearie?

TUG
(overlapping Kristi)
She's my -- mother!

A beat. Looks.

ROSE
Your mother, my ass!
(grabs her drink)
"Melvin!?" You even look like a
"Melvin!" Putz!

And Rose is gone. Tug just stands, a Paul Newman grin of irony. He had it coming; Kristi delivered it.

TUG
Touché.

KRISTI
Somehow, I didn't think that touche
would be your first word. Shall we
dance?

TUG
(grins)
I don't know how.

KRISTI
(also grinning)
I wouldn't have expected as much.

TUG
(mock defensive)
What's that supposed to mean?

KRISTI
Oh, you know. Jocks don't know how
to do anything but play ball.

TUG
Neither do reporters.

A happy-go-lucky Carol joins them.

CAROL
Hi.

KRISTI
Carol, do you know Tug?

CAROL
(couples his arm)
We've talked a couple of times at
the school.

TUG
Hi, Carol.
(looks at Kristi)
My real name is Melvin.

CAROL
Well, are we going to just stand
here all night, or grab that table
before someone else does?

TUG
Actually, I was just about to leave
before the scotch starts leaking
out my ears.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL

Afraid of the odds, huh? Well
you're not getting off that easy.
You can buy us one drink at least.

She leads Tug by his coupled arm. Tug likes the action and is smiling.

Later the three of them are seated at Tug's old table, each with a cocktail. The music and intermingling activities in the background. Carol lights a cigarette. Kristi is being quiet.

TUG

Bad habit. Nasty.

CAROL

So's sex.

TUG

No. If it's nasty, it's a good habit.

CAROL

Cigarettes?

(blows smoke)

Sex? Not much chance I'll give either up. Actually, everything you do's bad for you, one way or another. Running is supposed to get you in shape, but you never know when you're going to drop over with a heart attack. Sorry to bring up such a touchy subject. By the way, how's the battle of the birds coming?

TUG

I've been plucked.

KRISTI

What do you mean, Tug?

TUG

I've decided to give it up. The Mad Gull is dead. They can cut me up into pieces, fry me, and sell me in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TUG (CONT'D)

a bucket.

KRISTI

But why? You can't, not now.
Saturday's Third Week Evaluations.
Monday the university teams come
in. Everything changes. No more
Group 8. No more horsing around.

CAROL

Plus, I've got next Wednesday in
the pool.

There is a pause, looks, Carol covering her mouth having
said a no no. Kristi grins, drops her head.

TUG

Pool? What pool? If it's a car pool
count me in.

Kristi and Carol both laugh. Tug cannot help a faint smile
of amusement, looks from one to another.

TUG (cont'd)

What goddamn pool, Kristi?

KRISTI

Mike started a pool, on what day
you would quit. Carol has next
Wednesday.

CAROL

Twenty bucks. Stick it out until
next Wednesday and I'll split it
with you. Fifty-fifty.

TUG

I'll stick it out, all right.

Kristi is somewhat embarrassed. Carol is having fun. Tug is
holding his own, but is angered as well.

TUG (cont'd)

(to Kristi)

So what day do you have?

Kristi looks at Tug evenly, her expression telling him that
she thinks more of him than that.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

I don't have a day, Tug.

TUG

Betting on what day my career crumbles. Real cute. How'd your mother do with her Pearl Harbor bet?

117 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - MORNING

117

The students are filing out of the morning classroom session, spreading out for the different diamonds. Group 8 members are moving away from the primary complex, headed for the distant Diamond 5, their isolation. Tug hurries to catch up with the briskly striding Hipperson.

TUG

John? Can I talk to you for a minute?

HIPPERSON

What about?

TUG

Scott Simpson. I was wondering why he wasn't being given a chance.

HIPPERSON

It's news to me.

TUG

Come on, you know damn good and well what I'm talking about. It's like putting Jesse Owens in with some one-legged pirates. You've got him stuck over here in Siberia with all these thumbs and left feet, not a damned one of which has any business here, except maybe Bertha Mae. Who's going to tell her she doesn't belong? And we all know exactly where she's going, don't we?

(CONTINUED)

HIPPERSON

And where is that, Tugwell?

TUG

You won't say it? All right, I will; nowhere. I hope she picks you up like a barbell. You'd be an easy guy to clean and jerk.

HIPPERSON

And where is it you think she should go, Tug.

Hipperson knows Tug would never suggest that a woman be assigned as a professional umpire.

TUG

(a beat)

Scott knows more about baseball and umpiring than any other six of those fatheads put together.

HIPPERSON

He knows his stuff, that's true.

TUG

Then is it because of me? Do what you want to me, but don't take it out on someone else; especially someone who doesn't even like me. He doesn't even like me, Hipperson! Last night he told me if he ever worked a game I was in and I gave him a bad time he'd --

(gestures humourously)

-- kick me in the ass and hit me and put a piano wire around my balls and tell me where I could go.

Hipperson seems amused, turns to face the milling members of Group 8, blows his whistle loudly.

HIPPERSON

All right. Line up. Two rows. Limber up, get those muscles loose.

They follow orders. Hipperson walks along the row. Tug

(CONTINUED)

follows. Scott, while stretching, seems to sense the conversation is about him. There is a three-way exchange of looks, Tug and Hipperson lowering their voices.

TUG

He moved out. He's not my roommate anymore. He's not a friend at all. He'd rather have a V-8.

HIPPERSON

Tugwell, don't try to tell me my business, OK? You got enough problems to worry about on your own; you let me worry about Scott Simpson. If you think he's getting a raw deal because of you, fine, only think it to yourself.

(to the Group)

All right, that's enough. At ease. The Mad Gull and I have been discussing something which we think you will find beneficial.

(gleams at Tug)

You ready for this, Tugwell? In front.

(to Group)

To hone, shall we say, mind-body co-ordination? When you're working a game you will be faced with instantaneous decisions. How well your mind and body work together is imperative. A little game to prepare you for THE game. Simon Says. Tug, Simon Says say "You're Out."

TUG

(sotto voce)

Come on, Hipperson, show some class. Should I bribe you with a crate of sewage?

HIPPERSON

Seems like we said you should show some class a thousand times. Where did it get us?

(CONTINUED)

TUG

I was trying to make it, in my profession.

