

OUT OF OUR LEAGUE

by

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FADE IN:

Over opening credits, are images and highlights from the Little League World Series over the past fifty years.

Transition into ABC's coverage of the 1973 Series. The graphics, clothes, and hair styles suggest the era.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH (1973)

BRENT MUSBURGER and REGGIE JACKSON, wear the trademark ABC jackets. The game can be seen through the window behind them.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Well, it's been one heck of a ball game here in Williamsport. But, the Firecrackers of Flint, Michigan have all but manhandled--or should I say "boy-handled"--these kids from Panama. Just one out stands between this team and the title of 1973 Little League World Champions. Which will be due in big part to the arm of pitcher Danny Turner.

REGGIE JACKSON

You said it, Brent. I mean, wow, I'm the reigning AL MVP Reggie Jackson and even I'd hate to face Danny's knuckle curve ball, a wicked pitch that comes in slow then drops and curves. He's got future, big leaguer written all over him.

EXT. WILLIAMSPORT BALLFIELD - PITCHER'S MOUND - CONTINUOUS

Thirteen year old Danny winds up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - strike one, strike two, strike three.

BRENT MUSBURGER (V.O.)

And that's it! The Firecrackers have done it!

A chubby catcher rushes to pick up Danny in celebration.

BRENT MUSBURGER (V.O.)

Danny's teammates are lifting him up on to their shoulders.

REGGIE JACKSON (V.O.)

Soak it up, Flint's biggest celebrity. You're only young once.

Close on young Danny's face, which transitions into the face of 52 YEAR OLD DANNY, a big kid. He wears the same baseball cap - both are scruffy and a little worse for the wear.

EXT. WILLIAMSPORT BALLFIELD - PRESENT DAY

Danny is on TV, which he doesn't realize.

BRENT MUSBURGER (V.O.)

Now if that face looks familiar,
it's because it belongs to the kid
who threw one of the finest games
in Little League history.

Danny is on a hill, overlooking the field. Below, players are warming up. As is tradition, little kids slide down this hill on cardboard. Danny does it headfirst, tumbling at the end into a group of kids, wiping them out like bowling pins.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Brent and Reggie (oddly looking just about the same) watch Danny on their monitor.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Looks like you can take the boy out
of the game but you can't take the
game out of the boy. In addition to
his records, Danny has added
something else to his Little League
legacy - his son, Daniel Turner.

Through the glass behind them, down on the field, pitcher DANIEL is warming up. He looks too serious for a 12-year-old. Fans of all ages crowd the nearby fence for autographs.

REGGIE JACKSON

A ruthless pitcher, with his
father's same knuckle curve.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Thank you hall-of-famer, Reggie
Jackson.

EXT. BALLPARK - FIELD LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Danny pushes his way through the crowd by the fence, trying to make his way on to the field.

DANNY

(to whoever will listen)

Yes, I'm him. Excuse me. Oh, thanks
for remembering. Excuse me, gotta
get through. No autographs folks.

(MORE)

DANNY (cont'd)
 Sorry, I'm not an asshole, just
 busy. Alright, maybe one.

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)
 And starting pitcher for the Flint
 Firecrackers, Daniel Turner.

DANNY
 Yeah! Let's go, hot rod. Show them
 what you're made of... Me!
 (to fan next to him)
 That's my son.

FAN
 No, really?

At the gate, Danny is stopped by a hulking SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD
 You got some ID?

DANNY
 I think this should cover it.

Danny shows his 1973 Little League championship ring.
 Security Guard opens the gate, and Danny walks through.

SECURITY GUARD
 Sorry I questioned you, champ.

Danny turns around, takes off his custom made 1973 champ's
 satin jacket, and tosses it to the Security Guard.

SECURITY GUARD
 What?! Are you friggin' kidding me!
 This is priceless, one of a kind.
 You're just like Mean Joe Green.

Danny walks back over.

DANNY
 Yeah, um, look, I just got caught
 up in the moment there. I really
 need that back.

Security Guard doesn't easily let go, but Danny wrestles it
 back from him.

DANNY
 Thank you.

Danny walks past kid players stretching and warming up. He
 dispenses advice to them as he goes.

DANNY

Hey Scooter, remember to shift left for that big number forty four. Andy, keep your elbow up on your swing, alright buddy. Remember boys, losing is for losers.

Danny makes over to his son, Daniel.

DANNY

How's the arm, son?

DANIEL

From twenty minutes ago when you asked, it's great. Hey Dad, can I ask you something?

DANNY

Of course. Wow, doesn't it smell great down here?

DANIEL

Should I grow a mustache?

DANNY

Yes... No-- What? Grow a mustache? You're about to pitch the biggest game of your career and you're talking about mustaches.

DANIEL

Biggest game of my career? Dad, this is the end of my career. I'm gonna throw these guys a beatin' and then it's on to finding a nice girl like you did. So, the mustache... ladies dig 'em, right?

COACH RICK, cocky and mustached, also around 50, walks up.

RICK

Daniel, is this man bothering you? Oh Danny, it's you. Sorry, I mistook you for a drifter. You know it's only players and coaches on the field.

DANNY

Good call, Coach Rick. I know it puts you in a weird spot hassling parents. So just give me the word and I'll kick them out.

Danny puts back on his Little League Champion jacket.

DANNY

Just found out this was priceless. Who knew? But hey, enough about all my accomplishments. Pretty soon here, you'll finally be a Little League champ as well. Now you may not think winning as a coach is as good--

RICK

Yes, actually I think it is.

DANNY

(laughs, then)

Oh, you're serious. Yes, yes, it is just as good. Well, go get 'em.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Back with Brent and Reggie.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Deja vu. Seems like only forty years ago that these kids had Farrah Fawcett on their wall, Stevie Wonder on their eight-track and feelings they couldn't quite describe in their nether region.

REGGIE JACKSON

Had me up until that.

BRENT MUSBURGER

And a hot shot from Flint, Michigan took his team to the big dance. Reggie, the history of Flint please.

REGGIE JACKSON

Well, it's certainly had its share of great Firecracker teams. Of course, the 1973 bunch won it all. But several teams have come oh so close, most notably the year right before. The '72 Firecrackers made it here to the Series, only to be humiliated by the Panamanians in the first round. They returned the following year for revenge. It was virtually the same team, only with added pitching phenom Danny Turner.

BRENT MUSBURGER

If I'm not mistaken, the pitcher who was replaced by Danny is here today.

REGGIE JACKSON

That's right, Brent. That unfortunate kid is Firecrackers' coach, Rick Wannamaker. You can bet he wants some redemption.

Coach Rick is now on their monitor.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Oh baby, he can just taste it.

EXT. BALLFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Coach Rick tries to coolly spit like a ball player, but ends up spitting down his chin and on himself. He looks around and tries to wipe it off before anyone notices.

EXT. BALLFIELD - STANDS - DAY

Danny walks through a sea of Korean fans. He finds his seat by his buddy T-BONE MALONE (52), an affable, big guy.

DANNY

I gotta tell you, T-Bone, I'm nervous.

T-BONE

More nervous than when we were here?

A baseball vander goes by, but he's speaking Korean.

DANNY

No, come on. I knew we'd crush the Panamanians.

Instead of hot dogs, sushi is being passed down the row.

T-BONE

Really? Because as I recall, your first pitch went into the dirt and your second into the stands.

Koreans are passing money back down the row - Korean money.

DANNY

Yeah, but where did the next three pitches go?

The two have a little ritual - Danny mock throws, T-Bone mock catches, then they both signal "out."

DANNY (CONT'D)

Okay, so I'm not as much nervous,
as I am concerned. Daniel is down
there talking about growing a
mustache.

T-BONE

A mustache is a lot of
responsibility. Never had the
mustache talk with my kids.

DANNY

You have three girls.

T-BONE

But I also have a wife... who
bleaches. I just had the whole make-
up argument with my youngest. Be
glad he's not into that.

DANNY

Why are they trying to grow up so
damn fast? I mean, there's a time
to be a kid and there's a time to
be an adult.

T-BONE

True enough. Where's Vicki?

DANNY

She's sitting with the Americans.
She says I'm too much of a kid...

They take off their shirts, revealing painted bodies.

DANNY

And that I'm not a responsible
parent or husband, and that I need
to commit as much time to family as
I do building forts, fantasy
sports, and reliving my glory days
with my loser friends.

T-BONE

Loser? Do you think she meant me?

DANNY

Not a chance. We're winners.

They stand up to cheer. On their fronts: "Fire" and "Crackers". On their backs: "Death to" and "Kim Jong-il". To the guys' surprise, Korean fans cheer at the sight of this.

T-BONE

Reverse psychology. Damn, they're good.

A KOREAN MAN with perfect English leans over.

KOREAN MAN

We're from South Korea, you assholes.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Daniel almost single-handedly beating the Korean team.

BACK IN THE STANDS - LATER

T-BONE

That pitch is a thing of a beauty. Wish I could pass on my wealth of baseball knowledge to the next generation. Maybe I'll write a book.

DANNY

That would mean you'd actually have to write a book.

T-BONE

Yeah, you're right... Maybe I'll record an audio book instead.

Daniel throws a final strike. His teammates mob the field. Danny and T-Bone jump and hug each other.

BRENT MUSBURGER (V.O.)

That's it folks! The Flint Firecrackers are once again Little League Champs.

DANNY

Excuse us, South Koreans.

Danny heads down to the field.

EXT. BALLFIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Brent Musburger with a camera crew finds Daniel. The rest of his team is still in a dog pile.

BRENT MUSBURGER

There he is. Congratulations, Daniel. I don't know if there's anybody who can stand in there and hit that knuckle curve.

DANIEL

Yeah, one person. My dad. He's the one who taught me how to throw it.

As if on cue, Danny shows up.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Credit where credit is due. Danny Turner, back on the biggest stage in Little League ball.

DANNY

Thanks Brent. But Daniel deserves the credit here. Four words - work ethic, work ethic.

BRENT MUSBURGER

I can't help but imagine what it'd have been like if your two teams faced off. It would be like a lion fighting a shark.

DANNY

Yeah, I mean I guess...

BRENT MUSBURGER

Or the Abominable Snowman taking on Big Foot. No, I got it. A tornado versus an earthquake. Am I right?

DANIEL

Well, Brent, we'd have certainly had our hands full... Back in the day that is.

Daniel's final comment surprises Danny.

DANNY

Right, son. But we--

Danny is interrupted by the kids carrying by Coach Rick on their shoulders, then pouring Gatorade on him.

INT. PIZZA PLACE - LATER

Through the window, the bus is parked outside with a banner and shoe-polished windows that read: "BEST EVER."

The players toast with sodas and slices of pizza. They're acting like kids - blowing bubbles in drinks, putting straws in their mouths like fangs. Danny looks like he's over it.

T-Bone and Danny take it all in.

T-BONE

This is what it's all about, eh, buddy?

DANNY

To the victors go the spoils of war.

PHIL, a player's dad comes up to the guys.

PHIL

Hey T-Bone, Danny. Congrats. Pretty awesome the boys getting a championship ring of their own.

DANNY

It sure is...
(seriously)
But heavy is the hand that wears the ring, Phil. Know what I mean?

PHIL

No, not really.

On a big screen, ESPN's SportsCenter is playing highlights from the game. Coach Rick shushes everybody to watch. They cheer at anchor STUART SCOTT's mention of the team.

ON TV - SPORTSCENTER

STUART SCOTT

No doubt about it, this is the best team of 2010. But the debate batted around here all day is who's better: the Champion 1973 Firecrackers or the new Champs? Like Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron, different era, different game. Guess we'll never know.

Rick follows up.

RICK

Oh I think we know. Who's the best?

CROWD

We are!

T-BONE

(to Danny)

Guess our reign is over. I'm gonna go drown my sorrows... Or to be more accurate, stuff my sorrows.

T-Bone walks away. Danny watches Coach Rick get handshakes and pats on the back. Rick then approaches VICKI, 40's, an attractive, down-to-Earth mom.

RICK

Thank you for your cheering today, Vicki. I couldn't have done it without you.

VICKI

You mean "we"? You said "I".

RICK

Well, I meant the collective "I".

Danny approaches the two of them.

DANNY

Coach Rick, there's a debate over there about who should play you in a Firecrackers movie. I say Hilary Swank.

RICK

Get serious... She doesn't have the range. Besides, I should play myself, of course. Excuse me.

Rick heads off to end the "debate."

DANNY

That guy is my Lex Luthor.

VICKI

Making you Superman? I think he'd be more like your Eddie Haskell... Quite a game, huh? Your heckling go over well?

Danny says something in Korean.

DANNY

I just insulted your family's appliances, which in my book doesn't go over the line, but just enough to get in your head.

An uncomfortable beat of neither knowing what to say.

DANNY

Okay, I know you're still unhappy with me.

VICKI

True, but I'm not ruining Daniel's night talking about...our stuff.

DANNY

Oh good. I hate talking about our stuff.

VICKI

Don't tell Daniel, but in a way, I'm glad the season is over. So, at some point soon, you and I can work on us. We can't just keep putting our issues on hold and--

DANNY

Thought you didn't want to talk about this.

VICKI

(louder)

And come back to them when it's convenient. It's never convenient!

A family at the next table looks over.

DANNY

(to table)

Our hotel... in relation to the stadium. Not very convenient.

(to Vicki)

I know that. It's just, I've been busy. I had to come here early to scout out the competition. And before that, T-Bone and I were on a serious mission to master all the songs on Rock Band. You'll be happy to know, it kicked our ass.

Daniel walks up.

DANNY

Daniel Turner, you just won the Little League World Series. What are you gonna do now?

DANIEL

Oh yeah, the Disneyland thing. That's cute. I like how whenever I walk over you guys stop talking.

Everyone cheers.

VICKI

(to Daniel)

So, I know I'm the hundredth person to ask, but how's it feel?

DANIEL

Well, great. It's certainly a big relief. Don't tell Dad, but in a way, I'm glad the season is over.

VICKI

Oh really?

DANIEL

Yeah, I just wanna break from baseball and to get my summer going, you know?

VICKI

Well, you certainly earned it.

RICK

(on mic)

Can we get the team to come up and sing the Firecracker fight song?

The team goes up. Daniel reluctantly joins them.

KIDS

(singing)

We are the Firecrackers of Flint.
 Best team in its class.
 When we take the field,
 Boy, we kick some...
Assassins at the plate,
 With a home run or grand slam.
 So give us all you got,
 Cuz we don't give a...
Damage your team spirit,
 Because we play so well.
 Try to steal our thunder,
 We'll send you straight to...
Hello to the Flint fans,
 Best ones in the game.
 From the halls of victory,
 Let them shout our name...

EVERYBODY

Firecrackers! Firecrackers!
 Firecrackers!

Danny, T-Bone and some older guys join the kids on stage.

DANNY

One more time, Firecrackers!

Daniel leaves the stage and rejoins Vicki. They watch as Danny, his arm around T-Bone, really gets into it.

VICKI

He'll grow up sometime, son.

DANIEL

But not today.

VICKI

No, not today.

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAYS LATER

Danny wears cargo shorts and the familiar orange apron with a "Firecracker World Champs" button. He talks to a CUSTOMER.

DANNY

Screws won't hold, pal. Bolt the two beams together. Brackets over on aisle six.

CUSTOMER

Thanks Danny, and congratulations.

P.A. (O.C.)

Danny to hardware, please. Danny to hardware.

Danny's on the move. CUSTOMER #2 stops him at the paint area.

CUSTOMER #2

Hey, hey Danny.

They do a quick high-five/fist bump exchange.

CUSTOMER #2

How much paint for a garage that's twenty by thirty five?

DANNY

Two gallons. But do a primer coat first - seal out moisture, protect from mold.

P.A.

Danny to hardware.

Nearby CUSTOMER #3 joins in.

CUSTOMER #3
Faux marble tile okay for an
outdoor deck?

DANNY
Go with Spanish tile. Spend half as
much. Just use a commercial grade
grout.

CUSTOMER #3
(recognizing him)
Hey, you're the Little League
Champ. You and your son both won
the World Series titles.

DANNY
Yeah, that's me.

P.A.
Danny...

DANNY
Hold on a sec.

He picks up a store phone, now on the intercom loudspeaker.

DANNY
Hey Gloria, what's up?

P.A.
Customer question in hardware.

DANNY
Put him on. What's up pal?

The whole store hears the conversation.

P.A.
First, congrats. You and your boy
are putting Flint back on the map.
Lord knows, we need it.

DANNY
Gracias, my man. What's your
question?

P.A.
The Odawald drill that's on special-

DANNY
Let me stop you right there. It's a
piece of crap. Spend the extra
twenty bucks and get the Black and
Decker.

P.A.

Thanks. My wife has a question.

DANNY

Go ahead, wife.

P.A.

Danny, I saw you play against Beeville on your championship run in 1973. You broke your finger diving into the stands for a fly ball. And you still went on to finish the game and win!

DANNY

I remember. What's your question?

P.A.

What was going through your mind at the time? And where are rakes?

DANNY

I was thinking "If you're not a winner, you're a loser" and aisle ten. Thanks for the call.

As he hangs up, Rick shows up with a "Manager Rick" name tag.

RICK

Are you quite done?

DANNY

Well, I hung up if that's what you mean.

RICK

First, this is an intercom system, not a talk radio show. Second, your department is hardware.

DANNY

Well, technically yes, but I like to spread my wealth of knowledge around. Like the Robin Hood of home improvement smarts, I take away ignorance and give them my genius.

RICK

How noble. Look, as your boss--

DANNY

Just so you know, "boss" sounds a little ridiculous, plus...

(whispering)

(MORE)

DANNY (cont'd)
I don't think anybody really believes it. Let's just keep it at "manager."

RICK
Danny, you may have been the big man in junior high... then also in high school... and now around town. But not here. And I'm sure it's tough for you, that I have ascended the Depot ladder quicker than you.

DANNY
Actually, I have purposely never gotten on that ladder. I do this job by choice. I love what I do, working with the common man.

CUSTOMER #4 and CUSTOMER #5 walk by.

CUSTOMER #4
Way to go, Danny boy!

CUSTOMER #5
Danny for mayor!

DANNY
Thanks, fellas!
(to Rick)
"Mayor Danny" does have a ring to it.

RICK
I'll have you know, I love what I do too. I have my own parking spot. I can take lunch whenever I want. I can take two half lunches or a bunch of ten minute lunches spread out over the entire day. Totally up to me.

DANNY
Mini-lunches? You could have mini-lunches? Good god.

RICK
All day long.

GUY approaches Rick.

GUY
Excuse me, manager type. You sure could use a few more guys like this around.

RICK

Thank you... customer type.

GUY

Yeah, he built a fort for my kid in our backyard. Thanks again, Danny. I owe you one.

DANNY

You're welcome. Just doing what I love.

Guy exits.

RICK

Still building tree houses, huh?

DANNY

Well, I'd build one for you, but you're not able to have children.

RICK

I'm able to have children. I'm just not able to have a wife... I mean I don't have a "Vicki"-- I mean, I haven't found that special lady.

DANNY

Have you checked gardening supplies? A lot of nice ho's.

Danny leaves. Rick stands there, confused.

RICK

(to himself)

Ho's? Oh, double entendre... Who am I talking to?

INT. TURNER HOUSE - LATER

Danny tosses his apron at the coat rack. It stays. Vicki is picking up dirty clothes.

DANNY

A child could do his job, I'm serious. Or a trained monkey, not even a trained monkey, any average monkey right off the street.

VICKI

(loudly)

Guys, throw your dirty clothes in the basket, not at the basket. Or at least get your own rebound.

DANIEL (O.C.)
(yelling from his room)
Those are Dad's.

VICKI
Shocker. I got it, Danny. But
what's the point? That you hate
working for Rick?

DANNY
That's the point. I don't work for
Rick. I work for the company and
for way longer than him, I might
add.

VICKI
But he's a manager. So, go into
management. Problem solved.

DANNY
Well, yes that problem would be
solved, but then I'd have the
obvious, bigger problem. I couldn't
wear shorts and a T-shirt to work.
Plus overtime sucks. Unless it's in
football or basketball, then it's
pretty awesome. And honey, jerk
off's and d bags are in management.
All the cool guys work on the floor
like me.

VICKI
Fine. Then get a new job I guess.
But Danny, "jerk off's, d bags,
cool guys"? You sound like some
teenage kid.

DANNY
As I recall, that's what you first
liked about me - my boyish charm.

VICKI
I did. But not any more. Which
brings us back to the root of our
problems.

DANNY
That's not fair, honey. We can't
blame our problems on Coach Rick.

She starts to walk off.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm kidding... Of course we can blame our problems on Coach Rick. I'm kidding again... Okay, you're right. I'll stop complaining. Tell me about your day? How's things at the bank?

VICKI

Fine. Except Mister Nissly had the audacity to tell us we're going to have to stagger our lunch breaks. I mean just who does he think he is?

DANNY

Well hun, he is the bank president. I mean, it's his job to--
(beat)
Okay. Well-played. Point for you.

VICKI

I still have to pick up some kind of refreshments for this neighborhood council meeting. So, we should take off early.

DANNY

That's tonight? But, I have a thing, a meeting.

VICKI

Danny, it's on the fridge calendar.

DANNY

I didn't know we were still doing the fridge calendar thing.

VICKI

Yes, we're still doing the fridge calendar thing.

DANNY

Well, I got an important project. How about this? Next neighborhood council meeting, I'll go and you can do a project. You know I'm not sure how, but I'll bet Coach Rick's to blame for this miscommunication.

VICKI

Okay, fine. But can you make sure Daniel gets dinner?

DANNY
Absolutely. Done.

Vicki leaves. Danny finds Daniel on the computer.

DANNY
Hey hot rod, whatcha doin'?

DANIEL
I'm just online, Dad.

DANNY
Nothing weird or dangerous or
illegal, right?

DANIEL
Nothing that exciting, Dad.

DANNY
Right. I'll be out back with the
guys if you need me, okay? Mom put
me in charge of dinner, so order
pizza whenever you're hungry.

Danny hands him money.

DANIEL
I'm gonna get a large. Alex is
coming over.

DANNY
Good. Cool. Alex? No Alex on the
team. Somebody from school?

DANIEL
Yeah, Alex goes to my school.

DANNY
Cool. Hey FYI, I installed a
program on that computer that
watches everything you do.

DANIEL
What kind of program?

DANNY
A database, fire-wall, software...
system-- Okay, I can't back that
up. I trust you. Stay outta
trouble.

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - BACK DOOR

Danny heads out behind the house. Instead of a garage, Danny has a big workshop/warehouse of sorts.

INT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - A LITTLE LATER

Danny, T-Bone and HUGHES and ROSS (guys their same age) sit around a poker game. All drink beer. Ross smokes a cigar.

HUGHES

So, this whole thing tomorrow is like our team passing the torch.

ROSS

No disrespect to Daniel, but these kids would be lucky to get the sweat off my jock.

DANNY

Knowing my son, I don't think he'd want your jock sweat.

T-BONE

Have you been saving the sweat off your jock for such an occasion?

HUGHES

He keeps it in a mayonnaise jar under his sink. Very Ted Bundy of you, Ross.

ROSS

Hilarious. I'm just saying, our team was way better. Plus, I can't stand Rick Wannamaker.

HUGHES

I second that. Danny, you should've been the coach of that team.

DANNY

Well, maybe the better man got the job. Or at least the man who got a degree online in "Sports", and bribed the parks and rec council.

T-BONE

Know what'd be awesome? If the whole team was there tomorrow. It'd be like a Little League reunion. How cool would that be?

DANNY

Pretty cool. Hey, if I'm gonna take over the world before my wife gets home, we gotta get started.

The guys put on impromptu body armor, goggles and helmets (Army, Viking, football, and construction). They each set a PAINTBALL GUN on the table next to a "RISK" board game, which is set up and ready to go.

DANNY

Okay, I'm up and I'll start by attacking Siberia from China.

The guys are playing a hybrid of "Risk" and Paintball.

HUGHES

How many armies are you attacking with?

DANNY

Four.

Danny loads four paintballs into his gun.

ROSS

How many you defending with, T-Bone?

T-BONE

One... which is all I'll need.

The guys "Ooo." T-Bone loads one paintball into his gun.

HUGHES

Ready guys... Battle!

Danny and T-Bone dive out of the others' aim. Danny fires - a miss. Both use the garage for cover - tools, building supplies, a half-finished fort. Danny fires more shots. T-Bone, agile for his size, dodges, then shoots, hitting Danny.

T-BONE

Mother Russia stands protected, you bastard.

ROSS

Danny, how do you get away with all the stuff you do? I mean my wife won't even let me put up a punching bag.

HUGHES

Ross, your turn.

ROSS

I will attack North Africa from
Brazil with... everything I got.

DANNY/T-BONE/HUGHES

Damn!/Oh, shit!/Whoa!

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - NIGHT

As Vicki walks up to the front door and hears battle cries
from Danny's workshop around back.

INT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Vicki opens the door to find the place in ruins. A battle is
in full swing, shots are fired. She dodges, as one hits the
wall next to her head. The guys all notice. The game stops.

DANNY

Does my wife got reflexes or what?!

MOMENTS LATER

The guys are leaving.

ROSS

Vicki, I was just telling the guys
earlier how Stacy would never go
for this. You are the coolest wife!

Danny is behind Vicki, trying to get Ross to "shut up."

VICKI

Oh, yeah. The coolest. Night, boys.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - BACK DOOR

Vicki walks in, clearly annoyed. Danny follows.

DANNY

Honey, it was a project. I'm
designing an awesome new game. That
was R&D, which stands for Research
and Development by the way.

She stops in the kitchen, eying an empty pizza box.

VICKI

I know what the hell it stands for,
Danny. I see you made a healthy
dinner. And what was your son up to
tonight?

DANNY
Hanging out with his buddy Alex.

She leads Danny into the living room.

VICKI
Danny, meet your son's buddy, Alex.

Turns out, ALEX is a very pretty 15 year old girl. Danny tries to be cool as he shakes her hand.

ALEX
Nice to meet you, Mr. Turner.

DANNY
Call me-- yeah, Mr. Turner is good.

ALEX
I just wanna compliment you both on raising such a decent son. Other than making out for the past three hours, that's all we did. He never once tried to go up my shirt and let me tell you, that's rare.
(beat)
Because, you know, I'm so hot.

Danny and Vicki are at a loss for words.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Alex leaves. Daniel closes the front door behind her.

DANIEL
So, how awesome is that?

VICKI
Not very.

DANNY
I'm on the fence.

DANIEL
What? I never said Alex was a boy. You just assumed that.

DANNY
Okay, nice. You tricked me.

VICKI
Tricked? Now where would he have picked up such a habit?

Dad. DANIEL DANNY
The street.

VICKI
Danny, handle this!

DANNY
Um... well, she seems nice, just no more surprises. I think we need a new rule - no girls in the house unless there's a responsible adult present.

DANIEL
So, mom.

DANNY
Watch it! Plus, isn't she a little old for you?

DANIEL
Of course not. She's fifteen. I'm thirteen, almost. Yeah, she's in high school, but she's only two years older than me. You're six years older than Mom.

DANNY
It's just... you've never been into girls. I mean, I'm sure you're into girls. But you're a kid and a ball player. There will be plenty of time for girls later.

DANIEL
Dad, she's one of the hottest girls in school, and she likes me. What if she's the one? Besides, I've already missed a month of my summer with the playoffs and the series.

DANNY
Missed a month? You got to play for an extra month. And what are you talking about "the one"? You're a-- teenager, almost. Dammit, why are you trying to grow up so fast? Mustaches, girls... next thing you know you'll wanna start puberty.

DANIEL
Dad... I'm mid-puberty.

DANNY

And the change didn't affect your pitching at all. You are amazing.

EXT. STREETS OF FLINT - DAY

It's the Little League Champs' parade with marching band, floats, fire truck, horses, cheerleaders, etc. From their float, the kid players wave and toss candy to townspeople.

Wearing their satin team jackets, Danny, T-Bone, Hughes and Ross have their own float, a decorated old pickup.

HUGHES

Our parade was twice this size.

ROSS

Drunk people everywhere, topless women, looting...

DANNY

That was our Mardi Gras trip in high school.

ROSS

Oh yeah, right.

The parade route is adorned with fans. There's a patch of 1973 fans. A large WOMAN FAN throws a bra to T-Bone.

WOMAN FAN

Hey ya, T-Bone. You still got it.

T-BONE

Yes, I suppose I do. Thank you.

Three tiny little cars with old Shriners drive up, honking baby horns. The COMMANDANT, an old German, is their leader.

COMMANDANT

Let's go, boys. Move it along. Keep the pace or else.

DANNY

Or else what?

COMMANDANT

Or else, you get bumped to the end of the parade.

DANNY

Hey! FYI, we're the 1973 Little League World Champs.

COMMANDANT

Well FYI, I was on the 1939
Firecracker team. There wasn't a
fancy World Series back then, but
we'd sure as hell have beaten you
ladies.

The Shriners speed off to police somebody else.

T-BONE

What's with everybody comparing
their team to ours?

The guys catch back up to the Shriners, who are now harassing
some kids on bikes. The guys pelt them with candy. The
Shriners give chase, but the four guys throw more candy,
running them off the road.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

On a large outdoor stage, the roly-poly MAYOR is at a podium.
Daniel and his team, including Coach Rick are on one side.
Danny and his three teammates are on the other.

MAYOR

Texas has its high school football.
Indiana loves college basketball.
But here in Flint, Michigan, we got
Little League baseball!

The crowd cheers.

MAYOR

It is my pleasure to introduce the
MVP of the 1973 Little League World
Series and what has to be the
proudest father in Flint, Danny
Turner.

Danny joins the Mayor, who hands him a huge TROPHY. Danny
then turns to give it to the new champs.

DANNY

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Proud indeed.
Son, Firecrackers, from us to you,
congratulations. You deserve it.

MAYOR

Thank you, Danny. Daniel, come on
up here. Tell us, how does it feel
to be the best?

DANNY
 (under his breath)
 One of the best.

The microphone picks up Danny's comment which gets the attention of everyone. Danny quickly backs away from the mic.

DANNY
 Sorry, I didn't mean-- Never mind.

The mayor is about to continue, but Danny can't resist and steps back to the microphone.

DANNY
 I just meant, yes, they're awesome,
 but you can't really say "the best"
 because they never played us.
 That's all.

Part of the crowd cheers for their beloved 1973 team. Another part yells for the new champs. Coach Rick steps forward.

RICK
 Well Danny, all I know is - we're
 the best today. Now I would say
 let's hit the field and settle it,
 but it would hardly be fair now.

DANNY
 True.

Danny nods in agreement. The situation seems diffused.

RICK
 Fair to you guys, that is. I mean
 you're old and slow and way out of
 shape. We'd kill you.

DANNY
 How about I take this bat and...

Danny covers the mic, but his animated gestures say it all.

MAYOR
 Actually, I think it's a wonderful
 idea. Not the bat in the...you
 know. The game of the century:
 Firecrackers versus Firecrackers!

The place erupts, excited about the idea.

INSERT: SPORTCENTER

STUART SCOTT

Ali/Frazier, Red Sox/Yankees,
Cowboys/Redskins. The newest epic
rivalry in sports has been born, as
the newly crowned Little League
World Champs take on the 1973
champs next month in Flint,
Michigan. Brent Musburger has more.

BRENT MUSBURGER

I can count the greatest moments of
my career on one hand, but it looks
like I'll need to grow another
finger, because this is number six!

STUART SCOTT

Um... why don't you just use the
other hand? For the sixth finger, I
mean.

Stuart Scott demonstrates.

BRENT MUSBURGER

Fair enough. At the center of it
all are father-son combo Danny and
Daniel Turner. For all of those
boys who have ever wanted to beat
up their dads and for all those
dads falsely accused of child
abuse, this one's for you. The
talent is obvious, but this
showdown will be all about
experience and "know how" versus
youth and speed.

INTERVIEWS WITH FLINT CITIZENS

CITIZEN

It'll be a good game, but I gotta
give the edge to the young 'un's.
They're on a streak.

WOMAN CITIZEN

Sure, they're awesome. But they're
boys. It's a man's game.

(beat)

What's that? It's a boy's game? Oh,
then the kids will win.

OLD CITIZEN

I'm against the whole damn thing.
What's next, refighting the Civil
War?

INT. TURNER HOUSE - LATER

Vicki and Danny argue. Frustrated and folding clothes, she makes each piece of clothing extremely small and tight.

VICKI

Where does it leave Daniel? Have
you even thought about that?

DANNY

He gets to play an extra game!
Against his old man, no less. It's
like when Ken Griffey, Junior and
Senior played together in Seattle.

VICKI

No, it's not, Danny. They played on
the same team. You're playing
against Daniel. I just can't
believe you some times. You just
refuse to grow up and take
responsibility for your actions.

DANNY

It wasn't my idea. What was I
supposed to say?

VICKI

How about "no" or "thanks anyway"?
Or maybe "Sorry, I'm a grown-ass
man"!

(beat)

Danny, I want you to go.

DANNY

Go? Go where?

VICKI

I don't know. You're a grown man. T-
Bone's house, a motel, the YMCA,
Ross's hunting cabin. Figure it
out. Just not here. I need space
from you. You need to get your
priorities straight.

DANNY

They're straight. Family first.

VICKI

Good. Then you'll call off the game?

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - LATER

Danny walks out the front door with a big duffle bag and a box of his stuff.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE BALLFIELD - MORNING

Rick has gathered his team. They are wearing their street clothes. Rick addresses the troops.

RICK

Okay, boys we got ourselves a situation. Less than a week ago, we won the World Series. But now we have a chance to do something even greater. Be the best of all-time. The season is over, so this is strictly voluntary. Now, who's with me?

None of the boys move. They all look to Daniel, who is reluctant to agree. Rick notices.

RICK

Let me put it another way. You boys will be men someday. For some, they become men when they go off to war. For some it's when they have their first drink, first woman, or first arrest. For some, it's when they go against the advice of friends and relatives and grow a bad ass mustache. But for others, it's when they stand up to their fathers, toe to toe, mano y mano. Your time has come. What do you say, men?

The speech is enough for Daniel. He steps forward.

DANIEL

I'm in.

The other boys follow suit, all agreeing to play.

INT. TURNER HOUSE

Danny's stuff is all over the dining room table: treehouse blueprints, Risk game, his little league cap. Vicki looks at it for a beat. Then, she sweeps it all into a box. She heads out the back door with the box, towards Danny's workshop.

INT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

She walks in and drops the box of stuff on a workbench. It lands with a clang. Danny, who was sleeping on the couch behind her, wakes up abruptly. Both are startled.

VICKI

Danny, you scared the bejeezus out of me. What are you doing here? Wait...wait, this is not where you're staying.

DANNY

You said you needed me out of the house for a while. I'm out.

VICKI

No, this is... You're still here.

DANNY

I couldn't go to T-Bone's. He's got a house full of girls, and a motel is just too lonely. I'm out of your hair. You have your space. We have distance between us. But if something goes down, I can be in there for you guys in a heartbeat.

Vicki is momentarily torn, as she's a little touched.

VICKI

Oh... okay.

T-Bone walks in, wearing a catcher's mask and carrying a large equipment bag.

T-BONE

T-Bone reporting to Firecracker headquarters.

VICKI

Firecracker headquarters.

DANNY

(as if a new idea)
Good point. See, there's that too.

VICKI

Bye boys. Danny, if you get hungry, there's food in the grocery store.

She leaves.

T-BONE

What's that all about? You sleeping out here?

DANNY

Yeah.

T-BONE

Whoa... You are so committed to the team.

LATER

The four guys are gathered.

DANNY

Alright, so maybe I got a little ahead of myself with accepting this challenge, so if there's anybody who doesn't--

All four give quick variations on "I'm in." Danny reveals a white board with a ballfield diagram. There's pictures of the four in their positions.

DANNY

Alright then, we gotta few MIA's. Randal "Mouth" Jenkins.

Danny tapes up a PHOTO of Mouth as a kid.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Juan and Carlos, the speedy Gonzales brothers.

Danny tapes up pictures of Juan and Carlos.

DANNY

And Charlie Rock.

ALL FOUR GUYS

(singing)

I got big hair, but that ain't all.

DANNY

After his one hit song, he's kind of fallen off the radar.

For Charlie, Danny tapes up his cassette tape jacket. It's very "80's."

DANNY (CONT'D)

Finally, Billy. According to his mom, he's changed his name to "Freedom" and is living off the grid, out in Colorado.

He tapes up two drastically different photos.

DANNY (CONT'D)

T-Bone and I are gonna track down our old teammates. Hughes and Ross, you guys check on our old field... and start stretching. We got a month to get everybody together, get back in our groove and get back our trophy.

INT. COURTROOM

Danny and T-Bone slip in the back. A BAILIFF is at the door.

DANNY

(whispering)

We were told we might find "Mouth" Jenkins here.

BAILIFF

That's the son of a bitch right up there.

A big, athletic guy cries, as a smaller man in a suit consoles him. Danny and T-Bone slide down a row.

MOMENTS LATER

Danny and T-Bone have found a seat in the back. They share peanuts as if they're at a ballgame.

DANNY

Jeez, triple homicide. You think you know a guy.

T-BONE

Well, it has been a lot of years. People change. Why didn't we just call, again?

DANNY

I told you, T-Bone. It's too easy to say "no" over the phone and we can't take that chance.

T-BONE

They're taking him out. Should we say something?

DANNY

"Yes, your honor, could you please find it in you heart to let this savage murderer out just for a month to play baseball?"

T-BONE

I bought it.

DANNY

That did sound good, didn't it?

As others in the courtroom exit past them, Danny and T-Bone make their way up front.

T-BONE

Sorry, Mouth.

The big guy turns around and sobs some more. The small man in the suit turns around - this is MOUTH.

MOUTH

Win some, lose some. T-Bone, Danny, heeey-- Hold on a sec.

(to Bailiff)

Take him away. Innocent, my ass.

BAILIFF

(to Mouth)

Later, you son of a bitch.

MOUTH

See you at the bar, you bastard.

Danny and T-Bone take in their mistake.

DANNY

Wow, you haven't changed a bit.

T-BONE

You're... the exact same size.

MOUTH

Glandular disorder. Thanks for noticing.

DANNY

Do you have a second?

MOUTH
You killed your wife.

DANNY
No!

MOUTH
You're thinking about it. As an attorney, I can't recommend it.

DANNY
No! We want you to come play ball with us again.

MOUTH
Nobody's dead?

DANNY
No. It's a Firecrackers reunion.

MOUTH
I should really get to work on his appeal... Who am I kidding, he's not going anywhere.

T-BONE
Well, unless the governor fast-tracks his execution.

Danny elbows T-Bone to "shut up."

MOUTH
Boys, life is about priorities.

Mouth flips out his "Direct Connect" cell phone.

MOUTH
Peggy, clear my schedule... indefinitely.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP

Danny and T-Bone step tentatively through the run-down shop. They see a mean OLD WHITE MAN, in grease-stained coveralls.

DANNY
Yes sir, we're looking for Carlos and Juan.

OLD WHITE MAN
No hablo ingles.

T-BONE
But you're like seventy and white.

OLD WHITE MAN
No, not me...them. They no hablo
ingles.

T-BONE
We're old baseball buddies.

The old man starts laughing.

OLD WHITE MAN
You two here to talk about
something you did forty years ago?

DANNY
Why, yes sir, we are.

OLD WHITE MAN
Like living in the past do you?
It's easier there, ain't it? Thank
god, you never had any kids.

T-BONE
We do.

OLD WHITE MAN
I ain't interested in your
lifestyle. They're in the pit.

They walk in the back, into the garage, where they find JUAN
and CARLOS, down in a grease pit, are arguing in Spanish.

DANNY
Guys, it's us.

CARLOS
Danny!

JUAN
T-Bone!

The two climb out. Carlos has lost all but one finger on his
left hand. Juan's legs squeak like the Tin Man.

T-BONE
What the hell happened?

JUAN
We were on a pit crew at a Tijuana
race track for a few years.

CARLOS
The safety regulations were a
little...

(MORE)

CARLOS (cont'd)
well, there were no safety
regulations. So, I lost a couple of
fingers.

JUAN
And I got robot knees.

CARLOS
He just got some metal hinges put
in there.

JUAN
Like a robot.

DANNY
We're getting the team back
together for one final game.

Juan and Carlos get all excited, talking in Spanish.

CARLOS
What's the pay?

DANNY
There is no pay.

More Spanish.

JUAN
Talk to us about health insurance.

T-BONE
Guys, it's just a baseball game.

More Spanish.

JUAN
Okay, but no contract.

DANNY
Deal.

Everybody shakes, ending with Carlos and Juan shaking hands
with each other.

OLD WHITE MAN
What in holy hell? You boys spoke
English all these years?

JUAN
No.

CARLOS
No.

OLD WHITE MAN

Oh... okay then... as you were.

INT. MALL

On a small stage, CHARLIE, who still has big glam rock hair, is performing to a crowd of nine, which includes T-Bone and Danny. Charlie finishes and is approached by a FAN with a cassette in his hands.

CHARLIE

That baby's a collector's item. You want me to sign her?

FAN

Actually, I wanted to see if you might want to buy it off me?

Another FEMALE FAN approaches with a picture. He signs it.

CHARLIE

That'll be a dollar, little lady.

She pays.

FEMALE FAN

How much for a lock of your hair?

CHARLIE

Um, gosh, I never thought about it. How about twenty bucks?

She gives him cash. He turns around and she cuts a big chunk out of the back of his hair. He sees the fistful of hair.

CHARLIE

Holy shit.

He then sees Danny and T-Bone.

CHARLIE

Holy shit! Hey guys, what are you doing here-- Hold on a second.

Charlie runs to catch up with fan with the cassette tape. He swaps the twenty he just made for the tape. As he walks back to T-Bone and Charlie, he kisses the tape.

CHARLIE

One of my babies.

INT. MALL - FOOD COURT - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie is picking off Danny and T-Bone's plates.

CHARLIE

You eating the rest of that?

DANNY

Go ahead, man.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, played the Astrodome once. Actually, it was a swap meet in the Astrodome parking lot. So, rejoin the team, huh? Can I sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"?

DANNY

Nah... How 'bout you do the National Anthem?

Charlie stops eating and looks up, eyes welling up with tears. He practically jumps across the table to hug the guys.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Danny and T-Bone crest a ridge to find FREEDOM, who has long hair and a beard. Several animal skins hang outside his tent.

FREEDOM

Lemme guess. Couple of hikers, lost your way, hoping to be saved by my survival skills and knowledge of the constellations?

DANNY

Actually, we're--

FREEDOM

Feds, here to ask me about my association with the radical activist, Joseph Littlefeather. Well, you boys won't take me without a fight.

Freedom rips off his shirt and pulls out a large knife.

T-BONE

We're not Feds.

He puts away his knife.

FREEDOM

Damn. Then I suppose you've come to bring me down from this mountain to play baseball.

DANNY

Yes. That's amazing. How'd you...

T-BONE

Was it our scent?

FREEDOM

No, Joe Littlefeather has got satellite radio. He told me about the Firecracker Showdown.

DANNY

It's us, Danny and T-Bone.

He seems to recognize them, then looks off into the distance.

FREEDOM

You boys are looking for Billy McCarthy, a poor lost soul who was sucked in by a commercialized world and a society that lost her way long ago, due to corporate greed and government lies.

DANNY

Yeah, him.

FREEDOM

He has been replaced by Freedom, master of nature, servant to none.

T-Bone stops Danny, as if to say "Let me try."

T-BONE

I believe in the Church of Baseball. I've tried all the major religions, and most of the minor ones. I worshipped Buddha, Allah, Brahma, trees, mushrooms, and Isadora Duncan.

DANNY

(through his teeth)

Dude, are you quoting Susan Sarandon from "Bull Durham"?

T-Bone is now into his performance.

T-BONE

Making love is like hitting a baseball: you just gotta relax and concentrate. There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career.

DANNY

Would you knock it off already?

FREEDOM

I'll join you on your quest.

T-Bone flashes a grin of satisfaction at Danny.

FREEDOM

If you face the six ancient rites
of passage: fire, water, wind--

DANNY

Alright, look. You're obviously
happy up here among the trees and
critters. Great. This is where
Freedom belongs. But maybe, Billy
can come down for a bit, take a
shower, check his e-mail, play a
little baseball, then head right
back up here and kill something.

Freedom stoically considers this, then gives in.

FREEDOM

Okay, but I sleep outdoors.

EXT. BALLFIELD - DAY

Danny, T-Bone, Hughes, Ross, Mouth, Charlie, Juan, Carlos and
Freedom ("the guys") stand side-by-side, looking at their old
field. They look like a grown version of the Bad News Bears.

The ballfield is rundown, weeds everywhere. There's junk and
old tires. An abandoned car is in the outfield. By the
dugout, there's a faded sign heralding the 1973 champs.

DANNY

Looks like everybody forgot our old
field.

T-BONE

Well, not everybody. Hobos seem to
like it.

A scraggly HOBO crawls out from some boxes.

HOBO

Hey Danny Turner! Congrats!

DANNY

Thanks, my man. Hey, we're gonna
need the field here.

HOBO
My home?

EXT. RUNDOWN FIELD - LATER

The guys finish getting the field back in usable condition. The trash is gone, though it's still looks pretty rough.

In a nearby tree, Danny has built a treehouse. The elated Hobo sticks his head out one of the windows.

HOBO
And look at this view!

The view is of an alley and side of a building.

Danny joins the guys, reassessing the field.

DANNY
Okay, this looks... not near as shitty.

CHARLIE
Hey, what about Coach Ozark?

CARLOS
Yeah, we need that mean, old bastard.

HUGHES
You guys don't know? Coach Ozark is dead.

Mouth, Charlie, Freedom, Juan and Carlos mumble and sigh.

MOUTH
Does his murderer have a good lawyer?

DANNY
There was no murderer, Mouth.

FREEDOM
Natural causes?

DANNY
Animals are natural, so I guess an animal attack could be considered natural causes. Point is, he isn't around anymore. The way I see it, we don't need a coach. We just need to find our rhythm. Now how about some fielding exercises?

MOMENTS LATER

Juan tapes Carlos's glove on his hand with duct tape. Carlos then duct tapes up Juan's knees, over his sweats.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The guys hit the field. They're terrible, running into each other, misjudging catches, throwing wildly, batting poorly. As practice winds down, Danny rallies the guys.

DANNY

We're back. That was practice. Um, nobody got hurt. That's positive. Carlos didn't lose any more fingers. Take the rest of the afternoon to... not get hurt.
(aside to T-Bone)
We gotta have a coach.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Danny drives alone, passing a sign: Saginaw 30 miles.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

The place is pretty empty. Danny bowls. He checks his watch, then notices an old man at the other end. Danny goes over and stands ten feet behind him. The old man bowls a frame.

DANNY

Not bad for an old man. But you gotta follow through... Coach Ozark.

COACH OZARK (think Burgess Meredith) doesn't turn around.

COACH OZARK

You're one to talk about following though, Danny Turner. Only man I ever knew who peaked at thirteen. How'd ya find me? I'm dead, ya know?

DANNY

Yeah, we all read it in the Flint paper five years ago. Said you were eaten by a Bengal tiger in Bangkok.

COACH OZARK

If you gotta go, it's one helluva way. Every spring, one neighborhood after another hassled, bribed, even threatened me to coach their team.

(MORE)

COACH OZARK (cont'd)

All I wanted was a little peace and quiet.

DANNY

So you went to the trouble of faking your death?

COACH OZARK

It's easier than you think. Just up and moved a few towns over in the middle of the night. Had a war buddy in Bangkok send a letter to the newspaper, saying he saw me die.

DANNY

T-Bone and I came here for nickel beer night last year and saw you bowling. He thought it was just some poor bastard who had the misfortune of looking like you, but I was convinced.

COACH OZARK

So, you got a chance to recapture your youth and you want me to come back?

DANNY

It wouldn't be the same without you.

COACH OZARK

Bullshit.

DANNY

Okay, we're terrible. It's like everybody forgot how to play. The guys are way out of shape and practice. It looks hopeless.

COACH OZARK

Yours was my dream team and I wanted to go out on top. Coming back would just be a big pain in the ass.

DANNY

Look, Coach Ozark. You don't wanna coach the team, fine.

Danny starts to walk away.

COACH OZARK

For a man who came all the way here to recruit me, you sure don't follow through too well. I'll be damned if I'm gonna let you take my dream team and run its rep into the ground. Call the paper, tell 'em to print a correction.

EXT. RUNDOWN FIELD - DAY

A local newspaper hits the dirt. The headline reads: "Coach Not Eaten By Tiger", and underneath "Turns out, Tiger Eaten by Coach."

Coach Ozark has his team huddled up.

COACH OZARK

Listen up, Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. I didn't come back from the dead to lose. Now you may be older, slower and in all-around terrible shape. But you got one thing on your side - experience. No matter how old you get, that's something you can't lose. In fact, you just keep getting more of it. So, we'll beat these kids with skill and smarts. That said... Start running!

The guys all take off running laps around the field.

Coach Ozark uses an old school megaphone.

COACH OZARK

You're late for practice, you run laps. You throw attitude, you run laps. Missed assignment, bone head play, anything less than every ounce of sweat, blood and tears you got - laps. I wanna see vomit, Spice Girls. Maybe not today, but soon, one of you will get sick.

A LITTLE LATER

The whole team is puking, dry heaving, writhing in pain.

COACH OZARK

(to himself)

Damnedest thing I ever saw. Got every damn one of 'em.

Watching the gross scene, Coach Ozark himself gags.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Coach Ozark barks orders at each of the guys.

COACH OZARK
T-Bone, block the plate.

COACH OZARK
Mouth, Run all the way through.

COACH OZARK
Carlos, hit your cut off man.

COACH OZARK
Eye on the ball, Freedom Billy.

COACH OZARK
Danny, where's that knuckle-curve?

DANNY
I'll get it, Coach. I'll get it.

COACH OZARK
You'd better or we're toast.

COACH OZARK
Stretch. Your old, soft bodies are
no good to me hurt.

The guys run a lap around the field, lagging, barely making it. They see Coach Ozark back near the dugout, pouring out beers from a cooler.

COACH OZARK
And no more beers at practice!

They guys all take off running back toward dugout.

LATER

The guys lay on the ground and lean against the fence.

COACH OZARK
The new champs are practicing over
at their new field. Go see a
polished unit do their thing. Look
your enemy in the eyes.

EXT. KIDS PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

From afar, the guys watch the kids team practice. They look great.

T-BONE

Yeah, but we're having fun. Look at those guys. Are they having fun? All business. Know what we should do? Prank 'em. Bring back a little fun to the game, like we used to do to other teams back in the day.

T-Bone eyes the kids' street shoes under the dugout bench. Danny sees Daniel taking a water break and runs over to him.

DANNY

Hey son, just thought I'd stop by and see how it's going. Pretty easy practices?

DANIEL

Yeah, coach Rick says we're already where we need to be. Just don't want to get rusty. How's your practices?

DANNY

Good. Great actually. So, I was gonna see if you wanted to hang out later - in the workshop, like old times. Maybe we'll build a fort.

DANIEL

I'm a little old for that, Dad.

DANNY

I know that. It wouldn't be for you. It'd just be something to work on together.

DANIEL

I've got plans actually. Alex and some of my new friends are going to the mall to hang out later.

DANNY

Cool. Want me to come along? I'm kidding... Unless you want me to.

DANIEL

I gotta go, Dad. Our rings came in today. Coach Rick is passing them out.

DANNY

Your rings? Awesome. Hey Daniel... you do want to do this whole showdown game, right?

DANIEL
Um, yeah. Why? You don't?

DANNY
No, I want to too. I'm pumped.

DANIEL
Cool.

DANNY
Cool.

Daniel runs back over to join his team. T-Bone sidles up.

T-BONE
Hey while you were doing the father-son smokescreen, we were pranking the hell out of them.

DANNY
I wasn't doing the father-son smokescreen. What'd you guys do?

T-BONE
We got their shoes. Center fielder got his filled with mustard. Shortstop got mayo. We raided the concession stand over there. Used whatever we could find. Daniel got relish.

DANNY
He's gonna think I...

T-BONE
Pulled a man-size prank? Yes, he is. And that's a skill every man needs to learn, like barbecuing or spitting a loogy. Oh yeah, catcher got barbecue sauce. But we saved the best for Coach Rick.

EXT. KIDS PRACTICE FIELD - LATER

The kids return to the dugout.

KID #1
Aww, man, my shoes are filled with ketchup.

KID #2
I got ranch dressing.

KID #3

Mine have ice cream... and ants.

DANIEL

It's my dad's team. They pranked us.

Daniel shrugs, embarrassed. Rick comes in the dugout and grabs his bag, he stops as he reaches for his shoes.

RICK

Who shit in my shoes?

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - DAY

Daniel answers the door to find Alex.

ALEX

Hey Daniel, ready to hit the mall?

DANIEL

Um, yeah. Should I get my mom to drop us off?

ALEX

No, B Dog is driving. He just got his license and he's got a Jeep.

Daniel looks out to see a Jeep with a kid driving and two other girls, waving.

ALEX

That's Steph and Jess.

INT. MALL - LATER

Alex and Daniel walk through the mall. He has his hands in his pockets. She holds his arm.

ALEX

So, do you think you'll be as good when you play in high school?

DANIEL

I dunno. Not sure if I'll even play.

ALEX

Really? D, you have something that most people would die to have - popularity. Do whatever it takes to keep it.

Some other KIDS the same age pass by.

KID
Hey Alex. What's up Daniel?

Two young BOYS, around 9 years old, come up.

BOYS
Excuse us, Mister Turner, can we see your World Series ring?

DANIEL
Sure.

A cool teenage kid with a PIERCED lip and eyebrow passes.

ALEX
Hey.

PIERCED KID
Yo Daniel Turner! Sweet arm, dude.

ALEX
Oh my god, how cool was that?

INT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - EVENING

It's even more of a wreck than before, looking more like a college dorm with the guys all staying there.

The guys all crowd on and around a couch, playing Rock Band. Danny is picking up trash, filling a large garbage can.

DANNY
Guys, come on. This isn't some spring break youth hostel. When you take off dirty clothes from practice, at least throw them in the corner.

He opens the door to set the garbage can outside. Vicki is standing there. He steps out and closes the door to hide the loud mess inside.

EXT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

DANNY
Hey, we're just in there, studying game film.

VICKI
You talk to Daniel?

DANNY
Yeah, I saw him at the ballfield. Said he was going to the mall.

VICKI

With Alex, I'm sure. He was supposed to be home an hour ago. He texted me from a blocked phone number saying he was running "L8".

DANNY

"Late"?

VICKI

Yeah, not sure how much time he's saving not typing two more letters. Is it just me or did he grow up overnight?

DANNY

You're right. He's got one foot out the door.

VICKI

He was washing his shoes out with the water hose. Isn't that weird?

DANNY

Um, no. Guys do that from time to time. Keeps 'em fresh. I should probably do mine. How's the bank and those staggered lunches?

VICKI

They're fine. And how's the Depot?

DANNY

Great. I'm working the late shift, so I never run into Coach Rick.

VICKI

I know you don't like him that much but he sure does treat Daniel well.

DANNY

What, I don't?

VICKI

I didn't say that, Danny. It's just Daniel looks up to him as a role model. Maybe, despite the game, you could try putting your differences with Rick aside.

They hear a car pull up out front.

DANIEL (O.C.)
Thanks for the ride, B Dog. I'll
hit you in a bit, Alex.

Danny and Vicki meet him at the side of the house. Daniel has
a freshly pierced lip, which he doesn't even acknowledge.

DANIEL
Hey guys. Sorry I'm late. I already
ate by the way.

DANNY
Hold up. Lemme see your ring, hot
rod.

VICKI
What the-- Is that a lip ring?!

DANIEL
It's no big deal. It was a thank
you gift from Alex. I'm letting her
wear my World Series ring.

DANNY
What the--?!

VICKI
What the--?!

DANIEL
Do me a solid and chill out, P's.

VICKI
P's? Watch that tone, you little
SOB.

DANNY
(whispering to her)
That would make us B's.

Daniel heads inside. Vicki continues to freak out about the
lip ring, while Danny freaks out about the championship ring.

INT. HOME DEPOT - NIGHT

The place is closed. Danny and T-Bone push orange shopping
carts down an aisle. They are filled with baseball equipment.

DANNY
I mean I wouldn't trade my ring
for... anything.

T-BONE
How about an extra penis? That'd be
pretty cool.

DANNY

What? No, man.

(beat)

It'd probably just get in the way.

T-BONE

Excellent point.

The guys turn a corner into the garden department.

DANNY

Thanks for doing this, T-Bone. Coach Rick scheduled me to pull a double and do inventory. I thought about burning the place down, but I need the health insurance. So, I figured why not get a little practice in?

The guys unload equipment from the shopping cart.

T-BONE

Hey Danny, I gotta ask you... What if we lose?

DANNY

C'mon, losing is for losers. Where's your confidence?

T-BONE

I was just thinking. I know we should win. They're kids. But if we don't somehow, then we'll be a joke. We'll be the adults that played children and lost. Before, we were Little League champs. Big fish in a little pond, sure, but I liked that pond. I don't want to get out of that pond.

DANNY

I guess we can't lose then.

Danny and T-Bone do their little ritual.

A LITTLE LATER

The two have moved shelves and plants out of the way. They've set up a backstop and a pitcher's mound made of mulch.

DANNY

Alright, let's just kind of go half speed. Don't want to wreck the place.

Danny winds up and throws a wild pitch that hits a bank of lights.

DANNY

Like that.

T-BONE

Had to get one out of your system.

A LITTLE LATER

The whole area is wrecked. Entire shelves have fallen over, displays are up-ended.

Other employees have gathered to watch. An older INDIAN MAN is at the makeshift plate.

T-BONE

Alright, ace. Let's see that sweet knuckle curve.

INDIAN MAN

Bring it, Danny.

Danny throws his infamous pitch - an easy strike.

INDIAN MAN

Damn man. I'll never make it in the bigs.

Danny rubs his shoulder. Just then, Rick comes in.

RICK

Just what in the hell?

Employees disperse. T-Bone nonchalantly acts as though he's doing inventory. Rick approaches Danny.

RICK

And to think I felt guilty.

DANNY

Well, that was probably your gut feeling and you should go with it. So I'll leave you now to clean this up.

RICK

You're unbelievable. And you're on graveyard.

DANNY

Graveyard. Do we even have a graveyard shift?

RICK

We do now.

DANNY

Come on, this just got a little out of hand... Okay, a lot out of hand. Hey, I just want to give you the best game possible.

RICK

You're right. Tell you what, a letter of apology should do it.

DANNY

To corporate?

RICK

To me. And I'll forget about this. Something like, "Dear Boss, I am sorry for being a child. In the future, I'll try harder to follow your example of what a responsible and professional man should--

DANNY

Orrr, I could just shorten it to, "Dear shit head, I quit."

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY

Danny is cleaned up, looks nice, has flowers. He knocks on the back door. Vicki answers.

VICKI

What is this?

DANNY

I wanted to ask you out on a date.

VICKI

Did you? And what would we do on this date?

DANNY

Let's see. Your choice. We could: a) pick up some hot wings, watch some mixed martial arts and then sneak into the hot tub at the Holiday Inn; b) go out to a romantic dinner, then for a walk, and talk about feelings; or c) an awesome combo of the two.

VICKI

Well, it does sound tempting. And I really appreciate your effort, but I'll have to take a raincheck. I've got plans.

DANNY

Okay, consider us rainchecked. I just had a crappy day.

VICKI

Why aren't you at work?

DANNY

That's the thing. I'm taking some time to focus on the team.

VICKI

They let you do that?

DANNY

I'm Danny, they let me do whatever I want.

The doorbell RINGS.

VICKI

Hold on, Danny.

She heads to the front door. Danny waits at the back door.

DANNY

(to himself)
Left standing at my own door.
Awesome.

Rick comes around the side of the house.

RICK

Hey there, Danny. No hard feelings.

DANNY

Rick. You come here to burn my house down or steal my son away?

RICK

No, of course not.

DANNY

He's not here anyway.

Vicki comes back.

VICKI
Hello, Rick.

RICK
Hey Vicki. I rang the doorbell,
then I heard you guys talking back
here.

VICKI
Danny was just telling me he took
some time off to focus on the big
game.

RICK
Yeah, if by "some time" he means
all of it.

VICKI
What?

DANNY
I may have, the official term is
"quit." Rick, why are you still
here?

VICKI
Rick, could you wait inside for a
minute?

RICK
Sure thing.

Rick goes inside.

DANNY
Whoa, wait for what? Is he your
"plans"? You have a date with Rick?

VICKI
Not a date. Just two adults having
some adult conversation.

DANNY
Son of a...

Danny barges past Vicki into the house.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

RICK
I helped myself to a soda. Hope you
don't mind.

DANNY

You think I don't know what you're doing? Stand up. You're getting punched in the face.

RICK

Danny, I don't want to fight you, buddy.

DANNY

We're not fighting. I'm punching you in the face. That's it.

VICKI

Danny, stop.

DANNY

Hold on, honey. I've gotta punch him in the face.

Daniel comes in.

DANIEL

Hey Coach. What's going on?

VICKI

We're just having a discussion. Danny, please leave.

RICK

Sweet lip piercing, Daniel.

DANIEL

Thanks. Why are you here, Coach?

RICK

Your mom and I have plans and your dad wants to fight me.

DANIEL

Plans?

VICKI

You told me you wanted to talk about Daniel.

DANNY

What about Daniel?

RICK

I just think a boy needs a role model around, a positive adult male influence.

DANIEL
I'm a teenager.

DANNY
Come on. Enough with the "teenager"
stuff. Go to your room.

DANIEL
Why? We're talking about me.
Shouldn't I be involved?

VICKI
No, we're talking about you.

RICK
Sorry, champ.

VICKI
Maybe you should go too, Danny.

DANNY
What? But we're talking about
Daniel.

RICK
No Danny, we're talking about
Daniel.

DANNY
Okay...fine. Oh, almost forgot.

Danny punches Rick.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Rick and Vicki sit at the kitchen table. He has a busted lip.

RICK
Rick and Vick, hanging out, having
coffee. We could be a talk show,
"Hanging with Rick and Vick."

VICKI
Except my name is Vicki.

RICK
"Hanging with Ricky and Vicki"
then.

VICKI
What did you want to tell me about
Daniel?

RICK

I just wanted to assure you that I'm here for you guys. You're not alone. The season is over and soon this game will be too. But just because I won't be Daniel's coach anymore doesn't mean he can't still come to me for guidance. You too.

VICKI

I can come to you for guidance?

RICK

Maybe not guidance. Other stuff, like friendship, advice, company...

VICKI

Yeah, I'm not sure...

RICK

Danny's great, barrel of laughs. I tried to help him at work, but he wouldn't let me. I guess some men are quitters and others refuse to grow up. Fortunately, I'm neither.

VICKI

Well... I am a little concerned about Daniel. He wants to be so grown up.

RICK

"Growing up" is one of my specialities. That and poetry and snuggling. Maybe I could have a talk with him. If I don't, who will, right? Also, romantic comedies, another specialty. And taking walks. Oh, and listening. I'm the best listener you know.

VICKI

Anything you're not good at?

RICK

Sucking. Acting like a teenager. Killing defenseless animals like kittens or bunnies. Lying, being lazy or racist - I'm not good at those things.

As he goes on, Vicki is clearly over it.

INSERT: ESPN SPORTSCENTER

STUART SCOTT

And now for the latest, we take it
to Vegas for the lowdown.

AL and LOU, mafia-looking bookies, sit at a desk. Behind them
is an obnoxious neon sign: "The Lowdown".

AL

Thank you, Stu. Well Lou, you gotta
believe the '73 team has got this
one comfortably in the bag.

LOU

Yeah Al, they been three to one
favorites since this crap started.
But I dunno. That catcher's gotta
be tipping the scales around three
bills. One guy's got what, like a
metal leg.

AL

Yeah, definitely weird, that metal
leg business. And their ace ain't
even pitched in this century. Plus,
my sources tell me he recently got
fired from his job and currently
resides in his garage.

LOU

I been there, Al.

AL

Ain't we all.

LOU

Lemme tell ya, it ain't no bucket
of peaches... Rips your soul right
out.

Getting emotional, Lou slams his fist down.

AL

Time and place, pal. Time and
place. Back to you, Stu.

EXT. RUNDOWN FIELD - MORNING

The guys are stretching out.

COACH OZARK

Okay Strawberry Shortcake and
Friends, gather 'round. The game is
less than a week away and I thought
you should see a little action.

(MORE)

COACH OZARK (cont'd)

So I set up a scrimmage. A buddy of mine runs a correctional facility and he owed me a favor. So he sent over their softball team.

A gray bus with barred windows pulls up. A guard armed with a shotgun steps off. As the tough PLAYERS start to unload, we see on the side of the bus: "Michigan State Women's Prison."

The guys are lined up as the women players pass by. Some of the guys are nervous, some scared, some totally into it.

DANNY

(to Coach Ozark)

Women, Coach... Really?

COACH OZARK

You're already playing children. Would you rather I got you an old folks home to play? Maybe a school for the blind? Just play 'em like you would men... Only thing is you gotta pitch underhand.

DANNY

Perfect.

LATER

The guys bat first. The pitches come fast and accurate. The game might as well be against an inner-city gang. The women play vicious.

MONTAGE

--The pitcher intentionally hits a few batters. A runner from third plows over T-Bone.

--A disputed tag at second almost turns into a riot.

--A guy runner trapped between second and third is tackled.

--At first, Danny can only throw grapefruits, lobbing the ball over the plate, but as he watches and studies the women's pitcher, he starts to get the hang of it.

Tension builds, with players bruised and bloodied. Then as soon as the game ends, the women turn into ladies.

WOMAN PRISONER

Thanks so much for having us.

WOMAN PRISONER #2

We had such a lovely time.

WOMAN PRISONER #3

Next time, we get home field advantage.

Everybody laughs.

LATER

As the bus pulls away, hands stick out windows, waving "bye."

COACH OZARK

The lesson here is: Don't play like there's no tomorrow. Play like you're being incarcerated tomorrow.

CONTINUE MINI-MONTAGE

--As the days pass, the guys practice, enjoying themselves, getting better and back in shape.

--After practice, Daniel leaves his teammates to hang with older kids.

--Vicki reads Danny's old notes on the fridge calender: "Tell Vicki she's great", "Remind wife she's a hotty". She smiles, then sees "Build rooftop water slide". She shakes her head.

END MINI-MONTAGE

The guys head to the dugout, hot and sweaty from practice.

COACH OZARK

Alright, Girls Gone Wild, the game is two days away. Try not to do anything stupid like get arrested or punch out the other team's coach. Now excuse me, while I go somewhere that you guys are not.

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - EVENING

Coach Rick shows up with a potholder. He hands it to her.

RICK

I brought you this potholder. It's macrame. I made it. It's nothing, just another thing I'm good at.

She sniffs, then makes a face.

VICKI

Check your shoes. I think you may have stepped in dog crap.

RICK

No, they were actually filled with feces. I refuse to throw them out, because then they win. Pranks, so cute and childish. The guys got us pretty good. Of course, I've directed my players not to retaliate.

VICKI

Can I help you with something?

RICK

Oh well, I just wanted to stop by and check on you and Daniel. Maybe make amends with Danny, be the bigger man, that kind of thing.

VICKI

I think he's gone to practice.

RICK

Truth is, I'd like to talk about Daniel. Seriously. On the serious tip. For "sers."

INT. FONDU RESTAURANT - LATER

Rick and Vicki at a table with a pot of cheese between them.

RICK

Welcome back to the "Rick and Vick Show."

VICKI

So?

RICK

So, cheese makes everything better. I believe it was the Swiss who invented it. Before then, macaroni just laid there - plain. Grilled cheeses were just two pieces of toast. Personally, I try to limit my cheese intake. And if I do go a little overboard, sure I'll throw it up.

VICKI

Rick, we were going to talk about Daniel.

RICK

Question, Vick...

VICKI

Vicki.

RICK

Tomato, tomaato.

VICKI

No, it's my name. It's Vicki.

RICK

Fair enough. Question, Vicki.
What's the most important thing in
the world to you?

VICKI

I give up.

RICK

Daniel's future. And it just so
happens that I have secured it.

VICKI

I'm not following.

RICK

Daniel will be in eighth grade next
year. But, I've made arrangements
with Lansing Prep--only the best
private high school in the state--
to accept him a year early. He'll
have special classes, of course.
But--and here's the kicker--they'll
give him a waiver to play high
school baseball.

VICKI

Oh Rick, I dunno. I mean let me
talk to Daniel. But he isn't--

RICK

No, I already asked him, he's into
it. He loves the idea!

VICKI

I'm sure he does. But he's already
trying to grow up so fast...and now
to start high school early...

RICK

(sympathetically)
With no responsible role model?

VICKI

Exactly.

RICK

Well, that's the best part, Vicki. I'll be with him. The high school is making me the head baseball coach. I gotta teach drivers ed also. Not too excited about that. But hey, I can teach Daniel to drive, right?

VICKI

Wait a sec. Is your new job contingent on bringing Daniel with you?

RICK

Define "contingent."

VICKI

Did you make a deal to recruit a twelve year old boy in order to get a job?

RICK

Whoa, I'm sensing hostility here. Yes, Daniel and I are a package deal. But I wouldn't take the job without him. He's my prize horse.

VICKI

Your prize horse?!

RICK

Bad example. He's like...

VICKI

A fighting rooster, a pit bull, a trained seal.

RICK

Those are bad examples, right?

VICKI

Yes!

RICK

Then no, he's not like those. I've been his coach for three years. Taught him the game. I made him the young man he's become. I love your son like he was my own.

VICKI

But, he's not your son. And you didn't teach him to play ball or throw a curve-slider or become a young man. Danny did! Danny may not be a responsible adult, but I guess he knows how to raise one. Now, excuse me Rick.

She gets up.

RICK

But we still have a whole pot of melted cheese, Vick.

VICKI

My name is Vicki!

She takes his hat and pushes it down in the cheese. She walks out.

RICK

(to whoever is listening)
Can I get a to go cup?

EXT. RUNDOWN PRACTICE FIELD - NIGHT

The "guys" gather around a campfire in the outfield, sitting on an old bench, folding camp chairs, etc.

Hughes cooks a hot dog. T-Bone roasts a dozen marshmallows on a wire hanger. Mouth counts them.

T-BONE

What? They shrink down in your stomach.

MOUTH

How many stomachs you got?

Freedom has a squirrel cooking on a stick.

FREEDOM

I've trapped enough squirrel and possum for everybody. So eat up.

ROSS

Or we could just order a pizza and inject ourselves with random diseases - same thing.

FREEDOM

Fine. More squirrel for me.

He tastes his smoldering squirrel.

DANNY

This is it, boys. This is what life is all about.

General agreement from the others.

DANNY

Hey, you guys ever think we, uh... you know, peaked at thirteen?

MOUTH

No, not really. I went on to be a lawyer.

ROSS

Yeah, I have a cabin and a boat.

HUGHES

And my wife is hot, way out of my league. I'm still not even sure how I pulled that one off.

CHARLIE

Thirteen was good. But you kiddin'? I went on to have a top ten hit... well, top twenty... twenties, it was in the twenties, okay. Number twenty eight. For three weeks in the Summer of '86, I was a god.

Not getting the answer he was hoping for, Danny tries again.

DANNY

Well, yeah, right. But still, it's crazy all the sacrifices we made for one more shot at glory.

JUAN

Not us. We hated that job. Our boss was skimming off our paychecks.

CARLOS

We were plotting our revenge, involving kidnapping, blackmail and flame throwers.

JUAN

But we can go back and do that anytime.

MOUTH

I can pretty much take off whenever I'd like. Plus I'm what you call "rich", so I'm not really missing the income.

T-BONE

I know a little about sacrifice. I've had to skip going to Home Cookin' Buffet on Tuesdays. That sucks.

Again, Danny doesn't find anyone who identifies with him.

DANNY

I guess I meant more... us having to give up family time.

T-BONE

At our house, Buffet Tuesday is family time. And yes, I'll admit it, I have some gravy issues.

FREEDOM

Family time was one of my reasons for coming back. Wanted to reconnect with my folks. Guess I can check that off my list and disappear for another ten years.

CARLOS

Our wives are in Buenas Aires and Mazatlan.

JUAN

And Costa Rica.

CARLOS

And Costa Rica, almost forgot about those wives. But they're all far away, so we do whatever we want.

T-BONE

I just remembered, I gotta be home by eleven... by choice.

Danny realizes that maybe he's alone in his situation.

DANNY

I was thinking, and tell me if I'm crazy, but what if you guys all moved back to Flint?

MOUTH

Yeah, you're crazy. And I should know. I make my living with the insanity plea. 'Course to convince a judge, I always recommend drawing pictures with your do-do.

DANNY

Hear me out. If you guys lived around here, we could keep this going, maybe start our own league. What if we got a hold of the team we played from Panama and had a re-match?

ROSS

But we already beat them.

Danny stands, frustrated.

DANNY

That's not the point.

T-BONE

What is the point, Danny?

DANNY

The point is... How many chances do you get to be a kid?

HUGHES

One... And we already had it.

The other guys all nod in agreement. Danny takes this in.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Daniel and Alex are hanging out. He's showing her his knuckle curve. He has his supply bag with his equipment.

DANIEL

The trick is where you place your fingers. Here and here.

ALEX

That's it? Now I can throw the famous Turner knuckle-curve ball?

He walks over the back stop.

DANIEL

Well, that's half of it. The other half is the release. Go ahead.

She throws a wild pitch.

DANIEL

I should mention you gotta have about five hundred hours of practice.

ALEX

Oh, is that all.

DANIEL

Now the real trick is being able to keep it up. It really wears on the arm. And if you throw it wrong, you could throw your shoulder out.

ALEX

Your dad taught you this. Shouldn't it be a secret?

DANIEL

It is. Nobody else knows it.

ALEX

Why are you showing me?

DANIEL

Well... because you're my girlfriend.

ALEX

Girlfriend, huh?

He's insecure for a beat, then she kisses him.

ALEX

I gotta go.

DANIEL

Go? Where?

ALEX

A bunch of us are going to the lake. I would've asked you, but you have practice. Can't miss that.

DANIEL

I can do whatever I want. It's not like it's a real game. Besides, I already practiced for the day. I mean, what do you call this?

ALEX

You sure?

DANIEL
Let's go to the lake.

EXT. KIDS PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The kids take in the adults' latest prank. "1973" has been burned with weed-killer across the outfield grass.

KID #1
Good one.

KID #2
I left my bike outside last night. Somebody covered it in glitter and put 1973 on the seat in puffy paint. It's humiliating... But the seat is more comfortable.

KID #3
Somebody shaved "1973" on my dog, Beauregard.

Rick pulls up. His car is covered in shoe polish, declaring 1973's awesomeness and his suckiness. He gets out and heads over to his team.

RICK
Hey, where's Daniel?

KID #1
Not here. He's never been late.

KID #2
He's always been the first one here.

KID #3
It's the ultimate prank... They killed Danny.

KID #2
Daniel's dead.

KID #1
Hey, everybody, Daniel's been murdered.

RICK
Don't be ridiculous. Nobody killed Daniel. Now, kidnapped by gypsies, mauled by a pack of dogs, struck by lightning, all real possibilities. My money is on gypsies.

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)
Let's start practice. Wherever
Daniel is, I'm sure he's thinking
about baseball.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Kids have the music cranked and are dancing, partying. Daniel
is getting attention and enjoying himself thoroughly.

GIRL #1
Think you could strike out Manny
Ramirez?

DANIEL
It's hard to say. But maybe.

GIRL #2
How about Tony Romo?

DANIEL
He's a football player, so yeah I
guess so.

Some kids are pouring a purple drink in a milk jug into
plastic cups. Alex gets some and brings it to Daniel.

DANIEL
What's that?

ALEX
Tank Top's special suicide punch.

DANIEL
What's in it?

ALEX
What's not in it? Want some? I mean
you're already such a rule-breaker
today.

Daniel takes a long sip.

DANIEL
Tastes like cough syrup.

TANK TOP
Yep, that's in there.

GIRL #2
I bet Daniel could strike out
Shaquille O'Neal.

ALEX

I bet I could strike out Shaq. He showed me how to throw his knuckle-curve.

Older boys show up, including the pierced face kid from the mall. Daniel takes another sip from cup.

GIRL #1

Will you show me?

DANIEL

I dunno.

PIERCED KID

Ooo. What do you want him to show you?

GIRL #1

His secret, un-hittable pitch.

GIRL #2

He can strike out Vin Diesel.

PIERCED KID

Whatever. He can strike out other Little Leaguers. That's about it.

Daniel takes another sip.

DANIEL

I could strike you out.

The other kids "Oooh".

MOMENTS LATER

They get a ball and bat from Danny's supply bag. Everybody is watching. The older kid talks trash.

Pitch one. Knuckle-curve. Swing and a miss.

Pitch two. Knuckle-curve. Swing and a miss.

PIERCED KID

Dammit! I bet you I can hit anything else that you throw. One pitch and if you can throw a strike, I'll run around the lake naked. If not... then you have to.

DANIEL

Deal.

He takes a sip. He's obviously affected by the drink. Daniel sizes him up.

PIERCED KID
You're about to see what happens
when a boy faces a man.

Daniel winds up and beams Pierced Kid right in the head. His buddies help him up. He's shaken, but okay.

Daniel is already stripping.

LATER

Daniel makes it all the way around the lake. He covers himself with his hands.

DANIEL
Where is he?

ALEX
He went home, crying. You could've
really hurt him. Plus, you lost the
bet.

DANIEL
Totally worth it.

ALEX
They took your clothes.

DANIEL
Whatever.

Daniel throws up, then falls over.

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - DAY

Danny and T-Bone are tossing the ball. A worried Daniel is dropped off. He wears girl shorts and a small, pink hoody.

DANNY
Heard you missed practice?

DANIEL
Yeah, I was...doing other stuff.

DANNY
That's a good look for you.

DANIEL
Look Dad...

Daniel senses that he's in trouble. Danny is at a loss for words.

DANNY
Glad you're home.

Danny turns around and walks off. T-Bone follows. Daniel walks in the house.

VICKI
Oh my God! What in the world? Are you okay? What happened to you...

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM - LATER

He lays on his bed, showered, changed, and mostly recovered. There's a knock on the door.

DANIEL
Go away. If it's Mom, I don't want to talk about it. If it's Dad, you don't want to talk about it.

The door slowly creeps open. It's T-Bone.

T-BONE
It's T-Bone. Can I come in?

DANIEL
I guess so.

T-BONE
Rough day. Need a hug?... Sorry, I've got three girls. That usually helps. You wanna tell me about it, whatever it is. Trust me, we've all been there.

DANIEL
Betrayed my dad's trust, skipped practice for the first time in my life. Had some mystery punch that was like drinking the devil's pee. Hit a guy twice my size in the face with a baseball. Then puked and passed out naked.

T-BONE
Where were you, a bachelor party?

DANIEL
My dad send you in here?

T-BONE

Uh no. He thinks I left.

DANIEL

Figures. Doesn't care enough to yell at me himself. Why would he get you to do it?

T-BONE

That what you think? That he doesn't care? He cares alright. Maybe too much.

DANIEL

He cares about us being buddies, like he's my big brother or something. All the other dads have rules, they punish their kids, yell at them, give them advice. My dad builds tree houses, organizes hot dog eating contests... or challenges my baseball team. And did he ever think that maybe I might want to be called "Danny"?

T-BONE

But he's Danny.

DANIEL

Exactly!

T-BONE

It's true, your dad is a bit kid-like... Okay, more than a bit... Okay, he's a freakish man-child. But you know he loves you.

Daniel shrugs.

T-BONE

You know, in college your dad got straight A's in parenting class?

DANIEL

Really?

T-BONE

No, not really, because there was no such class. That's the thing, Daniel. Parenting is something you get from your own parents and TV. But mostly you just learn it on the job. My oldest daughter was like the test case.

(MORE)

T-BONE (cont'd)

My second helped me tighten up my game. By the time I had number three I was always thinking three moves ahead - like chess.

DANIEL

You play chess?

T-BONE

Checkers then. And in your Dad's case, he's a rookie. He'll get better. Here's the good news. You're an exceptional kid. I mean not including today, you've never been in trouble. You're smart. People like you. You'll be in eighth grade this year, the big dog in middle school.

DANIEL

Actually... I got a chance to start high school a year early. My dad doesn't know. But I'm sure he'll want me to so I can start pitching in high school.

T-BONE

Don't be so sure, pal. Sure, your dad loves seeing you play and win. I know you want to be grown up, but it's a little like leaving college and entering the draft early.

DANIEL

Exactly. What's wrong with that?

T-BONE

Nothing. If you're twenty one and about to get paid and ready to start your life. Here's your other option: stay in eighth grade, be the most popular kid in school history, be a leader, make a bunch of friends...

DANIEL

And play baseball?

T-BONE

Or don't. Maybe you'll want to wrestle instead, or play an instrument or be an actor.

DANIEL

Think my dad would let me?

T-BONE

I know he would. Because no matter how old you are or how old you act, he respects your right to decide what you want to do. Would he be disappointed? Sure, but would he back you up? Definitely.

EXT. RUNDOWN FIELD - DAY

Danny pitches to T-Bone, practicing his knuckle-curve. Danny grimaces after throwing.

T-BONE

How's the shoulder?

DANNY

Body doesn't bounce back like when we were kids.

T-BONE

You and me both, buddy. You ever wonder what we'd be like if we'd never played baseball?

DANNY

No. Why?

T-BONE

I just mean we played ball all the time growing up. Nothing else really. What if Daniel decided baseball wasn't for him?

DANNY

Yeah, right. That's a good one.

(beat)

But I guess as long as he was happy...then I guess that'd be cool.

(beat)

Why?

T-BONE

Just wondering. Working on being a better parent I guess.

DANNY

You and me both, buddy.

LATER

Coach Ozark has his team huddled up, ready for practice.

COACH OZARK

Alright, listen up, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. I got something to say. It's as if a girl from my past that I met at a party once, called me out of the blue and said "Congrats, you're the father of nine babies. And they're all boys and they play baseball." Then I took off, before she could make me pay child support or change diapers. Then years later I ran into all of you, and you'd grown up. Into... a blood-sucking lawyer, a drifter, auto workers with a death wish, and a has-been singer, and a bunch of other guys.

DANNY

Thanks?

COACH OZARK

Sit down, I'm not done. Eat a big meal tonight. Lots of pasta. Get your rest. T-Bone, if there's any way you can drop twenty pounds tonight, that'd be swell. No final practice today. Instead, I want you to do whatever you do together - tea party, quilting circle, etcetera. And remember your team unity. Going the distance for your brothers, willing to kill, or bury a body - no questions asked, or lend him your wife. That was team unity back in my day. Wrecked a lot of families, now that I think about it. Now excuse me, while I go wrestle with the ghosts of bad decisions.

Coach Ozark heads off. The guys look around, unsure what to do.

DANNY

Anybody remember what we did the night before the 1973 championship?

T-BONE

Frank's Fun Park.

INT. FRANK'S FUN PARK - NIGHT

The guys get tokens. They're all talking, laughing, having a good time already. Then they run right into the kids team.

DANIEL
Hey Dad, old champs.

DANNY
Hey son, current champs.

DANIEL
What're you guys doing here?

DANNY
Blowing off a little steam before
the game.

DANIEL
Well, Coach Rick said we were
supposed to steer clear of you guys
till tomorrow.

DANNY
Yeah, Coach Ozark said something
like that. Should we flip a coin to
see who stays?

DANIEL
How 'bout we play you for it?

DANNY
Let's do this.

SERIES OF SHOTS - The kids and adults seriously compete at arcade games, skee ball, air hockey, mini basketball, Dance Dance Revolution, shooting gallery, putt putt, and go carts.

Some of the kids pitch against a backdrop. Their speed is clocked by a radar gun.

A teammate of Daniel grabs him at an arcade game.

KID #1
Daniel, they're clocking pitches
over there. Kevin just threw sixty.
You gotta try to beat it.

Daniel walks over to the pitching game. His teammates pat him on the back, encouraging him to throw. Daniel starts stretching out his arm. Just then, Danny walks up.

DANNY

Hey son, what are you doing? You're not gonna pitch are you? You gotta save your arm. You got a game tomorrow.

DANIEL

Not a real game.

The comment hurts, but Danny covers well.

DANNY

Yeah, still. You should take it easy.

Daniel tosses the ball up and catches it.

DANIEL

You wanna go?

DANNY

No, I'll stick to putt putt.

DANIEL

Good idea. Don't want to get beat tonight and tomorrow.

MOMENTS LATER

An even bigger crowd has gathered. The teenage game operator hands Danny and Daniel each three balls.

Daniel pitches first - 62 MPH.

Danny pitches - 65 MPH. T-Bone leans over to Danny's ear.

T-BONE

Maybe you should take it easy.

Daniel - 66 MPH.

Danny - 65 MPH. Danny rubs his sore shoulder.

DANNY

Remember son, it's not a knuckle curve, so release a bit sooner.

DANIEL

I know how to pitch, Dad.

Daniel pitches - 70 MPH. The crowd cheers.

DANIEL

Maybe I should be giving the tips.

Danny gives it everything he's got - 90 MPH. Danny's teammates cheer. Daniel's teammates now look nervous, even scared about facing Danny tomorrow.

DANNY

Here endeth the lesson.

Everybody laughs. Daniel tries to take it in stride. Danny turns to walk away. As he does, he grimaces in pain. T-Bone catches up to Danny.

T-BONE

Talk about the intimidation factor.

DANNY

I think I just threw my arm out. I gotta go find some ice.

As Danny heads for the exit, he passes Bumper Boats. Daniel calls from the other side of the shallow pool.

DANIEL

Rematch... old man?

Danny turns to face his son. Like an old west saloon, others see how serious they are and clear out.

MOMENTS LATER

Father and son are in bumper boats They head straight at each other in a game of chicken. Both boats overturn. T-Bone jumps in the water and grabs Daniel and Danny to make sure they're okay.

KID PLAYER

They're gonna drown Daniel!

The kid players jump in dog pile Danny and T-Bone.

HUGHES

They're gonna drown our guys!

The adults start grabbing and throwing off the kids. More kids nearby see this go down.

RANDOM KID #1

The old champs are going after the champs!

RANDOM KID #2

Protect our own kind!

Another wave of kids jumps in, attacking adults. The ride operator tries to settle things, but can't stop the chaos.

INT. JAIL - LATER

A barred jail door shut in front of Daniel and Danny.

DANNY
 (to Daniel)
 "Eat donuts or racially profile"?
 What were you thinking?

DANIEL
 Guess I wasn't.

POLICE #2
 You want me to call your wife,
 Danny?

DANNY
 No! Don't call her. T-Bone will
 come bail us out.

VICKI (O.C.)
 Why? So you can sneak home and not
 tell me?!

She comes around the corner.

VICKI
 Come on, Danny. Twenty people have
 called me already, including most
 of the parents of Daniel's team.
 Let's go Daniel.
 (to Police)
 I'm springing the little one.

The cop obliges.

DANIEL
 What about Dad?

VICKI
 What about him? I think a night in
 here might do him good.

DANNY
 Vicki, we were just horsing around.
 And things got a little out of
 hand. That's all.

VICKI
 Danny. You gave our twelve year old
 son a record!

DANIEL
 Mom, it was my fault. I was--

VICKI

Unbelievable. You've got your son taking the fall for you?

DANNY

Well, he did--

VICKI

Both of you, shut it. Daniel, car, now.

As they leave, Danny yells to them.

DANNY

Love you guys. Daniel, get a good night's sleep. Lots of fluids.

(to Police)

Sir... officer. Can I get my phone call?

POLICE #2

Sorry, pal. It's now after midnight. Even if you get somebody on the phone, soonest you can get out is six o'clock tomorrow morning.

DANNY

I got the second biggest game of my life tomorrow.

POLICE

Yeah, so do a bunch of twelve-year-olds.

Danny sighs, accepting his fate.

DANNY

(to himself)

At least my team is getting a good night's sleep.

(to whoever can hear him)

Can I get an ice pack?

INT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

The adult team sits around bummed. There's a siren, then a knock at the door.

POLICE (O.C.)

T-Bone Malone, you and the other Firecrackers mind stepping outside here a sec.

T-BONE
Did you bring Danny back?

EXT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

The guys head out, met by a handful of cops.

POLICE
Guys, it's one thing to challenge a bunch of kids to a baseball game. It's another thing to wreck Frank's Fun Park. But your pranks and stupid stunts went way too far.

T-BONE
Oh, you mean shaving dogs and writing "1973" in the grass?

POLICE
So you admit it?

T-Bone and the guys rolling their eyes, yes. They laugh.

POLICE
I got thirty eight ruined lawns, including the Mayor's house, City Hall and four parks. And there's fifty plus dogs let loose from the city pound with "1973" shaved on their sides, wandering the streets.

Just then, another cop walks up with one of the dogs.

POLICE #2
Caught one, sir.

POLICE
Thanks, rookie. Go catch fifty more.
(to the guys)
You're all under arrest.

T-BONE
Mouth, do something.

MOUTH
Do what? You just admitted to the police that we vandalized half the town and its stray dogs.

Coach Rick, wearing all black, hides in the bushes.

RICK
(whispering to himself)
Yes!

Two more dogs run past that have been shaved.

INT. JAIL - LATER

The guys are all locked up together, beaten at their game.

DANNY
Damn, that's a good one.

T-BONE
Way better than shitting in
somebody's shoes.

EXT. JAIL - NEXT MORNING

The guys file out of the station. Coach is waiting for them.
He stops Danny.

COACH OZARK
Danny, hold up. Big day.

DANNY
Yeah. I won't let you down.

COACH OZARK
Who will you let down?

DANNY
Not sure I follow.

COACH OZARK
Well, you're the leader, team
captain. You reassembled the team,
inspired them, got them all to
revisit their childhood. Don't want
to let your boys down. The biggest
kid of all grew up a little bit.

DANNY
My son Daniel?

COACH OZARK
No, you. But if you go out there
and win today, pitch the game of
your life, get even for what looks
like the greatest prank of all
time, then you let down Daniel. You
take away part of the magic of his
championship season.

DANNY

I don't want to take it away. If anything I want to share in it.

DANIEL

Did he share in yours? Did your father?

DANNY

So you're telling me to throw the game? To lose?

COACH OZARK

No, I'm just telling you the stakes. Some kids need to grow up. Some grown ups need to kid down.

DANNY

Why can't it be as simple as Little League? Win or lose. Black or white.

COACH OZARK

Life isn't that simple.

DANNY

You have any advice?

COACH OZARK

I've coached twenty six Little League teams. I'm about to give you the one piece of advice that I never offered, because I always thought it was candy ass... Just have fun.

ESPN GRAPHICS OF "THE CHALLENGE"

STUART SCOTT

This is it folks, the Showdown. Firecracker versus Firecracker. Old versus young. Experience versus youth. Father versus son. It's on.

Several baseball personalities and the like say "It's on" and then the screen splits.

DANIEL

It's on.

DANNY

It's on.

STUART SCOTT

You are looking at-- no, it's not Williamsport, Pennsylvania and no, it's not the Little League World Series. It's good ol' Flint, Michigan. And there are two models of Firecrackers ready to explode.

Transition from ESPN coverage to the game itself.

EXT. FLINT BALLPARK - DAY

Coach Ozark and Coach Rick go to home plate and exchange lineup cards with a sea of signs behind them. The two huge stands are divided in their support.

Danny and T-Bone get ready to take the field. They look around. The place is a circus.

T-BONE

Man, this is insane.

DANNY

When did it become about so much more than baseball?

Coach Rick and Daniel are in the dugout.

RICK

Remember today is about redemption, revenge, payback, personal satis--

DANIEL

It's just about baseball.

Charlie sings a "Big Hair" version of the National Anthem.

The obsessed hair-cutting fan from earlier runs out onto the field with scissors, quickly tackled by two policemen.

Daniel sees Alex by the fence. He runs over.

DANIEL

Did you wanna wish me luck?... Hey, where's my ring?

ALEX

Oh, it's at home. I realized I wasn't meeting as many guys as I used to, when I was wearing it.

DANIEL

Meeting guys? You're my girlfriend.

ALEX

Right, and you're one of my
boyfriends. And I'm here to support
you.

Just then, Pierced Kid walk up. He has a black eye. It's
obvious that he and Alex are together.

ALEX

Guess I'll see you around... Oh,
good luck.

She and Pierced Kid walk away. Daniel returns to his dugout,
deflated.

From his own dugout, a concerned Danny sees the whole thing.
Coach Ozark approaches Danny, who is rubbing his shoulder.

COACH OZARK

How's the shoulder, kid?

DANNY

Not good. I'm remembering why I
stopped playing.

Coach Ozark claps his hands together loudly and slowly starts
rubbing them together. The music swells. Coach puts his hands
in Danny's shirt on his shoulder and makes a few movements.

COACH OZARK

Better?

DANNY

Um... No... No, not at all. What
the hell was that?

COACH OZARK

Saw that Japanese guy from "Happy
Days" do it in a movie once.
Thought it was worth a shot. All I
can tell you now is, suck it up.

UMPIRE

Play ball!

SERIES OF SHOTS - Danny throws a few pitches.

T-Bone approaches the mound.

T-BONE

What's up, Danny? I signaled for
you fast ball.

DANNY
That was my fast ball.

T-BONE
Oh well...throw it a little faster.

ANOTHER SERIES OF SHOTS

Danny gives up a few hits. His arm starts to run out of gas.

Daniel is striking out the guys, except Danny, who keeps getting singles.

Daniel is mowing down the rest of the guys, one by one. After striking out, T-Bone returns to the dugout.

T-BONE
My God, that kid is ruthless.

DANNY
For the first time during this whole thing, I'm a little scared.

T-BONE
What?

DANNY
My shoulder can't take much more.

T-BONE
I thought this whole time it was one of those situations where you taught him everything you know, but maybe held back a few things.

DANNY
Held back? On my son? Not only did I teach him everything I know, but it looks like he learned a few things behind my back.

UMPIRE
Strike three.

DANNY
Oh great, I get to go out and pitch some more.

Danny and T-Bone do their little ritual - without much enthusiasm. Daniel and his team return to their dugout.

A LITTLE LATER

Danny has walked another batter.

UMPIRE

Batter, take your base.

T-Bone goes out to the mound.

T-BONE

Hey, stop making me come out here so much. Do you know how much all this stuff weighs?

DANNY

I'm done.

Coach Ozark comes out.

COACH OZARK

Did I lip read "I'm done"?

DANNY

Coach, I can't throw.

COACH OZARK

Oh, hell, if I leave now I can still make happy hour. Thanks for nothing.

Coach Ozark starts to walk away, then turns back.

COACH OZARK

Stop acting like a woman and start pitching like one.

DANNY

(to T-Bone)

Does he mean what I think he means?

T-BONE

I believe he does... Danielle.

Danny swallows his pride and starts pitching underhanded, fast pitch like the ladies from the women's prison.

At first, the kid players, Rick and the crowd all laugh. Then Danny is able to get a few strikes across the plate.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Danny gets in a groove. Danny and Daniel are now pitching almost everyone out at the plate. Both coaches come out to argue calls.

LATER

It's the sixth (and final) inning. The score is 3-2. The kids are ahead. Ross on first. With two outs, Danny is up.

IN THE STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Turns out Brent Musburger and Reggie Jackson are there as a fans. They talk to each other as if they're on the air.

BRENT MUSBURGER

"Mister October", you don't need to be Al Einstein to know this is it. Two outs, down by one. Coming up to the plate, father. And on the mound, son. Oh baby, this is drama.

REGGIE JACKSON

I tell ya, Brent. I'm just glad I'm not in the car for that ride home.

BACK ON THE FIELD - CONTINUOUS

As Danny walks out of his dugout, he looks at the faces of his teammates and recalls their words at the campfire. Lastly, he bumps fists with T-Bone.

DANNY

What are we gonna do tomorrow?

T-BONE

I dunno. I guess tomorrow we go back to our lives.

As Danny steps up to the plate, he glances over at Vicki in the stands, then at Daniel.

UMPIRE

(to Danny)

Whatever happens, you gotta be damn proud of that kid.

DANNY

(looks back)

Sure am. Time please.

UMPIRE

Time out!

Danny walks out to the mound. Everyone in the stands, dugouts and announcers box is confused. Even Vicki can't quite figure out what's going on.

DANIEL

Dad, what are you doing?

DANNY

Looked like things aren't going so well with Alex.

DANIEL
Wanna say you told me so?

DANNY
No. I wanna say, forget her.
There'll be others. You're a
teenager now, almost a man. And...
I'm proud of you.

DANIEL
Thanks. I knew that, though. Can we
finish please? There's a lot of
people watching.

DANNY
Let them watch.

Coach Rick comes out to complain. The umpire meets him at the mound.

RICK
Hey ump, what's going on? This guy
is bothering my pitcher.

DANNY
Give us a minute, Rick.

RICK
I don't like it. That's my ace out
there and--

DANIEL
Coach Rick.

RICK
What's up, super star?

DANIEL
Go back to the dugout and sit down
and zip it. My dad and I are
talking.

Rick exits, speechless. The umpire also walks away.

DANNY
Man, you're tough.

DANIEL
I had a good teacher.

DANNY
Thanks.

DANIEL

I meant Mom.

Vicki heads onto the field. The crowd is now really confused. She passes by Rick, who is headed back to his dugout.

RICK

Good, maybe you can tell him how it is.

VICKI

Like this? You're a conniving, spineless, little excuse for a man. Stay away from my son, stay away from my husband and stay away from me. Or so help me, I'll take this bat...

Vicki picks up a bat leaning against the fence.

IN THE STANDS

From Brent and Reggie's vantage point, we can see that Vicki is telling Rick just where she'll put with the bat.

BRENT MUSBURGER

What do you make of that, Reggie Jackson?

REGGIE JACKSON

It appears Vicki Turner is giving Coach Rick... some batting advice.

BACK ON FIELD

Vicki makes her way to the mound.

VICKI

How's the shoulder?

DANIEL

Fine.

DANNY

Fine.

VICKI

How's it going out here?

DANIEL

Fine.

DANNY

Fine.

VICKI

What's going on out here?

DANNY

It just hit me. Tomorrow, we go back to our lives. And my life isn't much of one without you two. Even though I was probably the coolest Dad of all time, I definitely could have been a better Dad. And this may come as a shock to you, but I think I could be and should be a better husband.

VICKI

Thank you, I-- we needed to hear that. But I think we can talk about this at home. There's like a lot of people watching.

DANIEL

Let them watch.

DANNY

Baseball is important. Little League is important. But you two are the whole world to me. I'm not taking it for granted and I'm gonna do whatever it takes to prove that.

The three hug. The confused crowd cheers. Vicki heads back to the stands. Danny starts back toward the plate.

DANIEL

Hey Dad, this doesn't mean you're going to take it easy on me, does it?

DANNY

I'll never take it easy on you again...

Danny grabs the bat and steps up to the plate.

Daniel winds up and throws his knuckle curve. Danny crushes it deep to left field. He starts jogging to first. The ball goes just outside the foul pole. The kids breathe a sigh of relief. Daniel turns around to his outfielders.

DANIEL

Guys, shift left and move back, way back.

The outfielders shift. Daniel throws another knuckle curve. Danny hits it deep the opposite direction, to right field. Everybody is on their feet watching, as this one fouls the other way into the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The foul ball smashes through the windshield of Rick's car.

EXT. BALLPARK STANDS - CONTINUOUS

Brent turns to Reggie.

BRENT MUSBURGER

That's back to back knuckle curves
from Daniel and his dad has knocked
the stuffing out of them both.

REGGIE JACKSON

With an 0-2 count, you gotta think
he'll throw a few in the dirt and
see if his old man will go after
them.

BACK ON FIELD

DANNY

Uh-oh, I think I found my swing,
son.

Rick comes out of the dugout.

RICK

Infield move back. Spread out
across the fence.
(to himself)
He can have the base hit. But I'll
be damned if I'm giving him the
long ball.
(to Daniel)
It's all up to you Daniel.

The kid players are now spread deep in the outfield. Only Daniel and his catcher remain in the infield.

Daniel pitches. Danny hits a grounder between first and second and takes off.

As Danny rounds first, an outfielder scoops up the ball and throws it to second base, where Daniel is already standing.

Daniel catches the ball just before Danny gets there. Danny runs right into him and Daniel hits the ground hard.

Before the second base umpire calls Danny "out", he sees that the ball was knocked out of Daniel's glove. Danny notices too and heads for third, where the kid catcher waits.

Daniel jumps up and grabs the ball, ready to fire it to third. He holds off, as Danny has already stopped on base.

Daniel and Danny lock eyes. They both look over at home plate, which is left completely unguarded. It's on...

Danny takes off from third and Daniel from second. Both head straight for home, realizing it's winner take all.

They close in, both diving head first. It's an even bigger and badder collision than the one at second. Daniel holds on to the ball. The home plate umpire is there to make the call.

UMPIRE

You're out!

The Kids win. They immediately mob the field.

Danny shakes his head and smiles. He lifts Daniel up on his shoulder. The crowd eats it up.

The guys of the 1973 team seem bummed for a beat. Then, taking a cue from Danny, the guys each lift up a kid player on their shoulders. Before long, all the kids are raised up.

Coach Ozark just shakes his head. Rick looks over at him and points back and forth as if to say, "You and me?" Ozark spits on the ground and joins the players.

The town pours on to the field like the end of a college football game.

T-Bone bumps into the kids' CATCHER.

CATCHER

T-Bone Malone, you're the reason I became a catcher.

T-BONE

Is that right?

A group of men in their 70's, wearing faded baseball uniforms, approaches Danny and his team. The Commandant is among them.

COMMANDANT

Danny, let us know when you boys are done licking your wounds and you want a real game.

DANNY

Um, yes sir. Will do.

The guys all nod, "sure thing", humoring the old men.

Danny looks over at Daniel and Vicki and mouths, "No way." The three walk off the field. Danny's arms are around his wife and son's shoulders.

EPILOGUE

As music plays, we see the following:

--Coach Ozark gives a Middle School baseball team the "puke speech." Daniel is among the players.

--T-Bone is there as an assistant coach, giving special attention to the kid catcher from the game.

--Mouth is in a prison visit. Turns out to be one of the women from the softball game. Mouth puts his hand to the glass affectionately. She does the same.

--Freedom is content, back in nature. His new cell phone rings - a call from "Mom." He smiles as he answers.

--Charlie rocks out, singing the National Anthem at a Major League baseball ball game.

--The Gonzales brothers are back at the auto shop. The old white guy points for them to get to work. As he turns away, Carlos nods to Juan, who pulls out a length of duct tape.

--Rick, who has been busted back down to "orange apron" status, tries to impress Home Depot customers with his ring. He has no luck.

EXT. DANNY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

The workshop has been turned into a business. A new sign above it reads: "Dan's Treehouses & Forts".

Vicki and Daniel pull up in the driveway. Danny takes off his toolbelt and wipes off his hands. He greets Vicki with a kiss.

DANNY

Hey guys. How was practice, Daniel?
I mean, how was practice, Danny?
Still getting used to it.

DANIEL

Good. Coach Ozark made us puke.

DANNY

Awesome. That means you'll have
room for dinner. I made chili.

VICKI

I thought you were making a
meatloaf.

DANNY

Well, it started out as meatloaf,
which turned into a big fat
hamburger patty...

The three head inside.

DANNY

So I just smashed it up and added
tomato sauce and onions and stuff,
and I'm now calling it chili.

FADE OUT.