

HOUND DOGS

By

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Baseball is ninety-percent mental. The other half is physical.

--Yogi Berra

TEN MILLION MOTHS and bugs and mosquitoes and all manner of flying creatures swarm around a set of outdoor lights in the night sky. Distant organ music accompanies. It's another sticky spring night in Nashville...and we're--

THURSDAY

EXT. A BASEBALL PARK -- NIGHT

HIT THE MUSIC HARD--Cheesy organ vibes fill the air. Mostly empty seats in a decrepit ballpark. A couple thousand fans are standing and singing--it's the seventh inning stretch.

FANS (SINGING)

Take me out to the ballgame...

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIST'S BOOTH -- NIGHT

MARTY CROWLEY, 35, plays an old Hammond B-3 with flair. Endlessly upbeat, endlessly spinning, he possesses quintessential American hopefulness--he sees the upside, the future, the dream. He's also the General Manager of the AAA Nashville Hound Dogs Baseball Club (for now, anyway). There's a restless, sexy, unknown quality to him.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

MARTY (SINGING)

...take me out to the crowd.

Standing nearby with a folder of papers to sign is his secretary/right arm, MAYBIRD STRAWN, 27. A tad overweight but slightly delicious--she hides her crush on her boss.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

A young pitcher smokes a cig, watching. This is FRANKIE FOSTER, 24--supremely confident, always on the make, wired.

CROWD (SINGING)

Buy me some peanuts and  
crackerjacks...

FRANKIE'S P.O.V. THE MASCOT posing for pix with a family.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

The team mascot, HARRY HOUND, dances and poses for pictures with a family.

CROWD (SINGING)

I don't care if I ever get back...

CLOSE ON THE MASCOT--Harry Hound has ONE ARM around the kids and the OTHER ARM around Mom.

CLOSE ON MOM--A bit too much cleavage for a ballpark mom. \*

HARRY HOUND'S P.O.V.--Through the mouth of the dog. Down the cleavage of mom. \*  
\*

HARRY HOUND

Momma. Whoaa...

Harry squeezes in, ARM AROUND MOM'S WAIST, a little snug. She doesn't object. The kids squeeze in tight.

THE DAD

Everybody smile!

HARRY HOUND (V.O.)

I'm smilin', Dad...

CROWD (SINGING)

...peanuts and crackerjacks...

His hand roams.

MOM

Hey...

HARRY HOUND

Sorry...a little too close.

MOM

Maybe not.

CROWD (SINGING)

...I don't care if I ever get back...

MOM

I saw you with Frankie Foster at Tootsies one night. You're a good lookin' guy--

HARRY HOUND

Meet me there after the game.

MOM

I've got kids. Can't you see?

HARRY HOUND

What's your name?

DOG MOUTH P.O.V.--Harry's eyes meet with Mom's.

Mom stares back. She's desperately unhappy, pretty, lost, and mom-like. A devastating combination.

CROWD (SINGING)

Let me root, root, root for the home  
team...if they don't win--

\*

MOM

Judy. Just Judy. You know there  
are three mascots in the baseball  
Hall of Fame at Cooperstown and you've  
got what it takes--

\*

\*

\*

\*

HARRY HOUND

I know, I know--Ya really think I  
got the stuff? Can I have your phone  
number? Judy?!

\*

\*

SHE TURNS to rejoin her family as the chorus ends, and--  
Harry TURNS to the crowd without missing a beat, leading  
them in song with gusto, as if nothing's happened.

\*

HARRY HOUND (SINGING) (CONT'D)

One more time! Take me out...

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

"CASH" ADAMS, 23, combs his hair in the mirror--a face off a  
G.Q. cover. He feigns arrogance for its entertainment value--  
but some of it's real. DEWITT JONES, 31, black, studies his  
batting stance in a mirror, as a few PLAYERS mingle.

\*

DEWITT

Cash, ever get tired of the view?

CASH

It's not about me--it's about respect  
for the game. I'm going to the bigs,  
'Witt, and my heater, my deuce, my  
splitter, the way I dress--my entire  
gestalt--is already "big league."

\*

\*

DEWITT

Gestalt my ass...  
(sudden shift)  
Cash, man, Big Money, I need your  
help--can you watch?

Cash FOLLOWS Dewitt out of the locker room--

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE STANDS -- NIGHT

A net hangs, and BATBOY with a bag of balls sits waiting. Dewitt takes his stance again. Cash studies him, as--

DEWITT  
My mechanics are off--  
(to batboy)  
Okay. Go.

The boy LOBS A BALL--Dewitt SWINGS AND RIPS it into the net.

CASH  
Your elbow's flying. Looks like a  
chicken wing.

DEWITT  
Chicken wing?

The Batboy FLIPS another ball from the side--Dewitt RIFLES a line drive into the net.

CASH  
You stepped in the bucket.

Another ball is FLIPPED. Another SWING.

CASH (CONT'D)  
You're bailin' out.

DEWITT  
Fuck me! Chicken wingin', bucket'  
steppin, black ass bailin'--and I'm  
listening to a pitcher! Whatta you  
know about hitting?

CASH  
You're thinking too much. Can't  
think and hit. All great hitters  
are stupid--except Tony Gwynn and  
Ted Williams.

DEWITT  
Get stupid?

CASH  
Yeah. Get really stupid.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORGANIST'S BOOTH -- NIGHT

Marty's big finish--the crowd singing along...

MARTY (SINGING)  
 ...one, two, three strikes you're  
 out at the old, ballgame!  
 (beat)  
 Play ball!

Marty RISES quickly and is all business--the ultimate multi-tasking plate spinner. She hands him a toilet plunger.

MAYBIRD  
 I need some checks signed, boss, and  
 the plumbing's backed up in the  
 ladies' room and--

They're off walking, signing checks as he walks.

MARTY  
 I think I've gotta pick up the tempo  
 on the song, ya think? Bad as this  
 team is--sounds like a funeral dirge.

MAYBIRD  
 Kick in some allegro--'at'll do it.

MARTY  
 Mas allegro...good call. Scoreboard  
 lights are still out?

MAYBIRD  
 Workin' on it--

They turn and are now--

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK BEHIND THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Marty's whirling dervish act heads into the ladies room.

INT. LADIES BATHROOM -- NIGHT -- CONTINUOUS

Marty plunges an overflowing toilet fearlessly.

MAYBIRD  
 One more thing, Mr. Crowley--Reverend  
 Davis from First Baptist is in your  
 office and he's a little steamed...

MARTY  
 About?

REV. DAVIS (O.S.)  
 Vasectomy Night?! Saturday?!

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

REVEREND DAVIS, 45, confronts Marty in his office overlooking the field as the game continues. In the b.g. through a glass we see the TEAM ACCOUNTANT talking to Maybird, finally handing her a metal strongbox.

REV. DAVIS

What in the good Lord's name is  
Vasectomy Night?!

MARTY

We draw ten tickets out of a hat and  
the ten winners get a free vasectomy  
courtesy of the Nashville Free Clinic--  
gonna be a big crowd.

REV. DAVIS

But a highly inappropriate promotion.

MARTY

As the General Manager, if I don't  
put asses in seats, I'm outta work.

REV. DAVIS

I'm trying to put asses in Heaven,  
Mr. Crowley. It's a higher calling.  
(turns to leave)  
See you in team chapel tomorrow?

MARTY

Probably not.

The Reverend EXITS without responding--Maybird enters carrying the box which she hands to Marty.

MAYBIRD

Attendance--little over four thousand.  
Gate--fifty one thousand, eight  
hundred and six.

He OPENS the box with a key, checks the accounting record and sees the neatly bundled cash, and as he talks he OPENS A WALL SAFE and deposits the night's receipts.

His cell rings--he answers and is caught off guard.

MARTY (ON PHONE)

Marty here...

(beat, alarm)

Jack? Big Jack Barnett? How'd you  
get this number?!

(to Maybird)

Private.

\*



Maybird scurries out the door--and looks back.

MAYBIRD'S P.O.V. THROUGH THE GLASS at Marty on the phone. Agitated, he's screaming at Jack, whoever that is--and when he finally hangs up, she re-enters the office, concerned.

MAYBIRD

You okay?

MARTY

Fine.

She touches his hand softly--an invitation.

MAYBIRD

I'm here for you, y'know...

MARTY

(removes her hand)

I'm your boss and whatever you're feeling stops now.

MAYBIRD

I worry about you. I see you yelling. You get strange calls and shush me outta the room. Should I be worried?

MARTY

No.

MAYBIRD

You can tell me...

MARTY

Maybird, lighten up...

MAYBIRD

But I heard things--

\*

\*

She's not going away, so he stops and makes a speech.

\*

MARTY

(forcefully)

I've had some issues but they're under control now. I barely drink, lay off the weed, and avoid gambling at all costs--

MAYBIRD

I care about you--

\*

MARTY

--and I'm certainly not having an office romance with a woman young enough to be my daughter.

MAYBIRD

I'm old in certain ways...

MARTY

Maybird! This job saved my life and I'm gonna turn around this stinking franchise--

(points to field)

You imagine what I could do in marketing with a big league team and a budget?

\*  
\*

MAYBIRD

You'd be great--

MARTY

My hero isn't Mickey Mantle or Sandy Koufax. It's Bill Veeck--the greatest general manager who ever lived--back in the day--

(quickly, excited)

He pinch hit a midget, he invented the exploding scoreboard, he ran the game like a business but turned it into a show--decades ahead of his time! He was a poet and a philosopher and carnival barker!

\*  
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\*

MAYBIRD

Like you! You're a Renaissance Man in a post modern world and the ballpark is your canvas!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

MARTY

I see the Sistine Chapel before paint.

\*  
\*

He makes a sweeping gesture of the decrepit ballpark, just as a CONCESSION WORKER enters, distraught.

CONCESSION WORKER

Hey, Boss, the wieners got mold all over 'em and there's rats in the buns.

Beat. Marty regathers himself, and exits smiling, in charge.

MARTY

Fuck. I gotta do everything?

CLOSE ON MAYBIRD as Marty exits--she's more smitten than ever.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

A Latin player, CHICO RAYAL, 22, tries to light a fire in the moribund dugout--he GRABS his bat from the rack.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)  
 Not too late, a little rally, eh,  
 put some hits together we go home...  
 (re: the silent dugout)  
 Why so quiet here?

\*

P.O.V. A BATTER POPS UP--ONE OUT.

The Manager, JOE WATTS, 40's, black, a lifer in baseball, musters enthusiasm. Known as SKIP, short for "Skipper."

SKIP  
 Bing, bing, bing--never too late.

P.O.V. ANOTHER BATTER GROUNDS OUT WEAKLY--TWO OUTS.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' BULLPEN -- NIGHT

Frankie has a VANDERBILT COED in his web.

P.O.V. THE HOUNDS BATTER SINGLES UP THE MIDDLE.

FRANKIE  
 Base hit...

\*

VANDY GIRL  
 But it's a Hound Dog hit? It's us!

FRANKIE  
 I want this game over with, baby, so  
 you an' I can do some damage...

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

The flatline flickers to life as Chico steps to the plate.

OTHER LATIN PLAYER (IN SPANISH)  
 (to Chico at bat)  
 Take his breakin' shit the other  
 way!

CUT TO:

EXT. WIVES' SECTION OF THE STANDS -- NIGHT

A few WIVES and SEVERAL GIRLFRIENDS watch from an assigned area--there's a grinding routine to it all. A beautiful black woman, 30, VICKIE JONES, and her five year old son, ISAIHAH, watch--the boy sees his father.

P.O.V. ON DECK CIRCLE--DEWITT TAKES HIS PRACTICE SWINGS.

ISAIHAH

Daddy! Hit a homer! Momma why hasn't  
Daddy hit a homer for awhile?

\*  
\*

VICKIE

Your Daddy's having a hard time,  
sweetheart.

\*  
\*

ISAIHAH

Why?

\*  
\*

VICKIE

Sometimes grownups have hard times  
in their jobs and this is Daddy's  
job and he's having...a...hard time.

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\*

CUT TO:

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EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

CHICO RIPS A LINE DRIVE to right center, slides into second base as the lead runner pulls into third.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

Suddenly there's life in the morgue...

SKIP

You da man, 'Witt, your time, baby...  
(to the dugout)  
Little life, eh?

PLAYERS

'Witt, 'on baby, hang one out...

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK - AT THE PLATE -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON Dewitt stepping into the batter's box where the OPPOSING CATCHER seems familiar with him.

DEWITT (TO HIMSELF)

Clear head. No thoughts. Get stupid.

OPPOSING CATCHER

Dewitt. When's the last time you got a hit?

DEWITT

Shut up. \*

OPPOSING CATCHER

No. Really. Last year in Rochester?

DEWITT

I'm 0 for 23 but my head's clear...

OPPOSING CATCHER

Hey, I went 0 for 35 once. Couldn't hit shit. Went psycho. Bought a gun, loaded it, went down to the river, put the barrel right at my head, pulled the trigger. \*

DEWITT

What happened?

OPPOSING CATCHER

I missed. Like I told ya--couldn't hit a freakin' thing that year. \*

DEWITT

Joke...right? \*

OPPOSING CATCHER

Fastball down the gut--

THE PITCHER FIRES a fastball down the middle.

UMP

Strike one.

OPPOSING CATCHER

Man, that was teed up. Was a time you jacked that. Here comes a horseshit deuce--you can crush it.

DEWITT

My head's clear.

HANGING CURVEBALL--Easily hittable.

UMP

Strike two.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

The players are dying for him--they know a slump is hell.

CASH  
Bat off the shoulders, homes! This  
guy throws shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. WIVES' SECTION OF THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Vickie can barely watch. Isaiah is full of hope.

ISAIAH  
He's gonna do it--Dad's gettin' out  
of his slump. Do it for me, Daddy!

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK - AT THE PLATE -- NIGHT

FASTBALL DOWN THE MIDDLE--the bat stays on Dewitt's shoulder.

UMP  
Strike three.

Dewitt stands there--drained of life. Game over. And as  
the PLAYERS LEAVE THE FIELD, a deeply distraught Dewitt walks  
to the Hounds' dugout as Chico heads there from second base.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)  
Swing the damn bat, man! \*

DEWITT  
Go to hell, ya little Mexican faggot! \*

CHICO  
I Dominican!

AND THE TWO MEN ATTACK each other right on the field--a fist  
fight to the death among team members.

FANS LEAVING THE PARK stop to watch--

CHICO (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)  
You swing like an old lady!

DEWITT  
Talk English you midget prick!

BANG! BANG! They throw punches with a purpose. Soon they're  
rolling around on the infield dirt in mortal combat.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Marty whirls to see the fight.

MARTY

Christ...

Maybird ANSWERS a phone in the b.g., offers it to Marty.

MAYBIRD

Iris Hammer. She's pissed. \*

MARTY (ON PHONE)

Iris Hammer, delighted, I-- \*

(cut off rudely)

--I'll be right over.

(hangs up, to Maybird)

We got a problem.

MAYBIRD

You met Iris Hammer? \*

MARTY

Not yet.

MAYBIRD

Good luck.

What does that mean?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

Players shove through the dugout into the tunnel to the locker room, driven by Skip who's just broken up the fight.

SKIP

Everybody in the clubhouse! Team meeting!

Cash taps Chico, who's irate--speaking in gardener's Spanish.

CASH (IN SPANISH)

No problem, man. Not your fault.

Dewitt's all screwed up right \*

now...hang in there...

Chico nods--seems to appreciate some gringo sympathy, and--

WE FOLLOW the Hound Dog mascot in the crowd of players through the MAZE of ancient tunnels under the stands, until--

CUT TO:

INT. MASCOT'S CUBICLE UNDER THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Harry's in the Mascot's hovel--a locker, a bench, not much else. He OPENS the door to the clubhouse a crack, peeks in.

DOG MOUTH P.O.V.--Skip holds court for the players.

SKIP

Teamwork?! Teamwork?! I'm gonna  
tell you about teamwork.

Harry TAKES OFF the Hound Dog head and LIGHTS A JOINT and  
INHALES deeply.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

The players are seated quietly, uniforms half off.

SKIP

So Dewitt, my third baseman, and  
Chico, my shortstop--hate each other.  
(no response)

It's okay. I don't care if every  
man in this room hates the guts of  
every other man in this room. I  
don't care if you eat or drink  
together or play footsie with each  
other, or if you screw each other's  
wives and girlfriends.

\*

CLOSE ON FRANKIE, to himself.

FRANKIE

(softly)  
Cool...

SKIP

All I care about is what happens  
between the lines. I don't get to  
the show unless I win a lotta games  
in the minors and the word spreads  
that I'm a helluva guy but a tough  
guy. *A baseball man.*

(beat)

But I know all you care about is  
your individual statistics--*gotta*  
*get some eye poppin' stats*--live an'  
die for your stats. Am I right?

PAN THE ROOM--They know he's right.



SKIP (CONT'D)

Well...there is one thing we all share in common.

(beat)

We all want to get the hell outta Nashville.

\*

PAN THE ROOM--More nods of agreement.

SKIP (CONT'D)

So. You should know that every night all your precious stats go into the computer and tomorrow morning the Big League Chief of Scouting studies every pitch, every at bat--every time you wipe your ass, we got a statistic for it...

(beat)

But also, every night, I file a report on every damn one of you. Who's a dickhead and who's got the stuff to make it? And they care what I say 'cause they don't want to bring some jagoff up there to embarrass 'em.

\*

\*

\*

(beat)

We work together? Huh? You give me some wins, I file some good reports.

PAN THE ROOM AGAIN--Makes sense.

SKIP (CONT'D)

You know what that's called?

(beat)

Teamwork.

(smiles)

Now shower up and get the hell outta this dump...Cash--stick your head in my office.

\*

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Skip's stressed in his cubicle sized "office."

SKIP

Jagoffs stressin' me out...

\*

Skip opens a drawer and pulls out a bag with a large ball of yarn and knitting needles--and he begins knitting. The door opens, Cash sticks his head in--he sees the knitting and tries to avoid commenting, at first.

CASH

Skip?

SKIP

The G.M. for the big club and the Chief of Scouting are coming down Saturday night to watch you pitch. You have a good outing Saturday night, you'll be in the major leagues Sunday.

CASH

I'll be ready.  
(re: knitting)  
I gotta ask.

SKIP

Doc said I gotta bring down my blood pressure--this shit'll do it. The whole ballclub could benefit.

CASH

Right...

Cash leaves, shaking his head--Skip continues knitting.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATED MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- NIGHT \*

Marty at the intercom, from his car.

MARTY

Marty Crowley for Iris Hammer. \*

VOICE

Come right up.

The GIANT IRON GATE swings open to reveal an enormous southern mansion on a hill, overlooking half of Tennessee.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- NIGHT \*

IRIS HAMMER, 45, looks less--she's quite attractive and much younger than her recently deceased husband. POURS two scotches, hands one to Marty. \*

IRIS HAMMER \*

Reverend Davis called me about Vasectomy Night. I had no idea and frankly I'm appalled.

MARTY

The Nashville Free Clinic--

IRIS HAMMER \*

--a fine organization, but--

MARTY

Respectfully, Ma'am, I think a little progressive thought in Nashville--

IRIS HAMMER \*

You're new here, aren't you? Where did you come from?

MARTY

I was in Sports Management in Florida.

IRIS HAMMER \*

Baseball?

MARTY

Racing.

IRIS HAMMER \*

(warming)

Horses? I'm going to Louisville next week for the Derby--my husband and I never missed the Derby and I'm going in his memory. I love the horses.

MARTY

I ran a dog track outside of Tampa.

She looks at him with some mix of disdain and fascination.

IRIS HAMMER \*

My husband hired you from a dog track?

MARTY

I'm just grateful for the opportunity. Your husband was an amazing--

IRIS HAMMER \*

--Colon cancer. Went quick. You like this Scotch?

MARTY

I'm more of a bourbon guy--

She POURS two new drinks from a different bottle.

IRIS HAMMER \*

Baby piss. So I guess I'm now owner of the Nashville Hound Dogs--you have any issues with me?

MARTY

No...

IRIS HAMMER

I'm a lifelong Baptist. I am also Chairman of the Board of the Nashville Symphony, Board member of the Art Museum, the Music Academy, the ballet--it's what wives of rich guys do.

(tastes the Scotch)

I get along with everybody.

MARTY

Your reputation is far reaching--

IRIS HAMMER

Oh don't patronize me, so when I get a call from the President of the Baptist Church Association of Greater Nashville--it rocks my world.

MARTY

I can't dump Vasectomy Night--the Clinic has worked hard for--

IRIS HAMMER

Keep the Clinic--find another medical problem. Something that doesn't conjure up images of a knife in a scrotum.

She drinks deeply. He contemplates that image.

MARTY

But we're expecting a big crowd and the promo's in two days?

IRIS HAMMER

Two words. *Knife. Scrotum.*

MARTY

I don't need another--

IRIS HAMMER

Yes you do.

She smiles--one formidable dame. He drinks.

CUT TO:

INT. DEWITT JONES' APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Dewitt and Vickie ENTER--he carries their sleeping son, she carries a bag of fast food. Nothing is said. He LAYS DOWN his son on a couch, covers him with a blanket.

She PUTS DOWN place settings on the table and lays out the hamburgers and fries as if it were a fancy meal. She UNSCREWS a half finished bottle of red wine and pours two glasses.

THEY SIT down, still silent.

DEWITT  
Pitch down the middle--I couldn't  
pull the trigger.

VICKIE  
Let's not talk about it.

DEWITT  
I need to talk--

VICKIE  
Me too.

DEWITT  
Okay, you first--

She takes a deep breath, and with great difficulty.

VICKIE  
I need to leave. I need to go back.  
To L.A. with Isaiah.

DEWITT  
You what?

VICKIE  
I've got a job offer--I can teach  
and finish my credential on line.

DEWITT  
'Cause I'm not hitting?

VICKIE  
No.

DEWITT  
Hey, I hang out a couple ropes, they  
start falling in and before you know  
it I'm stroking the ball--

VICKIE  
I don't care what you're hitting.

DEWITT  
You don't care?

VICKIE  
I do care. Of course I care.

DEWITT

I'm gonna start hitting, it's gonna work out--I just need your support right now!

\*

VICKIE

Support? Did you say *support*? I've followed you for twelve years, we've lived in twenty-one cities in eight states not counting spring training and winter ball and the year in the Korean League--lousy apartment to lousy apartment, you on the road half the time, me either desperately lonely or worried sick that you might not get a hit because then you turn into a walking landmine. And for the last five years, trying to raise him--

(points to Isaiah)

--like a transient.

DEWITT

They're gonna release me. I can smell it.

VICKIE

Maybe it's time to give it up.

DEWITT

I'm a phone call away from the bigs!

VICKIE

Dewitt, that phone call ain't coming.

\*

DEWITT

What can I do besides baseball?

\*

VICKIE

(without rancor)

I don't know.

Dead silence. He doesn't know either.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHECK CASHING STOREFRONT -- NIGHT

CHICO ENTERS with two Latin players.

INT. CHECK CASHING STOREFRONT -- CONTINUOUS -- NIGHT

Chico at the window. The LARGE FEMALE CLERK stares back.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)  
 No hablo ingles...I...I...  
 (holds up check)  
 I got ripped off once and the money  
 never got home!

CLERK  
 You got to get a translator. Trans-  
Lay--Tore. No hablo Spanish.

Chico scrambles through his pocket dictionary.

CHICO  
 Check...cash...send...home.

The three players HAND HER addresses and checks.

CLERK  
 You boys Hound Dogs?

CHICO  
 Si, si...

CLERK  
 You playin' like caca de vaca this  
 year...comprende?

CHICO (IN SPANISH)  
 (smiles)  
 Kiss my ass. \*

CLERK  
 (uncomprehending)  
 Glad you didn't take it personal.  
 Dominican Republic. I can do this.

The transaction begins--the money's headed home.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHECK CASHING STOREFRONT -- NIGHT

As the Latin Players leave, all SNAP ON their cells, walk  
 and talk to their shared rental car.

CHICO (ON PHONE)  
 (in Spanish)  
 Poppa? How you doin'? I'm starting  
 to hit pretty good. Two hits tonight.  
 I'll be in the big leagues if I keep  
 hitting...love you too...call you  
 Saturday night...

LATIN PLAYER #1 (IN SPANISH)  
 Things good, eh, Chic'?

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

I need a woman.

LATIN PLAYER #1 (IN SPANISH)

Bad idea, man, no Latinas in  
Tennessee...

\*  
\*

LATIN PLAYER #2 (IN SPANISH)

They hang you from a tree, hombre,  
by your dick.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

I need a woman...

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE -- NIGHT

A booming city of the New South--high rises, bright lights,  
and lots of building cranes. It's a big league city with a  
minor league team and ballpark.

CRANE DOWN reveals another universe--a block of old clubs  
and bars, unchanged in fifty years. Like the ballpark, it's  
a time warp in a bustling city. The shot lands on the  
exterior of a raucous old joint--TOOTSIE'S CLUB.

\*

CUT TO:

INT. TOOTSIE'S CLUB -- NIGHT

A LIVE BAND plays as a hot blonde tends bar, GINGER, 30.  
Southern and real, she flirts just enough to double her tips  
without being cheap. She shoves drinks at two ballplayers--  
ANDY, 37, a lifer in the minors, and "ROOK," 21, the rookie.

\*

GINGER

On the house, Hound Dogs--chin up,  
eh? Peaks and valleys. You're in a  
valley...

IN THE CORNER--Frankie and Harry work the Vanderbilt coed  
and her GIRLFRIEND--the girls laugh--they all LEAVE together,  
passing Cash as he enters and sits next to Andy and Rook.

CASH

Gents...who's the hottie?

ANDY

Untouchable--everyone's tried.

CASH

She got a name?



ANDY

Ginger.

CASH

Hundred bucks says she goes home  
with me.

ANDY

You're on.

CASH

Tanqueray martini, dry, extra olives.

GINGER

This is more of a Jack Daniels joint.  
You a tourist?

CASH

I'm a Hound Dog.

GINGER

A dog's a dog to me...

CASH

What time you get off work? \*

GINGER

You think you got what it takes?  
I'm pretty demanding.

CASH

Like how?

GINGER

Insatiable.

CASH

Try me.

GINGER

Why not? \*

Andy and Rook stare in disbelief, and Ginger calls out to  
the other BARKEEP, punching her time card as she does.

GINGER (CONT'D)

I'm outta here. This big ol' hoss  
thinks he's got the goods.

Ginger puts on a Levis jacket, grabs her guitar case from  
behind the bar, and leaves Tootsie's with Cash.

Andy, stunned, holds out a C-note for Cash as he EXITS.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSIC ROW -- NIGHT

Cash hands Ginger the hundred--over a big, shared laugh--and it's quickly obvious they know each other. Really well. She chatters with excitement.

GINGER

Baby you can't believe it but that big time A & R lady and music producer that came in the other night? They came in again and I worked 'em pretty hard over J.D. and Coke and they agreed to come to see me at the Marriot Hotel Showcase Saturday night.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CASH

I'll be there right after the game, cheering my ass off.

GINGER

These guys could sign me or just get me a song writing gig or something-- I could stop tendin' bar an'--I'm a nervous wreck, Cash...

CASH

(knowingly)

What can we do about that?

GINGER

Just two or three times tonight, sweetie, just two or three...you know how it calms me down...

They can hardly keep their hands off each other as they disappear into the Nashville night.

DISSOLVE TO:

FRIDAY

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NEXT DAY

Rain is falling on the ballpark--a GROUNDS CREW just finishes covering the infield with a tarp.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Marty stares at the field--Maybird's there, and Harry Hound has his feet on the desk. A beat up GUITAR leans nearby.

MAYBIRD

So gettin' your tubes tied didn't go  
down with old lady Hammer, eh?

\*

HARRY HOUND

Old lady? She's a fox.

MARTY

And the fox broomed Vasectomy Night.  
We need something by tomorrow night.

HARRY HOUND

How about Gall Stone night? My Gramma  
had 'em and they were terrible--

MARTY

What if the people with the winning  
tickets don't have gall stones?

HOUND DOG

See, that's why you're the chief.

MARTY

Get your feet off my desk. A big  
league mascot respects authority.

\*

\*

Harry removes his feet.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

CLOSE ON VIDEO GAME--HALO III, the violent kill or be killed  
game of carnage BLASTS in our faces.

PAN THE LOCKER ROOM--A parallel universe of PLAYERS with lap  
tops, GUYS texting, head sets on.

CLOSE ON CASH'S SCREEN--Financial reports flash by, market  
info, stock info--and he races around the world like a broker.

ANOTHER SCREEN--A letter home is composed. "Dear Mom..."

ANOTHER SCREEN--The predictable porn search, of course.

ANOTHER SCREEN--"Human Growth Hormones" from the Caribbean,  
it reads: STRAIGHT TO YOU, DISCREET SHIPPING, PROVEN PRICES.

ANGLE BACK TO THE ONGOING VIDEO GAME--Rook and Andy go head  
to head--as a dozen PLAYERS, half dressed, kill time.

ANDY

Take that shit, Rook and that and  
that and that...

Blam! Blam! Skip glances up from a Sporting News.

SKIP

Nobody's beat Andy in two years,  
Rook, you ain't got a chance...

ANDY

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Like shootin'  
ducks in a barrel, man!

ROOK

Fish in a barrel. Ducks are something  
you get in a row. Y'know--ducks in  
a row? Fish in a barrel. \*

ANDY

Who'd shoot a fish in a barrel?!  
You could net 'em easier. \*

ROOK

Sorry, man, sorry...

ANDY

Rook givin' me shit here...

Rook HANDS Chico the controller and backs off.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

Bring it on, big man...

ANDY

Callin' me fat? Shit, I speak some  
Espanol--let's get it on, Mexican...

ON THE VIDEO SCREEN--The carnage continues. BAM! BAM!

ANDY (CONT'D)

Boom! Boom! Boom! You messin'  
with the king, Chico! \*

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. STREETS OF NASHVILLE -- DAY

A CAB APPROACHES THE BALLPARK in the rain. Dewitt, Vickie,  
son Isaiah in the back seat--luggage in the front and trunk.

DEWITT

Don't tell me it's over--maybe it's  
over for now 'cause of this job thing--  
but it ain't over for real...

VICKIE

I don't know, I'm sayin'...

DEWITT  
When will you know?

VICKIE  
I don't know when I'll know...

The cab PULLS UP to the ballpark. Stops.

DEWITT  
You take care of Momma now, alright?

ISAIAH  
Why are we leaving?

DEWITT  
Gonna be okay. Love you. I'll call.

Dewitt GETS OUT into the rain, HANDS some cash to the CABBIE.

DEWITT (CONT'D)  
Airport.

And he WATCHES the cab drive away in the rain.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Still pouring outside as they work their way through a list of maladies. Maybird is online, reading them off.

HARRY HOUND  
I got a buddy--Joey Two Phones--he's  
a bookie with shingles. How 'bout  
shingles night?  
(cool response)  
No?

MAYBIRD  
Varicose veins?

MARTY  
Same problem as gall stones...

MAYBIRD  
Why did Iris Hammer's husband croak? \*

MARTY  
Maybird, you're a genius.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- DAY \*

The rain continues to pour outside as tea is served.

IRIS HAMMER \*  
 Colonoscopy Night?! Have you lost  
 your mind?

MARTY  
 Everyone who comes to the game buys  
 a program--throughout the game we  
 draw twenty-five numbers and the  
 Nashville Free Clinic gives away  
 twenty-five free colonoscopies.

IRIS HAMMER \*  
 This is not the sort of thing I do.

MARTY  
 Think of it as a public service.

IRIS HAMMER \*  
 It still has the *ick* factor. You  
 seem to be drawn to the *ick* factor.  
 What ever happened to Egg Toss Night?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- DAY \*

Umbrella-less in the rain, he walks to his car, climbs in.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTY'S CAR -- DAY

Desperate, wet, pissed off--and undaunted.

MARTY \*  
 Shit.

He gets back out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- DAY \*

He MARCHES back through the rain, KNOCKING loudly at the  
 front door. She appears. He stands in the rain.

MARTY  
 (forcefully)  
 This is not about you nor is it about  
 a baseball game. It is about the  
 legacy of your husband. Tomorrow  
 night you will stand at home plate  
 and announce the formation of the  
 Harvey Hammer Foundation whose sole  
 (MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

purpose is to create awareness and offer free colonoscopies for those who can't afford them, a night in your husband's memory so that another great man does not die before his time.

(no response)

Tomorrow night will be a demonstration that together we can hang a lantern in the darkness.

IRIS HAMMER

Don't gild the lily, Mr. Crowley. \*

MARTY

I am a lily gilder, Ma'am, it's part of my job. And call me Marty.

IRIS HAMMER

Call me Iris Hammer. \*

MARTY

Your late husband felt I could build this franchise into something--

IRIS HAMMER

He felt you needed a job-- \*

MARTY

--but he trusted me with his ballclub. He was a *hands off* kind of guy. I work best that way.

IRIS HAMMER

Well I'm a *hands on* kind of woman, I work best *that* way...Marty. \*

He turns and walks away in the rain as she stares.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL ROOM OFF LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Dewitt studies VIDEO FOOTAGE of his swing in a game. Harry sits watching with him.

HARRY HOUND

Run it again. Next at bat. Next.

Dewitt FAST FORWARDS through a sequence of at bats.

HARRY HOUND (CONT'D)

You're overstriding.

DEWITT  
I'm not overstriding.

HARRY HOUND  
Then don't ask the friggin' mascot. \*

DEWITT  
Okay, okay, calm down. You get any  
tail last night?

HARRY HOUND  
Naw. When I got her to her dorm  
room I confessed that I didn't  
actually *play* for the Hound Dogs--  
but that I was the Hound Dog.  
(beat)  
Said she didn't do mascots.

Dewitt still studies his swing. Chico has stuck his head in  
the doorway, over their shoulders.

DEWITT  
What am I doing wrong?

CHICO  
You got a hitch in your swing. See?

Dewitt replays the tape, studying it.

DEWITT  
Damn. I'm hitching.

CHICO  
I told you.

And Chico is gone.

DEWITT  
(studying screen)  
Harry, look't that--I got a hitch.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Reverend Davis ENTERS, and announces in the chaos--

REV. DAVIS  
Weekly chapel service in half an  
hour--you're all invited...

Frankie ENTERS--and is instantly the provocateur.

FRANKIE  
Am I invited?



REV. DAVIS  
 Everyone's invited. It's non-  
 denominational. Baptists, Methodists,  
 Catholics...even Jews.

Frankie wanders through the tunnel to the dugout door, which reveals the field, covered with a tarp, and continued rain.

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON LAP TOP SCREEN--Stock market report of the day, scrolled to more financial info.

Cash scrolls the screen, studying his investments, when:

Frankie arrives, lights a cigarette, stares at the rain.

CASH  
 That shit'll kill ya...

FRANKIE  
 Thanks, Dad...

CASH  
 None of my business but you ever  
 sleep with the same woman twice?

FRANKIE  
 Try not to--it confuses me.  
 (beat)  
 Look, *pal*...I'm a sex addict. You  
 heard about that, right? It's a  
 disease but as diseases go it's pretty  
 damn good.

CASH  
 You're not a sex addict--you're a  
 horny, undisciplined adolescent in  
 the body of a 23 year old man.

FRANKIE  
 I'm fine with that.

CASH  
 But you're messed up all the time--

\*

FRANKIE  
 I pitch better that way.

CASH  
 Just tryin' to help...

FRANKIE  
 Quit bullshitting around.  
 (MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

We both know there's only two big  
league arms on this horseshit team  
and we both know that tomorrow night  
you're on stage and if you throw  
good, you're going up--

\*  
\*

CASH

So?

FRANKIE

So tomorrow night I hope they turn  
you into a launching pad.

\*

Frankie EXITS. Cash smiles. Skip sticks his head in the  
dugout to announce:

SKIP

Game called. Play two Sunday.

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT ROOM -- NIGHT

EIGHT PLAYERS including Andy, Rook, Dewitt, gather in prayer.

REV. DAVIS

...and as we pray that God's will be  
done, we also ask for continued  
strength in difficult times. Amen.

VOICES

Amen...

REV. DAVIS

Are there any special prayer requests?

ANDY

My mother had an operation yesterday  
an' they cut her open an' sewed her  
right back up--said she's about gone.

REV. DAVIS

Thank you. Any more?

CHICO

Mi hermana...drugs. Bad problemas.

REV. DAVIS

Chico's sister. We'll remember.  
Anything else?

DEWITT

You might put in a word for me. I'm  
kinda strugglin' at the plate.

ANDY  
The mother's O for April. \*

DEWITT  
Go to hell... \*

ANDY  
Tryin' to help you, man.

DEWITT  
I don't rag your ass in chapel, man!

REV. DAVIS  
Relax, gentlemen. Let us pray...  
(head bowed)  
Dear Lord...

They all bow their heads.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- LATE AT NIGHT

The lights are on, the stadium is empty as a MAN WALKS out of left field toward the stands.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- LATE AT NIGHT

The rain has stopped as Marty looks down at the field. There is a stirring in Maybird's loins.

MAYBIRD  
I love the smell of the earth after  
it rains...  
(no response)  
It's so...earthy...and wet...

MARTY  
It's why we have tarps...

MAYBIRD  
(backing off)  
Who's that coming out of left field?

P.O.V. MAN WALKING ACROSS THE FIELD TOWARD US.

MARTY  
Figuratively or literally?  
(recognizes him)  
Oh god...Maybird, need some privacy.

MAYBIRD  
Again?

Slightly unnerved, she grabs her things and leaves, passing  
 "BIG JACK" BARNETT, 40's. He's half charm, half steel.

\*

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

Marty.

MARTY

Big Jack Barnett. How'd ya find me?

\*

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

My job to find folks--still collectin'  
 for the Florida boys.

MARTY

I owe 'em fifteen g's, I know...

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

Twenty. Compound interest's a pig.

\*

(beat)

You still playin' music?

MARTY

Naw. When I went from playin' the B-  
 3 in the house band at the Kennel  
 Club to runnin' the whole damn track--  
 I saw I'd never make it in music.

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

Ya shouldn'ta bet on the friggin'  
 dogs. Nobody bets on the dogs.

\*

\*

MARTY

I don't have the money. I've been  
 digging out of a hole--I pull this  
 gig off I got a shot to get to the  
 big leagues.

\*

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

--A man can be an alkie, junkie, or  
 wife beater an' get to the big  
 leagues. Only one thing he can't  
 have in his closet...

MARTY

I know the rules.

BIG JACK BARNETT

\*

Two words.

MARTY

Pete. Rose.

BIG JACK BARNETT

The big boys are scared shitless  
that if one little ol' riverboat  
gambler gets into the hen house then  
pretty soon the fix is in and the  
whole damn national pastime collapses  
like a house of--can I say *cards*?

MARTY

I'm clean--ain't got down a bet in  
two years and got no desire. Pay  
this one off, I'm a free man.

BIG JACK BARNETT

If I go back with the money, it stays  
a secret.

The phone rings. Marty answers. Big Jack Barnett idly picks  
up the guitar on the floor.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- NIGHT

Iris Hammer in a robe--with scotch and phone.

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)

Marty? Not too late, is it?

MARTY (ON PHONE)

No, no, fine...

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)

I've been praying on this whole thing  
and I believe that God is giving us  
an opportunity to do great things in  
my late husband's name.

MARTY (ON PHONE)

Yes He is...

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)

And so I will see you tomorrow night.

MARTY (ON PHONE)

"Colonoscopy Night" is a go, Iris  
Hammer?

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)

Yes, Marty. And do it with class.

She does look good with that drink in that robe...

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Marty hangs up, having momentarily forgotten his new dilemma.  
Big Jack Barnett picks out chords on the guitar. \*

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
"Colonoscopy Night?"

MARTY  
Oh yeah...

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
You used to have bigger dreams.

MARTY \*  
Come back tomorrow. I need a day.

CUT TO:

INT. TOOTSIE'S CLUB -- NIGHT

Frankie and Harry and two salty vets--MARYJO, 42, and her  
best friend, NORA, 45. The four of them, well lit and wildly \*  
amused with each other, get up and LEAVE TOGETHER. \*

ANGLE TO THE BAR--Ginger's not there as Cash enters,  
approaching a SECOND BARTENDER.

CASH  
Where's Ginger?

SECOND BARTENDER  
(points to ladies rm.)  
Tell her coffee break's over.

Cash heads to the LADIES ROOM, knocks, pushes open the door.

INT. LADIES BATHROOM OF TOOTSIE'S -- NIGHT

Ginger plays her guitar and sings--as Cash enters.

GINGER (SINGING) \*  
*Everyone said my star would shine,* \*  
*Won every competition every time,* \*  
*But the assistants in the music bus,* \*  
*Sure are hard to get by...* \*  
(singing again) \*  
*No one's ever in the office, They* \*  
*lose my number all the time, How can* \*  
*they expect to get their job done,* \*  
*When I'm not even signed.* \*

He claps. \*

GINGER (CONT'D) \*  
It's called "Not Famous Yet." \*

CASH \*  
But we're gettin' there. Ready for \*  
tomorrow?

GINGER \*  
Little nervous. I mean Renee Bell's \*  
comin' with Dann Huff--they're \*  
gigantic in this town. You get what \*  
that could mean? \*

CASH \*  
No more rehearsing in ladies' rooms. \*

A WOMAN ENTERS, notices the scene, heads into a stall unfazed. \*

GINGER \*  
I'm ready, Cash, I'm ready. \*

CASH \*  
And I gotta get some z's tonight so \*  
I just dropped by to say good luck \*  
tomorrow night and to remind myself \*  
how gorgeous you are.

He discreetly blows a kiss and leaves--she returns it...

GINGER \*  
Good luck to you, too...

Ginger plays a few final chords of her song, when the woman \*  
comes out of the stall-- \*

WOMAN IN STALL \*  
I'd go to G major there, then maybe \*  
something minor-ish in the bridge.

GINGER \*  
Everybody's a freakin' musician?

WOMAN IN STALL \*  
Just tryin' to help--

GINGER \*  
G major you said? \*

The woman hurries into the club. Ginger tries the G major \*  
chord, with a minor-ish thing in the bridge.

GINGER (CONT'D)

(shrugs)

Better...

CUT TO: \*

EXT. DEWITT JONES'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT \*

A cab is stopped--Dewitt STAGGERS out the back door towards his apartment house. He's extremely smashed.

CUT TO:

INT. DEWITT JONES'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT \*

Dewitt FALLS to the floor, taking a table with him. From the floor, head spinning, he looks up.

DEWITT'S DRUNKEN P.O.V.--Vickie and Isaiah are watching him.

DEWITT

You came back!

VICKIE

The flight was canceled. We're leaving tomorrow.

DEWITT

No, no! Wait till Sunday! I figured it out--I had a hitch in my swing!

VICKIE

We're leaving tomorrow.

DEWITT

No! Come to the game--I want Isaiah to see his father get a hit. Hell, I'm gonna hang out ropes all over the park.

She stares back at his pathetic presentation--what to say?

ISAIAH

Mamma, can we?

VICKIE

Shit...

CUT TO:

INT. SALTY VET APARTMENT HOUSE -- LATER -- NIGHT

Harry is curled up spooning his lady friend, while Nora sits up in bed. Frankie, barely wrapped in a sheet, is in the kitchen. \*



FRANKIE

You outta booze?

NORA

Some sour mash over there. \*

Frankie spots and pops the top on a fresh bottle of sour mash whiskey, returning to the bed. He takes a hit on the joint, then POURS a glass of whiskey and keeps drinking.

NORA (CONT'D)

Honey, you gonna be okay to play tomorrow night?

FRANKIE

Pretty boy's got the start.

(beat)

He's one of them guys when he comes out of the shower, the towel around his neck is perfectly folded and the ends meet at exactly the same place...

NORA

What does that mean?

FRANKIE

Everything about him is perfect. Plus--he's a generous and decent human being.

NORA

Sounds like a nice guy.

FRANKIE

Another reason I hate him.

(beat)

C'mon, honey, let's roll again. Climb on...

NORA

You're serious, aren't ya?

And the indefatigable Frankie starts to mount Nora once again-- \*

HARRY HOUND \*

Frankie, ya mind goin' in the other room? \*

FRANKIE \*

Yeah, sure, didn't know you was so uptight... \*

Frankie and Nora go into the next room, and Harry and MaryJo sit up, alone at last. Soon enough-- \*

Thumping and pounding from the next room through thin walls. \*

MARYJO \*

How'd you get into this line of work? \*

HARRY HOUND \*

I couldn't hit the curve ball but I  
loved the game so I looked around  
for a way to stay in it and finally  
found my true identity...my voice...my  
soul. \*

MARYJO \*

God, Harry, the way you talk...I  
could cry. \*

HARRY HOUND \*

I'm gettin' to the big leagues, baby,  
I'm goin' all the way. \*

She cuddles him. He cuddles back. \*

CUT TO: \*

SATURDAY \*

EXT. NASHVILLE FREEWAY -- DAY

Marty in his car--TALK RADIO fills the air.

TALK RADIO (O.S.)

Just when you think Nashville Hounds  
General Manager Marty Crowley can't  
sink any deeper, he comes up with--

Marty smiles and HITS a radio button.

ANOTHER TALK RADIO (O.S.)

--Colonoscopy Night? This would  
never have happened if Harvey Hammer  
hadn't passed away.

CALLER (O.S.)

Yeah. Of colon cancer. I think  
it's a great idea to--

ANOTHER TALK RADIO (O.S.)

Who cares what you think? Next  
caller! \*

Marty smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- DAY

"NASHVILLE FREE CLINIC" BANNERS hang everywhere.

Marty moves around the ballpark like a ringmaster--  
everything's hopping. To a TRUCK DRIVER--

MARTY

I ordered thirty cases of hot dogs  
an' you're five cases short!

TRUCK DRIVER

Hey, I just drive--

MARTY

Maybird!

MAYBIRD

I'm all over it--

Marty hurries through the tunnel to the field, shouting--

MARTY

Guys! You got the scoreboard lights  
fixed?

GUYS

Workin' on it--

MARTY

Not good enough. Maybird!

MAYBIRD

Yeah?

MARTY

Toilets?

MAYBIRD

Shit runnin' downhill, boss.

He turns--sitting in a box seat in an empty stadium, is Big  
Jack Barnett. \*

BIG JACK BARNETT \*

Damn, Marty, lotta friggin' work  
runnin' a ballclub-- \*

MARTY

I don't have the money.

BIG JACK BARNETT \*

My guys are serious as a heart attack-- \*

MARTY

Maybird! When the hot dogs are ready  
bring a couple to Big Jack here...an'  
some beer an' popcorn an' Crackerjacks--

\*  
\*

BIG JACK BARNETT

Hey I'm watchin' my carbs, Marty--

\*  
\*

But Marty's off on another rant, shouting at the GROUND CREW.

MARTY

Guys! The grass looks dead!

GROUND CREW

It is dead.

MARTY

Paint it.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- DAY -- LATER

The Ground Crew SPRAY PAINTS the grass green, laying out  
large SWATHS of green on the dry brown grass.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT OF THE BALLPARK -- DAY

Cash gets out of his car on his i-Phone, heading in.

\*

CASH (ON PHONE)

Hank, Hank, there's no opportunity  
in gold anymore--served its purpose--  
Time to get back into real estate.  
Yeah...Bend, Oregon--Golfing, fishing,  
skiing--it's a destination. Gonna  
turn around...

\*  
\*

INT LOCKER ROOM -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

Cash continues into the den of testosterone, deeply connected  
to his investment broker.

CASH (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

And run some Vegas numbers--high end  
condos only, they're givin' 'em away.  
(beat)  
No, no, it's going great here. I'll  
be with the big club by Sunday--count  
on it. Yeah...later.

\*

He hangs up to see Andy blast Rook on the video game.

ANDY  
Boom! Dead man! Punch out! Boom!

ROOK  
Shit...

Cash ENTERS, goes to his locker, starts to undress.

ANDY  
Hey, pretty boy! Ready for the king?

CASH  
Pitchin' tonight--gotta meditate.

ANDY  
Meditate this.

Andy grabs his crotch--he's 37 going on 13--as Cash EXITS with his iPod, into the:

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING ROOM -- DAY

Cash LIES DOWN quietly on a table, another PLAYER gets a rubdown on another table from the TEAM TRAINER.

CASH  
If I fall asleep, wake me in thirty.

CLOSE ON Cash--Sibelius's Andante festivo on his iPod. He SHUTS HIS EYES--the calmest man in the city. \*

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM OF LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Frankie's on his knees at the porcelain altar, HEAVING his guts up. Harry sits nearby, part vassal, part shrink, he wears his costume, save the head which sits on the floor.

HARRY HOUND  
...man ya can't mix that sour mash  
an' wine. An' beer.

FRANKIE  
That Maryjo was smokin', eh?

HARRY HOUND  
You were with Nora.

More heaving, unfazed. \*

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S OFFICE -- DAY

Dewitt ENTERS with his son--Skip knits. \*

DEWITT

Hey, Skip--

SKIP

Lemme finish the damn row--if I drop  
a stitch I'm hosed. \*

DEWITT \*

Skip--I got it. I was hitchin'--  
(demonstrates)  
--right here. Hangin' out nothin'  
but leenyas and ropos t'night...

ISAIAH

My daddy's gonna break outta his  
slump!

SKIP

Works for me--

Dewitt and his son leave--Skip resumes knitting.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING ROOM -- DAY

Cash rolls from his sleep with Sibelius to a sitting position,  
answering his phone.

CASH (ON PHONE)

Hey, baby...  
(beat)

You're where?! \*

INTERCUT TO: \*

EXT. PARKING LOT OF THE BALLPARK -- DAY

Ginger paces, smoking, next to her car--she's a wreck. \*

GINGER (ON PHONE)

I'm havin' an anxiety attack about  
tonight.

CASH (ON PHONE)

Just butterflies, hon'--

GINGER (ON PHONE)

I gotta see you.

CUT TO:

INT. GINGER'S CAR -- DAY

Cash and Ginger sit--she unloads, grabbing her guitar.

GINGER  
My fingers are frozen, I can't play  
the chords, I can't remember the  
chords!

She clanks a few chords--he gently takes the guitar from her hand and puts it in the back seat.

CASH  
I'm nervous before I pitch, too.  
Something's wrong if you're not.

GINGER  
I'm a wreck...need to calm down big  
time. Cash...I need you right now. \*

CASH  
Tonight. After you knock 'em dead.  
After I pitch.

GINGER  
After you pitch you're going to the  
big leagues--

CASH  
The next day--

GINGER  
And I won't see you ever again-- \*

CASH  
So we have tonight--and who says we  
can't see each other after that?

GINGER  
Make love to me...

CASH  
I'd be beat before I threw a pitch. \*

GINGER  
I know, I know...  
(beat)  
So do what a gentleman would do and  
take care of the lady.

Cash looks around--CONCESSION WORKERS drift into the ballpark.

She arranges her dress, pulls it up a bit. He reaches over with his right hand, looking around a little nervously. His hand slips under her dress...into her panties.

GINGER (CONT'D)  
 You are a gentleman...  
 (breathlessly)  
 Oh yeah...ohyeah...ohyeah...

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM IN LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Frankie sits on the can, a thermometer in his mouth.

TEAM TRAINER  
 One-O-Two. You ain't just hungover.  
 You sick.

FRANKIE  
 I got the runs, too...

TEAM TRAINER  
 You ever think about changing your  
 lifestyle a little? \*

FRANKIE  
 No. \*

CUT TO: \*

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Looking down on the field being prepared, as ballplayers  
 come out and begin warming up. The BIG CLUB G.M. and the  
 CHIEF OF SCOUTING are with Marty.

MARTY  
 Cash Adams is all you hoped he'd be  
 when you drafted him first-- \*

BIG CLUB G.M.  
 And the character issues? \*

MARTY  
 He's got the maturity of a veteran.

CUT TO:

INT. GINGER'S CAR -- DAY

Cash works hard--sweating--and Ginger gasps, on her way.

GINGER  
 Damn... \*

CASH  
 Better?



GINGER  
You've got great hands...

CASH  
Thanks...

GINGER  
I'm startin' to relax...I'm a little  
slow but the payoff's big...

\*

Cash is a bit strained, but works it like an All-American.

CASH  
Gettin' there, sweetie?

GINGER  
Circlin' the runway, baby...  
(defensively)  
I know, I know, I'm slow...

CASH  
You don't have to talk...

GINGER  
Sorry...

CASH  
Or apologize...

Suddenly, finally, the dam breaks.

GINGER  
Oh yeah...oh yeah...ohhhhhh!

CUT TO:

INT. CLUBHOUSE -- LATER -- DAY

SLAM! CRASH! BANG! Cash throws anything he can find in  
any direction--all with his left hand--a human hurricane of  
rage.

\*  
\*  
\*

CASH  
Goddammit! You stupid freakin'  
idiot!

\*  
\*  
\*

Other players back away, afraid to ask questions, until the  
trainer enters hearing the racket.

\*  
\*

TRAINER  
What is it?!

\*  
\*

Cash holds up his swollen right hand--the trainer holds it  
gently, studying it, feeling it.

\*  
\*

TRAINER (CONT'D)

Dorsal side of the canal...tender?

(Cash nods)

And the volar side? Transverse carpal  
ligament...flexor tendons to each of  
the digits and median nerves...

(Cash winces)

Repetitive stress injury...

(beat)

Carpal tunnel syndrome. \*

Skip charges in. \*

SKIP \*

What did you say you were doing? \*

Cash grunts a nothing response.

SKIP (CONT'D) \*

Can you hold a baseball?

He can't. \*

SKIP (CONT'D)

You ain't pitchin' tonight.

Cash's face collapses--at last completely transparent as  
Skip whirls and leaves--there's no sentiment in baseball. \*

SKIP (CONT'D)

Frankie! Where's Frankie?!

Cash lowers his right hand into a bucket of ice, mutters. \*

CASH \*

Fool... \*

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM IN LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Frankie's on his knees again. Harry stands above him when--  
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

SKIP (O.S.)

Frankie! You in there?!

INTERCUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE BATHROOM IN LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Skip POUNDS on the door.

SKIP

You okay?

FRANKIE  
 (mumbling)  
 I'm great.

HARRY HOUND  
 He's great.

SKIP  
 Cash got hurt. You're starting  
 tonight.

FRANKIE  
 I'm ready...

Frankie DRY HEAVES violently. Harry steps out of the crapper,  
 confronting Skip.

HARRY HOUND  
 He's ready.

Frankie ROLLS OVER onto his side, grimacing next to the  
 toilet. As he retches, we hear:

VOICES (SINGING)  
 Oh say can you see...

\*

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE on their feet--a sellout. And Harry  
 Hound leads them in our National Anthem. At homeplate--his  
 right paw across his heart.

\*

\*

HARRY HOUND (SINGING)  
 ...by the dawn's early light...

DOG MOUTH P.O.V.--We're back looking through the mascot's  
 costume--at the crowd singing with great conviction.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The Big Club G.M. and Chief of Scouting are with Marty--they  
 stand at attention National Anthem continues, talking.

BIG CLUB G.M.  
 Cash got hurt?

CHIEF OF SCOUTING  
 Book us a flight--we're outta here...

\*

BIG CLUB G.M.  
 I need a drink--

MARTY

Maybird, take 'em up to the Hound  
Dog Club.

BIG CLUB G.M.

Hound Dog Club?

MAYBIRD

We shouldn't be talking during the  
National Anthem.

THE MEN

Sorry...

The song ends and as they EXIT, Marty stays and watches--

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK - AT THE PLATE -- NIGHT

Iris Hammer, elegantly attired, at a mike in front of a  
sellout crowd--

\*

\*

IRIS HAMMER

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we  
launch the Harvey Hammer Foundation  
to promote early screening. So check  
the number printed in your program--  
and we'll give away three free  
colonoscopies at the top of every  
inning...

\*

Harry Hound Dog HOLDS UP box containing program numbers.

IRIS HAMMER (CONT'D)

The first winner of the evening holds  
program number...Two-three-six...

\*

ANGLE TO THE CROWD--People check their programs with  
enthusiasm--free hot dogs or a camera up your ass.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS BULLPEN -- NIGHT

\*

FRANKIE'S P.O.V. TO HIS CATCHER--As he warms up. What he  
sees is fuzzy and shaking and, well, hungover. Andy, the  
catcher, APPROACHES.

ANDY

You okay?

FRANKIE

Gimme the ball--

\*

ANDY

How you gonna read the signs when I  
give 'em, eh? How many fingers?

Andy HOLDS UP TWO FINGERS.

FRANKIE

One.

ANDY

Close enough...

\*

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

Cash sits alone, his right hand still in a bucket of ice.

\*

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

As the players RUN OUT on the field to start the game, Frankie  
grabs his glove and staggers to the mound. Skip grabs Andy.

SKIP

Is he sick or just screwed up?

\*

ANDY

And the difference would be?

Andy PULLS ON his mask and trots out to the plate.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

ANGLE--Dewitt's wife and son settle into their seats.

ANGLE--Big Jack Barnett with a beer.

\*

ANGLE to Iris Hammer watching the game from Marty's office.  
A drink is served. She motions that it's a bit "light."

\*

ANGLE to the Big G.M. and Scout, drinks in hand, watching.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

Cash in street clothes, hand wrapped in an ice pack and  
bandages, settles in to watch in silence, as--

Cash'S P.O.V.--Frankie's first pitch--a blistering fastball.

UMP  
Strike one...

CUT TO:

INT. HOUND DOG CLUB -- NIGHT

The Big Club G.M. turns to his Chief Scout.

BIG CLUB G.M.  
Had some hop to it. Get the gun.

The scout pulls a radar gun from his bag.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

FRANKIE STRIKES OUT a hitter, followed by...

A WEAK GROUND BALL for the second out, and...

ANOTHER STRIKE OUT--inning over. On his way to the dugout.

CUT TO:

\*

EXT. WIVES' SECTION OF THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Isaiah's on his feet.

ISAIAH  
Daddy's hittin' leenyas and ropos,  
Mamma...just watch...no hitch.

\*

VICKIE  
(flatly)  
No hitch...

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

AT THE PLATE--Dewitt in the batter's box with confidence.

DEWITT  
(to catcher)  
Hey, bro', that rainout get you a  
little action last night?

OPPOSING CATCHER  
Watched Discovery Channel about frogs.  
Some frogs are, like, homos? You  
know that?

\*

\*

\*

DEWITT  
Frogs take it up the ass?

OPPOSING CATCHER  
Didn't go into details. So...what'd  
you do in the rainout? Go another O  
for five? \*

DEWITT  
Figured it out. Had a hitch my swing.

OPPOSING CATCHER  
You ain't hitchin'--you're  
overstridin'.

DEWITT  
That's what the mascot said. \*

OPPOSING CATCHER  
You listenin' to the dog?

DEWITT  
The dog ain't stupid...

OPPOSING CATCHER  
Hey, 'Witt, I'm tryin' to help you  
here. Fastball--down the chute. My  
guy ain't got shit. \*  
(beat)  
C'mon, pods, leenya...

The pitch--Dewitt's overstriding, hitching, stepping in the  
bucket--he's lost it all. STRIKE THREE--Inning over. \*

CUT TO:

EXT. WIVES' SECTION OF THE STANDS -- NIGHT \*

Isaiah dies a thousand deaths. \*

ISAIAH  
Mom? What's wrong? \*

CUT TO: \*

INT. HOUND DOG CLUB -- NIGHT \*

The Big Club G.M. shakes his head.

CHIEF OF SCOUTING  
We gotta trade trade Dewitt? \*

BIG CLUB G.M.  
Just cut him. It's easier. \*

CHIEF OF SCOUTING  
And our first round pick out of U  
Miami--looks like he's gonna sign.

BIG CLUB G.M.  
See if he's ready for Triple A.

CHIEF OF SCOUTING  
What about Chico?

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK -- NIGHT \*

MONTAGE THE GAME as:

FRANKIE FIRES nothing but heat.

IRIS HAMMER REFILLS her drink, alongside Marty--they toast. \*

DEWITT STRIKES OUT, pops up, does nothing.

HARRY'S DOG MOUTH P.O.V.--Looking for hot college girls.

FRANKIE PUKES in the bathroom between innings.

CASH WATCHES IT ALL, hand in ice.

FRANKIE STRIKES OUT the final batter--Nashville wins, and we--

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Game's just over--Frankie sticks his head in Skip's room.

FRANKIE  
You wanted to see me?

SKIP  
Helluva job. Here ya go--

Skip hands him an envelope.

FRANKIE  
What's this?

SKIP  
E-ticket stuff. You're on a nine  
A.M. to Chicago to meet the big club.

FRANKIE  
Damn straights...



SKIP

Frankie, listen to me. Up there,  
you gotta stay under control. Big  
money up there--don't blow it.

FRANKIE

I know what I'm doin'.

And Frankie's out the door, holding up the envelope in--

THE LOCKER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Frankie's ebullient, still in pain.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Goin' up, boys! Joinin' the big  
club in Chicago tomorrow...

PLAYERS

Give 'em hell...way to go...etc...

ANDY

An' gimme a call to tell me what big  
league pussy's like--

Cash SITS in the corner, his injured hand wrapped. Watching.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Chico opens the door.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

You wanted to see me?

Skip speaks Spanish badly--but the message is clear.

SKIP (IN SPANISH)

The Big Club wants their first round  
pick to start in Triple A...and  
so...we're releasing you.

Jaw dropping stunning news to the Dominican player.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

But I'm playing good!

\*

SKIP (IN SPANISH)

You can catch on in Triple A, Chic'--  
I think Portland needs a shortstop.

CHICO (IN SPANISH)

This is bullshit!

SKIP (IN SPANISH)  
Well, yeah...it is. I'll put in a  
word for ya...

Chico whirls and leaves and we stay on Skip's face--he hates this, but he's done it before and he'll do it again. And so he knits.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Harry takes off his head--it's been a big night. The Clubby comes over.

CLUBBY  
Harry, there's woman askin' for ya--  
name's Judy.

HARRY HOUND  
Don't know no Judy's--

And the woman appears from a walkway around the corner--it's the woman with husband and children from the opening. \*

MOM  
I'm Judy. Remember--two nights ago?

HARRY HOUND  
Husband and three kids?

MOM  
Yeah. They'll be out of town next  
week. Here's my number.

She hands him a folded paper and she's gone.

CLUBBY  
(to Harry)  
I'm gonna be a mascot when I grow  
up.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

Frankie has showered and dressed--the place is pretty empty now. But Cash is still there--he approaches Frankie, reaches out with his left hand.

CASH  
Congratulations. You threw great.

FRANKIE  
Caught a break when you got hurt...

CASH  
I'll be back. Good luck up there.

FRANKIE  
Appreciate it...

Cash goes one direction. Frankie the other. We stay with Cash, as he turns into a tunnel leading out of the maze.

CASH  
You throw shit. They'll kill you up there.

\*  
\*

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Harry's almost dressed now, as Frankie arrives, hands him the envelope with pride.

FRANKIE  
Gettin' called up.

HARRY HOUND  
You shittin' me?!  
(big embrace)  
Who'm I gonna hang with?

FRANKIE  
Not my problem, Dawg.

Harry reads the itinerary.

HARRY HOUND  
Says there'll be a team rep to meet you at the V.I.P. Lounge.

FRANKIE  
V.I.P. Lounge--y'believe that?!

\*

HARRY HOUND  
(concerned, parental)  
Okay. Throw strikes, you'll be fine. Trust me. I've sent a lot of guys to the show.

FRANKIE  
You're the greatest, Harry, I mean it.

\*  
\*

And Frankie's gone, a manchild heading to Broadway.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT OF THE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

Dewitt and his family get into the car. Stunning silence.  
He's now 0 for 29.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASHVILLE BALLPARK BEHIND THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Cash moves quietly as fans disperse, and suddenly hears:

VOICE (O.S.)

Mike.

He FREEZES--he knows the voice. He turns.

CASH

Lisa.

LISA

I'm sorry to surprise you. I flew  
back to see you 'cause I didn't want  
to tell you over the phone.

CASH

Tell me what?

LISA

I'm pregnant.

The bomb that has landed on her life, now lands on his.

CASH

We haven't been together for three  
months.

LISA

I'm three months pregnant.

Silence--FANS pass.

FAN

Hey, Cash! Hang in there! You'll  
get 'em!

CLOSE ON CASH--Blindsided.

CUT TO:

INT. MARRIOTT HOTEL CLUB LOUNGE -- NIGHT

Cash and Lisa at the bar. He motions for a second martini.

LISA  
I'm keeping the baby. And I'm not  
asking for money...

CASH  
I'll take care of that part...

LISA  
I just want to know if this child  
will know its father or if--

They hear an announcement and look toward the stage. \*

ANGLE BACKSTAGE as Ginger approaches, cut off by EMCEE. \*

GINGER  
Where's the A & R lady and honcho? \*

EMCEE  
Renee Bell and Dann Huff. Back row  
left. Good luck. \*

Ginger CLIMBS ONSTAGE with a guitar, grabbing a mike.

GINGER  
Thank you...my name's Ginger Ledoux  
and I love that you're here... \*

ANGLE TO LISA AND CASH at the bar. Women know.

LISA  
And she would be the reason we're  
here? No problem. Kinda cute...

ANGLE TO THE STAGE--Ginger launches in: \*

GINGER (SINGING)  
*I spent a bit of time in Nashville,  
Where no one knew my name, Thought  
it would take just a couple of months,  
To land in country music's Hall of  
Fame...* \*

ANGLE TO MUSIC HONCHOS as they whisper, comparing notes re:  
Ginger. She's promising. \*

GINGER (SINGING) (CONT'D)  
*Everyone said my star would shine,  
Won every competition every time,  
But he assistants in the music bus,  
Sure are hard to get by...* \*

GINGER'S P.O.V. of the music honchos whispering. \*

Ginger panics, performance anxiety suddenly grips her. \*

GINGER (SINGING) (CONT'D) \*  
*So I'm not famous yet...* \*

Ginger hesitates, begins to hyper-ventilate a little. \*

GINGER (CONT'D) \*  
 Oh dear... \*  
     (beat) \*  
 I, uh... \*  
     (beat) \*  
*So I'm not famous yet...* \*

Ginger is overwhelmed with fear and nausea. And she runs \*  
 from the stage. \*

EMCEE \*  
 You okay? \*

GINGER \*  
 I'm sick! \*

EMCEE \*  
 Over here-- \*

He directs her to a ladies room and we hear her retching. \*

ANGLE TO RENEE BELL AND DANN HUFF--Talking. They shake their \*  
 heads and rise to leave, and as they do-- \*

Ginger charges back on stage and sees them leaving. \*

GINGER \*  
 Hey! Bigshots! Where you going \*  
 after sixteen bars?! So I had a \*  
 moment? You tellin' me Tami Wynette \*  
 never had a moment?! \*

Cash steps out in front of the two music biggies. \*

CASH \*  
 She's great! What the hell you doin'?

RENEE BELL \*  
 She's not ready. \*

CASH \*  
 She's ready! \*

But the music honchos EXIT and Ginger just laughs, until the \*  
 EMCEE HURRIES out to lead her off stage. \*

EMCEE \*  
 Pull yourself together--you'll have \*  
 another chance. \*

Ginger leaves the stage, and PLOPS DOWN next to Cash and his pregnant ex-girlfriend at the bar. \*

GINGER  
Screwdriver. Make it a double.  
(to Cash)  
I'm so sorry...it was going good  
till I panicked, right? \*

CASH AND LISA  
--was going great. Till then. \*

GINGER  
Those were the biggies I just scared  
off. They didn't even wait for the  
bridge-- \*

LISA  
You don't need them anymore, y'know?  
Music companies are history. \*

GINGER  
I been thinking about that but I'm  
not sure how to--  
(extends hand)  
I'm Ginger.

LISA  
Lisa. Old friend of Cash's. I'm co-  
founder of a big social networking  
company in California--we have a  
great team of website designers and  
we're expanding in the arts.

Lisa hands Ginger her business card. Cash's head is spinning--  
suddenly caught between these women on one very bad day.

GINGER  
I'm down with that. I just gotta  
lose this self-destructive streak  
that's killin' me...  
(to Cash)  
I gotta be more like you. Tough as  
nails and always prepared.

CASH  
How?

LISA  
Yeah, how? Some people think Cash  
has a lot of Diva in him.

CASH  
Says who?

LISA  
Some people think you're not a "big game" pitcher--they think you're great when nothing's on the line but in the "big game"--

CASH  
Name one big game I gagged?

LISA  
That's the point. You always seem to get hurt just before a "big game" and so you never really test yourself when it's all on the line.

CASH  
That's bullshit.

LISA  
I'm just quoting...okay, okay, I'll drop it.  
(innocently)  
By the way, what happened to your hand?

GINGER  
(notices his hand)  
Yeah, what happened to your hand?

Cash is at a loss, so turns for comfort to the bartender.

CASH  
Bartender?

He raises his bandaged hand to order another drink.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The ballpark below is virtually empty as Marty stares down-- it was a great night. Big Jack Barnett sits, strumming...

BIG JACK BARNETT  
See, you believed you could run a track and gamble on the side...

MARTY  
I could for awhile. I got cold...

BIG JACK BARNETT  
Your problem is that you're a believer. The world doesn't lay down for believers. Smart guys are thieves. Winners bet sure things.



MARTY

I'm not a thief and there's no sure things...

BIG JACK BARNETT

No...but there's a horse at Churchill Downs next week named Mr. Purple-- finished third in the Florida Derby. People think he can't go the distance but fact is he swallowed his tongue at the 3/4 pole. Nobody knows that's what happened but I got friends in the barn told me. That horse can run all day--and he'll go off at forty to one.

MARTY

I'm clean, Jack I'm clean...

Maybird ENTERS with the steel strong box.

MAYBIRD

Omigod, boss, what a great night for the Hounds, eh? The receipts are--  
(she reads)

A hundred an' sixty eight thousand,  
four hundred two dollars an' change...

She HANDS HIM the lockbox; he SETS it down.

MARTY

Great work, 'Bird, get outta here and I'll see you tomorrow.

MAYBIRD

Double-header starts at one.

She smiles cheerily and EXITS. Big Jack Barnett strums more chords.

BIG JACK BARNETT

If I go back empty handed, they send a slice an' dice guy.

MARTY

I don't like knives.

BIG JACK BARNETT

Ballpark reminds me of a garden...so green and lush...

MARTY

Painted the grass this morning...

Big Jack Barnett eases into an old gospel song.

BIG JACK BARNETT (SINGING) \*  
*I come to the garden alone, when the  
 dew is still on the roses...*

Marty joins him singing in harmony, the chorus.

BIG JACK BARNETT AND MARTY (SINGING) \*  
*And he walks with me and he talks  
 with me and he tells me I am his  
 own...* \*

ANGLE DOWN THE HALLWAY--Maybird hears the singing and turns.

MAYBIRD'S P.O.V. into the office. As they sing, Marty UNLOCKS  
 the lockbox, PULLS OUT and counts twenty thousand dollars.  
 He LAYS the money in front of Big Jack Barnett as they finish \*  
 singing. Maybird, terrified to witness this, hurries away.

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
 Strong play.

MARTY  
 Just borrowing it.

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
 Better hit the road--

MARTY \*  
 An' never come back no more, no more--

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
 I gotta come back.

MARTY  
 Why?

BIG JACK BARNETT \*  
 (pulls out a program)  
 Program number four-two-six-six. I  
 won a free colonoscopy.

A smile and Big Jack Barnett is gone. \*

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE STANDS -- NIGHT

Marty opens an electric panel and TURNS OFF A BREAKER and  
 the stadium lights go off. Only security lights remain.

CLOSE ON MARTY--A good night. He SMELLS something.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUND DOGS' DUGOUT -- NIGHT

Marty ENTERS the dugout through the tunnel, to see Harry sitting there peacefully SMOKING a big joint.

MARTY  
Goddamnit, Harry! You can't smoke  
that shit at the ballpark!

HARRY HOUND  
It was a great night, boss...

MARTY  
(shifts, relaxes)  
Yeah, it was.  
(beat)  
You still on good terms with your  
friend...Joey Two Phones? The bookie  
with shingles?

Harry nods, refusing to exhale.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
Can you get me down on the Derby?

HARRY HOUND  
Sure. How much?

MARTY  
A grand. Got a horse I really like.

HARRY HOUND  
You're down.

Marty's cell rings. He answers. \*

MARTY (ON PHONE) \*

Yeah? \*

INTERCUT TO: \*

INT. THE MANSION OF IRIS HAMMER -- NIGHT \*

Iris Hammer looks stunning in yet another silk robe, with  
yet another drink in hand. She's completely sober. \*

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE) \*

Marty... \*

MARTY (ON PHONE) \*

Mrs. Hammer. \*

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE) \*

Ms. Hammer. Wonderful job with the  
promotion. \*

MARTY (ON PHONE)  
Thank you, ma'am.

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)  
What're you doing later?

MARTY (ON PHONE)  
Later when?

IRIS HAMMER (ON PHONE)  
Later tonight...

Marty inhales deeply and exhales slowly. Harry seems to get what just happened and smiles broadly.

HARRY HOUND  
Take me out to the old ballgame, eh,  
Boss?

FREEZE FRAME ON MARTY EXHALING AND HARRY SMILING