The Glove

By

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A MAN and YOUNG GIRL are having a catch. In the background a group of BOYS are practicing.

YOUNG GIRL
I want to play baseball when I grow up.

MAN
You’re a girl. You can’t.

YOUNG GIRL
But I’m just as good as those boys.

She sticks her tongue out at the boys.

MAN
Now. But they’ll all get stronger, faster and bigger than you.

YOUNG GIRL
I’ll just practice more. Get better than them.

MAN
Girls don’t play. It’s not your place.

YOUNG GIRL
(getting frustrated)
And I’ll eat more to get bigger.

MAN
Mary, when you grow up you’ll want to look pretty, cook and clean for your husband.

YOUNG GIRL
No, Pop. I want to be a baseball player!

A ground ball takes a bad hop and clips her shoulder. She sinks to one knee. Her father runs over.

MAN
Are you okay?
YOUNG GIRL
(holding back sobs)
Yeah.

MAN
Sure?

YOUNG GIRL
(through sobs)
I only want to be a baseball player.

She hugs her father and starts crying.

MAN
(to himself)
If only I had a son.

INT. BEDROOM—NIGHT 12 YEARS LATER

MARY and CLYDE BEAUMONT are in bed sleeping. Mary jerks awake.

MARY
Clyde, Clyde wake up.

CLYDE
What?

MARY
Wake up. Wake up!

CLYDE
I’m up. I’m up. What?

MARY
I had that dream again. You know the one where I’m having a catch with my Pop and he wished I was his son. Didn’t he love me? Is that what it means?

CLYDE
No, he loved you. You know that.

MARY
I know. But that dream, it makes me feel like I robbed him of his dream to play ball.
CLYDE
No, he knew he had to give that up to raise you.

MARY
He really wanted a son.

Clyde rolls on top of Mary.

CLYDE
What it meant was he wanted us to practice making a boy. So since I’m up let’s practice.

EXT.RIVER-DAY
A barely moving river. Moss reaches from low hanging branches to drink. Birds swoop in looking for fish meals. Rounding a bend a faint sawing is heard. Moving further down stream the sound is louder and louder. Around another bend logs jostle in a log raft. Up from the logs a saw mill screeches.

EXT.SAW MILL
CLYDE T.BEAUMONT and JIMMIE HIGGINS push logs into a huge saw. Both men are sweaty and covered with sawdust.

CLYDE
(shouting)
Damn, it’s hot!

JIMMIE
Yeah, since the fourth, I feel like pig ribs on the grill. Now do you douse the heat?

CLYDE
Every night we’ve been taking a dip before going to bed.

JIMMIE
You and Mary? Skinny dipping?

CLYDE
No, me and the cat! ...Who do you think?
JIMMIE
Why don’t you tell me where. I’d love to join you guys.

CLYDE
I know you would, you perv.

JIMMIE
You know, you got the finest wife in the county and I have an appreciation for the finer things in life...

CLYDE
Sure, sure...but no way.

JIMMIE
...and not only is she fine to the eye, but she’s a heck of a ball player.

CLYDE
Yeah. I bet you’d love to see her in the locker room.

JIMMIE
No, really. I know you throw it around with her, but after seeing her play at the picnic, damn, if she was a guy she could have played on our high school team.

CLYDE
She could played as a girl.

JIMMIE
Yeah, best keep her as a girl and we know what they’re good for babies and pie and I’m not sure the order. Shame if she was a guy...

Jimmie is becoming distracted and placing his hands very close to the saw.

CLYDE
Hey, pecker head, better keep your eyes on your work or you’ll end up like me.

Clyde holds up his right hand. The fore finger is missing.
JIMMIE
Yeah, right. Got yer. Must be because I’m hungry. When is that damn whistle gonna blow?

CLYDE
Or horny.

JIMMIE
Nah, I still got Becky Ann to take of that.

A steam whistle blows.

CLYDE
There you go.

Clyde pushes some buttons shutting off the saw.

JIMMIE
Finally. Damn sawdust was starting to look like grits.

EXT. SIDE OF THE MILL
Several picnic tables are scattered.
A dirt road separates the picnic tables from an open field.
MILL WORKERS are gathering all carrying lunch boxes except Clyde.
Clyde sits opposite Jimmie facing the dirt road. Jimmie opens his lunch box and newspaper.

JIMMIE
Damn Yankees. They picked up another game.

Clyde is reading the paper upside down.

CLYDE
Yeah and Brooklyn is closing in the National League. If this keeps up it will be another all New York World Series. We need a team in the south.

JIMMIE
That ain’t gotta happen.
CLYDE
Damn Yankees!

Clyde looks at Jimmie’s sandwich.

CLYDE
What do you have for lunch?

JIMMIE
Nothing for you. Looks like your lunch is gonna be late.

A pickup is tearing up the road to the mill.
Clyde sees it over Jimmie’s head.

CLYDE
Don’t think so.

The pickup flies into the mill’s yard towards the tables, a wooden baseball bat bangs in the pickup’s bed. The pickup stops abruptly.

JIMMIE
Damn Clyde! Why don’t you get that bat outta your truck.

CLYDE
You know it comes in handy.

JIMMIE
(knowingly)
Yeah.

Mary Beaumont gets out of the driver’s door carrying a picnic basket. She walks to Clyde and Jimmie’s table.

JIMMIE
Hello Mary.

Mary ignores Jimmie.

Clyde stands as Mary approaches. Mary plants a syrupy kiss on Clyde and then glances over her shoulder.

MARY
Hi ya, Jimmie.

Jimmie sticks his two fingers down his throat. Mary ignores him.
MARY
Scooch over honey. Let’s eat and then we can have a catch. Got something to tell ya.

CLYDE
Yup. What do you got to tell me?

MARY
Later.

They squeeze next to each other.

JIMMIE
(patting the space near him)
You can sit right down here Mary, there’s more room.

MARY
Thank you Jimmie, but I’m fine right here.

JIMMIE
Yeah, I see.

MARY
Saw you and Becky Ann in town last Saturday.

JIMMIE
Yeah, so?

Clyde is eating and smirking knowing what is coming.

MARY
Spending a lot of time with that girl.

JIMMIE
(shrugging his shoulders)
No.

MARY
Come on.

JIMMIE
What do you want me to tell you?
That I’m spending time with her?
Okay, I’m spending time with her.

MARY
No, I want you to tell me when you’re gotta get hitched and make her a honest woman.
JIMMIE
Honest woman?

MARY
Shoot Jimmie, everyone knows that’s where your donkey has been getting all his hay from.

JIMMIE
Never.

MARY
Never?

JIMMIE
That’s my answer.

MARY
That’s not right.

Mary stands on the seat.

MARY
Hey fellas! Who thinks Jimmie should get hitched to Becky Ann and make her an honest women?

All the guys raise their hands. Mary jumps down.

MARY
There you go.

JIMMIE
Great, thanks for the help, now I’m gotta get a little sleep.

Jimmie leaves the table and heads off towards the cars.

MARY
(to Jimmie)
You’re welcome.
(to Clyde)
Let’s have that catch.

CLYDE
Sure.

Some guys put their head’s on the picnic table, others meander off to their cars. Some are reading newspapers.

Mary and Clyde load up the lunch remains into the basket and walk back to the car.
Clyde opens the driver’s side door, reaching under the seat, he pulls out two gloves and a ball. He tosses a glove to Mary.

**CLYDE**
So what do you want to tell me.

**MARY**
After we have a catch.

Mary and Clyde walk past the pick up into the field in the distance.

At the picnic tables a BLACK JANITOR starts cleaning up the lunch mess.

Clyde and Mary are seen in the background having a catch. After awhile Mary walks to Clyde, they are seen talking, then Mary jumps up into Clyde’s arms. They kiss for a long time.

The steam whistle blows. Workers start walking back to the mill. Jimmie walks past Mary and Clyde.

**JIMMIE**
Work time lovebirds!

Mary and Clyde run past Jimmie to the pick up. Mary gets in. They kiss through the open window.

Jimmie walks by.

**CLYDE**
Jimmie!

Clyde runs to Jimmie stopping by the picnic tables within a few feet of the black janitor.

**JIMMIE**
God, are you guys sweet and sticky, like overdosing on a barrel of molasses.

**CLYDE**
I’m gonna be a daddy!

**JIMMIE**
Holy crap! I guess that big old log of yours does work.

The black janitor laughs.
JIMMIE
What are you laughing at boy? Just pick up the garbage.

Jimmie and Clyde stare down the janitor.

JIMMIE
Man, a lot of things are changing.

CLYDE
Too many things...too many things. Have to see what we can do about some of them. Later.

CLYDE
Yeah, later.

JIMMIE
A daddy! Congratulations buddy, it couldn’t have happened to a better couple.

EXT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S YARD—DAY

A tall tree stands in the yard. The yard is more dirt then grass. Spanish moss drips from the tree.

A home made antenna sits in the tree’s highest branches its wire snaking its way through the tree ending two feet from the ground.

(OC) A women screams in pain.

A pick up truck is parked adjacent to the tree. Its driver’s door is two feet from the dangling antenna wire. Rust frowns the truck’s wheel wells.

A baseball bat lies in the pickup’s bed.

(OC) A women screams in pain.

INT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S LIVING ROOM

MARIBEL TREFOIL runs out of a bedroom into a sparsely furnished living room stopping in front of Clyde.

Clyde is standing facing the bedroom.
MARIBEL
Something’s wrong, something’s wrong!

CLYDE
What’s wrong?

MARIBEL (panicky)
I don’t know! Something! It’s not going right! You have to go...

(OC) A women screams in pain.

Clyde rubs his jaw with his right hand.

CLYDE
What the hell is wrong?

(OC) A women groans in pain.

MARIBEL
The baby! I don’t know! Something’s not right. You have to get her to the hospital!...Now!

Clyde pushes past Maribel into the bedroom.

Mary lies in bed in labor. Her face and the upper part of her gown are drenched in sweat. The bedsheets and the lower part of her gown are bloody.

MARRY
Clyde...Clyde

CLYDE
I’m here baby. I’m here.

Clyde glances at the bloody sheets and gown, rushes to Mary’s head, bunches up some sheet and wipes her face.

MARY
Help me Clyde. Help me. It hurts.

Clyde gathers up the sheets and folds them over Mary’s body and picks her up. Bursting out of the bedroom he hurriedly crosses the living room kicking open the screen door and busting the door jamb at the top hinge.
EXT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S YARD

Clyde crosses the yard, racing to the pickup’s passenger door.

MARY
(Groaning)

CLYDE
Hang in there baby. Hang in.

Opening the door, Clyde gently places Mary on the bench seat.

MARY
Ow...Ow..ow..Clyde.

Clyde races around the front of the pickup and slides behind the wheel.

MARY
Clyde!

CLYDE
I know baby. I’m getting help.

Clyde turns the ignition, throws the pickup into reverse, and floors it. The car flies out of the yard into the dirt road. Clyde glances at Mary.

ON CLYDE (total fright)

Hitting the dirt road, Clyde jams on the brakes, throws the pickup into first, grinding gears. The car fish tales in the dirt road.

MARY
(screaming)

The pick up roars down the road in a cloud of smoke.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

A DOCTOR walks into the waiting room.

DOCTOR
Well Clyde you’re the daddy of a healthy baby boy.

CLYDE
But...but how is she doing, doc?
DOCTOR
She lost a lot of blood. She’s very weak. We’re doing all we can for her...

CLYDE
Is she... is she going to be all right?

DOCTOR
We are doing all we can here, she’s lost a lot of blood and the trauma of the birth...

Clyde grabs the doctor by both shoulders.

CLYDE
Doc?

DOCTOR
I’m so sorry.

CLYDE
Can’t you do something... anything!

The Doctor barely visibly shakes his head.

DOCTOR
She’s very weak. You should go in and see her now.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Mary is in bed.

CLYDE
Oh baby. Baby, baby.

MARY
Hold my hand.

Clyde holds Mary’s hand.

MARY
It’s a boy.

CLYDE
I know.

MARY
Don’t think he’ll be a shortstop.
CLYDE
Mary...Mary. I...I

MARY
Looks more like a catcher.

Mary coughs and winces.

CLYDE
You need rest. And then you’ll be okay.

MARY
No.

CLYDE
No. No, you’ll be fine.

MARY
Promise me...promise me Clyde.

CLYDE
Anything.

MARY
Promise me you’ll make our son the best damn catcher. Promise me.

Mary kisses Clyde’s hand.

MARY
Promise?

CLYDE
No not catcher. I promise he’ll be the best shortstop, the shortstop your Dad wanted and the shortstop that I cut off. He’ll make the big leagues.

MARY
Promise.

CLYDE
I do.

MARY
Looks like I’m gonna miss the season.
INT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S KITCHEN—EVENING—TWO YEARS LATER

Clyde sits at a small kitchen table.

