

ROOKIE
OF
THE YEAR

Sam Harper
July 22, 1992

1 OPENING CREDIT MONTAGE - PHOTOGRAPHS AND HOME MOVIES

A baby in a baseball uniform.

Old baseball cards.

Fathers and sons playing catch. Families playing. Grandparents playing.

Cubs losing to the Mets during the legendary August 1969 fade.

Baseball fields.

Negro Leagues.

Funny home movies of Americans of all ages, races, classes enjoyng baseball.

Girls playing baseball and softball.

Boys playing "step ball" with a Spaulding.

Cubs losing to the Padres in the 1984 playoffs.

Boys and girls playing stickball.

Minor League baseball players and fans.

Cubs losing to San Francisco in the 1989 playoffs.

History of losing in the major leagues including the Black Sox, Jack Clark's home run, ending with Billy Buckner's through-the-legs error. This moves into,

A Cubs fan listening to a transistor radio. Under this we start to hear Harry Caray....

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Here we go, Cubs fans! Opening Day!...They haven't taken a pennant since 1945, but hope springs eternal...

FADE TO:

2 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - OPENING DAY

A photograph of PEYTON, Cubs golden boy pitcher. As he comes to life,

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

...And here comes the first pitch!

THE CROWD - stands, CHEERS, anticipating the first pitch.
 AT THE PLATE - FRICK, a huge catcher, gives Peyton the signal.
 ON THE MOUND - Peyton nods, goes into his wind-up, pitches.
 AT THE PLATE - The Cardinal swings, CRACK! gets all of it...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
 That ball is back...back...

IN THE FIELD - The Centerfielder chases it...
 THE FANS - let out a collective groan, as the ball sails...

HARRY CARAY(O.S.)
 That ball is goin' outta here...
 Well, maybe next year Cubs fans...

ON THE BALL - Still sailing....and sailing...

3 EXT. EVANSTON, ILLINOIS - STREET - DAY

...And sailing...It's about to hit the ivy, when a mitt reaches INTO FRAME and snags it...

HENRY(O.S.)
 (as Harry Caray)
 Rowengarter makes the GRAB!

CROWD ROAR O.S. Reveal that the ball has been snagged by HENRY ROWENGARTNER, 12, in an "Evanston Pirates" uniform. He's walking with CLARK and GEORGE, 12, also in baseball uniforms, who're carrying a 16ft wooden post...

CLARK
 ...So, David McNally said that he was going to talk to her, but then he chickens out and sends her a note, but then Cathleen got ahold of the note and she gave it Vicki...

Henry throws up another ball.

GEORGE
 Is that what she was carrying around? 'Cause I saw her laughing her head off, and I saw McNally practically puking...

Henry drops his throw. It rolls into the sewer.

HENRY

Jeez. My ball went down the sewer.

Henry gets down on all fours and looks into the sewer.

GEORGE

Maybe if you could catch a fly ball.

HENRY

I'm working on it...

GEORGE

Just give us a hand.

Henry gets up, steps in between them, carries the post.

HENRY

This thing's a redwood.

CLARK

No way it's going to fit. It's square.

GEORGE

It's going to fit. It's perfect.

George and Clark drop their ends, leaving Henry with the load.

HENRY

I'm laughing inside.

As Henry struggles to hold the post,

CUT TO:

4 EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - LATER

The Evanston Pirates are in the field, playing against the Winnetka Braves.

The stands are populated with over-zealous parents, some kids watching their friends. Other kids ride their bikes on the periphery, circling a concession stand manned by other kids.

ON THE SCOREBOARD - Pirates 10, Braves 4.

IN THE FIELD - A Winnetka player rips one to short. GOOSE, 13, gathers the ball up, rifles it to RICK, 13, at first base.

IN RIGHT FIELD

HENRY

How to go, Gooser! Way to be there
babyyyyyy! One more now! One mo'
time! One mo' one mo'--

RICK

--Shut up, Rowengartner.

Henry's CHEER sputters and dies.

IN THE DUGOUT - Clark and George, 4th stringers, are at the far end of the bench. Clark is drawing a boat in the dirt with a stick. George is spit-bombing ants...

THEIR POV - COACH EDWARDS' cleats and legs appear. A cleat scratches out Clark's drawing of the boat.

COACH EDWARDS

Pay attention and you might learn
how to play the game, girls.

Coach Edwards walks away.

CLARK

(calling out)

Thank you.

GEORGE

It's like having our own personal
zen master, right here in our
midst.

IN RIGHT FIELD - Henry isn't paying attention.

HENRY POV - He's staring at BECKY FRAKER, 12, among a group of girls in the stands.

IN THE FIELD - TEASER, 12, pitches. A Brave CRACKS it to right!

IN RIGHT FIELD - Henry snaps out of it. He starts forward, but then has to go back...

ON THE FIELD - The Pirates follow the trajectory of the ball.

IN THE DUGOUT - Clark and George leap to their feet...

GEORGE

Go, Henry!!!

IN RIGHT FIELD - As Henry chases the ball down...

HENRY

I GOT IT!!!

Henry gets to the fence...Looks up for the ball...It drops 10 yards in front of him...

ON COACH EDWARDS LEGS - Throws down his clipboard.

ON GEORGE AND CLARK - wincing...

IN THE STANDS - Becky watches Henry err.

ON THE FIELD - Henry picks up the ball, throws it as hard as he can. But the ball gets away from him....

ON THE BALL - arc-ing toward 2nd base.

ON THE PLAYERS - following the arc of the ball.

ON THE BRAVE BASE RUNNER - rounding 2nd, going to 3rd.

ON THE FIELD - Henry's throw drops halfway between 2nd and 3rd.

ON THE RUNNER - continuing home, for an inside-the-park homer.

ON HENRY - Sighing, punching his glove...

CUT TO:

5 EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - LATER

The game's over. On the field, Rick, Teaser and Goose are riding their BMX bikes, popping wheelies, showing off for the the girls and Becky.

George/Clark/Henry are parked on the bench, watching.

HENRY

What a nightmare.

GEORGE

When the Pirates look back on this game, do you think they're going to remember that play? No. They're only going to remember that they won.

THEIR POV - They see Rick acting out Henry's errors...saying "I Got it!" and making the spazz throw. Becky stops LAUGHING as she sees Henry...

HENRY

Let's go...

As they pick up the post...

CUT TO:

6 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH ENTRANCE - MINUTES LATER

A "Closed to Public" notice covers a "Hubert's Beach" sign. Henry/George/Clark slide through a crack in the fence.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - SAME

The lake has swallowed much of the beach and pier. Henry leads Clark and George to an abandoned boathouse that bears the sign "Hubert".

GEORGE

Hey, Hubert, stick your feet out the window!

CLARK

Do you have to do that, George?
It's a building.

George shrugs, they follow Henry in.

CUT TO:

8 INT. HUBERT BOATHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Exploded furniture, pictures of sports and music heroes, decaying life preservers, lifeguard stands, a real clubhouse...

In the center of the room, is a lifeboat in a state of disrepair...

Henry, George and Clark bring the post in.

HENRY

Let's do the do!

And they hoist the "mast" into place at the front of the dory.

CLARK

It could work.

Henry, Clark and George mount the mast. They stand back to admire it. The mast falls, taking a bite out of the bow.

HENRY

Why don't we just row the thing?

GEORGE

Hey, dweebs row. Studs sail. It has to be a sailboat.

George climbs into the boat, dramatically scans the horizon.

GEORGE(CONT)

Hoist that sail! Batten down the,
uh...

CLARK

Hatches...

GEORGE

Hatches!

George leads them out to the beach.

GEORGE(CONT)

Okay. Picture this. It's mid-July.
Boiling hot. People are flocking
to the beaches.

(to Henry)

Becky Fraker is there.

(to Clark)

...and...and...

HENRY

...Edith Berger...

Clark GROANS.

GEORGE

Everybody's there, okay. Suddenly,
something catches their eye...Just
off the beach, headed for the
horizon...It's a boat. It's sail
full...

HENRY

...They run to the shoreline for a
closer look...

GEORGE

...And it's us!

CLARK

We're steering!

HENRY

We're navigating!

GEORGE

We're gone!

CLARK

Hey, look what I found.

Clark holds up a dead fish.

GEORGE

Cool.

George picks up a dead fish. Then Henry. As they skip the dead fish across the water,

CUT TO:

9 EXT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LATER

A modest house near Northwestern U. Henry walks up the stairs, onto the porch, into the house...

10 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

MARY ROWENGARTNER, 34, Henry's mother, is unpacking a bag of groceries. Spaghetti sauce is cooking on the stove. Henry enters, dips into the sauce.

MARY

Hi, sweetheart. How was the game?

Henry GRUNTS.

MARY(CONT)

Did you get to play?

Henry GRUNTS again.

MARY(CONT)

Any hits?

Henry doesn't even respond.

MARY(CONT)

Why don't you take laundry down.

Henry GRUNTS. Picks up the laundry, GRUNTING again.

MARY(CONT)

Catch!

ON MARY - as she tosses Henry a box of Salvo Detergent tablets. Its a HIGH ARC-ING toss...

ON THE BOX - Arc-ing through the air...

ON HENRY - trying to get under it...

The box drops in front of him. He sighs, picks up the box, walks downstairs. Mary watches him go, very sympathetically.

JACK
Put this stuff in the washer, will
ya?

Henry stuffs his clothes in the laundry.

HENRY
Laundramat closed?

Jack LAUGHS.

JACK
Cubs lost again last night--

HENRY
I know--

Henry takes the extra tablets out of the washer...

JACK
--Sure you can take another summer
in the cellar?

HENRY
They'll come around. They just got
Chet Crumm back.

JACK
That old guy. He hasn't had any
stuff since he had surgery.

Henry slams the washing machine door. Turns on the machine.

HENRY
Gooden came back. Hershiser came
back--

JACK
--Yeah. But everybody knows that
Crumm is scared to throw hard.

HENRY
--When he's rested he'll throw
some of his old heat--

JACK
--Yeah. Yeah. The Cubs haven't won
a series since 1908. They're
losers. That's the bottom line.
Root for the White Sox, Hank.

Jack starts back up the stairs. Henry follows, making faces
behind his back.

11 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - SAME

Henry enters with the laundry basket. He jams the laundry in the front-loading washing machine. He opens the Salvo Detergent box, looks at the tablet.

HENRY
(to himself)
The Pirates are bringing in that
deadly southpaw from right field,
Henry Rowengartner.

Henry CROWD ROARS, crosses to a dirty towel, his "mound", steps on the "rubber", glares back at the "strike zone".

HENRY POV - STRIKE ZONE - The open door to the washing machine.

HENRY(CONT)
He's the most feared pitcher in
the greater Chicago Little League.
And no one can touch his heater!

As Henry goes into his wind-up and throws..

ON THE SALVO TABLET - going into the washing machine.

ON HENRY - throwing a dozen Salvo Tablets at the washing machine in quick succession.

ON THE MACHINE - eight tablets make it through the door, four miss. Henry's not a total spazz. Then,

HENRY(CONT)
Bottom nine. Two out. One on. Full
count...Rowengartner takes a long
look at the runner at second...

Henry goes into his wind-up. He's in such a "zone" of his own, that he doesn't even look at the strike zone. He throws!

REVEAL JACK CHAMPLAIN, 35, has positioned himself in front of the washing machine. With a plunger! CRACK! He powders the Salvo Tablet!

JACK
Cubs Lose!

REVEAL Henry covered with Salvo dust.

HENRY
Jack. What a surprise.

12 INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Jack and Henry come in. Mary puts spaghetti on the table.

MARY

Did I hear you two talking sports again?

JACK

What else is there?

Jack kisses Mary. Henry looks on, disgusted.

JACK(CONT)

You put your face on. I'll make a call and we'll get out of here.

Jack goes to the phone, picks up dial.

MARY

(to Henry)

Are you going to be okay?

ON JACK - on the phone.

JACK

Bernie. Jack. Did we close?

ON HENRY AND MARY

HENRY

I can't believe it. Three weeks with this guy and already I'm doing his laundry.

Mary ignores the comment.

MARY

We'll be back early.

ON JACK - on the phone

JACK

Right. Right. Tell him we'll pay 4 cents on the dollar. But that's as high as we'll go.

ON HENRY AND MARY

MARY

In bed by 8:30, sweetheart. And do your homework--

HENRY

--Blast-Metallica-chug-a-case-of-
brew-and-hang-my-butt-out-the-
window?

MARY

That too.

Jack hangs up the phone.

JACK

Ready, babe?

She kisses him again. As they go, Jack throws a final jab,

JACK

Go White Sox.

Henry watches them exit, then follows, carrying his plate of spaghetti...

13 INT. HENRY'S ROOM - SAME

Henry enters his Cub shrine: The walls are covered with pictures of current and former Cubs, banners, etc. A poster of a much younger Chet Crumm calls him "ROCKET".

- The only non-Cub item is a photo of Henry's Dad. He's wearing a baseball glove, in the midst of floating an underhanded pitch into home. Henry puts his plate down, goes to the window.

HENRY POV - OUT THE WINDOW - Jack opens the Trans Am door for Mary. As Mary gets in...

HENRY(O.S.)

(as James Earl Jones)

Oh, Mom. Not Jack Champlain. He is
man. He is wheeler dealer...

Jack closes the door, checks his "look" in the window glass, fluffs his hair with his fingers...

HENRY(O.S.)

...He is The Stylish One...

Henry sits on his bed. He looks at the plate, but his appetite is gone. He turns on the radio, which is next to a picture of his father who is seen pitching an underhand floater pitch.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Hey, Cubs fans! It's beautiful
night for baseball here in St.
Louis--

Henry smiles, comforted by the sounds of baseball. Then he pulls a baseball mitt and ball out from under his pillow. The mitt is an old, oily, taped '50s relic.

As Caray rattles on, Henry tosses the ball above his head. He errs. The ball bounces onto the floor, just out of his reach.

14 EXT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - SAME

Night falls on the neighborhood. Henry's room light is a beacon...

CUT TO:

15 INT. WILSON JHS - LUNCH ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Some of the Pirates sit at the "A" table. They're throwing food across the lunch room at the CAMPUS SPAZZES at the "Z" tables.

George, Clark and Henry come in with their trays. George says "Hi" to everyone who passes. No one returns the greeting.

CLARK

George. You're humiliating yourself. Duck.

They duck. A Ding-Dong flies overhead.

George, Clark and Henry sit alone, at an "M" table. They're staring longingly at the girls, including Becky.

Then EDITH BERGER, 12, a plain Jane, approaches the table carrying her lunch tray.

EDITH

Hi, guys. Mind if I sit here?

Clark hides, too shy to respond. They MUMBLE that they don't mind. Edith sits, starts to eat.

GEORGE

Remember that time you and Becky got put on that Science Project together in 3rd grade?

HENRY

Let it go, George. She doesn't like me. And besides she's not that hot.

GEORGE

Not hot? She's stacked.

George indicates Becky's bust size by cupping his hands on his chest.

EDITH

Cammy Harold told me, and I'm quoting here, "Becky Fraker doesn't think you're very ugly."

HENRY

Really?

GEORGE

Once we launch, she's going to be all over you...

HENRY

Sure.

They duck. An entire plate of food flies overhead...

CUT TO:

16 EXT. WILSON JHS PLAYGROUND - LATER

Clark, George and Henry emerge from the lunch room onto the playground. They pass some of the Pirate players, who're hitting fungoes.

RICK

HEY! Rowengartner, good game yesterday.

They arrive at the chin-up bar where the PHYS ED SPAZZES watch a fellow Spazz hang like a bag of cement. One Spazz says to the other: "C'MON, GIMME ONE!"

BASEBALL PLAYER(O.S.)

HEADS UP!!!

SPAZZ POV - in the sky above them is a towering fly ball.

PHYS ED SPAZZ #1

What is that?

PHYS ED SPAZZ #2

(total horror)

It's a BASEBALL!

The spazzes SCREAM, scatter, as if the ball is a bomb.

HENRY POV - Becky Fraker is watching the ball.

Henry realizes that this is his chance to show EVERYONE that he DOES have baseball talent.

Henry takes off after the fly ball.

CLARK
What's he doing?

ON HENRY - putting it into third gear.

ON THE PIRATES - LAUGHING.

ON HENRY - actually catching up with the ball.

ON THE PHYS ED SPAZZES - seeing him catch up with the ball.

GEORGE
He's going to catch it!

The Spazzes: "He's going to catch it!" "Go Hank!"

ON HENRY - churning now, all heart, closing the gap between himself and the ball...

ON THE GROUND - A baseball in Henry's path.

ON HENRY - smiling now, because he knows he'll make the catch.

ON THE PLAYGROUND - Everybody watching, silently, drawn into the drama of the moment...

ON HENRY - As the ball drops into his outstretched hand.

HENRY
I GOT IT!

ON HENRY'S FOOT - stepping squarely on the baseball...

ON HENRY SLOW MOTION - sailing into the air, arms and legs all over the place.

THE PIRATES - CHUCKLE, give each other skin.

THE SPAZZES - cover their bifocals, SCREAM, faint, spazz out.

ON HENRY - slamming into the turf, hard, on his left side...

GEORGE/CLARK
HENRY!!!

As George and Clark run to Henry's aid...

CUT TO:

17 INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

CLOSE ON AN X-RAY - revealing an arm that's broken.

DR. KERSTEN, 53, peels the x-ray off, examines it.

DR. KERSTEN

Inverted fractures of the
phelanges and assorted rotator
cartilage damage--Your basic bag
of bone meal.

REVEAL Henry in a body/arm cast. It looks like he's raising his left hand to answer a question in class. Clark, George and Mary are gathered around Hank, comforting him.

MARY

What does all that mean, Doctor?

DR. KERSTEN

It means Henry's in deep plaster
until mid-August.

HENRY

That's four months!

Mary puts an arm around Henry, comforts him.

GEORGE

Stiff sentence.

DR. KERSTEN

Henry has to take it easy. I want
those bones to set.

HENRY

This is going to be a great
summer.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. DR. KERSTEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The Monks squeeze into Mary's VW. It's awkward until Mary opens the sun roof. Henry's hand pokes through. They drive away, the VW belching smoke...

CUT TO:

19 MONTAGE - HENRY'S RECOVERY

Some Pirates and girls are hanging out on the field. As Henry walks past, Rick raises his left hand, stiffly waves, like he's wearing a cast, too. The Pirates join in, as the girls watch.

Graduation day at Wilson JHS. The students charge out of the school, hands in the air, totally excited. Their hands fall, but Henry's stays up.

Clark jumps through a sprinkler. George jumps through the sprinkler. Henry, wearing a full garbage bag, runs through.

Henry's lying on the sofa watching TV as Mary comes into the house and kisses Jack goodnight and sends him off.

At home, Henry listens to the radio. Harry Caray: "The Cubbie losing streak continues..."

On the beach, the boys try to raise another mast on the boat. It falls, hooking onto Henry's arm...

George, Clark and Henry chase the "Good Humor" truck.

Henry sits alone in bed, listening to his beloved Cubs lose.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. DR. KERSTEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The VW enters Dr. Kersten's parking lot, still belching smoke. Henry's arm is poking through the roof...

FADE TO:

21 INT. DR. KERSTEN ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC - DAY

CLOSE ON - Henry's cast in two pieces.

Mary, Clark, George and Henry are anxiously waiting as Dr. Kersten studies an x-ray...

DR. KERSTEN

The bone is fine, but the tendons have connected with cartilage in the ulna...

MARY

Is that bad?

DR. KERSTEN

Well, it's unusual. Let's have a look. Let's try the fingers first.

(Henry moves fingers)

Good. Now, raise the arm.

(Henry raises)

Good. To the side.

(Henry raises)

Good. Bend at the elbow.

(Henry bends)
Good. Now rotate from the
shoulder.

As Henry reaches the top of his shoulder rotation, his arm comes down LIGHTENING FAST, slapping Dr. Kersten's glasses off. Dr. Kersten grabs his nose.

DR. KERSTEN
Funky butt-loving!

GEORGE
(to Clark)
Did he say funky butt-loving?

MARY
(to Dr. Kersten)
Are you alright?

HENRY
I'm sorry. I don't know what
happened.

DR. KERSTEN
I think those tendons have healed
a little tight. Give it some time.
It'll work itself out...

MARY
You're bleeding, Doctor.

Henry tries to shake Dr. Kersten's hand. He backs off, afraid of getting whacked again...

DR. KERSTEN
Go. Please, just go.

They leave. Dr. Kersten looks at the x-ray, shrugs off the weirdness of it. Then he touches his tender nose.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. DR. KERSTEN'S OFFICE - PARKING LOT - SECONDS LATER

As they emerge, Mary pulls an envelope out of her purse, hands it to Henry.

MARY
Happy...cast-off day.

He opens it, looks in.

CLARK
What is it?

HENRY

It's nothing, nothing at all...
Just CUBS TICKETS! Noon TODAY!

The boys ad-lib "thank you"s. HIGH FIVES Henry's arm whips before they have a chance to give five...

CUT TO:

23 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

On the electric sign: "CUBS VS. BRAVES - Noon Today". The VW pulls up to the curb. Fans are filing into the stadium.

24 INT. VW - SAME

As the Monks hustle out of the VW, totally psyched,

GEORGE/CLARK

Thanks, Mrs. R.

MARY

Take the E Line home and--

HENRY

--Talk-to-strangers-shoplift-run-naked-through-the-streets?

MARY

That too.

When he's sure Clark and George aren't watching, Henry slips his mother a kiss...

HENRY

Thanks a lot, Mom.

Mary smiles, a soft touch. Henry gets out.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

Pre-game excitement: Kids in Cubs colors, wearing those big foam rubber hands; Vendors hawking programs; families crowding through the turnstiles. Henry and the boys enter...

26 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - BLEACHERS - MINUTES LATER

Loaded down with food, programs, the Monks sit among scattered BLEACHER BUMS--The Cubs are not a big draw these days.

FADE TO:

27 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - NINTH INNING

THE SCOREBOARD - Cubs 5, Braves 3.

ON THE FIELD - Chet Crumm gets ready to pitch...

IN THE BLEACHERS

GEORGE

--Gas 'im, Crumm!

CLARK

--Give him the cheese!--

HENRY

--Throw him the high, stinky
cheddar, Rocket!!

ON THE FIELD - Braves at the corners. Chet winds up and throws weakly, a Brave swats the ball deep into the hole.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

That ball is sharply hit...

Suarez catches up with the ball, wings it to Fern at first, but it's not in time.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Fern is unable to make a play! The
run scores! 5-4 Cubbies...

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella spits. Parker spits. Brickma accidentally blows the entire wad of tobacco onto his shirt.

IN THE BLEACHERS - Henry, Clark and George GROAN, worried now.

HENRY

(to himself)

Come on, Rocket, throw heat.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Top nine. Two out. Casey Cronin comes to the plate with runners at 1st and 2nd. And it's blowing out at Wrigley.

ON THE CENTERFIELD FLAGS - rippling toward Addison Ave.

HARRY CARAY(CONT)

Martinella wants to talk it over.

ON THE FIELD - Martinella heads for the mound.

28 INT. WRIGLEY - CUBS OWNER'S OFFICE - SAME

Bob Carson, Cubs Owner, and Larry "Fish" Fischer, Cubs PR Director, watch the game together. Carson paces. Fish eyes him nervously.

FISH

I don't know how you can put up with this mess, Mr. Carson.

BOB CARSON

What do you want me to do, fire the whole team?--

FISH

--Nothing more motivating than seeing a few heads roll--

Carson keeps pacing.

29 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SAME

ON THE MOUND - Martinella, Frick, the huge catcher, and Crumm.

MARTINELLA

Howya feeling?

CHET

I can finish.

MARTINELLA

Good. 'Cause we're 2 for August. I want this one.

Martinella heads back for the dugout. Frick slams the ball in Chet's glove.

FRICK

Put something on it, wouldya.

Frick goes back to the plate.

IN THE BLEACHERS

HENRY

Blow him down, CHET!

CLARK

Throw the heater!

GEORGE

Bake his tuna!

ON THE FIELD - We go around the infield...

FERN

End it, Crumm. I'm nauseous.

OKIE

I'm 2 for 4 today, Crumm. I don't want to bat again.

ON CHET - Throwing a strike.

SUAREZ

Finish him. I gotta hot date.

UMPIRE

PLAY BALL, CRUMM!

Chet looks for the signal, nods, checks the runners, goes into his wind-up and throws a side-armed slider...

AT THE PLATE - Cronin CRACKS IT!

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

That ball is back, back...

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella, Parker and Brickma follow the arc of the ball. Brickma loses his balance, falls against Parker.

HARRY CARAY(CONT)

....Awaaaay back....

IN THE BLEACHERS - The Bums watch the ball sail overhead.

HARRY CARAY(CONT)

...Kiss it goodbye!!!

AT THE MOUND - Chet is bummed.

IN THE DUGOUT - The players reactions...

ON HENRY - He sighs, bummed by Chet's misfortune.

ON THE BALL - ricocheting off the scoreboard, into an empty row of bleacher seats.

IN THE BLEACHERS - George and Clark scramble for the ball. They dive behind the empty seats. George comes up with it. YES!

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella takes a hit on a bottle of Maalox.

30 INT. WRIGLEY - OWNER'S OFFICE - SAME

Bob Carson kicks the TV off.

BOB CARSON
Should I fire Martinella, Fish?
(Fish shakes him off)
Parker?

Fish shakes him off, nods head toward outer office.

BOB CARSON
Miss Smith?
(Fish nods)
Miss SMITH! Get in here!

Miss Smith enters.

MISS SMITH
Yes, Mr. Carson?

BOB CARSON
You're fired!

She glares at Fish. Fish fires an index finger at her; "Gotcha"

31 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SAME

IN THE BLEACHERS - The Bums CHANT, point at the boys...

BLEACHER BUMS
Throw it back, throw it back....

GEORGE
Do we have to?

CLARK
You can't keep a homer hit by the
other team.

George nods, starts to throw, incredibly spazz-like. He stops.

GEORGE
Wait a sec! This game is on cable.

He hands the ball to Clark.

CLARK
Oh. Sure. Clark will throw it.

Clark hands the ball to Henry. The CHANT heightens: "THROW IT
BACK! THROW IT BACK!"

HENRY
Here goes.

Henry winds up and throws the ball as hard as he can...

ON THE BALL - WHISTLING out of the bleachers. A missile, streaking over the heads of fielders...

IN THE DUGOUT - Cubs notice the ball streaking toward them.

IN THE BLEACHERS - The Bums jaws drop collectively.

BRICKMA POV - Henry's ball is headed straight for him.

ON THE FIELD - The ball short hops into the dugout.

IN THE DUGOUT - Ball hits Brickma, knocks the wind out of him.

IN THE BLEACHERS - Henry stares at his arm, mouth agape, awed. George and Clark stare at Henry, agape, awed.

THE BLEACHER BUMS - stare, MUMBLE their amazement.

BLEACHER BUM

What the hell was that!?

HENRY

I'm Sorry, I didn't mean it--

CLARK

--Geez, Henry--

HENRY

--My tendon's too tight. The Doctor--

BLEACHER BUM

What's your name, kid?

GEORGE

Henry Rowengartner!

HENRY

Shut up, George...

IN THE DUGOUT

BRICKMA

(gasping for breath)

...Did you see that?! Somebody threw this ball from the back of the bleachers.

MARTINELLA

Have you been snorting the Gatorade again?

CUT TO:

32 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - AFTER THE GAME

The boys file out with the fans. Clark picks up a rock.

CLARK

I gotta see that again.

Henry smiles, takes the rock. The boys bolt into an alley.

33 EXT. ALLEY - SAME

GEORGE

Go for the wall.

THEIR POV - A cinderblock wall, 50 yards away.

Henry stares down the batter, stretches, throws.

ON THE ROCK - WHISTLING, a missile, EXPLODING against the wall.

CLARK

(total disbelief)

I think further tests are
necessary.

Pause. The boys LAUGH, run down the alley.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. "EL" PLATFORM - MINUTES LATER

The boys get off the train. As the train pulls out, Clark hands Henry another rock. Henry WHISTLES it the length of the platform, parallel to the train.

35 INT. TRAIN - SAME

A man is reading the newspaper. Henry's rock moves by the window. On the Man's reaction,

CUT TO:

36 INT. CUBS LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The Cubs are getting dressed, not listening to Martinella.

MARTINELLA

(to Chet)

Why didn't you give him the
Rocket? We brought you back to
throw heat and now you're throwing
that junk up there, of course he's
going to hit it out.

ON LEEZER and PEYTON - Leezer's making lip noises to the music on his headphones. Peyton, on the phone, turns on him.

PEYTON

Want to shut up? I'm trying to get traded here.

ON MARTINELLA

MARTINELLA

(to the team)

I don't get it with you guys! You can hit. You can field. But you can't close...

ON FRICK and FERN - Fern watches in disgust as Frick jams an entire Hostess Cupcake in his mouth...

ON MARTINELLA

MARTINELLA

--What's missing?

CUT TO:

37 EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Henry is standing on a mound of old newspapers, unwinding out of his delivery...

HENRY

This is a blast!

REVEAL Clark wearing sofa cushions, a helmet and colander as protective gear is piled on top of George who is equally over-protected, playing umpire. The ball's lying on the ground.

CLARK

I can't feel my fingers!

GEORGE

You almost killed me--

HENRY

--Sorry. You alright?

GEORGE

--Hey. The ball was HOWLING. He's throwing 200mph.

CLARK

--Nobody throws 200mph--

HENRY
 (to himself)
 Now pitching for the Pirates,
 Henry-enry Rowengartner-artner-
 artner--

Henry struts out to the mound of newspapers.

HENRY(CONT)
 The southpaw owns a 24 and 6 mark.
 That's tops in the school
 district.

ON CLARK AND GEORGE

GEORGE
 But it's possible he's throwing,
 like, 100mph, right?

CLARK
 It's possible.

ON THE MOUND

HENRY
 Rowengartner checks the runners.
 Henry checks the runners, adjusts his "cup".

HENRY(CONT)
 --Adjusts his ungainly unit--

ON THE MOUND - Henry winds up...

HENRY(CONT)
 --Here's the pitch!--

GEORGE/CLARK
 WAIT!!!

A car HONKS O.S. Henry stops his motion.

Mary and Jack are getting out of Jack's Trans Am.

MARY
 Hi, honey! How was the game?

JACK
 They lose again?

HENRY
 Watch this, Mom.

As Mary and Jack look on, Henry goes into his wind-up.

GEORGE

Let's see the cheese, Hank!

CLARK

The HIGH, STINKY CHEDDAR!!!

Henry pitches. The ball SCREAMS toward Clark and George. This time, they dive out of the way. The ball imbeds itself in the chain-link fence behind them.

ON MARY AND JACK - Totally shocked, dropping the groceries.

CUT TO:

38 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LATER THAT EVENING

Jack's watching ESPN, on the phone, making another deal. Mary's cooking in the kitchen.

JACK

So, what's in it for me? Hey, I've got plenty of other things cooking. I don't need this.

He hangs up.

ON TV - Martinella is being interviewed about how badly the Cubs are doing.

The boys come through,

JACK

Henry, that is one freaky arm you got there. I don't what that doctor did to you, but whatever you got is one in a million...

HENRY

It's wierd. I don't even have to try. I just snap it and it goes...

ON TV

COMMENTATOR

...And maybe the most interesting play of the day was made by a fan in the bleachers...

A WIDE SHOT clip of the ball coming out of the stands, STREAKING across the field. (Henry is not identifiable).

GEORGE

Hey, HENRY! You're on tv.

JACK
That was you?

HENRY
Yeah. It was.

ON TV

COMMENTATOR
...Boy, if the Cubs had an arm
like that they could go all the
way...

Jack gets an idea. The boys settle in to watch ESPN.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - BACKYARD - NEXT DAY

George and Clark looking over an old crate.

GEORGE
This'd be perfect for a cabin on
the boat.

CLARK
A cabin? The boat's six feet long.
Where're we going to put a cabin?

GEORGE
So it'll be a small cabin...

ON HENRY - As he throws a stone. We see the stone leave his
hand and land KERPLOP! in an above-ground swimming pool six
yards away...

CLARK(CONT)
Henry, would you tell George we're
not having a cabin. Henry?

HENRY
What?

CLARK
We're impressed with the arm, but
we need a hand.

O.S. we hear the doorbell ring...

HENRY
I'll be right back...

As he runs inside,

GEORGE
Bring back more food!!!

40 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Henry grabs some apples off the table blows through the kitchen doors, into the living room.

41 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - SAME

Henry opens the door. Brickma and Martinella are standing there.

MARTINELLA
Hello, son. We're looking for
Henry Rulenfurter--

BRICKMA
--Rowengartner--

MARTINELLA
Whatever. Is he here?

HENRY
I'm Henry.

MARTINELLA
I guess we're looking for Henry,
Sr. Is your Dad here?

Henry doesn't know what to say. Then Jack bounds up the stairs behind Martinella/Brickma...

JACK
Hey, sorry I'm late! You must be
Coach Martinella. I'm Jack
Champlain. I'm a huge fan--

HENRY
--Coach Martinella from the Cubs?

JACK
--And this is Henry Rowengartner,
the next Nolan Ryan.

Martinella looks at Henry in disbelief.

MARTINELLA
And I'm King Tut's Monkey.

Martinella and Brickma start back for their car as George and Clark enter from the kitchen.

GEORGE
C'mon, Henry. We're starving.

CLARK
Hey, what's going on?

JACK
(calling after them)
You're making a big mistake!

42 EXT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - STREET - SAME

As Brickma and Martinella approach the Cub mobile,

MARTINELLA
--I gotta be desperate to be
chasing 12 year-olds around this
town--

BRICKMA
--You don't really think a kid
could have thrown that ball from
the bleachers--

ON JACK AND HENRY - Come down the steps of the house. George
and Clark try to listen in as Jack slithers an arm around Henry
and WHISPERS seductively in his ear...

JACK
Look. That arm of yours is a gift.
It could take you a long way. I
called the Cubs, arranged a
tryout. You want to be a Cub,
doncha?

HENRY
Well, yeah.

JACK
I mean picture yourself on the
mound...

HENRY
Omigod.

JACK
...Pitching for the Cubs.

HENRY
...Yes!

JACK
You could have everything you ever
wanted.

HENRY

WAIT!!!

ON MARTINELLA and BRICKMA - stop at their car, look back.

ON HENRY - He looks for a ball. George grabs an apple out of his hand, hands it to him....

JACK

That's the ticket.

GEORGE

Throw him the high cheese...

CLARK

The BIG, STINKY CHEDDAR!

ON BRICKMA AND MARTINELLA - Brickma aims the speed gun. Martinella spits, no where close to believing...

ON HENRY - Going into the wind and THROWING...

ON THE APPLE - WHISTLING through the air and SMASHING against a stop sign.

ON MARTINELLA/BRICKMA - peppered with applesauce.

MARTINELLA/BRICKMA POV - On the speedgun - "102".

MARTINELLA

Holy Christmas...

Jack leaps off the porch, approaches Martinella...

JACK

How about them apples!

ON HENRY/GEORGE/CLARK

CLARK

Nice pitch, Henry--

GEORGE

--And under pressure, too.

HENRY

I was aiming for the mailbox.

ON MARTINELLA/JACK/BRICKMA

JACK

What say we head out to the ball park?

Martinella nods, dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - LATER

ON BRICKMA, MARTINELLA and JACK - watching Henry pitch O.S.
Brickma and Martinella are transfixed by what they're seeing.

JACK
Not bad, eh?

MARTINELLA
He's looking good.

BRICKMA
Awful good.

JACK
...And your boss is going to love
him, 'cause he'll fill the seats
every time he pitches...

MARTINELLA
He's looking good.

BRICKMA
Awful good.

Their heads snap again as they see another pitch.

CUT TO:

44 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LATER

Mary is on the couch looking over a contract. Henry and Jack
are pacing in front of her.

MARY
I don't even know what any of this
means.

JACK
It's a standard rookie contract.
One season. And it means that
Henry is going to get the
opportunity of a life-time--

HENRY
C'mon, Mom. It's been like the
worst summer ever.

JACK
Just sign it, Mary.

MARY
How could you do this without
asking me?

JACK
C'mon.

Jack tries to hand her a pen. She pushes it back.

MARY
No. I won't c'mon. Henry's 12
years old--

HENRY
I'm almost 13--

MARY
I'm not going to send my son to
hang out with a bunch of jock
scratching, butt-slapping
neanderthals who could kill him
with one--

JACK
Why don't we just sleep on it.

MARY
Good idea.
(pointedly)
Goodnight, Jack.

As he goes,

JACK
The opportunity of a lifetime--

Jack exits. Henry sits next to his mother.

HENRY
I'll never ask for anything again
as long as I live...

MARY
We'll see.

HENRY
Mom. The Cubs said I was their
hope for the future.

MARY
You're my hope for the future,
too.

She kisses Henry.

CUT TO:

45 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Henry is making pancakes. Henry has set the table for two, carefully arranging the flower and the pen and contract next to Mary's setting.

Mary enters looking tired, as though she hasn't slept a wink...

HENRY
Good morning, Mom.

Mary GRUNTS, sits.

HENRY(CONT)
HMMMmm! I smell pancakes!

Mary GRUNTS. Henry sets a plate of pancakes before her. Puts a couple slices of charcoal on her plate.

HENRY(CONT)
--And bacon...Kinda--

Mary slams her fork on the table. Henry knows the verdict is coming. He puts his hands together in silent prayer. Then...

MARY
I can't be chauffeuring you
around.

HENRY
(YEESSSSS!)
You won't.

MARY
--You have to do all your
homework.

HENRY
--I will--

MARY
If your grades slip, the deal is
off.

HENRY
--They won't--

MARY

And you must come home immediately
after the games....

HENRY

...I must!

MARY

...And...

Henry waits for the moment of truth...

MARY

If anything happens to you, Henry
Rowengartner...I'll kill you.

Mary signs the contract. But she feels better about it when
Henry gets up and hugs her.

CUT TO:

46 INT. TRIBUNE TOWER - PRESS ROOM - DAY

The room is crowded with reporters. Bob Carson approaches the
podium, the crowd quiets...

BOB CARSON

Good afternoon, ladies and
gentlemen. Today's a historic day
in the annals of baseball...

BACKSTAGE - MARY and THE BOYS - frozen like deer in the glare
of camera lights. Some children ask Henry for his autograph. He
signs. A kid looks at it...

KID

This is your autograph? It's not
even in cursive.

On a TV MONITOR covering Carson's introduction, and the
hyperbole of Cub officials.

ON JACK and FISH -

FISH

...You need any doors opened for
Henry. Corporate contacts. Media.
Let the Fish know. I want Henry to
be happy. Happy players play
better. Better players fill the
stands. So, happiness is my job.
Are you with me?

JACK
I'm with you, Fish.

They fire index fingers at each other simultaneously; These guys are birds of a feather.

ON THE MONITOR

BOB CARSON
...Say hello to a little man with
a big league gun. Henry! Come out
here and meet the press!

Big moment. APPLAUSE. Henry gives his friends skin. His mother kisses him, very proud. Henry takes a deep breath, scouring for confidence. He finds it...

ON STAGE - Henry walks to the podium, disappears behind it.

BACKSTAGE - George and Clark see the problem, grab a chair.

ON STAGE - George and Clark bring the chair to Henry. George waves to the crowd. They LAUGH. Clark pulls him back stage.

Henry appears atop the podium. Fish adjusts the mike.

REPORTER #1
The press kit said that since you
broke your arm you can throw the
ball over 100mph. Question is, can
you pitch?

HENRY
Well...My Dad used to play.

REPORTER #1
Semi-pro? Pro?

HENRY
Actually, it was his company
softball team. But he was the
pitcher.

The Crowd LAUGHS.

47 INT. RICK'S KITCHEN - SAME

The Pirates sweaty from baseball practice, raid the ice box.
The TV is on.

ON TV

TEASER
Hey! It's Rowengartner!

The Pirates crowd around the TV.

REPORTER #2

Did you play softball too?

HENRY

No. Little League. I play right field for the Pirates. Kinda.

ON THE PIRATES - Pause. As they SCREAMMMMM in disbelief.

48 INT. TRIBUNE TOWER - PRESS ROOM - DAY

REPORTER #3

When're you going to pitch him?

CARSON

He'll be in uniform tomorrow...

49 INT. COACH EDWARDS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Coach Edwards' legs walk in...

ON TV

CARSON

...We want him to get playing time before we make our West Coast swing next week.

Pause. Mr. Ed SCREEEAMMMMS....

CUT TO:

50 INT. TRIBUNE TOWER - PRESS ROOM - DAY

REPORTER #3

With all due respect, Mr. Carson, we've seen these publicity stunts before. Bill Veeck and Charlie Finley gave us midgets and disco and green baseballs. Why should we believe Henry here isn't just another ploy to sell tickets...

HENRY

I can pitch.

REPORTER #3

Prove it!

The reporter tosses a baseball to Henry.

HENRY
Alright. I will.

Henry starts to throw. Carson grabs his arm, stopping his motion.

CARSON
If you want to see him pitch, you
can come on out to Wrigley...

51 INT. DR. KERSTEN'S CLINIC - SAME

Dr. Kersten is working on a patient, watching Henry on TV.

ON TV

BOB CARSON(CONT)
...and see the kid. He's got a
bullet in his arm and a lion in
his heart!

Dumbfounded, Dr. Kersten sits on the patient's setting arm. The patient SCREAMMMMMMS.

CUT TO:

52 INT. HENRY'S ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Henry is in bed, kneading his mitt, clearly nervous, sits on Henry's bed.

HENRY
I don't like that they laughed at
Dad today...

MARY
They weren't laughing at him...

HENRY
Why didn't Dad play baseball
instead of softball?

She takes the mitt from him.

MARY
He said softball had a better
sense of humor than hardball. He
had a lot of fun with this mitt.
He would just stand out there on
the mound and float it in. And no
one could hit it. The harder they
swung, the more they missed it...

Mary mimes throwing a floater.

HENRY
Did you ever see him pitch?

MARY
Every game.

Henry is touched and is about to thank her when Jack busts in with 50 Chicago Sun-Times', tosses one to Henry.

JACK
We're famous!

ON THE NEWSPAPER - A picture of Henry, Jack and Mary beneath a headline: "CUBS SIGN CUB". Sub-Headline: "Broken Arm Gives 12 Year-Old 100mph Fastball"

JACK(CONT)
--NBC has cancelled regular programming to air the game. Wrigley's sold out. I got calls from Nike and Coke. They're chomping at the bit to have you endorse their products--

MARY
(interrupting)
--Henry's tired, Jack--

As Mary hustles Jack out of the room,

JACK
Remember. All you have to do is win--

Jack exits. Mary kisses Henry.

HENRY
I'll never get to sleep.

MARY
Why don't you read a book.

HENRY
Well...I guess I'm pretty tired.

Mary exits. Henry practices throwing from his bed, using a sock as the ball...

FADE TO:

53 INT. ROWENGARTNER - HALLWAY - THE NEXT MORNING

Henry comes out of the bathroom, bounces downstairs, goes into the kitchen.

54 INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Henry comes in, stops short.

REVEAL that Mary has made Henry a HUGE breakfast: Steak, eggs, pancakes, fruit, juice, and WHEATIES.

Henry looks nauseous.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - PARKING AREA - DAY

Mary, Jack, George, Henry and Clark get out of the Trans Am. They start to walk toward the stadium. The fans notice Henry, point at him, Henry stops Mary.

HENRY

Mom, let's just say goodbye here.

MARY

I want to make sure you get in safely.

HENRY

None of the other Cub Moms are going to be there.

JACK

C'mon, Mary. Let him go. You can go check out the owner's box, and I have some business to talk over with Fish.

Mary kisses Henry.

MARY

Break a leg.

The boys approach the stadium.

56 EXT. WRIGLEY - PLAYER'S ENTRANCE - SAME

HENRY POV - WRIGLEY FIELD - intimidating, horrifying, big. The electric sign: "CUBS vs. ST. LOUIS - NOON"

HENRY

Whoa.

Pause. The Boys approach the "PLAYER ENTRANCE". Henry knocks on the door. The door swings open. Henry STAMMERS.

SECURITY GUARD

Autographs after the game.

He starts to close the door...

HENRY

Wait! I'm Henry Rowengartner.

SECURITY GUARD

You're him!?

(Henry nods)

Man, you are small!

HENRY

Thank you.

The Security Guard opens the door. The boys start in. The Security Guard stops Clark and George.

SECURITY GUARD

Sorry. Players only.

Henry turns to his buddies to say "goodbye". George hands him an old scorecard.

CLARK

Sign it--

GEORGE

--So we can say we were best friends with you "when".

HENRY

When what?

CLARK

Just sign it.

Henry signs the scorecard.

ON THE AUTOGRAPH - "Henry Rowengartner" in 6th grade scrawl.

He hands it to George.

GEORGE

You gotta work on this.

Henry goes in.

57 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - CORRIDOR - SAME

SECURITY GUARD

The locker room's at the end of the hall.

HENRY

Thanks...

Henry heads down the cement corridor, his bat and mitt over his shoulder...

HENRY POV - Portraits of the Cub greats stare down at him: Ernie Banks, Don Kessinger, Ron Santo, Billy Williams...

Henry reaches the "Locker Room" door. Pause as he finds his courage. He opens the door.

58 INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

Henry comes through the door...

HENRY POV - All of the Cubs are staring at him.

HENRY

Hi. I'm the new pitcher.

Henry starts walking through the locker room. The players look big, strong, powerful, heroic.

HENRY(CONT)

(to himself)

I can't believe this.

He approaches Frick's broad back...

HENRY(CONT)

You're Billy Frick!

Frick turns around.

HENRY(CONT)

.256 lifetime. Switch hitter. And you're hobbies are fishing and golf...

FRICK

(nodding)

Welcome to the Bigs, kid.

Henry approaches Fern. Peyton is at the next locker.

HENRY

Hi, Mr. Fern. I'm Henry Rowengartner.

FERN

How's it goin', Hank?

HENRY

Hank. Good.

PEYTON

What is this, Romper Room.

Henry moves on through the crowd with them greeting him.

HENRY POV - Chet Crumm emerges from the training room, stretching his shoulder, chewing tobacco...

Henry can't believe his eyes. This is his IDOL. He takes his baseball out of his pocket, hurries over to Chet.

HENRY

Chet Crumm. Unbelievable.

CHET

Howya doin', short stop.

HENRY

Could I have your autograph?

CHET

I don't see why not.

HENRY

Could you sign it, "Rocket".

Chet stops chewing, startled at being called "Rocket". Spits.

CHET

I don't do autographs.

Chet walks to his locker. Just as Henry is about to get bummed, he's collared by Brickma and Martinella.

MARTINELLA

Your locker's over here. Suit up.

Martinella yanks Brickma toward the field. Henry turns to his locker. His eyes light up.

HENRY POV - HIS LOCKER - Cleats, clean uniform, new hat and the capper--"Rowengartner" emblazoned on the locker.

Henry discreetly pumps his fist, totally psyched. He pulls his uniform out of the locker. He strips off his shirt, pulls his jersey on, buttons up. It feels great.

Then he starts to pull his pants off. He stops, looks around.

HENRY POV - a forest of hairy legs, hairy chests, big men.

Feeling scrawny and hairless, Henry nonchalantly steps into his locker, takes off his pants, slides into his uniform pants.

Then he finds a cup in his locker. Henry considers this, tosses the cup into the locker. Then he puts on his socks and cleats.

Finally, reverently, Henry puts on his official Cubs hat. The hat falls over his eyes...

CUT TO:

59 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD RUNWAY - SAME

Henry comes out of the locker room and sees something that takes his breath away.

HENRY POV - There's the magical green of the field...

Henry smiles, breaks into a trot...

CUT TO:

60 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - BATTING PRACTICE

Henry comes out onto the field, to batting practice. He watches the big boys hit. Awesome power.

HENRY

Way to get all of it, Okie!

Brickma approaches,

BRICKMA

You're supposed to be with the pitchers...

HENRY

Oh, yeah. Right.

Henry trots to the bullpen.

61 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - BULLPEN

Henry watches the pitchers. Pitching coaches ad-lib advice.

CLARK/GEORGE(O.S.)

Hey, ROWENGARTNER!

HENRY POV - George and Clark are in the empty stands, waving.

CLARK/GEORGE(CONT)

Stick your feet out the window!!!

Henry waves.

62 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - EMPTY STANDS

ON GEORGE and CLARK

GEORGE
Think he'll change?

CLARK
No. Not Henry.

ON MARY/JACK/FISH

MARY
HI, HENRY!!!

In the background, Jack is talking to Fish.

ON THE FIELD - Henry gives an embarrassed wave.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - GAME TIME

"The National Anthem" resounds.

ON THE CUBS - In a neat row, well-groomed, well-creased, wearing game faces, MUMBLING along. PAN DOWN the row as each Cub notices Henry's HIGH-PITCHED SINGING O.S....

Finally, there's Hank SINGING his heart out in ear-wrenching SOPRANO. As he hits the high note --"land of the freeeeeeeee!"

The Anthem ends. Crowd CHEERS. The kids point and call to Henry. Henry waves to the crowd.

HENRY
...And the crowd goes wild.

IN THE OWNER'S BOX - Clark and George SCREAM and WAVE to Henry, but they're drowned out, blocked by fans....

Mary and Jack try to get his attention, but fail...

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry enters. No one is paying attention to,

MARTINELLA
Awwright, guys let's do it today!!
We're 13 out. Beat these squids
and we're 12 out.

HENRY is bumped, knocked, pushed by Frick going for his catching equipment, by Okie putting his bats in the rack, by Fern looking for a band-aid. He's out of place, in the way...

MARTINELLA(CONT)

We're still alive. Let's start a streak today! Let's win it!

As Henry is bumped onto the bench, the Cubs take the field. Henry's legs swing back and forth, short of the ground. Peyton notices. Gaines notices. Then Leezer. Then all the players are looking.

THE UMPIRE(O.S.)

PLAY BALL!!!!!!

ON THE FIELD - Crumm throws his last warm up pitch. RON AKERS steps in at the plate.

P.A. ANNOUNCER(O.S.)

Now batting for St. Louis--RON AKERS...

Crumm looks for the signal...

IN THE DUGOUT

HENRY

Gas him, Rocket! Put some cheese in the kitchen! Big stinky Cheddar! DO THE DO...

ON THE MOUND - Crumm looks toward the dugout, startled to hear something positive from a teammate...

CRUMM POV - Henry gives him a "thumbs up".

ON THE MOUND - Crumm pitches. The pitch is crushed into center field for a single.

Henry slinks back to his seat...

CUT TO:

64 QUICK CUTS - CUBS GETTING BEATEN

ON THE MOUND - Crumm throws...

IN THE FIELD - A Card slaps the ball and it drops in for a fluke single. Runner from third scores...

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella spits. Brickma accidentally spits on Martinella. Martinella doesn't notice. Brickma nonchalantly strolls to the other end of the dugout.

IN HIS OFFICE - Watching the game with Mary, Jack, George and Clark. Bob Carson paces angrily. Fish chews his gum, anxious. George and Clark are chowing everything in the box. Carson is uncomfortable having to be polite.

IN THE FIELD - Cubs are up. Men on 2nd and 3rd. Okie lines a two-run single to center.

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry CHEERS WILDLY. The other Cubs applaud politely.

AT THE PLATE - A Card bunts...Suarez lets the ball roll, thinking it's going to go foul...But it stays in...

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry winces, feeling the Cubs misfortune.

ON THE MOUND - Crumm snap catches the ball, pissed off.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
The Cubs can't buy a break today!

CUT TO:

65 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Top six. 3-2, Cards--

Sweaty, exhausted, Crumm throws a screwball, walks the batter.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
--There's a free pass. I think
we're due for a pitching change.

IN THE DUGOUT

MARTINELLA
(to Brickma)
Get Leezer and Bauvier up.

Brickma goes to the phone.

ON THE MOUND - Chet pitches to another batter. He's looking tired.

IN THE BULLPEN - Leezer and Bauvier start to warm up.

THE CROWD - behind the bullpen starts to yell: "Where's the kid!?" "We want Henry!!" The Crowd picks up the chant: "We want HENRY! We want HENRY!!!"

IN THE OFFICE - Carson picks up the phone...

CARSON
 (into phone)
 Let's give them what they want,
 Martinella.

IN THE DUGOUT - As Martinella hangs up the phone,

MARTINELLA
 (to Henry)
 Warm up, you're going in.

Henry exits the dugout. The crowd goes WILD!

IN THE BULLPEN - Henry arrives, starts lobbing some warm-up pitches, very distracted.

ON THE MOUND - Chet serves up a double.

IN THE DUGOUT

MARTINELLA
 I'm sticking a fork in him. He's
 done. Call in the kid...

As Martinella heads to the mound, Brickma makes a grand, elaborate signal to the bullpen.

IN THE BULLPEN - As Henry finishes his warm-ups...

HENRY
 What's Brickma doing?

GAINES
 That's the signal. You're in.

ON THE MOUND - Martinella takes the ball from Chet.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
 That'll do it for Crumm. He
 pitched 8 strong innings, but got
 no help from the Wrigley ghosts.

IN THE BULLPEN

HENRY
 I'm in?

P.A. ANNOUNCER
 And now pitching for Chicago,
 Henry-enry Rowengartner-artner...

HENRY
 I'm in?

The CROWD ROARS.

GEORGE/CLARK/MARY - CHEERING WILDLY for Henry. Jack seems barely interested.

HENRY POV - THE FIELD - appears vast, the mound miles away.

Henry trots onto the field, devoid of self-confidence.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Mark it down--August 20th, 1992,
11 year-old Hank Rowengartner
played in his first professional
game against the St. Louis
Cardinals...And the batter is
Alejandro Heddo--a dead fastball
hitter--

ON THE FIELD - Henry reaches the mound and stops.

HENRY POV - THE MOUND - looks like Mt. Everest.
Martinella/Brickma at the top, clapping in SLOW MOTION.

Henry scales the mountain.

HENRY POV - FISHEYE - Martinella's head is huge, distorted.

MARTINELLA

(16 RPM)

Throw the heat.

Henry nods. Martinella hands him the ball. Martinella trots off the mound. Suddenly, Henry's alone on the mound.

HENRY POV - 35,000 screaming, rabid, maniacal fans.

HENRY POV - The dugout players stare, non-believers.

HENRY POV - TV cameras point at him, "on air" lights ablaze. A bank of photographers snap his picture...

HENRY POV - In the "on deck" circle, Heddo smiles viciously, revealing a row of gold teeth.

ON THE MOUND - Henry nods. He grabs the rosin bag. The rosin floats up, he COUGHS on it.

IN THE DUGOUT - Peyton, Leezer and Gaines LAUGH.

FRICK

Let's go! Gimme some warm up!

ON THE MOUND - Glove shaking, Henry goes into his wind-up and throws some easy warm-up pitches...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Hank appears ready to pitch!

AT THE PLATE - Heddo steps into the box.

IN THE STANDS - The crowd rises to its feet. This is historic.

ON THE MOUND - Henry takes a breath, looks for a signal.

HENRY POV - Frick gives him the signal.

ON THE MOUND - Henry rocks and fires...

ON THE BALL - WHISTLING over Frick's head...

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella/Brickma watch the ball sail into the backstop.

GEORGE/CLARK/MARY - wince.

ON THE MOUND - Henry GROANS.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Hank let that one get away. And
the runner advances--

ON THE MOUND - Henry winds up and pitches again.

IN THE FIELD - The ball bounces in the dirt in front of Frick who stays with it, holds the runner.

IN THE DUGOUT - As the players watch dispassionately,

BRICKMA

Maybe I should have a chat with
him.

Martinella glares.

BRICKMA(CONT)

--Maybe not.

ON FRICK - Giving Henry the signal.

ON THE FIELD - Henry steps off the rubber, walks toward Frick. Frick calls time out, trots out to Henry...

HENRY

What was that the signal for?

FRICK

Fastball. It's your only pitch.

HENRY
Just checking.

FRICK
C'mon, now. Put it in the leather,
nice and easy.

HENRY
Nice and easy. Right.

Frick goes back to the plate. shaking his head.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Now Hank's ready to pitch!

ON OWNER'S BOX - Mary, Jack, Carson, Fish and the boys CHEER
Henry on..

ON THE MOUND - HENRY - Steps on the rubber again, tries to
control his shaking glove.

HENRY
Okay. Nice and easy...

Henry goes into his wind-up and pitches...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
The southpaw deals!

THE BALL - HUMS toward home. It's right down the pike, but it's
only 50mph...nice and easy.

AT THE PLATE - Crack! Heddo KILLS it. I mean KILLS it.

ON THE BALL - rocketing toward the loop.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
That ball is back....

IN THE STANDS - The crowd GROANS.

GEORGE AND CLARK - slump into their seats, bummed.

MARY - covers her eyes, unable to watch. Jack's disgusted, as
though he has been cheated out of something.

IN THE BULLPEN - the Pitchers look like they expected this.

HARRY CAREY(V.O.)
...Back...AWAAAAY BACK!!

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella kicks the Gatorade bucket.

ON THE MOUND - Henry watches the ball go, looks as though he's about to cry.

Heddo rounds the bases, flexing his big muscles, mocking Henry.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
...That ball is gone...

Henry looks to the dugout for relief.

IN THE DUGOUT

MARTINELLA
Carson wants him in, he's staying in.

ON THE FIELD

UMPIRE
...Hey! Pitcher!

The Umpire fires a new ball to Henry.

ON THE FIELD - The next batter comes to the plate. Henry looks for the sign, nervous.

Henry pitches.

AT THE PLATE - The ball hits the batter. The batter glares at Henry as he takes 1st base.

HENRY
Sorry! My fault!

Frick picks up the ball, brings it out to Henry.

FRICK
Just rock and fire.

HENRY
They gotta take me out. I can't do this.

FRICK
That's not my call.

Frick heads back to home plate. Henry takes a deep breath, rocks and fires...

THE BALL - flies past Frick, all the way to the backstop, but bounces off the bricks, right back to Frick...

THE RUNNER - on first rounds second, heads to third.

FRICK - picks up the ball and fires to third.

AT THIRD - The runner is tagged out.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
And that's the end of the inning.
And a rough one it was for the
youngster from Evanston.

IN THE DUGOUT - Cubs ad-lib "Let's get it back", "We can't be this bad"...

Henry sneaks out of the dugout, heading for the locker room.

CUT TO:

66 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The game can be heard, Henry's putting on his street clothes.

CHET(O.S.)
It's scary out there, isn't it?
(no response)
I know I'm scared when I go out there.

HENRY
What're you scared of?

CHET
I'm scared I'm going to blow my shoulder out. Scared I'm going to lose. Scared I'm going to win...

HENRY
Why would you be scared of winning?

CHET
'Cause then you gotta keep on winning.

Henry looks at him like he's nuts, packs up his stuff, starts to go.

CHET
Hey, you're just a kid. It'll happen for you when you're ready.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SECONDS LATER

WIDE SHOT. In b.g. Wrigley is full of fans. In f.g. we see Henry running away...

CUT TO:

68 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - LATER

George and Clark come down the hill onto Hubert's Beach.

THEIR POV - Henry is feverishly working on the boat, trying to get it seaworthy.

They hurry over.

GEORGE

Your Mom was really scared. We told her you probably took the train.

Henry keeps working.

CLARK

Hey. It wasn't so bad. At least you didn't puke.

GEORGE

The Cubs ended up coming back and winning it.

HENRY

I don't care. Baseball sucks.

Henry hammers harder.

GEORGE

What're you doing?

HENRY

I'm getting out of here.

Henry throws down his hammer, starts to pull the boat toward the water.

CLARK

It won't sail. It needs more work.

HENRY

I'm sailing anyway.

GEORGE

Where're you gonna go?

HENRY

Somewhere else.

Henry continues toward the water. George and Clark step in front of him.

GEORGE

You can't sail a boat that's not ready.

HENRY

We could try, couldn't we!?? All we ever do is talk about going out in this boat...

Henry pushes them out of the way, pulls the boat into the water. Clark and George grab him...

GEORGE

You're going to wreck it!

Henry tries to push them off. They wrestle with him, fall to the sand. The boat drifts out a few feet and starts to sink.

As the boys get winded from their wrestling match, they rest, and see the boat disappear...They roll off each other.

CLARK

Great...

GEORGE

All that work...sunk.

Henry covers his face and starts to cry.

GEORGE(CONT)

Hey. It's okay. We can fix it.

CLARK

Yeah. Yeah. It's no big deal.

Henry continues crying...

GEORGE

Look!

George steps into the water. Too cold. He steps out, grabs Clark, pushes him toward the water...

GEORGE(CONT)

...Clark's going to pull the boat out.

Clark glares at him, wades in, starts to pull the boat out. UNHHH, he can't do it. George SIGHS, wades in, starts to pull the boat out. UNHHH. The two of them can't do it, but they try...Henry looks up, brushes away his tears, stands, wades in.

HENRY

Sorry.

GEORGE

Hey. I didn't think you were really this serious about the boat. But if you are, we gotta work on it.

Henry nods and they pull together...The boat starts to emerge.

FADE TO:

69 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - LATER

On the beach, the boys bail the boat. The boys raise the mast. It stays...They raise their arms victoriously and we

CUT TO:

70 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DUGOUT - THE NEXT DAY

The Cubs are preparing to take the field to open the game. PAN DOWN the players as they ad-lib "Guess the kid's not showing" "Thought he'd come back"...

MARTINELLA

C'mon, fellas, let's keep the streak alive...

HENRY(O.S.)

Hey, guys!

Everybody turns to Henry...

HENRY(CONT)

It's a beautiful day for baseball.
Let's play two!

The Cubs react happily as,

P.A. ANNOUNCER(V.O.)

And now ladies and gentlemen, YOUR
CHICAGO CUBS!!!

They charge out onto the field, a team, one unit.

HENRY
(to Chet)
I think I'm ready.

Chet smiles,

MARTINELLA
You ready for a \$1,000 fine? \$500
for leaving early, and \$500 for
coming late.

HENRY
\$1,000! That's like 6 years
allowance.

DISSOLVE TO:

71 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DUGOUT - LATE IN THE GAME

Some of the Cubs are rooting on the bench. Henry's trying to
perfect the art of seed spitting; he's enjoying himself.

MARTINELLA
Rogers! You're on deck. Pinch for
Leezer! Smith, Bauvier, get out to
the pen and warm up...

As Peyton and Bauvier start for the mound, Chet stops
Martinella.

CHET
--Let the rookie pitch--

MARTINELLA
-The kid? After yesterday?--

THEIR POV - Henry's spitting seeds, wearing a rally cap.

CHET
--What've we got to lose?

MARTINELLA
--What're you a coach now, Crumm?

Chet flexes his shoulder.

CHET
Maybe I should be.

Martinella considers this.

MARTINELLA
Reeminferter!!

ON HENRY - in his rally cap, his face falls...

CUT TO:

72 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SECONDS LATER

ON THE FIELD - Henry walking to the bullpen...

HENRY
(muttering)
...Nine other pitchers on this
team and they gotta go with me.

ON THE FANS - CHEERING and HECKLING Henry....

As Henry starts to warm up,

73 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - CARSON'S OFFICE - SAME

Carson is on the phone.

BOB CARSON
...This is just for show, right
Sal. You're not really sending him
in...

74 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DUGOUT - SAME

Martinella is on the phone...

MARTINELLA
(to the Ump)
YOU SON OF A BITCH! That was so
far inside, he felt it in his
shorts!
(into phone)
I gotta go, Mr. Carson.

As the Cubs take the field, he hangs up.

MARTINELLA(CONT)
Brickma. Get him in there.

Martinella charges out to the field to yell at the Umpire.
Brickma does his elaborate signal to the dugout...

IN THE BULLPEN - Henry gets the signal from Brickma, takes a
deep breath and heads for the mound.

GAINES
Go get him, short change.

IN THE FIELD - Henry arrives at the mound, picks up the ball
and watches Martinella finish his argument with the Umpire.

Henry goes into the wind, throws his first warm up...

ON THE BALL - bouncing halfway between the mound and the plate.

The CROWD BOOOOOS.

HENRY
(to himself)
Oh God, here we go again.

Frick comes out to the mound.

FRICK
C'mon, kid, nice--

HENRY
--Yeah, I know. Nice and easy.

Frick goes back to the plate. The batter steps in...

Henry goes into the wind and throws, nice and easy.

AT THE PLATE - The batter laces the ball.

HENRY POV - The ball is screaming toward him.

ON THE MOUND - Henry ducks.

The ball goes into center for a single.

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella hides his face in his cap...

MARTINELLA
I don't believe this....

CHET
Go talk to him.

MARTINELLA
You go talk to him.

CHET
Okay.

MARTINELLA
Good. Fine. Go. Go.

Chet heads to the mound. Brickma appears with the phone.

BRICKMA
Phone call for Coach Martinella!

ON THE MOUND - as Chet arrives...

CHET
What're you doing out here?

HENRY
I'm pitching.

CHET
No, you're not. You're quitting again.

HENRY
Oh. Great. Like I need this...

IN THE STANDS - Jack sees Chet talking to Henry.

JACK
Don't listen to that, loser, Hank!

The Cubs fans turn on Jack. Jack smiles meekly, sits.

ON THE MOUND

CHET
Don't let the lose use you.

HENRY
What?

CHET
Forget about the other night.
Forget about everything. Just deal
from your have to.

HENRY
My have to? Are you speaking
English?

CHET
Your have to is the stuff you use
when you feel like quitting. It
makes you keep going. You've got
the have to, don't you?

Henry looks at him for a second, nods...

CHET(CONT)
Let's see it.

UMPIRE(O.S.)
PLAY BALL!!!

AT THE PLATE - Tony Ovitz steps into the box.

ON THE MOUND

HENRY

The have to...What the heck was he talking about?

Henry looks to the Owner's Box.

HENRY POV - George, Clark and Mary CHEERING him on.

Henry half smiles, goes into the wind, throws...

AT THE PLATE - Ovitz CRACKS the ball.

ON THE MOUND - Henry buries his face in his stinky glove.

HENRY

Ohhh, nooooo...

He peeks through the webbing to watch the ball fly out of the stadium, but he can't find it. Then, O.S. POP! POP!

FERN(O.S.)

Way to pitch, Hank!!!

Henry pulls the glove away from his face, looks around...

HENRY

Huh?

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

A perfectly executed double play!

Henry sees the two Mets heading for the dugout.

SUAREZ

One more, Hank! Just one more!

Henry looks to the dugout. The Cubs are CHEERING. Chet is CHEERING him on too.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

And Rowengartner is one out away from recording his first Major League SAVE!

PRESS BOX - A forest cameras and lenses recording the event.

AT THE PLATE - The batter steps in.

HENRY POV - 35,000 SCREAMING fans.

ON THE MOUND - Henry looks calm, goes into his windup and throws.....

ON THE BALL - WHISTLING toward home--100mph! A very inspirational sight...

AT HOME PLATE - Ovitz doesn't even see the ball as explodes into Frick's glove.

UMPIRE
STEEEEEIRIKE ONEEEEEEE!

IN THE STANDS - Everyone goes wild.

AT THE PLATE - Frick shakes his hand, smiles, throws the ball back to Henry.

ON THE MOUND - Henry breathes a sigh of relief. Pause. Henry winds up, throws another WHISTLER. Ovitz swings, misses.

UMPIRE
STEEERIKE TWOOOOOO!

IN THE FIELD - Fern and Okie are behind Henry, CHEERING him on.

GEORGE AND CLARK - CROWD ROAR.

ON THE MOUND - Henry snap-catches the throw from Frick, beginning to feel his oats.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
The Cubs are ONE STRIKE AWAY from
their 3rd victory in 22 games!

AT THE PLATE - Ovitz is frothing for a hit.

IN THE DUGOUT - Everyone is standing, watching the action intensely, drawn out of themselves for the first time.

MARTINELLA
Throw him the STINKY CHEESE!!!

ON THE MOUND - Henry winds up, throws.

ON THE BALL - EXPLODING into Frick's glove.

UMPIRE
STEEEEEIRIKKEE THREEEEEEEEE!

CLARK AND GEORGE - embrace each other as the crowd goes WILD!

IN THE DUGOUT - Brickma goes berserk. Martinella shakes hands with Chet, charges the mound.

IN THE PRESS BOX

HARRY CARAY
CUBS WIN IT!

ON THE MOUND - Henry raises his arms in victory. Chet comes into frame and lifts him into the air...

IN THE OWNER'S BOX - Mary watches Henry with Chet as the celebration goes on around her. Jack and Fish hug each other.

As the celebration continues...

FADE TO:

75 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LOCKER ROOM

Amid a locker room spirit that we haven't seen before, Henry takes off his hat, puts it on the shelf of his locker. He notices a ball. He pulls it down...

ON THE BALL - "Rocket."

Henry looks up, sees Chet. They smile.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - RUNWAY - SAME

Savoring his victory, Henry steps onto the empty field with the ball in hand.

CLARK/GEORGE(O.S.)
HEY, ROWENGARTNER!

Henry turns to see George and Clark in the empty stands.

CLARK/GEORGE
You SUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!!

As Henry smiles, the boys race out on the field together,

Chet watches from the shadows of the dugout...

HENRY - SLOW MOTION - pitches.

CLARK - IN HIS VERSION OF SLO-MO - swings for the fences...

GEORGE - IN HIS VERSION OF SLO-MO - goes back to the warning track, watches the "ball" go into the stands..

IN THE DUGOUT - The Cubs have gathered in their street clothes to watch and LAUGH.

Chet is leaning on the railing outside the dugout. Mary comes down behind him...

MARY

Whatever you said to him, thanks.

CHET

I don't know who taught him to play, but we could take a lesson from this...

Mary smiles. They continue watching the kids.

CUT TO:

77 INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - CUBS GATE - SAME

As Henry, Mary, George and Clark arrive they are besieged by Cubs fans and Press. The atmosphere is charged; flashbulbs are popping, reporters SCREAMING Henry's name.

ON CLARK, GEORGE - in the crush of waistlines, loving it. George grabs an autograph-seeker's pad and pen, as George signs.

KID AUTOGRAPH SEEKER #1

Who're you?

GEORGE

Name's George McPhee. Henry and I are practically related.

The Kid Autograph Seeker grabs his pad back. George shrugs it off. As he and Clark say "CHEESE" for a photographer who doesn't want their photograph...

ON MARY, HENRY and BRICKMA - As she pulls Henry to her side.

MARY

Did you pack your toothbrush?--

HENRY

--Toothbrush, pajamas, 3-piece dinette set--

MARY

--Do you have enough spending money?

BRICKMA

--We'll take good care of him, Mrs. Rowengartner.

MARY

Do everything Mr. Brickma says--

Mary kisses Henry, near tears.

MARY(CONT)
I love you! Be a good boy.

HENRY
I'll see you in ten days.

Henry high-fives the boys.

CLARK
Eat your vegetables.

GEORGE
Get plenty of rest.

CLARK
Wear sunblock.

GEORGE
But most important...

Clark and George break into a jiving hump-dance version of
"Play that funky music, white boy."...

Henry LAUGHS, waves to his mother and the boys as he heads down
the ramp with Brickma. The crowd starts to disperse, leaving
Clark, George and Mary alone.

GEORGE
Let's go back to our dull lives
and search for meaning.

Mary smiles, takes the boys under her wing. As they head for
the exit...

78 INT. RAMP - SAME

As Henry and Brickma walk down the ramp.

BRICKMA
Ever fly before, Hank?

HENRY
This is my first time.

BRICKMA
Don't you worry. It's a snap.

CUT TO:

79 INT. CHARTER PLANE - LATER

CLOSE ON Brickma, twitchy, white-knuckled nauseated. Reveal Henry, sitting next to him, watching, trying to eat...

HENRY
Want a vomit bag?

Brickma shakes his head. Chet looks up from his meal...

CHET
Is he making you nervous?

HENRY
No. He's making me nauseous. I'm trying to eat.

CHET
C'mon over here.

Henry takes his tray over to Chet's aisle seat.

CHET(CONT)
What'd you get?

HENRY
Chicken fingers.

CHET
How is it?

HENRY
Good. You?

CHET
Best damn Salisbury steak I ever had. Want half?

HENRY
Sure.

They go half-sies on their entrees, eat some, nod approvingly.

HENRY(CONT)
Thanks for signing that baseball.

CHET
You're welcome. But do me a favor and don't call me Rocket. I'm not the Rocket anymore.

HENRY
Yeah. I don't get it. You're throwing so slow.

Chet the salad off Henry's tray.

CHET
Thank you kindly.

HENRY
No. I mean Hershisser and Gooden
came back from surgery.

CHET
They had a different problems. I
don't know what my arm will do if
I heat it up again...

HENRY
Hey, maybe you should see my arm
doctor!

As Chet LAUGHS Henry takes the cake off his tray.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. LA SKYLINE/LAX AIRPORT - LATER

The charter jet lands in an idyllic afternoon sun.

CUT TO:

81 EXT. SHERATON HOTEL - LATER

Henry gets out of the team bus and his eyes go wide...

HENRY POV - A vast, luxurious hotel set on the Pacific.

HENRY POV - Palms swaying in the breeze.

HENRY POV - Surfers carving the waves.

HENRY
Paradise!

Henry goes into the hotel. Brickma, still a little pale,
wobbly, follows him in.

CUT TO:

82 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

The Bellman leads them in.

BELLMAN
This is Mr. Rowengartner's room.

HENRY
We get our own rooms?

BRICKMA

Yep.

HENRY

Alright!

The Bellman opens the door that adjoins the rooms.

BRICKMA

I'll be right next door if you need anything. You got 10 minutes till the bus leaves for the stadium.

He and Brickma go into the other room...

CUT TO:

83 INT. HENRY'S HOTEL ROOM - TEN MINUTES LATER

Brickma enters...

BRICKMA

Game time...

BRICKMA POV - Henry's dancing on a messed up bed, playing the radio and watching Jonathan Winters being "The Fastest Pitcher In The World" on TV. He's wearing a bathrobe and shower cap and is surrounded by candy, peanut wrappers and empty soda cans...

CUT TO:

84 EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - NIGHT

ON THE FIELD - A routine short-to-first ground out ends the inning. Henry and the Cubs jog off the field.

VIN SCULLY(V.O.)

...This kid is really taking baseball by storm. And the Dodgers go quietly in the seventh. So, with the score 3-2 Chicago...

IN THE DUGOUT - The team enters, pumped up, preparing for their at-bats...

VIN SCULLY(CONT)

...We'll be right back with Suarez, Rowengartner and Fern due up.

Martinella approaches Henry.

MARTINELLA
Are you good for another inning?

HENRY
You betcha, Sally baby.

Martinella stares at him for a beat. Sally baby?

MARTINELLA
Good.

Martinella walks away, Brickma approaches.

BRICKMA
Henry, you're on deck.

HENRY
Huh?

BRICKMA
You're up after Suarez.

HENRY
Huh?

ON CHET AND MARTINELLA

CHET
You can't let Henry bat.

MARTINELLA
He's gonna have to learn sometime.

CHET
Oh, Christ...

ON DECK CIRCLE - CLOSE UP ON HENRY

HENRY
Huh?

Henry slides a donut weight onto the bat, takes a practice swing. The weight of the bat pulls Henry off balance...

CHET
Choke up...

HENRY
You know there's a lot to be said
for the DH.

AT THE PLATE - The ball SCREAMS by Suarez for strike three.

CHET(CONT)

...and don't get killed.

As Henry heads to the plate he passes Suarez who's shaking his head like he's just seen the Grim Reaper. Henry GULPS.

VIN SCULLY(V.O.)

...And that brings Rowengartner to the plate with his first Major League at bat.

85 INT. LIBRARY - With Mary, at work, watching the game on TV.

MARY

They're going to let him bat?!

86 IN THE DUGOUT - The players are now a CHORUS LINE...

GAINES

--Powder it, Hank!--

LEEZER

--SHOW HIM WHERE YOU LIVE!--

AT THE PLATE - Henry steps into the box.

HENRY POV - The Ugly Dodger looks for the signal.

87 INT. LIBRARY MARY - Covers her eyes unable to watch...

MARY

Omigodomigodomigod...

88 AT THE PLATE -

HENRY

Omigodomigodomigod...

HENRY POV - The Ugly Dodger goes into the wind and pitches a SIZZLING curveball. It's headed straight for him!

AT THE PLATE - Though the pitch is nowhere near him, Henry dives into the dirt.

UMPIRE(CONT)

STEERIKE ONE!!!

89 INT. LIBRARY MARY - stands, grabs the TV.

MARY

He's only a boy, you big ugly piece of...

90 IN THE DUGOUT

CHET

...Shit....

AT THE PLATE - Henry pulls himself off the turf.

ON THE MOUND - The Ugly Dodger LAUGHS as he collects the ball.

CHET(CONT)

Hang in there, Henry.

ON HENRY - stepping back into the box.

ON THE MOUND - The Ugly Dodger pitches...

AT THE PLATE - Henry shuts his eyes, BUT HE STAYS IN THE BOX...

UMPIRE

STEEERIKE TWOOOO!

91 INT. LIBRARY - MARY - Nose to nose with the Ugly Dodger on TV...

MARY

You almost killed him, you stupid mother--

92 IN THE DUGOUT

CHET

--of God in heaven--

MARTINELLA

Way to stand in, Henry!

FRICK

This time take a rip at it!

BRICKMA

RIP SOME CHEESE!!

AT THE PLATE - Henry's determination is fortified by his teammate's support. He steps in again...

ON THE MOUND - Big Ugly goes into the wind, pitches.

AT THE PLATE - Henry swings about a half hour late, but he keeps his eyes open.

UMPIRE

Steerikke Threeee!

IN THE DUGOUT - The players CHEER Henry as he arrives; he's congratulated for standing in, taking a good cut, etc...

93 INT. LIBRARY - MARY - Heaves a sigh of relief, falls back into her chair...

CUT TO:

94 INT. SHERATON HOTEL - HALLWAY - AFTER THE GAME

Chet and Henry are walking to their rooms.

HENRY

It's just timing. I was just starting to get his timing at the end...

CHET

Yeah. You looked good up there. I'm proud of you.

They walk for a beat.

HENRY

It's really cool everybody gets their own rooms. You know in the olden days, Banks used to room with Santo, Rose used to room with Seaver--

CHET

--I roomed with Johnny Bench--

HENRY

Get outta here! That is so cool.

They arrive at Henry's room.

HENRY(CONT)

But this is better. (Pause) Well. Goodnight.

CHET

Goodnight, Henry.

Henry goes into his room.

CUT TO:

95 INT. CHET'S ROOM - LATER

A knock on the door. Chet opens the door. Henry is standing there in his pajamas. Chet smiles at him, nods him into the room.

CUT TO:

96 INT. CHET'S ROOM - LATER STILL

Chet's reading in one bed. Henry's sleeping in the other.

CUT TO:

97 MONTAGE - REST OF ROAD TRIP

Henry and the Cubs wear rally caps.

Clark is bailing water out of a dredged up boat while George reads Sports Illustrated with Henry on the cover.

Henry sits on Chet's lap and drives a convertible around the hotel parking lot.

Jack shakes hands with an executive in front of a Pepsi logo.

Henry saves another game, throws his fists in the air.

Cuts of fans throwing fists in the air. In bars, throwing fists in the air.

Mary puts his Evanston Pirates uniform into his bureau, clearly missing him.

Brickma raises his fists in victory, nearly breaks his hands on the dugout ceiling...

And finally, The President of The United States, watching the game on TV, throws his fists in the air the Oval Office.

Henry notices a bag of chewing tobacco on the bench. Pause. He looks around, digs into the bag, tucks a chaw into his cheek. Pause. As Henry's eyes go wide with the burn....Henry sprints past the Cubs SCREAMING in pain. The Cubs PAUSE, pick up the SCREAM as a war cry. Cubs: "Yeah!" "Alright, Hank!" "Let's WIN!" And run out to the field.

CUT TO:

98 INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - GATE - NIGHT

The Cubs disembark--The gate area is populated with fans and media. Mary scans the players for Henry...

Chet are among the disembarking players,

REPORTER #1

Chet! You're one out with ten to play! How's it going to turn out?

CHET
Hey, we're the Cubs. You never
know!

IN THE CROWD - Mary is bouncing up and down trying get a
glimpse of Henry.

MARY
Henry! Henry!!

Chet sees Mary, heads her way.

REPORTER #2
How does it feel to be out-pitched
by a 12 year-old?

CHET
I don't care whose coattails we
ride as long as we get the ring!

Henry deplanes.

HENRY POV - The travelers and Media and fans notice Henry, and
rush toward him...

HENRY
Momm! MOMMMM!

MARY
HENRY!!

Chet rushes in, scoops Henry up, carries him through the crowd.

CHET
Give him some room! Back off!

He grabs Mary in his other arm.

CHET(CONT)
Let's get outta here!

They start to run. People follow, asking for autographs.

CHET(CONT)
Hot coffee! Hot coffee! COMING
THROUGH!!!

CUT TO:

99 EXT. AIRPORT - MINUTES LATER

Henry is between Mary and Chet, holding their hands as they
hurry toward a limousine. A couple of press people and fans are
still in pursuit.

They reach the limo, dive in...

100 INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME

CHET
(to chauffeur)
Go! Go! Go!

As the limo pulls away, the press pounds on the windows, takes pictures, screams questions.

As they pull away...

CHET
You can drop me off at the next terminal. I'll get a cab.

HENRY
No way. We'll give you a ride--

CHET
That's okay, Hank--

MARY
--No. He's right. We have this whole huge limousine that Mr. Fish gave us. Drop us off and I'm sure the driver will take you home.
(to Chauffeur)
Would that be okay?

CHAUFFEUR
You betcha...

CHET
(to Mary)
Thanks.

They sit back. Henry in the middle, smirking mischeivously.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. LIMOUSINE - LATER

Going into Evanston.

102 INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME

Mary is LAUGHING freely. Chet is LAUGHING. Henry is hopeful of romance.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LATER

The Chauffeur is unloading the car.

HENRY

(to Mary)

Aren't you going to invite Chet in for coffee? It's the least we can do. He saved our lives.

MARY

Would you like to come in for coffee?

CHET

No. I think I'll just go back to the hotel.

MARY

Please come in. I'm sure the driver wouldn't mind waiting.

CHAUFFEUR

I'm paid by the hour.

They head into the house.

104 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - SAME

Mary, Chet and Henry enter to find the house is filled with Nikes, 3 BMX bikes, cases of Pepsi, shades, Choco-Chunks cereal.

George and Clark are decked out in one of everything, sitting on two new bikes, looking like the hippest kids on the block. Well, almost.

GEORGE

Who loves you, baby?

Henry gives his buddies five.

HENRY

Hey, where'd you get all this stuff?

Jack enters looking slicker than ever.

JACK

It's all yours! Welcome home.

HENRY

What?

JACK

Perks! Because thanks to me you
are now a spokesperson for Nike,
Pepsi, BMX, and WHEATIES.

As the boys go upstairs with the goods,

CLARK

Are we going to be the coolest
guys in school or what?

Jack kisses Mary on the lips.

MARY

Jack, this is--

JACK

I know. Chet Crumm. Rocket, huh?
More like firecracker these days,
isn't it...

(as they shake)

How's that gimpy wing?

CHET

Good. Thanks.

Chet hands Jack Henry's suitcase. It nearly rips his arm off.

JACK

Well. That's good.

CHET

Henry's told me a lot about you.

JACK

Really--

MARY

--I'm going to put on some coffee.

Mary goes into the kitchen.

CHET

Pushing the endorsement thing kind
of hard, aren't you?

JACK

Got a problem with that?

CHET

Don't you think he's got enough to
worry about pitching in the
majors?

JACK
Don't you think you should mind
your own business?

Chet sizes him up for a beat.

CHET
Listen. Tell Mary I'll take a rain
check on that coffee. And, uh,
nice to meet you.

JACK
Yeah. A real pleasure.

Jack opens the door. Chet exits. Mary comes in.

MARY
Where'd Chet go?

JACK
He said he had to meet his
girlfriend somewhere.

Mary nods. We can see that she's a touch disappointed.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. WILSON JHS - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Some of the Pirates are hanging out. Becky is talking to her
friends. Suddenly, Becky Fraker stops talking...She sees
something.

GIRL #1
Who're those guys?

On the other side of the playground, the Phys Ed Spazzes are
tangled up in a tether ball rope. They look up....

PHYS ED SPAZZ
Who's that?

EVERYBODY'S POV - THE BOYS - Wheelie-ing in perfect formation,
wearing sunglasses, boss gear...

CLARK
--Riding tall--

GEORGE
--Studly--

HENRY
--Yet understated--

ON THE PIRATES

RICK
They gotta be kidding.

ON BECKY FRAKER

BECKY FRAKER
It's HENRY!

ON THE BICYCLE RACKS - as the Boys arrive...

CLARK
Here they come--

GEORGE
We have reached the summit!

George and Clark brace for an assault of adoration, but the kids run right by them to Henry. Becky Fraker is trying to get to Henry, but can't.

George and Clark find themselves rejected. Edith comes over.

EDITH
Looking good, guys.

CLARK
(to George)
Let's go.

As Henry continues to answer questions, signs autographs,

CUT TO:

106 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - THAT VERY DAY

Jack's drinking coffee, reading the newspaper.

ON THE NEWSPAPER - SPORTS PAGE - Huge color picture of Chet with his arms around Henry and Mary at the airport.

JACK
(seething)
You're messing with my golden
goose...

Jack picks up his phone, dials. Pause.

JACK(CONT)
(into phone)
Fish. Jack. We gotta talk...

CUT TO:

107 EXT. WILSON JHS - DAY

Henry runs out of the school, carrying his book bag. He goes to Mary's car, gets in. The car pulls away, leaving the kids behind, playing on the playground.

MARY(O.S.)

Do you have much homework today?

CUT TO:

108 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - BATTING PRACTICE - DAY

The Cubs are taking batting practice, warming up. Henry is doing sprints with Frick and Chet. He's feeling loose...

HENRY

Where's Peyton? He's starting, isn't he?

FRICK

Didn't you hear?

HENRY

Hear what?

MARTINELLA(O.S.)

ROLLENGARDNER!!!

As Henry turns toward the dugout,

CUT TO:

109 INT. LOCKER ROOM - MINUTES LATER

ON HENRY

HENRY

(panicked)

I'm starting? I can't be starting.
I'm the stopper. Stoppers don't
start, they stop.

MARTINELLA

Easy boy. It's a nationally
televised game. Carson wants you
to start. So, you're starting.

Martinella walks away MUTTERING. Henry turns to Peyton.

HENRY

(to Peyton)

Sorry.

PEYTON

I get paid if I pitch or not.

Henry turns back to Chet.

CHET

Forget about it. It's business.
Just win it.

Chet sees that Henry is uptight about starting.

CHET(CONT)

Look. Starting's no different than
relief, you just gotta lock into
the zone.

Henry looks at him blankly.

CHET(CONT)

You don't know about the zone?

HENRY

What zone?

LEEZER

It's a place inside where it's
peaceful. Where there are no
distractions.

CHET

When I was pitching my best, I
wasn't at the ball park. I was in
Arkansas, knocking cans off a
fence post with a rock.

OKIE

--For me, it's like I'm knocking a
Spaulding into the Hudson River.

PEYTON

--It's like I'm kicking my little
brother's ass--

CHET

What?

PEYTON

Hey, you have your zone, I have
mine.

HENRY

I've never been to Arkansas or New
York.

CHET
 You have to find your own
 Arkansas. That's the zone--

Henry nods. He starts to get dressed, thinking hard...

FADE TO:

110 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SAME

The stands are filling. Vendors are selling "Oh, Henry" t-shirts. Network TV cameramen are making final adjustments.

111 INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

Henry is sitting alone. O.S. we hear "The National Anthem".

HENRY
 The zone. The zone...

HENRY POV - A Cubs Equipment Manager, carrying a load of warm-ups, walks into the laundry room at the end of the locker room. He loads the front loading washing machine, tosses in some detergent, closes it, turns it on, walks away.

Henry smiles; now he's got it. He stands.

HENRY
 (to himself)
 The Pirates are bringing in that
 deadly southpaw from right field,
 Henry Rowengartner...

Henry CROWD ROARS, crosses the room to a "mound". He steps on the "rubber", glares across the room at the "strike zone"...

HENRY POV - The camera is pushing to the door of the washing machine as Henry starts to zone in.

HENRY(CONT)
 He's the most feared pitcher in
 the Chicago Little League. And no
 one can touch his heater!

As Henry goes into his wind-up and throws...

ON THE BALL - SCREECHING toward the washing machine....

112 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SAME

ON THE BALL - As it SCREECHES into Frick's mitt!

UMPIRE
STEEERIKKKKE THREEEE!

Frick leaps up, rushes the mound. O.S. The crowd goes WILD.

HARRY CAREY(V.O.)
CUBS WIN. They take first place on
Henry Rownegartner's first shut
out in his first start!
Unbelievable!

ON THE MOUND - Frick lifts Henry in the air, and he seems to
snap out of a trance-like state. Man, he was in the zone.

IN THE DUGOUT - Brickma hops around, totally psyched, embracing
everyone including Martinella, who'll have none of it...

IN CARSON'S BOX - As Jack turns to Bob Carson and Fish, Mary
bolts for the field...

JACK
This is going to cost you, Bob.

BOB CARSON
Don't worry. We'll keep him happy.
Right, Fish?

FISH
Happy. Right.

MARY POV - Chet approaches Henry on the mound puts his arm
around him.

ON THE FIELD - Mary runs to the edge of the field. Chet and
Henry approach. Henry hugs his Mom. As they celebrate together,

CUT TO:

113 EXT. FANCY CHICAGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

All lit up. Limos parked in front.

114 INT. FANCY CHICAGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Cubs with their wives and girlfriends. Everybody's dancing,
mingling, drinking.

ON HENRY

HENRY
(to himself)
That was a heck of a game you
pitched today.

Reveal that Henry is sitting alone.

HENRY(CONT)
Stop it. Please. It's too much.
(to other self)
You hungry?
(to other self)
Why, yes.
(to other self)
Let's check out the food.

HENRY POV - as he pinballs from waistline to waistline, looking for food.

Then he smiles. Chet is walking toward him. But Chet walks right by, cuts in on Mary and Jack who're dancing behind him.

ON CHET, JACK, MARY

CHET
Mind if I cut in, Jack?

JACK
Not at all.

As Chet and Mary dance away...

CHET
That was easy.
(as they dance)
Too bad Henry's Dad couldn't be here. Henry is a helluva kid.

MARY
He keeps his eye on him.

JACK(O.S.)
MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!

Jack is on a small stage, talking into a mike.

ON HENRY

HENRY
Oh, brother.

ON JACK

JACK
I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate The Chicago Cubs for taking over first place in the National League West...

Wild CHEERING from the partiers.

JACK(CONT)

And a special congratulations to
Henry Rowengartner for pitching a
heck of a game today...

The crowd CHEERS more wildly.

ON HENRY - raising his arms in the air.

JACK(CONT)

But the best news is that tonight
I am going to ask Mary
Rowengartner to be my wife! Mary,
will you marry me?

The crowd CHEERS

ON MARY - surprised, her face drops, covering her mouth with
hands.

ON CHET - almost as surprised as Mary, he applauds politely.

ON HENRY - People start congratulating him. He runs out.

CUT TO:

115 INT. WOODROW WILSON JHS - LUNCH ROOM - LATER

Henry, Clark, George and Edith are sitting at the girls "A"
table. Some of the Pirates look on jealously.

CLARK

It's weird sitting here.

GEORGE

Why?

HENRY

Don't worry. You fit in.

Reveal that George has a huge rudder for the boat sitting on
the table.

HENRY(CONT)

They're just kids.

George turns to Tiffany.

GEORGE

Hi, Tiffany.

TIFFANY
Hi, Roger.

GEORGE
How's it going?

TIFFANY
Not bad.

CLARK
(whispering)
She called you Roger.

GEORGE
So?

ON HENRY AND BECKY

BECKY
What is that thing George is
carrying around?

HENRY
It's the rudder for this boat.
we're working on.

BECKY
You have a boat?

HENRY
Kinda.

CLARK
(whispers to Henry)
Ask her to go for a ride.

Henry tries to ignore her.

CLARK(CONT)
Ask her to go for a ride.

Henry summons his courage. Just as he's about to speak, the bell RINGS O.S. As the table breaks for class, ad-libbing goodbyes to Henry...George juggles his rudder and his tray, as they head to empty their trays...

CLARK
Man, you were this close...

HENRY
When we finish the boat, I'll ask
her.

GEORGE

When we put the rudder in today,
we'll almost be there.

HENRY

I can't do it today. Jack set up
somekind of photo shoot for
Doritos with Bruce Willis today.
You guys want to come?

GEORGE

Naw.

CLARK

I can't believe that guy is going
to be your father.

HENRY

He's not going to be my father,
Clark. Stepfather, please.

GEORGE

Meet us after then.

HENRY

Okay. He said it should only take
about an hour.

EDITH

C'mon, Roger, we better get to
class.

CUT TO:

116 INT. SOUND STAGE - LATER

ON THE STAGE - Henry's blinded by the spotlights. A prop master
hands him a Pepsi, a mitt, a bat. As Henry juggles them...

DIRECTOR(O.S.)

Okay, Henry. Relax. Be yourself.
Here we go!

ON HENRY - IN FAST MOTION - striking 56 different poses
holding, juggling, dropping the Pepsi, the bat, the mitt. He's
definitely NOT being himself.

DIRECTOR(O.S.)

Good! Let's take a break. And
we'll start again in a half hour.
Has Mr. Willis showed up yet?!

ON MARY - looking on, concerned.

Henry drops everything falls back into a director's chair, totally exhausted.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. LLOYD'S BEACH - DUSK

George and Clark are sitting, still waiting for Henry. The pieces of the boat, including the rudder are lying around them.

CUT TO:

118 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack's looking over the proofs of a Wonder Bread ad that has Henry surrounded by huge baseball props. The caption: "Wonder Boy". Mary and Henry enter...

JACK

How'd it go?

HENRY

I had my arms in the air for five hours. I ate 16 bags of Doritos--

MARY

--Henry. You're tired. Go get some dinner.

As Henry shuffles into the kitchen he thrusts his arms in the air one more time for Jack's benefit.

MARY

We gotta cut back on this stuff. Henry's exhausted.

JACK

Mary, you gotta strike while the iron's hot.

MARY

You're pushing him too hard.

JACK

I'm pushing him? You think I'm doing this for me?

MARY

No. I didn't mean...

JACK

...Look. If you think we're doing the wrong thing here, I'll call Henry's sponsors, cancel all of his deals...

MARY

I'm not saying that--

JACK

Mary, if you don't trust me to make these business decisions, how're you going to trust me to run this family?

MARY

Jack. I only said I'd think about the marriage thing...

Jack starts to nuzzle her--"wooziewooziewoozie"--trying to coax her. Henry comes into the living room with his dinner, sees them and nearly vomits...

CUT TO:

119 EXT. BICYCLE RACKS - LATER

George and Clark are getting on their bikes. Henry comes out of school, hurries over...

HENRY

Hey!

GEORGE

Hey. Look who's actually talking to us.

CLARK

George...

HENRY

They kept me there for hours. You think I like doing that?

GEORGE

I don't know. Do you?

HENRY

Look. I'm sorry. Let's just go down there and work on it.

GEORGE

I'm not working on it just because you say to.

HENRY

What, am I supposed to work on it by myself?

GEORGE

Good idea! Work on it yourself!

George gets on his bike, takes off.

CLARK

George...

Clark gets on his bike.

CLARK

I'll see you later, Henry.

Clark takes off. Henry's left alone.

CUT TO:

120 INT. CHARTER PLANE - DAY

The Cubs sit in pairs, LAUGHING, having a good time together. A real team. Even Brickma is enjoying the flight.

Chet and Henry are sitting together. As usual Chet is eating heartily. Henry is picking at his food.

CUT TO:

121 EXT. BUSCH STADIUM - ST. LOUIS, MO. - NIGHT

Martinella is on the mound with Henry. He takes the ball from Henry. Henry walks to the dugout. When he gets there he throws his mitt and walks off into the locker room.

Chet looks on, concerned.

CUT TO:

122 INT. ST. LOUIS HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

PULL BACK to find Henry staring out a hotel window. The Gateway Arch is in the distance...

HENRY POV - In a lake below, are kids in pedal boats, tearing around, LAUGHING, bumping into each other. Doing what he might be doing with Clark and George if he wasn't a pro ball player.

HENRY
(ironically)
Paradise.

Henry falls back onto his bed.

CUT TO:

123 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Henry is sitting alone on the bench playing GameBoy. Chet's getting dressed in the locker next to him.

CHET
That's going to make you stupid.

Henry doesn't even hear him.

CHET(CONT)
Too late.

MARTINELLA(O.S.)
Crumm! Get in here!

Chet gets up, goes into Martinella's office.

CHET
I guess I'm getting that big bonus
after all.

Henry keeps playing as Chet goes into Martinella's office.

124 INT. MARTINELLA'S OFFICE - SAME

Chet comes in. Martinella shuts the door behind him. Chet notices.

CHET
Uh-oh. It's over, right?

Chet and Martinella look at each other. Both have been through it before.

MARTINELLA
I'm sorry, Chet.

CHET
That's the name of the game. Where
do I go this time?

MARTINELLA

They're not trading you. They're just going to let you go. I figured I'd tell you now instead of wait 'til the end of the season.

(Chet starts to go)

You got two games left. Make the most of 'em.

125 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Chet comes back into the locker room.

HENRY

You get the start today?

Chet roughs Henry's hair; he's going to miss this kid.

CHET

Not today, kid.

CUT TO:

126 INT. CHET'S PICK-UP - LATER

Chet's giving Henry a ride home.

HENRY

What's eatin' you?

CHET

Nothing.

HENRY

C'mon Chet. We could win the division tomorrow. Isn't that what you always wanted?

CHET

Yeah. I guess it is.

HENRY

I'm going to get it for you. I'm going to get you that ring.

CHET

Henry, you're a great kid. Don't take this game too serious 'cause one day it'll be over. You got a great Mom. She's going to marry a decent guy...

Henry air vomits, gagging mightily...Chet LAUGHS.

CHET(CONT)

Okay. Okay. He's almost decent.
But, it's your life, Henry. That's
what's important. You got great
friends...And that's what's going
to see you through.

They drive on...Henry thinking...

CUT TO:

127 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - LATER

The pick-up truck pulls up to the crack in the fence. Henry gets out.

CHET

Go home right after this. Don't
worry your mother.

HENRY

Wanna see the boat?

CHET

Next time.

Henry looks at Chet for a beat.

Embarrassed, Henry squeezes through the hole in the fence.

CHET

(touched)

Aw, kid, you're breaking my heart.

128 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - SAME

Totally psyched to see his friends, Henry sprints across the pier, down the beach. But he skids to stop in front of Lloyd--

HENRY POV - George, Clark and Edith are working on the boat. George and Clark are taking orders from Edith, who's wearing a carpenter's belt. The boat has never looked better. They are filling the boat with sea rations of junk-food.

Long pause. Henry turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

129 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - LATER

Jack's on the phone.

JACK

(into phone)

You mean they're going to let him finish the season? Well okay. I guess that'll teach Arkansas hick to mess with my golden goose...

Henry enters...

JACK(CONT)

Right-o, Fish...

He hangs up the phone and grabs Henry by the arm.

JACK(CONT)

Where the hell have you been?

HENRY

Get off me!

JACK

I asked you a question! You can't just blow off a photo shoot without--

HENRY

--I had better things to do--

JACK

It's going to cost me a fortune if we don't get that ad back--

HENRY

Get out of my face.

Henry starts to walk away. Jack grabs him again...

JACK

Don't you walk away when I'm talking to you? Show me some respect!

HENRY

You're not my father!

JACK

That's right. I'm not your father. And that guy in the picture by your bed isn't your father. I'm not even sure your mother knows who your father is! He's a figment of her imagination--

MARY - standing on the stairs...

MARY
That's enough!

Jack lets go of Henry.

JACK
Mary. I thought you were in the shower.

MARY
Get away from my son.

Mary comes down the stairs. Henry goes to her.

MARY(CONT)
Get out. Don't ever come near me or my family again.

JACK
Mary--

MARY
I never want to see you again!

JACK
You're going to be seeing me. I have a ten year contract with Henry.

Jack heads for the door.

JACK(CONT)
I suppose the wedding is off--
Gimme the ring back.

Mary walks over as though she's going to give him the ring back. But she punches him hard in the forehead with the ring hand. He flies through the screen door. She takes the ring off, chucks it out...Slams the door. Pause. Mary does a CROWD ROAR, throws her arms in the air. Henry joins her...

MARY
Henry settle down. It's not that big a deal.

Henry is re-living the Mary vs. Jack bout, shadowing boxing.

HENRY
(as Jack)
Gimme the ring back...BOOM!

Henry reels from the punch...

HENRY

I can't believe what a liar that guy is--

MARY

Henry, sit. What he said about your father--

HENRY

Yeah?

MARY

Your father...
(a new tact)
When I was a teenager--

HENRY

--Mom. I got a confession to make. I stopped believing the story you made up about Dad and all the baseball and softball and the floater pitch in like 2nd grade...

MARY

What? How'd you know--

HENRY

--Because no one could be that perfect.

MARY

I'm sorry. I just wanted you to have someone who was looking after you and could teach you...

HENRY

I do.

Mary hugs him.

MARY

When I had you, people said you were my little mistake. You're no mistake...You're perfect...

CUT TO:

130 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Henry has just gotten dressed. Behind his back, Edith climbs into a tree outside the window. Precariously balancing, she tries to knock on the window, but it's just out of reach. She almost falls. Henry hears her SCREAM O.S., turns around.

Henry opens the window...

HENRY

Edith! What're you doing?

EDITH

They're launching the boat!

CUT TO:

131 EXT. HUBERT'S BEACH - LATER

Henry and Edith come down to the beach.

THEIR POV - George and Clark are fixing a boom and it's rolled up sail to the mast to a nicely finished boat...

Henry approaches. Clark is holding the end of the boom. George is struggling hard to get it fixed to the mast.

HENRY

Hi, guys. You're launching today,
huh?

They keep working.

HENRY(CONT)

Mind if I watch?

GEORGE

It's a free country.

A long beat while they work. (INTERCUT on the approving reactions of the boys during this speech.)

EDITH

Let me jump in here. Henry is a professional ball player, a life that can be very demanding; juggling school, baseball and overwhelming popularity. George and Clark on the other hand seemed to have misread Henry's inability to fit them into his busy schedule as a rejection of their friendship. This confusion is a natural response to an extraordinary situation. But there is a solution. Friendship is about practice, work, and spending time together. Everybody really likes each other. And everybody wants to be friends again. And it's only right that you all participate in the maiden voyage, right?

A beat. They all look at each other. Then, dismissively all ad-lib "Yeah" "Right" "I knew that" "I was going to say that"...

GEORGE

Could you give me a hand with this?

They pull the boat into the water. When they have it in...

GEORGE(CONT)

HOIST THE SAIL!!!

Clark hoists the sail. They clamor aboard. The sail fills with wind. And they start to sail away...

GEORGE

HEY! IT WORKS!!!

CLARK

We're MOVING!!

HENRY

Left rudder!!

GEORGE

I don't know how to steer!

EDITH

WHAT!?

They at each other.

ALL
JUMP!!!!!!

They jump ship, swim back to shore, and watch as their boat sails away...

They drag themselves to shore, exhausted, and dissolve into LAUGHTER...

HENRY
That was excellent.

CUT TO:

132 INT. ROWENGARTNER HOUSE - DAY

Mary is making lunch. Henry comes in...

MARY
Lunch is ready.

HENRY
Mom. I've been thinking. My confusion is a natural response to an extraordinary situation...

As Mary turns around, shocked by Henry's diction.

CUT TO:

133 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DAY

The sun sets on Wrigley's electric sign: "SEASON FINALE - CUBS VS. ST. LOUIS".

Fans are lined up around the block, waiting to get in.

CUT TO:

134 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - CARSON'S OUTER OFFICE - SAME

Mary and Henry are waiting.

MARY
Are you sure this is what you want?

Henry nods.

CUT TO:

135 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - CARSON'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Bob and Fish are watching the pre-game show on television. The Secretary brings in Mary and Henry...

SECRETARY

The Rowengartners, sir...

BOB CARSON

What? You should be suiting up, Henry.

HENRY

Mr. Carson, I'm not going to be back next season.

BOB CARSON

What? You're the best thing to happen to baseball since Cracker Jack.

HENRY

I love the Cubs. It's been great. I've made some great friends: Mr. Brickma and Mr. Crumm, but I think it'd be better if I waited...

BOB CARSON

Chet Crumm is a friend of yours?

HENRY

Yes, sir. He's taught me a lot this summer.

BOB CARSON

Then why the hell did you ask him to be released.

HENRY

What?

BOB CARSON

Didn't your new Stepdaddy tell Mr. Fish here to get rid of Mr. Crumm?

Henry races out. Mary follows Henry out...

Carson turns on Fish, stares him down. Fish cowers.

CUT TO:

136 WRIGLEY FIELD - BATTING PRACTICE - LATER

Henry runs onto the field, in his street clothes, sees Chet loosening up. He hurries over.

CHET
Shouldn't you be getting loose?
You're starting today.

HENRY
Are you alright?

ON JACK - leaning against the rail, a bandage on his forehead, schmoozing some businessmen. He eyes Chet and Henry.

A beat; Chet knows that Henry knows he's been let go, then...

CHET
I'll be a lot better when you win
me that ring. Now go get dressed.

Henry heads for the locker...

CUT TO:

137 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Henry ceremoniously puts his uniform on. The uniform fits much better than it did earlier. He puts on his glove, pounds it. He checks the front-loading washing machine...

ON THE WASHING MACHINE - the glass is shattered.

ON HENRY - he smiles,

HENRY
Let's do the do.

Henry jogs toward the biggest day of his life...

138 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - RUNWAY - SAME

Henry charges toward the field...

139 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - DUGOUT - SAME

Henry runs up the stairs onto the field.

140 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SAME

ON HENRY - Running toward the bullpen.

ON THE BASEBALL - in Henry's path.

ON CHET - seeing the accident about to happen.

ON HENRY - Running.

ON THE BASEBALL - Henry in B.G. approaching.

ON HENRY'S FOOT - stepping on the baseball...

ON HENRY - SLOW MOTION - going up into the air, arms and legs all over the place. He slams to the ground, on his left side.

Chet hurries over...

CHET

You okay, Hank?

Henry pulls himself up, GROANING slightly. Then he tests his arm. Everything seems to be working okay.

HENRY

Yeah. I'm fine.

CHET

Get warmed up. The game starts in forty five minutes.

CUT TO:

141 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - BULLPEN - LATER

The stands are filling up. Mary and the boys are sitting together.

ON THE BULLPEN MOUND - Henry throw his first warm-up pitch.

ON THE BALL - HUMMING toward home 50mph.

Henry doesn't seem concerned as he collects the ball.

ON THE BULLPEN MOUND - Henry throws again...

ON THE BALL - HUMMING toward home, again only 50mph.

ON THE BULLPEN MOUND - Henry seems a little concerned. He stretches his shoulder.

AT THE PLATE - As Frick throws the ball back,

FRICK

C'mon, shorty! Gimme the heat!

ON THE BALL - HUMMING toward home, 50mph, a meatball.

ON THE MOUND - Now, Henry is concerned. Frick approaches.

FRICK(CONT)
Stop mucking around--

HENRY
My arm's gone. That's as fast as I
can throw it...

Frick waves to Martinella and Brickma.

MARTINELLA
What's up?

CUT TO:

142 INT. LOCKER ROOM - MINUTES LATER

ON THE "TRAINING ROOM" DOOR

MARTINELLA(O.S.)
Noooooooooooo!!!!

CUT TO:

143 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

The Cubs take the field. The crowd goes berserk!

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
And here come the Cubbies. What a
season it's been!

ON THE MOUND - Peyton warms up.

IN THE STANDS - Mary is standing next to a guy with a radio.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
(on the radio)
But everybody wants to know why
Henry Rowengartner has been
benched.

Mary looks concerned, starts for the dugout...

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella paces, possessed, muttering...

MARTINELLA
The Cubs jinx...It's for real...I
should've taken the Padres job.

As he passes in front of Chet and Henry....

CHET
Helluva a way to go out.

HENRY
Championship game...

CHET
Cubs could win it all...

HENRY
And we've got great seats.

Chet smiles...Then Mary leans into the dugout...

MARY
(to Henry/Chet)
What's going on?

HENRY
My arm snapped back to normal.

MARY
Are you okay?

HENRY
Yeah. I'm fine.

MARY
Need anything?

Henry looks to Chet...

CHET
Hot dogs. We need hot dogs.

Mary smiles...

ON THE MOUND - Peyton deals.

AT THE PLATE - A Card lines the pitch up the middle...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Romanow leads off with a clean
single up the middle...

ON THE MOUND - Peyton collects the ball, checks the man on
first. Goes into the wind, throws...

AT THE PLATE - The Batter looks at it...

UMPIRE
STEERIKE ONEEE!

IN THE STANDS - The crowd, including George and Clark ERUPTS!!

IN THE DUGOUT - The row of pitchers CHEER Peyton. Brickma over
indulges his CHEER. Martinella stares him down...

FADE TO:

144 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SECOND INNING

ON THE SCOREBOARD - Cubs 1, Cards 0.

ON THE FIELD - two Cards on base.

IN THE DUGOUT

MARTINELLA

Leezer. Get warmed up.

Leezer leaves the group of pitchers. Chet and Henry watch him go. Only five pitchers are left.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

Cubs are up, but Peyton has already given up 7 hits in just two innings. He's not looking too sharp...

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry and Chet are eating hot dogs.

ON THE MOUND - Peyton rocks and fires.

AT THE PLATE - Heddo gets most of it...

IN THE FIELD - The ball sinks into the corner, the Rightfielder chases it. The runners score. Heddo goes into 3rd.

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry and Chet stop chewing. GROAN.

THE CROWD - GROANS...

ON THE FIELD - Martinella trots to the mound, takes the ball from Peyton. As Peyton heads for the dugout.

CUT TO:

145 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - FIFTH INNING

ON THE SCOREBOARD - Cubs 1, Cards 6.

ON THE FIELD - Two men on base for Okie.

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry and Chet put on their rally caps. Pitchers follow suit. Four pitchers left.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

The Cubs could use a little magic here...

ON THE MOUND - The pitcher deals...

AT THE PLATE - Okie gets all of it....

ON THE BALL - Sailing out of the stadium....

ON THE CROWD - Going absolutely ape....

146 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - STREET - SAME

As Jack and Fish get into Fish's Trans Am...

Okie's home run shatters his windshield!!

CUT TO:

147 INT. WRIGLEY FIELD - LATER

Leezer comes into the dugout, heads for the showers.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

They're pinch hitting for Leezer.
Which means the Cubs have only got
Bauvier, Crumm and Rowengartner
left. Martinella is pulling out
all the stops.

Bauvier gets up, goes to the bullpen. Henry looks down the
bench. No pitchers left besides him and Chet.

CUT TO:

148 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - SEVENTH INNING

ON THE FIELD - Cards at the corners.

ON THE MOUND - Bauvier pitches...

AT THE PLATE - The ball is lashed into left...

IN THE FIELD - The leftfielder makes a spectacular catch, but
the runner at third tags and scores.

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella looks at the scoreboard.

MARTINELLA POV - Cubs 7, Cards 9.

CUT TO:

149 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - EIGHTH INNING

ON THE FIELD - Cubs on 2nd and 3rd...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Full count. Two out. Bottom
eight...

ON THE MOUND - The Card pitcher, RICK COTTEN, wheels and
deals...

IN THE FIELD - Fern lines one into the gap...The runners score,
Fern heads into second with a stand up double...

The CROWD goes berserk...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
FERN TIES IT UP with a two-out
double! It's 9-all! And here comes
OKIE!!!

AT THE PLATE - Okie steps into the box...

ON THE MOUND - Cotten is shitting.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Okie is 3 for 3 with a single, a
double and a three run homer!

IN THE DUGOUT - Everybody is on their feet, CHEERING Okie on.

ON THE MOUND - Cotten spits, deals...

AT THE PLATE - The ball catches Okie in the middle of the back.

IN THE DUGOUT - The Cubs are pissed, but Bauvier is INCENSED.

BAUVIER
He did that on PURPOSE!!! Throw
him out!!!

ON THE MOUND - Cotten makes a face at Bauvier, telling him to
take a flying leap.

IN THE DUGOUT - Bauvier has to be restrained, he's so pissed
off.

IN THE FIELD - Okie takes first. Frick comes to the plate...

ON THE MOUND - Cotten checks the runners, deals...

AT THE PLATE - Frick reaches for a bad pitch...

IN THE FIELD - The ball just clears the 1st baseman's mitt.
Drops into right field.

Fern rounds third as the Rightfielder comes up with it and guns
it to the plate...

AT THE PLATE - The Card catcher gets the ball a second before Fern gets there. He blocks the plate. Fern slides....

THE CROWD - Rises...

IN THE DUGOUT - The players leap up...

A cloud of dust...The Ump waits to make the call, unsure. Then the ball rolls out of the dust...

UMPIRE
SAAAAFFFFFEEEEEE!

THE CROWD - goes wild.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
CUBBIES TAKE THE LEAD!!!

As the crowd continues to CHEER,

FADE TO:

150 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - TOP OF THE NINTH

ON THE SCOREBOARD - Cubs 10, Cards 9

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Runners at the corners and nobody
out here in the top of the ninth.
And Romanow is coming up. He's 3
for 4...

AT THE PLATE - Romanow steps in...

ON THE MOUND - Bauvier works the ball menacingly, stares Romanow down...As Bauvier steps on the rubber,

BAUVIER POV - In the Card dugout, Cotten makes that same face at him.

ON THE MOUND - Bauvier fumes, fires...

AT THE PLATE - He nails Romanow in the ribs.

ON THE FIELD - As the benches empty onto the field. As they brawl...

ON HENRY - being lifted into the air by a Card who is almost immediately knocked out by Chet...

As the brawl continues....

FADE TO:

151 EXT. WRIGLEY FIELD - TOP NINTH

The field has cleared...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

The good news is that the fighting is over. The bad news is that Bauvier has been ejected, the bases are loaded. And the Cubs are left with Crumm, who hasn't been right since surgery last year and young Rowengartner.

IN THE DUGOUT - As Martinella walks over...

HENRY

Oh, boy.

CHET

This is what it's all about.

MARTINELLA

Crumm, you're in.

(Chet gets up)

You want the ring. You're going to have to take it.

Chet nods, winks at Henry heads for the mound...

ON THE MOUND - As Chet takes his warm-ups,

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry starts chanting: "ROCKET, ROCKET". The rest of the dugout starts chanting with him.

IN THE STANDS - The Fans pick up the chant "ROCKET, ROCKET"

AT THE PLATE - The batter steps in.

ON HENRY

HENRY

ROCKET!! ROCKET!!

ON THE MOUND - Chet winds up and throws a HEATER that SIZZLES toward the plate...

AT THE PLATE - Whunk!

UMPIRE

STEEERIKKKKE ONE!!!!

The crowd ERUPTS!!!!

Frick fires the ball back to Chet. He collects it. Goes into his motion...

ON CHET - Throwing another heater, in SLOWER MOTION. "STRIKE TWOOO!"

ON THE FANS - CHEERING "ROCKET, ROCKET!!"

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry watches his hero delivering, CHEERS.

ON CHET - SLOWER MOTION - Throwing his heater. He looks younger than ever..."STRIKE THREE" He's out!!!

THE CROWD - Jubilant.

AT THE PLATE - The next batter steps in. "STRIKE ONE" "STRIKE TWO".

ON THE MOUND - Chet rears back and gives it EVERYTHING he's got. As the ball is released, POP! Chet falls to the ground, grabbing his shoulder, in agony...O.S. we hear "STRIKE THREE!"

IN THE DUGOUT - Henry and Martinella run out to the mound.

HENRY

CHET!

IN THE STANDS

MARY

Omigod.

ON THE MOUND - Henry, Martinella and Frick arrive, tend to Chet...

CHET

Stick a fork in me. I'm done.

MARTINELLA

Who the hell do I pitch now? Fern?
Okie? Brickma?

Now the Crowd starts to chant: "Henry! Henry! Henry!"

CHET

Let Hank pitch...

MARTINELLA

I'd like too, but there's too much
at stake--

HANK

--I can do it, coach.

MARTINELLA

How?

HENRY

I've got the have to.

The "Henry!" chant gets louder. Martinella notices.

FRICK

If Hank doesn't warm up, the
batter'll be thinking fastball all
the way--

Martinella nods...

MARTINELLA

Just get me the out...

Chet takes the ball out of Frick's glove, and hands it to
Henry.

CHET

You know, maybe I could use that
doctor of yours, after all.

Henry LAUGHS. The players head for the dugout. The crowd goes
ABSOLUTELY INSANE...

UMPIRE

Warm up!!!

HENRY

I'm ready. Let's go.

UMPIRE

Okay. BATTER UP!!

Heddo gives Henry a quizzical look.

P.A. ANNOUNCER(O.S.)

Now batting for St. Louis--
Alejandro Heddo...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)

...The Cubbies still have to get
around Cub killer Alejandro Heddo.
And Rowengartner's record against
him is anything but sterling.

ON THE MOUND - Henry works the rosin bag expertly.

HENRY

(to himself)

Alright. Pitch it.

Henry goes into his windup and throws...

ON THE BALL - 60mph. Surprised by the slowness of the pitch, Heddo is way out in front...

UMPIRE
STEEERIKE ONE!!!!

The CROWD GOES WILD.

The DUGOUT goes wild.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
That was the first change-up that
I've ever seen Rowengartner throw.
And what a time to go to it...

ON THE MOUND - Henry collects the ball, goes into his windup, pitches.

ON THE BALL - As Heddo CLUBS IT!

ON THE MOUND - Henry watches the ball...

HENRY
Oh, noooo.

IN THE DUGOUT - Martinella turns away. Brickma SCREAMS, covers his eyes, unable to watch...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
That ball is back...

THE BOYS/MARY - cover their eyes, unable to watch.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
...Back...

IN THE BOX - Bob Carson covers his eyes.

EVERYONE IN THE STADIUM - covers their eyes.

ON THE BALL - changing direction.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
...That ball is CURVING FOUL!!!!

The ball curves foul, an inch west of the foul pole.

UMPIRE
STERRIKKKE TWO!!!!

THE CROWD - CHEERS wildly, rises to its feet.

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
The Cubs are one strike away from
a Western division championship!

IN THE DUGOUT - Brickma drops to his knees, starts praying.

HEDDO
(to Henry)
You got nothing! An I know you got
nothing.

Henry takes off his glove, rubs the ball with both hands,
really working it over...

HARRY CARAY(V.O.)
Hank looks rattled.

ON THE MOUND - Henry finishes rubbing the ball, starts to put
his glove back on. Then he notices something in the glove.

ON THE GLOVE - a little flap of tape is coming loose, above the
inscription "ROWENGARTNER". Henry slowly peels it back,
revealing the word..."MARY"...

HENRY
Mom?

Henry looks up.

HENRY POV - Mary is watching him, seeing him look into his
glove. She smiles...

ON HENRY - Henry smiles back.

ON MARY - She mimes throwing an underhand floater pitch.

ON HENRY - LAUGHING.

HEDDO
What are you laughin' at!!?

HENRY
Nothing, sir!

Henry winds up, throws a FLOATER underhand toward the plate.

THE CUBS - follow the arc of the ball...

THE CROWD - follow it's arc....

AT THE PLATE - Heddo is so captivated by the arc of the ball
that he swings and misses...

UMPIRE
STEEEEEEEEERIKKE THREEE!

IN THE STANDS - The crowd goes WILD.

ON THE MOUND - Henry pumps his fist...

IN THE BLEACHERS - The Bums LEAP up...

IN THE DUGOUT - The Cubs go wild, pour onto the field.
Martinella slam-dunks his Maalox bottle, embraces Brickma.

ON THE FIELD - Fans and the Cubs hoist Henry onto their
shoulders. Henry throws the game ball into the air...

HENRY POV - Mary, Clark and George celebrate.

ON THE FIELD - Henry pumps his fist at Mary, Clark and George.
Winds up and throws the game ball to Mary...

ON THE BALL - sailing against the sky...and sailing...

CUT TO:

152 EXT. WILSON JHS - THAT SPRING

....And sailing...It's about to hit the ivy when a mitt reaches
into frame and snags it...

Reveal Henry catching the ball, saving a home run, wearing his
Evanston Pirates uniform...

IN THE DUGOUT - Mary in a "Coach" jacket CHEERS for her star
right fielder.

IN THE STANDS - Chet applauds, pumps his fist toward Mary.

Mary pumps her fists back at him.

IN THE STANDS - Becky pumps her fist toward Henry.

Henry pumps his fists back.

GEORGE and CLARK CHEER from their makeshift concession stand
made from the remnants of the boat, wearing Pirate outfits.

Henry runs to the infield where he's embraced by his teammates.
He pumps his fist in the air....

CLOSE ON HENRY'S HAND - On his ring finger is a "CHICAGO CUBS -
WORLD CHAMPIONS" ring. FREEZE FRAME.