

HOSS

Written by

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Teaser

"Livin La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin plays.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Various shots of the city at night.

INT. CLUB NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

JACK HOSS (early to mid 30's) is partying in the VIP room of a swanky, New York club with SEVERAL GORGEOUS WOMEN (tall, thin, model types).

A few bottles of Dom are on the table, some empty, one on ice in a bucket. Glasses crowd the small tables.

Jack also parties with two other men, athletic types, one Hispanic, significantly larger than the other man, who is African American. They are Jose "El Smoke" Seville (late 20's) and DeWayne "Flash" Brown (late 20's).

Jack is dressed in jeans, brightly colored fitted shirt and a blazer. Seville and Brown both have on fashionable designer suits, silk shirts, expensive shoes.

They dance right wear they are.

MANAGERS AND WAITRESSES come-and-go, refilling glasses and making sure all is satisfactory.

Jack, unlit cigar in his mouth, glass of champagne in hand, leans in to listen to a manager, then nods appreciatively.

He slips a hundred dollar bill into the manager's breast pocket and slaps him on the back.

A waitress brings a tray of Cosmo's for the ladies. As the ladies take them off, and without blinking an eye, Jack grabs one and downs it.

His friends all cheer him on. He shakes his head and roars beating his chest. His buddies clap and laugh.

EXT. LONDON, UK - NIGHT

Various shots of London at night.

EXT. PRIVATE CLUB, MAYFAIR, LONDON, UK - NIGHT

PAPARAZZI wait outside a club. A sleek, black JAGUAR XJ with DRIVER sits waiting.

Suddenly, Jack bursts through the door with another MAN who looks a lot like Prince Harry. They both still have pints in their hands.

As the paparazzi snap away, flashes go-off, Jack heads straight for the car, but, annoyed, his friend throws his nearly-full pint at a photographer.

Ale goes everywhere. Jack grabs him and they stumble into the car.

The Jag pulls away fast, nearly hitting two more photographers who are leaning in and clicking away furiously.

The paparazzi who got soaked shake their fists and curse them at them as they leave.

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - DAY

GREG FORD (mid 50's), GM of the Chicago Cubs sits at his desk. His office is filled with various Chicago Cubs team memorabilia, and framed photos of old and present day Cubs. A glass of water is on the desk.

Greg looks at the Chicago Tribune. He see's a picture of Jack right behind his inebriated friend, just as he launches his pint at the camera.

A framed photo of Greg and Jack, arms around each other, hangs just over his shoulder. He stares down at the paper.

Tribune Headline: "HOSS'S LONG WEEKEND CONTINUES"

Sub-headline: "Banner Night for US, UK Relations"

Ford shakes his head, then drops it on his desk. He stares into space, rubs his temples and opens a desk drawer.

He pulls out, opens and drops, two Alka-Selzer tablets into a glass of water on his desk.

EXT. YACHT, IBIZA COAST - DAY

It is a magnificent vessel. Jack cavorts with several bikini-clad WOMEN (all early 20's, Euro jet-set model types).

The paparazzi follows him from a regular boat, much less glamorous. They crowd the side, taking shots of them

From their camera P.O.V. Jack stumbles around the yacht in his swim trunks, worn low, champagne flute in hand. Noticing them, he flips them "the bird". FREEZE.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - DAY

INSERT: Tribune - That last shot is the back cover of the paper that sits on Greg Ford's desk.

Caption: "HOSS GOES BANANAS IN IBIZA"

Ford, standing behind his desk chair, stares at it. He tosses his chair to the side and reaches for his phone. He dials and begins talking MOS.

As he talks, his face gets a stern, concerned expression. As he speaks he picks-up the paper.

He hangs up, angrily slamming down the receiver. He throws down the paper. He collapses into his chair in disgust, puffing out his cheeks as he exhales.

He opens his desk drawer and takes out a bottle of Malox and drinks it.

INT. FLORIDA MANSION - DAY

An older man, whom we will meet later, Cubs owner, MONTGOMERY "BIG MONTY" LAKE (late 60'S, early 70'S) has open the same Chicago Tribune newspaper on a spacious table.

He eats his breakfast, served on fine china. A servant in white jacket stands silently near by.

He looks over the back page. He picks it up and glances at it closer and then, without emotion, sets it back down.

He stares out a large window towards the OCEAN. The waves reflect on his face through the glass.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - NIGHT

Miami Beach with waves coming in at the shoreline and then various shots of Miami Beach at night.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jack comes out of an Ocean Avenue restaurant, very steady, with several people; THREE WELL-DRESSED MEN (40's) and FIVE GORGEOUS GIRLS (early 20's).

He looks good in linen pants and a brightly colored shirt, tan, top few buttons opened.

The men are dressed similarly, the women in flowing dresses of fine, expensive fabric with matching gold bracelets and necklaces.

EXT. OCEAN AVE, MIAMI BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Jack and his party walk down Ocean Avenue with SEVERAL PAPARAZZI now in tow.

They start walking faster and faster to keep ahead of the photographers, finally breaking out into an all out run.

Running down Ocean Ave looking like the Beatles from a "Hard Day's Night".

EXT. CLUB, MIAMI BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Laughing as they go, Jack turns towards a crowded club entrance with his group. Many fashionably dressed young PEOPLE are in line.

A large BOUNCER with headset, sees and recognizes them. He quickly says something MOS into the headset mic.

The Red Sea parts, the velvet rope gets unhooked and Jack hugs the bouncer now giving him a big, toothy smile.

Jack and the group enter, hardly breaking stride. Just as quickly the rope goes back up, keeping out the paparazzi and everyone else.

INT. CLUB, MIAMI BEACH - LATER

Jack is dancing it up on crowded dance floor with a few of the girls. The club is jammed.

A club re-mix of "Livin' La Vida Loca" picks up the song at this point.

Jack and the girls are dancing in an increasingly uninhibited way. The bass from the music, pounding away.

Confetti falls from the ceiling amidst the whirling lights and strobes, the revelry akin to New Year's Eve.

EXT. CLUB, MIAMI BEACH - LATER

Jack and his party, now drunk, shirt tails out, hair askew, clothes wrinkled, come stumbling out of the club.

Ocean Avenue is now quiet, serene and peaceful. Even the paparazzi have gone home.

Out over the water, the Sun is coming up. In the golden glow of the dawn, Jack looks like Hell. His eyes squint as he gazes at the sunrise. He puts on his sunglasses.

INT. MIAMI ARENA - NIGHT

RICKY MARTIN is in concert before a packed arena crowd. He performs "Livin La Vida Loca", the live version of which now replaces the studio version.

Jack is in the wings, looking tired and haggard, wearing a V-neck T-shirt and jeans.

Martin looks over, sees Jack in the wings and motions him on stage.

Jack looks around, not realizing that Ricky is motioning at him. Martin keeps motioning, and then it dawns on him that Ricky wants him out there.

Jack makes it over to Ricky and they sing the song together, crowd cheering wildly as they recognize Jack.

Jack closes his eyes for a moment to concentrate on the words, but then loses his balance a little, and quickly opens them to steady himself.

Near the end Jack hugs Ricky, and heads off-stage, Ricky acknowledging him inaudibly.

Jack smiles and waves to the crowd as he goes. Ricky waves his arms upwards encouraging applause.

As the song ends, and Ricky sings his final note, Jack makes it off stage, and then collapses. Onlookers rush to him.

CUT TO:

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - DAY

INSERT: Chicago Tribune. In the Entertainment section there is a single picture of Jack on stage with Ricky Martin.

Ford is on the phone, glancing down at the open paper.

FORD

Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yes, well, we had a deal, did we not?

ANONYMOUS GM (ON THE PHONE)

C'mon, Greg. You see the headlines.

FORD

Not today! Buried in the entertainment section!

ANONYMOUS GM

For a change, yeah. But its only a matter of time.

FORD

He'll be fine! He's done this every year since I can remember! He'll be fine.

ANONYMOUS GM

Greg, you gotta stop. You know who my owner is and how he is. It's not going to work this time.

FORD

I can talk to Big Monty, maybe pay more of his contract.

ANONYMOUS GM

Forget it, buddy. I love you and we've done right by one another, but that comes as a result of mutual respect and knowing each others position. It's not going to work this time. Next time. OK?

FORD

(frustrated)
Yeah, yeah, OK.

ANONYMOUS GM

Can you blame me?

FORD

(giving in)
No, I actually can't, Goddamn it!

ANONYMOUS GM

We're cool then. Good luck buddy.

FORD

Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK. Thanks.

He hangs up. He sits there in frustration.

"Turn It Up, Turn Me On, Turn Me Loose" by Dwight Yoakam plays

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO'S GOLD COAST - DAY

SUPER: 48 Hours Later.

TRACKING: Through the apartment.

The apartment is spacious. Big windows let in the late morning light. The living room is very modern: black leather couches, glass coffee table, large bookshelves and a huge flat screen TV on the wall.

On the back walls are many photos: At bat for the University of Texas (age 18), at bat for the Iowa Cubs (20), at bat for the Chicago Cubs (21), in the field at the All-Star Game (25)

Also a picture with his FATHER (Jack's early 20's, his father, a shorter, stockier, spitting image of Jack, 50's) and

Another photo of Jack with another MAN, 50's BENNY, whom we will meet shortly, and who wears a dark suit, white shirt, dark tie, glasses, while Jack is dressed casually. Both wear cowboy hats and smile broadly.

Set apart from the others is one large framed photo of a 1958 B&W picture of BUDDY HOLLY and WAYLON JENNINGS, taken in an old photo booth.

In the bookcase: Ten Silver Slugger Awards, Two MLB MVP Awards, Five Gold Gloves.

All of the awards are, at least, three-years old.

TRACKING: From the living room into an open kitchen.

INT. JACK'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

There is a very modern kitchen. An empty champagne bottle sits on the island in the middle.

Two empty glasses and several empty beer bottles are strewn about the counter and island along with Chinese food containers, half-eaten.

TRACKING: Down a hallway and into Jack's bedroom.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack lies in bed, half under a comforter. His leg hangs out. He is face down.

A bed side table includes a modern lamp, Bose music system/radio, alarm clock and a framed picture of Jack in a tux along with an elegantly dressed young WOMAN (late 20's) - JANE, whom we will meet later. Blond hair, dark evening gown, pearls. Very elegant.

A WOMAN wrapped in a towel, a tall, dark-haired beauty, emerges from the bathroom. She drops the towel and starts dressing.

Jack is oblivious. She is NOT the woman in the photo on the table. She finishes dressing and tries to wake Jack. She bends down and shakes him gently.

WOMAN

Jack, Jack?

JACK

(gurgling sounds)

Uh, Ugg, Ahhhh, Huh?

He tries to raise his head and open his eyes. Then he drops it back down on the bed.

She shakes her head and walks out.

Jack starts to get out of bed like he is literally being poured onto the floor. He begins to crawl.

INT. JACK'S KITCHEN - DAY

The top of the island in Jack's kitchen is as before. Then, from behind, a hand grabs the top from below. Then a second hand. Then we see a seriously hung-over Jack Hoss, hair askew, eye's hardly open, pull himself up.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, CHICAGO - LATER

He stumbles around the apartment looking for something. He disappears into the bathroom. We hear him throw-up.

We hear the sound of a toilet flushing, then water running from a faucet.

He comes back out. He looks around the place. Something catches his eye.

INSERT: cell phone on the top of the Island.

Jack walks over, grabs it and makes a call. He waits. No answer.

JACK

Shit.

He puts it down. He looks over his kitchen.

JACK (CONT'D)

(disgusted)

Ugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN CHICAGO - LATER

Jack exits a Greek diner and takes out his cell-phone. He glances down at it.

INSERT: Cell phone screen. It is blank.

Jack walks down the street and tries a call. It connects. Jack stops. His eyes get big.

JANE - ON THE PHONE

Hello, ass-hole.

JACK

(into his phone)

Jane! It's me! Don't hang-up!

JANE - ON THE PHONE

What do you want?

INT. JANE'S CHICAGO GOLD COAST HIGH RISE - CONTINUOUS

Jane's place is the epitome of high style and haute couture. It overlooks Lake Michigan and Lake Shore Drive.

Jane stands there, phone to her ear, head cocked, unhappy look on her face, brow furrowed. Despite this, her natural, Ivory Girl/Girl-Next-Door good-looks shine through.

JANE

(into the phone)

You are making another asinine spectacle of yourself! And now it no longer satisfies you to just do it here, now you're taking it overseas?

EXT. STREET IN CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

Jack, oblivious to the people now walking around him, focuses on the call.

JACK

(into the phone)

Oh, c'mon, honey! You have known me long enough to know that I just like to blow-off a little steam before Spring Training. Just sowing a few wild oats, nothing more. Only one woman means anything to me, and that's you. You know that!

JANE - ON THE PHONE

Yeah, yeah. Used to be a few days, just you and the boys. Fishing wasn't it? Then a week, and now three weeks! Three weeks! Who the hell are you? David Lee Roth?

JACK

(glancing around)

No, no. But I did see him in Ibiza.

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - CONTINUOUS

Jane walks to her window and gazes out.

JANE

You're making jokes now? You're having fun? At my expense! You know, you enjoy looking like the good ole' foolish playboy, I understand that, and at first it was cute. Well, it's not cute anymore, Jack. We're in our 30's. No matter what you're trying to achieve, and I have no idea what that might be, you being drunk for three weeks straight is no basis for anything positive!

JACK - ON THE PHONE

Well, what do you want, Jane? Tell me, darlin.

JANE

I want you to grow up. You want to save your career that you are seemingly trying to destroy? That's up to you, but you're not embarrassing me again. And stop embarrassing my father, and his club, and the city of Chicago and the entire damn country!

EXT. STREET IN CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

JANE - ON THE PHONE

I don't need this shit. I have my own life. I just don't have the time to waste on this anymore. You think about that. Good-bye.

Click! She hangs up.

JACK

Jane? Honey? Darlin'?
(a beat)
Aww, shhhiiiiittttt!

A young BOY (10) in a Cubs cap walks up to him with his FATHER (30's).

BOY

Mr. Hoss? Can I have your autograph?

Jack just looks down at the lad. Then at his dad, then back at the little guy who is holding up a pen and a piece of paper. Jack gathers himself quickly. His face and tone softens.

JACK

Why sure you can.

He kneels down, takes the pen and paper.

JACK (CONT'D)

What's your name, big guy?

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY JONES' OFFICE - DAY

BENNY JAMES, (late-60s), Jack's long-suffering agent sits behind a giant oak desk, and speaks with a Tennessee drawl. His office is full of clean, but old, wooden furniture.

Benny looks kindly, worn-out and rumped. He is a tall man and looks like he's been poured into his chair. He wears giant black, horn-rimmed glasses.

Jack sits in a chair in front of the desk. He stares at a picture on the wall

INSERT: Framed photo of a younger Benny with the Reverend Billy Graham.

Benny begins to speak and gets Jack's attention.

BENNY

So, tell me, Jack, my boy, what are you doing? Because, right now, I'm thinking I should have stuck to Country performers back in Nashville.

Jack squirms in his chair.

JACK

Ahh, well, ahh -

BENNY

Allow me to answer, OK?

JACK

Ah, OK.

BENNY

Look at you, although, in this state, I'd rather not. Still, we are here now and so here we are.

JACK

(smiling)
Yes, we are. Now.

BENNY

We must deal with this. Jack, you're throwing it away. With both hands you are throwing it away. Do you understand?

Jack nods as the smile disappears.

BENNY (CONT'D)
 You want a new contract, Jack? A
 new contract with the Cubs?

JACK
 Yes. Preferably.

BENNY
 Preferably?!

JACK
 (cocky)
 I'd like to stay. I love the Cubs,
 I love the fans, hey, I love the
 city of Chicago, but this is
 probably going to be my last
 contract, so its gotta be a good
 one. Maybe its gotta be the highest
 bidder this time.

BENNY
 (controlled agitation)
 The highest bidder?

JACK
 Yes, sir.

BENNY
 (slowly, taking it all in)
 Highest bidder.

Benny leans forward, clasping his hands together on his desk.

BENNY (CONT'D)
 You want to know who the highest
 bidder is going to be?

JACK
 Sure.

Benny produces a newspaper from his desk. He tosses it onto
 Jack's lap. Jack looks down and turns it over so he is
 looking at the back page.

BENNY
 Inside. Near the middle.

Jack leafs through the pages until he sees himself.

INSERT: Newspaper photo shows Jack on stage with Ricky Martin
 looking out-of-sorts.

Headline: "Dyin' La Vida Loca"

BENNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No one. That's who.

JACK
(looking at it)
I hadn't seen this one.

Jack looks up at Benny, who now sits back.

BENNY
Jack, I was very sorry when your father passed. Very sorry. But, I am glad to know that he did not live to see this. The man was a rock, an anchor, but now, well, just look at yourself. You trying to join him?

JACK
Oh, Ben, c'mon. Stop being dramatic. You know I like to kick back for a bit before the grind of another long season.

BENNY
Jack, your contract expires at the end of this season. It was a good one, I know, because I negotiated it, but there will not be another if you persist in this. You are going to be 35 years old.

JACK
(leaning forward)
Yeah 35 years old, with 517 home runs!

BENNY
35 years old. Looking forty.

JACK
Well, it generally takes that long to hit 500 homers. Ask anybody.

BENNY
You are out of shape. You should've spent the off-season in the gym, working out, living right, like other guys that are your age and still want to play and not as a drunken mess! I'd call you a playboy but it would be an insult to playboy's!

JACK

Aww, hell.

BENNY

Are you at all aware that the organization has had enough of being embarrassed? You thinking about signing with another club? Let me tell you, these guys, these guys reached that conclusion a month ago!

JACK

Bull shit.

BENNY

They've been trying to trade you in the off-season!

Jack sits back

JACK

(taken aback)

Probably just talk, you know?

BENNY

Talk? Just business, I suppose.

JACK

(smiling)

Yeah.

BENNY

A-ha. Jack, this is real. I wouldn't lie to you.

JACK

Bull shit! Jane would have said something!

BENNY

(facetiously)

Oh, is she here? I didn't see her when you came in. Did I miss her? Is she in the lobby? Should I go out and get her?

Benny looks around Jack, then goes to get up. Jacks squirms again.

JACK

Well, ah -

Benny stops, then sits back down and leans back in his chair.

BENNY

A-ha.

JACK

Look, let's cut the crap! I got a no-trade clause, right?

BENNY

Its a limited no-trade. To get the extra years we wanted we had to give in on that, remember? There are ten teams that Greg could ship you to right now, and there's not a damn thing we can do about it.

Jack looks away, the light beginning to dawn on him. All cockiness now gone, and re-composed, Jack looks back at him.

JACK

Damn, that's right. OK, OK. Just bottom line this, Ben.

BENNY

Get your head out of your ass, son, or next year you will be playing in Japan.

JACK

Japan?

BENNY

Japan. Do you speak Japanese, Jack?

Jack looks very depressed. He looks back at Benny.

JACK

Not that I'm aware of. But, I do like Chinese food.

BENNY

Chinese food? But it's Japan! They don't have - oh, never mind. The point is, you've had a Hall of Fame career. Let's see if we can put off talking about your legacy and see if we still can't make this about your future! Alright?

JACK

(solemnly)
OK, Ben.

BENNY

Focus on the team, Jack. Be a leader. Focus on the Series. You've not been there. Let it motivate you! You guys have a very good team. It would make them, and you, forget all the rest.