BILLY BEAUMONT sits in high chair. On his tray is a bowl holding lima beans.

Maribel busies herself getting dinner ready.

CLYDE
(to Billy)
Say baseball. Baseball. Come on base...ball.

BILLY
Blat blat.

CLYDE
That’s it. Base...ball

BILLY
Blat..blat.

CLYDE
Good. Baseball. Now throw me a lima bean.

MARIBEL
Clyde Beaumont. Don’t go teaching that boy to throw food around. Teaching him bad manners on his second birthday. That’s disgusting.

CLYDE
Say birthday. Birth...day

BILLY
Blat, blat.

CLYDE
That’s it. Now throw a lima bean.

Clyde picks out a bean and tosses it back into the bowl.

MARIBEL
You’re teaching the boy bad manners.

CLYDE
(turning to face Maribel)
Oh. it’s just one lima bean.

Clyde turns back towards Billy just as Billy heaves the entire bowl of lima beans at Clyde striking on his forehead.
BILLY
Blat, blat.

MARIBEL
(laughing)
Serves you right.

BILLY
(laughing)
Blat, blat.

CLYDE
At least I know he has a good arm.

There is a knocking on a door.

CLYDE
I got it.

Clyde walks towards the front door and sees Jimmie through the screen.

CLYDE
Hi Jimmie. Come on in. We’re just having dinner. Want some?

JIMMIE
No, thanks. I can’t stay. Can I talk to you a sec?

Jimmie motions for Clyde to come out.

CLYDE
Sure, what’s up?

Clyde steps onto the porch.

MARIBEL (O.C)
Clyde, you remember I have my church meeting tonight. Don’t you plan on going anywhere?

CLYDE
(to Jimmie)
So what’s up?

MARIBEL (O.C)
You hear me Clyde?

CLYDE
(yelling back)
I hear you.
JIMMIE
What’s that in your hair?

Clyde picks out a lima bean. He flicks it off the porch.

CLYDE
Lima bean. Billy beaned me with a bowl of them.

JIMMIE
So maybe he’ll be a pitcher and not a shortstop after all.

CLYDE
Nah, he’s got nice soft hands. A shortstop.

JIMMIE
Of course he has nice soft hands, he’s a baby.

CLYDE
A shortstop. What’s up?

MARIBEL (O.C)
You better have that screen door closed. You’ll let in every skeeter in the county. And when are you going to fix it properly? Been two years.

Clyde closes the door, glancing up at the top hinge.

CLYDE
(yelling back)
Of course it’s closed.

JIMMIE
So seems like there was a little incident today.

CLYDE
Incident? What kind?

JIMMIE
A couple of coloreds passed the Trimble twins in their car. Threw up a bunch of dirt on the girls’ car and in their hair. They got pretty dirty.
CLYDE
Shoot, I didn’t think those twins could get any dirtier.

JIMMIE
(thinking)
Yeah, but not in that way. That’s not the point.

CLYDE
Right. So?

JIMMIE
Well the boys and me think this is a situation that requires some corrective action. You agree?

CLYDE
Sure. But I can’t help you tonight.

Clyde hitches his thumb over his shoulder towards the kitchen.

JIMMIE
Understood, with you being a daddy and all. The bat still in the pickup?

CLYDE
Yup.

JIMMIE
We’ll just borrow it and make sure, that car won’t be on our roads for a long while, you know with replacement parts being so hard to get in these parts. Didn’t want to do anything without your permission.

CLYDE
Yeah. You got it.

Jimmie turns to leave, but before he can turn all the ways around he sees Maribel approaching.

JIMMIE
Evening Miss Maribel.

MARIBEL
Good evening Jimmie Higgins.
MARIBEL
(to Clyde)
You get back in the kitchen, finish feeding your son, finish your dinner and clean up. All this jabbering between you two washer woman gotta make me late for my church meeting.

Jimmie tries to leave.

JIMMIE
Good to see you again Miss Maribel. Clyde.

MARIBEL
Speaking of church, it would do the both of you some good to come. Especially you Jimmie. And bring that hussy Becky Ann with you. The good Lord has his work cut out with you two.

JIMMIE
(as he is leaving)
I wouldn’t want to do that to your church. The walls might just crash down. Bye.

MARIBEL
Snot nose.

Clyde and Maribel walk back into the kitchen.

MARIBEL
I know what you boys do. All these changes going on. Some times seems like no one knows what’s right.

CLYDE
Yeah. That’s why some times we need to correct some things, so our rights are protected. And things won’t change for you and Billy and me.

MARIBEL
You boys just be careful. That’s all.
EXT. A WEATHERED HOUSE—NIGHT

A cross is burning in the yard.

A group of white men stand around a car. Jimmie Higgins has a bat in his hands.

Higgins starts smashing the car.

A BLACK MAN runs from the house.

BLACK MAN
My car! My car! What are you doing to my car?

JIMMIE HIGGINS
Boy let this be a lesson. You don’t go passing white women, throwing up dirt on them. Do you understand boy?

On the black man. Tears streaming down his fire lit face.

JIMMIE HIGGINS
Boy, do you understand? Because the next time it won’t be your car that gets beaten.

Jimmie continues beating the car.

EXT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S YARD—DAY

Clyde, Billy and Maribel are standing under the moss laden tree. In front of them is a small wooden cross planted in the ground. There are five weathered baseballs half buried in front of the cross.

CLYDE
Well, Mary it’s the start of another season. I really miss you, this time of the year especially. I miss sitting in the truck listening to the ball game with your head in my lap, talking about baseball, our catches, your laugh, your touch.

Clyde turns around and sees Billy and Maribel walking towards him from the house.

CLYDE
Your aunt, God, she has been such a big help to me, but now she has to
go help her sister. She’s not well. So it will be just Billy and me. We’ll be all right. He’s turning into a real good little ball player just like I promised.

Maribel and Billy come walking up. Billy has a baseball in one hand and a trowel in the other.

    MARIBEL
    (to Clyde)
    I hate to leave you two like this...

    CLYDE
    We’ve been over this a dozen times. We’ll be all right. Right Billy?

    BILLY
    We’ll be okay. I can take care of Pop.

    CLYDE
    See no worries.

    MARIBEL
    I’ll always worry about you two. Billy you keep an eye on your dad.

    BILLY
    I know just what to do. When I get home from school, I’ll have a drink of milk and do my homework. And when I hear the train whistle blow I’ll know it’s 3:30 and Pop will be right home. Then we’ll play some ball so when I get older I can make the majors. See?

Maribel bends over to hug and kiss Billy.

    MARIBEL
    I love you and will miss you and see you when I can.

Maribel stands and looks Clyde straight in the eye.

    MARIBEL
    I won’t miss you as much as Billy, but I will miss you.

Maribel hugs Clyde.
MARIBEL
You watch that son of yours. You know Mary is watching from above.

Maribel moves Clyde to the side so she can be at the cross.

MARIBEL
And Mary I have cried a hundred years of tears missing you. You were becoming a fine women and would have been a great mother, but I guess the good Lord needed a pinch hitter and took you off our bench. I know you’re on the starting team now, but I still ache.

Maribel stifles back a sob.

MARIBEL
But you got two fine boys down here, they make you proud.

Maribel looks at Clyde and Billy. She looks at Billy for a long time.

MARIBEL
I know you see them every day, keep watching over them.

All three stand in silence.

BILLY
Can I put the ball in now?

CLYDE
Yes.

Billy gets down on his knees and with the trowel digs a hole in the dirt aside one of the other baseballs. He screws the ball in place and pats dirt around it.

BILLY
Mom, every year we put another ball here because Dad told me how much you loved baseball.

Billy turns and looks at Clyde.

BILLY
So every year we’ll do this even when I make the majors. I love you Mom.
Billy gets up. They all stand in silence.

A pickup pulls into the yard parking along side Clyde’s pickup. Jimmie Higgins gets out. He leans over the bed of Clyde’s truck watching.

Billy turns around first.

BILLY
Jimmie!

Billy turns back to Clyde.

BILLY
Can I go?

CLYDE
(softly)
Yes.

Billy runs off towards Jimmie. Maribel turns to look at Jimmie.

MARIBEL
Lordy, I still have some packing to do. Rest in peace Mary.

Maribel leaves and walks back to the house. Clyde is left alone at the grave.

CLYDE
(to the cross)
I will always love you and always miss you.

Clyde kisses his hand and pats the cross. He turns and walks toward Jimmie.

Maribel crosses in front of the trucks.

MARIBEL
(to Jimmie)
Just a bit more time to finish some packing, then I’ll be ready.

JIMMIE
Take your time. I gotta talk to Clyde anyway.

JIMMIE
(to Billy)
Do me a favor champ, go help your aunt pack.
BILLY
Do I have to?

JIMMIE
Got a new stack of baseball cards.

Jimmie reaches in his back pocket and pulls out the cards. He waves them in the air over Billy's head.

Billy jumps for them. Jimmie yanks them higher in the air.

JIMMIE
Still in the wrapper with the gum.

BILLY
I'm going!

Billy runs after Maribel. Clyde leans across the pickup bed from Jimmie.

JIMMIE
(motioning towards the cross)
Still rough? Does it get any easier?

CLYDE
No. Maybe harder as Billy grows. Jimmie, he can play. I know he's only six, but he can play and I know Mary would have loved every second of it.

JIMMIE
I know. And if you keep working with him, the promise you made to Mary will come true. Trust me buddy.

CLYDE
I hope so.

JIMMIE
But listen, we don't have much time to talk before I give Maribel her lift.

CLYDE
Thanks by the way.

Clyde reaches into the pick up bed and grabs his bat.
JIMMIE
Yeah. So what are we going to do about this civil rights stuff.

Clyde grabs the bat harder muscles flexing on his forearms.

CLYDE
We have to keep doing what we’ve been doing. Protecting our rights. Washington got no right telling us how to handle communists. Most of those people coming down here they don’t belong in our community. They’re agitators, government agents. We have to just take control of things ourselves. They’re not our coloreds.

Clyde smacks the bat against the pick up bed.

SUPERIMPOSE "ONE YEAR LATER"

EXT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S YARD—DAY

Billy is in the yard throwing a baseball against a small backstop. The back stop comes out of the ground perpendicular to the ground then slants back a little at the top.

Billy throws the ball against the perpendicular part. A ground ball comes at him.

BILLY
Here we go fans. It’s the last of the ninth in the seven game of the 1957 World Series and the big bad Yankees are down to their last at bat.

And there’s a ground ball to Billy Beaumont. He fields it cleanly and throws it to first. One out.

Billy throws the ball against the slanted part of the back stop.

BILLY
There’s a high fly ball hit deep to center. Beaumont is on his horse. He’s racing back, back and makes the catch. Two outs, one to go.
Billy rears back and throws as hard as he can against the perpendicular part of the back stop. A hard grounder comes back to his left.

Billy moves quickly to his left.

**BILLY**
A hard smash to the hole. Beaumont ranges over.

The ball takes a bad hop over Billy’s head.

**BILLY**
Oh, a bad hop. They’ll have to score that a hit.

The ball rolls through the yard and rolls into the road. Billy turns and jogs after the ball.

A young black boy about Billy’s age is walking down the road. He sees the ball roll into the road and runs to it. He is about to pick it up.

**BILLY**
Hey boy! Let that be.

Billy sprints out to the ball and grabs it and pounds it into his glove.

**BILLY**
Get out of here boy. This ain’t no place for you.

The black boy looks at Billy.

**BILLY**
Git, I said.

The black boy starts walking away. A train whistle blows.

**BILLY**
Git going, you don’t belong here.

The black boy glances back over his shoulder. Clyde’s pick up is seen coming down the road. The pick up passes the black boy and pulls into the yard.

The pick up parks near the tree. The wire dangles a couple of feet from the pick up.

Clyde gets out.
BILLY
Hi pop.

CLYDE
Hi champ. (motioning with his head down the road) Any problems?

BILLY
Nah. I told him to git.

CLYDE
Good.

BILLY
(hesitantly)
Pop, he looked kinda sad.

CLYDE
He just needs to be with his own, that’s all. And stay with them.

Clyde motions toward the pick up.

INT/EXT. PICK UP

CLYDE
Come on, let’s see what game we can pick up.

They walk over to the pick up. Billy gets in the passenger side door. Clyde walks around to the driver’s side, walks to the tree and grabs the dangling wire and attaches it to the pick up’s antenna.

Clyde gets in the driver’s side.

CLYDE
You know this was one of your mom’s and mine favorite things to do.

BILLY
I know Pop.

Clyde turns on the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(over static)
The Moultrie Peaches will send up (static).
CLYDE
Let me see if I can fix that.

Clyde gets out of the pick up and rubs the wire up and down the antenna a few times.

CLYDE
(sticking his head in the open window)
Better?

BILLY
Yeah.

Clyde gets back in.

CLYDE
What did we miss.

BILLY
Just the top of the first.

Clyde reaches into his back pocket pulls out his wallet and two tickets.

CLYDE
Good. Some times when you listen and close your eyes, you can see the game in your mind. It’s almost like being there.

Clyde flips the tickets onto Billy’s lap.

CLYDE
Not the same as being there, but almost.

BILLY
What’s this?

Billy picks up the tickets.

CLYDE
Read them.

BILLY
Moultrie vs. Americus Saturday July 26, 1956. That’s tomorrow. We’re going?

CLYDE
Tomorrow. Unless you don’t want to. I’ll take Jimmie.
BILLY
No way! I’m going with you!

Billy excitedly leans over and hugs Clyde.

BILLY
Pop this will be great! A pro game. Wow! I can’t believe it.

CLYDE
Yeah. We’ll have to make sandwiches.

BILLY
Let’s start making them now.

CLYDE
Slow down buddy. We can do that in the morning. Let’s just listen to this game now.

INT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S KITCHEN—DAY

Billy is in the kitchen with a stack of bread, peanut butter and jelly.

He is making sandwiches.

Clyde sleepily walks into the kitchen.

BILLY
Hi pop. I’m getting the sandwiches ready.

CLYDE
(glancing at the clock)
Little early isn’t it?

ON CLOCK "6:30."

BILLY
I want to be ready. This is my first real game. I can’t wait. What time do we leave? Where’s my glove?

CLYDE
(groggily)
Did you make coffee?

Billy looks at Clyde as if he has two heads.
INT. CLYDE’S PICK UP

Clyde and Billy are driving down a dirt road. The radio is on.

(VO) RADIO ANNOUNCER
And the Montgomery Bus Boycott continues into its seven month.

BILLY
What’s a boycott?

CLYDE
Find some music. It’s what some coloreds are doing to the bus people in Alabama. They don’t want to stay where they belong so they’re not riding the bus.

BILLY
Why don’t they want to stay where they belong?

CLYDE
Because they got no sense.

BILLY
Everyone knows they’re suppose to stay where they belong.

The pick up turns a corner. The stadium is right ahead.

BILLY
Wow, it’s so big! My first pro game. When I’m older I’ll be a big leaguer, right pop?

CLYDE
We’ll work hard at it. Real hard.

EXT. BALL PARK

Clyde and Billy are at the railing separating the field from the stands. Players are taking batting practice. Billy and Clyde are focused on the hitters.

All the players are white. THE BATTER smashes a line drive over the outfield wall.

BILLY
Wow! Did you see that one. It hardly look like he swung.
CLYDE
Yeah. Watch. He keeps his weight
back. He keeps his hands back,
leads with legs, then pow brings
his arms through and snaps his
wrist.

Billy takes a stance and mimics the hitter timing the
batting practice throw.

BILLY
(swinging an imaginary bat)
Pow.

CLYDE
Nice swing.

MANAGER GILLY has ambled up, unseen by Clyde and Billy.

MANAGER GILLY
Yeah, that was a nice swing.

Clyde and Billy turn.

CLYDE
Coach Gilly!

MANAGER GILLY
Clyde Beaumont. It’s been a long
time.

CLYDE
Since I was in high school. 12
years?

MANAGER GILLY
Seems right. Lost track of the
years out in Texas.

Gilly motions to Billy.

MANAGER GILLY
And who is this fine looking ball
player?

Clyde turns to Billy and tussles his hair.

CLYDE
This is my son, Billy.

MANAGER GILLY
Nice to meet you Billy.

They shake hands.
MANAGER GILLY
That was a nice looking swing.

BILLY
Thanks.

MANAGER GILLY
Do you know I was your Dad’s manager when he was in high school?

Billy looks at Clyde for confirmation. Clyde shakes his head.

MANAGER GILLY
Even when he was a little scrawny freshman I saw how good he would become. Just sorry I missed the last part of his senior year.

BILLY
How come? Did you get fired?

Clyde and Gilly laugh.

CLYDE
No, he didn’t get fired. Some team called the St. Louis Cardinals wanted him to run some of their minor league operations in Texas.

MANAGER GILLY
That’s right. When the big leagues call, you drop everything and come running.

BILLY
That’s what I’m gotta do. Go running when the big leagues call me. Right Pop?

CLYDE
Right.

MANAGER GILLY
Well you have to practice real hard, work real hard and love the game.

BILLY
Yup. That’s what my Pop says. And that’s what I do.
MANAGER GILLY
Good. Keep it up and we’ll see you in the big leagues one day.

BILLY
Okay.

MANAGER GILLY
And you know what else you need?

Billy looks at Clyde questioningly.

BILLY
What?

MANAGER GILLY
A baseball cap.

Gilly turns towards the dugout.

MANAGER GILLY
Gus!

A HEAD pops out of the dugout.

MANAGER GILLY
Get this ball player a cap.

Gilly motions to Billy.

MANAGER GILLY
Up and over.

Billy hops the rail. Gilly points to Gus.

MANAGER GILLY
Go see Gus. He’ll fix you up.

Billy runs off.

BILLY
(yelling back)
Thanks, Coach Gilly.

MANAGER GILLY
And don’t step on any lines. Bad luck.

Billy turns back.

BILLY
(hopping over a line)
I know.
CLYDE
Thanks Coach. So what brings you back to these parts?

MANAGER GILLY
Change. I couldn’t work with the Mexicans they were looking to bring in. Coloreds, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, all over baseball. That’s not me, you know that. I had to get back to where I feel comfortable. You know where things feel right.

CLYDE
Yeah. I know how you feel.

MANAGER GILLY
But damn, now I hear they want to integrate this league. Clyde we can’t let that happen. You’ll help, right?

CLYDE
Sure. You can count on me.

MANAGER GILLY
Figured I could. You and Billy want to watch the game from the bench?

CLYDE
Only if I can help you coach.

MANAGER GILLY
Why not. You were doing it as a freshman. Why change?

Clyde hops the rail. Gilly puts his arm around Clyde. They walk off towards the dugout being careful not to step on any caulk lines.

EXT.FIELD-DAY

Clyde, Billy and Jimmie are in a field. There are woods in the distance.

All three have shotguns in their hands. Jimmie holds two dogs on a leash.

They are dressed to hunt.
CLYDE
Okay Billy. I started hunting quail at 12. You’re 12 and a half, you’re a little behind where I was but since fall is quail season that’s all right.

BILLY
Yeah, let’s go!

CLYDE
Whoa, buddy. There’s a few things we have to go over before we go out.

BILLY
Yeah, you told me about gun safety.

CLYDE
There are some more things to go over.

BILLY
Pop, I know all about keeping the safety on and pointing the gun at the ground. And you’ve said I’m a good shot. Let’s go.

Clyde looks at Jimmie. Jimmie shakes his head.

CLYDE
Okay. I guess we’ll have to show you. Jimmie.

Jimmie hands the leashed dogs to Clyde. Jimmie turns around, unbuckles his pants, drops his pants, bares his butt, and bends over.

His butt has lots of pock marks.

Clyde points to Jimmie’s butt.

CLYDE
(to Billy)
Know what that is?

BILLY
Yeah, Jimmie’s hairy butt.

Clyde looks at Jimmie’s butt.
CLYDE
Yeah, but look closer.

Jimmie hesitates.

BILLY
Er, no.

CLYDE
No look at all the marks.

BILLY
Pop, no.

JIMMIE
Hurry up. My wang is getting cold and is going turtle.

CLYDE
Okay, pull up your pants.

JIMMIE
Thanks.

BILLY
Yeah, thanks.

Jimmie pulls his pants back up. Clyde gives him back the leash.

CLYDE
What you saw, all those little marks. That was buckshot.

BILLY
Wow! Jimmie who shot you in the ass?

Jimmie looks at Clyde. He nods.

JIMMIE
Becky Ann.

BILLY
Becky Ann? Did it hurt?

JIMMIE
Stung, just a little.

CLYDE
A little? He was hopping around, cursing up a storm, acting like he had been shot. Scared all the quail in the whole county.
JIMMIE
I was shot.

CLYDE
Just with some buckshot.

BILLY
Boy you must have been mad at her.

JIMMIE
I was, but she kinda made up for it.

Clyde and Jimmie exchange knowing looks. Billy looks at them.

CLYDE
Anyway that’s why we have to go over some rules before we let the dogs loose.

BILLY
Yeah Pop. I understand. We don’t want Jimmie getting shot in his butt again.

INT.CLYDE’S PICKUP-DAY

The pick up is moving down a road. The radio is on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O)
Yesterday a crowd estimated at a quarter of a million marched on Washington to listen to Martin Luther King give a speech. He said, "I Have a Dream." In other news the Possum Corner Flag factory announced it will increase it’s production of Confederate flags to keep up with the demand. Six new workers will be added.

CLYDE
(perturbed)
Find some music.

BILLY
Pop, why are we going into town? We always meet the guys and play some pick up Saturdays.
CLYDE
(still a little perturbed)
I told you. I got get some things and need your help.

BILLY
But what kinda things? Are we gotta be able to practice later? If I’m gotta make the high school team, I need to keep practicing.

CLYDE
(relaxing)
Making the team means a lot to you.

BILLY
Yeah. I want to start as a freshman.

CLYDE
Freshman? Think you can start?

The bat in the pick up bed clanks as the pick up turns.

BILLY
Pop, you know that’s my goal, but just for high school. I just gotta keep getting better and better, because I want to make the big leagues. You think I can make it, don’t you.

CLYDE
Son, with a little luck and a lot of hard work with the skills you have, you can be the best ball player ever to come out of Georgia.

BILLY
Really? You really think so.

CLYDE
You know I think so and I promised your mom.

The pickup pulls up in front of MGUILTROYS store.

CLYDE
Come on let’s go.

BILLY
So are we practicing later?
CLYDE
Sure thing.

INT. MCGUILTROY’S STORE—DAY
OREN MCGUILTROY is sweeping up some grain spilled on the floor.

OREN
(to himself)
Damn. They’re so messy.

BILLY
Hey Oren, you coming to practice later?

OREN
Yeah. And wait till you check out my new curve.

BILLY
Curve? Good. We need to show those seniors we can play. A good curve will help.

OREN
Yeah, we’ll show them.

CLYDE
Hi ya Oren. See you later for some ball?

OREN
Yes, Mr. Beaumont.

CLYDE
Good deal. See you then. Come on Billy.

Clyde and Billy start walking through the store. They start passing the SPORTING GOODS DEPARTMENT.

BILLY
Pop, can we just take a look?

CLYDE
Yeah, but we have to be quick. What are you looking for?

BILLY
Nothing...really.
CLYDE
Nothing?

BILLY
Well, maybe, I was thinking that maybe, some new cleats. You know my foot is still growing, and the ones I have now are getting tight and...

CLYDE
Whoa!

BILLY
I know they’re expensive and we don’t have a lot of money, but I thought maybe...

CLYDE
(feigned exasperation)
We can look.

Clyde and Billy walk over to the counter.

NED MCGUILTRY is behind the counter.

NED
Morning boys.

BILLY
Morning Mr. McGuiltry.

CLYDE
Morning Ned.

NED
So what can I do for you today?

Billy is looking at cleats and sees the price. Clyde has moved down the counter a little away from Billy.

BILLY
Oh...nothing.

NED
Nothing? Come on Billy. I don’t see much of you two in here and you don’t make a trip for nothing.

BILLY
(glancing down the counter at Clyde)
Oh Pop has to pick up something and needs my help. We just stopped here to look.
NED
Look for what?

BILLY
(almost whispering)
Just looking. Maybe some cleats?

NED
(Whispering)
Oh cleats.

Ned leans over the counter, looking down at Billy’s feet. Billy glances at his father who seems preoccupied down the counter.

NED
Looks like a size nine and a half?

BILLY
I take a ten now.

NED
Okay, a ten. Gives you a little wiggle room for your foot to grow more. Let me see what I have in the back.

Clyde ambles back to Billy. Clyde looks down at the cleats. Clyde sees the price and lets out a low whistle.

BILLY
Sorry Pop. I’ll tell Mr. McGuiltroy to take the cleats back.

Ned appears from out back.

CLYDE
Ned, cleats?

NED
Cleats? Or a glove?

BILLY
A glove? Wow, Mr. McGuiltroy. That’s a Rawlings professional model. That’s what the pro’s use. That’s real expensive.

NED
It is. Go head. Try it on. See how it feels.
Billy looks at his father. He nods his head to go on. Billy slips it on and pounds his fist into the glove’s pocket. He raises the glove to his face smelling the new leather.

    BILLY
    It’s kinda stiff.

    NED
    Yeah. For a glove like this you’d have to oil it and work it a bit. Turn it over. Take a look at the padding on the strap.

Billy turns the glove over. On the strap he sees written in his father’s block printing in all caps "BILLY T. BEAUMONT."

    BILLY
    Why is my name here?

    CLYDE
    Happy Birthday!

    BILLY
    What? My birthday is in April.

    CLYDE
    Well, that would have been after your freshman year, and you’ll need to break it in the next couple weeks for high school. Right Ned?

    NED
    You sure will.

    BILLY
    But Pop, I never had a new glove before...and...and this is so expensive.

    NED
    Don’t you like it.

    BILLY
    (looking at his father)
    Yeah, it’s great, but Pop?

    CLYDE
    It’s yours. I saved for it. You’ll need it for high school.

Clyde pauses, looks around, rubs his face.
CLYDE
And it will help you get the chance
to get into the big leagues. Get
the chance I never had.

BILLY
Thanks Pop. I’ll make you proud and
work hard and make the big leagues.

Ned places a baseball and some linseed oil on the counter.

NED
Here Billy work some oil in the
glove.

BILLY
Okay.

Ned motions Clyde down the counter.

CLYDE
Thanks for letting me get the glove
today. I’ll pay the rest as soon as
I can get some overtime.

NED
Don’t worry. Take your time.

CLYDE
Thanks.

NED
You know, I had to keep that glove
out of sight in the back. Couple of
colored boys came in awhile back,
saw it and wanted to buy it.

CLYDE
With what?

NED
Don’t know where they got it from,
but they flashed cash. A wad of it.

CLYDE
What’s happening? Too many things,
all them marching to Washington.
That King getting all of them
excited with that "I Have a Dream"
speech. They’re all over the
majors, now they’re coming in here
with lots of cash. That’s not
right. What about our dreams? Our
rights?
NED
What’s happening is our folks up in Washington didn’t do their job and let that Civil Right’s Bill pass.

CLYDE
Yeah the Yankees are shoving it down our throats again.

NED
That’s why you, me and the other boys have to make sure everything stays the same down here. You have to lead us Clyde.

CLYDE
(pausing and thinking)
Yeah. You can count on me.

Clyde and Ned shake hands over the counter.

CLYDE
Billy come here and say good-bye.

Billy walks down to the two men continuing to work the glove.

BILLY
See ya Mr. McGuiltroy. Thanks for the glove.

NED
You can thank your pop.

Billy looks at Clyde.

BILLY
Thanks again pop.

NED
And you can thank me by beating the Possum Corner boys in high school.

BILLY
Okay.

Clyde and Billy walk towards the front of the store. Billy still has the glove on. He is looking down at it.

BILLY
This is the best thing that ever happened to me. I’m gotta use this to make me the best shortstop ever
and make the majors. Just wait and see. Just wait and see, I’ll make you proud.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD—FOUR YEARS LATER—DAY

It’s the championship game. Billy’s team is winning by one run.

ON THE OUTFIELD SCOREBOARD. VISITORS 5, HOME 4. Beyond the scoreboard standing in a tree a YOUNG BLACK BOY watches the game.

The home team is up. The bases are loaded and BRYON GRISSUM is up.

The COACH and the INFIELD PLAYERS are in conference on the mound. The coach is rubbing the ball and talking to Oren, his pitcher.

    COACH
    Okay boys this is it, bottom of the ninth. We’re close.

The coach looks at Oren.
    Oren, I know you don’t have much left, but you’re all I got. Just bear down son, forget that it’s Grissum up there and don’t be nervous. You got a team behind you. Okay go get them.

The coach flips the ball to Oren, he catches it. The infield players go back to their positions except Billy.

    BILLY
    Gimme the ball Oren.

Oren opens his glove and Billy takes the ball. He sticks his glove under his armpit and rubs the ball with both hands.

    BILLY
    I know you got nothing left and you know it and you’re as nervous as a fourteen year old left out behind the barn with Cindy Jo.

ON CINDY JO IN THE STANDS.

    BILLY
    So I’m gotta tell you what to do.
    Now old Bryon up there is ready to
swing at the first pitch and knock the crap outta it.

Billy nods to Byron who stands at home with a bat that looks like a toothpick in hands attached to forearms that have no right being on a high school baseball player. His cheek is puffed.

BILLY
And there ain’t nothing you got left that is gotta stop him from doing that. So you got one chance, one pitch. You’re gotta throw that curve so it breaks four inches, knee high off the outside corner.

Bryon hawks up a lungee that lands on the center of home plate. It is black.

BILLY
Old Bryon’s gotta try to kill it and if you make the pitch like I said, he’s gotta slaughter it near me and I’ll make the play. Got it?

Billy slams the ball in Oren’s glove.

OREN
(nervously)
Yup.

Oren makes the pitch. Bryon unleashes a ferocious swing and pulls a vicious line drive towards the third base-shortstop hole.

As soon as the ball was released Billy is moving towards the hole, he takes two more quick steps and leaps to his right, higher and higher, stretching and stretching his glove hand.

The ball looks almost past him, but with one more stretch, the ball smacks into his glove. Pandemonium erupts on the field.

TEAM BENCH

Clyde and Billy sit alone on the team bench. A chain link fence protects the bench from the field.

Billy sits with his glove on his right knee his baseball cap on his left knee.
CLYDE
Billy you played great. Smart and hard. And that last catch, in all the year’s I’ve played and watched baseball, I don’t think I can remember a better catch.

BILLY
It’s the glove dad. It feels like it’s part of me.

CLYDE
The glove, a lot of hard work and talent.

BILLY
Yeah, the talent and glove I got from you.

Clyde tussles Billy’s hair.

CLYDE
And your mom.

BILLY
And mom.

Ned McGuiltroy is walking by. He stops on the infield side of the fence.

His white shirt is totally soaked, his neck is sweaty. He pulls a handkerchief from his back pocket and wipes his neck.

NED
That was a barn burner, Billy. A real barn burner. And that last catch...That’s why you’re "The Glove."

CLYDE
Yeah, I told him I don’t think I could remember a better catch...

NED
Don’t think? I’ve watched a lot of games in these parts, even some colored games, and that catch was the best catch ever made in the entire state of Georgia. I say the entire state of Georgia. Ever.
BILLY
Thanks.

NED
It was historic! There’s magic in that glove!

CINDY JO walks by and stops.

BILLY JO
Hi, Mr. Beaumont, Mr. McGuiltroy.

NED AND CLYDE
Cindy Jo.

CINDY JO
(to Billy)
Walk me to the gym.

Billy looks at Clyde. Clyde motions "go ahead" nodding his head.

Billy gets up and starts walking away with Cindy Jo.

NED
That’s a firecracker.

CLYDE
More like a powder keg.

NED
Yeah, a very dangerous girl. (long pause) Ah, youth.

CLYDE
(shaking his head)
Colored games? What do you mean you’ve watched some colored games?

NED
Yeah, some of them can play.

CLYDE
Ned, how can you be supporting them?

NED
Supporting? I was just watching.

CLYDE
That’s the same.
NED
Nah.

CLYDE
Damn, it’s bad enough that they’re playing in the majors now. We don’t want them playing in our leagues down here. I don’t want my son playing with any coloreds.

NED
Clyde, you know that may have to happen.

CLYDE
What?

NED
There were scouts in the stands and they sure were interested in Billy.

CLYDE
Yeah. So?

NED
You know he has the talent. Baseball will take him out of here. It’s just a matter of time. And with the teams having coloreds on them, Billy will be playing with them. It’s going to happen.

CLYDE
It’s not suppose to be like that. What’s happening to us? Our lives? We may as well be living in the god damn North.

NED
Times are changing.

CLYDE
We have to stop it! We’re not doing enough.

NED
That’s another thing I got to talk to you about.

Ned pauses. The two men look at each other.
NED
I wanted to tell you some weeks ago. But after I came back from the hardware association meeting, I had to make some changes.

CLYDE
What changes?

NED
Well... and you understand this is a business decision. I had to start extending credit to coloreds.

CLYDE
What?

NED
I have to. It’s strictly business. I have my family to think about. I can’t risk my business to a boycott.

Ned pats his stomach.

NED
We all have to eat.

CLYDE
Damn Ned! All this is wrecking our lives. Our kids won’t have what we had if this continues.

NED
I don’t know that it can be stopped.

CLYDE
No it can, even if I have to do everything alone.

Clyde walks off and gets into his pick up.

INT/EXT. PICK UP

Clyde is driving through town. He is stopped at the main intersection by a NATIONAL GUARDSMAN directing traffic.

A mixed group of YOUNG BLACK AND WHITE protesters march by singing.

(V.O) "We shall overcome, we shall overcome, some day..."
Clyde turns his radio on full volume.

(V.O) "Try to set the night on fire. The time to hesitate is through. No time to wallow in the mire. Try to set the night on fire."

EXT. CLYDE BEAUMONT’S YARD

Clyde’s pick up pulls into the yard.

Clyde gets out, slams the door shut, reaches into the pick up bed, and puts a strangle hold on the bat.

He stomps across the yard to his front porch and plopping into a chair.

    CLYDE
    (agitated)
    In my town! Right in front of me!
    What the hell...this has to stop!

Maribel comes out of the house. She looks around.

    MARIBEL
    Someone else here or you just talking to yourself. Maybe you’re sucking up too much sawdust.

    CLYDE
    Sorry, I forgot you were cleaning today.

    MARIBEL
    You didn’t forget to leave a mess.

    CLYDE
    Yeah, got some things on my mind. Can I give you a lift back?

    MARIBEL
    No. I have one coming.

    CLYDE
    Then how about a cold one while you wait. We can catch up.

Clyde reaches for the screen door and notices the new hinges.

    CLYDE
    What happened to the door?
MARIBEL
I had it fixed.

CLYDE
I’ve fixed it.

MARIBEL
Clyde you fixed it a dozen times since it was broke. I had it fixed right, so you won’t have to fix it again.

CLYDE
Who fixed it?

MARIBEL
Horace Greene.

CLYDE
Black Horace?

MARIBEL
Yes. He was looking for some ways to make some money.

CLYDE
You let a colored fix my house? Fix, something that I fixed.

MARIBEL
You never fixed it right all these years and it needed to be done before it bopped some one on the head, like me.

CLYDE
But...

MARIBEL
I’m sorry Clyde. It’s done.

Clyde goes into the house slamming the screen door behind him.

INT. CLYDE’S PICK UP—NIGHT

Clyde is driving his pick up. He stops at a free standing nondescript building.

A sign says "VOTER REGISTRATION."

Clyde stops his pick up and gets out.
EXT. NEAR THE BUILDING

Clyde walks around the entire building pouring a liquid out of a canister.

He lights a match and throws it against the building. The building goes up in flames.

Clyde gets into the pick up and peels out throwing dirt and gravel into the air.

A BLACK MAN comes running out of the woods.

BLACK MAN
(looking at the burning building and then the speeding pick up)
Hey! Shit!

NEAR THE BUILDING- DAY

The building is smoldering.

A WHITE SHERIFF is talking to the black man.

SHERIFF
So you say you were here guarding the building last night.

BLACK MAN
Yes sir.

The sheriff looks back at the building, shaking his head.

SHERIFF
Looks like you didn’t do such a good job. (long pause) Just where were you when the fire started?

BLACK MAN
I was in the woods taking care of my business.

SHERIFF
But you say you saw a car speeding away.

BLACK MAN
Not a car, a pick up.
SHERIFF
Oh, a pick up. Lots of them down here. Get a color?

BLACK MAN
No sir, didn’t see a color, but when it was speeding away there was a clanking noise.

SHERIFF
A clanking noise?

The sheriff kicks at some dirt. Some lands on the boots of the black man.

SHERIFF
Probably just some of that good old Georgia clay stuck in a tail pipe causing a back fire. Hear it all the time. Don’t have much to go on, but we’ll keep a file.

EXT. MINOR LEAGUE BALL FIELD—DAY

MANAGER BRISTOL and INFIELD COACH FOY stand near home plate. Foy has a bat in his hands and stands near a basket of balls. Bristol has a clipboard.

There are FOUR PLAYERS at the shortstop position and FIVE at the second base position.

A CATCHER stands near Foy and a FIRST BASEMAN at first base. Billy is with the shortstops.

BRISTOL
Okay boys, when I call your name you’re up. Coach will hit some grounders and we’ll see what you can do. When I yell "DP" let’s see how you turn one.

The players nod. Bristol looks down at his clipboard.

A BLACK BALLPLAYER, LEON TURNER runs up to the coach.

LEON
(to Bristol)
Bristol looks up from his clipboard, then at Turner, then at the players near second base.

Turner follows his gaze towards the players.

BRISTOL
There are four other ballplayers who think the same thing. Get your late ass out there with the others and I’ll decide who my second baseman is. Is that okay with you? Or should I just tell everyone else to go home now?

LEON
(running out to the field)
Ah, that’s no problem coach.

BRISTOL
(to Foy)
One every year. Okay, you know the drill.

As Bristol calls out names Foy hits grounders of varying difficulty. All the players are competent, there are bobbles and some misses on harder chances, but nothing unexpected.

BRISTOL
(to Foy)
I see a lot cheese out there. Swiss cheese, lots of holes.

Foy hits a routine grounder that an infield player botches.

BRISTOL
A lot.

FOY
Same thing every year.

BRISTOL
(looking at clipboard) Beaumont! Turner!

Grounders are hit at both players, they are making the more difficult look routine.

As their time on the field increases the almost impossible are made spectacularly.

BRISTOL
(right when the ball is hit)
DP! Runner coming hard!
The ball is hit into the shortstop hole. Billy races to his left, back hands the ball, slides his foot to stop, pivots, and throws to second.

Leon catches the ball, toe taps the bag, jumps and pivots in one motion and drops his arm to throw to first.

BRISTOL
Attababy! Way to drop your throw. That’s the way to clear the runner. All you guys see that?

OTHER PLAYERS
(in unison)
Yeah, yes, yeah.

BRISTOL
(to Foy)
Keep hitting to them. Make them harder and harder.

FOY
I’m running out of real estate.

The next grounder is hit way to Billy’s left, unreachable, except he reaches it, pivots and makes a perfect throw to first.

BRISTOL
Anybody make that today?

FOY

BRISTOL
Maybe Boudreau. Right. We have our double play combo. Hit one more right up the middle.

Leon reaches the ball behind second fully stretched. Without taking it out of his glove he instinctively flips it to Billy crossing in front of him.

LEON
(as he is flipping the ball)
Whitey.

Billy bare hands the ball and completes the play throwing to first.
BILLY
(after the play is finished)
What did you call me boy?

LEON
Don’t call me boy, Whitey.

BILLY
Boy, you don’t speak to me, unless
I talk to you first.

LEON
This isn’t the cracker red neck
south Whitey. Better get use to it.

Leon and Billy begin fighting. The other players gather
around. The coaches run out to break it up.

BRISTOL
What the hell is going on? All you
other guys to the showers! Now!

The other players head off. Bristol and Foy stand between
the players.

BRISTOL
Now, tell me, what the hell was
that all about?

Both players look at Bristol silently.

BRISTOL
I said what the hell was all this
about?

LEON
He called me "boy." I don’t stand
being called that by anyone, let
alone white trash.

BILLY
I ain’t white trash boy.

LEON
Don’t call...

BRISTOL
Both of you shut your yaps! Now get
this straight. There are no colors
on my baseball team. Whatever crap
you came here with, get rid of it
right now. Understand?

Both players stand silently as the Bristol looks at them.
BRISTOL
Both of you have more talent then
I’ve ever seen at this level, but
the common sense of a knuckleball.

Bristol taps his temple with his finger. Billy and Clyde are
staring at Bristol.

BRISTOL
Your knuckleheads could be the only
thing that stops you from getting
to the majors.

Billy and Leon steal a glance at each other when they hear
the word "majors."

BRISTOL
And it’s my job, my ass on the
line, to get you to first base. If
I see this crap again, I will show
you a color I do allow and that’s
blood red.

Bristol looks at both players for a long time. His fists are
clanched.

BRISTOL
And that blood will be coming from
your noses when I bust them to
drive those knuckleballs out of
you. Got it?

Bristol slams his fist into his hand.

BRISTOL
(screaming)
You’re ball players and teammates,
that’s it! Get to the showers!

Leon and Clyde start a slow jog towards the field house.

LEON
(mumbling, almost inaudible)
The majors.

BILLY
Yeah, the majors.
EXT. MINOR LEAGUE BALL STANDS/FIELD-DAY

Clyde and Jimmie are in the stands watching Billy’s minor league team.

JIMMIE
Hey this is great that we get to watch Billy practice.

CLYDE
Yeah, all the rain up north washed their field away so they’ll be traveling around down south for awhile. Figured a three hour drive was worth it.

JIMMIE
Sure. Does he know we were coming?

CLYDE
No.

JIMMIE
Hey look. There he is at shortstop, just like at home.

Coaches Bristol and Foy are standing near home plate. Foy has a bat in his hand and container of baseballs by his side.

BRISTOL
Okay, live DP practice. Coach will hit, you boys turn them fast and clean.

Runners hang around first base. One leads off. A WHITE BALLPLAYER at second stares towards home plate. Billy checks the runner at first.

BRISTOL
Okay here we go. Go head.

Foy smacks a grounder at Billy. Billy fields it cleanly and looks towards second.

BILLY
(to himself)
Come on, come on, get there, get there.

Billy throws towards second base. The second baseman catches the ball, taps the bag, pivots and is upended by the runner just as he release his throw. The throw bounces to first base. Billy shakes his head.
Foy hits another grounder to Billy. Billy fires it to second, the second baseman catches it, but looks down and stamps his foot around the bag three times before hitting the bag and clearing himself out of the runners way.

BILLY
(to the second baseman)
Damn, just fake hitting the bag.
The ump will give it to you.

Foy hits a grounder to the second baseman. Billy races to cover second base and momentarily stands there as the second baseman makes a casual throw. Billy bare hands the ball and whips a side arm throw to first causing the heavy set runner to slide before reaching the bag.

BILLY
(to the second baseman)
Shit, you have to be quicker. Much quicker!

Billy looks at the next runner. Foy hits another grounder to the second baseman. Billy covers second. The second baseman bobbles the ball slightly and throws towards Billy as the runner bears down. The ball and the runner arrive simultaneously. Billy jumps, but is too late; the runner’s spike catches his shin and sends Billy tumbling.

BILLY
Damnit! Coach get Turner back in here. I’d rather play with a good colored player than a shitty white one. That jackass is gonna get me killed out here.

BRISTOL
Okay Turner. Show them how it’s done.

Series of shots showing the ballet between shortstop and second baseman.

BRISTOL
That’s how it’s done boys.

Billy and Leon look at each other. They nod.

BRISTOL
Okay. Couple of laps and hit the showers.

The players groan.
BRISTOL
Make it a couple of couple laps.

On Clyde and Jimmie.

CLYDE
Should have gave that kid more of a chance.

JIMMIE
He stunk.

CLYDE
He’s white.

JIMMIE
Still stunk.

Clyde glares disapprovingly at Jimmie.

CLYDE
I don’t like Billy playing with that colored boy.

JIMMIE
Yeah, but together they’re as smooth as silk.

CLYDE
Don’t like it.

JIMMIE
But he’ll be playing with colored ball players when he gets to the majors.

CLYDE
Still don’t like it.

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT

Billy and Leon walk out the locker room door towards their bus. Billy sees his Dad and Jimmie.

BILLY
(to Leon)
That’s my Dad. I thought he would be here.

Billy starts walking towards his Dad. Leon starts following. Billy turns around facing Leon.
BILLY
Better not. I’ll see you on the bus.

Leon walks towards the bus, Billy towards his father.

JIMMIE
The Glove! Smooth out there, real smooth.

BILLY
Thanks Jimmie. Dad what did you think?

CLYDE
Looks like you were pulling off the curve a bit during batting practice.

BILLY
Yeah. Been working on it. Kids down here got real hooks. Not a nickel curve like Oren’s. But what about the DP drill?

JIMMIE
Thing of beauty. You and that black kid.

Clyde glares at Jimmie.

CLYDE
Yeah. You worked good together. But a colored second baseman. Don’t care for it.

BILLY
But he’s just a ball player to me. A pretty good one.

SUPERIMPOSE: "FIVE MONTHS LATER"

INT. BRISTOL’S OFFICE–DAY

There is a knock on his door.

BRISTOL
Come in.

Leon and Billy walk in. They are still in their sweaty, dirty uniforms.
BRISTOL
(motioning to a couple of chairs)
Sit down boys.

They both sit. Billy lays his glove over his right knee.

BRISTOL
Pretty hard to separate you from that glove, huh Beaumont?

BILLY
Well sir, my Pop...

LEON
Shoot coach. If that was a woman, we’d have a bunch of little gloves running round. Save the club some money.

The coach laughs, Billy smirks slightly.

BILLY
Like I was saying, my Pop worked hard and saved for this. So it’s real special.

BRISTOL
That’s good. You take care of it. I can see it’s special, maybe even some magic in it. Treat it good.

BRISTOL
(nodding at Leon)
And how did you get so special?

LEON
Coach I’m just a natural.

BRISTOL
Natural?

LEON
Naturally fast like the gazelle, naturally shifty like a cheetah, naturally strong like the gorilla...

BRISTOL
So you’re an animal.
LEON
No NOT an animal, don’t you see coach, all us brothers had to be one step better than the animals or else we all would be snacks.

Billy is starting to laugh. Bristol looks at Billy and then Leon and knowingly smiles.

BRISTOL
Okay Turner, didn’t know I had a comic on the team...

LEON
(interrupting Bristol)
Seriously, coach, I want it more then anything else and will do anything to get it.

BRISTOL
The majors?

LEON
Damn right.

Leon gestures towards Billy.

LEON
The both of us.

BRISTOL
That’ll come. If there were ever two can’t miss prospects, its you two. They know all about you two at the big club.

Leon and Billy look at each other smiling.

BRISTOL
But there is something else I need to talk over with you two.

Bristol leans over his desk, folding his hands together, pointing at each player with his index fingers.

BRISTOL
The organization knows you both got low numbers in the draft. Now you can roll with those numbers. Maybe you go, maybe you don’t. But if you go, we lost you.
LEON
Yeah if we don’t go?

BILLY
Yeah if we don’t get called, what happens.

BRISTOL
If you don’t get called, then you continue with us and in two, three, maybe four years at the most you’re in the big leagues.

LEON
So it’s a crap shoot.

BRISTOL
Well there is one other thing...

LEON
Yeah we can go to Canada and practice with snowballs.

Bristol throws a "this is serious" dart at Leon.

BRISTOL
No, not Canada. The organization can pull some strings and if you enlist, it’s a two year commitment, then...

LEON
Two years? Two years, I want to be in the big leagues in two years.

BILLY
Me too.

Bristol unfolds his hands and opens his palms gesturing the players to slow down.

BRISTOL
Slow down fellas. Slow down. Listen, I can’t guarantee in two years you would be in the big leagues. Like I said it might take a little more time.

LEON
So?
So, the organization can pull some strings and get you into a special Army unit. A special unit that plays ball.

Leon and Billy look at each other confused.

If you enlist, your job would be to play ball against teams at Army bases. Mostly in the US, but maybe Germany and Japan. Decent competition, as good as here maybe a step up.

So we would be Army ball players?

Pretty much. And the front office guarantees that after your two years are done, you go right into triple A with a shot at the big club.

Two years?

So two years and the big leagues.

A real shot at it. What do you think?

Bristol looks at both players. They look at each other. Billy is fingering his glove.

I gotta talk to my Pop.

Yeah, when do you need to know?

Saturday before the team dinner.
EXT.US ARMY BASE BALL FIELD–DAY

PLAYERS are scattered about the field warming up. Leon, Billy and some other INFIELDERS are playing pepper. Leon is the only black player.

As they play pepper, they’re hot dogging and singing, "We’re in the Army now."

CAPTAIN BEN WILKES walks up to them.

WILKES
All right you clowns, knock it off.

The men continue to play pepper singing a little more softly.

WILKES
(sternly)
I said knock it off. You’re soldiers first, then ball players. Am I clear?

ALL
(shouting)
Yes sir.

WILKES
Good. Now listen, as soldiers you guys stink and would scare the hell out of me if I had to do any fighting with you. But you’re damn good ball players, so consider yourselves lucky you’re not doing any fighting. Understand?

ALL
(shouting)
Yes sir.

WILKES
Okay...

CAPTAIN STEVE CRITTEN walks up to Wilkes.

CRITTEN
That’s a shabby bunch of soldiers you have there.

WILKES
Shabby soldiers, but a hell of a bunch of ball players.
CRITTEN
So I’ve been hearing. Been winning pretty easy on your tour. Not against much competition, but winning still.

WILKES
That’s why we’re down here, to beat up some good competition.

CRITTEN
Seem a little over confident there Ben, considering how you’ve never put together any team to beat my guys. And I use real soldiers, not some pussy ass momma boys too scared to fight.

Critten spits a wad of tobacco in the direction of Leon. It lands short but gets Leon’s attention. Leon stares in Critten’s direction.

CRITTEN
(to Wilkes)
And I don’t use no coloreds.

WILKES
You sound so sure, why don’t we double the bet to a thousand, and you can buy us dinner and drinks after we kick you ass.

CRITTEN
You’re on. And we like our steaks rare, just on this side of dead.

Critten walks away, stares at Leon and spits down into the dirt. He turns away and walks over to his team. His baseball uniform looks a little tight across his butt.

Wilkes sees Leon looking pissed off as he follows Critten walking away.

WILKES
Turner! Forget about him. He usually talks out of his ass, but his uniform is a little too tight today, so everything has to come out of his mouth. It’s all still the same shit.

All the players break up laughing.
WILKES
(to all his players)
Just do me a favor and beat that
son of a bitch’s ass.

ALL
Yes sir.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS SHOWING THE GAME IS A SLAUGHTER AND
LEON AND BILLY HOT DOGGING AS THE SCORE GETS OUT OF HAND.

ON SCOREBOARD: WILKES 12; CRITTEN 2.

Critten’s team is at bat.

There is one out, a RUNNER on first. Critten is the first base coach.

CRITTEN
(to runner)
If there is any ball hit where you
can take out that goddamn nigger
you do it. You got that?

The runner nods.

The pitch comes towards the batter, he hits a hard ground ball up the middle, Billy ranges to his left going behind second base to snag the ball and flips it to Leon covering second.

CRITTEN (OC)
(screaming)
Take the bastard out!

BILLY
(as he is flipping the ball to Leon)
Runner hard!

Leon catches Billy’s toss bare handed, toe taps the bag, turns and drops his arm and makes a throw right at the runner’s head. The runner drops into a clumsy slide way short of second base.

The ball smacks into the FIRST BASEMAN’S glove. Double play.

Critten kicks at the dirt in the coaches box mouthing "Shit!"
INT. BAR—NIGHT

The bar is crowded with soldiers. Both teams are there. Wilkes and Critten are leaning against the bar.

WILKES
So what was the bet. Two thousand and dinner and drinks?

CRITTEN
A thousand. A thousand.

WILKES
And dinner and drinks for my team.

CRITTEN
Yeah, yeah. Dinner and drinks.

Critten looks around at the scene in the bar. Most of the players are drinking.

CRITTEN
Looks like it will be mostly drinks.

WILKES
(looking around)
I guess. No hard feelings?

CRITTEN
No. Have you ever known me to have any?

WILKES
Me? No, but you hear.

CRITTEN
Yeah. I know what you hear. You hear that I’m a prick, a hard ass. All that’s true, you know that. But I have to get soldiers ready to fight, where one mistake and someone dies.

Critten downs a shot and slams the glass on the bar next to five others.

CRITTEN
And what do you do Ben? Train baseball players. Barely soldiers. Wouldn’t want any of them watching my back in Nam.
WILKES
Why? Afraid they might surprise you like they did today?

CRITTEN
Surprise me? The only thing that surprised me was you bringing on a colored.

WILKES
Yeah. So?

CRITTEN
Come on Ben, that’s not you.

WILKES
Steve, times are changing. This is what’s happening.

CRITTEN
Not to me.

Critten slams another shot down.

WILKES
Slow down Steve. You’re not as young as you use to be.

CRITTEN
No you’re not. I can handle it. But a colored? Ben I never thought, I thought I knew you better.

WILKES
It’s the future. The past is over. Better get use to it.

CRITTEN
Not here. Not me.

Critten looks around the bar. He sees Leon and Billy sitting at a table.

CRITTEN
I gotta take a leak.

Critten gets up from the bar, walks towards the bathroom, stops by one of his SOLDIERS and says something. Critten disappears into the bathroom.

The solider walks over to where Leon and Billy are sitting.
SOLDIER
Never thought I would see the day
ey they would let a fag and nigger in
the Army.

BILLY
Shut your trap.

SOLDIER
A pussy and a darky.

LEON
Why don’t you just go back with the
rest of your losers.

SOLDIER
Shut up boy! I didn’t address you.
You don’t speak to me unless I
speak to you. Understand boy?

Leon starts getting up, Billy pulls him back down into his
chair.

BILLY
Forget about the jerk.

Leon starts to rise again. Billy puts his hand on his
shoulder to push him back into his seat; as he is pushing
Leon down, he pushes himself up, swings around and cold
cocks the solider.

VOICE IN BAR (V.O.)
FIGHT!

SERIES OF SHOTS SHOWING BAR FIGHT.

Leon and Billy are protecting each other throughout the
fight.

Billy and Leon are standing back to back. The fight ends as
MPs come in.

INT. CAPTAIN WILKES OFFICE- DAY

Captain Wilkes is sitting at his desk. There are two folders
in front of him on his desk.

There is a knocking on the door.

WILKES
Come in.

Leon and Billy come in. They stand at attention.
WILKES
(motioning to two chairs)
Sit down.

Billy and Leon sit facing Wilkes.

WILKES
Well men, that’s it for the team. The colonel decided we were becoming more of a disturbance than having a positive affect.

LEON
Captain, I’m sorry, but...

BILLY
(interrupting Leon)
We’re sorry Captain.

LEON
Yeah, both of us.

BILLY
The fight was...

WILKES
(interrupting)
No, don’t blame the fight. You did what you had to do. The both of you. You had each others back. That’s what soldiers do. It’s what teammates do.

LEON
Yeah but...

WILKES
(interrupting)
We were too good, especially you two. We won too easily, probably ruffled too many feathers. Guys who thought they had players. Guys who have a pipeline to higher ups. Shit just got shoved downhill. That’s Army.

BILLY
That sucks.

LEON
What are we going to do Captain?
WILKES
Well this is the part that really stinks. And I’m so sorry my hands are tied. But they’re shipping you two to Vietnam.

Leon and Billy sit silently stunned.

OUTSIDE BRISTOL’S OFFICE

Billy is at a pay phone. He calls his father. Leon stands off to one side.

BILLY
Pop, we screwed up. They’re shipping us to Vietnam.

BILLY
No Pop. I screwed up. We screwed up. It doesn’t matter. We’re both going.

BILLY
You’re wrong Pop. He’s my teammate, my brother in arms. I trust him with my life, like he trusts me with his.

BILLY
I’m sorry. That’s not the way it is anymore. Things changed. Leon’s my best friend. We’ll help each other get through this.

BILLY
I’m sorry Pop, but you’re wrong.

Billy hangs up. He walks over to Leon.

LEON
Tough call?

BILLY
He hates you, blames you.

LEON
What about you?

BILLY
I don’t know...he’s probably pissed. Maybe hates me. But he’s my dad, he’s all I got back home. He taught me the game...
LEON
No, how do you feel about me.

BILLY
You? (long pause) We’re soldiers, we’re teammates. I’d die for you.

LEON
Same here.

INT. MCGUILTROY’S STORE—DAY

Clyde is hanging up the public phone. He walks over to Jimmie Higgins.

JIMMIE
Bad news?

CLYDE
The Army is shipping Billy to Vietnam.

JIMMIE
I thought Billy was just going to play ball.

CLYDE
Because of that colored kid.

JIMMIE
Who?

CLYDE
The second baseman on his Army team. A colored kid. He started a big fight at a bar and Billy had to help.

JIMMIE
Sounds like something Billy would do.

CLYDE
Yeah for a white teammate. But a colored kid? That’s not what I taught him.

JIMMIE
But times are changing.
CLYDE
I’m sick of hearing that. Times are changing. Times are changing because we’re not doing enough. God dammit Jimmie we have to step it up!

EXT.WOODED HILL-DAY
A country road unwinds below the woods. Clyde’s pick up is parked in the woods.

Clyde and Jimmie are standing facing each other over the pick up bed.

Clyde’s back is to the camera.

CLYDE
You’re sure that bus is coming this way.

JIMMIE
Yeah, yeah. They’re on their way to picket the flag factory.

CLYDE
Sure?

JIMMIE
Yeah.

Clyde pulls his arms out of the pick up. In his hands is a rifle. Billy has binoculars in his hands.

Billy scans up the road. He sees a cloud of smoke and then the bus.

JIMMIE
Okay, they’re coming.

Clyde puts the rifle between the crock of a tree. Jimmie is sweating nervously. He keeps looking through the binoculars.

CLYDE
Let me know when they round the corner.

JIMMIE
Yeah.
CLYDE
Now?

JIMMIE
No.

CLYDE
Now?

CLYDE
Now?

JIMMIE
Okay, they’re turning the corner.

Clyde’s trigger finger tenses.

CLYDE
Okay, I have them in sight. Just a little closer.

Jimmie is still looking through the binoculars and sees Becky Ann sitting in the front seat.

Just as Clyde pulls the trigger Jimmie jerks the barrel of the gun skyward.

JIMMIE
No!

CLYDE
What the hell!

The shot goes high.

INT. BUS

Becky Ann is in the front seat opposite the black DRIVER.

BECKY ANN
What was that?

DRIVER
Sounded like a shot.

BECKY ANN
Shot?

DRIVER
Someone probably hunting.
VOICE FROM BACK OF BUS (OC)
Hope they weren’t hunting us.

EXT. WOODED HILL

JIMMIE
Becky Ann was on the bus.

CLYDE
What the hell was she doing?

JIMMIE
Shit, Clyde... I meant to tell you, but... she’s working with them. Registering voters.

CLYDE
Damn, Jimmie. Why are you letting her? Now she’s helping wreck our life.

JIMMIE
I can’t... I can’t do this anymore.

CLYDE
Because of her?

JIMMIE
We’re getting married.

CLYDE
Her twang has got your head all screwed up. Why get married. You’re not gotta have the life we had here. You’re giving up. Her hay has poisoned you. You’re thinking with your pecker.

JIMMIE
It always did my best thinking for me. I just can’t do this anymore.

Jimmie stands between Clyde and the pick up.

CLYDE
Pussy. Get out of my way. I’m going after them. I’ll do it all myself. Screw you, Ned, Maribel all of you.

JIMMIE
Clyde don’t.

Jimmie doesn’t move.
CLYDE

Don’t make me do this.

JIMMIE

Clyde...

Clyde swings the stock of the rifle against the side of Jimmie’s head. Jimmie slumps to the ground.

Clyde gets in his pick up and takes off through the woods and throwing the rifle on the front seat.

Series of shots;

--The pick up tearing through the narrow woods. The bat clanging from sidewall to sidewall.

--The pick up clears the wood onto the road dirt flying as the it gains speed.

--The pick up gaining on the bus; then the bus is momentarily out of view as it rounds a turn.

--The pick up tears around the turn.

INT. PICK UP

Clyde slams on the brakes as he sees the bus pull into the stadium parking. (Same shot as when Clyde and Billy saw Billy’s first game.)

Clyde grabs the steering wheel with both hands and slams his head against it.

CLYDE

My God! They’re going to the game.

A car horn blares.

Clyde picks his head up and looks in the rear view mirror, seeing he is blocking the entrance to the lot. he looks at the rifle.

He looks at the bus and the stadium.

CLYDE

Damn! Not here.

Clyde drives off.
EXT. VIETNAM ARMY BASE—DAY

A makeshift baseball diamond has been set up. SOLDIERS are standing around behind home plate.

A BATTER is hitting ground balls to INFIELDERS. Leon is at second, Billy is at shortstop.

Leon and Billy are putting on a show. There is a lot of hooting and hollering from soldiers watching.

Outside the perimeter of the field, a group of young VIETNAMESE KIDS, 11 or 12 years old look on.

The fielding exhibition continues as Billy and Leon banter with each other.

BILLY
Looks like we can still draw a crowd.

LEON
Yeah, just like the states. Maybe when we get back we can just put our show on the road. Call it the Hoover Show.

BILLY
Huh?

LEON
Hoover. You know like vacuums.

BILLY
What?

LEON
Hoover vacuums, because we suck up everything in our path.

BILLY
(shaking his head)
Let’s take five. Get a drink.

LEON
Yeah. I’ll be Hoover. What will we call you.

Leon and Billy jog off the field together.

LEON
Ever had a nickname?
BILLY
Eh...they called me "The Glove" in high school.

LEON

Leon and Billy stop off to the side of the batter looking at the kids.

The kids are throwing a mango around.

LEON
Look at that. Kids got nothing, but they still want to play ball.

BILLY
Yeah. I feel sorry for them.

LEON
(to the batter)
Hey Andre, toss me a ball.

Leon catches the ball and starts walking towards the kids. Billy watches.

He gets close to them.

LEON
(as he is softly tossing the ball)
Here, catch.

One of the BOYS catches the ball and looks up with a smile at Leon.

A mortar round explodes near third base.

VOICE (O.C)
INCOMING!

The Vietnamese kids bolt into the underbrush. The soldiers scatter.

A round lands right at second base, blowing the bag to smithereens.
EXT. VIETNAM JUNGLE- DAY

A CAPTAIN leads a patrol in the jungle. Leon and Billy and a number of other soldiers follow.

Two BLACK SOLDIERS walk behind Billy.

SOLDIER ONE
(to Billy)
You take that glove around with you everywhere?

SOLDIER TWO
Yeah, what is it like your teddy bear?

LEON
Shut up.

SOLDIER ONE
Leon, why the hell do you stick up for this whitey? His daddy is probably a member of the klan and would string up your ass if he found you in his town.

LEON
Shut up I said.

BILLY
It reminds me of my dad and home.

SOLDIER ONE
Yeah, like I said your dad and home and Ku Klux Klan.

