

LATE MOVEMENT

A Full-length Drama in Six Scenes

BY

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- JEFF** Forty two, haggard and worn as the overused, slightly out of style funereal black suit, white shirt, and dark blue tie he is wearing today. Given his state of mind, he answers more with nods, gestures and pauses than with words.
- DERMOT** Late twenties, English, of the lower echelon, brawling sort, where rare is the sound of an “h” and the final consonant of words (e.g., bleedin’ bastar’). He has spent decades in the States, so portions of his accent and vernacular have become “Americanized.” Many of his expressions are incomprehensible which he knows and enjoys.
- ALLIE** Eighty-three, is slim, fit, and well groomed which belies his age effectively. He is impeccably dressed with an elegance bred more of dignity than wealth with trench coat over a blue sports coat with a red handkerchief in the pocket, white shirt and tan wool slacks.
- IRWIN** The character at various ages ranging from thirties to seventies. His posture, physical stability and voice should reflect the variations in his age. Sometimes he is speaks to the television, sometimes to a person watching besides him, but mostly to himself, alone.

PLACE

A bar on the Lower West Side of Manhattan in the neglected area just above Canal Street

TIME

Late October 2000 and previous times

SET

The bulk of the stage is your standard NY pub: A browned, wooden, L-shaped bar, some stools with torn seat covers, a table with chairs upstage right, a mirrored back bar and full bar complement. To the far left, a tableau that in a few pieces represents the den of a middle class Connecticut home. There is one arabesquely patterned fabric chair, the matching piece of love seat (*not shown*), a small round table, shaded lamp perched on top.

The play is designed to challenge the audience to follow two different conversations or time frames. Irwin is bri-collage of moments. Like a Cubist painting, the goal is to capture the flashes, snapshots of the parts as a means of illuminating the whole.

NOTE: The play contains the lyrics from two songs by The Waterboys: *Whole of the Moon* and *Bang on the Ear*. Let’s hope you can use them.

SCENE 1

The bar area is lit, but empty. IRWIN sits in his chair in the darkened den. We hear the sounds of a baseball game: the crowd, chatter, the crack of a bat, cheers rise and fade)

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER

(voice-over)

There's one on one out in the top of the fifth. The Pirates are leading the Mets 3-2 as we wind down a tough season for both teams. Artinez is at the plate as Dixon takes a short lead off first. Artinez is hitting a healthy 287 for the fleet-of-foot shortstop. Johnson on the mound stares in, checks his signs and sets....Throw over to first, not even close. With Dixon's lead, there's no real reason to throw over. He's no threat to run, having stolen only four bases this season. He's been caught five times. But Johnson's keeping a close eye, he doesn't want a runner in scoring position protecting a one run lead. Johnson sets again—shakes off the sign—looks to first—*aaaand* the pitch....

(the sound of the crack of a bat. The lights come up on IRWIN)

IRWIN

GET ON, GET!....Ach, look at him. Runs like a duck on pavement, all flapping to and fro but going nowhere. Run off that beer belly in the off season!....Too much booze and women during spring training. Pampered ruffians, can't risk getting hurt with the loot they're making.

(he watches a moment, shaking his head scornfully)

IRWIN

Thieves, that's what you are! Stealing, pilfering, that's what it is, if you don't play hard. TAKE HIM OUT, TAKE HIM OUT!—God! Don't they play the game anymore? Break up double plays, advance runners, challenge outfielders. Knock a ball loose once in a while?!

(he waves disdainfully at the screen then looks away. JEFF enters the bar, shaking out an umbrella, carrying a newspaper. Despite his scorn, IRWIN's head tilts back to the television)

JEFF

Dermot?

IRWIN

RUN! RUN!—Ach, this's ridiculous. I can't, I can't watch this.

JEFF

Dermot?!

IRWIN

They're gonna lose, I know it. I know it.— *You're gonna lose this one! Just like in Philadelphia! . . .*It's just like Philadelphia.

JEFF

Cyrice, Dermot, anybody here?!

(JEFF sits at the bar facing IRWIN. He sits on a stool, opens the newspaper to read but only stares out at IRWIN)

IRWIN

They don't know their history. It's a game of intricacy and nuance. Many small conflicts underlying a greater battle. Heroes and villains, one day one, the next the other. A perfect little sample of the world....*RUN! Run, why don't you?!* Oh turn it off. Turn it, I can't watch.

(DERMOT offstage, comes on singing, carrying three cases of beer piled high in his arms over which he cannot see JEFF. DERMOT puts down the cases on the bar)

DERMOT

"I saw the crescent. But you saw the whole of the moon.
The *whole* of the moon. I saw the crescent
But you saw the whole of the moon.
The whole of the moon. I saw the crescent—"

JEFF

Dermot.

DERMOT

Motherfucker!

(DERMOT flies back shocked, feigns a heart attack. pause)

JEFF

I'm sor—

DERMOT

Motherfucker!

(pause)

Goddamn Jeffy, ya scared da corn outta me. You know we ain't opened yet!

JEFF

I'm sorry. You mind if I sit?

DERMOT

What?!

(JEFF intimates towards the newspaper. DERMOT looks confused at first, then nods in understanding. DERMOT unloads the cases, placing the six packs under the bar)

JEFF

I am sorry.

DERMOT

Yeah yeah I hear. But got me seeing flashes wid dat donk. Frights like dat unsettle me gennies. And me gennies need all da settlings dey can....You want some?

JEFF

A glass of orange juice.

DERMOT

Orange juice, good.—Verity?

(JEFF nods and DERMOT gets the drink)

IRWIN

Look at this guy. Suspended by the league six times. Gets clean for a week, pees in a cup, and they say “*Welcome home!* Here’s your millions. Here’s women and your *humvee*, enjoy.”

DERMOT

Jeffy off the vize! Apocalypse or Kingdom, I do believe! And I’m betting on the fronner dare. Take me a polo mark the ‘casion. You cut out or something?....Jeffy?—What’re ya doing here early, you cut out?

JEFF

I took the day off.

IRWIN

There’s always forgiveness if you can hit home runs. I’ve no patience for that. Enough chances, they should throw him out. *Permanently!*

DERMOT

Wish I get me a holly. Sodding thirty-eight straight counting. How come?

JEFF

What’s that?

DERMOT

You took the day?

JEFF

I had something to do for my family.

(DERMOT places the juice, goes back to unpacking the beers)

IRWIN

It’s a *privilege* to play professional baseball. A grace of God.

DERMOT

That can't never be fun, specially wid me fam. Lotta Class A Wool Pigeons, constant grabbing and gibbering. "*Where's you wife'n? Where's dat last pretty little bird who kibbed ya?*" Me aunties nevers give rest. One worst the last, Cyrice worst of all, da Daft Willie. Hardened-heart bunch, not worth two pluggers open....San Bernadandy or whatever they calls dat, wheres you're from?

JEFF

My sisters are there, but we were born here. Connecticut.

DERMOT

Oh yeah? Never figger you for one of dem Sasses. Mazing how little you know bout a soak you been draining all these years.

IRWIN

Don't walk him.

DERMOT

Can never tell wheres you people from. Home, I name the county, town, yer fave bleeding pub, listening to a wanker jab. Here you alls from somewheres else. New York from Califor, Califor New York. And everybody escaping Ohio! What's a matter dat place? Seems every third person skiffed dare. I wonders if there's anybody *left!*

IRWIN

You got him now, don't you walk him. Don't walk the batter before the pitcher.

DERMOT

Any family out here?

(DERMOT looks up, sees JEFF staring absently into space)

Jesus' turds Jeffy, pay 'tention when I'm entertaining! Any family East?

JEFF

My father.

DERMOT

Oh yeah, *patersfamil?* Bring the old coocher in somestime, like to meet 'im. Find out who to blame for your Sorry Sanders. Lazy's always father side. Like baldness and finchers for horses. Da *losing* kind.

IRWIN

He walked him.

DERMOT

Now vanity's Mum's fault. *That* and dissolute. Given your tips, ya cheap knacker, ain't something you'll be accursed soon. But Poppa's to blame for da dilator. Bring 'im in here laddy. We'll have a talking to, straighten you out straight.

JEFF

My father's dead....He died last year.

IRWIN

This's how they treat me. I swear they do it on purpose.

DERMOT

(pause)

Don't mind me. Sodding ass whomper. *You* know. Just making scrab....Something marble on the house?

JEFF

No, thank you Dermot. I'm good.

DERMOT

Okay laddy. Let me know when you red.

(DERMOT corrals the cartons. JEFF drifts away again)

IRWIN

He never runs them, always plays it safe, this guy. 2-0, 2-1, good running counts. We've got no team speed! The Yankees, they've got Henderson. *That's* a lead off hitter.

JEFF

Dermot, could you turn the game on?

DERMOT

What that?

JEFF

There's a baseball game on Channel Nine.

DERMOT

You people and baseball.

(he climbs on a foot stool for the television)

Like fascists and marching, can't get too much. Must have something better to do.

IRWIN

Boy, that kid can run. Maury Wills at his best was never like him. Lou Brock, never. Gets on base and it's like a double or a triple every time.

DERMOT

That it?

JEFF

Yeah.

DERMOT

Watch grass grow wid men standing on it.—Chase the twillies, feckle the bobber, *pleasure* there. But Jeez, let the little man come down off da horse. You follow my mean?

JEFF

Not a word.

DERMOT

(pause, smiling)

All right laddy, I'll let be. *This* time. You want any fore I go?

JEFF

I'm good, thanks.

IRWIN

It's a different era, you can't measure the two.

DERMOT

(moving down the bar)

Don't rob me while I go. Cyrice thinks I'm cheating my bar. Da Daft Willie. Caught cash pouring out you gibbets—he'd *still* think it me behind.

IRWIN

It was different then! Look at what they call a ball player today. Half these guys wouldn't've made a *team* then. They couldn't make the minor leagues!

JEFF

I'll pass. *This* time.

DERMOT

I thank ya for it.

IRWIN

(shaking his head)

It was a different then, it was different, *it was different!*....It was all different then.

(JEFF turns to the paper. Before leaving DERMOT looks at JEFF, then continues off)

SCENE 2

(shortly after the end of the previous scene)

IRWIN

What is it, the sixth? Sixth, seventh?...He'd be coasting by now. Maybe a run, maybe not. *Probably* not.—They never scored that many so he had to be that good. Seven or eight strikeouts. It wouldn't be fair watching them, waving at his pitches, flailing away. *Unhittable!*....He was just unhittable.

(the bar door opens. ALLIE, with as much hustle as a man his age can muster, moves in under dripping wet newspapers. JEFF, lost in revelry, doesn't hear or notice him at first)

ALLIE

Excuse me, are you open?....Excuse me?

JEFF

I'm not the bartender.

(JEFF turns to look, tries to hid it, but becomes star-struck)

IRWIN

I lived by his rotation. It was four days then, not like pitchers today, *every five games*. They only go six innings! Turn it over to a middle reliever, then the set-up man, *then* the closer.

ALLIE

It's coming down out there. I don't have my umbrella and just my luck, the skies open.—Did you say you were open?

JEFF

I didn't. I don't work here.

ALLIE

Oh, yes, I'm sorry.

IRWIN

Four pitchers to do what *one* use to. And they *still* can't get it done!

JEFF

I don't think they'll mind.—But you should ask the bartender, he's downstairs.

ALLIE

Yes, I'll do that. Thank you.

(JEFF watches as ALLIE shakes the wet off his trench coat and moves to a stool mid bar)

IRWIN

It was his job to go nine, it was what you did. He thought like that, a man with a job to do. I lived by his rotation. The days he pitched, I couldn't wait for the first pitch.

ALLIE

This place was nearest by. I saw that sign. It only says "BA," like a sheep. I took a chance.—You're not the proprietor? Right right, you said.

(ALLIE notices JEFF staring so JEFF moves back to his paper. They sit silent. JEFF peeks at ALLIE, who smiles uneasily. DERMOT enters singing, carrying three beer cases)

DERMOT

Deborah broke my heart and I, the willing fool.
I fell for her one summer on the road to Liverpool.
I thought it was forever, but it was over within a year,
But I send to her my love and a bang on the ear.

(he puts the cases down, sees ALLIE, and stops frozen)

They're reproducing....Gotta stop bringing up beer.

ALLIE

I hope you don't mind. It's really coming down and yours was the closest place.

DERMOT

Firm rules and fat women are for Catholics. I got no use for all three.

ALLIE

Thank you, I'm very much obliged.

DERMOT

We'll see to obligations at the end, all bales and bolls tallied. What can I get?

ALLIE

Oh, uh, no, I just stopped in with the rain, I wasn't planning on drinking.

DERMOT

Then you wasn't planning on staying.

ALLIE

I see. It is a tavern for *drinking* customers.

DERMOT

Glad for your vision. Johnny Swift dis one eh Jeffy? Bollocks, *look!* A whole stocker wid all dat vise! *Mazing*. And sin we're being so amy sheltering ya wit this Beambanger....

ALLIE

You sold me.

DERMOT

Heh-heh, had a real conny I would. Now then, I redress. What can I do to ya?

ALLIE

I'm not much of a drinker. It's a rare occasion when I partake. Can you make a Tom Collins?

DERMOT

Honesty in bars, go figger. TomCo it is, Old Time.

(DERMOT makes the drink. When he speaks, he stops, turning completely to the listener, glass and bottle in hand. Resultantly, he makes the slowest drink in town)

IRWIN

What were you thinking out there today? You couldn't've been thinking! Walking six in a row! Three of those kids could barely hold the bat!

DERMOT

Don't get that much anymore. Usually a high school Tinkley if you're bibing those. Collins, Sours, *Kahluahas Creme*. You sure you're of age? Not trying to pull a Hasty on me.

ALLIE

I'm very sure.

DERMOT

Yeah well, a little suspy still. But I'll pledge ya on it.

ALLIE

You're very kind. Pardon my anachronism.

DERMOT

Certainly I will—once I look up what it means.

IRWIN

That little runt can't hit and you walk him on four pitches! He could barely hold the bat. Haven't I told you what he was like?! No matter the score, no matter the situation!

DERMOT

Did ya hear this Jeffy? We got a sub-rosy inspect coming. Cyrice served some unders, got wrote up. Seems she's da spring of a plenpotent.

IRWIN

He kept control! I've told you, I've told you countless times! GODDAMN IT!

(IRWIN turns away, slowly recedes into a cold countenance)

JEFF

No, I didn't hear.

DERMOT

Yeah last Tuesday 'fore. Pretty little fill, fifteen going on divorce. Trowing back Tequila like a border breaker.

(to ALLIE)

Not the Liquor Inspector you? It's entrapment if you don't tell me when I ask straight. I saws dat on a Law and Order rerun. L&O knows. L&O speak da Gospel.

ALLIE

I'm not an Inspector, I'm just getting out of the rain.

DERMOT

Likely line dat! Just what a Spector'd say!

ALLIE

I uh—I'm just, I'm waiting for my son.

JEFF

Your son?

DERMOT

(pause)

Okay, but it won't water if you are. L&O hath spoken.

IRWIN

When my father came here to America, he couldn't speak a word of English. He was nineteen and couldn't say "yes" or "no" to save his life. He didn't have an in but he had smarts alright.

DERMOT

Only clarifying for da Daft Willie, he's da Fin dat served, Dumb Diller. Should've seen this chippie Jeff. Drink *Inspector* here under da belly widout sweat.

IRWIN

Within two years of Ellis Island, there wasn't a trace of accent. Not a “v”, not “f”, not a “pf” where it didn't belong. German protestant work ethic in action. *That* he had in spades.

DERMOT

Vise some people drink. I makes ‘em, I don’t drink ‘em. Jeffy dare downs red veen.

ALLIE

A man of distinction.

DERMOT

Ha! A man o’ *extinction*. Buy a whole vine-yard for da square pound Cyrice cases it.

IRWIN

What it takes to make that happen. That effort, that determination. Rock hard, clear will power....Almost nothing could beat down my father.—Tough little kraut he was.

(DERMOT brings over ALLIE’s drink and places it before ALLIE, dropping in a cherry)

DERMOT

That’ll top it. Almost too pretty to drink. But you’ll make an achronism for me, woncha?

(DERMOT winks, stands nearby waiting for the impost as ALLIE, unaware, smiles awkwardly tries the drink)

ALLIE

Quite tasty.

DERMOT

Five dollars.

ALLIE

Oh. Yes, I’m sorry.

DERMOT

Not free here you understand. Haves to make a living, sporting six kids all. And me mum-in-law. Redding stepper, a *schnauzer* too.

ALLIE

No, of course not. My Aunt Fannie too, I presume.

DERMOT

Yeah, her *too* proolly, da dumb slut!

(ALLIE hands him a fifty and DERMOT moves for the cash register as the phone rings)

Proolly should be free what with we make you drink in.

IRWIN

It's not—don't worry, it doesn't matter. It's not important.

DERMOT

(into the phone)

Van Damm....What'd'ya think, waiting clients....Dey come in, Jeffy and some *ol'* geeze outta da rain....Drinking I spect. We *are* a bar, ya Daft Willie.

IRWIN

I can't, I uh, I'm watching, the game is on. I—*GO GO! Go goddamn it!*

DERMOT

No, I haven't....Because I haven't....I said I will!

IRWIN

Your mother, your mother will—I'm just....

DERMOT

Oh come off Cyrice! Ya think I'm kibbing ya, fire me....Not that I don't think you won't, I just don't think you will.

IRWIN

I'm watching the game. I can't uh, your, where is....

DERMOT

You know where to come do it. Ain't hard to find, I'm always behind the bar!

(DERMOT hangs up, lays ALLIE's change on the bar, and goes back to the beer cases)

IRWIN

I'm watching the—I'm watch, I'M WATCHING THE GAME! I'M WATCHING!

DERMOT

(pause)

I'm cheating da dodgy Shif?! Like I'd desperate pinches from dis low-rent kip!

JEFF

Why's he think that?

DERMOT

Who can spleen da workings a dat mind?! Wid his Schizing and paramentalling. Dilly flowers and Moonbunchers left right, mazing he keeps his shoes tied. *You* know!

JEFF

I do.

DERMOT

Lines up the bottles when he leaves! Don't I sell?! Clucks here all bibing till noon day!

JEFF

You're cheating him.

DERMOT

Of course I'm cheating 'im!....Not the way he thinks! Not stealing pifle! Crop low to pinch a Glenny? Damn good goddamn for bottle price!

JEFF

He's just trying to get to you.

DERMOT

And I ain't baiting!

(DERMOT piles the empty boxes, stops, then ashamed)

But condiments.—Ketchup, steak sauce.—And Johnny Pap. Quiver a few cord montly. *That'll* teach his ass. *Mine too* to think. Sandpaper da skinflint buys, all grooves a cement. He questions *my* integrity!....Doing you milling soaks a favor wit da lift.

JEFF

Don't cross swords in our honor.

(DERMOT moves down the bar with the empty boxes)

DERMOT

All sovereign, all the same says the croak. I'm going back downstairs. You two all right?

ALLIE

Yes, thank you, I'm fine.

IRWIN

He wouldn't talk to anybody on the days he got the ball. He was superstitious. Not to reporters or his teammates. Not even to his wife!

DERMOT

I come back, 'spect to see only you two muggers.

ALLIE

We'll bar the door.

DERMOT

That's a good Inspector. If you see me absence as a lifting opportunity—feel free. Compliments a Cyrice.

(DERMOT leaves, humming. ALLIE looks outside the window)

IRWIN

He wasn't being arrogant or rude or anything like that, though some thought so. But it wasn't, *he* wasn't like that.—He had this focus, this incredible, deep....

JEFF

Windows open on your car?

ALLIE

No no.—No, I'm supposed to meet my son, he works down here. I don't want to be late. I used to always be.—I try not to be anymore.

JEFF

I'm sure you won't be.

(they smile awkwardly again and JEFF drifts back to his paper. ALLIE's gaze eventually drifts to the television. JEFF notices)

IRWIN

A little hitch in the knee on his off leg. The ball spinning, twisting in his hand at his back. He'd change signs with the slightest flick of the head. Just a twitch, a facial tick.

JEFF

Follow it much?

ALLIE

Hm? Oh, no, not really. Just seeing, you know, the teams.

JEFF

I used to. Quite a bit actually.—But these players today, all hotshots playing for themselves, playing for the money, kind of turned me off.

IRWIN

Then he'd pull back with this long step. Into the well with the stride, long, elongated to the plate. The firm foot landing, planting, then the arm, sling-shot towards the plate.

JEFF

It's a lot of money that guy makes for that. *All* of them. It's amazing what they believe one man's worth.

ALLIE

It is.

IRWIN

Faith, *belief*, written on his face like fact. And you knew.—They way you used to know things when you were very young. When you were sure and safe....I wouldn't miss him for anything in the world.

JEFF

Makes you wonder what Mayes or Aaron'd be worth today. They'd be calling them *partners*.

ALLIE

They couldn't afford them.

JEFF

They could buy *Brazil!*

ALLIE

(chuckling)

Yes, probably. If they wanted, I believe so.

JEFF

Yeah....Lot of money to play a *child's* game.—But he's a great ball player. Gold glover, hit for power and average. *Steals* bases.

ALLIE

A complete player.

JEFF

Back when, they *all* use to be.

ALLIE

It does seem like many more were.

JEFF

Great ball players, black and white. And the Hispanic players? Oliva and Cepeda. *Clemente*.

ALLIE

Oh yes, those were some ballplayers. It made the game better.

JEFF

And they were gentlemen too. Family men, all.

ALLIE

It was the way back then.

IRWIN

Did I tell you about the time I met him?

JEFF

(pause)

Great men, great ballplayers. Makes you miss those days.

IRWIN

Met, saw, what's the difference? I'll tell you again, it's good for you.

JEFF

Some real terrors at the plate.

IRWIN

He was at the produce counter at the Schwegmeyer's. I saw him there, just waiting for something. He wasn't a big man, not like I expected. He was tall, he *was*—but I always thought that he would be bigger. More size, more—dimension.

JEFF

They knew how to hit then, how to work a pitcher, get to the right counts. Look for their pitch, drive it where it came.

IRWIN

He had the counter slip in his hand. I was standing by the pickle barrel....He was just waiting there like anyone else. Like *everyone*.

JEFF

A regular Murderer's Row. Matthews and Snyder and Mantle.

ALLIE

Some incredible hitters.

JEFF

Musial and Hodges. *Billy Williams!* Hall of Famers all. Legendary. Some of the greatest hitters that ever played the game.

ALLIE

Sure.

JEFF

Except against you.

IRWIN

Nobody recognized him, not the counterman or the other customers. Without his uniform, without a baseball diamond, on a mound, in a stadium....

JEFF

They were never too much against you.

ALLIE

Against me too.

IRWIN

I watched him. I watched him a long time.—When he got what he ordered, he grab it in his hands, those *giant* hands—and he walked away right by me. He smiled and I nodded....I nodded, I didn't speak.

(JEFF and ALLIE stare at each other then back to the game)

SCENE 3

(immediate after the previous scene. ALLIE and JEFF sit facing each other. DERMOT comes on, singing, carrying another case of beer)

DERMOT

Laura was my first love, when I first was in a band.
I can still see her there, stirring chicken soup.
I thought it was forever but it was over within a year
But I send to her my love and a bang on the ear.

(he places the case on the bar, then jams the beers into ice)

You two making nice bluff, eh? Peach. Cyrice don't believe we can draw in the day. Always tell 'im there's rum whinnies 'round to make whiley.

(to ALLIE)

Sorry laddy.

ALLIE

No, of course.

DERMOT

Other rum whinnies, not you. *Heh*, Jeffy know, don't mean nothing by. 'Cept against Cyrice. Cyrice I mean.

(DERMOT notices the two of them silent looking at each other)

What's all secretarian here? You guys make a Bum Run?

ALLIE

Of course not.

DERMOT

Makes me no matter. Daft Willie wouldn't know. Wouldn't know a good idea from arse air.

ALLIE

What is a Daft Willie?

DERMOT

You don't know that one? Eh Jeffy, a new listener for me catches.

JEFF

Lucky you.

DERMOT

Lucky 'im, they enlighten! Pay attention now, you gotta *glean* da subtle. Daft Willie's when a wanker's *so* stupid, even though he's the biggest Feck Wally trew da field, ya *still* need to comment on his dumb. A Daft Willie. Eh? You see?

ALLIE

Yes. Not very friendly.

JEFF

Or subtle.

DERMOT

Fact dat. But there ain't no away ascribing Cyrice. He was born that way, that way he dee.

JEFF

You should hear what Cyrice has to say about you.

DERMOT

Don't care what dat wank think! Lucky I'm willing this Dinkwaller! Tow faced ant-pisser—

JEFF

Dermot.

DERMOT

Blames *me* for Inspector here! Bleeding fucking filcher's da dumb runny pouring. Cuntly little snat—

JEFF

Dermot!

DERMOT

For fuck's sake Jeffy, what?!

(they stare threateningly at each other)

ALLIE

Excuse me, do you have the time?....Excuse me—

DERMOT

What?

ALLIE

Do you know what time it is?

DERMOT

Time?....Three clucks plus o' da clock dere.

ALLIE

Oh, yes, I didn't see that there. Yes, three-twenty. Thank you.

DERMOT

(to JEFF, taunting)

You spilling some?

(pause, no response)

Pfff, Jeffy, what would you.

(moving down the bar towards ALLIE)

Gotta see Inspector. All eyes behind the cranes, you know. Keeps you Specting job dat way.

ALLIE

Yes. I missed my mark some. Are the facilities nearby?

DERMOT

Sure Inspector, Johnny's down dat way. Second door, light's outside left.

(ALLIE gets up to leave and moves off)

IRWIN

Look at him, will you?...No fear, never any.

DERMOT

And beware the pap Inspector! Tears at ya Privies!

(ALLIE turns, smiles embarrassed, continues on)

IRWIN

On the mound, in charge. To see him stand there and take on all comers, anyone with the guts to dig in and take their swings, their *misses!*...To see him pitch, it was a human marvel to me.

DERMOT

Decent old sod, eh? Not much a biber, but a likely straight sile mostly, hey?

JEFF

You shouldn't talk that way in front of him.

DERMOT

Why the hell, he royalty of something?

JEFF

Some people thought so.

DERMOT

This ancient manger herein?

JEFF

People weren't always the age you meet them at Dermot.

DERMOT

You were. Ya been fitty ya whole life.

JEFF

(pause)

He was a pitcher, perhaps the greatest. And he was much admired for the gentleman he was. For what he stood for.—At least my father thought so, whatever that's worth.

DERMOT

Well, since it was your father....But I ain't seen him shilling briefs and beer. Itn't that the reward here for a job well done?

JEFF

He disappeared from the spotlight....At some point after his career ended.

IRWIN

My father wasn't a loafer, not always. Before the depression, before the wipe-out. Sold ties down on Elizabeth Street. Started as a salesboy, worked his way up. Had a little shop of his own eventually. All silk, imported from China after the Boxer rebellion.

JEFF

Could you watch how you handle him?

DERMOT

How's that? I don't quite—

JEFF

You *know* what I mean.

IRWIN

People from the neighborhood would come by our home to see the merchandise. Neighbors, families on the street. The parents of kids from my school. Some nights it seemed the whole neighborhood went through our living room.

DERMOT

Sure Jeffy, no pro. Got a sensor. You'll see, real cute wid 'im. Fear little.

JEFF

I'd appreciate it.

(the phone rings. DERMOT moves to answer it)

IRWIN

My father'd lay out ties all around the living room and they'd pick one for church on Sundays or maybe to be buried in....I thought that was real special, a big shot on the block.

DERMOT

Van Damm Street....Ah bolls, don't ya have a life....Ain't gonna toss 'em when dey's paying!

(to JEFF whispered)

Old soak's good?

(JEFF nods)

IRWIN

But then there were ties everywhere. It was 1930, what did I understand. You can't sell them if no one has got money to buy them. Ties in the living room, ties on the bed, in the closets and bath. Piles and boxes piling up. All the colors of fabric like a kaleidoscope.

DERMOT

He keeps asking queers. "Serve underage honey, would ya lad? If she promised windburn. Trade some vize for dat."

(whispered to JEFF)

Prolly would....Listen Cy, gotta skip now. Few Privy school girls just come to ped sweets.

Maybs I can barter for garter.

(he hangs up)

Something wrong dat boy Jeffy. He'll end in padding, if he ends anywheres.

(ALLIE returns from the bathroom)

Find everything okay in there sir? Everything to your like?

ALLIE

Yes fine, thank you.

DERMOT

That's a good laddy. And the light too? Worried 'bout the torch.

ALLIE

Found it right away.

DERMOT

Splendid sir, splendid. Yeah sure, you're still a nimble Ginny.

IRWIN

He'd always been stern, that European Hussars stern, even when I was very young. But the times and the business—and it all got so messed up. And with his way....

ALLIE

And I see what you mean about that paper in there.

DERMOT

Do you? Oh that's Scot. Lay down a big ol' roll? Real blood trucker?—Comment Jeff?

ALLIE

(pause)

You're out of hand towels.

DERMOT

(pause)

Pardon for the inconvenience Inspector. Thank for the notice. You *see!* Da Daft Willie so cheap and daft, can't keep Johnny in pap widout. I'm da glue, da wherewith dat gigs!

(DERMOT moves to end of the bar, pulls out a cardboard box, grabs a stack of towels out of it. He takes another pile, pulls a backpack from under the bar and puts them in it)

IRWIN

I don't remember when he hit me the first time. I must've done something to deserve it. But it became regular quick. First there was an excuse, garbage wasn't taken out or newspapers weren't picked up.—Then doors are opened wrong, windows closed *inappropriately*.

(DERMOT looks up sheepishly at ALLIE and JEFF who are watching his theft)

DERMOT

I'm allowed to skiff dese.

ALLIE

Of course.

JEFF

Sure.

DERMOT

I am. Cyrice knows, he does.

(facing disbelieving stares)

You two muggers—Cyrice's support staff.

JEFF

Hardly.

(he puts away his backpack, the towel box and moves to make another Tom Collins)

IRWIN

Any good reason. But eventually any good reason becomes any reason—until finally there's no need for any reason at all....I *don't* remember when it started exactly....I remember it hurt.

DERMOT

Don't like baseball much meeself. So damned slow, drives me to da clockers. Fellas scratch and play with dey's bollocks all time. They all haves the Syph? Pulling, straight placing like a burlesquerie. Not fit for garteners.

JEFF

Baseball's a beautiful game for *educated* viewers.

DERMOT

Heh-heh, Jeffy to the rescue. Right on cue.

ALLIE

I'm afraid I agree.

DERMOT

Yes I'm sure, you vested all.

JEFF

A game of intricacy and nuance.—Many small conflicts underlying a greater war.—Heroes and villains, and one moment one of those coats, the next moment the other.

DERMOT

Listen to da Bard here. Orotate orotator!

JEFF

It's not for the short-attentioned.

DERMOT

Uh what's dat bloke? Forgots what you was telling. Me mind can't keep up.

JEFF

(smiling)

Dermot.

DERMOT

Eh well, men playing *balls* and *long stick*—makes me queasy bout da gills. Hetero-sapens man ya understand. Joyed playing?

ALLIE

Yes I did.

DERMOT

That makes the world. Some like blondes, some brunes. I only likes the spreads. Know my mean? Yeah you do. Still quite the killer Inspector, driving all da pretty doties ya way.

(he places the drink in front of ALLIE)

ALLIE

No I'm sorry, I didn't want uh—

DERMOT

Cheers laddy, cheers. A right true honor having you herein.

(with a cautious look at JEFF, he smiles and nods)

Hey don't make that much of it Inspector, not like I know what goes in a Tom Collins.

(DERMOT heads towards the bathroom singing)

Make yourselves home laddies, got some *relieving* to do. No *balling* while I gone.

(he leaves, grabs the paper towels as he goes)

The home I made with Bella became a house of pain

We weathered it together, unbound by ball and chain

It started up in Fife, it ended up in tears

But I send to her my love and a bang on the ear.

(JEFF and ALLIE smile, shake their heads after he has gone)

IRWIN

The rules of a game. A child's game. It's comforting, the permanence. Routine, structure.

Because, that's all. *Because* is enough.

ALLIE

He's likes to get to people.

JEFF

I'm terribly sorry. It's his calling. He's *still* fighting the Revolutionary War—one *malapropism* at a time!

ALLIE

I thought it was me!

JEFF

You begin to understand him after awhile. There's *madness* to his madness. I just wish he knew his place better.

ALLIE

Oh, he's all right. I've known worse.

IRWIN

Rules are important. They keep things understandable, they keep them simple. Today wear red, tomorrow believe blue. The next day the sky will be green. And it will be. You'll see it, you'll believe it so.—It's green because the rules tell it so.

JEFF

He only said those things because of you. A game's on every night in here.

ALLIE

We can't get mad at someone who doesn't understand the beauty of our game.

JEFF

Why can't we? I think we can.

IRWIN

There's nothing so important as the rules we make for ourselves. Our existence assured if for no other reason than continuing them. When things, your world....The rules say, "*Follow this*"—and you do.

ALLIE

I like him actually. He's very entertaining really.

JEFF

A little too much so.

ALLIE

I'd hate to be this Cyrice fellow.

JEFF

Well, you know how family can be. They're father and son, him and the one on the phone.

ALLIE

No.

JEFF

This's a thing they do to entertain the customers. Or at least I thought it was. The *Bickering Britons*, they've been written up in papers. It's nice to know it isn't an act.

ALLIE

No, it appears it goes on without an audience.

(an awkward pause. Their eyes drift to the television. ALLIE notices JEFF watching him)

JEFF

I'm sure you don't want to talk baseball.

ALLIE

No it's all right—

JEFF

I'll understand, I will—

ALLIE

That's all right, it's all right.—Thank you for asking.—I miss talking it actually. Discussing, even arguing, the way we do over silly things. Nobody thinks to do that with me anymore. People are always—and I guess I am too....But I steal a look at the papers, and catch a game on television from time to time. If there's somebody playing I'd like to see.

JEFF

Ever catch a game at a park?

ALLIE

(pause)

I can't go to the park.—Can't quite seem to bring myself to do that.

JEFF

(pause)

The Subway Series! Wasn't that something? Not like the old days, I imagine.

ALLIE

The Yankees won! It was just like the old days.

JEFF

Yes, a Met fan myself. It's a badge of honor, suffering through all these championships.

ALLIE

Ever thought of switching teams?

JEFF

I'm not a fair weather fan. It's our *losing* that defines us. And I can't root for both teams. I want my team to win and the other team to lose. *Badly!*

ALLIE

Oh no, one of those! *Philosophical*. I know the type. *You* people who make the rivalries.

JEFF

My father's son. Brooklyn in the fifties. When you guys moved west, he almost died.

ALLIE

So many did.

JEFF

He wouldn't *allow* me to be Yankee fan. *On principal!* A Met fan he could live with. A *homicidal killer* he could live with!—But a Yankee's fan....

ALLIE

Never!

(ALLIE laughs heartily, for the first time becoming ebullient, remaining so throughout. As a result, he doesn't notice JEFF grow noticeably grim. IRWIN begins pacing the living room)

IRWIN

Listen to me. I'm telling you this, you'll do *exactly* what I want. There are rules and you follow them.

ALLIE

I've met *many* of you. It was even more common in my day. The fans, sure, you fans. But never between us ball players. There was a rivalry between the lines, it was fierce there. But *respect!* There was always that.

IRWIN

I don't care! You can play anything, you can play everything, but you *will* play baseball.

ALLIE

We'd see them around town, restaurants, clubs. Our wives knew each other. We all lived here year round then.

JEFF

I know.

ALLIE

We weren't *paid* enough to live anywhere else. Speak about cheapskates, oh my, the owners then. Not like today. We developed a relationship with our community. It was our home too. We weren't just ballplayers, we were your neighbors. We didn't need protection.

(JEFF turns away cold. ALLIE becomes more animated, unaffected by JEFF's shift)

IRWIN

You will play it because! Because I said so, that's enough!

ALLIE

They would bring us into their homes, ask us to weddings and births. We were welcome, we were family.

JEFF

Yes—

IRWIN

It's enough!

ALLIE

We were a piece of their heart, a piece of their identity, the fabric on which lives revolved—

JEFF
YES I KNOW!

IRWIN
ENOUGH! ENOUGH! ENOUGH!

(long pause. ALLIE is silent. IRWIN settles slowly in his chair)

JEFF
I'm sorry. My father, he uh....he was always lamenting the state of the modern game.

ALLIE
Yes, of course....How is your father?
(JEFF looks solemnly at ALLIE who understands)

Most of my fans were—I always assume....

JEFF
That's all right. *I'm* sorry. My father....my father. Yeah.

IRWIN
Rules change. They change as fast as you learn them, as fast as you can learn....So you trade off for what hurts least....And lines are not crossed and deeds are not repeated. And the sins of the father are not visited on the son.

ALLIE
You grew up with a lot of baseball.

JEFF
265 wins. 2,759 career strikeouts. 9.8 strikeouts per nine innings....1.91 post-season ERA. Perfect in the World Series. Perfect when it mattered most.

IRWIN
Yet gentlemen beyond his skills.

JEFF
For incredible five seasons—unhittable.

ALLIE

(pause)

It was a special time.

JEFF

We have plenty of love for our heroes. What would we do if we couldn't give it to them....God, the questions I want to ask you. Games and pitches. What you're thinking, why you did what you did? The 3-2 curve to Killebrew, the brush back against Carew? *Philadelphia!* My god, the playoff game in Philadelphia!

ALLIE

It's gotten cloudy over the years, I'm not really sure it's all still in there. It's the first thing that goes they say and believe them, *it's true*.

IRWIN

And now, it's as if it didn't happen. They don't write, they don't tell the stories.

ALLIE

Gets to a point you're not sure you did all those things, it's grown so in your imagination. And the line between the truth and wishing something were true becomes very difficult to see.

JEFF

Have no fear—you did them....You did them all.

IRWIN

When all else failed, when everything else was wrong—there was him....There'll never be another like him.

ALLIE

(pause)

What time is it? I don't mean to....I don't want to be late.

SCENE 4

*(maybe fifteen minutes later, everything same as previous scene.
JEFF and ALLIE sit closer together and actually seem in a
closer esprit de corps)*

ANNOUNCER

Here we are folks, it's another Old Timer's Day without Allie Miller, unquestionably the greatest player in the history of this proud franchise. The fans don't seem to notice but how could they not. Their favorite not here again on a day dedicated to the greats this organization has fielded. I don't mind telling you, it doesn't seem right. It's been twelve long years since he's graced this field, his presence lending grandeur to the day. The lines are still white and straight, and the sun shines the same, bright and true, but there's something missing and you can feel it in the clear pristine air. How long it will last, will it ever end, no one knows. But this absence, this being without him, we all sure hope it does end soon.

*(DERMOT comes in from the back room walking bow-legged.
He moves behind the bar, eventually cleaning with a rag)*

DERMOT

Damn skinflint. Damaged permanent working here. Walking like I took in a twelve gram! Bloody paper. I mean dat litralee! Never won a battle wid it yet.

JEFF

And Baltimore in '57?

ALLIE

They were all helping me out that day.

DERMOT

What that, lover's road trip? Three long-leggy sweeteners in Cincy hey?

ALLIE

I was a married man.

DERMOT

So only two den?

JEFF

On August 3rd 1957, he struck out 18 of 27 batters, throwing the last of his three career no-hitters. It was the most strikeouts in a game at that time. Not anymore.

ALLIE

That's what records are for, something to shoot at, something for somebody to someday pass.

JEFF

Most say it was the greatest game ever pitched. Did you know it warming up, did you feel it?

ALLIE

I could never tell. Sometimes I had it in the bullpen but when I got to the mound, nothing. Other times, there'd be nothing warming-up and I'd go out expecting to struggle and then *wow*.... You never really know till you're actually calling on your body to do what it can. Most times you don't have your best stuff, sixty, seventy percent of the time. But when it's there, when you have it all, control, command, *pop!*....

JEFF

And the game in Boston in '59, that showdown?

ALLIE

The opener with Billings? Oh well, that was more a fluke thing than anything else.

DERMOT

There's no flukes Inspector, only plans ya mind don't tell about.

(ALLIE and JEFF look at DERMOT stunned)

What? I'm strict Jungian.

JEFF

It's still a record.

ALLIE

Not one I'm most proudest of.

DERMOT

Sawbucker, eh?

JEFF

Tell him.

ALLIE

He doesn't want to hear a baseball story.

DERMOT

Sure I do, don't say. Keeps da drudge fanning when you guys blab for change.

ALLIE

Well it was, well *you* know, opening day in Boston, they had a *great* team that year. It's threatening rain with these big columns of clouds so we're all hustling to get the game in. It's a struggling day, I walked four in the first six innings. I always started slow each year.

JEFF

(*to DERMOT*)

He won seven straight Opening Day games.

ALLIE

And I'm fighting it so it's a good thing I've a pretty good move to first.

JEFF

You had the greatest move a right-hander ever had.

ALLIE

Oh I don't know, there were others. Early Wynn had a good move. Jim Kaat had a good one.

JEFF

Yes. They had great moves.—You were the best.

DERMOT

Nuff smooch 'ere!

ALLIE

In the second, Baker walked on a three-two fastball that *wasn't* outside. Pelusso, the ump, missed the call. He had arthritic knees, he never saw the outside corner. You had to work the inside with him. He wasn't a bad ump mind you, he just never gave the outside.

JEFF

High in tight, low and away. And it can never be too tight!

ALLIE

Right, yes. Baker inches out past the cut, where the grass grows in the infield, that tells me he's looking for an extra step. He'd lost a few with the years and needed an edge.

JEFF

On the third pitch you wheeled. He never even got back to the bag. Just a cloud of dust.

DERMOT

A cluster!

JEFF

And then Neims in the third. Another walk.

ALLIE

Yes well, ol' Manny was a sad case. He tipped off when he was gonna run by flicking his hand off his lead leg. Everybody in the league knew it. His own manager was always yelling at him from their dugout, "Manny you're telegraphing it!" trying to embarrass him out of it.

JEFF

He still holds the record for being picked off more than any other player.

ALLIE

He should! I never saw anything like it. And it was a bad count too! Oh and two, one and two, I can't remember exactly but he's out there flicking away....

JEFF

Number two that game.

DERMOT

You see me dunder 'ere?

ALLIE

My first baseman Plowden made a great throw to second, caught him in a run-down.

JEFF

There was only a play at second because Plowden missed him at the base. He was always slow with the slap tag.

ALLIE

Perhaps a little. But he covered the line well in the late innings and that's a blessing.

JEFF

In the fifth, Billings hits a squib down the third base line that just sticks there on string.

ALLIE

Stops dead on the line fair. All you see are the red stitches sticking out against the white.

JEFF

Billings was the greatest base stealer of his day.

ALLIE

He never got the credit, but he was as good as anybody. Lou Brock, Ricky Henderson.

IRWIN

(fondly)

Henderson.

JEFF

And he's dancing off first the way he always did.

ALLIE

He could intimidate a pitcher with that dance. Like a chicken, bobbing and ducking.

JEFF

He's waiting for his count and Kiellor's at the plate trying to protect him.

IRWIN

Don't give him a chance.

ALLIE

He was a great two hitter, Billings benefited from him.

JEFF

Oh-and-one, he doesn't go. One-and-one he doesn't go.

IRWIN

He's dancing.

ALLIE

Billings won't go if it's a wrong time. He's disciplined, that's what made him great.

JEFF

He's gotta get Kiellor out before he works him to a good running count. The crowd's going crazy. They know Billings's gonna run, they know you're going after him.

ALLIE

You couldn't hear yourself think.

IRWIN

Go after him now!

JEFF

You're looking over before each pitch. Staring hard, but not throwing over.

ALLIE

He knew I was watching.

JEFF

And he's dancing there with that lead.

IRWIN

Two-and-two, he likes two and two.

ALLIE

I knew his pitch, when he liked to run.

JEFF

Kiellor lays off the outside curve then fouls off another fastball.

ALLIE

It was a good pitch, choked him in on the hands. Don't get it inside enough, he'll pull it through the gap into left with the second baseman cheating to cover the double play.

JEFF

It's his count.

IRWIN

Two balls and two strikes.

JEFF

Allie peers in hard at Aggie, the catcher, who runs the signals a second time.

ALLIE

I wasn't even looking the first.

JEFF

You flick to run them a third time.

ALLIE

I wanted Billings thinking I was going home.

IRWIN

He's never thrown over!

JEFF

And it's all him and the Billings, him and Billings.

ALLIE

Sometimes you can lull them.

IRWIN

A cat toying with his mouse.

JEFF

He nods and sets. The ball's twirling in his hand behind his back.

ALLIE

The runners get so caught up watching, they forget what they're seeing.

IRWIN

Billings's dancing!

ALLIE

I can feel him.

JEFF

And then the ball stops twirling in Allie's hand. And he waits.

ALLIE

Yes.

JEFF

And he waits, just fixed there.

ALLIE

It was a long time.

IRWIN

They're screaming!

JEFF

Billings's dancing! The crowd's screaming!

ALLIE

I can feel him.

JEFF

And Allie wheels—

IRWIN

He's turns and POW!

JEFF

And POW!

IRWIN

HE GOT HIM! Ha ha, he got him, he got him! Look at that will you! Look at that!

JEFF

(pause)

He threw a strike to first and Plowden swept the tag quick. It was close, it was. Billings got back fast, he only hesitated a millisecond.

IRWIN

But he was out.

JEFF

No rundown this time.

ALLIE

No, not that time.

IRWIN

God, it was fast.—He was just so fast.

JEFF

Three pick-offs in three innings....*That's* still a record.

ALLIE

Everyone said he was the best. I'd faced him twice before but either he never got on or never had an open base to run to.—I wanted to take him on. *He* wanted it too.

IRWIN

Challenges. To *be* challenged, to have faced them.

ALLIE

The gamers always want the best. You're not a ballplayer real and true, if when the game's on the line you don't want the best against you. I'll give him credit, he knew it too. As I walked off the mound we passed each other. He was going to his dugout and I was going to mine, and he says low so only I can hear—"Yes sir. Yes....Next time though."

DERMOT

(pause)

Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser.

ALLIE

Not always.

DERMOT

Always Inspector. Always and f'ever.

(DERMOT moves off to wipe down the bar)

JEFF

It was an incredible display, one for the ages.

ALLIE

I can't believe you remember it, it was an awful long time ago.

JEFF

I don't.—I wasn't even born yet....I tried to imitate your move in my little league games. You should've seen me standing there like you. The hip, the foot on the rubber.

(JEFF stands and takes the position)

Ball in my hand twirling, I had it all. It was pathetic. It was twenty years past you. Nobody knew what the hell I was doing.

ALLIE

Oh for heaven's sake. I don't believe it.

JEFF

My father taught me. *Drilled* it into me really.

IRWIN

You got to turn it out! The front leg! You gotta turn it out more!

ALLIE

That's not quite it. With the leg, the front leg, the foot turned out more towards the plate.

JEFF

Like this?

IRWIN

It's bent more!

ALLIE

Yeah, like that, kind of. But with the back leg bending more.

JEFF

This one, here?

IRWIN

Against the rubber! It's gotta be against the rubber!

ALLIE

Back further. Back against—

JEFF

Here?

DERMOT

Ya look like ya taking a crap.

IRWIN

No!

ALLIE

No, not real—

JEFF

This?

IRWIN

No! No!

ALLIE

Here, let me—let me see if....

DERMOT

Don't hurt yourself Inspector.

(ALLIE assumes the position, then moves slowly through the motion. JEFF watches in awe)

ALLIE

You have to pivot quick so you set up with this leg turned in bearing weight. The back leg's bent and you can turn after the pivot. Step over—pivot—release. Step over, pivot, release.

IRWIN

You can't follow the simplest of directions. It's easy! It's simple! Listen and follow!

JEFF

(pause)

You've still got it.

ALLIE

Oh now, not really, no.

JEFF

No you do, you do, I can see it. You're still—it's incredible.

ALLIE

That's very kind of you to say.

JEFF

Let me see what it was like.

ALLIE

Pardon?

JEFF

Let me, let....Dermot—Dermot come around here.

DERMOT

What's this now?

ALLIE

I don't think—

JEFF

Dermot come here for a second.

(to ALLIE)

Do you mind?

ALLIE

It's not really—

JEFF

Just for a second, it'll only—Dermot, be the first baseman.

(to ALLIE)

You don't mind. Just to see it, what it was like.

DERMOT

Do I have to do this?

JEFF

Yes. Come here.

ALLIE

You want to do this here?

JEFF

Yeah yeah here, right here, it'll be fine.

DERMOT

I don't know what the knocker I'm doing.

JEFF

You're used to that.

DERMOT

Blather more, you want my help.

JEFF

I'm *kidding*. Don't worry, it doesn't matter, you don't have to do anything.

(to ALLIE)

Let's see if you still got it, if you can feel which way I'm going.

ALLIE

I'm not sure I'm up to it.

JEFF

It's a feeling you said. Right? Lull me. *Feel* me. You handled Billings, you handled the best. I'm an amateur, a bush leaguer!

ALLIE

It'll be a poor representation.

JEFF

Oh I know, I'm sure. Sure, once you get to your age.

ALLIE

It's not about—

JEFF

You don't have much left, it's natural to lose it. I don't expect much.

ALLIE

You just lead there.

(to DERMOT)

Hold him on.

JEFF

Hm mm, yes. Dermot, you're the first baseman, you're holding me on.

(ALLIE moves to his position as DERMOT and JEFF to theirs)

DERMOT

What do I do, do I get down?

JEFF

No, you just stand there with your hand out, give him a target.

(JEFF imitates a first baseman awaiting a pickoff. DERMOT follows suit)

Yeah like that. Beat the mitt a bit.

DERMOT

What?

JEFF

With the mitt, your hands.

DERMOT

C'mon Inspector, fire da cocker 'ere bloke. I'm dare for, ya snap o' strength, yer willy wisp.

JEFF

Dermot, it's baseball, not an intervention.—All right *Inspector*, let's see that move.

ALLIE

You're trying to catch him leaning.

JEFF

I'm taking my lead. Whatcha got?

DERMOT

Here we go Inspector, right here baby.

ALLIE

Whichever way he *thinks* he's going, you want him leaning the other....

JEFF

Which way am I going?

ALLIE

And you try to feel his mind.

IRWIN

He's dancing!

JEFF

I'm dancing like Billings!

DERMOT

Come to me Inspector!

JEFF

Back to the bag? To second?!

IRWIN

He's waiting!

DERMOT

Come to me!

ALLIE

I can feel him.

IRWIN

Go now!

JEFF

Which way?!

ALLIE

I can feel him leaning.

IRWIN

Now!

JEFF

Which way?!

IRWIN

POW!

(ALLIE turns quickly, “throws” to DERMOT as JEFF darts from the “base.” With his follow-thru, ALLIE falls over, catching himself on a stool. DERMOT and JEFF argue and don’t see him)

DERMOT

He got you!

JEFF

I was going back!

DERMOT

He got you! He did, he got you!

JEFF

No! I was going back, I was going—Shit. *SHIT!*

(they rush to ALLIE, catching him under his arms, and drag him to a chair at a table)

Sit him down!

DERMOT

Where?!

ALLIE

(feeble)

I'm alright.

JEFF

Sit him here!

DERMOT

On the stool?!

JEFF

No, here, *here!*

DERMOT

Don't die on me Inspector! Don't give Cyrice da pleasure!

JEFF

Sit him down!

ALLIE

I'm okay, I'm okay.

(they finally get him seated)

JEFF

Get some water!

DERMOT

(hustling for the water)

Go outside and die if you have to! You hear me! *Can you hear me?!*

ALLIE

I'm alright. It's....

JEFF

Get the water!

DERMOT

I see da Post head t'mar. "He's Out! Famous Geeze Final Round in da House!"

JEFF

Dermot get the goddamn—

ALLIE

It's all right! I'm all...I don't want, just let me, just let me sit....Just let me sit here.

(DERMOT finally arrives, hands water to JEFF who hands the water to ALLIE, who just holds it, exhaling heavy, but calmer)

SCENE 5

(immediately following the end of the previous scene)

IRWIN

I loved him. More than anything—he was everything to me. Worshipping as only a young boy can. With innocence and completeness, and the absolute fury of youth.—Athletic heroes aren't human, not to young boys. They are *Gods*. An expression of infinite possibilities made manifest on the green earth. Infallible and incorruptible.

ALLIE

(with a ashamed grin)

Still got it?

JEFF

Yes you do.

DERMOT

I'd say Inspector.

(ALLIE hands JEFF the water who hands it to DERMOT who goes back around the bar)

IRWIN

Before there are gods, before there's the perception of death which makes gods possible, there are the heroes of young boys.

JEFF

You were magnificent.

DERMOT

Here here.

ALLIE

No. Not anymore.—But thank you....The mind lies. The mind says “Nothing’s changed.” But the body knows. It knows and it doesn’t pretend otherwise.—Eventually you’ve changed so much, it’s hard to recognize yourself.

JEFF

Isn’t disappearing what you wanted?

ALLIE

Oh I’m not complainig mind you. I’ve gotten used to it. Yes I did. In the beginning, then....It’s just that when you first disappear, you don’t realize you can’t re-appear at the snap of your fingers. You never expect they’ll have others, that they *find* others.—And when you finally achieve it, *invisibility*—it’s unexpected how complete it can be. You lose your way back. The talent, the knack of people. Simply talking, getting to know them, laughing at a joke, saying excuse me, *apologizing*—you no longer know how.

IRWIN

You can live that way. You can *survive*.

ALLIE

I know this joke, it isn’t very funny. In fact, it isn’t funny at all. Would you like to hear it?

JEFF

Of course.

DERMOT

Hold on, let me fin ‘ere.

(DERMOT finishes, turns to ALLIE)

Okay. Jimmy it.

ALLIE

I’m not much of a joke teller. I never was.

DERMOT

Stop da oversell Inspector.

ALLIE

Okay, right.—Why'd the monkey fall out of the tree?

JEFF

I don't know, why?

ALLIE

(pause, grinning)

Because it was dead.

(ALLIE laughs fully yet guiltily. DERMOT and JEFF look at each other bemused)

You see! It's terrible I know. All the guys would bust me that I loved it.

DERMOT

Dat?—Da dead monkey?

ALLIE

(nodding, still chuckling)

We'd be sitting around after a game, drinking beer, relaxing. They'd all be telling these dirty jokes and I'd be there listening to them, one dirtier than the next. I'd blush through most of it, that was never my sense of humor, sex and women's parts.

DERMOT

What else is dare?

ALLIE

Plowden was the dirtiest. He knew a million of them, everything was a straight line to him. And they were never that funny! He just had a way of telling a joke with his face all bunched up and he was so damned animated about it.

(he laughs)

And one day we're in the locker room and after two hours of these dirty ones, Plowden comes out with that dead monkey.

(ALLIE starts to laugh all by himself again)

DERMOT

(to JEFF)

I miss some?

JEFF

I'm uh....

ALLIE

He used to tell it just to crack me up. Sometimes in a tight game, he'd come to the mound and tell it. Only that punch line "*Cause he's dead!*" I'd start to laugh, him there telling me this joke with the game on the line. I don't know if it relaxed me or just unnerved the hell out of the other team to see the two of us laughing cause it worked every time. I'd be set straight-up and we'd go get 'em after that.—That stupid joke, it never failed!

DERMOT

Pfft, I feck funnier twice t'mar. You want a blaff about dead, I'll tell ya a dead blaff.

JEFF

Dermot—

DERMOT

Wait Jeffy listen. Let me combat.—This guy's wife'n died in his casa, hey. And aggrieved as is, he calls a funeral home to arrange for body pickup.

(JEFF drifts off to the side)

Da funeral director answers and da man says, "Me Wife'ns died." Da funeral director says "Hey Pal, sorrys to hear. Where ya lives so's we can come picks her up?" Man says "3503 Eucalyptus Street." "*Eucalyptus?*" da funeral director says. "How ya spell dat?"—Da man pauses den says, "E-C, E-U-C—you know, I can drag her fat dead ass to Oak Street for ya."

(DERMOT laughs heartily while ALLIE smiles politely. JEFF turns away completely)

Ya get it, Oak Street! O-A-K! Dat he can spell!—*Dat's* a blaffer!

ALLIE

It's not very nice, and a little unfeeling.

DERMOT

Who gives ratty ass! Bully bollocks though, itn't it?! Sodding bully bollocks hey!

ALLIE

Some people would.

DERMOT

Some peoples mind, most peoples's idiots.

JEFF

Jokes about death, what's the difference?...It's something to laugh at, something ridiculous, *ridicule* worthy, that's the thing here? Stupid lowly animal doesn't even understand what's happening to him. *Lucky* him!

DERMOT

Da thing 'ere Jeffy is, it's *dead* monkey for a punch an' dead *fish* as a joke.

ALLIE

As you see it.

DERMOT

As anywhose would see it.

ALLIE

Oh come now, you can't say that. At least it's clean.

DERMOT

What's da cross a jokes if days clean?! Bloated Stevie, a regular, fat as a lorry, Jeffy knows him, when he tells bluff about dis stuttering hooker Mathilde he visits, with da fuh-fuh-fucking dis and da suh-suh-sucking dat—I crack my steel pod for it! You want another?

ALLIE

No, no. No thank you. Two is always my limit.

(DERMOT pours himself a pint)

DERMOT

See! Dat's what I'm talking! What kinda philos dat? Can't make progress if ya don't expand.

ALLIE

Maybe at your age, not when you get to mine.

DERMOT

Don't 'spect to live that faraways. *Don't* want to.

ALLIE

Oh, everyone says that when you're young.

DERMOT

I swears by it. Memory blinking, Willie don't wank, pissing every tree into swabby draws.

ALLIE

That's how you picture it?

DERMOT

And not dat glamorous! Everybody talking round you, "Time to walk Gramps, time to feed Gramps! Time to wipe Gramps's bum! Bollocks. Fifty-two picks and go home.

ALLIE

That's why you need to be more temperate when you're young.

DERMOT

Temperate! Ante up nuff right here to avoid dose festies, hey. Live past sixty-oh, I didn't live hard enough. Take a nozzer off GW's Bee if gets it. Cheers.

(unexpectedly, he clinks his glass against ALLIE's)

ALLIE

You'll feel differently when the time comes.

DERMOT

Don't bet the farmer's virgin on it. You'll proolly outlive me Inspector.

ALLIE

Well, I was never much of a carouser, but I wasn't an abstainer either. I had my days.

DERMOT

Sounds pretty nears.

JEFF

My father never drank.

(both turn to him. His face rises slowly to meet theirs)

IRWIN

A man lives with exactness and an understanding of what happens if he does not.

JEFF

Never. Just orange juice, or *ginger* ale.

IRWIN

Ramifications, consequences, they are present. They are always present.

JEFF

His whole life, not just around the kids. At parties, family functions, it was the running family joke. He'd add some cranberry juice and we'd say, "*Oh no, watch out!* He's hitting the hard stuff tonight. Better take it easy Pop, don't wanna *lose control.*"

DERMOT

Damn dirty glasser, got no use for 'em. No tips, but da bloody mess's same.

ALLIE

No, I suspect you wouldn't. That's why moderation—

DERMOT

Ech please, would ya wid dat?

ALLIE

It's the best of both worlds!

JEFF

Moderation isn't the answer!...Never too much, to never go *too* far—that's not *living*.

IRWIN

You know what would be my advice be to you? *Nothing!* It doesn't matter, you don't listen. You don't learn from experience.

JEFF

There are times to indulge, to *overindulge*, to let loose and live and *excess*. *To excess!*

DERMOT

Damn straight Jeffy!

IRWIN

Your dreams, these dreams, that's all they are! Useless! Never to be fulfilled, never to be completed, they're so far from what is possible.

JEFF

Certainly *abstinence* isn't an answer. Believing people should deny pleasure, refuse it. The *fucking* idiocy in that, that mindset, that people should just *abstain!* That they *could!*

DERMOT

Catalics, I tell ya! No use!

ALLIE

Now don't say that.

JEFF

Pleasure makes life worth living. With all the sadness and the stupidity that makes so much of the sadness possible, it's crazy. It's *fucking* crazy!

DERMOT

Bloody bollocks Jeffy, how'd you get to where you are from dat?

ALLIE

I'm sure he's not that bad.

DERMOT

Covers the monthly nut regular.

JEFF

It was not the first of my father's many great humiliations, his son who drinks in bars. There are degrees to sacrilege, substrata to how far one can lower in estimating eyes. He never wanted to lose control—that's why he never drank. Always disciplined and restrained, as if that made a difference in some twisted alternate version of the universe.

IRWIN

I told you! I told you what he was like! Didn't I?!

JEFF

If he could only control himself, his environment, the *things* around him, he believed he could alter the way people are in it. Cool under pressure, laughing at challenges, *succeeding*....If he could be like you.

ALLIE

Oh well, not really.

DERMOT

A chilly chuck eh? Yeah, I can tell.

ALLIE

On the outside maybe.

JEFF

He believed it. He believed that's what you were like.

ALLIE

On the outside, sure, but not inside.

DERMOT

That's always the secret, itn't it? Insides afrost.

ALLIE

Not as much as I wished.

JEFF

No, I wouldn't think so. Not inside. On the inside, you were nervous.

ALLIE

Sure, that's the trick. On the outside you're focused.

JEFF

But inside you're tense, you're tight.

ALLIE

Oh my yes. All the time.

JEFF

You were feeling it, the pressure. Anxious. *On edge.*

ALLIE

How could I not be?

IRWIN

Look at him there!

JEFF

Effected by the situation, *feeling* the magnitude. All that was riding on it, all those hopes and dreams! Those people, your *family*. How could you not, how could anyone think you weren't?

IRWIN

Look how calm he is.—Ice cold.

JEFF

Feeling it inside. Feeling pressure, feeling the weight!

ALLIE

I couldn't. No one could!

JEFF

Where you were, *what it meant!*

DERMOT

Jeffy?

IRWIN

Nothing gets to him.

JEFF

To not, to not *feel* that....

ALLIE

It wouldn't be human.

JEFF

It *wouldn't* be human! It *wouldn't* be human!

DERMOT

Jeff!

(this summoning breaks JEFF's trance)

IRWIN

To live like that. Untouchable, unable to be hurt inside, to *be* hurt inside. You must keep great distance to achieve that. A place of such safety that there is no need for concern.

JEFF

Do you know what would've been highest on his list, *his* list of *my* disappointments?—I didn't become a ball player, I didn't fulfill that dream of his. Isn't that hilarious? Such a *fucking* cliché. Cold and distant father dreams of future glory through the heraldic exploits of his gifted son.—Right?—And the son, a feeble shell of a person, and a shitty fucking ballplayer to tell the truth, tries his damndest to win the love of a man *unacquainted* with that notion, a man who has taken the feat of surviving to an art form. A creed, an *ethos!*

IRWIN

Survival is a skill, it is learned. Not through comfort, not through ease and adjustment and status. People need to learn, to conserve. Marshal energies and forces. Focus! On their wants and needs, to get them, take them. Not expect to be given, not expect to be handed.

JEFF

The father, impassive and detached, not only to his *un*-athletic son, primogeniture, but to his daughters too. Daughters who spent their lives worshiping a man with no capacity for caring. Amazingly, these women grew to be such loving, sensitive mothers. Who now live out sworn pledges *not* to continue the cycle of distance and removed indifference with their children.

IRWIN

What good do I do them if they are not prepared! They will take care of themselves! They will know, they will learn how!....Without. Want. You survive these if you have learned, if you have been prepared.

JEFF

But the boy, the son, when he can't fulfill his father's dreams for him, his father's dreams for *himself*....What's past cold? What's beyond frozen?

IRWIN

We aren't truly free, not truly. It's a delusion. We're still caged, only the dimensions of our cage changes. And as far as we run, we don't escape it, we merely postpone....And all this, all of it, for the satisfaction of conceding defeat with a prettier view of the sun.

JEFF

(pause)

I'd've called him. I'd've called him, he'd've come. For *you*—he'd've come running. He would've enjoyed meeting you, *even here*, like this.—I would've enjoyed giving him this.

DERMOT

Yes laddy, hey-hey, sure he would.

ALLIE

I would have been very honored to meet him.

DERMOT

Real gentry Inspector, real gentry.

(DERMOT pats ALLIE on the shoulder. Long pause)

JEFF

He always said that, that you were like that. A gentleman.

DERMOT

An upstander!

ALLIE

I always tried.

JEFF

Always approachable, always available for the common man. Ready to talk, sign autographs. Posing for photos, kissing babies, anything they wanted.

ALLIE

That's kind of you to say.

DERMOT

A fan fave! Man o' da people!

ALLIE

(to DERMOT)

You stop now.

IRWIN

It should never've happened to him. Never to the likes of him.

JEFF

Hero for kids, model for parents to follow. You were always like that, you were, before.

DERMOT

Heh-heh! Yes sir!

JEFF

Before—always.

(JEFF and ALLIE stare hard at each other)

DERMOT

Yeah sure....Before what?....Jeffy, before what?

ALLIE

Nothing.

JEFF

Why couldn't you do it?

DERMOT

Couldn't what?—Jeffy?

IRWIN

Leave him alone.

JEFF

Such composure, such calm and cool as he's never known before.

DERMOT

Jeffy, what're you talking about?

JEFF

Why didn't you stand in and take it?

IRWIN

Leave him alone!

DERMOT

Now Jeffy—

JEFF

With the pressure on and everybody watching.

IRWIN

It's his son!

JEFF

Was it too hard?

ALLIE

Shut your mouth.

DERMOT

Hey laddies, let's keep it ami-cable.

IRWIN

Can't they see he's in pain?

JEFF

Was it too tough, did it get too tough?

ALLIE

I said—

JEFF

Did it get too *hard*?!

ALLIE

Shut your mouth!

DERMOT

Jeff!

IRWIN

Why don't they leave him alone?!

JEFF

With the crowd screaming and the fans cheering!

DERMOT

Goddamn it Jeff!

(from behind the bar, DERMOT tries to restrain JEFF, grabbing for his shirt. JEFF rips away)

JEFF

Everybody was watching, the fans, the press.

IRWIN

It's his name!

JEFF

My father was watching!

DERMOT

Fuck Christ Jeff!

(DERMOT hustles around the long bar)

JEFF

My father was watching!

IRWIN

It's his name! He carries his name!

JEFF

WAS IT FUNNY THEN?! WAS IT FUNNY?

IRWIN

THE MAN'S IN PAIN!

DERMOT

JEFF STOP!

IRWIN

HE'S IN PAIN!

JEFF

WAS IT A PUNCH LINE THEN?!

ALLIE

NOOOOOOOOOOOO!

(ALLIE lunges at JEFF, who catches the attacking arms, easily subduing them. He steers the soon-spent ALLIE to a stool. DERMOT who has made it around the bar, pounces on JEFF, throws him against the bar, pinning him there)

DERMOT

Are ya fucking balmy?!

JEFF

Let go of me!

DERMOT

Are you blind fucking balm?!

JEFF

Let me go!

(DERMOT pins JEFF there a moment longer. He releases JEFF with a final shove. ALLIE, settled meekly on a stool, catches his breath from the exertion. It is a long moment)

ALLIE

You have no right....You have no right to talk about that.

JEFF

Some tragedies are televised for the enjoyment of the masses.

ALLIE

It's mine.

JEFF

Others aren't, but it doesn't make them any less tragic.

ALLIE

IT'S MINE!

JEFF

(long pause)

You were *his*....like I never could be.

SCENE 6

(immediately following the end of the previous scene)

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER

(voice-over)

Allison Miller Jr., son of Baseball great Allie Miller, died today from complications related to a gun shot wound suffered last week in Roanoke Virginia. The younger Mr. Miller was a minor league player with the Roanoke Knights, a Texas Rangers farm affiliate. Allie Miller, whose storied Hall of Fame career spanned the late 1950's and early 60's, could not be reached immediately for comment. A spokesman for the family said they are deeply shocked by this tragedy and gratefully acknowledge all condolences on this dark day. Mr. Miller, the deceased, was twenty-seven.—The wound was reportedly self-inflicted.

ALLIE

(pause)

I never wanted the attention, I just wanted to play ball. Others did, they did then too. Not like today with their self-promotion and their lack of sportsmanship. It's disgusts me. But in their way, yes. I never begrudged the guys that did, certainly it wasn't the money we got paid then, we didn't play for that. Opening car dealerships and drive-ins allowed most to make a living, raise a family. And they enjoyed it, the people, the fans, they looked up to us, as if we were—something special....But I never wanted that.

JEFF

Perhaps because you always had it.

ALLIE

It came with the job I did.

JEFF

The *way* you did the job.

ALLIE

Yes!

JEFF

Adulation. Reverence.

ALLIE

I didn't ask for it.

JEFF

You were worshipped.

ALLIE

People respond, they *reacted*. To what I was doing, how well it went.

JEFF

You were revered by my father.

ALLIE

It just came, I didn't ask for it.

JEFF

And your son.

ALLIE

IT CAME! IT CAME! THEY JUST CAME!

JEFF

(long pause)

It doesn't matter.

ALLIE

It has too!

JEFF

(pause)

He had to live with it, your name. To live up to that, what it meant. The expectations, the comparisons. Everyone said it to him, he heard it every day.

ALLIE

I talked to him. I *told* him it didn't matter.

JEFF

To live up to something like that, to even try to....

DERMOT

(to JEFF)

Don't do this.

ALLIE

I told him! "Don't *listen* to them. It doesn't matter what they think."

JEFF

You can't turn it off, not with that. Not with you.

ALLIE

"Be yourself! Don't worry about what I did. Be your own man!"

IRWIN

It's his son!

JEFF

None of us are. We are the men our fathers permit us to be.

DERMOT

Is there a need for this?

ALLIE

I told him!

JEFF

What we became because of—

IRWIN

Let him be!

JEFF

What we became in spite of—

ALLIE

I TOLD HIM!

IRWIN

It's his son! It's his son for God's sakes!....Won't they let him be?

(a long pause. IRWIN moves back to his chair, but doesn't sit)

ALLIE

I was good.

JEFF

You were the best.

ALLIE

(pause)

Few people find what they were born to do. I was put here to do this. I thought that then.

(looking at his hands)

I could feel the ball right to the very end of my release, the very end of my fingertips as it left.

(he sticks out his hand as if at the end of the release of a pitch):

The seam, the fabric wound. Twine against my fingertip, the fibers, I could *feel* them. To the last moment—I still had control, it was still *in* my control. I could alter it, change bad into good, the wrong pitch, the wrong placement, I could *save* it!....That *total* command.

JEFF

And movement.

ALLIE

Late movement! It's not just movement, everyone's got that, it's natural. *Of* nature. The spin, trajectory, two seams, four. The elements, humidity, wind! But *late* movement. *Late* tail on a fastball, *late* break on a curve. *In* the strike zone, *through* the strike zone!

IRWIN

Perfect.

(pause. IRWIN turns slowly, frail now with age)

ALLIE

The things we love as children, we never quite leave them behind. Our relation to them changes, burnishes what once was. Even our regrets and disappointments....But those of us lucky enough— we are truly blessed.

JEFF

(pause)

I wanted to take my father to Los Angeles to see my sisters. He'd never been out there, never seen where they were living, the warm loving homes they made for their families.

IRWIN

All the people, the crowds. *Screaming* kids. You can't really see anything.

JEFF

I'd been asking him to do things for years. Ball games, movies, theater. It was always something, the weather or the traffic. His *arthritis*.

IRWIN

There's probably some huge entrance fee! All to see a plaque and a silly bust of his head.

JEFF

I got some time off a couple of years ago. Two days, a Wednesday, Thursday. I told him we'd make an adventure of it, drive up one day, get a hotel room, my treat. It'll be quick I said, being mid-week. We'd just zip right up the thruway all the way to Cooperstown.

(IRWIN stands affected before an exhibit at Cooperstown)

I knew it was the one. It had to be....He wanted to see you there.

DERMOT

Was it right?

(JEFF turns to DERMOT who after a moment, only nods)

IRWIN

It doesn't really look like him. The hair, his brow, the way the hat sat.—And he was thinner, more severe. When he'd bear down on the plate, you just saw that chin under his cap.

JEFF

We spent three hours there, fighting parents and kids and *nuns*.

DERMOT

Catalics and baseball.

JEFF

(pause)

It was ours. Not his or mine, or even yours.—It was both of ours.

(IRWIN turns towards his chair, overcome)

IRWIN

We have to get back, they'll be traffic. And all the tolls! They charge you bloody murder to ride on a *Freeway*.

JEFF

My father died a year ago last month. I went to the cemetery today to visit him....Our whole lives we had no common language to communicate through. *Sports*'d always been our only way of communicating. We'd talk about them when we couldn't talk about anything else. Batting averages, yards from scrimmage, shooting percentages.—The dialogue between fathers and their sons—who would otherwise remain silent.

IRWIN

(seated, exhausted)

Don't drive too fast.

JEFF

(pause)

We talked of you....We had you—it was enough.

(the phone rings and DERMOT moves to get it)

DERMOT

Van Damm Street....Ah Jeez....I don't know, when dey's finished I 'spose....No, not yet. Listen Cyrice, I can't talk now, I've gotta go. I can't, I've gotta....

(DERMOT hangs up and turns back to them)

DERMOT

Thinks I'm gonna scrap feek on the floors downstairs. Wait till Kingdom Come to see.

JEFF

Why don't you just quit Dermot if you can't get along?

DERMOT

(pause, thinking)

He's *family*.— Ya don't do dat to family.

(JEFF and ALLIE look at each other, then break out laughing. DERMOT starts to laugh as well, more from catching their laughter than from understanding the point)

DERMOT

Stay around and torture 'em, *that's* what you do to family.

(they laugh harder)

Bloody hell, you two. A couple daft Willies you ownselves. Another Inspector?

ALLIE

No, thank you. What time is it? It must be past time now.

(he looks towards the clock)

Oh, yes.

DERMOT

Ya sure? For the road, my tab?

ALLIE

Thank you, no. I would but my son's waiting....I don't want to make him wait.

(ALLIE puts on his coat and scarf)

DERMOT

Okay Inspector. Your next marble, on da house. Don't forget your scrim now.

ALLIE

Yes, thank you.

(ALLIE hands him a twenty)

This is for you.

DERMOT

Ya sure?

(ALLIE nods appreciatively)

Dey was good Tom Collins's, wasn't dey?

ALLIE

Very.—And for my friend....

JEFF

No, that's not—

ALLIE

I know.

(JEFF pauses, then nods gratefully. DERMOT moves to the register to split check and tip)

DERMOT

Heh-heh, dat's a good laddy. Sees Jeffy, should've been drinking. Always be drinking, dat's me rule. Case some Big Dud unloads. Not dat you're a Big Dudley.

ALLIE

No, of course not.

DERMOT

No of course, heh-heh. Woo-eee, almost kibbed ya dat time, hey.

ALLIE

Not even close.

DERMOT

(smiling)

Heh-heh, that's a good ol' Inspect. Don't wanna do dat to me new day comer. You'll be regular, you'll see. I have dat effect. It'll be fun when Jeffy's not rousting. Exchecked our roles from normal course, eh Jeffy? Think still I'm suited more.

JEFF

I think you're right.

DERMOT

Eh, blooders, I know. Real cooz. Got a knacker for dem things.

(to ALLIE)

Don't let the bastards walk off with your shine.

IRWIN

No it's all right. I'm all right.

ALLIE

No I won't. Thank you.

(ALLIE looks at JEFF who meets his gaze)

IRWIN

It's alright, it's alright, just, just leave it there. Just leave it.

JEFF

Get home safely.

ALLIE

Thank you, you as well.

(ALLIE leaves quietly. As DERMOT wipes down the bar, JEFF moves back to his original seat facing IRWIN. The phone rings. DERMOT moves towards it)

IRWIN

Come here, sit, sit down. It's okay, don't worry about that now.

DERMOT

If it's Cyrice, I'm gonna pave hell and level 'im out on it. Van Damm—eh bollocks.— Nobody's come in yet ya Daft Willie, da bar don't open for another sixty....Yeah of course.— Of course! But ya don't see me cauterin' bout it!

(lights fade down on the bar, save for a spot on JEFF who stares into space over at IRWIN)

IRWIN

Just sit here awhile. Just—just sit.

DERMOT

No, I know, I know....I *know!*

IRWIN

Did I ever tell you about the game Allie pitched against the Phillies in the playoffs?

JEFF

No Pop—no you didn't.

IRWIN

No? I can't see how I could've forgotten that one. Oh, it was a great one, I remember it so. The League Championship series! He takes the mound and it's below zero! And when he's—oh well, all right, no, it wasn't. But it was cold! He can barely feel his fingers, it's so cold! And you know what that's like for a pitcher, when he can't feel his fingers....But it doesn't faze him. It doesn't. Nothing....nothing ever did.

(the lights fade down)

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER

(voice over)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, it's 38 degrees on a crisp October day at Ebbets Field. It looks to be a tall order for Allie Miller as he faces the elements and the murderous Philadelphia lineup. Our boy will have to have his best stuff today in an environment perfectly suited to limit his effectiveness. But if any one can rise to the occasion it's our boy Allie who seems to thrive on these difficult situations. The better the competition bringing out the best in him. So put the kids to bed, throw the dog in the yard and get cozy on the couch and watch with us *as the game begins!*

(the sound of a large stadium crowd cheering rises up)

Fade to Black