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Bull Durham

By Ron Shelton

FADE IN:

A series of still photos. Black and white. Ancient.
BABE RUTH SWINGS -- An icon of American history. His giant upper body balanced delicately on tiny ankles and feet. The huge bat in an elegant followthrough...

DISSOLVE TO:

TY COBB ROUNDS THIRD -- The most vicious ballplayer of them all, a balletic whirling dervish.

DISSOLVE TO:

JACKIE ROBINSON STEALS ROME -- Yogi Berra applies the tag. Too late.

DISSOLVE TO:

JOE DIMAGGIO WITH HIS SON in the Yankee clubhouse. Walking down the runway, Joe in uniform. Number five.

PULLBACK REVEALS:

A WALL COVERED WITH BASEBALL PICTURES behind a small table covered with objects and lit candles. A baseball, an old baseball card, a broken bat, a rosin bag, a jar of pine tar-- also a peacock feather, a silk shawl, a picture of Isadora Duncan. Clearly, the arrangement is--

A SHRINE -- And it glows with the candles like some religious altar.

We hear a woman's voice in a North Carolina accent.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I believe in the Church of
Baseball.

(beat)

I've tried all the major religions
and most of the minor ones--I've
worshipped Buddha, Allah, Brahma,
Vishnu, Siva, trees, mushrooms,
and Isadora Duncan...

PAN AWAY FROM THE SHRINE across the room. Late afternoon light spills into the room, across fine old furniture, to a small dressing table. A WOMAN applies make up.

ANNIE SAVOY, mid 30's, touches up her face. Very pretty, knowing, outwardly confident. Words flow from her Southern lips with ease, but her view of the world crosses Southern, National and International borders. She's cosmic.

ANNIE (V.O. CONT'D)

I know things. For instance--

(beat)

There are 108 beads in a Catholic rosary. And--

(beat)

There are 108 stitches in a baseball.

(beat)

When I learned that, I gave Jesus a chance.

(beat)

But it just didn't work out between us. The Lord laid too much guilt on me. I prefer metaphysics to theology.

(beat)

You see, there's no guilt in baseball...and it's never boring.

ANNIE OPENS A CLOSET DOOR -- Dozens of shoes hang from the door. She chooses a pair of RED HIGH HEELS, with thin straps. She sits on a bench and

ANNIE:

Which makes it like sex.

(beat)

There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career.

(beat)

Making love is like hitting a baseball--you just got to relax and concentrate.

ANNIE SLIPS ON THE RED HIGH HEELS -- Smoothing her hands up her calves as she does.

ANNIE:

Besides, I'd never sleep with a player hitting under .250 unless he had a lot of R.B.I.'s or was a great glove man up the middle.

(beat)

A woman's got to have standards.

SHE HOLDS HER LEGS DISPLAYING THE HEELS, side by side. Like a little girl showing off her new shoes.

ANNIE:

The young players start off full of enthusiasm and energy but they don't realize that come July and August when the weather is hot it's hard to perform at your peak level.

(beat)

The veterans pace themselves better. They finish stronger. They're great in September.

(beat)

While I don't believe a woman needs a man to be fulfilled, I do confess an interest in finding the ultimate guy--he'd have that youthful exuberance but the veteran's sense of timing...

ANNIE STARTS PACKING A HUGE HANDBAG -- With fruit, an official scorebook, binoculars, a radar gun, and lipstick.

ANNIE:

Y'see there's a certain amount of "life-wisdom" I give these boys.

(beat)

I can expand their minds. Sometimes when I've got a ballplayer alone I'll just read Emily Dickinson or Walt Whitman to him. The guys are so sweet-- they always stay and listen.

(beat)

Of course a guy will listen to anything if he thinks it's foreplay.

ANNIE TOUCHES PERFUME BEHIND HER EARS and, ever so slightly, in her cleavage.

ANNIE:

I make them feel confident. They make me feel safe. And pretty.

ANNIE POSES IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR -- She smoothes her dress along her hips. And puts on a flashy pair of sunglasses.

Stylish and slightly mad.

ANNIE:

what I give them lasts a life-
time. What they give me lasts
142 games. Sometimes it seems
like a bad trade

(quickly rebounding)

but bad trades are part of baseball--
who can forget Frank Robinson or
Milt Pappas, for Godsakes!

(beat)

It's a long season and you got to
trust it.

ANNIE STARTS FOR THE DOOR and grabs her baseball glove

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- DUSK

A frame house with porch and lots of trees--a Thomas Wolfe
house...with a 1959 faded red Volvo in the driveway.

ANNIE LEAVES ON FOOT, turning onto the sidewalk of a bucolic,
old Durham, North Carolina neighborhood. In the b.g. other
people are heading the same direction ANNIE PULLS A DURHAM
BULLS BASEBALL CAP from her handbag and pulls it on her head.

ANNIE:

I've tried them all--I really
have--

(beat)

and the only church that truly
feeds the soul--day in, day out--
is the Church of Baseball.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH -- DURHAM BASEBALL PARK -- DUSK

Now visible In the late afternoon sun, a rickety old stadium
carved into the center of an old Tobacco town.

People are arriving on foot from all around...

"Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley fills the air.

CLOSE ON A BASEBALL CLOWN -- MAX PATKIN, 60, at home plate
doing his famous Bill Haley routine.- A comic pitcher's windup
full of twists and goofy choreography.

RECORDING OVER P.A.

One o'clock, two o'clock, three

o'clock, rock...Four o'clock,
five o'clock, six o'clock rock...

ANNIE SITS DOWN IN HER PRIVATE BOX SEAT -- Her chair is wiped off by a young black boy, JACKSON, 11, who then sits next to her. He is her employed errand runner, note sender, and friend.

A GROUP OF GROUPIES ENTERS THE PARK -- 20 year old girl/women, dressed in tight pants, tight everything.

Friendly, eager, innocent--THEY WAVE TO ANNIE.

FIVE PLAYERS' WIVES AND THREE SMALL CHILDREN sit in a special box seat behind a small sign "Players' Wives".

RECORDING OVER P.A.

Seven o'clock, eight o'clock,
nine o'clock rock...we're gonna
rock around the clock tonight

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE DURHAM BULL DUGOUT -- NIGHT

AS MAX PATKIN CONTINUES HIS ROUTINE, PLAYERS WARM UP, AND- THE MANAGER, JOE RIGGINS, 45, known merely as SKIP, short for "Skipper", a chaw of tobacco in his cheek, stands with his pitching coach, LARRY HOCKETT late 30's, an ex-big leaguer whose body has seen too many cocktail lounges.

LARRY ROLLS SOME RED MAN CHEWING TOBACCO into a slab of pink bubble gum, carefully folding the corners, tucking it neatly together. Larry examines it as they talk-And shoves the giant chaw into his mouth.

SKIP:

Where's Ebby?

LARRY:

Ain't he warning up?

SKIP:

(cynically)

No. The guy's professional debut and he forgets about it.

LARRY:

Better find our bonus baby, eh?

A PLAYER, DEKE, 25, stuffs a hot dog into his mouth.

SKIP:

Seen Ebby?

DEKE:

(mouthful of food)

Nope.

SKIP WHIRLS AND HEADS UP THE TUNNEL into the:

CUT TO:

INT. THE DURHAM CLUBHOUSE -- NIGHT

SKIP enters, shouting--

SKIP:

Ebby?!

CLOSE ON A BARE ASS -- Baseball uniform around the ankles, short t-shirt on top, and on top of that the head of EBBY CALVIN LALOOSH, baseball cap on backwards. EBBY is a great looking energetic man-child with the endless confidence, naivete and horniness of youth.

Life is a party.

A YOUNG WOMAN, MILLIE, 20, half nude, is dressing quickly.

EBBY WHIRLS as Skip enters.

SKIP:

Jesus. Game starts in four minutes!

(beat)

Why ain't you warm?!

EBBY:

I am warm.

SKIP:

I'm fining you a hundred dollars.

Jesus, Ebby, this is your professional debut tonight--you know how many guys out there'd give blood to be in your shoes an' you're leavin' your fastball in the locker room for some piece of ass!

MILLIE LOOKS OUT FROM BEHIND A BAT RACK -- Outraged.

MILLIE:

Skip, It's me! I'm not some quote

piece of ass unquote.

SKIP:

Oh, Millie, jeez, sorry--I didn't recognize ya. Don't take it personal but if I catch you in here again you're banned from the ballpark.

MILLIE:

You can't ban me from the ballpark 'cause Daddy donated the scoreboard and if you banned me he might take the scoreboard away.

SKIP:

Whatta we need a scoreboard for? We haven't scored any runs all year
(tough, to Ebby)
Get your ass out there.
As Skip starts to leave.
EBBY)
Hey Boss, I got a question.

SKIP:

(stops, exasperated)
What?!

EBBY:

You think I need a nickname? I think I need a nickname. The great ones have nicknames-- somethin' like Oil Can or Catfish
Skip stares at him. He can't believe this guy.

SKIP:

Ya got three minutes.
SKIP WHIRLS AND HEADS BACK OUT TO THE FIELD -- And Ebby unperturbed, turns his attention back to Millie.

EBBY:

Got time for another quickie?

MILLIE:

Jesus, you got a game to pitch!

EBBY:

But we got three minutes.

EXT. THE BALLPARK -- MOMENTS LATER -- NIGHT

CUT TO:

MAX PATKIN STILL FLAILING AWAY to "Rock Around the Clock".

RECORDING:

When the clock strikes two, three,
and four and the band slows down
we'll yell for more, gonna rock
around the clock tonight.

ANNIE LOOKS THROUGH HER BINOCULARS -- Studying the players
warming up casually on the sidelines as Patkin winds up his
act.

P.O.V. A LATIN PLAYER playing pepper.

ANNIE:

Number twenty-two's thighs are
just great. Who's he?

JACKSON:

(reading the program)

Jose Galindo. He hit .314 at
Lynchburg last year.

ANNIE:

Three-fourteen? Hmmm... Look't
those thighs, Jackson

BACK TO MAX PATKIN -- He finishes his routine.

RECORDING OVER P.A.

Gonna rock, gonna rock around the
clock tonight.

INT. PRESS BOX -- NIGHT

CUT TO:

A WOMAN ANNOUNCER, MARYLOU, 30, speaks into the P.A. mike.

ANNOUNCER:

Let's hear it for Max Patkin--

Applause as Patkin takes his bows, leaves the field, shakes

hands with a the BULL MASCOT LEADING THE APPLAUSE.

ANNOUNCER:

"The Greatest Show on Dirt"--your
own Durham Bulls!

CUT TO:

INT. THE DUGOUT

CLOSE ON ANOTHER PLAYER -- MICKEY MCFEE, 23, black. Smoking
a cigaret--always smoking a cigaret. He snuffs out his
cigaret and RUNS onto the field with the rest of the team,
as--

EBBY ENTERS THE DUGOUT from the runway. Larry and Skip
encourage their players running onto the field. Ebbby is
trying to get the zipper on his fly unstuck. He smiles
broadly at Skip and Larry, and grabs his glove.

EBBY:

I'm there, Skip, I'm ready.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PRESS BOX

THE RADIO ANNOUNCER, TEDDY CULLINANE, 50, leans into the
radio mike of a very small local station. Next to him is
the local SPORTSWRITER, WHITEY SHERRARD, 40. Between them
they've seen a million minor league players come and go.

WHITEY:

Is this guy LaLoosh worth a hundred
grand? I hear he's a quart low?

TEDDY THE RADIO MAN

(covering the mike)

He's left handed. Whattya expect?

(on the air)

The Bulls are off to a slow start
having dropped their first three
games, but hope to turn it around
tonight with the professional
debut of the heralded young left
hander, Ebbby Calvin LaLoosh.

(beat)

Stepping In for the Peninsula

White Sox is leadoff hitter Willie

Foster

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BALLFIELD -- NIGHT

ANGLE TO ANNIE'S BOX SEAT -- Millie has joined Annie and Jackson. Clearly, the younger women look up to Annie for wisdom and insight.

ANNIE:

--Millie, you've got to stay out of the clubhouse. It'll just get everybody in trouble.

MILLIE:

I got lured.

ANNIE:

You didn't get "lured". Women never get lured. They're too strong and powerful for that. Now say it--"I didn't get lured and I will take responsibility for my actions".

MILLIE:

"I didn't get lured and I will take responsibility for my actions".

ANNIE:

That's better.
(to Jackson)
Got the radar ready?

JACKSON:

Ready.
JACKSON AIMS A RADAR GUN at the plate.
THE PENINSULA WHITE SOX LEADOFF HITTER steps in.
TEDDY THE RADIO MAN (V.O.)
The word on LaLoosh is that the good looking young lefty has a major league fastball but sometimes has problems with his control
EBBY CALVIN LALOOSH WINDS UP and fires. The pitch sails over the batter's head, over the catcher's head, over the

backstop, and CRASHES INTO THE PRESS BOX.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PRESS BOX

THE ANNOUNCER AND SPORTSWRITER CRASH to the floor as the ball smashes into their booth.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DUGOUT

SKIP SPITS TOBACCO, mumbles flatly to Larry.

SKIP:

Little high.

LARRY:

(shouts to EBBY)

C'mon big 'un, you're okay...

ANNIE'S BOX SEAT -- She turns to Jackson.

JACKSON:

Ninety-five miles an hour.

ANNIE:

He looks great, just great!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PITCHER'S MOUND

THE CATCHER TALKS TO EBBY, trying to calm him down.

CATCHER:

What the hell was that?! Lighten up a little. Awright?

EBBY,

(to catcher)

Hey--what's your name again--I'm bad with names--

CATCHER:

Ed. You want me to write it on my chest? Jesus ...

EBBY:

Sorry. Hey, Ed, I got a question.

CATCHER:

What?

EBBY:

Who's the beef sitting behind the third base dugout?

CATCHER:

(slowly)

That's Annie Savoy. Nice eh?

But that's more woman than you ever dreamed of, Rook. She could kick your ass and have you for breakfast

THE CATCHER RETURNS to the plate.

INT. THE PRESS BOX

CUT TO:

WHITEY AND TEDDY WARILY CLIMB back to their seats.

TEDDY:

One ball and no strikes to Willie Foster...

CUT TO:

EBBY'S NEXT PITCH HITS FOSTER in the ribs. He crumples.

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S BOX SEAT -- She's writing a note. She hands it to Jackson.

ANNIE:

Take this to Ebbby in the dugout between innings.

JACKSON:

What's it say?

ANNIE:

It says he's not bending his back on his follow-through.

JACKSON RUNS OFF with the note. Annie turns to Millie.

ANNIE:

Well let's get down to it, honey--
how was he?

MILLIE:

Well, he fucks like he pitches.
Sorta all over the place
P.O.V. EBBY LALOOSH FIRES ANOTHER ONE into the stands. And--
Hit "Rock Around the Clock"--

DISSOLVE INTO:

QUICK MONTAGE OF EBBY'S FIRST GAME -- Strikeouts and wild
pitches. A young, gifted, uncontrollable thrower.
BILL HALEY AND HIS COMETS
When the chimes ring five, six
and seven--We'll be right in
Seventh Heaven, Gonna rock around
the clock tonight...
EBBY UNLEASHES A WILD ONE -- And decks the Bull Mascot.
EBBY IN THE DUGOUT READS THE NOTE from Annie.
EBBY STRIKES OUT a Peninsula batter.
EBBY UNLEASHES ANOTHER WILD ONE and a batter hits the dirt.
End "Rock Around the Clock" and--

CUT TO:

INT. THE BULL LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT
SKIP WALKS THROUGH THE PLAYERS ROOM -- Players are up, joking
irreverently.

JOSE:

Hey Lefty, hold 'em to 12 runs
every night, you'll win 20--

EBBY:

(he might be serious)
Had 'em all the way.
A DURHAM PLAYER SITTING HALF DRESSED in front of his locker.
A PICTURE OF JESUS hangs amidst his gear. The player, JIMMY,
25, has a Bible and prays softly to himself.

JIMMY:

Dear Lord, thank you for being
with us tonight, thank you for
protecting us from injury and--
DEKE WALKS BY, shaking Jimmy irreverently as he prays.

DEKE:

Wake up, wake up--

MICKEY (A BLACK) COMPLAINS TO TONY as they undress.

MICKEY:

This league is racist, man.

TONY:

Every time you go 0 for 4 you
think the league is racist-face
it, Mick, you're an equal
opportunity "out".

CUT TO:

THE MANAGER'S OFFICE -- A tiny cubicle, a desk, phone Larry
joins him with the pitching charts. Skip studies the charts.

SKIP:

He walked eighteen?!

LARRY:

It's a league record.

SKIP:

Struck out eighteen...

LARRY:

League record.

(beat)

And he hit the Radio Announcer, a
Sportswriter, and the Bull Mascot
twice--also league records--

(beat)

Joe, the guy's got some serious
shit.

THE DOOR OPENS -- A PLAYER ENTERS, in street clothes, carrying
his suitcases. CRASH DAVIS, 30, older than the other players.
And different. More than just opinions, he actually has a
point of view. A career minor leaguer, hanging on wherever
he can get a job. Unlike Ebby--Crash knows a lot about the
world without baseball. Also unlike Ebby--he loves baseball
desperately.

LARRY:

Who're you?

Crash speaks slowly, with a trace of cynicism and pride, like an old warrior who knows he's just a hired gun.

CRASH:

I am the player to be named later.

Beat. Skip looks out, half dressed, from his cubicle.

SKIP:

Crash Davis?

CRASH:

The Crash Davis.

(beat, then nonstop)

And you, Larry Hockett, should recognize me 'cause five years ago in the Texas League when you were pitching for El Paso and I was hitting cleanup for Shreveport, you hung a curve on an 0-2 pitch of a 3-2 game in bottom of the 8th and I tattooed it over the Goodyear Tire sign, beat you 4-3-- and I got a free wheel alignment from Goodyear.

LARRY:

(remembering)

Ohyeah. I shoulda throwed a slider. Damn, Crash, how're ya?

SKIP:

I'm Joe Riggins. Sit down

CRASH:

I'm too old for this shit. Why the hell am I back in "A" ball?

