

APPLES & ORANGES

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APPLES & ORANGES

FADE IN:

INT. S.F. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Champagne cork EXPLODES.

SARAH MCGRAW, intense teenage tomboy, shakes bottle and sprays ...

Her father, "CRACKER JACK" MCGRAW, who cradles National League Pennant trophy.

MCGRAW

(to reporters)

It's a dream come true. We all need them. In the long run, they're all we got.

REPORTER (O.S.)

What's yours, Jack?

SARAH

Cooperstown.

Jack throws soggy towel to ...

MATT COOPER, who snaps Sarah's butt. She kisses his cheek as he grabs her bottle.

MATT

(to reporters)

Me? Write a novel about it.

He holds up brand new ink pen shaped like baseball bat and winks at Sarah.

MATT

How about you, junior?

SARAH

A reporter.

MATT

Keep us honest?

SARAH

Forget sports, Matthew. I want to change things.

MATT

Sarah, journalism's just literature in a hurry.

SARAH

Maybe literature just can't keep up.

Matt tosses bottle to ...

BILLY CLARK, who drops it.

BILLY

(to reporters)

I'm gonna buy me my own island. Stock  
it full of wild game and spend my days  
hunting.

Billy yanks jock off his head and slingshots it at ...

MIKE WALT, who dodges it.

WALT

(to reporters)

When it's all over? Live my life my  
way.

Mike grabs bucket of ice water and throws it at ...

JIMMY SWIFT, who sidesteps it.

SWIFT

(to reporters)

I was the kid they never let play.  
One of these days, I'll call the  
shots.

Jimmy stumbles into ...

TONY PRONZINI, who slips into shadows.

KNUCKLES

(to himself)

Life's a game. Can't win if you don't  
play. Down the road, I ain't playing  
underhanded.

Tony flicks dead cigarette at ...

TELEVISION

where TEX AUSTIN sits in his wheelchair in owner's box. He  
deals poker and watches Giants celebrate on TV.

AUSTIN

(to reporters)

My dream? The only one I ain't got.  
My Angels win the Series.

Austin holds up card and winks at ...

TELEVISION MONITOR

where ROBERT SANCHEZ stands in his office. He watches Austin's interview on left monitor. "Third Inning" segment of Ken Burns' "Baseball" documentary on center monitor. And Jack McGraw's interview on right monitor.

SANCHEZ  
(to TV)  
And you own mine, Tex.

Sanchez walks up to ...

RIGHT TELEVISION MONITOR

where Matt and Sarah join Jack, who hands trophy to Matt and drapes his jersey around Sarah. Lucky number seven.

REPORTER (O.S.)  
The world needs heroes, Jack.

MCGRAW  
You want heroes? There they are. I'm nobody's hero.

INT. NEW YORK - TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

SPORTS WIDOW does her live, shock jock sports thing.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Real-time from New York. The city with no room for amateurs. It's time for the Sports Widow.

WIDOW  
You heard it first right here, fannies. On the Widow's Web.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah sits alone in Jack's office. She wears his jersey and stares at TV.

TELEVISION

On monitor behind Widow: Head shot of Jack McGraw.

WIDOW (V.O.)  
Superstar "Cracker Jack" McGraw, first sacker and player-manager of the NL Champion SF Giants, admitted today that he bet on his team to win the World Series.

EXT. NEW YORK - TIMES SQUARE - DAY

On banks of TVs behind storefront windows, Tony Pronzini exits L.A. Federal Building. He shields face from swarm of reporters.

WIDOW (V.O.)

It began with an anonymous tip to the Commissioner's Office. And ended when bookie Tony "Knuckles" Pronzini fingered his long-time friend. In return for immunity.

KNUCKLES

If it moved, Jack had a bet down. But he never bet baseball.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - STUDIO GATE - DAY

On TV inside guardhouse, Jack McGraw faces bank of microphones. He toys with rabbit's foot.

WIDOW (V.O.)

At an emotional press conference, McGraw gave up the whole *tamale*.

MCGRAW

I got a problem. But it's not with lying. I placed the bet. Someday you'll understand.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah fights tears. She clutches Jack's autographed, rookie baseball card.

INT. NEW YORK DELI - DAY

On TV, COMMISSIONER exits office.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Commissioner Bill White immediately suspended McGraw. Indefinitely, pending further review. Just days before McGraw's Giants square off against the California Angels.

COMMISSIONER

I have no choice. The World Championship of Baseball will go on. Without Jack McGraw.

INT. LOS ANGELES - POLO LOUNGE - DAY

On TV behind bar, Jimmy Swift stares down reporters outside L.A. Federal Building. He touches small scar on his left cheek.

WIDOW (V.O.)

McGraw's agent and business manager, attorney Jimmy Swift had little to say.

SWIFT

I've been begging Jack to get help for years. Now this. I'm shocked. And disappointed.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Will you continue to represent him?

SWIFT

He sold out the game, his team, the fans, his family, his friends. Me. I don't do business with cheats.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah salutes TV with her middle finger.

INT. NEW YORK - GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

On TV, Matt Cooper wades through reporters.

WIDOW (V.O.)

No one was more stunned than McGraw's protégé, All-Star catcher Matt Cooper.

REPORTER (O.S.)

You must have known he had a problem.

MATT

Wasn't my turn to watch him.

INT. LOS ANGELES - UNION STATION - DAY

On TV, Matt scribbles notes with baseball bat pen.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Why the cover-up?

MATT

Everybody knew. We just decided to keep it in the clubhouse. The Skipper always swore he never bet baseball. I trusted him.

REPORTER (O.S.)

What now?

MATT

One base at a time.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah kisses tiny, leather catcher's mitt on her keychain.

EXT./INT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - MERCEDES BENZ WAGON - DAY

On TV inside car, Giants take batting practice.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Even with McGraw gone, the juice  
remains heavy on the Giants to sweep.

EXT. GIANTS' STADIUM - DAY

Red, white, and blue bunting flaps in breeze.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

It's empty and quiet. Eerie, like world's end.

Sarah sits in front of Jack's locker. His jersey lies at  
her feet. She stares at TV.

TELEVISION

On monitor behind Sports Widow: California Angels  
celebrate Series victory.

WIDOW

The Giants were snake-bit before a  
pitch was even thrown. Everything  
that could go wrong, did.

INT. NEW YORK - BOOKIE JOINT - DAY

On TV, Jack McGraw exits clubhouse.

WIDOW (V.O.)

First they lose Jack McGraw. The man  
many consider the best all-around  
player since Ty Cobb.

INT. LOS ANGELES - HEALTH CLUB - DAY

On TV, Mike Walt flees from reporters.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Then, in a bizarro gesture of loyalty,  
Mike Walt, the left-handed ace of the  
Giant's staff, suddenly retired.

WALT

Like the Skip said, he's got an  
illness. He needs understanding, not  
punishment. If baseball wants to  
treat him like a leper, it can do it  
without me.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah flashes thumbs up.

EXT./INT. NEW YORK - CENTRAL PARK - HOMELESS CAMP - DAY

On TV inside shack, CHICO MORALES gives up home run.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Once the Series opened, that snake started working overtime. Relief ace Chico Morales got rocked. His fastball wasn't.

INT. LOS ANGELES - RACETRACK - DAY

On TV inside luxury box, GOVER JOHNSON boots easy grounder.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Gold glove shortstop Gover Johnson traded in his Hoover for a Cuisinart.

INT. NEW YORK THEATER - DAY

On TV backstage, Billy Clark whiffs at third strike.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Fence-busting outfielder Billy Clark couldn't hit his ass with both hands.

INT. LOS ANGELES - SOAP OPERA SET - DAY

On TV, Matt Cooper punches out water cooler and slices open his right hand.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Early in game three, a frustrated Matt Cooper went a round with the water cooler. And lost. Out for the Series. Maybe for good.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah wraps towel around right hand.

INT. NEW YORK - 42ND STREET SUBWAY - DAY

On TV inside security office, Giants watch Angels celebrate.

WIDOW (V.O.)

From first pitch to last out, it was a nightmare. Some blamed it on losing McGraw. Others on voodoo. Or the Bossa Nova. The Widow summed it up in one word: Youneverknow.

INT. LOS ANGELES - PAWN SHOP - DAY

On TV, Tex Austin rolls his wheelchair up to microphones.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Angels owner Tex Austin agreed.



AUSTIN  
Stranger than fishin'.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Sarah tosses father's jersey in trashcan.

EXT. GIANTS' STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Sarah stares at her father's baseball card. She clips it to spokes of her mountain bike and races away.

CLOSE ON SPOKES

as they spin and card FLAPS.

TILT UP to reveal ...

Sarah, ten years later. A self-confident young woman, she races her mountain bike along edge of oceanside cliffs.

INT. NEW YORK - TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

Set of sports talk show, "Behind the Mask."

Matt, ten years older. Still lean and lanky, he interviews meathead slugger RUDY BONZI.

MATT  
Hope you get off the DL soon, Rudy.

Rudy lifts bandaged right hand.

RUDY  
Thanks, Matt. I know you feel my pain.

MATT  
Least you've had some time to spend with your baby boy.

RUDY  
I got pictures.

Rudy fumbles photos out of wallet.

INT. STUDIO CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Producer MORT WEINBERG glares at monitors.

MORT  
Not baby pictures. I hear snoring.  
Anybody hear snoring?

STUDIO

as Matt scans photos.

RUDY  
That's Little Rudy.

MATT  
Junior?

RUDY  
No. Rudy.

MATT  
Right. Rudy Junior.

RUDY  
No. Little Rudy.

MATT  
Looks like a born slugger.

RUDY  
Just like his old man.

MATT  
Right. Boy, it looks like we're fresh  
out of time.

(to camera)  
I'd like to thank my guest, Yankee  
outfielder Rudy Bonzi for joining me  
tonight. I hope you'll come back next  
week when my guest will be ...

CONTROL ROOM

as Mort speaks to monitor.

MORT  
... the Invisible Man.

MATT  
(on monitor)  
This is Matt Cooper reminding you to  
take it one base at a time.

STUDIO

as Mort joins Matt and Rudy.

MORT  
Good luck with the rehab, Rudy.

RUDY  
Thanks, Mort.  
(to Matt)  
And thanks for not getting into that  
little Dallas problem.

MATT  
No sweat. Take care of that hand.

Rudy exits with PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.

MORT

Can't believe you let that pass.

MATT

Guy's got enough problems.

MORT

Jerk beats the screaming shit out of some cocktail waitress and he calls it a little problem.

MATT

Fans want to know what he does on the field.

MORT

He's a racist and he hits women.

MATT

They only care if he's a pennant racist and he hits .300.

MORT

Asshole deserves to be crucified.

MATT

There's lots of reporters who'd gladly provide the cross. Like Sarah McGraw.

MORT

Who just happens to be the hottest journalist in sports television.

MATT

That's not sports or journalism.  
That's Oprah at the Old Ballpark.  
Howard Stern with no ... .

Matt adjusts himself.

MORT

And the public eats it up.

MATT

Like vultures. They'll gobble up anything if it stinks loud enough.  
Hell, you nicknamed her "Roadkill."

MORT

Wipe the pabulum off your face, Pollyanna. People like their stories short and their pictures big.

INT. NEW YORK SKYSCRAPER - EVENING

Matt and Mort ascend in elevator.

MATT

I can see what's coming.

MORT

Always could. That's why you were a lifetime .300 hitter.

MATT

They want me to juice it up. You have to admit that show with Pedro Valdez wasn't bad. All that voodoo about soaking his bat in his mama's guacamole. I found that pretty fascinating.

MORT

Rest of the country didn't. Even if you had a ladder, your ratings wouldn't reach the Mendoza line.

MATT

That bad, huh? No surprise. It's tough finding athletes worth talking to who don't have some kind of shit on their shoes.

MORT

Maybe we've run out of heroes.

Elevator doors open. Pretty young WOMAN enters. Well-endowed. Matt and Mort exchange appreciative look.

One floor down, she exits.

MATT

Nice neck.

MORT

Neck? I couldn't get past that pair of big brown eyes.

MATT

I'm a neck and shoulders man. A lot of women think they're the most erogenous of their zones.

MORT

I'd like to get in her zone.

MATT

16th floor. Must work in legal. Smart and sexy. Lethal combination.

MORT

Thought you'd given that stuff up.

MATT

Until the real thing comes along.

MORT

Those looked pretty real to me.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE - NIGHT

Office decorated *Los Angeleno*-style. Lots of white and earth tones and West Coast artifacts. Big bowl of fresh oranges sits on table.

Dart board hangs in corner. Photo of Woody Allen attached. Steel dart stuck right between his eyes.

Robert Sanchez stares out window, his back to Matt and Mort who sit in chairs.

SANCHEZ

Out in Los Angeles, you can still find your dreams. But you'll have to change.

Sanchez balances orange in left hand, apple in right.

SANCHEZ

That's why New York hates us. They don't like change. New York's got balls. But LA bats last.

Sanchez tosses apple in blender and juices it.

SANCHEZ

You afraid of change, Matt?

MATT

No, Bob, but I don't like the gutter.

SANCHEZ

Your point?

MATT

I won't do any Roadkill McGraw stuff. I don't wear mud well.

SANCHEZ

I know you don't. The public wouldn't buy it anyway. They expect you to be the good cop. You keep their heroes up on those pedestals instead of tearing them down.

MATT

So where's that leave us?

SANCHEZ

Your show's been canceled.

MATT

Just like that.

SANCHEZ

No *habla* second place. That makes me the first loser.

MATT

You farming me out?

SANCHEZ

We hope it doesn't come to that. We don't want to lose you, Matt. You're respected and well-liked. You raise the tone of the whole network.

MATT

And jam the ratings through the floor.

MORT

You can still hit it out, Matt. You just need the right stadium.

MATT

Got one in mind?

SANCHEZ

We're thinking of teaming you with someone a bit more colorful. Provocative. You'd accentuate the positive, your partner the negative.

MORT

Kind of a Point/Counterpoint, Yin/Yang deal.

MATT

Starsky and Hutch?

MORT

Gehrig and Ruth.

MATT

Who's going to play Ruth?

SANCHEZ

Sarah McGraw.

MATT

That's not Gehrig and Ruth. That's "Bambi Meets Godzilla."

SANCHEZ

Which should make for interesting television.

MATT

Doesn't Fox have her wrapped up until the 21st Century?

SANCHEZ

Past tense.

MATT

Must've cost you major bucks to bag her.

MORT

Major major.

SANCHEZ

What clinched it was the prospect of working with you, Matt.

MATT

That's hard to swallow.

SANCHEZ

I always heard she thought of you as her older brother. Since you and her Dad were so close.

MATT

In another lifetime.

MORT

But you did get along?

MATT

Tell you the truth, there was a time I felt something more than brotherly love for her.

SANCHEZ

Anything ever come of it?

MATT

I was old enough to be her father.

SANCHEZ

You two been in touch?

MATT

Not since the Series.

MORT

That's been ten years.

MATT

That's why I'm surprised. Figured she had a longer memory.

MORT

About what?

MATT

Me bailing on her Dad. And her.

SANCHEZ

Who could blame you? McGraw betrayed you all.

MATT

He was still my best friend, Bob. I owed him practically everything. My baseball career. Even this. Writing his biography led to my becoming the most boring journalist on TV.

MORT

What he did was way foul. I'd have dropped him, too.

MATT

Course you would, Mort. You guys never forgive. Just didn't have to include Sarah.

MORT

She's got a shorter memory than you remember. She jumped at the proposition.

MATT

So how's this supposed to work?

MORT

We want you to meet her in Arizona. Hang around Spring Training. Get re-acquainted.

SANCHEZ

See if you're *simpatico*.

MATT

If we're not?

SANCHEZ

Not a problem.

MORT

Sarah brings "Down the Line" here.

MATT

And me?



SANCHEZ

We find something agreeable. Or, you pop your golden parachute and go write those novels you always dreamed about.

MATT

Now there's a real nightmare.

SANCHEZ

Dreams are all we have, Matt. Without dreams, we don't know how good we can be.

MATT

Sometimes dreams have to wait.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Matt and Mort walk to their cars.

MORT

If this thing flies, you'll have to move to LA. Sarah didn't think you'd mind going back home.

MATT

Least we know who's going to be on top.

MORT

Tell me something, Matt. Anything to the rumor she's lesbian?

MATT

No. Just a tomboy trying to be the son her father wanted.

MORT

How come there's no men in her life?

MATT

Maybe she's still looking for daddy.

MORT

Don't get Greek on me.

EXT. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST - RANCH - DAY

Sarah turns her mountain bike inland. Behind her, we hear THUNDERING HOOVES.

MATT (V.O.)

Maybe she's never found the right guy. Maybe she's just too busy. Or doesn't feel the need. Shoot, I haven't had a woman in my life for ages. That make me gay?

MORT (V.O.)

Just nuts. The way women throw  
themselves at you. What a waste of  
sin.

MATT (V.O.)

Saving myself for the stretch run.

Sarah races for open corral dead ahead. Beside gate stands  
TERRY, her ranch foreman.

TERRY

Come on, Sarah. Pump! Pump!

Sound of HOOVES grows louder and closer until ...

Sarah disappears in cloud of dust as herd of horses  
stampede past her and through gate.

She emerges from dust and skids to stop. Terry dashes to  
her side.

SARAH

Ginger's too smart. I was sure she  
wasn't watching when I took off.

They approach magnificent Arabian filly. Sarah strokes  
her.

TERRY

You better hustle.

Sarah checks watch.

SARAH

Shit!

INT. RANCH BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah exits bathroom in robe. Terry neatly folds clothes  
into suitcase.

TERRY

Too bad you'll miss the AIDS ride.

SARAH

Duty calls.

TERRY

Liz'll be bummed.

SARAH

She'll get over it.

Sarah stands before open closet. HUMS happy tune.

TERRY  
Excited or nervous?

SARAH  
Some this. Some that.

TERRY  
And which has to do with Mr. Matthew  
Cooper?

SARAH  
Some. And some.

TERRY  
Been in your dreams lately?

SARAH  
Once upon a time.

TERRY  
I wouldn't mind playing hard ball with  
that boy.

SARAH  
Doesn't swing from your side of the  
plate, Terry honey.

Sarah grabs wispy black dress with spaghetti straps. She shrugs robe off naked body and slips on dress. Studies herself in mirror. Touches neck and shoulders. She removes dress and tosses it to Terry. He models it.

SARAH  
Pack it. In case.

TERRY  
Of?

SARAH  
I feel like showing off my neck and  
shoulders.

TERRY  
Sarah McGraw in a dress. Well, shut  
my mouth and call me Butch.

EXT. RANCH CIRCULAR DRIVEWAY - DAY

Terry tosses bags in back of classic 1956 Chevy Marauder. Sarah wears T-shirt that reads: "CALIFORNIA AIDS RIDE -- SF TO LA."

TERRY  
How many riders you sponsor this year?

SARAH  
Liz and five others.

TERRY  
When can I expect them?

SARAH  
They'll stay the last night.

TERRY  
Take it easy.

SARAH  
I know the road.

TERRY  
I meant with him.

Marauder RUMBLES to life. And Sarah ROARS down road.

INT. AIRPORT SPORTS BAR - DAY

Sarah lost in Bill James' *Baseball Abstract*. Sports and Sports Widow on TVs.

MCGRAW (O.S.)  
How's it going, Princess?

It's Jack McGraw, ten hard years older. Bent, but not broken.

SARAH  
This an accident, Dad?

MCGRAW  
Terry told me. No hug for the old man?

She folds arms.

SARAH  
What's the occasion?

He sits.

MCGRAW  
Something I need to talk over with you.

SARAH  
You own a phone.

MCGRAW  
Face-to-face kinda thing.

SARAH  
Never felt that way before.

MCGRAW  
Things change.

SARAH

You broke again?

MCGRAW

Nothing like that. Roustabout Charlie nabbed us a fat purse at Santa Anita last week. We're in the Catbird seat.

SARAH

Your timing sucks as usual. I'm about to board a plane.

MCGRAW

Spring Training, eh? Congrats on the new job. Hope you soaked them.

SARAH

To the bone.

MCGRAW

Thought you were going to stop sniffing jocks. Take that overseas gig with CNN, like you always dreamed.

SARAH

Got no time for dreams.

MCGRAW

Dreams are good, Sarah. Help us wake up a virgin each morning.

SARAH

I lost that a long time ago.

MCGRAW

Chance to work with Matt change your mind?

SARAH

And wild horses.

MCGRAW

Wild horses?

SARAH

The wild horses it'll take to drag me over there to watch children starve.

MCGRAW

You two make a strange battery. Like apples and oranges.

SARAH

Professionally, we're night and day, but that's the point. Personally, I always thought we got along like Fred and Ginger.

MCGRAW

Funny how things come around.

SARAH

Some things.

(glances at watch)

Make it fast. Got two minutes tops.

MCGRAW

It'll wait.

SARAH

You okay, Dad?

MCGRAW

Sure, Princess.

She stands. Gathers stuff.

MCGRAW

I was thinking, now that you and Matt are going to be together ...

SARAH

Working together, not together together.

JACK

... maybe you could smooth things out. Get him to give me a call.

SARAH

I'll play the messenger, Dad. But I won't go to bat for you. My rules haven't changed.

MCGRAW

I know. Just tell him I said "hey" and we need to talk.

SARAH

Sure thing.

MCGRAW

Yeah? What the hell's that.

EXT. GIANTS' TRAINING CAMP - AFTERNOON

Matt walks over to DUSTY THOMAS, barrel-chested African-American, who hits fungoes.

DUSTY

Matt! Bat still hard?

MATT

Like blue steel, Dusty.

They embrace.

DUSTY

Haven't seen you since they installed  
plastic water coolers. So how is that  
hand?

MATT

Not worth spit for horseshoes or golf.  
But it gets me through the night.

Matt imitates session with five-fingered Hannah.

DUSTY

Same old Matt. Hear you're doing it  
with Sarah McGraw. TV, that is.

MATT

News travels fast.

DUSTY

She was just here. Told us all about  
it.

Dusty feints at Matt's nuts with fungo bat.

DUSTY

Cup check. You'll need it.

MATT

Know where she went?

DUSTY

Prowling the clubhouse.

MATT

You frisk her for sharp objects?

DUSTY

She promised to be gentle.

MATT

Said the hammer to the nail.

INT. GIANTS' CLUBHOUSE - AFTERNOON

PLAYERS lounge in various states of nakedness. TRAINER  
enters.

TRAINER

Roadkill's headed this way and looking  
for lunch.

Sarah enters. Kit bag slung over shoulder. Wears T-shirt  
that reads: "ROADKILL GRILL - You Kill 'Em, We Grill 'Em."  
Mug shots of sports STARS dot menu on back of her shirt.

CAMERAMAN trails in her wake. She GREETs several PLAYERS.

SARAH

Hey, Pedro, got your guac?

PEDRO holds up five-gallon bucket of green goo.

ELROY, Alabama boy with cocksure air of solid gold asshole, SHOUTS from across room.

ELROY

Yo, McGraw. You looking for someone?  
Or something.

Good-natured LAUGHTER.

SARAH

Someone, or something, worth talking  
to.

Elroy struts up.

ELROY

Talk to this.  
(drops towel)  
Get up close with what you gave up.

Nervous LAUGHTER.

SARAH

The brains of the outfit? Anybody  
could miss this little guy. He's so  
...

She holds two fingers very close together.

SARAH

... shy.

She leans over with mike to interview dick's dick.

SARAH

So, Peewee, how many of your  
teammates' lovely doves you shooting  
for this season?

Elroy blushes. Whips towel back on.

ELROY

Bite me, McGraw.

SARAH

No thanks. Never much cared for  
cocktail weenies.

Raucous HOOTS.



MATT (O.S.)

More blood on the highway.

Sarah whips around. Throws arms around Matt's neck.

SARAH

What's the matter, Matthew? You look spooked.

MATT

Expected a cooler reception.

SARAH

Was a time you might've gotten one.

MATT

Place brings back memories, doesn't it junior?

SARAH

Smell that smell?

MATT

Ben-Gay?

SARAH

Sweat. Remind you of anything?

MATT

Pain.

SARAH

Reminds me of heroes.

MATT

Let's get some fresh air.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELDS - AFTERNOON

PLAYERS drift toward clubhouse. Matt and Sarah stroll across diamond.

MATT

I'm sorry.

SARAH

For?

MATT

Losing touch.

SARAH

Him I could understand. I'd have dropped the sonofabitch too if he wasn't my Dad. But you. I always thought of you as a friend. My friend.

MATT

Years come, friends don't.

SARAH

I could have used a good friend back then. But you pulled a milk carton.

MATT

Milk carton?

SARAH

Missing person. Like him.

MATT

It's called life, Sarah. That thing that happens while you're taking care of other stuff.

SARAH

It's called chicken shit, Matt. You couldn't deal with it. It hurt and you couldn't handle it.

MATT

No excuses then.

SARAH

None accepted.

MATT

How about apologies?

SARAH

We'll see.

Sarah tugs at Matt's shirt sleeve, suddenly his best friend's little girl again.

SARAH

Just kidding. Whatever I felt's all blood under the bridge.

MATT

It's really good to see you, Sarah.

SARAH

You too, Matthew.

Electric SILENCE. She SNIFFS.

SARAH

Cut grass. Smells like fresh starts.

MATT

And old times.

SARAH

Remember that Spring you let me catch  
batting practice?

MATT

Foul tip knocked you into next week.  
Thought your Dad would kill me.

SARAH

Would've if he could've caught you.

She punches his shoulder. One of the guys again.

SARAH

Fussed over me like a mother hen the  
rest of Spring Training.

They walk to outfield fence. BOYS and GIRLS play sandlot  
game. FATHER plays catch with SON.

MATT

How is the old Skipper?

SARAH

Same old, same old. Faster horses,  
younger women, older whiskey.

MATT

Handling the life sentence any better?

SARAH

Thinks there's no way they can keep  
him out of the Hall forever. Says he  
didn't do anything Cobb and Ruth  
didn't do.

MATT

Tell that to Pete Rose.

SARAH

Figures since they banished him for  
life, once he's dead he's in.

MATT

Lousy reason to die.

SARAH

He still acts cocky. 'Til the ballots  
come out.

MATT

Has to hurt like hell. Wanting a  
dream so bad and knowing it's just out  
of reach.

SARAH

What goes up your back comes down your belly. He said to say "hey" and tell you he needs to talk.

MATT

About what?

SARAH

Wouldn't say. Just that it was important. He really misses you.

MATT

Same here. Been meaning to drop a quarter for ages.

SARAH

Message delivered.

They head back across diamond. Sarah takes mound. Matt squats behind home plate. They lob invisible ball back and forth.

SARAH

How we gonna work this game?

MATT

Me Bambi, you Godzilla.

SARAH

You suck 'em, I fuck 'em.

MATT

You don't seem as thrilled with the idea as the shiny suits think you are.

SARAH

This man-eater thing is getting old.

MATT

Turn vegetarian and you'll break Mort's heart.

SARAH

It may be time to take my game to another level. Concentrate more on issues than personalities. Make a difference in the world.

MATT

Show me your dreams and I'll show you mine. Over dinner.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah munch chips and salsa.

MATT  
Hottest food north of hell.

SARAH  
And here comes Satan.

FLASHBACK

Naked BODIES thrash in water. BURST of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony.

BACK TO RESTAURANT

as Jimmy Swift enters with very young WOMAN.

MATT  
You don't mean Teflon Man?

SARAH  
He could subpoena me for the time of day and I wouldn't give it to him.

Swift spots them. Breaks away from friend.

SWIFT  
Matt, Sarah.

MATT  
Welcome to Spring Training, Jimmy.

SWIFT  
And new beginnings.

Sarah folds arms.

MATT  
Looking to steal some Giants for your Angels?

SWIFT  
Buy, baby, buy. How's Jack doing, Sarah?

SARAH  
Fine. On his own.

A WAITER approaches.

WAITER  
Telephone, Ms. McGraw.

Sarah follows waiter.

MATT

Don't guess I'd be jumping the gun to congratulate you on the Commissioner's job. Word is you're a lock.

SWIFT

We must be talking to the same sources.

MATT

Going to miss running the Angels?

SWIFT

I'm not losing a team, I'm gaining a league. Two leagues, actually.

MATT

Don't suppose you've got a pardon for Jack on the agenda?

SWIFT

That's kind of dicey ...

Sarah appears at table. Pale.

SARAH

Asshole.

SWIFT

Excuse me?

SARAH

My Dad. Smashed his truck into a tree.

MATT

He okay?

SARAH

He's in the hospital. Banged up, but not critical. He wants to see me.

MATT

Mind if I come along?

SARAH

I can handle it.

MATT

You said he wanted to see me. We can finish catching up. Work on our game plan.

SWIFT

Can I offer you a lift? I'm headed to LA. Team jet's fueled and ready.

SARAH

Frankly, Jimmy, I'd rather swim naked  
through a sea of scorpions.

Sarah marches away.

SWIFT

She still hates me. Thinks I betrayed  
her father. Turned my back on him.

MATT

Didn't we all?

