

Eddie, The Collegiate Freshman

Chapter Nine Summer Break

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Now that Summer has arrived, Eddie decides to take a trip to Vito's Bicycle Shop. Wanting a multi-speed bicycle, Eddie is hopeful that Vito can provide a few good options. Walking into Vito's shop, Eddie yells out, "hey, Vito! How have you been?" Vito replies, "great! And, business has been good!" After catching up, Vito asks, "so, what can I help you with today?" Eddie explains, "I want a multi-speed bicycle. But, I only want like five speeds." Vito asks, "why only five?" Eddie explains, "I'm changing my training. I don't really need all the other gears."

Vito, knowing his inventory down to the last valve cap and spoke nipple, tells Eddie, "I think I have what you're looking for." Going to the back of the shop, Vito returns with a highly modified track bicycle. Vito explains to Eddie, "I built this bicycle from the ground up. It has a five-speed rear hub, road tires, front and rear brakes, and comes in at twenty pounds." Eddie examines the workmanship carefully, never seeing a bicycle quite like it before. Vito further explains, "the Sturmey Archer five speed hub is really nice. The gears are internal, and don't need a lot of maintenance." Eddie asks, "can I take it for a ride?" Vito replies, "sure. Tell me what you think." Eddie takes the bicycle out for a ride, wondering how it compares to his track bicycle.

When Eddie returns, Vito asks, "so, what do you think?" Confident that he wants the bicycle, Eddie replies, "I'll take it." Vito replies, "are you sure?" Eddie replies, "yeah. I'll take it. And, let me get two spare tubes." Vito heads to the cash register, and writes up Eddie's purchase. Vito tells Eddie, "that will be six-hundred-fifty dollars, with the tax." Eddie gives Vito a funny look but, before Eddie can respond, Vito tells Eddie, "I'm only kidding! I'm not going to get myself into that mess again." Vito tells Eddie the real price, and Eddie makes the purchase.

The challenge of the day for Eddie is to get his new bicycle in his MGB, which he manages to do once the top is down. Driving home slowly, Eddie contemplates other ways to modify his workouts to improve his performance on the track. Using the low gears, the plan is to pedal as fast as possible, developing speed. And, using the high gears, the plan is to make the ride as difficult as possible, developing strength.

When he returns home from Vito's, Eddie has some good news on his doorstep or, more specifically, in the mail. The rezoning for the property he bought on Second Street has been approved. He has been granted a demolition permit for the four houses, and is now ready to knock them down. After hearing the good news, Eddie has a few 30-yard dumpsters delivered to the property, so the trash from the demolition can be hauled off. With each house being approximately 1,200 square feet, they should fit nicely into the dumpsters. Eddie also has Mr. Crum's worthless Volkswagen Beetle, which still needs to have the engine rebuilt, impounded.

On a Monday morning, Mark drives down Second Street with a bulldozer, equipped with a backhoe, on a trailer. Eddie, Kathy, and Paula are already there, waiting for him. As Mark pulls off the road, Kathy exclaims, "woo-hoo! Here we go!" As Mark gets out of the truck, Kathy asks, "which one is first?" Eddie replies, "how about Mr. Crum's house. We can all take a few hits at it with the backhoe." Mark removes the bulldozer from the trailer, as Eddie, Kathy, and Paula formulate a plan.

Ready to go, Mark asks Eddie, "where do we start, boss?" Eddie points to Mr. Crum's house, and Mark drives the bulldozer in that direction. Mark asks Kathy, "so, you wanted to knock Crum's house down?" Kathy energetically replies, "yeah, man! How does this thing work?" Giving everyone instruction, Mark explains the controls, and how to operate the bulldozer and backhoe. Everyone tries the controls a few times, quickly getting the hang of it.

Kathy gets in the bulldozer and, as Mark is instructing her, raises the backhoe bucket high in the air. As she is driving toward Mr. Crum's house, Mark tells Kathy exactly when to stop. Mark then instructs her to lower the backhoe. Kathy pulls the lever, putting the backhoe into motion. The backhoe bucket crashes through the roof of Mr. Crum's house, through the wall, tearing the structure apart. Mark tells Kathy exactly when to release the lever.

Mark then instructs Kathy to gently press on the two directional controls, but in opposite directions. This will turn the bulldozer in place. Kathy turns the bulldozer. The backhoe bucket effortlessly rips through Mr. Crum's house, tearing the wall down, and exposing the inside of the house. Kathy screams out, "woo-hoo!" Following Mark's instruction,

Kathy quickly gets the hang of it and, in fifteen minutes, levels Mr. Crum's house to the ground.

Having enough for a while, Kathy lets Mark finish the job. Mark gets behind the controls, and quickly tidies up the demolition, dumping the structure, and Mr. Crum's possessions, into a dumpster. As Mark cleans up the lot, Eddie is impressed with how fast Mark works. Eddie walks over to the next house, and peeks through the windows. Seeing nothing inside of value, Eddie and his wrecking crew move on to the other three houses. Just looking at the state of disrepair, Eddie concludes these houses haven't been occupied in a very long time.

As noon approaches, Kathy and Paula head out to get some carry out pizza. While they are gone, Eddie and Mark demolish another house, dumping it into one of the dumpsters. After building his and Paula's house, Mark has gotten very skilled at operating a bulldozer and a few other pieces of heavy equipment.

Taking a break, as they wait for Kathy and Paula to return with lunch, Eddie mentions to Mark, "this place is beginning to look pretty good." Mark replies, "it cleaned up really nicely. Once I grade the lots, it will look really good." Kathy and Paula return with the pizza, and everyone breaks for lunch.

By the end of the day, all four houses are gone. Everyone got their chance at driving the bulldozer, and knocking down the houses. Four pizzas, a few quarts of Gatorade, and a lot of water have been consumed throughout the day. Mark tells Eddie that he will come back tomorrow morning, and clean up the lots, and grade them. But, for now, they all call it a day.

The next day, after work, Eddie heads back to the property on Second Street to see how Mark is coming along. When Eddie pulls up, Mark is loading the bulldozer back onto the trailer. Seeing Eddie, Mark yells out, "so, what do you think?" Mark has cleaned up each lot, graded them so they are slightly pitched toward the road, and ready to use. Eddie replies, "it looks awesome, bro! You did a great job!"

As Eddie helps Mark secure the bulldozer onto the trailer, Mark asks, "so, what's next?" Eddie explains, "I thought about this when I was at work today. I'm thinking we should install a fence around the property. That will keep your dad's trailers safe. And, my dad could store his trailer and his equipment here too." Mark asks, "do you want a fence, or a wall?" Thinking about this, Eddie replies, "how about a wall on three sides, and a two-foot high wall, with an iron fence, along the road. A layer of gravel on the inside would be nice too. And, we can do the same on the other side of the street." Mark asks, "when do you want me to start?" Eddie replies,

“whenever you can fit it in.” Mark informs Eddie, “I can start tomorrow.” Eddie instructs Mark, “go for it.”

Now that Eddie has acquired the four properties on Second Street, and the dilapidated houses have been removed, Eddie can get moving on the storage lot he envisioned a while ago. The storage lot will open up the opportunity for Mark, Mark’s father, Eddie, and Eddie’s father to store construction vehicles and materials.

Summer also brings the annual 100-yard freestyle rematch between Tessa and Eddie. It’s no secret that Tessa will have a distinct advantage this year. Eddie has been focusing on track, and his times on the track show it. Tessa has been focusing on swimming, and her times in the pool show it. But, it’s really no longer about the competition. The Summer rematch is a time where the whole group can catch up.

As the morning moves on, everyone arrives, usually two at a time. Toward mid morning, there are six matching Dune Buggies in the parking lot. John has been enjoying driving his Dune Buggy, and arrives today with Anne. Eddie, who still has three Dune Buggy frames sitting in his garage, wonders if anyone else will want a Dune Buggy built.

Tessa arrives with Hoffer on the back of his motorcycle. This year, Akinmola chooses not to run to the pool, but instead catches a ride with Mitchell and Amber. With the group as a whole being a little older now, no one rides their bicycle to the pool anymore. This year, Stone is invited to join the group. Stone’s big secret, that he is Provost Leighton’s son, is known only to the tribe and the coaches.

The big mystery surrounding Stone is that no one knows what year of college he is actually in. Since he doesn’t attend formal classes, and has been around for a while, it was difficult for anyone to exactly make that determination. It turns out that, between his freshman and sophomore years, Stone took a year off. He did the same thing between his sophomore and junior years. During those times, he practiced with the team, but was not on the team roster and did not compete. This gave many people the illusion that Stone has been around a lot longer than the rules would allow.

Right before lunch, when everyone is gathered around the tables, Barbara announces, “well, now that everyone is here, I have some news!” Kathy whispers to Eddie, “this must be really good. She’s been bubbly all morning.” Eddie whispers back, “well, it’s not about her and Johnson getting married.” Kathy asks, “how do you know?” Eddie points to Johnson, and mentions, “Johnson’s talking with Bobby B., and not paying much attention to Barbara.”

Once she has everyone's attention, Barbara announces, "first of all, I just found out about this two days ago, so please don't think I was keeping anything a secret. The first thing is that, as you all know, I've graduated. But, the big news is that I've been given a job offer to teach physical education at the high school! And, Miss Paterno will now be teaching gym at one of the elementary schools." Everyone claps and cheers for Barbara, but she is not finished. Barbara continues, "but, wait! There's more!" After a pause, Barbara asks, "how do I say this?" Paula yells out to her, "just spit it out, girl."

Barbara announces, "okay. I'm also going to be the track coach at the high school!" Everyone cheers, knowing that Barbara's dreams have come true. This is exactly what she was hoping for after she graduated. Barbara continues, "but, wait, wait, everybody! There's still more! Mr. Frazier will not be at the high school any longer. The University has offered him a position coaching track! So, if you're at the University, he'll be one of your track coaches next year!" The whole group claps, cheers, and exchanges high-fives like they never have before. Everyone who has ever had Mr. Frazier as a coach realizes what Barbara's announcement means.

Barbara can't make an announcement like that, and not expect twenty questions. As Barbara answers everyone's questions, Stone tells Mitchell, "I can't wait to meet Mr. Frazier. I've heard a lot about him from you guys." Mitchell tells Stone, "he's the best coach around. This next year is going to be really interesting." Stone asks Mitchell, "what makes him so different?" Mitchell explains, "Mr. Frazier not only trains the body, he trains the mind as well. Anyone can tell you to run laps, and drag a training sled."

Wanting more information from Mitchell, Stone asks, "so, what else is different with Mr. Frazier?" Mitchell explains, "you've been to Eddie and Kathy's house. There's a Bible verse over their medal collection that reads, '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.' Mr. Frazier has that same Bible verse in his office. Mr. Frazier believes that whoever comes in second place has the infamous title of being the first loser. Only one person really wins the race. But, for some reason, they hand out medals for second and third place. And, a lot of people believe that coming in fourth place in a big meet is something to be really proud of. Not in Mr. Frazier's book. Mr. Frazier detests any thought of coming in fourth place."

Stone sits back, and asks, "what else can you tell me about him?" Mitchell replies, "Mr. Frazier says, 'we train to win. If you don't win, then what's the point of training?' During my senior year, on the first day of tryouts, Mr. Frazier said, 'if you are willing to settle for second place,

please head to the locker room, get dressed, and go home.’ He used the word ‘settle’ for a reason. Once you settle, you stop improving.”

Mitchell continues, “oh, and another thing. You’ve talked with Kathy. Kathy knows everything about the opponents. That was her job for years at the high school. The better you know your opponent, the easier it is to find their weak point. When you find their weak point, it’s easier to beat them. Ask Mark about McCrutchen’s weak point sometime. He’ll tell you it’s his mind. Oh, and listen to Braden right before a race. Don’t think for a second that his rants don’t suck the energy and confidence out of his opponents.” Stone confesses, “yeah, I’ve witnessed that first hand.” Mitchell replies, “I was right there with you. But, if I ever race Braden again in the mile, I can assure you, he will not beat me.”

Since the end of the school year, Mitchell and Stone have been training together and have gotten to be good friends. In the past few days, Stone has heard about Mr. Frazier from his mother, Athena Leighton. Stone also learns a lot about Mr. Frazier from speaking with Mitchell. Stone has also learned from Mitchell that, in order to improve his mile performance, he needs to improve his quarter-mile time. Stone, like Mitchell, has been working on that.

It’s no secret that Provost Leighton had something to do with Mr. Frazier’s future career of coaching track at the University. The University gave Mr. Frazier an initial five-year contract and quadrupled his salary. That’s what it took for Mr. Frazier to make the move. After speaking with Eddie, Kathy, and Mitchell, Provost Leighton is convinced that Mr. Frazier can also help her son, Darryl Stone, realize his dream and make it to the Olympics. If Stone, Eddie, or anyone else at the University for that matter, do make the Olympics, hiring Mr. Frazier will be worth every penny they pay him.

While Mitchell and Stone were talking, Eddie and Tessa have been getting ready for their annual rematch. As in past years, they want to get the race out of the way before lunch. Lena already has the pool cleared. Eddie and Tessa have moved to the pool’s edge, and are ready to race. So has Erika, who, for some reason, wants to see where she stands. Having a score to settle with Tessa, Lena joins in with the swimmers again this year. Last year, at the annual rematch, Tessa beat Lena. During a regular season meet, Tessa beat Lena. Lena, who used to be faster than Tessa in the pool, has been training a lot more.

Andrea, the other lifeguard on duty today, tells everyone to get ready. Hearing that a race is about to get underway, a good number of spectators line each side of the pool. Some of them who frequent the pool remember the race from past years. This year, Tessa is in lane three, and Eddie in lane four. Next to Tessa, in lane two, is Lena. And, next to

Eddie in lane five is Erika. In lane six is Bobby B., who has been brushing up on his swimming skills in Mark's pool. This year, with a lot more confidence, Tessa is not as picky about her lane assignments.

One guy, who seems to be a smooth operator, quickly arranges a few bets with his five buddies on the outcome of the race. The stakes at their table are on the high side, with one guy betting \$200.00 on Eddie. Another wheeler-dealer has \$100.00 on Erika, and another \$100.00 on Eddie. One fish¹ at the table, who is playing it safe, bets \$150.00 on the lifeguard. Braden, catching wind of the betting, tells Eddie, "there's a guy over here that has two hundred dollars on you!" Eddie replies, "wow! I'd better swim fast then."

The kingpin at the table asks Braden, "hey, are you an insider?" Braden replies, "yeah. And, you'd better have some of your money on the girl in lane three." Everyone at the table realizes that no one has any money on Tessa, the number one seed in today's race. The table of six hustlers scrambles as the race is about to get underway.

Andrea asks if everyone is ready, which they are. Silence falls over those watching, as Andrea announces, "take your mark." Once everyone is set, Andrea blows her whistle. Eddie, Tessa, Lena, and Erika dive into the water, fighting it out for this year's title. Bobby B. dives in after everyone else, getting off to a slow start. The other swimmers are just glad Bobby B. didn't enter the water doing a cannonball.

Tessa, fully expecting to win this year, does not let her guard down from the very beginning. But, she is not alone. Everyone is out to win this year, except for, perhaps, Bobby B. After the first lap, Tessa touches the wall first, with Eddie right behind her. After everyone does their flip turn, Eddie emerges as the leader, demonstrating his unsurpassed superiority at the wall.

During the second lap of the four-lap race, Eddie has gained a distinct advantage. Mid lap, Tessa and Lena, with their better swimming skills, are gaining ground on Eddie. Lena, in lane two, is unsure who is in the lead, but Tessa, right next to Eddie, knows that Eddie has a slight advantage. At the wall, Eddie touches first and, after his flip turn, retains the lead. Tessa is in second place, with Lena right behind her. Erika, who is still swimming a very competitive time, is in fourth place. Bobby B. makes it to the wall last, holding his own.

¹ Fish: *Slang*. Gambling term for a very inexperienced gambler.

During the third lap, Tessa still realizes that Eddie is slightly ahead. Not willing to let Eddie win, Tessa delivers as much energy into her stroke as she can. Lena, now head to head with Tessa, fights to settle her score. As they all approach the wall, Tessa and Lena slightly erode Eddie's lead. After the turn, Eddie is now leading by only a slight margin. After their turn, Tessa is tied with Lena for second place.

Early in the last lap, Eddie still maintains the lead. Tessa and Lena are tied as they both fight it out to beat Eddie. Not knowing exactly where she stands, Tessa does not relent, and gains on Eddie. Approaching the wall, beating Eddie by inches, Tessa again touches first. Eddie and Lena tie for second place, and Erika, who has not been swimming much recently, comes in fourth place. Bobby B., taking it easy, is still on his third lap. Everyone knows Bobby B. was just swimming for the fun of it anyway.

Kathy, Paula, and Barbara, carefully watching the race, all agree that Tessa won, but only by inches. Kathy announces, "the winner this year, by a few inches, is Tessa! As far as we can tell, Eddie and Lena tied again." Eddie and Lena congratulate Tessa, as everyone exchanges high-fives in the pool. Bobby B. finally arrives at the wall, joining in on the celebration.

The crowd cheers, as the swimmers get out of the pool. The kids waste no time jumping back in after Andrea announces the pool is open again. Over at the Las Vegas table, a small disturbance arises as to how to split the money since no one picked the winner. The kingpin at that table mentions to Braden that he wished he talked to him before the race. With hundreds of dollars on the table, inside information would have been welcomed.

The competitors head back to the tables and, as they are drying off, talk more about Barbara's and Mr. Frazier's new coaching positions. After the race is lunch, which will be pizza. The only question is what will be on the pizza.

Over lunch, Braden asks Eddie, "how are you and Kathy doing so good?" Eddie asks, "what do you mean?" Braden explains, "you guys bought that house, and you gave me the Dune Buggy. You must be doing something right. Either that, or I'm doing something wrong." Eddie tells Braden, "the stock market, bro." Braden asks, "can you let me in on the deal?" Eddie replies, "sure. And, anyone else too." If Eddie were to tell Braden about the portal, the whole world would know, and there would be a line a mile long to get through it.

Eddie tells Braden, "I've been giving Angelo stock tips. He's made a lot of money. He comes in to work around noon now, and leaves at six. He used to work twelve hours a day. Angelo is actually taking a vacation

for a week or two. He's going back to Greece at the end of the Summer. I guess that means I'll be covering the station when he's away."

Hearing that Eddie and Braden are talking about making money, Johnson and Bobby B. join the conversation. Braden asks the expected question, "how much money can I make?" Eddie replies, "it depends. One of the stocks I told Angelo about last week is probably going to triple by October. A lot of stocks are going to go down over the next two years. But, you can still make money selling options." Getting on to the next question, Braden asks, "how do you know all this?" Eddie replies, "I study the market every day. I've been doing this since I was sixteen." Braden tells Eddie, "I got to get my ass moving on this. How do I do it?"

Eddie explains to Braden, Johnson, and Bobby B. how to open a brokerage account. Mitchell and Stone come in late in the conversation, also expressing interest. Giving them some reassurance, Eddie explains, "Mark and Paula have been investing too. That's where they got the money for their house." Bobby B. comments, "Mark said he makes more money in the stock market than he does by working." Eddie replies, "me too." Everyone is convinced. First thing Monday morning, a few more brokerage accounts will be opened.

After lunch, most of the group gets in the pool to cool off. When they are alone, Kathy, who heard Eddie talking about stocks with the group, asks Eddie, "so, are they going forward with it?" Eddie replies, "it sounds like it." Suddenly getting excited, Kathy tells him, "maybe we can all live in the same neighborhood!" Eddie comments, "I know Bobby B. wishes he could live in our area. He really likes it." Kathy comments, "and, take a look at Braden. He's laying back, taking it easy, as if he already made a million dollars." Eddie replies, "I think he's falling asleep."

Eddie whispers, and asks Kathy, "so, how much money do we have anyway?" Eddie is really good at buying gold, riding his bicycle through the portal, and selling it. Finding portals elsewhere, Eddie has even ventured out to distant cities to buy and sell gold. With the amount Eddie buys and sells, doing it in one or two shops will certainly attract a lot of the wrong type of attention. Kathy has become the family banker, and keeps track of their assets. Kathy whispers in his ear, "a little more than twelve million dollars." Eddie replies, "wow! I should take a day off." Kathy replies, "yeah, you really should."

Eddie and Kathy join everyone in the pool. Bobby B. does a cannonball into the water, sending a shock wave through the pool. After suffering his defeat in the 100-meter freestyle, Bobby B. suggests a cannonball contest. Eddie, Mark, and Johnson quickly take him up on it. Mark asks, "what are the rules?" Bobby B. replies, "there are no rules. The farthest splash onto the concrete deck wins." Eddie asks, "is the diving board fair

game?" Bobby B. laughs, and replies, "you can jump out of an airplane for all I care." Bobby B. sounds very confident that he will win this contest. It is decided that Kathy, Paula, and Barbara will be the judges, each standing on one side of the pool at the deep end.

Bobby B. goes first. Bobby B. carefully scopes out the area. It's easy to get the impression that he is carefully planning his trajectory and landing point. Getting a running start, Bobby B. flies through the air, entering the deep end of the pool on a slight angle. The huge splash gets everyone in the area wet, including some who are working on their suntan. The judges take the measurements. Barbara, who is now soaking wet, announces, "the splash went past the edge of the concrete on my side." Bobby B. comes out of the water, announcing, "I won!" Mark exclaims, "not yet, bro!"

Mark goes second. Also getting a running start, Mark flies through the air. Unlike Bobby B., Mark enters the pool nearly vertical. Hitting the water hard, Mark's splash goes high, but not too far. The judges search out the farthest splash from the pool's edge. With all three judges standing at the point of Mark's farthest splash, it appears Kathy has found it. Bobby B. is still the leader by a significant margin. Mark is in second place, but only two people have gone thus far.

Eddie goes next, and decides to use the diving board. After two bounces, Eddie gets as much altitude as he can, and cannonballs into the water. Making a huge splash, Eddie thinks he might have beat Bobby B. The judges mark the point of Eddie's farthest splash. Although Eddie may have made a bigger splash, because Bobby B. entered the pool closer to the edge, Bobby B.'s splash went farther. Eddie is in third place, something that is foreign to him in any competition.

Johnson has the advantage of going last. He has seen what works and what does not work. Choosing Bobby B.'s technique, Johnson runs on an angle, approaching the deep end from the shallow side. Like Bobby B., Johnson soars through the air, entering the water at an angle. Also making a huge splash, Johnson may be in the running. When Johnson surfaces, he is hopeful that he beat Bobby B.

Barbara yells out to Johnson, "I'd like to say you won, sweetie, but Bobby B. is the winner!" Barbara makes the official announcement, "the winner of the first annual cannonball contest is Bobby B.!" Hearing the news, Bobby B. exclaims, "yes!" Redeeming himself from his defeat in a race against some of the fastest swimmers around, Bobby B. claims victory, and also claims another slice of pizza.

After the cannonball contest, the group cools off again in the pool. As they are lamenting their loss to Bobby B., Eddie asks Mark, "so, how's the

project coming over there at Second Street?" Mark explains, "I think I'll be done this week. I'm working on the iron railing right now." Eddie mentions, "I'll pick up some locks for the gates early this week." Mark replies, "any padlock will do." Eddie informs Mark, "I'll come take a look at it someday after work this week. Maybe we can start moving equipment there someday soon."

Overhearing Eddie and Mark's conversation is Akinmola, who understands that someone has purchased a piece of property. Akinmola asks Eddie and Mark, "did one of you guys buy a piece of land?" Eddie replies, "yeah. I bought two acres on Second Street. We're going to use it for storing equipment, like trailers and that sort of stuff." Akinmola replies, "wow! That's a lot of land!"

Getting right to the point, Akinmola asks, "do you know of any good land for sale? My father is looking for a piece of land to build a church." Eddie asks, "how much land is he looking for?" Akinmola explains, "he was hoping for three acres, but there's not much empty land in this town. Whenever there is, it's all small." Eddie tells Akinmola, "I'll see if I find anything. I'll ask John Davies. He might know about something." Akinmola tells Eddie, "I really appreciate that, my friend!" Dr. Akinmola has been looking for a suitable location for building a church ever since he moved here years ago. So far, he has not found exactly what he has been looking for.

Later in the afternoon, while sitting at a table with Mark and Braden, Paula catches Chuckie out of the corner of her eye, sitting at a table on the other side of the pool. Paula mentions to Mark and Braden, "oh shit! That troublemaker is back again. There's the Chuckie, at the table near the shallow end." Mark glances over to the other side of the pool, and asks, "where?" Paula explains, "by the fence, near the ladder." Mark, seeing Chuckie, replies, "wow! There's a chain link fence around the whole pool. He should be really getting paranoid." Braden comments, "maybe he wants to get his fat ass kicked again." Mark replies, "that can be arranged."

Somewhat concerned, Paula tells everyone, "I don't have a good feeling about this. The Chuckie showed up at the two divisional meets this year." Mark adds, "yeah. Along with that Goldshit guy." Braden mentions, "I thought we saw the last of those two guys." Paula looks around for Andy Goldstein and Terry Haynes but fortunately does not find them.

Getting out of the pool, Eddie and Kathy come over, and join the group. Mark tells Eddie, "hey, take a look over there at the table by the ladder." Seeing Chuckie, Eddie laughs, and asks, "does anyone have a

belt?" Paula laughs, and comments, "no. But, there's a long nylon cord attached to the fence next to the life preserver."

Changing the topic of conversation to an earlier subject, Braden, who has been working overtime at the University, asks Eddie, "so, how do I open a brokerage account?" Eddie explains, "you go down to the bank, and tell them you want to open a brokerage account. You fill out the forms, give them a deposit for the account and, in a few days, you'll be ready to trade." Braden asks, "and, you're gonna tell me what to buy, right?" Eddie replies, "yeah, bro." With a smile coming across his face, Braden sits back and tells Eddie, "I'm gonna do that on Monday."

While Eddie and Braden are talking, Paula quietly exclaims, "shit! Here comes trouble. The Chuckie is headed this way." Mark asks, "what is he doing here anyway?" Walking along the far side of the pool, Chuckie stares across the pool at the table where Eddie, Kathy, Mark, Paula, and Braden are sitting. Most of the rest of the tribe, however, is cooling off in the pool. As Chuckie passes the diving board, Eddie comments, "well, he's not diving today." Turning the corner, Chuckie has his eyes on the group at the table. The group at the table also has their eyes on Chuckie.

Chuckie walks between the group's tables and the pool, and suddenly stops. Acting kind of weird, Chuckie turns and stares at Eddie, prompting Mark to ask, "what's your problem, junior?" With all eyes now on Chuckie, Andy Goldstein sneaks up from behind the building and hammers Braden's head with a baseball bat. Braden goes down, and is knocked out. Barbara, and a few others who were sitting at a nearby table, quickly rush to Braden's aid. Kathy and Paula shove the chairs and tables away to better get to Braden. Seeing what happened, Lena, the lifeguard on duty at the moment, runs over with the first-aid kit.

Eddie forcefully takes hold of Goldstein, who ineffectively tries to fight Eddie. With a right uppercut, Eddie solidly connects with Goldstein's left jaw. Evidenced by a loud cracking sound, Goldstein's jaw is broken yet again, but Eddie does not stop there. With a second right uppercut to Goldstein's left jaw, Eddie adds to the carnage. Goldstein falls to the ground and is knocked out.

Wendy repeatedly stomps Goldstein with her feet. Wendy even stomps Goldstein's broken jaw. Chuckie comes to Goldstein's aid, and is promptly thrown into the pool by Mark. Unfortunately, Chuckie cannot swim. As Mr. Zunde would say, that would be his problem. Andrea, the other lifeguard, already on her way over to the table to break up the altercation, dives into the pool to rescue Chuckie. After Chuckie is rescued from the water, Andrea closes the pool, instructing everyone to get out of the water immediately.

Eddie quickly takes hold of Chuckie, which is fine with Andrea, and motions to Mark to head over to the fence. Mark, already having it all figured out, runs ahead to get the nylon rope that is attached to the fence.

Eddie slams Chuckie against the chain link fence, telling him, "say hello to the fence again, junior!" Sobbing like a baby, Chuckie replies, "let me go! Let me go!" Eddie tells Chuckie, "not on your life! Shut up, junior!" Using the nylon rope, Eddie and Mark tie Chuckie to the fence. Eddie, leaving the pool area, goes to the other side of the fence, and ties a very tight knot. Chuckie cries out, "no! Not this! Somebody, stop him! Somebody, stop him!" Before Eddie returns to the pool area, he punches Chuckie in his mid section, and tells him, "suck it up, junior!" Chuckie sobs like a little brat, with no one coming to his rescue. Eddie and Mark return to their table, where Braden has not yet regained consciousness.

