

## **SUGAR**

Written by

Anna Boden & Ryan Fleck

### **1 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - DAY**

A high angle looking out over a well-manicured baseball field carved out of a tropical jungle. A game is currently in progress.

#### **A1 ON THE FIELD**

Wearing KANSAS CITY KNIGHTS uniforms, mostly Black and dark-skinned Dominicans as well as several lighter-skinned Venezuelans (17-22 years old) are set in their positions, poised for the next pitch.

CLOSE ON the pitcher, MIGUEL SANTOS (aka AZÚCAR/SUGAR - 19, lean, Black and handsome). Sweat drips down his face in the oppressive midday heat. He steadies his glove and ball at his chest, peeking over at the RUNNER on first base. Miguel lifts his leg high into the air, rears back his right arm, and FIRES the ball toward the plate.

THUD! A cloud of dust pops off the CATCHER'S mitt as the ball slams inside.

#### **UMPIRE**

Strike three!

The BATTER lowers his head, helpless in the face of Miguel's overpowering fastball.

FROM THE DUGOUT, Miguel's TEAMMATES CHEER him on. HEAD COACH REYES (dark-skinned, 30s) nods approvingly, CLAPS.

BEHIND THE HOMEPLATE BACKSTOP, a dozen rookie players also in Kansas City uniforms cheer for their team. Two YOUNG PLAYERS clocking Miguel's pitches look at each others' radar guns, which read 92 and 93 MPH.

As the next batter steps up to the plate, Miguel's catcher, JOSE (18), taps his index finger on his thigh, calling for an outside fastball.

The next pitch is popped up on the infield between first and home. Miguel locates the ball, points to the sky, but Jose and first baseman, PEDRO BERROA, nearly collide, as the ball lands between them and the runners reach base safely.

B1 FROM THE OBSERVATION TOWER, the ACADEMY'S DIRECTOR, LEANDRO  
B1 ALVAREZ (light-skinned, late 50s) and several other COACHES and SCOUTS jot down notes on their clipboards.

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C1 ON THE FIELD, Miguel glares at Pedro, who averts his eyes, and  
C1 kicks the dirt.

Miguel looks in for the sign from Jose, nods, and delivers a tight fastball that sends the batter stumbling backwards to the dirt.

Some players LAUGH and heckle the batter. Others point angry fingers at Miguel, who greets the batter back to the plate with a friendly, but authoritative, grin.

He sends in the next pitch and the batter swings right through it, getting nothing but air.

**2 INT. ACADEMY DINING ROOM - NIGHT**  
**2**

The TEAM (about 35 young men) gather around several tables for their standard baked chicken and rice lunch. The mood is friendly and playful as players tease each other across the tables. Miguel, sitting with his friends MARCOS (2nd base) and ALFONSO (3rd Base), works on a second helping of dessert.

**MARCOS**

Check out Sugar... Puts on twenty pounds in two months; now he's going for twenty more.

**MIGUEL**

(mouth full of food)  
All muscle, baby. Rock solid.

For some NEW PLAYERS, distinguishable in the sea of BLUE uniforms by their BLACK "tryout" jerseys and ragged sneakers, it is their first healthy meal, and they eat as if it were their last. One of them, SALVADOR (Black, scrawny, 17) holds his plate up to his mouth, shovelling food down his throat.

**PEDRO**

Slow down, kid, it ain't going nowhere.

A few of the guys LAUGH.

**MIGUEL**

(to Pedro)

If you hustled half as much as him,  
maybe you'd be hungry too.

The other guys "ohhhh" Miguel's insult, as Salvador and Miguel exchange subtle grins.

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**3 INT. ACADEMY CLASSROOM - SAME DAY**

**3**

Kids crowd around in a circle, repeating after the animated English instructor, SEÑOR SANCHEZ, who goes over some English BASEBALL TERMS in the center. As he repeats the terms, he enthusiastically pantomimes the meanings of each.

**SANCHEZ**

Fly ball.

**CLASS**

Fly ball.

**SANCHEZ**

Line drive.

**CLASS**

Line drive.

**SANCHEZ**

Ground ball.

**CLASS**

Ground ball.

**SANCHEZ**

Home run!

**CLASS**

Hone rone!

CLOSE ON Miguel, repeating the strange words.

4 INT. RECREATION ROOM - SAME NIGHT

4

It's dark, and most of the team sits around an old TV set watching the climactic final scene of Field of Dreams dubbed in Spanish. Kevin Costner asks his father to play catch in a voice that sounds nothing like Kevin Costner.

Miguel passes through the room, and we follow him out of the rec room down a hall, and into...

5 THE WEIGHT ROOM

5

...where he sits down at the bench press, lowers his head in thought. TRACK IN CLOSE as he crosses himself, mouths a prayer, then leans back onto the bench.

TRACK OUT as he lifts the bar, and begins a set of presses.

**FADE OUT.**

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6 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - DAY

6

The Kansas City Director of Minor League Operations, RUDY HUBBARD (white, 40s), watches a TRYOUT SESSION, where TWO SKINNY TEENS in worn street clothes pitch to uniformed catchers. Their AGENT talks on a cell phone nearby.

Alvarez, the academy director, approaches one of the kids, whispers in his ear. The kid smiles tentatively.

Alvarez joins Rudy and they speak in English.

**RUDY**

What'd you tell him?

**ALVAREZ**

I told him to grip the ball more gently. Like a tit.

They both crack up.

FROM THE TRYOUT MOUND. The kid looks over to the two men pow-wowing about him. He breathes in, nervous...

7 BATTING CAGE - MINUTES LATER

7

Pedro, sweating hard, takes a few cuts, but only seems to be hitting weak ground balls and foul tips.

**ALVAREZ**

Pedro Berroa. Third year. Hasn't developed like we hoped.

**RUDY**

How much he sign for?

**ALVAREZ**

Forty-five.

**RUDY**

Jesus. These kids keep getting more expensive. How much did you sign for back in the day?

**ALVAREZ**

3000. When I was fifteen.

Rudy smiles and moves on. Alvarez follows. Pedro watches the men as they walk away.

**8 BULL PEN MOUNDS - MINUTES LATER**  
**8**

Alvarez and Rudy approach a PITCHING COACH instructing Salvador. Miguel warms up next to him.

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**ALVAREZ**

Salvador Torres. Been practicing with the team for almost a week. Still raw, but he's got a lot of potential.

**RUDY**

We gonna sign him?

**ALVAREZ**

Soon. Soon. We want to play it low-key, see what his agent says.

**RUDY**

How much you think?

**ALVAREZ**

They've gotten two offers from other clubs. Agent says they were around a

hundred.

Rudy raises his eyebrows.

**ALVAREZ**

(firm)  
He's good.

Rudy looks over to Miguel.

**RUDY**

What about him?

**ALVAREZ**

Miguel Santos. Great arm. We signed  
him two years ago for fifteen.

Miguel fires in a pitch. Rudy nods, impressed.

**RUDY**

Good deal. He throw any junk?

**ALVAREZ**

(in Spanish)  
Sugar!

Miguel looks over, sees the American with Alvarez.

**ALVAREZ**

Show us your curve.

Miguel nods, nervous, focuses. He pitches. The ball curves  
very subtly over the plate for a strike.

**RUDY**

Not bad. Mind if I try something?

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Miguel looks back to the men.

**RUDY**

Hey, kid, do you mind? May I?

Miguel stares blankly at Rudy, not understanding.

**ALVAREZ**

(in Spanish)  
Give him the ball.

Miguel hands Rudy the ball, and Rudy demonstrates how to handle

a knuckle curve ball, which looks strangely unorthodox, with the index finger tucked against the baseball.

**RUDY**

Spike curve. Gives you more rotation,  
more movement.

(hands Miguel the ball)

You try.

Miguel struggles to emulate Rudy's grip, so Rudy maneuvers his fingers into the correct position. Alvarez laughs.

**ALVAREZ**

Vamos! Let's go! Pitch it!

Miguel looks over to his catcher, Jose. Winds up the next pitch, and soars it 5 feet wide of the mark.

Rudy and Alvarez laugh. Miguel looks back over his shoulder.

**RUDY**

It's okay, son, these things take time.  
You'll figure it out.

Rudy pats Miguel on the back and walks off with Alvarez. Miguel stares at them hard as they go. He turns back to his catcher, determined, squeezes the ball in spike curve formation. Delivers.

Misses badly again. JUMP CUTS take us through a half-dozen more bad curve attempts, as other players take notice and gather around, some laughing, until...

...finally a perfect curve twists dramatically through the air, landing centered in Jose's mitt.

The other players erupt in amazement, while Miguel stares straight ahead. After a beat, he smiles wide.

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**9 INT. ACADEMY CLASSROOM - DAY**  
**9**

Sr. Sanchez stands in front of a chalkboard, reading off lines of a scripted ENGLISH DIALOGUE for the class to repeat. The class' version of the words are jumbled and incomprehensible.

**SANCHEZ**

I want to talk to you.

**CLASS**

I want talk to you.

**SANCHEZ**

Your performance in the mound is not as good as last year. What is the problem?

**CLASS**

Your performance in the mound is not good as last year. What is problem?

**SANCHEZ**

I don't know. Maybe my mechanic.

**CLASS**

I don't know. Maybe mechanic.

**SANCHEZ**

I want to give you a chance. It is up to you...

CLOSE ON Miguel focused on the baseball in his hand. He practices his knuckle curve grip, not participating in the lesson.

**CLASS**

I want to give you a chance. Is up to you...

10 **EXT. BASEBALL ACADEMY - MORNING**  
10

Miguel walks down a dirt road with his duffel bag. He exits past the gate, waving goodbye to the SECURITY GUARD.

A10 Beyond the manicured lawns and landscaped gardens of the  
A10 Academy, Miguel passes through the overgrown, undeveloped land where neighborhood CHILDREN play among grazing goats. He continues down the dirt road towards a paved highway in the distance, as bachata music fuels the sound track, and carries over the following...

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11 **INT. MOVING BUS - DAY**  
11

Thick stalks of sugarcane race through the frame. CLOSE ON Miguel staring out the bus window. On his way home, he

passes...

A11 --half-clothed children flying a homemade kite.  
A11

B11 --a truck of bananas barrelling by with a boy perched on top.  
B11

C11 --an old man sitting by the street, looking straight at Miguel.  
C11

D11 --flaming sugarcane alongside the road.  
D11

E11 --three children wedged between their parents on a motorbike.  
E11

F11 --the tall, wheezing smokestack of the Cristobal Colon sugar  
F11 refinery.

**12 EXT. STREET - SAN PEDRO DE MACORIS - DAY**  
**12**

Miguel hops off the bus with his duffel, climbs the pedestrian walkway passing over dozens of rusty railroad cars used for transporting sugarcane to the refinery. We PAN Miguel across the bridge, revealing burning smokestacks in the distance.

**13 EXT. SIDE STREET - MINUTES LATER**  
**13**

Modest homes line the neighborhood, fashioned from corrugated tin, painted in bold colors, no two houses alike. A skinny pig roams a barren lot. A group of WOMEN with their hair in curlers sit on crates around a dominoes table. They wave their hellos to Miguel, who smiles back.

Local KIDS play stickball in a trash-strewn clearing with makeshift mitts fashioned from old milk cartons or cardboard. They see Miguel and rush toward him as he paces up the block, SHOUTING his name.

As Miguel approaches home, he makes eye contact with a girl, ERICA (15), buying water from a delivery truck. She smiles.

With the kids still clamoring around Miguel, he stops, unzips his duffel and hands out some used baseballs. The kids grab the balls, then run off to play.

Miguel approaches Erica. She puts down her water bucket, gives Miguel a hug.

**MIGUEL**

How are you, sis?

**ERICA**

Any news about the States?

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**MIGUEL**

Is that all you have to say?

Miguel helps Erica with the water bucket and walks with her towards their home - a small wooden construction with peeling paint and a rusted aluminum roof. On the lot next to their house, the cinder-block frame of their future home dwarfs the others on the block.

**14 INT. MIGUEL'S HOME - NIGHT**

**14**

Miguel and Erica enter the house, where their brother LUIS (7) watches an enormous television, which feels incongruous in the middle of the tiny, dilapidated home. The reception is still crappy, though.

Miguel's grandmother, ABUELA, sits upright on her mattress in the corner of the room.

**MIGUEL**

Hello, Abuela. You're looking beautiful.

She smiles big at her oldest grandson, opens her arms for a hug. Erica sits at the kitchen table, where her schoolbooks lay open.

**MIGUEL**

What's up my people? How's the TV?

**LUIS**

Erica won't let me watch baseball.

**ERICA**

Not during American Idol, anyway.

Miguel's mother, CARMEN (late 30s) emerges from behind a hanging bed sheet, which acts as a "wall" separating two rooms.

**CARMEN**

Buenas, Miguelito! Do you have any good news for your mother?

**MIGUEL**

As a matter of fact, yes.

**CARMEN**

You're going to the United States?!

**MIGUEL**

Not yet, ma... But I learned how to throw a knuckle curve.

**CARMEN**

A knuckle curve? What's that?

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A GROUP of KIDS gather at the window.

**KIDS**

Sugar, come out and play!

**15 EXT. STREET - NIGHT**  
**15**

Gathered under the only functioning street lamp, Miguel rears back and throws in a swooping curve, that causes the BATTER to flinch out of the way, as it breaks perfectly over the plate.

Carmen, Luis and the rest of the barrio ONLOOKERS, "oooohh", the impressive curve.

Miguel notices a group of GIRLS eyeing him from across the street. His eyes stop on one, SOFIA (17). They exchange grins.

**16 INT. MIGUEL'S HOME - NIGHT**  
**16**

Miguel's family - minus Miguel - watches a soap opera. Carmen and Erica are in dialogue with the TV.

The CAMERA PANS away from the family, out the back window, where the new home is being constructed. We ZOOM IN on the structure covered in plastic tarp.

**17 INT. CONSTRUCTION LOT**  
**17**

Amidst tools, dry cement, a half-finished wooden dining table, and other assorted construction materials, Miguel has sex with Sofia on a work table.

18 INT. CONSTRUCTION LOT - LATER  
18

Miguel throws on his t-shirt. Sofia looks at the wooden dining table. It's artfully done, with details etched into the legs.

**SOFIA**

When will you finish this?

**MIGUEL**

Soon. It's just hard to find the time.

**SOFIA**

It's pretty.

**MIGUEL**

I'm trying to match the chairs my dad made, but I can't get it right.

**SOFIA**

Well, I think it's perfect.

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**MIGUEL**

I'll make you another when I'm done.

Sofia smiles, kisses Miguel on the cheek.

**SOFIA**

And the rest of the house? How long till it's done?

Miguel hesitates.

**MIGUEL**

Um, another month, maybe two... You know we just did it where Abuela's room is going to be...

**SOFIA**

(laughing)  
Don't tell me that!

**MIGUEL**

Why not? We can do it in mom's kitchen next. Right over there.

**SOFIA**

(getting serious)  
I hope you make it to the States this

year.

**MIGUEL**

You hope? C'mon, there's nobody better, baby.

**SOFIA**

(smiling big)

Okay, how about: I KNOW you'll make it.

**MIGUEL**

Now you're talkin'. And when I do, I'll buy a Cadillac, drive it through the ocean, and bring you back with me.

**SOFIA**

You can't drive a Cadillac on water.

**MIGUEL**

Yes! In the States they make cars that drive on water.

**SOFIA**

You're crazy.

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**MIGUEL**

You'll see who's crazy. Just watch.

**SOFIA**

I want to see the snow. Does it snow in Kansas City?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know. But I'll take you to New York City. Yankee Stadium. It snows there. You wanta see me play in Yankee Stadium?

**SOFIA**

It doesn't snow during baseball season, silly.

**MIGUEL**

So we'll go for Christmas.

**SOFIA**

Promise?

**MIGUEL**

Next Christmas, we'll sail into Yankee Stadium in my Cadillac car-boat. Deal?

**SOFIA**

You are crazy!

They kiss.

19 **EXT. MALECÓN - NIGHT**  
19

Miguel, Sofia, JAVIER (Black, 22) JAMIE (Black, 26) and ALEXANDRA (one of Sofia's friends) hang out by the malecón (waterside), drinking rum and dancing to merengue that blasts out the open doors of a nearby car. The mood is festive.

**JAVIER**

(mid-story)

I liked her, but she asked me to cut my hair. I thought about it. She was cute, but... I liked my hair more.

**SOFIA**

I liked it too, Javi.

**MIGUEL**

Then why'd you cut it last week?

**JAVIER**

I thought it was time for a new look.

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**MIGUEL**

Or a new girl.

Sofia punches Miguel in the arm.

**MIGUEL**

Watch it, baby, that's a million-dollar arm you're messing with.

**JAVIER**

He's right! All hail the golden arm.

Javier and the girls drunkenly salute Miguel's arm, pretend to dust dirt away, but Jaime doesn't play along. He looks on, a little jealous.

**JAIME**

You call that flabby rubberband an arm?

**JAVIER**

Ooh...

**MIGUEL**

This flabby rubberband can throw 95.  
What can yours do?

**JAIME**

I threw 98 in double-A Portland.

**MIGUEL**

98? Then why you washing windshields  
now? I saw you try and bumrush Javy at  
the stoplight last week.

Everyone cracks up laughing, including Jaime, as Miguel grabs Sofia, and leads her in a dance.

His smile fading, Jaime looks out over the water. Miguel notices this. Hold.

**EXT. SAN PEDRO TOWN - MORNING**

20

20

Various Sunday morning images establishing Miguel's hometown:

--A dewey mist covers an empty baseball field, surrounded by acres of tall sugarcane.

--Women hang laundry on the line to dry.

--A rooster walks alone through a graveyard.

--People spill out of church into the road.

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--MIDDLE-AGED MEN drink beer in the dugout during a softball game.