HIPPERSON

So were we. Simon says say "You're out."

TUG

(retorting)

You're out.

HIPPERSON

Again. You're out.

TUG

You're out.

HIPPERSON

Simon didn't say to say that.

TUG

Horseshit, Hipperson. Simon died yesterday.

HIPPERSON

Alright, one more chance. Simon says --

TUG

What day do you have in the pool, John?

HIPPERSON

(stifles reaction)

Today.

TUG

You need the money that bad? I know a goat that will give you five bucks for a brain transplant.

HIPPERSON

(grins)

Every little bit helps. Simon says say you're safe.

(CONTINUED)

(no response)

Simon says say you're safe.

Tug starts responding in a robot-like voice.

TUG

You're safe.

HIPPERSON

Simon says say Balk.

TUG

Balk.

HIPPERSON

Faster, Tugwell. Simonsayssay
You're out.

TUG

You're out.

HIPPERSON

Simonsayssay you're safe.

TUG

You're safe.

HIPPERSON

Simonsayssay You're out.

TUG

You're out.

HIPPERSON

You're safe.

TUG

You're safe.

Tug winces. Hipperson grins. It is obvious he is not going to let Tug come up for air this time.

HIPPERSON

Did Simon say to say that?

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Tell Simon to go sit on a sulfuric acid douche.

HIPPERSON

I'm afraid you'll have to take two laps, Tugwell.

TUG

Tell Simon I'll give him two laps from a Doberman Pinscher.

HIPPERSON

(nose-to-nose)

Simon says four laps!

(Tug glares)

Six laps!

Tug rips his pants zipper down, then back up. There is not much doubt about what he has just told Hipperson he and/or Simon can do. He spins and walks away, toward the parking lot.

HIPPERSON

Is that it, Tugwell? Is that all you can take, sapworthy? Thanks! I'll take Kristi to dinner with the twenty bucks.

Tug performs a marvelous pirouette, stalks in a straight line back for Hipperson, who stands jaw jutted challengingly. Tug plants a right-cross on Hipperson's chin, knocking the bigger man sprawling backwards, turns and walks away again.

Cuts establishing various reactions around the umpiring school complex. Kristi breaks from her working position in the Diamond 2 bleachers, hurries at an angle to cut off Tug before he can reach his car.

KRISTI

Tug, what are you doing?

TUG

I've just told my career to go suck.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

You said you'd stick it out, until next week at least.

TUG

No, I didn't. You told me things would change, but they won't. It's like expecting Walter Cronkite to tap dance.

Kristi stops, sighs in resignation. Tug stops. There is a look between them, then she moves her eyes away from his.

KRISTI

So quit then. I don't know what I ever thought I saw in you in the first place. I've always been a dreamer.

TUG

Who said you ever saw anything in me anyway?

KRISTI

If you weren't such a self-centered klutz you'd have figured it out by now. So leave. Go on, give up. Carol was right; you're as big a jerk as my ex-husband was.

Kristi turns away. Tug grabs her arm.

TUG

You don't understand. It's not just the crap I have to put up with. I thought you knew everything that's going on. Like what Hipperson's doing to Scott Simpson because of me.

KRISTI

What? Scott Simpson has a bad knee. He would be perfect otherwise, but they're not sure he can make it.

(Tug reacts)

John's been testing him every day, making him run, cut, jump, slide,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)

reverse. Monday he fell, trying to cut back to his left. His knee buckled and he went down, and if he was working a game and that happened he would've missed the play. You think they can hire people like that, even if they want to?

(angry now)

I talked with Billy, and I went to see your family. So what's so unusual about that? I also checked out Scott, Bob Mayes, Timmy Johnson; We checked up on as many of the logical candidates as we could. Who told you you were so damned special?

TUG

All right, so I'm not so special -- you think I don't know that? Why would I be here otherwise?

Kristi is several feet away now. She stops, turns, faces Tug again.

TUG (cont'd)

(after a beat)

I'll be thirty-four Sunday. You think I'm going back to play Double-A ball at Nashville? Do you think they want me as a manager, after all that's happened? Anyway, I hit Hipperson, kicked the goddamned "sacred cow" --

KRISTI

If you'd stop feeling sorry for yourself you might have a chance --

(smiles)

John might not even care. He won a fifty dollar bet that you'd take a swing at him before the six weeks were up --

(CONTINUED)

TUG
 (beat, he grins back)
 Don't tell me --

Kristi's grin widens; she nods -- it was her bet. Tug just shakes his head in disbelief.

TUG
 Plus if I leave today he wins the pool -- and takes you out on the town -- on me --

KRISTI
 Yes -- and -- maybe, I haven't been asked yet --

TUG
 I don't want the sonofabitch to be too happy.

TO SCENE HIPPERSON AND GROUP 8 and the various reactions of anticipation as Tug comes walking back. Hipperson gives no indication of ever having been in conflict with Tug, who just slips back into position in line.

HIPPERSON
 All right, let's play some ball. Smalley, work the plate. Frank, you're at first. Larry, second. Bertha, go on over to third. Tug, you captain the "A" team; Sammy, you're captain of the "B's" -- "A's" are home --

LATER Tug is catching the intrasquad game. Jimmy pitches. Arnold Smalley calls the pitch a ball.

TUG
 Come on, Smalley! If you can't see the outside pitch, don't call it!

SMALLEY
 I can see it, Tug -- I can --

TUG
 Horsecrap, Arnold, you're blind as a bat low-and-away!

(CONTINUED)

TUG is "managing" the "A" team from the bench. Sammy underhands a pitch to Sunny and she hits a ground ball to Georgie Goose at third base. He drops the ball, throws late to first; but Sunny just keeps on running for second.

TUG (cont'd)
 For crying out loud, Sunny!
 (where she is called out)
 She beat the throw anyway, Larry!
 Open your eyes!

Tug on the bench again, as Morris tries to go from first to third on a wild pitch. Georgie manages to handle the throw and tag Morris. Bertha Mae calls him out.

TUG
 Pay attention, Bertha! He tagged
 him high!

BERTHA MAE
 (across the diamond)
 Shut up, Tugwell! He missed the
 bag!

Hipperson puffs his cheeks and blows the hell out of his whistle.

