

THE G.O.A.T
Season 1, Episode 4
"The Honeymoon"

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TITLE: THE HONEYMOON

FADE IN.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

SUPER: First Inning

Today, the Statesmen host the BOSTON COLONIALS. Cam Kendricks is at bat with one out. Jason Doster stands on third base

The pitcher, KENNEDY, throws a fastball that Kendricks takes to deep right field. It stays in the park, though, and Kendricks is out. Doster scores from third and the Statesmen lead 1-0.

Hitting coach Alvin Huebner claps bench coach Craig Glover on the shoulder.

HUEBNER
Gets the job done.

GLOVER
Could've been worse.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Third Inning

The stands behind the batter's box are loaded with Statesmen fans of all races, genders, shapes and sizes. They all wear rainbow-colored shirts that read "The B*stards of Section B." Like the asterisk is actually there to get past stadium decency standards.

The atmosphere in this section is that of a party. Kennedy stands on the mound and he's in trouble. Savoy Bishop is on second and Alfredo Brito is on first. There are no outs.

Chuck Chester stands at the plate. Kennedy throws a pitch, too low. The count is now 3-0.

The self-appointed leader of the B*stards,

RICHARD SMITH, is the self-appointed leader of the B*stards. He is a white man in his early 40s with long, black hair and a mustache.

Smith gets a chant going:

B*STARDS OF SECTION B
Load 'em up, rag arm, load 'em up.
Load 'em up, rag arm, load 'em up.

Conan Jones and Doster step out of the dugout to look up at the B*stards. They laugh along.

Kennedy throws a fastball and Chester swings and misses. The ball slips past the catcher, all the way to the backstop.

Chester waves the runners over and Bishop safely makes it to third. Brito claps his hands as he pulls into second.

Kennedy throws another fastball and Chester bounces the ball back to the pitcher. Kennedy looks Bishop back at third and makes the throw to first, getting Chester for the first out.

CUT TO:

Jones comes up to bat. He's not particularly confident.

He turns to bunt and lays it down perfectly. Kennedy runs to cut it off and gets Jones at first. No chance at the play at home. 2-0 for the Statesmen.

CUT TO:

Doster stands at the plate, he's got a 2-0 count. Kennedy throws a curve, but Doster blooms it to short right field, scoring Brito. 3-0.

The B*stards go crazy. Richard Smith hops up and leads them in song:

B*STARDS OF SECTION B (CONT'D)

Take me out of this ballgame. Take
me out of here now. Put someone in
who can throw the ball, my curve is
flat and I can't get a call...

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fourth Inning

Jones stands on the mound and stretches. His aching bones pop and crackle. He readies the pitch.

He throws a curve that gets the batter, FRANKLIN, to strike out. One down.

CUT TO:

Jones has a 3-1 count against the next batter, EMERSON.

He throws a curve that barely crosses the corner of the plate, the batter is caught looking, but umpire William Smith has other ideas.

SMITH

Ball four.

Emerson is giddy as he throws his bat and runs to first.

JONES

You've gotta be kidding me!

BISHOP

Looked good from down here.

SMITH

Play ball!

CUT TO:

Jones takes a deep breath and concentrates. The sound drops away.

He throws a high fastball and the hitter, ROSENBERG, grounds to third, an easy double-play ball.

Chester lines up to grab the ball and it goes through his legs.

In the dugout, Manager Harold Gray leaps from the bench and starts pacing.

GRAY

Can somebody, for the love of god,
get me someone who can play third
base?

Bench warmer Albert Whaley crosses his arms to hold in his rage.

GLOVER

Let him get used to it. He hasn't--

Gray shoots him a look and Glover quiets down.

Scout Ferd Langwieler leans in quietly to speak to Glover.

LANGWIELER

He's struggling man, he's
struggling.

CUT TO:

Jones tries the high fastball again, this time against GARDNER.

Gardner hits the ball to deep right. Stan Lombardi leaps for the ball, but it's gone.

Jones bends over and stares at the ground, not watching as the Colonials round the bases and tie the game at 3.

Pitching Coach Vernon Howell gets up to call the bullpen.

GRAY

Leave it.

Howell is taken aback.

HOWELL

But he's in trouble out there?

GRAY

I said leave it.

Howell hangs up the phone, sits down and crosses his arms with a frown.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Sixth Inning

Derrick Speck stands at the plate, facing off against Kennedy. He has a 2-2 count with no outs.

In the stands, Richard Smith leads the B*stards in a chant:

B*STARDS OF SECTION B

Speck, Speck, he's our man, if he
can't do it Lombardi can. Lombardi,
Lombardi, he's our man, if he can't
do it Kendricks can!

Speck drives the ball in the right field gap and pulls into second with a stand-up double. The B*stards go crazy.

CUT TO:

A new pitcher is in for the Colonials, HANCOCK. He is a towering presence at 6'5" and over 300 pounds. He's a white man in his early 30s. He finishes up his warm-up throws.

Lombardi steps into the box.

Hancock throws a breaking ball, but Lombardi isn't fooled and singles to left field. Speck moves to third.

CUT TO:

Kendricks stares Hancock down and taunts him a little bit with his bat on his last practice swing.

Hancock tries to ignore him and goes into his wind-up.

Kendricks takes the ball to deep center, an easy out. Speck scores from third and the Statesmen take the lead, 4-3.

Two of the B*stards, MITCH and RHETT, take off their shirts to reveal painted-on letters "D" and "C." Both men are white guys in their 40s who probably shouldn't take their shirts off. Mitch is bald, Rhett has nicely-styled brown hair. They run all the way to the top of the stadium, across the top row and back down to the bottom and then back to their seats as the crowd goes crazy.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Seventh Inning

Jones throws a ball low and away, ball four. The batter BELL, runs down to first base. Jones drops his head and stares at the ground. The bases are now loaded and there are no outs.

In the dugout, Howell grabs the phone. He glances at Gray. Gray nods. Howell calls up the bullpen.

In the bullpen, coach Justin Tannehill gets relievers Krishna Malay and Omar Wheeler to start warming up.

GRAY

Give 'em a chance.

HOWELL

That's the plan.

CUT TO:

Jones takes a deep breath. The sound drops away. He throws a fastball. Swing and a miss. Strike three. One out.

CUT TO:

Jones gets the next batter, RUSSELL, to ground the ball to third. Chester fields it cleanly this time and he throws to second.

The throw is a bit wide and Speck is pulled off the bag. The runner is safe. Speck turns and throws to first and gets the out. The runner from third, Gardner, scores. The game is now tied at 4 with two outs.

CUT TO:

Franklin stands at the plate. Jones gets set. He takes a deep breath. The sound drops away.

He throws a ball that sinks wickedly. Franklin puts wood on it and pops it up to first. Kendricks easily grabs it for the third out.

CUT TO:

Super: Ninth Inning

Doster is at bat, facing off against a new pitcher, BERNER. Berner throws, Doster drives the ball through the gap into left field and pulls up at first for a single.

CUT TO:

Berner pitches, a strike to Lombardi. Doster takes off and steals second easily enough the catcher, ADAMS, doesn't make the throw.

HUEBNER

What are we doing?

Gray spits.

GRAY

Playing baseball.

HUEBNER

But the numbers clearly say that steal--

GRAY

Hush.

Huebner stands and stares at Gray. Gray ignores him. Huebner walks towards the other end of the dugout. As he passes Howell, he leans in and whispers:

HUEBNER

We need to talk.

CUT TO:

Doster takes off as Berner throws. Lombardi swings and misses, striking out.

Adams fires the ball to third, but Doster is safe with another stolen base.

CUT TO:

Kendricks steps up to the plate.

Richard Smith and the B*stards serenade Kendricks (to the tune of Bonanza):

B*STARDS OF SECTION B

The bat he swings is as good as
gold, Cam Kendricks!
Swing by swing, he'll win this game
at National Stadium!
It's our right, to win this night,
Cam Kendricks!
Here we belong, he's standing
strong, the visitors ain't got a
chance!

Kendricks steps out of the box, smiles and tips his cap to
the B*stards, who go wild.

CUT TO:

Adams throws a brushback pitch that Kendricks easily avoids.
The B*stards boo Adams mercilessly while Kendricks grins.

Adams throws a low fastball and Kendricks pops it up to deep
right field.

Doster scores and the Statesmen win 5-4. The B*stards go
crazy.

GLOVER

That's a record.

