THE SANDLOT KIDS

Written by

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A FADED KODACHROME PHOTO

Of the 9 best (11-year-old) buddies that ever lived. On a makeshift baseball diamond - a sandlot... circa 1962:

SCOTTY SMALLS, studious-looking; ALAN "YEAH-YEAH" McCLENNAN, little, hyper; HAMILTON "HAM" PORTER, tubby with a huge smile;

KENNY DeNUNEZ, handsome bean pole; TOMMY "REPEAT" TIMMONS and his brother TIMMY; BERTRAM GROVER WEEKS, wearing inch-thick horn rims; JEFF "SQUINTS" PALLEDOROUS, a transistor radio plug wedged in his ear; and BENNY RODRIGUEZ, leaning on Scotty's shoulder, sporting the world's all-time hottest sneakers... P.F. Flyers.

One palm up, together like the 9 musketeers they're holding forward a baseball... with a mysterious smudge.

NARRATOR

Everyone's got that one summer when they were a kid... a summer so perfect, that it stays with them forever. It stays caught in time, like Camelot. That summer is like a book with a million blank pages that you get to fill with the greatest story you could ever dream up.

(BEAT)

This is a story about a legend. And for us, that summer was the one when the legend got made.

WE CLOSE IN TIGHT on the black smudge, which becomes:

A SERIES OF B&W PHOTOS & STOCK FOOTAGE

GEORGE WASHINGTON crossing the Delaware. DANIEL BOONE in
frontier buckskins. ABE LINCOLN giving the Gettysburg
address.
FREDERICK DOUGLAS orating from a podium. SITTING BULL in his
splendor. THE WRIGHT BROTHERS at Kitty Hawk - this photo
blends to news reel stock footage of the actual launch. The
following also blend to stock: JOE LOUIS clobbering MAX
SCHMELLING. JESSE OWENS in the '32 olympics. ALBERT EINSTEIN
scrawling on a chalkboard. CHARLES LINDBERG and his Spirit
of St. Louis land in Paris. As the waiting throngs cheer
WILDLY:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Everybody sometime in their life has
met a real live hero.
(MORE)

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NARRATOR (CONT'D)
They're not exactly a dime a dozen,
but there's plenty of people who've
done real great things. But hardly
anyone has ever met a certified Legend,
because most of them are dead before
they get voted one.

CHUCK YEAGER in the X-1 breaking the sound barrier.
MACARTHUR
stepping ashore, pipe clenched. JIM THORPE playing football.
ELVIS PRESELY on stage in hep-cat duds. NEIL ARMSTRONG
setting
foot on the moon.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
So, to actually be there at the moment
one gets made... well, forget about
it. It never happens. Almost never...
To understand how it all got started,
you have to go back...

WE PULL BACK FROM THE MOON - like a baseball in the sky.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...to the all-time, hands down, complete
and undisputed Legend that ever lived.
A BASEBALL in someone's hand. WE PULL BACK FROM IT.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
In any language, in any country, in
any world. The Sultan of Swat. The
King of Clout. The Great Bambino.
You have to go back to...

BABE RUTH is holding the baseball.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...The Babe.

(BEAT)
There's never been anyone greater than
The Babe. And when he called his famous
full count homerun in the 1932 world
series, he made sure he'd live forever.

THE BABE

hits a homerun. Settles into his signature, locomotive
basepath chug.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
And it's a good thing he became
immortal, because without him, what
happened that summer, absolutely never
(MORE)

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NARRATOR (CONT'D)
would've happened. Weird thing was,
before I moved to the neighborhood, I
had no idea who he was. And he played
a game I knew nothing about.

SLO-MO - THE BABE'S CLEATS

send up chalky dust at each STEP. His foot hits home plate -
taking us 30 years into the future. The Babe's antiquated
leather cleat becomes...

EXT. DODGER STADIUM - 1962 - DAY - STOCK

...the cleat of basepath speedster MAURY WILLS.

NARRATOR
Fourteen years later, after The Babe was gone, there was another guy who had something to do with the legend getting made too. A guy who set a record that summer that was so awesome, some people still don't believe it.

WILLS TAKES OFF, STEALING 3RD

so fast that no one knows he's gone. The Pitcher fires to rd. The 3rd BASEMAN gloves the dirt. The UMPIRE wings the air.

UMPIRE
Safe!

WILLS' CLEAT becomes

THE P.F. FLYER SNEAKER of...

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - 1962 - DAY

...BENNY RODRIGUEZ, as he steps up to the plate.

THE PITCHER

fires.

BENNY

cranks one deep to right. He tears around the bases like lightning (this kid is real fast). He rounds 3rd. The ball comes in home - cutting him off. He's caught in a pickle.

FROM

BEHIND THE CHAIN-LINK BACKSTOP

YEAH-YEAH, HAM, DeNUNEZ, REPEAT, TIMMY, BERTRAM and SQUINTS come unglued and crowd the basepath.

HAM

PICKLE!

BENNY

pickles the CATCHER and 3RD BASEMAN. He feints n' rubba-legs
them out of position. He sprints for home. Safe! Just as he crosses home plate

SQUINTS

pulls his transistor radio ear plug out.

SQUINTS
Thirty-one! Maury Wills just stole number thirty-one!

THE ON-FIELD TEAM

throws their gloves 9 different ways in disgust.

OTHER TEAM
(ABOUT BENNY)
Crap! Can't beat that guy! Ya dufuses, why'd ya get him in a pickle for?! Ya know he's the damn pickle king! Rubba legs for sure! Truly rubba legs.

BENNY JOINS THE GANG

They imitate the big leaguers; skinning five, spittin' 'zooka chaw-juice. Yeah-Ye"h hands Benny his glove. Squints jots the stats in his pee-chee folder.

SQUINTS
Game over. Sixteen zip. Murderers' Row remains undefeated.

OPPONENT
Hey! We never got our ups!

The lunch bell RINGS. The gang heads across the playground back to the bungalows.

OPPONENT (CONT'D)
All your moms wear boxers!

Without looking back, eight "birds" hit the air. Nervous, NEW-KID

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SCOTTY SMALLS
has been watching nearby.

**EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DRINKING FOUNTAIN - DAY**

Just as Ham, Squints and Benny go for the 3 spigots, Yeah-Yeah taps each rapidfire:

**YEAH-YEAH**
Milk-milk-pee.

**HAM**
Great, I'm dyin' a thirst and you pee me out!

**BENNY**
Ham, it ain't really.

**HAM**
Then switch with me.

**BENNY**
Do I look stupid?

Everyone drinks from the 2 "un-cursed" spigots. Ham last. As they turn to leave, Scotty goes for the fountain. The guys hang - waiting for doom. Scotty drinks from the pee spigot! The guys GAG and FAUX-BARF. Scotty has no idea why they're laughing at him.

**NARRATOR**
I moved to the neighborhood about a month before school let out. I was from another state, and didn't have a single friend in a thousand miles.

**INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

Benny, Ham, Scotty (sitting by himself) and the other students are clock watching. The BELL RINGS. Summer vacation! The classroom empties... papers circle to the floor from 35 departing cyclones.

**INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAYS / ENTRANCE - DAY**

Streams of excited KIDS spill into the corridors - a river of scrambling tennis shoes and clashing lunch boxes at the entrance gate.

**SCOTTY'S**
caught in the mayhem.

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HE SPIES
the 8 guys forging ahead. He follows them.

NARRATOR
It was a lousy way to end up the 5th grade, 'cause I had zip time to make friends before summer. And that's about where it all started...

EXT. OLD REDWOOD FENCE – FOILAGE – DAY
Scotty sneaks close around some dense bushes, clutching books and "John Glenn - Freedom 7" lunchbox. He steps through the barrier (a secret doorway in the fence) onto the distant OUTFIELD OF

EXT. THE SANDLOT – DAY
The gang's homemade baseball diamond. They're:

CLEANING THE BLEACHERS
with broken brooms.

RAKING THE INFIELD
with halves of tools.

LAYING NEW CHALK LINES
with a holed box of detergent powder.

CLEARING THE OUTFIELD
of leaves, trash and sticks.

RE-ERECTING A PIECE OF RAGGED PLYWOOD
in left field - painted green and lettered "The Green Monster."
SCOTTY

maintains cover and

PERUSES THE LAYOUT

a row of houses, whose backyards are all chain link fenced. The fencing is trimmed individually in wood, bamboo etc...
One has the world's coolest treehouse. Next to it... is the last house. This owner has cordoned his backyard - tall panels of that green "tropical-look" privacy fiberglass lashed to the fence.

THE GANG

never notices him. As they work:

HAM
Fifth grade's history, man. A hundred days, man. A Hundred days of baseball. All Day, everyday, as much as we can. That's the best.

TIMMY
We got all summer.

REPEAT
We got all summer.

BENNY
Let's play.

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-Yeah... let's play.

The guys round up in the infield. As they play catch, they spread farther and farther apart... until they've each taken up the position they most like to play. They fit the paltry little diamond; scrappy, happy kids.
EXT. THE BLOCK - DUSK

Tract homes - everybody's got a different thing going in the front yard. The guys (sans Timmons') split up toward their homes - slappin' gloves, "so-longing" for the night.

NARRATOR
Everyone but the Timmons twins lived on my new block.

FROM HIS DRIVEWAY

Scotty, shuttling moving boxes to his garage, watches them go.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
They lived in a house by the sandlot and had the world's greatest tree house, because their dad was a contractor.

FROM BENNY'S PORCH

Benny is the last to go in. He sees Scotty watching. So, he nods... just a little.

THE BLOCK

clears to empty. The street lamps arc on, drawing soft white circles on the sidewalks. FROM THIS HEIGHT, they look like baseballs dotting the neighborhood.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Even before I knew any of them I envied that tree house...

INT. BENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A shrine to the pastime. Pennants, magazine pictures, game programs, baseball cards, a whole section of Maury Wills, radiating from a picture of Wills caught in a pickle.

NARRATOR
...later, it would become second only to Cape Canaveral as a command post
for history.

(BEAT)
When I moved in that summer, I'd never played baseball, but it wasn't too tough figuring out who these guys' heroes were. So, after a week of watching... I figured baseball seemed like the best way to get in with them.

BENNY'S

in bed, oiling his glove, staring out his window at Scotty's house. Taped to his footboard is the most important picture of all... a picture of The Babe.

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jr. Chemistry set. Heath Kit gadgets. An unbelievable Erector Set contraption with little motors and stuff. An autographed picture of Mr. Wizard. Scotty's pj'd at his erector set table, bothered and unhappy. This stuff is too damn easy for him. He whips on a last bolt and connects the itty-bitty motor.

SWITCHES ON

THE CONTRAPTION

a tiny scoopelvator snatches up a white marble. Drops it on a roller coaster track. The marble whips around corners and loop-da-loops... lands in a mini-catapult. Another motor draws it back via a winding string. Boy Scout camping-knife scissors ratchet in - snip the string - the catapult fires.

THE MARBLE

leaps a little green fence and WONK! Ouuuhhh! beans

HIS MOTHER (HAVING JUST COME IN)

right in the forehead.

BEDROOM
Scotty winces at the shot.

SCOTTY

Sorry, Mom.

MOM

I thought we agreed we'd take this apart... and not spend so much time in here.

SCOTTY

(FEELING LOW)
I know - but it's just nighttime.

MOM

Scotty, have you made any friends yet?

SCOTTY

No.

MOM

Why not, honey?

SCOTTY

'Cause I'm still "new."

MOM

Honey, I don't want you sitting in here all summer fiddling with this stuff, like you did last summer... and the one before that.

(BEAT)

Scotty, look at me. I know you're smart, and I'm proud of you. But you have to get outside, you have to... play.

She sits across from him, trying to get through.

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MOM (CONT'D)

I want you to get out in the fresh air and make friends. Run around and scrape your knees. Get dirty. Climb trees
and hop fences. Get in trouble for crying out loud.

(BEAT)
Not too much, but some. You have my permission. Now how many mothers do you think say that to their sons?

SCOTTY
None mothers I guess.

MOM
I want you to make friends this summer, Scotty. Lots of them.

SCOTTY
I know, but I don't - I'm no good at anything. Face it, Mom, I'm just an EGGHEAD -

MOM
- and you'll always be just an egghead with an attitude like that. So promise me, alright?

SCOTTY
'Kay.

MOM
Maybe tomorrow you'll make some friends.

SCOTTY
Yeah, maybe tomorrow.

(BEAT)
Mom? Do you think Bill - I mean Dad - will teach me to play catch?

MOM
Are you kidding, he'd love it, you know what an athlete he was in high school.

(ALTERNATE LINE)
You know what a pitcher he was in high college.

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Scotty slurps a glass of chocolate Quick. Rinses the glass too carefully. Gathers courage for something. Breathes deep -

starts across the house.
INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scotty peeks through a slightly open door. BILL moves around inside, unpacking boxes. Scotty reaches to knock. Stops. Almost walks away. Then musters the gumption. KNOCKS.

BILL (O.S.)
Yeah...

Scotty takes a few cautious steps into...

INT. BILL'S DEN - NIGHT

...a trophy room. Ribbons, plaques, trophies. Bill must've been some athlete; but he limps now. Scotty lingers... gathering more courage.

NARRATOR
My real dad died when I was just a little kid. My mom married Bill a year before we moved to the neighborhood.

(BEAT)
At the time, he and I were still getting used to each other.

SCOTTY
Um, Dad - sorry, I mean Bill, remember you promised you'd teach me to play catch?

BILL
Um hum...

He dusts a batting trophy.

SCOTTY
Well, could you teach me?

BILL
Sure.

He places a pitching plaque. Scotty waits awkwardly. Waits for more words. They don't come.

SCOTTY
Okay. Great. Thanks.

BILL
Um hum.

Scotty leaves, bringing the door with him on his way out. Through the cracked portal he sees Bill set a silver pedestal on the main shelf. On this he sets a baseball...

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just a baseball.

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Scotty wakes up. Checks his (Theme) clock. 8:30. He bolts out of bed. Dashes through the house to the front door. Throws it open and runs down to...

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

...the sidewalk. Fan sprinklers water all the lawns. Way far down the block

HE GLIMPSES

Ham, at the HELMS BAKERY TRUCK, buying a donut, then scrambling around the far corner.

HAM

Hey-hey, come on! Wait up - wait up!

SCOTTY

panics. Runs back inside and...

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - DAY

...strips off his cowboy pj's. Redresses. Digs through his CLOSET

finding a vinyl, "toy" baseball glove. It's still in the package, with a note attached: "To Scotty Boy - Love, Grandma!"

It's all he's got. He shovels through a pair of Mickey Mouse ears - a cowboy hat - finds the closest thing he's got to a baseball cap... a long, duck-billed fishing cap with a big embroidered trout.
EXT. ENROUTE TO THE SANDLOT - DAY

Scotty runs by (soon familiar places):

A 5 & DIME

A BOYS CLUB

A LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD,

where he slows momentarily, envious of the crisply uniformed kids... wow. Moving on down

EXT. THE BLOCK OF SANDLOT COMMON HOUSES - DAY

whose backyards we already know. Scotty flat out stops at

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THE HOUSE

with the fiberglass panels out back. Scary place.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

Scotty slips quietly through the secret fence doorway, emerging

IN

DEEP LEFT FIELD

where he hugs the perimeter, moving slowly toward the sandlot

common houses. Winded, Scotty finds

THE GANG'S

already playing "over the line."

NARRATOR

They never kept score. They never chose sides. They never even really stopped playing the game... it just went on forever. Everyday they picked up right where they left off the day before. It was an endless "dream game."

(Beat)
There was only 8 of them, so they didn't have a whole team. It didn't matter though... Benny was so good he took everyone's position when it was there ups.

(BEAT)
I didn't know any of that then... I just knew they were having the time of their lives and I wanted to be a part of it.

SCOTTY

watches and listens (as he goes) to the SHARP, satisfying sound of the hardball, SNAPPING CLEANLY in the oily leather of their gloves.

HE LOOKS AT

his own toy glove... how embarrassing.

SCOTTY

continues around the perimeter, trying to be seen and become invisible. He goes unwittingly CLOSER TO those green fiberglass panels.

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DENUNEZ

winds up and pitches to

BENNY

who connects big. CRACK!

SCOTTY'S

come too close to the green fence. Something has overcome him... fear! He stares with serious woollies at

A HOLE IN THE FIBERGLASS

and sees only dust rising in time with some great, SOUNDS OF EXHALATION. And then, before he can draw any conclusions... disaster.

GANG (O.S.)
Hey! Look out!
SCOTTY

whips a look up and sees

THE FLY BALL

coming right at him.

SCOTTY

tracks it, frozen stiff. Scared shitless. At the past possible moment, he throws his arms over his face and ducks...

social suicide.

THE BALL

beans him at the glove covering his noggin.

SCOTTY

hits his butt. The ball rolls a bit. Comes to an "I-dare-you" stop: right up against the diseased fiberglass panels of that preternatural fence. Scotty pulls his arms away from his face.

THE GANG

LAUGHS uproariously.

TIMMY

Nice catch!

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REPEAT

Nice catch!

HAM

Hey! Throw the ball back!

YEAH-YEAH

Yeah-yeah, hurry up!

BERTRAM
We gotta a game here, man!

SCOTTY

moves for the ball. As he goes, he sweats:

SCOTTY

'Kay, I'll get it!

(TO HIMSELF)

Don't be a goofus - don't be a goofus -
don't be a goofus.

He reaches the fence and the ball and stops. It's hard to
move. The force emanating from the backyard has got him:

DUST THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE FIBERGLASS

keeps perfect time with the monster-breathing.

AN OLENADER BUSH

moves. It scares the living kapok out of

SCOTTY

who snatches up the ball and back-pedals 10 feet.

SQUINTS

WE'RE WAITING...

He throws back the ball. And his chances of getting in with
these guys are over. Because Scotty... throws like a girl!

THE BALL

droops forward in the air. Lands 6 feet from him. Rolls
slowly up to the gang, finally coming to a dainty stop at
DeNunez' feet.

THE GANG

looks from the ball to Scotty... they CRACK UP!

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SCOTTY
walks away... crying.

    SCOTTY
    (TO HIMSELF)
    My life is over.

    BENNY

is the only one that isn't laughing. He stares the others down.

    DENUNEZ
    Come on, Benny-man, didn't you see that throw?

He imitates it, "flipping" his glove to Ham. The gang BUSTS UP again.

    HAM
    (TRULY STUNNED)
    That kid's got the gaw'damn panty-waistiest arm I ever saw in my whole life.

    SQUINTS
    I seen a guy once that threw like that. I mean not that bad, but at least so bad that he hadda move in the fourth grade 'cause they nicknamed him "Bloomers."

Benny's look stifles the bunch.

    BENNY
    I bet not one of you knows how The Babe got his nickname.

    HAM
    Easy, 'cause of the way he looked like a little kid face.

    BERTRAM
    Bull, it's just 'cause he liked kids and stuff.

    SQUINTS
    Wrong. The Babe was called The Babe, because he was like the child of Yankee Stadium.
BENNY
I knew it. You're all full of crap.
George Herman Ruth got his nickname
because his mom died when he was just
a little kid, and he hadda go live in
an orphanage.

Silence. None of the other guys has heard this before.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Nobody liked him there. The bigger
guys picked on him all the time. And
when they messed with him he couldn't
fight back, 'cause he was just... like
scared. So when they messed with him,
he cried about it.

(BEAT)
He cried... so they called him The
Babe.

This hits home real good.

BENNY (CONT'D)
How ya think that kid just felt?

Benny exits the sandlot, leaving the others with a lesson
learned.

NARRATOR
Everyone knew Benny was different.
Nobody ever voted or anything, but he
was the leader.

EXT. THE BLOCK - DUSK

As Benny goes into his house, the other's round the corner
far behind him.

THE MOON

is up. Full. Like a big baseball.

NARRATOR
Even though he seemed like a regular
guy, he wasn't. Benny was special,
and he was loyal.

(Beat)
When they'd all tried out for youth league, they'd all made it. But when they found out they'd have to play on different teams, Benny told 'em that if they couldn't play together, they shouldn't play at all. So, they stayed together.

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EXT./INT. BENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Benny's at the window, clutching a baseball, staring over at Scotty's house.

NARRATOR
So, the only person that ever felt sorry for me 'cause I was such a weenie was Benjamin Franklin Rodriguez.

(BEAT)
Even though neither of us knew it at the time, we were connected. Like I had been born for just that one moment, when I would perform the world's all-time boner, and Benny would bail me out.

(BEAT)
Connected as friends... born to meet for just that one moment.

We DRIFT OFF Benny to his PICTURE OF MAURY WILLS in a pickle.

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

A PICTURE OF MAURY WILLS on a Post Super Sugar Crisp box.

BILL & SCOTTY

at the table. Bill sifting through mounds of paperwork. Scotty eating breakfast. Scotty's spoon CLANGS one too many times. Bill looks up at him.

SCOTTY

Sorry...

Scotty picks up his bowl and cereal, goes into

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - THE KITCHEN - DAY
where his mom is making coffee.

MOM
(QUIETLY)
Well?...

SCOTTY
He's too busy, Mom.

MOM
(ENCOURAGING)
Go back in there and ask. He'll take
the time. Go on.

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Scotty comes back in. Stops mutely near Bill. Long, agonizing
seconds pass. Finally:

SCOTTY
Um, Da -

Quick look toward the kitchen, then:

SCOTTY (CONT'D)
(so Mom won't hear)
- I mean, Bill. Could we... I mean
could you, like you said - teach me to
catch today?

BILL
Um, yeah, but later, okay? I gotta
get this done.

It ain't much, but it's something.

SCOTTY
Okay, thanks.

Mom comes in behind Scotty.

MOM
Bill, can't you take a break and teach
him now?

SCOTTY
Mom, it's okay -

(NOBODY'S LISTENING)

BILL
Honey, I said I would and I will. I'm just under the gun here, ya know?

SCOTTY
Mom, really -

MOM
- How long could it take? You can't spare a half hour to show him?

Bill drops his pen. Checks his watch. A lost battle here.

BILL
(ANNOYED)
Fine. Alright. I'll get my glove.
Come on.

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Bill exits past them. Scotty's been "Mom-embarrassed." She looks at him:

MOM
(CLUELESS)
There. See. Told you so.

Scotty shuffles out back, shaking his head.

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Bill slides his hand into his glove. He warms up the cradle, POPPING the "hardball" into the palm.

SCOTTY
stands ready to "learn" on the other side of the yard. Appropriately pitiful in "trout" cap and toy glove.

BACKYARD

BILL
Keep your eye on the ball. Put the
glove up where it goes. Okay?

**SCOTTY**
Yeah, okay, I think so.

Bill throws one to Scotty. The toy glove goes up to the right.
The ball sails by to the left.

**SCOTTY (CONT'D)**
Darn. Sorry.

Bill's a little amazed at that one. He checks his watch.

**BILL**
That's alright, just throw it back.

Scotty eagerly retrieves it. Turns to throw - *deja vu* - he runs over, hands Bill the ball.

**SCOTTY**
Here.

He runs back across the yard. Turns 'round again. Holds his glove up stiffly.

**SCOTTY (CONT'D)**
Okay. I'm ready.

Bill cannot believe this. Checks his watch again.

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**BILL**
Keep your eye on the ball. Put the glove up where the ball goes.

He throws again. The ball bounces off the toy glove - breaks the webbing.

**SCOTTY**
Darn. My glove got -

**BILL**
- not bad. Right side at least. Now, just throw it back this time.
SCOTTY

But my glove -

Bill's looking at his watch again. Scotty fetches the ball - gulps - "flips" it back.

BILL

(DISBELIEF)

Oh, my God.

EXT. THE BLOCK - SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Benny comes out of his house. From the sidewalk

BENNY'S POV

up the side of Scotty's house into the backyard. He can see Scotty. Only Scotty. Standing there game as hell, trying to catch balls that seem to be coming too fast. The ball comes. Scotty ducks. The ball hits the block wall behind him, caroming back toward where we assume Bill is throwing from.

BENNY'S

drawing the wrong conclusion.

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Scotty's still game. Bill's at ropes end. Check his watch again.

BILL

Alright, Scott, listen, this one's gonna come right at you, easy, okay?

SCOTTY

'Kay.

BILL

Just keep your eye on the ball and put your glove up. You'll catch it.

SCOTTY

Okay.
BILL

throws.

THE BALL

comes slowly forward.

SCOTTY

sticks his glove up.

SCOTTY'S EYES

widen.

THE BALL

hits dead center glove. Rips the "toy" webbing. Flies through

AND CLOUTS

SCOTTY

right in the eye.

BILL

BILL

Oh my -

EXT. THE BLOCK - SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

BENNY

- God, whadda jerk!

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Scotty's mom comes unglued.

MOM

Bill! What happened?!

BILL

Well, he -
SCOTTY
(PRIDE'S SAKE)
- just took my eye off the ball, Mom.

Scotty's mom pulls his hand away from his eye. Great shiner. Bill grabs a steak from the fridge, FLOPS it over Scotty's eye.

BILL
There. Keep that on for an hour. It'll still be black, but it won't swell.

(BEAT)
Sorry. We'll try again soon.

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Scotty emerges. Sits on the porch. Pitiful and forlorn. Chin in his hands, he looks across the street. He starts. His hand moves to cover his black eye... but he thinks the better of it.

BENNY'S
on the curb across the street. A moment goes by. Benny raises a hand.

SCOTTY
slowly waves back.

BOTH

Benny comes over to Scotty's sidewalk.

BENNY
Gonna go play some ball. Need a extra guy. Wanna go?

SCOTTY
Naw. Thanks.

BENNY
Why not? Doncha like baseball?

SCOTTY
Oh. Yeah. But, ah...

BENNY
But what?
Scotty searches for a quick way out of this. Gets it:

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SCOTTY
But my glove's busted. So, ya know, I can't go. Thanks, though.

Benny reaches behind his back. Takes something out of his jeans - like he's going for a gun. Smiles a little.

BENNY
That's okay.

He offers it to Scotty... a "real" glove.

BENNY (CONT'D)
I got a extra one.

Scotty SHOUTS over his shoulder:

SCOTTY
Mom! I'm gonna go play some ball!

As they move away down the block.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)
Thanks. Cool glove.

BENNY
Yeah. Cool shiner. We gotta stop by the 5 & 10 first. Need a new ball. And chaw and stuff, ya know?

SCOTTY
Yeah.

BENNY
You dip chaw?

SCOTTY
(COMpletely clueless)
Sure. A'course.

EXT. FIVE & DIME - DAY
Benny & Scotty go inside.

**INT. FIVE & DIME - DAY**

Benny grabs a new baseball on the stride, and handful of bazooka from a jar on the soda fountain counter. He leaves the money and exits. Scotty follows.

**25**

**EXT. REAR OF FIVE & DIME - DAY**

Benny and Scotty come upon the gang (all their mouths are full a' bazooka) as Ham's chompin' on a candy cigar doing a

**BABE IMITATION:**

**HAM**

Hey! Check me out! I'm the Great Bambino!

The gang laughs.

**SCOTTY**

(OVER EAGER)

Who's that?

The gang stifles. They're none-to-pleased. Ham sees why. The new kid... "flipper." Eight pairs of eyes burn holes in his little soul.

**HAM**

What?...

(BEYOND HIM)

What did he say?

**BERTRAM**

Were you born in a barn, man?

**YEAH-YEAH**

Yeah-yeah, what planet are you from?

**SQUINTS**

You never heard of The Sultan of Swat?!

**DENUNEZ**

The Titan of Terror!

**TIMMY**

The Colossus of Clout!
REPEAT
The Colossus of Clout!

BENNY
(even he's amazed)
The King of Krash!

NARRATOR
I had no idea who they were talking about. But there was no way I could let them know that... so, I lied.

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SCOTTY
Oh! The Great Bambino! Of course. I thought you said The Great Bambi.

HAM
(SHIVERING)
That wimpy deer?

SCOTTY
Ah, yeah - I guess. Sorry.

The gang goes SILENT. They spit - they're tough. Scotty dribbles - he's wimpy.

BENNY
(W/MOUTHFUL)
So, Scott, this is Ken DeNunez; Alan McClellan, we call him Yeah-Yeah; Hamilton Porter, we call him Ham; Tommy and Timmy Timmons, Bertram Grover Weeks, and Mike "Squints" Palledorus.

(TO GANG)
He's Scott Smalls.

SCOTTY
Hi.

The gang just stares.

BENNY
He's gonna play with us. He makes nine. Now we got a team.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY
The pack follows Benny onto the diamond. Scotty trails after them.

**BERTRAM**
Why'd you bring him for, Benny?

**BENNY**
'Cause there's eight of us, and he makes nine.

**BERTRAM**
Yeah, so would my sister, but I didn't bring her!

**BENNY**
With nine Guys we got a whole team.

---

**HAM**
No, with Elswenger we had a whole team, and Elswenger could throw!

**DENUNEZ**
He ain't game, Benny. He can't throw for nothin'.

Scotty drifts off by himself. He can hear what's exchanged.

**TIMMY**
Benny, you already play all the empty positions since Elswenger moved to Arizona.

**BENNY**
And now I get to rotate 8 positions instead of 7. I need the practice.

**SQUINTS**
No you don't. It's stupid, Benny. The kid's an L-7 weenie.

**YEAH-YEAH**
Yeah-yeah, Oscar Mayer even.

**BENNY**
Oh yeah, Squints, and you're Willie
freakin' Mays. You catch like a dork - anybody ever bust your chops about that?

SQUINTS
(PALTRY EXCUSE)
No, but I'm - ya know, I'm -

BENNY
- and you run like a duck, Yeah- Yeah.

YEAH-YEAH
(IT'S TRUE)
'Kay-'kay... But I'm -

BENNY
- part-a the game.

SQUINTS
(DEFENSIVE)
Right.

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah.

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BENNY
How come he don't get to be?

Nobody's got an answer for that one. Base up you blockheads.)

THE GANG
hits the field. Their suspicious glares aren't lost on

SCOTTY
standing off by himself, kinda lost. Benny comes over.

BENNY (CONT'D)
You take right field, Smalls.

SCOTTY
(EAGER)
Right. Okay. Ah... where exactly is that?

BENNY  
(SURPRISED)
Uh, over there.

Scotty runs "over there" anxiously.

BENNY  
takes home plate worried: "Maybe the kid is a weenie."

INFIELD  
DeNunez at the mound. Benny's up.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Get two.

Repeat at 3rd, stabs it effortlessly and fires to 2nd. Timmy snatches it down and drag-tags the invisible base runner, then fires to Bertram at 1st. SNAP! Outta there. Bertram throws back to DeNunez. Benny's ready:

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Smalls! Get one!

CRACK! THE BALL  
arcs up... comes down right at

SCOTTY  
who raises the glove, and skippers around, as if he were tracking a falling leaf. The ball lands 5 feet behind him.

29

THE GANG  
shakes its collective head, exasperated.

SCOTTY  
runs to the ball, is about to throw... runs it in to DeNunez instead.
SCOTTY
Here. Sorry, sorry.

THE GANG
is stunned.

SCOTTY
runs back to right field. Ready again - a game kid.

BENNY
trots out after him.

BENNY
Hey, you can throw it ya know.

SCOTTY
No, I can't... I don't know how.
(LUMPY THROAT)
Um, thanks for taking me here... but I think better go.

Scotty turns to leave. Benny grabs his arm.

BENNY
You think too much. I bet you get straight A's and shit, huh?

SCOTTY
No, I got a B once. Actually it was an A minus.
(QUICK)
But it shoulda been a B.

BENNY
This is baseball, you're not supposed to think, you're just supposed to play.
(BEAT)
You ever have a paper route?

SCOTTY
Uh, I helped a guy one time.
BENNY
Throw it like you chuck a paper. When your arm gets here... just let go of it.

(PAUSE)
Just let go.

Scotty nods. Benny starts back.

SCOTTY
Wait - how do I catch it?

BENNY
Don't worry. Just stand there and stick your glove in the air. I'll take care of it.

HOME PLATE
Benny mentally calculates the distance. Puts a little rub on the ball. Flips it into the air...

BENNY (CONT'D)
Smalls, get one!

...and swings through deliberately. CRACK!

SCOTTY
sees it coming. Stands there stiffly. Sticks his glove up, closes his eyes.

SCOTTY
Please, catch it. Please, catch it.
Please, ca -

SNAP! His glove swings down. He opens his eyes. Looks into his glove. The ball is there. He takes it out and chucks the ball like a folded paper.

BERTRAM
catches it good and solid at 1st.

BERTRAM
Okay! Hey, let's play ball!

SCOTTY
loosens up. From home plate
BENNY

gives him a "Thumbs Up." The significance of this is only outweighed by his sudden fear, when...

SCOTTY

glimpses something.

SCOTTY'S POV

of some great, lumbering thing moving past a crack in those green fiberglass panels.

EXT. THE BLOCK - DUSK

In good spirits, the guys break off to their houses.

SCOTTY & BENNY

split up in the middle of the street between their homes.

SCOTTY

Thanks.

Already at his door, Benny just raises his glove in answer.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

Wait, here - your glove.

BENNY

Keep it.

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Scotty opens a new writing tablet, and titles the page: "Baseball Stuff to Remember." He writes: "1. The Great Bambino?" He hasn't got a clue.

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

Benny coaches Scotty. Correct batting stance and swing.

thumb-flicks bottle caps at Scotty from a coffee can full. They're tough to hit. But soon Scotty's tagging every one of them.
THE SUN SETS.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY

DeNunez fires - fastball. CRUNCH!

32

SCOTTY

tags it. The ball sails over

SQUINTS'

Head in center. From left field

BENNY

gives Scotty another "Thumbs Up." The kid's in.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY - LATER

Squints arrives with a box of baseball cards.

NARRATOR

Everyday, first thing, we'd all pick a card from what we called "The Dugout."

Squints shakes it up. Everybody picks one.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It was just a shoe box, but whoever we picked, we got to be when it was our ups. One day, when Ham took his pick a little too seriously, the guys let me in on the world's most terrifying secret...

BENNY

Bingo! Maury Wills!

SCOTTY

Mickey Mou - ah, Mantle.

YEAH-YEAH

Say hey, Willie Mays.
DENUNEZ
Stan Musial.

TIMMY
Lou Brock.

REPEAT
Lou Brock - I mean, Luis Aparicio.

BERTRAM
Frank Robinson.

SQUINTS
Oh... Bob Uecker.

33

HAM
Hank Aaron. I'm up.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY - MINUTES LATER
The gang "peppers"

HAM
(at home plate) mercilessly.

DENUNEZ
pitches - strike. Pitches again - strike. Delivers and

HAM
takes a Ruthian cut at it. CONNECTS to deep right.

SCOTTY
tracks it.

THE BALL
comes down.

SCOTTY
runs beneath it - glove up.
THE BALL

drops into a backyard. The one with the green fiberglass panels.

SCOTTY

stops short. Looks back to

THE GANG

who're already packing up in slumped dejection.

SCOTTY

makes a decision. Swallows against fear of the fence. He takes one step toward that fence.

SCOTTY

Wait a sec, I'll get it!

THE GANG

comes unglued.

GANG

NOOOOOOOOOO! STOPPPPPP!

They rush over - grab Scotty - pull him back 10 feet into the "Fear-Free" zone.

SQUINTS

Holy crap, you coulda been killed!

YEAH-YEAH

Yeah-yeah - truly! Whadda you doin'?!?

SCOTTY

Well, you were all leavin', so I thought I'd just -

SQUINTS

- if you were thinkin' you wouldn't a thought that!
BENNY
You can't go back there, Smalls.

SCOTTY
Then how do we get the ball?

TIMMY
We don't.

REPEAT
We don't.

BERTRAM
It's gone.

HAM
Forever even.

DENUNEZ
Forget it, it's a memory.

BENNY
Game's over. We'll get a new one tomorrow. Just forget it. We'll never see it again.

SCOTTY
Why not?

35

GANG
(HUSHED)
The Beast.

Scotty stares at them; all heads hung.

BENNY
Go over there, real slow, and be quiet. Don't touch the fence, just peek through that hole in the green stuff... go on.

As Scotty goes forward, the gang steps back.

SCOTTY
draws his eye close to the hole in the fence. WE SEE

EXT. MR. MERTLE'S BACKYARD - DAY

A LIMITED VIEW of 3 feet square. WE SEE nothing but the ball... in the small crater it's made in the dirt. There are oddly similar craters in the immediate vicinity. Those craters are empty.

A MAMMOTH, HAIRY PAW

comes down from out of nowhere. As it CLEARS FRAME, the baseball is gone. Only the crater remains.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY

Scotty snaps his head away from the hole - runs over to

THE GANG:

SCOTTY

Something got the ball!

(UNNERVED)

What was that thing?!

Considered looks are exchanged, then, in unison:

GANG

Campout.

EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - NIGHT

Aglow. (NOTE: Same as Sc. 80)

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

A Boy Scout lantern. Professionally built structure. The gang's got sleeping bags. They're roasting marshmallows over a Cub Scout camping stove.

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Ham's brought personal s'mores supplies.

HAM

Wanna s'more?
SCOTTY
Some more of what?

HAM
No. You wanna s'more?

SCOTTY
I haven't had anything yet, so how can I have any more of nothing?

HAM
You kill me Smalls. Look, these are s'mores stuff. Pay attention:
(CONCRAFTING)
First you take the graham - you put the chocolate on the graham, Hershey's of course - you hold the chocolate on the graham while you roast the mallow-

He does. The mallow flames to life.

HAM (CONT'D)
-then when the mallow's flamin', ya stuff it on the chocolate and cover it with the other end.
(BEAT)
Then, you scarf.

Ham does. The junk squirts half way down his shirt.

HAM (CONT'D)
(BARELY INTELLIGIBLE)
Kinda messy... Good though.

Squints turns the lantern down low...

SQUINTS
Alright, listen up.
(TO SCOTTY)
First time DeNunez heard this story he FAINTED -

DENUNEZ
- Bull, Squints!

BENNY
You did, man.

DeNunez shuts up. It's true.
SQUINTS
When Yeah-Yeah heard it he peed his pants.

YEAH-YEAH
Shut up, Squints - did not!

HAM
You did, man.

SQUINTS
And when The Ham heard it he barfed up two bags of marshmallows.

HAM
Liar! It was only one.

SQUINTS
So stay away from the door... you might fall out. And don't sit on your sleeping bag... you could shit your pants.

(SOLEMN)
Now, quiet...

Absolute silence. Kid-reverence equals fright.

SQUINTS (CONT'D)
The legend of The Beast goes back a long time... before any of us could pick up a baseball. Back to a place called Mertle's Acres.

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

THE STORY OF THE BEAST:

EXT. "MERTLE'S ACRES" - DAY

A legendary place... benefitting from years of kid-embellishment: a gothic, scrapyard fortress oddly designed to keep something in not out.

SQUINTS (V.O.)
The Beast belongs to Mr. Mertle, the guy that used to own Mertle's Acres.
Junkyard. And nobody's ever seen him since the day it happened...

INT. MERTLE'S ACRES - DAY

Blurbling pockets of super-heated muck.

38

BURNED-OUT SHELLS


OLD APPLIANCES

that form tortured faces in the shadowy recesses.

SQUINTS (V.O.)
Mertle's Acres was a bitchin' place, that had everything you could ever imagine.

OTHER STUFF


SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And the stuff was worth a fortune. So, one day Mr. Mertle got him this new pup from the pound. They were glad to get rid of him, on account of while he'd been there, he'd killed three dogs bigger than he was.

(BEAT)
That was exactly what Mr. Mertle figured he needed to protect his junkyard, 'cause people kept stealing stuff at night, when he wasn't around.

WE DRIFT THROUGH

a maze of dark, grimy junk-passageways.

SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So he bought The Beast, and set him loose in Mertle's Acres.

SOMETHING LOPES BY

at the end of a passage. (NOTE: We never fully see The Beast.)

SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Beast was still just a pup of six months, but he already weighed a 150 pounds... and he kept gettin' bigger.

A TRASH BAG

full of meat hits the ground - disappears. SLIFFTHT! It spits back INTO FRAME... empty and tattered.

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SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He threw The Beast a trash bag full of meat every night, and just left him alone. All alone in the whole place by himself... to grow.

AN EYEBALL

among a pile of broken headlights. As big as the headlights.

FLEETING GLIMPSES OF MORE STUFF

like Mannequins, with bite-chunks missing. Plastic flamingoes, brutally mangled. A decapitated "lawn jockey." A plastic cow, legs gnawed off. And BREATHING... amongst the artificial "life" forms.

A GARGANTUAN FOOTPRINT

in the center of an old truck tire.

THE BEAST'S SHOULDERS

moving powerfully - as tall as a burned-out VW.
SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And so, in a few months, the pup grew into The Beast. And he grew big as a car. And he grew mean, 'cause nobody liked him, and he didn't like nobody either.

(BEAT)
And so he only had one thing on his mind... to kill.

INT. MERTLE'S ACRES - NIGHT

TWO THIEVES in ski-masks. Suddenly, a HEATED WIND strips their masks. Two elephantine feet come down on their faces. They SCREAM.

SQUINTS (V.O.)
And he did. And he liked it.

ANOTHER THIEF

suddenly enveloped by a shadow. He's dragged into darkness...

he SCREAMS.

TWO OTHER THIEVES

load their van and take off. They skid. CRUNCH! The van caves in. The Thieves are dragged out, BLATHERING in horror.

FROM HIGH ABOVE MERTLE'S ACRES

The Beast moves like a murderous phantom. WE HEAR ROARING, and primordial bloodlust.

VARIOUS OTHER THEIVES

are tossed hither and yon... mixed in with fake flamingoes, and a flying plastic cow.

EXT. MERTLE'S ACRES - DAY

Police cars. DETECTIVES speak with MR. MERTLE; his shoulders slumped, his eyes moist. They show him file photos of (THEIVES
SQUINTS (V.O.)
The Beast was the most perfect junkyard
dog that ever lived... a true killing
machine.

(BEAT)
After awhile, the police started getting
phone calls from people, reporting all
the missing thieves. The ones The
Beast had killed... it added up to
about 37 guys.

Mr. Mertle solemnly heads inside the junkyard.

SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But they never found a single body...
not one. Some people say they all got
away, and were just so scared that
they ended up in insane asylums and
stuff.

(BEAT)
But we know what really happened.

Mr. Mertle emerges from the junkyard. Cops take cover behind
their cars. Guns are leveled toward Mr. Mertle and what
follows him at the end of a rusty tow chain.

SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Beast... ate them.

(BEAT)
He ate them bones and all.

EXT. THE BLOCK OF SANDLOT COMMON HOUSES - DAY

PEOPLE slam their windows - draw their curtains. LITTLE KIDS
are snatched up by PARENTS, who run inside and lock their
doors.

MR. MERTLE

leads the The Beast on a huge chain. (NOTE: We only see bits
of The Beast.)
SQUINTS (V.O.)
The Beast was good at his guarddog job. Too good. So the cops said he had to be retired. But he didn't have to be killed or nothin', on account of there was no evidence... no bones... no teeth for dental records.

EXT. MR. MERTLE'S BACKYARD - DAY

The green fiberglass panels are brand new here in the past.

SQUINTS (V.O.)
The police told Mr. Mertle that if wanted to keep The Beast, he hadda lock him in his backyard, so he could never get out.

A CRANE

lowers a giant bathtub into the backyard. FIREMEN fill it with water.

SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And that he hadda chain him up, so's in case he tried to get out to eat children and stuff, he couldn't.

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

sink an I-Beam girder. Cement fills the chasm.

MR. MERTLE

contracts a huge lean-to from old bullet-holed, tin-ad signs.

A WELDER

Braises chain to the girder.

MR. MERTLE

"collars" The Beast with the other end.

THE BEAST

disappears beneath the lean-to. DUST EXPLODES from underneath as he lies down.
SQUINTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Mr. Mertle asked the cops how long he had to keep his pup chained up like a slave.

EXT. MR. MERTLE'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

A POLICEMAN "mouths" the word, "F-O-R-E-V-E-R."

SQUINTS (V.O.)
They said... until forever.

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ham drools mallow goop. His hands are fisted tight...

'mallows squirt out twixt his clenched fingers.

REPEAT & TIMMY

have their pillows 'round their heads like bonnets.

DENUNEZ & YEAH-YEAH

stare and shake.

BERTRAM'S

eyes are shut tight, his bottom lip shudders.

BENNY

gulps.

SCOTTY'S

sitting shattered. He checks his pants to see if he's peed them. His mallow's a briquette. It SPUTTERS and flames out.

SQUINTS

is proud of his story prowess.

SQUINTS
And so... The Beast sits there under that lean-to, dreaming about the time when he can break the chain and get out... dreaming of the time when he can chase and kill again.

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THE GANG

BERTRAM
See, man. That's why you can't go over there. Nobody ever has. Nobody ever will.

HAM
One kid did, but nobody ever seen him again.

DENUNEZ
That ain't true -

HAM
- yeah it is! He got eaten!

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah - that kid who went to get his kite... what was his name?

DENUNEZ
"Boogers" Fleming?

TIMMY
No. It was that guy with the warts on his face.

REPEAT
Davy "The Toad."

TIMMY
That's what I said.

Solemnity spreads among them. Kid-reverence.

SQUINTS
Davy "The Toad" Stodenrous.
BERTRAM
Yeah, The Toad...

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah, poor Toad.

SCOTTY
(WEAK)
Nuh-uh... none of that's true. You guys are just -

SQUINTS
- oh, yeah?... Come here. Stick your head out the window and look down.

Scotty goes slowly... He sticks his head out guillotinely, through the small square opening.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT
Scotty's head comes out turtle-like. The tree house overhangs the common wall.

HE LOOKS DOWN INTO
Mr. Mertle's backyard and SEES an old footed bathtub filled with murky water. A steel pole, cemented into the center of the yard. A tow chain, snaking away from the pole and vanishing under the lean-to. Dust rises and falls from 'neath the lean-to.

SCOTTY
hears the ORGANIC EXHAUST that accompanies the dust... rising and falling... in POWERFUL EXHALATIONS.

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT
Scotty pulls his head back, scared shitless.

SCOTTY
(HUSHED)
He's down there!

SQUINTS

You bet he is.

HAM

Whatever goes over that fence... stays there.

SQUINTS

It becomes the property of The Beast...

Forever.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

(NOw: Same as Sc. 54) FROM THE SANDLOT... a FULL MOON hangs ominously over the tree house; a glowing little box of debate in the scary night.

NARRATOR

I learned that more than a 150 baseballs had gone over that fence... and not one of them was ever seen again. Even when some brave kid worked up enough courage to peek over the fence.

(MORE)

45

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(BEAT)

Because, when they went over, they vanished.

(BEAT)

I knew it was true, because when I looked down in there, I didn't see a single... solitary... one.

EXT. FIVE & DIME - MORNING

Squints and Yeah-Yeah come out of the store in a big hurry, with a new baseball in a box. They stop momentarily - open it and chuck the box. Yeah-Yeah rams his mouth full of 'zooka

WHILE
SQUINTS
spits into his palm and rubs the ball to get the shine off. His eyes go suddenly wide and he stares, and oggles, and gawks:

SLO-MO - A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE GIRL
about 19-years-old walks by into the store. She smiles at Squints.

SQUINTS
can only manage a totally embarrassing goofy grin.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - MORNING
The guys are waiting anxiously as Yeah-Yeah and Squints run over. Yeah-Yeah tosses Benny the ball. He rubs it up. Passes it along. They all take a turn.

BENNY
What took you so long?! We been here forever already!

YEAH-YEAH
Squints was pervin' a dish.

SQUINTS
Shut up, I wasn't!

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-Yeah you were! Yer tongue was hangin' outta yer head and you was swoonin'!

(SWOONIN')
Oh-oh Wendy Peffercorn my darling lover girl...

Squints goes for Yeah-Yeah. Ham holds him back.

SQUINTS
Hold me back! Hold me back!

HAM
I am holdin' you back Squints.

**SQUINTS**

Oh, yeah. Well, lemme go then.

*(CALMS)*

**DENUNEZ**

So, where'd you get the money this time Yeah-Yeah?

**YEAH-YEAH**

Oh, yeah-yeah! It was great! So I went around pretended like I was selling perscriptions to magazines. And the people asked if they should pay me now. So I said yeah-yeah, pay me now! And they did!

The guys are astonished.

**HAM**

Sonavabitch!

**YEAH-YEAH**

What-what?! I'll take it back. I know it was crappy, but I didn't have no money, I -

**BENNY**

- naw, don't, man. He's just mad he didn't think of it.

**HAM**

Yeah, you know how many lawns I hadda mow when it was my turn?! Geez. Let's play.

**THE SUN**

crests the sandlot... it's gonna be a hot one.

**EXT. SANDLOT - LATER**

A real hot one. Ham sweats uncontrollably. His lunch bag drips PB&J.
DENUNEZ

spits a 'zooka sploink that SIZZLES when it hits.

THE GANG

simultaneously heads for the bleachers. Everybody but Benny.

FINALLY:

HAM
I can't take it no more, Benny. I'm bakin' like a toasted cheeser!

TIMMY
It's hotter than the fires of hell.

REPEAT
It's hotter than a fish in a fryin' pan.

The brothers "look" at each other on the miscue.

BENNY
Come on, don't be wimpy.

SQUINTS
Face it, Benny. It's not a fit day out for man nor beast. We gotta call it for the day.

BENNY
Vote then. Everyone that wants to be a can't-hack-it panty waist, and wear their momma's bra, raise your hand.

They all raise their hands. Grinning.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Fine. Be like that. So what're we gonna do then?

They look at each other, as if Benny's gone quite mad...

SO OBVIOUS:

GANG
Scam Pool Honeys!

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY
TEENAGE POOL HONEYS arranged particularly on their beach towels
along the deck, soak up the rays in their polka-dot bikinis.

48

THE GANG

rushes out in cut-off shorts, and banzais the shallow end. Ham leaps over the water like a graceful Manatee.

HAM

Hamonball!

KERSPLASH! A Ham-tsunami SLOSHES the Coppertone'd bods of

POOL HONEYS

They're up and SCREAMING at him.

NARRATOR

Benny would've played ball all day and all night... rain shine, tidal wave, whatever, it didn't matter. Baseball was the only thing he cared about and everything else was just a waste of time.

(BEAT)

But, of all the things we ever did besides baseball, goin' to the pool was what he tolerated best. Even though none of us had ever seen a Playboy magazine - which we constantly lied about - we figured the pool was the next best thing to being there.

THE GANG

dunks each other, play "attack-sub," etc...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It wasn't the Pool Honeys like we said, 'cause if any one of them had come up to any one of us, we'd of peed our pants.

(BEAT)

We went for... the Lifeguard.

THE LIFEGUARD
is unbelievable. In fact, it's WENDY PEFFERCORN. She slides Coppertone up and down her legs.

THE GANG

one by one, stop foolin' around. Chest deep in the shallow end, they're a detached and frozen pocket of leering dopes. The OTHER 80 KIDS in the pool play on around them.

49

SQUINTS

is suddenly afflicted.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
And one day, it became too much for Michael "Squints" Palledorous. And he did the most desperate thing any of us had ever seen.

THE LIFEGUARD

oils up and down.

THE GANG

gawks on. (Cool Hand Luke scene):

BENNY

Oh, man...

YEAH-YEAH

Yeah-yeah, too cruel.

TIMMY

She don't know what she's doing.

REPEAT

She don't know what she's doing.

BENNY

Yeah she does. She knows exactly what she's doing.

SQUINTS
I've swum here every summer of my adult life... and every summer there she is.

(LOSING IT)

Lotioning... oiling... smiling.

(TEETH CLENCHED)

I - can't - take - this - no - more!

THE GANG WATCHES AS SQUINTS

pushes through the water, pulls himself out, and walks really fast to the diving board (taking off his glasses to impress her as he passes.)

SCOTTY

What's wrong with him?

50

YEAH-YEAH

(WORRIED)

Don't-know, but that's the deep end, and Squints can't swim!

SQUINTS

walks the plank to the end. Looks wantingly toward

THE LIFEGUARD

who smiles back at him.

SQUINTS

holds his nose. Takes the deep leap. Hits the water and...

UNDERWATER

...sinks like a stone. Squints grins as he founders.

THE GANG

lines the edge of the deep section.

BERTRAM

Squints!
HAM
Oh my God! He's drowning!

THE LIFEGUARD
to the rescue. Seconds pass... she surfaces and lays a limp

SQUINTS

ON THE DECK

Everybody at the pool gathers 'round. The Lifeguard lays
Squints flat. She administers mouth-to-mouth.

The gang watches on tense as hell.

Squints peeks at them through a secretly opened eye. As the
Lifeguard is "saving" his sneaky life, Squints can no longer
restrain himself, he grabs her - gives her a sloppy SMOOCH!
She tears away. Stands up over his wimpy little form:

LIFEGUARD
You little pervert!

She grabs Squints by the scruff of the neck. Run-walks him
toward the exit, and...

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY

...chucks his boney butt into the hedges. The guys scramble
out, dragging their clothes after them. They help Squints
up.

HAM
Did you plan that?!

SQUINTS
A'course I did. Been plannin' it for years.

They let Squints walk out front:

NARRATOR
Michael "Squints" Palledorous walked a
little taller that day. And we had to
tip our hats to him. He was lucky she
hadn't beat the crap out of him. We
wouldn't have blamed her. What he'd
done was sneaky, rotten and low.
(BEAT)
And cool.

(BEAT)
Not another one among us would've ever, even for a million dollars, had the guts to put the move on the Lifeguard. He did. He had kissed a woman. And he kissed her long and good.

(BEAT)
We got banned from the pool forever that day... but every time we walked by after that, the Lifeguard looked down from her watchtower, right over at Squints... and smiled.

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - NIGHT


EXT. SANDLOT - SUNSET

The Guys play in magic hour. CRACK!

52

BENNY

jolts a high fly to

SCOTTY

in right field. No problem now. He backpedals, judging.

CLOSER TO

MR. MERTLE'S FENCE

then, SNATCH! Scotty makes a clean catch.
BENNY

gives Scotty "Thumbs Up." Just as

SCOTTY'S

gonna throw the ball back, he shivers, noticing that the sun has fallen to a precise declination; its rays focused behind the glowing green fiberglass of

MR. MERTLE'S FENCE

against which a hulking black form rises in the backyard... blocking out the sun against the panels. A gargantuan shadow.

THE SUN GOES DOWN

The shadow vanishes. TRIBAL DRUMS SOUND far in the distance. The oleander bushes rustle menacingly, like...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - B&W - NIGHT - (ORIGINAL "KING KONG," 1932 - STOCK)

...a wall of tropical foliage. Frightening. Primordial. (NOTE: the scene with NATIVES atop the wall when Kong grabs Fay Wray.)

INT. BOYS CLUB AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

ON THE PROJECTOR SCREEN King Kong rips through the jungle.

THE GANG'S

here with 100 OTHER BOYS at the afternoon show.

EXT. BOYS CLUB AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The gang gathers. Ham bursts out behind the gang as Kong!

53

HAM

Eee! Eee! Eee! Oh! Oh! Oh!
The guys SCREAM - spin to face the Ham. He BUSTS UP.

HAM (CONT'D)
Hey, check me out! I'm the mighty King Kong!

(DODGING BLOWS)
Hey! C'mon! It was a joke, ya dopes!
Do I _look_ like a monkey?!

A GROUP

of other kids comes out behind them. LITTLE LEAGUERS. Matching
caps and shirts. The gang straightens up.

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Yeah. Ya smell like one too. Hey guys, it's the sandlot babies!

LEAGUER PUNK 2
Skin yer knees lately sliding on rocks?!

HAM
Shut up, blockhead.

LEAGUER PUNK 2
What're you gonna do, Porter, sit on me?!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Rodriquez, why do hang around with these rejects, man? You could be
playin' with us on a official American Youth League certified big time diamond.
You'd make the Allstar team easy.

BENNY
Play us and you'll find out why, Phillips.

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Forget it, we play real ball, not with toy bats and sneakers!

The punks head off, LAUGHING as they go. Benny glares at them.

SQUINTS
Benny, man, are we gonna let 'em get away with that?!
BENNY
Yeah. For now. Let's go.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - NIGHT

The guys 'round a corner and continue on. They fall serious.

SCOTTY
You think he really died in the end?

BENNY
Who?

SCOTTY
King Kong...

SQUINTS
Not possible. He's so big that fallin' off the Empire State's just like us fallin' off a roof... he's alive.

SCOTTY
So whadda you think happened to him?

Heads are scratched. Chins are rubbed. Thoughts are thunk.

TIMMY
Most likely.

SCOTTY
Hey, guys? Has anyone ever really seen The Beast?

THE GANG STOPS

except Scotty, he goes forward - turns back.

SQUINTS
Look, Smalls. You ever seen King Kong for real? In person, I mean?

SCOTTY
No. But -
SQUINTS
- well, he's real right?

SCOTTY
Yeah, a'course.

SQUINTS
And he's still out there somewhere right?

55

SCOTTY
Yeah.

SQUINTS
See, there's just somethings that are. Ya know, stuff that it's better not to talk about... 'cause thinkin' about it just makes it worse.

(BEAT)
Nobody has to see The Beast to know he's there.

SCOTTY
(HORRIFIED THOUGHT)
You don't think that The Beast is really...

Motionless silence. No one's ever considered this. They suddenly realize where they are:

EXT. MR. MERTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Denial kicks in as they carry on:

GANG
King Kong? Naw! God is that stupid! No stinkin' way! Oh boy, had me feelin' like a douf there for a minute! Whew, what a relief!

EXT. THE SANDLOT ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

FROM THIS HEIGHT WE SEE them round the corner, and carry on past the sandlot. Little debating specks, far away from us, and the cares of the world.
**HAM**
Hey, who d'ya think'd win in a fight, King Kong or Godzilla?

**GANG**
Godzilla. King Kong. 'Zilla! Kong! 'ZILLA! KONG!

**YEAH-YEAH**
Yeah-yyeah, wait a sec, maybe they'll do a movie someday and we'll find out.

**GANG**
Yeah. That would be cool. I'd see that. Kong would kick his ass. No way, 'Zilla's got that fire breath stuff, he'd fry the monkey!

---

**EXT. DODGER STADIUM - ESTABLISHING - 1962 - DAY**
The gang heads toward hallowed halls.

**INT. DODGER STADIUM - TUNNEL - DAY**
Footsteps echo as the gang walks along, alone, in awe.

**EXT. DODGER STADIUM - INFIELD - DAY**
The '62 DODGERS (and our gang's Home Team) are taking batting practice.

**THE GANG**
and a bunch of kids at the infield railing. Autograph signing. Benny sticks his glove through the crowd up to a certain player.

**NARRATOR**
Besides The Great Bambino, who I still had no clue about, Benny had one living hero.

**MAURY WILLS**
autographs Benny's glove. Hands it back to...
...Benny who's suddenly here watching a baseball game. The gang's with him.

**YEAH-YEAH**
Yeah-yeah, here he comes. He's gonna steal second.

**BENNY**
Naw he ain't, not yet.

**TELEVISION - STOCK '62 DODGER GAME**
Maury Wills on 1st. Taunting the pitcher. Big lead off.

**NARRATOR**
A guy that would break the stolen bases record that year that had stood for as many years as there were baseball's lost to The Beast.

**THE GANG**
can't wait for Wills to go.

57

**GANG**
He's gonna go, Benny. Here he goes, man. Right now, watch, watch. There, there!

**BENNY**
leans forward seriously.

**BENNY**
No... not yet.

**TELEVISION - STOCK '62 DODGER GAME**
Maury Wills gets ready to steal.

**NARRATOR**
Maury Wills became a hero for what he
did.

BENNY

watches intensely.

BENNY

He's... gonna... go... riiiiight...
now.

TELEVISION - STOCK '62 DODGER GAME

Maury Wills steals second.

BENNY

smiles to himself.

GANG

(CLUELESS)

How'd you know that? How'd you guess?
How'd ya know?

NARRATOR

Benny... would become a Legend.

INT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Scotty opens the front door, BENNY'S THERE. 4th of July
party inside. All ADULTS.