HIPPERSON
 That's it for today. Check with
 Sherzer. E-val-u-a-tions tomorrow.

The students groan, and begin gathering their equipment to leave for the day.

118 EXT. - PHONE BOOTH NEAR THE FIELD

118

Kristi is on the phone talking long distance with her office in New York.

KRISTI
 I know it seems like I'm taking a
 long time, Dan, but this assignment
 should be followed to the end. Give
 it a finish.

She listens, holding the phone away from her ear. We hear the sound of someone shouting on the other end. She starts

(CONTINUED)

talking again.

KRISTI (cont'd)
OK, OK. Just give me a little more
time and I'll wrap it up.

She listens.

KRISTI (cont'd)
Thanks. I'll talk with you soon.

She hangs up and wipes her brow.

119 EXT. - THE FIELD

119

Tug is lagging behind, slowly undoing his catcher's equipment. He stuffs it into a personal bat bag. The buses have already departed, and the parking lot and the old Stude are all alone as he slings his bat bag over his tired shoulder.

He smiles realizing Kristi is still there. She is also smiling as he approaches.

KRISTI
As a liberated woman I was going to
ask if you would like to take me
out to dinner -- before I
remembered I put two steaks out to
thaw this morning, and they'll
spoil if I don't cook them --
although if they do spoil I know
you'll like them even more.

TUG
What kind of steaks?

KRISTI
Oh, nothing special, just -- you
mean you'll come?

Her smile broadens. Tug is smiling teasingly.

KRISTI (cont'd)
You want to follow me?

TUG

If you drive real slow. I have a family living in the back of my car.

120 INT. - AND EXT. - KRISTI'S APARTMENT AND VERANDA - EVENING

120

Kristi's apartment overlooks the flat, long white beach. She is barbecuing steaks on a hibachi on the veranda, where Tug is sitting back on a chaise lounge with a bottle of beer.

Kristi looks extremely good in her off-hours state of dress, in terrycloth shorts and matching halter-top. Tug is not being obvious about it, but he is taking full opportunity to notice.

TUG

(shaking his head)

Pappy Wintergren. I don't believe it. Pappy played something like seventeen years in the minors.

KRISTI

Eighteen-and-a-half.

TUG

Ol' Pappy. Guess I just never put two and two together. You're from good stock. Maybe we should breed minor league players.

KRISTI

I hope you are better at multiplication than you are at addition.

Kristi turns the steaks. Tug studies Kristi's wares.

TUG

I played three years for Pappy.

KRISTI

I know. I mean, I didn't last summer, but I do now. I probably should have remembered, but I was in New York then, still living with Larry. He chewed off half my tail

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI (CONT'D)

for giving you such a bad time.

TUG

(pleased)

Your father taught me how to really 'cook the meat,' that means stick it to the umpires. Pappy was the best, a classic.

KRISTI

The feeling's still mutual. You're one of his favorite ballplayers.

TUG

Why don't you teach me to cook the meat?

Kristi looks up from the hibachi, waves her cooking fork at Tug, her eyes gleaming mischievously, a look that says she is more than a little impressed by what she knows.

TUG (cont'd)

What's that supposed to mean?

KRISTI

It means you were a little shit.

TUG

Little?

(they laugh)

What I don't understand is, if Pappy Wintergren's your father, and you were married to Larry Miller for six years, how did you ever wind up working for the Association, running around with umpires? Ol' Pappy was -- is -- a shin-kicker, from the old school. Whereas Miller's one hell of a ballplayer, never did have much use for the men in blue.

Kristi cuts into Tug's steak. He looks and shakes his head. It's still too rare. She pushes it back over the coals.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI

As far as who my father was, you'll probably understand that if he said yes, I said no. No self-respecting sibling would be caught dead agreeing with their parents. Parent, in my case. He was always fighting the umpires, so I was always taking their side.

TUG

I'll bet he loved that.

KRISTI

Almost disowned me. As far as Larry was concerned, no contest. He was just the best looking male specimen I'd ever seen. I just looked at him and my clothes started falling off.

TUG

Vaseline vision, huh?

KRISTI

Unfortunately, he was about as charming as a Chinese noodle, which might have been OK, if he'd had at least that much intelligence. But he didn't. After a couple of years I was too bored to care what he looked like.

(checks the steaks)

I think they're done.

TUG

(facetiously)

You're a terrific cook. You can cook meat better than Pappy.

Tug holds the plate and Kristi forks the steaks onto it from the hibachi. They are looking at each other, liking each other, smiling.

KRISTI

I can barely boil water, and that's the way I like it.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Was I complaining? I like water
boiled, too.

KRISTI

I'm not sure.

121 EXT. - BLEACHERS - DAY

121

Tug is sitting with Kristi in the stands. They are alone. Kristi is doing a pre-interview with Tug. She takes notes on what he's saying.

KRISTI

So the travel in the minors is less
than first class.

TUG

I don't know what class it is, but
there is very little of it.

122 INT. - OLD BUS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

122

The team is returning from a road trip. Everyone is trying to sleep, but the constant backfiring of the bus keeps waking them up.

123 EXT. - RAILROAD CROSSING

123

The lights start flashing and the protection arm comes down.

BUS DRIVER

The ringing of the crossing alarm bell awakens him. He sees the approaching train and slams on the brakes. Everyone's head hits the seat in front of him. About 100 empty bottles of booze, that were under everyone's seats, start rolling to the front of the bus. They all crash against the front stairway and break as usual. The bus stops one inch from the wooden crossing arm. The driver calmly opens the door and takes a big push broom and sweeps the broken glass into the street. The train passes. The crossing arm goes up. The driver tries to proceed. No forward gears work. They're stuck. Tug gets up from the aisle and walks to the driver. He's angry.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Do we have to push it again?

DRIVER

No need to. The gears are gone.

TUG

What! None of them work?

DRIVER

No, Mr. Gull. None. Tried 'em all.

TUG

Try reverse.

The Driver puts the bus in reverse. The bus backs up.

DRIVER

Hey, that works.

TUG

Good. Then let's back our way to Amarillo.

DRIVER

Yes, Mr. Gull.

The Driver turns the bus around and starts backing up the highway with his head looking back out the window. We see the bus disappear down the highway.

