

THE G.O.A.T  
Season 1, Episode 2  
"Spring Training"

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TITLE: SPRING TRAINING

FADE IN.

EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - DAY

SUPER: First inning

The Statesmen are the home team against the CHICAGO GHOSTS. The Ghosts are currently in the field.

Cam Kendricks takes practice swings in the on deck circle. Right fielder Stan Lombardi stands on second.

In the dugout, Manager Harold Gray takes a handful of sunflower seeds and tosses them in his mouth.

Bench Coach Craig Glover sits next to him. Beyond them is Hitting Coach Alvin Huebner.

HUEBNER

These guys are pretty good this year.

GLOVER

They've been good a few years now. Spanked us pretty bad in August.

Gray spits a sunflower seed shell onto the dugout floor.

On the outside of the dugout, someone has slapped a sticker with a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns. No one notices it.

Kendricks steps up to the plate.

The Ghosts' pitcher is MULANEY, a short white man in his late 20s. Mulaney throws a fastball that Kendricks stares at. Umpire William Smith calls it a strike.

KENDRICKS

That was a nice pitch.

The Ghosts' catcher, PENA, Mexican-American 20s, throws the ball back to Mulaney. Kendricks takes a few practice swings.

PENA

Wait until you see what's next.

Kendricks smiles. Mulaney winds up and throws a change-up. Kendricks is out ahead of it, but manages to foul it off.

KENDRICKS  
He almost got me there.

SMITH  
I thought he had you for sure.

PENA  
Better be ready. He's got options.

Kendricks gets ready. Mulaney throws a curve that Kendricks flails at. Smith calls him out.

PENA (CONT'D)  
I tried to warn you.

KENDRICKS  
I'll be back.

Pena laughs as he rockets the ball to third base.

In the dugout, Glover whistles.

GLOVER  
That was ugly.

Huebner frowns. The scoreboard reads 0-0.

Gray spits.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Second inning

Grady Duhart stands on the mound. On the back of the mound, Duhart has scrawled three crosses with one of his cleats. Kendricks plays first.

The bases are loaded with one out. The batter, FISCHER, white early 30s, waits.

Duhart throws a sinker and Fischer grounds it to first. Kendricks gets a bad break and looks a little silly lining up, but he still catches the ball. The play is clearly at home, but Kendricks turns towards second for the double play.

From the bench, several coaches and players jump to their feet. First Base Coach Chris Lawthon yanks his cap off.

LAWTHON  
What the hell?

Kendricks' throw is bad enough to pull shortstop Alfredo Brito off the bag.

Brito is frustrated and he turns and throws home. Catcher Savoy Bishop catches the ball, but is nowhere near the runner, who scores. The scoreboard reads 2-0 for Chicago.

On the bench, Glover shakes his head.

GLOVER

Ugly.

From the end of the bench, backup Albert Whaley speaks up:

WHALEY

I would've had that.

Gray spits.

Duhart walks back onto the mound, frustrated.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fourth inning

Kendricks stands in the box with a 2-1 count. Mulaney throws a slider and Kendricks almost hits it.

KENDRICKS

There it is.

PENA

Yeah, that WAS impressive.

He holds the ball up and stares at it. Kendricks grins.

SMITH

Play ball.

CUT TO:

Mulaney throws the same pitch and Kendricks rips it down the third base line. Third Baseman Fischer makes a stab for the ball, but misses. Third Base Coach Terrence Kimbell waves outfielder Ronnie Pitts through and he scores.

From the bench:

HUEBNER

That'll do it!

He claps exaggeratedly.

Kendricks grins as he pulls up at first, satisfied.

Behind home plate:

SMITH

Not bad.

PENA

I've seen better.

The scoreboard now has the game tied 2-2.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fifth inning

Duhart pitches from the stretch. A runner, DISNEY, white late 20s, dances off third base, hoping to distract him. There are two outs.

Duhart pitches and the hitter, FORD, hits a sharp grounder to second base. Derrick Speck fields it and throws to first.

Kendricks bobbles the catch and the runner is safe. The runner from third scores. Speck turns away and smacks his glove on his hip.

SPECK

He's a damned putz!

From the bench:

WHALEY

Amateur hour.

The score is now 3-2, Ghosts. Duhart glares at Kendricks.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Seventh inning

The score is now 5-2, Ghosts. Mulaney has a 2-0 count on Kendricks, who is ready. Mulaney shakes off Pena.

Mulaney nods.

He throws a low fastball that Kendricks doesn't bite on. The count is 3-0.

Mulaney nods.

They intentionally walk Kendricks. A smattering of boos from the sparse crowd.

Ford throws the ball to First Baseman, PATINKIN, white, 30s.

Kendricks arrives at first. Patinkin fake throws the ball back to Mulaney, who pretends to catch it. Kendricks steps off the bag in fair territory to straighten his uniform.

Patinkin tags Kendricks with the ball.

UMPIRE

You're out!

Kendricks has no idea what just happened. Patinkin holds up the ball and grins.

LAWTHON

You've gotta be kidding me.

Kendricks protests, but Lawton pulls him away to laughter in the stands.

LAWTHON (CONT'D)

Ain't seen anyone fall for the that since grade school.

In the dugout, Gray turns his back towards the field and grabs a big handful of sunflower seeds.

GRAY

I see any more shit like that and I'm gonna have to do my job.

Huebner looks up at him, not quite getting it.

HUEBNER

What's that mean?

GLOVER

Man, ain't it obvious?

Gray spits.

Huebner stews.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Ninth inning

The score is now 6-3. Mulaney is out and a new pitcher, FROMAN, 20s, white, is in. His warm-up tosses are fire.

Bishop paces back and forth in the dugout.

BISHOP

C'mon!

Nobody really pays attention to him.

BISHOP (CONT'D)  
 Why am I the only one around here  
 who cares about winning?

A few laughs.

HUEBNER  
 Keep it down over there.

Bishop continues pacing.

BISHOP  
 It's like people are giving up. And  
 the season hasn't even started.

HUEBNER  
 Why don't you concentrate on  
 swinging the bat and leave the rest  
 to us.

Gray spits.

GLOVER  
 We playing a game here? Or we  
 having a debate society?

HUEBNER  
 I'm just saying--

Gray glares at Huebner, silencing him.

Froman throws his last warm-up toss and leadoff hitter Jason  
 Doster steps up to bat. On the first pitch, Froman gets  
 Doster to ground to short.

CUT TO:

Smith stands up from his crouched position.

SMITH  
 Ball four.

Speck tosses his bat and trots to first.

CUT TO:

Lombardi hits a sac fly to deep left field. Speck advances to  
 second.

CUT TO:

Pitts steps up to the plate.

Froman doesn't even try to pitch to him. Pena calls for the intentional walk and Froman throws the ball way outside. A smattering of boos.

CUT TO:

Kendricks steps up to the plate.

Froman throws a fastball for a called strike. Kendricks looks down at the ball and smiles.

Froman sets and throws another fastball. Scout Ferd Langwieler clocks the pitch at 99 mph. Kendricks swings away, depositing the very fast pitch in the right field bleachers.

Huebner leaps from the bench. Most of the other coaches are excited, too.

Gray spits.

Kendricks rounds the bases and crosses home, high-fiving Speck as he scores.

SPECK

I think I was wrong about you.  
That's some hellacious lumber.

Pitts hugs them both as the game is tied at 6.

CUT TO:

A new pitcher, FOSSE, white, 20s, is in the game. The hitter is third baseman CHUCK CHESTER. Chester is also a white man in his mid 20s. He's VERY athletic and confident at the plate.

Chester takes a pitch. The outfield is shifted left for defense against the right-handed hitter. The Statesmen players all stand on the edge of the dugout, wearing rally caps.

Chester hits a line shot over Patinkin's head, down the first base line.

The right fielder, Disney, breaks slowly and the ball rattles into the deep corner of the stadium.

Chester rounds first and refuses to slow down. Disney gives chase. He grabs the ball and throws to the cutoff man as Chester slides into third. The small group of fans in attendance go wild.

CUT TO:



Bishop walks up to the plate as his teammates cheer him on. He steps into the box.

PENA  
Glad I'm not you, sausage-boy.

Bishop ignores him as he takes practice swings.

PENA (CONT'D)  
Like this is SO much pressure.

Another swing.

PENA (CONT'D)  
Like, you're a much better hitter  
than I am, but still...

Bishop isn't sure whether to smile or be angry.

PENA (CONT'D)  
...you'd have to eat a LOT of  
sausage to hit Fosse's pitching.

Bishop flinches. Fosse throws a curve that freezes Bishop for strike one.

PENA (CONT'D)  
See. Lots of pressure. And there's  
so much movement on that pitch.  
Tough stuff.

Bishop stops swinging and waits nervously for the pitch. Fosse nods.

PENA (CONT'D)  
You ain't ready for this.

Bishop chokes up on the bat. Pena smiles as he gets set. Fosse throws a fastball.

Bishop flails at the ball and makes contact. The ball flares into short right field.

The first baseman, second baseman and right fielder converge on the ball, but it falls in between them. Chester scores. The Statesmen win, 7-6.

The Statesmen mob each other in celebration. Gray sits at one end of the bench, deep in thought. Whaley sits at the other end, dejected.

OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. SAVOY FARMS - DAY

This is a TV advertisement. The production values are very low, SAVOY FARMS is a very small family-run company. The music behind the ad sounds a LOT like "Delirious," by Prince.

Savoy Bishop stands in front of a big hand-carved wooden "Savoy Farms" sign.

BISHOP

Hey, y'all. Y'all might know me as professional baseball player Savoy Bishop.

Someone off-screen tosses him a baseball. He pulls the ball from his catcher's mitt and throws it back.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

But folks around here...

He gestures to the farm.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

...know my family as the makers of the finest sausage in Nebraska. Even Oklahoma and Kansas.

Someone offscreen tosses him a package of Savoy Farms sausage links and he catches it with the mitt.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

My favorite is the mild, but we got all kinds of sausage here at Savoy Farms. We got maple...

Someone tosses him another package of sausages. He manages to catch it.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

...hickory flavor...

Another package. He drops the first one while catching the new one.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

...spicy Cajun...

Another package. He starts to drop them all while he laughs.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

...apple-smoked chicken...

Another package hits him. And another and another. He stops trying to catch them.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Just about any kind of sausage you  
ever heard of.

SUPER: [www.savoyfarmssausage.com](http://www.savoyfarmssausage.com)

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You can order the best sausage in  
three states online right now. We  
only use the freshest ingredients  
and we only make the best sausage.

SUPER: Savoy Farms Sausage

Someone offscreen throws a bag of Savoy Farms Turkey Jerky to  
him. He catches it.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Hey! Now we even have turkey jerky!

INT. SPORTS CENTRAL STUDIO

Sports Central starts up with lots of whooshes and flags and  
sports images and bald eagles and such.

This leads us to the very futuristic and busy Sports Central  
set. Blue is the dominant color. At the desk are  
sportscasters Inesta Morgan and Major Sumrell.

INESTA

Welcome back.

MAJOR

As always, we thank you for  
watching Sports Central.

Close-up of Inesta.

INESTA

Now, we turn towards Spring  
Training, where the D.C. Statesmen  
are the surprise story.

MAJOR

That's right, it may be Daylight  
Savings this weekend, but no  
daylight could save Atlanta's  
pitchers today against the  
offensive onslaught of the  
Statesmen.

INESTA

And in recent years, the Statesmen bats have been more offensive and less offense.

Major laughs.

MAJOR

The team is hitting nearly .300, which has spurred their 7-1 start.

INESTA

The Statesmen have won five straight games, but they'll need to pray to St. Patrick if they're going to continue their lucky ways.

MAJOR

The Ides of March may portend greater things for D.C.

INESTA

Or it could turn out to be yet another false pre-season prophecy in a long line of tough seasons.

MAJOR

(sarcastic)

With seven wins, the Statesmen are almost halfway to their entire win total from last year.

Inesta almost laughs out loud.

INESTA

A big part of their surge has been the bats, led by stalwart Ronnie Pitts and surprisingly hot start for Mario Gay, who spent most of last year in the minors.

MAJOR

This team could be significantly better than last year. Especially if they get production from surprising places, like 30-year-old rookie Cam Kendricks.

INESTA

If, and it's a BIG if, they play in the regular season like the have been playing in Florida.

MAJOR

I do like my ifs to be big.

Inesta smiles.

INESTA

And that's it for us tonight. Next up is Jeffrey Brack with the NBS Nightly News.

MAJOR

Have a spectacular evening.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

And cut!

The big lights go off and Inesta and Major relax. Major pulls out his phone and starts checking messages. Inesta smiles.

INESTA

You almost got me.

Major smiles confidently.

MAJOR

Would that be so bad? If I got you?

INESTA

You're going to have to try harder than that to get me.

MAJOR

Who says I'm trying?

She locks eyes with him. She looks him up and down.

INESTA

You're trying.

They both laugh confidently.

During the show, the crawl at the bottom of the screen shows the following messages, on a loop:

"SD Whalers star P Walton out for season"

"Galaxy Wars 7 dominates weekend box office with \$171m"

"Serena Williams gets 3rd #1 album with 'Nevermore'"

"Search continues for missing girl, Julie Croteau, in AZ"

"Cy Young confirmed as Secretary of Interior"

"President Winfrey signs Sokovia Accords"

"'Gilgamesh' renewed for third season on WolfTV"

INT. NBS NEWS STUDIO

Jeffrey Brack sits in the NBS News Studio, which is a lot less busy and more professional than the Sports Central set. Blue is still the dominant color, although it's softer here.

BRACK

Welcome to NBS Nightly News. With a record heat wave gripping the nation, OUR top story tonight is a new craze taking the nation, Hippy Poppers.

Brack sighs.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Is the new children's toy the hottest item of the summer or will it make your child go blind?

Brack stacks his papers on the desk.

BRACK (CONT'D)

And then maybe after that we'll dive into the latest issue of Mad Magazine.

Brack never smiles. Never.

INT. SPRING TRAINING LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The team is mostly excited over their win against the Chicago Ghosts. Bishop isn't undressing, he's just sitting on a bench in his catcher's gear, grinning.

Gray stands at the front of the locker room, he's excited, too.

GRAY

I really think you guys have the chance to make something special happen this season. All we gotta do to win it all is pay attention Gray's Rules.

Jones elbows Bishop.

JONES  
Here we go.

BISHOP  
Why does he do this every year?

Jones shrugs.

JONES  
It's his thing. Let him roll with  
it.

Gray holds up a fist.

GRAY  
Gray's rules. Follow them for best  
results. Rule #1: No whining.

Chuckles. Gray extends his index finger.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
Rule #2: No complaining.

The laughter grows.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
Rule #3: No bitching.

Hilarity.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
Rule #4: Work hard.

Laughs turn to cheers.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
Rule #5: Play hard!

The locker room explodes with enthusiasm and hope and  
testosterone.

CUT TO:

Gray and the coaches are gone, but the team excitement  
remains.

BISHOP  
Man, I do like winning!

Speck slaps him on the back.

SPECK  
Hell, farmboy, we all like to win!

Speck tosses his jersey into his locker. Conan Jones speaks up.

JONES  
C'mon Speck, leave the kid alone.

BISHOP  
I'm not a kid.

Laughter.

JONES  
You sure look like a kid to me.

SPECK  
Everyone's a kid next to you.

Jason Doster playfully shoves Jones' shoulder.

DOSTER  
Yeah, Jones, how did it feel to be  
a kid before baseball was invented?

The room starts getting lively. Bishop turns to Jones.

BISHOP  
How old ARE you?

More laughs.

SPECK  
Don't you know to never ask a lady  
her age, Bishop?

BISHOP  
Yeah, we had that rule back home.

Laughter. They're laughing at him, not with him.

Kendricks comes in from the showers. His locker is next to Chester's.

CHESTER  
Hell, Bishop, you come from an  
actual farm?

Laughter.

BISHOP  
Yep. A sausage farm.

That's even funnier.



CHESTER

Like you cut up the pigs yourself?

BISHOP

Sure do.

Chester leans into his locker and takes a pull from a flask.

CHESTER

You ever get any girls down there on the farm? Or you come from one of them towns where the farmers and the animals... you know... date each other?

Bishop frowns.

KENDRICKS

Maybe we give the guy who won the game a break?

Laughter and cheers. Bishop is happy again.

Whaley glares at Kendricks from across the locker room.

SPECK

Besides, Chester, aren't you from like Montana or some shit?

DOSTER

Yeah, he was voted most likely to be a rodeo clown in high school.

Big laughs.

BISHOP

My cousin Richie WAS a rodeo clown.

Even bigger laughs.

KENDRICKS

Can he save the team with timely hits? If so, he can dress like a ballerina for all I care.

Another round of congratulations for Bishop.

Whaley leans forward on the bench.

WHALEY

Wouldn't have to save the team...

Kendricks stops laughing.

WHALEY (CONT'D)  
...if other people weren't fucking  
it up.

Kendricks stands up. Whaley does, too. The room quiets.

KENDRICKS  
What was that?

WHALEY  
Things were just fine around here  
without any walk-ons.

JONES  
(chuckles ruefully)  
Were they?

A few smattered laughs. Kendricks glares at Whaley. Whaley  
doesn't flinch.

WHALEY  
I'm just saying... like... don't we  
still haze rookies around here?

Beat.

WHALEY (CONT'D)  
Or something?

BISHOP  
Nobody hazed me.

Whaley doesn't break eye contact with Kendricks.

WHALEY  
Wasn't talking to you, cow pie.

BISHOP  
Now wait a second...

Bishop moves towards Whaley, but Kendricks steps in front of  
him.

KENDRICKS  
Who were you talking to there, Mr.  
Baseball?

Whaley steps forward.

Kendricks steps closer, too. They get close enough to  
embrace, staring each other down.

Glover walks in and puts himself between them.

GLOVER

I could care less if you guys are in love. But if you're gonna start kissing, you're gonna need to take it outside of my locker room.

The tension in the room releases. Kendricks walks away. Whaley stands put.

Glover puts a hand on his shoulder, but Whaley brushes it off and finally walks away.

INT. PDDC BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The briefing room is packed. Everyone in the precinct is here for this case.

Officer Cody Paige sits against the back wall of the room. The officers nearby have pulled their chairs away from her. In a busy, bustling room, she is isolated.

Captain Alex Levin walks up to the front of the room carrying a notebook. She sets it on the podium and clears her throat.

LEVIN

Morning, everyone. Quiet down.

The room quickly settles.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

You all know why we're here today.

Disgruntled murmurs.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

We now have before us the largest single-incident mass murder in the Northeast in more than 20 years.

The room goes quiet.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

And we're going to catch the sick fuck that perpetrated this disgusting spectacle.

Officer Steven Beck rolls in a whiteboard covered with images of the victims. Headshots of four women and four men are pinned next to images of the severed heads of each. At the center of it all is an image of the overall crime scene.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

It's safe to say none of us has ever worked on a case like this. This is well beyond the boundaries of what is comprehensible in a civil society. Today, our system has broken down.

Cody shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

And it's our job to fix it up and make it work again.

Levin nods towards his administrative assistant, RITA, a woman in her 50s, and she starts handing out folders of various thicknesses.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

Each of you has a briefing folder that gives you more details on your specific role in this investigation. This is an all-hands-on-deck situation, obviously, and you all have a role to play.

Rita hands a folder to Cody. Her folder is noticeably thinner than the other officers.

Cody opens it. Inside is a general briefing memo. On top of it is a sticky note that reads "See me. - Levin." Nothing else is inside.

Levin and Rita walk up to Cody as the others leave the briefing room.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

I didn't have time to write up your briefing...

Cody leans in.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

...but it's KEY to the case.

Levin raises both eyebrows to emphasize "key." Rita smirks.

CODY

Yes, ma'am. Any way I can help?

Levin stifles a laugh and glances at Rita, who giggles.

LEVIN

Sure. I'm going to need you to bring in Brice Eversmith.

Cody starts writing. Levin places her hand over Cody's and stops her.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

He... uh... she's an old cop.

He gestures for Rita to give something to Cody. She hands Cody a business card.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

He... she's an expert on serial killers or satanic cults or devil worshipping ceremonies or whatever.

Levin chuckles. Rita laughs harder. Levin takes a deep breath.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

So, yeah, I was told to bring... uh... HER in on the case and so I'm delegating it to you.

CODY

You think Eversmith will be key to breaking the case?

Levin laughs heartily.

LEVIN

I can't even begin to give a shit.

Rita laughs, too. Cody is shocked. Levin walks away.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

I'm not sure which of the two of you has less to offer this case. Just do what you're told and stay out of the way so we can do the REAL work.

Rita scrunches a smile at Cody as she follows her boss. Cody stares after them for a few seconds.

Cody looks down at the card. It reads: "Brice Eversmith (she/her), philosopher" and has her phone number.

Cody frowns and stuffs the card in her pocket.

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - DAY

Reporter Shirley Muldoon and the blogger known only as "Chad" sit in Chad's mom's basement. Chad's throne is a fancy ergonomic chair before a modern gaming desk. Shirley sits on a folding chair next to him.

CHAD  
Okay, let's do this.

SHIRLEY  
I'm having trouble getting started.

CHAD  
Aren't you a reporter?

She gives him a sarcastic smile.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
No Pulitzers on your shelf?

SHIRLEY  
I don't see YOUR trophy case.

She exaggeratedly looks around the room.

CHAD  
I don't "get trophies," I "unlock achievements."

Shirley laughs.

SHIRLEY  
All right. Enough stalling.

CHAD  
You aren't waiting on me.

Shirley pulls Cody Paige's card out and runs her thumb over the raised type.

SHIRLEY  
She's gonna be angry.

CHAD  
Who is?

SHIRLEY  
Officer Paige.

Chad stares at her for a moment.

CHAD  
What does Officer Paige have to do  
with baseball?

Shirley looks away from his questioning eyes.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Like does she play for the  
Statesmen or something?

SHIRLEY  
No. Not exactly.

CHAD  
Then what are you doing?

Shirley shrugs.

SHIRLEY  
I can't get it out of my mind.

Chad looks away.

CHAD  
I... I didn't see anything.

Shirley studies him.

SHIRLEY  
I wish I hadn't.

One of them tries to remember and one tries to forget.

Shirley picks up her phone and dials.

CHAD  
She sure was angry when she kicked  
us out of the crime scene.

Shirley cancels the call.

SHIRLEY  
You're right. She's not going to  
tell us anything.

Chad watches Shirley fidget with Cody's business card.

CHAD  
Then why'd she give you her card?

Shirley runs her finger over the phone number on the card  
again.

She dials. Cody answers midway through the first ring.

CODY (O.S.)  
Officer Paige speaking.

Beat.

SHIRLEY  
I... uh... Officer Cody Paige?

CODY (O.S.)  
I already said I was.

SHIRLEY  
Oh... uh... sorry.

Shirley takes another deep breath.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)  
I'm working on a story and I need  
to talk to you. Can we meet?

CODY (O.S.)  
Who are you with?

SHIRLEY  
I'm with the Washington Gazette. I  
write about--

CODY (O.S.)  
Call the front desk and make an  
appointment.

Shirley relaxes.

SHIRLEY  
Are you available tomorrow at 1?

CODY (O.S.)  
Call the front desk and make an  
appointment.

Cody hangs up.

SHIRLEY  
I have to call the front desk and  
make an appointment.

Chad laughs.

INT. PDDC BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Cody hangs up the phone, mumbling to herself.



CODY  
 Who the hell do these people think  
 I am? I ain't no damned secret--

She sees Eversmith's business card and picks it up.

CODY (CONT'D)  
 This fucking job...

She dials the number and waits for a few rings.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 How did you get this number?

CODY  
 But I didn't even tell you who--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 Doesn't matter who you are. You  
 shouldn't have this number.

CODY  
 I... uh--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 Business? Or are you just here to  
 annoy me?

Beat.

EVERSMITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Hello?

CODY  
 Yeah. I... um... I'm a cop.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 Gross.

Cody stares at her phone for a second.

CODY  
 I need to meet with you.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 I can't imagine why.

CODY  
 It's about this--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
 No.

Beat.

CODY

But I--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

I don't work with PDDC.

CODY

Why n--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

Don't ask.

Beat.

CODY

But I need to ask you about this case.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

I don't work on cases.

CODY

But I was told--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

People lie. A lot. You sound a bit old to not have learned this important lesson.

Cody takes a deep breath.

CODY

It's about that ritual killing. The mass murder.

Beat.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

You know, back in my day, the press wouldn't have that information yet. We kept things a little closer to the vest.

Cody sighs.

CODY

Hey, cut the shit!

EVERSMITH (O.S.)

Why--

CODY

I get it, you don't like PDDC. Well get in fucking line.

(MORE)

CODY (CONT'D)  
I'm doing my job here and all you  
can do is give me shit. I don't  
even want to be asking these--

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
Hey!

Beat.

CODY  
Yeah.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
You know where the Pinch is?

Cody thinks for a second.

CODY  
Yeah. Over near the stadium?

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
That's the one.

CODY  
I know it.

EVERSMITH (O.S.)  
Meet me there. Tomorrow night. 7  
p.m. You're buying.

CODY  
I... uh...

Eversmith hangs up.

Cody writes "The Pinch, 7 p.m." on her notepad.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - DAY

Shirley drives a recent-model Toyota Camry into the parking  
lot of National Stadium. The lot is mostly empty.

She pulls up to the gates and sees they are chained. The  
stadium is closed except for the ticket booth and gift shop.

She picks up her phone and dials.

SHIRLEY  
Where you at?

CONAN (O.S.)  
In Puerto Rico. Where I'm supposed  
to be.

Beat.

CONAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Why? Where are you?

Shirley takes a deep breath.

SHIRLEY  
Your office.

CONAN (O.S.)  
My office? The stadium?

SHIRLEY  
Yep.

CONAN (O.S.)  
You really don't know anything  
about baseball do you?

Shirley barks a laugh.

SHIRLEY  
Not even a little bit.

Beat.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)  
When do you get back?

CONAN (O.S.)  
End of the month.

SHIRLEY  
That long? What am I going to do  
with my time?

CONAN (O.S.)  
Watch some baseball games?

Shirley considers it.

SHIRLEY  
I guess. When do you guys play?

She listens.

EXT. PUERTO RICO NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

Today's exhibition game against the PUERTO RICO COQUIS is in full sway. The stands are pretty packed and the crowd is loud. A sign hangs over the outfield fence that says: "Statehood or Else!"

SUPER: Fifth inning

Jones stands on the mound. The scoreboard reads 5-2 in favor of the Coquis. Jones is tired and has given up a LOT of hits.

He throws a pitch and gives up a single.

In the dugout, Gray jumps off the bench and starts pacing.

Glover moves all the players towards the other end of the dugout and the coaches huddle near Gray.

HUEBNER

What's going on?

GLOVER

When he starts pacing...

Gray talks low, so the players can't hear.

GRAY

I really don't like what I'm seeing.

He walks up the dugout.

GRAY (CONT'D)

I know the pressure is on and we're going to have to make cuts. And I don't think we're ready.

He walks down the dugout.

GRAY (CONT'D)

You two...

He points towards Huebner and Pitching Coach Vernon Howell.

GRAY (CONT'D)

...You're not letting the young guys get enough playing time.

He walks up the dugout.

GRAY (CONT'D)

We've gotta evaluate the bottom of the roster and we gotta do it with enough data.

He walks down the dugout.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
We already know what the big guns  
are gonna do. We don't need to see  
them in fucking Florida.

Huebner is taken aback.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
(to Howell)  
And YOU'VE been leaving the  
starters in too long.

Howell crosses his arms and slumps backwards.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
I'm not liking this whole  
situation. Something's gotta give.  
How do you guys not see that?

The team comes in from the field. First in are Bishop and  
Jones.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
(to Langwieler)  
How am I the only one who  
understands baseball around here?

LANGWIELER  
Beats me, boss. Beats me.

HUEBNER  
(under his breath)  
Only coach around here to ever lose  
101 games.

Glover elbows Huebner in the ribs. Hard.

Bishop watches the whole thing, mouth agape. Jones leans over  
and whispers to Bishop.

JONES  
Close your mouth before they turn  
their sights on you.

Bishop closes his mouth.

BISHOP  
Are you serious?

Jones shrugs.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Ninth inning

The score is now 7-5 in favor of Puerto Rico.

Standing at bat is rookie Ajax Cloud. He is not confident. The bases are loaded with one out.

GRAY  
What's Cloud done today?

LANGWIELER  
0-3. Two strike outs.

Cloud swings wildly at a bad pitch to strike out.

HUEBNER  
Dammit!

LANGWIELER  
Three strike outs.

Gray spits.

GAME ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Now pinch hitting for Albert  
Whaley, Mario Gay. Gay.

Gay, the muscular rookie, steps up to the plate. A smattering of applause. Whaley throws his helmet against the dugout wall and walks into the locker room.

Huebner gets up to follow.

GRAY  
Leave him. We're in the middle of a  
game here.

HUEBNER  
But I--

GRAY  
Here's your pinch hitter.

He nods towards Gay, who fouls off a pitch.

HUEBNER  
Ha! This guy can't handle the  
pressure. He's too green.

Gay fouls off another pitch.

GRAY  
He's got THIS guy's number.

HUEBNER  
0-2? Okay.

Huebner crosses his arms as they watch the pitch.

Gay lines a shot to the gap in right center field and it gets past both outfielders. A runner scores.

The ball takes a tough bounce off the outfield wall and towards foul territory. A runner scores.

The RIGHT FIELDER chases down the ball and turns to throw towards second. A runner scores.

Gay slides into second. He gets tagged out, but he leaps to his feat with excitement.

CUT TO:

The game is over and various players from both teams and members of the media congregate on the field in small groups. The scoreboard reads 8-7 for the Statesmen.

Jones is speaking to an PUERTO RICAN UMPIRE.

PUERTO RICAN UMPIRE  
Tell your mother I said hello.

JONES  
I will. She'll be mad I didn't bring her any of Kamila's mofongo.

PUERTO RICAN UMPIRE  
You know my wife's rule...

BOTH  
"My food doesn't travel, you eat it now or you go home hungry."

They laugh. Jones claps him on the shoulder and walks away.

Before him stands LUIS NARVAEZ, a pitcher for the Coquis. He is a Puerto Rican man in his early 30s.

NARVAEZ  
Mr. Jones? Conan?

Jones smiles at the nickname.

JONES  
Hey, great job out there today. You beat me head-to-head. My boys had to save me.

Narvaez nods and shakes his head.



JONES (CONT'D)  
But YOU were great.

Narvaez beams with pride. He takes off his glove and shows it to Jones. It has Jones' signature on it. Jones grins.

NARVAEZ  
I don't speak English that gr--  
that well, so just let me talk.

JONES  
Of course.

He's truly listening to his fellow pitcher.

NARVAEZ  
My father worked in D.C. a lot when  
I was growing up.

Jones nods.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)  
We came to Washington many times.  
My father was busy. He bought me  
season tickets to the Statesmen. I  
watched you pitch many times.

He holds up his glove and smiles.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)  
I am a pitcher because I watched  
you. All alone in the stands, far  
from home.

Jones is choked up.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)  
I picked up my first ball because  
of you. Threw my first pitch. Won  
my first game. Joined my first  
team. Played for the national team  
of my home. This season...

Narvaez grins.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)  
...I will be on the opening day  
roster for the Philadelphia  
Porters. I am a professional.

Jones has to hold back the tears.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)

I have done all these things  
because I watched you.

Narvaez drops his glove and gives Jones a big hug. Jones is reluctant at first, but then returns it.

Narvaez breaks the hug, but keeps his hands on Jones' shoulders.

NARVAEZ (CONT'D)

Philadelphia will be world  
champions this year. But it will be  
an honor to beat D.C. to win.

Narvaez hugs him again.

INT. PUERTO RICO NATIONAL STADIUM PRESS ROOM - LATER

A bare-bones interview room has been set up. A few local reporters have joined most of the press core from D.C., which has followed the team.

Most of the team's usual reporters have traveled and the assembled press includes Sharon Alligood and Dwayne McDaris. Gray and Jones sit at the table, fielding questions.

ALLIGOOD

Rumor was you weren't going to come  
back this season. What changed your  
mind?

JONES

You know, every time I've taken the  
mound over the past two decades,  
I've tried to win games for the  
fans of Washington, D.C. Those fans  
have been without a championship  
for many years and I saw a  
situation where I might have a  
legit chance to help the team  
finally get that win in October.

ALLIGOOD

Do you think you need to win a  
championship in order to get in the  
Hall of Fame?

Jones leans back in his chair and rubs his head.

JONES

I mean, I'd be lying if I said I hadn't thought about it and, sure, every boy wants to grow up to be in the Hall of Fame. But, mostly I just think about winning today's game. That's always been my mindset. Just win today's game. And I look at this team and I think we have a lot of wins in us.

The reporters jockey for the next question. McDaris forces his way to the front.

MCDARIS

Harold, what kind of message do you think it sends to play here in Puerto Rico at THIS moment in time? Are you concerned about being here during a time of revolutionary fervor?

Gray stares at him for a second.

GRAY

I'm no politician. I'm a baseball guy. I go where they tell me to go and I make decisions that help these guys win games. That's it. Next question.

MCDARIS

But what--

Gray points to Alligood.

GRAY

Sharon.

Alligood stands up.

ALLIGOOD

Oh... um... your star pitcher seems particularly optimistic about your team's chances this year. Is that optimism realistic? Have you seen enough to back up that prediction?

Gray claps Jones on the shoulder.

GRAY

Nobody's as optimistic as Conan the Barbarian here.

Laughter.

GRAY (CONT'D)

The regular season is the regular season, but I've never won 20 games in Spring Training before, so I'm feeling pretty good. It's been a LONG time since we were in first place in ANYTHING. It feels good.

He smiles.

MCDARIS

So you'd rather talk in platitudes about meaningless games rather than answer valid questions about Puerto Rican independence?

Gray stands up.

GRAY

I'm a god-damned baseball coach!

He storms out of the room. Jones pauses for a second, then follows him. The room erupts into chaos.

McDaris sits back and smiles.

INT. PUERTO RICO NATIONAL STADIUM MANAGER'S OFFICE - LATER

The office is cleared out, except for Gray. Whaley walks in.

GRAY

Have a seat, son.

