

RIGGED

Written by
Andrew Parker

Andrew.Parker.IV@Gmail.com
424.254.8865

OVER BLACK

CROWD (V.O.)
Bobby! Bobby! Bobby! Bobby!

FADE IN

INT. HOUSTON ASTRODOME - NIGHT (1973)

We track behind a canary yellow Sugar Daddy warm-up jacket.

HOWARD COSELL (V.O.)
Hello again everyone, I'm Howard
Cosell. We're delighted to be able
to bring you this very, very
quaint, unique event.

BOBBY RIGGS, 55, a diminutive man in horn-rimmed glasses and
shaggy dyed hair, walks intently down a long corridor.

BOBBY (V.O.)
My name is Bobby Riggs. I once
defeated the top mens tennis
players in the world.

He pauses, listens to the distant crowd chanting.

BOBBY (V.O.)
Now I play women.

Starts walking again, then stops abruptly.

Turns just in time to see --

A SQUEALING PIG charging straight for him!

BOBBY
Oh shit!

FREEZE FRAME on his face as he takes off running.

BOBBY (V.O.)
The pig chasing me? Least of my
problems. Let's start at the
beginning.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY (1928)

Ten-year-old Bobby circles a taller BULLY, fists up like a boxer. School kids egg them on.

BOBBY (V.O.)
That's me. The little guy.

BOBBY (AGE 10)
If you win, you get my lunch money.
If I win, I get your racquet.

BULLY
Deal.

The bully spits on the ground, lunges.

The quicker Bobby ducks the bully, sweeps his legs out, jumps on his back and pummels him.

BULLY
(bloodied)
I give up! I give up!

Bobby smiles triumphantly.

BOBBY (V.O.)
And that's how I hustled my first
tennis racquet.

EXT. PUBLIC TENNIS COURTS - DAY (1928)

Bobby hits with ESTHER BARTOSH, late 20s, an attractive and skilled tennis player.

BOBBY (V.O.)
This is my first coach, Esther.

BOBBY (AGE 10)
Can I get a kiss if I win this set?

ESTHER
(heard it before)
Sure, Bobby.

They have a long rally. Bobby is quick and crafty.

But he eventually loses the point and slams his racquet down.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I never did get that kiss.

EXT. WIMBLEDON - DAY (1939)

Bobby (21) hits against ELWOOD COOKE, early 20s, at the All England Club. Wins match point.

BOBBY (V.O.)
At the age of twenty-one, I won the Wimbledon championship in singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

LATER - He proudly holds the champions trophy aloft.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I'm smiling because I bet a parlay on myself, winning \$105,000.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY (1941)

Bobby, in Navy uniform, dials a pay phone.

BOBBY (AGE 23)
Hello, this is Bobby Riggs. I'm inquiring about my winnings.

Bombs explode in the background. He is undeterred.

BOBBY (V.O.)
Unfortunately, World War II made it difficult to collect.

EXT. AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPH CORPORATION - DAY (1971)

A gleaming tall Manhattan building.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I went on to win a few more championships after the war. Got married. And eventually retired from tennis in 1952.

INT. AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPH CORPORATION - DAY

A typical 1970's sterile office environment.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I've been working here at the American Photograph Corporation for the last eighteen years.

ANGLE ON an office nameplate - **Executive VP, Bobby Riggs.**

BOBBY (V.O.)
I take my job very seriously.

Bobby (53) and a CO-WORKER stand next to a desk full of wadded up paper.

A trash can sits in the middle of the room.

BOBBY
Alternating shots. Best of ten.
Winner-take-all. \$50.

A SECRETARY pokes her head in.

SECRETARY
Mr. Wheelan would like to see you.

BOBBY
Did you tell him I'm busy?

SECRETARY
I did. He said, quote...
(reading her notes)
"Tell Bobby put the trash can back
and get his ass into my office."

Bobby's co-worker gives him a sympathetic nod.

BOBBY
Don't go anywhere. And no practice
shots!

MOMENTS LATER

Bobby knocks on the door.

MR. WHEELAN (O.S.)
Come in.

MR. WHEELAN, early 70s, is a typical silver fox.

BOBBY
Mr. Wheelan... Dad... Sir?

MR. WHEELAN
Bobby, have a seat. I wanted to ask
you a question. Not as your boss,
as your father-in-law.
(beat)
Are you happy here?

Bobby thinks about this a moment.

BOBBY
What do you mean?

MR. WHEELAN
When I walked by earlier, you
seemed... bored.

BOBBY
I was reading.

MR. WHEELAN
The NFL lines, correct?

BOBBY
Perhaps.

MR. WHEELAN
I own a chain of photo centers,
Bobby, not a casino.

BOBBY
I'd like to apologize--

MR. WHEELAN
I know it's hard to go from the
tennis court to the boardroom. But
it's been nearly twenty years. You
need to grow up.

BOBBY
You're right, Mr. Wheelan. I'm
sorry. I promise I'll do better.

MR. WHEELAN
Thanks, Bobby. You can go.

Bobby exits and gently closes the door behind him.

BOBBY (O.S.)
You better not have moved that
trash can! I'm serious!

EXT. LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD - NIGHT

Manhattan recedes into the distance.

INT. LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD - NIGHT

Bobby loosens his tie and unbuttons his collar, a man beaten
down by life.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
Now entering, Little Neck.

A few people exit.

Bobby notices one of the remaining passengers staring at him.

Bobby returns the gaze and the passenger approaches.

PASSENGER
Excuse me, are you --

BOBBY
(shaking the man's hand)
Bobby Riggs? Yes, yes I am. Thanks
for taking the time to say hello.
Always happy to meet a fan.

PASSENGER
I was going to say "saving that
seat."

BOBBY
Oh.

Embarrassed, Bobby removes his briefcase and the passenger
sits down.

PASSENGER
(to himself)
Jeez, I want a seat, not a guy's
life story.

INT. RIGGS HOME - NIGHT

Bobby polishes off a nightcap as his wife, PRISCILLA, gets
into bed.

PRISCILLA
How was your day?

BOBBY
Pretty good.

PRISCILLA
What did you do?

BOBBY
(after a long beat)
I'm not really sure.

Priscilla laughs.

PRISCILLA

I told the Westons they could come over Saturday for a barbecue.

BOBBY

Sorry, can't. Golf that day.

PRISCILLA

How about Sunday?

BOBBY

It's opening week of the football season.

PRISCILLA

You aren't going to the Jets game, are you?

BOBBY

No, but it's opening weekend. Christmas for guys like me.

PRISCILLA

You mean gamblers?

BOBBY

Football fans... who happen to have a few bucks on the games.

PRISCILLA

Oh, Bobby. This has to stop. You need help.

She turns away from him and shuts off the bedside lamp. They've clearly had this conversation before.

In darkness, there's a moment of silence, then:

BOBBY

How about Monday night?

(beat)

Wait, that's Monday Night Football.

Tuesday night. That works, right?

(off her silence)

Right?

INT. AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPH CORPORATION - DAY

The next day. Mr. Wheelan walks by Bobby's office and sees him scribbling notes on a legal pad. Wheelan smiles.

IN BOBBY'S OFFICE

We see the legal pad is covered in chicken scratch.

Bobby secretly reads a newspaper in his lap.

Headline... **Billy Jean King defeats Rosemary Casals.**

BOBBY
(disinterested)
Eh...

Finds another... **Stan Smith over Jan Kodes for US Open Crown.**

BOBBY
Oh c'mon, everyone knows how to
beat Smith. You hit to the backhand
and charge the net.

Bobby spots Wheelan walking by, resumes fake note taking on
the legal pad.

INT. LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD - NIGHT

Bobby stares out the window of the train.

A different man walks up to him.

BOBBY
The seat's open if you want it.

PASSENGER #2
That's OK. I'm next stop.
(beat)
I know you though. Bobby Riggs,
right?

Bobby perks up, happy to be acknowledged.

BOBBY
Yes, yes I am. Thanks for taking
the time to say hello.

PASSENGER #2
You probably don't remember me. My
ad firm pitched your team at
American Photograph Corporation
last year.

Bobby deflates instantly.

BOBBY
Right...

PASSENGER #2

Say, who did you end up going with?

Bobby rolls his eyes -- *Who cares?*

INT. RIGGS HOME - NIGHT

Alone at the dinner table, Bobby nurses a whiskey highball.

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

Kids, dinner time.

Only one son -- JEFF, 12, a sensitive soul -- appears.
Priscilla follows him in.

PRISCILLA

Where is your sister?

JEFF

Career night at school.

This gets Bobby's attention.

PRISCILLA

I wish she would have told me.

BOBBY

Hold up. Did you say career night?

JEFF

Yeah.

BOBBY

How come I wasn't invited? I
could've talked about Wimbledon.
Demonstrated my serve.

JEFF

You work at grandpa's photograph
company.

That stings.

BOBBY

Well sure, now I do.

JEFF

Nobody wants to hear about what you
did twenty years ago.

BOBBY

Nobody wants to hear about
photography either.

PRISCILLA

Bobby!

BOBBY

I'm sorry. I know your father owns the company --

PRISCILLA

-- which pays for this house --

BOBBY

But it's boring. The whole thing is boring. Family portraits? Boring! Mall leases? Boring! Tax filings? Boring! Boring! Boring! Boring!

Priscilla slams her silverware down, startling everyone.

PRISCILLA

Jeff, why don't you eat in front of the tv tonight.

JEFF

Nice!

He hurries out as Priscilla turns to face Bobby.

PRISCILLA

What is wrong with you? Have you checked out mentally?

BOBBY

I'm dying.

Priscilla softens instantly.

BOBBY

Not literally. Figuratively.

PRISCILLA

Oh thank god.

BOBBY

Everyday I ride the same stupid train into the same stupid office, where I sit at the same stupid desk, reviewing the same stupid documents.

(beat)

It's terminal.

PRISCILLA

Other people would love to have your job.

BOBBY
They can take it.

PRISCILLA
So you're just gonna quit? To do
what exactly?

Bobby doesn't answer immediately.

PRISCILLA
(jokingly)
Become a tennis player again?

BOBBY
Actually, yes.

PRISCILLA
Wow. You have checked out.

BOBBY
No Priscilla, I've checked in...

He realizes that doesn't make sense, but keeps going.

BOBBY
I think maybe we should separate.
Take some time off.

PRISCILLA
Excuse me?

BOBBY
I'll move in with my brother in
California. Start training again.

PRISCILLA
You won't have a dime.

BOBBY
That's fine. I'll win money.
Hustle, like I always do.

A smile creeps across his face. He's fantasized about this
day for a long time.

PRISCILLA
You know what your problem is,
Bobby?

BOBBY
What?

PRISCILLA

You think you're a hustler. But one of these days... you're gonna be the hustlee.

She storms out of the kitchen.

BOBBY

(a bit delayed)
Hustlee isn't even a word!

INT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

Warm California sun illuminates Bobby as he descends the LAX escalator. A Head tennis bag slung over his shoulder.

He spots a familiar face: his older brother, DAVID RIGGS (a little nutty -- think Alan Arkin).

David lowers his homemade "Bobby Riggs" sign and embraces his brother.

DAVID RIGGS

There he is!
(loud, for others to hear)
WIMBLEDON AND US OPEN CHAMPION,
BOBBY RIGGS.

Nobody seems to care.

BOBBY

Former champion. David, what are you doing here? I told you I'd catch a cab to Newport.

DAVID RIGGS

C'mon, you're royalty. Bobby Riggs doesn't take cabs.

David pulls out a chauffeur's cap and puts it on.

BOBBY

Oh boy.

EXT. THE 405 FREEWAY - DAY

A lime green Chevelle travels south on the highway at no more than 40 mph. Cars pass on both sides.

INT. CHEVELLE - DAY

David navigates traffic in thick prescription glasses.

Bobby white knuckles the passenger side door.

BOBBY

Maybe we should get over to the
slow lane.

DAVID RIGGS

Nonsense! If others don't like my
driving, THEY CAN GO TO HELL!

Cars HONK at them.

DAVID RIGGS

They probably recognize you. Not
everyday you see a champion around
here.

EXT. PARK NEWPORT - DAY

The Chevelle pulls up to a stucco townhome.

DAVID RIGGS

What do you think? Only \$400 a
month.

Bobby cringes. This is nothing like his Long Island home.

BOBBY

It's... nice?

DAVID RIGGS

And the women... I'm drowning in
them, Bobby. Seriously. The morals
are very loose in this complex.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - DAY

David opens the door to a small townhome. There's piles of
stuff (magazines, records, etc) everywhere.

DAVID RIGGS

I knew you were coming, so I hired
a cleaning lady.

Bobby shakes his head -- *what have I gotten himself into?*

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Bobby practices hitting balls against a wooden backstop.

David leans against the fence surrounding it.

DAVID RIGGS
How does it feel?

BOBBY
Like I never stopped.

DAVID RIGGS
What's the plan?

BOBBY
Seniors tour.

DAVID RIGGS
Huh?

BOBBY
I'm going to join the seniors tour.

DAVID RIGGS
That exists?

BOBBY
Yeah, it exists. I'm gonna
revolutionize it.

DAVID RIGGS
The seniors tour? Who sponsors
that? Metamucil? Geritol?

BOBBY
I've got a lot left in the tank,
David. Bobby Riggs is not finished!

He bends over to pick up a ball, winces in pain.

DAVID RIGGS
Need any help over there?

BOBBY
No, I'm good.

David exits, as Bobby remains bent over.

He's not going anywhere for a while.

CUT TO:

TRAINING MONTAGE:

Think of this as the anti-Rocky montage, as Bobby tries to compensate for nearly twenty years at a desk job:

- A. Bobby runs lines on the tennis court, taking a tumble on a backpedal.
- B. Doing push-ups, he collapses on his stomach.
- C. Trying to swim laps in the ocean, he flails.
- D. Doing a Superman push-up (on his knees), he collapses.
- E. Trying to do a pull-up, he just hangs from the bar.
- F. Finally, looking at himself shirtless in a mirror, he flexes. Nothing.

END MONTAGE

EXT. HOLLYWOOD PARK - DAY

Thoroughbreds race around the historic track.

NEAR THE RAIL

Bobby watches eagerly with betting slips in hand.

BOBBY
C'mon! Go! Go!

A man in a suit sidles up next to him. This is FRANK RAGANO, 40, an associate of the mafia.

RAGANO
Hey, Bobby.

BOBBY
Frank.

RAGANO
Santo sends his regards.

BOBBY
Tell him I said likewise.

RAGANO
You making picks this week?

Bobby hands Ragano a slip of paper.

BOBBY
Here you go.

Ragano reviews it.

RAGANO
Chargers over Raiders?

BOBBY
Big risks, big rewards. Never count
out the underdog.

RAGANO
Sometimes it just isn't worth the
risk though, Bobby.

The horses hit the straightaway.

Ragano starts to exit...

BOBBY
I know I'm a little behind. I'm
catching up though.

RAGANO
Santo is a patient man. But you
don't want to be in his debt for
too long.

Bobby gives him one last glance as he leaves. Knows these
people are bad news, but he can't help himself.

Looks at the horse race results.

BOBBY
Damn it!

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby talks quietly on the phone.

INTERCUT with his son Jeff at the Long Island home.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Hey buddy, how's it going?

JEFF
(into phone)
Good.

An awkward pause between the two.

BOBBY

This is the part when you're supposed to ask me when I'm coming home.

JEFF

When are you coming home?

BOBBY

I'm not sure. Why don't you come out to California to visit?

JEFF

Yeah, that sounds good.

BOBBY

We can go to Disneyland, hit some balls. You name it.

JEFF

OK, sounds fun.

Another awkward pause. Bobby isn't the greatest communicator with his son.

BOBBY

Is Mom there?

JEFF

Let me get her.

Bobby looks over at David hitting the tv to fix the reception. *Oy.*

PRISCILLA

Yes.

BOBBY

Hey Priscilla...

PRISCILLA

If it isn't the white Arthur Ashe.

BOBBY

Nice to hear from you too.

PRISCILLA

You're the one who decided to move three thousand miles.

BOBBY

That is true.

PRISCILLA
Have you decided to give up this
fantasy and come back yet?

BOBBY
(lying)
Actually, things are going great
here. Really great.
(beat)
I have my first tournament this
week.

PRISCILLA
That sounds like a big deal.

BOBBY
It is. Big things are happening.
Big things.

PRISCILLA
I talked to my father and your
position is still open.

BOBBY
Tell him to fill it. Because Bobby
Riggs doesn't quit... he is not a
quitter!

PRISCILLA
You quit your job at American
Photograph.

BOBBY
Besides that!

PRISCILLA
OK, Bobby. I gotta go. Take care
and good luck.

She hangs up. Bobby looks at the phone.

BOBBY
(to the dial tone)
No luck needed!

He slams the phone down.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Bobby takes on a middle-aged opponent.

He loses point after point. Each more frustrating than the last.

This goes on for a while, until...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LA TENNIS CLUB - DAY

A long rally ends with Bobby pushing a shot wide. He walks up to shake his opponent's hand.

EXT. LA TENNIS CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby and David make their way through the parking lot.

DAVID RIGGS
You were a little rusty.

BOBBY
I was the tin man out there.

DAVID RIGGS
But you're getting better.

BOBBY
I sucked, David.

DAVID RIGGS
He was a junk baller.

BOBBY
I am a junk baller.

DAVID RIGGS
They should check his age too. He didn't look a day over 47. You... legit 54. No question.

BOBBY
I know you're trying to be nice, but it's not helping.

DAVID RIGGS
Listen, you'll bounce back. You're Bobby Riggs for Christ's Sake.

BOBBY
I was Bobby Riggs. Now I'm...

Bobby hesitates.

BOBBY
I'm not sure.

As they reach the Chevelle, a tan, long-haired guy in tennis shorts walks over. He has a James Franco-like surfer vibe.

This is LEE KUHN, 29.

LEE
Mr. Riggs?

BOBBY
Yes?

Lee takes out a piece of paper and a pen.

LEE
Lee Kuhn. I was wondering if I could get your autograph?

BOBBY
Sure, sure.

As Bobby signs it...

LEE
My parents saw you play in the US Open in '41.

BOBBY
No kidding.

LEE
They said you used to be pretty good.

Bobby cringes at the words *used to be*.

LEE
You should have won today. You need to up your stamina though and work on your footwork. Take better angles. Your game was sloppy.

Bobby looks at David -- *do you believe this guy?*

LEE
Who's your trainer?

BOBBY
My trainer?

LEE
Yeah, your coach.

DAVID RIGGS
Bobby Riggs needs no coach.

LEE
Do you want one?

Bobby is a little bit intrigued...

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby and Lee flip playing cards at the dinner table.

David, in chef apron, brings over a tray of burgers.

LEE
Thanks for having me over, guys.

DAVID RIGGS
Burgers are up.

LEE
(looking at his plate)
Do you eat a lot of dead cow?

BOBBY
Define "a lot".

DAVID RIGGS
Sunday is burger night. Monday
steaks. Tuesday meatloaf. And
Wednesday, Sloppy Joes.

LEE
So you're trying to kill yourself?

DAVID RIGGS
What are you talking about, hippie?
These are red-blooded American
meals.

LEE
They're full of fat.

DAVID RIGGS
The good kind.

LEE
There is no good kind.

DAVID RIGGS
What a bunch of New Age garbage.
Next you'll tell me the Beatles
were better after their India trip.

LEE
They were!

DAVID RIGGS
Bull. Crap.

LEE
(focusing on Bobby)
We're gonna put you on a vegetarian
diet. Lots of greens, lots of
beans, occasional fish. Does that
sound good?

BOBBY
(hesitant)
OK.

Bobby takes a sip of his beer.

LEE
How much do you drink?

BOBBY
Per day?

LEE
You're going to stop.

BOBBY
Huh?

LEE
Vitamins?

Bobby shakes his head "no."

LEE
You're going to start.

DAVID RIGGS
(to Bobby)
You listening to this little shit?
You're a Wimbledon champ.

BOBBY
Former.

LEE
I may be a little shit, but if
Bobby listens to me, I'll take him
to the top. That's a promise.

Lee removes the lettuce from his burger and bites down on it.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

It's just Bobby and David cleaning up. Lee has left.

DAVID RIGGS

Did you hear that stuff he was saying?

Bobby shrugs.

DAVID RIGGS

He's a snake oil salesman, not a coach.

BOBBY

I don't know. He seemed to make sense.

DAVID RIGGS

How many championships has he won?

Bobby doesn't respond.

DAVID RIGGS

None! That's how many.

BOBBY

It's a new era, David. Metal racquets, matches live on tv. I'm a dinosaur.

DAVID RIGGS

Pretty soon you'll be doing transcendental meditation and hanging out with the Dalai Lama.

BOBBY

If the Dalai can improve my forehead, I'll be his best friend.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bobby gets ready for bed. He looks down at a vitamin case -- over a hundred of them laid out.

He takes the first one and strains to swallow it. Can't believe there's 99+ to go.

BOBBY

This is going to be difficult.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Lee feeds balls to Bobby, having him run side to side.

LEE
Faster, faster.

BOBBY
I'm trying!

LEE
Try harder! It's all mental!

They run out of balls. Take a break on the bench.

BOBBY
Why are you pushing me so hard?

LEE
I believe in you.

BOBBY
That makes one of us.

LEE
Look... you're not tall. You're not fast. You don't hit the ball hard. But you do have one quality as big as anyone.

BOBBY
What's that?

LEE
Heart.
(beat)
And it's the most important quality. So if you can just be in reasonable shape, you should win.

BOBBY
What's reasonable shape?

Lee gets off the bench and heads back towards the baseline.

LEE
Not what I'm seeing out there right now.

INT. SAUNA - DAY

Lee and Bobby relax in the sauna.

LEE
Why are you doing this?

BOBBY
Doing what?

LEE
Tennis.

Bobby shrugs.

LEE
You could be home in Long Island,
enjoying a beer.

Thinks about this a moment.

BOBBY
I'm a hustler, Lee.

LEE
(not understanding)
OK...

BOBBY
There's two paths you can choose in
life: the simple life or the
unexpected life.

LEE
And you chose...

BOBBY
When I was younger, the unexpected
life. People thought I was too
short and hit too softly to ever
amount to anything.

LEE
But you became a winner.

BOBBY
I did. Because I bet on myself.
(beat)
After I retired from tennis, I
chose the simple life. Steady
office job. Steady paycheck.
(beat)
But it never felt the same as
playing tennis. I've been chasing
that high for the last twenty
years.

Lee gets up to exit the sauna. Bobby follows.

BOBBY

Do you know what the definition of a hustler is?

Lee shakes his head.

BOBBY

It's someone who tricks their opponent into underestimating their skills.

(beat)

Look at me. I'm a schlub. I shouldn't beat anyone. But I have and I will. Because what I really am is a hustler.

Lee laughs at this.

LEE

You better start winning matches then. Or you're gonna be more like the hustlee.

Bobby pauses as Lee walks ahead.

BOBBY

Hustlee is not a word!

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Lee feeds balls to Bobby, having him run side to side. He looks more fluid, quicker.

BOBBY

Faster!

LEE

What?

BOBBY

(out of breath)

I want you... to him them to me... faster.

LEE

Alright! That's what I like to hear!

Bobby dives for a ball just out of his reach.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Bobby struggles to do a pull-up.

But gets above the bar, just barely.

LEE

Yes!

After Bobby crumples to the ground...

BOBBY

Next time I'm doing two.

LEE

Let's not get cocky.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

Bobby swims in the ocean. Doing pretty good this time.

REVEAL Lee riding parallel to him on a beach cruiser.
Enjoying himself.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bobby looks down at his large supply of vitamins.

This time he takes one after the other, no hesitation.

DISSOLVE TO:

TENNIS MONTAGE:

We see Bobby winning rallies, shaking hands, posing with an occasional trophy. He's doing well, but...

The stands are also empty. This is no Wimbledon or US Open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARK NEWPORT - DAY

Bobby enters the townhome exhausted.

He drops his tennis bag by the door and opens the fridge.

BOBBY

(looking in)

I just want one beer.

But there are none. He reluctantly takes out a container of juice.

He finds a note on the counter left by David - **Alan Zobel called.**

BOBBY
(sarcastic)
Great.

INT. ZOBEL ACCOUNTING - DAY

ALAN ZOBEL, 40s, Bobby's wet blanket of a business manager, reviews a folder of paperwork as Bobby patiently waits.

ALAN
Hmm...

BOBBY
Is that a hmm good or a hmm bad?

ALAN
Hmm...

BOBBY
That doesn't clarify.

ALAN
Bobby, I'll be straight with you.
Your finances are not great.

BOBBY
But they're still... "good"?

ALAN
Not that either.
(beat)
Your income is virtually non-existent. You make a lot less than you used to. What little you do make, you send back east for private schools and mortgage payments.

BOBBY
Yes...

ALAN
You also have some... rather odd expenditures.

BOBBY
I can explain--

ALAN

Can you? \$17,000 at baccarat in Las Vegas in one evening?

BOBBY

I hit a rough streak. Plus, too much bourbon. I don't drink anymore.

ALAN

I understand your wife comes from some money...

BOBBY

No!

ALAN

(confused)

No she doesn't?

BOBBY

She does, but I will not ask for help. Bobby Riggs asks for no handouts!

ALAN

Fine, fine. But your debts are accruing, Bobby. The clock is ticking.

BOBBY

Don't worry, Alan. I know how to make money in a hurry.

ALAN

Please don't say gambling.

Bobby gets up to leave. Doesn't say a word.

ALAN

I'm serious. You better not say gambling.

BOBBY

Then I will say nothing.

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

It's New Year's Day -- 1973. Bobby is one of the few patrons left in the bar. He's in bad shape.

He watches the Rose Bowl on tv. Looks very worried.

ANNOUNCER
Archie Griffin tackled for another
loss.

BOBBY
C'mon! You have to cut left!

The bartender makes his way over.

BARTENDER
Can I get you another?

BOBBY
Sure.

BARTENDER
What were you drinking again?

BOBBY
Doesn't matter. Alcohol of any kind
will do.

Bobby looks at his betting slips.

BARTENDER
Tough loss. Didn't know USC had
this type of game in them.

BOBBY
Neither did I.

BARTENDER
You have money on the other games?

BOBBY
I lost them all. Every one.

BARTENDER
No kidding?

BOBBY
29 G's.

The bartender sympathetically winces as he finishes pouring.

BARTENDER
Drink's on me, buddy.

He hands it to Bobby, who toasts him.

BOBBY
To better luck in 1973.

BARTENDER

Cheers.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby stumbles into the townhome.

BOBBY

(slurring)

Hey Lucy, I'm home.

Reveal David on the couch in underwear, watching the news.

DAVID RIGGS

Nice of you to call.

BOBBY

Why do you care?

DAVID RIGGS

I'm your brother. I was worried.

BOBBY

Nobody cares about me. I'm an old
broken down shell of a man.

DAVID RIGGS

What are you talking about? You've
been winning.

Bobby is about to mention his gambling losses, then doesn't.

BOBBY

Have you seen the stands at these
matches?

David shrugs.

DAVID RIGGS

So?

BOBBY

So?! Nobody cares!

(beat)

The sport is dying. They only want
to see...

Bobby nods towards the TV -- BILLIE JEAN KING, 29, is talking
to a reporter.

BOBBY

People like her. Champion tennis player by day, feminist icon by night.

BILLIE JEAN KING

(on TV)

And even though I won the US Open last year, I was paid \$15,000 less than Ilie. There's no equality.

DAVID RIGGS

The reason she gets paid less is because she's not as good as men.

(to Bobby)

You could probably beat her.

BOBBY

It would be a good match.

DAVID RIGGS

Damn right it would!

And that's the genesis of "The Battle of the Sexes." A man at the end of his rope with a glimmer of hope at how to become relevant again.

BOBBY

Hold on. What if I played her?

DAVID RIGGS

You're joining the Virginia Slims?

BOBBY

Huh?

DAVID RIGGS

You do have a bit of a feminine physique. No offense.

BOBBY

No, no, no. Not on tour. I'll play her 1-on-1.

DAVID RIGGS

OK...

BOBBY

We'll televise it. If she thinks she's so equal to men, she can prove it.

DAVID RIGGS

You're gonna beat a girl?

BOBBY
 (smiling)
 And the whole world will watch.

INT. BILLIE JEAN KING'S HOME - DAY

An upscale Long Beach house. There's camera equipment everywhere as Billie Jean takes part in a photo shoot.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Alright, can you hold the tennis racquet a little bit higher?

BILLIE JEAN KING
 Sure.

LAWRENCE KING, Billie Jean's husband at the time, walks in.

LAWRENCE KING
 Hey babe, you have a call from a...
 Bobby Riggs? Who's that?

BILLIE JEAN KING
 Tennis player from long ago. Maybe
 wants me for a charity event?
 (to the photographer)
 Do you mind if we take a break?

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Sure.

Billie Jean approaches the house phone and picks it up.

BILLIE JEAN KING
 Hi, this is Billie Jean.

INT. ZOBEL ACCOUNTING - DAY

Bobby and Alan lean over a speakerphone.

BOBBY
 Billie Jean, this is Bobby Riggs
 with my manager, Alan. We have a
 proposition for you.

Bobby gives Alan a big smile.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK NEWPORT - DAY

Bobby enters, even drunker than last time.

BOBBY
(slurring)
Hey Home, I'm Lucy.

David's attention turns from an episode of *The Newlywed Game* to Bobby.

BOBBY
She said no.

DAVID RIGGS
She said no?

BOBBY
Is there an echo in here?

DAVID RIGGS
Why would she do that?

BOBBY
I offered her ten grand if she won.
She said no.

DAVID RIGGS
She gave up ten grand?!

BOBBY
Said that losing would set back
women's rights by a decade.

DAVID RIGGS
That's bull crap. She's embarrassed
she'll lose to an old bum.
(beat)
No offense.

BOBBY
A little bit taken.
(beat)
Maybe I was destined to spend the
rest of my life at a photograph
company. The coffee's good there.

DAVID RIGGS
Don't say that.

BOBBY
It's true. There's a creamer that
tastes just like hazelnut.

DAVID RIGGS
That's not what I meant.

BOBBY
Sometimes what you want to do and
what you can do are two different
things.

David exhales deeply, about to share something important.

DAVID RIGGS
Did I ever tell you about Rita
Carlson?

BOBBY
Rita Carlson?

DAVID RIGGS
Yeah, Rita Carlson was the best
looking girl when I was in high
school. Wouldn't give me the time
of day. I must have asked her out
twenty times.

BOBBY
Is there a point to this?

DAVID RIGGS
Yeah, there's a point! After the
twentieth "no," I started dating
Rita's best friend, Martha Ritelli.
Not quite as good looking, but
that's not important.

BOBBY
I'm starting to feel the same way
about this story.

DAVID RIGGS
Will you listen! So after six
months of dating, Rita started
getting jealous of Martha and I.
She saw what she could have had.

BOBBY
But you told her "no" cause you
were in a relationship with Martha?

DAVID RIGGS
Hell no! I dumped Martha as fast as
possible, and a week later Rita and
I were making out at Lover's Lane.

BOBBY
Must have made school interesting.

DAVID RIGGS
I did ruin a friendship, but those
come and go. There's only one Rita
Carlson.

BOBBY
I'm still not getting the point...

DAVID RIGGS
If you want to play Billie Jean,
you have to play her biggest rival
first.

BOBBY
Margaret Court.

DAVID RIGGS
Exactly! Margaret Court.

BOBBY
Let's give Margaret a call.

DAVID RIGGS
That won't work.

BOBBY
Huh?

DAVID RIGGS
It won't work if you call. Too easy
for her to say no.

BOBBY
Then what do you suggest?

CUT TO:

INT. WESTVIEW HOTEL - DAY

Bobby Riggs stands at a podium in the hotel ballroom. A small
group of reporters stand before him.

He holds up a check.

BOBBY
(into microphone)
And so, I'm offering Margaret Court
\$10,000 if she beats me. Winner
take all.

Bobby looks over at his crew -- David, Lee and manager Alan.

David gives him the enthusiastic thumbs up, Lee is bemused by this whole dog and pony show, Alan is hopeful.

BOBBY
(into microphone)
Or is she afraid of losing to an
old man?

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Lee feeds balls to Bobby.

LEE
You're crazy.

BOBBY
Or maybe I'm a genius.
(beat)
But yeah, probably crazy.

LEE
She's going to be faster than you.
Stronger than you.

BOBBY
I know.

LEE
Aren't you afraid of being
embarrassed?

BOBBY
Embarrassed? Going back to New
York... that would be embarrassing.

David sprints down to the court (more of an old guy shuffle, really).

DAVID RIGGS
She said yes! She said yes!

LATER - PRO SHOP

David, Bobby and Lee look up at a grainy black and white television.

NEWSCASTER

In sports news, Australia's Margaret Court has agreed to take on retired champion Bobby Riggs May 13th in what is being termed "The Battle of the Sexes."

DAVID RIGGS

Put on your dancing shoes, Bobby. You're going to the ball.

Lee turns off the tv.

DAVID RIGGS

This will be the perfect Rita Carlson.

LEE

Huh?

BOBBY

Too long to explain.

DAVID RIGGS

He's stepping out with Billie Jean's best friend.

Lee looks at Bobby again.

BOBBY

Like I said, too long to explain.

INT. DINER - DAY

Bobby meets with Alan Zobel over lunch at a greasy spoon diner.

BOBBY

Twenty bucks says I can guess our waitress' age.

ALAN

I'm not interested Bobby.

BOBBY

There are certain clues. I'm very perceptive.

ALAN

Please, Bobby. I don't want to bet you.

BOBBY
 (changing gears)
 So you can't get anything else for
 the match?

ALAN
 I'm sorry, Bobby. Nobody knows the
 number of viewers. This is
 unprecedented. The network can't
 pay based on potential when the
 potential is unknown.

BOBBY
 But ten thousand barely makes a
 dent.

ALAN
 I'm aware. But it's something.

They get up to pay the bill.

ALAN
 Put it this way: You beat Court,
 you have a chance for a big payday
 against Billie Jean. You lose to
 Court, we're back to square one.
 You've got nothing.

BOBBY
 So what you're saying is--

ALAN
 Just beat Margaret Court. And stop
 betting!

As they exit the diner...

BOBBY
 Five bucks says I can get you to
 gamble before we reach the car.

EXT. SAN DIEGO BACKCOUNTRY ROADS - DAY

The Chevelle with Bobby, Lee and David travels through the
 dusty roads of eastern San Diego County.

The guys look out the window at cow pastures and Indian
 villages.

David turns on the radio. **American Pie** by Don McLean plays.

LEE
 Turn that off.

DAVID RIGGS
See I told you he was a Commie.

LEE
I'm not a Commie. Bobby needs to concentrate.

DAVID RIGGS
This will help him get focused.

David starts singing along.

DAVID RIGGS
(awful)
*Bye Bye Miss American Pie, Drove My
Chevy to the Levee, But the Levee
Was Dry...*

LEE
I'm serious. Turn it off.

Lee leans forward. David swats his hand.

LEE
Stop it!

DAVID RIGGS
You stop it!

They wrestle for control of the radio knob like kids. The station changes to one playing **I Am Woman** by Helen Reddy.

That song plays over the rest of the scene.

DAVID RIGGS
Now look what you did.

LEE
What I did?!

DAVID RIGGS
Yes, you. Pinko Commie.

LEE
OK, square.

BOBBY
(exploding)
Stop it! Everyone stop! I'm nervous enough. This is a big match. I don't need you two fighting. Can we just ride together like adults?

DAVID RIGGS
I can ride like an adult.

LEE
So can I.

After a few seconds...

DAVID RIGGS
(softly)
Bye Bye Miss American Pie...

LEE
Oh, c'mon!

BOBBY
Enough!

As they crest the hill, they see before them a huge newly developed community in Ramona -- San Diego Country Estates.

And absolute pandemonium -- fans everywhere, RVs, huge news trucks with satellite dishes.

It's like when ESPN rolls into town for College Gameday.

BOBBY
Holy crap.

LEE
Well, win this and you'll definitely become legendary.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Cheers from the rowdy crowd are drowned out by the sounds of Bobby retching into a trash can.

He stops long enough to say a silent prayer--

BOBBY
God, I know I don't often talk to you, or believe in you. But this is important. I'm just an old man with a dream. This woman has her whole life ahead of her. Plus she's good looking. Can you, just this once, have things go my way?

He waits a beat.

BOBBY
Or least don't let me get
humiliated.

A PR PERSON enters the dressing room holding some flowers.

PR PERSON
You're on.

She hands Bobby the flowers.

BOBBY
What are these for?

PR PERSON
To give to Margaret. It's Mother's
Day.

BOBBY
Oh.

EXT. RAMONA TENNIS COURTS - DAY

Bobby enters the stadium to thunderous applause. He looks all around at the crowd.

That feeling from Wimbledon and the US Open has re-entered his veins. The unexpected life.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Billie Jean King sits in the airport terminal with ROSIE CASALS, her friend and frequent competitor.

They watch Bobby on a small black & white tv.

BILLIE JEAN KING
Why is she doing this?

ROSIE CASALS
It's stupid.

BILLIE JEAN KING
I mean there's nothing to gain.

ROSIE CASALS
She'll win though, right?

Billie Jean's not so sure.

An airline rep makes her way over to them.

AIRLINE REP
The plane is boarding.

BILLIE JEAN KING
Damn.

They gather up their stuff and take one more look at the tv as they exit.

INT. RIGGS HOME - DAY

Jeff, Bobby's twelve year old son, sits in front of the tv. Priscilla makes her way over to him.

PRISCILLA
Not so close to the tv.

BOBBY
But Dad's on.

PRISCILLA
I know.
(beat)
That doesn't mean you can sit close.

BOBBY
Fine.

Jeff backs up a bit.

PRISCILLA
I still remember seeing him when he played the US Open. He worked so hard to get there.

We hold on Priscilla, who obviously still has some feelings for Bobby.

EXT. RAMONA TENNIS COURTS - DAY

Back on the court.

Bobby looks over at the player's box -- Lee and David are sitting there. David gives him a thumbs-up. Lee points at his heart -- *use your heart*.

And then the crowd erupts as MARGARET COURT, 29, appears. She's a sweet, shy Australian woman.

Bobby hands her the flowers.

BOBBY
These are for you my dear.

She curtsies.

MARGARET
(quietly)
I'm going to kick your butt, old
timer.

And it's on...

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Bobby bounces a ball at the baseline.

Margaret eagerly awaits serve.

CHAIR UMPIRE
Zero - zero. Mr. Riggs to serve
first.

Bobby serves it. A long rally ensues. Margaret eventually
hits a winner that Bobby can't quite catch up with.

The crowd goes wild.

BOBBY
(to himself)
Dammit, Bobby.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

We see various snippets of the rest of the match.

Unlike the first point, Bobby starts to take control.

He regains his confidence. Pumps his fist. Gets the crowd
into it.

At a certain point, he almost starts to strut.

We see the scoreboard. Bobby Riggs leads **6-2, 5-1**.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals run out of the jetway.
Rosie pulls out a portable radio.

BILLIE JEAN KING
Maybe we can catch the end of it.

After some fuzz, they find an AM station.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
It's been all Riggs today.

Billie Jean groans.

BILLIE JEAN KING
Darn it!

RADIO ANNOUNCER
Here we are at match point.

BILLIE JEAN KING
C'mon, Margaret.

EXT. RAMONA TENNIS COURTS - MAGIC HOUR

The sun is almost setting. Bobby again bounces the ball at the baseline.

CHAIR UMPIRE
Advantage Riggs.

Bobby serves. As usual, a long rally. This time he's able to run down every ball. He finally ends it with a winner.

BOBBY
Yes!

The crowd erupts.

INT. RIGGS HOME - DAY

Jeff celebrates.

JEFF
Alright, Dad!

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Billie Jean lowers her head. Turns to Rosie.

BILLIE JEAN KING
You know what this means?

EXT. RAMONA TENNIS COURTS - DAY

We're back on the courts.

Bobby runs up to the net to shake Margaret's hand.

MARGARET
Nice win... old timer.

Bobby soaks it in. The crowd. The chanting. This is his moment. This is his immortality.

BOBBY
Still got it.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK NEWPORT - REC ROOM - NIGHT

We're in the rec room of David's apt complex. A victory party is under way. The sweet sounds of Motown emanate from a turntable.

David comes over with a beer and gives his brother a big hug.

DAVID RIGGS
There's the man. They're calling it
The Mother's Day Massacre.

BOBBY
(not so happy)
Uhh...

DAVID RIGGS
What? You crushed her.

Bobby takes the beer.

BOBBY
I only did it to play Billie Jean.

DAVID RIGGS
You should still soak in the glory.
(privately)
FYI - According to women in the
complex, you are in demand.

BOBBY
What does that mean?

DAVID RIGGS
 Somehow beating a woman makes you
 more attractive. Some weird mental
 effect.

BOBBY
 Yeah, not interested. Plus Jeff's
 coming to visit soon.

DAVID RIGGS
 Your loss. More for me. I'm gonna
 go check on some of those ladies
 now. If they can't have one Riggs,
 maybe they'll settle for the other.

David wanders off. Lee appears.

LEE
 Nice win.

BOBBY
 Nice coaching.

LEE
 (re: the beer)
 Training for Billie Jean starts
 tomorrow.

BOBBY
 It's one beer.

LEE
 Billie Jean hits harder and is more
 aggressive. She's a tougher match-
 up.

BOBBY
 I'm a sure thing winner, according
 to most people.

LEE
 You're a hustler, Bobby. You should
 know nothing is a sure thing.

Lee clinks his Coke glass to Bobby's beer. Gives him a wink.

David stops by again.

DAVID RIGGS
 Jeff is on the phone for you.

Bobby makes his way over to a phone.

INTERCUT between Jeff and Bobby.

BOBBY
Hey, son!

JEFF
Hey dad!
(beat)
I can barely hear you.

BOBBY
Sorry, we're having a small party
here.

JEFF
I'm proud of you.

BOBBY
(can't hear him)
What was that?

JEFF
I'm proud of you.

BOBBY
(still unable to hear)
Say it again.

JEFF
I'M PROUD OF YOU!

This time Bobby hears it. He's touched.

BOBBY
Thank you, son. It's just the
beginning. Now go to bed. It's
getting late.

JEFF
OK, Dad.

Bobby hangs up the phone. Smiles privately to himself.

INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bobby reads a newspaper recapping his victory.

He's proud, but a little conflicted. It's not exactly the
same joy that winning the US Open and Wimbledon brought him.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

The tennis court is empty, save for Lee sitting on a bench.

Bobby hurries down to meet him.

BOBBY

Sorry.

LEE

That's your third tardy this week.

BOBBY

Are you going to kick me out of class, teacher?

LEE

I'm here for your benefit, Bobby. Not mine. I could be out surfing.

BOBBY

I overslept, OK. It happens.

LEE

You're not taking this seriously.

BOBBY

I'm playing a woman. C'mon, you saw what I did to Margaret Court.

LEE

You got lucky. Her style of play didn't match up well with yours.

BOBBY

You don't need to worry. I'm Bobby Riggs. The best woman's tennis player in the world.

Bobby flashes him a smile.

LEE

You have four months, Bobby.

BOBBY

That's plenty of time, Lee. Plenty of time.

Lee gives him a look. He's not so sure.

INT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

Jeff, Bobby's son, descends the airport escalator and runs over to him.

JEFF

Dad!

BOBBY

Jeff!

JEFF

Mom bought me Sports Illustrated.

He takes out the issue. Bobby is on the cover. The headline:
Never Bet Against This Man.

BOBBY

That's me.

JEFF

Everyone at school is talking about
you.

BOBBY

That's good.

JEFF

I'm famous now.

BOBBY

I'll bet you are.

Jeff takes out a Head branded hat.

BOBBY

Here, I got this for you.

He puts it on his son's head.

JEFF

Can we hit some?

BOBBY

Sure. Dad's gonna play some golf
first though. I already had a tee
time with some friends. Wanna be my
caddy?

JEFF

Sure.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Bobby waits at the first tee with his son.

A cart pulls up with Frank Ragano (guy from the horse races)
and SANTO TRAFICANTE JR, an imposing old school mobster.

There's definitely an uneasiness with Bobby when these guys
appear.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Riggsy.

BOBBY
Santo.

FRANK RAGANO
Bobby Bolita.

BOBBY
Frank.
(beat)
This is my son, Jeff.

Jeff nods at them.

FRANK RAGANO
He's got his mother's looks. He's
lucky.

The guys smile.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Shall we make it interesting? \$50 a
hole?

BOBBY
If you really wanted to make it
interesting, we would do \$100.

Santo and Frank look at each other. Smile.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Good old, Bobby Bolita. Never met a
bet he didn't like.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - LATER

Bobby walks with his son caddying by his side.

The two mobsters ride by in their cart, directly over Bobby's
ball, plugging it.

JEFF
Hey, they just rode over your ball.

BOBBY
I know, Jeff. I saw.

JEFF
Aren't you going to do anything?

BOBBY
Not with these guys.

JEFF
But that's cheating.

BOBBY
You don't ask questions with them.
OK? You just keep your mouth shut.

Jeff nods, a bit confused.

EXT. GOLF CLUBHOUSE - DAY

The guys gather round a lunch table. Bobby pays off his losses to the others.

BOBBY
\$100, \$200 and \$300.

FRANK RAGANO
A few shots here and there.
Sometimes you get lucky.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Yeah, tough break, Double B.

There's an awkward pause between the three.

Frank hands Jeff some change.

FRANK RAGANO
Jeff, why don't you buy yourself an
ice cream?

JEFF
Sure.

Jeff takes the money and leaves.

FRANK RAGANO
(serious)
We need to talk.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Nice move bringing your son.

BOBBY
I forgot he was going to be in
town.

FRANK RAGANO
You owe us close to \$125,000.

BOBBY

I can pay some of it now. I'm good for it. I swear. Plus, the Billie Jean King match will net another \$50K.

FRANK RAGANO

That's not enough.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR

We have expenses.

FRANK RAGANO

You don't make bets if you can't pay off your losses.

BOBBY

We're still negotiating the match. It's the Battle of the Sexes. It's a huge deal. I can get you more. I'm sure of it.

Jeff walks back towards them with his ice cream.

FRANK RAGANO

Cute kid. He deserves to have a father in his life.

Frank points at Bobby. Hard to tell if it's just a meaningless gesture or imitating a gun.

It hits Bobby hard though -- not only the veiled threat, but knowing he's been absent in his son's life.

BOBBY

He does.

INT. ZOBEL ACCOUNTING - DAY

Bobby bursts into Alan Zobel's office.

He starts pacing, manic.

ALAN

Bobby...

BOBBY

Alan, I need your help. We need to up the payout.

ALAN

It's not my call.

BOBBY
There's gotta be a way.

ALAN
The promoter determines the money.

BOBBY
Yeah, well I'm pretty goddamn
popular right now and I say they're
stiffing me.

ALAN
Calm down.

BOBBY
No Alan, you calm down.

ALAN
I am calm.
(beat)
What's going on?

BOBBY
Can't a guy ask for the money he
deserves?

Alan eyes Bobby suspiciously.

BOBBY
Can we please go see the promoter?

Alan is apprehensive.

But relents and pushes a button on his phone.

ALAN
(into speakerphone)
Marjorie, can you get an
appointment with Jerry Perenchio?

INT. PERENCHIO'S OFFICE - DAY

We're in the Beverly Hills waiting area of Jerry Perenchio's
office. Sports posters line the walls.

Alan and Bobby patiently sit as a Herb Alpert song plays over
the office stereo.

SECRETARY
Mr. Perenchio can see you now.

ALAN
Thank you.

BOBBY

Thanks.

Alan and Bobby enter through glass doors, Bobby walking ahead of Alan. A man on a mission.

Sitting behind a mahogany desk is JERRY PERENCHIO, early 40s, a successful sports promoter.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Nice to see you two. Bobby, you're looking fit.

BOBBY

Amazing what a few months of exercise can do.

ALAN

We'll be quick, Jerry. Bobby wants more money for the match.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Sorry fellas. We're tapped out.

ALAN

There's got to be something.

BOBBY

Can we get it to \$100K?

JERRY PERENCHIO

Look, your match against Court drew a respectable audience. But \$100K is a large guarantee. We'd need something like 40 million viewers and a full house.

BOBBY

I can make it happen.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Are you some kind of promoter now?

BOBBY

I can be.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Eh, we don't have a lot of time.

BOBBY

I can make it happen. Quickly.

JERRY PERENCHIO

You seem awfully--

BOBBY

I said I can make it happen.

JERRY PERENCHIO

You're sure?

BOBBY

Yes.

JERRY PERENCHIO

How?

BOBBY

I'll sell the heck out of the match. Everyone in this country -- and beyond -- will want to watch it. People will clamor for tickets. The Ali-Frazier match will have nothing on us.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Except for two people fighting in their prime.

BOBBY

Look, the country is in the dumps now. Watergate, Vietnam, gas prices. People just want some escape. I'll provide it.

JERRY PERENCHIO

That's a lot of confidence. You do realize this is just a tennis match?

BOBBY

But what if it wasn't. Men versus women is an age old rivalry. I mean, women are now entering the workforce and taking men's jobs. It's time we fought back. I'm going to be the poster child for the disgruntled modern man.

(beat)

Or at least that's how I'll spin it.

JERRY PERENCHIO

You're a crazy son of a bitch.

BOBBY

I know I am.

JERRY PERENCHIO
 There's also some money to be made
 if you secure your own sponsors.

BOBBY
 I'm in.

JERRY PERENCHIO
 I like you Bobby. Maybe after
 tennis you can go into sales.

BOBBY
 There won't be an "after tennis."
 This is who I am. I want to do this
 the rest of my life.

JERRY PERENCHIO
 Alright, Bobby. You supply the
 eyeballs, I'll get you the money.

They all shake hands.

JERRY PERENCHIO
 Good luck, gentlemen.

EXT. PERENCHIO'S OFFICE - DAY

Bobby and Alan exit the office to the street.

Bobby is about to keep walking, when Alan puts his arm out,
 stopping him short.

ALAN
 What was that in there? Those
 promises?

BOBBY
 Have you ever been desperate, Alan?
 Truly desperate?

ALAN
 Sure.

BOBBY
 Times that by two and that is how I
 feel. I am in a lot of shit.

ALAN
 Gambling?

BOBBY
 Yes.

ALAN
Mafia?

BOBBY
Yes.

ALAN
Bobby...

BOBBY
I know. I have a problem. I'm
addressing it. But if I can get
them the money...

ALAN
It's only tennis... How can you
drum up that much interest?

BOBBY
Same way I always have... by being
me.

ALAN
That shouldn't be too hard.

BOBBY
We'll do a road show. Barnstorm.
Like old time hucksters.

ALAN
Alright...

BOBBY
I need you to do me a favor
though... I need to be booked on
every tv show possible.

ALAN
That's a tall ask.

BOBBY
I'm aware.

ALAN
I'm a manager, not a publicist.

BOBBY
When I make more money, Alan, you
make more money. I know you like
money.

ALAN
Sold. You know the way to my heart.
I'll do my best.

CUT TO:

THE BOBBY RIGGS MEDIA TOUR:

INT. FIRST TV STATION - DAY

Close on Bobby doing an interview.

BOBBY
Women play 25% as good as men, so
they should be paid 25%.

INTERVIEWER
And you honestly believe that.

Bobby hesitates. Doesn't want to, but...

BOBBY
I honestly do.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

He does a different interview from a court.

BOBBY
Girls play a nice game of tennis
for girls, but when they get out
there on the court with a man, even
a tired old man of 55, they're
going to be in trouble.

INT. BILLIE JEAN KING'S HOME - DAY

Billie Jean is watching that interview with her husband over
lunch.

BILLIE JEAN KING
What is going on with him?

LAWRENCE KING
He's a chauvinist pig. People love
it.

BILLIE JEAN KING
He's acting like a clown.

INT. SECOND TV STATION - DAY

Bobby points towards his shirt -- it says WORMS.

BOBBY

WORMS stands for World Organization
for the Retention of Male
Supremacy.

(beat)

We men need to take back what's
ours.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Bobby hits against an opponent while using only a frying pan.

MORLEY SAFER (O.S.)

He's called the happy hustler.
He'll take on all opponents -- for
the right price. And to even out
the competition, he'll handicap
himself. Here we see him playing
with a frying pan instead of a
racquet.

Bobby sits down with a young Morley Safer for a *60 Minutes*
interview.

BOBBY

I have complete belief in my
abilities. I'll take on all
challengers. Man or woman.

INT. THIRD TV STATION - DAY

Bobby leans towards the interviewer.

BOBBY

Personally, I wish women would stay
in the home, do the kitchen work,
take care of the babies.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby returns to Newport from a trip. Drops his bags.

DAVID RIGGS

You're huge, Bobby! Everyone wants
a piece of you.

BOBBY
I know. I don't like it.

DAVID RIGGS
Are you kidding me? People love
you.

BOBBY
Yeah, well I'm starting to hate me.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Bobby, wearing a dress, hits against an opponent.

A cigar dangles from his mouth.

REPORTER (O.S.)
Leading up to the Battle of the
Sexes II, Bobby has chosen to walk
a mile in the other half's dress.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby shakes his head as he shoves the dress into a trash
can.

He's getting more and more disgusted with the lengths he's
going to.

INT. TONIGHT SHOW - DAY

Bobby and JOHNNY CARSON get fed balls from a machine. They
hit over a makeshift net on the stage.

Johnny hits the first one poorly.

BOBBY
You gotta put some spin underneath
your drop shot.

Johnny does it. Looks smooth.

BOBBY
There we go Johnny!

JOHNNY CARSON
If this talk show gig doesn't work
out, maybe I'll join the tour.

The crowd erupts with applause.

END BOBBY RIGGS MEDIA BARNSTORM

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby returns to the Newport townhome with his bags. He drops them by the door. Plops down on the couch.

David comes out from the kitchen.

DAVID RIGGS
You got more fan mail.

BOBBY
Fan mail or hate mail?

DAVID RIGGS
Little of both.

BOBBY
How do these women get my address?

DAVID RIGGS
(handing it to him)
The first letter tells you to drop dead. The second letter calls you a ferret faced weasel. The third was a woman proposing marriage that included a naked picture of herself.

Bobby looks through the letters.

BOBBY
Where's the picture?

DAVID RIGGS
I didn't think it was appropriate.
(beat)
It's on my bedside table.

Bobby curls up into a ball on the couch.

BOBBY
I'm exhausted.

DAVID RIGGS
Hey, no one said being the most popular tennis player in the world would be easy.

BOBBY
I'm not popular, I'm infamous. A pariah.

DAVID RIGGS
You're a household name. You're
more popular than when you won
Wimbledon.

BOBBY
Ugh.

DAVID RIGGS
What's wrong with that?

BOBBY
It's all just an act.

DAVID RIGGS
Shhh! Are you trying to derail this
publicity train?

BOBBY
It's bad publicity.

DAVID RIGGS
No such thing as bad publicity.

BOBBY
I don't know anymore. At what price
do you sell your integrity?

Bobby gets up and walks to the fridge.

DAVID RIGGS
By the way, Isabella called.

Bobby slaps his forehead.

INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Bobby talks on the phone. INTERCUT with Priscilla.

PRISCILLA
Bobby, it's late.

BOBBY
I know. I'm sorry. I just got home.
(beat)
Happy birthday.

PRISCILLA
Thanks. I saw you on the news again
tonight. You said some pretty
ridiculous things.

BOBBY

What did I say this time? It's hard to keep track.

PRISCILLA

Something about women and kitchens.

BOBBY

It's not me, it's the publicists.

PRISCILLA

You're saying the words!

BOBBY

That doesn't mean I wrote them! Or think them.

PRISCILLA

Then tell them "no."

BOBBY

I can't.

PRISCILLA

Can't or won't?

BOBBY

Can't.

PRISCILLA

How could that be?

He wants to tell her so badly about his gambling and the mafia, but knows it's a bad idea.

BOBBY

I just can't.

PRISCILLA

That explains it.

BOBBY

This is going to be the most watched tennis match of all time.

PRISCILLA

You don't get it, do you?

BOBBY

What?

PRISCILLA

I didn't love you because you were famous. I loved you because you were Bobby.

BOBBY

Well I haven't been Bobby in a while. Wearing a suit is not Bobby.

PRISCILLA

But wearing a dress is?

BOBBY

That's not the real me either.

PRISCILLA

If it's not the real you, why are you doing it?

Bobby really wants to say why, but instead is silent.

PRISCILLA

Jeff wants to see you again.

BOBBY

Tell him to come out anytime.

PRISCILLA

OK, Bobby. I don't know what's going on, but I do love you.

BOBBY

Love you too.

He hangs up.

INT. TOOTSIE ROLL OFFICES - DAY

Bobby and Alan walk down the hallway of Tootsie Roll's corporate headquarters.

They are greeted by MELVIN and ELLEN GORDON, the husband and wife team that run Tootsie Enterprises.

Everyone shakes hands.

ELLEN GORDON

Bobby, thanks for coming down.

MELVIN GORDON

My wife thought I was crazy when I said we should reach out to you.

BOBBY

It's very nice to meet both of you.

MELVIN GORDON

We'll get right to it. We'd like to sponsor you for your match.

BOBBY

Great! I love Tootsie Roll!

ELLEN GORDON

It would be with our Sugar Daddy brand of candy.

BOBBY

Excuse me?

Bobby gives a concerned look over to Alan.

BOBBY

What exactly would sponsorship entail?

MELVIN GORDON

You'd wear a Sugar Daddy jacket with matching pants. Have a Sugar Daddy racquet case. You'd carry an oversized Sugar Daddy onto the court.

ELLEN GORDON

Non-edible, of course.

MELVIN GORDON

You'd do a few commercials.

ELLEN GORDON

We're playing on the idea that you are this creepy older man who is interested in younger women.

BOBBY

I know what sugar daddy means. I don't like it.

(beat)

The phrase, not the candy.

ALAN

Bobby...

BOBBY

I'm turning into a joke.

ELLEN GORDON
We thought it was fun.

MELVIN GORDON
We've seen you play in a dress
using a frying pan for a racquet.

BOBBY
This is different.

MELVIN GORDON
How so?

BOBBY
I respect women.

ELLEN GORDON
Really? You could have fooled us.

Ellen and Melvin share a laugh.

BOBBY
I've gotta go.

EXT. TOOTSIE ROLL OFFICES - DAY

Bobby exits the building. Alan trails him.

ALAN
C'mon, Bobby. You said you needed
the money.

BOBBY
But what about my pride?

ALAN
You think the mafia cares about
pride? You did this to yourself.
You quit your job. You're addicted
to gambling. It's all on you.

BOBBY
You're just like everybody else!

ALAN
I'm telling you the truth.

BOBBY
So I'm supposed to sell what little
of my soul I have left?

ALAN
 If that's what it takes.
 (beat)
 Think about your family.

Alan gives him a look, knows this is a weak spot.

BOBBY
 Fine, I'll do it! But no other
 sponsorships. None!

ALAN
 OK.
 (beat)
 Just so you know, I think you might
 look good in yellow.

EXT. TODAY SHOW STUDIO - DAY

A different day. Bobby exits the back door of NBC Studios to a throng of people, mostly women.

They are holding signs, shouting, yelling in his face.

He looks very uncomfortable. This is not what he signed up for.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

Bobby hits practice serve after practice serve under the moonlight. He's a man possessed.

He hears footsteps. Cocks his racquet aggressively like a weapon.

BOBBY
 Who's there?

LEE (O.S.)
 It's me, Lee.

Lee walks on the court.

LEE
 Don't hurt me.

BOBBY
 Hi Lee.

LEE
 Good to see you on a tennis court.

BOBBY

What's that supposed to mean?

LEE

I see you on tv more than I see you in person.

BOBBY

They asked for a show, I gave them a show.

LEE

You still have to win the match to win the money.

BOBBY

(pointed)

I'll win the match.

Bobby hits his last ball and takes the hopper to the other side to pick them up. Lee follows.

LEE

I just don't want you to forget, you're a showman second, a tennis player first.

BOBBY

I know, Lee.

LEE

You don't want to become legendary for all the wrong reasons.

Lee and Bobby share a look.

LEE

I'm serious.

INT. BEVERLY HILTON - DAY

Billie Jean and Bobby wait by a dais at the Beverly Hilton.

BILLIE JEAN KING

It's been a while, Bobby.

BOBBY

I appreciate you doing this.

BILLIE JEAN KING

(sarcastic)

It was hard to pull myself away from the kitchen.

BOBBY

Fine, fine. I deserve that.

BILLIE JEAN KING

I wanted to thank you.

BOBBY

For what?

BILLIE JEAN KING

Putting women's tennis on the map.

(beat)

After I beat you, women athletes
will get a lot more respect.

(beat)

Assuming we can take a break from
making babies.

BOBBY

Billie Jean...

BILLIE JEAN KING

It's OK, Bobby. I know what you're
going to say.

(imitating Bobby)

It's all schtick.

BOBBY

It is all schtick!

BILLIE JEAN KING

Either way, you've been a
tremendous help.

She gives him a wink.

BOBBY

You're trying to get in my head.
Stop getting in my head!

BILLIE JEAN KING

What? I'm just returning serve.

The promoter, Jerry Parenchio, appears at their side.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Showtime.

The three of them walk on stage before a packed house of
media folks. This press conference is a lot bigger than his
one in San Diego for the Margaret Court match.

Billie Jean and Bobbie take seats on opposite sides of Jerry.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Ladies and gentleman, as you know,
we moved the Battle of the Sexes to
a larger venue, the Houston
Astrodome.

(beat)

I'm proud to announce we have sold
close to 28,000 tickets.

There's a buzz of amazement in the crowd.

JERRY PERENCHIO

Now we're going global. Through
television agreements, we expect
over 80 million viewers worldwide
to see this match, a new record for
tennis.

(beat)

Any questions?

VARIOUS REPORTERS

Bobby!/Bobby, who do you think will
win?/Bobby, what are your thoughts
on women?/Bobby, where do you think
women belong?

Bobby's just overwhelmed by it all. It's too much.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

Bobby hits with a ball machine under the moonlight. He hits
each ball harder than the last.

Whacking them into the fence, not even trying to keep them in
the court.

When the machine is finally empty, he chucks his racquet.

MOMENTS LATER - AT HIS CAR

As Bobby goes to put his key in the car door, he feels a hand
on his shoulder.

He turns abruptly.

BOBBY

Jesus!

It's Frank Ragano and Santo Traficante, Jr.

BOBBY

You scared the heck out of me.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
We do that.

RAGANO
Sorry, Bobby. You're a hard man to track down.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Yeah, you being a celebrity and all.

RAGANO
Who knew Bobby Bolita would become so popular.

BOBBY
I'm sure you heard the news. After the match, I will have your \$100,000.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Actually, we don't want your money anymore.

BOBBY
Huh?

The guys look down menacingly at Bobby. Never has he been so aware of his small stature.

BOBBY
What's going on?

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Riggsy, we have a favor to ask.
(beat)
Well more like a demand.

RAGANO
We need you to throw the match against Billie Jean King.

BOBBY
What?! It's winner-take-all. If I don't win, you don't get your money.

RAGANO
It turns out you're a popular man. All that boasting on tv, all those stunts. Vegas now has you at 7-2.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Lot of money flowing in for Bobby
Bolita.

RAGANO
Which means if you take a dive, we
stand to make a lot more than the
pittance you owe us.

BOBBY
I can't do it, guys. I'm sorry.

Santo reaches into his pocket and removes a .38 Special.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
As I said, it's more of a demand.

BOBBY
Please, I'm begging you. Man to
man. If I beat Billie Jean King, I
can set up a million dollar payout
on a Chris Evert match. I'll get
you guys a lot of money. Two, three
hundred thousand.

RAGANO
Too risky. What if you lose to
Billie Jean King, but not on
purpose. There's no more matches.

BOBBY
I won't lose. I can beat her.

RAGANO
Yeah, we heard you say that on tv.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
Taking a dive against King is the
only sure thing.

BOBBY
Please, anything else.

RAGANO
Bobby, you're a gambler. Sometimes
you win and sometimes you lose.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR
This time you lose.

BOBBY
Is there any way--

Frank slugs Bobby hard in the stomach.

Bobby doubles over in pain.

RAGANO

If you care about your reputation,
you can just fake an injury during
the match.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR

Or we can give you a real one.
Either way.

The mobsters start to exit for their car.

RAGANO

Nice doing business with you,
Bobby. We have a lot riding on
this. We'll be watching.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - NIGHT

Bobby enters the townhome. David, who has fallen asleep on
the couch, is awoken by the commotion.

DAVID RIGGS

(groggy)
What? Who goes there?

BOBBY

It's me.

DAVID RIGGS

Bobby. What time is it?

BOBBY

2 AM.

DAVID RIGGS

What are you doing home so late?

BOBBY

Is it late?

DAVID RIGGS

You need sleep. There's only two
weeks until the match.

BOBBY

Good. I'll be glad when it's over.

DAVID RIGGS

You said you were going to put
tennis back on the map, and you
have. What's the problem?

BOBBY

I was wrong. Sometimes it's better to just settle for good enough. I should be a suit wearing exec. A crappy one. I made a huge mistake.

Bobby gets up and walks over to the kitchen to get a glass of water.

BOBBY

I'm moving out.

DAVID RIGGS

You don't like the Riggs Brothers bachelor pad?

BOBBY

I have a friend up in Beverly Hills. He has a tennis court on his property. I need to get away from the media and everything.

DAVID RIGGS

Alright, suit yourself.

BOBBY

I'll pack up tomorrow. Good night.

INT. PARK NEWPORT - BATHROOM - DAY

Bobby brushes his teeth.

Looks down at the vitamin case. All that work for nothing.

He violently knocks the vitamins to the floor.

Looks in the mirror at himself.

BOBBY

Idiot. Stupid idiot.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Bobby pulls up to Beverly Hills mansion. The gates open for him.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

Bobby steps out of his car. He's greeted by a colorful starfucker millionaire with dark hair and thick eyebrows. This is STEVE POWERS, 40.

STEVE POWERS

Bobby!

BOBBY

(glum)
Steve.

STEVE POWERS

So happy you finally took me up on the offer.

BOBBY

Yeah thanks.

STEVE POWERS

You know you're standing in the same spot royalty has -- Nicholson, Carson, Sinatra, you name it. But you're hotter than all of them right now.

BOBBY

OK, you don't have to sell me. I'm here, aren't I?

Steve puts his arm around Bobby.

STEVE POWERS

Don't be so modest. We're gonna have fun pal, OK. That's an order.

Bobby looks at the gates.

BOBBY

You have good security here?

STEVE POWERS

Of course I do, my man.

They walk towards the opulent front doors.

BOBBY

Good, good. There are some people I don't want bothering me.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

Bobby and Steve eat at an elaborate dining table, mahogany wood probably.

A hot blonde in a maid's uniform gets them breakfast.

STEVE POWERS

You like her? Name's Ingrid.
Swedish. Didn't speak a word of
English when I met her. Still
doesn't, really. You want me to
introduce you to her?

She walks back to the kitchen. REVEAL she has no pants on,
only a cute naked butt wiggling back and forth.

BOBBY

I don't think so.

STEVE POWERS

C'mon, Bobby! What's the point of
money and fame if you don't use it
for fun?

BOBBY

Ehh...

STEVE POWERS

Oh yeah, the match. All focus on
that, right? We'll party after you
win the match.

That hits Bobby in the gut. Reminds him there will be no
victory celebration.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Bobby is in the mansion's basement bowling alley. He's
throwing frames by himself.

Steve Powers enters.

STEVE POWERS

You need me to call you up a
hitting partner?

BOBBY

Nah.

STEVE POWERS

You sure? I know a lot of the local
pros.

BOBBY

Yeah, I'm sure.

STEVE POWERS

What's the matter?

Bobby doesn't say anything, just throws another strike.

STEVE POWERS

When I'm sad, Ingrid helps cheer me up. She also makes a great Reuben sandwich.

BOBBY

I just want to be alone, OK? Sometimes you can be the most popular person in the world, but it doesn't make you feel important.

STEVE POWERS

OK, Bobby. Whatever you say.

Steve starts to exit.

BOBBY

Steve...

He stops.

BOBBY

I changed my mind on that victory party. Let's have it now.

Steve smiles.

STEVE POWERS

That's the Bobby I know and love.

INT. MANSION TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

A party is in full swing on the tennis court. Music, celebrities, drinking, drugs. Like a scene out of "Shampoo."

Bobby talks with two Playboy pinups. They're twins.

He's very drunk, holding a whiskey on the rocks in one hand and a lit cigar in the other. His glasses are askew.

BOBBY

(kidding)

You're really sisters?

PLAYBOY BUNNY #1

I'm the younger one.

PLAYBOY BUNNY #2

By like two minutes.

Steve Powers makes his way over to them.

STEVE POWERS

I see you've met Miss March and the other Miss March. They're my new favorite month.

BOBBY

(slurring)

They're very sweet.

Bobby downs the rest of his drink.

STEVE POWERS

Girls... show Bobby which one of you is the better kisser.

PLAYBOY BUNNY #1

I am.

Before he knows what's going on, she gives Bobby a long deep kiss.

BOBBY

That will be hard to beat. Shall we just declare you the winner?

Playboy Bunny #2 moves in and kisses him deeply. Out of the corner of his eye he spots...

Priscilla & Jeff!

Priscilla grabs Jeff and heads back towards the house.

Bobby runs after them, through the house.

He catches up to them...

OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR

BOBBY

Jeff, Priscilla... wait!

They finally stop.

PRISCILLA

It's OK, Bobby. This was a mistake.

BOBBY

What are you doing here?

PRISCILLA

Jeff wanted to surprise you. I thought I'd come along too.

JEFF

Uncle David said you were up here.

BOBBY

What you just saw...

They wait for him to finish the sentence, but he just trails off.

BOBBY

I've done a lot of stupid things lately. That one looked pretty bad.

PRISCILLA

You don't need to explain. We're separated. You can drink, smoke, kiss whoever you want. Doesn't matter.

BOBBY

I'm sorry!

PRISCILLA

It's OK.

BOBBY

Please, will you listen to me?

They get to their rental car.

PRISCILLA

Good luck in Houston.

BOBBY

Aren't you going to be there?

Priscilla doesn't answer. They pull away from the curb.

All Bobby can do is watch them leave. He doubles over to his knees, bows his head.

BOBBY

What have I done?

INT. PARK NEWPORT - DAY

David assists Bobby with carrying his bags back into the crappy townhome.

BOBBY

Thanks for helping. I'm sorry I left in the first place.

DAVID RIGGS

It's OK, Bobby. We all make mistakes.

(beat)

Even I was, perhaps, a bit over exuberant in using you for my own benefit.

Bobby gives him a look.

DAVID RIGGS

I've gotten laid more in the last three months than the last three years combined. Still got it, by the way.

Bobby musters up a small laugh.

BOBBY

I just wanted to do something special.

DAVID RIGGS

You did. And you are.

Bobby looks through one of the piles of stuff in David's house. Finds a picture of him and David on the tennis court when they were younger. A more innocent Bobby.

BOBBY

You framed this?

DAVID RIGGS

Of course I did. One of my most treasured memories... teaching you tennis.

BOBBY

I taught you!

David gives him a big brotherly hug.

Whispers in his ear...

DAVID RIGGS

I'm pretty sure I taught you.

Bobby pulls away from him jokingly.

BOBBY

Alright...

DAVID RIGGS

Look, Bobby. You'll always be my brother. Famous or not, I don't care. I just love having you in my life.

BOBBY

Thank you, David.

They share a moment.

DAVID RIGGS

But if you keep winning, it does definitely increase my sex life.

Bobby laughs and punches David in the shoulder.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Night time on the tennis court. Bobby bounces a ball at the service line, deep in thought. Lee appears at the fence.

LEE

There's Mr. Enquirer Magazine. What party will the Happy Hustler show up to next?

BOBBY

Thanks, Lee. I deserve that.

Lee steps inside the court.

LEE

You've got, what, five days left? You look in worse shape than the day I met you.

BOBBY

I know. I haven't gotten a lot of sleep lately.

LEE

Too many models?

BOBBY

No, too much self loathing.

LEE

You're not a bad person, Bobby. A little eccentric, maybe. A hustler, definitely.

BOBBY

I don't know. Sometimes I feel like
the hustlee.

There's a silent moment between the two.

BOBBY

When we first met, you said you'd
take me to the top? Is it too late
to ask if you can still do that?

LEE

I usually prefer more than five
days, but what the heck.

BOBBY

Thanks, Lee.

(beat)

And for the record, I hated David's
rendition of "American Pie" also.

They share a smile.

CUT TO:

FINAL TRAINING MONTAGE:

- Lee hitting ball after ball to Bobby. Bobby sprinting after them. He's not in great shape, but he's trying.
- Bobby doing sit-up after sit-up. Each one more excruciating than the last.
- Bobby doing a few pushups before collapsing.
- Bobby hitting the last serve of a bucket of practice balls.
- David and Lee driving in the Chevelle. Lee has his head out the window. He's shouting at Bobby who's running after the car slowly, covered in sweat.

END FINAL TRAINING MONTAGE

EXT. HOUSTON INTERNCONTINENTAL AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING

We see an airplane touchdown on the Houston runway.

INT. ASTROWORLD HOTEL - DAY

Bobby enters the hotel. There's signs and advertisements for the tennis match all over the place.

As Bobby goes to check in, fans descend on him. He responds appreciatively.

INT. ASTROWORLD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby looks out over the city. Lost deep in thought.

The phone rings.

BOBBY

Hello.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR (V.O.)

Hi Bobby, guess who?

INTERCUT between Bobby and Santo on a pay phone.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR

Just wanted to make sure you remembered our arrangement?

BOBBY

(reluctantly)

Yes, yes I do.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR

If you're looking for a steakhouse in Houston, might I suggest Brenners?

(beat)

Frank and I are eating there right now.

Bobby doesn't know what to say.

SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR

Don't worry, Bobby. All your problems will be gone after tomorrow. Get some rest.

Santo hangs up.

Bobby puts the phone down and rubs his temples.

EXT. HOUSTON ASTRODOME - DAY

A TV REPORTER stands before the -- at the time -- relatively new mega-stadium.

TV REPORTER

We're here outside the Houston Astrodome where tonight Bobby Riggs, America's clown prince of the tennis court, will take on 29 year old champion tennis player Billie Jean King.

Fans file in behind the reporter, many carrying homemade signs. It's a circus atmosphere.

INT. HOUSTON ASTRODOME - NIGHT

WE'RE BACK TO THE FIRST SCENE OF THE MOVIE

The Howard Cosell VO, Bobby listening to the chanting crowd, the pig running straight for him.

We UNFREEZE Bobby as the pig gets right up to him, then stops. Held back by a leash.

A PIG TRAINER appears from around a corner.

PIG TRAINER

C'mon, Porgy. Not quite yet.

She hands Bobby the leash.

BOBBY

What is this?

PIG TRAINER

You're going to walk out there with the pig. You know, cause you're a male chauvinist pig.

Bobby sighs.

PIG TRAINER

It's all part of the show.

BOBBY

The tennis match?

PIG TRAINER

Yeah, whatever.

Bobby takes the leash and shakes his head.

IN THE STADIUM

It's pandemonium. The crowd is going wild. Music is getting everyone pumped up.

Then the lights dim for a moment.

PA ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentleman, the moment
you've been waiting for. The Battle
of the Sexes. Now entering the
tennis court, representing the
women, Billie Jean King.

As the lights come back on, Billie Jean appears, being
carried to the court on a chariot by buff gladiator-like men.

The crowd goes wild for her. She smiles and waves.

PA ANNOUNCER

And representing the men, Bobby
Riggs.

Bobby appears in a rickshaw, pig at his side, oversized Sugar
Daddy in his hand, with scantily clad women beside him.

The crowd goes even more berserk.

He looks overwhelmed, like a deer in headlights. Paranoid, he
scans the crowd but doesn't see who he's looking for.

CUT TO:

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Billie Jean and Bobby finish their warm-up.

They approach the net, Bobby still outfitted head to toe in
Sugar Daddy apparel.

BILLIE JEAN KING

You gonna take that jacket off?

BOBBY

Think I'll keep it on for now.

BILLIE JEAN KING

Your call. Good luck.

BOBBY

Same to you.

They shake hands cordially.

Then take their respective seats on opposite sides of the
umpire's chair.

Bobby tries to take a drink of water, but with his hands shaking, spills it on himself.

His eyes furiously scan the crowd -- mostly tennis enthusiasts, some just there for the spectacle.

He clearly hears every insult and epitaph hurled at him.

He eventually spots Lee and David sitting together. Their eyes meet Bobby's. David gives him a thumbs-up, Lee gives him a smile.

And then Bobby spots two other familiar faces -- FRANK RAGANO and SANTO TRAFICANTE, JR. They gave him a nod. Frank gives him the finger gun salute.

Bobby starts to sweat.

MOMENTS LATER

Bobby bounces a ball at the baseline. True to his word, he's still wearing the Sugar Daddy jacket.

CHAIR UMPIRE

Zero-zero. Mr. Riggs to serve first.

Bobby takes his time, bouncing the ball interminably. He finally serves it and it goes way long.

LINE JUDGE

Out.

He bounces the next ball, swallows hard. And serves it right into the bottom of the net.

The crowd lets out an audible groan.

CHAIR UMPIRE

Love-fifteen.

Bobby looks over at Frank and Santo. They're all smiles.

TENNIS MONTAGE - SERIES OF SHOTS

Bobby loses point after point.

Balls into the net, balls he should get to not chased down, double faults. He's pretty clearly tanking it.

The crowd starts to get restless.

END TENNIS MONTAGE

CHAIR UMPIRE

Ms. King wins the first set, 6-4.

Bobby and Billie Jean cross by each other for their end of set two minute break.

BILLIE JEAN KING

(smiling)

Is it nap time yet?

Bobby wants to say something, but can only hang his head in shame.

He sits down, slumped in his chair.

We hear snippets of the announcing team...

ROSIE CASALS (V.O.)

He doesn't look right to me.

HOWARD COSELL (V.O.)

I don't understand it.

ROSIE CASALS (V.O.)

Where is Bobby Riggs? Where did he go?

Bobby scans the crowd again. A lot of the buzz taken out of them. And then he spots:

PRISCILLA and JEFF

Jeff wears the Head hat Bobbie gave him at the airport. Gives Bobby a tentative wave. Bobby waves back.

Priscilla gives him a sad look. She didn't want this to happen to him.

Bobby picks his head up. Sits up straighter. Finally removes the Sugar Daddy jacket. His t-shirt underneath is drenched in sweat.

He makes the decision then and there -- he will not quit. He will not throw the match. He will give it his all. That's the Bobby Riggs way.

Bobby hops up out of his chair. Runs over to the baseline. Starts bouncing on the balls of his feet.

BOBBY

(to himself)

You're Bobby Riggs. The underdog.
The hustler.

And in the first point of the second set, Bobby serves, runs to net and hits a volley winner.

BOBBY

Yes!

The crowd erupts! Bobby starts nodding his head, into it.

BOBBY

(to himself)

You can do this. You've been playing your whole life.

ANGLE ON Frank and Santo: they're a little nervous.

SECOND & THIRD SET TENNIS MONTAGE

- More points, more hustle by Bobby, more fist pumping and getting the crowd.

- But he also loses many points. Billie Jean is really, really good. The crowd appreciates her play too.

- David and Lee are into it. Cheering along with Bobby, suffering when he misses.

- Jeff is on the edge of his seat for every point. Priscilla is too.

- Santo and Frank have left their seats. There's just two empty chairs where they were.

END TENNIS MONTAGE

Bobby bounces a ball at the baseline, out of breath. We're deep into set three.

The weeks of media tours, smoking cigars and drinking have obviously taken their toll.

He serves it, a long rally ensues, Bobby seems to get to impossible shots, but Billie Jean pushes him further and further. She finally hits one that he can't get to...

Tosses her racquet up in victory! The crowd jumps to its feet to applaud.

CHAIR UMPIRE

Game, set, match for Ms. King. 6-4,
6-3, 6-3.

Bobby goes to greet Billie Jean at the net.

BILLIE JEAN KING
Good try, Bobby.

BOBBY
I... I underestimated you.

They embrace.

He takes his seat and pours some water on his head. He looks over to where Priscilla and Jeff were sitting, and they too are gone.

Bobby throws the water bottle down in anger.

INT. HOUSTON ASTRODOME - MEDIA ROOM - NIGHT

The post match press conference is underway. Billie Jean's voice can be heard through the curtain.

David and Lee greet Bobby outside the curtain.

DAVID RIGGS
It was a good match.

LEE
If we just had a few weeks more to practice.

BOBBY
She still would have beat me. I'm an old man.

DAVID RIGGS
A great old man. We love you.

LEE
You'll get the next one. There's talk of a rematch.

DAVID RIGGS
I heard Chris Evert might be interested too.

BOBBY
There won't be a rematch.

DAVID RIGGS
What?

LEE
Why not?

BOBBY

As a hustler, you need to know when to fold them.

DAVID RIGGS

You put on a pretty good show.

BOBBY

Yeah, they can't take that away from me. I'll always have that. But I think I want to play in the senior tour again. More my speed.

LEE

Alright, let's start training.

BOBBY

But I'm gonna take a little time off first.

Lee and David look at him.

DAVID RIGGS

We understand.

LEE

Want to grab dinner?

BOBBY

I'm gonna go soak for a bit after this.

DAVID RIGGS

Alright. Suit yourself.

BOBBY

Thanks, guys. I appreciate it.

They all shake hands.

Bobby enters the interview room through the curtain.

INT. ASTROWORLD HOTEL - NIGHT

Bobby sits in a bathtub full of ice. A wash cloth covers his face.

He submerges his head, as if to drown himself. Pops back up a few seconds later breathing heavily.

BOBBY

Cold, cold.

He hears a knock at the door. Ignores it. The knocking continues. He again tries his best to ignore it.

BOBBY

Go away. Leave me alone.

JEFF (O.S.)

Dad, it's me!

Bobby scrambles out of the bathtub. Puts a towel on and runs to the door.

He opens it to find Priscilla and Jeff.

BOBBY

I thought you weren't going to come.

PRISCILLA

Jeff never got to see his father win a championship. I thought I'd let him experience the magic.

BOBBY

Well I didn't win. And this wasn't a championship.

PRISCILLA

It doesn't matter, Bobby. That was never the point.

BOBBY

Thanks, Priscilla. I love you and I'm sorry for what I put you through.

She understands.

PRISCILLA

I'll leave you two alone.

Priscilla heads towards the elevator. Jeff enters the hotel room and Bobby closes the door behind them.

JEFF

Cool room.

BOBBY

Thanks.

Jeff runs over to the window and looks out at the penthouse view of Houston lights.

JEFF

Oh wow.

BOBBY

I'm... I'm sorry I lost.

JEFF

It's OK.

BOBBY

It's the worst thing I've ever done.

Jeff gives his dad a big hug.

JEFF

I'm proud of you for trying. Some people never even try.

BOBBY

I did try. She was just better.

JEFF

I'm glad I got to see you play.

Bobby throws Jeff a tennis ball.

JEFF

Maybe you can show me how to hit that spin shot you do.

BOBBY

I'd like that.

JEFF

And maybe you give a talk at my school sometime.

BOBBY

I'd like that too.

Bobby starts juggling the other two tennis balls. Walks with his arm around his son. Finally content.

BOBBY

I'll bet you a week's allowance I can throw this ball into that trash can.

JEFF

Deal.

Bobby throws it as we...

Fade to Black

* A record 30,000+ people witnessed The Battle of the Sexes live and an estimated 90 Million watched on tv globally

* The match was a symbolic win for the women's liberation movement and led to greater interest in women's tennis

* Bobby and Priscilla got remarried to each other in 1991

* Bobby and Billie Jean never played a rematch, but remained good friends until Bobby's passing in 1995