SWIFT

Give my best to Jack, Matt. Tell him  
the door's not closed.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Matt climbs inside rental car. Sarah's on cellular.

SARAH

(into phone)

Call Mort. Let him know what's up.

MATT

Brrr. Next time I need some ice, I'll  
just take a chunk of you.

SARAH

He's scum.

MATT

That's not new news. If you could  
forgive me, you could ...

SARAH

You're a friend. He's not.

MATT

Keep your friends close, your enemies  
closer.

SARAH

Dumb fuck.

She slams car into gear.

SARAH

Not you. My Dad. Probably bet his  
pal Jack he could drive right through  
that goddamned tree.

MATT

Jack?

SARAH

Daniels.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Matt by window. Sarah on aisle. Empty until ...

FAT SLOB waddles in. Followed by SLOPPY DRUNK. They sit in back row on opposite sides.

SARAH

Gluttony and his pal Sloth.

MATT

Could've been all seven dwarves.

Plane lifts off. Slob pulls food out of flight bag. Drunk lines up tidy row of miniature liquor bottles and slips on headphones.

SARAH

Written any great novels lately?

MATT

Filling lots of journals.

SARAH

Still leadoff in your dream lineup?

MATT

The one I always pitch around.

SARAH

'Cause it's still the toughest out.

Slob SMACKS, BURPS, and FARTS.

MATT

From the noises you were making over dinner, sounds like you still hope to save the world.

SARAH

Keep getting better offers.

MATT

I'm flattered, I think.

SARAH

You are. I'm not sure I've got the stomach ...

Sarah leans into aisle. Addresses Slob.

SARAH

Would you mind stopping?



SLOB

What?

SARAH

Slopping the hogs.

SLOB

Excuse me for breathing.

SARAH

Inconsiderate pig.

MATT

What about marriage? And kids?  
Always said you wanted some.

SARAH

Kids, but not yet. Marriage? It's a  
wonderful institution, but I'm not  
ready to be institutionalized.

Sarah swivels on Drunk. Lost in ozone, he SINGS along with  
song inside headphones.

SARAH

Hey, Mick!

He's oblivious. She hurls peanut. Beans him right between  
his eyes.

SARAH

Save it for the showers.

He salutes her with his middle finger.

DRUNK

Beer me, babe.

Sarah flags down STEWARDESS.

SARAH

Any seats in coach?

STEWARDESS

I'll check.

SARAH

If I have to put up with this shit  
anymore, I swear I'll lose it.

MATT

Maybe he can't help himself.

SARAH

Maybe he's too weak to deal with it.

MATT

Cut him some slack. We've all got nasty habits.

SARAH

He hasn't got the guts to deal with his addiction. God, I hate weak people.

INT. AIRPLANE - COACH - LATER

Matt on aisle. Sarah in middle. Nine-year-old ELIZABETH sits by window.

SARAH

Flying all by yourself?

ELIZABETH

Daddy's in New York. Mommy's in Los Angeles.

SARAH

Divorced?

ELIZABETH

Bi-coastal. Daddy likes apples. Mommy likes oranges.

SARAH

My name's Sarah. This is my friend Matt.

ELIZABETH

I'm Elizabeth.

SARAH

Just like the Queen of England.

ELIZABETH

Just like my Mom's best friend.

SARAH

Me, too. My best friend's named Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Did your best friend run off with your husband?

Matt SNICKERS. Sarah jabs him.

SARAH

No, but then I'm not married.

ELIZABETH

I'm never getting married. Men let you down every time.

SARAH

What do you want to be when you grow up, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Divorce lawyer. How about you?

SARAH

A journalist.

ELIZABETH

You make up stories?

SARAH

I tell stories.

ELIZABETH

Good ones?

SARAH

You decide.

Matt leans back, closes eyes, and smiles.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah exit elevator.

DOC JENSEN exits private room. Sarah hugs him.

SARAH

He going to live?

DOC

If he stops bitching. Nurses are about to give him a Drano enema.

SARAH

Like you to meet an old friend. Matthew Cooper, Doc Jensen.

DOC

Enjoyed watching you play ball. Like your show, too.

MATT

So you're the guy.

Puzzled look.

MATT

The one who watches. Thanks.

DOC

Excuse us, Matt?

SARAH

It's okay, Doc. Matthew's family. He can hear whatever you have to say about the accident.

DOC

It's not about the accident. Bumps and bruises heal. It's his liver. It's shot.

Sarah grabs Matt's hand.

DOC

He didn't tell you?

SARAH

We don't talk much.

MATT

How bad?

DOC

Critical.

SARAH

There's nothing you can do?

DOC

Not up to me. He's got to make some changes. Or he'll die.

SARAH

Can I see him?

DOC

Make it short. He's pretty weak.

Matt nods toward sofa in waiting area.

INT. HOSPITAL PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Jack McGraw. Head and face swathed in bandages. Oxygen tube up nose. IVs in arm. Weak smile.

MCGRAW

Hiya Princess.

SARAH

You never did like that old Chevy.

MCGRAW

Can't drive through trees worth crap.

Her tough shell cracks.

SARAH

Oh, Daddy ...

## HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Matt SNORES on sofa. Sarah touches him.

SARAH

You're up.

MATT

How's he look?

SARAH

Rode hard.

MATT

He strong enough to talk?

SARAH

Doesn't matter. He insists.

## HOSPITAL ROOM

Matt and Jack share moment.

MCGRAW

Hey Matt. How they hanging?

MATT

Low and lonely, Skip. You look like a damn Tampax.

MCGRAW

Feel like one.

MATT

Sarah said you wanted to talk.

MCGRAW

Door closed?

MATT

Got a hot tip for me?

MCGRAW

Depends how you take it.

Matt crosses to door. Sees Sarah in corridor. She watches as he closes door.

MATT

Just you and me and the wall.

MCGRAW

I didn't do it, Matt.

MATT

That old truck didn't drive itself.

MCGRRAW

I didn't place the bet. I was set up.

MATT

You don't know how bad I'd like to believe that.

MCGRRAW

Believe it.

MATT

Who'd want to screw you?

MCGRRAW

Someone who wanted us to lose the Series.

MATT

Why'd you never say anything?

MCGRRAW

Couldn't. Got caught in a dead perfect squeeze play.

MATT

Talk to me, Jack.

MCGRRAW

I'd been on a major losing streak. Couldn't pick a winner if it sat on my face. Was losing more than I could cover. I was in deep to Knuckles.

MATT

How deep?

MCGRRAW

The kind that gets you six feet deep.

MATT

I thought Pronzini didn't go for the rough stuff.

MCGRRAW

He didn't. But he's a businessman. With others to answer to.

MATT

The mob?

MCGRRAW

No, Pollyanna. The Girl Scouts of America. Of course the mob. I got no proof, but lots of coincidence.

MATT

Pronzini set you up?

MCGRAW

Doubt it. Knuckles never was a wise guy. But he had to be in bed with them to stay in business. He was their go-to guy. 'Cause he could get to me.

(grimaces)

One day, he cuts me off. No more bets 'til I clear my downside.

(winces)

Christmas! That one felt like Drysdale hard and inside.

MATT

Want the nurse?

MCGRAW

It'll stop. So now I'm sweating bullets. Figure I've got to sell the ranch to get straight with Knuckles and keep the garlic-eaters from the door.

MATT

That's a bunch of deep.

MCGRAW

Only thing stopping me was Sarah. I was already on thin ice after her Mom died. Losing the ranch would've killed her. But not before she killed me.

MATT

Faster than shit off a new shovel.

MCGRAW

Couple days before the Series, I get a call. Voice tells me I just placed a very large bet on the Giants. To win. And that fact would be leaked to the Commissioner. At which time, I would freely and publicly confess.

MATT

You could've told them to piss up a tree.

MCGRAW

Not if I wanted my healthy daughter to stay that way.

MATT

They were going to kill Sarah?

MCGRAW

Or put her in a wheelchair for life.  
Same dif' for her.

MATT

Jack plays or Sarah pays.

MCGRAW

They threw in a little Nutrasweet. Do  
like I was told and my debt to  
Knuckles would be zeroed out.

MATT

So would your career. And your life  
with Sarah.

MCGRAW

And you. And the rest of the team.  
Jimmy Swift. The fans. The press.  
They were gonna paint me as the  
biggest asshole of the ages. But that  
didn't bother me.

(grimaces)

I knew I'd be suspended quicker'n a  
bug fart. But I figured it'd blow  
over. It was just a stupid bet. Not  
like I'd killed someone. Never  
dreamed I'd be banned for life.

(winces)

Hit that button. I need some dope.

MATT

Maybe when Jimmy's Commissioner he'll  
lift the ban.

MCGRAW

Wouldn't bet on it.

MATT

He sort of left the door open.

MCGRAW

When?

MATT

In Phoenix.

MCGRAW

He doesn't owe me.

MATT

Body said otherwise.



MCGRRAW

News to me. I never saw anyone so  
pissed in all my life. Except Sarah.

MATT

We all were.

MCGRRAW

And now?

MATT

Time heals a lot.

MCGRRAW

That's something I'm running short on.

MATT

You could buy more if you'd clean up  
your act.

MCGRRAW

Save it. I don't need your lectures.  
I need your help.

MATT

Name it.

MCGRRAW

I need you to ...

NURSE enters.

MCGRRAW

... shit!

MATT

Can't do that for you, Jack.

NURSE

Turn out the lights, boys, the party's  
over.

MCGRRAW

Just fifteen more, Angelheart.

NURSE

You've had your fifteen. Mr. Cooper  
can come back in the morning.

MATT

Get some rest, Skip.

MCGRRAW

Got no choice.

Jack grabs key from bedside tray. Tosses it to Matt.

MCGRAW

My stopper. Case I can't finish.  
Fits a safe in the guest house out at  
the ranch. Sarah knows where. But  
that's all she knows. For now.

MATT

You bet.

HOSPITAL ELEVATOR

Matt and Sarah descend.

SARAH

Look like your dog died.

MATT

Don't have a dog.

SARAH

Don't jump my bones. Can't blame me  
for being curious. It's in my  
contract.

MATT

Sorry. I'd like to tell you, but I  
can't. I promised.

SARAH

He make you?

MATT

Skipper knows best.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah exit.

SARAH

You feel like being alone?

MATT

Don't know what I feel.

SARAH

I've got a little place in Venice.  
When I need to overnight in town.  
You're welcome to stay, if you don't  
mind the sofa.

MATT

What if you want to be alone?

SARAH  
I'll hide in the closet.

EXT./INT. VENICE BEACH APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sarah and Matt enter. She snaps on TV. Surfs to Sports Channel and Sports Widow.

SARAH  
Make yourself to home. Phone's over there. I'll make myself scarce.

MATT  
We just got here.

SARAH  
Some privacy, goof. Case you want to call your girlfriend. Or whatever.

MATT  
Have to be "whatever" since I don't have a girlfriend.

SARAH  
"Don Juan of the Diamond" flying solo. No way.

MATT  
Former Don Juan. More like the Pope these days.

SARAH  
It'll pass.

MATT  
Hope so. This monk routine's getting old.

SARAH  
How old?

Impatient look.

SARAH  
Like I said, it's in my contract.

MATT  
About five years.

SARAH  
You mean five since you've been romantically involved. Or five since ...

MATT  
Not even a sniff.

SARAH

That's so ... trendy.

MATT

Not the word I'd use.

SARAH

Is this a fear-of-AIDS thing? Or something more serious?

MATT

How about a serious drink?

SARAH

Scotch neat, if I recall.

She opens wet bar.

MATT

I'm beginning to feel like one of your victims, Roadkill.

SARAH

If you don't want to talk about it, fine. You don't have to be insulting.

MATT

Didn't mean to be. Just feels weird.

SARAH

What's weird about two old pals getting reacquainted? At least we used to be.

She hands him drink.

MATT

Still are. To old pals.

They CLINK glasses.

MATT

We can talk about anything you'd like. But I need to use the can first.

SARAH

Down the hall. On your left.

MATT

I can stay in there if you need to call "whatever."

SARAH

You know my rep.

MATT

Which one?

SARAH

How many have I got? I'm talking about the male-hating, ball-bashing lesbian bitch.

MATT

I never called you a bitch. Ruthless, maybe.

SARAH

Ruthless?

MATT

Professionally.

SARAH

And?

MATT

You never bashed my balls.

SARAH

You must be curious.

MATT

It's none of my business.

SARAH

Make you a deal. Since we're going to be working together, I'll promise to be a little less ruthless if you'll promise every now and then to ask the hard question.

MATT

Fair enough. Do you prefer women to men?

SARAH

Yes.

Matt SNORTS Scotch out his nose.

SARAH

That's the kind of question that keeps you riding the pine. Just because I like women better than men doesn't mean I'm a lesbian.

MATT

Fine. Are you, or have you ever been, a lesbian?

SARAH

No. Honestly, I don't think I'm anything. Go use the bathroom before you inhale an icecube.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Matt gazes at mirror.

MATT

Put me in coach, I'm ready to play.

He goes out wrong door. And into Sarah's bedroom. Turns to go, then notices framed photographs on dresser.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Several shots of him and Jack. In one, Sarah wears catcher's gear. Bandage on forehead. She protects Matt from her mock-angry Dad. The inscription reads: "Junior, You can't win if you're not in the game. Love, Matt."

Next to photo lies keychain with tiny, leather catcher's mitt and Jack's tattered rookie card.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah on phone. Dries eyes. SNIFFLES.

Matt starts talking while still in hallway.

MATT

Sure be glad to get out of New York.  
Even the tap water smells like piss.

Matt stops.

SARAH

It's okay. Just ordering Chinese.  
(into phone)  
And extra chili paste. Plenty-plenty.

She hangs up. BLOWS nose.

MATT

Didn't think you had any tears left.

SARAH

He's still my father. Though you couldn't tell it by how much he's been around the past ten years.

MATT

That bad?

SARAH

Worse. The Series ripped it. After Mom died, he swore on her grave he'd clean up his act. He didn't. So let's talk about something else. Like your new monk's habit.

MATT

Not much to it. Despite my rep, all I ever really wanted was to fall in love, get married, and have kids. Problem was, I couldn't lay off those curves.

SARAH

Could've walked.

MATT

Never took a free pass.

SARAH

Think maybe, deep down, you were afraid of the C-word?

MATT

No customer refused.

SARAH

Sound like a public service.

MATT

I just couldn't say no.

SARAH

Because you didn't want to hurt them.

MATT

So I broke their hearts instead.

SARAH

Must've been hard on you.

MATT

On me?

SARAH

You're not a cruel person. Never have been. Is that what drove you to the monastery?

MATT

Ginger did. Sex began to seem like dancing without music. Because there was no Ginger.

SARAH

Dancing without music. That ...

Doorbell RINGS.

MATT  
... must be dinner.

She hands him cash and points at bathroom door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah at table. Food cartons and beer. She ladles chili paste over food.

MATT  
I smell chili and think of you.

SARAH  
Nice to know I've been in your thoughts.

MATT  
You're the only person I know who can eat jalapenos like they were peanuts and never lose your cool.

SARAH  
Never let them see you sweat.

MATT  
So, what do you mean, you don't think you're anything?

SARAH  
Sexually. I'm neither here nor there, this nor that. Never been a big issue.

MATT  
You afraid of sex?

It's Sarah's turn to SNORT. Chili paste.

FLASHBACK

Naked BODIES thrash in water. BURST of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. WOMAN's hand scratches MAN's face.

BACK TO KITCHEN

as Matt wipes chili paste off his shirt.

MATT  
Slick. Ask the hard questions and get slimed.

SARAH  
I'm not afraid of it. It's just that  
(MORE)



SARAH (CONT'D)  
my limited experience has been about  
as enjoyable as a pelvic. I've just  
never heard the music.

MATT  
You haven't met the right guy.

SARAH  
That all there is to it?

MATT  
Ask a veteran.

SARAH  
Thought I had. Once upon a time.

MATT  
No music?

SARAH  
Never got that far.

MATT  
You still looking for Fred?

SARAH  
You auditioning?

MATT  
No ... no. I meant in general.

SARAH  
Most guys are afraid to ask.

MATT  
Maybe you intimidate them.

SARAH  
Or they believe the rep.

MATT  
Mort'll be relieved.

SARAH  
He asked?

MATT  
It's in his contract.

SARAH  
You can ease Mort's mind. But nobody  
else's.

MATT  
You want people to think you're butch?

SARAH

I could give a rat's ass what they think. In this job, it's useful.

MATT

Just one of the guys.

SARAH

It's kind of weird. If guys think there's no chance of a sex thing, they treat you the way you'd like to be treated if there was the chance of a sex thing. Guess that's why I like gay men so much.

MATT

This is giving me a headache.

SARAH

Most gay men have the sensibilities you'd like to find in straight men, but never do. About the only men I'm attracted to aren't interested.

MATT

The only?

SARAH

I said "about."

MATT

Sounds frustrating.

SARAH

No more than what you're feeling.

MATT

Least it's safe.

SARAH

That's about all it is.

Matt YAWNS.

SARAH

I'll make up the sofa. You can change in the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Matt slips into sweats. Photographs he saw before are now gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah listens on phone. Matt enters and sits on made-up sofa. She rolls her neck and shoulders. He leans back. Closes eyes. She hangs up.

SARAH  
Well, seems Dad's ...

Matt SNORES.

SARAH  
... sleeping like a baby.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah sits on bed. Naked in moonlight. She massages oil into her neck and shoulders. She lies back. Caresses herself. Closes eyes. Gentle MOAN.

KNOCK on bedroom door.

Sarah yanks sheets around her.

SARAH  
Yes?

MATT  
Telephone.

SARAH  
Oh.

MATT  
It's Doc Jensen.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Jack McGraw sleeps. Sarah grips his hand.

DOC  
His heart was weak to begin with.

SARAH  
Don't sugarcoat it.

DOC  
He's stable. But not out of the woods.

MATT  
We've got to go to the ranch.

SARAH  
I can't leave him.

MATT

Have to.

DOC

I wouldn't stay long.

INT. RANCH GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah opens safe. Removes only package inside. Matt's name written on it. He opens it. Microcassette player and tape inside.

MATT

He wasn't able to tell me everything.  
Said this was his ace in the hole.  
Just in case.

SARAH

In case?

MATT

He couldn't finish. He wanted to make  
sure I knew everything.

SARAH

And I didn't.

MATT

I don't make promises I can't keep.

SARAH

Cool the *mysterioso* crap, Matthew.  
Cut to it.

MATT

He didn't place the bet, Sarah. He  
was set up.

SARAH

By who?

MATT

Mob. Or someone who needed to make a  
big score. They blackmailed him into  
saying he did it.

SARAH

With what?

MATT

Something he loved more than baseball.  
You.

SARAH

Me?

MATT

They made some threats he couldn't ignore.

Sarah grabs microcassette player. Hits play.

MCGRAW (V.O.)

"Start with Knuckles. If the mob put in the fix, no way he'll be able to talk. But Knuckles' heart is good. Maybe he'll give you a wink, so you'd know I was telling the truth. Then you could tell Sarah. That's all I really care about. Fuck my reputation. Fuck the Hall and all that other crap. I just want her to trust me. Believe in me again. Matt, you're the only one she'll listen to. Just don't tell her what you found out. Or how. She gets a whiff of a trail and she'll try and castrate the bastards. I got to tell you, Matt, it's a real bitch trying to stay up on that pedestal."

Sarah's eyes glisten.

SARAH

You never fell.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah walk up circular drive to house. Lights on. MUSIC plays inside. Bicycles rest along porch.

MATT

Looks like company.

SARAH

I sponsored some friends in the AIDS ride. They're staying here tonight. And they're gay.

MATT

Won't hold it against them.

SARAH

Or me?

Terry comes out on porch.

TERRY

(acts straight)

Sarah? Back so soon?

SARAH

My Dad had an accident.

TERRY

He okay?

SARAH

He'll live.

Sarah hugs Terry. Matt extends hand.

TERRY

Matt Cooper. I know.

SARAH

This is Terry. My right hand man.

Terry shakes Matt's hand firmly.

TERRY

Pleasure.

SARAH

Matthew's cool, Terry. Relax.

ELIZABETH DONOVAN comes out on porch.

SARAH

Hello, Liz.

ELIZABETH

What's wrong?

SARAH

Later, okay?

Matt and Liz size each other up.

SARAH

Matthew, this is Elizabeth Donovan.  
An old friend.

Elizabeth takes Sarah's arm. They enter house.

TERRY

How's Jack, really?

MATT

Deep in the woods.

TERRY

You live alone.

Defensive look.

TERRY

Your socks.

Matt lifts pant legs higher. Socks don't match.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Matt and Terry enter. PEOPLE lounge, talk, and drink.

Beyond glass doors at back of house, Sarah and Liz chat. Liz holds Sarah's hands. Matt can't take his eyes off them.

TERRY  
Everybody. This is Sarah's dear  
friend ...

EVERYBODY  
... Matt Cooper!

TERRY  
Matt, meet ... everybody.

Nods, smiles, and GREETINGS. PERRY walks over and shakes Matt's hand.

PERRY  
Never miss your show.

MATT  
You must be the other one.

PERRY  
Sorry?

MATT  
Running joke.

PERRY  
May I offer a suggestion?

MATT  
Sure thing.

PERRY  
Don't be so nice to everyone.  
Especially brutes like that ape Rudy  
Bonzi.

Terry hands Matt glass of Scotch.

TERRY  
Matt and Sarah are teaming up to do a  
new show.

PERRY  
I take it back. Now you'll have to be  
nice. To make up for Sarah's brutish  
behavior.

On verandah, Liz cups Sarah's face in her hands. And kisses her. Full-blooded on her mouth. Sarah lays her head on Liz's chest and ...

Sees Matt watching and pulls away from Liz.

EXT. RANCH - MORNING

Riders prepare to depart.

MATT

Nice to have met you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Same here, Matt.

MATT

If I ever need the FBI, I'll know who to call.

ELIZABETH

You do that. 'Til then, take care of our little girl.

MATT

Do my best.

Riders take off. Sarah checks watch.

SARAH

We've got a few hours.

MATT

Until?

SARAH

Our one o'clock with Pronzini.

MATT

Not wasting any time.

SARAH

Already wasted ten years. I need to know.

MATT

Can't take him at his word?

SARAH

Think I'll race the horses. Up for it?

MATT

Haven't ridden in years.

SARAH

Me neither.



EXT. RANCH CORRAL - MORNING

Horses THUNDER out gate. Matt and Sarah follow on bikes.

SARAH

This monk habit of yours. Seems like  
a Catch-22. How you going to find  
Ginger if you're not on the dance  
floor?

MATT

Fact is, I have.

SARAH

She know?

MATT

Not yet.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE COASTAL PLAIN - DAY

Horses graze. Matt and Sarah gaze out at ocean.

SARAH

What're you waiting for?

MATT

Doubt she'd be interested.

SARAH

Why?

MATT

Dances to different music. Least it  
seems that way.

SARAH

Could ask her.

MATT

Not in my contract.

SARAH

May I ask who it is?

MATT

Make you a deal. If I decide to make  
a play, you'll be the first to know.

SARAH

Some deal. We better head back.

Sarah looks at Ginger. Who watches them.

SARAH

Follow my lead. Once we start, don't  
look back.

MATT

I'll watch.

SARAH

Come on, Matt. Get in the game.

Sarah hops astride bike and rockets away. Matt does same. Ginger WHINNIES and gives chase. Other horses follow.

Ginger overtakes Matt and hip-checks him. He sprawls ass-over-teakettle. Sarah hits brakes as Ginger THUNDERS by.

MATT

Knew I should've stayed in the stands.

SARAH

Can't dance if you're not on the floor.

EXT. LAS VEGAS CASINO - DAY

Matt and Sarah cross lobby.

SHADOW FIGURE watches. Then polishes silver tips of black cowboy boots.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Matt and Sarah enter office. Knuckles walks around desk.

KNUCKLES

Took you long enough.

MATT

Plane was delayed.

KNUCKLES

Been expecting you for years. Or someone. This about your Dad?

Sarah nods.

KNUCKLES

Sorry about his health. Poor Jack can't catch a break for nothing.

SARAH

Maybe you can help change his luck.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Knuckles, Matt, and Sarah wait at Thirteenth Tee. Knuckles sucks on unlit cigarette.

KNUCKLES

You play?

Matt flexes right hand.

MATT

I can caddie.

KNUCKLES

That was bum luck.

MATT

Luck didn't throw the punch.

SARAH

Let's make it interesting.

KNUCKLES

Five dollar Nassau?

SARAH

Automatic presses. Full carryover skins.

Knuckles tees off. Huge divot flies.

KNUCKLES

I'm only allowed four holes. Twice a week.

MATT

Doctor's orders?

KNUCKLES

Pro's orders. I'm sorta rough on the turf.

They walk down fairway. Matt carries bags.

KNUCKLES

What can I do you for?

MATT

Wink.

KNUCKLES

Come again?

SARAH

My father says he didn't bet the Series. Hoped you might back him up.

MATT

Jack figures it was a Mafia fix, so he knows there's no way you can talk. But he thought you might wink.

SARAH

Off the record. Just so I know.

KNUCKLES

Just wink? Why not take the SOBs  
down?

                  SARAH

Then he was set up?

Knuckles gives them a theatrical wink.

                  KNUCKLES

But it wasn't no Mafia deal.

                  MATT

Who did him?

                  KNUCKLES

Never found out for sure, but I've got  
a good gut. Tells me lots. Let's  
give the sod a break.

Knuckles, Matt, and Sarah sit on bench in shade.

                  KNUCKLES

I'll tell you what I know.

EXT./INT. LOS ANGELES SMOKE SHOP - EARLY MORNING

Knuckles, ten years younger, opens shop and carries bundles  
of newspapers inside.

                  KNUCKLES (V.O.)

Back then I wasn't legit. Ran my book  
from a storefront on Sunset. Cut the  
mob a slice for protection. Keep the  
cops from asking why a tobacconist  
needed 25 phone lines.

Knuckles behind counter. TINKLE of bell as MAN enters.  
Can't see his face. Carries briefcase and large duffel.

                  KNUCKLES (V.O.)

One morning, this guy walks in. Big,  
buffalo head. Texas yahoo written all  
over him. Who but a Lone Star asshole  
wears Armani suits with a string bolo  
tie? Yo, buckaroo.

                  COWBOY

Pronzini?

                  KNUCKLES

Speak to me.

                  COWBOY

Got a little business to do. Private  
like.

Knuckles leads way to back office. Cowboy follows. Still can't see his face. Knuckles lights cigarette.

KNUCKLES

You're up.

COWBOY

I'm here representing Jack McGraw.

Cowboy places briefcase on desk.

CLOSE ON HIS HANDS

and tattoo of silver bullet on top of each.

Cowboy opens briefcase toward Knuckles. It's stuffed with long green.

COWBOY

Two hundred K.

KNUCKLES

You been riding the range too long, Duke. If you know Jack, you know he's cut off 'til he clears the bases. Two hundred large don't even cover half.

Cowboy slams duffel on desk. Zips it open. More green. Lots more.

COWBOY

Four-hundred and thirty-five "large."  
Plus triple the usual vig.

KNUCKLES

Why trips?

COWBOY

McGraw's way of saying *gracias*.

KNUCKLES

Where's he want it?

COWBOY

On his Giants. To win the Series.

KNUCKLES

Jack don't bet baseball. His Golden Rule.

COWBOY

Does now.

KNUCKLES

Then what's the good word?

COWBOY

United.

BACK TO GOLF COURSE

as Matt and Sarah listen to Knuckles.

KNUCKLES

You know about the code, don't you?

SARAH

Just that he had one that only you two knew.

KNUCKLES

First word of the banner headline in that day's first edition *LA Times*. Had to be the first. The one with the single star. You know how they put those little stars on the front page?

SARAH

One for the first edition. Two for the second.

BACK TO SMOKE SHOP

as Knuckles goes out front into shop. Checks headline on top bundle of *Times*. It reads: "UNITED FLIGHT CRASHES IN HOUSTON."

KNUCKLES (V.O.)

There it was. And wasn't.

Knuckles touches front page. There's two stars, not one.

KNUCKLES (V.O.)

Second edition shouldn'ta been that early.

Knuckles removes top bundle. Checks second bundle below. Front page of that *Times* has one star. Banner headline reads: "CONGRESS OVERRIDES VETO."

KNUCKLES (V.O.)

Obvious what happened. Crash took place early that morning. *Times* rushed out second edition to cover it. I figured that must've been the one Jack got and he forgot to check the stars.

INT. CASINO SPORTS BOOK - DAY

Knuckles, Matt, and Sarah watch action.

KNUCKLES

So I placed the bet.

SARAH

Even though the code was wrong?

WAITRESS serves drinks.

KNUCKLES

Close enough. Besides, I needed the cash. And Jack needed a favor. Hated to see him break his Golden Rule, but he was desperate. His Giants were as close to a sure thing as I'd ever seen. Figured a win might change his luck. For good.

MATT

It did. From bad to none.

KNUCKLES

As it turned out.

SARAH

How'd you know it smelled?

KNUCKLES

By the way it all hit the fan. That anonymous tip, for starters. Never came from me. Or anyone I knew about. Then there was the Dream Weaver.

SARAH

The who?

KNUCKLES

What I called him. Minute the shit hit, I started packing my bags for a long Mexican vacation. Then I got the call. Mr. Anonymous. Smooth talker. Slick as snot on a doorknob. Advised me not to leave town. Said my expertise was required.

MATT

To set Jack up?

KNUCKLES

Slick assured me if I sang nice and sweet I'd be taken care of. Complete immunity. If not, I'd be singing out my ass from a cage in San Quentin.

SARAH

Why'd you call him Dream Weaver?

KNUCKLES

Slick asks me if I got a dream. I say sure. Everybody's got dreams. Who but a corpse don't?

                  SARAH

And yours?

                  KNUCKLES

To be legit. Run straightup book for a bigtime Vegas casino.

He gestures to casino.

                  SARAH

So what'd your gut tell you about the deal?

                  KNUCKLES

These were players. With some real money and serious juice. But strictly ballroom amateurs at this kind of deal.

                  MATT

Sounds pretty real to me.

                  SARAH

Matt's a Minnesota virgin when it comes to these kinds of things.

                  KNUCKLES

All the cash was new money. Fresh from the mint. Real pros never touch new money. Way too easy to trace.

                  SARAH

Was it a gambling fix?

                  KNUCKLES

No way. Would've been a lot heavier action on the Angels.

                  SARAH

Then what?

INT. CASINO - DAY

They walk through main gambling hall.

                  KNUCKLES

Not what, but who. Someone who could give a dream to get a dream.

                  SARAH

Tex Austin.



KNUCKLES

The man who owns this casino.

SARAH

You help him win the Series, he helps you go straight.

KNUCKLES

Simple as pie.

SARAH

And my Dad loses his.

KNUCKLES

Had to take care of myself.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STREET - EVENING

Knuckles, Matt, and Sarah cruise strip.

SARAH

Taking my Dad out wouldn't have been enough. Other players had to be involved.

MATT

I was there. I knew those guys. I can't believe any could've been bought. Hell, most were already multi-millionaires.

SARAH

Wipe the fairy dust from your eyes, Polly.

KNUCKLES

Money ain't always the prime knuckle, Matt. Some could've had skeletons hiding in the closet. Some could've had dreams money alone could never buy.

MATT

But why take Jack out? He could've helped throw the Series all kinds of ways.

KNUCKLES

Not his style.

SARAH

Would have hung himself first.

KNUCKLES

The bad guys needed some smoke. They may have been virgins, but they  
(MORE)

KNUCKLES (CONT'D)  
weren't stupid. When a bunch of All-  
Stars start playing like spastic  
monkeys all at the same time, you  
better have something to blame it on.

                  SARAH  
Or someone.

                  MATT  
And everyone bought it.

                  KNUCKLES  
Hook, line, and concrete sinker.

EXT. UNLV BASEBALL DIAMOND - EVENING

Knuckles, Matt, and Sarah watch college game.

                  MATT  
Why you talking now?

                  KNUCKLES  
You asked.

                  SARAH  
Aren't you worried?

                  KNUCKLES  
Thought you said off the record?

                  SARAH  
But not out of sight.

                  KNUCKLES  
Maybe you caught me at a good time.  
Maybe I got the same problem as Jack.  
The old long walk on a short pier.  
Figure it's time to square the books.

                  SARAH  
I'm sorry.

                  KNUCKLES  
Me, too. For lots of things. Like  
what they did to your old man. I'm  
not proud of my part in that, but  
regrets won't even buy a cup of  
coffee. It'd sure sweeten my final  
days to see them suck hind tit.

                  SARAH  
But only off the record?

                  KNUCKLES  
Ever heard of remission? 'Sides, I  
(MORE)

KNUCKLES (CONT'D)  
got no proof it was Austin. All's I  
know for sure is someone else knew the  
code.

                                SARAH  
We haven't heard from your gut in a  
while.

Knuckles gives them another theatrical wink.

                                KNUCKLES  
Find the cowboy.

                                SARAH  
He could be anywhere.

                                MATT  
Could be dead.

                                KNUCKLES  
Few years after the deal came down,  
I'm watching this wrestling match with  
my grandkid. One of the jokers is  
decked out like a cowboy. He's  
wearing this black mask and Stetson.  
Called himself "The Lone Ranger," or  
some facocta thing. He pins this  
other steroid Rhino, jumps up, and  
shoves his fists at the camera. Guess  
what I saw?

                                SARAH  
Silver bullets.

                                MATT  
The cowboy with the cash.

                                SARAH  
Thanks for the wink.

                                KNUCKLES  
Be careful. They may be bushers, but  
they're definitely playing hardball.  
How long you in town?

                                MATT  
Flying back tonight.

                                KNUCKLES  
Stick around. Enjoy Vegas. On me.  
Come by the office tomorrow. Nine-  
ish. Might have something more than a  
wink.

INT. CASINO COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Sarah and Matt sit in corner booth.

MATT

You're really going hunting?

SARAH

They destroyed my father's life. And mine. I can't let that go.

MATT

Could be dangerous.

SARAH

So's life, Matt. It's all a gamble. We learn as we play. You in the game?

MATT

Haven't decided.

SARAH

If clearing your best friend isn't enough, then how about writing the sports story of the century?

MATT

This goes way beyond sports, Sarah. Maybe way beyond what we can handle.

SARAH

I could use a game of stud. Clear my head.

MATT

You've got the jones, too.

SARAH

I like the action. Difference is, I'm in control.

INT. CASINO CARD ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah and Matt at poker table. Sarah rakes in huge pot. Matt's cleaned out. Tosses last chip to Sarah.

INT. CASINO SUITE - NIGHT

Matt lies in bed. Stares at ceiling. Sports Widow on tube.

MATT

Cowboy with the cash ... cowboy with the cash.

INTERCUT

Shots of Matt in suite, Jack McGraw in hospital room, Sarah gambling, and Pronzini removing papers from wall safe.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
Knuckles played a chatty round of golf  
with Matt Cooper and Sarah McGraw.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Your point?

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
McGraw and Pronzini are dying. Death  
has a way of loosening consciences.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Pronzini can't prove anything.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
Then I guess he won't have nothing to  
tell them when they show up for their  
appointment tomorrow.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
What's he know that they don't?

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
That McGraw was framed.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Means nothing without proof.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
Pronzini's got friends. Eyes and ears  
everywhere. No telling what he might  
have come up with the last ten years.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
We bat last.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)  
When?

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Wait until you hear from me.

INT. CASINO SUITE - MORNING

Matt exits bedroom in sweats. Sarah sleeps in chair. Huge  
pile of cash lies on table beside her. He sits opposite  
her. She stirs.

MATT  
Looks like you kicked butt, junior.  
Learn that from Jack?

SARAH  
His mistakes. You showered yet?

MATT  
Just got up. Be my guest.

SARAH  
You go. Let me make some calls.

INT. CASINO SUITE - LATER

Matt enters living room. Sarah hangs up phone.

SARAH  
Dad's still unconscious. But stable.  
I've got Terry working on the cowboy.  
And the whereabouts of those spastic  
monkeys.

MATT  
Thought Terry was your handyman.

SARAH  
He is. He's also my Jack.

MATT  
Daniels?

SARAH  
Of-all-trades. Does my research.  
Heavyweight computer jock. Give him  
twenty minutes and he'll tell you the  
last time Castro threw a curve. He's  
also booked us on an eleven o'clock  
back to LA.

MATT  
Who we hunting?

SARAH  
Tex Austin.

MATT  
How'd you get past his gatekeepers?

SARAH  
Told him we were doing a retrospective  
on the Series. Told Mort the same  
thing. And that Gehrig-Ruth's a go?

MATT  
Tally-ho!

INT. CASINO FRONT DESK - MORNING

Matt and Sarah check out. CLERK hands them small package.

CLERK

Mister Pronzini sends his apologies.  
He won't be able to meet with you this  
morning. He asked me to give you  
this.

Sarah opens package. Inside is a book: "'PLAYING THE  
ANGLES' BY TONY PRONZINI." She opens it to inscription.

SARAH

(reads)

"A gift. Your Dad'll enjoy it.  
Especially Chapter Four. Best of  
Luck, Knuckles."

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sarah touches her unconscious father's face. She WHISPERS  
in his ear.

SARAH

Got my eye on the ball, Daddy. I love  
you.

She props envelope on bedside table. In plain sight. Next  
to rabbit's foot.

EXT. CALIFORNIA ANGELS STADIUM - MORNING

Matt and Sarah walk toward main entrance.

SHADOW FIGURE watches. Silver tips of black boots reflect  
sunlight.

INT. STADIUM CONCOURSE - MORNING

Matt and Sarah walk through exhibit about Hollywood's  
"Singing Cowboys."

Tex Austin rolls through side door. Followed by very  
pretty and very young NURSE.

As wheelchair moves, some old cowboy SONG like "Back in the  
Saddle Again" plays. Wheelchair stops, song stops.

TEX

What can I tell you you don't already  
know?

SARAH

We're looking for an unusual angle.

TEX

Then ask your *padre*.

SARAH

We have.

TEX

Tell you what I told them back then.  
Queerest damn thing I ever did see.

MATT

How so?

TEX

Hell's biscuits, son. You were there.  
Didn't seem spooky to you?

MATT

Unbelievable.

TEX

Reckon that's what I'm saying. No way  
my Angels should've beat you boys.  
Ask me, smelt fishier'n a Japanese  
picnic.

SARAH

You think it was fixed, too?

TEX

Too? Sounds like some others been  
figuring it like me. Seemed awful  
peculiar no one saw it like I did back  
then.

SARAH

Some did. And some have. Since.

EXT. ANAHEIM STADIUM - DUGOUT - AFTERNOON

Tex, Matt, and Sarah watch Old-Timer's All-Star game.  
Brooks, Ernie, Duke, and Willie. Joe DiMaggio sits alone  
at end of bench.

TEX

If I wasn't a dumb old country boy  
from Brazos County, I'd say you're  
fishing for more'n a new angle.

SARAH

Just doing some background for the  
show.

TEX

Don't bullshit a bullshitter, kids.  
Anywho, nobody ever came 'round to see  
me. Hoped they would.

SARAH

Hoped?



TEX

So I could ride into the sunset  
without looking back.

SARAH

I don't follow.

TEX

Comfort me to know the real story was  
told. All of it.

SARAH

There's lots of holes and missing  
pieces.

TEX

I'll be bulldogged. You are fishing.

EXT./INT. ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER - AFTERNOON

They enter "World of Baseball" convention.

There's memorabilia, autograph sessions, CELEBRITIES,  
equipment and clothing manufacturers and vendors, and  
exhibits.

SARAH

My father says he never placed that  
bet. He says he was set up. They  
blackmailed him into saying he did so  
the guys putting in the fix could  
blame him for the Giants blowing it.

TEX

Don't say. Sorta figured it that way  
myself. Any idea who?

SARAH

Drowning lots of worms looking.

TEX

Guess that's why you'all're here.  
Takes me a while these days. You  
figured it must've been me. Old  
cowpoke desperate to lasso his last  
dream?

SARAH

Seemed likely.

TEX

Course it was, sugar. And just as  
ridiculous. My dream was to win the  
Series, not buy it.

They stop in front of mobile TV studio. Sports Widow broadcasts, live and in-person.

TEX

This leave you up a blind draw?

SARAH

Pretty much. We've got some other leads, but they're all longshots.

TEX

How'd you like a closer one?

SARAH

Sorry?

TEX

A more likely target.

MATT

You know something.

TEX

Ain't got a cowflop of proof, so you'll have to keep it off the record. Least for now. Don't care to spend my last days fighting a lawsuit.

SARAH

You have our word.

TEX

Try the asshole I had to sell my Angels to. That beaner-Ted Turner-Juanabe. Mr. Robert-o "Don't Call Me Bob" Sanchez.

MATT

Not good.

TEX

Or easy to take on the man who fills your bowl of *frijoles*.

MATT

Nobody ever talked about "had to" before. Word was you were tired of losing money.

SARAH

And losing.

TEX

Sanchez'd been on me like a chicken on a June bug to sell. Kept telling him, "No way, Jose." He wouldn't take no.

(MORE)

TEX (CONT'D)

Kept raising his offer 'til it reached a number that made my old dick come back to life, if you'll pardon my *Espanol*.

SARAH

Why the Angels? There were all kinds of teams on the block back then.

TEX

Sanchez had to have an LA team. That was his dream. Ever since he was a *cholo bandido* running in East LA. The Dodgers were untouchable, so he locked in on me. Even bought his way into my monthly poker game so's he could come at me from my easy side. And that's how he finally got me.

MATT

Didn't know he gambled.

TEX

Bet on everything but the weather, 'cause he couldn't fix that.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tex and Sanchez in big stakes poker game.

TEX (V.O.)

It was a month or so before the Series. Sanchez and me was faced off over a Texas-sized pot. It's last bet. He says forget the money. If he wins, I got to sell him the Angels. If I win, he gets off my butt for good. I say sure. But ... I sell only if my Angels win the Series. Sanchez says "*Si*." I'm laughing to myself now 'cause even if he wins, I can't lose.

MATT (V.O.)

How's that?

TEX (V.O.)

Never told him or nobody, but I'd already decided that if by some miracle my Angels did win, I'd sell.

SARAH (V.O.)

Put it all in the hands of Lady Fate.

INT. EXHIBIT HALL - AFTERNOON

Tex, Matt, and Sarah walk through "Diamonds Are Forever" exhibit.

TEX

She's been good to me. Winning the Series seemed about as likely as the moon falling from the sky. Shoot, we hadn't even won the AL Pennant yet. If'n we did win it all, I'd still have my dream and all Bob's money to boot. I could live out the rest of my days with a good stiff one. Again, your pardon.

SARAH

Miracles can happen.

TEX

Sometimes. But not this one. It smelled rank as a bloated mule carcass from the get-go.

MATT

You really think Sanchez would've gone that far?

TEX

Would a cockroach eat spit? He was possessed. The public don't see the ruthless, arrogant sonofabitch he really is. He thinks the sun rises and sets just for him.

MATT

If you knew all that, why honor the bet?

Tex and Sarah look at each other then at Matt.

TEX

Since I had no hard evidence, son, I had no choice. And a bet's a bet. If a man don't stand by his bets, he don't stand for nothing.

SARAH

It's a matter of honor, Matt.

TEX

At my age, ain't much else left. 'Sides, there was witnesses. I would've never lived it down.

SARAH

We can't thank you enough, Mr. Austin.

TEX

Sure you can, darling. Hang the big prick.

