

Chasing the Dream

By

Phil A. Savage

Registered: WGAe R28406

Cell: (905) 379-7349

Email: chasingthedreammovie@aol.com

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BALLPARK - DAY

SUPER: **Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, May 2009.**

Inside of a single unkempt, sand lot ballpark, potholes and weeds everywhere.

PHIL SANDERS (38) athletic, short hair, happy-go-lucky, wears a Toronto Blue Jays hat and t-shirt. Awkwardly hits ground balls to 12 year old boys.

PHIL
That's it Charlie, stay down on it.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Johnny, you have to stay in front
of the ball, you know better.

AMY SANDERS (30) ponytail, light complexion, emotional but willing to please, sits in the bleachers.

Amy hears a cell phone ring, she reaches down to the phone by her feet that is sitting on a Toronto Blue Jays jacket, grabs the phone with her left hand as we see her wedding ring. The phone has a Toronto Blue Jays cover on it as we hear the "ok Blue Jays" ring tone. Amy looks at the caller ID that says Forest City Cardinals and lets it go to voice mail. She then listens to the message.

JAMES (V.O.)
Phil, this is James Fox, I'm the
General Manager of the Forest City
Cardinals down in North Carolina. I
know it's kinda at the last minute,
I've got a volunteer assistant
coaching position available for
this summer. Get back to me ASAP if
your still available.

Amy pauses, deletes the message then bites her lip with worry.

EXT. PAVED TRAIL - DUSK

Phil and Amy walk along a paved trail.

AMY
Okay, spill it, what are you
thinking about?

Phil turns around and walks backwards in front of Amy.

PHIL

If I can't find a collegiate summer ball team in the states to help coach, I'm screwed. I dunno what more I can do, I've emailed over 200 teams all across the US. That Scout with the Blue Jays said if I wanna be a Scout one day I really need to be around good college ball players.

AMY

I know, but I thought there's only a week til' these summer leagues get started.

Phil walks beside Amy again, with a pissed off look on his face while Amy has a very worried look on her face.

EXT. INDIANA UNIVERSITY BASEBALL STADIUM - DAY

The loud PING of a metal baseball bat striking a baseball is heard in the distance as the IU Baseball team is taking batting practice. MATT HAYNES, (25) bald, tall, skinny and pale, uptight and serious, wears his red IU baseball pullover jacket that says Coach Haynes on the heart in white letters. Haynes hears his cell phone ring, stops walking and answers.

EXT. FOREST CITY CARDINALS OFFICE - DAY

A red vinyl sign with white letters says Forest City Cardinals.

INT. CARDINALS OFFICE - DAY

JAMES FOX, (40) pale, short hair, serious, sits at his desk where a name plate says James Fox, General Manager, wears a White Cardinals golf shirt with name tag that says James.

INT. CARDINALS OFFICE / INDIANA U. BALL PARK - DAY

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE - MATT / JAMES

JAMES

Hey Matt, I finally got hold of you.

MATT

Hey James, what's up?

JAMES

Remember that assistant coach from Asheville that was supposed to come down here and help coach this summer?

MATT

Yeah, what about him?

JAMES

Well, he was in a wreck a couple days ago and broke his leg so he ain't comin'.

We continue to hear the ping of baseballs being hit.

MATT

What the hell James, we only have a week til' the summer season starts and you wait two days to tell me this?

JAMES

Yeah well I've been trying to find someone to replace him. The problem is, all these college assistant coaches have found other summer ball teams to coach.

MATT

So now what? You need to find me someone who will do the team laundry all summer, Mac did it all last summer, I told him he's not doing it again.

JAMES

I do have one guy, he's not a college coach though, his name is Phil Sanders. He's a Canadian, has some coaching experience. Just give him a uniform and tell him he's a volunteer assistant coach. He can stay in the coaches locker room and we'll get him to wash the uniforms.

MATT

What the hell James, so he's not even a college coach! Sure, why the hell not. I gotta go.

END INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Amy works at a flower shop with co-worker SUSAN (35) long hair, friendly lady.

SUSAN

You're awfully quiet this morning.

AMY

Sorry Susan, I'm just thinking.

SUSAN

I can always tell when somethins' bothering you, so what's up girlfriend?

AMY

Well, you know how Phil really wants to go coach baseball in the States this summer so he can be a Scout?

SUSAN

Uh, huh.

AMY

He got a voicemail on his cell phone from a baseball team last night and they offered him a position for this summer.

SUSAN

Wow! that's great! So what's the problem?

AMY

(sheepish)

It's only a volunteer coaching position and it's in North Carolina and well, I deleted it.

Amy grabs her pack of cigarettes on the counter then tosses them back down in frustration.

SUSAN

You what, You deleted it! You went into his voicemail and deleted it! So you never told him about the call, why would you do that, I thought Phil's been looking forever for a baseball team to coach in the US?

AMY

I know, I know, I don't know if I wanna be by myself for the whole summer. It didn't really matter til' now because he didn't have a team.

SUSAN

You just can't stand the thought of Phil going away without you.

AMY

Yeah, well put yourself in my shoes, what if Dave wanted to go on the road with his band for the whole summer?

SUSAN

Well, I'm not in your shoes, all I know is that if Phil is as passionate about baseball as Dave is with his music, if you don't tell him, karma will get you!

Amy's finger is picked by a rose thorn, shakes her hand.

AMY

OWWWWW!

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Phil walks into the dining room with a cup of coffee, sits down and checks his email at the computer, suddenly his eyes open wide along with his mouth in amazement.

PHIL

Holy crap! I just got an email from a baseball team! He says his name is James, the GM of the Forest City Cardinals, he says he's got a coaching position for me for this summer.

Amy, comes out from the kitchen while drying a plate, tries to look surprised while hiding her fear of already knowing, yet show excitement for Phil.

AMY

Holy crap, that's awesome! So where is this Forest City?

PHIL

Ummm It's in North Carolina.

AMY

North Carolina, Oh my god, that's so far away!

PHIL

I know, but it's in the South where really good college players are, It could help me a lot.

AMY

So how in the world are you supposed to go down there if you have no car?

PHIL

I guess I'd have to fly.

Amy starts to cry.

AMY

So what am I supposed to do without you for two months? It didn't really matter til' now because you didn't have a team but this is suddenly too real.

Phil gets up from the table and paces back and fourth.

PHIL

We've had so many talks about me having to go away in the summer if I wanna be a baseball Scout and you never had a problem with it.

AMY

We didn't have talks. You brought it up over and over, I never agreed to anything. It's just so sudden. We've never really been apart in the 6 years we've been married.

PHIL

This could be the only chance I get, if you let me go, I promise I'll call you every couple days. You'll be alright, you have the dogs to keep you company along with Susan. I tell ya what, if you let me go, I'll take you to Sandals for your Birthday!

Amy wipes the tears from her eyes and settles down.

AMY

Just answer one question for me,
why? Why do you have this need to
be a baseball Scout?

PHIL

All I know is baseball, inside and
out, you know this. I want to do
something that matters.

AMY

Well, I don't wanna be the one who
gets in the way of living your
dream. You can't take your cell
phone with you, it'll cost too much
for roaming from the US.

PHIL

Does this mean I can go?

AMY

Yes, At least I won't have to hear
you talk non stop about baseball
all summer.

Phil gives Amy a giant hug that lifts her off the floor as
she drops the plate which crashes to the floor and breaks.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

The next morning Amy is in the washroom, we can hear her
throwing up followed by the sound of the toilet flushing then
water running from the sink when Amy comes out of the
washroom with a very concerned look on her face. Amy looks up
to Susan, holds up a pregnancy text wand and starts to cry.
Susan quickly comes over to Amy and hugs her.

SUSAN

Oh my god! Your pregnant.

Susan and Amy slightly separate.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

What's wrong? I thought you two
want to have a baby.

AMY

Yeah, we do but not now. Phil got
that coaching position but probably
won't go if I tell him I'm
pregnant.

SUSAN

Why? It's only for what a couple months?

AMY

Yeah, I know but I know him, there's no way he'll want to leave me at home alone all summer.

SUSAN

So don't tell him.

AMY

No way! There's no way I'm going not tell him he's going to be a father.

SUSAN

Well whatever happens, I'm here for you.

Susan hugs Amy again.

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amy is washing the dishes while Phil dries.

PHIL

Why are you so quiet? Is everything alright?

Amy turns to face Phil.

AMY

You might want to put down the plate before we lose any more dishes.

Phil puts the plate in the dish rack and looks at Amy with a concerned look on his face.

AMY (CONT'D)

I'm pregnant.

PHIL

Oh my god! That's awesome!

Phil gives Amy a HUGE hug, again lifting her off her feet.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Wow, that changes everything. There's no way I'm gonna leave you by yourself for most of the summer.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm gunna stay home with you and
work my butt off to save money.

AMY

No way! I'm not going to let you
ruin your dream. It's only two
months. You have to go down there
and learn so you can become the
best baseball Scout you possibly
can.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Phil wears a Toronto Blue Jays t-shirt & hat, Amy starts to
cry as they see the bus coming.

PHIL

Are you sure your going to be
alright?

AMY

Yes, I'll have Susan, I'll be fine.
I'm more worried about you. You
don't even know these people.

PHIL

They're baseball people, I'll be
alright. I promise, I'll call every
couple days.

Tears roll down Amy's face.

Phil and Amy kiss.

Phil enters the city bus with his large suitcase and travel
bag as it pulls away. Amy turns and walks away, tears stream
down her face.

Song: *Before You Go* - Lewis Capaldi.

EXT. BUFFALO AIRPORT - DAY

From the air, we see the airport terminal followed by an
American Airlines plane taking off.

INT. CHARLOTTE AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Phil waits at the baggage carousel with his luggage after
everyone else has left, looks at his watch and waits for his
ride to arrive.

OWEN (22) A bit scruffy with a beat up Red Cardinals hat and t-shirt, walks towards Phil.

OWEN
You must be Phil, I pulled up
outside but didn't see you so I had
to park.

PHIL
Oh crap, sorry about that.

Phil and Owen shake hands.

EXT./INT. OWEN'S TRUCK - DAY

Owen drives on the Interstate towards Forest City.

PHIL
So are you a coach or something?

OWEN
Me? No, just an intern. Did ya'
know the other Cardinals coaches
all know each other? Coach Haynes,
the Cardinals Head Coach, usually
coaches at Limestone College with
Mike Ranson but he's currently an
assistant at Indiana. Ranson's the
Cardinals Pitching Coach. Another
guy named Mac, was a player at
Limestone who just graduated, is
also helpin' coach the Cardinals.

PHIL
Oh so they all know each other,
they should get along pretty well.

OWEN
That they do! Ya see, I just
graduated from Limestone. They're
all pretty tight, walkin' around
campus like they own the place, at
least Haynes and Ranson. I just
wanted to let you know what you're
getting yourself into but ya didn't
hear it from me.

EXT. INSIDE MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

A beautiful new ballpark, cement concourse and 3000 permanent
seats, a real gem.

Owen drops Phil off on the concourse and drives away, Phil is then greeted by James.

JAMES

Hey Phil, good to meet you. I do have to let you know that I was the one who talked to Coach Haynes and convinced him to let you come down here this summer. You're not a college coach so we need you to help out in the clubhouse a bit.

PHIL

No problem, whatever I can do to help, I'm just happy to be here.

James and Phil walk toward the picnic tables as James introduces him to Ranson and Mac.

JAMES

Here's your Canadian volunteer assistant coach, Phil Sanders.

RANSON, (24) clean cut with a GQ model look, friendly but like a used car salesman, unsure of his sincerity.

MAC, (21) chubby, country boy. Wears his old beat up Limestone baseball hat, usually has a dip of chewing tobacco in his mouth, happy-go-lucky and a Southern accent.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well Phil, welcome to little ole' Forest City, North Carolina. I have to get back to the office, these guys can show you your living quarters for the next couple months. Mac, make sure to show Phil how to use the washer and dryer.

James walks away. Phil with a bewildered look as Ranson and Mac sit on top of one of the picnic tables.

MAC

Hey, got any of that Canadian bacon with ya?

Phil gives Mac a weird...I don't think so look.

PHIL

Yeah, I've got a couple packs in my suitcase along with a bottle of Maple Syrup.

RANSON

I was just texting with Coach Haynes who was coaching with Indiana, they just got knocked out of the Louisville Regional and should be here in a few days.

PHIL

So we're on our own to start the season?

RANSON

BINGO!

Mac spits Dip into his Hardees cup and chuckles.

MAC

We're so screwed!

PHIL

Why what's wrong?

RANSON

We're gonna have thirty five hundred people here in a couple days for our home opener, and no head coach. I have enough with my Pitchers to worry about, chuckles over here just graduated from college. What do you bring to the table, have you coached any college players back in Canada?

Phil, very intimidated, knowing he doesn't have much coaching experience.

PHIL

I've got a few years of coaching experience, mostly little leaguers but did coach in a men's league last summer.

MAC

We're soooooo freakin' screwed!

Mac spits Dip into his Hardees cup again and chuckles.

RANSON

Shut the hell up Mac! I'll ask Haynes what he wants us to do. So Phil, it's great to have more help but tell me what are ya doin' here?

PHIL

Well, I'm trying to get more coaching experience especially in a league with good college players. What I really want is to be a baseball Scout. I was talking to a Canadian Scout with the Blue Jays who said this would really help my chances.

RANSON

You should get back to your guy with the Blue Jays and find out who their area Scout is down here, get a hold of him and ask to be a Bird Dog for the summer.

Phil has a puzzled look on his face.

PHIL

Bird Dog?

RANSON

Sorry, that's slang for Associate Scout. It's like an internship, where you watch players and if someone really stands out, you tell the area scout about him and hopefully he'll take a look at him. Over a few years you'll build credibility and a reference.

Phil looks completely shocked to hear this from Ranson.

RANSON (CONT'D)

At least your in the right place, the Coastal Plain League is one of the top summer leagues in the country, just behind The Cape. A lot of the players that play up there, come from colleges down here in the South.

INT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE WASHROOM - DAY

The three assistant coaches stand in the shower area between the players locker room and the coaches locker room where the commercial size stainless steel washer and dryer are.

MAC
(to Phil)
I'm gonna show you how to use the
washer and dryer, I washed the team
uniforms last summer after every
game so it's your turn!

Again, Phil looks shocked.

PHIL
Ahhh, where's the detergent?

All 3 coaches look around the washer and dryer and see
nothing.

MAC
Cheese and Rice! James. I'll call
him later and find out where it's
at.

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Phil sleeps very uncomfortably on an old flowery couch in the
coaches locker room.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - MORNING

Phil wears a different Toronto Blue Jays t-shirt, stands on
the concourse above the first base dugout, notices ALEX (21)
skinny, short black hair, who walks down from the press box
wearing khaki shorts and a red Forest City Cardinals golf
shirt.

ALEX
Nice ball park huh.

PHIL
Yeah, it's quite something, I bet a
lotta' minor league ball parks
don't look this good. I'm Phil
Sanders, one of the Cardinals
Assistant Coaches.

Alex and Phil Shake hands.

ALEX
I'm Alex, I'm the media guy, I do
the Cardinals game broadcasts on
the internet along with the team
stats. I just graduated from the
University of Miami in broadcast
journalism.

PHIL

Oh wow, that's great, I had no idea the games will be on the internet. Will my wife be able to listen to the games back home?

ALEX

Let me take you to the Cardinals office and meet Debbie, the Assistant General Manager.

INT. CARDINALS OFFICE - DAY

The Cardinals office is small with 4 desks and a few racks of Cardinals t-shirts and hats for sale.

DEBBIE (35) long blond hair, friendly, wears a Cardinals golf shirt and name tag, sits at her desk with stacks of paper.

DEBBIE

(to Phil)

Here's the password to the internet broadcasts of the games.

PHIL

Thank you very much, I really appreciate it.

DEBBIE

Hey, no problem. So you haven't met Coach Haynes yet, you're in store for a real treat! Before I forget, one of the players named Travis just called, he should be pullin' up any second, could you show him where the players locker room is and get him his uniforms?

PHIL

Sure, no problem.

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Phil and TRAVIS (20) skinny, short red hair and friendly, enter the players locker room where four other Cardinals players rummage through boxes of team shorts, shirts and socks.

WADE (20) athletic and muscular, mature for his age, looks out for fellow NC State teammate Pratt, wears an NC State baseball hat and t-shirt.

PRATT (19) skinny, long hair touching shoulders, immature for his age, talks like a Skater Kid, also wears an NC State baseball hat and t-shirt.

ROBBIE (20) skinny, tall, scruffy with a bit of a speech impediment, wears a VCU baseball hat and t-shirt.

JOE (19) short hair, athletic and muscular, Italian and serious, wears a University of Maine baseball hat and t-shirt.

The players locker room, light tan wooden lockers surround the white cinder block walls, a folding table in the middle of the room and a couple dingy old flowery couches.

PHIL

Hey everyone, I'm Coach Sanders,
let's see what we got here.

Phil has to show some authority, sees a note that James left with the boxes.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Hold on a second, let me see what this says, each player gets - 1 pair a Black Cardinals shorts, 2 Red practice shirts and 2 pairs a socks. Are we good with that?

PRATT

Yeah, sure coach, I got ya, no problem.

WADE

Okay dumb ass, why do you have 3 pairs of socks?

PRATT

Ohhh my bad!

PHIL

Alright, grab your stuff and make sure your all back here at 7 for practice.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL - DAY

There's a pay phone at the end of the parking lot of the Dollar General store, next door to the clubhouse. Phil is on the payphone while Amy is sitting in the living room at home.

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - PHIL / AMY

PHIL

Hi hun! How are you?

AMY

Don't hi hun me, why didn't you call me last night after getting there? I was waiting for you. I miss you so much.

PHIL

Yeah, I know. Things are crazy here, the head coach isn't even here yet and players are still comin' into town. How are you doing? Are you feeling alright?

AMY

I guess I'm doin' alright. Why is the head coach not there yet? Don't you start playing tomorrow night?

PHIL

Oh coach Haynes, he was with his college team at a tournament and got knocked out so he should be here in a couple days. I have a password for you for the internet broadcasts of our games, just use our email address and FC2009 for the password.

AMY

So I'll be able to listen to the games online, It might put me to sleep but I'll do my best. Where did you find a phone?

PHIL

I'm on a payphone at this discount store called Dollar General right next to the locker rooms.

AMY

So how are things going so far?

Phil takes a deep breath.

PHIL

I'm still getting settled in but I dunno if I can do this, it's so weird being away from home and you.

AMY

Give it time, you just got there.
Susan said people in the South are
nice.

Phil sighs.

PHIL

Hey, I better get going for now, we
can't use my whole calling card at
once.

AMY

I love you, bye for now, be safe.

PHIL

I love you too, talk soon.

Phil gently hangs up the phone, puts his head down and rubs
his eyes.

END INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

All the Cardinals players and coaches wear black shorts and
red Cardinals shirts. The players stretch, throw, take
infield/outfield, Mac throws batting practice while Ranson
watches his pitchers in the Bullpen. Phil talks to players in
the Outfield who pay close attention to what he has to say.

PHIL

I won't know what type of hitter
you are until I see you hit here in
BP and in a game situation over the
next few days. You know what kinda
hitter you are, don't try to be
somethin' you're not, especially
now that we're playing with wood
bats, hitting will be a lot harder
than with those composite metal
bats you guys use at school.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

Everyone gathers at the Pitchers mound.

MAC

Alright everyone that's a wrap for
tonight. Put everything away and
cover the mound and home plate, no
different than at your colleges.

(MORE)

MAC (CONT'D)

Check out the town even though
there ain't nothing to do here but
go to Walmart. It's our home opener
tomorrow night so BP's at 4 PM
sharp!

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Mac and Phil come into the coaches locker room with a leather couch, love seat, microwave, tv and VCR and turn it into a living room. Five tan wooden lockers and an old dingy flowery sofa bed is Phil's new home away from home. They play catch with a hard plastic baseball with bare hands as Ranson enters with pizza and a 12 pack of beer.

MAC

About damn time Ranson!

RANSON

What can I say, the girl at the
pizza shop was cute.

MAC

Did ya' at least get her number?

RANSON

Of course!

The three assistant coaches eat pizza and drink beer while they go over the team roster on paper.

RANSON (CONT'D)

So Phil, I see a ring?

PHIL

Yup, I'm married, 6 years, no kids
just a couple furbabies as Amy
calls them.

MAC

Married...What the hell you doin'
here? So Your wife just says...go
ahead, go to North Carolina for
like two months. I couldn't
imagine, I pretty much lost my
girlfriend to baseball. How old are
you anyway?

PHIL

38.

Ranson starts to feel the effects of the beer.

RANSON

Ahhh I don't like to be the bearer of bad news but as far as I know, guys don't get their first scouting job at 38. I've only been a college coach for three years but I do know a-lot-a Scouts and they're pretty much all former minor league players who got their first scouting job in their mid 20's.

Phil, stunned, takes a huge drink of his beer.

PHIL

(to Ranson)

What about you, your not married or anything?

RANSON

I'm what you'd call in baseball a free agent.

(smart ass comment)

MAC

Ranson, you're just a slut!

Mac spits into his Hardees cup, sits back in his love seat, gently throws the plastic baseball against the white block wall of the locker room **PING**.

CUT TO:

In the middle of the night, Phil's asleep on the nasty looking very old couch, has a **FLASHBACK** about what Ranson said earlier about scouting and how he might be wasting his time.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL PAY PHONE - MORNING

Phil on the pay phone while Amy is at home.

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - PHIL / AMY

PHIL

Hi Amy, how is everything?

Amy sits on the bathroom floor in front of the toilet, wearing a nightshirt and looking sick.

AMY

Hey! There's my baseball Scout. I'm okay.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

(beat)

How are you doing?

PHIL

We had a practice last night so I met most of the players.

AMY

So, how did it go?

PHIL

Most of them don't know each other, it's like we're in the middle of nowhere but there is a Walmart store.

AMY

Well then why don't you talk to them and try to be there for them. Remember they're only like 18 to 20 years old.

PHIL

Yeah, I know but I'm not much for talking in groups.

AMY

So start by talking to them one on one til' you get to know them a bit better.

PHIL

Yeah, I'll try. Hey, I have to get back to my laundry, try to take it easy. I'll call in a couple days.

END INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE.

Phil shakes his head and takes a deep breath.

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clock: on wall **3:55**. The three Cardinals Coaches and players wear black shorts and red t-shirts. The players sit anxiously in front of their lockers as the three assistant coaches stand at the front of the room.

MAC

Alright everyone, listen up. Here's how it all works. 4 PM is BP til' 5, we leave everything set up for the other team to hit their BP from 5 til' 6.

(MORE)

MAC (CONT'D)

Make sure you don't leave anything including our baseballs, they bring their own balls.

MAC (CONT'D)

Be here in your uniform ready to go for 6 PM. We go back to the ball park, stretch, throw and get ready to play. At 6:30 we do I-O for 10 minutes, they do I-O for 10 minutes.

RANSON

Tonight we have opening ceremonies. After every game, regardless if we win or lose, you will line up along the first base line and sign autographs until there are no more fans wanting an autograph, only then will it be ok to be out of your proper uniform and go to the concession stand to get your post game meal which you will thank them for. When you are done eating, come back here and get your shower but do not leave until we come back and talk to you. Do y'all understand?

ENTIRE TEAM

Yes Sir / Yes Coach!!!

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Mac throws "BP", Ranson watches a couple pitchers throw in the bullpen, Phil wears his old ball glove and talks to players in the outfield.

TRAVIS

Hey Coach!

PHIL

Hey Travis, How ya' doin'?

TRAVIS

I'm alright, kinda hot but we are in North Carolina.

PHIL

Where ya' from?

TRAVIS

Way up in Connecticut.

PHIL

Damn! I thought I was far from home, do you go to UConn?

Travis chuckles.

TRAVIS

No, I wish! I go to Eastern Connecticut State.

PHIL

How in the world did ya' end up down here?

TRAVIS

Coach Haynes had an opening at shortstop so here I am. I just hope I'm here for more than a few games.

PHIL

Why ya' say that?

TRAVIS

A lot of summer ball teams in good leagues get temporary players from D2 schools to hold a spot til' the main guys from D1 schools get knocked out of the NC-double-A tournament.

PHIL

Wow, I had no idea, that really sucks!

TRAVIS

It's all good, hey, if I play well maybe I'll stay.

PHIL

Let's hope so, I wouldn't wanna see ya have ta go back home. Tell ya what, any time you wanna field some balls, I'll hit em' til' I can't swing any more.

TRAVIS

Wow coach, you'd do that for me. Thank you so much. Any chance I could say something to you and it not get back to the other coaches?

PHIL

Sure Travis, no problem, is there something wrong?

TRAVIS

I got a messed up elbow, if I say something they will for sure send me home.

PHIL

Try to rest it as much as possible and ice it whenever you can.

TRAVIS

Thanks coach, I really appreciate it.

Phil chases after a fly ball, catches it and walks over to Wade.

WADE

Nice catch coach!

Wade and Phil slap gloves hi-five style.

WADE (CONT'D)

It looks like you've caught a few balls in your day.

PHIL

I used to play outfield, it's nice to be out here with a glove on, it's the closest I'm getting to playin' in a game so I'm gunna have fun chasing down fly balls all summer.

WADE

Hell yeah! This game is supposed to be fun. We got a great park, sun's out, can't wait for the season to get started tonight, nothin' like opening day.

PHIL

Yeah, it'll be fun, I'm gunna be coachin' first base.

WADE

Have you coached first before?

PHIL

Hmmmm, no I don't think I have. It shouldn't be that hard though.

WADE

Rule number one, when coaching the bases, don't forget your skull cap.

PHIL
Oh, ok, so what's a skull cap?

WADE
It's pretty much a batting helmet
with no ear flaps.

PHIL
Ahhhhh I gotcha!

Phil chases after another fly ball hit towards right field.

GRANT (20) Athletic build, tall, friendly.

GRANT
Ohhh coach! That was close, thought
you had it.

Phil picks up the ball and throws it towards the infield.

PHIL
I think I've lost a step.

GRANT
It's all good coach, it'll happen
to all of us.

Phil and Grant shake hands.

PHIL
Phil Sanders.

GRANT
Grant Buckner, good to meet you
coach.

PHIL
So where do you go to school?

GRANT
I'm an Outfielder at West Virginia.

PHIL
Do you have any other teammates
here with you?

GRANT
Yes sir, just one, his name is
Vince Belnome, although he might be
drafted in a couple days.

PHIL

Not ta worry, you'll be fine,
everyone I've met so far is pretty
nice.

GRANT

(grins)

We haven't lost any games yet!

PHIL

Well then, maybe we shouldn't lose
too many!

GRANT

Whoa! Coach, don't be talkin' 'bout
winnin' and losin', dont'cha know
baseball players are really
superstitious. I think I have ta go
hit, good to meet you coach.

Grant runs in to go hit.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

BP has ended as Ranson and Mac reach the top of the steps at
the concourse where they are met by someone in Khaki pants
and a Toronto Blue Jays golf shirt. JOHN HENDERSON (30)
athletic, short hair, professional.

JOHN HENDERSON

Good day gentlemen, I'm looking for
Coach Sanders, would he be around?

RANSON

Yeah, he should be coming up in a
second.

Phil walks up the steps and meets John as Mac and Ranson walk
away.

JOHN HENDERSON

Coach Sanders, I'm John Henderson,
the Blue Jays area Scout for the
Carolinas.

Phil is initially shocked, like a deer in the headlights but
then smiles and shakes John's hand.

JOHN HENDERSON (CONT'D)

I was actually on my way to
Asheville and thought I'd stop in.
(MORE)

JOHN HENDERSON (CONT'D)
I was given a heads up by Kevin Bryant up in Toronto that you were coaching here for the summer and were interested in scouting.

PHIL
Yes I am, very interested actually. I was told to ask about being an associate Scout?

JOHN HENDERSON
Here, let me give you my card. If a couple players really stand out this summer, make sure to let me know who they are right away so I can take a look at em'.

John hands Phil his card.

JOHN HENDERSON (CONT'D)
In simple terms, we have a scale to evaluate players, from 20 to 80. Keep in mind 50 is a Major League average player and 70 plus is an all-star. Most of the players you will see here in this league will fall around 35 to 50. Right now you will just be looking for OFP which stands for overall future potential. My suggestion is to get index cards, write notes on every player you see. In this league you will probably see the same players a dozen times which is good, by the end of the summer you will have a good understanding of what they can do well and what they can't.

(beat)

For position players, there are 5 tools. Can they hit for average, do they have power, can he run, can he field his position and can he throw hard.

(beat)

For pitchers, they need to throw a 90 mile per hour fastball, minimum, which is a 50 on the scale. I figure you don't have a radar gun so just talk to your pitching coach and he'll tell you how fast the pitchers are throwing.

JOHN HENDERSON

I only want the very best of the best, it really is the needle in the haystack I'm looking for. I have to get back on the road, Good to meet you.

PHIL

Thank you so much, I'll certainly do what I can.

Phil reaches out and shakes John's hand.

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The three assistant coaches get into their uniforms as SCOTT (45) Bald, slight beard, glasses, enters. Full of personality.

SCOTT

Hey Gentlemen!

MAC

Ranson, I think he's talkin' to you.

SCOTT

It's great to see you two again! I was tryin' to stop by the last couple days but got too busy at the office.

MAC

(to phil)

This is Scott, he's the Sports Editor at the local newspaper.

Scott and Phil shake hands as Ranson look at the clock.

RANSON

We gotta' talk to our guys and go play a ball game but stop in any time Scott.

SCOTT

Will do! Good luck this summer!

Scott waves and walks out.

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clock on wall: **5:55**. The players blast music while they eat, talk, laugh and get into their uniforms. The music is off and the players sit at their lockers as the three assistant coaches enter.

MAC

Alright everyone, listen up! Coach Haynes isn't here with us, I'll be the first to say I'm nervous, If you're not a bit nervous and excited, you probably shouldn't be here. I don't think many of you play in front of 3000 fans at your colleges. This is a big thing we got goin' on here in this little town.

RANSON

To tell you the truth, I've thrown up three times in the last 20 minutes but I guess that beats crappin' my pants!

The players all chuckle slightly.

MAC

Phil, anything you wanna say?

PHIL

Well, ahhhh...so just go win a ballgame.

Phil quickly realizes he mentioned winning to everyone which is a faux pas.

All the players cheer.

MAC

Alright, let's get outta here.

Everyone hustles out of the locker room.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Opening ceremonies include the Cardinals starting lineup, the remaining players and coaches line up along the first base line. James throws out the ceremonial first pitch. The National Anthem is sung as the sun comes out.

ALEX (V.O)

Welcome to Opening Night at McNair Field. The sun's out, the birds are singing, it's a beautiful night for a ball game here in Forest City, North Carolina. Game 1 of 56, sit back and enjoy.

Both teams get hits and runs. We see Phil in the dugout writing notes on his index cards. scoreboard: **Visitors 4 Cardinals 5 9th Inning, 2 Outs.**

The crowd stands and cheers, a Gastonia player leads off second base, the batter hits the ball to right field on the ground, Grant fields the ball and throws it home on a line as the runner coming home from second base is tagged out to end the game.

The capacity crowd screams in delight as the Cardinals players empty the dugout and congratulate each other.

The lights at McNair Field turn off as fireworks fill the dark sky. The Cardinals players and coaches sign autographs and have their post game meal up at the concession stand.

EXT. CEMETERY TRAIL - NIGHT

The three assistant coaches walk side by side with Phil in the middle, towards the clubhouse.

RANSON

Phil, what we're you writing on those cards during the game?

PHIL

Oh, that Blue Jays Scout said to get index cards and write info on the other players so I can learn to evaluate them.

RANSON

So that's why you kept asking me how fast the pitchers were throwing. Hey, don't forget our guys.

PHIL

Oh crap, that's right. Hey, how many times do we play each team?

RANSON

We play the other 4 teams in our
division 12 times each, 6 at home
and 6 on the road.

INT. CARDINALS PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Music blares as players celebrate. The three assistant
coaches come into the room. The music is turned off as the
players sit at their lockers and pay attention.

MAC

Congratulations on winning your
first game.

The players all cheer.

MAC (CONT'D)

Now y'all can see how passionate
our fans are, we might get half
that many fans most nights but it's
still more than any other team in
the league.

RANSON

Two things, don't stay up too late
and don't get into any trouble.
Remember we're in a small town, if
you as much as fart and don't
excuse yourself we're gunna know.

MAC

We play in Gastonia tomorrow at 7,
the bus leaves here at 4 sharp!
alright, that's it!

CUT TO:

The three coaches enter their locker room, grab a beer from
the mini fridge and sit in their living room after taking
their jerseys off before calling Haynes.

ON SPEAKER PHONE:

RANSON

Hey Haynes, good news, we won our
home opener and nobody got hurt.

HAYNES

That's awesome! Who coached third?

MAC

Who the hell ya' think coached third? I was on third, Ranson babysat his pitcher in the dugout, when the hell ya' gettin' down here?

HAYNES

I'm half way there, I just stopped 20 minutes ago and got a room for a few hours.

MAC

Why ya' only half way? Thought you'd be here by now.

HAYNES

If I must tell you everything, when we got knocked out in Lou-a-ville, I had to ride the team bus back to Indiana to get my truck and all my stuff for the summer. I'll try to get there tomorrow, hopefully before you leave for Gastonia.

RANSON

Alright Haynes, sounds good, wanna talk to Phil?

HAYNES

No I gotta sleep, just make sure he does the team laundry.

MAC

Yes Haynes, I'll make sure. Sweet dreams buddy.

Mac hangs up his phone.

MAC (CONT'D)

Phil, It's late, just make sure you get on it early in the morning.

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - MORNING

Clock on Wall: **8:00**

Piles of team uniforms, undershirts, shorts, socks "**personals**" and towels sit on the floor as the washer sits there not in use.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL - DAY

Phil wears his Grey Cardinals t-shirt and Cardinals hat.

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Phil at Payphone / Amy at home

PHIL

Hi Amy, How are you?

AMY

Why didn't you call me last night after your game? I fell asleep waiting for you.

PHIL

I wanted to call but it was so late when we finally got done everything. It was after 11 and I was going to pass out. Hey, we won our game!

AMY

Pass out? What, were you drinking?

PHIL

NO! Pass out from exhaustion. They have a process here for home games. BP's at 4, they play from 7 til' around 9:30, the players sign autographs, then we eat and then talk to the players in the locker room. It was opening night, it was packed, a few hundred kids wanted autographs and then they had fireworks.

Amy is not amused at what Phil has to say.

AMY

If I get off work at 5 and your playing baseball til 11, when are we supposed to talk?

PHIL

Take the cell phone to work with you. We can talk anytime on Sundays, we don't ever play on Sunday. Hey I see Alex, he just pulled up, I'm gonna see what he's up to. I'll talk to you soon, love you!

END INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Amy puts her head down and starts to cry.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL - DAY

PHIL
Hey Alex!

Phil waves as Alex gets out of his Tracker and approaches Phil near the pay phone.

ALEX
Hey Phil, What are you up to?

PHIL
I was just on the phone with my wife back home. How about you?

ALEX
I'm off til' 1 so I thought I'd do a-bit-a shopping, wanna hang out?

PHIL
Sure, if you'd like some company.

EXT. WALMART ENTRANCE - DAY

Phil and Alex walk inside the entrance of Walmart.

INT. WALMART - DAY

Phil and Alex walk around the store, looking around in various departments and the camping section while Alex pushes a blue Walmart shopping cart.

PHIL
Alex, check this out, air mattresses! I need to get one of these. I've been sleeping on a nasty old couch. This'll be perfect.

Phil is all smiles as he picks out an air mattress he likes.

ALEX
Oh that's right your staying in the coaches locker room. Those couches look like they're from the 50's.

EXT. HIBBETT SPORTS - DAY

We see a sign that says Hibbett Sports as Phil and Alex walk into the store.

INT. HIBBETT SPORTS - DAY

Phil tries on baseball gloves as Alex watches.

PHIL
I seriously need a new glove, I
think mines like 20 years old, I
just can't believe how expensive
ball gloves are these days.

INT. SUPER CHINA BUFFET - DAY

Phil and Alex are having their lunch in a booth.

ALEX
It's so nice to get out for a bit
and hang out with someone. It's a
wonder you weren't busy with
baseball stuff.

Phil (beat) with the deer in the headlights look.

PHIL
Oh crap! I forgot to do the
laundry. We need to get outta'
here.

Phil and Alex jump out of their seats.

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Two big buckets of laundry detergent sit beside the washer along with a large Yellow bottle of "Yellow Go" and two spray bottles as Phil frantically takes one load of uniforms out of the washer and puts them into the dryer then grabs another pile of uniforms and puts them into the washer. There's a pile of player "personals" on the floor.

Clock on wall: **1:10**

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Amy and Susan work together.

SUSAN

I still can't believe you were able to get Phil to go down South with you being pregnant. So how's he doin' with his ball team?

AMY

I think he's alright, I told him I'm in good hands with having you here for me.

Susan places her hand on Amy's shoulder.

SUSAN

Yup, your my BFF and I'm gonna take good care of you.

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Phil, wears his black shorts, red Cardinals t-shirt and grey Cardinals hat, stands at the side of the clubhouse building as he watches and waits patiently for something.

Suddenly a large black truck drives past Phil and pulls up in front of the clubhouse doors. After blasting his horn 4-5 times, out comes MATT HAYNES, Haynes wears a bright red Indiana University basketball warm up suit, bucket hat and Oakley sunglasses. Mac, all smiles as he sees his buddy.

MAC

'bout damn time you show up!

HAYNES

Shut the hell up and gimme a hug.

Mac gives Haynes a big bear hug, lifting him off the ground.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

I'm so damn tired, you wouldn't believe! I've been drivin' all day.

PHIL

It's coming! The bus is coming!

Phil runs over to Mac and Haynes.

HAYNES

Thanks for the update but who the hell are you?

MAC
Haynes, this is Phil Sanders, your
other assistant coach.

HAYNES
Oh, my bad Phil.

MAC
(to Phil)
Run in and tell the players the bus
is here and to start loading up.

PHIL
Sure, no problem.

The team bus pulls up and parks in the clubhouse parking lot.

Mac and Ranson help Haynes bring his suitcases into the
coaches locker room.

INT. CARDINALS COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clock on wall: **3:58**

Haynes walks through the coaches locker room right to the
bathroom area and sees the dryer full of the players practice
shirts and shorts spinning round and round.

HAYNES
Sanders! Get your ass over here.

Phil walks into the bathroom, pale as a ghost.

HAYNES (CONT'D)
Why is the laundry not done?

The dryer turns off.

PHIL
It's done, I just have'ta give it
to the players.

Phil reaches into the dryer and pulls out two arms full of
players personals and walks towards the players locker room.

HAYNES
It's four o'clock! You can't wait
all day to do the laundry. You only
have one job to do, hurry up, we
have to go.

Haynes walks out, into the coaches locker room.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Mac, you weren't planning on goin' on the road without me were ya?

MAC

Damn right we were, this train rolls at 4. We've got BP at 5 in Gastonia.

HAYNES

The skipper has arrived! Thanks for holden' down the fort in my absence but this ain't yo' show no mo'. We roll when Haynes is ready to roll. You two go grab the rest of my stuff and make sure the players are on the bus, I have'ta talk to Phil for a minute. Phil, grab a seat.

Phil sits on a folding chair while Haynes stands.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

See that's the thing about being the Head Coach, I run the show! Where the hell did all this furniture come from?

PHIL

It's Mac's. He said he had to leave his apartment and had to put it somewhere.

HAYNES

So what, he just moves into the clubhouse.

Haynes shakes his head.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Tell me about yourself, what kind'a coaching experience do ya' have?

Phil stutters as he's intimidated and afraid of Haynes.

PHIL

Ahhhh, I have a couple years of coaching experience, I played for like 12 years back home in Canada growing up. I wanna be a Scout but need more coaching experience. I'm really hoping you'll give me a reference at the end of the summer.

HAYNES

Well now that I'm here, you'll be in the dugout during games. Watch and listen to what's goin' on and learn. I don't like to be bothered during games so if you have a question or somethin', just write it down and ask me after the game here in the clubhouse or after we come back from a road game. Alright, let's get outta here.

PHIL

One quick question, if a batter hits one of those yellow poles it's a home run so why do they call it a foul pole?

HAYNES

Nope! Not goin' there.

Haynes pulls the front of Phil's Cardinals hat down over his face.

EXT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

Haynes and Phil walk into the bus as the door closes and starts to roll away.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

With Haynes in the washroom at the back of the bus, Phil gets out of his seat and looks over to Mac.

PHIL

Hey Mac, would it be alright to talk to the players on the mic?

MAC

Go nuts!

Phil grabs the microphone, turns to face the players, with a shaky voice.

PHIL

Ahhh I'm not really much for speaking to groups let alone on a mic, so bare with me. This is not a Greyhound bus, we're not on a road trip.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'll be damned if we're gonna go through all this trouble to get on a bus, drive for hours, play a baseball game then get back on the bus and drive all the way back home and lose. No, screw that! I don't think so! We beat Gastonia last night at home so now they think they'll beat us at their ballpark, Not gonna happen.

Phil returns the microphone and sits back down in his seat as the players roar with enthusiasm, Haynes returns from the washroom, gives Phil a dirty look, shaking his head.

INT. GASTONIA BALLPARK - DAY

The Cardinals players and coaches arrive, all wearing their black shorts, red Cardinals t-shirts and grey Cardinals hats "BP clothes", take the third base dugout.

HAYNES

We're ten minutes late, everyone take your positions for BP, first group of hitters get ready to hit. Mac, let's play catch for a minute.

Haynes stands in front of the "L-Screen" in front of the pitchers mound while he throws back and fourth with Mac who stands near the on-deck circle. All of a sudden, Haynes stops throwing.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Where's the baseballs?

Mac, with a bewildered look on his face.

MAC

I have no idea, Phil was supposed to bring em'.

Phil sits on a three foot block wall in front of the dugout, oblivious to what's going on as he's listening to his MP3 player. Mac yells and waves to Phil with no acknowledgement. Mac tries tossing the baseball over to Phil who sees the ball coming, catches it and tosses it back to Mac. Travis pulls one of Phil's earbuds out of his ears.

TRAVIS

Phil, they need the baseballs for BP, did you bring them?

Phil speaks loudly as he still has one earbud in his other ear, Mac and Haynes can hear his reply.

PHIL

Ahhh nope, I guess I forgot.

Haynes, furious and almost in shock.

HAYNES

You forgot the baseballs! Are you serious! How are we supposed to have BP without baseballs!

Haynes walks towards Phil, red face and swinging his arms in disgust.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Now I have to go beg the other team to borrow their balls and look like an idiot.

Haynes storms off the field.

CUT TO:

Haynes returns with one white tall bucket of baseballs and looks over to Phil.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

52 balls, make sure there are 52 balls in this bucket after we're done and take them back to the other team.

CUT TO:

Haynes throws BP, Mac hits fungos to the infielders while Phil catches for him as Travis gets a drink of water in the dugout.

VINCE BELNOME (20) skinny, athletic, talks on his cell phone on the side of the dugout.

Haynes throws a couple baseballs near Travis' feet in order to get his attention.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Travis, get your ass out here!

TRAVIS

I'm just getting a quick drink.

HAYNES

Mac, what the hell is Vince doin'?

Vince, on his phone with a smile from ear to ear.

MAC

I think he just got drafted, chill
out a little bit.

Travis grabs his glove and jogs out to his position at shortstop, Vince wipes his watery eyes as he got the call of a lifetime.

CUT TO:

BP ends, Haynes walks towards Phil with the bucket of balls as Phil sits on the same three foot wall outside the dugout.

HAYNES

Count em' up, make sure there's 52
and take em' back to the other
team.

Haynes walks out of the ballpark with Mac about to follow.

PHIL

Hey, Mac, one question. If the
balls are already in the bucket,
how am I supposed to count em?

Mac grabs the bucket from Phil, turns it upside down, hands Phil the empty bucket and walks off the field.

CUT TO:

Phil sits on the ground while counting the last few balls and dropping them into the bucket.

PHIL (CONT'D)

48, 49, 50.

Phil holds the last ball in his hand for a second...

PHIL (CONT'D)

51.

Phil shrugs his shoulders.

INT. GASTONIA BALLPARK - DAY

Travis hits a routine fly ball in the air which is dropped by the right fielder. Travis, running slowly is not able to run to second base. Haynes, coaching third base, has his hands on his knees and his head looking down to the ground shaking his head, not impressed by the lack of hustle from Travis and the lack of coaching on first base by Mac.

Vince, batting next, hits a two run home run. As Travis rounds third base, Haynes, with his hands on his hips, stares at Travis.

INT. GASTONIA BALLPARK - NIGHT

With two out in the bottom of the 9th Inning, Phil quietly starts to pick up used paper cups all over the floor of the dugout as Mac stands beside Haynes.

HAYNES

(to Mac)

What the hell is he doin'?

Haynes nods for Mac to look over at Phil.

MAC

Phil, what'er you doin'?

PHIL

Just startin' to clean up a little bit.

HAYNES

(to Mac)

Tell him to sit his ass down, we're not done yet.

MAC

(to Phil)

Just chill out a minute, the players will help you, just one more out.

PHIL

(to Mac)

It's not like I'm packing the bats and helmets, I know, you're all superstitious. They're just cups.

Phil continues to pick up cups as Haynes shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. GASTONIA BALLPARK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The bus headlights are on as the players are all smiles as they walk to the team bus after beating Gastonia two nights in a row.

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Phil with piles of uniforms, personals and towels sitting on the floor, works on the team laundry. Clock on wall: **11:50.**

CUT TO

Phil sleeps on his air mattress on the floor of the coaches locker room.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Mac has the position players practice running hard out of the batters box, down to first base and on to second base.

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Haynes, alone in the coaches locker room, paces back and fourth mumbling to himself when HEATH knocks on the door and enters. HEATH, tall and skinny, wears a Cardinals hat, white t-Shirt that says SMC Baseball and shorts.

HEATH

Hey coach, you wanted to see me.

Heath walks in, over to Haynes.

HAYNES

Hey Heath, please take a seat.

Heath leans up against the end of the couch with a slight worried look on his face.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

There's no easy way to say this,
but I have to let you go.

HEATH

What! Your releasing me?

HAYNES

Nothing against you at all,
remember when I signed you I said I
might end up with too many
pitchers, well I've got a D1
pitcher coming in later today to
take your spot, I promised his head
coach it would be his.

HEATH

Sooo what, that's it. Thanks for
coming and have a great summer.

(MORE)

HEATH (CONT'D)

Thanks for nothing! I'm gonna find another team in the CPL and we're gonna beat your ass.

Heath takes his Cardinals hat off and fires it into Haynes' locker as he storms out of the locker room. Haynes lowers his head and closes his eyes.

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Phil walks into the coaches locker room from the laundry area and sees Mac and Haynes sitting in front of their lockers cleaning their turf shoes.

PHIL

Whatcha' guys doin'?

MAC

We're using this stuff called Scrubbing Bubbles to clean our turfs.

Haynes looks over to Phil with a stern look.

HAYNES

Yeah, you might wanna do yours too, they're filthy.

PHIL

I would but I'm a bit superstitious, we haven't lost yet.

Phil walks away as Haynes is irritated by Phil's response, scrubs his shoe really hard with a small brush.

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

ALEX (V.O)

The Cardinals are 5 and Oh, We're about to leave for our longest road trip of the summer, an 8 hour drive all the way out to Outer Banks. I'm glad we have a nice comfy bus with AC.

Everyone gets on the bus with an extra bag along with a pillow as the bus pulls out of the parking lot.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

Haynes, the last person to get on the bus, sees Phil sitting in his seat, the first seat opposite the bus driver, listening to his MP3 Player. Haynes sits beside Mac who has the window seat, a couple rows behind the bus driver, listening to music on his phone. Haynes gently pulls one earbud out of Mac's ear and almost whispers into Mac's ear.

HAYNES

What's Sanders doing in my seat?

MAC

I have no idea.

HAYNES

That's alright, I'm just gunna sit here and talk to you all the way to Outer Banks.

Mac screws the cap on his dip spit plastic water bottle and fires it to Phil, hitting him in order to get his attention. Phil pulls out his earbuds and gives Mac a dirty look.

MAC

Get the hell outta' Haynes' seat!

CUT TO:

We see from the back of the bus most of the players sleep or listen to music on their headphones. Going forward, Alex looks over stats. Ranson sits in front of Alex. Phil sits opposite Alex, Mac sits in front of Phil while Haynes sits in his seat at the front with his legs hanging over the partition, IU bucket hat over his face.

EXT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

The Cardinals bus pulls into a shopping plaza.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

HAYNES

(on microphone)

Alright everyone, listen up, it's now 11:15, we'll be here for lunch 'til 12 noon, be back on the bus at that time as we roll when my watch hits 12 o'clock.

EXT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

Phil, on a payphone 100 feet from the bus, notices Haynes standing outside the bus with his arms crossed. Phil hangs up the phone and walks towards the bus. A scowl on Haynes' face looks more intense with every step Phil takes.

HAYNES

Mr. Sanders, what time do you have on your watch?

Phil tries to swallow before replying.

PHIL

Ahhh twelve-oh-two.

HAYNES

What time did I say we we're leaving at?

PHIL

Twelve o'clock.

HAYNES

The players are all on the bus ready to go and they are nothing more than children in men's bodies. When I say something, that applies to everyone! Now get your ass on the bus.

Phil gets on the bus followed by Haynes, the door closes and the bus pulls away.

INT. OUTER BANKS BALLPARK - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 7 Home 12, Inning 9.** The home team fans stand and cheer, Travis hits a routine fly ball to the outfield, slamming his bat to the ground as the ball is caught for the final out.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

HAYNES

(on microphone)

I know you're all tired so I'll make this short. Obviously we can't win em' all, just remember how losing feels over the next 20 hours so you are physically and mentally ready to play tomorrow night in Edenton.

INT. PHIL'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

There's a BANG at Phil's door like the motel is on fire, the curtains are still drawn as it's dark in the room. Phil opens the door to a bright sunny day that almost blinds him. Standing in the doorway is Haynes, wearing his IU bucket hat and Red IU jump suit.

HAYNES

Sanders, wake the hell up! I have a list of room numbers for you to go get the players uniforms, and personals so you can take them to the laundromat.

PHIL

Ahhh yeah, but isn't it early?

HAYNES

The uniforms can't go in the dryer, they need all day to dry on their own. You haven't been putting the uniforms in the dryer have you?

PHIL

Ahhh nobody told me not to.

HAYNES

For god sakes! Can you not read a label on clothes? It shows do not put in dryer. Get all the clothes together from the players and put it in the bottom of the bus, we'll drop you off at the laundromat and pick you up on the way to the ballpark later.

PHIL

Good news, in a way, now that we lost a game, I can wash my shoes.

Haynes gives Phil a dirty look and shakes his head as he walks away.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MOTEL - DAY

Phil knocks on the first players door, Pratt opens the door, half asleep and not happy.

PHIL

Hey Pratt, I need to get your uniforms and personals to do laundry.

Pratt closes the door in Phil's face.

MONTAGE:

Phil knocks on 3 other players doors a few times as they open the door also half awake and not happy.

END MONTAGE

EXT./INT. OUTSIDE/INSIDE LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Phil grabs the last bunch of uniforms from the bottom of the bus and walks into the laundromat as the bus pulls away. Phil drops the uniforms on the floor in front of a washer, quickly grabs and opens his wallet to find two one dollar bills.

PHIL

Ohh crap!

Phil bolts out of the laundromat, sees the bus slowly pulling away, waves his arms frantically while running down the sidewalk.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - DAY

The bus stops. As the door opens, Haynes leans over his seat and yells from inside the bus.

HAYNES

What the hell do ya want now?

PHIL

I need money to wash the uniforms,
I only have two bucks.

Haynes gets up and walks down the steps of the bus, not happy to see Phil again so soon.

HAYNES

Are you serious? Why didn't you get
money from James before we left,
you knew you had to wash the
uniforms.

Haynes shakes his head in disgust, opens his wallet and gives Phil a twenty dollar bill.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

There, is that enough?

PHIL

Well, I need to buy detergent.

HAYNES

Let me get this straight, you
brought Scrubbing Bubbles but you
didn't bring any laundry soap?
Seriously!

Haynes gives Phil a five dollar bill from his wallet along
with a look that could burn a hole through him.

Phil smiles.

PHIL

Thank you!

Haynes turns around with a scowl and walks back up the steps
into the bus as it pulls away.

EXT. MAIN STREET EDENTON - DAY

Beautiful but tiny downtown Edenton. Groups of Cardinals
players walk around the three blocks of old stores, The bus
driver sits on a bench near the bus and reads a newspaper.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Phil sits, reads a newspaper, washing machines full of
baseball clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. EDENTON COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Haynes, Mac and Ranson sit together, drink smoothies and have
a good time.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Clock on wall: **3:50**. Phil sits and listens to his MP3 player,
uniforms hang throughout the laundromat drying.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - DAY

The last of the players enter the bus as it's about to pull away from downtown Edenton.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Clock on wall: **4:50**

Phil sees the bus pull up in the parking lot.

INT. HICK'S FIELD EDENTON - NIGHT

The players and coaches are in their Grey Cardinals uniforms and Grey Cardinals hats as the players throw to each other in left field, Haynes sees Phil walking towards the dugout.

HAYNES

Where the hell is your belt?
Everyone else is in their full
uniforms.

PHIL

Ahhh Pratt forgot his so I lent him
mine.

Haynes stares directly at Phil as Phil walks to the other end of the dugout.

HAYNES

(beat)
Yeah, well you should have a couple
extras.

CUT TO:

Spencer is in the bullpen getting ready to pitch.

CUT TO:

As the other players walk back into the dugout, Haynes sees Pratt.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Pratt, what happened to your belt?

PRATT

Yeah...sorry coach, I forgot it at
the motel.

INT. HICK'S FIELD EDENTON - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 6 Home 4 Inning 9 Outs 2**. Travis throws the ball awkwardly from shortstop across the infield to first base to make the final out. Haynes shakes his head. Haynes and Ranson shake hands, Haynes and Mac hi-five.

MAC
(to Haynes)
6 and 1 !

HAYNES
(to Mac)
Yeah buddy!

HAYNES (CONT'D)
(to Phil)
Sanders, go grab the burgers for everyone at the concession stand, we roll in 10 minutes, got it!

EXT. DOWNTOWN FOREST CITY - DAY

The two blocks of Main Street is lined with huge old trees and ma' and pa' shops including the Cardinals baseball office and Smith's Drugs across the street.

INT. SMITH'S DRUGS - DAY

Phil and Alex have lunch together at this Drugstore/Diner combo that looks like it's out of the 50's.

ALEX
We haven't really had much time to talk. I know the teams' doin' alright but how are you doin'?

PHIL
Oh man! Where do I begin, I don't think Haynes likes me, he makes me nervous like I'm walkin' on egg shells every time I'm around him. My wife back home is pregnant, she's all by herself. I have to wash the team uniforms every day at the clubhouse. If James would actually give me twenty bucks to do them at the laundromat once in a while, it wouldn't take all day but then again, I'd have to depend on Mac to take me to the laundromat in his truck.

Alex looks at his watch.

ALEX

Man! That sucks! You're screwed no matter what you do. Hey I do have to get back to the office before James wonders why I'm gone so long.

PHIL

Yea, I gotta' get back to my laundry.

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Phil, inside of a bathroom stall, hears Haynes and Ranson walk by.

HAYNES

I might have to release Travis, he can barely field a ball without making an error.

Haynes and Ranson go into the coaches locker room as Phil comes out, washes his hands quickly, walks into the players locker room where Travis and a few other players are sitting around.

PHIL

Travis, grab your glove, a bat and a bucket-a balls, your coming with me.

Phil walks out of the players locker room followed by Travis.

WINNING MONTAGE:

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

Cardinals win game after game as we see the players hi-fiving each other, the fans cheering and the final score on the scoreboard. Their record increasing after each game.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - NIGHT

The Cardinals players are all smiles as they walk to and board the team bus while winning game after game on the road. Their record increasing after each game.

SUPER: Cardinals **Record 15-2**

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Phil washes the team uniforms and personals late at night,

Home and Away wins as Phil writes notes on his index cards and Phil washing uniforms.

Phil sleeping on his air mattress.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Grant pulls up in his large SUV.

SPENCER (20) skinny, tall, scruffy and friendly.

JAMAAL (20) black, athletic, mouthy.

JOSH (21) bald, stocky, quiet and serious.

JAMAAL

Damn! It's about time you show up.
It's a 3 hour drive to Thomasville,
we can't be late for Scout Day!

GRANT

Then get your asses in the truck!

JAMAAL

Shotgun!

GRANT

Where's Phil?

Phil walks out the doors of the clubhouse.

PHIL

I'm right here.

GRANT

Jamaal, let Phil sit up front.

Jamaal, half way in the passenger seat, gets out and jumps in the back with the other players.

INT. GRANT'S TRUCK - DAY

JAMAAL

Hey coach, you comin' for the ride?

PHIL

Yeah, someone has to make sure you guys behave.

JAMAAL

Hell, we don't need no babysitter!

GRANT

Jamaal, he's just messin' with you.

INT. FINCH FIELD THOMASVILLE - DAY

Players from various teams wear their uniforms, stretch, run and throw baseballs.

Phil, very nervous but tries to be professional and serious, approaches the two Scouts who are present.

MARLIN MCPHAIL (45) athletic, wears a New York Mets golf shirt, DAVE (30) short, pudgy, wears a Boston Red Sox visor.

PHIL

(to both scouts)

Hi, I'm Phil Sanders, I'm an assistant coach with the Forest City Cardinals, I came with a few of my players.

MARLIN MCPHAIL

Hey Coach, good to meet you.

Phil shakes hands with Marlin and Dave.

PHIL

The reason I'm here is because I wanna be a Scout, when I heard about this evaluation camp, I thought it would be great for me to come and learn a thing or two.

MARLIN MCPHAIL

If you wanna' hang with us for a few hours, we'd be happy to show you what we do.

PHIL

Really! That would be great, thanks a lot! I'd really appreciate it. I met with John Henderson, a Blue Jays Scout who said I should use index cards to make notes on players.

MARLIN MCPHAIL
Yeah, Henderson's a great guy.
That's a good start, get as much
information on players as possible.

INT. FINCH FIELD THOMASVILLE - DAY

SCOUT DAY MONTAGE:

Players are timed running the 60 yard dash, the Scouts in the bullpen record pitchers speeds using radar guns, the Scouts hold a clipboard and pen while evaluating outfielders throws to home from right field and infielders throws from shortstop to first base. The Scouts also evaluate hitters who hit BP. Wherever the scout are, Phil's always within a few feet, watching and learning intently as he makes his notes on the players.

END of MONTAGE.

INT. FINCH FIELD THOMASVILLE - DAY

Scout day has ended as the players walk off the field towards their vehicles, Phil addresses the Scouts.

PHIL
I wanna thank you guys for letting
me watch and learn what you do, I
really appreciate it. I do have one
concern, the pitching coach on my
summer ball team is a college
coach, he says that most guys get
into scouting when they are in
their 20's. I'm actually 38.

MARLIN MCPHAIL
For the most part, he's right but
don't worry about that. Do what you
are meant to do. If your heart
tells you -- you would make a great
Scout then do whatever you possibly
can to make that happen.

Phil smiles from ear to ear.

PHIL
Thanks again, that really means a
lot.

INT. GRANTS TRUCK - DAY

GRANT
So Phil did ya' learn much today?

PHIL
Yeah, I did, it was a great day,
thank you so much for taking me.

JAMAAL
Hey Coach, am I gunna' be drafted
in the first round next year?

PHIL
I have no idea, but your fastball
hit 88.

SPENCER
(to Phil)
Did you get my speed?

PHIL
Yeah, 90. And Josh, you hit 91.

JOSH
Thanks Coach, you-da man!

JAMAAL
Coach Sanders has our backs!

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Just as Grant's truck arrives back at the clubhouse parking lot, there's a white cube truck backing up towards the doors. Phil jumps out of Grant's truck yelling with excitement.

PHIL
It's here!

Phil runs over to the back of the cube truck as the players look at each other wondering what's going on. The driver unloads a box that is five feet long and five feet wide from his hydraulic lift.

GRANT
What the hell did you do?

PHIL
I got ya' a Ping Pong table so you
can have fun together in the locker
room.

JAMAAL

Damn Coach! You are freakin' awesome!

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL PAY PHONE - DAY

Phil is on the pay phone, waiting for Amy to answer only to get her voice mail.

PHIL

Hey, where are you? It's Saturday morning. I wanted to tell you all about this Scout day thing that I went to but I guess I'll have to wait. Alright, later, love you.

SUPER: **A FEW DAYS LATER.**

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Phil, gaining confidence in his voice, walks into the players locker room. The players hang out, play Ping Pong, talk, eat fast food, throw a football around and listen to music on their headphones.

PHIL

Could I have everyone's attention for a couple minutes.

The players all stop what they're doing and look to Phil.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Could you raise your hand if your stressed out at all with what your going through here this summer?

Every player raises a hand.

PRATT

Seriously? Sure we're 18 and 2 but the stress is killin' us.

GRANT

It's like we have a Bulls-eye on our backs. Every team who sees us on the schedule wants to beat us that much more just because we're in first place.

JAMAAL

So is there a point to this?

PHIL

Yes Jamaal, our next day off is this Sunday. Sunday will be the first annual Cardinals baseball golf tournament to be held at McNair Field. I've got 6 index cards, you will need to get into groups of 4, write your names down and come up with a team name to write at the top. The first group to get your card back to me will tee off at 9 AM followed by the next group every 10 minutes.

Phil puts the index cards and pencils down on the table as a bunch of player make a mad dash for them and all hell breaks loose with players trying to organize their four-somes.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Gastonia 12 Cardinals 4**

CUT TO

EXT. CEMETERY TRAIL - NIGHT

The Cardinals players walk quietly except for the clickity-clack of their metal spikes on the pavement after losing to Gastonia. The coaches walk 50 feet behind. Phil, a few steps ahead of Haynes.

HAYNES

I heard about your little golf tournament you have planned. Don't remember saying it was ok to have it. You don't think this might'a distracted the players and they go and lose tonight. This is on you! What if they go on a losing streak.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Haynes is just about to pull away with his truck to leave when Josh comes out of the clubhouse and walks over.

JOSH

Hey Coach, us getting whooped tonight is all on me. I just didn't have my best stuff.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

When I pitch, it's just me and the catcher. Joe called good a good game, I just didn't execute.

HAYNES

Your not just tryin' to cover for Sanders are you?

JOSH

No sir! He's tryin' to help us deal with this crazy pressure we all have to keep winnin' every single night. We don't blame losses on anyone but ourselves.

Haynes pulls out and leaves, **SQUEALING** his tires.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

BASEBALL GOLF MONTAGE:

The Cardinals players run all around the ballpark with bats in hand, chase after golf balls and have a great time playing baseball golf as Phil watches closely along with Mac and Ranson.

END OF MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Haynes, in his truck, sits outside the ballpark and watches with a scowl as he's losing his team to a coach with little experience.

SUPER: Monday

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clock: **3:55**

The players sit at their lockers in their BP clothes as the coaches enter and walk to the front of the room. The players, all quiet, look up to Haynes.

HAYNES

Twelve to four! That was the score two nights ago when we got our asses kicked against Gastonia.

(MORE)

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Just in case you forgot while playing baseball golf yesterday. I was so pissed the other night, I couldn't even come in here after the game and see your faces. This isn't about losing a baseball game, this is about intensity. You need to be physically and mentally ready to play to the best of your ability every single night. I do not wanna see that kinda' effort again.

Haynes pounds his fist on the folding table, turns and walks out the door followed by Mac and Ranson. Phil stays, looks at the players for a couple seconds who look like a bunch of sad puppies.

PHIL

I'm no expert, in anything really, but I do know one thing, you guys have a chance to be something really special this summer and I think you will make it happen. Your a league best 23 and 3 and one win away from clinching a spot in the playoffs. let's go out there, have fun and win the first half.