SKIP:

'Cause of Ebby Calvin LaLoosh.

(beat)

The Big Club's got a hundred grand in him-

LARRY:

He's got a million dollar arm and
a five cent head.

SKIP:

--we had the gun on him tonight--
the last five pitches he threw
were faster than the first five.
96 miles an hour, 98, 97, 97.
97. (beat) He's got the best
young arm I've seen in 30 years.

LARRY:

But he ain't quite sure which
plane he's on, y'know what I
mean...

SKIP:

You been around, you're smart,
you're professional, you know
what it takes--
(beat)
We want you to mature the kid.

CRASH:

"Mature" ain't a fuckin' verb.

LARRY:

You go to college or what?

SKIP:

We want you to room with him on
the road and stay on his case all
year.
(beat)
He can go all the way.

CRASH:

And where can I go?

SKIP:

You can keep going to the ballpark
and keep gettin' paid to do it.

(beat)

Beats hell outta working at Sears.

LARRY:

Sears sucks, Crash, I tried it once. Sold Lady Kenmores--it's nasty, nasty work.

SKIP:

Even if it's the Carolina League--this is a chance to play everyday.

CRASH:

(angrily)

You don't want a player, you want a stable pony. My Triple A contract gets bought out so I can hold the Flavor o' the Month's dick in the bus leagues?!

(angrily)

Fuck this fucking game... I fuckin' quit.

CRASH RISES TO LEAVE -- Picks up his luggage, and turns to Skip and Larry before exiting. A deep breath

CRASH:

Who we play tomorrow?

Beat. They know, they share the inability to quit the game. They're all clinging to the Church of Baseball.

SKIP:

Winston-Salem. Batting practice

at 4:

CRASH LEAVES and as he does -- Ed (the catcher) enters.

ED:

You wanted to see me?

SKIP:

Yeah, Ed, shut the door...

He does. Remains standing. He can see it coming.

SKIP:

This is the toughest job a manager has, Ed...

(deep breath)

But the organization has decided to make a change--we're releasing you from your contract...

CLOSE ON ED -- Silent. Motionless. Empty.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKER ROOM --

CRASH PUTS HIS BAG IN A LOCKER as other players return from the shower. Crash watches as EBBY SOAKS HIS ELBOW IN A TUB OF ICE WATER as the sports writer, Whitey, interviews him.

WHITEY:

How's it feel to get your first professional win?

EBBY:

It feels "out there". A major rush. I mean it doesn't just feel "out there" but it feels out there.

CRASH:

Hopeless. Utterly fucking hopeless.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXWELL'S BAR -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Loud country music in the players' hangout and pickup spot. It's full of players and lots of young women.

MILLIE SITS DOWN NEXT TO YET ANOTHER PLAYER, TONY, 25-- He's slick, urban, smooth.

MILLIE:

Hi, I'm Millie.

TONY:

I'm Tony. I play left field.

MILLIE:

I know.

ANNIE SITS IN THE CORNER at her own table. Max Patkin,

looking spiffy in a turtle neck sweater and double breasted blazer, sits down next to her. Old friends.

MAX:

Love the game, Annie, love it
(dead serious)
When I die I'm gonna have my ashes
sprinkled around a pitcher's mound
in some ballpark somewhere--
(beat)
--and I'll have a few ashes saved
for the rosin bag so I'll still
be in the game after I'm gone.

ANNIE:

What a sweet idea-
A COCKTAIL WAITRESS DELIVERS another round to them.

ANNIE:

We didn't order this, honey...

WAITRESS:

(she points)
He did.
P.O.V. CRASH DAVIS SITTING ALONE IN THE OTHER CORNER. HE
waves, and smiles easily.

ANNIE:

(to Max)
Who's that?

MAX:

Hey--that's Crash Davis. He's
played in more towns than I have.
Helluva guy--real different... I
actually saw him read a book
without pictures once

ANNIE:

Really? Kinda cute...
ANNIE NODS AT CRASH -- He comes over to her table, greets
Max as an old friend, and introduces himself.

CRASH:

I'm Crash Davis.

ANNIE:

Annie Savoy. Wanta dance?

CRASH:

I don't dance.

ANNIE:

I don't trust a man who don't
dance. It ain't natural.

SUDDENLY -- HARD CORE ROCK AND ROLL on the juke box. Several
couples dance, and out of the pack--

EBBY DANCES WITH A GROUPIE -- Spinning and whirling,
uninhibited and infectious. He's suddenly dancing with a
different WOMAN, then another, and another...

ANNIE, CRASH AND MAX WATCH the mad performance.

MAX:

Who's he dancing with?

ANNIE:

All of 'em, I think...

EBBY PUTS ON A ONE MAN SHOW ON THE DANCE FLOOR -- The whole
bar stops to watch him, applauding as he spins to a finish.
A quirkier "Saturday Night Fever" show. More naive, fun.
He climbs off the floor and joins Annie's table.

EBBY:

Thanks for the note--you're right,
I wasn't bending my back.

ANNIE:

You got a live arm there.
He extends his hand to introduce himself.

EBBY:

Ebby Calvin LaLoosh.

ANNIE:

You need a nickname.

EBBY:

That's what I been telling

everybody! Wanta dance?

CRASH:

She's dancing with me.

ANNIE:

Crash, I didn't think you--

CRASH:

I'll learn. C'mon--

EBBY:

Just a minute, pal

The two men square off quickly. Annie mocks them.

ANNIE:

You boys gonna fight over little
me?

CRASH RISES, pulling Annie with him. But--

EBBY STANDS to challenge Crash.

EBBY:

Step outside, pal.

CRASH:

Love to--

ANNIE:

Oh don't be such guys--

But Crash and Ebby head outside. She turns to Max--

ANNIE:

Hell, Max, wanta dance?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

A circle is formed. Everybody gathers. Millie clings to
Tony, her guy of the moment. Crash and Ebby face off.

CRASH:

I don't believe in fighting.

EBBY:

Pussy.

CRASH:

Take the first shot at me.

EBBY:

I ain't hitting a man first.

CRASH:

Hit me in the chest with this...

CRASH PULLS A BASEBALL from his jacket pocket, tosses it to Ebby.

EBBY:

I'd kill ya.

CRASH:

From what I hear you couldn't hit a bull in the ass with a slingshot

EBBY:

Don't try me.

CRASH:

Throw it. C'mon, right in the chest.

EBBY:

No way.

CRASH:

C'mon, Meat. You can't hit me 'cause you're starting to think about it already, you're starting to think how embarrassing it'll be to miss, how all these people would laugh.

(teasing mercilessly)

C'mon, Rook--show me that million dollar arm 'cause I'm getting a good idea about the five cent head--

EBBY REARS BACK AND FIRES THE BALL -- From ten feet away, right at Crash's chest. But, alas--

THE BALL GOES THROUGH A SECOND STORY WINDOW in the distance.

Crash never blinks.

CRASH:

Ball four.

EBBY IS ENRAGED -- HE CHARGES CRASH, lunging at him.

EBBY:

Who the fuck are you?!

CRASH LASHES OUT A SHORT LEFT -- With lightning speed, effortless. And brutal. BANG! Ebby goes down. And stays there stunned. He looks up.

CRASH:

I'm Crash Davis. Your new catcher.

And you just got Lesson Number One--"Don't think--it can only hurt the ballclub".

(beat)

Buy ya a drink?

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLUB -- NIGHT

ANNIE AND MAX DANCE to Billy Eckstein on the juke box. Millie and Tony are also on the dance floor.

ECKSTEIN (ON JUKE BOX)

April in Paris, chestnuts in blossom, Holiday tables under the tree...

EBBY AND CRASH WATCH FROM THE CORNER TABLE -- Ebby's right eye is blackened. He holds a drink on it.

EBBY:

We fight, she gets the clown--
how's that happen?

CRASH:

Shut up--I like this song...

(sings along)

April in Paris, this is a feeling,
No one can ever reprieve...

EBBY:

She's playing with my mind.

CRASH:

It's a damn easy thing to play
with.

ANNIE SUDDENLY APPEARS at the table.

ANNIE:

Well--you boys stopped fighting
yet? Are you pals now? Good. I
love a little macho male bonding--
I think it's sweet even if it's
probably latent homosexuality
being "re-channeled" but I believe
in "re-channeling" so who cares,
right?

(beat)

Shall we go to my place?

EBBY:

Which one of us?

ANNIE:

Oh both of you, of course...

CLOSE ON EBBY -- His eyes full of fear and wonder.

CLOSE ON CRASH -- He smiles.

THE THREE OF THEM LEAVE the bar together.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

THE SHRINE OF BASEBALL GLOWS -- Annie lights the candles.

EBBY AND CRASH SIT ON OPPOSITE ENDS OF HER COUCH -- Both men
look around the room with wonder. Ebby is clearly more
nervous than Crash, who's been in some strange rooms in his
minor league career.

ANNIE:

These are the ground rules.

(beat)

I hook up with one guy a season--
I mean it takes me a couple of
weeks to pick the guy--kinda my
own spring training...

(beat)

And, well, you two are the most
promising prospects of the season

so far.

(beat)

So... I thought we should get to know each other.

CRASH:

Why do you get to choose? Why don't I get to choose?

ANNIE:

Actually none of us on this planet ever really choose each other. It's all Quantum Physics and molecular attraction. There are laws we don't understand that bring us together and break us apart.

EBBY:

Is somebody gonna go to bed with somebody or what?

ANNIE:

You're a regular nuclear meltdown, honey--slow down.
Crash rises to leave, and heads for the door.

CRASH:

After 12 years in the minor leagues, I don't tryout. Besides-- I don't believe in, Quantum Physics when it comes to matters of the heart...or loins.

ANNIE:

(challenging him)

What do you believe in?

Crash at the door. Annie's question is slightly taunting. He stops, and speaks with both aloofness and passion:

CRASH:

I believe in the soul, the cock, the pussy, the small of a woman's back, the hanging curve ball,

high fiber, good scotch, long
foreplay, show tunes, and that
the novels of Thomas Pynchon are
self-indulgent, overrated crap.

(beat)

I believe that Lee Harvey Oswald
acted alone, I believe that there
oughtta be a constitutional
amendment outlawing astro-turf
and the designated hitter, I
believe in the "sweet spot", voting
every election, soft core
pornography, chocolate chip
cookies, opening your presents on
Christmas morning rather than
Christmas eve, and I believe in
long, slow, deep, soft, wet kisses
that last for 7 days.

ANNIE:

(breathless)

Oh my...

(softly)

Don't leave...

CRASH:

G'night.

Crash heads out into the night. Annie hurries to the-door
while Ebby sits on the couch, bewildered.

EBBY:

Hey--what's all this molecule
stuff?

ANNIE STANDS IN THE DOORWAY -- Crash is on the porch.

ANNIE:

Wait, Crash--don't go--all I want
is a date. I'm not gonna fall in
love with you or nothin'.

CRASH:

I'm not interested in a woman
who's interested in that boy.

ANNIE:

I'm not interested yet.
Ebby appears in the door.

EBBY:

Who you calling a "boy"?

CRASH:

See ya at the yard, Meat.
Crash walks out into the Durham night. Ebby and Annie stand in the doorway. She speaks softly to Ebby.

ANNIE:

No ballplayer ever said "no" to a date with me.

EBBY:

Well shit, then, let's fuck.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER
ANNIE PUTS ON A RECORD -- Edith Piaf sings "Le Trois Cloches".
EBBY STARTS UNDESSING across the room.

ANNIE:

Wait, honey, slow down--I want to watch.
She sits in a chair. Piaf sings. Ebby practically rips his shirt off, exposing a great upper body.

ANNIE:

No, no, no. Put it back on and take it off slowly.

EBBY:

Jesus, what kinda broad are you?

ANNIE:

When you know how to make love,
you'll know how to pitch.
(turning to the stereo)
Shh. I love this part.
Piaf sings. Annie listens. Ebby re-buttons, then unbuttons his shirt. It drops, revealing his back.

ANNIE:

Oh my--what a nice back.
Ebby drops his pants.

ANNIE:

No, no, honey... first the shoes
and socks.

EBBY:

The socks? It's cold in here.

ANNIE:

(sweetly, unthreatening)
You think Dwight Gooden leaves
his socks on?
Ebby considers this. Pulls his pants back up. Takes his
socks off. Then his pants.

ANNIE:

Ebby honey have you ever been
handcuffed in bed?

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN DURHAM -- NIGHT
Deserted streets of the old tobacco town. Crash walks alone.
He picks up an old newspaper out of a trash can. He stops
in front of a store window. He rolls the newspaper like a
short bat. He takes a batting stance, and--
CRASH TAKES HIS BATTING STANCE in front of the window,
studying his reflection. He taken a "swing". And another.
A GROUP OF OLD BLACK MEN stand in a doorway, watching.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - 'CONTINUOUS NIGHT
CLICK -- A handcuff is locked onto Ebby's wrist. Both his
arms are outstretched--he's getting very excited.

EBBY:

Awright! I read about stuff like
this. Bring it on!
Annie calmly drags a chair over and sits down.

ANNIE:

Sweetie, have you ever heard of
Walt Whitman?

EBBY:

Who's he play for?

ANNIE:

Well, he sort of pitches for the
Cosmic All-Stars.

EBBY:

Never heard of 'em.

Annie opens a book and begins reading as Piaf sings softly.

ANNIE:

Good--then listen.

(reading)

"I sing the body electric. The
armies of those I love engirth me
and I engirth them--"

EBBY:

We gonna fuck or what?

ANNIE:

Shh, shh...

(reading)

"They will not let me off till I
go with them, respond to them,
and discorrupt them and charge
them"

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE -- LATER

ANNIE:

"Limitless limpid jets of love
hot and enormous -- quivering
jelly of love, white blow and
delirious juice--

CLOSE ON EBBY'S FACE -- Intrigued, aroused, frightened.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN DURHAM -- NIGHT

THE OLD BLACK MAN is tossing wadded up balls of paper at Crash who takes beautiful, fluid swings with the rolled up newspaper. Batting practice.

CLOSE ON CRASH'S EYES -- Studying the "pitches" with intense concentration, endlessly working on his game.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DURHAM FIELD -- NEXT DAY

LARRY, DEKE, MICKEY AND BOBBY ARE SINGING at home plate as a pre-game show. Larry is Diana Ross, the other three are the Supremes, and the routine is brilliantly tacky.

LARRY (AND THE SUPREMES)

Baby love, oh oh, baby love, I
need ya oh how I need ya, All ya
do is treat me bad, Take my heart
and leave me sad...

CUT TO:

INT. DURHAM BULLS LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

JIMMY STANDS ON A BENCH trying to get the players' attention.

JIMMY:

Listen up, guys, could I have
your attention a minute?

(a few heads turn)

I'm going to be leading a daily
chapel service at three In the
afternoons here in the locker
room and you're all invited to
drop by and worship before batting
practice.

BOBBY:

Jimmy, God damn it--loosen up and
get laid.

BOBBY, 25, smooths the creases of his uniform, preening.

JIMMY:

I don't care If you think I'm
square but I believe what I
believe.

All heads turn as:

EBBY ENTERS THE LOCKER ROOM -- He looks trashed.

BOBBY:

Jesus, Ebby, what truck ran over you?

EBBY:

(glassy eyed)
Call me "Nuke". Annie said it's my new nickname.
Lots of teasing from around the clubhouse.

DEKE:

Annie nailed you? That's great, means you're gonna have a helluva year. Does she fuck as good as they say?

EBBY:

We didn't do it, man--she read poetry to me all night, I swear. It's more tiring than fucking.
EBBY GOES TO HIS LOCKER and starts undressing. Crash sits next to him, looking straight ahead. Bobby nearby.

EBBY:

--of love"...hey, Crash, does that mean what I think it means? What's the deal here?
Crash studies Ebby.

CRASH:

Your shower shoes have fungus on 'em. You'll never get to the Bigs with fungus on your shower shoes.
(beat)
Think classy and you'll be classy. If you win 20 in the Show you can let the fungus grow back on your shower shoes and the press'll think you're colorful.
(beat)
Until you win twenty in the Show, however, it means you're a slob.
CRASH RISES AND HEADS OUT to the field. Ebby sits silently,

holding his shower shoes, taking it all in.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM BALLPARK -- GAME IN PROGRESS -- DAY
IN THE DUGOUT -- THE GAME FROM A DUGOUT P.O.V. The players
sit, stand, stir restlessly. A combination of relaxation
and intensity not visible from the stands.
CRASH IS HANDED HIS BAT and helmet by the bat boy.

DEKE:

This guy's bringing some serious
smoke out there.
DUGOUT P.O.V. THE WINSTON-SALEM PITCHER throwing hard.

CRASH:

He ain't got shit.
FOLLOW CRASH INTO THE ON-DECK CIRCLE -- The ritual. The bat
boy hands him the pine tar rag and he rubs pine tar on the
bat with great care.
CRASH RISES -- Heads to the plate. Talking to himself.

CRASH:

You ain't getting that cheese by
me, meat.
CRASH TAKES HIS STANCE -- Upright. Calm. Head still.
CRASH (VOICE OVER)
Look for the fastball up. He's
gotta come with the cheese. Relax.
Relax. Quick bat. Pop the
clubhead. Open the hips. Relax.
You're thinking too much. Get
outta your fuckin' head, Crash.
CLOSE ON CRASH'S FACE -- His eyes intensely focused.
CRASH'S P.O.V. THE PITCHER -- Starts his windup.
CRASH (VOICE OVER)
Get on top of the ball. Quick
bat. Don't let him in your kitchen--
THE PITCHER DELIVERS -- Crash strides. Curveball.
Crash swings and misses, offstride. Strike one.
CRASH QUICKLY STEPS OUT OF THE BOX and picks up dirt. Rubs
it on his hands. He's pissed.
CRASH (VOICE OVER)
You stupid fuck, Crash. What're
you swinging at a breaking ball

for? Why's he starting me off
with a hammer? Fuck me.

(more dirt)

You're okay. Stay back. Stay
back, you dumb fuck. Wait. Wait.

