

THE SANDLOT

by

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The Sandlot

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" PALLEDDOROUS, 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. pause 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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 PRESLEY 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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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-Yeah 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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCOTTY

remains undercover, but he's bustin' to join in.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 nightttime.

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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CONTINUED:

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 had to 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 others 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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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/mouhtful)

So, Scott, this is Ken DeNunez; Alan McClennan, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Benny 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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

(concocting)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Blurbliing pockets of super-heated muck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURNED-OUT SHELLS

of twisted vehicles - strewn carcasses. A battlefield.

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

like savaged shopping carts. A school bus graveyard. Scrap
motorbikes. Cargo ship buoy balls. The gutted shell of a
fighter plane.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 in ski masks.)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 fistled 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(NOTE: 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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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... it's
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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Scotty pours over his "Baseball Stuff To Remember" list: 2. Maury Wills, 3. Mickey Mantle, 4. Willie Mays, 5. Hank Aaron, 6. Stan Musial, 7. Lou Brock, 8. Luis Aparicio, 9. Brooks Robinson, 10. Frank Robinson, 11. Bob Uecker. Right Field is near the green fence. Left Field is in the left. Double play gets two outs. Triple play is impossible. Single is good. Double is better. Home run is best. And, ominously, "Don't get in a pickle or you're dead!" And one entry that's double question marked: 1. The Great Bambino??

EXT. SANDLOT - SUNSET

The Guys play in magic hour. CRACK!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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-yeah, 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...

INT. BENNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

...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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 intently.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

playing hard beneath them. Snap throws. Basket catches.
Snatching grounders.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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, Rodriquez.

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

PLAAAAAAAY BALLLLLLLLLL!

DENUNEZ

strikes out

BATTER 1

Whif. Whif. Whif.

BATTER 2

grounds to

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YEAH-YEAH

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 pouch 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Smalls. Smalls. Smalls. Smalls.

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 soemthing - somebody gave it to him. We have to get it back. He's gonna kill me!

SQUINTS

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

A tree house debate. Much shouting. Much disagreement. Many hands miming mechanical contraptions.

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 FEROCIOUS 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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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)
A-okay. Roger, affirmative. Initiate
retrieval suction.

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!

EXT. BADLANDS - NIGHT

THE BASEBALL moves a lot!

INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT

They throw eureka switch three! RRRWEEEEOOOHHH!

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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 B A B E R U T H, 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-Yeah SHOUTS to Ham at the tunnel entrance.

YEAH-YEAH

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-Yeah is unconscious on the grass. The guys turn a hose on him. He comes 'round SCREAMING:

YEAH-YEAH

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

SQUINTS

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

YEAH-YEAH

(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-Yeah snaps out of it.

YEAH-YEAH

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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-yeah, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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 -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(clear and simple)

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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.
You don't have to do this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A look in Benny's eyes. Kismet.

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

Benny turns from him - swallows hard. Swings himself onto the

TOP OF THE FENCE

and balances - deciding.

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!"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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-slippery 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.)

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NEARBY - DAY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

rips 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. Seuss" 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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 twisting 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. That's 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 he?

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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-Yeah, Repeat and Timmy, Ham, DeNunez, Bertram, Squints, Hercules, Scotty, Benny.

NARRATOR

That was the last summer that we all got to play together.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...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 makeshift 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE END