

Calvin Marshall

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FADE IN:

On the back of a baseball player: "MARSHALL" is sprawled in an arc above #14.

CALVIN MARSHALL (21), cute in a frazzled sort of way, pulls a ball and glove from his bag and turns around. WE MOVE BACK with him as he walks by the dugout and onto a Pee-Wee baseball field where a T-Ball team awaits his instruction.

CALVIN

Okay boys and girls -- infield fundamentals. Back straight, butt down. Soft, agile hands out front like you're fielding an egg. And no flinching. Always, ALWAYS keep your eye on the ball. A bloody lip and a black eye will heal but a fielding error is irreparable.

The Head Coach of the Pee-Wee team -- the tall, lanky and dim-witted FRED DEERFIELD (40) -- throws short hops to Calvin.

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin demonstrates to little IAN how to hit off a tee.

CALVIN

Arms fully extended. Club-head out. Your right knee should almost scrape the dirt. Look at my pivot, Ian. Go ahead and show me.

Ian takes a pathetic little chop at the ball.

CALVIN

That's it -- perfect!

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin, Fred and the entire team run in place.

CALVIN

High knees people! Crucial if you want to steal bags like Ricky or take out catchers like Cobb.

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin signs fancy autographs for the kids.

FRED

Really big of you to give back to the kids again this season, Cal.

CALVIN
No worries, buddy.

SUSIE
Can I have your autograph too,
Coach Fred?

FRED
You got it, Susie.

Fred nervously signs. Susie's mom LEAH watches with a smile.

IAN
How did you get so good, Calvin?

CALVIN
Gettin' my game on at the crack of
dawn, Ian.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING (OPENING TITLES)

Calvin lies awake in the dark chewing bubble gum. He stops chomping for a moment, watching the clock radio -- 4:44 AM.

It turns 4:45 and the alarm BUZZES -- Calvin jumps up and flips on the light.

THE MAIN WALL OF CALVIN'S BEDROOM is a shrine of sports memorabilia & equipment. Superstars. Posters.

Inspirational quotes scrawled neatly on the wall --

- *"Failure is the opportunity to begin again."*
- *"Never, never, never give up."* - Winston Churchill

CALVIN jumps rope. A bookshelf trembles with each jump and --

A BASEBALL falls to the carpet, rolls towards us and stops, revealing the autograph between the stitches, *Calvin Marshall*.

CALVIN HITS A SPEED BAG in the corner of his room -- with the control and grace of a lightweight boxing champion.

A 25 LB. WEIGHT is suspended from a rope mid-air. We follow it up, revealing Calvin's forearms -- straining, turning a stick over, lifting the weight.

CALVIN EXECUTES rigorous repetitions on a small hand grip exerciser. He passes the gizmo to his left hand.

CALVIN pulls on his baseball cap, hoists his bag on his shoulder and exits in the darkness.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAWN (OPENING TITLES)

In the breaking dawn, Calvin executes the most passionate, sincere baseball workout ever witnessed: Tee work. Batting practice. Sprints. Ground balls. Crunches. Drills.

His determination is more impressive than his talent.

Calvin finishes with a few ridiculous, sprawling head first slides into home plate.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

A cloud of steam follows Calvin out of the bathroom and into his room. He's wrapped in a towel.

Facing the mirror, Calvin buttons up a dress shirt. He eyes his black & white poster of Honus Wagner.

CALVIN

What do you think Honus? That's what I thought -- pretty sick.

He looks at the portrait of his mother Clarissa.

CALVIN

I know you like what you see, Mom. No doubt about that.

INT. CALVIN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Calvin watches ESPN, spooning protein powder into a blender stuffed with exotic fruit. The blender BUZZES to life.

A disheveled AUNT JUNE (40) stumbles in, half asleep. She beelines to the coffee maker. Pours a cup.

CALVIN

No spinning class?

JUNE

Not today.

Calvin gulps down his smoothie.

CALVIN

...You sick?

June approaches slowly sipping her coffee. She smiles.

JUNE

No. Just had a really good night.

The pleasant, blue-collared ERNIE (50) makes a big entrance.

ERNIE

Here I am.

Calvin looks surprised to see him. Ernie gives Calvin a quick shoulder rub as he passes by.

ERNIE

Oh yes, I stayed the night Cal and
I have you to thank. Mornin' bud.

(turns to June)

There she is.

Ernie greets her with a charged kiss and embrace. Finally, they release each other, smiling.

JUNE

Mmmmmm. Woke me up.

Ernie pours some coffee and opens a newspaper on the couch.

Calvin watches June -- she's euphoric. He whispers to her --

CALVIN

I knew you'd like him.

June winks, thanking him. Calvin heads for the door.

JUNE

Keep your eye on the ball, today.

CALVIN

Always. See you guys later.

ERNIE

Yeah - nice & easy buddy. Hit,
catch, throw.

CALVIN

Right. Simple game.

INT. BISON BRIGADE SOUND STAGE - DAY

Calvin swaggers onto the bustling make-shift set of the college sports TV show. The show's insecure director SIMON (25) walks alongside Calvin. Endearing but temperamental, Simon is in his 7th year of Jr. College.

SIMON

This is going to be the best season yet! Experienced crew. The set is brand new. You ready, Cal?

CALVIN
Of course, buddy -- I'm always
ready.

SIMON
You import your script into the
Teleprompter last night?

CALVIN
No, I don't have a script. But,
don't worry -- I can do this in my
sleep.

SIMON
(panicking)
What about the notes you showed me
yesterday?

Calvin sits down at his talk-show desk. A MAKE-UP ARTIST
touches up his face.

CALVIN
Those were from last year.

SIMON
(hurt)
How could you -- ? Why would you
do such a thing?

CALVIN
I was trying to ease your anxiety.
I'm sorry, man.

SIMON
That's great. Season premier's
gonna blow!

CALVIN
Simon. Relax. Once we get into
baseball season I won't have time
to prepare anything. Better get
used to it. We're flying without a
net this year.

Simon looks nauseous.

CALVIN
Look at me, buddy. We're gonna
knock this premiere outta the park.

Simon nods, still worried. He turns to the Make-Up Artist.

SIMON

Let's get a coat and tie on him.

CALVIN

I was thinking maybe we could lose the tie this year.

SIMON

Calvin, would you take this seriously? Please.

The Make-Up Artist hands Calvin his coat and tie on a hanger.

SIMON

Okay everyone. Five minutes and we roll. All crew in place, please.

INT. BISON BRIGADE SOUND STAGE - LATER - DAY

Fake APPLAUSE and a cheesy opening THEME SONG to Bison Brigade. Simon wears a headset and watches the monitor. Calvin has a strong, upbeat speaking voice and looks the part on camera. He's smooth and relaxed. A natural.

CALVIN

Welcome to the season premiere of Bison Brigade -- I'm your host Calvin Marshall. I hope Bison sports fans everywhere had a lovely summer. We'll be running a looser ship this year -- but still an exciting, extremely entertaining show. Right Sime? Off the cuff?

Simon frowns off-set, waving at Calvin to get moving.

CALVIN

He's nodding his head.

Calvin's SET PA pours coffee in his mug.

CALVIN

Thank you. The big news this week is our defending championship badminton team begins their young season against arch rivals Skyline College. Game time today is 3:15. Please show your support. This is a dazzling squad -- they can really slap the bird around the court. Moving on to baseball.

Calvin smiles, sipping from his coffee mug like Letterman.

CALVIN

Former minor leaguer Doug Little has quickly become one of the best young coaches in Jr. College history. He skippered last year's championship team to an impressive 37 wins and only 8 defeats.

Calvin motions to his Set PA who rolls out a TV where A PICTURE of Coach Little appears.

CALVIN

There he is. This year Little inherits a young ball club forcing him to lean on sophomores JJ Caselli, Grant Murphy -- and new faces like Pete Vanos, Rick Viczorek and yours truly, Calvin Marshall.

(pause)

See ya'll down at the ball yard.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Players warm up; pepper, playing catch, stretching, running.

Calvin tapes and pine-tars the handle of his new wooden bat.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

COACH DOUG LITTLE (38) paces on top of the dugout, towering over sixty prospective ballplayers. He points down at them with his fungo -- a long, thin coach's bat.

He's a handsome, rugged man with a bushy mustache growing out of control. Lean and muscular -- Coach Little still clings to the celebrated athlete he was years ago.

LITTLE

Gentlemen. In three days most of you will be cut and humiliated. When I blow my whistle, take your desired positions. Coach Dewey and I look forward to supervising your pathetic, weak-willed attempts to play this beautiful game. This is your chance to show me what you can do -- don't fuck it up.

Calvin looks on, sandwiched between two muscle-heads.

LITTLE

Only twenty-five of you pipsqueaks
can be Bisons. The rest of you may
as well quit. Take up golf or
fishin'. Any questions?

Silence. No one stirs -- except Calvin who CHEWS his bubble
gum a mile a minute. Coach Little BLOWS HIS WHISTLE.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

A SKILLED SHORTSTOP fields a ground ball effortlessly --
fires to first base. A second shortstop backhands a ball in
the hole, plants himself and fires to first.

Calvin's turn: he jumps up and down, wide-eyed -- punching
his glove.

CALVIN

Bring it to me, baby.

AN ASSISTANT COACH rips a grounder -- Calvin nearly tackles
the ball and fires it high over the first baseman's head...

THE BASEBALL soars through the air right at COACH LITTLE by
the dugout -- he barely ducks away from Calvin's throw.

Little's big, irritable Assistant Coach DEWEY ambles over
gripping a clipboard. He looks particularly annoyed.

DEWEY

Uh-oh. Is that...?

Little nods, distressed.

LITTLE

...Calvin Marshall.

DEWEY

Cut him now and get it over with.

LITTLE

Not yet.

EXT. JC BASEBALL INFIELD - LATER - DAY

The skilled shortstop scoops, tosses to MURPHY -- who fires a
rocket to first. A beautifully turned double play.

Calvin's turn: he trips, smothers the ball -- flings it
desperately to Murphy, but the runner is already safe.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Little faces his players with his fungo.

LITTLE

This is about bat control. Hitting is not swinging from your ass. No one here is fucking Mark McGwire. Ya'll couldn't play for Molly Putt's School for Malnutritious Girls. You're scrawny, you're weak, and you're unremarkable. Learn to control the bat and baseball. Even if you have one ounce of ability and zero strength -- like most of you -- you can still learn the basics of bat control. Caselli, get on the mound and heat it up.

CASELLI

(also chewing)
...Now?

LITTLE

No, next Tuesday. Of course now!

CASELLI nonchalantly jogs out to the mound and Little CRACKS a hard line drive right at him -- Caselli leaps, dancing away from the ball. It barely misses him. Silence.

LITTLE

Don't EVER lollygag on my field.

Caselli hurries to the mound and warms up rapid fire. Coach Little turns back to his players.

LITTLE

Five pitches each. Four ground balls and a sacrifice -- all to the right side. You're just making contact. It's something your baby sisters can do.

(impatient)

Let's go, one at a time -- jump in the cage! Move your ass!

Caselli winds up and throws hard strikes. Players hop in and out, most accomplishing the drill with ease -- cracking balls to right field and laying down bunts.

Calvin's turn. He digs his spikes in and waves his bat around like Gary Sheffield -- Caselli fires it right by him.

CALVIN

Let me get in the box, man!

Calvin gets set for the next pitch -- he swings and misses.

LITTLE

Easy, Caselli. Lighten up!

Caselli nods. Lobs one in -- Calvin fouls it off in the net.

The next pitch, another lob -- Calvin drills a line drive between first and second.

LITTLE

Nice, Marshall.

Calvin misses pitch four and fouls off the final bunt before sprinting down the line.

LITTLE

Asses and elbows!

The team responds to Little's command by quickly retrieving the balls scattered around the field. Calvin leads the way.

Coach Little nods discreetly at Assistant Coach Dewey --

Dewey comprehends and crosses CALVIN MARSHALL off his list.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Little faces his team.

LITTLE

All right, that's it gentlemen.

As the team disperses, Calvin high-fives Murphy and Caselli.

LITTLE

And remember, if your name's not on the board, do not show up for tomorrow's session! I will not hesitate to drop kick you off my field.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DUSK

Little locks the gate to the stadium. All the players are gone -- except Calvin. He's trying to get back on the field.

CALVIN

Hey, Coach.

LITTLE
...Calvin. Hey.

CALVIN
I can lock up. Need to work
through a few bugs in my swing.

Little plays with his mustache before pulling out his keys.

CALVIN
I've got a key.

LITTLE
Oh. Yeah, that's right.

Little nods -- unsure of what to say next.

CALVIN
...Man, Caselli's got a cannon.

LITTLE
Yeah, he does. Hopefully he'll
pull his head out of his ass.

CALVIN
I guess we'll find out.

Calvin unlocks the gate. Trots on to the field with his bat.

CALVIN
Later, Coach -- see you tomorrow!

LITTLE
C-ya, Calvin.

Little moves behind the backstop watching as Calvin drags a bucket of balls to the cages. He stretches his arms and gets some tee work in, hitting one after another into the net.

Coach Little finally turns away towards the locker room.

INT. COACH LITTLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An agitated Coach Little pops some Red Man in his mouth.

His office resembles a dorm room from the eighties. Dated posters and junk litter the walls; country music, girls, cars, booze, golf, beer and baseball.

Little pecks at his computer keyboard with two large index fingers while eyeing Dewey's list of names.

An ancient dot-matrix PRINTER churns out the cut list.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

One finger moves down the list of lucky names -- BERKSON, CANAL, FONG, FOSTER, KLIWERE, LIST, MARSHALL, NEUMANN.

Calvin pumps his fist -- thrilled. He jogs to his locker, grabs his bat and takes a few home run swings. Little watches Calvin celebrate from his window.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

Coach Little faces a drunk audience of OLD BARFLIES.

LITTLE

So King, my shortstop last year,
picks this big catcher up --

Little manhandles SKEETER, struggles to lift him in the air.

LITTLE

-- like this. And then body slams
him! Swear to God.

Skeeter lets out a toothless cackle as Little drops him back down on his bar stool.

LITTLE

The benches clear -- it was fuckin'
beautiful.

SKEETER

I remember that game! Coach
clocked one of their players!

LITTLE

Well, that little pansy pulled my
3rd baseman's hair -- swear to God.

All the boys crack up.

LITTLE

Un-fuckin-believable.

Little notices KAREN (40) sitting at the bar. She's a sexy, small-town brunette. Stetson hat. Faded blue jeans.

LITTLE

Skeeter -- get the box going.

Skeeter jogs to the Juke Box -- quickly gets Steve Earle's "Graveyard Shift" playing as Little saunters over to Karen.

LITTLE

Didn't see you come in. Whiskeys,
Kenny. Rocks.

KENNY

How 'bout some Knob Creek? Aged
nine years. Smooth. Hundred
proof.

LITTLE

Ha ha, very funny. Gimme whatever
swill you got in the well.

Kenny smirks and pours. Little resumes staring at Karen.
Finally, she looks at him with a smile.

KAREN

You son-of-a-bitch.

LITTLE

C'mon, drink up. Game was supposed
to start an hour ago.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - LATER - NIGHT

Little and Karen dance a country jig. Karen LAUGHS at Little
-- who clogs across the floor with a proud smirk.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Little and Karen sit on a blanket. COUNTRY MUSIC BLARES from
Little's pick-up truck which is parked along the foul line.

LITTLE

Man, I love this game...

Little swigs from his flask -- wistfully savoring the taste.

Karen shakes her head at Little, disgusted.

KAREN

Yeah, I know you do. Now are we
just gonna sit here or what!?

LITTLE

Give me a minute, would ya? I
gotta get in the mood.

KAREN

We always gotta do it like this?

LITTLE

Thought you liked it out here?

KAREN

Yeah but how 'bout your bedroom
sometime? When am I ever gonna see
your stupid apartment anyway?!

LITTLE

It's a condo.

KAREN

I wouldn't know -- would I?

Karen takes a swig from Little's flask -- glaring at him.

LITTLE

This is who I am. You don't like
it, clear out. My God, I got
players with more sense than you!

Karen flings the flask at him -- it THUNKS against his head.

LITTLE

Ow. The fuck're you doin', Karen!?

Little jogs up the stadium steps after her, rubbing his head.

LITTLE

Look, maybe I was a little out of
line, but don't go AWOL on me!

Karen stops at the top of the steps and shouts down at him.

KAREN

...You'll always be alone, Doug --
you fuckin' weirdo!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - SAME - NIGHT

Little watches dejectedly from the top of the stadium as
Karen peels away in her yellow, souped up '82 Camaro.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - NIGHT

Little stuffs chew in his cheek and steps in the batting
cages -- he's pumped, ready to hit. The machine winds up...

LITTLE

Okay, bring it to me --

Little cracks the first two pitches. Both drilled.

LITTLE

Uh-huh, that's exactly what I
thought. Ain't got shit.

EXT. CASELLI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A crooked sign in the lawn boasts three greek letters -- Pi, Pi, Pi and two baseball bats crossed like swords. A BAD ROCK BAND performs on a make-shift stage by three kegs.

TORI JENSEN (19), an attractive brunette with a long athletic body, leads a drunk Caselli through the crowd.

Caselli grabs for a beer off a table -- but Tori stops him.

TORI

No, no. No more for you. You're no good to me drunk. Let's go.

CASELLI

But, I thought --

TORI

-- Unless you're not interested.

CASELLI

No, I'm interest-interested.

Suddenly a fight over a beer bong breaks out between Murphy and Johnson.

Tori and Caselli stop to watch. Johnson's huge -- he shoves Murphy to the ground. Johnson moves in for the kill when --

CALVIN

No, Johnson -- stop.

JOHNSON

Outta my way, Cal!

Johnson swats him aside, but Calvin jumps back in his face.

CALVIN

Think about nationals, man! You break your hand punching my second baseman here, you'll be watching it on TV. Wake up.

Calvin grabs Johnson's head and gives him a little slap across the face. Johnson's stunned.

CALVIN

Think big guy. You want to throw the shot-put at the Olympics?

(Johnson nods)

Of course you do. Now get out of here.

Johnson threatens Murphy one last time and marches away.
Baseball players have to hold back Murphy --

MURPHY

Get back here, Johnson! That was
uncalled for, man!

Now Calvin's in Murphy's face.

CALVIN

Shut up Murph! Are you crazy!?

MURPHY

He's got a lot of nerve!

CALVIN

He'll kill you -- he's not human!
You want to hit .350 this year?
(Murphy nods)
And I want my 6-4-3's turned by you
-- so back off, okay?

Murphy suddenly comes to his senses.

MURPHY

...Okay, you're right... I'm sorry.
I feel terrible now.

Tori turns to Caselli and drags him to her car.

TORI

Who's that?

CASELLI

Calvin Marshall. Thought everyone
knew Calvin -- he's a legend!

INT. TORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tori pushes Caselli against the hallway, kissing him,
knocking pictures to the floor. She giggles.

TORI

Shhh -- we need to be quiet. Give
me a minute, okay? What's your
name again?

Tori steps back. Caselli stays slumped against the wall.

CASELLI

Caselli.

She studies him. He's really wasted.

TORI
You're annihilated, Caselli. Make
some coffee and sober up.

INT. MRS. JENSEN'S ROOM - SAME - NIGHT

Tori pokes her head in. Mom's bedside light is on.

TORI
Sorry.

MRS. JENSEN
I was already awake.

Tori closes the door and sits down beside her. Mom's hair is short from prior chemo and/or brain surgery.

MRS. JENSEN
Is this the shooting guard?

TORI
No, he's a pitcher.

MRS. JENSEN
Ah -- a baseball player. Make sure
he doesn't throw up on the carpet.

Tori smiles. She holds and caresses her mother's hand.

TORI
How're you feeling?

MRS. JENSEN
Good. Jennifer gave me something.
It's starting to kick in.
(pause)
Better not leave boy wonder hanging
out there.

Tori kisses mom and heads for the door.

INT. TORI'S LIVING ROOM - SAME - NIGHT

Tori finds Caselli slumped on the couch, pouring himself a tumbler of whiskey. He drinks it down like it was Coke.

TORI
Wonderful.

Tori grabs the bottle, seeing it's only half full.

CASELLI
Hey, that's my --

TORI

-- How much of this did you drink?!

Tori returns the bottle to the liquor cabinet.

CASELLI

...don't like coffee at night...
couldn't figure out how to make it.
...in there.

Caselli points towards the kitchen with an unsteady hand.

Tori pushes play on the boombox -- "Pink Love" by Blonde Redhead. She straddles Caselli, kissing him -- but Caselli's just too drunk to play along.

CASELLI

(pathetically)

...I'm... Um. Sorry...

EXT. TORI'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Tori drags a mumbling Caselli across the lawn. She puts a coil of garden hose under his head.

INT. MRS. JENSEN'S ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Tori quietly slips in bed with her mom. She lies wide awake in the dark watching her mom sleep.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Little and Dewey march towards the field.

DEWEY

I see you put his name back on the list.

LITTLE

90% of these spoiled assholes have no passion. But look at Marshall --

They stop on the fringe of a game of pepper.

Calvin plays excitedly, blabbering like Meadowlark Lemon.

DEWEY

Yeah, but he sucks.

Little nods sadly before blowing his WHISTLE.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Little faces the thirty players who are still in the hunt.

LITTLE

You guys are pathetic -- you smell like the garbage bins behind the Hillbilly! And some of you have beer-face. Caselli?

CASELLI

I don't have beer-face, Coach.

LITTLE

Like hell you don't -- you've got jowls! I can smell you from here! How much did you drink last night!?

Caselli shrugs. Little throws his clipboard to the ground.

LITTLE

Let's get one thing straight. You idiots aren't here to party. *Can I have a few beers Coach?* Of course. I'm a big fan of the barley pop in moderation. *Can I drag a babe up to Bison Ridge?* Yes you can. The flesh is a useful thing to indulge in from time to time, especially during a long season. But the only reason you monkeys exist is to play baseball. Some of you will play at four year schools. Some may even sign minor league contracts. I seriously doubt it -- but you never know. So, if any of you boneheads show up with beer-face again, I'm going to assume you've forgotten why you're here at all.

Little picks up his clipboard.

LITTLE

Now. I'm cutting twenty more of you assholes today. Station to station hitting! Let's get after it gentlemen! Pep in your step!

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

A HUGE DUDE crushes balls in the cages. He exits and Calvin jumps in. Little and Dewey observe Calvin's feeble swing.

DEWEY

Lay into him. Maybe he'll quit
before you have to cut him.

Little ponders this with a nod and approaches Calvin.

LITTLE

Couldn't hit a bull in the ass with
a shovel, Marshall. What's wrong
with you kid?! You look like shit!

CALVIN

I know, I know. My wrist is acting
up again.

Calvin misses the next pitch -- and grabs his wrist.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Little fires tennis balls at hitters. One by one they turn
inside -- letting the pitch hit them in the back.

Calvin's turn: he flinches and leaps, avoiding the pitch.

LITTLE

Turn inside -- it won't hurt ya!

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Dewey watches Caselli underhand balls to Calvin -- who hits
them into a small hitting net.

Calvin makes decent contact twice and then misses one
completely.

CALVIN

Man? I'm trying to get the barrel
out, and you're painting corners.

CASELLI

It was right there, Marshall!

CALVIN

I'm not asking you to comprehend
the art of hitting, Caselli -- I'm
asking you to get the fucking ball
over the plate!

CASELLI

Dude, you couldn't hit a pinata
with a rake.

Calvin rushes Caselli, tackling him.

DEWEY
Cool it, fellas!

Caselli giggles as he overpowers Calvin with a head-lock.

Calvin hits him with a few, harmless kidney shots. Dewey pulls Calvin off. Little storms over -- Murphy flanking him.

LITTLE
Marshall?!

Little shakes his head at Calvin, utterly disappointed.

LITTLE
Right field foul pole. Now.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin stands on top of the fence holding onto the foul pole.

LITTLE
Alright you little candy-ass.
Stand up there awhile. Don't come
down 'til I say so.

CALVIN
No problem, Coach. I take full
responsibility for punching
Caselli. I gotta defend myself.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

Little watches SONDRA (blonde, 32) sing a twangy, melancholy ballad on her acoustic guitar. He's nearly moved to tears...

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - LATER - NIGHT

Little and Sondra dance together to bluegrass on the JUKE BOX. A hooting 'n hollering, boot-stomping good time.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Little and Sondra walk along the foul line in the darkness. He punches on the field lights.

LITTLE
Look at that. Beautiful thing to
behold at night. Like a damn
cathedral.

But Sondra has her eyes on something else.

SONDRA

One of your players joinin' us?

Little spins, seeing Calvin -- half-standing on the top of the fence, half-leaning against the foul pole. He's asleep.

LITTLE

Marshall!

Little hurries to the fence, Sondra in tow. Calvin jolts awake, falls to the dirt. Scrambles to his feet.

CALVIN

Sorry, Coach. Should've stayed awake. My bad.

LITTLE

The fuck're you still doin' here?!

Half awake, Calvin shakes his legs out.

CALVIN

Legs are asleep.

LITTLE

Okay, you can go home now. Sondra and I need the field.

CALVIN

Hi, Sondra. Calvin Marshall. You play softball?

SONDRA

(smiles)

Mostly hardball.

LITTLE

Uh, yeah, we're gonna run through a few drills together.

CALVIN

Need me to shag some balls?

LITTLE

Oh, no. No. Just, go home.

CALVIN

Okay. C-ya tomorrow, Coach!
Tomorrow I bring my A game.

EXT. CALVIN'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Calvin tries the door -- it's locked? He KNOCKS. After some SCURRYING inside, the door opens. Ernie pokes his head out --

ERNIE

...Hey.

CALVIN

Hey Ernie. What's wrong?

Ernie shrugs. Calvin tries to push open the door -- but Ernie blocks the way.

CALVIN

Let me in -- what's going on?!

Calvin pushes open the door -- we see Ernie's in boxers. June slips on her robe. They look like guilty teenagers.

Calvin quickly surmises the situation. He shakes his head at them -- half disappointed, half amused.

JUNE

...Well. That was a late one.

CALVIN

Yeah, I was out... Practicing.

Calvin notices moving boxes crammed in the living room.

CALVIN

...No way.

ERNIE

Cal, I want you to always think of me as your pal. Your left fielder on the softball team. Just cause I'm in love with this fabulous woman does NOT make me your step-uncle. I never, ever want you to think of me like that.

JUNE

Ernie's right, Cal. I'm not your legal guardian anymore. Of course I'm ALWAYS your Aunt June -- that goes without saying. But from now on I want you to think of Ernie and me as your roommates.

Calvin nods. He's in sync.

CALVIN

Don't worry about me. I love you both very much and I can support this.

Ernie's moved -- he calls them all together for a group hug.

ERNIE

You're my hero, buddy.

Calvin heads upstairs. Ernie gulps his bottle of beer.

ERNIE

...Want a coldie?

CALVIN

Nah - I better get some z's. Last day of tryouts tomorrow.

JUNE

How're things going?

CALVIN

Good. Gradually getting the rust off.

INT. ATHLETIC TRAINING ROOM - DAY

DIANA the trainer takes the ultra-sound off Calvin's wrist.

DIANA

You look fine to me, Calvin. I'm not sure you need this.

CALVIN

Just a little bit longer, please, Diana. And crank it up.

Diana reluctantly puts the HEAT back on.

CALVIN

That's what I'm talkin' about. Diana, you're the best.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A frustrated Dewey stomps over to Little, towering over him. Little sits on the grass hitting his feet with Lamasil spray.

DEWEY

His name's still on the board. Let me be the bad guy. You obviously can't get it done.

LITTLE

How 'bout this Dewey -- you let me
worry about who's on the fucking
ball-club and who isn't.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Murphy feeds Calvin at short for 2. Calvin drops the ball.

CALVIN

...You're tying my hands up, Murph.
Lead me a bit more. I'm coming
through the bag hard.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

An OUTFIELDER runs down a drive off the wall and fires to
home plate. The skilled shortstop executes a textbook relay.

Calvin's turn to relay. He yells for the ball, arms raised --
but the Outfielder's hard throw knocks off Calvin's glove.

Calvin runs down the ball and heaves it high -- the CATCHER
looks around, confused. The ball falls straight down from
the sky, landing near the pitcher's mound.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Wind sprints -- Calvin falls behind.
Agility drills -- Calvin gets his legs tangled up and trips.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - AFTERNOON

Dewey times each player with a stop watch -- running 1st to
3rd, finishing with simple, pop-up slides.

Calvin's turn -- he chugs around 2nd base, arms flailing --
he lets out a WAR CRY as he maniacally lunges head first into
3rd base and flips on his back.

Players whisper and smirk at one another.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - AFTERNOON

Calvin jogs by a line of players -- high-fiving them all.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DUSK

We MOVE SLOWLY in on a red-faced and visibly shaken Coach
Little. He's slumped on an overturned bucket.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Coach Little stomps into the rowdy room.

CASELLI

Alright if we grab a locker, Coach?

LITTLE

Show some respect and wait 'til the final cut is up.

CASELLI

But, I thought --

LITTLE

-- Don't think, Caselli! Write it on your glove so you don't forget! Where's Marshall?

CALVIN (O.S.)

Right here, Coach.

Calvin rises near his locker -- already covered in baseball pics, inspirational quotes, mirrors and wall to wall carpet.

LITTLE

My office in five.

INT. COACH LITTLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Calvin sits facing Coach Little at his desk.

LITTLE

(gently)

Cal, this is your third year trying out. I thought we agreed you'd focus on the TV show.

CALVIN

Don't you think I've made some big strides in my game?

LITTLE

Well. Yeah, I can tell you've been practicing some, but --

Little swivels in his chair and pulls out an application.

LITTLE

...lots of ballplayers need a push when their ship doesn't come in.

Calvin looks at Coach Little as if he's been betrayed.

CALVIN

Not sure I heard you correctly.
You mind repeating that?

LITTLE

Calvin. You need transcripts and a
letter of recommendation. I'll
take care of both. Don't make this
harder than it needs to be.

CALVIN

(hostile)
No way in hell I'm transferring.

LITTLE

I know people at four-year schools!

Little pounds the application with his fist.

LITTLE

You gotta do something else with
yourself, man! Transfer to a good
University. End of Story.

Now Calvin looks as if Coach punched him in the gut.

LITTLE

I know you wanna be a Bison, Cal.
Hell, I want you to be a Bison...

Little's voice trails off. He swigs from his flask.

CALVIN

(softly)
Coach, my wrist has really slowed
me down. I'm serious.

Calvin bends his wrist back and forth -- and Coach Little
gets a brilliant idea. An easy way out.

LITTLE

Exactly. Take your time. Get
healthy again. And most of all --
don't jeopardize the rest of your
life by playing the game hurt.
It's not worth it.

Calvin nods slightly. Coach offers him a nip from the flask.

CALVIN

No, thanks.

Little takes a second, longer swig. Wipes his mouth.

LITTLE

You and Simon do a kick ass job in Sports Information. Speaking of which, how about broadcasting women's volleyball this year?

Calvin hesitates -- a small consolation.

CALVIN

Sure. I'll do it.

Little smiles victoriously -- whips open a pouch, shoves a wad of chew in his cheek.

LITTLE

Awesome. Don't let the door smack you in the ass on the way out.

Calvin forces a smile. Dejectedly heads for the door.

CALVIN

Uh, Coach? Can I keep my locker?

Little hesitates, chewing. He spits in his coffee cup and raises a finger to his lips with a nod -- keep it quiet.

CALVIN

Great, 'cause I'll need a place for my gear while I'm rehabbing.

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Calvin jerks to an awkward stop on the shoulder of the road, ENGINE running. He cries. Sobs. Eventually, Calvin takes a deep breath, collects himself and drives away.

INT. CALVIN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Calvin barges in as June pulls a lasagna from the oven and Ernie opens a bottle of cab.

CALVIN

Good news!

JUNE

You made the cut!

June drops the lasagna and it CRASHES to the floor.

ERNIE

Yeah, baby -- yes sir!

Ernie and June both high-five and hug a stunned Calvin.

INT. CALVIN'S KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin shovels PORK FRIED RICE in his mouth -- right from the box with a spoon. June and Ernie eat with chopsticks.

CALVIN

Coach says I made some big strides
in my game.

JUNE

(confused)

So, you are on the team then.

CALVIN

Yeah. Once I'm healthy.

ERNIE

What's wrong -- what happened?

CALVIN

(holds up wrist)

I'm in pain.

Ernie grabs for Calvin's arm. Calvin pulls it away, wincing.

ERNIE

Oh, sorry. Did you break it?

CALVIN

No. Just a pretty bad sprain. I
wanted to play through it but Coach
wouldn't let me. He wants me 100%.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin scrawls a quote on the wall with a sharpie. He lays in bed massaging his wrist with an ice cup. The new quote reads: "There are no shortcuts to the top".

CALVIN

Temporary setback, Honus. One week
on the DL -- maybe two. Roll with
the punches, right mom?

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Calvin wears a SPLINT on his injured wrist as he and Simon watch Women's Volleyball from the scorer's table.

CALVIN (ON MIC)

Point Foothill. Time out Bisons.
Seven - twelve in game one.

The Lady Bisons huddle up by their bench.

CALVIN (ON MIC)

Bison fans, our concession stand is open. Stop by for hot buttered popcorn and an ice cold Coca-Cola. Or perhaps a delicious snack cake and a collectible Bison souvenir.

Calvin turns the microphone off and looks at Simon.

CALVIN

Thought they were supposed to have some amazing recruit who turned down thirty scholarships.

SIMON

Tori Jensen. I'm interviewing her for the newspaper after the game. Number twenty-one. She's not here.

CALVIN

(disgusted)
Well, where is she!?

SIMON

How should I know?! I'm interviewing her -- I'm not in charge of her life.

Calvin crunches ice from his Coke.

CALVIN

Sime -- there she is. That's gotta be her.

Simon nods as Tori Jensen enters the gymnasium. She moves across the hardwood with a confident gait. Calvin falls for Tori in this moment. He swoons. Everything slows down as her thundering footsteps ECHO in Calvin's head.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - NIGHT

TORI LEAVES the huddle and takes her position. She studies the court. The WHISTLE blows, Foothill serves --

A dig, a set and Tori bounds to the net. Leaps high with a shriek, pounding a rocket -- the ball ricochets off the hardwood and into the stands. The crowd ERUPTS.

CALVIN (ON MIC)

Tori Jensen with the kill! Point Bisons!

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - NIGHT (VOLLEYBALL SEQUENCE)

TORI DIVES, parallel to the ground for a one handed dig.
Tori leaps, blocks the ball at the net for a point.

CALVIN WAGS his finger at the Eagles like Dikembe Mutombo.

COACH LITTLE WATCHES from the grand stands, spitting tobacco juice into a cup. He briefly APPLAUDS.

TIME-OUT - Tori stands by her huddle spraying her face with a water bottle.

CALVIN FLIPS OPEN the team MEDIA GUIDE and explores Tori Jensen's photo, bio and player profile.

THE FOOTHILL EAGLES duck and run for cover as more Tori Jensen kills zip past them.

TORI POUNDS another kill -- knocking an opponent (#38) on her butt and sealing the victory.

CALVIN (ON MIC)
Heads up thirty-eight!

CALVIN GRABS his score sheet as the teams shake hands.

CALVIN (ON MIC)
Ladies and gentlemen, give it up
for TORI JENSEN. She tallied
thirty-one kills, fifteen blocks,
twenty-four digs, and seven aces.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin trades his Pentax for Simon's notepad and sharpie.

CALVIN
I'm doing the Tori Jensen
interview, Sime.

SIMON
What am I gonna do then?!

CALVIN
Take some pics.

Calvin and Simon head into the rowdy throng of fans.
Coach Little and a SMALL SECURITY GUARD keep the peace.

Simon moves through the crowd -- but drops his camera.
He falls to his knees grasping for it as it's kicked around.

Calvin pushes his way over to the sea of volleyball players who move into the women's locker room.

CALVIN

Ms. Jensen -- quick word, please!
Bison press! Tori Jensen!

BRYCE -- a large security guard -- stops Calvin at the door.

BRYCE

Sorry, Calvin. Can't let you in
the women's locker room this year.

CALVIN

Bryce?! I'm press!

BRYCE

I ain't kiddin! Wait outside, man!

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - NIGHT

Still on duty -- Bryce is schooled by a COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYER in a friendly one-on-one. The gym is nearly empty.

Simon watches from the sidelines before wildly motioning to CALVIN like a 3rd base coach.

Calvin immediately appears from under the grandstands with his baseball bat and slips inside the women's locker room.

INT. WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Calvin strolls in -- a few players in underwear cover up. Tori's in sweats and a T-shirt and BLOW DRIES her hair.

CALVIN

TORI -- EXCELLENT MATCH.
ABSOLUTELY STUNNING.

Tori shuts off the blow dryer and shakes Calvin's hand.

CALVIN

Calvin Marshall.

TORI

I know who you are. Didn't know
you were the voice of the Lady
Bisons.

CALVIN

Only for the interim. I'm on the
baseball team. Currently dealing
with this.

Calvin shows her the splint on his arm.

CALVIN

Took the catcher out. At first they were talkin' about putting titanium pins in it.

TORI

Ouch.

Tori bags her uniform and knee pads.

TORI

So. Calvin Marshall. What the hell are you doing in the women's locker room?

CALVIN

A favor for my friend Simon. A write up for the school paper.

TORI

Well. Good for you. I have to go now so --

CALVIN

-- Two questions. It'll only take a minute, sweet thing.

Tori narrows her eyes -- sweet thing?

CALVIN

Will you lead this club to a conference title? Haven't won it since ninety-three.

TORI

I hope so.

CALVIN

Foothill won it last year, and you ran their asses all over the court.

TORI

It was the first match of a tough schedule.

CALVIN

(taking notes)

Why JC, Tori? You turned down thirty division one scholarships -- you could've played anywhere.

TORI
I need to be close to my family
right now.

CALVIN
Care to elaborate?

TORI
No.

Tori shoulders her bag to leave.

TORI
(firm)
I have to get home --

CALVIN
-- Last question. How fantastic
does it feel to dominate the game?
Pounding kills. Ripping aces.
Laying out for digs.

Tori searches for words, adopting Calvin's wistful tone.

TORI
It feels like... The world fades
away and all that's left is the
court. And playing the game is the
only thing that ever mattered.

CALVIN
...That's the most beautiful thing
I've ever heard...

Suddenly a door SLAMS -- footsteps STOMP closer and closer...

CALVIN
Tori, why don't we head over to a
neutral location --

Bryce drags Calvin out, pinching him in the back of the neck.

CALVIN
Easy, Bryce! Easy...

BRYCE'S VOICE (O.S.)
What are you thinking, Marshall?
You'll get me fired, dog!

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Calvin's at his news desk. Simon directs off camera.

CALVIN

Miraculous. Forever etched in my mind. I cannot overstate the dominating performance of Tori Jensen last night on the volleyball court. Mind-boggling. Let's take a look at the final point one more time. Simon?

Simon gets Tori's final kill up on the roll out TV. She POUNDS the ball, and #38 is knocked on her butt.

CALVIN

Did you hear that!? Sime??

SIMON

(nods)
Very impressive.

CALVIN

Believe me - the tape doesn't do it justice! You had to be there in person. Her kills sound like shot gun blasts. Do yourself a favor, and go see Tori Jensen play.

Calvin sips his coffee. Then he adopts a more somber tone.

CALVIN

As you've probably heard by now, Calvin Marshall suffered an injury during a violent collision at home plate last week. But there's no reason to panic -- it's not career threatening as first suspected. Only a matter of days before Marshall rejoins the team.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Calvin's behind the backstop. His wrist still in a splint.

CALVIN

Hey, Coach?

Little approaches Caselli, who's relaxing on the grass eating a glazed donut.

LITTLE
Caselli?! Aren't you loose yet?

CASELLI
What, uh --

LITTLE
You're pitching inter-squad!
Caught in the middle of the crick
without a pot to piss in - story of
your life Caselli! Gimme that --

Little snatches the donut from Caselli and takes a bite. He fires a ball at Caselli as he sprints away to the Bullpen.

CALVIN
Coach?

LITTLE
I thought I told you I don't need
you hanging around the field, Cal!

CALVIN
I know -- just wanted some quick
advice about a girl. Tori Jensen.

LITTLE
(surprised)
You going out with her?

CALVIN
No.

LITTLE
Well, step up to the plate.

Little crams the rest of the donut in his mouth. He picks up his fungo and gets in his batting stance.

LITTLE
Anticipate her pitch. Read her --
what's she gonna throw you?

Calvin hesitates.

LITTLE
Look, I've seen her. She's gonna
come at you with a fastball. Trust
me. And she'll try to get in your
kitchen. So, gamble. Get the club-
head out front and --

Little swings his fungo -- WHOOSH!

LITTLE

But looking at her, she's probably got decent off-speed stuff. If she makes you look like shit and gets ahead -- watch out. She'll waste one in the dirt. Maybe even throw one at your head. See if you can run her to a full count.

CALVIN

Then get a bat on the ball -- foul off anything close.

LITTLE

Attaboy -- take her opposite field.

CALVIN

Okay, this is good. Now, what's the best way to get an at-bat?

LITTLE

Scout her carefully. Find out what she's all about. Then when the time is right -- drag her up to Bison Ridge. That'll make things interesting.

Little grins, spits and rejoins his team.

CALVIN

Thanks, Coach.

LITTLE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Let's go, guys -- get loose! A beautiful day for baseball.

CALVIN

(wary, to himself)
Bison Ridge...

EXT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Tori exits with her book bag. Calvin follows her out the door. He jogs to catch up with her.

TORI

Does your sudden interest in Japanese have anything to do with me taking the course?

CALVIN

Decided to drop my cooking class. Didn't care for it.

TORI

I suppose you're adding my child development class as well.

CALVIN

No, but your astronomy class on Tuesday-Thursdays looks challenging.

Tori doesn't look at him -- half-amused, half-annoyed.

CALVIN

Look, I'm not stalking you. I just feel like we have a connection.

TORI

I know jocks. They're all aggressive and tough, but then they split. They like to hit and run.

CALVIN

You're a jock.

TORI

Yeah, so I should know. Play stalker for awhile and then put on the running shoes.

Calvin pops a cube of gum in his mouth. Offers one to Tori. She holds her hand out. Calvin tosses her a cube.

TORI

I saw your little TV show.

CALVIN

It's actually my buddy Simon's show. I'm just helping him out.

Tori unwraps her gum and chews -- then like a gymnast, she swiftly hops over a BIKE-RACK. Calvin struggles over it.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - SAME - DAY

Calvin catches up to Tori who is already in the parking lot approaching her car. She opens the trunk.

TORI

You know, I'm having a hard time figuring you out Calvin.

She throws her bags in the back of her Cabrio -- top down.

CALVIN

Well, I stalk attractive college girls as we've established. I play baseball. Host a talk show. What else? I'm an open book. Twenty questions -- go ahead, shoot.

TORI

You have a girlfriend?

CALVIN

Negative. I know it's hard to believe.

Tori smiles. Opens her driver's side door and hops inside.

TORI

What position do you play?

CALVIN

Shortstop. Quarterback of the infield. I love the game.
(nostalgically)
The smell of the grass. The crack of the bat. Working hard with the team... Can't wait to get back on the field. I have a rehab assignment this weekend. City league.

TORI

Well, Mr. Shortstop -- I have to go. Good luck with rehab.

Tori turns the key, starting the engine.

CALVIN

I'm detecting a pattern. We start talking and you always have to go.

TORI

You're very... perceptive.

CALVIN

You were about to say irresistible.

TORI

Try resistible. I'm the one who always has to go remember.

Calvin reaches into the car and turns the engine off.

CALVIN

Yeah, we have to change that. How about this -- you and me swapping war stories over a cold one. One athlete to another talking shop. Work ethic. Game strategies. Statistics. Superstitions.

Tori hits the power window -- Calvin yanks his arm out.

TORI

Hang out with a baseball player and listen to him talk about himself? No thanks.

Tori starts the car again.

CALVIN

I loved what you said to me the other night.

TORI

What was that?

CALVIN

How when you're in the middle of a game -- you play like it's the only thing that ever mattered.

TORI

Yeah, too bad we can't play all the time. Thanks for the gum.

Tori drives away.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD (MONTAGE) - DAY

SIMON puts in 1st base. He zips across the diamond in a golf cart, hops out and puts in 2nd base.

A MOTLEY GROUP of men and women arrive -- ranging in age from 20 to 50. Not many athletes here in C League Coed Softball.

CALVIN SHARPENS his spikes. Rubs oil on his glove. He approaches Fred (the pee-wee baseball coach) by the dugout mirror and smears on eye-black.

FRED

So fired up you're playin' tonight, man! Already been through two sorry shortstops this year! They just couldn't get the job done.

CALVIN

Make 'em chase your pitches,
Freddie.

FRED

Yep. No meat balls tonight.

SIMON takes his seat in the Scorebox and turns on the scoreboard. He sharpens a pencil and opens his score book.

ON THE FIELD, Calvin faces left field and shoves a large Tootsie Roll in his cheek. He spits like it's leaf tobacco.

FRED LOBS a high pitch to a stocky woman -- she chops it to Calvin, who fields and throws -- beating her by a step.

ERNIE CHASES one down in the gap and fires it in to Calvin, keeping the force on. June claps in the stands for him.

CALVIN TURNS two. Simon scribbles madly in the score book.

CALVIN ARGUES with RONNIE the Ump over a called strike. Cal steps out of the box and looks to Fred in the coaching box --

Fred flashes a complicated set of signs. Calvin steps and shows bunt -- the 3rd baseman charges. Calvin pulls back, SLASHING a line drive into the gap. He hustles around 1st and dives safely into 2nd base. He asks the Umpire for time.

CALVIN MAKES a lumbering basket catch for the final out. The Bisons celebrate. The SCOREBOARD reads 23 - 9.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER - AFTERNOON

Fred stands proudly in front of his rowdy team.

FRED

Congratulations, people. We played with some big-ass moxie tonight. Now, it gives your manager enormous pleasure to present the game ball to... Calvin, my man!

Calvin stands to enthusiastic APPLAUSE and takes the ball.

FRED

It's a friggin' honor to have the Bison's shortstop out here with the little guys for a rehab game. We miss your glove and bat Cal -- so your position's always open big man. No offense, Billy.

CALVIN

Thanks, Fred. You guys didn't have to do this.

Simon discreetly slips Calvin a piece of paper. Calvin glances at it -- "1514 Hill St."

CALVIN

Unfortunately, I can't join you at the Hillbilly tonight. Take care, guys. Hope to see you all again real soon.

INT/EXT. TORI'S HOUSE/MRS. JENSEN'S ROOM - DUSK

Still in his dirty softball uniform, Calvin sneaks past a HOSPITAL FIRST AID VEHICLE and notices a 2nd Floor light on. Calvin climbs a tree and sees through the window --

Tori reading to her mom from a paperback. A NURSE monitors Mrs. Jensen's condition. Calvin watches sadly from the tree.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin daydreams -- absentmindedly reading a massive Baseball Encyclopedia. June pokes her head in the door.

JUNE

Hey, how you feeling honey?

CALVIN

June. I feel GREAT. Feeling very optimistic. I should be off the DL any day. Is it 11:30 already?

Calvin gets up and rips off his T-shirt. He hits the deck and grunts through a set of push-ups.

JUNE

(carefully)

Cal, I was thinking -- you ever consider talking to Ernie about a job?

CALVIN

(strained, doing push-ups)

No.

JUNE

He just told me he'd start you as a Supervisor. Could do worse.

Calvin finishes his push-ups and heads to his bathroom.

CALVIN

The day I take a job in carpentry I hope somebody shoots me.

JUNE

Well. You'd have good benefits.

Calvin comes back out brushing his teeth.

CALVIN

What are you talking about? Why would I need benefits? All I need is Diana in the training room. My wrist is already ninety-five percent. I'm young and strong.

Calvin shows off his bulging forearms. June nods.

CALVIN

I guarantee they're not chiseling "he had benefits" on my headstone.

Calvin heads back in the bathroom to rinse out his mouth.

JUNE

It's just -- you've never been much of a... a student.

CALVIN

(jumps into bed)

I've got a C average. Besides -- the only thing that really matters is leaving my blood and guts on the field every day. After that, college will be an afterthought.

JUNE

What do you mean?

CALVIN

I'll get signed in the late rounds. Coach Little was a force in the minor leagues for ten years. He has serious connections.

JUNE

(stunned)

You mean pro -- the professional leagues?

CALVIN

Yeah. Why? You don't think I can do it.

JUNE

No, I didn't say that. I just --
I don't want to see you get hurt.
That's all.

CALVIN

June. I'm tired.

JUNE

All right. I was just...

CALVIN

Can you get the light?

June kills the light leaving her silhouetted in the doorway.

JUNE

Sorry. Love you.

CALVIN

Love you, too.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Calvin snaps pictures of Tori in the empty gymnasium.

CALVIN

How about a sad look? You're
losing and it hurts. Yeah...
Perfect. Let me know if you need
any prints for scouts or publicity.

Calvin reloads. The tape-job on his arm makes it difficult.

TORI

How's your wrist?

CALVIN

It's getting there. I'm still
listed "day to day" but I'm working
out with the team tomorrow. Coach
Little's so fired up to get me
back. Okay. Jump serves.

TORI

What are these for again?

CALVIN

A photo collage for my room.

TORI

Seriously.

CALVIN

Simon asked me to do this. Fund raiser. Sports Information is selling posters at the home opener.

TORI

Maybe Simon should've asked me for permission first?

CALVIN

I covered that, Tor -- I gave him permission for you. Okay. Give me three of those legendary jump serves.

Tori rips three hard jump serves -- Calvin snaps pics.

CALVIN

Unbelievable. Okay, you're off the hook -- five rolls of film is probably enough.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - DAY

Calvin drags a chair to where Tori stretches out on the gym floor. He notices her body as he breaks down his camera.

CALVIN

...Don't you have practice now?

TORI

Coach gave us the day off. And I don't really feel like going through my workout today.

CALVIN

Never thought I'd see a force like you pass up a workout.

TORI

(hesitates)

My mom's sick, so... it's been difficult. She can't come to my games anymore.

Tori's eyes glisten with tears. It's more serious than Calvin thought.

CALVIN

Feel like going somewhere? Clear your head a little?

INT/EXT. TORI'S CONVERTIBLE/FREEWAY - DAY

Tori's convertible cruises along at a decent clip.

CALVIN'S VOICE (V.O.)

This is one of the best places to relax in the world.

TORI'S VOICE (V.O.)

We're going to a bar, aren't we.

CALVIN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Negative. My all-time favorite place besides the ball yard.

INT. ARCADE/DEFENDER MACHINE - DAY

Calvin leads Tori inside with a twelve-year old grin.

TORI

You're kidding, right?

CALVIN

Hundred percent completely serious.

Calvin steps up to a DEFENDER machine. Puts two quarters in.

CALVIN

This place has been here forever. The city baseball fields are across the street so I pretty much grew up within this square mile.

Calvin hits the buttons frantically and his ship EXPLODES --

CALVIN

-- Damn it! Okay, you're up. Watch out. The fire button sticks.

Calvin coaches over her shoulder.

CALVIN

That's it -- stay low. Keep the throttle at about seventy-five percent. There's a mutant in front of you -- good, you got it. Two more coming up behind you --

TORI

-- Yeah, I can see the scanner.

CALVIN

...Wow, you're good.

INT. ARCADE/AIR HOCKEY - LATER - DAY

Tori and Calvin play air hockey. After an intense rally, Tori knocks in the game winner. Calvin grimaces in defeat.

TORI
Best out of five?

INT. ARCADE/SKEE BALL - LATER - DAY

Calvin rolls a ball up the ramp -- it dramatically lands in the fifty hole. The BUZZER rings.

CALVIN
...Yes!!

EXT. ARCADE/HITTING CAGES - LATER - DAY

Tori cracks a few baseballs in the batting cage. She's good. Calvin watches outside the fence, holding a STUFFED LION.

CALVIN
Not bad. A little late. Get the barrel out in front of the dish. Beat the pitcher to the spot.

TORI
Okay, let's see how it's done.

Tori hands Calvin the helmet and bat.

CALVIN
Oh, no -- better not. I'd need 15 minutes to get loose before I could take my big hacks. Coach Little would freak if I got hurt again.

EXT. ARCADE - LATER - DAY

Tori and Calvin walk by the mini race track eating ice cream cones. She carries the stuffed lion.

CALVIN
Honus Wagner was the greatest ballplayer to ever strap on a jock. Hit .329 lifetime. 17 seasons in a row over .300. 8 batting titles. And he had a sweet glove. High fielding percentage every year. Blazing speed -- stole 722 bases.

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin leads the way, walking towards a Tee-Ball game.

CALVIN

Led the league 5 times in RBI's, 6 times in slugging %, 7 times in doubles. When he retired in 1917, he led the NL in hits, runs, singles, doubles, and triples. His 1909 baseball card recently sold for 2.3 million. Only 50 exist. I promise you someday I'll own one.

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - AFTERNOON

Calvin and Tori sit in the Bleachers watching Fred's pee-wee baseball team play a game.

TORI

So when did you first know you loved baseball?

CALVIN

I remember the exact moment. Seven years old -- right here on this field.

TORI

Cute.

CALVIN

Saturday morning. Not a cloud in the sky. I got a hold of one -- a line drive to the wall. I can still feel myself running the bases. Crowd going wild. Inside the park home run. No better feeling in the world. My mother was the team mom...

(remembering)

She always brought oranges to the games. Organized team parties...

TORI

You got your enthusiasm from her.

CALVIN

Yeah. She was a kick. She died when I was ten.

TORI

Oh -- sorry.

CALVIN
It was eleven years ago.

TORI
Where's your Dad?

CALVIN
He's... out of the picture.

TORI
(pause)
...Mine too.

CALVIN
But you'll have to meet my Aunt
June sometime. She's really cool.

ON THE FIELD -- Ian CRACKS a single.

Fred CHEERS wildly. Susie's mom Leah APPLAUDS in the stands.

Calvin CLAPS for Ian -- turns back to Tori.

CALVIN
That kid has talent. Fred has me
teach the kids fundamentals every
year.

Tori smiles at Calvin -- she's warming up to him.

CALVIN
So, what about you? When did you
know you were going to dominate
volleyball?

TORI
Seventh grade. My mom taught our
team the jump serve. I caught on
pretty fast.

CALVIN
Your mom taught you that wicked,
spinning, Sinjin Smith rocket!?

TORI
She coached all my club teams.

CALVIN
So it's in the genes. My mom was a
high school ping-pong champion. I
always give her the credit for my
hand/eye coordination.

Tori stares at Calvin, impressed. She locks arms with him.

TORI

Will you do me a favor? Don't tell anyone my mom is sick. Not many people know about it.

CALVIN

Won't say a word.

EXT. PEE WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DUSK

Calvin faces Tori by her car.

TORI

Sure you don't want a ride?

CALVIN

It's okay. I'm right down the street. ...Well, thanks for a fun day --

Tori kisses Calvin impulsively but then stops.

TORI

...Uh-oh. Sorry -- bad call.

Calvin answers by leaning in for a gentle, lingering kiss. They part slowly, still holding each other's gaze.

TORI

I'd ask you to come over, but -- my mom's...

CALVIN

...No worries. I should get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow I come off the DL. Have a good night, Tori.

TORI

You too.

Calvin backs away with a quick wave and jogs out of the lot.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Calvin slams his locker. Hustles by Coach Little's office with his gear -- but stops, noticing a TEAM ROSTER on the Bulletin Board.

Calvin hunts for his name. It's not there.

INT. COACH LITTLE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Calvin pulls out his keys -- opens Coach Little's office door and sneaks inside. Sits down at Coach Little's computer.

ON THE MONITOR -- Calvin types in the INFELDERS section:

Marshall, Calvin #14 SS 6'1 185 lbs.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Calvin crumples up the old roster. Pins up the new one.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Calvin fields balls at short with the team. Turns a few double plays. He gets back in line with Murphy.

CALVIN

So awesome being back on the field,
Murph. Like getting out of jail.

Coach Little and Dewey run over from across the field.

LITTLE

The fuck're you doing out here,
Marshall!?

CALVIN

(innocently)
Getting some glove work in.

LITTLE

Who said you could do that?

CALVIN

You did. You said to take my time
and get healthy. Diana cleared me
this morning -- I'm officially off
the DL.

Little fumes. He's furious, but he knows it's his own fault.

LITTLE

C'mon -- let's take a walk. Now.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - LATER - DAY

Calvin and Coach Little walk the grand stands. A small team of cheerleaders and a Bison mascot practice behind them.

LITTLE

I never said you were on the team!

CALVIN

(amused)

You gave me a locker. What did you think I'd use it for -- my books!?

LITTLE

Listen to me --

CALVIN

-- No Coach, you listen to me. Remember how it felt when you were released?

LITTLE

...Don't want to talk about that.

CALVIN

Some asshole prying you away from the game you love?

Little finally gives in with a nod -- he remembers.

LITTLE

Yeah, I do -- so what.

CALVIN

A bit hypocritical isn't it?

LITTLE

That was different, Cal -- I was a professional player!

CALVIN

Everything's relative.

LITTLE

Marshall?! You're gonna drive me out of my fuckin' gourd!

CALVIN

Hold it, Coach. Stop.

Calvin grabs Little's face, slaps him gently. Scolding him.

CALVIN

(calmly)

Just don't do it. Don't hold me down anymore.

Little's speechless.

CALVIN

Is there anyone out there more
dedicated than me? ...Can't think
of anyone -- can you?

LITTLE

(defeated)

No. I can't. You're... pretty
fucking dedicated.

CALVIN

And I know I'm not a superstar yet.
Just give me the chance to help
this team with my gifts...
(wistfully)
Soft hands. Good speed. Quick
bat. Most of all -- this...

Calvin pounds his chest hard twice with his fist. Heart.

CALVIN

I'm a force our team can't afford
to be without.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Batting Practice. Calvin hits dribblers -- misses a few.
Dewey shakes his head at Little, severely disappointed.

DEWEY

(mutters)
...spineless...

LITTLE

Don't say a fuckin' word, Dewey.

DEWEY

Sorry, Coach.

Calvin sprints to first base by Coach Little and Coach Dewey.

LITTLE

Maybe Calvin's attitude will rub
off on the team.

Calvin dives clumsily into second base.

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT (VOLLEYBALL GAME SEQUENCE)

TORI CRUSHES the ball for a kill. The crowd goes nuts.

CALVIN CALLS THE GAME on the mic.

TORI RIPS two spinning aces and a jaw-dropping dig.

TORI CHARGES the net, leaps, and pummels the ball -- SHATTERING the eye glasses of a back row opponent.

A GROAN rises from the crowd. A TRAINER helps the injured girl off the court to polite applause.

Calvin mouths off on the mic -- rubbing it in. Simon plays the sound of a SIREN.

TIME-OUT - The teams huddle up. Bisons way ahead.

CALVIN JAWS with the crowd Phil Donahue style asking a very difficult trivia question as Simon holds up the prizes: Coach Little Bison Pennants and Tori Jensen Pez Dispensers.

FINAL POINT - another Jensen kill. Bisons win.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin jogs over to a spiffy looking Coach Little. Little has just chased away a few ADULTS who had Tori cornered.

CALVIN

What was that all about?

TORI

Just a few scouts.

LITTLE

They were harassing Tori. I told 'em they had to go through me.

CALVIN

Or they could go through me.

LITTLE

Why would they go through you!?

CALVIN

Well, when you're busy -- Tori can send them my way. I know how to handle these guys.

TORI

(to Calvin)

Give me twenty minutes.

CALVIN

I'll be waiting right here, Tor.

TORI
Bye, Coach. Thanks.

LITTLE
Good to see ya again.

TORI
...You too.

Little turns to Simon behind the CONCESSION STAND and stares up at two different TORI JENSEN POSTERS for sale.

SIMON
The jump serve is the best one in my opinion. I did the color correction and printing -- really solid contrast ratios. And strong game shots are generally worth more money than portraits -- at least when it comes to trading cards.

LITTLE
Gimmee one for the office, Sime.

SIMON
And you get a free Tori Jensen pez dispenser with the poster.

LITTLE
(paying Simon)
Sweet.

CALVIN
(watching)
...I took those pictures, you know.

LITTLE
Some of your best work.

Coach salutes Calvin with the rolled poster and walks away.

INT. COACH LITTLE'S OFFICE - LATER - NIGHT

Little wanders in with his new Tori Jensen poster. He rolls out the poster on his desk and admires it. But he accidentally knocks his flask over, spilling whiskey on the poster --

LITTLE
Damn it.

Little blots it dry. Pins the poster on the wall. He kicks back in his chair and eats a pez from the dispenser.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

Coach Little sits alone looking melancholy. A sad, country song plays on the Juke Box. He scratches off a lottery ticket with a nickel, revealing the word, LOSER.

Kenny tops his whiskey off.

LITTLE

That's it -- keep 'em coming big
Ken. Don't let my ice go dry.

Kenny puts the bottle away, smirking.

Suddenly, Karen the brunette and Sondra the blonde appear -- sitting down on either side of Coach Little.

KAREN

Coach Little? What a surprise to
find you here all alone.

SONDRA

Hey, Coach.

Little sizes up the situation with a smug look.

LITTLE

How are you ladies this evening?

KAREN

Doin' pretty damn well. Aren't we
Sondra?

SONDRA

(nods)

We've had a few divine appointments
-- Karen and me. Like the ones
they talk about in church?

KAREN

Two very revealing nights at my
house.

LITTLE

Oh yeah? Doin' a little soul-
searching?

KAREN

Let's just say Sondra and I have
become close.

Karen reaches by Little and grabs Sondra's hand.

LITTLE
 (nods with approval)
 Awesome.

Little plays with his mustache for a moment.

LITTLE
 Perhaps you both need some company
 tonight.

KAREN
 Yeah, maybe we can turn some double
 plays down at the ball yard.

LITTLE
 (grins)
 That's exactly what I was thinking.

SONDRA
 Sounds like a good time, except --

KAREN
 Yeah, there's one problem, Coach.

LITTLE
 Yeah, what's that?

KAREN
 While Sondra and I were having all
 that fun together, we took a few
 minutes to compare notes.

Guilt colors Little's face. He knows where this is headed.

KAREN
 Funny thing to find out you've been
 telling the same pitiful stories.
 Like how you been looking to settle
 down. Or how you had to introduce
 us to some of your celebrity
 friends like Nolan Ryan and Willie
 Nelson.

SONDRA
 And my favorite one -- how you
 hadn't been out with a girl in a
 year and a half.

KAREN
 Yeah, that one confuses me. Did
 you mean a day and a half?

LITTLE

Ladies, no reason to get all worked
up --

Karen raises her bottle of Bud and pours warm beer on Little;
his hair, his shoulders and neck, his shirt, his lap.

Sondra shakes up a plastic bottle of Hillbilly BBQ sauce and
squirts it all over Coach Little.

Coach Little's upper lip quivers slightly as Karen and Sondra
walk away satisfied. Kenny hands Little a bar rag.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - LATER - NIGHT

An inebriated Coach Little sits at the bar with Skeeter.
Little's clothes still decorated in BBQ sauce.

LITTLE

Fuckin' A-Rod. We locked horns in
the minors. More than once.

SKEETER

Yeah, you told me before.

LITTLE

They took the training wheels off
that teenage punk, and the next
thing you know he's a major league
all-star! Un-fuckin-believable!

SKEETER

Your minor league career 'aint
nothin' to be ashamed about, Coach!
How many times do I haveta tell ya
that!?

LITTLE

(ignoring Skeeter)
Hit me, Kenny.

KENNY

Have to cut you off, Little.

LITTLE

What?!

KENNY

(firm)
You've been drinking whiskey for
six hours -- go home.

Little looks hurt as Kenny helps another customer.

LITTLE
 (whispers)
 Order me one, Skeeter. Please?

SKEETER
 Maybe you better call it a night,
 Coach. Don't want things gettin'
 ugly in here again.

LITTLE
 I'm fine, Skeet -- I've just been
 sippin' these! I hope you're not
 turnin' on me too now!?

SKEETER
 Uh, Kenny, can I get me another
 please?

KENNY
 Nice try, Skeeter. Don't make me
 throw you both out. Get him outta
 here before I call Mo.

Little jumps up, knocking his stool over.

LITTLE
 I've been carrying this place on my
 back for six years, Kenny! Tired
 of being treated like a tourist!

Little throws his glass at the TV -- CRASH! Everyone stares.

EXT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - LATER - NIGHT

MO THE BOUNCER runs Little to the door. Kenny right behind.

LITTLE
 Don't do it, Mo!

Mo tosses Little head first on the sidewalk. Skeeter helps
 Little as he scrambles to his feet, red-faced.

LITTLE
 You wannabe! You're a bouncer --
 you're not in the NFL! Who do you
 think you are!?

SKEETER
 Get a grip, Coach!

LITTLE

You barely made our football team
and then RODE PINE for two years!
You're miserable!

Mo steps towards Little, pissed off. Fists clenched.

MO

Don't make me throw you on your
head again, dude!

LITTLE

Okay, okay -- take'r easy!

Kenny, Skeeter and Mo watch him stumble away down the street.
When Little's at a safe distance, he calls back to them.

LITTLE

Lucky I'm not in the mood to brawl!
I'd kick all three of your asses up
and down the street like a parade!

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Coach Little barely maintains his balance in shallow left
field, sucking the last few drops from his flask.

LITTLE

...I was some kinda shortstop, Mo.
Shoulda seen me pick it out here.

Little pulls his jeans down to his knees and urinates.

LITTLE

Backhanders in the six point five
hole. Bare-handing slow rollers --
6-4-3's, 4-6-3's. Had a fuckin'
cannon too. And I could run the
bases! I flat-out had wheels!
Forty-two, uhh... TWENTY-TWO stolen
bases in A ball.
(the good old days)
...Appleton, Wisconsin.

Little bursts into a sprint for 3rd base -- out to prove his
lightning speed to the world.

But his jeans slide down to his ankles, tripping him, and --

Little swan dives to the dirt like a grounded Cesena. He's
out for the count.

EXT. CASELLI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A wild party. Baseball players run "Bat Race Relays" on the front lawn -- a wild drinking game.

Calvin shotguns a beer, circles the bat five times and runs dizzily across the lawn, tagging Caselli.

Caselli's turn. He circles the bat and scrambles for the other side of the lawn -- but he's falling fast to the left and SMACKS head first into a telephone pole.

Blood is everywhere. Murphy and Calvin run to his side.

CALVIN

Think he broke his nose -- call an ambulance!

MURPHY

I'll take him to the ER. Coach Little's gonna kill you, man! Can't you run straight!?

EXT. CASELLI'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin steps up to Tori with two drinks and hands her one.

CALVIN

Sorry about that -- the boys needed me on their team.

TORI

Is Caselli okay?

CALVIN

He'll pitch tomorrow. Tori, you played like an MVP tonight.

TORI

(ignoring him)
Ready to get out of here?

CALVIN

Sure. What do you feel like doing?

Tori drinks down her beer, staring at Calvin.

TORI

I've got something in mind.

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/BISON RIDGE - NIGHT

Tori puts a CD in and chooses a track. She turns back to Calvin already unbuttoning her shirt.

TORI
Been up to Bison Ridge with anyone
before?

CALVIN
No. I hear it's a cool place to
talk and enjoy the view.

They face a breathtaking view -- the city lit up like stars.

TORI
Didn't bring you up here to talk.

Tori kisses Calvin -- but he's rigid, nervous.

TORI
You're scared.

CALVIN
No, I'm not! I'm just...

TORI
You've been with a girl before,
right?

CALVIN
Yeah. Just -- not like this.

TORI
You haven't.

CALVIN
Well, sort of. And not with
someone like you -- you're a
goddess. On and off the court.

TORI
(smiles)
Okay. You may as well take me back
to the party then. This is out of
your league.

CALVIN
Out of my league!?

CALVIN
 Look, I may not have a lot of
 experience, but I can't stop
 thinking about you.

Tori stares at Calvin -- no other reaction.

CALVIN
 You don't believe me.

TORI
 I don't know. You'll have to prove
 it.

CALVIN
 How?

TORI
 You know how much you love to play
 baseball?

Calvin nods -- of course.

TORI
 Try putting that same kind of
 passion into me.

Tori leans in and kisses him.

TORI
 Sex is a lot like sports, Calvin.
 It's a wonderful distraction.
 ...You're a good kisser.

CALVIN
 ...you think so?

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/BISON RIDGE - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin sits in the back seat -- Tori straddling him. Silent
 and still -- they speak in hushed whispers.

CALVIN
You okay?

TORI
I'm perfect. Just hold still.

CALVIN
You've done this before.

TORI
 (smiles)
Lucky for you.

Tori does most of the work.

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/BISON RIDGE - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin lays across the back seat of the car, staring up at Tori. She runs her fingers through his hair with a LAUGH.

TORI
 What did you think?

CALVIN
 Incredible. To be that close.

TORI
 Can't get any closer.

CALVIN
 No, you can't -- can you.

Tori shakes her head NO with an ironic smile.

TORI
 Was it everything you wanted it to
 be? Was it fun?

Calvin sits up, visibly shaken. Tori studies him. Finally he nods -- still a little confused.

CALVIN
 Is that...

Calvin's voice trails off.

TORI
 ...What?

CALVIN
 I don't know. Is that what this is
 to you? Fun?

TORI
 Well, yeah. It was -- right?

Calvin nods, averting her eyes.

CALVIN
 Definitely... But it seems like
 there's more to it. That's all.

TORI
But that's not how it is, though.

CALVIN
Not how what is?

A silence. Tori pulls her hair into a pony tail, reflecting -- and the tears come. Fast.

CALVIN
What?

Tori wills herself to stop crying on a dime.

TORI
Nothing -- I'm fine. I drank too much. Can you take me home now?

CALVIN
(nods)
...Are you mad?

TORI
No. Are you?

Calvin shakes his head, No. A bit rattled maybe but not mad. They exit the car and hop into the front seat -- and the Dart makes its way down Bison Ridge in silence.

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/TORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ENGINE running -- Calvin looks hopefully at Tori.

CALVIN
See you tomorrow?

TORI
Yeah, sure. Call me.

Tori brushes Calvin's cheek with the back of her hand and jumps out, running across the lawn to her house.

He watches her go inside. Calvin's looking more perplexed with each passing second. Or is that excitement on his face?

Calvin gets an idea and quickly dials his cell phone.

CALVIN
Hey Ernie, did I wake you guys up?
...Sorry -- didn't realize it was that late. I just need a favor -- you free tomorrow night?

INT. MRS. JENSEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tori slowly cracks open her mom's door. Crosses to the chair by the bed and sits, regarding her mother.

MRS. JENSEN
...You win?

TORI
Three zip.

MRS. JENSEN
Good -- good.

Mom forces a smile, trying to look upbeat -- but she can't hide her exhaustion. Tori grabs her hand. A long silence.

TORI
Hey, mom? How come Uncle Charlie or Kyle & Gina haven't come up since...

MRS. JENSEN
They've sent cards.

TORI
(gently)
But it's only a four hour drive.

Mrs. Jensen hesitates. Bad memories.

MRS. JENSEN
Charlie's always hated me.

TORI
No, he hasn't. He loves you. He's your brother. You're the one who always pushes him away.

The phone RINGS. Tori doesn't move. It RINGS again. Tori flashes a look to Mrs. Jensen -- answer it.

MRS. JENSEN
It's one-thirty -- we're asleep.

CALVIN'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)
Hope I didn't wake anyone. I had to call to say sorry, Tori. I can do this. Tonight was like seeing a 95 mile an hour fastball for the first time. I just hope you feel like I was keeping up with it.

Mrs. Jensen narrows her eyes at Tori.

CALVIN'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)

Anyway -- I wanted to make it up to you. Tomorrow night, after our double header, I am lining up the DATE OF A LIFETIME. Won't say anymore -- just clear your calendar. And Mrs. Jensen, if you're listening, Tori had a phenomenal game tonight. You would have been proud - she had 45 kills.

The answering machine clicks off.

MRS. JENSEN

He sounds sweet -- gives me a good feeling.

TORI

He's definitely one of a kind. I don't know. He's really cool. But I'm not sure I have the energy for him right now.

Mrs. Jensen suddenly looks confused. Tori watches her...

MRS. JENSEN

...Did you win tonight?

TORI

Yeah. I already told you that.

MRS. JENSEN

You did? ...You did.

TORI

Straight sets. Get some sleep.

INT/EXT. DODGE DART/TORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Calvin sits outside Tori's house. The excitement on his face now looking more like desperation. He watches the LIGHT go out in Tori's mom's room.

Calvin turns the key. He gives it more gas -- REVVING THE ENGINE. Finally it starts, and Calvin drives away.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAWN

Coach Little hasn't moved an inch -- still sprawled face down on the infield dirt, his pants down to his knees.

Coach Dewey cruises by on a RIDING MOWER. He doesn't give Coach Little a second glance.

Little cracks open an eye. Wobbles to his feet, pulling up his pants -- which are splattered with crusty BBQ sauce.

Little stumbles off the field towards the locker room.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Calvin, Murphy and Caselli play Pepper. Caselli wears a see-through face guard -- like the ones they use in the NBA.

LITTLE

What the fuck happened to you!?

CASELLI

Um...

CALVIN

He was sucker punched. The other team crashed our party.

LITTLE

You're joking. Who was it?

MURPHY

Tokheim.

Murphy points across the field to TOKHEIM -- who swings a weighted bat in front of the visiting dugout.

LITTLE

Tell me you can still pitch!

CASELLI

Yeah -- for sure!

LITTLE

Throw at Tokheim. First inning. And you better drill him.

CASELLI

Alright, Coach.

Coach Little catches Calvin stifling a yawn.

LITTLE

Am I boring you Marshall?

CALVIN

No, Coach -- just had a late one at Caselli's last night.

MURPHY

A late one with Tori Jensen.

LITTLE

No way.

CALVIN

Well you know how it is. After midnight. Out on Bison Ridge.

LITTLE

I don't believe it -- Marshall went yard last night! He's playing way over his head this year fellas!

MURPHY

Coach --

Murphy motions to the drinking fountain. Everyone turns --
Tori stands there alone, watching them. Calvin jogs over.

CALVIN

Hey, Tor -- great to see you.

TORI

What were you guys talking about?

CALVIN

Nothing -- I just hit one out the other day. Inter-squad game. Went yard. What are you doing here?

TORI

I wanted to talk about tonight.

CALVIN

Everything's set.

TORI

I'm not sure if... I'm just not feeling very well.

CALVIN

Grab a nap this afternoon -- you don't want to miss this.

LITTLE'S VOICE (O.S.)

The fuck're you doin' now Marshall?

CALVIN

Sorry, Coach.

LITTLE

Oh sure, stay out all night before a double header -- that's your business. But on game day, you keep your head on the field! Right field foul pole -- now.

Calvin sprints to the outfield fence. Little CRACKS a ball at Calvin with his fungo before sauntering over to Tori.

LITTLE

Just having some fun with Marshall. He's more or less our team mascot.

TORI

Isn't he the short stop?

LITTLE

Ha! We'd be in deep shit if that were true.

Tori narrows her eyes, disturbed by the news.

LITTLE

Good game last night.

TORI

Thanks, Coach.

LITTLE

Call me Doug.

An almost imperceptible smile rises on Tori's lips.

LITTLE

Listen -- schools are inquiring about you and I want to be there.

TORI

...You want to be there.

LITTLE

Course I do. An AD like myself can help you sort through the bullshit programs. And I can squeeze the best one for money and perks. You got the goods, Jensen -- let's make 'em beg for it.

TORI

Appreciate the advice.

LITTLE
Anytime. Come talk to me when
you're ready.

Tori smiles, feeling some electricity between them.

TORI
Alright, Doug -- maybe I will.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Game in progress. Calvin stands on top of the fence holding the foul pole. Tori walks towards the parking lot. She looks coldly at Calvin, giving him an obligatory wave before walking away.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD GRAND STANDS - LATER - DAY

Simon ANNOUNCES the game. June peers through binoculars. Ernie looks over her shoulders, squinting.

ERNIE
Is that him?

June's POV - Calvin stands on top holding the foul pole.

JUNE
...Yep.

ERNIE
Wonder what he did this time.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Caselli winds up and throws at Tokheim, drilling him in the ribs. Tokheim charges the mound -- the benches clear.

Calvin jumps down from the foul pole, sprints for the mound. He tackles Tokheim, tries to bring him down. Tokheim shrugs Calvin off with ease and unleashes a hard right cross -- Calvin hits the grass.

Ernie sprints onto the field. He manhandles COACH LITTLE -- dragging him off the opposing player he was pummeling.

LITTLE
The fuck're you doin' man!?

ERNIE
Breaking up the fight -- what do
you think!? Help me out!

Little comes to his senses and helps Ernie break up the pile.

INT. CALVIN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

June touches up Calvin's face with some make-up. His upper cheek is puffy and bruised. Calvin looks in the mirror. Tucks his shirt in his jeans.

JUNE

Just go with it. It accentuates this sort of rugged look you've got going on.

Calvin puts on his hiking boots.

JUNE

She's late. Four-fifteen.

CALVIN

Ernie won't be at the trail-head 'til five. It's a two mile ride, so we should get there by sunset.

JUNE

You'll be eating in the dark.

CALVIN

I have flashlights, candles and a lantern already up there.

JUNE

(smiles)

You're well prepared.

CALVIN

Ernie and Fred will take the horses back. After the picnic, we'll four wheel down the other side of Bison Ridge in the Humvee. Then we'll jump in the kayaks and head down river for a mile just in time for dessert and wine at Wildcat Creek Tavern.

The Doorbell RINGS.

CALVIN

Remember -- she doesn't know anything.

Calvin rushes over -- opens the door. Tori steps in looking a little shell-shocked. She notices Calvin's face.

TORI

What happened?

CALVIN

Bench clearing brawl. You should see what Tokheim looks like. I'm pretty sure I broke his jaw. He should never have messed with Caselli in the first place.

JUNE

Hi, Tori -- I'm June. It's so good to finally meet you.

June shakes Tori's hand -- Tori's quiet and intimidated.

TORI

Thanks. You too.

CALVIN

All right. Let's get moving.

JUNE

Have fun.

June watches them go, her smile fading.

INT. TORI'S CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Tori drives along a winding mountain road.

TORI

Coach Little told me you're not even playing shortstop.

Calvin looks caught for a second, but plays it off.

CALVIN

Well, my wrist set me back some. But it's only "Fall Ball". I'll gradually work myself back into the line up. Pull over right here.

EXT. TRAIL HEAD - DAY

Calvin leads Tori along the shoulder of the road towards a well-marked TRAIL HEAD. Tori looks nauseous.

CALVIN

Should be eating by six thirty. Can you make it that long?

TORI

(hesitant)
I think so.

CALVIN
Want some sunflower seeds?

Calvin produces a bag. Pops a few seeds in his mouth.

TORI
No, thanks.

TORI
Calvin --

-- A HORSE TRAILER idles by. Ernie winds down the window. Fred's riding shotgun.

ERNIE
Give us fifteen.

CALVIN
No problem guys.

Calvin waves to them. Turns back to Tori.

CALVIN
That's Ernie driving -- he's been going out with June for awhile now. We should all grab dinner together sometime. Sweet guy.

TORI
Calvin -- stop. Time-out. This is getting ridiculous.

EXT. TRAIL-HEAD - LATER - AFTERNOON

Calvin and Tori stand by the TRAIL-HEAD SIGN. Behind them, Fred battles a stubborn horse, leading it out of the trailer.

TORI
I'm supposed to pick a University for next year and I can't seem to concentrate on anything but my mom.
(pause)
It's an awful time right now.

CALVIN
Believe me -- I know it is. Why do you think I planned all this? I wanted to help get your mind off everything.

TORI
You're not listening to me.

CALVIN

Yes, I am -- I think I am. I thought this would be a good...
...distraction.

TORI

I can't do this.

CALVIN

We don't have to ride horses if you don't want to.

TORI

No. This. You and me.

The truth settles over Calvin.

TORI

Why did you lie to me anyway?

CALVIN

(pause)

What do you mean? About what?

TORI

About baseball.

CALVIN

I didn't lie -- I'm on the team!

TORI

I know you are, but --

CALVIN

-- So I'm not a starter yet. I still have 3 years of eligibility.

TORI

But you misled me! You made me think you were some kind of phenom. Doug says you're like the team mascot.

CALVIN

Doug -- who's Doug? You mean Coach Little?!

TORI

Yes. Doug Little.

Calvin smirks with anger.

CALVIN

Well, maybe you should've watched me play first before you got involved?!

TORI

Maybe I should have.

Calvin looks away, suddenly embarrassed.

TORI

(softening)

I'm sorry. Just because I can play volleyball doesn't mean I'm good at this.

CALVIN

You're putting on your running shoes.

TORI

If that were true, we wouldn't be having this conversation at all.

Another silence. Calvin stands paralyzed.

TORI

Let me drive you home.

CALVIN

That's okay.

TORI

Please. Come on.

CALVIN

I need to take care of these guys. They came all the way out here as a favor to me, so...

Calvin shuffles his feet and looks away.

TORI

I understand if you think I'm horrible. I'm not.

(pause)

Well. Maybe I am.

Tori turns and jogs down the road, back to her car.

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - DUSK (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

"Unguarded Moment" by The Church begins as ERNIE'S HORSE TRAILER inches down the winding mountain road at dusk. Ernie, Calvin and Fred crammed in the front seat.

INT. CALVIN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

OVER THE STOVE, June's hand shakes a bag of JIFFY POP -- it POPS rapid fire. The foil on the package bulges and smokes.

INT. CALVIN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

June and Ernie eat popcorn, watching a flick. Movie night. A morose Calvin lays on the couch half-asleep.

INT. DUGOUT - DAY (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

Calvin sits the bench. June waves to him on the other side of the fence. Calvin looks at her, depressed.

EXT. COMMONS - DAY (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

THE COMMONS -- Calvin watches from the sidelines as Simon, Caselli, Murphy, Nikki and Tori play a friendly game of Nerf football. Tori tackles Caselli...

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

Simon sets up a shot. Christmas decor. Calvin sits waiting, uninvolved and apathetic. He lays his head down on the desk.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER (HEARTBREAK MONTAGE)

Tori crushes a kill and players swarm the court. Tori's the hero. Conference champions. Simon announces on the mic -- he's the new MC. Calvin watches blankly beside him.

INT. CALVIN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A festive little Christmas party. Simon pours eggnog. Fred is here with Susie's mom, Leah. June puts on some Christmas vinyl and dances with Ernie. A packed house.

Calvin mopes in the corner. He holds a tiny little present. Calvin turns and slips out the front door unnoticed.

EXT. TORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Calvin KNOCKS, holding the present. Tori opens the door.

CALVIN

Hi.

TORI
(uneasy)
Hi.

CALVIN
Just thought I'd drop in -- we
haven't really talked in awhile.
Merry Christmas.

He hands her the gift.

CALVIN
Open it.

Tori hesitates -- unwraps it. Volleyball earrings.

TORI
...You're sweet.

Tori gives Calvin a sisterly hug.

CALVIN
Congrats on winning the conference.
You were amazing.

TORI
Thanks.

Silence. Calvin looks her over.

CALVIN
...You look unbelievable.

TORI
Calvin, let's not...

Tori stops, unsure of how to finish the sentence.

CALVIN
The least you could do is talk to
me once in awhile. Is that
unreasonable?

TORI
No. It's not.

CALVIN
Well, what's the problem then?

TORI
I'm a little confused, okay!? You
know I've had a rough semester.

Calvin stares at her, unflinching.

CALVIN

Well, you're all dolled up for
someone. Who you going out with?

Tori glares daggers at him.

CALVIN

Rough semester. Come on, you can
do better than that.

(pause)

It's Caselli, right?

Tori's had enough -- she shuts the door in Calvin's face.
Calvin pounds on the door, tries the door handle.

CALVIN

It is him, isn't it?! I can tell!

EXT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Calvin drags their Christmas tree to the street -- which is
already lined with old trees. Then he returns with a large
stack of Tori Jensen posters and drops them in the trash bin.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

Calvin, Fred, Leah, Ernie and June shoot pool. Ernie pulls
Calvin aside confidentially.

ERNIE

I know you've been going through a
difficult time. If there's
anything I can do, let me know.

CALVIN

Okay, Ernie -- thanks.

ERNIE

If you feel like taking a break
from school I can offer you a good
job. You're Supervisor material --
you do know that?

CALVIN

It's not really what I want to do.
But who knows?

ERNIE

Exactly. Think about it. Good
salary.

Calvin nods, trying to be polite. Still not interested.

ERNIE
(whispers)
Great benefits.

Calvin sees Tori moving through the mob of people carrying two drinks. She disappears in the back. Calvin follows after her, pushing through the crowd. He steps behind a pillar and stops -- is he hallucinating?

LITTLE AND TORI are toasting cocktails. Little tries to put his arms around her. Tori playfully pushes him off. Calvin ducks behind a table as they throw a round of darts.

EXT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

Coach Little's truck peels out of the parking lot -- country music BLARING. Tori GIGGLES riding shotgun.

LITTLE
Yeeeeee-Haw!

Calvin follows at a discreet distance in the Dart.

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - NIGHT

Little runs the bases carrying Tori piggyback. They stop near 2nd base for a little impromptu square dancing.

Little draws Tori in for a kiss. Tori goes along with it for a moment, but when Little persists, she muscled him off --

Little backpedals, trips over 2nd base and falls to the dirt.

LITTLE
What the fuck?!

TORI
This is a little bizarre -- don't you think?

Little shrugs innocently.

TORI
I thought you were showing me your apartment?

LITTLE
It's a condo.

TORI
Whatever. Or we could go have
dinner. But this is --

Suddenly the music from Little's truck shuts OFF.
Little staggers to his feet, confused.

LITTLE
...My battery die?

THE STADIUM LIGHTS go out in a flash. Little and Tori look
around suspiciously, finally seeing A FIGURE standing in a
creepy silhouette by the dugout.

LITTLE
Who's there? That you Dewey?

The figure approaches slowly -- until he's close enough for
them to recognize -- CALVIN.

LITTLE
Marshall!?

Calvin shakes his head slowly at Little with disgust.

CALVIN
You should be so ashamed.

TORI
Nothing happened, Cal -- he was --

CALVIN
-- I'm not talking to you!

Calvin turns back to Coach as if Tori wasn't even there.
He thumps Little in the chest with two fingers.

CALVIN
I. Loved. Her.

LITTLE
Wake up, Cal. You're lucky you got
an at-bat. She's way out of your
league. It isn't even funny.

CALVIN
And she's in yours!? You're forty!

LITTLE
I'm thirty-eight!

CALVIN

A thirty-eight year-old, over the hill, minor league failure.

TORI

Come on you guys!

CALVIN

And it'll only get worse. Fifty's right around the corner. By then the women won't be so easy. And you'll need a new batch of friends to harass, because the guys at the Hillbilly will be dead!

LITTLE

You piece of shit --

Little bumps into Calvin like he's arguing with an Ump.

Calvin tackles Little -- struggles to bring him down. Tori pulls Calvin off and gets between them --

TORI

Stop it -- this is absurd!

CALVIN

You think you're still in your prime -- but you're not! You are so deluded.

LITTLE

Me?! What about you?! You know how bad you are?

CALVIN

(pause)

What're you talking about?

LITTLE

At baseball.

TORI

Doug -- don't.

Calvin swallows. Silence.

LITTLE

You suck ass. You're miserable. You're the most delusional player I've ever seen! An embarrassment to the sport.

Calvin breathes faster -- loses and regains his balance.

LITTLE

I like you, Calvin. That's why I put up with your sorry game. But the only way you'll ever manage to stay in baseball is if you umpire or cut the grass.

Calvin backpedals, betrayed. He turns and jogs away.

LITTLE

Or sell hotdogs and beer! That's it -- go home! Get the fuck off my field!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin runs under the parking lot lights. Jumps in the Dart and the ENGINE won't turn over...

EXT. JC BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - NIGHT

Little faces Tori.

LITTLE

Sorry about that.

He puts a hand on her shoulder -- but Tori knocks it away.

TORI

-- Get off me.

LITTLE

I said I was sorry!

Tori regards Little with repulsion.

TORI

You're cruel.

LITTLE

He needed to hear that and you know it.

Tori turns and jogs after Calvin toward the parking lot.

LITTLE

Where you going, Jensen? Get back here -- it's not even midnight yet!
(watching her go)
Okay -- we'll go back to my place!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - LATER - NIGHT

Tori jogs over to the Dodge Dart. Peeks in the window. She looks around the lot. Calvin's nowhere.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin jogs by the pumps and crosses the street.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - LATER - NIGHT

Calvin walks along the tracks.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin watches the glow in the dark stars and solar system hanging from his ceiling.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Calvin cleans out his locker -- baseball gear, pictures, inspirational quotes, mirrors, stickers, and carpet.

Most of the team dresses for a game -- laughing and goofing around. Oblivious.

Murphy and Caselli watch Calvin as he shoulders his duffle bag and walks away.

A helpless Coach Little watches from his office window.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A no-nonsense Calvin walks the site with a hard hat and clipboard. He SUPERVISES his crew. The new boss.

Fred crosses by Calvin, giving him the thumbs-up. Ernie approaches and gives Calvin's shoulder a squeeze before marching away.

INT. CALVIN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON CABLE ACCESS TV -- Simon nervously butchers the Bison Brigade Sports show. He's no Calvin. Ernie and June watch.

SIMON (ON TV)

...freshman Tori Jensen is,
uh...currently mulling over forty-
five scholarship offers from, uh...
Universities all over the country.

Calvin enters, swigging from a bottle of beer.

SIMON (ON TV)
 (reading the Teleprompter)
 These schools include... USC, UCLA,
 Pepperdine, UCSB, Stanford,
 Berkeley. She's also considering a
 variety of schools on the east
 coast --

-- The TV shuts off. Calvin flings the remote to the ground and marches out leaving June and Ernie alone again.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Fred and GLENN are toe to toe ARGUING with each other. Calvin rushes over and breaks it up like a raving lunatic.

CALVIN
 Can't I turn my back for five
 minutes, you idiots?! What is with
 you guys?! You need a baby-sitter
 not a supervisor!

FRED
 You call me a baby!?

A crazy-looking Fred gets in Calvin's face.

CALVIN
 No.

FRED
 Since when is sticking up for
 yourself like a baby!?

CALVIN
 Get back to work, Freddie -- you
 have a problem with that!?

FRED
 Yeah! I do! I have a big-ass
 problem with that!

Calvin SWATS Fred's thermos to the ground.

Fred lunges on Calvin -- latches on to his throat.

Calvin fights for air. Kicks Fred's feet out from under him. Pounces on Fred and jerks him into a headlock.

The CREW gathers around to watch.

Ernie runs over. Manhandles Calvin, pulling him off Fred.

ERNIE

Calvin?! What's the deal, man?!

Calvin manages to throw his hard hat at FRED -- even while Ernie drags him away.

ERNIE

All right -- take it easy! You're supposed to be a Supervisor!

Fred and Calvin catch their breath, looking at the ground.

ERNIE

Why don't you go home, Cal. Go on -- take the week off.

CALVIN

Forget it. I'll take the rest of my life off -- how bout that?! I quit. Never wanted this pathetic job in the first place.

Calvin jogs off the work site.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Behind the backstop, Calvin drinks malt liquor from a paper bag and HECKLES Fred as his pitch arcs high for a ball.

CALVIN

Snap your wrist, Freddie! Hunker down and throw a strike.

JUNE (O.S.)

Calvin --

CALVIN

-- Quiet June, not now please.

June cringes helplessly in the stands.

CALVIN

It's all about two things, Freddie -- getting ahead of hitters and keeping your pitch count down!

FRED

(from the mound)

Shut your big-ass mouth! I know what I'm doing.

Fred fires the softball against the backstop in front of Calvin's head.

CALVIN
Easy, Rabbit! Keep your head in
the game!

FRED
You gonna throw him outta here,
Ronnie or what?!

The timid looking umpire removes his mask.

CALVIN
Best I can tell, Ronnie's doing his
job. Why don't you do yours & make
a good pitch for once in your life!

Ronnie puts his mask on and Fred steps on the rubber ignoring
Calvin. He pitches -- CRACK. Right past Simon at shortstop.

CALVIN
C'mon Simon, get in front of those!
Sorry excuse for a short stop!

SIMON
Shut your trap, Cal!

Fred gets the ball back -- returns to the mound.

CALVIN
You're miserable Fred! What
happened to you?! You've gone
downhill since I left.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

A drunk Calvin sits at the bar whooping it up with Skeeter.

CALVIN
Skeeter, you're a superstar buddy --
I love you!

Calvin drains the last of his malt liquor in the paper bag.

SKEETER
Um, that's where Coach sits. I
saw'r his truck pull up out front.

CALVIN
The more the merrier. He can sit
on your lap.
(to Kenny)
Give Skeet another please, Sir --
and I'd like a stout. Whatever's
on tap.

KENNY

Go back to the mall where your
friends are. What're you -- 16?

Calvin pulls a few balled up twenties from his pocket and
drops them on the bar.

CALVIN

For your information, boss -- I
work construction. I happen to be
loaded and have great benefits.

Coach Little sits down at the stool beside Calvin.

LITTLE

...Give him a beer, Kenny. I'll be
responsible.

KENNY

That really sets my mind at ease,
Coach. Thanks.

Kenny pulls Calvin a pint of stout.

CALVIN

Ohhh. Doug Little. Trying to come
through with the game on the line.

Calvin offers his hand -- Coach tries to take it but Calvin
pulls it away and runs it through his own hair -- psyche.

CALVIN

Don't know if I want your charity,
Doug.

LITTLE

Fine. I'll give it to Skeeter.

CALVIN

Maybe you should give it to Tori?
Weren't you two just in back
playing grab ass?

Little smiles at Calvin and slides the beer over to Skeeter.
Skeeter starts to pick it up but Calvin snatches it from him.

CALVIN

No, no, no -- I'll take it.

Calvin takes the glass of beer and guzzles.

LITTLE

What happened with Tori wasn't right.

(pause)

I mean it.

Calvin measures Little with a stare.

CALVIN

Don't beat yourself up. I couldn't care less.

LITTLE

What can I say? I got bad, philandering genes. The least I coulda done was let you know I was moving in on her.

CALVIN

Well. You can have her.

LITTLE

Wish I could. But Jensen strong-armed me from the get-go. Threw me three hard sliders off the plate.

CALVIN

That's exactly how I felt.

Skeeter's too close to Calvin and Little --

LITTLE

Skeeter -- you're breathing on me! Get outta my face for a sec.

SKEETER

Oh -- sorry, Coach.

Skeeter shrinks away down the bar.

LITTLE

And another thing Cal -- I didn't mean all those things I said to you that night.

CALVIN

Ha! Yeah, right -- you meant every word. I'm a miserable, delusional disaster. An embarrassment to the sport.

LITTLE

No,no,no,no,no -- it's people like you that make baseball the best game in the world. It's usually the really talented assholes out there that disrespect and tarnish the sport.

Calvin nods. Coach is right.

LITTLE

The fuck're you doin' here all alone on a Friday night!? You a Hillbilly regular now?

Calvin shrugs.

LITTLE

I can think of 10, 15 better places you could be. A guy like you...

Calvin gulps his beer. No answer.

LITTLE

Well, let me show you the ropes then. This is Kenny. He's a sweet guy. Always in a pleasant mood. You met Skeeter. There's always a colorful bunch of characters in dumps like these. I've seen hundreds of shitty bars all over the country. They're all the same. Bad food. Unstable women...

Little thinks about this one. Sips his whiskey.

LITTLE

Just enough meatheads out there to keep these dumps in business.

(pause)

...Fuckin' losers.

INT. CALVIN'S LIVING ROOM/CALVIN'S PORCH - DAWN

A hungover Calvin dozes in front of Sunday morning Professional Bowling. A CHUBBY BOWLER misses the spare.

Calvin opens his eyes, sprawled on the couch. He looks as if he's been hibernating here for days.

There's a perpetual look of defeat on his face.

Calvin shuts his eyes when there's A SOFT RAP on the front door. Calvin gets to his feet, annoyed.

He walks down the hallway, opens the door and freezes --

TORI
stands alone uncomfortably, arms crossed -- looking fragile.

TORI
Hey...

CALVIN
What do you want?

Calvin notices Tori's holding back tears. He softens.

CALVIN
What happened?

But Tori doesn't have to say a word. Calvin already knows.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small funeral procession heads through the cemetery gates.

The Priest PRAYS by the grave site. All heads bowed except Tori and Calvin.

Tori catches Calvin's eye. They hold each other's gaze.

The COFFIN has been lowered into the ground.
Tori stifles sobs as the mourners pay final respects.
Tears stream down UNCLE CHARLIE'S face. Tori hugs him.

As Tori and family head for the parking lot, Calvin walks the other direction further into the cemetery.

He suddenly gathers flowers from other graves. An armful.
He places them all on one particular grave, teary-eyed.

A HEADSTONE: Clarissa Marshall. (1962 - 1997)
Loving mom and sister who never lost hope.

INT. MRS. JENSEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tori's seated in the chair next to her mother's bed. The room is empty. Desolate.

She turns off the light and sits quietly in the darkness.

FADE TO:

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Calvin lays flat on a sleeping bag staring up at the sky.

EXT. PEE-WEE BASEBALL FIELD - LATER - DAY

Calvin now sits on the deserted field. Next to him is the rolled up sleeping bag and pillow.

He absentmindedly throws rocks that CLANG against the dugout trash can. Ernie approaches and sits next to Calvin.

ERNIE

Hey, bud. Sleep here again last night?

Calvin nods, searching for another rock in the dirt.

ERNIE

June was a little worried. We called around.

CALVIN

I left a note on the fridge.

ERNIE

Yeah. I saw it this morning.

Calvin finds another rock and throws it -- CLANG.

CALVIN

Park and rec needs to do a better job on these infields.

ERNIE

Thought any more about coming back to work? It's been a month.

CALVIN

I don't really think it's me, Ern.

Ernie nods. He's okay with it.

ERNIE

Well. Just so you know everyone's been asking about you.

CALVIN

Sorry for walking out on you and the crew. Will you tell them all for me?

ERNIE
Sure. No big deal, man.

CALVIN
Hey, I wanted to ask you something
personal if you don't mind.

ERNIE
Go ahead.

CALVIN
Is June just a little fling?

ERNIE
(pause)
What're you talking about?

CALVIN
I'm just curious if you'll be
breaking up and moving out at some
point.

ERNIE
(smiles)
I seriously doubt it.

CALVIN
How do you know?

ERNIE
Well. We've both been so picky for
so long. I think it's finally
paying off.

CALVIN
Think you'll get married?

ERNIE
(nods)
We're talking about it.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

June and Simon face Calvin's door apprehensively. June
finally knocks. Pokes her head in --

JUNE
Simon's here... Calvin?

CALVIN (O.S.)
Tell him I'm busy.

June waves Simon inside anyway. He's carrying a basketball.

Calvin's sprawled on the floor playing an apathetic game of Nerf Basketball. Simon tosses the real basketball to Calvin.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE/BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Ernie, Glenn and the crew eat sandwiches and watch as --

Fred SWATS Simon's shot away.
Simon chases the basketball down. Sprints hard for the hole and shoots a BRICK -- Calvin gets the rebound and clears it.

Calvin drives hard to the rim -- right by Simon and scores.

CALVIN

Nineteen.

Calvin jogs to the line. SWISHES in the first free throw.

Hoping to break his concentration, Fred throws a spin pass to Calvin forcing him to leave the free throw line. But Calvin calmly steps back to the line and CLANGS in the game winner.

SIMON

Twenty-one. Good one, Cal.

Simon high-fives Calvin. Fred SLAMS the ball down.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER - DAY

Back from 7-11. The boys say goodbye -- slurpies in hand.

FRED

(still pouting)

Well. Better get back to work.

CALVIN

Hey guys --

Calvin knocks fists with Simon and Fred.

CALVIN

No hard feelings?

Simon shrugs and shakes his head -- no. Fred brightens.

FRED

...Naw, it's cool Cal. We need to get you back on the softball field for playoffs, man!

SIMON

And back on the TV show. Our ratings suck.

FRED

That's because you're a friggin' mess in front of the camera, dude!

SIMON

(flings the ball at Fred)
Shut up, Fred! It's not my thing, okay?!

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Calvin spins a basketball on his finger -- caught up in the drama of A PRO BASEBALL RADIO BROADCAST. A clutch hit -- two runs score. Calvin APPLAUDS stoically.

Calvin sets the ball aside and goes into his closet. After rummaging around, he emerges with an outfit on a hanger.

Looking in the MIRROR, Calvin tightens his red tie. He slips on his navy blue sport coat. He looks good, and he knows it.

CALVIN

Hi, I'm Calvin Marshall. Reporting court-side.

Calvin paces over to a ripped TORI JENSEN poster hanging crooked on the wall.

CALVIN

Calvin Marshall here, Ms. Jensen. How are you feeling this evening? Strong? Ready to dominate? You look gorgeous by the way...

Calvin straightens the poster, re-pins a torn corner.

CALVIN

...Let's go back to the studio.

JUNE (O.S.)

Calvin?

Calvin yanks off his jacket and tie.

CALVIN

-- Yeah, June.

JUNE (O.S.)

Who are you talking to?

CALVIN

Nobody. Just the game on the radio.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

SCOREBOARD -- Bisons losing 14 - 13. 2 OUTS. BOTTOM of 7.

Calvin stops Fred before he steps up to the plate.

CALVIN

This guy's throwing watermelons,
Freddie. He wants to keep the ball
off the ground. Just get out front
and put a good swing on it. Hit
something hard to the left side.
With your wheels they'll never
throw you out.

Fred nods -- he gets it. He steps into the box and BANGS a
double into left field. Runners on 2nd and third.

FRED

(yelling from second)
Woo-hoo! Knock me home, Cal! You
can do it, man!

Calvin puts pine tar on his bat.

CALVIN

(to himself)
...You know it, Freddie.

TORI

C'mon, Calvin! Line drive!

TORI

waves from the grand stands next to Leah.

Calvin waves back in disbelief as The Sound's "Monument"
plays. He turns and approaches the batter's box.
Spits out a stream of Tootsie Roll.
Steps in the box, digging his spikes in the dirt.

The BEEFY PITCHER steps on the rubber.
Glares at Calvin. Winds up and tosses the pitch...
The softball arcs high...

Calvin swings -- CRACK -- A soft line drive...
It floats toward center, dropping in -- the tying run scores.

Calvin rounds first base and trips -- falls on his face.
The Center Fielder fires to 1st...
Calvin scrambles back and dives -- SAFE.

Fred breaks for home. The 1st baseman turns and fires...
Fred dives -- SAFE!

They've won the pennant. The team pours out of the dugout.

Calvin, Ernie and the rest of the team hoist Fred up on their shoulders and carry him off the field.

Everyone mingles. Postgame -- cinema vérité. Championship trophies are distributed.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER - DUSK

Calvin grabs his bag, heads off the field. Most everyone has left. Tori meets him along the third base line.

CALVIN
Who told you about the game?

TORI
Simon.

Tori high fives Calvin.

TORI
Great job! Nice clutch hitting there in the bottom of the 7th.

CALVIN
...Thanks.

Calvin's moved, embarrassed.

CALVIN
So, who's the lucky university?

TORI
I don't know. Wish my mom was here to help. I'm leaving on a recruiting trip early tomorrow.

CALVIN
You'll pick the right school.

Calvin leads Tori off the field slowly -- away from the bright field lights towards the shadowed parking lot.

CALVIN
Just make sure you like the coach and they need an outside hitter right away. You don't want to get behind a returning player. That's what happened to me here at BC.

TORI

Good advice. I think I might head to the east coast. I need a change of scenery.

CALVIN

Some excellent programs out there. Maryland. Florida. Notre Dame...

TORI

I'm not sure I want to go away.

Tori looks Calvin in the eye.

CALVIN

You came here to say goodbye.

Tori reaches up and gently touches Calvin's face.

TORI

(sincerely)

No. I came to see you play.

Tori moves close and kisses Calvin -- slowly, softly.

They cling to each other for a moment. Tori rests her head on Calvin's shoulder.

TORI

I loved watching you out there.

Finally, they step apart.

TORI

I wish I didn't pull away from you.

CALVIN

Don't worry about it.

TORI

Let me make it up to you.

Calvin shrugs then nods -- yes. Definitely.

CALVIN

Want to come to the party?

TORI

I need to pack. But have fun with your team, and I'll call you when I get home.

CALVIN

When are you getting back?

Tori smiles and steps towards her car.

TORI

Two weeks.

CALVIN

Still have my number?

TORI

Of course I still have it.

Tori opens the car door. Waves to Calvin once again.

CALVIN

And Tori -- don't let these recruiters push you around. If you want me to do the heavy lifting and talk numbers, I'll do it.

TORI

Alright. I'll tell 'em you're my agent.

Tori hops in her car and drives away.

INT. THE HILLBILLY COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

A packed house. Calvin stands over the Juke Box depositing a hand full of quarters and selecting songs.

Calvin heads to his seat beside Simon -- who's busy scribbling softball statistics in a notebook.

SIMON

...Your slugging percentage was eight-twenty-seven in the six games you suited up.

CALVIN

I know. And I hit six-hundred.

SIMON

Five-ninety-three.

CALVIN

Yeah, I rounded up.

Fred suddenly rushes up behind them with a toast.

FRED
We kicked big ass tonight boys!
Friggin' awesome finish!

The trio clashes beer mugs.

FRED
You have my E.R.A. figured out yet,
Sime?

SIMON
Nine point seven-two. You were
double digits last year, so
congratulations.

CALVIN
Not bad, Freddie.

FRED
Thanks, man.

Fred looks proud for a moment.

FRED
We're gonna repeat next year, I can
feel it. This club's a dynasty...

CALVIN
...I may not be here next year.

Simon and Fred look at each other -- surprised.

FRED
...What're you talkin' about, man?

CALVIN
I think I might head to the east
coast. I need a change of scenery.

SIMON
Why?

CALVIN
It's time. Bigger games out there
for me to call.

FRED
(stunned)
...Gonna miss you man.

CALVIN
I'll be here all summer.

FRED
 (addressing the crowd)
 Okay, everyone -- I'd like to make
 a toast!

The room quiets down. Coach Little and Skeeter mosey over to see what's going on.

Fred raises his bottle high in the air -- one hand on Calvin's shoulder.

FRED
 Here's to a man who's been a big-
 ass inspiration to me. Just found
 out he'll be leaving town soon.
 Going out to the east coast. On to
 bigger and better things.

Ernie and June are both taken aback.

FRED
 This is a man who just gives and
 gives and gives. And then he takes
 and takes and takes -- but then he
 turns back around and gives and
 gives and gives again. And he
 gives a lot more than I ever could.

Fred looks around at the group, searching for the words.

FRED
 ...This is a man who carried this
 club in the playoffs and his clutch
 base knock in the seventh tonight
 gave us another title. It's a man
 I think we all care about... Here's
 to Calvin Marshall.

Everyone raises their glasses. Ernie. June. Fred. Leah. Simon. The entire softball team. "Here's to Calvin"...

On the fringe, Coach Little toasts Calvin. He and Cal lock eyes for a moment. Little elbows Skeeter to raise his glass.

Finally everything SLOWS DOWN and we FREEZE ON CALVIN.

EXT. PEE WEE BASEBALL FIELD - CREDITS MONTAGE - DAY

SILENT HOME MOVIES UNSPOOL. High contrast Super 8.

A seven year-old Calvin fields the ball at short stop and throws the batter out. He's brimming with enthusiasm, punching his glove.

Calvin steps in the box. A mustached COACH lobs a pitch --

CRACK - Calvin knocks a ground ball through the shortstop's legs and the center fielder's legs -- all the way to the fence. Young Calvin runs hard. Eyes wide.

Calvin's mom CLARISSA cheers her heart out from the stands. June's by her side doing the same.

Calvin runs all the bases and scores. Inside the park homer. The team greets Calvin at home plate -- they've won the game.

The teams huddle-up, doing their "2-4-6-8, who do we appreciate" cheers. The teams shake hands.

An excited Clarissa and June greet Calvin after the game.

THE END