The ambulance arrives, and the paramedics attend to Braden. Braden, the victim, is taken away to the hospital. One of the paramedics stays behind to attend to Goldstein, awaiting the arrival of another ambulance. From an observational viewpoint, Braden clearly received the red carpet treatment, and Goldstein gets a last-class ticket. But, that's the way emergency medical services often work. The victims get top priority, and the perpetrators are generally attended to last.

The police arrive, and are met by Andrea, the lifeguard. Officer Richard Hayes, who works the day shift, asks Andrea, "what do we got going on here?" Andrea explains, "the guy tied to the fence started something, and the guy laying on the ground hit a guy with a baseball bat. They took the guy that got hit with the bat away in an ambulance. He was unconscious." Officer Hayes looks over at Chuckie, who is sobbing like a baby, and tells Andrea, "just looking at that character tied to the fence, I think I already have this figured out."

Officer Hayes and Andrea walk over to where they see Goldstein laying on the ground in a pool of blood. Seeing that it is Goldstein who is laying on the ground, Officer Hayes comments, "now, I know that I have this one figured out." Eddie and Mark, sitting at the table with the rest of the tribe, are glad to see Officer Hayes arrive.

Walking up to the table where Eddie and Mark are seated, Officer Hayes asks Eddie, "what's going on here?" Eddie, who is obviously ticked off, replies, "me, Kathy, Mark, Paula, and Braden were sitting right here, and the Chuckie stood in front of us and stared at us. Goldshit, that piece of shit laying on the ground over there, hit Braden on the head with a bat. Braden went down. Then, I let Goldshit have it. They had to take Braden to the hospital." Officer Hayes looks over at Goldstein laying on the ground, and whispers to Eddie, "good job." Officer Hayes asks, "where's

the bat that this Goldstein character hit Braden with now?" Pointing to the bat on the ground, Eddie replies, "it landed over there, near the bushes." Officer Hayes instructs his partner, "bag the bat as evidence. Handle it from the business end."

Laying on the concrete is a baseball bat that Goldstein stole from an equipment building elsewhere in the park earlier today. Goldstein threw it over the fence before he entered the pool area, knowing exactly what he was going to use it for. Inconspicuously hidden between the fence and the building, the bat attests to Goldstein and Chuckie's premeditated act.

Officer Hayes proceeds to get the statements of the lifeguards, Lena and Andrea, and Mark. Getting the names of the witnesses, Officer Hayes and his partner will finish their investigation later. For now, it is quite clear who started the altercation, and what the results were.

Moving on, Officer Hayes tells Eddie, "let's take a walk." Eddie and Officer Hayes walk toward the other end of the pool, where Chuckie is belted to the fence, or rather tied to the fence this time. On the way, Officer Hayes tells Eddie, "this Goldstein character has been a real pain in the ass. He's still dealing drugs. I'd like to thank you for getting him off the streets again, at least for a while." Eddie, glad to hear that, replies, "no problem. I'm glad I could help."

Approaching Chuckie, Officer Hayes asks Eddie, "whose work is this?" Eddie replies, "me and Mark." Officer Hayes whispers to Eddie, "nice job. I couldn't have done better myself." Seeing Eddie and the officer, Chuckie yells out, "arrest him! Take him to jail! Arrest him!" Officer Hayes tells Chuckie, "please, calm down! I'll get to you in a moment." Officer Hayes instructs Eddie to untie Chuckie, and promptly places Chuckie in handcuffs. Having enough evidence after talking with the lifeguards, Officer Hayes arrests Chuckie and reads him his rights. Officer Hayes will get Chuckie's statement downtown at the police station. Chuckie is taken away, again headed to his home away from home.

Meanwhile, back at the tables, the tribe watches as the second ambulance takes Goldstein away. Eddie mentions to Mark, "I guess I didn't do a good enough job on the Chuckie when I was in high school." Mark comments, "well, I guess we know why they were at the track meets. They were looking for an opening." Paula exclaims, "that's exactly why! What a piece of shit!"

Kathy mentions, "the only thing missing today is McCrutchen." Eddie adds, "yeah. And, that lug nut guy." Paula asks, "what's this? You guys are planning to have the asshole reunion, and leaving out Mahoney?" Eddie laughs, and informs everyone, "that reunion will have to be held in the county jail."

The afternoon comes to an early end. With Braden headed to the hospital, the group decides to forgo the pizza party afterwards. Instead, they all head to the hospital to check on Braden. Everyone heads out to their cars, and will meet at the hospital. Eddie, standing in the parking lot with Kathy, Mark, and Paula, tells Mark and Paula, “meet us at our house.” Paula asks, “aren’t you going to the hospital with everyone else?” Eddie replies, “no. We’re going to the portal and changing this somehow.” Paula quickly replies, “got it!” Mark and Paula quickly figure out Eddie’s plan and, instead of driving to the hospital, they all head home to get their bicycles.

Mark and Paula arrive on their bicycles at Eddie and Kathy’s house. Before they set out, Mark asks Eddie, “so, what’s the plan, bro?” Eddie replies, “Kathy figured it out on the way home. We head to the portal, and come back to this morning before we left for the pool. Then, we explain to our past counterparts what happened, and we’ll know exactly what is going to happen when the Chuckie heads over to our table.” Kathy then adds, “we then head back to the portal, and go to 3:00 p.m. today, and ride to the pool. Then, we can watch from the bushes at the far end as it all goes down.” Eddie comments, “I really want to see this.” They all make the trip to the portal, hoping to change the past for a better outcome for Braden.

Arriving at the portal, Kathy brings the group back to this morning at 10:00 a.m., when Eddie and Kathy were at home, getting ready to go to the pool. Mark and Paula likewise, are home, getting ready to head out for the day. Arriving in the past, they head back home to inform their counterparts of the unfortunate events that will occur at the pool later in the afternoon. Coming to an intersection, Eddie and Kathy head to their home to inform their counterparts. Mark and Paula, likewise, head to their own home to inform their counterparts of what will transpire. They all agree to meet back at the portal once they inform their counterparts from this morning.

Arriving at their home, Eddie and Kathy ride up the driveway, finding Kathy’s counterpart from this morning loading the Dune Buggy with their towels and a cooler. Eddie’s counterpart from this morning is in the garage, busy working on a soon to be white Dune Buggy. Kathy yells out to her and Eddie’s counterpart, “hey, guys!” Kathy’s counterpart replies, “uh oh. Don’t tell me that I took an antibiotic or something.” Kathy replies to her counterpart, “no. But, there’s a big problem.” Eddie’s counterpart from this morning walks out from the back of the garage, and asks, “what’s going on?” Kathy’s counterpart tells Eddie’s counterpart, “we’re about to find out.”

Kathy explains, “okay, so we got a big problem. At the pool this afternoon, the Chuckie and Goldshit showed up and, while we were

talking at the table, the Chuckie came and stood in front of us, and was acting really weird.” Eddie’s counterpart from this morning comments, “the Chuckie always acts weird.” Kathy continues, “okay, so get this. Then, while we were all looking at the Chuckie, Goldshit came up from behind and hit Braden over the head with a baseball bat, and Braden got knocked out. They had to take him to the hospital.” Kathy’s counterpart from this morning exclaims, “that shit head!”

Eddie’s counterpart from this morning asks, “what’s the plan?” Kathy explains, “at about 3:30, we’ll be sitting at a table with Mark, Paula and Braden. Chuckie will walk from the other side of the pool, and distract all of us. That’s when Goldshit will come up from behind and hit Braden with the baseball bat. You guys have to stop Goldshit. The way we were seated at the table, Eddie is in the best position to do that.” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “got it,” then asks, “which way does Goldshit come from?” Kathy replies, “from behind where you and Braden will be sitting.” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “got it. This shouldn’t be too hard.”

Kathy tells Eddie’s counterpart, “by the way, you really kicked the shit out of Goldshit. You hit him in his jaw twice. It’s broken again, and a lot worse than when Braden broke it a few years ago.” Eddie’s counterpart asks, “did I get in trouble?” Kathy replies, “apparently not. Richard didn’t seem to care that Goldshit was laying in a pool of blood. He told you that you did a good job. Oh, and Wendy stomped Goldshit’s jaw, and his whole body.” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “wow! Wendy? She must have been really ticked off.” Kathy replies, “um, yeah. She was. No one’s ever seen her so mad before.”

Kathy then tells her and Eddie’s counterpart from this morning, “Mark and Paula are at their house right now, explaining it to them. So, they’ll also know what’s going to happen.” Eddie’s counterpart from this morning suggests, “we’ll all have to keep an eye out for Chuckie and Goldshit in the future.”

Kathy tells her and Eddie’s counterparts, “we’re going to head back now. And, we’ll be watching from outside the fence where the bushes are at the end of the parking lot, by the deep end. Oh, and to keep from messing up time too badly, try to get everyone to the pizzeria at 5:00.” Kathy’s counterpart from this morning replies, “pizza at five. Got it.” Eddie and Kathy head back to the portal, where they will meet up with Mark and Paula.

At the portal, it turns out that Mark and Paula arrived first, and are waiting for Eddie and Kathy. As Kathy and Eddie ride up, Paula asks, “okay. Are we ready?” Kathy replies, “we’re ready.” They all head back into the portal, arriving back at the present time. They then enter the

portal a second time, and Kathy brings them to 3:00 p.m., a half hour before Goldstein hits Braden with the baseball bat.

Wanting to know exactly how they changed the future, Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula head to the pool on their bicycles. Arriving at the pool in less than ten minutes, they expect to watch the day's activities unfold with their plan in place. Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula hide out in the bushes where they cannot be seen, getting a good view of where the action will be.

Kathy mentions, "there's the Chuckie. He's sitting at the table. But, I can't find Goldshit." Mark looks around, and relays, "there he is. He just came out of the bathroom. He's just standing there, looking at everyone in the pool." Eddie replies, "no wonder we never saw him. He's behind the wall." Kathy mentions, "so, he's going to go around the concession stand, and behind the restrooms, and that's how he came up from behind us." Eddie replies, "yeah, I can see that." For right now, Goldstein is just hanging out, leaning against the wall.

Waiting another fifteen minutes, they observe Chuckie standing up. All nervous, Kathy announces, "here comes the action." Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula watch carefully from the bushes, as the events leading up to Goldstein assaulting Braden are hopefully about to be changed.

They watch from the bushes as Goldstein moves toward the concession stand, and sneaks behind the building. Apparently, Chuckie and Goldstein have planned their ambush well. Emerging from the other side of the building, Goldstein is now holding a baseball bat. Chuckie walks between the group's table and the pool, and suddenly stops. So far, everything is going exactly as expected. At the table, Eddie, hearing someone move a chair behind him, knows Goldstein is about to make a move.

At the table, Eddie, on high alert, catches Chuckie momentarily glancing to his right. Eddie explodes out of his seat, and lunges toward Braden, intercepting Andy Goldstein and the baseball bat that Goldstein is about to hammer down on Braden's head. Missing Braden, the bat lands on the ground, as Eddie forcefully takes Goldstein down. Eddie hammers Goldstein's face into the concrete a few times, and places him in an arm lock. Eddie smashes Goldstein's face into the concrete a few more times, quite by accident, of course.

With all eyes now on Eddie, Chuckie haphazardly picks up a chair, making a second attempt at taking down Braden. Chuckie, however, is not even remotely quick or agile. Braden intercepts Chuckie's feeble attempt of hitting him with a chair. Tossing the chair off to the side, Braden puts Chuckie into an arm lock, and demands to know, "what was

all that shit about?” Chuckie also makes a demand, telling Braden, “let me go!” Braden obliges, and throws Chuckie into the deep end of the pool.

Chuckie, who can’t swim, yells out, “help! I’m drowning! Help me! Someone help me!” A bit ticked off, Braden tells Chuckie, “shut your ass up.” Andrea, the lifeguard, already on her way over to the table to break up the altercation, dives into the pool to rescue Chuckie. Lena, the other lifeguard on duty, closes the pool, telling everyone to get out of the water immediately, and rushes over to help Andrea.

Over in the bushes, Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula all exchange high-fives, albeit a bit quietly. Their plan worked, and Braden was spared the serious concussion he would have received should he have been hit by the baseball bat or chair. But, the group hangs around in the bushes, making sure nothing else goes wrong.

Meanwhile, Braden has taken custody of Goldstein. Interrogating the twirp, Braden asks Goldstein, “what was all that shit you just pulled?” Goldstein yells out, “let me go! I’m going to kick your ass!” Braden tightens the arm lock, and replies, “yeah, go ahead. I wanna see that. Waiting.” Goldstein screams out in pain, as Braden further tightens the arm lock. Braden tells Goldstein, “shut your ass up! Don’t you see there’s a baby over there sleeping?”

Braden tells Barbara to call the police. As Wendy walks by, Goldstein attempts to kick Wendy, prompting Braden to slam Goldstein onto the concrete. As Braden expected, Goldstein stands up, and throws a punch at Braden. Braden returns the favor, solidly connecting with Goldstein’s abdominal region, hurling him into the pool. Unfortunately, Goldstein cannot swim either, but that would be his problem. For some reason, Braden didn’t think to ask Goldstein if he can swim before thrusting him into the pool. Really earning her salary today, Lena dives in to rescue Goldstein.

Andrea, in the meantime, just pulled Chuckie out of the water. Chuckie starts a fight with Andrea, but is restrained by a few bystanders. Chuckie then starts fighting with the bystanders attempting to restrain him. The time travelers in the bushes watch, as Eddie, Braden, and Mark run over, and take control of the situation. Braden puts Chuckie into an arm lock, as Eddie motions to bring Chuckie over to the fence. Mark, already having it all figured out, runs ahead to get the nylon rope attached to the fence.

Back in the bushes, Eddie’s time traveling counterpart comments, “here comes the best part. The little Chuckie is going to be belted to the fence.” Mark comments, “I want to watch as this goes down.” They redirect their attention to Chuckie, as he is about to be tied to the fence.

They all watch from the bushes as Braden slams Chuckie against the chain link fence, telling him, "I'm gonna ask you again. What was all that shit about back there?" Sobbing like a baby, Chuckie replies, "let me go!" Braden tells Chuckie, "yeah. I might just do that. I'll just throw your fat ass back into the pool again."