The other coaches look up. Glover looks down at his
scorebook.

GLOVER (CONT'D)

Kendricks just hit his third
sacrifice in one game. That ties
the record. He's the thirteenth guy
to do it.

HUEBNER

How do you like that?

Everybody seems to like it just fine.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Most of the team is already in the locker room when Kendricks
walks in, the conquering hero. Kendricks spots Whaley sitting
in the corner as he comes in.

KENDRICKS

I guess you can call ME "the
franchise" now!

Jones scoffs, but Kendricks doesn't hear it.

SPECK

Did you even get a hit today?

KENDRICKS

Nope.

Hector Delarosa joins the fun.

DELAROSA

You get a hit this week?

Kendricks shrugs.

BISHOP

He got a hit Tuesday.

KENDRICKS

Still getting my RBIs.

Small bits of applause from around the room.

Kendricks gets dressed quickly and leaves without saying goodbye.

LOMBARDI

Who the hell talks like that?

Murmurs of assent.

SPECK

I like him.

JONES

He does have a bit of an attitude problem.

BISHOP

He sure is pretty good on the field.

JONES

Maybe that's enough.

Nobody's convinced.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - LATER

Several players, including Doster and Lombardi, and Third Base Coach Terrence Kimbell exit the stadium towards the players' parking lot.

They are instantly surrounded by dozens of excited, autograph- and selfie-seeking fans.

The excitement is palpable and Doster and Kimbell exchange a look that says "have you ever seen anything like this?" Neither has.

Lombardi makes a beeline towards the center of the fans and starts signing baseballs and trading cards and random scraps of paper.

FAN #1
Where's Kendricks? Where's Cam?

FAN #2
We love you, Cam!

Doster hangs back a bit, standing closer to Kimbell than to any fans. Kimbell takes charge.

KIMBELL
Sorry, folks. Cam already left. You missed him.

A smattering of boos.

KIMBELL (CONT'D)
Come back, tomorrow. I'm pretty sure he's starting.

A few more boos. A few cheers.

FAN #3
Sweet! Already have tickets for tomorrow's game.

Other fans mob toward him.

FAN #3 (CONT'D)
Not on me! They're at home.

More boos. Doster and Kimbell exchange a look.

FAN #4
Hey, you're Jason Doster!

FAN #5
That is him!

FAN #6
Kendricks drove you in TWICE today.

The fans mob Doster.

FAN #5
And he stole three bases!

Doster looks to Kimbell to rescue him. Kimbell shrugs. Doster signs autographs.

INT. TERRENCE KIMBELL'S PICKUP TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The stadium shrinks behind them as Kimbell drives. Doster sits in the passenger seat.

DOSTER
I hate that shit.

Kimbell laughs.

KIMBELL
Where do you want to go for dinner?

Doster shrugs.

DOSTER
I'm worn out. I had THREE steals today.

He holds up three fingers and smooshes them into Kimbell's face. Kimbell playfully bites at them.

DOSTER (CONT'D)
Can we just stay in tonight?

KIMBELL
Sure, but you're cooking.

DOSTER
If you give me a massage later.

He rubs a sore shoulder.

KIMBELL
Deal.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

Several of the players stand in the dugout watching the rain pour. The stands are still relatively full, the people protected by a sea of umbrellas and ponchos.

Many still hold home-made signs, mostly for Kendricks or the team as a whole. A few have signs that reference Jones and one mentions Bishop.

It's clear the rain isn't going away any time soon. There will be no baseball today. Most of the fans don't care and don't leave.

A particularly simple sign says "Save Us Cam, You're Our Only Hope," alongside an image of the Rebel insignia from Star Wars. The ink used to draw the sign runs in the rain, black drops of water drip onto the jacket of a fan in front of the sign-holder.

Kendricks picks up a bat and throws it onto the field. He paces up and down the dugout.

GLOVER

Hey, man. The FANS can see that
shit.

Kendricks stops and looks at Glover, barely containing his rage. He turns and walks into the locker room.

Glover and Huebner exchange a look of bewilderment.

Gray spits.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The mood in the locker room is gloomy, most players relaxing or zoned out. Kendricks paces angrily back and forth.

Whaley flinches when Kendricks passes by. Kendricks chuckles, then drifts back into his gloom.

BISHOP

Calm down, man. The rain will stop
eventually.

KENDRICKS

I hate waiting. I'm tired of
waiting.

He's legitimately angry. Bishop backs down, wounded.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Like I'm trying to make something
here and nobody will fucking
cooperate.

Doster looks up at him.

DOSTER

It's just a rainout.

Kendricks picks up a batting helmet and throws it, very carefully but very forcefully, away from the other players. It smashes into a wall and cracks. The room goes quiet.

Gray peeks out of his office and makes eye contact with Kendricks. Kendricks stands still, almost snarling. Up close, he looks tired and ragged. He says nothing.

Gray dips back into the office.

KENDRICKS

Fuck!

He walks out of the room.

OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - DAY

National Stadium is filled. Ronnie Pitts is at home plate, taking practice swings. None of the players on either team is wearing an identifiable team logo, the uniforms are generic.

PARK ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Now batting, Ronnie Pitts!

The crowd roars.

A random PITCHER that no one recognizes throws a pitch and Pitts hits a towering homer out of the park.

The crowd goes wild. The wave starts.

Pitts crosses home plate and looks into the camera.

PITTS

Hitting home runs is hard work. As you well know.

A FAKE TEAMMATE high fives him.

PITTS (CONT'D)

It can take a lot out of you.

Someone hands him a bottle of HATER-ADE and he holds it up to the camera.

PITTS (CONT'D)

That's why I exclusively drink Hater-Ade!

Pitts walks towards the dugout and a group of fans for the other team start booing him.

He takes a drink from the bottle and points to the scoreboard. The game is over and the scoreboard reads that the "home" team won 3-0.

PITTS (CONT'D)
 They can hate, but I've got Hater-
 Ade!

He smiles and holds the bottle up to the camera again.

VOICEOVER
 Hater-Ade. Now available at your
 local Cloud 9.

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 Inesta Morgan and Major Sumrell.

INESTA
 Welcome back.

MAJOR
 We thank you for watching Sports
 Central.

INESTA
 Hope you've finished filling out
 your 1040 form, because tonight's
 taxing highlights will be anything
 but easy on your eyes.

MAJOR
 Today was Jackie Robinson Day, but
 he'd be embarrassed by what he saw
 on the field.

INESTA
 Today's game between the Statesmen
 and the Colonials was marred by a
 benches-clearing brawl.

MAJOR
 After a brushback pitch from
 Statesmen pitcher Cam Kendrick
 knocked Colonial Third Baseman
 Graham Bell on his back, both
 benches cleared and participated in
 a brawl that lasted nearly seven
 minutes before cooler heads could
 be convinced to prevail.

INESTA

My esteemed colleague Major Sumrell managed to avoid any of these embarrassing incidents in his 11 years playing professional football.

Major barely suppresses a smile.

INESTA (CONT'D)

These players in today's game would be well-served to follow Major's example.

Footage shows two full baseball teams pointlessly punching each other. There aren't any good fighters anywhere on the field, though, and they all look kinda pathetic, swinging and missing, getting blocked or landing blows that wouldn't hurt anyone, much less a professional athlete.

MAJOR

USBL President Mary Billups said an investigation would be pending, but that her preliminary viewing of the video tape suggested no suspensions were eminent.

The video cuts to tape of Billups speaking, but Major continues to talk over it.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

It's the type of quick and decisive action that my co-anchor Inesta Morgan would've taken if she had continued down the management track instead of going into a career in broadcasting.

Inesta holds back her grin.

INESTA

Welcome compliments aside, this type of behavior is not just unprofessional, but could lead to injuries and affect the sport as a whole.

MAJOR

The players should do their best to play like adults and set the example that young girls and boys around the country need.

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

"Washington D.C. sets record high for third time this year"

"Gordie Howe, Stillwater headline Earth Day concert on National Mall"

"Recall of Diet Mr. Bob soda after traces of cyanide found"

"Still no leads, arrests in National Mall graffiti case"

"Search for missing Deerfield Beach woman continues"

"Next week is National Take Your Daughter to Work Day"

"Get a room already!!!"

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

Our lead story tonight...

He looks down at his script.

BRACK (CONT'D)

And I can't believe I'm saying this... will BLOW you away.

