

Winning Isn't Anything

Inspired by Actual Events

By: Billy Garvin

FADE IN:

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Parked behind an abandoned brick factory amidst overgrown vegetation.

Dim lights from the radio and the red glow of fresh cigarette ash reveal a MAN, 40, in the driver's seat. He turns his head toward the warehouse.

Two GUNSHOTS then a LIGHT FLASHES through the building window. 5 seconds and the GUNSHOTS and LIGHT FLASHES repeat.

The Man turns the ignition key and starts the engine.

A factory door opens. TONY CERVETTI, 60, large and thick with a mobster's facial terrain, casually emerges and enters the car.

MAN

Both?

CERVETTI

Yeah.

Cervetti looks at his GAUDY GOLD ROLEX WRISTWATCH.

CERVETTI (CONT'D)

I got a flight.

Man hands Cervetti a brick of cash, and shifts the transmission to drive.

EXT. RURAL ROAD-NIGHT

A baseball field surrounded by a chain link fence.

Makeshift wooden sign: FUTURE HOME OF OAKVILLE STADIUM,
HOME OF THE OAKVILLE TRAPPERS.

Geese mingle in the outfield. A raccoon scrounges for scraps in a corner. Dead quiet, deserted.

Beyond the playing field, the perimeter is barren except for light poles, gravel and dirt, and abandoned construction equipment.

EXT. TAVERN-NIGHT

Across the road from the stadium site.

An old-fashioned neon sign in script: SCHNITZ'S.

INT. SCHNITZ'S TAVERN-NIGHT

A honky tonk dive. Blue collar crowd bellied up to the bar.
The sounds from a game of pool in a back room.

Juke box plays country music.

A small cardboard display holder on the bar: TRAPPERS
SEASON SCHEDULE.

A redneck, MAN, 35, pulls out a schedule.

MAN
They playing this season?

The bartender shrugs.

Man shakes his head.

MAN
Must be a Stadium of Dreams.
You know, the stadium's there
but no one can see it.
(imitates James Earl Jones)
People will come Ray.

Other customers laugh.

EXT. HOME-NIGHT

Quiet upper middle class residential neighborhood.

INT. HOME-NIGHT

JOE, 37, fit, dark curly hair, exits a bathroom into a
bedroom, where his wife, LIZ, 35, attractive brunette,
reads in bed.

Joe puts his mobile phone on the nightstand. Liz turns out
the light. 11:00 PM on a clock next to Joe's phone.

LIZ
Try to sleep.

Liz puts her hand gently on Joe's shoulder

JOE
G'night.

Joe is restless, wide awake. He glances at the clock.
Midnight. 2:00 AM. 3:00 AM.

Joe walks into another bedroom. Two young boys sleep. TIM, 7, and JAKE, 9. The walls are covered with sports photos, autographed pictures with athletes, newspaper sports headlines, and team pennants.

Joe stares at a newspaper headline: LOCAL LAWYER BRINGING MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TO OAKVILLE.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. COURTROOM-DAY (6 MONTHS EARLIER)

Joe and his CLIENT, male, 25, dark suit, dark shirt, white tie, stand at the JUDGE'S bench. An opposing attorney, WOMAN, 40, stands next to them.

JUDGE
(to Woman)
Counselor, unless the state has some evidence, something, anything, that supports the search without a warrant, I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to grant Mr. Marks' motion to dismiss.

WOMAN
Your honor, the state believes that the search was supported by exigent circumstances, which is confirmed by the results of--

JUDGE
Ok then, that would be a "no".

Judge pounds the gavel.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Motion granted, case dismissed.

Client gives a fist pump and shakes hands with Joe.

JOE
Thank you your honor.

EXT. COURTHOUSE-DAY

Joe and Client walk down courthouse steps amidst a large downtown city toward the curb and a black limo.

Client gets into the limo back seat. A clean cut man, MARCO, 30, mirrored sunglasses, emerges from the passenger side of the front seat.

MARCO
Got a minute for the Old Man?

JOE
Sure Marco.

INT. LIMO-DAY

Joe sits opposite OLD MAN, 70, large, wavy silver hair, intimidating, dressed in nice slacks and a golf shirt.

OLD MAN
So this is it?

JOE
This is it. For now.

OLD MAN
What am I gonna do without my Jew lawyer?

JOE
You and my mother.

OLD MAN
Your father would be proud.
From the streets to law school,
and now this, a baseball team
owner. Mr. Big Shot.

Joe nods.

OLD MAN
You ever run a cash business?

Joe nods "no".

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You got your spoilage, your
shrinkage, and your stealage.

Joe shrugs.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You know the difference between
depreciation, amortization, and
depletion?

Joe shrugs.

Old Man and Joe stare at each other.

OLD MAN
Difference between LIFO and FIFO
inventory basis accounting?

Joe shakes his head "no".

Old Man leans over and whispers to Joe.

OLD MAN
You sure you wanna--

Joe nods "yes", and Old Man does the same, with less
conviction.

Old Man then motions at Client and slaps the back of his
head.

OLD MAN
Thanks for taking care of the
kid. You need anything, you
call Marco.

Joe and Old Man shake hands, then they hug. Joe steps out
of the limo.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Baseball. You believe that shit?

Client shrugs.

EXT. LIMO-DAY

Joe and Marco shake hands.

MARCO

If you're not his lawyer when
you call, don't call the Old Man.
You call me.

JOE

Marco. Of all people that know
that.

END FLASHBACK

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-PRESENT

Joe walks into another bedroom. A girl, BONNIE, 5, sleeps.
Joe bends down and kisses her on the forehead.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

A car approaches at an idle speed. Headlights off.

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Too dark to identify the driver. The driver lights a
cigarette. The flame from the match reveals a GOLD ROLEX
WRISTWATCH, and a NOTE on the passenger seat: JOE MARKS
1953 LONGFELLOW LN.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Joe walks into a room and flips on a light switch.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

When the light in Joe's house appears, the car moderately
accelerates past. A block away, the head lights and tail
lights turn on.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

HOME OFFICE

Small room with a window to the street. Joe opens a closet door, moves some stray items on a shelf to the side, and reaches deep to the rear into a bowl of candy bars that appear hidden.

Boxes on the closet floor are full of dated, dusty baseball-themed trophies, and framed dated pictures of a young Joe in his baseball uniform.

Joe sits in a rocking lazy boy chair. SAMMY, a large golden lab, wakes, stretches, and climbs up onto his lap.

JOE

Atta boy.

Sammy sleeps while Joe stares ahead and eats his candy bar.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

The morning sun darts through the windows.

Joe makes espresso in a loud machine that grounds the beans and pours the shot. He pours each shot into a tall cup full of ice with a straw while he stands and reads the newspaper.

He shows the newspaper headline to Liz, and shakes his head: OAKVILLE AUTO PLANT CLOSING AFTER LABOR DAY.

LIZ

Uh. Those poor people.

Liz puts bowls of cereal in front of Tim and Jake. Bonnie enters. She wears a Chicago Cubs jersey with the name SORIANO on back.

JAKE

Soriano's a bum.

BONNIE

He is not, stop it. Daddy,
Jake said-

JAKE

Bum.

Bonnie falls apart and starts to ball. She runs to Joe, who picks her up. She buries her head in his chest and weeps. Liz looks at Jake and shakes her head. Tim giggles.

BONNIE
Soriano's not a bum, right
Daddy?

JOE
Nooo, he's not a bum.

Joe looks at Jake and silently mouths the words-

JOE
He's a bum.

LIZ
(to Joe)
Sleep ok? You look exhausted.

Joe nods while he consoles Bonnie. Joe puts Bonnie down on a seat. His chest is all wet from her tears.

Sammy laps up water from a bowl and jumps on Joe. Now his pants are wet too. The kitchen wall phone rings. Liz looks at the caller ID: DAD. She answers.

LIZ
Hey Daddy. Can I call you
later? I have to get everyone
out the door.
(pause)
Thanks. Love you too.
(end call)

JOE
Everything ok?

LIZ
He's been lonely. It's been
a year since Mom-next week, so-

Joe kisses Liz and walks out, coffee in hand.

LIZ
Eat something healthy please.

Joe rolls his eyes.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

Joe opens his car door. A neighbor, GORDY, 50, yells to him from his yard.

NEIGHBOR

How's the team looking?

JOE

Season starts in a week, so-

NEIGHBOR

Stadium ready?

JOE

Hoping for July.

NEIGHBOR

July? You're playing on the road for...?

JOE

Six weeks. You trying to cheer me up?

NEIGHBOR

Sorry, just wondering if- Didn't you quit your job at the firm for that?

JOE

Gordy, I'm an idiot. Alright?

NEIGHBOR

No, no, I didn't mean-

Joe drives away.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT-DAY

Joe drives past a store, OAKVILLE TRAPPERS BASEBALL CLUB, and parks in a far corner.

He reaches in a paper bag and pulls out a McDonald's Egg McMuffin and hash browns. He inhales it while guzzling his ice coffee, and juggles his phone to make a call.

JOE
Fucking voice mail. Goddamnit.
(pause)
Hi Mayor, its Joe. I think this
is around the fifth message I've
left the last couple weeks. Can
we get together and talk about
the stadium? When construction is
starting - you know, that sort of
thing. Thanks.
(end call)
Fucking asshole.

Joe takes a deep breath, calms himself and makes another
call.

JOE
Bud, it's Joe.

INT. OFFICE-DAY

BUD, 52, tan, wears a Trappers baseball cap.

BUD
Hold on man, let me close
the door.

Bud walks around the desk to the door, looks both ways down
the hall, closes the door, which has a sign on the outside:
DIRECTOR OF OAKVILLE BUILDING DEPT.

BUD (CONT'D)
I don't know what to tell you.
This is so fucked up I can't
believe it.

JOE
Jesus, our season starts next
week. This can't be happening.

BUD
Listen, you and I been friends
for too long to - you better
watch your back. The Mayor's up
to something, and I don't really
wanna talk about it over the
phone. Just watch yourself, ok?
(end call)

INT. TRAPPERS OFFICE-DAY

A large open space with a dozen desks, people busy at work on the phones and computers. Joe enters. His cell phone rings.

ALAN, 23, at a corner desk waves and yells at Joe.

ALAN

Before you answer, it's Clete.

JOE

Why?

Alan shrugs his shoulders. Joe answers his cell phone.

JOE

Clete, what's up?

EXT. ARIZONA BASEBALL FIELD COMPLEX-DAY

INT. DUGOUT

CLETE, 60, bleached blonde hair and a beer gut, sits on a bench next to MARTY, 65, red booze nose, who takes a swig from a silver flask. Both wear a baseball practice jersey and pants. Players practice in the background.

CLETE

Just checking when you're
sending more money Joe. Lot
of expenses on the road, so-

Joe walks toward Alan and speaks loudly.

JOE

Alan handles that Clete, so
not really sure. Ask Alan, ok?

CLETE

I did and he said to ask you.

Joe stares a dagger at Alan, who appears embarrassed.

JOE

Ok Clete, we'll get back with
you, thanks, talk soon, bye.
(end call)

Joe approaches Alan.

JOE
C'mon, don't ever send that
asshole my way.

Joe walks past everyone into a back room office. He sits at a desk and covers his face with his hands.

EXT. ARIZONA BASEBALL FIELD COMPLEX-CONTINUOUS

INT. DUGOUT-CONTINUOUS

Clete looks at his phone and turns to Marty.

CLETE
He didn't say.

Marty just shakes his head and drags on a cigarette. Clete walks to the other end of the dugout to make a phone call in private.

CLETE
Mr. Cervetti. Yeah, I just
talked to him, just like you
told me...

INT. JOE'S OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

MARY, 55, Trappers office manager, enters. She has a meek librarian appearance, but deep down, she's strong and decisive.

MARY
You have time? Payroll.

JOE
No. I have to run to City Hall.

MARY
What do you want me to tell
everyone, about payroll? I mean
there's no money, so-

JOE
I don't know Mary. I'll call
you later.

Mary raises her eyebrows.

JOE (CONT'D)
I will, I'll call you.

Joe ignores Mary and leaves.

EXT. HOT DOG STAND-DAY
Joe orders an Italian Beef and sausage sandwich with hot peppers and a cola, then takes it to go in his car.

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

Joe drives through a rural area, past corn fields and horse stables. He turns into a rough gravel parking lot that overlooks the stadium site.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

INT. DUGOUT

Joe sits on a bench and eats. He stops to make a phone call.

JOE
Marco.
(pause)
I need another fifty grand.
(pause)
Today, this afternoon.
(pause)
Ok, let me know.
(end call)

Joe mutters to himself.

JOE (CONT'D)
This is so fucked up.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Non-descript 2-story brick building on a sparse retail street location. Tinted front windows, an awning, and only one outdoor table.

Old Man sits with a couple of rough looking goons at the only table. Marco approaches, leans over and whispers to Old Man, who looks up and nods with approval.

EXT. STADIUM SITE DUGOUT-CONTINUOUS

Joe gives a loud whistle and motions for a man in the distant to join him. JACK, 40, chain smoking groundskeeper with a leathery face. Jack puts down a dirt rake.

Joe pats the spot on the bench next to him for Jack to sit.

JACK
Everything ok?

Joe pats the spot next to him again, and Jack sits.

Jack drags on his cigarette, and Joe closes his eyes and breathes in the smoke as Jack exhales.

Jack offers Joe a cigarette. Joe declines.

Joe stands and motions Jack to follow.

They stroll around the field. Joe walks downwind from the smoke. Joe stops in center field, then stares back at home plate. He appears mesmerized by the panoramic view of the ball field.

EXT. OAKVILLE CITY HALL-DAY

Joe enters.

INT. OAKVILLE CITY HALL-DAY

In front of Joe, off the lobby, is an empty City Council chambers. Joe stands in the doorway.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS-NIGHT (5 MONTHS EARLIER)

MAYOR WHITMAN, 63, stocky African American gives a speech, preacher-like, seated at the Council bench.

MAYOR
And we'd like to thank our
good friend Joe Marks for his
unwavering commitment and
loyalty to our little town. So
Joe, it's "play ball" on the
(MORE)

MAYOR (CONT'D)
stadium construction, with
opening day in about five months.

The crowd of about fifty people applauds.

MAYOR
Would you like to say a few
words Joe?

Joe appears embarrassed and shakes his head "no", but the Mayor urges him to stand, and the crowd follows. Joe reluctantly stands.

JOE
Thank you Mayor Whitman and
everyone. You've all been so
kind to me, I can't thank you
enough. I just hope I can live
up to everything you deserve.

There is an awkward pause. Joe just stands there and shakes his head positively, then sits. The crowd applauds.

MAYOR
And we'd also like to thank Mr.
Wolff, the owner of the stadium
land, who has also been instrumental
in the project.

NICK WOLFF, 52, sandy hair swept back like a 70's porn star with a mustache to match, sits across the room. Wolff stands and waves to the crowd.

MAYOR (CONT'D)
So thank you, Mr. Wolff, for all
that you've done for our town.
We're so blessed to have you.

Joe looks at Wolff with distaste.

A table on the side of the room seats other City employees. Next to Bud is DEE DEE MANNING, 33, with a nameplate: TREASURER.

Dee Dee gives Wolff a proud, sexy look up and down. Joe and Bud notice and look at each other. They both attempt to hide a snicker.

MAYOR (CONT'D)
So if it please the Council, all
those in favor of the stadium
construction, please say 'aye'.

All members of the City Council say "aye", and the Mayor
pounds his gavel.

MAYOR
Congratulations! Let's play ball!

The attendees cheer.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CITY HALL-PRESENT-CONTINUOUS

Joe walks out of the Council Chambers, down a hall, and
barges past a secretary into an office: DEE DEE MANNING,
TREASURER.

Manning sits at her desk.

JOE
Dee Dee, sorry to just pop in,
but I need some straight answers.

DEE DEE
I know Joe. I'm so sorry. I'm
pushing to get started next week.

JOE
Jesus, I'm going broke on everyone's
"next weeks". Enough already.

DEE DEE
I know, really I do. I'm just
so frustrated with the Mayor over
this, I can't tell you.

JOE
Dee Dee, this is about to get
really serious. You know that,
right?

Dee Dee picks up the phone.

DEE DEE
I'm calling the Mayor right
now.

Joe leaves as she dials.

Once Joe is out of sight, Dee Dee puts down the phone and walks down a corridor to a conference room, where the Mayor and Wolff wait with another man, JUDGE RAMOS, 45, thick black hair.

DEE DEE
He's gone.

Wolff stands and closes the door. He opens his briefcase and hands envelopes to the other three.

MAYOR
What are we gonna do about
him? He's not going away like
you said he would.

WOLFF
Cervetti has it covered. That's
why we're paying him.

MAYOR
Cervetti? You said no one would
get hurt.

Wolff raises his eyebrows and points to the envelope.

WOLFF
You want that or not? Because I
don't need a backseat driver.

MAYOR
Judge, what do you think?

JUDGE
Oh no. I'm not part of this.
Holds up his envelope.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
This is just a campaign
contribution. Leave me outta
this.

The Judge and the Mayor leave the room. Dee Dee closes the door. Wolff and Dee Dee stare at each other, then rush to embrace like horny teenagers.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

Joe drives into the gravel parking lot, stops and waits. A black SUV drives up next to him. The window eases down. It's Marco.

Through his window, Marco hands Joe a thick brown envelope. They exchange a handshake, then each drives away.

EXT. BANK-DAY

Drive thru lane.

INT. JOE'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

Joe opens the brown envelope, and hands the teller cash. The teller counts the cash and hands Joe a receipt.

Joe makes a phone call.

JOE
It's me. Run the payroll,
we're good.
(pause)
Don't ask.

INT. TRAPPERS OFFICES-DAY

Mary is on her phone.

MARY
Ok. None of my business.
(end call)

Mary grabs a stack of paychecks, and walks around the office and hands the payroll checks to the employees.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Old Man sits at a table with Cervetti. Marco approaches.

OLD MAN
Get Mr. Cervetti a meatball sub.
(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

To go.

(to Cervetti)

Peppers?

Cervetti nods "yes", and Marco turns around. Old Man sips coffee and motions Cervetti to continue.

CERVETTI

So outta respect I'm coming to
you so you hear it from me. I had
no idea you and Joe were so connected.
Twenty years away, I missed a lot.
Anyway, I know you like the guy,
but this is just business.

OLD MAN

I do like the guy. His ol' man and
I went back a hundred years. Anyway,
you been out six months now. Why'd
you wait so long to come see me?

CERVETTI

I was lining things up first, so,
you know, so I could talk intelligently.

OLD MAN

So talk.

CERVETTI

Here's da situation. I got a thing
going up there. Nobody's fuckin'
watchin' nuthin'. It's like a
Bermuda quadrangle. No state's
attorneys, no FBI, no crime task
force. Anyone with half a brain
could make a bundle up there.

OLD MAN

The whole half a brain?

Cervetti appears confused. Old Man motions him to continue.

CERVETTI

I got the Mayor, the only Judge
in town, this piece 'o shit scumbag
(MORE)

CERVETTI (CONT'D)

real estate developer, and the
broad that handles the town's
dough. So on the deal with Joe,
the real estate guy owns the land,
he leased it to Joe, you know for
his ball team to play, then the real
estate guy and the City used the
lease to get a loan at the bank,
seven million, so they can build
the stadium for Joe's team. Except
they're not gonna build no stadium.
If Joe vacates the premises without
playing a full season, the lease
terminates, we keep the seven million,
and don't gotta build no stadium.

OLD MAN

The bank?

CERVETTI

Let 'em take the land. It's worth
nothin' anyway. Fuck 'em.

OLD MAN

Sounds confusing.

CERVETTI

It is somewhat.

OLD MAN

You sayin' I'm stupid?

Cervetti starts to sweat.

CERVETTI

Are you kiddin'? You're the
smartest S-O-B I know. You know
I have nuthin' but respect for
you, right?

OLD MAN

And you think Joe Marks is going
to go away like some scared rat
without a fight?

CERVETTI

He's goin' broke up there, he'll
have to. Anyway, I'm certain of
it, if you know what I mean.

Marco returns and hands Cervetti his sandwich, wrapped "to
go". Old Man motions Marco to sit.

OLD MAN

You know Joe better than anyone.
He gonna make it up there with
this baseball thing?

Marco looks at Cervetti, then back at Old Man. He shrugs
indecisively.

Old Man motions Marco to leave, then turns to Cervetti.

OLD MAN

Five hundred grand says you
and the Petticoat Junction up
there don't run him out. You
can do anything you want, except
no physical harm or threats. And
I won't give him any more money.
He's on his own. Half a rock says
he makes it the whole season.

Old Man makes eye contact and a head motion above Cervetti,
and four goons walk over and circle the table.

CERVETTI

I don't have my cut yet. 'Til I
get my cut I can't risk the half
a rock.

OLD MAN

You just did. Next time don't
wait six months to see me.

Old Man extends his hand, which Cervetti nervously shakes,
then they give each other the obligatory mobster hug and
kiss on the cheek.

INT. JOE'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE: TELEPHONE CALLS TO JOE FOR MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY-DAY

CLETE

Joe, man, we need three thousand more for hotel and meals on the road.

INT. TRAPPERS OFFICE-DAY

ALAN

I need another two thousand for bats and balls.

INT. TRAPPERS OFFICE-DAY

MARY

The workers comp bill came. Thirteen thousand.

INT. BUD'S OFFICE-DAY

BUD

They wanted me to call and tell you the rent is past due.

END MONTAGE

INT. BANK-DAY

Joe hands paperwork marked WIRE to a teller.

INT. BANK-DAY

Clete waits at a counter. A teller hands him an envelope of cash marked WIRE PROCEEDS.

Clete pockets half the cash from the envelope, then seals the envelope with the remaining half.

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

Joe drives past a park where little leaguers, 9 years old, play a game. He turns in abruptly, and sits in his car and watches.

He occasionally laughs, mimics a baseball swing, and makes comments under his breath.

JOE
Good swing.
Oh, nice catch.
Way to hustle.

Joe glances at the dashboard clock, and drives out.

As he drives, Joe appears angry. He kills the music on the radio, and shakes his head.

He drives past Schnitz's tavern and turns his head toward a car parked in front, which has a vanity license plate: GODS GR8.

Joe drives past, and mutters.

JOE
Mother fucker.

Joe makes a U-turn and pulls into Schnitz's.

INT. SCHNITZ'S-DAY

Joe enters. Wolff sits at the bar. The bartender whispers to Wolff and nods toward Joe. Joe sits next to Wolff, and neither acknowledges the other. They're the only two at the bar.

Bartender approaches Joe.

JOE
Cutty.

Bartender pours Joe a shot from a Cutty Sark bottle, and Joe inhales it. Joe looks straight ahead and talks.

JOE
You know, there's nothing that judges a man like being in a fight where your life depends on surviving. It's exhilarating. Well, assuming you survive, but really, there's nothing like it. And the fight, I mean it usually only lasts like twenty seconds. It's that quick. But Jesus it seems like it takes forever.

Joe turns to Wolff.

JOE (CONT'D)
You ever been Nick?

WOLFF
No. But he has.

Wolff nods in the direction behind Joe. Cervetti approaches as the Men's Room door closes.

Cervetti sits next to Joe, who is now sandwiched between him and Wolff. Joe stares ahead and talks without looking at either.

JOE
The Old Man know you're back?

CERVETTI
I'm consulting for Mr. Wolff.

WOLFF
Vice President of Security. Mr. Cervetti ensures the integrity of my contract enforcement procedures.

JOE
How long you been out?

CERVETTI
Why, you writin' a book?

JOE
Yeah. It's called - How some Shrek-looking motherfucker took it up the ass in the joint. Catchy, right?

Cervetti stands and hovers over Joe. Wolff scampers around and gets between them.

WOLFF
(to Cervetti)
Not here. That's what he wants.

Wolff coaxes Cervetti toward the exit.

JOE
Don't let the door fuck you in
the ass-

Wolff pulls an angry Cervetti out of Schnitz's. Joe appears emotionless. He points to his glass for another shot of Cutty. The Bartender complies.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Joe lies in bed, wide awake. 1:00 AM. 2:00 AM.

HOME OFFICE

Joe sits with Sammy on his lap. He makes a phone call.

INT. LOFT APARTMENT-NIGHT

Marco answers his phone. A naked blonde woman sleeps next to him.

MARCO
4:00 AM dude, really?

HOME OFFICE

JOE
I need help.

MARCO'S APARTMENT

MARCO
Well the Old Man isn't gonna
give you no more money, so
forget about that. You can't
even make the vig on the current
portfolio. But there is something
I think we can arrange. The Old
Man said to send the Greek to
help you, you know, do some
fixing, help you run things.

HOME OFFICE

JOE
Antonopolous? Jesus, I haven't
seen him in ten years.

MARCO
Nobody has. He's been in Iraq.
But back now.

JOE
The Greek joined the Marines?

MARCO'S APARTMENT

MARCO
No. AFL-CIO. We got a few things
going up over there. Private
casinos. Lots of cement and steel.

EXT. HOUSE-DAY

Bud walks out of a small house. He opens his car door in the driveway, when a luxury SUV turns in the driveway to block him. The Mayor gets out of the SUV driver's side, and Cervetti the passenger side. They coax Bud back into his house.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

Bleachers, a few tents, and some trailers arrive. Workers screw signs to the trailers: PRIVATE OFFICE, FRONT OFFICE, HOME LOCKER ROOM, VISITOR LOCKER ROOM, TICKETS.

The Trappers employees move desks and computers into the Front Office trailer. Some shake their heads as they look around and survey the bleak surroundings.

Joe moves a few boxes into the Private Office Trailer.

INT. PRIVATE TRAILER (JOE'S)-DAY

Joe sets up a long fold out table with bottles of soda and liquor. Bud enters the trailer just as Joe's phone rings: LIZ. Bud appears antsy as Joe takes the call.

JOE-
Hey.

LIZ
How's it going out there?
Wearing sunscreen and a hat?

Joe wears no cap, and he's sunburn.

JOE

Yep.

LIZ

Eat something healthy today?

Open bags of chips and beer bottles on the table.

JOE

I did, yeah.

LIZ

Ok, good. What time tonight?

JOE

Late.

LIZ

Be careful, please.
(end call)

JOE

(to Bud)

I don't know what to tell her.
I put all our money into this
fucking shit show.

Bud remains nervous and looks out the window.

BUD

I've only got a minute. The Mayor,
he knows how tight we are, and
he and this guy come to my house,
I mean some fuckin' old school
mob looking guy, and they hand
Karly and me a stack of plane
tickets and hotel stuff for all
over Europe for the whole summer.
I told him I didn't have the
vacation time but he said it's a
paid vacation. And not optional.
Jesus Joe, this is some fucked up
shit.

JOE

They want you out of the way so
you won't help me.

BUD
I'm sorry man, but I'm out. That
guy scared the shit outta Karly,
and we just--

JOE
It's ok man. I understand.

Bud opens the door to leave, and turns to Joe.

BUD
There's not gonna be a stadium.
You know that right?

Joe doesn't respond, and Bud leaves.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING-DAY

Wolff walks toward a closed door. The entire floor appears empty and abandoned. He looks back, as if to see if he was followed.

Wolff opens the door. On the other side, Dee Dee lies under a sheet on a mattress on the dirty floor next to a pile of clothes. Wolff closes the door behind him.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

Joe sits on a lawn chair on the baseball infield grass. He holds a hose that sprays water on the grass.

A muddy jeep turns into the gravel parking lot. License plate: DA GREEK. Phil emerges. Joe whistles.

Phil walks toward Joe while he looks around and shakes his head at the surroundings.

PHIL
Long time, friend.

Phil and Joe hug.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Where's the stadium? This is
some fucking goat rodeo.

Joe points to the Front Office trailer.

JOE

Not the half of it. Check in
with Mary in there. She'll get
you set up, you know the drill.
And don't swear in front of her.
She's a Mormon.

PHIL

A Mormon? No shit.

Phil turns, but Joe stops him.

JOE

Thanks for coming Greek. This
might be worse than Baghdad.

Phil shakes his head.

PHIL

It's sure worse than I thought.

INT. PHIL'S CAR-DAY

Phil makes a phone call.

PHIL

Yeah, it's me. I'm here.

(pause)

I have to say, it's not good.

(pause)

A whole season? Jesus.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Marco stands, on the phone, next to a table where Old Man
sits.

MARCO

The whole season. The Old Man's
counting on you, capish? We'll
be in touch.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

The sun begins to set. Joe remains alone on the field with
the hose. He's approached by AARON, a 6'4" muscular black
man, 30, neatly dressed. Joe appears cautious.

AARON

Joe? Aaron Sullivan. We talked
on the phone last month? I called
about the sales job.

JOE

Sullivan? I don't recall-

AARON

Well I sure do. I'm real anxious
to work for you.

JOE

Not much here for you to sell
Aaron. I mean a month ago I thought
maybe we'd have- I just don't know
what I'd have you do. There's
nothing here to--

Aaron puts his big arm around Joe.

AARON

We'll work it out. I just want
to be around the game, you know?
I was a player in the Orioles
system a few years back.

The two stand side by side and look out the field.

AARON (CONT'D)

It's beautiful isn't it?

Joe nods.

JOE

I used to think so. I'm not
so sure anymore.

AARON

Baseball man. It doesn't get
any better.

JOE

Mr. Sullivan. I have a good
feeling about you.

Joe points to the Front Office trailer.

JOE (CONT'D)
Get with Phil in there. You
guys work it out.

The two shake hands.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-NIGHT

Joe, Phil, and Aaron meet and go over paperwork.

PHIL
What about that kid Darren.
Can he handle the ticket stuff
if we promote him?

JOE
I don't know. You guys notice
he's a little - dense?

Aaron and Phil don't react.

JOE
Ok. Here's what we'll do...

The three chat. Phil talks into a walkie-talkie radio.

PHIL
Darren, come to Joe's trailer.

A response on Phil's radio.

DARREN
Which one is that?

Joe, Aaron, and Phil shake their heads. Phil responds on
the radio.

PHIL
The one fifty feet from where
you're sitting, with Joe's car
parked right in front of it.

DARREN
What kind of car?

Joe, Aaron, and Phil shake their heads. Phil responds.

PHIL
You got ten seconds you little
shit.

Phil watches the second hand on his watch. Darren bursts through the door on the 9th second.

JOE
Darren, need you to run down
to Subway. I'll have a footlong
ham with swiss, -

The three give Darren their food orders as he writes.
Darren scampers off on his mission.

JOE
We'll see.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

Darren arrives with the food.

PHIL
(to Darren)
Wait outside.

Darren walks out.

Phil, Aaron, and Joe unwrap their sandwiches.

PHIL
He got mine right.

AARON
Mine too.

Joe takes the bread off his sandwich and inspects the ingredients.

JOE
Fine.

EXT. JOE'S TRAILER-NIGHT

Darren paces, Phil emerges from the Trailer. They talk, Darren gives a fist pump, and they shake hands.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

AARON

The bar's pretty low here, huh?

BEGIN MONTAGE: THE TEAM KEEPS WINNING ON THE ROAD

- Players hit home runs.
- Players board a bus.
- Newspaper league standings show the team in 1st place.
- Players congratulate each other after a win.
- Clete and Marty shake hands in a locker room.
- In the Office Trailer, Alan erases the win total for the 1st place Trappers and adds another win.
- Clete talks on the phone with Cervetti.
- Joe stands across from a bank teller, hands her wire instructions.
- Clete takes cash from a bank teller, pockets the dough, then steps onto a bus full of players. He motions 3 players off the bus. Outside the bus, Clete and the 3 huddle, he hands them cash, then they all step on the bus and shake their heads "no" as if the money didn't arrive. The other players appear angry.

END MONTAGE

INT. TRAPPERS' TEAM BUS-NIGHT

The players sleep. Clete and Marty drink beer from the front two seats across the aisle from each other.

CLETE

So we're on the same page?

Marty nods. Clete makes a phone call and whispers.

CLETE

We're good to go on our end.

INT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

Dingy, outdated furniture. Cervetti looks out the window while he talks on the phone.

CERVETTI

You better be, or you'll be
coaching Ty Cobb next summer
if ya know what I mean.
(end call)

INT. TEAM BUS-CONTINUOUS

Clete slumps in his seat. He appears nervous.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

A flip-over sign on the wall: DAYS UNTIL HOME OPENER: 1.
The grease board with the league standings show the Trappers in 1st place.

Office activity includes staff on the phones, while Aaron and Phil huddle, and Joe signs checks.

Aaron and Phil motion Joe to follow them outside.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

AARON

Marty just called. Not good. He said the players are owed a bunch of money, and if they're not paid, they're not playing.

JOE

What? How is that even possible with all the money I keep sending. How much?

AARON

He didn't say.

JOE

Not play the home opener? Who the fuck threatens that? Just tell that fucking rummy we'll square with everyone when they get here.

AARON

Joe, man, sorry to ask, but do we even have it?

JOE

That's a stupid fuckin' question. Of course we don't have it.

Phil laughs.

JOE (CONT'D)

Look. I won't be threatened by a bunch of fucking spoiled ballplayers still living out the high school glory days. Fuck 'em. They'll get square on all the money when they get here, if it's even owed. End of story, ok?

Aaron nervously nods, and Joe walks away.

AARON

Why does he have such a hard on for the players?

They walk to the field.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Joe was a ballplayer himself. Back in high school. Did you know that?

AARON

Joe?

PHIL

A damn good one too. But, he had anger issues. That's what ended it for him.

AARON

He hurt someone?

PHIL

Someone? Yeah. Someone.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. SCHOOL BUS-DAY (20 Years Ago)

High school ballplayers in uniforms sit, sweaty and dirty, appear dejected.

Coach, 50, enters the bus, and stands in the aisle. He spots Joe and approaches him. They have a heated exchange of words.

PHIL (V.O.)

The coach had told Joe to
bunt late in the game, and
Joe ignored him. He swung away
and—

BEGIN SUB-FLASHBACK

EXT. BALLFIELD-DAY (20 Years Ago)

Joe is up to bat, with runners on 1st and 2nd base. He hits a deep fly ball to center field. The outfielder goes back, back, back. As the ball clears the fence, the outfielder dives over the fence, and emerges holding the ball.

The umpire signals "out", and the outfielder throws the ball to the infield, where the runner on 2nd is already at home plate, and he's called "out" for advancing. Inning over.

Coach throws his clipboard and stares at Joe as he returns to the dugout.

END SUB-FLASHBACK

FLASHBACK (CONT'D)

Coach grabs Joe by the jersey and shakes him. Joe punches Coach in nose and knocks him flat on his back in the bus aisle. The other players appear stunned. Joe calmly sits back in his seat.

END FLASHBACK

PHIL

He was banned from high school
ball. In the whole state. So
why does he have such a hard
on for the guys? Because he
misses the game. He'd play for
nothing if he could, and all
they do is bitch.

Aaron nods as if he understands.

INT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

Dark room, lights out, the deadbolt turns: CLICK. Phil enters and turns on the light.

Cervetti sits in the middle of the room, with a gun pointed at Phil. He motions with the gun for Phil to sit opposite him.

Phil sits across from Cervetti.

CERVETTI
You know who I am?

PHIL
I'm pretty sure I do.

CERVETTI
Then you know I don't know the meaning of da word "no".

Phil lights a cigarette.

PHIL
From what I hear, you struggle with the meaning of a lot of words.

Phil offers Cervetti a cigarette. Cervetti reaches for it and instead punches Phil in his gut, which buckles him.

CERVETTI
I think I'll call you Allstate,
'cuz you're gonna be my insurance policy.

Cervetti pulls a photo out of his pocket. It's a little girl. He hands it to Phil.

CERVETTI (CONT'D)
Now let's skip the part where you're a tough guy and get to the part where you're gonna do what I tell ya, ok?

Phil looks at the photo and nods.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

The team bus arrives. Players and coaches step off and look around. They appear disgusted at the surroundings.

Clete looks at Marty and cues him to start talking.

MARTY

This is it?

CLETE

Fuck this. This isn't what we
were told it would be. This is
bullshit.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe sits among beer cans and bags of junk food. Phil walks in.

JOE

They here?

PHIL

They're all here. Marty and Clete
are already hemming me up about
the money.

JOE

Christ, can we play one fucking
game first? Tell Clete to meet us
for lunch tomorrow and we'll settle
up. We have a game in two hours
for chrissakes.

PHIL

You called it. Fucking Baghdad.

Phil leaves.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

MONTAGE-OPENING NIGHT

- The lineups are announced.
- Joe sits with Liz and the kids at a table on a small wooden deck behind home plate.
- Small crowd cheers.
- Liz and the kids eat hot dogs and cotton candy.

- The game action includes home runs by both teams in a close, low scoring contest.
- The scoreboard shows lead changes back and forth.
- The food concession tents have no lines of customers.
- Joe focuses on empty spots in the bleachers.

END MONTAGE

Phil approaches Joe and sits. They whisper.

PHIL
What do you think?

Joe looks around. Empty seats. Concession workers stand around with no sales.

JOE
We're fucked.

Phil gives Joe a sympathetic pat on the back and walks away.

A male FAN, 30, uses a cell phone to show a panoramic view of the activity, then talks into the phone.

FAN
You got it?

INT. WAREHOUSE-NIGHT

Wolff sits with Cervetti.

CERVETTI
Yeah, I got it.
(end call)
(to Wolff)
The best part is, there's nuthin'
for me to burn down. It'll just
end in a few days.

Wolff stands to leave.

WOLFF
Mr. Cervetti, I leave this in
your capable hands.

INT. CITY HALL OFFICE-NIGHT

Wolff shows Manning the cell phone picture.

WOLFF
He won't make it another week.

DEE DEE
You're brilliant.

WOLFF
And you're smokin' hot.

The two tear each other's clothes off.

INT. TRAPPERS DUGOUT-NIGHT

PLAYER 1
I don't get my money tomorrow
I'm adios. I hear they need
players in Evansville.

PLAYER 2
Me too. My agent said I can
play in Gary Indiana.

PLAYER 1
The murder capital? You need
a new agent.

Clete overhears the comments, looks at Marty and winks.

Bottom of the 9th inning, game tied.

A Trappers player hits a home run, and the slim crowd
cheers the victory. The team mobs the player at home plate.

Liz and the kids cheer. Joe remains seated.

JOE
I'm going to go meet with Phil
for a while. Won't be too late -
maybe Midnight.

LIZ
Ok, be careful.

Joe gives Liz and the kids a kiss.

Jake watches Joe walk away and appears concerned.

Joe walks toward his trailer. He looks in every direction, then gets in his car and drives away.

INT. JOE'S CAR-NIGHT

Joe appears filled with anxiety.

He pulls the car over about a mile from the field, opens his car door, leans out and vomits. He slumps back in his seat and closes his eyes.

JOE

What am I gonna do?

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

Joe goes through his routine - espresso poured over ice. The kids all sit at the table and eat breakfast.

LIZ

Couldn't you sleep in a little today?

JOE

Have to go meet with Phil, Marty, and Clete. Painful.

LIZ

Anything wrong?

JOE

I'm on my way to meet with a world renowned drunk and his scumbag sidekick to pacify a bunch of twenty four year old adolescents. What could be wrong?

Liz glances at Jake, then back at Joe. She pulls Joe to side and whispers.

LIZ

Forget something?

Joe appears clueless.

LIZ (CONT'D)

You promised Jake he could go
with you today.

JOE

Jesus, I can't take a kid into
that shit-storm. God damnit Liz--

LIZ

He's been talking about it all
week.

They look at Jake. Hair wetted, combed and parted.

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

Jake rides in the front seat. He's bopping his head to the
music, pleased as punch to be with his dad. Joe turns off
the radio.

JOE

So here's the deal. You're going
to hear and see some stuff today
that you can't tell anyone about,
ok?

JAKE

Yep.

JOE

This is no joke, Jake. Not even
Mommy, ok?

JAKE

Sure Dad.

JOE

What is it that your Grandpa says
again?

JAKE

Real men keep their promises.

JOE

That's right. We keep our promises.

Joe hits a speed dial on his phone.

JOE (CONT'D)
Fuckin voice mail.

He looks at Jake, who shrugs.

JOE (CONT'D)
Mayor, it's Joe. This will be
my last message, as its obvious
you're avoiding me. You and Wolff
stuck me good, and I'm looking at
a two million dollar loss now,
and I can't even get the courtesy
of a fucking return call from you.
You are greatly underestimating
my resolve to hold you and everyone
accountable. So have a nice day,
and go fuck yourself you piece of
shit cocksucker.
(end call)

Jake's lips are tightly sealed, as he makes the mock turn
of the key gesture on his lips.

INT. RESTAURANT-DAY

Joe and Jake arrive. Phil waives from a table. He sits with
Marty, and Clete. Marty puts down his glass of scotch.

WAITRESS
Hello, welcome. Can I get you
a beverage?

JOE
Ice tea.

JAKE
Same, thank you.

Marty swigs his scotch and holds up his glass.

MARTY
I'll have another.

The five eat, and the mood appears civil. Jake sips the ice
tea and makes a sour face.

JOE

Guys, let's get to all the money
clean up. Clete, meet with Mary
this afternoon, reconcile all the
issues, all of it, and we'll cut
checks today and be done.

CLETE

That would be great. I have a
list here-

Clete pulls a folded sheet of paper from his pocket. Joe
puts up his hand.

JOE

Just give it to Mary, Clete. And
be prepared with receipts. She's
a stickler.

MARTY

Well, that's good, let's get it
done.

PHIL

So we're good?

Joe stands, then leans over the table in Clete's direction.

JOE

One more thing. I don't want to
hear one more fucking utterance
of players threatening not to play.
One more time, and everyone's gone.
Everyone.

CLETE

Well, they're a good group of boys.
They--

JOE

See, that's the problem, Clete,
they're not boys, they're men.
Adults. And even though it's past
Noon right now, they're still
sleeping off whatever butt fuck
they gave last night, and then
sometime before the nightly news,

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

which they've never watched because they've always been told by their parents that they were the only thing going on in the world, they'll saunter over to the ball field- a fucking ball field, not an office- a ball field, then play a kids game on the grass while dressed in pajamas. The only thing I wanna hear from those lucky motherfuckers, those "boys", is "thank you."

Phil appears concerned that Joe is getting all worked up.

PHIL

Ok, so we're all on the same page right?

MARTY

Yep, yep, all on the same page.

Clete is silent, slumped in his chair with his arms folded.

Joe throws cash on the table, and he leaves with Jake and Phil.

CLETE

Asshole. Gonna get his.

Marty counts the cash, looks at the check, then waives the waitress over and jiggles his empty glass for another.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

League standings board-Trappers in 1st place. Joe arrives and sits next to Mary. Jake shadows Joe.

JOE

Clete's on his way over, so here's the deal. Don't waste a lot of time on this. Ask questions, and make him feel like we're not laying down on everything, but Mary, we are. I just wanna pay whatever he's claiming so I can be done with this shit - sorry Mary.

MARY

What if he doesn't have receipts
for everything?

JOE

Receipts? Mary, we're off the
accounting grid. This is jungle
accounting. I'm too exhausted to
fight over this.

Clete, Marty and AVERY THOMAS, a 30-ish bald man that
appears a little old to be a player, all enter the trailer
and approach Joe.

JOE

I thought this was just going
to be Clete.

They all sit, and Joe turns to Avery.

JOE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Avery stands and responds in an arrogant tone.

AVERY

I'm Avery Thomas, Trappers starting
3rd baseman.

JOE

Wow. You say that as if it's a big
fuckin' deal. Congratulations.

Avery looks at Marty. They're speechless.

JOE

Ok. Clete, Mary's ready for you.
Sit down with her, and work it out.
But just you Clete - this isn't
going to be the three of you
standing over her. That won't work.

CLETE

That's fine.

AVERY

So when we gonna get paid?

JOE
That's why Clete's here, Avery.
Why the fuck are you here?

AVERY
I'm owed money, that's why I'm
here.

Joe and Avery move toward each other. Jake gets wide eyed.

Marty puts his hand up to calm the situation.

MARTY
Let's let Clete and Mary work
it out. Then we'll see.

Avery and Marty sit. Joe points to the door.

JOE
This isn't your locker room.

Marty and Avery walk out. Avery and Joe stare each other
down.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe and Jake eat chips. Jake guzzles soda, Joe a beer. Mary
enters.

MARY
Just finished with Clete. He's
claiming ten thousand dollars, but
the receipts just don't look right,
or even real. Nevermind that we
don't even have the ten thousand.

Joe closes his eyes and leans back.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, and he wants cash so he can
give it out to players.

JOE
Fuck - sorry Mary. Alright, tell
him to come back at two.

MARY
You're going to give him cash?

Joe takes a deep breath and looks at Mary.

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

Joe drives his luxury car into an auto dealership. Jake just observes in silence as he works through a bag of chips.

EXT. AUTO DEALERSHIP-CONTINUOUS

Joe drives a used station wagon out of the parking lot.

INT. JOE'S CAR (STATION WAGON)-CONTINUOUS

Joe appears unemotional. Jake is equally unphased, now with a lollipop.

There's a large brick of bound hundred dollar bills bound on the back seat.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe and Jake sit at the table. Clete enters.

CLETE

Hey Joe.

Joe doesn't look up. He hands Clete the brick of cash.

CLETE (CONT'D)

Thanks, man.

Neither Joe nor Jake look at Clete or acknowledge him. Clete leaves and Jake shakes his head.

JAKE

Bum.

EXT. HOME LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-DAY

Clete takes the rubber band off the cash. He runs his thumb through the edge of the cash like it's a deck of cards. He takes about two-thirds of it, folds it, stuffs it in his pocket, and puts the rubber band around the remainder.

INT. HOME LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-DAY

Clete enters, displaying cash. He yells out to the players.

CLETE

He only gave me a part of what
you're owed, so I'll pass it out,
and maybe we'll get the rest later.

Players swear and throw equipment. Clete whispers to the same 3 players he appeared to be in cahoots with on the bus. One is Avery.

Clete looks around the trailer, and seizes on the mood. He dumps everything off a supply table, then stands on it and preaches to the young players.

CLETE (CONT'D)

If we don't get all our money
today, you're all free agents!
(chants)
Free agents! Free agents! Free
agents!

Avery and others enthusiastically chant along. Marty sits on a stool in the corner, drinks beer, and stares through everyone.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

League standings board-Trappers in 1st place. Joe walks in, appears exhausted, trailed by Jake, who also drags in like his dad. The staff appears busy.

MARY

Joe.
(she holds up the phone)
It's Avery Thomas's mother.

Joe appears confused.

MARY (CONT'D)

She asked for you.

The staff peeks up from their desks for Joe's response. He points to the phone on a vacant desk. Mary transfers the call.

JOE

Mrs. Thomas?
(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

(pause)

Yes, we worked all that out.

(pause)

Yes, Avery got his money today,
less the court ordered child
support garnishment.

(pause)

You know, for the twins. Let's
see here...

Joe picks up paper and makes a shuffling sound near the
phone.

JOE (CONT'D)

Here it is, the payments go to
a Miss Carmen Geddit. Huh, sounds
like a stage name. Maybe an actress?

(pause)

Oh my. He didn't tell you- oh this
is really embarrassing. Alright,
well, I've already said way too
much here.

Joe holds up the phone and motions to Mary, who takes the
cue and yells.

MARY

Joe, call on line three.

JOE

I have to run Mrs. Thomas.

(pause)

But-

(pause)

I know, but-

Joe motions Mary for more, and holds out the phone.

MARY (CONT'D)

Joe, it's - the President.

Joe shakes his head at Mary.

JOE

I have to run Mrs. Thomas. All
the best, and to the twins.

(end call)

Joe walks out, followed by Jake.

INT. HOME LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-DAY

Players sit around, mope, while Clete and Marty huddle. Clete does the talking, Marty nods with approval.

EXT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe and Jake are about to get in the car, when Phil approaches.

PHIL
Not staying for the game?

JOE
I'm going home. The thought of watching these assholes play a game sickens me.

INT. HOME LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

Players are half dressed. Marty walks around the room, stops and says a few words to a few players, and carries a gym bag. The locker with his name is empty - just a few loose hangers.

INT. JOE'S CAR-NIGHT

Joe's phone rings. It's Phil.

JOE
This can't be good.

PHIL
You didn't hear?

JOE
Oh God what?

PHIL
Marty just quit. Left. Walked off. Didn't even tell me. Just walked off. A lot of the players are packing up too.

Joe makes a U-turn.

JOE
On my way back.

INT. HOME LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

Clete stands on top of the table and chants.

CLETE
Free Agents, Free Agents...

Players rally like an angry mob. Some take off their uniform.

INT. JOE'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

The phone rings. It's Phil.

JOE
Yeah.

PHIL
Half the team walked out. Clete's playing all pitchers tonight.

JOE
Of course he is. Tell Aaron to suit up. He's managing tonight. Go fire Clete.

PHIL
Joe...so the guys that already left, they took all the bats with 'em. Do you believe that? They stole the fucking bats.

Joe turns the car into the stadium site parking lot, slams on the brakes, and parks. He opens his glove compartment and reaches in.

50 feet away, Clete throws two full equipment bags in his truck, and steps into the front seat.

Joe motions Jake to wait back while he walks up to Clete's truck. Joe looks into the truck carbo bed, reaches in and grabs a loose baseball and both equipment bags. Bats stick out of one of the bags.

Joe hurls the baseball at the back window of truck, and it shatters. Joe casually walks back to his trailer and inside with Jake.

Clete turns off his engine and steps out of the truck. He runs after Joe, who closes his trailer door behind him.

EXT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Clete flings open the trailer door. Joe stands in the entrance and points a handgun at Clete's face. Jake sits in the background and munches on chips.

JOE
(to Clete)
If I were you, I'd drive 'til
I hit ocean, then change my name.

Clete slowly back-peddles away from the trailer and sheepishly gets in his truck and drives.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe closes the door as Clete scampers off. He turns and looks at Jake, who nods and gives Joe a thumbs up sign. Joe opens the chamber of the pistol and shows it to Jake.

JOE
See, it's empty. Daddy would
never shoot anyone, ok?

Jake nods.

Joe takes a swig of beer from a bottle, then grabs a plastic cup and puts it in front of Jake. Joe pours less than a swallow of beer in the cup.

JOE
You're only nine, but today was
your bar mitzvah. You're a man now.

Joe and Jake toast the bottle to the cup.

JAKE
L' Chaim.

Jake swallows the taste of beer and puckers like it was lemons.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Liz talks on the phone in a room with a window that overlooks the front yard.

LIZ
It's not good Daddy. Joe doesn't
say much, but I can see it in
his eyes.

The slam of car doors gets Liz' attention.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Daddy, I think they're home, I
have to run.
(pause)
Love you too. Bye.

Liz looks out the window. She appears confused at the site of a used station wagon in the driveway.

Joe enters through the front door. He's disheveled and looks exhausted. Jake follows, with a yawn. His hair is no longer neatly combed.

LIZ
(to Jake)
So how was your day with Daddy?

Jake responds in an apathetic tone, like he was returning from a boring day at school.

JAKE
Good.

He walks up the stairs.

Liz points out the window at the station wagon and gives a puzzled gesture with her hands.

Joe turns his head toward the upstairs, and looks to make sure that Jake is out of site, then he steps to Liz and buries his head on her shoulder.

EXT. VACANT PARKING LOT-NIGHT

Clete and Cervetti meet in the dark of night. Cervetti hands Clete a wad of cash.

CLETE
I'm so far outta here it's
not funny.

CERVETTI
Good. The farther the better.

BEGIN MONTAGE: THE NEWS OF THE DAY TRAVELS

- Joe and Liz sit close on a couch and talk.
- Cervetti talks on the phone from his car.
- The Mayor listens on his phone.
- Wolff stuffs loads of cash into a green gym bag, while Dee Dee gets dressed in the background of their flea bag hotel room.
- Joe and Liz hold each other.

END MONTAGE

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Phil talks on the phone.

PHIL
They all left. Players, everyone.
(pause)
Yeah, it looks like it's over.

INT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT-DAY

Cervetti talks on the phone.

CERVETTI
So I heard there was an issue
with players not getting paid,
but I don't know much about it.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Old Man sits at his table with Marco while it rains. His goons hold umbrellas over them.

OLD MAN
No ballplayers? That's good for
you. Bad for me.

CERVETTI'S APARTMENT

CERVETTI
We'll see. You havin' second
thoughts?

MOB HANGOUT

OLD MAN
I don't have second thoughts.
Why, you wanna take it higher?

CERVETTI
Eh, I'd consider. What are you
thinking?

Old Man puts his hand over the phone.

OLD MAN
(to Marco)
A million?

Marco shrugs. Old Man takes his hand off the phone.

OLD MAN
Let's go up to a full rock.
Make it interesting.

CERVETTI'S APARTMENT

Cervetti takes a deep breath, then calms. He appears
nervous.

CERVETTI
Gee I don't know. A million
is half my take on the whole
thing. I've been working on
this for six months.

OLD MAN
So we're good then. That's good.
A million. Stay in touch.
(end call)

Cervetti looks at the phone and nods to himself.

CERVETTI
We'll see who's so fucking
smart.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

Joe enters. Things appear normal. Kids eat breakfast, Liz puts out the little fires. Bonnie wears her Soriano jersey. Her face lights up when she sees Joe.

BONNIE

Daddy, Soriano got three hits
last night.

TIM

They lost. The hits don't mean
anything if you lose.

Bonnie's lip starts to quiver. They all try not to look, but it's too hard. She loses it, and the floodgates open.

Tim and Jake laugh. Joe picks her up. She tries to talk through the tears.

BONNIE

It doesn't matter if you lose,
right Daddy?

JOE

That's right.

Joe looks at Tim and silently mouths the words.

JOE

It matters.

BONNIE

(to Tim)

See? Daddy says it doesn't
matter if you win or lose,
right Daddy?

Tim, Jake, and Liz all focus on Joe. It's awkward silence. He looks at Bonnie.

JOE

That's right sweetie. It doesn't
matter. You just have to play
the game and finish the game.

Tim looks at Joe like he's weird.

Joe puts Bonnie back in her chair and pulls the cell phone out of his pocket and makes a call.

JOE

Aaron, we don't have much time.
We need a whole new roster,
players and coaches by tomorrow.
Whatever connections you have,
we need 'em.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

Aaron talks on the phone.

AARON

I'll do my best Joe, but- during
the season everyone's already
playing somewhere, so-

JOE

I'm counting on you.
(end call)

Aaron looks at his phone, shakes his head, takes a deep breath.

AARON

Showtime.

Aaron makes a phone call.

AARON

Hey Jose, good news, turns out
we have an open roster spot.
Actually more than one if you
know anyone else looking to play...

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe sits alone, eats a twinkie to go with a bottle beer.
Aaron enters. He breaks into a big grin.

JOE

My motherfucker. You did it.

PHIL
None of 'em are over twenty
three, but they all own a glove
and shoes.

Joe stands and gives Aaron a handshake that turns into a hug.

JOE
Thank you.

AARON
Don't thank me yet. I haven't
seen any of these guys play, so-

JOE
Hey, it's not like anyone's
showing up to watch.

Joe hands Aaron a bottle of beer from a cooler and they toast.

MONTAGE-OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

- New players arrive at the stadium site via cars with various out-of-state license plates.
- Avery and the players that quit gather in an apartment with packed bags and stolen bats in plain site.
- Mary assists the new players with paperwork.
- The new players meet on the field, and introduce themselves to each other.

END MONTAGE

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

The Trappers play under the lights. The scoreboard:
VISITORS 11 TRAPPERS 1, 5th INNING.

Joe watches from his usual table, alone.

Phil talks on his phone from a remote spot near the field.

PHIL
Nothing I could do. This guy
Aaron got him a full team, so-

INT. RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Cervetti talks on his phone from a hallway.

CERVETTI
Fine. Stubborn asshole wants
to play, I'll play.
(end call)

Cervetti returns to his table, where two other men wait.
SAL, 36, dark hair and beard, 6'4", 280 pounds, and GUY,
36, 5'8", 200 pounds, tattooed arms.

CERVETTI
(to Guy)
Now Sal, remember, it has to look
like he came after you first.

GUY
Uncle Tony, I'm Guy, that's
cousin Sal.

Cervetti squints at the two.

CERVETTI
Sorry. You two were sixteen
when I went away, so-

SAL
Yeah, we remember. It was the
week before our eighth grade
graduation party. The folks
were pretty bummed.

Guy nods in agreement.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

Joe sits in a chair in his den and sips his iced espresso.
Sammy sits beside him with his head on Joe's lap. It's
pouring rain outside, and the sky flashes with lightning.
His phone rings. Caller ID: PHIL.

JOE
Phil?

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

Phil talks on the phone while three ballplayers sit in a
far corner.

PHIL
Well, I thought I'd seen everything.

JOE'S HOUSE

JOE
Oh God, what now?

PHIL
You lookin' outside?

JOE
Yeah, it's raining. Is that
my fault too?

FRONT OFFICE TRAILER

PHIL
No, but it's your problem. The
storm knocked out the power at
our bank, and I got some holdovers
from the last roster that still
need to cash some old paychecks.

JOE
And this is my problem because...?

PHIL
The league office called. They're
gonna fine the shit out of you if
we don't get these checks cashed
so these guys can leave. The good
news, though, is First National
said they'd cash the checks.

JOE'S HOUSE

JOE
You said good news. Kind of
like in a way that there's
also bad news?

No response.

JOE
Phil?

FRONT OFFICE TRAILER

PHIL

You have to go with 'em since
you're the signer on the account.

JOE

Your kidding, right?

Phil doesn't respond.

JOE (CONT'D)

Phil?

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

A soaking wet Joe drives in the downpour as four
ballplayers count their cash - one in the front passenger
seat and three in the back. Joe looks in his rear view
mirror. The reflection reveals Avery in the middle. He
stares at Joe with a mean-spirited glare.

AVERY

My check was short ten bucks.

Joe doesn't respond.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Hey, you hear me? My check was
short. I'm calling the league
office.

The other ballplayers watch Joe nervously. Joe looks in the
rear view mirror again and notices that Avery doesn't wear
a seatbelt. Joe surveys the others, and their seatbelts are
fastened.

Joe still doesn't respond to Avery. Avery leans forward as
he makes the phone call. Joe tugs on his own seatbelt,
which is secure. Avery makes the phone call.

AVERY

Yeah, it's Avery Thomas up in
Oakville-

Joe presses his foot down hard on the accelerator pedal and
speeds up. He appears headed at a car stopped 100 yards
ahead at a red light.

The ballplayers look at Joe, then the car ahead, and brace themselves.

Lightning strikes and Joe appears possessed.

Avery looks at Joe.

AVERY

Oh shit.

Avery reaches for his seatbelt. He drops his phone and unsuccessfully fumbles to connect each end of the seat belt.

Joe slams his foot down on the brakes, Avery lunges forward, and Joe throws his right elbow back into Avery's face and it reaches the gap in the front seats.

Joe's car stops inches short of the car at the light.

JOE

Sorry. Everyone ok?

The ballplayers all nod and indicate they're fine. Avery, on the other hand, is out cold in the back seat. His nose appears broken.

JOE

Jeez. What happened to him?

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

The rain stops and a rainbow appears.

Joe parks the car, and the ballplayers step out. They help Avery, who appears dazed and jelly-legged. Joe picks up the phone that Avery dropped in the car.

JOE

Safe travels boys.

Joe casually tosses Avery's phone a few feet ahead, then stomps on it twice until it breaks, and walks into his trailer.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

Liz opens the mail. She stacks pages of mail on the table - all marked "PAST DUE". One is marked "FORECLOSURE NOTICE".

She picks up the phone and makes a call.

LIZ

Hi Daddy. Sorry to bother you,
but you said you wanted to know
what was going on, so...

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

JOE AND LIZ' BEDROOM

Joe enters. Liz is in bed.

LIZ

Hey, I heard the game on the
radio. Sounded like it went ok,
right?

JOE

If losing in front of thirty fans
is the standard, then yes, it was
a great success.

LIZ

Steve called. He wants you to go
to his office tomorrow afternoon.

JOE

That can't be good.

LIZ

He didn't say.

JOE

More good news I'm sure. I swear
I'm on the fucking verge of just
kicking the shit outta-

Joe catches himself. Liz gives him a stern look.

JOE (CONT'D)

Except that I can't do that
because I promised my wife
fifteen years ago that I would

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)
settle my differences like a
responsible adult. With my
words, not my fists.

LIZ
Yes, you did.

INT. LAW FIRM-DAY

Joe approaches RECEPTIONIST, female, 30.

RECEPTIONIST
Hey you! Miss us?

They hug.

JOE
Steve's expecting me.

Receptionist presses a phone intercom button.

RECEPTIONIST
Joe's here.

Joe walks down the hall into an office. STEVE, 50,
overweight, stands and extends his hand.

STEVE
You're alive. What a week.

Joe responds in an exhaustive tone.

JOE
So, whatcha got?

STEVE
I did some checking like you
asked, and it's not good.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING-DAY

Wolff meets with Cervetti, Sal, and Gus. Wolff hands Sal
and Gus a pile of Trappers souvenir apparel and caps.

STEVE (CONT'D) (V.O.)

They were never going to build
the stadium. They used your lease
to get a mortgage. Seven million.
They're gonna just pocket the
money and not build the ballpark.

JOE

I was conned?

STEVE

I'm afraid so. The Mayor, Wolff,
and Manning. Even a judge. The
only one in town - I suppose just
in case you ever sued them up there.
There's ways we can deal with this
you know. Privately. I can call
the Old Man.

JOE

No. That's not me anymore.

Joe and Steve talk, then Joe stands, they shake hands, and
Joe leaves.

Steve picks up the phone and makes a call.

STEVE

It's me. He just left.

(pause)

He wants me to call the FBI.

This is a pickle.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

Activity on and around the field. The staff prepares for a
game.

EXT. VISITORS LOCKER ROOM TRAILER

Sal and Guy walk into the trailer.

EXT. FREEZER TRAILER

Phil and Joe enter the back of a large walk-in freezer
powered by a generator.

INT. FREEZER TRAILER

Aisles of boxes of frozen hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, and pizza.

PHIL

Maybe they'll give you a credit.
We can't possibly sell it all.

JOE

Just leave it for now. Let's see
what happens.

EXT. VISITORS LOCKER ROOM TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

Sal and Guy walk out.

EXT. FREEZER TRAILER-CONTINUOUS

Phil and Joe walk out of the freezer. They see Sal and Guy, but don't pay much attention, though Joe notices an unusual tattoo on Guy's outer forearm: A MULTI-COLORED DRAGON.

PHIL

Also, just so you know, we're
low on baseballs. We need to put
in an order.

JOE

Fuck. How much?

PHIL

A couple grand. Probably less if
we just get 'em at that little
sports store in town.

JOE

Fine, just do that then.

PHIL

You got it.

EXT. STORE-DAY

A sign above the entrance: OAKVILLE SPORTING GOODS

INT. OAKVILLE SPORTING GOODS-DAY

Phil buys several cases of baseballs.

OWNER

Tell Joe I said thanks. This
really means a lot to me.

Phil nods.

EXT. OAKVILLE SPORTING GOODS-DAY

Phil makes a phone call.

PHIL

I just got the balls. Tell the
ump it's a go tonight.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

The bottom of the first inning, no score on the scoreboard.

Sal and Guy appear, all decked out in Trappers jerseys and
caps.

The visiting team pitcher warms up on the mound.

He inspects the baseball, then motions the home plate
UMPIRE, 50, to the mound, who also inspects the baseball.

Several players from the visiting team walk over to the
mound.

Phil watches from the 3rd base line near an opening to the
field. Umpire motions Phil to the mound.

UMPIRE

(to Phil)

These aren't official league
balls. What's going on here?

PITCHER

(winks at players in the dugout)

Yeah, the seams are too high. I
could get blisters from this piece
of shit.

PHIL

What can I say. It's the only
ball we've got.

The small crowd appears impatient. Sal and Guy yell and get the fans stirred up.

SAL
Either play or give us a refund.

GUY
We want a refund, we want a refund...

Umpire looks around, and shakes his head.

UMPIRE
(to Phil)
This is some fucked up situation
you've got here.

Umpire hands the ball to the pitcher with a slight head nod that goes unnoticed by the others on the mound.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)
(to Phil)
We'll try it. Let's see, ok?

Phil nods.

The players return to their positions, and play resumes.

EXT. JOE'S TRAILER-NIGHT

Joe watches from the roof. He talks into a walkie-talkie radio.

JOE
Phil, what the fuck was that
all about?

Phil responds over the radio.

PHIL
The baseballs man. It's every
little thing. I've never seen
anything like it.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

Pitcher throws a pitch, then rubs his hand as the ball hits the dirt in front of home plate.

The Umpire approaches the mound, says something to the pitcher, then throws up his arms and yells loud enough for the crowd to hear.

UMPIRE

Game suspended!

The crowd boos, and angry fans lash out.

Sal and Guy rally the fans to rush the ticket trailer, and they scream for refunds.

The sporting goods store owner is in the stands. He appears disappointed, shakes his head and sneaks out.

Joe walks toward the field, and he's stopped by Phil.

PHIL

Let's get outta here.

They hear a message over their radios: PHIL AND JOE TO THE TICKET TRAILER.

JOE

We can't run from this Phil.

EXT. TICKET TRAILER-NIGHT

Fans line up. Loud and angry. Sal approaches Joe.

SAL

You suck! This whole place sucks!
Where's the stadium anyway?! You
promised us a stadium! You're a
liar!

Joe rubs his face and appears angry. He takes a step toward Sal, but takes a deep breath, shakes his head, and walks away.

SAL

Yeah, that's what I thought,
pussy!

Phil watches Joe with a sympathetic expression.

Aaron moves Joe into the ticket trailer and Phil follows.
The crowd remains hostile.

INT. TICKET TRAILER-NIGHT

PHIL

Joe this is crazy. Is it really
worth it?

Joe looks like he's on the verge of tears. A beaten man.

JOE

Let's talk in the morning.

Joe starts to leave, then turns back to Phil and Aaron. His
eyes are misty, and he can barely speak.

JOE

I'm really sorry about all this.

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Phil is on the phone.

PHIL

He's at the tipping point. I
don't think he can take any more.
(pause)
Ok, the sooner the better.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE-NIGHT

The Mayor answers the phone, listens, and nods. He hangs up
the phone and smiles.

INT. SCHNITZ'S-NIGHT

Joe sits alone at a small table in a dark corner.

A man at the bar looks at Joe, and squints to focus. He
makes a call on his cell phone.

A waitress picks up an empty glass from Joe and hands him a
fresh glass of scotch. Joe appears barely conscious.

Sal and Guy enter and walk to the man at the bar, who
points toward Joe. Sal whispers to Guy.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

The phone rings. Liz answers.

LIZ

Hello.

INT. POLICE STATION-NIGHT

Liz signs papers at a desk.

OFFICER

He was pretty out of it when
we got there. All he said was,
"I couldn't fight back. I
promised." I really don't think
he remembers anything or even
saw who beat him.

INT. POLICE STATION-CONTINUOUS

Interrogation room. Joe sits alone at a table. His face is
bloodied. He shivers, with a blanket wrapped around him.

The officer and Liz enter.

Joe looks up. His eyes are sunken and red. His clothes
stained from sweat. He appears to have hit bottom.

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Liz and Joe sit in the police station parking lot. Joe
takes a deep breath, arches his head back and closes his
eyes.

LIZ

We're going to make it Joe. I
know we are, but I can't do
this alone. The kids and I need
you.

Joe speaks in a barely audible, whispered tone.

JOE

What have I done. I'm a total
failure.

LIZ

You're not, Joe. Don't ever say
that.

JOE

I'm just so exhausted from it.
Exhausted to the bone. I don't
know what to do. I just don't
know--

LIZ

You have three kids at home that
think you're a God. They don't care
if you own a baseball team or drive
a garbage truck.

Joe stares.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Look at what this is doing to
you. Please, can we just end it
tomorrow?

Joe looks out the window. Liz starts the car and pulls out
of the parking lot.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

Joe cradles his coffee and reads the newspaper. He stares
at the headline: 2 LOCAL MARINES AMONG 30 KILLED IN
AFGHANISTAN.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE

And ballplayers are bitching
about the seams on baseballs?

Liz enters.

LIZ

You going to call Phil? About what
we talked about?

Joe hands the newspaper headline to Liz. Liz shakes her
head and reads. Joe stands and motions Liz to follow.

JOE

I think you and the kids should
go to your sister's for a few days.
Get away from all this. The kids
can swim and--

LIZ

And you'll come with us right?
You'll tell Phil to close
everything down and--

Joe hugs Liz, then looks in her eyes.

LIZ (CONT'D)

You will, right?

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

Joe kisses all the kids and Liz and they pile bags and toys
into a car.

They drive away while Joe waves.

INT. LIZ' CAR-DAY

Liz watches Joe in the rear view mirror and wipes a tear
from her cheek.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

Joe parks his car. Phil approaches. A young man, 21, clean
cut, gets out of the front passenger seat of Joe's car.

PHIL

Where you been? The ump wants
to meet.

JOE

So do I. Bring 'em over here.

Phil whistles and waives to Umpire, who walks over with an
attitude.

UMPIRE

You get new baseballs?

Joe doesn't respond, but motions for the young man with him
to step up.

JOE

This is Marine Second Lieutenant Doug Reilly. He went to high school with one of the Marines we lost yesterday. Doug's going to help us honor his friend tonight, and then there's going to be a baseball game. Right Lieutenant?

MARINE

Yes sir.

JOE

Phil, take Doug on over to the color guard for the anthem.

Phil and Doug walk away.

JOE

(to Umpire)

I need you look past whatever's going on here. I'm not blind. I know what's going on, but I need your help. Will you help me?

Umpire looks around, as if to make sure nobody watches him, then he extends his hand, nods affirmatively, and they shake.

UMPIRE

My son's in the service.

JOE

Thank you.

UMPIRE

Look, you didn't hear this from me, but you've got some dangerous people working against you. Some influential people. But you won't have any more trouble from me. Let's play ball.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

Joe walks along the outside of the outfield fence, where it's quiet. He watches the ballgame. Phil joins him.

PHIL
Nice play back there.

JOE
I don't have anything left
Phil.

They continue to walk. Phil gives Joe a sympathetic look.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

League standings board shows the Trappers in 4th place out of 5 teams.

Joe enters. Phil pulls him to the side.

PHIL
I know you don't want to hear
these two words. Player payroll.

JOE
Phil, I'm gonna have to steal
hot dogs and burgers from here
just to eat this week. I'm totally
tapped.

PHIL
Just sayin'. I'm hearing that
the new guys are leaving if they
don't get paid tomorrow. Can't
really blame 'em. Anyway, we made
it longer than anyone thought, so-

Phil walks out.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY
Phil talks on the phone.

PHIL
This has to be the last thing.
Jesus, it just has to be.
(pause)
Fine.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING-DAY

Cervetti sits behind a desk in a dingy office. Wolff sits opposite him. They review a Trappers pocket season

schedule. MR. BIRNBAUM, 65, thin, stringy grey hair, stands behind Wolff.

WOLFF

All four of their remaining games are against Indiana, and our friend Mr. Birnbaum here has agreed that his team will forego those games in return for fifty thousand dollars.

CERVETTI

(to Wolff)

Forego.

(to Birnbaum)

You'll take the money to not play?

BIRNBAUM

I have - obligations.

Wolff smiles and nods.

CERVETTI

America's pastime. Is nutin' sacred?

INT. BANK-DAY

Joe meets with 2 bankers, JERRY (60) and KYLE (30).

JOE

So if I don't come up with ten grand today, the players are walking, and I'm closing the doors. It's not complicated.

KYLE

Well we sure don't want that. We'll work with you, you know that.

Jerry and Kyle look at each other and nod approvingly.

JERRY

So we'll need your financials and updated tax returns and so forth. We can turn a decision around rather quickly, say three days.

JOE

No, Jerry. I mean that's nice of you, I appreciate it, but I'm not here for a loan. You'd be crazy to loan me any more money. What do I already owe you, like five hundred grand?

Jerry and Kyle look puzzled.

JOE (CONT'D)

No, I'm here because I want you to give me ten thousand dollars. I want the bank to buy ten grand of advertising. Money I'll never pay back. No loan committees, no financials. You can do that deal in like five minutes, right?

Jerry and Kyle appear stunned.

JOE (CONT'D)

See, fellas, if I don't get that money today, zero chance we can ever pay back the five hundred grand we already owe. The team will be worth zero.

JERRY

But you personally guaranteed that loan.

Joe laughs.

JOE

I know. What were you all thinking? Anyway, without the team playing, that guarantee is worthless. I'm flat broke. But none of that matters now. The City screwed me, there's no stadium, and I'm broke. If the team keeps playing, we all have a shot at something down the road. Maybe next year. Who knows. But if we shut down now, it's game over.

INT. JOE'S CAR-DAY

Joe drives out of the bank parking lot. He picks up his phone.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

Mary answers her phone, listens, pumps her fist, and grabs the stack of payroll checks bound with a label: PLAYERS.

INT. RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Wolff, Manning, Cervetti, the Judge, and the Mayor have dinner. Cervetti's phone rings, he excuses himself, then seconds later returns.

CERVETTI

He made payroll, but it doesn't
fuckin' matter. I got two more
aces. We're good.

EXT. AUTO PLANT-DAY

The flag outside flies at half staff.

A roadside message board: IN MEMORY OF LANCE CORPORAL BRIAN
BUCKLEY. LOVED AND MISSED BY ALL.

INT. AUTO PLANT-DAY

Joe carries a box into an office: TED FOSTER, FOREMAN.

The office has interior windows that views an assembly line.

Joe stands next to TED, 57, as they watch the workers.

TED

After this week we're all done.
Been working here since I was
fourteen.

Joe opens the box.

JOE

These are for all your people
Ted. It's not much, but I wanted
to do something.

Ted looks through the box and pulls out tickets.

TED

Tickets to a game, tomorrow night,
and free food? Shit, you're broker
than this plant, how can you? Sorry
but everyone knows it.

JOE

Once you're broke, it doesn't
really matter.

TED

Well the folks here will sure
appreciate it. Awfully nice of you.

JOE

See, that's just the thing Ted.
I don't want them knowing it's
from me.

Ted appears puzzled.

JOE (CONT'D)

Charity's the last thing they
need right now. Just say it's
from their union, ok?

TED

You sure?

JOE

Yeah. From their union.

Joe and Ted shake hands.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Joe has feet up and eyes closed. Phil enters.

PHIL

You awake?

JOE

No.

PHIL

Good.

Joe opens his eyes.

PHIL

Only two ballplayers still here.
The rest left. Went home.

JOE

I don't follow. You said if we
didn't pay everyone yesterday,
they'd leave. So we paid them
and they left anyway?

PHIL

It gets better. Turns out we're
not the only broke team in the
league. Indiana shut their doors
last night.

JOE

So you're telling me--

PHIL

We have no team, and we have no
team to play. Oh, and the guys
that left stole half the road
jerseys and most of the caps. You
can't make it up. It's unbelievable.

Joe closes his eyes. His anguish oozes.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry man. You trusted me
with all this and I let you down.

Joe can barely speak.

JOE

It's not your fault Phil. It's
my fault.

Phil looks out the small trailer window. He closes his eyes
with concern as Joe talks with a regretful tone.

JOE (CONT'D)

They picked the dummy that loves
baseball. He'll be an easy mark.
He wants this so bad he'll never
see the signs. He won't even see
what he sees.

Phil doesn't respond.

JOE (CONT'D)

You ever want something that bad?
You just want to believe?

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Marco and Old Man sit. Marco's phone rings. He looks at the caller ID and hands the phone to Old Man.

OLD MAN

Yeah.
(pause)
You sure?
(end call)
(to Marco)
Baseball. Who knew?

Cervetti drives up, parks, and joins Old Man, who motions him to sit.

CERVETTI

Thanks for seein' me. So I been
thinkin'. On that thing with
Joe, there's only a few days to
go, and outta respect, so as not
to take advantage and as a gesture
of good will, we can forget about
that wager if you want. I'll do
fine on my thing up there, you
can forget about our thing if you
want, and everyone makes out.
Whadaya say?

Old Man leans over the table.

OLD MAN

It ain't over 'til it's over.
That's a baseball sayin'. Did
you know that?

CERVETTI

I heard of it, I just figured it
was TV or somethin'.

OLD MAN
Tell ya what. I think instead
we'll take it up to the whole
two million. Your whole take.
Let it ride, right?

Cervetti doesn't respond. He appears worried. He puts his hands up in a surrender position.

CERVETTI
Whoa now-

OLD MAN
Good then, you agree.

Old Man reaches over, grabs Cervetti's arm, and forcefully helps him shake hands. Three of Old Man's goons stand there to discourage Cervetti from resisting.

Old Man and Cervetti hug. Cervetti is wide-eyed.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

Joe talks on the phone as he approaches the trailer. He looks disheveled and exhausted.

JOE
Hi hun. Call me back if you
want. I'm shutting it down today,
so I'll probably come join you
and the kids in a day or two.
I love you.

Joe takes a deep breath and opens the trailer door.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

Phil, Aaron, and other staff work the phones. It appears like business as usual.

JOE
What are you guys doing?

PHIL
It ain't over 'til it's over.

Joe pats Phil on the back.

JOE
Phil, it's over.

Joe sits next to Phil.

JOE (CONT'D)
It's over. I can't keep--

Aaron hangs up the phone, smiles, and yells.

AARON
I got 'em!

Joe stands and bumps his knee on the desk.

JOE
Fuck! Sorry Mary.

Mary shakes her head without looking up from her paperwork.

AARON
Ready for this?! The Menasha
Knights will play us every
night for the final four games.
Their season just ended in that
MidAmerica League.

PHIL
Are they competitive?

JOE
Jesus, we have two players.
Let's not worry about them.
They have uniforms and their
own bats, right?

AARON
Yep. Uniforms, bats, and caps.
That's more than us. And the
league approved it. We're good.

Joe takes a serious tone with Phil and Aaron.

JOE
Ok, here it is. We're the fucking
varsity, right? Just us three
now. Let's go find some ballplayers
and punch it into the endzone.

AARON
Fuck yes, we're the varsity.

JOE
Damn right. Now let's go fill
those uniforms.

PHIL
The ones we still have.

INT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-NIGHT

Phil, Aaron, and Mike work the phones. Names go up on a roster grease board.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-NIGHT

Phil talks on the phone. He shrugs while he talks. Then holds the phone away from his ear.

INT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Cervetti slams the phone.

MONTAGE-3RD NEW ROSTER IN THE SAME SEASON!

INT. AIRPORT-DAY

Phil greets two young men with duffle bags.

INT. BUS STATION-DAY

Aaron greets three young men with duffle bags.

RURAL ROAD-NIGHT

A young man hitchhikes. A semi-truck pulls over, and he runs to catch up and jump in.

HIGHWAY-NIGHT

A young man rides a motorcycle. Another sleeps in a sidecar.

END MONTAGE

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

Ballplayers warm up on the outfield, while Joe and Aaron sit in the bleachers and watch.

A ball gets loose and rolls toward the bleachers. A player runs over to chase the ball, picks it up, and throws it back. He turns to Aaron.

PLAYER

Thanks again for letting me play.

AARON

No problem Johnny.

The player returns to the others in the outfield.

JOE

He looks familiar.

AARON

One of our ushers.

Joe stares at JOHNNY with a hint of a smile as he runs back on the field with enthusiasm.

AARON

They're not all bad guys you know.

Joe gives Aaron a "what the fuck do you know" look and Aaron laughs.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

National Anthem. Joe stands alone next to his usual table. He appears content. The crowd is small, but enthusiastic. The national anthem finishes, and Joe claps. He turns and sees Liz approach in a gallop. His face lights up. They hug.

JOE

The kids?

LIZ

My sister's bringing 'em back next week. I called Phil to check on you and he told me about all this. I swear, I don't know how you- I am so proud of you.

Liz and Joe sit at their usual table for the game.

3rd Inning. The scoreboard shows the Trappers lead 2-0.

5th inning, a spectacular diving catch by a Manasha player, and scoreboard shows the game tied 2-2.

Bottom of the 9th inning. Scoreboard shows Manasha leads 3-2.

Liz looks toward the end of the deck at two fans that wear Trappers apparel. It's Sal and Guy.

LIZ

Those two have been staring at
us all night. It's creepy.

Joe looks at them with vague familiarity.

JOE

Just ignore 'em. A couple of
loud mouth regulars.

Liz can't seem to ignore them, and appears uneasy.

The game ends. The Trappers lose to Mensaha 3-2.
Liz and Joe stand to leave. Sal whispers to Guy, and Guy walks toward Joe. Liz appears nervous. Joe turns their unfinished wine bottle upside down on the metal grated table, and it drains as Joe steps a few feet away, toward the middle of the deck.

Guy extends his hand.

GUY

I'd like to shake your hand. You
sure got a lot of balls. Can I
ask you a question?

JOE

Sure.

As they shake hands, Joe notices the dragon tattoo on Guy's forearm.

FLASHBACK

INT. TAVERN-NIGHT

Joe lies on the ground, barely conscious, and sees the blurry vision of a fist, extended from a forearm with a dragon tattoo, coming at his face.

END FLASHBACK

GUY

I just wanna know, how you can still come out here and show your face after screwing this up so bad? You've gotta be the biggest fuckup loser in the history of baseball.

They mutually break off the handshake, and Guy gets in Joe's face.

GUY (CONT'D)

Do it, c'mon do it.

Phil approaches the deck and sees the impending confrontation. He talks into his radio as he runs.

PHIL

Ticket trailer, call 9-1-1.

Joe looks at Liz. He puts his palms up, and gives her a begging look.

Guy taunts Joe.

GUY

That your wife? Maybe when I'm done with you I'll show her what a real home run looks like.

Phil arrives onto the deck and stands next to Liz. A small crowd gathers.

Liz looks angrily at Guy, then back at Joe. Finally, she nods her head once up and down.

Phil notices Liz' green light to Joe and tries to hide a smile. He mutters under his breath.

PHIL

Tune that fucker up Joe.

Joe takes a deep breath - not the nervous kind, but the mind-clearing kind. The music blares over the loud speaker. Guy taunts Joe, but Joe is now in the zone and ignores him. Joe looks at the ground, closes his eyes briefly, then-

Joe punches Guy in the throat with a quick jab, which stuns him, then grabs him by the jersey, head butts him, then punches him in the face. Guy stumbles backward and falls. Joe stands over him.

Sal runs toward Joe. Joe looks at the wine bottle next to Liz, which is fully drained. With simple eye contact, Liz tosses it to Joe, who catches the bottle neck and in the same motion hits Sal on the head and drops him to the ground.

Joe takes a few steps over to Guy, pulls up his head from the ground by the hair, and whispers in his ear.

JOE

You shouldn't have pissed off
my wife.

Joe punches him again in the face, and Guy blacks out. Then Joe stomps his foot down on Sal's face.

Joe looks up at the small group of onlookers. He stands straight and proud.

PHIL

(to Joe and Liz)
Go. I'll clean this up.

JOE

Fucking Baghdad man.

Joe and Liz leave, his arm around her shoulder.

JOE

Thanks hun. I needed that.

Two onlookers chatter.

FAN 1

That was better than the game.

FAN 2

He's the team's best hitter.

INT. TICKET TRAILER-NIGHT

Phil runs in.

PHIL

You guys call 9-1-1? We've got
two down on the deck in there.

DARREN

Yeah. I called 4-1-1, so they
should be here any minute.

PHIL

4-1-1?! Jesus, are they coming
or not?

DARREN

Yeah, any minute.

Phil walks out.

EXT. TICKET TRAILER-NIGHT

Phil and Aaron open a beer.

PHIL

Darren called 4-1-1. I coulda
been killed back there and he
dials 4-1-1 like he's ordering
a pizza.

AARON

Jesus, I've seen shit on the news
where kittens hit 9-1-1 with their
little paws.

The police squad car arrives. Two officers approach Phil.

PHIL

Two idiots on the deck back there.
I guess they fucked with the wrong
guy.

COP

Who was it?

PHIL
Don't know. Reminded me of
someone I knew a long time ago,
but couldn't of been him.

One officer walks toward the deck while the other talks to Phil.

EXT. HOUSE-NIGHT

In the back yard of Wolff's upscale home, he relaxes with his wife and kids in the back yard. The sound of a text pings his phone.

His phone screen: PICKING UP MY \$2MM TOMORROW.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE-DAY

Joe sits on an examining table. DOCTOR, 50, walks in with an x-ray that he puts up on the backlit wall screen.

Doctor talks with his back to Joe as he examines the x-ray.

DOCTOR
How are the kids?

JOE
Great. Yours?

DOCTOR
Spoiled.

Doctor points to the x-ray.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Ok then. You have a ruptured
disk. Were you lifting something
heavy or straining?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

Joe punches Guy in the face, slow motion.

END FLASHBACK

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

JOE

No, not sure how that happened.

Doctor still has his back to Joe.

DOCTOR

Huh. Maybe it has something to do with your swollen wrist and bruised knuckles?

Joe's right hand is bruised and wrist is swollen.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Well, the disk could heal on its own over about six months, or we can fix it sooner with surgery.

Joe strains to get off the table, in obvious pain.

JOE

We'll see you later Bill. And don't call the house to check on me. Liz doesn't know I'm here.

Doctor writes a prescription and hands it to Joe.

DOCTOR

Something for the pain, dumbass.

INT. JOE'S TRAILER-DAY

Mary opens the door and pokes her head in.

MARY

Have a minute?

Joe waves her in.

MARY (CONT'D)

I didn't want to bother you, but do you think I could wear headphones at my desk? I just don't care for all the sassy language in the office.

JOE

Yeah, sure, why would I care?

MARY

Well, I checked the employee handbook and didn't see a policy about wearing headphones, so I'm just seeing if it's ok.

Joe laughs.

MARY (CONT'D)

What?

JOE

Mary. Rome is burning all around us, and you're still on the employee handbook.

Joe stands and puts his arms out. Mary stands and he hugs her.

JOE (CONT'D)

Thank you Mary.

MARY

For what?

JOE

For everything.

MARY

So, the headphones?

Joe continues to laugh.

INT. WOLFF'S OFFICE-DAY

Wolff and Cervetti meet. Wolff unzips a green gym bag, exposes it's full of cash, zips it and hands it to Cervetti, who leaves.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

Several fans huddled in the stands, all decked out in their Trappers gear.

FAN 1

It's just not fair what they did to him.

FAN 2

Tomorrow's the last game, so not
much we can do about it.

FAN 3

Poor slob did everything he could.
There's gotta be something--

Ted, the auto plant foreman, walks past and overhears the
fans. He stops and talks to them privately.

The fans then disburse and make phone calls.

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT-DAY

Phil meets with Cervetti, Wolff, the Dee Dee and the Mayor.

PHIL

Thanks for meeting here. I
couldn't risk being seen at your
places. Anyway, it's pretty obvious
that Joe isn't walking away from
this, so I think we need to plan
on something more permanent in
nature as soon as the season's over.
I can't afford any loose ends or
anyone looking into my involvement.

CERVETTI

You're some friend Greek. Remind
me not to Facebook friend you.

PHIL

You have Facebook?

CERVETTI

Yeah. I got nine friends. Well,
seven after that thing in Detroit
last month.

WOLFF

Let's focus here. Who's gonna do
it?

PHIL

I am. I just need to know that
you're all on board and you'll
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
pay me. It'll be an extra fifty
grand. I don't care how you split
it. You want him gone. Fifty grand.

They all shrug, nod in approval and chime in.

CERVETTI	WOLFF	MAYOR	DEE DEE
Yeah, good.	Yes, do it.	Fine.	Finally, yes.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Phil opens the door. It's Mary, who talks as she steps in.
She carries a stack of envelopes.

MARY
You forgot the final paychecks
last night and I'm not going to
be in today so--

Mary sees the whole group, looks at Phil, and heads for the
door. Too late. Phil beats her to it, and locks the door.

PHIL
(to everyone but Mary)
A two-fer.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-DAY

Joe walks past ballplayers that walk onto the field in
warm-up gear.

PLAYER 1
Hey Joe.

Joe nods and keeps going.

PLAYER 2
Joe, hey man.

Joe nods and walks.

PLAYER 3
Joe, you'll be at the game
tonight, right?

Joe stops, nods "yes" and walks. He looks confused that the
players acknowledge him.

INT. FBI OFFICES-DAY

A name plate on a desk: FBI SPECIAL AGENT HANSON. HANSON, 50, whispers on the phone.

HANSON
We're pinching 'em in Oakville
tonight.

EXT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT-DAY

In the hallway, a hand knocks on the door. Cervetti opens the door. He appears nervous.

CERVETTI
Oh hey, I was just gonna call ya.

A suitcase and a green gym bag appear by the door on the inside.

The hand holds a gun, and motions Cervetti back inside. Cervetti turns around and walks.

INT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT-DAY

Cervetti, his back turned to the visitor as he walks, reaches in his front waist band under his sport jacket to grab a gun.

The visitor unzips the green gym bag with his free hand. The bag is packed tight with the two million in cash.

Cervetti pulls out his gun.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-NIGHT

Joe sits with Liz at their customary deck table. It's quiet.

LIZ
Feels weird to say it, but I'm
gonna kind of miss all this.

Joe shakes his head in agreement.

They sit back and look at the blue early evening sky, when they hear the creak of the chain link gates open. It gets quiet again.

Seconds later, they hear a strange sound. They look at each other, then stand to confirm what they thought they heard.

Fans. Hundreds, then thousands of fans pour into the little makeshift ballpark. They carry lawn chairs and blankets, and fill every empty spot.

Cars continue to flow in and park wherever there's room.

The Trappers employees can barely keep up with all the cash they're collecting for tickets, hot dogs, beer, and souvenirs.

Joe and Liz appear stunned.

Those loyal die-hard fans from the previous night toast their cups of beer and high-five in celebration. Ted, the factory foreman, sees them and raises his cup of beer in a toast. The local sporting goods store owner is there, too.

Fans walk past the deck, and tip their caps and nod at Joe. Joe looks at Liz, and tears up. Liz gently pats him on the back.

The Trappers trail 4 to 1 on the scoreboard. It's the bottom of the 8th inning. Trappers players wear caps that don't match, and a couple have different jersey tops than their teammates.

Phil watches from the roof of Joe's trailer.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE:

BEGIN FLASHBACK 1 (THE NIGHT CLETE, MARTY, AND THE PLAYERS QUIT)

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Phil talks on the phone.

PHIL
They all left. Players, everyone.

INT. LUXURY HOME-NIGHT

Old Man talks on the phone.

OLD MAN
So they made it look like it's
over, right?

PHIL'S APARTMENT

PHIL
Yeah, it looks like it's over.
You can go ahead and up the bet.
We got everything covered.

Aaron stands in the background and nods with approval.

END FLASHBACK 1

BEGIN FLASHBACK 2

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE-DAY

JOE
Steve, I put all my money in
this deal. Everything I had.

Joe and Steve talk, then Joe stands, they shake hands, and
Joe leaves.

Steve picks up the phone and makes a call.

STEVE
He wants me to call the FBI. It's
a pickle.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Old Man talks on the phone.

OLD MAN
Nah. Just go through our guy,
Agent Hanson. He'll make sure
we're good.

END FLASHBACK 2

BEGIN FLASHBACH 3

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER-DAY

Phil talks on the phone.

PHIL
This has to be the last thing.
Jesus, it just has to be.

EXT. MOB HANGOUT-DAY

Marco sits at a table with Old Man, Aaron, Mr. Birnbaum,
and a man that wears a baseball cap: MANASHA KNIGHTS.

Marco talks on the phone.

MARCO
This'll be it. Then they got
nothing.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE TRAILER

PHIL
Fine, but this is it.

Mr. Birnbaum hands money to Old Man.

BIRNBAUM
So my account's all square?

Old Man looks at Mr. Birnbaum and motions to a MAN, 50,
with the Manasha Knights cap.

OLD MAN
What's he want outta all this?

The Man appears too terrified to talk. He reaches in his
pocket and four of Old Man's goons appear out of nowhere
with pistols drawn.

The Man's hand shakes and drops a red stone on the table.
He's dripping sweat. Birnbaum picks up the stone.

BIRNBAUM
He needs ten tons of this for his
warning track in Manasha.

OLD MAN
Ten fuckin' tons?

The Man hesitates, as Old Man's expression is difficult to
read. The Man sheepishly nods his head "yes"

Old Man stares at him, then breaks into a belly laugh. The Man is relieved.

All three shake hands.

END FLASHBACK 3

BEGIN FLASHBACK 4

INT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT-DAY

Cervetti, his back turned to the visitor as he walks, reaches in his front waist band under his sport jacket to grab a gun.

The visitor unzips the green gym bag with his free hand. The bag is packed tight with the two million in cash.

Cervetti pulls out his gun, and as he turns around, a baseball bat hits him square in the face.

EXT. CERVETTI'S APARTMENT BUILDING-DAY

Marco and Phil walk out of the building. Marco carries a green gym bag, Phil a baseball bat. A gold Rolex wristwatch dangles loosely on Phil's wrist. They walk toward a black limo parked in front of the building.

Marco motions with a thumbs up sign to someone across the street, then gets into the limo. Phil remains outside.

Across the street, Agent Hanson and two other men in FBI windbreakers get out of a car and walk toward the apartment building.

Hanson stops at the limo. Phil has a small tape player in his hand, and hits "play".

BEGIN TAPE RECORDING

WOLFF

Let's focus here. Who's gonna do it?

PHIL

I am. I just need to know that you're all on board and you'll
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
pay me. It'll be an extra fifty
grand. I don't care how you split
it. You want him gone. Fifty grand.

CERVETTI	WOLFF	MAYOR	DEE DEE
Yeah, good.	Yes, do it.	Fine.	Finally, yes.

END TAPE RECORDING

Phil hits "stop" and hands the tape player to Hanson. The FBI Agents walk into the apartment building. Phil pulls a photo of a little girl from his pocket, smiles, and gets into the limo.

INT. LIMO-DAY

Old Man unzips the gym bag and reveals the \$2 million cash.

In the background, they hear GUNFIRE.

OLD MAN
Not his fuckin' day.

MARCO
My uncle Guido hated that
stugats 'til the day he died.

OLD MAN
Your uncle Guido had the Sicilian
Alzheimer's at the end.

Marco and Phil appear puzzled.

OLD MAN
He forgot everything but the
grudges.

Old Man motions the driver, and the limo pulls out.

END FLASHBACK 4

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE

EXT. STADIUM SITE-PRESENT

Aaron climbs up to the roof of Joe's trailer to join Phil. They smoke cigars, and pop a bottle of champagne, which they drink from the bottle.

AARON
Any word on Mary?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. PHIL'S APARTMENT BUILDING-NIGHT

Cervetti and Phil carry a rolled up rug to Phil's car, and put it in the back. Cervetti hands a piece of paper to Phil.

CERVETTI
Just follow those directions to
Maple Woods. Finish her there.

EXT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Old Man and Phil carry the rug into Old Man's house.

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Phil and Old Man unroll the rug. Mary is wide awake, bound by rope and tape, and not happy. They release her from the restraints.

KITCHEN

A chef and servants cater to Mary, who wears pajamas and a bathrobe while eating soup. Old Man and Phil sit with her.

Old Man lights a cigar. Mary gives him a dirty look, so he stands and opens a glass dutch door, which exposes an in-ground swimming pool lit-up in the moonlight.

PHIL
It'll just be for a few days
Mary. Just 'til it all blows over.
I promise.

MARY
And this whole gosh darn thing
with Joe's going to be fine right?
You'll make sure?

OLD MAN
Nobody's gonna hurt Joe. We've
taken care of that.

Mary looks around and doesn't appear all that displeased
with her temporary surroundings.

MARY
Well, just for a few days then,
for Joe.

END FLASHBACKS

EXT. STADIUM SITE-PRESENT

JOE'S TRAILER ROOF-CONTINUOUS

PHIL
We'll never forget this gig. You
know that right?

AARON
Yeah, I do.

The two stand and point to where Joe sits.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

Phil walks up to Joe and Liz.

PHIL
What do you think?

Joe surveys the crowd, kids with cotton candy, fans high
five each other, the sound of the bat hitting the ball,
smoke from hot dogs on a grill.

JOE
This is how I always dreamt it
would be.

Phil smiles and walks away.

The Trappers load the bases, and the scoreboard shows 2
outs, with the Trappers trailing 4 to 2 in the bottom of
the 9th inning.

Joe walks over to the corner of the deck, and stands alone.

He looks around. In every direction fans cheer on the Trappers during the rally. He looks up at the sky.

JOE

Would it fuckin' kill ya?

Joe sits back down next to Liz.

The next batter, a lefty, hits a line drive into the right center field gap, and all 3 runners on base score. The Trappers win 5 to 4 and the players mob each other at home plate like they just won the World Series.

Phil runs up to Joe. They hug, and neither says a word.

As the crowd starts to thin out, Joe and Liz quietly make their way toward the exit. Joe winces in pain and grabs his back.

LIZ

You should have someone look at that.

JOE

Nah. Just slept funny.

Phil waves at a Trappers player, and points to Joe.

The whole Trappers team and front office runs over to Joe and Liz.

A player emerges from the pack and hands Joe a trophy: 5th PLACE, MIDWEST DIVISION, NORTH AMERICAN LEAGUE.

Joe is too overcome with emotion with to speak.

LIZ

Thank you, all of you.

Joe and Liz walk to the car. Joe stops and looks back at the empty field all lit up.

JOE

God I just love that damn game.

They get in the car.

INT. JOE'S CAR-NIGHT

As they drive, Joe stares back as he holds his trophy.

EXT. STADIUM SITE-CONTINUOUS

The players all raise bottles of beer to Joe as the car disappears out of site.

EXT. RURAL ROAD-NIGHT

Joe and Liz head westbound, while 3 large black sedans drive past in the opposite direction.

INT. SEDANS-NIGHT

Men wear FBI windbreakers, and talk into radios.

The sedans split in opposite direction.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE-NIGHT

The Mayor, clad in pajamas and a bathrobe, pours himself a glass of milk in the kitchen. He takes a bottle of Maalox and tops off the milk. The doorbell rings. Flashing red lights in his driveway.

PHIL

Oh crap.

INT. DEE DEE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Dee Dee packs a suit case with a sheer negligee. The doorbell rings. She looks toward her window, which reflects flashing red lights below in her driveway.

She dials the phone.

DEE DEE

C'mon pick up.

INT. WOLFF'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Framed pictures of Wolff and his family adorn the living room. It's dark and quiet. The phone rings. No answer, no lights, no movement in the house.

The doorbell rings. Flashing red lights in the driveway.

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Wolff and his family tow a u-haul trailer down the highway

INT. JOE'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

Joe clutches his trophy, and sleeps while Liz drives.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE-DAY

KITCHEN

It's business as usual in the Joe Marks house. The kids eat breakfast, Liz keeps the peace, and Joe talks on the phone.

Joe ends the call, and turns to Liz.

JOE

They'll take me back at the firm.
Thank God.

Liz takes a sigh of relief. The doorbell rings. Liz walks out of the kitchen to answer.

Joe and the kids overhear Liz answer the door.

LIZ

Daddy! What a nice surprise.

The kids spring up from the table.

BONNIE

Grandpa, Grandpa!

Joe walks out of the kitchen to join in. He passes his office, which now has the Trappers 5th place trophy displayed on a shelf. A framed family photo on the wall is revealed: Joe, Liz, the kids, Liz' deceased mother, and Liz' father - Old Man.

Joe reaches the foyer. Old Man holds the green gym bag by its handle.

The front door remains open, with a view to a black limo parked on the street. Marco, Phil, and Aaron lean on the limo while the neighborhood kids ride bicycles past and gawk.

Old Man holds out the green gym bag toward Joe.

OLD MAN
I think you lost this over at
that ball field.

FADE OUT:

THE END