

# Eddie, The Ten Year Reunion

## Chapter Four Autumn

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The Autumn semester begins at the high school and at the University, a date that just goes by on the calendar for Eddie and the rest of the tribe, except for, perhaps, Johnson. Teaching physical education at the high school, Johnson is the only member of the tribe who is still involved in academia. Johnson is now the head track coach at the high school, something Eddie knew would happen many years ago when he once traveled to the future. This year, Barbara is at home taking care of George. Taking a leave of absence, Barbara will not be teaching for a while, but is still coaching the high school distance team. Dr. Zunde, still the athletic director for the school system and a physical education instructor, is still coaching the field events.

Over at the University, Mr. Frazier and Athena Leighton still coach the undefeatable powerhouse that is expected to take all the medals in the indoor track divisional meet again this year. This does not make the competing teams very happy, for they have nothing to look forward to. But, as Dr. Zunde would say, that would be their problem. Mr. Frazier and Dr. Leighton are teaching a track and field class at the University, where prospective high school students practice with the team and earn college credits. Other universities have attempted to duplicate Dr. Leighton's program, but have failed miserably. But that, too, would be their problem.

Over at the office of Davies and Rice, L.L.P., Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula sit across the table from Mr. Davies and Mr. Rice, discussing a legal matter. Chuckie has filed suit against Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula. Chuckie alleges that his four adversaries have trespassed on his property, and that Eddie and Mark once kidnaped him. Chuckie is demanding \$100,000.00 for the emotional trauma he claims he suffered. Eddie and Mark could easily just write the check, but why? The entertainment value of the case is worth taking it to trial.

Hearing the evidence, Mr. Davies and Mr. Rice assure the group that Chuckie's case will be laughed out of court. Mr. Rice also assures everyone that Mr. Savage, the attorney who is representing Chuckie, is quite incompetent, and is only taking the case to collect a paycheck. Mr. Rice strongly suspects that Mr. Savage is getting paid up front by Chuckie. No sane attorney would take Chuckie's case on a contingency basis, where they would receive a percentage of the settlement.

Mr. Rice's assessment of Mr. Savage would be correct. Mr. Savage has somehow convinced Chuckie that he has a rock solid case. Mr. Savage has collected thousands of dollars from Chuckie to prepare the case, and has charged Chuckie several thousands more to pay for the trial. Chuckie continues to pay Mr. Savage's bills, hoping to make pay dirt on the day of the trial. And, as long as Chuckie continues to pay Mr. Savage's bills, Mr. Savage will continue to send them. Being paid for the time he puts into the case, Mr. Savage cannot lose, financially, that is.

The Autumn semester also brings the annual coach's meeting of the divisional track coaches. During the meeting, the topics of discussion include reviewing the order of events at the meets, any proposed rule changes, setting the meet dates for the following academic year, and any other issues that may be of concern to the teams in the division. Representing the University this year is Mr. Frazier, Dr. Leighton, Dr. Bonamo, and Dr. Karakova. Dr. Karakova, being the regional rules expert, attends the meeting every year, and is often the voice of reason among the group.

The first hour of the meeting, as usual, is rather boring. The comical highlights are a discussion where Dr. Larry Gable, who always has something to complain about, inquires whether the track lanes must be a standard width, or whether the width really matters. Dr. Gable wants to convert his outdated six-lane gravel track to an eight-lane all-weather track on the cheap. Dr. Karakova informs Dr. Gable that the lane width must be 1.22 meters, which is the metric equivalent of four feet. Dr. Gable should have known that.

Moving on to what he considers important business, Dr. Peter Gregory, the meeting chairman, suggests, "I do believe, my friends and colleagues, that it is time for another full audit of the teams in our division. My personal concern is that one team in particular still dominates the division, and several teams in our division, while they are what I would consider highly competitive, have not had a decent showing in the divisional meets for several years. And, I sincerely believe that one university in particular really needs to be put under a high-powered microscope. It would appear that budgetary constraints that apply to the rest of the teams seem to have no meaning to one university in particular."

Already knowing to which university Dr. Gregory is referring, Dr. Leighton interrupts, and asks Dr. Gregory, “may I ask, sir, to which university in particular you are referring?” Dr. Gregory replies, “do you really have to ask, Dr. Leighton?” Dr. Leighton replies, “yes. And, for the record, please provide a definitive answer to my question.” Answering Dr. Leighton, Dr. Gregory replies, “why, Dr. Leighton, it should be obvious that I am referring to your University.” But, Dr. Leighton already knew that.

Dr. Leighton responds, “please do not entertain me, Dr. Gregory, with threats pertaining to the review of our accreditation. I can assure you, sir, our University will endure any scrutiny that the auditors may deliver. In fact, in the last few years, we have slightly decreased the amount of scholarship money we’ve awarded to track athletes. In response to your threats, Dr. Gregory, I suspect that a few of our athletes would rather pay full tuition at our University, and win, as opposed to attending your university under a full scholarship, and lose.” Several coaches in the room snicker, knowing that what Dr. Leighton said is true. Now ticked off, Dr. Gregory replies, “Dr. Leighton, I believe that your words were uncalled for.” Dr. Leighton replies, “the truth is often hard to swallow, Dr. Gregory, especially if one is in your shoes. In sports, despite what others may say, winning is everything.”

The history behind the heated, yet diplomatic, exchange between Dr. Gregory and Dr. Leighton is no secret. Many years ago, when Athena Leighton ran track for the University, Peter Gregory ran for another university in the division. Peter met Athena at a track meet when they were both running for their respective universities. Not knowing Athena was married, Peter asked Athena out on a date. Athena refused, informing Peter that she was married. Meet after meet, Peter persisted in asking Athena out, until he ran into Mike Stone, Athena’s husband. Mike informed Peter that, if he so much as looks at Athena again, he will rip him apart, leaving him in unrecognizable pieces, and feed him to the sharks. Mike Stone, a Greco-Roman wrestler in the heavyweight class at that time, could have easily made good on his promise. Since then, Peter Gregory has held a great animosity toward Athena Leighton.

Continuing the heated exchange, not appreciative of Dr. Leighton’s exposing of facts, Dr. Gregory informs Dr. Leighton, “it does appear to me, Dr. Leighton, that you’ve implemented some of the thesis material yourself that some of your athletes have produced in the last few years.” Dr. Leighton asks, “will you please clarify specifically of what you are speaking, Dr. Gregory?” Mr. Frazier sits back with his arms crossed, and whispers to Dr. Karakova, “I think Athena is about ready to rip Gregory apart again.” Dr. Karakova whispers back, “Gregory doesn’t stand a chance against her, and he knows it.”

Clearly wanting the other coaches to know what Dr. Leighton's University is up to, Dr. Gregory discloses, "well, let me first mention a few thesis topics, which, I may add, have led to the issuance of advanced degrees at your University." Referring to his notes, Dr. Gregory announces, "thesis number one. Psychological Aspects of Athletic Competition and their Effect on the Inappropriate Engagement of the Fight or Flight Mechanism." Athena interrupts, and tells Dr. Gregory, "that thesis was inspired by Mark Svoboda, who was the master of psychological warfare. And, I might add, that thesis led to a master's degree in psychology, and had absolutely nothing to do with the School of Exercise Science or our University's track team." Dr. Gregory replies, "point taken, Dr. Leighton."

Dr. Gregory continues, "thesis number two. Anabolic Effects of Nutritional Supplements and their Relation to Increasing Athletic Performance in the Field Events of Track and Field. And, I might add, that thesis discusses which supplements cannot be detected on any blood or urine test. Thesis number three. The Efficacy of Classical and Novel Distraction Techniques and Appropriate Countermeasures in the Track and Field Arena." Thesis number four. The Long Term Psychological Effects of the Improper Engagement of the Fight or Flight Mechanism on the Sports Field."

Not appearing to be concerned in the least, Athena answers Dr. Gregory's charge by asking, "so what? What's your point?" Now unraveled, Dr. Gregory exclaims, "what's my point? My point is that this material has no place on the track!" Athena confidently replies, "sure it does. Haven't you ever seen Muhammad Ali before a boxing match?" Laughter arises from others in the room, irritating Dr. Gregory even more.

Trying to gain the upper hand, Dr. Gregory claims, "these are clearly inappropriate topics for a thesis! I can't believe your university grants advanced degrees for researching those topics!" Not letting Dr. Gregory finish his ranting, Mr. Frazier quickly responds, "it can't be too much of an inappropriate topic, since we often win by using many of the methods researched." Dr. Gregory rolls his eyes, but all the eye rolling in the world will get him nowhere with Mr. Frazier or Dr. Leighton.

Taking control of the conversation, and putting it to rest, Dr. Leighton informs Dr. Gregory, "I'm very glad, Dr. Gregory, that you have taken the time to review our research. I'm also guessing that you, and others sitting here today, have also examined our research leading to our training protocols. If you took the time to review our research in the realm of training protocols and methodologies, and took the time to incorporate the theories presented in the research into your own training programs, you might just earn a medal or two in the upcoming divisional meet. So, please don't entertain me with the appropriateness or

inappropriateness of the subject matter leading to the issuance of advanced degrees at our University. Quite frankly, Dr. Gregory, what we do academically is none of your business. And, since your university does not offer advanced degrees in the exercise science field or in the field of psychology, you, sir, are not even remotely qualified to judge our programs.”

Putting an end to the verbal wrestling match, Dr. Karakova suggests to Dr. Gregory, “let’s move on to the next topic. We’re clearly here today to discuss track and field, not academics.” Stepping back onto the mat of the verbal wrestling match, Dr. Gregory informs Dr. Karakova, “with all due respect, sir, I have one more issue to discuss regarding the activities at your University.” Dr. Karakova replies, “only one? I’m very surprised.” The casual observer would recognize that Dr. Karakova’s last statement was purely to irritate Dr. Gregory, and is a subtle form of psychological warfare.

Raising his next issue, Dr. Gregory explains, “Dr. Karakova, my second issue revolves around your University’s dual enrollment classes in track and field. I think we all know that these so-called dual enrollment classes taught at your University are for the sole purpose of training certain high school track and field athletes before they attend your University. It has also been brought to my attention that several track athletes from other universities have attempted to obtain dual enrollment status with your University to take the class, and their admission has been denied. And, in the few cases where a track athlete has been granted dual admission to your University, they were subsequently denied enrollment in your track and field class.” Dr. Karakova, who has been taking notes, asks Dr. Gregory, “are you done?” Dr. Gregory replies, “yes, sir. I’d like to hear what you have to say.”

Standing up, and walking to the front of the room, Dr. Karakova explains, “if a track athlete from another university was denied admission to our University, the denial was likely resulting from academic criteria, not their performance on the track. In cases where college students were granted dual enrollment status, they have been administratively denied the opportunity to take the track and field class.” Interrupting Dr. Karakova, Dr. Gregory exclaims, “administratively denied? That doesn’t seem fair by any stretch of the imagination!” Dr. Karakova explains, “stretch your imagination a little further, Dr. Gregory. The policy of administratively denying students from other colleges and universities from taking the class came from President Caldwell, Dr. Leighton, who was provost of our University at the time the decision was made, and myself. That’s just the way it is, and that’s the way it will be. And, there will be no discussion on the matter. So, get used to it.”

Not letting the subject rest, Dr. Gregory asks, “so, what you are saying, Dr. Karakova, is that no track athlete attending any other university will be permitted to take the track and field class offered at your university?” Dr. Karakova responds, “you can ask the question twenty different ways, Dr. Gregory, and the answer will be the same. And, let me add this. Our University offers a class entitled Advanced Physical Conditioning. To take the class, the student must, and I repeat, must be on one of our sports teams. The Advanced Physical Conditioning class is not open to the general student population, nor any dual enrollment students.” Dr. Gregory asks, “may I ask why that particular class is not open to anyone other than those on a sports team?” Dr. Karakova bluntly replies, “no. It’s none of your business.” Mr. Frazier laughs, promoting others in the room to follow suit.

Putting the issue of why the track and field class is closed to athletes of other universities, Dr. Karakova continues, “now, getting back to your original complaint about high school students in the dual enrollment program, advanced placement classes and dual enrollment status is an academic, not an athletic, issue. Offering track and field classes to high school students in a dual enrollment arrangement clearly falls under the jurisdiction of the University’s academic program. If you even attempt to disallow the class, you’ll have to completely eliminate any and all dual enrollment classes offered by every university in the entire country. You, sir, are not even remotely prepared to fight that battle.”

Addressing Dr. Gregory’s other issue, Dr. Karakova continues, explaining, “you have also implied that our dual enrollment classes are for the sole purpose of training track and field athletes before they attend our University. First of all, the high school students enrolled in our University’s track and field class are not contractually bound to attend our University in any sense at all. They can attend your university if they want to. Several of you sitting here today have attempted to emulate our program. As far as I know, none of you who have attempted to duplicate our program have succeeded. So, let me ask this. Why was our University’s dual enrolment program acceptable when other universities attempted to emulate our program but, when those attempts failed, our program is no longer acceptable? And, let me also ask this. Why did your programs fail? We have a long list of high school students waiting to get into our track and field class. And, at the same time, you closed your program down. Had you succeeded in your program, you would not have brought the issue up here today. I could be wrong, but I detect a little hypocrisy here.”

Knowing that he cannot win this argument, or any other argument with Dr. Karakova, Dr. Gregory announces, “okay, already. We’ll revisit this topic at a future date.” That is Dr. Gregory’s way of trying to slide out from between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Dr. Karakova takes

his seat, wondering if the childish complaint session is over or just beginning.

Dr. Gregory asks the coaches, “do we have any other items of concern that are not specifically mentioned in the agenda?” Dr. Nicholson stands up and announces, “I do believe, sir, that there are other serious issues that have gone unaddressed regarding Mr. Frazier and his University.” Glad to hear that someone else has a complaint against Mr. Frazier’s team, Dr. Gregory asks, “what issue is of concern to you, Dr. Nicholson?” Mr. Frazier whispers to Dr. Bonamo, “here it comes. The mother lode of all bullshit.”

Deviating from his usual haphazard style of babble, Dr. Nicholson confidently orates, “there is clear evidence, and many rumors to the fact, that Provost Leighton, and her University, have funded the installation of a new, modern-day, all-weather track at Northside High School. The cost of this new track is exorbitant, and far beyond the budget of any high school. With Northside High School as the clear training ground for Provost Leighton’s track team, this should be taken into account when auditing her University’s budget. I’ve been out there, and seen the new track myself. I can assure all of you, the track at Northside High School is one very expensive track. No expense has been spared.” If Dr. Nicholson took a trip to see the new track at Northside High School, he drove for one or two hours to get there.

Dr. Karakova whispers to Dr. Leighton, “it sounds like he still thinks you’re the provost of our University.” Dr. Leighton whispers back, “I see that.” As Dr. Nicholson continues to babble, Dr. Leighton asks her colleagues, “who wants to take care of this one?” Mr. Frazier replies, “I will, if no one minds.” Dr. Leighton tells Mr. Frazier, “please, George, be my guest. And, please remind Dr. Nicholson again of the fate of the stolen camera he still alleges to be his.” Mr. Frazier smiles, and replies, “no problem.”

Finally finished with his poorly researched complaint, Dr. Nicholson takes a seat. Focusing his attention to Dr. Leighton, Dr. Gregory asks, “Dr. Leighton, would someone from your University care to address the issue raised by Dr. Nicholson?” Dr. Leighton replies, “Mr. Frazier will be glad to address that issue, sir, and any other issues regarding the new Northside High School track.” Still thinking that Mr. Frazier is some sort of uneducated idiot, Dr. Gregory instructs Mr. Frazier, “you may now take the floor, Mr. Frazier.” Mr. Frazier is smart enough to figure that out by himself.

Mr. Frazier stands, and walks to the front of the room. Smiling like the cat that ate the canary, Mr. Frazier informs the group, “the outdated gravel track at Northside High School has certainly seen its better days.

The old track hosted many victories for the high school track team, and many, including myself, were very sad to see it go. Many of the athletes who ran for our University went back and practiced on that old gravel track while they ran for us. They were astonished at the difference between the old track and a modern-day track.” Dr. Nicholson and Dr. Gregory sit back, waiting to hear how Mr. Frazier, speaking for the University, will justify spending the University’s money on a track for Northside High School.

Mr. Frazier continues, “the new track at Northside High School was designed by Louis Zaino, who ran for Northside High School many years ago. Dr. Zunde was brought in on the project, who primarily served as a consultant. Many years ago, Dr. Zunde, as many of you know, was a consultant to the company that manufactures the all-weather surface. Today, Dr. Zunde now sits on the board of directors of that company. Mr. Zaino and Dr. Zunde came up with a really good design, if you ask me. Their design is every bit as good as the one at our University.”

Dr. Nicholson, back to his old self, interrupts, reprimanding Mr. Frazier, boldly stating, “I’m not asking for a history lesson, Mr. Frazier. Please, get to the point.” Pointing to Dr. Nicholson, Mr. Frazier raises his voice and sternly replies, “excuse me! Why don’t you just shut up and listen? I’m getting to that. Just sit back and relax. I’ll open the floor to questions and commentary when I am finished. Am I understood?” Dr. Nicholson reluctantly replies, “yes, sir.” Giving Dr. Nicholson a long, hard stare, Mr. Frazier pauses, as dead silence falls over the room. No one else would dare to interrupt Mr. Frazier again.

Mr. Frazier continues, “now, where was I? Oh, yeah. Many of you know Edward Bogenskaya and his wife, Kathy. They are the ones who initiated this project. They got together with Mark Svoboda, his wife, Paula, and Robert Bradshaw, and his wife, Erika.” Looking at Dr. Nicholson, Mr. Frazier offers some side commentary, stating, “I’m sure, Dr. Nicholson, you’ve heard of all of them. They kicked your team’s flimsy ass year after year when they ran for our University.”

Mr. Frazier then exclaims to the group, “our University did not put forth one penny for the construction of that new track! That track was fully funded by Eddie, Kathy, Mark, Paula, Robert, and Erika! Again, not one penny was given toward the construction of that track by our University!”

Put in his place earlier by Mr. Frazier, Dr. Nicholson raises his hand to ask a question, as if he were in kindergarten. Mr. Frazier asks Dr. Nicholson, “do you have a question?” Dr. Nicholson replies, “yes, sir. I noticed, sir, on the plaque, that the track was dedicated to you.” Mr. Frazier replies, “yes. I saw that. That was a very nice gesture on the part

of those who were responsible for its construction. I am deeply honored.” Mr. Frazier then concludes, “unless there are any further questions regarding the new track, I believe this issue can be put to rest.”

With silence in the room, Mr. Frazier informs Dr. Nicholson, “by the way, coach, the rightful owner of the camera you alleged to be yours is grateful to have it back.” And, pointing to Dr. Gregory, Mr. Frazier instructs him, “since you have nothing better to do than to audit shit, go ahead and audit where that track came from. Good luck. You’ll need it. During your audit, Mark will mess with you big time.” Mr. Frazier then informs Dr. Nicholson, “by the way, Jim, Mark Svoboda is the one who gave your university the name ‘Dogpatch University’.” Courtesy of Mark, Dr. Nicholson’s university is now known to all teams in the division as Dogpatch University. Gaining the respect of everyone in the room, Mr. Frazier walks back to his seat.

Mr. Frazier whispers to Dr. Leighton, “does this shit ever end?” Dr. Leighton replies, “not as long as we keep winning like we have been.” Mr. Frazier replies, “they’d better get used to it, then. I’m not about to start losing just to make them happy.” Seeing Mr. Crumpler complaining about something, Dr. Leighton whispers to Mr. Frazier, “I don’t think they’re done yet.” Dr. Gregory addresses Mr. Crumpler, who seems to have his own complaint.

Given the floor to air his grievance, Mr. Crumpler rises up, exclaiming, “the last eight years, if I may say, have been ridiculous! We show up at a meet, give it our best, and walk away with nothing! Nothing! What have I told my team after every divisional meet in the last eight years? I tell them they have to train harder, eat better, and have a positive mental attitude! My team is not stupid. They know something is drastically wrong in this division! In fact, I’ve had one of my best sprinters quit the team and try out for football!”

Mr. Crumpler continues yelling, screaming, and hammering his desk. Dr. Leighton whispers to Mr. Frazier, “George, his team’s problem is their coach. You can’t just tell your team to train harder, eat better, and have a positive mental attitude after you lose and go back to the same failed methods that caused you to lose to begin with.” Mr. Frazier replies, “you’re right, Athena. Crumpler tried to buy a winning sprinter years ago. What was his name? Major Nachlobrocklin, I think. That guy was a real screwball. Nachlobrocklin was always on edge during a meet. It makes me wonder what goes on during his training sessions.” Athena suggests, “what goes on during his training sessions, George, is exactly what you’re witnessing right here.”

Mr. Crumpler continues with his diatribe, exclaiming, “what’s the point of competing if there is a zero chance of winning even one event? What’s

the point of competing if you get your head handed to you every meet? What's the point of competing if one team is allowed to dominate the division year after year? I have half a mind to withdraw my team from the divisional meet this Winter! In fact, that's exactly what I will be doing! My team will not be showing up for the divisional meet this January!"

As Mr. Crumpler continues with his childish complaining, it is difficult to tell whether Mr. Frazier is getting angry, frustrated, or both. Breaking his silence, Mr. Frazier whispers to Dr. Leighton, "this guy is the biggest baby I've ever run across in track and field." Dr. Leighton replies, "I know, George. Just listen to him ranting, going on and on. He is quite the embarrassment to his university." As Mr. Crumpler points to Mr. Frazier, complaining about some unspecified underhanded tactics, Dr. Leighton tells Mr. Frazier, "here it comes, the personal attacks." Mr. Frazier replies, "I've had enough of him already."

Granted the opening he was waiting for, Mr. Frazier hears Mr. Crumpler exclaim, "what do you have to say for yourself, Mr. Frazier?" Mr. Frazier whispers to Dr. Leighton, "I'm going to put an end to this right now." Athena sits back, and relaxes, knowing that Mr. Frazier is about to give a motivational talk.

Mr. Frazier stands up, and asks Dr. Gregory, "may I have an opportunity to respond to Mr. Crumpler's complaint, sir?" Not wanting to address Mr. Crumpler's issue himself, Dr. Gregory smiles, and cheerfully replies, "the floor is yours, Mr. Frazier. Please, go right ahead." Truth is Dr. Gregory has no idea how to respond to Mr. Crumpler's complaints.

Mr. Frazier walks to the front of the room, and begins, "if there's something wrong with winning, I want to know what it is. They say, 'it doesn't matter whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game.' Where did that ever come from? I say, 'if it didn't matter, they wouldn't keep score!' When my team gets out there to compete, they compete to win! To my team, losing is not an option! To me, Coach Leighton, and Coach Bonamo, losing is not an option!"

Giving an example, Mr. Frazier explains, "many of you may remember Axel Braden. If that name does not ring a bell, let me refresh your memory. When he was a junior at our University, Axel Braden broke the world record in the 400-meter dash with a time of 43.75 seconds. Some of you may remember that event. Braden's record still stands today. What you don't know is that, earlier that year, Edward Bogenskaya beat Braden at his own race. Eddie beat Braden in the 400-meters! Axel Braden, who calls himself the 'chief ass kicker', was not going to stand for that at all."

Explaining how seriously his team takes their sport, Mr. Frazier continues, “here’s something you don’t know. At that time, Axel Braden was one of our campus police officers. After Eddie beat Braden in the 400-meters, Braden knew he was in a lot of trouble. At Eddie’s recommendation, Braden started patrolling the campus on a bicycle for several hours a day. Braden would sprint on his bicycle around the road that encircles the campus, then take a recovery tour through campus. Braden would repeat this for several hours a day, every other day, in the heat and in the cold! That’s what I call dedication! Unless your athletes have that dedication, you will never beat Braden!”

Citing another example, Mr. Frazier explains, “now, some of you may also remember Allison King. We picked her up from one of you guys in her junior year. She was quite unhappy with the coaching at the university she attended before we got her. Allison revealed to me that, during the workout sessions, the entire team would run around the track for forty-five minutes, and afterwards practice a few sprints. I understand that the coach of that team would yell out ‘faster, faster’ during the entire one hour training session. A one hour workout of running around a track followed by a few sprints is not training! No wonder your team always loses, whoever you are!” Mr. Frazier does not recall which university Allison formerly attended. For obvious reasons, the coach of that university does not dare to identify himself to the group.

Mr. Frazier raises his voice, and continues, “how did Allison go from what I would consider being a reasonably good athlete to a divisional superstar in two years? During her senior year, Allison won the gold medal in every event I put her in! She never let me down! She was unstoppable! Allison certainly did not attain that level of performance by running around a track for one hour a day! Now, listen to this. Only three things changed. The first was Allison’s training. The second was Allison’s teammates. And, the third was her coaching staff. Which of those three is responsible for her dramatic increase in performance?” Mr. Frazier pauses for a moment, quickly realizing that no one dares to answer his question. Mr. Frazier then announces, “I’ll give you the answer. It’s all three!”

Continuing with a story that he tells his team every year, Mr. Frazier continues, “let me tell you a story, if I may. When I was in my early teens, on one particular Saturday, it was very stormy outside. My father was home, watching a track meet on television. My race, which many of you know was the 100-yard dash, came up. So, I watched that race very closely. It was clear which runner took first place, but second place seemed to be a tie. While my father and I were waiting patiently to find out who came in second and third place, I asked my father, ‘who do you think came in second?’ My father turned to me, looked me square in the eye, and told me, ‘George. It doesn’t matter. They both lost. Only one

person wins the race. Everyone else is a loser.’ I told my father, ‘but, they give medals for second and third place.’ He replied, ‘so what. They still lost.’” Mr. Frazier then exclaims, “they can also give a medal for last place! What good is that?”

Now, with everyone’s attention, Mr. Frazier continues, “my father didn’t stop there. My father wanted to teach me a lesson, so he told me, ‘George, go and get your Bible.’ I went to my room, and returned with my Bible. My father told me to open my Bible to First Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 24, and read it to him. I read, ‘Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you win.’ My father looked me straight in the eye and, with deep conviction, told me, ‘George, there is only one winner. Everyone else is a loser. It’s that simple.’ Mark my word! There is only one winner! If you are to run in such a way that you win, you must train in such a way that will enable you to win! And, if you come in second place, congratulations! You are the first loser! Train harder, and work more!”

Giving his competitor’s some advice on coaching, Mr. Frazier energetically explains, “all of you here know or have heard of Edward Bogenskaya. When Eddie was in high school, I had the privilege of being his coach. When Eddie was a freshman, he won the silver medal in the 40-yard dash at the indoor track State invitational meet. After that, Eddie won the gold medal in the 40-yard dash for the next three years, and won the gold medal in the 100-yard dash at the Spring State invitational meet for four consecutive years! Can you believe it?” Mr. Frazier lowers his voice, and continues, “but, here’s what you do not know about Eddie. Eddie put all his gold medals in a box, where he couldn’t see them. Left out on his dresser was his silver medal, where it served as a constant reminder to work harder.” Mr. Frazier then exclaims, “second place was not acceptable to Eddie! Second place should not be acceptable to you, or your team, either!”

Revisiting an earlier topic, Mr. Frazier, addressing Dr. Gregory specifically, announces, “Dr. Gregory, I understand from your earlier conversation with Dr. Leighton that you’ve reviewed some of our research. Barbara Johnson and Eric Johnson, who coach the Northside High School track team, review all of our research. You may know Barbara as Barbara Wyngate. Over the last eight years at our University, more than 100 students have earned an advanced degree by researching athletic performance. Many of the theses associated with this research involve subject matter that is directly applicable to track and field. Barbara and Eric have read them all! Why haven’t you?”

Mr. Frazier then warns the other coaches, “unless your athletes are willing to train like Axel Braden, Eddie Bogenskaya, or Allison King, do not expect to win anything! Unless you, as a coach, are willing to study and

implement modern training protocols, do not expect to win! Unless you get your team on an optimal nutrition program, do not expect to win! Unless you are as committed to winning, as Eric and Barbara Johnson are, do not expect to win!”

Now speaking as if he were speaking to his team, Mr. Frazier reveals, “now, listen to me very carefully. If you forget anything else I say here today, remember this. The one, and only one, attribute that will determine your team’s success on the track is your team must attack the challenge they are facing with no fear! Did you hear that? Absolutely no fear! And, you, as a coach, must attack the challenges you face with no fear! If you demonstrate fear, your team will see it! Fear is contagious! When you have fear, you are infecting your team with the inability to win! So, don’t blame your team for your failures! Move on, and don’t make the same mistake next time!”

Mr. Frazier concludes, “as I look around this room, I see fear in some of your eyes. Do you see any fear in my eyes? Do you see fear in Coach Leighton’s eyes? Do you see fear in Dr. Bonamo’s eyes? No! You don’t! Do you hear great confidence when Dr. Karakova speaks to you? Yes! You do! Instead of whining about losing, do something to change it! You will never win by complaining that you are always losing! If you expect to win, you must change what you are doing!”

Addressing Mr. Crumpler specifically, Mr. Frazier tells him, “Mr. Crumpler, to not compete is to lose by default, which is worse than trying and losing! How do you think your team is going to feel about that? What are you going to do? Are you going to go back to your team and tell them, ‘we’re going to get our ass kicked in the divisional meet, so we’re not going’? Your team will see you as a coward! When you get to the divisional meet in January, and I sincerely hope you decide to attend, pay attention to the confidence level of the winners! The winners will display the one and only one attribute that determines success! They attack the challenge they are facing with no fear! Your job, as a coach, is to instill that same confidence in your team!”

Mr. Frazier then calms down, and announces, “the dedication of the new track at Northside High School will be this coming weekend. I invite you all to attend. Coach Eric Johnson will be there. Coach Barbara Johnson will be there as well. The Northside High School track team will be there and, from what I hear, will be running a few exhibition races. This is a very big event. The news media will also be there. And, you’ll have an opportunity to meet quite a few interesting people.”

Mr. Frazier then informs everyone, “Coach Barbara Johnson, by the way, has an athlete who runs a four-minute and five-second mile. His name is David Hall. When Hall was a freshman, he ran somewhere on the

order of a six-minute mile. A six-minute mile, incidently, is slightly better than average for that age group, but nothing special. You might want to ask Coach Johnson what she did to get his one-mile time down to roughly four minutes. And, I can assure you. It was not running laps around a track for an hour a day!"

Now done with his pep talk to a group who should not need it, Mr. Frazier announces, "I hope I said something here to encourage everyone in this upcoming season. Thank you, Dr. Gregory, for giving me the floor. And, Mr. Crumpler, I hope I answered your concerns to your satisfaction." Mr. Frazier, receiving a standing ovation from the other coaches, walks back to his seat.

Dr. Leighton whispers to Mr. Frazier, "thank you, George. Your presentation should get them off our backs for the rest of the day." Mr. Frazier whispers back, "hopefully, it will stop their complaining for a while too." Mr. Frazier is not one to entertain complaining by his team, much less by other coaches in the division.

Dr. Karakova tells Mr. Frazier, "that was really good, George. You gave them enough information to motivate them to get moving, but nowhere near enough information to actually implement what you spoke of." George replies, "I've read some of our student's theses. I tried to give these guys enough incentive to revise their training programs, but their problem is that our program is not for sale." Dr. Karakova whispers to Mr. Frazier, "it's a good thing all of our most valuable research is locked up in the Exercise Science Lab. But, they don't know that." Mr. Frazier strongly suspects that the other coaches will not make changes to their training program, but keep doing what they have been doing for years.

As Dr. Gable briefly addresses a few administrative details before taking a break, Dr. Bonamo whispers to Mr. Frazier, "I'm going to guess the spies will be back sometime soon. Observing our team's workouts is a whole lot easier than reading research." Mr. Frazier whispers back, "that's okay. We'll take care of them if they return." Dr. Bonamo smiles, knowing exactly Mr. Frazier's preferred method of taking care of business.

Finished with reading the remainder of the morning's agenda to the group, Dr. Gregory announces, "this looks like a good time to take a fifteen-minute break. When we return, we'll discuss the schedule for the next academic year."

During the break, a few of the coaches try to pump Mr. Frazier for more information. Using some of the psychological warfare tactics he has learned over the last decade, Mr. Frazier sends them on a wild goose hunt.

By mid afternoon, the meeting is adjourned, and the University's representatives head home. On his way home, Mr. Frazier thinks back to the meeting, and hopes some of the other coaches will attend the dedication of the new track at Northside High School. Mr. Frazier suspects that a few of the coaches will try to recruit David Hall, the high school student who is getting close to a four-minute mile. Mr. Frazier, however, does not care. Hall, who has been taking the track and field physical education class at the University, is looking forward to having Mr. Frazier as his coach. Hall has already received a full scholarship, and has committed to running for the University under Mr. Frazier.

On the Wednesday before the dedication of the new Northside High School track, Captain Richard Hayes drives into Eddie's Service Station to say hello, as he often does. Not seeing Richard for two weeks, Eddie yells out, "hey, Richard! Where have you been?" Richard yells back, "it's a busy time of the year. School just started. Traffic is a mess. Automobile collisions. And, my daughter, Cindy, can't wait until the track season begins. She had a good season last year." Eddie asks, "is Cindy still wanting to throw the hammer?" Richard replies, "right now, she's more interested in the discus. She tells me she wants a discus for Christmas. I don't even know where to buy a discus." Eddie informs Richard, "Kathy's father can get one for you." Richard replies, "why didn't I think of that? I'll walk down the street and talk to him sometime."

Eddie tells Richard, "hey! I have some good news!" Richard asks, "what's that?" Eddie replies, "the Chuckie is suing me, Kathy, Mark, and Paula." Looking quite puzzled, Richard asks, "wait a second. How is that good news?" Eddie explains, "the Chuckie claims we were trespassing on his property on Saturday, July 20, right before lunch." Richard asks, "why does that date ring a bell?" Eddie replies, "because that's the date we were all at the high school, laying sod, when the Chuckie claims we were at his house terrorizing him or something." Richard laughs, and tells Eddie, "that's right! You know, I hope they call me as a witness in that case. I was at the high school when Officer Wilson drove up and told us about that. We were eating pizza. And, we got a copy of the video. You guys were there from about 7:00 a.m. until about 4:30 p.m. according to the time stamp on the video." Eddie tells Richard, "I can't wait to hear what Chuckie's attorney is going to say." Richard laughs, and replies, "this one is really going to be interesting."

Richard then explains, "this Charles Black character is a real piece of work. On Monday, he filed a complaint against Officer Braden. This character alleges that Officer Braden looks at his house a lot. The desk sergeant told Black that there is no law against looking at someone's house. So, the desk sergeant took the complaint, and filed it." Eddie replies, "wow! It sounds like the Chuckie is after everyone now. I wonder who's next." Richard replies, "I don't know. It would really be nice to get

that character off the streets again.” Eddie then informs Richard, “if I had to guess, I’d say Braden looks at the Chuckie’s house to make sure there’s not a gun pointed at him.” Recalling an incident from a few months ago when a bullet was fired at Braden’s house, Richard replies, “I can totally understand that.”

Changing the subject, Eddie asks Richard, “the dedication of the new high school track is this weekend. Are you going to make it?” Richard replies, “Cindy keeps reminding me. She really wants to go, along with a few of her friends. Someday, they’ll be running on that track.” Eddie informs Richard, “there’ll be a few exhibition events. I’ll be running in a 100-meter dash. Kathy will be throwing the discus. Bobby B. will be showing off his shot-put skills. Me, Mark, Braden, and Johnson will be running a 4 by 400-meter relay, and racing the high school team.”

Eddie then offers, “if you want, I can set it up so Cindy and her friends can run in one of the events.” Richard replies, “wow! Thank you! I’m sure she’d really like that.” Eddie tells Richard, “with any luck, Cindy might be able to get on television.” Quite surprised, Richard asks, “television? Really?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Angela, Mitchell, and Hoffer will be putting the dedication on the air. From what I hear, parts of the dedication will be used for a documentary on track and field.” Richard exclaims, “wow! This sounds like a big production!” Eddie replies, “it wasn’t originally meant to be that big of an event, but it’s turning out to be one. Mitchell put a lot of work into publicizing the dedication.” Eddie tells Richard, “have Cindy and her friends come dressed in their running outfits. We’ll get them on the track.” Richard replies, “thank you so much. I’ll let her know. She’s going to be really excited.”

Eddie and Richard talk for a while, then Richard has to get back to the police station. After Richard leaves, Eddie gets back to work, glad to hear that Richard’s daughter, Cindy, has developed an interest in track.

The day of the big event arrives. Mitchell, Hoffer, Angela, and the production crew are the first to arrive at the new Northside High School track. Hoffer works closely with the production crew as they get the television equipment set up. Arriving second is Johnson, who takes a walk around the track, making sure everything is up to spec. At around 9:00 a.m., a few spectators begin to arrive for the 10:00 a.m. ceremony. As the morning moves along, Mitchell, who publicized the event, realizes that he, perhaps, did too good a job. From Mitchell’s vantage point, the dedication is beginning to look like a standing room only event. In fact, the parking lot at Dr. Akinmola’s church across the street is beginning to fill up.

Eddie and Kathy drive into the administration building parking lot, which has been reserved for special guests. Getting out of their

Volkswagen Bus, Kathy mentions, "wow! It looks really crowded." Looking down the parking lot where he, Mark, and Paula once raced Kathy in her Porsche 914, Eddie replies, "I see that." Kathy asks Eddie, "you know why, don't you?" Eddie asks, "why?" Kathy replies, "because you, and the rest of the tribe who set world records, are here. They came to see you run." All of a sudden, Eddie realizes that he will not be afforded the opportunity to slack off on the track today. Kathy already knows that she cannot slack off when throwing the discus.

Eddie and Kathy walk to the VIP seating section, which is a smaller set of bleachers having actual seats rather than a bench. Situated near the finish line for both the sprints and distance races, the relay transition zone, and the field events, those sitting in the VIP section will have a great view of the events. Eddie looks over at the launching zone for the field implements, seeing the shot-put, discus, hammer, and javelin all waiting to be thrown. At the edge of the red zone, near the finish line, Eddie sees seven high school girls in uniforms with stopwatches hanging around their necks, reminiscent of when Kathy helped with the team before she ran for the high school. Among them is Karen Corey, who is working on her Ph.D. at the University, and is still working with the high school team as a paid intern.

Looking around, Kathy mentions to Eddie, "this is so sad." Not quite understanding, Eddie asks, "what? What are you talking about?" Kathy replies, "they forgot to install Mr. Crum's special seat." Eddie asks, "Mr. Crum's special seat? Okay, out with it, Katarina. I can't wait to hear this." Kathy replies, "yeah. Mr. Crum's special seat. Right in the middle of the red zone, where the discus and javelin would normally land." Eddie laughs, and replies, "seriously! And, we can put a seatbelt on the seat, with a lock, so he can't escape."

Dr. Noreen Brooks, the superintendent of schools, walks over, telling Eddie, "it appears we have a really great turnout today." Eddie replies, "I see that. I wasn't expecting this." Dr. Brooks agrees, telling Eddie, "I don't think any of us were expecting this big a turnout." With the stands full, and spectators standing at both ends of the oval track, the turnout is far greater than expected. With about ten minutes before the ceremony begins, Dr. Brooks inquires of Eddie, "you mentioned earlier this week that there's a middle school girl who would love to run today. Who was that?" Eddie replies, "that's Cindy Hayes. She's Captain Hayes' daughter. Cindy is somewhere in the stands with her family and a few of her friends." Dr. Brooks makes a few notes, and tells Eddie, "this is very important. We'll be sure to fit it in."

Eddie and Kathy take a seat alongside Mark and Paula in the VIP section. Mark, who always scans the stands for people he may know, tells Eddie, "you'll never guess who's here." Taking a wild guess, Eddie replies,

“the Chuckie?” Mark replies, “no, worse.” Eddie tells Mark, “it doesn’t get much worse than the Chuckie, bro.” Mark replies, “except for McCutchen. He’s in the stands, on the top row, over on the right.” Eddie glances over to where McCutchen is seated, and comments, “I wonder what he’s doing here.” Why Todd McCutchen is in attendance today is anybody’s guess.

Also attending the ceremony today is Mr. Crumpler, Dr. Larry Gable, Dr. Nicholson, and Dr. Gregory, who coach track and field in the University’s division. Mr. Viktor Pushkin, who previously coached at Liberty High School, is also present today. Mr. Pushkin, now a first-year coach at a university in the division, remembers Mr. Frazier quite well. Captain Hayes is also present with his family, along with a few of Cindy’s friends. Darryl Stone, the Olympic gold medalist in the 1,500-meter run, is also at the ceremony. Stone likes to hear Mr. Frazier’s motivational speeches, but today he is out of luck. Mr. Frazier will not be speaking at today’s ceremony. Athena Leighton, who wouldn’t miss the event for the world, is also present, sitting in the VIP section. And, from the middle school, Mr. Harris has been looking forward to today since last Winter when he heard of the plans of the new track.

The ceremony begins with Dr. Brooks leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Northside High School Marching Band playing the Star Spangled Banner. The band, led by Mr. Barrett, the music teacher, will get a short break before they practice on the football field later in the afternoon. Once the band has left the red zone, Dr. Brooks walks up to the podium and addresses the crowd.

Greeting those in attendance, Dr. Brooks announces, “good morning!” Most everyone energetically replies, “good morning!” Dr. Brooks continues, “we have quite the turnout here today. Thank you all for coming out this morning to take part in this great moment in history for not only our high school, but our entire school district. This is truly a special day for all of us here in the Northside School District.”

Recalling history, Dr. Brooks continues, “about ten years ago, I personally met a member of the Northside High School track team. His name was Edward Bogenskaya. Some of you know Edward for his accomplishments on the track, specifically for breaking the world record in the 100-meter dash. During that season, I also got to know Mark Svoboda, Axel Braden, Gary Mitchell, Robert Bradshaw, and our own Eric Johnson, who is now the coach of our high school’s track team. Since graduating from Northside High, they have all made significant contributions in the sport of track and field.” The audience claps and cheers, many who are familiar with what Dr. Brooks has eloquently orated.

Without further ado, Dr. Brooks dedicates the new track, declaring, “our new track and field venue at Northside High School provides an

unprecedented opportunity for our student athletes to demonstrate their skills and abilities. This new track will also allow us to host events such as regional meets, special competitions, and sporting events in addition to our regularly scheduled meets. The possibilities and opportunities this new venue brings to our district are endless.”

Dr. Brooks continues, “for those of you who have not had the chance to see the plaque to my right, allow me the opportunity to read to you what is thoughtfully inscribed on it. The plaque reads, ‘it is with deep heartfelt gratitude that the administrators, faculty, coaches, students, and friends of Northside High School give thanks to Edward Bogenskaya, Katarina Karakova Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, Paula Giovani Svoboda, Robert Bradshaw, Erika Gabriel Bradshaw for the George W. Frazier Northside High School Track and Field Sporting venue.’ The plaque also lists Louis Zaino as the architect, Mark Svoboda as the general contractor, and Gerhard Zunde as the consultant.” Looking over to the VIP seating area, Dr. Brooks announces, “will those whom I just mentioned, please stand.” The group responsible for the new track all stand, and wave to the crowd, who cheer in return.

Offering details, Dr. Brooks tells her audience, “you might recognize that all of the names I have mentioned are associated with Northside High School in one way or another. Edward, Kathy, Mark, Paula, Robert, Erika, Eric, and Louis all attended Northside High School, and were members of the track team. Many of you know Gerhard Zunde as our district’s athletic director and our field events coach. And, how can we forget Mr. George Frazier? George Frazier has not only brought exceptional talent to the sport himself, but taught others to excel at track and field. George Frazier has not only coached many athletes to their way of breaking several world records, but he has taught them to be leaders in their community.”

Knowing that there is much more on today’s agenda, Dr. Brooks tells her audience, “in conclusion, I would like to thank all those who played a part in making today possible. I would like to thank our distinguished guests and everyone in the audience for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here for the dedication today. I would especially like to thank Edward Bogenskaya, who spearheaded this effort. For without his dedication, determination, and vision, none of this would have been possible. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you today.” The audience claps and cheers again, looking forward to what is coming up.

Dr. Zunde, who is the Meet Announcer for today’s events, steps up to the podium, and announces, “thank you, Dr. Brooks. We are also grateful that you took time out of your schedule to be with everyone here today. Thank you very much.” Dr. Brooks, quite aware of her warm welcome this

morning, receives another standing ovation. Dr. Brooks takes a seat in the VIP section next to Mr. Frazier, whom she has come to know very well over the years.

Getting down to business, Dr. Zunde continues, “since this is a track and field venue, we have organized a few events to demonstrate to you what you will typically see during a track and field event. The first event is a very special event. In the first event, Eddie and Kathy’s son, Eddie, Junior, Mark and Paula’s son and daughter, Mark, Junior and Dawn, and Axel Braden’s son, Hunter, will compete in a 100-meter dash. These future track stars are in the two to four-year-old range, and may someday be running for Northside High School right here on this track. Please focus your attention on the starting line, where the race is about to begin.”

At the starting line, the four runners are standing behind the starting blocks. The Starter announces, “on your marks.” Stepping in front of the blocks and getting into position, the four runners give the clear impression that, despite their age, they’ve done this a few times before. The Starter announces, “set,” and the four young kids show the audience that they know exactly what to do. The Starter fires the gun, and the four competitors run toward the starting line as if something big is at stake.

Eddie, Jr. takes the lead but, in this age group, one year makes a very big difference. Mark, Jr. is in second place, with his sister, Dawn, not relenting in the least. And Hunter, the youngest in the group, chases down Dawn. The crowd cheers as Eddie, Jr. crosses the finish line, taking first place. Mark, Jr. takes second place, with his sister taking third place. Hunter, not the least bit disappointed, crosses the finish line, and runs over to Braden and Wendy who give him a high-five.

Dr. Zunde announces, “while I am unaware of the record in the 100-meter dash for someone who is almost four years old, the winning time in this race is 17.4 seconds, which is a great accomplishment for someone of Eddie, Junior’s age group.” The crowd cheers, as Kathy walks out to the finish line telling her son, “that was your best run ever!” Eddie, Jr. replies, “I had to run really, really, really fast because lots of people are watching me.” Kathy tells Eddie, Jr., “you did really, really good!” Kathy gives Eddie, Jr. a high-five, and they take a seat with the rest of the group in the VIP section.

Dr. Zunde announces, “please now focus your attention on the shot-put pad, where Robert Bradshaw, who once held the world record in this event, will demonstrate to you how the shot-put is thrown.” Bobby B. picks up the shot-put, tossing it into the air a few times as if it were a softball. Stepping onto the shot-put pad, Bobby B. gets into position. Using the discus technique, Bobby B. goes into the spin and, letting out a

primal scream, hurls the shot-put with more force than anyone ever expected today. Soaring through the air, the shot-put lands beyond the 20-meter mark. The crowd cheers, as Bobby B. steps off the pad. The student Field Judges take the measurement, demonstrating yet another facet of track and field competition.

Receiving the measurement, Dr. Zunde proudly announces, "Robert Bradshaw's throw came in at 22.2 meters. If this were a high school meet, college meet, or international competition, Robert's throw here today would have easily taken the gold medal. Please lend a hand to Robert Bradshaw!" The crowd cheers, now knowing they've witnessed a world class throw today. What the crowd does not know is that Bobby B. poured a shot-put pad in his back yard, and practices quite regularly. Today's casual throw was not at all his best.

Bobby B. walks over to the hammer pad, and Dr. Zunde announces, "please now focus your attention on the hammer pad, where Robert Bradshaw, who just threw the shot-put, will now demonstrate to you how the hammer is thrown." Bobby B. picks up the hammer, swinging it around like it is a yo-yo. Stepping onto the pad, Bobby B. gets into position. Going into the spin, Bobby B. gains as much rotational velocity as he can. Letting out yet another primal scream, Bobby B. releases the hammer, which soars through the air, coming to its resting place just beyond the 75-meter mark. The crowd cheers, as Bobby B. waves to the crowd and steps off the pad.

A student assistant drives out to the field, driving a really cool electric golf cart, and retrieves the hammer. The golf cart, extensively modified from its original condition by Eddie, has been raised with a lift kit, fitted with a receiver hitch, and equipped with a 72-volt drive system, enabling it to attain a speed of 50 miles per hour. Once Eddie was finished with his modifications, Vinnie, at the body shop, gave the golf cart an awesome paint job. Wanting to recognize the student assistants, Dr. Zunde announces, "driving the golf cart out to the red zone to retrieve the hammer is Jenny Thompson, one of our high school's valued team assistants."

Once the hammer has been retrieved, Dr. Zunde announces, "please now focus your attention on the discus pad, where Katarina Karakova Bogenskaya is about to throw the discus. Kathy once threw the discus for Northside High School and for the State University where George Frazier is now the track coach." The six-foot tall, 185-pound discus girl is handed the discus and walks toward the discus pad. Kathy tosses her keys and the first medal she ever won in track and field onto the grass, and waves to the crowd. Seeing Kathy getting ready to throw, the crowd gets very quiet, not quite knowing what to expect from a woman throwing the discus.

Kathy waves to the crowd again as she steps onto the discus pad. Kathy goes into the wind up, and into the spin with form just as perfect as she had years ago. Kathy releases the discus, letting out a primal scream heard by everyone around. The crowd suddenly cheers when they see where Kathy's throw lands. The crowd is quite amazed that a woman can throw the discus that far.

During this trip to the red zone to retrieve the discus is a different student assistant driving the golf cart. Apparently, driving the golf cart is a cool thing to do among this group, so they take turns. Dr. Zunde announces, "driving the golf cart out to retrieve the discus from the red zone is Megan Reese, another one of our team assistants."

Waving to the crowd, Kathy walks off the discus pad shedding a tear that no one sees. Missing her competition years, Kathy thinks back to her fan club that came down from the stands following a meet to see her. Kathy also recalls accidentally hitting Mr. Crum with a discus that, at the time, seemed like a very serious issue. Today, Kathy laughs at that incident, taking it much less seriously than during her high school years. Walking back to the VIP seating area, Kathy sees Mitchell warming up for the one-mile run, which will occur immediately after the 400-meter dash.

With the events moving along very quickly, Dr. Zunde announces, "please focus your attention on the starting line, where Axel Braden will single-handedly take on the Northside High School's 400-meter team. Running for Northside High School is Bill Hoffman, Jason Osborne, Ray Jones, and Eddie Lee Washington." Dr. Zunde suspects Braden will win this race, but by how much is the question. Osborne, however, naively thinks he will beat Braden. Braden, the world record holder in this event, walks up to the starting line, waving to the crowd.

Arriving at the starting line, Braden quietly announces to his competition, "are you guys ready for your ass kicking?" Osborne, who has heard about Braden's pre-race antics from Johnson, confidently boasts, "yeah! We're ready to kick anyone's ass who steps on our track!" Complementing Osborne, Braden energetically replies, "that's real good! I like your attitude! Keep it up!" Braden suddenly gets serious, lowers his voice, and informs Osborne, "but, you got a big problem. You ain't got no track. Your track was hauled off to the county dump. This ain't your track yet." Blind sided by Braden's unusual greeting, Osborne is at a loss for words.

Osborne is saved by the bell when the Starter announces, "on your marks." Braden, standing behind the starting blocks, does a somersault in mid air and lands perfectly into the blocks. It is easy for anyone to conclude that Braden has practiced that move for quite a while. In fact, Braden perfected that move at his pool, where landing into the water will

not cause too much pain if he landed wrong as he developed the technique. Washington confidently whispers to Osborne, “he’s getting old. We’ll beat him.”

The Starter announces, “set,” and the runners get into the “set” position. Learning from Eddie years ago, Braden sees that the Starter has the gun to his side, not behind his back where it should be. Braden, seeing the Starter’s finger begin to move, leaves the blocks simultaneously with the firing of the gun. Osborne cannot believe how fast Braden was out of the blocks.

Nearly halfway into the first curve before the Northside runners even enter the curve, Braden clearly demonstrates that he is still the master of the track. From Washington’s perspective, he quickly realized that he grossly underestimated Braden’s ability, thinking that Braden is getting old. From Osborne’s perspective, Braden is embarrassing him, especially since Osborne’s girlfriend is in the stands watching.

As Braden crosses the 200-meter mark on the back straightaway, Mr. Frazier looks at his stopwatch, and exclaims, “he’s clocking! I clocked him at 22! He’s clocking! Watch this!” Mr. Frazier has good reason to be excited. A 22-second 200-meter split is on par with Braden’s world record time of 43.75 seconds. Four seconds later, Osborne, running a respectable race, crosses the 200-meter mark. The rest of the Northside team closely follows Osborne.

Along the back straightaway, Eddie Lee Washington passes Osborne, which is quite the surprise to Johnson. Last year, Osborne was Northside High School’s best at this event by a slim margin at a time when Washington was number three. Johnson rightly concludes that Washington has been doing a lot of training over the Summer. The four Northside runners fight it out along the back straightaway, but it doesn’t matter. Braden is already well into the second curve.

Coming out of the final curve, Braden is running as if a gold medal is at stake. Mr. Frazier again exclaims, “he’s clocking! Watch this!” Johnson, who already knows Braden’s current abilities, has his eyes on Washington, ready to record his time. Crossing the finish line, Braden takes first place, but no one really expected anything different, except, perhaps, the Northside team that is still on the track. In the upset of the day, Washington crosses second, with Osborne finishing in third place. Hoffman and Jones tie for fourth place. Braden receives a few high-fives, grabs a bottle of Gatorade, and takes a walk.

Mr. Frazier energetically announces, “I got 44.2 seconds! He was clocking! What else is on the clock? What do we got?” Mr. Frazier, to say the least, is quite impressed. Sounding just like Mr. Frazier, Johnson

exclaims, “I clocked Washington at 52.8!” With the indoor track season only four months away, Johnson is quite pleased with his team’s performance.

With the events moving along very quickly, Dr. Zunde announces, “please now focus your attention on the starting line, where Gary Mitchell will take on the Northside High School distance team in a one-mile run. For those of you who do not know, Gary Mitchell ran for Northside High School a decade ago, and later ran for the State University.” Although this is an exhibition event, Mitchell is taking this event very seriously, as this race is slated to be part of his documentary. David Hall, the superstar running for Northside High School, fully expects to beat the aging Mitchell, who is now 27 years old. But, what Hall does not know is that Mitchell has been extensively training since he left the University, and is a nationally ranked Marathon runner.

The Starter announces, “set.” Mitchell, who was granted the inside lane, gets into position. The gun is fired, and Mitchell takes off as if he is running a 100-meter dash. In the VIP section, Athena asks Kathy, “has Gary Mitchell been training?” Kathy replies, “oh, yeah! He never stopped.” Knowing that Kathy has great insight into how a race will turn out, Provost Leighton asks Kathy, “what do you see happening?” Kathy replies, “from what I hear, Hall is pretty good. But, Mitchell will beat him.” Athena observes, “you’re really that confident?” Kathy replies, “yeah. Mitchell has something to prove.” Athena curiously asks, “what would that be, if you don’t mind me asking?” Kathy explains, “Eddie, Mark, Johnson, Braden, and Bobby B. have all set world records. Mitchell, the only one in the group, hasn’t. Mitchell is after the record today.”

As Mitchell passes the starting line, Kathy looks down at her stopwatch, and tells Athena, “that was a 54-second 400-meter. Mitchell’s booking it.” Eight seconds later, Hall completes his first lap. Athena asks Kathy, “what is the world record in the mile, anyway?” Kathy, who looked it up last night, replies, “it’s 3:46.32.” Now watching the race closely, Athena is carefully studying how Mitchell runs, hoping to gain the same insight into the unseen strategy that Kathy has. Truth is, however, that Kathy’s ability to see how a race will unfold is more of a gift than analysis or logic. And, with Mitchell having only the clock as his competitor out there today, Athena will not learn much of Mitchell’s strategy.

At the half-mile mark, Mitchell delivers another 54-second quarter mile, surprising everyone. Hall, now trailing significantly, is confident that Mitchell will burn himself out. But, Hall, who has been taking the track and field class at the University, has been taught by Mr. Frazier to run his own race. If Hall were to keep pace with Mitchell, Hall would likely be the one to burn out and come in last place. Athena mentions to Kathy, “Mitchell has been running quite the pace.” Kathy confidently replies,

“he’s been running marathons and practicing his sprints. This is nothing for him.”

Now into his third lap, Mitchell enjoys a half-lap lead over Hall. Slowing his pace, Mitchell runs his third lap at about a 60-second pace. Hall recognizes Mitchell’s sudden change in speed, expecting him to falter during his last lap. But Mitchell, who has some sort of internal timing device in his brain, traverses the track with a pace consistent with a Swiss timepiece.

Mitchell enters his final lap. Mr. Frazier, who has two stopwatches running, gets out of his seat and exclaims, “he’s clocking! Can you believe this?” Mr. Frazier also has his eyes on Hall, who will be running for the University next year. So do Mr. Crumpler, Dr. Larry Gable, Dr. Nicholson, and Dr. Gregory, who all hope to pick Hall up for next year’s season. But the audience’s eyes are all on Mitchell, who has picked up the pace during his final lap.

Mitchell comes out of the final curve, sprinting toward the finish line. Looking at her stopwatch, Kathy exclaims, “he’s going for it! He’s going to break the record!” Kathy rushes to the finish line, followed by Athena, Mr. Frazier, and a few others. Mr. Frazier tells the Timekeepers, “somebody, catch his time! Get this on the clock!” Giving it all he has, Mitchell sprints to the finish line, which is about ten yards past the starting line. Mitchell crosses first, with four stopwatches documenting his performance today. Mitchell jogs off his run, knowing it was a very good one.

Wasting no time, Mr. Frazier compares the four stopwatches, all which tell the same story. But, the race is not over. Focusing back on the finish line, Mr. Frazier and Kathy, along with the Timekeepers, are ready to capture Hall’s time. Hall crosses second, with one of his better runs. But, the race is still not over. Over the next forty-five seconds, the remainder of the high school’s distance team crosses the finish line one by one.

Mitchell returns to the finish line, impatiently asking, “how did I do? What did I get?” Mr. Frazier, who doesn’t even hear what Mitchell asked, exclaims, “you broke the record! You ran a 3:45.1! You were clocking!” Coming back to reality, a smile comes across Mitchell’s face, who replies, “yes! Yes! Finally!” Mr. Frazier gives Mitchell a high-five, a pat on the back, and a victory hug. Returning to the VIP seating area, Mitchell is greeted with more high-fives, victory hugs, and fist bumps.

Dr. Zunde walks up to the podium, and announces, “may I have your attention please. It’s not every day that I get the opportunity to make an announcement like this. Gary Mitchell, who you just saw win the one-mile run with a time of 3:45.1, has just broken the world record in that event.

Please lend your hand in congratulating Gary on his awesome accomplishment here today.” The crowd cheers and claps, giving Mitchell a standing ovation. No one except, perhaps, Mitchell was expecting the record to be broken in the one-mile run today.

In the light of Mitchell unofficially breaking the world record, the exhibition must go on. Dr. Zunde announces, “please focus your attention once more to the starting line, where Edward Bogenskaya and Mark Svoboda will race in the 100-meter dash. They will be joined by Jason Osborne and Bill Hoffman, running for Northside High School.” At the starting line, the visitors, Eddie and Mark, have been granted lanes three and four. Hearing earlier that Eddie and Mark have kept up their training, Osborne and Hoffman do not expect to win, but they will certainly give it their best effort.

At the starting line, Hoffman and Osborne are very quiet, knowing that they are running against the world’s best. Eddie asks Hoffman and Osborne, “so, you guys are Johnson’s star sprinters?” Hoffman replies, “yeah.” Osborne replies, “I’m the star sprinter. Hoffman is the caboose.” Mark laughs, and tells Hoffman, “don’t take any of that shit from him.” Hoffman tells Mark, “he always messes with everyone.” Eddie laughs, and comments, “just like Mark used to.” Osborne, who was already up against Braden earlier, boasts, “I’m the master of messing, and I’m gonna keep you guessing!” Mark comments to Eddie, “he sounds more like Braden to me.” Eddie suggests to Osborne, “you should talk with Mark and Braden about messing with people before the race. They’re masters at that.”

Osborne wants to hear more, but the Starter announces, “on your marks,” shortly followed by “set.” The gun is fired and the runners are out of the blocks like a gold medal is at stake. Hoffman and Osborne quickly realize that the old guys are much more of a match than they ever expected. At 50 meters, Eddie and Mark are head to head. So are Hoffman and Osborne, who are five meters behind Eddie and Mark. At 75 meters, Eddie pulls slightly ahead of Mark. At the finish line, Eddie crosses first, and Mark second. Slightly less than one second later, Osborne edges out Hoffman by barely one meter, both very surprised that they got beaten so easily.

At the finish line, Johnson tells Osborne and Hoffman, “you guys were supposed to run, not walk.” Osborne exclaims, “those guys are fast!” Hoffman exclaims, “no shit!” The Timekeepers give the times to Johnson, who announces to the four runners, “Eddie, 10.1 seconds. Mark, probably 10.15 seconds. Osborne, 10.7 seconds. Hoffman, 10.75 seconds.” Stopwatches are only accurate to one tenth of a second and, since both Eddie’s and Mark’s times show 10.1 seconds, it is difficult to determine the exact time of either runner. Eddie and Mark shake hands with

Osborne and Hoffman, and they all head back to the VIP area with Johnson, where Dr. Zunde is preparing to make the next announcement.

After the race, Osborne asks Mark, “so, you’re the guy who’s famous for messing with everyone?” Before Mark can answer, Eddie replies, “that’s him. Mark Svoboda, in the flesh.” Osborne, who claimed to be the master of messing earlier, asks Mark, “does that shit really work?” Mark replies, “yeah. Of course it does. It works really good.” To Mark, Osborne does not appear very confident that distraction techniques work. Johnson tells Osborne, “someone got a master’s degree researching Mark’s distraction techniques. I got a copy of it in my office. You should check it out sometime.” Mark smiles, and tells Osborne, “I’ll show you later how good it works.” Osborne energetically replies, “good! I’m looking forward to it!” Mark grins, apparently having something up his sleeve.

Dr. Zunde announces, “Cindy Hayes, please come down from the stands and report to the starting line with your friends.” All excited, Cindy and her friends come down from the stands, ecstatic that they are going to get to run on the new track.

While Cindy and her friends are making her way to the starting line, Dr. Zunde announces, “Cindy and her classmates attend our middle school. In just a moment, they will be running a 100-meter dash. While we are waiting, I’ll make the next announcement. Following the girl’s 100-meter dash, the undefeated relay team of Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, Axel Braden, and Northside High School’s track coach, Eric Johnson, will be running a 4 by 400-meter relay. If you have followed track and field over the years, you may recall that this relay team broke the world record some years back. Their world record of 2:56.02 still stands today. They will be running against the high school’s 4 by 400-meter relay team, which is Bill Hoffman, Jason Osborne, Ray Jones, and Eddie Lee Washington. That’s one race you definitely won’t want to miss.”

Cindy and three of her friends arrive at the starting line, excited and ready to run. One of the Timekeepers hands Dr. Zunde a piece of paper with the names of the girls running in the next event. Dr. Zunde announces, “running in the next event, the 100-meter dash, is Cindy Hayes, Ellen Hunter, Jenny Floyd, and Tiffany Brannon. These four girls are on our middle school track team where Mr. Harris is the coach. And, from what I understand, these girls are all quite fast.” Paying close attention to Tiffany Brannon is Johnson, for next year she will be a freshman at the high school. Paying close attention to her performance today will be Tiffany, who knows her future coach will be watching her closely during this race.

The Starter announces, “on your marks,” and the four girls get into the blocks. The crowd is mostly quiet, except for a small group of middle

school students who cheer quite loudly. The Starter announces, “set,” and the girls get into the “set” position. The gun is fired, and the four girls are out to prove who is the fastest. Tiffany takes a quick lead, but she is the fastest girl in middle school this year. Running faster than she ever has, Cindy follows closely behind. Ellen and Jenny chase down Cindy in a fight to the finish watched closely by their coach, Mr. Harris. At the finish line, Tiffany crosses first, followed more closely by Cindy than anyone expected. As usual, Ellen and Jenny nearly tie, and argue over who beat whom at the finish line.

At the finish line, Mr. Harris exclaims, “good run! Good run!” Seeing only their effort, Mr. Harris is unaware of the girls’ times. The Timekeepers report to Mr. Harris that Tiffany ran a 12.1 and Cindy ran a 12.4. Ellen and Jenny appeared to tie at 12.8 seconds. All those times are great for middle school girls. But, that is to be expected, for they have all been training under Mr. Harris for several years.

As the girls exchange hugs, Mr. Harris tells them, “if you want, you guys can hang around here for the rest of the ceremony.” Speaking for the group, Tiffany energetically replies, “we’d love to!” Mr. Harris then instructs the girls, “pay very close attention to this next relay race, especially the transitions. This is what you can expect when you get to an advanced level.” Mr. Harris wants the girls to have a good, close-up view of what is expected to be a world class performance. The girls take a seat in the VIP section, now feeling very special.

On the track, the high school’s 4 by 400-meter relay team is getting ready to race Eddie and the wrecking crew. At the starting line, Eddie asks, “what order are we running in?” Mark shrugs his shoulders, and asks Johnson, “what leg does Osborne usually run?” Johnson replies, “he’s the second leg.” Mark tells the group, “I want to lead off.” Knowing that Mark usually leads off, Johnson suggests to the group, “why don’t we just run in our usual order?” Eddie replies, “that sounds good.”

Mark takes the baton and gets into lane one. Hoffman gets into lane two, wondering how fast Mark is at 400 meters. On the sidelines, Coach Johnson tells Osborne, Jones, and Washington, “you guys are on your own. Good luck. You’ll need it.” Johnson is clear that he will not be cutting his high school relay team any slack. And, Johnson appears to know something that his high school team does not.

The Starter announces, “on your marks.” Hoffman quickly gets into the blocks. Mark, taking his time, waves to the crowd, gaining applause as he lollygags toward the starting blocks. Mark positions himself into the blocks, tempted to ask Hoffman whether his blocks are set correctly. But, this race is an exhibition event, so Mark acts reasonably normal, at least for the moment. The Starter announces, “set,” and energy levels

rise. Mark, watching the Starter's finger, is waiting for any signs of motion. The gun is fired, and the runners are out of the blocks. Anticipating the gun, Mark procures an immediate one-step lead.

Mark, who has continued to train since his university days, takes a quick and substantial early lead over Hoffman. Athena mentions to Kathy, "it looks like Mark is taking this race very seriously." Kathy replies, "Eddie and the guys still take track seriously. They're not playing around." As Mark approaches the 200-meter mark, Kathy tells Athena, "that was a 22-second split!" Six seconds later, Hoffman crosses the 200-meter mark. Mark comes around the curve, where Johnson is on the track waiting for him. Athena watches carefully as Mark approaches the transition zone. Still flawless in the nonvisual-nonverbal exchange, Mark delivers the goods to Johnson.

Giving the distinct impression that something is drastically wrong, Mark quickly rushes back to the transition zone. As Hoffman approaches the transition zone, with a look of dire desperation on his face, Mark repeatedly points to Osborne's shoes as if there is some sort of problem. Osborne looks down, examining his shoes, wondering what could possibly be wrong. Mark then points to Hoffman, causing Osborne to realize he should have left a few seconds ago. Osborne takes off, receiving the baton with a horribly bungled transition that he is glad Coach Johnson did not see.

At the transition zone, Eddie asks Mark, "what was that all about?" Mark laughs, and explains, "when we ran the 100 earlier, he said he was the 'master of messing'. And, he asked if that shit really worked. I told him that I'd show him later. He said he was looking forward to it." Hearing the conversation, Braden comments, "it's a good thing for his ass that Johnson was halfway down the track. Johnson would have been all over his ass for falling for that shit."

Eddie announces, "it looks like I'm up." Eddie gets on the track, and Braden gets fired up. Johnson comes around the curve, and Braden starts ranting, "get down with the boogie!" Braden starts singing and dancing to the song Jungle Boogie, as he did on the track years ago while at the University. Johnson hands off to Eddie, demonstrating yet another flawless transition of the baton.

Braden steps onto the track, out of the way of Ray Jones, who is waiting for Osborne to arrive. Braden dances, exclaiming, "gonna kick an ass, and land it in the grass! The chief ass kicker's back, and ready to attack! Back on the track, so you better stand back! This race we're gonna win, and then I'm gonna grin!" Eddie Lee Washington, the high school's anchorman and now their best 400-meter man, is secretly studying Braden, getting a few ideas for himself for when the track season

starts. Osborne delivers the baton to Jones, who has a lot of ground to make up.

Back in the VIP section, Kathy exclaims, “they might just do it!” Athena asks, “do what?” Kathy replies, “they really wanted to break three minutes out here today! And, they’re going to do it!” Kathy stands up, watching Eddie as he sprints out of the final curve. Eddie hands off to Braden, and Kathy jumps up and down, exclaiming, “two minutes and eleven seconds! They’re going for it!” Athena, now knowing why Kathy is so excited, also stands up, and follows Kathy to the finish line.

Mr. Frazier, who stood up and walked to the finish line earlier, and Johnson watch closely as Braden circles the track like a machine. Mr. Frazier’s excitement rises as Braden enters the back straightaway. Looking at his stopwatch as Braden crosses the 200-meter mark, Mr. Frazier exclaims, “get as many watches as we can on him! He’s clocking!” Braden tears up the track coming out of the final curve, delivering exactly what he promised a minute earlier. Eddie Lee Washington, who just received the baton from Jones, can’t believe what he is seeing. When Washington is about 100 meters down the track, Braden crosses the finish line. Five stopwatches document the still undefeated relay team’s time.

Wasting no time, Mr. Frazier asks Kathy, “what do you got?” Kathy yells out, “I got a 2:55.7! They did it!” Eddie, Mark, and Johnson exchange high-fives, fist bumps, and victory hugs. Kathy jumps up onto Eddie’s hips, telling him, “you guys broke your old record!” The relay team’s accomplishment finally sinks into Eddie’s head, who thought the celebration was for breaking three minutes. Mr. Frazier, totally ecstatic, exclaims, “these guys did it! They broke their own record! They were clocking! Can anyone believe it?”

The celebration calms down for a moment as Eddie Lee Washington approaches the finish line. Crossing the finish line with a time of 3:38.3, the high school team certainly had their work cut out for them. Eddie and his crew give the high school relay team high-fives and fist bumps, encouraging them to keep up the good work. Although the high school team got beat, they are very happy that they got to run with the world record holders in their event. It’s one race they’ll all remember for the rest of their lives.

On the walk back to the VIP seating area, the energy level rises tremendously but, as in most high school track meets, the 4 by 400-meter relay is the last event. Dr. Zunde announces, “I certainly wasn’t expecting to make this announcement today either. The 4 by 400-meter undefeated relay team of Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, Axel Braden, and Eric Johnson have just broken the world record that they, themselves, set five

years ago, running the 4 by 400-meter relay in 2:55.7. Please join me in congratulating these amazing guys.” Dr. Zunde claps, and the spectators clap and cheer, never expecting to see the level of performance they have seen today. The undefeated relay team waves to the crowd, glad to see that the training they’ve been doing over the years has paid off.

At the VIP seating area, Dr. Zunde mentions to Mr. Frazier, “I sure wish we had used the electronic timers. I certainly was not expecting to see two records broken today.” Mr. Frazier replies, “me either. These guys are every bit as good, if not better, than when they ran for the University.” Dr. Zunde observes, in the understatement of the day, “they have definitely been training.”

With the planned events now over, Dr. Brooks returns to the podium, announcing, “this certainly has been a day to remember! What an awesome inaugural this day has been, with two unofficial world records set here today! I sincerely hope that all of you had a wonderful morning. Our special guests today, seated to my right, will stay around following today’s program. Please come down and take the opportunity to meet them before you leave. And, please stop by and meet our high school’s track team, who are seated on the team bench to my far right. Again, I thank all of you for taking time out of your schedule to join us on this very special day.” Dr. Brooks steps down from the podium, and today’s ceremony comes to a close.

After the ceremony, many of the guests head home. Those guests who are more interested in track and field take Dr. Brooks up on her invitation to meet those playing a part in today’s program. Before the crowd descends upon the group, Dr. Brooks walks up to Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, and Bobby B. to personally congratulate them. The high school track team walks over from the team bench, all wanting to meet today’s special guests.

Mark mentions to Dr. Brooks, “you forgot part of the ceremony.” Paula quickly tells Mark, “that wasn’t part of today’s program, and you know it!” Dr. Brooks asks, “am I missing something here?” Paula replies, “I had absolutely nothing to do with it.” Mark replies, claiming, “I take full responsibility.” Eddie laughs, prompting Dr. Brooks to ask, “what have you guys done?” Mark replies, “when we built the new dumpster enclosure for the administration building, we put a plaque on the side of it.” Knowing this is going to be funny, Dr. Brooks smiles, and asks, “and, just what does this plaque say?” Mark replies, “it reads,

Welcome to the Maurice Crum  
Honorary Dumpster  
One Man’s Trash is Another Man’s Treasure

We had that made when we were working on the track a while ago.” Dr. Brooks laughs, and exclaims, “I’ll have to stop and take a look at that on my way out!”

The first of the college track coaches out of the stands is Dr. Larry Gable, who makes a beeline toward David Hall. Announcing his entry, Dr. Gable asks Hall, “are you David Hall?” With a typical high school answer, Hall replies, “that’s me! The one and only.” Hall apparently knows he is good. So does Dr. Gable. Dr. Gable tells Hall, “if you have a moment, I’d like to speak with you about running for my university.” Hall bluntly tells Dr. Gable, “I’m running for State. They gave me a good deal. So, I’m going for it.”

Not taking ‘no’ for an answer, Dr. Gable tells Hall, “we can certainly match any deal that they’ve given you.” Hall confidently replies, “yeah. But you ain’t got Mr. Frazier or Dr. Leighton. I’m running for them.” Hall apparently knows who can best further his track career. Hitting a brick wall, Dr. Gable tries a few more angles attempting to get Hall to change his mind, but to no avail. Walking away sorely disappointed, Dr. Gable now has a better understanding of why Mr. Frazier and the University win all the time, and he does not.

Recalling that Mr. Frazier mentioned that, when David Hall was a freshman, he ran somewhere on the order of a six-minute mile and is now close to breaking four minutes, Dr. Nicholson approaches Barbara, hoping to get some answers of how that was accomplished. Introducing himself, Dr. Nicholson rudely interrupts Barbara, who is talking with Cindy Hayes and the girls from middle school, announcing, “I’m Dr. Nicholson, from.” Not allowing Dr. Nicholson to finish his introduction, Barbara kindly replies, “I know who you are. I’m in the middle of something very important right now. I’m sorry, but it will have to wait.” Dr. Nicholson, with his conceited attitude, somehow believes that what he has to discuss with Barbara is far more important than Barbara’s discussion with the middle school girls. Dr. Nicholson walks away, and will look for an opportunity to talk with Barbara later.

Walking out into the red zone by himself, Mr. Frazier takes a look at the new track and field venue. A vast improvement over the old gravel track, the new venue is on par with the best tracks in the world. Mr. Frazier is happy for Johnson, who will be now better equipped to prepare his team for advanced competition when they graduate. Walking out to the 65-meter mark in the red zone, Mr. Frazier looks back toward the launching zone for the field implements, recalling that Eddie consistently threw the discus this distance.

Seeing Mr. Frazier alone, Athena walks out to the red zone. Walking up to Mr. Frazier, Athena asks, “George, what are you doing out here all

by yourself?" George replies, "Athena, they dedicated this track to me. I don't deserve this. They're the winners. Not me. The best I ever did was to come in fourth place." Athena reassures George, "if it wasn't for you, George, none of this would have been possible. If one man has ever made a difference in this sport, it's you. The men and women you've coached over the years all know that." George confesses, "I thought it was over for Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson. And, look what they did today! They broke their old record!"

Barely able to get the words out, George explains, "and, look at Mitchell. All during his stay at the University, Mitchell was after the world record in anything he could get his hands on. He was always coming up just a little short. Today, he gets out there and smashes the world record in the mile." Showing some emotion, George reiterates, "Mitchell not only broke the world record, Athena. He destroyed it!" Athena quickly realizes that George clearly sees something that no one else has observed today.

George tells Athena, "Athena, I came out here to see where Kathy's discus landed. They never took a measurement." Pointing to the ground, George tells Athena, "there's the divot, right there, at about 69 meters. That's somewhere around five meters off the women's world record. Not only that, Athena, Kathy's throw was dead center, right down the middle of the red zone!" Astonished, Athena exclaims, "I see that now! No one throws the discus that far and accurately unless they've been practicing!" Mr. Frazier confirms, "she's been practicing. You can be sure of it."

George tells Athena, "Bobby B's. shot-put throw was just past 21 meters. That's one and a half meters off the world record for a casual Saturday morning throw. Athena, these guys are up to something. I can see it. They've all been training, and training hard." Athena replies, "I see that. The performance we saw out here today, George, would easily take the gold medal in any of our divisional meets."

Athena asks, "have you found the divot for Bobby B's. hammer throw?" Mr. Frazier replies, "yes. He threw the hammer about 76 meters. That's also not a bad throw for a Saturday morning." Looking back at the launching zone roughly 250 feet away, Athena reaffirms George's suspicion, telling him, "I see what you mean, George. Bobby B's. hammer throw would have taken the gold medal at the divisional meet last year. Not only that, if I am not mistaken, his shot-put and hammer throw would be qualifying distances for the Olympic tryouts." Mr. Frazier replies, "they would be, Athena. Just like Kathy's discus throw."

As they walk back to the VIP seating area where many people are still congregated, Athena suggests, "perhaps, George, they have their eyes on the next Olympics. That's only about three years away." George replies, "I don't know. I just don't know, Athena. I can only imagine what would

have happened if they had some serious competition out here today.” Athena points out, “I can’t see why anyone would keep their training up to that level unless they plan to compete.” George replies, “I agree.” Arriving back at the VIP seating area, Mr. Frazier and Dr. Leighton suddenly find themselves inundated with people who want to speak with them.

While Mr. Frazier and Athena were out in the red zone, Kathy has been reunited with one member of her fan club from her high school days. Now twenty years old, Melissa was nine years old when Kathy was a senior in high school. As Kathy and Melissa talk, Melissa tells her story, “I so remember when I was in elementary school. My dad drove me around town one Saturday morning when my mom was setting up the house for my surprise birthday party. My dad said to me, ‘let’s go see what’s going on at the high school.’ So, we drove in and watched the track meet for a while. And, I saw you throw the discus. I was seriously impressed! After that, I made my dad take me to every track meet that year. And, I was so sad when you weren’t there the next year. Okay, so, anyway, that year, I told my dad I wanted a discus for my birthday. So, for my birthday, my dad gave me an IOU for a discus. He managed to find one for me a few weeks later.”

Kathy asks, “are you still throwing?” Melissa, who is never at a loss for words, replies, “I sure am! I’m throwing for the University of Florida. I leave Monday to go back to school. I am so glad I ran into you again today! And, by the way, your throw earlier was fantastic!” Kathy replies, “thank you. I’m still throwing a lot,” then asks Melissa, “did you want to take a throw?” Suddenly excited, Melissa replies, “sure! I’d love to!” Kathy walks over and asks Johnson for the discus, who tells her it is lying on the ground under the VIP seats. Cindy Hayes asks Kathy, “are you going to throw the discus?” Kathy replies, “I’m not. Melissa is, though. Did you want to come and watch?” Cindy, speaking for herself and her friends, replies, “yeah!”

At the discus pad, Kathy tells Melissa, “go for it! Show your new fan club what you can do!” Melissa gets onto the discus pad, knowing that her performance is being closely watched. Going into the wind up, and into the spin, Melissa releases the discus, which soars high through the air. The discus comes to its resting spot at about the 50-meter mark. The middle school girls cheer, happy to have the privilege of seeing the discus thrown from up close. Kathy, Melissa, Cindy, and her friends all go out together to retrieve the discus.

When they return, Melissa inquires of Kathy, “okay, so, tell me what you thought. And, you don’t have to be nice. If I was doing something wrong, I definitely want to know about it.” Cindy listens carefully as Kathy explains to Melissa, “if your release angle was a little lower, like 40 to 42

degrees, the discus would go farther. If I had to guess, your release angle was slightly over 45 degrees.” Melissa replies, “really? One of the guy discus throwers told me that 45 degrees is the optimal release angle.” Kathy explains, “no, hon. That’s only true in a vacuum. At your distance, slightly more than 40 degrees will get you a lot farther. Go ahead and give it another try. But, release it at a slightly lower angle this time.”

Melissa gets onto the discus pad again, reminding herself to release the discus at a lower angle. Going into the wind up, and into the spin, Melissa releases the discus, which soars through the air at an angle lower than her first attempt. The discus comes to its resting spot slightly beyond the 55-meter mark. Kathy, Melissa, Cindy, and her friends all go out again to retrieve the discus. Finding the discus at 57 meters out, Melissa tells Kathy, “wow! You were right!” Kathy smiles, knowing that she was right. And, Cindy, who aspires to throw the discus someday, learned something today.

When they return to the discus pad, Kathy asks Melissa, “did you have Miss Amherst for physics?” Melissa replies, “no. That was the year she had her baby.” Kathy explains, “Miss Amherst always went over the optimal release angles for the field implements during physics class.” Kathy and Melissa talk more about track and field, as they teach Cindy and her middle school friends how to properly throw the discus.

Meanwhile, off to the side, Mitchell is interviewing Barbara on camera, creating footage for the documentary he is producing on track and field. Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson stand by and watch, as they will be interviewed by Mitchell next. Bobby B., who has already been interviewed by Mitchell, is 50 feet away, showing off his shot-put skills to a few guys on the high school track team who are interested.

Disrupting the interview, Dr. Nicholson, accompanied by Todd McCutchen, walks up, asking Barbara, “is this a good time to talk?” A bit peeved, Barbara replies, “it certainly is not! We’re filming!” Seeing that Barbara is ticked off, Mark, standing off to the side, yells out to Dr. Nicholson, “hey, junior! What are you? Some sort of idiot?” Turning around, and immediately recognizing Mark, Dr. Nicholson exclaims, “hey! Shut up!” McCutchen tells Dr. Nicholson, “those guys are a bunch of idiots.” Now realizing exactly who is disrupting Mitchell’s work, Mark yells out, exclaiming, “hey! Check it out! It’s the Dogpatch University clown crew!”

Angela Meadows yells out to her film crew, “keep rolling! Maybe we can use this somehow.” Mark stands in front of the camera, announcing, “this is Mark Svoboda, here at the dedication of the new Northside High School track. With me now is Dr. Nickeldick and Todd McCutchen.” Mark then points to McCutchen, and exclaims, “Todd McCutchen, here, got

bitten by a Prickly Sea Spider ten years ago. The bite has gone full circle! McCrutchen's brain is now all rotted away! It's mush, I tell you! All mush!" McCutchen yells out at Mark, "hey! Shut up, asshole!" Looking into the camera, Mark announces, "as you can tell, since his Prickly Sea Spider bite, McCrutchen hasn't been able to handle stress at all. He's falling apart physically and mentally!"

Dr. Nicholson advises McCutchen, "just ignore him." Looking into the camera and messing around, Mark replies, "yes, everybody! You heard it right out of the horse's ass himself, Dr. Nickeldick. Just ignore me! Ignore me when I say that Dr. Nickeldick, from Dogpatch University, fixes races because he's involved with organized gambling. Ignore me when I say that Dr. Nickeldick steals binoculars, cameras, and microphones, then uses them to spy on other teams so he can set the odds better. Ignore me when I say that Dr. Nickeldick sends McCrutchen over to the State University to steal our performance records and spy on our team. And, boys and girls, since Dean Grimsby, Mr. Crum, and Crum's rich uncle are out of the picture, Dr. Nickeldick is now the head of the gambling ring! You heard me right! Nickeldick is the top dog running the Dogpatch University gambling ring! Yeah, just ignore me! Ignore the truth!" Dr. Nicholson's blood suddenly begins to boil, suggesting that Mark, who is only playfully messing around, has spoken the hard and fast truth.

Losing his composure, Dr. Nicholson rushes Mark, intending to tackle him. Quick on his feet, Mark evades Dr. Nicholson's attack, who lands hard on the ground. Mark again looks into the camera, and announces, "could it be, ladies and gentlemen, that Dr. Nickeldick got bitten by a Prickly Sea Spider too? Dr. Nickeldick is losing it! He's going to crack!" McCutchen again yells out at Mark, "hey! Shut up already!"

Mark asks the camera operator, "can we get a close-in shot of Todd McCrutchen?" The camera operator obliges, but McCrutchen attempts to evade being on camera. The camera again focuses on Mark, who announces, "McCrutchen, here, began his criminal career years ago by crashing my wedding. Then, McCrutchen moved on to planting steroids in Eddie's locker and my locker when we ran for the University. Then, when that didn't work, McCrutchen planted pot in a few of our Dune Buggies. Then, Todd McCutchen started to work for Dr. Nickeldick, and broke into the State University, and tried to steal our performance records! And then, McCrutchen tried to steal Tessa's Dune Buggy! And now, McCrutchen is Dr. Nickeldick's left-hand man in the gambling ring!" McCutchen moves in to attack Mark, but Mark evades his every move, announcing, "McCrutchen's going crazy! I'm telling you. It's the Prickly Sea Spider bite! His brain has turned to mush! Mush, I say! Mush! Just look at him!"

Dr. Nicholson stands up and, reaching into his jacket, pulls out a gun. Those who are standing around react and, in shock, some run for cover. Johnson runs to the storage building, where he uses the telephone to call the police. Braden, who has been watching the entertainment, acts quickly and rushes Dr. Nicholson. Quickly disarming Dr. Nicholson, Braden tackles the would-be shooter, making sure he hits the ground with enough force to severely injure or break something. During the action, Mark gets down on the ground as if he is officiating a wrestling match. Pointing to Braden, Mark raises his right hand into the air, holding up two fingers, signifying a two point takedown. Searching Dr. Nicholson for more weapons, Braden exclaims, "whoever your fat ass is, it's under arrest!"

Joining in on the action is McCutchen, who rushes Braden. Attempting to shove Braden off of Dr. Nicholson, McCutchen is tossed off to the side by Mark like a rag doll. Mark looks into the camera, giving the football hand signal for illegal motion. McCutchen again attempts to rush Braden, but Eddie steps in, detaining McCutchen. McCutchen, however, is kicking and attempting to bite Eddie. Kicking McCutchen's ankles out from under him, Eddie shoves McCutchen to the ground. Grabbing McCutchen by his ankles, Eddie plans to try McCutchen out as a hammer. McCutchen threatens Eddie, firmly telling him, "this time, you asshole, I'm getting you back once and for all! You're going to pay!" As the camera focuses on Eddie, Mark, knowing exactly what is going to happen, announces, "here we go, ladies and gentlemen. You are about to see a demonstration of the hammer!"

Firmly holding McCutchen's ankles, Eddie goes into the spin, building up good momentum. With all eyes and a video camera on Eddie, Eddie releases McCutchen, who soars through the air. Still playing around, Mark announces, "with a throw using the 130-pound hammer, Eddie has set the world record here today! And, check it out! The hammer got damaged during the throw! The hammer will definitely have to be sent back to the factory to be repaired!" Hoffer yells out to Mark, "that hammer was damaged a long time ago!"

As the camera operator now focuses back to Braden and Dr. Nicholson, Mark continues to call the play by play, exclaiming, "you got to watch out, people! This is what happens when you get bit by a Prickly Sea Spider! I'm telling you! The brain turns to mush! The adrenal glands turn to mush! The tendons turn to mush! Everything turns to mush!"

Braden, now having Dr. Nicholson restrained in an arm lock, asks him, "are you gonna tell me what you were gonna do with that gun?" Dr. Nicholson exclaims, "let me go! You're hurting me!" Braden tells Dr. Nicholson, "I ain't begun to hurt your ass yet, junior." Braden tightens the arm lock, causing Dr. Nicholson to scream out in pain.

Captain Hayes, who was headed to his car, runs over, asking Braden, "what do we got going on here?" Braden replies, "this guy, whoever he is, tried to attack Mark. But, that's not the problem. He pulled a gun, and it looked like to me he was gonna use it." Now alarmed, Captain Hayes asks, "where is this gun now?" Pointing toward the shot-put pad, Braden replies, "it's over there, laying on the ground. Johnson's guarding the gun." Captain Hayes instructs Braden, "keep him detained until I can get a uniform officer out here." Johnson tells Captain Hayes, "I called them from the storage building. They're on their way."

Captain Hayes asks Dr. Nicholson, "you! What's your name?" Dr. Nicholson replies, "and, just who are you?" Displaying his badge, Captain Hayes replies, "I am Captain Richard Hayes, seventh precinct. Now, I am going to ask you one more time. What is your name?" Dr. Nicholson replies, "Dr. James Nicholson. I demand to be let go!" Captain Hayes firmly replies, "with a gun on the ground that will not be touched until a uniform officer gets here, you will remain detained. Deal with it." Braden informs Dr. Nicholson, "just like I told you, your fat ass ain't going nowhere, junior."

Meanwhile, as Captain Hayes and Braden detain Dr. Nicholson, McCutchen remains motionless on the ground. Barbara goes out to check on McCutchen, finding that he is still alive and conscious. Barbara tries to check McCutchen's vital signs, but McCutchen pulls himself away. McCutchen, by fighting Barbara, is suggestive enough that he is not too severely injured.

Officer Wilson arrives, and is briefed as to what the problem is by Captain Hayes. Officer Wilson places Dr. Nicholson in handcuffs, and arrests him. Now that Dr. Nicholson is properly restrained, Officer Wilson bags the evidence, a gun that Dr. Nicholson claims was removed from his person by Braden, and tossed aside. Insisting that he never drew his weapon, Dr. Nicholson forgets that the film crew was recording his every move.

Once Dr. Nicholson is taken into custody by Officer Wilson, Captain Hayes advises Braden, "if the gun wasn't an issue, I would have had you release this character under the advisement that he'd better not move. If he decided to run, it gives good reason to take him down again. And, I'm talking about a hard takedown." Braden, who is quite good at hard take downs, smiles and replies, "got it."

Before Dr. Nicholson is taken away, in a pleasant tone of voice, Dr. Leighton inquires of him, "Dr. Nicholson, if my recollection is correct, I believe you had some questions regarding the funding of this track. I do hope, sir, that all your questions were satisfactorily answered today." Quite embarrassed by his behavior, Dr. Nicholson is silent. Mr. Frazier

yells out to Dr. Nicholson, “hey, Jim! Thanks for coming out! I hope you enjoyed your day!” Dr. Nicholson is taken away, leaving many wondering why the Dogpatch University track coach badly lost his composure today.

With Dr. Nicholson gone, the question remains what to do with Todd McCutchen. McCutchen, voicing his opinion, exclaims, “I want Eddie arrested!” Captain Hayes asks McCutchen, “what are the charges?” McCutchen exclaims, “he assaulted me!” Eddie tells Captain Hayes, “then, I want McCutchen arrested.” Captain Hayes asks Eddie, “and, what are your charges?” Eddie explains, “when Braden was disarming Dr. Nicholson, McCutchen attacked Braden. Mark threw McCutchen off of Braden, but McCutchen attacked Braden again. So, I pulled McCutchen off of Braden, and detained him. Then, McCutchen started to kick me and tried to bite me. So, I tried him out as a hammer.” McCutchen exclaims, “he’s lying! He’s making it up!” Eddie calmly replies, “McCutchen is full of shit, as usual. It’s all on camera. They were filming it.”

Suddenly, McCutchen looks very worried. Adding fuel to the fire, Captain Hayes asks McCutchen, “Todd McCutchen, are you aware that Axel Braden is an officer of the law?” McCutchen replies, “yeah. But this isn’t the college!” Captain Hayes informs McCutchen, “that doesn’t matter. You interfered with an officer doing his duty of upholding the law. And, if you initiated the confrontation, what happens to you after that is your problem. I could arrest you right now.” Hearing Captain Hayes’ remarks, McCutchen bolts out. Mark comments, “wow! I’ve never seen McCutchen run that fast.” Seeing Captain Hayes idle, Braden asks, “do you want me to chase his ass down?” Captain Hayes replies, “no. We can always pick him up later. It’s this other character that I’m more concerned about.”

Mr. Frazier reminds Captain Hayes, “Nicholson is the guy that you were never able to link to the gambling ring years ago. But, we suspected he was involved somehow, since he was always spying on our team.” Mark comments, “that guy really lost it when I said something like, ‘boys and girls, since Dean Grimsby and Mr. Crum are out of the picture, Dr. Nickeldick is now the head of the gambling ring.’ He really went psycho after that.” Captain Hayes sighs, and replies, “this incidence of assault and brandishing a weapon is going to open a big can of worms. I can see it coming a mile away.”

Officer Hayes informs Angela Meadows, “I’m going to need a copy of any video evidence you have.” Angela replies, “no problem. We captured the whole thing on tape.” The cameraman points to Mark, and comments, “that guy was awesome on camera. We might have a job for him.” Paula tells the cameraman, “only if it’s comedy. You’re not getting Mark to act serious in front of a camera.” The cameraman replies, “I saw that.”

Captain Hayes asks Mark, “so, you were just messing around? And, you weren’t being serious?” Mark replies, “yeah. I was just playing around and messing with them.” Captain Hayes tells Mark, “if that character went off the deep end like that, you must have really hit a nerve. Now, I really want to see this video.” Angela reassures Captain Hayes, “I will definitely get it to you.”

With most everyone gone, Mark comments, “well, today didn’t go exactly as planned.” Dr. Leighton points out, “I can just imagine what would have happened if Dr. Nicholson lost it during a meet. We could have had a mass shooter on our hands.” Mr. Frazier replies, “at least everyone is safe. And, as a side benefit, we got another gambler out of the way.”

Johnson and his student assistants finish putting away the field implements and starting blocks. Now a few minutes after noon, Kathy asks, “now what?” Paula looks at Kathy, and asks, “do you really have to ask, girl?” Dawn whispers to her mother, “it’s Saturday. Does this mean we get pizza now?” Paula replies, “yeah. We’re going to get pizza now.” Dawn jumps up and down and claps, exclaiming, “pizza!” The tribe, Mr. Frazier, Dr. Leighton, Dr. Brooks, and many other invited guests head to the pizzeria, where they will enjoy a peaceful lunch.