All the players yell and cheer as they get up to walk out.

TRAVIS

Hey Phil, isn't July 1st your countries birthday?

PHIL

Actually, it is Canada Day.

The players walk past Phil, out and into the hallway singing a horrible rendition of O' Canada.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

We see a Canada flag above the American flag on the flag pole, the Cardinals players and coaches are lined up along the first base line as the anthem singer sings the last few words to O' Canada, "*O'Canada, we stand on guard for thee*" Phil leans slightly forward and looks over to Travis who see's Phil, smiles and nods his head.

The league standings are on a chalkboard on the side of the souvenir booth is seen.

Scoreboard: **Visitors 3, Home 5, Inning 9.**

The capacity crowd stands and cheers as the Cardinals are one out away from winning. Strike three, Cardinals win!

All the Cardinals players and coaches come out of the dugout and congratulate each other, a part from Haynes not getting close to Phil.

INT. VISITING TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Plastic tarp has been laid down on the carpet and cover the lockers. The players, sweaty and dirty as they enter, are all very excited as they hi-five and hug each other. Rap music plays as the coaches and Cardinals staff enter. Music turns off.

HAYNES

Alright everyone listen up! We do have a few people with us tonight who are usually not here so mind your tongue. I'd like to congratulate all of you for what you've accomplished in the first half of the season, winning the western division and a spot in the playoffs.

The players all yell and applaud.

PHIL

You're the ones who came here after playin' 50 plus games at your colleges. You're away from home for the whole summer, in a town you've never been to, playing with a bunch of guys you've never met.

(beat)

A lot more goes into this game than just playing 9 innings, 6 days a week. No matter how much or how little you've played, you support each other, you count on each other and you depend on each other like no other team I've been a part of. I'm proud of each and every one of you. You might not realize it but each of you has 26 brothers that you don't wanna let down, WE...are family!

Joe steps forward with a plastic bag.

JOE

I've got a little presentation I'd like to make on behalf of the players. Phil, we would like to show our appreciation for all the hard work you do, washing our stinky clothes and uniforms every day and to make sure we've got clean stuff for the next game. We saw your old ball glove break a couple days ago and know how much you like chasin' after fly balls in BP so we all pitched in and got you a brand new glove.

Joe takes the ball glove out and a takes a couple steps towards Phil and shakes his hand while giving him his new glove.

Phil turns red like he's gunna cry.

PHIL

WOW! Thank you everyone so much! I just don't know what to say, nobody's ever done anything like this for me.

Jamaal turns the music back on as the players pop corks and spray champagne all over Phil and themselves. The Cardinals staff quickly exit the locker room.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL PAY PHONE - DAY

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Phil at pay phone / Amy at home

PHIL

Hey, there you are, I tried calling Saturday morning but you didn't answer.

AMY

Yeah, I was at work, I have to work on Saturdays because your not here. It's not easy trying to get by with only one income. So how's it going down there?

PHIL

Haynes is driving me crazy. He doesn't like me, it's like I'm walking on egg shells every time I'm near him. I don't know if I can take another month of this.

(beat)

And I miss you so much. Your all I think about, wondering if your ok.

AMY

First, I'm fine, I promise. I went to see the Doctor yesterday with Susan as scheduled and everything is good. I'm taking my prenatal vitamins every day so don't worry about me.

(beat)

Don't worry about Haynes, just try to keep away from him if he doesn't want to be nice. Just remember your goal, you need to learn so you can become a Scout, that's why your there and that's why you have to stay there until the season is over. You can do this.

Phil smiles from ear to ear.

PHIL

I love you so much!

END INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Phil wipes a tear that rolls down his cheek.

INT. FLORENCE BALLPARK - DAY

Some players are at the concession stand before the game. Spencer and Jamaal are at the back of the line when Phil walks up.

PHIL

Hey Spencer there you are, good news, I have someone coming out to watch you pitch tonight.

SPENCER

Really, thanks a lot Phil, you always got our backs.

JAMAAL

(to Phil)

That's awesome you've got a Scout comin' but you're not supposed to let us know beforehand, we're a bit superstitious and it makes us nervous if we know someone's watchin'.

SPENCER

Don't worry bout' it Phil, it's all good.

INT. FLORENCE BALLPARK - DAY

Scoreboard: **Visitors 1, Home 0, 1st Inning.**

The Cardinals have bases loaded with runners and no out, Wade is about to bat. Phil stands behind a fence in the dugout next to Travis.

PHIL

Watch this, Wade's gunna' hit a grand slam!

TRAVIS

Yeah, you think so, we'll see.

SLOW MOTION pitch one is a slow curve ball, almost hitting Wade, inside for ball one.

The ball is thrown from the catcher back to the pitcher. The pitcher rubs up the ball a bit. We see the three runners on base taking their leads.

SLOW MOTION the next pitch is a fast ball, right down the middle that is **CRUSHED!**

It's super quiet until the ball easily clears the left field fence for a Grand Slam!

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Phil called it! Phil called Wade's Grand Slam!

The Cardinals players in the dugout scream in delight as Haynes, coaching third base, looks over to Phil with a wry smile, chuckles and shakes his head. The players in the dugout all rush out to home plate to congratulate the four Cardinals coming home.

INT. FLORENCE BALLPARK - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 9, Home 0, Final Score.**

EXT. FLORENCE BALLPARK - NIGHT

After the game, near the Cardinals bus, Spencer is seen talking to a Scout who is wearing a Kansas City Royals golf shirt.

INT. FAYETTEVILLE BALLPARK - DAY

Haynes throws BP while Phil attempts to hit fungos to the infielders when he loses grip of his bat as it goes flying, missing the backstop and landing in the unoccupied metal bleachers with a huge **BANG**.

Haynes, not impressed, gives Phil a death stare.

HAYNES

Go get the damn bat and put it down
before you kill somebody.

Phil walks over to the gate, up the bleachers and retrieves the bat.

PHIL (V.O)

You're such an ass, like I meant to
lose the damn bat, it's like a
thousand degrees out here.

INT. FAYETTEVILLE BALLPARK - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 4, Home 2, 6th Inning.**

Haynes doesn't like a called strike three on Grant, is furious, jogs from the third base coaching box to home plate and argues with the umpire who quickly ejects him, Haynes then throws his skull cap to the ground in protest.

Mac quickly runs over to home plate from first base to subdue Haynes while Phil picks up Haynes' skull cap. Mac points Phil to go coach first base. Phil runs over to first base and quickly takes off his Cardinals jacket and puts it down then sees Haynes walking towards him on his way out of the ballpark so Phil tosses him his jacket as Fayetteville fans heckle Haynes on his way out of the ball park.

INT. FAYETTEVILLE BALLPARK - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 5, Home 4, 9th Inning.**

Fayetteville has runners on second and third base, the home crowd claps and screams for a game winning hit, Robbie strikes out the batter to win the game for the Cardinals as the fans go quiet in defeat.

EXT. FAYETTEVILLE BALLPARK PICNIC TABLES - NIGHT

The Cardinals players and coaches have their post game meal, the coaches sit together at one table as Mac does a visual re-enactment of Haynes getting ejected which everyone finds really amusing. Suddenly, Haynes looks across the table at Phil with a serious look on his face.

HAYNES

And what's with you throwing your jacket at me?

PHIL

What, at first base?

HAYNES

Who the hell do I look like, the damn equipment manager or somethin'? I'm the Head Coach! and there I was walking out with your jacket and a bunch of their fans got up my ass! Do you know how embarrassing that was?

Phil has finally had enough of Haynes' attitude and stands up.

PHIL

Ya know, this isn't really about my jacket. Your just worried about your reputation and being the king of the castle. If you could coach third base wearing a crown rather than that helmet thingy

(beat)

you probably would. This team wins in spite of you. This isn't about Matt Haynes. These players don't need a ruler, they need a leader.

Phil snatches his jacket from the picnic table, empties his food into the metal garbage can and slams his food tray on top **BANG!** and walks towards the bus.

The players look at each other, get up and also empty their food trays and follow Phil to the bus. Haynes closes his eyes and lowers his head for a couple seconds. Suddenly, Haynes jumps up from the picnic table and points to his chest.

HAYNES

I'm the damn head coach and I'm not putting up with his shit. He can go home!

Haynes points towards Phil at the bus.

RANSON

Haynes, you don't wanna piss off the players, we only have a couple weeks left. If you send him home now, the players might revolt or worse...lose!

MAC

And I ain't doin' the team laundry for the rest of the summer.

HAYNES

Son of a bitch!

Haynes lowers and shakes his head in defeat.

EXT. DOLLAR GENERAL - DAY

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

Phil at pay phone / Amy at flower shop

Amy hears the phone ring in her purse that's sitting on the counter, pulls it out to see the caller ID say North Carolina. Amy suddenly has a worried look on her face.

AMY

Hey, what's happening? You never call me at work.

Phil is almost yelling and talking really fast.

PHIL

He's driving me absolutely crazy! Last night in Fayetteville, he goes and gets ejected and he gets pissed off at me for giving him my jacket to take with him on his way out of the ball park cause I had to go coach first base.

AMY

Whoa, wait a second, slow down.
What does this ejected mean?

Phil calms down a bit.

PHIL

Ejected means getting thrown out of
the game by the umpire.

AMY

Okay, got it, so he was already
pissed off and he just used you to
take his frustrations out on. This
thing with your jacket meant
nothing. So did you say anything?

PHIL

Yeah, I pretty much told him off in
front of everyone after he got all
pissy. I don't know how much more I
can take.

AMY

Just keep away from him as much as
possible. Don't give him even the
slightest reason to say anything to
you. It's just a few more weeks,
you can do this.

Phil smiles.

PHIL

I love you so much.

AMY

Love you too.

END INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION.

INT. CARDINALS COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Mac, Ranson and Haynes sit around and toss a football, Phil
walks into the room with arms full of personals as Scott
enters. Mac sees Scott and throws him the football.

MAC

Touchdown!

SCOTT

Any idea where I can find some
baseball coaches?

MAC

Nah, just us football players here practicin'.

SCOTT

Y'all are pretty loose for bein' the number 1 collegiate summer team in the country.

Scott has a copy of Baseball America folded up in his hands.

HAYNES

Ahhh crap! here we go.

SCOTT

Listen tooooo you!

HAYNES

We're doin' just fine without all the publicity.

SCOTT

Hell, it is what it is. The players'll be fine, They're all just havin' fun playing ball. It's not like you can go out and buy all the copies of Baseball America in the area and there is this invention called the internet.

Scott grabs a bottle of Nos from the mini fridge and sits on a couch.

Alex knocks and enters.

ALEX

Hey guys, I hope it's ok to stop in?

MAC

No problem, we're just hangin' out.

Mac throws Alex the football which he drops.

ALEX

Did you guys know that the Cardinals are the number 1 team in the country?

HAYNES

Seriously!

Haynes gives Alex a death stare.

ALEX

Yeah, according to Perfect Game.
They have the top 25 teams ranked
in Baseball America, and the
Cardinals are right here at the
top.

Alex opens up a copy in his hands.

HAYNES

Tell me somethin' I don't already
know!

Alex looks like he's about to shit his pants.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

I'm happy for the players but I
don't want anyone here mentioning
this to them. They have enough
stress to deal with.

Haynes gives Phil a stern look.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

Jamaal enters the bus and walks up the steps.

JAMAAL

(to Haynes)

Hey Coach, did ya hear we're the
number 1 team in the country!

Haynes looks over to Phil and shakes his head with a dirty
look on his face. Phil's facial expression is like...Wasn't
me.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOOKER FIELD MARTINSVILLE - DAY

The Cardinals bus is parked on the side of the road as the
players walk along a paved path downhill to the ball park.

Mac grabs one bucket of baseballs in the storage under the
bus and follows the players downhill as the other coaches
walk behind.

CUT TO:

INT. HOOKER FIELD - DAY

The coaches walk towards the infield behind the players.

HAYNES

Mac, where's the other bucket of balls?

MAC

If Phil didn't get em', they're probably under the bus. I always grab one bucket and he gets the other.

HAYNES

Sanders, for god sake go get the other bucket! I need em' for BP.

Phil turns back, hands Haynes his new glove and runs towards the bus.

PHIL (V.O)

Sure, why not, Phil get this, Phil do that, it's a shame I never hear you say thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - DAY

Phil grabs the bucket of baseballs from under the bus and jogs down the hill, takes a short cut through the grass, steps in a small hole and falls to the ground face first BANG! as the bucket of 50 balls flies everywhere and rolls down the hill.

Josh and Spencer, at the bottom of the hill notice a bunch of baseballs rolling towards them along with the bucket, look up to see Phil laid out.

JOSH

Phil! What in the world are you doing?

Phil, laying on the ground in agony.

PHIL

I've fallen, and I can't get up!

Spencer runs up the hill to check on Phil while Josh grabs the bucket and quickly starts to gather the baseballs.

SPENCER

What in the world did you do?

PHIL

I think I stepped in a hole.

Spencer tries not to laugh but just can't hold it in.

SPENCER
Can you get up alright?

PHIL
Yeah, I should be alright, just get
the balls to Haynes for me.

Phil gets up gingerly as he can't put any weight on his left foot, hobbles slowly down the hill in pain.

CUT TO:

INT. HOOKER FIELD - DAY

Josh jogs up the right field line towards the infield with the bucket of baseballs as Haynes yells.

HAYNES
Where the hell is Sanders with the
other bucket of balls?

JOSH
I got em' coach!

Phil walks into the ball park with an obvious limp.

Haynes continues to throw BP as Phil pays attention to not get hit by a batted ball. Pratt, hitting left handed, pulls a line drive right towards Phil and hits him in his right knee. Phil hits the ground and screams like he's been shot.

HAYNES
GAAAAAD DAMMIT!

Haynes puts his hands on his hips, Spencer jogs over to Phil.

SPENCER
Phil, where's your new glove man?

Phil, layed out on the ground on his back, looks up and thinks for a second.

PHIL
Haynes! Haynes has my glove!

Spencer chuckles with a huge smile and shakes his head.

INT. HOOKER FIELD - NIGHT

Phil wears his BP clothes while everyone else is in their uniform, sits in the dugout during the game, stretched out with one bag of ice under his left achilles and another bag of ice on his right knee.

INT. COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Phil enters the coaches locker room as the other coaches sit on the furniture. The first to see Phil and his **medical boot** on his leg is Mac, Ranson sits on a couch and looks over stats while Haynes faces the other direction. Mac lays on a couch with a huge chuckle and a big spit of dip goes into his Hardees cup as he almost chokes.

MAC
Holy cheese & rice!!!

HAYNES
What now?

Mac rolls on his side almost falling off the couch as he explodes in laughter, points towards Phil. Haynes finally looks over his shoulder.

HAYNES (CONT'D)
What the hell is that?

PHIL
Alex took me to the doctor to look at my Achilles, I have a slight strain but I need this damn boot so it can get better.

Haynes closes his eyes and shakes his head in total shock.

HAYNES
Unbelievable unfreakin' believable!
Time for BP, and you're not comin'
to the ballpark with that thing on!

Haynes, Mac and Ranson get up and walk out, Phil sits down at his locker, puts his head down and starts to cry.

EXT. OUTSIDE FINCH FIELD THOMASVILLE - DAY

SUPER: **4TH OF JULY, THOMASVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

A huge crowd is lined up to enter Finch Field.

INT. FINCH FIELD - DAY

Red, white and blue bunting is hung all around the ball park.

The Cardinals players stretch and throw baseballs in left field as the Thomasville team does the same in right field.

Phil swings a brand new shiny Black baseball bat in front of the Cardinals dugout as Haynes watches while standing on the dugout steps.

HAYNES

Would you put that damn bat down
before you kill somebody!

Travis walks up to Phil.

TRAVIS

Phil, you got a new bat!

PHIL

Yup! James gave it to me.

TRAVIS

Could I take a look?

Phil hands Travis the bat.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Damn! It's pretty nice, could I use
it in the game?

PHIL

Well, okay, but only if you hit a
home run.

TRAVIS

Oh gee, thanks Phil, no pressure.
Coach Haynes, could I use this bat
in the game?

HAYNES

I don't care if you use a two by
four, just get a damn hit for a
change.

Travis tosses the bat back to Phil, winks and walks over to the water cooler.

CUT TO:

Down the third base line, the remaining players walk towards the dugout to start the game as Phil goes out to greet them.

GRANT

Phil, do you have a pre-game speech
for us today?

All the players stop and listen to what Phil has to say.

PHIL

Alright, it's the 4th of July,
There's a lot of people here today
who wanna see Thomasville kick our
asses followed by a huge fireworks
display. Well, I've got bad news
for them! We're gunna provide our
own fireworks display during the
game.

All the players walk past Phil say "hell yea" and give him
high fives on their way to the dugout as Haynes watches from
the dugout wondering what was said to his players.

INT. FINCH FIELD - DAY

Scoreboard: **Visitors 2, Home 5, 6th Inning.**

The players in the Cardinals dugout look worried, heads down,
sitting on the bench when Thomasville brings in a relief
pitcher. While he is throwing his warm up pitches, Phil
gathers the Cardinals hitters together as he looks over his
index card on this pitcher.

PHIL

Everyone listen up. This pitcher
can't throw strikes with his
curveball so don't chase, wait for
his fastball then hammer it.

Quickly, the Cardinals bats come alive with hits all over the
place.

CUT TO:

INT. FINCH FIELD - NIGHT

Scoreboard: **Visitors 5, Home 5, 7th Inning.**

Phil stands near the bat rack in the Cardinals dugout as
Travis is about to lead off the inning.

TRAVIS

Phil, where'd you put that new bat?

PHIL
Oh, right here, you want it?

Phil hands Travis his shiny new black bat.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Look for a fastball, he throws hard
but it's straight as a pin.

Travis nods his head then takes a few swings with the bat and walks up to home plate to begin the 7th Inning.

The first pitch is a curve ball inside for ball one. Pitch two is a **SLOW MOTION** fastball right down the middle that Travis **CRUSHES** as it easily flies over the left field fence for a home run. Travis has a huge smile as he makes eye contact with Phil as he rounds third base. Travis is met at home plate by a few teammates who hi-five and pat him on the butt and helmet. Travis gets to Phil outside the dugout and gives him a huge bear hug, lifting him off the ground.

INT. FINCH FIELD - NIGHT

The Cardinals continue to hit the ball all over the ballpark over the last three innings.

Scoreboard: **Visitors 17, Home 7, 9th Inning.**

Fourth of July fireworks light the sky.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Amy and Susan work in the flower shop.

SUSAN
Hey I've got a great idea!

AMY
Okay...

SUSAN
Why don't we go away for a girls weekend, just the two of us? You need to forget about Phil for a couple days and try to have some fun.

AMY
And go where?

SUSAN

Well, we're only 45 minutes from
Niagara Falls and the weather is
supposed to be perfect all weekend.

AMY

Well, I have to call the pet sitter
first and see if she's available.

SUSAN

No need, Dave'll be more than happy
to take care of the dogs for a
couple days, trust me. Ever been on
the Maid of the Mist?

AMY

Oh my god no, I've wanted to go on
that thing for years!

SUSAN

Well that makes two of us, and I'm
taking you shopping for baby
clothes. Oh my god, it's gunna be
so much fun.

Amy turns her back to Susan and breaks out in tears and sobs.

WINNING MONTAGE 2:

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

Cardinals win game after game as we see the players hi-fiving
each other, Phil in the dugout making notes on his index
cards, the fans cheering and the final score on the
scoreboard. Their record increasing after each game.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - NIGHT

The Cardinals players are all smiles as they walk to and
board the team bus while winning game after game on the road.
Their record increasing after each game.

Super: Cardinals **record 38-6.**

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Phil washes the team uniforms late at night.

ALEX (V.O)

The Cardinals are now 38 and 6, the number one team in the country out of over 200 teams, will this be the year of the Cardinals.

Home and Away wins and Phil washing uniforms.

Phil sleeps on his air mattress.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Haynes, wears his IU Bucket Hat along with Mac and Ranson, load Macs' truck with clothes, pillows and a cooler as Phil watches.

HAYNES

Phil, you'll have-ta ride in the van with the players and interns to Wilmington. We don't have any room for you in Mac's truck.

PHIL

Yeah, it's alright, I just don't wanna be stuck here for three days with nothin' to do and there'll be Scouts there for the All-Star game.

Mac and Ranson are in the truck ready to go as Haynes stands close to Phil, almost whispers in his ear.

HAYNES

You better not do anything down there to embarrass me, remember I don't have to let you go to Wilmington.

Haynes pulls the bill of Phil's hat down over his eyes then jumps into the back seat of the truck. Mac **SQUEALS** his tires as they leave. A white extended van enters the clubhouse parking lot with two Cardinals interns and Alex.

Cardinals INTERN 1 (21) Woman, long brown hair, chubby, quiet.

Cardinals INTERN 2 (18) Woman, long blond hair, skinny, outgoing.

Alex slides the side door open and exits the van.

ALEX

Hey Phil, are the players ready to go?

PHIL

I think so. Apparently, I'll be going with you guys.

ALEX

I thought you would'a gone with the other coaches?

PHIL

I thought so too but Haynes said there wasn't any room for me in Mac's truck.

Wade, Grant and Spencer all come out of the clubhouse together with backpacks of clothes, uniforms and pillows.

INT. INSIDE OF RENTAL VAN - DAY

ALEX

Hey would you guys mind if I did a short interview?

Wade, Grant and Spencer all agree.

Alex turns on his hand held tape recorder.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I have three of the Cardinals here with me on our way to Wilmington for the league all-star game. Wade, Grant and Spencer.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Wade, how do you keep winning night after night, and tell us about the pressure?

WADE

As much as I love hitting, this game is all about Pitching. We have the best pitching staff in the league. The pressure we have is like nothing I've ever experienced in baseball but we do have Coach Sanders in our clubhouse, he's a riot, he's got a white board and writes something inspiring every day for us.

Alex moves the recorder to Grant...

ALEX

Grant, why do the Cardinals dominate the competition in this league?

GRANT

We're a pretty talented bunch but I really think what matters is how the players all came together early and really dedicated themselves to a team first mentality. Coach Sanders told us we need to play for each other and not for ourselves.

Alex moves the recorder to Spencer...

ALEX

Spencer, have you been part of a winning team before and what's the pressure like?

SPENCER

I've been on a few winning teams growing up but nothing like this. As far as pressure, I personally try not to think of it especially on days when I'm pitchin'. The one thing, actually person that really helps is having Coach Sanders with us, he really helps keep the mood light in the clubhouse and in BP which takes the pressure off us until game time. I don't know where we'd be without him.

ALEX

Coach Sanders, did you know you being here meant this much to the players?

PHIL

No, I had no idea, but it means a lot to me. I just wanna be part of something special.

WADE

He's our secret weapon, there's only one Coach Sanders, and we got him!

Alex turns off his tape recorder.

We see Phil with a tear rolling down his cheek.

EXT. COMFORT INN WILMINGTON PARKING LOT - DAY

Everyone who was travelling inside the white van walks toward the lobby with their clothes and pillow in hand.

INT. COMFORT INN WILMINGTON LOBBY - DAY

DEBBIE

Hey Alex, here's the key cards for your room. There's 4 of them, one for you and one for each of the assistant coaches. Coach Haynes will be sharing a room with one of the other all-star coaches that the league is paying for. I'm sorry we could only get one room for the 4 of you to share but it's only a couple nights and it's free.

ALEX

No problem Debbie, we'll be alright.

INT. ASSISTANT COACHES ROOM - DAY

Alex and Phil each claim a queen size bed and lay down when Mac, Ranson and Haynes enter the room with their arms full of clothes and pillows.

HAYNES

Alright we're gunna have to double up with only two beds.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Sanders, ya know how you really wanted ta come down here and I said there might not be much room and you said it didn't matter, you just wanted to be here. There's only room for 4 people in these beds so you're gunna have to put a couple blankets and pillows together and find a cozy spot on the floor.

PHIL

Ahhh yeah sure but I thought the league has a room for you?

HAYNES

They do but I'd have to stay in a room with another coach I don't know. I'm gunna take half of Mac's bed, I don't think you wanna sleep next to Mac.

MAC

No Phil, you're not sleeping in my bed, and Haynes, you try to spoon with me, I'll cut your little weenie off!

HAYNES

Alright, I'm havin' a nap, if y'all goin' to the beach, the ocean's that way.

Haynes points towards the door.

INT. WILMINGTON BALLPARK - DAY

Alex gets through the turnstile and walks towards the press box while Phil enters and wonders around.

P.A ANNOUNCER

Welcome to the Coastal Plain League home run hitting contest.

Ranson and Mac drink beer and hang out inside of a VIP beer tent that is surrounded by a 4 foot high fence. Phil takes a seat in the bleachers behind home plate, a couple rows above some baseball Scouts.

INT. WILMINGTON BALLPARK - NIGHT

Haynes and Wade hold a trophy, Spencer, Grant, Debbie and James take pictures.

INT. COMFORT INN ASSISTANT COACHES ROOM - NIGHT

Phil makes a bed on the floor with blankets and pillows, turns off the light and tries to get comfy.

CUT TO:

The other three Cardinals coaches enter the room in the dark and turn the light on as Phil pretends he's sleeping. They change shirts, spray on deodorant, Ranson styles his hair in the bathroom and they leave while turning off the light on their way out. Digital Clock on end table reads **11:50**.

Later...

Phil looks like he's asleep, Digital Clock reads **3:10**. The three other coaches enter the room with a couple girls, turn on the bathroom light, eat Taco Bell and drink beer.

Later...

At **4:02**, Haynes gets up to go to the washroom and trips over Phil as we hear a **THUD!**

HAYNES
Son of a bitch!

INT. COMFORT INN LOUNGE - DAY

Phil sits on a chair half asleep as Debbie enters.

DEBBIE
Hey Phil, Good Morning! How's
everything up there in the room?

Phil looks like he's gotten one hour of sleep on a hard floor as Haynes stands around the corner, a few feet away, listens out of sight.

PHIL
I had to sleep on the floor!

DEBBIE
Why? There's room for four of you.

PHIL
Haynes is there.

DEBBIE
What's he doing there?

PHIL
He slept there, they went out and
partied and came back at like 3 AM.

DEBBIE
What in the world, you poor guy,
I'm just gunna keep my mouth shut.

Haynes turns around and creeps away.

EXT. PORTERS NECK COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

A sign says Porters Neck Country Club.

INT. PORTERS NECK COUNTRY CLUB LOBBY - DAY

A sign on a tripod reads "Coastal Plain League Luncheon"

INT. BANQUET ROOM - DAY

James, Debbie, Alex and the Cardinals coaches sit at their round table and have lunch. Haynes sits across from Phil and gives him dirty looks over the whole luncheon until he takes his sunglasses off to rub his eyes.

JAMES

Holy crap Matt, where'd you get the
the nasty shiner?

Haynes, chews on food as he answers.

HAYNES

I think I tripped over somethin',
might'a been a rat.

Haynes gives Phil a death stare.

DEBBIE

Oh my god! Did you say rat?

Haynes, now finished chewing his food.

HAYNES

No, a bat, I think I tripped over
my fungo bat.

DEBBIE (V.O.)

Hmmm that's funny, I don't remember
seeing your fungo bat.

INT. ASSISTANT COACHES ROOM - DAY

Phil is back in the room after the luncheon, sits on the end of the bed and watches TV when Haynes enters, followed by Mac and Ranson.

Haynes is red faced and irate, walks over to Phil, grabs the remote control, turns off the TV and throws the remote control on the bed.

HAYNES

We need to have a little talk, I'm
pretty pissed, so you better just
sit your ass right there! I heard
you talkin' to Debbie downstairs
this morning. I heard everything!

(MORE)

HAYNES (CONT'D)

You have no damn business tellin' Debbie or anyone what I do on my own time. I just don't get you, this is how you show me your appreciation for letting you come down here!

PHIL

Debbie asked me how things were going up here, so I told her I had to sleep on the floor. I didn't even tell her you guys came back with a couple girls.

Haynes looks at his watch.

HAYNES

You're just lucky I have ta get to the ballpark for this all star game before I really freakin' lose it.

Haynes **SLAMS** the door on his way out.

Phil gets up and extends his arms out in a pleading motion to Ranson and Mac.

PHIL

Could someone please tell me what his problem is?

Ranson chews on an apple.

RANSON

He's jealous.

PHIL

Jealous of what? He's the Head Coach, I'm nothing more than a clubhouse attendant who wears a uniform.

RANSON

You sir, like it or not, are our rabbits foot, horseshoe or any other good luck charm you can think of. Haynes would like nothing more than to get rid of you and burn your uniform but all we do is win and he's not gonna do anything to jeopardize that as long as we keep winning.

Phil looks shocked, still not understanding what he has anything to do with the team's success.

INT. WILMINGTON BALLPARK - DAY

People stream into the ballpark, the two teams stretch, run, and throw baseballs.

ALEX (V.O)

Welcome to the Coastal Plain League all star game. I'm Alex. It looks like we will have a beautiful night for a ball game here in Wilmington, North Carolina. For those of you at home listening to this broadcast on the internet, I'll do my best to keep up with all the player names from the 15 CPL teams being represented. Sit back, grab yourself a cold lemonade and enjoy the next three hours.

INT. WILMINGTON BALLPARK - NIGHT

Phil sits in the stands behind home plate just above where five Major League Scouts sit with their radar guns. Ranson and Mac, back in the VIP tent, drink beer while they watch the game as Haynes coaches third base.

After the game, Haynes, Debbie, James and the Cardinals players take more photographs with the All-Star game trophy.

INT. CARDINALS RENTAL VAN - NIGHT

Phil sleeps on the long back seat inside the rental van.

EXT. COMFORT INN PARKING LOT - MORNING

The sun is up as Phil walks towards the front entrance with his pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. COMFORT INN LOBBY - DAY

Phil sits in a chair near the entrance with his bag and pillow while looking over his index cards.

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The rental van returns in the dark.

EXT. CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - MORNING

Haynes pulls up and parks his truck when he gets a phone call.

HAYNES

Hey Mom, How's it goin?

(beat)

Oh no, I had no idea grandma was sick.

(beat)

Hospice, isn't that for...

(beat)

Oh my god!

(beat)

We're off today, I'm coming home.

Haynes takes his sunglasses off and starts to cry.

EXT. MCNAIR FIELD PARKING LOT - DAY

The Cardinals hold their annual charity car wash. A Stand up to Cancer sign hangs up at the ballpark. All the Cardinals players and staff wash many cars that are in the parking lot as the three assistant coaches wash cars together.

TRAVIS

Hey Phil, did I see on Facebook
it's your birthday today?

Phil sprays water from his hose at Travis and gives him a dirty look with big eyes that says shut up!

MAC

Ranson, did ya hear that, it's
Phil's birthday!

MAC (CONT'D)

(Mac to Phil)

I'm gettin' you drunk tonight!

MAC (CONT'D)

(Mac to Ranson)

Isn't it Karaoke Night at Legal
Grounds?

RANSON

Don't even think about it!

MAC

Cheese & Rice Ranson!

MAC (CONT'D)

Don't be a party pooper, Haynes is gone for the day, it's Phil's Birthday, let's all have some fun.

RANSON

Fine! But we're takin' your truck, he's not throwin' up in my car.

INT. ENTRANCE OF LEGAL GROUNDS RUTHERFORDTON - NIGHT

Legal Grounds, very rustic and dark, a simple, slightly better than a dive bar with a tiny stage and a decent size dance floor. White mini Christmas lights hang from the bar.

As the three assistant coaches enter, the last few seconds of **Fire Burning** - Sean Kingston, is being sung by three girls in their (20's). All with long dirty blond hair, black shirts and jeans.

There's around 50 people in the small bar. Mac gets a pitcher of beer at the bar as the three assistant coaches grab a table. The KARAOKE HOST, (30's), has a full beard, black dress shirt and black dress pants.

KARAOKE HOST

(on microphone)

Thanks a lot ladies! Y'all were pretty good, give'em a hand!

A bunch of patrons cheer and applaud as the girls return to their table.

KARAOKE HOST (CONT'D)

(on microphone)

Alright everyone, make sure to keep bringin' up those song slips, we're just gettin' goin' here.

CUT TO:

The three coaches, have a good time as their pitcher is a third full.

KARAOKE HOST (CONT'D)

(on microphone)

Alright, calling Jack to the stage...you're up!

Four guys sit at a table when a heavy set guy with a beard and sunglasses on gets up and walks over to the stage

Music starts, Jack starts to sing **Chicken Fried** - *Zac Brown Band*. The whole bar claps and sings along, a bunch of girls hustle to the dance floor and start to line dance.

The song ends, everyone returns to their tables with a smile.

KARAOKE HOST (CONT'D)
(on microphone)
Wow Jack, that sounds a lot like
the real thing...great job!

The coaches pitcher of beer is now empty.

PHIL
Well, we should probably get goin'
soon.

Just then, we see a cake lit up with candles approaching as everyone in the bar starts to sing "Happy Birthday" to Phil.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Oh my god! I'm so embarrassed.

The singing ends as Phil blows out the candles.

KARAOKE HOST
(on microphone)
Ok next up, we have Coach Phil,
come on up here.

PHIL
Ohhh crap!

Everyone starts to cheer as Phil gets up and motions the Karaoke host a one with his pointing finger and walks to the bar.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Excuse me, you guys have live bands
here sometimes right?

BARTENDER, (22) woman, long dirty blond hair, was singing karaoke with the girls earlier.

BARTENDER
Yup, Thursday and Friday nights, I
actually keep trippin' over their
stuff back here they haven't picked
up yet.

As she tilts her head towards the back of the bar.

PHIL
Any chance they have a Ukulele back
there?

BARTENDER
Actually, I think there is one,
hold on a sec.

The bartender turns around to find a Ukulele in a case
sitting on top of the other musical instruments and hands it
to Phil.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
If you break this thing, I will
break your ass!

Phil smiles and walks up towards the stage with the small
Ukulele in hand and talks to the karaoke host for a couple
seconds then stands in the middle of the stage as the music
starts to play **Somewhere Over The Rainbow** by "IZ".

PHIL
(on microphone)
This song goes out to someone I
miss dearly back home in Canada.

Phil sings and plays the Ukulele perfectly!

Mac and Ranson look at each other in complete Awe!

They keep looking at Phil singing, with their mouths wide
open as they chuckle, totally stunned that Phil can not only
sing but also play the Ukulele. The rest of the bar patrons
clap to the song.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

During Cardinals BP, Ranson hits fungos to the infielders as
Phil catches for him. Ranson hits a short little pop up down
the first base line which Phil tries to catch until Grant,
who is a little taller, also tries to catch the ball, runs
into Phil's shoulder. Phil walks back towards Ranson rubbing
his shoulder.

RANSON
Damn Phil, you alright?

Phil rubs his shoulder a bit more.

PHIL
It's a little sore but I'll be
alright.

The infielders throw a couple more balls to Phil which he catches gingerly but then Grant throws one in a bit high that Phil reaches up for and falls to the ground in agony holding onto his right arm while making a terrible grunting noise.

RANSON

Holy crap Phil, are you okay?

PHIL

No, I think my shoulder's messed up. I think Grant did it when he ran into me.

Phil slowly gets up and walks over to the front of the Cardinals dugout and sits on a bucket.

Haynes, throwing BP, yells over to Ranson.

HAYNES

What's his problem now?

RANSON

He hurt his shoulder.

Haynes looks over to Phil, shakes his head then continues to throw BP.

INT. CARDINALS COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Phil, in agony as he tries to put on his uniform.

INT. OUTSIDE OF CARDINALS DUGOUT - DAY

Phil walks in through the gate beside the dugout where he sees the Cardinals trainer, MELISSA (22) long blonde hair, friendly.

PHIL

(slight whine)

Melissa, I hurt myself again.

MELISSA

Oh Phil, what did you hurt this time?

Phil walks over to Melissa in the dugout.

PHIL

This one's bad, Grant ran into me during BP and messed up my shoulder.

Phil holds his right arm in front of his chest as Melissa tries to take a look at it.

MELISSA

Is it your arm or your shoulder?

PHIL

It's my shoulder, he ran into it when I was trying to catch a ball, I can hardly feel anything in my whole arm.

MELISSA

What in the world are you trying to catch baseballs for? You're not a player. Go sit down right there on the bench, the Doctor will be here in a few minutes.

CUT TO:

During the game, Phil sits on the bench with a temporary fabric sling.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Phil wait for a doctor to take a look at his shoulder.

PHIL

Thank you so much for taking me to get my shoulder looked at. I can't believe I have to rely on you when there's three other coaches and interns who could take me.

ALEX

Hey, no problem. I'm usually up late anyways.

Clock on wall: **11:15.**

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

The ER Doctor walks into the exam room. ER DOCTOR (40) short hair, well kept. Phil sits on the exam table.

ER DOCTOR

Mr. Sanders, sorry to keep you waiting, I have the results of your x-rays.

(MORE)

ER DOCTOR (CONT'D)

It looks like there's no tear or separation so it's not serious. I'd say you have a nasty bruise. Did you run into something?

PHIL

Yeah, a baseball player. I'm one of the Cardinals coaches, one of my players ran into me during batting practice.

ER DOCTOR

Oh yes, Coach Haynes' team, How's he doing? My niece Maggie's a CNA at the hospice his grandma's at.

Phil is completely shocked at this news about Haynes and his grandma.

PHIL

Any idea how long it will take to get better?

ER DOCTOR

If you rest it, it should be better in a couple weeks. I'll have the nurse get you a prescription for the pain.

PHIL

Thanks a lot for seeing me.

ER DOCTOR

No problem, let's hope those Cardinals keep winning!

The Doctor walks out with a grin from ear to ear.

PHIL

(to himself)

So Haynes' grandma has cancer.

INT. BATHROOM AREA OF CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

With one arm in a sling, Phil tries to wash the players uniforms with one hand. Clock on wall: **12:10.**

EXT. DOWNTOWN FOREST CITY - DAY

The Cardinals bus heads towards the interstate to leave town.

ALEX (V.O)

After losing at home to Thomasville 14 to 3, the Cardinals worst loss of the whole summer, we're heading to Asheboro and Martinsville for a two game road trip. Sometimes it's nice to get away for a couple days and regroup, mind you we haven't lost more than one game in a row all summer.

EXT. PARKING LOT ASHEBORO BALLPARK - DAY

The Cardinals bus arrives and parks.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - DAY

Haynes looks over to Mac and Ranson as the players are about to get off the bus.

HAYNES

You two throw BP today, I'm not feelin' all that well so I'll stay here for a while.

RANSON

Alright Haynes, take it easy!

Mac yells out to all the players.

MAC

Phil's throwin' BP today!

Phil with a grin from ear to ear as he looks over to Haynes who wears his sunglasses and Indiana bucket hat.

HAYNES

I don't give a crap, just don't kill anyone.

EXT. PARKING LOT ASHEBORO BALLPARK - NIGHT

The Cardinals bus lights are on and the door is open as the players walk towards the bus after beating Asheboro.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

The players are all smiles as they enter the bus. Haynes, with his Indiana Bucket Hat pulled down over his face. Phil sits at his seat while players high-five him as they pass.

PRATT
Coach Sanders, you were awesome at
third base, and those signs were
funny as shit.

SUPER: Cardinals Record 42-7

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

As the bus heads towards Martinsville, all is dark and quiet until one of the players near the back of the bus throws up.

Spencer walks up to Ranson.

SPENCER
Hey Ranson, Pratt's back there
getting sick.

RANSON
Tell him to get his ass in the
bathroom. What's he throwing up in?

SPENCER
You don't wanna know.

Prior to arriving in Martinsville, all is still dark and quiet except for more players throwing up.

INT. HAMPTON INN - NIGHT

Ranson and Mac are at the check in counter while Phil sits on a bench inside the lobby as Haynes gets up and walks over to the desk when suddenly Phil puts his hand on his mouth as he's about to get sick, Phil then grabs Haynes's IU Bucket Hat that Haynes left on the bench and throws up in it while running to the restroom.

Haynes has a look of utter shock on his face.

INT. HOOKER FIELD MARTINSVILLE - NIGHT

Half a dozen Cardinals players sit by themselves at the top of the bleachers and watch the game.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

During the game, Phil sleeps on the three seater opposite the washroom.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

On the way home, all is quiet on the bus.

ALEX (V.O)

Somehow I didn't get the flu but it did rip through most of the team over the last 24 hours. We did win of course, so we're now 43 and 7.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Amy and Susan work together in the flower shop.

SUSAN

So you only have what, a few days left til' Phil comes home?

AMY

Yes, don't remind me. I'm tryin' not to think about it.

SUSAN

Awww you poor girl, are you gunna make him a cake?

AMY

Me? Make a cake? You must have me confused with someone who can bake.

SUSAN

Then just get a little cake at the grocery store in the bakery and have them write welcome home Phil on it. I still can't believe you haven't told him about the baby.

AMY

Oh don't worry, I have it all planned out for when he gets home.

Amy has a grin from ear to ear.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Phil leans up against the fence in front of the Cardinals dugout, in uniform, all by himself. It's his last home game with the Cardinals. With a look on his face like his dog just died, a tear rolls down Phil's cheek. Haynes comes down the steps into the ballpark and see's Phil.

HAYNES

What's up buttercup?

Phil quickly wipes the tear away and shakes his head a bit, realizing Haynes was saying something.

PHIL

It's my last home game, my plane ticket says I'll be going home in a couple days.

HAYNES

The players are coming, you better just suck it up and not say anything, I don't want them distracted.

Haynes walks towards the pitchers mound to grab the L-screen, looks up to the sky and closes his eyes like he's thinking of something.

EXT. CARDINALS CLUBHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Phil walks ahead of a few players on their way to the team bus from the clubhouse.

SPENCER

Phil, is it true your goin' home after we get back from Martinsville?

WADE

(to Phil)

What, your not gunna be with us for the playoffs?

Phil turns around and confronts the players.

PHIL

No, I can't change my plane ticket so I have'ta go home.

TRAVIS

Well that blows! What are we gonna do without you?

PHIL
Do what you usually do...Win!

WADE
But we need your scouting reports
on the other team.

PHIL
You'll be fine.

INT. INSIDE OF CARDINALS BUS - DAY

The players are huddled together near the back of the bus.
Haynes slowly creeps up, hears what's being said.

GRANT
What can we do, it's probably too
late to pitch in and change his
plane ticket.

WADE
Why the hell didn't he tell us.

Haynes walks towards the back of the bus.

HAYNES
It's not your responsibility! Leave
it alone. You have a game to play
and to get ready for the playoffs.
Now get back to your seats, I need
ta take a leak.

Haynes goes into the washroom, we see his face in the
reflection of the small mirror above the toilet.

HAYNES (CONT'D)
Sanders, your gonna be the death of
me.

Haynes lowers his head to concentrate.

EXT. HOOKER FIELD MARTINSVILLE - NIGHT

The Cardinals players walk up the hill slowly with their
heads down towards the bus.

ALEX (V.O.)
Six nothing. The Cardinals lose to
the Mustangs for the first time all
summer, finishing the regular
season 46 and 9.

INT. CARDINALS TEAM BUS - NIGHT

HAYNES

(on microphone)

Alright everyone, listen up! I just checked my voicemail. Debbie said she's gettin' Phil a new plane ticket so he can stay with us for the playoffs,
(beat)
if you want him?

All the players start chanting...We want Phil, we want Phil, we want Phil.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, settle down! You got him!

The players all cheer and chant, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil !!!

Haynes hangs up the microphone, sits back in his seat and covers his face with his Indiana Bucket hat as players douse Phil with bottled water.

EXT. CLUBHOUSE TO DOLLAR GENERAL PAY PHONE - MORNING

Phil walks to the pay phone, very worried about telling Amy he's not on his way home.

INT. PHIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Amy has a grin from ear to ear as she puts up decorations including a "Welcome Home" banner.

BEGIN INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Phil at pay phone / Amy at home

PHIL

Hey hun, I've got some good news and some bad news for you.

AMY

What, you missed your flight but will be on the next one?

PHIL

No, not exactly, Debbie was able to switch my plane ticket so now I'm staying for the playoffs.

AMY

What! You wait til' this morning to tell me this! When did you know you weren't coming home?

PHIL

Amy, I'm sorry, I only found out last night when we we're coming back from Martinsville, I couldn't call when we got back at like 2 in the morning.

AMY

It's okay, it's not your fault. Just relax. Everything will be fine. Just make sure you do one thing
(beat)
Win!

Phil's face lights up as he smiles from ear to ear.

PHIL

I love you so much!

END INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

Amy hangs up the phone, pulls down the welcome home banner, tears it up and starts to cry.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FOREST CITY - DAY

Sign outside of SMITH'S DRUGS is seen.

INT. SMITH'S DRUGS - DAY

Haynes has lunch at the counter when he sees something interesting on their TV.

B-ROLL - **ON TV**

TV station WRAL from Raleigh has come to Forest City to do a short story on the Cardinals, including interviews by James, Wade, Spencer and Robbie.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

2 studio news anchors sit at a news desk wearing dress clothes.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

To the boys of summer and the heat of competition, one North Carolina baseball team has been racking up wins and shattering records all summer long.

NEWS ANCHOR 2

Tonight, our Tar Heel traveler is out West in Rutherford county. Scott Mason reports on the unforgettable season of the Forest City Cardinals.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FOREST CITY - DAY

Scott Mason stands with a microphone, wearing a WRAL golf shirt and dress pants.

SCOTT MASON

There are around 500 collegiate summer baseball teams in the nation and the team that's been number one for much of the summer is from right here in little ole Forest City, 46 wins and counting.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Scott, off screen, interviews Spencer who is on the field standing on the right field line.

SCOTT MASON

How many players have you struck out?

SPENCER

So far, a hundred and ten.

Scott, off screen, then interviews Robbie who stands in the same place.

SCOTT MASON

Robbie Andrews, your the Cardinals closing pitcher, you haven't allowed a run or a walk all summer. What's your nickname?

ROBBIE

Game over.

SCOTT MASON
Robbie, game over Andrews.

Robbie with a huge grin.

ROBBIE
That's right.

CUT TO:

Scott, off screen interviews a fan, 50's male, grey hair, wearing a red Cardinals t-shirt and hat, sits at the picnic tables.

FAN
Look at the attendance, the Cardinals are the best thing that's ever happened in this city. They're unbelievable! They've broken every record in the league. The quality of baseball here is as good as anywhere in the country.

Scott, off screen, interviews James who is standing up against the fence with the scoreboard in the background.

SCOTT MASON
Tell me about the history of this ballpark.

JAMES
Robert McNair was from Forest City, owns the Houston Texans NFL team, he donated a million dollars to help make this stadium. One of the best small stadiums in the country.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FOREST CITY - DAY

Scott stands with his microphone and a fountain in the background.

SCOTT MASON
One day, many of these college players will be pros, their careers just beginning. As far as this magical season, for the ompetition, it's game over! From Forest City, Scott Mason reporting.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Due to an early tropical storm battering the East coast, the ballpark in Hampton, Virginia is under a foot of water so the entire best of three Coastal Plain League finals begin tomorrow in Forest City.

INT. CARDINALS COACHES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Cardinals coaches throw around the hard plastic baseball when there's a knock at the door as Alex enters the locker room.

ALEX

Hey guys, how's it going?

HAYNES

What-da-ya need Alex?

Alex has sheets of paper in his hand.

ALEX

I just have the updated stats for Peninsula to give you for tomorrow.

Alex hands the papers to Ranson.

RANSON

Thanks Alex.

ALEX

Hey, no problem.

Alex walks out.

Haynes, Mac and Ranson resume throwing around the plastic baseball as Phil sits at his locker when there is another knock and enter at the door as James comes in.

JAMES

Hey, guys, it's good your all here.

HAYNES

Yes James.

JAMES

I just wanted to go over a couple things for tomorrow night.

The coaches stop throwing the baseball and listen.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Game one is at 4 PM. They're going to be full nine inning double-headers though, not like during the regular season. We're having opening ceremonies like we did for the home opener.

HAYNES

Four PM, so that means BP's at 1, alright we'll let em' know.

JAMES

Alright, thank you.

James walks out of the coaches locker room.

The coaches resume throwing the baseball for another 5 seconds when there's another knock and enter at the door.

MAC

Holy cheese n' rice!

The coaches stop throwing the baseball.

SCOTT

Hey guys! I just wanted to stop in real quick and thank you for doin' interviews this summer and getting me team stats. I really appreciate it. I know you baseball guys are pretty superstitious so I'm not gonna say anything about tomorrow.

Scott takes a few steps towards the door.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Ya know, if you guys finish this thing off and win the CPL Championship, you might have a chance to beat out the Cape Cod League and be National Champions!

Scott chuckles and takes a couple more steps towards the door.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

You know if this does happen,
there's no way this dream, this
fairy tale season we've been livin'
for the last couple months could
ever be turned into one of those
true story movies as nobody would
ever believe it!

Scott waves and leaves.

HAYNES

Okay, I'm gettin' the hell outta
here!

INT. CARDINALS OFFICE - DAY

Phones ring off the hook as Debbie and the two Cardinals
interns try to help people who want to purchase Cardinals
tickets.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

The two man grounds crew chalk the field while the Cardinals
game day staff meet at the picnic tables. The Peninsula
baseball team arrives and enters through the gate. Leading
the way for the Pilots players is HEATH, the old Cardinals
player who was released early in the season who has a scowl
on his face.

INT. PLAYERS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clock on wall: **2:58**

The Cardinals players sit in front of their lockers, all
nervous and pale as ghosts. Quiet like we can hear a pin
drop. Phil stands at the front of the room.

PHIL

Seeing that we didn't play
Peninsula all summer, I don't have
any scouting reports for you but
that's ok because they have nothing
on us either. This is old school
baseball gentlemen. Us against
them, pure and simple.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Every time when we'd arrive at another teams ballpark all summer long, the bus stops and the door opens, you walk out past me and when your right here, usually at 6 o'clock, about to make that walk through the cemetery,

(beat)

there's this confidence I see in all of you that's really hard to explain. I can't really see it but I can actually feel it enter my body and flow through me as you walk past me. It's like your titans on your way to battle and will not be defeated. Most of the time, with this attitude, you've already won before even entering the ballpark.

(beat)

I'd walk in and see the opposition and say to myself

(beat)

you have no chance.

(beat)

This, is your night,

(beat)

your night to show the great fans Forest City, the Peninsula Pilots, the Coastal Plain League and the entire country that the Forest City Cardinals are the number one collegiate summer baseball team in America.

EXT. CEMETERY TRAIL - DAY

The Cardinals players and coaches walk towards the ballpark. **Click clack** of their metal cleats on the pavement, not a word is said.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

A lot of Cardinals fans are wearing red, lined up to enter the ball park.

ALEX (V.O)

Welcome Cardinals fans to a dry Forest City which will now be home to the entire best of three Coastal Plain League championship series between the Cardinals and the Peninsula Pilots. Tonight will be a double header, should they split, the deciding game three will be played tomorrow night at 7 PM.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

We hear the last few words of The Star Spangled Banner being sung as we see the United States flag blowing atop the flag pole.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 0 Home 0, 1st Inning.**

Spencer walks back towards the Cardinals dugout after striking out the third Pilots hitter and hi-fives with Ranson as he enters the dugout.

With Pratt on second and Wade on first, Grant hits into an inning ending double play as the Cardinals fans groan in dissatisfaction.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 0 Home 0, 5th Inning.**

The Pilots lead off hitter hits a first pitch fastball high and deep over the left field fence for a home run.

The inning ends with a strikeout and Spencer walking to the dugout with his head lowered.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 1 Home 0, 7th Inning.**

Wade, about to lead off for the Cardinals, swings his bat near the on deck circle.

PHIL

They got a new Pitcher, we need to get these bats going!!!

Wade quickly hits a double followed by a two run home run by Grant giving the Cardinals a 2-1 lead.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 1 Home 2, 8th Inning.**

Jamaal bounces off the mound after striking out all three Pilots hitters in the top of the 8th inning.

Travis comes to bat with two out in the bottom of the 8th inning and hits a solo home run giving the Cardinals a 3-1 lead.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 1 Home 3, 9th Inning.**

ALEX (V.O)
Here comes Robbie "Game Over"
Andrews to close it out for the
Cardinals here in the 9th inning.

Music blares on the stadium speakers, Song: **Enter Sandman.**

Robbie strikes out all three Pilots hitters to end game one, Cardinals win!

All the Cardinals fans stand and cheer.

P.A ANNOUNCER
There's going to be a 30 minute
break between games. Game two is
now scheduled to begin at 7:10 PM.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

The Cardinals players sit together in right field relaxing when Phil walks out with a cardboard box full of hot dogs on top of a case of water for the players.

GRANT
Look what Phil's got!

WADE
Damn Phil, you da' man!

TRAVIS
Phil's always had our backs.

PHIL

I was a little hungry and thirsty
so I just figured you guys might be
too. Haynes didn't want me coming
out here and disturbing you guys.

JAMAAL

Screw Haynes!

PRE-GAME MONTAGE:

The two man grounds crew drag the infield with their tractor
and re-chalk the lines for game two. Fans are lined up at the
concession stand, kids run around and play. The P.A
announcer starts to give the lineups for game two. The
Cardinals players start to walk back towards the dugout.

END MONTAGE.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

The Cardinals players are starting to walk back towards the
dugout.

TRAVIS

Hey Phil, give us some of your
words of wisdom.

PHIL

Well, I guess I could but this is
the last time!

The players chuckle because they know if they win this game
there won't be a next time.

PHIL (CONT'D)

It's been a while since we played a
double header, do you remember what
I used to say?

GRANT

We don't split double headers.

PHIL

That's right Grant, why don't we
split double headers?

JAMAAL

We're not a 500 team.

PHIL

Yes Jamaal, we haven't split a double header all summer so why would we do it now? Every time we've played a double header this summer, after winning the first game we come back onto the field a half hour later and tell the other team NO! You will not split this double header!

(beat)

This ends tonight! Right here, right now!

The Cardinals players, really pumped up, jog past Phil with high-fives and pat him on the back and spray him with water as they run towards the dugout. The other three Cardinals coaches stand in the dugout who saw Phil talking to the players. The players run in with a very determined look on their faces.

CUT TO:

Ranson looks over to Haynes.

RANSON

When did this become Phil's team?

HAYNES

I dunno, maybe a couple months ago. That's alright, at least I get to wear a uniform and coach third base.

MAC

And that uniform looks awfully clean even though it is a bit tight on you.

Haynes nods his head and grins.

HAYNES

That it does Mac, that it does.

RANSON

Phil, would you run down to the bullpen and ask Josh one question for me? First, tell him I sent you. Ask him if he's ready to go.

Phil takes off to the bullpen. The umpires come back onto the field as Haynes walks to home plate with his lineup card in hand.

CUT TO:

Phil gets back from the bullpen almost out of breath as Haynes looks to Ranson, Ranson looks to Phil for an answer.

PHIL

Josh said he would be ready as soon
as I got back to tell you he was
ready.

Ranson gives Haynes a thumbs up.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - DAY

Josh starts off with two quick strike outs followed by a routine ground ball to Travis at shortstop.

Travis leads off the bottom of the first inning with a home run off of HEATH.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 0 Home 1, 4th Inning.**

The Cardinals have runners on first and second, Wade hits into what looks like a routine double play until the first baseman's foot comes off the base and he's safe which keeps the inning going. Pratt hits a two run home run to give the Cardinals a 3-0 lead.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 0, Home 3, 5th Inning.**

We see more strike outs for Josh.

INT. MCNAIR FIELD - NIGHT

We hear the fans sing the second half of take me out to the ball game in the 7th inning stretch. The Cardinals have bases loaded with two out in the 7th inning. With full count on Joe, the fans stand and hold their breath. **SLOW MOTION** a fastball for strike three on the outside corner, Joe is called out by the umpire.

Robbie begins to stretch in the Cardinals bullpen.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 0 Cardinals 3, 8th Inning.**

Jamaal completes his warm up pitches on the mound. The lead off hitter for the Pilots hits a home run to left field as Jamaal lowers his head.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 1 Cardinals 3, 8th Inning, 2 outs.**

The Pilots have a runner on third base when Jamaal throws a wild pitch scoring the runner. Ranson comes out to talk to Jamaal and settle him down. The Pilots players get really excited as they are only down 3-2. Robbie throws in the bullpen to get ready if needed.

RANSON

It's only you and him now, nobody
to worry about on base, concentrate
on your catcher and trust your
stuff. Take a deep breath and do
this!

Jamaal nods yes to Ranson, Ranson walks back to the dugout.

Jamaal throws a curve ball for strike one looking. The next pitch is a slider that is swung on and missed for strike two. Joe calls for a fast ball that Jamaal shakes off so Joe then puts down two fingers for a curve ball. **SLOW MOTION** the curve ball locks up the hitter for a called strike three to end the inning.

The Cardinals fans jump up and cheer as Jamaal jogs off the field into the dugout.

CUT TO:

Scoreboard: **Visitors 2, Home 3, 8th Inning.**

The Cardinals quickly get out in order in the 8th inning.

CUT TO:

It's the top of the 9th inning as Robbie runs towards the mound while Song: **Enter Sandman** blares on the speakers.

Robbie quickly strikes out the first Pilots batter. The next batter hits a single to right field. The following batter hits a double to right field with the head coach of the Pilots having to stop his runner at third base. The head coach puts his head down knowing how close they just were to tying the game.

Haynes and Ranson stand beside each other in the dugout.

HAYNES

Should you go talk to him?

RANSON

No, Joe's got it.

Phil stands beside Ranson.

PHIL

You might wanna put a runner on first to set up a force out at any base.

RANSON

Yeah Haynes, actually that's a good idea, If two runs score, a third doesn't really matter.

HAYNES

Tell Joe.

Ranson looks over to Joe who is catching and gives him a sign to go and talk to Robbie along with sign showing 4 fingers to intentionally walk the next batter.

Joe walks to the pitchers mound.

JOE

Ranson says we're walkin' the next batter so we have a force out at any base. It looks like we're in a bit of a pickle.

ROBBIE

Ya think!

JOE

Hey do you still have that stuff Phil said for pitchers to write in your hat a while back?

ROBBIE

What, those 5 keys, Maybe.

JOE

Well, look at the damn thing!

Robbie takes his cap off and reads what's written inside.

ROBBIE

First pitch strikes, keep the ball down, change speed and location, don't walk anyone and trust your stuff.

JOE
Yeah, do that!

Joe smacks Robbie in the chest with his catchers mit, turns around and jogs back to home plate. Phil smiles from ear to ear as he knows what they were talking about.

After the intentional walk and the batter jogs to first base to load the bases, the next batter is called over to talk to his head coach near third base while Robbie walks around the mound rubbing the ball.

ROBBIE (V.O)
Ok, let's see, first pitch strike
and keep the ball down, I can do
that.

The first pitch is a fastball that is hit on a line drive three feet directly above Travis. Travis squats down then lunges as high as he possibly can into the air, catching the ball and landing on his feet for the second out. All three runners on base quickly return to the base they occupy.

Robbie gets the ball back from Travis and rubs it up as he walks behind the mound. The Cardinals fans stand in unison, applaud and cheer for Robbie to finish them off.

The Pilots batter steps into the batters box and digs in.

ROBBIE (V.O) (CONT'D)
Alright, let's start off with a
fastball inside.

Pitch one is a called strike.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Okay, change speed and location.

Robbie throws a curve ball low and outside that is also watched for strike two. All the Cardinals fans stand and cheer as loud as they can for Robbie, pitch three is a slider that barely misses the outside corner for ball one.

ROBBIE (V.O) (CONT'D)
How about an inside fastball.

Pitch four **SLOW MOTION** is an inside fastball that is crushed! Hit high and deep to left-centerfield, Wade **SLOW MOTION** dives.

ALEX (V.O)
This ball is crushed, high and deep
to left-centerfield.
(MORE)

ALEX (V.O) (CONT'D)

Wade Moore dives, does he catch the ball...Yes! He caught it! It's over, it's over! Cardinals win! Cardinals win! The Forest City Cardinals have just won the Petitt Cup!

Wade falls to the ground, jumps up with the ball in his hand, shows it off as he's jumped by his teammates on the field and the rest of his teammates from the dugout and the bullpen. The players dogpile on Wade while the four Cardinals coaches run out and join the players.

The outfield lights quickly turn off as a barrage of fireworks light up the sky. The Cardinals fans cheer and applaud the players as camera flashes go off.

INT. VISITING TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

All the Cardinals players, coaches and staff are once again inside the spare locker room which is covered with plastic, music playing loud. Haynes holds the Petitt Cup in front of him.

HAYNES

Alright, alright, turn off the music for one minute, I know you wanna get this party started.

Music is turned off.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

I have a lot of people to thank. Ken, James, Debbie and the rest of their staff for having me here. Ranson for getting us the best pitching staff in the league. Mac for hitting fungos every day and putting up with me.

Haynes takes his sunglasses off.

HAYNES (CONT'D)

Phil Sanders, you were a thorn in my ass all summer long! You were also the heart and soul of this team.

(MORE)

HAYNES (CONT'D)

From day one all you talked about was winning, a-lot-a the time you had a knack of saying crap at the wrong time but it didn't matter because we just kept winning and these players not only believed in what you said all summer long it made them into the team they are, CPL Champions!

Haynes goes to shake Phil's hand and then brings him in for a big hug as the players all cheer. The players all chant - Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil. Corks pop as the players spray champagne at Haynes and Phil. Within seconds, everyone gets soaked.

EXT. HOST FAMILY POOL PARTY - NIGHT

All the Cardinals players, coaches and staff party in the back yard of a host families house.

EXT. HOST FAMILY POOL PARTY - DAY

The next morning, Debbie wakes up Phil who is asleep on a pool lounge chair.

DEBBIE

Phil, I have a flight for you, if you wanna go home today?

PHIL

Really! Oh my god, yes, what time does it leave?

DEBBIE

3:30 this afternoon. Alex is going home to Florida this afternoon and can take you to the airport.

PHIL

Okay, that would work. Could you please text my wife and let her know I'm coming home tonight.

DEBBIE

Alright no problem, come with me.

Phil gets up and starts to follow Debbie.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

It was really nice of Coach Haynes
to get you that new plane ticket so
you could stay for the playoffs.

Phil looks over to Haynes who's asleep on a hammock,
sunglasses on and trophy wrapped in his arms.

EXT. IN FRONT OF CARDINALS OFFICE - DAY

Phil gives Debbie a big hug and is about to get into Alex's
truck when John Henderson pulls up and stops on the street.

JOHN HENDERSON

Hey Phil, Congrats on winning the
championship! Tell ya' what, If you
keep coming down here for another
3-4 summers, I'll see about getting
you a scouting job with the Jays.

John waves and drives off. Phil stands on the sidewalk in
total shock knowing he won't be getting a scouting job with
the Blue Jays any time soon.

EXT. IN FRONT OF SHERATON HOTEL DOWNTOWN HAMILTON - DAY

The airport shuttle pulls away, Phil sees Amy as she walks
through the glass doors of the Sheraton Hotel and comes
outside.

PHIL

Your the most beautiful pregnant
women I've ever seen in my life.

AMY

I love you so much!

Phil and Amy hug and kiss. They start walking down the
sidewalk with Phil's luggage when Amy stops.

AMY (CONT'D)

Oh, wait a second, something came
for you in the mail this morning
but I didn't open it.

Amy pulls an envelope out of her purse and gives it to Phil
who takes a look at the envelope. Logo: **Atlanta Braves**. Phil
opens it and reads the letter out loud.

PHIL

Dear Mr. Sanders, My name is Roy Clark, I'm the Atlanta Braves Director of Amateur Scouting. A good friend of mine, Matt Haynes, mentioned you are interested in a scouting position and gives you a good recommendation. I would like to offer you a position next summer to Scout the Coastal Plain League for the Braves. Please let me know if you are interested in this opportunity. Sincerely, Roy Clark, Atlanta Braves Baseball Club.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Ohhh my god! The Braves want to give me a scouting job for next summer! Hey, if we have a boy could we call him Chipper?

AMY

Don't even think about it!

Phil and Amy hug and kiss, and walk away down the sidewalk.

FADE OUT.