LEON
I said shut up!.

SOLDIER ONE
What are you some uncle Tom?

LEON
Drop it.

SOLDIER ONE
Cutting it a little too close to home for you?

LEON
I stick up for him because he’s got my back. Out in this hell hole we’re all brothers.
SOLDIER ONE
Then he’s the whitest brother I’ve ever seen.

CAPTAIN
Shut your yaps, all of you or every gook in the area will know we’re here.

SOLDIER TWO
(mumbling)
Shit. We’ve been out in this stinking jungle for two days now and we ain’t come close to any gooks. I’m seeing more action from these damn mosqu...

A shot rings out and he drops dead before finishing his sentence.

CAPTAIN
DOWN!

An intense fire fight breaks out. The patrol is pinned down.

Series of shots showing the chaos.

CAPTAIN
(shouting)
Radio! Radio! Get up here!

Leon and Billy are lying face down next to each other behind a log. Bullets whiz over their heads. They blindly return fire.

They are scared.

LEON
Damn I didn’t sign up for this.

BILLY
Shit.

They hear the captain yelling.

LEON
Radio! Radio!

Billy looks to his right. He sees the radio man lying on his back.
BILLY
Radio’s hit!

LEON
(yelling to the captain)
Radio’s hit!

CAPTAIN
Get me that radio!

Billy looks at Leon.

LEON
No man, you’ll get killed.

BILLY
If I don’t get it we’ll all get killed.

CAPTAIN
Where’s that damn radio!

BILLY
Cover me.

LEON
No...

Billy takes off for the radio. Leon lays a fierce cover of fire.

Billy gets to the radio man, gets the radio off him and starts running back just as a mortar round goes off near by knocking him to the ground.

LEON
Billy!

Billy picks himself up and as he starts running towards the captain his glove falls to the ground, the backpack strap holding it sheared by shrapnel.

Billy doesn’t notice.

Leon is still laying covering fire.

Billy makes it to the captain. The captain grabs the radio.

CAPTAIN
(barking into the radio)
I need support at coordinates 135 Alpha 234.
The fire fight continues for several more minutes. Helicopters are heard in the distance and then their shadows pass overhead. Rockets from the helicopters rip apart the tree line.

The fire fight ends. Billy heads back to Leon.

LEON
That was crazy!

BILLY
You said it brother.

LEON
You’re a crazy mother. You almost got yourself killed.

Billy reaches around the back of his pack. He doesn’t feel his glove.

BILLY
Shit, where’s my glove?

LEON
(walking around Billy)
Damn, looks like some shrapnel cut your strap. Lucky it didn’t rip you a new asshole.

BILLY
(panicky)
Where’s my glove?

LEON
(looking around down towards the radio man)
Look, it’s down by Stubby.

Billy looks down towards the fallen radio man and starts walking towards him.

BILLY
(to Leon)
Yeah, thanks man. I’d die if I lost it.

Billy reaches his glove, picks it up and looks it over.

Out in the field a very young wounded Vietcong stands up with a rifle in his hand.

Leon sees him and opens fire.
LEON
Billy stay down!

Leon’s fire cuts down the Vietcong, but not before he fires off a shot.

Billy is hit. He goes down.

LEON
Billy!

Billy falls face up. Leon runs over to Billy. Billy clutches his glove in his left hand; he is holding his stomach with his right hand, his eyes are closed.

LEON
Billy! Billy.

BILLY
Something happened.

LEON
Take it easy. Take it easy.

BILLY
(moving his right hand, revealing a gaping wound)
It’s bad.

LEON
No, you’ll be fine. Medic! Medic!

Billy opens his eyes.

BILLY
I know you. We’re brothers.

Billy reaches up his left hand holding the glove.

BILLY
You have to take my glove to Pop.

Leon takes the glove as Billy’s arm goes limp. A MEDIC walks up. He feels for Billy’s pulse.

MEDIC
There’s nothing we can do for him soldier. He’s gone.

TWO SOLDIERS approach with a litter. They place Billy on it. They walk towards the clearing where a helicopter has landed not far from where the fallen Vietcong lies.
Leon walks with them. They walk past the Vietcong who shot Billy.

SOLDIER
(motioning towards the dead Vietcong)
Look at that. A kid. Twelve or thirteen at the most. Kids. Can you believe it?

They load the litter into the helicopter and hop in. Leon watches the helicopter lift off.

Leon is left in the clearing with the dead Vietcong.

Leon screams and empties his magazine into the dead Vietcong.

INT. ARMY TENT–NIGHT

The tent is dark except for a small flickering light from a candle.

VOICE FROM THE DARK
Leon. Leon my brother. Sit.

The candle’s flame heats liquid in a spoon.

VOICE FROM THE DARK
The Nectar of the gods.

A syringe draws up the liquid.

VOICE FROM THE DARK
For Billy.

The syringe plunges into a vain on a black forearm.

EXT. VIETNAM VILLAGE–DAY

A CAPTAIN leads a patrol. Leon is in the middle of the line. The captain hold his hand up stopping the patrol.

CAPTAIN
(turning)
Corporal. Keep an eye on Turner

The patrol continues, clears the jungle and enters into a village.
CAPTAIN
Easy here boys. These are suppose to be friendly, but keep your eyes open.

The patrol approaches a couple of huts. To the side of the hut a group of YOUNG BOYS, eleven or twelve years old are standing around.

Leon stares at the boys, his finger on the trigger.

SOLDIER ONE
Hey some of those kids look like the ones that hang around camp.

SOLDIER TWO
Nah, they all look the same. Right Leon?

Leon has stopped walking and is staring at the group.

The captain has also stopped and is looking at Leon.

One of the boys reaches under the hut and pulls something out.

BOY
(making a throwing motion)
Hey Joe catch.

Leon looks up and sees a grenade tumbling through the air.

LEON
Grenade!

Leon levels his weapon at the group of boys. He fires his weapon just as the captain lifts Leon’s barrel with his rifle.

The shots go into the tree above the hut. There is a murderous shriek.

CAPTAIN
Turner, what the hell are you doing! (to the other soldiers) Get that weapon away from him!

LEON
Grenade!

Two other soldiers are struggling with Leon. They take him down. He lands face down in the dirt. His face is inches from a baseball.
LEON
(looking at the baseball)
Grenade!

SOLDIER
It’s a baseball!

A dead monkey falls out of the tree, onto the hut roof and then onto the ground just past the baseball.

LEON
I killed him. I killed him.

CAPTAIN
Get him out of here. Get him to base!

LEON
(looking at the dead monkey, shouting crazily)
I got the gook who killed Billy. I got him. I got him

Two SOLDIERS struggle with Leon.

LEON
I got him! I got him!

CAPTAIN
Get him out of here.

One soldier slugs Leon.

EXT. TOWN CEMETERY-DAY

The entire town has turned out for Billy’s funeral. The color guard is all white and present the American flag to Clyde.

After the burial Ned and Maribel walk up to Clyde.

NED
Come back with us to the store. I closed it for the day.

MARIBEL
I cooked up some food. You have to start eating again.

CLYDE
(mumbling looking down at the flag)
How come they didn’t have the glove? Where’s our glove? Where’s the glove?

INT. MCGUILTROY’S STORE

Clyde, Maribel, Ned, Jimmie along with most of the town are in the sporting goods department.

A table with food and drink is set up. Another table has news clippings about Billy’s high school career.

ON NEWSPAPER STORY.

SUPERIMPOSE "Local Can’t Miss Prospect Signs Pro Contract. Billy "The Glove" Beaumont, star shortstop for the Robert E. Lee high school team signed a professional contract with the Atlanta Braves. Beaumont will report to the Brave’s minor league affiliate right after graduation."

Jimmie walks up to Clyde. Clyde is in state of shock.

JIMMIE
This whole thing really stinks.
It’s not fair. Billy was special.
He deserved better. You deserved better.

Clyde looks at Jimmie. He says nothing.

JIMMIE
I know we had some disagreements recently, but...but, you’re like a brother to me. I just want you to know that. And let’s put what happen in the past.

CLYDE
It doesn’t matter now. My life is over. Yeah, forget about it.

Maribel walks up to Clyde. Jimmie sees that she wants to talk to him.

JIMMIE
If you need anything call me.

CLYDE
Sure.

Maribel is holding a letter.
MARIBEL
(trying to hand the letter to Clyde)
This came this morning.

CLYDE
What is it?

MARIBEL
(looking at the letter)
It’s a letter from the Atlanta Braves.

Maribel tries again to give the letter to Clyde. Clyde holds his hand up.

CLYDE
No, you open it and read it.

MARIBEL
(reading the letter)
Dear Mister Beaumont, I am very sorry to hear about Billy’s passing in Vietnam. In my thirty years coaching in the minor leagues I never saw anyone with the talent your son had. His glove was exceptional all ready at a big league level. He would have been a great big leaguer. The thing I most was impressed with was his ability to turn a double play at any time with his team mate, Leon Turner. I know Leon and the rest of his teammates will also miss him.

CLYDE
Stop.

MARIBEL
But there’s more.

CLYDE
Stop reading. He killed Billy.

Clyde looks around the room. He sees Ned and Jimmie talking near the newspaper clippings.

He looks at Maribel.

CLYDE
They’re building a shrine to something that doesn’t exist
anymore. Take care of my house. I’m leaving.

MARIBEL
Leaving? But have something to eat.

CLYDE
No. I’m leaving.

MARIBEL
Where are you going?

CLYDE
Away. I lost Billy. I lost Mary. You, Ned and Jimmie quit on me. All of you are letting our town, my town, my life change. Don’t any of you understand what you’re doing?

Clyde motions towards Ned and Jimmie.

CLYDE
They’re building a shine to a life that is over. It’s over. Everyone quit on me. I don’t even have the glove.

SERIES OF SHOTS:
-Fighting in the civil rights movement.
-George Wallace speaking with Clyde on stage as his bodyguard.
-Shots showing civil rights progress being made.

EXT. SIDEWALK–DAY
A crowd has gathered around the store front of a general store. Inside the store facing towards the street a color television is showing the ATLANTA BRAVES game.

Clyde stands in the mixed race crowd. A black boy stands next to him.

ON TELEVISION, A BRAVE SLIDES ACROSS HOME PLATE.

CROWD
LOUD CHEERING.

The boy looks up at Clyde.
BOY
(stammering nervously)
You’re...you’re Billy Beaumont’s
dad...right?

Clyde looks at the boy.

BOY
I...I saw him play in the
championship game. He...he played
great...and the last out...I hope I
can be as good as him.

The boy pounds his glove.

ON CLYDE’S FACE. Puzzlement. He walks away.

CROWD
LOUD CHEERING.

INT. VETERAN’S HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WARD—DAY

Two ORDERLIES are walking down the hall.

ORDERLY 1
So they blew it. Your Brewers.

ORDERLY 2
Yeah, so? At least they got in.
Where did your Mets finish again?
Last.

ORDERLY 1
Who cares? Its over and you owe me
fifty. Pay up!

ORDERLY 2
Yeah, yeah. Last. Mets. My Entire
Team Stinks. I’ll pay you on pay
day. I’m a little light.

ORDERLY 1
Knew that was coming. Your boys got
no game and you got no money.

They stop at Leon’s door. It is closed. They peer inside
through the door’s window. Leon is sitting by the room’s
window staring outside.

ORDERLY 1
No game...yeah. But talk about
game, they say that old Leon was a
fine prospect. A slick fielding, power hitting second baseman.

ORDERLY 2
Leon?

ORDERLY 1
Yeah, Leon.

ORDERLY 2
How the hell do you that?

ORDERLY 1
I was talking to my cousin from up in the Bronx about some of the guys in here. I mentioned Leon’s name and he recognized his last name. Said Leon’s old man is a doctor up there. Told me the whole story about how Leon was in the minor leagues, playing sweet, putting on a show.

ORDERLY 2
Leon? You sure?

ORDERLY 1
Hey, I’m not throwing you a screwball, this is straight heat. But when he was in the minors the Army drafted him and he got sent to Nam. He flipped over there.

ORDERLY 2
Yeah, Nam. He’s not the only one who flipped over there. We got a whole ward full of them.

ORDERLY 1
Yeah, we do. That’s not right.

ON LEON’S CATATONIC STARE. His eyes never blink.

ORDERLY 2
Wonder what made him flip out?

ORDERLY 1
Don’t know. But whatever happened over there is stuck up here (tapping his head) and never coming out.

Orderly 2 opens door slightly and leans in.
ON LEON’S STARE. His eyes don’t blink until he hears the word "catch." Then he blinks several times and closes his eyes.

ORDERLY 2
Hey Leon you play ball? Wanta have a catch?

FLASHBACK
Series of chaotic war scenes. Bombings, patrols, firefights, snipers, soldiers dying, wounded crying out on pain.

And out of the chaos a serene scene wrapped in haze. Leon is having a catch. We see him catching the ball and throwing it back into the haze. Each time the ball keeps coming back harder and harder.

LEON
Hey you got a pretty good arm. Who’s there?

Out of the haze steps Clyde all shot up as Leon saw him when he died.

LEON
No..........

INT. BAR–DAY
Clyde sits at the end of the bar. There are a couple of other patrons. The television is on.

GEORGE WALLACE is speaking.

Clyde is watching the television.

WALLACE
I was wrong. Those days are over and they ought to be over.

CLYDE
(to himself)
God is it over? Is it? Was I wrong? Billy, was I wrong?

Long silence. Clyde stares into his beer. The television plays inaudibly in the background.
CLYDE
(to bartender)
Isn’t there a game on?

BARTENDER
No. (flipping a ticket on the bar towards Clyde). Why don’t you take this and go see Moultrie. If you leave now you can see batting practice.

Clyde looks up at the television and takes the ticket off the bar.

CLYDE
Yeah. Thanks.

Clyde leaves the bar.

No...........

EXT. VETERAN’S HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WARD—DAY

On the lawn the two orderlies are having a catch. They are under Leon’s window. It is a beautiful spring day. They are lazily throwing a ball back and forth.

ORDERLY 1
What a day! I can smell baseball!

ORDERLY 2
The only thing you smell are your Brewers stinking it up again.

ORDERLY 1
Hey, we made the Series.

ORDERLY 2
And lost. How the hell did you come to like the Brewers anyway?

ORDERLY 1
Robin Yount.

ORDERLY 2
Robin Yount?

ORDERLY 1
Yeah. When I read about him becoming a starting major league shortstop at 18 and with a first name like Robin it connected with me.
ORDERLY 2
What? What the hell you talking about?

ORDERLY 1
Because of my first name.

ORDERLY 2
Alex?

ORDERLY 1
My parents really named me Alexis.

ORDERLY 2
That’s a girl’s name.

ORDERLY 1
Yeah, so is Robin.

ORDERLY 2
Or a bird, or frut-frut sidekick to Batman.

ORDERLY 1
Yeah. But I figured if he had the courage to use Robin and play in front of thousands of people, I could use Alexis. You know out of respect to my folks.

ORDERLY 2
I never heard you use Alexis or seen you sign it.

ORDERLY 1
Yeah. I never became a major league shortstop at 18. Alex is a whole lot easier. Hey at least the Brewers made it. What did your Mets do again? Zilch.

ORDERLY 2
Hey, I got no team. I’m just a pure fan, in it for the love of the game.

ORDERLY 1
That’s crap.

The throwing starts to get harder.
ORDERLY 2
I’m a true connoisseur of the game. The hit and run, the sac bunt, the intentional walk, the 6-4-3 dp, the suicide squeeze...

ORDERLY 1
Shit! Why don’t you move from that spot, you fertilized the grass enough there.

They are throwing as hard as they can. The ball makes a loud pop when it hits the gloves.

ORDERLY 2
Man why so angry Alexis?

ORDERLY 1
Shut up! It’s Alex, legally. Let’s just have a catch.

ORDERLY 2
With a little heat.

ORDERLY 1
With heat as much as you got.

INT. VETERAN’S HOSPITAL LEON’S ROOM

A NURSE walks into Leon’s room. Leon is sitting in a chair staring straight outside six or seven feet from the window. The nurse walks towards Leon shaking her head.

NURSE
Leon, it’s such a beautiful spring day why don’t we open your window and let some of that beautiful air inside?

The nurse walks past Leon and opens the bottom sash full and looks outside.

The pop of a baseball hitting gloves can be heard.

NURSE
Look, some of the boys are playing a little ball.

The nurse turns to look at Leon, there is no response. She steps away from the window. The popping sound gets a little louder as she walks past Leon towards the door.
NURSE
Well, see you after lunch.

ON LEON

NURSE
Hope the boys have a nice catch.

Leon blinks three times, closes his eyes. Leon’s flashback starts. (same as previous.)

In quick succession the door slams and the popping of the catch is heard.

As the sounds are heard Leon opens his eyes and gives a quick violent shake of his head. The flashback ends.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- Leon slowly rising from his chair and walking to the window, looking out, seeing and hearing the popping of the ball.

-- One, two, three, four times the ball goes back and forth.

-- Leon turns and walks to his closet reaching onto a shelf and pulling down a plastic bag. Opening the bag and he pulls out a baseball glove.

-- Leon puts the glove on his left hand, balls his right fist and pounds the glove, once, twice, three times. He brings the glove up to his face and inhales deeply.

-- Throwing off his robe he quickly walks to the door. Opening the door, looking left down the hall, then right he sees an EXIT sign.

-- Kicking off his slippers Leon runs down the hall towards the sign.

-- Leon runs past the nurses station. His nurse is speaking with a DOCTOR.

Two male orderlies, MACK and JIM stand behind the desk.

NURSE
Leon?...Mack, Jim get him!

Mack and Jim leap the desk.

DOCTOR
No...follow him. Give him space. Don’t let him hurt himself or anyone. Let’s go.
Leon pushes open the staircase door, flies down two flights of stairs and pushes open the exterior door.

EXT. VETERAN’S HOSPITAL

Leon rushes towards the catch the two orderlies are having. Before the orderlies can react he sticks his glove in front of one of the orderlies’ glove and snags the ball.

Leon awkwardly throws the ball back.

The doctor, the nurse and Mack and Jim arrive and stand to the side.

ORDERLY 1
What the hell!

Leon takes a few steps further away from the orderly.

LEON
Throw.

Orderly Two looks at the doctor, holding his hands out questioning. The doctor shakes his head "YES."

He throws the ball softly to Leon. Leon catches it and throws it back a little more surely.

LEON
Throw.

SERIES OF SHOTS SHOWING LEON BECOMING AN ACROBATIC VACUUM.

LEON
Throw.

A soft toss to Leon.

LEON
Harder.

A harder throw back to Leon. Leon whips the ball back.

LEON
Harder.

A much harder throw to Leon.

LEON
Grounders.

A ground ball right to Leon.
Leon
Not right to me.

The grounders get wider and wider.

A grounder is thrown way to his left, Leon reaches fully extended to nab it, plants on his right foot, jumps and spins as if to throw to where second base would be. At the top of his jump, as he is ready to make the throw, he sees the other orderly.

Leon lands without making the throw. The ball drops from his right hand. He looks in the pocket of the glove. He slowly turns his gloved hand. He looks up at the orderly again. He looks at the wrist band of the glove.

On the wrist band printed he sees "BILLY T. BEAUMONT."

Leon
God, he’s gone!

EXT. MINOR LEAGUE BALL FIELD–DAY

Clyde stands by the railing separating the field from the stands watching batting practice.

Black and white players are scattered across the field.

Coach Driscoll is in the dugout, his back to Clyde facing a black player. Driscoll is in a hitter’s stance, gripping an imaginary bat. He takes a swing.

The black player nods and walks out the dugout towards the batting cage. Driscoll follows him and sees Clyde. He walks towards Clyde.

Driscoll
Clyde Beaumont. It’s good to see you back in the park. It’s been a long time.

Clyde
Coach. Yeah. I’ve been busy.

The men shake hands. Driscoll holds the shake, looking at Clyde.

Driscoll
Come on in the dugout. Let’s talk. Catch up.
CLYDE
Yeah, coach. Sure.

Clyde hops the fence. Both men walk towards the dugout exaggerating a step so not to step on a chalk line.

INT/EXT. DUGOUT
Driscoll and Clyde lean against the top step watching the players warm up.

An errant throw bounces off the grass in front of them. Clyde snags it with his bare hand right.

DRISCOLL
(motioning to an outfielder)
Great arm on the kid. Gets a little goofy wild once in awhile. (to Clyde) Nice catch.

Clyde is rotating the ball in his hand throughout the entire scene.

CLYDE
Yeah.

DRISCOLL
I see it in your face Clyde. You’re looking at this and me and wondering what happened.

Driscoll pauses. The men look at each other.

DRISCOLL
Well, we were wrong Clyde. We all were wrong. I was wrong. They play the game just like we do. They love it like us. They teach it to their kids, just like we do.

Driscoll pauses. Both men stare at warm ups.

DRISCOLL
(looking at Clyde)
This game is all I know. It’s life. And all anyone wants is the same opportunities. It’s okay Clyde.

Driscoll pauses. Both stare at the warm ups. Clyde turns to Driscoll.
CLYDE
I have someone I have to see.

Clyde flips the ball into the air. The coach catches it.

INT.VETERAN’S HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WARD—DAY

Clyde stands in front of a reception desk.

RECEPTIONIST
I’m sorry, Mr. Beaumont. Mr. Turner was released several months ago.

CLYDE
Where did he go?

RECEPTIONIST
I’m sorry, that’s confidential.

CLYDE
It’s important.

RECEPTIONIST
I’m sorry sir, that’s all I can tell you. Is there anything else I can help you with?

CLYDE
No.

Clyde leaves.

INT/EXT CLYDE’S PICK UP

Clyde pulls away from the hospital. The bat clangs in the bed of the pick up.

Clyde drives down a highway towards a bridge. He sees a sign that says "POTOMAC RIVER." He crosses the bridge and pulls to the side.

Clyde gets out, walks to the back of the pick up, reaches into the bed and picks up the bat.

Walking towards the center of the bridge the bat dangles at his side.

Reaching the center of the bridge, Clyde gets into a hitter’s stance and takes a vicious swing and lets the bat fly into the river.
CLYDE
(screaming)
I just don’t understand.

EXT. VIETNAM MEMORIAL—DAY—VERY LIGHT MISTING RAIN

Leon, in full dress uniform, stares at "Billy T. Beaumont" engraved in the black granite. The misting rain gathers in the letters and then rolls out as a tear.

Leon wipes the name and then wipes a tear from his eye.

Clyde Beaumont walks softly up the path to Leon’s back stopping several feet behind Leon.

Leon is unaware of Clyde.

LEON
I’m scared Billy.

ON THE NAME "Billy T. BEAUMONT". The name cries back with more tears.

LEON
I’m scared Billy, because I’m back and now know what I have to do. I have to get back in the game. After you got wasted I didn’t want to. I got crazy. I did whatever drug was available. Heavy. No one would cover my ass in the field. I was going to get myself and whoever was with me killed. I was crazy. I thought I shot up a bunch of kids. Totally flipped.

Leon pauses, wipes his eyes again.

LEON
For ten years I was in a mental hospital. A nut case. Ten years! A zombie. My body was here, but my mind was in Nam, always with you man. We were having catches, turning double plays, hitting and running, taking an extra base...but you were always getting blown away...always...every time.

ON CLYDE BEAUMONT

Clyde’s face is questioning, perplexed, unsure. He is totally silent.
Leon takes a deep breath controlling a couple of sobs.

    LEON
    But I’m home now. Back. I know what you did. You turned the double play even though you knew Charlie was going to take you out. You did it for me, your brother, for the whole team.

Leon spreads his arm encompassing the entire monument.

    LEON
    All you guys did.

Leon pauses, looking up and down the monument.

    LEON
    I know I have to get back to living...for you...for the entire team. Baseball brought me back. I know how you loved the game, how we both do. I have to start on the bench. But I do have to get back into the game. I’m just sorry it won’t be the big leagues with you.

Leon reaches into the plastic bag, pulling out an old baseball glove.

    LEON
    I kept it with me through everything. I wouldn’t let anyone take it. I...I...couldn’t use it. It made me feel like you were still alive, then it brought me back to life, and I wanted to give it to you when I saw you again. For the big leagues.

Leon slips the glove on his left hand and pounds it with his right.

    LEON
    But I know that won’t happen now. So I’ll give it to you here. I don’t need it anymore. I got the game. Baseball. Man we loved it. It’s life.

Some light snow flakes mix in with the rain as Leon starts bending to put the glove at the foot of the granite.
Leon is bent over, hesitating to let go of the glove. Clyde steps up.

Clyde steps up.

Clyde
Soldier, I’ll take that.

Leon straightens back up, the glove still in his hand. He turns towards Clyde.

Clyde
You were speaking with my son.

The two men face each other a couple of feet apart. Leon hesitates, looks deep into Clyde’s face and recognizes Billy.

Leon
You’re Billy’s father.

Clyde
Yes.

He reaches out with the glove to Clyde’s hand and gives him the glove. Clyde gazes down at the glove, tears roll down his face.

Clyde
(looking up from the glove and up and down the monument)
So this is what it was all about. I thought life was all about baseball. But there was so much more.

Leon
Sir, the game was life to us.

Clyde
No son, you guys brought life to the game.

Leon
Yes sir.

Clyde
He made the big leagues, didn’t he?
LEON
Yes sir! He did!

CLYDE
(extend his hand to Leon)
With your help I’d like to get there too.

The rain is all a fine snow now.

FADE OUT:

-THE END-