

**The Umpire Has No Balls**  
by

Debbie Bolsky

802 3rd Street Unit D  
Santa Monica, CA 90403  
310-490-5537  
debbie@dbolskywriter.com  
www.dbolskywriter.com

FADE IN:

INTERVIEW FOOTAGE:

Three Major League Baseball Players, JIMMY ROLLINS,  
DONTRELLE WILLIS and CASEY CANDAELE.

JIMMY ROLLINS

I grew up eating and drinking baseball,  
always knew it was what I was gonna do.  
Only channel our TV was ever tuned to.  
After all my mom played ball, softball ya  
know.

DONTRELLE WILLIS

Mine too, but competitively. The only  
reason she gave it up was 'cause I was  
coming along. Growing up she's the one  
who trained me. Everything I am, all  
because of her.

CASEY CANDAELE

Well, did they make a movie about yours?  
Mine played in A League of Their Own's  
all girl baseball league.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A beautiful, sunny day.

A man, dressed in an umpire uniform, leads a large group  
of men, also dressed as umpires, in drills of synchronized  
umpire signals.

INT. BATTING CAGE - DAY

An UMPIRE, wearing an oversized uniform, face hidden  
beneath the mask, stands behind a lanky batter and an  
oversized catcher.

DUTCH BOYLAN (30s), out-of-shape, ex-linebacker, stands  
next to a man holding a digital camcorder recording the  
performances.

Fastball SLAPS the catcher's mitt. The umpire  
enthusiastically signals strikeout.

Lanky spins around and is immediately in the umpire's  
face.

LANKY

Say what?!

The umpire, not hesitating a moment, rips the mask off, mid-length hair pours out revealing the beautiful face of JESSIE STILES (20s.)

JESSIE

Yer out!

LANKY

That was high and outside!

Jessie slowly shakes her head no.

JESSIE

One more word and you'll be outside too.

LANKY

If that's where you wanna take it.

JESSIE

My preference is right here.

LANKY

Fine with me.

Dutch strides over.

DUTCH

Rookie...

JESSIE

Yeah?

DUTCH

Ejections aren't part of your training...  
(to Lanky)  
...yet. Forty laps, Lanky.

Lanky cringes, the catcher chuckles.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

(to the Catcher)

You too, Pudge

Lanky and Pudge glare at Jessie as they jog out.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

And you got five minutes, we're off on a road trip.

JESSIE

To where?

DUTCH  
 (taps his watch)  
 Four fifty-seven.

Jessie runs to...

INT. UMPIRE LOCKER ROOM - DAY

FOUR MALE UMPIRE STUDENTS, all different sizes and ages.

Jessie runs by them to her locker which has a protective cup taped to the front. The guys snicker.

Jessie swings the locker open. Inside she eyes her clothes and duffle bag on top of a pile of protective cups.

JESSIE  
 Real funny.

UMPIRE STUDENT #1  
 Ya know, Rookie, maybe if you were fully equipped you'd be umping real games instead of your third round at school.

She yanks one of the cups out and swings it into his crotch. He bends over in pain.

JESSIE  
 Guess I'm more equipped than you.

She strips down and quickly changes.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 When was the last field trip Dutch took any of you on?

All of them leer at her.

UMPIRE STUDENT #2  
 You sure it's...  
 (slowly licks his lips)  
 ...business related.

Dutch pokes his head in. The guys quickly turn away and act busy.

DUTCH  
 Tick-tock Rookie.

Dutch moves on.

Jessie stuffs her equipment and uniform into the duffle bag, shoots them a smile...

JESSIE

Catch ya tomorrow, boys.

She runs out.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Dutch scribbles notes at the side.

Jessie, crouched behind home, is the only umpire.  
Runner's on 3rd.

DAN CALHOUN (20s), twinkle in his eye combined with a cocky smile, stands in the batter's box. He hits a sharp grounder down the 3rd base line.

Jessie hustles from behind the plate shadowing the ball as Dan tears off for first and the runner heads home. She hesitates then signals...

JESSIE

Foul!

Runners slide to a stop. Everyone pivots to her. Dan's in her face.

DAN

That was fair, skipped over the bag.

JESSIE

Did not.

DAN

Did too!

All of the players mutter in agreement.

JESSIE

Well, since mine's the only opinion that counts...it was foul!

Jessie strides back to the plate. Dan eyes her ass.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

The ball's coming Calhoun whether you're here or not.

Dan hurries back and readies himself. The pitcher goes into his windup.

DAN

(to the catcher)

Never use a girl Blue, bet she's on her period.

Jessie steps out from behind the plate. The pitcher lets go of the ball.

JESSIE

Time!

The ball sails over everyone's head and crashes against the backstop.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You're gone!

DAN

What'd I do?

The UCF COACH runs over, talks to Dutch, not Jessie. Dutch continues taking notes.

UCF COACH

You can't do that, I'm outta players!

JESSIE

Not my problem.

UCF COACH

Come on, be a guy.

JESSIE

I'm not and he's done.

Dan shoot her a dirty look as he walks off.

UCF COACH

(to Dutch)

That makes me one man short.

JESSIE

Forfeit on account of stupidity!

Both teams glare at Jessie as they walk off the field.

The UCF Coach looks at Dutch who still takes notes.

UCF COACH

I can't believe you let her -- What are you writing, we're not even playing?!

DUTCH

My dinner order, there's this little Italian --

UCF COACH

This is the last time I let some girl decide my team's fate, pre-season or not.

The UCF Coach stomps off.

JESSIE

That was so cool. Did you see the way --

Dutch rips off a piece of paper and sticks it in her hand.

DUTCH

Your strike zone's too wide, arms shake on the safe calls, late covering plays on the bases and...don't ever hesitate on a call again.

Dutch starts to walk away.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

That won't earn you high marks when Umpire Development evaluates you.

JESSIE

What?

DUTCH

You don't screw up too badly they might slot you into one of the openings.

Jessie joyfully runs toward him, her arms outstretched...

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Don't! Took me long enough to convince the wife there's nothing between us.

As Dutch saunters off...

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Don't embarrass me, Rookie.

Jessie laughs and dances around the empty field to Bruce Springsteen's version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

As she dances over to home plate her dance becomes a ballet of strike out and home run gestures until...

DAN

You can't dance.

Jessie and the music stop. She turns to Dan who gathers equipment.

JESSIE

Well, you can't hit.

Dan picks up a bat and goes into his batting stance.

DAN

Not according to the Tourists, they're  
checkin' me out.

JESSIE

If they'd been here today your career'd  
be short lived.

Jessie gets behind him, places her hands over his,  
repositions them on the bat.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Grip this more evenly and lower.

She roughly moves his legs with her legs.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You're way too scrunched.

Slowly leads him in swinging.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

That'll give you all the power you need  
to slam it out of the park.

DAN

So Rookie...

(softly into her ear)

What doya say we meet back here tonight  
where you can spread out with a real  
ballplayer.

Horn HONKS.

Jessie lets go and starts to run off, gives a backhand  
wave.

DAN (CONT'D)

How bout nine o'clock?

Horn continues HONKING.

Jessie stops, turns back, her eyes shift to his crotch.

JESSIE

Nine-thirty.

She runs off the field as Dan playfully practices swinging  
the bat.



BEGIN FLASHBACK.

EXT. OAKLAND A'S COLISEUM - STANDS - DAY

Cheering fans, most wearing Oakland As' caps and T-shirts. An excited, Young Jessie (7-8), can't sit still as she cheers and squirms around watching the game.

CRACK. The ball heads into the stands.

Mad scramble for this foul ball. It bounces off of hands, through the air, toward Young Jessie's seat.

THE WOMAN (mid-late 20s) sitting next to her sticks her hand up at the last moment and catches the ball. She smiles and hands it to a beaming Young Jessie.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

FLANNERY

Baby girl...Baby girl...

Jessie snaps out of it.

FLANNERY, a burly workman, positions a pink hard hat on Jessie's head.

FLANNERY (CONT'D)

What world you in, you never let me get away with callin' you that.

JESSIE

I'll catch you the next time.

FLANNERY

(points)

Lu's over there.

Jessie walks by the men working on the bridge. A mixture of friendly waves along with lewd whistles and gestures.

She stops in front of a welder, face covered with a mask, working away.

JESSIE

I was just thinking back on the first ball game I ever went to.

The welder grunts.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

It's been too long since we've been to one.

The welder removes the mask to reveal the woman in the stands, older and worn-out, LU STILES (40s).

LU

Don't have time.

JESSIE

Even if I'm working it.

LU

You're late.

JESSIE

(excited)

They have openings and they're evaluating me!

LU

That's nice.

JESSIE

Nice?!

Lu puts her arm around Jessie and they walk past the workmen as they head to the elevator.

LU

Baby girl, you've been through this three times and with each one they spin that hope.

JESSIE

But this is different...

Lu nods.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Really...I'm as good as any of the guys they're looking at.

Lu glances around at all of the men working away. One of them leers at Jessie...

LU

As good don't cut it.

...moves his middle finger back and forth.

Lu abruptly stops and turns her attention to him.

LU (CONT'D)

What are you looking at, Dick?

She gets in his face.

LU (CONT'D)

If you paid as much attention to your work as my baby girl we wouldn't be three weeks behind and you wouldn't be working nights for the next two months.

Dick quickly goes back to work. Jessie and Lu continue toward the elevator.

LU (CONT'D)

You've gotta be better.

Jessie opens her mouth but Lu doesn't let her speak.

LU (CONT'D)

By a mile.

Lu pulls Jessie onto the elevator, looks at Flannery.

LU (CONT'D)

Dinner break.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Name etched into a headstone: HONUS STILES. A bouquet of cigars leans against the headstone.

Jessie and Lu stand on the grass near the grave. Jessie hands Lu a piece of paper then clumsily practices her signals.

She glances at the grave not skipping a beat.

JESSIE

How am I doing gramps?

Lu looks up from Dutch's notes.

LU

He'd tell you ya have to be smoother.

She gets behind Jessie and molds her arms into strike and safe calls.

LU (CONT'D)

Your arms need to be certain even if you're not.

JESSIE

They are, I mean I am.

LU

It's not as easy as you think.

JESSIE

Have a little faith in me.

Lu lets go of Jessie who continues on her own.

LU

Faith isn't the point.

Lu positions herself opposite Jessie and rapidly runs through the signals. Jessie tries keeping up.

LU (CONT'D)

You've been trying for so long and --  
Remember your promise.

JESSIE

(mutters)

Alameda J.C.

(louder)

But that's not gonna come into play, I'm  
ready.

LU

I've got a pile of videotapes saying  
otherwise.

JESSIE

But you haven't seen me --

Lu looks at her watch.

LU

I've gotta get back but why don't you  
head over to my place. I'm off at eight  
and we can --

Jessie shuffles around uncomfortably.

JESSIE

I got plans.

LU

What kind?

Jessie doesn't answer, just looks away.

LU (CONT'D)

If you're really serious...

JESSIE

I am!

LU

Then this is the only plan you have.

JESSIE

This has to do with the game...

(mutters)

...sort of.

LU

(rolls her eyes)

Not a ball player.

(takes a deep breath)

Okay, for tonight. But this 'll be the last free pass you get until the evaluation. My place, 6:30 AM tomorrow, the first of many extensive, hands on practice sessions.

Jessie continues with her signals. Lu gives Jessie a kiss on the cheek.

LU (CONT'D)

And baby girl, I am proud of you.

As Lu walks away Jessie amps up her practicing, her eyes harden with resolve.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Dan drinks from a bottle of tequila. Jessie sashays over.

JESSIE

You allowed that on campus?

DAN

Just thought I'd bring a little something to help loosen you up.

Jessie takes a swig from the bottle, moves toward him.

JESSIE

You think I need loosening up?

Dan pulls her closer.

DAN

You never know, Rookie.

JESSIE

The name's Jessie. And I suggest you use that unless want my calls to go against you.

DAN

Like you'll get that chance again.

Jessie takes another drink from the bottle.

JESSIE

I brought you a little something too.

She hands him a small pink protective cup.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Figure you'd want to be well equipped for the Tourists. Lemme know if it's too big, I've got plenty of other sizes.

Jessie turns and walks away.

DAN

Rook --

She whirls around.

DAN (CONT'D)

Jessie.

He holds up the bottle.

DAN (CONT'D)

At least let me thank you properly, Jessie.

She strolls back and takes another swig. He moves in for a kiss. She sidesteps him, he jerks forward.

JESSIE

See you around.

DAN

Only if it's in the South Atlantic League.

JESSIE

Oh, I know I'll be there. The question is, will you?

Jessie struts away. Dan gulps his tequila and takes in the show, his eyes fixated on her ass.

## INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Female ex-umpire, RIA CORTESIO.

RIA CORTESIO

I got into pro ball in '99 straight out of Jim Evans Academy, the fifth woman to work as an umpire in the minor leagues. I loved being on the field, it was my safe haven, everything made sense there. It was when I was off that the shit flew, having to deal with the other umpires, supervisors, PBUC, let's just say they didn't want any chicks invading their space. I made it all the way to double A and in the time span of a few short months went from being ranked near the top, where they'd have to promote me, to the bottom, where they could release me.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Light drizzle.

A compact car motors down the interstate, passes an "Asheville, North Carolina" sign.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - DAY

The car turns into the parking lot.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jessie, carrying a duffle bag, talks on her cell as she walks toward the entrance gate.

JESSIE

It's me again. Just wanted to let you know I'm in Asheville and my first game's in a few hours. I know you're p.o.'d...

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

JESSIE

...but you didn't raise no quitter. Hope you'll make it to one of my games.

Jessie disconnects and heads through the gate, a GUARD blocks her.

GUARD

Gates don't open till eleven-thirty lil' girl.

JESSIE

I'm the new umpire.

The Guard eyes her up and down, smacks his lips.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Check your lil' list, Jessie Stiles.

The Guard glances at the list, shakes his head no.

Jessie moves in close and taps it.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You hardly checked.

He glares at her for a moment then slowly looks down the list.

GUARD

Not here.

He nudges her out the entrance and closes the gate in her face.

GUARD (CONT'D)

You small town girls 'll say anything to saddle up to these boys.

Jessie shakes and rattles the gate as he walks away.

JESSIE

Get back here and let me in! It's my first game, I can't be late!

ONE HOUR LATER

The Guard, looking a little harried, opens the gate and scopes the area, sighs relieved and relaxes until...

Car alarm BLARES. He runs in the direction of the alarm.

Moments pass. Jessie slinks over from the other side, quietly enters the stadium, looking at the ground as she sneaks through it.

A man's pant's legs step in front of her. As her eyes shift up he lifts her by her collar.

GUARD

What'd you say your name was again, Jessie Stiles? From now on it's on my list, permanently, and you'll be banned for all eternity.



Jessie squirms around.

JESSIE

Let me down, Dutch is gonna kill me!

DUTCH

I'll do more than that.

The Guard drops her.

GUARD

She's for -- But her name's not here.

A sour looking Dutch takes the list and taps a name on it.

DUTCH

I put Rookie on it myself.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - GROUNDS - DAY

Excited fans of all ages, making no mind of the rain, fill up on an assortment of concessions and souvenirs before heading to their seats.

Dutch whisks Jessie through the stadium. She licks her lips as she watches some guy devour a bratwurst.

DUTCH

(shakes his head no)

Too mushy.

(points to a tunnel)

Field's through there.

(points to a bathroom)

Your dressing room.

JESSIE

(nervous laugh)

Better than my car.

DUTCH

Humph...

JESSIE

I wouldn't 've been late if it weren't for that ignoramus --

DUTCH

You got a problem with the way things are you take it up with me instead of having your lawyer --

JESSIE

She isn't -- She caught my practice -- It's been over a year...

DUTCH

Was waiting till you were ready.

JESSIE

They're bringing guys greener than me up  
and I know it's more about anatomy than  
ability.

DUTCH

And I'm about equal opportunity. They're  
not ready either. Short leash, Rookie.

He tosses her the umpire mask.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

You're behind the plate.

As he walks away.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Your work on the bases is shit.

Jessie stands there for a beat.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Tick-tock.

Jessie runs to the bathroom, pulling her clothes out of  
the duffle bag en-route.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Single stall.

As Jessie finishes putting on her uniform she hears...

T-BALL (O.S.)

So bro, got big plans tonight?

DAN (O.S.)

Megan at seven, Jennifer at nine.

EXT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Dan and T-BALL FIELDS (early 20s), kid-like smile and  
enthusiasm, wearing Tourists' uniforms, walk by as Jessie  
walks out.

JESSIE

And protective cups at ten.

She heads toward the field. Dan has a surprised but  
pleased look on his face which disappears when...

T-BALL  
Who the "f" is that?

DAN  
I think the new umpire.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS DUGOUT - DAY

Light rain.

CAP (30s-40s), slightly ruffled, rolls his eyes as he stands on the edge of the dugout chewing a big wad of gum and watching the game.

Dan sits on the bench next to T-Ball.

T-BALL  
I can't believe we got a Sheila ump.

Dan sneezes loudly, wipes his sleeve across his nose.

CAP  
Calhoun, grab a bat, you're hitting for Washington.

Dan grabs his bat and runs toward the batter's box, still sneezing.

CAP (CONT'D)  
(spits the gum out)  
And stop sneezing long enough to bring Danville home and end this game before the rain does.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Jessie, wearing an ill-fitting cap, stands behind the catcher. Dan digs into the batter's box.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Storm clouds a brewing. Wonder if she brought 'em.  
(laughs)  
Now, now ladies, I'm just joshing you.

A perfect strike is pitched.

JESSIE  
Str...rike!

Dan turns around, winks at her then turns back.

A hanging curveball. He's frozen. She signals strike.

DAN

That was nowhere near the strike zone!

JESSIE

It went through mine.

Dan grits his teeth and prepares himself...a 90 MPH fast ball. He takes his home run swing and --

JESSIE (CONT'D)

(signals)

Yer out!

THUNDER CLAPS; the sky opens up drenching everyone.

Dutch signals the ground crew who unroll the tarp. Jinx, a three-legged black kitten, rolls out, scurries between the two dugouts. Some of the players scatter away from her.

As Dan picks Jinx up he sneezes uncontrollably. Jessie and Dan eye each other and he gently gives her Jinx.

Dutch heads off the field handing Jessie a damp piece of paper as he walks by.

DUTCH

Your screw ups.

Dan looks to his dugout where the players make obscene gestures at Jessie.

He grabs her and plants a kiss on her lips which totally takes her by surprise.

JESSIE

(stammering)

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah ah....

Dan strides back to the dugout, the players applaud.

Jessie, struggling to control her temper, walks by their dugout as she carries Jinx off the field.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

That's gonna cost you Calhoun.

DAN

In that case, let me get my money's worth, babe.

The players burst into laughter.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Steady rainfall. Jessie hurries across the lot. Dan jogs up to her.

DAN

You're the last person I expected here.

Jessie ignores him.

DAN (CONT'D)

Sorry about that back there but I have a reputation to uphold.

She abruptly stops.

JESSIE

Then you won't mind the hundred dollar fine.

DAN

Only if you have dinner with me.  
(eyes her up and down)  
You are looking real good.

JESSIE

And you're playing the way I remember.

She continues to her car with Dan following her.

DAN

You know I got my ass chewed 'cause of that call.

JESSIE

You swung at that last pitch.

DAN

The one before.

JESSIE

Yeah, the one I would've gone for.

Jessie gets to her car and sees a paper under the wiper. She yanks it off. Dan gives her a questioning look.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Some people just aren't as enlightened as you ballplayers about me being here.

DAN

Makes no mind to me. In fact, I was thinking of asking you for another lesson.

Jessie gets into her car. Dan presses his face against the window and flashes his smile.

She waits a beat then cracks it.

JESSIE  
Tomorrow, 7:30.

DAN  
We've got a game.

JESSIE  
A.M.

She rolls the window up and drives off. Dan grins and waves.

DAN  
One, maybe two weeks tops.

EXT. LOCAL BATTING CAGE - MORNING

Dan, wearing a new, pristine baseball cap, swings at the fastball.

The ball barely makes it over the fence.

DAN  
You free for dinner?

Jessie looks in the direction of the ball, drains a can of Tab and tosses it.

JESSIE  
C plus.

LATER

Tab can lands in the trash bin. Jessie, dressed in different clothes pops open another.

Dan, his baseball cap dustier, readies himself. The pitching machine sends him a curveball.

DAN  
How 'bout a bite before the game?

Pop up.

Jessie signals out. Dan pounds his bat onto the ground as Jessie drinks her Tab.

LATER

Jessie, still drinking, wearing different clothes, reloads the pitching machine.

Dan, his cap muddy, readies himself in the batting cage.

DAN (CONT'D)

A drink after?

Jessie points between the machine and Dan and turns the machine on.

Dan, grips his bat and looks at the slider coming toward him...

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

...and belts the ball over the right field wall.

Dan rounds the bases. He tips his now dirt caked cap and blows her a kiss.

The players laugh. Jessie, flash of anger in her eyes, turns away.

LATER

TWENTYSOMETHING PHOTOGRAPHER snaps pictures of T-Ball.

T-BALL

Can I get copies of these?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Just tell me how many.

T-Ball picks up his bat and models his batting stance. Dan sneaks up behind, armed with a can of shaving cream.

Jessie walks around T-Ball as she heads off the field.

T-BALL

They're going up all around here, right?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Of course, you're one of their --  
 (sees Dan and giggles)  
 -- r..rising stars...

T-Ball instinctively ducks as Dan sprays. He nails Jessie.

T-Ball and the photographer burst into laughter. Dan tries to stop his...

DAN

I'm so...

...but can't.

DAN (CONT'D)

...sorry...

Dan tosses Jessie a towel and she angrily wipes the shaving cream off.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Jessie sits in a booth eating alone. She glances around, a little longingly, at the other tables filled with couples, friends or families.

The little girl in the booth adjacent to hers, sticks her tongue out at Jessie. Jessie sticks her tongue back at the little girl then pulls out her cell and dials.

JESSIE

Hey there. Just want to let you know I sent you my schedule. Still waiting to hear when you're gonna come. Miss you.

She continues eating, pulls out sheets of notes. As she reads them...

JESSIE (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Fixed that, and that, he's just wrong --

DAN

Want some company?

Jessie looks up as Dan, still wearing his filthy cap, sits down and signals the waitress.

LATER

The waitress picks up the last of their dishes.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'm so glad we're finally having this date.

JESSIE

You sat down, I hardly consider that --

DAN

Could've told me to leave.



JESSIE

Didn't want to make a scene.

DAN

Since when?

Jessie shakes her head. Dan takes her hand.

DAN (CONT'D)

I just really wanted to apologize for that shaving cream --

Jessie slowly takes her hand back.

DAN (CONT'D)

I was aiming for T-Ball.

JESSIE

It never happened.

DAN

Good, then you won't hold it against me on any of your calls.

JESSIE

Is that what this is about? You listen you two bit ball player, my calls are never personal. They don't have anything to do with any issues I have with you or T-Ball or any of your brethren and if you think --

Dan shoots her his winning smile.

DAN

Just tryin' to get your blood boiling.

(to the waitress)

Two slices of cheesecake. And make hers extra large, I hear it's her favorite.

LATER

The table in front of Dan, perfectly neat; in front of Jessie, scattered crumbs and bits of cheesecake.

Dan cleans Jessie's mess.

DAN (CONT'D)

So, have your parents seen you ump yet?

JESSIE

Lu, my mom's name's Lu. Like Gehrig. You know how most moms recite nursery rhymes...

She stops Dan's cleaning and takes one last bite of cheesecake.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

1971 the A's made it to postseason but never got past the playoffs. '72, they got to the series and squeaked by the Reds 4 to 3 games to claim the first championship ever for a San Francisco Bay area team. And they repeated that in '73 and '74.

Jessie lifts his cap off.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Not polite.

Dan snatches it back and slaps it back on.

DAN

Ever since I got it I've been tearing the cover off the ball.

JESSIE

Yeah, the cap's the reason for that.

Uncomfortable silence.

Dan takes out an extra large pink protective cup with a small paperback book sticking out.

DAN

Thought this might help with some of your calls.

Jessie looks at the book: Haney's Baseball Book of Reference.

Dan takes the protective cup back.

DAN (CONT'D)

I can always use another --

Jessie looks at the cup and using her hands estimates the size of it then eyes Dan's crotch.

JESSIE

You do think highly of yourself, don't you?

Jessie gets up, holds the book.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Drops money on the table and leaves.

Dan quickly throws down some bills and hurries after her.

EXT. BERNIE POLLOCK CEMETERY - NIGHT

Dan parks his car behind Jessie's.

Jessie practices her signals near a grave covered with rubbish. A bouquet of cigars lies on it. Etched into the headstone, a picture of a baseball player.

DAN

So this is where you spend your off time.

Jessie looks up startled.

JESSIE

You stalking me?

DAN

(points to the headstone)

Friend of yours?

Jessie continues, still in her rhythm.

JESSIE

He broke a bunch of records. You could probably use some pointers from him.

Dan picks up an imaginary bat and assumes the position.

DAN

How 'bout getting some from you?

Jessie stands opposite him, waits a moment then signals...

JESSIE

Strike!

DAN

You're crazy, it was low and inside.

JESSIE

Not from my view.

DAN

Then you need glasses.

JESSIE

(looks down at the grave)

What do you think?

Dan puts his ear near the headstone as if he's listening.  
He cleans off the rubbish.

DAN  
(to Jessie)  
Got a piece of paper, he gave me the  
number of a really good optometrist.

Jessie signals to continue. Dan assumes his position.

DAN (CONT'D)  
It's cool your mom's named after Gehrig?

JESSIE  
Family tradition, mine came from Hall of  
Famer Jesse Burkett and gramps was Honus.  
(looks around)  
Ball's coming.

DAN  
Just how I'm picking mine.

Dan bears down...

JESSIE  
And if your wife thinks differently?

...and takes a mighty swing.

DAN  
She'll follow my lead.

Jessie's eyes follow the imaginary ball. She signals home  
run.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Yes!

He jogs in a small square as if he's running the bases.

DAN (CONT'D)  
What about you?

JESSIE  
Not having any.

DAN  
What?!

As Jessie continues practicing signals, her emotions go  
into her actions.

JESSIE

What doya think, all us girls wanna make babies, that I'm just marking time --

DAN

I --

JESSIE

Well some of us have other things, more important things --

DAN

...just asked a question.

Dan moves behind her.

DAN (CONT'D)

You're arm's shaking.

JESSIE

It was the way you asked it.

(mutters)

And if I did, I'd never name them like that, too much pressure.

He tries molding her arms.

DAN

If you want I can --

Jessie circumvents him.

JESSIE

No, no, I've got it.

Dan glances at his watch.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You got someplace to be?

DAN

Uhh, she can wait.

Jessie pushes Dan toward his car.

JESSIE

No she can't.

She goes back to practicing.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Don't want to get you in dutch.

As Dan walks to his car.

DAN

The way I hear it, that's where you are.  
Or maybe it's the other way around.

JESSIE

Jesus...  
(flash of anger)  
He's my boss!

Dan gets into his car.

DAN

Mind if we meet here again?

JESSIE

Yes...I do mind.

DAN

Then the batting cage tomorrow morning?

JESSIE

(shakes her head no)  
First road trip.

Dan smiles at her and waves as he drives off.

Jessie gets into a rapid rhythm practicing. Her arms shake a little as she makes the signals.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Damn I hate that he's right.

INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Ex-baseball player/baseball TV announcer, KEITH HERNANDEZ.

KEITH HERNANDEZ

It's been years and I still get ribbed for my comment about that woman in the Padres dugout not belonging there. How was I supposed to know she was on the training staff. When I was playing, girls didn't do that sort of thing. I got a lot of crap from women's groups. My wife was none too pleased either. It's just that, there's not a lot of places for men only, the dugout and field should be two of them.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Conrad the Crawdad, the orange, big eared mascot, chases a little boy into his mother's arms.

The boy breaks into uncontrollable fits of giggles as the nearby crowd applauds. Conrad hugs them both, pictures are snapped.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Jessie, smiling, glances around the couple of thousand of fans in the stands. Many gawk at her.

DUTCH

(points)

Shoot that dweeb a smile, you'll make his year.

Jessie turns and sees a geeky, beer guzzling, 22 year old, lean over the barrier, flicking his tongue at her. Her smile disappears.

She puts her mask on and crouches behind home. Dutch takes his position on the field.

Eye popping fastball. The pale, light haired batter, WHITEY, swings and misses. Another one; he misses again.

Hanging curve just off the plate. He thinks he checked, but didn't. Jessie signals...

JESSIE

Out!

WHITEY

Where the Hell's your strike zone?!

JESSIE

You went through it.

Whitey starts toward Jessie.

WHITEY

Horseshit you little --

His manager, TIM JOYCE (60s) runs in-between.

TIM

You got one for them and another for us!

JESSIE

He went too far.

WHITEY

This isn't a girl's game.

TIM

Yeah, stay in the kitchen!

Whitey's in her face, spraying as he screams.

WHITEY  
STAY IN THE KITCHEN! STAY IN THE  
KITCHEN!

JESSIE  
And you can both stay in the clubhouse.

Tim pulls him away but the crowd picks up the chant.

CROWD  
Stay in the kitchen. Stay in the  
kitchen. Stay in the kitchen.

The game resumes. A slider off the plate.

With a look of certainty on her face...

JESSIE  
(grunts)  
Ball.

EXT. SAVANNAH SAND GNATS STADIUM - ON DECK CIRCLE - NIGHT

Dan takes practice swings. Cap signals him over.

CAP  
(softly in his ear)  
Bunt.

DAN  
I can bring him home.

CAP  
Just get him to third, T-Ball 'll do the  
rest.

DAN  
But Cap...

Cap points him to the batter's box.

EXT. SAVANNAH SAND GNATS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Dan readies himself, assumes the bunt position.

The runner on second dances off the base, rearing to go.

Split-finger fastball. At the last moment Dan pulls the bat back and takes a mighty swing, a major league pop-up toward second.



The second baseman gets a twofer as he catches the ball and tags the runner out.

EXT. DUGOUT - NIGHT

Dan slinks back to the dugout. Cap blocks him.

CAP

What part of bunt did you not understand?  
Two hours extra practice every day for  
the rest of your life.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

The slightly larger crowd, drinking beer, eating junk food, snapping pictures.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

Jessie works the bases. Whitey's on first, leans toward second.

Ball's pitched, Whitey's off.

Jessie is positioned perfectly at second.

CROWD

Go, go, go, go! Yeah!

Whitey's tagged before his foot hits the plate. Jessie signals him out.

CROWD (CONT'D)

No!

WHITEY

I was safe you --

The restless crowd moves closer to the barriers.

CROWD

STAY IN THE KITCHEN!

JESSIE

Do you wanna be ejected, again?

Whitey looks at Tim then stomps back to the dugout.

The crowd applauds him and showers the field with leaflets.

CROWD

STAY IN THE KITCHEN! STAY IN THE  
KITCHEN! STAY IN THE KITCHEN!

Dutch walks over to Jessie and picks one up. He signals for her to pick up the rest.

DUTCH

Recipes.

A disgusted Jessie obeys him.

JESSIE

I don't cook.

The bat boy snickers as he takes the pile from her.

DUTCH

The wife does.

Jessie and Dutch return to their positions.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

Dutch nervously eyes the angry crowd.

He crouches behind the batter. A perfect strike is pitched.

DUTCH

Ball.

(to the batter)

Consider that a gift.

He glances at the less angry crowd and relaxes.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - DAY

Dan, carrying a newspaper, walks toward the locker room. A slick, professionally dressed, TONY SCHAFFER joins him.

TONY

Didn't expect you here on an off day.  
None of your girls available?

DAN

T-Ball's keeping them amused till I'm through.

TONY

Well, if you ever need another pinch hitter...

Tony grabs the paper and points to an article.

TONY (CONT'D)

I see Rookie's making a name for herself.

Dan chuckles and takes the paper back.

TONY (CONT'D)  
I've been beating my brain on how to  
capitalize on this.

Dan stops and skims the article.

DAN  
They really love this "stay in the  
kitchen" thing.

Jinx limps over. Dan pets her.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Tie it in with some giveaway, a frying  
pan --

TONY  
One drunken fan, too much liability.

DAN  
Then something less deadly. You're the  
marketing guy, use that gray matter  
between your ears.

Jinx rubs against Tony. Tony pushes her away.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, don't take your shortcomings out on  
her.

Dan sneezes as he picks her up, pretends to listen to her.

DAN (CONT'D)  
(smiles)  
Purrfect...

Jinx squirms around so Dan sets her down.

DAN (CONT'D)  
(to Tony)  
Plastic spatula with a plastic egg.

Tony thinks real hard then his face breaks out with a wide  
grin.

TONY  
It'll get the fans involved and maybe  
knock the broad down a peg or two.

He enthusiastically shakes Dan's hand.

TONY (CONT'D)

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

DAN

Thank Jinx.

TONY

(calls to Jinx)

You got the best serving of fresh shrimp  
coming your way.

(to Dan)

You want I give you some credit?

DAN

(shakes his head no)

I still have to play in this league.

EXT. LOCAL BATTING CAGE - DAY

Mechanical pitching machine sends the ball toward Dan.

He pops the first pitch up; sends an easy fly out to  
center; swings through the last one.

Frustrated, he throws his bat on the ground and kicks it,  
grabs his foot in pain.

DAN

Ahh!

JESSIE

Your timing's off.

Jessie refills the pitching machine.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Respect your bat, Calhoun.

Dan picks up his bat.

DAN

Send me a fastball.

Jessie flips on the machine.

JESSIE

She's not gonna tell you what she's  
sending you.

It pitches a curve that Dan swings through.

DAN

Thought you weren't due back till  
tomorrow.

JESSIE

Rain out, so Dutch made lunch plans...

The Machine sends Dan a fastball that he slams down the field.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

...and has two speeding tickets to show for it.

(points to the ball)

B-.

She takes Dan's bat...

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You think too much.

...hits the ball.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

(mimics Dan)

"I gotta slam it out of here..."

She hits another one.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

My average keeps dropping and Cap's all over my ass...

Fouls off another.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Hitting that long ball's the only way I'll get to double A."

Readies herself.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Then you swing your hips out of sync and...

She pops the ball up.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

...or

She swings and whirls around as she connects with air.

Dan laughs.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You got talent Calhoun. I suggest you learn how to use it.

She hands him the bat and walks away.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

And a word of advice, when Cap says bunt, bunt.

As Jessie walks off Dan practices bunting.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Rowdy crowd clangs plastic spatulas with eggs. Three girls (10-13), wearing colorful T-shirts with T-BALL painted across them, dance in front of their seats and cheer along with the crowd.

CROWD

Stay in the kitchen, stay in the kitchen...

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Dan's on second, T-Ball's in the batter's box.

T-Ball hits a seein'-eye single. Dan rounds the bases, stretching this into a double. It's not even close, Dutch signals him out.

Jessie darts between first and second as T-Ball heads there on the throw. Her eyes never leave the base as he slides and is tagged right before his foot touches it.

JESSIE

Out!

T-BALL

Horseshit! I got in under --

JESSIE

One more word and you're out of the game too.

T-Ball looks around then storms off the field.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dan and T-Ball hurry across the lot.

T-BALL

That call was bogus.

DAN

I was out too.

T-BALL

Except you weren't even in the same zip code.

Jessie strolls through the parking lot. T-Ball storms over, Dan in tow.

T-BALL (CONT'D)

What is it with that call?! If it weren't for you we'd have won.

JESSIE

You lost 8 to 2, slugger.

T-BALL

But it started with that horseshit call.

JESSIE

I think it was your lackadaisical running. You should've been there when the ball arrived.

T-BALL

That's bull --

JESSIE

Uh, uh, uh...

Jessie pulls out Haney's Baseball Book of Reference.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

According to this, baseball players are supposed to abstain from the use of profanity and obscenity.

T-BALL

(looks at the book)

This was written in 1867!

JESSIE

I'm pretty sure the rules still apply.

Dan chuckles. Jessie just turns and walks away.

T-BALL

Big mistake having girl Blues.

DAN

Rookie's usually --

Jessie whirls back to Dan.

JESSIE  
Is this about you?

DAN  
Uh, no...

JESSIE  
Then shut up.

Jessie smiles at T-Ball and pats him on the shoulder.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
And remember slugger, it's a long season  
and this girl's umping a fair amount of  
your games.

As Jessie leaves them.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
(to T-Ball)  
You have a real good evening.

T-Ball has a confused look on his face.

T-BALL  
Wanna grab a beer?

DAN  
Ahh...

He turns to Dan in time to see his eyes following Jessie.

DAN (CONT'D)  
...Sure.

EXT. TRIPLE PLAY BAR - NIGHT

A cab parks near the entrance, lets its passengers out.

As they walk in Dan staggers out. Jessie calls from  
around the side.

JESSIE  
Calhoun!

Dan jerks around, loses his balance and plops on the  
ground.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
What was that horseshit back there?

DAN  
Guess the language rule only applies to  
players.



Jessie walks over.

JESSIE  
What were you thinking?

DAN  
Was defending you.

JESSIE  
Don't! He doesn't know I've been helping  
you, does he?

Dan smiles his drunken smile as he shakes his head no.

Jessie reaches down to help him up.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
What, none of your girls around tonight?

Dan pulls her down...

DAN  
I left T-Ball to them.

...puts his arm around her.

DAN (CONT'D)  
How 'bout you being the girl I grab a  
drink with?

JESSIE  
(shakes her head no)  
But I'll taxi you home. A DUI won't get  
you more playing time.

Dan gets on top of her, slobbering all over.

DAN  
Better, we'll shoot some tequila...

Jessie pushes him off.

JESSIE  
Jesus!

She jumps up.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
We're just friends, really not even...

DAN  
(drunken laugh)  
Play your cards right and we can add a  
few benefits to that.

Jessie storms over to the cab, points to Dan then leaves.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Dark. Practically empty. Jessie peeks in, carries a squirming Jinx to a locker. Jinx rubs her face and paws over everything.

JESSIE

Good girl.

T-Ball watches from another aisle.

Dan walks through the locker room.

DAN

Jess, where are you?

Jessie turns toward Dan, Jinx scurries to a welcoming T-Ball.

DAN (CONT'D)

Ah, just as I thought.

(sneezes)

Here to apologize?

Jessie hurries out, Dan on her heels.

JESSIE

I see you made it home safely.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

DAN

(sarcastic laugh)

Woke up half a mile from it, face down on a Great Dane's dumping zone. So, what time for the batting cage?

JESSIE

You've gotta be kidding.

Two Minor League Groupie Women (19-20) dressed in skin tight souvenir T-shirts, walk in. Dan's head turns toward them.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

I'm not up to being another one of your conquests.

Dan quickly turns back.

DAN

That's not --

The Groupies giggle, Dan looks again.

JESSIE

Go.

He looks between Jessie and the Groupies then takes a cocky stride toward them.

DAN

Hello ladies...

Jessie stalks furiously back to the locker room.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

T-Ball pets and rubs Jinx's belly.

Jessie walks through the locker room.

T-BALL

Who's the cutest little fur face...who's  
the cutest little fur face...

JESSIE

Jinx...Jinx...

Jinx licks T-Ball.

T-BALL

You're the cutest little fur --

Jessie turns down an aisle and runs into T-Ball and Jinx.

JESSIE

Ji --

They stare at each other for a beat then quickly go in opposite directions. Jessie suddenly remembers and turns back for the cat but...

T-BALL

(scoops Jinx up)

Come on Jinxy, it's time for your morning  
treat.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

Dan slides into third, his hand touches the bag before the ball gets there. Jessie signals him out.

DAN

Are you blind or something?!

Jessie and Dan inch toward each other.

JESSIE  
Nope and you're out.

DAN  
Thought your calls are never personal.

JESSIE  
In my professional opinion you are out.  
Now cut the horseshit and get back to  
your dugout.

They are nose-to-nose.

DAN  
Or what, Rookie?

Jessie clenches her fists and teeth to control her temper  
and signals him ejected.

JESSIE  
You get your ass out of here now.

The Crowd BOOS and CLANGS the spatulas.

Dan looks at Dutch for help. Dutch turns away.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
You wanna be fined too?

Dan storms off. Jessie calms down by taking deep breaths  
and slowly walks back to her position.

Spatulas are tossed on the field in her direction. She  
ducks to avoid getting hit by one.

Bat boys and girls run around picking them up.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Now folks, you know the rules. Anyone  
caught throwing objects onto the field  
will be kicked out no matter how much of  
a horse hockey call that was.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

A Thirtysomething man dressed in a ill-fitting suit  
watches Jessie and takes notes.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Jessie, still pissed, half dressed, changes.

KNOCK. Jessie ignores this but the knocking continues.

JESSIE

What?!

Lu walks in.

LU

I taught you better than to answer like that.

Jessie hugs her.

JESSIE

Oh shit, way to surprise me.

LU

Judging by your performance maybe that wasn't such a good idea.

Lu walks into the stall, closes the door.

LU (O.S) (CONT'D)

Having an off day?

Sound of unzipping pants then peeing.

LU (O.S) (CONT'D)

Making that amateur call, losing your cool...

JESSIE

I didn't --

LU (O.S)

What's going on with you and that boy?

Dutch swings the door open.

DUTCH

You really screwed the pooch on that, he was safe and both of you out of line.

Dutch throws her cap on the ground.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Get a cap that fits...

Lu walks out of the stall. Dutch turns away in embarrassment.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Mrs. Rookie?

Lu nods and signals for him to continue.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Ah...and work on your signals, you look like a spaz.

Tosses Jessie some papers.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Your fu -- screw ups. Study them and be here 6 AM, we're off on a three week road trip.

(to Lu)

Nice meetin' you.

LU

Likewise.

Dutch leaves.

Lu holds her hands out and Jessie reluctantly gives her the papers. Jessie finishes dressing as Lu reads them.

LU (CONT'D)

He's right...about everything.

Jessie and Lu walk out of the bathroom.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They walk through the lot.

LU

You still haven't answered my question.

They stop in front of Jessie's car which has multi colored paint stains all over it.

JESSIE

I haven't exactly been accepted.

LU

First day on the job I took my tool belt off and they nailed it to the deck, next day, blue dye in my gloves.

(hugs Jessie)

It's hard enough without...

EXT. BERNIE POLLOCK CEMETERY - NIGHT

Jessie stands opposite Lu, mirroring her as they both run through umpire signals. Jessie is much more awkward and out of sync.

JESSIE

He's nothing, he's nobody!

LU

Concentrate.

JESSIE

I hardly know him.

LU

You don't lose it like that over a nobody. And if that's it, fine.

Lu stops doing signals and stops Jessie as well.

LU (CONT'D)

'Cause after watching you I'm not sure you're ready for this, for how hard it'll be, how it'll consume...

INT. JESSIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark, messy room with an unmade folded out double sofa bed and a kitchen table.

The only neat part of the apartment is a makeshift baseball shrine on the table: A tattered baseball, old Oakland A's cap, Roberto Clemente and Jackie Robinson baseball cards and a picture of Lu and little Jessie at the Oakland A's game.

Tab cans, junk food wrappers, dirty dishes, clothes and papers scattered all over the floor

Jessie turns on a dim light as they walk in. They both get ready for bed.

Lu looks at the picture of her and Jessie.

LU

Go back, finish college, date nice boys, have a normal life.

JESSIE

Like yours...

Lu puts her arm around Jessie.

LU

You're not near ready yet.

Jessie shakes Lu off.

LU (CONT'D)

And I'm not sure you're willing to give up what you have to.

JESSIE  
Why, 'cause I lost it in one game?

LU  
Have you slept with him?

JESSIE  
No!

Lu lies down on one side of the bed.

LU  
Do you want to?

Jessie doesn't say anything just pops open a Tab can.

JESSIE  
Why won't you back me on this?

LU  
I have baby girl, all my life. I just  
know how hard it is...

JESSIE  
I'm not you! Just because you gave up,  
didn't have the guts --

Lu looks like she's been verbally slapped.

LU  
Been holding onto that for awhile have,  
you?

Jessie turns away.

LU (CONT'D)  
Remember, one major curveball was thrown  
my way on that.

Jessie downs the rest of her Tab.

JESSIE  
That's a handy excuse.

She flips the lights off and climbs into bed, turns on her  
side away from Lu.

LU  
I'm hitting the road real early tomorrow,  
probably won't see you before I cut out.

JESSIE  
Then I'll see you when I see you.



## INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Senior Vice President of Baseball Operations for Major League Baseball, KIM NG.

KIM NG

I'm currently Senior VP of Baseball Operations for the MLB. It's been said I'm the most powerful woman in the game, but frankly I'm just doing my job. I've been the Assistant General Manager for the Dodgers as well as tenured with the Yankees, American League and the White Sox. I love baseball. More importantly, I know it...I have this knack for spotting and locking up the best talent. During the past few years I've been considered for general manager positions with the Angels and Padres. Didn't get those but mark my words, it's only a matter of time.

EXT. CHARLESTON RIVERDOGS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Bottom of 7th inning. Fans hold spatulas with plastic eggs. Jessie sweeps off home plate.

Charlie T. Riverdog, the team mascot, two spatulas in hand, shadows her. He waves the spatulas all around her. Fans' laughter mixed with clanging spatulas.

Charlie T. waves the spatulas very close, not quite touching her until...

Jessie abruptly turns around and he accidentally swats her. He makes apologetic, dog like whimpers.

Belly laughs from the crowd.

Jessie holds her hands out and he surrenders his spatulas. Fans moan.

He looks at the fans then grabs Jessie and gives her a cuddly hug.

Fans, players and managers alike, laugh hysterically.

Jessie's face turns red. She points Charlie T. toward the exit and signals him ejected.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Small, cramped, dirty room. Loud lovemaking sounds from the room next door.

Jessie POUNDS on the wall, the sounds get louder.

Jessie sits on the bed, looking very small and lonely.  
She dials her phone.

JESSIE

Dutch, I just ordered a pizza, you  
wouldn't want -- Oh. See you tomorrow.

Jessie pulls out Haney's Baseball Book of Reference but  
instead of reading it swats away flying bugs.

KNOCK.

She opens the door and a PIZZA DELIVERY GIRL hands her a  
pizza.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Finally.

Jessie fishes a \$20 bill out of her pocket.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Keep the change.

PIZZA DELIVERY GIRL

It's \$21.52

A slightly embarrassed Jessie hands her a five dollar bill  
as well.

JESSIE

Now, keep the change.

Jessie opens the box...

PIZZA DELIVERY GIRL

I upgraded you.

A spatula shaped pizza with "STAY IN THE KITCHEN" scrawled  
on pizza box lid.

The pizza delivery girl snickers as she heads down the  
hall.

Jessie clicks a number on her cell.

LU (V.O.)

(over cellphone)

Sorry I missed you but I'm probably out  
working on a bridge. You know the drill.

Jessie disconnects. She lifelessly eats a piece of the pie and sinks to the floor as the lovemaking sounds escalate.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dutch, dressed casual, eats dinner with COLBY GAINS (50s), uptight, suit wearing. Dutch enjoys a trio of lobster, Colby picks at a salad and looks enviously at Dutch.

DUTCH

Try some...  
(makes a hand signal)  
...it's magnifique!

COLBY

The wife says I've put on a few pounds.

DUTCH

Mine too.

Dutch waves a piece of lobster in front of him.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

But since they're not here...

Colby takes a bite and has a very pleased look on his face. He eats off of Dutch's plate.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Hey...

Dutch signals to the waiter to bring another serving.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

So what doya want to jaw about?

COLBY

This experiment of yours. Don't get me wrong, we give you a lot of credit for initiative, it's gonna take you far.

Dutch eats a piece of lobster and nods appreciatively.

COLBY (CONT'D)

But you also have to know when to throw in the towel. We think that maybe the time's not right, or maybe it's the girl.

DUTCH

Granted she's a little green but that I'll fix.

COLBY

Gerard was at that Asheville game. It was an embarrassment.

DUTCH

One that won't happen again.

COLBY

It shouldn't have happened in the first place.

(scarfs a mouthful of  
lobster)

And where's my payoff? You promised great press. What little there is, is not so great.

DUTCH

If your guys did their job and spun it right it would be.

Second lobster dinner arrives, Dutch starts on it.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

This can work out for you, all I need is a little more time.

COLBY

It's not just me.

DUTCH

Don't you wanna be in baseball history?

Colby's finished his lobster so he jabs his fork onto Dutch's plate for more.

COLBY

For what, lowering the standards.

Dutch moves the plate out of Colby's reach.

COLBY (CONT'D)

Hey!

Dutch guards the food.

DUTCH

Climb down off that perch of yours and watch her, she can go all the way. It took Wilson two and a half years to get his footing and you didn't bounce him.

COLBY

You're not getting two and a half years!

DUTCH

We all know what forced your hand in bringing her up. You want that to be the lead story?

Colby looks between Dutch and the food.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

All I want is two more months.

Dutch stops guarding the plate and Colby takes a piece of lobster.

COLBY

Hell, it's your career.

Dutch pushes the food in front of Colby who digs in.

COLBY (CONT'D)

But if --

DUTCH

-- I'll can her ass myself.

Dutch signals the waiter.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

(to the Waiter)

Two chocolate souffles.

(to Colby)

I won't tell the wife about that either.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS' DUGOUT - NIGHT

Players, Coaches and a large Bat Dog wearing an Asheville Tourist's T-shirt and carrying bats in his mouth to the players.

Dan skims the lineup card.

DAN

Hey Cap, who's this Guzman clown starting in my place?

CAP

Some kid from Venezuela the big club's hot for.

(downs a cup of water)

Guzman!

An excited NELSON GUZMAN (19), wearing a low riding, uniform and oversized cap, rushes over.

CAP (CONT'D)

Guzman, Calhoun...Calhoun, Guzman. You guys are platooning.

DAN  
Platooning!?

GUZMAN  
I start every game!

CAP (CONT'D)

(to Dan)

Your hitting against lefties is horseshit.

(to Guzman)

You need seasoning.

(to Dan)

I expect you to help with that.

Cap walks away. Dan and Guzman stare each other down. The Bat Dog walks over to Dan.

DAN

Not playing today.

The dog turns to Guzman and drops the bat in front of him.

GUZMAN

I guess you're my Obi-Wan. You know, Star Wars, he show Luke the ropes. So Obi, where do we drink around here?

DAN

Let's get you through the game first.

Dan plucks Guzman's uniform.

DAN (CONT'D)

And a better fitting uniform.

GUZMAN

It's me style.

DAN

On the field Cap likes us all to have the same style.

Guzman points to T-Ball.

GUZMAN

The best thing about coming here...best in league, soon be gone. My brother coach in Triple A, much talk.

Guzman chews a wad of tobacco, offer some to Dan.

DAN  
 (chewing tobacco)  
 Chatter about anyone else?

GUZMAN  
 (shakes his head no)  
 The blue girl here?

DAN  
 On the road.

GUZMAN  
 She as much trouble as they say?

Dan nods.

GUZMAN (CONT'D)  
 Haven't had a firebrand in long time.  
 She give it to me...

Guzman makes lewd gestures.

GUZMAN (CONT'D)  
 I return it in triples.

Dan spits the tobacco at Guzman.

DAN  
 Cut the horseshit and get yourself in  
 gear and your head in the game. You're  
 starting today.

Guzman looks confused.

DAN (CONT'D)  
 And don't ever show up dressed like some  
 low rider again.

Guzman doesn't move.

DAN (CONT'D)  
 Go!

Guzman grabs a mitt and hurries over to some of the  
 players. Dan slumps on the bench.

EXT. SAVANNAH SAND GNATS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Sign: FREE BEER AND SPATULA NIGHT

This 4,000 seat stadium's two-thirds full of drunken rowdy  
 fans hanging over the barriers.

EXT. SAVANNAH SAND GNATS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Jessie, covering the field, smiles warmly up at a matronly woman in the stands until she waves a "Stay in the Kitchen" sign with one hand and clangs her spatula with the other.

Savannah runner's on 2nd. The ball's scorched down the right field line.

The fans cheer and clang feverishly as the runner takes off at full speed.

Jessie quickly signals the batter/runner safe at first, shadows the runner as he darts past third toward home. He misses touching the bag.

EXT. HOME PLATE - NIGHT

The runner slides and the catcher swipes.

DUTCH

Safe!

The catcher looks at the manager who points so he throws the ball to the third baseman...

EXT. THIRD BASE - NIGHT

...who steps on the bag.

JESSIE

Out!

CROWD

What?! The broad's crazy, doesn't know the game!

Jessie motions that the runner missed third.

EXT. HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Dutch glances between Jessie and the angry crowd then nervously changes the call.

The runner explodes but before he can act...

EXT. STANDS - NIGHT

The fans go wild and hurl spatulas onto the field in both Jessie and Dutch's directions.



CROWD

You Bitch!/You're an ass, the call went  
my way!/Get her!/Traitor!

Fights break out in the stands.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Rabid fans climb onto the field. Dutch hurries to safety  
the moment trouble starts.

Jessie skips around and ducks flying spatulas as she runs  
off the field.

A SHERIFF and 2 DEPUTIES block fans from getting to her.

EXT. UMPIRE LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The Sheriff and Deputies escort Jessie.

SHERIFF

(southern drawl)

Haven't had an umpire killed on my watch  
yet. You got two minutes to gather your  
partner, we'll get you outta here in one  
piece.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jessie's car and two police cars pull next to a highway  
sign. The sign reads:

HOPED YOU ENJOYED SAVANNAH; Y'ALL COME BACK SOON.

The Sheriff leans into Jessie's window, points to the  
sign.

SHERIFF

That doesn't apply to you, lil' girl.

Dutch sticks his hand out and shakes the Sheriff's hand.

DUTCH

I'll see to that.

SHERIFF

You know honey, that was the biggest crap  
call I've ever seen. You just don't have  
the...goods to be doin' this.

Jessie opens her mouth to respond but he taps the car's  
hood and points them down the road.

EXT. AUGUSTA GREENJACKETS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jessie hurries toward her car. Dutch saunters behind, eating Cracker Jack.

JESSIE

You ever plan on backing me up, Guthrie was gonna rip my head off.

DUTCH

You being in this league is backing enough. Anyway, how else you gonna grow a couple --

Jessie stops. Dutch walks into her.

Jessie's car, still multi-colored, now has two slashed tires, a spatula etched into one side and STAY IN THE KITCHEN painted on the other.

Jessie tries maintaining control...

JESSIE

My c..car, my baby...

...but can't. She fast walks around as her anger builds.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

I spent two and a half years working at a lousy burger joint to pay for her and Lu still had to kick in some.

(points to her trashed car)

This ever happen to you?

He opens his mouth but she doesn't let him answer.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Course not, you're a guy!

She kicks someone else's car. Alarm BLARES.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

All I'm trying to do is the best job I can, make the calls the way they are, right?!

Dutch nervously nods.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

And this is the thanks I get.

DUTCH

There's no thanks in umpiring.

JESSIE

What!?

DUTCH

(slowly)

There's no thanks in umpiring.

Jessie stares at him then breaks into uncontrollable laughter. Dutch continues scarfing his Cracker Jack.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

I know this mechanic, I'll have him here first thing in the morning.

(hands her the Cracker Jack)

This always puts Joyce in a better mood when she's hit with one of her crying jags. Happens a couple of times a month, what's that about?

JESSIE

(eats Cracker Jack)

Probably you.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Jessie's trashed car chugs along.

INT. JESSIE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

A calm, determined Jessie drives.

DUTCH

They got a couple of amateurs fillin' in so I figure we take the scenic route, stop at this local ice cream joint --

JESSIE

Is food all you ever think about?

DUTCH

That and baseball...and the wife.

JESSIE

If we don't stop for anything but gas we'll be there by game time.

(points to the back seat)

Food to eat, bucket to pee.

Dutch looks at the food and bucket that are buried under or surrounded by pieces of paper and Tab cans.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - GROUNDS - DAY

Jessie and Dutch run through the stadium.

JESSIE  
Told you. Even got --  
(looks at her watch)  
-- twenty-five to spare.

Dutch tears into the bathroom.

Jessie, slightly out-of-breath sinks to the ground.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
Ya should've used the bucket you wuss.

Dan walks toward the locker room skimming a newspaper.  
The moment he sees Jessie his face lights up.

DAN  
Jess...  
(tosses her the paper)  
Looks like you had a fun road trip.

CLOSE ON SPORT'S SECTION. Pictures of Jessie showered  
with recipes, spatulas and ejecting Charlie T. Riverdog.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Thought maybe we could grab a bite and  
you could tell me all about --

She throws the paper back at him then jumps up and hurries  
into her women's bathroom.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Bored, "young pup" Reporter, CAL WORLEY, smokes and paces  
impatiently around home.

An annoyed Jessie with Dutch beside her walks over from  
right field.

JESSIE  
Why me?

DUTCH  
The league wants the publicity and you're  
the hot story.

JESSIE  
What about what I want?

Cal spits his cigarette onto home plate.

DUTCH  
Don't worry, I'm your wingman.

Jessie pulls Dutch over to Cal. She picks the cigarette up and, as she shakes Cal's hand...

JESSIE

Jessie Stiles.

...deposits the butt in his palm. Cal, shuffles around, embarrassed and slides the cigarette into his pocket

CAL

Cal Worley.

Dutch vigorously shakes Cal's hand.

DUTCH

And I'm Dutch Boylan, the lead umpire.

LATER

CAL

Is this what you always wanted to do?

JESSIE

Uh huh.

CAL

(mutters)

Guess your father wanted a boy...

Jessie looks at him, anger building. Dutch quickly gets in-between.

DUTCH

Her mother wanted a ballplayer.

CAL

(sarcastic chuckle)

Well, she didn't exactly get that, did she.

(lights up a cigarette)

Any discrimination?

JESSIE

I treat everyone equally.

Boisterous laugh from Dutch.

CAL

I meant against you.

Jessie shakes her head no.

CAL (CONT'D)

Really?

DUTCH

That's 'cause she'll bounce their ass.  
So far Rookie's got the highest ejection  
rate in the league.

CAL

Rookie?

DUTCH

That's her handle.

CAL

Your wife doesn't mind you working with,  
Rookie?

DUTCH

Nah, she's liberated, sort of...

Cal and Dutch walk ahead.

CAL

How do you spell your name again?

DUTCH

Dutch Boylan, B...O...Y...L...A...N.

(to Jessie)

You coming, Rookie?

Jessie trails behind.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

You should've been at our first  
out-of-towner, she kicked a batter out,  
got told to stay in the kitchen and was  
pelted with recipes from the crowd.

EXT. BERNIE POLLOCK CEMETERY - MORNING

Jessie places a bouquet of cigars against the headstone.

JESSIE

Never asked if you like these, Gramps  
does.

She practices signals. Dan, not wearing his cap, watches  
from behind a tree.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Ball! You know, you're the best  
company...Strike! Dutch...Foul!

JESSIE (CONT'D)

And Dan...If the schmuck played with his  
brains and not his dick he'd hit...

She signals home run.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

...instead of...

She signals a strikeout.

DAN

That was off the plate!

Jessie looks at him for a moment then...

JESSIE

Was not.

Dan moves in on her.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Back away Calhoun or you're gone.

Dan bends down, cleans leaves and rubbish off of the  
grave.

DAN

That should've happened the minute I  
questioned the strike.

Jessie channels her anger into her signals.

DAN (CONT'D)

Umpires never hesitate.

He takes out a copy of Haney's Baseball Book of Reference.

DAN (CONT'D)

Page 58.

Dan swings an imaginary bat, his eyes fixated on her. She  
tries looking past him but can't help stealing glances.  
She signals a ball.

JESSIE

Where's your cap?

DAN

Not my good luck charm after all.

She awkwardly signals a strike out.





JESSIE  
This means nothing.

DAN  
Nothing...

JESSIE  
Just for fun.

DAN  
Fun...

JESSIE  
No one can know.

DAN  
No one...

JESSIE  
I mean it.

Dan pulls her into a passionate embrace.

DAN  
I've been wanting this ever since you  
gave me that pink cup and walked away.  
(grabs her ass)  
Made quite an impression.

He lowers her to the ground.

JESSIE  
With me, when you picked Jinx up, didn't  
care about your allergies or anything.

DAN  
I had a cold.

Jessie kisses him.

They roll on top of each other straight into the  
headstone.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Maybe this isn't the right --

JESSIE  
I have a nice place that's not too far.

They jump up. Dan quickly repositions the cigars  
perfectly against the headstone as they run out.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Dan, T-Ball and the rest of the players from the Tourists sit in the dugout, all reading the same book, *Rookie's Recipes*.

Tony walks by.

TONY

Have a good game boys.

PLAYERS

Thanks. Of course we will. Get outta here, you're worse than Jinx!

Dan looks up and Tony gives him an appreciative nod.

Jessie walks toward the plate, the players chuckle. She glances at what they're reading.

JESSIE

Jesus.

T-Ball hands her his book.

T-BALL

Sign it for me, Rookie.

Jessie reluctantly signs the book. She hands it back to T-Ball then all of the players, one at a time, hand her their books.

PLAYERS

Me too. Sign mine. Make it to Stephanie. Geraldine. Claire. Joe.

With each signature the smirks get louder. Before she gets to Dan...

DUTCH

Rookie!

Jessie drops the book she's signing and runs over to him.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Don't ever -- That's just demeaning.

Jessie shuffles around uncomfortably.

JESSIE

Okay...

Dutch looks up to the stands.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Colby scarfs a dog, eyes fixated on Jessie and Dutch.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Dutch looks back at Jessie.

DUTCH

You're behind the plate.

Jessie hurries over to home.

INT. SLEAZY BAR/RESTAURANT - NIGHT

T-Ball, Guzman and two other players, BULL and RED, both very aptly named, finish their drinks.

Jessie walks in and sits at the bar.

JESSIE

(to the bartender)

Burger and a beer, both dark.

All of the players glare at her.

BULL

Guess they'll serve anyone.

RED

But Blues aren't just anyone, especially those with...

Red holds his hands out to indicate tits. He jumps up.

RED (CONT'D)

Come on, the stink's overpowering.

T-BALL

I know this place down the block.

GUZMAN

The one with cheap booze and even cheaper....

Guzman makes curvy and lewd hand motions. An excited Bull gets up, knocking his stool over.

BULL

Lead me.

All of the players except T-Ball head toward the exit.

T-BALL  
I'll settle up, meet you outside.

Guzman purposely bumps into Jessie, almost knocking her off her stool.

JESSIE  
Hey!

He gives her the evil eye as he walks out.

T-Ball slides money to the bartender.

T-BALL  
You okay?

Jessie nods and drinks her beer.

T-BALL (CONT'D)  
He's just young.

JESSIE  
And an arrogant, stupid ass wipe,  
son-of-a --

T-BALL  
Who can pulverize the fast ball.

JESSIE  
Well, sometimes you need a little more.

She holds her beer up to T-Ball in a silent toast.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
I hear congratulations are in order.

T-BALL  
The rumor mill's just working double  
duty.

JESSIE  
Maybe, but it's not always the assholes.

Jessie pulls out a cat toy and pitches it to T-Ball. He makes a showy catch.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
This should drive Jinx crazy.

As T-Ball walks toward the door.

T-BALL  
Which means it'll drive me crazy.

BULL (O.S)

Get your ass out here!

T-BALL

Keep your shorts on!

JESSIE

Ya know if you ever need me to watch Jinx  
when you're on the road --

RED (O.S)

If we hurry they'll be coming off!

T-BALL

You're gone more than me. Anyhow, my  
bro's got so many girls trying to please  
him, they watch her for nothin'.

GUZMAN (O.S)

(in Spanish)

Pieces of ass aching for us.

T-BALL

At least until he clicks with someone a  
little more permanent.

T-Ball shoots her a slight smile and swings the door open.

T-BALL (CONT'D)

Come on boys, there are girls awaiting.

INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

News reporter BRUCE WEBER

BRUCE WEBER

Hell yes Ria Cortesio was treated  
differently. I went out drinking with  
some umpires I was interviewing one night  
and asked about her. I was fined a buck.  
Everytime I mentioned her name I was  
fined. But they were equal opportunity,  
anyone who said the name Ria, was fined.  
Cost me a couple of rounds.

MONTAGE - BASEBALL GAMES

A) EXT. CAPITAL CITY BOMBERS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Jessie flawlessly signals a strikeout. The batter whirls  
around and, with the look of murder in his eyes, rushes at  
her screaming and flailing.

His manager tries unsuccessfully to hold him back. Jessie stubbornly stands her ground.

Dutch jumps in-between. The batter bumps and knocks him on his ass.

Dutch signals the batter ejected. Three of his teammates pull him off the field as Jessie helps Dutch up.

B) EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Dan takes a mighty swing at a ball out of the strike zone. The umpire signals him out. Cap spits out his gum.

C) EXT. HAGERSTOWN SUNS STADIUM - HOME PLATE/FIELD - DAY

The pitch whooshes past the batter, King Kong's right ear. This 6'1", 275 pound man glares at the pitcher who grins and winks.

This enrages King Kong who charges the mound. Jessie blocks him. He stops and gently lifts her.

She eyeballs him, points at the ground then the dugout. He sets her down and sheepishly walks off the field.

D) EXT. SAVANNAH SAND GNATS STADIUM - HOME PLATE/FIELD - DAY

Dan pops the pitch up, stranding men at second and third. Cap crosses a name out on the lineup card.

E) EXT. CAPE FEAR CROCS STADIUM - HOME PLATE/FIELD - NIGHT

Jessie's behind the plate. The ball's pitched.

The batter leans in so it grazes his elbow. He jogs toward first and all of the runners move up and start celebrating until...

Jessie signals that the batter didn't try to get out of the way, the pitch was a ball and no one moves up.

All of the runners and manager converge on her. Tempers rise.

Dutch glances to the stands.

EXT. CAPE FEAR CROCS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Colby, not taking notes, eyes fixated on Jessie, nods approval.

EXT. CAPE FEAR CROCS STADIUM - HOME PLATE/FIELD - NIGHT

Dutch looks back as the argument cools down and everyone returns to their previous spots.

F) INT./EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS DUGOUT - NIGHT

Dan slumps on the bench. A smiling Guzman passes him as he runs to the outfield.

INT. JESSIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

Neatly folded men's clothes on top of an Asheville Tourist duffle bag.

Covers moving up and down on the creaking bed. A moment of quiet then Dan and Jessie pop out from under the covers. Dan's arms around Jessie holding her close.

DAN

I love you...

Her eyes pop open as she jerks away.

DAN (CONT'D)

...surprising me like this.

She relaxes.

JESSIE

I think we both needed this pick me up.

DAN

(kisses her)

How 'bout goin' for a twin killing?

Jessie rolls out of bed and walks around the apartment picking up her clothes and putting them on.

JESSIE

I better get back before Dutch realizes I took this three hour tour.

Dan picks up his neatly folded pants and squirms into them. He grabs Jessie.

DAN

This sneaking around is so...dirty...

JESSIE

T-Ball doesn't know, does he?

Dan rapidly shakes his head no. Jessie finishes dressing.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
'Cause he said something...

DAN  
He doesn't.

She picks up a Tab can and downs what little's left.

DAN (CONT'D)  
But if he did it wouldn't matter, he's  
safe.

Dan follows Jessie, cleaning up the mess as she drinks  
remnants of many near empty Tab cans.

JESSIE  
If he does...

Jessie makes an "it's over" signal.

Dan, his hands full of some of her trash, shakes an empty  
Tab can at her.

DAN  
You know you're an addict when...

Jessie finishes another can.

JESSIE  
I'm serious.

Dan shoots her a "don't worry" smile and holds out the  
trash bin for her to drop the can in.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
You know you're anal when...

DAN  
Stay.

JESSIE  
I can't.

DAN  
But today's my off day.

JESSIE  
(kisses him)  
Not mine.

She heads toward the door.



JESSIE (CONT'D)

But if you want, the bathroom can use a good scrubbing.

Dan pulls out cleanser from his duffle bag. She shakes her head as she walks out.

Dan heads toward the bathroom, picks up one of the papers en route. As he reads it...

DAN

What the --

He quickly collects and reads others and a concerned look crosses his face.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Empty field and stadium. T-Ball sits at the center of it, plays with Jinx while talking on his cell phone.

T-BALL

Caps's p.o.'d, thinks you're slacking off.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The ball catches a lot of the plate and the batter takes full advantage

Mixture of cheers and groans as he stretches this single into a double.

Jessie, positioned between second and third, sees that he beat the ball on this close play and signals safe.

CROWD

No! You're blind?! He's out, my grandmother could've seen that!

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Dan fidgets around as he talks on his cell phone and watches the game.

DAN

Tell him I've got it -- You know, it's not your worry, I'll catch him before tomorrow's game.

A large, hot dog scarfing, beer guzzling BRUISER, lumbers down the row in front of Dan.

Sounds of action on the field. The fans groan.

BRUISER  
Stay in the kitchen lesbo!

Dan glares at the guy then goes back to his cell.

DAN  
Sorry, it's just that --

Bruiser plops down, stretches over 3 seats and blocks Dan's view. Dan leans far right then left but all he sees is the back of Bruiser's head.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, I'm trying to watch!

Bruiser turns around, slopping beer onto Dan.

BRUISER  
And I'm aimin' to get a look at the Dyke.

Dan struggles to hold his temper...

DAN  
(into his cell)  
I'm still here.

BRUISER  
Though a skirt with moves like that can't really be one, she's just aching for the right guy to fill her tank. And I'll be applying after the game.

...but can't. Dan clocks him then leaps on top and pounds away. His phone clanks to the ground.

T-BALL (V.O.)  
(from the cell phone)  
Hey bro, you still there...

As other fans and security guards pull him off an unconscious Bruiser...

T-BALL (V.O.)  
(from the cell phone)  
Dan...Dan...

INT. STADIUM - DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quiet, no crowd or game sounds.

T-Ball and TED, the stick-up-his-ass security guard, walk down the hallway toward the storage room.

T-BALL

Come on...

(looks at his name tag)

...Ted, let me take charge of him.

TED

He caused such a ruckus, took three of us to pull him off.

T-BALL

Do you really want to spend the rest of the night doing paperwork?

TED

Just part of the job.

T-BALL

But it'll also earn you a black mark around the league with all the players.

T-Ball puts his arm around Ted in a friendly manner.

T-BALL (CONT'D)

Now, helping me out will do just the opposite, and I'll owe you...

Ted stops walking.

T-BALL (CONT'D)

Big time.

Ted signals for him to continue.

T-BALL (CONT'D)

How'd you like championship tickets to every game I ever play in, and there will be plenty.

TED

Even if you make it to the show.

T-BALL

'Specially when I make it to the show.

TED

You've got twenty before our next round.

T-Ball pumps his hand.

TED (CONT'D)

Make sure him and his friend are gone by then.

Ted walks away.

T-BALL

Friend?

T-Ball heads into the storage room.

INT. STADIUM - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Dark, dank, cluttered with boxes.

A bruised, slightly worse for wear Dan, slumps on the ground with a SCRAGGLY DRUNK (early 20s), passed out against him.

T-BALL

Hey...

DAN

(brief smile)

Thanks. I'm so glad you --

Jessie walks in.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

JESSIE

(points to the drunk)

Friend of yours?

DAN

He tried to help.

JESSIE

(to T-Ball)

Could you give us a few. And pour him into a cab.

T-Ball rouses the drunk.

SCRAGGLY DRUNK

You should've seen him...BAM! One shot the guy was down.

As they leave...

T-BALL

A cup of black coffee's in order for you my man, then you can tell me all about it.

JESSIE

Guess T-Ball does know.

Jessie takes out a tissue and roughly cleans Dan's face.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
What the Hell were you thinking?

DAN  
Ouch! I was defending you.

JESSIE  
I don't need you --

DAN  
You didn't hear what he said.

JESSIE  
I've heard it, believe me, in every  
park --

Dan shoves a piece of paper at her.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
You knew I was getting these, I told you  
that first day.

DAN  
Didn't matter then.

JESSIE  
It doesn't matter now!

Hands her another piece of paper.

DAN  
And I didn't think it was like this, this  
is --

Jessie crinkles the paper and throws it on the ground.

JESSIE  
A worthless piece of paper from a  
worthless piece of shit.

Shoves a bunch of papers at her.

Jessie crumples all the papers and trashes them.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
One, ten, a hundred, doesn't matter.

DAN  
It does to me.

JESSIE  
What you gonna do, pound 'em all?

DAN

One by one if I have to.

JESSIE

Yeah, that'll make things easier.

Jessie dabs the tissue around his face.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

God, he did a job on you.

DAN

That was from the security guards.  
That bruiser never even landed a blow...  
(imitates punching)  
I laid him out. You'd 've been proud.

JESSIE

I'd be a little more concerned about my  
swing if I were you.

DAN

Nope, gotta have priorities and right now  
you're it.  
(kisses her hand)  
Things like this are driving me crazy I  
love you so --

Jessie yanks her hand back.

DAN (CONT'D)

I know this isn't exactly the time...

JESSIE

No time is the time.

T-BALL (O.S)

Hurry bro, the car's humming and ready to  
go.

DAN

I'm sorry I feel how I feel but --

Dan moves in for a kiss.

DAN (CONT'D)

Ya know, I'm not sorry...

Jessie turns her head.

JESSIE

We agreed!

T-Ball sticks his head in.

DAN  
One minute.

JESSIE  
I can't have this now.

DAN  
Jess --

Jessie pushes Dan to the exit.

JESSIE  
(to T-Ball)  
Get him out of here.

Dan looks upset and confused. T-Ball throws his arm around him as they walk out.

INT. STADIUM - DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

T-Ball leads Dan down the hallway.

T-BALL  
You've had a rough night. I'll drive,  
you sleep.

INT. STADIUM - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Jessie fast paces then slumps down and shifts around nervously.

JESSIE  
What the hell am I doing?

TED  
Exactly what I was wondering.

Ted walks into the storage room.

JESSIE  
Uh...writing my report.

TED  
Well, do it somewhere else, we're locking  
up.

Ted ushers Jessie out the door.

INT. STADIUM - DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Jessie walks down the hallway Ted pulls out a pad and scribbles in it.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS - UMPIRE OFFICE - DAY

A small cubicle with a table for a desk and two folding chairs.

Dutch fills out paperwork. Jessie sticks her head in.

JESSIE

Am I workin' the plate or field tonight?

Dutch looks up.

DUTCH

I don't know, are you?

JESSIE

It's your call but I'd say my work on the bases is getting better and --

Dutch points her to the other chair, tosses her a fax.

DUTCH

Enjoy your time Hickory?

Jessie glances at the fax.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Are you really serious about this, 'cause if you're not...

JESSIE

Never more! Knew it was what I was meant to do since I was yay high.

DUTCH

(points to the fax)

According to that there was a drunken ballplayer when he left and you when he returned.

JESSIE

I was just holing up in a quiet place doing my report, lost track of the time.

DUTCH

So there's nothing going on with you and that ballplayer?

JESSIE

What player?!

DUTCH

I've invested a lot Rookie, and if you're lyin'...



JESSIE  
 (mouths)  
 Never.

Dutch points her to the door.

DUTCH  
 You're workin' the field.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jessie stands to the side, a worried look written all over her face. A LITTLE GIRL (8-10), baseball in hand, walks over.

LITTLE GIRL  
 You Rookie?

Jessie smiles and nods. The little girl hands her the baseball.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)  
 Sign this pleese!

As Jessie signs the ball.

JESSIE  
 You a baseball fan?

LITTLE GIRL  
 Yes!

JESSIE  
 So who's your favorite team?

LITTLE GIRL  
 The Tourists!

Jessie hands the ball back to her.

JESSIE  
 You gonna play for them when you get older?

LITTLE GIRL  
 No, basketball.

She runs over to a group of men standing within earshot of Jessie.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)  
 Thank you!

The little girl hands the ball to a man.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

I got it daddy, I got it!

Jessie has a pleased look on her face until...

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

What's an anomaly?

All of the men point at Jessie and burst into laughter.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS - DUGOUT - NIGHT

CAP

Calhoun, you're hitting for Guzman.

As Dan runs by...

CAP (CONT'D)

You wanna get back in my good graces,  
bring T-Ball home.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

T-Ball dances around second base. CRACK!

He's off with the sound as the ball flies down the left field line. It's a no-doubter that the ball's going out.

The ball goes over the wall, just barely on the wrong side of the foul pole. Jessie's positioned perfectly.

T-Ball passes 3rd on his way home and Dan goes into his home run trot when Jessie signals...

JESSIE

Foul!

Dan stops abruptly and hurries over.

DAN

That ball was out of here!

Jessie physically displays where the ball went out.

JESSIE

Yep, on the wrong side.

Dan closes in on her so Cap rushes over to act as a buffer.

DAN

It was fair!

Jessie shakes her head no.

DAN (CONT'D)  
(points to Dutch)  
A smart umpire asks for help.

JESSIE  
A smart umpire is sure of her calls.

Jessie turns and walks away.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
(to Cap)  
Get him back to the plate.

DAN  
I'm not finished with you, Rookie!  
Cap tries pulling him away.

CAP  
Yes, you are.  
Dan shakes him off.

DAN  
Your call was dead wrong.  
Jessie gets in his face.

JESSIE  
You wanna finish this?

DAN  
Yeah.

JESSIE  
Well my call was right. And you've got  
your wish, you're finished, at least for  
this game.

Cap and the first base coach pull Dan off the field.

CAP  
(softly in Dan's ear)  
Twenty ticks after the game, my office.

Dan walks toward the locker room. Cap signals and another  
player steps into the batter's box.

INT. CAP'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dan pokes his head in.

DAN  
I'm sorry Cap...

Cap points Dan to a chair and closes the door.

DAN (CONT'D)

It wasn't me, I was safe and she was --

CAP

-- a bitch. Normally I'd agree but in this case she was right. And your behavior, out of line.

DAN

I promise nothing like that 'll happen again.

CAP

I can guarantee it won't, not here anyway. When we drafted you we had high hopes, sometime things just don't work out...

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dan carrying two loaded boxes hurries across the lot. Tony rushes over.

TONY

Glad I caught you, I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am.

DAN

It just happened, how do you --

Tony smiles and takes one of the boxes, walks with Dan.

DAN (CONT'D)

Know anyone looking for a center fielder?

TONY

I'll make a few calls. But ya know, we could use you.

Dan stops and looks at him.

TONY (CONT'D)

In marketing. You're a natural.

DAN

The only thing I'm a natural at is baseball.

Dan continues walking. Tony hurries after him.

TONY

Then consider it a temporary solution.

They get to Dan's car.

DAN

Thanks but I'm sure I'll be picked up in no time.

As Tony puts the box in Dan's trunk.

TONY

Probably. Just know you've got other options.

Tony pats Dan on the back and walks away.

EXT. BERNIE POLLOCK CEMETERY - NIGHT

Dan runs around looking.

DAN

Jess...Jess...Jessie!

He stops and scopes the empty cemetery.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Nearly empty, dive. Jessie sits alone at the bar, drinking.

PETE, wearing a sparkled, flashy, "one night wonder" suit, chain around his neck, drink in hand, sits next to her.

PETE

Mind?

Jessie points to all of the empty stools.

PETE (CONT'D)

I hate drinking alone.

She takes a gander at him, rolls her eyes and continues drinking.

JESSIE

Whatever.

PETE

Rough day?

She answers by moving to the other end of the bar.

Pete moves next to her. As Jessie finishes her drink...

JESSIE

I've had one lousy week and don't want  
any company.

He signals the bartender to refill both of their drinks.

PETE

Too bad, 'cause it looks like that's  
exactly what you need.

EXT. JESSIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jessie and Pete, tangled in a passionate embrace, work  
their way toward her door.

She goes to unlock it as they continue kissing and trips  
over Dan who's lying in front.

DAN

Hey!

Dan jumps up in-between them.

PETE

Boyfriend?

JESSIE

DAN

No.

Yes.

Jessie and Dan glare around Pete at each other. Pete  
shuffles a little uncomfortably.

PETE (CONT'D)

You know, I've got an early meeting so I  
think I'll take off.

Jessie nods, her eyes still on Dan.

PETE (CONT'D)

Who knows, maybe we'll run into each  
other.

Jessie nods again.

PETE (CONT'D)

You know, I never did catch your name.

DAN

And you won't.

Silence.

PETE

Uh, see you.

Pete leaves. Jessie opens her door.

JESSIE  
I'm going to sleep.

DAN  
That seemed to be the last thing on your  
mind a couple of minutes ago.

Dan follows her but Jessie blocks him.

JESSIE  
Now it's the first.

DAN  
What are you so pissed about? If  
anyone's got the right it's me.

Jessie starts to close the door. Dan stops it with his  
arm.

DAN (CONT'D)  
I just want to talk.

Jessie stands in the doorway.

JESSIE  
Okay, but I'm the one doing it. Cutting  
to the chase, too many people know and  
you're not abiding by my rules so we're  
dialing things back.

DAN  
What?!

JESSIE  
People find out, you're a stud, I'm out  
of the game. And that's not gonna  
happen.

As she closes the door.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
We'll see each other on the field, but  
that's it.

Dan stares at the closed door.

DAN  
Don't I get --

Sound of the lock clicking. Dan stands there.

INT. JESSIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jessie sadly leans against the door, listening to Dan's footsteps as he walks away.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

T-Ball and a player from the opposing team hand Jessie lineup cards. She skims them then looks toward the Tourist dugout.

T-BALL

He was cut last night.

T-Ball walks back to the dugout.

Jessie stands there motionless for a moment, then snaps out of it and brushes the plate off.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - DAY

A smiling Dan walks through the gate talking on his cell.

DAN

I'm walking in right now...Surprised me too. I'll call you after.

EXT. HICKORY CRAWDADS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

Tim Joyce watches as Dan hits the ball around the park. An unhappy JERRY GUTHRIE (20s) fields it.

LATER

Jerry slams the ball as Dan fields it in the outfield.

TIM

I've seen enough.  
(nods approvingly)  
Clean up and come to my office.

EXT. TIM JOYCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan, unable to sit still, keeps jumping out of his chair and pacing. Jerry drags himself in and slumps down.

DAN

Thanks for your help man.

Jerry grunts.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'm Dan Calhoun.



JERRY

Jerry Guthrie.

DAN

The number one draft pick of '98, the man who hit over .400 during his college and pioneer league careers, who bookies are taking bets on how soon it'll be before he ends up in the show...

Jerry nods.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hell, with the two of us in the outfield we'll annihilate the other teams, you can bet we're going to post season.

JERRY

We're platooning.

DAN

But you're the type they build teams around.

JERRY

When a blue suggests you check out a player you take their suggestion very seriously, even if it's a Rookie who wears a skirt.

Dan stares at Jerry with a mixture of anger and realization. He gets up and walks out.

DAN

Tell Tim I appreciate the try-out but I've got other fires burning.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - NIGHT

Jessie walks to the entrance gate. Dan calls from around the side.

DAN

Hey, Rookie!

Jessie runs over, pushes him out of sight.

JESSIE

What are you doing? No one's supposed to see us --

DAN  
I'm not a player anymore. And I've  
decided to dial us back to before we ever  
met.

Jessie moves closer to Dan, confused. He backs away.

DAN (CONT'D)  
That stunt you pulled showed your total  
lack of respect for me...

JESSIE  
Dan...

DAN  
And, worse, the game. I can't know  
anyone like that.

Dan walks away.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Wait till you see the kick ass promo I'm  
doing. You're featured predominantly.  
Hell, who do you think thought up the  
spatulas and Rookie's Recipes?

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - NIGHT

Dutch, entering the stadium, watches Dan walk away from a  
visibly upset Jessie.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Jessie drags herself over.

DUTCH  
You're working the plate.

JESSIE  
I'm workin' the bases.

Dutch starts to say something but sees the seriousness on  
her face so he nods in agreement.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

HURRICANE'S ready, ball's pitched. He swings and misses  
but so does the catcher. Hurricane hesitates then amps up  
his speed and darts to first on this passed ball.

EXT. GREENSBORO BATS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

It's a very close play that Jessie's on top of and signals  
out.

HURRICANE

What the --

The MANAGER runs in-between Jessie and Hurricane.

MANAGER

He was safe!

HURRICANE

I beat the ball by at least a second or two.

Jessie stomps on the base.

JESSIE

You're spewing horseshit, you was out by a mile!

BOOS from the stands.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Sloan was here with the ball when Hurricane arrived.

MANAGER

That's a pile of crap, Rookie, he --

Jessie's in his face, spraying as she yells.

JESSIE

Don't ever call me Rookie again! Now get your ass back to the dugout 'cause the game's gonna continue.

MANAGER

Or what, Blue?

JESSIE

(signals)

You're gone!

Jessie backs him off the field.

MANAGER

Why? I didn't call you Rookie.

Hurricane tries to intervene and she ejects and backs him off the field too. The same for the first base coach.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Whoa...looks like the old Rookie's in full style. Cover the little one's eyes and ears, don't want them pickin' up any bad habits.

Jessie starts towards someone in the dugout but Dutch slowly walks over, blocks her and signals "enough."

BOOS, OBSCENITIES and CLANGING spatulas from the Crowd.

INT. UMPIRE LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jessie finishes tying her shoes. Dutch storms over.

DUTCH

You're suspended. Good thing no one from PBOC was here 'cause you'd have given them the excuse.

He hands her a suspension contract and pen. She signs without reading it.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

I sometimes wonder if I put everything on the line for the wrong horse.

She lets the contract float to the ground and walks away.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

What the Hell's going on with you and Calhoun?

Jessie stops and turns around.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

I know everything.

JESSIE

Then you know you have to find a ride back 'cause I'm taking my car.

She walks out.

INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Female ex-umpire, PAM POSTEMA.

PAM POSTEMA

I spent thirteen years in the minor leagues, the only woman ever to make it as far as triple A. If Commissioner Giamatti hadn't died I'm sure I'd have been given my shot at umping in the majors. Who knows, I might've hated being in the spotlight, all my calls scrutinized. Maybe I wasn't good enough. But ya know, it would all be on me, not them.

INT. JESSIE'S CAR - DAY

Early morning.

Jessie sits in her car staring blankly ahead, eyes red, face showing every bit of her struggle to hold it together.

Passenger door opens. Lu, wearing an Oakland A's nightshirt, carrying a can of Tab, slides in.

LU

Thought you could use a morning  
pick-me-up.

JESSIE

Th...thank....  
(tears flow)  
...you...

Lu puts her arms around Jessie as she sobs into her nightshirt.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS - UMPIRE OFFICE - DAY

A worn out Dutch drags himself in, plops on one of the folding chairs and flips the computer on.

As he reads his email...

DUTCH

Get your head out of your ass and back in  
the game, Rookie.

Dutch roughly gets up, knocks the folding chair over as he stalks out.

INT. TRIPLE PLAY BAR - DAY

Dark, near deserted. Baseball pictures and paraphernalia all over.

Dan sits at the bar drinking alone. Empty shot glasses lined up in front of him.

Dutch slides a chair over.

DUTCH

(to the Bartender)  
I'll have what he's having...

Silently counts the shot glasses.

DAN

But not as many. And he'll have another.

Dan finishes his shot.

DUTCH

Ya know Calhoun instead of sharing this drink I should be kicking your ass.

The Bartender sets the shots down.

DAN

Be my guest.

The Bartender backs away waiting for blows to fly. Dutch hesitates then downs his drink instead. Dan slugs his back.

They both slam their glasses on the bar. Dutch signals for another round.

DUTCH

Because of you Rookie's gone.

Overlapping.

DAN

Nothing to do with me. She's just some X chromosome Blue and I'm even less to her.

DUTCH

It sticks in my craw that she's blowing it over some insignificant putz like you.

DAN

I knew it! There is something between the two of you.

DUTCH

Yeah, my gateway to baseball history which you seem to have slammed shut.

The Bartender sets their drinks down. They sip them.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

She's rough but she knows her shit.

DAN

For a girl. Pit her against a guy any day...

(shakes his head no.)

She's always chasing the ball, lacks the instincts we grew up with.

DUTCH

Well you aren't playing anymore, are you?  
 (looks squarely at Dan)  
 And apparently, neither is she. But  
 that's got nothin' to do with how she  
 does her job.

Dan quickly downs his drink.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Rookie may be a little over enthusiastic,  
 seasoning 'll take care of that, but  
 she's rarely wrong.

He leans into Dan, almost threatening.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Except when you're around.

DAN

I wasn't even in that last game --

DUTCH

You're in her head you two bit, moth  
 eaten piece of shit!

Dan signals for another shot, Dutch stops him.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

(to the Bartender)

Burgers for the both of us, medium well

DAN

I like mine --

Dutch shoots him a sharp look that shuts him up.

DUTCH

You've fucked up my plans. I was gonna  
 change umpiring the way Branch Rickey did  
 the game.

Dan looks at him confused. Dutch shakes his head  
 disgusted.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

He only integrated it with Jackie  
 Robinson. Rookie was gonna be my key to  
 that but now --

The burgers come and Dutch scarfs his.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

My appetite's totally off kilter.

Dan pushes his burger over to Dutch. Dutch pushes it back.

DUTCH (CONT'D)

Eat it.

Dan slowly eats the burger.

DAN

You really think she could make it to the show?

As Dutch nods Dan lays his head down on the bar. Dutch looks like he's going to pound Dan's head then changes it to a gentle pat.

DUTCH

(to the Bartender)

Black coffee, strong.

INT. LU'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Modest, not a lot of furniture. The only pictures displayed are of Jessie at many different ages, some current of her umpiring.

Jessie sleeps on the couch in sweats, cover pulled over her head. Tab cans and crumpled paper scattered over the floor.

Lu yanks the blanket off.

JESSIE

Hey!

LU

You plan on moving at all baby girl, it's been three days.

Jessie slowly gets up.

She walks into the kitchen and returns with a can of Tab. Lu hands her a piece of scratch paper.

LU (CONT'D)

He called again.

Jessie crumples it and tosses it on the floor then plops back on the couch.

JESSIE

Think I'll call Alameda J.C. for an application.



LU

How 'bout getting something more  
substantial in that stomach of yours.

Jessie downs her Tab.

JESSIE

Thanks for not -- you know -- You were  
right.

LU

I'm only working half day so maybe we  
grab an early dinner at that hotdog place  
you love...

(makes a face)

And you can tell me whatever you wanna  
tell me.

Jessie, slight smile, slowly nods.

LU (CONT'D)

Take a shower, you're little ripe. And  
get some fresh air, find a pickup  
ballgame to watch.

Jessie shakes her head no. Lu walks to the door, stopping  
to kiss Jessie on the top of her head.

LU (CONT'D)

Then head over to that park you hung out  
at, it always put you in such a good  
mood.

Lu leaves.

Jessie gets up and looks at the pictures on the wall. She  
focuses on a recent one of her working a game.

JESSIE

I'll be damned.

EXT. PARK - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A bunch of 8-10 year old girls awkwardly play baseball.  
One of them is even umpiring the game. A woman, LIZ  
CLYBORN, (20s), spiked colorful hair, sits on a bench  
watching the girls.

Jessie, dragging herself by, stops to watch.

The pitcher, PORTIA, throws the ball over the batter and  
almost hits the little umpire, MADISON, sending her to the  
ground instead.

LIZ  
You okay Madison?

Madison nods as she gets up and brushes herself off.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
You do that again Portia, you'll be the  
dummy in my practice.

Portia, with a wicked smile, tosses the ball up and down.

JESSIE  
You know she's gonna bean someone.

Liz looks at Jessie and breaks into a wide grin.

LIZ  
Jessie Stiles...

JESSIE  
Thought they banned you from here.

LIZ  
They banned us.  
(points to the kids)  
My brood...

Jessie rolls her eyes. Liz laughs.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
My class. I'm a teacher.

Jessie sits down next to Liz.

JESSIE  
How frightening is that.

LIZ  
Tell me about it.

Soft sound of the ball hitting the bat.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
Run...

Sound of a girl running.

JESSIE  
I love you showing these girls how to  
play ball.

LIZ  
Someone had to.

Shows Jessie a picture a one year old being held by a man.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
This one's really mine.

JESSIE  
But that wasn't part of your plan.

LIZ  
Well, after that grunge rock thing  
imploded...  
(looks at the picture again)  
She's my light. They both are.

JESSIE  
Never counted on you for settling down.

LIZ  
Clark was the only one who had the...  
(whispers)  
...balls...  
(louder)  
...to tell me how...  
(whispers)  
....shitty...  
(louder)  
...my songs were. Figured that alone  
earned him a shot.

Liz looks at the kids.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
It's not your turn Faye, it's Mia's.  
(to Jessie)  
Gotta watch 'em every minute. So baby  
girl...

Jessie softly slugs her arm.

LIZ (CONT'D)  
You still hit like a girl.  
(rubs her arm)  
Seeing anyone?

Jessie shifts around uncomfortably.

JESSIE  
You know me, no one really, too busy.

Soft slap of the ball hitting the bat and Mia running.

LIZ  
Really?

JESSIE

And this umpiring thing didn't exactly work out...

LIZ

That's not what I heard, Rookie.

Jessie shoots her a sharp look.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I ran into Lu a couple of months back.

JESSIE

Well things have changed a lot since then. I've disappointed so many, probably her the most.

LIZ

Disappoint Lu...

(shakes her head no)

Not even when she caught us...

(mimes smoking a joint)

Never.

JESSIE

That's because she blamed you.

Liz puts her arm around Jessie who smiles and relaxes while watching the girls.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You might wanna tell the catcher that the runner on first is itching to steal so she better be ready. And your ump is calling everything a ball, even the ones down the middle.

LIZ

Why don't you tell 'em?

Liz pulls Jessie up and over to the girls.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Girls, you've got yourselves a new coach, the one I was telling you about.

GIRLS

The umpire!? How cool! What's the infield fly rule? Show me how to bunt. I only know the ball signal, what's the one for strikes.

JESSIE

Hold on...I'll show you everything in a few but let's get this game on the road again.

Portia tosses the ball up and down, ready to pitch.

PORTIA

Okay, Rookie.

Jessie shoots Liz a dirty look then takes her position behind Madison.

JESSIE

(into the Madison's ear)

That ball comes into the zip code of any one of you girls, I'll show you the ejection signal.

LATER

Liz smiles watching the game, Jessie looks very much at home.

Portia's pitch brushes the batter back. Jessie whispers into Madison's ear.

MADISON

(points to Portia)

Yer out of here.

Madison giggles. Jessie high fives her and the game continues.

Lu steps over to Liz. From the look on her face she's been watching for awhile.

LU

I always knew how much she loved this but --

(gives Liz a little hug)

Thanks.

LIZ

For what?

Lu makes hand motions for Liz not to tell Jessie she was there then walks away.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Flowers lean against Honus's headstone. Lu sits next to it.

LU  
I'm sure you're laughing at us...  
(chuckles)  
She's so much my daughter. I also know  
what she has to do, just hope for once  
she'll listen to me.

Lu places her hand against his headstone.

LU (CONT'D)  
Damn, I wish you were here.

JESSIE  
He is.

Jessie sits down next to Lu.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
What's the change to the plans?

LU  
Thought you might want to see gramps...

Jessie sets a bouquet of cigars next to his headstone.

LU (CONT'D)  
Before you head back.

Jessie looks at her surprised.

LU (CONT'D)  
All your stuffs in my car. I washed your  
clothes, got you a case of Tab and...  
(hands her some money)  
...here's a few bucks so you'll eat.

JESSIE  
It's over.

LU  
Is that you speaking or the crap you've  
been sold. I watched you today.

Lu puts her arms around Jessie.

LU (CONT'D)  
It's the first time in eons I've seen  
that smile in you.

Lu stands, stretches herself.

LU (CONT'D)  
Baby girl, you are the best thing I ever  
did and I have absolutely no regrets.

LU (CONT'D)  
 (kisses Jessie)  
 About anything.

JESSIE  
 But it's too late.

LU  
 You sicked a high power lawyer on them  
 and won. This should be child's play.

Lu pulls Jessie up, gives her a kiss.

LU (CONT'D)  
 I'll back you one thousand percent on  
 whatever you decide but you've gotta do  
 things properly. You owe it to them, you  
 owe it to you.

The two of them walk to their cars.

LU (CONT'D)  
 I didn't raise no quitter.

Lu opens her trunk and they load things into Jessie's car.

INT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS - UMPIRE OFFICE - NIGHT

Jessie sits on the folding chair, fidgets around.

Dutch walks in, sits down and shuffles papers, doesn't  
 acknowledge her.

JESSIE  
 Dutch...

No response.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 I just wanna say how sorry I am for  
 leaving you in Greensboro.  
 (nervous laugh)  
 Looks like you made it home okay.

Dutch stops shuffling the papers, still no response.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 And for not acknowledging my suspension.

Dutch looks up, still no response.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 I know that's the right thing to do.

Dutch turns on his computer.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
And for not coming in, there are things I  
should've finished up.

Dutch reads an email.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
And for sending you that email, I should  
have --

DUTCH  
What email?

JESSIE  
The one where I --

DUTCH  
I never got no email.

JESSIE  
But I sent --

DUTCH  
I never got it.

JESSIE  
But --

DUTCH  
(slowly)  
I didn't get it.

JESSIE  
What about my suspension?

DUTCH  
(points to the door)  
You had the flu. You'll be better  
tomorrow.

Jessie sits there motionless.

DUTCH (CONT'D)  
Leave.

Jessie jumps up and walks to the door.

DUTCH (CONT'D)  
And, Rookie...

Jessie turns back. Dutch clicks his computer off.



DUTCH (CONT'D)

You pull this horseshit again, I will get the email.

Dutch watches as Jessie quickly walks away, a rare smile forms over his face.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jessie, carrying her duffle bag, walks across the lot.

DAN

Jessie...Jessie...Rookie!

Jessie abruptly stops as Dan runs over.

JESSIE

What?!

DAN

I've been trying to reach you for days. I even dug Lu's number up but she said you weren't there, wasn't sure if she was lying or --

JESSIE

What do you want?

DAN

I'm sorry about what I said. Please don't quit, I couldn't take the guilt --

JESSIE

You are so full of yourself.  
(holds up the duffle bag)  
Does this look like someone who's not working? I'm no quitter and if I decide to leave you won't factor into the equation one bit.

They continue walking to the stadium.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Now, I've got a game to call.

Jinx comes over and rubs against both of them. Dan pops a couple of pills. He picks Jinx up.

DAN

Guess I'm watching you while T-Ball's on the road.

(to Jessie)

Unless...

JESSIE  
I'll be gone too. It'll teach you some  
responsibility.

As they walk into the stadium.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
You know you can make it to the show,  
just not as a player.

Dan nods knowingly.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
I always knew those ideas were yours.  
(chuckles)  
Rookie's Recipes.

DAN  
I'm working on volume two.

JESSIE  
Just don't disrespect me or ejections  
will flow straight into the back office.

DAN  
Disrespect you, never Jess...  
(flashes his winning smile)  
Never.

Jessie heads in one direction, Dan the other. He turns  
around and watches for a brief moment as she walks away.

EXT. ASHEVILLE TOURISTS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The pitcher's eye popping fastball gets too much of the  
plate and Guzman tattoos it toward the left field wall and  
foul pole.

The ball hits below the line and flies out momentarily  
then hits the foul pole and falls back onto the field.

Guzman is half way around the bases with his home run trot  
until...

JESSIE  
(points to second base)  
Double.

Guzman charges over.

GUZMAN

(rapid fire)

That was out! You so don't know the game  
when it hit there and goes out home run  
even if pop back in.

Jessie points to where it hit.

JESSIE

Except when it's below this line. Ground  
rule double.

Guzman closes in on Jessie, who doesn't back away. Cap is  
out of the dugout running toward them.

GUZMAN

(in Spanish)

You are a ball breaking bitch who doesn't  
know anything about the game and wants to  
take over a sport that is for guys only  
probably because you're a repressed  
dyke --

JESSIE

English.

GUZMAN

(looks directly in Jessie's  
eyes)

Bitch.

Cap shakes his head disgusted and signals for a  
replacement player. Guzman starts to walk off the field.  
Jessie shakes her head and points him back to second.

JESSIE

Actually, a bastard.

Everyone returns to their spots and the game continues.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - NIGHT

A large crowd pours in through the entrances, mixture of  
Yankee and Dodger fans. World Series signage adorns the  
stadium.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Rabid Fans CHEER their teams, scarf their dogs and chug  
their beers.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The scoreboard, tie game, bottom of the 9th, one out.

T-Ball (mid-late 30s), wearing a Yankee uniform, digs into the batter's box, stares the pitcher down.

A hanging slider straight down the middle. He connects and the ball skips down the right field line into the corner.

The right fielder has trouble digging it out. T-Ball rounds the bases and arrives at third right before the ball.

The crowd bursts into thunderous CHEERS.

The next batter, HENDERSON squares to bunt. A slow curveball is pitched. T-Ball is off with the pitch.

Henderson misses then awkwardly moves and bumps the catcher as he swipes at T-Ball.

T-Ball slides in safely under the tag.

The crowd joyfully ERUPTS.

STEVE LYONS (V.O.)

What a play! Henderson missed the bunt  
and still brought the winning run in.  
I've never seen anything like --

EXT. HOME PLATE - NIGHT

The umpire steps out from behind home, signals the run's no good, T-Ball's out and it's strike one on Henderson.

STEVE LYONS (V.O.)

What the --

VIN SCULLY (V.O.)

Batter's interference.

The crowds' CHEERS turn to angry BOOS as they clang spatulas with plastic eggs.

The YANKEE MANAGER, Henderson and T-Ball run at the umpire.

The umpire rips the mask off, it's Jessie (late 30s-early 40s.)

YANKEE MANAGER

(splatters her with spit)

He was safe!

JESSIE

Only 'cause Henderson here tangled with  
Gonzalez.

HENDERSON

I was tryin' to get out --

JESSIE

Don't pull that crap, I remember you from  
the River Cats. There was no way you'd  
let him tag T-Ball out.

HENDERSON

That's a horseshit call!

T-BALL

This game's ours!

Jessie shakes her head no and points to the Manager and  
T-Ball.

JESSIE

How 'bout you both get to the dugout so  
we can continue.

Jessie turns her back on them.

HENDERSON

You...

JESSIE

Don't...

HENDERSON

...little...

Jessie slowly turns around.

JESSIE

I'm warning...

Henderson's lips form a "C"

T-Ball rolls his eyes in disgust. Jessie signals...

JESSIE (CONT'D)

You're gone!

Henderson lunges at her. Jessie doesn't move an inch.  
T-Ball and his Manager yank Henderson back before he  
touches her.

The clanging and crowd noise intensifies.

T-BALL  
 (softly to Jessie)  
 Don't you think you're overreacting?

JESSIE  
 And don't you think your bat's more  
 valuable in this game than the showers.

Dutch, working third base, walks over.

DUTCH  
 (to all the men)  
 I'd listen to her if I were you.

The Yankee Manager and T-Ball drag a protesting Henderson off the field. Dutch leads Jessie to the side, signals the other umpires over.

All six umpires step over the World Series insignia.

DUTCH (CONT'D)  
 You sure about that call?

Jessie looks straight into Dutch's eyes, the seriousness of the situation written all over her, then a slight smile crosses her face.

JESSIE  
 As sure as I've ever been.

Dutch signals that her call stands. BOOS and CHEERS as everyone takes their positions and the game continues.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Empty stadium except...

Jessie stands on the field breathing it in. Someone applauds.

Jessie turns around and smiles at Dan. He's wearing a blazer with Los Angeles Dodgers embroidered above the pocket and a L.A. Dodgers cap.

DAN  
 You were great.

JESSIE  
 Were there ever doubts?

Dan answers her with a kiss.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 Where is everyone?

DAN  
Drysdale's...

Jessie shoots him a sharp, dirty look.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Donnie's with Lu collecting his bets from  
the groundskeepers. And T-Ball took  
Callie to meet her namesake.

Jessie starts to run off the field.

JESSIE  
I wanna meet Cal Ripkin Jr.

Dan pulls her back.

DAN  
So do I but that's not happening yet.  
T-Ball's not talking to either of us till  
after the series.

Dan wraps his arms around Jessie.

DAN (CONT'D)  
How does it feel living your dream?

Jessie answers him with a long deep kiss.

DAN (CONT'D)  
My feelings exactly, Rookie.

Jessie runs out to where the shortstop would be.

JESSIE  
I ever tell you I was gonna be the  
greatest shortstop since Roberto  
Clemente, break barriers like he did.

Dan shakes his head no as she positions herself like a  
shortstop.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
But there was this one little  
problem...hit me one.

Dan grabs a bat and hits her a soft grounder. It rolls  
straight between her legs.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
I couldn't field worth shit.

He hits another one that also goes through her legs.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

I did get my dream, and they were all  
watching me tonight.

DAN

Keep your glove close to the ground. Lu  
taught Drys...Donnie this, surprised she  
couldn't teach you.

JESSIE

She tried, you think I listened.

Dan hits her grounders that she fields as we...

FADE OUT.

THE END