P.O.V. THE PITCHER'S NEXT DELIVERY -- CURVE BALL AWAY.

CRASH STRIDES INTO THE PITCH -- Lashes a line drive down the
first base line. Just foul.

Crash has started to first. Pulls up. Returns slowly to
the plate. Picks up his bat.

CRASH:

Throw that shit again, meat.

Throw that weak ass shit.

(beat)

Now he's gotta try to slip the
cheese by me. one and one.

You're on top. Now bring me the gas--

--P.O.V. PITCHER'S THIRD DELIVERY -- High and tight. Right
at Crash's head. The ball seems to accelerate. About to
explode his skull. For a moment--THE FEAR OF DEATH...

CRASH HITS THE DIRT -- It just misses his head.

CRASH CLIMBS OUT OF THE DIRT -- Brushes himself off.

CRASH (VOICE OVER)

This son of a bitch throws hard.

(beat)

Annie, Annie, Annie--who is this
Annie?

(catching himself)

Jesus, get outta the box you idiot,
where's your head? Get the broad
outta your head.

CRASH HOLDS UP HIS HAND to the ump.

CRASH:

Time out.

UMP:

Time out!

CRASH STEPS OUT OF THE BOX -- Motions to the bat boy for the
pine tar rag. The boy brings it over. Crash re-applies it
to his bat.

BAT BOY:

Get a hit, Crash.

CRASH:

Shut up.

CRASH WALKS BACK TO THE BOX -- Talking to himself.

CRASH:

Awright, awright. You've seen
all his pitches. Two and one.
Relax. Wait. Quick bat. You
can hit this shit--

CRASH IN THE BATTER'S BOX -- Digs in-again. Takes his stance.
Upright. Relaxed. Ready.

CRASH (VOICE OVER)

Shorten up. Bring the gas... Be
quick--be quick--yeah, yeah...

CUT TO:

ANNIE AND JACKSON IN THE STANDS -- She's writing a note
quickly, and hands it to Jackson, who hurries off.

CUT TO:

CRASH'S P.O.V. THE PITCHER'S NEXT PITCH -- A major league
fastball. It explodes to the plate. Crash swings. And
misses. Strike Three.

CRASH WALKS BACK TO THE DUGOUT -- Head high, no show of
emotion. Almost proud. An old Warrior, not giving an inch
even in defeat.

HE RE-ENTERS THE DUGOUT -- Sits down and starts putting the
catcher's gear back on. Deke leans over.

DEKE:

Serious heat, eh?

CRASH:

He ain't got shit.

THE BATBOY TAKES THE NOTE FROM JACKSON -- And hands it to
Crash, who refuses to accept it, being busy putting his gear
on.

BAT BOY:

From Annie.

CRASH:

Read it.

BAT BOY:

Dear Crash. You have a lovely swing but you're pulling your hips out too early. I'd be happy to meet you at the Batting Cage tomorrow to discuss it. Signed, Annie.

DEKE:

Well if there's one chick'd know when you're pulling your hips out early, Annie's the one.

Crash doesn't seem too amused. He grabs the note, and the pen hanging from the starting lineup card taped to the dugout wall. He scrawls a quick note.

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S PRIVATE BOX -- She's watching the players through binoculars as Jackson returns with the note.

ANNIE:

(looking through the glasses)

What'd he say?

Jackson looks at the note uneasily, then reads--

JACKSON:

It says..."I want to-make... love to you. Crash".

ANNIE PUTS DOWN THE GLASSES -- Takes the note.

ANNIE:

Oh my...

CUT TO:

EXT. A LOCAL BATTING CAGE DAY

ANNIE DIGS IN AT THE PLATE -- Bat in hand. Crash a few feet away. Annie spits on her hands, wear batting glove, pumps the bat back and forth.

THE MECHANICAL PITCHING MACHINE DELIVERS -- Kawoosh.

ANNIE SWINGS -- Lashes out a line drive. Crash smiles.

ANNIE:

See my hips?

CRASH:

Yep.

ANNIE:

I think Thomas Pynchon's a genius.

CRASH:

When you're hitting you shouldn't think about anything but hitting.

(beat)

But you shouldn't think about it too much. The trick is to use your brain to not use your brain.

ANNIE:

But you were pulling your hips last night.

CRASH:

So...Wanta make love?

ANNIE SWINGS AND MISSES the next pitch.

ANNIE:

I'm committed to Nuke for the season. You had your chance the other night.

CRASH:

What you see in that guy--he's dim, pretty boy. a young, wild,

ANNIE:

Young men are uncomplicated.

(Crash mutters)

And he's not "dim". He's just inexperienced. My job is to give him "life-wisdom" and help him make it to the major leagues.

CRASH:

That's my job too.

ANNIE SWINGS AND MISSES another pitch.

ANNIE:

Damn.

CRASH:

You're pulling your hips out.

ANNIE:

But they're nice hips.

(beat)

I looked up your records-- You've hit 227 home runs in the minors.

That's great!

ANNIE FOULS ONE OFF and digs in gamely.

CRASH:

Don't tell anybody.

ANNIE:

Why not? If you hit twenty homers this year you'll be the all time minor league champ! The record's

CRASH:

247 home runs in the minors would be a dubious honor, if ya think about it.

ANNIE:

Oh no, I think it'd be great! The Sporting News should know about it.

CRASH:

No. Please.

ANNIE SWINGS AND MISSES another one.

ANNIE:

Damn.

CRASH:

Let me.

CRASH STEPS IN TO HIT -- He takes his familiar stance. The

pitch comes. Crash drills it.

CRASH:

Your place or mine?

ANNIE:

Despite my love of weird
metaphysics and my rejection of
most Judao-Christian ethics, I
am, within the framework of a
baseball season, monogamous.

CRASH:

Fact is you're afraid of meeting
a guy like me 'cause it might be
real so you sabotage it with some
bullshit about commitment to a
young boy you
can boss around--

(whack--a line drive)

Great deal. You get to write
self-indulgent little poems all
winter about how hard it is to
find a man even though you just
sent him packing-

(whack--a line drive)

So what do you really want? You
wanta be a tragic woman figure
wallowing in the bullshit of magic?

(whack--a line drive)

Or do you want a guy?

The pitching machine arm flaps. Empty. Silence.

ANNIE:

Oh Crash...you do make speeches...

Crash puts the bat down, heads out the gate. She follows.

A LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM ARRIVES -- Twenty-five 10 year olds in
uniform with a couple PARENT COACHES.

LITTLE LEAGUER #1

Hey, are you Crash Davis! Can I
have a autograph?!

CRASH STOPS TO SIGN AUTOGRAPHS amidst 25 Little Leaguers.

CRASH:

(as he signs autographs)
Well, Annie, your place or mine?

ANNIE:

You got me all confused.

CRASH:

A batter has two tenths of a second
to decide whether to swing--

ANNIE:

I'm not a real batter. I'm a
woman.

LITTLE LEAGUER:

Hey, when are you guys gonna start
winning? You're terrible!

ANNIE:

It's a long season, boys.
SUDDENLY A VOICE -- Nuke pulls up, gets out of his Porsche.

NUKE:

Hey!
(coming over)
What're you guys doing here--
stealing my girl?

CRASH:

Now, Nuke, would I do a thing
like that?
(to the little leaguers)
Hey kids, this is the great Ebby
Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh.

LITTLE LEAGUERS:

It's Nuke, it's Nuke! Can I have
your autograph?! etc.

NUKE:

No prob, kids--
And suddenly Nuke is swept up into a sea of Little Leaguers.
Crash smiles as he turns Annie and the kids over to Nuke.

CRASH:

See you guys at the ballpark.
Crash leaves Annie with Nuke and 25 Little Leaguers.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRASH GETS INTO HIS CAR -- CONTINUOUS
AN AGING SHELBY MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE -- The paint's fading, a couple dings in the body, but loaded under the hood.
CRASH PUNCHES HIS TAPE DECK -- Sam Cooke's "You Send Me".
ANNIE BITES HER FIST watching Crash leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM -- DAY
The sounds of lovemaking in a darkened room lit only by a few candles.

ANNIE:

Yes, yes, yesnnmmmyes...
(beat)
Oh my...
(several beats)
Oh, that was just fabulous, Crash.
Several beats of silence.

NUKE:

Crash?
He flips on a lamp near the bed.

NUKE:

You mean Nuke. You said "Crash".

ANNIE:

I didn't say "Crash". I said
Nuke.

NUKE:

You said "Crash".

ANNIE:

Honey, don't ever listen to a
woman when she's making love.
They'll say the strangest things.

NUKE:

You said "Crash".

ANNIE:

Would you rather me be making love to him, using your name, or making love to you, using his name?

Nuke considers this fabulous logic.

NUKE:

Yeah maybe you're right.

ANNIE:

You see how nice things are when we go slow?

Nuke sighs; and lets his head sink in the pillow.

NUKE:

Mmm, hmmm.

(beat)

You shoulda seen how many people came to the airport to see me off. When I got drafted first it was the happiest day of my Father's life.

(beat)

He likes baseball more than I do...

ANNIE:

You can learn to like it.

NUKE:

I wanted to be the host of Dance Fever, somethin' like that...

ANNIE:

Y'know if you make it to the Bigs you could still become the host of Dance Fever. Baseball's a good stepping stone for things like that.

NUKE:

God, I never thought of that.

ANNIE:

(sweetly)

There is a lot of things you never thought of, sweetie--now get some rest for tonight's game.

Nuke rests his head on Annie's shoulder. His eyes are wide open and full of nervous energy.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM BASEBALL PARK -- DUSK

NUKE ON A PAY PHONE -- In his uniform. Players warming up in the background as the ground crew prepares the field.

NUKE:

Hello? Dad? This is Ebby.

(beat)

Yeah, I know, I know--you got the Durham papers yet? Well I been a little wild...

(defensively)

These hitters down here are better than the ones in high school ...

(trying to change subject)

How's Mom? Yeah? Well I am trying hard... I am bending my back...you're not coming down' here to visit just yet, are you?

(beat)

Can I talk to Mom?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME PLATE -- THE BALLPARK NIGHT

THE MAYOR OF DURHAM AND THE CITY COUNCIL stand at a mike in front of home plate. 300 LITTLE LEAGUERS in uniform are lined up along the foul line, restrained by a rope.

VOICE OVER P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Mayor of Durham, the honorable Mutt Clark...

THE MAYOR STEPS to the mike. A classic Southern mayor.

MAYOR:

Welcome to the "Atlantic Seaboard
Tobacco Growers City Council Little
League Cash Drop Night"!

As the honorable Mutt Clark drones on--we INTERCUT:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BULLPEN -- CONTINUOUS

NUKE IS WARMING UP TO PITCH -- Crash and Larry watch him
closely, giving advice. As Nuke delivers--.

CRASH:

Drive off your back leg. You
pitch with your legs as much as
your arms-

NUKE:

I thought I was--

CRASH:

Don't think.

A MANGY DOG EATS FROM A DISH provided by the players. A
couple kids sit with the players.

MILLIE SITS DOWN NEXT TO A PLAYER -- BOBBY, 25.

MILLIE:

Hi, I'm Millie.

BOBBY:

I'm married.

JOSE FASHIONS A SMALL CROSS OUT OF CHICKEN BONES and rubs it
on his bat. Bobby notices this.

BOBBY:

What's that?

JOSE:

Chicken bone cross take the curse
off this bat and bring me hits.

BOBBY:

You a God damn witch?

JOSE:

Yes. A switch hitting witch.
Very common in Puerto Rico.

BOBBY:

Will that work for me?

JOSE:

If you believe in Voodoo.

BOBBY:

I'm 0 for 16! Gimme some of that
shit.

BOBBY HOLDS OUT HIS BAT for Jose to rub with the cross.

JOSE:

No, that is not belief. That is
desperation.

BOBBY:

C'mon, God damn it, gimme some!

ALL HEADS TURN,- A HELICOPTER APPEARS ABOVE THE FIELD

CUT TO:

BACK TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL -- Hair and hats blowing
from the chopper turbulence.

MAYOR:

...five, four, three, two,
one...let 'er go! One thousand
big ones!

THE HELICOPTER DUMPS HUNDREDS OF DOLLAR BILLS above the field.
The night sky fills with fluttering money THE ROPE IS DROPPED --
THREE HUNDRED LITTLE LEAGUERS charge across the infield to
the falling money, scooping it up wildly, brawling, shoving,
clawing for the cash.
As the money flutters down...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DURHAM BASEBALL STADIUM -- SHORT TIME LATER
CLOSE ON THE ROSIN BAG on the mound. A hand picks it up.
Puffs of rosin "smoke". Nuke is on the mound.
NUKE NERVOUSLY WALKS AROUND THE MOUND -- Just before the
first batter. He picks up the rosin bag. Digs a slot for
his lead foot to land. And CRASH APPROACHES, in full gear,

mask tipped up on his head.

CRASH:

Don't try to strike everybody
out.

(beat)

Strikeouts are boring. They're
Fascist. Throw some ground balls,
it's more Democratic.

CRASH TURNS AND HEADS TO THE PLATE and we hear the beginning
of Nuke's interior monologue.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

What's this guy know, eh? If
he's so great why's he been in
the minors for ten years? And if
he's so hot how come Annie wants
me instead of him.

CRASH TURNS AROUND HALF WAY TO THE PLATE and returns to the
mound, as if he knows everything Nuke's thinking.

CRASH:

And listen, meat. You don't know
shit. If you want to get to the
Show, you'll listen to me. She
only wants you 'cause she can
boss you around, got it?

(beat, complete tone
change)

Relax, have a ball out here.

This game's fun, okay? Fun, God
damn it.

(beat)

And don't squeeze the ball so
tight. It's an egg. Hold it
like an egg.

CRASH SMILES -- And trots back to the plate.

NUKE'S P.O.V. The first batter steps in. Crash gives the
sign for the pitch.

NUKE:

Fun? What's he know about fun?

(beat)

Why's he calling for a curveball?

I wanta bring heat.

CRASH (VOICE OVER)

Shake off the pitch. Throw what you wanta.

NUKE SHAKES OFF THE PITCH -- Here comes Crash back out to the mound before Nuke's thrown a pitch.

CRASH:

Why you shaking me off?

NUKE:

I wanta throw the heater to announce my presence with authority.

CRASH:

"To announce your fucking presence with authority"? This guy's a first ball fastball hitter. He's looking for heat.

NUKE:

But he ain't seen my heat--

CRASH:

Awright, meat, give him your heat.

CRASH RETURNS ONE MORE TIME to behind the plate.

CRASH CROSSES THE PLATE, past the hitter. He speaks to the opposing leadoff batter.

CRASH:

Fastball.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

Why's he always call me "Meat"?

I'm the guy driving a Porsche.

NUKE WINDS UP AND DELIVERS -- A fastball.

THE LEADOFF HITTER TEES OFF on the pitch and sends a line shot over the right field fence.

CLOSE ON BILLBOARD -- "Hit Cow, Win Steak" sign, The home run hits the cow on a target painted on the cow's rump.

The COW'S MOUTH OPENS AND MOOS.

THE BATTER STANDS AND WATCHES the home run, admiring the shot, enjoying the moment. CRASH GETS IN HIS FACE instantly-- and gets very tough.

CRASH:

What're you lookin' at?! You're showing up my pitcher, bush--get your ass in gear!

THE BATTER TAKES OFF ON A HOME RUN TROT -- Slightly scared.
AND CRASH HEADS TO THE MOUND where Nuke watches the Mooing Cow and the circling batter with dismay. Crash smiles.

CRASH:

Guy hit the shit outta that one, eh?

NUKE:

Well, I held it like an egg.

CRASH:

An' he scrambled the son of a bitch.
(beat)
Having fun yet?

NUKE:

I'm having a blast.
(beat)
God, that sucker teed off on it just like he knew I was gonna throw a fastball.

CRASH:

He did know.

NUKE:

How?

CRASH:

I told him.
CRASH SMILES -- Drops the mask, returns behind the plate.
NUKE SIGHS -- Takes a deep breath.

NUKE:

Don't think. Just throw. Don't think. Just throw.
NUKE'S WINDUP AND DELIVERY -- A fastball. A powerful, clean, overwhelming fastball. Strike one.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

God, that was beautiful. What'd
I do?

NUKE WINDS UP AND DELIVERS HIS NEXT PITCH -- A monster. An
Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh fastball. Twenty feet wide of
the plate.

THE BULL MASCOT DIVES FOR COVER -- The ball hits the bat
rack. Bats go flying.

CUT TO:

ANNIE IN HER BOX SEAT -- Jackson with the radar gun.

ANNIE:

Oh dear....easy honey...

JACKSON:

Ninety-five miles an hour...

CUT TO:

BACK TO NUKE -- Pacing the mound. Looks In for the sign.

NUKE PITCHES AGAIN -- The batter lines a single to left.

NUKE'S P.O.V. THE MANAGER AND PITCHING COACH TALKING

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

Christ, Skip and Larry are talking
about me. Don't get anybody warm
in the pen yet. I'm okay. I'm
having fun.

NUKE PITCHES AGAIN -- The batter lines a single to right.

NUKE'S P.O.V. THE BULLPEN -- TWO PITCHERS start warming up.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

Don't yank me in the first, man.

NUKE'S P.O.V. -- THE MANAGER comes out to the mound to talk.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

Aw, shit.

THE MANAGER AND CRASH MEET NUKE on the mound.

SKIP:

Relax.

NUKE:

Don't pull me, Skip. I'll settle
down. I'm okay!

SKIP:

(fatherly)

Relax, Nuke, Relax...

(to Crash)

What kinda stuff's he got?

CRASH:

I don't know. I haven't caught anything yet.

SKIP:

What're you thinking about out here, Nuke?

NUKE:

I'm trying not to think.

SKIP:

Good. But just 'cause you ain't s'posed to think don't mean you ain't s'posed to use your head.

SKIP SLAPS NUKE ON THE ASS in a gruff, reassuring way, and returns to the dugout. Leaving Nuke and Crash.

CRASH:

Have some fun, God damn it.

CRASH SMILES -- And as he returns to the plate...

CUT TO:

ANNIE WATCHES IN THE STANDS with Jackson and the radar gun.

ANNIE:

Here we go again, Jackson, hold on tight...

Hit Professor Longhair rock and roll...and:

DISSOLVE TO:

NUKE DELIVERS -- A batter grounds out weakly.

DURHAM AT BAT -- DUGOUT -- Crash lets Jose rub his bat with a chicken bone cross. Then steps to the plate and--

CRASH HITS A LONG HOME RUN -- And circles the bases.

NUKE DELIVERS -- A line drive nearly undresses him. Runners circle the bases.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

THE SHOWERS -- Naked bodies in the steamy room. No joking around. A team on losing streak.

SUDDENLY SKIP STEPS INTO THE SHOWER in his uniform and angrily throws an armload of bats into the shower.

SKIP:

Anybody not outta the shower in ten seconds gonna get fined a hundred bucks. One, two...

THE SHOWER EMPTIES in seconds. Players grab a seat, and: WHITEY THE SPORTSWRITER ENTERS as he does every night.

SKIP:

No press for five minutes, Whitey.

WHITEY:

I'm doing a column on the Myth of Sisyphus as manifest in a minor league losing streak, Joe, and I thought

SKIP PICKS UP A CHAIR AND FIRES IT AT WHITEY -- The chair crashes into a locker. Whitey hurries out.

SKIP:

If I ever need a brain transplant I'll choose a sportswriter 'cause that way I'd be getting a brain that's never been used.

A couple snickers from the players. Skip whirls.

SKIP:

What're you laughing at?!

Silence.

The Durham Bulls sit and stand quietly.

SKIP:

You guys lollygag the ball around the infield, ya lollygag you're-way to first, ya lollygag in an' outta the dugout. You know what that makes ya

(beat)

Lollygaggers. What's our record,

Larry?

LARRY:

We're eight and sixteen.

SKIP:

Eight and sixteen?! How'd we
ever win eight?

(beat)

Jose, what's this sign?

SKIP FLASHES THROUGH A SEQUENCE of signs. Hand to face,
hand to belt, hand brushes letters, etc.

JOSE:

That's the steal.

SKIP:

Wrong. That's the bunt. This is
the steal.

SKIP FLASHES QUICKLY ANOTHER SEQUENCE -- Hand to face, hands
to hands. He speaks rapidly--a private language.

SKIP:

Face is "skin to skin". Skin
starts with "S". "S" stands for
steal if it follows the indicator
which is hand to eye 'cause the
word "indicator" starts with an
"I" so I figure "eye"--

(touches his eye)

--would remind you of "I" for
indicator to indicate that what
follows is the sign. I figure
wrong-- You're a buncha
lollygaggers.

(beat)

This is a simple game.

(beat)

ya throw the ball, ya hit the
ball, ya catch the ball.

CLOSE ON FACES OF THE PLAYERS -- Sitting silently.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BALLPARK SIMULTANEOUS -- NIGHT

THE SIX PLAYERS' WIVES WAIT in a cluster. Three of them have SMALL CHILDREN. The children are crying. The long-suffering women try to calm the kids.

BOBBY'S WIFE

Bobby went hitless again. He's gonna be in a terrible mood... terrible. How'd Mickey do?

MICKEY'S WIFE

He got two hits.

BOBBY'S WIFE

Lucky you.

CUT TO:

BACK INSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM -- Skip is winding down.

SKIP:

We can't win at home--how we gonna win on the road? We got a twelve day road trip starting tomorrow.

(beat)

Bus leaves at six In the morning.

SKIP HEADS BACK INSIDE his little office with Larry.

CUT TO:

INSIDE SKIP'S OFFICE -- He and Larry open a couple beers. THE DOOR OPENS -- BOBBY ENTERS wearing only a towel.

BOBBY:

You wanted to see me?

SKIP:

Yeah, Bobby, shut the door.

(he does)

This is the toughest job a manager has...

(beat)

But the organization has decided to make a change--

BOBBY:

Skip, I know I'm in a slump but I hit the ball hard tonight, right at 'em. A couple flares drop in, and I'm back in the groove!

The nearly naked 25 year old man pleads helplessly--his career is over.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STADIUM -- NIGHT

THE PLAYERS EXIT -- The Groupies wait in a cluster. The wives wait in another group. Bobby's wife sees Bobby.

BOBBY'S WIFE

(to child)

There's Daddy! Wave to Daddy!

--P.O.V. BOBBY COMING OUT OF THE CLUBHOUSE -- Another player has his arm around Bobby, consoling him. The wife knows.

BOBBY'S WIFE

Oh God...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT -- DAWN

THE DURHAM BULLS TEAM BUS is parked. Luggage is loaded. Sleepy players arriving, escorted by wives and girlfriends. ANNIE BIDS NUKE GOODBYE -- Off to the side. She pulls something from her handbag and hands it to Nuke. A pair of WOMEN'S RED PANTIES, with lace and frills.

ANNIE:

I want you to wear these on the road trip when you pitch.

NUKE:

What?

ANNIE:

They'll fit snugly against your balls in such a wonderful way that you'll start seeing things differently--plus they'll remind you of me which is better than thinking about those nasty hitters.

NUKE:

Jesus, Annie, I don't know--

ANNIE:

You've been pitching out of the wrong side of your brain. These'll

help move things to the right side.

NUKE:

Big League pitchers don't use these.

ANNIE:

They did when they were in the Carolina League.

NUKE STUFFS THE PANTIES in his pocket, bewildered. A small kiss from Annie, and he hurries to the bus.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- DAWN

PLAYERS THROW THEIR GEAR into their travel bags.

A PAPER BEER CUP IS TAPED TO THE WALL -- With a sign:

"Married men deposit wedding rings here for road trips".

CLOSE ON THE CUP -- A ring is dropped in, and another, and...

We begin hearing Annie's VOICE OVER:

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

A woman should never ask questions about road trips.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT -- DAWN

THE TEAM BUS PULLS OUT -- Wives and girlfriends head back to their apartments, leaving:

ANNIE WALKING BACK HOME -- Several blocks to her house.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

Men don't realize that women always know when they've been unfaithful.

(beat)

The fact is, upon exact moment of penetration--the woman knows.

AS ANNIE WALKS BACK through Durham...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY THROUGH THE SMOKY MOUNTAINS EARLY MORNING

THE TEAM BUS ROLLS through the North Carolina landscape.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

This sort of spiritual awareness can be a mixed blessing, especially if you're dating a ballplayer. I

believe a woman oughta take care
of her man so thoroughly that he
can go on the road for a few days
without having the desire to search
out another pair of panties

(self-aware)

That is probably, however, my
most ridiculous belief.

(sigh)

I just hope the boys start winning
soon. In some profound way I
fear that a last place team is a
reflection on its women...

THE BUS ROLLS through North Carolina.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BUS -- MORNING

SKIP SITS IN THE FRONT of the bus, doing a crossword puzzle.
LARRY READS A BOOK -- "How to Make a Million Dollars in Real
Estate with No Money Down".

DEKE TURNS UP HIS TAPE DECK -- George Jones sings "He Stopped
Loving Her Today".

MICKEY TURNS UP HIS TAPE DECK across the aisle -- Aretha
Franklin sings "R-E-S-P-E-C-T".

DEKE TURNS HIS VOLUME LOUDER -- Mickey does likewise, and
soon we have DUELING TAPE DECKS. C & W going head to head
with R & B. A cacophony.

SKIP LEAPS TO HIS FEET, WHIRLS and shouts.

SKIP:

I got one word to say to you--

Shut up!

Silence.

And then from the back of the bus, some soft, gentle, but
slightly dissonant guitar chords.

THE BACK OF THE BUS -- Nuke sits across the aisle from Crash,
who's re-reading Thomas Pynchon. Nuke has a guitar and is
struggling with some chords to "Try a Little Tenderness".
He butchers the chords and the words.

NUKE:

(singing softly)

Oh she may get wooly, women do
get wooly, because of all the

stress...

CRASH:

(in disgust)

Gimme that.

CRASH STRONGARMS THE GUITAR from Nuke.

CRASH:

I hate people who get the words
wrong. It ain't "woolly" it's
"weary" and it nobody's got stress,
they're wearing a dress.

(beat)

Listen.

CRASH WHIPS THROUGH THE FIRST FEW BARS of the song.

CRASH:

(sings softly)

Oh she may be weary, Young girls
do get weary, Wearing the same
old dress...

HE SHOVES THE GUITAR back at Nuke.

NUKE:

How come you don't like me?

CRASH:

'Cause you don't respect yourself,
which is your problem, but you
don't respect the game--and that's
my problem.

(beat)

You got a gift.

NUKE:

What do I got?

CRASH:

A gift. When you were a baby the
gods reached down and turned your
left arm into a thunderbolt.

Nuke looks at his left arm rubs his shoulder curiously.

CRASH:

You got a Hall of Fame arm but
you're pissing it away.

NUKE:

I ain't pissing nothing away--I
got a Porsche already. A 944
with A.C. and a quadraphonic
Blaupunkt.

CRASH:

You don't need a quadraphonic
Blaupunkt--you need a curve ball.
(beat)
In the Show, everybody can hit
the fastball.

NUKE:

You been in the Majors?

CRASH:

Yep.
Tony and Deke overhear this and turn around. And Crash gets
wistful, lyrical, and even slightly hopeful.

CRASH:

I was in the Show for 21 days,
once.

(beat)

It was the greatest 21 days of my
life. You never touch your luggage
in the show--somebody else handles
your bags. It's great.

(beat)

The ballparks are like cathedrals,
the hotels all have room service,
the women have long legs and brains--
it's a smorgasbord.

DEKE:

The women are hot, eh?

CRASH:

Yeah--and so are the pitchers.
They throw ungodly breaking stuff

in the Show--exploding sliders.

Nuke, Tony, and Deke murmur in awe at Crash's pronouncement.

CRASH:

You could be one of those guys--
but you don't give a fuck, Meat.

NUKE:

God damn it I'm sick of you calling
me "Meat"! You wanta step outside!

CRASH HOPS TO HIS FEET as the bus barrels along, grabbing
Nuke by the collar.

CRASH:

Yeah, let's go.

Nuke quickly has second thoughts--Crash can be terrifying.

NUKE:

No. Wait a minute. Calm down,
Crash...

Nuke sits back down. Calms. Reaches for a baseball sitting
nearby. He hands the ball to Crash.

NUKE:

Teach me how to throw a breaking
ball.

Crash takes the ball gently and speaks softly:

CRASH:

As I was saying ya hold it like
an egg.

As the bus rolls through the country:

A LATE 60'S OLDS CONVERTIBLE ROARS PAST -- Max Patkin at the
wheel. He waves at the team bus and honks.

The opening bars on the National Anthem--"Oh Say Can You
See"

And Max roars off through the rolling green-landscape...

Hit Hank Williams music to play over:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WINSTON-SALEM BASEBALL STADIUM -- DAY

MAX PATKIN COACHES THIRD in his comic routine, now, for the
Winston-Salem team, as Durham is in the field.

A WINSTON-SALEM BATTER lines a double off the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. DURHAM RADIO STATION -- DAY

TEDDY THE ANNOUNCER re-creates the game for broadcast with a several second delay.

HIS ASSISTANT (P.A. ANNOUNCER FROM THE BALLPARK) has a phone to her ear, and writes down each play on a piece of paper, holding it up for Teddy who enhances shamelessly in his ON THE AIR "play by play".

CLOSE ON PAPER -- His assistant writes "DOUBLE TO LEFT".

TEDDY HITS A TINY MALLET against a jar. Thunk. The sound of ball hitting bat. He punches one of several tape cassettes cued up. A crowd roars. An array of special effects is at his fingertips.

TEDDY (ON THE AIR)

...double off the wall by Higgins, and once again the Durham pitchers are unable to get the first out of the Inning...

HIS. ASSISTANT WRITES ANOTHER NOTE -- "ERROR MCFEE"

Thunk -- The mallet again.

TEDDY (ON THE AIR)

Line drive to center--a diving stab by McFee--oohhhh! Ball gets by his glove, another run in and the crowd loves it--

PUNCHES A CASSETTE -- A crowd roars.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY THROUGH SMOKY MOUNTAINS -- NIGHT

The bus rolls through a small town.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEAP MOTEL IN GREENSBORO -- DAWN

THE TEAM BUS PULLS IN -- Players stagger off, half asleep.

TEDDY (ON THE AIR) O.S.

Bulls will attempt to end a six game losing streak against the Greensboro Astros with Nuke LaLoosh on the hill...

CUT TO:

INT. GREENSBORO BALLPARK LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

NUKE DRESSES FOR THE GAME -- He pulls the RED PANTIES out of

his bag. Looks around the clubhouse. Nobody sees them.
He's embarrassed anyway--and stuffs them back.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENSBORO BALLPARK DAY
NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- The batter swings, and:

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STATION -- DAY
TEDDY AND HIS ASSISTANT -- A note is held up, "Single"--
THUNK -- The mallet strikes.
TEDDY ON THE AIR
Base hit centerfield off LaLoosh...
HIS ASSISTANT (ON THE PHONE) SCRAWLS another quick note.
THUNK THUNK THUNK -- A rapid sequence of the mallet striking
the percussive box, and:
TEDDY ON THE AIR
That closes the book on LaLoosh
today, 5 earned runs, 5 hits, 5
strikeouts, 5 walks, 5 wild
pitches...

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENSBORO BALLPARK -- DAY
SKIP REMOVES NUKE FROM THE GAME and he heads for the showers.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN -- DAY
ANNIE SITS WITH MILLIE at the kitchen table, listening to
the radio. Annie sighs. Millie consoles her.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENSBORO LOCKER ROOM -- DAY
NUKE IN THE SHOWERS ALONE -- Letting the water run over him.
The voice of Teddy an the air, editorializing shamelessly.
TEDDY (ON THE AIR)
It's time to tell it like it is,
sports fans--and this is the most
wretched road trip I've seen in
20 years, and possibly the worst
Durham team in half a century.
(beat)
Where are the great Bull players
of yesteryear? Where are the

Footsie Blakes, the Digger O'Dells,
the Gus Palowitzes?

TEDDY'S VOICE PLAYS OVER road trip images:

NUKE STARTS TO PUT ON THE RED PANTIES -- Changes his mind,
and hides them again.

THE TEAM BUS rolling across North Carolina.

THE TEAM BUS at a drive through hamburger stand somewhere in
the Smoky Mountains. Sack after sack of fast food is passed
through the window to Skip.

THE TEAM BUS PULLS INTO YET ANOTHER HOTEL and this time, a
Bus with a sign--"Holiday on Ice" pulls in next to them.

TEDDY ON THE AIR

Is the modern athlete a pale
imitation of the great old
warriors? Only Crash Davis stands
out this year, begging the
question, "What are these boys
thinking about, 'cause it sure
ain't baseball".

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE BUS IN FRONT OF THE KINGSTON HOTEL -- NIGHT
As the players rise in the bus, Deke is trying to work up
excitement about the "Holiday on Ice" bus from which twenty
great looking women ice skaters are getting off.
P.O.V. HOLIDAY ON ICE GIRLS getting off the bus.

TONY:

Ice skaters. God. Look't em.
that's what we need, y'know--one
night with some skaters and we
can get back on track...

DEKE:

We need a night off just to stop
our losing streak. We need a
rainout.

CRASH:

I can get us a rainout.

MICKEY:

It's 90 degrees, there ain't been
a cloud in the sky in weeks.

CRASH:

Hundred bucks says I can get us a rainout tomorrow.

TONY:

You're on.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINGSTON BASEBALL STADIUM -- NIGHT

A CAB PULLS UP in the dark. Late at night. The cab leaves, and the four men climb over the fence.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE KINGSTON BALLPARK -- NIGHT

CRASH PULLS THE LID OFF A BOX -- Several valve handles.

Crash turns several handles with an iron bar, and...

THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM COMES TO LIFE -- And suddenly the field is covered with the clicking of rain-bird sprinklers, throwing long slow arcs of water across the entire field.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SCOREBOARD OF THE BALLPARK -- MINUTES LATER --

NIGHT:

THE FOUR PLAYERS sit on the scoreboard, watching the sprinklers flood the field. A six-pack is passed around.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BALLPARK -- EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

A QUAGMIRE ON THE INFIELD -- The Kingston GENERAL MANAGER stands in the muck with his ground crew. Wheelbarrows, shovels, sand is piled around. It's hopeless.

KINSTON G.M.

God damn it! Vandals. Damn kids!

GROUND CREW MEMBER

We can't get it ready by game time, boss.

The General Manager studies the field. Hopeless.

He looks up at the sky. Cloudless, sunny.

KINSTON G.M.

(to his assistant)

Call the radio and the paper.

(with disgust)

The game's been rained out.
Organ music -- "The Blue Danube Waltz".

CUT TO:

INT. THE KINGSTON CIVIC ARENA -- DAY
"HOLIDAY ON ICE" in its matinee performance. The beautiful,
leggy women skating to the "Blue Danube Waltz".
TEN OF THE DURHAM BULLS sit in the front row. Nuke, Deke,
Tommy, others, but not Crash. 'Tony waves to a skater.
THE SKATER WAVES BACK as she swirls past the Bulls.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KINGSTON HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT
DEKE ICES THE CHAMPAGNE -- In the b.g. Tommy is blow drying
his hair. Mickey puts the finishing touches on his outfit.
Several other players get ready to party.

DEKE:

Par--ty! I blew a whole day's
meal money for this champagne seven
dollars, man, it better be good.

MICKEY:

For seven bucks it better be some
serious shit.

TOMMY:

What time is it, eh? When are
they coming?
The guys lounge around nervously, trying to be casual.

CUT TO:

INT. KINGSTON HOTEL COFFEE SHOP -- NIGHT
CLOSE ON A STEAK DINNER set down in front of Crash.
Nuke hands Crash a hundred dollar bill.

NUKE:

This is from Tony for the rainout.
C'mon, man, let's go to the party.

CRASH:

Naw...

NUKE:

"Naw"? There's ice skaters coming!
You ever made love to an ice
skater?

CRASH:

By the dozen. Holiday on Ice,
Ice Capades, Ice Follies--
(beat)
I'm through with one night stands.

NUKE:

You're through with one night
stands?! What do you want?

CRASH:

I just wanta play everyday despite
small nagging injuries--and go
home to a woman who appreciates
how full of crap I truly am.
Nuke just stares at him.

NUKE:

You're weird, man--I want a ice
skater real bad.

CRASH:

Go for it.

NUKE:

If I get laid, you won't tell
Annie?

CRASH:

I won't have to.
NUKE LOOKS AT HIM STRANGELY -- And hurries to the party.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PARTY ROOM -- NIGHT
THE GUYS ARE GROOMING TO EXCESS -- Still blow drying and
preening for each other.
A knock at the door.
THEY QUICKLY GET "CASUAL" and lounge seductively.

DEKE:

It's them, it's them! Be casual.

(calling out)

Come in!

THE DOOR OPENS -- It's Nuke.

NUKE:

Hey, guys, pa--rty!

TOMMY:

Shut up and be cool, man. Like

Mickey there...

MICKEY "LOUNGES" WITH A DRINK and a cigaret.

MICKEY:

You wanta make it to the Show,

Rock, you gotta learn how to

"lounge".

NUKE LEANS ON THE BAR with an elbow, striking his version of a "lounging" pose.

NUKE:

How's this?

MICKEY:

You got it.

A knock at the door.

TOMMY:

Entre.

EIGHT ICE SKATERS STAND IN THE DOORWAY -- Ready to...

ICE SKATER #1

Pa--rty!

POP THE CORK ON THE SEVEN DOLLAR CHAMPAGNE -- And party...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

THE WIVES AND SOME GIRLFRIENDS WATCH "DYNASTY" on Annie's television. Annie hosts, filling their drink glasses, serving popcorn, and largely staying in the background.

MICKEY'S WIFE

Do you think your husband plays around on the road trips?

DEKE'S WIFE

No way. Well...God...do we have

to talk about that?

MICKEY'S WIFE

I guess not...it's just that once I asked Mickey if he was faithful to me on the road trips and he said "in his heart he was faithful".

(beat)

What the hell does that mean?

DEKE'S WIFE

It means he's unfaithful--but only a man would put it in those words.

A BABY CRIES -- Tommy's Wife lifts a baby from the couch, begins rocking It.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PLAYERS' HOTEL -- NIGHT

Players are dancing, drinking, hustling the ice skaters, the music is up, the party swinging, when:

SKIP ENTERS -- He's steaming and slightly drunk. Larry is with him.

SKIP:

I just got one word to say to everybody--shut up!

THE PLAYERS AND ICE SKATERS freeze in mid-party.

SKIP (CONT'D)

Nuke-- get everybody in here.

Hundred dollar fine anybody's not here in five.

NUKE HURRIES OUT THE DOOR

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

NUKE POUNDS ON DOORS in a hurry.

--P.O.V. IN FIRST DOOR -- Jimmy is on his knees at the bed, bare chested, praying with an open Bible.

NUKE:

Get your holy ass in Room 401.

He hustles to the next door, and pounds madly.

--P.O.V. IN SECOND DOOR -- TWO NAKED WOMEN with Jose and Tony, nearly nude.

NUKE:

Hundred dollar fine if you're not
in #401 in five.

JOSE:

Hundred dollars?!

JOSE AND TONY LOOK AT THE TWO WOMEN -- It's a lot of money
in Class AAA ball.

TONY:

Christ. Sorry ladies...

JOSE AND TONY HURRY OUT in their shorts.

NAKED LADY:

Go to hell! You're in last place
anyway!

AND NUKE HURRIES DOWN THE HALL -- Pounding on each door.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

CRASH EATING ALONE -- Peacefully. Nuke arrives excitedly.

NUKE:

Crash! Skip wants everybody in
#401 for a team meeting. Hundred
buck fine if ya don't show!

CRASH PULLS OUT THE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL and hands it to him.

CRASH:

Party without me.

NUKE:

God--what a Big League move.

NUKE TAKES THE MONEY and hurries back.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PARTY ROOM CONTINUOUS

24 PLAYERS AND 8 ICE SKATERS -- Some of the players Nuke
rounded up are partially dressed. Skip spots the women.

SKIP:

Who are you?

ICE SKATER #1

We're ice skaters. Can we go now?

SKIP:

No. I want you to hear my philosophy. It'll do you some good

(beat)

Here It is. This is a simple game. You throw the ball, you hit the ball, you catch the ball.

You got that?!

ICE SKATER #1

(frightened)

Yes.

SKIP:

Are you lovely creatures aware that you are about to compromise yourselves with a buncha bums who are--

(to Larry)

--what are we?

LARRY:

Eight and twenty-four.

SKIP:

Eight and twenty-four! How'd we ever win 8 games?

LARRY:

It's a miracle.

SKIP:

Look, guys--I'm a man, I got needs too. I understand this party--but...

(beat)

sex is the one thing you can get further behind in and catch up faster than anything I know.

(beat)

There's a baseball lesson in there

somewhere.

(looking around)

Where's Crash?

NUKE STEPS FORWARD -- Hands Skip the hundred dollar bill..

NUKE:

He can't make it. Here's his
fine.

SKIP:

Aw Christ, he don't have to come.
He's hitting .350.

TOMMY:

Don't you think that's a double
standard--we're here and he ain't?

SKIP:

I believe in a double standard
for guys hitting .350.

(beat)

Look, men--you got a choice. You
wanta be roasting your nuts off
for Midas Muffler welding exhaust
pipes up the assholes of
Cadillacs...or--

(beat)

You wanta be sitting in the Caddy
while some other guy's crawling
around in a monkey suit with a
blow torch?

(beat)

There's only two places you can
be in life--in the Caddy or under
it.

(nearly pleading)

These are the best years of your
lives. These are the glamor days.

(beat)

It don't got any better than this.

(threatening, tough)

But...if this club don't start
winning soon, there's gonna be
changes made!

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE SIMULTANEOUS -- NIGHT
CLOSE ON TELEVISION -- "DYNASTY" drones on.

DEKE'S WIFE

(wistfully)

Deke was a great player in high school. I thought held go right to the Major Leagues--I was gonna be a Big League wife.

(beat)

Pass the Pampers, please.

CRASH:

Helluva guy--

Silence.

Crash flips off the T.V. with the remote.

NUKE:

Can I ask you something?

CRASH:

What?

NUKE:

What would you think of a pitcher who wore women's panties?

CRASH:

If he had a good breaking ball,

I'd respect the shit outta him.

Crash turns off the light.

CLOSE ON NUKE -- A bit of light spill on his face. Eyes open. A long ways from sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. A CAROLINA LEAGUE BALLPARK -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON NUKE'S FACE -- He takes his cap off, wipes his brow. He's pitching. Everything in SLO-MO.

FANS IN THE BALLPARK LAUGH at Nuke, mocking his.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON NUKE'S EYES -- Frightened.

SLOW FULLBACK ON NUKE -- HE'S STARK NAKED save for his cap and glove. Everyone else is clothed.

NUKE WINDS AND PITCHES in the nude. SLO-MO...and as the

batter cranks up to take a vicious swing--

CUT TO:

INT. TEAM BUS -- DAWN

CLOSE ON NUKE'S FACE -- He awakes with a start.

NUKE:

No!

CRASH LEANS OVER and shakes him.

CRASH:

Wake up, it's okay...you're
dreaming...

CRASH HELPS NUKE back to consciousness. Nuke shakes his
head, trying to wake up. Crash Is almost tender.

NUKE:

I was playing naked.

CRASH:

I know, I know--I have that dream
all the time. We're almost home.
The Bus continues across the Carolina landscape.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STADIUM PARKING LOT -- DAWN

The team bus pulls into a deserted parking lot. A few of
the players' cars are parked. Some of the wives and
girlfriends. And Annie.

THE PLAYERS SHUFFLE OFF the bus. Tired and beat.

CLOSE ON NUKE -- He looks worse than the rest. He sees Annie
and waves. She's waiting next to her old Volvo.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DURHAM MOMENTS LATER

ANNIE'S VOLVO PULLS OUT -- She drives.

INT. THE VOLVO -- DAY

Annie is up--Nuke is down.

NUKE:

God I'm tired. What a trip I was
lousy. I was worse than lousy.
Everytime I pitched--it was like
throwing gasoline on a fire.

Kaboom. I--

ANNIE:

What is this "I, I, I" stuff?
You only talk about yourself?
Aren't you glad to see me? Don't
I look nice?

NUKE:

Sorry. You look great. I'm
totally exhausted.

ANNIE:

Good. Total exhaustion can be
spiritually fabulous.
(beat)
Let's play catch.

NUKE:

Catch?

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNIE'S BACKYARD -- MORNING

Flowers and birdfeeders everywhere. And, 60 feet away in
complete, oversized catcher's gear--
JACKSON IN A CATCHER'S CROUCH -- Nuke stares, in his street
clothes, but now with a glove and ball.

JACKSON:

Hum, babe, hum, babe, fire it in
here, hum babe--

ANNIE:

That's not necessary, Jackson---
(beat)
Okay, Nuke, now lean in for the
sign.
He does. Jackson flashes some ridiculous signs.

NUKE:

This is ridiculous. I'm a pro.

ANNIE:

Just do what I say. Now, which

nostril are you breathing through?

NUKE:

Which nostril am I breathing through?

Annie puts her hand under his nose.

ANNIE:

The right nostril. Good.

NUKE:

My right nostril?

ANNIE:

There are two important psychic conduits called the "pingala" and the "ida". The pingala starts with the left testicle (or left ovary of the female) and ends at the right nostril.

She touches his left nut through his pants in a matter of fact manner. He stares back.

ANNIE:

The ida originates at the right testicle(or ovary) and terminates at the left nostril.

NUKE:

I'm really beat. I need some serious "z's"--

ANNIE:

The pingala is the nostril used for throwing a baseball.

(beat)

And if you discover before a game you're in the wrong nostril, it's easy to switch.

NUKE:

Switch nostrils?

ANNIE:

Right. Okay, fire a couple in there.

NUKE TOSSES AN EASY PITCH to Jackson. Annie's incensed.

ANNIE:

You're patronizing me! I will not be patronized--

NUKE:

If I throw too hard I'll hurt the kid.

ANNIE:

He's handled a lotta pitchers whose records were better than one and six.

Nuke gets a little steamed. He feels his nostril, winds, and fires a medium speed fastball to Jackson.

NUKE:

(a bit angry)
How was that?

ANNIE:

A little better.

NUKE:

Gimme the God damn ball!
NUKE WINDS UP and fires a pitch to Jackson. Alas--
THE BALL SAILS THROUGH A WINDOW -- Crashing glass.

NUKE:

(cynically)
How ya like that?

ANNIE:

Much better. Your delivery was fully integrated because you weren't thinking about it 'cause you were pissed off at me.

(beat)

This is progress.

Nuke smiles and gives in. And reaches for her.

NUKE:

I give up. Let's go inside, make love, and fall asleep till it's time to go to the ballpark. She takes his hand and leads him up to the back porch.

ANNIE:

Or...
(taking his hand)
...We could just take that sexual energy and save it for a few hours and re-channel it into your pitching tonight.
(shouting)
C'mon, Jackson, I've got some lemonade!

Jackson runs over in full gear to join them.
SITTING ON THE BACK PORCH -- A pitcher of lemonade.

NUKE:

I can't keep up with you. First you say sex is gonna make me a better pitcher--now no sex is gonna do it?!

ANNIE:

It's all the same thing.
SUDDENLY NUKE'S FACE IS FILLED WITH ALARM -- He points.

NUKE:

What's that?!
--P.O.V. A CARDBOARD BOX ON A TABLE NEARBY -- Scrawled in larged letters on the side are the words "MAX PATKIN".

ANNIE:

(matter of factly)
That's Max. His ashes anyway.
He left no kin...
Nuke stares, unsettled.

NUKE:

God...I think I'm gonna be sick--

ANNIE:

Oh don't be silly. Death is nothing to be scared of. It's just another way of living. It's just a fresh start--kinda like spring training.

Nuke thinks about this carefully. Looks at the ashes, at Annie, and at Jackson, in full gear, mask on his head.

NUKE:

Death is like spring training?

ANNIE:

Yes. And so is birth. Now look me in the eyes, Nuke--
(sweetly accusing him)

You haven't been wearing my panties, have you?

CLOSE ON NUKE -- Utterly bewildered.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLS LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

NUKE PULLS HIS JOCKSTRAP ON over the red panties.

Crash notices the panties, and snaps the waistband.

CRASH:

Hot. Very hot...

Nuke looks around nervously, continues dressing quickly.

NUKE:

Annie says her panties will keep one side of my brain occupied while I'm on the mound, thus keeping my brain slightly off center, which is where it should be for artists and pitchers. She also said I should throw whatever pitches you call for.

CRASH:

Annie's a smart lady.

Suddenly Deke spots Nuke's panties.

DEKE:

Hey, fruit alert! Check out the

Rook.

SEVERAL PLAYERS GATHER AROUND -- Wolf whistles aimed at Nuke as the players are dressing into their uniforms.

NUKE:

Annie says there's no such thing as straight and gay. We're all sexual creatures to start with, and we get formed into certain roles.

TOMMY:

You believe that?

NUKE:

When I'm one and six I'll believe anything.

(as they dress)

Annie also says that God is a woman. You believe that, Crash, you think God's a lady?

CRASH:

God's definitely a woman--but she's no lady.

TOMMY:

This is all Commie bullshit.

(beat)

God has a dick, man.

TONY:

God damn it, Jimmy, you're an expert--does God have a dick or a pussy?

JIMMY TURNS FROM HIS CUBICLE to answer the theological question. All heads wait for the answer.

JIMMY:

The Lord God is tri-une--Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

TOMMY:

Father and Son. Awright!

The guys slap fives, convinced God is a man.

MICKEY,

(baiting them)

Yeah, but He is a brother.

TOMMY:

Bullshit! God ain't no brother!

Deke turns to Crash, full of despair.

DEKE:

If there is a God, why am I hitting
.200?

SUDDENLY SKIP AND LARRY APPEAR to restore order.

SKIP:

Shut up! This is a damn noisy
clubhouse for a team that's lost
15 straight.

Silence.

Skip takes off his cap--instantly sincere.

SKIP:

Patkin was a tribute to baseball...

LARRY:

...and one helluva guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM BALLPARK -- DUSK

A BLACK GOSPEL GROUP at a mike at home plate, singing:

GOSPEL SINGER (SINGING)

I come to the garden alone, When
the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear, whispering
in my ear,. The Son of God
discloses--

ANNIE SPRINKLES MAX'S ASHES on the pitcher's mound, as:

JACKSON SITS IN THE DUGOUT FILLING ROSIN BAGS with the extra
ashes from a box.

EXTREME CLOSE UP -- A ROSIN BAG MARKED "MAX"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP -- "MAX" ROSIN BAG on the mound.

EXT. DURHAM BALLPARK -- GAME IN PROGRESS -- NIGHT

NUKE ON THE MOUND -- PICKS UP the rosin bag, and paces. A small crowd. A batter steps in to hit. Nuke looks. in for the sign.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

God, these panties feel great.

That don't make me queer, right?

Right. Whoo.

(reads the sign)

Breaking ball.

NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- Breaking ball for a strike.

NUKE:

I ain't queer. I know I ain't...

(reads the sign)

Fastball.

NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- Fastball for a strike.

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S BOX SEAT IN THE STANDS -- She charts pitches.

JACKSON:

Ninety-three miles an hour.

ANNIE:

He looks wonderful, Jackson...

CUT TO:

NUKE ON THE MOUND -- He looks in for the sign.

NUKE:

Fastball again? Why's he want

the heat--I just threw heat.

Don't think, Meat--give 'em the

gas.

NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- An eye-popping fastball. The batter swings and misses. Strike three.

CUT TO:

IN THE DUGOUT -- SKIP AND LARRY LOOK AT EACH other warily.

SKIP:

Jesus--what's got into Nuke?

LARRY:

I heard he's wearing women's underwear--and he's breathing through his pingala nostril.

SKIP:

(spitting tobacco)

I'm getting too old for this game.

P.O.V. NUKES FASTBALL SHATTERS A BAT -- THE HITTER hits a weak roller to third for the second out.

CUT TO:

BACK TO THE MOUND -- Nuke is pumped up. Paces.

NUKE (VOICE OVER)

God, Annie's got a great ass....

How come her panties fit me?

That's one of the mysteries of sex I guess...

NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS A VICIOUS CURVEBALL -- A check swing dribbler to first for the third out. And the players run into the dugout.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DUGOUT

NUKE PUTS ON HIS WARM UP JACKET and sits down next to Crash, who's taking off his gear, readying to hit.

NUKE:

I was great, eh?

CRASH:

Your fastball was up and your curveball was hanging--in the Show they woulda ripped you.

NUKE:

Can't you let me enjoy the moment?

CRASH:

The moment's over.

(rising to get a bat)

If this guy starts me off with a breaking ball, I'm going downtown--

CRASH SMILES in his disarming way, and grabs a bat.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ON DECK CIRCLE

Crash kneels, rubbing the bat handle with pine tar. He studies the pitcher working the first two hitters.

CRASH RISES and heads to the plate.

CRASH STEPS INTO THE BOX -- Digs in.

CRASH (VOICE OVER)

I dare you to throw me the hammer--
you ain't that stupid...

CRASH'S P.O.V. IN SLOW-MOTION -- The pitcher winds and delivers. And as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand--

CRASH (VOICE OVER)

Breaking ball--you fool!

CRASH UNLOADS ON THE PITCH -- Crushing a home run deep over the left field wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE PRESS BOX

TEDDY THE RADIO ANNOUNCER is wary about these events.

TEDDY THE RADIO MAN

Two-nothing Bulls in the second--

first time the Bulls have been

ahead in weeks, eh Whitey--

(beat)

Let's see if the real Nuke LaLoosh
will show up--

CUT TO:

NUKE FIRES THREE QUICK PITCHES for another strike out. Curve ball, fast ball, curve ball. Overpowering.

CUT TO:

ANNIE AND JACKSON in her box seat.

ANNIE:

Oh my...

CUT TO:

SKIP AND LARRY IN THE DUGOUT -- Skip looks at Larry as if to say "What's happening?" Larry just shrugs.

CUT TO:

BACK TO THE FIELD -- Nuke's next pitch.

THE NEXT BATTER POPS UP -- Crash circles into foul ground to

make the catch, whipping the ball around the infield.
AND CRASH GOES TO THE MOUND for a visit.

NUKE:

Hey, I'm cruisin', man--what're
you doing out here?!

CRASH:

I want you to throw this one at
the bat rack.

NUKE:

Why?! I'm finally throwin' the
damn thing where I want to.

CRASH:

It'll keep the fear of God in the
hitters. Trust me.

NUKE:

You're the boss.

CRASH RETURNS TO THE PLATE -- Flashes a sign.

CUT TO:

THE PRESS BOX Teddy's getting worked up.

TEDDY THE RADIO MAN

--a staggering start by LaLoosh--
he's thrown 5 cuts on 9 pitches,
all of them strikes--he's got pin
point control here tonight, Bull
fans...here's the pitch--

CUT TO:

NUKE'S NEXT DELIVERY -- A wild ass rocket thirty feet off
line. The BULL MASCOT DIVES for cover.

THE BATTER STEPS OUT OF THE BOX nervously, muttering.

BATTER:

This guy's crazy.

CRASH:

Yep. Next one might be at your
head. Hell if I know where the
damn thing's going...

CLOSE ON NUKE -- Smiles. Winds. Delivers. A change up.
THE BATTER SWINGS TERRIBLY OFF STRIDE -- Strike three. Crash
whips the ball around the infield.

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD:

TEDDY THE RADIO MAN
--top of the ninth, two outs, one
out away from a stunning two hit
shutout for LaLoosh...

CUT TO:

NUKE ON THE MOUND -- Bearing down.
NUKE (VOICE OVER)
Bear down, Meat, don't let up.
You own these guys. Dad'll love
a shutout ...
P.O.V. CRASH FLASHES THE SIGN -- Nuke doesn't like it.

NUKE:

No, no--this guy's looking for
heat--lemme give him the deuce--
NUKE SHAKES OFF THE SIGN Cocky, full of himself.

CUT TO:

ANNIE AND JACKSON in her box seat.

ANNIE:

Oh no--he's shaking off the sign,
Jackson. Big mistake...

JACKSON:

He'll learn.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON CRASH BEHIND THE PLATE

CRASH:

This son of a bitch is throwing a
two hit shutout and he's shaking
me off?!
(to batter and umpire)
Hey Charlie, here comes the deuce.

NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- A hanging curveball. The batter takes an ungodly cut, and BLASTS a long home. THE BATTER STANDS AT THE PLATE watching the blast...until CRASH SHOVES HIM toward first with a sneer. For a moment it looks like there'll be a fight--but the hitter backs off and takes the home run trot as: NUKE STARES AT THE OUTFIELD WALL as the batter circles the bases. Crash walks to the mound.

NUKE:

You told him I was throwing a deuce, right?

CRASH:

Yep. He really crushed that dinger, didn't he. Musta gone 450 feet...damn...

NUKE HOLDS OUT HIS GLOVE -- Says nothing. Crash puts a new ball in the glove. Returns to the plate.

NUKE GETS THE SIGN -- Winds. Delivers. Batter hits a weak one hopper back to the mound. Game's over.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXWELL'S BAR -- LATER -- NIGHT

A raucous celebration of the victory. Booze flows. And we begin hearing the familiar sounds of Piaf ...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- LATER -- NIGHT

ANNIE COMES OUT OF THE BATHROOM -- Dressed in a long, flowing nightgown, elegant and old fashioned. She looks fabulous, PRESENTING HERSELF to Nuke.

ANNIE:

I'm yours.

NUKE:

Y'know, Annie, I been thinking if it works for one game, maybe it'll work for a whole buncha games.

ANNIE:

Breathing through your pingala always works, honey--

NUKE:

Not that. I mean the re-channeling
of my sexual energy.

(beat)

Maybe we shouldn't make love for
awhile.

ANNIE:

Now don't go overboard, I look
incredibly hot, right?
She strikes a pose. She does look hot.

NUKE:

You know what it feels like to
throw a three hitter?

(nervously, with
resolve)

We better not fuck.

ANNIE:

Nuke?!

NUKE:

Just till I lose.

ANNIE:

Get over here.

NUKE:

No.

ANNIE:

Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh--

She starts toward him--and Nuke flees. Out the door, into
the night. Annie slumps in disbelief.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

ANNIE SITS IN BED ALONE -- Lights a cigaret. A puzzled
expression--things have got out of control.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

Nuke was so encouraged that he
took a vow to not have sex until

they lost...

Annie reaches over, opens a drawer in her nightstand, and pulls out her baseball glove. She cradles it fondly in her lap, puts it on, pounds it gently...

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

Y'see a ballplayer on a streak considers himself touched with magic and he'll do anything to keep from breaking the spell ...

CUT TO:

INT. DURHAM BULL LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

NUKE NEATLY UNFOLDS THE RED PANTIES in his locker.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

In fact the whole team started making religious connections and everybody got hot.

JOSE BLESSES THE BATS with a chicken bone cross.

JIMMY READS THE BIBLE and prays alone in the corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

PLAYERS TAKING GROUND BALLS and batting practice.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

I figured Nuke would win a couple, then lose, and things would get back to normal ...

PLAYERS PLAYING "FLIP" PEPPER like kids.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

But it didn't happen like that...

and for one extraordinary June and July, the Durham Bulls, for whatever perverse reason, began playing baseball with joy and verve and poetry--

NUKE WARMING UP in the bullpen, listening to Crash.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

The two sides of my own brain were all jumbled up and cross-wired... while one side was being neglected, the other was in paradise watching our Bulls play like Big Leaguers...

MICKEY RIPS A TRIPLE UP THE ALLEY -- Slides into third.

DEKE AND TOMMY TURN A SPECTACULAR DOUBLE PLAY

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

We swept a four game series with
Kingston, back to back
doubleheaders with Winston-Salem,
and kicked the holy shit out of
Greensboro in a three game
series...

SEVERAL PLAYERS SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS at a local mall. A line
of kids to meet them. A banner--MEET YOUR BULLS!

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

They were in demand all over town--
and Crash, who kept hitting
dingers, was approaching the minor
league record... though I told
nobody.

CRASH BLASTS ANOTHER HOME RUN -- Another win.

JULY 4 PROMOTION -- LARRY, DEKE, TOMMY, AND JOSE dressed as
the "Spirit of 176 Drum and Fife Corps" at home plate,
surrounded by a Boy Scout Troop.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

After sweeping a July 4
doubleheader, the Durham Bulls
were tied for first.

THE WIVES, THE GROUPIES, AND MILLIE WAIT for the players
outside the clubhouse following a game.

ANNIE SITS ALONE IN HER BOX SEAT as the stadium empties.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

But beautiful as the winning streak
was, I was getting damn lonely.

(beat)

Something had to be done. I needed
a man...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TEAM BUS ON THE ROAD BACK --DAY
The sounds of Diana Ross and the Supremes.

INT. THE BUS -- DAY

LARRY, DEKE, TOMMY AND MICKEY as the Supremes, singing "Stop
in the Name of Love" at the front of the bus.

NUKE:

I love winning, Crash, you hear
me? I love It. Teach me

everything.

CRASH:

It's time you started working on your interviews.

NUKE:

What do I gotta do?

CRASH:

Learn your cliches. Study them. Know them. They're your friends. Crash hands Nuke a small pad and pen.

CRASH:

Write this down.

(beat)

"We gotta play 'em one day at a time."

NUKE:

Boring.

CRASH:

Of course. That's the point.

(beat)

"I'm just happy to be here and hope I can help the ballclub."

NUKE:

Jesus.

CRASH:

Write, write--"I just wanta give It my best shot and, Good Lord willing, things'll work out."
NUKE STARTS WRITING them down.

NUKE:

"...Good Lord willing, things'll work out."

CRASH:

Yep. So how's Annie?

Nuke looks up from his cliches, startled.

NUKE:

She's getting steamed 'cause I'm still re-channeling my sexual energy--maybe I should cave in and sleep with her once just to calm her down. What'ya think?

CRASH:

You outta your mind? If you give in now you might start losing.

(beat)

Never fuck with a winning streak.

Nuke nods seriously, listening to the master.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STADIUM PARKING LOT -- DAY

THE BUS PULLS IN -- Wives and girlfriends are waiting.

The players get off, greet their women.

ANNIE GREETES NUKE -- They head for her Volvo..

JIMMY STARTS ACROSS THE LOT on foot, dragging his luggage, when Millie pulls up in her car.

MILLIE:

Hi, Jimmy. Want a ride?

JIMMY:

(nervously)

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior?

MILLIE:

No.

JIMMY:

Can I give you my testimony?

MILLIE:

You can do anything you want.

(a tiny grin)

Hop in.

JIMMY NERVOUSLY GETS IN WITH MILLIE They roar away.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN -- DAY

NUKE SITS AT THE TABLE -- He's just finished eating.
Annie circles him. A pot of soup on the stove.

ANNIE:

I'm so proud of you and all the
guys. Want some more soup?

NUKE:

No, no, it was great.

ANNIE:

How 'bout a back rub?

NUKE:

No, that's okay. All I need's a
little nap.

ANNIE:

I'll tuck you in.

NUKE:

(nervously)
You can't seduce me.

ANNIE:

I'm not gonna try to seduce you,
sweetie...
ANNIE STRETCHES OUT HER LEG and lays it an the table.

NUKE:

What's that?
She pulls back her skirt slightly, exposing her garter snaps
attached to her stockings.

ANNIE:

That's my leg.

NUKE:

I know what it is.

ANNIE:

I figure we could work on some

fundamentals even if we don't
make love.
She strokes her leg. Nuke stares fearfully.

NUKE:

Fundamentals?

ANNIE:

Sure.

(beat)

Unsnap my stockings.

Nuke squirms, then reaches for her garter snaps. And stops.

NUKE:

Crash once called a woman's, uh--
pussy--y'know how the hair kinda
makes a "V" shape?--

ANNIE:

Yes I do...

NUKE:

Well--he calls it the Bermuda
Triangle. He said a man can get
lost in there and never be heard
from again.

ANNIE:

What a nasty thing to say.

NUKE:

He didn't mean it nasty. He said
that gettin' lost and disappearing
from the face of the earth was
sometimes a good thing to do--
especially like that.

ANNIE:

Oh...

(beat)

Crash is a very smart man. Now
c'mon, honey, give it a try.

NUKE REACHES FOR THE GARTER SNAPS with two hands. He fumbles,
groping awkwardly. Annie stops him gently.

ANNIE:

Watch...one hand--

WITH A SINGLE HAND ANNIE FLICKS each snap. Flick, flick, flick. Magic. The snaps open effortlessly.

NUKE:

oh.

ANNIE RE-SNAPS THEM QUICKLY, offering her leg to Nuke.

ANNIE:

Now you try.

NUKE TRIES AGAIN -- One handed. Awkwardly again, but--

ANNIE:

(sighing sexually)

Mmmmmmm...oh yes...

BUT NUKE LEAPS TO HIS FEET -- Reacting vigorously, nervously, desperately. The soup crashes on the floor.

NUKE:

No! You're playing with my mind!

ANNIE:

I'm trying to play with your body!

NUKE:

I knew it--you're seducing me!

ANNIE:

Of course I'm seducing you for Godsakes, and I'm doing a damn poor job of it--

(beat)

Aren't I pretty?

NUKE:

I think you're real cute.

ANNIE:

Cute?! I hate cute! Baby ducks are cute! I wanta be exotic and mysterious!

NUKE:

You're exotic and mysterious and cute--that's why I better leave.
Nuke starts to leave.

ANNIE:

Nuke! You got things all wrong!
There's no relation between sex
and baseball. Ask Crash.

NUKE:

I did.

ANNIE:

What'd he say?

NUKE:

He said if I gave in to you I'd
start losing again.

ANNIE:

He did?

NUKE:

I'll be back when we lose.
NUKE HURRIES OUT THE DOOR -- Annie just stares.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOWNTOWNER MOTEL -- DURHAM -- DAY
A run of the mill cheap modern motel.
INT. CRASH'S ROOM AT THE MOTEL -- DAY
CRASH WORKS ON HIS SWING in front of a mirror.
A knock at the door.

CRASH:

Come in.
ANNIE ENTERS the room. Crash stays with his stance.

ANNIE:

Crash...I want you.

CRASH:

Nuke won't go to bed with you,
eh?

ANNIE:

He' s confused--

CRASH:

Aren't we all?

ANNIE:

Don't you think I'm pretty?

Crash puts down the bat, and looks directly at her. As he does he picks up two spring loaded hand exercisers and begins pumping them an he talks.

CRASH:

You're gorgeous, God damn it!

From the moment I first saw you I knew I had to have you. I had to have you!

ANNIE:

I want to be had.

CRASH:

I think of you and the "boy" all the time.

ANNIE:

He won't make love to me anymore.

CRASH:

And he's right! A ballplayer on a streak has to respect the streak. They don't happen very often.

(beat)

You know how hard this game is?

If you believe you're playing well because you're getting laid or because you're not getting laid or because you wore red silk panties--then you are!

(beat)

And I still think Thomas Pynchon is full of shit.

ANNIE:

I want you desperately!
Crash can hardly keep up. So he slows her down--

CRASH:

Who are you? Do you have a job?

ANNIE:

I teach part time at the Junior
College. What if I told you I
was through with Nuke? He learned
his lessons quickly and left me.

CRASH:

And now you wanta teach me?

ANNIE:

I don't imagine there's much I
could teach you.

CRASH:

I doubt that.

ANNIE:

Crash, I get wet just thinking
about you.

CRASH:

I thought you wanted an
"uncomplicated" boy?

ANNIE:

I'm ready for a complicated man.

CRASH:

--and as soon as we lose a game,
he'll be back in your arms.

ANNIE:

I said when I think about you, I
get wet.

CRASH:

Annie, I think you should leave.

Annie launches into a tirade without orchestration or self-awareness. She's frustrated, confused, angry and...

ANNIE:

God damn you--what is happening?
Is there no man who'll have me?
(beat)
This is the weirdest season I
ever saw--the Durham Bulls can't
lose and I can't get laid!

CRASH:

(softly)
You okay?
Annie slides against the wall down to the floor. Tears flow.
Her makeup runs. Her eyes are red.

ANNIE:

(shakily)
I need a drink.
Crash gingerly helps her to her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXWELL'S BAR -- DAY
ANNIE AND CRASH SIT IN THE CORNER of the empty bar.

CRASH:

Why baseball?

ANNIE:

(sighs)
I was raised in a Baptist church
got dipped in the water when I
was 5-- born again before
kindergarten...by the time I was
10 I knew it was bullshit and at
15 I ran away from home...
SHE SMILES at the most painful memories.

ANNIE:

pregnant, had an abortion, got
pregnant again, had an abortion
again...gave up men. Tried women.
Missed men. My mother died.

(beat)

I bought a car for \$200 and drove to Ft. Lauderdale to bury her.

(beat)

And after we'd sung some hymns in some wretched Florida funeral home, I went outside and something happened--

Her tone becomes wistful, nostalgic.

ANNIE:

The smell of cut grass in the warm March air overwhelmed me and I heard a noise--

(makes the sound))

--tok, tok, tok--and some men shouting...then tok, tok, tok. Crash smiles slightly. He knows.

ANNIE:

I crossed the street--it was the New York Yankees spring training field--tok, tok, tok, was the sound of a ball hitting a bat--and I sat in the warm bleachers to think about my mother...

(beat)

And I saw him.

CRASH:

Who?

ANNIE:

Thurman Munson.

(beat)

He was covered with dirt and he was fighting with everybody--it was beautiful ...

(beat)

And he called the ump a cocksucker and got thrown out of the game even though it was an exhibition!

(beat)

So I stayed in the bleachers all

spring and gradually came to understand what's so great about baseball.

CRASH:

What's so great about baseball?

ANNIE:

If you know where home plate is, then you know where 1st base is, and 2nd, and everything else-- 'cause they're always in the same place in relation to home.

(beat)

Don't you see? If you know where home plate is, then you know where everything else in the universe is!

Silence.

CRASH:

I don't know if I'd go that far.

ANNIE:

It's true, It's true!

(beat, down)

Least it used to be true. It ain't possible that baseball's not enough anymore, is it, Crash?

CRASH:

It's possible.

ANNIE:

No.

CRASH:

Are you gonna be waking up next to 20 year old ballplayers when you're 60?

ANNIE:

Well...I used to think that wasn't the worst thing in the world to

look forward to. Lately I'm not so sure.

CRASH:

Why not?

ANNIE:

(angrily)

Whatta you mean "why not"? Are you gonna play forever?!

Before Crash can answer--

SUDDENLY A VOICE interrupts. They both turn to see: MILLIE EXCITEDLY DRAGGING JIMMY into the nearly empty bar. She leads him by the hand.

MILLIE:

Annie, Annie! There she is--we've been looking all over for ya. Hi Crash.

MILLIE LEADS JIMMY right up to their table. And as they hold hands. Jimmy stands there shyly.

MILLIE:

Well tell 'em, honey.

JIMMY:

(nervously)

We're getting married.

MILLIE STICKS OUT HER LEFT HAND Displays a huge ring.

ANNIE:

Omigawd, honey, I'm so happy for you.

MILLIE:

He's a virgin.

Jimmy squirms defensively.

JIMMY:

Wellyeah...

(to Annie and Crash)

I guess that probably seems pretty corny to people like you.

ANNIE:

Oh Jimmy, honey, I think it sounds wonderful!

MILLIE:

Annie, will you be the bride's maid?

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- LATER -- NIGHT
GAME IN PROGRESS -- Nuke on the mound.
NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS -- Very high. Ball three.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE DUGOUT -- Skip and Larry spitting tobacco.

SKIP:

Nuke's overthrowing tonight, he don't look loose. Anything bothering him?

LARRY:

He said his chakras were jammed and he was breathing out of the wrong nostril.

SKIP:

(spitting tobacco)
Okay...

CUT TO:

BACK TO THE MOUND
NUKE WINDS AND DELIVERS AGAIN -- Very high. Ball four.
CRASH IS QUICKLY to the mound.

CRASH:

What's wrong?

NUKE:

I'm nervous--my old man's here.
NUKE MOTIONS -- They both look --P.O.V. NUKE'S FATHER SITTING in a special box seat. The man is 45, and is operating a home video camera taking pictures of his son.

CRASH:

Hey, he's just your father, man--
he's as full of shit as anybody.
TOMMY AND DEKE JOIN THEM at the mound.

DEKE:

What the hell's going on?

TOMMY:

You breathing through the wrong
fucking nostril again?

DEKE:

Hey, you guys hear Jimmy and Millie
are engaged?! Wait'll I tell him
she's gone down on half the
Carolina League--

CRASH:

(threatening)
Anybody says anything bad about
Millie, I'll break his neck.

NUKE:

Hey, guys, I got a game to pitch.
JOSE THE FIRST BASEMAN JOINS THEM ALL at the mound.

JOSE:

Don't throw anything to me--my
girlfriend put a curse on my glove.

NUKE:

I'll take the curse off the son
of a bitch!

JOSE:

Then you got to cut the head off
a live rooster.

NUKE:

Shit.
MICKEY JOINS THE CROWD from third base.

MICKEY:

Don't worry, man, this umpire's a
God damn racist.
P.O.V. THE UMPIRE -- He's black.

CUT TO:

THE DUGOUT -- SKIP AND LARRY watch the growing meeting.

SKIP:

What the hell's going on out there?

LARRY:

It's a damn convention.

SKIP:

Check it out.

CUT TO:

THE MOUND -- Larry joins the convention.

LARRY:

What the hell's going on out here?

CRASH:

Nuke's scared cause his nostrils
are jammed and his old man's here,
we need a live rooster to take
the curse off Jose's glove, and
nobody knows what to get Jimmy
and Millie for their wedding
present--there's a whole lotta
shit we're trying to deal with--

LARRY:

Oh. I thought there was a problem.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE NIGHT
ANNIE IS HELPING MILLIE make her WEDDING DRESS.
The game can be heard on the radio in the b.g.

MILLIE:

You should be at the game.

ANNIE:

No, no--I'm fine. Millie, how much time did you and Jimmy spend together before he proposed? Annie holds the dress up to Millie.

MILLIE:

Five hours. We both just know. (studying the dress) Do you think I deserve to wear white?

ANNIE:

We all deserve to wear white. BOTH WOMEN TURN THEIR HEADS to the radio to listen. TEDDY THE RADIO MAN ...line drive up the alley's gonna score at least two, here comes the relay--

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM BALLPARK THE GAME NIGHT CRASH FLIPS HIS MASK -- A runner rounds third heading for home. Here comes the throw, on a line. It hits once on the infield grass, takes a long hop-- AS THE RUNNER BARRELS TOWARD THE PLATE -- Crash takes the throw. THE RUNNER SLIDES -- Crash blocks the plate. A cloud of dust. A close play. THE UMPIRE SIGNALS "SAFE" -- And Crash flips out. In a second he is nose to nose with the UMPIRE.

CRASH:

I got him on the knee!

UMPIRE:

You missed him!

CRASH:

God damn It, Jack, he still ain't touched the plate. THEIR FACES ARE INCHES APART -- Screaming face to face.

UMPIRE:

Don't bump me.

CRASH:

It was a cocksucking call!

UMPIRE:

Did you call me a cocksucker?

CRASH:

No! I said It was a cock-sucking call and you can't run me for that!

UMPIRE:

You missed the tag!

CRASH:

You spit on me!

UMPIRE:

I didn't spit on you!

CRASH:

You're in the wrong business, Jack--you're Sears-Roebuck material!

UMPIRE:

You're close, Crash, you want me to run you? I'll run you!

CRASH:

You want me to call you a cocksucker?!

UMPIRE:

Try it! Go ahead. Call me a cocksucker!

CRASH:

Beg me!

UMPIRE:

Call me a cocksucker and you're

outta here!

CRASH:

Beg me again!

UMPIRE:

Call me a cocksucker and you're
outta here!

CRASH:

You're a cocksucker!

UMPIRE:

You're outta here!

THE UMP THEATRICALY THROWS CRASH out of the game.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- SIMULTANEOUS
ANNIE AND MILLIE STARE at the radio.

TEDDY ON THE RADIO

...I've never seen Crash so angry
and frankly, Bull fans, he used a
certain word that's a "no-no"
with umpires...

MILLIE:

Crash musta called the guy a
cocksucker

ANNIE:

God, he's so romantic...

CUT TO:

INT. THE SHOWERS NIGHT

CRASH STANDS AGAINST the water, letting it stream across
him. He raises a can of beer to his lips, drinks it slowly
in the shower.

As the water runs over Crash...

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

When Crash got throwed out, the
game got out of hand...

(beat)

...Jose made three errors with
his cursed mitt...

JOSE BOOTS A GROUND BALL -- A runner scores.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

Nuke never quite got in the groove
though he didn't pitch bad...

NUKE JUST MISSES WITH A PITCH -- Ball four.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

...and the winning streak came to
an end with a 3-2 loss...

(beat)

The good news was that a man was
about to come calling...the bad
news was--it was the wrong guy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM NIGHT

AS PIAF PLAYS on the stereo--A knock at the door.

ANNIE GOES TO THE DOOR -- Then refuses to answer it at first.

She hides in a corner. Bites her fist.

NUKE'S VOICE

Annie! You gotta be in there--I
can hear that crazy Mexican singer!

Annie smiles slightly, and opens the door.

NUKE:

We lost.

ANNIE:

it's okay..

She opens the door fully. Nuke's father stands there.

NUKE:

I'd like you to meet my father.

ANNIE:

(surprised)

Oh--won't YOU come in?

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE

AS THEY ENTER -- She leads them into the kitchen.

NUKE'S FATHER

Ebby's told me a lot about you.

ANNIE:

Uh oh...

(beat)

Can I offer you some coffee?

THE KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS -- NIGHT

She puts a pot of water with a swirl of graciousness.

NUKE'S FATHER

Yeah...Ebby tells me you're a very spiritual woman. He tells me you've taught him a lot about discipline and self-control.

Annie and Nuke exchange glances. Nuke smiles.

ANNIE:

He's a good student.

NUKE'S FATHER

We were worried that Ebby might get involved with the wrong crowd in professional baseball--we're so pleased, he met a Christian woman.

ANNIE:

Praise the Lord, eh?

The Piaf record begins skipping in the next room.

ANNIE:

Oh my--I better fix that. Ebby will you help me? I'm no good with mechanical things

Nuke picks up his cue and follows her to:

THE LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS--- NIGHT

Annie fixes the record.

NUKE:

I couldn't dump my old man but maybe later I can sneak away from him...

ANNIE:

You don't have to...

NUKE:

I'm starting to understand what you're teaching me. I mean the

panties and the nostrils and all
that shit...I mean I'm getting it--

ANNIE:

So am I. Nuke, honey, we need to
talk--
Nuke gets very aggressive and playful, pinning her.

NUKE:

Aw hell, let's have a quickie
right here--

ANNIE:

--but you're father's in there!

NUKE:

Crash says I gotta quit worrying
about him--c'mon, honey, we got a
lotta catching up to do--
He pins her to the wall, she squirms away.

ANNIE:

Nuke--we do need to talk!

CUT TO:

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Nuke's father is studying pictures on Annie's wall.
CLOSE ON A HELMUT NEWTON PHOTO -- A nude woman, two afghans,
and a toilet.

CLOSE ON A PHOTO OF SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA YOGANDA

CLOSE ON A POSTER OF A MARIJUANA LEAF with the inscription
"Better Living Through Mexican Agriculture".

Nuke's father is a bit unsettled by all this, when:
The phone rings.

ANNIE SWEEPS BACK into the kitchen--saved by the bell--to
answer the phone. Nuke trails.

ANNIE:

(on phone)
Hello? Skip? Yeah, as a matter
of fact, he is here.
She hands the phone to Nuke.

ANNIE:

It's Skip, for you.

NUKE (ON PHONE)

Yeah, Skip, it's me.

(several beats)

Jeez...Jeez...God...Jeez...

Nuke hangs up the phone. Looks at Annie and his father.

NUKE:

I'm going to the Show.

(beat)

They're sending me up to finish
out the season with the Big Club.

I'm going to the Show!

NUKE'S FATHER LEAPS TO HIS FEET and embraces his son.

NUKE'S FATHER

Let's have a quick word of prayer,
right here, to thank the Lord for
all this--

ANNIE:

Oh let's not...

NUKE:

I gotta leave first thing in the
morning.

ANNIE:

That's great!

NUKE:

How can I possibly thank you?
He embraces her rather formally.

ANNIE:

Just pitch well and do good.
Nuke hustles his father out of the house.

NUKE:

I will, I will--C'mon, Dad, I'll
dump you off. I gotta find Crash.
As they exit, Nuke's father turns to Annie:
NUKE'S FATHER
God bless you.

ANNIE:

(to herself)

She will, Mr. LaLoosh, she will

...

ANNIE SITS DOWN in a kitchen chair. An enormous sigh.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOWNTOWNER MOTEL -- NIGHT

Nuke knocks on Crash's door. Nobody home. Tony is arriving with his GROUPIE GIRLFRIEND to the next room.

TONY:

Crash ain't there. He never gets back till four or five--

NUKE:

Where does he go?

TONY:

Well, I'd rather not say.

NUKE:

They called me up to the Show and I wanta tell Crash goodbye.

TONY COMES OVER AND GIVES NUKE a heartfelt "five".

TONY:

Goddamn, that's great! Jesus!

(beat)

Listen, Crash don't like anybody to know it but--

(beat)

Most nights he goes down to, you know, down to Niggertown. To Sandy's... the whorehouse.

NUKE:

He goes to a whorehouse every night?

TONY:

Don't tell him I told you--he'd break my neck.

CLOSE ON NUKE -- Disturbed.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLACK SECTION OF DURHAM -- NIGHT
A CAB MOVES SLOWLY through a poor neighborhood. Stops at:
AN OLD HOUSE -- Decades of ad hoc add-ons.

BLACK CABBIE:

That's Sandy's. Keep your extra
cash In your shoes.
NUKE GETS OUT and goes to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANDY'S WHOREHOUSE -- NIGHT
NUKE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR -- A small barred window opens.
A face appears--a TOUGH BLACK, SANDY, 50.

SANDY:

What'you want, kid?

NUKE:

Jim looking for somebody.

SANDY:

Who ain't?

NUKE:

Looking for Crash Davis.

SANDY:

Ain't here.

NUKE:

I'm Nuke LaLoosh. With the Bulls.

SANDY:

(studying him)
Your breaking ball's getting better
but ya need a change up.
The door opens. Nuke enters.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDY'S WHOREHOUSE -- NIGHT
NUKE ENTERS TENTATIVELY -- Another world. Grim. Sleazy.
The Doorman leads him down a hallway full of doors. A BLACK

PROSTITUTE enters a room with a HUGE REDNECK. As they go down the hallway, and as they do:

We begin hearing singing--raucous, soulful, drunk.

NUKE STOPS IN A DOORWAY -- Looks into the "waiting room".

--P.O.V. SEVERAL HOOKERS in various stages of undress, sit on couches and chairs. Bored, smoking, ancient. The ONE WHITE HOOKER, a skinny 25 year old, accompanies on a guitar, struggling to keep up. And a couple HOOKERS are hanging around a piano that--

CRASH IS PLAYING and singing. He doesn't look up. Crash Is dressed but barefoot. A cigaret dangles from his mouth as he accompanies himself with decent cocktail lounge chords. Two Hookers at the piano hum along.

CRASH (SINGING AND PLAYING)

But when she does get weary--Try a little tenderness...

NUKE STEPS INTO THE ROOM -- All the Hookers rise in anticipation of a new customer. Crash keeps playing, never looking up.

CRASH (SINGING CONT'D)

You know she's waiting, just anticipating, the things that she'll never possess...

(beat)

While she's there waiting--Try a little tenderness...

Nuke interrupts the instrumental passage:

NUKE:

Crash. I'm going to the Show.

Crash Ignores him, keeps playing.

NUKE:

Club's expanding its roster to finish the season--

CRASH:

Shut up. I'm playing.

(singing last 8 bars)

Oh you won't regret it, young girls don't forget it, lost in their own wilderness ...

(beat)

But it's all so easy--Just try a

little tenderness...

As Crash plays on--

NUKE:

I'm going to the Show.

CRASH:

Then go.

NUKE GRABS CRASH by the hair and jerks him to his feet. The two men are face to face.

NUKE:

I'm trying to thank you.

CRASH:

Let go of me!

NUKE LETS HIM GO and Crash staggers drunkenly against the piano, regaining his balance as:

SANDY RUSHES IN WITH A GUN to break it up.

SANDY:

He makin' trouble for you, Mr. Davis?

CRASH:

No, no, Sandy, put it down.

(drunkenly, to Nuke)

Nuke, you know Sandy Grimes? Hit .367 at Louisville in 155.

SANDY:

I hit .371.

CRASH:

He hit .371--C'mon, Nuke--you and me, let's step outside and settle this.

NUKE:

Settle what?

CRASH:

C ' mon!

NUKE:

I don't wanta fight you, I wanta thank you. Let's have a drink and forget this--

CRASH:

God damn it, you fucking virgin prick--step outside.

Crash drunkenly heads out the back door in his underwear. Nuke reluctantly follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ALLEY BEHIND THE WHOREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Several of the Hookers follow to watch. Crash is drunk and lost. Nuke in control.

NUKE:

C'mon, we got nothin' to fight about.

CRASH:

You fuck!

NUKE:

Why am I a fuck?

CRASH:

Why are you a fuck?

(beat)

'Cause you got talent. I got brains. But you got talent!

You're God damn left arm is worth a million dollars a year.

(drunken insight)

All my limbs put together are worth 7 cents a pound--and that's for science and dog meat.

NUKE:

You're a great catcher.

CRASH:

Come over here into the light so I can kick your ass.

NUKE:

No.

CRASH:

Okay, I'll kick your ass there.

Crash takes a step toward Nuke. Pulls up his bare feet quickly, stepping on a sharp stone.

CRASH:

...God damn...I forgot my fucking shoes. Honey, go get my shoes.

One of the Hookers goes inside for his shoes.

NUKE:

I'll take you back to the hotel.

CRASH:

(drunken, mad)

You know what the difference is between hitting .250 and hitting .300? I got it figured out.

(beat)

Twenty-five hits a year in 500 at bats is 50 points. Okay? There's 6 months in a season, that's about 25 weeks--you get one extra flare a week--just one--a gork, a ground ball with eyes, a dying quail--just one more dying quail a week and you're in Yankee Stadium!

CUT TO:

INT. THE WHOREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

THE HOOKER FINDS CRASH'S SHOES -- Starts to bring them out to him when...she notices cash in one of them. The Hooker takes a few bills for herself, and continues out--

CUT TO:

BACK IN THE ALLEY -- Crash finishes his tirade as:

THE HOOKER COMES OUT WITH CRASH'S SHOES

He struggles drunkenly to put them on.

NUKE:

Forget it. You ain't worth
thanking--

NUKE STARTS TO WALK AWAY -- Crash fires his one free shoe at
Nuke hitting him in the back of the head.
NUKE WHIRLS -- Comes after Crash.

CRASH:

Come on, Meat...

CRASH SWINGS WILDLY -- Nuke ducks it and level s Crash with
a short right hand.

CRASH CRASHES INTO SOME GARBAGE CANS -- Lies there on his
back for several beats. Nuke stares.

CLOSE ON CRASH -- Blood trickles from his mouth.

CRASH:

Nuke...tell me something. Did
you hit me with your right or
your left?

NUKE:

My right.

Silence. Crash's next line is both drunk and sober and we
don't know if he's just being clever or if, somehow, he's
staged It all. Maybe even he doesn't know.

CRASH:

Good. Good. That's terrific...

NUKE:

What?

CRASH:

If ya get in a fight with some
asshole, never hit his with your
pitching hand. ya might get
injured.

(smiles)

That's another lesson for ya--now
quit fucking around and help me
up.

CRASH REACHES UP A HAND FOR HELP -- Nuke stares back.

AND FINALLY NUKE REACHES DOWN AND HELPS CRASH to his feet.

NUKE:

Ya look like shit.
The two men head inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- NEXT MORNING -- EARLY
NUKE'S PORSCHE -- The Clubhouse Boy drags Nuke's out to the
car and loads the trunk. Annie, Larry and a COUPLE KIDS AND
DOGS are watching.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS -- DAY
NUKE CLEANS OUT HIS LOCKER -- Filling his travel bag.
Crash sits on a stool next to him. Sober.

CRASH:

Sorry about last night.

NUKE:

Forget it.

CRASH:

I have been known, on occasion,
to howl at the moon. D'you
understand that?

NUKE:

No.

CRASH:

You will.

(beat)

Look, Nuke--these Big League
hitters are gonna light you up
like a pin ball machine for awhile--
don't worry about it. Be cocky
and arrogant even when you're
getting beat. That's the secret.

(beat)

You gotta play this game with
fear and arrogance.

NUKE:

Fear and ignorance.

CRASH:

(raging)

No. Fear and arrogance, you,
hayseed, not ignorance!

NUKE:

(smiles calmly)

I know. I just like to see you
get all worked up.

Crash calms down. Sighs. Nuke nods and picks up his bags.

NUKE:

(knows it's not true)

Well, I got Annie all warmed up
for ya...

