

MONEYBALL

Screenplay by
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Story by
Stan Chervin

Based on the book by
Michael Lewis

IN BLACK:

**There will always be people who are ahead of
the curve, and people who are behind the curve.
But knowledge moves the curve.**

- Bill James

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

Static shots: A deserted locker room. Empty showers. Cinder-block tunnels lit with wire-encased lamps like in a coal mine. THREE SECURITY GUARDS watch a game on a TV.

LEGEND: October 15, 2001

We begin to hear disembodied cheering crowds and the faint voice of an announcer -

BRENNAMAN V/O

... nobody on, two and two to Saenz - who has just three at bats in the series, and none of them hits - as he settles back in -

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM -NIGHT

At the end of a tunnel, the A's empty dugout. The empty diamond. Just a couple of the floodlights are on.

BRENNAMAN V/O

- Rivera looks in for the sign, he has it, the pitch, Saenz swings and -

The announcer's voice and excited crowd abruptly cut off. In silence, we regard the 60,000 empty seats that wrap around the playing field ... but then see that, in fact, it's 59,999 empty seats. There's a lone figure seated in one of them. The sound snaps back on:

STEVE LYONS V/O

- a ground out to second, Thom, is not what the A's were looking for from Saenz - down by two in the ninth -

The lone man in the stadium has a radio and a bag of peanuts. He seems at peace as he looks down on the empty diamond - a peace only slightly belied, perhaps, by the baseball he absently turns in a hand. He switches the radio back on -

BRENNAMAN V/O

Eric Byrnes has emerged from the dugout to bat for Menechino -

He turns it off again. Calmly eats a peanut. Waits.
Switches the radio back on -

BRENNAMAN V/O

- the A's are down to their last strike
and this Yankee crowd is on its feet -
Rivera squints for the sign, he has it,
delivers and -

Again, at the crucial moment, he cuts the radio. Waits
just a few moments. Turns the radio back on -

BRENNAMAN V/O

It is bedlam in New York. The Yankees -
down two games to none - have come back
to win three, and the Division Series.

The outcome of the series seems to have no effect on
Billy. He simply gets up, switches off the radio, and
climbs the steps to leave. But somehow we still faintly
hear, as he comes past shuttered concession stands toward
an exit, the voice of one of the announcers -

STEVE LYONS V/O

This is an exceptional feat not only for
New York, Thom, but for Oakland - though
not the kind you can be proud of: Only
once before has a team lost a Division
Series after winning the first two games -

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

It's coming from a small television a night security
guard is watching. But when he sees Billy approaching,
he quickly shuts it off.

BILLY

It's okay, Joe, you can leave it on.
It's no big deal.

SECURITY GUARD

No, it's okay, I don't need to watch it.

The guard's eyes consider the baseball Billy absently
turns in his hands -

BILLY

How's Meg?

SECURITY GUARD

She's good, thanks.

- and the glass window of the bar behind him -

BILLY
And the boys?

SECURITY GUARD
They're good. Everybody's good.

BILLY
That's good.

The security guard waits for the baseball to sail through the glass, but it doesn't happen.

BILLY
Night.

SECURITY GUARD
Night, Billy. It was a great season.

EXT. COLISEUM - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

A lone car sits in the parking lot in front of the Coliseum. We HEAR-

TARA V/O
They had three times your payroll, Billy.

BILLY
Yeah...

TARA V/O
You're not watching them celebrate, right?

Car's off. Billy sits in the dark on his phone.

BILLY
No. That would be, uh--

TARA V/O
Pointless? Self-destructive? Masochistic?

BILLY
Are you asking me to pick one?

TARA V/O
What you should be doing is thinking about what an amazing job you did and how great you are.

BILLY
I'll be honest, right this minute I'm not thinking about either of those things.

TARA V/O

You take a team with that payroll to the playoffs? You take the Yankees to a fifth game? I'm not even sure the better team won.

BILLY

They were down two-love and then beat us three in a row. Trust me, the better team won.

BILLY presses a button on his portable radio and is hit with sound of sports talk radio--

CALLER V/O

--while embarrassing the entire city and making a mockery of their fans. I'm *sick* of this.

TARA V/O

Let's go away.

BILLY

That sounds good.

CUT TO WHAT BILLY'S BEEN LOOKING AT THIS WHOLE TIME -

Three enormous looming likenesses of the Oakland A's premiere players on floodlit banners--Jason Giambi, Johnny Damon, Jason Isringhausen.

TARA V/O

Someplace they don't have a baseball team.

BILLY

How about Oakland?

TARA V/O

Okay, here are the rules for tonight. You can do anything you want but you can't give any quotes to the press, go on the internet or hurt my car, we have a deal?

BILLY

Yeah.

TARA V/O

They had three times your payroll, Billy.

From the radio we've been hearing shards of "--an unprecedented choke--", "--get rid of Billy Beane--", "--Billy Beane knows nothing about baseball--".

BILLY

Yeah.

TARA V/O

How about Hawaii? I'll make a reservation someplace. The place with the turtles.

Billy gets out of the car.

BILLY

Great. I'm on my way.

Billy chucks the radio away. Gets back in the car, puts it in gear. HARD CUT TO --

INT. OAKLAND AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Blur of shapes and colors as we move through a crush of travelers to a Hawaiian Airlines counter where Billy and Tara check luggage. Billy's got a cell phone to his ear.

BILLY

Is it Boston? You're talking to Boston? What are they offering?

BORAS (ON PHONE)

What does it matter to you?

BILLY

What?!

BORAS V/O

I mean -- what does it matter since whatever it is you can't afford it.

BILLY

You don't know that.

BORAS V/O

I don't?

TICKET CLERK

You need to hurry.

BILLY

I don't know that -- since I don't know what they're offering.

(to Tara)

What did she say?

TARA

She said we had to hurry up.

BILLY
Scott? Scott?

The call's been disconnected. CUT TO: Another corridor, as Billy and Tara head toward security. Billy on the phone with Boras, continuing where they left off --

BILLY
What did they offer?

BORAS V/O
They offered seven and a quarter.

BILLY
Just to be clear -- they offered seven and a quarter.

BORAS V/O
Yes.

BILLY
As opposed to you said seven and a quarter and they're thinking about it.

BORAS V/O
No, they offered seven and a quarter and I'm thinking about it.
(nothing from Billy)
And you're thinking -- what.

BILLY
I'm thinking I don't want to lose Damon, but I don't pay my whole infield seven million dollars.

TARA
We're losing Damon?

BORAS V/O
For seven and a half, Billy, you can keep Johnny Damon and we can be done thinking. I have to go, my plane is boarding.

BILLY
Wait, don't hang up. Don't hang up --

Billy drops the phone in a plastic container, steps through the metal detector like it's a stick-up, grabs the phone again.

TSA OFFICER 1
Is that phone still on?

BILLY
What's the difference?

TSA OFFICER 1
Faradie. Can his phone be on?

TSA OFFICER 2
Sir, you need to turn your phone off.

BILLY
It's already through.

Billy grabs his phone from the other side.

BILLY
Seven point five?

BORAS V/O
Seven point five.

BILLY
I'll talk to Steve.

BORAS V/O
Talk to Steve.

Boras hangs up.

TARA
Try to relax.

BILLY
(hitting speed dial
on another number)
A small emergency is starting to develop.

TARA
Try. Try to relax.

BILLY
You look fantastic today.

ARN V/O
Hello?

BILLY
Arn. Billy. We gotta talk about Giambi.

TARA
Wait, we're losing Giambi, too?

ARN V/O
I can't talk about that now. I can't
talk about anything now.

BILLY
We can talk now. We're talking now.

ARN V/O
 We can't talk now. I'm at a family
 thing. I'll call you Monday.

BILLY
 Who are you talking to -- the Yankees?

ARN V/O
 I'm talking to everybody. But not today.
 I'm not in today. I'm hanging up.

BILLY
 Don't hang up.
 (off phone)
 He hung up.

TARA
 You found Giambi.

Billy dials another number --

TARA
 A thousand dollars says you don't get on
 the plane.

SECRETARY V/O
 Arn Tellem's office.

BILLY
 Denise. Billy.
 (to TARA)
 These guys are auctioning off my team one
 player at a time.

SECRETARY V/O
 (overlapping)
 He's not in today, Billy.

BILLY
 I know, I just want to send him flowers.

SECRETARY V/O
 Flowers?

TARA
 Flowers?

BILLY
 Where would I send them?

SECRETARY V/O
 To who?

BILLY
 To Arn.

SECRETARY V/O
You want to send him flowers?

TARA
(overlapping)
You're not going to be anywhere near
Hawaii.

BILLY
To where he is now, yes.

SECRETARY V/O
Beth Israel Temple, Beverly Hills.

TARA
The airport is as close as you got.

BILLY
(into phone)
Thank you, Tara.

SECRETARY V/O
Denise.

TARA
I'm Tara.

BILLY
I know. I need a day.

TARA
Billy --

BILLY
One day. I'll fly out tomorrow.

TARA
It's gonna be more than one day.
(pause)
We're losing Isringhausen too?

BILLY
Only if my luck stays exactly the same.

TARA
It's like the bell rang but you're still
getting hit in the head.
(hands him tickets)
Just in case.

BILLY
I'm sorry. Have fun out there.

TARA

I'm picking up a guy at the breakfast buffet.

BILLY

A left-handed reliever if you can.

OMITTED

INT. SINAI TEMPLE - BRENTWOOD - LATER - DAY

The ceremony is in progress as Billy arrives, plucks a yarmulke from a basket, sets it on his head and finds a place in the back row for himself and his carry-on.

He listens to the boy's monotone-reading of verses. He fidgets. Taps his foot. Checks his watch. Turns to the person down the row and whispers --

BILLY

How much longer you think?

GUEST

What?

BILLY

Nah, it's okay.

INT. TEMPLE LOBBY - LATER - DAY

As attendees exit the ceremony and enter the adjacent banquet hall, Billy has cornered Arn Tellem, picking up right where he left off three hours ago in Oakland on the phone --

BILLY

Arn, I don't wanna lose him.

ARN

Billy --

BILLY

I don't wanna lose him.

ARN

This is my nephew's Bar Mitzvah.

BILLY

He did well with his Torah portion I thought.

ARN

Thank you.

BILLY

What did they offer?

ARN

He's not staying in Oakland, Billy.

BILLY

What did the Yankees offer him?

ARN

It's New York; you've got to give a player a reason not to play there.

BILLY

What did they offer?

ARN

17 million.

BILLY

No way.

ARN

Yeah.

BILLY

I don't pay my whole infield 17 million dollars.

ARN

I know, I know...

BILLY

For how long?

ARN

17 a year for seven years.

Billy stares, completely nonplussed...

BILLY

A hundred and twenty million dollars?

ARN

Hundred and nineteen.

(beat)

You gotta get Steve to let you spend some money.

BILLY

That's pretty good advice, I should do that.

ARN
Steve doesn't get it. This isn't a
charity raffle.

BILLY
Arn. I get it, he gets it, Jason gets it
and you certainly get it. I'll talk to
him.

ARN
And you're losing Isringhausen, too.

BILLY
Ya think?

ARN
I've gotta get back.

BILLY
Hey mazel tov, Arn.

ARN
Thank you. Good luck.

Arn walks away. Billy looks to his right to see a 12 year
old kid standing right next to him.

KID
Are you Billy Beane?

BILLY
Yes.

KID
That was a pretty serious choke.

BILLY
Are you from around here?

KID
Yeah.

BILLY
You a Dodger fan?

KID
Yeah.

Billy hands the kid his scotch --

BILLY
Here, drink a lot of this.

-- and walks away.

INT. OFFICE - SAN BRUNO - LATER - DAY

Billy tries, but is having trouble sitting still as he talks with Steve Schott - the A's owner - around 60 - a college player way back when. He's a successful home builder now. Models of developments lie around.

BILLY

We're losing Damon and Giambi. We can't survive losing Damon and Giambi.

SCHOTT

Isringhausen's gone, too, don't you think?

BILLY

I can win without a closer. I can't without power.

SCHOTT

So negotiate with them.

BILLY

I have. They want more.

SCHOTT

So offer them a little more.

BILLY

I have. They want more than a little more.

SCHOTT

Like what. What'll it cost - say - to keep Giambi?

BILLY

17.

SCHOTT

17 for how many (years) -

BILLY

One.

SCHOTT

For one year?

Billy nods. Steve smiles. And Billy knows what it means. It means, That makes it easy - there's nothing more to discuss on the matter.

SCHOTT

I have confidence you'll find a way to make it work without them.

BILLY

I can't.

SCHOTT

Sure you can.

BILLY

Steve -

SCHOTT

Billy. What are we? The Taj Mahal?
We're a small-market team. Obviously, we
can't afford Giambi at such a (price) -

BILLY

Fine. He's gone. But I might - for a
bit more than last year - be able to keep
Damon in (Oakland) -

(Steve is shaking his
head no)

I need more money, Steve.

SCHOTT

Billy...

BILLY

I can't compete against a hundred and
twenty million dollar payroll with a
forty million dollar payroll.

SCHOTT

We just won 102 games with a forty
million dollar payroll.

BILLY

With Giambi and Damon. We wouldn't have
without them.

Silence. Then -

BILLY

You can't ask me to be okay with losing.
That's too much to ask a professional
athlete.

SCHOTT

Billy--

BILLY

It's too much, Steve!

SCHOTT

You're not a professional athlete!
(beat)

You're a professional GM.

(MORE)

SCHOTT (CONT'D)

We're a small market team. You're a small market GM. And I'm asking you to be okay with not spending money I don't have. And I'm asking you to take a breath and shake off the loss. And then I'm asking you to get back in a room with your people and figure out how you're going to replace these guys with the money I do have.

(beat)

Got it?

SCHOTT can go from milquetoast to ruthless in a blink and he just did.

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - MOVING - LATER - DAY

Billy's on his cell again as he crosses the Bay Bridge.

BILLY

Scott. Billy.

BORAS V/O

What was that beep?

BILLY

It's just my phone, it's about to die, but this'll be quick - listen - I'm losing my favorite prospects, but I got you the seven point five.

BORAS V/O

That's great. I'll get right back to (you) -

BILLY

No. No, you won't. I got it for you and we're done. Damon stays in Oakland.

BORAS V/O

Billy - I have to talk to Johnny - obviously. It's my fiduciary (duty) -

BILLY

Whose number is that - seven point five. Mine?

BORAS V/O

No, it's mine -

BILLY

It's yours. So make your call, but don't play me, Scott. We have a deal. I won't be a stalking horse. The word stays in the - dictionary.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - DANVILLE - LATER - DAY

The door pushes open and Billy comes in after his very long day. He sets his carry-on bag down. Takes out his dead cell phone and plugs it into a charger. Calls Tara on the land line.

BILLY

Sorry, hon. I'm gonna need another day.

TARA (V.O.)

Take your time, do your thing. There are a lot of cute guys here.

BILLY

You've got my suitcase?

TARA (V.O.)

No, the airline sent it to Prague.

BILLY

(pause)

Why?

TARA (V.O.)

Well, we left out of Oakland, honey... and I think the baggage handlers knew it was yours.

BILLY

(beat, can this get any worse?)

Okay.

Billy's cell phone rings --

BILLY

I gotta take this.

TARA (V.O.)

Wish you weren't insane. Miss you.

She hangs up. Billy hangs up and switches to his cell --

BILLY

Yeah.

BORAS (V.O.)

Billy. Scott. I just got off the phone with Dan.

BILLY

No, you didn't.

BORAS (V.O.)

Yeah, I was surprised he even called me.
Because he had said --

BILLY

No, I have Johnny for seven-point-five or
he's not playing anywhere, because that's
the deal --

BORAS (V.O.)

Boston just upped it to seven-seven-five.

Billy's hand is already in motion to smash the phone,
but in a herculean feat of self discipline, he manages to
restrain himself before impact.

BORAS (V.O.)

You there?

BILLY

We had a deal.

BORAS (V.O.)

We have a deal. If it's eight million.

BILLY

Why am I the ugliest girl at the dance,
Scott? Why do I get the feeling I'm
always gonna be a quarter million short?

BORAS (V.O.)

I'm just doing my job for my client.
That's all I'm doing.

BILLY

No, you played me. And you're playing me
now. Congratulations, asshole. You win.

Billy hangs up on him.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - SCOUTING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Billy and his scouting department - ten men older than
him - all former players and tobacco chewers still, each
with his own can of Copenhagen and wastebasket - sitting
around a large underground cinder block "war room" whose
most extravagant appointment is a Mr. Coffee.

Two large white-boards dominate a wall, covered with
magnetic strips with players' names on them.

On the left board - every player in the A's organization. On the other, even larger board - every player that may be of interest to them from the other organizations.

It's the most complex chess board you will ever see. But what can be easily discerned are the obvious holes in the A's team - the star players they are about to lose - their names set apart from the positions they're vacating: Jason Giambi (1B), Johnny Damon (CF), Jason Isringhausen (RP).

GRADY

Alright, guys... we had a great year. We won 102 games and we only came a buck short in New York. Now the bad news... we've got three big holes to fill.

(then)

Let's start with who we like for Giambi. We'll go around the room. Who you like, Matty?

KEOUGH

I like Geronimo.

(approval from the
other scouts)

Guy's an athlete. This guy is big, fast and talented.

GEORGE

Six foot four.

PITTARO

Top of my list.

POTE

Clean cut, good face.

ARTIE

Good jaw. He's the real deal.

GEORGE

Five tools, good lookin'.

BILLY

Can he hit?

KEOUGH

He's a tools guy.

BILLY

Can he hit?

KEOUGH

He's got a great swing. Natural swing.

BILLY
So you're saying he can't hit.

KEOUGH
He can hit.

BARRY
The ball explodes off his bat.

ARTIE
It's exciting. When he hits it sounds like he's droppin' a firecracker at his feet.

PITTARO
Down in the pisser you can hear that sound.

BARRY
Sounds like Mays, Mantle, Aaron...

BILLY
That's not what I asked. I asked can he hit.

KEOUGH
He's a good hitter.

BILLY
If he's a good hitter, why doesn't he hit good?

KEOUGH
He needs a little work. He'll be able to hit. He could be a great hitter.

BILLY
Right... we put him up against big league competition and suddenly he'll be able to hit.

Grady moves on --

GRADY
Artie, who do we like?

Billy backs off, incredulous as the scouts prattle on --

ARTIE
I like Perez. He swings like a man.

KEOUGH
He swings like a man who swings at too much.

ARTIE

There's some work needs to be done. I admit it. He needs to be reworked a little. But he's noticeable.

GRADY

He's notable?

ARTIE

No, he's noticeable. You notice him.

KEOGH

He's got an ugly girlfriend.

BARRY

What's that mean?

KEOGH

Ugly girlfriend means no confidence.

BARRY

Alright. That's true.

PITTARO

I agree with Art. I like the way he walks into a room. Kid's so confident his dick gets there two minutes before he does.

GEORGE

Passes the eye candy test. He's got the looks, he's ready to play the part. He just needs some playing time.

KEOUGH

I'm just saying, his girlfriend's a 6.

BARRY

Billy, if you want to talk about another Giambi, this guy could be it.

Enough. Billy raises a book above the table, drops it with a dull THUD... STOPPING TRAFFIC.

GRADY

Is that a suggestion, Billy?

BILLY

Guys, stop. You're talking like this is business as usual. It's not.

GRADY

We're trying to solve the problem.

BILLY

Not like this. You're not even looking at the problem.

GRADY

We not only have a very clear understanding of the problem we now face, but everyone in this room has faced similar problems countless times before.

BILLY

Good. What's the problem?

GRADY

The problem is that we've lost 3 key players that we now have to replace.

BILLY

Uh-uh. What's the problem?

PITTARO

The problem is the same as it always is; we've got to put a team together with what we've got.

BILLY

Uh-uh. What's the problem?

BARRY

We've got 38 home runs to replace, 120 rbi's, 47 doubles...

BILLY

Okay, stop. The problem we're trying to solve is that this is an unfair game. There are rich teams, poor teams, 50 feet of crap and then there's us. And now we've been gutted. We're organ donors to the rich. The Red Sox took our kidneys and the Yankees took our heart. And now I'm listening to the same old shit about having a good body and being a tools guy like you're looking for Fabio. Is there another first baseman like Giambi?

(beat)

Is there?

Everyone mumbles "no."

BILLY

Then stop looking for one because what we'll surely wind up with is the McNuggets version of Giambi.

GRADY

Look, we're gonna find 25 guys, put 'em through player development, teach 'em how to play Oakland A baseball. This is no time to push the panic button. This is the way we've been doing it for 150 years. Let us do our job.

BILLY

If we try to play like the Yankees in here, we're not going to be able to play with them out there.

GRADY

That's fortune cookie wisdom.

BILLY

No, it's just regular wisdom.

POTE

Who's Fabio?

GRADY

Okay, Billy. Clearly you have something on your mind.

BILLY

Bill James.

ARTIE

You're not serious?

PITTARO

We're not playing fantasy baseball, Billy.

BARRY

Those aren't new ideas, they disproved that years ago.

GRADY

Bill James was a night security guard at the Stokely Van Camp Pork and Beans Factory.

BILLY

He thinks differently than anyone in baseball.

GRADY

He's not in baseball. He's in pork and beans.

BILLY

Don't attack the man, attack the argument.

PITTARO

(to the room)

I think he just won the argument.

Chuckles.

BILLY

What if we've been wrong this whole time about what ingredients manufacture a win? What if this whole time we thought it was the chicken that made the chicken soup taste good when really it was the onions that made the chicken soup taste good? Onions are a lot cheaper than chicken, you see what I'm saying?

POTE

I don't have the first idea what you're saying.

BILLY

We gotta start over. We gotta rethink this thing. We gotta look where others aren't looking.

GRADY

With all due respect, we've been doing this for a long time.

BILLY

That doesn't mean you're doing it right. Do you watch nature docs? You know what happens to the runt of the litter? He dies. I'm open to any solution, as long as it's not what the other guys are doing.

(then)

Now, I'm going to Cleveland to poach an outfielder named Brandon Garcia --

TBD SCOUT

Hold on -- You're going to Cleveland for a double-A guy?

GRADY

Billy, I've seen Garcia. He's got a bad body. It's not a pretty sight.

PITTARO

Kid wears a large pair of underwear.

KEOGH

That is a big boy.

GRADY

He's not just big, but kind of doughy. A fleshy kind of body.

BILLY

Oh, you mean like Babe Ruth.

SCOUTS (UNISON)

He's no Babe Ruth.

PITTARO

When he walks, Billy, his thighs stick together. There's enough friction there to start a bonfire.

KEOGH

If you saw him, I'm telling you, you wouldn't want to go to Cleveland.

BARRY

Billy, can I make a suggestion? If you could get Ricardo Rincon... he'd be worth the trip to Cleveland.

GEORGE

That would solve our left handed reliever problem.

Unanimous approval from the scouts --

BILLY

Really?

SCOUTS (UNISON)

Yeah.

BILLY

I should get Rincon?

SCOUTS (UNISON)

Definitely.

BILLY

Okay. I'll also come back with Joe DiMaggio and Ty Cobb. And who would like a Fabergé egg? Guys, you aren't hearing me -- in what universe can we afford Rincon?

(then)

I'm asking you guys to look at this game differently than you've ever looked at it before. I'm going to Cleveland.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

And when I come back, I want you to tell me something I don't already know. I want to question everything. We've got to rethink this game.

As he exits --

BILLY

And Grady? Nobody cares about a 102 win season.

Billy storms out.

KEOUGH

What's a Fabergé egg?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1980

CRACK! A ball sails well over the heads of the SCOUTS in the outfield who are shagging the batting practice flies. The KIDS in the parking lot have seen Billy play before and so know just how far back to stand in order to shag a ball.

BILLY's at the plate, crushing pitches from a pitching machine.

CRACK!--he sends another one sailing over the heads of the cluster of scouts.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

BILLY, tanned and glistening with sweat, looks over to see THREE GIRLS watching him from behind the backstop. They're looking at him like he's Elvis and BILLY tries to nonchalant it but can't help a small smile to himself before--

CRACK!

CRACK! CRACK!

SABATINI

This is the guy.

MARTINEZ

He's got a great path. I love the extension in his swing and the backspin he creates.

SABATINI

That's some amazing power right there, huh?

MARTINEZ

Good approach, great balance. How's he compare to the others around the country?

SABATINI

He's number one. Let's just hope he's still there when we pick.

MARTINEZ

This guy'll go in the first round.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY - 1980

The scouts put the players through their paces -- sprinting, fielding...

CUT TO:

EXT. DUGOUT STEPS - DAY - 1980

SABATINI and MARTINEZ are talking to BILLY, who's toweling off and is still a little aware of all the people who are standing nearby to watch the birth of a star.

SABATINI

Billy. I'm Sabatini, Area Scout, New York Mets. Can we get a couple minutes of your time, find out more about you?

BILLY

Of course.

SABATINI

I'd like to introduce you to Tom Martinez.

MARTINEZ

Very impressive performance today. In my job as the national cross-checker for the New York Mets, I see the top 200 players in the United States. It's been a while since I've seen a five tools guy, the complete package. Your throwing ability, your fielding skills... Ed told me you had power but I had no idea it was of the light tower variety. I hope you're as interested in professional baseball as we are in acquiring you in the upcoming draft.

BILLY

Well, sir, I'd need to talk it out with my parents, decide if baseball is something I want to do full time. I have a scholarship to play football at Stanford.

MARTINEZ

Well, Billy, we're certainly looking forward to meeting your folks and talking to them as well. And we believe in college, but that's something you can do in the winter months. You need to know the sky's the limit with your ability. You could be a superstar before you've even graduated. But to get to that level, you need to work with our people. Pro-ball is where you need to be to develop the skills God gave you.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION - INDIANS CORPORATE OFFICES - DAY

Unlike the A's, this is a franchise that can spend actual money on players, and on nice lobby furniture, which is where Billy sits, staring at a classic baseball photo that hangs in the lobby.

ASSISTANT

Mr. Beane? Mark's ready to see you now.

OMITTED

INT. MARK SHAPIRO'S OFFICE - CLEVELAND - DAY

Billy's counterpart in Cleveland--Indians General Manager MARK SHAPIRO--35 and about three weeks into the job--sits behind his desk in a tie and shirt sleeves like Billy.

Joining them in the room are FOUR OTHERS, including PETER BRAND.

SHAPIRO

So Billy, what are you looking for?

BILLY

50 million in additional payroll.

SHAPIRO

Try Giambi.

BILLY

Ouch.

SHAPIRO

120 million.

BILLY

I should've been a hitter.

SHAPIRO

Where's Steve in all this?

BILLY

Supportive. Excited about rebuilding the team.

SHAPIRO

Bonds is available.

BILLY

Yeah, how do I afford the rest of the field?

SHAPIRO

So what are you looking for? I want to help out.

BILLY

I guess you've touched the bottom of the sports industry when your opponent is offering you--

SHAPIRO

Billy--

BILLY

I need a lefty reliever and I want Ricardo Rincon.

SHAPIRO

Not going to happen.

BILLY

Not even a discussion?

SHAPIRO

Come on Billy, even if you could afford him we're not about to let him go.

BILLY

Why's that? You've got the Venezuelan kid in North Carolina you're bringing up.

SHAPIRO

We dished him to Detroit. Keep up.

BILLY

Well there goes my other idea.

SHAPIRO
What else you thinking Billy?

BILLY
You have any outfielders I should be
looking at?

SHAPIRO
To replace Damon?

BILLY
Yeah.

SHAPIRO
That's a tough one Billy.

BILLY
Yeah. Who do you got?

SHAPIRO
The guys you might be able to afford?
Hollins, Garcia... Coste.

BILLY
Tell me about Garcia.

SHAPIRO
To replace Damon?!

BILLY
Is he healthy?

SHAPIRO
He had a back thing, some minor surgery,
but he's okay. Petey?

PETEY
He'll be good by Spring Training.

BILLY
He'll do. I can give you Guthrie for him
if you kick in some cash.

SHAPIRO
Mark Guthrie?

As Shapiro and gang review Guthrie's stats, Billy notices
Peter whispering to the guy next to him.

Shapiro looks around the room at the guys who don't
object.

SHAPIRO
How much are you thinking?

BILLY

200 K.

BRUCE approaches Shapiro and whispers and steps away.

SHAPIRO

Sorry about that. So... Garcia is going to be a no. What else are you thinking about?

BILLY

Let's make it work, I'll go straight up with you, Garcia for Guthrie, no kicker.

Shapiro looks to Bruce, Peter is covering his mouth with his hand but we can just barely hear him whisper the word 'no'. Bruce subtly shakes his head to Mark.

SHAPIRO

Sorry Billy, who else you interested in?

INT. INDIANS CORPORATE OFFICES - DAY

Peter sits at his cubicle absorbed in his computer until he notices Billy hovering over him.

BILLY

Hey.

PETER

Hi.

BILLY

Who are you?

PETER

My name is Peter Brand.

BILLY

What do you do?

PETER

I'm special assistant to Mark Shapiro.

BILLY

So what do you do?
(pointing at co-
worker)

Hey, mind your own business.
(he does)

What do you do?

PETER

Mostly player evaluation right now.

BILLY
Why does Mark listen to you?

PETER
Actually he rarely does.

BILLY
He just did.

PETER
I don't think he was really listening to me in there per se.

BILLY
Really?

PETER
Yeah, I think he was listening to Bruce.

BILLY
Who are you?

PETER
Peter Brand.

BILLY
I don't give a rat's ass about your name.

Nothing from Peter.

BILLY
What happened in there?

PETER
I'm not sure what you're asking me.

BILLY
What did you tell Butch?

PETER
Huh? Oh Bruce? I told him I like Garcia.

BILLY
(beat)
Why?

PETER
(beat)
Probably for the same reasons you do.

BILLY
Meaning what?

PETER

He's undervalued. You were smart to go after him.

BILLY

(long beat)

What makes him undervalued?

Peter is stuck. He can't bring himself to say anything. After a long beat Billy nods to him in a way that seems to say, 'I understand, it's okay'.

BILLY

Come on.

Billy makes a strong gesture indicating Peter to follow. Which he does. They exit the offices into

INT. A VAST PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

BILLY

Where you from Peter?

PETER

Maryland.

BILLY

Where did you go to school?

PETER

Yale.

BILLY

I hate Yale.

PETER

Why?

BILLY

Kid from Yale once blocked a trade I was trying to make. What'd you study?

PETER

Economics.

BILLY

What are you doing in baseball?

PETER

I love baseball.

BILLY

I'm just curious. Why were you so cagey in there?

PETER

I work for a different team.

BILLY

I know, but I'm the first person in baseball who's ever talked to you this long. Right? Why is Garcia undervalued?

PETER

Okay, truthfully, it might not be so easy to explain.

BILLY

Really? Why's that Peter?

PETER

We might not see the game the same way.

BILLY

Oh really? What do you mean by that?

PETER

You've spent your life in baseball and I don't have a very traditional view of the game.

BILLY

Hey Pete, just say it. I'm not about to beat you up. Say what you've always wanted to say to a GM.

PETER

Baseball thinking is medieval. It's stuck in the Dark Ages. I have a more scientific view of the game.

BILLY

Keep going, Peter.

PETER

There is an epidemic failure within the game to understand what's really happening. And it leads people who run major league teams to misjudge their players and mismanage their teams. They're still asking the wrong questions. People who run baseball teams still think in terms of buying players. Sorry to say that.

BILLY

Peter, don't apologize for what you believe.

PETER

The goal shouldn't be to buy players, what you want to buy is wins. To buy wins, you buy runs. You're trying to replace Johnny Damon. The Red Sox look at Johnny Damon and they see a star worth seven point five million a year. When I look at Johnny Damon, I see an imperfect understanding of where runs come from.

SUDDEN CUT TO:

ARCHIVAL VIDEO: The back of Johnny Damon's A's jersey as he walks to the plate to adoring Oakland fans.

PETER V/O

His batting average is ignorable. What matters is his on base percentage-

DAMON swings at the first pitch and knocks it into left field for a single. He leads off first--

PETER V/O

- which in 2001 was .324. That's 10 points lower than league average, and 17 points lower than Garcia's.

On the next pitch, DAMON takes off for second--

PETER V/O

True, he stole some bases. But attempted steals in general have to succeed 70% of the time before they even start to contribute to run totals. In 2001 he cost you runs.

DAMON's tagged out at second.

BACK TO THE GARAGE

PETER

He's got a good glove. He's a decent leadoff hitter. He steals bases. But he's not worth the seven point five million Boston is paying him. You're lucky to have him off your payroll, it opens all kinds of interesting possibilities.

BILLY

You read Bill James, Pete?

PETER

Yes. These ideas and this approach to the game aren't all new. In fact, some of them have been around for two decades.

BILLY

If this approach has been around for so long, why isn't anybody in baseball doing them?

PETER

That's a much more difficult question than how to win baseball games. Once you begin to pull at that string, your understanding of the world might begin to unravel.

The elevator door closes.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Billy's in coach, staring at the night through the window, lost in thought.

INT. HOUSE - SAN DIEGO - DAY - 1980

Billy's mother and father escort Martinez and Mets Head Scout Roger Jongewaard into the kitchen.

MOTHER

Billy? They're here.

JONGEWAARD

Billy... Good to see you again. Obviously you're a very special player. We'd like to compliment you on your high school career, and we're looking forward to you being a part of the Mets family.

Jongewaard sits at the kitchen table, speaking more to Billy's parents than Billy himself --

JONGEWAARD

There's good -- and there's premium. Your son is premium. He has it all -- power, speed, the arm. The Look -- and I'm never wrong about that. Which is why this is a premium number.

He sets a contract on the table. Clipped to its top-sheet is a check. On its left-hand corner is the Mets insignia; on the right, the amount: \$125,000. They all see it. A lot of money in 1980. Silence. Then --

MOTHER

Billy's been offered a scholarship to Stanford.

JONGEWAARD

I know. And that's a great accomplishment. I'm sure you're very proud of him.

MOTHER

So he can accept that, go there, and then -
-

Jongewaard is already shaking his head no.

JONGEWAARD

I understand how important college is. I do. But what I can't do is burn a second first-round draft pick on someone who can't play for four years -- no matter how good he is. Four years is ample time for someone to get hurt. It happens all the time. So, no. I'm sorry. It has to be one or the other. To postpone four years is four years he could be in big leagues. The sooner he gets there the sooner he can reap the benefits.

Stanford or The Money. Young Billy regards the check, and then his parents. He really doesn't know what to do.

JONGEWAARD

We're going to give him a different kind of education. This won't be his life's career, it'll be his first career. He's going to be a young guy in the business world when his baseball career is done. He'll still have his whole life ahead of him.

FATHER

It's your decision, Billy. Whatever you decide is fine with us.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BILLY's looking out his window while holding his cordless phone. He's dialed the numbers in and just has to hit the green button.

And now he does.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

PETER's ringing cell phone wakes him up and he answers it.

PETER
Hello?

BILLY
It's Billy Beane.

PETER
What time is it?

BILLY
I don't care. Would you have drafted me
in the first round?

PETER
What?

BILLY
After I left you ran me through your
computer, right? Would you have drafted
me in the first round?

PETER
You were a good baseball player.

BILLY
Would you have drafted me in the first
round?

PETER
(pause)
I'd have drafted you in the ninth round.
No signing bonus. You'd have passed and
gone to Stanford.

BILLY
Pack your suitcases.

PETER
Why?

BILLY
I just bought you from the Cleveland
Indians.

BILLY hangs up the phone. He sits all alone for a moment.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - MORNING

MONTAGE: Peter pulls into the parking lot for his first day of work, takes in the sight of the colossal, concrete relic that is the Oakland Coliseum. He's just in time to see a paint roller on a long pole laying a white stripe down the middle of Jason Giambi's giant portrait.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

PETER's completely converted the place. The dry erase boards are covered with undecipherable equations, algorithms and numbers and PETER, who's pretty tired now after not a lot of sleep, is in the middle of this.

This is what BILLY sees when he walks into the doorway, where he slows down, stops and looks around blankly.

BILLY

Good evening.

PETER

Good evening.

BILLY

I asked you to do three.

PETER

Yes.

BILLY

To evaluate three available players.

PETER

Yeah.

BILLY

And how many did you do?

PETER

47.

BILLY

Okay--

PETER

51, I don't know why I lied just then.

BILLY

Talk me through the wall.

PETER gets up and gives BILLY a tour of the dry erase boards.

PETER

This is the American League West. This year we're going to need to win between 97 and 101 games to make the post season. Here's the number of runs we'll need to score in order to win those games and here's the number of runs we can allow.

BILLY
Let's make sure we're on the same page.

PETER
Okay.

BILLY
We're going to re-think baseball.

PETER
Yes.

BILLY
Look for an inefficiencies in statistics.

PETER
Examine the ways that runs are scored and prevented.

BILLY
Exploit the fact that unspectacular runs are just as valuable as 450-foot bombs.

PETER
Unspectacular runs are more valuable.

BILLY
Why?

PETER/BILLY
(simultaneously)
Because they cost less.

BILLY
We believe there's a river that hasn't been fished.

PETER
We know it for sure.

BILLY
And because players have been overlooked because they don't rise to the standards of traditional baseball thinking, we believe that in this river, there are fish...fish who--
(BILLY lost it)
Help me with--

PETER
Forget the fish. In this room is every available player at every level of professional baseball, and somewhere in that group are 25 players that everyone has else has thrown out.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

An island of misfit toys. In this room is a championship team that we can afford.

BILLY

Yes. But let me ask you this. If our theory is right--

PETER

Math isn't a theory.

BILLY

If it's right--

PETER

It's right.

BILLY

It sounds right.

PETER

It is right.

BILLY

If math isn't a theory--

PETER

It isn't.

BILLY

I'm gonna punch you in the kidneys if you don't let me finish a sentence.

PETER

Sorry.

BILLY

If this is right, why isn't everybody doing it? In fact, why isn't anybody doing it?

PETER

Somebody once said, "It's not what you don't know that worries me it's what you know for sure that's got me scared." In the mid-19th Century in Budapest there was an incredibly high instance of mothers dying shortly after childbirth from a disease called puerperal fever. 35%.

BILLY

Make this story less boring as soon as you can.

PETER

A doctor named Semmelweiss showed that if the attending physicians and nurses sterilized their hands before delivery, the mortality rate dropped to 1%.

BILLY

And he was vilified?

PETER

He was institutionalized. For suggesting that washing your hands before putting them inside someone else's body was a good idea. High functioning people can live under the spell of an inexplicable mental lapse when they think as a group. Why isn't anybody else doing it? Because they don't think guys who look like you are what win baseball games. They know it for sure.

BILLY

(pause)

Alright, let's find our team.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO ROOM - DAY

Peter schleps his computer stuff. Sets up, plugs in, fires up. Turns an unused room into a war room with dry erase boards and computers. He installs software in the video room computer, works on a computer in his room, prints two pages of data and reviews.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Peter enters and hands the two pages to Billy. Billy reviews, stands, then slowly paces as he reads. Peter stands and watches.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

From somewhere in the outfield, we have a wide view of the darkened stadium and Billy's office, which, unlike the others, is illuminated. We can just discern Billy's silhouette as he continues to slowly pace and study.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

Billy and Peter walk down a long, subterranean corridor. Peter carries a laptop and a slim notebook.

BILLY
Nervous?

PETER
No??

BILLY
Huh. Interesting.

Peter doesn't know what to make of *that*.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SCOUTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As they near the scouting room, Billy sees ART HOWE waiting for him outside it.

BILLY
Hey, Art.

ART
Can I talk to you a second before you get started.

BILLY
I got a lot to do.

ART
I know.

Whatever it is, Billy knows it can't be as dire as his other problems, but also knows that to ignore Art would be to insult him.

He gestures for Peter to go into the scouting room alone. He'd rather not, but does. The scouts, assuming perhaps he's there to make coffee, ignore him. He finds a place to sit in a corner.

ART
Who's the kid?

BILLY
That's Peter.

ART
I can't manage this team under a one-year contract.

BILLY
Sure you can.

ART

No I can't.

BILLY

I've got to put a team on the field, then I'll deal with your contract.

ART

How about you deal with the manager's contract and *then* put a team on the field?

BILLY

At the moment, if a ground ball is hit to first base, nobody's going to be there to stop it from rolling.

ART

I have to tell you it's not easy doing what I do under the cloud of a one-year contract.

BILLY

I know. I been there.

ART

I know you have. And a 1-year contract says the same thing to a manager as it does to a player: There's not a lot of faith there. Which is strange after a 102-win season.

BILLY

If you lose the last one of the season nobody gives a shit about the others.

ART

It's on me now?

BILLY

It's on me, Art!

(beat)

And the kid's the new assistant general manager.

ART

(pause)

What the fuck are you about to do?

BILLY doesn't answer the question, just walks into the-

INT. SCOUTING ROOM - DAY

-and ignoring Peter - who has tried to inconspicuously plant himself in a corner - pulls up a chair to receive his scouts' report - which Grady, as always, will lead. Art wanders off.

GRADY

How did it go in Cleveland?

BILLY

It was cold.

The news bothers no one.

GRADY

Let's get after our relief pitching problem.

BILLY

We got Chad Bradford. Right-hander.

Few, if any of them, have heard of Bradford and begin leafing through their printouts and notes.

GRADY

Submariner?

BILLY

That's the one. Technically an underhander.

GRADY

What's his velocity?

BILLY

Unimpressive.

ARTIE

About 85.

GRADY

Does he have a good breaking ball?

BILLY

Doesn't have one.

GRADY

Why do you like this guy?

BILLY

Well, he gets people out.

ARTIE

The left-hander hitters get a really good look at him.

GRADY

He's down there. He's down there real low, too.

BILLY

Let's move on.

The scouts aren't sure what to say, and so say nothing. Eventually -

GRADY

Well, we, I think, have fared better. We have some ideas for what to do about Giambi.

BILLY

Knock me down.

GRADY

We trade power for speed. A rabbit for a gorilla - We go for an overachiever. A big heart in the last year his contract. Tend to play hard. We usually get a pretty good year out of them. Make up for some of the offense we lost.

(puts more names up)

Or the other option. Just a thought. We go for a high-maintenance guy. A guy that's a little difficult but talented. A guy like Milton Bradley. Well, not like Milton. Milton himself. Which do you want to talk about first?

BILLY

None of them.

Grady looks like a man who can't take much more.

BILLY

You're still looking to replace him; you're just saying it another way.

BARRY

We got some trades here.

BILLY

We can't do it. What we can do is recreate his value to us in the aggregate.

GRADY

The (what) -

BILLY

Giambi's on-base percentage was .477.
 Damon's was .324. And Olmeda's - bless
 his heart - was .291. Add that up and
 you get -

He points to Peter.

PETER

You want me to speak?

BILLY

When I point at you, yes.

PETER

Ten-ninety-two.

BILLY

Divided by three -

PETER

Three-sixty-four.

BILLY

That's what we're looking for. And
 that's what we'll find. Three players
 whose average OBP is -

PETER

Three-sixty-four.

ARTIE

That doesn't come out right.

BILLY

You gotta carry the one.

ARTIE

Still don't look right.

BILLY

It's right.

The others aren't sure what confuses them more - the
 logic, or the guy who shouldn't be in this room.

GRADY

Billy?

BILLY

Yes.

GRADY

Who's that?

BILLY

That's Peter.

And that's all he's going to tell them about Peter.

GRADY

I don't know how to say this delicately - but does - Peter - need to be here?

BILLY

Yes.

POLONI

What's with this on base percentage obsession? Is that Bill James bullshit?

BILLY

You can call it Billy Beane bullshit for all I care.

Billy takes a Marks-A-Lot, jots down three names on strips, and approaches the board.

BILLY

So here's who we want. One.

He puts the first strip up. It reads: JEREMY GIAMBI.

BILLY

Jason's little brother Jeremy.

BARRY

He never comes home from the games.

POLONI

Billy, if I may, he's had his problems on the field -- not to mention his problems off the field -- not to mention he's getting a little thick around the middle -- there's the stuff with the weed. He's at strip joints...

GRADY

This guy could start the year with an agent and end up with a parole officer for Christ's sake.

BILLY

His on-base percentage is all we're looking at now and he gets on base an awful lot for someone who only costs \$285,000 a year.

GEORGE

He can't catch a ball in the outfield.
I've seen him lose a ball in the
moonlight.

Billy puts up another name: DAVID JUSTICE.

BILLY

David Justice.

GRADY

Ten years ago he was a big name. He's
going to really help our season tickets
at the beginning of the year. But by
June he's not going to be hitting his
weight.

PITTARO

He's 36!

ARTIE

His legs are gone. He's a defensive
liability. I question whether the bat
speed is still there.

BARRY

Steinbrenner is so pissed at his decline
he's willing to eat up half his contract
to get rid of him.

BILLY

That's good.

HOPKINS

He's a fossil. With all due respect,
bringing these three guys aboard is like
putting bubble gum on a flat tire.

GRADY

And why do we want to be the ones to bail
Justice out of his contract?

Billy points at PETER --

PETER

He gets on base.

GRADY

I got 37 free agents who are better than
those guys.

BILLY

Scott Hatteberg.

POTE

Who?

BILLY

Exactly. Sounds like an Oakland A already. Yes, he's got a little damage in his elbow.

GRADY

Some damage? He can't throw.

BILLY

We're not interested in him for his arm anymore than we wanted Giambi for his.

GRADY

Wait, you're talkin' about Hatteberg at first?

BILLY

Yes.

HOPKINS

He's a career .260 hitter and the good part of his career is over.

BILLY

I say it's just starting.

PITTARO

Well, Billy, you'll like the sound of this... I hear Boston wants to cut him and no one wants to pick him up.

BILLY

That's good news for us. He's cheap.

GRADY

Let me understand this. At first base you want a guy who's been cut from half of the minor league teams in the country due to irreparable nerve damage?

BILLY

He can't hit and he can't field, but what can he do?

(beat)

Look at the piece of paper or I'm going to point at Peter.

The SCOUTS consult their spreadsheets and then answer half-heartedly--

SCOUTS
 (half-heartedly)
 He can get--

BILLY
 He can get on base.

POLONI
 Alright, so he walks a lot.

BILLY
 He gets on base a lot, Rocco. Do I care
 if it's a walk or a hit?

PETER
 You do not.

POLONI
 These three players, by your own
 admission, are defective in one way or
 another.

BILLY
 Yeah.

GRADY
 You want to replace Jason Giambi with not
 one but three defective players?

BILLY
 You got it.

GRADY
 Billy, we've all been busting our asses
 the last six and a half weeks to make
 this a better ball--

BILLY
 (cutting him off)
 Grady, it's not a discussion.

POTE
 I think we're all losing sight of the
 fact that you're the general manager.
 You only have to answer to ownership and
 God.

BILLY
 I didn't know God followed baseball.

POTE
 I hope he does.

Some of the scouts look over in Peter's direction, no doubt wondering if he's had something to do with their general manager's ideas.

WASHINGTON

Billy, I just don't see it.

BILLY

That's okay, Wash. We won't be victimized by what we see anymore.

WASHINGTON

I understand what you're saying about their averages, but there's something you're forgetting. None of them plays first base.

BILLY

I haven't forgotten that, Wash. One of them is going to have to learn.

WASHINGTON

Learn.

BILLY

You're going to have to teach him.

WASHINGTON

Teach.

BILLY

Instruct.

WASHINGTON

Which one?

EXT/INT. TACOMA HOUSE - NIGHT

A Christmas tree. Four stockings hang from the mantle. The phone rings. SCOTT HATTEBERG gets up. He looks at it. Looks at his wife. Picks it up.

SCOTT

Hello?

BILLY (VO)

Scott?

SCOTT

Yes?

BILLY (VO)

It's Billy Beane. Oakland A's.

SCOTT was expecting that it would be someone else...

SCOTT
Yes?

BILLY (VO)
Can we talk?

SCOTT
Yes.

BILLY (VO)
You want to invite me in?

SCOTT
What?

BILLY (VO)
I'm outside. I can see you in the window.

SCOTT goes to the window and cups his hands against the glass to see outside.

ELIZABETH
Honey?

Two silhouettes are standing on the edge of the fairway. One of them waves.

INT. SCOTT HATTEBERG'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

ELIZABETH is putting out some cookies shaped like stars and bells for the late-night guests: BILLY and RON WASHINGTON.

BILLY
Thank you, ma'am.

WASHINGTON
Thank you, ma'am.

She leaves her husband with the two men but listens in on their conversation from the next room, nibbling on a cookie of her own.

BILLY
You've played catcher your whole life?

SCOTT
Since I was 8.

BILLY produces a baseball from his windbreaker and hands it to SCOTT. SCOTT can only manage to grip the baseball like a claw. Washington looks to heaven.

BILLY
How's the elbow?

SCOTT
 Good. Real good. It's great.
 (fuck it)
 I can't throw at all.

BILLY
 Yeah, don't worry about it. You've thrown
 your last baseball from behind the plate.
 I want you at first.

SCOTT is so thrown by this that all he can do is stare at
 BILLY. Then at WASHINGTON, who's shrug tells SCOTT "This
 wasn't my idea."

SCOTT
 I've only ever played catcher.

BILLY
 You're not a catcher anymore. If you
 were, then mine wouldn't have been the
 only call you got when your contract
 expired at midnight.

SCOTT
 I appreciate it but--

BILLY
 You're welcome.

SCOTT
 You see--

BILLY
 You don't know how to play first base.

SCOTT
 That's right.

BILLY
 It's not that hard. Tell him, Wash.

WASHINGTON
It's incredibly hard!

BILLY
 Anything worth doing is. Wash is gonna
 teach you.

SCOTT
 Wait a minute, what about--

BILLY
 Jason's gone, Scott.

SCOTT
I'm taking Giambi's spot at first? What about the fans?

WASHINGTON
Yeah, maybe I can teach one of them.

BILLY
The fans don't run--
(to WASHINGTON)
--good one--
(back to SCOTT)
--the fans don't run my ball club.

SCOTT
They're gonna hate me.

WASHINGTON
(motioning to BILLY)
No, they're gonna hate him.

BILLY
The fans love me.

WASHINGTON
Okay.

HATTEBERG's YOUNG DAUGHTER comes down the staircase in her pajamas, having just woken up in the middle of the night.

BILLY
Hello.

HATTEBERG'S DAUGHTER
Hi.

SCOTT
That's our youngest daughter.

BILLY
Great.

SCOTT
Do you have kids?

BILLY doesn't like to share personal lives with the players but he covers well--

BILLY
--yeah, I have a daughter.

BILLY takes a contract out of his windbreaker and sets it on the table next to the cookies.

BILLY

This is a contract for you to play baseball with the Oakland A's. A copy's on its way to your agent. Discuss it with your wife and let us know.

(They get up and

Billy calls off)

Thanks for the cookies, ma'am.

We see ELIZABETH with tears running down her face...then go back to the living room--

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

You're welcome.

BILLY

(on his way out)

Merry Christmas.

EXT./INT. SAN DIEGO - PRESENT DAY

The door of a suburban house opens, revealing a WOMAN.

BILLY

Hi.

SHARON

Hi, Billy.

She pulls the door open so he can come in. As he does -

BILLY

She home?

SHARON

She's out, but she'll be home soon.

INT. SAN DIEGO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Billy enters his ex-wife Sharon's house, her husband ALAN walks in, talking on the phone.

ALAN

(on phone)

Yeah, no, don't worry about it sweetie.
Here's mom.

Alan hands Sharon the phone.

BILLY

Hey Alan.

ALAN

Come on in have a seat. Want some coconut water? It's really refreshing.

BILLY
I'm all set, thanks.

ALAN
What are you benching now?

BILLY
I don't keep count.

ALAN
Well, whatever it is, it's working. You look good.

They sit on the couch next to a Christmas tree.

ALAN
I haven't got to see you since the playoffs in New York. That was heartbreaking, Billy. We were rooting for you.

BILLY
(beat)
Yep.

ALAN
You know what I say?

BILLY
Fuck 'em.
(beat)
I'm sorry Alan, what do you say?

ALAN
No, I just wanted to say that a lot of teams don't get that far, and to make it that far is a really big accomplishment.

Sharon gets off the phone and joins them.

BILLY
(to Sharon)
So how is she?

SHARON
She's great. Be here in a minute. How's the team shaping up?

BILLY
New beginnings. Blue horizons.

ALAN
I read that you lost two players. Damon and -

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)
 (mispronounces)
 Ghee-ambi?

SHARON
 Giambi. Wow, that's tough. That's really tough.

BILLY
 And Isringhausen.

ALAN
 Sounds tough.

BILLY
 So where is she?

ALAN
 I just talked to her on her cell. She's just coming up the hill, she's two minutes away.

BILLY
 You bought her a cell phone?

SHARON
 Yeah.

BILLY
 At 12?

ALAN
 Just for emergencies. I'm sorry, we should have consulted you for that decision-

BILLY
 It's probably a good idea.

SHARON
 But actually I called you -

The front door opens. It's Billy's daughter Casey - a pre-teen indie-rock girl - and not a moment too soon. He's up quickly to give her a hug and to get out of here.

BILLY
 Let's go shopping.

INT. GUITAR CENTER - LA MESA - DAY

Billy and Casey peruse guitars.

BILLY
 You want one with nylon strings, right?

CASEY
I like the red ones.

BILLY
How about this?

CASEY
Yeah, that's cool.

BILLY
Let's try it out over here.

They take a seat. Casey easily fingers through a very tough spray of notes.

BILLY
(genuinely impressed)
Casey.

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
You got good.

CASEY
I've just been playing a lot.

BILLY
That's... that's not the way most 12 year olds play.

CASEY
Alan thinks I should have a better teacher.

BILLY
Who's Alan?

CASEY looks at him --

BILLY
Oh, yeah. Mom's Alan. What's wrong with the teacher you have now?

CASEY
Alan thinks I should be working more on technique so I don't learn bad habits.

BILLY
Well, you seem to be doing just fine to me. Do you like playing?

CASEY
I love it.

BILLY
That's so great. I'm so happy for you.
The most important thing in life is to
find something you love and do it well.
Do you like your teacher?

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
Okay, I'll talk to Mom and Alan. Do you
like that guitar?

CASEY
Yes!

BILLY
That the one?

CASEY
Yeah, I think so.

BILLY
Let's get it. Let's get it now.

CASEY
Really?

BILLY
Merry Christmas.

CUT TO:

EXT. DODGER STADIUM

LEGEND: 1984

BILLY's at the plate, a batting helmet snug around his
head, wearing a METS uniform, as a 97 mph fastball buzzes
by him and the UMPIRE calls--

UMPIRE
Striiike!

BILLY steps out of the box, taps the dirt off his cleats
and steps back in.

A younger-looking SHARON is sitting in field level seats,
looking on nervously and trying not to show it.

BILLY half-swings at the breaking ball, holding his swing
at the last minute.

The CATCHER and PLATE UMPIRE both point down to first base for the call and the FIRST BASE UMPIRE makes a fist in the air, indicating that Billy swung.

UMPIRE

Striiike!

And Billy's out.

SHARON holds her head in her hands and BILLY walks back to the dugout, passing a player with "STRAWBERRY" on his back.

And now the quick scenes of failure become staccato--

OMITTED

EXT. TIDEWATER

LEGEND: 1985

BILLY playing for minor league Tidewater and he grounds out and

CUT TO:

EXT. TOLEDO

LEGEND: 1986

BILLY playing for minor League Toledo. He swings and pops up lamely to the PITCHER, throwing his bat down in frustration as he jogs hopelessly to first and we

ANNOUNCER V/O

...Billy Beane, who's quickly establishing a new record for breaking bats, bat racks and water coolers, was actually a much-touted first round pick of the New York Mets in 1980 but the majors have not been kind to him with only 18 plate appearances in two years and this won't doing anything to help him as...

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM

LEGEND: 1986

BILLY playing for the Minnesota Twins where he comes back into the dug out and throws his batting helmet down and

CUT TO:

EXT. PORTLAND

LEGEND: 1987

BILLY playing for minor league Portland and a water cooler goes flying across the dugout and

CUT TO:

EXT. MINNESOTA

LEGEND: 1987

ANNOUNCER V/O

...one of two first round picks in 1980 along with Daryl Strawberry, Beane was brought up last year and sent back down after 8 at-bats so here's a second chance as Smith delivers...

BILLY playing for the Minnesota Twins. He swings hard at a pitch and strikes out and we

CUT TO:

EXT. DETROIT

LEGEND: 1988

BILLY playing for the Detroit Tigers and the bat rack gets heaved across the field and

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT

LEGEND: 1989

ANNOUNCER V/O

...If you're a real baseball fan with a good memory you might remember that Billy Beane was taken in the first round of the amateur draft back in 1980, separated from All-Star outfielder Daryl Strawberry by only 14 picks, so it just goes to show...

BILLY in an A's uniform. He stands and watches a called third strike sail past him.

UMPIRE

Strike!

Billy breaks the bat over his thigh and drops the pieces on the plate. He begins to walk off.

UMPIRE

Hey Billy, clean up after yourself.

Billy hears him but continues to walk off.

TO BE WRITTEN: THE UMP TOSSES BILLY FROM THE GAME.

BILLY looks up at SHARON in the seats behind the dugout but the two can't quite meet each other's eyes.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

In the subterranean video room - an even less elegant place than the rest of the stadium - someone has put up a scraggly Christmas tree. There, Peter watches a tape of a minor leaguer on the Lowell Spinners, a Single-A Boston affiliate. Billy comes in.

PETER

How'd it go?

BILLY

How'd what go?

PETER

Hatteberg.

BILLY

He can barely hold a baseball. But he's our guy now.

Billy sits.

BILLY

Who's that?

PETER

That is Kevin Youkilis. This is the guy we want more than anyone else in the world.

Billy watches the guy on the screen. He's an overweight right-handed batter with a peculiar stance.

PETER

He can't run, throw or field. But he walks more than anyone in baseball except Barry Bonds. Take out intentional walks and it's more than Bonds. He's the Greek God of Walks.

On the TV, the batter takes another pitch just off the edge of the strike zone.

PETER

I tried to get Shapiro to draft him last June. He said he waddled like a duck. Boston took him. Boston won't let him go yet. They're going to wait and see.

They watch him lay off a pitch an inch outside the strike zone. Peter gives Billy a look that says, You see that?

PETER

You all right, Billy?

GRADY O/S

Billy?

Grady has appeared behind them at the door.

GRADY

Can we talk a minute?

BILLY

Yeah.

(to Peter)

Yeah.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grady closes the video room door for privacy. The only other person in sight is manager Art Howe, in his office in street clothes. He shuts his windowed door so Grady and Billy can talk in confidence.

GRADY

Your boy and I had a talk while you were in Tacoma. I didn't like much of what I heard.

BILLY

No?

GRADY

No. You got a kid in there with a Yale economics degree and a scout out here with 29 years baseball experience and you're listening to the wrong one.

BILLY

I don't listen to anyone, you know that.

GRADY

This isn't a joke.

BILLY

I'm not joking.

GRADY

This isn't how you run a ball club, with a computer. You know that. You're a baseball man. There are intangibles that only a scout can see in a player that you're not going to pick up with just numbers, with someone who doesn't play the game, who knows nothing about the game but how to feed numbers into a computer.

BILLY

That's what we're doing. That's exactly what we're doing.

GRADY

If this is what baseball is, if it's not Kirk Gibson going up to the plate on two bad legs because the manager felt in his heart that he had one swing left in that body... a computer wouldn't do that. They would have had him sitting up in the stands.

BILLY

A computer doesn't romanticize the sport. Leave that for the fans.

GRADY

Well, romance and the fans, it's called a love affair with the game and it's been going on for one hundred and fifty years.

BILLY

I don't want to hurt you love affair with the game. Just because we've been doing it one way for a hundred and fifty years doesn't mean we've been doing it right. You have any idea how long people thought the sun revolved around the earth? To your eyes it looks like that's what's happening.

GRADY

You're saying everybody's been wrong? Everybody?

Beat.

GRADY

Are you saying everybody's been wrong?

BILLY

Yes. Maybe.
(beat)

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Yes, and I've thought so my whole life.
And now we're gonna see if I'm--

GRADY

--we're gonna see if you're right?! This is about you and your shit? Some scouts from 20 years ago called it wrong, okay? They thought you were a ballplayer and you weren't. As you know, it happens. Don't take it out on--

BILLY

I'm not--taking it out on--

GRADY

I'm trying to help, okay, I'm saying--

BILLY

No, you're not saying anything to me right now.

(beat)

Grady, you don't have special powers. You don't have the ability to look at a guy and "just know" because you're a scout with special powers. I've watched you sit at kitchen tables for years and tell the parents of a 17 year old kid, "Trust me, when I know, I know, and when it comes to your son, I know" and you don't. We're shopping in a new store--full of complicated statistical analysis and equations and I get that it turns your world upside down but on base percentage--our best chance to score on our budget isn't getting a 6'4" Adonis to the plate, it's getting a 5'10" washout who's already at first base.

GRADY

(pause)

May I speak?

BILLY

Yes.

GRADY

Major League Baseball and its fans will be happy to hand you and Google Boy your heads if you keep doing what you're doing here, I don't give a shit about friendship this situation or the past. Major League Baseball thinks the way I think. You're not gonna win. And I'll give you a nickel's worth of free advice.

(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

You're making it impossible for yourself to get another job once Schott fires you after this catastrophic season you're setting us all up for and you're gonna have to explain to your wife and your kid why you're working at Dick's Sporting Goods.

BILLY

I'm not gonna fire you, Grady.

GRADY

Go fuck yourself, Billy.

BILLY

Well now maybe.

GRADY takes off.

BILLY stands there a moment. On his way out, passing Art's windowed office, he exchanges a look with the manager. Billy takes a short walk to where a few of his scouts are standing around an arcade console. To the youngest one -

BILLY

Eric. You never even played high school ball, right?

The young scout shakes his head, embarrassed.

BILLY

Grady's gone. You're the new Head Scout.

Billy turns away and is headed back to the video room. Pokes his head in.

BILLY

Don't try to explain things to scouts. They're not programmed to get it. It's just us.

He leaves. Peter watches the door close, then glances back to the tape as Youkilis takes ball four and waddles down to first base.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHOENIX MUNICIPAL STADIUM - DAY

Team / JumboTron photos are taken of our new A's. It's clear from the photo Billy didn't hire them to sell jeans.

LEGEND: March 2, 2002 - SPRING TRAINING

Billy gives an interview to a SPORTS REPORTER.

SPORTS REPORTER

Billy, will the fans still come out now that you've lost Giambi?

BILLY

I don't know, Graham. Will they listen to your insipid radio show?

INT. LOCKER ROOM - ARIZONA - DAY

MIKE MAGNANTE goes through the effort of putting on his knee-braces. Scott Hatteberg, lacing up, watches him.

EXT. PHOENIX MUNICIPAL STADIUM - DAY

Various stations have been set up at which infielders go through their warm-ups - wind sprints, arm loosening.

Infielders field grounders hit by Art Howe from a fungo.

Billy paces in the foul territory off the first base line. HIS POV: JEREMY GIAMBI missing a fly ball, DAVID JUSTICE looking tired, HATTEBERG missing the scoop.

Art hits another grounder which Hatteberg botches again. Art looks at Billy a good long beat, then hits to another infielder.

Peter walks up to Billy, just as -

A poke off the bat sends Jeremy Giambi scrambling back like a postman trying to escape a mad dog. The ball lands behind him.

BILLY

Well, we didn't pay him for his defense.

Art and Washington hit grounders to Carlos Pena and Scott Hatteberg. Hatteberg miraculously gets his mitt on it.

BILLY

That's the way, Hatte. Pickin' Machine.

Behind a portable backstop, a guy with a radar gun gets ready to clock a trio of relievers. Mike Magnante has his pant legs pulled up to adjust knee-braces. Magnante gets up and begins throwing, increasing his velocity each time.

BILLY

None of those broke 85.

They watch the second pitcher - the gentle-faced kid from the locker room - Chad Bradford - step up.

BILLY

Chad I have high hopes for.

Bradford overthrows his first submarine hand-scraping-the-ground pitch, and the ball sails wide of the catcher. Somebody ducks. Art Howe glances with a long-suffering look to Billy.

BILLY

It just got away from him.

They watch David Justice do wind sprints.

BILLY

He's still got it.

Then Justice stops, winded.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - ARIZONA - LATER

As the players shower and change into street clothes, Art, Billy and Washington discuss Hatteberg, who knows they're discussing him.

BILLY

It's the first day of week one. There's nothing to judge yet.

ART

I can judge it and so can you. First base is the moon to him.

BILLY

It wasn't to Giambi? He's the worst first baseman in baseball. What do you think of him, Wash?

WASHINGTON

The nicest way I can put it is, he lacks confidence.

BILLY

Work with him Wash.

WASHINGTON

I'll do that, Billy, but we've got Pena who can play first. And he's looking pretty good out there.

BILLY

I want to make it work with Hatte, Wash.

As Washington crosses the locker room to lie to Scott about how much progress he's making, he passes Magnante taking off his knee braces, and Chad Bradford sitting at his locker with a Bible in his lap.

ART

Not to mention we already have a first baseman.

BILLY

A rookie first baseman. It's not the same.

ART

Number 11 on the Top 100 Prospects list.

BILLY

Lists aren't baseball.

ART

Catchers at first base aren't baseball. Who's idea was this? Peter's?

BILLY

Hatteberg will be fine, Art.

ART

He will be fine, you're right. Pinch hitting while Pena plays first base.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

A towering portrait of David Justice has been painted where Jason Giambi's used to be.

The hardest diehard fans file under it and through the turnstiles. You know what they look like, dripping A's merchandise, radios and Sharpies, arriving so early the B.P. cage is still being dragged into place.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Indicate the arrival of opening day. INCLUDING: foul lines are painted, broadcast trucks plug in, the network control room fires up, ANNOUNCERS do their prep, Steve Schott lands in his helicopter.

LEGEND: April 1, 2002 - OPENING DAY

IN THE LOCKER ROOM: Players prepare. Magnante puts on his knee braces.

MAGNANTE

Yeah... been doing it for way too long.

HATTEBERG

How long does it take?

MAGNANTE

When I first started these things? It was like a half hour process. Now I can knock these suckers out in 30 seconds, no problem.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - SAME TIME - DAY

Jeremy Giambi's boombox is on again as he and his 24 teammates suit up.

36-year-old David Justice wanders past to a soda machine. Presses a button, but nothing comes out. Tries again.

TEJADA

Is a dollar, mang.

JUSTICE

What?

TEJADA

Always been like that here.

JUSTICE

You're kidding me, right?

TEJADA

Welcome to Oakland.

BILLY and PETER walk through. He walks past CHAD BRADFORD's locker...

CHAD

Excuse me, Mr. Beane.

BILLY

Hey Chad.

CHAD

I hope I'm not disturbing you.

BILLY

You're not, what's up?

CHAD

I wanted to say thanks for the opportunity.

BILLY

It's gonna work out well for both of us.

CHAD
Nobody in the major league ever took me seriously.

BILLY
(pause)
Nobody?

CHAD
Just you, sir.

BILLY
Okay.
(beat)
It's a big day, you won't forget it.

CHAD
I'm going to pray for you and your family.

PETER follows BILLY out of the locker room.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - DAY

SHOTS OF THE GAME ANNOUNCERS. KEN KORACH, GREG PAPA and GLEN KUIPER welcome the fans to opening day, discuss the A's lineup and the problems they face this season.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY

MONTAGE:

It's fifteen minutes before the game as some executives have their picture taken on the field with BILLY.

BILLY
Hey, great to see you. Thanks for coming out. Got a good box? You want a picture? Sure, let me step in there. Great, big smiles now. Big smiles. Know what I like about opening day? Everyone's even. Thank you. You all enjoy the game.

BILLY gets his picture taken with KIDS from an area Little League team. He's laughing and being a good host.

BILLY
Hey, how you guys doing. So you won? That's great. What position are you? How's your fastball? 92? Alright, should we get a pic?

Billy and the Little League team pose with a giant donation check. The announcer then directs everyone's attention to a trophy ceremony in progress. As Chavez receives his Golden Glove award and smiles for the fans...

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD LEVEL SEATS - DAY

BILLY greeting some VIP's in their field-level seats. Throughout this we'll hear bits of talk radio.

HOST #1 (FROM RADIO)

With the departure of head scout Grady Fuson and a roster that I'll describe as unusual, if not eccentric, you have to wonder what Billy Beane is thinking.

BILLY catches a glance of ELIZABETH HATTEBERG taking her seat nearby.

In the family area, Elizabeth introduces herself to Tara.

ELIZABETH

Hi, I'm Elizabeth.

TARA

Hi. Tara. Which is yours?

ELIZABETH

Scott Hatteberg. Catcher - actually first base - actually we don't know. Yours?

TARA

GM.

ELIZABETH

(excitedly)

Mr. Beane?

Tara nods.

ELIZABETH

He's a saint.

TARA

Really?

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY

Art is talking to a JOURNALIST.

JOURNALIST

Are they picking up your option for next year?

A beat.

ART

I brought it up to them during the off-season, and I still do not have my option.

JOURNALIST

Are you frustrated?

ART

I think it's fair to say that.

OMITTED

OMITTED (INCORPORATED INTO 54)

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER

Art Howe stands mid-field as the starting lineup is announced. One by one, players join him on the field.

The honor guard presents the flag as everyone stands for the National Anthem. Afterward, the players scatter to warm up for the game.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD LEVEL - DAY

The CROWD CHEERS as the A's take the field. Billy and Peter are at the edge of the tunnel, watching.

BILLY

Okay, good.
(beat)
I'm heading in.

PETER

Why?

BILLY

I don't watch the games.

PETER

Is this a joke?

BILLY shakes his head "no". PETER gestures "What the fuck are you talking about?"

BILLY

I don't know what you're miming.

PETER

I'm miming "You don't watch the games?!"

BILLY

This is my team. And they've taken the field. They're world class athletes who are fighting for their lives and I stand with them. Except not literally so I need you to text me what Art does.

BILLY walks out onto--

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY's watching the game on TV (**ARCHIVAL VIDEO**) with the sound off but we can hear the live crowd in the stadium. CRACK--a TEXAS RANGER hits a three-run homer and BILLY walks out of the room and

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY - **ARCHIVAL VIDEO**

An OAKLAND A hits an easy pop-up to center field and

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Where BILLY's on a stationary bike. His blackberry buzzes and he takes a look--

"Fly out to cntr"

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Where BILLY's bench pressing and CRACK--

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY - **ARCHIVAL VIDEO**

Where an OAKLAND A has just hit a ground ball to the SHORTSTOP, who tosses it easily to second for the first out, and the SECOND BASEMAN throws it over to first for--

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Where BILLY looks at the blackberry which now says--

"643 dbl play"

The blackberry goes crashing into the wall and blows apart.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM/AREA OUTSIDE ART'S OFFICE - NIGHT

We find Billy and Art in conversation.

BILLY

Yeah. I should have made you a bigger part of the conversation, I should have had you in the scout meetings from the first day, that way you would have understood this better and that was *another* mistake, I take full responsibility.

ART

What are you trying to say?

BILLY

It doesn't matter what moves I make if you don't play the team the way I need them played.

ART

Billy -
(long beat)
You are out of your depth.

BILLY

Why wasn't Hatteberg at first?

ART

Because he can't play first.

BILLY

How do you know?

ART

Not my first baseball game.

BILLY

Art--

ART

Scott Hatteberg can't hit.

BILLY

He gets on--

ART

And his defense--

BILLY

Still keeps us in the plus column and we only need to be 7 over 500.

ART

Anything else?

BILLY

Yeah, I would have rather seen Chad Bradford in there at the end than Magnante.

ART

Bradford's--

BILLY

I don't care about righty/lefty.

ART

I do.

BILLY

This is about your contract?

ART

No, you've made it clear what you think about that. This is about you doing your job and me doing mine. Mine's being left alone to manage the beer league team you assembled for me.

BILLY

I didn't assemble them for you, I assembled them for me.

ART

No shit.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY

I want you to go on the road with the team.

PETER

You don't go on the road with the team.

BILLY

That's why I want you to do it.

PETER

Why don't you?

BILLY
I don't want to develop personal relationships. I need to trade them, send them down and sometimes cut them. You should learn how to do that by the way.

PETER
The only way I'd have to cut a player is if you oh come on!

BILLY
Yeah, let's practice.

PETER
No.

BILLY
I'm a player, cut me from the roster.

PETER
No.

BILLY
Do it.

PETER
This is stupid.

BILLY
Man-up, Yale.

PETER
Fine. Billy, would you have a seat for a moment, I need to talk to you.

BILLY
I'm already sitting.

PETER
I was pretending you weren't sitting.

BILLY
But I am. Keep going.

PETER
This is the hardest thing there is to do in baseball.

BILLY
You got that from Bull Durham?

PETER
Yeah.

BILLY

Hitting a curve ball is the hardest thing there is to do in baseball but go ahead.

PETER

You've been a huge part of this team but decisions have to be made that are best for the team, I'm sure you can understand that.

BILLY

You're cutting me?

PETER

I'm really sorry.

BILLY

I just bought a house here.

PETER

(beat)

Well...

BILLY

Well? That's all you have to say? My kids just started at a new school, they made friends.

PETER

That's--I'd leave them in school, you don't want to take them out in the middle of the--

BILLY

What the hell are you doing?

PETER

Are you you or the player?

BILLY

I'm me. You're talking about kids and schools and you should've been out of the room three minutes ago.

PETER

Shouldn't I tell them that they'll always be a part of the A's family?

BILLY

That makes me feel so good I'm thinking of burning your house down with you in it. These are professional baseball players. You just do it. "Peter, I need to let you go. Jack's office'll handle the paperwork."

PETER

That's it?

BILLY

Would you rather get one bullet in the head or five in the chest and bleed to death?

PETER

Those are my only choices?

BILLY

Go on the road with the team.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

Jeremy Giambi discreetly mixes a highball from a cache of hotel minibar liquor bottles as he watches his favorite movie on a portable DVD player, *The Natural*.

DAVID JUSTICE is sitting next to PETER, who scrolls down stats on his laptop.

DAVID

How come your boss doesn't travel with the team?

PETER

He doesn't like to mingle with the players.

DAVID

Makes us easier to cut?

PETER doesn't say anything...

DAVID

He's gonna make some moves if we keep losing.

PETER gives a small "Yeah" shrug...

DAVID

How come soda costs a dollar in the clubhouse?

PETER

Billy likes to keep the money on the field.

DAVID

Soda money?

PETER doesn't say anything...

DAVID

Where on the field is the dollar I pay
for soda?

PETER

(beat)
It's hard to see.

DAVID

(shaking his head)
Alright.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

Billy watches the T.V.

ON TV - PENA taking his place at first.

TV ANNOUNCER V/O

The A's begin their first road trip of
the season having dropped 7 of their
first 11 games at home and their schedule
doesn't get any easier from here. If
there's a bright spot it's rookie first
baseman Carlos Pena.

Billy turns off the T.V., gets beeper updates as he works
out.

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - DAY

Billy drives.

VOICES V/O

With the A's getting off to a miserable
start/13 of their last 20/17 of their
last 25/etc...

INT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

BILLY's waiting for someone. HE'S WATCHING THE A'S GAME
BY THE GATE. A PASSENGER, also watching the game,
recognizes Billy.

PASSENGER

Hey, aren't you Billy Beane?

BILLY

Yeah.

PASSENGER

Shouldn't you be at the game?

BILLY

Nope.

CASEY emerges from the gate, sees her father before he sees her and runs to him. They hug.

CASEY

Hey, Dad.

BILLY

Hey, honey... I'm glad to see you.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S/PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY and PETER are throwing a ball through their office doors on either side of the hallway--

PETER

It's not a big enough sample yet. I want to wait until we play more games.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY watches the game from the office T.V. He sees --

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY - **ARCHIVAL VIDEO**

DAVID JUSTICE grounds into a double play to end the game.

TV ANNOUNCER

And Justice hits into the 6-4-3 double play to end the game...

The INDIANS trot on the field to high-five each other.

OMITTED

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Casey sits at the table as Billy scoops ice cream.

BILLY

Do you want strawberry or vanilla?

CASEY

Both.

BILLY

Don't tell your mother.

(then)

If you could only have one ice cream for the rest of your life, which would you choose?

CASEY
Vanilla. Definitely vanilla.

BILLY
Interesting. Chocolate sauce?

CASEY
Yup.

A beat. Then --

CASEY
Dad... if you could choose between the power of invisibility or flight, which would you choose?

BILLY
Flight. Yeah, I'd wanna fly. You?

CASEY
I think I'd want invisibility.

BILLY
Really? Why?

CASEY
I don't know. People wouldn't notice me as much.

BILLY
Why wouldn't you want people to notice you?

CASEY
I don't know.

BILLY
Well, I guess you could sneak up on people. Or eavesdrop on their conversations. You could be a spy.
(then)
So how's school?

CASEY
My teacher's kinda mean. She doesn't like us to ask questions.

BILLY
What kind of teacher doesn't let you ask questions?

CASEY
I know, right? Mom was mad, too. She thinks maybe I should be home schooled.

BILLY
Wouldn't you miss your friends?

CASEY
Yeah. But the other kids are mean.

BILLY
There are always going to be bullies.
Try not to let them get to you. But let
me know if it's becoming a problem.

CASEY
Can I ask you a question? Are you still
chewing tobacco?

BILLY
Yeah...

CASEY
Please stop.

BILLY
I know, it's terrible. Look, I promise
I'll quit in November if you promise not
to worry about it.

CASEY
Pinkie swear?

BILLY
Pinkie swear.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

PETER
Theoretically, when we've played more
games the numbers will become more
representative of--

BILLY
Theoretically?

EXT. SAFECO FIELD - SEATTLE - DAY

The scoreboard shows the A's down by 1 in the 6th.

As Art trudges toward the mound to pull his starter, he
touches his left arm. Magnante emerges from the pen -
and Peter, up in a VIP box, flips open his phone.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

BILLY is saying goodbye to CASEY.

BILLY
Alright. Be good.

CASEY
Okay.

Billy's Blackberry chimes. He ignores it.

BILLY
(pause)
I feel like--

CASEY
(pause)
You feel like what?

BILLY
(beat)
I don't know, did we talk enough this
time?

CASEY
About what?

BILLY
Anything. Did we talk about the things
you want to talk about, did we have fun?

CASEY
(pause)
Yeah!?

BILLY
Okay.

CASEY
I love you, Dad.

BILLY
You're doing it right now.

CASEY
What?

BILLY
You're worrying about me.

CASEY
Sorry.

BILLY
Do I look like I'm worried?

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
 'Cause you're getting on an airplane and those things crash all the time. Will you please stop worrying about your father? You're a kid, I can't have it.

CASEY
 Okay. Can I worry about the airplane now though?

BILLY
 Absolutely.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches --

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 We're all set.

BILLY
 Great.

There's a slightly awkward moment and CASEY isn't sure whether she's supposed to hug her father again and so they do a sort of half-hug.

BILLY
 I love you.

BILLY watches her go off with the attendant, feeling like it was an unsatisfying visit.

He looks at his blackberry--

3-2. Magnante in.

BILLY
 (shouting)
 No! WHY IS HE IN THERE?!

EVERYONE in the area stops to look at the madman.

BILLY
 (to the people
 looking at him)
 No no. I'm alright.

EXT. TRACK - MORNING

Billy runs the warning track with a small radio that he turns on long enough to follow what's happening, and switches it off again.

Over the following, we hear a cacophony of radio and TV VOICES tumbling into each other--

THE STANDINGS ON PETER'S COMPUTER:

The A's have fallen to 19-25.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - NIGHT

MAGNATE giving up a save-blowing hit while BRADFORD sits in the bullpen...

EXT. JACOB'S FIELD - CLEVELAND - DAY

An Oakland A hits into a double-play, strike out, caught stealing, picked off first, a lop-sided scoreboard, half-empty stands--

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

The parking lot is a vast, empty black sea with just two pin-points of moving light. Headlights.

Billy drives around the lot like a downhill skier with nothing in his way -- his daughter's mix-tape playing.

EXT. EDISON FIELD - ANAHEIM, CA - NIGHT

Jeremy lines a single to right, but is so slow he's almost thrown out at first. Art Howe glances at his bench coach, Ken Macha.

ANNOUNCER

Art Howe is the only manager in baseball who has to think about pinch running his leadoff hitter.

Down in the Visitors' pen, Chad sits with Mike Magnante.

MAGNANTE

Why do you do it?

CHAD

I can't not do it.

MAGNANTE

How do you do it? Every ball park's different.

CHAD

I take that into account and adjust the distance of my steps.

MAGNANTE

Exactly seventy-four, from the pen to the mound.

(MORE)

MAGNANTE (CONT'D)
 (Bradford nods)
 You should get that looked at, man.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAFECO FIELD - NIGHT

The TEAM in the dugout, hanging their heads during a
 blowout and

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter erases the percentage of games left they need to
 win and writes in a higher number and

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - DAY

He's listening to the radio.

REPORTER V/O
 -- after Sunday's 11-0 rout. Now, having
 dropped 13 of 16, the A's are a game away
 from being swept at home by the AL East
 last place Baltimore Orioles.

CUT TO:

AERIAL SHOT

as we follow Billy's truck from Oakland over the Bay
 Bridge into San Francisco.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY
 Steve.

SCHOTT
 Billy.

BILLY
 You remember Peter.

SCHOTT
 Peter. Guys, give me some idea of what's
 going on out there.

BILLY

Listen, it's a team of probabilities, and we're gonna need 162 games to tell that tale in a nascent form. It's phase one, we're evolving and we feel confident where we're heading.

SCHOTT

Billy -

BILLY

We're not scared.

SCHOTT

3 out of 17 games. 3. We're getting crucified in the press. What makes you think this is gonna turn around?

BILLY

Because I believe in what we're doing. I believe the numbers. I believe the record doesn't accurately reflect the team and where we're going to be at the end of the season. Peter and I feel very strongly that we need to stick to the game plan, and you can tell your partners to start booking their tickets to the playoffs.

SCHOTT

Billy, look, you've got guys who are nearly crippled, who couldn't get hired as an usher in a ballpark now playing on the team. Give me something I can go back to these guys with and feel like I have the confidence that you're gonna turn these things around.

BILLY

With all due respect you asked me to build a team with shoelaces and gum wrappers and we've done it.

SCHOTT

You haven't done it yet billy.

BILLY

And it will pay off. Stick with us. Suffer the blows. Listen, life with no money means we're gonna have to suffer a few embarrassments along the way, but we are okay in the end.

SCHOTT

Billy, there's a lot of money at stake here.

(MORE)

SCHOTT (CONT'D)

And a lot of people with vested interest in seeing this be successful. I've given you a lot of flexibility. When are we gonna start to see a change in these results?

Schott sits back at his desk.

SCHOTT

Give me a date, give me a time frame.

BILLY

(to Peter)

Where do we expect to be mid July All Star break?

PETER

Our goal and our expectation by the All Star break is to be within seven games of first place.

BILLY

That'll keep us in the hunt.

PETER

And that would be this working exceptionally well.

SCHOTT

7 within 500. By July. And what's going to keep us from getting there?

BILLY

Nothing Steve.

SCHOTT

Nothing. We're 3 for 17 right now. You've got to be able to give me a little bit more to go back to my partners with.

BILLY

Listen, you hired me to do this job and that's where we're going to be.

SCHOTT

That's not good enough.

BILLY

Well, let's go buy Barry Bonds, then. This is the team we've got and this is the team we'll win with.

SCHOTT

Billy, put yourself in my shoes. What do you imagine is going to happen if things don't turn around?

BILLY

It's very clear, Steve. If I put myself in your shoes, I'd spend another 20 million on the team.

SCHOTT

We don't have another 20 million

BILLY

I'm just kidding, Steve, I'm just kidding. We've got the team.

SCHOTT

I gotta be honest with you, Billy, I wish you had a little more worry and a little more fear. Because things aren't going in our direction right now.

BILLY

162 games Steve.

SCHOTT

Let's hope the next 30 are better than the last 30.

BILLY

I don't need to hope.

SCHOTT

All right fellas. Let's go try and win one. We're in May, we've got til July.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

The A's take batting practice.

LEGEND: May 23, 2002

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

ART, as he always does, is watching not from the railing but from the bench.

BILLY walks into the dugout without saying hello.

BILLY

We're not gonna lose three at home to the Orioles.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

I want Dye in right, Justice DH-ing, Pena on the bench, Hatteberg at first and anyone but Magnante first out of the pen.

ART

You want Pena on the bench?

BILLY

That's right. So that you can play Hatteberg.

ART

Hatte - as opposed to the guy who's going to win Rookie of the Year.

BILLY

No, Hatte - as opposed to the guy who gets on base less. Pena getting voted Rookie of the Year and the A's making the playoffs are two entirely different--

ART

Pena's not just the best first baseman on the roster, he's the only first baseman on the roster and the most valuable member on this team.

BILLY

Not according to, what do you call 'em, facts.

ART

Hatteberg--

BILLY

Listen to me--gets on base more than Pena. 25% more.

ART

His fielding--

BILLY

His fielding doesn't matter.

ART

It does matter and Pena only has one error in 70 games.

BILLY

Not only is that number statistically insignificant but it's also subjective. It measures what someone did against what someone else thought they were supposed to do.

ART

Part of the conversation? I've heard enough of the conversation and I disagree with you, plain and simple. Moreover, I strongly believe that you're in the middle of experiencing some sort of personal crisis and you seem indifferent to the fact that you're taking a whole organization down with you. I'm playing my team in a way I can explain in job interviews this winter.

Some As players arrive in the dugout, causing Billy to hold his tongue. He simply says -

BILLY

Hatte, not Pena.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

The game plays silently on the TV as Billy lifts weights. Not wanting to watch but not being able not to, he looks at the screen to see Pena trotting out to first base ...

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER - NIGHT

The Orioles' bench clears to high-five the players coming off the field. The game is over, and, obviously, they've won. The A's exit their dugout to the tunnels.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - LATER - NIGHT

As Art crosses to his office, he sees Billy waiting inside it with a towel around his neck. He hesitates, then goes in and we follow him. Billy says nothing, but his silence is worse. Art has to break it -

ART

It's just one game.

BILLY

That's the point, you think?

ART

The point is always tomorrow's game.

BILLY

No, the point - as you said - is to win. I don't like sharing the cellar with Texas, do you?

We hear FUNK MUSIC begin to play in the distance.

ART

I'm doing the best I can with what I've got. I'm playing the players I've got.

BILLY

I'm through talking.

INT. CLUB HOUSE LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Billy lets himself out and walks down the hall to the locker room - regards Jeremy Giambi -

JEREMY

Yeah!

He's not even aware of Billy. It's just like any other night as far as Jeremy Giambi is concerned. He dances to a CD of funk music as he dresses, until he becomes aware of Billy standing there, and smiling, he kills the music.

JEREMY

(nervous laugh)

What?

BILLY

Getting swept by the Red Sox at home. Having Long lead off the ninth with a triple in a one-run game and not being able to score a runner from first with nobody out, is that fun?

JEREMY

No.

BILLY

Then what the fuck are you having fun for?!

(calmly)

This is what losing sounds like.

He heads out.

OMITTED

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

PETER V/O

...point 3-5 below the AL average field which isn't bad.

(beat)

Billy?

BILLY

Yeah?

CUT TO:

PETER IN THE VIDEO ROOM - SAME TIME

Peter rattles off player stats.

PETER

Cruz -- .283, .347, .476. Stevens --
.244, .349, .560. Miner -- .272, .349,
.499. Hanson -- .280, .363, .450.
Baretta -- .273, .354, .497. Durazo --
.292, .395, .621. What do you think?

(then)

Billy?

BILLY (V.O.)

(beat)

I don't know where I am.

PETER

You okay?

BILLY (V.O.)

I missed my exit.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Billy takes the next off ramp and as LIGHTS FLARE on the windshield, we transition to ANOTHER TIME, YOUNG BILLY DRIVING --

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT - 1989

Billy and his wife drive home from a game in silence, their infant daughter Casey asleep in a car seat in back. Sharon regards Billy's hands, clutched too tightly to the steering wheel.

SHARON

Have you thought about what you might do
if baseball doesn't work out?

BILLY

(pause)

What?

SHARON

That was too abrupt.

BILLY

No.
 (pause)
 What?

SHARON

(beat)
 If baseball doesn't work out. Have you
 thought about what you might do?

BILLY

(beat)
 The game's only been over for three
 hours, I haven't had that much time to
 think about it.

SHARON

Sure.
 (beat)
 Maybe real estate.

BILLY

I'll be honest, if I don't make it in
 baseball I don't think I'm going to be
 able to afford much real estate.

SHARON

I meant--

BILLY

I know what you meant.

SHARON

(pause)
 It's just a slump, right?

BILLY

(beat)
 No.

SHARON

You're saying every scout was wrong?

BILLY

You're kind of saying it too.

SHARON

Billy--

BILLY

Honey...don't you think you should
 divorce me now while you're young?

SHARON looks at him... then her eyes go to the window.

COMMENTATOR (PRELAP)
 When a science experiment fails in a lab,
 things blow up.

OMITTED

IN BLACK:

Problems are the price you pay for progress.

- Branch Rickey

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - CORRIDOR - DAY

Billy shoves a wad of Copenhagen under his lip as he and Peter walk-and-talk.

BILLY
 Get me Wade.

PETER
 Why.

BILLY
 Get him.

PETER
 Why.

BILLY
Get him.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy's seated at his desk. Peter reluctantly dials a number from a list, the number across from the Phillies' GM's name. It connects on the speaker.

WADE V/O
 Hello?

BILLY
 Ed. Billy. I need some help on defense
 and I'm willing to trade Jeremy Giambi
 for it.

PETER
 No, you (aren't) -

BILLY
 (ignoring Peter; to
 Wade)
 Who you got?

WADE V/O

Let me think.

PETER

What are you doing? Jeremy's doing
(great) -

BILLY

Cleaning house.

WADE V/O

Maybe?

BILLY

Maybe what?

WADE V/O

No. Mabry.

BILLY

Hang on.

(put the call on
hold)

Mabry?

PETER

I don't know.

BILLY

Yes, you do.

PETER

Runs hot and cold, Billy. Impossible to
know what we're going to get. He's a crap
shoot. He's exactly the kind of player
we're not looking for.

BILLY

(into the phone)

He'll be fine, Ed.

WADE V/O

Why do I get the feeling you're picking
my pocket?

BILLY

I'm not picking your pocket, you're
picking mine. Giambi's name alone is
worth more than Mabry.

WADE V/O

You realize -

BILLY

(into phone)

I do. His career is stagnant, to put it nicely. Can we say it's done in theory and start drawing up paperwork?

WADE V/O

Okay. But -

BILLY

Great.

He hangs up.

PETER

I think he was going to say something else.

BILLY

Peter. Rule Number 3: When you get the answer you're looking for - hang up. That's done, and in a minute Pena's going to Detroit.

PETER

I don't think you want to do that.

BILLY

Art can't put him at first if he's playing for the Tigers and I want Hatte in the lineup tonight.

PETER

Maybe you should think about this. You're upset and this is - this -

BILLY

What am I missing?

PETER

It's just a very hard move to explain. People are going to think you've lost your mind.

BILLY

Why's that a problem Peter?

Beat.

PETER

Don't make an emotional decision Billy.

SUZANNE

David Dombrowski's on 3.

Billy picks up the call.

BILLY

(to Peter)

Sometimes you have to shake it up.

(into phone)

David, Peña's going on the blocks, you're my first call... because he's making the rest of the team look bad... He's going to be rookie of the year...

PETER

(not eager to help
but...)

Probably an all star.

BILLY

He's an all star Dave...

(winks at Peter,
listens)

It's more like he's creating self-esteem problems for the other guys... No, I'm looking for a reliever and some cash... Ok... five minutes Dave, I'm not waiting.

(hangs up)

What's the problem?

PETER

(trying to slow it
down)

Billy, Peña *is* an all star. If you dump him, and if Hatte *doesn't* work out, you know, this is the kind of decision that gets you fired.

BILLY

Why you worrying about my job?

(beat)

You worried about my job or yours?

PETER

(beat)

I'm worried about yours.

BILLY

Well you should be worrying about yours because if this thing we're doing don't work... neither of us have jobs.

PETER

That's probably true.

BILLY

In which case I'm a 44 year old guy with a high-school diploma and a daughter who I'd like to be able to put through college one day.

(lets it sink in)

You're 25 years old with a degree from Yale and a pretty impressive apprenticeship.

(beat)

I don't think we're asking the right question. I think the question we're supposed to be asking now is, do you believe in what we're doing or not?

(beat)

It's a problem that you think we need to explain ourselves. Don't... to anyone. I'm going to see this through, for better or for worse. Just tell me, do you project we'll win more games with Peña or Hatteberg on first?

PETER

It's close Billy but theoretically Hatteberg.

BILLY

What are we talking about then?

The phone rings.

BILLY

Dave.

(listens)

That works. Great. There's just one more thing I need. I don't want the guys paying for soda--I want you to stock my soda machine for three years. Uh huh, uh huh, great... then that's a deal.

Billy hangs up. He stares at Peter.

PETER

That was thoughtful.

BILLY

Yeah. Okay. You gotta tell Pena to pack.

PETER

You want *me* to tell Pena he's been traded?

BILLY

Be a man.

PETER

What about Jeremy? Am I telling him, too.

BILLY

No. I'll do that.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Peter walks into the locker room. Sees Pena talking to a couple of other players. He approaches Pena.

PETER

Hey, Carlos.

PENA

Yeah.

PETER

Can I get a moment with you?

PENA

Sure.

PETER

Okay, maybe we can talk over here.

They walk awkwardly to the players' lounge.

PETER

Have a seat.

They sit.

PETER

So, um, Carlos, you've been traded to the Tigers. This is the number of Jay Palmer, their travel secretary. He's expecting your call. He'll help you arrange travel to Detroit.

Pena sits and stares at him. It's excruciating for Peter, awkward, until --

PENA

Is that all?

PETER

Yeah.

PENA

Cool.

Pena just takes it. Picks up the number and leaves.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - LATER - DAY

Billy knocks and lets himself in.

BILLY

Mind if I have a seat.

ART

Please.

BILLY

You can't start Pena at first tonight,
you'll have to start Hatteberg.

ART

I don't want to go 15 rounds, Billy, the
line-up card is mine and that's all.

BILLY

The line-up card is definitely yours, I'm
just saying you can't start Pena at
first.

ART

I am starting Pena at first.

BILLY

I don't think so, he plays for the
Detroit Tigers now.

ART

(pause)

You traded Pena?!

BILLY

Along with German, Hiljus and Jeremy
Giambi.

ART

You are outside your fucking mind.

Art stares at him in a silence broken by Jeremy Giambi
knocking on the open door.

BILLY

Jeremy, come on in.

Billy jots a phone number on an A's Post-It and hands it
to him.

BILLY

This is Ed Wade's number. You know him?

Art looks sick.

JEREMY

No.

BILLY

Phillies General Manager. Real nice guy. Give him a call - he's expecting it - say hello - then talk to Futterman about arranging a flight for you.

JEREMY

The what?

BILLY

The flight. To Philadelphia.

Billy gets up and shakes his hand.

BILLY

It's been a real pleasure, Jeremy. I mean that. You're a great ballplayer and great guy.

Jeremy, not sure he heard right, looks at the Post-It in his hand as Billy escorts him to the door.

BILLY

We're going to miss you.

Jeremy leaves. Billy looks at Art from the door.

BILLY

Adkins is gone, too.

ART

You're killing this team.

BILLY

Art? I can do this all day long.

He leaves. Art notices Peter, who had been lurking by the door, eavesdropping.

ART

What are you looking at?

PETER

I'm not looking at anything.

ART

You went along with this? You agree with this bullshit?

PETER

(beat)

A hundred percent.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Pena cleans out his locker. Several players stop by to say goodbye. Tejada --

TEJADA

Keep your head up, okay? It's part of the business. You're gonna be a great player, okay?

PENA

Thank you, man.

TEJADA

Don't let this bother you at all.

Chad Bradford --

CHAD

Nice to meet you, brother. Take care and... God bless you, man.

PENA

Thank you.

Scott Hatteberg --

HATTEBERG

You're the best first baseman here. It's not right, Carlos.

PENA

Thank you, Hattie.

HATTEBERG

Yeah.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

BILLY and PETER stride through as the team is getting dressed for batting practice.

The place quiets down as BILLY comes in. They've all heard the news and they've never experienced a move like this in their careers.

BILLY

(calling out)

Scottie H.!

SCOTT

Yes sir.

BILLY

Go out and field some grounders.

BILLY looks around at the PLAYERS, who are looking at Billy...

BILLY

Everybody, listen up. You may not look like a winning ball team. In fact, you look nothing like a winning ball team. But you are one. So play like one tonight. You'll get further instructions tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT (HYBRID)

DAVID JUSTICE hits a single up the middle as the runners on 2nd and 3rd round the bases to score.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's blackberry buzzes.

"Sngl up the mdl--2 rns scr"

BILLY

Okay.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

Billy talks to Chavez and Ellis. Peter stands nearby.

BILLY

No more bunts.

CHAVEZ

No more bunts?

BILLY

A bunt is an out. You're paid to avoid outs, not make them.

CHAVEZ

A bunt isn't an out. It's a sacrifice.

BILLY

A bunt is for pitchers and weak hitters. You're not a pitcher, Chavvie, so what are you saying?

(then)

Until the third out, anything can happen. After the third out, it's over. You gotta protect your outs like they're your children. Every out's precious, don't give 'em away.

(then)

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Another thing -- you should see more pitches. We wanna get into their bullpen. Deep into their bullpen. We want to see 100 pitches by the end of the 5th inning. You wanna get your at-bats off their 10th and 11th pitcher.

ELLIS

You want us to walk more. How much more?

BILLY

Pete?

PETER

At least once every ten at bats.

ELLIS

Or...?

BILLY

Triple-A Sacramento's only 80 miles away. And there's no flights.

(as they look to
Peter)

Don't look at him. Here's the deal. I'm not interested in what you think you know about baseball, or what you think I don't know about it. I'm not interested in guts or heart or determination or anything else the fans or your mothers love about you. I'm interested in you getting on base. If you do that, we win. If you don't, we lose. And I hate to lose. I hate to lose more than I need to win. There's a difference.

INT. VIDEO ROOM - DAY

Billy and Peter give advice to Dye and Byrnes.

PETER

Every at bat is like a hand of blackjack. Every card that's dealt, your odds completely change. For instance, every first pitch strike, your batting average goes down about 75 points.

BILLY

75 points.

PETER

75 points. Every first pitch ball, it goes up about the same amount. So you gotta lay off the first pitch.

BYRNES

First pitch curveball or first pitch fastball?

PETER

First pitch period. When you swing at the first pitch you're batting .140.

BILLY

We want to see more pitches.

DYE

How many pitches?

PETER

Every starter, we want to see 100 pitches by the 5th inning.

DYE

So... 5, 6 pitches per at bat?

PETER

Yeah. I mean, Hatteberg drained 38 pitches.

BILLY

And Byrnsie, you're hackin' at everything. You're all squirrely out there. Wait for your pitch, man. This is a war of attrition. There's no clock on this thing. Wait 'em out. Let them make the mistakes. And when your enemy's making mistakes -- don't interrupt them.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Peter advises Durham as he works out.

PETER

Basically, these are all your at bats. This is you versus righties, you versus lefties... and then, of course, all your count knowledge, okay? In an 0-0 count you're batting .290. In an 0-1 you average .238. In a 0-2, .159. When you're 1-0, you're batting .324. Understand what I'm saying?

DURHAM

Not really.

PETER

I know, it's a lot of math. When your first pitch is a strike, your batting average goes down about 70 points.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

When it's a ball, it goes up about 30. If you draw a ball on your first pitch, you're unstoppable. If you strike on the first pitch, you might as well be jumping off cliff. I'm trying to get you to lay off the first pitch.

DURHAM

But I'm a first pitch hitter. I like to swing at fastballs.

PETER

And that's the way you've been trained. But it's a habit we'd like to break you from. We're trying to design the game to your strengths. This has nothing to do with you being a great hitter -- you're a great hitter. We just want to get you on base.

DURHAM

But if I get my pitch, I'm gonna swing at it, no matter what the count is.

PETER

I'm not worried about you crushing the ball out of the park. I just want you to lay off anything that will result in a strike.

DURHAM

I guess I'll have to watch some film and take a look at it.

PETER

Absolutely. The video room is open to you any time, I'm always available.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

BILLY and PETER with a group of players around the card table, post-game.

PETER

-- But seriously. Make him use up all his bullets.

BILLY

Yeah, make him work.

HATTEBERG

So... Mr. Beane?

BILLY

Billy's fine.

HATTEBERG

Billy --

BILLY

Nah, make it Mr. Beane.

HATTEBERG

Mr. Beane --

BILLY

I'm screwin' with you, Haddie.

HATTEBERG

So we just don't steal?

BILLY

That's right.

LONG

That's what I do. That's what you pay me to do.

BILLY

No, I pay you to get on first, not get thrown out at second.

LONG

I don't get thrown out much.

BILLY

I don't hit on 17 at the blackjack table, but if I did, the odds would be the same.

PETER

You've actually gotten caught 6 out of 17 tries this season.

LONG

I get 11 of 17. That's not bad.

BILLY

You just handed them an out. Protect your outs like they're your children. There's no clock on this game. Until the third out, anything can happen. Get on base and let the next guy move you up. Pass the torch, pass the torch. We're like a machine. A run making machine.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - KITCHEN - DAY

As JUSTICE and HATTEBERG prepare food --

JUSTICE

What's your biggest fear?

SCOTT
A baseball being hit in my general
direction.

JUSTICE
That's funny.
(then)
No, seriously.

SCOTT
Seriously.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM BATTING CAGE - DAY

BILLY
Hey, Dave. I've been thinking... I want
you to --

JUSTICE
You gonna teach me something?

BILLY
Excuse me?

JUSTICE
I've never seen a GM talk to players.

BILLY
You've never seen a GM who was a player.

JUSTICE
Huh.

BILLY
Is there a problem?

JUSTICE
It's okay, man. I know your routine. It's
a patter, it's rap, it's for effect.
That's okay. But it's for them, it's not
for me.

BILLY
You're special?

JUSTICE
You're paying me 7 million bucks so I
guess I am a little.

BILLY
As a matter of fact I'm not paying you 7
million bucks, David. The Yankees are
paying half your salary. That's what the
New York Yankees think of you.
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

They're paying you three and a half million dollars to play against them.

If this is news to Justice, he doesn't show it.

JUSTICE

Where are you going with this, Billy?

BILLY

You're almost 37, Dave. Almost as old as me. Let's be honest with each other about what we each want. I want to milk the last ounce of baseball you have left in you, and you want to stay in the show. So let's do that. I'm not paying you to be the player you used to be, I'm paying you to be the player you are now. You're smart, you know what's going on here. I need you to set an example for the younger guys. Take a leadership role.

Justice just studies him ... then nods.

BILLY

We're cool?

JUSTICE

We're cool.

BILLY

All right.

Billy starts to leave, but has one last thought for him --

BILLY

You know -- the Yankees are coming to town. If it were me -- I'd want to take that three point five and shove it up their ass. But I'm a competitor.

Billy exits. Justice calls after him --

JUSTICE

You know, I got a couple World Series rings. I think I'm a pretty good competitor, too.

BILLY

(calling back)

You want another one?

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT

DAVID JUSTICE takes ball four from a Yanks pitcher, tosses his bat to the side and trots down to first base.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT

TEJADA is on first and taking a big lead toward second. He wants to steal it bad.

ANNOUNCER (VO)
Tejada taking a big lead off first,
eyeing the steal--

INT. CLUBHOUSE MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY watches with two or three TEAM EMPLOYEES.

BILLY
Don't do it, Migs.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

And CRACK--a base hit sends Tejada to 3rd.

INT. CLUBHOUSE MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY's blackberry buzzes:

Sngl to lft. Frst and thrd--nobody out.

BILLY
Thank you.

EXT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT

The wheels of the team jet lift off--

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The TV is on as BILLY and PETER work, seeming more and more like mad scientists who are getting closer and closer to splitting the atom.

GREG PAPA OR RAY FOSSE (TV)
What is happening in Oakland?! The A's have won seven in a row and 15 of their last 19. You got to hand it to Art Howe. He's managing this unorthodox team in an unorthodox way. They are not bunting. They are not stealing. They are just winning. And Art Howe is the reason.

PETER
Did you hear that?

BILLY
I heard 7 in a row.

Billy clicks off the TV and it's very quiet. Billy is scrolling down numbers that show trends and comparisons of all of the A's relief pitching.

BILLY
Can you show me righty-lefty matchups for the division and overall versus Mariners?

Peter reaches over and with a few clicks produces new columns of numbers, upon which Billy darts his eyes as he scrolls through them. Finally -

BILLY
Okay.

He gets up and heads out.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

BILLY walks through the clubhouse, shouting locker room shoutouts to PLAYERS as he walks by.

BILLY
Voos.

VOOS
Billy.

BILLY
(pointing back down
hall)
That smell is getting worse.

VOOS
I'm on it, Billy.

BILLY
(to Hernandez)
What are we doing tonight?

HERNANDEZ
Splitting the plate in half.

BILLY
Both sides.
(to Hudson, playing
cards)
Huddy, you gotta mix it up tonight.
Trust your slider.

HUDSON

Yes sir.

BILLY

(to the others)

You guys stop distracting him.

(to Chavez)

Chavvie -- you couldn't hit that shit with a boat paddle last night. You gotta see more pitches. Patience.

CHAVEZ

You got it, Billy.

As Billy crosses through the weight room --

BILLY

(to Justice)

Hey David --

JUSTICE

Hey, man.

BILLY

Great at bats. Really. Quality.

JUSTICE

Thank you.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BILLY knocks on Art's door -- something we haven't seen him do before.

ART can see BILLY through the window blinds and is a little surprised at the courtesy of a knock.

ART

Come in.

BILLY does. He's going to try to do this nicely.

BILLY

How are ya?

ART

Good. You knocked.

BILLY

I did, and I hope you take it as a show of respect.

ART

We'll see.

BILLY

You look good.

ART

We've won 7 in a row, what am I doing wrong now?

BILLY

Absolutely nothing.

ART

Good.

BILLY

But.

ART

Yeah.

BILLY

Magnante's having some head problems.

ART

Head problems.

BILLY

Yeah.

ART

Okay.

BILLY

He's 37 and he's got three blown saves in two weeks. Everytime he winds up he's thinking he's about to throw the last pitch of his life. So he grips it a little hard.

ART

I appreciate this.

BILLY

Sure.

ART

But I know my bullpen.

BILLY

Yes you do. Yes you absolutely do. No question about it. Except not really.

ART

Yeah?

BILLY

If we have a lead late in the game and they have runners on base, I'd rather not see Magnante out of the bullpen.

ART

I'll make that decision when the time comes.

BILLY

That's what you should do. Baseball's a game of situations and you should make the decision when the time comes. Except you should make it now.

ART

Look--

BILLY

Don't bring Magnante out if we've gotta hold a late lead with runners on. He's 37, he's scared shitless of being the guy who blows this winning streak.

ART

You think a lot of yourself, don't you?

BILLY

I.....think the regular amount of myself. Magnante on the other hand, he doesn't think very much of himself at all, and when he tightens up we've got ourselves an adventure. So I'd like to see Chad Bradford out of the pen tonight when we're in, let's say, just to make it easier for you, any situation. Righty/lefty, two outs, no outs, the umpires have decided we're going to finish the game by playing darts, whatever. Bradford's the first guy out of the pen.

(beat)

Okay?

ART regards BILLY for a moment...

ART

I could've coached you up, you know.

BILLY

I don't think so.

ART

You think you went as far as you could have?

BILLY

(pause)

Yeah, that's what I meant. Play Bradford.

BILLY steps out of Art's office into--

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

The game plays on TV as BILLY bench presses. The A's are up by three runs in the ninth inning but the Indians have a runner on first.

Through the tunnel, BILLY can hear the crack of the bat and a collective groan from the stands.

BILLY holds the barbell in the air--frozen--as he simply looks at the T.V. and sees the silent images.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (HYBRID)

ART HOWE walking to the mound, tapping his left hand.

MAGNANTE heading to the mound.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

We think BILLY's going to trash the weights, but he simply returns the barbell to the bracket, sits up and watches the silent images.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (HYBRID)

MAGNANTE mops his brow, squints for the sign, winds up and makes his pitch. It misses low for ball four and PEDRO walks to first.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

Billy lays back on the bench, breathes, then unmutes the T.V. and we hear -

ANNOUNCER (FROM TV)

Magnante has quickly let two on base for Lee Stevens who's the go ahead run for the Indians in a game that Oakland appeared to have put away.

And then - BILLY sits calmly...waits for it...and--

CRACK!

--BILLY nods his head at the inevitable.

ANNOUNCER (FROM TV)

That ball is deep...way back...three run
homer for Lee Stevens to put Cleveland
ahead in the ninth inning...

BILLY can hear 40,000 people booing their lungs out. He
takes a moment, then grabs his jacket.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The FANS are booing as ART makes his way to the mound to
take MAGNANTE out. BRADFORD makes his way from the
bullpen and takes the ball from ART.

ART turns to head back to the dugout but slows as he sees
a strange sight: BILLY is standing at the dugout rail.

The plate UMPIRE notices and follows Art's line of sight.
He sees BILLY and walks over there ahead of Art.

UMPIRE

You can't be in there, Billy.

BILLY doesn't move. He just watches ART as he comes into
the dugout.

UMPIRE

Billy?

The PLAYERS are watching to see what's going to happen.
BILLY puts his hand on ART's shoulder a second as he says--
-

BILLY

Just nod a little bit--not too much--like
I'm assuring you you didn't just make a
calamitous vocational decision.

UMPIRE

Players and coaches only, Billy.

BILLY

(ignoring the umpire--
still quietly to
ART)

Remember that in about four seconds--

BILLY sees one of the nearby TV cameras pivot over to
catch this conversation--

BILLY

--yeah there it is. We're the lead story
on Sports Center now so let me be brief.
First of all, that was an awfully costly
fuck-you, wouldn't you say?

ART

Look--

BILLY

Second of all, genius, those boos?
They're for you. Drink up.

UMPIRE

Come on, Billy.

BILLY

Get me this game back.

As BILLY passes MAGNANTE he pats his back before we--

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The radio is on and the ANNOUNCER is telling us--

ANNOUNCER (FROM RADIO)

...after giving up the lead on a three
run homer off Magnante, the A's came
right back to win it in the bottom of the
ninth with another three run homer by
Miguel Tejada. And the A's have won eight
in a row!

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

As the early-bird fanatics arrive - players arrive at the
players' entrance -

INT. LOCKER ROOM - COLISEUM - DAY

Magnante walks into the A's locker room.

OMITTED

INT. LOCKER ROOMS - COLISEUM - SAME TIME - DAY

Billy, standing at the door, surveys the room, his eyes
moving from player to player as they're hanging up their
street clothes. The team's equipment manager, pouring
himself a cup of coffee, glances over -

VOOS

You want one, Billy?

BILLY

I'm good, Voos. Thanks.

Voos wanders off. Billy keeps looking at the players ...

LEGEND: July 31 - TRADE DEADLINE

INT. SCOUTS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Billy comes in sticking some tobacco under his lip and, like a shark that knows it could die if it stops moving, doesn't through the entire scene --

BILLY

Suzanne, get Shapiro on the phone.

PETER

Are you thinking Rincon?

BILLY

Yeah, he's lost faith for the season. I think he's gonna dump him.

PETER

Hardcore.

They wait as Suzanne dials the Indians' GM, staring at the speakerphone that sits like a little island in the middle of the conference table.

SUZANNE

Shapiro on two.

BILLY

Mark. Billy. Let's be honest. A premiere setup man is not going to get you any closer to the playoffs.

SHAPIRO V/O

Are you referring to Rincon?

BILLY

He's a luxury you can't afford.

SHAPIRO V/O

And you can? There's half a million on his contract and at least one other suitor.

BILLY

By at least one, you mean one? Who is it?

SHAPIRO V/O

I'd rather not say.

PETER
 (whispers)
 San Francisco.

BILLY
 I'll call you back.

He hangs up. Stares down Peter.

PETER
 What do you think we can get for
 Magnante?

BILLY
 Nothing.
 (continues to stare
 down Peter)
 What's left on Venafro's contract?

PETER
 Two-seventy-five.

BILLY
 Suzanne -- get me Sabean.
 (then)
 If we can get San Francisco interested in
 Venafro, Shapiro's only got one buyer for
 Rincon.

PETER
 Us.

Pete gets busy on his computer.

SUZANNE
 On three.

BILLY
 Sabes. Billy. You like Venafro. I can
 let you have him for almost nothing.

SABEAN V/O
 (smelling a rat)
 Why would you do that, Billy?

BILLY
 Because I'm amazing.

SABEAN V/O
 Uh-huh.

BILLY
 All I want is a couple of bucks and a
 sweetener. Throw in, say...

Billy snaps his fingers at Peter --

PETER

Anderson.

BILLY

Anderson.

SABEAN V/O

I like Anderson.

BILLY

No, you don't. I don't even like him. I don't know why I'm doing this -- but let's do it anyway. Venafro for Michaelson?

PETER

Anderson.

BILLY

Anderson. See, I don't even know his name.

SABEAN V/O

I'll think (about) --

BILLY

Think about it and call me back.

He hangs up.

BILLY

Get Shapiro back on.

Billy and Pete stare at each other in silence.

SUZANNE

Two!

BILLY

Mark --

SHAPIRO V/O

You can't afford him, Billy.

BILLY

You sure about that? I get the impression the market for Rincon is softening. I could be wrong. Call whoever's interested and make sure they're still interested. And call me back.

He hangs up.

BILLY
What about the Mets for Venafro?

PETER
You just offered him to the Giants.

BILLY
Suzanne -- Steve Phillips! Get me Steve Phillips.

Pete works his computer.

BILLY
Between Bonds, Nen, Kent and Snow,
they're never gonna do it.

PETER
Totally agree.

BILLY
We just need them to cool on Rincon.

SUZANNE
Phillips on two.

BILLY
Steve-O. Billy. I hear you're looking
for a left-handed reliever. What do you
think of Venafro? I can make it quick
and easy for you.

PHILLIPS V/O
What's the angle?

BILLY
No angle.

PHILLIPS V/O
Who am I getting fleeced for?

BILLY
Hang on a second.

He puts him on hold. Peter is already scrolling through
the Mets' farm system, his eyes darting around the stats.

PETER
Bennett maybe?

BILLY
How old?

PETER
Twenty-six.

BILLY
Twenty-six and in Double-A? Forget it.

PETER
Duncan? No. Cerda? No. Furbush?

BILLY
Furbush?
(beat)
No.

PETER
Eckerton? Eckerton. Eckerton, that's
the guy.

Billy punches the phone off hold.

BILLY
Eckerton.

PHILLIPS V/O
Eckerton? I like Eckerton.

BILLY
You don't even know who Eckerton is.

The phone on Pete's desk rings. Peter answers a second
blinking line.

PETER
Hello?

PHILLIPS V/O
Is Venafro hurt?

PETER
Oh, hi.

BILLY
No, he's not hurt. He's fine. This is
just a situation for us.

PETER
It's Steve.

PHILLIPS V/O
Last couple of times out, he got
hammered.

BILLY
(mute)
I'm on with Steve.
(unmute)
Not his fault. We misused him.

PETER

Steve Schott.

BILLY

Tell him to hold.

(to Steve Phillips)

Look. Steve. Here's the deal. I'm being straight with you. I'm getting Rincon. It's a done deal. It's done.

PHILLIPS V/O

I heard the Giants --

BILLY

No, the Giants want Venafro. And I told them they can have him for Michaelson...

PETER

Anderson --

BILLY

-- but I'd rather deal with you. Because you can give me Eckerton and two hundred and twenty-five thousand cash and the Giants can't.

Billy's look to Peter says, Doesn't hurt to ask. As they listen to silence on Phillips' side of the call --

PETER

Yes, I understand it's impolite to keep you holding.

PHILLIPS V/O

I'll think about it.

BILLY

Of course. Think. But whoever calls me back first gets Venafro.

He hangs up. Looks for the blinking light that belongs to his owner.

PETER

He hung up.

Silence. Then --

BILLY

If you could have the power of flight or invisibility, which would you choose?

PETER

What?

BILLY
Invisibility or flight?

PETER
(thinks)
Invisibility.

BILLY
That's what Casey said. Why?

PETER
You'd have total access. Besides,
everyone else would choose flight.

Quiet.

BILLY
Why isn't anybody calling?

The phone rings.

SUZANNE
Shapiro's on two.

Billy picks up. Listens. Fist pump.

BILLY
Great. Lemme talk to my owner. Call you
right back.
(then)
Get Steve.

PETER
Phillips or Schott?

BILLY
Why would I call Phillips back? Schott.
Tell him I'm on the other line.

PETER
Right.

Peter dials. Billy can't sit.

PETER
Mr. Schott, it's Peter Brand. Sorry I
left you on hold. Billy asked me to call
you back. He's on another line.

BILLY
Tell him we need two hundred and twenty-
five grand for Rincon.

PETER

Billy says he needs two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars for Ricardo Rincon. Please?

(then)

Yes, I added the please.

(listens; to Billy)

No.

Billy thinks intensely. Finally --

BILLY

Tell him I'll pay it, but when I sell him next year for twice that, I keep the money.

PETER

Billy says he'll pay for Rincon himself, sell him next year, and keep the profit.

Peter listens to whatever Steve Schott is saying, then --

PETER

Okay. Thank you.

(hangs up)

He says he'll pay for Rincon.

High five.

BILLY

Great! Shit. What are we forgetting?

(calling out)

Get me Shapiro!

-- as he grabs his cell phone and hits speed dial.

BILLY

Wait, never mind!

(beat, then into phone)

Mark. Yeah, it's Billy. Here's the deal. I don't want Rincon pitching against me tonight. Tell him to change his clothes. I got you the money and I accept your gratitude. It's done.

He hangs up. Fist bump.

BILLY

We gotta let someone go. It's Mags. It's gotta be Mags.

PETER

I call not it.

Billy dials an extension.

BILLY

Art. Billy. The good news is Ricardo Rincon's heading over to the clubhouse. The bad news is you got to tell Mags he threw his last pitch for the Oakland A's last night.

ART V/O

No.

BILLY

What do you mean, no.

ART V/O

No, as in no. I'm not doing it. You do it. You did it, so you do it.

Art hangs up. Billy slams the speakerphone.

PETER

It's not the phone's fault. Suzanne, we're gonna need a new speakerphone.

BILLY

We gotta catch Mags before Rincon comes over.

He leaves.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - 20 MINUTES LATER

Billy comes through the clubhouse past his team suiting up to where Magnante is adjusting his knee braces next to his locker, and sits with him.

BILLY

Mike --

MAGNANTE

Hey, Billy. I know I've been struggling lately. But we're coming into the home stretch, and I promise I'm gonna turn it around --

BILLY

-- I need you to stop getting dressed.

Magnante isn't sure he heard right, but the silence tells him he did. Eventually -

MAGNANTE

Traded?

Billy shakes his head, no.

BILLY

I'm sorry for the crap news. I know it hurts.

(then)

Mike. I can't have 26 guys in the clubhouse.

Magnante nods.

MAGNANTE

Alright.

BILLY

Thanks.

Billy gets up to leave. As he exits, he sees Peter enter with Rincon, standing with his new uniform in his arms, looking like a prison inmate. Oops. Billy joins them.

BILLY

Hey, Ricardo.

RINCON

Hola, señor.

BILLY

Hola. Hey, I know this must seem a bit sudden, but the Oakland A's have been trying to get you for a long time. You're gonna love it here. The guys are fun.

PETER

Muy divertido.

RINCON

I pitch tonight?

BILLY

I don't know if you're gonna pitch tonight. But you're on our team tonight.

RINCON

I no wanna pitch tonight.

BILLY

Right. So... where you from?

RINCON

Veracruz, Mexico.

BILLY

Well, you're a lot closer to home. Why don't you hang out there for five menudos and we'll get you a uniform and everything.

(to side room)

Hey guys, clear the room, huh? Say hi to Ricardo Rincon.

As the other players file out and say hello...

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Billy, Tara and Casey at dinner.

BILLY

Tara and me were thinking --

CASEY

Dad... Tara and I --

TARA

She is correct.

BILLY

Tara and I were thinking about going to Point Reyes to the beach.

CASEY

That'd be fun.

TARA

Me go, too?

BILLY

And I'll work on my grammar.

CASEY

(beat, then)

Dad... are you going to lose your job?

BILLY

What? Where did you hear that, honey?

CASEY

The internet.

BILLY

No, I'm not going to lose my job. Don't go on the internet or watch TV or read the papers or talk to people.

CASEY

I'm not talking to people, I'm just reading stuff.

BILLY

Don't worry. You don't believe me? Ask Tara.

TARA

He's not (losing his job). Your dad is a brilliant man. He's the best GM in baseball.

CASEY

But say that you did -- just saying -- would you have to move away?

BILLY

No, honey. Absolutely not. And even if I did, I'm not going anywhere. I told you not to worry about me. People say a lot of crazy things and they don't always know what they're talking about. It's just gossip. Like gossipers at school.

TARA

You can't always believe what you read. Sometimes you need to scratch underneath the surface and find who the authority is.

BILLY

And once you do find out who the authorities are, ignore them at all costs.

TARA

You can always ask your dad.

BILLY

Everything's fine, honey. I'm not going anywhere. The only way I would lose my job is if someone was to give me a better one. Don't worry about me, okay? Dad knows what he's doing.

CASEY

Pinkie swear?

BILLY

Pinkie swear.

A GRAPHIC

of the AL West standings over A GAME BEING PLAYED--from the start of the season until now--the teams shifting positions as the "games-out" and winning percentage numbers change like an adding machine, too fast for us to really follow, but then:

The calculations abruptly lock and we're given enough time to understand where we--and Oakland--are after 120 games:

<u>AL West</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>WP</u>
Seattle	---	.610
Anaheim	2.0	.593
Oakland	4.5	.571
Texas	21.5	.427

REPORTER V/O

The A's begin this road trip on a 10 game winning streak, picking up two games on the Mariners and the Angels, and it should be noted this is their longest winning streak in six years heading into--

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY

A PITCH TRACKING CAMERA mounted in center field. ZOOM IN to the lens...

INT. VIDEO ROOM - DAY

Peter sits with Hatteberg, reviewing his hits on a monitor.

PETER

This is a chart of what you should and shouldn't be swinging at. These circles represent different pitches. Red is hit, blue is out, yellow's missed or foul, green is chased, white taken. This is you versus Conway. What do you see?

HATTEBERG

I'm chasing a lot of high and outside.

PETER

The red is where most hits happen. That's where you want to be swinging. You don't want to be swinging at the junk at the top of the strike zone. We'd rather take those strikes, 'cause you're not going to hit 'em out of the park. And you're good about that, patient.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Right now you're averaging about 4 pitches per at-bat.

HATTEBERG

4 per bat?

PETER

Yeah, and that's great. One of the reasons why we love you. You're draining a pitcher's pitches. Now, guys like Bonds and Jason Giambi average a little over 5. That's top tier. Does this chart make sense to you?

HATTEBERG

Yeah. I'll get on base more if I lay off anything high. This is awesome. So you have a breakdown of this from every game?

PETER

Every game. Your instincts are in the right place. This isn't something they teach you in little league. This is something fundamental we're looking for -- how to wear out a pitcher's arm. If you're about to face Conway and wondering what you should and shouldn't swing at, come in here and watch how you're tending. You can click on any one of these pitches and watch it happen. Pretty great, right?

HATTEBERG

Show me some of the stuff I'm chasing up high...

TIME LAPSE of hundreds of at bats registering and changing modalities to produce graphs and numbers. PULL OUT to reveal we're now in

INT. VIDEO ROOM - LATER

Peter and Bradford review footage.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Peter analyzes the data with Billy as they throw a ball back and forth.

PETER

Everybody thinks the first pitch is what's most important, but it's not. It's the first two out of three pitches that matter the most.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

The difference between 1-2 and 2-1 is the difference between a scrub and an All Star.

BILLY

So you're saying if we can get our guys to lay off the first pitch it'll put us in the driver's seat?

PETER

Any sort of extra discipline in the first three pitches will help us.

A game is on TV in the background. Billy makes various comments the the screen --

BILLY

That's a problem right there. Terrance jogging to first.

(then)

Mr. Justice. That's what we pay you for.

(then)

Chad Bradford, you deceptive son of a bitch, I love you.

(then)

He's a pain in the ass, but that Giambi gets on base.

Another train of thought --

PETER

Hatteberg once had 18 walks in 30 at bats.

BILLY

My whole career I only had eighteen walks.

PETER

Actually... 11.

BILLY

Shut up.

And now we have QUICK SCENES OF BILLY TAKING PLAYERS ASIDE --

LOCKER ROOM--BILLY AND TEJADA - DAY

BILLY

Migs, let's make a deal. I'll pay you fifty bucks for every away fastball you hit to opposite field, but you've gotta pay me fifty for every one of those you pull.

Tejada immediately starts thinking about it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

TERRANCE LONG is working out. Billy pokes his head in.

BILLY

Hey, T. Did your car get egged?

LONG

Yeah.

BILLY

I think I just got an e-mail from the culprit. He said he was tired of paying good money just to watch you jogging around the bases.

LONG

What the hell does that have to do with anything?

BILLY

I don't know, man. Don't worry about it.

Billy exits. Long calls after --

LONG

Who brings eggs to the ballpark anyway?!

INT. CLUBHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Billy and Mecir walk down the hall with the smelly stain.

BILLY

Man, you're not fooling anyone but yourself out there. You're falling further and further behind. In your mind, what's the problem?

Mecir mumbles something.

BILLY

I can't understand you with your hand over your mouth.

MECIR

Sorry, Billy. It's just, the smell...

BILLY

Right?

(indicates stain)

It's that. And it's growing.

They stare at the stain in silence. Finally --

MECIR

I'm gonna grab a shower.

BILLY

Yup.

OMITTED

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Hatteberg in the clubhouse. Billy enters.

BILLY

Hey, Scottie. What's on your mind?

HATTEBERG

I feel like I'm hurting the team. At first base I'm making a lot of errors. I'm gonna cost us a hundred runs.

BILLY

16.5 actually. But as a hitter, you will create 70 runs. 70 runs wins us an awful lot of ball games. I can live with that. Can you live with that?

HATTEBERG

I appreciate that, but I know you're just pulling those numbers out of your ass.

BILLY

I'm pulling them out of Pete's, actually.
(then)
And another thing. When a guy reaches first base, be social.

HATTEBERG

Social?

BILLY

Like a greeter at the Gap. A guy steps into your office, chat him up. You're well read, you went to college. Have some fun out there. Relax.

HATTEBERG

Yes sir.

BILLY

Scottie, you deserve to be here.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

PETER is erasing the percentage of games left that they need to win and writing in a LOWER number--

BILLY
More information.

TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY of all of the changes to the board over the following two weeks.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY

It's the Twins vs. the A's. A TWINS PLAYER stands at first, stoic. Scott figures "What the hell?" and turns to him.

HATTEBERG
What are you guys getting up to tonight?

The focused Twins player looks at Scott like he's crazy.

TWINS PLAYER #1
Bed by ten o'clock. Game time.

HATTEBERG
I don't buy it.

TWINS PLAYER #1
I'm sore, man. Beat up. Day in, day out.

HATTEBERG
Where d'you guys go next?

TWINS PLAYER #1
Houston.

HATTEBERG
Houston?
(then)
You ever get up to Boundary Waters up there in Minnesota? It's beautiful. I went on a trip up there. Fishing trip. Caught some walleye.

TWINS PLAYER #1
That's good fishing.

CUT TO:

Scott chatting with a DIFFERENT TWIN on first.

HATTEBERG
"Mankevich" is polish?

TWINS PLAYER #2
Yes, sir.

Crack! The ball's in play. It's thrown to Hatteberg, who tags out the stunned player.

CUT TO:

A DIFFERENT TWIN is on first.

HATTEBERG

Where'd you go to school?

TWINS PLAYER #3

University of Arizona.

HATTEBERG

What are you guys getting up to tonight?

TWINS PLAYER #3

See what the city's about -- San Francisco. What are you up to?

HATTEBERG

I don't know. Depends on if we beat you today. Probably celebrating.

(then)

So my GM says I gotta be more social. What was your name?

TWINS PLAYER #3

Jaqcue.

HATTEBERG

I'm Scott.

TWINS PLAYER #3

How are you doing, Scott?

HATTEBERG

Pretty good. You got kids?

TWINS PLAYER #3

Yeah...

Crack! Hatteberg catches the ball, making another out.

GRAPHICS

The standings graphic shows the A's have just moved up into a three-way tie for first place--

REPORTER

Oakland's offense has exploded, scoring 40 runs in their last four games and extending their streak to 17 in a row which is an American League record going back to 1954 and just three shy of the all-time--

<u>AL West</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>WP</u>
Oakland	---	.619
Anaheim	4.0	.591
Seattle	4.5	.586
Texas	22.5	.450

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT

CHAD BRADFORD smokes the last batter on a called third strike to end the game against the Twins, and the TEAM rushes in to congratulate him--

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY looks down at his blackberry, sees the result and makes a small fist pump.

REPORTER

Who would have thought in April I'd be saying this: The A's won their 18th game in a row, that's two-shy of tying, three-shy of beating the American League record-

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - DAY

SHOTS OF THE GAME ANNOUNCERS.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

--where the energy is electric.

<u>AL West</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>WP</u>
Oakland	---	.633
Anaheim	3.5	.609
Seattle	7.0	.583
Texas	25.5	.449

REPORTER #1 V/O

This is something special now and far be it for me to jinx it by saying how many consecutive games the A's have won--

REPORTER #2 V/O

Nineteen--

REPORTER #1 V/O

Well you said it not me.

Tickets are torn and purses searched as record breaking numbers of fans pour into the stadium.

REPORTER #2 V/O

None of the Oakland fans in their cars down there have forgotten the A's inglorious history-making choke in Game 5 of the ALDS last October and tonight--

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

It's like a tomb. The PLAYERS are getting ready without music or chat. Justice steps up to deliver a pre-game pep talk.

JUSTICE

Hey, listen up fellas... bring it up real quick.

(then)

We got some older guys on this team, we got some younger guys on this team. What we got right now is a chance for everyone to make history. I don't want to get sappy and corny, but this is what we play for. We've been playin' real good for 19. Let's get 20. We get 20, they can't take that away from us until they do it themselves. Guys that are starting tonight, keep playing like you've been playing. Guys not starting, be ready. Huddle, you got the ball -- shove it up their ass tonight. Let's play some ball! Let's go!

LEGEND:

**September 4, 2002
Kansas City Royals at Oakland A's
GAME 20**

REPORTER #2 V/O

--one game shy of 20 consecutive wins, they have a shot at redemption. How rare is it to win 20 games in a row? This rare: No American League team has ever done it.

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

BILLY heads east on 580. His cell phone rings and he hits the speaker button for the truck.

BILLY
Don't tell me the score, Peter.

SHARON V/O
It's me, Billy.

BILLY
How you doin', leggy.

SHARON V/O
Nope.

BILLY
Sharon?

SHARON V/O
You hangin' in there?

BILLY
Yeah.

There's silence...

BILLY
Hello?
(beat)
Sharon?

SHARON V/O
(pause)
"Go into real estate". What a stupid
thing to say.

BILLY didn't even realize until that moment how much he wanted to hear her say that...He's not sure what to say back.

BILLY
I appreciate that, thanks.

SHARON V/O
Good luck. Casey wants to talk to you.

CASEY V/O
Are you on your way to the stadium?

BILLY
No, I'm on my way to Visalia to see our
minor league team.

CASEY

Dad - turn around. You have to see the game.

BILLY

No, I don't.

CASEY

Turn around.

BILLY

I'll talk to you later, sweetheart. I love you.

He hangs up, drives a little longer...letting what Casey said sink in. Then...

BILLY

(to himself)

Shhhit.

...he turns on the radio.

ANNOUNCER V/O

Tim Hudson is carving through this Royals line-up and at the end of three, it's the A's 11 and Kansas City nothing.

BILLY

(quietly)

Oh God.

(beat)

Ohhhh God.

BILLY sees the sign for the next exit coming up. He makes a decision and quickly crosses to the right, just making the exit.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER - DAY

BILLY is striding through an underground corridor which is echoing with the cheers of 55,000 fans.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD LEVEL - DAY

BILLY emerges from a tunnel to a sight Billy's denied himself for 138 games: The lit-up ballpark with a game in play. From the field, we see Billy finding his place in the seats behind home plate. Peter is already there.

BILLY'S POV OF THE SCOREBOARD: 11-0 at the bottom of the 3rd. Unfortunately the idyllic moment is short-lived as Dye strikes out swinging and the teams swap places. The A's take the field with TIM HUDSON pitching.

Billy looks around. He sees the scoreboard, a FAN with a big funky cowboy hat, the charged-up crowd in the stands, it's like the Coliseum at Rome.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY - TOP OF THE 4TH

IBANEZ of the Royals singles to center field.

RANDA of the Royals singles to left field.

But the Oakland fans are still jubilant and do the wave.

Then a big error from Tejada puts runners on 1st, 2nd and 3rd (MAYNE, Ibanez and Randa).

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - MAGIC HOUR - TOP OF 4TH

As if we've entered the Twilight Zone, it becomes twilight and LIGHTS GO ON.

DEE BROWN of the Royals singles to right, bringing Ibanez and Randa home, and Mayne to 3rd.

Ibanez and Randa high-five each other at the plate, passing Billy as they head to their dugout. Okay, the Royals are on the board now: 11-2, but just barely. Until-

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 4TH

PEREZ of the Royals singles to center field, bringing Mayne home.

Then TUCKER of the Royals doubles to left field. Justice makes an embarrassing fall trying to catch it, and Brown and Perez score. They high-five and pass Billy as they leave the plate, the second time he's seen that, and suddenly the Royals have 5.

Reaction shot CLOSE-UPS: Justice, Tejada, Tucker on 2nd, Art Howe, the Royals' dugout, a pitcher's conference with Peterson and Hudson.

And finally Billy, who WALKS OUT.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 5TH

MIKE SWEENEY of the Royals singles to left-center field -- Neither Justice or Long get it, it lands between them. And they have WORDS.

Randa makes a sloppy single to left field... this one goes between Justice and Tejada.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - BOTTOM OF THE 5TH

MONTAGE of A's at bat: Hernandez grounds out, DURHAM strikes out, Mabry grounds out... A stunned A'S FAN stands up with his arms out in a "WTF??" gesture. While the A's are still up, this is excruciating for the fans.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 7TH

ANNOUNCER V/O

Kansas City's scored five and Oakland's lead is down to six as Art Howe comes out to the mound to pull Tim Hudson.

Art Howe comes out of the dugout, gives the signal for "underhander," takes the ball from Hudson.

ANNOUNCER V/O

He'll go with the submariner, Chad Bradford.

We see SHOTS OF FANS in the sold-out stadium experiencing the height of tension and excitement in sports.

Chad Bradford comes off the bullpen mound to relieve Hudson, and begins counting his steps -

CHAD

One, two, three, four -

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 7TH

Chad arriving at the mound taking the game ball from Art, who we see is genuinely supportive and encouraging to Chad.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 7TH

Chad finishing his warm-up pitches.

CHAD

I know what it is to be in need and to have plenty. I am content. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength--

INT. ART'S OFFICE - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 7TH

BILLY is just as tense as the fans.

BILLY
 (to himself but to
 CHAD)
 Okay Chad, let's see it.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 8TH

CHAD walks Mayne. An angry fan throws toilet paper onto center field, the one thing Long manages to pick up. The crowd grows anxious.

CHAD's submariner pitch to the next batter, DEE BROWN, walks him. BROWN trots down to first and there are now two runners on.

Some FANS have to cover their eyes. There's a pitcher conference.

Art Howe simmers in frustration. He signals Rincon to warm up. The fans aren't happy either.

ORDAZ of the Royals grounds to Tejada, who throws home for the force, and misses. Now it's 11-6!

Howe pulls Bradford.

Rincon throws a controversial strike out. The Royals batter, TUCKER, protests, and fans go crazy BOOING.

Brown scores, 11-7 now, Royals chipping away that lead, and --

Howe pulls Rincon. Tam comes in to relieve him.

Sweeney's up. In rapid succession, we seem him battle off TEN PITCHES of Tam. He's got two strikes on him, more toilet paper flies on the field, Bowie comes in to warm up which Tam sees, then -

SWEENEY HITS A THREE-RUN HOMER TO MAKE IT 11-10! This is excruciating.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - TOP OF THE 9TH

BOWIE is already gone. KOCH is on the mound. There's a Royal, PELLOW, on 2nd. According to the scoreboard, it's 2 outs, 2 strikes. If Koch throws a strike, the game is over. The fans are fucking feverish.

ALICEA of the Royals singles to left and Pellow scores. The game is now TIED.

In their dugout, Royals GLOAT.

He's ended the inning, but in the A's dugout, Koch slams the wall.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT - BOTTOM OF THE 9TH

The scoreboard shows us that it's still tied in the bottom of the ninth. Nobody's out. DYE grabs a bat and walks to the plate. Then, inexplicably, Howe turns to-

ART

Hattie. Grab a bat.

SCOTT HATTEBERG actually points to himself and mouths, Me?

ART

Let's go.

SCOTT pulls a bat from the rack and heads to the on-deck circle. He only manages a warmup pitch or two before -

INT. WEIGHT ROOM

Billy is watching on a muted television as he sees Dye fly out to right field. As Hatte approaches the plate, he kills the TV.

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - SAME TIME

As ROY STEELE's booming voice echoes:

VOICE OF GOD

Pinch hitting for Eric Byrnes--Scott Hatteberg.

Scott's wife, ELIZABETH, watches from the VIP seats. She clutches her face.

SCOTT lets the first pitch go by.

UMPIRE

Ball!

Art Howe looks like he can't stand it any longer. In the dugout, Koch looks like a psychopath ready to kill.

SCOTT steps out of the box to catch his breath. He steps back in and stares at the exact spot in space he thinks the pitch will leave the pitcher's hand.

The pitch. SCOTT swings.

Crack! 55,000 erupt. The A's leap to the front of the dugout steps and watch.

We see the ball ascending on a strong trajectory, but before we can know for sure where it's headed, TIME SLOWS TO A CRAWL-

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's sitting on the floor with his back against the wall, trying to breathe. He looks like he's in pain. He can't move.

He hears the crowd ERUPT outside. His Blackberry buzzes:

"hatte homered. a's 12, ryls 11"

Billy flips on the TV. With sound off, he watches silent images of his team swarming the mound in (**archival footage**) mixed in with Art Howe celebrating with them.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - SAME TIME

The place is going crazy. ELIZABETH is screaming as she watches her husband get mauled by his teammates at the plate.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BILLY's still contemplating making AL history as celebrating players flood into the locker room just outside. Billy looks through a portal on the door. He's trapped in here now. He crosses into the

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The place is packed with players, coaches and news crews. There's no champagne spraying but they feel like they won the World Series and in fact have done something much more rare.

Billy is trying to make a fast unnoticed exit. After pushing through the crowd, he walks outside of the club house into the -

INT. CORRIDORS / FAMILY AREA - CONTINUOUS

where the players' families and wives are waiting. Billy sees ELIZABETH HATTEBERG walking toward him--

ELIZABETH

Mr. Beane? I'm Elizabeth Hatteberg. We met at my house last Christmas.

BILLY

Sure.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

BILLY

Thank me? Thank you. Whatever you put in those Christmas cookies, keep--

ELIZABETH starts to cry--

BILLY

Whoa. It's okay.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

BILLY

It's alright.

ELIZABETH

You don't know what it's like to have everyone think you're a failure.

BILLY doesn't say anything but of course he does.

BILLY

Well...You never thought that, and that's what's--

ELIZABETH

(the worst possible
sin)

I did.

(beat)

And he knows I did.

BILLY takes this in a second...

BILLY

Yeah he does know you did.

ELIZABETH

He's talked to you?

BILLY

No. I just know.

(beat)

That's all over now.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Your husband just took a Jason Grimsley two-seam fastball and parked it in the upper deck in left field for a pinch-hit walk-off home run in a record breaking game. Go tell him about it.

ELIZABETH looks at him a moment...and then starts crying again--

BILLY

No it's okay now, just go.

ELIZABETH goes off to find her husband. BILLY sees PETER standing there.

BILLY

Gilligan.

PETER

Congratulations.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

BILLY and TARA are eating.

BILLY

Aw, man. I spend the season trying to reduce it to numbers and we won on romance. Suddenly it's the Natural with Hatteberg. Scott Hatteberg.

(toasts)

To twenty.

TARA

To twenty.

(then)

You should've seen Elizabeth's face when it went right over.

BILLY

She showed up afterwards.

TARA

What did she say?

BILLY

I was a big moment for them. You know everyone wrote him off?

TARA

You didn't. You found him and you put that together.

BILLY

I know. It was beautiful. But you know... it's not gonna mean a thing.

He's upset. She knows it.

BILLY

Here's the thing -- we changed the game. We got this year, maybe next, then they're gonna catch on. This is our moment. I want to go the distance. I wanna shove it up the Yankees' ass. Not just the Yankees, but... these guys deserve it.

TARA

You deserve it. Honey, 20 games. It's a record.

BILLY

That's right, it's just a record. It gets buried in some book. Come on, tell me who won 19? I don't even know. It's 4th place at the Olympics. Any other team wins the World Series this year... great. We're still in the record books. But if we win, we've changed the game. We've put it on its head and shoved it up their ass. If we don't, they're gonna erase us.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

The same shot as at the beginning: the Coliseum from high above, only this time the final game of the division series is being played at home.

LEGEND:

**2002 ALDS
Deciding Game 5
Minnesota Twins at Oakland A's**

The camera pans down the huge scoreboard. It's excruciating. The numbers on the board tell us it's been an incredibly close game but the A's are losing by one run in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and nobody on.

Ray Durham stands in at the plate. Strike one to the Durham as we hear the venerable voice of ESPN's Joe Morgan, who's speaking post-game.

JOE MORGAN V/O

The flaw in the A's thinking, and this comes from the top of their organization-- is their failure to comprehend you have to manufacture runs in the post season.

Durham fouls off a pitch. Strike two.

JOE MORGAN V/O

You have to steal. You have to bunt. You have to sacrifice. You have to trust in small ball, not Billy Ball.

Durham swings at the fastball and connects, but it's a pop fly to second which a TWINS INFIELDER easily nabs. The PITCHER throws his glove in the air and the CATCHER runs out to the mound as the rest of the Twins run to the middle of the field to begin their victory celebration.

Durham turns away and heads back to the dugout.

The A's have lost the series.

JOE MORGAN V/O

They think they've devised a science to win games. They think it resides in a computer. They thumb their nose at fundamentals. At tradition. At Baseball.

OMITTED

INT. VIDEO ROOM - NIGHT

Harrowed by the defeat, PETER stares at the TV, listening to Joe Morgan.

JOE MORGAN V/O

They're bean counters in Oakland. That's bean with an "e" at the end. They're card counters at the blackjack table who forget the house always wins.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO ROOM - NIGHT

Peter SMASHING a wooden chair to pieces with a baseball bat.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO ROOM - NIGHT

Peter, in exhaustion, his eyes glued again to the screen watching shots (**ARCHIVAL VIDEO**) of euphoric Twins reveling and A's stunned at their misfortune.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - NIGHT

A LOCKED-OFF SHOT begins to slowly move towards the pile of celebrating players on the mound and as we near, the sound begins to fade and the PLAYERS BEGIN TO DISAPPEAR, as do the FANS and ALL OCCUPANTS OF THE COLISEUM. DRIFT in an empty stadium, towards the dugout, where the last of the CLEANING CREW brooms the floor.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

CAMERA MOVES down a dimly lit cinder block corridor, and finally into the -

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT - 1989

where we discover a solitary figure.

The camera comes to settle on the Oakland A's player, still in uniform, hours after the game has ended, sitting with his face in his hands. After a long, deep breath he sits up and we discover that it's Billy, 10 years prior.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT - 1989

Billy, still in uniform, walks down the long corridor that leads to the GM's office, his cleats clicking on the concrete halls.

ALDERSON V/O

This is weird, Billy.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDY ALDERSON'S OFFICE (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT - 1989

BILLY's standing in front of the A's GM wearing his uniform pants and a t-shirt.

ALDERSON

It's like a politician quitting a campaign to become a staffer. Do you even know what a scout does?

BILLY

I've been scouted since I was 15.

ALDERSON

And you're ready to say, "I'm not a baseball player"?

BILLY

I'm not a baseball player.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY

Ready to do this?

Pete nods. Billy calls out --

BILLY

Suzanne? Get Schott on.

(to Peter)

You ever been to Boston?

The speakerphone rings. Billy answers.

BILLY

We need to talk about the Red Sox.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

So I heard. John Henry reached out to you?

BILLY

Yes. But I haven't spoken with him yet.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

That's what he said.

BILLY

I want your blessing before I do.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

Well, how am I supposed to react to all of this? You're under contract, Billy. You extended.

BILLY

I know that, Steve, but I'd like to talk to them. I want to see what they have to say.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

You're asking me to let them talk to you?

BILLY

Yes. With your permission.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

Well, I can't do that unless I know Peter is in place as my GM.

BILLY

Pete?

SCHOTT (V.O.)

I'm not letting you take him with you, and I have no idea if he's willing to stay if you aren't here. How do I even know I can come to terms with him, given the extremely disadvantaged bargaining position you're putting me in?

BILLY

Well, I think you'll agree this is a great opportunity for him. I can't believe he's not going to make a deal.

Peter is frozen. Neither Steve nor Billy are acting like he's even in the room.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

If you want out of your contract, I want their whole team and a lot of cash. We've invested in you.

BILLY

I haven't asked to get out of my contract, Steve, I just asked if I could talk to them.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

And I said I won't give you permission unless I know I have Peter! You can't leave me with a vacant front office.

BILLY

Then talk to Peter.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

I will.

Silence.

SCHOTT (V.O.)

All right. You know what? I've made it a point never to stand in the way of a man wanting to make more money. They made the call, the genie's out of the bottle. I had faith in your judgement when I named you GM; that's why I did it and I have faith in it now. Good luck, Billy.

Billy hangs up. A long beat. Peter looks at Billy.

PETER

Well, I didn't see that coming.

BILLY

I think you should think about staying. You're one of the architects of this thing, it belongs as much to you as it does to me.

PETER

Okay... okay...

BILLY

How you doing Pete?

PETER

I'm a little overwhelmed right now. I think I need to process what's happening.

BILLY

Why don't you take the day off.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNCAR - DAY

Billy regards culinary treats presented fancifully in a towncar that transports him to Fenway Park.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - BOSTON - DAY

We establish the famous home of the Red Sox before finding BILLY standing on home plate. He looks around at the historic stadium...

JOHN (O.S.)

Billy Beane!

JOHN HENRY, the new owner of the Boston Red Sox, is shouting at him from the owner's box. BILLY gives a kind of wave.

HENRY

Due respect to the Coliseum, but this is a ball park.

BILLY

Yes it is. It is.

HENRY

(shouting)

You ever play here?

FLASH CUT:

BILLY swinging hard at a pitch in the dirt.

CUT BACK TO:

BILLY

No.

JOHN

That's a shame. Let's walk the field.

BILLY and JOHN begin a stroll around the perimeter of Fenway.

JOHN

Hey, I'm sorry I kept you waiting but believe it or not there was snow on 84. The second week in October. The car turns on to Yawkee Way and it's 53 degrees and this. How can there be an entirely different weather system here than there is three miles from here? Is that global warming or a sign that there's no such thing?

BILLY

I don't know.

JOHN

What's that Billy Joel song? Oh the snow it was falling from Stockbridge to Boston. And the hilltops seemed something because of that frosting.

BILLY

I think that's James Taylor and I'm certain those aren't the words.

JOHN

Well whatever, it was snowing from Stockbridge to Boston so I'm sorry I'm late. We'll have lunch in a little bit but why don't I have some coffee sent up.

(he's already got his
cell phone open)

Denise?

(back to BILLY)

We've got espresso, cappuccino, latte, we've got a machine that makes whatever you want.

BILLY

We've got free soda.

JOHN
 I heard about that.
 (into phone)
 Can you have some coffee in there for us?
 (beat)
 Thank you.

He snaps the phone shut.

INT. PRESS BOX - DAY

Billy and John admire the view. DENISE sets down a tray of coffee and exits.

JOHN
 It's her birthday and I need to get her a present but she's usually the one who does that for me so do you have any ideas?

BILLY
 (pause)
 A scarf?

JOHN
 You mean like wool?

BILLY
 No I meant something that women wear with, you know, a decorative --

JOHN
 Sure! Excellent.
 (pause)
 And where would I get something like that?

BILLY
 John, no disrespect, I just lost in five for the second year in a row -- give her a bowling ball for all I care.

JOHN
 Steve Schott told me he's offering you a new contract.

BILLY
 Yes he is.

JOHN
 So why'd you return my call?

BILLY
 You're the Red Sox, and I think I can help you.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

I think I can do something about the Curse of the Bambino. I heard you hired Bill James.

HENRY

Why it took someone so long to hire that guy is beyond me.

BILLY

Because baseball hates him.

HENRY

Money buys a lot of things. One is the luxury to disregard what baseball thinks.

BILLY

That must be nice.

(beat, then)

I was grateful to get your call.

JOHN looks at BILLY a moment...

JOHN

You were grateful.

BILLY

Yeah.

JOHN

For 41 million you built a playoff team. You lost Damon, Giambi, Isringhausen and Pena and you won two more games without them than you did with them.

And we begin a slow push-in on BILLY... this is the first person in baseball other than his assistant who doesn't think he's crazy.

JOHN

You won the exact same number of games as the Yankees but the Yankees paid 1.4 million dollars per win and you paid two-hundred and sixty thousand. Yes, I want you to be my General Manager.

(pause)

I know you're taking it in the teeth. The first guy through a wall always gets hurt. But those are dying voices. Any GM that doesn't tear down their team and rebuild it using your model is gonna be a dinosaur.

JOHN's taken a piece of paper out of his pocket and slides it to BILLY --

BILLY
What's this?

JOHN
My first offer.

BILLY opens it, looks at it for less than a second, and looks back up at JOHN...

INT. LIMO - DAY

Billy looks out at the Boston scenery. He steals a glance at the paper in his hand, John's offer, pensive...

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Billy comes into the locker room and gives it a look.

OMITTED (**MOVED TO G177**)

OMITTED

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Billy sits at a table. A baseball SLAMS down in front of him. He looks up to see where it came from. PETER is standing in the doorway.

PETER
Heads up!

BILLY
Jesus. What the hell --

PETER
Sorry.

BILLY
What the hell was that?

PETER
I don't know. Sorry.
(then)
How was Boston?

BILLY
Impressive.

PETER
You're giving me Youkilis, Billy.

BILLY

Why would I ever do that?

PETER

Come on Billy, Schott's going to want something in exchange for letting you out of your contract and I want Youkilis.

BILLY

Oh, what is that, your GM voice? You can't have him.

PETER

And Cash. And a player to be named later.

BILLY

You already have my job. What else do you want from me?

PETER

I don't want your job.

BILLY

Why did you take it?

PETER

You didn't leave me much choice.
(then)
Did Henry make you a good offer?

BILLY

It doesn't matter.

PETER

Did he make you a good offer?

BILLY

It was fine.

PETER

What was it?

BILLY

It doesn't matter.

Pete just stares at him. Finally, Billy reaches into his pocket, takes out the folded piece of paper and hands it to Peter.

Peter looks at it...

PETER

He offered to make you the highest paid GM in pro sports.

BILLY
 (genuinely
 conflicted)
 Do I love the Red Sox?

PETER
 I don't know. I've never heard you say
 you did.

BILLY
 So why am I doing this?

PETER
 You're not doing it for the money.

BILLY
 I'm not?

PETER
 You're doing it for what the money says.
 It says what it says to any player who
 gets big money: that they're worth it.

BILLY
 The offer says that. The money itself is
 redundant.
 (beat)
 I made one personal decision based on
 money in my life and I swore to never do
 that again.

PETER
 So you're not going to Boston?

BILLY
 I haven't decided.

PETER
 It's all over the news that it's a done
 deal.

BILLY
 Look at this place. What a dump.
 (then)
 I so wanted to win here.

PETER
 I think you've already won, Billy.

BILLY
 No Pete, we lost.

PETER
 You haven't given yourself time to get
 over it, it's only been three days.

BILLY

I'm not even over last year yet. I don't get over it.

PETER

(beat)

I've got something in the video room, come with me.

BILLY

I really can't look at video right now.

PETER

No, come with me.

OMITTED (MOVED TO K177)

INT. VIDEO ROOM - DAY

PAUL

It's not much more than a home movie but you'll get the idea.

BILLY

Who is it?

PAUL

The Visalia Oaks and their 240 pound catcher, Jeremy Brown, who's scared of running to second. This was in a game six weeks ago.

PAUL hits the remote and the tape starts. The quality is poor and the camera is focused only on Jeremy.

PAUL

This guy's gonna start him off with a fastball low and in because he hasn't read the book on our guy and doesn't know that low and in is where he eats. Jeremy takes him to deep center --

We see JEREMY BROWN connect and the ball fly off the bat but the camera stays on JEREMY running to first. PAUL slows down the picture with the remote

PAUL

-- and he knows that if he runs it's a stand-up double and he's running.

BILLY

(quietly)

Go pal.

PAUL

And now he's gonna do something he never does. He's gonna round first base, he's gonna take the turn.

BILLY

Please tell me he's safe at second.

PAUL

No. Because right here --

JEREMY slips and stumbles to the ground.

PAUL

-- is what he's always been afraid of. It's all he can do to get himself back to first.

JEREMY has been scrambling in the dirt to get safely back to first base.

BILLY

What is that?

PAUL

That's the first base coach.

BILLY

Why's he laughing? I'm gonna fire that guy, why the hell is he --

PAUL

Everybody's laughing.

JEREMY's looking around the field now, looking at his own dugout. We can't see what he sees but he's confused.

PAUL

And now Jeremy finds out why. Watch his face because this is art. He's just found out the ball went 60 feet over the fence. He'd hit a home run but he didn't know it.

And JEREMY's face explodes into a smile. He slaps hands with the first base coach and begins his trot around the bases.

BILLY stares at this. He takes the remote and backs it up a little so he can see Jeremy's face again.

BILLY

How can anybody not be romantic about baseball?

PAUL

(pause)

It was a metaph--

BILLY

I know it was a metaphor.

PAUL

That was a hell of a baseball season,
boss.

BILLY

The Island of Misfit Toys. Okay.

And with that, Billy's mind begins to go elsewhere. No resolution, no decision, other than to get up and wander on.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM HALLWAY - DAY

Billy stops in front of a door, checks to see if it's open, it is and he enters.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM SCOUT ROOM - DAY

Billy Stands and takes it in.

CUT TO:

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy stands and takes it in.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM HALLWAY - DAY

Billy stands at area from which a mysterious smell still emanates.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY (**FORMERLY 174**)

Billy haunts the field, talking to himself. Eventually he stands at the plate, and has an imaginary at bat.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pete watches Billy from the pitch tracking monitor as he argues with an imaginary ump before hitting an imaginary inside the park home run that ends with a slide into home.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM FIELD - DAY

Billy wanders over to the pitcher's mound. Lies down.

His POV of perfect sky...

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY (**FORMERLY A177**)

BILLY's driving along and listening to the continued DRONE of talk radio criticism.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

ARCHIVAL RADIO CHATTER

BILLY keeps listening a moment, then reaches in the glove box and pulls out a CD marked "Dad's Mix".

BILLY slips it in the CD player. The sound of the radio immediately snaps off and the momentary silence is soon broken by CASEY's VOICE--

CASEY (V.O.)

Hey, Dad. I picked these songs out just for you.

And then the first track on the CD comes on (**SONG TBD**).

And BILLY smiles.

He continues on down the freeway into dusk, as--

EXT. MLB FIELD

David Justice at the plate. As he takes ball four and trots down to first, the image freezes -

Legend: David Justice retired after the 2002 season, leaving baseball with a team-leading on-base percentage with most walks.

EXT. MLB FIELD

Scott Hatteberg, looking comfortable on the infield dirt finally, dives for a line drive - freeze.

Legend: Scott Hatteberg played three more seasons with the A's, then signed with Cincinnati in 2006 - as a first baseman. He retired in 2007.

EXT. MLB FIELD

Chad Bradford goes into his windup from Mars. As his hand scrapes the dirt - freeze.

Legend: Chad Bradford went to the Red Sox in 2005. In 2008, he was traded to Tampa Bay who went on to the World Series with a payroll even lower than the A's.

EXT. MLB FIELD

Kevin Youkilis, in a Red Sox uniform, shimmies at the plate. As he lays off ball four and the umpire points to first - freeze.

Legend: Boston never traded to Billy - or anyone else - their Greek God of Walks, Kevin Youkilis. He was part of the historic World Series Championship Red Sox of 2004, and is still with the club.

EXT. MLB FIELD

Peter, in a Yale Bulldogs uniform, scoops a grounder to second. As he throws out a Yale Bulldog - freeze.

Legend: Peter Brand left Oakland in 2004 to become the General Manager of the Dodgers. He's now with the San Diego Padres.

EXT. MLB FIELD

Billy - 18 years old - in his Mount Carmel High uniform, takes his stance at the plate with the supreme confidence of youth. The pitch comes. He swings. And as his bat makes contact - freeze.

Legend: Billy Beane is still the General Manager of the Oakland A's.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

The Coliseum's floodlights switch off and the green of the grass darkens -

TO BLACK