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# Major League: Back to the Minors

By David S. Ward

I got it.  
You want Tobik to finish  
it off for you, Gus?  
No I'm fine.  
Just need to get out of this inning  
and get a little breather.  
Hey...  
"Hey" nothing.  
That ball is tagged!  
It's going... going... nowhere.  
Hold on just a minute.  
Let me see that ball.  
- What?  
- You heard me, let me see it.  
- Frozen ball, Gus.  
- Where did that come from?  
You shouldn't have to resort to this.  
I mean, where's your pride?  
You know I searched high and low.  
You know I have to throw you out.  
C'mon Mick, I'm five outs  
from finishing this. You don't...  
I'm sorry Gus, but you got to go.  
You are gone. You're outa here!  
Don't hold on to that too long, Mick.  
If it freezes, they have to cut your  
fingers off to get rid of the damn thing.  
Give me some water, now!  
Is that arm numb yet or is it  
at that tingly, burning stage  
just before everything freezes?  
Well.  
Look what the cat drug in.  
Don't pretend to act like you're  
not surprised to see me.  
Picked up a whiff of your cologne  
about half an hour ago.  
Will you look at these fancy clothes.  
- Flatterer.  
- Bullshiterer.  
How you doing?  
Sorry I missed it.  
How'd you throw?  
Pretty good. Moved the ball around a lot,

even blew a few fastballs by them.

I'm okay to drive.

I know you are, but you're a little too drunk to walk to your car.

So this nice taxi driver is going to give you a lift.

- Strong and capable woman.

- You left out "independent".

- You must be smitten.

- Went past smitten a long time ago.

For the first time, the woman I love and the woman I like are the same person.

That's a dangerous combo.

And the kicker is, she loves me but she's not desperate for me.

Which could only mean, you're desperate for her.

Six marriages had to teach me something.

- Ever think about getting out?

- This is my last season. I'm hanging it up.

What are you going to do?

Don't know, still kicking a few ideas around.

It just so happens that

I've got a proposition for you.

And I thought you came here because you missed the sound of my voice.

There is that...

Gus, I'd like to ask you:

how would you like to manage?

Manage?

I've got a AAA team with a heap of talent but not a baseball player in the bunch.

What I need, what they need, is a genuine baseball man, someone who really knows the game.

I figure with all that you know about baseball, and their natural ability, it would be a perfect match.

I don't know Rog.

I spent the better part of my life kicking around the Minor Leagues.

Hell, my ass has gone flat from sitting  
on hard benches and riding bad busses.  
I ain't so sure I'm interested  
in signing up for more of the same.  
But this is something that you know,  
something you could be really good at.  
Who says I can't be good at  
something other than baseball?  
No one.  
Look, thanks...  
Come the end of the season,  
I'm quitting. Cold turkey.  
I know how to take  
"no" for an answer,  
but maybe you can do me  
one little favor?  
If I can.  
I'd like you to take a look at  
Mr. "Downtown" Anderson.  
He is a pure hitter.  
You got the day off tomorrow, right?  
Why don't... the three of us, why we go  
down and we can watch the kid play?  
I'm in.  
So it's either wrestle me from  
the ball or let me stay in.  
So I let you stay in?  
- Two dogs and two Cokes.  
- Just ketchup and mustard on mine.  
Do my eyes deceive me or  
is that who I think it is?  
Slick guy, overdressed,  
helmet hair, shit-eating grin?  
You must have eyes in the  
back of your head.  
Leonard Huff, manager/bullshit  
artist extraordinaire.  
I know a broken down old  
ballplayer when I see one.  
No offense.  
And who is this lovely  
little lady?  
- I'm Maggie Reynolds.  
- Maggie.

- That's four bucks.  
- I'll get those.  
- I got it.  
- No, no. Save your money.  
- Here we go...  
- Out of a ten.  
- The change is yours, my friend  
- Thank you sir.  
- So, Maggie are you a baseball fan?  
- As a matter of fact I am.  
I manage a team, the Minnesota Twins.  
Maybe you've heard of them.  
Minnesota Twins. Maybe I've heard  
of them... you asshole.  
First class all the way.  
That's how we do it on the big team.  
He says "big team" one more time,  
I'm gonna pinch his neck  
until his head pops off.  
- Here's the kid I'm talking about.  
- Now coming to the plate,  
number 1, Billy "Downtown" Anderson.  
Number one in your heart,  
number one in the program.  
Downtown!  
I like this kid.  
Super, just super.  
I was just telling  
Mr. Downtown here  
that he is going to be with  
the big team real soon.  
No question about it.  
The sooner the better  
as far as I'm concerned.  
What do you think, Gus?  
I think he's got a real nice bat.  
They say I've got a pure swing  
and that I'm a natural.  
As soon as you get over that lack  
of confidence, the sky's the limit.  
Good game. Why don't you get a shower,  
don't want my star player catching a cold.  
Wait a second... Gus Cantrell.  
6'1, 185 lbs, throws right, bats right.

I had triples of your rookie card when I was in grade school.

- You still got them?

- No.

I traded them all for one player to be named at a later date.

Kidding.

See ya.

Smartass.

Well, I've got to roll.

- I've got to get back...

- Back to the big team?

- Margaret...

- Nice meeting you.

Listen, you ever get tired of the Minor Leagues, you give me a call. Just kidding.

No, seriously...

Kidding. Kidding.

Let's go to the airport, my friend.

Hey listen, keep me

posted on that kid.

Let's go!

Airport. Big tip waiting.

Like a vulture circling fresh meat.

- Well he wants Downtown.

- He's not gonna wait.

He's gonna bring him up

before he's ready.

See, that's exactly what I've been saying.

You know how to bring a player along.

I need a manager with that kind of touch, that kind of instinct.

I want you to take him to AAA.

I want you to teach him how to hit.

Sounds like a lot of work.

Try it for a couple of weeks.

You don't like it, no harm,

no foul. You quit.

- I need to think about it.

- Gus, I need a coach.

- Let you know in the morning?

- You're on.

- What if I hate it?

- You quit. He even gave you an out.

- Are you scared?

- No.

Yeah.

You can't let fear of the unknown  
keep you moving off the dime.

What if Christopher Columbus had  
let fear get in the way?

- I'd be playing Cricket.

- You know what I'm saying.

You really think I could  
manage a baseball team?

I know you can.

What about us?

"Us" will be here.

"Us" isn't gonna go anywhere.

- You must be Gus Cantrell.

- What gave me away?

Frank Morgan, everybody calls me Pops.

Can I grab these? Come on, jump in.

- This is Mr. Buzz.

- Hi, how you doin'?

We're about an hour from gametime,  
so I brought your uniform along.

We'll move Mr. Buzz' head up here.

Excuse me.

Watch your...

- You must be pretty excited.

- Oh yeah.

This is the clubhouse.

In some parts of the world  
this is called a basement.

Good news is, it's cool in August.

Other times it can be a little musky.

- Dank?

- That too, but cool.

It's your office.

Another prayer unanswered.

Lance Pere.

Gus Cantrell, our new skipper.

Welcome to our  
unique little troupe.

Thanks.

- You aren't stuck or anything, are you?

- Nah. It's yoga.

Limber mind leads to a limber spine  
which leads to a long life.  
As we go, so goes the world.  
We are the world, the world is us.  
I'll have to jot that down.  
You'd better unwind and get dressed,  
unless you plan on playing naked.  
Alright, Pops.  
Came to baseball by way of the  
New York City Ballet.  
Ballet?  
Went to an open tryout, he was such  
a natural athlete they signed him.  
He used to be a ballerina?  
- I don't think guys are ballerinas.  
- Balladeer?  
- Don't balladeers sing?  
- Nah, I think that's troubadours.  
- That was me, I was out of position.  
- Hog Ellis.  
This is our new skipper, Gus Cantrell.  
What's up?  
- Nice to meet ya.  
- Hog, show the skipper your fastball.  
- Got some velocity there.  
- Yeah.  
You can bet on the hummer, babe.  
It's all good.  
Well, don't let me interrupt.  
It's cool.  
"Cool" is the only thing  
he said I understood.  
Hog ain't much on communication.  
Remind me not to sit  
next to him on road trips.  
Gus Cantrell?  
Remember me?  
Rube Baker. I thought  
you were with San Diego.  
I was. Little control problem  
came creeping back to haunt me.  
Trouble making the throw to second?  
Yeah, second...  
And first.



Third a little. Still have trouble getting it back to the pitcher.  
Come on, I don't believe that. Just take a deep breath, rear back and let her rip.  
- Mom, they did it again!  
- See what I mean?  
You're a little bit off the mark, but don't worry, we'll get you straightened out.  
You want me to go get that?  
Don't worry about it.  
Just keep warming him up.  
- Good seeing you, Rube.  
- Good seeing you, Gus.  
Got any more balls?  
I remember Gus Cantrell from the old California AA league.  
It was before Diet Coke became my beverage of choice. Gus was a pretty fair pitcher.  
But he'll have to be more than pretty fair to turn this bunch into anything that resembles a baseball team.  
Perplexed? Carlton Windgate, pitcher.  
Everyone calls me Doc.  
Gus Cantrell, manager.  
Everybody calls me... Gus.  
- Delighted to make your acquaintance.  
- Yeah. Likewise.  
So you have a question regarding the scorecard?  
As a matter of fact there seems to be a mistake.  
You've got Juan Lopez at second and Juan Lopez at short.  
It's no mistake. Juan!  
- Hello Coach.  
- Buenos das.  
- Brothers?  
- Twins.  
- With the same name?  
- Confounding isn't it?  
Confounding seems to be the word of the day.

Listen, from now on,  
you're going to be Juan One.  
- And you're gonna be Juan Two.  
- Sounds good, Coach.  
But... by numbering them, you risk  
stifling their identities  
and squelching their self esteem.  
I don't wanna be rude here, Doc,  
but how would you like to be Juan 3?  
So a routine throw becomes a  
2-base throwing error.  
Mr. Buzz almost got nailed  
by that missile.  
And we all might be better off  
had he got nailed.  
All right, Lance! Shake it off, buddy!  
Shake it off! Get the next one, bud!  
Lance the dance had a  
slippery one that time.  
They don't call him  
Ol' Stone Hands for nothing.  
I've seen better hands on a clock.  
Juan 1 has the ball,  
still time to make the throw.  
No, Juan 2 has the ball!  
Hey, wait a second! It's a brawl!  
Here we go again.  
Come on, cut it out, you guys!  
The brothers Lopez are going at it.  
Juan 2 looks hurt.  
No! Here he comes fighting back!  
He connects with a right! Whoo! What a shot!  
- Stop it! You can't play ball,  
- I'll kill you!  
You! You! You're both out of here!  
So all Juan Lopezes concerned  
get the heave-ho.  
And right about now, Gus Cantrell  
has gotta be wondering  
why he ever took this job.  
You know, fans, it's games like this  
that used to get me overmedicated.  
Just keep hitting them up the middle,  
all right? They'll catch on.

He got a bad jump on that one.  
Not only that, he ran too long  
in the same spot.  
Huh. Couldn't get a reading.  
I got that used from  
the highway department.  
It doesn't pick up  
anything under 55.  
Under 55?  
- How was that, Coach?  
- Good, Doc.  
You want to see my change-up  
before you go?  
No, no. I'm good.  
Super. All right, we'll  
stay with the heater.  
Lance Romance.  
Let me see your mitt.  
Try this for a while.  
I can't field with this.  
Well, I hate to tell you, but  
you ain't so hot with a glove, either.  
Look, I want you to get  
used to feeling the ball.  
Loosen up those hands a little bit.  
Okay, coach.  
Go ahead, open it up.  
It's a first baseman's mitt.  
Yeah, that's what the guy at the  
sporting goods store said it was.  
I'm no first baseman. I'm an outfielder.  
Been an outfielder all my life.  
I know you're an outfielder, Pops.  
I just think it might be  
better for the team if we...  
Hold on now.  
I've been around a long time.  
You don't have to give me  
"the best thing for the team" speech.  
I'll take it straight.  
You're too old, you're too fat,  
and you're too slow. Straight enough?  
- Ah, that'll do it.  
- But I like your bat.

And I need a leader on the field,  
and I think you're my man. So, uh...  
What do you say?  
You want to give first base a shot?  
Sure. I'm... If you think  
that's best for the team.  
Thanks, Pops.  
Ok, so, "pure hitter"...  
now, what's that mean?  
See, I got these naturally  
quick hands, you know?  
Nioise.  
I told you. We got Ranch, Italian,  
Chunky Blue Cheese, which is 50 cents extra.  
Do you have any  
balsamic vinegar?  
I got Ranch, Italian,  
Chunky Blue Cheese.  
Ok. You know what?  
Forget the salad.  
Bring me a gun, and I'll just  
shoot myself, ok?  
Pops, I was wondering...  
You, uh... you ever  
make it to The Show?  
Came close once.  
With the Red Sox organization.  
It was in October.  
A player got injured.  
I got the call.  
And I was on the plane flying into Boston  
when a freak snowstorm hit.  
We couldn't land.  
Two days later, weather's fine,  
so is the player.  
- That was it?  
- 20 years, professional baseball,  
I circled The Show, couldn't land.  
Windgate is what you'd  
call a finesse pitcher...  
moves the ball up and  
down, in and out,  
relies on control and savvy.  
They time this kid's fastball

with an hourglass.

Anderson.

- Sacrifice him over.

- Sacrifice?

- Yeah. Bunt him over into scoring position.

- You're kidding me.

No, I'm not kidding you.

Lay one down.

Anderson drives one to left and deep.

Hey, get up, get out of here, gone!

And the Buzz lead this game 3-2.

Anderson!

I need to see you.

I'll put this sandwich to go,

bro, all right?

Yeah.

Pull up a chair.

See, uh... this ain't the

Downtown show, so, uh...

...when I ask you to lay one down,

you lay one down.

But I won the game.

Well, that's not the point.

We're a team here.

We do what's best for the team.

And I make that decision.

See, this isn't about one guy

doing what he wants to do.

Even if that one guy

wins a ball game?

Even if that one guy

wins a ball game.

I'm benching you

for the next 3 games.

- You're serious?

- Yeah.

But I'm on a roll. I've had 5 hits

in my last 12 at-bats,

and you're going to bench me?

3 games, you sit.

- Is that all?

- Yeah, that's it.

- Skipper, can I talk to you for a second?

- Sure. What's up, doc?

Well, I've been working with Rube,  
trying to help him to open up.  
We've actually been breaking down  
some walls, and I really believe...  
...that Rube's whole  
throwing problem goes back...  
...to a rather abrasive  
little league coach.  
Rube can't throw worth a shit  
because of some jerk-off  
little league coach?  
In layman's terms, yes.  
And I want to ask you  
if you could just be gentle with him.  
See, Rube's psyche is far more delicate  
than his rugged facade would indicate.  
- You want me to give him my gentle speech?  
- If you would be so kind.  
And, Skipper, I want to  
thank you for  
making yourself accessible  
to such an open dialogue.  
You bet.  
It's strong for your legs.  
It'll be good for first base.  
Balance yourself, Pops.  
Now we're going to do jets.  
Leap like a gazelle.  
Let the ball get further across the plate,  
further in on you.  
and then hit the inside half  
of it right into right field.  
You can't help but hit it that way.  
Why do I want to hit it into right field?  
I mean, I'm a pull hitter.  
I know you are.  
and it won't be long  
until every pitcher knows it, too.  
All right, let's try again.  
This time act like you give a shit.  
- Hey, Rube  
- Hey, Skip.  
I've been wondering...  
- You got any, uh, hidden skills?

- Hidden skills?

Yeah. Like if my car  
wasn't running right,  
could you take the  
carburetor apart and fix it?

No. I don't know nothing  
about carburetors.

How about if I bought you some lumber...

Could you make me a coffee table?

Uh, nope. Don't believe I could.

So your skills then lend themselves  
primarily to baseball, we could say that?

Yeah, we could say that.

If another routine throw lands  
15 rows in the grandstands,  
I'm sending your ass home.

So you better make your throws, or  
I suggest you invest in some how-to books  
and find a fallback profession.

Understood?

Yes, sir.

Mitt.

I thought you were going to  
give him the gentle speech.

That was it.

God...

if you can hear me,  
Please... send me one real  
baseball player.

That's all I ask.

And if you can't grant  
me that, then, well...  
you might as well just  
strike me dead.

Right here and now.

- God?

- No.

- Moses?

- No, but you're getting warm.

Cerrano.

Hello, Gus.

- Jesus Christ...

- Be careful now.

You scared me to death.

You mean when you realized  
God is black?  
I thought  
she was white.  
I must've been out a long time  
if it's Halloween already.  
What's your point?  
Pedro Cerrano, the original Voodoo Man  
from Mars, dropped out of baseball  
to find whatever the hell  
it was he lost. Maybe his mind.  
Anyway, he's back with  
a new piece of lumber.  
Let's see if he remembers  
how to swing it.  
How about that? Cerrano must have  
bumped into the God of all line drives.  
He just hit a bullet down  
the left field line.  
2 runs score, and the Buzz  
put one in the win column.  
They're on a roll now, baby.  
The Lopez brothers pull off a  
double play... 4 to 6 to 3.  
Hey, and not a punch was thrown,  
not a drop of blood spilled.  
All right, Pops, nice stretch.  
Nothing like a little brotherly love.  
So the Buzz win their  
third in a row.  
Oh, my.  
Cerrano.  
S, Gus, what?  
- Is that who I think it is?  
- Jess Cristo. Tanaka.  
Did your part to beautify America.  
I see you've got it made in the shade.  
Piece of brain?  
"Peace of mind".  
Basically, yeah.  
What does your inner voice tell you?  
Sounds like Taka needs vacation.  
I got just the thing. Come on.  
Watch your step.



Taka Tanaka, like Cerrano,  
left baseball for a while.  
Here's the windup and  
the pitch to Tanaka.  
He swings and lines  
a single to right field.  
Tanaka hit that one  
right on the screw.  
Holy Crap-ola, the Buzz just  
pulled off a double steal.  
Either someone got  
their signals crossed,  
or this is starting to look  
like a baseball team.  
What the hell is that?  
What's he doing?  
I think that's a... a curtsy?  
Lance Pere is curtsying  
to the crowd.  
He's blowing kisses and curtsying.  
This must go back to  
his days as a balladeer.  
- He was a singer?  
- Dancer.  
Now batting, Carlos Liston!  
Baltimore Orioles 8,  
Minnesota Twins 0!  
Coach, you're doing a fine job,  
a real fine job.  
Get your heads in the game, ok?  
Put the magazines away.  
Put the phones away. Bye, mom!  
Pick 'em up, Carlos.  
Get a hold of one now.  
18 million over 3 seasons, and he doesn't  
even wave the bat at the ball?!  
What?  
Thought you'd like to know, the Buzz won  
again. That puts them in second place.  
Really? Well, maybe I'll take  
a trip down there,  
watch somebody who's  
interested in playing baseball.  
The next game is not until Thursday.

They've got 2 days off.

Hey, Gus. Hey, I knew you could  
turn that bunch into a ball team.

The first couple of weeks were pretty rough,  
but we're starting to come together.

Gus, look, you've got a couple of days off.

Why don't you hop on a plane,  
come up here, and let me  
wine and dine you Minnesota style?

I can't. I promised Maggie I'd spend the  
next couple of days off up there with her.

All expenses paid. First-class trip  
to Minneapolis. In fact,

my assistant is calling the hotel as we  
speak and booking the presidential suite.

I don't know Rog... by the time we get there  
we got to turn around and come back.

I'll send my jet for you. Very sexy.

Nice vacation for you and Maggie.

- Lear jet.

- Ok. Ok, you're on.

So, um... what's  
the deal with Carlos?

Well, Carlos is in a love fest...  
with Carlos.

What about the rest  
of your team?

Well, one of them wants to be  
traded to New York,  
so he can get a little  
more press coverage.

My center fielder is threatening to quit  
'cause he wants to become a male model.

And my shortstop and second baseman  
aren't speaking

because one of them's got a  
bigger shoe contract than the other,  
and they haven't turned a  
double play in over a month.

So, out of your 25 players, baseball is  
a primary concern for how many?

Maybe.

Oh God, I love this team.

What? I like it.

Well, I'll tell you this,  
alright, if I had a good short reliever,  
I could turn this team around.

In his wildest dreams.

- What's that?

- Nothing.

- No, no. Come on, go ahead.

- Gus...

I'm just saying that a short reliever  
is not going to solve your problems.

Why's that?

You got no unity. It's every man for  
himself. Nobody's playing for the team.

Well, that's right. We got a few bad eggs  
who are spoiling it for everyone else.

Well, you see, when you

have major talent,

you get major personalities.

Maybe you got too much talent  
and not enough team.

See, this game is about 9 guys  
working as one.

They don't have to be the best  
9 guys who ever lived.

They just got to work together.

Oh, that's sweet. That really is.

That's... that's so sweet.

"9 guys working together as one".

Come on, everyone. Ohmm...

Rah, rah, rah. I love it!

I do, I love that, but...

...you're just going to have to  
trust me on this...

- You don't know what you're talking about.

- Is that so?

This might be a good time  
to get the check.

Yeah, that most definitely is so.

See, let me explain, ok?

There are 2 kinds of baseball, right?

There's big league...

and then there's little league.

And you, my friend...

you are in the latter.

That smells a little bit  
like a challenge.

Well if you're foolhardy enough  
to take it as one, yeah, it is.  
Any hour, any day, any week, my guys  
will be on the field ready to go.

Waiter?

You would actually step onto  
the same field as my Twins?

- Is there an echo in this room?
- Let me tell you something.
- Don't poke me.
- If you had the first idea...

I said don't poke me.

In fact, if you had any idea of what...

I told you not to poke me,  
you loudmouth moron!

You're breaking my finger!

One minute, you're telling me about  
the new, improved, responsible Gus Cantrell  
And the next thing I know you're  
rolling across a barroom floor  
punching, kicking and biting.

I didn't bite him.

Besides, it wasn't my fault.

- It wasn't your fault?
- No. Huff asked me to hit him.

That's funny. I don't remember hearing  
him request a punch in the nose.

It's, like, a secret guy language.

When somebody pokes you with  
their finger more than once,  
they're saying,

"come on and hit me."

"A secret guy language".

I mean, I knew about the handshake  
and the decoder ring,  
but the "language" thing  
is new to me.

Hello?

Yeah, he's right here.

It's Roger.

Listen, Rog, I'm really sorry...

Right now?

Okay.

Okay.

On my way.

Good morning, Sir Guv'ner.

Follow me, please.

No, that sounds great.

I think that'll work out great.

- Behind you all the way, sir.

- Thank you.

I'll tell him you said that.

- Ok, gotta go. Talk to ya. Bye-bye.

- Are you out of your mind?

You know, you are the fifth person  
this morning to ask me that question.

We can't play the Twins.

We're a Minor League club.

You said 9 players  
playing together...

I know what I said, damn it.

Don't throw it back at me.

- You don't believe it?

- Well, of course I believe it. It's...

- Coffee, sir?

- Yeah.

Um, I just wanted to say that, uh,  
on behalf of the entire restaurant staff:

Go Buzz. Kick ass.

Thanks.

By the way, that was Huff  
on the phone just now.

He thinks you're  
going to back out.

He said that?

Yeah. Blowin' smoke out of your butt.

Those were his words.

"Gutless"? I think he said "gutless".

He... I forgot how he used it.

"Big Twins vs. Little Twins."

Sounds like a good way to put  
some butts in the seats, huh?

Do you really think selling tickets  
is my sole motivation?

Ok, maybe it is, but nevertheless,

It's great opportunity for your boys

to see The Show up close, personal.

Gus, come on.

It's... it's dicey.

Why don't you ask your team  
what they wanna do?

- Huff's finger broken?

- Fractured.

Give me 24 hours.

Let me talk to my team.

You're the man.

Hello?

Yeah, it's for real.

- It's been a while.

- Well, one thing never changes.

- What's that?

- Butterflies.

What a decade to quit drinking.

Like I said before,  
the charges were dropped.

What about your alleged quote:

"Carlos Liston is so big,  
he's becoming a religion"?

Yeah, honey, I said it.

You got a problem with it?

What exactly does it mean?

It means that people  
think of Carlos Liston.

Carlos is on the  
minds of people.

They wish to pay him respect because  
they know him to be a superior man.

Does anyone besides Carlos Liston  
worship at the shrine of Carlos Liston?

Or is it a one-man congregation?

Thou shall not make fun of Carlos,  
or thou will get thou's ass whipped.

Carlos Liston, resident madman  
and cleanup hitter.

I have to pitch to him?

Yeah, just remember one thing.

Carlos is a little bit like a mad dog.

Mad dog?

If he smells fear,  
he goes into attack mode.

- So no matter what you do...
- ...don't let him know that you are scared.
- I gotta use the bathroom.
- Use the mound. Stake out your territory.

Gentlemen...

This is not a should-win or  
want-to-win situation.

This is every 8-year-old's dream. Playing  
a big league game in a big league park.

This is a must-win situation!

Play as well as you can.

I want you

to humiliate, brutalize!

Don't force. Don't push, huh?

Beat them into submission!

Let's stay loose.

Let's have some fun.

Come on, guys.

What do you say?

He struck him out swinging and the  
Hawkster is bringing the heat,  
throwin' gas, tossin' aspirins,  
blowin' smoke, zingin' BBs,  
firing missiles, zipping darts,  
threading the needle.

Let's see if my colleague in the booth  
here has anything to add.

Nope, guess not.

Throw! Make your throw!

Taka slides safely into first base.

"Beautiful and daring"... the  
only words to describe that play.

Wouldn't you say

"beautiful and daring"?

Well, my colleague,

a little bashful, concurs.

And this buzz team has come to play ball.

There's no bout-a-doubt it.

Aw, that a baby.

Mine! Mine!

Keep it up! Keep it up!

Nice, nice, nice. Love to your mother.

Hey, hey, Gussy. Whoo!

Who the man now? Who the man?

Adams broke up  
the double play.  
Could have been called for  
unnecessary roughness on that one.  
And that brings Carlos  
Liston to the plate.  
He's been crowding the plate,  
forcing you to throw into his power.  
You better give him  
a little chin music.  
You want me to  
throw at Carlos Liston?  
He'll hate you tonight, but  
he'll respect you in the morning.  
What do I do if he  
comes out here after me?  
Just...  
Climbing the center field wall  
wouldn't be a bad idea.  
Just calming the kid down. Probably telling  
him to keep the ball down and away.  
Liston's getting up.  
He doesn't appear to be hurt.  
And he doesn't appear to be happy.  
Oh, right now would be a good time  
to get Hog measured for a casket.  
What's up?  
Now, I know you ain't  
throwing at Carlos Liston,  
cause anyone dumb enough  
to throw at Carlos  
wouldn't be smart enough  
to find their way to the park.  
And you're here,  
so you ain't that dumb.  
I think there was a little  
moisture on the ball,  
and it slipped  
out of my hand.  
- Moisture?  
- Dew. A little dew.  
Yeah, well, you get that close  
to Mr. Liston again,  
dew or no dew,



and I'll come back out here and  
beat you into the ground with that bat.  
You got that?  
Yes, sir. Yeah, I got it.  
It's no problem.  
There's a routine fly ball  
hit to left field.  
Oh, the wind's got this baby.  
Takin' it back toward the wall...  
the wind's gonna carry this one  
over the fence for a home run.  
I might point out that  
there is no wind.  
We're in a dome.  
An enclosed environment.  
There's no rain either,  
in case you were wondering.  
Oh, well, excuse me for  
having an opinion, pal.  
- Hey, what's that over there?  
- Where?  
You did that on purpose.  
- Oh, my!  
- My notes. My scorecard.  
- It was a complete accident. I'm... I'm...  
- My pants...  
Here, here, here's a 20.  
Get yourself another suit.  
Some people say Downtown  
is a big league hitter.  
Yeah, he's one of the people  
spreading that rumor.  
I guess now is the  
moment of truth.  
Here's the windup and the pitch to Downtown.  
He swings and drives one to left.  
This ball is really hit  
back toward the wall.  
Could get out of here...  
gone for Downtown!  
And the Buzz have tied it at 3 all.  
Listen to this crowd!  
They love this team!  
Well, so much for

"beating them into submission".  
Shut up!  
Get the trainer.  
Better bring a bag of ice.  
Come on, guys. Play a  
little ball here now. Oh!  
Here's the throw by Tanaka. Heading  
towards third. He threw a bullet.  
There's going to be a play,  
and they've got him! He's out!  
What a throw by Tanaka!  
Wasn't that a beaut?  
- You're a beaut.  
- You're finally coming around.  
Adams swats that one  
for a single to left field.  
Well, slam or swat, the Twins' hitters  
have timed this kid's fastball.  
Well, Hog will have to go  
to one of his other pitches.  
He doesn't have other pitches.  
- Does too.  
- Does not.  
Hey, somebody needs a nap.  
He's going to be sitting  
on the fastball.  
I can't let that happen to Hog.  
- Time, ump.  
- You ok?  
Good job, Hog. There's  
nothing to be ashamed of.  
We just gotta find you another pitch.  
Something to go along with that fastball.  
- Doc?  
- Yep.  
Coach, he's got no smoke.  
They've been looking at heat all day.  
Give them a little change of pace.  
Coming to the mound for  
the Buzz will be number 35,  
Doc Windgate. Windgate.  
Well, we got one out left, Doc,  
but, it's a tough one.  
You want me to go with

the off-speed stuff?  
You got anything else?  
- Nope.  
- Let's go with the off-speed stuff.  
Liston swung just a little early...  
By about 4 1/2 minutes.  
Damn junk baller. Carlos hasn't seen  
anything this slow since high school.  
Strike 2 on Liston. He's swinging at pitches  
that leave Doc's hand on Tuesday.  
The trouble is they don't  
arrive till Wednesday.  
Tell that son of a bitch  
to throw me his fastball.  
That was his fastball.  
We're one strike away  
from extra innings.  
If they go up to bat again...  
...we could lose this damn thing.  
One more time.  
One more time.  
- I'm gonna kill 'em.  
- You can't do that.  
Look, numb nuts. This is my  
ballpark, all right? I can do...  
...anything that I want to.  
- You're the manager.  
- You're right about that.  
You're right about that.  
Do it! That's right,  
I said kill 'em.  
Here's the pitch.  
Ow, isn't that a shame?  
- "Power outage", my large white buttocks.  
- Well, that's what he said.  
Did you know that Huff has "born  
to lie" tattooed on his forearm?  
Is that true?  
He's on the Twins...  
Carlos Liston.  
Gigantic, you wouldn't believe it if  
you saw him. And he says to me,  
"I'm gonna beat you into  
the ground with this bat."

What did you say?

I said, "you better chase it on back to the plate where you belong."

"Before I rip your face off and shove it in your a... your

No way.

What did he do?

He walked his self on back to the plate.

Tell you what, Rube. Played a Major League team in a Major League stadium. Made the whole 20 years worthwhile.

- It's a beautiful thing.

- Oh, yeah.

"They're calling it a tie, but the Twins were outplayed by a younger, gutsy Buzz team."

"And Leonard Huff was outcoached by ex-player rookie manager Gus Cantrell."

"However, a generator snafu allowed the Twins to limp home with their dignity just barely intact."

- Congratulations.

- Thank you.

A lot of people are very impressed. In fact, it's made me start wondering if I didn't have a couple of people in Triple-A who were ready to come up to the bigs and vice versa.

- It did? It made you wonder?

- Yeah, it did.

And apparently I'm not the only one who's wondering.

I got a call this morning.

- Yeah?

- Yeah.

Huff, he... he wants Downtown.

- Roger, Downtown's not ready.

- Well Huff says he is.

Well, Huff doesn't know his butt from a manhole cover.

- Gus, listen.

- No, you listen.

You take Downtown up too early,

you may have to send him back,

- and that could really hurt the kid.

- Gus.

He's got a big career ahead of him,

but you've got to bring him along.

- He's just starting to listen to me...

- Gus! Gus!

Huff is the Twins' manager.

If he wants to bring a Triple-A

ballplayer to The Show, then I'm sorry.

He's made it very clear.

He wants Downtown.

Take care, man.

Hey, good luck, bud.

Well... going to The Show.

Yeah, I'm going... to The Show.

Could I make sort of an

off-the-wall suggestion?

Tell Huff you want 4 more weeks

with me before you go up.

Convince him you need

a little more time.

- What the hell would I want to do that for?

- Cause you're not ready yet, kid.

- Bullshit. Huff says I am.

- Huff doesn't know, ok?

He's not about turning you

into a baseball player.

He's trying to use a publicity

stunt to cover up a lousy season.

I knew this. I knew

this would happen.

I knew you'd come in and

try to rain on my parade.

- I'm not trying to rain...

- Yes, you are.

You've been on my ass

since the very beginning.

I hit a home run

and you benched me.

You told me not to pull when

I'm a natural pull hitter.  
I'm just trying to help you.  
Don't tell me you're trying to help me,  
cause you're not. You never were.  
Want me to tell you why?  
Because you're jealous.  
You're jealous that I've got  
more talent on my worst day  
than you've had in your  
whole goddamned career.  
What, it's true, isn't it? Isn't it?  
Isn't it? You've never had  
half the talent that I do.  
That's true.  
God, I should have known you couldn't  
just shake my hand and say good luck.  
But you know what? I don't give  
a shit 'cause I just passed you up.  
I don't need you, Gus Cantrell. I'm  
moving on to bigger and better things.  
Thanks. Thanks for nothing.  
So the Buzz lose another close one.  
Gentlemen.  
Some of you guys might want to check  
your contracts. You set there, Rube?  
- Oh, yeah, sorry.  
- A little more mayo there.  
Seems you signed on to play an entire  
season, but it looks like you quit playing  
about 2/3 of the way through,  
and I'd like for someone to tell me  
what the hell is going on.  
Yeah, Hog?  
Well, you see, um...  
No one thinks that we can  
win without Downtown...  
I think.  
Look, this game is not about  
one home run hitter.  
Don't get me wrong. I miss  
Downtown as much as anyone of you.  
But baseball is not  
about one player.  
It's about a team - an entire

team - playing together.  
Oh, that's right. Look at me like I'm  
some damn corndog old man  
who doesn't know what the hell  
I'm talking about.  
You know, I don't know  
about the rest of you,  
but I remember not too long ago  
we were the joke of the league.  
Now we've won a few games. We even  
went dead even with the big team,  
This man made the difference.  
I think we might want to listen  
to what he has to say.  
Look, guys, I'm just asking you  
to do one thing.  
Start thinking about how you can  
help the guy sitting next to you.  
Maybe you know something  
he doesn't know.  
Maybe you got some information  
you can pass along.  
We're traveling tonight.  
We got the Crawdads tomorrow.  
By the time we hit the field,  
I expect everybody's mind  
to be on teamwork and  
the business of baseball.  
Cool?  
It's cool.  
Let's pack it up and  
get out of here.  
It's not that complicated.  
You see, a curve ball is simply  
the application of basic physics.  
Resistance plus velocity equals...  
- You ok?  
- Yeah.  
Uh, motion.  
Bingo! Now, by controlling  
the resistance,  
i.e. the rotation, you can  
determine direction of motion.  
The greater the velocity,

the less opportunity  
for resistance.  
Thus, a smaller degree  
of motion. Right.  
Less velocity.  
Create more resistance.  
Allow for greater movement.  
- Strike 3, you're out!  
- He struck him out.  
Hog Ellis has just thrown the first  
curve ball of his young life.  
And the boy now has  
not one, but 2 pitches.  
All right!  
Nice deuce there, Hog.  
I just decreased velocity, reversed  
the ball's natural rotation.  
Whatever you say, Hog.  
Just keep throwing 'em.  
Here's the pitch. Swing and a miss.  
And strike 3.  
Anderson goes down swinging,  
and is now 3 for 15 since joining the Twins.  
Downtown, huh? More like  
down and out if you ask me.  
Voodoo, Voodoo!  
As it's been explained to me,  
the hood helps Cerrano focus.  
All I know is it looks dumb as hell,  
and he has to be led up to home plate.  
But I've long since given up  
trying to understand this team.  
Cerrano lines a bullet to left center.  
Romance is rounding third.  
Lance The Dance scores  
on what appears to be  
a Double Salchow and a  
Triple Axel thrown in, too.  
What a play! The Buzz are back on track.  
They've won 7 of their last 10.  
- Hi.  
- Hey.  
- I couldn't cut the mustard.  
- Sorry.



Man, you can say  
"I told you so" if you want.  
No point in that.  
Look, about all that shit  
I said to you, I'm sorry.  
Water over the bridge.  
Or under the dam.  
Or wherever the hell  
the water goes. Sit down.  
Any idea what happened?  
It was, uh... I mean,  
a number of things, really, but...  
They just started throwing me outside  
like you said they would.  
You want to know  
the good news?  
Yeah. Yeah, I'd like to hear  
some good news.  
- This is nothing we can't fix.  
- How do we do that?  
Sweat, sweat, and more sweat.  
Straight up with your hands, straight back  
with your chests, way back to the sky.  
Way beyond your hands  
and then back into first position.  
Clear.  
Wow. That's cool!  
- I told you not to do anything fancy.  
- But if I can get around on an outside...  
Do you know more  
about hitting than I do?  
No.  
I'm asking you to do 2 things:  
keep your mouth shut,  
and listen to my instructions.  
- Can you do that?  
- Yeah.  
Don't overswing, all right?  
Take a little bit later and  
drive it into right field. Here we go.  
- Ready?  
- Ready.  
It's dark in there.  
You're not scared?

Clear.

- Thinking ball and nothing else.

- Thinking ball and nothing else.

Keep your head down.

Go, Downtown. Come on,  
buddy. Give it a ride, pal.

Nothing fancy. Just  
keep your head down.

Here's the pitch to Anderson.

It's a swing and a base hit to right.

This will send Juan 1 to third.

Downtown's got another base hit, sending  
his average up near the .300 mark.

This kid's not just a home  
run swinger anymore.

He's turning himself  
into a solid hitter.

Coach, you've finished  
the season in first place  
and let's face it, you do it  
without anything

that even resembles a  
Major League player.

Now hold it right there. We got  
a lot of players of Major League caliber.

- Like who? Downtown Anderson?

- Yeah, for one.

I heard coach Huff say  
he thinks Downtown's a mistake.

He even went on to say that he doesn't  
have any business in the big leagues.

Yeah, once again Leonard Huff has  
his head shoved up a body cavity  
that I can't mention on TV.

So you disagree with Huff's  
evaluation of Anderson?

Not only do I disagree, but  
I'm not even sure that Huff,  
or for that matter, some of his own  
players, belong in the Major Leagues.

In fact, as far as I'm concerned,  
you're looking at the best team  
in the entire Twins organization.

Ha! You little Minor League peckerwad.

...beat 'em man-to-man  
at every position.  
Once again, though,  
Huff considers that incomplete.  
- I think he even said...  
- Said it, I said it was a fluke.  
I want to hear what he's saying.  
Would you shut up?  
- Love this announcer.  
- Shut up.  
- The light thing was pretty squirrely.  
- Pretty squirrely? Meaning?  
I'd like to check the fingerprints  
on that light switch.  
He's accusing me.  
This son of a bitch is accusing me.  
If we can't beat the Twins, I'll hand  
over my entire year's salary to Huff.  
And if the Twins lose?  
I can't believe he's doing this.  
...my salary, the least he could do  
would be to put up his job.  
- So this is a, uh... challenge.  
- A friendly challenge with incentives.  
If you win, you get to  
manage the Twins.  
If Huff wins, then he takes home  
your entire year's salary.  
That's right. I'm gonna ask  
for one condition.  
What's that condition gonna be?  
This game should be played  
at home, at Buzz stadium.  
So, Leonard Huff, wherever you  
are, the ball's in your court.  
Aw, Jesus, Lenny!  
You could have just turned it off!  
That son of a bitch set me up.  
He knew every sports channel  
in America would run this thing.  
- Nobody ever said he was stupid.  
- Yeah, well, I'll say it. He's stupid.  
He's stupid, stupid.  
He's so stupid.

- Oh, stop.

- He's stupid.

What am I gonna do now?

Well, the way I see it  
you got one of 2 choices.

You can either play the Buzz,  
or you can have the entire world  
of baseball call you a coward.

It's up to you.

By the way... you just  
bought yourself a \$1,200 TV.

Jopu, what are you doing here?

I told you before. These boys,  
they've got to do it on their own.

I would love to use you,  
but I cannot.

So please,  
get back in the bag.

But stay close.

Jesus Christ, what a dump!

Oh, man, can you imagine  
living like this?

Look out!

Sorry to have to do this, but there's  
a speech clause in my contract.

I know you've all read in the paper  
that this game is a publicity stunt,  
Part of my ongoing feud  
with Leonard Huff.

But it would be foolish  
and self-indulgent  
for me to put you all  
in such a jam,  
in such a tough game for publicity.

No, my...

...my motivation is stronger,  
deeper than that. It's...  
it's ego.

But unlike some coaches who might ask  
you to go out there and play the game  
because you love it or because  
you're fulfilling a lifelong dream,  
I'm asking plain and simple  
that you win this one... for me.

Win this one for Gus Cantrell.  
Now, stay loose, play hard,  
give it your best shot,  
and let's go out there and  
take a bite out of the big team's ass.  
Gentlemen, you know  
the ground rules.  
So let's shake hands.  
Have a good, clean ball game.  
I'm going to give you  
the beating of your life.  
- We'll see about that.  
- Yeah, we will.  
By the way, some of the guys have been  
wondering where you got your toupee.  
This is not a toupee, all right?  
This is real.  
You can level with me, huh, Lenny?  
Come on, where'd you get it?  
- No, it is. it's real, see? It's mine.  
- Come on.  
It is. It's real, and it's mine.  
See that? Ha ha ha! Ha ha! Dumbass.  
I'll go tell the guys  
they were wrong.  
Well, the first pitch  
has yet to be thrown,  
and already Leonard Huff  
is tearing his hair out.  
And what a lovely head of hair it is.  
That is, of course, assuming it's real.  
And, frankly, I've  
always had a question.  
What style. What finesse.  
Ha ha! What je ne sais quoi.  
Which is Italian for  
"what a hell of a play."  
It's French, and it's  
"je ne sais quoi".  
Get out of here. It means the same thing  
in French? Huh. What about that?  
- Mon Dieu!  
- God bless you.  
Strike 2!

- Kid learned to throw a curveball, huh?  
- Gee, I don't know. Was that a curveball?  
I mean it's hard for me to tell  
from way back here.  
Carlos moves in a little closer, trying to  
get a good look at Hog's mystery pitch.  
- Otherwise known as a curve ball.  
- Probably a curve ball.  
Carlos is taking the plate  
away from Hog.  
The kid's afraid to  
throw him inside.  
All righty, Hog. Come on, buddy.  
Hang tough now, let's go.  
Ha ha! Let's go. Let's go, guys.  
We need some more runs now.  
Be a hitter up there! Be a hitter up there!  
Hey, hey. Pitcher's got a rubber arm.  
Hey, give me some pistachios.  
You're outta there!  
Well, the entire Lopez family scores,  
and the Twins learn the hard way  
you can't pitch around Anderson.  
He's become a complete hitter.  
All right, guys. Come on, come on, come on.  
Let's go. I need some more runs. More runs.  
You're outta there!  
That's poetry. Pure poetry.  
Poe, Wordsworth,  
Barry Manilow, Maya Angelou,  
this Buzz ballclub. What do they  
all have in common? Poetry.  
And I have to ask my colleague...  
Have you ever seen a sunset more  
beautiful than that play at the plate?  
My colleague is speechless.  
He's speechless.  
Come on, let's go!  
Hey, Twinkle toes,  
go ahead and get a lead. Get a  
lead, little bigger lead. That's it.  
- Pitch Count. What's the pitch count?  
- 97.  
Jeez, you moron. Come on, you're

killing me! And you are not helping.

Give me an "L".

Give me an "A".

Give me an "N".

Give me an "C".

- Give me an "E". What have you got?

- Lance!

- What have you got?

- Lance!

Top of the ninth. Twins are leading 4-3.

and with 2 outs and a runner on second,

the big man, Carlos Liston,

comes to the plate.

Hey, Cantrell!

Scoreboard! Scoreboard!

Man, you must love

these Minor Leagues.

Come on, now! Come on, now!

Hit a one-ton tomato!

Foul ball!

That ball lands foul for a

very long strike one.

All right, Carlos. Pop one out, and I'll

give you all the tamales you can eat!

Keep it fair.

I better go talk to him.

Another long strike

and here comes Cantrell.

And I imagine he's

going to ask Hog Ellis

to keep some of these

strikes inside the park.

Hey. Got 2 strikes on him.

- They were beauties too, huh?

- He's crowding the plate a little bit.

Hog? You want to walk him

and pitch to the next batter?

No.

I want Carlos.

- I think it's time for a little chin music.

- You sure?

Yeah. When he hits the dirt, you get

the ball back to me quick as you can.

If he comes out,

I'll try to cut him off.  
No, Pops, you stay put.  
This is my fight.  
He's gonna knock him down, boys.  
He's gonna knock him down.  
- All right, now, just hold on.  
- Wait, wait, wait.  
Now, this here is a  
100-mile-an-hour fastball.  
The most powerful fastball  
known to man.  
From this distance if it were to hit you,  
it'd take your head clean off.  
Of course, I could miss...  
but my control has been pretty good today...  
So you gotta ask yourself one question...  
Do I feel lucky?  
Well, do you, Carlos?  
Play ball!  
Strike 3, you're out!  
This is bad.  
Very bad. Not good.  
That brings us to the  
bottom of the ninth.  
By the way, folks, Hog  
Ellis is not a fighter.  
That's for sure.  
So I'm guessing he's appealed  
to Liston's more humane side...  
Begging for his life.  
explaining we're all here  
to enjoy the game...  
Speak for yourself.  
and there's no reason for  
anyone to get angry or hurt.  
Especially not Hog himself.  
And let me say this...  
if there is a sportsmanship award,  
my vote goes to Hog Ellis.  
And, oh, there's the other half of the  
voodoo magic brothers, Taka Tanaka.  
You're all nuts. You know that?  
Every last one of you.  
Well, it's an aura thing which



can only be appreciated by  
those of an enlightened nature.  
Yeah, it doesn't hurt  
if you're a little tweaked upstairs.  
And don't even try and tell me  
you can see with that thing on.  
Now Tanaka takes a couple of  
practice cuts and steps up to the plate.  
Taka drives one through the infield,  
and the Buzz have another base hit.  
Come on, you guys are killing me!  
What are you looking at, huh?  
What are you smirkin' at?  
Are you smirking at me? What, is  
this some kind of conspiracy?  
You, I can't even look at you, you waste  
of time. Hit the showers, you pig.  
Thank you.

- What's up?  
- You, uh, you want me to bunt?  
...sacrifice Taka over and  
get him into scoring position?

- I want you to go Downtown.  
- Downtown?

I want you to hit the ball  
into another zip code.

Yes, sir.

- Is he gonna sacrifice?  
- I told him to swing for the fence.  
- You did what?  
- You heard me.

You never tell a hitter  
to swing for the fence.  
I couldn't help myself.

Strike!

Come on, buddy.

Hang in there.

Good try, buddy. Good try.

You can do this. You can  
do this. You can do this.

It's gone.

It's gone!

That is it. That is all she wrote.

The fat lady is on

her way to the field.  
What a perfect end  
to a fantastic season.  
- Hey, let's be friends.  
- No.  
Come on. Give  
me a little hug.  
- No! No.  
- Come on.  
- No! Stay away!  
- One little hug.  
I'm a married man, you know.  
Aw, come on, at least let me  
carry you downstairs.  
That's it. It's over.  
I'm not a Pirate, I'm not a Yankee,  
I'm not even a Red Sock.  
I am a damn Buzz.  
Thank you.  
Bumblebee. Yeah,  
that's what I am, a Buzz.  
As far as I'm concerned,  
a deal's a deal.  
Besides, I know how long you've  
waited to get to the Major Leagues,  
and I know... that it  
has been a lifelong dream.  
Boy, I never thought I'd say this,  
but... I'm gonna have to pass.  
I'm talkin' about a job with  
the Twins here, Gus.  
I got a lot of information I'd like to  
pass on to young ballplayers.  
That's where I belong,  
and that's what I want to do.  
You want to manage  
a Minor League team?  
That's right.  
I wanna stick with the Buzz,  
if it's, uh, ok with you.  
Of course, but...  
But, uh... thanks.  
Attention please. Flight 63 to Miami  
is now boarding at gate 28.

Oh, that's us.

Wait a minute. Where  
are you guys goin'?

It's called a honeymoon.

Hey, that's great.

Congratulations.

Hey, I don't have any plans.

You mind if I come along?

Yeah, we do.