(knows it is true)

She's just waiting for you to
show up, y'know...

CRASH:

I don't need a crazy woman in my
life.

NUKE:

Maybe you do.

(quick beat)

Y'know I'm starting to like this
game--baseball's a helluva good
way to make a living.

Crash speaks with quiet passion, from his soul.

CRASH:

It's the best, Nuke...the absolute
fucking best.

NUKE:

Yeah, thanks for everything.

They shake hands, and Nuke heads out the door.

CRASH:

Nuke--

(Nuke stops)

Good luck.

NUKE:

You too...Meat.

Nuke smiles. A little arrogance and fear.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- CONTINUOUS DAY

NUKE TOSSES HIS BAG in the Porsche and motions to Annie.

They step away from the others.

ANNIE:

Well I guess this is it.

NUKE:

(smiles)

I won't be needing these anymore.

NUKE PULLS ANNIE'S RED PANTIES from his jacket pocket.

The frilly, silk lace is tattered. The panties have been through the mill. She accepts them graciously.

ANNIE:

Neither will I.

NUKE:

I think I'm ready for the Show.

ANNIE:

Ebby Calvin Nuke LaLoosh--don't think too much.

NUKE:

Don't worry.

They look at each other awkwardly, sweetly, and:

NUKE KISSES ANNIE GENTLY ON THE LIPS -- They hesitate, and Nuke heads for his Porsche.

CRASH ARRIVES IN THE DOORWAY to watch. Nuke bids farewell to his father and climbs into his car.

NUKE:

I gotta go now, Dad.

FATHER:

I was thinking I could fly up and spend a week in the Big Leagues with you--help you get comfortable.

NUKE:

No. If I screw up, I wanta do it alone. I'll call.

FATHER:

We'll be praying for you.

NUKE:

Dad--if my curveball is hanging, God ain't gonna help me.

FATHER:

We'll pray anyway.

NUKE:

(kindly)

If it makes you and mom feel better, go for it. I gotta run--

THEY SHAKE HANDS, AND:

CRASH'S P.O.V. -- NUKE ROARS AWAY in his Porsche, leaving a trail of dust in the Stadium parking lot.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- DUSK

MILLIE AND JIMMY'S WEDDING -- A formal wedding on the pitcher's mound. Millie in white. Jimmy in his uniform. Skip is the best man, also in uniform, and several players and groupies are the attendants, Annie as the Bride's Maid. Organ music plays the wedding march.

JIMMY LIFTS MILLIE'S VEIL and kisses her. The stands are full of fans.

JIMMY LEADS MILLIE DOWN THE "AISLE" towards home plate.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- GAME IN PROGRESS -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON SCOREBOARD -- Ninth inning. Durham is leading by a score of 1 to 0. Two outs.

JIMMY IS PITCHING -- He delivers. The batter rockets a line drive up the alley. A PENINSULA RUNNER races from first, rounding third, trying to score. A relay.

CRASH WAITS AT THE PLATE -- Here comes the runner. Here comes the throw. A close play. A terrible collision.

Crash goes rolling. The umpire waits--and in a cloud of

dust, Crash holds up the ball.

THE CROWD ROARS -- Jimmy jumps victoriously in the air.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKER ROOM -- NIGHT

The air of victory. The mood is up and goofy. Beer cans are squirted at Jimmy, the groom.

JIMMY:

I wanta thank everybody and the Lord for the victory, it's a wonderful way to celebrate my marriage--and I guess we're all back on a winning streak, eh?l A few raucous "Fuckin A's" from the team.

TONY:

Hey, Jimmy--we chipped in and kind got a little gift for ya of a special wedding cake from the Durham Bulls.

DEKE CARRIES OUT AN WEDDING CAKE -- It's X-Rated. The decorative Bride and Groom are fucking. Jimmy's embarrassed but it's all good natured.

CUT TO:

CRASH COMING OUT OF THE SHOWER -- Toweling off, watching the innocent, vulgar fun. He sits down in front of his locker, drying his hair, when the CLUBHOUSE BOY approaches:

CLUBHOUSE BOY:

Hey, Crash--Skip wants to see ya.

CRASH RISES AND HEADS FOR SKIP'S CUBICLE -- Wearing only a towel and his shower shoes.

CUT TO:

INSIDE SKIP'S OFFICE -- Skip and Larry sit in postgame routine, checking charts, smoking, half dressed.

CRASH ENTERS as he's still drying off.

CRASH:

Yeah, Skip, you wanted to see me?

SKIP:

Crash, shut the door.

And it hits him. Crash looks at Skip, who looks down at the floor, unwilling to face Crash who then looks at Larry, who also looks away nervously.

CRASH SHUTS THE DOOR -- The party rages beyond.

SKIP:

(heartfelt)

This is the toughest job a manager has...

CLOSE ON CRASH -- He's been in the game too long to be surprised; nonetheless, he's surprised. And hurt. His stoicism is professional.

SKIP:

The organization wants to make a change...now that Nuke's gone they wanta bring up some young catcher...

LARRY:

Some kid hittin' .300 in Lynchburg ...probably a bust.

SKIP:

I put in a word for you with the organization--told 'em I thought you'd make a fine minor league manager someday...Might be an opening at Salem next year--

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON CRASH -- His eyes are moist.

SKIP:

Helluva year, Crash--you know how it is.

Silence.

Crash stands there nearly nude. He just nods slightly. Without rancor or bitterness, he turns and re-enters the raucous locker room.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DURHAM -- NIGHT

CRASH WALKS THE STREETS ALONE -- Crash stops in front of a

window and takes his batting stroke, studying the reflection.
And he keeps walking into:

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CHEAP BAR IN DOWNTOWN DURHAM -- NIGHT
CRASH DRINKING ALONE at the end of a bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DURHAM -- NIGHT
CRASH WANDERS ALONG into the residential neighborhoods.
HE STARTS ACROSS A QUIET INTERSECTION Stops. Looks at the
street signs. He CHANGES DIRECTION, walks on.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT
The windows glow. After midnight.
CRASH STARES AT THE HOUSE -- Hesitates, then walks up the
porch stairs. Knocks at the door. Moments later:
ANNIE OPENS THE DOOR -- She looks beautiful. Almost as if
she was expecting him. At first, silence. Then:

CRASH:

I got released.

ANNIE:

I heard already.
SHE OPENS THE DOOR -- Crash enters Annie's house.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT
ANNIE PUTS ON her favorite Piaf record.
ANNIE POURS A DRINK for both of them.
CRASH PUTS A HAND ON HER HIP -- Annie closes her eyes, a
tiny gasp. He kisses her forehead. She kisses his neck. A
tiny smile from Crash. The same from Annie.
SHE KISSES HIM on the corner of his mouth. Her hand finds
the back of his head and she runs her fingers through his
hair.
CRASH RESPONDS -- They kiss slowly, deeply. As--
HIS HAND ON HER HIP PULLS UP HER SKIRT -- By degrees, the
skirt is raised up her stocking covered leg. At last exposing
the beloved-
BLACK GARTER SNAPS -- Crash's hand expertly holds up the
skirt and effortlessly UNSNAPS THE GARTER with a minimum of

effort.

FLICK, FLICK, FLICK -- The garter snaps are free.

ANNIE:

Oh my...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BEDROOM -- Crash carries Annie to the bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE'S FOOT KICKS OVER A LAMP onto the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE'S BLOUSE FRONT -- Flick, flick, flick. Crash unbuttons it with one hand in seconds. Even Annie is startled with the speed and ease of Crash's hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

HER HAND SLIDES UNDER THE WAISTBAND of his underwear

DISSOLVE TO:

HIS HAND SLIDES UP UNDER HER panties.

DISSOLVE TO:

A FULL EMBRACE ON THE EDGE OF THE BED -- Remnants of clothes cover parts of their bodies. They tumble out of control to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE'S HAND GRABS ONTO A DRESSER LEG -- A carved oak antique, her hand holds on tight and shakes the dresser.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DRESSER TOP SHAKES -- Makeup bottles and pictures and dozens of Annie's special things rattle and fall

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE'S HEAD RESTS ON CRASH'S STOMACH -- Post coital, they lie on the floor blissfully as Piaf finishes.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE CHANGES THE RECORD to Hank Williams.

DISSOLVE:

THE KITCHEN -- ANNIE AND CRASH eat an after mid after sex snack. Crash eats a bowl of Wheaties. They each wear one of her robes.

DISSOLVE"

Annie sits, munching a carrot and rolling a joint of marijuana she keeps in a Victorian jewel box.

ANNIE:

... so you see in a former lifetime I'm sure that I was Alexandria, the Czarette of Russia? What do you think?

CRASH:

How come in former lifetimes, everybody was someone famous?
(beat)
How come nobody ever says they were Joe Schmo?

ANNIE:

It doesn't work like that.
(stares at him)
God, you're gorgeous. Want to dance?

THEY KISS AGAIN -- And fall gradually onto the table top.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE SITS ON TOP OF CRASH lying on the kitchen table. He stretches out a leg and:
KICKS THE BOWL OF CEREAL to the floor. It smashes-- ceramics, milk, cereal go everywhere. As:
THEY START MAKING LOVE AGAIN in the glaring kitchen light.

DISSOLVE TO:

CRASH AND ANNIE DANCE in her living room.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BEDROOM -- Crash is handcuffed to the bed. He seems perfectly happy as Annie reads Walt Whitman.

ANNIE:

...mouth, tongue, lips, teeth,
roof of the mouth, jaws, and the

jaw hinges...

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE HANDCUFFED TO THE BED -- Crash reads.

CRASH:

...wrist and wrist joints, hand,
palm, knuckles, thumb, fore-finger,
finger-joints, finger-nail...

DISSOLVE TO:

CRASH AT ANNIE'S RECORD COLLECTION -- He thumbs through it quickly, puts on a new record.

The Dominoes sing "Sixty Minute Man". And...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BATHROOM -- Candlelight around the bathtub. All we can make out is two heads, two bodies, sloshing wildly in the dim glow. Water splashes, douses some candles.

DISSOLVE TO:

CRASH AND ANNIE IN BED READING -- Each with a copy of a Thomas Pynchon novel. Crash tosses it aside. And disappears under the sheets, playing with her as she struggles to keep reading. She puts down the book.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANNIE APPLYING EYE MAKEUP TO CRASH -- Who doesn't resist, seems even amused. He kisses her deeply, slowly. She kisses him back. They fall onto the bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

P.O.V. OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW -- Dawn. A bird chirps. And we hear a record skipping, repeating endlessly.

PAN ACROSS THE KITCHEN -- Overturned chairs, spilled and broken cereal bowls, liquor bottles.

PAN ACROSS THE BEDROOM -- A disaster. Clothes scattered across the floor, overturned lamps, the bed lies at a cockeyed angle. Annie and Crash lie face down -- asleep, utterly spent.

CRASH WAKES UP SLOWLY - 'Reaches up and pulls his underwear off of a lampshade, pulls them on, and gets slowly out of bed. He staggers across the bedroom floor, stumbling a bit,

into:

THE LIVING ROOM -- He stumbles across the trashed room.
Record album covers, more liquor bottles, pillows, cushions,
pictures hanging crookedly on the wall.

CRASH TAKES THE SKIPPING RECORD off the player and breathes
a sigh of relief. He sees his pants lying on the floor and
pulls them on.

CRASH OPENS A DRAWER -- Pulls out a piece of paper and a
pencil. He starts writing...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BEDROOM -- LATER

Sun streams in. Annie opens her eyes. Rubs them. Reaches
over for Crash. Her hand hits a note. She whirls. He's
gone. Only a note.

SHE SITS UP WITH A START and reads the note.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER)

Crash said he had to get an early
start to drive to Asheville in
the South Atlantic League where
he heard they might need a catcher
to finish out the season...

ZOOM IN EXTREME CLOSE UP OF NOTE -- "Love, Crash".

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS -- DAY

CRASH IN HIS CAR heading for Asheville.

CUT TO:

EXT. ASHEVILLE BASEBALL PARK -- DAY

CRASH KNOCKING ON THE BASEBALL OFFICE DOOR -- Looking for
work.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHEVILLE LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

CRASH UNLOADING HIS GEAR Into yet another locker.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN -- DAY

ANNIE SCRUBBING HER KITCHEN FLOOR -- Down on her hands and
knees, picking up the broken cereal bowl.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

The house smelled like sex for
days. It was wonderful. The

only real cleaning I did was on
the kitchen floor 'cause who likes
to walk on spilt cereal?

SHE FINDS A BIT OF A JOINT on the floor as she's cleaning.
She picks it up, sits on the floor under the table, and lights
the tiny joint.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

The funny thing is, I stopped
worrying about Nuke. Somehow I
knew nothing would stop him.
Crash was right--Nuke had a gift.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INSIDE A MAJOR LEAGUE STADIUM (ATLANTA) -- DAY
NUKE IN STREET CLOTHES IN THE DUGOUT of an empty stadium.
50,000 seats. Slick. Awesome. He's being interviewed by a
BIG LEAGUE REPORTER, who has a small tape deck and has stuck
mike in Nuke's face.

NUKE:

(like a big leaguer)
Y'know, I'm just happy to be here
and hope I can help the ballclub.
I just want to give it my best
shot and good Lord willing,
things'll work out... gotta play
'em one day at a time, Y'know...
THE BIG LEAGUE REPORTER nods attentively as Nuke knowingly
delivers the cliches like a veteran.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ASHEVILLE STADIUM -- DAY
In sharpest contrast to the Big League stadium, a rickety
old wooden grandstand, carved into the pine covered hillside.
CRASH STEPS TO THE PLATE -- In a uniform we've never seen
him in, of course. The Asheville Tourists. He picks up
some dirt, rubs it on his hands. He's as intense as ever.
Still playing for keeps.
CRASH (VOICE OVER)
(at the plate)
C'mon, Meat, throw me that weak
ass shit--c'mon, bring the heat,
bring it, bring it...
CRASH'S P.O.V. -- SLO-MO AS THE PITCHER WINDS AND

delivers a fastball right down the pipe.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

ANNIE LIES IN BED READING -- She suddenly jerks up.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

I was reading in bed when Crash
hit his 247th home run. I knew
the moment it happened...

CUT TO:

EXT. ASHEVILLE STADIUM -- DAY

CRASH UNLOADS A MONSTROUS HOME RUN deep into the trees. He
stands at home plate watching it...like Reggie or the Babe.
And doesn't move. For several seconds he indulges himself
uncharacteristically--until...

THE OPPOSING CATCHER SHOVES HIM toward first.

CATCHER:

Get your ass in gear...

CRASH SMILES and takes the home run trot slowly. As he heads
toward first, HE RAISES A CLINCHED FIST for a brief moment,
a tiny gesture of triumph. And then, routinely, he just
circles the bases.

A HUNDRED FANS APPLAUD ROUTINELY as he circles the bases.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

SHE LIGHTS A CANDLE for the home run. Above the candles,
displayed in the shrine, are her RED PANTIES.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

I lit a candle for Crash's
dinger...and tried to root the
Durham Bulls home to a pennant.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM STADIUM -- DAY

ANNIE AND JACKSON OPEN AN UMBRELLA in her familiar place in
the stadium. Umbrellas go up all around, as:

THE RAINS COME -- The players huddle-in the dugouts.

IN THE DUGOUT Skip and Larry reading copies of "The Tantric
Yoga of Sex". And spitting tobacco.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

The Kid from Lynchburg wasn't

good enough to hold Crash's
jockstrap if ya ask me, and Nuke's
replacement had a fastball that I
coulda hit
(beat)

We had a three game lead with two
weeks to go when the rains came.

THE GROUND CREW DRAGS TARPS over the mound and the plate.

ANNIE (VOICE OVER CONT'D)

It rained and rained and I thought
of driving down to Asheville to
see Crash but then I thought "No,
what you pursue, eludes you". I
had to trust Quantum Physics and
the Church of Baseball.

(beat)

It ain't always easy being this
religious...

ANNIE AND JACKSON POP OPEN THEIR UMBRELLAS and walk out of
the ballpark towards home.

CUT TO:

EXT. DURHAM NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

ANNIE AND JACKSON UNDER UMBRELLAS -- He turns down one street,
she heads toward home.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

AS SHE APPROACHES -- She stops. Looks up. Crash's beat up
car in the driveway.

P.O.V. CRASH SITTING ON THE PORCH SWING Still raining.

CLOSE ON ANNIE -- She hesitates, and smiles.

ANNIE:

Oh my...

ANNIE SITS DOWN on the porch owing next to Crash.

ANNIE:

What happened?

CRASH:

I quit. Hit my dinger and hung
'em up.

A moment of silence over the significance of him quitting.

ANNIE:

I'm quitting too. Boys, not baseball.

CRASH:

There might be an opening for a manager at Salem next spring.

ANNIE:

Salem, Massachusetts? Where all the witches were?

CRASH:

Yeah...you a witch?

ANNIE:

Not yet. It takes years of practice...
He smiles slightly and takes her hand.

CRASH:

You think I could make it to the Show as a manager?

ANNIE:

You'd be great, just great...
(rattling quickly)
'Cause you understand non-linear thinking even though it seems like baseball is a linear game 'cause of the lines and the box scores an' all--but the fact is that there's a spacious-"non-time kind of time" to it...

CRASH:

(interrupting)
Annie---

ANNIE:

What?

CRASH:

I got a lotta time to hear your theories and I wanta hear every damn one of 'em...but right now I'm tired and I don't wanta think about baseball and I don't wanta think about Quantum Physics... I don't wanta think about nothing...

(beat)

I just wanta be.

ANNIE:

I can do that, too.

He rises, takes her hand, and they head inside.

And as the rains fall on Durham...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

THE SHRINE GLOWS -- Candles everywhere. Rain pours down on the windows outside. And...

ANNIE AND CRASH SIT ON THE COUCH together, in silence.

ANNIE:

Walt Whitman once said--"I see great things in baseball. It's our game--the American game

(beat)

He said "it will repair our losses and be a blessing to us"...

(beat)

You could look it up....

The music--Dave Frishberg sings "Van Lingle Mungo".

THE END: