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The Express

By Charles Leavitt

five yards apart,
that's a football field.
But there are other lines,
ones you don't see,
that run deeper and wider,
all the way through a country,
and aren't part of any game.
Strong load right,
On one. On one.
Ready?

- Break.

Whiskey, whiskey, 33.
Been waiting for this, spook.
I'm gonna kick your black
ass back to Africa, boy.
I found another Pepsi.
Pepsi Cola hits the spot...
- 12 full ounces, that's a lot

Twice as much
for a nickel, too
Twice as much
for a nickel, too
Pepsi Cola is
the drink for you
Pepsi Cola is
the drink for you
America has been riding...
the crest of a wave of
a peaceful prosperity.
I believe
in this world to come.
I think it's going to
be a pretty good one.

'When you say 'Budweiser,'
'you've said it all.'

- 'You've said it all.'
What are you boys doing
north of Union Street?
One of you better answer.
Just collecting bottles.
These are our
bottles up here.
Hey, guys.
Ain't but one

thing to do here.
Ernie, you listening to me?
Ernie, now.
Ernie.
Ernie. Ernie.
This one must be stupid.
I'll tell you what,
you give us those bottles...
and we won't
kick your black ass.
Got something to say?
No.
What?
Not only stupid,
but retarded.
And a nigger,
how sad is that?
Look, you've got three
seconds to drop those bottles.
One,
two,
three.
Get him.
- Get him.
Dear Mr. Martin, it feels...
strange to write
about my life.
I can't tell you
the exact moment
I knew what it was
I wanted to be...
or how I wanted
to make my mark.
Maybe it just felt
real good to run,
or maybe one day,
out of the corner of my eye.
I saw tacklers reaching out
for me and dropping behind.
Back in 1949, at the age of
I sure didn't want to be...
remembered for
running too slow.
People in town would always

ask, 'What you running from?'

Hey, Will.

I didn't know
then what I know now,
that I wasn't running from,
I was running to.
After dinner we gonna...
have an ice cream
eating contest.
What do you say about that?
Yeah, I like it.
Okay.
First Corinthians 15:10.
Ernie.
Yes, Grandpa.
Why don't you read tonight?
You can do it.
'But...
'by the...'
Ernie, take a deep breath.
Okay, now try it again.
'But by the...
'grace of God I am what I am.
'And his grace...
'His grace...
'...which was bestowed...'
'...which was
bestowed upon me...
'was not in vain.'
'But I labored more
abundantly than they all,
'yet not I,
'but the grace of
God which was with me.'
The words, I know
they're in there...
but they don't come out
straight all the time.
That'll bring
Jackie Robinson up.
He's wearing a Brooklyn
Dodgers uniform.
He's Negro and he's playing
for the Brooklyn Dodgers?

That's right, boys.
That there is Jackie Robinson.
The windup and the delivery.
And the drive deep
into left field.
And it's a home run.
Jackie Robinson with a home
run, his 12th of the year,
and the crowd
roars at Ebbets Field.
Now what? You gonna
stare at it all night?
This here is a man
who's doing a lot...
without saying nothing.
Hey.
- Hey, Ernie.
Ernie.
Mama?
Mama.
It's great to have you back.
So you still got that Chevy?
And what year is that?
It's a '39,
and you, too, Mama.
A '39 Chevy.
So, Marie, you have
some news for us?
Yes, sir. Mama, Daddy.
Ernie, I got married again.
To a very nice man.
The main thing is I can
support you now, baby.
I want you to come back
and live with me in Elmira.
How far away is Elmira?
It's not far at all, baby.
It's just a few hours away.
I think you'll like it.
You gonna love it, baby.
Bye, Will.
Bye, Ernie.
So, I'll see you soon.
Come on, boys.

Line up. Line up.
I got some new
jerseys here for you.
Wait till you see these.
Here you go,
Mike, Aaron, Nick.
Patrick, there's one for you.
You been waiting for
these, I know it.
Here you go,
Peewee. Put it on.
Uh...
I'm sorry, boys.
That's all there are.
Don't worry. The
other team won't...
have any trouble
recognizing you.
Come on. Huddle.
Reggie.
Davis.
Just give him the ball.
Ready?
- Ready.
Break.
Ready.
Hike.
That your son?
Yes. Yes, it is.
Al Malette,
Elmira Star-Gazette.
What's his name?
Ernie.
His name is Ernie Davis.
Ernie Davis.
Break.
So you're the man
who owns Jim Brown.
I own the team.
He's his own man. Hey, Jim.
I think you've
done enough of that.
Mr. Modell,
just a few more?

This is the last time he's
gonna be on this field.
You've got plenty, Rex.
Boys, thank you very much.
That's good, we got it.
Jim, come over here.
All right, fellas.
Take a couple like this.
Nice big smile, Jim.
Hey, Jim, you
think you're ready?
Right here, Jim, look
here. Right here...
So Jim Brown's
gonna be wearing...
a Cleveland Browns jersey.
How's it feel?
It feels right.
Jim? Right here, Jim.
Dan Boyle,
Chicago Sun.
You had a terrific year
here at Syracuse, Jim.
Seven yards a carry,
broke records,
took your team to
the Cotton Bowl,
number one draft choice,
signed a big contract.
I'm guessing you're
pretty happy...
with the way
things turned out.
I could be happier.
You left something out.
You talking about
the Heisman Trophy, Jim?
I didn't win that.
Actually, no Negro
has ever won it.
And you're saying
you should have?
Now, if I say that...
the papers tomorrow will tell...

the story of the
angry Negro...
who doesn't know his place.
I know my place,
gentlemen.
It just may not be
where you like it.
Next question.
Hey, Coach.
Coach, let me ask
you something.
How do you ever expect
to replace Jimmy Brown?
Glen Boyd, Cedar Rapids
High. Team won state.
He has a C average
but a tested IQ of 120.
That means he's lazy.
Ben, the kid has
a five-yard average.
I don't care.
He's lazy. I don't want him.
Next.
- Wally Purdue.
Bridgeport Academy,
six varsity letters.
He's healing from
an ankle fracture but...
But bullshit.
Anybody else? Maybe someone
who isn't hurt or lazy?
Isn't there
a kid from Elmira?
Yeah, Ernie Davis.
Elmira Free Academy.
Running back, 1,300
yards on 179 carries.
Led his team to a
state championship.
Why the hell didn't
we look at him first?
Well, he's a Negro boy, Ben.
Is this a new trend,
or is it just my luck?

It's a new trend.
He might remind you
of somebody we know.
Too old to butt heads
with another Jim Brown.
Roll it.
There he is
on the left, number 55.
Right now, he's...
Now watch him here.
He breaks through
both tackles and...
look at that, into
the secondary.
There he goes,
Touchdown. Wow.
He have any offers yet?
About 50.
Shit.
It's all chrome
inside there. Feel that.
No, no, no. Not
that, that's the gas.
Better step on the brake.
Oh.
There you go. You
got tiny legs.
She's gonna love this, right?
Mighty nice car, Jim.
Do me a favor,
wait upstairs.
Okay then.
What's on your mind, Coach?
I take it this
isn't a social call.
All right, look,
there's this kid,
and I want you to
help me recruit him.
You want me to help you?
You're leaving us a
hell of a hole, Jim.
And we are up
against the big boys.

We've got Pitt, UCLA, Texas.
You mean he's colored.
He's a Negro, yes.
You can't talk to Negroes?
I can't...
I'm not good at that
salesman stuff.
Not much of a dancer,
you know that.
I know this wasn't
the most welcoming...
place for you, but
that's not my fault.
I can only control
what happens...
on 100 yards of gridiron.
But I do know Cleveland never
would have heard of you...
if you hadn't come
here to play for me.
What I did here was on
my back and my sweat.
What good would
your time be here...
if you're not willing to help
the next kid get his chance?
A kid like you.
He's got talent, Jim.
Maybe even your
kind of talent.
Didn't mention
anything in your...
telegram about
bringing Jim Brown.
I hope you don't mind signing
a couple hundred autographs.
Ha. Jim loves to sign
autographs, don't you?
You know, Jim, I'm a
Syracuse man myself.
Class of '31.
You don't say.
Is that Bill Clark
from Notre Dame?

Yeah,
been here all week.
Yeah, not enough he
steals Ramsey...
right out from under my nose.
That's your man
right there, Ernie Davis.
Plays baseball, too.
In fact, there's not
a sport he doesn't play.
Try it one more time.
Let's see what he does.
He's too fast for these kids.
He's too fast for anybody.
Ben Schwartzwalder.
Head coach, Syracuse
University Orangemen.
Pleasure to meet you, sir.
Pleasure to meet you, son.
Do you know why I'm here?
Same reason as
Notre Dame, sir?
Yeah, same reason.
But don't just take my
word for it. Jim. Jim.
I'll be right back.
- Thank you.
There's another fan
who'd like to tell you...
how much he'd like to
see you come play for us.
Jim...
- Brown.
touchdowns in the Cotton Bowl.
We lost the Cotton Bowl.
But that sweep where you
cut back to the middle?
My mama and me watched
that game on...
a television set in
Sears and Roebuck.
She's a big fan
of yours, too.
Oh.

Is she?

Mr. Brown?

I hope you like caramel cake.

I do, thank you.

Here you go.

I understand you're from
Pennsylvania, Mr. Davis.

What brings you up
here to New York?

I asked him to come.

To help me make up my mind.

That's good to have
family like that.

You close to your family,
Mr. Schwartzwalder?

I have a wife
and two daughters.

And they never ask my
opinion about anything.

Seems to work.

Mr. Brown?

Yes, sir.

Were you the first in your
family to go to college?

Yes, sir, I was.

And what's it like at
Syracuse for men like us?

It's great.

It's good.

I suppose I'd say
it's not that...

different than
a lot of places.

This cake is delicious.

I want you to go
out. Keep going.

Back. Back. All right.

Mr. Brown, I'm not
real big on lacrosse.

Jim.

- Jim.

Okay, let's see
what you've got.

It's not as easy

as it looks, is it?
I'm all right.
You see, lacrosse
isn't just a sport.
The Indians used it to settle...
their conflicts
and heal the sick.
They also played it as
a preparation for war.
Make no mistake, there's
a war in this country,
but for men like us, it's
not on the football field.
So if all you nice folks
are offering the same thing,
what makes you different?
Well, Syracuse...
Not Syracuse. You.
I'm not sure I follow
you, Mr. Davis.
My grandson might
be spending the...
next four years
listening to you,
learning from you.
So, I suppose what I'm
asking, Mr. Schwartzwalder,
is what kind of man are you?
I just want to be the best
player I can be, you know.
I want to be
like you, Jim Brown,
first-team All-American
then straight to the NFL,
and I need you to
tell me exactly...
where I gotta be to get there.
Look, if you go to Syracuse,
it's not gonna
be easy for you.
But Schwartzwalder,
he's one of...
the best coaches
in college ball.

Now you're fast,
but he'll make you faster.
You run hard, he'll show
you how to run harder.
And you're good,
but he'll make you better.
And if you ever
tell him I said that.
I'll jump on the
first plane from
Cleveland and come
and wring your neck.
Now let's get out of here.
Let me tell you
something about Jim...
and I, we had our
differences at times.
So whatever he told
you about me, I...
would take it with
a grain of salt.
Even if he said you
were a good coach?
Well, in that case,
son, I would tell...
you that too much
salt is bad for you.
Ernie? Ernie Davis?
How'd you guess?
Welcome.
I'm Lew Andreas, the
athletic director. Come on.
I'll give you a tour of the...
campus on the
way to your dorm.
All right.
- Syracuse has a storied...
academic tradition, Ernie.
- Really?
Steven Crane attended
the university in 1891...
and wrote The Red
Badge of Courage...
Hey, Lew.

Harry. Sorry, I'll be
right back. Right back.

Harry.

- How are you?

No one from here has ever won,
if that's what
you're looking for.

No harm in dreaming,
right, Coach?

It's not about
winning trophies.

Davis. It's about
winning games.

I'll see you at practice.

Get up. Get up.

That was plum awful.

Now, last one runs a lap.

Let's go.

Run a lap.

five, six...

Youmans, you move
like a walrus.

Come on. Like a big,
old elephant walrus.

Gerhard, goose-step.

Make your ancestors proud.

Ease up, Davis.

What are you smiling at?

This fine institution is...

giving you three

hots and a cot.

I do not intend to let
them waste their money.

Get them up, come on.

Right about now,

I bet you're wondering...

what happened to that nice...

gentleman that

visited your house...

and begged you

to come here, huh?

Let's go. Now make

no mistake, gentlemen.

No matter what anyone

else tells you,
you are not here to
just play football.
You are offside.
You are here at
Syracuse to win games.
And you can't win games if you...
can't out-perform
the other team.
Don't you step on
my All-Americans.
If you step on my
All-Americans.
I will reach down your throat,
grab your donuts and
tie them to your tonsils.
Good hit.
Take him down.
So, you're the
next Jim Brown, huh?
Yeah, I can see
the resemblance.
Yeah, except Brown was
always mad about something.
Don't be fooled by the smile.
Well, he's funnier
than Jimmy.
Yeah.
Well, maybe he
can entertain us.
You dance, Davis?
Not as good as me, Lundy.
Come on. Get up.
Move. Move. Move. Move.
You should know,
you never call Coach, 'Sarge.'
He was a captain,
jumped out of...
airplanes, stormed a
bridge in Normandy.
Killed people,
won medals.
By the way, I'm Gerhard
Schwedes, halfback.

Roger, everybody calls
me Hound Dog though.
Maury Youmans, center.
I'll be keeping your
jersey clean next year.
He embarrassed you.
Embarrassed you.
I want you to move Davis
from freshman to varsity.
But he won't be eligible
to play in any games, Ben.
Why don't we just
let him catch...
his stride with
the other freshmen?
First, when he does
become eligible next year.
I want him to hit
the ground running.
Second, he's gonna
raise everybody's game.
He'll probably be the best...
running back they
face all year.
I got you.
Third, that's just
the way I want it done.
Jack Buckley, right tackle,
sophomore. Call me JB.
I was a defensive end
in high school. Philly.
But I think they're
gonna move me to tackle.
What we up to?
Three miles?
Don't know.
Never count.
You hear a train?
Why?
Is it making you nervous?
No, I'm not nervous.
Can we get off these tracks?
Yeah, I'm sorry.
I'm just used to it.

And when you use your meal...
voucher in the
student union...
Right.
...stay away from
the meatloaf.
What else?
- Girls.
You'll find a Negro polar bear
before you find a Negro coed.
Good morning, sir.
Beautiful day, isn't it?
I swear, sometimes you feel
like you're on the moon here.
Yes, yes,
that's her sister.
Sarette, what did Petey
say about that broad?
Yeah, it's her little sister.
I don't know about
our team yet,
but theirs is in
mid-season form.
At least her sister is.
Coach wanted to see me?
He's in his office.
Knock.
You wanted to see me, Coach?
Mmm-hmm.
Davis, my system is simple.
Conditioning,
teamwork.
And on my team, I expect every
player to know his job.
Know his place on the field.
Quarterback, running
back, lineman.
That way, nobody
steps on anybody's toes.
Same holds true
off the field.
I'm not sure how
you mean, Coach.
Well...

There are some lines that some...
people don't care
to see crossed,
just like there are some toes
that shouldn't be stepped on.
And I expect my players
not to cross those lines.
Now, you must have a
girlfriend back home, right?
Good-looking fellow like you.
You might want to
keep in touch with her.
You're a smart kid, Davis.
I don't have to spell
it out for you, do I?
Anything else, Coach?
No.
May I go now?
Yes.
We call that,
'The white girl speech,'
and don't worry,
we all get it.
That's funny. I don't
remember seeing...
that in the campus
brochure, JB.
Avatus Stone.
Avatus what?
Avatus Stone.
Quarterback. Negro.
First one Schwartzwaldner
recruited here.
What happened to him?
He got run off.
What do you mean,
'Run off?'
One night, just
disappeared. Gone.
And then Jimmy
Brown shows up,
and all Jim hears is,
'Don't be like Avatus Stone.
'Whatever you do, don't

be like Avatus Stone.'
Wait. But what did he do?
Did he kill somebody?
Worse. He dated a white girl.
Majorette, blonde.
Schwartzwalder wouldn't
even give Jim...
a scholarship until
sophomore year.
Made him prove himself.
Yeah.
Just goes to show, Coach likes...
winning more than he
dislikes Negroes.
A little.
See you at the room.
Hey.
Excuse me,
Hound Dog.
Would you look at that, boys?
If it isn't enough they let a...
freshman dress in
the varsity locker,
now they went and anointed him...
the second coming
of Jim Brown.
What's your problem, Lundy?
My problem is I was
raised to believe...
you should have
to earn things.
That's not all you were
raised to believe, now was it?
You got a big mouth, JB.
Yeah, I do.
How about the next play, Ben?
This'll be strong load
right, 42 shovel pass.
We can use this third short.
Strong load right.
- Right, 42 shovel pass.
What you got there, Davis?
It's this jersey, Coach.
What, something

wrong with it?
Yeah, I...
What is it?
Too big? Too tight, what?
Oh, no. Not at
all. It's just...
Then what is it?
Somebody made a mistake.
They gave me
the wrong number.
Mr. Davis, I put that
jersey in your locker.
Are you accusing me
of making a mistake?
No, sir.
- Well then, what?
Coach, I'm...
I'm not Jim Brown.
God, I hope not.
And, God, I hope so.
That is your number.
The day you're not up to it,
I'll take it away as
quick as a hiccup.
Now, get out of here.
Tight right, 34 right dig.
On one. On one. Ready.
Break.
Offense, I want to see
you fire off the ball.
Fire off the ball.
Red?
- Sir.
Are you in or out there?
Strong left,
strong left.
Strong left. Why don't you
watch the sweep, right there?
Sir.
- Ready?
On one.
God damn it.
Lundy, you got
yourself planted.

Get off your heels
and get after it.
That was embarrassing.
Davis looks good.
Looks good, Ben.
Five, three,
cover two. Ready?
Break.
Double tight, double tight.
Watch the sweep left.
Watch the sweep.
That was a cheap shot.
Oh, he's gonna get a lot worse...
than that before
he's done here.
You've got something
to say, 44?
You all right?
- Yeah.
You can't let him treat you
like that and not say nothing.
That's all right. I do
my talking on the field.
Hey, hey. Come on.
Hey, come on.
All right, all right, all
right, all right, all right.
Don't ever make me
look bad again.
Back to the huddle, Lundy.
You got away with a lot
back in high school...
'cause you were bigger
than everybody else.
Those days are done.
You got it?
- Got it, Coach.
Good block.
Now listen up.
If you practice half-assed,
you will play half-assed.
Now, we have Boston
College in two weeks...
and I would like not to get

blown out in our own stadium.
Now play football.
Let's go. Good work.
Surprise, surprise.
Will you look at this?
They're saying Pete Dawkins...
is gonna take
home the Heisman.
Well, he rushed for over
has almost as many
receiving yards, JB.
He's gotta be real good.
Yeah, well, he's
definitely real white.
This thing's
like a love letter.
JB, look.
What?
Hey.
Negro polar bears.
Who knew they
traveled in pairs?
Ready?
- For what?
You're not ready. Come on,
let's go. Which
one do you like?
Which one do you like?
The one on the right.
Good evening, ladies.
Good evening.
I'd like a Pepsi.
- The same.
And could you bring us
some of those deviled eggs?
You don't even be
eating no deviled egg.
I'm so sorry.
- You go to Syracuse?
I didn't know.
Yes, we go to Syracuse,
but if you'd like,
we can jump in the
kitchen, whip...

you up some grits

and gravy, ma'am.

Get them, Ernie.

I'm Gloria.

This is my friend...

Sarah.

She's visiting from Cornell.

Gloria and Sarah. Okay.

I'm Jack Buckley,
but you call me JB.

JB.

- JB.

And this is my friend, Ernie.

How do you do?

Very well.

So, what are you
guys studying?

Well, a little bit
of everything.

Math, basic literature...

We're on the football team.

And that.

Oh.

I don't really know
too much about football.

Neither does he.

All kidding aside, Gloria,
would you care to dance?

All right.

So, Sarah, what
are you studying?

I'm majoring in education,
with a minor in
social sciences.

Oh.

And you?

What are you studying?

Just some basic courses
right now, some math,
some English.

Look, I know what
you're thinking.

That since I'm not here
because of my grades,

or my money,
that I'm not
a serious person.
You're wrong.
So, you know what
I'm thinking, do you?
Fine, Mr. Serious.
What am I thinking right now?
Rain still coming down...
steadily here at
Archbold Stadium.
The last chance
for the Orangemen.
The Orangemen can really use
a little help out there.
Let's hope their recruiting is...
better than their
running game.
Hike.
And for the Syracuse faithful,
there's a sense of disbelief,
as Holy Cross has knocked
off the mighty Orangemen.
Let's go, ladies.
Pick it up.
Let's go.
Knees up. Knees up.
Pain is how you learn.
Come on.
Gentlemen, it is not okay
to lose to an inferior team,
especially on our home turf.
Now, we gave no
effort out on that...
field tonight, so we
should feel it now.
Don't you puke
on my gym floor.
Varsity practice only, Ernie.
You don't have to be here.
I know.
I just heard you called
a midnight practice, Coach.
I'm sorry I'm late.

Well, go ahead.
Get in there.
Yes, sir.
Gentlemen, do you think you...
played good
football last year?
Think again.
You think you're here just
to wear a varsity jacket...
and impress the ladies?
Think again.
If you think you know
what pain is, think again.
This is what pain is for.
Now, does anyone
know the last year...
that Syracuse won a
national championship?
Hmm?
You're right.
We've never won one.
You are here to
change all that.
Ladies and gentlemen,
please welcome to the field...
your Syracuse
University Orangemen.
Welcome to Archbold
Stadium, Syracuse, New York,
where the Orangemen
begin the 1959 campaign.
The expectations for
Ben Schwartzwalder...
and the Orangemen
are enormous.
This is a football team
that could go unbeaten.
Hut one.
On first down, Ernie
Davis gets his first carry...
as a member of the Orangemen.
Welcome to Syracuse football.
Will... Will, he said
his name on the radio.

Sure did. I heard it.
I heard it, Pops.
Ernie Davis certainly has...
some big shoes to
fill here today.
And after an unsuccessful...
series of downs
by the Orangemen.
Kansas takes over on
its own 28-yard line.
Hut.
Let's get after it.
Come on, let's get after it.
The receiver is leveled by...
veteran linebacker
Bobby Lundy.
I'm doing your job, 44.
Huddle up.
Ball at the Syracuse
First down and goal
to go for Kansas.
Yes.
- Did he get in?
Did he cross the goal line?
Here's the official signal.
Touchdown, Kansas.
What kind of
pig slop is that?
We haven't gotten
a call all day.
Jayhawks jump
out to a 7-0 lead...
here at the very,
very quiet Archbold Stadium.
Here in the second quarter,
Kansas on top of
Syracuse, 7-0.
Six regular.
Six regular.
The Orange faithful
still waiting...
for something to cheer about.
Hut one.
Sarette back to pass.

Throwing downfield.
It's complete
to his tight end...
down near the
Kansas 30-yard line.
Way to pick up
the blitz, Ernie.
A superb block on the play,
turned in by Ernie Davis.
Second down, eight yards
to go for the Orangemen.
Hut.
Toss play once
again to Ernie Davis.
Get him out there.
Davis to the
Kansas secondary.
Go, Davis, go.
Look at that young man go.
The Elmira Express virtually
walks into the end zone.
The Syracuse Orangemen,
now on top of Kansas, 14-7.
Go for one.
And what an impression
Ernie Davis has...
made on this crowd
here at Archbold.
The Orangemen just may have...
found their next
great halfback.
Hey, Ernie.
Hey, fellas,
how you doing?
You guys coming or going?
Hey. Welcome home, Ernie.
Pops.
They give you some time off?
Yeah, yeah,
long weekend.
Look at you,
all college boy.
You're just gonna dirty
up my college jacket.

Come on, come on,
let's go inside.
You're too good to hug me?
Look at this.
Let me carry that.
Give me your bag.
If they'd run you more
last week against Navy,
you would have blown
them jokers off the field.
Will, we won.
Seems like that coach of
yours like to pass the ball.
I'll get my carries.
Yeah? He promise you that?
No. Thank you, ma'am.
But eventually...
No?
How are your grades, Ernie?
Ernie?
They're good, Pops, thanks.
I'm keeping them up.
I like history, and I'm
taking a business course.
That's good.
'Cause football
is just a game.
It's that degree that's
going to count for something.
Gonna get you a good job.
Where you gonna get a good...
job at, a Negro
with a diploma?
AT&T? GM?
It's football that's
gonna take him someplace.
Otherwise, he gonna be
working right here with us,
cutting coal,
and you know it.
I wanna apologize for him.
You ain't got to
apologize for me, Pops.
Don't you start

it tonight, Will.

Pops... Guys.

- Don't start it tonight.

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa.

Relax.

You're both right.

Now, my plan A is
the Cleveland Browns.

Now, if that doesn't work out,
plan B is the

New York Giants.

Come on, Ernie.

We don't wanna be late.

Sorry, my dear, we got
things to do, people to meet.

I'll meet you outside, Ernie.

Jim Crow is alive and...

well right here
in Pennsylvania.

Yes, it is.

But we can no longer
willfully close our eyes...
and pretend that we cannot see...
that he sees us
as beneath him.

Yes.

- No, we cannot.

And we can no longer
stay silent...

when he tells us that
we cannot speak.

Yes.

- That's right.

Abraham Lincoln stood
in a field at Gettysburg,
and spoke of a new nation.

- That's right.

Uniontown is 100 miles away
from his Gettysburg.

We are still yet to be equal.

That is why the NAACP
is calling for...

a nationwide boycott
of Woolworths.

That's right.
That's right.
All right.
Come on.
Boycott. Boycott.
Boycott. Boycott.
Boycott. Boycott.
Come to Washington with us.
There's a bus going
down from the church.
We gonna organize
with Martin Luther King...
and let the people know this
country has got to change.
I don't think I
can be a part of...
what you want me
to be a part of...
right now, Will.
All this.
What you saying?
I got a scholarship.
I can't risk losing it, and
I don't wanna invite trouble.
I see. Did Emmett
Till invite trouble?
Did Rosa Parks?
Who told you this,
your coach?
You don't understand.
It's a different
world up there.
Is it?
You know, your coach
sound a lot like Pops.
No understanding
whatsoever with...
the troubles in this country.
'You boys got no
business north...
of Union Street, you hear me?'
Now, leave Pops
out of this, Will.
Now you got a white

man telling...
you what you can and can't do.
Wait a minute. Hold on.
Watch how you talk to me.
That man don't care
nothing about you, Ernie.
You're not there.
You don't know him.
You just his educated nigger.
You don't know what
you're talking about.
Tom can toe the line...
and carry the ball,
but that man...
will turn on you.
Just you wait.
You don't think I'm reminded...
every minute of
who I am at school?
Everybody there is
watching me, and...
waiting for me to
make a mistake.
You Ernie Davis.
You got your
name in the paper.
Now that's something
for colored folk...
around here to open up
a newspaper, Ernie,
and see your name,
your face.
And say, 'I know him.
I went to school with him.'
They gonna be
looking up to you.
I think you owe them more
than just running a ball.
The play action
pass was there all day.
It won't be
there the next time.
Why not?
'Cause Boston College

is watching...
the same damn
game that we are.
All right, we start out double...
tight. Tight in
here, tight in there.
Just a normal double tight.
Just like from the
beginning of time, Simmy.
Now, we're gonna take Schwedes
out of the wing position,
and we're gonna move him
into a three-back formation.
Only shift it over like this.
All right, defense. What
do you do when you see this?
Now the defense,
they have to shift.
We move to the right.
That's right. Even
if it's shading...
from nose up to
opposite shoulder.
Our right tackle?
He goes on the left side.
I'm gonna leave the huddle,
and you're gonna start out
right, just like normal.
Go left, go left.
Except before we're set,
you're gonna run left.
He runs left,
and you're gonna line
up on the left side.
And he sets up
on the left side.
And it's evident that
Boston College is confused...
by the offense
Syracuse is running.
You lost me, Ben.
The right tackle
moves to the left,
he covers the tight end.

But if he's on the
left side, we cover...
the tight end, I
can't pass to him.
The Holy Cross defenders are...
desperately trying to
position themselves...
to best play against
this formation.
Petey, am I talking
French here?
Tackle lines up inside
the tight end, does he not?
It's unbalanced, right?
Do we shift again, Coach?
Yes, they shift.
They all shift.
They have to shift.
They must shift.
Shift, shift, shift.
All right, so you've got
everybody and their dog...
shifted over to
the left. Now what?
We are going to run it...
We are going to run it...
...to the right.
...to the right.
- To the right, Coach?
But that's away
from our strength.
The weak side of the field.
So, we're going to
run to the weak side?
I like the way that
you think, Mr. Davis.
Gentlemen, when you
have a thoroughbred,
you do not lock
him in the barn.
Hut.
I will take one-on-one
out here all day long.
That just might work, Coach.

Damn right.

'Ernie Davis is a bull-necked,
steel-shouldered
running back...

'from Syracuse University, who...
can run a football
field's length...

'in 10 seconds flat.'

- 10 seconds?

Okay, put that
away now, please.

Don't you be modest.

Thank you.

- Be proud, Ernie.

You're in the same
magazine as Reverend King,
that's something.

- Yeah.

That is something,
but Sarah, it looks...

like you didn't
read the best part.

'In his spare time,
the bull-necked
Ernie Davis enjoys sewing,
'baking lasagna, and writing
songs for his church choir.'

Ernie, you never
invite me to church.

Very funny, very funny.

I'm hurt. What is that?

- Ernie? Ernie.

Can I have a word
with you, please?

Make me some lasagna.

He can take it.

Good to see you.

- That's Mr. Andreas.

Just turn left there.

'He maketh me to
lie down in green pastures.

'He leadeth me
beside the still waters.

'He restoreth my soul.

'He leadeth me in the paths of...
righteousness for
his name's sake.
'Yea, though I walk
through the...
valley of the shadow of death,
'I will fear no evil,
for thou art with me.
'Thy rod and thy staff...'
worked underground.
Seems wrong to put him
right back in there.
And the drive deep into...
left field. And
it's a home run.
'And his grace which was...
bestowed upon me
was not in vain.'
'His grace
which was bestowed...'
'... upon me
was not in vain.'
Pops.
Now, we barely got
by West Virginia...
when we played them
here last year,
and they've been licking their...
chops waiting for
us ever since.
They play by a
different set of rules.
It will be hostile.
Their fans are unruly,
especially when they're
playing against a team that...
looks a little
different than they do.
Now, load up.
God damn it.
Hey, Squirrel.
Didn't I tell you to
put new laces in these?
I forgot. I'll do it now.

His name is Donald.
What?
His name is Donald.
Hell, Squirrel,
I don't know
which one's worse.
But you see, Davis,
around here.
Squirrel finishes the laces.
If it makes you happy,
you can shine them for me.
Hey, come on.
Get him off.
Hey. Knock it off.
Hey.
What the hell's
going on in here?
Where are you going,
Davis? Davis.
I'm talking to you.
Hey, you guys all saw it.
Coach, he went crazy on me.
All right,
everyone, listen up.
Everyone is to keep their
helmet on at all times,
whether you're in
the game or not.
I don't want anyone
hurt by flying bottles.
Davis, Buckley, Baker, you...
stay in the middle
of the pack.
Keep your heads down.
It must be Halloween,
'cause here come the spooks.
We'll be safer
out on the field.
All right, let's go.
Come on, boys.
Let's go.
The unbeaten
Syracuse Orangemen...
have made the journey

to Morgantown, West Virginia.
They'll face a rugged
Mountaineer team.
And there's the boot. Baker...
takes the football
up to the 20,
the 30, the 40 and
he's finally...
brought down at
the 47-yard line.
Offense, let's go.
- Look alive, let's go.
A full house. 495 dive
on two, on two. Ready?
Thirty-five,
thirty-five.
Okie. Okie.
Thirty-five,
thirty-five.
The Orangemen break the
huddle, first and 10.
Out of the full-house
backfield.
The give is to Ernie Davis.
Davis spins at the
line of scrimmage...
where he's met by a host
of West Virginia tacklers.
Get him off him.
Play football.
Huddle up, 70.
We will get no justice
from the refs tonight.
All right, guys. We're gonna
run it till they stop it.
Right, full house. 495
dive, on one, on one. Ready?
Break.
- Break.
Same play. Same
play. Same hole.
Run it. Same play,
same hole, on one.
Run it.

- Strong left.
Thanks.
- Set.
Second down at
six yards to go.
Hut one.
The Orangemen go
back to Ernie Davis.
Davis is met with a
wall of Mountaineers.
And Davis reverses field
with a tremendous move.
What's he doing?
Davis picks up a big block...
and with a stiff
arm, gets free...
into West Virginia territory.
Shit, he's going in.
He's at the 20,
the 10, inside the 5.
No. Knee down, right here.
It certainly appeared
from our vantage point here...
that Ernie Davis has
scored on this play.
I got you down at the 1.
You were down.
No, I got in,
Mr. Official.
Sir, I got in.
You saw me...
You want a penalty, boy?
Get back in that huddle now.
Brokaw, come here.
- Yes, Coach.
Come on, son.
Go get us six. Go.
Davis, come in.
Come in, son. Come in.
Come on, son. Let's go.
- For me?
You're holding up
the game. Let's go.
I got it.

First down Syracuse.
Why'd you pull me, Coach?
I took it down
there. Let me score.
If I let you carry that
ball across the goal line,
all of us, we might not get
back on that bus in one piece.
That's the way they
do things down here.
Sarette hands off to Brokaw,
who punches the ball home,
and the Orangemen
have grabbed a 6-0 lead...
against the Mountaineers
on their own home turf.
Go home, blackie.
First down for the Orangemen.
Ball at the West
Virginia 42-yard line.
Sarette with the fake.
Ernie Davis across the
left side breaks...
the tackle and gets
into the open field.
Good run. Good run.
Brokaw, come here.
- Yeah, Coach.
Strong right, fullback
wedge eight. Go.
Ernie, Ernie.
Brokaw, get in there.
Right full house, 40 broom.
On one, on one. Ready.
Break.
- Break.
Davis,
get off the field.
Now, you got a
white man telling...
you what you can
and can't do...
...one hundred years
away from here...

Ref, time out. Time out.
You don't have any more.
We are still not yet...
You're just his
educated nigger.
They gonna be
looking up to you.
I think you owe them more
than just running a ball.
What the hell do you
think you're doing?
What did I tell you
about the rules down here?
What are you...
We just scored.
Bullshit.
You scored. We're a team.
I'm the coach.
You're a goddamn running back.
You're my goddamn
running back,
and you will do what I tell
you, when I tell you to do it.
Now, you plant your ass
down on that bench.
Am I invisible?
What?
- Am I invisible to you?
Am I an X, an O in
your goddamn playbook,
or do you see a
person standing here?
Am I Avatus Stone?
Am I Jim Brown?
Just a running back?
That's bullshit.
You're about
this close, Davis.
Come on, let's go.
You know, maybe,
just maybe, Coach,
the rules down here
are your rules, too.
That's enough.

Come on.
What?
You all right?
Yeah.
Good game.
Good game, Ben.
- Mike?
I tried not to
run up the score.
I know. You just had
our number tonight.
Say, Ben, how many coloreds
you got playing for you?
Three, why?
You just be careful, Ben.
They got no discipline.
Too many of them and they'll
take the team away from you.
Now, you give my
best to Reggie.
Coon-lover.
Can I sit down?
I'm sorry I lost my temper.
But I'm not sorry
I stayed in the...
game, and I'm not
sorry I scored.
Now, what kind of
an apology is this?
I've never walked off
the field for anybody.
These people down
here, they're dug in.
They're set in their
ways. We got...
Coach, that...
You're just hiding
behind those words.
I have a responsibility
to my team, Davis.
That's not how it has to be.
Yes. Jack, Art and me,
we're all a part of your team.
But we can't run across that...

goal line down
here without you.
It doesn't mean a damn
thing unless you're with us.
Is that it?
And in college...
football, the
Syracuse Orangemen...
continue their
dominance of the
Eastern Conference
with a 29-0...
Fans, I wish
all of you could be here...
to see what these eyes
have just witnessed.
...brilliant displays
of athletic...
talent I've seen
on any gridiron.
Come on, guys.
Sustain your block.
...led by Ernie Davis,
from Elmira, New York.
Another jaw-dropping...
performance here at
Navy Memorial Stadium.
I tell you one...
thing, he's
electrified this crowd.
The unbeaten
Syracuse Orangemen...
Davis,
who has been...
nothing short of brilliant
today, reserves the victory...
for coach Ben Schwartzwalder
and the Syracuse Orangemen.
...nothing but a hound dog
You know it.
Crying all the time
Well, you ain't never
caught a rabbit
And you ain't no

friend of mine
Settle down.
Listen up, boys.
All right, listen up.
Listen up.
Coach.
Gentlemen,
congratulations.
Undefeated with a number one...
ranking is something
to be proud of.
Yeah.
But...
But...
Mr. Andreas has informed me...
that we have been offered
two different bowl games,
the Orange Bowl in Miami...
and the Cotton
Bowl in Dallas.
Now, in Miami, we would play
Georgia, ranked
ninth in the polls.
And in Dallas, we
would play Texas,
ranked second,
right behind us.
If we win either game, we...
will be the
national champions.
Texas is the tougher
opponent, the tougher team.
But to be the best, I believe
you have to beat the best.
So, I guess you
know how I would...
vote, but this is your vote.
This is your team.
Your decision.
Texas.
Texas.
Texas.
Texas.
Texas.

- Texas.

Texas.

- Texas.

Texas.

Texas.

Texas.

Texas.

Looking forward to it.

- Texas.

Texas.

- Texas.

Texas.

- Texas.

Texas.

A lot of people think
the Texas Longhorns...
are the best team
in the nation.

One big reason is Clay Taylor.

All-American, best Division

One tackle in the nation...

three years in a row.

Now, some folks even

think that the...

only reason that we

are undefeated...

is because we have not met

Clay Taylor and his teammates.

I want everyone to

take a good long...

look at what we're

up against here...

because in Texas,

football is a religion.

You think we been south?

We ain't been south

till we go to Texas.

Schwedes,

give me a goose-step.

We are now faced

with a far different problem.

The forcible

integration of the...

public schools of

Little Rock...
against the overwhelming
sentiment...
of the people of the area.
Two, four, six, eight.
We don't want to integrate.
Two, four, six, eight.
We don't want to integrate.
We still have
the attitude of love,
we still have the method
of passive resistance...
and we are still
insisting emphatically,
that violence is
self-defeating.
That he who lives by the...
sword will perish
by the sword.
This is quite a ruckus.
Hey, Ernie,
Roger Page, Channel Nine.
They're calling this game
the North against the South.
In light of what's
going on in this country,
do you feel added pressure
to represent change?
We don't concern
ourselves with politics.
We're just here to
play a great football game...
and take home
the championship.
To be honest, Mr. Page,
when I'm out on that field.
I only think about
winning the game.
But that doesn't mean I don't
know the color of my own skin.
Let's check in.
We've got a problem, Ben.
What?
The Aristocrat Hotel does not

allow coloreds to stay here.
I need my team together, Lew.
Now, you do whatever it takes
to make that happen.
What's the problem?
What's the problem here?
Right this way, gentlemen.
Fellas, looks like we once
again found the Negro wing.
State seven.
State seven.
Set.
- Double tight. Double tight.
Wing left,
watch it.
Stop.
Do you think it is
the New York City Ballet...
that's going to be running
up your ass on New Year's day?
These are the goddamn
Texas Longhorns.
If you cannot fight off
blocks better than that,
let's just get on
the bus and go home.
Run the play again.
Shit.
My hamstring.
This may be
a blessing in disguise.
Look at these.
Where did you get these?
Where did I get them?
They were sent to the
hotel to your boys.
Scare tactics.
Doesn't have a goddamn
thing to do with football.
We shouldn't play him.
Maybe not even Art or Jack
but especially Ernie.
The NCAA is on my back.
Even the Mayor of Dallas is

nervous, afraid of race riots.
Lew, you hired me to win.
Well, I'm here at
the goddamn Cotton Bowl,
and this time
we're gonna win it.
So why don't you tell that
to the Mayor of Dallas?
I'm playing. You hear me?
I'm playing.
You're goddamn right you are.
There's an electricity
in the air today in Dallas.
And, as you can see from
the clear skies behind me,
it's not
a local thunderstorm.
All eyes are on the field
as undefeated Syracuse,
the Beast from the East,
takes on Texas, the power
of the Southwest Conference.
Do I need to say anything?
Come on, it's on.
Come on, it's on, the
Cotton Bowl. Come on, Marie.
Come on. Come on. Come on.
All right, all right.
Get two ice teas,
please.
And the Cotton Bowl.
Drop your heads.
Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done...
George,
fancy seeing you here.
You taking a look at Davis?
I've seen him.
Really?
In a Redskins uniform?
I think he'd look better

in a Cleveland uniform.
Now, wouldn't that
be something?
Ladies and gentlemen,
please give a warm
Texas welcome...
to the Syracuse
University Orangemen.
With a phenomenal record
of 10-0.
Ben Schwartzwalder and his
mighty Orangemen of Syracuse,
ranked number 1
in the nation,
take the field here at the...
historic Cotton
Bowl in Dallas...
to face Darrell Royal...
and the second-ranked
Longhorns of Texas.
You ready for this?
I'm ready.
Get off the field.
If the Orangemen are going to...
be successful moving
the football today,
they're going to have to go...
through Clay Taylor
and Pete Logan,
two very dominant
football players...
and the defensive leaders
for the Longhorns.
Davis, hamstring.
Tails.
Syracuse receives.
That's what we wanted.
Go, boy.
- Get them.
Ernie, if you get the ball,
go all the way.
Let's go. Let's go.
- Let's go, four-four.
And the 1960

Cotton Bowl is underway.
Offense. Let's go.
An incredibly
enthusiastic crowd on hand...
as Syracuse lines up
for its first series.
I've been waiting
for this nigger.
Okie. Okie. Set.
I'm about to kick your black
ass back to Africa, boy.
Oh, yeah?
Too bad I'm from Philly.
The give is to Ernie Davis.
He gains two yards
and is brought...
down quickly by
Taylor and Logan.
We're in the Cotton
Bowl, not the
cotton patch, boys.
Personal foul, ref.
- 84.
The handkerchief
on the field.
There appears to be some late...
contact by both
Taylor and Logan.
Holding, offense.
That's bullshit.
- Will.
But there, did you see that?
- I saw it.
You don't stop this quick,
it's gonna get out of hand.
That's one.
You've been warned.
'I've been warned.'
What are you, my
first grade teacher?
Sophomore Davis is...
clearly favoring
his right leg...
as he moves back to

the Orangemen huddle.
Okay, on one,
on one. Ready?
The Orangemen
facing first and 20.
It's to Davis.
Runs to his left.
Looks to throw.
Now cuts back to the right...
with a dazzling spin move,
and sheds the tackler.
He turns the corner.
He's in the clear. He's gone.
Quick. Go. Go. Go. Go.
Go.
He's drilled out of
bounds at the 3-yard line.
And now Davis, who's lying
prone on the sidelines,
appears to be
either exhausted or hurt.
I can't believe
they caught him.
Ernie, get up.
Ernie. Ernie.
Ernie, you all right?
Davis is finally
helped to his feet...
by All-American
tackler Jack Buckley.
One has to wonder...
just what kind of shape
Ernie Davis is in.
I told you.
Syracuse, first down
at the Longhorn three.
The give is to the right
halfback, Gerhard Schwedes.
Outstanding block by Davis.
He crosses the goal line
to put Syracuse on the board.
Here in the second quarter
Coach Ben Schwartzwalder
and his...

top-ranked team
find themselves...
on top of
the Texas Longhorns, 7-0.
Ready?
- Break.
The Orangemen are knocking
on the door once again.
State seven.
State seven.
Set. Hut one.
The give is to Ernie Davis and...
the sophomore
finds the end zone,
as the Orangemen increase
their lead on the Longhorns.
So precisely when is it
you're going to...
start kicking my
black ass back to Africa?
Hey, Buckley.
Hey, come on, stay cool.
They're baiting us.
- They're baiting them.
Hey, Logan, Taylor,
And after a successful
two-point conversion...
the Orangemen of Syracuse
lead the Longhorns of Texas...
by a score of 15-0.
McKinley on
a sweep to the right.
Bobby Lundy steps up and...
there's a huge
hit on McKinley.
And the ball is loose,
recovered by the Orangemen...
and Syracuse takes over.
Yeah.
My,
that's a cheap shot.
A late hit by Talbert
on Ernie Davis...
after the play

was whistled dead.
Back. Everybody,
back. Back. Back. Back.
You all right, son?
You okay?
I'm all right, Coach.
All right. You sure?
- Yeah.
Offense on the field.
Let's go.
Told you this would get out
of hand. This is bullshit.
Syracuse will run
one last play before halftime.
Pack your bags, spook.
Scoreboard, eight-four.
Come on,
let's just play ball.
You defending this nigger?
How you gonna call yourself
a white Christian?
I'm Jewish.
Hut one.
That's another late hit.
And once again,
Ernie Davis is pummeled.
Break it up, ref.
Come on, ref,
do something.
And both teams
are clearing their benches...
and heading to
the middle of the field.
Ref, I told you to
do something about this.
This has become a fiasco.
It's a donnybrook.
My God, no.
- This...
This is no longer a football
game, ladies and gentlemen.
Is somebody gonna stop this?
...ugly display...
Get off. Get off the field.

Hey, Coach.
Get off of him.
- Break it up.
Petey, you all right?
You guys see what happened?
Come on,
cozy up to the blackboard.
You see what happened,
Lundy? That's what
I'm telling you.
You can't let people
talk to you like this,
be pounding on your leg
the whole time.
I know, but you'll
get ejected. They won't.
You're done for the day.
We're up by 15.
We can take it from here.
Coach, I can still get
back out there and play.
No, I want you to
put some ice on that leg.
I had a halftime speech
all planned out.
It seemed pretty good
up till about 10 minutes ago.
It was all about victory
and champions and glory.
But this is not
just a game anymore.
We're fighting something else
out on that field right now.
And I can see it
just as clearly as you.
And that's why
winning this one...
means nothing
if you lose yourselves.
Don't give this one away.
Keep it. Hold on to it
for yourselves...
and for everyone
in this room.

It's here. It's right here.
And no one can
take it from you, gentlemen.
Not the officials,
not the crowds...
and certainly
not the other team.
It belongs to you, gentlemen.
Don't you let anyone
steal history away from you.
Glory.

- Glory.

As play resumes
here at the Cotton Bowl.
Ernie Davis has not joined
the rest of the Orangemen...
for the second half.
Down 15 to nothing,
the Longhorns are...
desperate to get
something on the board.
Bobby Lackey
drops back to pass.
And it's complete
to Bobby Gurwitz...
for a 69-yard
Texas touchdown.
What a throw by the
Heisman-hopeful...
quarterback from Texas.
A 69-yard touchdown pass...
caught by number
Goal line,
goal line. Ready?
Darrell Royal and Texas...
opt to go for the
two-point conversion.
Another walloping tackle
by Syracuse's Bob Lundy.
That'll mean
something later on.
Midway
through the third quarter.
Syracuse protecting a 15-6

lead against the Longhorns.
Three.
- Hut, hut.
Sarette with a fake to Baker.
Options to Schwedes.
Schwedes is hammered by
Muehling and coughs
up the ball.
All right. Let's go.
Protect the ball.
And watch out. The Longhorns
are building some momentum.
Texas, knocking on the door
at the goal line.
Bobby Lackey calls his own
number and finds the end zone.
The Longhorns have
suddenly given...
us a football game
here in Dallas.
Lackey drops back to pass,
and it's complete to Paul.
Syracuse 15, Texas 14.
The Longhorns have made it
a one-point game.
Tough break.
I mean, they probably
got it in hand.
Baker, Schwedes,
they're good backs.
But no sense in
getting hurt worse, right?
Entering the fourth
quarter of play,
the tension level here at
the Cotton Bowl is palpable.
We let them
right back in the game.
Coach, Davis.
All right, boys,
keep your heads...
in the game. Don't
worry about it.
Ernie, what are you doing?

I need to talk to you, Coach.
I need you to ice that leg.
I already have. I need
to talk to you for a sec.
No, no, you are not playing.
- Just listen to me for a sec.
You can watch,
but you cannot play.
Just hear me out, Coach.
Coach, on the trip
down here I saw...
a lot of things out
that bus window.
Now, we get to Dallas,
they got me, Jack and Art...
in a tiny room with cots.
We can't use the
elevator 'cause...
we might scare
the white folks.
Can't even walk in
the front door of a hotel.
Now, all those people
who did that,
who believe that's right,
are watching.
But you know what,
so are they.
Can you even run?
Yes, sir.
I don't want to
hurt you anymore.
I'm ready.
All right.
Strong load right,
Go.
- Let's go, Ernie.
And now the 76,000 fans at
the Cotton Bowl are stunned.
Ernie Davis has
returned to the playing field.
Let's go.
Man, that's Ernie Davis.
Strong left.

Six regular.
Six regular. Tight.
The Orangemen,
ball on their
own 40-yard line,
are desperate
for a first down...
to keep the ball
out of the hands...
of Longhorn quarterback
Bobby Lackey.
And the ball comes loose.
Texas has recovered.
His knee was down, ref.
First down, Texas.
Bad call, ref.
My knee was down, sir.
They're trying to
steal it from us.
I was down.
Franklin, Franklin,
get in there for Davis, go.
No. Get back. I'm staying
in. I'm staying in.
Regulations.
Texas on the 40-yard line with...
the ball and with
the game's momentum.
Bobby Lackey
drops back to pass.
Throws downfield,
he's got a receiver open.
Go. Go.
All the way.
All the way.
That's the way.
Offense, offense, let's go.
Let's take advantage.
Get out there. Let's go.
First down,
Syracuse has to
move the chains...
and keep the clock
ticking down...

or put this game away
with another touchdown.
Hut one.
Yeah. Yeah, go, go, go.
He's behind you. Go.
That's it. That's it.
He got this. Go.
An unbelievable play.
Ernie Davis scoring...
on an amazing
With the final seconds
ticking away...
Stay in the game.
Stay in the game.
It's not over.
...the Longhorns are looking
to tie this game up...
with a last chance
shot at the end zone.
All right, ladies,
settle down. Settle...
down. Give me your
undivided attention. Hey.
It's just been announced,
the 1960 Cotton Bowl MVP.
Congratulations to
Mr. Ernie Davis.
Ernie.
Congrats.
Come here.
Congratulations, brother.
All right,
everybody, listen up.
This gentleman
wants to say something.
Go ahead.
What the man is
trying to say is...
that the trophy ceremony
in our honor...
will be held at Oak Hill
Country Club tonight.
Great.
- Very nice.

Unfortunately, the Oak Hill
Country Club is
color restricted.
Which means that three of us,
including the player
who was awarded...
the Cotton Bowl MVP
today, cannot attend.
Seriously?
Ridiculous.
Now, how do we
feel about that?
I don't know about you,
but I hear they have some
great barbecue down here.
You read it.
'To Syracuse University
department of athletics.
'This is to inform
you that Ernest Davis...
'has been selected as one of...
the three finalists
for the...'
Congratulations, Ernie.
We're ready
for you, Mr. Davis.
...or witnessed
more closely...
Good luck, Mr. Davis.
Thank you, sir.
...the importance
of the gridiron...
or effected more
change in the game...
...than John W. Heisman. So,
it is with distinct
pleasure...
No matter what
happens up there.
I want you to know that I'm
really proud of you, son.
...the memorial
trophy bearing his name.
The first is Ernest R. Davis

from Syracuse University.
Our next nominee is
Robert Ferguson.
Ohio State University.
Our third nominee
is James Saxton,
the University of Texas.
Congratulations.
Thanks, man.
The Heisman Trophy has,
since 1935, represented
everything that...
is great about
collegiate athletics.
And these three fine young men...
represent their teams,
their schools...
and their families
with honor.
The voting for this year's...
award was the
closest in history...
and each of these
players is deserving.
That said, the winner of this...
year's Heisman
Memorial Trophy is
Ernest R. Davis from
Syracuse University.
Congratulations.
Thank you.
Congratulations.
I appreciate it.
Congratulations, Ernie.
- Thank you.
You did great.
First, I'd like to thank
the Heisman committee.
Sarah,
my family.
Mom.
Will,
and...
And Pops for believing in me.

And Jim Brown for letting
me wear his number.
I'd also like to thank my...
head coach, Ben
Schwartzwalder,
for making me better,
being a good teacher,
and for being a good man.
Thank you, everyone.
Where exactly are we going?
Right this way.
Ernie, I was in town
and I wanted...
to get a chance to meet you.
I know today is a
proud day for you.
You've really accomplished
something here.
Congratulations.
Thank you, Mr. President.
Fourth down, 9 yards.
Must be nice having the number
one draft pick, huh, George?
I'm sure Ernie Davis
is a fine boy,
but I'll start signing
Negroes when the
Harlem Globetrotters
start signing whites.
Mr. Modell, George
Marshall from the
Washington Redskins
is on the phone.
Of course he is.
George, what a surprise
to hear from you.
You do?
Okay, I'm listening.
It's all over the wire.
The Redskins just traded their
number one pick to Cleveland.
You're a commodity now.
Yeah, you should
listen to your lawyer,

man. He's right. It's
all business now.
Have you been sick recently?

No, I feel great.

I may be a commodity, but this...
commodity is playing
for Cleveland.

Me and Jim Brown in
the same backfield.

You're gonna steal
his number again?

Oh. Oh.

Stop it.

I don't want to leave.

You don't have to leave.

I do.

I should bring you with me.

Just jump in my suitcase.

You know you can fit.

Oh.

Oh, no.

- Oh, I slipped.

I'm sorry.

That was a mistake,
too. I'm sorry.

Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

I have to get
you a new blouse.

Look at you.

What are you doing?

He's at the 10.

The 20, the 30...

The 40...

Is that another nose bleed?

You know, Hound Dog
says he gets hit so hard,
he wakes up with
blood on his pillow.

Doesn't even know
where it came from.

But you haven't been hit.

Ernie, you haven't
been hit. What...

Bus leaves for practice

in a half hour.
Be here when I get back?
I'll be here.
Right two to Maury,
right two to Maury.
Set? Go.
Stop.
Change your block,
change your block.
Behind me, the
East team led by
Syracuse's Ben Schwartzwalder.
Ernie Davis goes
through the paces...
in preparation for Saturday
night's All-America game.
Davis look a little
sluggish to you?
He'll be fine.
Tight right,
Come on.
- Break.
Okie. Okie.
Watch. Strong left.
Strong left.
Right.
Six box.
Six box. Set.
Hut. Hut.
All right, let's run
it again. Let's go.
It's all right.
You'll get them
next time. Come on.
Ernie?
Ernie? You okay?
He's got to have
another transfusion.
He's lost quite
a lot of blood.
How'd he do that?
- We're not sure.
He's gonna need
further tests.

So test.

- Gentlemen.

Now what am I supposed
to tell the press?

Mumps.

- What?

He's got a bad
case of the mumps.

That's good.

Double tight.

Double tight. Down.

Set.

Blue 3-21.

Blue 3-21.

Hut. Hut.

Hey, Ernie.

The man wants to see you.

All right, get back.

- Let's go.

Hey.

Hey, Mr. Modell.

Hey.

- How are you?

I'm good. I've been
watching you.

I'm still trying to
find my rhythm out there.

You know, new system and all.

- Yeah, listen, Ernie.

All I need is some rest.

- Yeah, the system is...

Once I get used to it...

All right.

Ernie, Ernie, Ernie.

I spoke with

Dr. Hewlett and...

Look, he doesn't know
what it is, but...

they know something's
not right, Ernie.

I should have told
you earlier, kid.

I really can't clear
you for practice.

If I can't practice,
how am I gonna play?
You're not gonna
play. Not now.
And maybe not this season.
Well, when?
I don't know.
I don't know, kid.
Get better, okay?
Your job is to get well.
Mr. Modell,
you don't understand.
Everything I got is
because of football.
I need to play.
Yeah.
Mr. Modell, please, sir.
Next year, kid. We're counting
on you next year. Really.
Thank you.
Thank you, sir.
Did you hear back from
the teaching job yet?
Well?
They offered it to me.
That's great.
I told them I had
to think about it.
What's to think about?
The distance between
Cleveland and Oakland for one.
Take it.
What?
Take the job, Sarah.
You've always said you want...
to do something
with your life.
You didn't just come to
school just to find a husband.
You're beautiful, smart.
Stick to that dream.
How sick are you, Ernie?
Look at me.
Sarah...

Ernie Davis?
I hate to disturb
you, but would...
you sign an
autograph for my son?
He's 12, and you're
his favorite player.
Gonna be great to see
you with the Browns.
Thank you.
You're welcome.
Leukemia.
It's a word that
jumps out at you.
I know when I first
heard it myself.
I was...
I was scared.
But I got a lot of
people in my corner,
good people,
standing beside me.
My doctors are confident.
They tell me I'm responding
well to my treatment.
So, things are good.
And you know me. I'm an
optimist. I'm gonna fight it.
I hope to get on that
field and see...
you all in that
press box real soon.
Real soon.
Mr. Davis, Tom Martin,
Saturday Evening Post.
I saw you play in the
Cotton Bowl two years ago.
Okay.
I'm wondering if you'd like
to write an article for us.
You want me to
write an article?
I don't know whether
you know this,

but you're an inspiration
to a lot of our readers.
There he is,
number 77.
He's as good as me?
Maybe better.
Hey, Ernie.
Ernie, this is Floyd Little.
Floyd, this is...
Ernie Davis.
You good at math, huh?
You see, my plan
is to be just like you,
best Negro running
back in the NCAA.
Heisman Trophy all the way.
Then the NFL,
make some money.
You got it all
figured out, don't you?
What kind of bottle
do you think this is?
Don't know.
Don't have a label.
Right.
It could be a soda bottle,
it could be a beer bottle,
it could be anything.
No label.
You see, I never set out to be
the best Negro running back.
I just wanted to be
the best running back.
The best football player
I could be. Period.
Look, now I'm...
Floyd, I'm never gonna
play for Cleveland.
Or any other team.
My playing days are over.
So don't you look
at that poster...
of me on your wall
and tell me...

you want to be like me,
because that isn't enough.
You're gonna have to
do better than that.
You think you can?
Yes, sir.
Good.
But the thing is, I told Notre
Dame I would sign with them.
Floyd, you know how Notre
Dame loves their passing game.
My fear is a talented
runner like yourself...
may get stuck polishing that
Notre Dame bench
with your butt.
You don't want that.
I want to know something.
Coach?
What the hell did you
say to Floyd Little?
Why? What happened?
Well, I'll be damned,
he backed out on Notre Dame.
He's coming to Syracuse.
Well, let's see. I told him
you like your runners lazy,
and you like players
who backtalk.
Mmm-hmm.
Anything else?
I told him you
were a good coach.
I'm not gonna
lie to him, Ernie,
because I know how hard
it's gonna be for him.
And I promise,
if he works hard,
he can run for that
end zone whether...
he's in Boston or Mississippi.
And I won't tell him that
he's the next Ernie Davis,

because there won't
be another Ernie Davis.
Can you believe they
suited me up...
to run on the field
and take a bow?
I'll be right
here with you, son.
Please welcome to the field,
number 45, from Syracuse
at halfback, Ernie Davis.
Mr. Martin, in the end...
it turns out you
did me a favor...
when you asked me to
write this for The Post.
You see, yesterday
was my 23rd birthday,
and compared to some,
that doesn't seem...
like a whole lot of
life to talk about.
Thing is, I don't know how
much more is in front of me.
And as you see from the number...
of pages, if you've
read this far.
I did have a few
things to say,
and I'm not sure
how to end this...
or even if I want to.
It's funny. Most
people think my...
life has been all
about football.
I've even thought
that myself.
But football is just a game.
What matters is
what you play for.
Sometimes, when the
game is close...
and everything is on the line,

that's when you forget
the crowd and the noise.
That's when it's
just you against...
somebody else to see
who is the better man.
That's what I like
about the game.
Because at that
moment you are friends...
and you are enemies
and you are brothers.