

THE TRADE

Written by

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Click. The screen "turns on" like an old picture tube TV. After a few moments of flickering, we realize we are watching a...

BASEBALL GAME. The color is so bleached out, it has to be from the seventies. 1970 to be exact.

The pitcher, number 19, goes into his wind-up and throws... THWACK!

The batter rips the ball to left field for a single.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Base hit for Andrews. Yanks left
fielder, Roy White, bobbles the ball.
Andrews is going to test White's arm...

The runner rounds first and heads towards second. Here comes the throw...

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Safe! Not even close. That's going to
put a runner in scoring position for the
Red Sox. Not that it matters here on the
last day of the season. Neither team is
going near the playoffs this year.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
But it still matters to Fritz Peterson,
the Yankee lefty, who's trying to win his
twentieth game. He does not look happy.

The pitcher stares daggers out to left. Meet Fritz Peterson. Big, tall and athletic, but with a kind face.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)
Here comes the Yankee manager, Ralph
Houk, to take his pitcher's temperature.

From out of the dugout comes a legend, Houk. He moves with the slowness of a man who won two consecutive World Series. But that was long ago.

ANNOUNCER
Yanks lead 4-1 bottom of the 8th. We'll
be right back after these words from our
sponsor.

CUT TO:

GULDEN'S MUSTARD COMMERCIAL

Young kids come into the kitchen, where their mom, Mrs. Elston Howard, spreads mustard on a bunch of delicious-looking hot dogs.

MRS. ELSTON HOWARD

Wonder why the hot dogs at Yankee Stadium are so good?

CUT TO:

BACK ON THE MOUND

We are no longer "watching this on TV."

HOUK

How you doin' Pete?

FRITZ

I'm fine.

HOUK

What do you want me to do?

FRITZ

What would you do if this was the eighth inning of Game 7 of the Series?

HOUK

I'd bring in McDaniel to shut them down and win the game. Then we'd have a parade down Broadway.

Fritz hands the manager his ball and walks off with a pat on his butt as Houk motions for relief.

Fritz reaches the visitors' dugout and a sea of "good jobs." He heads to the far end of the bench where the pitchers hang out. Mel Stottlemeyer, the Yankee ace, hands him a towel.

FRITZ

If either of us is ever traded...

STOTTLEMEYER

... we bean Roy White.

Fritz sits a second but then heads down the stairs to the locker room.

STOTTLEMEYER (CONT'D)
Where you going?

FRITZ
I can't watch this.

VISITOR LOCKER ROOM

Empty. Fritz grabs a beer and starts to get undressed.
There's a big TV hanging from the ceiling.

ON THE TV

The end of the Gulden's mustard commercial. The kids and Mrs. Howard have now been joined by former Yankee Catcher and the first African American Yankee, Mr. Elston Howard.

ELSTON HOWARD
All the Howards love Gulden's mustard!

The game comes back on.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Welcome back to Fenway Park where it's up
to Lindy McDaniel to keep the Red Sox
from scoring.

Fritz can't bear to watch. He heads away from the TV.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Fritz enters. Another TV is there with the game on.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
McDaniel into his wind-up... a monster
shot, going back, back, back... Home run!
Luis Alvarado! And the Sox just made it
interesting. 4-3 Yankees.

Fritz runs out and slams the door.

VISITING MANAGER'S OFFICE

Fritz comes in. Looks around. There is no TV. But he
can still hear the TV from the locker room.

He shuts the door. He can still hear it.

Fritz gets down on his hands and knees and crawls under the manager's desk.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And that's a curve ball just nicking the corner--

He covers his ears. SILENCE. We close in on his face. He shuts his eyes.

We are there forever. Or just a few seconds.

Suddenly... the door to the office opens. From under the desk, we see feet approaching. They come around the desk to find Fritz.

FRITZ'S POV: He looks up to see the Yankee clubhouse man, Pete Sheehy. Sheehy looks sad.

SHEEHY

(shaking his head)

Sorry, Pete.

Fuck.

SHEEHY (CONT'D)

You just won your twentieth game!

Yeah!

SHEEHY (CONT'D)

Still not going to the playoffs.

CUT TO:

THE LOCKER ROOM

Fritz is on the phone. His shoulder is packed with ice. Behind him, celebration. The season is over. School's out for the summer.

FRITZ

It's me! Guess what!?!

(beat, disappointed)

Oh, you heard. Good. No. No. I'll be home tomorrow. First flight out. OK, well, I lo--

Click. He looks at the phone and hangs up.

EXT. FENWAY PARK-- THAT NIGHT

The Yankee team bus sits waiting. Players slowly making their way out into the cold Boston fall. A few fans still linger for autographs. A few reporters as well. The players make time for both.

Fritz and Mel Stottlemeyer emerge from the locker room in street clothes.

VOICE

Pete, you want to grab a drink?

Fritz turns to see Gene Michael, short-stop and future Yankee GM.

FRITZ

Sorry, Stick.

STICK

You sure?

Michael gestures to two GIRLS, all "dolled up." They don't call him "Stick" for nothing.

STICK (CONT'D)

Spotted them in right field, during the game. Had the bat boy pass them a note. See if they wanted to meet a real live Yankee.

FRITZ

Have fun.

Michael and a couple of other players head off with the girls. Stottlemeyer heads for the bus.

A car pulls up. The driver gets out and heads inside.

STOTTLEMEYER

You coming?

FRITZ

Yeah, one sec.

Stottlemeyer gets on board, as Fritz heads over to legend-to-be Thurman Munson who is finishing an interview.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Hey, Tugs. The bat boy just told me the heater on the bus is broken, but they sent a car for us.

Fritz gestures to the sitting car.

MUNSON

Guys, we got a car.

Munson and a couple of other players rush into the car and wait for the driver.

Fritz gets aboard the bus, and watches out his window.

FRITZ'S POV: the confused driver comes out of the stadium and heads to his car, only to discover it filled with players. After some discussion, the very angry players get out and look towards the bus as... it drives away.

ON THE BUS

Fritz laughs to himself. The perfect crime.

Fritz is approached by a reporter MAURY ALLEN.

MAURY ALLEN

Pete, you got a sec?

FRITZ

Sure, Maury, what do you need?

MAURY ALLEN

Bullshit piece. 20 game winner, all-star year, blah blah blah, what do you have planned for the off-season?

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: A BOWLING BALL HITTING PINS.

It's Fritz, and he has just bowled a strike in front of a group of students.

Super: Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois

FRITZ

Welcome to Introduction to Bowling. I'm Coach Peterson, and I will be your instructor. We'll meet here each week, and there will be a written final exam at the end of the semester. Any questions?

It's Fritz, and he is teaching a physical education class during the off season.

Super: Average Major League Salary 1970-- \$29,203.

STUDENT #1
Are you really a Yankee?

FRITZ
Yup.

STUDENT #1
Then why are you here?

FRITZ
(laughing)
'Cause I'm from here, and I am not going
to be a Yankee forever. I'm going to
teach when I am done playing and coach
the baseball team.
(points)
You?

STUDENT #2
Is there really a final exam?

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: FOR SALE SIGN

REAL ESTATE AGENT
What do you think?

Fritz is being shown a couple of townhouses.

FRITZ
(considering)
It's nice... near the campus. My buddy
always said rental properties were the
way to go.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Smart guy.

FRITZ
Yeah. Too bad they killed him.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
(horrified)
What?

FRITZ
Sold him to the Seattle Pilots.
(beat)
We have a deal.

They shake.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE

--Fritz mows the lawn.

--Fritz is up on a ladder making small repairs to the gutters.

--Fritz paints the doors.

CUT TO:

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE-- THAT NIGHT

Fritz stands outside his front door a moment. He takes a deep breath. Here we go.

He enters the house, and...

VOICE (O.S.)
(yelling)
You're late!

He's heard that tone before.

FRITZ
Sorry, Chip. I was helping that new tenant move a few boxes in. Nice people.

He heads for the dining room and finds his wife MARILYN "CHIP" PETERSON. She is somewhat petite, and very attractive, with long hair, but definitely bossy.

MARILYN
You don't know if they're nice people or not. Why would you say that?

FRITZ
Well, they seemed--

MARILYN
And it's not your job to help them move boxes. You are the landlord, not some moving company. If they are one day late with the rent...

He's heard all this before.

FRITZ

Right.

MARILYN

Dinner's ready.

INT. PETERSON LIVING ROOM-- CONTINUOUS

Fritz and Marilyn eat dinner in front of the TV.

Fritz turns it on and flips the channels. Kent State. Vietnam. Something about Janice Joplin. Ah, Lawrence Welk! Enough said.

They do not speak for a long while.

FRITZ

It's delicious.

MARILYN

Thanks.

More silence.

INT. PETERSON BEDROOM-- LATER

Close-up: Marilyn's head.

Only, it's not Marilyn's head, it's a Styrofoam head. And on it sits a wig of Marilyn's hair.

Marilyn comes out of the bathroom-- her hair is naturally shorter and thinner. She walks by the wig, taking us to the bed where Fritz awaits.

She climbs into bed.

MARILYN

(flat)

OK.

That's the starting gun. Fritz kisses her a bit. And after enough of that, he climbs on top of her, as if by rote.

It's over quickly. That's it.

They turn and face away from each other and go to bed.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE-- THE NEXT DAY

Fritz outside his front door again. Takes a deep breath and goes inside.

FRITZ
(before she can accuse him of
anything)
Sorry.

MARILYN
Your sister called.

FRITZ
They want to borrow the car.

MARILYN
No.

FRITZ
Are you using it?

MARILYN
No, but I don't want them borrowing it.
That car costs too much money to be
lending it out to just anyone.

FRITZ
But she's my sis--

MARILYN
Dinner's ready.

Discussion over.

INT. PETERSON LIVING ROOM-- CONTINUOUS

Once again they eat in front of the TV.

FRITZ
Delicious.
(beat)
As always.

MARILYN
Thanks.

Marilyn gets up to clear the dishes.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Oh, I got you this.

As she walks away, she hands Fritz a BOOK. *The Art of Marriage*.

INT. PETERSON BEDROOM-- LATER

A wig-less Marilyn is fast asleep. But the bed next to her is empty.

Fritz is still in the living room staring at *The Art of Marriage*, still CLOSED.

He picks it up and looks through it a bit.

Fritz's POV: we see keywords like "pleasure", "new positions" etc.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY-- THE NEXT DAY

Fritz addresses his students.

FRITZ
Some of you fellas are... married, right?

A few nod.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Have... uh... any of you ever... uh...
heard of...

Yes?

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Never mind.

A hand goes up. Fritz points to him.

STUDENT #3
Coach, will this be on the final exam?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON BEDROOM-- LATER

Fritz and Marilyn having sex again. The same as before.
He finishes and rolls off her.

They lay separately. Neither of them will speak of it.

FRITZ

I got the schedule today. Pitchers and catchers report at the end of February.

CUT TO:

EXT. YANKEE SPRING TRAINING, FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

The first day of Spring Training, and it is a bit like the first day of high school: players and coaches arriving, happy to see each other; finding your locker; getting your uniform and equipment.

Fritz is holding court. He is a different animal away from Marilyn.

FRITZ

... ha, some negotiation. I said, I made the all-star team last year and won twenty games. They said the offer's still the same. So I said, "Oh yeah," and they said, "Yeah," so I said... "OK" and signed the deal. I showed them.

Everyone laughs. That's the business of baseball.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(re: Thurman Munson)

Hey, Beer Can, what do you have there?

Thurman Munson is reading a gun catalog.

MUNSON

Check this out boys.

(points)

I am going to order me this beauty.

It's a pistol and a black leather holster.

FRITZ

Make sure you get an extra extra large, Tug Boat.

More laughter, even from Thurman, who always has trouble with his weight.

MUNSON

Very funny.

(smiling)

You better be careful once I get this thing.

(MORE)

MUNSON (CONT'D)
(yells)
Hey, Pete, some help here.

Pete Sheehy magically appears to help whatever player calls. Munson scribbles on the order form and writes a check from his locker.

MUNSON (CONT'D)
Put this in the mail for me.

Fritz is finishing getting dressed but he watches the exchange with great interest.

INT. PETE SHEEHY'S OFFICE-- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Fritz pops his head in.

FRITZ
Hey, Pete, can I see that thing Munson gave you?

Sheehy smiles and hands it over.

SHEEHY
You better hope nobody finds out it's you.

FRITZ
No problem, Thurman just asked me to make a few changes. Let's see...

Fritz is crossing stuff out and marking a few things.

EXT. TRAINING FIELDS-- LATER

Fritz and the boys having a lazy throw-around.

MEL
Jean and the kids are coming down next weekend. Wait until you see Todd's arm. Just like the old man.

FRITZ
I know Marilyn would love to see her.

VROOM! VROOM!

The players look over to see a motorcycle heading practically right for the field.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
What--

The bike stops. The rider kicks the t-stand and gets off the bike. He wears a jean jacket and an old-fashioned leather helmet. Crazy.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Who's the Red Baron?

The rider reaches into a case and pulls out... his baseball mitt.

STOTTLEMEYER
That's Mike Kekich. We got him from the Dodgers. Supposed to be the next Sandy Koufax.

Mike heads towards them.

MIKE
How you ladies doing today?

Meet MIKE KEKICH. A free spirit if there ever was. His hair is a little shaggy, his grin a little devilish, and I don't feel comfortable saying this about another man, but he is really good-looking.

MUNSON
Aw great, another lefty.

VOICE (O.S.)
(yelling)
Kekich!

It's Ralph Houk.

HOUK
I don't know how you do things in Dodgertown, but on the Yankees, we report first thing in the morning.

MIKE
(flashes a grin)
I know, but it was such a beautiful morning.

They can't believe he just said that to Ralph Houk!

HOUK
Be on time tomorrow and ready to throw. Let's see why the Dodgers would trade away...
(dismissive)
"the next Sandy Koufax."

Kekich heads off. The players disperse except for Fritz and Houk who watch Kekich go.

HOUK (CONT'D)
 (to Fritz)
 Pete, word to the wise. Steer clear of that guy. You don't need that kind of trouble.

INT. LOCKER ROOM-- THE NEXT MORNING

Fritz, Stottlemeyer and the guys are changing, when Pete Sheehy brings over Mike.

SHEEHY
 You'll be over here in the "nursery."

MIKE
 The nursery?

STOTTLEMEYER
 Where they keep us babies!

FRITZ
 It's a little something we call ourselves. Right, guys?

Stottlemeyer and the others are less than enthusiastic. But Mike doesn't let that bother him.

STOTTLEMEYER
 C'mon, Pete. Let's hit the field.

Fritz heads off, but throws a look back at Mike.

EXT. FIELD-- LATER

Joining a new team is a little bit like transferring to a new school: everyone else already knows each other, and they don't want any new friends.

Mike walks out on to the field, and all the other pitchers are already long-throwing with each other.

He stands there a second. He knows the drill.

Fritz sees Mike. He's been warned but...

Fritz grabs a ball and throws it over to Mike. FOOMP!
 Right in his glove.

FRITZ

So where are you from, Mike Kekich?

MIKE

California, born and bred. I'll tell you, my wife wasn't too happy about moving to New York. You?

FRITZ

Illinois. My dad always wanted me to play for the White Sox. Scout told me, sign with the Yanks. They win championships.

MIKE

How many have you won?

FRITZ

Hold on, let's see...
(does the math)
... zero.

Mike laughs.

MIKE

Well, it's better than that poor bastard Herb Score.

FRITZ

Yeah, it's better than Herb Score.
(beat)

You know, Marilyn and I would love to have you and your wife over for dinner sometime.

MIKE

Ha. No.

FRITZ

What's so funny?

MIKE

Susanne doesn't come to spring training.

FRITZ

You got kids in school?

MIKE

We've got kids, but that has nothing to do with it. It's just spring training... that's my time. You know?

FRITZ
(oblivious)
What?

MIKE
My time.

FRITZ
(getting it)
Oh. Riiight.

MIKE
But how about we go "oiling" tonight?
Grab a few drinks?

FRITZ
Well, I'm not sure if my wife would--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PARROT LOUNGE-- NIGHT

An old Florida watering hole. Mike and Fritz sit at the bar "oiling." Mike makes a toast.

MIKE
To Herb Score!

FRITZ
Herb Score!

They drink.

MIKE
Poor bastard got hit by a liner and never
pitched again.

They both shake their head at this. A pitcher can't
imagine anything worse.

FRITZ
At least it got him out of Cleveland.

MIKE
So, what's Houk like? His bite worse
than his bark?

FRITZ
No, you'll love him. He's got the rings.
(looks at his watch)
Well, it's getting late. I really should
be going.

MIKE
(to bartender)
Another round!

SMASH CUT TO:

LATER

Mike sings some 50's tune, while Fritz harmonizes. It sounds pretty good.

The bar gives them a round of applause.

The bartender puts down yet another round.

BARTENDER
You guys sound pretty great.

MIKE
Speaking of "great," check out the talent
at the end of the bar.

He motions towards two great-looking girls at the far end of the bar!

MIKE (CONT'D)
Let's say hi. C'mon.

Before Fritz can object, Mike is heading over. Fritz has no choice but to follow.

This is NOT something he would ever do.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Ladies, I am... Doctor Gehrig. And this
is my associate.

They all turn to face Fritz...

FRITZ
... Doctor Ruth.

This is going to be fun.

GIRL #1
We're waiting for someone.

MIKE
That's fine. We just wanted to ask you
some questions.

Fritz whispers something into Mike's ear.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Right, we're doing a study for *Psychology Today*. Very prestigious. Can we ask you a few questions?

The girls are a little confused.

GIRL #1

I guess so.

MIKE

OK, these are pretty routine... question one, do you hate your mother?

GIRL #2

What?

MIKE

That's a very interesting reaction. Isn't it, Dr. Ruth?

GIRL #2

It is?

FRITZ

Very interesting. You avoided the question. Classic avoidance syndrome.

MIKE

Yes, avoidance syndrome. Classic.

The two girls are now mouths agape. What could this all mean?

GIRL #1

Please sit down.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

Empty glasses lined up on the bar.

GIRL #1

(a little drunk, confused)

We should make out with each other?

GIRL #2

Really?

MIKE

I think so, and I am a doctor.

That's it for Fritz.

FRITZ

Dr. Gehrig, I should go. I have surgery
in the morning.

MIKE

I thought that was canceled.

FRITZ

No, it wasn't canceled.

MIKE

You're sure.

FRITZ

I'm sure.

MIKE

I'll take it from here then. Doctor.

FRITZ

Doctor.

Fritz heads out the door. Looks back at Mike and the
girls. What a night!

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON SPRING TRAINING BEDROOM-- MORNING

The Florida sun blazes across the sleeping face of Fritz
and finally wakes him. His head hurts a bit. He
struggles to get up and finally heads downstairs.

INT. PETERSON SPRING TRAINING DOWNSTAIRS-- CONTINUOUS

Fritz starts down the stairs, but stops when he hears
something... something very strange... something he
hasn't heard in a long time. It's...

Marilyn LAUGHING.

Fritz looks down and sees Mike and Marilyn having
breakfast, and Marilyn is giggling like a school girl.
Fritz listens a moment.

MARILYN

... when will I get to meet her and your
daughters?

MIKE

Well, she didn't want to come to Florida.
She hates oranges. Bit of a racist.

Marilyn laughs.

Fritz heads down the rest of the stairs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(arch)

Oh my God, Pete, what are you doing here!
You weren't supposed to be home for
hours!

FRITZ

(playing along)

Well, well, well. My new best pal and my
wife.

MIKE

Fritz, there's something we've been
meaning to tell you. But just didn't
know how.

FRITZ

You can start by getting out of my chair.

MIKE

That's OK, I just swung by to make sure
you were OK. Marilyn, absolutely
delicious. The food wasn't bad either.

MARILYN

(laughs)

Any time.

Fritz shows Mike to the door.

FRITZ

Last night was hilarious. How come you
told them we were doctors?

MIKE

I always thought I'd be a good doctor.

They pass the copy of *The Art of Marriage*.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What's that?

FRITZ

Nothing.

MIKE

See you soon, Petersons.

Mike leaves, and we see his bike right outside. He starts it with a loud rev and heads out.

FRITZ

Sorry about staying out so late last night.

MARILYN

It's OK.

FRITZ

(surprised)

It is? Great. Mike's a nice guy.

Uh-oh. What is she going to say.

MARILYN

He seems so. Now sit down, I made you some breakfast.

Fritz sits. A little bit shocked.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM-- A WEEK LATER

MUNSON

Son of a bitch!

We pull back to see Thurman Munson in his underwear holding up a tiny little derringer gun for ladies. It matches well with his tiny holster that he can't fit around his belly.

MUNSON (CONT'D)

They sent me the wrong gun, the wrong holster, and worst of all, it's for a lefty. I'm right-handed. Peeeeeeeeete!

Fritz is biting his hand. Other guys in the locker room are laughing hysterically.

Pete Sheehy appears. Thurman hands him the box, the gun and the holster.

MUNSON (CONT'D)

Send this piece of shit back and tell them to send me the gun I ordered.

Thurman finishes getting dressed and heads out to practice. Other players follow. Fritz lingers behind.

INT. PETE SHEEHY'S OFFICE-- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Pete is just putting the gun down on his desk, when Fritz sneaks in.

FRITZ

Hey, Pete.

SHEEHY

I thought I might see you.

FRITZ

Take a letter...

Pete pulls out a piece of paper.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

"To the Stenbridge Gun Company. From
Thurman Munson, New York Yankees catcher.
Dear sirs, I received my gun, and I love
it!

Sheehy smiles.

EXT. SPRING TRAINING GAME, YANKEES VS. PHILLIES-- LATER
THAT DAY

Kekich goes into his wind-up, blazes a ball right down the middle of the plate and.... THWACK! The batter drives it out of the ball park.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Spring training may not count but Mike
Kekich is getting killed by the boys from
Philadelphia.

Fritz watches from the dugout as Houk walks out and takes the ball from Kekich.

Mike heads for the bench near Fritz and Stottlemeyer.
You wouldn't know he just got taken out of a game.

MIKE

Hey, Amigo. Why the long face?

FRITZ

The Phils stuck it to you.

MIKE

Eh, it's spring training. Too many late nights, you know.

STOTTLEMEYER

Great.

Stottlemeyer doesn't care for Mike's attitude. He heads into the clubhouse.

MIKE

I think I may have picked up a little virus. Doc says there's something going around, and I agree with his diagnosis.

FRITZ

Well, they're sitting on your fastball, Virus.

MIKE

(defensive)

It's faster than yours.

FRITZ

That may be. But it's nothing without control. You ever throw a palm ball?

MIKE

Palm ball? That doesn't sound fast.

FRITZ

Jim Bouton taught me when I first came up.

(holds up a baseball with a palm grip)

You never learned to pitch, did you Virus? You just get out there and throw as hard as you can?

MIKE

That's how I do everything. Let it all hang out!

More true than he realizes.

FRITZ

You have to learn to think about every move you are going to make, and then, only then, throw the ball... in control.

(beat)

I'll take control every day of the week.

Mike takes the ball and tries it.

MIKE
Palm ball, huh? Needs a cooler name.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. YANKEE STADIUM-- A FEW WEEKS LATER

The stadium is packed to the gills, and the crowd is going nuts.

Mike Kekich goes into his wind-up and throws... for a ball.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Low and outside. A ball and two strikes.
Mike Kekich looking for his first win as
a New York Yankee.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)
That looked like some sort of off-speed
pitch.

Munson throws the ball back, and crouches down to give the sign.

Mike goes into his wind-up again...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Kekich has been keeping the Tigers off
balance all night with that one. Here's
the pitch... fastball... strike three!
The Yankees beat the Detroit Tigers 5-2
thanks to an outstanding performance from
Mike Kekich.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)
You know they call him the next Sandy
Koufax.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM LOCKER ROOM-- LATER

Post-game frivolity. Everyone gabbing and having a good time, except for Fritz who picks up the clubhouse phone.

FRITZ
(into phone)
Hi, Sally. It's Fritz Peterson, can you
connect me to my home number. Thanks.

After a few seconds, Marilyn picks up.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Hey... but Chip, the game just ended.
OK, I'll be home within the hour... Half
hour. OK. Hey, Mike won his first game.
Yeah.

He hangs up and starts to get dressed.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM-- LATER THAT NIGHT

It is drizzling out, but the autograph hounds are out in force.

Fritz exits the stadium and sees Mike surrounded by fans.

MIKE

Who wants an autograph from the Yankees
newest star?!?

The fans laugh. He is a natural with them.

Fritz starts to head for his car when...

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, you all recognize All-Star pitcher
Fritz Peterson. I taught him everything
he knows.

(shoots a look to Fritz)

His autograph isn't worth as much, but
you should still get it.

FRITZ

(to fans, awkward)

Hi... fans...

Some fans move over to Fritz to get his autograph.

MIKE

Pete, you wanna get a drink?

FRITZ

Can't. Marilyn.

Fritz signs another one and then heads into the parking
lot, disappointing those that didn't get signatures

The rain is starting to come down now.

A car pulls up near the gate and HONKS its horn.

Fritz turns to look.

MIKE
 (to fans)
 Hold on, hold on. I'll be right back.

Fritz watches as Mike runs out into the rain, and heads over to the driver side of the car.

Mike begins talking to the driver. The talk gets more and more animated. Mike is yelling.

Fritz approaches. As he gets closer he can hear the argument.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 I spent that money. It was my money.

VOICE
 (upset)
 You left us in LA with my parents. I had to borrow from them.

MIKE
 (yelling)
 I don't want to talk about this.

Mike looks up to see Fritz. The argument stops.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Pete, hey.

FRITZ
 Hey.

Fritz can now see that there is a woman driving the car. Even seated, he can tell she is slim, cute and athletic.

MIKE
 This is my wife. Susanne, this is Fritz Peterson. And that's Kirsten in the front, and that little bug in the back is Reagan.

Kirsten, age 5, sits in the front seat. Reagan, almost 2, sits in the back with a stuffed animal. That's right, no car seats.

KIRSTEN/REAGAN
 Hi,

FRITZ

Hi.

(to Susanne)

Nice to meet you.

SUSANNE

It better be. It's raining.

FRITZ

It's worth it.

She laughs.

MIKE

We should get going.

FRITZ

Yeah, me too.

Starts to go.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Hey, after this next road trip, we should all get together some time. The four of us. You, Mike, me, and Marilyn.

Trailer moment. Sorry, couldn't resist.

CUT TO:

FUCKING

There's no other word for it. But it's not who you think... yet. We are...

INT. CRAPPY BALTIMORE HOTEL-- NIGHT

Mike has a blonde bent over the bed and is having his way with her. Loud.

Suddenly, a lamp goes on. We see...

Fritz trying to sleep in the other bed.

FRITZ

(groggy)

Hey--

Mike turns to talk without missing a beat.

MIKE
 Sorry, roomie, did we wake you?

FRITZ
 (sarcastic)
 Oh, no. This is when I like to wake up
 on the days I pitch.

MIKE
 Oh, where are my manners. Pete, this
 is....

She speaks with a thick "Bal-mar" accent.

BLONDE
 Barbara.

MIKE
 Pete, this is Barbara.

FRITZ
 Hi.

BLONDE
 Charmed.

FRITZ
 Do you think you guys could, you know...

MIKE
 Say no more. We will move the party to
 the guest room.

Mike and Barbara open the door to the bathroom and head
 in. The door closes behind them.

Fritz turns off his light as the fucking starts again.

Fritz lays there listening and listening in disbelief.

EXT. BALTIMORE STADIUM

The Orioles line up to shake hands. The scoreboard reads
 Orioles 3, Yankees 2.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 A heartbreaker for Fritz Peterson and the
 New York Yankees. Those Yankee bats have
 got to wake up.

INT. BALTIMORE VISITORS' LOCKER ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz and Mel Stottlemeyer getting dressed together.
Fritz is thinking about last night.

STOTTLEMEYER
Tough loss. White should have made that
throw, for a change.

FRITZ
Hmmm.

STOTTLEMEYER
You OK? You seem... I don't know...
distant.

FRITZ
Mel, let me ask you something.

STOTTLEMEYER
Sure.

FRITZ
You and Jean...

STOTTLEMEYER
Uh-huh?

FRITZ
Well... do you... No... Have you
ever...

STOTTLEMEYER
Pete, what is it? You know you can ask
me anything.

FRITZ
It's about sex.

STOTTLEMEYER
Oh. I should go.

CUT TO:

THWACK

A racket hits a tennis ball. TWACK. It's quite a rally.

Reveal: Fritz playing tennis with Susanne. Kirsten and
Reagan play with dolls as Mike and Marilyn drink ice teas
and look on.

MIKE

What do you say winner buys dinner?

FRITZ

(hitting a great forehand)

I have to buy dinner. You blew all your money on a house with a tennis court.

Everyone laughs. Except maybe Susanne.

MIKE

I love this house. The kids love this house. Right?

KIRSTEN/REAGAN

Yeah! Yes!

FRITZ

You don't even play tennis.

Everyone laughs again as Fritz and Susanne hit the ball back and forth. They are well-matched.

Fritz looks over at Mike and Marilyn who are thick as thieves.

FRITZ'S POV: Mike and Marilyn laughing a little loud. Playful touching. "Oh, Mike, stop it!"

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: MIKE FUCKING THAT GIRL FROM BALTIMORE.

What was her name again? Oh yeah, Barbara.

CUT TO:

TENNIS COURT

Susanne hits a blazing WINNER by a distracted Fritz.

SUSANNE

Game. You should have had that.

FRITZ

Huh? Oh, yeah.

MIKE

Alright, Susanne! C'mon, let's throw some steaks on the grill.

Mike and Marilyn head towards the house.

SUSANNE

Mike, the kids...

Either Mike didn't hear or he chose not to.

Fritz starts to follow when...

SUSANNE (CONT'D)

Hey, a little help! My husband can ignore me, but you're not allowed to.

FRITZ

I'm sorry. Sorry.

SUSANNE

You don't have to apologize for anything. I was kidding.

(re: kids)

Now, give me a hand with these munchkins.

Susanne picks up Reagan, and Fritz grabs Kirsten.

FRITZ

You hungry?

KIRSTEN

Uh-huh, Unca Fritz.

That's sweet.

CUT TO:

EXT. KANSAS CITY STADIUM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Mike on the mound for the Yankees, throwing the last pitch in a complete game victory. Yankees 6 - Royals 5.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

A reborn Mike Kekich goes all the way for the Yankees. They beat the Kansas City Royals 6 to 5.

INT. BAR, KANSAS CITY-- NIGHT

Mike and Fritz out for a drink. Actually they have had a few, and they have a few shots sitting in front of them.

MIKE

What the fuck are we doing in Kansas City?

FRITZ

We're playing the Royals.

MIKE

It could be worse. We could be in...

FRITZ/MIKE

(same time)

Cleveland.

The door to the bar opens.

MIKE

Look... stews.

Fritz turns to see a flight crew of stewardesses sitting down at the other end of the bar.

MIKE (CONT'D)

The trick is you separate the weak ones from the herd. Then fuck 'em.

Fritz laughs. Starts to get up.

FRITZ

(yawns)

I should head back.

MIKE

(mocking)

I should head back. I'm going to buy more real estate and get yelled at by my wife.

(downs a shot)

Don't be such a pussy.

FRITZ

Fuck you.

MIKE

Alright, fuck me. But seriously, where are you going, Pete?

FRITZ

Stop it.

MIKE
 She can't yell at you here. Where are
 you going? We're in fucking... where are
 we?

FRITZ
 Kansas City.

MIKE
 We're in fucking Kansas City. Who's
 going to know?

Fritz doesn't answer.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BAR-- KANSAS CITY-- LATER

Fritz and Mike and the Stewardesses at a table, laughing
 it up.

MIKE
 (to the bartender)
 I love that song! Turn it up!

The bartender does.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Who wants to dance? Pete?

FRITZ
 Sure.

Fritz takes Mike's hand "romantically." They move closer
 to each other and get ready to dance. The stewardesses
 giggle.

Mike grabs a girl. Fritz grabs one too. They start
 dancing. Real close.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
 (to stewardess)
 I'm married.

STEWARDESS
 Ha, OK.

FRITZ
 I just want to be clear. Nothing can
 happen.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM-- LATER

Fritz and the stewardess in bed together. She starts to head south on him.

FRITZ
This can never happen again.

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON HOUSE-- A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz and Marilyn in bed together. Her head comes up from under the blankets.

MARILYN
I don't like it. It's wrong.

FRITZ
(kissing)
C'mon, honey--

MARILYN
No.

FRITZ
C'mon!

MARILYN
Where is this coming from?

Uh-oh.

FRITZ
You know... you got me that book and I thought...

MARILYN
No.

Fritz gives up. They have their usual sex, and Marilyn heads to the bathroom.

Fritz lays there. That was soooo quick.

CUT TO:

EXT. KEKICH HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

SPLASH! Mike jumps into the swimming pool getting everyone-- Fritz, Susanne, Marilyn and the kids-- wet. A splash fight ensues.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - A FEW DAYS LATER

Both couples out on a big sailboat. Lots of laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

The Petersons and the Kekiches standing around the piano. Fritz plays a bit, and the four of them sing. Just a typical Saturday night for the foursome.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR-- NIGHT

Fritz, holding flowers, approaches nervously and rings the bell, like he is picking up his prom date.

The door opens. It's... the stewardess, Karen.

KAREN
(re: flowers)
For me? You shouldn't have.

INT. CLUB-- KANSAS CITY

Fritz and Karen slow dance, along with a few other couples.

The song ends. She heads to the ladies room. He heads to the bar where he finds...

Mike, Stick, a couple of other players and some girls. Stick is finishing some wild story.

STICK
 ... she's two-timing him. And he only
 figures it out, because she keeps going
 to the beauty parlor and getting her hair
 done.

Everyone laughs.

FRITZ
 (re: girls)
 Hey, boys. Who do we have here?

STICK
 This is Lois and Lana. Lucky for us,
 they always wanted to meet some real live
 Yankees.

MIKE
 We're thinking of heading over to Charlie
 O's.

FRITZ
 Eh, I think Karen and I are going to call
 it a night.

MIKE
 Jesus, Pete, only you could get married
 twice.

Off Fritz's confused look.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 She's a road girl. You're not supposed
 to be so... serious. That's the point.

FRITZ
 It's not that serious.

MIKE
 Whatever you say.

Fritz walks away back to his table.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (calling after.)
 You're welcome by the way.

Fritz looks back him. What?

MIKE (CONT'D)
 You never would have even done this if
 not for me.

Very true.

INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz and Karen lay in bed together, her head nuzzling his shoulder. They look so comfortable.

FRITZ

Tomorrow's our last game in KC. But maybe you could meet me in Chicago in three weeks.

KAREN

Yeah, I'll swap flights with someone on the Chicago run.

Karen has something important she wants to ask.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You know, I was thinking... about when the season ends, and maybe you and I could--

FRITZ

Karen, no. I'm sorry.

She is hurt by this.

KAREN

(backpedaling, tears)

No, no. My fault. I shouldn't have said anything. Stupid. I just thought...

FRITZ

I've always been honest with you. I won't divorce Marilyn. I could never leave her in the lurch. I can't do that to her.

KAREN

I know.

Karen runs out to the bathroom leaving Fritz to contemplate the decision he made there.

CUT TO:

SWACK!

The Tigers batter pops one practically straight up. We are...

INT. YANKEE STADIUM-- A FEW WEEKS LATER

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

That's going a mile high, back behind the plate. Shouldn't be a problem for Munson.

The ball lands right in Munson's glove.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

And that's the ball game. Yankees over the Tigers 3-0. The Yanks starting to build some momentum and put something together.

INT. LOCKER ROOM-- LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz comes out of the shower and starts changing next to Mel. Mel eyes him-- no more weird talk!

STOTTLEMEYER

Are you going to Maury's party?

FRITZ

I have to convince you-know-who.

STOTTLEMEYER

Tell her it will be fun.

FRITZ

You think Maury would be OK if we brought the Kekiches?

Stottlemeyer makes a face.

Suddenly...

VOICE (O.C.)

(screaming)

Son of a bitch!

Everyone turns to see a very angry Thurman Munson holding an even smaller gun and holster set.

MUNSON

Those fuckers did it again!

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz is waiting in the living room for Marilyn to get ready. He plays with their dog.

FRITZ

C'mon, Chip, we're going to be late.

(beat)

By the way, Mike and Susanne are going to be there.

MARILYN (O.S.)

Why didn't you tell me? I need a few more minutes.

Fritz sighs and goes back to playing with the dog.

INT. MAURY ALLEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A nice suburban house. The party is already going. A nice mix of some players and some reporters that Maury is friendly with.

Mel and Jean Stottlemeyer are there, trying to talk with Mike and Susanne. The Munsons too.

The door bell rings. Maury heads off to answer it.

MAURY ALLEN

Hey everyone, Fritz and Marilyn are here.

Fritz and Marilyn enter only there is something different tonight.

Marilyn is NOT wearing her wig. Instead it is her NATURAL HAIR. It is surprising and stunning.

MAURY ALLEN (CONT'D)

Can I get you guys something to drink?

FRITZ

I'll have a beer. And Marilyn will have a ginger ale.

MARILYN

I'll have a glass of wine.

Fritz almost does a double-take.

MAURY ALLEN

Great.

Maury heads off as the Petersons mingle.

SUSANNE
Marilyn, you look fantastic tonight.

MIKE
Definitely.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The table has been extended so that 12 chairs can go around it.

Mike is across from Susanne. Marilyn is next to him, and Mike is next to Susanne. Chit-chat all around.

MAURY ALLEN
No, it's true, CBS is looking for a buyer.

FRITZ
Maybe I should buy the team. Then I can underpay myself.

Everyone laughs.

MAURY ALLEN
George Steinbrenner is trying to put an offer together.

MIKE
Who?

FRITZ
(To Susanne)
Sorry.

SUSANNE
What?

FRITZ
I think I kicked you. Sorry.

SUSANNE
No problem.

Unseen by anyone, Susanne kicks Fritz under the table. He looks at her. Did you just do that?

Susanne smiles devilishly.

MAURY ALLEN

Guy tried to buy the Indians last year.
From Cleveland. He's in shipbuilding.

Fritz kicks her back.

FRITZ

What's he know about baseball?

It's an all-out game of footsie, and nobody suspects anything, least of all their spouses.

MAURY ALLEN

Nothing.

Fritz holds her foot down with his foot.

FRITZ

That's all we need running the Yankees...

To make him let go, Susanne gives him a slightly harder kick.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

... a guy from Cleveland. Owwww!

Everyone looks. What's going on?

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Can someone pass the potatoes?

MARILYN

You've had enough potatoes.

Susanne giggles to herself.

CUT TO:

LATER AT THE PARTY

Everyone's having a great time, especially the Kekiches and Petersons who DRINK and SING around a piano.

We notice that Mike seems to be standing more with Marilyn and Fritz seems to be closer to Susanne.

FRITZ'S POV: Susanne laughing and looking so pretty.

Fritz turns to see: Mike and Marilyn LAUGHING together.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAURY ALLEN'S HOUSE - LATER

The party is breaking up. The Kekiches and the Petersons exit laughing.

ALL
Good night, Maury. Thanks! Delicious!

The foursome head for the cars which are parked one behind the other.

FRITZ
So much fun.

ALL
Yeah. Definitely. Fun.

MIKE
Too bad it has to end.

ALL
Yeah. Too bad. Fun.

They all pause for a second by the cars. Where is this going?

FRITZ
You know.. this evening doesn't have to end. Maybe we could all head to the Fort Lee Diner? They are open late.

Fritz looks at Susanne. She is gorgeous, even in the low light.

Before anyone says anything he adds...

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Susanne can ride with me... if she wants.
Mike, why don't you take Marilyn?

Fritz can't believe he said it. What is Marilyn going to say? What is Marilyn going to say?

MARILYN
Great. We'll see you there.

Marilyn and Mike get into his convertible. Susanne and Fritz get in his very sensible car.

SUSANNE
I'm glad you thought of this.

FRITZ

Me too.

They drive off.

INT. FORT LEE DINER - AN HOUR LATER

Fritz and Susanne sit across from each other in a booth eating ice cream-- like a Norman Rockwell painting.

FRITZ

So, what's it like being married to Mike?

SUSANNE

Ha. I was going to ask you the same question.

He is completely smitten with her.

FRITZ

Seriously.

SUSANNE

Well, you know Mike. He's full of... zest.

FRITZ

(laughing)

Yeah, zest. You know, he told me you've been running some kind of races?

SUSANNE

I can't believe he even was paying attention. They're not "races." It's just cross country. To keep in shape.

FRITZ

You know, I ran track back in high school. Heck, I teach track among other things, during the off season.

Small world.

(re: Mike and Marilyn)

Boy, I hope they didn't get lost or something.

SUSANNE

Probably not.

FRITZ

Probably not.

They laugh.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(a little giddy)
God, it feels so great just to talk.

SUSANNE
I know. I'm with the kids all day, and
Mike's...

FRITZ
... zesty.

She smiles at him. Finally... Mike and Marilyn show up.
Marilyn looks disheveled, if you know what I mean.

MIKE
Sorry.

FRITZ
No problem, we were just talking.

MARILYN
(not)
Us too.

INT. PETERSON BEDROOM-- THAT NIGHT

Fritz climbs into bed. Marilyn is already in bed
watching a little TV.

MARILYN
Good night, honey.

FRITZ
Good night.

They kiss good night. Not a word about the evening is
said.

Fritz turns off his light and goes to sleep.

On the TV, once again see... The Gulden's Mustard
Commercial.

ELSTON HOWARD
All the Howards love Gulden's mustard!

Marilyn turns the TV off and goes to bed.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz enters the empty locker room. He makes a bee-line for Munson's locker and adds an envelope to Munson's fan mail.

Fritz heads to his locker as other players drift in including Mike.

COACH
(screaming from across the room)
Kekich, you're dropping your arm on your curve. Keep an eye on that.

MIKE
Fuck you.

Mike pulls a medical text book from his locker.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(to Fritz)
Hey, check this out. Did you know your left lung is smaller than your right lung? It's to make room for your heart. This shit is fascinating.

We see Thurman Munson start to sort through his mail.

FRITZ
So... uh... that was... fun. Last night.

MIKE
(like it was nothing)
Yeah, we should do it again.

FRITZ
Really? Yeah. Definitely!

Munson comes running up.

MUNSON
Hey, Guys! They want me and my family for a new Gulden's mustard commercial.

FRITZ
What? You're kidding.

MUNSON
No.
(re: letter)
Look!
(MORE)

MUNSON (CONT'D)
 (all serious)
 All the Munsons love Gulden's mustard.
 Fuck. I hate mustard. Gives me
 heartburn. Hell, I'm going to be rich!

Munson runs off to call his wife.

Beat.

Mike and Fritz laugh like bastards.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE-- THE NEXT NIGHT

Fritz and Marilyn say goodbye to the dog, lock up and
 walk out to their car, all dressed up.

MARILYN
 (giddy)
 We're going to be late.

FRITZ
 No, no, we're fine.

Next door, a NEIGHBOR is getting out of his car.

NEIGHBOR
 Hey Marilyn, finally got Fritz to take
 you out to dinner, huh?

Marilyn smiles and nods as they get into the car and
 drive off.

INT. STEAK AND ALE - NIGHT - LATER

They make a heck of a steak. A perfect spot for a date
 night out with your wife.

Mike and Susanne are sitting at the bar having a drink
 when Fritz and Marilyn arrive.

MARILYN
 I told you we would be late.

MIKE
 Don't sweat it. We got here a little
 early, had a drink.

This seems to calm down Marilyn.

FRITZ
 Hi.

SUSANNE

Hi.

Fritz and Susanne smile at each other.

The hostess approaches.

HOSTESS

Folks, your table is ready.

AT THE TABLE - LATER

The two couples sit having a drink, looking at menus.

MIKE

A toast! To the Yankees. This is the year we win it all!

ALL

To the Yankees!

MIKE

And to our beautiful ladies!

He's a smooth one.

They all toast.

FRITZ

(re: menu)

So... who's in the mood for a steak?

Marilyn and Mike exchange a look.

MIKE

You know what, Pete? Marilyn and I were going to go take a drive.

FRITZ

What about dinner?

MARILYN

We'll... get something later.

MIKE

Besides, you guys should be alone together.

Mike and Marilyn move to leave.

FRITZ

Look, I don't exactly know what we're doing here... or what last night was... but it's great, really great...

Everyone nods.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

... And I thought maybe, we should... I don't know... lay down a few ground rules. So nobody gets hurt.

How could anybody get hurt?

MIKE

Don't be such a fuddy-duddy. We're just having some fun, grandma.

Everyone laughs.

FRITZ

I know, I know. But, I've been thinking...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

Fritz watching Mike having sex in the hotel room.

CUT BACK TO:

STEAK AND ALE

FRITZ

Let's just agree... so we can all stay friends... that there won't be any... you know... sex.

Mike and Marilyn exchange a look.

MIKE

Fine. Good idea.

MARILYN/SUSANNE

Yes. Of course.

FRITZ

Alright. Great. We've got this totally under control. This is really working out great.

Now, Marilyn and Mike make their move to leave.

MARILYN

Bye, Susanne.

MIKE

Bye, Babe.

Marilyn practically grabs Mike's hand and pulls him out of there.

Fritz and Susanne don't seem to notice... or care.

FRITZ

We should order. Waiter...

INT. STEAK AND ALE - LATER

Fritz and Susanne eating and having a great time.

FRITZ

I've got it all planned out.

SUSANNE

(teasing)

You?

That makes him laugh.

FRITZ

I'll pitch a few more years. Win a World Series. By then I'll have my degree, and I'll be ready to coach back at Northern Illinois. Unless I go the announcer route.

SUSANNE

Wow. Mike can't even tell me if he's coming home for dinner tomorrow.

UNDER THE TABLE

Susanne engages Fritz in a little more footsie.

EXT. NITE LITE MOTEL

Convenient to the Lincoln Tunnel. Mike's convertible is sitting parked outside room 4.

The camera peeks into the room to see...

Mike and Marilyn "breaking the ground rules."

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz entering the players' entrance when... HONK! HONK!

Fritz looks up to see Thurman Munson driving a brand new Ford Thunderbird. Guys gather around to take a look.

MUNSON

Check it out! Got it this morning!

FRITZ

Wow!

STOTTLEMEYER

This must have set you back good.

MUNSON

Uh-uh. I used the Gulden's Mustard commercial money.

There is a giggle or two.

MUNSON (CONT'D)

What?

Then it explodes into a circle of laughter.

MUNSON (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

The crowd disperses as Mike drives up. Fritz heads over.

FRITZ

You guys got in late last night, did you--

MIKE

I love her, man.

FRITZ

What?

MIKE

I love her. You're so lucky to be married to someone like Marilyn.

FRITZ

Marilyn Peterson?

MIKE

Oh stop. She's... incredible.

Oh boy.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. STEAK AND ALE - NIGHT

Fritz and Susanne on a date. Fritz doesn't know how to tell her.

FRITZ

He loves her.

SUSANNE

I know, he told me.

FRITZ

He wrote her a poem.

SUSANNE

Mike's good. Heck, I fell for it. It's why we got married so young.

(remembering)

I was eighteen years old, and he can make you feel like the most special person on earth.

(beat)

And he can also make regret that feeling for the rest of your life.

Fritz looks at Susanne with new appreciation.

SUSANNE (CONT'D)

Don't sweat it. Mike falls in love a lot.

FRITZ

You want to catch a movie?

CUT TO:

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - A FEW

Fritz and Mike are changing into their uniforms as Munson comes stomping by angrily.

MIKE

What happened to the car?

MUNSON

They're going to take it back.

(yelling to all)

(MORE)

MUNSON (CONT'D)
I hope whoever did it finds that funny
too!

Munson open his locker. Hanging there is "Little Lefty."

MUNSON (CONT'D)
Arrrgggh!

Munson storms out, and Fritz chuckles to himself.

MIKE
(sing-song)
Hey, Pete. Don't forget you promised to
call my wife before the game.

FRITZ
(loving it)
Alright but don't you forget to call my
wife.

Mike and Fritz laugh at their private joke, and Fritz
picks up the clubhouse phone.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hey Sally. It's Fritz Peterson. No, not
my home number. Can you connect me with
Mike Kekich's house? Thanks.

It rings. Susanne answers.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Susanne, it's Fritz. The game should be
over around 5 PM. We on for tonight?
Great.

Fritz hangs up the phone. He bows to Mike and hands the
receiver over.

MIKE
(into phone)
Sally, it's Mike Kekich. No, not my
house. I need Fritz Peterson's place.

CUT TO:

INT. YANKEE STADIUM SWITCHBOARD - CONTINUOUS

Sally, the long-time Yankee switchboard operator looks
very, very confused.

Eh, none of her business so she connects the call and goes back to smoking her tenth pack of cigarettes that day.

CUT TO:

DATING MONTAGE

A. Fritz takes Susanne dancing. They gaze forever into each other's eyes.

FRITZ
There's somewhere special I want to take you.

B. Mike and Marilyn having sex in his convertible.

C. Fritz covers Susanne's eyes

FRITZ (CONT'D)
What do you think?

Reveal, Fritz has taken her to... an ice hockey game.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
If it wasn't for baseball, I would have been a hockey player.

Fritz looks at her. What is she going to say?

SUSANNE
We should get a couple of beers.

Can you imagine Marilyn ever ordering a beer? Susanne is like a dream come true.

FRITZ
Yeah! We should.
(yelling to the Beer Guy)
Two beers over here!

What a girl!

D. The ice hockey game plays on a TV, which sits in a bedroom where... Mike and Marilyn are having sex.

E. Fritz and Susanne pull into the Steak and Ale parking lot.

A moment later, Mike and Marilyn pull in. The wives get out and switch cars.

F. Mike and Susanne pull up to their house. They open the front door and are met by the baby-sitter. They pay her and watch from the front door as she heads home.

As soon as she is gone...

Mike runs out to his car and drives off as Fritz pulls up in his car and heads inside.

G. Fritz and Susanne on her couch... necking like two teenagers.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Is this OK?

SUSANNE

Yeah. It's nice to go slow.

H. Fritz picks up the clubhouse phone.

INTERCUT: Sally the operator connects the call.

SPLIT SCREEN: Fritz talking to Susanne.

Sally the operator connects another call.

The split screen shifts over and now Susanne is talking to Mike.

Sally does another connect, and now Mike is talking to Marilyn.

Sally shakes her head, connects a call, and now Marilyn is talking to Fritz.

I. 5:30 am. Fritz is sneaking out of the Kekich house when... he bumps into Kirsten, in her PJs.

KIRSTEN

Hi, Unca Fritz. Can you make me something to eat?

FRITZ

Uh... sure.

J. Mike comes sneaking back in only to find... Fritz, Susanne and the kids already having breakfast.

SUSANNE

Mike, look who came over to make us breakfast... Uncle Fritz!

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A gorgeous day for a drive. Fritz and Susanne in the front, Mike and Marilyn in the back of a car.

On the radio, the one and only Paul Harvey show is wrapping up with one of his amusing stories.

PAUL HARVEY

(on radio)

... the old farmer's name incidentally.
McDonald.

(beat, get ready for the
catchphrase)

For what it's worth.

(beat)

Paul Harvey... good day.

MIKE

Can you imagine if we ever ended up on
the Paul Harvey show? Perfect place to
announce our double wedding!

FRITZ

(laughing)

Don't forget our double divorce first.

MARILYN

It's not funny. Nobody can ever find
out.

FRITZ

Nobody is ever going to find out. We're
just having some fun.

But even as he says this, Fritz puts his hand on
Susanne's leg. It's more than that.

Susanne gives Fritz a meaningful look back.

MIKE

(doing Paul Harvey)

Doctors believe it had something to do
with both men being lefties.

Everyone laughs. Even Marilyn.

FRITZ

(doing Harvey)

Righties would never have done this. And
they throw worth shit.

(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

For what it's worth.

More laughter.

SUSANNE

I have a question. Have we figured out what we are going to do about the hotel rooms?

The car speeds past a road sign: Baltimore 33 miles to go.

INT. YANKEE TEAM HOTEL - BALTIMORE- LATER THAT DAY

The foursome approaches the check-in desk.

FRITZ

Reservation for Peterson and Kekich.

CLERK

Yes sir, we have them right here.

MIKE

Can we get adjoining rooms, please.

CLERK

Sure. You guys going to gab all night?

FRITZ/MIKE

Yeah. Sure.

The Clerk hands over the keys, and the foursome heads up to their rooms and pass by Stottlemeyer and a couple of the other guys.

STOTTLEMEYER

Boy, they are really good friends.

INT. HOTEL ROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Susanne head into their room.

Fritz and Marilyn head into their room.

Just in case anyone is watching.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A mad dash for the connecting door which is immediately opened.

At that point, Susanne rolls her suitcase into Fritz's room, and Marilyn rolls hers into Mike's.

Mike grabs at Marilyn as...

The connecting door is SHUT.

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Do Not Disturb signs are hung on both doorways.

INT. FRITZ'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fritz and Susanne are making out, but it's starting to get a little more serious.

Fritz starts to undress her.

Unlike anything we have seen before-- be it the music, the lighting, or how it's shot-- this is all beautiful and romantic.

Unlike any sex we have seen before, these two make love, gentle and caring love.

Fritz is on top, and as always he doesn't last long. Fritz is a bit nervous to say the least. She's been with Mike.

FRITZ

(whispers)

Sorry. Was that... alright?

SUSANNE

It was perfect.

She kisses him and they lay there together.

From the other room, they can clearly hear Mike and Marilyn having LOUD sex.

FRITZ

I'm glad we all waited.

CUT TO:

INT. BALTIMORE RESTAURANT - THAT NIGHT

Crab cakes all around for Mike, Fritz, Susanne and Marilyn. To anyone walking by, it looks like two couples out for a nice evening.

FRITZ

The season's coming to an end in a month.
So, I've been thinking....

MIKE

Uh-oh, more thinking.

They all laugh.

FRITZ

I think... we should try to make this
official.

MARILYN

(not sure where this is
going)
What, tell people?

FRITZ

No, no. But once the season is over,
these guys are supposed to go back to LA.

SUSANNE

I don't want to go.

FRITZ

And I don't want you to go. I think we
should try this. Heck, we've practically
been living like it for the last few
months anyway.

Marilyn has concerns.

MARILYN

I don't know. What if people find out?

MIKE

C'mon, Babe, don't worry about that.

Mike has a way with her that Fritz never had.

FRITZ

I know this is right. We're good
together. You and Mike. Me and Susanne.

MARILYN
(correcting)
Susanne and I.

FRITZ
Susanne and I. I think maybe this is how
it was supposed to be.

They all nod.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
It's perfect, because nobody gets hurt.
Nobody gets left behind, and we all get
what we want.

Fritz looks to Susanne. Mike to Marilyn.

MIKE
Pete and I will work it all out.

FRITZ
We'll take care of everything.

MARILYN
(always sees the bad side)
But what if--

FRITZ
Let's agree right now, that if at any
time, any of us want out then we quit.
No matter what the reason. It all goes
back to the way it was.

ALL
OK. Good. Yeah.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE - EARLY MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

A newspaper lays on the front stoop.

Mike walks up, picks up the paper and rings the bell.

While he waits, he looks at the back of the paper:
sports. A headline reads: "Yanks 6 Back and Falling
Fast".

Fritz opens the door. Sam the dog barks madly and tries
to run out.

FRITZ
(to dog)
Down boy. It's just Mike.
(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(to Mike)
Marilyn will be out all day. You ready
to do this?

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Fritz sit in the living room, kind of opposite
each other, in arm chairs.

FRITZ
Our wives stay with their houses. We
trade.

MIKE
(looking around)
So I live here?

FRITZ
Yeah. I figure it will be easier. Less
change for them. Agreed?

MIKE
Whoa, whoa, wait. What about the rent
here? It's kinda higher than our place.

FRITZ
I wanted to talk about this with Marilyn,
but I want to help out financially
because obviously, I make more money and--

MIKE
(defensive)
I've had a lot of injuries.

FRITZ
(you big baby)
Sure. I know.

MIKE
I should have been an all-star two
seasons ago, but the trainer screwed me.
Total misdiagnosis. I tried to tell him.
That's why the Dodgers traded me.

FRITZ
Right.
(gentle)
But until you sign your next contract, I
thought I could lend a hand.

MIKE
(proud)
I don't need your help.

FRITZ
OK, fine. Sorry I brought it up.

MIKE
I mean maybe for a bit. But does Marilyn
have to know?

FRITZ
Not at all.

MIKE
OK. Boy, I feel like a general manager.
I'll give you Willie Stargel for Marilyn.

FRITZ
Ha. No deal. I want Susanne and a
player to be named later.

They both laugh.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Now most important--

MIKE
(heard it before)
I know, I know...

FRITZ
OK, then you tell me.

MIKE
(it's been said a thousand
times before)
Nobody can find out.

FRITZ
That's right. So, smart guy, what do we
tell our families?

MIKE
Oof, I don't know.
(thinks)
This is hard. I guess it's why people
don't do it every day. You got any
beers?

FRITZ
I think there's some in the kitchen.
Grab me one

Mike hops up to grab them.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
My Dad could probably deal with it. But
Marilyn's folks make her seem easygoing.

MIKE (O.S.)
(from the other room)
Hey, lay off my lady.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BUNCH OF EMPTY BEER CANS AND SOME HALF-EATEN SANDWICHES

Mike and Fritz still sitting there.

FRITZ
Steak and Ale is ours. You can have
Pietro's.

MIKE
And The Old Town Tavern.

FRITZ
Fine.
(next on the list)
The Stottlemeyers. Mel is my friend.

MIKE
You can have him.
(next)
I'm keeping my car. Nobody is swapping
any cars. Agreed?

FRITZ
Not a problem. Spring training.

MIKE
What about it?

FRITZ
You have to bring Marilyn.

MIKE
No waaaaay. I've told you. Spring
training is my time.

FRITZ
No. You can't do that anymore. I
brought Marilyn to Spring training every
year. Now, you'll bring her. And I'll
bring Susanne and the girls.

MIKE
 (truly shocked)
 You're getting the girls?

FRITZ
 I'm not "getting" the girls. The girls
 should stay with their mother.

MIKE
 Why?

FRITZ
 Why? She's their mother.

MIKE
 So?

FRITZ
 So? You really want to take care of two
 little girls?

MIKE
 Alright, well maybe not the baby. She's
 a lot of work. How about I take Kirsten?
 She's a more interesting anyway.

FRITZ
 You can't split them up. They're not
 lamps.

MIKE
 They might like it. They're always
 fighting.

FRITZ
 They're sisters! They stay together with
 Susanne.

Mike stews a moment or two, but finally gives in.

MIKE
 Fiiiiiiiiine.
 (beat)
 But I want this chair.

Mike pats the arms of the chair he is sitting in.

FRITZ
 What? C'mon, take this seriously.
 Please.

MIKE
 OK. I want Sam.

Mike points to the dog.

FRITZ

Cute. You're not getting Sam. He is coming with me.

MIKE

No. Sam should stay with the house like the kids.

FRITZ

You're just saying that.

MIKE

Am not. Besides, Marilyn loves that dog, she told me.

FRITZ

Marilyn hates that dog. She hates the way he sheds. She hates the way he drools. She hates that I named him Sam. Says that it's not a proper dog's name.

MIKE

The dog stays here... or I'm staying with Susanne.

FRITZ

That's how you want to be.

MIKE

Yeah.

FRITZ

Fine. Keep the dog. He needs to be fed twice a day and walked at least, AT LEAST three times a day.

MIKE

Great.

FRITZ

You're ridiculous.

MIKE

You're ridiculous.

FRITZ

Are we done?

MIKE

Yeah.

FRITZ
 Alright then.

MIKE
 Alright then.

Mike starts to get up.

FRITZ
 Do me one favor? Will you talk to the girls and help Susanne explain things.

MIKE
 Absolutely.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KEKICH HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

KIRSTEN
 Where's daddy?

Susanne is talking to the girls. No Mike. No surprise.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)
 Daddy was supposed to take us to the zoo.

SUSANNE
 (to self)
 I wish I knew.
 (to girls)
 Daddy was supposed to be here to tell you that he is going away for a bit.

The girls look confused.

SUSANNE (CONT'D)
 But don't worry, Uncle Fritz is going to live with us, and from now on he will be Daddy Fritz.

There is no way they can understand this.

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON HOUSE-- LATER THAT DAY

Fritz comes downstairs with a couple of bags packed. Marilyn is sitting at the dining room table reading the paper.

FRITZ
I'm going to the ball park.

MARILYN
OK. Have a good game.

FRITZ
Thanks.

He starts to go.

MARILYN
Aren't you taking Sam?

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - THAT NIGHT

Fritz sitting in the dugout watching the game.
It flies by at triple speed. His mind is elsewhere.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - LATER

Fritz exits the stadium, gets in the car and starts driving.

Across the George Washington Bridge and into Jersey.

He gets to his house... and keeps on driving.

A few more twists and turns, he pulls up to the Kekich house.

Fritz gets out of the car, grabs his luggage and heads for the door. DING DONG!

Susanne opens it.

FRITZ
Hi. I'm here about the room for rent.

She hugs him.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
I forgot, I got you a little something.

Fritz pulls out a couple of bars of Zest soap.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
In case we need it.

SUSANNE
 (laughing)
 Girls, look who's here?

KIRSTEN/REAGAN
 Uncle Fritz!/Unca Fritz!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KEKICH BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz and Susanne are asleep when something wakes him up.
 KNOCK! KNOCK! There's someone at the door.

Fritz stumbles awake and heads downstairs. KNOCK!
 KNOCK!

Who the hell could it be at this hour? Fritz opens the
 door to see... Mike with Sam the dog.

Mike hands Sam's leash to Fritz.

MIKE
 Here. I'm not allowed to have a dog.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - A FEW DAYS LATER

The Yanks warm up before another meaningless game.

Stottlemeyer and Fritz throw the ball back and forth.

STOTTLEMEYER
 So, it's a done deal?

Oh my God, does Mel know?

FRITZ
 Huh?

STOTTLEMEYER
 This Steinbrenner fella is officially the
 new owner of the Yankees.

FRITZ
 Well, that should be good for my contract
 negotiation next season.

STOTTLEMEYER
 Hmmm?

FRITZ

Guy like that, knows nothing about the game. Should be a real pushover.

STOTTLEMEYER

Yeah.

(yells and throws ball to
Mike)

Kekich, look lively. Your wife is waving.

Mike looks up to the "WAG" section-- Wives and Girlfriends. We recognize a bunch of the players' wives including Susanne and, a few seats away, Marilyn.

MIKE

Uh, yeah.

Mike throws the ball and waves back.

Susanne looks confused. But Marilyn sees the wave and waves back.

STOTTLEMEYER

What's wrong with you guys today? You both blind? Pete, Marilyn's now waving.

Fritz looks up, and starts waving.

Marilyn and Susanne are now waving to Mike and Fritz. And nobody is the wiser.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM-- LATER THAT NIGHT

Players coming out and loading onto the bus. Wives and girlfriends there to say goodbye.

Fritz and Mike stand with Susanne and Marilyn.

FRITZ

Well, it's off to Milwaukee. Lucky us.

MIKE

We'll see you ladies in a few days. Be good.

SUSANNE AND MARILYN

(pointed)

You too.

They both know Mike too well.

FRITZ
We should get going.

There are too many people around. So... Fritz kisses Marilyn goodbye, and Mike kisses Susanne. Both a little awkward.

Then Fritz hugs Susanne.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(whispers)
I'll call you when we get there.

Mike hugs Marilyn.

Mel Stottlemeyer walks bye. He hugs Marilyn too.

STOTTLEMEYER
Bye, Marilyn.

Mel gets on the bus. The guys laugh and follow.

The bus pulls out as Marilyn and Susanne watch it go.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Some of the players are asleep. Some play cards.
Practically the entire plane smokes. It is the 70's.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
This is your captain speaking. We will be landing in Milwaukee in just about twenty minutes. This would be a great time to make sure you are buckled up and have a last cigarette. I'll speak to you again when we are on the ground.

Fritz hops up, heads back to give something to the stewardess, and then sits back down.

About a minute later, the stewardess comes down the aisle and hands a clipboard to Thurman Munson.

MUNSON POV: The clipboard reads "Sign up Sheet for Yankee Exhibition Trip to Tokyo."

Munson eyes it suspiciously. He looks around to see if anyone is watching him. Nobody.

Munson stares at the paper some more. "Players may bring their wives. No Children."

Fuck it. Munson signs up and passes it on to Roy White. White takes a read and also sign up.

Fritz is loving every second of it.

INT. LUGGAGE CAROUSEL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Yankees wait for their luggage. They all look exhausted.

Munson approaches Ralph Houk.

MUNSON

Hey Skip, any idea who we will be playing in Tokyo?

HOUK

What the hell is wrong with you, Munson? This is Milwaukee not Tokyo.

MUNSON

No, the exhibition games this winter... we're all... going... Tokyo...

Everyone is staring at poor Thurman.

Everyone LAUGHS and it finally hits him..

MUNSON (CONT'D)

Fuuuuck!

INT. MILWAUKIE STADIUM - DAY

Yanks vs. Brewers. Mike is pitching.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Kekich winds up, the pitch... fouled back behind the plate. Catcher Thurman Munson has a bead on it, aaaaaaaand makes the catch to end the inning.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

But not before the Brewers get three more runs off Mike Kekich and the Yankees.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

You know, they used to call Kekich the next Koufax.

The Yanks head for the dugout, looking pretty defeated.

Mike sits down next to Fritz and throws a towel over his head.

FRITZ
Your curve is hanging there like a meatball.

MIKE
Yeah... I... I'm not feeling too well.

Fritz rolls his eyes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What? I'm not.

FRITZ
Probably all the travel.

MIKE
Yeah. I think it may be some kind of streptococcus.

MUNSON
(from across the room)
You're not a doctor. You're a ball player.

MIKE
I could be a doctor if I wanted to!

Stick Michael wanders down the bench.

STICK
Hey boys.

FRITZ
How's it going Stick?

STICK
I'm 0 for 3 today, but things are looking up. Check out section 220, row 5.

All the players' heads turn and lock in on the section.

STICK (CONT'D)
On the end...

POV: At the end of the row are two blondes falling out of tight, tight Yankees shirts.

STICK (CONT'D)
Bull's-eye! I hope to God they want to meet a real live Yankee.
(MORE)

STICK (CONT'D)

(beat)

And fuck his brains out. Who's with me?

FRITZ

Sorry, Stick. But have fun.

STICK

No surprise there. But I know I can count on Kekich here-- especially after the turd ball he's throwing out there.

MIKE

Actually, Stick, I'd like to, but... I can't. I just... can't.

STICK

Holy shit, I never thought I'd see the day. I guess we now have two lefty homosexuals on the team.

(spots a likely accomplice)

Hey, Jerry...

Stick heads off. Fritz is in shock too, but says nothing, but smiles. This is really working out.

MIKE

(getting a sense of Fritz's happiness)

Shut up.

INT. MILWAUKEE HOTEL LOBBY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz enters and passes Mike, who talks with a bellboy.

MIKE

... you're back hurts? Interesting. Let me take a look.

(sees Fritz)

Hey Pete, you want to grab a bite or something?

FRITZ

(excited)

Maybe later, OK. I'm going to give Susanne a ring.

MIKE

Yeah, sure. I've got stuff to do, too.

Fritz practically runs towards the elevator and heads up.

Mike watches his friend go.

INT. FRITZ'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Fritz eats room service and talks on the phone.

FRITZ
(into phone)
Everybody ready? Daddy is going to eat
his dinner at the same time as you guys.

INT. MIKE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike lays on the bed and tosses a baseball in the air.
He's never been "alone" on the road like this.

CUT TO:

EXT. KEKICH HOUSE - EARLY MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

An exhausted Fritz opens the front door, Susanne, the kids, and Sam the dog come running up to greet him.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door is half-way open, luggage half-leaning on the door, and clothes all over the floor.

The camera starts to go up the stairs when we realize Mike and Marilyn are going for it right in the living room.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - A FEW DAYS LATER

A sign on the facade now reads "Thanks to all our fans. See you next season."

INT. YANKEE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Season's over. Time to clean out the lockers and say good-byes for the winter.

Fritz is packing a box as he talks with one of the infielders, Jerry Kenney.

JERRY
I'm going to work at my brother-in-law's dealership. You know, meet a Yankee and buy a car. You getting out of town?

FRITZ

Later on, but I am going to be doing some color commentary for the New York Raiders.

JERRY

The hockey team?

FRITZ

Yeah, the hockey team.

JERRY

Wild. Well, see you next Spring... I hope.

FRITZ

See you next Spring.

Fritz grabs his box and starts to head out, passing Mike's locker.

Kekich's locker has already been emptied. No trace of him.

Fritz is about to exit when...

Thurman Munson yells.

MUNSON

Hey, Pete!

FRITZ

Hey, Tugs, just taking off.

MUNSON

I just wanted to say goodbye. Oh, and, I know it was you, and I am going to get you.

FRITZ

(trying not to laugh)
OK. I'll be ready.

MUNSON

Fuck you.
(all nice)
Say hi to Marilyn.

Fritz heads out to...

EXT. YANKEE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Susanne is waiting with the car. Fritz loads up the trunk and climbs in.

SUSANNE

You ready?

FRITZ

Let's go!

They head off to their life together.

CUT TO:

INT. RAIDERS HOCKEY GAME - NIGHT

Fritz doing color commentary for the Raiders Hockey Games.

The camera pans from the announcer booth to find...

Susanne is at the hockey game too.

Fritz throws her a look and she smiles back.

CUT TO:

MIKE

(yelling)

I don't know what happened!

We are...

INT. PETERSON KITCHEN - DAY

In the middle of a big fight between Mike and Marilyn.

MARILYN

(yelling back)

How can you not know?

MIKE

I guess I spent it!

MARILYN

You spent it?!? The entire check!?!

She stares at Mike like she wants to kill him. Money has always been important to Marilyn.

Mike... laughs.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
(pissed)
Don't laugh at me!

MIKE
(trying to hold it in)
I'm not.

MARILYN
Stop it!

Mike moves towards her.

MIKE
Come here.

MARILYN
No.

MIKE
Come here, baby!

Mike grabs her and they start MAKING OUT. Very passionate.

They head towards the ground.

MARILYN
(between kisses)
What happened to the check?

MIKE
Shut up.

He starts to undo her shirt.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz helps little Reagan "throw" a ball down the lane... into the gutter.

REAGAN
Yay!

Kirsten runs around with a couple of other kids at the bowling alley.

SUSANNE
My turn. Little help?

FRITZ
Here, you have to follow through with
your arm. Like this.

Susanne giggles as Fritz holds her close and helps her
with her arm motion. It's quite adorable.

SUSANNE
Are you sure that's right?

FRITZ
It better be. It was on the final exam.

SUSANNE
I hope you didn't hold all your students
like this.

With his help, she releases the ball. And as they
kiss... she rolls a spare!

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW JERSEY NEIGHBORHOOD- DAY

A "FOR SALE" sign hangs on a two-story apartment
building. Mike and Marilyn stare at the building.

MIKE
It's a lot of money.

MARILYN
It's for the future. You have to plan
for the future.

MIKE
I don't know....

MARILYN
What do you know? It's not like you went
to college.

Yikes. Mike tries to calm her down.

MIKE
I just thought we'd take a trip to
Mexico. You know... drink some fruity
drinks... hot sweaty nights...

Mike presses up against her. She nuzzles him. Then...

MARILYN
 (all business)
 Focus, Mike.
 (re: the building)
 It needs a little work, but you can do
 that.

What?

CUT TO:

EXT. KEKICH BATHROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz stands by while Reagan sits on her little "potty."

FRITZ
 Did you go?

REAGAN
 Noooo.

FRITZ
 Do you have to go?

REAGAN
 Yeah.

FRITZ
 Big girls who go to the potty get a
 tootsie roll.

He holds up a tootsie roll.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
 Did you go?

REAGAN
 No.

CUT TO:

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike walks up to the front door. Like Fritz before him,
 he pauses at the front door and takes a deep breath.

Here we go.

As he walks in...

MARILYN (O.S.)
 (yelling from the kitchen)
 You're late!

MIKE
 Sorry.

MARILYN (O.S.)
 Did your check come today?

Mike puts his head down and heads towards the kitchen defeated.

Marilyn has worn him down.

CUT TO:

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - A FEW WEEKS LATER

Fritz, Susanne, and the girls come down an escalator. A sign reads "Mayor Richard Daley welcomes you to Chicago."

At the bottom of the escalator is Fritz's family: his DAD, his STEP-MOM, and his SISTER.

FRITZ
 This... is Susanne. Susanne, this is my family.

The family eyes her warily for a moment and then... rushes to HUG her.

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON FAMILY HOME - A FEW HOURS LATER

Filled to the brim with memorabilia and pictures of Fritz, the house is packed with people in honor of Fritz and Susanne.

Fritz is talking with some old college buddies, while Susanne is chatting with his sisters.

One of the sisters breaks free and runs over to Fritz.

SISTER
 Oh my God, she is so much nicer than Marilyn.

(MORE)

SISTER (CONT'D)
By the way, how is Marilyn doing?

CUT TO:

INT. KEKICH HOUSE - A FEW WEEKS LATER

A quiet night back at home for Fritz and the girls.

The family eats TV dinners in front of the TV watching the Lawrence Welk show.

They laugh and sing along.

Fritz has never seemed happier.

INT. KEKICH BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz and Susanne are fast asleep when suddenly... there is a LOUD KNOCKING downstairs.

FRITZ
(groggy)
Stay here...

Fritz downstairs and opens the door. It's... Mike. And he is a little drunk.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(rubbing his eyes)
Mike? What time is it?

MIKE
Can I stay here?

FRITZ
Huh? No.

MIKE
Marilyn threw me out!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KEKICH LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mike and Fritz sit in the living room drinking a couple of beers.

MIKE
(looking around the room)
This room looks different.

FRITZ

Yeah, we painted it. What happened?

MIKE

It looks good. I should have done that.

FRITZ

Thanks. Now tell me what happened.

MIKE

Aw, hell. You probably know better than me. She's crazy. She makes me crazy. Arrrrgh!

FRITZ

I know Marilyn can be a little difficult but--

MIKE

Difficult? Fucking looney tunes.

(takes another drink)

I don't know how you lasted so long. You deserve like a medal or something.

(re: walls)

What color is it?

FRITZ

Teal.

MIKE

Ah, teal.

FRITZ

Mike, uh, Marilyn?

Mike downs another beer.

MIKE

(getting worked up)

She doesn't stop, and it's always about the money. Where's the money? What am I doing with the money? How could I spend the money?

(yells)

It's my god damn money! When I'm a doctor, money's going to come rolling in!

(realizes)

Sorry, I don't want to wake the girls. How are they?

FRITZ

Good, Reagan is toilet trained.

MIKE

Yeah?

FRITZ

Yeah. You know when you tell them you're going to visit and then you don't show up...

MIKE

Aw, not you too. Where's Susanne? She was the only one that never yelled at me.
(yelling)
Susanne?

Fritz doesn't want to go down this path.

FRITZ

OK, big fella. How about you call Marilyn and let her know where you are?

Fritz picks up the phone, dials, and hands the phone to Mike.

MARILYN (V.O.)

(on phone and pissed)

Hello...

MIKE

(sotto voce)

You talk to her.

He hands the phone back to Fritz.

FRITZ

(sotto voce)

I don't want to talk to her.

MARILYN (V.O.)

(on phone)

Mike, is that you?

Fritz shoves the phone back to Mike. He shoves it back to Fritz. It's like a hot potato.

MIKE

(sotto voce)

She scares me. Take it!

FRITZ

(sotto voce)

She scares me too.

They struggle some more and finally...

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Fine.

(takes the phone)

Hey, Chip. Yeah, he's here. He's OK, more or less... I know, I'm sorry... I'm sorry... Let him just sleep it off, and I'll talk to him in the morning and bring him back to our place. Your place... I should go...

He tries to hang up. She clearly won't let him.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Ok... No, Mike understands. It's all fine. Don't freak out. Everything is good. OK... OK... OK... Goodbye.

He hangs up the phone. Jesus.

Fritz looks over and Mike is passed out.

Fritz heads to the stairs where he finds... Susanne has been watching.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

He's drunk.

SUSANNE

I'm familiar with it.

(beat)

Fritz, please don't let him ruin it.

FRITZ

He's not going to ruin it. I love you sooo much!

SUSANNE

I love you.

They kiss and head up to bed. On the couch...

Mike is awake, and he heard that "I love you."

MIKE

(drunk and to himself)

How come you're so fucking happy.

It does not sit well with him as he passes out again.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - A FEW DAYS LATER

Marilyn and Mike are driving and, for a change, fighting.

MARILYN

I don't want to do this.

MIKE

Just shut up. We're doing it.

MARILYN

Don't tell me to shut up. We're not supposed to do this. It's idiotic.

MIKE

We're there. People need to see, we're a couple too.

INT. STOTTLEMEYER'S HOUSE - DAY

Like something out of a Norman Rockwell painting, Mel and his wife are playing a board game with their kids when... the doorbell RINGS.

Mel goes to answer it. It's... Marilyn.

MEL

Marilyn! What a surprise.

MARILYN

We were in the neighborhood, and thought we would drop by.

Behind her walks Mike Kekich.

MIKE

Hey, Mel.

MEL

Hey, Mike.

Marilyn and Mike enter, but Mel just stands there with the door open.

Beat.

Beat.

MEL (CONT'D)

(confused)

Uh, where's Pete?

They don't exactly know how to answer.

MEL (CONT'D)
Out in the car?

Mel heads out to the car.

MEL (CONT'D)
(looking around)
Peeeeete!

INT. STOTTLEMEYER'S HOUSE - LATER

Marilyn and Mike sit on the couch and drink coffee with Mel and Jean. Mel just looks stunned.

JEAN
So how long have you two been together?

MARILYN
Well, since the season ended. It's been hard to tell anyone.

MEL
Can I ask one question? This isn't one of Pete's practical jokes, is it? He's pulled some pretty good ones.

MIKE
No, it's real. Pete's with Susanne and I'm with Marilyn.

Mike puts his arm around her. She forces a smile.

Just then... the Stottlemeyer kids come running down the stairs playing with some army men.

MEL
(yelling to kids)
Todd, I told you to keep your brother in your room. Get upstairs. Now. Hurry!

The kids run for their life back upstairs.

MEL (CONT'D)
(to Mike and Marilyn)
We're really happy for you.

JEAN STOTTLEMEYER
(stunned)
Uh, yeah.

Mike has a big smile on his face. Mission accomplished.

MEL

So are all four of you coming to spring training?

CUT TO:

EXT. YANKEE SPRING TRAINING - A FEW WEEKS LATER

Players arriving and seeing each other for the first time after the long winter.

We can't help but notice that back then players didn't take quite as good care of themselves.

Super: Spring training 1973

EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - CONTINUOUS

FOOMP! Fritz and a couple of other pitchers hurl a few in to a couple of bullpen catcher.

PITCHER

Looking good, Pete.

FRITZ

Well, I bowled a bunch this offseason. Kept me loose. You?

PITCHER

I haven't touched a baseball in months.

The Pitcher throws the ball.

PITCHER (CONT'D)

(exquisite torture)

Oh yeah! That hurts!

ACROSS THE FIELD

Maury Allen and a couple of other beat reporters talk with Ralph Houk. Allen spots Fritz and heads over.

MAURY ALLEN

Hey, Pete. Got a sec?

FRITZ

Let me guess, Maury... what I did on my winter vacation by Fritz Peterson?

(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Or maybe, Fritz Peterson says this is the Yanks' year!

Maury laughs. That is the kind of article that gets written in these first few days of Spring training.

MAURY ALLEN

No, nothing like that. Actually, this is kind of weird...

Fritz's interest is piqued.

FRITZ

Did you hear something about a new contract for me?

MAURY ALLEN

No. It's just there's kind of weird rumor going around... about you and Kekich... and your wives.

It's like someone just punched Fritz in the stomach. He can't breath for a second, but he knows he has to answer.

FRITZ

(interrupting)

Maury. Mike and I are pals. The wives are friends too. The four of us spend a lot of time together. You've seen us.

MAURY ALLEN

I know...

FRITZ

A lot of people don't like Mike. Cause they don't understand him.

(a little outrage)

But come on. I can't believe you of all people would even dignify this.

Is this going to work?

MAURY ALLEN

I'm sorry, Pete.

Yes!

MAURY ALLEN (CONT'D)

(chastised)

You know how guys talk. I shouldn't have....

FRITZ

Forget it.

MAURY ALLEN

So tell me, is this the Yanks' year?

FRITZ

You can quote me on that!

Maury laughs and heads off. Fritz heads to...

YANKEE DUGOUT

Fritz grabs a seat to collect his thoughts. What the fuck is happening.

Mel enters and sits down next to him. Silently.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(looking up)

Hey, Mel! Good to see you!

MEL

(mumbles)

Hey.

FRITZ

What's doing?

MEL

Nothing. You?

FRITZ

Nothing.

MEL

How's... Susanne?

FRITZ

(stunned)

What?

MEL

(un-hip)

Don't worry, I'm hip, my man...

Mel saunters away, leaving Fritz in a state of shock.

After a moment, Fritz regains his senses and looks around.

FRITZ'S POV: across the field, yucking it up with a bunch of players and yes, a few reporters, it's Mike.

INT. SPRING TRAINING PARKING LOT - LATER THAT DAY

Mike heads to his motorcycle only to find Fritz waiting for him.

MIKE

Hey, Pete. How are my girls?

FRITZ

Everybody is good. Anything you want to tell me?

MIKE

I don't think so.

FRITZ

Maury Allen cornered me. Said there are rumors about us going around. And then to top that off, Mel seems to know.

MIKE

(innocent)

That was Marilyn. She wanted to visit Mel and his wife. We had to tell them.

FRITZ

(freaked)

People aren't going to understand this. We have to keep the noise down.

MIKE

I know. Don't worry. You want to grab a drink? Me and Stick are going out.

FRITZ

Stick?

MIKE

It's just drinks.

FRITZ

You promise.

MIKE

I'm not a child.

FRITZ

You promise.

MIKE

Yes, I promise.

Fritz heads off.

Mike laughs to himself as he hops on his bike. He's enjoying this.

INT. FT. LAUDERDALE BAR - NIGHT

Fritz enters the bar, looks around and sees Mike chatting up two slutty-looking stewardesses.

Fritz approaches with a head of steam.

MIKE
 (to the girls, finishing a
 joke)
 ... the fireman says, "Let me show you my
 hose!"

The girls giggle and Mike laughs loudly at his own joke.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (seeing Fritz)
 Ah, Dr. Mantle. Ladies, this is the my
 colleague from the Institute, Doctor
 Mickey M--

FRITZ
 What the hell do you think you are doing?

MIKE
 Is there a problem at the Institute?

FRITZ
 Cut that shit out.

MIKE
 What!?!

The girls are a little weirded-out and back a few steps away.

FRITZ
 (re: the sluts)
 Who are they?

MIKE
 Keep your voice down.

FRITZ
 (loud whisper)
 You promised me. Now, who are they?

MIKE
(laughing)
That's for you to find out. Dibs on the
one with the big tits. Whoops. They
both have big tits.

Mike laughs again and turns towards the girls. We're all
having fun here!

Suddenly, Fritz grabs Mike by the collar and shoves him
into the wall.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(shocked)
Heeeeey!

FRITZ
(seething)
I asked you what the fuck you are doing
with them? You have a wife at home that
loves you.

MIKE
No, my wife loves you.

FRITZ
You know what I meant. You can't do this
to Marilyn.

MIKE
Jeezus, why do you care so much?

FRITZ
She's my wife.

MIKE
You can't have it both ways.

FRITZ
Don't screw this up. We have a good
thing.

MIKE
Maybe you do.

FRITZ
What's that supposed to mean?

MIKE
Nothing. Look, these girls are just for
fun. You sure you're not interested?

Fritz looks at the sluts. No way.

FRITZ
I'm going back to my place. And keep
your voice down.

MIKE
Hey! More for me!
(to the girls and others)
Who wants another round?

As Fritz heads out the door, he hisses over his shoulder.

FRITZ
You should go home and call my wife!

INT. FRITZ'S RENTAL-- LATER

Fritz lies in bed talking on the phone with Susanne.

FRITZ
(into phone)
I miss you.

SUSANNE (O.S.)
I miss you.

FRITZ
I can't believe you won't be here till
next week. Wait till you see the pool.
The girls are going to love it.

SUSANNE (O.S.)
Have you seen Mike?

FRITZ
(better to lie)
Not yet.

INT. MIKE'S PLACE-- CONTINUOUS

Mike having his way with one of those stewardesses.

Oh wait, the other one just came out of the bathroom and
joins them.

The phone RINGS. Mike ignores it. He knows who's
calling.

INT. FRITZ'S HOUSE - NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

Marilyn angrily stands in the kitchen on the phone.

After letting it ring a while, she SLAMS it down.

INT. FRITZ'S RENTAL - CONTINUOUS

The Phone RINGS. Fritz answers it. It's Marilyn.

FRITZ
Hello... Marilyn, I don't know where he
is. I swear.

MARILYN
What am I supposed to do?

FRITZ
It's going to be OK, Chip. I can fix
this.

CUT TO:

INT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz playing catch with a couple of the pitchers.

As he looks around, we get the sense that other people
across the field are looking at him. Even pointing.

Word is spreading.

Maury Allen approaches.

MAURY ALLEN
Pete, sorry man, but I gotta talk to you
again. I think you know about what.

This isn't good.

FRITZ
Maury, I have nothing to say.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Fritz on the phone with a crying Susanne.

SUSANNE
People know?

FRITZ
Don't cry, baby. It's going to be OK. I
can fix this.

INT. MIKE'S PLACE - LATER THAT NIGHT

An agitated Fritz knocks on Mike's door.

MIKE
What do you want?

FRITZ
All of a sudden, everybody seems to know about us. Susanne's crying. Marilyn is calling me. What the hell is going on?

MIKE
I'm not happy with our deal.

FRITZ
What is that supposed to mean?

MIKE
What it says.

FRITZ
I don't understand. What are you, two years old?

Mike doesn't like that.

MIKE
(exploding)
Why the hell do you get to be so damn happy with my wife? It's not fair.

Fritz can't believe what he is hearing.

FRITZ
Oh my God! Fair? It's not fair?

MIKE
Everything has changed. Even you and me are different.

FRITZ
And this is my fault? We all agreed--

MIKE
I want more.

FRITZ
What more do you want? The dog back again? I can't give you anything else. There is no more. This is crazy. Why are you ruining this?

MIKE

You ruined it. You and Susanne. It wasn't supposed to be like this. I was the next Sandy Koufax.

Fritz just shakes his head, turns and leaves.

FRITZ

Look, please, just say nothing. That's what I did. Alright?

MIKE

Fiiiiine.

Fritz leaves.

INT. SPRING TRAINING LOCKER ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz enters and finds it empty. Weird.

Pete Sheehy wanders by.

FRITZ

Pete, where the heck is everybody?

SHEEHY

I guess you didn't hear. Mike Kekich is holding a press conference.

INT. SPRING TRAINING PASSAGEWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Fritz sprints through the underground maze that runs under the stadium. He passes the occasional support personnel, none of whom can seem to look him in the eye.

Finally, Fritz finds Mike heading towards the press room.

FRITZ

(out of breath)

Mike, this is quiet?

MIKE

Sorry, I don't have a lot of time, they're waiting for me.

FRITZ

Waiting for you? Who's waiting for you?

MIKE

The Post. The Daily News. A couple of the other guys.

FRITZ

Are you really doing this? This is completely out of control. Out of control.

And Fritz likes control.

MIKE

Pete, let's be adult about this. Feel free to speak with them after me, and you can tell your side.

FRITZ

My side? I don't have a side. There are no sides. We were all in this together.

MIKE

That's not how I see it.

FRITZ

Well, how do you see it?

MIKE

That's not how I see it. OK? You're not my boss. Marilyn isn't my boss. Promises were made, and they weren't kept. And I'm not going to sit back and just take it.

Fritz is stunned.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm not some pushover, you know. I'm Mike Kekich.

The door to the press room opens, and Mike is ushered in.

As he heads in, Mike drops his head into a hang-dog expression-- woe is me. Flashbulbs snap as he enters.

The door shuts. Fritz is in complete shock.

INT. PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Six or seven reporters plus photographers throw questions at Mike, who is loving every minute of it.

As the flashbulbs pop, we see Mike alternatively smiling and trying to look very sad.

We don't always hear the questions, but we hear a bunch of Mike's answers.

MIKE

Don't say this was wife-swapping, because it wasn't. We didn't swap wives, we swapped lives.

ANGLE ON: Reporters. They are stunned. Mouths agape.

JUMP CUT TO:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Susanne and I had a good marriage. But I wanted a great marriage. I was idealistic, I guess. Now I have nothing.

JUMP CUT TO:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Word started to leak. I don't know how that happened.

JUMP CUT TO:

MIKE (CONT'D)

There's still something very strong there for Marilyn and me, but we're both so mixed up. We each have qualities, idiosyncracies that rub the other person wrong. I would like it to work out, but I'm really dubious now. Love is the strongest emotion I ever felt in my life. I'm one of the biggest soul searchers around. I don't give a damn what other people say, but Marilyn does. I'm sad that Marilyn and I can't work things out. I can't tell you how perfect it would have been if it worked like Fritz and Susanne.

Awwwwwww.

JUMP CUT TO:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Fritz and I are still teammates. I suppose I'm fortunate in being able to disassociate myself from other things. When I play baseball, I play baseball, with nothing else on my mind. Fritz will be a teammate. Thank you.

Mike tries to leave, and the reporters are going nuts with more questions.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM - A FEW HOURS LATER

Now it's Fritz's turn. He enters the room like he's facing a firing squad.

FRITZ

Guys.

They all nod/say hellos.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I just want you to know that I'm here to clear the air as much as possible so that nobody can turn this into something sordid. Because it wasn't.

JUMP CUT TO:

FRITZ (CONT'D)

We all tried something with a common understanding. It was completely a four-way thing.

ANGLE ON: Reporters. They shake their head at his story.

JUMP CUT TO:

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I suppose I was hen-pecked. I always checked home before I made a decision. Susanne and I now both feel we're free people. Now we have free minds. It would have been perfect if things worked out, but I don't feel guilty.

JUMP CUT TO:

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I'll be rooting for Mike when he's pitching. I hope he wins twenty games this year. I hope I win twenty. I hope all our pitchers win twenty.

CUT TO:

INT. FRITZ'S HOUSE - LATER

Fritz on the phone with Susanne.

SUSANNE

(crying)

It's all over the papers. People are acting like it was my fault. Like I stole you.

FRITZ

Honey, don't be so upset. You didn't steal me. It was a mutual swap.

SUSANNE

People don't care. Oh God, what do I tell the girls? How are they going to go school.

FRITZ

Look, this is a tiny little story. It will all blow over once exhibition games start. I guarantee it.

CUT TO:

INT. FRITZ'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Fritz stumbles into the kitchen and pours himself a cup of coffee.

Out of habit, he turns on the TV to see...

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER

The biggest trade in baseball? No it's not Babe Ruth to the Yankees anymore. That's right, Yankee pitchers Mike Kekich and Fritz Peterson--

Fritz changes the channel.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER #2

Something got baseball fans all riled up and it's not the new designated hitter rule. Yankee pitchers Fritz Peterson and Mike Kekich apparently swapped wives earlier this year when--

Fritz changes the channel again.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER #3
 Our top story today, fire ranges through
 a downtown warehouse. But first, news
 from spring training where it seems
 Yankee pitchers Mike Kekich and Fritz
 Peterson--

Fritz turns the TV off.

FRITZ
 (to self)
 Jesus, it's on all three networks.

It's getting more out of control.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPRING TRAINING PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A reporter interviews Jake Gibbs, former Yankees catcher.

GIBBS
 I knew they were close. I guess we never
 realized how close.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPRING TRAINING LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Thurman Munson talks with a group of reporters.

MUNSON
 What do you expect? They're lefties.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPRING TRAINING FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Ralph Houk being interviewed.

HOUK
 Who the hell cares. This team is our
 best chance to win a pennant since 1964.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL - CONTINUOUS

Commissioner Bowie Kuhn is mobbed by reporters heading into his office.

KUHN

Personally, I'm appalled. But it is a private matter.... for now.

CUT TO:

EXT. KEKICH HOUSE - NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

Susanne and the girls pull up at their house.

The lawn is full of reporters and newsmen like she is the wife of an astronaut.

She hurries the girls inside as reporters yell questions and flash photos.

Once inside, Susanne cries hysterically.

CUT TO:

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

Marilyn sits stoically watching news coverage.

CUT TO:

INT. YANKEE OFFICES - FLORIDA - LATER THAT DAY

Mike and Fritz sit together, not talking, in the waiting area of an office.

A secretary finally looks up and says...

SECRETARY

Mr. McPhail will see you now.

The boys rise and head into the office of Lee McPhail, the General Manager.

INT. LEE MCPHAIL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Fritz face McPhail.

LEE MCPHAIL

Well boys, I guess we are going to have to cancel family day.

They stare at him.

LEE MCPHAIL (CONT'D)

That's a joke. I guess not that funny after this little shit storm you created.

(re: the phone)

I've been getting calls all morning from our new owner, Mr. Steinbrenner. Thank you for that. He's not particularly happy with either of you. Or me. But that's not why I called you in here. We're real close to something with this team. I can taste it, and I don't want to screw it up. So I need to know from both of you, can you still play on the same team, and not screw it all up?

They look at each other.

FRITZ

We can do that, sir.

MIKE

No problem.

EXT. FIRST SPRING TRAINING GAME - A FEW DAYS LATER

Always a crowd pleaser, it's the Yankees vs. the Mets. People are still filing in as the players are announced.

OUT IN THE BULLPEN: Fritz finishes warming up. A couple of Mets fans spot him.

METS FANS

Hey, Peterson. I want to introduce you to my wife. Take her off my hands, ya bum!

Mel walks over to Fritz.

MEL

Don't let that bother you. It's just a couple of idiots.

FRITZ

Thanks.

PA (V.O.)
 Today's pitcher... number 19... Fred
 "Fritz" Peterson...

MEL
 Get on out there.

Fritz jogs onto the field and heads for the mound, but is instantly hit with... BOOOOOOOOS!

Fritz is taken aback by it, but makes his way to the mound.

He looks around the stadium. It's a STANDING BOO-VATION. The whole stadium. Mets and Yankee fans alike. Booing him.

Not good.

The first batter approaches the plate. Still more booing.

FRITZ
 (to self)
 Block it out... block it out... you're in control.

Fritz goes into his wind-up. The pitch.... ball one.

The crowd BOOING even louder.

It can't be blocked. It can't be controlled.

It's fucking out of control. Which is never good for a "control pitcher."

YANKEES UP AT BAT - THE THIRD INNING

Fritz sits on the bench basically alone. Nobody will sit near him.

The Yanks get a couple of hits, and now Fritz has to grab a bat. He heads to the on-deck circle.

PA (V.O.)
 Now batting... number nineteen... Fred
 "Fritz" Peterson...

Boooooooooo!

Fritz steps into the batter's box.

FRITZ
(to himself)
Just strike out... just strike out...

Thwack! Fritz hits it to shallow right and is safe at first.

The stadium boos some more.

Fritz is just in total shock from it.

LATER FIFTH INNING

Fritz walks another batter to a chorus of BOOS.

And now out comes Ralph Houk to talk to him.

HOUK
You're done son.

Fritz hands him the ball.

If anything the BOOING is getting louder.

HOUK (CONT'D)
Let them get it out of their system. It will get better.

Fritz heads for the showers.

And it doesn't get any better...

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - A FEW DAYS LATER

Reporters hounding Fritz as he walks to his car.

CUT TO:

INT. FRITZ'S CAR - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz drives listening to the radio.

PAUL HARVEY
(on radio)
... the pitchers names? Mike Kekich and Fritz Peterson. And they are both New York Yankees.
(beat)
(MORE)

PAUL HARVEY (CONT'D)
For what it's worth.
(beat)
Paul Harvey... good day.

CUT TO:

INT. FRITZ'S RENTAL - A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz's dining room table is covered with newspapers.
All of them are still covering the trade.

It will not go away.

EXT. SPRING TRAINING GAME - A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz goes into his wind-up and...

THWACK! A Houston Astro smacks a shot off the outfield wall.

Fritz pitching poorly again to a sea of boos.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Another poor outing for Fritz Peterson
and the Yankees. And a familiar sight...
here comes Ralph Houk with the hook.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)
The Yanks will be opening the season next
week versus the Indians and are obviously
hoping that their spring record means
nothing. Otherwise, it's going to be a
long season.

Once again, out comes Houk.

HOUK
Sorry, Pete. I think it's getting a
little better, huh?

FRITZ
Yeah. I barely notice it.

HOUK
This probably won't help.

Houk taps his left arm.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Houk is signaling for a lefty. Who's it
going to be?

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)
And there's something you don't see every day.

Out of the bullpen comes... Mike.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Mike Kekich is going to get a little work. I'm sure he and Peterson have some catching up to do.

Mike jogs out to the mound and holds his hand out for the ball.

Fritz stares at him. Mike stares back.

MIKE
You going to give me the ball so I can pitch?

Fritz takes the ball and puts it hard into Mike's glove.

FRITZ
Pitch. Unless of course, you're not feeling well.

They glare at each other till Houk gets Fritz to head back into the dugout.

Mike throws a few warm-up pitches.

The crowd BOOS.

Oddly, Mike seems to be enjoying it.

CUT TO:

INT. FRITZ'S RENTAL - THAT NIGHT

The phone rings and Fritz answers it.

FRITZ
Hello.

MARILYN (V.O.)
Hello.

FRITZ
Chip?

MARILYN (V.O.)
Yeah.

FRITZ
How are you doing?

MARILYN (V.O.)
Not great.

Fritz never wanted to hear that.

INT. KEKICH RENTAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Mike answers it. It's Fritz.

FRITZ
We need to talk.

MIKE
You want to talk. Let's talk.

They sit down.

FRITZ
(deep breath)
How did we ever get here?

MIKE
I know.

FRITZ
Is what we did so wrong? Do they have to boo like that? I won 17 games last year.

Mike nods.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
I talked to Marilyn tonight.

MIKE
She's not talking to me.

FRITZ
You know when we got into this, I was just happy she found someone. And doubly happy it was you.

MIKE
Thanks.

FRITZ
We always said if someone wanted out, we would call the whole thing off. Well... Marilyn wanted out, and I was too selfish to do anything about it.
(MORE)

FRITZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

I can't leave her alone. It's wrong.

MIKE

So what are you saying?

FRITZ

I guess I am saying when we head north for the season, we should go back to the way it was.

(beat)

Try and make this all go away.

MIKE

(takes it in)

OK... OK. Yeah. I thought I was going to have to fight you. But this is good. I like this plan.

(realizes something)

Um...?

FRITZ

What is it?

MIKE

Have you told Susanne?

INT. KEKICH HOUSE - NEW JERSEY - A FEW DAYS LATER

SUSANNE

(crying)

No!!!

FRITZ

I know. And I'm sorry, but that is how it has to be. It's what we agreed to.

SUSANNE

Who cares what we agreed to? I don't want to be with Mike.

FRITZ

You have to. I have to. I told Marilyn I'd never abandon her.

SUSANNE

Marilyn? What about me? What about Kirsten and Reagan?

FRITZ

(knows he's lying)

Well, maybe they would be better off with their real father.

SUSANNE

He was never a father to them. I don't understand. What's wrong with you?

FRITZ

I just didn't think it would be like this. You know? And now everything is soooo complicated. We have to get this under control.

Susanne doesn't know what to say.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

SUSANNE

You already said that. The girls are upstairs. You tell them.

FRITZ

I will.

Fritz turns to leave, but before he does, puts his keys to the house on the kitchen table. Then he heads upstairs.

INT. KIRSTEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kirsten is bossing around her sister and all their stuffed animals in an elaborate tea party, as Fritz enters.

FRITZ

Hey, ladies!

They are thrilled to see him.

KIRSTEN/REAGAN

Daddy Fritz!

REAGAN

We have tea party.

FRITZ

OK, sure.

Fritz sits down on a tiny chair at a tiny table.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

So girls, Daddy Fritz has to go away.

KIRSTEN

When will you be back? Tomorrow?

The girls "serve" him tea.

FRITZ

(playing along)

Hmmm, delicious tea! Actually, Daddy
Fritz will be gone a looong time. But
Daddy Daddy is coming home.

The girls look confused.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

You know, Daddy Daddy. He's going to
live with you and take you to the library
and the ice cream store.

REAGAN

Cookie?

Reagan serves him an imaginary cookies.

FRITZ

Yummy.

KIRSTEN

When will you be back, Daddy?

This is awful and Fritz has no answer. He drinks his
fake tea.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE - A LITTLE BIT LATER

Fritz walks up to the doorway with his luggage and
pauses.

We have been here before. He can't bring himself to go
in.

Suddenly... the door opens. It's Marilyn. And she's
smiling. Or at least trying to.

MARILYN

Welcome home.

He heads inside.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - THE NEXT DAY

Cleveland Indians vs. the Yankees.

A ball flies over the fence, and an Indian rounds the bases.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Home run Buddy Bell! And that's it for Fritz Peterson as the Yankees' woes continue since the start of the season.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

And listen to that: the boo-birds are back and letting Fritz know how they feel.

Fritz walks off the mound defeated. More booing. He looks up into the WAGs section. Marilyn sits clapping. No sign of Susanne.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz finishes changing and is heading out when he bumps into Mike coming out of the shower.

They try to get out of each other's way but keep blocking each other. It's like running into an old girlfriend.

FRITZ

Hey.

MIKE

Hey. Tough out there today.

FRITZ

I just didn't have it.

MIKE

It'll come.

FRITZ

Thanks.

MIKE

A couple of the fellas and I are going out to grab a drink. You interested?

FRITZ

I can't. You know Marilyn.

Ha.

MIKE

I saw her up in the stands. She looks good.

FRITZ
I'll tell her.
(beat)
Maybe not.

They laugh.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
How's--

MIKE
Kind of a mess. A couple of those
articles really hit her hard.

FRITZ
Sorry.

MIKE
Yeah. We all are.

FRITZ
I'd like to see the girls sometime.

MIKE
I don't think that's a good idea.

FRITZ
Yeah. Well, Marilyn is waiting.

Fritz heads off.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz stumbles down the stairs from a restless sleep.
Something stops him in his tracks...

Marilyn has laid out a giant breakfast spread.

MARILYN
(a little Stepford-y)
Hey, sleepyhead. I hope you're hungry.

Fritz approaches the food and her demeanor cautiously.

FRITZ
Is this for me?

MARILYN
Of course, silly. Who else?

Fritz sits down and starts eating.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
I made all your favorites.

FRITZ
Yeah.
(eating)
... goood.... Hmmm. Thanks.

MARILYN
No need to thank me. You know I was thinking, when you play the White Sox in October, maybe I would tag along and we could visit your family.

FRITZ
... OK...

This is weird.

INT. PETERSON BEDROOM-- LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz and Marilyn have sex. She is trying very hard.

MARILYN
(passionate)
Oh God! Fritz! Fritz! Fritz!

He stops her.

FRITZ
You don't have to do that.

MARILYN
I love you.
(beat)
Do you love me?

FRITZ
Yeah.

Fritz finishes quickly to her "moans" of delight.

Marilyn rolls over and sleeps.

Fritz can only lay there staring up at the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLUR OF GAMES AND LIFELESS SEX

Fritz stares into the distance, be it day game, night game, rain delay or sex with Marilyn.

CUT TO:

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - NIGHT

Like a zombie, Fritz comes out of the stadium after a game.

FRITZ'S POV: Mike getting picked up in the Kekich family car.

Fritz runs towards the car, but they pull away.

Fritz can only see the back of Susanne's head as they drive away.

INT. JFK AIRPORT - THE NEXT MORNING

The Yankee team bus unloads into the terminal. As the players get off the bus, they are handed their airline tickets.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Fritz sits next to Mel who is showing him pictures of his kids. Fritz barely listens and stares out the window.

MEL

This is Todd in his uniform. He's a pitcher and plays outfield....

(another)

Here's me showing him how to throw a change-up.

Fritz can't help but think about the girls.

MEL (CONT'D)

How's... never mind.

INT. AIRPORT - LATER

A sign reads "Welcome to Cleveland, Ohio." The Yankees exit the plane and head towards baggage claim.

INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM - LATER

Fritz is the last guy still waiting for his luggage.

FRITZ
(to self)
I hate Cleveland.

Thurman Munson comes running up with a big smile.

MUNSON
Where's your luggage, Pete?

FRITZ
I don't know. I guess it's coming.

MUNSON
Wrong! It's on its way to France. Ha-ha! I got you!!! I finally got you!!!

FRITZ
Yes, you did. Good one. I have been bested by the master.

Munson runs off as the everyone heads towards the charter bus.

MUNSON
(to other players)
I got Pete! I got him good!

Fritz walks over to Pete Sheehy.

FRITZ
Hey, Pete. Thurman sent my luggage to Paris, can you call the airlines.

SHEEHY
No problem. They'll find it.

FRITZ
Thanks!

INT. MUNICIPAL STADIUM, CLEVELAND - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz sits in the dugout, once again lost in thought, as the Yanks are losing to the lowly Indians.

Fritz turns to Mel.

FRITZ

I'll be right back, going to go inside and grab a bite. The only good thing about Cleveland is the Clubhouse food.

CLUBHOUSE

Fritz pokes around and finds a fridge with a delicious-looking deviled eggs.

Fritz pulls out the tray and starts eating a few.

Suddenly...

VOICE

Those are for after the game.

Fritz looks up and sees the voice of the Indians, Herb Score.

HERB SCORE

You're going to get in trouble with the clubhouse guy.

FRITZ

You're Herb Score, right? You had a hell of a curve ball.

HERB SCORE

As good as Koufax's and my fast ball was slightly faster. It's nice to meet the infamous Fritz Peterson. You taking a break?

FRITZ

My head wasn't in the game. Hasn't been all year.

He eats another deviled egg.

HERB SCORE

It's just a game. I learned that the hard way. Ever since that line drive hit me in the head all those years ago, it's hard to get too excited about any one game.

FRITZ

Man, how many years ago was that now?

HERB SCORE

Who knows? The only anniversary I pay attention to is the one that involves my wife.

Herb grabs an egg.

HERB SCORE (CONT'D)

Don't tell anyone I took this. See you around Fritz Peterson.

FRITZ

See ya.

Fritz puts the almost-empty tray back in the fridge and heads back to the...

DUGOUT

Fritz sidles up to Munson.

FRITZ

Hey Tugs. They have an incredible tray of deviled eggs in a fridge down in the clubhouse.

That sounds great to Munson.

MUNSON

Thanks. Be right back.

Fritz sits back down near Mel.

FRITZ

I met Herb Score.

MEL

Poor bastard. He never pitched the same after he got hit by that line drive.

FRITZ

Yeah. I'm not sure he cared.

CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Thurman has found the tray of eggs and is eating one when...

CLUBHOUSE ATTENDANT

Hey! What the hell is the matter with you? Who eats an entire tray of eggs, you animal?

MUNSON

(mouth full of eggs)
It wasn't me. I swear.

INT. CLEVELAND HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fritz sits down and dials the phone.

FRITZ

Don't hang up!

Reveal: Susanne on the other end of the call.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

If I can't be with you, then none of this is worth it. Susanne, I thought I was doing the right thing before. The proper thing. But I want to be with you. No matter how crazy it gets.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

The phone rings and Marilyn picks up the phone.

MARILYN

Hello.

FRITZ

Hey, Chip.

MARILYN

Is everything alright? It's late.

FRITZ

Yeah, everything is fine. Well, no, not really.

She knows right there.

MARILYN

Fritz, please.

FRITZ

I have to. I can't keep pretending like this.

MARILYN

I love you.

FRITZ

I don't think you do, and I know I don't love you.

MARILYN

You promised. You said you wouldn't ever leave me. You said.

FRITZ

I know. But I think for once, I have to choose my happiness over yours.

MARILYN

Fuck you!

FRITZ

Marilyn, please, I'm going to hang up.

MARILYN

Fuck you! I tried so hard. I--

FRITZ

It just wasn't working.

MARILYN

Don't you hang up--

For the first time ever, Fritz hangs up the phone on her.

He won't let her just boss him around anymore. He wants to be with Susanne, no matter what the cost.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - LATER

Fritz walks down the hallway and knocks on a door.

A second later, Mike opens the door.

FRITZ

Hey, Virus, we need to talk.

He knows what this is too.

MIKE

Aw, crap. Come on in.

The door shuts.

Beat.

A stewardess exits the room buttoning up her shirt and smoothing out her skirt.

EXT. KEKICH HOUSE - NEW JERSEY - THE NEXT DAY

Fritz parks the car and goes running up the pathway.

Susanne throws open the door and goes running to hug him.

SUSANNE

It's going to get bad.

FRITZ

I don't care. Let them hit us with the worst they got.

They kiss and go inside. We hear...

KIRSTEN/REAGAN (O.S.)

Daddy!

INT. YANKEE STADIUM LOCKER ROOM- A FEW DAYS LATER

Fritz arrives and is throwing his stuff in his locker when he looks over to Mike's locker...

It's empty. The name Kekich has been taken down as well.

Pete Sheehy approaches.

SHEEHY

Hey, Pete.

FRITZ

Pete, did Mike move his locker out of the nursery?

SHEEHY

Kekich is dead. They traded him this morning.

(beat)

The GM would like to see you too.

Fritz is in shock as he heads upstairs.

INT. LEE MCPHAIL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Fritz enters but someone else is behind McPhail's desk.

FRITZ

I'm sorry, I was told to see Mr. McPhail.

MAN

Sit down, Fritz. OK to call you Fritz?

FRITZ

Sure, mister....?

GABE PAUL

I'm Gabe Paul. Special advisor to George Steinbrenner. Mr. Steinbrenner has decided to get more active in the running of his team.

FRITZ

Am I being traded?

GABE PAUL

We sent Mr. Kekich away, because we think you can help us more. Mr. Steinbrenner wants to win a World Series.

FRITZ

Believe me, we all do.

GABE PAUL

Alright then.

FRITZ

Mr. Paul. IF you guys ever decide to trade me, please do me one favor: anywhere but Cleveland.

GABE PAUL

You have my word on that.

FRITZ

Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - APRIL 1974

Yankees vs. The Indians.

Fritz takes the mound... as #16 on the Cleveland Indians.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Fritz Peterson back in familiar territory as he takes on his old team the New York Yankees.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Peterson had a little bit of arm trouble last year, and they traded him at the beginning of the season for first baseman Chris Chambliss, whom the Yankees are expecting big things from.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

But Peterson's doing OK today against his former team. He struck out Craig Nettles and that will bring up Roy White, the Yankees right fielder.

Roy White steps into the batter's box.

Fritz looks over into the Yankee dugout. He can see Mel Stottlemeyer, looking back at him and smiling.

Fritz looks up into the stands and finds the Cleveland WAGs section. And there's Susanne. She waves to him.

Fritz takes a deep breath.

FRITZ

(to self)

It's all about control.

He winds up and throws as hard as he can...

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Whoa! Peterson hit White right on the shoulder! That is going to sting for a bit!

FADE TO BLACK.

AS THE ANNOUNCERS SPEAK WE...

SUPER:

FOOTAGE OF FRITZ AND SUSANNE'S SIMPLE BACKYARD WEDDING CEREMONY. THE GIRLS ARE FLOWER GIRLS.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Fritz and Susanne were married in 1974. They raised Kirsten and Reagan, as well as two kids of their own, and are still married today.

FOOTAGE OF FRITZ WALKING REAGAN DOWN THE AISLE.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Reagan asked Fritz to give her away at her wedding.

FOOTAGE OF ANY EMPTY SEAT FOR THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Mike was not happy and didn't show up.

FOOTAGE OF OLD YANKEE STADIUM

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Fritz Peterson will forever hold the record for the pitcher with the lowest ERA at old Yankee Stadium. His 2.52 ERA beat out Whitey Ford with a 2.55. He was a control pitcher.

CU OF FRITZ'S REAL BASEBALL CARD

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Fritz never coached at Northern Illinois or anywhere else. He was never hired as an announcer anywhere either.

FOOTAGE OF YANKEES WINNING THE SERIES IN 1977

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

In 1977 the New York Yankees finally won another World Series with many of Fritz's former teammates and Chris Chambliss.

FOOTAGE OF MARILYN'S HOUSE. WE SEE SOMEONE PEAKING OUT A CURTAIN FOR A SECOND.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Marilyn Peterson is remarried and has all but disappeared in the years since the trade.

FOOTAGE OF MIKE IN MEXICO

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Mike Kekich got a medical degree in Mexico and would not cooperate with the making of this movie unless someone bought him a boat.

BEAT

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We did not buy him one.

CU OF MIKE KEKICH'S REAL BASEBALL CARD.

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

You know, they used to call Kekich the
next Sandy Koufax.

EXT. PUERTO RICO WINTER BALL -- MANY YEARS LATER

Super: Many Years Later

Fritz trying to warm up with a game of catch.

FRITZ

(to self)

Christ my arm is killing me.

VOICE

You want me to take a look at that.

Fritz looks up to see... Mike.

FRITZ

You a doctor now?

MIKE

Well, in Mexico.

Fritz laughs. With Mike, it's probably true.

FRITZ

How are you?

MIKE

Good. You?

FRITZ

Hanging on. Not a lot of people looking
for wife-swapping announcers.

MIKE

Yeah. Susanne's good?

FRITZ

Yeah.

MIKE

Tell her hi.

FRITZ

I will.

MIKE
You ever talk to Marilyn?

FRITZ
Only through lawyers. And if a check is
late. You?

MIKE
Every now and then, we get together.
(he smiles)

FRITZ
You're unbelievable.

MIKE
I'm actually remarried now.

FRITZ
Really?

MIKE
Yeah, that's her over there. On the end,
behind the dugout.

Mike points into the stands to an attractive Brunette who
might just look a little like Marilyn.

FRITZ
Not bad. Not bad.

MIKE
Thanks.

FRITZ
(joking)
Wanna trade?

As they laugh we...

FADE OUT.

THE END.