

the Bandits



by Ethan Dawes

WGAW #1759749

EXT. LAMADE STADIUM - EVENING

Bleachers overflow with buzzing fans. The GOODYEAR BLIMP floats aimlessly above the field. From a distance it looks like a professional baseball stadium, minor league maybe...

COMMENTATOR V.O.

It doesn't get much more exciting than this. It's win or go home for these boys...

QUICK CU'S OF: CAMERAS, LIGHTS, CLEATS digging into the batter's box. The UMPIRE crouches behind the CATCHER. SWEAT BEADS drip down the side of a young face.

We see a cleat push up against the rubber on the pitcher's mound.

COMMENTATOR V.O. (CONT'D)

California is up by two, but the bases are juiced for Japan's big man coming up to bat. If the boys from the West can get out of this inning, they're taking home the title.

REVEAL: These are **Little Leaguers**. Playing in the championship game of the Little League World Series.

Our team on defense, California, wear blue and yellow jerseys with WEST scrawled across the chest. The opponent, JAPAN, in red and white.

The CALIFORNIA COACH, 40's, sweet but pensive, calls for time and waves to the catcher, BEN "PICKLES" SCHWARTZ, 13, curly hair, solid--

COACH

Pickles!

Pickles jogs over and joins them on the mound.

They approach the pitcher MICKEY STANLEY, newly minted 13-year-old, brown hair, light eyes, we nearly see him becoming a man in this moment. He waits with great anticipation as his coach approaches--

COACH (CONT'D)

Hey, this is nothing. We've been in tougher spots. This is your game, Mickey, they're just playing in it.

Pickles looks to Mickey, trying to gauge his mood--

COACH (CONT'D)

If you can get two strikes on him,
then go with the curveball. Unless
I call for something else, that's
the plan.

Mickey feigns some confidence.

COACH (CONT'D)

Don't leave it hanging. Pickles,
that thing gets in the dirt, I want
you jumping on it, a pass ball
means a run.

PICKLES

Got it, Coach.

Coach puts the ball in Mickey's glove--

COACH

(softens)

Hey, look around you, you've made
it. I couldn't be more proud of you
boys. Just have fun, that's what
it's all about.

Mickey smiles in relief.

MICKEY

Thanks, Dad.

Mickey's Dad and Pickles walk off to their respective places.

Mickey looks around the stadium, connects with his mom,
DEBRA, 40's, proud, nervous, she smiles and waves. His eyes
continue to wander to the OPPONENTS DUGOUT, where we find a
dozen Japanese kids, waiting with great anticipation.

The BATTER, a beast of a 13-year-old, size 14 shoe, looks at
Mickey, waiting for him to give him everything he's got.

Mickey takes a deep breath, winds up, and UNLOADS. Batter
rears back, swings, and hits the ball INTO THE NEXT ZIP CODE.

But foul. RELIEF from one side of the stands, AGONY from the
other--

COMMENTATOR V.O.

And a long strike one.

Mickey takes the next sign, this time... SMACK!..the ball
hits the glove before the batter can finish his swing.

COMMENTATOR V.O. (CONT'D)
And strike two! The big righty from
Balboa Park nearly touching eighty
miles an hour on that one.

Mickey's Dad shoots him a wink and bubblegum-smacking-smile.

The batter steps out of the box, takes a deep breath, steps back in. Mickey is ready to pitch immediately, he goes right into his wind-up...

BEGIN SLOW MOTION

Mickey releases. The ball soars through the air, the batter clocks the rotation of the ball, Mickey's face falls as he realizes...he left it hanging.

He started it too high...the ball drops, but instead of dropping away from the batter, out of his reach, it drops right into his wheelhouse, like a big lopsided mango.

END SLOW MOTION

CRACK!

CU ON MICKEY: Just like that, it's over.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

CHYRON: TEN YEARS LATER

Mickey, now 28, wears a wrinkled white T and blue jeans, everyone else is ready for practice. He's asleep against his locker. His COACH, 40's, gut, windbreaker, shoots him a look-

COACH
STANLEY!

He wakes up, groggy--

MICKEY
So loud. Oh my god, why so loud?

COACH
Get out there and throw some
batting practice.

MICKEY
Yes sir, Mr. Coach, sir.

It's a MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAM. Painted on the wall is "ACES" LUBBOCK, TX.

Mickey begrudgingly gets up, opens his locker, flips on a BOOMBOX. Bruce Springsteen blares through the speakers, Mickey dances as he gets ready. Other players are irked by the noise.

PLAYER 1
Turn that crap off, Stanley.

MICKEY
I'm sorry, I can't hear you! Gotta respect the boss!

THE TOWEL BOY, 18, passes pushing a cart full of dirty uniforms.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Seth, do me a solid and take care of some personals while you're at it.

Mickey reaches into his locker, pulls out a small bag of laundry and tosses it in.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
I don't like wasting water on small loads.

Seth begins to walk off-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Easy there, Usain Bolt.

Mickey then removes a HUGE bag of laundry from his locker--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
It's been a while.

Mickey takes a whiff from the bag.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Careful, that's powerful stuff.

SETH
I'm not supposed to wash any personal belongings.

MICKEY
Who's making this personal? I don't want to make this personal. I want to save the environment. That's actually a personal dream of mine, water is being wasted everyday--

Seth walks off as Mickeys drones on...

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

Mid-practice. Mickey is on the mound throwing batting practice to his teammate TUCKER, 26, big, fat, obnoxious goatee.

TUCKER

Let's see what you got, kid.

MICKEY

Fastball. I'm going to throw you a fastball.

Mickey winds up and throws... WHACK! Tucker sends it out of the park in a hurry.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Nice cut.

TUCKER

That all you got?

MICKEY

It's practice, Tuck, let's build your confidence, we all know you need it.

TUCKER

Why don't you give me that famous curveball of yours?

This winds up and throws... WHIFF Blows a fastball by him.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Do that again, I dare you.

Mickey THROWS HIM SOME CHIN MUSIC. Tucker falls to the ground. Mickey smirks. Tucker jumps up and walks towards him, pointing his bat--

TUCKER (CONT'D)

Watch it!

MICKEY

What're you gunna do, meathead?

COACH

KNOCK IT OFF!

The boys cool down. Tucker gets back in the batter's box.

TUCKER

Let's see that breaking ball, tough guy.

Micky winds up and releases. The ball soars towards Tucker, then drops so quickly and dramatically it looks like it's going to drill a hole through the ground. SWING AND WHIFF. Nowhere near it.

ANGLE ON: Coaches, impressed...until they see Mickey, holding his arm, wincing in extreme pain.

MICKEY
No, no, no...

He tries to move it-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
OW!

COACH 2
Crap.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

OPEN ON: A set of X-RAYS. DR. MITCHELL, 40's, inspects them. Mickey sits on the examination table--

DR. MITCHELL
I'm seeing more and more of this
with kids your age. When did you
start throwing a curveball?

MICKEY
Eleven...maybe twelve?

DR. MITCHELL
Your body wasn't developed enough
to handle that sort of workload.
Players like you start throwing all
these wacky pitches too early then
it catches up with them and...SNAP.
(Off Mickey)
There's really only one thing we
can do--

MICKEY
Tommy John?

DR. MITCHELL
I was gunna say hack the whole
thing off, but yeah, that would
work, too.

Doctor smiles, knowing this weighs on him.

DR. MITCHELL (CONT'D)
Sorry, kid. I know that's a tough
pill to swallow for pitchers.

MICKEY
What if I just rest? Physical
therapy?

DR. MITCHELL
You'll be able to do every day
tasks, but throwing a baseball is
out of the question if you don't
have the surgery.

Mickey exhales.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - LATER

Shack of an office, coffee pot from the 80's, legal pads.
Mickey has his feet up on the tanker desk that sits between
him and Coach. Coach slides a check across his desk.

MICKEY
What's this?

COACH
Your final check, plane voucher for
the flight home.

MICKEY
That's it? I'm done?
(looks at ticket)
A coach seat?!

COACH
Lotta guys out there looking for
their shot, Ace.

MICKEY
What about my shot? I spend a year
out here in the middle of friggin'
nowhere giving you guys results,
and that's worth what, \$600 bucks?

COACH
We're going to pay for the surgery,
but we can't keep you on the
roster. Let's face it, your numbers
haven't been great.

MICKEY
I'll be better in no time. Really,
it's nothing. I'll do whatever--

COACH
Best of luck to you.

MICKEY
This is bull--

COACH
Watch it.

Mickey retracts.

COACH (CONT'D)
Listen, I know you think you can
skate by on your talent, but
sometimes you gotta do things you
don't want to do in order to get
where you need to be.

MICKEY
I think they call that compromise.

COACH
They call it teamwork. You got
something, kid. But you need to
stop getting in the way of
yourself. You're a pain in the ass.

Mickey gets up. Heads to the door--

MICKEY
I'm good enough to play in the
bigs. You know that.

COACH
So was Matt Hausfater.

MICKEY
Who's that?

COACH
Another pitcher you've never heard
of because his bad attitude got in
the way of his 100 mile an hour
fastball.

Mickey shakes his head, leaves. The door closes, we stay on
coach.

MICKEY
(from down the hall)
If this is a middle seat I'm gunna
lose it!

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Players avert their eyes as he packs up his stuff. Seth passes pushing the cart of clean laundry--

MICKEY

Hey Seth, you have my clothes?

Seth hands him a bag, Mickey inspects his clothes, they're now TODDLER SIZED AND PINK. His uniform, pants, everything. Other players laugh.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Real funny! VERY FUNNY!

Mickey CHUCKS some of the laundry around the room. He then continues to completely TRASH THE ROOM. Players start to video it with their phones as he spirals and LAUNCHES A TRASH CAN AT A LOCKER.

OFF THE CRASH of the locker...

ESTABLISHING: PLANE ARRIVING AT LAX

INT. LAX - LATER

Mickey walks through the BAGGAGE CLAIM, his arm in a sling. His face suddenly lights up. REVERSE ON: His mother, Debra, 60's, holding a sign for: "THE ACE"

INT./EXT. DEBRA'S TOYOTA - LATER

They drive, K-Earth on the radio. Mickey takes in his hometown.

DEBRA

Your dad would be proud of you.

MICKEY

I slacked off.

DEBRA

You're young, you're allowed to slack off.

MICKEY

I'm not that young anymore.

DEBRA

Hun, you had a shot and you took it, that's more than most kids can say. You hungry or anything?

MICKEY

Yeah.

DEBRA

Anywhere you want.

He shoots his mom a smile...

ESTABLISHING: BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE

Donations from the local pizzeria and construction companies have given way to soft outfield grass and softer cushions on the bleachers. It's dialed in. With the exception of an old sign at the entrance with faded paint that reads: "*WELCOME TO BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE*"

We catch various ballplayers on the field--

-A ATHLETIC KID, 12, is hitting bombs over the fence.

-A RICH KID, 10, wears a multitude of sweatbands and goes through an exhausting routine before stepping up to bat. He takes a pitch, then steps out of the batter's box and goes back into his routine.

-A PORTLY KID, 9, is getting help from a DAD, 40's, as he piles catcher's gear on him. It's an overwhelming amount of padding. The kid goes to stand and slowly TIPS OVER.

INT./EXT. THE DUGOUT DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Mickey takes a HUGE BITE out of a burger. DAVE aka "DUGOUT DAVE", 60's, jeans, grease-stained shirt, a valley holdover from it's agriculture days, shares a smile with DEBRA as they watch him eat-

DAVE

Glad you still have that appetite.

MICKEY

Now that I'm not playing, I'm just going to get really fat, so stock the fridge. Is this cheese organic?

DAVE

You'll get back out on that field, what have I always told you?

MICKEY

Trust your gut.

DAVE

What's your gut telling you?

Mickey BURPS.

DEBRA
Manners, Mickey!

Dave slaps him in the face with a bag of hot dog buns he's putting away.

DAVE
I'll pay you fifty bucks to paint a new welcome sign for the park.

Mickey looks at the overgrown sign--

MICKEY
Why haven't they fixed that thing?
They don't seem to be lacking any funds around here.

DAVE
They just pour money into new batting cages and computers. Someone was talking about video cameras for replays. Can you believe that? At a little league! Ridiculous. They don't understand the feeling you get when you step into a ballpark is the most important part. We get replay cameras, I'm out of here. These parents argue enough.

MICKEY
The game's changing. Any new talent?

DAVE
Some solid players. None as good as you and the Backyard Bad Boys.

Dave looks at a FRAMED NEWSPAPER CLIPPING on the wall, Mickey as a kid, being lifted by his former All-Star team with the headline "LOCAL BOYS BOUND FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP". It strikes a chord in Mickey.

MICKEY
No point in showing up if you don't win.

DAVE
There's this one girl, Mackenzie Jones, throws a fastball like I've never seen. Reminds me of you.

MICKEY
Baseball, not softball.

DAVE
How long you been gone? They got
girls out here playing hardball.
Good ones, too.

MICKEY
Girls can't play baseball.

Debra WHACKS Mickey on the back of the head with the same bag
of hot dog buns--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
OW! What? Put those away, you don't
work here--

DEBRA
These are good. Not too damaging
but they get the point across.

Dave nods in agreement.

SFX: SMACK.

Micky DUCKS. As if he thought the noise was his mom whacking
him again--

SMACK!

He then turns his head, realizing it's something else.

THWACK!

He gets up and rounds the corner to find MACKENZIE JONES, 12,
dark features, laser focus, ponytail sticking straight out of
the back of her hat.

She's throwing HEAT to an older girl in a CATCHER'S MASK.
Mickey is transfixed. Dave approaches--

DAVE
Could use some work on her control.
The league just lost a coach. Maybe
you should step in...

MICKEY
Are you nuts? If my minor league
team found out I moved in with my
mom and started coaching Little
League, I'd get laughed out of a
career.

DAVE

Until that arm gets better, you
don't have a career.

MICKEY

I don't have the patience for kids.
They're always hungry...and sticky.

VOICE (O.C.)

Dave! Let's get that grill fired
up, I'm starving!

Mickey and Dave look down at SCOTCH JONES, 7, goofy, oddly
mature, always wearing golf attire, tugging on Dave's pants.

MICKEY

See what I mean?

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

Scotch! Time to go.

Mickey looks up, catcher takes off her mask, TANNER JONES,
27, no bullshit, dark eyes, wipes the hair out of her face.
Her and Mickey lock eyes for a brief moment.

MICKEY

Um, hey, what's up?

TANNER

Nothing, you?

MICKEY

Nothing.

TANNER

Cool.

MICKEY

Cool.

TANNER

Great chat.

MICKEY

Not my best.

She laughs and walks off.

DAVE

Nice one. That's her sister,
Tanner. I thought you were going to
get her name but that would've been
moving too fast for you.

MICKEY

I like to take things slow. And the little one? Her...?

DAVE

Brother.

INT. SPORTS AGENCY - OFFICE - LATER

OPEN ON the video of Mickey trashing the locker room, it has tens of thousands of views. With the title CUT MINOR LEAGUER LOSES IT.

PULL OUT to reveal Mickey's agent, TAD, mid 30's, tight suit, behind a desk COVERED in various bobbleheads, playing the video on his phone-

TAD

Healthy or not, nobody wants this in their clubhouse.

MICKEY

Tad, I gotta play again, I'll do anything.

TAD

We need to improve your image first.

MICKEY

I played three seasons in the minors, I have no image!

TAD

You're a liability! This is a liability. Professional organizations don't want negative press like this, at any level.

MICKEY

What happened to this friggin' sport? Baseball is about getting dirty. It's about stepping up to the plate when a ball is getting thrown at your face at 90 miles an hour! It's not about being nice and feelings and crap. I may as well go coach Little League!

Tad thinks.

TAD

Wait...that's it.

MICKEY

What?

TAD

Little League.

MICKEY

I'm too old to play Little League!

TAD

Not to play. Coach! Go coach Little League! Injured ballplayer gives back to his community with his time off! Are you kidding? People eat that stuff up.

MICKEY

You want me, a professional baseball player--

TAD

--Former--

MICKEY

Whatever!...To go coach little snot-nosed kids how to field ground balls?

TAD

Hey, you don't have to. I also don't have to represent a pitcher who can't pitch--

MICKEY

Tad, you can't be serious...

TAD

Former pitcher revisits his roots! You said you'd do anything...this is anything. This is a start.

Off Mickey, reluctant...

INT./EXT. MICKEY'S CAR - LATER

Mickey sits in his Ford Explorer parked outside Balboa Little League. He takes a deep breath and gets out.

INT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The office is covered with CHAMPIONSHIP BANNERS and faded photos of wide-eyed Little League teams. Behind the desk is League President STEVE CAMERON, 60's, polo shirt, balding.

Mickey sits across from him.

STEVE
What's the catch?

Mickey spots a COOLER and removes a Capri Sun from it.

MICKEY
Man, I missed these things. No catch...I love...kids. I love baseball and I can't play right now, so I figured I'd pass along everything I know. The basics--

STEVE
Healthy competition...
exercise...confidence building...

MICKEY
...Giving wedgies, hawking loogies, spitting sunflower seeds. Yeah. I got all the bases covered. Pun intended.

STEVE
Mickey, we take this seriously. If I catch you slacking off, I'll get rid of you.

MICKEY
Steve, can I call you Steve? Or it it Mr. President of Baseball?

Steve isn't entertained.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Mr. President Steve, I won most of the banners hanging on this wall. Who better to teach kids the ins-and-outs of this place than the guy who put this place on the map?

He takes NOISY sip of the Capri Sun.

STEVE
The draft is tomorrow morning at 7am. Leave the attitude at home.

Mickey SPITS Capri Sun everywhere-

MICKEY
7am! Who's awake at 7am?!

Steve wipes the beverage off his face.

STEVE
Most human adults. Including all
the other coaches that need to be
at work by 9am.

MICKEY
Can we push that back...or is there
some sort of auto-draft feature?

STEVE
This isn't Fantasy Football. 7am
tomorrow morning. And I suggest you
get a co-coach, these kids can run
you into the ground.

Off Mickey, not exactly thrilled...

INT. BIG 5 SPORTING GOODS - LATER THAT DAY

It's sheer mediocrity is what has kept this giant returns
closet/sporting goods store safe from bankruptcy. Never
extending beyond a first floor like it's competitors, Dick's
and Sports Chalet, Big 5 has outlasted them all by staying in
it's underwhelming lane.

BLUE SHIRTED EMPLOYEES aimlessly walk past WALLS OF ATHLETIC
EQUIPMENT. We see customers in various departments using
equipment incorrectly--

-Two 12-YEAR-OLDS casually place a TRAMPOLINE under a
BASKETBALL HOOP.

-A OLD MAN is testing GOLF EQUIPMENT, he lines up to swing in
the practice stall FACING THE WRONG WAY, shooting into the
store. An EMPLOYEE runs up and turns him around.

-A TEENAGER sits in a kayak with a helmet on, looking oddly
serious. We PULL OUT to reveal another TEENAGER pushing him,
sending him FLYING off a bench that has been propped up like
a ramp, into a wall of inflatable pool toys.

-Back to the 12-year-olds, one of them is stuck on top of the
hoop, the other trying to lasso him with a jump rope.

Walking briskly down the aisle is PICKLES, now 29. He's barking orders at BOPE, 16, thin as a rail, glasses too big for his face, staring off into space--

PICKLES

Bope! Redress the mannequins, pump-up the basketballs, and go take the Spring skiing stuff off the wall.

BOPE

Yes sir, Mr. Pickles.

Pickles' face lights up as he see's...

PICKLES

ACE?!

MICKEY

The Big Pickle.

They hug.

PICKLES

Man, I feel like I haven't seen you since college!

MICKEY

I know, sorry I kinda lost touch.

PICKLES

Hey, I was your catcher...that's a bond that can't be broken by a few ignored phone calls...texts...and notarized letters. Did you get the care package I sent?

MICKEY

I did, turns out ice cream doesn't travel very well by mail...thanks, though.

PICKLES

What brings you 'round these parts? I didn't know you were back in town!

MICKEY

Yeah, sorta threw my arm out and...got cut.

PICKLES

Dang, I'm sorry man. What's up? Want a job application?

In the b.g. we see Bope near the ski equipment, he's assessing two skis that are stuck to the wall.

MICKEY

Nah, I wanted to talk to you about Little League.

PICKLES

Baseball is aisle six.

MICKEY

No, I think we should coach Little League together.

Bope continues to struggle with the skis, trying to pry them off the wall, Mickey and Pickles don't notice.

PICKLES

Us, like you and me, the dynamic-duo, coach?

MICKEY

Back to the glory days, what do you think?

PICKLES

Heck yes! I've always wanted to give one of those uplifting speeches when the team is down in the dumps and the game is on the line!

MICKEY

Great. The draft is tomorrow at 7am, I can't make it so you gotta be there.

Bope's face has turned BEET RED as he continues to struggle with the skis.

PICKLES

No can do, gotta open up shop here. Do you have something more important like a doctor's appointment or family emergency or are you just too lazy?

MICKEY

After all these years, you still know me better than anyone else.

WHACK! Bope NAILS himself in the face with the ski and falls to the ground. Mickey and Pickles turn--

PICKLES
Keep up the good work, Bope.

Bope gives a THUMBS UP from the ground.

MICKEY
He gunna be okay?

PICKLES
He'll be fine. Nature over nurture.
Anyways, this is exciting!

PRE-LAP SFX: ALARM BUZZING takes us to...

INT. MICKEY'S BEDROOM - 6:30AM

Mickey silences his alarm. Goes back to sleep.

INT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE - CONFERENCE ROOM - 7:15 AM

We GLIDE DOWN the table. Steve sits at the head, Parent/Coaches sit on either side of him staring each other down. There's an unoccupied seat at the end of the table.

DAD 1
Do we wait?

Next to Steve sits JEFF JONES, 50's, strong jaw, stern, wears a GIANTS hat.

JEFF
Steve, we have jobs to get to...
families to support. This kid has
nothing to do but watch cartoons.
Let's get into it.

DAD 1
Are we sure he was the best choice?
I heard he's a bit of a loose
cannon...

STEVE
He was the only volunteer--

MOM 1
Mickey Stanley, is he--

JEFF
Same kid who got us to the Little
League World Series fifteen years
ago. Then gave up a grand slam in
the championship.

DAVE (O.C.)
I'll draft his team for him.

ANGLE ON: Dugout Dave, watching from the end of the room. He walks over and takes the empty seat.

INT. MICKEY'S ROOM - LATER

Mickey wakes up, looks at his clock: 7:45am

MICKEY
Crap!

He puts on pants and DASHES out the door...

EXT. BALBOA PARKING LOT - LATER

Mickey STUMBLIES out of his car and BOLTS towards the office.

INT. BALBOA CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mickey enters, the coaches are wrapping up--

MICKEY
I'm here! I'm here. Did it start?
Are there bagels?

STEVE
Here's your team.

Steve hands him a ROSTER, he looks it over-

MICKEY
Autumn...Mackenzie...Betsy...This
is a softball team. I'm coaching
baseball.

STEVE
Those are all bona fide
ballplayers, son. Dave drafted for
you.

Jeff walks over with a cardboard box and drops it in front of Mickey. THUNK.

JEFF
Here are your jerseys. Your girls
should like these. I have a bet
going with the other dads, odds are
you won't last a week.

Mickey opens the box and pulls out a BRIGHT PINK JERSEY with FLAMINGOS scrawled across the chest.

MICKEY
You gotta be kidding me.

INT./EXT. DAVE'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Dave is wiping down the counter. Scotch sits in front of him with a GIANT SUNDAE.

SCOTCH
I'm gunna need a bigger spoon.

DAVE
Or a snorkel.

Dave hands him a ladle as Mickey storms in, waving the roster in his hand-

MICKEY
Dave! What the heck, man?!

DAVE
You're welcome?

MICKEY
There are two boys on this team,
we're screwed! I can't win with
this team!

DAVE
Who said it's about winning?

MICKEY
If I'm going to coach a Little
League team, it's going to be a
winning one.

DAVE
There's some real talent there,
they just need some guidance...

MICKEY
Matty Weinberg! I heard about this
little nutbar, he got kicked out of
school for biting! Biting?! In the
day-and-age of iPhones? Who bites
anymore?

DAVE

He's just...curious. Mickey, they need someone to teach them to love the game. Someone like you. No one has given these kids a shot because they're girls...or they're a little-

MICKEY

Evil!

DAVE

Odd. Trust me, those dads woulda stuck you with a much worse team.

MICKEY

You stuck me with a cheerleading squad, not a baseball team!

DAVE

You're better than that, kid.

MICKEY

Dave, I'm on board for co-ed Little League. Don't get me wrong. But between you and me, come on, baseball is a man's sport. You gotta be tough. You gotta have ball-
(off Scotch's look)
--Huevos! How am I going to win any games with a chick team?

DAVE

Let's face it. You're not exactly a great communicator. You're not easy to take. Any other group of kids wouldn't have given you the time of day. *Those* kids will listen to you. That's if you have anything to teach them.

MICKEY

The FLAMINGOS?!

DAVE

(laughing)

I had no say in that. Man, those are some ugly jerseys.

SFX: AN ENORMOUS BELCH echoes from the counter, Scotch sits there, sundae gone, eyes droopy.

SCOTCH

Call my mom. Call a chopper. I'm gunna need to be airlifted outta here.

Scotch slowly falls off his stool and lands with a thud. He's immediately asleep.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - THE NEXT MORNING

QUICK CUTS OF: Young baseball players looking like PROS. They're turning double plays, making diving catches, exhibiting perfect swings.

SFX: A LOUD WHISTLE takes us out of the sequence to another field where PICKLES, WEARING A PINK FLAMINGOS HAT, IS STOKED.

PICKLES

Listen up you jive turkeys!

REVERSE ON THE TEAM: WE PAN DOWN A LINE OF FACES-- girls of all different shapes and sizes and two puny boys, the antithesis of the players we just saw.

PICKLES (CONT'D)

You little monkey butts! You goofy jelly--

Mickey, wearing sunglasses and his faded Balboa All-Star hat, carrying a bat, intervenes--

MICKEY

It's too early for that, man.

PICKLES

Sorry, I'm just so psyched to be here. There's no crying in baseball! Are you crying? Are you really crying?!

REVERSE ON: The team, nobody is crying. They look at each other quizzically.

MACKENZIE

Nobody is crying...

MICKEY

What are you doing?

PICKLES

Tom Hanks, League of Their Own.

MICKEY

Let's start with some defense,
everyone go to your position.

JANETTE, 12, short, spunky, untied cleats--

JANETTE

You haven't given us positions yet,
sir.

MICKEY

Good point. What's your name?

JANETTE

Relief pitcher, Janette Wilson,
sir...but you can call me Trouble.

PICKLES

What, why?

JANETTE

The Cyclone! The Sultan of Swat!
Shoeless Joe Jackson! Every great
ballplayer has a great nickname.
Mine's... Trouble.

MICKEY

You gotta earn a nickname, kid. But
everyone here can learn something
from Jordette-

JANETTE

Janette.

MICKEY

Whatever. Ask questions. More
importantly, never talk back to
your coach.

JANETTE

But--

MICKEY

No buts! No cuts...and absolutely
zero coconuts. We're not fooling
around here, we're playing
baseball. Now get out to whatever
position you think you should be
playing.

THEY ALL RUN to the Pitcher's mound.

PICKLES

That ain't gunna work...

Mickey recognizes Mackenzie in the middle of the group--

MICKEY
Mackenzie, right?

She nods.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Stay there, everyone else go to a
different position.

THE PACK RUNS OVER TO SHORTSTOP. Mickey hangs his head.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Okay! Just go to whatever position
you played LAST YEAR.

THEY ALL RUN TO THE DUGOUT...and sit on the bench.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Huh.

EXT. PRACTICE - LATER

The team is lined up at THIRD BASE. Fielding ground balls. Mickey hits one down the line and it rolls past TEDDY, 12, ginger, thick-framed glasses, reading a BOOK.

MICKEY
What's that in your hand?

TEDDY
Stats! I'm going to be the next Vin
Scully.

MICKEY
What's your name?

TEDDY
Teddy Saperstein!

MICKEY
Teddy, we're here to make stats,
not read them.

MATTY
(next in line)
Yeah, nerd!

The rest of the gang snickers. Mickey looks over to MATTY WEINBERG, 11, short, yappy-

MICKEY

You must be Mike Weinberg's little brother.

MATTY

The name's Matty, old man.

MICKEY

What's that? I can't hear you from up here.

The other players giggle, Matty is FUMING. He jumps up, GRABS MICKEY BY THE COLLAR, and yanks him down to his level so they're face-to-face--

MATTY

Do you know what it's like being this tall? Whenever I'm at the mall, theme park, any crowded place, someone ALWAYS farts in my face! ALWAYS! I'm face-to-face with someone's butt at least ONCE A DAY! You adults, you think you can go around, farting in kid's faces without them knowing, we know! I've seen some stuff, man!

Mickey, scared, slowly peels the kid off him.

MICKEY

Can you throw this ball over to first?

Matty throws a LOB to Pickles, standing on first. It hangs in the air for an eternity but eventually makes it there.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Good enough. Stay here. Next!

A petite blond ALLY, 12, steps up-

ALLY

(singing)

I'm Alllllyyyyy!

Everyone winces as she belts it out-

MICKEY

Wow, okay, what was that?

ALLY

I'm a soprano!

MICKEY
You're a center fielder.

Mickey tosses a ball in the air and off the CRACK of the bat we...

BEGIN SEQUENCE

-With the exception of Mackenzie, they're all bad. Very bad.

-Janette chases down a ground ball and TRIPS on her laces--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Let's tie those cleats!

-Mickey hits a fly ball to AUTUMN, 11, small, dark hair, stiff as a board. She makes zero effort, it drops right next to her.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Are you here to play baseball?

AUTUMN
No.

MICKEY
Then why show up?

AUTUMN
Disciplinary purposes.

Off Mickey, confused...

-At SECOND BASE and SHORT STOP are IDENTICAL TWINS, MEL and BELLE, 12, brown bob cuts, angular faces--

MICKEY
Mel, Belle! Turn two.

Mickey hits the ball to short stop, Belle struggles to field it, Mel runs over, trying to help. They bump into each other, kicking the ball around, this goes on for an inordinate amount of time. They eventually PICK IT UP TOGETHER and run it over to first base holding hands.

-IN THE PARKING LOT we see CODY THOMAS, 12, tall, lanky, pedaling her bike with a tattered baseball glove hanging off the handlebars. She rides up to the fence and looks at the team, unimpressed. Mickey spots her from the field.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Mackenzie!

Mackenzie runs over to him-

MACKENZIE

Sup?

MICKEY

Is that girl on our team?

MACKENZIE

No...that's Cody Thomas. She just kind of hangs around the park.

Later...

Janette is still in the dugout trying to tie her cleats.

PICKLES

Need help?

JANETTE

I got it.

REVERSE ON: The field, Mel and Belle are braiding each others hair, Ally is singing in center field, Matty is beating up Teddy...

-Mickey spots Mackenzie's older sister Tanner watching from near her car. He waves, she shakes her head.

-Janette has finally tied her cleats, she gets up, runs and TRIPS immediately. They're tied together.

Mickey looks up at the sky.

MICKEY

Looks dark, we should call it.

PICKLES

It's only three.

MICKEY

Good point. Second lunch time.

END SEQUENCE

INT. DUGOUT - LATER

The team looks up at their coaches, exhausted-

MICKEY

Alright guys, that was-

AUTUMN

I think you mean GIRLS.

MICKEY

Huh?

MATTY

I'm pretty sure he means GUYS.

AUTUMN

There are more GIRLS THAN GUYS! He should be addressing us as GIRLS!

MATTY

I'm no stinkin' GIRL!

Autumn gets in Matty's face, before we know it, THE WHOLE TEAM IS CAUGHT IN A SCUFFLE.

MICKEY

Okay...enough, break it up.

The fight continues...

MICKEY (CONT'D)

You guys--girls, whatever, stop...

They still go at it--

PICKLES

1-2-3 EYES ON ME!

They stop, frightened.

PICKLES (CONT'D)

Cool. It worked.

MICKEY

(looking at roster)

Where's Betsy Simon?

The players look at each other, fearful--

MACKENZIE

She's on our team?!

MATTY

She's bad, man. That is one bad bit-

PICKLES

Hey! No cursing.

MATTY

...bitcoin.

MICKEY

Does anyone know where she is?

INT./EXT. TREE HOUSE - LATERs

AN OLD TV IS PLAYING THE SANDLOT, the part where Ham famously says, "You play ball like a girl!"

CRACK! A baseball DRILLS A HOLE IN HAM'S FACE. A plume of smoke billows from the broken TV.

REVERSE ON: BETSY SIMON, 12, an intimidating young lad, FUMING as she looks at the broken TV.

MICKEY (O.C.)
Betsy! Betsy Simon!

Betsy gets up and looks outside her tree house to find Mickey, Pickles, and the rest of the team--

BETSY
WHAT?!

MICKEY
You missed practice.

BETSY
Get off my lawn.

She ducks back into her tree house.

MICKEY
Will you be at the game this weekend?

THE TV COMES FLYING OUT OF THE TREE HOUSE AND CRASHES on the ground in front of them, baseball still lodged in it.

MACKENZIE
I think that's a yes.

PICKLES
That little girl scares the cra--

MATTY
Hey! No cursing.

PICKLES
--aaap out of me.

MATTY
You cursed.

PICKLES
Shut up, I'm an adult.

PRE-LAP SFX: THE NATIONAL ANTHEM sung by a 5-year-old girl...

EXT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE - OPENING DAY

Fields are buzzing, Dave's Diner is packed. We make our way to the MAJOR field where the first game of the season is about to be underway.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

On the third base line we have our home team, the Giants. You might recognize some of these boys from their championship run last year. Their coach, Jeff Jones, is looking to clinch a league record sixth Championship. And the visitors, on the first base line the... Flamingos? Looking, well... confused.

THE FLAMINGOS stand hesitantly, awkwardly tugging at their pink jerseys. The Giants laugh at them from across the field.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOX - SAME

Behind the mic our announcer, BRIAN, 20's, swagger of a 1940's newsman, turns to his co-commentator, Scotch, food all over his face.

BRIAN
(covering the mic)
Those are some ugly jerseys.

SCOTCH
Ugly indeed, Jack, ugly indeed.

BRIAN
My name is Brian.

SCOTCH
Jason, I'm seven-years-old, give me a break.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jeff meets Mickey at home plate, they shake hands and pose for a TEENAGER snapping photos.

JEFF
Why don't you quit now, save your girls some embarrassment?

MICKEY

How old are you, the sum of all
your players?

SNAP! The photo is taken, the coaches separate instantly.

EXT. MAJOR FIELD - LATER

CU ON: The scoreboard. The Giants are up by 9 in the first inning.

Balls are being drilled all over the field. The Flamingos can't get an out to save their life.

Mackenzie pitches, a grounder is hit right back to her, she fields it and throws to first base where Teddy is giving the play-by-play instead of waiting for the ball--

TEDDY

The ball is drilled back up the middle to the pitcher! Mackenzie Jones fields it with ease, throws to first and--

THUNK! It NAILS Teddy in the chest and he falls to the ground. He didn't even put his glove up.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

And the first baseman is down! He's down!

MICKEY

TEDDY! We're in the middle of a game, what are you doing?!

Teddy rolls on the ground in pain--

TEDDY

Sorry, coach! I got a little caught up in the color commentary...

Mackenzie runs over, picks up the ball and SPEEDS down the line, following the runner as he tries to get to second. She tags him out.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(from the ground)

And a stand-up play from the valley wunderkind! The medic should be on their way to help the first baseman. Any day now...anybody? I guess this is how it ends for me...

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Betsy steps into the batter's box and stares down the pitcher. The pitch comes, she swings and BIG WHIFF. As she swings, everyone in the field (as well as the stands) DUCKS.

MICKEY

What's everyone ducking for?

Another pitch. She swings and BAM! She DRILLS one down the first base line, nearly taking Pickles' head off as he stuffs his face with a hot dog. Foul ball, strike two.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Okay, we might have something here.

The next pitch comes, she rears back and...WHIFF. The bat SLIPS out of her hands and it flies back, back, back and OVER THE FENCE.

SFX: GLASS SHATTERING FOLLOWED BY AN ALARM.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Well, she's got power.

BRIAN (V.O.)

And there's one reason not to park behind center field.

SCOTCH (V.O.)

Another reason is sometimes I take our dog Scooter back there to do his business. I tell my mom I clean it up and throw it away but I don't. I should. But I don't.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Um. Thank you for sharing that.

Autumn is up to bat, she timidly steps into the batter's box, stiff as a board. She CLOSES HER EYES as the pitcher throws...

Ball 1.

MICKEY

She's so small...she has no strike zone.

Ball 2.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
A base runner! Finally. Alright,
Autumn, whatever you do, DON'T
SWING!

Ball 3.

The next pitch comes, Autumn doesn't swing but CALLED STRIKE.
Autumn looks at the Umpire-

AUTUMN
A STRIKE?! Are you
(BLEEPING)
serious? THAT'S
(BLEEPING BLEEP)
GET YOUR EYES CHECKED YOU
(BLEEP).

Everyone is shocked as the expletives pour out of this tiny
girl. In the stands, parents are SLACK-JAWED.

UMPIRE
You're outta here!

She's ejected. Jeff shoots Mickey a look...

MICKEY
She's here for disciplinary
purposes.

JEFF
I don't think it's working.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - LATER

CU ON: The scoreboard 10-0, 4th inning. The game is over. The
teams huddle for the post-game cheers.

BRIAN (V.O.)
And due to the mercy rule, the game
is ending two innings short. To put
it simply...that was a beating for
the Flamingos.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

SCOTCH
You got that right, Brittany.

Brian covers the mic.

BRIAN

My name is Brian, Scotch.

SCOTCH

Your last name is Scotch? That's crazy! My first name is Scotch! Brittany Scotch...that's a weird name for an adult man.

Brian shakes his head.

EXT. MAJOR FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The teams line-up and shake hands. As they pass each other--

GIANTS 1

Nice try achem-LOSERS-coughcough.

GIANTS 2

Cute jerseys.

A player is passing Matty-

GIANTS 3

How's the weather down there,
SHORTY!

Matty JUMPS at him, Betsy GRABS THE KID and holds him, Matty starts PUNCHING him. Other players get in on it. The stands are cleared. IT'S AN ALL-OUT BRAWL.

We spot Debra in the stands, hanging her head. We also find Tanner and Cody watching the fight, unimpressed.

INT. BALBOA CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Mickey and Jeff sit across from Steve, he's FUMING. Jeff holds a bag of ice on his leg--

STEVE

This is Little League, not the friggin' UFC!

JEFF

That Weinberg kid socked me in the shin!

MICKEY

To be fair, he can't reach any higher.

STEVE

Is this funny to you, kid? You think this is some sort of joke?

MICKEY

Kind of.

STEVE

What's the punchline, huh? A washed-up ballplayer comes back to his Little League to make himself look good?

MICKEY

What?

STEVE

I see what you're doing, alright? I'm not exactly convinced you're here out of the *goodness of your heart*. Just know that I'm not going to let your bad attitude negatively effect the reputation of this league, got it?

Off Mickey--

STEVE (CONT'D)

You have one strike on you. Do I have to tell you what happens after three?

MICKEY

Take your base?

Off Steve, shooting daggers at Mickey...

EXT. ROCCO'S TAVERN - THAT NIGHT

Pool bar with a jukebox and flat screens playing highlights from every sport. Mickey and Pickles play PING-PONG.

MICKEY

These girls are hopeless.

PICKLES

Who thought coaching would be this hard? I'm happy to do it but I can't believe they don't pay coaches in Little League--forget college athletes--this is a bigger scandal in the sports world.

SLAM! Mickey hits the ball, Pickles fails to return.

MICKEY

How are you this bad? I'm playing left-handed.

PICKLES

I haven't exercised this much in a while.

VOICE (O.C.)

Can I play?

Mickey and Pickles look over and see Tanner.

PICKLES

I could use a break. And a snack.

Pickles hands her the paddle. She serves...THWACK! Mickey is taken aback. He tosses her the ball--

MICKEY

Funny seeing you here.

TANNER

Why is that funny? It's a bar.

MICKEY

Well, yeah--I--It's just a thing people say--I don't know. I guess it's not that funny. I'm not like, laughing. I--just haven't seen-- Okay. Just serve.

She serves. Another ace.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

For the record, I'm not using my good arm.

TANNER

From what I've heard, your good arm was never good to begin with.

THWACK! She serves another ace.

MICKEY

Damn.

PICKLES

Torched.

Later...

MID-MATCH. MICKEY IS POURING SWEAT. It's heated. A crowd has formed. Mickey misses a corner shot.

TANNER
20-15. Sucker's serve.

He serves the ball and SLAM! Gives it everything he's got. She NAILS it back in his face. Game.

MICKEY
You're definitely the best girl
I've ever played--

Tanner storms over, grabs him by the shirt and SHOVES HIM AGAINST THE WALL-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Woah, woah! Relax, I'm just--

TANNER
Mackenzie hasn't been practicing year-round only to be let down by some washed-up minor leaguer with nothing to teach her.

MICKEY
The team isn't good, okay? That's not my fault! I don't know how a buncha misfits can win a baseball game. I don't have much to work with here.

She shoves him again--

TANNER
They're excited young kids. You have everything to work with.

Tanner drops him on the floor and walks off.

TANNER (CONT'D)
(shouting back as she exits)
I'll be at practice tomorrow! You better have a plan.

Mickey looks up at Pickles-

MICKEY
What's her problem?

PICKLES
Apparently you.

INT. MICKEY'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mickey enters, it's late. He flips on the light, the first thing we see is a photo of him as a child with his dad, they're in matching All-Star uniforms.

VOICE (O.C.)

Your dad spent a lot of time with you boys out on that field.

He looks up, Debra is in the doorway-

MICKEY

I don't know how he found the time.

DEBRA

He loved it out there. He would come home after practice and just be so...smiley, there was nothing he would've rather been doing.

Debra puts her hand on his shoulder and looks at the photo-

MICKEY

I don't really know how to connect with them the way he did with us.

DEBRA

I think your version of baseball is a little different than theirs. Think about being their age. What was fun for you?

Mickey thinks.

MICKEY

I...don't know. I liked putting on the jersey. I like being able to put on this nice uniform knowing I could go out and play and get it as dirty as I wanted. And just...I don't know, it was fun.

DEBRA

Fun. Now there's a crazy idea.

Debra exits. Off Mickey, pensive...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - THE NEXT MORNING

It's California heat. Desert heat. Summer on Ventura Blvd. heat. The team looks up at Mickey, already sweating--

MICKEY

Let's start with some fundamentals.
Pickles, show the team how to slide
properly.

Pickles DARTS down the base path, approaches second base,
FARTS and trips over the bag. The kids BURST into laughter.
He continues to fart as he rolls around on the ground.

MATTY

He's having a fart attack, coach!

MICKEY

Thank you for showing the team what
not to do.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Can anyone slide properly?

They take turns, having little success.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

I'd say forget about the last game,
but I want you to remember that
feeling and I want it to drive you.
A great man once said, "*The past is
never the past. It is always
present.*"

AUTUMN

That doesn't even make sense, who
said that?

MICKEY

Bruce Springsteen.

ALLY

Who the heck is Ruth Springsteen?

MICKEY

Bruce. The Boss.

TEDDY

Oh! I know Bruce, he's my rabbi.

MICKEY

He's not your rabbi.

TEDDY

Yeah, Rabbi Springsteen.

MICKEY

The boss is not your rabbi!

TEDDY
You callin' my rabbi a liar?!

Mickey hangs his head, then...

MICKEY
(shouting)
Hit it!

CU: A hand plugs an IPOD into the speaker system on the field. We PULL OUT -- It's Tanner. Bruce Springsteen's "BORN IN THE U.S.A." blares over the speakers.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Alright, let's have some fun. We
might even learn something.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-Dave is taking the trash out, looks to the field and smiles as he sees...

The outfield COVERED with tarps, Mickey, Pickles, and Tanner are HOSING them down, making GIANT SLIP-N-SLIDES. The kids run through the grass, HIT THE TARPS and slide across, working on their sliding form. BIG SMILES on their faces.

Later...

The gang is huddled around home plate--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
The beauty of first base is that
you can run right through it. You
do everything you can to beat out
the throw. Pickles, Tanner...

ANGLE ON: First base, Pickles holds one side of a PAPER BANNER that reads "BIG 5 WINTER SALE!" Tanner holds the other end.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Let's see if you can run fast
enough to blast through that paper.

Janette BOLTS down the base path, hits the paper and SLAP -- bounces right off it. Falling to the ground.

Teddy gets up and DARTS down the first base line, he slowly meanders off the base path. He completely misses the banner and continues to run into the outfield.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Teddy! Get back here!

The team laughs.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
We'll have to work on his sense of
direction. Betsy?

Betsy wobbles down the base path, not going very fast, by the time she gets to first she's totally WINDED. She FALLS over, collapses through the sign, landing on her face.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
That's a start.

Later...

Tanner is in center field with Ally--

TANNER
You and the catcher are the only
players with a perfect view of the
entire field. You gotta be loud,
whenever there's an out, I want the
kids in the next town to hear it.

ALLY
(singing)
I CAN DO THAAAAT!

Later...

Mickey helps Mackenzie grip a change-up.

MICKEY
Nothing throws a batter off like a
good change-up. You want to make
them miss so bad they'll wonder if
they should even be out here.

MACKENZIE
Did you ever wonder that?

MICKEY
What?

MACKENZIE
If you should be out here...playing
baseball.

MICKEY
Never. Neither should you. People
like us, we belong out here.

MACKENZIE

Sometimes I feel like it's really
just a sport for boys.

MICKEY

Well, if you want to change
anyone's mind about that, you gotta
convince yourself first. Can you
show me that?

MACKENZIE

Yeah.

-Pickles works with Mel and Belle on turning double plays,
they're slowly making progress.

-Betsy is on the mound pitching to Pickles as he stands in
the batter's box. She throws and NEARLY TAKES HIS HEAD OFF.
He falls to the ground.

MICKEY

Maybe we'll stick to catcher.

Pickles climbs to his feet and looks behind him, the ball is
lodged in the wall.

-Betsy is behind home plate in catcher's gear. Mickey throws
the ball to her, she pops up, throws it down to second as
Mackenzie tries to steal second base. She's out by a mile.

Mickey is in right field with Janette--

JANETTE

Just let me pitch! I'm the next
Sandy Koufax.

MICKEY

I'm the next Sandy Koufax.

JANETTE

You're injured!

MICKEY

Watch it, missy.

Off Mickey's smile...

Janette tries to pitch. She can barely make it to the plate.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

That ain't gunna cut it.

JANETTE

I need the pressure to be on, I'm
no good in low-stakes
circumstances. I'm a closer!
Closers play with heart and grit
and I got that in spades!

MICKEY

Closers also have fastballs.

INT. PICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Pickles watches various clips from famous sports movies and practices delivering a big moving speech.

INT. MICKEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mickey is doing laundry. He finds his STAINED PINK UNIFORM from the minors. Gets an idea.

INT. BIG 5 SPORTING GOODS - THE NEXT DAY

Mickey stands over the cash register with Pickles.

PICKLES

Ace, the discount is only for
family.

MICKEY

Pickles, look around you...

They look at the kids running around the shop, enamored by the fancy gear. Matty and Betsy are tossing Bope's glasses around, he tries to get them but keeps crashing into things.

PICKLES

It's a mess, I know.

MICKEY

No, doofus. This is your family.

Pickles smiles and slides his ID through the register.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - LATER

Mackenzie is throwing batting practice to her teammates, nobody can get a hit off her.

MICKEY

Can't anyone make some contact off
her?

VOICE (O.C.)

I can.

They look to the bleachers, it's CODY.

MICKEY

Do you play here?

CODY

No.

MACKENZIE

She just sits and watches like a
weirdo.

CODY

The only thing I'm watching is you
not following through and losing
velocity on your fastball.

TEDDY

Oh snap! Analytical burn.

MACKENZIE

Why don't you put your bat where
your mouth is?

PICKLES

Damn. These kids are snappy.

Cody gets up and walks onto the field. She grabs a bat and helmet and steps into the batter's box. Mackenzie takes the rubber, they stare each other down.

Mickey and Pickles look on, entertained. Mackenzie winds up and CRACK! Cody hits it out of the park in the blink of an eye. The other players crane their necks as they watch it fly out. Cody walks off the field, gets on her bike, and leaves.

MEL AND BELLE

Talk about a walk-off home run.

Mackenzie is frazzled but intrigued.

MICKEY

Why doesn't she play?

MACKENZIE

I don't know.

Off Mickey, pensive.

INT. GALLERIA FOOD COURT - LATER

CU ON: A CARDBOARD BOX

Mickey pulls out a STUNNING jersey. It's all black with the word BANDITS across the chest in pink outline. The players look on in awe. Mickey nudges Pickles--

MICKEY
This is your moment.

PICKLES
Huh?

MICKEY
The big speech.

PICKLES
Oh. Right!

Pickles looks at the team, starts to pace across the room. He clears his throat--

PICKLES (CONT'D)
When you're down...and out for the count...in the dumps. Teams are just, it's you and me...and Dupree. Bad movie. We don't want to be like Matt Dillon...

Off the kids, confused-

PICKLES (CONT'D)
We want to be like Matt Damon...the baseball version of Matt Damon.
Good Will Hunting! The Departed!
(considering)
Matt Dillon is good too, though...Wait, before I continue. I have a question...what the hell am I talking about?

They have no idea. Mickey steps up and relieves Pickles--

MICKEY
Bandits are outlaws.

Off Matty-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Bandits have been kicked to the
curb.

Off Betsy-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Bandits have been pushed in a
corner and left to fend for
themselves.

Off Mackenzie-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Bandits take what isn't theirs.
Those other teams think that field
belongs to them...what are we going
to do?

TEAM
TAKE IT!

MICKEY
Most of all, Bandits stick
together.

Off Mel and Belle-

MICKEY (CONT'D)
By the looks of you, I'd say you
were born to be Bandits.

CHEERS. They crowd Mickey as he passes out uniforms--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Obviously, don't break any laws or
do anything bad, you're bandits
when it comes to baseball...out in
public, you're perfectly good kids.

Janette looks at the back of her jersey, instead of her name,
it says "Trouble". She smiles. Mickey looks over to Tanner,
tosses her a jersey--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
We could use your help in the
dugout, coach.

TANNER
You trying to keep me around?

MICKEY
Anyway I can. Dinner. Tomorrow
night after the game?

TANNER
Maybe...if you win.

ACROSS THE FOOD COURT WE FIND three kids in GIANTS hats, watching the Bandits.

GIANT 1
Clowns.

GIANT 2
Better uniforms won't make them better ballplayers.

Giant 1 takes a SMOOTHIE and HURLS IT ACROSS THE FOOD COURT, exploding in front of Matty and Betsy. The Giants start cracking up. Matty gears up to run at them, Pickles grabs him by the shirt collar, Matty runs in place.

GIANT 3
You girls have no shot! NO SHOT!

MATTY
(growling)
Let me at 'em!

MUSIC KICKS IN--

BRIAN (PRE-LAP V.O.)
And here come the Bandits! Needing a win here if they want to make anything of the rest of the season...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - DAY

-The Bandits storm the field in their new uniforms.

-The Giants watch from the bleachers.

-The Bandits play textbook baseball. They're focused, in sync, and energized.

INT. COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH - SAME

BRIAN
And we're seeing some new life in this team as the Bandits have a commanding lead heading into the final inning.

SCOTCH

You got that right. Baseball, Soccer, Basketball, Rugby. These are all sports. I learnt that in school. Big shout out to Mrs. Montgomery at Balboa Elementary, you're doing a bang-up job.

BRIAN

You heard it here first folks, baseball...is a sport.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The final out is called. BANDITS WIN. The team throws their gloves in the air and celebrate. Tanner approaches Mickey--

TANNER

Dinner at my place tonight?

Mickey lights up.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - THAT NIGHT

Mickey waits at the front door of a sprawling suburban home holding flowers. The door swings open and it's JEFF, the Giants coach.

MICKEY

Oh...no.

JEFF

Hey there, Mick.

MICKEY

I think I'm at the wrong house.

Mackenzie and Tanner appear from behind Jeff on both sides, smiling from ear-to-ear.

JEFF

I really wish you were.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Mickey, Mackenzie, Tanner, and Scotch, sit at the dinner table. The parents have yet to enter.

SCOTCH

Want to see me stick my fist in my mouth?

MICKEY
Absolutely.

Scotch goes for it. Mickey looks to Tanner--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me Jeff was
your dad?!

TANNER
I guess it slipped my mind...

Mackenzie laughs-

MICKEY
You think that's funny? Is that why
he didn't draft his own daughter,
cuz everything is a big joke to
her!

Scotch's ENTIRE FIST is in his mouth, he's making weird
noises.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Is he okay? Also, WOW.

MACKENZIE
Scotch! Bad boy!

MICKEY
I think it's stuck.

Mackenzie SLAPS Scotch on the back, his fist POPS out.

JEFF (O.C.)
I didn't draft my daughter because
my wife thinks we bicker too much
when I'm her coach.

Jeff enters the dining room holding mashed potatoes followed
by his wife NANCY, 40's, hippie-turned-soccer mom/attorney,
wielding a roast chicken--

NANCY
They couldn't leave it on the
field.

JEFF
She thinks I pushed her too much.

MACKENZIE
You didn't push me enough!

NANCY
See what I mean?

SFX: A LOUD BELCH emits from the end of the table, everyone looks over, Scotch has eaten half the chicken.

SCOTCH
Lovely chicken, Nancy. What's for dessert?

EXT. TANNER'S HOUSE - SAME

The Bandits are crept down in a BUSH OUTSIDE THE DINING ROOM WINDOW.

MATTY
I can't see, I can't see!

Betsy LIFTS him up and puts him on her shoulders.

MATTY (CONT'D)
That's better.

Matty SNAPS a photo with his iPhone and sends it to Mackenzie.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

Mackenzie's phone buzzes, she looks at it--

JEFF
What's the rule, Mackenzie?

MACKENZIE
With a runner on third, always go for the squeeze bunt over the big hit.

NANCY
About phones at the dinner table...

She silences it, glances at the photo, and giggles.

TANNER
What's so funny?

MACKENZIE
Scotch.

They look at Scotch, he's wearing his pants on his head.

SCOTCH

Sometimes you gotta loosen your belt after a big meal. You know what I mean, Alfonzo?

MICKEY

What? My name is Mickey.

SCOTCH

Whatever, guy. Pass me that gravy boat. Daddy's goin' swimmin'!

JEFF

I think we have to like--limit his TV or something?

NANCY

He's perfect.

EXT. TANNER'S HOUSE - SAME

Betsy SNEEZES, causing Matty to FALL off of her shoulders.

MATTY

WOAH! WOAH! WOAH!

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SFX: AN O.C. THUMP comes from the front lawn.

NANCY

What was that?

Jeff heads for the front door--

EXT. TANNER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jeff inspects the front yard...nothing. We find them UP IN THE TREE. Stifling their laughter.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

JEFF

So, Mickey, what's your plan once that arm heals?

MICKEY

Hopefully get back to playing ball. Depends how it responds to physical therapy.

TANNER

I'm sure you'll be fine.

JEFF

That can get expensive. Who foots the bill for that?

MICKEY

The team paid for the surgery...but I have to take care of everything else. Probably be a while until I can afford it.

JEFF

Maybe you should be focusing on work instead of playing with these kids.

TANNER

Sounds like you're scared of a little competition, Dad.

JEFF

Me, scared? Of this jabroni? No way.

Jeff DRIVES his knife into a piece of chicken. Mickey laughs nervously...

INT. TANNER'S ROOM - LATER

Mickey looks at Tanner's old trophies.

MICKEY

You're a little old to be living at home, don't you think?

TANNER

You're one to talk, Momma's boy.

MICKEY

Touché.

TANNER

It's just until I'm done with grad school, then I'll be out of here. And hey, my parents aren't that bad.

MICKEY

Your mom is lovely. Your dad wants to rip my face off.

TANNER
So did I when we first met...

Mickey moves in closer, they lock eyes--

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The team is watching from the tree, with a perfect view into Tanner's window. Mel and Belle are giggling--

VOICE (O.C.)
Keep it down!

They look at the branch above them...it's Pickles. He lowers a bag of popcorn to the kids.

INT. TANNER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mickey takes Tanner by the hand, leans in and...

MATTY (O.C.)
WOAH!

Mickey and Tanner look out the window to spot THE KIDS HUDDLED IN THE TREE, they try to duck but FALL OUT! Mickey runs to the window and looks down on his team in a dog pile on the front lawn, laughing incessantly.

AUTUMN
Nice moves, coach!

MATTY
You just taught me more in fifteen seconds than you have all season!

Off Mickey and Tanner, shaking their heads.

PICKLES
Very smooth, Ace.

They look up at Pickles, eating popcorn. He offers them some.

PICKLES (CONT'D)
Jiffy Pop?

INT. TAD'S OFFICE - DAY

CU ON: A PLASMA TV. It's highlights of Mickey pitching, hitting, pumping up his college and minor league team in slow motion, as well as footage of him with the Bandits.

MICKEY

Wow...what is this?

TAD

Highlight reel, baby. Texture.
Moral fiber. This is what we're
going out with. We're going to
reintroduce Mickey Stanley to the
baseball world.

Off Mickey, smiling...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Mickey sits in the examination room as a Doctor, 40's, checks the mobility of his arm.

DOCTOR

Your recovery speed is pretty
amazing.

MICKEY

Positive thinking.

Doctor moves to a wall of pamphlets--

DOCTOR

Here are some physical therapists
and personal trainers that have
great programs for ballplayers.
Unfortunately...they're not exactly
cheap.

Mickey looks over the pamphlets, taken aback by the prices.

MICKEY

I don't know if I can afford
this...

DOCTOR

They have great results. With the
right program you could be back out
there in as little as six months.

INT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Mickey is exiting when he spots Dugout Dave getting out of his car with some help from what looks like his son. Mickey looks on, confused.

INT. DAVE'S DINER - LATER

Mickey looks at a cheeseburger pensively. Dave notices as he's wiping down the counter--

DAVE
Bite, chew, swallow, repeat. You're thinking too hard.

MICKEY
I'm having fun coaching these kids. I just...I gotta make some money soon.

DAVE
You'll figure something out. You always do.

MICKEY
If I can't play, I'm not sure what else there is. All of my friends went straight into the job market...I'm so behind. All I have on my resume is baseball player.

DAVE
There are worse things in life than having something on your resume that you truly loved doing. Some people live their whole lives without that.

MICKEY
I just gotta catch a break.

DAVE
Breaks happen when you work hard. Stay focused, you'll be alright.

MICKEY
What were you doing at the doctor's office the other day?

DAVE
Just a routine check-up. Making sure the old gears are still working.

MICKEY
I never thanked you, by the way.

DAVE
For what?

MICKEY
Y'know...Everything.

DAVE
Hey, ballplayer or Little League
coach, you know I'm here for you.

Off Mickey's smile...

BRIAN (PRE-LAP V.O.)
And here come the Bandits! Trying
to make a playoff push late in the
season.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The Bandits take the field. Mackenzie jogs out to the pitcher's mound when then OPPOSING COACH, 40's, comes and says something to the UMPIRE.

UMPIRE
Bandits coach!

The Ump waves Mickey out--

MICKEY
What's up?

UMPIRE
She's at her pitch limit for the week. She needs seven days rest.

MICKEY
She's had seven days.

UMPIRE
It's only been six.

Mickey looks out onto the field and exhales...

BEGIN SEQUENCE

Different Bandits try their arm at pitching.

-Betsy is on the mound throwing WILDLY. Tremendous speed that frightens every batter as it nearly lops their heads off.

-Matty pitches, getting irate as balls are called. He takes his hat off, STOMPS ON IT, and is carried off the mound, kicking and screaming, by Pickles.

-Janette waves to Mickey from right field, pleading to pitch without much success.

-The Bandits get CRUSHED. 13-2.

END SEQUENCE

INT. DUGOUT - POST GAME

Mickey looks over his distraught team.

MATTY
We suck!

MICKEY
You don't suck. All this shows us
is that we can't rely on Mackenzie
too much.

JANETTE
I've been wanting to pitch all
season!

MICKEY
Janette, you'll have your chance, I
promise.

BETSY
At this rate, we'll never make
playoffs.

MICKEY
Didn't you at least have fun today?

MACKENZIE
It's hard to have fun when you're
getting whooped.

Off Mickey, concerned, we...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL - EVENING

CU'S OF the Bandits, smiling ear-to-ear as they ride a ROLLER COASTER. As they BLAST past camera we catch:

MACKENZIE
AHHHH!

TEDDY
I'm gunna spew!

MATTY
Prove it!

Ventura Boulevard has been shutdown for an old school carnival. Ferris wheel, bumper cars, and kids strung out on all the fried crap they can get their hands on. Mickey and Tanner walk past the GAME AREA sharing a funnel cake-

MICKEY

My dad wouldn't let me play sports like golf or tennis because he didn't want it to ruin my swing.

TANNER

Are you mad at him for it?

MICKEY

No way. He gave me a shot.

TANNER

What does he think now?

BEAT.

MICKEY

He passed away when I was in high school.

TANNER

Oh...that sucks.

MICKEY

Yeah.

TANNER

Sorry, was that insensitive?

MICKEY

No, not at all. Everyone always says, "I'm so sorry." Like it's their fault...or "What a hard time that must've been." But, you nailed it on the head...it...sucks.

TANNER

Do you think you'll play again?

MICKEY

I have to. Towards the end there, my heart wasn't in the right place. I didn't care when I could play...now that I can't, all I want to do is get back out there and show people what I can do.

She shoots him a smile, endeared.

SMASH TO:

EXT. BUMPER CARS - CONTINUOUS

CRASH! BAM! THWACK!

The Bandits are in an all-out war against the Giants in the BUMPER CARS. They're ramming into each other left and right. Pickles and Teddy are in a car together, each holding COTTON CANDY, scared for their lives. Every time Pickles goes to take a bite the car gets SLAMMED.

PICKLES

This is my nightmare!

TEDDY

This is bad for my digestion!

Matty and Mackenzie occupy another car, getting nailed from every direction.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Mickey holds a SLEDGE HAMMER at the STRONGMAN game.

TANNER

I've been helping out with the basketball team at school...who knows, maybe I'll coach in the NBA.

MICKEY

You mean WNBA?

Mickey DRIVES the hammer down, hitting the block, the ball shoots up but fails to ring the bell.

TANNER

No, I mean the NBA.

Tanner takes the hammer from him.

MICKEY

Are you admitting men's sports are better?

TANNER

They just pay better.

She DRIVES the hammer down, SLAMS the block, and RINGS the bell. She shoots Mickey a smile, he's impressed...and a little scared.

CARNEY
We have a winner!

The Carney goes to hand the prize to Mickey, thinking he won, Tanner SNATCHES it.

EXT. BUMPER CARS - CONTINUOUS

The bumper war continues. Pickles notices the Giants remove CARTONS OF EGGS from their jackets.

PICKLES
Oh no. They're strapped.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Mickey and Tanner head towards the bumper cars...

TANNER
Not a lot of guys our age would give up their precious time to volunteer with a bunch of kids.
What gives, huh?

MICKEY
Yeah. Well, the thing is, I--

Tanner reaches for his hand. He stops talking and smiles.

EXT. BUMPER CARS - CONTINUOUS

The Bandits are getting PELTED WITH EGGS from every direction. The RIDE OPERATOR, 30's, tries to intervene, he gets nailed with an egg and SLIPS in the middle of the rink.

An egg is HURLED towards Matty's face, Mackenzie CATCHES it. She throws it back, nailing the assailant.

MATTY
Give me your scarf.

MACKENZIE
What are you gunna do?

Matty reaches down and pushes a button on his sneakers, WHEELS pop out. Mackenzie hands him her scarf.

PICKLES
Stop wasting perfectly good eggs!

TEDDY
I'll protect you, captain!

Teddy shields Pickles as eggs are slung their way. Teddy gets lit up.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Mickey and Tanner near the bumper cars--

TANNER
Most guys are just so obsessed with themselves and their jobs...they forget about other people.

MICKEY
Yeah, I guess I kind of just...

His EYES LIGHT UP--

ANGLE ON: The BUMPER CARS, Matty is tethered to the bumper car with the scarf, rolling around on his Heely's as if water skiing.

Mackenzie drives, ferociously WHIPPING him around, he's speeding towards the head Giant, he JUMPS over the Ride Operator that's on the ground and LEAPS into the car, tackling the Giant. Mickey RUNS up and YANKS ON THE LEVER.

SFX: A SCREEEECHING HALT

Passersby turn to the source of the noise. Matty and the Giant go wrestling to the ground.

Teddy is laying across the car on his back, COVERED IN EGG. Pickles pops up from inside the car, he looks down at Teddy--

TEDDY
If I don't make it, tell my family
I loved one thing and one thing
only...various numbers generated by
different things baseball players
do on the field...

Teddy exhales dramatically and falls back. Pickles surveys his clothes--

PICKLES
I didn't get hit...I didn't get hit!

WHACK! An errant egg nails him in the face.

PICKLES (CONT'D)
I'm hit.

Pickles collapses on top of Teddy. Mickey sees STEVE approaching the scene.

MICKEY
Bandits! Come with me, NOW!

The team runs towards him, he leads them to the GAME AREA. Steve runs over to the bumper cars, sees the mess and the Giants recuperating--

STEVE
WHO DID THIS?

GIANTS 1
Who do you think?

Off Steve...

EXT. GAME AREA - CONTINUOUS

Steve searches for the Bandits, he passes THE DUNK TANK...

-Where Teddy sits incognito wearing a SNORKELING MASK, he SPLASHES into the water where we find Matty and Mackenzie at the bottom of the tank.

-Steve runs past a WALL OF STUFFED ANIMALS...TWO OF THE BEARS REMOVE THEIR HEADS, it's Mel and Belle. The game operator turns, it's Pickles.

-We catch Scotch bartering with the PENNY CANDY GUY, standing next to barrels full of candy--

SCOTCH
I'm willing to pay extra if you drop me in the barrel and let me eat my way out.

-Steve passes the HORSE RACES, the commentator has a TOP HAT on, his back is turned--

COMMENTATOR
Number six making a break for the finish line...is this, wait, can it be? YES! HORSE NUMBER 3 COMING UP FROM BEHIND AND IT'S NUMBER THREE FOR THE WIN!

Steve passes, the commentator turns, it's Teddy. He takes off his hat, wipes his brow. Two people playing the game spin their chairs around, it's Mickey and Tanner.

MICKEY
Fun date, huh?

Tanner SPRAYS HIM WITH WATER from her pistol. Mackenzie and Matty run over, dripping wet--

MACKENZIE
You gotta come see this.

EXT. CLOWN GAME - MOMENTS LATER

The team watches in awe as a Cody THROWS HEATERS at the clown faces. Knocking them down one-by-one.

MICKEY
You ever play in a league, Cody?

She answers by hitting another one, it BURSTS INTO PIECES.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
How'd you like to join our team?

CODY
Can't.

BAM! BAM! She hits two in a row. THE CARNEY hands her a GIANT STUFFED ANIMAL and she walks off.

MICKEY
Anyone know where she lives?

MACKENZIE
I heard she lives with her uncle.

INT. TAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Mickey sits across from Tad.

MICKEY
It's healing well but I can't afford the physical therapy. Isn't there a client loan program or something?

TAD
Not these days, unfortunately.

MICKEY

There's gotta be something...

TAD

Wait!

Tad reaches for his phone but grabs a DARTH VADER BOBBLEHEAD and puts it to his ear--

TAD (CONT'D)

Jamie!

(realizing)

Nope, that's Darth Vader.

He puts it down and grabs his phone.

TAD (CONT'D)

Jamie! Get me someone from marketing.

MICKEY

What are you doing?

TAD

What's the one thing every professional athlete does besides play sports?

Off Mickey, confused--

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Mickey wears a full BASEBALL UNIFORM HOLDING A BAT and looks into the camera as he walks past rows of used Hondas. He looks directly into camera-

MICKEY

I'm Mickey Stanley, and if there's one thing I learned pitching in the minors it's that you know a home run when you see it. Down here at West Covina Autos, we're slashing prices left and right. For any buyer, that's...

(swings the bat)

A home run.

O.C. CUT! Tad approaches--

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Used cars? Come on! What about Nike or Adidas...

TAD

Mickey, as you said, you're a minor leaguer no one has heard of. We were lucky to get this. There are harder ways to make two thousand bucks.

MICKEY

I just feel like I'm selling out a little here.

TAD

It's not selling out, it's buying in, Mickey. It's buying in.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - LATER

Mickey approaches an old trailer with a gaggle of lawn flamingos in the front. He approaches the door.

KNOCK KNOCK. Nothing. KNOCK KNOCK.

VOICE (O.C.)
HOLD YOUR DARN SELF!

He's startled as the door SWINGS OPEN and we find TOM, 50's, a BIG BURLY MAN--

TOM

What?

MICKEY

Hi, sir, my name is Mickey Stanley and I--

TOM

What are you selling?

MICKEY

Nothing, I--I wanted to talk to you about your niece...?

TOM

Cody? What'd she do this time?

MICKEY

Nothing, I wanted to talk to you about her playing baseball... .

Tom looks him up-and-down...

INT. TRAILER - LATER

PAN ACROSS vintage photos of ballplayers in the eighties. Among them, Cody's dad.

TOM

My brother was one of the best relief pitchers you've ever seen.

MICKEY

I remember Jack Thomas...I used to have his baseball card.

TOM

You and every other kid.

Mickey takes a seat across from Tom--

MICKEY

Cody has a great arm.

TOM

She's her father's daughter.

ANGLE ON: Cody listening from the hallway.

MICKEY

I'd love to have her come out and play for our team.

TOM

I don't have the time to drive her back-and-forth to the field. The practices...games...I need to pick up every shift I can. Unfortunately, that leaves little time for--

MICKEY

I'll take care of everything, you just need to sign off on it.

TOM

You some sort of volunteer?

MICKEY

Yeah! I'm a coach. I play minor league ball and I'm injured now so I figured...y'know, why not.

Tom looks him up and down.

TOM

KID!

ANGLE ON: Cody, in the hallway, silent--

TOM (CONT'D)
I know you're in that hallway, get
out here.

Cody reluctantly takes a step out--

TOM (CONT'D)
What do you think?

Off Cody, smiling...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - DAY

Ballplayers from different teams have come out to watch the new addition to the team as a game is underway. The Giants watch, intimidated.

BRIAN (V.O.)
The Bandits are looking invigorated
here due to some pitching help by
their new player, Cody Thomas.

Cody is on the mound, striking guys out left and right.

BRIAN (V.O.)
If she can put this last batter to
bed, playoffs might not be ruled
out for the boys in black.

Betsy calls time and looks up at Brian in the announcer's box-

BETSY
GIRLS!

BRIAN
Correction, girls.

VOICE (O.C.)
Talk about a gross factual error...

WE PULL OUT to reveal Teddy, standing behind him-

BRIAN
Shouldn't you be out in the field?

TEDDY
I'm sitting this inning out. Plus,
game over.

Brian looks down, the last strike has been thrown, Bandits
win! Teddy grabs the mic--

TEDDY (CONT'D)
And here come the Bandits!

BEGIN MONTAGE

-The Bandits go on a tear, mounting a WINNING STREAK. The STANDINGS are adjusted, the Bandits slowly climbing into contention.

-The Giants are holding down the first place position.

-Mackenzie and Cody pitch back-to-back, nearly untouchable.

-Janette is bored in the outfield as opposing teams can't get a hit.

-The Giants grow worrisome.

-The Bandits land a spot in the PLAYOFFS.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - DAY

Brian and Scotch watch the game, invested.

BRIAN

The Bandits are in a win-or-go-home situation here in the bottom of the 6th as they duke it out with the Astros to advance to the semis.

SCOTCH

I tell ya, Frank, this reminds me of my first day at school. I was nervous, intimidated, and extremely farty, but I knew I could overcome my brain and my butt.

The crowd LAUGHS, we overhear, "*He's so cute and weird!*"

BRIAN

Again, my name is Brian.

SCOTCH

Semantics!

EXT. FIELD - LATER

CU ON: The scoreboard, the game is tied, bottom of the 6th.

The Bandits are up to bat.

ANGLE ON: Teddy, in the dugout, enamored by the action, speaking into the small end of a baseball bat--

TEDDY

Bottom of the 6th, last chance for the Bandits to clinch a spot in the playoffs. The Cinderella kids are-

MACKENZIE

Teddy...

TEDDY

-refusing to go down without a fight...it's come down to one batter, one batter looking--

CODY

Teddy...

TEDDY

for a walk-off hit to win this thing for the Band-

WHOLE TEAM

TEDDY!!

He stops and looks, the whole team is staring at him.

TEDDY

What?

AUTUMN

You're up!

TEDDY

Oh...no.

Teddy looks out on the field, sees everyone waiting. He clocks Mel on third base, waiting for someone to drive her home. Teddy timidly grabs a helmet and bat and approaches the batter's box.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(to Ump)

How's it goin'?

(to catcher)

Beautiful day for a ball game....

CATCHER

Get in the box, dingus.

Mickey gives him a sign, Teddy nods and steps up to bat.

MICKEY
You got this Ted, base hit!

Teddy is suddenly confused and puts his hand up to the Ump.

UMPIRE
TIME!

He approaches Mickey--

TEDDY
(whisper)
You gave me the sign for a bunt,
right?

MICKEY
Yes.

TEDDY
Then why'd you just tell me to get
a base hit?

MICKEY
Trying to throw off the other team,
Teddy...

TEDDY
OH! Man, gotta love baseball.
That's why they call it the
thinking man's sport!
Person...thinking person's sport?

MICKEY
Get in the batter's box, Teddy.

Teddy walks back. The pitcher throws, Mel DARTS down the base path, Teddy lays down a perfect bunt, the pitcher fields it and throws it to the catcher but SAFE! Bandits win!

The team spills onto the field, lifting Mel and Teddy up.

TEDDY
Hava...nagila hava nagila..hava...
Everybody!

BRIAN (V.O.)
And the Bandits are headed to the
semifinals!

INT. TAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Tad sits, feet up on his desk.

TAD
It's all happening.

MICKEY
What?

TAD
ESPN.

MICKEY
Huh?

TAD
They're doing profiles on Tommy John Surgery. Mickey "Ace" Stanley former pitcher for the Lubbock Aces is going to be interviewed. Looks like that injury finally paid off!

MICKEY
No way. ESPN? Really?

TAD
I had to call in a lot of favors. I also reached out to a few sponsors. Our friends at West Covina Autos are willing to pay you five-hundred bucks to wear their gear during your interview. Combine that with the commercial...that's more than enough for the fancy physical therapy.

MICKEY
Tad, that's amazing! You're the man!

TAD
I'm the man! Shoots next Saturday.

MICKEY
Wait, Saturday? I can't, we have a playoff game...

TAD
It's ESPN. You can do anything for ESPN.

MICKEY
I can't just bail on the kids...

TAD
Mickey! This is the opportunity we've been waiting for. It's ESPN!
(MORE)

TAD (CONT'D)

It's the big time! You know the last time a minor leaguer who *wasn't playing* had a feature on ESPN?

MICKEY

No...

TAD

Me neither! Cuz it never happens!

Tad digs into his drawer and pulls out a HAT AND T-SHIRT from West Covina Autos, Mickey looks at them.

MICKEY

Kinda ugly.

TAD

No one said making money was pretty.

Off Mickey, conflicted...

EXT. JONES'S FRONT YARD - EVENING

Mickey watches as Mackenzie pitches to Tanner. She throws a CURVEBALL.

MICKEY

What was that?

MACKENZIE

Curveball.

MICKEY

None of that.

MACKENZIE

If we're going to make a run for the championship I'm going to need to mix it up a little.

MICKEY

Leave it up to me to decide when to mix it up. Lay off those, I'm not kidding.

MACKENZIE

Fine. I'm getting some dessert, or are you the master of my diet as well?

MICKEY

Ha. Ha.

He tousles her hair as she enters the house.

INT. JONES'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jeff and Nancy dry dishes as they watch Mickey and Tanner through the kitchen window.

NANCY

Kind of reminds me of us when we
first fell in love. Cute...young...
skinny.

JEFF

You're skinny.

NANCY

I'm not talking about me.

She pats his belly.

JEFF

Hey!

(then)

She is not in love with that boy.

NANCY

Looks like it to me.

Jeff looks--they're ABOUT TO KISS. He BANGS on the window,
breaking it up. Mickey is TERRIFIED.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Come on, he's sweet.

JEFF

What's so sweet about a guy like
that with our little girl?

NANCY

She's not little anymore. And how
many other boys do you know his age
that volunteer at a Little League?

JEFF

Volunteer? Hun, he's doing it for
his image. He has a bad rep in the
minors, he's just trying to save
some face.

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)
Trust me, when it comes down to it,
he doesn't care about those kids,
he just cares about himself.

ANGLE ON: Mackenzie, listening from the hallway.

EXT. MAJOR FIELD - DAY

The game is about to be underway. Both teams are waiting. Pickles eyes the parking lot, waiting for Mickey. The UMP approaches--

UMP
We gotta get this game going,
where's Coach Stanley?

PICKLES
I'll try him again.

Pickles pulls out his phone--

PICKLES (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Where are you?

-CUT AS NECESSARY-

INT. ESPN - DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Mickey sits in a chair getting his make-up done.

MICKEY
I can't make it.

PICKLES
Everything okay?

MICKEY
Yeah, it's fine, just tell them my
car broke down. I'll explain later.
You can handle this.

Mickey hangs up, guilt ridden.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Mackenzie looks at Pickles--

MACKENZIE
What's the deal?

PICKLES
His car broke down.

MEL AND BELLE
Uber, heard of it?

PICKLES
We'll have to start the game
without him.

Off Mackenzie, skeptical...

INT. ESPN SET - SAME

Mickey wears the hat and shirt from the dealership and sits across from an ANCHOR, 30's.

ANCHOR
Tell us a little bit about the recovery process.

MICKEY
It's not easy...you think for a second you might not ever throw a baseball again...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - LATER

BOTTOM OF THE SIXTH.

ANGLE ON: Scoreboard 6-5

BRIAN (V.O.)
One out in the bottom of the sixth.
The Bandits need some runs here to advance to the championship game against the Giants who punched their ticket earlier today.

Pickles coaches from third base, anxious. Tanner coaches from first as the Bandits try to knock in a few runs.

BEGIN SEQUENCE

-Janette doubles down the left field line.

-Matty is up to bat, he BUNTS, sending Janette to third. He's safe on first.

-Teddy is in the dugout when his iPHONE gets a GOOGLE ALERT. He pulls it out of his bag.

Teddy taps on a link that says MICKEY STANLEY ESPN INTERVIEW. He waves Mackenzie over to watch.

-Cody is up to bat.

-Teddy and Mackenzie watch the LIVE INTERVIEW OF MICKEY ON ESPN, confused. They call the rest of the team over to watch.

ANCHOR

And I hear you're coaching Little League in your off time?

MICKEY

Ha, yeah. It's been really fun getting back to my roots. Spending time with those kids...they've taught me a lot.

The kids look on, confused.

MACKENZIE

Liar.

-Cody drives one up the middle, the short stop makes a DIVING CATCH, then tries to throw to first but OVERTHROWS it. Matty scores. BANDITS WIN.

END SEQUENCE

BRIAN (V.O.)

And the Bandits score on an error!
They're headed for the
championship!

Pickles cheers but notices his team in the dugout isn't even paying attention. He approaches and looks at the phone, confused...

MACKENZIE

My dad was right. He just cares about himself...

Off Pickles, torn...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - THE NEXT MORNING

Mickey walks onto the field for practice. Nobody is there. He looks at his watch.

Time passes. He pulls out his phone and calls Pickles, no answer. Calls Tanner, no answer. Calls Mackenzie, no answer. Off Mickey, worried...

EXT. TANNER'S HOUSE - LATER

Mickey gets out of his car and heads for the door. Tanner exits with a backpack slung over her shoulder--

MICKEY

Hey--

TANNER

ESPN, congrats...

MICKEY

Tanner, listen--

TANNER

You let them down.

MICKEY

Who cares?! We won! Everybody wins.

TANNER

It's not about that! They look up to you and you bailed on them. Worse, you lied to them.

She walks to her car--

MICKEY

My career was on the line. What was I supposed to do?

She gets in her car--

TANNER

I don't know, maybe not be a selfish ass--

She slams the door, cutting herself off. He watches her take off. He looks at the house, sees Mackenzie watching through the window. He waves, she walks off, upset.

EXT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - LATER

Mickey gets out of his car and approaches the front door where he sees his mom, crying, holding the phone. Off Mickey...

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - MORNING

WE START ON A PICTURE OF DAVE.

PAN ACROSS attendees, in all black, huddled around the casket. Little Leaguers of all shapes and sizes take turns placing hats on the casket. Mickey is beside himself. He looks at the picture of Dave...

DAVE'S VOICE
(in Mickey's head)
Trust your gut.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - THAT NIGHT

Mickey is in the batting cage, taking swings as a machine pitches. He's still in his suit. With each pitch he swings harder and harder, angry. He takes a BIG CUT-

MICKEY
OW!

He holds his arm...

MICKEY (CONT'D)
That was stupid.

He leans back up against the fence, slides down until he's sitting in the dirt. He looks over at the rotting sign at the entrance of the field. His eyes continue over to Dave's Diner, the lights suddenly flicker off.

INT. BIG 5 SPORTING GOODS - LATER

Mickey finds Pickles organizing hiking equipment.

MICKEY
Pickles--

PICKLES
Only my friends call my Pickles.

In the b.g. we see Bope, holding a feather duster, he approaches the ROCK CLIMBING WALL.

MICKEY
Benjamin Zachary Schwartz, can I explain?

PICKLES
If there's one thing I've learned working at a sporting goods store, it's that being honest is always better than doing something wrong and hoping no one finds out.

MICKEY

How has working at a sporting goods store taught you that?

PICKLES

Do you know how many people try to return stuff they've used?! They don't think I'm gunna take a whiff of the armpit of a running shirt, but I'll do it, I've done it, Mickey!

MICKEY

We won! We're getting to play in the championship, nobody was--

PICKLES

We're getting to play in the championship, not you. And it's not always about winning, Mickey. It's about showing up for your team. You taught me that.

ANGLE ON: Bope as he rigs the rock climbing harness so he's counterbalanced by a few medicine balls. He starts to climb the wall and meticulously dust the hard-to-reach spots.

MICKEY

I didn't think it was a big deal.

PICKLES

It is a big deal. You were on TV, that's a big deal! They would've thought it was cool to have their coach on TV, they would have understood. I just don't know why you lied about it. It's insulting.

In the b.g. Bope seems stuck halfway up the wall. He's trying to propel himself higher by yanking on his harness.

MICKEY

I need your help, I need to fix things with the team.

PICKLES

You're on your own on this one.

Pickles walks off. Mickey watches Bope as he furiously YANKS on his harness, the medicine balls come loose and Bope goes CRASHING to the floor in a cloud of dust.

BOPE
I'm alright!
(BEAT)
I think my legs broke my fall.

Mickey shakes his head and walks off. Bope tries to stand and falls on his face.

EXT. MICKEY'S FRONT YARD - MORNING

He gets the mail, opens a letter addressed to him, it's the CHECK from West Covina Autos.

INT. SPORTS AGENCY - TAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Tad sits on his Bluetooth headset, clutching a football-

TAD
Dak is great, sure. But we're talking about the GOAT here. Come on. It's a fair trade. Dad's team smoked me last week.

Mickey enters-

TAD (CONT'D)
Mom, I gotta go.
(CLICK)
Mickey. Take a seat. Great news--

Mickey sits, Tad drops a stack of envelopes in front of him-

TAD (CONT'D)
Bites.

MICKEY
There's something I need to take care of. I might not be ready by next season.

TAD
What? Why not?

MICKEY
I need to use the money for something else.

TAD
Mickey, I'm doing everything I can on my end--

MICKEY
I'll think of something...just hang
with me.

EXT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE - DAY

Mickey stands in front of the OLD WELCOME SIGN with a shovel in his hand. He takes one last look at the sign and DRIVES the shovel into the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE - LATER

A delivery truck is pulling up with SOMETHING ON THE TRUCK BED, covered in a tarp. The DELIVERY GUY takes it off the bed and places it where the old sign was. Mickey signs a form.

He looks up at the covered object and YANKS the tarp off, it's a BRONZE STATUE OF DAVE. A spatula in one hand, his hat in the other, tipping it to people as they enter the park.

CU ON A PLAQUE: In Loving Memory of Dugout Dave, "Trust your gut."

MICKEY
(under his breath)
Why didn't you tell me you were
sick, man?

VOICE (O.C.)
Nice.

Mickey turns, it's Jeff, pulling up in his car.

JEFF
My girls are real pissed at you.

MICKEY
I know.

JEFF
Thanks.

MICKEY
For what?

JEFF
Usually I'm the a-hole around the
house.

Jeff drives off. Off the statue we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - LATER

Mickey sits deflated on the couch, watching TV in the dark.
Debra enters-

DEBRA
Isn't your big game today?

MICKEY
Not my game anymore.

A KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR. Debra looks out the window, smiles.

DEBRA
It's for you.

She walks into the other room. Mickey begrudgingly gets up and answers the door, it's Pickles.

PICKLES
Well, this place looks...terrible.
You look...chubby. And your hair is ridiculous.

Mickey shoots him a look.

PICKLES (CONT'D)
Sorry, that last part wasn't true.
Your hair actually looks really good today.

MICKEY
Thanks.

Mickey collapses back onto the couch. Pickles spots a framed photo of their Little League team sitting on the mantle.

PICKLES
Do you think things would be different if we won that World Series game?

MICKEY
Who cares.

PICKLES
We had fun, man. Every practice, every game, we had fun.
(MORE)

PICKLES (CONT'D)

You think those Japanese kids had as much fun as we did?! Sure, they might have grown up to invent some cool Japanese cars but you know what we invented?

Off Mickey--

PICKLES (CONT'D)

Farting into your baseball glove and putting it on your teammate's face.

MICKEY

That was truly revolutionary when you did that.

PICKLES

One of my proudest moments.

Off Mickey's laugh--

PICKLES (CONT'D)

They probably recalled those Japanese cars anyway. And you know what? You can't recall a fart. Trust me, I've tried. Point is, they didn't enjoy themselves, they didn't goof around. And you know what? They were better. That's why they beat us. They were a better team. But I guarantee you we had more fun.

MICKEY

They beat us because I hung a curveball. One. Lousy. Curveball.

PICKLES

You could also say they beat us because I got picked off the inning before or because Jackson hit into a double play with a man on third...

MICKEY

I let the kids down.

PICKLES

They're just kids, man! They don't understand the things us adults go through everyday. How old is this?

Pickles grabs a slice of pizza from an open box--

MICKEY

You were right. I should have been honest with them.

PICKLES

Hey, you didn't quit after we lost that big game. You dusted yourself off and you kept playing baseball. That's what life's about, getting a little chin music and being ready for the next pitch. And that's what you've taught those kids. Nobody ever gave them a chance until you came along.

MICKEY

It was all Dave.

PICKLES

Because he knew you were the right guy. He knew you could show them how to really love the game. Nobody expected us to be in this position. No one thought these kids were worth a damn. But the beauty of baseball is that-

Pickles walks to the curtains--

PICKLES (CONT'D)

-not every hit is a home run.

Pickles YANKS the curtains open, LIGHT FLOODS THE ROOM...

PICKLES (CONT'D)

But that doesn't mean you can't steal home.

Mickey adjusts his eyes to find Tanner and the Bandits on the front lawn, suited up and ready to play.

MICKEY

That was it.

PICKLES

Huh?

MICKEY

Your big speech, that was it.

Pickles realizes.

PICKLES

Oh, crap! And I wasted it on you?!

Mickey walks outside...

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

He approaches Tanner and the team.

MICKEY
I'm sorry.

TANNER
We know.

The Bandits watch as Mickey goes in for a kiss, Tanner puts a finger on his lips--

TANNER (CONT'D)
Go win a championship first.

The Bandits "ooooh! " and "aaaahh! "

Off Mickey's smile we...

SMASH TO:

EXT. BALBOA LITTLE LEAGUE - MOMENTS LATER

The Bandits enter the ballpark, tipping their hats to the statue of Dave as they enter.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - DAY

BRIAN
And it looks like it will be a David vs. Goliath match-up as the Bandits take on the Giants in the championship game!

SCOTCH
You got that right, Ottoman, and what a match-up it will be.

Brian covers the mic and looks at Scotch--

BRIAN
I'm a human man and my name is Brian, I am not a piece of furniture!

SCOTCH
You're not a piece of furniture and I'd love a piece of cake!
(MORE)

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
Just another beautiful day at the
ballpark.

ON THE FIELD...

The UMPIRE, 40's, approaches Mickey as the teams stretch before the game. He says something but we can't hear the exchange. Off Mickey, concerned we...

INT. BALBOA CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff and Steve are looking over a map of the way the town is divided. Mickey enters--

MICKEY
You wanted to see me, Steve?

JEFF
The trailer community is here...but
Oxnard is the cut off, one block
north of where she lives.

MICKEY
What's going on?

JEFF
Cody Thomas is ineligible to play.

MICKEY
What?

STEVE
She lives outside of the district.
She's not supposed to be playing in
our league, she should be playing
at Oak Park.

MICKEY
I had no idea.
(realizing)
This was you, Jeff?

JEFF
I just want everyone to have a fair
chance.

MICKEY
This isn't fair to my team, and
this definitely isn't fair to Cody.
They're kids, it's my fault, don't
punish them because I messed up.

STEVE
I'm sorry, Mickey.

MICKEY
She can't play because she's one block outside the district? Are you kidding? This is ridiculous!

JEFF
Mickey--

MICKEY
All this does is show me how scared you actually are.

JEFF
You think I'm scared?

MICKEY
Of being beat by a bunch of girls?
You bet your butt I do.

JEFF
I'll bet your arm I'm not.

MICKEY
What?

JEFF
You beat me, I'll pay for that fancy physical therapy. I beat you, you call it off with Tanner.

Off Mickey, confused...

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Mickey pulls Tanner aside as the teams warm-up. She's deep in thought, until...

TANNER
HA! Do it! Take the bet!

MICKEY
Are you kidding?

TANNER
If we win, he pays up...if we lose, what, we have to pretend we're not dating?

MICKEY
I'm not going to lie to your dad...

TANNER

You're also not going to lose.

MICKEY

We might without Cody.

Tanner SLAPS Mickey.

TANNER

Get your head in the game! We're going to win and he's going to pay to get your butt back on that field!

MICKEY

Fiesty.

TANNER

Damn right I am. Now snap out of it and win this ballgame.

Mickey can't help but to smile.

MICKEY

Sometimes I think you only like me for my tremendous coaching ability.

TANNER

It's mainly just your hair...

Off his smile--

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - DAY

The team is huddled around Mickey on the first base line.

CODY

So...I'm benched?

Mickey kneels next to her-

MICKEY

You can't play, but if it's alright with you, I'd love to have you help coach. There aren't any rules against that.

She nods silently.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Mackenzie, we just need to be smart with your pitching.

(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

If you can get through a game
without hitting your pitch count,
we have a solid shot. Throw strikes
and trust your defense.

BRIAN (PRE-LAP V.O.)

And the stage has been set. The
whole league has come out to watch
this showdown...

INT. DUGOUT - LATER

Pickles paces across the dugout. The team looks at him with great anticipation as he gears up for a speech, he takes a deep breath...

PICKLES

Nope, I got nothin'. I friggin'
lost it!

Off the team, nodding.

MICKEY

Three months ago I didn't plan on being here. But I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now. So go out there and play your hearts out. Don't do it for me, do it for yourselves. And do it for Dave, because without him, we wouldn't be here right now. Bandits on three.

They put their hands in--

MICKEY (CONT'D)

1-2-3...

TEAM

BANDITS!

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

BRIAN

I'd like to say this will be an even match-up, but the Bandits are going to have a tough time without one of their best players, Cody Thomas, who turned out to be ineligible to play.

SCOTCH

In-eligible! Now that's a word I've never heard before!

BRIAN

Ineligible.

SCOTCH

Illjellable! Yeah! Man, that's fun.

BRIAN

Inelig--Injel--...Darn, now I can't say it.

SCOTCH

Classic.

WE PAN ACROSS: The faces of the Giants as they take a knee along the third base line, watching the Bandits warm-up.

Mickey and Jeff greet each other at home plate.

JEFF

As much as I love my daughters, I've never had the guts to tell them baseball is a man's sport.

A BALL ZOOMS PAST JEFF'S FACE. He jumps back.

ANGLE ON: Mackenzie, on the mound, pissed.

MICKEY

I think she disagrees.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

SCOTCH

Jumble, I gotta tell you, I cannot wait to see what goes down here today.

BRIAN

Did you just call me Jumble? That's not even a name!

SCOTCH

That's not a name and I'm not tall enough to ride the ferris wheel! Here comes the first pitch!

ANGLE ON: The field--

The Giants batter steps into the box. Mackenzie winds up, throws, and...WHACK! The ball flies out of the park in a hurry.

BRIAN

And a HOME RUN on the first pitch!
WOW. What a way to start the game.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jeff shoots Mickey and Tanner a wink from the dugout.

MICKEY

Doesn't he feel bad for her?

TANNER

This is his version of tough love.

Mickey gauges Mackenzie's mood, it didn't even phase her, she's locked in, ready for the next batter.

TANNER (CONT'D)

If one of them is going to cry at the end of this game, it ain't gunna be her.

MICKEY

Alright, shake it off!

Later in the game...

The Bandits are up to bat, Betsy steps into the batter's box with Teddy on first and Mackenzie on third.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Hey! Remember what we worked on.

He gives her and the runners a sign. The pitch comes, Betsy fakes a bunt and Teddy DARTS down to second base, the catcher pops up and FAKE A THROW to second, Mackenzie BOLTS home, falling for the fake throw.

She's STUCK IN A PICKLE The catcher and third baseman try to run her down, she guns it towards home and DIVES, knocking the catcher down. There's a beat. Everyone in the stands gets to their feet, looking on with great anticipation.

The catcher opens his glove, ball still in there.

UMPIRE

OUT!

Mackenzie hangs her head. Collects herself and jogs back to the dugout.

MICKEY
It's alright! We'll get 'em next time.

Later...

The Giants are up to bat and knock in runs. On the scoreboard we see Mackenzie's pitch count is nearing the limit.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - LATER

ANGLE ON: The scoreboard. Top of the sixth. The Bandits are down by three. Two outs. Mackenzie is up to bat with the bases loaded. She steps into the batter's box. Jeff calls for time and approaches his pitcher--

JEFF
Walk her.

PITCHER
Coach, the bases are loaded...

JEFF
Giving them one run is better than her knocking them all in. Walk her, then we'll get the next batter. Got it?

PITCHER
Got it.

Jeff walks back to the dugout.

MICKEY
Base hit here, all we're thinking is base hit.

The catcher pops out of his crouch, getting ready for an INTENTIONAL WALK. Mickey looks to Jeff--

MICKEY (CONT'D)
You gotta be kidding.

TANNER
COME ON, DAD! Really?!

From the booth-

SCOTCH
What the frick, DAD?!

Brian covers Scotch's mouth.

BRIAN

I apologize, it seems as though my partner here has a vested interest in this game...plus, he's seven.

Ball 1

Mackenzie stands there, frustrated.

Ball 2

Cody yells out to Mickey--

CODY

Have her swing!

MICKEY

What?

CODY

Force them to pitch to her.

MICKEY

I--(then) Good thinking, coach.

Cody smiles.

Mackenzie looks down to Mickey, he calls for time. Mackenzie approaches.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Swing.

MACKENZIE

But they're walking me...

MICKEY

Take control of the situation. You swing at the next two pitches, get two strikes on you, force them to give you one good pitch. That's all it takes to change the game. If they still want to walk you, fine. But let's take a chance here.

She walks back to the batter's box. The pitcher throws and she SWINGS. The crowd murmurs, confused.

BRIAN (V.O.)

And it looks like Mackenzie just swung at the intentional walk...

Pitcher throws again...SWING. Strike two.

The pitcher looks to Jeff, unsure of what to do. Jeff calls time and walks out to his pitcher, the catcher joins them.

JEFF
One strike. You up for it?

PITCHER
No problem.

Mackenzie approaches Mickey--

MACKENZIE
What do we do?

MICKEY
Using your head only gets you so far.

On the mound--

JEFF
Fastball down and away.

Mickey and Mackenzie--

MICKEY
Trust your gut. Let's show them what girl's baseball looks like.

The catcher makes his way back to home plate.

BRIAN (V.O.)
And it looks like they will try to get the out here.

Mickey watches Jeff as he makes his way back to the dugout--

MICKEY
What do we think? Maybe I'd go fastball down and away, the old standby, at least hope she hits it on the ground...

Jeff looks at him, frazzled.

JEFF
McConnell!

Jeff gives his catcher a sign. The pitcher adjusts the ball in his glove.

BEGIN SLOW MOTION

The pitcher winds up, UNLEASHES. The ball flies through the air and DROPS, it's a CURVEBALL, Mackenzie waits on it and CRACK!

END SLOW MOTION

The ball FLIES OUT OF THE PARK. GRAND SLAM! The crowd ERUPTS! Mickey shoots Jeff a smile.

MICKEY

That's one impressive daughter you have.

The Bandits spill onto the field and wait for Mackenzie as she PUMPS HER FIST like Kirk Gibson rounding the bases.

JEFF

Don't get too excited, we still have an at-bat.

Later...Off the crowd....

EXT. FIELD - LAST INNING

Mackenzie takes the mound.

BRIAN (V.O.)

And Mackenzie Jones will come out to pitch the final inning. She has yet to reach her pitch limit. The Bandits need to maintain their one run lead to send the Giants packing.

Mackenzie stares the batter down. She winds up and...IT'S A curveball. SWING. Strike 1.

MICKEY

Easy there!

She throws a FASTBALL. Strike 2. Then ANOTHER curveball. Strike 3. ONE OUT.

Mickey calls for time and approaches the mound with Pickles. He checks the pitch count on the board--6 LEFT.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

We need to get the next two batters in 6 pitches, can you do that?

MACKENZIE

As long as you let me throw the curve.

MICKEY

Lay off it, I'm not kidding.

MACKENZIE

I don't see what other options we have.

MICKEY

Get them to put the ball on the ground, trust your defense.

Next batter. SINGLES UP THE MIDDLE. Mackenzie looks to Mickey, nervous.

Next batter. SINGLES TO RIGHT FIELD, Janette throws the ball in in time to stop the runner from scoring. Runners on first and third. The situation has turned on it's head in an instant.

Next batter. Curveball. STRIKE 1. Mickey shoots her a look.

She throws a fastball and it's lined to center field. Ally THROWS it in, stopping the runner from scoring. BUT THE BASES ARE LOADED.

Mackenzie looks around, taking in the situation. Mickey watches her process it and...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

The Little League World Series game. 13-year-old Mickey gazes around the field. The bases loaded, the big hitter coming up...A young Pickles looks at him from behind home plate--

PICKLES

Mickey...Mickey...MICKEY!

Mickey snaps out of it.

END FLASHBACK

Mickey shakes it off and looks at Pickles--

PICKLES (CONT'D)

Call the pitch.

Mickey gives the sign. Mackenzie shakes it off. Betsy looks to Mickey, he gives her the same sign. Mackenzie shakes it off again Mickey goes to call time but she has already STARTED HER WIND-UP. She pitches...

CURVEBALL STRIKE 1. Mickey tries to get her attention, she ignores him.

FAST BALL STRIKE 2. Mickey tries to call time but it's too late.

CURVEBALL STRIKE 3. TWO OUTS!

The Bandits pump their fists, until they notice Mackenzie HOLDING HER ARM, writhing in pain. MICKEY AND JEFF RUN OUT TO THE PITCHER'S MOUND--

JEFF

Great job, having her throw all those curveballs, are you nuts?!

MICKEY

I told her not to!

MACKENZIE

(wincing)

It's not his fault, dad.

MICKEY

Are you okay?

MACKENZIE

It's my arm. I'm sorry, you were right. OW! Crap.

Matty runs over--

MATTY

Where does it hurt?!

MACKENZIE

My arm...I need some ice.

Matty reaches down heroically and LIFTS HER UP.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

I can walk!

MATTY

We're not taking any chances!

He carries her to the dugout.

MATTY (CONT'D)

Someone get some ice!

BRIAN (V.O.)

And Mackenzie Jones is being carried off the field! The Bandits now with the game on the line and without their star pitcher...

Mickey and Pickles look out at their team--

PICKLES

What's the move? They have their
three and four spots coming up...

Mickey looks at the scoreboard. All they need is one out.
Bases loaded. They're up by one.

MICKEY

(calls out)

Everybody in!

He waves the whole team in. They huddle around him on the
mound, Mickey looks at them, about to speak when--

PICKLES

I'm damn proud of you kids. A few
months ago you could barely tie
your cleats. Now you're all
bonafide ballplayers and you have
your opponents shaking in their
booties. You're tough, you're full
of spirit, and most of all...you
care about each other.

The team looks at each other, smiling--

PICKLES (CONT'D)

You're the best damn group of kids
I've ever met. Win or lose, we do
it together.

Mickey smiles.

PICKLES (CONT'D)

So together, we're making this
decision.

(he holds the ball up)

Who wants it?

The team collectively looks to Janette. She smiles coyly.

PICKLES (CONT'D)

You ready, Janette?

She's focused. And dead serious.

JANETTE

Call me Trouble.

MICKEY

Hands in. 1-2-3...

TEAM
BANDITS!

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOX - CONTINUOUS

BRIAN

And it looks like we're seeing a
pitching change after Mackenzie
Jones was carried off the field by
that rather small boy...

MATTY (O.C.)

HEY!

Brian looks at Matty, shooting him a death stare--

BRIAN

I mean... strong man. The Bandits
have decided to go with...number
two, Janette Lewis? Haven't seen
her pitch all season, I wonder what
the game plan is here.

SCOTCH

It's times like these, Crinkle,
that take me back to the early days
in my career.

BRIAN

When was that?

SCOTCH

Yesterday. Ahh, I remember it like
it was...

BRIAN

Yesterday?

SCOTCH

An hour ago.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Mickey stands with Janette on the mound.

JANETTE

What do I do, Coach?

MICKEY

One of the greats once told me that
real closers play with heart and
grit. Let's see what you got.

He puts the ball in her glove.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
But most importantly, just have fun.

He shoots her a wink and heads back to the dugout.

BRIAN (V.O.)
Lewis needs one out to end this thing. Doesn't seem like much, but it's a tall order for someone who hasn't pitched all season. And here comes the Giants big man trying to clear the bases.

THUMPING MUSIC matches the footsteps of...

CU ON: A GIANT KID as he approaches the batter's box, staring Janette down.

She narrows her gaze on him, resilient. She pitches and NEARLY HITS HIM IN THE HEAD. He goes flailing to the ground, frazzled, he pops back to his feet and shoots daggers at her.

ANGLE ON: Mickey and Pickles in the dugout, impressed.

BRIAN (V.O.)
And a little chin music! Looks like she's trying to show him who's boss.

Trouble gets back on the rubber. She winds up and throws, the batter swings with everything he has and CRACK! HE SENDS IT FLYING down the left field line--

BRIAN (V.O.)
And it's back...back...headed for the next zip code!

The crowd tracks the ball with great anticipation. Janette watches it fly towards the fence, scared. Mickey watches it go, Pickles covers his eyes...

BRIAN (V.O.)
And FOUL! Wow. A long strike to even the count. Talk about an early Christmas gift.

SCOTCH
Wait, what? It's Christmas. Holy crap, IT'S CHRISTMAS?!

Scotch freaks out. Brian hangs his head.

Trouble pitches again, THE BALL NEARLY FREEZES IN THE AIR
It's a killer change-up and the batter is a day ahead of it,
throwing him off as he swings at nothing.

UMPIRE
STRIKE TWO!

Mickey and Pickles high-five in the dugout.

JEFF
Time!

Jeff walks over to his batter--

JEFF (CONT'D)
Are you going to let this little
girl strike you out?

GIANT KID
No, sir.

JEFF
Your team is depending on you,
don't let them down.

Giant Kid gets back in the box. He stares Janette down. She tilts her head up, we see her eyes appear under the brim of her hat. She stares back at him.

The crowd is on their feet. Trouble winds up, throws, the batter swings and WHACK! Makes perfect contact.
Back...back...back...

BRIAN (V.O.)
And this one definitely in fair
territory....

CU'S OF the crowd, players, coaches, as they track the ball on it's way out of the park...

Autumn and Ally see it coming towards them in the outfield, both running back, unaware as they run towards each other--

MICKEY
SOMEBODY CALL IT!

ALLY
I got it! I got it! I got it!

AUTUMN
I got it! I got it! I GOT IT!

Ally stops running as Autumn LEAPS towards the fence, her glove extended, attempting to rob the homer.

The ball HITS HER GLOVE and BOUNCES back into play, ALLY LEAPS AND DIVES FOR IT!

ANGLE ON: The dugouts, the crowd, the base runners...

ALLY FALLS TO THE GROUND.

She slowly opens her glove to find...the ball. The Umpire looks on, puts his fist in the air--

UMPIRE
OUT!

She pops up holding her glove high in the air, RUNNING towards the field, HER WHOLE TEAM BOLTS TOWARDS HER, Mickey, Pickles, and Tanner clear the dugout.

BRIAN
SHE CAUGHT IT! SHE CAUGHT IT! A
ROBBED HOME RUN TO END THE GAME!

The batter THROWS his helmet on the ground. Jeff hangs his head. HUGE CHEERS from the Bandits crowd.

SCOTCH
RUB MY TUMMY AND MAKE A WISH, THE
BANDITS WIN!

The crowd rushes the field. Mickey meets Jeff at home plate and reaches his hand out--

JEFF
Good job, kid.

MICKEY
You were the guy to beat.

People celebrate around them.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
And hey, as fun as it was, you
don't have to worry about the
bet...I'll figure something out.

JEFF
Ace, I'm a man of my word. Plus, if
my daughter's gunna date a
ballplayer, he's going to be a
working one.

Mickey smiles.

JEFF (CONT'D)
But if you break her heart I'll
break that arm all over again.

MICKEY
Understood.

Jeff tousles his hair. Tanner runs over and kisses Mickey--

JEFF
Oh, come on! I'm standing right
here! None of that!

Tanner takes off her hat and covers her dad's face with it.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - SAME

Scotch is CRAWLING ALL OVER BRIAN. FREAKING OUT.

SCOTCH
They did it, Geoffrey! They did it!

BRIAN
For Pete's sake my name is BRIAN!

SCOTCH
You got it, Pete!

Scotch tackles him to the ground.

EXT. BALBOA FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The celebration continues. Jeff walks to meet his wife--

NANCY
You gunna be okay?

Jeff watches his girls celebrate.

JEFF
Better than okay.

His face suddenly turns BEET RED when sees Matty run up to
Mackenzie and KISS HER!

JEFF (CONT'D)
I'm gunna rip that boys face off!

Jeff RUNS AT HIM and chases him around the field. Debra
approaches Mickey--

DEBRA
Your dad would be proud.

MICKEY
I know.

Pickles watches the celebration, a tear slowly drops from his eye. We PULL OUT to find Betsy, Mel, and Belle watching--

MEL
There's no crying in baseball!

PICKLES
Yes there is! It's so beautiful!

IN THE ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH...

Teddy takes a seat behind the microphone.

TEDDY
Yeah. This feels right.

He plugs his iPhone into the speakers and BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S "BADLANDS" bursts in.

Brian and Scotch are on the field. Brian looks disheveled.

SCOTCH
Well, Brian, it's been great
working with you.

BRIAN
YES! You got it right! Finally, you
got my name right!

Brian HUGS Scotch.

SCOTCH
You're weird, but I like you.
Anyhoo, I got some Christmas
shopping to do. See you around,
Barry.

Brian's face falls.

BRIAN
I quit.

CU ON: Mickey and Tanner, smiling at each other, everyone
around them celebrating...

TANNER

Looks like you figured out how a
bunch of misfits can win a
ballgame.

MICKEY

I just figured out how to have fun.

PULL OUT to an AERIAL SHOT...pulling back further and further as we see everyone on the field. We continue to pull back as Dave's statue comes into frame...then the diner, the other fields...until we have a perfect view of the whole ballpark.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END