He crumples up the notes and tosses them over his shoulder.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Who writes this crap?

No one answers.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Anyway, looks like NOAA is predicting another record hurricane this year, which is apparently funny to my staff writers...

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - DAY

Gray sits across from team owner Leah Owens, neither of them happy to be there.

OWENS

I'm getting you some help.

Gray is interested.

GRAY

Pitching or hitting?

Owens laughs.

OWENS

Neither.

Gray frowns.

OWENS (CONT'D)

You need someone to handle all the media hype surrounding Kendricks.

Gray nods.

GRAY

Yeah, that makes sense. It's getting a bit... intense out there.

OWENS

You and Lewis will head up the search committee.

GRAY

I don't have time for that.

OWENS

Don't worry, she'll do all the grunt work, you just have to be there for the interviews.

Gray wants to spit, but he can't.

OWENS (CONT'D)

There's a bonus.

Gray shrugs.

GRAY

Whatever.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - LATER

Owens sits at her desk, watching a 70" TV on the far wall. The Statesmen are playing the Colonials again.

Doster lines a shot down the right field line and it rumbles around in the corner. He rounds first and is halfway to second before the outfielder even gets to the ball. Doster slides safely into third. The fans go wild.

Owens pumps her fist. She checks herself. Looks around to make sure no one saw her. She takes a sip of her whiskey.

Kendricks is next up to bat. He doubles to center field, Doster scores.

OWENS

Nice.

She takes another sip of whiskey. Team President Lekebra Benjamin walks in, but Owens doesn't see her.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

Finally rooting for your father's team?

Owens almost chokes on the whiskey. She turns and smiles.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Sorry, thought you heard me.

OWENS

No... uh...

BENJAMIN

You must not have heard me over your own cheering.

Owens chuckles.

OWENS

Why do you care?

BENJAMIN

Team sucks, you don't care. Team starts winning and you're a fan?

OWENS

I wouldn't go--

BENJAMIN

There's a term for that.

Owens frowns.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Bandwagon.

Owens scoffs.

OWENS
Nothing has changed.

Beat.

OWENS (CONT'D)
Yet.

Neither woman fully believes her.

INT. LEKEBRA BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - LATER

Benjamin rides her Peloton. It's unlikely she can go faster without hurting herself. She spins to a hardcore metal soundtrack.

The CAMERA pushes past Benjamin to focus on her framed college degree on the wall. She has a Master's in sports management from Howard.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOWARD UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - DAY

A younger Lekebra Benjamin sits in the office of Howard University Professor RACHEL JOY. Joy is a Black woman in her early 50s. She dresses nice, but not extravagant. The bookshelves contain political and social science tomes as well as Black history and civil rights volumes. The walls are filled with multiple awards and plaques.

PROFESSOR JOY
How can I help you today, Ms. Benjamin?

BENJAMIN
Well... Leah is going to announce that she's running for SGA president.

Professor Joy raises an eyebrow.

PROFESSOR JOY
Aren't you already running?

BENJAMIN
That's the problem.

PROFESSOR JOY
I see. What do you want?

Benjamin thinks on the question for a bit.

BENJAMIN
A brighter future.

PROFESSOR JOY
Meaning?

BENJAMIN
I don't care as much about today as
I do about tomorrow.

Professor Joy nods.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
I want to be student body
president. But I know who she is
and who she's going to be. I don't
want that to screw up my plans.

PROFESSOR JOY
So you know what you have to do?

BENJAMIN
Not really.

PROFESSOR JOY
Bide your time, go with the flow
and wait for your opportunity.

Benjamin concentrates on something not in the room, something
in the future.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LEKEBRA BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Benjamin stands in her office, drying off with a towel. She
walks over to her desk and sits at her laptop. She hits play
on video of Owens' interview with McDaris. She mouths along
with Owens' words, as if she either wrote them or memorized
them.

Her phone rings and she picks up. Owens is on the line.

OWENS (O.S.)
Hey, it's me.

BENJAMIN
Just finished up my workout.

OWENS (O.S.)
I have to head to New York tonight.

BENJAMIN
Emergency league meeting?

OWENS (O.S.)
Another one.

Benjamin gives a contemptuous but sympathetic laugh.

BENJAMIN
What's this one about?

OWENS (O.S.)
Who knows? Foreign residual rights
or something.

Benjamin gulps. She knows it's coming.

OWENS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I need you to go for me.

Benjamin covers the phone.

BENJAMIN
(quietly)
Fuck!

OWENS (O.S.)
What was that? You were muffled.

BENJAMIN
I had to sneeze.

OWENS (O.S.)
Bless you.

Benjamin closes her eyes.

PROFESSOR JOY (V.O.)
Bide your time, go with the flow
and wait for your opportunity.

BENJAMIN
Forward me the details. I'll be
there.

OWENS (O.S.)
You always make the right choices.

Benjamin hangs up and dials another number.

BENJAMIN
Yes, I need to cancel my flight.

Beat.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Lekebra Benjamin.

Beat.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
That's the one.

Beat.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Yes, I'm aware there are no
refunds.

Benjamin takes a deep breath.

EXT. PDDC PRECINCT - DAY

Officer Cody Paige parks her Hyundai Accent near the back of the PDDC parking lot. She gets out and walks towards the building.

She has to get past officers Bill Tucker and Mitchell O'Reilly to get inside. They're fully blocking the entrance. Tucker notices her first. She sighs.

TUCKER
Look who it is.

He nudges O'Reilly.

O'REILLY
This bitch.

She clearly hears them. She doesn't slow down.

TUCKER
You smell something?

He sniffs the air.

O'REILLY
Smells pretty bad.

TUCKER
It's like a rat smell.

O'REILLY
I hate the smell of rats.

TUCKER
Particularly at work.

O'REILLY
Rats don't belong in the workplace.
Certainly not in--

CODY
Funny stuff. You guys write your
own material? Or do you outsource
to like South Korea or something.

Tucker and O'Reilly exchange a glance of confusion.

CODY (CONT'D)
You know where they make all the
animated... You know what, never
mind.

She walks inside.

TUCKER
Yeah, you'd better go inside.

O'REILLY
Where rats belong.

She slams the door. Tucker and O'Reilly laugh as if they
REALLY showed her.

INT. VIVIAN CARLTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Cody sits across from therapist Vivian Carlton once again.
Cody is still shaken up from the parking lot encounter.

CARLTON
So what happened?

CODY
Then or now?

CARLTON
Whichever you prefer to talk about.

CODY
Neither.

Carlton forces a smile.

CARLTON
That's not how this works.

Cody looks out the window.

CODY
Tucker.

Carlton flips through her notes.

CARLTON
Officer William Tucker?

Cody nods.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
This a "now" story or a "then"
story?

CODY
A bit of both.

Carlton writes in her notebook.

CARLTON
Talk about it.

Cody hesitates.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
It's okay, this session is private.

Cody is skeptical.

CODY
I saw... something.

CARLTON
Go on.

CODY
Something... unethical.

CARLTON
Yes...?

Cody doesn't speak.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
It's okay, you can tell me
anything.

CODY
Can I?

Carlton writes in her notebook.

CARLTON
Of course you can.

Cody doesn't speak.

Carlton waits.

And waits.

Nothing.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
And you reported it? This thing you
saw?

Cody frowns.

CODY
Not formally. I told Levin.

CARLTON
And?

CODY
And now I'm in counseling.
Mandatory counseling.

Carlton writes in her notebook.

CARLTON
What did you see?

Beat.

CODY
Who do you work for?

Carlton stares at her for a moment.

CARLTON
I work for you.

Cody laughs.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
All of you.

She waves her arms around the station.

CODY
Right.

They stare at each other.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gray and General Manager Jamelle Lewis sit at a conference
table writing notes.

GRAY
This the last one.

LEWIS
Saved the best for last?

GRAY
Not how I usually play it.

ASHLEY HERNANDEZ walks in. She is a Black Mexican-American woman in her late 20s. She is dressed impeccable and professional.

LEWIS
Take a seat, Ms. Hernandez.

She does.

ASHLEY
Thank you. Please call me Ashley.

GRAY
Nice to meet you, Ashley.

He nods in her direction.

ASHLEY
I'm glad to be here.

LEWIS
Let's get to know each other a little bit better.

GRAY
Tell us a little bit about your background. What led you to this room right now?

Lewis takes a deep breath. The sound drops out. She very confidently tells her story:

ASHLEY
I was born in Cancun.

Gray and Lewis smile in surprise.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
My parents were townies who worked in the hospitality industry. It was like living in America. So, after college, I made the move...

CUT TO:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...magna cum laude and student body
 president...

CUT TO:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...the externship allowed me to
 spend three glorious months in
 Costa Rica...

CUT TO:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...it's common in campaign work for
 people to move on after two cycles,
 so I told Sen. Letterman that I had
 to move on...

CUT TO:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...spent the past two years as a
 press agent for Hank Aaron before
 he signed with Tampa Bay. I wasn't
 ABOUT to move to Florida...

CUT TO:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...and I NEVER come unprepared. I
 not only do my homework, I do all
 the extra credit, too. For
 instance...

Gray and Lewis exchange a bemused look.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 ...you, Coach Gray, have coached
 this team for 30 years and are top
 15 in career wins. You have three
 Manager of the Year trophies, well-
 deserved. In your playing days, you
 fell just short of the Hall of Fame
 in a storied career with the
 Atlanta Peaches and New Jersey
 Titans. You also have a taste for
 Puerto Rican cigars...

She sets two Puerto Rican cigars on the table in front of
 Gray. His eyes go wide as he grabs them pulls them close.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 And you love Scotch.

Hernandez reaches down to her bag and pulls out a bottle of The Macallan 18-Year Sherry Oak Single Malt Scotch. She presents it to Gray. He almost hugs it as he receives the gift. Gray nods. He's impressed.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

And you, Ms. Lewis, you are a graduate of Howard University with a Bachelor's and Master's in public relations, like me. And you are a proud AKA.

Lewis leans back in her chair, she doesn't need to take any more notes.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You interned with the Statesmen and that led to various jobs throughout the organization. Eventually, you worked your way up to be assistant to the president, Augustus Owens, and you were named general manager shortly before his passing.

(beat)

And I believe your favorite is Gin.

Hernandez presents Lewis with a bottle of Monkey 47 Distillers Cut Gin. Lewis grins.

LEWIS

I think at this point we can safely say the job is yours.

GRAY

You can get upstairs approval?

LEWIS

I already have it. She doesn't want to deal with the details.

Gray turns to Hernandez.

GRAY

Then welcome to the team.

Hernandez beams with pride.

INT. SIMON MEYERS' OFFICE - DAY

Reporter Shirley Muldoon sits across from her editor Simon Meyers, who is clearly upset. He flips through each of the recent editions of the Gazette.

MEYERS
Monday... Tuesday... Wednesday...
Thursday... Should I go on?

Shirley plays dumb.

SHIRLEY
Not sure what you're talking about.

MEYERS
I assure you this is not the time
to play games.

Shirley considers sarcasm, but thinks better of it.

MEYERS (CONT'D)
What have you done?

She doesn't respond.

MEYERS (CONT'D)
On the baseball beat?

SHIRLEY
I... uh... doing research.

He waits.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
And... I... I contacted my cousin.

Meyers relaxes a little.

MEYERS
So you've got something coming?

She hesitates for a moment.

SHIRLEY
Yeah... sure.

Meyers isn't buying it.

MEYERS
Do you?

SHIRLEY
Yes. Definitely.

He frowns.

MEYERS
Good. Have it in my inbox by the
time I arrive Monday morning.

SHIRLEY

Or?

MEYERS

Let's not find out.

INT. WASHINGTON GAZETTE BULLPEN - LATER

Shirley sits at her desk, her head on her arms. She's not sleeping, but she might as well be. A CUSTODIAN walks by and she straightens up with a yawn.

She reads Wikipedia articles about 80s TV shows. She plays Candy Crush. She organizes her pens.

Finally, she opens up her word processor and stares at the blank page.

And nothing.

She twirls in her chair. She fixes her makeup. She puts new business cards in her file box.

She turns back to the word processor, finally ready to start.

And nothing.

She picks up the phone and dials Chad.

No answer.

She hangs up and twirls in her chair again.

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shirley's partner Chad sits at his computer and he opens the Tor Dark Web browser. Chad brings up a webpage. It is completely gray, has no text and simply shows a place for a user name and password. Chad logs into the site.

On the screen opens a blank e-mail form with no identifying information, not even a "To" or "From" field, just a box to type text.

Chad types: "Leaving now." He hits send.

He closes the browser window, grabs his car keys and rushes outside.

Chad checks his phone and sees that Shirley is calling. He ignores it and pockets his phone. Chad jumps into his Miata and drives off.

Spyder shows Chad a Glock.

Chad nods.

Spyder waves the Glock.

 SPYDER (CONT'D)
 Unlock your door.

Chad does. Dante jumps in. He's holding a box a little larger than a shoebox.

 DANTE
 Let's go. I got tickets to see
 Hannibal Burrese tonight.

 CHAD
 Ah, shit, that's tonight?

 DANTE
 Sold out.

Chad hands him the cash.

 CHAD
 Have to catch him next time.

 DANTE
 Yeah he always comes through here.

Dante hands him the box.

 DANTE (CONT'D)
 Pleasure doing business with you.

He gets out.

 SPYDER
 Next time.

Chad rolls up his window. He squeezes the box to make sure it's real. Then he puts it in the passenger seat and starts the car.

Spyder drives the Hummer out of the lot.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM PRESS ROOM - DAY

Gray sits at the press table, the room is packed. Next to him sits Ashley Hernandez who is fired up and ready to go.

GRAY

Glad you all joined us today. I
happy to let you know that the team
has hired Ashley Hernandez from
Baltimore...

She nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)

...who will be our new press
assistant, with a particular focus
on fielding press and fan requests
related to Cam Kendricks.

HERNANDEZ

I'd like to thank you all for
joining me for my first day. I am
honored and excited to join this
storied franchise and I'm ready to
be a part of a championship team.

She looks towards Gray. He nods.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

I understand that the tradition
around here is that the first
question always goes to the
esteemed Edith Merman.

Merman nods.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Well, go ahead and kick us off, Ms.
Merman.

MERMAN

Thank you, Ms. Hernandez. As great
as your new job is, nobody spends
their entire career as a
spokesperson for a professional
baseball team.

Laughs.

MERMAN (CONT'D)

So, while avoiding how LONG you
plan to be here, Ms. Hernandez,
what do you want to be when you
grow up?

Bigger laughs.

HERNANDEZ

That is a great question. I see why they let you go first. At this time, I am completely happy with my job with the Statesmen and I have no plans to leave.

Merman gives her a pleasant, but impatient, smile.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

With that being said, I will happily answer your question, hypothetically speaking.

Laughs.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, my mom had this book about a place called Hull House. She had lots of books, but this one grabbed my attention because I thought it said HILL House... you know, that ghost movie? Anyway, I pull it out to read something scary, and instead I get this story about this community building. One where everyone who needs help can come and get it. Food, training, learning English. Hull House served mostly immigrant communities. I always dreamed of opening one up in my neighborhood. There were a lot of people that needed help there and that was my dream. And it still is.

Reporter Dwayne McDaris interjects.

MCDARIS

And being a flak for the Statesmen helps you pursue that dream?

Hernandez smiles, giving away nothing.

HERNANDEZ

Thank you for that question, Mr...?

MCDARIS

McDaris.

HERNANDEZ

What's your question, Mr. McDaris?

MCDARIS

Ms. Hernandez, can you give us the details of the terms of your contract?

Gray frowns.

HERNANDEZ

Mr. McDaris, I signed a two-year contract and the accompanying NDA prevents me from disclosing the salary or benefits.

MCDARIS

Would it be safe to say it's a six digit salary?

HERNANDEZ

I am not at liberty to discuss that at this time.

GRAY

Let's get another question in here, Travis?

Reporter Johnnie Travis starts to ask a question.

McDaris crosses his legs and stares at Hernandez while he bites on his pencil.

On the pad, he writes: "Look into Hernandez?"

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE - LATER

Chad walks into the house and locks the door behind him. He turns off the light and walks into his bedroom. He locks that door behind him, too.

Chad walks across the room and types a code into the panic room panel and opens the door. He walks in and shuts the door behind him in and he stands in the dark.

He flips a switch and the lights come on. The panic room is packed floor-to-ceiling with shelves and boxes and displays. A collection of valuable things and lost treasures. Among the many items in the room are a small bracelet with three green gems in it, an ancient wooden box holding a mogwai, the Aether, the Tablet of Life and Time, the Chachapoyan Fertility Idol, the Hairless Monkey and Feegee Mermaid from Captain Spaulding's Museum of Monsters and Madmen, the Lament Configuration, the Annabelle/Raggedy Ann doll, a cymbal-banging monkey toy from Stephen King's "Night Shift" and many other similar items.

A bookshelf contains books like the Necronomicon, the Darkhold, Patience Buckner's diary, a set of Goosebumps Gold books, "King Arthur and King Cornwall," the "Secret Gospel of Mark," "The Circular Ruins," by Herbert Quain, "The Blind Assassin," by Laura Chase, "Predictions for the Year 1708," by Isaac Bickerstaff, "The Devil May Care," by Zach Hutton, "God Hates Us All," by Hank Moody, "A Match Made in Space," by George McFly, "How I Did It," by Victor Frankenstein, "The Philosophy of Time Travel," by Roberta Sparrow, and other similar titles.

One cannot tell if these artifacts and books are real or replicas.

Chad opens the box he was given in the car and pulls out a mint condition copy of "The Era of Hopeful Monsters," by Kilgore Trout.

CUT TO:

Chad exits the panic room and goes to his computer. He brings up a browser window that has more than a dozen tabs open. He switches to a tab with a WordPress blog set up and opened to a new post. The title of the blog is Dr. Chad's Curiosity Shoppe.

He clicks on the title line and types: "New Item: Finally Got My Hands on Kilgore Trout!" He starts typing the blog post.

INT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A new player walks into the locker room, WINSTON PULSIPHER, a Black man in his mid-20s. Everyone looks up to check him out, then goes back to getting ready for game time.

He puts his stuff in a freshly-cleaned locker that already bears his name. He walks into Gray's office. Huebner and Howell are also present.

GRAY

Have a seat, Winston.

PULSIPHER

Yes sir.

GRAY

No need to be so formal. We don't stand on ceremony around here.

Pulsipher nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)
I don't like to beat around the bush, so, I'll get right to it.

Pulsipher grips the arms of the chair.

GRAY (CONT'D)
I'm putting you in.

Pulsipher looks from Gray to Huebner to Howell. He doesn't know what to say.

HUEBNER
You're starting at third today.

Pulsipher grins.

GRAY
Thank you, sir. I'll do my best.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Well go get ready, son.

Pulsipher gets up and hurries out of the room.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Winston!

He stops and pokes his head back in the door.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Shut the door, will you?

The excitement drops out of Pulsipher's face. He shuts the door.

HOWELL
I hate losing an arm.

HUEBNER
You weren't expecting Kendricks and you've got that. Chester's just a liability.

GRAY
What's he hitting?

HUEBNER
.222.

GRAY
And he can't play a lick of defense.

HOWELL
Agreed. He's killing my pitchers.

GRAY
Who do you want me to designate?

Howell is surprised at the question.

HOWELL
I... uh...

GRAY
You've run the numbers, you've thought it out?

Howell nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)
So who?

HOWELL
Well, I hate to lose him, but I'd like to see him get some starts.

GRAY
Rodgers?

HOWELL
Yeah. He's starting today, we'll tell him after the game.

Outside the office, Whaley has been listening through the door. He walks away with a grin.

EXT. STATESMEN LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Melvin Rodgers walks into the locker room in his street clothes and sets his bag in his locker. Most of the team is already there. Rodgers' locker is next to Whaley's.

WHALEY
Hey man, you heard?

Rodgers, who is in a good mood because he's starting today, shakes his head.

WHALEY (CONT'D)
The coaches were talking...

RODGERS
Yeah?

Jones overhears Whaley and leans in.

WHALEY
They're sending you down.

RODGERS
Wh-what? But I'm starting--

JONES
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Whaley recoils in fear as Jones steps towards him.

JONES (CONT'D)
Who the hell jinxes a pitcher like that, you loser?

WHALEY
Who the hell are you--

Kendricks and Bishop and Speck and a few other players step towards Whaley, who backs down.

JONES
That's why you've been permanently benched, you dipshit.

WHALEY
No I haven't. I'm--

The other players laugh at him and he shrinks.

SPECK
Naw, man, MAYBE you can pinch hit when you ain't feeling froggy.

More laughs.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM FIELD - LATER

SUPER: First inning

Rodgers stands on the mound. He nods to Bishop and throws the pitch. The batter, Adams, hits a shot to right field and the Colonials lead 3-0.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Second inning

The pitcher, HUNTING throws a fastball. Kendricks swings wildly, striking out to end the inning.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Third inning

Rodgers throws a pitch to Gardner, who lines a double over Pulsipher down the left field line. Two runners score.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Fourth inning

With an 0-2 count, Kendricks stands at home plate. He looks nervous, which is new.

Hunting pitches and Kendricks goes down again.

In the Statesmen dugout, Whaley stands up, frustrated.

GLOVER
Calm down, young man.

Whaley paces for a bit and then goes into the locker room.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
Something up his butt today.

CUT TO:

Whaley quickly walks into the locker room alone and starts getting undressed.

CUT TO:

Whaley is dressed in shorts and a t-shirt. He rushes out of the locker room.

In the stadium, the fans cheer SOME kind of big play.

CUT TO:

Whaley rushes from the stadium and hops in his Ford F-150. He pulls out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

Rodgers looks weary as he gets set. He pitches to Franklin, who smashes a three-run homer.

CUT TO:

Howell stands on the mound and takes the ball from Rodgers, who, to be honest, is relieved.

CUT TO:

Rodgers doesn't even stop in the dugout, he walks straight into the locker room without saying anything to anyone.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Seventh inning

With one out and Doster on third, Kendricks stands at the plate. Hunting pitches and Kendricks grounds to second, scoring Doster for the Statesmen's first run.

CUT TO:

As the fans sadly file out of the stadium, the scoreboard reads 7-1 for the Colonials.

EXT. KENNY'S ROASTERS - DAY

Whaley pulls into the parking lot of a hipster coffee shop and parks.

INT. KENNY'S ROASTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Whaley walks into the coffee shop, looking around nervously. Inside is busy and bustling, and Whaley hides himself in the back corner. He sets a large brown envelope on the table.

A WAITRESS comes over.

WHALEY

Bring over a pot of the Arabica.
Two cups.

She nods listlessly and walks away.

After a few seconds, reporter David Tessell walks in. He looks around and sees Whaley waving. Tessell sits across from Whaley.

TESSELL

Nice to meet you, Mr. Whaley.

WHALEY

You know who I am?

TESSELL

I AM a sports reporter.

Whaley puts his hand on top of the envelope.

WHALEY

I've got something.

Tessell lights up. The waitress comes back and pours them each a cup of coffee.

TESSELL

That's why I'm here. You said it was about Kendricks?

Tessell takes a sip of his coffee.

WHALEY

That fucking guy.

Tessell raises an eyebrow.

WHALEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, it is.

TESSELL

What is it?

WHALEY

I don't know. Medical records. Some other shit. Figured you'd know what to do with it.

Whaley takes a big sip of coffee.

TESSELL

What do you want?

Whaley chuckles.

WHALEY

Huh. Just consider me interested in... truth and justice.

He takes another gulp of coffee.

TESSELL

I'll check it out.

Whaley takes another sip of coffee and leaves quickly, looking over his shoulder.

WHALEY

Thanks.

INT. THE PINCH - NIGHT

Huebner walks into the Pinch and looks around, but he doesn't see anyone. He walks up to the bar and both Dan and Annie are working.

DAN
Hey, Coach Huebner!

HUEBNER
How's it going, Dan?

DAN
Can't complain.

Annie mixes a tall Captain Morgan and Coke.

HUEBNER
Coach Howell here?

Dan nods.

DAN
He's downstairs.

ANNIE
Here you go.

She hands Huebner the drink and he tips his cap. Huebner walks downstairs.

INT. THE PINCH, BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Huebner walks into the basement bar, which is empty except for Howell.

The basement is a small space used for shows and other small-ish events. The walls are painted with punk-themed art and covered with band fliers, including fliers for bands named Cyclone of Fur, Elder Sign Cuties, Fetuscake, Goblin Toes, Human Gangjapede, Metro Sketch, Placebo Jesus, Ponyshot and Smutnik. One of the fliers says "Punk Rock Karaoke Every Thursday!"

Howell stands at the bar with a bottle of Jack Daniels. He pours himself a shot and one for Huebner. They take the shot.

HOWELL
Not sure where to start.

HUEBNER
Anybody know you're here?

Howell shakes his head.

HOWELL
We actually here to do something?

Beat.

HUEBNER
I don't know. What can we do?

HOWELL
After Owens was on TV, I had my guy
check out all the contracts. She
can't fire him.

HUEBNER
How the hell did that happen?

HOWELL
Rich old dude.

They take another shot.

HUEBNER
We could go to the press?

HOWELL
That we could.

They both think for a second.

HUEBNER
We could leave?

HOWELL
I thought about that.

Another shot.

HOWELL (CONT'D)
It won't work. We leave, we'll have
to sign NDAs and they'll talk to
other teams. We'll be lucky to get
a college assistant job.

Huebner pours himself another shot.

HUEBNER
Fuck that.

HOWELL
So we go to the press?

HUEBNER
And tell them what?

They sit in silence.

HOWELL
I guess we wait it out.

HUEBNER
That's gonna suck.

They both take another shot.

HOWELL
Maybe your boy will get us to the
playoffs.

They laugh.

HUEBNER
Maybe we revisit this after the
season. See where things are.

HOWELL
Maybe we do.

Another shot.

EXT. VALVANO SKATE PARK - NIGHT

Two teens JACK and MILES ride skateboards up to the park.
They walk past "Park Closes at Sundown" signs.

JACK
You sure nobody is going to hear us
and call the cops?

Miles points to the nearest houses, at the far side of a
large parking lot.

MILES
Nobody can hear shit.

He cups his hand to his mouth and yells:

MILES (CONT'D)
HEY FUCKERS!

Jack giggles.

No other response.

MILES (CONT'D)
See.

JACK
Let's do it.

He drops his board to the ground and hops on. He kicks, then
pushes his way into the small, but nice skate park.

Jack stops and stumbles off his deck, barely stopping himself from falling to the ground.

Miles smashes into him from behind and falls to the ground.

MILES
What the hell--

JACK
Look!

Jack points towards the bowl at the center of the skate park, his face gripped with horror.

Miles looks. Then he starts screaming.

CUT TO:

Multiple cop cars surround the skate park, lights flashing. Jack and Miles each stand clustered with their PARENTS, visibly shaken up.

Cody and Detective Brice Eversmith arrive on the scene where two UNIFORMED COPS are already there. They approach the crime scene. The uniformed cops hold flashlights on the crime scene.

Unlike the previous crime scenes, this one is a mess. There are two severed heads, one male and one female, sitting on top of an elevated concrete slab. Nearby are the corpses from the bodies. Blood is everywhere.

EVERSMITH
This is different.

CODY
These our same guys?

Eversmith nods.

EVERSMITH
Help me unpack this stuff.

CUT TO:

Set up strategically throughout the crime scene are metal poles about 6' in height. Eversmith and Cody stand outside the area.

Eversmith flips a switch and a blue light emits from the poles and starts scanning the area.

Tucker and O'Reilly arrive as Cody and Eversmith are packing up.

TUCKER
What the hell is this shit?

O'REILLY
Did we join fucking Star Trek or
something?

They laugh.

INT. PDDC BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The Briefing Room is packed, new officers have joined them, not only from other jurisdictions, but from other state and federal agencies. Captain Alex Levin leads the briefing.

LEVIN
We are ready to say that we have at
least three connected crime scenes.

Cody laughs.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
You have something to say, Officer
Paige?

Everyone turns to look at her. But it's Eversmith who speaks up.

EVERSMITH
I do.

Levin chuckles.

LEVIN
Eversmith. Go ahead.

EVERSMITH
Thanks, Captain. Nice of you to
remember my name.

Some chuckles.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)
How do we know the crime scenes are
connected?

Levin takes a deep breath.

LEVIN
All of this is in the briefing
book. This is the part of the
presentation for questions that
AREN'T in the briefing book.

EVERSMITH
I didn't get a copy of the briefing
book.

Chuckles around the room.

LEVIN
Pick one up from Rita. After the
briefing.

EVERSMITH
What about suspects? Have you found
anything yet in terms of suspects?

LEVIN
We are developing a list of persons
of interest and will, you know, be
doing our job.

Eversmith chuckles.

EVERSMITH
What about--

LEVIN
As I mentioned earlier, it's in
your briefing book. Now, since
there are no further questions,
this briefing is over.

Levin closes her briefing book.

LEVIN (CONT'D)
It's getting scary out there. Be
careful, but get the job done.
Sooner rather than later.

Murmurs.

Eversmith turns to Cody.

EVERSMITH
(quietly)
They are NOT prepared for what's
about to hit.

Cody nods. She agrees and she's scared.

INT. PDDC BASEMENT - DAY

Cody and Eversmith wait for the computer bank to finish
loading and The Setup to come to life, showing the newest
crime scene.

CODY
Which scene is this one?

EVERSMITH
The new one.

CODY
From like last night?

EVERSMITH
That's the one.

CODY
How'd you get it so fast?

EVERSMITH
I don't sleep.

Cody takes a deep breath.

CODY
What are we doing here?

EVERSMITH
They're obviously all connected.

Cody raises an eyebrow.

CODY
Didn't you tell the captain...

EVERSMITH
Yes. But they have no ideas,
they're bluffing.

CODY
But you KNOW they're connected?

EVERSMITH
Obviously.

Beat.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)
We have to prove it first.

CODY
How?

Eversmith points to The Setup.

Officer Ann Snell walks into the room unannounced.

SNELL

I heard y'all had some weird stuff going on down here. What is this, a video game?

Eversmith ignores her.

SNELL (CONT'D)

While we're out here trying to catch killers, you fuck-ups are down here playing video games.

Cody doesn't look up. Eversmith notices Cody's anxiety.

EVERSMITH

Hey, Snell, how's your husband?

All the color drains from Snell's face.

SNELL

Bitch!

She walks out.

CUT TO:

Eversmith circles The Setup, looking from every angle. She can't find anything. Cody sits in an office chair, rocking back and forth.

EVERSMITH

I could use your help with this.

Cody stops rocking.

CODY

I don't know what I'm looking for.

She rolls the chair closer to The Setup.

CODY (CONT'D)

Or at.

EVERSMITH

You're a detective, right?

CODY

I was.

EVERSMITH

You still are.

They lock eyes. Neither looks away.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

So be one.

Cody turns and stares at The Setup.

CUT TO:

Cody sits in a chair, exhausted.

CODY

We've been at this for hours. We didn't find anything last time and we aren't going to find anything this time. This thing is a waste.

EVERSMITH

What are we even looking for?

CODY

I have no idea.

EVERSMITH

That's why we haven't found it.

CUT TO:

A montage of shots with Cody and Eversmith standing and sitting in various positions, staring at various parts of the crime scene.

CUT TO:

Cody reclines in a chair, sleeping.

Eversmith stares at a wall of graffiti that is a bit too fuzzy to really make out. But she sees something.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

What is that? A horn?

Cody startles awake.

CODY

What'd you say?

EVERSMITH

It looks like a horn.

Like a ram's horn. A sharp red ram's horn.

CODY

A horn?

EVERSMITH

We didn't even look for anything like this in the first two crime scenes.

CODY

Then let's look now.

CUT TO:

They are looking at the second crime scene, the front porch.

CODY (CONT'D)

Here.

Cody points to a chair on the porch. Peeking from beneath the back foot of a wooden chair is what looks like a ram's horn.

CUT TO:

The Setup now shows the first crime scene, with the full display of eight bodies.

CODY (CONT'D)

I give up.

EVERSMITH

It's not there.

Cody stares at her.

EVERSMITH (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's go.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - NIGHT

No game tonight, the stadium sits mostly dark. Security guard Marky Frost drives past, barely awake.

Once he's gone, several masked men dressed in all black, cult members Esau and Jacob, run towards the stadium, staying in the shadows as much as they can. On their backs are blood-red images of a demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

Esau and Jacob run up to the front door of the stadium and pull out cans and start spraying graffiti on the building. One writes "Wild Night" and the other writes "Hail Satan!"

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

McDaris sits in a darkened studio, a lone spot lighting him in his chair, his ever-present pad and pen in his lap. He looks directly into the camera.

MCDARIS

Hello, out there, McDaris' Minions.
You know me mostly as a "shock
jock"...

He uses air quotes.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

But I'm leaving the Bazoom behind
tonight to talk to you about
something more serious.

He pauses for effect.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

Nothing less than the end of our
beloved national pastime, baseball.

He turns and looks into the other camera.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

That's right. The game we all
cherish is under assault. And one
man is the perfect symbol of that
assault.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Owens sits in her office, lights out, TV on. She sips whiskey as she watches McDaris.

OWENS

I'm not violent, but I wish
somebody would shoot this fucker.

INT. WASHINGTON GAZETTE BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Shirley sits at her desk, a blank page on her word processor. She starts typing.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

One of the most destructive myths
in society is the one that posits
that dreams are the exclusive
province of the young...

INT. JAMELLE LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lewis sits at her dining room table sipping hot chocolate from a "Rick and Abed in the Morning" mug. She reads Shirley's column on her tablet.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

...and it's well past time that we not only revisit that lie, it's time we bury it and pave a parking lot over the grave.

LEWIS

And then nuke that parking lot.

EXT. THE PINCH - CONTINUOUS

Cult members Ishmael and REBECCA wear black hoodies with the Crimson Ram logo on their backs. They run down the street holding homemade Molotov cocktails. Rebecca is a white woman in her mid-20s. Very athletic. Like CrossFit and Tough Mudder.

Ishmael throws his cocktail at a trash can, which immediately bursts into flames. Rebecca throws hers at the building's front door, it bounces off and sets the doormat on fire.

Dan comes to the door and sees the fire through the glass. He runs and grabs a fire extinguisher and comes back to fight the fire.

INT. LEKEBRA BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin rides her Peloton, full-speed. She watches McDaris on the screen.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

Yes, a cynical opportunist has taken to our beloved field.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

MCDARIS

If there's anything I hate, it's an opportunist. And that's what I see every day when I watch the game I love.

INT. HAROLD GRAY'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Gray stands on his patio, drinking the Scotch that Hernandez got him. The doors are open and McDaris' speech plays. Gray listens, but only barely, he stares over the balcony.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

I am reminded of the last days of such hubristic societies as Rome, Sodom and Gomorrah. If we don't do something, we'll join those once great cities in the flames.

In the distance, Gray can see several fires throughout the city.

INT. VERNON HOWELL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Howell sits on his couch reading from a tablet. His WIFE and two KIDS play Mouse Trap at the dinner table.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

It's important to take a chance, even when the world is filled with danger. When institutions like the Statesmen take those chances, they open doors for everyone.

Howell's wife sets off the mouse trap and Howell starts. He looks around, but no one saw him.

INT. ALVIN HUEBNER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Huebner lays in his bed in his undecorated bedroom watching McDaris on TV. He nurses a beer.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

And no matter how many false leaders try to take us down that pathway, we need to resist.

Huebner stares at the TV, a frown on his face and his eyes darting back and forth as his mind races.

EXT. H STREET - CONTINUOUS

Several unknown CULT MEMBERS walk past the busy H Street shops and bars.

They yell at people, knock groceries from people's hands, yank a dog leash from an owner's hand and let the dog run off, knock over trash cans and newspaper boxes, throw eggs at people and throw rocks at windows.

Pedestrians clear them a path.

INT. ALEX LEVIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Levin sits in her home office, reading articles online. She comes upon Shirley's article and starts reading.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

When people, especially young people, are left with nothing to do. They FIND things to do. Bad things.

The phone rings.

LEVIN

Hello.

Beat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

How many?

Beat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

All schools?

Beat.

LEVIN (CONT'D)

On my way.

She jumps out of bed and heads for the closet.

INT. CHAD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chad sits at his computer, watching McDaris.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

All of this reminds me of old court cases about affirmative action. This guy is getting forced upon us and it means that regular guys don't have a chance.

Chad nods along a little too eagerly.

INT. SIMON MEYERS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Meyers and his wife sit in reading on tablets, both reading Shirley's article.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

What a story like Cam Kendricks shows us is that one man CAN stand up to the powerful. And by standing up and fighting back, you create opportunity.

Meyers frowns.

INT. CONAN JONES' MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jones sits in a bubble bath, reading Shirley's article on his phone.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

What Kendricks shows us is that no matter how old you are, no matter who you are, you can still win. And because of that, Kendricks is a role model. And one we should all learn a lesson from.

Jones laughs out loud, but not too loud.

INT. CAM KENDRICKS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kendricks sits in a very empty house. The living room has only a 70" TV on the wall and the expensive leather couch that Kendricks sits on, drinking from a bottle of Merlot.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

Too long, didn't listen? Shame on you. And shame on Cam Kendricks, the surest sign of the collapse of American society as I've ever seen.

Kendricks throws the remote into the TV, cracking the screen. Notably, McDaris doesn't shut up.

EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Two WHITE MEN in athletic jerseys and shorts exit a fast food restaurant holding bags and drinks.

MCDARIS (V.O.)

If someone who takes short cuts,
who doesn't put in the time, can
become the toast of the league,
what horrible things might happen
next in this sad, sick society?

The two men in athletic jerseys turn the corner and walk down an alley.

A half dozen CULT MEMBERS, led by Abraham, are waiting for them. With baseball bats.

The cult members rush the two men, swinging their bats. Abraham connects with the closest man's jaw. Another Cult Member hits the bag of fast food from his hand. The CAMERA follows the trajectory of the bag as it rips to shreds and ketchup splatters on the wall, layered over the fresh blood spatter.

EXT. VALVANO SKATE PARK - NIGHT

Valvano Skate Park is still surrounded by yellow crime scene tape, but that doesn't mean that TEEN SKATERS haven't broken in and aren't currently skating.

Cody and Eversmith approach the park and duck under the yellow tape. They are surprised that two skaters are inside the park, sharing a joint.

Cody shines her flashlight at the skaters, who drop the joint, grab their boards and run.

CODY

A horn?

EVERSMITH

That's what it looked like. Maybe a little sharper.

Cody starts wandering through the park, shining her flashlight everywhere. Eversmith makes a beeline directly for the graffiti.

She focuses in on the horn she saw in The Setup. It's mostly obscured by other graffiti. She starts taking pictures with her phone.

Across the park, Cody ducks under the police tape and makes her way towards a grey transformer box, sitting on the ground.

She leans in real close and shines her light on the side of the transformer. Her eyes grow wide.

CODY
Eversmith?

EVERSMITH
Yeah?

CODY
I got something.

Eversmith rushes over and looks where Cody points her flashlight. The graffiti isn't obscured here: A demonic-looking ram with great big razor-sharp horns.

EVERSMITH
That's it!

CODY
That's what?

EVERSMITH
Our first real clue.

Eversmith starts taking pictures of the crimson ram. Cody snaps a few, too.

The CAMERA zooms back from the skate park and into a small grove of trees across the street. Standing in the shadows is a man wearing all black, ABRAHAM. On the back of his shirt is a crimson ram. He watches everything the cops do.

INT. LEAH OWENS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Owens sits at her desk, sipping her usual whiskey. A knock on her door breaks the silence.

OWENS
Come in.

The door opens and private investigator Applegate walks in.

Owens stands up and walks to the bar. She refills her whiskey and makes one for Applegate. Owens pushes the buzzer on her intercom.

OWENS (CONT'D)
Ms. Richardson?

At her desk, MS. RICHARDSON, a Black woman in her late 20s, presses the button on her intercom.

RICHARDSON

Ma'am?

OWENS

You may go home.

RICHARDSON

Thank you, ma'am.

Owens waits while Richardson grabs her purse and leaves.

OWENS

Now. Mr. Applegate, let's talk
about a job.

APPLEGATE

That's why I'm here.

Owens smiles.

OWENS

Good.

She slides an envelope across the desk.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Inside is your first payment and a
name.

Applegate picks up the envelope and opens it. There is a lot
of money inside. And a business card. He fishes the card out.

OWENS (CONT'D)

I want you to dig up everything you
can. Every nook. Every cranny.
Every database. Every place she
ever paid a bill. Every time she
got a speeding ticket. If she got a
C- in her high school algebra
class. I want to know what size
shoe she wears. I want everything.
You understand?

Applegate looks at the card. It's Lewis' card. Applegate
takes the card and turns to leave.

OWENS (CONT'D)

One more thing.

He stops and turns toward her. She gestures towards the
brooch she's wearing in the portrait.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Keep your eye open for this brooch.
It has been taken and I would very
much like it back.

APPLEGATE

I'm on it.

Owens smiles and takes a sip of whiskey.

INT. JAMELLE LEWIS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Lewis sits in her office in the dark. Her door is open and she watches Applegate walk into Owens' office.

Richardson turns off the lights and walks to the elevator.

Lewis waits for several minutes. She stands and silently moves from her office into the main room.

She creeps quietly towards Owens' open door and listens.

Once she's heard enough, she sneaks back to her office. Once in, she launches the Tor browser and brings up the gray website. A blank e-mail message comes up.

Lewis types "tonight" and hits send.

EXT. NATIONAL STADIUM EXTERIOR - LATER

Lewis watches Owens drive away in her Lexus.

GRAY (O.S.)

Late night?

Lewis startles at the sound. She whips around to see Gray, still in his uniform.

LEWIS

Gotta keep up with the boss.

She nods her head after Owens.

Gray spits. Lewis laughs.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Yeah.

GRAY

Yeah.

Beat.

GRAY (CONT'D)
It's not like it used to be, is it?

LEWIS
No, it's not.

Beat.

GRAY
And it's never getting better
again, is it?

Beat.

LEWIS
It doesn't look like it is.

Gray spits.

Lewis reaches for her purse and starts digging around inside.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Damn, forgot my phone. It's on the
charger.

GRAY
You want me to wait? Everybody else
is gone.

Lewis shakes her head.

LEWIS
Thanks. I'm good.

She pulls a taser from her purse. Gray is impressed.

GRAY
Night.

LEWIS
See you tomorrow.

She goes back inside as Gray gets in his battered pickup truck. She closes the door and peeks out the window. She waits until he drives away.

Lewis pulls her phone from her purse. She opens the screen with a thumbprint. She types "Ready" and sends the text.

She steps back outside and waits in front of the building. The parking lot is empty and it's very quiet.

From around the stadium, a near-silent, custom black limousine pulls up.

Lewis gets in.

Sitting in the back of the limo is a lone FIGURE in a black robe. Their face is covered with a mask and their voice is modulated with a voice box.

FIGURE
Do I know you?

Lewis takes a deep breath.

LEWIS
Do we ever know anyone?

The figure nods and extends a hand.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Yes, the handshake...

She thinks for a moment. It comes to her.

She reaches out to shake the Figure's hand, but goes past the hand, to the wrist and grasps them by the elbow. The Figure does the same. They squeeze twice. Then once more.

FIGURE AND LEWIS
(simultaneously)
Beherit chemosh mastema.

They drop the grip.

LEWIS
You have gathered what you need to deal with Owens?

FIGURE
We have.

LEWIS
She'll be gone?

FIGURE
If that is what you want.

LEWIS
And I will be... unconnected?

FIGURE
If that is what you want?

Lewis takes a few deep breaths.

FIGURE (CONT'D)
So what do you want?

Lewis takes a breath.

LEWIS
I don't know.

FIGURE
We are on standup until you do know. As long as we are properly compensated, there are no limits to our resources, including time.

LEWIS
Thank you.

They repeat the odd hand shake and Lewis gets out.

FIGURE AND LEWIS
(simultaneously)
Beherit chemosh mastema.

Lewis shuts the limo door and it drives away.

INT. SUNDAY SPORTS CHAT SHOW STUDIO

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

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

Next to Weisman is Edith Merman.

WEISMAN (CONT'D)
With me today are four of our regular panelists: Edith Merman of the Philadelphia Inquisitor...

MERMAN
Thank you for having me.

WEISMAN
David Tessell from the Chicago Dispatch-Times...

TESSELL
Hello from the Windy City.

WEISMAN
...Sharon Alligood of NBS...

ALLIGOOD
Thanks for having me back.

WEISMAN
...and Johnnie Travis of the Denver
Tribune.

TRAVIS
Good to be here again.

Weisman turns and looks into the camera.

WEISMAN
Okay, first question. Are the
Statesmen slipping?

TESSELL
Yes. They're only 11-7 in their
last 18 games. Good, but a definite
decline.

ALLIGOOD
That's premature. They're 18-8
overall and surprisingly in second
place.

TRAVIS
I've watched a number of the games.
They look legit.

MERMAN
Their defense has been very
suspect. They lead the division in
errors.

ALLIGOOD
Yes, but more than half of those
errors come from Whaley, Chester
and Kendricks, and two of those
guys have been benched.

WEISMAN
Are they going to bench Kendricks?

MERMAN
Haha, not unless they find him with
a live boy or a dead girl.

Laughs.

WEISMAN
Speaking of Kendricks, is he
single? Is he married? Is he
dating?

TRAVIS

I can't believe we're even discussing this.

TESSELL

He could have his pick of women, or men, at this point.

ALLIGOOD

I'm hearing he's been rubbing elbows with the Hollywood types. Some pretty big-name actresses' names have been floating.

MERMAN

Can we PLEASE move on to a real topic?

Travis and Tessell laugh nervously. Alligood is wounded.

WEISMAN

Certainly. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projects a record number of hurricanes this season. Is this going to affect the rest of the season?

TESSELL

Nah, real men play through the rain.

MERMAN

No, they don't.

She frowns at Tessell, who turns away from her glare.

TRAVIS

Yeah, there's no chance they're playing during hurricane winds. Not even those of a small hurricane.

WEISMAN

What exactly is a "small" hurricane?

ALLIGOOD

I wouldn't be shocked if we end up playing some kind of shortened season. It's likely we're going to see a lot of rain- and weather-related cancellations.

WEISMAN

Should the USBL suspend league play because of the events of what the media is calling "Wild Night"?

MERMAN

I AM the media and I'm appalled at what happened on Wild Night, but that's exactly what it was.

TRAVIS

It's probably a bit too soon to suspend play, but they do need to keep an eye on the situation. Who knows what could happen next?

ALLIGOOD

Can they keep things safe? For the fans AND the players?

TESSELL

No way, ballparks are among the safest places in the country. Canceling games would punish players and fans for no reason.

WEISMAN

We definitely know that if USBL President Mary Billups isn't suspending players for last week's brawl, she won't be suspending games because of some random street anarchy.

INT. NATIONAL STADIUM PRESS ROOM - DAY

Ashley Hernandez stands at the podium to lead her first press conference. The room is packed with reporters, but she's the only senior staffer present.

HERNANDEZ

Edith?

EDITH

Nice to meet you Ms. Hernandez.

Hernandez smiles and nods.

EDITH (CONT'D)

After the events of "Wild Night," how is the team going to ensure the safety of fans AND players?

HERNANDEZ

First, I'd like to say it's an honor to be speaking with a woman of such accomplishment.

Edith nods.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

And that's a great question. We're taking this all very seriously...

CUT TO:

McDaris stands and reads his question from his notepad, not looking up from the pad while he listens.

MCDARIS

So your new star player hasn't had a hit in...

He flips his notebook pages until he finds it.

MCDARIS (CONT'D)

SIX games. Is that a significant problem for you?

HERNANDEZ

No. This is a team sport--

MCDARIS

No? You've only won two games during that streak? This HAS to be leading to some high-level discussions about ways to fix your flagging fortunes?

HERNANDEZ

Actually, we're in second--

MCDARIS

Yeah, sure. Early records are important, but would it be accurate to say that this little "experiment" with a 30-year-old walk-on is a failure?

HERNANDEZ

It's only--

MCDARIS

And how can you expect him, or the team, to get any better when it's managed by a--

GRAY

Now wait a minute you self--

Hernandez puts a gentle hand on his arm and he turns to look at her. She mouths "I got this." He defers.

She takes a deep breath. The sound drops away.

HERNANDEZ

I don't want to come across as naïve, so I would assume that a reporter of your stature understands concepts such as anecdotal evidence and how taking a few games out of a full 162-game season is statistically invalid?

Taken aback, McDaris nods.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Good. Then we'll move on to questions to which you don't already have the answers. Mr. McDaris is it?

He hesitates.

MCDARIS

Uh... yeah.

HERNANDEZ

Glad you could confirm your own identity. Do you have a serious question today?

MCDARIS

I... uh... no.

HERNANDEZ

Good. Ms. Alligood?

ALLIGOOD

Thank you...

McDaris' face is red with rage.

CLOSING CREDITS.

Special thanks to the Animals of Section B from Florida State University.

FADE OUT.