

"BULL DURHAM"

by

Ron Shelton

In baseball, you don't know nothing.

--Yogi Berra

Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball.

--Jacques Barzun

You could look it up.

--Casey Stengel

Titles over --

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 follow-through...

DISSOLVE TO:

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

DISSOLVE TO:

JACKIE ROBINSON STEALS HOME -- 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, Shiva, 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.)

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 OUT 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 smooths 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 God's sake!

(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 cigarette -- always smoking a cigarette. He snuffs out his cigarette 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. Ebby 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, Ebby 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 Ebby 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)

Oh yeah. 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  
4:30.

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  
Ebbby 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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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  
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  
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 (V.O.)

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  
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  
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

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  
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  
Don't yank me in the first, man.

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

NUKE  
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 (V.O.)

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

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

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 -- ohhhh! 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 (O.S.)  
(on the air)  
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 on 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 INFIELDF -- The Kingston GENERAL MANAGER  
stands in the muck with his ground crew. Wheelbarrows,  
shovels, sand is piled around. It's hopeless.

KINGSTON 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.

KINGSTON 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  
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. Ll 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  
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  
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  
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  
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: DURHAM 11, KINGSTON 0 -- TOP OF THE NINTH

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  
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 cigarette. A puzzled  
expression -- things have got out of control.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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

PLAYERS PLAYING "FLIP" PEPPER like kids.

ANNIE (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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 clichés. 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 clichés, 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 as 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  
Omgawd, honey, I'm so happy for  
you.

MILLIE  
He's a virgin.

Jimmy squirms defensively.

JIMMY  
Well, yeah...  
(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

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

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

NUKE JUST MISSES WITH A PITCH -- Ball four.

ANNIE

...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  
I'm 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 cigarette 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)  
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 levels 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, he? 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 TO:

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 TO:

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, dowses 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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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 clichés 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

(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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)  
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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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