124

EXT. - STANDS

124

Kristi is laughing at Tug description of that scene.

TUG

And that was the fastest we ever got to Amarillo.

KRISTI

(still laughing)

You must have stayed in some beautiful hotels.

TUG

(sarcastically)

Only the best. Wonderful accommodations. Rats used to drag

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)
my bags to my room.

125 INT. - DARK HALLWAY OF A SLEEZY HOTEL - FLASHBACK

125

Tug is walking down the hall carrying his own suitcase. There are no lights in the hallway. Tug is carrying a flashlight. He shines it on the doors to see which room is his. He has found it. We see that he is also carrying a key that is chained to a shotput, dragging behind him on the floor. He struggles to put the key in the lock. He opens the door and turns on the light. We see his face. It registers complete shock as we hear the sound of hundreds of insects running for shelter. It sounds like a jungle. The noise stops. He walks in. The mattress on the bed looks like an aerial view of the Rocky Mountains. Tug walks into the bathroom and turns on the lights. The bathroom looks normal, except where the toilet would normally be, there is a cat box with a flusher handle on the side of the box. Tug works the handle and a load of sand drops into the box from above. Tug walks out and sits on the bed. He shakes his head in disgust. He spots a Gideon Bible on the nightstand.

TUG
Maybe this will help.
(hefts Bible)
This might have the answers to my
problems.

Tug opens the Bible, and pulls out a Playboy centerfold of a nude woman.

126 EXT. - STANDS

126

Kristi is busy writing down Tug's story.

TUG
Sleeping in those lumpy beds --
your back would look like the
yearly Dow Jones average.

KRISTI
(finishes writing)
But you must have felt at home when
you got to the stadiums.

TUG

Hey, most of the stadiums weren't that bad. Class D ball, forget it. No respect for the game.

127 EXT. - STADIUM - FLASHBACK

127

Tug and his opposing manager are standing at home plate discussing the ground rules with the umpires.

UMPIRE

(pointing)

The yellow line above the fence is a home run.

The Umpire turns and points down the other direction to left field, where workmen are building an apartment building.

TUG

Now, what happens if a ball hits that bulldozer?

UMPIRE

It's fair as long as the driver doesn't touch it.

TUG

How about if it lands in a wheelbarrow of cement?

UMPIRE

A ground rule double.

The camera stays on the workmen.

TUG (V.O.)

But, Kristi, the Mexican League was something else. We played in a stadium in El Centro. The right field fence was the border.

128 EXT. - EL CENTRO DIAMOND - FLASHBACK

128

We see a stadium. The camera starts from the left field fence and pans around to reveal that the right field fence is barbed wire: The Border. We see a game in progress. The Mexican team is in the field. Tug's at the plate. He hits a long drive to right. The right fielder goes back and jumps

(CONTINUED)

at the fence trying to catch Tug's hit. He makes a spectacular catch and falls over the fence on the other side. The Mexican crowd goes wild with applause. The outfielder, realizing that he has jumped the border and is in the United States, starts running toward LA. Four border guards and a helicopter follow him. The crowd cheers louder; Standing ovation.

TUG

It was a different brand of ball down there. You know how we have a seventh inning stretch, well --

129 EXT. - MEXICAN FIELD SCOREBOARD - FLASHBACK

129

It's the seventh inning. The Mexican team is on the field.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

(with a Mexican accent)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is the seventh inning.

The fans in the stand lay down for a siesta. So do the players on the field. The announcers do too. Even the umpires. Tug and his team look on in amazement.

KRISTI (V.O.)

Those stories are great. We have to use them.

TUG (V.O.)

They're not stories. They're true.

130 INT. - KRISTI'S APARTMENT

130

Kristi is on the phone.

KRISTI

Dan, you've been a sweet, tolerant boss. The story has been shipped back with all the film. Carol will be with you back there to answer questions. Now, since I'm at home in Daytona, I'd like to take some vacation time I have coming.

(listens)

You can call me any time if you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)

have any questions.

(listens, smiles)

Thanks, Dan. You've been an absolute doll.

She hangs up.

131 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - MORNING

131

Various shots establish that the mid-session evaluations are underway. The students are milling, waiting, anticipating.

There is a pick-up game on Diamond 2, to pass time.

Tug is sitting alone, on one of the plaza benches. He sees Kristi move into the classroom, talking with Wendelstedt. She gives him a quick passing smile before disappearing.

Arnold Smalley comes around the corner, sees Tug, turns back.

Bambino Elias comes out of his evaluation session, a confused look on his face. He is muttering safe and out calls to himself. Suddenly he grins and stops. He's got it! he turns and bursts back into the office again. The doors close for a few seconds, then a grinning Bambino comes back out. All eyes are trained on him. Happily, he waves to his friends.

ELIAS

I do much good next year, when I speak English so good. See? Usted es safe. Usted es out.

He completes the routine correctly, much to the laughing delight of those around him. Bambino laughs with them, as behind him Mike is grinning.

MIKE

Sunny? Sunny, where are you?

The ebulliently façaded Sunny bubbles forth, eagerly displays her wares while disappearing into the office behind Mike. Tug is grinning, shaking his head, knowing the Sunny Moon Show is just an act, one that never got off the ground. A jittery Scott comes over, sits next to Tug.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT

You nervous?

TUG

No. Not after seeing those.

Tug points towards the others.

SCOTT

Yeah, me too.

The fidgety Scott is back on his feet and pacing again. Sunny comes back out, as Georgie Goose is called in. Sunny looks around, sees Tug, moves to join him.

TUG

How'd it go?

Sunny adopts her dumber-than-dirt pose, bats her eyes exaggeratedly.

SUNNY

I was just Star Wars, Tuggy!

(suddenly straight)

In other words, they can't wait for me to be on a slow boat to Lake Erie. No, really, they were very nice.

She puts her head affectionately on Tug's shoulder. He gently brushes a few strands of hair back from her face.

TUG

Honey, you made one mistake. You called me out too often.

Kristi appears in the classroom doorway behind them. She stops with what she sees.

SUNNY

(sighs)

Well, it almost worked. A couple of TV stations wanted to come in and film me, "Female Umpire!" If you can swallow that. But they wouldn't let them do it, and I can't say I blame them either. After all, no

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONT'D)

one wants their profession made a
farce of, right?

TUG

Even umpires.

Knowing how Tug feels, Sunny giggles, nudges her head
against his chest, her arms draped around his waist. Kristi
is watching from behind, very upset by what she is seeing.

Fuji Nakahoma is seen entering the office in the background.

SUNNY

Anyway, Bruce is going to be
pissed, but that's just the way the
cookie crumbles. I can't say he was
much help, and if I hadn't had
someone who know who I really was
and all that I might have been
climbing palm trees.

(up close to Tug now)

Hey, thanks, huh?

TUG

For nothing.

SUNNY

For more than you think. And if
you're ever in New York, I mean,
you know, and --

TUG

(knowing better)

Sure. I always have half a bed.

Sunny pushes up, kisses Tug. Focus back on Kristi
disappearing back into the classroom and back as Sunny
bounces up and bubbles away, all Sunny Moon Show once again.

Tug gets up, strolls off in the direction of Diamond 2 and
the ongoing game, amused and attracted by the fact there is
quite a rhubarb going on there. Fuji comes out of the
office, sees Tug walking away.

FUJI

Trug! Trug, wait!

(CONTINUED)

Tug stops, waits as the taut-muscled Fuji stiff-legs his way to join him. Fuji offers his hand, which Tug takes.

FUJI (cont'd)

I sorry I hit you, Trug.

TUG

I sorry too. My coat keeps falling off this shoulder.

Tug indicates where Fuji hit him.

FUJI

Anyway, I come back next year when my Engrish better, and make good umpire. Bambino too, OK?

TUG

No stopping you two, that's for sure. You'll win any argument.

Fuji suddenly grunts, juts into a karate pose; Tug recoils. Just as quickly, Fuji burst into uproarious laughter, he got Tug that time. He walks away, pointing back at Tug with his thumb over his shoulder, picking up laughter from others.

HIPPERSON (O.S.)

Tugwell!

Tug sighs, wends his way back for the office.

132

INT. - OFFICE - DAY

132

Tug is sitting across the desk from Hipperson, who is studying him in a manner Tug does not quite understand.

HIPPERSON

(pause)

I guess you don't need to be told what your evaluation status is.

TUG

Nope. Where to now, the Nazi League?

(CONTINUED)

HIPPERSON

(bitter)

I suppose we could say a little
bird told you.

TUG

Suppose a little bird didn't?

There is a long pause, the two men sitting eye-to-eye. Tug guesses that Hipperson must have found out about him and Kristi, and stands to leave.

HIPPERSON

God damn you for being here,
Tugwell.

TUG

It sure as hell wasn't my idea,
Hipperson.

HIPPERSON

Then why don't you leave?

TUG

I'll be damned if I can figure that
one out.

Hipperson busies himself at the desk, refusing to look at Tug.

HIPPERSON

There is no more Group 8, and we've
also lost enough students to filter
Group 7 up as well. You've been
assigned to Marty Trimble's Group
4. They're doing most of their work
on Diamond 3.

(he looks up)

You're gutting it out, Tugwell.
I'll give you that. But I'm not
impressed, and if I have anything
to say about it you'll spend the
next three weeks sitting on your
ass.

(back to his paperwork)

And if you do any dirt to Kristi,
I'll break your goddamned neck.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

You'll have to break something else. I happen to like her a lot.

HIPPERSON

She's too good for you, Tugwell. She's just too goddamn good for the likes of you.

Tug stands looking at Hipperson with a different level of understanding. Hipperson does not look up again. Tug exits.

133

EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

133

Tug heads for the old Stude in the parking lot. Behind him, Scott can be seen entering the office for his evaluation.

Tug unlocks the Stude, pulls out his glove, shoes and duffel bag, swings the door shut and starts back across the parking lot in the direction of the pick-up game on Diamond 2.

STUDENT #1

(sees Tug approaching)

Hey, we get Tugwell!

STUDENT #2

The hell you do! You got Johnson. Tug, you're with us!

STUDENT #3

Bullshit! Gull, you're over here!

There is an old glow to Tug's face as he sits and begins putting his spikes on.

Tug tears the pick-up game a new rear-end. He shows the kids how the game of baseball is really played as he --

Makes a diving catch --

Fields a tough ground ball and hums the throw to first base --

Catches a throw behind him and spins to tag out a sliding runner --

Hits a line drive so hard that the third baseman is just barely able to get out of the way of the blistering ball --

(CONTINUED)

Hits another ball so far that the opposing outfielder does not even bother chasing it, just throws his glove in frustration --

Tug jogs around the bases with the "home run" and is greeted by his ecstatic teammates --

Happily, he plunks to the bench and

MATCH CUT TO:

134

EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS

134

Tug standing on the periphery of the parking lot early evening. The umpire's school is virtually vacant, only a few stragglers, the third week ended. No sign of Kristi.

Later Tug is still standing, pacing, waiting, watching the roadway passing the school. He is now alone excepting for a solitary figure in motion out on the distant Diamond 3.

It is dark and Tug is still waiting. Confused, hurt, he is beginning to get the idea that what he thought was between him and Kristi wasn't after all.

He moves toward Diamond 3 to check out the solitary running figure. It is Scott, jogging, testing, working on his knee. Tug sits on the bench and waits for Scott to return from his outfield and back sprINT. -

TUG

What the hell you trying to do,
turn your knee into a crossword
puzzle? You've been running like
that for over an hour.

Tug is smiling, but as Scott draws nearer he is not. Breathing heavily, he stands several feet away.

SCOTT

I run every night.

TUG

How do you get back to the Sea Dip?

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT

Run.

TUG

Why don't you let me drive you
back?

SCOTT

(huffing)

It's faster to run.

TUG

You got a wire loose, Simpson.

SCOTT

(pause)

You told.

TUG

What do you mean? You know better
than that.

SCOTT

Then how did they find out?

TUG

The same way they found out I
swiped bottles and traded them for
Nehi grape and corn chips. They use
satellite photos.

SCOTT

You expect me to believe that?

TUG

Yeah, you're right. I told. Because
I was afraid if you made it, it
might hurt my chances, and I want
to be an umpire so bad.

Tug stands, turns and starts back for the parking lot area. Scott watches for a second, then hustles to catch Tug, grabs his arm. Scott smiles that he knows better than what he has just said; Tug returns the bond of friendship. They hold a beat, then Scott turns and jogs away. Tug watches.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Hey, you want a ride?

SCOTT

No thanks. I'm on a straight line
in now. I'll beat the Stude.

(fading in the distance)

See you Monday. Say hi to Kristi
for me.

TUG

Everyone knows?

SCOTT

Guess so.

Scott disappears in the darkness, headed off the field, leaving Tug feeling lonely again as he returns to his old Studebaker. Tug gets into the old car, starts the engine, backs out of his parking space, starts forward, cuts the wheel and the inevitable happens. The engine slips. The accelerator whangs to the floor and Tug is off and running, the old Stude engine racing to maximum RPMs. Completely out of control, Tug and the old car spin in crazy circles, cutting through and darting around the school grounds. Tug tries desperately to remedy the panic situation, while avoiding contact with any of the school structures or field facilities as around and around they go, dirt, gravel, more dirt and black exhaust flying until CLANK! The old Studebaker throws a rod, coasts clunking and grinding to a stop.

Tug just sits, releases a sigh. His sense of well being returns, and with it a surge of frustrated anger. He slams his hands against the steering wheel.

TUG

I want my thirty dollars back. Now
I know how A.J. Foyt feels.

He bolts out of the burned out car, slams the door behind himself. When it pops open again, he kicks it with a fury then we see his lips moving and hear computer tones. Tug hops on his left foot while clutching his pained right foot and leg.

Headlights swing into the complex with the entering approach

(CONTINUED)

of another car. Tug recollects his dignity quickly, realizing it is Kristi's Triumph. He is momentarily illuminated by her headlights as she approaches, and brings the car to a stop fifty feet away. She stops the engine, and steps out at dueling distance. Silence.

TUG

(a beat)

I mowed all the outfields, trimmed the hedges, swept the lunchroom, scrubbed the latrines, blew the engine of my car and almost killed myself, then broke my foot in six places. Can I go home now?

KRISTI

I saw you with Sunny.

TUG

You're not the jealous type.

KRISTI

Oh yes I am. I'm a woman -- a person, I mean. And if I catch you kissing pretty girls --

Tug exaggerates his limp as he moves toward Kristi, and she comes toward him, exaggerating concern.

KRISTI (cont'd)

You really are injured.

TUG

Pamper me.

KRISTI

Not until we get this straightened out.

TUG

I'm in severe pain. Where were we?

KRISTI

Kissing pretty girls.

(CONTINUED)

TUG
 (vis-a-vis)
 And if you don't?

KRISTI
 (yielding smile)
 Use your imagination.

Tug puts his hand tenderly against her cheek, lifts her face.

TUG
 It might take me a long time to use
 up all the thoughts jangling around
 in my imagination.

KRISTI
 I'm durable. Made in Taiwan, try
 me.

Tug kisses her. They embrace, hold lovingly.

TUG
 I'm a minor league jock, traveling
 cow town to cow town, beggar's
 wages -- not much of a life for a
 woman.

KRISTI
 I'm an ex-weak-armed shortstop,
 career girl, no time for a family
 -- not much of a life for a man.

Their lips meet.

135 INT. - KRISTI'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT 135

Tug and Kristi kissing, standing next to her bed. In a slow, erotic ritual they undress one another.

Tug and Kristi make love. A tender, sensuous moment.

136 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - MORNING TO EVENING - MONTAGE 136

Going into the home stretch business at the school is more serious than ever. All work and no play.

The major college university teams are in camp for their

(CONTINUED)

Spring Training games, and with several rivalries existing the games are not taken lightly. Neither is the umpiring, as the talented students are carefully weeded from the not so talented.

Various action angles of this serious competition and the student umpiring controlling it.

Tug and Bertha Mae are the only students not getting a chance to umpire these games. For awhile they are shown separately, occasionally glancing at each other, a bond being formed by their mutual lack of acceptance then.

One morning, Tug arrives as usual with Kristi, receives his departure kiss, moves directly for Bertha Mae, who sees him coming, stops and waits.

TUG

Want some company?

BERTHA MAE

Loves misery. Jackson State/
Bethune-Cookman?

TUG

(imitates TV)

No. My broker's E.F. Hutton.

(they laugh)

I have two tickets. Box seats.

BERTHA MAE

I accept.

137 EXT. - BERTHA MAE AND TUG

137

standing along the right field line watching the game.

138 EXT. - MONTAGE

138

continues as they are seen watching different games on different diamonds morning to evening, day to day. At first, they watch in frustrated silence. Then they begin to vocalize their increasing aggravations.

TUG

No, no, no!

(CONTINUED)

(another time)
 For crying out loud, Smith!
 (and another)
 Give Bertha a chance! At least her
 retinas are attached.

BERTHA MAE
 Tyson, that's the worst call I've
 ever seen!
 (and)
 I don't believe it. I just don't
 believe it. Tug.

TUG
 They'll be good at the Braille
 Series.

Tug arrives with Kristi, joins Bertha Mae, says goodnight to Bertha, leaves with Kristi.

Scott makes a key play. Wearing a brace on his bad knee, he is umpiring at second base, chases a looping fly into right field for the catch-trapped ball-call; when the ball is caught he cuts back instantly to pursue the play at second base. He executes the maneuver perfectly, beams his pleasure.

TUG
 Way to go, Scott! Nice call!

Kristi, Wendelstedt, Templeton, Mike Sherzer, and Hipperson saw it, too. It appears Scott may make it after all.

139 INT. - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

139

WENDELSTEDT
 Alright, next week's Last Chance Saloon. We have about forty students still in the running for only fourteen available spots at Bradenton. You're going to have to work extra hard, so relax tomorrow, get some sleep and prepare yourselves mentally. See you Monday.

140 INT. - KRISTI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

140

Tug and Kristi lying post-lovemaking on their backs.

KRISTI

I could talk to John, but I doubt
he'd give her a chance.

TUG

Ask him, see if it makes a
difference.

Kristi begins slithering, "oozing" onto Tug, who just grins
and enjoys as she teases.

KRISTI

What's come over you?
(cooing)
Even when you're in bed with me
you're thinking of other women.

She begins kissing at Tug, who is playfully resisting.

KRISTI

Tell me you love me again.

TUG

That, again? Why?

KRISTI

Because I'm very insecure.

TUG

All weak-armed shortstops should
be.

KRISTI

I'm drooping.

TUG

I'm not.

Kristi lifts her head, looks Tug mischievously in the eyes.

ERISTI

They'll run out of leagues to put
you in at this rate. You still
didn't tell me you love me again.

(CONTINUED)

TUG
 (kissing her sensuously)
 I love you. I'm insecure, too.
 Everyone is afterwards.

Kristi starts to work her way down.

KRISTI
 Mad Gull, my ass.

141 EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

141

Tug and Bertha are at it again, twisting, agonizing. Mike Sherzer approaches field level.

MIKE
 Alright, Boom, your big chance. You
 get to act instead of talk. Take
 first next game.

Mike continues on down the line. Tug and Bertha look at each other, Bertha suddenly intimidated. Tug slips his arm around her shoulders for confidence.

TUG
 No sweat. You could do better with
 a seeing-eye dog than what we've
 been watching.

Into college game action with Bertha umpiring at first base. The college players and coaches are determined to make life as miserable as possible for her.

HOME COACH
 Get that female out of here,
 Wendelstedt.

VISITING COACH
 We're trying to play a game. What
 is this, a three-ring circus?

And more. But the explosion comes when Bertha calls a runner out at first on a close play. He charges her. His coach charges her. Everyone is shouting and yelling.

(CONTINUED)

PLAYER

What? Are you as blind as you are stupid?

COACH

You dumb broad. You ignorant broad. He beat it five feet.

BERTHA

Hey, it was a bang-bang play. Something your wives could refresh your memories about.

Tug is standing in the midst of other umpiring students, all shouting, supporting Bertha.

TUG AND STUDENTS

She called it right! Get off her case. Go back home if you don't like it!

On the field the onslaught continues, player and coach literally jumping in circles around Bertha, who cannot escape the brutal assault.

PLAYER

What do you think we're doing out here, anyway? Playing dolls? We're trying to win a game.

COACH

That's the worst call I've ever seen. What are you, a lesbian?

BERTHA MAE

After seeing you, I'm considering it.

Mike Sherzer and John Hipperson start to move for the field, but they are too late as The Mad Gull is in motion again. Tug, like a swarm of hornets, heads onto the field. There is a rising cheer from the students.

The Coach is screaming into Bertha's face when BOOM! Tug is there, his strong hands clenching and twisting the Coach's uniform into a wringer around his neck. Stunned and fearful, the man is gasping and speechless.

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Just what the hell do you think
you're doing, you simple-minded
idiot? You think you can get away
with that because she's a woman?

Tug snaps loose of his grip and sends the Coach sprawling.
Tug looms over him.

TUG (cont'd)

You came here to play ball, so play
ball! That call wasn't even close.
Get out of here.

The nearly two hundred umpiring students are on their feet
in a rousing, victorious, hooting, howling ovation. Total
and red-faced embarrassment for the players and coaches.
Truly a moment for the umpires.

Tug is the hero of the moment as he "struts" from the field,
head held high.

Kristi tries to control her excitement and glee, sitting in
the midst of the "dignified" Association people. She cannot,
jumps to her feet.

KRISTI

That-a-way, Tugwell! Kick some ass!

Kristi catches herself, blushes, and sits back down
embarrassed.

142 INT. - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

142

WENDELSTEDT

Tomorrow's the rulebook exam. I
suggest plenty of sleep, and most
importantly, relax. Good luck.

143 INT. - KRISTI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM TO EXT. - VERANDA - DAWN

143

Snuggled against Tug, Kristi is sound asleep. Tug is lying
awake, staring fixedly at the ceiling. He slips Kristi's arm
from around him gently, starts to get up.

ON THE VERANDA Tug comes out, moves for the chaise lounge.
He is wearing only his pants, carrying a "Complete Rulebook
of Baseball" manual. He sits, opens the book.

(CONTINUED)

The sun is only half exposed on the Atlantic horizon. Tug is reading, thumbing pages, memorizing --

He hears Kristi, quickly stuffs the rulebook under his legs, sits as if just enjoying the eastern shore at dawn --

Kristi, clad sensuously in a thin robe, curls sleepily onto his lap, ducks herself against him. She then pulls back, looks him lovingly in the eyes, snuggles back again, hugs herself close.

KRISTI

Yes, I would. I would love you no matter what you were.

As if answering his unspoken question, "Even if I were an umpire?" Tug slips his arms around her, holds her to him.

144 INT. - CLASSROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

144

Other students are struggling somewhat with the exam. Tug is penciling through it question after question. He finishes, smiles, takes it to the front of the classroom where Wendelstedt and Mike Sherzer are watching over the examination process.

WENDELSTEDT

(quietly)

How'd you do?

TUG

(gesturing with hands)

SAAA-AFE.

WENDELSTEDT

Good.

The answer Tug didn't not expect. He smiles. They smile. Tug wends his way out of the classroom.

145 EXT. - CLASSROOM - MORNING

145

Kristi is waiting. Tug approaches.

KRISTI

Well?

(CONTINUED)

TUG

Well, what?

Meaning he killed the exam. Kristi gives him a kiss. Carol approaches, passes.

CAROL

Must be love.

KRISTI

Jealous?

CAROL

Hell, yes.

Kristi and Tug stand together as Carol just moves right on past. They look at each other.

TUG AND KRISTI

(together)

Good.

146

EXT. - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

146

And more student umpired college game action, with Tug watching and agonizing from the sidelines or bleachers. He is also seen to exchange affectionate looks with the now constantly bubbly Kristi, who is always seated with Carol in their "evaluator" positions.

TUG

(one play)

You can't call an Infield Fly on a borderline pop-up. You call it Infield Fly if fair.

(another time)

One base. One base, one base! God damn it, Henderson. One base on first overthrow with runners moving.

(another time)

You got the count screwed up. It's three-and-two. Thurber, pay attention. Wake up!

(another play)

(multiple computer beeps)

(CONTINUED)

(another play)
 Well I'll be (beeps) if I ever saw
 anything so (beeps) in my entire
 (beeps) life!!

Tug plunks back in his seat, lays his head back and closes his eyes in sheer aggravation. Hipperson slips in to sit next to him.

HIPPERSON
 You're pretty hard on these boys,
 Tugwell.

TUG
 Only when they deserve it.

HIPPERSON
 I suppose you could do better?

TUG
 A three-peckered goat could do
 better, Hipperson, with a virgin
 mole.

HIPPERSON
 We'll soon see. You've got the
 plate for the two o'clock game.

TUG
 Florida/Florida State?!

HIPPERSON
 (he grins)
 That's the one, hot shot.

Hipperson stands, walks away. Tug looks immediately for Kristi and --

She is smiling back from her distant bleacher seat and suddenly something very interesting is happening because -- It is "a happening."

147 EXT. - VARIOUS SHOTS CONTINUE - ESTABLISHING

147

that students, instructors, college players and coaches, even bus drivers are all converging on Diamond 3

148 INT./EXT. - INTERCUT

148

Tug in the Montreal Expos' dressing room slowly, ritualistically attiring himself in the home plate umpire's uniform, including the National League "inside" chest protector --

Tug pulls on a sock and --

More "bodies" have amassed around Diamond 3. The bleachers are nearly full already --

Tug is lacing on his baseball shoes --

More "bodies" surround Diamond 3 in anticipation. The bleachers are overflowing, the sidelines are becoming two and three deep and --

Tug is strapping on a shin guard --

No one is anywhere except at Diamond 3 except --

Tug, who is now completely dressed. He picks up the facemask, starts to move out of the locker room. He catches his own reflection in the mirror as he passes, stops, looks. He seems satisfied. He tries a couple of "stern" expressions. Again he seems satisfied. He flashes his thumb.

TUG

You're outta there!

He pans his palms.

TUG (cont'd)

No, no, he's there! Safe!

Tug straightens, takes a deep breath. He is ready.

SEQUENCE CONTINUED: Tug, fully attired as an umpire now, exits the locker room and starts the long walk for Diamond 3.

On the field at Diamond 3 the college players are warming up. They suddenly begin stopping, heads turning.

In the bleachers and along the sidelines heads are turning.

Tug strides evenly, confidently, bends, passes through the

(CONTINUED)

shortened field entrance -- arrives.

Kristi is standing, watching nervously, looking around her for the reactions of others.

Scott and Bertha Mae are standing. Scott cups his hands to his mouth:

SCOTT

Give 'em hell, Tugwell!

Suddenly the umpiring students see in full view what they have been waiting for. The Mad Gull. In blue. They rise in a rousing cheer.

Hipperson, Wendelstedt, Sherzer, and other instructors exchange looks. They did not expect all this --

149

EXT. - FAVORING TUG

149

as he arrives at home plate. He is all business.

TUG

(to Florida catcher)

How many warm-ups has he had?

FLORIDA CATCHER

(eyeing Tug)

Enough.

TUG

Coming down!

The Florida catcher takes the next warm-up toss, stands and hurls through to second base as --

Tug moves around, pulls the whisk broom from his back pocket and bends to brush off the plate. He looks up INTO SHOT AND

CAMERA MOVES TO MEDIUM -- FAVORING KRISTI in the stands -- which somehow suddenly look different. She stands, cups her hands to her mouth.

KRISTI

YOU'RE A BUM, TUGWELL!!!

(CONTINUED)

TUG
(to himself)
I love you, too.

Close on Tug protecting a hint of a grin as he looks back again.

Close intercut that their eyes have met, and pull back to reveal that they are not on the field and in the stands at the school, they are at San Diego Stadium for a night game, and only seconds away from the first pitch of a Padres/Giant game. Tug is attired handsomely in his home plate umpire's uniform.

In the stands, a fan cups his hands to his mouth.

FAN #1
Come on, you idiot, we haven't got
all night.

A second fan extends a pair of thick-lens glasses.

FAN #2
Here, Tugwell, maybe these will
help.

The camera finds Kristi again, laughing with the Padre supporters surrounding her.

And back to home plate as Billy Braxton steps forward. He is dressed in the San Francisco Giants uniform, and is their leadoff hitter. Billy is tickled, grinning as he bends and stretches, takes a practice swing or two while loosening up. The Padres catcher is squatting impatiently, taking a last warm-up pitch from the San Diego pitcher.

PADRE CATCHER
Let's go, ump. With any luck and a
tail wind, we'll beat curfew.

TUG
I'm getting tired of YOUR tail
wind.

There is a moment of understanding, as Billy's eyes meet with Tug's.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Finally made it to the big leagues,
huh, Tugwell?

TUG

Sure did, Bonus Baby, and I like
'em low and away, so you better get
that lumber off'a your shoulder.

Billy's eyes are gleaming. He nods off, indicating behind
Tug.

BILLY

You also still like birds, I see.

Confused, Tug turns to look.

TUG

Oh [computer tones]!

Lumbering directly at Tug across the field is the KGB
CHICKEN. Gangling and gawking and squawking, the hilarious
"chicken" dances circles around Tug, who turns, tries to
keep himself face-to-face with the huge feathery bird --

Much to the delight of the howling San Diego fans.

Kristi is in hysterics.

Tug tries to chase the "chicken" away. The chicken runs. Tug
turns back and the chicken follows him again. Tug turns back
and the chicken runs. There is no getting rid of this crazy
"animal" --

TUG

I'll kick you out of the game if
you don't get out of here!

KGB CHICKEN

You can't kick a chicken out of a
baseball game!

TUG

(the understood gesture)

GET PLUCKED!!

The KGB Chicken dances furiously around Tug, throwing a
"tantrum," kicking dirt on his pants' legs, jumping up and

(CONTINUED)

down. Finally, the chicken turns to "strut" away. Relieved, Tug moves back for his position behind the plate, tries to restore order:

TUG

All right! LET'S PLAY BALL!!!

(realizes)

[Many, many computer tones]!!!

LONG ANGLE OF THE KGB CHICKEN with his leg lifted at Tug, like a dog might to a fire hydrant. Tug is just standing, helpless and grinning.

FREEZE FRAME

THE END