Whaley is wary. This kind of meeting is never good.

WHALEY

What's up, skip?

Gray leans back in his chair and laces his hands behind his head. He stares at Whaley.

GRAY

I think you have a pretty good idea why you're here.

Whaley laughs nervously.

WHALEY

Pretty sure you aren't cutting me.

Gray doesn't respond.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

Right?

Gray shakes his head.

GRAY

No. But you probably won't start much. I don't have a spot for you. Certainly not on opening day.

Whaley turns and stares out the window.

WHALEY

Why? I've been hitting well.

Gray nods.

GRAY

You have. So have a bunch of guys. Not enough spots to go around.

Whaley swallows a lump in his throat.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Not used to having this problem.

Beat.

GRAY.

Do you want me to designate you?

Whaley stares at him.

WHALEY

Would I clear waivers?

GRAY

Probably.

Beat.

GRAY (CONT'D)

You'd be free.

Whaley thinks about it.

WHALEY

No.

Gray nods his head.

GRAY

You sure?

WHALEY

No.

Gray chuckles.

GRAY

Maybe if we had a special hitter...  
who was designated to just HIT, you  
know, that doesn't play in the  
field...

WHALEY

What kind of baseball would that  
be?

They both laugh.

GRAY

No kind I wanna coach.

Beat.

GRAY (CONT'D)

You in?

Whaley twists his head around as if trying to decide.

WHALEY

What choice do I have?

GRAY

You always have a choice.

Beat.

WHALEY

Then I'm in.

Gray stands up and they shake hands.

INT. PUERTO RICO NATIONAL STADIUM LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The team sits around, post-game, in various states of undress  
and cleanliness. They are celebrating being winners and being  
in Puerto Rico. Drinks are shared, music plays, it's a party.

Gray and Huebner walk through the room towards their offices.

HUEBNER

Settle down in here, you guys--

GRAY

Screw that. You guys need to cut loose. So cut loose.

He walks into his office. Huebner stares after him. The players continue partying.

Whaley takes a big swig from a flask and hands it to Speck. Chester tries to grab it, but Speck tips it back.

SPECK

Man, it sure is good to be winning!

Whaley grabs the flask and takes another sip.

WHALEY

Be better if I were still playing.

CHESTER

Dude, you're gonna make the team.

He grabs for the flask, but Whaley won't surrender it.

WHALEY

Make the team? I'm a god-damned starter. I'm the only one on this team who's played in the playoffs.

SPECK

Man, shut up. Y'all lost in the first round.

Chester laughs. Whaley finishes the flask.

He glares at Kendricks, who is drinking a beer and chatting with Jones and Bishop.

WHALEY

This fucker...

Chester and Speck back away from Whaley. Whaley takes a step towards Kendricks.

Kendricks sees him and nods his head.

KENDRICKS

Need something?

Whaley smirks.

WHALEY

The balls on this guy...

Kendricks steps toward him. The room goes quiet.

KENDRICKS

What was that?

He cups his hand to his ear.

WHALEY

Who even are you?

KENDRICKS

Cam Kendrick.

WHALEY

Cam... fucking... Kendrick. Where do you get off just walking in here? Some of us have put in the work.

Kendricks laughs.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

My father worked for a living. Had his own hardware store. Successful, too. I hated it. He made me work there.

KENDRICKS

You got some kind of point?

Kendricks steps closer.

WHALEY

Yeah, I do. My father worked his ass to get where he is, just like me. What about you? Your father--

Kendricks punches Whaley, knocking him on his ass. Nobody steps to help. Kendrick looms over Whaley.

A drop of blood rolls down Whaley's chin. Kendrick grins, almost lustfully.

Whaley scrambles to his feet and rushes out of the room.

BISHOP

C'mon, man. Teammates don't fight.

Kendricks turns back towards his locker. The room breaks up into gossip.

SPECK

Helluva punch.

Jones steps towards Kendrick. Kendrick tenses up.



JONES

That guy's always been an ass.

Kendricks relaxes. Jones hands him a beer.

INT. SUNDAY SPORTS CHAT SHOW STUDIO

The lights shine down on host Michael Weisman and his guests. Behind him is a giant sign: The Sunday Sports Chat Show.

WEISMAN

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's Sunday Sports Chat Show.

Next to Weisman is David Tessell, whose tie is always loose.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)

With me today are four of our regular panelists: David Tessell from the Chicago Dispatch-Times...

TESSELL

Hello from the Windy City.

Between Tessell and the next guest is a small table with bottles of water on it. Next is Sharon Alligood.

WEISMAN

...Sharon Alligood of NBS...

ALLIGOOD

Thanks for having me back.

Next is Ricky Womble.

WEISMAN

...Ricky Womble of the Los Angeles Defender...

WOMBLE

Great to be here, Mike.

At the end of the row is JONNIE TRAVIS, a Black man in his 40s. He is dressed nicely, but not expensively.

WEISMAN

...and Johnnie Travis of the Denver Tribune.

TRAVIS

Long-time viewer, first-time guest.

Weisman turns and looks into the camera.

WEISMAN

Okay, first question. Did you see Savoy Bishop's new TV spot?

ALLIGOOD

The one with the sausages?

Weisman nods.

INT. SAVOY BISHOP'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Bishop's condo came pre-furnished with weird modern furniture. He hasn't changed anything.

He sits awkwardly on a chair that might not actually be intended for sitting. He watches the chat show.

He hears his name and gets excited.

INT. SUNDAY SPORTS CHAT SHOW STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Travis looks into the camera.

TRAVIS

I'm getting hungry already.

WOMBLE

Doesn't he have any people that watch this kind of stuff before it gets put out into the world?

TESSELL

I don't know, I kinda liked it. It was sweet.

ALLIGOOD

If you like your sausage filled with "gumption" and all that.

WEISMAN

Well, I'd be DADGUM crazy to punish my heart with even a bit of Baseball Farm Sausage.

Laughter.

INT. SAVOY BISHOP'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Bishop paces back and forth in a rage.

He rewinds the TV.

WEISMAN

Well, I'd be DADGUM crazy to punish  
my heart with even a bit of  
Baseball Farm Sausage.

Laughter.

Bishop rewinds and watches it again.

And again, growing more and more angry. He turns it off and  
walks over to his stereo. He pushes a button and Prince's  
"Purple Rain" album starts to play.

PRINCE

*Dearly beloved...*

INT. SUNDAY SPORTS CHAT SHOW STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The panel laughs.

WEISMAN

Okay, question two. Will this new  
guy, the old man, Kendricks, make  
the Statesmen's roster? Tessell?

TESSELL

Whatever. No way. Who the hell  
signs a 30-year-old rookie with no  
time in the minors? Crazy talk.

ALLIGOOD

I'm hearing that there's some  
problems in the Statesmen locker  
room. Not everybody seems to like  
the new guy. There are even reports  
of locker room fisticuffs.

WEISMAN

The Boys of Summer WILL be boys.

ALLIGOOD

That being said...

WOMBLE

Here it comes.

ALLIGOOD

This team really looks like they  
could surprise and Kendricks could  
be part of that.

TRAVIS

Not a chance.

WOMBLE  
In your EXPERT opinion?

Laughter.

WEISMAN  
Why do you think that?

ALLIGOOD  
When it comes to the Statesmen,  
I'll give you one stat that means  
they HAVE to be better than last  
year.

WOMBLE  
This should be good.

WEISMAN  
Pipe down. Alligood!

ALLIGOOD  
The all-time record for fastest  
pitch ever recorded was set in  
2010, when Anderson Cooper was  
clocked at 105.1 miles per hour  
against the Nashville Blues.

Nods of assent. They KNOW.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)  
Well, down in Florida this pre-  
season, the Statesmen had TWO  
pitchers who hit 105 miles per hour  
in the same game.

WEISMAN  
That IS impressive.

ALLIGOOD  
Everybody knows Youngblood can hit  
that speed, it's why he was a  
number one overall pick. But the  
other is a bit of a shocker.

TESSELL  
Who are we talking about?

ALLIGOOD  
It was none other than your 30-year-  
old rookie, KENDRICKS...

The panel is shocked.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)  
 ...who surpassed Cooper at 105.3  
 miles per hour.

Weisman whistles.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)  
 He's 3-0 with a save. And he's  
 BETTER with the bat.

TRAVIS  
 How is that possible?

ALLIGOOD  
 He hit .593 in Florida with 37  
 RBIs.

This sounds preposterous. The panel lets her know.

WOMBLE  
 This is crazy. If you exclude for  
 injury, illness, military service,  
 hell one guy even took a year off  
 because his wife had a baby, if you  
 account for those things, nobody  
 who didn't play baseball anywhere  
 in the three prior years SOMEWHERE  
 has made a pro team since the teams  
 became pro. Are you telling me THAT  
 record is about to be broken?

Alligood nods.

WEISMAN  
 So, are the Statesmen for real?

WOMBLE  
 Not if they're digging that low to  
 find new players.

ALLIGOOD  
 They did go 27-5...

TRAVIS  
 Against Spring Training scrubs.

TESSELL  
 Probably not.

ALLIGOOD  
 I'm not convinced, but don't count  
 them out.

They poo poo her very weak endorsement of the Statesmen.

WEISMAN

So who will win it all this year?

TRAVIS

Smashers all the way!

ALLIGOOD

Of course! You're a homer!

TRAVIS

Everybody SHOULD be a Smashers  
homer!

ALLIGOOD

I think Boston will get past them  
this year.

Travis balks.

TESSELL

I'm afraid I have to agree with  
Travis. The Smashers are too deep.

WEISMAN

Womble?

WOMBLE

I WANT to say Los Angeles, but  
until I see the Smashers lose, I'm  
not betting against them.

WEISMAN

I, too, am from Missouri and it's  
the Smashers until proven  
otherwise.

Nods of assent.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - NIGHT

General Manager Jamelle Lewis, wearing her ever-present Bluetooth headset, stands in team owner Leah Owens' office, waiting. She stares at the rows of framed pictures on a wall near the front door. The pictures are all of Augustus Owens next to various celebrities, players and team staff.

Lewis stares at an empty spot in one of the rows. One of the pictures is missing.

She reaches out and caresses the spot on the wall with a grimace on her face.

Owens quietly walks in behind her. She stops and gives a contemptuous laugh to get Lewis' attention.

Lewis starts. She composes herself, then turns and faces Owens.

OWENS  
Have you been waiting long?

LEWIS  
Yes.

Beat.

OWENS  
Good.

Owens walks towards her desk.

OWENS (CONT'D)  
Have a seat.

She does. Owens stares at her for a few seconds.

OWENS (CONT'D)  
I know why you're here.

LEWIS  
Do you?

Owens nods. She stares Lewis down for several seconds.

OWENS  
Why don't you quit?

LEWIS  
No thanks.

Owens scoffs. She knew it.

LEWIS (CONT'D)  
There aren't exactly a lot of team  
president jobs to be had.

OWENS  
Especially for one with such a  
flimsy resume.

LEWIS  
Why don't you fire me, then?

Owens holds her smile.

OWENS  
If only I could. I didn't hire you.

LEWIS  
But you can't fire me?

Lewis isn't sure of the answer.

OWENS  
I'll defer questions like that to  
human resources.

Lewis raises an eyebrow.

OWENS (CONT'D)  
Besides, you know that whole saying  
about "keep your friends close and  
your enemies closer"? Which do you  
think we are?

LEWIS  
I guess we're about to find out.

Owens grabs her whiskey decanter and pours a glass. She  
doesn't offer Lewis one.

LEWIS (CONT'D)  
Is that all or is this going to  
devolve into "snaps"?

OWENS  
Snaps?

Lewis chuckles.

LEWIS  
You know, like "yo mama" jokes?

Owens nods.

OWENS  
Like, you're so ugly that your  
mother committed suicide just to  
get away from you?

Owens takes a sip of her whiskey, barely hiding her whimsey.  
Lewis sits, straight-faced, for a beat.

LEWIS  
I guess that's what a bitch would  
say.

Owens presses a button on the underside of her desk.



OWENS

Better walk the fuck out my office  
before you get thrown the fuck out  
by Solly and Mackey here.

In walk SOLLY and MACKEY. These are two big Irish thugs, more  
muscle and guns than brains.

LEWIS

Heh. Need some thugs to do your  
dirty work?

Lewis stands up. Solly tries to grab her by the elbow, but  
she pulls away.

OWENS

That's why I have all this money.  
So I can pay people to dispose of  
trash like you.

Lewis stares her down.

LEWIS

You have no idea what you've  
unleashed.

Solly and Mackey step closer.

OWENS

I know a lot more than you think.

LEWIS

That would be surprising.

OWENS

Solly?

The goon walks over and grabs Lewis by the elbow. He "helps"  
her to her feet, firmly but gently.

LEWIS

You'd better take your...

Mackey steps forward, blocking the line of sight between  
Lewis and Owens.

MACKEY

Ma'am.

LEWIS

What the hell is wrong--

Mackey gestures towards the front door. Solly grips Lewis'  
arm a little tighter and directs her towards the door.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Whatever.

She yanks her arm from Solly's grip and walks out. Solly follows, shutting the door behind him.

OWENS

Your cousin still doing investigations?

Mackey nods.

MACKEY

Yep, he's still a dick, both the public kind and the private kind.

He grins. She doesn't.

OWENS

Give me his phone number.

Mackey nods as he reaches for his phone.

INT. THE PINCH - LATER

Shirley Muldoon walks into the Pinch and waves to Annie, who tends the bar.

SHIRLEY

How's it going Annie?

ANNIE

I'm still alive, so you know...

SHIRLEY

I do. Let me get a PBR and... do you have the Quack & Mac tonight?

ANNIE

We sure do.

Shirley hands her a debit card.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Keep it open?

Shirley nods.

Across the bar, BRICE EVERSMITH sits at a table, sipping a bright yellow Mountain Dew. Eversmith is a white trans woman in her 40s.

Shirley glances over at the roped off table for her cousin and makes eye contact with Eversmith. They exchange a nod.

Shirley takes a sip of her PBR.

The door opens and Cody Paige walks in. Shirley instantly recognizes the cop, but it's not mutual.

Cody looks around, doesn't register Shirley, and finds Eversmith. She walks over.

CODY  
Eversmith?

Eversmith scans Cody up and down.

EVERSMITH  
That is me.

They shake hands, but Eversmith doesn't get up. Cody sits.

Annie walks over.

ANNIE  
What can I get you tonight?

CODY  
Just a soda.

Annie nods and walks away.

EVERSMITH  
On duty tonight?

It takes Cody a second.

CODY  
Something like that. I don't drink.

Eversmith nods and takes a sip.

CODY (CONT'D)  
They really want me to bring you in  
on this case.

EVERSMITH  
And what do you want?

Cody laughs.

CODY  
You used to work for Levin?

EVERSMITH  
(distastefully)  
I did.

CODY  
Then you probably know that what I  
want is Levin to get off my back.

Eversmith laughs loudly.

EVERSMITH  
You the lead on this case?

Cody laughs loudly.

CODY  
I'm barely the recording secretary.

Eversmith takes a sip.

EVERSMITH  
This case as bad as it sounds?

Annie hands Cody her soda. Cody takes a sip.

CODY  
Worst thing I've ever seen.

Cody stares off into the distance. Eversmith watches her the whole time, coming to an internal conclusion.

Eversmith finishes her drink and sets it down. She pulls some cash from her pocket and tosses it on the table.

EVERSMITH  
Call me Monday.

Eversmith walks out, waving to Annie as she goes. Cody is taken aback, clearly expecting the meeting to last longer.

SHIRLEY (O.S.)  
You a cop?

Cody turns and looks at Shirley, annoyed. Shirley takes a seat, against Cody's will.

CODY  
Did the uniform give it away?

SHIRLEY  
Do you mind if I join you?

CODY  
You already did.

She raises her PBR.

SHIRLEY  
To our WOMEN and men in uniform!

Cody doesn't join the toast. Shirley drinks anyway.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)  
What are you working on these days?

Cody pulls her soda closer, a defensive posture.

CODY  
Wait... are you that reporter?

Shirley finishes her PBR.

CODY (CONT'D)  
The one that trespassed on a crime  
scene with a BLOGGER?

Shirley grins sheepishly.

CODY (CONT'D)  
Don't we already have an  
appointment? Are you stalking me?

SHIRLEY  
I'm a regular here. You came in.

Cody's not buying it. She finishes her soda and walks up to Annie to pay. Shirley gets up and follows her.

CODY  
You're a dick.

Annie hands Cody a receipt and her card. She walks away, leaving Shirley staring after her.

CODY (CONT'D)  
I'll see you at our appointment. If  
I see you before then...

Cody walks out.

ANNIE  
Another one?

SHIRLEY  
Definitely.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The entire coaching staff sits around the makeshift conference table. Laptops, stacks of paper, caffeine, snacks and office supplies everywhere.

GRAY

All right, Ferd, last thoughts?

Langwieler leans over and taps his cigarette into an ashtray.

LANGWIELER

Yeah. I think you have to take him.

Gray spits a seed into a red Solo cup.

GRAY

Sell me.

HUEBNER

Isn't it obvious?

GLOVER

No, let's hear it.

LANGWIELER

Argument is the same as it was for the 40-man roster.

Glover nods.

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)

You don't wanna be the one who passed. He tore it up in Florida.

GLOVER

He's a liability in the field.

HUEBNER

We can play Whaley when he pitches.

LANGWIELER

I do like Whaley's bat, but...

HUEBNER

But what?

LANGWIELER

He's... uh... nah. I don't need to say anything else. We need his bat.

Vernon Howell clears his throat.



Gray settles back in his chair.

HOWELL (CONT'D)  
I don't... all this "cancel  
culture" stuff... I hate it.

Huebner nods in agreement.

HOWELL (CONT'D)  
And if it got out that I said  
something about his...

The room hangs on the word.

HOWELL (CONT'D)  
...predilections...

Complete stillness.

HOWELL (CONT'D)  
...well... I just wouldn't want MY  
name involved. Like Micki said he  
never DID anything to her and she  
never SAW anything, but...

GLOVER  
This guy has to go.

Nobody else agrees.

HOWELL  
All I'm saying is I have a lot of  
questions on the staff. We need  
arms more than you need bats.

HUEBNER  
Now wait a second--

GRAY  
Ferd?

LANGWIELER  
Kendricks fills both.

GLOVER  
You really think a professional is  
going to be a full-time hitter AND  
a full-time pitcher? Now?

Gray spits.

GRAY  
We're taking him.



Huebner is happy. Glover shrugs.

                                    HOWELL  
Whaley?

                                    GRAY  
Innocent until proven guilty.

Howell grudgingly nods. Glover frowns.

                                    LANGWIELER  
That's 25.

                                    LAWTHON  
Light 'em up.

Lawthon tosses cigars towards the other coaches.

                                    GRAY  
Read 'em off.

The coaches all grab cigars as Langwieler reads off the Opening Day Roster.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

The Statesmen man their positions.

                                    LANGWIELER (O.S.)  
Bishop...

Bishop catches a pitch from Jones.

                                    LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Whaley...

Whaley steps on the bag and throws to second base.

                                    LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Speck...

Speck catches the ball, steps on the bag and flips the ball to Brito.

                                    LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Brito...

Brito turns and throws the ball to third.

                                    LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Chester...

Chester catches the ball and tags the bag.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Pitts...

Pitts catches a deep fly ball in left field.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Doster...

Doster cheers for Pitts.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Lombardi...

Lombardi squats in right field, watching the action.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Doman...

Haywood Doman catches a pitch in the bullpen.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Pasco, Gay, Reeves, Pompey...

Each of the reserves sits on the bench.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Jones...

Jones throws a fastball.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Flowers, Riggins, Duhart...

The CAMERA pans across each of the starting pitchers sitting on the bench.

LANGWIELER (CONT'D)  
Rodgers, Parker, Wheeler, Delarosa,  
Derby, Shotwell...

The CAMERA pans past each of the pitchers sitting on the bullpen bench.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Youngblood...

The reliever tosses a pitch to Doman.

LANGWIELER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...and... Kendricks.

Huebner applauds lightly. Howell glares at him and Huebner stops with a shrug.

GRAY

I guess we have our team. Let's play ball.

Gray spits.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The players walk into the locker room, which is clean. Everyone's uniforms are nicely and neatly hung in their lockers.

A few lockers, though, have no uniforms. Instead, a red tag hangs from the hook. The tags are paper, but blank.

The players head towards their lockers. Fear grips the faces of some. Others are confident. Even cocky.

In most of the lockers, 25 of them, no red tags hang. But for those who are unlucky and won't make the major league squad on Opening Day, the red tags represent the deferral, and maybe the end, of dreams they've held since childhood.

Jones wasn't really worried, but no tag in his locker. Bishop WAS a little worried, but he's the starting catcher.

One-by-one, the veterans and best-paid players confirm what they already knew. A few feel their hearts pound in their chests as they learn they get to stay. For those who don't make it, the demotion crushes them.

Ajax Cloud, the British player. Red tag.

Relief Pitcher Krishna Malay. Red tag.

Starting Pitcher Chaka Purvis. Red tag.

Newest member of the team Cam Kendricks. No tag. He stays. He smiles.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DUSK

Jones and Bishop walk across the field from the bullpen towards the dugout. They have just finished a workout and are dirty and sweaty. They carry their gloves under their arms. Bishop drinks from a water bottle, water splashes everywhere.

BISHOP

Good workout. You finally loose?

Jones stretches as he walks.

JONES  
I'm tired.

BISHOP  
You got one more in you?

Jones stretches his neck.

JONES  
Guess we're gonna find out.

BISHOP  
Wouldn't be the same without you.

They cross into the infield, headed towards the dugout.

JONES  
I don't think it's going to be the same either way.

They walk in silence for a bit.

JONES (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you a question?

BISHOP  
Sure.

JONES  
Why is it Savoy Farms? Shouldn't it be Bishop Farms?

Bishop chuckles.

BISHOP  
Well, it's not named after me. I'm named after it. Kinda.

Jones is puzzled.

JONES  
You know I'm going to need you to explain that.

BISHOP  
Well, I'm named after my parents. My parents last names that is. You know what I mean?

Jones does not.

BISHOP (CONT'D)  
Well, my last name is Bishop and  
that was my dad's last name.

JONES  
That IS how last names work.

BISHOP  
Right. Well my mom's last name is  
Savoy. I mean it's Bishop, but it  
USED to be Savoy.

Jones nods. They stop and stand at the top of the dugout.

BISHOP (CONT'D)  
Named after her dad.

JONES  
You have really mastered ALL the  
rules about last names.

Bishop takes it as a compliment.

BISHOP  
My mom's dad used to run the farm.  
When he died, he left it to my dad.

JONES  
You mean he left it to your mom?

BISHOP  
Nossir, that is not what I meant.

Silence.

JONES  
But the sausage is good?

Bishop bursts with pride and joy.

BISHOP  
Hell yeah! I wouldn't lie. Not on  
TV.

They laugh, then walk in silence.

JONES  
Why are you here Bishop?

Bishop chuckles.

BISHOP  
I'm here to play baseball.

JONES  
Obviously. That's not what I meant.

Bishop cocks an eyebrow.

JONES (CONT'D)  
Maybe NOT so obviously.

BISHOP  
Like what I want to get out of it?  
Like philosophy of life and all?

JONES  
Uh... sure.

Bishop thinks for a bit.

BISHOP  
I just want to play.

Jones smiles, but he isn't satisfied.

JONES  
You could play at home.

Bishop frowns.

BISHOP  
Naw, not back on the farm I can't.

JONES  
I... uh...

BISHOP  
I just want to PLAY.

Bishop turns and stares out at the baseball field. Jones takes a deep breath as he joins Bishop.

JONES  
Me, too.

Jones claps Bishop on the back.

JONES (CONT'D)  
Let's go win some games.

Bishop grins.

INT. HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE - DAY

Lewis walks past the secretary and into the office of the Director of Human Resources, DAVID LEVY, a white man in his 50s with prematurely white hair.

DAVID

Thanks for coming in. Have a seat.

David sits. Lewis sits across from him.

LEWIS

Thank you for seeing me.

David forces a smile.

DAVID

You said it was an emergency?

David frowns.

LEWIS

Yes. Let's just say that the relationship between Owens and myself has become... strained.

David grows concerned.

DAVID

How can I help?

LEWIS

I wanted to check on my... STATUS.

David is puzzled.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Like... my job status.

David nods.

DAVID

You afraid you're going to be fired?

LEWIS

I wouldn't use the word "afraid."

David continues to nod through her denial.

DAVID

No... I understand.

LEWIS  
Do you?

DAVID  
I do. And you have nothing to be  
worried about.

She doesn't believe him.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
You are NOT going to be fired.

LEWIS  
And how do you know that?

DAVID  
Because SHE...

He points upward.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
...CAN'T fire you.

LEWIS  
Go on.

DAVID  
Now, it's not in your contract.

LEWIS  
I know.

DAVID  
But there is also the matter of the  
will.

Lewis finally relaxes.

LEWIS  
Augustus?

David nods.

DAVID  
Augustus. He wrote a clause that  
precludes Ms. Owens from firing  
you.

LEWIS  
That freaky old bastard.

David raises an eyebrow. Lewis laughs.



LEWIS (CONT'D)

Is it just me? Am I the only one...  
protected?

David shakes his head.

DAVID

No, the same protections apply to  
ALL employees who were making at  
least \$50,000 a year at the time  
the will went into effect.

Lewis laughs.

LEWIS

So... what... she can fire the  
janitor and the peanut vendor?

DAVID

The starting salary among the  
custodial staff at the stadium is  
\$68,353.

Lewis laughs again.

LEWIS

You have to admit, that's shrewd.

David nods.

DAVID

It is.

Beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Nothing precludes you from  
resigning your position.

Lewis laughs, but a more quiet, deliberate laugh.

LEWIS

Nah, that's not how this is gonna  
go down.

EXT. CONAN JONES' MANSION - NIGHT

Conan Jones has been an all-star caliber pitcher for nearly  
two decades and his mansion in the Kalorama neighborhood of  
Washington, D.C., shows it. Former presidents live here.

The mansion is one of the larger ones in the area and it is currently the site of the D.C. Statesmen's Pre-Season Blowout Bash, an annual party Jones throws for his teammates.

Bishop, Brito and reliever Eddie Parker walk up to the party. They are all well-dressed, like they're headed to a night club. Even Bishop cleans up quite well.

BISHOP  
Is coach gonna be here?

The others laugh.

BRITO  
Nah, man, this is players only.

BISHOP  
Just the fellas?

More chuckles.

PARKER  
And ladies. LOTS of ladies.

Bishop grins.

BISHOP  
I do like ladies.

Laughter.

PARKER  
We know, Bishop. We know.

Bishop furrows his brow.

BISHOP  
You guys think there will be any ladies in there that'd like me?

Big laughter. Brito puts his arm around Bishop.

BRITO  
Man, you are a starter on a professional baseball team. ALL the ladies are gonna be into your little "aw shucks" thing.

Bishop grins.

BISHOP  
Really?

Laughter.

PARKER  
Yeah, man. Let's go!

They hurry inside.

INT. CONAN JONES' MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

This party is insane. MUCH more than just the players and some ladies. This is a blowout.

The foyer opens into a large room that is currently the dance floor. Not much can be heard above the slippery bassline and booming drums. The dance floor is filled. But this dance floor isn't for everyone. Only the sexy people.

Bishop makes a beeline for the bar, staying well away from the dance floor.

Loud hop hop-inspired EDM pulses as we:

BEGIN MONTAGE.

Doster, Lombardi and Brito share drinks as Bishop comes up to the bar. All the beers and liquors on display have Satanic or devil or Hell or fire-based imagery and/or names.

Bishop joins the three men for a shot of Fireball.

CUT TO:

Bishop stands drinking a beer with starting pitcher Melvin Rodgers, Parker and Whaley.

BISHOP  
Where's Grady?

Parker and Whaley laugh.

RODGERS  
He never comes to parties. He's probably home studying the Bible or something.

Whaley stumbles a bit. He's already drunk.

CUT TO:

Chester, Speck and reliever Tommy Shotwell huddle in a dark corner. Chester pulls out a small metal case. He opens it and it's filled with cocaine.

He snorts a small bit and passes it to Speck. Ivan Pasco and Gay hold drinks as they watch, mortified.

Jones walks by as Shotwell snorts a little spoonful. Shotwell offers it to him. Jones shakes his head.

JONES

No thanks. I'm done with THOSE kind of parties.

Shotwell shrugs and snorts.

CUT TO:

Bishop wanders through the party, holding a beer and starting to get a little tipsy. As he wanders through the room, he sees a lot of the other players, including Doman, Harrell Flowers, Omar Wheeler, Hector Delarosa, Shawn Derby and starting pitcher KIT RIGGINS, who is a skinny white guy in his mid-20s.

Bishop arrives at the bar, where Pasco and Gay hang out. A random party-goer, ESAU, a white man in his 20s, walks by with a t-shirt with a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

Bishop gets another beer from the bartender and turns to Pasco and Gay.

BISHOP

This shit is crazy!

PASCO

Too crazy for my blood.

BISHOP

Hey, you guys should feel good, they didn't even invite me to the parties when I was...

Bishop burps and almost vomits. He takes a second to calm down and takes another sip of his beer.

GAY

I'm outta here.

PASCO

Me, too.

The rookies exit. Bishop looks around for someone new to talk to. He doesn't see anyone among the many strangers and walks towards the back of the house.

CUT TO:

Whaley and Speck stand in the kitchen. Whaley is drunk.

WHALEY

Where is that fucker, anyway? Gonna steal somebody's job and not even show up to the team party?

SPECK

Man, you need to sober up.

Speck sees Chester walking into the back room and follows him, leaving Whaley to drunkenly dig through the fridge.

CUT TO:

Speck, Chester, Parker and Shotwell are walking down the hall towards the dining room. Bishop sees them and follows.

As the guys turn to go into the room, Speck smiles at Bishop.

SPECK (CONT'D)

Bishop. Come with us.

Bishop stumbles into the dining room after Speck. Inside are a few other non-ballplayers, including BETTY BILLUPS, a blonde woman in her 20s, who smiles at Bishop and moves to stand next to him.

BETTY

Hi.

BISHOP

(slurring but happy)

Hey!

CHESTER

Alright rookie, this is the part where we segregate the party.

Bishop frowns.

BISHOP

Whoa, I don't support segregation!

Laughter.

SPECK

Not that kind of segregation, Opie.

Shotwell is chopping up lines from a LARGE pile of cocaine.

CHESTER

We're trying to see if you're one of the cool guys or if you're going to be flying coach.

SHOTWELL

Here.

Shotwell hands him a rolled-up hundred-dollar bill and offers him a line.

Bishop is hesitant. He looks around the room. Makes eye contact with Betty. She smiles.

BISHOP

What is that?

SHOTWELL

Magic pixie dust.

Laughs.

BISHOP

I don't do drugs.

BETTY

I do.

She grabs the rolled-up hundred and takes a snort. The guys love it.

CHESTER

No big deal, it's just for fun.

BETTY

Fuck! That's good.

She offers the rolled-up hundred to him.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Have some, Archie.

He smiles a bit, but hesitates.

Beat.

He shakes his head.

BISHOP

No thanks...

Shotwell and Chester boo him jovially.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

But I will have three of those shots and two of those beers!

Bishop points to the back-up bar, which is loaded with drinks. The other players erupt in cheers.

Betty grabs a bottle of some brown liquor and pours two shots. She hands one to Bishop and she takes the other.

They down the shots. Bishop hates it. Speck snorts a line.

CUT TO:

Kendricks walks into the party. Everyone gets excited and greets him with cheers. Someone hands him a beer.

Whaley spots Kendricks and makes a beeline towards him.

WHALEY

Motherfu--

Doster, Pitts and a few other big guys grab Whaley and keep him back. Kendricks grins and follows.

KENDRICKS

Nah, let him be.

Kendricks rolls up his sleeves. A small speck of blood discolors one of his knuckles.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

I just got here. Time for the party  
to get going?

Lombardi puts his arm around Whaley and pulls him away. But Whaley wants to fight.

LOMBARDI

You gotta sit this one out, man.

PITTS

Somebody call Whaley a cab.

WHALEY

Fuck that, I'm...

He falls to the ground as Pitts and Lombardi try to hold him up. Kendricks waves a hand to dismiss Whaley and walks away.

KENDRICKS

Somebody hand me a shot. I'm  
parched from taking Whaley's job.

Various reactions. Some are shocked. Others find it hilarious. Whaley passes out.

CUT TO:

The party is thinned out. Bishop is passed out on the couch. The party animals rage on. The loud music continues.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAWN

The dregs of the party stumble down the sidewalk, headed towards TOM'S DINER, the only place open this dusky morning.

Kendricks slogs alongside Chester, Shotwell and Speck. They haven't slept, but they stopped drinking a while ago.

KENDRICKS

You guys party like that all the time?

SPECK

Sometimes. More in the off-season.

CHESTER

Up all night, sleep all day!

Chester high fives Shotwell.

KENDRICKS

I'm not used to--

ISHMAEL (O.S.)

Hey man...

Kendricks looks up to see a ISHMAEL. He is a white man in his 50s. He has scraggly blonde hair, hasn't shaved for days and hasn't bathed either. He wears jeans and a t-shirt with a blood-red image of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

KENDRICKS

Hey.

ISHMAEL

Have you guys heard?

SHOTWELL

Nah, man. I wasn't even listening.

The guys laugh.

ISHMAEL

You NEED to be listening...

He keeps getting more and more agitated. Kendricks backs away.



ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

The signs are everywhere! You just  
have to know how to LISTEN!

He takes a step towards Kendricks. Kendricks turns tail and runs as Ishmael cackles.

Kendricks runs down an alley and turns several times. He stops. He's hung over and winded.

He turns and looks back, but no one is there.

Kendricks slowly makes his way towards the diner.

He looks around carefully before emerging from the alley. Ishmael is gone. His teammates stand in front of the diner, waiting impatiently. Kendricks bashfully makes his way over to them.

SPECK

There he is!

KENDRICKS

What? I thought we were all  
running?

Laughter.

CHESTER

You planning to lead the team in  
stolen bases this year?

SHOTWELL

You definitely have the wheels.

They laugh as they walk into the diner.

FADE OUT.