

COBB

Written by RON SHELTON

Based on material by AL STUMP

July 1993 Draft

**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas

Nice guys finish last.

Leo Durocher

The room is California Spanish, thick walls, arches, and light spills in from a mission window. But we don't have any sense of place just yet. At first there are just details.

EXTREME CLOSEUP ON TYPEWRITER KEYS

of an old Underwood upright, well-worn and ancient. A woman's fingertips with red nail polish are placed on the keys. They wiggle.

CLOSE ON PIPE IN ASHTRAY

Smoke curls. A man's hand picks it up.

CLOSE ON MAN'S HAT AND COAT

on a coat rack.

CLOSE ON WASTE BASKET

Overflowing with crunched-up paper.

MAN

lies on a couch near the window. He stands up suddenly and looks out the window. AL STUMP, 40, is sharply dressed -- tie, dress shirt, cufflinks. He's staring at something.

HIS POV - COURTYARD BELOW - BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE

in high heels crosses the courtyard. She glances up toward Stump, then quickly turns away and disappears.

CLOSE ON STUMP

He sighs, and turns.

STUMP

The muse has not descended,
Lucille.

(off her silence)

The muse has not descended.

(off her silence)

God damn it, Lucille, you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

ANGLE ON LUCILLE

The woman at the typewriter, a 50-year old steno/secretary, responds calmly.

LUCILLE

The muse has not descended.

STUMP

Yes! The muse has left me stranded here like a beached whale -- only one phrase, one word, from finishing the greatest essay I've ever written! One word, the right word -- Flaubert called it 'le mot juste' -- I ever tell you that?

Lucille is a longsuffering saint.

LUCILLE

'Le mot juste' -- the exact right word the writer needs to tell his story. Yessir, you've mentioned it.

STUMP

Hemingway, Faulkner, Joyce -- they all searched for 'le mot juste' until they cried, until they bled...

LUCILLE

Yessir.

STUMP

What is this essay about again?

LUCILLE

Fishing.

STUMP

I mean what is it really about?

LUCILLE

You said it was about the quote unquote primal issues of survival, man against nature, etcetera -- that's what you said.

STUMP

Ohyeah... so... we end the essay with...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

STUMP (CONT'D)

(dictating)

'The tarpon leaps shimmering into
the late cross light of the keys,
a primeval moment frozen in...

(hesitates)

... frozen in'...

Lucille types it out.

LUCILLE

Shimmering tarpon -- very good,
Mr. Stump...

(beat)

... 'frozen in' what?

STUMP

(patiently)

I don't know, Lucille, that's what
the Muse will tell me if she ever
descends.

(considering)

... 'frozen in'...

The PHONE RINGS -- Lucille answers it.

LUCILLE

Yes? Yes? Just a minute, I'll
see if he's available.

(covers phone)

It's your wife -- are you and she
speaking again?

Stump's cavalier attitude stops cold. He starts to reach
for the phone, then stops.

STUMP

I dunno. How does she sound?

LUCILLE

Don't ask me to interpret.

Stump is suddenly a nervous wreck. He hesitates.

STUMP

Tell her... tell her... I'll
talk... no... tell her I'm out --
I'll call her later...

(serious, dark)

God damn it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

LUCILLE

(on phone)

Apparently he's out, Mrs. Stump --
I'll have him call you back.

She hangs up. The mood has shifted.

STUMP

I need a drink.

LUCILLE

What about 'le mot juste,' Mr.
Stump?

STUMP

(snaps)

Fuck 'le mot juste,' Lucille!
Finish the damn thing yourself.
'The primeval moment is frozen in'
whatever the hell you want it to
be. Did you know that James Joyce
let his secretary -- none other
than Samuel Beckett -- revise and
edit Molly's soliloquy in
Ulysses? You're my Beckett -- I
give you 'le mot juste!' Just
get the damn thing in the mail
so I can get paid.

Silence.

LUCILLE

Problems with the Mrs.?

Stump reaches for a beat-up pogo stick which leans against
the wall in his office.

STUMP

I don't know. I need a drink.

He grabs his hat and coat and we begin hearing the number
one hit song of 1960, PERCY FAITH'S schmaltzy recording of
"A Summer Place."

CUT TO:

2 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

2

Stump pogo sticks down the sidewalk, tipping his hat to
pedestrians. They're not alarmed. He's the town
eccentric. He pogos across a street and towards --

CUT TO:

3 EXT. THE SPORTSMAN'S LOUNGE - LATE AFTERNOON 3

A watering hole like a million others. He pogo sticks right in the front door.

CUT TO:

4 INT. THE SPORTSMAN'S - LATE AFTERNOON 4

A classic city bar, a hangout for drunks, philosophers, and especially sportswriters and journalists.

Our man hops off his pogo stick -- nobody even notices, and joins his cronies, five sportswriters full of dogmatic opinions on every subject known to man.

FRANK, a sportswriter, is at the jukebox feeding quarters. He looks up routinely, they're all regulars here.

FRANK

Hey, Stumpy...

Stump addresses the sportswriters at the table as if they were a small audience in a lounge.

STUMP

Awright, awright... how do you get five old ladies to say 'fuck?'

CRONIES

(stumped)

Jeez, I dunno, how? Etc...

STUMP

Yell 'bingo.'

Stump laughs. The others groan. REYNALDO, 40's, black, speaks up. He's one of the regulars.

REYNALDO

Okay, I got one --

(beat)

A drunk is taking a piss in front of a bar, a bus drives by, real fast right along the curb, and knocks his thing off. Drunk picks up his thing, puts it in his pocket, goes into a bar, reaches into his pocket and puts his thing on the bar. 'Look't that,' he says, 'bus knocked my thing off.' Bartender says, 'that ain't your thing -- that's a cigar butt.'

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REYNALDO (CONT'D)

Drunk reaches into his other pocket and slaps another thing on the bar. 'There,' he says, 'bus knocked my thing off.' Bartender says, 'you're drunk and that ain't your thing either. That's another cigar butt.'

(beat)

Drunk looks down at both cigar butts and back up at the bartender and says, 'God damn it, I mushta smoked my dick.'

Everyone roars, even Stump. But Frank, as usual, is hyper serious and never quite gets into the revelry.

FRANK

Amidst this levity, gentlemen, I have some real concerns. Mark my words, people will look back on this year and say that 1960 was the year that Western Civilization began its downward trajectory.

BILL

You need to get laid, Frank.

FRANK

Guys, guys, c'mon... do you really think things are as good as they used to be? You think Jack Kennedy is qualified to be President?

BILL

Kennedy may not be qualified, but -- Jackie's a babe -- and that's good enough for me.

REYNALDO

They're a happily married couple and that oughta stand for something these days...

Every man nods in solemn agreement.

MUD

Speaking of being happily married, Al, are you and your old lady still having problems?

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

Oh no, the wife and I are all patched up -- doin' fantastic.

CRONIES

Good to hear... awright... way to go, Stumpy... (Etc.)

FRANK

I mean look at us -- we call ourselves writers but we just watch ballgames and get drunk a lot. You call that writing?

STUMP

Yes I do.

MUD

In the department store of life, sports is the toy department -- so what?

BILL

Yeah, besides, Alan here's writing a serious novel, aren't ya?

MUD

Yeah, well I haven't started yet but I'm gonna. I've been busy.

FRANK

You guys are pathetic. Ya write for one reason -- a paycheck.

STUMP

More art was created for money than for passion. Take your platitudes and shove 'em, Frank. I'm gonna write a novel too, someday.

FRANK

(cynically)

The Great American Novel, I suppose?

STUMP

It could come from my pen.

FRANK

You're a barbershop writer, Al -- you write sugar-coated pieces for guys to skim when they're waiting for a haircut!

(CONTINUED)

STUMP
 Awright, that's it! Let's go!
 Settle this right here!

Stump raises his fists as if to fight; Frank responds.

MUD
 Hey!

A scuffle breaks out, a lot of posturing, feinting, but they're all too chicken to do anything. Nobody wants to fight.

A PHONE RINGS at the bar. The bartender answers the phone, shouts at the obnoxious sportwriters.

REYNALDO
 Stump! For you.

Stump goes to the phone, interrupting his own "fight."

STUMP
 (to Frank)
 Phone call saved your ass.

Stump grabs the phone, covering an ear to hear better.

STUMP
 (on phone)
 Yeah... yeah... who?... no...
 you're kidding?... when?

Stump hangs up the phone and turns. His face registers shock, or more precisely, bewilderment and wonder.

STUMP
 Hey...
 (as they ignore
 him)
 Shut up!

They do, and give Stump their ruffled attention.

STUMP
 Cobb wants to see me.

MUD
 Cobb who?

STUMP
 Ty Cobb! How many Cobbs are
 there?!

This news instantly sobers the room.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Ty Cobb? I thought he was dead?

STUMP

Not yet. He said he wants to tell me the real story of his life before he croaks.

BILL

You were just talking to Ty Cobb?

STUMP

The Georgia Peach himself.

This impresses the hell out of everyone in the room. Even Stump is still a little dazed.

FRANK

They say Cobb is crazy. The meanest sonofabitch who ever lived.

MUD

I heard he killed a man.

BILL

Maybe so, but -- he was the greatest baseball player of them all.

CRONIES

Yeah, the best, no one close, etc...

Frank suddenly is cautionary, concerned, paternal.

FRANK

Listen, Al, be careful --

STUMP

I ain't gettin' my ass shot, don't worry...

FRANK

No, not that -- the story.

(beat)

This is like Ivan the Terrible inviting somebody into the Czar's palace before he died.

STUMP

Except Ivan was a nicer guy...

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (5)

4

FRANK

(concerned, earnest)

Don't let Cobb bullshit you. This is your shot. This is all our shot.

(as cronies agree)

When does he want to see you?

STUMP

Immediately.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NEARLY EMPTY MOVIE THEATER - DAY

5

Al Stump sits alone in the theater, except for a teenaged boy sweeping the aisles, who stops to watch the screen.

STUMP (V.O.)

I gathered all the film footage that existed on Cobb -- which wasn't much -- and rented the local theater for the afternoon...

(beat)

I, too, had thought that the great Ty Cobb had been dead for awhile...

6 ANGLE ON SCREEN

6

The screen fills with (B&W) Movietone Newsreel footage of Ty Cobb, complete with overly sincere NARRATION and MUSIC.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR (V.O.)

This 1905 cameo of an 18-year-old youth shows a peaches-and-cream complexion and the piercing eyes of a lad who would become, etc...

Onscreen (B&W) -- Cobb as a young ballplayer followed by images of Cobb's famous batting stance, Cobb clowning, etc.

STUMP (V.O.)

His reputation as being difficult at best, psychotic at worst, preceded him. But if there was one thing I knew after all my years as a journalist covering politicians, celebrities, and sports heroes, it was this --

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Onscreen (B&W) -- Cobb with children, Cobb with celebrities, Cobb in a parade honoring him, and always, Cobb's dashing, swashbuckling style of play.

STUMP (V.O.)

The 'facts' -- and public perception of those 'facts' -- frequently bear little resemblance.

Onscreen (B&W) -- Cobb in action -- His demon fury gives way to the fierce joy of his playing. He slashes a ball up the alley, turns first and never hesitates at second, and as the relay comes into third --

STUMP (V.O.)

One thing was beyond argument -- he was the most brilliant athlete of his time... perhaps of any time.

(beat)

I was determined to find out who was the real Ty Cobb.

Cobb slides with spikes high and a cloud of dust. There is something thrilling and terrifying in the image.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. MOTHER LODGE COUNTRY (CALIFORNIA) - LATE AFTERNOON 7

Stump's car, a late model Buick, moves across the stunning grasslands at the western base of the Sierra Nevadas. We begin hearing his voice, then see him inside the car driving.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 EXT. FOOTHILLS OF THE SIERRAS - DUSK 8

Stump's car heads up into the darkening mountains.

STUMP (V.O.)

They said Cobb owned property all over the country, but in recent years had been staying in his hunting lodge at Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevadas.

9 AERIAL SHOT - LONE PAIR OF HEADLIGHTS 9

moving up into the Sierras, into rugged terrain and thick forests.

CUT TO:

10 INT. CAR - DUSK

10

Stump straining to see the road, a bit wary of this drive.

STUMP (V.O.)

Driving into the Sierras at night with winter coming on wasn't the smartest decision I'd ever made but it seemed better than being late for my first meeting with Cobb.

First drops of rain begin hitting the windshield -- Stump hits the wiper button and the floppy blades begin ineffectively wiping the windshield. Stump struggles with his vision.

STUMP

Shit...

POV SHOT THROUGH WINDSHIELD

A dismal, wet and obscured view of the mountain road, climbing higher into the Sierras. A small roadside gas station comes INTO VIEW, and --

Stump pulls his car into the station.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. JONAH'S SERVICE STATION - DUSK (RAINING LIGHTLY)

11

Stump gets out, blows on his hands. It's cold, and a man comes out, the gas station owner, JONAH, 55. The man services the car throughout the conversation.

STUMP

Fill it up and replace the wiper blades.

JONAH

You got it.

STUMP

Colder than a witch's tit, eh?

JONAH

It's just starting. We got three-four feet of snow another thousand feet up. Where ya going? Skiing? I hate skiing.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

STUMP

Actually, I'm going to meet Ty Cobb.

JONAH

Cobb?! He stopped here for gas once, I asked him for an autograph for my boy and he told me to shove it where the sun don't shine.

STUMP

I hear he's got a way with kids...

Stump heads to a pay phone as the attendant replaces the wiper blades. Stump's breath hangs heavy in the air. It's cold. Freezing. He drops a set of coins in the call box. He blows on his hands and pulls up his collar -- he wasn't prepared for the weather to be this cold.

He comes to life when he hears a voice on the other end -- a voice we never hear.

STUMP

Hey, baby, it's me...

(beat)

Al... your husband...

(beat)

I'm up in the woods somewhere on assignment...

(beat)

Listen, sweetheart, listen -- nobody can love you the way I love you and I want you to take me back. I made a mistake.

(listens)

Okay, lots of mistakes. I know I'm not worthy.

We hear a CLICK.

STUMP

Honey? Sweetheart? Baby?

He flicks the receiver hook several times. She's gone.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

12

RAIN POUNDS down as the car climbs to higher elevation.

CUT TO:

13 INT. CAR - NIGHT (RAINY)

13

Stump struggles with a map under the dome light as he drives.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SNOW COVERED MOUNTAIN PASS - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Stump's car passes a sign that tells all: DONNER PASS.

STUMP (V.O.)

I confess I was looking forward to seeing Cobb and being near his brilliance. My own life seemed on hold, somehow. Everyday churning out the same old articles, drinking at 4 in the afternoon with the same old guys, the same old excuses for not writing a novel, the same old confused marriages that we all needed and were trying to get out of at the same time... Cobb was a god whose brilliance, however difficult, could rub off on me. His problems were different than mine...

14 ANGLE ON STUMP'S CAR

14

which pulls off the road and heads up a small mountain road among snow-covered pines.

A row of mailboxes catches Stump's attention, and he pulls over to review the names with a flashlight. He lights his way across the names of a dozen boxes -- nothing, until:

The last box, enormously oversized, bears the name "COBB."

CLOSE ON STUMP

He smiles. Perfect.

BACK TO SCENE

His car heads up a mountain road a final hundred yards, comes around a bend in the trees and there it is --

14 POVS SHOT - HUGE MOUNTAIN LODGE 14

In the grand style but, like the mailbox, grotesquely oversized.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. MOUNTAIN LODGE - NIGHT 15

Stump parks and approaches somewhat warily.

The sound of BREAKING GLASS and SHOUTING voices.

Stump hurries to the door to escape the rain and finds refuge under the eave. The noise is frightening from that close. He stands unsurely -- does he knock? When --

The door is thrown open -- a black man, WILLIE, 40, with a suitcase stands wildly upset, screaming back into the house.

WILLIE

Fuck you, Mr. Cobb, I have too much dignity to spend another moment with you. I hope you die before the sun comes up and may you rot in hell!

The man whirls and is shocked to see Stump standing there with his own suitcase.

WILLIE

Who are you?

STUMP

I'm a writer.

WILLIE

You mean he actually found somebody to take the job?

Willie bursts out into crazed laughter, as if the world of Cobb was finally too absurd. Cobb and a writer? In this weather? In any weather? And the man walks through the rain, laughing, heading on foot down off the mountain as Stump just stares.

Stump turns and steps into the open doorway.

CUT TO:

16 INT. MOUNTAIN LODGE - NIGHT

16

Stump is in the front door -- The place is enormous and barely lit. Taxidermied game hangs on the wall. Stump is terrified.

A MAN is sitting in an overstuffed chair reading a newspaper. Dressed in a business suit and tie, he seems oblivious to the surrounding chaos. He also seems out of place.

STUMP

Mr. Cobb?

The man looks at Stump and points upstairs without speaking.

More CRASHING sounds from upstairs.

STUMP

Mr. Cobb?

The silence is shattered by a SCRATCH, then VIOLIN MUSIC from upstairs. STATIC suggests a record is playing.

17 ANGLE ON STAIRS

17

Stump climbs the stairs with caution -- Until he's just outside the half open door from which light spills. He hesitates...

STUMP

Hello? Mr. Cobb?

A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT -- Ripping through the door. Stump is terrified -- he gasps for air.

STUMP

Thank you very much, Mr. Cobb,
but I don't need this job that
bad.

Stump turns and creeps back toward the stairs, but --

ANOTHER GUNSHOT RINGS OUT -- SHATTERING a hanging LAMP.

Stump freezes one more time. Silence. Then the voice --

COBB

Yes, Mr. Stump -- you do need this
job that bad.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

COBB (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now come in here and meet the great
Ty Cobb.

(calmly)

I won't hurt you.

Stump breathes deeply and steps into the doorway -- He does it as if there's no choice, accepting his fate. And sees:

18 POV SHOT - TY COBB

18

Lying in bed in a robe. Unshaven. Bottles of booze and food everywhere. And bottles of pills sit on every surface. Two hunting dogs sit on the bed with him.

A small record player sits next to the bed. A record spins, filling the room with FRITZ KREISLER VIOLIN SOLOS.

He places the gun on his night table, knocking pills and bottles to the floor with a crash he barely notices. When he speaks it is without a snarl, without threat -- simply, even sweetly, he says:

COBB

On the violin -- Fritz Kreisler.
I'm a great admirer of his. I'm
also a great admirer of yours.

BACK TO SCENE

STUMP

Thank you.

COBB

But you are a hopeless romantic
and only a moderate success.

STUMP

Sir, I am the most successful
sportswriter in America and not
merely a 'moderate success.'

COBB

Of course.

(beat)

Give me those pills over there.

(CONTINUED)

Stump retrieves some pills that Cobb is pointing towards. Cobb washes down a handful of pills with a bottle of Scotch. Momentarily revitalized, Cobb hands Stump a folded letter which Stump opens to read.

COBB

That's an invitation to a testimonial dinner at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. You're taking me there -- when is it?

STUMP

(looking at the letter)

A few weeks.

COBB

All the great ones will be there -- The great Mickey Cochrane will be there! Hornsby, Sisler, Ott, the Waner Brothers... we used to have some parties, Stump, I'll tell ya that right now...

(beat)

We can't forget.

STUMP

I won't forget.

COBB

Look at me closely, Al...

(with utmost sincerity)

Lie after lie has been written about me -- my whole life I've been misunderstood.

(beat)

You're gonna tell the real story of Ty Cobb.

STUMP

What's the 'real' story?

Cobb climbs slowly out of bed. His words are reasoned and not without passion.

COBB

That's why you're here.

(beat)

See, there's two kinds of writers. The kind that spin endless yarns about small subjects... that's you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

COBB (CONT'D)

(beat)

Or... there's the kind with one great subject that consumes them forever.

(beat)

That could be you. Because I am that subject.

Cobb hobbles to a table in front of a window. The table is covered with pills, bottles, needles, and booze.

COBB

(suddenly bellowing)

Jameson! Get your ass up here!

Cobb grabs another bottle of booze and swigs deeply, liquor spilling over him. Then, suddenly, he holds up his hand. A calm comes over him as --

He stares out the window into the snowy woods. His rage has quickly turned into a quiet, intense, unsettling focus.

STUMP

You okay?

COBB

Mmmmmmm...

19 POV SHOT - WOODS IN MOONLIGHT

19

near the lodge. A bank of snow -- and a large buck moves INTO VIEW.

20 CLOSE ON COBB'S FACE

20

His eyes light. A flare in his nostrils. A twitch. And utter calm.

BACK TO SCENE

Jameson, the man in the suit, arrives and stands in the back of the room. He takes notes when Cobb speaks.

JAMESON (MAN)

Sir?

Cobb continues staring out the window at the buck.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

There's a small oil company near Bakersfield called Honolulu Oil, sitting near the Elk Hills Reserve...

(beat)

I want you to buy all the stock you can.

JAMESON

Honolulu Oil?

COBB

Getty is expanding in the west, looking for companies like that. I got a hunch...

(beat)

Stumpy, c'mere...

Cobb picks up the revolver and holds it lovingly.

Stump crosses and stands behind Cobb, sharing the view.

COBB

I can take that buck. What'ya think?

STUMP

With a pistol? No way.

Cobb smiles and loads the revolver. He pushes the window which swings slowly open.

21 POV SHOT - BUCK IN MOONLIGHT

21

searches for leaves to eat in the snow. Serene. Unaware.

BACK TO SCENE

COBB

(to Jameson)

There's a board meeting of Coca-Cola in Georgia next week. Call them up and tell them I can't make it for medical --

(correcting himself)

-- personal -- reasons...

(beat)

... and sell all the 3-M stock we got.

22 COBB 22

raises the gun -- he wobbles badly and steadies himself. The gun shakes. Then steadies.

Stump stands over his shoulder watching the bizarre action.

23 POV SHOT - BUCK RAISES ITS HEAD 23

Just as...

KABLAM! The REVOLVER FIRES with a violent kick.

The buck spins and runs back into the woods, kicking snow and disappearing in the brush.

24 BACK TO SCENE 24

COBB

Got him.

STUMP

Like hell you did.

COBB

Right behind the ear.

STUMP

You're full of shit.

COBB

Jameson?

JAMESON

If Mr. Cobb said he got him, then he got him.

COBB

You have no vision, Stump. A writer without vision is a waste of my time. I think I picked the wrong man.

Cobb stumbles back into bed, somewhat exhausted by the ordeal.

JAMESON

And I think I better get back to San Francisco before the storm hits. I'll take care of these transactions, Mr. Cobb.

And Jameson exits the room.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

STUMP

And I'll be leaving as well,
sir, since you think I'm the
wrong man for the job.

COBB

Shut up, Stump -- we both know
that I'm your meal ticket.

(beat)

We need each other.

(smiles)

And we start in the morning.

STUMP

No.

COBB

(calmly)

Yes.

Cobb reaches over and defiantly turns UP the MUSIC so
that the room is overwhelmed with Kreisler's violin.
Stump stares back at this decrepit, overpowering figure.

Cobb gradually slips into sleep, buried in the music,
the booze, the pills, the pain...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. MOUNTAIN LODGE - EARLY NEXT A.M.

25

Silence.

The morning mist hangs thick over a snowbank in the woods.

A rabbit scurries across the snow, some quail are flushed.

PAN ACROSS the landscape REVEALS the lodge. Smoke curls
from the chimney.

CUT TO:

26 INT. LODGE - MORNING

26

Stump sits hunkered over a tiny portable typewriter on
the kitchen table. Cobb mixes a bourbon with orange
juice to wash down some more pills, which he takes
randomly.

A teletype MACHINE sits on a table nearby -- Throughout
the scene, a tape CLICKS endlessly out, piling on the
floor. Cobb occasionally checks data on the tape.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

Ready, Mr. Cobb.

COBB

Chapter one, Page one...

STUMP

I'm ready.

COBB

'Know ye that a prince and a great man has fallen this day.'

Stump types it out, then stops.

STUMP

What the hell is that?

COBB

That's what Robert E. Lee said at the burial of my grandfather who was a Confederate General killed at Fredricksburg.

STUMP

So I'm taking notes?

COBB

Hell no. That's the first line of my autobiography.

STUMP

I ain't writing it.

COBB

Why not?

STUMP

It's horseshit. It's a third person comment about someone who's already dead. An autobiography has to be in the first person -- plus it can't come from the other side of the God damn grave.

COBB

My story can come from any damn place I want.

STUMP

Not to mention you can't call yourself 'a prince and great man' -- that's for the world to decide.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

What kind of a fucking writer you call yourself -- all tied up in rules and regulations. What's the point being a writer if you can't say what you want to?

STUMP

You're not treating me like a writer -- you're treating me like a stenographer.

BLAM! A SHOT RINGS OUT -- Stump types quickly, hunting and pecking with two fingers, reading aloud.

STUMP

Know ye that a prince and a great man has fallen this day...

COBB

It has a certain ring to it...

STUMP

Yes it does.

COBB

I thought you might like it. It's yours, a gift from me.

(beat)

'Cobb, a prince among men, misunderstood in his genius, as genius always is' -

(demands from

Stump)

This is the second line from what will be the greatest biography of a great man ever written -- type it!

Cobb checks the tape and suddenly is deep in thought over some information coming across. Stump types.

COBB

Bethlehem Steel's about to dive.

Cobb grabs a phone and dials -- Then barks into the phone.

COBB

(on phone)

Jameson. Bethlehem's going in the toilet. Dump it all!

Cobb slams down the phone, momentarily lost in finance.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

You got a stock tip for me?

COBB

Yeah... buy Coca-Cola. We're about to go out in cans.

STUMP

Coke in cans? I don't think so.

Cobb just stares back in disdain. Then, suddenly --

Cobb starts coughing terribly. He clutches his torso as if it were about to fall into pieces.

COBB

You know what's wrong with Ty Cobb?

STUMP

What?

COBB

(proudly)

Every disease known to man -- I got 'em all! And they'll never get me in a hospital -- never!

(beat)

My heart leaks -- the doctors who are nothin' but a buncha hacksaw artists give me Digoxin to keep it pumping...

Cobb grabs a bottle of Digoxin pills and flings it across the room in a rage. He flings bottles of pills as he recites his ailments.

COBB

They give me Darvon for the cancer in my back, they give me Tace for something eatin' up my stomach, Fleets Compound for an infection in my bowels, Librium for my tension, insulin for my diabetes...

Cobb grabs a hypodermic needle and awkwardly pours from a bottle into the chamber. Insulin spills as he does.

COBB

Fuckin' insulin...

He jams the needle wildly into his arm without hesitation.

(CONTINUED)

He takes a deep breath as if the drug has produced an immediate relief from pain.

COBB

And if all that wasn't enough,
it's been two years since I
got my pecker in the air...

(beat)

The South may not rise again but
my dick will.

The PHONE RINGS.

COBB

(barks)

I ain't here!

Stump answers the phone.

STUMP

(answering the phone)

Cobb's residence... hello.

(beat)

He's not here -- who's calling?

Ernie? Ernie who?

(his face drops)

My God...

(to Cobb)

It's Ernest Hemingway... for you.

COBB

Tell him to go to hell!

Stump covers the receiver nervously.

STUMP

Jesus Christ, Ty, this is the
great American writer -- this
is the man who inspired me to
become a writer!

COBB

Tell him to go to hell anyway.

STUMP

Why?

COBB

Him and me used to be pals but we
went on a hunting trip once and he
hired a shitty guide.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

That's it? You didn't like a
guide he hired?

Cobb looks at Stump with a fierceness that is so over-
whelming, so physical, that Stump melts.

COBB

You tell him to go fuck himself
or I'll kick your Yankee ass!

Stump is terrified. He reluctantly uncovers the
receiver.

STUMP

Mr. Hemingway? Mr. Cobb says...
to go to hell.

(awkwardly)

By the way I'm a big fan of
yours --

CLICK, a hang up.

Cobb settles into a chair, letting the drugs and pills
and booze work their way into his thick body.

COBB

Hemingway isn't a bullfighter -- he
wrote about bullfighting. What
the hell is that?!

(beat)

Bullshit... Damn painkillers...

Cobb rubs his head -- The drugs are taking effect.

STUMP

Ty, you okay?

COBB

It'll pass...

(increasingly
woozy)

Stumpy, listen to me -- you know
what I need?

STUMP

What do you need?

COBB

I need a woman.

(muttering to
sleep)

A woman is definitely what I
need...

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (6)

26

And Cobb drifts to sleep in his chair, momentarily overcome with painkillers.

Stump stares at the sleeping volcano of a man, and when Cobb starts snoring heavily, he rises, pulls on a coat, scarf, and hat, and heads out the door.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. LODGE - DUSK

27

Snow flurries greet Stump as he heads outside, and darkness is falling. He takes a deep breath.

STUMP (V.O.)

I couldn't be around the man for long without needing a break, which his painkillers gracefully provided.

(beat)

My sanity would soon depend upon a frequent breath of fresh air, a walk in the woods -- any escape from what one sportswriter had called 'Cobb's brooding soul that bubbled with violence.'

Stump lights a pipe as he walks up a trail, away from the lodge, toward a ridge, all covered with snow. The flurries of snow are getting thicker now.

STUMP (V.O.)

I knew most of the Cobb stories -- first man elected to the Hall of Fame, ahead of the incomparable Babe Ruth. Statistics that haven't been approached in three-quarters of a century.

Stump stops at the ridge and looks down at the partially frozen Lake Tahoe in the lingering light.

STUMP (V.O.)

But I'd known boxing champions and football players -- they were gentle souls outside the arena.

(beat)

How much of Cobb was an act, a lifetime of theatrical intimidation to preserve his own legend?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STUMP (CONT'D)

Legends grow in time. Tough guys are tougher, women more beautiful, routine acts of self-preservation become heroic.

Stump continues walking down a crest of snow, through a stand of snow-covered pines. The light is dark, purple, eerie, and Stump is lost in thought, until, suddenly, he sees:

A trail of blood in the snow. He follows it down a slope, past a tree, growing deeper, thicker. And there it is --

The buck lies dead in the snow in a pool of blood. Stump stops in fear, then approaches, leans down and examines --

STUMP

My God...

The buck's head has a hole blasted behind the ear.

Stump rises quickly to his feet and looks around. The woods are silent. Snow falls from a branch. And...

He hurries back through the woods up the ridge, momentarily lost as the snow swirls, he finally spots the lodge.

CUT TO:

Stump bursts into the lodge as the brewing storm blows in.

Cobb is standing there in a hunting jacket, high laced boots, a hat, with a suitcase. He holds a paper bag wrapped in twine.

COBB

We're going to Reno. I want a woman.

STUMP

There's a blizzard out there!

COBB

When a man wants a woman, a man wants a woman.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

STUMP

Let's just put on some soup, build a fire, and we can work on the book.

COBB

How cozy.

(holds up the
paper bag)

I got 25 thousand in cash and negotiable securities in here. Don't let it out of your sight.

STUMP

Look, Ty, the roads are impassable.

COBB

You lead, I'll follow.

STUMP

I'm not driving in this stuff!

COBB

I need a woman!

CUT TO:

29 EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY IN SIERRAS - DUSK

29

A blizzard -- two cars ease down an ice-covered road in an increasingly horrendous snowstorm.

30 INT. STUMP'S CAR - DUSK

30

Stump is terrified, straining to see through the flurries which grow thicker by the second. He keeps checking his rearview mirror.

POV SHOT THROUGH REARVIEW MIRROR

Cobb at the wheel of a huge, black, Chrysler Imperial. He looks possessed.

31 INT. COBB'S CAR - DUSK

31

Cobb at the wheel -- A madman.

COBB

You call that driving, Alice?! My sister can drive faster than that! Step on it!

(CONTINUED)

- 31 CONTINUED: 31
- He grabs a bottle of bourbon on the seat and chugs it down.
- 32 EXT. HIGHWAY IN BLIZZARD - DUSK 32
- A treacherous cliff drops quickly away from the road, certain death protected by an inadequate guardrail.
- Into a blizzard, increasingly out of control, the cars slip and slide and skid down the mountain.
- Cobb leans on his HORN -- HONK, HONK, HONK.
- 33 INT. STUMP'S CAR - DUSK 33
- Stump struggles to hang on as the car fishtails on the edge of losing control. He keeps glancing at Cobb who continues screaming.
- COBB
Get off the road -- ya can't drive any faster?! Move it!
- Stump is caught between fear and rage.
- STUMP
Fuck you! I ain't dying in this God damn ice cube!
- 34 INT. COBB'S CAR - DUSK 34
- Cobb's eyes flare -- The WIND roars, the blizzard beats against the windshield.
- COBB
(muttering)
The man drives like an old woman...
- Cobb steps on the gas -- His car pulls out into the oncoming lane and accelerates to pass.
- 35 EXT. HIGHWAY IN BLIZZARD - DUSK 35
- Cobb's car passes Stump's car down the steep grade. Insane, impossible, suicidal -- not another car on the road, the highway closed, barely visible... and here comes Cobb.
- Stump stares in disbelief as he clings to the wheel.

36 STUMP'S POV 36
Cobb waves his fist as he speeds past --

37 CLOSE ON COBB 37
He laughs, cackling madly at Stump.

COBB
Drive, motherfucker, drive!

38 STUMP'S POV 38
The black Chrysler rushes down the mountain into the raging storm.

STUMP
struggles to see through the windshield -- snow is swirling everywhere.

STUMP'S POV
Cobb's car disappears into the blizzard, fishtailing as it goes.

BACK TO SCENE

STUMP
Jesus...

39 EXT. HIGHWAY 39
Stump's car creeps along the edge of a deep ravine that plunges to a raging, icy river. The car fishtails, straightens, and continues on, slowly groping down the mountain.

40 CLOSE ON STUMP 40
Sheer terror. It takes his full powers of concentration to keep the car on the road.

STUMP
(to himself)
He's a goner, Al, save your own
God damn ass...

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

CLOSER ON STUMP

He sees something.

41 EXT. HIGHWAY 41

His car lights reveal tire tracks in the snowdrifts on the highway. The tracks skid wildly, clearly out of control, and head straight off the road.

42 ANOTHER ANGLE 42

Stump stops his car and gets out -- He hurries to the edge of the road where the bank drops away quickly.

POV SHOT - COBB'S CAR

lies nose down at the bottom of a snow-filled ravine, thirty feet away. The tail lights are still on. The car is totalled.

BACK TO SCENE

STUMP

Cobb!

Stump plows his way on foot down the embankment, fighting bad footing and snowdrifts, until --

He arrives at the car -- Surely nobody could survive this. With difficulty, he makes his way to the back door of the huge car and wrestles it open.

Stump sticks the top half of his body into the car.

STUMP

Cobb?

Cobb lies upside down, ass in the air, his face buried under the dash of the car. There's blood on his face.

COBB

It's about fucking time you got here!

STUMP

You've alive?

Cobb struggles to right himself, twisting and turning free.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

I wouldn't call it living but
it'll do. Help me outta here.

Stump helps Cobb back out of the car. It is an awkward, clumsy, difficult task.

STUMP

There's blood!

COBB

Of course there's blood! I just
put my head through the windshield
of a car, what the hell ya think,
ya big fucking jerk.

STUMP

Shut up!

COBB

Ty Cobb can't die like this!
They'll bury me and nobody'll
know who it is!

STUMP

I said shut up.

Stump drags Cobb awkwardly through the snowbank back up to the highway. When they get to the edge of the highway, Cobb stops to stare at the tire tracks leaving the road.

COBB

Look't that! No guard rail! I'm
suing the State Highway Commission,
I'm suing the Governor, I'm suing
every God damn body!

(outraged)

I coulda been killed!

STUMP

God damn it, shut up and get in
the car!

The blizzard swirls around the two men, now at Stump's car on the highway.

COBB

Gimme your keys, I'm driving.

STUMP

I'm driving.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

COBB

Do you know how to get to Reno?
Hell, no! I'm driving.

STUMP

Over my dead body!

Cobb pulls a gun from his overcoat pocket and aims it right at Stump's head.

COBB

Your call.

STUMP

You miserable son of a bitch. You coward, you pathetic, frightened, desperate old man -- you can't do anything without that gun and frankly it doesn't impress me to keep flashing it because I know you're not gonna shoot me 'cause you need me worse than I need you. What, you're gonna kill me?

Cobb smiles. He loves it when someone stands up to him. He thrives on confrontation.

COBB

I've killed a man.

STUMP

Fine, then put me outta my fuckin' misery. I'm freezing.

Cobb hands the gun to Stump.

COBB

Here ya go, Stumpy. I like a man who stands up to me.

Stump holds the gun awkwardly, not knowing what to do.

COBB

Now give me the keys. I'm driving.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. HIGHWAY TO RENO - DUSK (MOMENTS LATER)

43

The car races down the mountain -- a wild ride.

44 INT. CAR IN BLIZZARD - NIGHT

44

Cobb at the wheel is perfectly happy and at peace. Stump, in the passenger's seat, braces himself for certain death.

COBB

It's only another hour -- plenty of time to tell you my story before we find us some women.

STUMP

Women? Plural?

COBB

Some for you, some for me. We'll have a helluva time. The broads're probably lining up right now, waiting for ol' Ty and his buddy Stump.

STUMP

(muttering)

Dear God...

And Cobb launches in as he accelerates down the mountain, every curve risking death. He seems at peace with the world -- in the driver's seat, literally, on the edge of being utterly out of control.

COBB

I suppose you want to know about my childhood. Writers usually do.

STUMP

None of this 'know ye that a prince and great man has fallen' stuff --

COBB

My philosophy is simply this -- Life is too short to be diplomatic. A man's friends shouldn't mind what he does or says, and those who are not his friends, well, to hell with 'em.

And Cobb drifts into a story of his youth. He's suddenly so relaxed that he pays little attention to the road.

COBB

I was born in a small town in Georgia, of course... my sweet sister Florence still lives there...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

COBB (CONT"D)

(beat)

And I started playing baseball when I was a kid like everybody else only I was better than everybody else. When I was seventeen I started playing for money -- my father didn't approve.

(beat)

He was a great man...

45 EXT. HIGHWAY

45

As the snow whirls around the car hurtling down the mountain, the snowflakes FILL the SCREEN and turn to confetti as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

46 EXT. ROYSTON (GEORGIA) - DAY (1900) (B&W)

46

Confetti falls from the sky -- PROFESSOR COBB, 40, Ty's father, waves to the crowd in front of city hall. Signs everywhere declare him to be the newly elected MAYOR COBB.

A band plays "Sweet Georgia Brown" as the Mayor makes a victory speech.

COBB (V.O.)

He was the mayor, they were grooming him for governor, he was a learned man, a professor, and the Head Deacon in the Baptist Church.

47 INT. BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY (B&W)

47

Professor Cobb sings loudly with the Deacons behind the Pastor as the CONGREGATION joins in.

CONGREGATION

(sings loudly)

'There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins...'

CLOSE ON TY'S MOTHER

Very young and pretty, singing in the Congregation. And young Ty next to her, also singing at the top of his voice.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

COBB (V.O.)

My mother was the most beautiful woman in the county... she married my father when she was twelve which was the way they used to do it.

(beat)

And she taught me to believe in the hymns we sang... I especially liked the bloody ones...

(singing the hymn)

'And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains...'

48 EXT. RIVER IN GEORGIA - DAY (B&W)

48

Young Ty Cobb is baptized in the river.

COBB (V.O.)

I remember after I was baptized and I was walking home with my pals...

49 EXT. TRAIN TRACK IN RURAL GEORGIA - DAY (B&W)

49

Young Ty and three buddies walk along the track.

COBB (V.O.)

I was feeling very Christian, ready to live the good life -- my father didn't drink, smoke, gamble or chase women -- and I wasn't going to either --

The boys skip rocks and start across a trestle bridge.

COBB (V.O.)

... when all of a sudden a train was coming at us.

POV SHOT - TRAIN

headed right for the boys.

COBB (V.O.)

There I was, a newly baptized child of God who hadn't hardly sinned, and I was gonna die.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

BACK TO SCENE

The other other boys leap safely into the river, well ahead of the oncoming train. But young Ty stays on the tracks.

COBB (V.O.)

The engine bore down on me till
I could see the whites of the
engineer's eyes -- I was
thrilled...

CLOSE ON ENGINEER

He pulls the WHISTLE and screams at the young boy standing defiantly on the track.

CLOSE ON YOUNG COBB

His face filled with excitement as the space between him and the engine reduces to nothing.

NEW ANGLE

Closer and closer the engine comes -- 50 yards, 25 yards, 10, five, four, three... moments before death --

Young Ty Cobb leaps to safety, flying in front of the engine, out over the water till he splashes, mere milliseconds before he would have been crushed to death.

Young Cobb surfaces in the river and waves his arms in triumph. His pals shriek with delight and embrace him at his courage.

COBB (V.O.)

... it was the greatest thrill in
my life not counting the first
time I saw a woman naked...

50 SERIES OF SHOTS (B&W)

50

Other trains on other tracks bearing down on young Cobb. In each case --

Young Cobb dances in the track and leaps with grace to safety.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

COBB (V.O.)
 I felt protected. By my father,
 my mother, the baptism, I don't
 know -- but from that moment on
 I knew I couldn't be hurt.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Young Cobb hurtles through the air toward the river, just
 missing the locomotive...

CUT TO:

51 INT. CAR IN BLIZZARD - DUSK

51

Cobb and Stump continue racing down the mountainside.

COBB
 My father died in a terrible
 accident, you know.

STUMP
 No, I didn't, really...

COBB
 Didn't you do your research on me
 before you came up here?

STUMP
 I didn't have time... I mean, I
 knew the basics.

COBB
 Then you've read that I'm the
 meanest bastard of them all?

STUMP
 People have said that, yes...

COBB
 I don't care what people think.

STUMP
 Then why do you care what I write?

COBB
 I am who I tell you I am! Why
 are you making things so
 complicated?!

STUMP
 That's what writers do.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Well writers oughta make things simple! Everything's complicated enough as it is.

STUMP

(mutters)

Maybe you're right!

COBB

Of course I'm right!

Stump suddenly looks up and shouts in terror.

STUMP

Ty!

A snow-covered truck in the middle of the road, broken down and abandoned, is on top of us.

STUMP

Godddddddd!

Cobb spins the wheel -- The car spins out of control, just missing the truck, and hurtling on down the icy highway.

COBB

Don't shout like that, Stumpy -- it just increases my tension. I saw that truck all along -- you think I'm gonna hit a truck when I'm getting close to finding me some women?

Stump is in sheer terror by this time.

COBB

My father was murdered, y'know.

STUMP

Your father was murdered?

COBB

I mean that's the sort of thing you're looking for, isn't it?

(beat)

Murdered on the balcony of his own house... the house I grew up in...

DISSOLVE TO:

52 EXT. GABLED HOUSE IN GEORGIA - NIGHT (B&W)

52

The head of a horse in f.g., shaking its head, uncomfortable with the bit in its mouth. In the b.g., the gabled house in the moonlight. A small light spills from a second-floor window onto the balcony.

A man on the balcony porch moves toward the window from which light spills.

The man pulls up the window and --

KABLAM! A SHOTGUN BLAST rips the silence and darkness. The man falls on his back.

KABLAM! A second SHOTGUN BLAST takes off his head.

CUT TO:

53 INT. CAR ON HIGHWAY - DUSK

53

Stump is stunned by this information as the car careens wildly down the mountainside.

STUMP

Your father was murdered? How come nobody knows about this?

COBB

The oldtimers in Royston know about it. Nobody else's business. It happened when I was 17, a few days before Detroit called me up.

STUMP

But this helps explain why --

He catches himself.

COBB

Why I'm such a prick? Ha!
(laughs)
That's too easy -- you're a better writer than that --

STUMP

Was the killer ever caught?

COBB

There was an arrest, a trial, and an acquittal. Nobody was ever convicted.

STUMP

Jesus Christ --

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

COBB

Aw, don't go sob-sister on me,
Stumpy.

(beat)

The only thing that finally
matters is a man's accomplishments
and I must say, in all humility,
Al, in all humility -- I was the
greatest ballplayer of all time.
Nobody is even a close second.

DISSOLVE TO:

54 EXT. DETROIT BALL PARK - DETROIT DUGOUT - DAY (c1910) 54
(B&W)

A gambling den. Money on the bench. Two men in suits are
placing bets, intermingling with the players. A player
smokes, another drinks -- this is as far from the anti-
septic modern game as can be imagined.

Cobb, early 20's, selects his bat, talks to the gambler.

COBB

Single to left, steal second,
steal third, steal home...

GAMBLER

Eight to one.

COBB

Fuck you!

GAMBLER

Ten to one.

COBB

You're on.

Cobb tosses some money on the pile, and climbs up the
dugout steps, shouting.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. ON-DECK CIRCLE - DAY (B&W) 55

Cobb swings the bat and shouts at the pitcher.

COBB

Hey, greaseball, check your wife
-- one of the players is missing!

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

The pitcher flips Cobb the finger and takes a sign, delivering a pitch which is swung on and missed, strike three.

Cobb heads to the plate, passing his dejected teammate who has just struck out.

COBB

Who the hell ever signed you?

TEAMMATE

Go to hell.

Cobb laughs -- He seems to feed on these exchanges, and he stands in at the plate, addressing the UMPIRE.

COBB

Hey, Cyclops, you're missing a good game.

UMPIRE

Shut up, Cobb.

As Cobb digs in, he reaches into his back pocket and drops something on home plate, in front of the CATCHER.

COBB

Here ya go...

The Catcher holds up a pair of women's panties.

COBB

Your old lady left 'em in my car last night -- I thought you could give 'em back to her.

CLOSE ON CATCHER

He flips his thumb, a sign for the pitcher to deck Cobb.

CATCHER

You're going down, Cobb.

COBB

Let's go.

The pitcher delivers a fastball right at Cobb's head -- He hits the dirt just before the pitch arrives (and this is long before players wore protective headgear).

Cobb rises, laughing defiantly.

(CONTINUED)

COBB
(to the pitcher)
That's as hard as you can throw?!
Shit, it that was my fastball I'd
wear a dress!

Then Cobb shouts at the shortstop, a large German-American athlete, the great HONUS WAGNER.

COBB
Hey, Wagner! I'd shade me a
little up the middle if I was
you!

Wagner doesn't budge, comfortable in his position, not drawn into Cobb's taunts. Stoic, implacable -- far from Cobb.

COBB
(to catcher)
You try to take my head off then
you throw a sinker away, in and
out, same old shit -- sinker
away...

CLOSE ON COBB

His chatter stops, his focus is intense and sudden. He holds the bat strangely, with a split grip, a left-handed batter, he dangles the bat almost parallel to the ground. For all his fierceness, there's a delicacy in the way he holds the bat. A baton, a paintbrush, a magic wand...

NEW ANGLE

Here comes the pitch -- sinker away -- and Cobb unleashes a swing that is at once quick and powerful. He drives the ball to left, the opposite way --

Wagner lunges to his right -- But the ball skips into left.

Cobb streaks to first and rounds the base viciously, daring to stretch it into a double but slamming on the brakes and returning to first when the throw rifles into second.

Cobb shouts defiantly at the pitcher.

COBB
You God damn coward! You shoulda
thrown at me again! You shoulda
hit me in the fucking head!

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (3)

55

Cobb looks down at Wagner who stands implacably at short-stop, a large, powerfully-built man.

COBB

Hey, Krauthead, I'm coming down.

CLOSE ON WAGNER

He just nods.

NEW ANGLE

The pitcher stretches, looks and delivers -- and Cobb breaks for second. The pitch is wide. The Catcher fires.

Wagner takes the throw as Cobb arrives in a spikes-up slide.

And Wagner swipes a brutal tag in Cobb's face -- his giant ham of a hand in the tiny glove clutching the ball lashes across Cobb's mouth. Blood gushes. The ball pops free. Wagner seems unbothered by the fact that Cobb is safe at second -- he has bloodied Cobb's face. Cobb seems unbothered by the fact that his face is a bloody mess -- he has stolen second. Both men seem satisfied.

BACK IN DUGOUT

More money is wagered.

PITCHER

Stretches and delivers -- Cobb takes off for third. The throw is high -- he slides in safely.

IN STANDS

Bets are doubled. The stands are full of wagering. The whole ballpark is like a giant saloon -- drinking, smoking, wagering -- and the game is played by thugs and brigands.

COBB ON THIRD

Yells at the pitcher and Catcher.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (4)

55

COBB

You want in on the action? My
mother has a better arm than you!

(to the Catcher)

I'm coming to you, greaseball!
Coming to kick your dago ass!

CATCHER

steals a glance at Cobb who takes a menacing lead off
third. The Catcher gives a signal to the pitcher.

PITCHER

nods, winds up, and as he does --

Here comes Cobb with a recklessness beyond reason. And
as the pitch arrives in the Catcher's hands, the Catcher
digs in to take on Cobb --

Cobb slides spikes high, flying above the earth, his back
leg slashing his spikes like knives. It is a slide of
utter defiance and violence, a slide intended to harm.

A vicious collision between Cobb and the catcher -- blood
and dust. The ball rolls free. Safe.

Cobb and the catcher immediately start punching and in
seconds, a brawl breaks out, both benches clearing. As
the police rush out to break up the brawl...

COBB (V.O.)

In those days you didn't hold
hands and dance with the men on
the other teams. They were the
enemy -- you fought with 'em.

(beat)

And I was the most hated man in
baseball.

56 EXT. PHILADELPHIA BALLPARK - DAY (B&W)

56

Cobb enters the stadium through the dugout. The crowd
rises to boo Cobb. The boos are overpowering.

Cobb warms up in front of the dugout. The boos are
deafening. The vindictive threats are ceaseless.

FAN #1

You're a shit, Cobb!

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

Cobb continues warming up.

FAN #2
I hate your guts, Cobb!

Cobb tips his hat and speaks easily to the fan.

COBB
A good day to you, too, sir...

The police escort Cobb to right field -- the roar of the vitriolic crowd increases.

COBB (V.O.)
Do you know what it's like to be
booed like that?

Cobb in right with the cops -- the crowd on its feet, booing so loudly that the air is all one giant, wailing moan of hatred.

COBB (V.O.)
It feels wonderful! They couldn't
live without me! They came to the
ballpark to see me!

57 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (B&W)

57

Cobb opens a stack of mail -- a police chief and subordinate officers are with him.

CLOSE ON MAIL

Cut-out letters read: "COBB - YOU'RE DEAD"

Cobb puffs on a cigar defiantly as he reads his hate mail.

COBB (V.O.)
Fifty thousand fans trying to kill
me everywhere I went!

58 EXT. PHILADELPHIA BALLPARK - DAY (B&W)

58

Armed police patrol the stands looking for snipers as Cobb plays the game in right field surrounded by police.

The booing increases -- fans truly hate him.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

CLOSE ON COBB

He smiles.

COBB (V.O.)

I loved it. Only great men are booed. Captains of industry and presidents. I knew 'em all...

59 EXT. WHITE HOUSE (C. 1920) (B&W) 59

INT. WHITE HOUSE STUDY

Woodrow Wilson and Cobb have a drink.

COBB (V.O.)

Woodrow Wilson had the best Scotch...

60 INT. WHITE HOUSE STUDY (B&W) 60

Harding, Cobb and others play cards. A lot of money is on the table. And booze. And women that look suspiciously like they've been hired. A floozy drapes herself around President Harding.

COBB (V.O.)

Warren Harding had the best broads...

61 INT. WHITE HOUSE STUDY (B&W) 61

A formal portrait with President Calvin Coolidge and Cobb. Coolidge doesn't smile, doesn't seem to do anything. Just another portrait.

COBB (V.O.)

And Calvin Coolidge wasn't any damn fun at all...

CLOSE ON COBB'S MOUTH

during the portrait. We can read his lips as he mouths "fuck you" silently.

CUT TO:

Like an out of control bobsled -- Cobb races and Stump hangs on for his life.

COBB

After World War Two, General Patton asked me for an autograph -- he said he patterned himself after me!

(beat)

Are you getting this?

STUMP

I'll remember.

COBB

Why aren't you writing?!

STUMP

'Cause I'm trying to have a good grip on things when this car goes over the next cliff! I ain't ready to die yet!

Cobb's tone changes suddenly -- he questions Stump without guile or anger, as if his answer is obvious.

COBB

But neither am I.

Cobb stares at Stump, waiting for an answer, and forgets about the road.

Stump looks up in fear and points at the road.

STUMP

Ty!

Cobb swerves wildly back onto the road, such as it exists in the blizzard.

COBB

I said I'm not ready to die.

STUMP

Then watch the fucking road.

COBB

But you're not listening to me! I may have every God damn disease known to man but I am never going to check into a hospital because I am alive and I am going to get laid in Reno!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COBB (CONT'D)

(beat)

You're gonna get laid, too,
Stumpy!

STUMP

Maybe I don't wanta get laid!

COBB

You queer?!

STUMP

I'm married.

COBB

I thought you were divorced.

STUMP

We're in the middle of a...
problem. We're talking.

COBB

Talking my ass! Quit hanging on
-- get a divorce. Is that why you
don't wanta get laid in Reno?
'Cause you're feeling loyal to a
woman you're divorcing? That's
really stupid, Stumpy...

STUMP

I'm not getting a divorce. I'm
being loyal.

COBB

Is that why you used to wine and
dine that little brunette who had
an office across the courtyard
from you in Santa Barbara?

Stump is nailed.

STUMP

What do you know about her?!

COBB

I do my homework, Stumpy. I know
where the bodies are buried.

STUMP

(defensively)

It didn't last long!

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

COBB

Hey, no need to defend yourself.
When it comes to women I'm a total
shit -- the difference is, Stumpy,
that I know I'm a shit.

STUMP

Nobody knows about the brunette.

COBB

Our little secret, huh?

(beat)

And that part about me being a
shit with women? That ain't gonna
be in the book.

STUMP

I gotta put your family in my
book.

COBB

Your book?! My book! And nothing
about my ex-wives or children are
gonna be in it. My book is about
baseball!

STUMP

My book is about Cobb!

COBB

Cobb is baseball!

INTERCUT:

63 EXT. HIGHWAY

63

Suddenly something appears ahead on the roadside. Cobb
doesn't see it. Stump does. It looks like a figure,
huddled, wrapped, immobile in the swirling snow. It
can't be...

STUMP

Ty! Look! It's a man!

THEIR POV - FIGURE

attempts to wave at the car. A nearly-frozen, desperate
attempt to flag down the car.

BACK TO SCENE

COBB

Fuck him...

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

STUMP

Stop the car!

Cobb brakes -- the car spins to a stop some distance past the figure standing knee-deep in snow.

COBB

Whoever it is he's gotta be pretty stupid to be out in this shit.

STUMP

We're out in this shit!

And Stump climbs out of the car.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. SIDE OF ROAD (BLIZZARD) - DUSK

64

Stump trudges back to the half-frozen figure who flails his arms stiffly at the apparition of a car in all this. The figure is wrapped in blankets, his head covered. We cannot see who it is until we are in his face.

FIGURE IN SNOW

Help me. Please help me.

STUMP

My God... it's you. Are you okay?

It is Willie, the black man who Cobb fired the day before.

WILLIE (FIGURE IN SNOW)

I can't believe you found me...

STUMP

Let me help you to the car.

WILLIE

I told you that you'd only last one day with the bastard.

STUMP

Cobb's in the car. He's driving.

Willie stops trudging toward the car.

WILLIE

Mr. Cobb's in the car?

STUMP

Yeah...

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE

Then I'm not getting in the car with that son of a bitch. I'd rather take my chances out here.

STUMP

You're coming!

And Stump drags Willie to the car, though the man is reluctant the whole way, he is in no condition to resist.

WILLIE

(muttering the whole way)

He hates me. He hates black people...

STUMP

He fucking hates everybody. Don't give him the pleasure of dying out here.

WILLIE

If dying out here gives him pleasure then I won't die out here.

They get to the car -- Stump opens the back door to help the nearly-frozen man into the car. Cobb grumbles.

STUMP

Ty, it's Willie. We can give him a lift to town.

COBB

Bullshit! I ain't givin' no nigger a ride nowhere!

CUT TO:

And Stump loses it -- he grabs Cobb's pistol off the seat of the car and aims it right at Cobb's head.

STUMP

Shut the fuck up and give him a ride!

COBB

Now who's the coward! You won't shoot me! You need me!

Stump hands the gun to Willie.....

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

STUMP

No. But I'm sure Willie would take great pleasure in it.

Willie climbs into the back seat with the gun. Cobb is livid.

COBB

You'll pay for this, Stumpy...

STUMP

Say, Willie, you a baseball fan?

WILLIE

Yessir...

STUMP

Who's the greatest ballplayer of all time, in your opinion?

WILLIE

Willie Mays, no doubt about it.

COBB

That nigger couldn't hold my jock!

STUMP

Excuse me, Mr. Cobb, the man is speaking...

66 NEW ANGLE

66

And Cobb jumps on the gas -- the car races off, back down the mountain, fishtailing as it goes.

WILLIE

And I'd say the second greatest player of all time is Jackie Robinson... or maybe Josh Gibson...

COBB

Shut up!!

WILLIE

And of course, the greatest base runner of all time isn't riding in this car -- the fastest baseball player of all time was Cool Papa Bell -- Cool Papa would've easily broke all your stolen base records --

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

COBB

Nooooooo!

WILLIE

Cool Papa was so fast that when he entered a hotel room and flipped the light switch off, he'd be asleep in bed before it got dark...

STUMP

And then there's Satchel Paige...

WILLIE

Oh yeah, Satchel Paige could throw a porkchop past a wolf, Mr. Cobb, ol' Satchel woulda had you eatin' outta his hand, he woulda had you hittin' .220 and kissin' his black ass to boot...

COBB

Shut this man up!

WILLIE

The man with the gun does the talking, you wretched, old prick...

67 LONG SHOT - CAR

67

racing down the highway in the snow, and we go out hearing Willie recount the greatest ballplayers of all time -- all of them black -- as Cobb seethes, a gun to his head. Stump feeds Willie, watching Cobb's racism simmer.

Into the storm the car disappears -- fishtailing down the mountain.

The blizzard grows thicker, the flurries taking over the mountain, until all we see is --

The thick snow falling from the dark sky. Suddenly --

STUMP

Ice! Slow down! Tyyyy!

68 POV - STEEP DOWNGRADE

68

as slick as a bobsled run.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: 68

CLOSE ON STUMP

Terror.

CLOSE ON WILLIE

Terror. He lowers the gun and hangs on for dear life.

CLOSE ON COBB

He accelerates with vengeance.

69 CAR 69

wobbles and starts spinning -- out of control, then spinning continuous 360s down the grade.

70 CLOSE ON THREE MEN 70

The world spins around them as they cling for their lives. Until:

THUD -- the car slams into a bank of snow. Suddenly, silence.

The three men sit without speaking for several beats, slowly acknowledging that they have survived. Finally:

COBB
Fucked up roads. They don't build highways like they used to.

71 POV - HOTEL SIGN IN DISTANCE 71

glows a welcome sign in the night. It is no longer snowing.

BACK TO SCENE

WILLIE
Well, Mr. Cobb, thank you for a lift into town...

Willie hands the gun to Stump and climbs out of the car, bidding farewell to Stump as he does.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

WILLIE

And you, sir, should leave this disgusting, wretched, sorry son of a bitch immediately. Good evening.

Willie tips his hat and trudges to the neon glow in the distance. Cobb and Stump alone in the car.

They both look out -- the car is buried, hood deep, in the bank of snow.

CUT TO:

72 EXT. EDGE OF RENO - NIGHT

72

Under the famous arch that reads: "The Biggest Little City in the World," a tow truck pulls Stump's car into town, and up to:

EXT. LAST CHANCE HOTEL - NIGHT

The truck stops -- Stump helps Cobb out and into the old style building adjacent to the gaudier casinos.

CUT TO:

73 INT. LAST CHANCE HOTEL - NIGHT

73

Stump helps Cobb to the registration desk in a clean, but very modest old hotel.

A WOMAN, 30s, stands at the counter in the middle of some dispute with the clerk. She wears a long, cheap, plain-cloth overcoat and galoshes.

Stump bursts in, oblivious to the conversation in progress.

STUMP

Two rooms, please...

The woman turns to confront the two men. Now we see her. On a fabulous platinum-blond wig is stuck a yellow slicker-type rain hat. The ear flaps are awry, the platinum-blond wig curls up around it -- the effect is thrilling.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN IN WIG

Stand back, you old farts. I'm
in the middle of something --
(back to clerk)

The heat's on the blink and
the mattress is lumpy -- I
want a discount.

CLERK

Aw, c'mon, you always want a
discount, Mona.

RAMONA (WOMAN)

Ra-mona... and the mattress
is always lumpy --

Cobb pulls out a bottle of pills and washes a handful
down with a deep swig from a pint bottle of whiskey.
The Clerk looks on with alarm.

STUMP

Excuse me, I've gotta get him
checked in. He's very sick.

RAMONA

We're all sick in the eyes of God
-- but some of us still have
manners.

She whirls and leaves the lobby, leaving the three men.

STUMP

Two rooms, next to each other.

CUT TO;

Stump helps Cobb shoot up with insulin -- The needle
clumsily groping for a vein in the old man's arm.

CLOSE ON COBB

His face looks terrible, drawn, drained.

Cobb reaches into his pouch and pulls out a bundle of
cash and security notes, tied neatly with a string.

COBB

(barely audible)
My money...

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

STUMP

Your money's okay, Ty, right here...

COBB

My gun...

STUMP

Your gun's okay, too... right here...

And Stump hands Cobb his beloved pistol, which Cobb takes with great affection and comfort.

Stump helps Cobb into bed, covering him with a blanket. The gun and the money sit on the pillow next to his head.

Cobb speaks with great pain just before he passes out from pain, drugs, and exhaustion.

COBB

We haven't missed the testimonial dinner, have we?

STUMP

No we haven't missed the dinner...

COBB

Good, good...

Cobb manages a small, pained smile before drifting off into sleep. Stump turns off the light and exits.

CUT TO:

75 INT. STUMP'S ROOM NEXT DOOR - NIGHT

75

Stump pours a glass of vodka, settles into a chair, and dials the phone. He swallows deeply of the drink, and waits.

STUMP

(on phone)

Hello? Happy Birthday! It's your Daddy! Yeah!

(beat)

Your birthday was yesterday?! No, it couldn't be!

Stump quickly checks a calendar on the wall and realizes he's missed his son's birthday.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

(on phone)

Omigod, what can I say? I feel terrible -- no, it's not okay, jeez... When I get off the road we'll do something special -- a late birthday, eh? Maybe you can go to spring training or something with me, eh? Yeah...

(beat)

Listen, is your mother there?

(beat)

I know she doesn't want to speak to me, but I want to speak to her.

(waits for answer)

Okay, okay -- I feel terrible about the birthday... I'll call you real soon. And tell your mother I'm not drinking anymore. Okay... 'bye, 'bye...

Stump hangs up the phone -- Takes a deep breath, and...

He pours another drink, and sits down to his typewriter.

STUMP

Fuck it...

Stump is hunkered over his typewriter pounding away. His VOICE OVER indicates what he is writing.

STUMP (V.O.)

I was a fool for thinking Cobb's brilliance might be what I needed at this moment of my life... Ty Cobb was the last thing I needed.

(beat)

He was not misunderstood -- he was understood perfectly well. He hated blacks, he hated Jews, he hated Catholics -- he hated everything except himself and his own view of the world...

(beat)

At times it seemed like he would drop dead in front of me...

(beat)

... and other times he seemed indestructible...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

STUMP (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

I was reluctant to view the great Ty Cobb as a pathetic character, lost in the past, paranoia, and the shallow defense of 'his own breeding'...

We hear SOUNDS of the TYPEWRITER BANGING away as...

We DRIFT OUT the window -- Leaving Stump to write all night, at first viewing through the window, then moving until we have a view of --

76 EXT. VIEW OF RENO - NIGHT

76

We hear the incessant BANGING OF the TYPEWRITER GRADUALLY FADE AWAY...

DISSOLVE TO:

77 INT. STUMP'S ROOM AT HOTEL - DAY

77

Stump asleep -- full sun shines in the window. Noon.

A BOTTLE CRASHES against the headboard jarring Stump to consciousness. He looks up to see:

Cobb reading the pages in a rage. He tears them as he does.

COBB

'Pathetic, paranoid, lost in the past!' What is this shit?!

Stump awakens slowly, disoriented, amidst a shattered bottle.

STUMP

Those are my notes! You can't look at my notes!

COBB

You're notes -- my life! You're gonna betray me, you son of a bitch!

STUMP

You want the truth? I'm gonna tell the truth!

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Whose truth?

STUMP

Mine, for crissakes, I'm the writer!

COBB

But I'm the legend and legends are not pathetic!

STUMP

(slightly defensive)

These are just notes...

COBB

Don't you understand anything about 'greatness'?

STUMP

Maybe you should find another writer.

COBB

There's not enough time left.

This frank admission momentarily stops Stump.

STUMP

I'm entitled to my opinions --

COBB

Now that's pathetic. Who gives a good God damn about the opinions of Al Stump?! What people want to know about is Ty Cobb! And they don't want to know who he hates 'cause everybody hates somebody! They don't wanta know if he had two wives or ten! They don't wanta know if he hit women or if they hit him!

STUMP

You think they wanta know how to steal second base?

COBB

Yes! Precisely!

STUMP

Well I don't!

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

COBB

Oh, oh, oh... I get it. You're one of them college psychology type guys. You wanta find the missing piece to finish the puzzle known as the Madman Cobb -- you think you're the next Hemingway but you're just a moderate success in a moderate-sized pond.

STUMP

Fuck you, Cobb! I'm much more than a moderate success!

COBB

That's it, now you're showing some life. You want psychology? I'll give you some fucking psychology!

STUMP

(cynically)

I'm all ears.

COBB

My father was a great man...

DISSOLVE TO:

78 EXT. MOONLIT ROAD THROUGH SOME GEORGIA WOODS - NIGHT - 78
(B&W)

A horse shakes its head, attached to a buggy. A man pats the horse and ties it to a tree.

COBB (V.O.)

My father told my mother he was going out of town for the weekend on business. But he didn't go. He came back 'cause he thought she was being unfaithful...

79 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT (B&W)

79

The woman preparing for bed.

COBB (V.O.)

I don't know why he thought it -- 'cause my mother was a wonderful woman -- but he thought it.

80 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT (B&W) 80

The father climbing up the trellis onto the balcony.

COBB (V.O.)

My father thought he would catch
the man who was trying to steal
his wife from him... catch him
in the act...

81 FATHER (B&W) 81

pulls a gun as he nears the window.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT (B&W)

The woman hears noises on the balcony and leaps out
of bed in terror.

CLOSE ON WOMAN (B&W)

She turns and looks toward the bed. We don't see
whatever she's looking at.

WOMAN'S POV (B&W)

The window. It starts to open.

COBB (V.O.)

My father had high standards...
the highest. He believed in
quality... he believed in
education... he believed in God...
he believed in me... he believed
in my mother... But on that night
he seemed like a prowler... and
so --

82 EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT (B&W) 82

A SHOTGUN BLAST takes out Cobb's father's stomach
and he reels back onto the balcony. He rolls to his
elbows and looks up.

COBB (V.O.)

My mother killed my father...
shot him in the belly...

(beat)

And then blew his head clean
off...

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

A SECOND SHOTGUN BLAST takes his head off.

CUT TO:

83 INT. STUMP'S ROOM AT HOTEL - DAY 83

Cobb stands above Stump who is still in bed.

COBB

How's that? A pretty God damn good piece of psychology, eh? That what you're looking for? The childhood incident that explains me?!

Cobb spits on the papers of Stump's text.

COBB

Well I was a prick before it happened and a bigger prick after it happened so stick that up your Sigmund Freud ass!

Silence. Stump is shaken by this story.

STUMP

Your mother killed your father?

COBB

And you ain't printing it.

STUMP

I have to.

COBB

Not if I say so. I don't think you understand something -- I have final editorial approval of the book.

STUMP

No, I do. I always have it.

COBB

Did you read your contract?

STUMP

It's my standard contract. I just signed. I would never have agreed to this if you had final approval.

(CONTINUED)

Cobb calmly picks up the phone and hands it to Stump.

COBB

Call your agent.

Stump quickly dials and gets an answer.

STUMP

Hello? Charlie? Al... I'm in
Reno... yeah... things are fine...

(beat)

Yeah, listen... I'm just checking...
did we give away final editorial
approval on this Cobb book?

(long beat of
disbelief)

We did? Cobb has it? Jesus...

Stump listens long and hard -- his face sinks.

Cobb smiles and hangs the phone back up for Stump who reaches for the bottle on the nightstand and pours himself a morning drink of vodka.

COBB

Well, you were pretty stupid to
give up approval, weren't ya?

STUMP

Fuck you, Cobb?

COBB

Fuck me? Why me?

(suddenly charming)

Why you mad at me? Your agent made
the deal, your lawyer, your
publisher, you didn't even read
the contract because you trusted
them! Who the hell ever trusted
a lawyer or an agent?! If I was
Al Stump, the guy I'd be pissed
off at would be Al Stump!

STUMP

Listen to me, you son of a bitch --
if you die before the book is
finished, I'll write the story I
want.

COBB

But I ain't dying first.

STUMP

I'll write slow.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (2)

83

COBB

I'll die slow.

Cobb lights a big cigar -- and sets fire to Stump's pages. Both men watch them go up in smoke.

COBB

Now get dressed so we can go
find some women...

Stump just stares back -- exhausted and overmatched.

CUT TO:

84 INT. HARRAH'S CLUB (RENO) - NIGHT

84

The main room -- Showtime. In progress.

LOUIS PRIMA WITH KEELY SMITH are thrilling a packed house full of dinner tables.

LOUIS PRIMA AND GROUP

'That old black magic has me in
its spell,
That old black magic that you
weave so well..'

Cobb and Stump at a table drinking and eating.

A cigarette girl works the room at a nearby table. She's all legs and fishnet stockings... and wig.

COBB

Look't that -- hundred bucks says
I get in her pants before dawn.

The cigarette girl turns and we recognize her.

STUMP

My God -- it's Mona... Ra-mona...
We met her at the hotel...

Ramona is a vision in this outfit as she approaches them.

COBB

I don't remember...

Ramona arrives at their table.

RAMONA

Cigarettes, gentlemen? Cigars?
We stockpiled some Havanas before
Senor Castro did his little number.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

Coupla Monte Cristos, Ramona,
number twos.

RAMONA

Have we met?

STUMP

At the hotel -- checking in.

RAMONA

Ohyeah, you were the asshole.

Cobb is suddenly gallant, gentlemanly, even charming.

COBB

Excuse me, young lady, I must
apologize for the behavior of
my friend -- he has a crude side.

Ramona delivers the cigars and collects the money.
Stump is a bit chagrined and caught off guard by this
Cobb.

RAMONA

I accept.

COBB

Ramona... Spanish name... lovely...
it means 'moonlit garden of the
gods'...

RAMONA

Actually it's German and means
'wise protectress' but thanks for
the thought...

INTERCUT WITH:

ONSTAGE

Louis Prima takes the mike -- His number has finished to
much applause from the drunken crowd.

LOUIS PRIMA

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you
very much, you're a great crowd
... I have been informed that we
have a celebrity with us tonight
who is a legend, a man who truly
needs no introduction...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS PRIMA (CONT'D)

(beat)

... so let's give a Harrah's
Casino warm welcome to the
greatest baseball player of all
time, the one and only Ty Cobb!

The spotlight flies to Cobb who kisses Ramona's hand.
Stump has been left out of the exchange, and mumbles.

STUMP

'Moonlit garden of the gods'?

The audience stands to applaud Cobb -- Full and genuine.
Cobb graciously waves to the crowd, bowing, basking.

BACK ONSTAGE - LOUIS PRIMA

motions to his band.

LOUIS PRIMA

And this one's for the Georgia
Peach!

They break into "Sweet Georgia Brown."

LOUIS PRIMA/KEELY SMITH

No gal made has got a shade on
Sweet Georgia Brown,
Two left feet but oh so sweet is
Sweet Georgia Brown...

Cobb breaks into a little dance with Ramona at the table,
much to Stump's (and Ramona's) amazement. For a moment,
at least, there is great footwork and lightness in his
movement -- we get a glimpse of the great athlete he once
was.

LOUIS PRIMA

The great Ty Cobb! C'mon up
here!

STUMP

They want you, Ty --

COBB

Of course they want me.

And Cobb heads for the stage, walking better but not
without effort, a walk enhanced by drugs and booze. As
he does, Ramona turns to Stump.

(CONTINUED)

RAMONA

Who's that?

STUMP

The greatest baseball player of all time.

RAMONA

I don't know baseball from shmaseball but I know a nice man when I see one and I also know it's time for my coffee break. Hasta luego.

And she's off with her trayful of tobacco to the cocktail lounge.

BACK ONSTAGE

As Cobb arrives...

LOUIS PRIMA AND GROUP

(singing)

Fellas, she can't get, are fellas,
she ain't met,
Georgia made her, Georgia claimed
her, Sweet Georgia Brown.

Louis Prima welcomes Cobb to the mike to thunderous applause.

LOUIS PRIMA

My great pleasure, sir --

(shaking hands)

I've always wanted to ask you something, Mr. Cobb, with all the great ballplayers playing right now -- how well do you think you'd do against today's players?

COBB

Well, I figure against today's pitchers I'd only hit about .275, .280...

LOUIS PRIMA

That's amazing, Mr. Cobb, considering your lifetime average is nearly a hundred points higher. Why do you think you'd only hit .275 against today's pitchers?

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Because I'm 72 fucking years old,
that's why, God damn it. Give me
that thing.

Cobb grabs the mike and takes over.

COBB

First of all I wanta thank you
for that song, 'Sweet Georgia
Brown... it's a great song about
my home state and I appreciate
it...

(beat)

That song has become the theme
song for the Harlem
Globetrotters...

(as Prima nods with
a smile)

It's too bad such a fine song had
to be stole by a buncha niggers
playing a faggot game in their
underwear...

Prima and his cohorts are aghast. They cling to the hope
that this is some put-on, some joke. They force a small,
unnatural laugh.

Stump winces and leaves the room, heading for the bar.

COBB

'Course the Globetrotters are
owned by a Jew named Saperstein
so whadda you expect?

A disaster. Prima tries gamely to seize the mike back.

LOUIS PRIMA

Thank you very much. Another
round of applause for the Georgia
Peach, Ty Cobb!

COBB

I got the mike, Dago -- gimme a
God damn minute. Nobody's got
respect for their elders any
more.

Cobb turns to the crowd which, even in it's drunken state,
is appalled and in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Now let me explain to you how to hit a baseball. It's a lost art. Ever since that half-nigger Ruth started hitting home runs, the skill, the art, and the science have been lost.

Cobb grabs a clarinet from a member of Prima's band.

COBB

Now, say this is a bat...

BACKSTAGE

The CASINO MANAGERS and SECURITY FORCES are quickly gathering to figure out what to do.

CASINO MANAGER

Let's just haul him off --

SECURITY OFFICER

That's Ty Cobb! He'll fucking kill me!

COBB

You see, the bat is like a wand, a magic wand... it should be caressed, held like a woman... like a woman who's really in need of a man...

OFFSTAGE

The Casino Manager winces and consults.

CASINO MANAGER

Oh God, here we go...

COBB

Hitting a baseball is really very easy... you can't force it... you can't overpower it... you go with the pitch... you let the bat do the work... it's all rhythm and flow...

And Cobb starts demonstrating hitting techniques to the bewildered audience and casino staff. He strikes that familiar, strange stance -- choked up on the bat, a split grip, the bat held parallel to the ground...

CUT TO:

85 INT. CASINO BAR - NIGHT

85

Stump sees Ramona at the bar, her cigarette/cigar tray on the bar. She's smoking and working her way through a tall drink. He approaches her.

STUMP

Excuse me.

RAMONA

You again? You could learn some manners from your friend.

STUMP

I'll try harder.

(motions for
bartender)

You're a beautiful woman.

RAMON

It's the wig.

Ramona pulls the wig off her head revealing a sea of bobby pins and hair pins tying her natural brown hair to her head. She sets the wig on the counter and scratches her natural scalp.

RAMONA

The damn thing itches but it's good for tips. Give me a scratch, will ya?

Stump scratches the back of her scalp, somewhat embarrassed and somewhat aroused.

RAMON

Turn you on? Hey, Harvey, another round. On him.

STUMP

Vodka and grapefruit juice.

Ramona slaps the wig back on her head. Slightly akilter. She doesn't care. Harvey delivers another round.

STUMP

Your wig's crooked.

RAMONA

Does it bother you?

STUMP

No, no... I was just --

(CONTINUED)

RAMONA
(bored,
shrugging)
You wanta go to bed with me,
right?

Stump is so taken aback that he doesn't know how to answer. Flustered, he looks around, then takes a deep hit on his drink. He is very unsure.

STUMP
You want money?

RAMONA
I'm not a whore! I don't screw
for money?! Jesus!

STUMP
I'm sorry. I didn't know. I
mean I'm not good at this.

RAMONA
Just divorced, huh?

STUMP
Not yet...

RAMONA
It's written all over ya. Giant
letters right across the
forehead. D-I-V-O-R-C-E. Ha!
Plain as day.

Ramona lets out a loud, hearty laugh without inhibition.

STUMP
It's obvious, huh?

RAMONA
Obvious.
(beat)
So, if ya wanta pay me to screw,
I won't do it.

STUMP
Then I won't.

RAMONA
Screw or pay?

STUMP
Whichever.

(CONTINUED)

RAMONA

So ya don't wanta screw?

STUMP

No, I do.

RAMONA

All this ambiguity -- I see why she's divorcing ya.

Stump, completely befuddled, lets down completely. He doesn't care about getting laid or drunk or anything for the moment, except having someone to talk to -- the someone is Ramona.

STUMP

I don't know what I'm saying or doing anymore... I'm trying to speak my heart.

RAMONA

Oh God...

STUMP

I told my wife I wanted a divorce. She said 'okay' -- then I realized maybe I don't.

RAMONA

Then go back to her.

STUMP

No.

RAMONA

Then quit crying. You want a divorce, you don't want a divorce, you're asking marital advice from a woman you're trying to get in the sack -- Jeez Louise!

STUMP

I'm not myself.

RAMONA

Who is?

A sigh. Stump is lost. He motions to the bartender.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

Another round, Harvey.

(back to Ramona)

This assignment has me befuddled.
I'm supposed to tell the world
that a monster is really a
prince. I'm supposed to lie.

RAMONA

You being paid?

STUMP

Very well.

RAMONA

Then it's not a lie. It's a job.
Quit agonizing -- take the money,
do what you gotta do, and get it
over with.

STUMP

I can't.

RAMONA

Then quit.

STUMP

No!

RAMONA

For godsakes why not?

Stump has to think about this for a while.

STUMP

He knows greatness. I'm in the
presence of greatness. I want to
learn about greatness.

She looks at him like he's crazy.

RAMONA

Greatness is overrated.

STUMP

Maybe you're right, maybe you're
right...

RAMONA

So what do you want?

Stump drinks deeply -- his heart needs alcoholic
reinforcement.

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED: (4)

85

STUMP

I want to be in someone's arms tonight.

RAMONA

Oh that. Why do men have such a hard time saying what they want?

CUT TO:

86 INT. STUMP'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

86

Stump and Ramona stagger in drunkenly -- they are awkward and passionate.

She grabs his vodka and takes a swig from the bottle.

STUMP

Wait, wait... don't drink too much.

RAMONA

Ya think I won't be able to screw if I'm too drunk?

STUMP

Well... yeah...

RAMONA

Screwed, stewed, and tattooed!

She laughs a hearty laugh, letting it all out.

STUMP

C'mere... I want to hold you.

RAMONA

You're so thoughtful -- the others are trying to get me drunk and you're trying to keep me sober. You'd be good husband material.

STUMP

Not so fast --

RAMONA

I didn't mean --

STUMP

Come here.

(CONTINUED)

They embrace -- and hold each other fully, doing nothing but holding on. Stump relaxes.

RAMONA

I'm not a whore.

STUMP

Shh, shh... I know, I know...

A moment of quiet, simple bliss -- when:

The door bursts open -- the LOCK SPLINTERS with a CRASH, and:

Cobb bursts into the room -- Full of rage.

COBB

You two-timing bastard! You
God damn Judas Iscariot! You
stealing my girl! I'll kill
you!

STUMP

She's not 'your' girl!

And Cobb lashes out at Stump -- Stump tries to block the blow, but Cobb is relentless, and Cobb hits him again.

Stump falls backwards -- His head hits a corner of the table.

RAMONA

What're you doing?!

And Cobb backhands Ramona across the face, knocking her down.

Stump lies on the floor only half conscious. He grabs his head. Blood. The room swirls in front of him as --

Cobb grabs Ramona, pulling his everpresent gun from his pocket as he does.

COBB

You're coming with me!

RAMONA

I don't want to!

Cobb jams the pistol into her jaw.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

86

STUMP'S POV

A dizzying view of Cobb dragging the woman out of his room. And he passes out.

CUT TO:

87 INT. HOTEL - COBB'S ROOM - NIGHT

87

Cobb throws Ramona to the floor and locks the door. Her wig falls off.

Cobb picks it up and stares at it.

COBB

What's this?!

RAMONA

My hair.

COBB

Put it back on.

She does -- The wig sits at a funny angle.

COBB

That's better.

RAMONA

Who are you again?

COBB

I am the Georgia Peach. I have 4,191 base hits in 11,429 at-bats, 920 stolen bases, 2,244 runs scored, and 92 batting records...

(beat)

And I want you to undress.

RAMONA

No.

Cobb clicks the hammer of his gun with icy calm.

RAMONA

That don't scare me 'cause if you kill me I'll be dead and you ain't gonna screw a dead lady.

COBB

I might.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

She stares at the madman.

RAMONA
You're right. You might.

COBB
Take your clothes off.

Ramona removes her top -- her breasts are jammed into a classic 50's push-up bra.

COBB
You got big tits. I like big
tits.

RAMONA
(terrified)
They aren't so big. They're
average, actually -- but these
bras are great. Push 'em right up
there. I owe a lot to the bras
and wigs. A girl needs what she
needs --

COBB
Shut up. Take it off.

She does. And covers her breasts with her hands.

COBB
Shy, huh? Get on the bed.

Ramona gets on the bed -- Cobb circles the bed
continuously.

COBB
You're a beauty. Roll over.

She rolls on her face, propping herself on her elbows.

CLOSE ON HER FACE

Terror and tears.

RAMONA
Mr. Cobb, I --

COBB
Shut up.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

87

CLOSE ON COBB

His eyes are full of fury and lust.

COBB
What I coulda done with you in my
prime...

RAMONA
I'm sure you --

COBB
Shut up!

RAMONA
What do you want from me?!

COBB
Roll over.

Terrified, she does.

COBB
I want you to do exactly what I
say...

RAMONA
No...

CUT TO:

88 INT. HALLWAY - VIEW OF STUMP'S ROOM - NIGHT

88

THROUGH the open door -- Stump rises to his feet, feels
his head, and groggily staggers out. Blood on his hand.

Stump feels his way past a couple doors, listening in,
unsure which room is Cobb's until a booming voice --

COBB (O.S.)
Ramona!

Stump hurries to Cobb's door and listens in to be sure.

INTERCUT WITH:

89 INT. COBB'S ROOM - NIGHT

89

Cobb stands above her with his gun and his money.

COBB
Exactly what I say...

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

Cobb pulls a stack of bills from his bag.

COBB
A thousand dollars...

He holds out the money for her.

RAMONA
Do what you gotta do and get it
over with, Mr. Cobb.

Silence. Cobb takes a big, sloppy hit from a bottle,
throwing in a few pills for good measure.

COBB
I want you to tell everyone you
meet that you fucked me and I was
the best fuck you ever had.

RAMONA
That's all?

COBB
That's a lot.

RAMONA
For a thousand bucks? Hell yes.

He reaches out and straightens her wig which is pretty
crooked by now. She lets him. Then he falls apart, vio-
lently grabbing his crotch.

COBB
I'm looking at the most beautiful
woman in the world, do you hear
me?!

Cobb grabs his crotch with the violence he does
everything.

COBB
And I'm dead down here! Dead!
Nothing! And it's been like that
for over two years! Nothing! Now
get outta here before I hit you!

Cobb lashes out at Ramona -- a vicious right hand. She
ducks as his fist slams through the headboard.

RAMONA
Georgia Peach my ass -- Georgia
trash is what you are!

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2)

89

Ramona grabs her clothes and runs from the room, past Stump who has heard it all. He enters Cobb's room.

Cobb sits at the foot of the bed, thoroughly flustered. Stump helps him into his bed where he curls up with his money and his gun, barely conscious.

COBB

She was a great piece of ass,
Stumpy, best I ever had...

STUMP

Good, good...

COBB

Have we missed the Testimonial
Dinner?

STUMP

No we haven't, Ty... now get some
sleep...

Stump tucks Cobb in his bed as the old man drifts into sleep, turns off the light, and heads back to his own room.

CLOSE ON COBB

asleep. Even in sleep, dying, he is twitching and full of fragments of unspent energy.

STUMP (V.O.)

He slept for days. I thought he
was gone for sure. But even in
sleep he was restless and in
motion, a fire always burning in
his belly...

CUT TO:

90 INT. HOTEL - STUMP'S ROOM - DAY

90

Stump at the typewriter, pounding away without interruption.

STUMP (V.O.)

By this time I was working on two
manuscripts -- one was his
version, My Life In Baseball --
which for better or worse was a
history of how to steal second
base or how to hit the breaking
ball to the opposite field.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

STUMP (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It contained nothing about his parents, much less the death of his father at the hands of his mother...

INTERCUT WITH:

91 INT. COBB'S ROOM - DAY

91

Cobb tossing and turning in his sleep, squeezing a pillow or blanket in a death grip.

STUMP (V.O.)

... It contained nothing about his children and ex-wives, none of whom would even speak to him...

(beat)

It contained no insights from his friends because I couldn't find any.

INTERCUT WITH:

92 INT. STUMP'S ROOM - CLOSE ON TYPEWRITER - NIGHT

92

Pages of the baseball book in progress next to a neatly-stacked manuscript in progress.

STUMP (V.O.)

It was a baseball book and I kept it in the typewriter for him to discover and amend...

(beat)

It was a book I never planned to publish.

Stump sits on his bed smoking his pipe and writing in longhand on pieces of paper of all sizes.

STUMP (V.O.)

The second version, my version, was written on legal pads and hotel stationery and cocktail napkins and anything I could scrape together without drawing his attention...

(beat)

I kept my version in a box at the bottom of my suitcase --

(CONTINUED)

Stump packs "his" version into a box, hiding it deep in his suitcase.

STUMP (V.O.)

The whole thing had become an agonizing death watch, and most days I couldn't believe the son of a bitch wouldn't die...

The door flies open and Cobb bursts in -- full of vim and vigor, a fresh set of clothes on, fire in his eyes.

COBB

Nothing like a cigarette girl and thirty hours of sleep to invigorate a man, Stumpy! You look like shit.

STUMP

Been writing, Ty...

Cobb goes straight for the typewriter and yanks out a page, grabbing the stack of typed pages as well.

COBB

Well let's see how we're doing...

Cobb reads the pages with utter seriousness. Stump watches.

COBB

Yes, God damn it, Stumpy, yes! Now you're getting it! None of this Sigmund Freud bullshit! Baseball, Stumpy, baseball! Yes!

Cobb rushes to Stump and embraces him, almost like a child. His eyes are wet with tears.

COBB

You understand! People are no damn good but you're different! You're okay, Stumpy, you get it!
(beat)
And I can trust you...

Stump stares back. And nods.

COBB

Now let's go roll us some dice, Alimony, I feel a hot hand coming on!

CUT TO:

93 INT. CASINO - NIGHT

93

Cobb and Stump approach the gaming tables and as they do, Cobb is recognized and approached for autographs. He signs as he walks, suddenly gracious in this moment.

COBB

Y'see how it works, Stumpy... they boo ya your whole career, then when you're about to kiss off, they put ya on a pedestal. That's what being a legend's all about.

Arriving at a craps table, Cobb barges right in.

COBB

Send the dice to the Peach, boys, and belly up to the bar...

The croupier pushes the dice to Cobb who places a bet, as do the others.

Cobb rolls the dice -- but he sees something. Somebody.

COBB

Stumpy, what is that?!

POV - RAMONA AND WILLIE

are rolling dice at a nearby table. They appear friendly, not intimate, two among twelve.

BACK TO SCENE

COBB

My girl went for the nigger?

STUMP

I think they're just next to each other by accident.

COBB

Mona! You with that nigger!

Cobb's voice silences the tables. Ramona looks up.

WILLIE

He's crazy.

RAMONA

I know.

COBB

Willie! Is she with you?!

(CONTINUED)

Ramona seizes the moment and kisses Willie on the cheek, draping herself all around him as if they were close. The intention is strictly to get back at Cobb.

RAMONA

This is my man, Mr. Cobb, and he's all man.

COBB

My girl with my nigger!

STUMP

She's not your girl and he's not your --

Cobb pulls his gun and tries to climb across the table.

SECURITY OFFICER

He's got a gun.

RAMONA

Mr. Cobb!

WILLIE

Get down!

Cobb on the table with a gun as Stump and police officers scramble to grab his gun hand. Customers hit the deck.

COBB

What is the world coming to?!

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM -- the gun is FIRED REPEATEDLY into the ceiling fixtures, into the mirrors above the tables.

Cobb is wrestled to the table by several men, including Stump. And it takes all of them to escort the struggling Cobb out of the casino into the lobby.

STUMP

(to security men)

We're leaving, we're leaving!
There's no reason to press charges!

COBB

(to everybody)

Do you know who I am?!

SECURITY MAN

You're a crazy old fool, that's who you are!

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (2)

93

STUMP

Back off, God damn it! We're leaving!

COBB

Where we going, Stumpy, I wanta find us some more women!

Stump hesitates, chaos swirls around them. Cobb is out of control, we hear threats of arrest -- when...

STUMP

Ty, Ty, Ty, calm down. It's time for the testimonial dinner!

This stops Cobb cold. He's immediately sober.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. RENO ARCH - DAWN

94

Stump's car passes under the arch, heading out of town, and we go to voice over:

STUMP (V.O.)

Actually the testimonial dinner at the Hall of Fame was still weeks away, but it was the only thing that got him calmed down enough to get us out of town without getting thrown in jail -- or getting somebody killed.

DISSOLVE TO:

95 EXT. ROUTE 66 (ARIZONA) - DAY

95

The car takes Stump and Cobb eastward.

STUMP (V.O.)

And as we headed across country, Cobb as usual was oblivious to the chaos he'd left in his wake. In fact he was buoyed with new enthusiasm at the prospects of seeing his cronies once again...

96 INT. CAR ON HIGHWAY - DAY

96

Cobb is in an upbeat mood. He's reading a map. A tape recorder with hand mike sits between them.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Y'know something, Alimony, I believe you're the best friend I ever had.

STUMP

You're kidding.

COBB

Swear on a Bible, Stumpy -- I feel I can trust you now.

CLOSE ON STUMP

deeply alarmed by this confession.

STUMP (V.O.)

I was disturbed, to say the least, that he felt we were friends -- but at least for the moment it made things bearable.

(beat)

And he started talking -- the world according to Ty Cobb...

Cobb talks into a tape recorder sitting on his lap, enjoying the hand microphone.

COBB

(into recorder)

And then this fat ass named Babe Ruth came into the league and damn near destroyed the game of baseball... We all thought he was gonna eat and fuck his way outta the league but he hung around for a few years --

STUMP

'Hung around'? He was --

(quickly revising)

-- next to you -- the greatest player of all time. He hit 714 home runs?!

COBB

Anybody can hit home runs. Now excuse me, I got work to do...

STUMP

Sorry, Ty --

And Cobb resumes into the tape recorder.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: (2)

96

COBB

I didn't care that they cheered and adored Ruth -- I cared that they respected his ballplaying -- Christ, they built Yankee Stadium for him with a 297-foot right field line. My sister Florence could hit the ball 297 feet!

DISSOLVE TO:

97 EXT. STADIUM - DAY (1920S) (B&W)

97

Game in progress -- Detroit vs. New York.

Cobb at the plate -- a pitch at his head knocks him down. Immediately, both benches clear in a major brawl.

COBB (V.O.)

Whenever we got into a fight with the New Yorkers, 24 of our guys would fight 24 of their guys and me and Ruth would take on each other!

As the benches clear -- Cobb races not at the pitcher but straight to right field where The Babe is charging in like a rhino straight for Cobb. Somewhere near second base the two giants collide in a thunderous smash, falling to the ground in a brawl, as 48 players slug it out in the b.g.

DISSOLVE TO:

98 EXT. ROUTE 66 (SOUTHWEST) - DUSK

98

The car races into the sunset, Cobb babbling on...

STUMP (V.O.)

During the day, we worked on his version of the story. At night I worked on mine...

CUT TO:

99 INT. CHEAP MOTEL (ROUTE 66) - NIGHT

99

100 STUMP

100

alone in a room, is writing on pads of paper.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

He pours another drink and lights a cigarette.

STUMP (V.O.)

I was drinking like a fish,
smoking cigarettes again, and now
lying about the hidden
manuscript.

(beat)

And by writing two versions
without telling him, I was
becoming something Cobb was not.

(beat)

I was becoming a liar.

An O.S. RUMBLE -- Stump quickly hides the manuscript as:

Cobb thunders in with the typewritten version, the ver-
sion written for Cobb's approval.

COBB

Fabulous stuff, Stumpy, just
brilliant. You're a genius.

STUMP

Thanks, Ty...

COBB

I love reading about me.

Cobb takes a swig of booze. Some routine outside noise
drifts in, young people LAUGHING and CARRYING ON.

COBB

Goddamn it, who's out there?

Cobb hurries outside, drawing his pistol.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

101

Cobb charges outside -- FIRING his PISTOL into the air.
The manager and a security guard hurry over. Followed
quickly by Stump, who's now an expert at this.

STUMP (V.O.)

He shot up his share of motels
for all the usual reasons --
guests were too noisy, he
couldn't get any sleep, it didn't
matter -- he was always boiling
over...

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

Stump leads Cobb back inside and calms the locals.

STUMP
... and I became expert at
keeping the peace wherever we
went...

CUT TO:

102 INT. SAME MOTEL - BATHROOM - CLOSE ON COBB'S VEINS - NIGHT 102

as Stump helps him shoot up.

STUMP (V.O.)
I also became expert at finding
his veins...
(beat)
Which always revived him...

CUT TO:

103 EXT. SOMEWHERE ON ROUTE 66 - DAY 103

The car is parked by the side of the highway. Cobb stands with the tape recorder next to an endless plain of flat desert or rolling farmland. The hood is up on the car, steam spills from the radiator. And Cobb is dictating like Marc Antony.

COBB
(into recorder)
... by the age of 25 I was a
millionaire, by the age of 30 a
multi-millionaire, by the age of
35...

Stump wades up in the weeds to give Cobb his pills.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. HIGHWAY (PENNSYLVANIA) - DAY 104

105 INT. CAR - DAY 105

Stump driving as Cobb babbles away into the tape recorder.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

STUMP (V.O.)
Somewhere along the way I'd gone
from biographer to stenographer
to chauffeur to nurse... I was
the only thing keeping the
bastard alive... and I kept
hoping he'd die.

COBB
Y'know, Stumpy, with a friend
like you, I just might go on
forever...

Cobb grabs the recorder mike and launches in again.

COBB
(back into the
mike)
Where were we -- ohyeah -- then, at
the age of 42, I batted .323 which
was an embarrassment to me but
would be a career for anyone else...

STUMP (V.O.)
Until, by the grace of God, we
arrived -- days, weeks, months
later, I don't know -- in
Cooperstown, New York, for his
beloved testimonial dinner...

DISSOLVE TO:

106 EXT. BASEBALL FIELD (COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK) - DUSK 106

The ball field -- No game. Nearby, a set of buildings.
The Baseball Hall of Fame. Stump's car pulls into town.

CUT TO:

107 EXT. ABNER DOUBLEDAY MOTEL (COOPERSTOWN) - DUSK 107

A classic 50's motel.

108 INT. MOTEL - DUSK 108

Stump and Cobb get dressed for the testimonial dinner. A
black-tie affair, Stump has to help Cobb finish dressing.
Cobb is full of boyish enthusiasm.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

You're gonna meet great athletes,
great warriors, great men at this
Hall of Fame dinner, Stumpy.
None of this modern, pansy
bullshit --

STUMP

I've been looking forward to this
for a long time --

COBB

You fucking liar. You've been
hoping I'd die first.

STUMP

You got me wrong.

COBB

I got you right. But it's okay
'cause I need your help.

Stump squirms. A KNOCK at the door. Stump answers it.

A beat-up 70-YEAR-OLD MAN stands there -- looking like a
lost bum.

STUMP

Can I help you?

MAN

Cobb here?

STUMP

Why?

MAN

I'm Mickey Cochrane.

STUM

Jesus. Ty, it's Mickey Cochrane.

Stump lets Cochrane in the door. Ty stares at him.

COBB

Where's your tux?

COCHRANE (MAN)

I don't have one.

COBB

I sent you money for it.

(CONTINUED)

COCHRANE

It didn't arrive.

COBB

You drank it, you mean. You can't go to the Hall of Fame like that. I won't allow it.

COCHRANE

Things have been rough, Ty.

COBB

There's two things a man should never do -- complain or explain.

(beat)

Now go buy a God damn tux!

Cobb peels some cash from his roll of dough and throws it at Cochrane.

COCHRANE

The stores are closed.

COBB

(exploding)

How could you be so good behind the plate and so bad everywhere else!

Cobb grabs the phone and dials impatiently.

COBB

Operator? What's the best men's shop in town. Who owns it? Jack who? Gimme his home number. Better yet, ring him up for me.

(beat)

Jack?! This is Ty Cobb. Go down to your shop and open it up and sell a tux to the great Mickey Cochrane. And sell him a cumberbund and a shirt and a bow tie and some God damn cologne. He smells like shit. What's the address?

(makes a note)

He'll be there in twenty minutes.

Cobb thrusts the card into Cochrane's hand.

COBB

God damn it, Mickey, ya gotta give a better effort.

(CONTINUED)

COCHRANE

Thanks, Ty.

And Cochrane exits, leaving Cobb with Stump once again.

COBB

He's lost, Stumpy, the poor man's been lost ever since he took a fastball in the ear.

STUMP

You take care of him?

COBB

For years -- but that ain't goin' in the book.

STUMP

Jesus, Ty, why not?

COBB

Because it would embarrass him.

Cobb winces as he tries to rise, almost falling.

COBB

I don't wanta take the cane tonight.

STUMP

You've got to have your cane.

COBB

I don't have to have anything -- if you stay near me... in case I wobble or something... just a firm hand right here...

(touches his own lower back)

That'll keep me upright. I'd appreciate it. Now how do I look?

Cobb poses in his tux -- proudly, unsurely.

STUMP

You look like the greatest ballplayer of all time. You going to be okay?

COBB

I'll be okay when I hear the crowd.

CUT TO:

109 EXT. HALL OF FAME BUILDING - NIGHT

109

A crowd of locals has gathered and is cheering as the great old warriors of baseball get out of one limo after another and pass a phalanx of security guards, television cameras, and photographers. A P.A. ANNOUNCER presents each one.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

The great left-handed pitcher from the New York Giants, who struck out five men in a row in the 19-- All-Star game -- Carl Hubbell.

Lanky Carl Hubbell, 50's, waves to the crowd and cameras as he enters to applause from the locals gathered.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

The great third baseman from the Chicago Cubs, Harold Joseph 'Pie' Traynor...

Pie Traynor, 60's, struggles to the entrance using a cane.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

Paul and Lloyd Waner, the Waner brothers -- Big Poison and Little Poison -- from the Pittsburgh Pirates...

The Waner Brothers, 60's, jauntily wave and enter.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

Fifty-eight home runs in a season -- Mr. Double-X -- the great Jimmy Foxx!

The barrel-chested Jimmy Foxx, 60, gets out and waves.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

And ladies and gentlemen, the highest lifetime batting average of all time, first man elected to the Hall of Fame, retired with over 90 batting records, the one and only Georgia Peach, Ty Cobb!

Cobb gets out, followed by Stump. Cobb walks into the building, past the cameras, utterly erect and upright, stretching his full six feet one inch. The applause is the most enthusiastic yet.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

CLOSE ON COBB'S FACE

His concentration is intense, his focus is mesmerizing, full of pride and rage. He makes it to the door.

COBB

Your hand, Stumpy, your hand!

Stump slips his hand to Cobb's lower back just as they arrive at the door, and the two men enter together.

COBB

Thank you, my friend...

And Cobb is met by the Hall of Fame director, CHARLES, 50, who shakes his hand and shows him in.

CHARLES

Hello, Mr. Cobb, good to see you again.

And they head inside.

CUT TO:

110 INT. HALL OF FAME - BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

110

An orchestra is playing "Georgia On My Mind" as Cobb holds court at his table of honor. The great old players keep coming up to him, renewing old acquaintances.

The first is WAHOO SAM CRAWFORD, 80's, a contemporary and at one time both teammate and adversary of young Cobb.

CRAWFORD

Sam Crawford, Ty, Long time no see.

COBB

Good to see you, Sam. You doin' okay?

CRAWFORD

I'm alive, Ty, I'm alive...

COBB

The boys'll get together later and have a little party, eh?

CRAWFORD

Be some parties tonight, Peach...

(CONTINUED)

ROGERS HORNSBY, 60's, moves in as Wahoo Sam Crawford moves on.

COBB

Stumpy, meet Rogers Hornsby, next to me the greatest hitter of all time --

HORNSBY

How d'ya do. You're looking good, Ty...

COBB

I look like shit and you know it. We'll have a real smoker later, eh?

HORNSBY

Ohyeah... we'll tear it up good...

The EMCEE raps a fork on a glass, bringing the dinner to order.

BASEBALL M.C.

Welcome to Cooperstown, ladies and gentlemen. We're here to acknowledge the greatest ballplayers of all time, those men still gracing our presence who were among the earliest inductees into the Hall of Fame.

(beat)

Waner, Hubbell, Foxx, Cochrane, Hornsby, Traynor -- these are the giants, the Old Masters of our craft...

The spotlight moves around the room and each man waves, half rising from his chair.

BASEBALL M.C.

But the greatest of all is with us tonight -- simply put, the best ballplayer ever -- Tyrus Raymond Cobb.

A spotlight hits Cobb, who rises and waves to the crowd as the lights dim.

BASEBALL M.C.

We have gathered from the archives some film on Mr. Cobb... lights, please...

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (2) 110

The lights dim -- a giant screen is lowered, and the screen fills with old black and white footage of Cobb in action.

111 FILM (B&W) 111

With the familiar voice of a NARRATOR.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

This rare footage of Ty Cobb reflects his love of children, and they admired him by the thousands...

FILM - COBB (B&W)

posing with kids in uniforms. He clowns with them, tousling their hair, knocking off their caps.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

On another occasion he partakes in a Donkey Baseball game, showing his not-so-well-known lighter side...

FILM - COBB (B&W)

on a donkey in a Donkey Baseball game.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

And here's Cobb with two other immortals, Babe Ruth and Tris Speaker...

FILM - COBB, RUTH AND SPEAKER (B&W)

pose on the dugout steps.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

Cobb and Speaker were great friends off the field, and of course were accused of fixing some games by pitcher Dutch Leonard...

112 CLOSE ON COBB 112

watching the film -- He can't believe what he's seeing and hearing.

- 113 COBB'S POV - FILM (B&W) 113
- Cobb and Speaker carousing with obvious gambler types.
(NOTE: Cobb's POV of the film is subjective and differentiated from the film everyone else is seeing. We, the audience, see both versions.)
- FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)
- Cobb and Speaker were clearly involved with unsavory gamblers, but finally were acquitted by Judge Landis, though many questions remain unanswered --
- 114 COBB 114
- leans over to Stump with grave concern.
- COBB
- What the hell is this?!
- STUMP
- It's a great film --
- COBB
- Me and Speaker and the fix?
- STUMP
- I think the medication's getting to you, Ty -- I'm watching you run the bases.
- 115 STUMP'S POV (B&W) 115
- Cobb on the basepaths rounding second and heading for third where he slides, spikes high, safe.
- 116 CLOSE ON COBB 116
- Staring at the screen.
- FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)
- Cobb's unique batting style led to an unprecedented 12 batting championships and a lifetime average of .367 which places him far above the field...
- 117 FILM - COBB (B&W) 117
- at bat, demonstrating his unique stroke.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 117

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)
His ruthless competitive
spirit has sometimes been
called psychopathic...

118 COBB 118

turns to Stump again. Something is wrong.

COBB
Al, what are you seeing?

STUMP
Your batting stroke.

119 COBB'S POV - FILM - COBB IN UNIFORM (B&W) 119

climbs into the stands and starts attacking a heckler
with his fists.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)
In an infamous incident on August
xx, 19xx, Cobb attacked a heckler
who turned out to have no arms or
legs, and was briefly suspended
for the incident...

120 COBB 120

stands up next to Stump, who pulls him back down.

COBB
Stumpy, what's going on?

STUMP
Ty, I think you're not well
-- I'll take you back to the
motel.

COBB
What're you seeing?

STUMP
You and Connie Mack.

121 FILM - COBB (B&W) 121

in his A's uniform poses with Connie Mack.

- 122 COBB 122
settles back down and says nothing the rest of the film, though he continues to see different images.
- CLOSE ON STUMP
Enamored of the old footage.
- 123 STUMP'S POV - FILM (B&W) 123
Cobb running and sliding with abandon and disregard, a fabulous athlete.
- 124 CLOSE ON COBB 124
Silently watching, disturbed.
- 125 COBB'S POV (B&W) 125
He strikes his wife and she falls to the floor. He stands over her defiantly.
- FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)
Cobb and his friends were notorious for booze and sex parties they had in the off-season, parties they called 'Smokers,' which took place in various hunting cabins they would fill with hookers...
- COBB'S POV - NAKED STRIPPER (B&W)
on a table gyrates to a room so thick with smoke that Cobb and his cronies are barely visible sitting around the room, a hooker on each lap, bottles of booze flowing.
- 126 CLOSE ON COBB 126
He rubs his eyes. What is this?
- CLOSE ON COCHRANE, HORNSBY, WANER BROTHERS ET AL.
as they watch the same film Stump is watching.
- 127 FILM - COBB (B&W) 127
rounds third and slides home in a spray of dirt.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: 127

FREEZE FRAME as the Narrator wraps it up.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

And when he retired in 1929, Cobb left behind 92 batting records and a legacy of greatness that may never be approached.

128 CROWD 128

A standing ovation from the crowd as the lights come on.

CLOSE ON COBB

He's still disoriented by the "film" he's seen, but the applause brings him back, and --

The orchestra plays "Sweet Georgia Brown" to Cobb's raised arms.

CUT TO:

129 INT. LARGE LOCAL HOTEL - LATER THAT NIGHT 129

Cobb and Stump move through the hallway.

COBB

Crawford and Foxx have something cooking in Room 212 --

STUMP

Over here, Ty.

COBB

I never partied with these boys but they had a reputation.

ROOM 212

They knock. JIMMY FOXX opens the door a crack.

FOXX

Ty.

COBB

You got some booze?

FOXX

No.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

COBB

I do.
 (beat)
 Who's in there?

FOXX

Me, Sam and Pie.

COBB

Got any women in there?

FOXX

Sure do.

Cobb lights up.

COBB

Me and Stumpy want some action.

FOXX

Wanta meet some great broads?

COBB

We're ready.

And Jimmy Foxx opens the door letting in Cobb and Stump.

CUT TO:

130 INT. ROOM 212 - NIGHT

130

Wahoo Sam Crawford, PIE TRAYNOR, and Jimmy Foxx are sitting quietly in the room with their wives, each woman in her 60s.

Cobb and Stump stand awkwardly.

CRAWFORD

Hello, Ty. You know my wife,
 Lillian?

TRAYNOR

And this is Mrs. Traynor.

FOXX

Pearl, meet Ty Cobb and --

STUMP

Al Stump.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

COBB
 (meekly)
 Hello, ladies.

Foxx pulls Cobb aside and whispers discreetly.

FOXX
 Hornsby's got something on the
 third floor -- maybe more what
 you're looking for.

CUT TO:

131 INT. THIRD FLOOR HOTEL - NIGHT

131

Cobb and Stump hurry along looking for Hornsby's room.

LOUD MUSIC and LAUGHTER spills out of the room at the end
 of the hall. We see a woman enter the room.

COBB
 There it is!

STUMP
 You sure you're up for this?

COBB
 I've never been readier!

Cobb takes a hit on his flask and they knock at the door.

Hornsby answers the door -- we can see a party behind
 him, full of old players, booze, cigars -- and even some
 women, though the whole thing is infinitely tamer than
 the smokers Cobb remembers.

COBB
 Rajah!

HORNSBY
 You ain't comin' in, Ty.

COBB
 It's me! An' Stumpy here!

Cobb starts pushing on the door. Hornsby holds firm.

HORNSBY
 You're a bastard and you ain't
 coming to our party.

COBB
 Who's in there?!

(CONTINUED)

HORNSBY

Me and Mickey an' a coupla broads.

COBB

Let me talk to Mickey.

Hornsby signals to Cochrane who comes over to the door.

COCHRANE

Ty...

COBB

Ya look good in that tux, Mick.

COCHRANE

I can't let ya in, Ty. It's Rogers' party. I'm an invited guest.

COBB

God damn it, let me in!

Cobb tries to break into the party but Hornsby rushes over and shoves the door in his face, leaving Ty and Stump alone.

COBB

Presidents of the United States of America used to invite me to the White House to drink their Scotch and smoke their cigars and fuck their women.

STUMP

Let's go to the motel, Ty...

Cobb heads down the hallway pounding on every door -- he's ready to explode.

COBB

Let me in, God damn it! I invented this game! Let me in!

STUMP

Let's go home, Ty, this isn't a good place to be...

COBB

(screaming)

I fought for players' rights and salary increases and unions while all you crawled around on your knees begging massa' for bread crumbs just thankful for a job!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED: (2)

131

COBB (CONT'D)

Open up, God damn it! Ballplayers
can make big money but they're too
stupid! You're all too stupid!
The hell with ya!

Cobb grabs Stump and pulls his face close.

COBB

Take me back to the Hall!

CUT TO:

132 EXT. HALL OF FAME BUILDING - LATE AT NIGHT

132

Charles, the Hall director, opens the door for Cobb and Stump. He clearly has been summoned in the middle of the night.

STUMP

I appreciate your coming.

CHARLES

For Mr. Cobb, no problem.

Cobb is silent. He and Stump enter.

CUT TO:

133 INT. HALL OF FAME - NIGHT

133

The director flips on a couple lights -- the hall is partially lit. Charles stays in the b.g., as -- Cobb leads Stump past all the displays, various shrines and photos and old bats and balls and records, until --

A glass case full of Cobb's things -- his original Detroit Tiger uniform hangs there. Three of his famous "Black Betsy" bats, his glove, a couple balls, and his spikes.

Cobb stands in front of the case just staring. Stump stands respectfully a few paces away. Cobb stares at his old uniform. Stump stares at Cobb.

And Cobb starts crying, softly at first, then swelling until the muffled deep, convulsive sounds become more audible. He starts crying like a baby.

Stump stands quietly nearby, afraid to move, until, finally:

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

Cobb sucks up the tears and finally turns to Stump.

COBB

What did you see on that film tonight?

STUMP

I saw Ty Cobb playing baseball.

COBB

That's all?

STUMP

That's all.

COBB

I was raised in the Baptist Church but I know that Heaven is just the ol' oskefagus -- the change-up. You swing from your ass 'cause you think life is a fastball down the middle and after your bat has crossed the plate and you're all off balance and looking stupid, the ball just kinda flutters across home, slow and juicy and hittable, and as it crosses the plate, the ball looks at you and smiles a nasty smile and laughs its way into the catcher's mitt...

(beat)

We don't just lose -- we're made fools of.

STUMP

You were the best.

COBB

Save the romance for the book...

(beat)

... and take me home to Georgia.

CUT TO:

134 EXT. SOUTHERN HIGHWAY - DAY

134

A black limo crosses the landscape.

135 INT. LIMO - DAY

135

Cobb reads the typed manuscript next to Stump who just stares out the window at the passing landscape.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

135

STUMP (V.O.)

Cobb parted with some of his hard-earned money and rented a limo in order to make what he called a 'grand re-entrance to his beloved home town of Royston...'

Cobb marks the margin of the manuscript.

STUMP (V.O.)

He loved the manuscript, as well he should -- it made him out to be a saint --

Cobb looks up from the manuscript.

COBB

Greatest biography ever written --

STUMP (V.O.)

The book, like Cobb, was almost finished. But he was dying slower than I was writing, and like everything else, he viewed it as a competition that he was not going to lose.

CLOSE ON COBB

Sweating, pale, hanging on. A grim smile.

STUMP (V.O.)

To me, we weren't riding to Georgia in a limo...

(beat)

We were riding in a hearse...

136 BLACK LIMO

136

heads into the deep South, past catfish restaurants, shanties, and Civil War battlegrounds.

It looks like a hearse.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. HIGHWAY SIGN - DAY

137

"WELCOME TO GEORGIA -- 'The Peach State'"

The hearse rushes into Georgia.

138 INT. HEARSE - CLOSE ON COBB - DAY

138

staring out the window as the Georgia landscape passes.

CAR POV - OLD WOODEN SIGN

Paint chipped and faded.

COBB (O.S.)

We're here. And the fuckin' sign needs paint.

The sign reads: "WELCOME TO ROYSTON, GEORGIA
"HOME OF TY COBB"

A large painting of Cobb rounding third is still visible, though barely, as part of the sign.

The limo passes.

CUT TO:

139 EXT. DOWNTOWN ROYSTON - DAY

139

The limo moves slowly and ominously through the town.

Old folks, black and white, sitting on chairs and benches in front of the stores, under awnings, stare at the strange sight of a limo cruising slowly.

STUMP (V.O.)

It wasn't exactly the 'grand re-entrance to a home town' that he talked about...

CLOSE ON TWO OLD BLACK MEN

sitting under an awning. They point and discuss among themselves who this could be.

140 INT. LIMO - DAY

140

Cobb motions to the driver and to Stump.

COBB

My sister lives down this way...
Turn right here...

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

POV - ROW OF OLD HOMES

COBB (O.S.)
 (slightly confused)
 They look kinda the same...

STUMP (O.S.)
 When's the last time you saw her?

COBB
 About fifteen years ago. But she
 understands me...
 (points)
 There! No... damn....

BACK TO SCENE

The limo cruises slowly through a quiet neighborhood.

STUMP (O.S.)
 Maybe she moved.

COBB
 There! I think...

POV - HOUSE

like the others.

LIMO

stops nearby.

STUMP
 I'll see if it's her. Wait here.
 Stump gets out of the car and heads up the walk.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

141

Stump knocks at the door -- the door opens -- a woman in
 her 60s appears. It is FLORENCE COBB XXXXX.

STUMP
 Good day, ma'am. I'm looking for
 Florence Cobb -----.

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

That's me.

STUMP

I have your brother in the car.

FLORENCE

Tyrus?

STUMP

Yes. And he'd like to see you.

COBB'S POV FROM CAR - STUMP AND SOMEBODY

He can't quite see who it is from his angle.

BACK TO SCENE

FLORENCE

I don't wish to see him.

STUMP

It's been a long time, he said.
He's not well.

FLORENCE

I have nothing to say to him, and
wish to hear nothing he has to say
to me.

STUMP

I know there's been problems, but
the family is very important to
him.

FLORENCE

Young man, the family he talks
about never existed.

STUMP

He loved his father.

FLORENCE

If his father, if my father, was
such a great man, why did Tyrus
turn out to be so evil?

Stump hesitates. He doesn't have a ready answer.

STUMP

He's dying. He just wants to see
you.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED: (2)

141

FLORENCE

No.

And she politely closes the door in Stump's face. Stump turns, sees that the limo is at such a distance that Cobb couldn't possibly have seen, or heard, her. He returns to the limo.

CUT TO:

142 INT. LIMO - DAY

142

Stump climbs back in next to Cobb. He motions to the driver to head off -- the limo does.

COBB

Well?

STUMP

It wasn't your sister. The woman in the house said your sister moved a long time ago... she doesn't know where.

COBB

You cocksucking liar. My sister doesn't want to see me and you're lying.

And Stump, at last, goes off --

STUMP

Liar?! A cocksucking liar?! Of course I'm a liar! That's what I'm paid to do, isn't it?! Lie about Ty Cobb?!

COBB

If you didn't like the job, why didn't you quit?

STUMP

Who would take care of you?

COBB

Don't give me the sob-sister routine.

STUMP

I listen to your bullshit, I interpret and shape and find words for your bullshit and you give me nothing but grief!

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

142

COBB

You love being this close to greatness!

STUMP

Stop the car!

The car stops. Stump climbs out, searching for room and for air to breathe. The skies are overcast and dark.

CUT TO:

143 EXT. CAR BY ROADSIDE - DAY

143

Stump walks away from the car and from Cobb. Some wind blows, and the threat of rain.

STUMP

I wish you'd die!

COBB

I will, Stumpy, I will...

Cobb is out of the car on his cane -- following Stump.

STUMP

And go to hell!

A line of lightning signals a storm in the distance.

COBB

Oh, I'll do that, too.

(beat)

And look how convenient you've made it.

They look up -- The entrance to the Royston Cemetery. A casually-maintained slope of several acres up a hill.

STUMP

That was your sister alright, and she didn't want anything to do with you either!

COBB

I forgive her.

Stump walks into the cemetery to escape Cobb, who follows nonetheless with a cool resolution. Stump laughs at Cobb's comment.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

You forgive her?! That's rich!

COBB

(following along)

Forgiveness is crucial to human maturity and religious growth.

STUMP

Religious growth?!

COBB

We all need to forgive more, Al... you oughta try it. You're too angry. You're all pent up.

STUMP

I'm angry?

Through the cemetery they keep walking, up a long hill full of tombstones and shrines and sprays of dead and dying flowers and gaudy plastic bouquets. Cobb following steadily along with his cane, several paces behind Stump.

THUNDER shakes the ground. And more lightning.

COBB

Are you angry because I discovered you were a whore? Is that it, Alimony?

STUMP

I'm angry?!

COBB

Is it the divorce? You gotta let go of it...

STUMP

I love her! I don't want a divorce!

COBB

Sure ya do. You're just so used to accommodating people that you don't know what you want anymore. I accommodate nobody.

Stump whirls near the top of the hill to face Cobb who continues making his way along, slowly and surely.

STUMP

But you have no friends!

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Do you? Who are they?! Those drunken hacks you hang out with who all think they're gonna write the great American novel but all they're gonna ever do is bitch and moan and write lousy leads about high school football games? How about the brunette in the courtyard? Is she your friend? I heard she fucks everybody -- she must be everybody's friend!

A mausoleum looms behind Stump, bigger than anything in the cemetery, classical, outsized, monumental, even elegant. One simple word is above the door, carved in granite: COBB.

COBB

I'm glad we're here -- I was gonna bring you here anyway sooner or later --

Stump turns to see the mausoleum, and the word COBB.

STUMP

Which Cobb of Georgia is that?

Several beats as the men take it all in. Finally:

COBB

(with pride)

That is me.

And rain suddenly falls from the skies, threatening to soak the two men.

Cobb heads for the mausoleum -- Stump follows.

CUT TO:

Just enough room for the two men to stand. On either side of them are two crypts, enough for four burial vaults. Cobb is very calm now, and lucid. Rain falls heavily outside.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

When I die, my mother and father will be moved in here and, in time, my dear sister, Florence will join us as well.

(beat)

The family will be together again.

Stump is still fuming, angry and cynical.

STUMP

Under one roof? That's romantic! You want that in the book? Ty Cobb brings the family together at last to enter the gates of Heaven whole!

COBB

You mock my family -- you mock me.

Cobb grabs Stump by the throat and stares him in the eye.

COBB

My father was a great man!

STUMP

Then why are you such a bastard?

COBB

Being a bastard is a small price to pay for greatness. I, too, am a great man.

STUMP

Let me go!

COBB

My mother didn't kill my father.

STUMP

What're you talking about?

Cobb's fist clinches Stump's throat, forcing him to hear. Outside the mausoleum, RAIN pours down now, a Southern spring thunderstorm unleashing torrents.

COBB

My father told my mother he was leaving town for the weekend but he came back to the edge of the woods where he tied up his horse...

CUT TO:

145 EXT. MOONLIT ROAD THROUGH SOME WOODS - NIGHT (B&W) 145

A horse shakes its head, attached to a buggy.

A man starts through the thinning woods.

COBB (V.O.)
... because my father thought my
mother was being unfaithful to
him...

POV SHOT - GABLED HOUSE (B&W)

In the window a silhouette of the woman. She turns. A dress drops.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY ON HOUSE - NIGHT (B&W)

The man climbs over the railing and peers in the window. He pulls a pistol from his belt.

COBB (V.O.)
... he was going to catch my
mother with another man...

146 POV SHOT - WOMAN (B&W) 146

Young, thin, beautiful. She turns and looks towards a bed we cannot see.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (B&W)

The woman whirls -- She hears a noise. She ducks down.

She reaches under the bed and pulls out a shotgun. She lifts the shotgun up awkwardly and without familiarity.

COB (V.O.)
I stood by my mother when she was
tried for murder a few months later.
I said she was noble and true and
loved my father completely and the
whole thing was an accident and she
was acquitted as she should have
been...

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

His mother looks away at something.

COBB (V.O.)
Because my mother did not kill
my father.

His mother hands the shotgun to a naked man climbing
from bed.

COBB (V.O.)
My mother's lover killed my father.

Cobb's father raises the winow -- KABLAM! The lover
FIRES into his stomach. Cobb's father lurches onto
his back.

CLOSE ON COBB'S FATHER (B&W)

on his back staring up at his mother's lover.

COBB (V.O.)
The last thing my father saw was
the face of the man fucking his
wife!

The lover unloads the second shell -- blowing his
head off.

KABLAM!

CUT TO:

147 INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

147

The rain pours down on the cemetery. THUNDER.
Lightning. Cobb still holds Stump by the throat.

COBB
Well?! Is that what you want?!
'Cause that's all I know and the
only other people who know about
it are dead! But it ain't going
in the book, either, 'cause you're
the only friend I got left, and
you're the only man I can trust.

Cobb lets Stump go, relaxing his grip and --

Stump rages back outside into the rain. Cobb stays
dry in the doorway of the mausoleum.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

I don't want to be your friend!
I don't want to feel sorry for you!
So your mother's lover blew your
father's head off! I don't care.
You were a prick before it
happened, you were a prick after it
happened, you've been a prick ever
since, and you're a prick now!

Cobb quietly takes a hit on his flask from the doorway of the mausoleum, watching Stump rant and rave in the rain.

COBB

Public relations are overrated.

STUMP

What the hell're you talking
about?

Cobb holds out his flask for Stump.

COBB

You need a drink.

STUMP

Fuck the drink!

Cobb motions for the limo to pull up the slope towards them.

COBB

You're too angry, Al, you just
gotta learn to let it out.

Stump stands in the rain screaming at Cobb who stands out of the rain, calm, centered, drinking, dying.

STUMP

I'm gonna tell the truth about you,
Cobb! I'm gonna tell the world you
hate women, Jews, and niggers!

COBB

(calmly)

You shouldn't use the word 'nigger',
Stumpy, it's racist and demeaning.
And I don't hate women -- I'm just
not very good with 'em, which puts
me in the same boat with you and
every other man I know.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED: (2)

147

STUMP

You treat people like dirt!

Cobb comes out into the rain toward Stump.

COBB

The children of America need
heroes, Al, you know that...

Cobb takes him by the arm and tries to lead him to the
limo.

STUMP

Get your hands off me!

COBB

C'mon, Al...

(taking by the
arm)

You're making a fool of yourself
out here. It's not dignified...

(helpfully)

Come in out of the rain...

And Cobb helps Stump into the limo, which pulls out of
the cemetery still being drenched by rain.

CUT TO:

148 EXT. JEFFERSON DAVIS MOTEL - NIGHT

148

The rain is thick -- Yet another motel, another neon
sign, and the limo parked in front of one of the
cabins.

149 INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

149

Both men are sitting in rocking chairs in front of a
fireplace. Stump is in a bathrobe, his feet in a big
pan of warm water, a bottle of booze in his hand. He
looks a mess. Cobb is idly playing with his pistol.
He's calm, introspective.

COBB

You're an educated man...
tell me what you think...

Stump just sits there, drinking.

(CONTINUED)

COBB

Either my father was... inadequate
... for my mother... he was not
the man I thought he was... not a
great man... not even a good man...

(beat)

... or my mother was... trash...
a common whore...

(beat)

It's that simple, isn't it?

Stump just shrugs and takes another hit.

COBB

As a boy I stood in court next to
her because suddenly I was the man
of the house but as I stood there
steadfastly by her side and heard
the jury say 'not guilty' I knew
she'd been with another man the
night of the killing.

Stump drinks deeply once again.

COBB

A man must defend his mother at
all times, isn't that right, Al?
Or am I a fool?

STUMP

A man must defend his mother
at all times.

COBB

That's what I thought...

And the two men sit there silently, rocking slightly,
trying to stay warm, when there is --

Suddenly a KNOCK at the door -- They stare at each
other.

Cobb puts down the gun, struggles to the door and answers
it.

A MAN stands in the rain, carrying a briefcase, trying
vainly to keep dry.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

Al Stump?

COBB

In here.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED: (2)

149

Cobb lets the man inside -- points to Stump in the chair.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

Mr. Al Stump?

Stump nods as he swigs on the bottle.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

I've been chasing you all over the country --

(opens his
briefcase)

-- I'm here to serve you papers.

STUMP

Papers?

COBB

I'm afraid it's divorce, Stumpy.
I know this routine.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

You're being sued for divorce.

STUMP

But my wife and I are still
talking?!

COBB

Yeah, and what she's saying is
'fuck you.'

STUMP

Fuck me? Well fuck her. No,
fuck him.

Stump reaches for the gun and aims it at the man.

STUMP

You ain't serving me no papers.

The Man is frozen with terror as Stump rises from the chair -- drunk and crazed, aiming the shaky gun.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

I'm just doing a job.

STUMP

I love my wife.

COBB

We all loved our wives, Al, that's
got nothing to do with it.

(CONTINUED)

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE
You'll find somebody else.

COBB
There's a million broads out
there, Stumpy -- put down the gun.

KABLAM! Stump FIRES at the man but the shot goes wild.
He's drunk, he's not experienced with guns, he's shaking.

STUMP
I am not going to accommodate
this man, Tyrus.

COBB
You're all mixed up. Give me the
gun.

STUMP
You're absolutely right, Tyrus,
I've been accommodating people
my whole life and it stops right
here.

(beat)
You've killed a man. I'll kill a
man.

KABLAM! KABLAM! He misses again.

The Man drops to his knees, begging for his life.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE
No! Please, dear God! I have a
family, too!

STUMP
Don't give me that sob-sister
stuff!

Stump tries to hold the gun with two hands, approaching
the man, to nearly point-blank range.

COBB
Al... no... Al... Al...

Stump looks crazed, a bathrobe falling open, his feet
bare and wet, his hair awry from the rainstorm. He aims
the gun at the man's head, looks at Cobb with wild glee.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

Life is too short to be diplomatic. A man's friends don't care what he says or does. You're my friend, Ty, right? You're my friend!

COBB

No!

Stump pulls the TRIGGER -- CLICK. Empty.

As the Man looks up, realizing he's alive, Stump strikes him across the face with the gun, drawing blood.

The Man scrambles to his feet and races from the room, grabbing his briefcase, and running to the door.

MAN WITH BRIEFCASE

You're crazy! No wonder she wants to divorce you! You're crazy!

And the Man runs into the rainy night, leaving Cobb and Stump.

Stump's head collapses in his hands -- Bewildered, exhausted. The two men sit alone for several beats before Stump speaks. He is completely lost.

STUMP

I almost killed a man.

COBB

A little drunken excess...

STUMP

No. I put a gun to a man's head and pulled the trigger. I wanted to kill him.

COBB

It's forgotten already. I saw nothing. Nothing happened.

STUMP

Yes it did.

COBB

Al, listen to me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COBB (CONT'D)

If I was hired to write a biography of the greatest sportswriter of our time -- a biography of Al Stump -- would I include what happened tonight? Attorneys are pigs -- divorce attorneys are lower than pigs. What happened tonight was private. An intimacy. Your own business. Our own business. Nobody else's. It wouldn't belong in a book about greatness.

STUMP

Nobody's gonna write my biography.

COBB

And when the brunette in the courtyard brushed against you, I know what happened, Al. A warm summer breeze, the smell of jasmine, her black hair against a white blouse -- you came to life again, you got hard -- and when you saw her naked it was more than you could bear... it's okay, Al, it's okay...

(beat)

The brunette ain't gonna be in the book either...

Stump looks up at Cobb but says nothing. He picks up a nearly-empty bottle off the floor and takes a hit.

COBB

And the drinking? Well, they used to say ol' Ty had a drinking problem but you can booze me right under the table right now... no problem... and nobody's God damn business, either...

Stump raises his hand, motioning Cobb to stop.

STUMP

I get it... I get it...

A moment. A look.

COBB

Then get some sleep. You look pathetic.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED: (6)

149

Stump crawls on the bed toward the pillows with the stupid grace of a drunk looking for a key under the mat.

Cobb helps Stump lie down, pulling a blanket over him.

Stump rolls over to go to sleep, Cobb tucks the blanket around him, and picks up the bottle from the pillow.

Cobb takes a last hit of the bottle -- Finishing it off. He throws it to the ground, and looks around the room for another.

COBB'S POV - STUMP'S SUITCASE

lies open on a chair. A nearly-full bottle of Scotch is visible.

BACK TO SCENE

He makes it to the bottle -- Steadies himself -- he's exhausted. He takes a deep swig from the Scotch. Several deep gulps, enough to kill a horse, but it only helps him steady himself.

And he sees something in the suitcase -- He looks down at --

COBB'S POV - CARDBOARD BOX

which Stump has been filling with his secret manuscript.

BACK TO SCENE

Cobb opens the box and pulls out a paper. He reads it. He looks at Stump, and --

Cobb takes the box and the bottle to the chair by the fireplace, where he sits down, puts on his reading glasses, and starts reading "the real story."

CLOSE ON COBB

He reads page one slowly and carefully, then starts moving through the box full of odd sizes of paper, hotel stationery, cocktail napkins, legal pads, all handwritten in secret. He keeps glancing up at the bed where Stump is in the deep stupor of sleep.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED: (7)

149

COBB
 (reading to
 himself)
 ... 'vicious, pathological,
 bubbling with violence... Cobb's
 demons were not merely exorcized
 on the baseball field... they
 spilled over into all parts of
 his miserable life...'

DISSOLVE TO:

150 SERIES OF IMAGES (B&W)

150

from the text -- from Cobb's real life.

- A) Cobb sharpens his spikes with a file.
- B) Cobb steals second base and slides spikes high, drawing blood.
- C) Cobb driving a fancy car with a pretty woman at his side.
- D) Cobb beats a man to death in an alley.
- E) Cobb onstage with a stripper at a smoker.
- F) Cobb striking his wife and knocking her to the ground.
- G) Cobb FIRING a GUN at Stump in the hunting lodge.
- H) Cobb and Stump being turned away from the parties by Hornsby.
- I) Cobb's father being blown away by the shotgun.
- J) Cobb on third being booed -- More trash on the field. Police restrain the crowd. Cobb stands defiantly, waving the crowd away in a menacing gesture, fearlessly. The sounds of derisive booing build to a crescendo, and then...

DISSOLVE TO:

151 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

151

Cobb's eyes flare -- He's in a rage.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED:

151

He rises from the chair, his adrenaline has momentarily overwhelmed his system and he moves as a young man.

Cobb picks up the pistol and reloads it.

Cobb marches resolutely to the bed.

Cobb aims the loaded gun at Stump's sleeping head.

CLOSE ON STUMP

Oblivious in a drunken sleep.

CLOSE ON COBB

Rage is in his eyes. He cocks the gun.

CLOSE ON COBB

He's crying. He shakes his head.

COBB

You don't have a point of view,
Stumpy, you ain't worth
killing...

Cobb puts the gun into his own mouth -- He clears his throat, as if to make room for the gun barrel. He gags slightly and closes his eyes, he thinks for the last time.

CLOSE ON HIS FACE

Something's not right.

Cobb removes the gun momentarily and looks at it.

He sees that the gun barrel is covered with blood.

COBB

Dear God...

152 COBB

152

rushes into the bathroom and faces the mirror. Blood gushes from his mouth as he coughs again.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

CLOSE ON COBB

as he stares into the mirror.

COBB

No... no... no... this can't
be... Absolutely not... This is
not right...

Cobb coughs again -- More blood covers his chin. He touches his chin, touches the blood, smears it around a little, looks at his hands now covered with blood.

COBB

(terrified)

Stumpy?! No...

Cobb moves around the tiny bathroom like a caged animal.

He falls to his knees in prayer in front of the sink.

COBB

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed by Thy name. Thy
kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily
bread, and forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive --

(beat)

Aw, fuck it... little late for
that sob sister stuff...

Cobb rises to his feet and looks in the mirror again.

He grabs a hand towel and daubs his face with it. A bit more blood trickles from his mouth. And gradually a deep calm seems to settle over him.

COBB

... so this is what it feels
like...

153 COBB

153

returns to the bedroom and sits down on the edge of the bed, next to Stump who continues his deep, drunken sleep.

Cobb picks up the phone and dials as he continues mopping his chin with the towel. He speaks with great calm.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

COBB

(on phone)

Can you get me the Emory
Hospital?

(couple beats)

Hello, Ma'am? This is Ty Cobb.
Can you please prepare your
finest room for me? Tomorrow
morning would be fine.

Cobb hangs up and leans back on the bed next to Stump
who is still deep in drunken sleep. One man sleeps
deeply, the other just sits there.

DISSOLVE TO:

154 EXT. JEFFERSON DAVIS MOTEL - EARLY NEXT MORNING

154

The limousine pulls away from the motel. The rain has
stopped.

155 INT. MOTEL - EARLY MORNING

155

Stump rolls over -- The hangover is brutal. He looks
worse than we've ever seen him. He reaches for the
bottle. Empty.

STUMP

Ty.

(off no answer)

Tyrus.

(off no answer)

Peach...

Stump struggles to his elbow to find Cobb.

STUMP'S POV - COBB'S BED

is empty and still neatly made.

BACK TO SCENE

Stump sits up with a start. He is suddenly, by circum-
stance, awake and alert, though he looks like hell. He's
also alarmed -- something is wrong.

STUMP

Ty!

Stump leaps out of bed and looks around.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

STUMP'S POV

Three holes of broken plaster and mirror.

STUMP (O.S.)

God...

BACK TO SCENE

He rushes to the fireplace where only embers now glow.
He sees something --

STUMP'S POV

The "real" manuscript scattered around the floor near the chair. Nearby, the bathroom door is open.

Stump hurries into the bathroom and stops cold.

Blood is on the sink and on the towels. A note is on the mirror. He pulls the note down and reads it.

COBB (V.O.)

'Dear Alimony, you lying S.O.B.
-- I'm checking myself into the
hospital. I think the end is
near. Your Pal, Ty.'

CLOSE ON STUMP

Deeply alarmed.

CUT TO:

156 EXT. EMORY STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

156

A cab pulls up -- Stump gets out. He's cleaned up now,
shaved, dressed neatly. He enters.

CUT TO:

157 INT. EMORY STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

157

Stump goes up to a reception desk and introduces himself.

STUMP

I'm here to see...

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

A CRASHING NOISE and shouting erupt from down the hall.
A tray of food is thrown out into the hall.

COBB (O.S.)

Get the hell outta here! You
call this a hospital?! You call
this food?! You know who I am?!

STUMP

... Mr. Cobb.

RECEPTIONIST

Be careful. He's got a gun and
we haven't been able to get it
away from him.

STUMP

I know, I know...

Stump hurries down the hall to the source of the noise.

A small group of doctors, orderlies and NURSES are
gathered outside Cobb's door, afraid to enter. Also
there are two civilians in business suits.

NURSE #1

He doesn't want visitors.

Stump ignores the advice and enters the room.

CUT TO:

158 INT. COBB'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

158

Cobb sits in bed -- His gun and his money are next to
him. He's giving orders, ranting and raving in a classic
Cobb rage. A bottle hangs from a pole, feeding his arm.

A doctor and two Nurses are present, trying to deal with
him.

COBB

Hey, Stumpy, where you been?
You can't believe the shit they
call food in this joint. You get
some sleep? Good. I had quite a
read last night...

A Nurse enters warily, but determined, with a small sy-
ringe.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE #1

Excuse me, sir, but I need to draw some more blood.

COBB

Put a bucket under my chin and I'll cough up a couple pints for ya.

NURSE #1

I have to do it this way.

COBB

Well don't poke around too long.

He holds out his arm for her. She begins drawing blood.

COBB

She's a nice piece of ass, eh, Stumpy?

(to Nurse)

You come back later and climb on the big fella?

NURSE #1

It's against regulations, sir.

STUMP

So you read the book.

COBB

Yeah, God damn it, I thought I could trust you -- I used to be able to figure out people better.

STUMP

That book is the truth.

COBB

You're a God damn romantic! The truth is a whore! Just like you and just like my mother!

Another NURSE enters and announces.

NURSE #2

A Mr. Barton is here to see you. He says he's the chairman of the board of Coca Cola.

COBB

Tell the son of a bitch to go downstairs and have a Pepsi -- I got no time for business.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: (2)

158

Nurse #1 tapes Cobb's arm and escapes with the blood sample.

A YOUNG DOCTOR enters, also warily.

YOUNG DOCTOR
I need to take your blood pressure, sir.

COBB
It's high. What else you need to know?

YOUNG DOCTOR
I have to do it.

The Young doctor wraps Cobb's arm with the device and begins pumping.

Another OLDER DOCTOR enters and addresses Cobb head on.

OLDER DOCTOR
Mr. Cobb. We cannot allow you to have a gun in here.

Cobb picks up the gun and aims it at the doctor.

COBB
Come and get it.

The Older Doctor turns and leaves. Stump enjoys the show.

COBB
Y'know, Stumpy, my oldest son was a doctor -- a hacksaw artist, that's all they are --
(increasing rage)
He died of a brain tumor when he was forty -- hadn't spoke to me in fifteen years 'cause I was such a rotten father -- put that in your God damn book!

The Younger Doctor completes his task and slips away.

COBB
(to the Younger Doctor)
Bad, ain't it?

(CONTINUED)

STUMP

I don't know which version of your life I'm going to publish. I really don't.

COBB

There ya go again! Accommodating me and you don't have to! I died faster than you could write!

Cobb waves his gun just as some more doctors enter.

COBB

Get the hell outta here! Everybody but Stumpy! Out!

The room clears -- leaving only Cobb and Stump.

COBB

You fooled me, Stumpy, nobody ever fooled me but you pulled it off! I thought we were pals!

STUMP

I didn't know what I was getting into with this job.

COBB

Quit explaining yourself! Stand by your convictions! You beat the great Ty Cobb! I respect that! But if you print it -- print it all!

(beat)

My second son weighed 300 pounds and he died of a heart attack in the arms of a hooker in Paso Robles. My other son I lost all track of and my two daughters won't speak to me and my two ex-wives won't and my siter you know won't! Print it all!

(beat)

And Ty Cobb can't get it up anymore! Print that too!

STUMP

It's all... confusing...

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: (4)

158

COBB

It's not! It's simple! You won!
 Tell the world that the greatest
 ballplayer who ever lived was also
 the biggest bastard! Who cares
 now?! I give you permission and
 my blessing! From here on it's
 your story!

Stump nods and pulls a pint of whiskey from his coat pocket. He goes up to Cobb and tucks the whiskey under the blanket.

STUMP

Here's a little something might help.

Cobb nods in appreciation.

COBB

Where's my money?

STUMP

Right here, Peach... next to your gun.

Cobb grabs Stump's hand for one last word.

COBB

Stumpy, there's nothing wrong with wanting glory.

(beat)

Now get the hell outta here.

Stump places Cobb's hand on his money, nods, and --

Stump leaves the room without looking back at --

COBB IN BED

with a gun -- in the last stages of life, his health in total collapse, he is in complete control.

CUT TO:

159 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

159

Doctors, nurses, orderlies, men in suits -- all are waiting nervously outside the door as Stump emerges.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED:

159

OLDER DOCTOR

What about the gun? Did you get it?

STUMP

Naw, I didn't get the gun...

And Stump leaves the hospital, passing the Coke Executive. As he does he looks back over his shoulder to see:

POV SHOT - DOCTORS, ET AL.

rushing back into Cobb's room. And --

The sounds of CRASHING, BROKEN GLASS, and COBB'S thunderous VOICE.

Stump smiles slightly and walks away.

CUT TO:

160 EXT. "WELCOME TO ROYSTON" SIGN - EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

160

A teenage boy re-paints the faded sign that reads "Home of Ty Cobb". The luster returns to the old sign.

STUMP (V.O.)

I gave a few bucks to a local kid to re-paint the sign, and disappeared for a while to finish the manuscripts...

(beat)

And wait for Cobb to die...

(beat)

And while I waited, Ernest Hemingway blew his brains out, Getty bought Honolulu Oil Company, and the brunette in the courtyard ran away with a handsome young lawyer...

CLOSE ON SIGN

As Cobb's image rounding third reappears in all its former glory.

(CONTINUED)

STUMP (V.O.)

And on July 17, 1961... Ty Cobb died quietly in his sleep. I don't believe it was quiet, nothing he did was quiet, but that's what the newspaper writer said who wrote the lead and we all know that writers never lie...

PAN OVER ACROSS the sign -- to the adjacent cemetery as --

A hearse enters the cemetery grounds followed by three cars. A very humble ceremony.

And the voice of a country gospel singer can be heard.

COUNTRY GOSPEL (V.O.)

'There is a fountain filled with
blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins...'

CUT TO:

The mausoleum -- The coffin sits by the open crypt.

STUMP (V.O.)

Somebody hired a singer...

COUNTRY GOSPEL SINGER (V.O.)

'And sinners plunged beneath that
flood,
Lose all their guilty stains...'

STUMP (V.O.)

... but it was the grimmest damn funeral service I'd ever seen.

Stump stands in the distance, at the back of the cemetery, watching the simple, empty service.

STUMP (V.O.)

He left all his money to his family, though no members of it managed to attend the funeral, and with the rest he founded a hospital in his own name and an educational trust fund for poor Georgia children.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

POV SHOT - THREE OLD MEN

in dark suits drop flowers on the coffin.

STUMP (V.O.)

Only three ballplayers attended the service -- three oldtimers who he'd been supporting financially for many years, a fact he didn't want made public.

POV SHOT - SCHOOL BUS

pulls in and unloads -- Dozens of Little Leaguers in uniform join in the service.

STUMP (V.O.)

Somebody rounded up some Little Leaguers, probably so the press photographers would have some sob sister photos... the sort Cobb hated... except the press didn't bother coming.

(beat)

I'll give him this -- the family was under one roof again.

BACK TO SCENE

Stump turns and slips quietly out of the cemetery.

STUMP (V.O.)

I called my publisher. The book was ready. Only I didn't know which one to turn in.

DISSOLVE TO:

162 EXT. SPORTSMAN'S LOUNGE - LATE AFTERNOON

162

The regulars are still there, still drinking, still griping.

BILL

... so a woman goes into a bar with a duck under her arm, sits down next to a drunk who looks up and says, 'Where'd you find that pig?' An' the woman says 'That's no pig, that's a duck.'

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

An' the drunk says, 'I know, I was talking to the duck.'

Bored laughter and another hit on their everpresent drinks.

And Stump enters for the first time in nearly a year.

BILL

Al!

Stump enters comfortably, happy to see his cronies at last. Frank and the others come over from the bar, quickly gathering around Stump.

FRANK

Stranger! Another round on me!

Stump settles in at the table.

CRONIES

Long time no see, etc...

STUMP

Good to see you guys... how's it goin'? Alan, how's that novel coming? Must be about done by now?

MUD

Uh, actually, I haven't started it yet... been kinda busy...

BILL

We all been busy...

STUMP

Yeah, I know how it is...

FRANK

We read that Cobb died.

STUMP

Yeah... finally gave up the ghost.

FRANK

So? What was he like?

MUD

Were the stories true or were they exaggerated?

(CONTINUED)

The drinks arrive. Stump plays with his, swirling the drink around the ice with his finger, considering his answer.

REYNALDO

Tell us the truth, man, was he
a monster?

BILL

Or was he just one of the guys?

Stump looks at the faces of his buddies, eagerly awaiting his judgement as if it is final wisdom. He stirs his drink.

STUMP

The truth?

CRONIES

Ohyeah, the absolute truth, no
bullshit, give it to us
straight, etc...

STUMP

The truth?

Stump takes a drink and looks his friends in the eye.

STUMP

A prince and a great man has
fallen.

Murmurs of deep satisfaction from the Cronies.
Affirmation.

CRONIES

Yes, awright, we knew it...
etc...

BILL

Helluva guy, eh?

STUMP

A helluva guy, a great man, a
misunderstood artist, a fierce
competitor but a sweet man at
heart... a gentle soul...

As Stump starts lying to his enraptured audience, we PULL
BACK AND UP, going FROM the intimate center of the table
TO a cool distance, and --

DISSOLVE TO:

163 EXT. DIRT BALLFIELD IN GEORGIA - DUSK

163

Some kids play baseball with a taped-up ball, patched up bat, no uniforms, rocks for bases. The right way.

STUMP (V.O.)

I published the lie and put the truth in a closet...

PAN OVER TO the Royston Cemetery in b.g.

MAUSOLEUM

Nearby, two holes in the earth have been opened up and the caskets of Cobb's mother and father are being moved into the mausoleum.

STUMP (V.O.)

Cobb and his father and mother were together at last...

(beat)

The man had some deep, unexpressed sorrow that I could never know. I embraced him and I hated him...

(beat)

And I knew I would never write a novel, unless you considered 'Cobb' a work of fiction -- which I did not.

DISSOLVE TO:

164 EXT. TIGER STADIUM (DETROIT) - DUSK

164

Stump walks from the dugout to the field. He stares up at the magnificent old structure, the overhanging right field facade, the great upper deck, almost a century of baseball has been played there. Cobb's palace.

STUMP (V.O.)

My friends were thrilled to hear that the Georgia Peach was a helluva guy -- it excused their own failures -- if Cobb was okay, then by God, they were okay...

(beat)

But finally I didn't lie for them, or the children of America, or somesuch hogwash -- finally I lied for myself.

(beat)

I needed Cobb to be somebody he was not. I needed him to be a hero. It is my weakness.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

Stump turns to walk off the field.

STUMP (V.O.)

The book was a moderate success...

The empty stadium, cavernous, half cathedral, half factory...

Fritz Kreisler's VIOLIN MUSIC that Cobb adored drifts up.

DISSOLVE TO:

165 SHOTS OF COBB IN ACTION (B&W)

165

His demon fury gives way to the fierce joy of his playing. He slashes a ball up the alley, turns first and never hesitates at second, and as the relay comes into third --

Cobb slides with spikes high and a cloud of dust.

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT.

THE END