MATT

Won't be easy. He's got to have covered himself by now.

TEX

Every way to a Baptist Sunday. But he's so damned cocky, he'll figure he's safe as chicken eggs. That kind of assuming leads to mistakes. And tracks you can't cover.

SARAH

Let's hope so.

TEX

I'll give you more than hope, honey. Get some hard evidence and I'll go on record. Hell, I'll even noose the hanging rope. Bastard hustled me and rustled my team.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

SHADOW FIGURE stands beside McGraw's bed. Sets flowers on nightstand. Opens envelope and removes Sarah's note. It reads:

SARAH (V.O.)

"I know the rest of the story, Daddy. Someone else knew the code. Love, Sarah."

CLOSE ON RESPIRATOR

as gloved hand reaches for "on-off" switch.

CLOSE ON ROOM DOOR

as handle turns.

CLOSE ON OPEN WINDOW

as silver-tipped, black cowboy boot slips over sill.

CLOSE ON NOTE

as hand picks it up and ...

NURSE inserts it inside envelope and sets it on nightstand.

EXT. ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER - EVENING

Matt and Sarah stand between convention hall and stadium.

SARAH  
For old time's sake?

EXT. DISNEYLAND - EVENING

Sarah drags Matt along as she skips down Main Street USA.

MATT (V.O.)  
Sanchez is our boss.

SARAH (V.O.)  
That make him untouchable?

MATT (V.O.)  
No way.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Just means we have to be careful.  
Can't tell Mort. Might find its way  
back to Sanchez.

MATT (V.O.)  
Where to now?

EXT. USC'S DEDEUX FIELD - EVENING

Matt and Sarah watch Rock 'N Jock softball challenge.  
Fund-raiser features TV and film, music, and major league  
baseball STARS.

SARAH  
The spastic monkeys.

MATT  
I don't get it. That team was tight.  
If there was a fix on, I would've  
gotten wind of it. At least felt  
something was up.

SARAH  
They could've got in your knickers,  
Polly, and you still would've thought  
you were a virgin.

MATT  
That hurts.

SARAH  
Getting screwed usually does.

MATT  
I always thought I was a key player.

SARAH  
You were. But get real. Straight  
arrow like you. What would they have  
bent you with?

MATT  
My own dream.

SARAH  
Which was?

MATT  
True love.

SARAH  
Now I know.

MATT  
What?

SARAH  
Your prime knuckle. Case I ever want  
to bribe you.

MATT  
Then tell me something.

She waits, hopeful.

MATT  
What took them so long? Pronzini.  
Austin. What've they been waiting  
for?

SARAH  
Somebody to ask.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Matt and Sarah enter. She goes to phone. He flips on  
Sports Widow.

Matt opens newspaper to sports section. Headline reads:  
"BASEBALL OWNERS MEET TO SELECT COMMISSIONER." Photograph  
of Robert Sanchez with arm around shoulder of Jimmy Swift.

MATT  
Speak of *el diablo*.

Shows paper to Sarah. She remains at phone.

SARAH  
Can't tell you how much it gags me to  
see Swift as Commissioner.

MATT  
The game's in intensive care. Now  
it'll be in the morgue.

Sarah glares and points at phone.

MATT

Sorry. Too bad they're not electing Jimmy Pope, then I'd only have to kiss his ring.

Matt sits on sofa. Picks up Ken Burns' "Baseball" from stack of coffee table books about baseball and opens it. Then surfs channels. To "When It Was A Game" documentary.

Sarah gets off phone and joins him.

MATT

Back in those days, rules were respected. Hard work and honesty were rewarded. Baseball was America.

Documentary ends. Station cuts to news footage of modern PLAYER firing baseball at FEMALE REPORTER.

SARAH

Still is.

MATT

You know what's really wrong with baseball? Nobody knows how to hit the cutoff man anymore.

Matt closes book and kills TV.

SARAH

No change with Dad. Terry's got a few leads on our cowboy.

MATT

Cowboy with the cash. That sure rings a bell.

SARAH

You've heard it before?

MATT

Somewhere. Sort of.

SARAH

Recently?

MATT

Don't think so.

SARAH

At work?

MATT

You're cold.

SARAH

Back when you were playing?



MATT  
Feels warmer.

SARAH  
My Dad?

MATT  
Hotter.

SARAH  
Someone on the team?

Matt suddenly grabs newspaper and rips through pages.

He stabs ad inside. It reads: "WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH,  
THE TOUGH CALL MIKE WALT CONSTRUCTION. WE GO THE  
DISTANCE." Mike's smiling face stares back at them.

MATT  
Mike and me roomed together on the  
road. Night we won the Pennant in New  
York, he asked me a really weird  
question. Wanted to know if I'd ever  
known a Texan who owned a briefcase.  
Figured he was setting me up for one  
of his lame jokes.

SARAH  
You left it at that?

MATT  
Must have. Or he dropped it. Maybe  
changed the subject. I don't know.  
It was such a left-handed question.

SARAH  
Liz needs to hear this. The AIDS ride  
finishes tomorrow.

MATT  
Big guns.  
Disgusted look.

SARAH  
Big game.

MATT  
Then?

She taps newspaper ad.

MATT  
Got anything dressy to wear?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sarah in black dress. Waltzes cheek-to-cheek with Matt.

Telephone RINGS over scene.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Hey, Terry. No, left my beeper. Out dancing. No, Matt. Thank you. You did? Great. Talk to you tomorrow.

Matt and Sarah at dinner table.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Terry's found the cowboy. Least his name. Tom Reese. Used to wrestle as "The Lone Wrangler."

MATT (V.O.)  
That makes two visits.

SARAH (V.O.)  
There's a problem. Seems all the personal data on our cowboy's been erased from the Wrestling Federation's files.

MATT (V.O.)  
Photos?

SARAH (V.O.)  
Gone, too. Everything.

Matt pours Sarah some wine.

MATT  
There's something I've always wanted to tell you.

She listens, expectant.

MATT  
You have the loveliest neck and shoulders I've ever seen. They belong in a museum.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Sarah and Matt enter. She checks messages. He slumps on sofa and flicks on Sports Widow.

Sarah sits opposite Matt as he flips through sports section of morning paper.

MATT  
Someone's trying to cover their trail.

SARAH

Maybe Liz can help us. Now that we've got a name.

Matt yawns. Sets paper aside then ...

MATT

Pronzini.

SARAH

He can't ...

Suddenly grabs paper, points at headline, and scans article.

MATT

He's dead. Killed in a car crash.  
Yesterday morning.

Sarah finds kit bag. Yanks it open. Removes book. Flips to Chapter Four. Pages are stuck together. She rummages in kit bag. Pulls out formidable switchblade. Flicks it open and deftly slits pages. Piece of paper falls out. Covered with handwritten numbers.

SARAH

Look like serial numbers. Knuckles must have kept a record. All these years. Just in case ... .

MATT

Somebody asked.

EXT. CENTURY CITY - AFTERNOON

Matt and Sarah CHEER RIDERS as they finish race.

Sarah greets Liz with big hug and kiss. They walk away. Matt follows, pushing Liz's bike. Third wheel.

EXT./INT. SANTA MONICA - ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Matt, Sarah, and Liz. Liz examines numbers.

LIZ

They're uncirculated bills. We can probably trace them to the bank of origin. But we can't subpoena records of the actual transaction without more compelling evidence.

SARAH

They were used in a gambling conspiracy. A con game. That's not compelling enough?

LIZ

The only person we know who can  
testify to that just got dead.

MATT

What sort of evidence do we need?

LIZ

Miraculous. See how the numerical  
sequence is broken? Some of the cash  
is missing. \$250,000 to be precise.  
It's not likely the bank did that.

SARAH

We have to find the cash?

LIZ

Plus witnesses or hard evidence it was  
used illegally.

MATT

Least we got our cowboy.

LIZ

I'll see what I can do to track him  
down.

SARAH

Officially?

LIZ

Not enough evidence to warrant the  
Bureau's involvement yet. But I've  
got some vacation time. I'd feel  
better if you'd let me handle this.

SARAH

Too dangerous for little Sarah?

LIZ

A man's dead.

MATT

Paper said it was an accident.

Liz and Sarah give him that look. He yawns.

SARAH

I need to do this. I've spent ten  
years punishing my father for  
something he didn't do.

Matt SNORES.

SARAH

Afraid I wore him out. Dancing.

LIZ

Dancing?

SARAH

Does a wicked fox trot.

INT. ELIZABETH'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Matt awakes. Gets up to undress. Hears GURGLE of hot tub on back deck. Peeks through window and sees ...

Sarah and Elizabeth in hot tub. Naked. Lit only by silvery moonlight. Elizabeth massages Sarah's neck. Then kisses Sarah's shoulders and touches her breasts.

Matt turns away.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

At that exact moment, Sarah pulls away from Elizabeth.

LIZ

No?

Sarah caresses Elizabeth's face.

LIZ

Matt?

Sarah smiles.

LIZ

Same as before?

SARAH

Worse. I'm a big girl now.

LIZ

You want him?

SARAH

More than ever.

LIZ

No flashbacks?

SARAH

None so far.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Matt curls up on sofa and punches pillow.

LIZ (V.O.)

Does he know?

SARAH (V.O.)  
I don't think so. I don't know. I  
don't know how to play these games.

LIZ (V.O.)  
Then don't. Be yourself. It's what  
you do best.

SARAH (V.O.)  
You okay?

LIZ (V.O.)  
Jealous. But I always knew it would  
happen someday.

SARAH (V.O.)  
I didn't.

INT. MARAUDER - MORNING

Matt stares out window as Sarah drives down freeway.

SARAH  
Your water's running deep.

MATT  
What?

SARAH  
Not two words all morning.

MATT  
Just thinking. About the Series.  
Hoping I could dredge something up.

SARAH  
About Mike's question?

MATT  
I keep going back to that.

SARAH  
Think he could have been bought?

MATT  
Mike's as straight as his fastball.

SARAH  
Seems they tried.

MATT  
Looks that way.

SARAH  
Looks are deceiving. We need some  
proof somebody tanked. Someone's got  
to talk.

MATT

Maybe Mike was threatened? He's got a wife and kids.

SARAH

Can't get an answer if you don't ask a question.

EXT./INT. NORTHRIDGE - WALT & BERINGER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Mike Walt hugs Matt and Sarah. His partner, PETE BERINGER, is on his way out.

WALT

Matt and Sarah, this is my partner. Pete, meet my former battery mate and roommate, Matt Cooper. And Sarah McGraw. Former Princess of the Giants.

They exchange handshakes.

BERINGER

Real pleasure.  
(to Mike)  
Make it when you can.

Pete leaves.

MATT

Seems you've done all right since your sudden retirement.

WALT

I sleep nights.

SARAH

I've always wanted to thank you, Mike. It meant a lot to my father.

WALT

It was time anyway. Building things was always my first love.

MATT

Not many of us had guts enough to take it for the Skip.

WALT

Seemed unfair. Especially now when you've got druggies and wife-beaters pulling down millions. League looks the other way for the good of the game. Your Dad places a harmless bet and gets banished for life? Sucks.

SARAH

He had a problem.

WALT

Addiction's a disease. It should be treated, not punished.

SARAH

Unless you're a left-handed closer.

WALT

Still cruel and unusual if you ask me.

MATT

Especially since he didn't do it.

WALT

Run that by me again.

MATT

He never placed the bet, Mike. He was set up.

WALT

Why'd he say he did it?

MATT

They threatened what he cared about most.

Matt glances at Sarah.

MATT

You can appreciate that.

SARAH

Others were involved, too. Key players were blackmailed or bribed.

WALT

You have proof?

SARAH

We were hoping you might help.

WALT

You think I was involved?

SARAH

Were you ever approached?

WALT

Not just no, but hell no.

SARAH

Your retirement was pretty sudden.



WALT

If there was a fix on, I never saw it.

MATT

Who was the cowboy, Mike?

WALT

The who?

MATT

Just before the Series, you asked me if I'd ever known a Texan who owned a briefcase.

WALT

That was ten years ago. I can't remember what I said.

MATT

This is just between us.

WALT

That doesn't change my memory.

MATT

One of the guys who set Jack up was a cowboy toting a briefcase full of cash.

WALT

Oh, my God. It never ... I never figured what happened to Jack was part ...

SARAH

You were approached.

WALT

I can't talk about this.

SARAH

You were blackmailed.

WALT

I said I can't talk about it!

Mike checks watch.

WALT

Pete's waiting. We've got a meeting across town. I gotta jet.

MATT

Mike ...

SARAH

My father's dying.

Mike freezes. Terror and guilt color his face.

INT. VENICE BEACH CAFE - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah sip coffee.

MATT

Must have been some serious knuckle.  
Mike was scared shitless.

SARAH

Maybe he was worried about his family.  
Or the fact that he's gay.

MATT

What?

SARAH

He's gay, Matt. I can tell.

MATT

No way. He's as straight as ...

SARAH

A three-dollar bill. Bet you a coke.

MATT

You're on. He's a stud. Been married  
eighteen years. Got three boys.

SARAH

Plenty of gay men have happy  
marriages. Often with lesbian women.  
So they can have kids. And a normal  
life.

MATT

What's Mike got they can get to? He's  
already in the Hall.

SARAH

How many hard-hats you seen in skirts?  
If he's outed, he's out of business.

MATT

So, who's next? Gover Johnson's dead.  
Chico Morales disappeared somewhere in  
Cuba. Which monkey?

SARAH

Billy Clark.

MATT

No way. He had more money than  
brains.

SARAH

Like Knuckles said, money can't always get you what you want.

MATT

Hell, he made ten or twelve mill his last few years alone.

SARAH

Might have been enough to buy his ranch. But someone had to put it together. An entire island stocked with wild game from all over the world. Think Billy could've handled that?

MATT

Can't even tie his shoes without a user's manual. Okay, he could've rolled over, but he's still too stupid to feel guilty.

SARAH

Maybe he's just dumb enough to tell us who made his dream come true.

INTERCUT

Shots of Matt and Sarah preparing for trip, Jack McGraw in hospital room, Tex rolling around stadium, Liz in office, Knuckles' funeral, Terry at computer, Mike and Pete on jobsite.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)

Cooper and McGraw are tracking our Billy boy.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)

Not a problem.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)

Fuck that! Billy's tongue's loose as goose shit.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)

He's stupid, but not suicidal.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)

What if they're onto my ass?

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)

If they suspect something, they'll ask Billy.

SHADOW VOICE #1 (V.O.)

I'll put a wire on him.

INT. LAX INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL - DAY

Matt and Sarah buy tickets.

SHADOW FIGURE buffs silver-toed black boots.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Tell me more about your mystery woman.

MATT (V.O.)  
We had a deal.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Won't ask who, just why. Want to know  
what it takes to make a jaded, love  
fugitive want to dance.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - DAY

Matt on aisle. Sarah by window.

MATT (V.O.)  
Okay, twenty questions.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Is she beautiful?

MATT (V.O.)  
Lovely.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Nice body?

MATT (V.O.)  
Just the way I like it.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Breasts?

MATT (V.O.)  
Two.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Sharp?

MATT (V.O.)  
As a razor.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Golddigger?

MATT (V.O.)  
Prefers baseball diamonds.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Introvert or extrovert?

MATT (V.O.)

She always asked the boys to dance.

SARAH (V.O.)

You find that attractive?

MATT (V.O.)

I like people who don't need someone  
else to make them feel complete.

INT. KINGSTON AIRPORT - MORNING

Matt and Sarah emerge from Customs.

SARAH

How about her neck and shoulders?

MATT

The best.

SARAH

Better than mine?

MATT

I told you. Yours belong in a museum.

SARAH

Tough to touch when they're up on that  
pedestal.

A MAN blocks their way.

REX

Miss McGraw? Mister Cooper? I'm Rex.  
I'll be flying you over to the island.

EXT. PRIVATE RUNWAY - MORNING

Small plane sits on tarmac. Painted on side: "BILLY  
CLARK'S SAFARI ISLAND RANCH."

Plane taxis, lifts off, and banks over water.

REX

Here to hunt? Or visit Billy?

SARAH

Bit of both.

REX

He must trust you.

MATT

Why's that?

REX

You're the first media folks on the island.

SARAH

How come?

REX

You must not know a whole lot about the ranch.

EXT. SAFARI ISLAND AIRSTRIP - MORNING

Plane taxis to stop. Matt and Sarah climb out. Billy Clark BLASTS up in Humvee.

BILLY

Hey, Mattie. Miz Sarah. My, my, my. What a shame.

SARAH

Shame?

BILLY

You not being partial to men. Hop on board. I'll show you around. Least the compound. Won't have time for much else. Gotta pack of Japs coming in right behind you.

They climb into Hummer. Sarah rides shotgun. Matt in back. Billy ROARS down twisty road through lush jungle.

BILLY

So you're doing a show on that crazy World Series, huh? Figured we buried that one a long time ago.

SARAH

We?

BILLY

You all ... the media.

SARAH

Not quite. Thought we'd take a "Where are they now?" approach. One decade after the biggest miracle since Coogan's Bluff.

BILLY

Miracle, my Aunt Minnie's ass.

MATT

You see it another way?

BILLY

Choke-o-rama. Biggest *el foldo* since  
Buckner booted that grounder.

They enter circular, walled compound. Large main building.  
Several smaller ones. Couple of barnlike structures  
surrounded by corrals stocked with wild ANIMALS. Grassy  
park with garden, fountain, and gazebo.

BILLY

Welcome to my dream.

MATT

Impressive.

BILLY

Only place on earth you can enjoy some  
good ol' Southern hospitality, then go  
out next morning and bag yourself an  
elephant.

EXT. JUNGLE LOOKOUT PERCH - AFTERNOON

SHADOW FIGURE cradles binoculars in gloved hands. Silver-  
tipped boots flash. He watches. And listens through  
earplugs.

GAZEBO

Matt, Sarah, and Billy sit in shade.

WAITER serves drinks.

Distant KA-BOOM! Matt and Sarah jump.

BILLY

Bazooka. The GSM don't like to miss.

MATT

GSM?

BILLY

General Sergeant-Major. Bigshot  
African dictator. One crazy fucking  
Jungle Bun, that boy. He's our main  
supplier. Brings his own game, so to  
speak.

SARAH

Why pay you to do what he can do at  
home for free?

BILLY

Here he don't have to worry about  
jungle bunnies from rival tribes  
leaping outta the bush and whacking  
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)  
his head off. He can relax and  
concentrate on the sport.

SARAH  
Some sport.

BILLY  
You got problems with hunting, Miz  
Sarah?

SARAH  
Depends on the game.

LOOKOUT

Shadow focuses binoculars.

EXT. COMPOUND - LATER

Matt, Sarah, and Billy stand by Humvee.

BILLY  
Big "mo" wasn't with me that Series.  
Hit a slump at the wrong time. Guess  
I was just pushing too hard. Pissed  
as I was about Jack and all. Kept  
seeing the ball as the Commissioner's  
head. Wanted to smack it clean to  
hell.

Van pulls into compound. Filled with Japanese HUNTERS.  
Rex drives.

BILLY  
Sorry you came all this way for a bit  
of jaw.

SARAH  
All part of the game.

MATT  
It was past time to touch bases with  
the old crew anyway.

SARAH  
When we air the show, think we could  
include a segment on the ranch?

BILLY  
Doubt it. Big Kahuna wouldn't  
approve.

SARAH  
Big Kahuna?



BILLY  
Dream Weaver, Inc.

LOOKOUT

Shadow rips phone from ear.

COMPOUND

Van parks. Japanese offload.

SARAH  
What's that?

BILLY  
Outfit that owns the 80% I don't.

SARAH  
Who owns Dream Weaver?

BILLY  
Don't rightly know. They like to  
remain a-nonymous. Don't want to be  
associated with a blood sport.

SARAH  
I can relate.

BILLY  
Rex'll get you back to Kingston.

SARAH  
There a bathroom I can use?

BILLY  
In my foreman's office. He's out with  
the GSM.

LOOKOUT

Perch is empty. Except for gloves and bootprints.

INT. FOREMAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Sarah yanks on file cabinet drawers. Locked. Desk  
drawers. Locked. She scans loose papers. Nothing.

She hurries into bathroom, FLUSHES toilet, and heads toward  
door. Stops. Turns.

EXT. COMPOUND - AFTERNOON

Sarah joins Billy and Matt beside van.

SARAH  
Thanks again, Billy. We'll let you  
know about the show.

MATT

Good to see you again after all these years.

BILLY

Same back at ya'll.

Van exits compound.

Jeep ROARS in on opposite road. And SCREECHES to halt inches from Billy.

CLOSE ON STEERING WHEEL

and hands with tattoos of silver bullets.

CLOSE ON DRIVER'S DOOR

as silver-tipped, black boot swings out.

BILLY

We can breathe easy now. All's they wanted was a little trip down memory lane.

Cowboy punches Billy hard. Then storms into office. Billy follows.

BILLY

What's your problem? They didn't ask no funny questions.

Cowboy checks file cabinet drawers, desk drawers, and papers. Nothing out of place. He turns. Stops. Walks to wall covered with framed photographs.

One photo is missing. Cowboy slams fist into wall. Strides to phone. Punches in numbers.

BILLY

What're you doing?

COWBOY

Taking care of the laundry.  
(into phone)  
Hank? Listen up.

EXT. SAFARI ISLAND AIRSTRIP - LATE AFTERNOON

HANK dicks around with engine of Rex's plane. Climbs onboard. Exits with gray box and hurries away.

EXT./INT. PLANE - LATE AFTERNOON

Cruises over open water. Sarah stares out window. Clutches kit bag to chest. Matt watches her.

MATT

What's with you? Look like you've got  
the world by the short hairs.

SARAH

(nods toward Rex)

Later.

MATT

Whisper in my ear.

Sarah ponders. Leans over to Matt and ...

REX

Shit!

Rex taps fuel gauge.

KA-WOOF. Smoke and flames pour from engine.

REX

Double shit! Grab those chutes behind  
you and strap them on. I'll take us  
up so we can bail.

SARAH

What parachutes?

REX

In the gray box.

MATT

No gray box back here.

REX

Bummer. Happy trails, folks.

Rex bails. Matt and Sarah freeze then ...

Sarah leaps to controls.

MATT

Since when ...

SARAH

Don't ask questions. Just talk.

MATT

Talk?

SARAH

Talk, dammit! I don't want to think.

MATT

Okay. I ... I love you.

SARAH

What?

MATT

I love you, Sarah. You're the one.  
You're Ginger. Always have been.

SARAH

Your timing sucks.

MATT

Said I'd tell you first.

SARAH

Why now? Why not before?

MATT

I saw you and Liz. In the hot tub.

SARAH

For how long?

MATT

Long enough.

SARAH

If you'd watched a little longer,  
you'd have seen ...

MATT/SARAH

(together)

SHIT!!!!

Plane plummets. Hits water. Hydroplanes across flat  
surface and skitters up onto smooth, sandy beach. Slams to  
stop. Water douses flames.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATE AFTERNOON

Inside cockpit, Matt and Sarah. White knuckles and pale  
faces.

MATT

Didn't know ... you were ... a  
pilot.

SARAH

I'm not ... had a lesson ... once.

MATT

Must have been ... a good one.

Sarah reels out of cockpit. Vomits. Matt staggers out  
other side.

Sarah reaches back inside plane. Grabs kit bag. Pulls out  
toothbrush and toothpaste.

SARAH

Be a statue.

She stomps down to surf. Brushes teeth. Rinses mouth. Splashes water on face. Marches back to Matt. Kisses him hard.

EXT. AIRPLANE - LATE AFTERNOON

Plane rhythmically rocks.

INT. AIRPLANE - EARLY EVENING

Matt and Sarah lie entwined on cabin floor.

SARAH

You hear music?

MATT

Anthems. You?

SARAH

Not exactly.

MATT

O-fer.

SARAH

Ride of the Valkyries.

Loud RAP on cabin door.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello in dere! You crazy loving-birds  
be all done now, mon?

Matt looks up. Grinning RASTAMAN fills cockpit window.

RASTA

Greetin's, Big Bamboo! Celebratin' de  
livin', yes? Near ting it was!

MATT

You saw us go down?

RASTA

Den you and pretty lady on beach. I  
dock me boat. Plane be rockin', so I  
ain't be knockin'. Ha! I be de  
gentlemans and wait 'til dancin's be  
all done. No problem.

Sarah sticks head out of cabin door.

SARAH

Can you get us to the nearest airport?

RASTA  
Safari Island's de closest.

SARAH  
Not there.

RASTA  
Dey might be likin' to know you be  
safe.

SARAH  
They might not consider that good  
news.

EXT. SPEEDBOAT - SUNSET

Rasta at wheel. Sarah beside him. Matt massages her  
shoulders.

COWBOY (V.O.)  
She took the photo.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Your point?

COWBOY (V.O.)  
They're onto me.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Maybe she's just a "Lone Wrangler"  
fan.

COWBOY (V.O.)  
What now?

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Keep looking for them. And pray to  
God they didn't die. Or suspect  
someone wanted them dead.

EXT. ISLAND HARBOR - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah climb onto dock. Rasta anchors boat.

COWBOY (V.O.)  
If we find them?

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Send them safely on their way.

COWBOY (V.O.)  
They know too much.

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
Even if they've figured out you're the  
cowboy, who's going to testify?  
(MORE)

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O. CONT'D)  
Billy? Me? Certainly not Pronzini or  
Gover or Chico. They still have no  
witnesses or proof.

COWBOY (V.O.)  
What about Mike Walt?

SHADOW VOICE #2 (V.O.)  
He took the money. If he crosses us,  
we'll have to tell his little secret.  
He hangs either way.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Matt looks at framed photograph. Sarah talks on AirPhone.

SARAH  
(into phone)  
Terry. We found the cowboy. Works  
for Billy Clark. Can you believe it?  
No. But I stole a photograph of him.  
Guess who else is in it?

TERRY (ON PHONE)  
Jimmy Swift.

SARAH  
You are good.

TERRY (ON PHONE)  
Hang on. Liz's got something.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
Jimmy was more than a fan. He was his  
agent.

SARAH  
Look, Liz. They know that we know.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
You sure?

SARAH  
Somebody tried to kill us.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
You okay?

INT. HOUSTON AIRPORT - NIGHT

Sarah and Matt stand in front of window. They gaze at  
airport hotel.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Yes and no. Long story.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
Where are you?

SARAH (V.O.)  
Houston.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
They after you?

SARAH (V.O.)  
Not sure. Safer to assume yes.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
Then listen. If they are, they'll expect you to head home. Might be waiting there now. Take a day or two to get back. Jump around.

SARAH (V.O.)  
See what you can find on an outfit called Dream Weaver, Inc. They own Clark's ranch.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
Will do. Make Burbank your last stop. I'll be there.

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Room a shambles. Clothes and bedding everywhere. Matt and Sarah on floor. Wrapped in sheets.

MATT  
What's with you and Liz?

SARAH  
We love each other, Matt. In our own way.

MATT  
You and Liz ever ... ?

SARAH  
Back in college, I had this little problem with men. Thought Liz might be the solution.

MATT  
The problem?

SARAH  
You've licked it.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Sarah sleeps. Matt watches. She flinches and jumps.



FLASHBACK

Naked BODIES thrash in water. BURST of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. WOMAN's hand scratches MAN's face. She swims away. He chases.

BACK TO AIRPLANE

as Sarah's eyes pop open.

SARAH

I know who else knew the code.

MATT

You were having a bad dream.

SARAH

A nightmare. Named Jimmy Swift. He's the key.

MATT

Just because he was the cowboy's agent, ...

SARAH

And Billy's and Gover's and Chico's and my Dad's.

MATT

And mine.

SARAH

You don't count.

MATT

Thanks.

SARAH

It's so obvious. Next to you and me, Swift was the closest person to my father. And even closer than Knuckles when it came to Dad's finances and gambling.

MATT

So he'd know the code.

SARAH

More than that. Jimmy kept Dad's books. He'd have known exactly how much Dad owed Pronzini. That's the missing piece.

MATT

What's Jimmy get he doesn't have that makes it worth it?

SARAH

His dream. Sanchez makes him President and GM of the Angels. Then backs him for Commissioner.

MATT

I always wondered about Jimmy wanting that job. His knuckle had always been money. He made more as an agent and business manager than he ever could running the Angels or the league.

SARAH

But he got to be the guy in charge. Typical jock sniffer. He wanted to be the top dog. Tell the jocks where to shit. If he couldn't play the game, he'd run the game. That was his dream.

MATT

You seem pretty sure.

SARAH

I know that pathetic little prick better than I'd like.

INT. PHOENIX AIRPORT - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah cuddle.

MATT (V.O.)

You've been slamming Jimmy since Spring Training. What's the deal?

SARAH (V.O.)

He tried to rape me.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - DAY

Sarah stares out window.

SARAH

One night at the ranch. He and Dad were working late. And drinking.

FLASHBACK

EXT. RANCH SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Covered by blue dome.

SARAH (V.O.)

Remember that plastic bubble we used to put over the pool in winter?

INT. POOL - NIGHT

Dense, blue fog swirls. Sarah floats on her back. Naked.  
Beethoven's Sixth Symphony PLAYS.