21

**EXT. EMPTY LOT FIELD - DAY**

21

A makeshift diamond is overrun with weeds, ditches, stones, and trash for bases. Donkeys graze in the outfield, unphased by the LITTLE KIDS (10-14 years old) playing around them.

A YOUNG PITCHER fires in a fastball that BEANS the YOUNG HITTER in the back.

IN THE BLEACHERS, TWO MIDDLE-AGED MEN drink beer and occasionally heckle the kids.

**HECKLER #1**

You're supposed to aim for the head!

Nearby, Miguel sits beside his old coach, FRANK (early 40s), watching the kids play. One of the local SHOE SHINE BOYS cleans Miguel's shoes with an old toothbrush as Frank cracks open a beer. Frank points out one of the kids on the field.

**FRANK**

I like this one. Good bat speed. Only twelve years old, out here four, five hours everyday. His mom tells me he's missing school. I say, yeah, but... have you seen his swing?

They laugh.

**FRANK**

I'm showing his older brother to the Yankees on Monday.

Miguel nods, a hint of disappointment in his eyes.

**FRANK**

(seeing this)  
They don't know what they missed with you. It's cool though. They'll be knocking on your door, offering millions when you turn into a superstar. You'll see...

Miguel nods, appreciating the vote of confidence.

**MIGUEL**

Have you been to New York?

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**FRANK**

(nodding)  
Nothing like playing for a crowd of New Yorkers. They're even louder than Dominicans.

**MIGUEL**

What's the city like?

**FRANK**

It's great. But you need to get to Kansas City before you start thinking about New York. Know what I mean?

**MIGUEL**

You hear anything about spring training yet?

**FRANK**

Yep.

Frank sips his beer.

**MIGUEL**

And?

Frank shrugs, as Miguel's sister calls out from the street--

**ERICA**

Miguel, Luis! Dinner is ready!

**MIGUEL**

You'd tell me if you knew.

**FRANK**

Maybe.

Miguel shakes his head, gets up.

**MIGUEL**

Wanna join us for dinner?

**FRANK**

Not tonight. But give your mom a kiss for me, okay?

Miguel gives a coin to the boy who's been cleaning his shoes before heading off with his little brother.

Frank sips his beer, calls out to the field--

**FRANK**

C'mon, Nelson! Fire it in, baby!

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16.

**22 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - EARLY MORNING**  
**22**

A mist hovers over the empty field.

23 EXT. ACADEMY ENTRANCE ROAD - SAME TIME  
23

A group of Academy EMPLOYEES shuffle down the dirt road on foot.

24 INT. ACADEMY DORMITORY - SAME TIME  
24

Miguel, laying awake in the upper bed, hears his bunk-mate, Alfonso, stirring beneath him. Miguel peers over, sees Alfonso discreetly pop several pills from a plastic baggy. They make brief eye contact before Alfonso heads out of the room.

25 INT. ACADEMY KITCHEN - DAY  
25

Several middle-aged women sit on buckets near an open door, peeling yucca. A man fries eggs at the grill, preparing breakfast for the players.

26 INT. ACADEMY DINING ROOM - DAY  
26

The players eat breakfast. The mood is strangely quiet.

27 INT. ACADEMY CLUBHOUSE - DAY  
27

The signed players sit around in uniform, while the unsigned "trial" players wear their black jerseys. Coach Reyes addresses them in mid-speech.

**REYES**

A lot of you are thinking about your families right now. Your girlfriends, sisters and brothers, grandparents. You're feeling the pressure. But, I'm going to tell you something very important, gentlemen... forget it. You've got to think about yourselves. Put all your energy into your game, into your development as a player. Forget about everything else in your life... and just play ball. You wanna succeed, you gotta be like a racehorse, focused on your goal. It's up to you.

28 EXT. ACADEMY BUILDING - DAY  
28

Several players work out on bars attached to the side of the

building.

As Miguel lowers himself after a set of pull-ups, he notices a shiny, black, luxury SUV drive into the academy parking lot.

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Miguel watches as Alvarez gets out of the driver's seat, doing business on his cell phone.

**29 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - LATER**

**29**

Miguel exercises his pitching arm by stretching an elastic tube tied against a chain-link fence. As he stretches, he watches a group of players line up for a sprint drill, sizing up his future competition.

Salvador, wearing his black jersey, races for his life, beating all the others.

**30 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - LATER**

**30**

The sweat-drenched players line up according to their positions, waiting their turns to participate in a double-play drill, where the pitchers cover first base.

Miguel awaits his turn, watching another pitcher, EDDY, run to first to receive a throw from second base, but before Eddy can catch the ball...

...he twists his ankle tripping over the bag.

The coaches rush over to Eddy, who is on the ground wincing in pain. Miguel and the rest of the team watch in nervous anticipation as Eddy struggles to his feet, limps off the field with the aid of another player.

**REYES**

Next up, Miguel! Here we go!

The ball is hit on the ground to first base, where the fielder quickly throws it over to second. Miguel charges over to first, stutter steps as he nears the base, and receives the throw just in time to beat the hitter and step out of the way. He exhales in relief.

**31 INT. CLUBHOUSE SHOWERS - DAY**

**31**

The players shower after a gruelling day of workouts.

**32 INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY**  
**32**

Miguel lounges with an elaborate ice-wrap around his shoulder and upper arm as other players get dressed into street clothes. Coach Reyes comes in, spots Pedro.

**REYES**

Berroa, see Alvarez when you're dressed.

Pedro nods. Miguel and Marcos exchange knowing glances.

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**33 INT. ACADEMY DINING ROOM - NIGHT**  
**33**

The team eats dinner. At Miguel's table, we catch the punchline of a joke...

**MARCOS**

So the Dominican's like, 'Fuck, what am I gonna do?' He stays there, points up to the sky and says. 'Look! There's a plane... Right THERE!'

Everyone laughs hysterically, as...

...the young rookie, Salvador, grabs a seat next to Miguel at an adjoining table.

**SALVADOR**

Hey, Sugar! They made me an offer.

Miguel smiles, but hesitates for a beat as Pedro walks past them and over to an empty table in the corner of the room. Miguel turns back to Salvador, pats him on the head.

**MIGUEL**

Good for you. Congratulations. How much they offer you?

**SALVADOR**

(with a big smile)

**115,000.**

(sensing the other players surprise)

But, you know, my manager's taking, like, forty of it... What'd you sign for?

**MIGUEL**

Oh, you know, more or less the same. Did you get any other offers?

**SALVADOR**

Yankees and Seattle, but not as much.

**MIGUEL**

Just don't get cocky. No one likes a dickhead... Welcome to the team.

Salvador smiles.

**SALVADOR**

So, why do they call you Sugar?

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**MIGUEL**

Well it's like this... it started cause I'm sweet with the ladies. But mostly it's cause I got the sweetest knuckle curve in the whole Republic.

**ALFONSO**

(interjecting)

Bullshit! You just learned that shit on Friday! It's cause he eats so much junk food!

Salvador notices two pieces of cake on Miguel's tray.

**MIGUEL**

(playing it cool)

He's just jealous.

Miguel notices Pedro across the room, staring at his food.

**34 INT. ACADEMY RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT**

**34**

A dozen players sit around the television, watching a shlocky American horror film on DVD.

**35 IN THE ADJOINING DORMITORY**

**35**

Pedro packs his belongings into a KC Knights' duffel bag, when Miguel, Marcos, and Alfonso approach his bunk.

**MIGUEL**

We got you a going away present.

Miguel unzips his windbreaker to reveal a bottle of Brugal rum hidden underneath. The other guys smile mischievously.

**36 EXT. ACADEMY BUILDING - NIGHT**  
**36**

Miguel, Marcos, Alfonso, and Pedro tip-toe across the gravel, whispering at each other to shut up.

**37 EXT. OBSERVATION TOWER - LATER**  
**37**

The four players toast their rum in little plastic cups. The bottle is nearly finished.

**MARCOS**

You should try Los Campos. I heard the Dodgers could use a new first baseman.

**PEDRO**

Fuck that. The coaches are even tougher over there. I'm done, man.

**(MORE)**

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**PEDRO (cont'd)**

No more curfews, nobody tellin' me what to do and how to do it. For real, I'm glad this shit's over. I'm a free man.

Awkward silence. The players look at Pedro with pity, unsure how to respond. After a beat, Miguel mocks coach Reyes and the others follow suit, mocking Alvarez and the other coaches.

**MIGUEL**

(snatching Pedro's cap)  
No caps indoors, son!

**ALFONSO**

Cut the meat with your knife; eat the meat with your fork. NEVER eat the meat with your knife.

**MARCOS**

Or you'll chop off your tongue.

**MIGUEL**

Ten p.m. lights out!

**PEDRO**

(in broken English)

"Tay me outta the ball game, tay me  
outta the crowd..."

The other players laugh, join Pedro in a loud whisper...

**ALFONSO/MIGUEL/MARCOS/PEDRO**

"...buys me so peanut and crackay-  
yacks. I doe-care if I never get back.  
Roo, roo, roo for home teams, we doe-  
win is a shame..."

Pedro breaks off from the song, looks out over the field, on the  
verge of crying. One by one, the other players take notice and  
stop singing. Silence. Hold.

**38 INT. ACADEMY BATHROOM - DAY**

**38**

Hungover, Miguel vomits in the toilet. Reyes opens the stall.

**REYES**

Santos, what the hell's wrong with you?

**MIGUEL**

I think I have the flu, coach. I can't  
pitch today.

Reyes glances over to Marcos and Alfonso standing nearby. They  
lower their heads in embarrassment like two kids busted by dad.

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**REYES**

You've got five minutes to get out on  
that mound, Santos.

Reyes marches off.

**39 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - DAY**

**39**

Miguel on the mound. Takes a deep breath. He utilizes every  
ounce of strength to deliver a pitch, and...

CRACK! The visiting Detroit Academy HITTER knocks the ball over

the left field wall for a homerun, wherein...

BLAH! Miguel throws up on the mound. All the players gasp in disgust, but Reyes just laughs.

Miguel looks over to Alvarez, sitting under an umbrella with a clipboard, then to Reyes, hoping he'll yank him out of the game, but Reyes just claps.

**REYES**

Feel better now? Let's go!

Miguel tries to shake off the cobwebs, steps on the rubber, stares down the next hitter.

CLOSE on his hand revealing the knuckle curve grip. He tosses in the next pitch, which arcs into Jose's glove for a...

**UMPIRE**

Strike!

Reyes' smile fades, stunned by the beautiful curve.

A SERIES OF JUMPCUTS take us through the next three batters, as Miguel makes quick work of them, mixing up his nasty curve with a blazing fastball.

After the third out, Miguel walks back to the dugout. He takes a seat on the bench, smiles smugly.

**REYES**

Wipe that smile off your face.

And he does.

**40 EXT. ACADEMY FIELD - SUNSET**  
**40**

Miguel, Alfonso, and Marcos run laps around the field as punishment for the previous night's activities. They look as if they could pass out at any moment.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

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**41 INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY**  
**41**

Miguel and Marcos sit on a couch in a bare-walled waiting room

outside Alvarez's office. They sit quietly, like two kids waiting for the principal.

Coach Reyes pokes his head out of Alvarez's office, motions them inside.

**42 INT. ALVAREZ'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**  
**42**

Miguel and Marcos stare straight ahead, nervously. Alvarez stares at them, icy cold. After a beat...

**ALVAREZ**

I am very disappointed. Just when I was starting to like you guys, you go and do something stupid. What do you have to say for yourselves?

**MARCOS**

But Alfonso was there too--

**ALVAREZ**

--No excuses. This is unacceptable behavior. You guys need to learn discipline.

Miguel and Marcos lower their heads.

**REYES**

You need to remember that you still have a long way to go, a lot of hard work ahead of you before you make it. First, there's getting your shot in the American Minor Leagues: rookie ball, single, double, triple A - all that before you even set foot in a major league ballpark. So, you better pull it together quick...

**ALVAREZ**

Because nobody's gonna take this shit from a couple Dominican rookies when you go to the U.S. for Spring Training this season.

They glance up, eyes wide. Did he just say...

**REYES**

You've been invited to Spring Training.

Everyone smiles (even Alvarez).

**43 INT. TEXTILE FACTORY - DAY**  
**43**

CAMERA follows behind the FLOOR MANAGER, as he passes rows of WOMEN of all ages, working on sewing machines for an American underwear company. He stops behind one woman, taps her on the shoulder. The woman removes her earphones, turns around. It is Miguel's mother, Carmen.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Phone call. He said it's important.

**44 INT. FACTORY HALLWAY**  
**44**

Carmen picks up the phone.

**CARMEN**

Hello?

Hold on her reaction shifting from that of concern to elation. She struggles to contain her joy.

**45 INT. MIGUEL'S HOME - NIGHT**  
**45**

Miguel opens a new bottle of rum, pours shots for everyone. The whole family and all of Miguel's neighbors are jammed inside the tiny house and spilling out into the street. Merengue blasts from the new home stereo system.

FRIENDS and FAMILY pat Miguel on the back. He smiles, basking in the glory of success. Erica kisses Miguel on the cheek.

**ERICA**

Don't forget to call everyday. I want to know everything!

**MIGUEL**

Everything?

**ERICA**

You know what I mean, dummy.

**MIGUEL**

Of course I'll be calling to keep you in check, make sure your grades don't slip.

**ERICA**

Look who's talking.

Carmen interrupts, drapes her arms around Miguel, kissing him repeatedly. As Erica looks on, we get the sense that she's used to being on the outside of this kind of attention.

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**CARMEN**

You are my hero!

Carmen pulls Miguel close, takes something from her pocket, puts it in his hand.

**CARMEN**

It was your father's. I want you to  
take it with you...

Miguel looks at the cross, kisses his mother on the cheek. As he looks up, he notices Erica slip away.

**CARMEN**

You've been given a wonderful gift,  
Miguelito. And God willing, you will  
continue to do great things with it. I  
love you so much.

She kisses him on the forehead.

A SERIES OF JUMPCUTS present a variety of family and friends introducing themselves to Miguel.

**UNCLE ANGEL**

Miguelito! You gonna remember your  
uncle Angel when you're all big and  
famous? Don't forget your family, kid.  
Never forget where you came from.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**COUSIN LUPE**

Lupe! Cousin Lupe! Remember that time  
we went skinny-dipping at the Malecón?

**MIGUEL**

When?

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**COUSING FELIPE**

You were eight years old! Hated the goats so much. You would cry and cry and cry and cry. What a baby you were. Do you remember?

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**MIGUEL**

What's your name?

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**AUNT LOLA**

Lola! Your aunt Lola!

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**UNCLE JEFFE**

Uncle Jeffe!

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**NEIGHBOR ANA**

Your neighbor Ana. I grew up around the corner from here.

Ana lays a juicy kiss on Miguel. He smiles.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**FRANK**

Don't give me any shit, kid. I taught you everything you know.

Miguel gives Frank a big hug.

**FRANK**

I'm damn proud of you, kid. Your father would be, too.

**MIGUEL**

Thanks. I owe it all to you.

**FRANK**

Not all. Just forty percent.

Miguel smiles, as Frank leans close.

**FRANK**

I spent the best years of my life playing in the States. Life gives you

a lot of opportunities, but baseball only gives you one. Enjoy every minute of it.

Miguel nods.

**FRANK**

How's your new curve?

**MIGUEL**

It's pretty sweet.

**FRANK**

Good. Here...

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Frank hands Miguel a pen.

**MIGUEL**

What's this for?

**FRANK**

Your autograph.

Miguel seems puzzled, but searches for something to write on.

**FRANK**

I'm kidding, you arrogant prick. It's so you can write your family... and me, too... if you feel like it.

Miguel gives Frank another hug.

**46 INT. MIGUEL'S HOME - LATER**

**46**

Miguel dances salsa with Sofia, and then switches partners, dances with Carmen.

As he dances close with his mother, he catches a glimpse of Erica standing with some friends off to the side.

**47 EXT. CONSTRUCTION LOT - LATER THAT NIGHT**

**47**

Miguel and Erica stand in silhouette, isolated from the party raging outside. Miguel sands one of the legs of the dining table.

**MIGUEL**

Where's your boyfriend?

**ERICA**

Which one?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know; the ugly one.

**ERICA**

Hector?

**MIGUEL**

Okay, where's Hector?

**ERICA**

(shrugs, then)  
Some other party.

**MIGUEL**

So what about the good-looking one?

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**ERICA**

Mmm, Fernando... I think he's out there  
dancing with Sofia.

Miguel's eyes get big for a second, until Erica smiles. He's  
been had. He smiles back. A beat.

**MIGUEL**

I'm proud of you, sis. You're going to  
do great things too. We all know it.

**ERICA**

I'm gonna miss you...

She kisses Miguel on the cheek.

**ERICA**

C'mon, let's dance.

**MIGUEL**

Go on, I'll be out in a minute. And  
tell Fernando to keep his dirty hands  
off my girl.

Through cracks in the tarp, Miguel watches Erica join the dance  
party in the street.

Savoring this rare moment alone, he breathes deep, blows wood

dust off the table leg, and continues sanding. Hold.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**48 INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**  
**48**

Miguel looks out the window over the dry, Arizona desert.

**49 INT. AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY**  
**49**

A duffel bag emerges from the luggage shoot, and slides down to the rotating conveyor belt, where an AMERICAN TOURIST grabs it and exits frame. PAN OVER to Miguel, Marcos and several other DOMINICAN PLAYERS (including ANTONIO and JULIO) excitedly waiting for their bags. Miguel perks up upon seeing his, quickly snatches it off the belt. The others smile and APPLAUD.

**50 EXT/INT. AIRPORT SHUTTLE BUS - LATE AFTERNOON**  
**50**

The other Dominican players goof off, while Miguel stares out the windows at the rocky suburban Phoenix landscape. He catches wide-eyed glimpses of wacky shaped cacti, strip malls, and, of course, a drive-thru Starbucks.

ON THE RADIO, a conservative talk show host warns listeners about the evils of Iran, suggests war as the only solution.

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**51 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT**  
**51**

The players enter the southwest-style lobby, examining potted cacti, and framed R.C. Gorman reprints on the walls.

**52 INT. HOTEL ROOM**  
**52**

Miguel and Marcos enter the room, drop their bags and explore everything like big kids away from home for the first time.

Marcos turns on the TV, which has a clear reception. He smiles.

IN THE BATHROOM Miguel examines the hair dryer on the wall, turns it on and off.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Miguel opens the adjoining suite door to

find Antonio and Julio. They push past him, each holding a beer.

**ANTONIO**

Check this out.

Antonio opens their mini bar, tosses Miguel and Marcos beers. They all toast...

**MIGUEL/MARCOS/ANTONIO/JULIO**

To America!

Marcos randomly hits buttons on the remote control and accidentally selects an adult pay-per-view movie. The opening credits plunge right into a graphic sex-scene. Their heads immediately jerk over to the TV, stunned.

**MARCOS**

To America!

They all smile and toast again.

**KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK**

Marcos opens the door to find JORGE RAMIREZ (25, an experienced minor leaguer who left the KC Knights Dominican camp three years ago) smiling before him.

**JORGE**

What's up fellas!?

**MARCOS**

Jorge!

They hug. Jorge enters, notices the beers and porn. He shakes his head.

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**53 EXT. ALL NIGHT DINER - NIGHT**

**53**

Through the window we see the players sitting in a corner booth. A semi truck BLASTS through the frame.

**54 INT. ALL NIGHT DINER**

**54**

Over beers, the players study their menus in confusion, as Jorge does his best to explain how things work.

**JORGE**

Never, never, never, drink from the hotel mini bar. That shit is expensive. You want beer, buy it at the store. You wanta see titties? They got magazines for that. Don't pay in the hotel.

A WAITRESS approaches.

**WAITRESS**

You boys ready?

**JORGE**

The greatest thing about the States? You can order breakfast 24/7. French toast is the best. It's nothing like Dominican toast.

(in English to waitress)

French toast please.

The players stare at Jorge, a little intimidated.

**WAITRESS**

Who's next?

After a beat, the players respond in unison...

**MIGUEL/MARCOS/ANTONIO/JULIO**

French toast.

The waitress nods and leaves, wherein the players crack up laughing at their first English language dining experience.

**55 EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - DAY**  
**55**

FROM THE OBSERVATION TOWER, we look down over the multiple-field spring training complex, where the MINOR LEAGUERS work out. The vast facilities are triple the size of what we saw in the Dominican Republic.

A55 ON THE FIELD, Miguel, Marcos, and Jorge stretch out on the  
A55 grass.

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Jorge, wearing an elastic knee brace, points out a young, AFRICAN-AMERICAN GUY running wind sprints across the field...

**JORGE**

Brad Johnson. He just signed for a million dollars out of college.

Miguel and Marcos watch Brad with fascination, searching for some sort of physical representation of his wealth.

**JORGE**

There's a lot of guys like that. But you can't let that intimidate you. Everyone knows Dominicans rule the game.

Two Venezuelan players, ORLANDO MATO (23, catcher) and ED POVEDA (22, center field) step up.

**ORLANDO**

What's this about Dominicans ruling the game?

**ED**

No, he must've said Venezuelans.

Jorge stands up, exchanges hugs with Orlando and Ed as they continue their debate over which Latin country has the best players.

**JORGE**

Sammy, Manny, Pedro...

**ED**

Santana, Zambrano, the Guillens!

**JORGE**

Are you guys all from the same family?

**ORLANDO**

Look who's talking... Are these your brothers?

**JORGE**

What, all Dominicans look the same, now?

They all smile, stop razzing each other momentarily to meet the new players.

**JORGE**

This is Miguel and Marcos. Up from Boca Chica.

(to Miguel and Marcos)

**(MORE)**

JORGE (cont'd)  
Orlando and Ed. We all played in  
Bridgetown together before I moved up  
to Double A and left these fools  
behind.

**ORLANDO**  
But you couldn't hang in Wichita.

**JORGE**  
I injured my knee, asshole. But I'm  
healthy now. You'll see.

**ORLANDO**  
Fifty bucks you're back in Iowa next  
month.

**JORGE**  
Fifty bucks you're still an asshole  
next month.

They all LAUGH.

**56 ON THE FIELD - LATER**  
**56**

Pitching coach, STU SUTTON (white, 40s), addresses the minor  
league pitching staff in mid-speech.

**STU**  
You've gotta show us your best game  
here. Remember that, until you reach  
the top, there's always guys above you,  
hustling to keep you here. And guys  
below you pushing to take your job. We  
have 75 pitchers in this camp competing  
for less than 50 positions come April  
3rd. So you gotta work hard...

While all the players respectfully listen to Stu, it is clear  
that very few of the Latino players can understand him.

**57 LATER ON THE PRACTICE MOUNDS**  
**57**

Miguel stretches his arm, while observing another group of  
PITCHERS throwing in the bullpen. He stares at them with  
intensity, sizing up his new competition.

58 **LATER ON THE FIELD**  
58

Miguel faces off against a HITTER in a simulated game scenario. One, two, three, he strikes him out on three straight pitches.

Stu and another COACH exchange impressed looks.

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**STU**

Bring over Leonard.

The other Coach calls over to the adjoining field.

**COACH**

Bring over Leonard!

59 **ON THE FIELD - MINUTES LATER**  
59

ON major league all-star ROB LEONARD in the batter's box, awaiting Miguel's pitch.

Miguel takes a deep breath, psyches himself up. He puts everything he has into a hearty fastball, which...

...sails right over the plate for a STRIKE, as Leonard calmly watches and readies himself for the next one.

Feeling confident with his stuff, Miguel fires in the next pitch, and...

WHACK! Leonard sails it over the right field wall.

Stu Sutton smiles at Miguel.

**STU**

Welcome to America, kid.

60 **INT. ALL NIGHT DINER - NIGHT**  
60

CLOSE ON a plate of french toast. Miguel, Marcos, Antonio, and Julio all chow down on french toast again. They eat in silence for a few beats, until...

**ANTONIO**

I have to admit... I'm getting a little sick of the french toast.

The others nod in agreement, but continue eating.

**61 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - PAY PHONE - NIGHT**  
**61**

Miguel talks on the phone to Sofia.

**MIGUEL**

I pitched against Rob Leonard today.

A61 We INTERCUT with Sofia, at her home in the Dominican Republic.  
A61

**SOFIA**

No shit! You strike him out?

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**MIGUEL**

Yeah.

**SOFIA**

Liar!

**MIGUEL**

You don't believe me?

**SOFIA**

No.

**MIGUEL**

Well, I got one strike at least.

Sofia laughs.

**SOFIA**

So, do you like it there?

**MIGUEL**

Mmmm... It's different.

**SOFIA**

Different how?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know. Just different. Like  
the food is really sweet.

**SOFIA**

I thought you liked sweet things.

Miguel smiles.

**MIGUEL**

All the players are really good.

**SOFIA**

But not like you.

**MIGUEL**

No, not like me. Of course not... But they're pretty good.

Another beat. Sofia looks down at her bare feet, scrunches her toes.

**SOFIA**

I miss you.

**MIGUEL**

I miss you, too.

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**62 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

**62**

Marcos tries to sleep, while Miguel channel surfs through the late night infomercials and reality TV dating shows.

After a few beats of this...

**MARCOS**

(annoyed)

Turn it off.

And he does.

**63 EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - SUNRISE**

**63**

Miguel runs laps along the outfield wall in the empty stadium.

**64 EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - GAME DAY**

**64**

The Kansas City B-squad is facing off against the Los Angeles B-squad, which is rallying in the top of the 9th.

**65 IN THE BULLPEN**

**65**

Miguel warms up, glancing over to the action on the field between pitches. He sees...

...Los Angeles gets another hit, scoring another run, so...

...Stu Sutton walks out to the mound, signals for Miguel.

Miguel throws one more warm-up toss and sprints onto the field.

**66 ON THE MOUND**  
**66**

Miguel arrives, ready for action. Stu hands him the ball, while the catcher, Orlando, translates.

**STU**

Just relax. Know your pitches. And take it easy. Ground ball. Okay?

**ORLANDO**

(in Spanish)  
Just relax. Ground ball.

Miguel nods. As he tosses a few more warm-up pitches from the mound, Stu goes back to the DUGOUT where Marcos and Julio anxiously await Miguel's spring training game debut.

The BATTER steps in and Miguel steps on the rubber, touches his father's cross around his neck, tucks it in his jersey. He looks to Orlando, and nods at his request for a fastball. He throws it in...

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**UMPIRE**

Strike!

Stu exchanges impressed glances with another COACH.

Miguel sends in the next one, and...

...the HITTER checks his swing, but goes too far.

**UMPIRE**

Two!

IN THE DUGOUT Marcos gets to his feet, clapping for encouragement.

Miguel nods to Orlando, delivers again...

CRACK! The ball is smoked toward Brad Johnson at second base. He leaps out, body fully extended, and makes a fantastic catch. But he's not done yet...

The runner at second is too far off the bag, so Brad hops to his feet, and fires a laser beam to second, finishing off one of the sweetest double-plays you'll ever see.

Miguel pumps his fist into the air, and the team runs to...

**67 THE DUGOUT**

**67**

Marcos and Julio are the first to greet Miguel with high-fives. Orlando, Ed, and Jorge, coming off the field, follow in suit. Miguel awaits Brad's return to the dugout and high-fives him too, but they soon return to their segregated places on opposite ends of the bench.

**68 INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY**

**68**

Most of the players are gone or heading out when Miguel approaches his catcher, Orlando, a few lockers away.

**MIGUEL**

Where did you learn English so good?

**ORLANDO**

Back home in Caracas.

**MIGUEL**

Like in high school, or something?

**ORLANDO**

Yeah, but it's still hard though.  
People talk fast.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 36.

Miguel agrees, as an ASSISTANT COACH finishes handing out checks to the remaining players.

Miguel sits on the bench near his locker, opens his envelope to find...

INSERT: a check for \$502.18.

He SMILES.

69 INT. CLASSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON  
69

The ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR goes over baseball related vocabulary off-screen, while Miguel glances through his "English for Baseball Players" notebook.

He finds a page with pictures of different foods along with their English names. He looks at all the foods, stops at an image of a fried egg. He circles the word "egg."

The instructor finishes up class, and the exhausted Latino players get up to leave. Marcos stands, leans over to Miguel.

**MARCOS**

C'mon. Let's grab some dinner.

**MIGUEL**

Nah, I'm gonna stay and work out a little. I'll catch up later.

70 INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT  
70

Miguel does bicep curls alone in the weight room, when...

...Brad Johnson enters. They exchange hello gestures, and proceed to workout on opposite sides of the room. After finishing his set, Miguel turns to Brad.

**MIGUEL**

(struggling in English)  
Good catch.

**BRAD**

Thanks... I got lucky.

They continue with their respective routines.

71 INT. WESTERN UNION - NIGHT  
71

CLOSE ON Miguel's hands counting out seven fifty-dollar bills.

He approaches the CLERK behind thick, bullet-proof glass, and slides the money and routing slip through a retractable tray.

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37.

He smiles BIG at the clerk. Proud.

72 INT. ALL NIGHT DINER - NIGHT  
72

The usual waitress hovers over Miguel, alone at the usual booth.

**WAITRESS**

French toast, right?

**MIGUEL**

No... Egg. Egg, please.

**WAITRESS**

Eggs. No problem. How would you like 'm?

Miguel stares at her.

**MIGUEL**

Yes.

**WAITRESS**

Um, okay, uh... Scrambled? Over easy?  
Sunny side up?

A beat... He didn't count on this part. He thinks hard,  
pressure mounting.

**MIGUEL**

(giving up, embarrassed)  
French toast.

**WAITRESS**

No eggs? You sure?

**MIGUEL**

French toast.

**WAITRESS**

(disappointed)  
Alright, honey. French toast it is.

As she leaves, Miguel shakes his head, dejected. Stares  
out the window.

A72 MINUTES LATER. The waitress returns with french toast and  
A72 another plate with samples of different eggs.

**WAITRESS**

Okay... This is scrambled. Scrambled.

**MIGUEL**

Scrambled.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

38.

**WAITRESS**

(pointing on plate)  
Over easy.

**MIGUEL**

Over easy.

**WAITRESS**

(and finally)  
This one's tricky... Sunny-side-up.  
Sunny...

**MIGUEL**

Sunny...

**WAITRESS**

Side...

**MIGUEL**

Side...

**WAITRESS**

Up...

**MIGUEL**

Up.

**WAITRESS**

Sunny side up... On the house.

**MIGUEL**

Thank you.

**WAITRESS**

(smiling proud)  
You're welcome.

Miguel gets to work on his food, feeling good.

**FADE OUT.**

73 **EXT. CLUBHOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY**

73

Miguel leans against the wall, eyes closed. He whispers a prayer to himself, then heads inside the...

74 INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY  
74

...where he passes a dejected-looking Antonio, on his way out. Antonio avoids eye contact, and Miguel understands what's happened.

He sees Marcos, Julio, and a few other players lingering near the bulletin board. He approaches, cautiously.

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**MARCOS**

They're sending Antonio back.

**MIGUEL**

Shit. What about you guys?

**JULIO**

We're staying here. Rookie ball.

Miguel nervously glances over to the list.

**MARCOS**

Go take a look.

Miguel goes to the board scans the names on a roster, finds his.

INSERT: We PAN from his name to "(A) Bridgetown, Iowa"

**MIGUEL**

I'm not with you guys?

**MARCOS**

Straight to Single A, bro. With Jorge.  
Congratulations.

**MIGUEL**

Where is Iowa?

75 EXT/INT. MOVING BUS - IOWA HIGHWAY - DAY  
75

Various images of vast Midwest farmlands... corn country.

Miguel looks out the window at the passing landscape.

76 **EXT. BRIDGETOWN, IOWA BUS DEPOT - DAY**  
76

Bridgetown's number one baseball fans, EARL HIGGINS (70) and his wife HELEN HIGGINS (also 70) watch as the bus pulls into the depot. They're holding a sign that says: "Miguel Santos #1"

About a dozen young players hop off the bus and grab their bags. Some of them jump into waiting taxis, but Miguel sees his name on the Higgins' sign.

**MIGUEL**

Can't I stay with you guys?

**JORGE**

Don't worry, Sugar. The Higgins are good people. I stayed with them last time I played here.

Jorge walks over towards the Higgins with Miguel.

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**MIGUEL**

Then why don't you stay with them again?

**JORGE**

They have a no girls policy.

**HELEN**

Jorge! Good to see you back in Bridgetown!

Jorge hugs Helen, shakes hands with Earl.

**JORGE**

Thank you. This is Miguel.

Orlando whistles to Jorge from a taxi.

**JORGE**

I go now. Take care of my friend.

Jorge waves goodbye to the Higgins, pats Miguel on the back, and hops in a cab with Orlando and Ed.

Awkward beat, as Miguel, Earl, and Helen stand in silence.

77 **EXT/INT. HIGGINS CAR - DAY**  
77

Earl and Helen ramble on in English, while Miguel spaces out the back window at the passing corn stalks, which are strikingly similar to the sugar cane stalks back home.

**HELEN**

We've had Dominicans, Venezuelan boys, a Colombian, one from Panama, blacks and some Americans. Mostly Spanish boys, though. Johan Santana, Mendy Lopez and Ramon Martinez all stayed with us. Years ago.

**EARL**

Last year we had this boy, Junior Sanchez. Nice boy. Decent with the glove, but couldn't bunt to save his life.

**HELEN**

Two-for-twelve in sacrifice situations.

**EARL**

Cost the team at least two victories.

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**HELEN**

Oh, that's being generous! I'd say four or five.

78 INT. HIGGINS FARMHOUSE - DAY  
78

Miguel, Earl, and Helen enter the old, crickety home.

**HELEN**

Put your things down. I'll show you around.

79 INT. KITCHEN  
79

**HELEN**

This is the kitchen. Help yourself to whatever you'd like. You can make a list of special foods you like to eat and put it here.

Helen points to a grocery list tucked under a broccoli magnet.

**HELEN**

Oh, and over here, this drawer is a little funny.

She pulls open the silverware drawer.

**HELEN**

You have to be careful or...

She pulls it a little too far and it falls off its rail.

Miguel  
nods.

**80 INT. WASHER/DRYER ROOM**  
**80**

**HELEN**

This is the washer and the dryer. For your clothes. You put the soap in this one. Sopa.

Miguel looks at her, confused. Did she just say "soup"?

**HELEN (CONT'D)**

The other one's just hot air.  
Caliente.

**A80 INT. STAIRCASE**  
**A80**

Miguel follows Helen up the stairs.

**HELEN**

Your room is up here.

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**81 IN THE BATHROOM**  
**81**

**HELEN**

(in bad Spanish)  
El banyo.

She laughs. Miguel smiles, appreciating the effort.

**82 INT. MIGUEL'S NEW BEDROOM**  
**82**

**HELEN**

Your new cuarto. Bedroom. Do with it

as you please. Just no girls. Chicas?  
No chicas.

Miguel smiles, understanding.

**83 INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

**83**

Earl and Helen break down the rules for Miguel at the table.

**EARL**

No drinking. No cervezas in the casa.  
No chicas in the bedroom.

**HELEN**

I already told him that one.

**EARL**

Okay. What about quiet time?

**HELEN**

Right. There's no real curfew, but you  
must be quiet after ten.

**EARL**

Diez.  
(holding index finger to  
mouth)  
Shhhh... after diez.

**MIGUEL**

Ten. Okay.

**HELEN**

Si! That's all we ask. It's our job  
to keep you healthy and focused on  
baseball.

**EARL**

And we take pride in that.

Miguel smiles.

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43.

**84 EXT. HIGGINS PORCH - DUSK**

**84**

Helen brings a large glass of lemonade to Miguel gently swaying  
on the porch swing.

**MIGUEL**

Thank you.

She nods, looks out over the landscape, and for the first time we see...

...an EXTREME WIDE SHOT of the Higgins house, which seems to be situated in the middle of nowhere. The low sun casts a dreamy Days of Heaven glow over the image. A tiny Helen Higgins returns inside the house, while Miguel continues to sway on the porch swing, alone. Hold.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**85 INT. MIGUEL'S HOME (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC) - DUSK**  
**85**

Carmen talks into the phone.

**CARMEN**

Everyone is so proud, Miguelito. It's all we can talk about.

A85 We INTERCUT between Carmen and Miguel IN HIS NEW IOWA BEDROOM.  
A85

**MIGUEL**

Did you get the money?

**CARMEN**

Of course.

**MIGUEL**

Good. And Victor? Can he start construction on the house again? I'll be sending money every two weeks now.

**CARMEN**

We just paid him. He's coming next week.

**MIGUEL**

What about you? You get something for yourself like I said?

**CARMEN**

Me? What do I need?

**MIGUEL**

C'mon, mom...

**CARMEN**

What?

**MIGUEL**

You didn't get anything?

**CARMEN**

Well, maybe I got some new shoes, but I'm not telling.

Erica strolls by, yells into phone...

**ERICA**

Three pairs, Miguel! But who's counting?

Miguel laughs on his end.

**MIGUEL**

Good for you, mom.

**HELEN (O.S.)**

Miguel! Time for dinner!

**MIGUEL**

I have to go, mom. The lady is calling me. Smells like dinner.

**CARMEN**

Dinner? Don't forget who your real mother is, Miguelito. Are you going to prefer her cooking to mine now?

**MIGUEL**

Impossible... I love you, mom.

**CARMEN**

Everyone loves and misses you. Strike one out for me, okay?

**86 INT. HIGGINS DINING ROOM- DUSK**

**86**

The Higgins' son, MICHAEL (40s), and his wife, HILARY (40s), and their daughter, ANNE (17), join Earl and Helen for Miguel's first dinner in Iowa.

Helen leads the table in grace...

**HELEN**

Dear Lord... Thank you for the meal we  
are about to eat. And for blessing us  
with our new guest. And guiding him  
safely on his journey from the  
Dominican Republic to Bridgetown...

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Miguel glances around the table. Everyone's head is bowed and eyes closed.

His eyes stop on Anne, seated across from him. She's an attractive all-American girl, but would never dream of flaunting her good looks. After taking her in, Miguel closes his eyes.

**HELEN**

...And finally, Lord... Please look kindly over the Swing this season. May all the players stay healthy and... well, why not?... if there's anything you can do to help us win another championship, we'll take that too... Amen.

The table laughs, followed by a chorus of Amens. Miguel opens his eyes, greeted with smiles. He smiles too, as everyone passes dishes around the table.

**MICHAEL**

So, Miguel... Do - you - eat - meatloaf - back home?

**HELEN**

I already told you, Michael, he doesn't speak any English.

**MICHAEL**

I know but... I'm curious to know what he thinks of the meatloaf.

**EARL**

What do you care? You didn't cook it.

**HILARY**

(to Michael)

I doubt they have meatloaf in the Dominican Republic, dear.

**ANNE**

I bet they have something similar. They probably just have another name

for it.

All eyes are on Miguel as he nervously takes a bite.

A suspenseful beat, until...

...he smiles and nods.

Everyone sighs, smiles, and nods back.

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46.

**MICHAEL**

This is good old-fashioned American home cooking, Miguel. Welcome to America.

**MIGUEL**

I like. Thank you.

**EARL**

Well, very good, Miguel. De nada to you, mi amigo. De nada to you.

Anne smiles at Miguel, a little embarrassed by her grandpa. Miguel smiles back, then gets back to his meatloaf.

**87 INT. BRIDGETOWN SWING CLUBHOUSE - DAY**

**87**

The team's CLUBHOUSE MANAGER (19, redheaded freckle face), hands out schedules to a handful of returning players.

**CLUBBY**

If you guys ever need tickets for family or friends, just let me know two days ahead of time. Thursday's opener is already sold out, but I saved one row, so you need to speak up now...

Miguel enters the room, looking for his locker. The Clubby takes notice.

**CLUBBY**

Santos - you're over there.

Clubby points Miguel in the right direction, where he finds his locker and several pressed jerseys waiting for him. Miguel takes his practice jersey, sits down in front of the locker, as...

**BRAD (O.S.)**

(in bad Spanish)  
Que pasa, hermano?

Brad pats Miguel on the back. Miguel is excited to see a familiar face.

**MIGUEL**

(in bad English)  
What up, Flaco?

**BRAD**

Dude, I was totally psyched when I saw your name on the squad. Good times.

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**MIGUEL**

Yeah, okay.

Brad finds his locker, and they both suit up.

**88 INT/EXT. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR - MINUTES LATER**  
**88**

We follow Miguel through the tunnel, which leads out to the...

**89 BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK FIELD**  
**89**

A stunning little park that sits at the Mississippi River's edge, underneath the Crescent Bridge. A dozen scattered players warm up on the lush green grass.

A wide-eyed Miguel steps onto the field for the first time and takes it all in. Hold.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**90 INT. WESTLAND MALL - DAY**  
**90**

Miguel and Jorge stroll through the mall. Miguel notes the steady barrage of discount signs, plastic jewelry kiosks, and product samples.

**91 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - MINUTES LATER**  
**91**

Miguel follows Jorge through the men's section when a rack of Hanes underwear catches his eye. He turns a package over.

INSERT: in a little corner of the package Miguel reads, "MADE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC".

He checks the price tag.

**JORGE**

C'mon, bro, let's find you a suit.

**MIGUEL**

I can't afford a suit.

**JORGE**

I didn't say buy a suit. I said find a suit. So when you make it big, you'll already know what looks good.

92 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE SUIT SECTION - NOT MUCH LATER  
92

Miguel emerges from the dressing room in a white suit and electric blue collared shirt.

**JORGE**

Hot damn! That's what's up!

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**MIGUEL**

You like it?

**JORGE**

I love it! You look like an all-star, bro.

Miguel admires himself in the mirror.

**JORGE**

(in a fake announcer voice, in English)

"Starting pitcher for American League... from Kansas City... Miguel... 'Sugar'... Santos."

Jorge fakes massive crowd applause. Miguel laughs.

**MIGUEL**

What about you, man? You try one.

Jorge shrugs, smiles.

**JORGE**

Me? Nah... I'm all washed up.

**MIGUEL**

C'mon...

Jorge gets distracted by a pack of TEENAGE GIRLS cruising by. They smile at the players, who smile back.

**MIGUEL**

Very nice.

**JORGE**

Dude. You have no idea. Just wait till we go to Big Muddy's.

**MIGUEL**

Big Muddy's?

Jorge reaches into his wallet, removes his ID, hands it to Miguel.

**JORGE**

You gotta be 21 to drink there. This is my old license. They won't know the difference.

Miguel looks at Jorge's ID photo, cracks up.

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49.

**MIGUEL**

Are you kidding me? Nobody's gonna believe I'm this ugly fool.

**JORGE**

Believe me; they won't know the difference.

**93 EXT. WESTLAND MALL PARKING LOT - DAY**

**93**

Miguel and Jorge each carry a shopping bag for Helen. Miguel also carries a plastic bag of his own. All three of them are licking ice cream cones.

**94 INT. MIGUEL'S ROOM - DAY**

**94**

Miguel takes a new calendar out of a plastic shopping bag. It features iconic images of New York City. He peels off the

plastic and pins it to the month of April on his wall.

CLOSE ON Miguel's hands tearing open a small package from his family back home: we linger on a crudely drawn sketch of a baseball player with a Kansas City jersey from Luis, along with a photo of Carmen, Erica, and Luis posing in front of the frame of the new house.

Miguel smiles, reads the enclosed letter.

**95 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - LATE AFTERNOON**  
**95**

Opening Night. There's an air of excitement in the stands and on the field. The small park's seats are packed with fans.

**96 INT. RADIO ANNOUNCERS' BOOTH**  
**96**

JACK JEFFERIES (White, 50s) overlooks the field, speaks into the microphone.

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Hey there, Swing fans, welcome to another exciting season of Swing baseball. As always we've got some new faces who we'll get to know this year-- like Brad Johnson, the highly touted 2nd baseman out of Stanford. He'll make his professional debut tonight. Great night for Swing baseball... And also a great night to grab a bite and a brew at Harlow's after the game - your local pub and proud sponsor...

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50.

**97 EXT. ON THE FIELD**  
**97**

As a YOUNG LADY begins singing the Star-Spangled Banner, Miguel takes off his hat, looks out to the American Flag. Hold on his solemn expression.

**98 EXT. IN THE DUGOUT**  
**98**

We STAY ON Miguel for the game's highlights, JUMP CUTTING his reactions to the best plays of the game.

PLAY 1: he casually spits sunflower seed shells, then CLAPS the final out of the inning, high-fiving players returning to the dugout.

PLAY 2: chats to Jorge, when they react to the CRACK of the bat, leap to their feet, eagerly anticipate an umpire's call, and CHEER when the call goes their team's way.

PLAY 3: grimaces at the sight of a hit-by-pitch.

PLAY 4: leaps to his feet, CLAPS.

PLAY 5: leaps to his feet, doesn't clap. Sits back down.

PLAY 6: Miguel and Jorge sway to the seventh inning stretch classic "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

PLAY 7: sitting with Brad, they both point to something on the field and crack up laughing. Of course, we don't see what they're laughing at.

PLAY 8: standing with Jorge and the rest of the players, the mood is tense. The players react to a hit ball, as their heads jerk toward the outfield, waiting, waiting, waiting, and...

A98 CELEBRATION! Whatever happened, the game is over and we follow  
A98 the players out onto the field to mob Brad, who just scored the winning run.

**99 EXT. BIG MUDDY'S FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT**  
**99**

The BOUNCER examines Miguel's photo ID, which is actually Jorge's. He shoots Miguel a suspicious look, but hands it back and lets him through.

**100 INT. BIG MUDDY'S - NIGHT**  
**100**

Some of the Swing players celebrate their first victory with beers at the local bar/dance club. A few of the guys dance with LOCAL GIRLS, but Jorge and Miguel stand against the wall, beers in hand, as they watch the MTV-inspired GRINDING and FREAKING unfolding before them.

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**MIGUEL**

You think they know how to salsa?

**JORGE**

(smiling)

Go for it, bro. But remember, just cause they dance with you, doesn't mean they want anything else.

Orlando and Ed approach with a couple brews.

**ORLANDO**

Not from you, anyway.

Miguel notices Brad stroll by, calls him over.

**MIGUEL**

Yo flaco!

**BRAD**

What's up fellas? Good game.

They all toast beers.

**BRAD**

What's with the flaco? I mean...  
(flexing his arm)  
You call this flaco?

Everyone laughs, as Jorge eyes TWO WOMEN on the dance floor.

**JORGE**

You ready?

**MIGUEL**

Let's do it.

**101 INT. BIG MUDDY'S DANCE FLOOR**  
**101**

Jorge whispers in one of the girls' ears and the two of them begin dancing with him and Miguel. At first cautious, Miguel and his partner ease closer, until Miguel's hands are on her hips, leading her in rhythm to the hip-hop jam, while mixing in some Latin moves as well.

As Miguel and Jorge carve and twist with their partners, several local bar PATRONS begin to take notice of their fancy footwork. But Miguel might be dancing too well for one DRUNK JACKASS in particular, who...

...wanders over, gets in Miguel's face.

**JACKASS**

(barely audible)

Careful, Paco. This ain't the jungle.

Miguel stares him down. A few clubbers in the immediate vicinity stop dancing, observe. Jorge steps between them, and...

...apparently, drunken egos speak the same language everywhere because Jorge and the Jackass start jawing back and forth in their native tongues. Both seem to be understanding the other, though the MUSIC is too loud to hear anything specific.

Brad and the Venezuelans run over to break it up before anything serious starts. They all hustle out to...

**102 EXT. BIG MUDDY'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT**  
**102**

The Latin players spill out into the brisk night air with Brad and the Swing's designated hitter, JEFF ELKS.

They all pile into Brad's car, as a few locals stand near the club's entrance, watching them go.

**103 EXT. HIGGINS FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**  
**103**

The car pulls up near the house and Miguel stumbles out, as the wild bunch inside HOOT and HOLLER.

The car backs down the road and the players' voices fade out with the hum of the engine.

An upstairs light goes on. Miguel looks up to the Higgins' bedroom where Helen's silhouetted figure lingers in the window. He tiptoes inside.

The sound of a CHURCH CHOIR fades in, and carries over to...

**104 INT. CHURCH - DAY**  
**104**

With the exception of Miguel, the all-white congregation sings hymns about Jesus and the Lord. He tries to suppress a yawn when he sees Anne Higgins singing in the choir. She notices him as she sings. A smile.

Miguel perks up.

105 **EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY**  
105

CHURCHGOERS flood out of the church after the service. Anne walks alongside Miguel.

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**ANNE**

How'd you like the service?  
(off his blank stare)  
Our church? Hope it wasn't too boring for you. Did you go to church in the Dominican Republic?

He shakes his head.

**MIGUEL**

I am sorry. I do not understand.

**ANNE**

S'okay. You understand more than a lot of folks around here I bet.

He nods, still unsure.

**ANNE**

So listen, me and some friends are hanging out later. You should stop by my house after the game. It's gonna be super chill. Grandma can take you there, but here...

She stops a random CHURCHGOER...

**ANNE**

Can I borrow a pen real quick?

The churchgoer hands over a pen, and Anne writes her address on Miguel's forearm.

**ANNE**

After the game. My house... Good luck, tonight.

Anne runs off. Miguel looks after her, mystified.

106 **INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**  
106

Half-uniformed players hang out, eating sandwiches, passing

around a PLAYBOY magazine, signing souvenir baseballs, and talking at full volume. Hip-hop BLASTS from a stereo, competing with an old DUKES OF HAZARD rerun on the TV. HARDY, the Bridgetown Swing mascot, passes through with his enormous monkey head under one arm.

Miguel sits at his locker, psyching himself up for his first start. He touches Luis' drawing, which is taped to the inside of his locker. Closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

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54.

**107 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - LATE AFTERNOON**  
**107**

ON THE MOUND. Miguel opens his eyes, as the LEAD-OFF HITTER steps into the batter's box. He takes a moment, crosses himself. Play ball.

Miguel nods to his catcher, Orlando, then fires in the first pitch high for a ball.

When he gets the ball back, he looks to the stands, where...

...Earl, Helen, Michael, and Hilary sit uncomfortably close to the field in choice box seats.

He takes a nervous breath, fires in the second pitch. Ball  
two.

Same for the third. And forth.

The batter jogs to first, and the crowd GRUMBLES.

**108 INT. RADIO ANNOUNCERS' BOOTH**  
**108**

Jack Jefferies does his thing on the mic.

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Santos, apparently feeling the butterflies on his first professional outing. Hailing all the way from the Dominican Republic, Santos wowed the club with his power during Spring Training. But he's off to a rocky start tonight.

**109 ON THE MOUND**  
**109**

Jorge comes over from third base as the batter walks to first.

**JORGE**

Relax, Sugar. It's the same game we played back home. That's all it is. Just a game, man. So relax. Let's have some fun. Okay?

Miguel nods. Jorge points out the next batter. Another Dominican.

**JORGE**

See? Just like home.

Jorge runs back to his position at third. Miguel tucks his index finger into his knuckle curve grip. Delivers...

**UMPIRE**

Strike!

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**JORGE**

That's it! There it is!

And the next pitch...

...is hit sharply to Jorge at third, who fires it over to second for one, and on to first for a double play.

The crowd goes WILD and Miguel finally exhales.

One, two, three... he mows down the next BATTER on three consecutive strikes. More APPLAUSE.

**110 IN THE DUGOUT**  
**110**

Orlando hands him his first strikeout ball. Miguel takes a seat, wipes the sweat from his head, then looks down at Anne's address scribbled on his forearm.

**111 SCOREBOARD - LATER THAT NIGHT**  
**111**

We PAN RIGHT across six innings of zeroes. The Swing are leading 4 to nothing in the top of the 7th.

**112 ON THE FIELD**  
**112**

THWACK! The HITTER smokes a double off the left-center wall.

113 INT. RADIO ANNOUNCERS' BOOTH  
113

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Nearly unhittable for the first 6  
innings, that was only the second hit  
allowed by Santos tonight.

114 BACK ON THE FIELD.  
114

The next BATTER dribbles a spinning groundball at Jorge, but it  
squirts through his legs into left field, allowing the runner to  
score an unearned run from second.

Stu walks toward the mound, signals for the bullpen. He and  
Orlando greet Miguel on the mound.

**STU**

Good game, kid. Enjoy this...

**ORLANDO**

(in Spanish)  
Nice work, Sugar.

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**MIGUEL**

(in Spanish, to Orlando)  
But that wasn't my fault. I can go  
longer.

**ORLANDO**

(in Spanish)  
Take it easy; it's your first game.

Though he doesn't speak Spanish, Stu knows exactly what's  
happening. He takes the ball from Miguel with a smile, but  
Miguel doesn't move, still reluctant to leave the mound.

As the FANS begin to cheer his stellar debut...

**STU**

You hear that? It's for you, kid.

Orlando smiles, pats Miguel on the butt, and Miguel finally  
starts his slow walk off the field. As we follow him off, the  
FANS rise to their feet and Miguel approaches the dugout to a  
standing ovation. On his way in, he's greeted by his teammates

with congratulatory high-fives.

AT THIRD Jorge stares at the dirt, frustrated by his misplay.

**115 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALLPARK - AFTER THE GAME**  
**115**

FIREWORKS EXPLODE in the sky as the kids in the crowd watch excitedly.

**116 IN THE DUGOUT**  
**116**

Miguel and a few other players hang over the railing, enjoying the awesome display.

**117 EXT. ANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**  
**117**

Miguel rings the doorbell, waits. He's holding a baseball. Anne opens the door.

**ANNE**

Hey Miguel. C'mon inside.

He hands her the ball like it's a rose.

**MIGUEL**

(in rehearsed English)  
My first... strike-out.

**ANNE**

Oh, Miguel... you're so sweet.  
Congratulations, I heard you pitched awesome.

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**118 INT. ANNE'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER**  
**118**

Some kind of casual teenage party is in effect. Pizza boxes are spread around the living room and everyone (12-15 WHITE KIDS) are drinking soda from plastic cups. No booze.

**ANNE**

Hey everybody, this is Miguel. He's from the Dominican Republic, and now he pitches for the Swing.

Everyone manages to say "Hi Miguel" at the same time.

119 **GAME ROOM - A LITTLE LATER**  
119

Two guys, RANDY and TRAVIS, play a spirited game of foozeball, while Miguel looks on, fascinated.

**RANDY**

What's up, man?

**TRAVIS**

Wanna play?

**MIGUEL**

No. Thank you.

**TRAVIS**

It's like soccer. You play soccer?

**MIGUEL**

Soccer? No. Baseball.

**TRAVIS**

Well this is called fooze-ball. Fooze-ball.

**MIGUEL**

Foos-ball?

**TRAVIS**

Yeah, you got it.

Miguel looks for Anne, sees her going over some papers with another kid. She sees Miguel, waves, then gets back to her conversation.

**RANDY**

I used to be a pitcher. In little league. I wasn't very good though.

Miguel nods, and another girl, WENDY, chimes in.

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**WENDY**

I heard that the beaches in the Dominican Republic are really beautiful.

Miguel nods again. They stand in silence for an awkward beat, sipping from their red, plastic cups, until...

**ANNE**

Hey guys, let's get started. Everyone grab a seat.

The teens crowd into the living room, squeezing together on sofas, recliners, and desk chairs. Miguel sits behind the majority of the group, not sure what's going on. Anne stands before them...

**ANNE**

I'm so glad you all came. Last year, we didn't have half as many people in our group. So, I think this just goes to show the great work we've been doing in spreading the word. But this year, I want us to work harder. Now, I know a lot of you are studying for SATs or working on college applications. And all of that is important, but we need to remember that our spiritual accomplishments are more important. What we do in school or for a job... that's just a small part of who we are. We're only here by the grace of God, so let's get out there and share that grace.

Miguel watches, still unsure what's going on.

**120 LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER**  
**120**

Anne leads the group in song, while Randy plays the piano. Miguel watches; he's the only person not singing.

**THE GROUP**

(singing)  
One there is above all others,  
Oh, how He loves!  
His is love beyond a brother's,  
Oh, how He loves!  
Earthly friends may fail or leave us,  
One day soothe, the next day grieve us;  
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us:  
Oh, how He loves!

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Miguel observes, a little disappointed, as this is not quite the date he was hoping for.

121 EXT/INT. MOVING BUS - DAY  
121

Miguel and Brad are side by side in neighboring aisle seats, while Jorge and Jeff catch some Zs against the window. Miguel's "English for Baseball Players" workbook is on his lap, but he and Brad discuss language that won't likely be found there...

**MIGUEL**

Mamañema. Very bad. Very bad word.

**BRAD**

Mama-ñema? What's it mean?

**MIGUEL**

Mmm... Like--

Miguel mimes fellatio.

**BRAD**

Cocksucker?

**MIGUEL**

Cock-sucker?

**BRAD**

Yeah, we say cocksucker.

**MIGUEL**

Okay, cocksucker.

**BRAD**

Mamañema.

They laugh.

**BRAD**

(in bad Spanish)

Who is your favorite player?

**MIGUEL**

(in bad English)

Robinson Cano for the Yankees. I know  
him brother. And you?

**BRAD**

Roberto Clemente.

**MIGUEL**

Who is that?

**BRAD**

What? You don't know about Clemente?

**MIGUEL**

Is Dominican?

**BRAD**

Puerto Rican. I can't believe it. This is tragic. Do you know who Babe Ruth is?

**MIGUEL**

Baby Ruth? El chocolate?

Brad stares at Miguel for a beat, and they both crack up.

**BRAD**

Hey, how'd it go with that girl the other night?

**MIGUEL**

Girl?

**BRAD**

Yeah, didn't you have a date, or something?

**MIGUEL**

Oh, she no es my girl.

Brad senses Miguel's disappointment in the matter.

**BRAD**

No sweat, bro. We'll find you a little honey on the road.

Miguel smiles. Brad picks up his mp3 player, searches the menu for something.

**BRAD**

You like The White Stripes?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know.

**BRAD**

Check it out.

Miguel grabs his portable CD player, hands it to Brad, trading

music with him. As Miguel places Brad's Bose headphones over his ears, The White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army" infuses the soundtrack and leads us through the following...

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61.

**122 EARLY SEASON SWING BASEBALL SEQUENCE:**  
**122**

--The Swing players sprint out of the dugout to their positions at BRIDGETOWN BALLPARK, while Miguel struts to the mound with supreme confidence.

A122 --AT A VISITING TEAM'S STADIUM, Miguel throws a series of  
A122 strikes and batters WHIFF.

B122 --Miguel ices down his arm after a game.  
B122

C122 --Ed sneaks up behind Miguel while he's talking to Brad and  
C122 drops a handful of ice down his shirt.

H122 --AT A VISITING BALL PARK Brad makes a diving stop.  
H122

D122 --AT THEIR HOME PARK, Stu works with Miguel in the early  
D122 afternoon, before the other players have arrived.

J122 --Brad slides in safely at second base.  
J122

F122 --Miguel runs videotape during one of his off days.  
F122

G122 --Jorge strikes out.  
G122

J122 --Miguel and Jorge eat eggs at a local diner.  
J122

123 --AT THE WESTERN UNION, Miguel hands \$300 through the glass to  
123 the teller.

124 --ON THE BUS, Brad hands Miguel a local paper, featuring a  
photo124 of Miguel on the mound.

**BRAD**

"Santos stings Owls with 8 Ks." What kind of shoddy journalism is this? There's nothing' about me in here.

Miguel smiles, takes the paper, examines it.

125 --IN A MOTEL ROOM, Miguel enthusiastically talks on the phone  
125 with his mom back home.

A125 --AT A VISITING TEAM BALLPARK, Miguel picks off a runner at  
A125 first.

126 --Jorge does physical therapy for his knee while Miguel  
126 stretches out his pitching arm.

127 --Miguel watches videotape of his pitching with Stu in the  
127 coach's office.

A127 --Miguel, Jorge, Orlando and Ed sit in the dugout,  
respectfullyA127 listen as a chaplain gives a sermon in Spanish.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 62.

At the other end of the dugout, some of the American players listen to a Sunday morning sermon in English.

B127 --TRACK IN on Miguel as he fires in another strike.  
B127

128 --A KID hands Miguel a baseball card and pen for his autograph.  
128 Miguel coolly obliges like he's been doing this for years.

129 --IN THE RADIO BOOTH, after a game, Jack Jefferies, interviews  
129 Miguel with Orlando acting as translator.

**JACK JEFFERIES**

At what point in the game did you realize you had your best stuff?

**ORLANDO**

(doing his best)  
When did you know you were going to be

a good pitcher in this game?

**MIGUEL**

I knew from the time I was very young I would be a good pitcher. Ten, eleven years old. Thanks to God, I have had the opportunity to develop my talents.

**ORLANDO**

(translating in English)

He knew very early that he was going to pitch good. Eleven years.

Jack Jefferies nods, confused. Miguel and Orlando look at each other, unsure.

**END EARLY SEASON SEQUENCE.**

**130 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**  
**130**

Miguel checks his appearance in the bathroom mirror, while Jorge talks on the telephone with somebody back home. Jorge appears anguished, as he struggles to speak.

**JORGE**

It's not good. Because I haven't been playing good... No. I'm working hard, but, I don't know... I think they might...

(Jorge glances back toward Miguel)

Listen, I can't talk now.

Miguel gets the hint, steps out of his room into the...

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**131 MOTEL HALLWAY**  
**131**

...and we follow Miguel through the lobby, which opens up into an enormous arcade with blinking neon lights, and whistling machines everywhere. His senses on the verge of overload, he continues through the arcade, which then opens up into a...

**132 FUN CITY BOWLING ALLEY**  
**132**

Miguel notices Brad bowling with some GIRLS and other players. Miguel watches for a beat as they laugh at one of the girl's gutter balls. He thinks about going over to say hello, but decides against it, heads back toward the arcade.

**133 INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER**

**133**

While Jorge sleeps, Miguel carves a small piece of wood with a swiss army knife. Stops when he hears a burst of MALE AND FEMALE VOICES coming from down the hall. He, goes to the door, listens...

The drunken giggling VOICES get louder as they approach.  
Miguel

looks through the peephole, sees...

...Brad and Jeff with TWO LOCAL GIRLS disappear into their room across the hall.

Miguel puts his ear to the door again, but can't hear anything, so he returns to the desk, begins carving again.

**134 EXT/INT. MOVING BUS - DAY**

**134**

Orlando and Ed play a spirited game of Casino on a Gatorade jug in the aisle while Miguel, Jorge and Brad chat about movies.

**BRAD**

Did you ever see "Y Tu Mama Tambien"?

**MIGUEL**

Y tu mama what?

**BRAD**

Y Tu Mama Tambien... It's Mexican.

Jorge laughs, shakes his head.

**MIGUEL**

No, I don't know this.

**BRAD**

What are your favorite movies?

**JORGE**

Terminator.

**MIGUEL**

I like Matrisse.

**JORGE**

Oh, Matrisse. Very strong.

**BRAD**

Matrisse? What's that?

**MIGUEL**

He doesn't know Matrisse?

**JORGE**

You don't know The Matrisse?

**BRAD**

The Mattress? I don't know.

(turns to Jeff, beside  
him)

Dude, do you know a movie called The  
Mattress?

**JEFF**

The Mattress?

**JORGE**

With Keanu...?

**JEFF**

Keanu Reeves?

**BRAD**

Oh, shit! The MATRIX!!

**MIGUEL**

Matrisse!

**BRAD**

Yeah, yeah, the Matrix is badass. I  
was like, Mattress? What?

**135 INT. MIGUEL'S BEDROOM - DUSK**

**135**

He finishes up a birthday card to his sister Erica, encloses  
it in a padded envelope along with the wooden etching he carved  
earlier - a pendant with a cornstalk design. The NYC calendar  
on the wall in the background indicates we are now in JUNE.

When he's done, he goes to his duffel, pulls out his English  
language workbook.

Miguel sits on his bed, opens the book.

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**136 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - DAY**  
**136**

A batter swings and misses for strike three. The catcher  
throws  
the ball around the horn.

Miguel steps off the mound, grabs the rosin bag for traction,  
gets the ball back.

His next pitch is hit on the ground toward the first base line,  
where the first baseman makes a nice back-handed play...

Miguel sprints over to cover the bag, receives the toss, but...

**OUCH!**

...the RUNNER storms into Miguel before he has time to pull his  
foot off the bag, knocking them both hard to the ground. The  
runner is called out, but Miguel is slow getting to his feet.

Stu and the TRAINER run out to check on him. Jorge rushes over  
from third, and Orlando also comes to help translate.

**STU**

Nice play, kid. How's your foot?

**JORGE**

You okay?

Miguel nods, but he's limping back to the mound.

**STU**

Take it easy. Don't force it. How's  
it feel?

**ORLANDO**

(translating)  
Don't push it. Does it hurt?

**MIGUEL**

I'm okay.

**STU**

Let him toss a few warm-ups.

The umpire grants Miguel a few "test" pitches.

Visibly shaken, Miguel sets up for a warm-up pitch, breathes deeply, and delivers. He lands gingerly on his right ankle, makes a face.

Stu and the trainer exchange glances. Miguel notices this, as he sets up for another pitch. The trainer shakes his head, no.

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66.

**STU**

All right, kid. Give it a rest.

As Stu reaches for the ball, Miguel pulls it away.

**MIGUEL**

I am okay. Please.

Stu and the trainer sense Miguel's anxiety. Stu puts his arm on Miguel's shoulder for comfort.

**STU**

You're okay, I know, but let's just be sure... Give me the ball, son.

Miguel sizes them up, reluctantly hands the ball over, and limps off the field with Stu and the other players looking after.

**137 INT. ANNE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**  
**137**

The whole family, with a couple new additions, sit around the table in mid-meal: Earl, Helen, Anne, Michael, Hilary, Jorge, Brad and Miguel. Miguel wears a big blue boot on his injured foot, and a crutch leans against the wall behind him.

**HELEN**

You've been pitching so well... it's a real shame.

**EARL**

Don't worry, Miguel, you'll bounce right back.

Miguel pokes at his food, avoids eye contact.

**HILARY**

Where'd you say you were from, Brad?

**BRAD**

Berkeley.

**MICHAEL**

Oh, different world out there, huh?  
You like to surf?

Brad smiles.

**BRAD**

Uh, no, I've never tried it. But maybe  
someday.

**JORGE**

Your parents visit here?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 67.

**BRAD**

Yeah, I hope so. Maybe when they get  
some time off this summer.

**ANNE**

How about you, Miguel? What's your  
family like?

**MIGUEL**

My family?

**ANNE**

Yeah. Like, who do you live with back  
home?

**MIGUEL**

I live with my mother, sister,  
brother... and Abuela?

Miguel looks to Jorge for help.

**JORGE**

Grandmother.

**MIGUEL**

And grandmother.

**MICHAEL**

How about your father, Miguel?

**MIGUEL**

My father, uh...  
(searching for the word)  
He die.

Anne nudges her dad under the table.

**HELEN**

Oh, Miguel, honey. I'm so sorry.

Miguel nods, takes a bite of potatoes. There is an awkward beat as everybody chews.

Miguel musters all his language skills to break the awkward silence.

**MIGUEL**

(to Michael and Hilary)  
You have other child...?

**HILARY**

Yes, we have a son. Anne's older brother.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 68.

**ANNE**

He's in Iraq.

Brad pauses from chewing, looks around, and nods. More awkward silence. Hold.

**138 EXT. ANNE'S PORCH - NIGHT**  
**138**

Miguel and Anne sit alone on the porch. We can hear CHATTER from inside, where the others are clearing the table.

**ANNE**

You like it here in Iowa?

**MIGUEL**

Yes. I like... Many new things.  
(thinks for a beat)  
Very different.

**ANNE**

I bet. You've traveled a long way, huh? God must have something special in mind for you...

Anne points out a small scar on Miguel's scalp.

**ANNE**

What happened there?

**MIGUEL**

(struggling)

Uh... When I boy... Um... I don't know--

**ANNE**

Tell me in Spanish.

**MIGUEL**

(in Spanish, no subtitles)

Okay... When I was little, I wanted to eat some cherries from a tree. It wasn't our tree, and there was a fence to keep us kids away.

Anne hangs on his every word as if she understood perfectly.

**MIGUEL**

So I climbed up the fence to knock down some cherries with a stick, but I when I took my first swing-- whoosh. I fell. There was a lot of blood.

Anne reaches out, lightly touches his scar. Her hand lingers for a beat, until...

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

69.

...Miguel leans in and kisses her. She kisses him back for a beat, but when he puts his hand around her waist, pulling her closer, she resists. They separate.

Anne looks down at her feet, uncomfortable.

**ANNE**

Sorry, I just... Sorry.

Miguel looks on, confused, as she stands. They lock eyes for an awkward beat.

**ANNE**

I should help clean up...

On her way back inside...

**ANNE**

We have another meeting Thursday... If  
you can come.

Miguel nods. Anne leaves him on the porch alone. He looks  
out  
over the corn fields.

**139 INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE - DAY**  
**139**

Miguel enters the near-empty room limping on his blue boot,  
finds Jorge wearing street clothes and packing up personal  
things from his locker. Miguel knows immediately what's  
happened.

They make eye contact from across the locker room. Nobody  
moves. After a beat...

**JORGE**

I had a good run.

**MIGUEL**

What happened?

**JORGE**

It's over.

**MIGUEL**

Why?

**JORGE**

You know the drill. I'm not playing  
well, so they'll bring up somebody who  
is.

**MIGUEL**

What about your knee? You just need  
some more time... You're recovering.

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**JORGE**

Sugar...

Miguel relents.

**MIGUEL**

When do you leave?

**JORGE**

They want me to fly back tonight.

**MIGUEL**

Tonight?!

**JORGE**

But I'm not going back...

A beat as Miguel lets this sink in.

**JORGE**

I gotta cousin in New York.

**MIGUEL**

You're going to New York?

**JORGE**

Where else? There's no work back home.  
My bonus won't last forever...

Miguel looks off.      Jorge senses his anxiety.

**JORGE**

Relax Sugar, I'll see you at Yankee  
Stadium someday... when the Knights  
come to town. I'll be in the front  
row, getting drunk, and cheering the  
loudest.

Miguel smiles.

**JORGE**

Not for you though. Yankee fans are  
crazy. I can't take the risk... I'll  
call you.

A beat as Miguel looks at Jorge with concern.      Jorge shakes it  
off.

**JORGE**

You worry too much, Sugar. I'll be  
okay. I mean, it's just a game, right?

Miguel nods.

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**140      INT. SOFIA'S HOUSE (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC) - NIGHT**

**140**

A140 Sofia on the phone. We INTERCUT between her and Miguel IN HIS  
A140 BEDROOM, his injured ankle elevated on a pillow.

**SOFIA**

How'd you play tonight?

**MIGUEL**

(hesitant)

Good, good.

**SOFIA**

I bet you have lots of groupies waiting for you after your games.

**MIGUEL**

I have a few.

**SOFIA**

A few?

**MIGUEL**

Just kidding. I mean I would, but none of these white girls speak Spanish. Marcos plays in Arizona. Lots of Mexicans; everyone speaks Spanish. He has like fifteen girlfriends.

**SOFIA**

Shut up!

**MIGUEL**

He's probably lying though.

**SOFIA**

I bet he's lying.

A beat, as Miguel shifts gears...

**MIGUEL**

Jorge went to New York.

**SOFIA**

To the Yankees?

**MIGUEL**

No. Our team cut him loose. He's got a cousin there... I don't know what he's going to do...

**SOFIA**

Shit... What about his family?

**MIGUEL**

(his mind somewhere else)  
It's not right. He got injured playing  
for them. They owe him another chance.  
He's worked too hard for too long... I  
mean he's not a horse.

Miguel drifts off, and they sit in silence for a beat.

**SOFIA**

But you can't let it get to you.  
You've got nothing to worry about.  
Just keep playing well, and things will  
be okay.

**MIGUEL**

Yeah... I know. Things will be okay.

Miguel looks off, not so sure.

**141 INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE - DAY**

**141**

Brad  
Players lounge in uniform, relaxing before tonight's game.  
Brad  
reads on the sofa across from Miguel, who is in his street  
clothes, his crutch by his side.

**MIGUEL**

What is your book?

**BRAD**

Welcome to the Terrordome. It's about  
sports and politics.

**MIGUEL**

You study at, um, university?

**BRAD**

Yeah, I went to Stanford. Studied  
history and baseball. Did you go to  
school back in the DR?

**MIGUEL**

Yes. Little. Secundaria?

**BRAD**

High school?

**MIGUEL**

Yes. A little of... high school. But I sign when I have sixteen years.

**BRAD**

You signed at sixteen? Wow. So you didn't finish school?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 73.

Miguel shakes his head, no. After a beat...

**MIGUEL**

If you no play baseball... what you do?

**BRAD**

Um... it's hard to say for sure, but I like history, so I'd probably go to grad school... maybe teach someday.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Brad! We're up for B.P. Let's go.

Brad gets up, taps Miguel on the shoulder on his way out. Miguel sits alone on the couch in the empty room, when he looks off, sees...

IN THE BATHROOM doorway-- Jeff Elks discreetly hands ANOTHER PLAYER a prescription pill bottle, exits.

Miguel takes note of the transaction, leans back, looks at the ceiling fan.

**142 INT. HIGGINS FARMHOUSE - DAY**

**142**

Miguel watches "When the Levees Broke" playing on HBO-Latino.

ON THE TV, one image of the hurricane's devastation gives way to another. An AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN stranded on the roof of her house. A YOUNG BOY who's lost his mother.

Miguel looks on, moved by the tragedy.

**143 INT. WASHER/DRYER ROOM - DAY**

**143**

Miguel takes the initiative and attempts to do his own laundry while on the disabled list.

He stuffs his clothes into the washer, scrutinizes the instructions, turns the knobs, and presses the buttons.

**144 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
**144**

Miguel studies his English Language workbook on the couch. He glances at the wall clock.

**145 INT. KITCHEN - DAY**  
**145**

As Miguel opens the faulty utensils drawer, the folded paper towel holding it in place pops out. Miguel catches the drawer from slipping too far, takes out a fork.

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**146 INT. KITCHEN - DUSK**  
**146**

Miguel sits at the kitchen table with the broken drawer and several small tools in front of him. He readjusts the wooden rails on the faulty side of the drawer by sanding them down and re-gluing them into place.

**KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.**

FRONT DOOR. Miguel hobbles over, opens it to find Anne, carrying a casserole dish and a couple empty platters.

**ANNE**

These are grandma's from the other night.

Miguel lets her pass into the kitchen, put the dishes on the table. They stand awkwardly for a beat, looking at each other.

**ANNE**

We missed you at our meeting, Thursday.

**MIGUEL**

Sorry. I forget.

**ANNE**

It's okay, maybe next time.

**MIGUEL**

You want sit?

**ANNE**

I gotta go actually, so--

**MIGUEL**

Okay, go.

him Miguel sits, gets back to work on the drawer. Anne looks at  
for a second, then exits.

Miguel glances out the window, watches Anne climb into a pickup truck idling in the driveway. Anne and Miguel make brief eye contact before the truck speeds away, a trail of dust following it into the distance.

**A146 EXT. CORN FIELDS - DUSK**

**A146**

Miguel walks down a path in the middle of the Higgins' corn field. He finds a cob of corn, removes the leaves, and examines the kernels up close.

ZOOM IN to ECU of a single kernel.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 75.

Miguel stares at the raw corn with strange fascination.

**FADE OUT.**

**147 INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE - DAY**

**147**

Miguel walks in without crutches, looking healthy. He pounds a few players hello, then freezes upon seeing Brad's empty locker.

Stu approaches Miguel...

**STU**

There was an injury to the Wichita right-fielder. They called up Brad this morning... He left you this...

Stu hands Miguel an old paperback book.

INSERT: a Spanish-language version of Roberto Clemente's biography. Miguel opens to the first page, where Brad has inscribed a note, "See you in Kansas City, Mamañema!"

Miguel smiles, bittersweet, when a familiar VOICE calls out...

**SALVADOR**

Yo! Sugar!

Miguel turns around to find Salvador Torres (the once scrawny kid from the Academy) running at him. They hug.

**MIGUEL**

Holy shit! How'd you get here?

**SALVADOR**

On a airplane, motherfucker.

Miguel playfully flips Salvador's cap bill down over his face for being a smartass.

**STU**

Great, you guys know each other. Sal's our new middle-relief man. Throws a nasty cutter. You could learn a thing or two from him, Santos...

**MIGUEL**

Okay.

Stu walks back towards the coaches' office.

**SALVADOR**

What he say?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 76.

**MIGUEL**

(not sure himself)  
Don't worry about it... Good to see you.

**SALVADOR**

Good to see you, too, Sugar.  
(a beat)  
I'm a little nervous.

**MIGUEL**

Look, just remember... it's the same game we played back home. Same rules, different place. Just have fun. It's only a game.

**148 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - NIGHT**

**148**

CLOSE ON Miguel swearing at himself, clearly not following his own advice.

A RUNNER circles the bases after hitting a homerun.

**JACK JEFFERIES (V.O.)**

Santos allows his second homerun of the game. First night off the DL, and not looking so sharp.

The SCOREBOARD indicates the Swing losing 5-2 in the 4th.

Miguel glances out of the corner of his eye to...

**THE DUGOUT**

...Stu is scribbling on his scorecard.

way  
MIGUEL quickly sets up for his next pitch, but Stu is on his  
out to the mound. Miguel glances back to the bullpen, where  
Salvador is warming up.

Stu signals for Salvador to come in, and we follow Miguel off  
the field to scattered applause.

A148 IN THE RADIO BOOTH Jack Jefferies continues his play-by-play  
ofA148 the game.

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Sutton makes the call to pull Santos here in the 4th, bringing in rookie reliever, Salvador Torres for his Bridgetown debut.

B148 IN THE DUGOUT. Miguel sits on the bench, throws a towel over  
B148 his head.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

77.

ON THE MOUND. Salvador warms up, looking a little freaked.

Players and fans marvel over Sal's unorthodox, side-armed delivery. His form is reminiscent of A's legend, Dennis Eckersly, but without the grace.

MIGUEL peaks through his towel at the action...

first  
ON THE FIELD. Salvador takes a deep breath, delivers his

pitch...

**UMPIRE**

Strike!

Salvador seems to relax. Winds up his next pitch, and...

...the ball appears to zig-zag across the plate, freezing the hitter in confusion.

**UMPIRE**

Strike two!

IN MIGUEL can't watch, hides behind the towel again. SLOW ZOOM  
on Miguel's head, hidden.

**UMPIRE (O.S.)**

Strike THREE!

Miguel removes the towel, sees...

...SALVADOR smiling big as he comes off the field. Orlando pats him on the back, hands him his first professional strikeout ball.

**C148 IN THE RADIO BOOTH**  
**C148**

**JACK JEFFERIES**

A stellar debut for Torres, who records the final out, baffling Josh Lansford with a nasty side-armed cutter.

D148 FROM THE DUGOUT, Salvador arrives to a congratulatory standing  
D148 ovation from the fans and his teammates.

**STU**

Welcome to America, kid.

Salvador sits next to Miguel on the bench, admiring the ball.

**MIGUEL**

Just do me a favor... don't give it away to the first white girl you meet.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 78.

Salvador laughs, but Miguel is serious. He gets up and heads for the showers.

149 INT. HIGGINS CAR - NIGHT  
149

Helen and Earl drive Miguel home after the game. ON THE CAR RADIO, we can hear a news report of a suicide bombing in Iraq. Helen turns it down.

**HELEN**

You started dropping your arm in the third. I think that was your problem.

**EARL**

He lost control of his breaking pitches and they just zeroed in on the fastball, which isn't as fast as it used to be.

**HELEN**

Earl...

**EARL**

Don't matter, he can't understand anyway.

Miguel stares out the window in the backseat.

150 EXT/INT. MOVING BUS - DUSK  
150

CLOSE ON corn stalks passing through frame. Miguel stares out the bus window. Salvador jokes around with Orlando and Ed about whether Dominican or Venezuelan girls are better.

151 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT  
151

Miguel tries to sleep, while Salvador watches "Sponge Bob" on the Spanish channel.

152 EXT. VISITING BALL PARK - AFTERNOON  
152

Miguel walks out onto the field, notices Stu working with Salvador in the bullpen. Out of nowhere, Stu mimes the chicken walk to Sal, and they both laugh.

153 EXT. VISITING BALL PARK - DUSK  
153

Miguel runs videotape behind homeplate as Salvador strikes a batter out.

154 **EXT. VISITING BALL PARK - NIGHT**  
154

Miguel throws in a pitch, which is lined directly over his head for a base hit. He swears to himself as he sprints over to back up home plate where the runner scores easily.

155 **INT. VISITORS' CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT**  
155

Miguel storms into the empty clubhouse, grabs a bat from the wall rack, and smashes a water dispenser unit to the ground, spilling water everywhere. As he observes the mess, his breathing steadies, and...

He glances over to the entrance, where the clubhouse manager stares at him, disapproving.

156 **INT. VISITING COACHES' OFFICE - DAY**  
156

Miguel sits across from Stu, staring off, embarrassed.

**STU**

I know it's hard when you don't perform up to your own expectations for yourself. But you need to learn self-control. Can you understand what I'm saying? You need to learn that your actions have consequences. So we're gonna take the cost of the water unit you broke out of your next check... That's not something your family back home's gonna be too proud of... Is it?

Miguel turns his gaze to Stu. Though he doesn't fully understand what he's saying, Stu's intention is clear.

**STU**

So you should think real hard next time. Think about channeling that frustration you're feeling onto the field. Into practice. Channel it into working harder--

**MIGUEL**

--I am work hard! Everyday I work hard.

**STU**

So work harder, goddamnit! You think you're the only one on this team works hard?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 80.

**MIGUEL**

(in Spanish)

I don't understand you. You speak too fast. I just don't understand!

**STU**

Look, you may think I don't know what you're going through, but I do. I've been on the mound; I've played through pain. I've been in your exact situation before. I've struggled too... I've...

As Miguel glances away in frustration, Stu stops himself. They sit in silence. Hold.

**157 EXT. PEORIA CHIEFS' PARK - EVENING**  
**157**

Pouring rain. The few remaining FANS head for the exits. The players pack up their gear in their respective dugouts.

SLOW ZOOM IN on MIGUEL, staring at the falling rain.

**158 INT. MOTEL LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT**  
**158**

CLOSE ON about ten pills in Miguel's palm.

Jeff Elks instructs Miguel, alone, in the small room with a flickering fluorescent light.

**JEFF**

Listen, your first time, take a half. Okay? No more. You gotta ease into it. Half.

Miguel nods.

**JEFF**

And anyone finds these, you didn't get them from me, okay?

Before Miguel can respond, Salvador enters with his dirty laundry. Miguel hides the pills.

**SALVADOR**

What's up?

**JEFF**

What's up, Sal?

Jeff heads out. Miguel resumes folding his clothes.

**SALVADOR**

Did you hear I made player of the week?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

81.

**MIGUEL**

You told me last night.

Salvador examines his detergent options from the dispenser machine.

**SALVADOR**

Which one do you use?

Miguel eyes the bleach. Can't help himself.

**MIGUEL**

That one.

**SALVADOR**

Thanks.

Salvador inserts coins into the machine, pulls the bleach lever.

**159 INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE BATHROOM STALL - THE NEXT EVENING**

**159**

Miguel pops two pills. Exits out into the...

**160 SWING CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

**160**

...where Salvador undresses out of his bleach-stained street clothes. Miguel walks past without acknowledging him.

**161 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - LATE AFTERNOON**

**161**

THE CAMERA eerily floats toward and around Miguel on the mound. He stares down the HITTER, totally focused. He touches his cross, whispers a prayer to himself.

Winds up, throws, and...

**THUD!**

...a cloud of dust pops off the catcher's mitt, just like the old days. Miguel's "stuff" is back. And he knows it.

A161 IN THE STANDS. Earl and Helen settle into their box seats  
A161 eating caramel corn and cola.

B161 RADIO ANNOUNCERS BOOTH. Jack Jefferies at the mic...  
B161

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Miguel Santos appears to be in top form tonight, striking out two of three in the first. I don't want to jinx it, but this sure looks like the Santos we knew earlier this season.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 82.

C161 IN THE DUGOUT. There's an intensity we haven't seen before in  
C161 Miguel. We get the sense he's treating this game like it could be his last.

**162 ON THE MOUND - 2ND INNING**  
**162**

CLOSE ON MIGUEL. Sweating more than he should at this point  
in the game, but...

...who cares? He continues to dominate opposing hitters, striking out two more in the 2nd.

A162 IN THE STANDS. Earl and Helen CHEER for their Miguel.  
A162

**163 IN THE DUGOUT - LATER THAT NIGHT**  
**163**

Still sweating, Miguel is now shifting his jaw back-and-forth. The SOUND FADES LOW, as he stares onto the field, sees...

...the teams changing sides between innings, everyone moving in subtle SLOW-MOTION (36 fps).

Stu approaches Miguel, puts his hand on his shoulder. We see him mouth the words, "You okay?", but NO SOUND comes out.

Miguel nods, yes.

**164 BACK ON THE FIELD - 5TH INNING**  
**164**

And back in real time (24 fps). Miguel fires his first pitch over the head of his catcher and all the way to the backstop. Orlando motions for him to calm down.

The next pitch is closer, but still high.

And the next pitch BEANS the hitter in the thigh.

heart Miguel swears at himself, tries hard to calm down, but his  
is racing.

**A164 IN THE RADIO BOOTH**  
**A164**

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Top of the fifth and Santos is showing some control issues. Not sure what's going on down there, but he seems to be talking to himself.

B164 ON THE MOUND, Orlando runs out to Miguel.  
B164

**ORLANDO**

Don't worry about it. You're all good. Just relax. Throw strikes. They can't touch you. Just throw strikes.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

83.

Miguel nods. Orlando goes back behind the plate.

Miguel glances to the runner at first, then delivers...

**UMPIRE**

Strike!

Orlando nods, encouraging. Throws the ball back.

Miguel takes another deep breath. He whispers a prayer to himself, grabs the ball in his spike curve grip, and...

...his next pitch is ROCKED to deep left field.

Miguel immediately lowers his head, unable to watch. We HOLD on his anguished reaction, as the hitter circles the bases.

STU shakes his head in disappointment.

C164 FROM THE BULLPEN, Salvador watches, concerned.  
C164

D164 FROM THE STANDS, Earl and Helen clap for encouragement.  
D164

E164 MIGUEL does his best to shake it off, but he keeps muttering  
toE164 himself, which makes him look crazy.

Another deep breath. Another pitch...

**UH-OH.**

This one almost finds the batter's head, as he falls to the  
dirt to avoid contact. It's on.

**UMPIRE**

(ejecting Miguel)  
You're outta here!

The batter leaps to his feet, walks out toward the mound, pointing his finger at Miguel, PISSED.

Miguel opens his arms, inviting a fight. Orlando steps  
between them.

**BATTER**

Fucking Puerto Rican piece of shit!

**MIGUEL**

(in English)  
Fuck you, cocksucker!

Both benches clear, as players rush out onto the field to restore order.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

Miguel and the batter continue jawing at each other, while the other players swirl around them, creating little sub-conflicts of their own. It's a mess.

The sound FADES TO SILENCE and the image blends to SLO-MO again. There's something poetic about a bunch of men in child-like baseball uniforms, screaming at each other in silence.

Miguel looks around, perhaps recognizing this for himself... Hold, until...

...he calmly walks off the field, leaving the chaos behind.

**165 INT. SWING CLUBHOUSE SHOWERS - A LITTLE LATER**  
**165**

Miguel showers alone.

**166 INT. HIGGINS KITCHEN - NIGHT**  
**166**

Miguel eats a late dinner at the table. Earl sits at the other end, sipping some tea, while Helen does dishes at the sink. The mood is uncomfortably tense. Nobody says a word, until Miguel musters up the courage.

**MIGUEL**

I'm sorry.

Helen turns off the faucet, turns around. Earl methodically sets down his mug, stands up, and crosses to Miguel. Puts his arm around his shoulder, wherein...

...Miguel breaks down, hugs Earl around the waist, his face pressed against his stomach. He's crying. Hold.

**167 INT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - COACHES' OFFICE - EVENING**  
**167**

Stu addresses Miguel before the game. Though his words are encouraging, his tone is detached, cold. Miguel senses this, listens, dejected.

**STU**

You played with your emotions, and your emotions got the best of you. Happens to everyone. It's just a nasty part of the game. Nobody likes to admit it, but it is. The true test of our character as athletes... is how we come

back. It's up to you.

Stu notices Hardy, the Swing mascot, pass by his office door.

**STU**

Hardy! Don't wander off; I gotta talk  
to you about that accountant...

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 85.

**168 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALLPARK - NIGHT**  
**168**

Miguel sits out in the bullpen with the other relievers, while  
Stu continues in V.O.

**STU (V.O.)**

So, um, anyway, I'm bumping Sal into  
your slot in the rotation. I'd like to  
see how you handle a relief spot.

A168 ON THE MOUND, Salvador fires in the opening pitch.  
A168

B168 IN THE RADIO BOOTH, Jack Jefferies does his play by play.  
B168

**JACK JEFFERIES**

Moving up from relief, Torres makes his  
third start for the Swing. I tell ya,  
this lanky kid from the Dominican  
Republic has surprised us all with his  
unique delivery and precision. Reminds  
me of a young Pedro Martinez... Hey  
there Bees fans, don't forget, closing  
night is approaching fast and tickets  
are selling out. So pick yours up at  
the box office today...

**169 IN THE BULLPEN**  
**169**

Similar to an earlier sequence of JUMPCUTS on Miguel reacting  
to  
the game from the dugout, we now HOLD on Miguel, solemn and  
detached, from the bullpen.

NOTE: the frame for the following images contains the first 3-4  
rows of FANS seated behind the bullpen, so we can also use them  
to gauge what might be happening on the field.

PLAY 1: Miguel, the FOUR RELIEVERS, and the fans clap for a nice play.

PLAY 2: The fans jump to their feet as a ground ball passes through frame, followed by an outfielder in hot pursuit.

PLAY 3: A reliever warms up in the foreground. Miguel stares ahead, deadpan, while the others chat and spit chewing tobacco.

PLAY 4: A new reliever warms up, then runs out onto the field, leaving only two others with Miguel.

PLAY 5: Miguel stares ahead, while the crowd does the "Chicken Dance" behind him.

PLAY 6: The fans leap to their feet in applause. The two relievers high-five. Miguel CLAPS, going through the motions.

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86.

PLAY 7: Miguel chews and spits sunflower seed shells as the fans sing along to "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

PLAY 8: Another reliever runs out onto the field, leaving only Miguel and one other guy.

PLAY 9: Miguel is finally warming up, ready to enter the game, but...

...the fans leap to their feet, CHEERING victoriously. Game over. The only other reliever grabs his jacket, and heads out onto the field.

As the players and fans head for the exits, Miguel remains on the bullpen mound for a beat. He nods to himself, oddly at peace with the moment. Miguel steps off the mound and we PAN with him, as he crosses frame, and makes the long walk to the dugout. Hold.

**170 INT. MIGUEL'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

**170**

Miguel grabs a slip of paper from his nightstand. His large duffel bag is packed full in front of him. On the wall, his NYC calendar is turned to AUGUST.

He goes to the phone. Dials...

After a long beat he hangs up.

171 INT. HIGGINS FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING  
171

Helen walks in to find Miguel washing the dishes in the sink.

**HELEN**

Oh, honey, you don't have to do that.

**MIGUEL**

(his English better than  
ever)

No problem. I want to help.

**HELEN**

Well, thank you, Miguel.

Helen grabs a dish towel. They do the dishes together in  
silence. After a beat...

**MIGUEL**

Thank you, Helen.

Helen smiles, pats Miguel on the back. HOLD.

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172 EXT. BRIDGETOWN SWING BALL PARK - EARLY MORNING  
172

Earl drops off Miguel near the team bus, as players and coaches  
load their gear in, and get on.

Miguel cautiously approaches the bus, sees Salvador,  
hesitates...

**MIGUEL**

I forgot something in the clubhouse.  
I'll be right back.

As Miguel turns, Salvador grabs his bag, which is still on his  
shoulder.

**SALVADOR**

Here, I'll load your bag.

Miguel grips his bag tighter and the two of them lock eyes.  
Salvador senses his intensity, releases the bag. Miguel backs  
away with Salvador looking on.

**ED**

Where's he going?

**SALVADOR**

Bathroom.

AT THE CLUBHOUSE ENTRANCE Miguel turns back to the bus, sees...  
...Salvador eyeing him from the open bus window. Sal raises  
his hand, very subtly waves goodbye.  
Miguel continues on his way.

**173 EXT. BURLINGTON BUS DEPOT - MINUTES LATER**  
**173**

A local taxi pulls up, and Miguel hops out with his duffel bag.

**174 INT. BUS - DAY**  
**174**

Miguel steps on, moves past the other PASSENGERS, finds an empty seat towards the back. He sits down, catches his breath, and whispers a prayer to himself. When he's done, he looks across the aisle, where an OLD LADY is staring at him.

He shoots her a cautious smile.

**175 INT. MOVING BUS - DAY/EVENING**  
**175**

Miguel stares, wide-eyed, out the window at the shifting landscapes, daytime into evening...

--cornstalks.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 88.

--bridges and rivers.

--city lights.

He sleeps against the window, his Clemente book open on his lap.

**176 INT. MOVING BUS- LATER**  
**176**

From the New Jersey turnpike, Miguel sees the approaching Manhattan skyline in the early morning light. He sits up straight, looks attentively at the city emerging in the distance.

177 INT. TIMES SQUARE SUBWAY STATION  
177

Morning COMMUTERS push past Miguel, as he looks around, lost in the cacophony of the swirling rush hour environment.

He locates a giant subway map on the wall, the various subway lines reaching into the outer boroughs like colorful tentacles. His eyes scan the map, and we follow his finger up the green line's numbered stations, stopping on 161ST/YANKEE STADIUM.

Miguel smiles.

AT THE TURNSTILES. Miguel inches forward, observes people passing through after swiping cards. He notices a line behind a Metrocard vending machine nearby.

178 AT THE MACHINE - SECONDS LATER  
178

Fortunately, there is a Spanish option, so after a few touches and BEEPS, he's got his card.

179 AT THE TURNSTILE  
179

He swipes the card, tries to pass through, but the turnstile won't budge. He studies the message: "SWIPE AGAIN AT THIS TURNSTILE", but can't make sense of it. Miguel tries again, this time very slowly, but still can't get through.

An IMPATIENT COMMUTER behind him SIGHS loudly.

Miguel steps out of the way, let's the commuter pass.

After the commuter goes through, Miguel tries again.

180 INT. SUBWAY PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL  
180

As Miguel strolls through the underground hallway that connects the various Times Square subway lines, he sees...

--a TEAM OF BREAKDANCERS performing for tips.

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--billboard ads for movies, music, dermatologists, Mets baseball, etc.

--a HOMELESS MAN passed out on the ground.

--a WOMAN selling a random collection of objects: VHS tapes, batteries, a used blender...

**181 INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MOVING**  
**181**

Miguel observes other passengers, when the train emerges above ground. He stands, looks out the window as the train passes Yankee Stadium.

**182 EXT. 167TH ST. - THE BRONX - DAY**  
**182**

Miguel descends from the elevated subway station, glances around. The atmosphere is immediately more familiar, as PEOPLE walk by speaking Spanish; MERENGUE blasts out of an open apartment window; Dominican flags hang from others.

Miguel paces up the block, looking for something. He smiles when he finds...

...El Restaurante Caribe. A HELP WANTED sign (in English and Spanish) hangs in the window.

**183 INT. EL RESTAURANTE CARIBE - DAY**  
**183**

Miguel takes a seat at the counter, smiles to the waitress, REYNA (cute, 20-something, Dominican).

**REYNA**

(in Spanish, of course)  
Talk to me.

**MIGUEL**

Is Jorge working today?

**REYNA**

Jorge?

**MIGUEL**

Jorge Ramirez.

A bus boy, RAFAEL, overhears as he passes by.

**RAFAEL**

Jorge, the ball player!

**MIGUEL**

Yeah!

**REYNA**

Oh. The ballpayer... He left about two weeks ago.

**RAFAEL**

I think he drives a car now.

**MIGUEL**

Do you have a phone number for him?  
His old one isn't working.

Reyna shrugs, looks to Rafael.

**RAFAEL**

(shaking his head)  
Sorry... But I think he was staying down at concourse village on 156th.

**REYNA**

He still comes in to eat sometimes.

Miguel nods, looks off, a little anxious.

**184 EXT. 156TH STREET - DAY**  
**184**

Miguel glances up at the dozens of high-rise apartment buildings in every direction.

He walks away, discouraged.

**185 OMITTED**  
**185**

**186 EXT. (ANOTHER) STREET - DAY**  
**186**

Miguel continues to follow the elevated subway tracks, which lead him straight to...

...YANKEE STADIUM. He looks up at the park's grand exterior with wonder. Approaches to get a closer look.

The Stadium is closed today, so Miguel struggles to catch a glimpse of the field through an iron fence. He grabs hold of the bars, attempts to climb just enough to get a better view, but...

**SECURITY GUARD**

(in English)  
You wanta see the inside, you gotta buy  
a ticket, pal.

**MIGUEL**

(jumping down)  
Sorry.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 91.

**187 EXT. SOUND VIEW PARK - LATE AFTERNOON**  
**187**

With his duffel on his lap, Miguel sits on a bench overlooking  
a  
a community baseball field, where local KIDS play for fun. He  
stares off blankly, preoccupied with other things.

**A188 EXT. PARADISE HOTEL - DUSK**  
**A188**

Miguel stands before the old transient hotel.

**188 INT. PARADISE HOTEL LOBBY**  
**188**

Miguel sidesteps a nodding JUNKY on his way to the front desk,  
approaches the toothless Russian clerk, NIKOLAI (late 50s).

**MIGUEL**

One room.

**NIKOLAI**

For how long?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know.

**NIKOLAI**

Two hundred a week. First week in  
advance.

As Miguel tries to piece together what was just said, he  
notices  
a rack of condoms beside a set of long distance calling cards  
on  
the front desk. The name of the calling card is ALÓ MAMÁ!

**NIKOLAI**

Two hundred now.

Miguel reaches for the calling card.

**MIGUEL**

This also please.

**189 INT. PARADISE HOTEL HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER**

**189**

As Miguel looks for his room, he passes another room's doorway, where a middle-aged JOHN gives a woman a kiss goodbye. Miguel makes brief eye contact with the woman, RAQUEL. She smiles.

**190 INT. PARADISE HOTEL ROOM**

**190**

Miguel turns on the light to find a small bed in the corner of the room. There's also a desk with a phone. Miguel puts down his duffel and sits at the desk. He examines the calling card for a beat, then goes to the window, looks out. Hold.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 92.

**191 EXT. 163RD STREET - NEXT DAY**

**191**

Miguel strolls by various stores and restaurants. He passes outside a WOODEN CABINET STORE, where 5-6 Dominican men, ranging in age from 20 to 50 years old, make furniture in the shop. He stops for a beat, watching the men work.

**192 INT. CABINET STORE DISPLAY ROOM**

**192**

Miguel approaches a man, OSVALDO (late 50s), who works at his desk on the computer.

**MIGUEL**

You speak Spanish?

**OSVALDO**

Of course.

**MIGUEL**

Is this your place?

**OSVALDO**

Yeah. Can I help you?

Miguel glances around at the various wooden furniture items for sale.

**MIGUEL**

I like your work.

**OSVALDO**

Thanks. What are you looking for?

**MIGUEL**

Oh, no, I mean... I don't know. I was passing by and thought maybe you might need some help. I know how to make furniture, and--

**OSVALDO**

--I don't have any work right now. Sorry.

**MIGUEL**

Right. Okay, thanks for your time.

Oswaldo gets back to his computer, but Miguel lingers...

**MIGUEL**

Do you know any other places like this where I might find work?

**OSVALDO**

Have you checked the classifieds?

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 93.

**193 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON**  
**193**

Miguel sips soda from a straw as he leafs through the classifieds in a Spanish-language daily.

INSERT: Various employment ads, requiring experience, fluency  
in English, working papers, etc.

Miguel glances up, stares out the window. Rafael, the busboy from the other day, wipes down the table next to Miguel.

**RAFAEL**

If you leave a number, I'll give it to him next time he comes through.

**194 INT. PARADISE HOTEL BEDROOM - EVENING**  
**194**

Miguel braces himself, dials on the phone, waits... His NYC

calendar (turned to the Statue of Liberty month) hangs on the wall in the background.

**MIGUEL**

(into phone)  
Erica?

A194 We INTERCUT between Miguel and his home in the Dominican  
A194 Republic.

**ERICA**

Miguel! My God, where are you?

Carmen snatches the phone from Erica, who stays close, trying  
to listen in.

**CARMEN**

Miguelito, what is going on? Frank called last night. Where are you?

**MIGUEL**

New York.

**CARMEN**

Oh, my God! What are you doing in New York? I don't understand. Your team is looking for you.

**MIGUEL**

I can't play anymore.

**CARMEN**

Are you hurt? What does that mean, you can't play?

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**MIGUEL**

No. I'm fine. It just--

**CARMEN**

We've been working for this your whole life, Miguelito. Oh, my God! You're so close. I don't understand...

**MIGUEL**

Don't worry, mom. I have some money. We're going to be okay.

**CARMEN**

You have to go back. Listen, Miguel,  
my sweet sugar, call Frank. They'll  
take you back.

**MIGUEL**

I can't go back--

**CARMEN**

Did I raise you like this? Did I raise  
you to give up?

**MIGUEL**

I didn't give up. I'm starting  
something new here.

**CARMEN**

What? What are you starting?

**MIGUEL**

I have to go mom. The card's almost  
out of minutes.

**CARMEN**

Where are you even staying? Miguel--

**MIGUEL**

Don't worry. I'm staying with a  
friend. I have a new job. It's all  
good. I'm sending money tomorrow.

**CARMEN**

Miguel--

**MIGUEL**

I love you. I'm sorry.

Miguel hangs up, stares off.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 95.

**195 INT. WESTERN UNION - MORNING**

**195**

CAMERA TRACKS past a long line of IMMIGRANTS in all shapes and  
sizes, preparing to wire money back home, wherever that is.

MINUTES LATER. Miguel looks at the few bills in his wallet,  
hands two fifties to the TELLER.

196 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY  
196

Miguel leans over the counter, talks to Reyna, the waitress.

**MIGUEL**

Hey, um, I was in here the other day.

**REYNA**

Yeah, sure, did you find your guy?

**MIGUEL**

No. I'm actually looking for a job today.

She smiles, calls over to...

**REYNA**

Fernando!

(leans close to Miguel)

Tell him you like his shirt.

Reyna moves away, and Miguel glances over to the approaching MANAGER. He's wearing an outrageously colorful tropical shirt.

197 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN  
197

CLOSE ON Miguel's hand scraping uneaten food into the trash.

His new co-worker, RAFAEL (the same bus boy from Miguel's first visit), shows Miguel how to use the dishwasher.

**RAFAEL**

And then put it in here with the others.

Miguel puts the plate in the large dish washer.

**RAFAEL**

When it's full, set to scrub, and there it is.

Miguel stares at the machine as it HUMS and WHIRS.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 96.

198 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - NIGHT  
198

Miguel and Rafael sit next to each other in the back, eating

dinner.

**MIGUEL**

Do you know anybody with a room for rent?

Rafael shakes his head, no.

**RAFAEL**

But I'll ask around, let you know if I hear of anything.

Miguel nods, gets back to his food.

**RAFAEL**

You and Jorge used to play baseball together?

**MIGUEL**

Yeah, you like baseball?

**RAFAEL**

It's okay. I'd rather watch soccer though... Have you found him yet?

**MIGUEL**

Not yet.

**RAFAEL**

He'll be through sooner or later.

**MIGUEL**

How long have you worked here?

**RAFAEL**

Two years.

**MIGUEL**

Do you have family here?

**RAFAEL**

No. My wife and kids are still in Mexico.

**MIGUEL**

My family's in the Dominican.

Rafael nods, and they continue eating.

199 INT. PARADISE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT  
199

Loud, overexaggerated SEX SOUNDS filter in from another room, while Miguel reads the last page of the Clemente biography. After a beat, he closes the book, listens.

200 INT. WOODEN CABINET SHOP - EARLY EVENING  
200

Two EMPLOYEES say goodbye to Osvaldo as Miguel enters the shop. Miguel approaches Osvaldo, who is sanding a table.

**MIGUEL**

Hi, um, do you remember me?

**OSVALDO**

Yeah, but, sorry, I still don't have a job for you.

**MIGUEL**

That's okay. I already found one. I'm actually just trying to make a coffee table, and I'd like to buy some wood and supplies.

**OSVALDO**

I don't really sell raw materials...

Miguel hesitates.

**MIGUEL**

I just moved here, you know, and I don't have a space to work. Do you think I could do some work for you, help you clean up or whatever you need, in exchange for using your shop? You don't have to pay me.

Osvaldo sizes up Miguel's unusual request.

**OSVALDO**

Somebody paying you for the table?

**MIGUEL**

No. It's a gift for my mom. Something I like to do.

**OSVALDO**

How old are you?

**MIGUEL**

Twenty.

**OSVALDO**

Who taught you to make tables?

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**MIGUEL**

My dad. He was a carpenter in San Pedro.

**OSVALDO**

Is that where you're from?

**MIGUEL**

Yeah.

**OSVALDO**

I grew up in Santiago. What are you doing in New York?

**MIGUEL**

I came to work. I used to play baseball.

Oswaldo nods, understanding.

**OSVALDO**

The whole world plays baseball. My son's sixteen. Won't touch a piece of wood that's not a bat. I never cared for the game, myself. Too slow.

Miguel laughs.

**OSVALDO**

Your mom still in San Pedro?

**MIGUEL**

Yeah. With my sister and brother.

**OSVALDO**

So, you're telling me that you want to make a table for your mom, then mail it back to her in the Dominican?

Miguel nods. Oswaldo smiles, finally warming up.

**OSVALDO**

What's your name?

**MIGUEL**

Miguel.

They shake hands.

**OSVALDO**

Oswaldo.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 99.

**201 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY**  
**201**

Miguel performs his new work routine: mopping floors, washing dishes, accepting deliveries. He seems to be getting the hang of things.

**202 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - LATER**  
**202**

As Miguel eats from a heaping plate of beef and mashed yucca, he watches Reyna chatting up a customer from behind the counter.

**203 EXT. STREET - NIGHT**  
**203**

Miguel passes a Western Union, looks inside, but keeps going.

**204 INT. CABINET STORE - NIGHT**  
**204**

Miguel finishes work on his table for the night, covers it with a blanket, and proceeds to sweep up. Oswaldo works at his desktop computer from across the room. They don't speak.

**205 INT. PARADISE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**  
**205**

Miguel sits at the desk, talks into the phone.

**MIGUEL**

Hello... Is Sofia at home?... Yeah,  
it's Miguel again... Can you tell  
her... Just tell her I called...

Miguel hangs up.

**206 INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT**  
**206**

Miguel leans against the counter, staring at his clothes

twirling in the dryer, when...

...he notices Raquel unloading her clothes a few dryers away. She pushes her laundry cart to the opposite side of his counter, begins folding.

Miguel stares at her out of the corner of his eye, taking special notice of her diverse underwear collection ranging from lacy thongs to the standard cotton variety. She catches him peeking.

**RAQUEL**

(with a mysterious Eastern-European accent)

You just going to watch or you going to help me out?

Caught off guard, Miguel smiles awkwardly, turns away. After a few beats, a flying sock lands on his shoulder.

100. Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

He turns back to find several random items of her clothing on the counter in front of him. She smiles, keeps folding.

Miguel sorts through the items: socks, underwear, t-shirts. He looks back to her, then begins folding, as the laundromat's machinery reverberates around them. They exchange brief grins.

**MIGUEL**

Where you from?

**RAQUEL**

Ukraine.

Miguel nods, and they continue folding in silence. Hold.

207 **INT. CABINET STORE - NIGHT**

207

They Miguel carves wood, while Osvaldo looks on from his desk. exchange glances, until Miguel breaks the silence.

**MIGUEL**

So you never liked baseball? Not even as a kid?

**OSVALDO**

It's okay. Sometimes during the playoffs I'll watch a game or two.

**MIGUEL**

Who's your favorite player?

**OSVALDO**

I don't know enough to have a favorite.

**MIGUEL**

C'mon, everybody has a favorite player: Juan Marichal, Pedro Martinez?

**OSVALDO**

Fine. Jose Canseco.

**MIGUEL**

Jose Canseco!? That's the best you can do?

**OSVALDO**

Okay, what about you?

**MIGUEL**

Roberto Clemente.

**OSVALDO**

(pushing his buttons)  
Never heard of him.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 101.

**MIGUEL**

Shut up.

**OSVALDO**

What's so special about Clemente?

**MIGUEL**

I read this book where he said something like, "If you have the opportunity to help someone and don't, then you're wasting your life." And he was a carpenter too.

**OSVALDO**

Get out of here.

**MIGUEL**

For real. He used to make furniture during the off season.

**OSVALDO**

Are you fucking with me? Cause you know I can google this fool right now.

**MIGUEL**

Google?

**OSVALDO**

The internet. Don't worry, I'll teach you someday.

A beat. Miguel continues his work.

**OSVALDO**

When did you get released?

**MIGUEL**

They didn't release me. I left a few days before the season ended.

**OSVALDO**

You left? When was this?

**MIGUEL**

About two weeks ago.

**OSVALDO**

Holy shit. Where are you staying?

**MIGUEL**

Oh, you know, with a friend. But if you know somebody who needs a roommate...

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07

102.

Oswaldo nods and they continue working.

**OSVALDO**

(after a beat)

Why'd you leave?

Miguel hesitates, unsure where to begin.  
discomfort with the question.

Oswaldo senses his

**OSVALDO**

Do you have any family here?

**MIGUEL**

(shaking his head)  
But I'm okay... I have some money  
saved, a couple friends. I'll go home  
to visit soon.

Oswaldo doesn't quite buy it, but nods anyway.

**MIGUEL**

Do you know a place called Ukraine?

**208 INT. PARADISE HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT**  
**208**

Miguel attempts to slip past Nikolai, who is currently checking  
in another GUEST, but...

**NIKOLAI**

Hey! You owe money. Full week!

**MIGUEL**

I know. I have tomorrow. No problem.

**NIKOLAI**

Yes, problem. You pay tomorrow or you  
have big problem.

Miguel continues up the stairs.

**209 INT. MIGUEL'S BEDROOM - LATER**  
**209**

Unable to sleep, Miguel lies in bed, staring at the ceiling,  
when he overhears a commotion from across the hall.

After a beat, he hears a door open and SLAM SHUT.

He goes to the door, listens close. It's quiet, until...

**KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK**

Miguel flinches. Then slowly cracks open the door to find...

...Raquel standing before him with a small leather duffel bag.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 103.

**RAQUEL**

(handing him the bag)  
Love, keep this in your room for me.  
Just a few hours. Til morning. I'll  
be back.

She forces the bag into his hands, kisses him on the cheek, and retreats into her own room.

Miguel closes the door, still holding the bag. He sets it on his bed, stares at it. After a few beats, he grabs it, stuffs it under the bed, out of sight.

He sits down at the desk, stares at the bed, when he hears SHOUTING from the hall. Again, he goes to the door, listens.

Another MAN POUNDS on Raquel's door, SCREAMING in Ukrainian, while Nikolai YELLS at the man in English, though Miguel can't make out exactly what's going on. The shouting intensifies until a SCUFFLE breaks out. A woman SCREAMS. Miguel reaches for the door handle, but stops himself.

He steps into his BATHROOM, shuts the door, sits on the toilet. The muffled SHOUTING continues. Miguel waits.

**FADE OUT.**

**210 INT. MIGUEL'S ROOM - LATER**  
**210**

Now quiet, Miguel stares at the mysterious bag on his bed, then heads for the door with his packed duffel over his shoulder. He puts his ear to the door, then exits, leaving the other bag behind.

**211 INT. PARADISE HOTEL HALLWAY**  
**211**

Miguel tip-toes down the hall. He stops in front of Raquel's room, leans down, and slides his room key under her door. Continues down the hall.

**212 EXT. STREET - PHONE BOOTH - EARLY MORNING**  
**212**

Miguel dials his calling card number into the phone, listens...

**MIGUEL**

Frank... It's Miguel.

We hold on Miguel, though we can hear Frank's muffled voice through the receiver.

**FRANK (O.S.)**

Jesus, Miguel, what the hell happened?

**MIGUEL**

Sorry for calling late. I'm in New York.

**FRANK (O.S.)**

I heard. You're making me look bad. What are you doing there?

**MIGUEL**

I got a job, but I don't know if I'm going to stay...

**FRANK (O.S.)**

Where you gonna go? The season's over... Your visa's expired.

**MIGUEL**

I know, but I thought maybe I could...

A beat, as Miguel drifts off.

**FRANK**

I can talk to Alvarez... But I don't know. Nobody's happy about this.

Miguel bites his lip. A police SIREN flies by.

**MIGUEL**

I know. Sorry.

**FRANK (O.S.)**

Look, Miguel--

Miguel hangs up the phone.

**213 EXT. ALL NIGHT CAFE - NIGHT**

**213**

Through the window, we see Miguel seated at a corner table. He stares out at the early morning traffic.

**214 EXT. ALL NIGHT CAFE - SAME ANGLE - EARLY MORNING - DAY**

**214**

Miguel is asleep at the same table. A WAITRESS comes by with a fresh pot of coffee, wakes him up. He declines another cup.

**215 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY**

**215**

Exhausted, Miguel goes through his usual work routine: bussing tables, washing dishes, stocking the kitchen...

**216 INT. CABINET STORE - NIGHT**  
**216**

Miguel approaches Osvaldo with his duffel bag. He looks a mess.

Osvaldo glances up from his work.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 105.

**OSVALDO**

Hey, Miguel.

Miguel doesn't respond. Osvaldo notices his packed bag and worn expression. Both men stare at each other for a long beat.

**MIGUEL**

I don't know where to go.

Osvaldo approaches, takes the duffel from Miguel's shoulder.

**FADE OUT.**

**217 EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY**  
**217**

Now wearing a Fall coat, Miguel crosses the street on his way to work, when...

**BEEEEEEEP!**

...he's startled by a loud car horn coming from a black livery cab parked at the curb.

**MIGUEL**

(giving the finger)

Fuck you, man!

Miguel keeps walking, but stops upon hearing...

**JORGE**

Fuck you too, bro!

Miguel turns to find Jorge, leaping out of his car, and running at him. They hug.

**MIGUEL**

What happened to you?

**JORGE**

Me? What happened to you?

**MIGUEL**

I been looking for you for weeks.

**JORGE**

I know. Rafi said you took my old job.  
Welcome to New York!

**218 INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY**  
**218**

Jorge eats at the counter, while Miguel stands on the opposite side, in his apron.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 106.

**JORGE**

I called the Higgins to give my new number, but they said you split. I couldn't believe it, man, I had no idea.

**MIGUEL**

Things got a little ugly after you left.

**JORGE**

We all go through slumps you know.

**MIGUEL**

It wasn't a slump.

**JORGE**

What was it then?

**MIGUEL**

I don't know, but I wasn't gonna wait around for them to throw me out.

Jorge looks at Miguel for a tense beat.

**MIGUEL**

I'm just saying...

**JORGE**

Whatever, man, you wouldn't be saying that shit if you made it.

Miguel smiles, shrugs.

**REYNA**

(from across the room)  
Sugar! Rafi needs you in the kitchen!

**JORGE**

They call you Sugar?

On his way to the kitchen...

**MIGUEL**

What can I say? The name sticks.

As Miguel slips past Reyna on his way to the kitchen, they exchange flirtatious smiles.

**219 INT. UPTOWN CLUB - NIGHT**

**219**

Merengue fuels the packed club tonight, as the mostly Latino crowd gets down on the dance floor.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 107.

AT THE BAR. Miguel, Reyna, Jorge, and his girlfriend, MONICA, drink beers, enjoying the party.

**JORGE**

They got all kinds in this league, bro.  
Like fat cats in their forties, kids  
like you and me, Dominicans, Puerto  
Ricans, even some white boys. I got  
this fifty year old catcher on my team,  
used to play for the Dodgers. Can't  
run for shit, but he's out there every  
week. Belly out to here. My man can  
still go deep though... You ever hear  
from that kid, Brad?

Reyna leans close to Miguel, says something in his ear, and he smiles, as she leads him out onto...

**220 THE DANCEFLOOR**

**220**

...where they carve up some fast and fierce moves. Miguel grins wide, having a great time. At this point the sound FADES LOW and the image blends to SLOW-MOTION, their bodies gliding through the frame, soothing and peaceful. Hold, as Jeff Buckley's "Hallelujah" FADES UP and carries over...

221 **EXT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - MORNING**  
221

A DELIVERY MAN puts boxes on a ramp, which go from his truck down into...

222 **INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT BASEMENT**  
222

Miguel takes the boxes off the ramp.

223 **INT. EL CARIBE RESTAURANT - DAY**  
223

Miguel and Reyna eat together, smiling.

224 **INT. WESTERN UNION - NIGHT**  
224

Miguel hands the teller two fifty dollar bills.

225 **EXT. STREET - NIGHT**  
225

Miguel floats down the street among a packed block of Bronx pedestrians. He blends in now, just another face in the crowd.

226 **INT. WOODEN CABINET SHOP - NIGHT**  
226

Oswaldo helps Miguel work on his coffee table.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 108.

227 **INT. WOODEN CABINET SHOP - LATER THAT NIGHT**  
227

Oswaldo teaches Miguel how to use the internet.

228 **INT. OSVALDO'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM**  
228

Miguel, Oswaldo, and his wife, ESTELLA, eat dinner at the table. The music continues under the following scene...

**OSVALDO**

I did some research and I got a new favorite player now.

**MIGUEL**

Okay, good.

**OSVALDO**

Vic Power. You know him?

Miguel shakes his head, no.

**OSVALDO**

You ought to. Greatest Puerto Rican first baseman ever. But that's not why he's my favorite player... Back when he first arrived, 1951, 52, he was playing in the minors. Little Rock, Arkansas. So the story goes, one day before a game, Vic stops into this diner for lunch. Hadn't been here long, so he knew very little English. Didn't even notice the "whites only" sign hanging in the window. And Vic was Black. I looked him up on Google. I mean Black like you. So he sits down at the counter and the little waitress comes up to big Vic and says, "I'm sorry, we don't serve colored people."

Oswaldo pauses for dramatic effect, as Miguel and Estella eagerly await what comes next.

**OSVALDO**

So he leans close to the waitress, tells her in his best English, "That's okay, I don't eat colored people."

After a beat, Estella laughs, but Miguel is unsure. Oswaldo does his best to explain the joke in Spanish.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 109.

**229 INT. OSVALDO'S APARTMENT - SPARE ROOM - NIGHT**  
**229**

A229 We INTERCUT between Miguel and Carmen in the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.229

**A**

She sits at her table in the same old house. (We can see through the window that the new one is still unfinished).

**CARMEN**

I got the photos you sent, but you'll have to send more.

**MIGUEL**

Okay, mom, but you know it would be a lot easier if you opened an email account.

**CARMEN**

Email? I don't even know how to use the TV!

Miguel smiles.

**MIGUEL**

I'm making a new table for you. It's going to be real nice.

**CARMEN**

I'm sure I'll love it. Thank you.

**MIGUEL**

How's Erica?

**CARMEN**

She's good. Got a job at the factory. Just part-time, though, so she can keep up with school.

Miguel removes the phone from his ear for a beat.

**MIGUEL**

And Luis?

**CARMEN**

He's pitching now. You should see him, Miguel, got an arm like his brother.

**MIGUEL**

Yeah, but can he throw a knuckle curve?

Carmen laughs. After a beat...

**MIGUEL**

I miss you, mom. But, I'm working hard. I'll be home soon. Give everyone a hug for me.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 110.

**CARMEN**

I will, Sugar. I love you.

**MIGUEL**

I love you, too.

She nods, hangs up, and looks over to...

...LITTLE LUIS, watching her from across the room.

**230** **EXT. ROBERTO CLEMENTE FIELD - BRONX - DAY**  
**230**

CLOSE ON a Dominican flag being waved by a TODDLER. A WIDER ANGLE reveals him in the packed bleachers with a diverse CROWD of FANS and FRIENDS: Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Anglos...

The mood is festive. A VENDOR sells mangos on sticks. Merengue MUSIC blasts from a portable stereo in the stands. FANS drink Presidente beer out of bottles.

**231** **ON THE FIELD**  
**231**

Uniformed PLAYERS of all ages, races, shapes, and sizes warm up before the game (though the majority are Dominican).

Jorge introduces Miguel (also in uniform) to the other players.

**JORGE**

Caballo! This is Miguel from San Pedro.

**CABALLO**

The new guy. You ready to pitch?

**MIGUEL**

I think so.

**CABALLO**

It's been a while, no?

**JORGE**

Don't worry; he's ready.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

Jorge introduces Miguel to...

**JORGE**

Felipe! Meet Miguel. They call him Sugar.

**FELIPE**

What's up, Sugar?

**JORGE**

Felipe played for the Dodgers Triple-A team. Hit a dinger off Pedro once.

**FELIPE**

Twice.

**JORGE**

Twice.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

More intros...

**DIEGO**

I played for the Yankees.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**JOSE**

Cubs.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**ADRIAN**

Padres.

**JUMP CUT TO:**

**GERONIMO**

Kansas City.

**MIGUEL**

Me too! Bridgetown.

**GERONIMO**

I was there in 96. I lived on a farm.

**MIGUEL**

With the Higgins!

**GERONIMO**

Yeah!

Miguel smiles big, just as the UMPIRE calls out...

**UMPIRE**

Vamos! Let's play ball!

232 ON THE MOUND - MINUTES LATER  
232

We TILT UP from his cleats to reveal Miguel looking in for the sign from his catcher. He nods. And delivers.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 112.

The ball is SMACKED toward third, where Jorge makes an awkward lunge for the ball, manages to stop it with his foot. By the time he gets his hand on it, the RUNNER has made it to first.

The fans and some of the players laugh at Jorge's ugly mistake.

**OLD MAN HECKLER**

(from the stands)

This ain't soccer! You can use your hands!

**MIGUEL**

(smiling)

Just like old times.

But Jorge shrugs and laughs it off. No pressure here. It's only a game.

Miguel buckles down, delivers a monster fastball.

**UMPIRE**

Strike!

He gets the ball back, looks to the stands, and sees...

...Monica waving to Jorge at third.

Miguel's new friend, Osvaldo, is also there with Estella. Miguel smiles to them.

Miguel fires in the next pitch, even faster, and the batter swings straight through it.

**UMPIRE**

Strike two!

He gets the ball back, lowers his head and whispers a prayer to himself. Looks back to the runner on second. Comes to the set position, and...

...floats in a vicious, swooping, knuckle curve, that causes the batter to flinch out of the way, before breaking back over the

plate for...

**UMPIRE**

Strike three!

All the fans and players in attendance go NUTS over the awesome pitch, as we follow Miguel off the field to a mini-standing ovation. He tips his hat to the crowd. Just like old times.

Official Shooting Script as of 10/22/07 113.

**233 IN THE DUGOUT**

**233**

Miguel takes a seat as TEAMMATES pass through the frame and pat him on the back.

The SOUND FADES LOW as we start a SLOW ZOOM IN on Miguel. He takes in the moment as we get closer, and his smile gives way to a beat of quiet introspection. Hold.

He looks out across the field. CLAPS for encouragement.