JACK

The Series, Hell, that would be awesome, but it's not up to just me. We were a few bricks shy of a load last season.

BENNY

In your absence they've added a Cuban defector to play Right and two good pitchers.

JACK

It takes chemistry, a lack of serious injuries, intangibles -

BENNY

You can do your part! And if the thought of the Series in and of itself is not enough to motivate you, well, they got one more thing; a rookie, a prodigy. As they compared you to a young Mickey Mantle, so they compare him, to you.

Jack just waves his hand

JACK

(dismissive, looking away)
Rookies! They fold-up like lawn chairs when the going gets tough.

BENNY

This kid looks like the real thing. He destroyed pitching at double and triple-A. This kid is coming, Jack. He's an outfielder, and he's coming for your spot. Why do you think Greg's been talking about trading you? Now do you see? Look, Jack, time marches on for all of us. This kid is coming, and he's bringing doom with him.

JACK
 (unfazed)
 Oh yeah? And does "Doom" have a
 name?

"Fast As You" by Dwight Yoakam plays.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOHOKAM STADIUM, MESA, AZ. - DAY

MANY PLAYERS, COACHES AND SCOUTS are on the field. A LARGE BATTING CAGE is positioned around home plate. A SCREEN protects the coach throwing batting practice. In the infield, in-between pitches, a COACH hits fungoes to the outfielders.

CLARK SPRINGFIELD, a good looking young man (22) is in the batting cage. 6-3 and 230 lbs of muscle. His swing is smooth and well balanced. His hair, short and light.

Crash! He connects. Crash! Again he connects. Crash! A third time with effortless abandon he is connecting with direct hits - the barrel of the bat to the ball.

His swing is so sweet, the stroke deceptively fast and powerful. As he completes his swing he has perfect balance.

Another angle, from behind, shows the ball flying off his bat - each pitch out of sight as he continues to connect.

Around the batting cage is Cubs Manager, Bobby Hart, (55). He wears his trade-mark sun-glasses.

Next to him are VARIOUS COACHES: ROCKY CARULLI, hitting coach, (50), WHIMPY SMITH, bench coach (68) and Head Scout MILLER OSTEEN (65). On the mound throwing BP is Hitting Coach, RICK PALMER (MID-50'S).

They say nothing. They just watch the display. Each time their head turns and angles up with each solid rocket off of Clark's big bat.

EXT. HOHOKAM PARK, MESA, AZ. - LATER

Clark comes sprinting from O.S. He races across the field. At the last minute he raises his glove-hand and looks up. He stretches out and the ball falls into his mitt.

He pulls up short of the warning track. He spins, and throws the ball back in.

Clark races in and makes a sliding catch of a screaming liner

Clark waits on a fly-ball. He starts in, timing his approach so he will catch the ball with his momentum going forward. He catches the ball and fires a laser-beam of a throw to third-base.

RYAN JONES, (early 30's), straddles the bag. On one hop the ball arrives. Ryan throws down a sweep-tag right in front of the base, then jokingly throws off his glove and starts waving and fanning his hand. He starts blowing on it.

In the outfield Clark just stands smiling.

The other coaches and players start LAUGHING.

At the cage the coaches don't react. Bobby Hart miles.

Greg Ford walks over to the cage from O.S.

FORD

Clark Springfield.

BOBBY

He's a find.

WHIMPY

He's a physical specimen.

ROCKY

No doubt. That boy's a find.

BOBBY

(dead-panning)

Yeah, kinda' hard to believe you found him, Miller.

MILLER

Ha!

ROCKY

Last guy like him was Hoss

FORD

Don't say that. I don't need this kid jinxed already! You know better.

(a beat)

Bobby, Miller, a word, please?

They walk from the cage to the dug-out.

I/E. HOME TEAM DUG-OUT, HOHOKAM STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg, Bobby and Miller, the three of them sit in the dug-out looking out at the field. They are alone.

FORD

Well, so what do you really think?

BOBBY

He makes thunderous contact. Strong, fast, agile. Extremely coordinated. Has nice control of his swing and his body. Great fundamentals. Great. Good eye.

MILLER

I have to agree, of course.

BOBBY

But, we'll see. I am anxious to see how he handles big league pitching. He can handle fastballs, its cutters, sliders and off-speed stuff that concerns me.

He gets up to go back on the field.

HART

But, I'll tell you this. He might be the most-advanced 21 year old I've ever seen, next to Hoss. That is the real question, right? Is he the next Jack Hoss?

He leaves for the field.

MILLER

(to Greg)

Don't rush him, OK? You'll be able to build the franchise around him for a decade, or more if you don't.

FORD

Sure, Miller. Sure. Now go find me another one to go with him.

MILLER

(looking unappreciated)

I'll see what I can do. As we all know, they just grow on fucking trees.

Greg smiles, enjoying breaking his balls. Miller leaves and Greg sits alone, looking around. Then, his face hardens.

FORD
 (yelling outside)
 Hey? Where in the hell is Hoss?

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLD COURSE - DAY

Jack Hoss is dressed in a gold shirt and long, loud Bermuda shorts. He wears a visor, shades, low-cut socks and gold shoes. He's on a driving range with a TEACHING PRO.

Jack is swinging a driver. A can of Lone Star beer is on the ground near by as is his GOLF BAG, a bucket of them on ice sits near by.

The Teaching Pro, BARRY (a youthful 50) watches intently.

JACK
 Ooh-wee! Goddamn, Barry! This is why I love you, son. You make time for me and my unofficial, official first day of Spring Training, and you bring the Lone Star on ice. In the middle of Arizona, no less.

Jack picks-up a the can.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Yes sir. Nothin' like it. You are a gentleman and a scholar!

He takes a swig.

BARRY
 Yeah, Pop said you were on your way and I'd better get over here and get ready for you. So here I am. Fully loaded!

JACK
 I'll drink to that.

He takes another sip. As does Barry.

BARRY
 Just don't tell pop about the beer! You know how he feels about it!

JACK
 Oh, ole' Benny knows the score, bud. We had a chat before I came down. It's all good.

BARRY

Great. OK, Big Guy, let's go. Let's see you do it, baby. Show me that power! Show it to me! Nice and smooth, head quiet, good balance. Let her rip!

Jack puts down the can. And takes a practice swing with the driver.

JACK

You're a stern task master, Barry. Just like your old man! I'm getting both barrels this week!

Jack addresses a teed-up golf ball and then lets it rip. Big swing. He makes solid contact and the ball explodes off the tee, straight ahead and disappears into the distance.

BARRY

My work here is done. I'll send you my bill.

He starts to walk away.

JACK

Get your ass back here!

BARRY

You hit them farther than I do! I mean, who is the pro here? You're gong to put me out of a job!

Jack tees-up another one.

BARRY (CONT'D)

So, when do you report, anyway? Hopefully before someone sees this!

JACK

This morning.

BARRY

What?

JACK

Relax. I always report early, right along with the rookies. But, since they want to trade me, I'll just show-up to-mor-row.

BARRY

A-ha. But, trade you? No way. You are the Cubs. Chicago would go crazy.

JACK

Yabba-dabba-doo, to that, but, your daddy seems to think that times are a-changing. And it could happen.

BARRY

He said that?

JACK

Words to that effect. And you know what? We're just going to see about that!

He hits another big drive into the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE, HOHOKAM STADIUM - DAY

Inside a bear-bones, concrete/cinder block office deep under the stands of Hohokam Stadium is the clubhouse and manager's office.

There is a desk and a few chairs. A phone, white board, not much else. Bobby, Greg and a third man, Montgomery Lake III, Big Monty's son, known as "Junior".

He is tall and lean and resembles a younger version of his powerful father. He is in his mid-30's.

MONTY JR.

So, where in the hell is Hoss? Please tell me. Dad is on me constantly for reports. He's getting older and he just doesn't need this shit!

FORD

Easy, Junior. He's just upset.

MONTY JR.

Is he? After what he's pulled? Well, I'm in no fucking mood. You listen Bobby, you tell him. You tell him good, he gets here and he does not embarrass us anymore, or else!

He stops and collects himself.

MONTY JR. (CONT'D)

I saw the kid Springfield today -
we all did. Jesus Christ, its like
the second coming of Babe Ruth.
Pow! Pow! Pow! Miller was right.

BOBBY

Don't get too excited, okay Junior?
By tomorrow Hossie will be here,
ready to go. Give him some slack.

MONTY JR.

Slack. Fuck that. Bobby, Greg,
first whiff we get and we should
see about moving him! His contract
is up and Springfield is the
future!

FORD

Lets see how it goes, OK, Junior?

MONTY JR.

Just keep your eyes and ears open.
And I'm sure, ever so sure, that
it'll all be smooth sailing
starting tomorrow, right?

"That'll Be The Day" by Buddy Holly plays.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUBHOUSE BAR, GOLF CLUB - DAY

Jack and Barry sit at the bar with some other golfers in tow.
A bartender notices them and comes over smiling. "That'll be
the Day" plays in the B.G. Over a sound system.

BARTNEDER

Why if it isn't Jack Hoss and his
band "Drunk in the Afternoon"!

JACK

Larry! Hey son, c'mon, I ain't
drunk! Are we boys?

BARRY

But we're working on it.

Jack and Barry get a couple of drinks and are left to themselves, They chat inaudibly, enjoying a few laughs.

Another tipsy golfer tries to get by Jack. He trips on his stool and spills a beer all over Jack's shirt, drenching it.

Jack jumps up. Barry jumps back, and everyone else freezes. It goes quiet. Tension rises as all eyes are on Jack.

Jack looks down and then up at the guy who looks very worried. Jack frowns. Then a smile comes across Jack's face.

JACK

Well, hell boys, nobody told me we were having a wet titties contest!

They all start to laugh

JACK (CONT'D)

And that I was in it!

They'll all just laugh harder.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hey Barry! That gives me an idea! They still got a strip club or two in this town don't they?

BARRY

One or two, Jack!

JACK

Well get me a shirt and lets go!

CUT TO:

EXT. HOHOKAM STADIUM COMPLEX - EARLY MORNING.

Various angles. The sun is rising. It is early morning. The sprinklers are still going, watering down the stadium and two outside practice fields. No one is around. It is still.

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, HOHOKAM STADIUM - DAY

MANY PLAYERS are mingling around their lockers and getting ready. The players names are above their stalls.

Included Among those at their lockers are the following main players:

BRONSON CUTTER catcher, early 30's, ALAN "LEFTY" QUIVER (late 20's), tall and lean. ARTIE MANOR (early 20's) not as bulky as the bigger guys, or as tall. DeWayne Brown, who we met with Jack.

BALBOA SANCHEZ, 6-4 and bulky (early 20's), JULIO VEGA, (mid 20's) smaller, but not as thin as Brown.

Clark Springfield stands talking to JOSH BARNES, big and stocky and BILLY QUARTERFLASH, thin and tall. Both late 20's. Ryan Jones walks over to chat with them.

All sound is faint and in the B.G.

In a corner is JOSE SEVILLE, "El Smoke" (early 30's), the teams closer and ROBERTO SANTOS (late 20's), another big kid. They chat in Spanish, very faintly in the B.G.

OTHER YOUNG PLAYERS, all early 20's are also there. They look young enough to be high school players

Jack walks in, ruffled but otherwise none the worse for wear. His ball cap on backwards, wearing shorts and a tee-shirt. Sun-glasses sitting on the top of his cap.

He carries a large duffle bag. He walks to the middle of the room, and stops.

JACK

Well, howdy boys! Ola, amigos!

The players ad-lib 'hello's' back. Cutter walks over.

BRONSON

Well, well, well. I thought you'd be in jail in Mexico by now!

JACK

Hell Cutty, you've taken one too many foul balls off your head! You know as well as anybody that due to an unfortunate misunderstanding with the Federales that I am no longer welcome in Mexico!

While they laugh at that, Ryan Jones walks over.

RYAN

We heard from the English, Hossie. After your recent exploits they've decided they want the colonies back so they can teach us some manners!

JACK
That's another misunderstanding,
Ry. I'm from Texas you know, and
Texas was never any colony!

RYAN
Just of Mexico!

JACK
A fact we rectified at the Alamo
and San Jacinto! Where are you from
anyway?

More laughter as Jack heads to his stall. Jack sets down his bag and takes a seat on a chair. He glances up at his uniform, perfectly pressed and almost glaringly white.

WHIMPY (O.C.)
Hello Hossie!

Jack whirls around. Whimpy stands behind him.

JACK
Whimpy! Give me a hug big guy!

Jack gets up and hugs the old guy.

WHIMPY
Damn good to see you Hossie! You
don't look so bad.

JACK
Hey you either, Whimpy.

WHIMPY
Jack, soon as you get a chance,
Bobby wants a word, OK?

Jack pauses for a beat looking off in the direction of the manager's office. He thinks.

JACK
Why keep him waiting? Lead the way!

Jack gets up and they both start off for the office.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S STALL, HOHOKAM CLUBHOUSE - LATER

Jack walks to his locker now surrounded by REPORTERS. Front and center among them is RICK SYLVESTER, mid-40's. Dark hair, going grey, combed straight back and frumpy.

Jack goes through them to his stall, then turns around to face them. The reporters thrust small recorders and microphones in his direction.

JACK

Nice to see you boys. I see you're all here, so, go ahead, shoot.

SYLVESTER

You just speak to Bobby, Jack?

JACK

Hey there, Rick. Sure thing.

SYLVESTER

And?

JACK

And what? Just a friendly hello since we haven't seen each other since last fall.

SYLVESTER

I've got to ask you Jack, did he talk to you about your off-season exploits?

JACK

Look Rick, what me and Bobby talk about behind closed doors, stays there. Always has. I'm not going to change that now.

(a beat)

Look boys, I see that you guys take a serious interest in my activities while I'm on vacation but, I'm here to play ball now with one goal in mind; the World Series and raising that championship banner high over Wrigley Field.

REPORTER #1

So you're knocking off the partying and the drinking then?

JACK

Absolutely. Nothing but beer.

The reporters laugh.

REPORTER #2

Do you think your actions have been a distraction to the team?

JACK

In the off season? C'mon. I blow off steam right before Spring Training, always have. Folks say the season is 6 months long. I say its 6 months long plus six weeks of Spring Training and then, hopefully, another month of play-offs. That's February to November.

SYLVESTER

You plan on playing in that?

JACK

Hell yeah! Of course! I've been fortunate to play this game. Fulfilled a lot of dreams that me and my late daddy, Lord rest his soul, had from the start. But we had a much bigger dream. One day to play in the World Series! We haven't done that, yet.

He pauses for a moment.

JACK (CONT'D)

I see guys on other teams celebrate winning the Series, pouring champagne over their heads and laughing and crying and hugging each other. I see what it means. Can you imagine how much more it would mean to the fans of Chicago and the Cubs, after all they've been through? That's what I want for the people of Chicago, and for us. Can you imagine it? That's what I want. That's all I want. That's all that's left for me. Nothing else matters. Nothing.

SYLVESTER

What about the fall-out from the scene in Miami? Did you talk to the club about that?

JACK

Oh, Rick, Didn't you hear what I just said?

REPORTER #1

Did you speak to Ford about it?

JACK

What? OK, boys, forget it. Just print what I said, OK? I gotta get ready and get out there. It's high time.

He hits the button on his iPod sitting in a deck on a shelf high in his stall above his uniform.

Waylon Jennings's "Don't you think this outlaw bits done got out of hand?" Plays

JACK (CONT'D)

(motioning to his music player)

You know what, boys? That's Waylon Jennings right there. He started off in Buddy Holly's band. He was supposed to be on the plane that put ole' Buddy on the road to glory, but the Good Lord had other plans for him. You just never know what fate has in store. Don't sell us, or me, short. OK?

SYLVESTER

OK, Jack.

They all start to walk away. Sylvester stops.

SYLVESTER (CONT'D)

By the way, have you heard of Clark Springfield? Boom-boom, Jack. Boom-boom.

JACK

Yeah. Boom. Rhymes with doom, so I hear.

End Act I

CUT TO:

ACT II

EXT. BATTING CAGE, HOHOKAM STADIUM - DAY

Jack walks to the cage. The players are in the field. A pitching screen protects Billy Quarterflash, who is on the mound.

Another screen protects a coach in the infield hitting fly balls in between pitches.

Bronson Cutter is behind the plate, the coaches are around the outside of the cage. Jack walks up to the plate.

JACK
 (to Bronson)
 Who's this guy? That Quarterflash
 out there?

QUARTERFLASH
 It is, Jack!

JACK
 Well, well. You signed with us?

QUARTERFLASH
 Yup.

JACK
 Dodgers get tired of seeing me hit
 all those dingers off you?

QUARTERFLASH
 Nope. Greg got tired of me striking
 you out all of the time.

The guys in the infield burst out in laughter. Jack's not terribly amused.

BRONSON
 Teach him a lesson, Hossie. Take
 him deep. Here's a present. All
 fastballs today, Ok?

JACK
 Whatever, Cutty. Just bring it.

Billy winds-up and the pitch. Swish! Jack takes a mighty cut and misses. The infielders don't say a word.

Another pitch. Swish! And another. Swish! Three monster cuts, and three big misses. Billy smiles a sly smile.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Goddamn it!

Billy winds up and throws a few more. Hoss gets a piece of one and fouls it off. He dribbles one to short, then another cut and another miss.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (angrily to Rocky)
 Rock! Indoor batting cage, now!

He storms towards the dug out. "Gone" by Dwight Yoakam plays.

CUT TO:

INT. INDOOR BATTING CAGE, HOHOKAM STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack is blasting balls off a hitting tee into a screen. He is swinging and crushing them.

Pitching Coach Rocky Carulli replaces the ball each time Jack hits it.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Thunderous shots as he strikes each ball.

ROCKY
 Atta boy Jack! You're getting the
 stroke back now. Not too hard.
 Fast, but smooth. Quick but
 relaxed! Balance! Balance! Just
 chopping wood! Yeah, that's it!

Bam! Bam! Bam

He hits and hits. The balls go screaming into the screen.

ROCKY (CONT'D)
 Yeah, great! All in the wrists!
 Turn over that top hand! Yeah! Ok,
 Jesus Christ Jack! Save some for
 the field.

JACK
 Lets go!

He storms out of the cage, bat in hand, ready to hit. He looks like somebody's going to get hurt.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTING CAGE, HOHOKAM STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack comes purposely striding out of the dug out, Rocky not far behind him.

Jack approaches the cage A ROOKIE is in there.

JACK

Out!

The rookie looks around confused.

BOBBY

Better get out Will, before you get hurt.

The rookie does not need to hear that twice. He's gone, off to the first base side as Jack enters from the third base side.

Jack takes a couple of cuts, sets his feet and his stride, digs in his cleats.

JACK

C'mon, son. Throw.

Billy winds and throws. And...

Boom! Like a cannon ball out of a cannon a prodigious shot leaves the park - both high and long. The outfielders run after it, but its gone.

Bam!

Another pitch, another big hit.

Billy winds-up and throws, harder this time.

Boom!

A huge blast.

An angle on DeWayne Brown just shows him standing there, arms crossed. He doesn't move. He doesn't turn around.

We pan up to reveal the homer clearing the fence by 50 feet.

BOBBY

Sorry to see how much power you've lost there, Hossie.

WHIMPY

Damn!

JACK

Now that's more like it, damn it!

Jack leaves the cage quite pleased with himself. He heads to the dugout for his glove. As he walks we hear:

BOBBY (O.C.)
Ok Springfield, get in there.

Jack pays no attention. He just keeps walking. Then,

Bam! An explosion sounds. Jack stops in his tracks. He doesn't run around

Bam! Another explosion.

This time Jack turns around. Another angle reveals Springfield in the cage.

Billy winds and throws. Bam! Another shot.

Jack stands just staring at the shot as it leaves the park.

JACK
(to himself)
Not bad.

He turns back around and walks away.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Nice. OK Clark, now lefty!

Jack, stops, closes his eyes, exhales, then opens them, shrugs it off, shakes his head and keeps walking.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Springfield just keeps blasting them O.S.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM, CAMELBACK MTN, AZ - DAY

The room is large and airy. The home is decorated in expensive southwestern/desert decor. Lots of earth tones - serene, not busy.

On a large couch sits Monty Jr and Greg Ford. In a large arm is BIG MONTY LAKE, presiding and sitting in judgement. He is in his late 60's, early 70's.

He looks distinguished. He wears a white golf shirt, Brooks Brothers' blue blazer, gold buttons, double-breasted, khakis and Gucci loafers.

In another arm chair is Miller Osteen. On an adjacent couch sits Bobby Hart. They are all dressed similarly, but without the blazer.

GREG

Ok guys, lets re-cap for Big Monty
what we've got thus far. Bobby?

BOBBY

I think we all agree -

EXT. BALL FIELD - DAY

DeWayne "Flash" Brown runs-down a fly ball in full-out gallop. He is then sliding into second ahead of a throw. The opposing Shortstop throws down a slap-tag, but Flash has it easily beaten.

BOBBY (V.O.)

That Flash Brown will play center field and bat lead-off. He's our catalyst and near impossible to stop on the base paths.

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

BOBBY

We're divided a bit -

EXT. BALL FIELD - DAY

Various angles of more action.

Short Stop Artie Manor is at bat. He swings and drives the ball. He takes off out of the batters box and runs O.S. A CATCHER stands and takes off his mask.

Artie, now in the field, charges a ground ball, bear-handing it and firing to first. As we pull-back the ball arrives in the glove of Balboa Sanchez, a step ahead of the runner.

BOBBY (V.O.)

But we're going to give the rookie, Artie Manor, a shot at the two-hole. He impressed last September after his call up.

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

BOBBY

Finally, Ryan Jones, "Mister Three-Hundred" -

EXT. BALL FIELD - DAY

Various angles.

An opposing PITCHER throws and third baseman Ryan Jones swings and sends that pitch deep, and then goes into his home run trot around the bases.

Ryan is up again. He swings and drives a ball into the gap in left center. The opposing center and left fielders give chase as it goes between them.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Ry's an on-base machine and big time run producer and he'll bat third and play third, as well.

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

BOBBY

And that's where we're at, Boss.

BIG MONTY

Alright, Bobby. How about clean-up?

GREG

We've had our doubts about Jack Hoss, as you know. His skills are beginning to erode -

BOBBY

As would the skills of any player after all of these years, especially in the outfield!

GREG

Legs only have so many miles in them, Boss, and we are concerned about potential injury.

MONTY JR.

He's down in every category across the board from his hey day.

BOBBY

(testy)
Jesus! We've been through this!

MILLER

(testier, agreeing)
We have!

MONTY JR.

(raising his voice)

His years of dominance, of being an MVP, look over. It's been three-years since the last one. And he's not taking care of himself. We all know that. Anybody want to argue that? No? Thank you.

GREG

(calmly)

Boss, we certainly did field offers for him in the off-season.

MONTY JR.

(gathering himself)

In all fairness, it was a bit more than that, Greg. Dad, we gave moving him a shot.

BIG MONTY

Trade him? Did we? Or were we just listening to offers?

GREG

Well, we were fishing for, and fielding offers. We nearly had a deal set, a good one, with Houston, that we were ready to bring to you, Boss, but then, well, Jack's Lost Weekend hit the papers. They have new ownership in Houston and didn't want to take a chance.

MONTY JR.

Not to mention his embarrassing collapse on the stage in Miami.

BOBBY

He didn't collapse, Junior, OK? Lets get that straight right fucking now! He slipped! That's what he told me and that's what I believe.

(to Big Monty)

I'm sorry for the language, Boss, I know that you don't like it.

BIG MONTY

That's alright, Bobby. I like your loyalty to your men. So?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOHOKAM PARK, MESA, AZ. - DAY

Jack Hoss playing, from various angles. He takes a mighty cut, but smooth, well balanced. He trots around the bases. He is in the field grabbing a line-drive. He spins and fires it back to the infield where Artie Manor cuts it off.

BOBBY (V.O.)

He's hit the shit out of the ball, Boss. This kid Springfield has lit a fire under him. I want Hossie hitting clean-up.

BIG MONTY (V.O.)

Greg?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

GREG

The power is there. We don't know about the legs because he hasn't even attempted a steal this Spring.

MONTY JR.

He's not dumb. He's saving himself. He's not jeopardizing his summer in March.

BOBBY

He's a veteran, Junior. That's how they do it!

MONTY JR.

Ok. So, what do we do about "The Phenom"?

BIG MONTY

The who?

CUT TO:

EXT. BALL FIELD - DAY

Various angles. Clark Springfield leads off first, then takes off and steals second ahead of the throw.

He catches a fly-ball and fires it to Cutter at Home.

He swings and crushes a long home run. Very high in the air, and long gone over the outfielders head.

MONTY JR. (V.O.)
 "The Phenom", Dad. The reporters
 started it. They love him.

INT. LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

GREG
 Well, it's ride the bench here,
 pinch hit, spare guys now and then,
 or option him back to the Minors,
 Triple-A Iowa, where he plays
 everyday.

BIG MONTY
 We can't find him a spot?

MONTY JR.
 No, dad. Not with adding Roberto.

EXT. CUBAN BALL FIELD - DAY

From the stands: Low quality footage of Roberto Santos,
 large, strongly built, is at bat in a shabby, dimly lit Cuban
 ball park. Looks like something shot with an old Super-8
 camera.

He swings and crushes a pitch. The ball soars into the sky
 and clears the outfield wall by twenty-feet.

Our view is quickly returned to the infield where Roberto
 circles the bases and comes across home plate, accepting the
 congratulations of his teammates.

His jersey reads "Habana".

GREG (V.O.)
 We signed Roberto Santos, the
 "Cuban Missile Crisis" in the off-
 season, as you recall. Before his
 defection he was a real Superstar
 throughout Cuba.

INT. LIVING ROOM, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ - CONTINUOUS

MONTY JR.
 We want your money on the field,
 Dad, and Clark isn't making much.

BIG MONTY
 How much?

GREG

Major's minimum is \$480,000. At Triple-A? About \$2500 per month.

BIG MONTY

That's not a differentiator. Look guys, I just want to win.

BOBBY

Wish we had the DH right about now!

GREG

I say leave him here, on the bench.

BOBBY

I don't know, I don't want his skills eroding sitting around!

GREG

I want Jack at his best. The moment the kid is gone, Hoss could back-slide, and damage his value more!

BIG MONTY

Then that's on us. Ok, the kid goes back down. We'll give him a call when we need him, right, Miller?

MILLER

This kid will crush it wherever he is. You'll build the team around him in the years to come, Boss. Mark my words.

MONTY JR.

Ok then. Good enough for me.

GREG

Alright. OK Bobby, what's the rest?

Bobby holds up his media guide. He has certain pages marked with sticky notes. As he mentions each players name he quickly flips to that page in the guide.

He turns it towards Big Monty, showing him a picture of the player in action.

BOBBY

Bubba Sanchez bats fifth and plays first. He's a whiff machine but enormous power, so Bronson Cutter bats sixth to stabilize things, and catches.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Then the Missile Crisis, Santos, bats 7th, since he has to adjust to life after Cuba. We'll let Julio Vega, the kid from Puerto Rico, bat eighth and play second. All glove, but he could surprise you, if you listen to Miller.

MILLER

He's an overachiever. Very mature at Iowa last year. Steady for a kid

BIG MONTY

Good. Pitchers?

BOBBY

(flipping to their pages)
Alan Quiver is the Ace with new guys Josh Barnes and Billy Quarterflash as two and three. El Smoke closes.

MONTY JR.

That's as good a top three as you'll find, dad!

BIG MONTY

And I love El Smoke. Alright, I'll leave the rest to you boys before I get dizzy.

The Boss pauses. He looks around the room and at each man in the eye as he speaks. They, in turn give him their undivided attention. The room takes on a much more serious tone.

BIG MONTY (CONT'D)

Look, I have big expectations for this season. I have more than one hundred and twenty-five million dollars of my own money sunk into this team, for this year, alone. Now, if we win, I don't care - money well spent. But, let me be clear; with a pay-roll like this, I expect a winner, and if I don't get one, I don't want excuses. We're all big boys here. I don't mind spending that money if we can bring a winner to the hardworking people of Chicago. They deserve it. But, if not, well, you boys know the score. You all know the stakes. Well, no need to belabor this. That's it.

Everyone in the room starts looking at each other.

MONTY JR.

OK, guys, my father and I know that you have all done a great job, and we appreciate it. Thanks, guys.

They all get up and go. Big Monty and Junior are left alone. Big money gets up to get himself a drink. A servant in a white coat starts over but Big Monty waves him off. He starts fixing himself a drink from a silver drink cart.

BIG MONTY

(looking down, making his drink)

I don't know. Trade Jack? I don't know. I think the people of Chicago will have to reach that conclusion well before I do.

(looking at Junior)

Junior, one day this team will be yours, and if Miller is right, then you'll build it around this kid Springfield like I built it around Jack.

(a beat)

And when its time for that to end, you'll have as hard a time with it as I am going to have. A player like that, you see them the whole way through and it's as though you're their father. You watch them grow up, like I did you.

He looks away reflecting and then back at Junior.

BIG MONTY (CONT'D)

You'll see. So, how's Jane?

MONTY JR.

Fine, Dad. She's a strong, smart girl. You and Mom raised her right.

BIG MONTY

That was your late mother's doing. And Jack?

MONTY JR.

Calling her nightly if you listen to Jane. She's still not buying his apologies.

BIG MONTY

She will, though.

MONTY JR.

Will she?

Big Monty gets up and starts to leave the room.

BIG MONTY

She loves him, son. Arizona's a long way from Chicago. A few acts left to go in that little play. I'm not getting involved. You either, understand? Its up to her. Keep me in the loop on all of it.

Big Monty leaves, leaving Junior sitting there, alone.

"SHE'S A LOT LIKE TEXAS" by The Derailers plays

CUT TO:

INT. RENTED HOUSE, SCOTTSDALE - NIGHT

Jack stands in his living room looking out at his pool through glass sliding doors. As he gazes into the glass, Jane's face is superimposed in it.

Jack drinks a beer. Jack turns around, turns down the music and picks up his cell phone from the coffee table. He dials.

JANE - ON THE PHONE

Hello Jack.

JACK

Hey, honey! How are you?

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - NIGHT

Jane stands in her kitchen.

JANE

I'm fine, Jack. Working. You know? My career?

JACK - ON THE PHONE

Sure, sure. I know. Hotey-Cotour don't just sell itself!

JANE

I buy, Jack, not sell. You think you could remember at least that. Look, Jack, I've been thinking.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

I don't know about this. Your type of life and mine, they don't mix. I just don't...

CUT TO:

INT. RENTED HOUSE, SCOTTSDALE - CONTINUOUS

JACK

I can't blame you, honey, really I can't, but just wait, just wait for me to get back, Ok? I'll come by, we'll talk.

JANE - ON THE PHONE

I don't know about that.

JACK

Just give me a chance, Ok? Just let me get back. We'll talk. I just gotta' see you, darlin'.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - CONTINUOUS

JANE

I just don't know. I just don't.

JACK - ON THE PHONE

I'll call you, when I get back. You just think about it, OK?

JANE

OK, Alright. I'll think about it.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTED HOUSE, SCOTTSDALE - CONTINUOUS

JACK

Oh, that's great, Honey! I know we're going to work this out!

JANE - ON THE PHONE

No promises, Jack! I mean it.

JACK

OK, OK. We'll talk when I get back! Soon as I get in!

JANE - ON THE PHONE

No Jack! After the game. You just focus on that, OK? We'll talk after the game.

JACK

You bet, Honey, right after, but you'll be on my mind!

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - CONTINUOUS

JANE

Alright.

She hangs up. She stares ahead, not sure what she's doing.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTED HOUSE, SCOTTSDALE - CONTINUOUS

Jack turns up the song, again and we hear it to the end.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM, MESA, ARIZONA - NIGHT

We see the door of a very ordinary hotel room. Modern shabby. We hear a KNOCK at the door. Clark Springfield walks into the scene and opens the door. An OLDER MAN, who is big and looks like Clark is in the doorway. He is probably late 50's.

CLARK

(shocked, surprised)
Dad!

CLARK'S FATHER

Son. Can I come in?

CLARK

Sure, Dad.

They both enter. His father looks around the room.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

CLARK'S FATHER

Heard you on the phone with your mother.

(MORE)

CLARK'S FATHER (CONT'D)

One thing to tell me you're being sent down. Another to tell her that you want to quit and come home.

(a beat)

Hell, I thought I was raising a man, but you ain't nothing but a coward! So, get packed and I'll take you on home.

CLARK

Well, Dad, I...

CLARK'S FATHER

Well, Dad, nothing. Get packed. You think the world owes you somethin'? You play baseball and get paid to do it. Now you cry to your mother about bein' sent down. Want to quit do ya? Hell, you come home. I'll show you some work. Earn you an honest livin' if this is how you're gonna' behave.

(a beat)

Go ahead, get your bags.

CLARK

Dad, c'mon, I didn't say I was quitting, just disappointed is all. I killed it this Spring, I did.

CLARK'S FATHER

A-ha, and so this is how you behave? My grandfather came to this country with nothing in his pocket. Did someone owe him something? No! Did he ask for anything? No. He went to work. To work! Not baseball, but work! Well alright, you're a great athlete son. You've got a gift, but you took their money to sign. You do what they damn well tell you, or you can come home right now! Understand?

CLARK

Yes sir.

CLARK'S FATHER

Don't you ever let me hear you say what you said to your mother again, you understand? Now, where you goin'? Back to Iowa?

CLARK

Yes sir. Triple-A

CLARK'S FATHER

Then you go there. You keep your mouth shut. You do what they tell you. And you play hard. Hard as you can. You got a gift, son, and if you work as hard as you can, keep your nose clean and listen more than you talk, you will go far.

CLARK

Yes sir.

CLARK'S FATHER

Good. Now don't make me come back here, because if I do, I'll be packing your things myself and that will be the end of it. You understand that too? Am I clear?

CLARK

Yes sir.

CLARK'S FATHER

Good. Now let's go get something to eat and call your mother. It'll do her good to hear your voice. She'll like that.

CLARK

Yes sir. OK. And I'll make Mom and you proud.

CLARK'S FATHER

You always have, son.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - DAY/NIGHT

"SWEET HOME CHICAGO" plays. Three versions: Robert Johnson, blended into the Blue Brothers, blended finally into Eric Clapton's version.

MONTAGE: Various shots/angles. All of Chicago's great sites.

Sites/Time of day:

1. Chicago Skyline at night from Lake Michigan. 2. Buckingham Fountain at night, lit-up sand spraying water high into the sky. 3. Navy Pier, night 4. Wrigley Building, night 5.

Tribune Tower, night 6. Rush Street, night 7. Gino's Famous Pizza, night 8. Chicago Pizza and Oven Grinders, night 9. Green Mill Cocktail Lounge, night 10, Ditka's Restaurant, night

11. Water Tower Place, night 12. Chicago Theater, night 13. Sears Tower, night 14. John Hancock Tower, night 15. Michigan Avenue, night 16. Lake Shore Drive, night

17. Belmont Harbor - TIME LAPSE: FROM NIGHT TO DAY

18. Chicago Tribune truck downtown, dawn 19. Greek Diner, dawn 20. Millennium Park, dawn 21. Shedd Aquarium, early morning 22. Planetarium, early morning 23. Natural History Museum, morning 24. Museum of Science and Industry, morning

25. Lincoln Park, morning 26. Lincoln Park Conservatory, morning 28. Abe Lincoln Statue, Chicago History Museum, morning 29. Soldier Field, morning 30. Art Institute, morning

31. Chicagoans running and biking along Lake Michigan, morning 32. Billy Goat Tavern, morning

SUPER: Wrigley Field, Opening Day.

33. Wrigley Field - FROM ABOVE - morning 34. Wrigley Field, Clark and Addison entrance, late morning 35. Wrigley Field, Waveland Ave, late morning

36. Statue of Ernie Banks, late morning 36. Statue of Harry Carray, late morning

Fans and vendors gather in the streets around Wrigley. They wear Cubs jerseys, caps and jackets and mingle around Wrigley

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

It is a narrow, very long corridor with banquet tables for food set up in the middle. Running the length of the two long side walls are the player's stalls. Their uniforms are neatly hanging in each one.

There are several flat screen TV's above them. Chicago Regional Sports on one, ESPN on another.

The PLAYERS begin filing in for opening day. Some have their SONS with them.

Jack sits in front of his locker. Benny leans in over Jack's shoulder.

BENNY
(looking tired)
You looked good down there, Jack.
We're mending some fences and
repairing some damage.

JACK
Good to hear, Ben. Anything on the
contract front?

BENNY
Nothing, yet.

JACK
What does that mean?

BENNY
I'm not sure, but its best not to
speculate. What do I always say?
Control what you can control and
the rest will take care of itself.
Play good baseball. Get Chicagoland
on your side, right?

JACK
You bet.

Jack notices that Benny looks tired. He stands-up and offers
him his stool.

JACK (CONT'D)
Hey, sit down, Benny. Have a seat.
You look tired.

BENNY
I'm fine.

JACK
Sit.

BENNY
OK, OK.

MONTY JR. (O.C.)
That's a good move, Jack. Let Benny
suit-up for you!

Jack turns. Appearing behind him, as other players head out
onto the field for BP is Monty, Jr.

JACK
Agree with that, Junior! Got a
homer in ya' today, Ben?

BENNY
(deadpan)
One or two.

Ben stands

MONTY JR.
You know I believe it! Sit down,
Ben.

Benny sits back down.

MONTY JR. (CONT'D)
Boys, I'm on your side. I hope you
know that, and Jack, I have a
message for you. Good luck out
there today. That's from me and
from dad.

JACK
I appreciate that, Junior and tell
Big Monty, thanks. I'll do my best
for him.

MONTY JR.
I know you will, slugger. And you
take care, Benny.

BENNY
I will Junior, and, if you guys are
serious, I'd love to talk to you
about an extension.

MONTY JR.
Give me a call and we'll get
together. Take care, Ben. Jack.

Junior hits him in the arm like a buddy, and then heads off
to another stall to talk to Cutter.

JACK
Well, what do you know?

BENNY
Eh. He might be trying to prime the
pump a little, get you playing well
so they can deal you at the top of
your game.

JACK
Huh. So, you think he's full of it?

BENNY

Not sure, just prepare yourself for any eventuality, and we'll be fine. Remember, they can trade you to the teams we stipulated without your OK, but I can't imagine it being before the trade deadline. We won't hear a thing for months. Just relax and play.

Benny looks down, looking drawn.

JACK

Christ, Ben, get some rest, Huh? I'm the one supposed to be worried! Look, I'm just gonna' cut loose and let her rip, Ok? Don't worry, I'm gonna get her done.

BENNY

That's the spirit.

JACK

(He put's his hand on
Benny's shoulder)

Ben...

(a beat)

Ben, thanks for setting me straight. You're all I got left since daddy died. I love you.

BENNY

I love you too, kid. I do. Now, go get 'em!

Jack grabs a bat by the side of his locker, his glove. He walks down the hallway and disappears into the dugout.

"FOREVER MAN" by Eric Clapton plays. It will play over the next scene.

CUT TO:

I/E. WRIGLEY FIELD - CONTINUOUS

FROM THE DUGOUT:

Jack drops his glove, puts on some EYE BLACK and heads up the stairs and out onto the field of "The Friendly Confines".

ON THE FIELD:

A batting cage is up as is a screen in front of the pitcher and near second base. The OTHER PLAYERS are out there all around, mingling, hitting, fielding.

Jack nears the on-deck circle where he stops and takes a look around the stands. We go around him 360 degrees as he takes in Wrigley.

There are already a number of fans in the stands on this brisk but sunny day. Not a cloud in sight.

Jack looks at the flags above the scoreboard in center field. The are blowing in towards home plate, but ever so slightly.

"FOREVER MAN" fades out.

JACK

(to himself and his bat)

Oh yeah! That won't stop us, will it?

Jack greets Ryan Jones and Roberto Santos on his way to the batting cage. Flash Brown leans on the batting cage, watching, waiting his turn.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ola! Como esta, Roberto, hombre!

ROBERTO

Bien. Tu?

JACK

Muy bueno, amigo. Muy bueno! C'mon!

ROBERTO

Oh yes! Today is the day. No mañana. Today is the day!

JACK

You got that, Big R. Let's do it!

RYAN

C'mon Hossie! Gonna hit one for me today, baby? Huh? What do you say?

JACK

I say, lets do it! Let's get her done! You too Ry, you too, huh?

RYAN

I'll set that table for you, Hossie!

FLASH
 (turning around)
 Ahhhhhhhh! Hossie! My Man! Opening
 day! Gonna do her! Gonna do her big
 time! I mean, yeah!

He high fives and does some sort of intricate ritualistic
 greeting with Jack.

JACK
 You see! That's what I'm talking
 about right there! What do you say
 Flash?

FLASH
 Flash says he's gonna run. And run,
 and run. All day, and all night.
 And you know why?

JACK
 Tell me.

FLASH
 Cause those assholes can't do
 nothing to stop me!

JACK
 That's it, son!

Jack gets in the cage and starts sending balls flying all
 over the park, including several out of Wrigley all together
 and out onto Waveland Ave.

FLASH
 Owww! Preach Jack! Hurt that ball!
 That's a crime y'all! Wanted!
 Hossie for assault and battery on
 innocent baseballs! Damn! Someone
 go tell St. Louis to stay in the
 clubhouse. They don't want to see
 this, its for their own good! They
 might get hurt! No, no, they will
 get hurt!
 (to Artie Manor standing
 near the cage)
 Hey Rook, Manny! Hey! Go tell the
 Cards to get permission slips from
 their parents or they can't come
 out here today! Too dangerous! Tell
 'em Hossie's loose and he's headin'
 for the village! Ha! Gonna destroy
 everything!

The guys are rolling with laughter.

JACK
 Stop, Flash! Stop! You're killin'
 me, son! Damn.

Whimpy walks over

WHIMPY
 OK, boys, lets go, huh? We gotta
 rap this up. Bobby wants time to
 say a word before game time.

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

All the guys sit by their lockers. The coaches at the end of the hallway. Bobby takes up a spot between two banquet tables in the middle of the room. Another coach, REGGIE stands at the rear. He is younger, 40's, another ex-ball player. Three trainers stand at the back too - Max (60), Smokey (30), and Patch (45).

BOBBY
 Ok boys, listen-up!

The room goes silent. All eyes are on Bobby.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 There won't be many speeches this year. You all know what you have to do, but, this is opening day. Priceless shit, boys. Priceless. Let's have a good day out there today. Pressure? Not us. That's for the other guys. Won the World Series last year or not, I don't give a shit. It's a new year. This year we have the horses to win. Any man think we don't have the guys in this clubhouse to go all the way this year?

He pauses, looking around the clubhouse.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 No? Me neither. It starts today. 162 of these, but that's just a start. Keep your heads in the game. That means you Flash!

Flash looks around, and points to himself like, Who me? The players all laugh.

Bobby pauses and looks around the room at each guy.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Watch the coaches. Get the signs. Reggie has gone over them. You're not sure, better get it straight or I will come down on you. There is shit to forgive and shit to kick you guys in the ass about. Missing a sign is definitely ass-kicking time. So don't.

(a beat)

You get hurt, Max, Smokey or Patch better hear about it. You get injured and say nothing? More ass-kicking time. So don't. That aside. Let's have some fun out there. Time for the Cards to get reintroduced to us! Let's go, boys. Let's go Cubs!

The guy's get up, clapping their hands and whooping it up.

CUT TO:

INT. TV BOOTH, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

In their booth, behind home plate and high above Wrigley, overlooking the field are Fox Sports announcers JOE BUCK and TIM MCCARVER. THEY ARE ON THE AIR.

JOE BUCK

Welcome to Wrigley Field. It is opening day, and there is nothing like it. Hello everyone, I'm Joe Buck, that's Tim McCarver, and Tim, it just doesn't get much better than this does it?

MCCARVER

Under any circumstances, certainly not, but the North side of Chicago has reasons to be very optimistic this year. The Cubs are vastly improved with the additions of Cuban defector Roberto Santos, whom they have already nicknamed the "Cuban Missile Crisis" and new starters, young guns Billy Quarterflash and big Josh Barnes to go with ace lefty, Allen Quiver.

JOE BUCK

Pitching coach Rick Palmer and manager Bobby Hart have to be excited. But they face a tough task today against the now defending World Champion St. Louis Cardinals

MCCARVER

Their ace, Adam Carter is on the mound and if the Cubs want to deliver the first World Series appearance for their fans since 1945, and their first win in over 100 years, they will have to best these guys they face today over the better part of the season.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Plenty of Cubs fans pack a random bar to watch the game. Joe and Tim continue on the big flat screens that surround the room from above. Everyone is glued to the game.

JOE BUCK - ON TV

And along with that Tim, the controversy swirling around the Cubs one day Hall-of-Famer, slugger Jack Hoss and his antics this winter.

MCCARVER - ON TV

Livin' La Vida Loca on both sides of the pond, so to speak!

CUT TO:

INT. BAR ROOM 2 - CONTINUOUS

Another random bar. Same scene, different place.

JOE BUCK - ON TV

Right and plenty of trade rumors also swirled in the off-season. In the end, for maybe a few reasons, those rumors did not come to fruition.

MCCARVER - ON TV

For now, Joe. We'll see. They made a controversial move that has been the talk of Chicago sports radio all week when they sent "The Phenom", a monster youngster named Clark Springfield, for those unfamiliar with the saga, to Triple-A Iowa, even though he hit everything he saw in the Spring out of sight!

CUT TO:

INT. BAR ROOM 3 - CONTINUOUS

A third bar, this time a Sports Bar. Same scene, though.

JOE BUCK - ON TV

Still, Tim, this Cubs line-up looks stacked.

MCCARVER - ON TV

True Joe, and if not, help is just a phone call and a few hours drive away - in Iowa!

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - DAY

It is opening day. The stands are now filled. Many angles and views of the ball park.

JACK

Watch this boys, I'm heading out there like ole' Sammy Sosa used to do it!

BRONSON

Lead us out, Hossie!

"FOREVER MAN" by Eric Clapton fades back in.

The Cubs take the field to cheers from the faithful. Jack, in Sammy Sosa like fashion, sprints straight out to Right Field, then turns and runs across Center Field and over to his position in left. The crowd out there, especially in Left Field is beside themselves. They love him! He loves them too and salutes them by waving his cap.

Alan "Lefty" Quiver walks. to the mound. He is all business. Nothing celebratory ab out this guy. Time to do business. He takes the ball from his glove and goes to work.

He fires in his warm-up tosses and then Bronson Cutter comes out of his crouch and fires the ball to Artie Manor at second. He flips to Vega, who throws to Sanchez at first and then to Ryan Jack at Third.

Ryan walks the ball to the mound, where Cutter is standing, too. He puts the ball in Lefty's glove. He pats him on the butt.

CUTTER

OK, Quiv, you own these guys. All day long! Let's go, Ace!

Cutter pats him on the butt and then heads back behind the plate.

The home plate UMP looks around and then...

UMP

Play ball!

A St. Louis batter walks to the batters box from the on-deck circle. He makes ready, fixes his feat, takes a few practice swings. His arm is raised to indicate 'time'. He look out at Quiver, drops the arm, and we're ready.

Quiver looks in, get the sign from Cutter, winds and delivers. The batter swings. It is a ground ball to third. Ryan Jack scoops it up cleanly, fires to Sanchez at first base and gets the speedy runner by half-a-step. One out.

The Cubs dug out ad-libs some encouragement. Bobby, Wimpy, Rocky and Rick all the coaches, clap.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Quiver's first pitch is grounded to Ryan Jones at third. He's up with it, over to Balboa "Bubba" Sanchez at first. One out.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

The #2 St. Louis hitter stands in against Quiver. He delivers. The batter swings. The Ump makes vigorous gestures to indicate strike three.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Strike three! Quiver has his first
'K'.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

The #3 St. Louis batter stands in. Quiver throws. The batter swings and sends a ball out to left field. Jack Hoss jogs in a few steps and catches it in stride. He tosses the ball to the crowd. Three outs. The Cubs run off the field and into their dugout.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Fly-ball out to left in the
direction of Jack Hoss, he comes
in, and catches it right in stride.
Three-up and three down in the top
of the first. St. Louis no runs on
no hits, and the Cubbies coming up.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Bottom of the First. Flash Brown up. St. Louis pitcher Adam Carter delivers a pitch that Brown swings at and lines to right field. Brown runs to first with a single. The Cubs react from the dugout.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
That's a single for Flash Brown,
the catalyst for this Cubs team.

BOBBY
Atta' boy Flash! All right.

The rest of the guys ad-lib encouragement.

Artie Manor heads for the plate. He digs-in, takes a few swings. Flash Brown leads off first. Carter pitches from the stretch. He glances over at Flash and then throws home.

Flash takes-off for second. Manor lines the ball to left. Flash rounds second and heads for third. The St. Louis left-field charges the ball, and fires to third.

It's close, but Flash slides in heads-first and beats the tag. Manor takes second on the throw to third. Ryan Jack walks to the plate and makes ready.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Flash Brown leads off first, Carter takes a look, comes set and delivers. There goes Brown and Manor lines the ball to left for a hit. Brown rounds second base and without breaking stride and will go for third even though the ball is in front of him. Here is McKay's throw, it's a good one. Safe at third!

MCCARVER (V.O.)

Flash Brown sending a message right there! I've got speed, I know it and I'm going to use it! Wow!

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And on the throw, Manor takes second. Heads-up play for the rookie short stop. And now here comes the dangerous Ryan Jones.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

Not known for a lot of power, but he's a lifetime .300 Hitter. His on base percentage is always among the league leaders as well.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

They'll need to be careful with him here. So, second and third, no outs and Carter in trouble all ready here in the bottom of the first.

Carter goes from the stretch with Brown on third. He looks a bit nervous and unsettled. He throws and promptly hits Ryan in the arm. Ryan does not react. He just drops his bat and heads for first. Bases loaded.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - CONTINUOUS

Jane is watching TV in her living room while she works in the kitchen. Her head is down working.

JOE BUCK - ON TV - (V.O.)

And Carter promptly hits Ryan Jones! Bases now loaded with nobody out and look who's coming up, Jack Hoss, and listen to this crowd!

Jane now looks up from her cooking and stares at the screen. We see Jack walking to the plate.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Jack Hoss steps into the batters-box. All business. The crowd goes crazy, wildly cheering their hero. Jack gets himself ready in the batters box.

The crowd is cheering. The St. Louis catcher has headed out to the mound to chat with the pitcher and settle him down.

UMP

How are you Jack?

JACK

Good, Stan. How's everything?

UMP

Fine. Nice spot here for you.

JACK

We'll see, I could use a little help here, if you don't mind.

UMP

Sorry Jack.

JACK

Yeah, yeah.

The catcher comes back and squats down behind the plate. Carter looks in. We see Flash at third, Manor at second and Ryan at first.

Carter stares in and then from the stretch, delivers the pitch. Fastball out over the plate. It's a mistake. Jack swings. Boom!

He drives it deep to left. It clears the wall, the stands and heads out onto Waveland Ave.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

So with the bases full, here's the pitch. Hit deep to left! Way back. It is gone! A monster home run out onto Waveland avenue and a first-inning grand-slam for Jack Hoss! What a start and what a message to send after a crazy, crazy off-season! Wow!

MCCARVER (V.O.)

And listen to this crowd, Joe!
These guys are sending a message!
We love Jack Hoss! Keep him right
here!

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

He keeps hitting like that and they
won't have to worry! What a bomb
from Jack Hoss! A huge home run!

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - CONTINUOUS

On TV: Jack after his hit, simply drops his bat, puts his head down and runs briskly around the bases.

He touches home plate, high-fives Flash, Manor and Ryan who are all waiting at the plate for him and he then leads them all back over to the bench.

The crowd is standing and cheering and Jack's teammates are all up and heading for the end of the bench near the plate to greet him.

Jane gives a smile. She is happy, but restrained. She goes back to working in her kitchen.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Bobby Hart is on the top dugout step and shakes each man's hand as he heads in. Jack and the boys high-five all of the their teammates.

Jack takes a seat on the bench and looks relieved. He claps his hands a bit to encourage his teammates.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - LATER

The Cubs are in the field. Same line-up as before. Quiver on the mound taking his warm-up tosses. El Smoke warms-up in the bull pen.

Scoreboard above the dugout, attached to the upper-deck shows the score CUBS - 8, ST. LOUIS - 0. INNING - 9.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

So, here is something you never see, Tim. It's just opening day and Alan 'Lefty' Quiver is still in to pitch the ninth and get a complete game.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

Very unusual, Joe, but Lefty is only at 95 pitches through eight. The Cards have been a big help swinging at an inordinate amount of first pitches today.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

True enough, and Lefty has made it look easy today. Still, El Smoke, Jose Seville, the Cub closer is warming-up, just in case.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

If he gets much over 100 pitches I think he's gone for sure and we will see El Smoke.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Quiver is pitching to a St. Louis hitter. The hitter drives the ball to left. Jack Hoss is after it.

He sprints back towards the ivy-covered brick wall. He sprints back, throws up his glove and spears the liner.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

One out, and now, here is a ball that is well hit, on a line and deep, Jack Hoss on his horse, reaches-up and makes the grab under a full-head of steam! Two down.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

No one plays left field here at Wrigley like Jack Hoss! Great play!

Jack spins and throws the ball in. He starts flexing his hamstring. He's shaking it and stretching it.

The dugout notices.

BOBBY
 (to a trainer)
 Hey, Max! I think Jack tweaked his
 hammy!

But just as he says it, Quiver delivers and another fly ball goes out to left. This one is right at Jack. He grabs the ball without moving and starts jogging-in.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
 Another fly-ball to left. Hoss is standing right there. And that's the final out. Cubs win eight, nothing and what a game for Alan Quiver! Lefty throws a four-hit shut-out! Plenty of offense supplied with a grand-slam by Hoss and a three-run shot from "The Cuban Missile Crisis" Roberto Santos.

MCCARVER (V.O.)
 All in all, even more than they could have hoped for today, Joe.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
 Well, if this is a harbinger of things to come, and Cubs fans certainly hope it is, this could be some kind of fun summer on the north side! As for tonight, Deep-dish Chicago pizza for everyone! For Tim McCarver, I'm Joe Buck. Good night from Chicago.

Cutter flips the mask back and heads for the mound to shake hands with Quiver who has started towards home plate to greet him.

The dugout empties, and the guys pour out onto the field. Everyone gathers behind the mound to high-five congratulations for each other.

Jack puts the ball into Quiver's glove. Bobby comes up to Jack and points to Jack's hamstring. Jack shakes him off and heads for the dugout and the clubhouse with the rest of his teammates.

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The guys are in various stages of undress. Reporters gather around some of the players. Other enter and emerge from the showers. The banquet tables have food and drinks on them. Nothing alcoholic. Just soda, Gatorade, Vitamin Water and bottled water.

The press surrounds Hoss who is answering questions in his street clothes.

JACK

I just got a nice turn on it, got good wood on it and that's it.

SYLVESTER

Did I see you grab your leg on that running catch in the ninth? Hamstring?

JACK

It's cool out there in April. I felt it tighten-up a bit so I wanted to loosen it up, but that last one fell right into my glove. Even you boys could have had it!

The reporters and Jack laugh.

SYLVESTER

So, a sign of good things to come with today's win?

JACK

Absolutely. That's what's important; the win.

SYLVESTER

Over in Iowa, Clark Springfield hit three home runs today.

JACK

(Clark who?)

Did he? Well, good for him. He's got a bright future.

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

Reporters now gone, Ryan and Flash stop by Jack's stall. Jack sits on his chair. The clubhouse is beginning to empty.

RYAN

C'mon Jack. We're going to head out for a celebratory beer.

JACK

(reticent, hesitating)

Well, how can I say no? Guess I got time for one with you boys.

Ryan and Flash walk away. Jack goes to get up. He has a look of discomfort on his face. He reaches back and grabs his hamstring. He looks around the club house. No one notices.

He spies the older trainer, Max. The he sees the other veteran trainer, Patch. He keeps looking around. He sees the new kid, the assistant trainer, Smokey. He walks over to him.

JACK (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Hey, Smokey.

SMOKEY

Hey, Jack. Big hit today!

JACK

(rubbing his hamstring)

Yeah, thanks. Say, I got a little muscle stiffness.

SMOKEY

You Ok? You need the tub or a rub-down?

JACK

Hell no, its nothing. But, do you have anything for it?

SMOKEY

Oh, sure Jack. I got something.

Smokey walks to the trainers room. Jack follows.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINERS ROOM, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Lefty Quiver is in there on a trainers table. His pitching arm wrapped in ice.

JACK

Nice game, Quiv. Big.

QUIVER

Thanks, Hossie. You really helped me out.

JACK

Some of us are heading for a beer. Want to come?

QUIVER

Noooo. Got to take care of my bread and butter, here.

JACK

Ain't that right.

Smokey hands Jack the pills.

SMOKEY

That should do it.

JACK.

Sweet, Smokey. Thanks.

QUIVER

You OK, Hossie?

JACK

Sure. Just got to take care of my own shit, that's all. Somebody around here's got to help you out! You can't just depend on Fidel Castro over there!

Out the window of the trainers room they see Roberto talking with some SPANISH LANGUAGE REPORTERS. They laugh.

SMOKEY

Sure you're OK, Hossie?

JACK

You bet, Smokey. Alright, well, I'm gone. Beautiful out there today Quiv, just a thing of beauty.

QUIVER

Thanks, Hossie.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Jack is in there whooping it up. Ryan, Flash, Manor and Vega are all there too. Girls are all around.

Clearly, jack did not stay for just one. Music is blaring. Jack is having a shot of vodka. He also has a bottle of Heineken. This place is up scale. They aren't going to have Jack's Lone Star.

They party around a booth with a table in front. Jack sits on the edge of the booth. A girl, uninvited, just sits down on his lap. She is very flirtatious, but otherwise looks quite respectable. Like a young professional just out of college and with her first office job.

JACK
Well, hello darlin!

The girl just laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S HIGHRISE APARTMENT, CHICAGO APT. - LATER

From the inside we hear a knock at the door, O.S.

Then again. Knock, knock, knock!

Jane walks into the scene and goes to the door. She checks the peep-hole. She drops her heads and pauses.

A beat goes by.

JACK (O.S.)
(from behind the closed
door)
Oh, c'mon darlin! C'mon now. I'm
here!

Jane reluctantly opens the door. She just stares at a drunken Jack darkening her doorway.

JACK (CONT'D)
I made it! I'm here. The boys just
wanted to...

JANE - ON THE PHONE
Christ, get in here!

She pulls him inside and closes the door before he can finish his sentence.

JACK
Be gentle with me, now!

Jane, a very composed, professional woman, is having her patience tested.

JANE

What in the hell do you think you are doing?

JACK

Well, like I was saying, the boys just wanted to have a small celebration after our opening day victory in which my home run featured prominently.

(a beat)

Did you see it? C'mon, I'll bet you saw it, huh?

JANE

I saw it.

JACK

It was bad ass! I still got it.

JANE

And, so this is how you intend to come crawling back? To convince me of how you've changed? After drinking! Do you ever think straight?

JACK

On occasion.

JANE - ON THE PHONE

Just not this one.

JACK

Huh?

JANE

You're drunk

JACK

True, but never more humble.

He falls to his knees.

JACK (CONT'D)

Honey I am a very humble Bumble.

JANE

Christ!

Jack starts crawling over to her and wraps his arms around her legs.

JACK
Come here, baby!

JANE
(half-laughing)
Jack.

She kneels down to kiss him. They embrace. They kiss. His arms go around her. Her arms go around him. She puts her and in his jacket pocket. Suddenly she pulls away. She stands up in shock. Furious. A pair of red panties dangles from her fingers.

JANE (CONT'D)
What the fuck are these!

JACK
(genuinely surprised)
I don't know! I don't know! They're not yours?

JANE
What? You fucking asshole! I am so tired of you sticking your dick into every woman you meet or who comes on to you!

Jack is still on his knees. She takes them and puts them over his head and then pulls them down over his face.

JANE (CONT'D)
Now get out! I never want to see your lying face again! Get out!

Jack still sits there with the panties over his head trying to look around.

Finally he pulls them off and looks at them.

JACK
I've never seen these before ever! Someone's playing a joke! They must have slipped them in there! Really! I'm going tom kill those fucking guys!

JANE
You know what, Jack? I don't give a fuck! You may enjoy your life trying to re-make Animal House, but I do not! I have a life Jack! I'm an adult! I make my own way, and I don't need your sorry ass around here!

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

Now get out because I am calling security if you don't, and won't that be another lovely headline in the Tribune for you! You asshole!

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET OUTSIDE JANE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

"JUST TO SATISFY YOU" By Waylon Jennings plays.

Jack emerges from the highrise. He looks seriously downtrodden. He carries the panties. He starts walking staring at them and shaking his head totally confused.

He stops at a garbage can. He stares at them one more time, still shaking his head and mumbling to himself.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB, CHICAGO - NIGHT

FLASHBACK: Earlier that night.

That same girl is sitting on Jack's lap, kissing him on his neck and cheek. She takes her hand and deposits those red panties into Jack's pocket.

JACK

So, what would you like to do?

The girl whispers something in Jack's ear.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, honey, that's what I thought. Listen, I'm long on love, but short on time. Rain check, OK?

GIRL

(giggling)

I've left you a little something to remember me by.

JACK

You have? What's that darlin'?

She just laughs. Jack looks puzzled.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET OUTSIDE JANE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Back to the present. Jack stares at the red panties. He shakes his head, throws them into the trash can and walks away, still confused.

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGER STADIUM, LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Legend: Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, CA

Establishing. Parking lot filled with cars. The Stadium is illuminated in the background. Clearly a game is being played.

We HEAR the ROAR of the CROWD from inside the park. It is from a distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGER STADIUM, INSIDE THE PARK - NIGHT

We see the Cub players, dressed in their grey away uniforms out in the field. Jack Hoss stands in left. There is no action. Various angles show DODGERS at first and second.

Bronson Cutter is at the mound talking to the pitcher, Josh Barnes. Over this we hear long time Dodgers announcer Vin Scully. Cutter and Barnes both have their gloves over their mouths.

VIN SCULLY (V.O.)

Now, with first and second occupied with Dodgers, Bronson Cutter is going to come out and talk things over with his young pitcher. Josh Barnes is a big fella', standing six-foot-six and weighing 250 pounds. Is it any wonder he throws so hard and can be a bit wild.

CUTTER

Ok, Barnsie, lets settle down. First and second here, right? Keep an eye on those guys but remember, the important guy is at the plate. And don't forget, this game doesn't start until you do. You control the pace, so use that!

BARNES

Ok, Cutty.

The UMP comes walking out from Home.

UMP

C'mon boys, lets go.

CUTTER

OK. No matter what I put-down,
throw the curve, understand? I
think that son of a bitch at second
is stealing signs. I'm going to
teach him a little something.

Barnes says nothing. Cutter and the ump head back to the plate and get set. The batter takes a few practice swings and Cutter goes through some signs and then promptly calls for a fastball. He glances up at the batter to see if he's peeking. He's not.

Cutter slides to his right and sets up low and outside. Barnes comes set and delivers.

The batter swings and misses and the ball sails over Cutters head. Cutter, caught by surprise and expecting the curve, misses most of it, but gets a piece of it, but it still crashes into the chest of the umpire.

He falls back a bit. Cutter spins and picks up the ball. Both runners hold.

VIN SCULLY (V.O.)

Oh-oh. Cutter just got crossed-up
by Barnes, and the ump just paid
for it. You'd think that after the
meeting on the mound they'd have
had at least that first pitch
straight.

Cutter flips up his mask and turns to the ump.

CUTTER

You OK, Bill? Sorry about that. I
called for the curve.

UMP

(bent over a bit)
No shit.

CUTTER

Let me give you a second.

Cutter heads back out to the mound. Both guys put their gloves over their mouths so the opposition can't read their lips.

CUTTER (CONT'D)

What the fuck was that? I said no matter what, throw the fucking curve!

BARNES

Sorry, Cutty.

CUTTER

Sorry, my ass. For the rest of this game you can kiss any close calls good-bye. You're gonna have to be seriously around the plate. OK, this time give me the fastball, got it?

BARNES

Yeah, got it.

CUTTER

Fucking say it.

BARNES

Fastball.

CUTTER

When?

BARNES

Next pitch.

CUTTER

Try to fucking remember that. And check the runners!

They both drop their gloves down. Cutter glances out at second base and the runner.

CUTTER (CONT'D)

Hey!

CUT TO:

INT. DUG-OUT - CONTINUOUS

Bobby and his coaches sit casually in the dugout. His eyes squint a bit as he looks out at the mound.

BOBBY
 (to Whimpy)
 What the hell is Cutty doing?

CUTTER (V.O.)
 Hey!

BOBBY
 Christ!

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGER STADIUM, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

CUTTER
 (agitated at the runner)
 Try to steal another sign and
 you're going down!

The runner at second just smiles at him.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
 I fucking mean it, Goddamn it!

Cutter heads back behind the plate as the DODGERS YELL at him from their dugout.

CUTTER (CONT'D)
 (to the Dodgers)
 Ah, go to hell!

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

At home Benny sits watching the game on his TV. He seems half asleep.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)
 So, Cutter exchanges pleasantries with the base runner and some other select Dodgers, and here we go again. Ball one. Runners still at first and second with no outs. It's been a great first month for the Cubs. Through April and most of May the Cubs are in unfamiliar territory - first place, with the best record in the league.

On TV Barnes comes set. Checks second and then first and delivers. Heeding Cutter's advice, Barnes puts it right over the plate.

CRACK!

The batter hits it hard. It is a screaming liner to left-center. Jack and Flash are both after it. It appears that Hoss has a beat on it as he runs back and towards center field at full speed.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)

Brown and Hoss converge on it, both running hard. Looks like Hoss is going to corral this one.

Jack suddenly pulls up and grabs his hamstring. He still reaches up and tips the ball with the end of his glove. It ricochets off and Brown who had pulled up a bit, now pursues it towards the outfield wall at full speed once again.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)

But now, Hoss pulls up and grabs the back of his leg. He reaches up but the ball is off the tip of his glove. Brown now gives chase as this ball is going to be up against the wall on a couple of hops. Brown gets it in, but both runners have scored with Jerry Smith winding up on third. And just like that, it's two to nothing, Dodgers.

Jack falls to the ground clutching his leg. Cubs trainer Max and Bobby Hart head out onto the field, running hard.

Benny sits up in his chair a bit, suddenly waking up.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)

Of considerably more importance to the Cubs, is what has happened to their slugger, Jack Hoss. Under full steam he seemed to have a beat on the ball, when he suddenly pulled up, grabbing the back of his right leg. Looks like it's his hamstring and that, as we all know, can be a real nuisance of an injury

Max and Bobby attend to Jack, now sitting up in the outfield. Max starts checking out the leg.

Benny is now looking suddenly very concerned.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)
 What a shame this would be. Hoss
 was off to his best start in years
 with ten home runs already this
 season.

Benny stands up. Clutches his chest. takes a step or two
 towards the Tv and collapses.

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGER STADIUM, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Max and Bobby attend to a fallen Jack. Ryan and Flash both
 stand out there looking on as well.

MAX
 (grabbing Jack's
 hamstring)
 How's that feel Jack?

JACK
 Ow! Christ, like shit!

BOBBY
 Damn.

MAX
 OK, Jack, OK, we'll get you fixed
 up. Let's get him up.

Flash and Ryan help Jack up and then off the field with Max
 and Bobby following.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Benny lies, face-down in front of the TV.

VIN SCULLY - ON TV (V.O.)
 Uh-oh, this looks like bad news for
 Mr. Jack Hoss. What a shame.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUBHOUSE, DODGER STADIUM - LATER

We see Jack on the trainers table. His hamstring iced and
 heavily bandaged. PLAYERS AND OTHERS are present going about
 post-game rituals.

CLUBHOUSE ATTENDANT

Hey Jack, phone call.

A CLUBHOUSE ATTENDANT appears in the scene behind Jack. He hands Jack a phone.

JACK

Thanks.

(then, into the phone)

Hello? Yeah, sure, this is Jack
Hoss. What? I can't really hear
you.

Jack puts his other finger in his ear, squints his eyes a bit and looks down, then up.

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

Then utter shock and disbelief comes across his face.

We hear "JUST AS I AM" (the old Billy Graham Crusade hymn. It plays over the funeral and burial scenes.

INT. CHURCH, CHICAGO - DAY

The church is FILLED WITH MOURNERS. Jack sits in the front row along with Benny's son, Barry. In front of the alter lies Benny in a coffin. Big Monty, Junior, Jane, Greg and Bobby are all there.

Barry is distraught. Jack has his arm around his shoulders. There is a CHORUS singing 'Just As I Am', carried over from the previous scene.

BARRY

Daddy loved Billy Graham. This was
his favorite song.

Jack just nods.

INT. CHURCH, CHICAGO - LATER

Jack is a pall bearer. He is up front as they carry the casket down the aisle of the church. He looks very distraught.

EXT. CHURCH, CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER

They load the casket into the hearse as everyone files out of the church.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHICAGO - DAY

The casket lies at the burial spot. Everyone sits as A PREACHER says a few more words. Jack sits next to Barry who is openly crying. Jack puts his arm around him. Both Jacks eyes and Barry's are red.

JACK

You know Barry, I buried one daddy
not long ago.

(a beat)

Now, I'm burying another. I want
you to know how much he meant to
me.

BARRY

I know, Jack. Daddy's gettin' his
final reward, now.

JACK

Yes he is, son. No man was finer.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

The mourners are all expressing their condolences and leaving. Greg, Bobby, Big Monty and Junior. They all go.

Off to the side under a big oak tree stands Jane. She is in tears. Jack walks over and they embrace.

Jack starts to tear-up, but he holds it in and gathers himself. They say a few words to each other, but it is inaudible.

We hear "DEAREST" by Buddy Holly. It plays over the scene.

They continue to embrace.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER

Jack just sits in one of the folding chairs up front as Benny's casket still sits, closed, upon its platform. He just sits there. Alone.

"Dearest continues to play. It ends. Jack sit there in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY JONES' OFFICE - DAY

FLASHBACK: A few years back

Jack Hoss, from the not too distant past, stands looking at the pictures on Benny's wall. He stares at the picture of Benny and Billy Graham and then looks at another old framed portrait. Benny is sitting behind his desk.

JACK

I recognize you and Billy Graham,
but who's this guy?

BENNY

That's William C. Durant. The
founder of General Motors.

JACK

Oh, rich fella'

BENNY

He lost everything in the stock
market crash of 1929 and the
ensuing Great Depression.

JACK

Then why do you have a picture of
him on your wall?

BENNY

Because until his dying day, he
never stopped trying for a
comeback. He died in 1947 at the
age of 86, and he was still trying.
I keep it on my wall to remind me
that you can get knocked down, but
as long as you get back up, there's
always time for a comeback, Jackie-
boy, or at least, to keep trying
for one. Durant was a winner
because he never stopped trying.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY, CHICAGO - DAY

Back to present day. Jack still sits there. Finally he gets
up, and limps O.C.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, CHICAGO - DAY

His cell phone sits on a counter in the kitchen. It rings. Jack limps into the scene and answers it.

JACK
(no life in his voice)
Hello?

GREG - ON THE PHONE
Jack? Greg. How are you?

JACK
Ah, Greg, you know, what can I say.

GREG - ON THE PHONE
I know, man. It's hard. We are all so sorry. It's like Benny was a member of the team too, you know?

JACK
Yeah. Thanks, Greg.

GREG - ON THE PHONE
Of course. I mean it. Look, ah, I was wondering if you could come down to my office tomorrow. The test results are back and we'd like to go over them with you.

JACK
Yeah, yeah. So how do they look?

GREG
We'll discuss it tomorrow, but don't worry. Its certainly not the worst of results. Two o'clock, alright?

JACK
(distracted)
OK. OK. I'll be there.

CUT TO:

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - DAY

Greg is seated behind his desk. Bobby sits in one chair, Jack in another. Very down-trodden. A TEAM DOCTOR (mid-50's) sits on a sofa on the side.

GREG

Well, it's not torn but, it is severely, severely strained.

DOCTOR (DR. WATERS)

Could still be a slight tear.

JACK

Well, I could of told y'all that. So where do we go from here?

GREG

Well, it's the DL for sure.

JACK

How long?

BOBBY

15 day, for starters.

JACK

For starters?

GREG

If it doesn't come around, we can just extend things. We want you healed, Jack.

JACK

What do I do?

GREG

Not much. Dr. Waters?

DR. WATERS

Nothing, Jack. It just needs time to heal. Pushing it is the worst thing you could do. You could tear it. So, just rest.

BOBBY

It's been a tough few weeks for you, brutal, I know, but just take some time to heal, OK?

GREG

And Jack, take this time for you, too, to heal in all aspects.

BOBBY

And just take it easy, Hossie.

JACK
Yeah. Yeah. You bet.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR ROOM - CHICAGO

Jack is drinking beer in a Chicago tavern featuring Country music, he is pretty smashed. He sits at the bar. SEVERAL PATRONS hang around him and seem to be joining in his revelry.

"YOU CAN HAVE HER" live version, by Waylon Jennings, plays.

Jack sings along to the song, pounding his fist on the bar, keeping time. The other patrons join in.

By the last chorus Jack has gotten up on the bar and is singing back at his friends. He finishes the song with a great gesticulating flourish.

He then climbs down, depressed, but the other patrons don't notice. They cheer his performance, slap him on his back and ad-lib congratulations.

He sits back down on his stool.

PATRON 1
Atta' boy, Jack!

PATRON 2
That's just the way ole' Waylon
done it!

PATRON 3
Rest in peace!

JACK
(reflecting)
Yeah. Yeah. Rest in peace.

He looks at the ceiling like he's looking right through it.

JACK (CONT'D)
Rest in peace. All y'all.

"TWO DOORS DOWN" by Dwight Yoakam plays

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER BAR, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Various angles, various shots.

Jack sits in a shabby bar drinking whiskey. This time he is alone. No one bothers him.

He drinks it slowly, just staring straight ahead.

CLOSER

He just sits there thinking, and continues sipping shots of Whiskey. A bottle of beer sits nearby, untouched.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, CHICAGO - LATER

Various angles, various shots.

Jack is in his bathroom of his apartment, just staring at his reflection in the mirror.

In the living room, on the big flat screen, is TCM. They are showing "GIANT".

While it plays Jack stumbles by. With it's iconic images of Texas, it catches Jack's attention, and he stops to watch.

Then, he's stumbling on again.

He enters his bed room. He spies the picture of Jane on his night stand. He picks it up and looks at it. Then stumbles down, landing on his bed in a sitting position.

He stumbles into the kitchen, still holding Jane's picture. He puts it down. He finds a bottle of Jack on his counter and pours himself some. He drinks it down.

Jack is back in his bathroom, on his knees vomiting violently into his toilet. He stops. Then starts again. He slumps to the floor holding onto the toilet for dear life.

He tries to get to his feet. He pulls himself up by grabbing the sink. He stumbles for the door and then collapses half in the hallway, half in the bathroom.

Hold.

"TWO DOORS DOWN" ends.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, CHICAGO - DAY

It is the next morning. Sunshine pours in through his large windows. TCM is still on, only now it's "GONE WITH THE WIND".

Jack comes walking in, very much the worse for wear and terribly hung-over. He slowly prepares the coffee maker.

On TV the final scenes play. Jack watches from the kitchen.

SCARLETT - ON TV

"Tara! Home. I'll go home. And I'll think of some way to get him back. After all... tomorrow is another day!"

JACK

(struck by an epiphany)
That's good enough for me.

He puts down the coffee and walks O.S.

INT. LOBBY OF JACK'S BUILDING - LATER

Jack comes strolling into the lobby from the elevator. Ball cap, sunglasses, dressed very casually. He carries a duffle bag.

An elegantly dressed doorman sees him.

DOORMAN

Good morning, Mr. Hoss

JACK

A cab, please, Freddie.

DOORMAN

Where to sir?

JACK

Airport.

DOORMAN

O'Hare?

JACK

Sounds right.

DOORMAN

Luggage, sir?

JACK

Cargo today; just me and this ole'
duffle bag. I got it.

DOORMAN

Yes sir.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB, TRAVELLING - MOMENTS LATER

Cab is already moving through Chicago traffic.

CAB DRIVER

(he recognizes Jack)

Mr. Jack Hoss! In my cab! So, which
airline today?

JACK

Which one goes direct to Houston?

Cab driver slams on the breaks. Jack rocks back in his seat
then forward. The cabbie turns around.

CAB DRIVER

Holy shit! Did dose fucking
assholes trade you? Fuck me! I'll
never go to another game! What's da
matter wit dose guys?

JACK

No, son, no. I ain't been traded.
But thanks so much for the support.
Appreciate it.

The cabbie turns around, he shifts into drive, and the cab
starts up again. He watches Jack in the rear-view.

CAB DRIVER

Thank God. Well, United, now dat
dey absorbed Continental is da best
bet. OK?

JACK

Good enough, son. Get her done.

CAB DRIVER

What? Oh yeah, yeah. Next stop,
O'Hare.

JACK
That sounds alright to me, son. Yes
sir, that sounds fine.

CUT TO:

"T FOR TEXAS", by Waylon Jennings plays

I/E. SUV, I-10 WEST, HOUSTON AND OUTSKIRTS, TRAVELLING - DAY

Jack is behind the wheel of a RENTED SUV, heading west on I-10, quickly leaving the skyline of Houston behind him.

The sky, big as Texas, is cloudless and a brilliant blue.

CUT TO:

I/E. SUV, I-10 & HWY 71 INTERSECT, COLUMBUS, TX - LATER

Jack pulls off the interstate and gets on state highway 71 heading into the Texas Hill Country, heading towards Austin.

CUT TO:

I/E. SUV, TEXAS HILL COUNTRY, TRAVELLING - LATER

Jack, still driving up Rt. 71, drives through a long stretch of BLUEBONNETS, the prized Texas wild flowers that come out in abundance in the Spring/Summer.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S RANCH, NEAR BASTROP, TEXAS - LATER

A MEXICAN MAN, (early 50's) comes out of a ranch house and onto the porch. He sees an unfamiliar SUV coming down the dirt road from the main road.

The SUV pulls up in front of a very nice ranch house, made from Texas stones that are popular building materials in the Texas Hill Country.

Jack pops-out of his SUV.

JACK
Ola, Pablo! It's me!

PABLO
Mr. Jack! Ola! Ola! What are you
doing here?

JACK

Hell, Pablo, I hurt my leg and I just couldn't stand being away from here another second.

PABLO

It's good to see you. We heard about Mr. Benny. We are so very sorry. We liked him very much.

JACK

(puts his arm around him)
I know, Pablo. I just couldn't breath up there for another minute. If I was gonna rest my leg, I was gonna do it here.

Two dogs come running out.

JACK (CONT'D)

Waylon! Willie! Come 'ere!

He embraces both dogs and then they start walking into the house.

JACK (CONT'D)

(puts his arm back around Pablo)
Now, what have you folks got to eat around here? I'm starvin'!

PABLO

Plenty, Mr. Jack. It's so good to see you! You will heal up very fast here!

JACK

I tell you what, Pablo. I'm feelin' better already.

INT. JACK'S RANCH HOUSE -LATER

Jack sits on a big brown leather sofa watching the TV in his great room. The house is large and is a combination of both Spanish and the American West in design.

There is a big fire place in the room, the star of Texas in a round, metal setting hangs above the mantle.

Jack eats a bowl of ice cream and watches MLB TV.

Bobby Hart is being interviewed by BOB COSTAS. It is interspersed with clips of Clark in action.

Jack leans forward on the sofa, riveted to the show.

BOBBY - ON TV
Bob, there's no question

ON TV

Clark hits home run after home run. Clark then crosses home plate, receiving the congratulations of his teammates.

BOBBY - ON TV (CONT'D)
Clark has a bright future ahead of
him. We all believe that.

Clark takes a liner on one-hop, grabs it from his glove and fire a strike to the plate nailing a runner.

BOBBY - ON TV (CONT'D)
Big things are expected. But we
hate losing a guy like Jack Hoss
even for a short period. We're very
lucky because Clark has stepped-up.

BOB COSTAS (ON TV)
As good as he is and Baseball
America now has him rated as the
number one prospect in the game,
how does he compare to Jack Hoss?

BOBBY
Jack Hoss is a veteran and a leader
on this club. I'm not sure any
comparison would be fair or even
possible.

Jack, on his sofa, smiles

BOB COSTAS
But as well as Clark Springfield
has played since being brought up,
what if the rumors prove true and
you do, in fact, trade a Cubs
legend at the All-Star break?

BOBBY
I don't know anything about that,
Bob. Clark Springfield's a young
man just coming up, who has had an
incredible start to what we all
hope will be a long career. But I'm
not going to make it harder by
comparing him to Hossie. That's not
fair to anyone.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

We are just looking forward to getting Hossie back and then we'll let the cards fall where they may.

JACK

Fall where they may, my ass.

Jack frowns and clicks it off. He picks up another remote and hits 'play'. "Lonesome Dove" plays. He sits back, relaxes and watches. Waylon and Willie are on a rug, sleeping, at his feet.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JACK'S RANCH - DAY

"WALTZ ACROSS TEXAS" by Ernest Tubb plays.

Jack, on horseback works his ranch. It is large and expansive. The blue sky is huge and is amplified by the fact that the land is mostly flat, except for some spots with a few gently sloping hills.

He helps to move some CATTLE from one area of his ranch to another with a few RANCH HANDS and Pablo.

Next, Jack, alone, works on repairing a fence. He pauses for a moment, takes off his cowboy hat and gloves and wipes his brow with a bandana. It is Texas hot. The sun beats down.

He sits under a big oak tree by a pond while his horse drinks some water.

Back on horseback Jack helps move some cattle into a pen as the sun is setting. As the other ranch hands ride out of the pen, Jack gets down off his horse and closes the gate. He pauses for a moment to check-out the sun set.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - DAY

Clark Springfield is at bat. His teammates are all along the top step, leaning on the railing, watching.

Bobby, with Wimpy at his side, watches silently.

Clark swings and WHACK! Crushes a pitch. He pulls it and the ball explodes towards the bleachers.

All of the heads in the dugout turn, their eyes look skyward. Bobby's eyebrows go up as high as they can go, his eyes open wide. He is silently impressed by the kid's power.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Boom! There it goes, way back,
that's gone! What a shot! A huge
blast! Home run, Clark Springfield!
Welcome to the Majors, son!

All of the guys in the dugout look around, laughing, smiling, pointing, and shaking their heads, all with differing versions of amazement.

TV ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

The hype for this young man is in
over-drive. If he can handle it,
the sky could be the limit.

Clark rounds the bases, emotionless, quickly, head down. The crowd's on its feet cheering.

TV ANNOUNCER

He looks good with that smooth
swing. And you're right, if he can
handle the spotlight, we've got a
star in the making.

Clark's teammates give him the silent treatment as he walks into the dugout and sits down, alone. Then, Flash comes over and jumps on him, then the rest all rush over and congratulate him with high fives.

TV ANNOUNCER #2

With that talent, I think he can
and it is going to be fun to watch!

INT. JACK'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack walks into the kitchen. A Mexican woman, CONCHA, prepares dinner.

JACK

Ola, Concha.

CONCHA

Ola, Mr. Jack.

JACK

What'cha makin' there?

CONCHA

Pollo Enchiladas.

Jack walks to the stove and peers into the pan. He puts his hand on Concha's shoulder.

JACK

Oh, now that will hit the spot. I have surely missed your food.

CONCHA

No good Mexican food in Chicago?

JACK

Not like yours, Concha.

CONCHA

Oh, thank you. Are you going out tonight, Mr. Jack?

JACK

You know what? I am. I'm fixin' to head over to Gruen.

CONCHA

Oh, Gruen. Long drive.

JACK

Yeah, well, ole' Jerry Jeff is playin' at the hall. I could do with hearin' some Jerry Jeff tonight. Think I'll head over after dinner, then.

CONCHA

OK, Mr. Jack. It is nice to have you back!

Jack smiles, nods and walks O.C.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. JACK'S TRUCK - LATER

Jack drives his old pick-up, showing signs of wear, along a dark Texas highway. Road sign says "New Braunfels, 15 miles".

Jack turns on the radio. He fiddles around with the buttons looking for a channel. A slightly fuzzy voice comes out.

RADIO ANNOUNCER - ON THE RADIO

And now back to Sunday Night Baseball on ESPN radio. The Cubs and the Dodgers from Wrigley Field in Chicago.

Jack sits back in his seat and listens as he drives.

JOHN SCIAMBI - ON THE RADIO

Welcome back everybody. John Sciambi alongside Chris Singleton. Home-half of the 5th and Clark Springfield coming-up. Chris, we were talking earlier about this young man. He certainly announced his arrival with authority!

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Before a packed-house, Clark Springfield walks to the plate.

CHRIS SINGLETON (V.O.)

Yes, he did. He has the papers, TV, sports radio and the fans pretty excited.

Clark takes a practice cut and then steps in.

JOHN SCIAMBI (V.O.)

Well, five home runs in his first seven games, since being called-up to replace Jack Hoss, will do that. It was against this very team, the Dodgers, that Hoss was hurt. Still no time frame for his return. Here's the pitch to Springfield.

The pitcher winds and delivers. Clark swings and CRACK! He promptly drives one in to the right-center field gap.

JOHN SCIAMBI

He swings and drives it into the gap!

The center fielder, running hard, cuts it off.

JOHN SCIAMBI (CONT'D)

Kemp, running hard cuts it off.

Clark rounds first and goes for second. He digs hard.

JOHN SCIAMBI (CONT'D)

Springfield's going to try for second, here's the throw!

Clark slides into second headfirst ahead of the tag. The crowd cheers wildly. He calls time, gets up and brushes dirt off his jersey. Seemingly oblivious to the cheers.

INT/EXT. JACK'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Jack, driving, keeps glancing at the radio, an anxious look on his face. He's holding his breath, leaning forward.

JOHN SCIAMBI - ON THE RADIO (CONT'D)
And he is, safe! Clark Springfield
on his horse, legs out a double!

CHRIS SINGLETON - ON THE RADIO
Wow! This kid is exciting. What a
combination of speed and power. And
he's so composed, like he's been
doing it forever.

Jack sits back and a breath puffs-out his cheeks. He tilt's back his cowboy hat.

JOHN SCIAMBI
I just saw a sign, "Jack Who?",
Think he's going to make them
forget Jack Hoss, Chris? His
contract is up at years-end.

Jack frowns, his joy gone.

CHRIS SINGLETON
Oh, I can't see that. I'll be you
that in the front office, as well
as the in the clubhouse, they're
thinking about what they can
achieve with both Hoss and Clark in
the line-up.

JOHN SCIAMBI
Maybe, but the trade deadline is
coming-up. Their's been a lot of
rumors. The end of Hoss's days with
the Cubs?

CHRIS SINGLETON
I doubt Greg Ford or Big Monty Lake
are going to do anything to hurt
their chances.

JOHN SCIAMBI
I don't know Chris, another arm
might help in that cause. Their
hitting is good.

CHRIS SINGLETON
Hoss for a pitcher? Maybe, but I
say Hoss comes back and we see what
this team can do.

(MORE)

CHRIS SINGLETON (CONT'D)

And they'll let the next off-season
and Hoss' contract take care of
itself.

JOHN SCIAMBI

Well, we'll all know soon enough.
Stranger things have happened.

Jack, better, although not totally secure, takes some comfort
from Singleton's words.

Steering with his left hand, he rubs his jaw with his right.

His truck rumbles down the road, the lights of New Braunfels
now visible in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRUEN HALL, NEW BRAUNFELS, TX - NIGHT

The facade of the famous old central texas music palace -
Gruen Hall in New Braunfels, is all lit up. We hear MUSIC
coming from inside. "L.A. FREEWAY" is being played by Jerry
Jeff Walker.

Jack is at the front door. A BIG BOUNCER stands guard. The
Bouncer becomes excited as he recognizes jack.

BOUNCER

Hey, you Jack Hoss?

Jack smiles; nice to see another friendly Texas face. He pats
the excited bouncer on the back and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. GRUEN HALL, NEW BRAUNFELS, TX - CONTINUOUS

Jack enters the large, historic old texas down hall. Bar at
the back, benches in the middle, dance floor farther down and
a big stage at the far end. The place is jammed with FANS.

On stage is JERRY JEFF WALKER and his band playing.

Jack walks over the bar. Through the crowd of young and old
alike in all manner of casual western attire, Jack leans in.

A young, attractive female BARTENDER comes over (early 20's).
She does not recognize him.

BARTENDER

Hi! What'll it be?

JACK
Lonestar!

She brings him a Lonestar beer as he settles in at the bar.

On stage Jerry Jeff continues with his tune. The club is jammed with PATRONS. Jack turns around, back to the bar, takes a sip of his beer, and takes in the scene. He exhales a huge breath and tips back his cowboy hat.

As the song nears its end, the crowd joins in and sings the last chorus. Jack joins in with full-throated accompaniment.

The song ends, the crowd CHEERS, and WHISTLES abound.

JERRY JEFF
Thank you! Sure is nice to be back
here in Gruen!

The crowd cheers. Jack whistles through his fingers.

So, I gotta old compadre of mine
backstage. Seems like he's got a
night off and thought he'd stop by.
He's a guy I once drove to a place
called Key West. What do ya' say we
bring him out here and put him to
work? Say hello to my old buddy,
Jimmy Buffett!

The crowd goes bananas as JIMMY BUFFETT comes out.

JIMMY BUFFETT
Hello! Nice to be back in Gruen!
OK, so this one is for all of you
that have been with us all along
and for all of you not alive when
this song was a hit.

Jimmy starts playing 'COME MONDAY". The band picks it right up and joins in. Jerry Jeff joins in on a duet.

Jack, tears welling up in his eyes, gets a far-away look.

FADE TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL, CHICAGO - NIGHT

FLASHBACK:

With Buffett's song playing in the BG, a flashback of Jack and Jane standing, dressed elegantly - exactly as in the photo by Jack's bedside - out in front of the hotel. They kiss passionately.

FADE TO:

INT. GRUEN HALL, NEW BRAUNFELS, TX - CONTINUOUS

Jack shakes it off and keeps watching. He looks around the hall as the song plays. He begins to look less sad. As the song ends, Jack looks more content and satisfied. He takes another swig of his beer, and looks around the place, as the crowd APPLAUDS. He starts to applaud as well.

Ring! Ring!

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Jack is asleep in his bed, lying on his stomach.

Ring! Ring! Jack reaches for his phone. He raises up his head to have a look. The display reads: "GREG". Jack sits up and answers.

JACK

Yeah, hello?

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Jack! Jack is that you?

JACK

Yeah, it's me.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Jesus, Jack, it's Greg. I've been trying to get a hold of you.

JACK

Yeah, well I'm at my ranch. Real bad reception out here. In and out. Kind of surprised you got through.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Your ranch? In Texas? What for?

JACK

"R&R", Greg. I just wasn't gettin' anywhere up there.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

OK. OK I can see that. That's fine. You behaving? You OK? No problems, right, I mean I've gotten reports from here in town that --

JACK

I'm fine. Why do you think I left?

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Yeah, OK, probably nice there. Peaceful. OK. Good. So, how's the leg?

JACK

You know, its fine. No pain. Zip.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Oh, that's great. Listen, that ranch of yours, where is it?

JACK

Well, Austin, San Antonio and Houston kind of form a triangle.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Right.

JACK

My ranch is sort of in the middle of that.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

That works. Listen, Jack, I want to send the doctor to have a look at you and if everything checks out, have you cleared to resume baseball activities, OK?

JACK

Yeah, sure. You bet.

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GREG

And listen Jack, you played a little first for us last year.

JACK - ON THE PHONE

Yeah, little bit.

GREG

I need you to grab that first baseman's glove, Ok?

INT. JACK'S RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

JACK

Why's that?

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Something could be happening. Might need you at first. So, when you get to Iowa --

JACK

Iowa?

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Yeah, of course. That's where you're going to get in a few rehab starts. You know how it works.

JACK

Yeah, yeah, I guess so.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Hey, don't worry about it. Just play first and get in a groove. You'll be back before you know it.

JACK

OK.

GREG - ON THE PHONE

Good, Good. Someone will be in touch about the doctor. We want to get that done and you to Iowa ASAP.

JACK

Fine by me. Alright, Greg. Adios.

Jack hangs up. He looks pensive. He gets out of bed and heads out a door leading to his patio and pool. He walks outside.

EXT. JACK'S RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jacks walks out along the pool, He stares out at the land and just takes it in.

End Act II

CUT TO:

ACT III

EXT. PRINCIPAL PARK, IOWA - DAY

A large BUS waits outside Principal Park, home of the Iowa Cubs. YOUNG PLAYERS (early 20's) file on-board. A couple linger by the front door of the bus.

PLAYER 1

He's coming! I saw him in the club house getting his gear!

PLAYER 2

Jack Hoss. Holy shit! I can't believe it.

PLAYER 3

Look, be cool. We're supposed to be pro's, so play it cool!

PLAYER 1

Yeah, but its Jack Fucking Hoss!

"Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way" by Waylon Jennings plays

Jack emerging from the stadium carrying a large duffle back. It's blue and says "Iowa Cubs" on it. Iowa manager, TROY BUCKLEY (early 40's) walks with him.

They walk up to the bus where the players are waiting. Jack wearing his customary cap and shades stops and looks at them, and then up at the bus.

JACK

So, boys, are you sure that Hank done it this way?

He takes off his shades and winks. Troy laughs and they get on. Troy pauses, and turns back to the players.

TROY

Let's go guys.

The players look at each other.

PLAYER 1

Hank? Hank who?

PLAYER 2

Hank Aaron? Gotta be Hank Aaron, right?

PLAYER 3

Yeah, yeah, Hammerin' Hank, for sure.

JACK

(to Troy, deadpan)
I'm in hell.

Troy laughs again and they disappear into the bus

I/E. BUS - LATER

The bus rolls down a highway and through some corn fields. The players are sit around talking, joking, listening to music, playing cards.

Jack sits in the back with Troy. Jack stares out the window at the cornfields rushing by.

The bus rumbles down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. WERNER PARK, OMAHA, NE - DAY

Jack is up for the Iowa Cubs vs. The Omaha Stormchasers.

Jack swings and misses.

UMP

Strike three!

Jack walks back to the dug out and sits down, alone.

EXT. PRINCIPAL PARK, IOWA - NIGHT

The Iowa Cubs play the Las Vegas 51's.

Jack is up again. Again he swings, and again he misses.

UMP

Strike three!

Again Jack walks away dejectedly, gripping his bat tightly and twisting it and looking out at the outfield.

EXT. ACES BALLPARK, RENO, NV - DAY

Jack up again. Again he swings. This time he connects. He pulls the ball down the line. It's a big shot. All of his teammates get up and go to the edge of the dug out to watch.

The opposing outfielder gives chase. It's over his head.

Jack watches then starts to run.

The ball lands just to the left of the right field foul pole.

UMP

Foul!

Jack stops, shakes his head and heads back to the plate. Jack picks up the bat. Gets back into the box.

The pitcher delivers and Jack swings. He pops it up. The catcher throws the mask, Jack starts to run and the ball comes straight down into the catcher's mitt.

"STOP THE WORLD (AND LET ME OFF)" by Waylon Jennings plays.

Jack, still carrying his bat, heads for the dugout, but he stops and breaks his bat over his knee. Some fans BOO.

EXT. WERNER PARK, INSIDE THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jack walks over and down and into the dugout where he tosses his helmet, sits down and just stares out at the field.

CUT TO:

I/E. BUS - TRAVELLING - DAY

"LONESOME, ONRY AND MEAN", Live, by Waylon Jennings, plays.

The bus rumbles along as Jack sits alone near the back of the bus. He wears headphones, staring out the window.

There is much commotion on the bus as the other players laugh and talk. It's like a high school bus filled with kids.

Troy comes down the aisle and sits down next to Jack. He nudges him. Jack takes off the earphones.

JACK

What's up, Bucksie?

TROY

I was going to ask you. We've known each other a long time, Hossie. You're not yourself. Leg bothering you?

JACK

No, no. I'm fine.

TROY

Then what's wrong?

JACK

I don't know. I've lost my girl, I lost the man I called my second daddy, and then I got hurt! Now, I just spent the last few weeks at my ranch. It's a beautiful place, Bucksie. Peaceful. I didn't want to leave. I mean, I never do, but this time, well, the pull was stronger.

(a beat)

And now, here I am and I can't hit. Don't know what's wrong. I sit here and I wonder, is the Good Lord tryin' to tell me something?

TROY

Like what? You think this is it?

JACK

I don't know, Bucksie, maybe?

TROY

Hossie, that peace at your ranch, that peace can get deafening, fast. I know. When I first retired I was climbing the walls! Nearly went nuts! Wife wanted to disown me!

JACK

(smiling)

Well, can you blame her?

The players up in front are having a good time, seemingly without a care in the world.

TROY

Probably not, but will you look at those guys up there? Look at them, Hossie. To a man, if you add up all the money they'll make this year, and times it by ten, it won't come close to what you'll make.

(MORE)

TROY (CONT'D)

But, look at them. They're loving it. They're playing for peanuts, and having the time of their lives.

(a beat)

Some of them will make it. Most of them won't. But it doesn't matter, because they're having the time of their lives. They'll look back at this someday and they'll say that these were the best days of their lives. And why? Because they love the game. Hell, it's why I'm still riding a bus instead of at home.

(a beat)

We love this game. Don't give up yet, Hossie. You got more in the tank. And one more thing. They'll look back someday, alright, and when they do, they'll say that they once played with the great Jack Hoss.

We pause for a few beats to linger over the players in front of them as they laugh and kid and joke around as the bus moves along down the highway.

TROY (CONT'D)

You forget the bull shit and just go out and play. You're Jack Hoss. Play for no other reason than you love it, and at your best, you are damn close to being the best who ever played.

He gets up. Then turns and leans in towards Jack.

TROY (CONT'D)

Forget it all and just play. The rest will take care of itself.

He walks to the front and sits down. The players still having a good time, laughing and kidding around.

Jack sits in silent contemplation. He looks at the kids up front and then out the window.

EXT. PRINCIPAL PARK, IOWA - NIGHT

It is mid-game at the home park of the Iowa Cubs. Jack's playin first base. A runner at first. Jack holds him on. An UMPIRE stands behind them. A FIRST BASE COACH is at the end of the coaches box.

The Memphis Redbirds are at bat.

The young Iowa Cubs PITCHER comes set. Looks at Jack at first, then delivers the pitch.

The batter lines the ball down the first base line. Jack dives and snares the liner. He then scrambles to his feet and runs across the bag.

MEMPHIS FIRST BASE COACH

Back!

But its too late. The runner is too far from the bag. He just freezes. Then as Jack steps on the bag,

FIRST BASE UMP

Out!

Jack takes the ball with him as he heads into the dugout. The rest of the team heads in as well.

TROY

That's it, Hossie! Hot damn!

JACK

Not bad, but I'll tell you what,
Bucksie, now it's time to introduce
myself to this kid on the mound.
(in a sort of cackle)
Heh-heh-heh!

He drops his glove and hat, and reaches for a batting helmet and a bat and heads out. He walks to the plate and gets set.

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Leading off the 4th inning, number
seven, Jack Hoss, first base.
That's number seven, Hoss!

The crowd goes wild.

Jack stares at the mound. The Memphis PITCHER looks in, gets the sign, winds and delivers.

Jack swings and, BOOM! He strikes a mighty blow. He starts running.

The CENTER FIELDER runs back. As he approaches the wall he slows down. He stops, leaps and then comes down on his butt in a sitting position.

Jack rounds second and stops. And looks. And waits.

The center fielder looks into his glove. Empty. It's a home run! The umpire at second twirls around his index finger.

JACK

Yeah!

He starts running. His teammates go wild as does the crowd.

He crosses home plate and high fives the next batter and heads in to the dugout. All of the players and coaches come to the end where he's coming in to congratulate him. They're more excited about it than he is.

TROY

That's it, Hossie! You feelin' it?

JACK

You know what? I am. You were right. I mean look at those guys!

We see the other players pointing to the outfield towards where Jack hit his homer and they try to emulate his smooth swing. Taking practice swings on the bench in slow motion.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hell!, They're more excited about it than I am!

Not waiting for a response from Troy, but noticing the players trying to emulate his swing.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to the young players)
Hey, hey! Let me see that.

He walks down the bench and takes the bat.

JACK (CONT'D)

No, no. Let me show you. It's all in the balance see? You gotta stay back, then explode, but smooth, controlled. Your hips, your balance it adds to your power, you see?

He takes a practice swing to show them. They watch and then all nod. Troy can't help but smile. Jack's back.

JACK (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Yeah, yeah, that's it.

We see Jack instructing one of the young players who now has the bat and is practicing his swing.

A closer angle shows Troy smiling and watching.

JACK (CONT'D)
And study these pitchers. If you
watch, they'll tip their pitches...

The sounds fades out, but Jack continues MOS.

CLOSE ON: Troy's smiling face.

TROY (V.O.)
Yeah. He's back! -

SMASH-CUT TO:

INT. TROY'S OFFICE - LATER

Troy is on the phone, behind his desk in his office.

TROY - ON THE PHONE
No, no, I've kept him out of the
outfield. Kept him at first just
like you wanted. Made a helluva
play tonight. He looks like himself
again. Yeah he does!
(he listens)
OK. See you when you get here.

CUT TO:

INT. MONTY JUNIOR'S OUTER-OFFICE - DAY

An ASSISTANT (late 20's), pretty, professional, brunette,
sits behind a desk. She has her hair up, glasses on. She is
working at her computer.

Another very attractive young woman, early 20's, blond, long
hair, sits on a couch down the hall a little way from the
office.

Junior comes walking out of his office and stops at the desk.

ASSISTANT
Greg would like to see you when
you've got a minute. I think he's
got a deal to show you.

MONTY JR.
(noticing the girl)
Hmm, OK. Who's that?

ASSISTANT

Applicant. She's filling out some paperwork, waiting for an interview for a PR assistant or something.

MONTY JR.

Oh yeah? She's hired.

He heads to his office as his assistant just shakes her head.

MONTY JR. (CONT'D)

And tell Greg he can come up. And you might have to stay late tonight; trade deadline, you know. Always crazy.

He disappears and his assistant looks less than thrilled.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCIPAL PARK, IOWA - NIGHT

It's the next night. The stands are packed since Jack Hoss is still in town. It's a great crowd, as the Iowa Cubs crowd is known to be.

Just sitting up in the stands, maybe half-way up, behind home plate is Cubs GM Greg Ford. As the sun sets he sits there, watching, with his sunglasses on.

Jack comes to the plate.

PA ANNOUNCER

Now batting, first base, number seven, Jack Hoss.

The crowd goes wild. Greg notices. Iowa plays the NEW ORLEANS ZEPHYRS. Their pitcher delivers. Jack takes a cut and rips it into the gap.

He rounds first as the outfielders give chase. One of them tracks it down. Jack rounds second and heads for third. The outfielder fires it in. Jack slides headfirst into third.

UMP

Safe!

He beats the tag. In the stands, Greg smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. TROY'S OFFICE - LATER

Troy, Greg and Jack sit in Troy's office.

GREG

So, how do you feel, Jack?

JACK

Never better.

GREG

That's good.

(a beat)

Look Jack, I'm not going to screw around here. There's been a trade.

(a beat)

We just finalized it today. I needed to tell you before you found out on Twitter or some other damn thing.

From the look on Jack's face his heart is sinking, his world, collapsing. Even Troy looks stunned.

GREG (CONT'D)

Jack,

(another beat)

We traded Sanchez to St. Louis for Adam Carter.

JACK

(stunned)

What? Sanchez?

Troy looks very relieved. He can breathe again.

GREG

Yeah, you know, Bubba? Balboa Sanchez? He's doing alright for us in the power department, but St. Louis is having a bad year, Carter is going to be a free-agent and we could use his arm for the stretch run. We think he'll be the final piece, that is, after we bring you back up. You ready?

JACK

Hell yeah, I am! Playin' first, huh?

GREG

Noooo! I just did that to rest your legs.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

I didn't want you getting hurt pushing it for the fans and running into some goddamn wall or something. Apparently, the Missile Crisis can play first. Who knew? I gotta have Miller brush up on his espanol, or something.

JACK

Huh.

GREG

Well! Get packed! You're in the line-up tomorrow back in Chicago!

Jack springs up. He looks at Troy, who is happy for Jack, but looking forlorn at losing his friend.

JACK

Bucksie, What can I say, partner?

He hugs him

GREG

Just play like I told you and remind them all of who you are. Ok, Hossie?

JACK

You got it.

He heads for the door.

JACK (CONT'D)

You're a helluva manager, Bucksie, really! They're all nuts if you aren't in the Big's pretty quick!

He leaves and Troy smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - DAY

Jack walk's towards the entrance. He carries a duffle bag.

As he walks, three huge banners, hanging-down from up-high, come into view. One is of Lefty Quiver, one of Bronson Cutter and one of himself.

Next to these three, THREE WORKMEN on the roof unfurl a fourth banner; one of Clark Springfield.

As Jack walks towards the entrance, the banner, now totally unfurled, gets caught in a gust of wind, the bottom of it slapping against the facade.

Jack enters, seemingly oblivious. The Springfield banner settles into place, right next to Jack's.

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - DAY

Solo/Outro to "TUNNEL OF LOVE" Live, by Dire Straits, plays.

VARIOUS ANGLES AND SHOTS as the Cubs play in different games.

Jack, at the plate, crushes a pitch, then stands and watches

Clark does the same, then takes off around the bases

Lefty Quiver pitching, Cutter catching, a Red's batter swings and misses. Cutter heads out to the mound, mask held aloft, to celebrate the win. He high-fives Lefty.

Flash Brown, running hard, stabs a screaming liner.

Ryan Jones, at the plate, drills a hit past a Met's pitcher.

Vega leads off first, the Rockies first baseman holding him on. He then takes off for second. The catcher throws down, but he beats the tag.

Jack at the plate, Manor on third, and Clark at second. Jack hits one up the middle - hard.

Artie Manor comes around to score, Clark right behind him. They high five, then point at Jack, who points back at them from first.

Josh Barnes throws a pitch, and the Red's batter swings and misses. Billy Quarterflash and then Adam Carter, each do the same.

Clark, at bat, swings and misses. He dejectedly heads for the dugout, head down, eyes on his shoes.

El Smoke on the mound throws a pitch to a St. Louis batter. The batter swings and hits a grounder right at El Smoke who fields it and throws to Roberto Santos at first.

Santos leaps in the air and runs towards the mound.

Cutter already there, grabs El Smoke around the waist, lifting him. Santos barrels in to them and they all tumble to the ground. All the other players run in, and mob them.

Flash jumps on the pile, then Clark. Jack is last to arrive. He leaps on to the pile, rolls over on his back and thrusts his arms, into the air, spread-eagle style.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Chicago Tribune newspaper: Headline: "Cubs Clinch Division", Sub-Headline: "Springfield's Struggles Continue"

SUPER FADES. REPLACED BY:

Chicago Tribune headline: "Cubs, Dodgers for Pennant!"

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - NIGHT

The field is decked-out with patriotic bunting. Fans are now bundled up in warm jackets. The Cubs play the Dodgers.

In rapid succession: Cutter gets a hit, then. Santos hits a home run. Clark flies out, and Jack hits a titanic homer to dead center, as the crowd erupts.

El Smoke, again on the mound, stares in. He comes set, fires a rising fastball to Cutter. The Dodger batter swings, but is well underneath it.

Cutter leaps to his feet, arms out-stretched and races to the mound, as the batter walks away dejectedly.

The Cub players again go wild. Cub fans are on their feet, cheering. The players again converge on the mound to celebrate. Everyone hugging each other.

INSERT: Chicago Tribune; Giant Headline: "CUBS WIN PENNANT!" Sub-Headline: "Head to First Series Since '45"

INSERT: Chicago Tribune; Giant Headline: "DO OR DIE". Sub-Headline: "Game 7: Cubs, Red Sox For It All"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO, CHICAGO - DAY

Typical sports radio studio. A big sign reads "Radio 720, WGN, The Voice of Chicago", various banners of Chicago teams are scattered about. A rather large, burly, rumped figure sits behind a microphone wearing headphones.

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST

I'm not sure that my heart, or the collective hearts of Cub's fans everywhere, can take this next game. Here we are, tied-up in the World Series. Three games for us, three games for Boston. Well, they broke their curse and now only one remains. Ours. The Billy Goat curse

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

A middle-aged man, wearing a Cubs cap, flannel shirt and long-sleeve T-shirt underneath, is driving and listening to the radio. His eyes watch the road but also glance down at the radio.

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST (V.O.)

(out of car radio speaker)

Now, Boston has two recent World Series titles, and we haven't had one since 1909. I say, our turn!

The driver nods firmly in agreement.

INT. BAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An attractive young woman, mid-20's tends bar. She wears a white Cubbies jersey. Her long dark hair partially obscures the name "Hoss" and the number "7" that are on the back.

A few patrons sit at the bar, all decked-out in Cubbies gear. Equal parts men and women, they all have pints in front of them.

They look up at a big flat-screen, engrossed, their beers go untouched. The simulcast of the radio program is on.

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST - ON TV

Big Monty Lake has announced that the Cubs will not be taking any chances in tonight's game seven. Yes, friends, a trip to the Billy Goat Tavern will be made and the goat will be in attendance. There will be a ceremony, presided over by Ernie Banks himself. We're gonna' parade that goat around Wrigley and exorcise it.

The patrons in the bar start nodding and smiling and ad-lib support.

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST - ON TV
(CONT'D)

We're gonna cleanse Cubs Park. And then, we are going to get the job done, once and for all, for all of Chicagoland and for the long suffering Cubs fans the world over.

The patrons now get louder with their encouragement. Some clap their hands and high-five one-another. A few let out a few shouts and whoop-it up a little. The anticipation growing unbearable.

INT. RADIO STUDIO, CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

The host now becoming more intense in his speech, leans in closer to the mic.

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST
And when it is done, and only then, will I be able to die in peace. So for every underdog that's ever tried, for every broken heart, for every fan ever brought to tears by a beloved team, let me just say, once, and for all of us - -

He pauses for a beat and then, at the top of his lungs:

SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST (CONT'D)
Let's go Cubs!!!

INT. BAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The patrons explode in cheers

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The driver listening on the radio starts banging on his wheel and honking his horn.

INT. RADIO STUDIO, CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

The radio host just falls back in his chair taking a breath. His cheeks puff out as he lets it out.

"RUNNIN' SHOES" by the Fabulous Thunderbirds plays.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Game Day. Mid-afternoon. Cubs fans are already mingling around Wrigley Field and adjacent streets. It's filled with fans and vendors beneath a sharp blue sky.

Steam rises from the carts of the hot dog and sausage vendors.

The players, as they arrive, walk from their cars, past cheering fans and into the clubhouse.

Flash does a little dance as he walks, playing to the fans and stirring them-up.

The other players and coaches file past silently, some wearing sunglasses, eyes straight ahead, trying to keep calm.

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Inside it is a different scene. It is quiet, business like.

Clark sits at his locker. Head down. His father stands next to him. His hand on his shoulder.

Jack is at his locker getting dressed. He sees this. He walks over.

JACK

So, Clarksie, this your father?

CLARK

Yeah, Jack. My Dad.

JACK

(extending his hand)

Well, this is a pleasure. Jack Hoss

CLARK'S FATHER

No, no, it's my pleasure, really!

JACK

You take an interest in your son's career. You teach him the game?

CLARK'S FATHER

Sure did.

JACK

So did mine. I loved my daddy. He's gone now.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Clark, you treasure these moments
with the old man and play it the
way he taught you. You'll be fine.

Jack turns to go. He stops and looks at Clark's dad.

JACK (CONT'D)

And as for you sir, you did a good
job.

Jack smiles, winks at Clark's father, then gets a serious
look on his face and nods at Clark. He picks up his glove and
heads out towards the field, other players following.

CUT TO:

INT. CUBS CLUBHOUSE, WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

All of the players sit silently at their lockers. Not a sound
can be heard. In the back stand the coaches, lined-up. Bobby
stands alone in the center of the room looking around.

BOBBY

I made one speech this year, on
Opening Day. We won and not wanting
to jinx it, I haven't made another
since.

The players chuckle a little.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Boys, it's been a hell of a year
and now we have one last game. I'm
not going to talk about history, or
what this game means, or curses, or
any of that stuff because none of
it means a damn thing. Right now we
just gotta go out there and play
the game. It's the same game as it
ever was. For you guys struggling a
little bit right now --

Clark drops his head and stares at his shoes.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Things can turn on a dime. With one
swing. One good swing. That's how
baseball is. Remember that.

Bobby now turns around as he speaks, looking at each man

BOBBY

For the rest of you guys, know this: There is no clock in baseball. You can't run it out, and it can't run out. Whether we are ahead or we are behind, this game is played until the last out is made. When the last out is made, then the game is over. Until then, it's not, and anything can happen. So, if we're ahead, lock it down. If behind, play until they make the last out. In between the first pitch and the final out, anything can happen. There's no clock. All I ask is that you fight until the last out. That's it. We'll be fine. Ok, let's go.

There is no cheering. The guys get their stuff and head out.

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - NIGHT

Many angles and shots. The sounds of the ballpark dominate.

SUPER: "GAME 7"

The fans have filled the park. Night is upon us. The anticipation is evident on the faces of the fans. Some look on nervously, others are excited, still others stoney-faced.

The players go through their pre-game preparation same as any game. Ryan shoves a big was of bubble gum in his mouth.

Flash stretches his hamstrings. Jack rubs a bat with a towel. Cutty puts his gear on, then heads to the bullpen.

Clark sits on the bench, still as a statue. Not much talking going on.

Big Monty, Junior and Greg take their seats along the First base line, next to the Cub's dugout.

Clark's father sits alone, mid-way up, behind home plate.

Lefty warms-up in the bullpen. Rick Palmer, pitching coach, is standing behind Lefty. Watching.

WRIGLEY PA ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentleman. If you will turn your attention to the Cubs dugout along the third base line.

(MORE)

WRIGLEY PA ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Please welcome, with special
guests, Hall-of-Famer, Mr. Cub,
Ernie Banks!

Ernie banks, in Cubs jacket and cap comes out of the Cubs
dugout with a MAN and a GOAT on a leash.

They parade the goat around the entire boundary of the field,
taking a lap, with the goat, all the way around.

The crowd goes bananas and cheer wildly as Ernie, the Man and
the goat, make their way around the field.

WRIGLEY PA ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

It is high time that we welcomed
back, from Chicago's Billy Goat
Tavern, the owner, Sam Sianis and
their famous goat!

The crowd continues to cheer as they make it to home plate.
VARIOUS CLUB OFFICIALS are there waiting for them.

Ernie and Sam take off their caps and wave them to the crowd.

Sam steps up to a STANDING MICROPHONE set up at home plate.

SAM

(raising his arms to quiet
the crowd)

As owner of the Billy Goat Tavern,
and in the presence of the famous
goat, who has returned once more to
Wrigley Field, I hereby proclaim
the Curse of the Billy Goat
officially, irrevocably, and
forever, lifted! Lets go Cubs!

The crowd cheers wildly. Ernie, Sam and the goat leave
through the Cubs dugout. As they pass Bobby who is near the
end of the dugout Bobby turns to his team.

BOBBY

OK, boys. That should do it.

That breaks the tension and they all laugh and loosen-up.

Out in the bull pen Lefty and Rick now stand with Cutter.
Lefty wears a Cubs jacket to stay warm as does Rick.

RICK

(almost yelling over the
noise of the crowd)

OK, Lefty. You're on just three
days rest.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

You'll be a bit more fatigued, so your fastball might take a hit in velocity, but your breaking balls should move more, so be aware of that. You too, Cutty! Work the ump to get the calls in case Lefty's stuff is really moving around a lot. OK?

CUTTER

Yeah, OK.

RICK

Ok, mow 'em down! You'll be fine.

They walk along the field in between the third base line and the stands. As they walk to the dugout the fans cheer wildly and lean over the brick wall to yell encouragement. All three just keep their heads down and keep walking.

They walk into the dugout. No one talks to Lefty. Rick stands next to Bobby

BOBBY

How's he look?

RICK

Fine.

BOBBY

You tell Josh and Quarterflash?

RICK

Yeah, Stay in the clubhouse and stay warm and loose. No long leashes tonight. Be ready from first pitch. Even Adam Carter says he's got an inning in him.

BOBBY

Good. All hands on deck. Let's hope we don't need them.

An MLB OFFICIAL comes over to Bobby from the field.

OFFICIAL

OK, Bobby. Time.

BOBBY

(to the team)

OK guys, time. Let's get 'em.

Bobby claps his hands and the guys rise-up from the bench or grab their gloves and hats and take the field.

They run out on the field, flooded with light. The fans again cheer wildly. It is deafening.

Cutter; catcher, Santos; first, Vega; second, Manor; short, Ryan Jones; third, Hoss; left field, Flash; center, and Springfield; right.

They go through the normal warm-up tossing the ball around the infield and playing long-catch in the outfield.

Lefty walks to the mound. Takes his practice throws. Cutter throws the ball down to second. Manor sweeps a tag then flips to Vega who throws to Ryan at third.

Ryan walks the ball to the mound, and puts the ball in Lefty's mitt. He pats him on the butt.

RYAN

Ok, Quiv, blow 'em away.

Lefty says nothing, just nods. Ryan returns to third. The Red Sox BATTER steps in and gets set. Quiver looks in, winds and delivers the pitch. The batter takes a big cut.

CRACK!

Lefty spins around and looks up to follow the flight of the ball.

From the dugout Bobby and his coaches, together watching from the steps all lift and turn their heads towards the outfield. We stay on their faces as all goes quiet (MOS)

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - LATER

The crowd is now decidedly more subdued. The Cubs are in the field. Same line-up, except that Josh Barnes is on the mound. He just stands there. Holding the ball.

Cutter and Bobby walk into the frame and arrive at the mound at about the same time. Josh puts the ball into Bobby's hand, and walks from the mound towards the dugout.

Over this scene we can hear the commentators.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Well, Tim, this is not what Bobby envisioned, nor hoped for, when this day began.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

Not at all, Joe, but you have to wonder, this being the Cubs, was an outcome like this going through his mind.

As Barnes leaves a scoreboard along the upper deck come into focus. It simple shows the score:

Cubs - 0, Boston - 9, Inning - 8

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

They had their ace going, Alan "Lefty" Quiver, albeit only on three days rest, first time this year and one has to wonder what affect that had on him.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

His slider and sinker were good. He just didn't throw them enough. Kept going with the gas, normally his best pitch, and tonight it cost him, and the Cubs.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Barnes, not a reliever, brought in to stem the tide, couldn't, and now, with the bases loaded and two outs, more damage can still be done. And to try and get out of this, another starter, Billy Quarterflash will enter.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

At least Billy has relieving experience. It is very difficult to relieve if you've never done it, as Josh Barnes, brilliant all year with 18 wins, found out tonight.

As they speak Quarterflash takes the ball from Bobby, throws a few warm-up tosses and the batter steps in.

Quarterflash checks the runners, comes set and delivers. The batter swings and pops it up to Santos at first in foul ground. The Cubs jog off the field and into their dugout.

Over this we hear:

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

First pitch swinging, despite the situation and the new pitcher and Quarterflash gets him to pop-up to Santos in foul ground.

(a beat while the ball comes down)

That'll do it. Cubs escape further damage. Eight innings in the books. Top of the order and the last chance for the Cubs when we return.

The players come down into the dugout dejectedly. Quarterflash enters last.

BOBBY

(patting him on the butt)

Nice job, Billy.

The players take their seats. All of a sudden Flash Brown gets up and starts yelling as he grabs a bat and puts on his helmet.

FLASH

Hey! Hey! Wake up! Wake the fuck up! You guys wanna cry? Huh? Now? Well fuck that! I'm going up there, and I'm gong to make that big ape on the mound pay! Right now. When there's three outs, we can cry. Til then? Fuck them! I'm gettin' on!

Some of the guys look a bit livelier. Flash walks to the batters box. He looks down at the catcher

FLASH (CONT'D)

So, things pretty good for you buys, huh? Not even bringing in the closer. Just this big guy.

CATCHER

Well, Flash, you now how it is.

FLASH

Yup. Yup I do. No respect.

The pitcher, being a reliever, just comes set and delivers. Flash swings. Crack!

It's a hit into the gap. Flash rounds first and goes all out heading for second. The outfielders converge grab the ball and fire it in to second. The second baseman goes for a quick sweep tag but Flash's hand gets under the tag.

UMP

Safe!

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Flash Brown, never a guy to quit,
ill-advised as it may be down eight
runs, goes for second, anyway, and
makes it.

RED SOX SECOND BASEMAN

Oh, nice, Flash, down by eight,
going for second?

FLASH

What the hell? You know what? It's
time for somethin' crazy, cuz we
are down nine in the ninth in game
seven and so, its crazy time!

Artie Manor digs in. The pitcher checks Flash at second. He delivers. Flash goes for third. Manor swings and misses.

The catcher throws down to third but the ball gets away from the third baseman. Flash gets up from his head first slide and heads for home.

The Boston third baseman runs the ball down as it has bounced off the wall and is rolling near the third base line. He grabs it and whirls around to throw.

He suddenly has a look of futility on his face as we see Flash cross the plate standing up. He just keeps sprinting right into the dugout. The guys are suddenly on their feet.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Nine to one, Red Sox as Flash, as
he can do, manufactures a run all
by himself.

In the dugout

FLASH

(yelling)

You guys see! You see what I just
did? Now each of you fuckers do the
same thing and we're gonna win!
Come on now!

Manor digs back in and promptly delivers a hit. He rounds first, then retreats.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Now Manor with a hit. Nine - one
game with manor at first, no outs
and the struggling phenom Clark
Springfield coming to the plate.

Clark gets set.

Clark's dad, in the stands, looks nervous.

The pitcher checks Manor and then delivers. Manor takes off
for second and Clark swings. He drills the ball into the gap.

Manor rounds second and heads for third. The Boston
outfielders run it down and throw it in to the short stop who
catches the ball and runs it in. Manor holds at third, Clark
pulls up at second.

Clark's dad looks very happy.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Manor goes. That's drilled into the
alley. Manor will stop at third and
Springfield will pull up at second.
Second and third, no outs and here
comes Jack Hoss.

MCCARVER

And with one swing its nine to four
with no outs!

JOE BUCK

That exorcism with the goat might
just have worked, but lets see.

In the dugout they are all ad-libbing and yelling
encouragement.

FLASH

C'mon Hossie! Come on now!

BOBBY

Let's go Jack!

Everyone is yelling. The crowd, dead for hours, is now waking
up.

PA ANNOUNCER

Now batting, number seven, left
fielder, Jack Hoss! Hoss, number
seven.

The crowd is now standing and screaming encouragement.

Jack stand in against the pitcher.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And they're going to let Harold
face Hoss, despite a lack of his
best stuff tonight.

The pitcher comes set. He delivers. Jack takes a mighty cut.

CRACK!

The players on the dugout leap to their feet and head-up the
dugout steps to have a look.

The ball explodes off of Jack's bat. It is a deep drive
straight-away center field. The center fielder gives chase,
his back turned to the infield, he runs straight back as fast
as he can.

But its no use. The ball flies over his head and lands just
beyond the center field wall.

The crowd EXPLODES. It is deafening. Manor jogs across the
plate, Clark jogs across the plate. They both turn and wait
for Jack. Hoss crosses the plate, solidly high-fives each of
them and then leads them to the dugout. Crowd on their feet.

Jack taps Ryan Jones on the top of his helmet, as he goes by
and ad-libs some encouragement.

Inside the dugout the players are screaming their approval.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And just like that Jack Hoss makes
it a nine to four game and still
with no outs!

Ryan walks to the plate.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And that'll be all for Harold. And
no more playing with fire for the
Sox. Here comes their closer.

The Red Sox manager is taking the ball from the reliever and
taking him out.

From the dugout:

RICK

Hey! They're bringing in that nut-
job closer of theirs.

All the guys look out at the field and see a monster of a man coming in. More the size of a small shed than a human, their huge closer walks to the mound.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Cletus Miller, all six-feet-six and three-hundred pounds of him is coming in.

MCCARVER (V.O.)

He's the scariest pitcher I've seen in a long time as his 41 saves this year will attest!

Ryan comes back to the dugout and leans in towards the coaches

RYAN

Jeezus, he's not even a dude, he's a small shed!

RICK

Look, he's all gas. OK? High heat, too, so watch out! But not a lot of movement! Just get the bat started quick, right?

RYAN

Right.

Ryan heads for the plate. Miller looks in. He throws.

UMP

Strike one!

Another pitch and Ryan swings and misses.

UMP (CONT'D)

Strike two!

Another fastball. High heat. Ryan swings. And misses.

UMP (CONT'D)

Strike three!

JOE BUCK

One out.

Cutter now stands in the batters box. He swings.

UMP

Strike three!

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And now the Cubs are down to their
last out.

The guitar solo/outro for "TELEGRAPH ROAD" live version, by
Dire Straits, plays to the end of the game.

Roberto Santos comes up. The Sox pitching coach is at the
mound having a quick word with Miller. Miller nods and the
coach departs.

Miller looks in at the imposing Roberto Santos. He delivers
and promptly hits Santos high on the arm. He doesn't budge.
He simply jogs down to first.

Next up is the much smaller number eight hitter, Julio Vega.
Vega looks like he's half the size of Cletus Miller.

Miller comes set and delivers. Santos pulls off a swinging
bunt. He swings, but actually bunts the ball to the left of
the mound in between the pitcher and the third baseman.

Vega races for first. The third baseman charges, picks up the
ball barehanded and with no shot at second fires to first,
falling in the process. Vega beats the throw by a step.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Vega beats the throw! And now first
and second with two outs, and we're
going to see a pinch hitter.

Balboa "Bubba" Sanchez comes to then plate.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And of all people, it's going to be
Balboa "Bubba" Sanchez. Traded at
the All-Star break to St. Louis,
near years end, the Cubs claimed
him off waivers. And now, he's
back.

MCCARVER

One of the oddities of the modern
game. But listen to this , Joe!
They love him! They didn't want him
gone in the first place!

The closer checks the runners. He delivers. Bubba singles on
a hard hit grounder through short and third. Santos holds at
third. Vega at second.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Bases loaded and the next pitch
will be Miller's 20th this inning.

MCCCARVER (V.O.)

He looks rattled.

Indeed he does. Cletus Miller looks around like he's lost. Like he's looking for help. But no help is coming.

PA ANNOUNCER

Now batting, number one, center fielder, DeWayne Brown. Brown, number one.

Flash strides up. The catcher, not looking too happy, glares up at Flash and then gives a sign. Miller delivers and Flash sends a screaming liner into the outfield. Santos scores. Vega scores.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And it's 9-6 and the ceiling continues to fall in on the Red Sox!

MCCCARVER

Unbelievable!

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

Various shots and various angles.

Out in the streets of Chicago, fans have heard what's happening and are quickly returning to the taverns and pubs. The crowds at the bars are swelling. Expectation is building all over again.

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Back on the field, the Red Sox manager has no choice. He has taken the ball from his closer on the mound and taken him out of the game.

In the Cubs dugout the excitement builds. Something good is happening, They're back in this.

WHIMPY

Hey! They're taking out Miller! We knocked him out!

This just emboldens the players more. They clap their hands and nervously pace the length of the dugout. Others try to sit and watch.

Artie Manor stands in and takes a pitch.

UMP

Ball four!

Artie jogs down to first. Jack and Clark are in the on-deck circle. Clark is about to head to the plate

JACK

Hey, Clarksie!

Clark comes back.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just try to get one you can drive.
Don't try to overdo it! See it and
swing. He'll give you one, OK? OK.

And he pops him on top of the helmet again.

Clark's dad, is once again wide-eyed and stiff in the stands.

Big Monty and the rest look on, also wide-eyed. Jane has slipped into the field box and now stands just behind them.

Jack looks on, seemingly the only one relaxed. The Cubs are on the steps of the dugout watching, no one talking, just staring.

Clark gets in the batters-box. Stone faced, he goes about his business of getting set. He stares out at the mound.

Catcher gives the sign. The pitcher comes set. He delivers. Clark starts his swing but stops it.

UMP

Strike one!

Another pitch. Fastball. Clark swings and misses.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

And lost in all of this is the fact
that there are two outs and the
Cubs are down to their last strike.

Jack looks on concerned.

JACK

(to himself)
Easy, Clarksie!

Big Monty and his group look on nervously.

Clark's dad has gone catatonic.

The pitcher Looks in. He comes set. He delivers, breaking ball, low. Clark takes it.

UMP

Ball.

JACK

(to himself)

Good eye. Here comes the heat, kid.

Another pitch. Fastball again. But, Clark has him timed now, and with perfect balance he swings --

BOOM!

The ball explodes off the bat. Screaming towards the gap, it's cut-off.

Bubba, running with the crack of the bat, heads home.

Flash is right behind Bubba, flying around the bases. He rounds third and heads for home. The short stop getting the relay, and seeing this, spins and throws home.

Bubba crosses, 9-7. The Catcher gets the ball and tries to block the plate. Bubba spins around, sees Flash coming and motions for him to 'get down'.

Flash slides headfirst towards the back edge of the plate. He reaches out with his left arm.

The catcher reaches back to tag him, but Flash is too far away. His hand brushes over the plate, alluding the tag.

He pops up and hugs Bubba.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)

Safe! Safe on a great slide by Brown and it is 9-8! The kid, Springfield comes through!

MCCARVER

And, perhaps caught up in his own amazement, he does not take second on the throw, Joe!

Clark is way off first, but then heads back to the base clapping his hands.

Jack sees a young boy in the stands looking very, very nervous along with his dad. He walks over to him.

JACK
 (to the boy)
 Nervous?

The kid looks at him amazed. Jack smiles and walks to the plate.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
 And so here's Jack Hoss and how perfect is this, Tim McCarver?

MCCARVER (V.O.)
 Too perfect. I keep saying it, but, unbelievable. Wow!

Jack strides up to the plate. The players and coaches are yelling encouragement from the dugout in the B.G.

JOE BUCK
 And, as you pointed out, Tim, because Clark Springfield didn't take second, and the Red Sox aren't about to put him in scoring position, they will pitch to Hoss.

Clark takes a short lead off of first, even though the first baseman plays behind him, off the bag.

The pitcher glances at Clark, then delivers.

UMP
 Ball!

The pitcher stares-in again, menacingly, comes set and delivers. Jack swings with a big cut.

UMP (CONT'D)
 Strike!

Jack pops himself on top of his helmet.

JACK
 (to himself)
 Easy Jack. Easy. C'mon.

Again the pitcher looks in with his menacing stare. He comes set and delivers. Jack swings a smooth, fast swing. CRACK!

The ball explodes off of Jack's bat. It his well hit and deep and towards the ivy covered walls in right center.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
 Well hit!

It crashes into the ivy and then rolls away from the outfielders giving chase.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
It's up against the ivy!

Clark rounds second. The outfielders chase the ball. Clark rounds third and heads home.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Springfield rounds third and heads home!

Jack is on his way to second. An outfielder finally catches up to the ball rolling away.

Clark crosses the plate his fist clenched and his arm raised above his head. Cutter high fives him. They both turn to look at what's happening. Scoreboard shows 9-9.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Springfield scores and we're tied!

Jack heads for third as the outfielder throws it in.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
And Hoss is going to try for third.
Here's the throw!

Jack goes sliding feet first into third, taking out the leaping third baseman, as the throw is wild and high and goes over the head of the third baseman and bounces off of the wall.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
The throw is wild high! And Hoss takes out Williams as the ball gets away!

Seeing this Jack pops-up and heads for home, digging hard. The third baseman scrambles to his feet and looks around for the ball. He sees it and heads after it.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Hoss is going to try to score and win it!

The third baseman gets to the ball quickly.

Jack is digging for home.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
A century of frustration is going to be decided right here!

The third baseman throws home.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Here's the throw, and Hoss is --

Hoss slides across the plate, the tag of the catcher just behind him. The umpire signals safe wildly.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Safe! Safe! The Cubs win!
(a beat)
Cubs fans, you have waited a
century for this. You've done it,
you are the World Series Champions!

Clark rushes up to him. Clark dives on top of him and they both roll around on the ground for a moment. Then, all the Cubs are on the field and start piling on.

The crowd, all on their feet, cheering and screaming. Everyone is hugging each other, the players and the fans.

As the melee dies down a bit, Clark looks for his dad behind home plate. His father has moved down the aisle and is now right behind the wall.

Clark finds him and walks over and hugs him.

Jack, getting up, sees this and, turning his head, sees that Big Monty is weeping.

Jack walks over to their field box and leans over. He and Big Monty embrace in a heartfelt hug. They hold it.

Jack then sees Jane in the back of the box. They make eye contact. She smiles at him. He smiles at her.

Jack goes back to hugging Big Monty.

JOE BUCK (V.O.)
Chicago, let the celebrations
begin!

MCCARVER (V.O.)
And, Joe, I don't think they're
going to end until next season!

"I BELIEVE I'M IN LOVE" by the Fabulous Thunderbirds plays.

Jack walks over and re-joins his teammates.

I/E. CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

Many locations and various angles showing the celebrations. Inside and out of bar rooms and taverns all over Chicago there are CUBS FANS celebrating with tremendous release.

We see Chicagoans in the streets celebrating with each other like a war has ended. They cheer, shout and hug one another.

A CUB FAN has the first early edition of the Chicago Tribune. He raises it over his head. The headline reads, in three-inch type: WE DID IT!

EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD, INSIDE THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

The team and the fans continue celebrating. Clark comes back over. Jack sees him. He hugs him and puts his arm around him.

The team then heads off the field and into the clubhouse, arms raised high.

As the other players head-off, Jack pauses. He looks back for Jane. He sees her still in the box, her eyes filled with tears. He smiles at her and she smiles back.

We HOLD, then Jack heads into the dugout and disappears into the clubhouse.

We start pulling up higher and higher. Finally we can see the inside and the outside of Wrigley field.

The streets are packed, celebrating, savoring this moment that they thought would never come.

FADE TO BLACK.