

BROKEN PROMISE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. INTRO - DAY

A dirty BASEBALL floats in blackness. A NARRATOR, a reporterly voice of authority, is breathing heavily, perhaps smoking a cigar. When he begins to talk, we move into stock footage of faces in the crowd, and then of Americana on the ball field.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We always think of baseball as being grounded in stats and hard fact. Wins and losses. Averages, ERAs, LOBs, OPS and Ks. It's supposed to be so basic in that way: 9 innings, 9 players, certain truths, always the same. That's why it makes so much sense to so many of us.

It isn't really, though, so simple. There's all sorts of stories, and real world hopes and dreams tied up in it, both fulfilled and disappointed. Like the game of life, no one ever said it was supposed to be just about the stats.

And, like life, outside the hard facts, there have always been plenty of lies and half-truths, sprinkled generously throughout.

For most of the game's modern era, the dishonesty even included who invented it, and where and how and when. You see, in 1905, a commission headed by Al Spalding, the robber barron of sporting goods, somehow wrongly credited, yes wrongly credited, Abner Doubleday with making up the rules one bright day in 1839, in Cooperstown, New York. Unfortunately, it later came out that when he was said to be chalking off the first baseball diamond there, Abner was actually a cadet at West Point, from which

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

he graduated in 1842 to embark on distinguished military career. In truth, it probably wasn't until the late '40s or early '50s or so that New York City sportsman Alexander Cartwright came up with pretty much the rules we use today, and wrote them down. And yet, the hallowed ground of the Hall of Fame remains in that charming little Washington Irving upstate town. And "The Doubleday Baseball" still resides there.

NARRATOR

It was during game three of the '32 World Series, with one out in the top of the fifth, a 2-2 count, and 4-4 tie, that Babe Ruth, whose legend probably needs a whole hall of its own, pointed past Charlie Root and over the pre-bittersweet-and-ivy-flanked walls at Wrigley, calling the shot he hit on the next pitch, his last in World Series play. That's the lore at least, though maybe not the truth. Root, nicknamed "Chinski" for his lack of timidity when it came to buzzing batters, denied it ever happened that way, with occasional vehemence, until his death. At the time, Root, who would have had the best seat in the house for it, noted that "if he," Ruth, "had tried to pull anything of the sort. I would have knocked him down with the next pitch."

Ralph Branca was always more generous. On Oct. 3, 1951 Bobby Thompson's shot off him was heard round the world -- a phrase better know today for that association than it's Revolutionary War antecedent. But the homerrun, and amazing season-ending streak preceding it, the one that made up for a 13-game deficit in less than two months, may have all been a lot of cheating, if recent reporting is to be believed. The

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

'Gints were stealing signs, using a elaborate buzzer system.

NARRATOR

There are other mysteries, born of both lies and lives: How many homers would Bonds have really hit? Was Steinerbenner a tyrant or a saint? Which records don't deserve asteriks? Why did Charlie hustle so hard? Why was it so Joe? Weren't they supposed to be Brooklyn's Bums forever?

Then there is the biggest lie of all: That winning even matters. That the moment it's over, we don't start all over again with every chance of losing. That last year makes any difference at all. That All-Stars aren't mortal, too. That their demons don't make it to the big leagues with them.

This much is gospel: Darryl W. Strawberry, of that amazing Crenshaw High team, and Dwight "Doctor K." Godden, of Tampa, could have been two of the best there ever was. Instead, agonizing words, whispered stories and formal allegations document the pain that followed. Some are true. Some probably not. Heck, one record the Straw Man himself held was being the first person to be say he was misquoted in his own autobiography. Some of the murkiness stems from shame; some from jealousy; some fear. Don't they all? Oddly, it was the "white" Ted Williams, the Splendid Splinter himself, who once said, "We tell lies when we are afraid... afraid of what we don't know, afraid of what others will think, afraid of what will be found out about us. But every time we tell a lie, the thing that we fear grows stronger."

Still... an man's urge for honesty and brushes with witnesses leaves  
(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
something quite apart from lies or  
stats to fill the back of his  
gum-stained cards.

Believing is another story. The  
reasons to rarely last... Everyday  
we all head up to bat.

The sound of an AIRPLANE taking off builds.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

AIRPLANE sound continues, as one soars above SHEA STADIUM.

DARRYL, the lanky slugger, stands in a deathening roar in rightfield. He is hanging his head with a hangover. One might be able to say they can hear the crowd chanting "Dar-ryl, Dar-ryl." But it's not really there, the roar is so loud. The roar just gets more defeaning until the crack of the bat comes.

FADE TO WHITE

VICTORY by Kool & the Gang comes on.

Various METS are in the field. Breathing heavily. Talking to theselves. Looking around.

DWIGHT, the slim young fireballer, is on the mound ... He delivers a wicked CURVE BALL to WILLIE MCGEE, a lean and ugly St. Louis Cardinal. Strike One.

Lockerroom. A bunch of REPORTERS huddle around KEITH, who's got a bucket of iced BEER at his feet and CIGARETTE dangling out of his lips. He passes a BEER to DARLING. LENNY, and WALLY are goofing around, with Lenny is showing off something weird about the CHEWING TOBACCO in his lip. GARY's all smiles. More BEERS are getting drunk by a variety of people. "GO-BEERS" wrapped in sanitary socks look scarce. HOJO and MCDOWELL pull a hotfoot on DARLING. DAVEY smokes a CIGARETTE and talks with press, turns as they leave and whips out some VODKA.

Various Mets making plays over the course of the season ... Balls whiz by. This game is intense.

Mets out at a New York City bar. GROUPIE GIRLS are going wild. Crazy nightclub stuff is happening. Doc and Darryl do SHOTS, clink glasses of GIN AND TONICS. KEVIN MITCHELL has

got a GLASS OF COLT 45. Darling is chatting up some girls. Lenny is passing shots around, places on in a GROUPIE's exposed bra. JESSE is slapping asses, swilling on a BEER. Darryl gets his neck licked by a smoking hot girl.

DOC is on the mound ... High heat. McGee swings and misses a FASTBALL. Willie bangs his helmet.

Doc picks up rosin bag. Darryl pounds his glove.

GROUPIE GIRL pushes out door of men's room. Doc and Darryl follow another DUDE and ???Darryl's brother??? Darryl does a line of COKE quietly, rubs nose, and is suddenly elsewhere making out. Dwight, forlorn, sucks down a BEER at the end of the bar.

Lockerroom. Darryl, looking awful, is popping some BEANS. Doc is getting wrapped, hobbles out and grabs some BEANS and a cup of COFFEE from Lenny.

Players throw tantrums, break bats. Players yell at UMPS. They talk shit to OTHER PLAYERS. A fight ensues. Mitchell starts choking someone.

HEADLINES mostly amazed at the Amazin's.

Darryl, in right, looking limp.

FAN

Come on Straw, look alive now!

DARRYL

(Shrugs)

I'm just doing my thing, man. You want to come out here?

FAN

You wanna get paid what they pay me shithead?

Doc gets a FASTBALL inside, but Willie inside-outs it to right with a crack. Darryl charges in.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. KEVIN MITCHELL'S HOUSE - DAY

HIGHWAY

Doc drives with CARD GUY, memorbialia promoter, speeding faster and faster over concrete. BROKEN WINGS by Mr. Mister is on the radio.

CARD GUY

So you'll give these checks to the other guys for last week's signings, right?

DWIGHT

Sure, man. It's cool. No problem. I'm not fucking retarded. Trust me I know retarded. I just saw some of those kids last week. Or at least that's what I would say if I was Darryl.

CARD GUY

Hey man, Doc, you guys are un-fuck-yeah-believable this year. You know that? I don't even know what the fuck to say about it, you're that fucking good.

DWIGHT

We're doing pretty alright so far, that's all I'm thinking. Guys like Darryl and Carter really got the offense going, you know. I do what I do. Ronnie, Ojeda'll do what they do. We'll see.

CARD GUY

Personally, I'm thinking I should be getting some more of your rookie cards, that's what I'm thinking. Maybe you'll sign some for me?

IN MITCHELL'S HOUSE,

A vase is thrown.

PULL INTO DRIVEWAY

Dwight pulls a small flask of GIN out of his jacket pocket. THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR kicks in on radio.

CARD GUY

Seriously, though man, you should get Darryl in touch with me, I'll hook him up.

DWIGHT

You mind man? Give me a sec.

CARD GUY

Kool and the Gang, homeboy.

Doc stays in car while Card Guy gets out. He takes a swig gets out. Meanwhile, Card Guy, hunched over, lights a ROACH with his zippo. He passes the joint from between his thumb and forefingers to Dwight, who takes it and puts it to his lips.

DWIGHT

You're starting to talk like a black person already, you know that?

CARD GUY

Fughgeaboudit. Hey, you don't think Kevin'll mind us stopping by without calling first right?

DWIGHT

What the fuck else would he be up to? It's like 2:30 and we got the night off.

CARD GUY

Good point. I got to drop this shit off at some point anyway.

INSIDE MITCHELL'S HOUSE

IT'S TRICKY by RUN DMC is playing. Mitchell is in a tee-shirt and jeans, arguing with his GIRLFRIEND. He has got a bottle of MILLER LITE in one hand a KNIFE in the other. There is COKE on the table.

MITCHELL

(Shouting)

What the fuck bitch? Bitch? What the fuck? I told you not to fuck with me, but you don't want to fuckin' listen to me, do you?

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

Why you gotta be an asshole, Kevin? Why you gotta be an asshole and tell me you weresn't sleeping with her? Why? I let you hudlum friends come by here all the time.

MITCHELL

(Holding up finger to guys)

What the fuck did you think you were doing flirting with a fucking

(MORE)



MITCHELL (cont'd)  
teammate of mine like that, baby?

DWIGHT  
(To Card Guy)  
Maybe now is a bad time.

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND  
(Seeing the others)  
How the fuck did they walk in  
here?!?!  
(Shriekin')  
How many times do I fucking have  
to tell you, Kevin: Lock the  
fucking door! You want me to be  
raped by some stranger who just  
strolls in here? That's what you  
want? Maybe I should just hike up  
my skirt go fucking jogging in  
Central fucking Park?

MITCHELL  
Sit the fuck down. The two of you.  
We're not going anywhere.  
(Checking windows)  
You guys see those those  
undercovers following you or what?

CARD GUY  
Don't know what you're talking  
about, bro.

MITCHELL  
C'mon they're outside the house  
right now, over there. In that  
Buick that just passed. That's a  
sizable shit sandwich we've got  
here. Come on, we're going to  
barricade the doors.

DWIGHT  
(Sweating)  
You kidding, Cuz?

MITCHELL  
Do I look like I'm fucking  
kidding? Do what I tell you,

They put a couch in front of it, then stack two chairs on  
top. They pull the blinds down on all the windows, Mitchell  
rips the phone out of the wall.

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

You're out of your mind.

DWIGHT

Mitch, listen to me. It's okay, there's nobody out there. Even if there is, they ain't getting in now.

MITCHELL

You calling me a liar, motherfucker?

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

Kevin, stop acting so crazy, these people are your friends

Holding the knife in his right hand and tossing beer from the left, Mitchell bends down and grabbs girlfriend's KITTEN at his feet. In one awful sweep of his hand, Mitch pulls the cat's head back, exposing its throat.

MITCHELL

Enough! All right?!? Enough already! You think I'm kidding when I say don't ever fuck with me!!!

Mitchell takes the knife to the cat's throat, and cut its head off. Clean. He drops body "to the floor, blood pouring out from where the head once was, limbs still twitching."

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!! JESUS JESUS JESUS

MITCHELL

Why when I say don't ever fuck with me would you ever fuck with with me, huh???

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

Roxy...

Card Guy walks in fast stride toward the door.

MITCHELL

Sit the fuck down. You, too. Doc, sit down on that couch and don't move.

Card Guy, Doc, and then Mitchell's Girlfriend sit on the couch that is backed-up to door.

Mitchell sits opposite them in a chair, BEERS lined up somewhere near him. Starts to fade off into sleep. Eyes snap open and drift into shut.

SUNLIGHT FADES

MITCHELL

You guys can go.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. GOODEN'S LONG ISLAND HOME - DAY

BLACK LINGERS

VIN SCULLY (V.O.)

... and now the winning run is on second with two outs, three and two to Mookie Wilson...little roller up along first; behind the bag! It gets through Bill Buckner! Here comes Knight and the Mets win it!

SUBURBAN STREETS

Darryl drives around the suburbs, looking a little lost.

INSIDE GOODEN'S HOME

CHAMPAIGNE bottles are strewn everywhere in somewhat beautifully decorated living room and bedroom.

Darryl knocks on the front door.

DARRYL

Ding dong. House call for a Mr. Doctor K, of your World Champion New York Mets. Doc, you in there? We got to get going if we're going to make the parade, man. It looks like there's no doubt there's going to be traffic.

Doc holds the pillow over his ears. Winches. Thinks back to getting home, and into bed, a few minutes earlier, at around 8 a.m. on clock.

DARRYL

Doc, what's up, you coming? Come on, we got to get to the parade. Ahhh man... Don't make me come up there and beat your ass.

Doc peaks out. Darryl looks up. Then, cursing under his breath, turns and walks back to his car.

FADE TO BLACK

AT PARADE

Darryl looks skyward at the ticker-tape falling.

CROWD

Dar-ryl! Dar-ryl!

FADE TO WHITE

AT GOODEN'S

Doc is watching on his TELEVISION. Drinking a REMY MARTIN.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. TELEVISION - DAY

Newscasters talk about World Series win, and related hoopla. Photos tell some of story.

WORLD SERIES TROPHY

NARRATOR

Like true sons of Queens, the world champion Mets crossed the river yesterday to celebrate in Manhattan, proceeding in triumph and exultation from sun-washed Battery Park to the steps of City Hall before one of the largest parade crowds in New York history. Ticker tape alone was not sufficient...

HAPPY DARRYL

NARRATOR

Ray Knight, Lenny Dykstra, Wally Backman, Tim Teufel, Lee Mazzilli and absolutely Darryl Strawberry will be back. Mookie Wilson, Kevin Mitchell, Howard Johnson, Randy  
(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
Niemann and Danny Heep probably  
will not. The 1986 Mets were still  
hearing the cheers yesterday as  
they were cleaning out their  
lockers and their...

## ROSE GARDEN

NARRATOR  
In the sunny chill, no roses  
bloomed in the Rose Garden, only a  
few marigolds and too few Mets who  
were there to accept President  
Reagan's congratulations. Fourteen  
players, two coaches and four  
members of the World Series  
champions' front office had formed  
a backdrop on a small outdoor...

## METS LOGO ABOVE JETS AND GIANTS

NARRATOR  
In the aftermath of the Mets'  
World Series victory, after  
consecutive Monday Night Football  
appearances by the Jets and the  
Giants, with the odds improving  
that at least one of those teams  
will be participating on Super  
Bowl Sunday, is it really fair to  
impose another New York City...

## DWIGHT PERPLEXED

NARRATOR  
In a statement released by the  
Mets at the Knick game last night  
in Madison Square Garden, Dwight  
Gooden, responding to newspaper  
reports, acknowledged that he has  
a son and that the wedding planned  
Saturday with his friend from high  
school, Charlene Pearson, was off  
for the time being. 'I have an  
8-month-old son and I'm proud of  
him,' the statement said.

'I'll support him. My wedding is  
postponed. Aside from that, it's a  
personal matter.'

Gooden, who was among a half-dozen  
(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Mets honored by the Knicks, was quoted yesterday in The Tampa Tribune as saying that he would ask for a drug-testing clause in his next contract with the Mets. 'It can be for a test every week, every two days, as often as they want and it can be forever,' Gooden said in the interview, conducted at the Tampa, Fla., home he shares in the offseason with his parents and son, Dwight Jr. Gooden, the National League's Cy Young Award winner in 1985, said he had never taken drugs and did not have a problem with alcohol either. 'Beer is what I drink and not much of that,' said Gooden, who had a 17-6 record this year. 'Wine makes me sick. Drugs? No. I never use them and I never will.'

#### DARLING AND TEUFEL

NARRATOR

Four Mets charged in July after an incident at a Houston nightclub are scheduled to appear in court Monday.

Ron Darling, the pitcher, and Tim Teufel, the second baseman, were charged with felonious aggravated assault of a police officer. Published reports, however, indicate the charge against Darling was reduced to a misdemeanor on Friday.

The players' attorney, Dick DeGuerin of Houston, said he could not confirm the report. Mike Anderson, an Assistant Harris County District Attorney, who is prosecuting the case, also declined to comment.

The charges against Darling and Teufel stem from a July 19 incident at Cooter's nightclub. The two are accused of fighting  
(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

with two police officers who were off-duty and working at the club as security guards. The trial for the two is scheduled for Monday morning in State District Judge Joe Kegans's court.

Bob Ojeda and Rick Aguilera, both pitchers, were also charged in the incident and were accused of hindering police apprehension, a misdemeanor. Ojeda and Aguilera are scheduled to appear Monday before County Criminal Court-at-Law Judge Don Hendrix.

METS LOGO INTO VOICEOVER

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Dwight Gooden, the Mets' premier pitcher, and four companions were arrested in Tampa, Fla., late Saturday night and charged with assaulting several police officers in what the police described as a routine traffic offense that turned into a furious fight. According to the police, one officer was kicked in...

Doc, GARY SHEFFIELD, RANDOM FRIEND, VINCE LOVELACE, RANDOM FRIENDS, driving back from USF basketball game. KISS by Prince or WALK THIS WAY by Run DMC, or both, is playing. Pull out of Chili's in MERCEDES 500SL, CORVETTE, and NISSAN 280X. Gary drive unaware that police sirens are blarring behind him. His speakers block view.

NARRATOR

Gooden said yesterday that he had been 'harassed and abused' by the police in Tampa, Fla., who arrested, handcuffed and manacled him after a fight that grew out of a routine traffic violation Saturday night. 'I'm upset,' he said in a telephone interview, 'because the situation could have...

Pulled over, a ton of cop cars pull up. Doc shouts, grabs at

WHITE POLICE OFFICER's hand. They beat the living crap out of him. More squad cars show up, and they hold back Dwight's friends, and beat him some more. Throw him in squad car. Take him out, by railroad tracks, clean him up, and BLACK POLICE OFFICERS drive him to the station.

NARRATOR

To the Sports Editor:

The recent arrest of Dwight Gooden means that 80 percent of the Mets' starting pitchers have been arrested on assault charges this year. Is this really baseball the way it oughta be? THOMAS MARIAM  
Brooklyn

DWIGHT PERPLEXED

NARRATOR

Personal troubles continued to hound Dwight Gooden yesterday when his former fiancée was arrested and charged with carrying a stolen, loaded pistol at La Guardia Airport, where she was meeting the pitching star of the Mets for a reconciliation. Personal troubles continued to hound Dwight Gooden yesterday when...

CHOCOLATE STRAWBERRY by Darryl Strawberry kicks in.

NARRATOR

The wife of Darryl Strawberry filed a petition for a legal separation yesterday in Los Angeles Superior Court, accusing the Mets' outfielder of violent behavior last month and breaking her nose after a playoff game last October. Lisa Strawberry also obtained a court order forbidding her husband from coming within 100 yards of her mother's home in Altadena, a suburb of Los Angeles, where she is staying. In her petition filed by Marvin Mitchelson, an attorney, Mrs. Strawberry cites irreconcilable

(MORE)



NARRATOR (cont'd)

differences as the reason for the separation after two years of marriage, and seeks sole legal and physical custody of their 19-month-old son, who lives with her. She also seeks child and spousal support. Jay Horwitz, the Mets' public relations director, said the club was aware of the suit and had spoken to Strawberry, who was reported to be ''sad and distraught.'' Strawberry said he would have no comment at this time and denied the allegations in the suit.

SPRING TRAINING

Doc does coke with a few teammates. They want to do more, he declines. Then Doc sits in front office with CASHEN and AGENT discussing drug testing, then on another day, looking at results, busted, and he checks into the SMITHERS clinic.

INT. EXPERIMENT MONTAGE - DAY

A FEW YEARS EARLIER

CASHEN is talking. TALKIN BASEBALL & THE METS version of Terry Cashman great.

CASHEN

64, 66, 63, 67, 41, 65, and 68...  
68? I mean honestly, that team last year, it was awful, no? But the kids look good right? How good do I think this Gooden will be? You can't ask me that. Honestly, I don't think there's a state the kid can drink a beer in. You want me to put him in there with major league hitting? We may or may not compete this year, but we can give him time. Tom, what do you want me to say about Tom? Tom, he's Tom Terrific. He's done a lot for this club. You know, it's tough. Did I think that Sox would pick him up? Obviously not; it was not a stupid move on my part, though, the guy's 40, but that's what happens. He'll win them 10-games I'm sure, but not much  
(MORE)

CASHEN (cont'd)

more, but I guess that's all they wanted from him. Strawberry? Kid's been great, and I'm really excited to have Keith on board. I don't know about that, that whole black Ted Williams. I wouldn't know about such a thing. But what I definitely do know that we drafted him first for a reason. I mean Darryl's, Darryl. Who went next in the draft? Garry Harris, Ken Dayley, Darnell Coles? Those guys might end up being good, but with Darryl, you can see the raw power in him already... the kid's a machine. I don't know about Gooden, we really haven't seen him enough. I don't know why people seem to be talking about him. Then again, I'm going to be indubitably correct in saying he's got to be someday be better than [Bad Pitcher.] Once he straightened it out last year, he pitched really well, but Single A's and a couple of AAA playoff games are just that, and we're not going to rush him. I don't want another Tim Leary, here. I'm not going through that again with anybody. He never even pitched AA. He needs at least a full year on the Tides.

CASHEN

We got Darling and Terrell who I think can really get the hang of things quickly around here. Dave West, a talented guy, too, we're really looking forward to seeing him mature. You know how I feel about the lefties. After a certain point in the draft, I tell our people, 'Take all the left-handed pitchers you can get.' We'd corner the market if we could. A southpaw is a commodity. Next year? What about this year? I'd hate to say this team is going to finish worse than last year. I mean Kingman's gone right? We still got Foster... Carter's not going to just be a good hitting catcher, but we're counting on him to babysit the

(MORE)

CASHEN (cont'd)

staff out there. I don't know I  
got a good feeling about this  
year.

SPLIT SCREEN

DARRYL:

Microscopic video of SPERM swimming breaching the walls of an EGG. He is born. Darryl's mom, RUBY, is carrying him, then washing him. Someone puts a baseball cap on his head. FATHER STRAWBERRY pitches a mean games in the EMPLOYER LEAGUE. Ruby straightens Darryl's shirt, takes him out walking, points to bad people doing DRUG DEALS. Ruby drops him off to waving BALLPLAYERS. Darryl plays on field with BROTHER MICHAEL and BROTHER RONNIE. Father Strawberry is sitting at table littered with beer cans, shouting at the basketball game on the television. Darryl's SISTER I and SISTER II babysit for neighbors. Brother Ronnie meets up with GANGBANGERS, Darryl watches. Darryl and BROTHER II get into fist fight with father. Darryl tosses high school shirt down and walks away. Darryl sneaks out the window with brother. Darryl tries to hang around Gangbangers, Brother Ronnie beats him up. Darryl's natural swing. Other CRENSHAW players, and the crowd is filled with SCOUTS and PRESS. Darryl's natural swing against JOHN ELWAY Ruby marvels at Darryl's basketball skills during game, asks him about newspaper proclaiming him the nation's top high school player. Darryl is drafted #1. AGENT, AGENT'S SON, and GARY TEMPLETON hang out. Darryl hovers three feet tall over PEOPLE in rural town. Darryl is on the phone with Ruby and his sisters. Darryl walks around town with STARVIN' MARVIN. Darryl eat dinner with COACH'S FAMILY. Darryl is down in Caracas -- he hits homerrun -- he gets pelted with stones and bricks -- a kid runs up with a helmet, but Darryl's waves him off and comes trotting in. JIM FREY counsels Darryl .Darryl's strikes out looking bad three at-bats. Darryl meets with LISA STRAWBERRY, at a LAKERS GAME. Darryl's loopy swing sends a few homerruns out of a variety of MAJOR LEAGUE PARKS.

DOC:

Microscopic video of SPERM swimming breaching the walls of an EGG. FATHER GOODEN shows three-year-old Dwight the Braves game on television. Dwight goes to little league world series. Dwight plays crap with father. Father Gooden grabs lawnmower from, son, slapping his baseball mitt into his stomach with a grin. Gooden, a freshman, pitching against LITTLE LEAGUERS. Gooden against HIGH SCHOOLERS. Gooden meets up with DEALER HAWK by his big black car in the high school parking lots. Dealer Hawk motions Gooden into the car, drives to a projects, sends Gooden up. Gooden walks up stairs. Gooden gets beat up, and Dealer Hawk hangs up pay phone. Dwight, wearing Univ. of Miami hat, huddles with

TAMPA TRIBUNE reporters to watch news of draft come in on ticker. Dwight in minors, tries some DIP offered to him, looks sick, spits it out, and washes his mouth out with a gallon of water. MINOR LEAGUE COACH comes out to mound, and his body language questions Dwight's struggles against such inferior foes. Dwight kicks it into high gear. Davey watches a Dwight pitch, and then calls personnel office. Dwight's birth certificate is brought out. Yup, only 17.

1983 METS:

Sometimes Cashen, sometimes the previous seasons' awful play.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

1984

Dwight stands in mostly silent dugout.

Darryl strolls up.

DWIGHT

First game in the bigs: Just like spring training, right?

DARRYL

Not exactly, but you'll be fine. You'll have bad innings at some point, and they're going to boo. But you get used to it. And screw 'em anyway right. You're like me, Dwight, you got a lot of talent and want to use it. You're here for a reason. They don't bring brothers like us up to shine shoes.

DAVEY

(To Assistant Coach)

See that over there? That's the future. Darryl on offense and Doc on defense. That's the new Mets.

DARRYL

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is: just go out there and show 'em what a brother like you is built out of, Doc.

Davey strolls over as Dwight peels away from Darryl.

DAVEY

You ready, kid?

DWIGHT

I'm ready for whatever you want me  
to do, Davey...

April 7, 1984: Dwight Gooden allows one run in five innings in his ML debut, earning the win in the Mets' 3-2 victory over Houston. At 19, he is the youngest National League player.

BLACK SCREEN BACKGROUND

1984 TOPPS or WHATEVER BRAND Cards of Dwight and Darryl. Each comes alive with a great game and then they start to float stage right, and are followed by recentangle (each oft-kilter in the opposite direction) with highlights of great games for both between April 7 and All-Star game.

DAVEY

I better go get him. Strict orders  
not to use him up. Sorry guys.

Cut to Jim Frey, in Cub's uniform.

FREY

You're asking me what I think of  
Gooden's poise? The guy has a  
93-mile-per-hour fastball and one  
of the best curves in baseball and  
you ask me about his poise? What  
the hell does he need poise for?

Cut to Kiner's Korner.

KINER

So tell me Darryl, what...

DWIGHT

Excuse me, Mr. Kiner. It's Dwight.  
Or Doc...

INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

TRAINER'S ROOM

Dwight is icing shoulder after game.

FLASHBACK

Gooden plays catch with his dad as a kid, which wasn't so long ago.

Gooden plays third base in high school.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Davey walks in, bleary-eyed.

DWIGHT  
Can you believe it Davey?

DAVEY  
I'll believe anything with you  
around, Doc. You got the touch.

DWIGHT  
Right...

DAVEY  
You'll be a great All-Star. You're  
already a great Met.  
(Pause)  
Hey listen, don't stay here too  
later. Go home and get some sleep.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. BAR - NIGHT

1984

RANDOM STADIUM

Darryl and Dwight get introduced for All-Star Game

DWIGHT  
Holy shit.

BAR

Darryl and Dwight stand together sipping booze, surrounded  
by All-Stars, groupies, and hanger-ons.

DARRYL  
You know what I was thinking  
about? The first time we met...

DWIGHT  
In the outfield at Miller Huggins?

DARRYL

Yeah, you had looked scared  
shitless. Whole spring training  
you couldn't even look anyone in  
the eye.

DWIGHT

You know what you said to me? When  
you first met me? You said: You  
know what your problem is Doc? You  
don't look like a big-league  
ballplayer. You don't talk like  
one. Man, you don't even walk like  
one. Look at you, you got your  
head all down like you're  
embarrassed to be here.

DARRYL

Know what I also said?

DWIGHT

What?

DARRYL

I said you're alright, Doc.

DWIGHT

No, I think you said 'go get me  
some water, rookie.'

DWIGHT

We're good this year, Straw. Not  
just you and me, I mean the team.  
It's like an express train, and  
we're on it.

DARRYL

Yeah, I got to admit, it's pretty  
cool. Can you believe this? We're  
playing good ball, screwing up  
some other teams? It's a lot  
better than last year.

DWIGHT

It's messed up, man. I wake some  
mornings, and think about pinching  
myself because it's like a dream.  
One day you're striking out high  
school sophomores, the next day  
you're on your way to rookie  
league, the next day you're in the  
majors. That's how it feels.

Two FINE CHICKS walk up.

DARRYL

Well, let's what we can wait up  
tomorrow morning to...

(To Fine Chicks)

Ladies, anyone want to meet an  
All-Star, a man who's only a boy.  
And, his very grown-up friend.

One whispers into the other's ear.

DARRYL

Don't worry I won't bite. And I'm  
buying... only right thing to do  
for such a fine pair of beauties.

INT. DARRYL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Darryl and Lisa lay naked in bed.

DARRYL

Listen, Lisa. There's something I  
think you should know... I love  
you and want you to be with me,  
like forever.

LISA

Come on, Darling. Who am I to you?

DARRYL

You're the only one woman for me,  
Lisa you know that.

(Smiles, reaching  
down)

Everything's been feeling great  
since I met you.

LISA

Oh, Darryl. I hope you mean it.

DARRYL

No, I definitely mean it.

LISA

I don't know why they say you  
don't hustle, Darryl. You're going  
to great no matter what. I'm going  
to be your woman, and take care of  
all of that other stuff.



INT. THREE RIVERS STADIUM - DAY

FLASHBACK

KEITH walks over to CATERER. He exchanges cash for BAG OF COKE.

KEITH

Good stuff? Yeah? Thank you, sir.  
Good doing business with you.

Keith returns to reality.

DANNY HEAP, DOUG SISK, and Jesse

JESSE

You coming out with the Scum Bunch  
tonight, Straw?

DARRYL

You know it boys. Don't know what  
ones does in Pittsburgh, but you  
tell me.

JESSE

We'll make up something to do is  
what we'll do, yeah?

Game is lost; suns sets, comes up on field.

Keith is stretching out on lockerroom bench, smoking a CIGARETTE, and talking to reporters.

KEITH

The thing is some people on this  
team, and I'm not naming names  
here but you can image who I'm  
talking about, these people are  
not playing up to their potential.

REPORTERS

You talking about Strawberry, Mex?

KEITH

Straw, yeah, and some other  
people. A couple of guys who have  
the talent, but just don't seem to  
want to get their butt in gear.  
It's still anybody's race, but  
it's not your race if you're going  
to be loafing out there.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

Dwight strikes out tons of batters.

The Ks go up.

Darryl hits home runs, doubles, etc.

CROWD

Dar-ryl, Dar-ryl.

INT. GOODEN'S PARENT'S - DAY

Dinner is being prepared by MOTHER GOODEN.

Father Gooden is strolling around kitchen. College football is on TV.

FATHER GOODEN

Leave the child alone in there  
Ella. He's been working all  
summer.

MOTHER GOODEN

I tell you what, though, he will  
be coming to dinner. His sister's  
coming and bringing Gary.

FATHER GOODEN

I'm sure the boy'll be up by then.

Dwight wakes up. He goes into bathroom and stares at self in bathroom mirror. Mirror turns into magazine covers that he has been on. He showers, rubs his shoulder.

He walks out to see a full family, not quite ready for dinner.

INT. RUBY'S HOUSE - DAY

EXT. TAMPA BURGER KING - NIGHT

Dwight is at skating rink, hanging out with ANOTHER GIRL, laughing as FRIENDS, including a young Sheffield, goof off. Dwight looks out at people skating.

Dwight and Another Girl get into his car. They wing around parking lot to Burger King drive up. Monica is taking orders.

DWIGHT

Hey, how's your family? Everything good with your brothers?

MONICA

Yeah... fine ... you know...

DWIGHT

Yeah... ?

MONICA

Yeah...

DWIGHT

Good. What about you?

MONICA

The same... you know... You know how it is Dwight. Listen, you going to let me take your order or something? You come here to eat or what?

DWIGHT

(Pauses)

Monica, I known you a long time, When are we going to hook up?

MONICA

(Nodding at  
Another Girl, in  
the car)

I don't think we're going out anytime soon

DWIGHT

Just a friend.

MONICA

Yeah... ?

DWIGHT

(Grinning)

Yeah, you know...

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

1985

DWIGHT mows down more batters.

RIGHT FIELDER and CENTER FIELDER playfully shout at Darryl.  
Darryl shrugs.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

'When a guy gets to the ballpark at five-thirty, six o'clock at night and he's sending somebody out for a burger or chicken and it's his first meal of the day, that's a sign of trouble,' says Steve Garland, a former Met trainer.  
'And that happened a lot.'

INT. GOODEN'S LONG ISLAND HOME - DAY

Lenny and Gooden sit on the couch, drinking beers.

LENNY

Hey, man thanks again for having me.

DWIGHT

Dont' even say it, cuz. You'd do the same for me.

LENNY

You fucking think?

LENNY

Yeah I fucking think.

They watch television.

LENNY

I wish there was some goddam real television on at this hour. What do you they want you getting up to trouble?

Phone rings.

BAR

INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - DAY

1985

Dwight is driving through suburbs.

DARRYL (V.O.)

What the fuck Lisa?

LISA (V.O.)  
 You asking me what the fuck?  
 That's exactly what I should be  
 asking you lying piece of shit.

DARRYL (V.O.)  
 Honestly, Lisa, you had better  
 calm down because you are not  
 right on this one.

He pulls up to Darryl's house. Honks. Darryl comes out.

DWIGHT  
 Yo, Straw.

DARRYL  
 Yo.

They drive around in silence. Darryl is fuming. Car is  
 tracking underpass that leads to Shea.

DARRYL  
 Doc, turn around. I'm going back  
 home.

DWIGHT  
 Straw, we're here. We've got a  
 game in a few hours.

DARRYL  
 I don't care. Take me back. I  
 ain't finished with her.

DWIGHT  
 Listen, man, I'm going into the  
 clubhouse. You want to go home,  
 I'll give you the car drive  
 yourself back.

DARRYL  
 Thanks man.

DWIGHT  
 She's making you fucking crazy,  
 Straw, you realize that?

INT. DODGER'S STADIUM - NIGHT

Food fight before the game.

Mets lose to Dodgers.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Lenny jokes around, Scum Bunch tosses shit at him. Players drink.

DARRYL

You know I love LA, but I can't wait to get back so real New York action, you know what I'm saying?

(Sarcasticly)

Where do you think Carter's going out first? Hey Kid, you going out on to any parties on the off day? Think maybe I can come along? Or are you too young and innocent to get in anywhere Kid.

KEITH

All right, settle down back there, Straw Man.

DARRYL

(To whoever)

What does he think, he owns this team? Fuck. Pass me a beer?

Doc walks toward front of the plane to Keith, sitting alone in aisle.

JESSE

Ehhh... what's up, Doc?

He leans into Keith, nervous. Keith is nursing a BEER.

DWIGHT

Why don't lay off a bit on Darryl, Mex?

GEORGE FOSTER looks back.

KEITH

Somebody's got to keep his butt in gear.

DWIGHT

Don't you think the press is doing a good enough job of that. I mean even without your help.

KEITH

Listen, Doc, sit down.

Dwight sits down.

KEITH

What are you kid, 20, yet?  
Darryl's not much older than you,  
but he's old enough to know better  
than to rock the boat all the  
time.

DWIGHT

Come on Keith, that's just Straw,  
you know that. It's like you were  
getting on the Scummies for  
drinking.

KEITH

Dwight, there's one thing I know:  
I don't care what you're doing so  
long as it doesn't effect things  
on the field. Maybe, it's a fact  
of life actually, that no one  
does. You got to keep focused.

DWIGHT

So...

KEITH

You know what I'm saying...  
Darryl's being a jackass and  
loafing around may be just what it  
is for him, but it can definitely  
cross the line.

DWIGHT

I'm not telling you to not tell  
him to lay off the guy, but... you  
know, try not to belittle him.

KEITH

Trust me, I'm not trying to stop  
the kid, any more than I wouldn't  
want you to succeed to fullest,  
Doc. Long after I'm good they'll  
be saying as goes Darryl so goes  
the Mets.

Darryl is in the back, acting like a jackass.

INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

1986

KID buys three packs of baseball cards. He finds Dwight and  
then Darryl. Looks at back in awe, which we see:

INT. LOCKERROOM - DAY

1986 OPENING DAY

KEITH

How you guys feeling? I feel like feeling good. It's pretty, rad, the kind of team we've got.

DWIGHT

You know, Mex, I feel pretty good, too.

KEITH

Nice... nice...

KEITH

Listen, Darryl. We're really counting on you, but let me know.

DARRYL

You going to keep badmouthing me to the press?

KEITH

Knuckleface, just keep your head in the game.

Darryl hits home run. Mookie, Keith, Gary, Doc, and the rest of the team great Darryl at home plate. He is filled with pure joy, and wears a big unangry grin.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

DARRYL

Hey Richard. Whatcha doing Richard. Mr. Richard Head, you enjoying yourself, tonight? Sure is a big Richard Head we got on our team.

LENNY

Tuff, how's that hammy doing?

Lenny starts opening and closing fist, making loud kissing noises.

LENNY

Yeah, baby milk that leg. Milk it good.



TEUFFEL

(Laughing)

Why don't you go fuck yourself,  
Len?

DWIGHT

Don't you think he would if he  
could, Richard?

KEITH

Yeah, Richard, if you figure that  
one out tell me.

Time passes. Pranks are pulled. Lights go down, people fall asleep. Darryl is still drinking in the back, drinking with Dwight.

Strawberry could be mean and antagonistic, especially from his usual spot in the back of the team bus. He would shout loud enough so that Johnson, sitting in the first row, could hear him. He once ridiculed Johnson so viciously for not giving enough playing time to outfielder Mookie Wilson that Johnson had to fight back an urge to run to the rear of the bus and pummel Strawberry.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clock strikes 4 a.m.

LISA

Great... so Mr. Basbeball finally  
gets a homestand and this is what  
his family gets... Do you know  
what time it is?

DARRYL

Ah come on, baby, you know I love  
seeing you...

LISA

You're not here 80% of the time.

DARRYL

I can't help that, I'm a  
ballplayer baby.

DARRYL

This is being a ballplayer... It's  
amazing that they don't give you  
guys all barf bags to play with.

DARRYL

You said you'd be asleep.

LISA

You think I know how to set this alarm clock?

DARRYL JR. is sleeping peacefully.

Darryl comforts Lisa.

DARRYL

You're right, I didn't... I'm sorry. And, you know what? Straw is going to spend more time at home for now on, I swear.

LISA

I could just use some help, you know...

DARRYL

Let me take him.

LISA

I'm going to get some ice cream, you want any? It's that new Rocky Road stuff.

Darryl sits with Jr., a bowl of ICE CREAM is on the coffee table.

LISA

Gooden's looking pretty good so far, this year... Everyone, really.

DARRYL

Yeah, I just wish the press would stop bitchin every time I don't get a hit. Why they got to be dissing me every time?

INT. ASTRODOME - DAY

1986 ALL-STAR GAME

Either on field or in clubhouse.

DARRYL

Chris?

CHRIS BROWN

Darryl?

DARRYL

Brother come here...

They embrace.

DARRYL

Homeboys of Creenshaw together again.

CHRIS BROWN

Took a little longer, but I got here.

DARRYL

Man, what you been up to?

CHRIS BROWN

You know, got married to that chick from Creenshaw, I was always dating...

DARRYL

Nah...

CHRIS BROWN

Had a son, a junior, got a divorce, playing some third baseman.

DARRYL

Play it good, too. Not much has changed there... Anyway, you know, I know all that... Hey you talk all the guys much. Coridie, the twins, Carl..

CHRIS BROWN

You know how it is. Every once in a while.

DARRYL

Listen, what are you doing tonight? You want to go out with Lisa and me, catch up?

CHRIS BROWN

Sorry... Darryl... I got a girl here, I'm supposed to take her out.

DARRYL

What are you talking about? Bring her along. I flew some buddies in, and we're going out later, you know after dinner or whatever. It'll be fun. Come on, we'll make fun of Coach Hurst.

CHILI DAVIS strolls in.

CHILI

There are you...

CHRIS BROWN

Darryl you know Chili, much?

DARRYL

A little. How's it going Chili; you cool?

CHILI

Actually, I just remember some important advice I had tell your old teammate, you want to help me convince him?

CHRIS BROWN

What is it?

CHILI

Ok, it's this: Whatever you do, don't swing at the first pitch if you get a chance to pinch hit. Make it last.

CHRIS BROWN

Seriously, that's what you had to tell me?

CHILI

I'm telling you, a couple of year back I made the team, traveled to game instead of doing a little vacation or something, practiced, then waited innings for my licks. Then I swung on the goddam first pitch, and grounded like a pussy to short.

DARRYL

Seems like good advice man.

Dwight strolls in.

DWIGHT

Yo, Straw. Come on, we got to do some picture shit. You know how pissed off Jay'll be.

DARRYL

Shit, thanks man.  
(To Chili and  
Chirs)

I'll see you guys, Chris think about going out. Call you girl.

All-star game starts.

Dwight and Darryl sit on bench, goofing.

Chris Brown is sent up against CHARLIE HOUGH. he smashes ball against wall. He coasting into second. He looks into dugout.

Darryl is on the top step, shouting inaudibly. Chili is doubled over with laughter.

Limo in front of hotel. Chirs and DATE sit in limo; Chris checks watch. Darryl and Lisa get in, arguing slightly. It gets ugly. Darryl somewhat threatens Lisa with violence. Chris, appologizing and promising to meet them, gets out of the limo.

No Darryl or Lisa at club.

Darryl shows up at hotel bar.

when he returned to their room he found Lisa had chained the door shut. He banged furiously on the door as they screamed at each other. When she finally opened the door, Darryl uncorked a punch to her nose that sent her to a hospital.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Dwight pulls out a bottle of STOLLY VODKA.

DWIGHT

Mitch, do you... do your remember that night in your apartment, with, the cat, and everything?

MITCHELL'S GIRLFRIEND

(V.O.)

JESUS!

MITCHELL

I told Dwight, we don't remember any of that. Nothing happened.

DWIGHT

Yeah?

MITCHELL

Thanks.

DWIGHT

Sure thing.

INT. ASTRODOME - DAY

Pandemonium in clubhouse after victory. BACKMAN shouts, "Who!" Mitchell grabs Ojeda, douses him with CHAMPAGNE. Ojeda douses Sisk. Sisk douses Aguleira, who douses Gooden, who gets Backman. ARTHUR RICHMAN, the traveling secretary tries to get people dressed. Floor is strewn with crushed cans and empty bottles.

CASHEN

The World Series bus is leaving!  
Anyone not on it gets left behind!

Bus rolls on with beers flowing, champagne being polished off, even Davey is indulging.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

GAME ONE, 1986 WORLD SERIES

Ball rolls through Teuffel's legs, costing Mets the game.

GAME TWO, 1986 WORLD SERIES

Keith misplays a bunt by Clemens.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Gooden listening to headphones. Signals to waitress he wants a drink.

Time passes. She is back in the area, without the drink.

DWIGHT

(Impatiently)

Hey, do you think I can get that drink or what?

DARRYL

Doc, you think she's your servant or something?

DWIGHT

Hey, man, all I want is a beer.

DARRYL

Then wait your turn, man. She's busy, can't you see that?

DWIGHT

Why don't you mind your own business, cuz? I ain't talking to you.

DARRYL

(Rising)

It is my business.

They scuffle, looking serious.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Lenny is walking around looking crazed in dugout.

He walks out to plate, his a homerun.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

FLASHBACK

Darryl's house. Lisa was thinking about moving out.

RUBY (V.O.)

It's like I told you. Like I been tellin' you. Like I'm gonna keep on tellin' you every time you from New York. You ain't gonna get nothin' fixed over the phone while you in New York playin' ball and she out here watchin' you onna TV. You kids just gonna start fighting again and somebody's gonna hurt somebody and you got a lilte boy to watch out out for. You wanna tlak to Lisa. You get done with your game and get yaw butt home. Darryl, you to grow up.

## GAME 6, 1986 WORLD SERIES

## KISS by PRINCE

The Sox take a quick 2-0 lead off Ojeda, scoring single runs in each of the first two innings. The Mets answer, scoring two of their own in the bottom half of the fifth. The Sox put another run on the board in the seventh, chasing Ojeda from the game. Lead 3-2 until the eighth inning,

McNamara takes Clemens out.

DAVEY

Darryl.

DARRYL

I know, I know. Don't worry.

DAVEY

I'm sorry. You're out.

Darryl walks away, looks out at field.

DARRYL

Aw come' on. Fuck man.

In the bottom of the ninth the Mets get a runner to second base with one out. Manager Davey Johnson chooses not to bunt him to third, a move that backfires when Lee Mazzilli flies to right, which would have been the sac fly that scored the winning run. Instead, the Mets strand the runner, and regulation ends with the score knotted at three.

Cut to the tenth inning. Mets star reliever Rick Aguilera takes to the hill, looking to preserve the tie for the hometown Mets. Dave Henderson ends all hopes with a leadoff home run to put the Sox up 4-3. Two outs later, Marty Barrett sends a single through the infield that scores Wade Boggs to put the Sox up 5-3.

When Wally Backman and Keith Hernandez fly out to start the bottom of the tenth inning, Aguilera holds his head in despair. Just one more out, and the underdog Red Sox will have won their first World Series in 68 years. The Mets, who won the NL East by 21 1/2 games, who triumphed over the Houston Astros in the NLCS, who were heavily favored by everyone to win the World Series, will fail because of Aguilera.

The center field scoreboard momentarily reads "Congratulations Red Sox". Two NBC announcers are rehearsing with Sox owner John Harrington, who will accept the trophy



on behalf of his team. Dead silence falls over the 55,000 at Shea Stadium.

But then Gary Carter singles to left, and Kevin Mitchell, who was undressing in the locker room when called upon to pinch hit, bloop one to center. Schiraldi gets ahead of Ray Knight 0-2, but Knight lines a single to center, scoring Carter, and sending Mitchell to third. In comes Bob Stanley - the "Steamer" - the Red Sox top closer to face Mookie Wilson, with two runners on and the game hanging in the balance. Get an out... the Red Sox win it all... give up a run... go to the eleventh inning... give up more than a run... well, let's not even start thinking about a Game Seven just yet.

An epic battle ensues between Stanley and Wilson. Stanley throws two balls, then fights back, forcing Wilson to foul off two tough pitches to even the count at 2-2. After Wilson fouls off another pitch, Stanley delivers what is officially scored as a wild pitch. Most people think catcher Rich Gedman should have caught the ball. Regardless of the official scoring, the play has the same result:

The Mets tie the score at 5-5. This is important to remember, because regardless of what happens from this point, the score has been tied.

With the count 3-2, the battle continues. Wilson hits a pop foul into the stands, and then lines one down the third base line just foul. On the next pitch, Wilson hits a slow roller down the first base line. Bill Buckner, who had been taken out of every previous World Series game for defensive replacement Dave Stapleton, hustles over into position for the ball.... which dribbles through his legs. Ray Knight, who had moved up to second on the wild pitch, rounds third and heads for home, jumping up and down the whole way. The New York Mets mob him at home plate. They've just forced a Game Seven, and with momentum on their side, there's no way they'll mess up this second chance.

Lockerroom is pure joy.

Cashen is being interviewed by REPORTER.

CASHEN

I mean, what can you say? This is what it's all about, right?

Randy Nieman douses him in champagne.

CASHEN

You know, it's always the guys who contribute the least who spray the most champagne.

INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - NIGHT

Monica and Dwight are leaving Gooden's parents house.

DWIGHT'S MOM and DWIGHT'S DAD see them off.

DWIGHT

Let's take separate cars to dinner. I don't want you to have to come all the way back here, and I'm supposed to swing by Pete's (??) later anyway.

MONICA

(Kissing him)

Sure, whatever.

They pull off. Dwight lets himself miss a red light she makes. He turns the car. He drives into seedy area, stops at a friend's, picks up some coke, does a quick line, then leaves.

He pulls into a restaurant parking lot next to Monica's car.

MONICA

What the hell happened to you? I've been here for like an hour-and-a-half. I was getting pretty worried. I was about to leave.

DWIGHT

You won't believe this baby, I got a fucking flat out of no where. You'd think I've spent enough on that car to never get flats, right? So anyway, this older brother pulls over when he sees I'm on the side of the road, and he's all like, 'Doc, Doc. You know who you are, you're Dwight Gooden. So, what's happening here? What a flat tire? You gotta let me help you. I got a jack, hold on' And, we started to put the spare on, only he didn't know what he was

(MORE)

DWIGHT (cont'd)  
 doing, and stuff, and then we finally got it on, you know, and I gave him an autograph and everything on his copy of the Times, which was all he had, and came here.

MONICA  
 You're acting weird. You weren't really with another girl having dinner were you? You always disappear like this...

DWIGHT  
 Other woman? What other woman? Listen, I'm sorry I got a flat. I'm here now. Let's order dinner? Ok? You order yet? What looks good?

Food comes, they chat, Dwight waves at some fans staring at him. He only picks at his lobster.

INT. FRIEND'S CAR - DAY

Gooden gets in notices a .38 CALIBER PISTOL by feet of driver, RANDOM DOC FRIEND 1.

DWIGHT  
 What's that for?

RANDOM DOC FRIEND  
 We're going to fuck up the first cop who fucks with us.

RANDOM DOC FRIEND 2  
 Yeah, a little surprise.  
 Motherfuckers.

Car rolls down the street.

DWIGHT  
 Stop the car. You heard me. Stop, I'm getting out.

Car waits a moment as Dwight paces for a second. He sticks head back in.

DWIGHT  
 I can't do it.

INT. SMITHERS - DAY

Dwight arrives at La Guardia, a gray van picks him up off the tarmac, drops him off at Smithers, walks through the front doors, with his head down as reporters shout.

CRACKHEAD walks by, scratching himself only a little less than furiously.

NURSE

Right this way.

NURSE checks Dwight in. He is taken to a small bed, a nightstand and lamp, in a room with three other people. He gets up at 7 A.M., does chore of cleaning out garbages. He sits in on lecture. He eats a bad lunch. He does group therapy, and one-on-one. He reads, he writes to explores his feeling.

CRACKHEAD

Fuck man. There ain't one needle-free spot on my body, except my neck. And I shoot heroin into that, too.

CRACKHEAD

I been using for six days once. Didn't sleep a wink. Coke, rock; rock, whatever, it didn't matter.

CRACKHEAD

And so then I would have to ask myself: Has it really been two days since I ate? And when's the last time I took a shower? Three-and-days ago? Shit, something weren't right with me, you know?

DWIGHT

I'd, you know, didn't really do it at all until this year, and then it got bad.

NURSE

How much were you using?

DWIGHT

I don't know... really... mostly a parties, with the booze and the girls and the music... At least once a week, but not much more than that.

CRACKHEAD

C'mon man, Doc, you're lying.

CRACKHEAD

You wouldn't be lying to us?  
There's a reason you're here, son.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

Darryl pulls into to parking lot, then walks gauntlet of REPORTERS.

REPORTERS

(Following him,  
some dropping)

Darrl, Darryl!?!? What do you  
think Straw? Should we fear for  
you, should we fear for you, too?

DARRYL

(Charming)

Come on, man. I was not raised  
like that. You all have got to lay  
off. How'd you like if it I was  
doing this to y'all?

Darryl takes some baseballs and signs them. He walks out the clubhouse, goes over to stands, and he starts signing. He enters the clubhouse.

Keith is hanging out at his locker. MCCARVER talks to Ron Darling.

MCCARVER

Thanks for the time, Ron. You have  
a good game today, all right.

(Turning to Darryl)

Straw... How's it's going ...

MCCARVER

Thanks for the time, Ron. You have  
a good game today, all right.

(Turning to Darryl)

Straw... How's it's going ...

DARRYL

S'ok.

MCCARVER

Great. great. You thinking about  
maybe planning in a little more?

DARRYL  
C'mon, man. Leave that shit alone.

Keith looks on chuckling.

MCCARVER  
You know, Darryl. No reason you  
got to be camped up near the  
warning track. I'm going to  
mention it to Ralph again.

DARRYL  
Mex, you belive this?

Keith waves him off.

DARRYL  
Don't you worry about me, Mr. Bob  
Uecker, or whoever you think you  
are.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - DAY

LISA  
Great, looks who it is...

DARRYL  
Why is there some strange car in  
the driveway filled with bags. Is  
there guy here?

LISA  
You weren't home. So I had the  
nanny watch Darryl Jr. and went  
shopping.

LISA  
I went car-shopping, too. I'm  
going to need you to take the bags  
in some of them were to heavy.

DARRYL  
In somebody else's car?

DARRYL  
Jesus, Lisa. Can't you stop  
shopping for a minute?

LISA  
Can't you stop drinking for a  
minute?

Darryl smacks Lisa.

DARRYL

You know what the planner said?  
We've got cars...

DARRYL

You're a rotten man, Straw. You  
know that. Been rotting since the  
day I met you.

DARRYL

He kept it down. You'll wake him  
up.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

On another day Mackey Sasser, a Met catcher troubled by an embarrassing hitch in his throwing motion, was not as restrained. He charged Strawberry and came away from the assault with blood gushing from his nose . 'Darryl always thought (ragging on people) was funny,' Magadan says. 'But a lot of times it was vicious. And he wasn't always drunk. A lot of times it was on the bus right after a game.'

TEUFFEL

I'm warning you straw. I don't  
like this crap, and I'm not going  
to put up with it anymore.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

CHOCOLATE STRAWBERRY by Darryl Strawberry is still playing.

In STUDIO, Darryl and ???his brother and other???. Highlight film. Darryl raps over it.

DARRYL

My name is Darryl, I'm a baseball  
player/One thing I forgot to  
say-a/When I'm on the field I'm on  
top of the world/I get screams  
from all the girls/(Dar-ryl!)/  
Everybody in the stadium, screams  
for me/Strike one, strike two, but  
no strike three/When I'm runnin,  
all the players make space/I run,  
I slide, and then I'm safe/"Cause  
you're DEF!" Yo, I ain't soft/I  
even get paid on my days  
off/Grandslammer, "Are you as good  
(MORE)

DARRYL (cont'd)  
 as they, say?"/I guess you never  
 came to see me play/Any pitch you  
 throw I control it/I took it while  
 you wasn't lookin'/So give me your  
 beef, homeboy I'm cookin'/I can  
 get loose so don't you try/I  
 graduated from Crenshaw High/  
 You can even ask Eric 'Boogie' E

RUN DMC  
 My name is Darryl, but you can  
 call me D, hit it!

DWIGHT  
 The cat's in the bag, and the  
 bag's in the river.

DARRYL  
 Lisa? She's moved back to  
 California.

CRACKHEAD  
 Hey Straw. ain't you supposed to  
 be at the ballpark?

DARRYL  
 Used to be I was just playing for  
 myself. Now, I'm playing for you,  
 and all the rest of them. I've  
 stopped playing for me, like I  
 have all my life. It's hard thing,  
 I don't matter anymore.

EXT. TEAM PICTURE - DAY

1988

PLANE HOME

CROWD  
 (Laughing)  
 I don't know maybe I'll go golfing  
 for a couple weeks, what do you  
 think? Or more importantly what do  
 you think my wife'll think?

DARRYL  
 Bunch of pussies up there...  
 better shut their fucking  
 mouths... anyone got a problem  
 with that?



## TRAINING CAMP

PHOTOGRAPHER

Now if you too could just squeeze  
in a little.

DARRYL

I ain't sitting this close to this  
motherfucking backstabber.

KEITH

Honestly, Darryl, just shut your  
damn mouth and let's get this over  
with.

DARRYL

I mean, honestly, what the fuck,  
man? Now you got mess with my  
contract situation?

KEITH

Why don't you mind your own  
business, boy? Get a new team if  
you can't be part of this one.

DARRYL

I know who won't be there ... and  
I'm including Big Mac over there  
because I ain't taking anyone who  
sucked you off, Mex. I want at  
least a fair chance of winning the  
MVP on it without your  
gaylord-side getting in the way.

Punches fly.

DARRYL

I've been tired of you for years!

## INT. HARBOR PARK - DAY

The program is in session. Darryl, Chris Brown, ERIC DAVIS,  
BARRY LARKIN, DAVID JUSTICE, SHAWON DUNSTON, coast up in  
Benzes and BMXs, work out lightly, goof around. Other  
BASEBALL PLAYERS take swings, field grounders, shagging fly  
balls.

CARL JONES

Hey, guys it's me, Carl Jones, how  
you guys doing?

DARRYL

Good? You good Carl?

CHRIS BROWN

Yeah, you got to tell us what's up with everyone.

CARL JONES

Derwin's over there; you guys should say hi to him.

DARRYL

Hold up. I think I got to do a little hitting.

Darryl hits three massive shot. Eric hits a couple of slightly less massive shot and liner. Then progressively younger and less skilled BATTERS, with DERWIN MCNEAL before high schoolers.

Darryl, Eric, and Chris take off in Darryl's car. Talking with them Carl jumps in. They go to Chris' mother's house, and, except for Carl, shower, and exit in fresh clothers.

They head to Lakers game. Darryl stops car at Western and Exposition, near the Forum. He opens his wallet, and his fishes out a twenty. turns and gives it to Carl.

DARRYL

Listen, man. Take a taxi or something home, but you got to get out. I mean, look at you, you're in no shape to go out in public even, homes.

In the parking lot.

CHRIS BROWN

You kidding me Darryl? What did you do that for? There's big footing and then too much.

DARRYL

Whatever.. there was no way he could have come in. It was impossible.

CHRIS BROWN

Bro?

DARRYL

Come on.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

DARRYL

Buddy, can we talk? Don't worry not about my contract. I'm pretty pissed off about that, but I'm here right now, and I want to win. It's just that I don't know what kind of role I should have here. I'm Darryl, not Keith.

BUDDY

What kind of role do you want.

DARRYL

I'm a member of the Mets family, I have been for years. I'm a leader in the Mets family, but I don't think the Mets want me. And so I don't want them.

BUDDY

It's simple. Show them how to win on the field. You're the natural leader of this team. They will follow you if you perform well.

Another day, Darryl is tryin gto whip up some enthusiasm.

DARRYL

Christ, we got to better than half those teams. We all got to start playing, you know concentrating, not letting any distractions get in the way... We got a lot of season left...

BUDDY

Darryl, can I talk to you for a minute?

BUDDY

Darryl, I know that Jose's contract got you down (FUDGE TIMING), but what's holding you back on the field, what's keeping you from showing instead of telling the other guys how to win? Why not just show Frank and the rest of them how much you're worth on the field.

DARRYL

I bring it with me, Bud, the pressure. I bring it everywhewre. They teach you in Smithers how to have an inner security, you know rehab helps with that. But I just can't stand that tthey treat me with the same kind of respect. How come I'm not paid like Donnie Baseball? What am I supposed to think about that?

BUDDY

What did they tell you to do wiht your feelings in rehab?

DARRYL

They help you understand them.

BUDDY

And what are you feeling toward the pitchers who are making you hit grounders and strike out?

DARRYL

You know I'm angry as hell as that picther, but I'm holding it in and I don't know why.

BUDDY

Don't hold it in anymore. Get intesne. Get mad. But get mad at the other guy instead of at yourself for holding it in.

Darryl dominates. 18-game hitting streak. Mets reach first.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ERIC DAVIS

Hello? Straw?

DARRYL

Yeah, Eric? Whuzz up? You know what time it is?

ERIC DAVIS

You'll read about it this morning in the papers.

DARRYL

Read about what?

ERIC DAVIS

The Mets broke off negotiations.

DARRYL

I'm hitting .415. The whole club's come alive. What are they crazy?

ERIC DAVIS

They say they won't go above nine and a half and won't agree to anything beyond a three-year contract. At least not for now.

DARRYL

They've dicked me around the whole year. Christ. Now what I am supposed to do?

ERIC DAVIS

Just do what you've been doin'. They're playing chicken. They're betting you won't file for free agency because you're afraid of what's going to happen when you don't get offers from other teams.

DARRYL

FUCK

ERIC DAVIS

I said the same thing. Just don't get too pissed off when you read today's papers.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - DAY

January 26, 1990

Lisa comes in. Clock shows 3 o'clock. CAN OF BEER sits on the table.

DARRYL

Where were you?

LISA

Oh come on, Darryl. Don't give me that crap.

DARRYL

Why not?

LISA

Because if you want to give somebody that crap, give it to that slut we're goin going all this money, too. You realize that, Darryl, you're dick's coming cost us, cost you real son, so don't give me some crap for going out with my friends. Lord knows we got enough stares because of you.

DARRYL

Shut up already Lisa. You want to keep fight about this for the next two days?

LISA

Sure. Sure. You know why?

LISA

Because you've fucking ruined us Darryl. You need to wait until the news comes on prove it. Darryl, you're a fucking joke, know that?

DARRYL

If you're so worried about the money, or whatever, made so shouldn't spent so much on you're fucking outfits, you fucking bitch.

They keep fighting up and down the sta

LISA

I wish you'd just get the fuck out here already! We don't a need a father like that. You're nothing but a loser Darryl. A fucking nigger Crenshaw loser. YOU KNOW THAT DARRYL! YOU'RE A LOSER! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO ON THE FIELD, YOU'RE A FUCKING LOSER AS A FATHER, YOU'RE A LOSER AS A HUSBAND, FUCK YOU'RE EVEN A LOSER AS BASTARD'S FATHER. You fucking deadbeat.

Darryl cracks Lisa across the top of her hand with a punch. She falls bac, then slowly gets back up to her feet. The stand face-to-face. Her lip is puffy from where heel of Darryl's hand had come down.

Lisa grabs a metal rod from somewhere, and swings it like a bat at Darryl. Metal cracks across Darryl's wrists as he tries to block and into his side. He is doubled up. Lisa starts swinging again.

Darryl runs to closer, where he gets .25-caliber semiautomatic pistol. She runs after him, still swinging, tries to force him to stay in closet by poking his chest. He pulls gun out, as LISA'S MOTHER comes in.

DARRYL

I'm going to kill you bitch. I'm going to blow your brains out. Fucking cunt.

Lisa's Mother calls 911. Squadron of LAPD black-and-whites wheel around Ventura Blvd., pulls into driveway. They fan out.

POLICE OFFICER

Open up police  
(Politely, but  
with hands on  
guns and  
nightsticks)  
What's going on here? We got a call.

DWIGHT

Nothing officer. Nothing. It's late you know?

POLICE OFFICER

You ok, ma'am?

LISA

(Touching her face  
with hands)  
Yeah. Yeah, officer. Everything's fine.

POLICE OFFICER

Does it hand gun belong to you, Mr. Strawberry? May I see the permit and registration, please?

DARRYL

(Shrugs)  
Don't have one.

POLICE OFFICER

Mr. Strawberry, you're under arrest for the possession of a handgun. You have the right to  
(MORE)

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)  
remain silent. ANYthing you say  
can and will be used agsint you in  
a courrt of law. You have the  
right ot a lawyer and have him  
present with you while you are  
questioned. If cannot afford to  
hire a lawyer... one will be  
appointed to represent you before  
any questioning, if you wish. You  
can decide at any time to  
excercise these rights and not  
answer any questions or make any  
statements. Do you understand  
these rights?

POLICE OFFICER  
We'll write this all up as a  
domestic. We all have our  
problems, Straw, but no can do.  
Someone called in a weapon and  
it's already on the tape. We gotta  
make a report, homes, you know.

POLICE OFFICER  
You'll come, quietly?

DARRYL  
Yeah.

Darryl is taken downtown. They escort him ot the back of the  
car. Getting in, he winces, rubs ribs. No lights come on.

He waits at desk, making phone calls to Eric Goldschmidt,  
Alan Lans.

Within eye sight, decision go on. Lisa looks forgiving.

FLASHBACK: Young Darryl and rest of family fighting with  
father.

POLICE OFFICER  
This is going to be ok, Darryl.  
Just a "domestic" incident. We  
didn't find any drugs or anything,  
which is great, but you know, your  
wife say you may have a "drinking  
problem," and really we're not  
going to face any more charges  
from that.

LATER in the day, back at home. DR. LANS visits.



DR. LANS

Listen, Darryl, I want to help. We can intervene medically in your life. But whatever we do it has to be your decision.

DR. LANS

I can't force you to do anything. But you should stop drinking right here and now. But it has to be your decision or nothing will take.

DR. LANS

We're talking about a medical problem here, Darryl. You've got an addiction, but it's something we can fix. Whatever the public thinks, you've got to understand, your problems will respond to medical treatment. You're sick, we can make you better. You're not going to get worse. Things will be better if you let them. I'm here to make sure they do.

DARRYL

I can't do this alone.

DR. LANS

Don't worry about help. You'll get help, but you did to talk the people you've hurt. Things won't start getting better unless you go right to where you feel the most guilty right now.

Darryl walks up to Lisa. He explains things with a pleading look in his eyes. He breaks into tears, and puts his head on her shoulder.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Jan. 1991

Darryl kneels in a church as a priest reads bible.

INT. SMITHERS - DAY

Darryl walks in.

INT. GOODEN'S RENTED HOME - DAY

March 30 , 1991

Dwight stretches on Spring Training field. Cone is doing some long toss. Vince Coleman stretches down on leg.

AFTER PRACTICE

Cone talks to Cone's Girl in stands.

CONE'S GIRL  
You coming out tonight, big boy?

CONE  
Can't, doll face.

CONE'S GIRL  
Yeah? We can go to Winn Dixie again, get some BBQ, drinks some beers, a bottle of wine... and you know... again...

CONE  
Tomorrow. Ok?

CONE'S GIRL  
Ok... I'll miss you.  
(As Cone walks away)  
Remember soon enough we're going to be packing you up for up north.

BANANA MAX, A JUPITER BAR

Dwight, VINCE COLEMAN, DARRYL BOSTON, other Mets whoop it up. Dwight looks forlorn. Boston dances with Cone's Girl.

DWIGHT  
(To Random Girl)  
Yeah, you know. Apparently, it's not as easy it looks, huh?

Boston swings by.

DWIGHT  
Hey, you know Daryl Boston, right?  
Great.

BOSTON  
Heya Doc.

DWIGHT

Bro, wasn't that Coney's girl you were dancing with?

BOSTON

I guess, why don't you ask her. Here she comes.

Cone's Girl walks up. Random Girl, shrugging, walks away.

CONE'S GIRL

Yo, Doc, how you doing?

DWIGHT

Chillin.

LATER

BOSTON

Okay, I'll catch up with you tomorrow, homes.

IN CAR

DWIGHT

Thanks for the ride.

CONE'S GIRL

No problem. Any time, Doc.

DWIGHT

Want to come in.

CONE'S GIRL

Nah... I really got to be getting home.

(Thinking)

Actually, let me come in and use your potty.

DWIGHT

Sure

Boston and Coleman play Nintendo in the living room. Cone's girl uses bathroom. Cone's Girl turns down a beer from Gooden, but he gets her a water.

DWIGHT

(Walking Cone's Girl into Bedroom)

Yo, I want to talk to you about something.

Gooden starts kissing Cone's Girl forcefully. She looks unhappy. Suddenly, both Boston and Gooden are kissing her shoulders and back. They laugh. Coleman comes in closing door.

Dwight takes a shower. Cone's Girl, shaking, makes the bed. Boston and Coleman lay on beds in a second bedroom. Cone's Girl goes in and kisses them.

Cone's Girl hangs up the dress and got in bed with her mother.

CONE'S GIRL

Yeah, I had a good time, ma. I  
Yeah I did, but I drove Doc Gooden  
home, and then I kind of got lost

Dwight still showers.

In the shadows on the couch, the next afternoon, Cone's Girl uses phone.

CONE'S GIRL

(Crying)

Ron ... Darling ... that you? I...  
I...

INT. BEVERLY CENTER - DAY

Beverly Hills party for Eric Davis' 29th Birthday. Late May 1991.

Darryl strolls in wearing pale yellow suit with a colorful shirt, great Eric Davis. CHARISSE, a fresh-faced girl wearing a blacket jacket, jeans and a hat, chats with GIRL FRIENDS. Charisse dances with RANDOM GUY.

Darryl cuts in, takes hat from her head. Charisse cocks her head. He smiles. They dance.

DARRYL

What's your name?

CHARISSE

Charisse.

DARRYL

Where you from, Charisse?

CHARISSE

You know, round here.

DARRYL  
Do you like baseball?

CHARISSE  
Not really. Why?

DARRYL  
Because that's what I do. I'm a  
ball player.

CHARISSE  
Oh really?

DARRYL  
Yeah.

CHARISSE  
So who do you play for?

DARRYL  
The Dodgers.

CHARISSE  
Uh huh?

DARRYL  
You don't believe me?

CHARISSE  
What's your name?

DARRYL  
Darryl. Darryl Strawberry.

DARRYL  
Oh, yeah? Okay... I know who you  
are. My brother loves you.

DARRYL  
Oh yeah, okay?

Song ends.

CHARISSE  
Thanks for the dance.

Charisse walks away.

PARKING LOT AFTER PARTY

Charisse sees people talking about her as she leaves.

Darryl pops up.

DARRYL  
Hey...

CHARISSE  
Hey...

DARRYL  
May I get your number?

Girl friends swarm up, encouraging her to.

DARRYL  
Well are you going to or not?

CHARISSE  
I've got a better idea. Why don't  
you give me yours?

DARRYL  
Just give me the digits. Please...

CHARISSE  
Actually why don't just autograph  
my invitation card, for my  
brother.

GIRLS GETTING INTO CAR

CHARISSE  
Actually I gave him yours...

A FEW DAYS LATER

Darryl picks Charisse up at her apartment complex in red  
two-seater Mercedes.

They arrive at Bar & Grill, it's closing time, and mostly  
empty. The two eat and giggle.

Darryl drops her off at apartment.

DARRYL  
Can I call you while I'm on this  
roadtrip?

CHARISSE  
That's be fine.

DARRYL  
You going try to call me while I'm  
gone?

CHARISSE  
 (Smiling)  
 We'll see.

Darryl kisses her on the cheek.

Charisse runs across living room, fights with blinds, watches Darryl.

Darryl turns around and waves. She waves back excitedly.

INT. SIMPSON'S STUDIO - DAY

JOSE CANSECO, WADE BOGGS, DON MATTINGLY, MIKE SCOSIA.  
 Darryl.

INT. DODGER'S STADIUM - DAY

March 2, 1992 -- In his autobiography, "Darryl," written with Art Rust Jr., Strawberry charges the Mets with racism and claims that Dwight Gooden used cocaine during the 1986 World Series.

DWIGHT  
 What the fuck, homes? I don't care  
 what the fuck you say about them,  
 but you know I never did that shit  
 during the series. I wasn't even  
 doing that shit then...

INT. CHURCH - DAY

On Dec. 3, 1993, less than two months after his divorce was finalized, Strawberry married Charisse Simon. The wedding occurred three months after Strawberry was arrested on a battery charge for allegedly striking her. Simon did not file charges. The couple has an 11-month-old son, Jordan, and is expecting another child in June, the fifth for Strawberry by three women. (In 1990 Strawberry was found by means of a blood test to be the father of a child by Lisa Clayton, of Clayton, Mo., who had filed a paternity suit against him.)

INT. GOODEN'S LONG ISLAND HOME - DAY

Darryl  
 March 3, 1994 -- Investigated by the IRS and U.S. Attorney's Office for allegedly failing to file tax returns for income from autograph and memorabilia shows in excess of \$ 300,000.

April 8, 1994 -- Enters Betty Ford Center for treatment of a substance-abuse problem.

DWIGHT

Darryl's missing? It's that  
fucking phoniness Lasorda spews  
out. He was talking like he was  
close to losing it.

"That's how powerful that ---- is. Darryl told me (he used again because) he felt a lot of pressure was on him, like going to jail and his ex-wife bothering him. Darryl has never been one to be honest with himself." Until the recent relapse Strawberry said he had been clean since last April 2. That night began with a private lecture in the office of Dodger manager Tommy Lasorda, before an exhibition game in Anaheim against the California Angels. "Get yourself going," Lasorda barked. "We need you to carry us." How many times have I heard that? Strawberry thought. Only my whole career. Why is it always on me? I'm tired of it. I don't want to hear it anymore.

He hit a home run in his last at bat that night and then disappeared into his own black hole of despair, drinking and drugs. He got so high he never went home. His new wife, Charisse, called his mother, Ruby, late the next morning, which was a Sunday. Darryl had weekend custody of his two children from his first marriage, Darryl Jr. and Diamond, but after staying at his house they were to return that day to his ex-wife, Lisa. Did Ruby know where Darryl was? Ruby was rushing off to church, so she let her daughter Regina talk to Charisse and left without being clear as to what the call was about.

When Ruby arrived at the Blood Covenant Christian Faith Center in Pomona, Calif., where she also works as a secretary, the parishioners comforted her. They had heard news reports that Darryl was missing. "It's going to be O.K.," they said. Ruby had no idea what they were talking about.

Strawberry remembered that the Dodgers had an exhibition game in Anaheim that afternoon -- the last before the regular season began on April 5 -- but he could not muster the energy to go. I'm tired, he thought, too tired. I am not going through another season like this. The partying, the drinking. . . . I'm just so tired



INT. WRIGLEY FIELD? - DAY

Opening Day 1994: Dwight gives up three homerruns to Tuffy Rhodes.

INT. BASEBALL CARD SHOW - DAY

Rows of Darryl's and Dwight's.

INT. BAR - DAY

June - July 1994

It begins with one beer, the way an inferno starts with a spark or the way a massive freeway pileup begins with one car. Dwight Gooden's pattern of self-destruction continues when he orders another beer and then another. On this night, in June 1994, the lights and the music and mostly the alcohol at the Manhattan nightclub are soothing him.

He has been a hard drinker since 1986, when he was 21 and in his third year in the majors -- abstaining from alcohol only on the two nights before a starting assignment and, flushed with youth, money and stardom, indulging on all the others. At 22 he landed in a drug rehab center after testing positive for cocaine. Now, nearing his 30th birthday and into his third straight losing season, he is drinking out of self-pity. The alcohol hits him like Novocain; it numbs the pain of his depression but cannot remove it.

The beers are not enough, so, as he often has, he switches to something harder. Vodka has always been a favorite. It makes him forget about his combined 22-28 record in 1992 and '93, about how terrible his team, the New York Mets, has become and about the injured toe on his right foot, which has kept him on the disabled list for the past five weeks. The drinks keep coming.

Man, I'm hammered, he thinks. He presses on deep into the night, so deep that he still is drinking when he notices the place is closed, the doors are locked and everybody else except the people who work in the club have gone home. That's when one of the employees pulls out the bag of cocaine. You want some?

I know I shouldn't, he thinks. But that notion passes quicker than one of his old fastballs, dissolving completely into the fuzziness of his alcohol-polluted mind. What the hell, he thinks. I'm on minor league rehab for my toe. They won't test me.

Within 48 hours a representative of the testing agency used by Major League Baseball arrives in Binghamton, N.Y., home of the Mets' Double A affiliate, to collect a urine sample

from Gooden.

But the dirty test last June was not ignored. The Mets told Gooden he was facing probable suspension for violating his aftercare program. Gooden, in deep denial, told friends that it was no big deal, that he simply had missed a test because of oversleeping. He learned of his 60-day ban on June 24, a day he was scheduled to start against the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Mets, paranoid as ever, coaxed him into going ahead with his start anyway. After all, baseball wasn't ready to announce the suspension, so what would people think if Gooden was scratched from his start? It turned out to be the worst performance of his career. 'If I had to do it again,' he says, 'there's no way I'd go out there.' At first, Gooden says, Millman and Solomon, his counselors in New York, did not recommend that he undergo another inpatient rehabilitation. His aftercare program, including the testing regimen, needed to be stepped up. Gooden, after meeting with the doctors on July 1, went home to St. Petersburg. At an outing over that Fourth of July weekend, he decided, 'Well, I'll just have a couple of beers.' He continued to slide. 'I always knew one or two guys who had the coke,' he says. 'It wasn't like I had to go driving through some bad neighborhood and roll the window down.' Once, on the morning of scheduled drug tests, he called up Lans and said, 'I was using last night. Should I still go ahead with the test?' Lans advised him, yes, he should let himself be tested. Finally, on July 22, he checked into the Betty Ford Center. When he broke the news to his wife, Monica, that he was heading to the clinic, she looked puzzled and asked, 'Why?'

'Once, on the morning of scheduled drug tests, he called up Lans and said, 'I was using last night. Should I still go ahead with the test?' Lans advised him, yes, he should let himself be tested.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - DAY

Aug. 20 in L.A.

Dwight is released from Betty Ford. He turns up at Darryl's house. Monica and Charisse hang out in kitchen, chit-chatting, as Darryl and Dwight walk around outside by a tennis court. They sit by tennis court.

DARRYL

Doc, I'm telling you, you've got to get out of Florida. Those people around you are killing you.

DARRYL

You've got to change your environment to keep from using. The most important thing they told me at Betty Ford was to change the whole atmosphere and get away from the people who use. Can't trust in no one but Jesus, Doc. No one but Jesus.

DWIGHT

Yeah.... yeah... I know...  
Darryl...

Time passes, and night falls. The two sit on porch.

DARRYL

Can you believe this strike shit?

DWIGHT

Doesn't make much difference to me, of course.

They relive past, talk about wasting great seasons, hurting family and friends.

They go to NA meeting.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Aug. 20ish 1994

Dwight and Monica return home.

DWIGHT

Yo, Monica... if it's cool with you, I'm going to go out and see some friends, you know, nothing crazy, just to say hello.

MONICA

Of course. You should.

DWIGHT

Yeah?

MONICA

Yeah.

(Pause)

I love you.

At bar... Dwight holds up three fingers, ordering three beers, proceeds to down them.

DWIGHT

Whaddya have?

DEALER

Come see me in the bathroom...

Dwight exchanges money for drugs.

DWIGHT

(To friends)

Listen guys, I'm done, you know, there's been so much going on.

RANDOM DOC FRIEND

Aww man... gotta do what you gotta do... you cool to drive?

DWIGHT

Yeah... yeah... Totally cool there, cuz.

RANDOM DOC FRIEND 2

(Pregnantly)

Doc, you okay?

Dwight wanders streets of Tampa in his car, snorting coke, listening to music(???) He returns home, sneaks in, and flushes coke down the toliet.

INT. HIGHWAY - DAY

1994

Gooden, looking strung out, floors BMW 850 up and down Tampa's highways. 105 mph. 110 mph. 120 mph. 130 mph.

FLASHBACK

Younger-looking Dwight and friends block off I-275 in St. Petersburg for drag-racing.

Dwight, looking older again, tips back a beer, as his car clinks over the Howard Frankland Bridge. Dwight scores coke, gets high.

Dwight pulls past his driveway upon seeing a car. Monica and kids leave for the day. Dwight sits in his car, parked in front of someone's house two blocks away. Dwight looks at the time. He pulls into his driveway.

Odometer pushes into the red. Tears run down Dwight's cheeks.

Dwight, looking drunk again, tips back a beer, as his car clinks over the Howard Frankland Bridge. Dwight scores coke, gets high.

Odometer hovers in red.

NOV 4 1995

Dwight sneaks in and drops on couch.

A distraught Gooden considered suicide in 1995, a day after he learned he had been suspended from baseball for one year for failing a drug test.

"I reached into my dresser and found the 9-mm. automatic that I kept. . . . Calmly, I loaded a full magazine, unlocked the safety and placed the gun to my head," writes Gooden in "Heat: My Life on and off the Diamond" (William Morrow & Co.). The book will be published next month.

"I put the gun to my temple, then my ear, my forehead, then at the roof of my mouth. Hell, I couldn't even find clarity in suicide. What the hell was I doing?"

Just before squeezing the trigger, Gooden's wife, Monica, came running into the room and wrestled the gun away from him.

EXT. TAMAPA CUL DE SAC - NIGHT

1994

THREE LARGE MEN with weapons sit with Darryl and Sheffield on a porch.

DWIGHT

I don't know who the fuck would be  
fucking calling up and fucking  
with Betty, your mom, but I tell  
you what, Sheff, I don't fucking  
like it.

SHEFFLIED

I tell you what, uncle Dwight,  
having your cousin and these goons  
make me feel a lot better.

DWIGHT

We'll show them whose got the  
bullet waiting for them.

The large men talk amongst themselves. LARGE MAN 1 gets up  
and walks around. Sheffield and Dwight watch sunlight.

SHEFFLIED

You listen that mix I made you  
yet? Some pounding jams.

DWIGHT

Haven't really had time... I mean  
... I' retired, right, I call all  
the time in the world, I just  
haven't gotten around to listening  
to it more than a couple times.  
Seems good.

SHEFFLIED

So why

(Pauses)

So why you gonna retire anyways?  
Think about it... you get yourself  
signed by the Marlins, and we'll  
win the series together, right  
here man. We always talked about  
playing together... Christ, we got  
rookies older than you.

DWIGHT

C'mon Gary, you know how it is  
with me, I don't got no more  
juice.

SHEFFLIED

You really tired of baseball, DOc?  
You don't like pitching anymore?

DWIGHT

It ain't that. I'm tired of  
everything. All the bullshit I've  
been putting up with. You know  
what I'm saying?

SHEFFLIED

Oh I get it...

(Pauses)

You mean you're afraid of the

(MORE)

SHEFFLIED (cont'd)

tests.

DWIGHT

What?

SHEFFLIED

They're too tough for you, aren't they? You can't beast those test, so you're just walking away. You gonna let that shit end your career.

Sheffield walks away. Dwight sits for a minute, gets up to go into house, but notices a car call pull across street. It cuts headlights but stays there.

Large men fan out. Dwight, dizzy, thinks of gun in his car's glove compartment. Large men handle weapons.

DWIGHT

Who's that? Get the fuck outta here.

KLAPISCH and NEGRON get out of car.

KLAPISCH

Doc, it's me. Bob... the sportswriter from New York...

DWIGHT

Fuck man. Why didn't you say it was you?

(To others)

It's okay I know him.

(To Klapisch)

You outhgt ot be more careful around here. You almost got your ass kicked, cus.

KLAPISCH

Sorry, Doc... I was trying to track you down, so I could talk to you about something I'm writing. This here is Ray Negrón; he's a Yankees guy I've known for a long time; he lives down here. He gave me a ride.

DWIGHT

Yeah?

NEGRON  
(Shaking hands)  
Nice to meet you.

DWIGHT  
Yankees, huh? Right.

KLAPISCH  
Listen, Dwight. I don't know if  
it's a bad time, or whatever.

DWIGHT  
It is.

Klapisch stops talking.

NEGRON  
Used to have no time to do  
interviews, but you did 'em,  
though, right? It's funny like  
that.

DWIGHT  
Seven magazines cover in one week  
once. So I must have found the  
time. Who exactly are you again?

NEGRON  
Negron... Ray... I been around  
baseball for almost twenty years,  
starting with some minor-league  
ball. I've been with the Yanks in  
every capacity you can think of,  
one way or another. I was Reggie's  
right-hand man, a scout, batboy,  
video guy, you know, lots of  
stuff. Right now, though I'm an  
agent, working a lot with a New  
York lawyer, Goodstein, you know  
him? I do some work for the Tokyo  
Giants, too. More American  
ballplayers going to Japan these  
days than at any time since Pearl  
Harbor, and I help send 'em there,  
Barfield, Moseby, Cotto. I live  
two miles from here. Got two  
beautfiul kids.

DWIGHT  
Yeah? How is that for guys?



NEGRON

You'd be surprised. It can be real good, living without all the... distractions... and they can eventually come back these days. Look at Cecil Fielder.

DWIGHT

But everyone... they only speak Japanese there, right?

NEGRON

It's weird you can get by without knowing the language, so long as you pick up the culture. Some people never fit, but others will in a minute.

DWIGHT

No distractions, huh?

NEGRON

Just the simple stuff. Just playing baseball. They got their own devils there, sure, but everything's more disciplined and focused.

(Hands him card)

Lisen, Doc, anytime you want to talk, you know where to find me.

DWIGHT

Yeah, man, I will man, I will. But, uh, now, I got to getting... you guys got to get going, some things are going down, and...

KLAPISCH

Not even five years minutes for an interview, Doc? Just a couple of quicks questions.

Negron and Klapisch get back into car. Dwight slaps Klapisch on back.

DWIGHT

Not tonight, homes. Not tonight. Soon though soon. Take care of yourself. And, be careful when you drive your white ass around here, no telling what'll happen if you're alone.

Car pulls off, leaving Dwight in the middle of cul de sac.

INT. NEGRON'S HOUSE - DAY

In NEGRON's backyard, his KIDS play and he watches. Doorbell rings.

Gooden holds daughter ARIEL in his arms.

DWIGHT

You got a minute to talk?

Children play in the back yard. Negron's house, and especially office, is filled with pictures of Reggie Jackson and Billy Martin, framed clips of articles about Yanks, framed back pages of the NY Post and Daily News in the 70s.

Negron and Dwight sit in his office.

NEGRON

So...

DWIGHT

Ray... I'm sorry... it was just...  
I was in the neighborhood and all  
and...

NEGRON

You're thinking some days that  
it's hopeless, right?

Dwight reacts.

NEGRON

I've been there, Doc. You don't  
know me, and I don't know you, but  
when I tell you I've been you  
better believe me. I lost a  
borhter to drugs, my best friend  
fucked up a successful career on  
Wall Street because he loves crack  
that much, and me... me? ... I  
lost every penny I ever made to a  
goddam gambling addiction. Dude,  
one day I was ripping the  
satellite disk off my fuckin' roof  
because I knew I could sell it for  
\$500. I just knew that \$500 was  
going ot make me rich at Belmont  
--which of course it didn't. So  
don't ever let anyone look down at  
you because you've got a problem  
with coke. Hate the situation,

(MORE)

NEGRON (cont'd)  
 hate the actions, but don't hate  
 yourself. We all have problems;  
 they just show up in different  
 places.

Dwight eyes signed REGGIE JACKSON picture.

NEGRON  
 Someday you can be on that wall,  
 too, Doc. But first you have to  
 get your life together. It's that  
 simple.

DWIGHT  
 I ain't coming back, Ray. I ain't  
 got no chance of making it back.  
 It's over for me.

NEGRON  
 What about just getting help for  
 your own sake, Doc. Fuck Selig,  
 fuck Cashen, fuck 'em all. How  
 about it, Doc, how about doing  
 that. It can be done. We're  
 talking as men, here, not  
 ballplayers.

DWIGHT  
 You know I want to... it's why..  
 That's why I'm here today. You...  
 you seem like you got it all  
 figured out.

NEGRON  
 I ain't got nothing figured out  
 except that when people need help  
 they need help. I'll put in touch  
 with some people, it isn't going  
 to be pretty stuff, like Betty  
 Ford, but it'll open your eyes.  
 You think you gotten problems,  
 I'll introduce you to my friend,  
 Vincent Kenyon, he's a Havard  
 educated man, on the fast track ot  
 succes on Wall Street, and he's in  
 the gutter now. He went to a party  
 one Friday, tried a little coke,  
 and didn't come home for four  
 days, costing himself several  
 hundred thousand and his job. That  
 was three years ago and it just be  
 cycles after cycles with the same  
 ending for him. Fucking rock got a  
 (MORE)

NEGRON (cont'd)  
hold of him from in deep.

DWIGHT  
Jeez...

NEGRON  
Then there was my little brother.  
It all started when I saw him  
stealing money out of my our  
mother's purse. We grew up in  
Queens; my mother was a school  
teacher and my father was orderly.  
Obviously we didn't come from a  
lot of money, and what he took was  
a big deal when it was gone.  
Eventually my mother started  
noticing, and at about the same  
time, I heard rumors about my  
brother and one day I finally  
asked him to his face, 'Are you  
using?'

(Frowning)

He started crying right in front  
of me and asked em to help him. He  
said he was trying to get off the  
stuff and that he needed money to  
get counseling -- without my  
parents knowing. I gave hime a  
couple of bucks, then and later,  
and that's what kept the cycle  
going. I realize now I'd become an  
enabler.

(Pauses)

One night, I get a call, it's like  
2 a.m. and my brother calls me  
from somewhere in east Brooklyn.  
He told me some dealers were going  
ot kill him if he didn't come up  
with two hundred dollars, and so  
could I come right away? I drove  
like crazy to get tehre and show  
up, like an idiot. I thought I was  
helping him, but fuck, c'mon on. I  
got to the place he told me he  
was, walked into a hallway of some  
dark building, scared shitless,  
and I suddenly I feel a cold gun  
poking into my head. Some guy just  
says, 'Give me the fucking money'  
and I give him two hundred  
dollars, turned around and went  
home, thanking the Lord I didn't  
get shot. Basically, even though

(MORE)

NEGRON (cont'd)  
he denies it to this day, but I  
think he set me up just for the  
cash.

DWIGHT  
Fuck, man. I'm sorry.

NEGRON  
You think that's bad. You're  
sitting here with me while your  
daughter, your fucking daughter,  
plays outside and you're telling  
me you're done. Done with  
baseball, what? Done with  
yourself? You throwing that away?  
I never been bitten quite as bad  
as some people, what with the  
gambling, which ruined another  
friend of mine even quicker, he  
couldn't stop trying to catch-up,  
but I been bitten, and I tell you,  
Doc, you're either getting better  
and you're getting worse. Listen,  
Doc, I know you need help. There's  
places you can go. It never ends  
unless you admit you're sick.

INT. EL CERRITO COMMUNITY CENTER, - DAY

Jan. 1995

Last 29 days last year on giants.

Strawberry had provided a urine sample the previous day as well. The day before that, on Monday, Strawberry had spoken at a Martin Luther King Day rally at the El Cerrito Community Center, a few miles north of Oakland. He had talked about the importance of keeping children off drugs and alcohol, referring to them several times as "the young youth today."

"I've been through drugs and alcohol myself," he had said into the microphone. "I overcame that through the grace of God."

The cocaine he had scored less than 48 hours earlier, on Saturday night, lingered in his system as he spoke at the rally. More fatefully, it was in the urine samples he provided on Tuesday and Wednesday. He didn't realize, as he sprawled across his couch, telling a reporter he was clean, that he'd been caught.

Flash back  
to Father yelling at him  
to previous night, doing drugs.

"Tears welled up in my eyes, and I had a big lump in my throat," Ruby says. "It made me realize some of the things that were going on. I couldn't understand some of the things that were happening with him. He didn't care what was going on with the family. He was not in touch with us. "Now that I look back I can understand a lot of his behavior. I used to wonder why he never made eye contact with me when he talked. I kind of brushed it off. You know, he was always on the go, never had much time. He was always kind of looking over my head, looking for someplace else to go or something. "I remember one of the first things he did after he left the Betty Ford Center. We were sitting in my home, on opposite sides of a room. I told him, 'You know, that's something you never used to do.' And he said, 'What's that? What are you talking about?' And I said, 'You can look me in the eyes when you're talking to me. You never used to do that.' "From what I understand now, a lot of things were going on before he came back to L.A. That was something we weren't aware of."

INT. NA CENTER - NIGHT

Street people, hard-core addicts.

VINCENT

Doc if you ever think of cocaine as a mellow high, like slowly climbing stairs, then using crack is like taking an express elevator all the way to the top. It's a very powerful high, and in many people it create paranoia. You think everyone is out to get you, you think everyone is an undercover cop. You cannot defeat crack unless you help. If you're in denial, it will kill you.

Dwight sits in corner listening.

RON DOCK

A lot of you heard this story already. But it's my story. It's what I been through. I went to Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, and I was going nowhere in my life. I was, what, boxing in the PAL, running a little track,  
(MORE)

RON DOCK (cont'd)

but I had no real goals. I didn't know anything about the marines or Vietnam, until one of my buddies, an older guy, came home one day in his dress blues. And, man, he wiped me off the mpa. He looked so tough, so sharp. I was bored with my life at the time, and why not, you know? I decided I had to join up.

(Pauses)

Funny thing was I didn't know the first thing about racism until I got into the corps. The sergeants started telling me, 'Hey boy, we're gonna kill you when we get you 'Nam. You gonna die, you know that?' Shit, I thought these guys were supposed to be on my side. Was I scared? You better believe it. I was only seventeen when I went over, and I got into my first firefight within two weeks.

(Pauses)

It was three in the afternoon, and I was part of a seven-man patrol getting ready to set up an ambush when we got caught in an L-shaped ambush ourselves. The VC started with mortars, then with AK-47 fire, and right away we were pinned down in the rice paddies. We lost one Marine, and another was about two minutes away from dying when we called in for an auxiliary strike. Luckily, the VC broke off contact with us.

DWIGHT

(To self)

Fuck.

RON DOCK

Well, and it all happened so fast, that I never realized that, during that first firefight, I had urinated and defecated all over myself. I was screaming, completely crazy; I'd gone into shock. I was there but I wasn't there. I knew Vietnam wasn't for me, but there I was, stuck in the worst place in the world. My buddy

(MORE)

RON DOCK (cont'd)  
in the dress blues didn't tell me  
what being a marine was really  
about... constant fear. And, man,  
I was about over the edge. My  
sergeant gave me a littel weed,  
some Jim Beam, and I passed out.  
That's how it started for me.

Dwight thinks of a home run flying over his head.

NEGRON  
Basically right after that, I  
decided somewhere inside me, I  
don't know who was in charge then,  
that I would get high every single  
night. Particularly when I was  
night patrol. It was even a reason  
to voluneer for it. To get zooted.  
But it wasn't, you know, frowned  
upon or anything. I mean, put it  
this way... whenever we killed a  
VC, first thing we did was check  
his pockets for opium.

(Looking at  
addicts)

You were in the shit every second  
over there, basically, and it  
fucks with your head. One night I  
fucking look down and realize I  
have a huge erection that popped  
up while I was trying to blow away  
some gooks out in the forest with  
my M-16. I mean some guys, they  
stuck to the Beam and weed and  
compartmentalized it all, and, you  
know, they came back ok, more or  
less. But I was hooked on the  
fear, addicted to all of it. When  
I got back here, I was out of  
control. They tried to get me into  
teaching young lieutenants about  
jungle warfare, but you know I  
still so crazy, I didn't to bother  
with that. I took over a VA  
hospital, held the doctors and  
patients up as hostages until they  
talked me out of doing worse shit.

(Looking at Dwight)

After, I mean, not surprisingly, I  
was discharged, dishonorably, sent  
back to the Bronx and every else  
spiraled downward. I was in jail,  
psychiatric wards, divorced almost

(MORE)



NEGRON (cont'd)

as soon as I was married, and mostly in the street. Then one day it came to me, man I was eating out of a garbage bin here in St. Pete, weighing, what 140 pounds if that, and I thought to myself, 'This is the day I'm going to die.'

RON DOCK

(To no one in particular)

So I found a cop and I went up to him and I said, 'Please take me to a treatment center.' That's how I ended up up here, and I've been sober for three years now. And, everyday, I pray to God that I can just be sober for another day.

Meeting ends, and Dwight goes up to Ron Dock.

DWIGHT

Hey, Ron. Dwight. Dwight Gooden. I ... I was... wondering if you could... you know help me... through this... as...

RON DOCK

(Cooly)

Let me ask you something, Dwight? How bad do you want to stay clean?

DWIGHT

Real bad.

RON DOCK

Well, if you do, then come just come back tomorrow. Don't say another word. You're talking too much as it is. The only way you can prove you're serious is if you show up again tomorrow.

He turns and walks away. New day. Dwight is back.

DWIGHT

You don't understand. I'm here to beat this. I want to now... I need to now... the way... just the way I left the game. I don't want people twenty years from now to say ' Dwight Gooden had a great

(MORE)

DWIGHT (cont'd)

career, but he threw it away.' I want them to say, 'Dwight Gooden had a great career because he beat that shit.' I sure don't want my kids to think of their father as some junkie who couldn't handle success.

RON DOCK

If you really want to impress me, then don't think about anything except tomorrow. Your goal from now on is to stay clean for the next 24-hours.

INT. COURT - DAY

. Between Feb. 6 and 9 1995 Strawberry received a 60-day suspension from baseball because of the positive drug tests, was released by the San Francisco Giants and pleaded guilty to the charge of failing to report and pay tax on more than \$350,000 earned from appearing at card shows from 1986 to '90. Sentencing is scheduled for March 15.

Late in the day he phoned his lawyer, Robert Shapiro, and agreed to meet with him the next morning. Shapiro, who two months later would be on national TV representing a fugitive named O.J. Simpson, brought Darryl into his office while Ruby, Charisse and Michael waited outside. Shapiro told Strawberry it was time he admitted he was an alcoholic and a drug user. For years Strawberry had been afraid to make that admission because he was worried, for one thing, about how it would be received by his family, his team and the media. Shapiro told him he would take care of everything, including how it played out in the press. When the door opened, Shapiro gestured toward the family and asked Strawberry, "Is it O.K. to share it with them?" Strawberry nodded and told them.

"Tears welled up in my eyes, and I had a big lump in my throat," Ruby says. "It made me realize some of the things that were going on. I couldn't understand some of the things that were happening with him. He didn't care what was going on with the family. He was not in touch with us. "Now that I look back I can understand a lot of his behavior. I used to wonder why he never made eye contact with me when he talked. I kind of brushed it off. You know, he was always on the go, never had much time. He was always kind of looking over my head, looking for someplace else to go or something. "I remember one of the first things he did after he left the Betty Ford Center. We were sitting in my home, on opposite

sides of a room. I told him, 'You know, that's something you never used to do.' And he said, 'What's that? What are you talking about?' And I said, 'You can look me in the eyes when you're talking to me. You never used to do that.'  
 "From what I understand now, a lot of things were going on before he came back to L.A. That was something we weren't aware of."

INT. GOODEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

On television, Invasion of the Body Snatchers plays.

Dr. Miles J. Binnell: Drugs dull the mind... maybe that's the reason.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - DAY

1996 May No Hitter Game

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - DAY

Darryl

May 3, 1996 -- Signs free-agent contract with St. Paul Saints of the independent Northern League.

July 4, 1996 -- Contract purchased by Yankees for \$ 300,000.

July 28, 1996 -- Hits his 300th home run -- a game-winning, two-run blast in the bottom of the ninth to give Yankees a 3-2 win over Kansas City.

Aug. 28, 1996 -- Ejected during bench-clearing brawl against Seattle Mariners.

October, 1996 -- Batted .417 with three homers and five RBI in ALCS win over Baltimore Orioles,

INT. KINGDOME - DAY

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SERIES: SECOND OF THREE PARTS - EDITOR'S NOTE \_

BODY:

All summer the Yankees had been dreading that second West Coast trip. Their only hope? By the time they stepped inside their personal torture chamber, the Kingdome, the lead over the Orioles would be fat enough to withstand a disaster. And the Yankees felt one was coming.

Already the month of August was turning ugly on Joe Torre. Between August 4 and August 20, the Yankees lead had been trimmed from 10 games to six, thanks to a devastating four-game series against Seattle at the stadium. The Mariners took the first three games, scoring 25 runs, prompting Darryl Strawberry to admit, "They seem to have our number this year. I just can't explain it."

The Mariners were equal-opportunity Yankee thrashers: they nailed Kenny Rogers for eight runs in three innings on August 17, then pounded Dwight Gooden for seven runs and 10 hits in just two and two-thirds innings the next night. No one had an antidote for Alex Rodriguez's bat speed, or Edgar Martinez's remarkable plate coverage, or Ken Griffey's overall star quotient. The Mariners were big and tough, the West's version of the Orioles. Not even Gooden's fastball could stop Seattle.

In fact, Gooden's loss on the 18th dropped his record to 10-5, and while that was still more than respectable, George Steinbrenner was beginning to lose patience with his national celebrity.

Ever since the May 14 no-hitter, Gooden had become a spokesman for second chances. He said yes to virtually every interview

request, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, everyone wanted to chronicle this storybook resurrection. By the time the summer was over, Gooden was on the cover of The Sporting News and New York magazine, and he would soon be featured on ABC's documentary prime-time show Turning Point.

The producers wanted to spend a full hour on the dual sagas of Gooden and Strawberry, starting from their childhoods, and then follow with their high school careers, their early days with the Mets, their fall to cocaine, and their subsequent resurrections. Gooden, of course, was more than happy to participate, but he was stunned to discover that Steinbrenner not only was opposed to it but actually forbade him from speaking to ABC.

What was really bothering Steinbrenner was Gooden's involvement in an even larger project. Less than a week after Gooden's no-hitter, Doc had been contacted by movie producer Norman Twain, who had the idea of turning his life story into a feature-length film. Twain, who had produced the highly successful film Lean on Me, said Gooden's story "was perfect for Hollywood. It's really a very distinct three-act screenplay: the rise, the fall, and the return to baseball ending with the no-hitter."

Negron wasn't far away. In fact, he was at Gooden's locker at that very moment, helping the Doctor sort out the pounding he'd just absorbed from Seattle's hitters. Priore poked his head around the corner and said, "Ray, telephone for you."

The advisor took the phone. "Negron here." Truth was, Gooden's real enemy was the number of innings in his shoulder, not any TV interview or movie project. He'd been

throwing for  
 nearly an entire year without rest and was desperate for  
 time off. But  
 it was impossible for Gooden to make that request, not now,  
 not with  
 David Cone still on the disabled list and the Yankee lead  
 shrinking by  
 the day.

BOSS

That was a fucking disgrace out  
 there! And let me tell you  
 something. If I have to hear one  
 more thing about that goddam  
 movie, you're both gone!

Negron returns to Doc's locker.

"What was that about?" Doc asked.

"Ah, nothing," Negron answered casually. "George just wanted  
 to  
 know how your arm felt."

Negron weighed whether to tell Doc the truth but asked  
 himself what  
 the point was. How would it benefit the emotionally fragile  
 Gooden to  
 know that Steinbrenner had turned his infamous temper on  
 him? Would  
 that make him pitch any better? Would it make the tendinitis  
 in his  
 shoulder disappear? Truth was, Gooden's real enemy was the  
 number of innings in his  
 shoulder, not any TV interview or movie project. He'd been  
 throwing for  
 nearly an entire year without rest and was desperate for  
 time off. But  
 it was impossible for Gooden to make that request, not now,  
 not with  
 David Cone still on the disabled list and the Yankee lead  
 shrinking by  
 the day.

INT. TURNING POINT - DAY

Meredith Vieira tells the story

FORREST SAWYER: [voice-over] On the eve of the World Series,

chief correspondent Meredith Vieira with a story bigger than baseball.

FORREST SAWYER: [voice-over] On the eve of the World Series, chief correspondent Meredith Vieira with a story bigger than baseball.

MEREDITH VIEIRA, ABC News: And a good day for Dwight Gooden these days?

DWIGHT GOODEN: Being clean and sober comes first because if I'm not that, then I don't get the chance to win a game.

FORREST SAWYER: [voice-over] And the man who gave them both a second chance.

GEORGE STEINBRENNER: I don't want to tell a guy when he's 31 or 33, "Hey, your life's over."

BOB KLAPISCH, Sports Writer: It really is a story that you couldn't possibly have scripted.

MEREDITH VIEIRA: [voice-over] Ten years ago this month it was the New York Mets who were the best ballclub in America. The players were young, rich and seemingly invincible. Sports writer Bob Klapisch watched them define a decade.

BOB KLAPISCH, Sports Writer: The Mets were hip. They were chic. It was the thing to do to go to Shea Stadium. People used to show up in limousines to see Dwight throw a shutout, to see him strike out 10 or 15 guys. The Mets team, as a whole, had this relationship with New York. We were all on a first-name basis with the Mets. It was Lenny, Straw, Keith, Doc.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - DAY

OCT. 1998

Charisse throws out first pitch in Game 1.

Strawberry's number, 39, embroidered on their caps.

Gooden is in the Cleveland clubhouse.

Gooden called Strawberry from Boston, two days before the surgery, and said he would pray for him. Strawberry responded by needling Gooden about his ejection from Game 2

of the division series against the Boston Red Sox.

Flowers, cards, telegrams, candy and phone calls overwhelm Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Centre.

EXT. OUTSIDE FLA. REHAB CENTER - DAY

Darryl waits for ride.

BEVERLY

Hey.

DARRYL

Hey.

BEVERLY

Sorry. I'm late.

DARRYL

Nah. It's cool.

DARRYL

They'll wait.

"He said she took him to a nearby motel where there were a total of five men who had guns and took his jewelry."

Strawberry said the men later took him with them in a search for more drugs, and eventually drove him to Orlando, where he was abandoned in a motel. Police are also trying determine the legitimacy of a kidnapping allegation.

INT. HIGHWAY - DAY

March 2001.

A cracked-up Darryl is searched for in the drug areas of Tampa by Gooden, Dock, and Negrón.

They pop their heads into drug dens, ask street people.

DARRYL

I'm sorry. I messed up, I really messed up this time. I'm sorry.

a four-day cocaine binge Two days later, Dock and Negrón got a call from Strawberry, 135 miles away in Daytona Beach. "We picked him up on the highway," Dock said. "That was the saddest sight for me. I thought a couple of times in the car



we may lose him... He cried, I cried." Dock said Strawberry disliked chemotherapy and said it was killing him.

Car pulls over twice. Dock, Darryl embrace, cry.

They take him straight to St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, where he was placed on suicide watch.

SAFER

No echo of cheering crowds, only the arm of a friend for support. Washed up, addicted to drugs and alcohol, and eaten alive by cancer. Just six weeks earlier he was full of hope for at least some kind of life.

INT. 60 MINUTES - DAY

DARRYL

I've been working so hard and, you know, everything has been going extremely well, and all of a sudden, you know, I just kind of lost it.

SAFER

That body that once had so much power and grace seemed hollow and broken, defeated.

DARRYL

I'm just, you know, very sorry that I--but right now I'm just very sick, you know, mentally and physically and--and just, you know, at a real bad place, going through a real difficult time.

(Jump cut)

I have a wife and I have five children and, you know, I--I look forward to, you know, being a dad and--and being a husband and--and being something to them instead of being, quote, unquote, "something" to, you know, the world of baseball.

LIKE A DICK: Mr. TOMMY LASORDA: He's got a lot of fame, he's got a family, and yet he put something inside of him knowingly that this thing could ruin his career, ruin his

entire life, and yet they have the weakness to put it in their body. This is something that I cannot understand

CHARISSE

Man, I just was, like, why--why can't he stop? Why can't he quit? Why--why does he make the promises? Why does he do that? Why--why can't--you know, it was probably the most painful thing.

RON DOCK

If people who loved me gave up on me, I probably wouldn't be here talking to you right now. And you know what's fascinating? If you look around and the public looks around, there's a Darryl Strawberry, they'd know one in each household from an uncle, sister, brother, mother, friends. They're all around us. They're all--there's a Darryl Strawberry all around us. So are you going to give up on your Darryl Strawberry?

DWIGHT

I can use everything that I went through and what I'm doing now to show him that he can make it. If I made it through all the stuff, then he has the opportunity if he wants it, because what Darryl's going through now, that could easily have been me.

INT. TAMPA DRUG HOUSE - DAY

The circumstances surrounding his spiral grow more ironic and disturbing every time. Strawberry marching out of his treatment center in the middle of Game 1 of a Subway Series and disappearing into the Tampa night for a binge of crack cocaine.

October 27, 2000, Friday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS, Pg. 4

LENGTH: 589 words

NEW YORK - He haunts this New York-New York World Series from the grave. And he isn't even dead. But there are people who think Darryl Strawberry is working on it. Saturday, Strawberry apparently was as busy as the Yankees, the last team he played baseball for, and the Mets, one of his former teams. The Yanks and Mets met in Game 1 of the long-awaited Subway Series. Strawberry was off having another train wreck. Strawberry was jailed Wednesday after leaving house arrest in Tampa during the weekend for a crack and prescription-drug binge.

"I heard about it 10 minutes ago," Keith Hernandez said before Game 4 Wednesday at Shea Stadium. Hernandez and Strawberry were teammates in 1986 when they helped the Mets win their last world championship.

"I wanted to cry," Hernandez said, "because this might be over the edge. This could be suicidal." There are those Strawberry left behind all over Shea Stadium. People with Darryl memories. Dwight Gooden is one of them. Gooden has had his own long list of off-field problems. But now he is clean and a Yankee at a World Series, as Strawberry could have been had he not been suspended in February, his third cocaine-related suspension from baseball in five years. Doc Gooden hustled through the dugout before Wednesday's game. Media wanted to know what he thought. Gooden ran past them. "Gotta go. Gotta stretch."

That is where people are now, even people who care about Darryl Strawberry. They want to do anything but stand and talk about a man they've nearly exhausted breath and patience on.

"I don't even want to go into this," Yankees bench coach Don Zimmer said. "How many times can we be asked? It's easy to say you're sad. And I am. But I don't want any connection to it. What can I say? What can anyone say at this point?"

In 1998, Strawberry was diagnosed with colon cancer, which was treated with surgery and chemotherapy. In August, he underwent surgery to remove a kidney and a tumor in his stomach. Strawberry's friends think that battle, coupled with this Subway Series, has taken an emotional toll on the eight-time all-star. "I know this is probably tough for him right now with all that's going on," Gooden said last Friday, on the eve of the World Series. "To see everything that's taking place has to be hard. But my main concern is his health." "He's doing this to himself, basically," Yankees manager Joe Torre said. "That's the sad part." "I cry for Darryl," said Mets co-owner Nelson Doubleday, who met Strawberry 20 years ago. "I really cry for him." "It was amazing here in '86," Hernandez said of that championship season, when it was Hernandez, Doc, Darryl and

Gary Carter. "Honestly, it's so corporate now; the crowds seem a little quieter," Hernandez said. "Back then, there was a buzz. It was electric." In Tampa, Strawberry soon might buzz. Upon his release from jail, his probation officer wants him fitted with an electronic monitoring device.

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November 10, 2000 Friday FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS, Pg. 7D

LENGTH: 723 words

HEADLINE: Ailing slugger Strawberry: 'My career is over - done';

Judge tells ex-Yankee to resume chemotherapy;

Notes

BODY:

Darryl Strawberry says he has given up on ever returning to baseball -- and has accepted that colon cancer may kill him.

"My career is over -- done," Strawberry told Jane Pauley in a jailhouse interview to air Sunday on NBC's "Dateline."

"I'm physically not able to go anymore, and I just don't have the desire to go anymore."

Strawberry -- who last week said he had stopped his cancer treatment and lost the will to live -- said his doctors told him his long-term prognosis is good. But he's not so sure.

"I have no idea what's going to happen," he said. "I've reached a point of understanding that life is going to come-to an end one day for me."

Excerpts of the interview were released yesterday as Strawberry, 38, was sent back to jail by Hills-borough County Judge Florence Foster, who told him to resume chemotherapy treatments "or you are history."

The ex-New York Yankee was sentenced to 30 days but will get credit for the 15 days he has served since testing positive for cocaine last month, a violation of his probation on drug and solicitation charges.

Strawberry could be out of jail in a few more days with his time served and other considerations of Florida's prison system, prosecutors and defense attorneys said.

Once Strawberry is released, he must return to the private substance-abuse treatment center where he had been under house arrest for violating probation on drug and prostitution charges.

He will also be forced to wear an electronic monitor - and the judge vowed to send him back to prison if he leaves again.

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INT. PHOENIX HOUSE - DAY

2002.

It's a persuasive argument because, after all, since when is consensual sex or smoking cigarettes cause for imprisonment? Still, the hardhearted -- including more than one Yankee official -- will say: Enough. To them, Strawberry is a multiple-offense loser who deserves all the humiliation and embarrassment he's enduring today, including jail.

Nevertheless, there are disturbing elements to his case. Phoenix House officials admit "someone goofed" in reporting that Darryl had \$140,000 in his possession during treatment; the actual sum was \$140.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

FEB. 2002

Dwight's Cadillac Escalade weaves through traffic. Cop car pulls it over.

Red-eyed, Dwight leans out window.

DWIGHT

Officer.

POLICE OFFICER

License and registration.

(Taking them)

Where you going sir?

DWIGHT

I'm going to pick my son up. For a game.

POLICE OFFICER

You been drinking? It sure smells like it Doc.

DWIGHT

Only maybe three beers. Really. I'm cool.

Police officer sees open BOTTLE OF MICHELOB LIGHT in a cupholder.

Dwight sweats it out while cop runs license. Radio reports back "and that's been suspended for a failure to pay."

POLICE OFFICER

Why don't you get out, Doc?

Dwight staggers out, points to his knee.

AT JAIL

Cop is booking Dwight.

DWIGHT

(Exhausted)

No fucking tests. No more fucking tests. I'm not fucking doing it.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - NIGHT

Light drizzle. 20th Anniversary of 1986 win.

Many of the old timers are in attendance. Lenny is huge. Ron and Keith are micked up for SNY.

Darryl waits in tunnel.

Darryl is greeted with great cheers.

Darryl is in booth.

INT. SNY TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Play movie of appearance. Things they learned:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGjIztGhmm8>

FADE OUT.