Using the nylon rope, Eddie and Mark tie Chuckie to the fence. Eddie, leaving the pool area, goes to the other side of the fence, and ties a knot. With a new technique, Eddie and Mark also tie Chuckie's wrists to the fence, making sure he is unable to escape. Chuckie cries out, "no! Not this again!" Eddie laughs, and tells Chuckie, "suck it up, junior."

Braden tells Eddie and Mark, "I'm gonna go check out that Goldshit guy." Braden then tells Chuckie, "don't you even think about going anywhere," not that Chuckie, who is tied to the fence, has much choice. Eddie and Mark take a seat at a table near where Chuckie is tied to the fence. Braden returns to the table, where Johnson has Goldstein restrained.

Goldstein, putting up a fight, continually attempts to kick Johnson. Braden tells Johnson, "just throw his ass into the pool again. That will shut him down." Goldstein responds, "there's going to be a pay back for this! Yeah, yeah! A payback!" Braden informs Goldstein, "where your ass is going, they're gonna pay your ass back every day, free of charge."

Goldstein continues to kick Johnson. Taking Braden's advice, Johnson tells Goldstein, "you know what? I'm sick of you. It's time for your second swimming lesson, junior," and hurls Goldstein into the pool again. Giving Johnson a high-five, Braden exclaims, "see that? That shut his fat ass down!" Lena and Andrea run over to rescue Goldstein. Braden tells them, "you might want to do rock-paper-scissors to see who's gonna save his fat ass." It's apparently Lena's turn, who dives in and rescues Goldstein.

Retrieved from the water, Goldstein is not the least bit happy with his swimming lesson. This time, Braden is the one to restrain Goldstein, but at the edge of the pool. Hitting Goldstein with a reality stick, Braden exclaims, "you're gonna shut your ass up, and just stand there! Otherwise, I'm gonna throw your fat ass back into the water again! And, you better hope they get here in time to save your ass. Maybe I'll just bust your jaw up again before I throw you in." Braden is taking full advantage of Goldstein's fear of the water and his fear of another broken jaw. The fear of being thrown into the pool again is enough to silence Goldstein.

Back in the bushes, Mark comments, "this is getting kind of funny." Eddie agrees, saying, "yeah. That was really funny about the rock-paper-scissors thing." Kathy comments, "well, the party's over. Here comes the

police.” Mark reminds Kathy, “Braden is the police.” Kathy replies, “oh, yeah. Duh.”

The police arrive, and are met by Andrea, the lifeguard. Officer Richard Hayes, who works the day shift, asks Andrea, “what do we got going on here?” Andrea explains, “the guy tied to the fence, and another guy, started a fight. They really caused a huge commotion.” Officer Hayes looks over at Chuckie, and tells Andrea, “just looking at this character tied to the fence, I think I already have this figured out.” Richard and Andrea walk over to where Chuckie is tied to the fence. Eddie and Mark, sitting at a table near Chuckie, are glad to see Officer Hayes arrive. Officer Hayes heads over to talk to Eddie and Mark. His partner heads over to where Goldstein is being detained by Braden.

Eddie’s time traveling counterpart and the rest of the group watch from the bushes, as Officer Hayes questions Eddie. During the conversation, Goldstein, who is still restrained at the pool’s edge, can be heard exclaiming, “there’s going to be a payback for this one! Yeah, yeah. I can see it coming! A big payback.” Officer Hayes asks Mark, “what’s all this talk about a payback over there?” Mark explains to the officer, “this goes back to high school, when Braden had to kick that guy’s ass when he tripped him on the track. All during our senior year, that asshole said he was going to pay Braden back for kicking his ass. I guess Braden’s time finally came. But, it didn’t go exactly as planned.” Officer Hayes replies, “yeah. I remember that incident with that character.” As Officer Hayes’ partner places Goldstein in handcuffs, Goldstein continues running his mouth, becoming quite an annoyance.

Officer Hayes instructs Eddie to untie Chuckie, and promptly places Chuckie in handcuffs. Officer Hayes escorts Chuckie over to the tables where Goldstein is restrained by the other police officer. Officer Hayes tries to get a statement from Chuckie, but all Chuckie does is to insist that Eddie be arrested. The officer will likely have to get Chuckie’s statement downtown at the police station.

Tired of Goldstein’s ranting, Officer Hayes directs his attention to Goldstein, telling him, “calm down! I’ll get to you in a moment.” Referring to Braden, Goldstein exclaims, “I’m going to kick his ass! Yeah, yeah. I’m kicking his ass!” Officer Hayes explains to Goldstein, “sir. I suggest you calm down. And, let me put it to you this way. The person you allegedly assaulted is an officer. If you are planning to retaliate for some event that occurred years ago, you just might not be so lucky next time.” Officer Hayes is telling Goldstein that he just might not survive his next attempt at a payback.

After getting the statements of Braden, Andrea, Lena, Eddie, and Mark, the officer again questions Chuckie and Goldstein. Neither Chuckie nor

Goldstein is cooperative, so the officers agree to question them downtown at the police station. Chuckie, still insisting that Eddie and Mark be arrested, and Goldstein, still vowing to pay back Braden, are escorted out of the pool area, and taken to the police station.

Over in the bushes, Kathy's suddenly mentions, "you know, we really have a problem." Paula agrees, adding, "yeah, I'd say." Kathy replies, "no. We have a real problem. If those guys were at the track meets, and showed up here today, they're following us around." Mark comments, "that's not good." Kathy mentions, "we'd better keep an eye out for those guys." Paula adds, "yeah. They're stalkers." Mark comments, "they're more like psychopaths." Kathy comments, "wonderful. Stalking psychopaths. How lucky are we?"

Kathy whispers, "it looks like everyone is gathering up their stuff and we're all heading out to get pizza. We did it!" Paula quietly exclaims, "awesome!" Mark comments, "well, it looks like everything went according to plan." After the back alley rumble, everyone heads out a little later than usual to the pizzeria, only to continue the party there.

Now that the group is headed out to get pizza, the time travelers, Kathy, Eddie, Mark, and Paula, wait patiently as the parking lot clears out. Among the last to leave is Braden in his Dune Buggy, which everyone is glad to see. It's certainly better than seeing Braden carried away in an ambulance. Once the tribe has left, the time travelers head back to the portal, and back to their time. In a rush to get home, they ride their bicycles as fast as they can. If their calculations are correct, they'll be able to get to the pizza party at around 5:00, as planned.

When Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula arrive at the pizzeria a bit late, everyone asks, "what took you guys so long?" Kathy replies, "we had to make a side trip. How late are we?" Bobby B. answers, "about ten minutes. Akinmola could have run here in that time." Kathy comments, "well, we're not too late." Seizing the moment, Bobby B. adds, "will you just look at this. Two of the fastest guys in the country are the last to get here. You guys must be really slacking off." Kathy is glad to hear that they are not too late, and lets Bobby B. have his moment of roasting Eddie and Mark.

Joe, glad to see the group, comes to their tables, taking everyone's order. Joe is really glad to see that the group is all still in the area. When they come in for pizza, the energy level of the whole restaurant goes up. Everyone orders pizza today, for the second time, which is no surprise. After dinner, everyone calls it a day, and goes their own way.

Summertime brings an interesting development in the life of the derelict high school principal, Mr. Crum. Mr. Crum's father, who worked

as a security guard for most of his life, has been more than happy to leave Mr. Crum sitting in a jail cell. Mr. Crum's mother, a highly emotional French woman, was devastated to hear the news. Never coming to an agreement of whether to help their son, the alleged criminal, Mr. Crum's parents let him sit in jail.

Mr. Crum's rich uncle, Alistair Crum, has gotten word of Mr. Crum's incarceration. The news came to Alistair through Mr. Crum's father. Mr. Crum's uncle always felt a bit sorry for his nephew, Maurice, who always whined that he had a bad home life. Mr. Crum's father had absolutely no tolerance at all for stepping outside the line of his warped interpretation of good conduct and behavior. Mr. Crum's mother, a chronic emotional wreck, was always yelling and screaming at her son, trying to keep him in line so his father wouldn't blow up. It's no secret from where Mr. Crum's odd and deviant personality stems.

Feeling sorry for the chronically irate drug dealing principal, Alistair Crum bails Mr. Crum out of jail. Mr. Crum is grateful that he was bailed out of jail, at least for five minutes. On the way to driving Mr. Crum back to his house, Mr. Crum's uncle hears all about the bad food Maurice had to endure while in jail, how he'll probably lose his job, and how he now has no money. Mr. Crum's uncle tries to reassure Mr. Crum that, in the long run, everything will work out. But, Mr. Crum does not want to hear it. Instead, Mr. Crum goes on complaining.

As they approach Second Street, Mr. Crum tells his Uncle Alistair, "I will be so glad to sleep in my own bed. The one in the jail was like a rock." Alistair replies, "I'm sure you'll sleep better tonight. But remember, when you awake, your troubles will still abound." Back to his ungrateful self, Mr. Crum replies, "thanks for the encouragement." Alistair, hoping someday Mr. Crum would get over his bad home life woes, replies, "you're welcome. I'm glad that I could be of help." Reminding Mr. Crum of his piss poor attitude, Alistair adds, "and, please show up for your hearing at the courthouse. Your bail was about two years of your salary, and I want my money back."

Alistair turns onto Second Street, and Mr. Crum is in shock. Frantically looking around, Mr. Crum's first impression is that they have turned down the wrong street. Looking back at the street sign, Mr. Crum is assured that they are on Second Street.

Alistair asks, "have I made a wrong turn?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "no! My house! It's gone!" Looking around, Alistair calmly replies, "well, yes. I can see that. Perhaps that gentleman working over there might know something about it. You should take it upon yourself and talk with him." Mr. Crum brashly replies, "I think I'll do that!" Mr. Crum gets out of the

car, walking toward the worker. Alistair also gets out of his Bentley, taking a look around at the street that used to be the slum of slums.

Second Street formerly had four dilapidated houses on it, one of which was Mr. Crum's. After Eddie acquired all four properties, and the houses were bulldozed down, Mark began working on the storage yard. Each side of Second Street now has a one-acre lot, surrounded on three sides by an eight-foot high brick wall. Along the front of each lot, Mark built a two-foot high knee wall, and is in the process of installing a six-foot high iron fence between the brick posts. Each lot has a 16-foot wide gate, allowing easy access for large construction vehicles. Inside the lots, a bed of crushed gravel is perfect for storing just about anything. And, the icing on the cake is that Mark also installed lighting, making nighttime access easy.

Mr. Crum approaches the worker, and yells out, "hey! Where did all the houses go?" The worker turns around, who is none other than Mark, and tells him, "I bulldozed them down. It looks really good, doesn't it?" Once Mark sees that it is Mr. Crum, he grins ear to ear. Mr. Crum, screaming at the top of his lungs, exclaims, "what did you do to my house? You'd better start explaining! Where's my house?" Mark replies, "I will, once you shut up." Mr. Crum exclaims, "you're not getting away with this!" Mark continues to work, as he sees another man approach.

As if it is not already obvious, Alistair asks, "what seems to be the problem here?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "my house! It's gone! And, he said he bulldozed it down!" Mark continues to install the iron fence along the knee wall along the front of the property, as Mr. Crum continues his tirade. Alistair wisely informs Mr. Crum, "until you calm down, Maurice, it's highly unlikely that you'll get any further information." Mr. Crum yells, "my house is gone! It's gone! And, you want me to be calm?"

Alistair tells Mark, "sir, I am Maurice's uncle. Would you be so kind as to explain what happened to Maurice's house?" Mark explains to Alistair, "sure. It was foreclosed, and sold on the courthouse steps. My friend, Eddie, bought it. Eddie bought the other three houses too. Eddie hired me to build a storage yard." Alistair looks around, and asks Mark, "so, you built all of this by yourself?" Mark replies, "yeah." Alistair tells Mark, "I would appreciate it, sir, if you give me your name and phone number. I was thinking of building a wall similar to this around my family compound. Your work appears to be most excellent." Mark replies, "thank you."

Hearing the conversation between his uncle and Mark, Mr. Crum exclaims, "but, he bulldozed my house down!" Alistair tells Mr. Crum, "yes, Maurice. We've already established that fact. No amount of yelling, screaming, and carrying on is going to cause your house to magically

return.” Alistair talks further with Mark, carefully examining Mark’s workmanship as Mr. Crum paces up and down the street.

Mr. Crum, meanwhile, repeats to himself, “Eddie! I can’t believe it! Of all people, Eddie!” Mr. Crum finally comes back to Earth, realizing that he has lost his house, and Eddie is involved. Alistair tells Mr. Crum, “Maurice, it would really be of benefit to you if you put your energy into solving your immediate problem instead of having a temper tantrum.” Mr. Crum replies, “yeah, thanks.”

Alistair, impressed with Mark’s craftsmanship, gets Mark’s contact information. On the upside, Mark, or his father, may pick up some more work. As Mr. Crum and his Uncle Alistair walk away, Mark goes back to work. Mark watches, as Mr. Crum stares, with his hands on his hips, at the place where his house formerly sat.

As an afterthought, Mr. Crum turns around and yells to Mark, “hey! Where’s my car?” Mark yells back, “it was impounded.” Mr. Crum yells back, “but, where is it?” Mark yells back, “it was impounded by A-1 Towing. Call them!” Mr. Crum gets into his uncle’s car, and now will be in search of his Volkswagen Beetle. Unfortunately, when Mr. Crum does find his car, he will discover the storage fees far exceed the value of his vehicle. Or, perhaps because it wasn’t claimed within a certain time frame, it could have been sold at an auto auction.

Later that day, Eddie stops by the property to see how Mark is coming along. Driving up with the top down, Eddie yells out, “hey! It’s looking good!” Mark yells back, “I should be done in a day or two!” Knowing the project is almost done, Eddie can’t wait. He’s been stopping by every day for the last week, monitoring the progress.

Eddie walks up, and Mark asks him, “hey! Guess who came by today?” At a loss for an answer, Eddie replies, “I have no idea. Tell me.” Mark replies, “Mr. Crum.” Eddie exclaims, “no! You can’t be serious!” Mark replies, “seriously, bro. He came by with his uncle. He was kind of ticked off that his house was gone.” Eddie comments, “well, he should have paid his mortgage.” Mark tells Eddie, “his uncle seemed to be a nice guy. I wonder how Crum got to be so grumpy.” Eddie replies, “he was probably born that way.”

After Eddie takes a walk around the lots, he tells Mark, “well, it looks like we can start moving in.” Eddie then asks Mark, “which side do you want?” Mark asks, “I can use a whole lot?” Eddie replies, “yeah. I’ll take one side, and you take the other. Each one is an acre of storage.” Mark replies, “wow! Thanks!”

As Eddie installs the padlocks on the gates, Mark comments, “that’s a weird looking lock. Where did you get it?” Looking at the package, Eddie replies, “it’s an Abloy PL 362, whatever that is. Both locks have the same key. I went to the future to buy them. The lock body is harder than a drill bit, so it will keep the riffraff out. And, it can’t be picked. But, we’ll have to go to the future if we want more keys made.” Mark adds, “and, it will keep Mr. Crum out too.” Eddie points out, “he’s part of the riffraff I was talking about.”

Eddie gives Mark a few keys, which look nothing like any key Mark has ever seen before. Eddie and Mark decide that Eddie will take the yard on the right side, and Mark will take the yard on the left. The decision was made because Kathy told Paula that the boogie man used to live in the first house on the right.

Eddie also mentions, “I bought a few more of these locks. Since they’re pick proof, no one will be able to get into my locker next year.” Mark comments, “yeah, but McCrutchen and lug nut are gone.” Eddie replies, “yeah, I know. But, who knows who else on the team can’t be trusted. And besides, McCrutchen and lug nut know where the campus is, and where the locker room is. They can come up here and mess with us again.” Mark replies, “that’s a good point. They got in once. There’s nothing stopping them a second time.”

Eddie helps Mark, as they install the last two sections of the iron fence. Mark inquires, “so, we can start moving stuff here?” Eddie replies, “yeah. I gave a key to my dad. He’s going to move his trailers and his cement mixer here one day after work next week.” Mark comments, “maybe I’ll buy my own Bobcat² sooner than I expected. Paula really liked driving the Bobcat when we built our house.” Eddie asks, “really?” Mark informs Eddie, “yeah. She used the one I rented to level out our lot after I got the foundation in.”

Looking around, Mark comments, “wow! This is a lot of space.” Eddie and Mark finish up for the day, and head out, with one more day of work to do.

On his way to work one day, as he is passing the high school, Eddie sees a new sign on the vacant land across the street from the high school indicating that it is for sale. Stopping to get the information sheet from the sign, Eddie learns that the land is seven acres. Getting out of his car, Eddie walks the lot, finding that it is level, and slightly pitched toward the

² Bobcat: Bobcat Company. A company which manufactures small front-end loaders, farm, and construction equipment.

road. The best part is that the land has been cleared a few years ago, and has been kept in reasonably good condition. Eddie remembers very well when they cleared the lot. He was a sophomore in high school, sitting on the lawn at lunch with Kathy when that project was started. Since then, for some unknown reason, nothing has ever been built on the land.

Taking a slight detour, Eddie stops by the office of John Davies, the attorney who helped Eddie acquire Mr. Crum's and the other three properties on Second Street. Mr. Davies is busy when Eddie drops by, so he tells the paralegal that he wants to buy the property. The paralegal takes Eddie's information, and informs Eddie that Mr. Davies will be in touch. This day has started out very good for Eddie.

When Eddie gets to work, a familiar face is waiting there for him to arrive. As he gets out of his MGB, Mr. Crum gets out of his Volkswagen Beetle, hastily walking toward Eddie. Mr. Crum exclaims, "Edward Bogenskaya! I want my house back!" Eddie informs Mr. Crum, "it's in the county dump. Go and get it." Opening the door to the office, and going about his business, Eddie tries to ignore the irate ex-principal of the high school.

Mr. Crum exclaims, "are you going to listen to me?" Remembering that Mr. Zunde always replies to Mr. Crum in a very calm fashion, Eddie nonchalantly replies, "no." Not taking "no" for an answer, Mr. Crum demands, "I want my house back!" As he is opening the bay doors, Eddie replies, "so what." Mr. Crum starts screaming and yelling, making a scene. Eddie quickly realizes that Mr. Zunde was spot on. Mr. Crum loses it when he is responded to in a calm manner.

Eddie finally explains to Mr. Crum, "Crum, you don't need your house. From what I heard, you'll be moving into a gated neighborhood, with many security guards soon. And, when you get there, your new neighbors are going to rip you a new hole. So, unless you want me to rebuild your piece of shit engine that you destroyed with your special oil additive, get your ass out of here." Mr. Crum yells, "you can't talk to me that way!" Eddie calmly replies, "I'm sorry. I don't have time to listen to drug dealers today."

Eddie joggles Mr. Crum's memory, reminding him that he had some money stashed away in his house. Getting even more irate, Mr. Crum exclaims, "I want my money back too! My money was in my house, and I know you have it!" Eddie tells Mr. Crum, "Crum, your house was bulldozed down and dumped into a dumpster. Go to the county dump. I'm sure they'll point it out to you." Mr. Crum asks, "so, you bulldozed my house down?" Eddie laughs and replies, "well, not exactly. Kathy bulldozed most of it down. From where I was standing, it sure looked to

me like she was having a lot of fun knocking your piece of shit house down.”

Having enough of Mr. Crum, Eddie asks Mr. Crum, “now, tell me what your problem is again.” Mr. Crum starts his complaining from the top, as Eddie dials the police. Eddie places the call, and Mr. Crum doesn’t even notice who Eddie called since he is on a major tirade after hearing Kathy was the one who bulldozed down his house. Eddie, then getting to work, lets Mr. Crum go off on his tirade.

As Mr. Crum continues to demand that Eddie return his house and his money, a police cruiser pulls into the station. Mr. Crum walks up to the officer, points to Eddie, and exclaims, “that’s the guy, in there! He bulldozed my house down! And, he stole my money!” The officer gets out of the car, and immediately recognizes Mr. Crum. He tells Mr. Crum, “calm down, sir. Let’s take it from the top. Now, what exactly is your complaint?” Mr. Crum reiterates his complaint, as Eddie walks out from the service bay.

Eddie tells the police officer, “hey, Richard! Can you do me a favor and get rid of this guy?” Officer Hayes asks Eddie, “did you call us?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It was me.” Pointing to Mr. Crum, Eddie tells Officer Hayes, “Mr. Crum is on a tirade and is being a pain in the ass. His complaint is that I bulldozed down his piece of shit house over on Second Street.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “I had a lot of money in my house, and Eddie has it! I know he has it!” Ignoring Mr. Crum, Eddie tells Officer Hayes, “his house got put in a dumpster. It’s in the county dump.” Officer Hayes tells Eddie, “Second Street is looking a whole lot better now. You guys did a great job over there.”

Mr. Crum exclaims, “I want my money back! And, I know Eddie has it!” Taking some notes, Officer Hayes asks Mr. Crum, “how much money did you have in your house?” Mr. Crum replies, “tens of thousands of dollars! It was in a few locked boxes! They were hidden in the attic under the insulation!” Now suspicious, Officer Hayes asks Mr. Crum, “can you please explain to me why you had that much money in your house?” Answering for Mr. Crum, Eddie replies, “because he’s a drug dealer, and drug dealers deal in cash. If he put all his drug money in the bank, the IRS would be after him.” Mr. Crum realizes that Eddie is not quite as stupid as he thought. Mr. Crum tells the officer, exclaiming, “don’t listen to him! He doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”

Officer Hayes is very well aware that Mr. Crum is out on bail and awaiting trial. If there was money stashed away in Mr. Crum’s house, it would likely constitute more evidence against Mr. Crum. Pulling Eddie aside, Officer Hayes asks, “when did you guys bulldoze the houses?” Eddie replies, “sometime in early to mid June. It was right after the

University let out.” Officer Hayes asks, “what happened to them after that?” Eddie explains, “Mark loaded all four houses into dumpsters. They were taken away to the county dump.” Officer Hayes asks, “did Mark see any money?” Eddie replies, “no, not that I know of. Me, Kathy, and Paula watched as Mark loaded Mr. Crum’s house into the dumpster. We didn’t see anything.” Officer Hayes then explains to Eddie, “I’m going to get his statement. If there was cash in this character’s house, we’ll bring up his claim of it at the trial.”

Eddie gets back to work, and Officer Hayes walks over to Mr. Crum to get his statement. Acting very concerned, Officer Hayes tells Mr. Crum, “the department would like to find your money, but I’m going to need your help. I’m going to file a report, but I need you to go down to the station and fill out some paperwork describing exactly what is missing.” Mr. Crum, who suddenly becomes very cooperative, tells the officer, “I’ll do that, as soon as we’re done here.”

Officer Hayes clearly said that the department would like to find Mr. Crum’s money. Officer Hayes never said that they were going to give it back to Mr. Crum. Nor did Officer Hayes tell Mr. Crum that tens of thousands of dollars in cash stashed away, if found, will likely be used against him in court.

After Officer Hayes takes Mr. Crum’s statement, Mr. Crum starts the engine of his Volkswagen Beetle, which sounds like it is ready to seize up at any moment. Mr. Crum drives away, confident that he will be getting his money back someday soon.

Officer Hayes walks over to Eddie, and tells him, “that character is a real piece of work. I’ll send a detective over to the dump. If they find the money he claims he had, hopefully some of our marked bills will be in his stash.” Eddie asks Officer Hayes, “is there any way I can keep that idiot away from here?” Officer Hayes replies, “yes. I suggest you go down to the court and get a restraining order. If he violates the restraining order, call us. We’ll cart him off to jail immediately.” Eddie tells Officer Hayes, “I think I’ll do that after work today.” As Officer Hayes heads out, he radios the precinct, forewarning them that Mr. Crum is on his way, and of the situation.

As the end of the Summer draws near, Eddie and Kathy decide to have a get-together at their house before classes start. On the guest list is the entire tribe, along with a few members from the track team. With McCutchen and Leggett gone, the energy is a lot lighter. On the menu is pizza, which will be delivered around noon by Joe and Arianna. The pool is up to a perfect temperature for relaxing and, most importantly, there is not a dead frog in sight.

The guests arrive a few at a time, many of them in Dune Buggies. For those who have never been to Eddie and Kathy's house, Kathy gives them the grand tour. Eddie and Kathy's house is still sparsely decorated, and looks beautiful inside.

Outside the house, the guys check out Eddie's shop, admiring the partially assembled Dune Buggy with a Porsche 911 drive train and front end. A metallic white body off to the side awaits to be installed on the frame. With them is Tessa, who is checking out all of the Dune Buggies. Another body remains boxed up, which Eddie will open when it's time to install it. And, Eddie is modifying one of the frames to fit the motor laying on the floor in the back of the shop.

As they are standing around in Eddie's shop, Tessa asks Eddie, "so, whose is the white Dune Buggy?" Eddie explains, "it doesn't have anyone's name on it yet. I'm just going to build a few Dune Buggies and sell them." Tessa asks, "how fast does it go?" Eddie replies, "too fast. Kurt, the guy who designed them, estimates 140 miles an hour, but I wouldn't drive it that fast." Tessa then asks, "can you really drive it on the beach?" Eddie explains, "you can drive it on the beach, off road, on road, anywhere you want." Tessa tells Eddie, "I need something practical. Jimmy's motorcycle is what I call impractical. A Dune Buggy seems like it would make much more sense." Eddie tells Tessa, "well, if you want one, I can build one for you." Tessa replies, "I'm thinking about it."

While the guests are arriving, Mark is outside with Paula, relaxing by the pool. Paula asks Mark, "what are you thinking about?" Mark replies, "McCrutchen is going to pop up in another college next year. Since he always wants to be the star, he's going to go to a college that has a really shitty team." Paula comments, "there are a few of them in the division. Two teams in the division haven't won much of anything since I've been at the University." Mark mentions, "I'm not sure I'll ever get a chance to mess with McCrutchen again." Paula reassures Mark, "you'll find other ways to entertain yourself. How about that Nachlobrocklin guy? You could mess with him." Mark concedes, "yeah! That's the ticket! I'll mess with Nachlobrocklin." Mark is happy that he has someone to mess with during the upcoming track season.

Everyone has their way to raise their energy level during a meet. Braden's way of getting his energy level up is by ranting, chanting, and telling everyone that he is going to kick their ass. Kathy and Paula raise their energy by racing against each other. Mitchell's way is by using his brain, analyzing every last angle to gain an advantage. Eddie's way is simple. He stays focused on the race, intentionally ignoring everyone around him. Apparently, messing with other runners during a meet is the way Mark gets his energy level up. By messing with McCutchen, the potential of confrontation gets Mark's adrenaline levels up.

During the late morning, everyone gets in the pool to cool off. Tessa asks everyone who has a Dune Buggy what they like and what they don't like about them. Mark is discussing ways to mess with Nachlobrocklin. Kathy and Paula are talking with Barbara, who is very excited to be the new track coach at the high school next year. Erika is diving off of Bobby B's shoulders into the water. And, everyone is occasionally looking toward the driveway, waiting for the pizza to arrive.

While everyone is doing their thing, Eddie is talking with Akinmola about the mile. Akinmola is happy that, for the first time in his life, he beat Mitchell in the mile. Changing the subject, Eddie asks, "did your dad find any land yet?" Akinmola replies, "no, not yet. But, he's still looking."

Eddie then yells over to Kathy, "should I tell him?" Knowing exactly what Eddie is talking about, Kathy yells back, "yeah, but wait. I'll be right there." Kathy makes her way over to the corner of the pool where Eddie and Akinmola are standing, stopping to talk with Erika for a moment. Akinmola asks Eddie, "is there something that I should know?" Eddie replies, "yeah. But, wait until Kathy gets here."

Kathy finally makes her way to where Eddie and Akinmola are hanging out, which seemed like an eternity has passed to Akinmola. Akinmola asks, "what is so important that I should know about?" Eddie replies, "we have some good news." Akinmola asks, "what's the good news, my friend?" Eddie would have moved on to answering the question, but Akinmola never misses the opportunity to ask another question. Eddie explains, "we found some land for your dad to build a church." Suddenly all excited, Akinmola exclaims, "really? Are you serious, man?" Kathy tells Akinmola, "yeah, we're serious."

Akinmola asks, "where is this land?" Eddie replies, "it's across the street from the high school." Akinmola tells Eddie, "wow! That would be a really good location!" Kathy adds, "that's what we thought." Moving on to his next question, Akinmola asks, "so, tell me. How big is this land?" Kathy explains, "it's a little bigger than you said your dad wanted. It's seven acres." Akinmola exclaims, "seven acres? You ain't making this up, are you?" Kathy replies, "no. Not at all." Akinmola, like the rest of the tribe, is always suspicious that someone may be messing with him. And, for good reason. Everyone in the tribe occasionally gets messed with, and messes with someone else.

Akinmola is suddenly very excited. It has been a little more than three years, and Dr. Akinmola has not yet found a suitable tract of land to build a church. When Eddie found the property on his way to work, he had Dr. Akinmola in mind. Kathy was fully onboard with acquiring the property before someone else gets the idea to buy it. So, Eddie and Kathy bought the property. Eddie and Kathy reason that, if Dr. Akinmola did not want

the property because of the location, they can get Mark to build a few houses on the land and sell them.

Akinmola tells Eddie, "I want to see this property." Eddie explains, "it's seven acres, and it's level. The land is cleared. You've seen it before. Mitchell drove by the property on your way here." Akinmola tells Eddie, "yeah, I know. I saw it, but I didn't look at it." Getting out of the pool, Akinmola tells Eddie and Kathy, "I'm going to run over there and look now." Knowing that Akinmola will stop at nothing to take a look at the property, Kathy looks at Eddie, and tells him, "just drive him. Take the Dune Buggy." Eddie tells Akinmola, "come on, let's go."

Eddie and Akinmola get into the Dune Buggy, and head to the site. When they arrive, Eddie drives off the road, and through the property. Akinmola exclaims, "wow! This land is perfect! It's across from the high school, and right off the main road!" When they get to the side of the property that adjoins the highway, Eddie points out, "here's a place that would be a great location for a sign. Everyone driving down the highway will see it." Akinmola exclaims, "Eddie, my friend, this place is perfect! How did you find this, my man?" Eddie explains, "I was driving to work one day, and I saw the sign." Now that Akinmola's curiosity is satisfied, Eddie and Akinmola head back to the house.

When Eddie and Akinmola return to the house, they get there just in time for pizza. Between bites of pizza, Kathy asks Akinmola, "so, what do you think?" Akinmola, who cannot contain his excitement, tells Kathy, "that land is perfect! I'll have to show my dad." Kathy tells him, "oh, good!" After he graduates from the seminary, Akinmola will likely be working with his father in the church. The news of the property will not only be good news to Dr. Akinmola, but to his son as well.

After lunch, the group all returns to the pool, except for Tessa. Tessa is examining each Dune Buggy as if she is a quality control technician. The land that Eddie showed Akinmola earlier is on Akinmola's mind. Akinmola is sitting alone, contemplating the many possibilities of what can be done with not three, but seven, acres. Mark is sitting back, thinking of a few innovative ways of messing with Nachlobrocklin. After lunch, however, most everyone else is relaxed, laying in the sun or enjoying the pool.

When they get a moment alone, Kathy asks Eddie, "did you give Akinmola all the news?" Eddie replies, "no. Not yet." Kathy suggests, "maybe we can do that tomorrow." Eddie points out, "Dr. Akinmola hasn't seen the property yet. Let's see if he likes it first." Kathy replies, "that's a plan."

As the afternoon begins to wind down and the guests are headed out, Tessa asks Eddie, "can I buy the white Dune Buggy?" Eddie replies, "sure, if you want to. You do realize it doesn't have a heater, and the top isn't exactly weather tight." Tessa tells Eddie, "I know. I've been checking them out." Surprising Tessa, Eddie tells her, "I saw you looking underneath them. It looks to me like you were really looking them over." Tessa replies, "I was. So, can I buy it?" Eddie replies, "sure. What do you want to be painted on the back?" Tessa replies, "Tessa's Dune Buggy! I want it to be like everyone else's!" Eddie tells Tessa the price, and that the Dune Buggy will be finished before school starts. Tessa is excited, and can't wait for her Dune Buggy to be finished.

The next day, Eddie and Kathy attend Dr. Akinmola's church service. Before the service, Kathy asks Akinmola if he spoke with his father about the property. Akinmola indicates that he has, and that his father is very excited about the possibility of moving forward with constructing a church building. Akinmola also mentions that he and his father were going to take a look at it after lunch today.

After the church service, Dr. Akinmola, Mrs. Akinmola, Adekunle, Dr. Akinmola's daughter Sade, Eddie, and Kathy all go out to eat lunch together. Over lunch, they talk about the property, and the excitement level rises. After lunch they head over to the property. Eddie and Kathy drive Kathy's Dune Buggy, just in case Dr. Akinmola wants to take a drive through the land. Dr. Akinmola and his family follow in their family car.

Arriving at the property, Kathy pulls off the road and onto the land. Since four door sedans aren't very well equipped for driving off road, Dr. Akinmola parks across the street in the high school parking lot. Dr. Akinmola stands across the street, looking at the land from a distance. Kathy mentions to Eddie, "I think he might like it." Eddie replies, "how do you know? He's not even coming across the street." Kathy bumps Eddie's hip with hers, and tells him, "he's not coming across the street because he's standing there admiring it." After a minute, Dr. Akinmola walks across the street with his family.

Once they've crossed the street, Kathy throws out the question, "so, what do you guys think?" Looking out at the property, Dr. Akinmola exclaims, "this place is beautiful!" Perceiving that Dr. Akinmola likes the property, Eddie asks him, "do you want to walk around, or have Kathy drive you around?" Dr. Akinmola tells Eddie, "thank you, but we're all going to walk. I don't want to miss a thing!" Sade asks, "are there any bunny rabbits?" Dr. Akinmola replies, "if you see a bunny rabbit, you are leaving it here. This is the bunny rabbit's home." Eddie and Dr. Akinmola lead, as they all take a trek through the land.

There is no question whether Dr. Akinmola likes the land or not. As they are walking, Dr. Akinmola is continually commenting how beautiful and perfect the land is. Dr. Akinmola asks Eddie, “how big is this land again?” Eddie replies, “it’s seven acres. It’s approximately 500 feet across the front, and 610 feet deep.”

Once they have walked around the entire property, they all stop somewhere in the middle. Kathy asks again, “so, what do you guys think?” Dr. Akinmola replies, “this land is beautiful! This is perfect! I’m just wondering how much it is going to cost.” Kathy looks at Eddie, and Eddie nods his head, apparently signaling something to Kathy.

Kathy asks Dr. Akinmola again, “so, you really like it?” Dr. Akinmola replies, “I could not ask for anything better. This is twice as big as I was hoping for, and four times bigger than I was expecting.” Kathy tells Dr. Akinmola, “Eddie and I bought this property a few weeks ago. We’d like to donate it to your church so you can get started with the building.” Hearing what Kathy said, Dr. Akinmola is in shock. Falling to his knees, the only words he is able to get out are, “thank you, Jesus!” With tears of happiness flowing down her eyes, Mrs. Akinmola tells Eddie and Kathy, “oh, thank you so much! Thank you so much!”

Akinmola, who always asks a lot of questions, asks Eddie, “are you guys serious, man?” Eddie gives Akinmola a fist bump, and replies, “yeah. Totally, bro.” Akinmola tells Eddie, “wow! That is really, really nice of you guys!” Eddie tells Akinmola, “the good part is that Mr. Crum is no longer the principal across the street.” Akinmola comments, “and, the school can only be a better place without him. My sister is going there next year.”

Eddie joins the conversation between Kathy and Dr. Akinmola. Dr. Akinmola tells Eddie, “we have been looking for a tract of land since we’ve moved here. Our church has saved enough money for the land, or to build a building, but not both. This will really help us move forward. I thank both of you very, very much!” Eddie replies to Dr. Akinmola, “you’re welcome. We’re just happy to help.”

Eddie then mentions, “it sounds like you can start building soon.” Dr. Akinmola tells Eddie, “I don’t even know where to begin. We’ll have to find a builder.” Eddie explains, “if you want, my father, Mark’s father, and Mark can build it for you.” Dr. Akinmola asks, “are you serious? Do they know how to build a church building?” Eddie replies, “they do commercial construction. They can handle it. No problem. And, Kathy can drive the bulldozer.” Dr. Akinmola turns to Kathy and asks, “do you really know how to drive a bulldozer?” Kathy smiles, and replies, “I sure can! And, so can Paula!”

Eddie, Dr. Akinmola, and his family walk around the property again, taking more time to look since acquiring the land has become a reality. Sade seems to be more interested at the moment of getting a ride in Kathy's Dune Buggy. Kathy drives Sade around, as everyone else walks the property. Akinmola and Eddie split off from the rest of the group for a few minutes. Akinmola tells Eddie, "my dad was trying to decide if he should lease his space for five more years. He has to decide by the end of next year." Eddie tells Akinmola, "the building can easily be built by then. No problem."

After Sade gets her ride in Kathy's Dune Buggy, Kathy and Eddie get ready to head out. Everyone says goodbye, and will keep in touch. On the way out, Kathy tells Eddie, "Sade wants a Dune Buggy." Eddie replies, "how old is she, like fourteen or something?" Kathy replies, "yeah. She said she'll be going to high school next year."

As Kathy and Eddie drive away, Dr. Akinmola and his family take one last look at the land before they head out. While they are headed back to their car, Sade asks her parents, "can I get a Dune Buggy, please?" That's not exactly the question Dr. Akinmola wants to field right now, so he tells her, "if you want one, you'll have to save up your money."

Just before classes start again at the high school and the University, Officer Hayes drops by the service station to give Eddie some news. Officer Hayes often stops by Angelo's Service Station to say hello, but today is a little different.

Officer Hayes walks back to the service area, and tells Eddie, "hey, thanks for the tip!" Thinking Richard was referring to a stock tip, Eddie tells Richard, "don't forget to sell it before October." Richard replies, "not that one. Maurice Crum. We sent a detective and some heavy equipment out to the county dump. They found his house among the construction trash. We found his money and some drugs." Eddie replies, "wow! How much money did he have?" Richard reveals, "he had a little more than fifty-eight thousand dollars in locked metal boxes, just like he described to us." Eddie exclaims, "and, he lived in that dump on Second Street? That just doesn't make any sense!"

Richard explains, "he had a sophisticated operation going on over there on Second Street. This character used the abandoned houses for drop off and delivery points. Some of the bills were marked. So, now we know exactly where Maurice Crum sat in the supply chain. But, that's not why I'm here. Why I stopped by today is to let you know that there's another warrant out for Maurice Crum's arrest. So, if he stops by, call us and stall him if you can." Eddie replies, "that should be easy. I'll just pull a wire from his ignition." Eddie then asks, "what did he do this time?"

Richard replies emphatically, “we now have evidence that this character is part of a gambling operation.”

Eddie pauses for a moment, and exclaims, “wow! Mr. Crum, the gambler.” Richard explains, “a good number of the marked bills we found in his stash were used in gambling. They were used to place bets. Our men placed the bets through agents. Many of the bills were found in his stash. We know who a few of the agents are, but we are still trying to find the ringleaders. With fifty-eight thousand dollars, many of them marked bills, there is a lot to sort out.” Eddie replies, “wow! This sounds complicated.”

With his limited knowledge of gambling, Eddie asks, “what was Crum gambling?” Richard explains, “high school and college sports. He was part of a ring that takes bets. It’s not the big time, but apparently they made out really well. The way we see it, it’s more to show the judge at his trial.”

Shocked at the news, Eddie exclaims, “wait a second! High school sports?” Richard replies, “yeah. Can you believe it?” Eddie suddenly gets very concerned and tells Richard, “follow me,” as Eddie walks into the office. Apparently, a light bulb went off in Eddie’s head.

Eddie tells Richard, “have a seat.” Eddie, who is now obviously ticked off, hammers his fist on the desk, and tells Richard, “that pepecita head, Crum, was always interfering with the sports teams at the high school! Right before a meet, he would find a reason to suspend one or two athletes. It’s not only track. It’s all the sports. And, it’s always the better athletes he’s after. I’m not talking about now and then. It was constant, and it never ended! That piece of shit was rigging the outcomes of the meets!” Eddie is not stupid. He has just figured it out. Eddie now knows why Mr. Crum was always interfering with the track team, and the other sports teams, except for one team in particular.

Eddie listens as Richard radios the precinct, telling them, “315 to radio.” The dispatcher replies, “315. Go ahead.” Richard replies, “I’ll be 10-7³ at Angelo’s Service Station.” The dispatcher replies, “315 10-4. 10-7 at Angelo’s.” Eddie now knows something serious is going on. And, Richard knows that Eddie, again, may have some more valuable information.

Richard asks Eddie, “what else do you know?” Eddie replies, “Mr. O’Brien, one of the social studies teachers, is one of Mr. Crum’s buddies.” Richard is taking notes, as Eddie spills his heart. Eddie continues, “Mr.

³ 10-7: Out of service, i.e., busy.

O'Brien would always fail certain athletes. If an athlete is failing any class, they're not allowed to play sports until they have passing grades. That Mr. Crum had Mr. O'Brien in his back pocket the whole time! And, for some reason, Mr. Crum always wanted Mr. O'Brien's son on the track team. Jimmy O'Brien ran the 440-yard dash in over two minutes! He sucked! Put O'Brien on any relay team, and they'll lose."

Eddie hammers his fist on the desk again and blurts out, "Mr. Ryan! Mr. Crum never interfered with the baseball team! What is so special about the baseball team that they always got a pass?" Richard asks, "there was no interference with the baseball team, but there was with all the other teams?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Exactly. Well, the major teams, anyway. No one ever interfered with the girls' badminton team." Richard asks, "and, this Mr. Ryan is the baseball coach?" Eddie replies, "yeah." Richard hypothesizes, "if Crum and Ryan were working together, the coach could easily make substitutions to affect the outcome of the game." Eddie replies, "so, I bet that Mr. Crum, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Ryan are all in it together. I can believe that." Richard tells Eddie, "that gives me something more to investigate."

Calming down a bit, Eddie tells Richard, "you really need to talk with John Davies." Richard asks, "the attorney in town?" Eddie replies, "yeah, that's him." As he starts a new page in his book, Richard asks, "what's the deal with John Davies?" Eddie explains, "years ago, John Davies was all set to get a football scholarship to some big university. Mr. Crum suspended him for drinking a beer on school grounds. John was eighteen⁴ at the time. It was on a Saturday, and school wasn't even in session. Mr. Crum, who just happened to be at the school, saw it, and suspended him anyway. So, now listen to this. When Davies wasn't allowed to play in the divisional semifinals, the team got hammered big time. I think the final score was like 63 to 6. We were expected to win that game, but we got creamed. That's when the school board hired Mr. Zunde to keep Mr. Crum in line." Richard is taking more notes, becoming aware that the gambling ring may be a little more extensive than originally thought.

Richard asks, "this Mr. Zunde, what exactly does he do at the high school?" Eddie replies, "he's the athletic director, and teaches a few gym classes. The superintendent, Dr. Brooks, is Mr. Zunde's cousin. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Crum were at it for the entire four years I was there. And, until Mr. Crum was arrested, they were still at it. But now, all the gym teachers report to Mr. Zunde. Mr. Zunde reports directly to the school board. Mr. Crum was interfering with athletics so bad, the school board

⁴ Eighteen years of age was the legal drinking age at Eddie's time.

had to take Mr. Crum out of the chain of command.” Eddie then asks, “do you remember when Mr. Crum attacked me?” Richard replies, “I do remember that.” Eddie confesses, “my only regret is that I didn’t body slam that piece of shit harder.”

Recalling his senior year in high school, Eddie tells Richard, “there might even be more.” Richard asks, “what do you mean?” Eddie explains, “Centerville High School. The coach over there is Mr. Ruff. Mr. Crum and Mr. Ruff got into a huge spat after a four-way indoor meet once. I remember hearing Mr. Ruff tell Mr. Crum, ‘that really tilts the odds in your favor. You weren’t supposed to take everything.’ I was wondering at the time what that was supposed to mean. For days before that meet, Mr. Crum was on the rampage. He tried to suspend Braden, and he wanted to suspend Erika too. And, he desperately wanted Jimmy O’Brien and the Chuckie on the team. If Mr. Crum got what he wanted, O’Brien and the Chuckie would have weakened the team. But, we took the gold medal in every event during that meet.” Reviewing his notes, Richard informs Eddie, “when someone uses the phrase, ‘that really tilts the odds in your favor,’ they are likely referring to gambling.”

Eddie proposes, “if I had to guess, if Mr. Crum was in on it, so is Mr. Ruff, the coach at Centerville. Get this. Centerville had this runner, a guy named Todd McCrutchten. Actually, his name is Todd McCutchen, but we call him McCrutchten. Anyway, McCrutchten’s times were always erratic. He would run the 440-yard dash one day in 57 seconds, and the next week, he would run it in 75 seconds.” Richard asks, “really? That’s quite the spread.”

Eddie continues, telling Richard, “it doesn’t stop there. How can a relay team make it to State every year, and totally blow it like Centerville did every year? And, at every meet, Mr. Ruff was always complaining about something.” Richard gets the impression that the problem may be even worse than he originally thought. Richard asks, “what year is this McCutchen character in now?” Eddie replies, “he was a sophomore at the University, but he just got expelled.”

Richard tells Eddie, “wait a second. Todd McCutchen got expelled from the University?” Eddie replies, “yeah. So did a guy named Steve Leggett.” Richard asks, “do you know why this McCutchen character got expelled?” Eddie replies, “oh, yeah! He planted steroids in my locker. The Dean of Students at the University got an anonymous tip that I was using and selling them. Then, McCrutchten, Leggett, and a third guy tried to plant steroids in Mark’s locker, but the campus police caught them. The lot number and manufacturing date of the steroids they tried to plant in Mark’s locker matched the ones that were planted in my locker. And, the police found the same steroids in McCrutchten’s dorm room.” Looking at his notes, Richard asks, “how does this Leggett character fit in?” Eddie

explains, “he picked the locks for McCrutchen. Braden found out that Leggett’s father is a locksmith.” Richard replies, “wow. This gets better all the time.”

Eddie raises his index finger into the air, shaking his arm, and tells Richard, “you know. Last year, at the high school State invitational meet, Todd McCrutchen snuck into a relay race. His brother, Jeff, was on the roster, but Todd McCrutchen took his brothers place. But, the plan failed and Centerville got caught, and they got a one-year sanction. So, they can’t participate in any State level event this year. According to Kathy’s father, if they didn’t get caught, they would have gotten the bronze medal.” Richard asks, “how did they get caught?” Eddie replies, “Braden saw McCrutchen on the track when he was talking with Kathy’s father. So did me and Mark. We yelled down to them from the stands, but they apparently already figured it out.” Richard shakes his head, wondering how this piece of the puzzle will fit.

Richard asks, “you mentioned the Dean of Students was involved with the case. How was he involved?” Eddie replies, “he pretty much kicked me out of the University. But, when McCrutchen got caught, they reinstated me.” Eddie begins to think that, if McCrutchen succeeded in framing Mark, who would have been next? Richard asks, “who is the Dean of Students?” Eddie replies, “his name is Dean Grimsby. He’s a real asshole if you ask me.” Richard takes more notes, wondering which pieces are part of the puzzle and which ones are not.

Eddie hammers his fist on the desk again, and exclaims, “McCrutchen’s brother used to go to the University!” Richard asks, “what is his brother’s name?” Eddie replies, “his name is Scott. So, now I’m wondering if the third person who was never caught was Scott McCrutchen!” Richard asks, “now, let me get this straight. This third person involved in planting the steroids in Mark’s locker was never caught?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Exactly. Todd McCrutchen and Steve Leggett both denied there was a third person, but Braden was chasing two people. The other officer had Leggett detained in the locker room.” Richard tells Eddie, “I’ve been around a while. I can just about guarantee you that Scott McCrutchen was the third person. Blood is thicker than water. He’s not going to turn in his brother.”

Eddie recalls, telling Richard, “at the University, Johnson was on the mile medley relay team with Todd McCrutchen. McCrutchen ran the second 220-yard leg. During one race, he ran his leg in like 45 seconds. A good time for running 220 yards would be in the lower to middle twenty-second range. You would definitely expect the time to be better than 30 seconds. But, 45 seconds just really sucks. Braden can run 440 yards in 45 seconds. But, anyway, McCrutchen also bungled both of the handoffs during that race. One of the guys on the relay team thought

McCrutchen intentionally threw the race.” Richard, getting the big picture, is writing down everything Eddie says.

Eddie and Richard talk for a while longer. Richard has discovered that he apparently has a lot more to investigate. Eddie has figured out that many of the outcomes of the sports competitions in his high school were possibly rigged. Worst of all, the possibility that the sports at the University are also rigged irritates Eddie. Eddie can’t wait to hear how Richard’s investigation goes. But, for now, Eddie goes back to work, and Richard has a lot more pieces of the puzzle to work with.

When Kathy gets home later that afternoon, she finds Eddie in his shop working on Tessa’s Dune Buggy. Eddie sort of promised Tessa that it would be ready by the time classes start, and time is running out. Kathy walks into the shop and asks Eddie, “do you need any help?” Eddie replies, “no. I’m almost done for now.” Kathy tells Eddie, “I’m all registered for classes. And, I made sure they reinstated my scholarship.” Eddie asks, “did you get me registered too?” Kathy laughs, and reminds him, “the school takes care of your special registration. But, I did get you your parking sticker.”

Eddie tells Kathy, “Richard came by the station today. There’s another warrant out for Mr. Crum’s arrest.” Kathy asks, “oh really? What did the little weasel do this time?” Eddie replies, “you’re not going to believe it.” Taking a seat in Tessa’s white Dune Buggy, Kathy exclaims, “try me! This has got to be good!” Kathy is somehow jubilant that Mr. Crum is in trouble once again.

Eddie explains, “Richard said that Mr. Crum was part of a gambling ring.” Kathy replies, “well, that’s maybe a little better than dealing drugs.” Eddie continues, “well, not really. He said they found the money that was hidden in Mr. Crum’s house. They found fifty-eight thousand dollars, in locked boxes. Some of the bills were marked, and were used in gambling.” Kathy replies, “wow! Fifty-eight thousand dollars! And, he lived in that dump?” Eddie replies, “that’s exactly what I said.”

Eddie continues, “but, that’s not the big part. Richard said the gambling was betting on high school and college sports teams. So, get this. The reason Mr. Crum tried to suspend athletes and Mr. O’Brien always failed athletes is to fix the outcome of the games. And Mr. Ryan, the baseball coach, is probably in on it too. Mr. Crum never messed with the baseball team. But, it doesn’t end there. Think about what happened to John Davies.” Eddie explains all of what he and Officer Hayes discussed regarding high school sports. After hearing Eddie’s news regarding Mr. Crum’s interference with athletics, Kathy, barely able to compose herself, exclaims, “that little piece of Crum shit!”

Eddie tells Kathy, "it doesn't stop there. The gambling ring extends to college sports. Now I'm thinking McCrutchen is involved." Kathy asks, "how is that?" Eddie points out, "can you tell me one other runner that can run a 57-second quarter-mile one day, and a 75-second quarter-mile a week later? No, you can't. And, think about all those bungled handoffs." Kathy exclaims, "McCrutchen's brother was the same way! His times were all over the place!" Eddie tells Kathy, "Richard said the third person helping McCrutchen and lug nut when they got caught planting steroids in Mark's locker was probably Scott McCrutchen."

Thinking about what Eddie has revealed, Kathy gets very quiet, and thinks to herself for a while, recalling the many past events at the high school. Meanwhile, Eddie finishes connecting the antenna for the two-way radio underneath the rear fender.

After a few minutes, Eddie emerges from underneath the Dune Buggy. Kathy tells Eddie, "I think I figured something out." Eddie asks, "what's that?" Kathy explains, "now, I'm guessing what you and Richard know so far is only the tip of the iceberg. So, if you wanted to affect the outcome of a game or track meet, you'd have a lot better chance of doing it if you can take out the better players, like John Davies. Now, listen to this. With you, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, and everyone else on the University team who never loses, they can't fix the races any longer." Eddie adds, "and, you, Paula, and Barbara too." Kathy concludes, "that means they can't make money. It's a sure bet that you'll win the 100-yard dash. It's a sure bet that Mark will win the 220-yard dash. And, no one is going to beat Braden in the 440-yard dash! If they take you guys down, they're back in business! They can't fix races that can't be fixed." Eddie exclaims, "wow! You are definitely on to something here, Katarina Karakova!" Kathy smiles, and replies, "for your information, buddy, it's Katarina Bogenskaya now."

Kathy exclaims, "that's why they never went after Stone!" Eddie asks, "now, what are you talking about?" Kathy explains, "Darryl Stone is Provost Leighton's son! He won every race he ran until Mitchell came along! They're not going to go after him!" Eddie exclaims, "just like they're not going after you because your dad is the athletic director! And, you, Paula, and Barbara are good friends, so they're not going after them either."

Kathy is now livid. She points out to Eddie, "so, now our team is winning everything, just like we did in high school. And, it's the same old crap, just like in high school, all over again. Except, instead of detention and suspension, it's the big time. It's planting steroids in lockers and expulsion." Seeing the light, Kathy tells Eddie, "there's definitely something going on here. We need a tribe meeting." Eddie replies, "yeah,

I'd say. And, we should invite Mr. Zunde and Richard." Kathy concludes, "we're doing that!"

Eddie and Kathy believe they are on to something. With the proof sitting in the evidence room at the police station, Officer Hayes is also confident that he is on to something. Betting in sports is commonplace. So is fixing the outcome of the event if enough money is at stake. In order to fix the outcome of an event, there has to be someone on the inside in order to do that. To get to the bottom of who is behind the gambling operation, if in fact it does exist, would be analogous to opening Pandora's box. Going down that path, and getting to the root of the situation is certain to invite a few unexpected surprises. But, that does not seem to bother Eddie or Kathy. And, it certainly does not bother Officer Richard Hayes.

While Kathy is arranging the tribe meeting, life goes on as usual. Eddie goes to work in the mornings, and Kathy does, well, what Kathy does. Kathy has been doing a lot of training recently, and getting ready to play a larger role in coaching the high school track team. Kathy and Paula have met with Barbara a few times, getting their plan ready for when they begin practice in the Autumn.

One day, while Eddie is at work, a familiar face drives into the service station. This time, fortunately, it is not Paul Mahoney or Mr. Crum. Today's familiar face is Jimmy O'Brien, the track star wannabe who never made the team because the system isn't fair. O'Brien was never able to make the cut on the high school track team in spite of four years of trying, blaming his failures on everything but his own ability, or lack of it.

As he drives in, Jimmy O'Brien pulls his brand-new Mercedes Benz up to the pumps. Manning the station alone, while Angelo is away on vacation, Eddie takes a break and goes out to the pumps. Eddie is wise enough to not let Jimmy O'Brien touch the gas pumps. Doing so will only invite disaster. Wondering how O'Brien struck it rich, Eddie is ready to hear the story.

O'Brien opens the window, and asks Eddie, "can you fill it up with regular?" Eddie replies, "no. This car takes premium." O'Brien tells Eddie, "no one told me that. Then, I guess, put premium in it." Eddie replies, "sure. No problem."

As Eddie is pumping the gas, O'Brien asks Eddie, "so, how do you like it?" Eddie replies, "it looks pretty nice. Is it yours?" O'Brien answers, "yeah. I just bought it." Eddie asks, "wow! You must have a good job. Where are you working?" O'Brien explains, "I'm working at the burger place downtown. I'm a manager now." Eddie replies, "wow! It looks like

you made the big time.” O’Brien adds, “well, my dad helped me buy the car.”

O’Brien snickers, and asks Eddie, “so, is that all you’re doing now? Pumping gas?” Eddie replies, “yeah, that’s all I’m doing now. Pumping gas.” O’Brien pays Eddie for the gas, and drives off. After O’Brien leaves, Eddie is now fully convinced that Mr. O’Brien is in on the gambling ring.

Kathy managed to get the entire tribe together for a tribe meeting. Mr. Zunde, Mr. Frazier, and Officer Hayes, the police officer doing the investigation, have all made the time in their schedules to be present. John Davies, the local attorney who lost his football scholarship years ago because of Mr. Crum, has also made the time to attend the meeting. Mr. Zunde was kind enough to host the meeting in the high school’s auxiliary gym, a place with which everyone is quite familiar. High school classes will begin shortly, with the teachers in school a few days before the students arrive. Since Officer Hayes is conducting the investigation, Kathy decided that he should be the one who is running the meeting.

Officer Hayes opens the meeting introducing himself, and asks everyone to introduce themselves to him and each other. Officer Hayes knows many of the athletes, particularly because he has had to be called out to the high school on numerous occasions. Due to the nature of the meeting, Mr. Zunde also asked that all of the physical education staff be present today. For consideration of their time, Mr. Zunde has given them Friday, which is a teacher’s workday, off. The physical education staff still reports to Mr. Zunde, so there’s nothing anyone can do about it anyway.

After the introductions, getting down to business, Officer Hayes announces, “from what I gather, no one is sad to see Maurice Crum gone. As all of you know by now, Maurice Crum has been arrested for possession of, with intent to distribute, various banned and controlled substances. What you may not know is that Maurice Crum is suspected to be involved in a gambling operation.” The room suddenly gets very silent, as Officer Hayes continues, “Maurice Crum was not betting on horses or dogfights. We have definitive evidence that Maurice Crum was part of a gambling ring that rigs sporting events at both the high school and college level.” Officer Hayes now has everyone’s full attention.

Elaborating, Officer Hayes continues, “we have discovered that most of the activity has been at the collegiate level. At the high school level, most of the activity was confined to the State level competitions, the higher profile events, and divisional championship games. I understand from some of you that Maurice Crum has interfered with this school’s athletic program for many years.” Officer Hayes continues, reiterating much of his conversation with Eddie a few days ago. Officer Hayes, however, does not

reveal all of what he knows to those who are present. He only reveals the amount of information necessary to obtain more information.

After his presentation, Officer Hayes explains, “why I am here today is because I need your help. If you are a faculty member or an administrator, and have any evidence of students being suspended, given detention, or unduly given failing grades to prevent them from competing, I would like to speak with you. If you are a student, either in college or high school, and you suspect that you’ve been benched in favor of a less qualified athlete, I’d like to speak with you. If you have been subjected to improper or inappropriate disciplinary action that prevented you from competing, I’d like to speak with you.” Officer Hayes is hoping to obtain a substantial amount of information for his investigation. Specifically, Officer Hayes is looking for the names of people who are potentially involved with the gambling ring.

While Officer Hayes conducts a question and answer session, Mr. Zunde leaves the gym and heads to the athletic office. Mr. Frazier is appalled at what he is hearing, but finally gets some answers that explains all the crap he’s had to endure for years. Braden now realizes why he’s been a target of Mr. Crum before every big meet. John Davies, who probably suffered the greatest blow from the gambling operation, finally understands the real reason for his suspension years ago. Erika, a frequent target of Mr. Crum’s disciplinary action, cannot hide her frustration and anger. And Eddie’s brother, John, now realizes exactly why Mr. Crum was after him personally.

Mr. Zunde returns from the athletic office, where he made copies of his files documenting each and every instance of Mr. Crum interfering with athletics over the years. Seeing Mr. Zunde returning with a copy of the file, Mr. Frazier asks, “did you copy the whole file?” Mr. Zunde replies, “every last page. I suspect we have enough here to keep the officer busy for a while.” Mr. Frazier whispers to Mr. Zunde, “I hate to say it, but maybe Crum was a little smarter than I thought.” Mr. Zunde whispers back, “well, he couldn’t have been that smart. It sounds like he left enough evidence to put him away until I retire.” Mr. Frazier comments, “I’m just happy for Barbara. She won’t have to put up with him.”

After the question and answer session, Officer Hayes hands out his business card to everyone in case they think of any other information that may help. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier walk up to Officer Hayes and deliver the file. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier, who are a goldmine of information, have a good conversation with Officer Hayes. Mr. Davies joins the conversation, who is glad to see Mr. Frazier again.

After the meeting, Officer Hayes tells Kathy, “I can’t tell you how much I appreciate you putting this together.” Kathy replies, “we’re all glad to

help. I'm sure that Mr. Zunde, Mr. Frazier, and Barbara are grateful that Mr. Crum is gone." Officer Hayes asks, "I believe Mr. Frazier said he is the new University track coach. Am I correct?" Kathy replies, "yeah, sort of. He's one of the coaches." Officer Hayes asks for Mr. Frazier to come over for a moment. Mr. Zunde heads out, satisfied that his meticulous documentation over the years had a purpose.

Officer Hayes tells a few of the attendees that he would like to speak to them confidentially about what is going on at the University. Officer Hayes, Eddie, Kathy, and Mr. Frazier move aside and have their private conversation as everyone else heads out. Eddie calls Braden over.

As Braden walks over, Officer Hayes asks Eddie, "now, where exactly is Braden's assignment?" Eddie explains, "he's one of the campus police officers. He's the guy who busted McCrutchen putting steroids in Mark's locker." Looking through his notes, Officer Hayes tells Eddie, "that's right. You told me about him. You said he saw two people leaving the scene, and apprehended one of them." Braden joins the private conversation, and is ready to help.

Officer Hayes tells Mr. Frazier, "I'm going to need your help. Over at the University, we have some evidence that at least one of the track coaches is involved in the gambling ring. I would appreciate it if you keep an eye on things and see what you can find out." Mr. Frazier tells Officer Hayes, "I'd be glad to. I want this problem solved as much as you do." Officer Hayes reveals, "and, there's another university in the division that we suspect is involved as well. But, more about that later."

Officer Hayes then informs Eddie, Kathy, Braden, and Mr. Frazier, "please keep this confidential. We don't want to make a move until we can identify all the key players."

Braden asks, "is there anything I can do to help?" Officer Hayes replies, "yes. Someone at the University is controlling a few of the athletes. I cannot tell you who they are or how they are being coerced, because I don't know. That's the area that I need help in." Braden tells Officer Hayes, "I'm honored to help, sir. And, I'm ready." Officer Hayes is glad to have an officer on the inside for this investigation. It's not every day that an officer participating in the investigation can be operating inconspicuously right in the middle of the action. Braden will make the perfect undercover officer. Undercover, and right out in the open, no one will ever suspect that Braden's eyes are on everyone.

As they head out together, Eddie tells Mr. Frazier, "I guess we'll see you in a few days." Mr. Frazier responds, "I'll be looking forward to it!" Kathy mentions to Mr. Frazier, "I guess we'll be back here next week. Barbara is starting practice in the Fall just like you did." Mr. Frazier

replies, "Barbara has worked with me for eight years. You and Paula have been with me for seven years. With Eddie and Mark, you guys are more than ready!" Barbara will be walking into the position of the head track coach with 25 years of collective experience behind her. Mr. Zunde will be there to stand alongside her. Barbara and her assistant coaches should be able to handle it, especially now that Mr. Crum is gone for good.

Eddie and Kathy spend the next week getting ready for school. Getting ready for school amounts to getting things out of the way now because there will be no time to do them later. On the list is finishing Tessa's Dune Buggy. Eddie is also doing some work on his own Dune Buggy, which will move along much faster once Tessa's is done. Since high school starts a week or two before the University, track practice also starts at the high school. Working with the high school track team will keep Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula busy during the afternoons for one or two days a week.

The first week of high school begins, and so does track practice. Barbara immediately begins working with the team during the first week of school. On the first day of tryouts for the Autumn sports teams, the track team and the cross country team meet in the auxiliary gym. Mr. Chubin introduces himself as the cross country coach, and Barbara introduces herself as the head track coach. Barbara also introduces her assistant coaches, Kathy, Paula, and Mark, who will be helping her today. After a few words from the coaches, they all head out to the track, ready to begin training.

Eddie, however, is a complete slacker. He is sitting in his MGB in the teacher's parking lot, off in a corner where he cannot easily be seen, when he should be working with the team. Remembering that Jimmy O'Brien bought a new Mercedes Benz, Eddie is curious to see what model vehicle Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Ryan drive. Expecting the teachers not involved in Autumn extracurricular activities to leave shortly, Eddie hangs around for a while before he heads out to the track.

The teachers leave a few at a time, ready to get home. Since it is the first week of classes, there is not much that they have to do after school. Mr. O'Brien, not exactly the most popular guy around, walks out alone. Eddie watches carefully, seeing Mr. O'Brien walk past a few cars. At the end of the parking lot, Mr. O'Brien gets into a Mercedes Benz, a model that is a bit nicer and more expensive than the one his son, Jimmy, was driving. Eddie makes a note of the make and model, noting the license plate number. Eddie figures that teaching social studies is either a lucrative business, or Mr. O'Brien has something happening on the side. O'Brien drives out of the parking lot as Eddie waits for Mr. Ryan.

One of the last to leave, Mr. Ryan, walks out with Mr. Harrison, the permanent substitute teacher. Mr. Harrison has the easiest job in the school. He fills in when a teacher is absent and babysits the class, often giving them work to do just to keep them busy. For some reason, Mr. Ryan gives Mr. Harrison a high-five, and they each walk to their cars. Mr. Ryan gets into his Cadillac, as Eddie again makes a note of the make, model, and license plate number. Eddie also makes a note of the high-five exchange.

Being no surprise at all, Eddie sees Mr. Harrison get into his new De Tomaso Pantera, which he purchased last year. Last year, Eddie was wondering who owned the Pantera, which he immediately noticed one day before Spring track practice. Eddie still has a hard time understanding how Mr. Harrison, who is literally the laziest teacher in the school, can afford a Pantera. In fact, it's hard to even call Mr. Harrison a teacher. Eddie again makes note of the make, model, and license plate number, adding it to his list.

Eddie thinks to himself why Mr. Crum, who has been dealing drugs and was involved in a gambling ring, would drive around in his Volkswagen Beetle when he could easily afford a vehicle that runs better. Eddie surmises that Mr. Crum must have money or assets hidden elsewhere. But, Eddie will leave that for Officer Hayes to investigate. Eddie, finishing his undercover work for the day, heads out to the track to join the rest of the coaches for practice.

When Eddie gets to the track, he tells Kathy, "I think we have a problem." Kathy asks, "what did you find out?" Eddie replies, "Mr. O'Brien drives a Mercedes. Mr. Ryan drives a Cadillac. And, Mr. Harrison drives a De Tomaso Pantera. I didn't think much of the Pantera last year when I first saw it, but this is all beginning to make sense." Kathy asks, "what's a Pantera?" Eddie replies, "it's an expensive mid-engine sports car. It's made in Argentina, but it's designed by an Italian design firm. And, it has a 351 cubic inch Ford Cleveland engine in it. The parts to the car are made all over the world." Kathy asks, "are you going to tell Officer Hayes about this?" Eddie replies, "yeah. The next time he comes into the station."

Eddie asks Kathy, "so, what are we doing?" Kathy replies, "we just finished timing everyone in the 100-yard dash. One freshman looks pretty good." Eddie asks, "oh yeah? What did he run?" Kathy replies, "he ran a 10.5, which isn't too bad." Eddie then asks, "what did John run?" Kathy explains, "he's being real lazy. The fastest high school guy in the State ran a 9.6 today." Eddie replies, "yeah. He's being lazy. It's either the Dune Buggy or his girlfriend." Kathy informs Eddie, "speaking about Anne, she's out with Barbara and the distance team on a run. They all ran a mile for time earlier."

Eddie then asks, “so, what’s next?” Kathy replies, “the 440-yard dash. And, we’re running it for time. Would you mind running with them? Maybe it will make them run faster.” Eddie answers, “sure. It sounds a lot easier than working that complicated stopwatch thing. And, mine never blows up, like it’s supposed to.” Kathy tells Eddie, “we’ll just have to get you a new one then.”

Getting a bit more serious, Kathy then tells Eddie, “make them all look bad. This way they’ll work harder.” Eddie replies, “will do, boss.” Eddie gets warmed up, ready to work out himself, and get paid for it. Just like when Mark ran in the 100-yard dash, the 440-yard dash will be a one-man race.

Eddie gets on the track. Getting set in the blocks, Eddie waits for the gun to go off. After the gun is fired, Eddie asks Kathy, “what was I supposed to do again?” Kathy replies, “run!” Eddie asks, “which way?” Kathy laughs and points down the track, telling Eddie, “that way!” Eddie starts sprinting. About sixty seconds later, Eddie crosses the finish line before any of the high school athletes.

After a long first day of practice, calling it a day, Barbara and the team head back toward the school. As they are putting away the equipment, Kathy tells Eddie, “this is so sad.” Eddie asks, “what? Is something wrong?” Kathy replies, “just look at the team. No one goes out to get pizza anymore.” Paula chimes in, stating, “I can solve that problem.” Kathy and Paula both yell out in unison, “pizza!” It’s no secret where the interns and track coach will be having dinner tonight.

With the Summer winding down, Eddie and Kathy take a day off, and spend it in their pool. Since their pool is heated, they can enjoy it until late October. Kathy sits on Eddie’s lap, putting her head on his shoulder, and tells him, “I love you so much!” Eddie tells her, “I love you.” They float around the pool together, leaving the world behind.

Kathy tells him, “this has been a hard year. I hope next year goes a little easier.” Eddie tells her, “you’ll be a senior this year.” Kathy replies, “yeah, finally.” Eddie points out, “Mr. Crum is gone. McCrutchen is gone. Lug nut is gone for good. Mr. Frazier is the new coach at the University. Barbara is the new coach at the high school. All that sounds good to me.” Kathy replies, “yeah, you’re right. This year is going to be awesome!”

Kathy mentions, “John is a senior this year. Do you have any idea what he’s going to do after graduation?” Eddie replies, “the best I can tell is he’ll be driving Anne around in his Dune Buggy, and cutting lawns.” Kathy points out, “when Johnson graduates, we’ll need someone to take his place.”

Eddie points out, “by then, you’ll be gone too.” Kathy sighs, and replies, “oh yeah. I guess I’ll get a job.” Eddie asks, “where?” Kathy replies, “at an elementary school. I’m going to be the gym teacher.” Eddie suggests, “you can teach them early how to throw the discus.” Kathy, who is getting very relaxed, replies, “yeah. I can do that. Or, maybe I can go to graduate school.” Teaching elementary school students to throw a discus probably isn’t going to happen, but it was a nice thought. Graduate school is a nice thought too. Kathy will figure it all out when the time comes.

Putting her arms around his neck, Kathy looks Eddie in the eye, and tells him, “taking the long way home isn’t my favorite anymore.” Eddie asks, “what took its place?” Kathy replies, “getting home the fastest way possible, so we can be here together, just like this.” Kathy touches her lips to Eddie’s, and kisses him passionately. The rest of the afternoon, Eddie and Kathy catch up on the billions of kisses she promised.