

SPIKES

Original Screenplay
By Ken Luber

Reg. WGAw

EXT. EST. SWANK COUNTRY CLUB - SPRING DAY

A sporty Mercedes CONVERTIBLE, top down, speeds up the circular drive, surrounded by country club green. The driver (MIKE ABBOT), handsome, rakish, early thirties, rests one arm on the wheel, one arm on the door. The innocent, earthy smile that laps his face saves him from being a genuine rogue. He'd rather steal your heart than your wallet. And, since he was born rich, the latter isn't even an option. The beautiful brunette seated next to him (MONICA) checks her makeup in a compact mirror.

The convertible STOPS under the canopied entry of the stately clubhouse. The LATINO VALET, standing to the side, quickly opens the passenger door.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB GROUNDS - LATER

The leggy brunette, MONICA, is on a cell phone, chatting up her girlfriend. She's seated at a patio table with a drink at her side.

MONICA

Mike promised we'd go shopping after his match, but...

(looking up at dark clouds)

I don't know; it looks like we're in for a storm.

(she looks over to the TENNIS COURTS)

I'm sure he'd play through it if I let him.

EXT. TENNIS COURTS - SAME

Smash! The ball slams against the racket. MIKE is surprisingly agile, athletic, impressive. Spindly-legged, broad chested ANDY WELLINGTON is a formidable opponent.

The frenetic volley ends on a very close line call.

ANDY

(throws up his arm)

Out!

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ENTRY - LATER

MIKE

Out? What's out?

He's raising his arms and voice to the hunched, teenage Valet, in an oversize white jacket.

LATINO VALET

(low voice)

Your car. A tow truck came. All I heard was "repossession."

Mike hushes him just long enough to muster a thought. He spins back to Monica, standing under the canopy. RAIN splatters the pavement in front of her.

MIKE

Monica! He says the top's jammed. He can't get it up. We'll take a cab.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

High-rise condo furnished "post" modern, as one piece after another is being CARRIED OUT by burly MOVERS. Mike, on a cordless PHONE, paces back and forth in the rapidly emptying room, his voice rising in disbelief.

MIKE

Repossession! Grandma, do you realize I haven't even gotten my new rug yet? I've got no place to sit!
(looks up, terrified)
No, not the SubZero!

As two guys wheel out the pricey refrigerator, the CABLE GUY enters, belted with his tools-of-the-trade.

CABLE GUY

Cable man.

MIKE

(frantic, into phone)
Grandma.. Grandma?

He looks over to the Cable Guy's blank shrug.

EXT. ABBOTT MANOR - DAY

A great stone mansion, graced with colorful gardens and shade trees. The Mercedes CONVERTIBLE races up the long driveway and SCREECHES to a stop in front of the mansion doors. MIKE gets out, clutching a bouquet of FLOWERS, and rushes into the mansion.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS - DAY

We follow MIKE as he bounds up the sweeping, marble stairwell. He's wearing white tennis shorts, a white, crested sweater slung over his shoulders, and tennis sneakers.

MIKE

Has she any new suitors, Raymond?

RAYMOND

Not since Ranjani returned to India.

Mike passes the dour, uniformed BUTLER (RAYMOND), half way up the stairs.

MIKE

Is she dying?

RAYMOND

No more than usual.

MIKE

(tossing the bouquet)

Then please find some water for these.

The bouquet sails through the air, LANDING neatly in the Butler's outstretched hand.

INT. GRANDMA ABBOT'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The spacious room is filled with elegant French furniture. The windows are heavily draped in purple velvet, shutting out the light. RELIGIOUS ICONS (from the great Western, Eastern and Pagan traditions) adorn the walls, tables, and chests. Votive candles and incense burn on every surface, creating a smoky, golden hue.

GRANDMA ABBOT, a thin, lovely wisp of a woman, a dry leaf under a drift of snowy white quilts, is living (or dying, depending on the day) in a shrine. Her head, crowned by flowing white hair, rests against a bank of pillows.

GRANDMA

I want you to get a job.

Her voice has a grave quickness that stops MIKE in his tracks, a few steps into the room. And for all her near death experiences, her eyes sparkle as brightly as the diamonds on her fingers.

GRANDMA

This is your trust fund agreement.

She removes a paper from a MANILA FOLDER lying next to her.

MIKE
(reaching for it)
I'll make a copy. No problem.

GRANDMA
(pulling it away)
That's an errand, not a job. It took you seven years to graduate college. You're thirty-three years old. You've never worked.

MIKE
I worked the year after mom and dad died.
(he POINTS to a golden framed PORTRAIT of a handsome couple in their forties)
Maybe you've forgotten but I was an orphan.

GRANDMA
I take full responsibility, Michael.

MIKE
You didn't kill them. It was the avalanche in Switzerland.

GRANDMA
I mean, for spoiling you, as the executor of your trust. You worked in the family business for exactly six months.
(she removes another DOCUMENT from the folder)
According to a staff report, you spent four of those months deciding on a wardrobe and the color of the company car, which left you with sixty days, of which there were eight weekends and a Thanksgiving holiday, reducing the number to forty-two days. You called in sick fourteen times and left before lunch, complaining of asbestos fever, whatever that is, on seven occasions, leaving you with twenty-one work days.

MIKE
That's a solid three weeks.

GRANDMA

(ignoring his remark)

Of those twenty-one days, this report shows that you spent thirteen of those days outside the company buying holiday decorations for an office party and seven more choosing the music. That leaves you with one day at your desk. You've worked exactly one day of your life.

MIKE

I could have sworn it was more than a day. It actually felt longer. Are you sure those dates are right?

GRANDMA

The Buddha says that a man who reaches forty and hasn't held a shovel in hands will never hold happiness in his heart. Michael, you've got to work.

MIKE

I understand what you're saying. You've set a direction for me. Feel well.

(he starts to leave)

GRANDMA

This is more than a direction, Michael. It's time to get off the gravy train.

MIKE

(stops at the door)

You don't think your medication is affecting you...

GRANDMA

I've never seen your trust fund more clearly.

MIKE

Ranjani leaving?

GRANDMA

I threw him out.

MIKE

Okay, no cable TV. But a refrigerator, grandma?

GRANDMA
Try a lunch pail.

MIKE
(finally)
The Buddha never worked. He sat under
a tree.

GRANDMA
The Buddha lifted the hearts of a
people. Make me happy. Lift one heart.

Mike leaves. Grandma Abbot hoists herself up against the pillows,
grabs the CELL PHONE.

GRANDMA
(speed dials)
Legal Department, please...
(she smiles at the great stone
Buddha across from her)
Cal, this is Margaret Abbot. I'm
calling about my grandson.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BAR - AFTERNOON

Mike sits alone at the bar, nursing a scotch.

MIKE
Hey, Eddie, one more when you get a
chance.

EDDIE, the bartender, a short, hefty fellow, puts down a tray of
glasses and comes over.

EDDIE
(leans in, very confidential)
I'm sorry, Mr. Abbot, but your tab's
been pulled. This one's on me, but the
next one's gotta be cash.

MIKE
Cash?

ANDY WELLINGTON, Mike's tennis nemesis, enters, saunters over.

ANDY
Mike! Mike, old boy, take a look at
this. You might be interested in
investing.
(slaps down a parcel of papers
on the bar)
(MORE)

ANDY (cont'd)
 May as well do something with all your
 money. I'll be in the sauna.

MIKE
 Andy...
 (Andy stops, they exchange a
 look)
 Nothing.

Andy leaves. Mike, with a hangdog look, turns back to the papers
 on the bar.

CLOSE ON PAPERS

"Wellington Land Development. Luxury estates, half acre lots..."

BACK TO SCENE

Mike turns a page. The DAILY NEWSPAPER is lodged underneath. He
 pulls the newspaper closer, flips it open, past the Financial
 Section to... The CLASSIFIED ADS stare back at him. Mike eases
 the section closer, turns a page to... "EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES."
 He's never done this before; he's very tentative. Scans the ads
 until his EYE CATCHES:

CLOSE ON: HEAVILY BORDERED AD

"ATHLETIC DIRECTOR WANTED - MAJOR INSTITUTION - EXCELLENT
 FACILITIES - HIGH SALARY- ROOM AND BOARD - CALL COLLECT: OSCAR
 LEVITUS (440) 922 9098 - DAWN TO MIDNITE."

BACK TO SCENE

Mike stares into space, his thoughts DAYDREAM into... Beautiful
 bikini clad girls splashing in the crystal blue pool; his arms
 around a bosomy blond, teaching her to swing a tennis racket.

I/E. MIKE DRIVING AN OLD CHEVY CLUNKER - NEXT DAY

Swings into "Gerry's Tia Taco" DRIVE IN RESTAURANT, home of the
 "Cream Cheese Breakfast Taco." Mike parks at the far end, keeping
 a safe distance from inquiring eyes. He straightens his Armani
 tie and looks over to his COLLEGE YEARBOOK on the passenger seat
 A car BACKFIRE alerts him. He glances into his sideview mirror.

MIRROR POV

Belching smoke and dragging a tailpipe, a '78 faded gold CADILLAC belches to a stop in the parking lot. A short, paunchy, BALD MAN gets out, lugging a tattered briefcase.

He waddles towards the restaurant, like a penguin stuffed in a checkered suit. This is OSCAR LEVITUS. The briefcase SPILLS OPEN. Oscar RUSHES AFTER the scattering papers.

INT. GERRY'S TIA TACO - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE

This is the year I captained the tennis team. We were undefeated.

He points proudly to his yearbook picture. The two men are seated in a booth. The mood is very upbeat.

OSCAR

You're gold, Mikey. Do you mind if I call you Mikey?

MIKE

Not at all.

OSCAR

(points to black and white 8X10 GLOSSIES spread on the table)
And your performance fencing and swimming..

MIKE

Backstroke and the crawl, Mr. Levitus.

OSCAR

Oscar to you, Mikey. This is unbelievable. You're a Mark Spitz-John...

(snaps his fingers)

Help me?

MIKE

McEnroe.

OSCAR

Rolled into one. I should be paying you double... but I can't. What I give you instead is...

(big smile)

(MORE)

OSCAR (cont'd)
 Heaven's Gate, the door to your
 future.
 (he pushes the CONTRACT across
 the table)
 We'll take it one year at a time. I'm
 not a pusher.

MIKE
 Are these all the papers?

OSCAR
 Some might still be in the parking
 lot. You know, boiler plate. These are
 the important ones.

MIKE
 (stares at the contract)
 The salary's just a little lower than
 I expected, Oscar. The ad said "High."

OSCAR
 It's high for me. We're in a
 recession. Think of all the perks. The
 pool, the gym, the accommodations.
 Fresh country air!

MIKE
 Right.
 (takes the PEN from Oscar's
 outstretched hand)

Mike SIGNS the contract.

OSCAR
 I've interviewed hundreds for this
 position. But you're the lucky one.
 Wait'll the folks meet you.
 (he snatches up the contract)

MIKE
 Folks?

OSCAR
 Folks is just an expression.
 (big smile)

I/E. MIKE DRIVING CHEVY CLUNKER DOWN COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The roof is loaded with steamer trunks and luggage. The back seat
 is crammed with cardboard boxes.

MIKE'S POV - BIG BILLBOARD on the roadside: "Under Construction -
 Palatial Accommodations - Heavenly Haven Estates."

MIKE

(mumbles to himself)

Heavenly Haven Estates. This is probably one of their business projects Oscar was talking about.

Mike swings the car onto the off-road and stops beside an OFFICE TRAILER set up on cinder blocks. Big earth moving machines stand nearby. The wind blows scrub grass and dust across the empty field. A GUY in a hard hat, cradling a SHOT GUN, comes up around the trailer and approaches the car. He POINTS TOWARDS a gnarled tangle of trees ACROSS the road. The place appears desolate, haunted.

I/E. MIKE DRIVES DOWN A RUTTED MUD ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Jostling over every bump and rut. The car drives under a faded, hand-painted, wood SIGN, swaying in the wind: "WELCOME TO HEAVEN'S GATE - est. 1905."

A few yards past the sign, a TAN TOYOTA approaches on the one lane road. Mike pulls to the side. His front wheels HIT a deep rut. The car BOUNCES. A TRUNK on the car roof JERKS loose. WHAM! The trunk SLAMS into the hood of the Toyota and rolls to the ground.

The DRIVER shrieks and slams on the brakes. BETH McDONALD jumps out of her car. She's in her late twenties. Attractive... but, at the moment, shaken and furious.

BETH

You almost killed me!

MIKE

(getting out of his car)

I'm sorry. I guess the old Boy Scout knots didn't hold.

He runs to retrieve his trunk.

BETH

You couldn't be staying here.

MIKE

I'm staff. Are you staying here? I'd be happy to give you tennis lessons or a few tips with the ol' putter. Free.

She stares icily. His smile isn't working.

BETH

What's your name?

MIKE

Mike. What's your...

She doesn't wait for his question. Angrily, she gets in her car and starts off. Mike RUNS along the driver's side.

MIKE

If there's any damage, I'm sure Mr. Levitus will take care of it. Just submit a claim. This is a high-class institution!

She never looks over. The road gets smoother; her speed increases. Mike stands in her dust, watching the car disappear up the road.

I/E. MIKE CONTINUES DOWN THE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Mike passes a large, old VICTORIAN HOUSE. Tree branches brush against the tall windows. PAIRS OF EYES in wrinkled faces PEER OUT from behind the curtains. He passes Oscar's old Cadillac. An OLD MAN in bathrobe and slippers wanders among the trees. Ahead, he sees OSCAR, big smile, cigar clenched in his teeth, waving.

INT. MIKE'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Mike stares up at the cobwebbed ceiling. The stand-alone fireplace is covered with soot; the bed and a few pieces of ratty, stuffed furniture take up most of the room.

The two men exchange looks. Oscar's smile is weak but steady.

OSCAR

Do you feel the charm? They say Lincoln slept here on his way to that whole southern conflag..flag, conflagfligration.

MIKE

Is there a bathroom?

OSCAR

And a kitchen. But like I said, you take all your meals in our full service, three star dining room.

MIKE

(enthusiasm fading)
What about the pool?

EXT. TRUDGING THROUGH THE WOOSY GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Mike and Oscar push aside the low hanging boughs, as the sky darkens and a mist settles across the land.

OSCAR
My gardener died a couple of years ago.

A branch SNAGS Oscar's suit jacket. He pulls the sleeve and half of it RIPS OFF. He leaves it hanging on the branch and hurries up to Mike, who trudges ahead, oblivious to what happened.

EXT. "POOL" - MOMENTS LATER

The moon shines down on the "pool," a modest size pond, choked with weeds and dead leaves. MEDICINE BOTTLES float on the murky water.

Mike stares into the pond, totally distraught. He looks over to Oscar, whose weakened smile has risen to a puffy show of bravado.

OSCAR
Well, it looks like we need a pool man!

MIKE
A pool man and a gardener. You don't need an athletic director. All I've seen are old people!

OSCAR
Would you deny the elderly their exercise?

MIKE
No, but this isn't a health spa. It's a retirement home, isn't it?

OSCAR
Oh, you're going to quibble over the meaning of words; I thought you were more than that.

MIKE
(frustrated, disillusioned)
I'm sorry, Oscar, I can't do this.

OSCAR
You signed a contract.

MIKE

I'm resigning from the contract.

OSCAR

You can't let these people down! I've already told them how great you were. This Home has been in my family since 1905.

MIKE

That has nothing to do with me.

OSCAR

(waving his sleeveless arm)

It does! Without a licensed physical therapist, the state won't give me a grant. Without a grant, I can't keep the doors open. The developers across the road want to scoop up this land. I know you haven't met the people yet, but the fate of their sunset years rests in your hands. It's like you got a shovel in your hands. You can dig their graves or build a magical foundation for the rest of their lives.

Oscar's plea has reached Mike. In spite of the playboy's resistance, there's a trace of relenting in his voice.

MIKE

I'm not licensed, Oscar.

OSCAR

Leave that to me. I'm the vision, the macro. You're the micro. Micro-Mikey.

A WOLF HOWLS in the distance. Mike and Oscar look up through the moonlit branches.

OSCAR (cont'd)

The sign of the wolves. We couldn't ask for more.

INT. MIKE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Mike is pacing the cabin, between his piles of boxes and luggage. He's shouting into his CELL PHONE.

MIKE

Monica, can you hear me? I've been exiled to the wilderness. Monica?

(MORE)

MIKE (cont'd)

(he's getting more frustrated,
routing through the narrow
aisles of boxes trying to find
a clear channel)

It's this cheap cell phone; it's all I
could afford. My grandma cut off my
trust fund... Cut it off! I'm down to
zilch! Nada! I haven't got a penny!
Monica? Monica?

His jaw drops; his heart sinks with the sound of the DIAL TONE .
A sense of sad understanding comes over his face. He looks across
the cluttered, musty room. The STOVE PIPE WIRE SNAPS off the
fireplace contraption. His gaze settles on the metal pipe, as it
DANGLES from the ceiling, dumping ashes on his luggage.

FADE IN:

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - MORNING

A few rays of light poke through the moving clouds. No sign of
life outside. The mist rises off the weedy grounds.

INT. HEAVEN'S GATE RESIDENCE HALL - SAME

Mike wanders down the creaky ground floor hallway, doors half open
to resident rooms. He casually PEEKS IN: in one, an Old Man
watching TV; in another, an Old Lady knitting; in the next, an Old
Man reading a newspaper. The rooms are small, neat, the walls
decorated with family pictures and shelves with memorabilia.

A few RETIREES, dressed in bathrobes, shuffle by, one of them
escorted by the RESIDENT NURSE. She casts a brief but alluring
SMILE at Mike. This is TANYA FASHNICK, a Rubenesque figure with
dark hair streaked red and blond. Her white uniform hugs every
curve and stops high around her thighs.

Mike arrives at a pair of double doors, half-open. A SIGN above
the doors reads: "SOCIAL ROOM." He peeks in. Five guys are
seated around a table, PLAYING CARDS, sipping coffee, kibitzing.
One of the guys - SAL FAZIO, a wiry old Italian retiree, with a
long face and a mop of white hair - NOTICES Mike. He stops.
Conversation stops, as the others LOOK towards the FACE in the
doorway.

MIKE

Good morning.

Mike meets a SET OF EYES that stare back with a cold, fierce look.
The man they belong to is in his seventies, draped in a HOODED
BLACK BATHROBE;

his face unshaven, deep set eyes, bushy brows, still color is his thick, ruffled hair. This is MAX COSTIGAN. And he still looks like he could wrestle and beat an alligator.

MAX
(growls)
Keep playing.

The men turn back to their card game.

MIKE
(his voice fades)
Sorry for the interruption.

INT. MIKE AND OSCAR DOWN A BASEMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Walking and talking fast. Oscar clutches a large brown envelope.

MIKE
They don't want me here!

OSCAR
You met Max. One man! He'll warm up.

MIKE
If the sun sat on his head for two weeks, he'd still be spitting ice cubes.

OSCAR
Remember, every challenge is an opportunity in disguise.
(stops at a door, throws it open)
Look at this!

INT. BASEMENT WORKOUT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Oscar step in. MIKE SEES: A room filled with ancient EXERCISE EQUIPMENT. A stationary bicycle, rowing machine, treadmill, a padded bench and pile of weights. The paint's peeling. Old charts and posters droop on the walls. Rust and cobwebs cover every piece of equipment. The place hasn't been used in years.

OSCAR
(pulls a CAN from his pocket)
This'll fix the whole shebang. A high-tech lubricant. And look what I got you.

Oscar marches over to a poster, rips it off, removes a FRAMED CERTIFICATE and hangs it on the nail.

OSCAR
Ain't it beautiful?

CLOSE ON CERTIFICATE

"Michael Abbot - State Licensed Physical Therapist" - affixed with the golden STATE SEAL.

MIKE
(stunned)
I haven't even applied yet, Oscar.

OSCAR
I took that liberty. Plus a few well-placed phone calls. Plus your first week's salary.

MIKE
Well, the State Agency Rep you've been shouting about isn't going to fall for this crap and a can of WD-40!

OSCAR
Don't worry. They're all old bags. Bureaucrats. This is a win-win situation. Think of the "folks," Mikey. Think micro.

MIKE
Don't call me "Mikey," anymore.

INT. GROUND FLOOR BULLETIN BOARD - DAY

Mike is tacking a sheet of paper: "PHYSICAL FITNESS CLASSES - WORKOUT WITH A BOARD CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL - 8 AM (Beginners) - 9 AM (Intermediate) - 10 AM (Advanced)"

JAMAL
(light Jamaican accent)
Drop down the 8 to 10, cross out the Intermediate and whack the Advanced.

MIKE
Ha?

Mike looks over his shoulder. The voice belongs to the friendly SMILE of a young BLACK MAN. This is JAMAL ANDERSON.

He's twenty-five, dressed in white duck pants, a white shirt and wrapped in a big white CHEF'S APRON. Judging by his size, Jamal enjoys his own cooking.

JAMAL

Most folks don't start eating breakfast till eight. Then you wait for digestion to set in puts you at ten. You ain't trying to kill them, are you?

MIKE

No.

JAMAL

Then you start'em slow with a beginners class. I've never seen no one do more than shuffle cards since I've been here.

MIKE

How long has that been?

JAMAL

Three years.
(puts out his hand)
Jamal Anderson. Head chef at Gerry's Tia Taco before Oscar hired me away.

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE GROUNDS - LATER

Under the leafy trees, Mike and Jamal stroll the grounds, coming upon a large weedy field, filled with rocks.

JAMAL

People like living here. The food's good, beds are warm, windows close, and Oscar stays out of their business. What's your favorite dinner?

MIKE

Chateaubriand, mixed salad with garlic croutons, courgettes au gratin, and a Grand Marnier flan for desert.

JAMAL

That's my favorite thing to make! Folks get it every Thursday night.
(points a finger to his eye)
See, I'm looking you in the eye when I say that. That's an Oscar.

(laughs)

(MORE)

JAMAL (cont'd)
 Welcome, brother, to Heaven's Gate!
 We're gonna have some fun.

INT. RESIDENCE HALL - DAY

Mike rounds a hallway corner, lugging a BOX overflowing with machine parts. He stops short at the sound of a howl "NO!" as MAX COSTIGAN rips MIKE'S WORKOUT SCHEDULE off the wall and whirls towards him.

COSTIGAN
 (seething)
 Don't you dare tell us what to do!
 This is our home! Don't you think we
 see what you're up to, walking around
 in those silly designer shorts...

He sneers, staring at Mike with those same dark, fierce eyes. A smaller man (DOC FLANIGAN), arms crossed, stands next to Max, like a pipsqueak bodyguard.

COSTIGAN (cont'd)
 (pointing to the box)
 And don't try to fancy us up with
 fixed-up machines. We like our bodies.
 We've worked all these years just to
 get them like this! We know Oscar
 wants the state money. But first comes
 the federal money, matching it buck
 for buck. And then you got Washington
 telling us what to do, when to go to
 sleep, wake up, what clothes we should
 wear, when we can have a bowel
 movement, and just like that...
 (he CRUSHES the sheet of paper
 in his large hand)
 Our lives are worth nothing. Right,
 Doc?

DOC
 Right, Max.

COSTIGAN
 We don't want and we don't need your
 help, buddy.
 (tosses the ball of paper to
 the floor)

Mike watches the crusty, old man amble down the hall, with bowlegged Doc Flannigan at his side. He reaches down to pick up the paper.

ESSY

Pst!

A spry, wrinkled WOMAN (ESSY CLAYMORE), with a sweet smile and sparkle in her blue-gray eyes, peeks out from behind the hallway corner. She wiggles her finger at Mike.

ESSY

He's more bark than bite.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE stares into a tall GLASS CASE, coated with grime. ESSY opens the case and WIPES AWAY the grime with her sweater sleeve. She closes the glass panel and steps back. MIKE SEES: Tall, golden BASEBALL TROPHIES. The hallway light still catches some of the shine, though it's obvious they haven't been polished or cared for in several years.

MIKE'S POV: CLOSE ON TROPHIES

Engraved on the trophies, Mike reads the various INSCRIPTIONS: "Heaven's Gate Grizzlies - Sunshine League Champions;" "MVP - Max Costigan;" "HG Grizzlies - Gray Cup Champions;" and more.

ESSY

No one could turn the double play better than me, Mike. I had the best footwork in the league. Max had the windmill windup. Sal played center field like he owned it. We were strong up the middle.

MIKE

Then why don't you play?

ESSY

(she stops, hesitates)

Max...

(her gaze falls away)

It all stopped with him.

Mike turns back to the trophy case. His eyes settle on one trophy: "MVP - Max Costigan."

EXT. FIELD - SUNNY DAY

MIKE, sweating, irritated, pushes along an old gas engine LAWN MOWER. The weedy field is pitted with holes and rocks. The mower sputters and blows black smoke. SAL FAZIO (the Italian cardplayer) tags alongside, yakking.

SAL
 (points)
 Those are the tombstones, directly in
 back of center field.

Sal is pointing to a small gathering of weathered TOMBSTONES,
 surrounded by weeds.

SAL (cont'd)
 The rule was, if a ball passed over
 any of the graves on the fly, it was a
 home run. I was the center fielder
 but, trust me, it wasn't easy, going
 back full speed and running into a
 tombstone. I got a gimpy knee the way
 it is.

The lawnmower JERKS, SCREECHES and stops.

MIKE
 I think we just ran into a rock.

The men bend down to examine the mower blades.

SAL
 I was forty years a mechanic. I've got
 a touch with machines.

OSCAR
 Mikey! Mikey!

Mike looks up. Across the field, OSCAR is frantically waving his
 arms.

OSCAR
 She's back!

INT. BASEMENT WORKOUT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MIKE and OSCAR exchange a nervous look. Oscar dabs a white
 handkerchief across his perspiring forehead. They both turn their
 attention to...

BETH McDONALD, the STATE GRANT AND AID REPRESENTATIVE (whose car
 Mike's trunk had slammed). Her back is to them, as she examines
 Mike's LICENSE hanging on the wall. She turns sharply.
 Everything about her is sharp and crisp. Her glare, her tightly
 pulled back dark hair, her starched white blouse and beige
 business suit, even her voice.

BETH

I can't see how you got that license, Mr. Abbot. Judging from the condition of this room, I can't see how you would expect anything less than a flat out rejection of your grant request. Just look at this equipment.

She struts like a military officer, her quirky beauty at odds with the dress code that comes with the job.

BETH (CONT'D)

It's not current, it's not ergonomically correct, it's not gender neutral, it's not senior friendly.

OSCAR

It's been totally overhauled.

MIKE

(getting into the spirit)
Our retirees are used to the older equipment. That's the world they come from.

OSCAR

Show Miss McDonald, Mikey.

MIKE

(marches over to WALL WEIGHT MACHINE)
Their eyesight isn't strong anymore. They can't read those digital readouts. They don't like all those bells and whistles.
(grabs the handles of the pulley cables, his back to the wall)
They prefer something like this!

Mike yanks both arms forward, the WEIGHTS attached to the pulleys FLY UP, off the rods, and SHOOT PAST Beth's head.

OSCAR

DUCK!

She ducks, flies back, landing SPRAWLED ACROSS the rowing machine.

Mike and Oscar rush over and kneel down.

MIKE

Miss McDonald.. Miss McDonald, can you hear me?

OSCAR
She's dead, Mikey. You killed our
golden goose.

MIKE
Don't say that; she's not dead.

Beth's beauty, of a kind enriched by personality, lies dormant in
the realm of unconsciousness.

EXT. HEAVEN'S GATE - LATER

BETH McDONALD throws her BRIEFCASE onto the passenger seat, gets
in her state issued tan Toyota and angrily slams the door.
Through the windshield, we can see a heavy GAUZE WRAP around her
forehead.

MIKE
(shouts)
Don't forget to send in the claim on
your car hood!

She throws the car into reverse, swings a turn, and takes off.

MIKE AND OSCAR WATCH

As the car roars down the rutted lane towards the highway.

OSCAR
I never said to use the whole can of
WD-40; that was supposed to last a
year.

MIKE
You told me she was an old bag. You
said the bureaucrats were pushovers.

OSCAR
Well, you certainly pushed her over.
You almost killed her, Mikey.

MIKE
Don't call me Mikey.

They start back towards the Residence Hall.

OSCAR
We've gotta come up with a new plan if
she's gonna stay on the case. There's
people buried in center field who'd
smile sooner than her.

MIKE

Maybe she didn't get enough attention
when she was growing up.

OSCAR

Maybe you could give her a little.

Oscar winks, pats Mike on the back as.. they enter the Hall.

INT. ANDY WELLINGTON'S HIGH-RISE OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Andy stands at the tall window, looking out on the waterfront and
Lake Erie.

ANDY

You know how much I'd like to help
you, old chap, but these are hard
times.

(he turns back into the room)

We're putting every penny we can
scrounge into our development.

Mike sits in a chair across from Andy's desk.

MIKE

I'm talking about a dozen baseballs,
Andy. A few bucks for bats and gloves.
You used to dump that kind of money on
drinks at the pool.

ANDY

(more firmly)

Well, things have changed... for all
of us.

Mike knows when he's getting stiffed. He gets up.

MIKE

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

He starts for the door, stops. His eyes catch the large
DEVELOPMENT MAP framed on the wall. Across the top of the map, in
big letters, is the name: "HEAVENLY HAVEN ESTATES."

ANDY

You should have invested, when I made
the offer.

Mike walks out. The door SLAMS. Andy stares at it.

INT. MIKE DRIVING THE OLD CHEVY CLUNKER - DAY

Passing a PARK. He's on his CELL PHONE, getting more frustrated.

MIKE
Grandma! Grandma, can you hear me?
(buzz, crackle, static)
Cheap damn phones.

He throws the phone down on the seat. When he looks up...

MIKE SEES: A LARGE PARK BANNER: "SENIOR SUMMER LEAGUE - SIGN UP NOW"

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

MIKE marches out to the ball field, HAULING bats, tattered gloves and balls. SAL FAZIO keeps pace at his side.

MIKE
I signed us up for the Sunshine League.

SAL
The Sunshine League! We haven't been in it for five years.

MIKE
Welcome back.

SAL
Who's gonna play? We don't even have a team.

MIKE
We've got a center fielder, don't we?

SAL
(forming a smile)
I'd have to get one of those fancy wraps for my knee.

MIKE
And Essy says she can still turn the double play.

SAL
But the equipment stinks.

INT. RESIDENCE HALL SOCIAL ROOM - LATER

MAX is sitting with his buddy, DOC, alone at the CARD TABLE. Cards are laid out in front of EMPTY chairs.

MAX
(banging the table)
Let's go! You're wasting time!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max is looking over to the tall windows, where MARCUS, a chubby, bearded BLACK MAN, has a pair of BINOCULARS clamped against his eyes. The other card players, STU, CHESTY, and HECTOR, are SHUFFLING OVER to the window. All of the men are in their seventies, pushing eighty.

MAX
It's Hector's play!

No one's listening to Max.

AT THE WINDOWS

MARCUS
They're playing.

STU
(incredulous)
No. Let me see.

Marcus hands the binoculars to Stu, who bellies up to the window, with the binoculars at his eyes.

BINOCULARS POV

Mike is hitting balls to Sal, Essy and a very tall, frail man. This is BURKE.

INT. MIKE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Boxes have been unpacked. Mike's enormous WARDROBE HANGS on wires that crisscross the room.

Mike lies in bed, staring into the moonlit darkness. Defeat is close at hand. His gaze drifts across the display of SUITS and SILK SHIRTS.