

A GAME OF INCHES

A true story

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

BASED ON A TRUE STORY:

In 1961 Major League Baseball extended its schedule from 154 games to 162 games setting the stage for the competition between Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle to break Babe Ruth's single season home run record of 60.

They battled through the season until Mantle was felled by a hip infection causing hospitalization late in the season, leaving Maris as the single remaining player with the opportunity to break Ruth's home run record. Maris finally broke the record in game 162, and is entered in the record books with an asterisk because of the increased number of games beginning a controversy that would last for decades.

While all fans of the game were focused on Maris and Mantle, another event took place that is equally as remarkable, and to this day remains unique in baseball history...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET OF OLD ROW HOUSES IN A MINING TOWN -- DAY

SUPER: 1955

Two 12 year old boys, C.A. LOVE and RON KEMBRY, are walking down the street. C.A. is swinging an old bat. The handle is taped, and it's held together by nails. Ron has a copy of Sport Magazine rolled up in his back pocket. They arrive at a house with a tired looking 40ish woman, ALICE DALTON, sitting in a rocking chair on the porch.

C.A.

Hi Mrs. Dalton, Denny home?

MRS. DALTON

He's out back boys.

INT. OLD SHED -- DAY

A 12 year old boy, DENNY DALTON, is wrapping an old beat up baseball with black electrical tape.

C.A. (O.S.)

Denny, let's go, the guys are waiting for us.

EXT. PASTURE -- DAY

The 3 boys walk together down the street to a pasture where 6 OTHER BOYS, 5 white and 1 African American named SHADOW, are waiting. BARBARA MASTERSON, a 12 year old freckled face girl with pigtails, stands off to the side.

DENNY
Where's Emmett?

BOY #1
His dad has him working today.
Looks like we won't have enough to
play.

BARBARA
I'll play. I can play. Let me play.

KEMBRY
Beat it, girls can't play baseball.

BARBARA
Can to Ron Kembry. You're just
still mad that I can run faster
than you.

DENNY
Okay, calm down, calm down you two.
Here's what we'll do. Me, Elwood,
Jim Bob, Shadow and Barbara will
play the rest of you. C.A., throw
me the bat.

C.A. throws the bat to Denny.

They go hand over hand up the handle until Denny is just able to grab the knob with his fingertips. He easily throws the bat back over his shoulder to win first choice, and elects to take the field.

The players put down burlap sacks for bases, and an old "Grapette" sign for home plate.

DENNY
Barbara you play left field.
Just stay out of the way, and let
Shadow take everything.

BARBARA
You just pitch Denny Dalton, I can
take care of myself. Just
concentrate on keeping C.A. from
hitting another one into the creek
like he did off you yesterday.

Dalton gives her brief stare, then takes the ball and prepares to throw the first pitch.

DENNY
Same rules as always. Right field
is out, and the mine shaft is a
ground rule double.

As Denny begins his windup the players hear a RUMBLING from below, and the ground begins to shake.

They freeze as if time has stopped when the sound of an EXPLOSION from Mine #9 is followed instantly by SIRENS signifying a disaster.

With fear on their faces they drop everything and start running toward the mine.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD ST. MATTHEWS, KENTUCKY -- DAY

A brand new Little League ballpark covered with opening day decorations. Like a scaled down major league stadium. The kids are wearing new wool uniforms, and are introduced as if they are on a major league team; the focus of our attention... TERRY RYAN, JAMES MARTIN, STEVEN PATRICK, KENNY PERRY.

Its the bottom of the last inning with the team in the field up by one. Perry is pitching with Martin catching.

Ryan is on third with one out. Patrick is at the plate.

Perry throws to Patrick who hits a line drive to left field that is caught for the second out. Ryan tags, and arrives at home plate at the same moment as the throw. He collides with Martin.

Out of a cloud of dust we SEE a little hand appear holding the ball. Ryan is out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK YANKEES SPRING TRAINING COMPLEX -- FORT
LAUDERDALE FLORIDA -- DAY

SUPER 1961 - SIX YEARS LATER.

JAKE De MOSS, mid 30's, hustles off the field.

Still dressed in his uniform, we TRACK with Jake as he enters an office next to the Yankee locker room.

An older man, a COACH, is sitting behind a desk. Jake sits down across from him.

JAKE

You wanted to see me Skip?

Coach sighs.

COACH

This hurts me as much as it does you, and there is no easy way to say it, but Jake it's over. We're giving you your unconditional release.

Jake looks down, fidgets for a moment. He looks up.

JAKE

I thought I was having a pretty good spring.

COACH

It's not so much how you performed; it's more that we have a couple of kids that we think are ready.

JAKE

Any chance for a trade?

COACH

We tried, everybody. Nobody was interested. Sorry. You had a pretty good run Jake, now it's somebody else's turn.

Jake sucks it up... He knew this day was going to come, he just wasn't ready for it now.

JAKE

I'll clean out my locker.

COACH

Take your time. You were a real pro. Good luck.

Jake gets up, leans forward to shake hands, and then walks out the door without looking back.

EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE -- DAY

An hour later Jake walks up to the entrance of the apartment building where he has been living during spring training. It is built around a swimming pool.

He sees his girlfriend SANDY, a very attractive blonde, sunning herself in a bikini by the pool. He walks up and seats himself in a chair next to her. She opens her eyes and sees him.

SANDY

What are you doing home so early?
I thought you had a double header
today.

She pauses, taking a hard look at him, studying his face.

SANDY

Something the matter, you look like
you just lost your best friend?

JAKE

Sandy, I got released today.
It's over. I am no longer a New
York Yankee.

SANDY

Well, there are plenty of other
teams.

JAKE

Skip said they talked to every
team, and nobody was interested.
It's official, I'm done.

Sandy is quiet for a moment, then turns to Jake and puts her hand on his arm.

SANDY

Jake honey, I know you're having
a bad day, and I don't want to make
it worse, but we need to talk about
what happens next between us. You
know I'm a bright lights, big city
girl. Fast lane all the way.

Jake pauses, then takes a deep breath.

JAKE

Well, I'm going back to New York to
get rid of the place I sublet for
the season, then I'm heading back
home. You can come with me, or you
can stay here. The rent on this
place is paid through the end of
the month.

Sandy is very quiet for a long moment.

SANDY

I think I'll stay. You know I'm not
real big on uncertainty.

Jake seems relieved that the decision has been made.

JAKE

Tell you what. I've got a bottle of
French champagne I've been saving
for a special occasion. Why don't I
put it on ice while you slip into
something more comfortable, and
we'll make it a memorable last
night.

Sandy laughs. They get up and walk hand in hand to their
apartment.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

SUPER: TWO DAYS LATER

A black 57 Chevy convertible with the top down is speeding
down a winding mountain road. As the car passes through a
valley in this very rural part of the country it SWERVES to
miss a DEAD ANIMAL lying in the middle of the road.

The car hits the gravel on the side of the road and goes into
a slide. The driver is able to correct just in time to avoid
hitting a fence.

INT. CHEVY -- DAY

Jake is driving. A can of beer between his legs. He keeps
turning the radio knob, but can only find COUNTRY MUSIC or
FUNDAMENTALIST PREACHERS. A cooler of beer is sitting on the
back seat.

Jake finishes his beer, and throws it at a road sign - "Rock
Creek Pop. 1,276". He misses.

As he reaches for another beer his car suddenly starts to
sputter. It stalls and comes to a stop, steam billowing from
under the hood.

Jake sits there for a moment, fingers strumming the wheel,
watching the steam rise.

When it clears, Jake SEES a field across from him. At the far end there is a small building with a flag pole that appears to be a school and a baseball field where a group of TEEN AGED BOYS are starting to warm up.

Jake ignores them. He tries to start the car but it won't turn over.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

The baseball field of Rock Creek High School is not much to look at; skin infield, sagging chain link backstop, no fences, one bleacher right behind home plate, and a single weathered wooden bench for each team.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Jake gets out of the car and opens the hood. After a few minutes of doing the usual tinkering he slams the hood shut.

A tall lanky man in his 40's wearing overalls, an old sweat stained St. Louis Cardinals baseball hat, and chewing an ever-present match in the corner of his mouth is cutting the outfield grass with a tractor mower. He sees Jake, stops his tractor and walks over. His name is ZEKE RAWLINGS.

ZEKE

Car trouble? What happened?

JAKE

Beats me. Clank, clank, bang, bang and she just stopped cold. I don't know why I even bothered looking under the hood; I don't know the first thing about engines.

ZEKE

Understand that. Not much better myself. Tell you what. Edgar, he owns the town garage, is over to the county seat until late Sunday. If you don't mind waiting a bit I can give you a tow into town. He can look at it first thing Monday morning.

JAKE

No other garages around?

ZEKE

Not for 50 miles in any direction.

JAKE

Well, that's real nice of you
mister, how much do I owe you?

ZEKE

Nothing, glad to help.

JAKE

You sure?

ZEKE

You're not from around here are
you? I said I'd be glad to help.
Names Zeke, Zeke Rawlings.

Zeke holds out his hand. They shake.

JAKE

Jake DeMoss, first time in this
part of the country. Pleasure to
meet you.

A late model sedan pulls up to the field, and a man in his
30's gets out... PATRICK "BULLDOG" MCMURPHY. He looks at Jake
and Zeke, then does a double take when he recognizes Jake.

He yells out:

BULLDOG

Hey there Jake DeMoss did they ever
find that ball I hit off you in
Columbus in 56?

Jake turns and looks.

JAKE

Bulldog, I'll be damned, is that
you?

Bulldog walks over to them. He shakes Jake's hand.

ZEKE

You guys know each other?

BULLDOG

We played against each other in
Triple A ball. Jake was in the
Yankee organization, and I was in
the Cardinals. Chased a few ladies
together. What the hell are you
doing here? Thought you were with
the Yankees.

JAKE

You know the drill. I'm sorry but the organization has decided to go in another direction blah, blah, blah.

BULLDOG

Sorry to hear it. How's Sandy?

JAKE

Let's just say she prefers the company of active Major Leaguers.

BULLDOG

Sorry again man. Sounds like you're on a roll.

JAKE

Yeah, when you're hot, you're hot. I wouldn't blame you if you didn't want to stand too close to me in case lightning strikes, or we get hit with a plague of locusts, or there's an earthquake, or something.

BULLDOG

Glad to see you haven't lost your sense of humor. Have you figured out what you're going to do?

JAKE

Nah. I thought I would head back to New York, clear out my place, then head home and figure what's next. I'm here because my car broke down. What the hell are you doing here?

BULLDOG

You know me. Step in a pile of horse manure and find a pony. To make a long story short, I met this girl and it turned out that her family was in the newspaper business. Her old man liked me, and gave me a job writing a weekly column on high school sports. On top of that, I have a weekly half hour radio show. Doesn't pay much, but I get to see a lot of sports. Kind of keeps me in the game. Which, is why I'm here.

He turns to Zeke.

BULLDOG

Where's Coach Woodward? This season's kick off show is next week, and I want to talk to him about what kind of team he'll have this year, and who else he thinks will be good.

ZEKE

He's not coaching this year. His wife is expecting so he's taking more shifts at the mine to make some extra money. I'm kind of looking after the boys. Hell, they don't need much coaching, they been playing together all their lives. Actually, I think we're going to be pretty good. We've got everybody back from last year's 10 and 7 team.

BULLDOG

Jake, you've got nothing special you have to do, why don't you help Zeke out?

JAKE

Bulldog, have you so soon forgotten my temper, and often stated opinion that all coaches are crazy?

BULLDOG

Don't pay any attention to him Zeke. His bark is worse than his bite. Most times anyhow.

ZEKE

Jake, you're going to be stuck here a couple of days. If you could help out at practice I'm sure the kids would love it, and I would really appreciate it. I love baseball, but don't know much about coaching.

JAKE

Ah, what the hell. I can't say no to the man that's going to tow my car into town for free. Any place I can change into my gear?

ZEKE

Yeah right over there.

Zeke points to a small equipment shed, then walks onto the field and calls the team together.

Jake opens the trunk of his car, grabs his equipment bag and enters the shed.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

ZEKE

Gather up boys. That guy Bulldog and I were talking to is Jake DeMoss. Up until a few days ago he played for the New York Yankees. He's going to be stuck here for a few days, and is going to work out with us.

The team begins excitedly talking among themselves as Jake strolls onto the field.

He is wearing sweats and a baseball cap with the Yankee logo. His spikes are highly polished, and the leather of his Wilson A-2000 glove is a rich dark brown.

Jake checks out the team; a bunch of tough, scruffy, hard honed farmer's and miner's sons dressed in various combinations of sweats, Levi's and shorts.

JAKE

Well, here I am. What do you want to do first Zeke?

ZEKE

We usually start with a little batting practice, if that's OK with you. Let me introduce the boys. Denny Dalton Ron Kembry, Shadow Washington, C.A. Love...

JAKE

Fine with me. Let me get loose. Which one of you is the catcher?

KEMBRY

That's me Mr. DeMoss, Ron Kembry.

JAKE

Jake works for me. Well, Ron Kembry, give me a target, and we'll get started.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Kembry squats down behind the plate... Jake winds up displaying a flawless motion... The ball seems to come out of his hand effortlessly... He grooves his pitches for the hitters, and, once they get over their initial awe, they start getting good wood on the ball.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

C.A. Love, who has grown into a barrel chested man-child, steps into the batter's box. He hits several balls hard.

C.A.
Hey Jake. Let's see what you've really got. Come on, throw me some heat.

JAKE
OK, you ready?

C.A.
Ready.

Jake starts throwing harder. C.A. fouls off a couple of pitches, and hits a couple of weak grounders. Then he connects and hits one way over the outfielder's heads. He stands in the batter's box, leans on the bat with one hand and points, admiring the flight of the ball.

C.A.
My oh my, would you look at that ball fly.

On the next pitch Jake hits him in the butt, and smiles.

JAKE
Sorry, force of habit.

C.A. seems puzzled, not knowing what to make of Jake as Jake concludes his round of batting practice.

Denny Dalton, now a wiry, raw boned, right hander, takes the ball to begin the next round. Jake goes over to sit on the bench with Zeke. As Dalton throws, Jake watches him intensely, recognizing instantly that the kid has talent.

JAKE
Zeke, what's his name again?

ZEKE
Denny Dalton.

Jake calls out.

JAKE
Hey Denny, mind if I show you something?

DENNY
Sure.

Jake walks out to the mound.

JAKE
You got a pretty nice delivery, but it's almost all arm. You're not getting your legs into it. Try it like this.

Jake shows Denny how to slightly change his delivery. Denny throws several pitches, and there is noticeable improvement.

JAKE
How's that feel?

DENNY
Good, real natural.

JAKE
Hey Kembry, what's that ball doing?

KEMBRY
Hopping and popping. Looking good.

JAKE
(to Denny)
OK, now show me your curve ball.

Denny throws several flat breaking curve balls.

JAKE
Come over the top with it a little more. Throw it real easy at first until you get the hang of it.

Denny throws several, getting more comfortable with each pitch.

JAKE
Now, really snap it off.

Denny winds up and releases the ball. Just as it reaches home plate it drops almost straight down. Denny looks at Jake and a big grin breaks out on his face.

JAKE

Hey, Kembry what did you think of that?

KEMBRY

Glad all I have to do is catch it, not hit it. Let's start the season right now.

He throws the ball back to Denny and laughs.

Jake walks back to the bench, and Denny finishes throwing his round of batting practice. Zeke turns to Jake.

ZEKE

Jake, how about hitting a little infield?

Jake takes a fungo bat and starts with the outfielders. They catch and throw to second, third and home. Shadow in centerfield has a rocket arm, but his throws are wild and he overthrows third by several feet.

JAKE

Cardinal rule guys - don't throw the ball away. No matter how good a play you make, if you throw the ball away it means nothing. You outfielders should always throw to the bases on one bounce. It gets there faster, and is easier to catch.

Jake finishes with the outfielders, and starts with the infielders. He gives them tips on how to field the ball, turn the double play etc.

ZEKE

OK, bring it in, that's it for today. Get on home and finish your chores. I don't want to deal with a bunch of angry parents.

The players all walk up and thank Jake before running home. The last one is Dalton.

JAKE

You have some talent young man. You ever think about playing pro ball?

DENNY

Every day since I can remember.

JAKE

Well, work hard, it's a great game.
Good luck.

BULLDOG

Guys, I've seen all I need to see,
gotta run. Jake, great seeing you.
If you ever get to Louisville look
me up. Zeke, take care of him he's
good people.

INT. DALTON FAMILY SHACK -- NIGHT

Denny Dalton runs into the house. His father, HOWARD DALTON a
grizzled man in his 40's, sits in a chair reading the paper.
His mother is preparing dinner.

DENNY

Mom, Pop, you won't believe what
happened at practice today.

MR. DALTON

I don't want to hear another word
about baseball. It's time you grew
up and quit wasting time playing a
kids game.

DENNY

But Pop...

MR. DALTON

I talked to Homer about you today.
You turn 18 next month, and he'll
have your union membership papers
ready for you. You got a job on
second shift starting the week
after you get out of school.

DENNY

Pop, I told you I don't want to be
a miner.

Mr. Dalton slams down his paper.

MR. DALTON

Well, if you don't want to be a
miner where do you plan to live,
and how do you plan to eat? The
free ride is over the day school is
out.

DENNY

But Pop...

MR. DALTON

No buts. I've got a union meeting tonight; get your chores done if you want any dinner.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

A late model pickup truck pulls up outside an old boarding house.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK -- NIGHT

Zeke and Jake are sitting in the pickup truck.

ZEKE

I really appreciate what you did for the boys out there today.

JAKE

To tell the truth I had a lot of fun. It's been a long time since I was around a bunch of kids that played just because they love baseball. Organized ball is a business. Pretty cold.

ZEKE

Glad you did. What did you think of the boys?

JAKE

You got some potential here. The Dalton kid has real talent. C.A. has a sweet swing. Shadow has as good an arm as you'll see. They all play hard.

ZEKE

C.A.'s my sister's boy. Does some work for me from time to time.

(beat)

My wife called, and they have a room ready for you. Just ask for Shelia Masterson, she runs the place. By the way, she makes the best berry pie in Kentucky. I'll see that Edgar looks at your car. Why don't you meet me at Hattie's Restaurant Monday morning about 10. Just walk toward town, you can't miss it.

JAKE

Thanks again for the tow Zeke, I really appreciate it. Good night.

Jake gets out of the truck. Zeke calls to him.

ZEKE

Almost forgot. There's a potluck supper and dance tomorrow night. The whole town will be there. Meet me about 7.

JAKE

I don't know. I'm not much for dances.

ZEKE

Good food, good music and pretty ladies, what more can you ask?

JAKE

Sure, why not.

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

Barbara Masterson, now a pretty teen-age girl, runs out the front door almost colliding with Jake.

JAKE

Hi, I'm looking for Sheila Masterson.

BARBARA

I'm her sister Barbara. You must be the fellow Alma Rawlings called about. She's expecting you.

(she turns and yells)

Hey Sis, he's here. See ya, gotta run.

Jake knocks on the door.

SHEILA MASTERSON opens the door. In her late twenties, she is attractive, but plainly dressed with no makeup. Her hair looks like it hasn't been styled in years.

JAKE

Hi. My names DeMoss, Jake DeMoss, and I need a room for a couple of days.

SHEILA

Yeah, I know. I'm Shelia. Come on in, I've been expecting you. Room 4 upstairs to the left. Supper is at 6 sharp. Breakfast at 7. No lunch, but we have tea, coffee, milk and sodas in the kitchen all the time.

Jake enters the house.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE FRONT ROOM -- NIGHT

Well worn and comfortable. Sparsely decorated with antiques and family heirlooms.

SHEILA

It's \$5 a day, \$30 a week. Zeke vouched for you, so you can pay when you leave. You missed supper, but I made a couple of sandwiches for you. What would you like to drink?

JAKE

Any chance for a beer?

SHEILA

Nope, dry county.

JAKE

Milk will do. Is everybody in this town as gracious as Zeke?

Sheila looks at Jake and shakes her head.

SHEILA

No, you got lucky.

She hands him the key. He turns and heads up the stairs.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

Sheila is standing by the sink snapping green beans into a large bowl. Jake walks in carrying his plate and glass from last night.

SHEILA

Good afternoon.

JAKE

Afternoon, what time is it?

SHEILA
12:30, you slept all morning.
Can I get you anything?

JAKE
Some coffee would hit the spot.

Jake sits down at the kitchen table, and Sheila pours him a cup of coffee.

SHEILA
Where did you come in from
yesterday?

JAKE
Ft. Lauderdale, drove all night
till my car broke down.

SHEILA
Where you headed?

JAKE
New York City. Ever been?

SHEILA
Good Lord no.

JAKE
What's that you're making, smells
good.

SHEILA
My "special surprise". It's for the
potluck supper tonight. By the way,
you're my only guest this weekend.
If you're going tonight I won't
make any supper, but I can fix you
something if you want.

JAKE
I guess I'll be going, I don't
think Zeke is giving me much of a
choice. This your place?

SHEILA
No, I just run it for "The
Company".

JAKE
What's "The Company"?

SHEILA
The Kennecutt Coal Company. J.
Wilkerson Kennecutt's the owner.
(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Owens just about everything around here except Hattie's, Edgar's garage, Elmo's barbershop, Jimmy's pool room and Zeke. Now you get out of here, I've got work to do before tonight.

JAKE

Think I'll stretch my legs and take a walk around. Which way is town?

SHEILA

Just turn right, you can't miss it. Try not to get lost.

Sheila laughs.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

Following Jake as he walks out the front door and down the road into town.

It's a typical hardscrabble mining town, clapboard houses and store fronts. There seems to be a layer of black dust covering everything.

INT. SHEILA MASTERSON'S BATHROOM -- DAY

Shelia is having her hair done by her sister Barbara. She is looking at an old Cosmopolitan magazine.

BARBARA

He's cute.

Shelia doesn't respond. She turns the pages of the magazine.

BARBARA

Is he gonna take you to the dance tonight?

SHEILA

Don't you start. He's a boarder not a boyfriend.

BARBARA

Just askin'.

SHEILA

Well don't ask.

BARBARA

You like him. I can tell.

SHEILA

Now that's enough. Not another word.

BARBARA

OK. OK. How about we try something from the 21st Century? This would look great on you.

Barbara shows Sheila several photos of different hair styles.

SHEILA

I can't see myself looking like any of these.

BARBARA

Trust me.

INT. ROCK CREEK HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT

A crowd of people are dancing to the music of a live Bluegrass band. Zeke is playing the fiddle.

The couples range in age from 70's to small children. All of the Rock Creek players, except Shadow and C.A., are there. Several tables are covered with food.

Jake enters the hall. A few people stare at him, and the players wave.

After a bit Zeke sees him and motions for the band, HATTIE, ELMO, JIMMY, PETE, TOM AND RANDY, to take a break.

Zeke calls out to Jake.

ZEKE

Jake, come on over here and meet some friends of mine.

Jake heads to the stage. Zeke gathers the band members.

ZEKE

Everybody, meet Jake DeMoss. Jake meet Hattie, she owns the best, and only, restaurant in town. Elmo is our barber. Jimmy owns the pool room next store to Hattie's. Pete, Tom and Randy work the night shift at the mine.

Jake shakes hands with everybody.

JAKE

Howdy everybody, nice to meet you.
Zeke this is quite a party. You
guys are really good.

ZEKE

Thanks, we have a lot of fun
playing. You hungry?

JAKE

Starving, what do I do?

ZEKE

Just grab a plate and help
yourself. Sit anywhere you like. We
gotta get back to playing; I'll
catch up with you later.

Jake fills a plate with food. Sheila is sitting at a table.
Jake sees her and approaches. His attention is immediately
drawn her new "Beehive" hairdo. Sheila is very self-
conscious.

SHEILA

Don't say a word, it wasn't my
idea.

JAKE

It looks, well, uh, modern.

SHEILA

Not another word.

JAKE

Okay. If I promise, will you let me
sit down?

Sheila points to a chair. Jake sits down and begins to eat.

JAKE

This is delicious. What is it?

SHEILA

Kentucky Burgoo, a mountain
favorite.

JAKE

What's in it?

Sheila gets a little twinkle in her eye.

SHEILA

Sure you want to know? You're not
the squeamish type are you?

Jake pauses eating, and looks a bit uncertain.

JAKE
OK, what's in this?

SHEILA
Well, it depends. Most times I'm not real sure. Whenever I make it I go out to Route 41 first thing in the morning to see what critters have been hit overnight and grab the freshest ones. You have to be sure and get there early before the sun spoils them.

Jake remembers the dead animal he saw on the road entering Rock Creek, and starts to look a bit green.

Sheila waits a few seconds then starts laughing.

SHEILA
Gotcha!

Jake realizes he's been had, and that there's more to Sheila than he had first thought. The music stops, and Zeke adjusts the microphone.

ZEKE
Folks I need your attention.

Everyone quiet down for a bit and focuses on Zeke.

ZEKE
We have a celebrity here with us tonight.

All eyes turn toward Jake.

ZEKE
I would like to introduce Mr. Jake DeMoss. For those of you that don't know, he used to play for the New York Yankees. Stand up Jake. Let the folks get a good look at you. Let's give him a warm welcome.

Jake appears a little uncomfortable. He sort of half stands and gives a very meek wave. A subtle MURMUR is heard from the crowd.

SHEILA
Don't take it personal. People in these parts aren't real partial to any kind of Yankee.

Jake sits back down. He tries to make himself comfortable, and attempts to change the conversation.

JAKE
Do you like to dance?

SHEILA
I've had an occasion, but not in a long time. How about you?

JAKE
Never been much for it myself, and this looks pretty complicated.

SHEILA
A pro ballplayer and can't dance?

JAKE
No, but I can throw a curve ball that will make your knees turn to jelly.

SHEILA
Touché'

HAL, a large man who is slightly inebriated, walks up to Jake and Sheila.

HAL
Sheila, I been tryin' to get you to dance with me for years. Tell me it's my lucky night.

SHEILA
Not tonight Hal. Looks like you'll just have to keep waiting. Hal, meet Jake DeMoss. He's a guest.

Jake starts to stand up to shake hands.

HAL
Don't bother mister baseball hotshot. Come on Sheila, dance with me.

Jake, now standing, starts to get angry.

JAKE
The lady said she doesn't want to dance with you fellow.

Sheila grabs Jake's arm.

SHEILA

Sit down Jake, I'll handle this.
Now you listen to me Hal. I've
tried to be polite, but you just
won't take a hint. I'm not going to
dance with you tonight, or any
other night. Not if Hell freezes
over. You understand? Now quit
bothering me, and stop being rude
to my guest.

Hal grumbles, and walks away very angry. Jake sits back down,
and the music starts up again.

JAKE

Friend of yours?

SHEILA

Went to school together.

JAKE

How come you won't dance with him?
Want to talk about it?

SHEILA

No comment.

They watch the dance for a while. People keep looking at
Shelia and Jake.

C.A. Love enters the hall, and immediately heads for the
prettiest girl in the room. Her name is PENNY. He picks her
up by the waist, lifts her off the ground, and heads for the
dance floor.

C.A.

Dance with me Penny darling.

PENNY

(trying to appear angry.)
You put me down right this instant
you big lug.

Holding her in his arms, without her feet touching the floor,
C.A. whirls Penny around the room.

C.A.

Might I say you're looking
especially lovely tonight my dear.

PENNY

Knock it off you big flirt, you
know I'm mad at you.

C.A.

You know you can't stay mad at me.
Would it get me out of your
doghouse if I told you that there's
a full moon, and I have Pop's truck
right outside?

Penny's mood changes instantly. She gives C.A. a hug.

PENNY

I'll sneak out and meet you there
in 10 minutes.

The music stops. Zeke takes the microphone and addresses the audience.

A table behind him is stacked with pie boxes.

ZEKE

OK, time for the auction. Y'all
know the rules.

Zeke holds up a box, and begins the auction. Several hands raise and the bidding becomes intense.

JAKE

So how does this work?

SHEILA

Each box has a pie in it. The
winning bidder gets the pie, and
the lady that baked it has to dance
with him.

JAKE

That sounds like fun, I guess.

SHEILA

We're trying to raise money to help
the baseball team. They need
equipment.

Jake watches for a while as the pies are auctioned off.

JAKE

If I buy a pie do I have to dance?

SHEILA

It would be nice.

DISSOLVE TO:

There is only one box left on the table.

ZEKE

OK folks. This is the last pie.

It's Sheila's... Spirited bidding starts \$5, \$6.50, \$8.
Suddenly Hal bids 10 dollars.

ZEKE

Ten dollars! Do I have eleven!
Going once for ten dollars. Going
twice! Ten fifty anyone? OK. Going
three...

JAKE

The money actually goes to the
team?

SHEILA

Every dime.

JAKE

And you have to dance with the
winning bidder?

SHEILA

Them's the rules.

Jake raises his hand.

JAKE

Twenty dollars!

ZEKE

Twenty dollars! Anyone gonna top
this?

The crowd is silent.

ZEKE

Going once! Going twice! Going
three times! Sold to Jake
DeMoss. Come on up here Jake and
get your pie. Lucky you!

Hal gives Jake an angry look, and leaves the dance.

Jake picks up his pie, and heads back to his table. The band
begins to play. Jake and Sheila walk out onto the dance
floor.

JAKE

You sure I can't take a rain check
on the dancing?

SHEILA

I made a fool out of myself getting
this hairdo. You can handle one
dance.

Sheila slowly takes Jake through the motions. He does very well. People applaud as they return to their table.

SHEILA

See, you survived.

Sheila gives Jake a long look.

SHEILA

By the way, thank you. I really
didn't want to dance with Hal.

JAKE

My pleasure.

Sheila and Jake make small talk. Suddenly a couple dances close to their table and bumps into it, knocking over some drinks.

Sheila leans back trying not to get wet. Her puffed up hairdo gets near some candles, and Jake notices smoke coming from the very top of her head. Sheila is unaware.

Jake quickly grabs a couple of drinks from another table. He pours them over Sheila's head putting out the flames.

Reacting instantly Sheila hits Jake with a left hook, and he lands flat on his back on the floor.

As Sheila wipes the burned hair and drinks from her face with the tablecloth she finally figures out what happened. She looks up, sees Jake holding his jaw, and bursts into embarrassed laughter.

SHEILA

I hated that hairdo. And you, you
need to learn to keep your right
up!

They both laugh.

EXT. OUTSIDE DANCE -- NIGHT

Barbara and Denny are sitting together on a bench in a secluded spot.

BARBARA

You're awfully quiet tonight.

DENNY

Another fight with Pop. He says I've got to start working in the mines after we graduate next month. He wants me to give up playing ball.

BARBARA

What are you going to do?

DENNY

I don't know yet, but I can't quit playing ball. It's my only chance to ever get out of this place.

(beat)

Something happened yesterday. That guy Jake showed me a couple of things about pitching, and all of a sudden everything just clicked. I started throwing the ball good, I mean really good. Like I could make it do anything I wanted. He said I've got some talent. If we can just make it to Lexington, and play in front of all those college and pro scouts, maybe I'll get a shot.

(beat)

Have you heard anything about your scholarship yet?

BARBARA

No. I've applied at just about every school in the state. I should start hearing back anytime now. Somehow, someday, we are both going to get out of here. Whatever you do, I'm with you; you know that.

DENNY

Me too.

They kiss.

INT. HATTIE'S RESTAURANT -- DAY

It's Monday morning, and the place is buzzing. Everyone is talking about Jake. Zeke is sitting at his regular corner table talking with Edgar. Edgar is nodding his head.

ZEKE

Somebody keep a lookout, it's getting close to 10.

A man moves to stand near the front window so he can see anyone coming down the street.

MAN

I'm on it.

ZEKE

OK Edgar get out the back door.
Wait a couple of minutes after you
see him come in, then you come
back. Everybody else know what to
do?

They all nod agreement, and Edgar slips out the back.

MAN

Here he comes. Everybody act
natural.

Jake walks into the restaurant. He sees Zeke and starts toward his table. Zeke has been joined by Hattie, Elmo, Jimmy and several others.

ZEKE

Hey Jake, how's the jaw?

JAKE

(rubs his jaw.)
Sore as hell. That woman's got some
punch. I feel like a mule kicked
me.

ZEKE

Want some coffee?

JAKE

(grabs a chair.)
Mornin' everybody. Coffee would be
fine, thanks.

Edgar enters the front door. Zeke looks up and sees him.

ZEKE

Here comes Edgar now. Edgar, over
here. Grab a chair, and say hello
to Jake DeMoss.

Edgar shakes hands and sits down.

ZEKE

What's the word on Jake's car?

EDGAR

Well Jake, you mind if I call you Jake?

JAKE

That's my name.

EDGAR

Well, Jake, I've got some bad news for you. You blew out a goesinta valve. It seems that you have a special high performance engine, and they can blow when they get overheated. I called the big parts distributors, but nobody has one in stock so I called the Chevy plant in Detroit. They are going to have to special order one for you. Said it would be here in a week, maybe 10 days.

JAKE

Damn, you sure there is nothing you can do?

EDGAR

Nothing. That's what happens when you get one of these big engines. Sorry.

ZEKE

As long as you are going to be here anyway you might as well come out to the game today. The season opener is at 3 PM.

JAKE

Sure, why not.

EXT. BLUEGRASS HIGH SCHOOL -- BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

The field has a grass infield, dugouts, press box, concession stand and a wooden fence with sponsor ads. The players, wearing full uniforms, are starting to loosen up.

In the background we SEE a brand new modern school. The parking lot is full of mostly late model cars.

Bulldog and his radio crew are standing near a dugout. He is preparing to interview a middle aged man, VERNON DAVIS, the coach of Bluegrass High School.

BULLDOG

Our preseason countdown continues. We're here today with Coach Vern Davis of Bluegrass High. Coach Davis how does it feel to have the number one team in the state?

COACH DAVIS

It doesn't matter much who's number one at the start of the season. It's who's number one at the end that counts. But, I've got to say that I really like this team. We have pitching, defense and hitting with experienced veterans at every position. If they commit to working hard for an entire season like they've done so far, they could be special.

BULLDOG

Coach, give us a brief rundown on some of your key players.

COACH DAVIS

Ken Perry, a studhorse.

As Coach Davis describes his players we begin a MONTAGE:

COACH DAVIS (V.O.)

He can throw three pitches anywhere he wants, any time he wants. Fastball hops.

KEN PERRY, a square jawed powerfully built right hander, pitching.

COACH DAVIS (V.O.)

Steve Patrick, grittiest second baseman you'll ever see. Nothing gets by him. High average hitter with a little pop.

STEVE PATRICK, a rangy athletic type, fielding and batting.

COACH DAVIS (V.O.)

Terry Ryan can fly in the outfield. He catches anything he gets his hands on. Big time long ball threat.

TERRY RYAN, a red haired, freckle faced Huckleberry Finn type, fielding and hitting.

COACH DAVIS (V.O.)
James Martin calls a game like a
pro. Nobody and I mean nobody,
steals on him. Can take you deep if
he gets his pitch.

JAMES MARTIN, dark haired and thin for a catcher, catching,
throwing and hitting.

END MONTAGE:

COACH DAVIS
They're good kids, and love playing
ball as much as I love coaching it.
My wife has a hard time believing
that the reason I'm getting home so
late is that they want to practice
so much. She thinks I'm having an
affair.

BULLDOG
Coach, you realize we're on live?

Davis, pauses, then laughs.

COACH DAVIS
Well, I do now.

BULLDOG
Thanks Coach and good luck this
year.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: DURRETT HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Bluegrass has just wrapped up their season opening victory,
an away game at arch rival Durrett High School.

Ken Perry gathers the team behind the dugout.

Ken
OK, players in the winning car get
first dibs on the showers and
training room all season. The rules
are the same as always - none. See
you at home.

The players run to their cars, and burn rubber out of the
parking lot.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS AND STREETS -- DAY

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Ken Perry in his 1956 Chevy convertible jumps out to an early lead over James Martin in his 58 Chevy and Steve Patrick in his 1959 Porsche. Next comes DOUG KENNEDY in his 1948 Ford then JIM HARBOLT in his 1957 Buick convertible. Ryan is in last place in his old gray 1952 Plymouth. Rush hour is just beginning as they finally reach the Watterson Expressway and they begin to weave their way in and out of traffic on the 12 mile journey.

Perry maintains his lead with all the others, except Ryan, following closely behind as they reach the Breckinridge exit - the start of the home stretch. Ryan is nowhere in sight. With the finish line only three blocks away suddenly Ryan appears at a stop sign on the last cross street before the school parking lot just as the last car, Harbolt's Buick, passes.

Instead of turning to follow, Ryan crosses the road and drives into the field behind the baseball park. He circles around the outfield fence, turns between it and the football stadium, hits the gas and arrives in a screeching halt inches from the school gymnasium.

EXT. BLUEGRASS HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM -- DAY

The car doors fly open and Ryan, and three teammates exit quickly. They are sitting nonchalantly on the steps when Perry turns the corner running at full speed thinking he has won only to be met by Ryan's grin.

RYAN

Ah yes, the thrill of victory, and
the agony of defeat.

INT. BLUEGRASS LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Several players are in various stages of undress. They are all clean cut "All American" boy types. One player is rubbing his right shoulder in pain.

PLAYER

Damn!

STEVE

What's wrong?

PLAYER

My arm is killing me.

Coach Davis walks by.

STEVE

Hey Coach, got a boy with a sore arm. Any of your "Snake Oil" left?

COACH DAVIS

Sure, I'll get it.

PLAYER

You're not putting anything to do with snakes on me.

STEVE

Don't worry; it's just what he calls his home made liniment. It's great stuff, really works.

Coach Davis returns with a Crème Soda bottle filled with a nasty looking brownish liquid.

COACH DAVIS

Here you go.

The Player applies the liniment liberally to his arm.

PLAYER

Hey, this stuff feels great. What's in it anyway?

STEVE

Don't ask, you're better off not knowing.

One of the other players accidentally knocks over the bottle spilling the contents onto the bench. Instantly the bench's varnish begins bubbling. It looks like acid has been poured on it. The Player yells, and runs for the showers.

PLAYER

Get this stuff off me right now!

Several of the other players laugh.

Ryan and Martin approach BUTCH, one of the freshman players.

RYAN

Hey Butch, can you help us out tonight?

BUTCH

Sure, what do you guys need?

RYAN

Keep this to yourself, but Martin and I occasionally slip out to Oldham County to see a pair of twin sisters we met last season. Their parents are out of town, and they want us to come out tonight, but we need to bring another guy for their girlfriend. Want to join us, if she is half as wild as they are, you might get lucky?

BUTCH

Count me in.

RYAN

Hey thanks, we'll pick you up at 8.

INT. RYAN'S 1952 GREY 4 DOOR PLYMOUTH -- NIGHT

Ryan stops the car off to the side of the road. Butch and Martin are seated beside him. A house is visible about a quarter mile away.

RYAN

We'll park here. If her parents should come home early they won't see us.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Ryan, James and Butch walk up a gravel driveway towards a house on a slight hill. There is a light on in the house, but the front porch is dark.

When they get about 15 yards from the house a SHOTGUN opens fire.

VOICE O.C.

I'm going to make you sons of bitches sorry you ever messed with my daughters.

More shots. Ryan screams, falls.

RYAN

I'm hit! They got me! I'm gonna die!

JAMES

Run Butch. Run for your life!

BUTCH
We can't leave him. We've got to help.

JAMES
Ryan's done for. Follow me.
Run!

James and Butch run through a field and woods. Finally, they break into a clearing. They are met with the headlights of several cars, and their teammates.

STEVE
This would be a gotcha on you
Butch. Welcome to the team rookie.

EXT. ROCK CREEK BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Jake finishes hitting pre game infield. Zeke fills out the lineup card, and hands it to the umpire.

ZEKE
Hey Jake, why don't you sit here
with me on the bench.

JAKE
You sure it's all right?

ZEKE
No problem. High school baseball is
pretty informal.

Jake joins Zeke on the bench. He notices that the uniforms are torn and patched, and that there are only a few bats and the catching gear is ancient.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE OF

Highlights of Rock Creek winning their first three games
against Cave City, Flat Gap and Danville.

Dalton striking out hitter after hitter...

C.A. hitting home runs...

Shadow making good catches in Center field...

The infield turning 3rd to 2nd to 1st double plays...

Shadow stealing bases.. Rock Creek runners crossing home
plate...

Jake giving advice to both Zeke and the players.

While Bluegrass on the other end of the state also keeps wining...

Brief action clips and newspaper headlines; "Perry fans 14, Ryan, Patrick homer as Bluegrass beats Eastern".

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCK CREEK -- DAY

IN A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS WE SEE

A week has gone by and Jake has settled into a daily routine: Running in the morning... walking into town to have lunch at Hattie's... saying hi to various TOWNSPEOPLE... then walking through town and past Edgar's garage on his way to the baseball field.

EXT. EDGAR'S GARAGE -- DAY

JAKE

Hey Edgar.

EDGAR

Hey Jake. Going to the game?

JAKE

Thought I would. Any news on my car?

EDGAR

Not a word. I'll check again tomorrow.

EXT. ROCK CREEK BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Jake is sitting on his now customary place on the bench beside Zeke.

The opponent is Hazard, a major rival. The score is nothing to nothing in the third inning. Dalton walks two batters on very close pitches.

JAKE

Hey ump, punch a hole in that mask; you're missing a good game.

The UMPIRE looks at Jake, but says nothing.

DISSOLVE TO:

It's the 5th inning, with Dalton on second, C.A. hits a long fly down the left field line. It's a sure home run, but the umpire calls it a foul ball.

JAKE
Terrible call blue. Where did you
get your umpires license, the
school for the blind?

The umpire looks at Jake, but says nothing. C.A. singles and Rock Creek takes a 1-0 lead.

DISSOLVE TO:

The 6th inning and Shadow is on third with one out. Kembry hits a fly ball to left. Shadow tags and heads for home. He clearly beats the throw, but is called out. Jake explodes off the bench and charges the umpire.

He is standing jaw to jaw yelling.

JAKE
What do you mean out, he was half
way back to the dugout before the
ball got there. If you would have
gotten your lazy ass into position
you wouldn't have missed it,
busher.

UMPIRE
I've had just about enough out of
you. Just who the hell are you
anyway? Only coaches are allowed
out on the field.

Zeke is sitting on the bench enjoying Jake's actions.

ZEKE
He's my new assistant, names
Jake. Brand new to coaching.

UMPIRE
Well, Mr. "Brand New Jake", let me
be the first to throw you out of a
game.

Takes off his mask, makes a hand gesture and points.

UMPIRE

You're out of here. Now get off the field.

Jake kicks dirt on home plate, then on the umpire, turns and walks off muttering to himself.

UMPIRE

Keep going, keep going, across the road will be just fine.

Jake leaves the field, and stands across the road to watch the rest of the game.

DISSOLVE TO:

Top of the last inning. Rock Creek still leads 1-0. Hazard's leadoff hitter singles. The next batter is safe when C.A. can't handle a sure double play ball. The next batter hits a fly ball to Shadow in centerfield. The runners tag. Instead of throwing to third on one bounce, Shadow's throw sails over C.A.'s head. Dalton fails to back up third, and both runners score on the overthrow.

Hazard holds Rock Creek in the bottom half, and wins the game 2-1.

EXT. ROCK CREEK BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Jake is furious. He corners Shadow and Dalton.

JAKE

Shadow, how often have you been told to throw the damn ball on one bounce?

SHADOW

Just about every day Coach.

JAKE

Dalton, how often have you been told to back up third?

DENNY

Just about every day Coach.

JAKE

Well words obviously don't make much of an impression, so maybe a little running will help you remember from now on. Get your asses moving, and don't stop until I say so.

Dalton and Shadow head for the outfield and start running laps.

DENNY

I'd say that man has a temper, but he's right. Next time, throw the damn ball on one hop.

SHADOW

Oh, yeah. Understood the man loud and clear. Next time get your ass off the mound and back up third.

DENNY

I hear you.

Jake watches them run for a moment then cups his hand to his mouth and yells.

JAKE

Less talk, more movement you two. Get your butts in motion.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD -- DAY

Jake is walking back to the boarding house. Zeke pulls up alongside.

ZEKE

Get in, you need to unwind a bit. You're coming with me.

Jake gets in and they drive off.

INT. ZEKE'S TRUCK -- DAY

JAKE

Where we headed?

ZEKE

Over to see a friend of mine.

They drive down a series of ever smaller gravel and dirt roads until they see a cabin ahead.

Zeke stops the truck just as a large African American man steps from behind a tree holding a double barreled shotgun. His name is SAM.

SAM

Is that you Zeke?

ZEKE

Yeah. You can put that cannon away.

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

Zeke and Jake get out of the truck and walk toward Sam.

ZEKE

This here is Jake DeMoss. Sam meet Jake. Jake meet Sam. Jake, Sam is Shadow's father. Sam, Jake has had a bad couple of weeks and is in serious need of something to brighten his outlook on life.

SAM

Pleased to meetcha Jake. I've heard about you. Come on up to the house, I've got just the thing.

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- DAY

Jake and Zeke are seated on Sam's porch. Sam comes out of the house with three glasses of clear white liquid.

SAM

Here you go Jake, Zeke.

ZEKE

Thanks.

JAKE

Thanks, Sam.

Zeke takes a sip, sighs contentedly.

Jake takes a small sip and is pleasantly surprised.

JAKE

Is this moonshine? I've heard about it, but never had any before. Man, that's smooth.

Jake takes a bigger drink, and starts to relax.

ZEKE

Yes sir it is. The recipe has been in Sam's family for generations.

Jake takes another drink.

ZEKE

Careful now pardner, that's made
for sipping, not gulping.

JAKE

Sam, did Shadow tell you I ran his
ass off after the game today?

SAM

No, he just told me they lost, left
that part out. What did he do?

JAKE

Airmailed one about 10 feet over
third base. Dalton didn't back up,
and 2 runs scored. We lost 2-1.

SAM

He knows better than that.
Dalton run too?

Sam looks at Jake, measuring him. Jake is unaware Sam is
staring at him. He finishes his glass.

JAKE

Step for step. Say, could I have a
little more?

SAM

Sure thing. Did he give you any
back talk?

JAKE

Not a word. Good kid. Got a hell of
an arm.

Jake passes Sam's test. Sam gets up, goes into the house, and
returns with a jug. He sets it down next to Jake and Zeke,
and takes a seat.

SAM

Help yourself. Zeke tells me you
played for the Yankees, mind if I
ask you something?

JAKE

Sure, go ahead.

SAM

What's it like, the Major
Leagues?

Jake refills his glass, and takes another drink.

JAKE

I played 8 years in the minors before I finally got called up to the big club. When I walked onto the field at Yankee Stadium for the first time I kept thinking if somebody pinches me and I wake up, I'll kill 'em. I remember running my laps in the outfield, and all I could think of was Ruth played right there, DiMaggio played right there. Then I saw the monuments in centerfield. It was really special. Everywhere you looked there was baseball history.

Jake pauses, reflecting.

JAKE

You can't believe how perfect everything is. The grass is emerald green, and there is not even so much as a pebble in the infield dirt. The uniforms are tailored and pressed. You take batting practice with brand new balls. You travel first class, no buses. You order room service. Somebody picks up your bags for you. But, the most unforgettable thing is when you're on that mound and somebody makes a great play. You hear the roar of 60,000 fans. It makes the whole place shake. Nothing like it anywhere.

Jake pauses and takes a sip.

JAKE

You play ball?

SAM

2 years in the Negro Leagues, centerfielder, Kansas City Monarchs. Barnstormed one winter with Satchel Paige.

JAKE

No shit? Was he as good as people say?

SAM

Well, he used to guarantee to strike out the first 9 batters or we didn't get paid. Don't remember missing a meal.

Jake takes another drink, and refills his glass.

JAKE

Zeke, where did you two hook up?

ZEKE

United States Army. WWII and Korea, the double dip. We were in the same outfit. Dalton's dad too. Sam's recipe kept our company in high spirits, so to speak. When we mustered out I talked him into coming back here with me, and we went into business.

(beat)

Jake, you know I'm a Cardinals fan, but what's it like to pitch to Mantle?

JAKE

I only faced him in inter-squad games, but I'm not crazy so I always pitched him inside to make sure he pulled everything. If he hit one back up the middle he could kill you. Never saw a man with that much power. I was shagging flies in the outfield one day with one of my buddies who happened to be a centerfielder. Mantle hits one into the trees right-handed, then turns around and hits one into the trees left-handed. My buddy turns to me and says, "Damn, looks like I'll be going home soon". Turns out he was right; he got released the next day.

They all laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

An hour later night has fallen. Zeke, Sam and Jake are laughing like old friends. They have just about finished the jug. Jake especially is feeling no pain.

JAKE

There was this girl in the stands
flashing her boobs so the guys in
the dugout could see her and Yogi --
(beat)

Woops, I've gotta take a leak.

SAM

It's right out back.

Jake stands, grins, sits back down and goes to sleep.

SAM

Think we should have told him how
powerful this stuff is?

ZEKE

Nah, he needed this. Help me get
him in the truck, and I'll take him
back.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

Sheila hears Jake coming down the stairs, and starts making a
hangover drink for him. Jake enters looking like something
the cat drug in. An old cane fishing pole leans against the
wall in the corner. A net is next to it.

SHEILA

And how are we feeling this
morning?

JAKE

Like I'd have to get better to die.
I thought I could handle my liquor,
but man was I ever wrong.

Sheila hands him the glass.

SHEILA

Here, this will make you feel
better.

Jake takes a long drink.

JAKE

This is good, what is it?

SHEILA

I'll never tell. Sam has his family
recipe, I've got mine.

JAKE
Whose fishing gear?

SHEILA
It's mine. Tonight's catfish night
if I can ever get down to the river
and catch some. You like to fish?

JAKE
Never been.

SHEILA
I've got another pole. Come on,
I'll teach you.

EXT. OLD PIER ON THE RIVER -- DAY

Jake and Sheila are sitting on the edge of an old pier. They
are barefoot... feet dangling in the water.

SHEILA
Now just take a minnow and put it
on the hook.

JAKE
Ugh, yuck.

SHEILA
Oh, quit being such a baby.
Here let me do it for you.

Sheila baits Jake's hook.

JAKE
OK, now what?

SHEILA
Just throw your line over there.
It's a good spot. Keep an eye on
the cork, think good thoughts and
wait.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

JAKE
Please let me pay for whatever
it'll cost to get your hair fixed
up, okay?

SHEILA
It'll grow back. Who knows I may
get used to short hair, it's
a lot less trouble.

Sheila catches a fish.

They sit in silence for a beat or two.

JAKE

You lived here all your life?

SHEILA

Born right here in one of those row houses.

JAKE

You seem to really know how to handle yourself. Just a manner about you.

SHEILA

Pop wanted boys, so he taught Barbara and me how to hunt and fish and all the other "guy" stuff. Barbara could beat most of the boys at sports up till a couple of years ago, and whatever you do, don't play pool with her.

JAKE

I think you left out boxing.

SHEILA

(turns to Jake and laughs.)

I'm really sorry about that.

JAKE

I have a feeling that this story will become legend around here. The night Sheila KO'ed the "Damn Yankee".

They both laugh.

SHEILA

What's New York like?

Jake is thoughtful for a moment.

JAKE

The first thing you notice is that everybody is in a hurry, like they want to get things done yesterday. And, it's loud, real loud. You hear every language you can imagine.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

When you walk down the street you see people of every shape, size and color from every country in the world. It has anything you want, from top flight entertainment to any known vice, 24 hours a day.

(long beat)

There's nothing like it. It's a great place to play ball if you're having a good year, but they can turn on you pretty quick. If things go bad, New York fans can get real ugly.

Shelia studies Jake for a moment. Feels his pain.

JAKE

Ever travel much?

SHEILA

You mean like other states, countries?

Jake nods. Sheila catches another fish.

SHEILA

Lord 'a mercy, no! Some girlfriends and I snuck out and went to Louisville once when the boy's basketball team made the Sweet Sixteen. We got lost, didn't get back until late Sunday. Pop almost skinned me alive for that.

They pass some time in silence. Sheila catches another fish.

JAKE

What do the kids do around here?

SHEILA

Well, it's not like New York. The church or school has a dance every month or so. The movie theater has two different shows a week, Sunday through Wednesday, and Thursday through Saturday. Nobody is supposed to know that Jimmy's has a poker game in back every Saturday night, but everybody does. They have parties at the lake. That's about it.

SHEILA

What do you do besides play baseball?

JAKE

Baseball is all I've ever done. I signed at 17. All I could think of when they released me was that I was going to have to get a real job. I've never had a real job.

(beat)

You ever marry?

Sheila's smile fades, and she becomes somber. She looks down at the water.

SHEILA

Lost him a couple of years back. He was a miner, like my father, my brothers, like a lot of other fine men in this part of the country. My father died when his lungs turned as black as the coal he mined. He used to brag "I'll be a coal miner until the day I die". Well, he was till he did.

(beat)

We buried him on a Thursday. My husband and two brothers were trapped in a mine explosion on Friday. They did everything they could... got to 'em in three days.

(matter of fact)

But they ran out of air after two.

JAKE

I'm sorry.

SHEILA

No need. I did enough feeling sorry for myself. Then one day it dawned on me, nobody makes you go into those mines.

JAKE

Is that why you wouldn't dance with that fellow Hal Saturday night?

SHEILA

I won't have anything to do with anyone that works for The Company, and I won't let Barbara either.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

After my husband died I wanted to get out of here, but I had to raise her.

(beat)

There are 39 kids in the senior class. Most all of the girls will get married and pregnant right after high school. The boys will either work in the mines or farm. Maybe two or three will join the military. One or two will go to college.

(sighs)

I don't know why I'm telling you this, and don't you dare say a word, but I'm determined that Barbara is going to have better options. She's really smart, and wants to be a teacher. I've saved enough to get her through her first year of college. It's going to be her graduation present.

Sheila lifts her head and looks at Jake.

SHEILIA

You ever marry?

JAKE

No. I knew some ballplayers that had good marriages, but I know me. With all the time on the road, and the "opportunities" available, I didn't like the odds.

Jake gets a bite.

JAKE

I got one, I got one. I think it's a big one too. What do I do? What do I do?

SHEILA

Take it easy, don't fight it. Just bring it in real slow.

Jake struggles, and finally lands an 18" long tree branch. Sheila nudges him with her elbow and laughs.

SHEILA

Want me to clean it for you? Do you want it pan fried or broiled?

EXT. ROCK CREEK BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

It's the first practice after their loss. The players are quiet as they warm up, and seem nervous about what to expect from Jake after his show of temper and ejection.

As Jake walks onto the field and heads toward Zeke C.A. notices a small garter snake at the edge of the outfield grass. Sensing an opportunity to break the tension he catches it, and, holding it out of sight behind his back, heads toward Jake.

C.A.
Hey Jake, got a second?

Jake turns toward C.A.

JAKE
Sure, what's up?

C.A. pulls the snake from behind his back and shows it to Jake.

C.A.
I just found this cute little snake
over behind third base, ever see
one like it in New York?

Jake freezes, turns pale with a look of sheer terror on his face, and takes a step back.

JAKE
Get that thing away from me right
now.

C.A.
It's harmless, want to hold it?

C.A. Holds the snake right in front of Jake's face. Jake starts backing up. C.A. follows him.

JAKE
They'll all kill you; some just
take longer. Now get that thing
away from me or I swear I'm
gonna...

Jake starts to back up faster. C.A. stays with him step for step, waving the snake in his face.

C.A.
Don't be scared, just give it a
try.

Jake turns, starts to run with C.A. in close pursuit behind him. Zeke and the players break up laughing. After a moment Jake joins in, and the tension is broken.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN ROCK CREEK -- DAY

Two weeks have passed.

Having had lunch, Jake walks out of Hattie's and stops by Edgar's garage on his way to today's game.

EXT. EDGAR'S GARAGE -- DAY

JAKE

Hey Edgar. Kids over the measles yet?

EDGAR

Not yet, but thanks for asking.
Hey, tell Sheila that my wife will stop by to see her tonight.

(beat)

Good luck today.

JAKE

Will do. Thanks, these guys are supposed to be pretty good.

(beat)

Any news on my car?

EDGAR

Not a word, I'll check again tomorrow.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Sheila is in the stands, cheering them on as Rock Creek begins a winning streak... Sheila and Jake walk back together to the boarding house... Jake going to the movies with Sheila... Jake getting his hair cut at Elmo's... and playing poker at Jimmy's.

EXT. DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Typical drive-in restaurant of the late 50's early 60's. James Martin drives up, parks.

INT. DRIVE IN RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Steve, Ryan and Ken look up as James enters. They wave him over to their booth.

KEN

How was the trip?

JAMES

Great, let's order and I'll tell you all about it. Miss anything at practice today?

KEN

It's a good thing you're sitting down. I'll let Steve tell you about it, he heard it firsthand.

STEVE

You want the long version, or just the highlights?

JAMES

Sounds serious, what happened?

STEVE

I was in the training room getting taped, and Rodman walks in looking like somebody just shot his dog. He goes into Coach's office, and the next thing I hear is Coach yelling "You're gonna do what?"

(beat)

Turns out our boy has knocked up Jeanie. They both dropped out of school today, headed to Tennessee and are married by now.. Her father is buying them a house, and he starts work at his old man's foundry next week.

JAMES

Holy shit. I thought they broke up?

RYAN

They did, but obviously not in time. Stupid jackass. Everybody over the age of 10 knows that Trojans are 3 for a quarter in the bathroom at DeHart's Texaco.

JAMES

Man, I feel for him. He wanted to go to Med school so bad.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

(beat)

Did they consider any other options?

STEVE

Not a chance. Her old man is a "Hard Shelled" Baptist minister. Big time Bible thumper. It wouldn't make any difference if they hated each other; they're getting married and having that kid.

JAMES

Well, that pretty much sucks.

RYAN

Let this be a lesson boys, never think with the little head.

JAMES

Who took his position?

STEVE

Coach put Butch out there and told him it's his to lose. He's looked good in practice all year, now we'll find out if he can play when the pressure is on.

(beat)

Enough depressing talk; tell us about your recruiting trip to Kentucky.

JAMES

It was great. I got to meet all the players, and catch batting practice. After the game they took me out to dinner.

James cracks a big grin.

JAMES

That's when they offered me the scholarship.

The WAITRESS arrives.

WAITRESS

Y'all ready to order?

RYAN

I'll have a chili cheeseburger with onions on the side, and a Coke.

STEVE

(looks at Ryan)

I think I'll start calling you
blowtorch breath. Waffle for me.
And, a Coke.

KEN

Number 3, eggs over easy. Coke.

JAMES

Pancakes and milk. Side of grits.

The waitress takes their menus and walks away.

STEVE

So, did you sign?

JAMES

I've got the papers. I told
Coach I had to talk it over with
Mom, but I gave him a commitment so
I'm going to be a Kentucky Wildcat
next year.

All three congratulate James.

KEN

Well, we're coming down to the end
boys. The Derby is next weekend,
the Prom the following week, then
the State Tournament and
graduation.

(beat)

What are you guys doing for
Derby? We're going to Melinda's
party. She's going to have it at
out at their farm with a live band.

JAMES

Robin and I are going to Melinda's
too. Wouldn't miss it for anything.
I heard she is expecting more than
300 to show up.

RYAN

Patti will be back, and, in a weak
moment, I promised that I would
take her to the party out at the
Pendennis Club. I'd rather be
tortured, but I can't figure any
way to get out of it. What about
you Steve, going to the Derby?

STEVE

Yeah, Sherri's dad has a box. After the races we're supposed to be going to some big distillery party. She said there's going to be a bunch of movie stars there.

(beat)

I'll bet she has looked at 50 dresses, and twice that many hats.

They finish their meals.

JAMES

I don't know about the rest of you guys, but I'm calling it a night. It's been a long day and I'm pooped. See you Monday.

STEVE

Me too, big week next week.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EDGAR'S GARAGE -- DAY

Jake walks to Edgar's on his way to the ball field.

JAKE

Hey Edgar. Sheila says she'll be happy to baby sit for you guys tonight. Just bring the kids over whenever you want.

EDGAR

That's great, tell her thanks. Boy, I can't believe today is the last game. Seems like this season sure went by in a real hurry didn't it? The boys have done right good.

Jake nods his head, and chuckles to himself.

JAKE

Yep, right, blink of an eye. They have played pretty good. 14 and 1, but we haven't faced any of the big schools yet. Things will start getting a lot tougher from now on.

EDGAR

You think we have any chance
against the big city schools when
the tournament starts?

JAKE

That's the beauty of baseball; you
don't need a lot of substitutes.
All it takes is nine guys that can
play, and we got nine guys that can
play.

EDGAR

You playing poker Saturday night?

JAKE

I'll be there.

Jake starts to walk away, then turns.

JAKE

Be sure to bring some of my money
with you.

(beat)

Any news on my car?

EDGAR

Not a word, I'll check again
tomorrow. See you Saturday.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCK CREEK BASEBALL BALL FIELD -- DAY

Jake arrives at the ballpark for the final regular season
game, and notices that C.A. and Shadow are not there. At
the last instant they come running onto the field.

JAKE

About time you two showed up.
Where the hell have you been?

C.A.

Sorry Coach...

C.A. glances at Shadow, who nods.

C.A.

Well, you see... We, ah, had to
finish some chores.

Over C.A.'s explanation, we SEE a SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

Shadow and C.A. are in an old Army truck... Zeke and Sam's mobile still is in the back, the boy's are moving the still to avoid detection... The truck wends its way across the back roads... They are spotted by GOVERNMENT AGENTS (REVENUERS) who take off after them.... After a hair-raising chase Shadow and C.A. escape arrest as the Revenuers car ends up in a creek.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLDOG'S OFFICE -- DAY

Bulldog's office is being set up for his weekly radio show. The walls are covered with baseball photos, and papers are scattered everywhere. Bulldog practices his spiel out loud.

BULLDOG

Monday 400 teams start their pursuit of the 38th Kentucky State High School Baseball Championship. It's been another great season, and 4 teams look like they may have what it takes to win it all.

(beat)

While Newport, Lexington and Owensboro have all had great years, our pick is still Bluegrass. We had them number 1 in preseason, and every week during the season. They are 18- 0 and their top pitcher, Ken Perry, has been spectacular. He's 11-0, and his .045 ERA is tops in the state.

As Bulldog continues we SEE a MONTAGE of:

Bluegrass players in action. Newspaper headlines "Perry wins 11th straight", "Martin, Ryan homer in Bluegrass win". "Patrick hits for the cycle".

END MONTAGE

BULLDOG

Our dark horse pick is little Rock Creek High. They are the smallest school in the state, but have a fine young pitcher in Denny Dalton who sports a 15-1 record. They're coached by Zeke Rawlings, with an able assist from former New York Yankee Jake DeMoss.

(beat)

(MORE)

BULLDOG (CONT'D)

Today's big news is that for the time in history the championship game will be broadcast live from the University of Kentucky's Happy Chandler Field by WJAS. Yours truly will be doing the play-byplay.

INT. KENNECUTT'S OFFICE, KENNECUTT COAL CO -- NIGHT

J. WILKENS ON KENNECUTT, a heavy older man, is sitting behind a large desk. Hal is sitting in a chair in front of him.

KENNECUTT

I'm getting tired of this union bullshit. This guy Dalton is getting to be too big for his britches. He's talking about striking again. We need to get this situation under control right now.

HAL

What do you want done about it?

KENNECUTT

Use your own judgment. Just see that it stops, and nothing can be traced back to me.

HAL

Consider it done Boss.

INT. JIMMY'S POOL ROOM -- DAY

Wooden floor, six tables in three rows of two, cue racks and spectator benches line the walls. There is a small grill next to the front counter where Jimmy sits reading the Daily Racing Form. It's early Saturday afternoon, and Denny arrives walking with a bounce in his step.

DENNY

Afternoon Mr. James, I'll have one of your finest burgers and a Nehi. Make it to go please.

(beat)

Who do you like in the Derby?

JIMMY

One Jimmy burger coming right up.

(beat)

Carry Back's a cinch.

(beat)

(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

The boys are in back, big news today.

He puts a hamburger patty on the grill, reaches into a cooler grabs a bottle, pops the cap and hands it to Denny.

Denny takes a sip and walks to the last two tables where C.A. and Shadow are playing Emmett and Kembry in a game of 8-ball. Jim Bob and Elwood are waiting their turn. As Kembry lines up a shot, C.A. begins a story.

C.A.

This good old boy has been trying to get his girlfriend to have sex with him for months. When her parents go out of town for the weekend he finally manages to get her in bed, but she still won't go all the way.

(beat)

In desperation he begs her to just let him put the tip in. She finally agrees, but makes him promise that he won't go any further. His good intentions last all of about 3 seconds before he goes all in. He's working away, and she is starting to enjoy herself. She whispers in his ear "Oh honey, I'll free you from your promise, don't hold back". Without missing a stroke he replies "Nope, a deal's a deal".

Everybody laughs and Emmett shoots Coke out of his nose.

EMMETT

Dammit C.A. I'm trying to make a shot here.

Denny joins the group.

C.A.

Hey Denny, you missed the big news. Coach was just here and we drew Corbin again in the District. 3 PM Monday.

(beat)

And, our corner outfielders, the Parker boys, just got a letter from their brother in Detroit City. He's got them set with the union, and said they won't have any trouble getting on at Ford. They're leaving the day after school is out.

DENNY

They always said they wanted to build Ford trucks, but I never thought they would actually go through with it. Good for them.

EMMETT

I hadn't really given it much thought until now, but after going to school and playing ball with you clowns since the first grade, when school is out in a couple of weeks our lives are really going to change.

(beat)

Have you guys given much thought to what you're going to do now? Kembry and I are joining the union. We'll be digging coal right next to your dad Denny.

(beat)

What are you and Jim Bob going to do Elwood?

ELWOOD

Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to dig coal I go.

JIM BOB

(points to Elwood)

I'm with stupid.

EMMETT

How about you C.A.?

C.A. looks at Shadow, nods.

C.A.

You tell 'em, it was your idea.

Shadow HUMS a few bars of Anchors Away.

SHADOW

It is my great pleasure to inform you that Mr. C.A. Love and I are the newest members of the U.S. Navy.

Everybody seems stunned.

DENNY

I'll be damned. I wouldn't have guessed this in a million years. Why, and why the Navy?

SHADOW

When I told Pop I wanted to join the service like he did he said to forget the Marines because you have to be crazy, and he didn't raise me to be crazy. He said to avoid the Air Force because all their bases are in the middle of nowhere, and the Army because K-rations suck, your feet hurt all the time, and there's too much mud. In the Navy you see the world, clean sheets every night and the chow is great. No contest.

DENNY

C.A. you sure? What about Penny?

C.A.

Real sure. Seems like Shadow and I have recently come to the attention of some government folks over the family beverage business. Time to make ourselves scarce for a while.

(beat)

Penny will do just fine. Her old man's loaded and she is going to UK in the fall. We both know it'll be over between us 30 minutes after she hits campus.

(beat)

Time to move on.

DENNY

When do you leave?

C.A.

June 15, one week after you pitch us to the state championship in Lexington.

DENNY

Let's not get ahead of ourselves, we've got to beat Corbin first.

(beat)

Everything set for the party at the lake tonight?

C.A.

Think so. Shadow has the refreshments under control, and Penny is taking a load of girls in her Dad's Buick. I think we've got everybody else covered.

SHADOW

It seems there was an accident
loading the truck for deliveries
yesterday, and two quarts of
Shine were lost.

C.A.

(laughing)

Let's have a brief moment of
silence for this terrible, terrible
tragedy.

DENNY

I'll meet you all there. Barbara is
coming over for dinner so we might
run a little late, but if anybody
needs a ride we have room.

EMMETT

Is your Mom giving you the "When
are you getting married, I want
some grand kids" speech?

DENNY

Nah, she's been pretty cool, but on
the other hand Pop is driving me
crazy.

In a loud voice with shaking fists and finger pointing
gestures he imitates his father.

DENNY

If I hear one more word about
baseball I'm throwing you and all
your stuff out in the street and
you can find another place to live.
You're gonna be a coal miner and
that's it. End of discussion blah,
blah, blah, blah endlessly.

C.A.

What are you going to do?

DENNY

I don't know, but nobody or nothing
is making me go down in one of
those mines.

JIMMY VOICE O.C.

Denny, burgers ready.

DENNY

Got to run guys. See you tonight,
and we can talk about the Corbin
game.

As Denny leaves, C.A. sinks the 8 ball winning the game.

C.A.

Pay up suckers. Rack!

EXT. DALTON'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Hal sneaks through some trees and bushes next to the house,
then crawls under Dalton's pickup truck. Mere seconds after
he finishes cutting the brake line and makes his getaway
Denny and Barbara walk out the front door.

MRS. DALTON VOICE O.C.

Don't stay out too late dear, and
drive carefully.

MR. DALTON VOICE O.C.

No racing, hear me boy?

Denny and Barbara get in the car. Denny starts driving down a
steep and narrow winding road.

INT. DALTON'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

BARBARA

Are you nervous about the District
Tournament game Monday?

DENNY

Yeah, but the good kind. I think
we're ready to... Oh oh, hang on!

Denny starts to brake as they approach the first of a
series of sharp curves with steep drop off's... The pedal
goes all the way to the floor.

EXT/INT. DALTON'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

Denny tries pumping the pedal, but nothing happens. Thinking
quickly he downshifts into second, then first gear, and pulls
the handle for the emergency brake.

The truck slows initially and they make it past the first
curve and head into a tunnel in the rock.

With their speed increasing again Denny tries to stop by slamming the truck into the sides of the tunnel walls. Still moving they exit the tunnel. Denny sees a huge oak tree in a turnout just before a cliff...

He aims for it and hits it head on.

At the last instant he throws his body in front of Barbara to protect her.

EXT. DALTON'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

The truck stops with one wheel hanging in space.

INT. SMALL MINING HOSPITAL -- CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

A DOCTOR and STATE TROOPER are standing outside Denny's room at the small mining company hospital. Mr. and Mrs. Dalton, Zeke, Sheila and Jake arrive.

DOCTOR
Which one of you is Mr. Dalton?

Mr. Dalton nods his head.

DOCTOR
Your boy has a concussion and some bad bruises. We're going to X-ray him first thing tomorrow to make sure he doesn't have a skull fracture. I think he will be all right, but we are going to keep him a few days. We need to run some more tests to rule out internal injuries.

MRS. DALTON
But you're sure he'll be all right?

DOCTOR
With any luck he should be 100%.

The Doctor turns toward Sheila.

DOCTOR
You must be Sheila. Barbara is fine, just a couple of bumps and bruises. You can take her home.

TROOPER
Mr. Dalton I've just finished the accident report.
(MORE)

TROOPER (CONT'D)

Your truck was totaled. We towed it to the junk yard. These kids are lucky to be alive. Your boys quick thinking to throw himself in front of Barbara probably saved her life.

Mr. Dalton appears to be angry.

MR. DALTON

How fast was he going?

TROOPER

We're not sure. There aren't any skid marks.

MR. DALTON

Doc, can I go in?

DOCTOR

Yes, but just for a few minutes. We gave him some medication, and he needs to get some rest.

Mr. Dalton enters Denny's room. Mrs. Dalton follows.

Sheila leaves to go get Barbara. Jake and Zeke wait.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

DENNY

Hi Mom, Pop.

MR. DALTON

How fast were you going?

DENNY

I wasn't speeding Pop, honest. I swear.

MR. DALTON

Well, then what the hell happened?

DENNY

We were headed down to the lake and when I tried to slow down for Lookout Curve the brakes didn't work. The next thing I remember is waking up here.

MR. DALTON

You hit the brakes?

DENNY

Yeah, the petal just went all the way to the floor. When can I get out of here, we've got a big game Monday?

MR. DALTON

Forget about baseball. You're not going anywhere for a few days.

DENNY

But Pop, we've worked so hard, and the guys are counting on me.

MR. DALTON

They're just going to have to get along without you.

DENNY

But Pop.

Mr. Dalton takes Mrs. Dalton by the arm and leaves the room. He is now very angry.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Jake and Zeke are standing in the corridor.

MR. DALTON

Zeke, got a second?

ZEKE

Sure.

They move down the hall so Jake can't hear.

MR. DALTON

Zeke, it was the God dammed Company. I just had those brakes fixed. They were after me and got my kid. I'm going to get those bastards.

ZEKE

Don't do anything crazy Howard. Let me give you and the Mrs. a ride home. We can talk about it tomorrow.

They walk back toward Jake.

JAKE

Mr. Dalton, I'm sorry about Denny. I know you don't think much of baseball, and that it's none of my business, but your son has a gift. He has a right arm that could give him a real chance in life.

Mr. Dalton brushes Jake aside.

MR. DALTON

You're right. It's none of your business.

ZEKE

Jake, why don't you ride back with Sheila and Barbara. I'll give the Dalton's a ride home.

INT. HAL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The room is dark. Hal is asleep. Another man is standing beside the bed holding an ivory handled, chrome plated .45. His face is not visible.

He KICKS the bed.

MAN WITH GUN

Time to wake up.

HAL

What the hell are you doing here?

MAN WITH GUN

Your plan didn't work genius, you got his kid.

(beat)

Come on, we're going for a little walk.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

The 26th District Tournament begins. Jake and Zeke call the team together in front of their bench.

ZEKE

You all know by now that Denny was in a car wreck Saturday. He won't be here today, but we still have a game to play. Who wants to pitch?

C.A. Looks around, then slowly raises his hand.

C.A.
I pitched a game last year when
Denny was sick.

ZEKE
How did you do?

C.A.
(smiling proudly)
We won.

ZEKE
Score?

C.A.
13 to 11.

ZEKE
And?

C.A.
Only gave up 5 hits.

ZEKE
And?

C.A.
Struck out 8.

Jake takes over the questioning.

JAKE
And?

C. A. Starts to look a bit sheepish.

C.A.
Walked 12.

JAKE
And?

C.A.
Hit 5.

JAKE
OK, let's see what you've got.

C.A. takes the ball and starts to warm up. His delivery is
very flawed. He is wild, but throws hard.

JAKE
We don't have much time, so we're
going to keep this simple.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

I want you to try something different, a no windup delivery like Don Larsen used in the 1956 World Series. Don't think, just take the ball, look at the mitt and throw.

(beat)

Don't worry if you're a little wild at first it'll keep hitters on their toes, and a nervous hitter is already half way back to the dugout.

EXT. ROCK CREEK BENCH -- DAY

Zeke talks to the team just before they take the field.

ZEKE

It's a tough break that Denny can't be here today, but you guys have worked hard all year to get ready for this. You can either quit, or bust your ass and win this game. It's all up to you.

The players yell, and run out onto the field.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

C.A. takes the mound to start the game. He walks the first three hitters on the minimum 12 pitches.

EXT. ROCK CREEK BENCH -- DAY

Jake and Zeke are talking to each other.

ZEKE

Jake, he's so tight you couldn't drive a pin up his ass with a mallet. Go out and talk to him. You know what to say.

Jake stands, and calls out to the home plate umpire.

JAKE

Time out.

Jake goes out to the mound. C.A. is obviously rattled.

EXT. PITCHERS MOUND -- DAY

JAKE

Calm down, calm down, take a deep breath. Did I ever tell you about my first time pitching in Yankee Stadium?

C.A. gives him a puzzled look.

JAKE

I was called up in September. We had already clinched the Pennant and were leading Kansas City 16 to 2. Casey took out all the regulars, and called me out of the bullpen to start the 7th.

(beat)

I walked the first 4 batters I faced, then hit the fifth one in the head. By then I wasn't throwing hard enough to break a window, and it didn't even knock him down. He just shook his head, laughed at me, and trotted down to first base.

(beat)

When I looked over into our dugout all the players were rolling on the floor laughing. They covered it up, but Mantle pulled a muscle and missed two games.

C.A. smiles, and visibly starts to relax.

JAKE

You can do this C.A. Don't think about anything but hitting Kembry's mitt. Just take a deep breath, focus on your target and throw. Everybody's behind you. Jake heads back to the bench.

Jake hustles back to the bench.

C.A. throws strike one, and breathes a big sigh of relief.

Two more strikes, and there's one out. The next batter hits a comebacker to the mound, and C.A. starts a pitcher to home to first double play. Inning over no runs.

DISSOLVE TO:

In the bottom of the next inning the first 9 Rock Creek batters reach base and they score 11 runs.

Scoring in every inning, they win 21-8.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DISTRICT FINALS -- THE NEXT DAY

Rock Creek plays Hazard, the team they lost to early in the year.

With the score tied at 6 apiece in the bottom of the 7th Shadow bunts for a hit, then steals second on the next pitch.

C.A. comes to the plate. He hits a screaming line drive into left field that is fielded on one hop.

Shadow rounds third, and, ignoring the third base coaches attempt to stop him, tries to score. The catcher receives the throw about 5 feet up the third base line in plenty of time. He falls to his knees to make sure Shadow can't reach the plate, but Shadow leaps over him.

When he hits the ground, Shadow reaches back and slaps the plate with his hand. Safe!

Game over. Rock Creek advances to the Regional.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

A NURSE enters Denny's room. Barbara is sitting beside the bed.

NURSE

I've got some good news for you.
You're going home today, and to the
Regional next week. Final score
Rock Creek 7, Hazard 6.

(beat)

The Miner's are District Champs!

INT. KENNICUTT COAL COMPANY OFFICES -- DAY

Jake enters the building, and walks up to the RECEPTIONIST. He is carrying a Rock Creek uniform waded up under his arm.

JAKE

This Kennecutt's office?

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

JAKE

Is he in?

RECEPTIONIST

May I say who is calling?

Jake walks by her and approaches the door to the office.

RECEPTIONIST

You can't go in there.

JAKE

Watch me.

Jake enters Kennecutt's office.

INT. KENNECUTT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Jake walks into the room and takes a seat in front of Kennecutt's desk.

KENNECUTT

Who the hell are you?

JAKE

Names DeMoss, I help Zeke Rawlings coach your baseball team.

KENNECUTT

So what?

JAKE

I'm sure you've heard by now that they're headed to Lexington to play in the Final Four.

(beat)

Thought you would want to see what they will be wearing.

Jake shows him the torn and patched uniform.

KENNECUTT

What concern is that of mine?

JAKE

Well, I thought that since you own just about everything around here, and are such a warm and generous person, you wouldn't mind helping them get some new uniforms and equipment.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

They raised some money, but are short \$276.43. I've got an invoice here from Kennedy's Sporting Goods in Lexington. It's for 10 uniforms, 10 pairs of spikes, half dozen bats, a dozen balls and new catchers' gear. I'd like you to cut them a check.

KENNECUTT

Well, you thought wrong. Get out.

JAKE

I'm sorry to hear you say that.

(beat)

I guess when all the sports writers in Lexington ask me why my team is dressed in rags they wouldn't wash their cars with, I'll just have to tell them it's because Mr. J. Wilkenson Kennecutt, owner of Kennecutt Coal, is the cheapest son of a bitch in the entire state of Kentucky.

(beat)

And, I'll just bet that my old friends in the national sports media will love a story like this. It might go national. You could end up famous, like Scrooge.

(beat)

Also, I might ask them to have one of their investigative reporters come down here and look into what really happened to the brakes on Dalton's truck.

Kennecutt looks furious. He stares at Jake for a long moment, and then hits the intercom button.

KENNECUTT

Mrs. Thompson make out a check to Kennedy Sporting Goods for...

Looks at Jake.

JAKE

\$276.43. Also, I want \$150 from petty cash. Win or lose I'm taking these kids out for the best steak dinner Lexington has to offer.

KENNECUTT
\$276.43, and put \$150 cash in an envelope. Bring them in here please.

Kennecutt stares at Jake in silence until Mrs. Thompson enters the room and hands him the check and envelope. He hands both to Jake.

KENNECUTT
I don't like you Mr. DeMoss, now get out.

JAKE
I don't care, and the feeling is mutual.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE FRONT PORCH -- DAY

Jake and Sheila are sitting in the swing as Edgar drives up towing Jake's car. It has just been washed and waxed. Jake walks over to the car.

JAKE
Howdy Edgar, been expecting you.

Edgar looks puzzled.

EDGAR
Here you go. All fixed up, running like she's brand new.

He unhooks Jake's car from his tow truck. Hands Jake his key.

JAKE
How much do I owe you?

EDGAR
Comes to \$14.65, including tax. The valve was \$4.65 and labor was \$10.

JAKE
Thanks Edgar.

Edgar drives off, and Jake walks back to the porch shaking his head and laughing to himself. He sits next to Sheila.

SHEILA
How long have you known?

Jake smiles sheepishly.

JAKE
Since the Pinefield game a couple
of weeks back.

(beat)
A goesinta valve; what is a
goesinta valve anyway?

SHEILA
You sure you want to know?

Jake nods his head.

Sheila demonstrates with her hands.

SHEILA
Well, it's this part goes into this
part, goesinta.

Jake shakes his head, laughs.

JAKE
Who all knew?

SHEILA
Pretty much everybody. I must say
you're a good sport about it.

JAKE
Well, there's an old baseball
expression "If you can't take a
joke, you shouldn't be in the
game". Sometimes the jokes on you.
(beat)
You and Barbara going to be there
tomorrow?

SHEILA
Yes, we're bringing Sam and
Alice Dalton, maybe a couple of
others. Will you be heading to
New York after it's over?

Sheila looks at Jake.

JAKE
Yeah, I need to get home.

They look at each other.

EXT. BLUEGRASS BASEBALL FIELD. -- NIGHT

A pep rally has just concluded inside the school, and a
dance is about to start. The local band, THE SULTANS, is
warming up.

James Martin and Steve Patrick are sitting in the bleachers looking out at the field. The field is dark except for some shadowy light from the dance.

JAMES

I hear congratulations are in order; you got the scholarship offer from Duke.

STEVE

Yeah, man I'm excited. Hey, I heard Ryan got an offer from Western. You and Perry still going to Kentucky?

JAMES

I am, but Kenny is still undecided. The pros are starting to talk serious money. I figure he's about 50/50 to sign.

STEVE

Well, this is it, our last chance to win a state championship.

JAMES

Went by in a hurry didn't it?

STEVE

Seems like the blink of an eye. You nervous?

JAMES

Yeah, but I keep remembering what Coach says, "Everybody gets butterflies, the secret is making them fly in formation".

They are joined by TWO YOUNGER PLAYERS, reserves.

PLAYER 1

Some send off huh, even the Mayor showed.

JAMES

Didn't think the long winded SOB would never shut up. My ass was getting sore.

PLAYER 2

What a draw. We get Manual and Owensboro licks out with Rock Creek. Hey, where is Rock Creek anyway?

STEVE

Not exactly sure, but somewhere in
the Eastern Kentucky Mountains.

The two players begin a back and forth banter making fun of
Rock Creek. Laughing and slapping hands.

PLAYER 1

"Hillbilly land".

PLAYER 2

I didn't know OshKosh made
uniforms.

PLAYER 1

Wonder how they get their bare feet
to hold their spikes?

PLAYER 2

Don't have to worry about buying
sanitary socks either; their long
johns do double duty.

PLAYER 1

(swings an imaginary bat.)
Heard they carve their own bats
from tree limbs. Got one with a big
bend in it for hitting curve balls.

James and Steve look at each other, and shake their heads.

JAMES

Coach hears you talking like that
he'll leave your asses home.

STEVE

You rookies finished telling all
your "Billy" jokes? We have another
game first, and so do they. I don't
care who they played, any team that
has made it to the final four teams
in the entire state is the real
deal. Bulldog says they're good,
and that's enough for me.

JAMES

They play great defense, and their
pitcher Dalton struck out 13
against Harlan. Whiffed the best
hitter in the state three times.

STEVE

You can't overlook anybody. One
loss and it's all over.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)
If we get cocky they'll kick our
"City Slicker" butts.

The players walk away. Patrick and Martin spot two people cutting across the outfield grass to get to the parking lot.

STEVE
Is that Ryan?

JAMES
Yeah, can't miss that red hair. Who
is that with him?

STEVE
It's one of the cheerleaders; I
can't make out which one.

JAMES
The boy does get around.

Ryan and the cheerleader get in his car and drive away.

EXT. TRUCK STOP PARKING LOT -- DAY

Jake in his car, followed by Zeke driving the team in an old school bus, pulls into a truck stop to get gas and something to eat.

Zeke fills the gas tank while the team enters the restaurant. Jake walks over to an outdoor phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH -- DAY

JAKE
(talking on phone)
Hey there Abe Shannon, it's
Jake. Yeah, long time. Don't ask
any questions just meet me at 1 PM
tomorrow at Kentucky's baseball
field.

Pause.

JAKE
Trust me.

Pause.

JAKE
Have I ever lied to you?

Long pause.

JAKE
Except about her.

Pause.

JAKE
Okay and her. Seriously, see you
tomorrow. You can thank me later.

INT. TRUCK STOP -- DAY

Jake enters with Zeke close behind him. He sees Denny arguing animatedly with the RESTAURANT OWNER, a large man wearing a grease stained apron.

Shadow is standing off to the side. The rest of the team is seated at several tables. Zeke joins them. A half dozen other PATRONS are scattered around the restaurant. Jake walks up to Denny.

JAKE
What's going on?

Denny nods his head toward the restaurant owner, and points to a sign that says "No Colored Allowed".

DENNY
He won't let Shadow eat with us.
Said he has to eat out back.

Jake turns to the owner.

JAKE
Hey mister, this young man is one
of our players. He eats with us.

OWNER
We don't serve Coloreds, can't you
read?

JAKE
Maybe I wasn't clear. He's with us.

OWNER
You deaf and stupid. I said we
don't serve Niggers. And, we don't
much like Nigger lovers either.

Jake explodes, and grabs the man by the throat.

JAKE

Denny, Shadow, we're out of here.
And, if I hear one more Nigger come
out of your mouth mister, I'm gonna
drag you back in the kitchen and
deep fry your red necked ass.

A man behind Jake starts to stand up. C.A. puts his hand
on the man's shoulder, and shakes his head no.

C.A.

Wouldn't do that.

The man takes one look at C.A., and sits back down. On the
other side of the restaurant two men look like they want
trouble. Zeke opens his coat to show a chrome plated,
ivory handled .45. The men freeze. Jake, Denny, Shadow and
the rest of the team leave. Zeke is the last one out.

EXT. TRUCK STOP PARKING LOT -- DAY

As the bus pulls out the owner yells after them.

OWNER

Don't come back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY BASEBALL COMPLEX -- DAY

The TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR meets the team bus, and shows them
the way to the locker rooms.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

Hello Coach, your guys are in
locker room 4. Everything is all
set up for you. Good luck.

JAKE

Thanks, appreciate your help.

The players enter the locker room, and are all shocked to see
the brand new uniforms laid out in front of each locker. They
all turn to Jake.

JAKE

Well, at least you'll look like
ballplayers.

CUT TO:

INT. KENTUCKY'S PRESS BOX - DAY

Bulldog is sitting behind his microphone looking out on the field. There are several other SPORTSWRITERS in the booth.

BULLDOG

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman. This is Bulldog McMurphy and I want to welcome you to the University of Kentucky's Happy Chandler Field for the 38th Kentucky State High School Baseball Championship. It's a beautiful day for a ballgame, and we are expecting a record crowd.

(beaming with pride)

Today marks the first time the game will be broadcast live, and I'll be calling the play-by-play for you. Three weeks ago 400 teams started on the road to the championship, and now we're down to the final two.

(beat)

Today's game is a real David versus Goliath match-up. It pits the states smallest school, the Rock Creek Miners, against the states largest school, the Bluegrass Wildcats. Both teams are led by senior pitchers. Denny Dalton of Rock Creek is 19-1 on the year with an ERA of 1.16. Bluegrass counters with Ken Perry. He's 16-0 with 5 straight shutouts during the tournament, a state record.

(beat)

We are expecting a real pitchers duel here today, but it will have to go a long way to top the excitement of yesterday's semifinal games.

Select Visuals of the events as Bulldog describes them.

BEGIN MONTAGE

BULLDOG

Rock Creek trailed Owensboro 2-0 in the 6th when C.A Love, who hadn't made contact all game, hit one over the scoreboard with 2 on and they held on to win.

Bluegrass was taken to extra innings by Louisville Manual and squeaked out a victory when James Martin, a runner with less than blazing speed, scored from first on an infield single and throwing error.

(beat)

The umpires have entered the field, and the Coaches are meeting at home plate for the coin toss.

EXT. HOME PLATE -- DAY

Zeke, Coach Davis and the home plate umpire are standing at home plate. The umpire flips a silver dollar.

UMPIRE

Your call Coach Davis.

COACH DAVIS

Tails.

UMPIRE

Tails it is. Your choice Coach.

COACH DAVIS

We'll take the field.

UMPIRE

All right gentlemen, play ball.

Zeke and Coach Davis return to their respective dugouts and call their players together.

INT. BLUEGRASS DUGOUT -- DAY

COACH DAVIS

We won the toss. We're home team. This is the game you have worked for all year, and it's a day you will remember all your lives. Give it everything you've got. Let's go.

The team yells, and runs out onto the field.

INT. ROCK CREEK DUGOUT --- DAY

ZEKE

Well boys, one more game and you're champions. Nobody thought you'd get this far, but You worked your butts off for the opportunity. This is your moment. Don't let anybody take it away from you.

(beat)

Jake, do you want to add Anything?

JAKE

You've all heard the old expression "Good things come to those who wait". Well, there is a different version in the Yankee locker room. It goes "Good things may come to those who wait, but championships are won by those who seize the opportunity by the throat and won't let go".

(beat)

All right now, let's go get em.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Bulldog calls the game.

Select Visuals of the events as he describes them.

BULLDOG V.O.

It's the bottom of the second, two out Ryan at bat. Both pitchers have been perfect to this point. Perry has struck out 5, Dalton 4. So far neither pitcher has shown any effects of pitching on back to back days. Dalton winds, the pitch to Ryan is a ball, ball 1. Ryan steps out, knocks the dirt out of his spikes, steps back in. Strike 1 called. Dalton goes into his motion, the pitch. Ryan crushes it down the third base line. C.A. Love dives to his right. He got it, he got it. I don't know how but he caught that ball. I thought it was by him.

(MORE)

BULLDOG V.O. (CONT'D)

(beat)

What a play. What a play!

CUT TO:

INT. HATTIE'S RESTAURANT -- DAY

Rock Creek townspeople have begun to gather at Hattie's to listen to the game. They cheer.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND MINE SHAFT -- DAY

The game is being broadcast over the mine's sound system. The miners listen as they work.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Select Visuals of the events as Bulldog describes them.

BULLDOG V.O.

Top of the 4th nobody out, still no score. 2 and 1 to Dalton, he swings, solid single through the hole at short. Here comes C.A. Love, the hero of yesterdays game. Perry goes into his stretch, the pitch, fastball, strike 1 called. Dalton bluffs like he is going to try and steal. Perry throws to first, safe. Perry is watching Dalton closely. Here comes the pitch. Love swings, it's a gaper. Folks he got all of it. Ryan is flying after the ball. He dives, can't get it. It's by him to the wall. Butch Riley plays it off the fence. Dalton rounds third, and will score standing up. Love tries for third, he's safe. Rock Creek 1, Bluegrass 0.

CUT TO:

INT. HATTIE'S RESTAURANT -- DAY

There is a larger crowd now. They are following the game closely, and cheer loudly.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND MINE SHAFT -- DAY

The miners start to pay more attention to the game.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Select Visuals of the events as Bulldog describes them.

BULLDOG V.O.

And, we're back. Well, it's all come down to this. Bottom of the 7th, Rock Creek hangs onto a 1-0 lead. Dalton has a no hitter going, but has shown signs of tiring in the last couple of innings. Bluegrass has the meat of their order due up. Hang on, here we go. Charlie Durcan leads off. Here's the first pitch. Line drive into centerfield, clean single. There goes the no hitter. Martin steps in. The count goes to 2-2. Martin swings, he topped it. It's a slow roller to third. Love fields it cleanly, but can't get the ball out of his glove. Everybody is safe.

(beat)

Well folks, there is no doubt now, Dalton is in trouble. Things are looking grim for Rock Creek as Steve Patrick, Bluegrass's leading hitter, comes to the plate with Terry Ryan waiting in the on deck circle.

(beat)

Here's the situation, nobody out, runners at first and second, bottom of the 7th Bluegrass down 1-0.

CUT TO:

EXT. PITCHERS MOUND -- DAY

Denny toes the rubber and looks in to Kembry for his sign. Kembry puts down two fingers for a curveball. Dalton nods.

DENNY (V.O.)
 Nobody hurt, still have the
 lead. Got this guy twice on curves.
 He'll be looking for one, but let's
 stay with it. Keep it down, make
 him hit it on the ground, and the
 guys will turn two.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTER'S BOX -- DAY

Steve Patrick spits in his hands, then grabs a bit of dirt and rubs it in. He digs in, and takes a couple of practice swings.

STEVE (V.O.)
 Take a deep breath. Don't over
 swing. Just a base hit. He's gonna
 keep throwing that curve to me try
 and get a double play. Take it.
 Make him come in with a fastball.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Denny goes into his stretch. Durcan takes his lead off of first base. Bulldog calls the pitch.

BULLDOG V.O.
 Dalton gets the sign, starts his
 delivery. The pitch to Patrick,
 curveball, low, ball 1.

Denny takes off his cap and wipes his brow. He steps back on the rubber, looks in for his sign. Kembry gives the sign for a fastball.

DENNY (V.O.)
 Come on ump, that's been a strike
 all day. Don't start squeezing me
 now.

He shakes off Kembry.

DENNY (V.O.)
 He'll be looking fastball now,
 let's go with the curve again.

Kembry gives the sign for a curve, Denny nods.

EXT. BATTER'S BOX -- DAY

Steve Patrick steps out, taps his spikes with his bat. He settles back in.

STEVE (V.O.)
Ahead now. If he throws that curve
don't bite. Concentrate.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Durcan takes his lead. Denny winds. Bulldog calls the pitch.

BULLDOG V.O.
Dalton looks in, gets his sign.
Here's the pitch. Curveball, low
outside. The count goes to 2-0.

EXT. PITCHERS MOUND -- DAY

Denny backs off the mound, and picks up the rosin bag. He turns his back to the plate, and rubs the ball a few times composing himself. He throws the rosin bag down, walks back onto the mound. He takes a deep breath, stands tall, toes the rubber, and looks in for the sign. Kembry calls for a fastball. Denny nods.

DENNY (V.O.)
Well, this is it. Gotta throw a
strike now, can't walk this guy.
Keep it down. Make him hit it on
the ground.

EXT. BATTER'S BOX -- DAY

Steve Patrick steps out of the batter's box, repeats his ritual of spitting and rubbing dirt in his hands, then steps back in and digs in.

STEVE (V.O.)
He's got to come in now. Look
fastball all the way. Get your
pitch and drive the ball.

EXT. THIRD BASE -- DAY

C.A. Love smooths the dirt in front of him with his spikes and pounds his fist into his glove.

C.A. (V.O.)
Forget that last play.
Concentrate. Soft hands, soft
hands. Guard the line. Knock
everything down. Nothing gets by.

Yells.

C.A.
Come on Denny, you can do it.

INT. BLUEGRASS DUGOUT -- DAY

The players are all standing and cheering.

EXT. CENTERFIELD -- DAY

Shadow sees the fastball sign, and moves a couple of steps to his left. He pounds his fist into his glove.

SHADOW (V.O.)
Get a jump. Cut off everything.
Nothing gets through. Make a good
throw.

Whistles through his front teeth, then yells.

SHADOW
Come on Denny, throw strikes.
You can get this guy. We're behind
you.

INT. ROCK CREEK DUGOUT -- DAY

Jake cups his hand to his mouth, holds up 2 fingers and yells.

JAKE
Get your heads up out there.
Turn two infield.

EXT. SECOND BASE -- DAY

Charlie Durcan takes his lead.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Tying run. Get a jump. Score on a
base hit. Watch the line drive.

EXT. FIRST BASE -- DAY

James Martin takes his lead.

JAMES (V.O.)
You're the winning run. Get a jump.
Break up two. Watch the line drive.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND MINE SHAFT -- DAY

The miners have stopped work. There is dead silence.

CUT TO:

INT. HATTIE'S RESTAURANT -- DAY

The place is packed. The silence is deafening... Almost as if
everyone is frozen in time.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Martin and Durcan take their leads. Dalton goes into his
delivery, throws. Bulldog calls the play as it develops.

BULLDOG V.O.
Dalton has the sign. He goes into
the stretch. Here comes the pitch.
It's a shot to center. Shadow
Washington is after it, but I don't
know if he can get it. He did, he
did, what a catch.
(beat)
Durcan tags and breaks for third.
Here comes Washington's throw. It's
a beauty, one hop right on the
money. Durkin slides. He may be in
there. No, no, his foot came off
the bag. C.A. Love tags him. He's
out.

EXT. THIRD BASE -- DAY

Denny has run from the mound to back up third.

He sees Martin break for second.

DENNY

Second C.A., second, get him!

BULLDOGS V.O.

Martin has broken for second.
C.A. Love turns and throws in one
motion. It's going to be close,
Martin slides.

EXT. SECOND BASE -- DAY

Martin and the ball arrive at second base almost
simultaneously. Martin slides, and the second baseman
applies the tag to his leg. The umpire makes the call.

UMPIRE

You're out!

JAMES

No! No! I was in there ump.

The players, coaches, fans and broadcasters all freeze for
a moment.

There is not a sound.

Then, slowly, everyone figures out that they have just seen a
triple play, and the game is over.

The Rock Creek players and fans erupt.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

The Rock Creek players run to the mound and mob Dalton.

BULLDOGS V.O.

He's out. He's out. It's a triple
play. This game is over.
Rock Creek has won this game on
a triple play. Ladies and
gentlemen, you had to see it to
believe it. I know you're not
supposed to say that on the radio,
but I saw it, and I still don't
believe it.

(MORE)

BULLDOGS V.O. (CONT'D)
The Rock Creek Miners are the 1961
Kentucky State High School Baseball
Champions.

EXT. PITCHERS MOUND -- DAY

Jake and Zeke run to the mound. The team celebrates. They lift Denny on their shoulders and carry him off the field.

The Bluegrass players are desolate. Martin trots back to the Bluegrass dugout shaking his head. Patrick just stares toward centerfield. Ryan is still in the on deck circle, looking stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. HATTIE'S RESTAURANT -- DAY

The place is packed, and the townspeople celebrate.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND MINE SHAFT -- DAY

The miners celebrate.

BULLDOG V.O.
Denny Dalton has just been named
MVP.

Mr. Dalton breaks down when he hears the news.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Coach Davis is standing with his arm around James Martin.

COACH DAVIS
Did he get you?

JAMES
Close, but I thought I was in
there.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Denny and Barbara are walking hand in hand back toward the locker room. ABE SHANNON, a beat up looking man in his late 50's, comes up to them.

ABE

My name's Abe Shannon. I'm a scout for the New York Yankees. Is there someplace where we can talk?

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

Jake finds Sheila in the crowd. He puts a hand on each of her shoulders, takes a long look at her and smiles.

JAKE

Need a ride home?

SHEILA

Thought you had to get back to New York?

JAKE

Well. I was all set to go when it finally dawned on me that you're more important to me than anything or anybody there. New York can wait.

Sheila gives Jake an impish grin, and playfully punches him in the chest.

SHEILA

Took you long enough to figure that out.

JAKE

You know me, sometimes I'm a little slow, but if it's OK with you, I think I'll stick around for a while.

Sheila gives Jake a brief kiss, then takes his hand.

SHEILA

Let's go home.

Together they walk hand in hand out of the ball park.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SUPER 1966 - FIVE YEARS LATER

James Martin and several teammates have just finished playing in a semi-pro tournament game, and are sitting under a shade tree having a cold beer when a man walks up to them.

MAN

Are you the Martin that caught for Bluegrass High in the 61 state tournament?

JAMES

That would be me.

MAN

Well, my name is Ron Taylor, and I'm the umpire that called you out at second. I know it's no consolation, but in all the excitement I think I might have missed the call.

Everyone turns to look at Martin. He has just reached into the cooler and has a bottle of Budweiser by its long neck. His knuckles have turned white. There is a very long pause as he considers various forms of homicide. Finally, he relaxes and begins to laugh.

JAMES

Ah, hell, have a beer, it's gonna make a great story someday.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

OVER BLACK:

Jake and Sheila married, and lived happily ever after.

Denny Dalton went on to an eight year career in the Major Leagues. After retiring he founded the Dalton Baseball School, Americas premier baseball academy for children located in Florida.

C.A. Love joined the Navy, and got out of town just ahead of the "Revenuers". The night before his enlistment ended he won \$20,000 in a crap game, and started a small distillery with Shadow Washington.

Coach Vern Davis of Bluegrass High continued to coach for 10 more years then retired. He passed away in 1997.

Ken Perry signed a baseball scholarship with the University Of Kentucky, and had an excellent career before an injury ended his professional hopes. He passed away in 2000.

Steve Patrick graduated with honors from Duke University, and owns a bed & breakfast inn just outside of Louisville.

Terry Ryan ended his competitive baseball career with the championship game, and is a successful real estate developer in Louisville.

James Martin, signed a baseball scholarship with the University Of Kentucky, and played until a lack of ability ended his career. He currently lives in Mill Valley, California, and has been telling this story for over 50 years... hope you enjoyed it.