BENNY

(URGENT)

Get your glove, c'mon.

58

SCOTTY

What's the big deal?

BENNY

Nightgame!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD HORIZON - DUSK
The sun is setting.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET ON WAY TO SANDLOT - DUSK

THE GANG

hurries along with their ball gear, through a Block party of bubble-topped BBQ's attended by APRONED DADS grillin' dogs n' burgers.

KIDS

clutching "Red Devil" fireworks, timing the sinking sun.

MOMS

pouring iced tea.

HAM

pilfers dog makin's from various Q's. Concocts a two-fisted doglog! He catches up to

THE GANG

marching away into the SETTING SUN.

A LONG LINE OF FIREWORKS

in the street.

MATCH HEADS

are lit.

YELLOW MATCH FLAMES

The SAME SIZE IN FRAME as our guys at the end of the block, are set to fuses.

DADS AND KIDS

rush for the curbs... and

THE FIRECONES FLOW INTO THE SKY

in kaleidoscopic columns of star-hot colors.
MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANDLOT – NIGHT

BURSTING FIREWORKS IN THE SKY down from which WE TILT TO

THE GANG


NARRATOR
There was only one nightgame a year. On the Fourth of July, the whole sky would brighten up with fireworks, giving us just enough light for a game.

(BEAT)
We played better then too. Because I guess, we all felt like Big Leaguers under the lights at some great stadium.

(BEAT)
Benny felt like that all the time.

BENNY

Knocks dirt from his p.f. flyers. Twirls the bat. Cocks it back. Coils up 'round his back leg.

DENUNEZ

delivers. Fastball.

CRUNCH!

Ash meets cowhide.

FIREWORKS EXPLODE

high above them.

THE GANG

stops play and marvels up at the colors.

SCOTTY'S

a little kid with a too-big mitt and floppy cap, goggling up at the fireworks. The ball lands by him. He retrieves it. Is about to throw - stops.
EVERYONE'S

staring at Benny up at

HOME PLATE

bat slung second-naturedly over his shoulder... a real ball player.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

We all knew Benny was different. We knew that he was gonna go on to bigger and better games.

(BEAT)

Because everytime we stopped to watch the sky that night like regular kids, Benny was there to call us back.

DENUNEZ

pitches.

BENNY

cranks one to kingdom come.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

For him, baseball wasn't just a game. For Benjamin Franklin Rodriguez...

A FINAL FIREWORK EXPLODES

in a beautiful burst above them.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...baseball was life.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

The gang is still in the same positions. As if having never left.

HAM
fires to 3rd from home.

**INFIELD**

Ham and Repeat catch Benny in a pickle. Benny feints, dodges and rubba-legs them. He crosses home easily.

---

**61**

**TIMMY**

Truly rubba legs.

**REPEAT**

Truly rubba legs.

**THE LITTLE LEAGUERS**

show up on their bikes.

**LEAGUER PUNK 2**

It's easy when you play with rejects and fat kids, Rodriguez.

**BENNY**

marches over. The gang follows.

**BENNY**

What'ID you say, crapface?

**LEAGUER PUNK 1**

He said, they shouldn't be allowed to even touch a baseball. They're an insult to the game.

That did it! Ham rushes the punk. The gang holds him back.

**HAM**

Come on! We'll take you on right here, right now! Come on! Right now!

**LEAGUER PUNK 1**

We play on a real diamond, Porter. And you ain't good enough to lick the dirt off our cleats.
HAM
Watch yer mouth, jerk!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Shut up, dipshit!

HAM
Asshole!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Scab eater!

HAM
Butt sniffer!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Pus licker!

HAM
Fart smeller!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Dog crap for breakfast eatin' geek!

HAM
You mix yer Wheaties with your momma's toe jam!

LEAGUER PUNK 1
You bob for apples in your toilet, and you like it!

The teams GASP. Then:

HAM
YOU PLAY BALL LIKE A GIRL!

THUNDERING SILENCE. The ultimate baseball insult.

LEAGUER PUNK 1
What did you say?

HAM
You heard me.

LEAGUER PUNK 1
Tomorrow. Sun-up. At our field. Be there, buffalo-butt breath.

HAM
Count on it, pee drinkin' craphead.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAWN

Ham raises his catcher's mask:

HAM
PLAAAAAAAAAY BALLLLLLLLL!

DENUNEZ
STRIKES OUT
BATTER 1


BATTER 2

GROUND TO

63

YEAAH-YEAAH

at short. He stabs it. Fires to

FIRST BASE

outta there.

BATTER 3

hits a lazy fly ball to

RIGHT CENTER FIELD

where Scotty and Bertram run for it - watching the ball, not
each other:

SCOTTY/BERTRAM
I got it. I got it.
They stop - the ball drops between them.

**SCOTTY/BERTRAM (CONT'D)**
I thought you had it.

**BATTER 3**

rounds 2nd base.

**BENNY**
Somebody get it!

**SCOTTY**
picks it up and fires for home for all he's worth.

**BATTER 3**

rounds 3rd.

**THE BALL**
rockets toward Home.

**BATTER 3**

slides in a cloud of dust.

**THE BALL**

**BLASTS INTO**

**64**

**HAM'S MITT**

and Ham drags the baseline.

**THE DUST CLEARS**

Ham's got him tagged. Ham goes Jackie Gleasonaic:

**HAM**
You - are - out - of - here! Out!
Gone! Dead! To the moon! Roger,
Wilco, Over and OUT!
Ham abruptly stops Cramdoning because

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING

at him.

HAM (CONT'D)

Ah, you're out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAY

Benny's at bat. BANG! Single to left. Throw to 1st - too late. Throw to 2nd - too late. Throw to 3rd - he's on his way home. Throw to home - safe!

THE LEAGUERS

gawk; an inside the park home run.

BENNY

(TO CATCHER)

That's one. Get used to it.

HIGH ABOVE FIELD, A SERIES OF ECU'S OF

the gang belting shot after shot. Rounding base after base. Crossing home.

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

(Bob B. Soxx & The Blue Jeans "Zip-A-Dee-Do-Dah" scene.) The guys strut along, air-batting, mime-catching. Benny RIPS a momentous victory slide.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT

The gang comes down the midway and stops at a ticket booth for a ride we don't yet see. As they buy their tickets:

BENNY

Crack! Boom! Outta here! You see the looks on their faces? Did ya? It was like, "Duh... so that's how you
play baseball."

BERTRAM
Crap! I almost forgot. Chaw!

He holds up a pouchnch of chewin' 'baccy.

THE GANG
gathers 'round.

BERTRAM (CONT’D)
I was savin' it for a good time.

SCOTTY
What is it?

HAM
Geez, Smalls... I s'pose you don't who
The Babe is either. It's chaw. Plug.
Wad. Chewing Tobacco!

Bertram passes it around. Everybody sniffs.

SCOTTY
Whadda you do with it?

HAM
You're killin' me, Smalls. You chew
it, of course.

DENUNEZ
All the pros do.

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah, gives ya tons of energy.

TIMMY
Let's dip.

REPEAT
Let's dip.

Bertram pinches a too-huge wad. Stuffs it in his mouth. The
bag goes around. All cud up.

BENNY
Smooth.
HAM
Juicy.

SQUINTS
Tangy.

SCOTTY
Kinda tastes like an ashtray smells.

DENUNEZ
Supposed to.

SQUINTS
Let's ride.

The gang gets on the ride: THE ANTI-GRAV!

EXT. CARNIVAL - ABOARD ANTI-GRAV - NIGHT

As they ride, and spin round and round and round... the brown
glop falls from their mouths. They all watch

BERTRAM
who turns salmon... yellow... green. Then, presumably

EXT. ANTI-GRAV - NIGHT

yawns breakfast, lunch, and dinner like a firehose. At least that's what WE HEAR as the ride spins vertical - that, and a host of blood curdling SCREAMS from vom-victims. As the RIDERS DISEMBARK

A BARF CHAIN REACTION

ensues. They all running SCREAMING from the ride and lose it.

EXT. THE SANDLOT ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The gang wobbles, MOANING as they go. Ham is strangely unaffected he unpockets a fistful of some disgusting glorp:

The guys lose it. WE DRIFT off them and their predicament to

THE HOLE
in the green fiberglass fence. An EYEBALL - big, bloodshot and amused. GUTTURAL PANTING... The Beast is LAUGHING at them.

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Scotty's cod belly white and jelly fish limp, from a long bout of the chuckies.

Bill tosses his luggage in the car trunk. Scotty's mom leans out the driver's window.

MOM
I'll be back in an hour, Scotty, I'm taking Dad to the airport.

SCOTTY
(STILL WOOZY)
'Kay. Where you goin'?

BILL
Chicago, on business for a week. Listen, Scott, while I'm gone, you're the man of the house. Understand?

SCOTTY
Yeah, I guess so.

BILL
We'll take another stab at catch when I get back, okay? So, take care of things while I'm gone. I'm counting on you.

He offers his hand to Scotty. They shake.

SCOTTY
(PERKING UP)
Okay. I will.

EXT. FIVE & DIME - DAY

The gang comes out with a new boxed baseball. Each has a pack of Topps. A bag of Bazooka.

NARRATOR
Once we got over trying to be big shots,
we just stuck to what we could handle, and swore off the hard stuff forever. When we finally got back together for some baseball, something amazing happened.

(BEAT)
It was an omen... one that was meant just for Benjamin Franklin Rodriguez.

EXT. THE SANDLOT – DAY

They tear open their packs of baseball cards. First things first – they eat the gum sticks. Then, shuffle through the cards looking for gold.

SQUINTS
Whad'ya get, Ham?

HAM
A Mickey Mantle and 7 guys I never heard of. How 'bout you?

SQUINTS
A Brooks Robinson and a Koufax. Pretty good.

BERTRAM
I got junk.

DENUNEZ
One Drysdale, a bunch a duds.

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah, me too. Four bombs, but one Whitey Ford.

SQUINTS
Benny, whad -

The guys notice

BENNY

staring down at the cards in his hands. He slowly shuffles them top to bottom... top to bottom.

THE GANG
moves over, concerned.

**HAM**
Hey, Benny, whatsa matter?

**BERTRAM**
You okay, man?

Benny slowly raises his eyes. Slowly holds the cards out to Squints, who takes them cautiously. Squints shuffles them forwards and backwards. He passes the eight cards amongst them all.

**SQUINTS**
Oh, my God...

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**TIMMY**
Imfuckingpossible.
(ALTERNATE LINE, same BELOW)
Unstinkinbelievable!

**REPEAT**
Imfuckingpossible. Don't tell mom I said that tim.

**TIMMY**
I won't.

**HAM**
This can't happen... can it?

**BERTRAM**
It just did.

**YEAH-YEAH**
Yeah-yeah, it's an omen.

Squints hands the cards back to the Benny, who takes home plate alone.

**EIGHT IDENTICAL MAURY WILLS CARDS**

**THE GANG**
can only stare at him. Suddenly, Squints clutches his ear
PLUG:

SQUINTS
Oh geez... Oh geez. I - I don't believe it. Maury Wills just stole 80 bases!

The guys are boggled.

BENNY

picks up a bat.

BENNY
We gotta play. I gotta play right now, guys. Right now.

THE GANG

obeys. They hurry into the field. As they go:

SCOTTY
What's it mean?

SQUINTS
It's a miracle, Smalls. A damn miracle.

NARRATOR
We all expected something to happen right then... during that game. What we had just witnessed was bordering on the supernatural... we knew that greater hands than ours were at work.

(BEAT)
And it happened alright.

(BEAT)
It happened right in front of our noses... and we didn't even know it.

DENUNEZ

delivers.

CRACK!
Magic dust EXPLODES from Benny's bat. The red lacing BURSTS!

THE BASEBALL
dermis flays. The string-wound innards fly into

YEAH-YEAH'S GLOVE
in left field. The cowhide "figure 8's" lay there in

THE INFIELD
like huge swatted moths. The guys gather 'round.

BERTRAM
Bitchin'.

BENNY
Naw, it ain't.

SQUINTS
C'mon, Benny, maybe two, three guys in
history have ever busted the guts out
of a ball. That's what the omen was.

GANG
Truly. Sure. Absolutely. Yeah-yeah,
Benny. It must be so.

BENNY
All's it means is that we can't play
no more. It's only noon, and I just
blew the whole day for us.

DENUNEZ
No, you didn't. It's the most amazing
thing I ever seen.

BENNY
Anybody got any money?
(NO ANSWER)
Then it ain't okay, 'cause now we can't
play no more.

SCOTTY
Yeah, we can.
BENNY
What, you got 98 extra cents just layin' around at home, Smalls?

SCOTTY
No, but I got a ball.

CUT TO:

INT. BILL'S DEN - DAY

A BASEBALL on a silver pedestal (Bill's baseball). Scotty's HAND ENTERS FRAME. His indecisive FINGERS almost touch the ball... then, SNATCH!

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

Scotty dashes across the schoolyard.

SCOTTY
(out of breath)
I got it! Let's play!

He tosses the ball to

BENNY

who catches it.

BENNY
Bitchin'. Your ball, your ups.

Benny hands Scotty the bat, heads to right field, leaving

SCOTTY
alone at home plate with Ham (the catcher).

BENNY
tosses DeNunez the ball on his way by.

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DENUNEZ

almost misses it. He rounds up, throws to
BERTRAM

at 1st. Bertram throws to

TIMMY

at 2nd. Timmy almost drops it. There's a smudge on the ball. Timmy tosses to

REPEAT

at 3rd. Repeat fires to

YEAH-YEAH

in left. The ball caroms off Yeah-Yeah's glove, comes down fast! Yeah-Yeah barehands it. Safe. He launches to

SQUINTS

in center. It's gonna be short! Squints sprints - Willy Mays basket catch. He throws to DeNunez.

SCOTTY

digs in.

HAM

Batter up!

DENUNEZ

fires. Scotty swings - WHIFF. Again - whif. Once more...

BOOM! Goodnight, Irene! Scotty drops the bat. Trots for first base in "home run" fashion.

BENNY

backpeddles.

SCOTTY

watches him, slowing, worrying.

THE BALL

drops over the green fiberglass fence.
SCOTTY

stops dead in the base path.

THE GANG

CHEERS:

TIMMY

Nice crank, Smalls.

DENUNEZ

Decent cut.

BENNY

It's outta here! Who's got the big bat now, boys!

GANG


SCOTTY

is drawn to the fence with mounting terror.

THE GANG

starts over.

HAM

What the hell's he doing?

BERTRAM

Maybe the shock of his first homer was just too much for him.

AT THE GREEN FIBERGLASS FENCE

Scotty runs right up to it - clutches desperately. Panting. Trembling. The guys arrive. Scotty turns back to them... he has aged 25 years.

SCOTTY

We gotta get that ball back.

HAM
Right! Good one, Smalls.

**SQUINTS**
Sure. We'll just hop over and say, excuse me Mr. Beast sir, could we have our ball back, oh, and please don't kill us while we're here!

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**BENNY**
It was a great shot, but forget about it... game's over. We'll get another ball.

**SCOTTY**
You don't understand!

**BENNY**
Sure we do. You feel bad 'cause you belted a homer, and now we can't play no more.

**SCOTTY**
No! You don't understand! THAT WASN'T MY BALL!

**THE GANG'S POV**
of something moving in the backyard. Just a rippling shadow and trailing dust accompanying it over the fence top.

**THE GANG'S**
eyes go to Scotty.

**SQUINTS**
Whadda you mean it wasn't your ball?

**SCOTTY**
It's my stepdad's. I stole it from his trophy room. It was a present or somethng - somebody gave it to him. We have to get it back. He's gonna kill me!
Smalls... listen to me. This is a matter of life and death.

(THINKS)
Where did your old man get that ball?

SCOTTY
I dunno... I think some lady gave it to him.

SQUINTS
Some lady?...

SCOTTY
Yeah, she even signed her name on it.

(THE END)
Some lady named Ruth... Baby Ruth.

75

EYEBALLS
pop from their sockets.

GANG
BAAAYYYBE RUUUUUTH?!

THE GANG
sprints for the fence. Scramble up it. Just their eyes peer over the top.

WHAT THEY SEE
a baseball in a little impact crater. A ball that has most clearly been autographed by... BABE RUTH.

A long, hideous forelimb thrusts from 'neath the lean-to. A massive paw-thing comes down on the ball. Drags it slowly away... leaving a baseball-deep furrow in the dirt. The CANINE "LAUGHTER" comes again...

THE GANG
drops from the fence - turn to face Scotty.

DENUNEZ
The Beast got it.

**TIMMY**
You're dead as a doornail, Smalls.

**REPEAT**
You're dead as a doornail, Smalls.

**TIMMY**
Nice knowing you.

**REPEAT**
Nice knowing -

**TIMMY**
- shut up, Tommy.

*(STUNNED)*
Smalls, you mean to tell me you went home and swiped a ball that was signed by Babe Ruth, and brought it out here and actually played with it?

**REPEAT**
And actually played with it?!

---

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**SCOTTY**
Yeah, but I was gonna put it back.

**SQUINTS**
But it was signed by Babe Ruth!

**SCOTTY**
Well, who is she?!

**HAM**
What?! What?!

*(OVERCOME)*
What did he say?!

**DENUNEZ**
The Sultan of Swat!

**BERTRAM**
The King of Krash!
REPEAT/TIMMY
The Colossus of Clout!

GANG

BABE RUTH!

HAM
(for good measure)
The Great Bambino!

SCOTTY
(that did it)
OH, MY GOD! THAT'S THE SAME GUY?!

BENNY
Yeah. Smalls, Babe Ruth is the greatest baseball player that ever lived. People say he was less than a God, but more than a man. Ya know... like Hercules or somethin'.

(BEAT)
The ball that you just aced to The Beast is worth... well, more than your whole life.

Scotty falls to his knees. Grabs his stomach.

SCOTTY
I don't feel so good.

They all step back, expecting the worst. Then, they fan him with their baseball caps.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)
(HEARTFELT)
We gotta get that ball back.

BENNY
When does your old man get home from work?

SCOTTY
He's gone on business for a week.
BENNY
Okay, we need 98 cents. So, everybody spread out and find some soda bottles and cash 'em in. We need a new baseball.

CUT TO:

A BRAND NEW BASEBALL

Benny's hand signs B A B E R U T H across the leather in ridiculous chicken scrawl.

EXT. FIVE & DIME - DAY

Forgery in progress. Benny does the honors.

DENUNEZ
I dunno, Benny-man.

YEAH-YEAH
Yeah-yeah, it's pretty crappy.

SQUINTS
He ain't gonna buy that, Benny. It doesn't look anything like the Babe's signature.

BENNY
It doesn't matter what it looks like. His mom's never gonna know the difference. This'll just buy us some time, ya dorks.

CUT TO:

INT. BILL'S DEN - DAY

Scotty's HAND ENTERS FRAME. Little anxious FINGERS wrapped around the phony "Babe Ruth" baseball. The second the ball is back on its pedestal:

MOM (O.S.)
Scotty?

DEN

Scotty whips 'round like he's been slapped by a wet mackerel - Mom's in the doorway.

SCOTTY

Huh?!

MOM

Honey, what are you doing in here?

SCOTTY

Ah... just looking at Bill's - I mean Dad's baseball.

Scotty hurries away from the "autographed" ball.

MOM

You know he doesn't like you touching his things.

SCOTTY

Yeah, I know. Sorry, Mom.

MOM

Has he ever told you about that ball?

SCOTTY

Uh - no, not really, I don't think so - no, he hasn't at all - I don't know _anything_ about it.

MOM

It's signed by Babe Ruth...

Sweet mother of - Mom knows! Scotty may collapse.

MOM (CONT'D)

...the greatest baseball player that ever lived.

SCOTTY

Um... really?

MOM

It sure is. Dad's father gave it to him. Maybe someday, he'll give it to you.
SCOTTY
(DAZED)
Uh... neat.

NARRATOR
It was salt in an open wound. Even my own mom, who was only a grown-up girl, knew who Babe Ruth was.

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

The gang's all here. Big plans. War conference.

SCOTTY
So, how do we get it back?

SQUINTS
I have no idea.

NARRATOR
I was dead meat. I knew it. They knew it. We had thought that those cards Benny had gotten meant that something great was going to happen. Now I figured that they'd just meant my life was over.

SCOTTY
Can't we just hop the fence and get it?

HAM
Remember Davy Stodenrous.

TIMMY/REPEAT
Poor Toad.

SCOTTY
Oh, yeah. I forgot.

(A THOUGHT)
Hey? Why don't we just go over there and knock on the door, and ask Mr. Mertle to get it for us?

Everyone looks at Scotty - the kid just sprouted a dunce cap.
SQUINTS
Are you outta your mind?! Mr. Mertle is the meanest old man that ever lived! He's the one that sicked The Beast on The Toad!

(BEAT)
That's not an option, Smalls. Forget about it.

SCOTTY
Oh. Okay. I will.

Silent moments... not a single blinking idea between them. Then, suddenly:

SQUINTS
We need to assess the situation!

GANG
(better than nothing)
Of course! Right! Good one, Squints! Access (sic) the situation! Okay!

BERTRAM
Um, Squints? How do we do that?

SQUINTS
First we survey the enemy's environment, then we make note of the surrounding terrain.

HAM
What?...

SQUINTS
(COPPING)
I heard that on "Combat." Let's just look out the window.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

The gang pokes their heads-only through the window. They look down into:

EXT. THE BADLANDS (MR. MERTLE'S BACKYARD) - DAY
The house is a godforsaken stucco'd corpse.

THE YARD

is the final resting place for: melted frisbees, withered kickballs, skeletons of heat-crumbled paper kites, an airforce of exposure-splintered balsa wood gliders, and a fleet of model rockets - their drag-chutes turning to dust. And hundreds of little empty craters - that used to cradle baseballs.

THE RUSTY TOW CHAIN

snakes through the dirt - buried then exposed. It terminates 'NEATH

81

THE LEAN-TO

from under which rises hazy twirls of dust. The dust is kept from ever settling by some enormous ORGANIC EXHAUST.

A GIANT PAW-THING

emerges from under the lean-to, pushing the Babe Ruth autographed cowhide into full view - "I dare you..."

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

The guys jerk their heads back inside.

TIMMY

He's darin' us!

REPEAT

He's darin' us!

DENUNEZ

He's waitin' for us, man. Just like he did with The Toad.

GANG

(REVERENT)
Poor Toad.

HAM
We're on his territory now.

BERTRAM
Think he's pissed?

BENNY
Is Doby Gillis a dork? Anybody got any bright ideas?

THE BIG MONTAGE STARTS WITH:


NARRATOR
We had absolutely no idea what the hell we were gonna do. So things started primitively.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - DAY

The gang hurries out from the Timmons' yard carrying a broom stick. They wriggle it under the fiberglass fence. Squints peers through the peep hole motioning directions to Ham. Suddenly - SNAP! Ham pulls the stick back. 'Tis toothpick'd.

Ext. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY

The guys fell the clothes line pole with a hack saw. 6 feet of inch thick pipe. They heft it up - go out to

EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - DAY

and shove the pipe under the green fiberglass. HORRIBLE SOUNDS ERUPT from the Badlands. Dust mushrooms over the fence. The pipe draws under in FEROIOUS JERKS. Gone. Moments. The pole sails back over the fence - bounces on the asphalt with ANGRY CLANGS. 'Tis pretzel'd.

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

Bertram arrives. Hands "it" over. How embarrassing:

BERTRAM
It ain't mine. I told you, it's my little sister's!

A Cootie Toy. They

**ASSEMBLE THE INSECT**

putting a hunk of chewed 'zooka on each Cootie foot. Attach it to a plastic parachute - ah-ha! Genius. An airborne assault!

**EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - DAY**

Squints indicates "go."

**INT./EXT. TREE HOUSE - THE BADLANDS - DAY**

**THE GANG**

**DRIFTS THE COOTIE N' CHUTE**

out the tree house window. It floats silently toward the baseball. The Cootie lands right on the Babe Ruth. The gum sticks.

**THE GANG**

hauls it in.

**THE BALL**

slowly rises. Suddenly

83

**THE BEAST'S JAWS**

erupt from 'neath the lean-to and CHOMP the Cootie whole. The string snaps.

**THE GANG**

pulls up the frayed end.
INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

Now a War Room. Map of the Badlands: crazed trajectories, distances to The Beast, etc. Coffee can PBX system. Cardboard periscope. X's on a calendar counting down "Bill's Return." The new retrieval system:

THREE EUREKA CANISTER VACS

all connected. Ham's catcher's mask bolted to the end pipe for ball securing.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - OVER THE BADLANDS - NIGHT

Toy flashlights and BSOA lanterns hang from the structure, semi-illuminating the Badlands.

OUT THE WINDOW

goes the vacuumtraption, 30 feet of wobbly pipe.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - NIGHT

Squints directs the operation, looking

THROUGH THE CARDBOARD PERISCOPE

WE SEE the vacupipe-mask... 12 inches from the baseball.

SQUINTS (O.S.)
(coffee can muffled)

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

They throw eureka switch one. WEOHH!

EXT. THE BADLANDS - NIGHT

The baseball moves itty-bittily.

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

They throw eureka switch two. WEEOOOHHH!

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EXT. BADLANDS - NIGHT
THE BASEBALL moves a lot!

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

They throw eureka switch three! RRRWEEEEOOOH HH!

EXT. THE BADLANDS - NIGHT

The baseball leaps from the ground - sticks in the catcher's mask collection basket.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - NIGHT

SQUINTS (O.S.)

We have suction! Pull it up! PULL IT UP!

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

The gang reels it in. Suddenly, the whole apparatus JOLTS.

EXT. THE BADLANDS - NIGHT

A great beef-paw yanks the end pipe under the tree.

STEEL TEETH

pinch the metal tube shut.

INT./EXT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

The vacuums build pressure fast. WHINE crazily.

THE GANG

leaps from tree house.

SQUINTS

lingers in the trap doorway a second too long:

EXT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

The gang (minus Squints) is face down in the dirt - arms over heads. The vacuums explode. Foggy clouds of dust pour out of the treehouse. Squints appears. He's battleship grey. Takes his glasses off. Only his eyes show white.

SQUINTS

We've been going about this all wrong.
I blame myself. We need total surprise.

(MORE)

85

SQUINTS (CONT'D)
Therefore, we tunnel. The Beast will never expect it.

EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY
The guys all wield a shovel, and have flashlights taped to their baseball caps like coal miners.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - DAY (DARK)
Flashlight beam at the fore, Scotty crawls with a safety rope 'round his waist. He pokes the cardboard periscope up through the dirt.

THROUGH THE PERISCOPE
the Badlands from ULTRA LOW ground level. WE SCAN 360 degrees.
Suddenly, the scan stops. The name BABE RUTH, FILLS the periscope's lens.

EXT. THE BADLANDS - DAY
Scotty's hand feels for the Babe Ruth. He grabs it. It's slimey.

SCOTTY (O.S.) (SUBTERRANEAN)
I got it! I got it!
The ball SQUIRTS out of his fingers.

THE BALL ROLLS
beneath the lean-to. It hits

THE BEAST
in the nose. With a SEISMIC ROAR The Beast leaps out. WE DON'T SEE MUCH. He's too big. We're too close.
EXT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

Yeah-Yeaaaah SHOUTS to Ham at the tunnel entrance.

YEAAAAH
It's huge - oh, my God! It's huge - pull him out! It's huge! PULL HIM OUT!

EXT. BADLANDS - DAY

THE BEAST'S JAWS dive toward Scotty's hand. They get within an inch of Scotty's hand, and his fingers vanish - THWOOOP!

EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY

The gang pulls Scotty out of the hole. Yeah-Yeaaaah is unconscious on the grass. The guys turn a hose on him. He comes 'round SCREAMING:

YEAAAAH
It's huge - pull him out! Oh God, it's like a dinosaur! Wh - Wh - Where am I?!

SQUINTS
Yeah-Yeaaaah! Get hold of yourself! What'd you see?!

YEAAAAH
(accelerating to lunacy)
Oh-oh, it was like hugeness and darkness and like the world was ending and the devil came up through the ground and the - and the - and the -

HAM
- somebody slap him quick! We're losin' him!

WHAP-WHAP! Squints administers. Yeah-Yeaaaah snaps out of it.

YEAAAAH
Thanks. I needed that.

EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY
Construction completes. A kid crane. A tricycle, block 'n tackle, fishing-pole n' body harness. In a line, the guys step on and off a scale. Everybody stares at Yeah-Yeah.

**YEAH-YEAH**
Yeah-yeah, I know - I'm lightest. But I ain't goin' over there! NO WAY!

All eyes to the ground.

**BENNY**
Sorry, Smalls. It was a good idea anyway.

**DENUNEZ**
Yeah, tough luck, Smalls.

**HAM**
It won't be that bad, Smalls. Your dad'll probably only shoot you or something.

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**YEAH-YEAH**
Hey-hey, don't blame me! I didn't hit the ball over there, man!

Silence. Yeah-Yeah considers.

**YEAH-YEAH (CONT'D)**
Yeah-yeah, okay. But if I say pull me up, you guys better PULL ME UP!

Benny takes Yeah-Yeah aside. Hands him all over Ham's catcher's gear.

**BENNY**
Here. Put these on.

**YEAH-YEAH**
Wha -? Why? Whadda I need All this stuff for Benny? I mean, why a mask and a gonad Protector?

**BENNY**
Oh, ah, nuthin', ya know, just For, ah... Altitude leveling
And stuff. Put it on.

Benny hurries off as Timmy and Repeat approach with a frightening looking harness assembly. Yeah-Yeah backs away:

**TIMMY**
Don't worry. We're professionals.

**REPEAT**
Our Dad's a contractor.

**EXT./INT. OVER THE BADLANDS - INSIDE THE TREE HOUSE - DAY**

**HAM'S**
strapped in at the tricycle winch.

**YEAH-YEAH'S**
dangling over the lean-to.

**YEAH-YEAH**
(into can phone)
Okay-okay, I'm right over it. Let me down - slow!

**HAM**

lets go. Oops. WHIZZZZ!

88

**YEAH-YEAH**
plummets.

**YEAH-YEAH (CONT'D)**
Ahhhh! Stop! STOP!

**HAM**
back-cranks.

**YEAH-YEAH**
comes to a twirling halt four feet off the ground.
YEAH-YEAH'S POV

into the lean-to. Blackness and dust.

YEAH-YEAH (CONT'D)
"Kay-'kay, tip me, hurry up. I'm gettin' the woollies.

Yeah-Yeah reaches... Gets it!

YEAH-YEAH (CONT'D)
Okay get me outta here!

HAM

struggles.

HAM
HELP! I'M LOSIN' HIM!

YEAH-YEAH

looks down from the guys on the tree house - back to level - "4 foot" eye-level with: THE BEAST'S MOUTH!

YEAH-YEAH
(QUAKING)
H - h - help! Help! HELP-HELP- HELP!
(TRYING ANYTHING)
Hail Mary Father who art star light
twinkle twinkle hey diddle diddle -

INSIDE THE TREE HOUSE

hands crank the trike wheel. Yeah-Yeah's to window level in seconds. He's got the ball!

89

THE BEAST'S JAWS

leap into view.

THE TOW CHAIN

goes taut. The jaws abruptly disappear.

EXT. THE BADLANDS - DAY
The Beast's shadowy form RUSTLES contentedly under the lean-to. Yeah-Yeah dropped the ball.

**EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY**

Yeah-Yeah's shattered. Balling. The guys sniff. Oh no, bad news. He shoves them away:

**YEAH-YEAH**

Yeah-yyeah, I did it! SO WHAT?! You jerks, I told you to pull me back faster!
(starin' them down)
You - you penises.

Yeah-Yeah waddles away. The guys rush to hold the fence door up for him. He goes through stiff-legged (can't bend over).

**EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY**

Yeah-Yeah heads across the field... waddle-waddle.

**NARRATOR**

Yeah-Yeah grew two feet in our eyes after that. There was no stinkin' way any of us would've showed back up, if we'd loaded our drawers.

(Beat)

Yeah-Yeah did. He showed back up and got right to work, like nothing ever happened.

**MATCH DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. THE SANDLOT/TREEHOUSE - MORNING**

(LOCK OFF. Same as Sc. 157) - Yeah-Yeah returns across the sandlot and goes up into the treehouse.

**INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY**

158

According to the calendar - 1 day till Bill's back. Scotty's got the conch.
SCOTTY
I think I know how to get it.
(they're all ears)
Anybody got an Erector Set?

Eyes dart. Brows feint.

SQUINTS
That thing with the nuts and bolts and
tiny wrenches that you can build junk
out of?

SCOTTY
Exactly.

SQUINTS
Never heard of it.

HAM
I used to have one when I was like I
dunno, a little kid.

GANG
(LIARS)
Might have some pieces. Gee, I don't
think so. I'd have to look. Maybe in
the attic. Not in our room though.

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAY - 20 MINUTES LATER

The guys re-arrive. Each holding huge arm loads of Erector
Set stuff.

GANG (CONT'D)
Guess I had more than I thought. Forgot
my grandma got me some for my birthday.
It's my little brother's.

Scotty's brought his "Set." A footlocker full of neatly
arranged pieces. Nut and bolt compartments. Electric motor
sections.

BERTRAM
Bitchin'.

SCOTTY
I really like Erector Set.

GANG
(ATTITUDINAL 360'S)
Me too. I was just thinkin' the same
thing. Couldn't agree more, Smalls.
I play with mine all the time.

91

SCOTTY
Let's get to work. Here's the plans -

FURLSNAP! Holy cow! Scotty unfolds them - amazing crayola blueprints drawn on taped-together grocery bags.

INT./EXT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

The guys swarm the tree house. Scotty supervises from the backyard, wearing a plastic hardhat. They build. Scotty hooks up electric motors. Throws one toggle, and...

EXT. TREE HOUSE - DAY

...it comes to life. A 35 foot hollow erector-beam and electric catapult-car assembly. They tilt-n'-tip it over the fence. Scotty pilots the little car from the treehouse deck.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

Benny's got his glove - waiting.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - TIMMON'S BACKYARD - THE SANDLOT - THE BADLANDS - DAY

Scotty on controls. Squints on periscope, with Bertram on the Yuban-comm for him. Others at support points.

THE CAR drives down.

THE BEAST strirs.

THE CAR rolls out the end.

THE CATAPULT BUCKET scoops the ball.

SQUINTS
(CLEANLY)

Fire!

GIANT SLEEPY EYEBALLS

roll open. A THUNDERROAR!
SCOTTY

flips the toggle.

THE "RAT-TRAP" CATAPULT

fires.

92

THE BASEBALL

is airborne.

BENNY

runs for it.

BENNY

I got it! I got it!

THE AIRBORNE BEAST

blocks out the sun. CLUNCHEENK! The Beast's FRONT TEETH SNATCH the Babe Ruth ball delicately out of the air.

THE UNSEEN BEAST

crash lands beyond the fiberglass paneling, right on top of THE

ERECTOR CONTRAPTION

wrenching it viciously.

THE STRUCTURE

comes tumbling down - bending into flimsy knots as it CRASHES!

EXT. TIMMONS' BACKYARD - DAY

Scotty stands alone on the tree house roof... staring down into the Badlands. A little, wrecked shell of a kid, who is now dead meat. The guys look up at him sorrowfully.

NARRATOR
My life was over. Just as Bill had finally warmed up to me, and asked me to be the man of the house, I had to knock a priceless chunk of history into the clutches of a monster. Great.

END THE BIG MONTAGE.

EXT. THE BLOCK - DUSK

The gang, minus Timmy and Repeat, shuffle along home without a word exchanged.

FROM HIS PORCH

Benny watches a dejected Scotty slowly head inside across the street.

93

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Scotty stares up at the ceiling in oceans of worry.

INT. BENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Benny's in bed. He clicks on a "baseball-bat" flashlight. Shines the beam toward his footboard... illuminating the photo of The Babe.

BENNY

We can't get it back, Babe.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

Suddenly, a RACKET from inside Benny's closet. A bright LIGHT GOES ON in there. Then, smoke comes out.

Benny jumps up on his bed – flattens against the wall. Hasn't done this in years:

BENNY (CONT'D)

M - M - Mom?...

The closet door CREAKS open... by itself. Everything inside is oddly devoid of color.
BENNY (CONT'D)

Who's there?!

BABE RUTH steps out of the closet. He exists in the only way any kid from 1962 has ever seen him: BLACK & WHITE.

THE BABE

Now don't go peeing your pants or nuthin', I'm just here to give ya a hand.

The Great Bambino PUFFS on a massive stogie... the source of all the smoke.

BENNY

B - B - But, you're...

THE BABE

...dead? Legends never die, kid.

Benny comes off the wall. The enormous Ruth towers over him.

BENNY

You're really him. You're The Babe. The Sultan of Swat. The King -

94

THE BABE

- of Krash and a hundred other dopey names. Forget about that, we ain't got much time. I'm here 'cause you're in some kinda pickle, right?

BENNY

Yeah.

THE BABE

A baseball with my John Hancock on it went over a fence, and you can't get it back. Right?

BENNY

Yeah, right.

THE BABE
Then just hop over there and get it. There ya go. Problem solved.
(tips his cap)
See ya, kid.

The Babe turns to go back to wherever he came from. Benny grabs his arm - shocked that he actually feels something "real."

BENNY
Wait! I can't.

THE BABE
Can't what?

BENNY
Go into that backyard.

THE BABE
Why not?

BENNY
There's a Beast back there.

THE BABE
What kind?

BENNY
A giant gorilla-dog-thing that ate one kid already.

THE BABE
Is that a fact? Listen to me, kid.

(MORE)

95

THE BABE (CONT'D)
Everybody gets one chance to do something great. Most people either never take the chance 'cause they're too scared, or they don't recognize it when it spits on their shoes.

(BEAT)
This is your "big chance," and ya shouldn't let it go by.
(PAUSE)
Remember those cards you got the other day?

BENNY
Sure, yeah, five Maury Wills all in the same pack.

THE BABE
What're the odds on that?

BENNY
About a zillion to one.

THE BABE
More even. Someone's tellin' you somethin', kid. And if I was you... I'd listen.

BENNY
Yeah, but what?

THE BABE
You're the one with the rubba legs. Figure it out.

(BEAT)
You gotta do what your heart tells you, else you'll spend the rest of your life wishin' you had.

BENNY
You mean, I should hop that fence - and pickle with THE BEAST?!

THE BABE
Lemme tell you something... you remember that called shot homer I hit?

BENNY
Sure, the greatest most famous and legendary home run of all time.

THE BABE
Yeah, right, well said.

(MORE)
THE BABE (CONT'D)

(BEAT)
Well, you think I knew I was gonna swat that?

BENNY
Sure ya did, Babe.

THE BABE
Not a chance. Matter of fact, all the way down to first I kept sayin' to myself, "you lucky bum."

(BEAT)
Think about that, kid. I'll see ya later.

The Babe disappears back into the closet, then:

THE BABE'S VOICE
Remember, kid. There's heroes and there's Legends. Heroes get remembered... but Legends never die.

(BEAT)
Follow your heart, kid, and you'll never go wrong.

A RACKET in the closet matching:

INT. SCOTTY'S ROOM - DAY

KNUCKLES on glass. Scotty hurries sleepy-eyed to the window and opens it. Benny stands outside, holding a shoe box.

BENNY
(WITH PURPOSE)
I had a dream. Get dressed. We're goin' to the sandlot.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

The guys march toward the rising sun - across the sandlot behind Benny. Toward destiny.

THE GREEN FIBERGLASS FENCE

They stop here. Benny steps forward. He opens the shoe box. Laces on brand new P.F. Flyers. Moves for the fence. Scotty grabs his arm.

SCOTTY
Benny - wait. It's okay, it was my fault. I'll just take whatever I get.
A look in Benny's eyes. Kismet.

BENNY  
(PREDESTINED)
Yeah I do, Smalls. I have to.


THE BABE'S VOICE  
(in Benny's head)  
...Follow your heart, kid, and you'll never go wrong.

Benny turns back one last time. Gives Scotty "Thumbs Up." With a pearl diver's breath - he plunges into...

EXT. BADLANDS - DAY  
...here. He stands fixed, staring hard 'neath the lean-to.

DUST RISES  
from thereunder. ORGANIC EXHAUST. The LAZY CLINKS of heavy chain links... The Beast is rising to its feet.

IT MATERIALIZES  
piece by piece: fore feet the size of a catcher's mitt, bulking head and shoulders, hulking flank and haunches.

BENNY'S  
mouth hangs open. He's frozen, staring at THE BEAST and it's worse than Squints recounted... because it's real.
This is the biggest dog that ever lived! 300 lbs. 4 1/2 feet tall. And ugly. This was a bad idea. The Beast lingers 8 feet away with slack in the chain.

THWOOOP! It spits something out, which rolls in the dirt...

STOPS EXACTLY BETWEEN THEM

A goo-slobbered ball. Dirty Beast-foam drips off, revealing the smeared signature, B A B E R U T H. "G'head kid, I dare you!"

98

A PICKLE

Benny measures The Beast. Times its ballooning chest.

The Beast's eyes glue to Benny. Flopping, hot-water-bottle tongue PANTS. Licks chops. Leather'd nose twitches - smelling for movement.

THE TOE

of Benny's P.F. Flyer digs into the cracked earth.

CLINK

the Beast leans forward - one chain link lifts from the ground.

SHTHUFT!

Benny spits, blowing his tanks.

THE BEAST

bristles.

BENNY'S EYES

widen, focusing.

WAR BREAKS OUT!

Benny goes for the ball.
THE BEAST'S

knotted muscles quaver and UNCOIL.

BENNY'S

P.F. Flyers leave behind tiny dust roosters.

THE BEAST'S

claws dig deep furrows. FOG BANKS of dust spread out behind it. Forelegs gallop at flared, over-anxious angles.

BENNY

leaves scrambling footprints. He slides - grabs the ball - "Pops-Up" Maury Wills fashion - heads back for the fence. The ball slips from Benny's fingers. Re-grabs it - shoves the ball in his teeth, freeing his hands for the leap up the fence.

THE BEAST

gains. SHNAPP! Jaws SHUT like a tripped bear trap.

BENNY

springs off the ground. He's on the fence.

THE BEAST

reaches chain's end - it goes taught. Breaks! The two foot length still attached to The Beast's neck bullwhips - the chain catches Benny in the butt.

BENNY

YOWWWWW!

He vaults over the fence.

EXT. SANDLOT - DAY

The gang looks up. A great shadow envelopes them.
THE BEAST IS LOOSE!

The guys turn to stone. Benny takes off.

BENNY

OOOOH SSSSHIT!

The Beast tears by the guys after Benny. The two vanish out of the sandlot.

SCOTTY

What're we waitin' for?! Let's go after 'em!

EXT. SIDEWALK - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Benny runs. The Beast is gaining. In its wake: dichondra lawns RIPPED to shreds. Scotty and the guys make tracks a block behind.

EXT. FIVE & DIME - DAY

On display: Pinwheels, Mailbox Propellers and Puddle-Jumpers.

Benny flies by. The Beast follows. As they pass, contact: the whirly-gigs take off!

INT. CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

A MOTHER drives. In the passenger seat, her TODDLER fingers a "scooter-pie" in marshmallowy strings.

100

TODDLER

(BEAMING)

Mommy, mommy - wook! Ah, ah - goggy!

(BEAT)

Big goggy.

The Mother looks out the passenger window.

ON THE SIDEWALK

Benny and The Beast run even. Then pull ahead.
EXT. "SNELGROVE'S" ICE CREAM - DAY

Gag per storyboards - t.b.d.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Benny's cookin'. The Beast follows - TRASHCANS SCATTER like bowling pins.

Scotty and the guys follow. All slow to check out the garbage bins... so many crushed beer cans.

Benny darts in the rear entrance to a "random" building. The Beast tears after him - KNOCKING the door off its hinges.

INT. BOYS CLUB AUDITORIUM - DAY

ON THE MOVIE SCREEN Kong does battle with T Rex.

   BENNY

comes sliding AT US across the waxed stage floor - from under the movie screen. He slides off the stage - into midair - lands on his feet. Splits up the aisle between the rows of folding chairs and blasts out the door.

   KIDS' HEADS

turn to watch him. KONG ROARS! They look back at THE MOVIE SCREEN

where, just as Kong proclaims himself king over the dead T Rex,

   THE BEAST

Leaps through the center of the silver screen - leaves a 6 foot hole - lands 20 feet down the aisle - CRASHES through the doors and disappears.

Moments pass. Our guys follow.

101

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Hot-rubber SQUEAKS from Benny's P.F. Flyers. The Beast's
claws leave jagged scars in the concrete.

CATS HISS

in terror and faint.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL DECK - DAY

POOL HONEYS lounge, all bedecked with rock-hard, Annette Funicello hairdo's.

Benny blasts out of the pool building, "tire stepping" over the Honeys. They're up and RANTING at him. Until, The Beast comes...

...sliding across the water-slippy deck like an out-of-control anvil. He "bowling pins" the Pool Honeys. The Honeys HIT THE WATER.

Benny cuts back through the pool building. The Beast follows parting our guys and the other Kids.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAY

Game in progress. From outta nowhere, Benny jams across the diamond. The game stops... EVERYONE gapes at:

Some huge dog-beast charging after a kid.

EXT. CITY PARK - PICNIC AREA - DAY

Big banner: "FOUNDER'S DAY!" Perfectly arranged picnic blankets covered with wonderful spreads of goodies.

BENNY

zips under the banner - runs through - grabs a Coke like a long distance runner.

THE BEAST

rages after him, through:

A DEADEND! MIDWAY

of neatly arranged display booths. (This is pie n' cake booth gag per storyboards - allow 2 pages.)
102

Founder's Day parade (et al).

BENNY

rips into the square. He rubba-leg zigzags, nimbly avoiding everything and everyone.

THE BEAST

Is a runaway freight train. He PLOWS through CLOWNS. CHILDREN are snatched from the dog's path by terrified parents. The Beast tears through the concession stands:

VATS & DISPENSERS

EXPLODE! The VOLUNTEERS dash out SCREAMING - "tar n' featherd" with baked beans and potato chips.

BENNY

zips through the MARCHING BAND - ducking trombone slides - leaping glockenspiels.

THE BEAST

ain't so graceful. He "barn-doors" the band. CRASH! An instrument tangled heap.

THE ONLOOKERS

pour into the street, knocking the MAYOR from his convertible, and the FOUNDER'S DAY QUEEN from her float.

FROM THIS HEIGHT

this all looks like the end of a "Dr. Suess" book!

SCOTTY AND THE GANG
search through the confusion. _They've lost Benny!_ Suddenly, doubling back on them

**BENNY**

**SHOOTS BY:**

**BENNY**

Sandlot!

Benny's gone. Seconds later - The Beast follows.

**SQUINTS**

This way! Shortcut!

103

**THE GANG**

forges through the disaster.

**EXT. THE SANDLOT - MR. MERTLE'S FENCE - DAY**

The gang's GASping for BREATH. And then, unbelievably

**BENNY & THE BEAST**

Are coming right at them! They race across the sandlot. Kill- anxious beast-drool splashes the seat of Benny's pants.

**THE BEAST'S**

muscles flex.

**BENNY**

just runs. He runs as if a big dog was chasing him. He lurches a step - RIP! A pants pocket flaps from an incisor.

**BENNY**

**LOOK OUT!**

He lays down the world's all-time most perfect SLIDE. He careens toward the bottom of
MR. MERTLE'S FENCE

hits it and, defying gravity, RUNS STRAIGHT UP THE GREEN FIBERGLASS PANELS!

BENNY

jets upward, leaving smashed green fiberglass footsteps - standing out from the fence 90 degrees - the Donald O'Connor "Singin' In The Rain" trick!

THE BEAST

sucks air - ROARS - EXPLODES from the ground - soars, gaping maw first, right for

BENNY

who pushes off the top of the fence.

THE BEAST

GNASHES up at Benny's heels - misses by an inch. He plummets toward the Badlands. Then, the unspeakable happens,

104

BENNY

DROPS

THE BABE RUTH AUTOGRAPH

and comes tumbling down after the ball.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Oh noooooo!

EXT. THE BADLANDS - DAY

Benny HITS the dirt with a gut twising THUD! Dust everywhere.

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

The gang climbs the fence. They look down into
EXT. THE BADLANDS - DAY

where, when the dust clears, they see

BENNY

holding the Babe Ruth Autograph up high like a trophy.

BENNY

I GOT IT!

THE GANG

hops down and races over. Suddenly, from the

FENCETOP

His shirt snagged:

SCOTTY

Help him! I'm stuck! I'm stuck! Help him!

THE BEAST

is hanging from the fence. His chain has caught. He struggles -

choking to death - right below Scotty.

THE GANG

petrifies where they stand.

105

SCOTTY

tears his shirt loose. Scrambles to where The Beast hangs. Tries to lift the tow chain free - too heavy! He'll die in seconds.

SCOTTY

Pick him up! Scoot him up so I can let him off! (DESPERATE)

COME ON!
NOBODY

moves. They wanna but they can’t!

SCOTTY

goes for broke. He reaches out and puts his hand on The Beast's head.

SCOTTY (CONT'D) (CONTACT)

Easy. Easy, boy.

THE BEAST

whimpers. Scotty balances atop the fence. Grabs the tow chain. Lifts with all his might... his fingers bleed. The Beast goes limp. An inch. That did it! The beast falls.

SCOTTY

goes with him - 8 feet to the dirt. The FENCE COMES DOWN - breaking the barrier to the sandlot. He lands on the ground NOSE TO NOSE

with The Beast.

SCOTTY

leaps to his feet.

THE BEAST

rises with him.

SCOTTY

freezes solid.

106

THE GANG

watches in horror.

THE BEAST
scans them instinctively - He might kill them all where they stand.

**SCOTTY'S**

about to load up his fruit o' da looms.

**THE BEAST**

sticks his mammoth head right in Scotty's face. SNIFFS. It! The kid is lunch! His jowls part - hot BEAST-BREATH BLOWS Scotty's hair back.

**SCOTTY**

closes his eyes.

**THE GANG**

SLAP their hands to their eyesockets.

**THE BEAST**

leans closer. Mouth opens. Cold-leather nose presses against Scotty's forehead. Then... He licks Scotty's face.

**SCOTTY**

wipes away the Beast slob. He doesn't even have to kneel down to read the name on The Beast's "doggy tag." It says...

...Hercules.

This time Scotty gives Benny "Thumbs Up."

**UNDER THE LEAN-TO**

Hercules digs, then stands away.

**THE GANG**

steps closer. Look into the hole. Their faces light up with wonder. In

**THE HOLE**

Are 150 baseballs.
THE GANG'S BLOWN AWAY

BENNY
We can play forever now.

SCOTTY
takes The Beast by the collar. He and Benny go to

MR. MERTLE'S BACK DOOR

Scotty KNOCKS. MR. MERTLE answers the door. An old man with dark glasses. He comes out on the porch.

MR. MERTLE
Hello?...

SCOTTY
Um, we brought your dog home.

MR. MERTLE
Hercules? How'd he get out?

SCOTTY
Well, sir... um, we kind of, well, what happened was -

BENNY
- we hit a baseball into your yard. Then we tried to get it and -

MR. MERTLE
- why didn't you just come to the door... I'd have gotten it for you.

Squints, Yeah-Yeah, Ham, DeNunez, Repeat, Timmy and Bertram faint.

MR. MERTLE (CONT'D)
Well, thanks for bringin' him back.

(BEAT)
Why don't you boys come in... we can talk about baseball.

INT. MR. MERTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Fairly spartan, except for one room, where it seems that Mr.
Mertle spends most of his time. He leads Benny and Scotty into the baseball room.

Mr. Mertle sits at a table. Benny and Scotty stare at the tabletop.

It holds a scale model Baseball Diamond: green felt field and little bases, outfield wall and miniature player figures. A picture on the wall of Mr. Mertle and Babe Ruth.

SCOTTY
You knew Babe Ruth?

MR. MERTLE
Yeah. And he knew me too.

(Beat)
They never let us play together, but we were friends. Good friends. He was almost as great a hitter as I was. But, he'd of told you he was better.

The picture is signed: "To Thelonius Johnson Mertle, the second greatest slugger I ever saw... Babe Ruth."

A baseball game on the radio. As each play is called, Mr. Mertle's hands deftly put his tiny players in the correct positions. Mr. Mertle is blind.

MR. MERTLE (CONT'D)
(HOLDING BALL)
This the one that went over my fence?

BENNY
Yeah.

Mr. Mertle brushes his fingers over the leather.

MR. MERTLE
This is an old ball, boys. Really old.

(Beat)
Hercules gave it a good chewing, didn't
SCOTTY (WEAK)
Yes, sir.

MR. MERTLE
You sound upset, son - what's wrong?

SCOTTY
Well, you see... that ball belongs to my stepdad... and, uh - it was signed by Babe Ruth.

Mr. Mertle shakes his head... hands the ball to Scotty.

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MR. MERTLE
Hmm. Well, I'm sure your dad will understand.

SCOTTY
I don't think so.

On the RADIO, Wills steals second.

MR. MERTLE (TO BENNY)
Son, move Maury Wills to second base for me, will ya?

Benny moves the little figure to second base.

MR. MERTLE (CONT'D)
If he steals third that'll be number 100.

(TO SCOTTY)
Helluva pickle you're in, boy.

SCOTTY
Yes, sir...

Mr. Mertle retrieves something from a glass case. A baseball.

MR. MERTLE
I'll make you a deal. If you boys
come over once a week and talk baseball with me, I'll trade you balls.

BENNY
Well, that's really nice of you... but this ball really is signed by The Babe.

MR. MERTLE
(CHUCKLES)
This one really is too... and all the rest of the '27 Yankees.

He hands his baseball to Scotty... Benny stares at it in disbelief.

BENNY
Oh my God - Murderers' Row.

As they ogle the ball:

BENNY (CONT'D)
(AWED)
Lou Gehrig...

110

SCOTTY
Babe Ruth.

MR. MERTLE
(SMILING)
They're all there.

Scotty hands Mr. Mertle the chewed up Babe Ruth ball. Shakes his hand.

SCOTTY
Deal.

On the RADIO, Maury Wills steals 3rd for his 100th stolen base. Scotty notices the wall clock:

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Mom's car is in the driveway. Scotty goes up the walkway slowly. Benny just behind him. The gang lingers at the
sidewalk. Scotty sets one foot on the PORCH and Bill comes out. He looks none-too-pleased. He towers over Scotty. The gang hangs their heads.

BILL
This better be good.

Benny unpockets a little felt bag. Hands it to Scotty. He holds the bag up to a perplexed Bill, who opens it. He looks from Scotty to Benny and back again. Then...

...stares down at the "Murderers' Row" ball.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCOTTY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

A BASEBALL sailing through the air. SMACK! it's caught in a brand new glove. Scotty's new glove. Scotty snap throws the ball back to Bill. He and Scotty are having a great game of catch.

NARRATOR
It was weird that Benny said Babe Ruth was like the Hercules of baseball, and then The Beast's name turned out to be Hercules.

(BEAT)
It was also strange that Mr. Mertle had a Murderers' Row ball to replace the one signed by The Babe.

111

Bill and Scotty smile as they fire the cowhide back and forth.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Some people might say that it was all a coincidence... but looking back at it now, it seems like everything was connected, just like me and Benny.

(BEAT)
It was like we were a part of the same myth as The Babe... the Myth of
Baseball.

Scotty's mom sticks her head out the back door. She smiles, watching her "two boys" toss the ball around.

MOM
Guys, supper's ready.

DAD
(FORMERLY BILL)
Give us another ten minutes. I'm helpin' my boy break in his new glove.

INT. MR. MERTLE'S BASEBALL ROOM - DAY

Mr. Mertle sits contentedly behind his little "diamond." The RADIO ANNOUNCER calls Maury Wills' 104th steal of 1962.

MR. MERTLE'S DIAMOND

HIS HAND moves a wooden figure from 1st to 2nd. This tactile "playing field" becomes...

EXT. THE SANDLOT - DAY

...this one, where the guys are playing ball. There's a new addition to their team. A mascot. A big mascot.

HERCULES

in a t-shirt and cap.

THE GUYS

all play as if, somehow, this may be the last time they ever get to be a team. As they play, they're "sponged" from the PICTURE in this order: Yeah-Yeath, Repeat and Timmy, Ham, DeNunez, Bertram, Squints, Hercules, Scotty, Benny.

NARRATOR
That was the last summer that we all got to play together.

(MORE)

112

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
But it would stay with us forever.
(as they all dissolve:)
Yeah-Yeah's parents shipped him off to military school. Timmy and Tommy grew up to build skyscrapers. Ham went to college and became a pediatrician. DeNunez played triple A ball and never got to the majors. Bertram got really into the sixties and no one ever saw him again. Squints grew up and married Wendy Peffercorn; they bought the Five & Dime and they still own it to this day. Hercules lived to be 199 years old... in human years.

Everyone but Benny has vanished from the Sandlot.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
After Benny pickled the Beast, his reputation spread all over town. From then on he was known as Benny "The Juet" Rodriguez.

BENNY'S P.F. FLYER
comes down on home plate and vanishes, leaving

THE SANDLOT
empty.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
The nickname stuck with him the rest of his life.

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - PRESENT - DAY

Dodger stadium. A ROAR goes up inside the ballpark.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(FAMILIAR)
That's a triple, and that'll put the winning run on third, with two out in the bottom of the ninth. What a shot!

EXT. DODGER STADIUM - INFIELD - DAY

From the dugout, TOMMY LASORDA calls for a pinch runner. A PLAYER comes out of the dugout, stripping off his warm-up jacket.
ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Lasorda's sending in a pinch runner - and it'll be...

(DRAMATIC PAUSE)
I don't believe it! Lasorda's calling up the "Old Man" to pinch-run in the biggest clutch situation this season! They say the veteran's lost a step or two. But if I were you, I'd get ready for some fireworks.

THE CROWD

is on its feet as 40-year-old BENNY "THE JET" RODRIGUEZ takes over third base from the PLAYER already there. They shake hands on the exchange. The 3rd base COACH walks over to The Jet. Pats him on the back.

COACH
(GRINNING)
Give 'em hell, Jet.

THE JET
I'll do my best, Maury.

The Coach moves into the coaching box... turning his back to us. Emblazoned across his jersey, is the name W I L L S.

THE PITCHER
takes the signal.

THE JET
leads off 3rd base - ten steps! The Pitcher fires to 3rd. The Jet hand tags.

THE PITCHER
settles.

THE JET
leads off. Eleven steps.

THE PITCHER
fires to 3rd again. The Jet gets back.

**THE JET**

leads off again. Twelve steps. The pitch - strike. The 
CATCHER tosses it back. Just then...

**114**

...The Jet moves. So fast that no one knows he's gone till it's too damn late. The Pitcher awkwardly throws home. The Catcher wipes the baseline. Too late...

...the dust clears. The UMPIRE eagle-wings the air.

**UMPIRE**

SAFE! SAFE! SAFE!

The tag missed by two feet. It's all over. The Crowd jumps to its feet. The Dodger dugout is all over The Jet.

**ANNOUNCER (V.O.)**

The Dodgers win the pennant! The Dodgers win the pennant!

The Jet breaks through his adoring teammates just long enough to give "Thumbs Up" to...

**ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

I don't believe it, the Old Man stole home! The Old Man -

**INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOX - DAY**

...39-year-old SCOTT SMALLS - The Announcer - who returns "Thumbs Up."

**SCOTT**

(after a pause)
The Jet stole home! The Jet stole home!!

**EXT. DODGER STADIUM - INFIELD - DAY**

The Jet signs autographs for swarming KIDS. As the CROWD'S
CHEERING CONTINUES and ECHOES into the past, we

CUT TO:

A FADED KODACHROME PHOTO

of the 9 best (11-year-old) buddies that ever lived. On a

makeshit baseball diamond - a sandlot... circa 1962. They're
all holding something forward - displaying - one palm up,
hand beneath another - together like the nine musketeers:

A baseball. A baseball with a familiar smudge.

END TITLES.

FADE OUT.

THE END