SARAH (V.O.)

I loved to crank up the heat 'til the  
bubble filled with steam. Then stare  
up into the blue mist. It was like  
floating in a cloud. I would dream.  
About the big wonderful world waiting  
out there for me.

SPLASH. Someone dives into pool.

Sarah looks around. Sees nothing. Swims toward bathing  
suit on side of pool.

A hand grips her leg.

SARAH

Daddy???

Swift's face surfaces. Sarah SCREAMS. He grabs her. She  
struggles.

SARAH (V.O.)

It was horrible. His hands and  
fingers and tongue all over me.  
Probing, tearing. Like an animal. A  
slimy, little ...

Sarah breaks free. Scrambles out of pool. Runs naked from  
pool area. To stables. Huddles among horses.

BACK TO AIRPLANE

as Sarah slips her hand into Matt's.

SARAH

Know that scar on his left cheek?

She blows on her fingernails.

SARAH

After that, anytime a man touched me,  
I'd flash on that night and freeze up.

MATT

Me too?

SARAH

Never.

MATT

Why?

SARAH

Because of how you are, Matthew. You offer sympathy, not solutions.

MATT

Ever tell anyone? Like your Dad?

SARAH

He would have strangled the weasel. Only one I ever told was Liz. Years later. And now you.

MATT

How old were you?

SARAH

Fifteen.

INT. BURBANK AIRPORT - DAY

Matt limps. Rests arm around Sarah's shoulder. Liz crosses arms.

LIZ

Hurt your leg?

MATT

Too much dancing.

Cowboy watches.

INT. MARAUDER - DAY

Terry drives down freeway. Matt rides shotgun. Sarah and Liz sit in back.

SARAH

Anything on Dream Weaver?

LIZ

Jimmy Swift's on the Board of Directors.

SARAH

No surprise. The owners?

LIZ

Owner. Several layers removed.

SARAH

Robert Sanchez.

LIZ

You're better than they say. Still doesn't prove anything.

SARAH

Any luck with the serial numbers?

LIZ

Withdrawn from the First Bank of Watts  
in East LA.

SARAH

Owned by Robert Sanchez.

LIZ

Still not enough.

SARAH

Don't all these coincidences add up to  
something compelling enough to bring  
someone in? Swift, Sanchez, even the  
cowboy? Can't you at least subpoena  
records of the transaction?

LIZ

Not without the missing cash.

SARAH

Then we've got to get Mike Walt to ID  
the cowboy. And testify the cowboy  
tried to bribe and blackmail him.

LIZ

Cowboy'd still be untouchable.

SARAH

Couldn't you arrest him on something?  
Old parking tickets? Drinking and  
dressing?

LIZ

Not until he strays onto US territory.  
That's a privately-owned island.  
We've got no jurisdiction. Couldn't  
even extradite him.

SARAH

Why'd we even start this if we can't  
finish it? We need another miracle  
and I'm fresh out.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL - DAY

Sarah and Liz hurry through lobby.

LIZ (V.O.)

Except for one.

SARAH (V.O.)

One what?

LIZ (V.O.)  
Miracle. Your father came back.

Sarah and Liz exit elevator.

LIZ  
Billy Clark's been calling night and day. In a sweat to know you're okay.

SARAH  
Hope you let him twist in the wind.

LIZ  
Naturally. Another guy's been calling, too. Pete Beringer.

Doc Jensen and MALE FBI AGENT in street clothes chat outside McGraw's room.

SARAH  
Official now?

LIZ  
Still moonlighting. They owed me some favors.

DOC  
Sarah! Finally. Maybe now he'll stop his bitching.

SARAH  
Sounds like he's back to his old self.

DOC  
One solid foot out of the woods.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nurse Angelheart fusses around bed. McGraw flirts with FEMALE FBI AGENT.

MCGRAW  
... this kid keeps stealing Sarah's lunch at school. One day, my little angel makes this big fat sandwich out of cat food and horseshit. Mayo, lettuce, pickles, the works. Last time that kid ...

Sarah enters. Liz follows. Agent stands. Sarah embraces her father.

MCGRAW  
Hiya Princess.

SARAH  
I love you so much, Daddy.

MCGRAW  
Haven't heard that in awhile.

SARAH  
I'm sorry I blamed you.

MCGRAW  
S'okay, Princess. S'okay. Should've  
told you long ago.

LIZ  
Yes, you should have.

MCGRAW  
Appreciate the help. And your keeping  
an eye on our girl.

LIZ  
Job's not done.

MCGRAW  
Thanks for the note, Sarah. First  
thing I saw when I came to. Like  
waking up to a brand new day.

SARAH  
You deserve one.

MCGRAW  
About the code. Had to be Swift. He  
was in my office a couple of times  
when I got calls from Knuckles.  
Might've seen me check the paper and  
heard me give Knuckles the good word.  
He's smart. Could've put two and two  
together.

LIZ  
He did.

SARAH  
About Knuckles. He had an accident.

MCGRAW  
He okay?

SARAH  
No.

MCGRAW  
Swift do him?

LIZ  
We think he had a hand in it.

MCGRAW

Guess we really don't know nothing  
about nobody.

EXT./INT. NORTHRIDGE SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Matt, Sarah, and Liz slide into booth.

Next to Pete Beringer.

PETE

Mike's scared. He left town with  
Angie and the kids.

SARAH

He was blackmailed.

PETE

They made him take some money, too.

LIZ

Made?

PETE

Back-up. They were smart. Realized  
the threat might not work forever.

SARAH

Children have short memories.

PETE

What makes you say that?

SARAH

Pete, I've got a good idea what their  
threat was. But don't worry, your  
secret's safe with us.

PETE

I've got no secrets.

SARAH

I know that you and Mike are lovers.

PETE

The kids don't know.

SARAH

I understand. Maybe when they're  
older, they will too.

MATT

Did they force Mike to quit?



PETE

No. They wanted him to play just bad enough to lose. Blow a few key pitches. Serve up some pumpkins. He couldn't do it. Mike's got too much pride.

SARAH

So he used my father's suspension as a way out. Remove his golden arm, but keep his honor and integrity intact?

PETE

And the game's. It was the least he could do.

LIZ

They went for it?

PETE

Never heard from them again.

SARAH

What about the money?

PETE

Mike wanted to give it back, but couldn't. Had no idea who to give it to. They were smart on that one, too.

LIZ

If he was stuck with the money, he was stuck with the deal.

PETE

Mike was smarter. He put the money and briefcase in a safe deposit box and never touched it. Bank records will verify that the box hasn't been opened since.

Pete removes envelope from coat pocket. Slides it over to Sarah.

PETE

The key to the box. And Mike's authorization to remove its contents.

LIZ

How much was there?

PETE

Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

MATT  
 (to Sarah)  
 Guess I owe you a coke.

Cowboy watches.

EXT./INT. NORTHRIDGE BANK VAULT - DAY

Matt, Sarah, and Liz. Empty deposit box. Open briefcase.  
 Liz compares serial numbers on bills to Pronzini's list.

SARAH  
 Compelling enough?

LIZ  
 I've got a date in East LA.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Matt and Sarah cuddle on sofa. Watch Sports Widow.

TELEVISION

On monitor behind Sports Widow: Baseball owners arrive in  
 Los Angeles.

WIDOW  
 ... as baseball's crowned heads fly  
 into La La Land for a special session.  
 Top item on their to do list: anoint  
 a new Commissioner. The odds-on  
 favorite: Jimmy Swift, President and  
 GM of the Angels.

Telephone RINGS. Sarah leaps to answer.

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 Merry Christmas, doll. The withdrawal  
 was made by one James A. Swift.

SARAH  
 Strike three!

LIZ (ON PHONE)  
 My game now.

SARAH  
 We need to talk first. Matt and I've  
 been doing some thinking.

EXT./INT. LOS ANGELES SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Matt and Sarah cross lobby. Sarah carries kit bag.

MATT  
 Would still love to see them hang.

SARAH  
This way works best. Especially for  
the game.

MATT  
Beating them at their own.

SARAH  
On their home field.

MATT  
If it works.

SARAH  
Bet you a coke.

MATT  
No way.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY

SECRETARY ushers Matt and Sarah into office. Same decor,  
different city.

Jimmy Swift stands in front of window. Robert Sanchez sits  
at desk. He rolls orange back and forth across surface.

SANCHEZ  
Sarah, Matt. Always good to see my A-  
team.

He gestures for them to sit. They don't.

SANCHEZ  
To what do I owe the pleasure?

SARAH  
Arrogance, Bob.

SANCHEZ  
Your point?

Sarah removes papers from kit bag. Hands copies to Swift  
and Sanchez.

SANCHEZ  
I pay people to give me the "TV Guide"  
version.

Swift scans papers and is immediately shaken.

SARAH  
It's a partial list of the evidence  
we've obtained.

SANCHEZ  
Evidence suggests wrongdoing.

SARAH  
Let's not play games.

SANCHEZ  
It's what we do.

SWIFT  
What are you going to do with this?

SARAH  
For the moment, nothing.

SWIFT  
Nothing?

SANCHEZ  
Seems you've gone to a great deal of trouble for nothing.

SARAH  
I'm here to make you an offer.

SWIFT  
Of what?

SARAH  
A chance to save yourselves.

MATT  
And the game.

SARAH  
Maybe even redeem yourselves.

SANCHEZ  
You know how much I love negotiating.

SARAH  
If you agree to the terms of our offer, this evidence will be withheld from the authorities. If you refuse, or if anything unusual should happen to any of us, all this will go directly to the FBI, the LAPD, and the LA District Attorney's Office.

MATT  
Perhaps they'll make you a better offer, Bob.

SWIFT  
This is ridiculous!

Sanchez motions for him to shut up.

SANCHEZ

Let us suppose that you actually do have evidence of this as yet unspecified wrongdoing, what exactly would your terms be?

Sarah removes more papers. Hands single sheet to each man.

SARAH

This spells them out quite clearly.

Swift studies paper. Sanchez doesn't.

SWIFT

More bullshit!

SARAH

No, Jimmy. What's bullshit is your arrogance. You can't toy with people's lives and get away with it.

MATT

Anybody else would've been crucified in prime time.

SANCHEZ

I'm sure your colleagues and my competitors would be more than happy to provide the cross. And the air time.

SARAH

Unlike the two of you, we happen to love the game of baseball.

MATT

You've nearly destroyed it by turning it into a carnival of greed and ego.

SARAH

We don't want to damage the game more by making public what you've done. It might be fatal.

SANCHEZ

Such selfless devotion.

SARAH

Selfless? Not at all.

SWIFT

Then why isn't there anything on this list for you? Or Matt or Jack?

SARAH

Every one is.

SWIFT

Even shutting down Billy Clark?

SARAH

We don't like people who kill for sport.

SANCHEZ

You're being very generous.

SARAH

We're not interested in anyone's head. All we want from you is what you've stolen from so many others.

SANCHEZ

And what might that be?

Sarah grabs orange from Sanchez.

SARAH

We want your dreams.

MATT

The terms of the offer are non-negotiable. Take it or leave it. You've got twenty-four hours.

SWIFT

I know you, Sarah. You'll run and hide. I know you. It's a game. You're bluffing.

SARAH

Call me.

EXT. NEW YORK SANDLOT - DAY

Ball EXPLODES off bat.

Fifteen-year-old GIRL races for first.

WIDOW (V.O.)

Big news in baseball this week, fannies.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - VENICE BEACH - DAY

On TV inside snack shack, Sports Widow knocks down some news.

WIDOW

Newly-elected Baseball Commissioner Jimmy Swift flicked it in. Citing those personal reasons to be named later.

INT. NEW YORK CAFE - DAY

On TV, Jimmy Swift exits Commissioner's office.

WIDOW (V.O.)  
As his first and only official act,  
Swift de-banished "Cracker Jack"  
McGraw.

INT. LOS ANGELES - TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

On TV in edit suite, Swift stares down reporters.

At console, Sarah scans footage of CHILDREN scavenging through garbage dump near Manila. Keychain with tiny, leather catcher's mitt dangles from monitor.

SWIFT  
There is sufficient evidence to prove  
that Jack McGraw never placed that  
bet. This is not a pardon. You can't  
pardon an innocent man.

INT. NEW YORK - REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY

On TV in conference room, Jack sits in wheelchair on porch of ranch. He twirls rabbit's foot. Matt and Sarah stand behind him. She wears her father's jersey. Lucky number seven.

At table in same conference room, Billy Clark signs papers and hands over set of keys.

WIDOW (V.O.)  
With his exile 86ed, odds are good  
McGraw will waltz into Cooperstown on  
the first ballot.

INT. LOS ANGELES TACQUERIA - DAY

On TV, Robert Sanchez stands beside limo.

WIDOW (V.O.)  
In Lotus Land yesterday, media mogul  
Robert-o Sanchez announced that he had  
sold the Angels. Back to the "Singing  
Cowboy."

INT. NEW YORK LOFT - DAY

On TV, Sanchez addresses camera.

At desk, Matt scribbles notes with baseball bat ink pen.

Surrounded by research on Giants-Angels World Series.

SANCHEZ

I was simply fulfilling the terms of a private gentleman's agreement I made with Mr. Austin ten years ago.

INT. LOS ANGELES - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

On TV inside trailer, Tex Austin deals poker in owner's box.

At drafting table, Mike Walt and Pete Beringer scan blueprints.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Now that Jimmy Swift has resigned as Commissioner, will you retain him as your President and GM?

TEX

Reckon not. First off, Mr. Swift never was my GM. Second, looks to me like ol' Jimmy don't want to be involved in the grand ol' game *no mas*.

EXT. NEW YORK SANDLOT - DAY

Fifteen-year-old girl slides home. Under BOY's tag.

TEX (V.O.)

Sort of thought I might offer the job to Jack McGraw.

Matt and Sarah CHEER.

Game over, KIDS head home. Bats over shoulders. Gloves dangling.

Matt and Sarah walk onto empty field.

SARAH

Mort called again. Far East Bureau's mine. If I want it.

MATT

You need to do this, junior.

SARAH

What about you, Matthew?

MATT

Thought I'd do some writing.

SARAH

Word processors work in Los Angeles.

MATT

And New York.



SARAH

You said love, honor, and obey.

MATT

Two for three gets you into  
Cooperstown.

SARAH

Three for three's never been done.

Matt takes mound. Sarah picks up abandoned catcher's mitt  
and squats behind home.

SARAH

What's it going to be? Apples or  
oranges?

Matt reaches into coat pocket. Grabs something and ...

Fires a strike. Right down the middle.

Sarah catches it. She turns glove over and sees ...

An orange.

FADE OUT: