

Eddie, The Collegiate Sophomore

Chapter One School Starts, No Classes

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Now that Mr. Crum is gone, life should be much better for the track team at the high school. With McCutchen and Leggett gone, life should be immensely better at the University as well. Mr. Frazier is looking forward to working with the University team this year, and many of the team members are looking forward to having him as their coach again.

Barbara, now a physical education teacher at the high school, is now the school's head track coach. Barbara and her assistant coaches are looking forward to working with Mr. Zunde and the high school team. As the academic year begins at the high school and at the University, peace and quiet is finally realized on all fronts.

Over at the high school, following in Mr. Frazier's footsteps, Barbara has orchestrated practice three times a week during the Autumn. Kathy and Eddie assist with the high school team one day a week, primarily helping with the sprinting drills and perfecting the team's relay handoff technique. Mark and Paula also assist one day a week, again helping the team in the same way as Kathy and Eddie do. This gives Barbara more time to work with the distance team. On the third day, the team runs the interval training drill, which Barbara can easily handle on her own.

In the Autumn, Mr. Zunde is working with the football team, so Eddie and Mark are found occasionally working with the field athletes. The field athletes, however, seem to have developed a fierce internal competition among themselves, and need minimal coaching and instruction.

The core members of the high school track team look strong this year. Barbara has inherited a lot of good talent from Mr. Frazier. Following in his brother's footsteps, Eddie's brother, John, is unquestionably the number one sprinter in the State. Lucius Hill, who is the number one seed in the State in the 440-yard dash and the 880-yard run, is out to break

Braden's State record. Whether he will actually do that remains to be seen. And Tom Davidson, the school's star distance man, is on track to win the gold medal in the mile at the State invitational meets.

Last year, Paul Davida took the silver medal in the 40-yard dash at the State invitational meet during the indoor track season, and in the 100-yard dash at the State invitational meet during the Spring track season. The verdict came in and, at both State invitational meets, John won the gold medal, beating out Davida. If it were not for John, Davida would have been the number one sprinter in the State. This year, Davida, who received a full scholarship, will be joining the University team.

Amber Amy, Mitchell's long time girlfriend, will also be joining the University team this year. Also on full scholarship, Amber's primary reason for attending the State University is because Mitchell is there. Amber has already learned through the grapevine that she will be taking Barbara's place in the women's mile medley relay. It's also no secret that Amber will also be running the mile and perhaps the 880-yard run as well.

At the University, Johnson is now a junior. Taking a year off before they entered college, Eddie, Mark, Braden, Mitchell, and Bobby B. are all sophomores. Kathy and Paula are now seniors, and in their last year of competition. Also, returning to the University team this year is Hoffer, Akinmola, and Erika. Akinmola vows to beat Mitchell in the mile this year during competition. Stone, who is also returning as a senior, does not care if Akinmola beats Mitchell. This year, Stone plans to beat both of them. After all, their new coach, Mr. Frazier, has always said that better internal competition leads to better external competition.

At the service station, Angelo now works five to six hours a day, taking a day or two off every now and then. Eddie has been giving Angelo a lot of stock tips, which have panned out really well. Angelo is now making more money in the stock market than he does by working as a mechanic. Working about four hours a day and building Dune Buggies on the side just for fun, Eddie is doing what he always wanted to do. Tessa's Dune Buggy is completed, as promised, just in time for the Autumn semester. With that project completed, Eddie has more time to work on finishing his own Dune Buggy.

Mark is busy working as well, along with Bobby B. Eddie's father, Mark's father, and Mark were hired by Dr. Akinmola to build the church building. Mark and Bobby B. will be clearing and grading the land, and doing all of the site preparation work. Eddie's father will begin working shortly on pouring the foundation, and erecting the steel skeleton of the building. Once the skeleton is completed, it's on to the concrete walls and floors, brickwork, and roof. Mark's father, with Mark's and Bobby B's.

help, will then finish the inside of the building. While the inside is being finished, Eddie's father will work on the parking lot and exterior lighting.

With the Autumn and the first week of classes comes the first session of track practice at the University. By now, the tribe knows the drill well. At 7:00 a.m., all the athletes are in the arena, either sitting on the bleachers or standing around talking, waiting for the coaching staff to arrive.

Sitting along with the tribe this year is Tessa Klement, Amber Amy, and Paul Davida, who will all fit in nicely with the team. Tessa, who has made a special arrangement, will swim for the University during the Spring, and run track during the Winter track season. Also, on the bleachers are several freshmen who sit quietly, taking in all of what is going on.

Dr. Braun, the head coach, walks in. He is accompanied by Dr. Paxton, the distance team coach, Coach Herndon, the sprinting team coach, Dr. Bonamo, the field events coach, and Mrs. Owens, the events coordinator. Joining them this year is Mr. George Frazier, who gets a round of applause from the tribe as he walks into the arena. The rest of the coaching staff assumes the applause is for all of them, but Mr. Frazier, looking over at the tribe and seeing them all smile, knows better.

Dr. Braun announces, "it's good to see all of you again. I hope you've all had a great Summer, and managed to find some time to get some training in." As Dr. Braun is introducing the coaching staff, coming to Mr. Frazier, he announces, "joining us this year is Mr. George Frazier, whom I believe some of you may already know." Applause again breaks out among the tribe, with others joining in. When the applause fades out, Dr. Braun continues, "Mr. Frazier will be working with both the sprinters and distance team, and will be focusing on improving your individual performance." The truth is that Dr. Braun doesn't exactly know what Mr. Frazier will be doing, so he just made that up on the fly.

As Dr. Braun is addressing the team, of all people, Todd McCutchen, with a full head of hair, walks out from the locker room, and takes a seat on the bench. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "what is that piece of shit doing here?" Eddie looks over, and whispers back, "I guess he wants to get his ass kicked some more." Braden whispers, "that can be arranged. No problem." Also seeing McCutchen, Paula whispers to Mark, "oh shit. This is not going to end well." Mark looks over, and smiles, whispering to Paula, "I need to stop by the grocery store on the way home and get some more of his shampoo." Last year, Mark mixed a depilatory in with McCutchen's shampoo, causing him to go bald. McCutchen never really did understand why his hair started falling out.

Walking in after McCutchen is Dean Grimsby, causing Eddie to laugh out loud. Eddie now clearly knows that Dean Grimsby is not a man of his word. Last season, the dean assured Eddie that McCutchen would not be back. But, Eddie never trusted Dean Grimsby from the beginning. Eddie can't wait to learn why Dean Grimsby is here today.

As the team and the remainder of the coaching staff head out to the track, Dr. Braun and Dean Grimsby stay behind and have a short meeting. Dean Grimsby explains to Dr. Braun that Todd McCutchen's father has hired an attorney, and claims that Todd McCutchen was expelled from the University without the hearing that he was due. Since the paperwork regarding McCutchen's expulsion was improperly filed and executed, the University was forced to readmit McCutchen. What Dean Grimsby does not mention is that the dean, himself, was the one who improperly filed the paperwork. Dr. Braun was also advised that the case involving McCutchen's breaking and entering charges have been sealed, and will not be pursued.

Unfortunately, Dean Grimsby advises Dr. Braun that readmission to the University also includes reinstating McCutchen to his position on the track team. According to Dean Grimsby, the attorney representing Todd McCutchen also strongly suggested that McCutchen run in minimally two events, and that the administration supports that position. Dr. Braun listens to Dean Grimsby, superficially agreeing with what he has to say, which is the fastest way to get rid of the dean.

Dean Grimsby heads back to his office, confident that McCutchen will be running in at least two events. Dean Grimsby is also secretly hoping that Eddie does not kick the shit out of McCutchen, which Eddie once hinted may be on the horizon. Dr. Braun heads out to the track and joins the other coaches, taking less than three minutes to dispose of the dean.

While Dr. Braun was having his meeting with Dean Grimsby, Braden has made Mr. Frazier aware of the situation last year regarding McCutchen planting steroids in Eddie's and Mark's lockers. Mr. Frazier has assured Eddie, Mark, and the rest of the tribe, that McCutchen won't be a problem, and to just focus on training and winning.

The first day of track practice traditionally involves time trials so that the coaches can see where everyone stands and what they have to work with this year. Dr. Braun, knowing that McCutchen is less than competent as a sprinter, initially assigns him to the distance team. Last year, coaxed by Dean Grimsby, Dr. Paxton expressed interest in having McCutchen on the distance team. This year, Dr. Paxton, the distance coach, finally gets his wish. And so does Coach Herndon, the sprinting coach, who has absolutely no use for McCutchen.

As the time trials progress, Mr. Frazier is impressed at the skill level of the team he is now part of. On the men's side, Eddie and Mark can easily run the 100-yard dash in the lower nine second range. Braden, Eddie, Mark, and Johnson can all deliver a 45 to 46-second quarter mile at will. Mitchell, Akinmola, and Stone can all break a four-minute mile. And, Bobby B. is still untouched in the shot-put, winning every meet last year. Some of the incoming freshmen look strong, reinforcing the overall strength of the team.

Among the women, Kathy and Paula have been the best in the division in the short sprints for the last three years. With Kathy and Paula graduating this year, the University picked up a few strong female sprinters. Among them is freshman Karen Corey, an excellent sprinter on full scholarship who is also competitive at the middle distance races. Erika is the best in the division in the 440-yard dash, but Tessa will have something to say about that. Amber Amy will replace Barbara as the woman's distance star, and will be running the 880-yard leg in the mile medley relay.

At the end of the practice session, Dr. Braun is confident that the team will have as good of a season as last year. Mr. Frazier, on the other hand, is confident that the team can win all the gold medals in the divisional meet, either in the Winter or the Spring. Making known his high expectations, Mr. Frazier is told by the other coaches not to get his hopes up too high, and that the other teams in the division are highly competent. Mr. Frazier listens to them with his mind, but not with his heart.

After practice, the team hits the locker rooms. In the men's locker room, the tribe exchanges high-fives, happy that Mr. Frazier is now part of the coaching staff. Looking forward to a winning season, the tribe is more fired up than ever. McCutchen's enthusiasm seems to be, however, inversely proportional to the tribe's energy.

As they head to the showers, Eddie whispers to Mark, "what's up? McCutchen has hair." Mark replies, "not for long." As he and Mark are talking, Eddie turns on the shower, quickly noticing that very little water comes out of the showerhead. Trying another shower, Eddie finds the same issue. Eddie asks, "and, what's up with the showers? There's not much water." Mark replies, "mine's the same way." Hearing the conversation, Mitchell comments, "they must have installed new flow restrictor showerheads over the Summer." No one appears to be the least bit happy with the new water-saving showerheads, especially Bobby B., who named them the "waterless wonders".

After the locker room has mostly emptied out, Eddie returns to the showers and removes one showerhead, planning to take it home with him.

At home, he will re-engineer the showerhead, removing any flow restricting devices, and replace it tomorrow.

When everyone else heads to class, Mark and Bobby B. head over to the seven-acre tract of land where Dr. Akinmola's construction project is just getting underway. At the construction site are Mark's and Eddie's fathers, who have just received the building permit and are in the process of siting the building. Mark will begin clearing and grading the land soon.

Stone heads home to practice his drums. Since it is rush week at the University, Stone has picked up a few gigs in the evenings and over the weekend. Fraternities and Sororities don't pay too well, but the work is nearby.

And, Eddie heads to the service station to begin his day at work. Mid morning, at Angelo's Service Station, Officer Richard Hayes, the police officer investigating Mr. Crum and the gambling ring, drives in. Knowing when to find Eddie at the station, Officer Hayes plans to stop by occasionally, hoping that Eddie has a few more pieces of the puzzle to share. Seeing Officer Hayes, Eddie recalls a few things he's learned since their last meeting a while ago.

Officer Hayes walks up, and yells out, "what's up?" Eddie yells back, "what's up?" The proper answer to the question "what's up?" is always "what's up?" After Eddie and Richard catch up a bit, Richard asks, "how's the team looking over at the University?" Eddie replies, "we ran time trials today. This year, we're looking really strong. And, now that Mr. Frazier is there, the energy level seems to be a whole lot better." Richard asks Eddie, "do you have any news for me?" Eddie replies, "oh, yeah. I got some good stuff. Let's go over to the office and sit down." Eddie takes a break, and takes a seat with Richard in the office.

Richard asks Eddie, "so, what do you got for me?" Eddie explains, "one day last Spring, before track practice at the high school, I sat in my car in the parking lot to see what kind of cars some of the teachers drive. It's a good thing you're sitting down." As Eddie is talking, Richard is taking notes. Eddie tells Richard, "Mr. O'Brien, the social studies teacher who likes to fail athletes, drives a Mercedes Benz. So does his son, Jimmy O'Brien, who works at a burger joint downtown." Richard asks, "how old is this Jimmy O'Brien character?" Eddie replies, "he's nineteen or twenty."

Eddie continues, telling Richard, "Mr. Ryan, the baseball coach, drives a Cadillac." Richard asks, "this Mr. Ryan character, isn't he the coach that Crum left alone?" Eddie replies, "yeah, that's him. But, I still can't figure out how he got a pass." Richard asks, "is there an assistant baseball coach?" Eddie replies, "no. Whenever we were outside for track practice, Mr. Ryan was the only one out there working with the team." Trying to

teach Eddie something, Richard explains, "it would be a whole lot easier to fix a game if he worked alone." Eddie comments, "I can see that."

Eddie then tells Richard, "here's the kicker. Mr. Harrison drives a De Tomaso Pantera." Richard's eyes become wide open, and asks, "really? What exactly does this Mr. Harrison do?" Eddie explains, "he's a permanent substitute teacher, which pretty much means he fills in if a teacher has to leave for an emergency during the day. He doesn't really do anything if you ask me." Richard asks, "when did this character pick up the Pantera? I don't remember seeing a Pantera at the high school before." A Pantera cannot be missed. Not by Richard, not by Eddie, not by anyone. Eddie replies, "he picked it up during the Spring of my senior year. I saw it one day when we were headed out to the track for tryouts. I've never seen it at the high school before that."

Richard asks, "do you have anything else for me?" Eddie replies, "no. Other than McCrutchen is back on the University team again." As Richard is looking through his notes, he tells Eddie, "refresh my memory. Who is this McCrutchen character again?" Eddie explains, "actually, his name is Todd McCutchen. He's the guy who planted steroids in my locker and in Mark's locker. He's also the one who runs erratic times and messes up his handoffs." Richard comments, "oh, that character." Finding what he was searching for in his notes, Richard comments, "McCutchen. He's the character who runs the quarter mile in 57 seconds one week, and 75 seconds the next week." Eddie replies, "yeah, that's the guy."

Eddie tells Richard, "I think that's all I have for now. Braden has his eyes on McCrutchen. Well, so does Kathy, Mark, and everyone else. That guy can't be trusted." Richard and Eddie talk for a while longer, but Eddie has to get back to work and Richard has to get rolling. Richard thanks Eddie for the information, confident that he has a few more pieces of the puzzle. Eddie goes back to work, as Richard drives over to the high school to take a closer look at Mr. Harrison's De Tomaso Pantera.

A week later, now that each athlete's ability has been adequately assessed, it is time to move on to refining certain skills. Dr. Braun has decided that, now that Mr. Frazier has joined the coaching staff, some formal instruction in the nonvisual-nonverbal baton exchange the team has been using is in order. The team has informally learned the technique from the tribe. Seeing how well the nonvisual-nonverbal exchange technique works in competition, Dr. Braun adopted it as the team's preferred technique.

Using the 220-yard track in the indoor arena, Mr. Frazier begins formal instruction of the nonvisual-nonverbal exchange. Using the athletes he has coached for years, demonstrations are made in slow

motion and at full speed. And, just so everyone understands, Mr. Frazier clearly explains what is happening at every point during the transition.

To prove the efficacy of the technique, Mr. Frazier has the athletes perform several full speed exchanges. The Timekeepers time the period from when the incoming runner enters the transition zone to when the outgoing runner leaves the transition zone. Mrs. Owens records the statistics comparing the nonvisual-nonverbal exchange with a visual exchange and other techniques. Once the statistics are compiled and presented to the team, everyone is convinced that the nonvisual-nonverbal technique affords improved performance.

Ready to perfect their skill in the nonvisual-nonverbal technique, the team gets onto the track. Departing from the normal procedure at the University, Mr. Frazier has the men run with the women today. This is to get the runners accustomed to differing speed and skill levels. Using two batons, the drill moves along quickly, with the runners handing off, sprinting for 110 yards, and handing off again. As the coaching staff observes the handoffs, they are looking for a smooth transition. Any slowing of the runner's pace or break in cadence is indicative of a bad handoff.

A few minutes into the drill, as the runners are lined up on both sides of the track, Mark does a few calculations in his head about who will be handing off to whom. Mark, near the back of the line, yells out to Eddie, who is second in line, "yo Eddie! Come help me out here for a second." Eddie steps out of his position in line, goes to the back of the line, and asks Mark, "what's up, bro?" Mark whispers to Eddie, "nothing. If you stepped out of line, Braden will be handing off to McCutchen." Eddie smiles, knowing exactly what Mark is up to. After a few transitions, they see Braden get on the track to receive the baton and, on the other side of the track, McCutchen is next in line to receive it. This would usually be called a setup.

Braden receives the baton in his right hand and, as predicted by Mark, at the other side of the track, McCutchen steps into Braden's lane. Eddie and Mark watch, as Braden moves around the track like a madman. McCutchen watches Braden approach, and takes off with his right hand behind him. Mark, seeing McCutchen with his right, instead of left, hand behind him, whispers to Eddie, "oh shit. Here it comes." As Braden approaches McCutchen, Braden, using an up sweep motion, jams the baton into McCutchen's left gluteal region, then shoves him off to the side. McCutchen goes down hard, as Braden steps off the track.

As Dr. Braun and Mr. Frazier both blow their whistles, Mark comments to Eddie, "well, that didn't go exactly as planned." Eddie replies back, "yeah, it did, if you're Braden." Mark whispers to Eddie, "you do have a

point.” Mark knows that, if McCutchen commits the slightest error, Braden will cut him absolutely no slack. Eddie mentions to Mark, “I think I’ll give Braden one of those Abloy locks for his locker like we have.” Eddie and Mark both laugh, having absolutely no sympathy for McCutchen, who planted steroids in their lockers last year.

As McCutchen is slow to get up, Braden exclaims, “get your fat ass off the floor, junior! You were supposed to have your left hand out! What is so hard about that? If I have the baton in my right hand, you grab it with your left! I put that baton exactly where I was supposed to! The only problem was your hand wasn’t there to grab it! Your ass was! Now, get your lazy ass off the floor and stop crying like a baby!” From the other side of the arena, Mark yells out, “yeah, junior! You’re holding up the drill!” Mark’s comment caused a lot of laughter to arise among the athletes. Mr. Frazier has to turn around to conceal his laughter, for he has not heard Braden this energetic in a while.

Coach Herndon yells out, “McCrutchen, you heard him! Get up and get back on the track!” Mr. Frazier is beginning to understand the dynamics of the University team, which are quite interesting. Mr. Frazier has already heard that McCutchen is not worth much to the team, and now sees why first hand. Failing to get any sympathy, McCutchen finally gets up, limps over, and gets back in line. Mark comments to Eddie, “well, that was definitely worth the price of admission.”

As the drill continues, Mark looks for every chance he can to mess with McCutchen. But, this time it’s Mark’s turn. As McCutchen leaves the transition zone, Mark cuts in front of Eddie, and gets on the track. Ready to receive the baton, Mark accelerates as McCutchen approaches the transition zone. McCutchen delivers the baton to Mark, who had to slow his pace considerably to receive it. Mark swings his arms a little more than usual, jamming the baton into McCutchen’s hip as he takes off. McCutchen goes down again, squirming on the ground in pain.

Dr. Braun and Mr. Frazier again blow their whistles, stopping the drill. Mark walks around the track, to the other transition zone, where Paula is talking with Erika. Paula whispers to Mark, “that was a good takedown.” Mark whispers back, “thank you.” Erika comments, “that’s twice in one day.” Mark laughs, and asks, “whose turn is it next?” Paula then whispers to Mark, “did you switch his shampoo yet?” Mark replies, “no. Not yet. But, I’m ready as soon as I get an opening.” The rest of practice goes well for everyone, except for McCutchen, who would have been better off applying to another college.

In the locker room, after practice, McCutchen tells Braden, “don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing.” Not taking any of McCutchen’s crap, Braden exclaims, “I ain’t doing shit! What you’re doing is acting like an

asshole, breaking into people's lockers, and planting steroids! What is your problem, junior? You can't run worth a shit, and you try to take down anyone who can! Why don't you do everyone a favor and just leave now?" As McCutchen listens to Braden's rant, Mark inconspicuously switches McCutchen's shampoo bottle, which is sitting on the bench, with the special formula Mark prepared a few days ago. Mark then ducks out of sight, and hits the showers.

And, while all the excitement is going on between Braden and McCutchen, Eddie reinstalls one of the showerheads that he took home and modified. Using Loctite on the threads, Eddie torques the showerhead down with a wrench, using considerable force, ensuring that the showerhead cannot be easily removed. Removing another showerhead, Eddie will take that one home, modify it, and reinstall it next time, as he has been doing since practice began this year. And, Kathy has been removing the water-saving showerheads, one at a time, from the women's locker room, and replacing it with the modified working showerhead the next day.

A few days later, Dean Grimsby awaits the arrival of the track team, getting to the arena at 6:30 a.m. As the athletes walk in, they see the dean sitting at the end of the bleachers, alone. His presence can't mean anything good for the team, but no one really seems to care, not even the coaches. By now, everyone knows that Dean Grimsby is pretty much an asshole.

Kathy whispers to Eddie, "Dean Grimsby is here. You got busted." Eddie asks, "for what? What did I do?" Mark, adding to the validity of Kathy's claim, adds, "you don't know, bro?" Eddie replies, "no. What did I do?" Playing along, Paula tells Eddie, "I'm surprised you don't know." Sounding a bit worried, Eddie asks, "seriously, guys! What did I do?" Kathy tells Eddie, "you're getting busted for making the showerheads work again." Eddie laughs, knowing that Kathy, along with Mark's and Paula's help, just got him good.

Once the team is assembled, Dr. Braun and the coaching staff walk in. Dr. Braun addresses the team, explaining that, today, everyone will be outside running drills and using the training sleds. Interrupting Dr. Braun is Dean Grimsby, who blurts out, "Dr. Braun, I need to speak with your team for a moment, if I may." Dr. Braun, who has had enough of Dean Grimsby after last year's fiasco with McCutchen and Leggett, tells the dean, "please don't interrupt me when I am addressing my team. Please explain to Mr. Frazier what you plan to discuss with the team, and I'll get to you as soon as I'm done." Dr. Braun continues addressing the team longer than usual, just to annoy Dean Grimsby.

In colleges and universities, certain cliques seem to form among the students. Unknown to most students, cliques also form among the faculty and staff members. After last year, when Dean Grimsby attempted to expel Eddie when steroids were planted in his locker, the entire athletic department has lost all respect for Dean Grimsby. Knowing now that the dean is nothing more than a paper tiger, the coaching staff now messes with Dean Grimsby like Mark messes with McCutchen.

While Dr. Braun is addressing the team, Dean Grimsby explains to Mr. Frazier, "it has come to the University's attention that certain members of the track team are the target of various forms of hazing. Hazing is strictly against the University's rules." Mr. Frazier replies, "I haven't seen any of that. Do you have an example?" Dean Grimsby explains, "Todd McCutchen has filed a complaint that he has been treated unfairly." Mr. Frazier, fully understanding the complaint, replies, "I can't even begin to imagine what the basis for that complaint was." Mr. Frazier then tells Dean Grimsby, "I'll let him know as soon as he is finished addressing the team. Please have a seat, and we'll get to you in a moment."

After addressing the team, seeing Mr. Frazier standing alone, Dr. Braun calls him over, and asks, "what does he want, George?" Mr. Frazier reports, "something about hazing and how McCutchen is unfairly treated. He wants to address the team." Dr. Braun whispers to Mr. Frazier, "tell him he has four minutes." Waiting to be sure he heard Dr. Braun correctly, Mr. Frazier asks, "four minutes?" Dr. Braun replies, "yes, exactly four minutes and no more. He's from Babylon." Mr. Frazier, not too familiar with Dean Grimsby, asks, "why does that matter?" Dr. Braun puts his hand on Mr. Frazier's shoulder, and whispers, "George, he's from Babylon. He'll just babble on and babble on unless he's checked. No one around here is going to care what Dean Grimsby has to say anyway. And, off the record, the dean is a real ass." Mr. Frazier gets the picture. Dean Grimsby is the Mr. Crum of the University. Eddie already knew that.

Mr. Frazier points to the dean, and announces, "you have exactly four minutes to address the team." Mr. Frazier then announces, "when he starts talking, will one of the Timekeepers please start your watch and tell me when his four minutes are up?" All eight of the Timekeepers are quick to get their stopwatches ready to time Dean Grimsby's speech. Mr. Frazier will also time the dean himself.

Dean Grimsby stands up, and begins arguing with Mr. Frazier. Eight stopwatches are started immediately after the dean utters his first word. The dean argues, "sir, it is improper protocol to give me a time limit once I have the floor. After all, I'm sure you're aware that I am the Dean of Students." Mr. Frazier argues, "if it is improper to give you a time limit, then I won't give you the floor at all. You can arrange a meeting with the team on your own time. Good luck getting anyone to attend. And, I can

assure you that I won't be there." Dean Grimsby insists, "I will certainly need more than four minutes!" Throwing one hand into the air, Mr. Frazier raises his voice and exclaims, "Mitchell, Akinmola, and Stone can run a mile in four minutes! You should be able to say what you have to say in that amount of time!" Dr. Braun is impressed with the forthrightness of the new coach.

Dean Grimsby argues a little further with Mr. Frazier, but realizes he is hitting a brick wall. Getting absolutely nowhere with Mr. Frazier, Dean Grimsby decides to move on and address the team. Looking at his own stopwatch, Mr. Frazier reminds the dean, "since you spent one minute and twelve seconds arguing with me, you only have two minutes and forty eight seconds left." The entire track team laughs, but learns quickly that Mr. Frazier is not one to argue with.

Dean Grimsby then begins addressing the team, "it has come to my attention that certain team members present here today have been engaged in certain forms of hazing. It is my understanding that one student in particular has been singled out as a target of multiple hazing incidents. The University frowns upon hazing of any type, which can and will result in disciplinary action if the hazing continues." Dean Grimsby likes to hear himself speak, annunciating very slowly, using twice as many words as necessary to convey his thoughts. This is not a good trait to have, since the dean only started out with four minutes to state his case.

Getting more specific, Dean Grimsby continues, "the person who has been the target of multiple acts of hazing is reported to me as being Todd McCutchen. While I do not want to single out any specific members of the track team as the violators of the University's policy, I'm sure you know who you are." Eddie yells out, "what are you talking about?" The dean sternly tells Eddie, "please don't interrupt me again. Am I clear?" Eddie replies, "for the record, you're interrupting my track practice. And, for the record, you also told me that Todd McCutchen was expelled, and that he won't ever be back."

The dean cannot dispute Eddie, who has just eroded away twenty of his precious seconds. Trying to brush Eddie aside, the dean tells him, "I am not prepared to address that issue with you today, or with anyone else. If you would like to discuss that issue with me personally, please make an appointment with my office." Eroding away more of the dean's precious time, Eddie sarcastically replies, "blah, blah, blah. Mumbo jumbo, mumbo jumbo. Blah, blah, blah." Eddie's frank disrespect of the dean does not go unnoticed. The team and coaching staff laugh hysterically, also eroding away more of the dean's time.

Dean Grimsby continues, "back to what I was saying. Now, where was I. My mind went blank for a moment after that rude and unexpected

interruption.” Eddie sarcastically announces, “your mind is always blank, junior!” The team laughs, and Dean Grimsby gets quite aggravated at Eddie’s comment. Knowing he is under a time constraint, the dean continues, “for the information of this team, Scott McCutchen, Senior gives a considerable sum of money to this University. He is quite upset that his son is being mistreated by certain individuals. This University has a policy regarding.”

On that unfinished note, eight Timekeepers click their stopwatches, and yell out in unison, “time’s up!” Without having to be prompted, the team gets off the bench, and heads out to practice. Dean Grimsby gets a bit angry that the coaches and the team did not afford him the attention he thinks he deserves. Dr. Braun does not report to Dean Grimsby, so there is nothing that the dean can do.

As the team leaves the arena and heads out to the track, McCutchen emerges from the locker room, joining the team on their way. Knowing that Dean Grimsby was addressing the team today, McCutchen keeps his distance. On the way to the track, Eddie asks Dr. Braun, “what was Dean Grimsby talking about in there?” Dr. Braun, who has about had it with Dean Grimsby, replies, “maybe he was referring to people calling him McCutchen. I don’t know. Don’t worry about it.”

Dr. Braun doesn’t seem to care about what Dean Grimsby’s issue may be. Dr. Braun, in fact, has been pretty much messing with the dean’s head recently, perhaps learning something from Eddie, Mark, or Braden. The dean has no influence or control over the athletic department anyway so, unless the so-called hazing was done outside of an athletic team, there’s nothing the dean can do about it. Any hazing that occurs on a sports team would be under the jurisdiction of the University’s athletic director, Dr. Karakova. For some reason, no one, including Dean Grimsby, approached Dr. Karakova regarding any alleged hazing issues. It is well known around the University that Dr. Karakova will tell Dean Grimsby to pretty much jump in a lake.

While the team is warming up, Kathy mentions to Paula, “it looks like McCutchen is starting to go bald again.” Paula informs Kathy, “it’s Prickly Sea Spiders. It’s going to be a tough year for McCutchen. He won’t make it back next year. He’s treading on thin ice, and he knows it.” Kathy mentions, “I wonder why it’s so important to him to be on this team anyway. He’d be better off in another university. And, what’s the deal with Dean Grimsby? He was supposed to expel McCutchen.” Kathy is puzzled at the entire situation surrounding McCutchen and Dean Grimsby. But, Kathy will surely figure it out one way or another.

Back at the high school, for once, things are running smoothly. At the end of the school day, Johnson heads over to the high school to visit Mr.

Zunde. Walking into the athletic office, Johnson sees that everything looks about the same as it did years ago, except no one is around. Johnson, however, knows exactly where he would find Mr. Zunde. Heading to the weight room, Johnson expects to find Mr. Zunde working with the football players.

Walking into the weight room, sure enough, Johnson sees Mr. Zunde putting a few of the football players through a grueling workout. After one football player struggles on the bench with 275 pounds, Johnson sneaks into the rotation while Mr. Zunde is talking with one of the players. Lowering the bar, Johnson benches the weight effortlessly for ten repetitions. Johnson, of course, attracted a lot of attention with that stunt. Johnson sits up on the bench and Mr. Zunde exclaims, "did everyone see that? That is exactly what I expect out of all of you!"

Johnson asks Mr. Zunde, "so, how's it going?" Mr. Zunde replies, "it's a little quiet around here without Mr. Crum around, but everything is good." Mr. Zunde asks, "how is Mr. Frazier working out at the University?" Johnson explains, "the energy level is a lot better. Dr. Braun, the head coach, doesn't seem to have the energy Mr. Frazier does." Mr. Zunde explains, "Dr. Braun is in very good shape physically but, you have to remember, he's approaching 70 years old." Johnson replies, "really? I would have guessed he was in his mid to late fifties."

Johnson and Mr. Zunde talk for a while, then Johnson gets around to asking, "have they found a replacement for Mr. Frazier yet?" Mr. Zunde replies, "no. They haven't even opened the position yet. Why? Are you interested?" Mr. Zunde saved Johnson the trouble of asking, which is why Johnson came to the high school to talk with Mr. Zunde in the first place. Johnson replies, "yeah. Actually I am. But, I won't graduate until next year." Mr. Zunde replies, "that's right. Barbara is two years ahead of you."

Mr. Zunde informs Johnson, "perhaps, Mr. Hesse would be open to transferring to the high school. If he does, it would open the position in the middle school. Mr. Hesse is likely to retire in two years anyway, which would open the position here when you're ready to graduate." Johnson asks, "do you think they'll go for that?" Mr. Zunde assures Johnson, "we'll get something to work out. Kathy is interested in a position at one of the elementary schools when she graduates. Something will come along." Mr. Zunde has a way of getting things to work out. After all, his cousin, Dr. Noreen Brooks, is the superintendent of schools.

Johnson hangs around for a while, helping Mr. Zunde with the football players, and working out himself. As Johnson is working with the athletes, Mr. Zunde can clearly see that Johnson would be a good asset to the physical education staff. And, in the hiring process, it is always better to go with someone who is known to be competent than someone who is

an unknown. During the training session, Mr. Zunde speculates on the various options available to get Johnson hired as a physical education instructor. Although Johnson did not mention it, Mr. Zunde suspects that Johnson would also like to coach the track team along with Barbara.

Mrs. Black, Jimmy O'Brien, and Mr. Crum all seem to look down at Eddie because he is a mechanic. About a year ago, Chuckie's mother, Mrs. Black, commented to Eddie, "is that all you turned out to be? Just a mechanic?" Mr. Crum did not want Eddie working on his car simply because he is Eddie. And, last Summer, Jimmy O'Brien snickered at Eddie, and asked him, "so, is that all you're doing now? Pumping gas?" Not everyone, however, is disappointed that Eddie has chosen to be a mechanic. It's what he always wanted to do, and he's good at it, just as Angelo is good at it.

As Mr. Zunde is driving to work one day, he hears an unusual sound coming from the engine of his Porsche 911. Instead of turning left into the school parking lot, he continues on, and heads to Angelo's Service Station. Unlike Mr. Crum, Mr. Zunde takes care of problems when they arise, not waiting for further damage to occur. Unfortunately, the sound gets a little worse as Mr. Zunde drives toward the service station.

Hearing the Porsche 911 as Mr. Zunde drives in front of a service bay, Eddie immediately runs outside, sticks his hand through the window, and turns off the engine. Eddie tells Mr. Zunde, "you're about to lose your engine! It sounds like a bearing is ready to go." Eddie knows that sound really well. He's heard it many times before.

Mr. Zunde explains, "it was running fine when I left for work but, when I got near the school, it was beginning to sound a little rough." Eddie informs Mr. Zunde, "it's either a connecting rod bearing or a main bearing." Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, "break it down, and find out what's going on. Whatever it is, go ahead and fix it." If there's a problem with the engine, Mr. Zunde wants it fixed. Eddie writes up the service ticket, and gives Mr. Zunde a ride back to the high school.

Just before the end of the school day, Eddie drives over to the high school to pick up Mr. Zunde. On the way back to the service station, Eddie explains, "one of the bolts to the main bearings backed off a bit. I replaced the bearing, and checked the torque of all the other bolts inside. Everything else looked okay." Mr. Zunde replies, "good. But, I'm wondering why that happened." Eddie asks, "has the engine ever been opened up before?" Mr. Zunde replies, "not as far as I know." Eddie explains, "it could just be a fluke. But, everything's torqued correctly now."

When they arrive back at the service station, Mr. Zunde pays for his repair, not complaining as Mr. Crum always does. Eddie introduces Mr. Zunde to Angelo, who have both heard a lot about each other. Finally getting to meet, Angelo and Mr. Zunde talk for a while, as Eddie heads home. Eddie went out of his way, and worked overtime, to fix Mr. Zunde's engine. Needless to say, Mr. Zunde will be taking his Porsche 911 to Eddie for service now.

Track practice has become a bit interesting for the tribe after Dean Grimsby admonished the team for the alleged hazing of McCutchen. During the relay practices, any baton exchange to or from McCutchen seems to fail miserably. The baton is transferred outside the transition zone, not transferred at all, lands on the ground, or is accidentally shoved into McCutchen's gluteal region. The rest of the team, for some miraculous reason, has tremendously improved their baton handoff performance.

McCutchen has again gone completely bald. The doctors are blaming it on stress, and suggested that he take vitamins. Stress is common in college, where students have a full academic and social schedule. Being a collegiate athlete can easily add to the stress. The only stress, however, that McCutchen can identify is the stress caused to him by the track team. McCutchen is hopeful, though, that the vitamins will not only cause his hair to grow back, but will also improve his performance on the track.

As the team is getting dressed for practice, pointing out the obvious, Mark yells out to McCutchen, "yo, junior! It looks like you're bald again! It's the Prickly Sea Spider bite!" Brushing off Mark's comment, McCutchen insists, "the doctors said it's stress. They gave me some vitamins, and my hair will grow back soon." Mark replies, "yeah! It's stress all right! Your adrenal glands are all shriveled up! You can't handle stress anymore!" McCutchen never learns, for he should have ignored Mark. Sounding very authoritative, Mark then instructs McCutchen, "yeah, go ahead and take the vitamins, junior. The vitamins are going to liquify your brain." McCutchen replies, "they will not!" Overhearing the conversation, Eddie, attempting to conceal his laughter, pretends to cough.

Listening in, as Mark is messing with McCutchen, is Mitchell, who is ticked off now that McCutchen is on the distance team. Mitchell chimes in, and tells McCutchen, "Mark is right. The B vitamins react with the pricklotoxins and form ganglioacetic acid. Ganglioacetic acid will slowly eat away at your white matter. You really should listen to Mark. He's been right all along, and your doctors haven't even seen it." Not missing a beat, Mark tells McCutchen, "see? What did I tell you? Do you think I just make this shit up?" McCutchen begins to look worried. After all, Mitchell is perhaps the most intelligent guy on the track team. What

Mitchell said sounds very convincing to McCutchen, even though it's totally fabricated.

Before they head out to the track, Eddie pulls Braden aside, telling him, "I got something for you, bro." Braden asks, "what's that?" Eddie replies, "a lock for your locker." Braden tells Eddie, "I already got one of those." Eddie explains, "this lock is pick proof. I'm guessing that you're next on McCutchen's list. This will keep him out of your locker." Eddie hands Braden the Abloy PL 362 padlock, which he obtained from going into the future. Looking at the lock, Braden tells Eddie, "I ain't never seen a lock like this before." Evading further questioning, Eddie replies, "they're really hard to find."

Braden then whispers to Eddie, "this is kind of a secret. After McCutchen broke into Mark's locker, we had a silent alarm system installed in this building. If anyone breaks in, the alarm goes off down at the station." Eddie tells Braden, "use the lock anyway, bro. He can still sneak into the locker room during the day or while we're practicing. And, you never know. Lug nut could have shown him how to pick a lock." Braden replies, "that's a good point." Braden takes the lock, thanking Eddie for looking out for him.

Dr. Paxton, the distance coach, has displayed a lot of patience working with McCutchen this season. Mitchell, however, would be glad to get rid of McCutchen, and is doing his part to help. The 4 by 880 relay team is bound to take nothing this year with McCutchen in the lineup. Akinmola, Stone, and Johnson are not too happy with McCutchen either. One of them will likely get bumped from the 4 by 880 relay team in favor of McCutchen, per administrative decree by Dean Grimsby.

After practice, McCutchen tries to gain the upper hand, starting his own psychological warfare. As Eddie opens his locker, McCutchen asks him, "how come you and Mark never go to class?" Eddie replies, "what are you talking about, junior? Last semester, I got all A's. So, just shut up and mind your own business. That is, if you have any business." Eddie doesn't know what McCutchen is up to, but he doesn't like it. McCutchen tries to continue the conversation, but Eddie has had enough of him. Eddie firmly tells McCutchen, "I said shut up, junior. And, remember the Chuckie."

Eddie and Mark leave the locker room, noticing that McCutchen is following them at a safe distance. Eddie whispers to Mark, "McCutchen might be on to us. Let's head toward the classrooms." As they are walking, Eddie, seeing a girl who is walking and carrying books, whispers to Mark, "hey, follow her. She looks like she's going to class." Eddie made a good choice. Neither he nor Mark even know exactly where the

classrooms are. With McCutchen following, Eddie and Mark follow the girl into a lecture hall, and take a seat in the back.

McCutchen sneaks into the lecture hall, wondering what kind of classes Eddie and Mark are taking. Taking a seat at the other side of the lecture hall, McCutchen hides behind a few students, and decides to briefly stay for the lecture. It's not that McCutchen cares about what is being taught today. It's that he's been watching Mark, Eddie, Bobby B., and a few others very closely, wondering when they go to class. After all, after track practice, Eddie, Mark, and Bobby B. always head out in their vehicles, and they are never seen with any books.

The professor, Dr. Bonnie Bancroft, walks in and, after making a few announcements, announces, "as promised, Dr. Erin Chandler will be our guest lecturer today. Please give her a warm welcome." The class applauds, as Dr. Chandler walks up to the front of the class. Eddie whispers to Mark, "I wonder what class we're taking." Mark replies, "I guess we're about to find out." Eddie whispers to Mark, "I'm sure glad there's not a test today." Mark whispers back, "you got that right."

After a brief introduction, Dr. Chandler begins, "today, as promised, we are going to analyze the harmonic characteristics found in a female soprano voice responsible for giving it pleasant tonal characteristics. As you all probably know, C4 is known as 'middle C'. The range of a soprano is from C4 to C6 or, for you technically minded people, from about 262 Hertz to 1047 Hertz. But, just what is it that makes the voice of Joan Baez or Crystal Gayle pleasing to listen to when compared with other sopranos whose voice may 'screech' at times? Before we discover why one soprano voice sounds pleasant, whereas another does not, let us first look at the differences in the harmonic distortion characteristics of a tube versus a transistorized amplifier."

Eddie whispers to Mark, "I think we're in a music class." Mark, who turned toward Eddie as Eddie whispered to him, replies, "don't look now, but McCutchen is at the other end of the row looking at us." Eddie whispers back, "are you for real?" Mark replies, "yeah. He must have followed us into the classroom." Eddie whispers, "I guess we're staying for the whole class then." Mark whispers, "I wonder what his problem is." Eddie replies, "the tribe."

Putting up an image on the overhead, Dr. Chandler explains, "if we look at the harmonic distortion curve of a transistor power amplifier, we clearly see that harmonic distortion is very pronounced in the odd harmonics when compared with the even harmonics." Switching to another image, Dr. Chandler continues, "in the vacuum tube amplifier, however, we observe quite the opposite. Harmonic distortion is very pronounced in the even harmonics when compared with the odd

harmonics. This, by the way, is exactly why a tube amplifier has a characteristically warmer sound than does a transistor amplifier. The harmonic distortion of a tube amplifier is primarily found in the even, not the odd, harmonics. Harmonic distortion, particularly when present in the even harmonics, is natural, and generally not objectionable. Harmonic distortion, when present in the odd harmonics is, in contrast, quite objectionable.”

Dr. Chandler continues, “as a side note, what is also objectionable is something called transient intermodulation distortion. Transient intermodulation distortion is caused purely by a deficient slew rate of the amplifier. The slew rate is how fast the amplifier can respond to the incoming signal. If the amplifier cannot respond to the incoming signal fast enough, the result is a very unnatural and objectionable distortion. Again, for you technically minded people, transient intermodulation distortion results from the incoming sine wave exiting the power transistor in not quite a sinusoidal pattern. So, the incoming sine wave exits the amplifier as something other than a sine wave. The human voice, by the way, does not and cannot exhibit any of the characteristics of transient intermodulation distortion.”

Dr. Chandler then informs the students, “since all of you are college students, I’ll mention this. When you go to purchase a stereo amplifier, the manufacturer always quotes the performance characteristics of the amplifier in their literature, such as the output power, frequency response, harmonic distortion, et cetera. All manufacturers intentionally leave out the one meaningful performance measurement, which is the slew rate. It’s what they don’t tell you that matters. I’ll let all of you speculate why that is.”

Eddie mentions to Mark, “this might be interesting.” Mark comments, “yeah. I hope I can understand it.” Eddie replies, “me too. She sounds like a genius.” Mark comments, “that’s probably because she is one.” Eddie is now wondering if he is in a music class or some sort of engineering class, since the lecturer is now talking about audio amplifiers.

Putting up a frequency spectrograph on the overhead, Dr. Chandler continues, “this is a spectrum analysis of the voice of Joan Baez. As we can clearly see, there is considerable energy in the lower even harmonics, and very little energy in the upper even harmonics. Also, what we observe is that there is very little energy in the odd harmonics, either above or below the fundamental frequency. We also observe that the spectrograph shown is characteristically similar to a tube amplifier versus a transistor amplifier. Is everyone with me so far? Or, have I lost everyone?”

Eddie raises his hand, and Dr. Chandler points to and addresses Eddie, “yes, sir, in the back. Do you have a question?” Eddie replies, “yes.

How about the tonal characteristics of Stevie Nicks' voice? Where would that fit in? It seems that her voice is quite unique." Dr. Chandler replies, "actually, that is an excellent question. Stevie Nicks is a mezzo-soprano, but she has a considerable amount of power in the lower second harmonic. And, get this. This is where it gets very interesting. Stevie Nicks, oddly, has a notable amount of power in the upper first harmonic, but not the upper even harmonics. A voice with the tonal characteristic such as that of Stevie Nicks is quite rare, which is why her voice is so unique. Interestingly, Stevie Nicks is often mistaken as a contralto. The mistake is commonly made by the untrained ear because of the significant amount of power present in the lower second harmonic. But, frequency spectrum analyzers do not lie. That was a very good question. I hope I answered it to your satisfaction." Eddie gives the guest lecturer a thumbs up.

As a few other students ask questions, Eddie glances over, seeing McCutchen at the end of the row. McCutchen inadvertently makes eye contact with Eddie. Eddie, sounding like a genius by asking a simple question, has now clearly gained the upper hand, especially since McCutchen likely has not understood a word Dr. Chandler has said thus far. Eddie and Mark stay for the rest of the class, finding it quite interesting. McCutchen also stays, and cannot sneak out now that he has been discovered.

When class is dismissed, Mark tells Eddie, "I need to get to the door before McCutchen." Eddie and Mark bolt toward the door, hanging out outside the lecture hall, waiting for McCutchen to leave. Seeing McCutchen as he walks out, Mark asks McCutchen, "hey, do you have the notes from the last class? We missed it." McCutchen, knowing that he just got busted by Mark, brashly replies, "no."

Eddie comments, "I didn't know McCutchen was in our class." Mark replies, "me neither. You'd think he'd help us out, since we missed the last class, but no. He never was a team player anyway." McCutchen, who is dumbfounded, cannot even find the words to respond to Mark. Mark tells Eddie, "we'll just get the notes from someone else."

Continuing the conversation, Mark asks McCutchen, "so, do you have class?" McCutchen replies, "no." Mark replies, "I didn't think so." Mark's play on words fly right over McCutchen's head. Referring to McCutchen, Mark tells Eddie, "this guy is such a loser." Mark and Eddie follow the crowd to somewhere else on campus. McCutchen, who is done with classes until the afternoon, dare not follow them this time.

The next week, after a practice session, Coach Herndon asks Dr. Braun and Mr. Frazier to remain after practice for a moment. Coach Herndon asks them to step into an office adjacent to the arena, so that they may

have some privacy. Dr. Braun, Coach Herndon, and Mr. Frazier walk into the nicely appointed office with a glass window overlooking the arena, which is usually reserved for the officials during a meet.

Dr. Braun asks Coach Herndon, “what’s up?” Coach Herndon, who always gets right to the point, replies, “I am requesting permission to resign from my position with the team, sir.” Dr. Braun pauses, and responds, “this is certainly a surprise! Is there something wrong?” Coach Herndon replies, “no, sir. Not at all. I signed on for the position six years ago when Coach Jensen retired, primarily because, at the time, I needed the money. Over the years, I’ve really enjoyed working with the team as the sprinting coach. With all due respect, sir, now that Mr. Frazier has joined the coaching staff, I feel that I can move on without adversely affecting the team.”

Mr. Frazier tells Coach Herndon, “please don’t feel like you have to resign because I’m now here.” Coach Herndon replies, “it’s not that, sir. Not at all. I took this position temporarily when Coach Jensen retired. I never expected for my assignment to last this long. Now that you’re here, I know that the sprinting team will be in good hands.”

Dr. Braun, focusing his attention to Mr. Frazier, adds, “George, this is my failure. I was supposed to find someone to replace Coach Jensen as the sprinting coach years ago. Coach Herndon has been doing such a great job, that I was very slow to find Coach Jensen’s replacement. After a while, I just forgot about it.” Coach Herndon tells Dr. Braun, “from what I hear from Provost Leighton, there is no one more qualified in the division or in the State to be the sprinting coach than Mr. Frazier. The team will certainly be in good hands.”

Dr. Braun tells Coach Herndon, “six years is certainly a long time for a temporary assignment. I can see your point. If you really want to resign, I’ll accept your resignation. I certainly appreciate all the work you’ve put in over the years. You’ve always gone above and beyond your call, which has not gone unnoticed.” Coach Herndon replies, “thank you, sir. I’ve really enjoyed working with the team, but it’s time for me to move on and focus more on the University’s ROTC program.”

Dr. Braun tells Coach Herndon, “okay, I’ll accept your resignation. And, I’ll let you determine your effective resignation date. But, I can assure you that you’ll be missed by all of us.” Coach Herndon explains, “I’d prefer that my resignation be effective immediately to allow the team to adjust to working with Mr. Frazier before the season begins. It would be in the best interest of the team.” Coach Herndon sincerely has the team’s best interests at heart. But, as she said, it is time for her to move on. Dr. Braun, who understands, tells Coach Herndon, “well, if there is no objection from Mr. Frazier, I’ll accept your resignation effective

immediately.” Mr. Frazier does not object, and it is decided that Coach Herndon will be released from her duties.

On their way out, Coach Herndon mentions, “you know, I’m really going to miss Axel Braden.” Mr. Frazier comments, “he’s one of the best athletes that I’ve ever coached.” Coach Herndon tells Mr. Frazier, “of all the athletes that have come through this University that I’ve had the pleasure to meet, Axel Braden is, by far, my favorite.” Braden is probably Coach Herndon’s favorite because of his military personality, his pre-race rants, and the running cadences he had the team chant last year. Quite often, Braden also spared Coach Herndon the pain of dealing with McCutchen.

Mr. Frazier reminds Coach Herndon, “you can still come to the meets and watch. I’m sure the team will be glad to have you present.” Dr. Braun adds, telling Coach Herndon, “I think we can arrange for you to be where the action is if you’d like.” Coach Herndon replies, “thank you, sir! I might just take you up on that!” Knowing that the sprinting team is now under expert guidance, Coach Herndon can now move on.

After practice every day, Mark and Bobby B. head over to the seven-acre tract of land where Dr. Akinmola is building a church building. Eddie’s father and Mark’s father have been working on the project from sunrise to sunset. The project is moving along quickly, and Mark and Bobby B. have been glad to pick up the extra work. Paula takes the money Mark earns, and takes it to the bank. Taking the money to the bank, to Paula, means buying gold, taking the gold to the future, selling it, and bringing home a huge profit. And, Bobby B. has been investing in the stock market, per Eddie’s stock recommendations.

Still convinced that Eddie and Mark are not actually taking classes, McCutchen tries to figure out their schedules. Eddie and Mark, however, have moved beyond caring. But, Mark and Eddie do not pass up the opportunity to mess with McCutchen. So, after practice, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, when McCutchen has class, Eddie and Mark hang around the locker room until McCutchen is about ready to leave. For some reason, McCutchen wants to follow Eddie and Mark, but his curiosity has been making him late to his class. McCutchen, trying to gain the upper hand, is losing the psychological warfare battle.

As if following Eddie and Mark to class once wasn’t enough, McCutchen, yet again, tries to gain the upper hand, and tries to discover whether Eddie and Mark actually attend formal classes at the University. McCutchen will stop at nothing to try to get Eddie and Mark off the track team. Proving that neither Eddie nor Mark attends formal classes would be McCutchen’s ace in the hole.

After practice today, McCutchen trails Eddie and Mark once again, this time at quite a distance. Arriving at the parking lot, Eddie whispers to Mark, "it looks like McCutchen is following us again." Mark whispers back, "let's mess with his ass, and go to that class again. We'll see if he follows us." Eddie replies, "yeah. Let's do that. If he doesn't follow us, we can just head home." Eddie asks Mark, "do you remember where that classroom is?" Mark replies, "I think so. It's the one in that really old building with two sets of double doors on the outside." Eddie and Mark head to the lecture hall, paying no attention to McCutchen, who is following them at a distance.

Arriving at the lecture hall, Eddie and Mark hang around outside for a few minutes, waiting to see if McCutchen will arrive. McCutchen slyly passes by, and does not stop at the lecture hall as Eddie and Mark expect, but rather keeps walking. Mark yells out at McCutchen, "yo, McCutchen! Where are you going? The class meets here, junior!" Not wanting to get busted by Mark for allegedly cutting class, McCutchen turns around, and replies, "oh, yeah. I thought today was Tuesday." Yelling out to McCutchen, Mark replies, "it's the Prickly Sea Spider bite, junior! I'm telling you. Your adrenal glands are shriveling up! Your brain is shot! You can't even remember what day it is!" McCutchen walks into the lecture hall, and takes a seat in the back row where he now must hide out for one hour. Eddie and Mark also walk in, taking a seat on the back row at the other side of the lecture hall.

After delivering a few administrative messages, Dr. Bancroft begins her lecture, orating, "today, as you probably already guessed, we are going to continue our discussion of how to properly design a transistor audio amplifier. During our last session, we discussed that one good indication of a properly designed amplifier is its ability to drive a capacitive load. The classical example of a capacitive load is the electrostatic transducer. Another example of a capacitive load is the piezoelectric transducer used in some commercially available horn tweeters today. And, a third source of load capacitance, which is quite often overlooked, is the loudspeaker cable itself."

As Dr. Bancroft recaps her last lecture, Eddie whispers to Mark, "we're definitely in an electrical engineering class. This ain't a music class." Mark replies, "you're right about that." The last time they walked into this class a few weeks ago, due to the subject material, Eddie and Mark could not easily discern whether they were sitting in a music theory class or an engineering class.

Moving on to new material, Dr. Bancroft continues, "another indicator of an amplifier's perceived sound quality is how well the amplifier behaves when its various stages are overloaded. In the consumer market, this is often referred to as clipping. When an amplifier is overloaded, by

definition, one of the stages of the amplification circuit is driven into electrical saturation. When a transistor saturates, a relatively large charge is stored at the semiconductor junction. For the amplifier to recover from its saturated state, this charge must be dissipated. Obviously, the best way to prevent any stage of an amplifier from overloading is to prevent the overload from occurring in the first place. But, as we can easily conclude, this is not always possible.” Mark whispers to Eddie, “McCutchen isn’t paying attention. He keeps looking over here at us.” Eddie whispers back, “his major is some sort of liberal arts. There’s no way a liberal arts major is going to be sitting in an electrical engineering class.”

Eddie and Mark, also not enrolled in the class in which they are sitting, whisper back and forth, discussing more ways to mess with McCutchen. McCutchen, a bit on the fidgety side, is looking for an opportunity to leave the classroom, but knows he cannot do so without catching the attention of Eddie, Mark, or the professor. In contrast, Eddie and Mark, with nothing pressing on their schedule, take the time to sit back and relax.

Toward the end of Dr. Bancroft’s lecture, the professor announces to her class, “now, let’s take the information that we’ve learned today and apply it to an amplifier design. For our example, consider the case of a simple three-stage audio amplifier. My question to you is which stage of the amplifier would be the worst of the three stages to exhibit an electrical overload?” While Dr. Bancroft’s question is a simple one, silence comes over the class as the students reason to themselves whether it’s better to overload the preamplifier, driver, or the final stage.

Seeing that no student has an answer to her question, Dr. Bancroft surveys the classroom, previously noting that McCutchen has not been paying one bit of attention to her lecture. Pointing to McCutchen, Dr. Bancroft announces, “you, in the back row wearing the skull cap, can you answer my question?” Hoping that he will easily get out of answering Dr. Bancroft’s question, McCutchen replies, “I don’t know.” Mark whispers to Eddie, “this is really going to be funny. McCutchen doesn’t know shit.” Eddie smiles, knowing that Mark is right. Eddie and Mark sit back, watching as Dr. Bancroft looks as if she is preparing to put McCutchen into a pressure cooker.

Dr. Bancroft asks McCutchen, “can you please tell me, then, if transient intermodulation distortion can occur if the open-loop bandwidth is greater than the signal bandwidth?” McCutchen replies, “I’m not sure. But, I suppose it could.” Dr. Bancroft, and the rest of the class, now knows that McCutchen was either not paying attention during the last class or he was absent. The answer to the professor’s question is clearly ‘no’, for that was the subject of the previous lecture. One criterion to minimize or eliminate transient intermodulation distortion of an amplifier

is to design the open-loop amplifier as to have a bandwidth far greater than the audio band it is designed to amplify¹. If McCutchen were present during Dr. Bancroft's previous lecture, he would have known that.

Now wondering whether McCutchen knows anything at all, Dr. Bancroft asks him the simplest of all electrical engineering questions, "can you, then, please tell me how much current flows through the circuit when one volt passes through a one ohm resistor?" Completely unfamiliar with electrical circuits, McCutchen replies, "I'm not exactly sure. I'd have to work it out."

Eddie, understanding basic electrical principles from working with automobiles, yells out, "it's one amp, junior! Everyone knows that." Dr. Bancroft points to Eddie and replies, "thank you." Bothered that McCutchen did not know the answer to her simple question, Dr. Bancroft then asks her class, "and, what would happen should the power source not be able to deliver a current of one amp?" Eddie, the automobile mechanic, replies, "something will fry. That's why they make fuses." Dr. Bancroft replies, "exactly. At least one person in this room has taken Electrical Engineering 101." Dr. Bancroft gives the clear impression that she is ticked off with McCutchen.

Clearly understanding that McCutchen, for one reason or another, should not even be in her class, Dr. Bancroft points to McCutchen, and instructs him, "you, please come up here." Fearing what would happen should he disobey the professor, McCutchen walks to the front of the classroom. Dr. Bancroft quietly asks McCutchen his name, finding that he is not even on the class role. Dr. Bancroft then proceeds to ascertain the reason that McCutchen is present during her lecture today.

While Dr. Bancroft questions McCutchen further, Eddie whispers to Mark, "it looks like we're off the hook now. McCutchen won't even dare to come back to this class again." Mark whispers back, "good. And, it gives me something else to mess with him about." Eddie asks, "what's that, bro?" Mark explains, "during track practice, I'm going to point out to him that he's been cutting class. Then, he's going to tell me that he dropped the class. Then, I'll point out that his brain is turning into mush, and that it's the Prickly Sea Spider bite." During their discussion, Eddie and Mark observe that, following McCutchen's brief encounter with Dr. Bancroft, McCutchen heads back to his seat, picks up his stuff, and leaves the lecture hall.

¹ This is why a high quality audio amplifier typically has a frequency response of 10 - 100,000 Hz or greater when the audible spectrum is 20 - 20,000 Hz.

Now that McCutchen is gone, Dr. Bancroft asks her class again, “now, getting back to my original question. In the case of a simple three-stage audio amplifier, which stage of the amplifier would give the worst result should it exhibit electrical overload? Since we’re running out of time, I will give you the answer. The answer to my question is actually quite simple. The last stage of the amplifier would be the worst stage to exhibit overload. Under saturation, the quasi-square wave output of the final stage would likely damage the speakers, particularly the high frequency drivers, to which the amplifier is connected. And, I might add, if the amplifier is properly designed, overloading the preamplifier or driver circuits would not saturate the final stage, so the speakers would be protected. Expect this question on the upcoming test in the form of a circuit design problem.”

Dr. Bancroft concludes her lecture for the day and class breaks up. Eddie and Mark head to the parking lot, seeing no trace of McCutchen anywhere. Reiterating what he hinted at earlier, Mark tells Eddie, “I’m going to mess with McCutchen next week sometime. He’ll never bother us about this shit again.” Eddie replies, “good. We need to get rid of him somehow. He’s becoming a real pain in the ass.” Mark agrees, telling Eddie, “you got that right.” Eddie and Mark have discovered that, for some reason, McCutchen is trying his best to get certain members off of the track team.

The next week, as the team gets dressed for practice, seeing McCutchen walk into the locker room, Mark yells out, “hey, McCutchen! Where have you been? You’ve been cutting class!” Hoping to get out of an embarrassing moment, McCutchen replies, “I had to drop that class.” Not letting McCutchen off the hook so easily, Mark exclaims, “it’s the Prickly Sea Spider bite, junior! Your brain is mush! Your adrenal glands are mush! Your hair is all gone! And now, your liver is failing!” McCutchen, who should not even respond to Mark, replies, “it is not!” Mark exclaims, “it’s stress! I tell you! It’s stress, junior! You can’t even handle stress anymore! You’re turning into a vegetable!”

Overhearing the exchange between Mark and McCutchen, Braden suggests, “maybe his fat ass ought to drop out of track instead. Then, everything will be just fine around here.” Mitchell, who has been ticked off at McCutchen recently, tells Braden, “what did I tell him a few weeks ago? The B vitamins react with the pricklotoxins and form ganglioacetic acid. All that ganglioacetic acid has eaten away at his white matter. Now, he can’t even keep up with his school work.” Disputing Mitchell, McCutchen firmly replies, “I can so!” Mitchell replies, “yeah, right. Keep telling yourself that. See where that gets you. You can’t even run in a straight line anymore. The ganglioacetic acid is now eating away at your cerebellum.” Heading out to the arena, Mark points back at McCutchen,

and exclaims, “see? What did I tell you, junior? Do you think I make all this shit up?”

Now that track practice is fully underway, Dr. Braun, and the rest of the coaching staff, has been taking the time to assign events, particularly the relay events. Since last year’s seniors have graduated, the relay teams must be reformed. In the individual events, however, the assignments are quite obvious in most cases. Today, Dr. Braun, working with Mr. Frazier and Dr. Paxton, is again refining the final relay team assignments.

The men’s 4 by 440 relay team is carved in stone. No one can beat Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson in this event. In the woman’s mile medley relay, Kathy and Paula will be running the 220-yard legs. Tessa and Erika will likely be trading off running the 440-yard leg. Taking Barbara’s place, Amber Amy will be running the half mile leg.

Johnson has the best half mile times of the team, and sets the standard in this event. Chasing Johnson is Mitchell, Stone, and Akinmola. With impeccable times in the half mile, the four distance stars have been having an unofficial competition in the 4 by 880 relay to see who can run the fastest leg among them.

With them this year is a transfer student whose name is Running Bull. Bull is a native American, and is competent at just about any distance. And, yes. Running Bull is his real name. Julius Bailey, a freshman, is also vying for a place on a relay team. Another freshman, Harry Dulaney, a walk on, is vying for a place anywhere on the team. Dr. Paxton runs a few time trials in the event, in an attempt to find the most competitive relay team.

Eddie, and most of the other tribe members, sits back on the bleachers watching, as the time trial gets underway. Dr. Paxton has arranged two teams running the 4 by 880 relay. The first team is comprised of Stone, Bailey, McCutchen, and Mitchell. The second team is comprised of Akinmola, Johnson, Dulaney, and Bull. Dr. Paxton arranged the relay teams as to even the field. Everyone is told to run their best, as their position on the team is dependent on their performance. Dr. Braun instructs the Timekeepers to get very accurate times on each individual leg. He is not too concerned with which team wins, but will be using the individual statistics to form the 4 by 880 relay team.

With no further ado, the Starter begins the race, and Stone fights it out with Akinmola on the first leg. As they are watching, Eddie remarks, “it looks like Akinmola and Stone are really pushing each other.” As they approach the end of their leg, Braden comments, “this leg looks like it’s gonna be a tie.” Stone hands off to Bailey, and Akinmola hands off to Johnson.

During the second leg, Mark mentions, “well, it’s no secret who is going to win this leg.” Johnson is leaving the freshman, Bailey, in the dust. But, this race was designed to get Bailey to run his best, which he is doing. Bailey knows who he is up against, and why. Johnson hands off to Dulaney, as McCutchen is on the track waiting for Bailey to deliver the baton. As Bailey approaches, McCutchen grabs the baton, happy to see that neither Mark nor Braden is on the track.

During the first half of the third leg, McCutchen actually gains some ground on Dulaney. Mark comments, “it looks like McCutchen’s bald aerodynamic head is giving him an advantage.” Eddie remarks, “eggs are aerodynamic. They also break when you drop them.” During the second half of the leg, Dulaney slows his pace, burning himself out a bit early. Dulaney hands off to Bull, who appears very strong at the beginning of his leg.

Mitchell, awaiting the baton, takes off as McCutchen approaches the transition zone. Mark comments to Eddie, “here it goes. McCutchen is going to hand off to Mitchell.” McCutchen enters the transition zone, and slows his pace. Approaching the end of the transition zone, Mitchell has to come to a near standstill to make the transition.

Mark comments, “well, that didn’t go exactly as planned.” Kathy vividly comments, exclaiming, “McCrutchen is back to his same old shit! That was intentional! He tried to mess up Mitchell’s time!” Eddie tells everyone, “don’t think Mr. Frazier didn’t see that.” Paula points out, “and, Mitchell had to really pull that baton out of McCutchen’s hand.”

Mitchell takes off, chasing down Bull. Mitchell should be able to catch Bull but, due to the bungled handoff, has a little more ground to make up than he originally expected. Bull, knowing he is ahead, is running his best race ever. Mitchell, however, is slowly gaining on Bull. Seeing what happened, Braden comments, “I don’t want to be on a relay team with McCutchen. I’m here to win, and he ain’t won nothing since he’s been here.” Mark asks, “why do they even keep him around?” Eddie, reminding Mark of what Dean Grimsby said, replies, “because his daddy gives a lot of money to the school.”

As the end of the race approaches, Mitchell gives it all he has to catch Bull. Bull, however, was underestimated, and crosses the finish line first, with Mitchell following a few seconds afterward. Now a secret to no one, Mitchell is exceedingly ticked off. With his relay team of Stone, Bailey, and McCutchen standing off to the side, Mitchell throws the baton at McCutchen. With the baton striking McCutchen on the leg, Mitchell yells out, “since you wanted to hold on to this, here it is.” Quite disgusted, Mitchell heads to the bleachers, and joins the tribe.

Braden asks Mitchell, “what was that shit all about?” Mitchell exclaims, “he slowed down, and he wouldn’t let go of the baton! I had to yank it out of his hand!” Paula tells Mitchell, “yeah, I saw that!” Braden exclaims, “someone’s got to go!” Eddie reassures Mitchell, “don’t think Mr. Frazier didn’t see what happened.” Mark reassures Mitchell, “either way, you’re probably in the top four anyway.” Mitchell calms down, sits back, and awaits the results of the competition.

Dr. Braun announces the times and, as expected, Johnson, Stone, Akinmola, and Mitchell had the top four times in an 880-yard leg, with Johnson delivering the best time of the day. Bull had the fifth best time of this exercise, and looks promising. McCutchen, even after sabotaging Mitchell’s run, came in with one of the worst times of the day.

After Dr. Braun announces the times, Mr. Frazier comments to Dr. Braun, “it looks like McCutchen’s hand off needs a little work.” Dr. Paxton pipes up, and says, “from where I was standing, it looked to me that Mitchell had a problem receiving it.” Mr. Frazier comments, “McCutchen clearly slowed down in the transition zone, and.” Before Mr. Frazier could finish his sentence, Dr. Paxton interrupts, and tells Mr. Frazier, “Mitchell should have gauged his speed better. He obviously left too soon and had to slow down.” Mr. Frazier is not in the mood for an argument, so he lets it go. After all, Mitchell was in the top four, and McCutchen turned in a dismal performance.

A few more events are run, and the relay team assignments are beginning to become clear. Mr. Frazier, now the sprinting coach, will decide who will run in any races that are 440 yards and under. Dr. Paxton, the distance coach, will decide the distance events. In the event of the mile medley relay, the coaches will come to a mutual agreement. With all the numbers in, the team awaits to hear what events they will be running in this season.

With enough information to form the relay teams, and thirty minutes remaining in the practice session, the team is instructed to run the interval drill. Braden whispers to a few tribe members, “we’re gonna do some running cadences again. Pass it around. Let everyone know.” The team gets on the track, beginning the drill, with Braden and the other sprinters sprinting their first two laps.

The tribe then takes their two 220-yard recovery laps together. Braden starts chanting, with the tribe energetically following suit with each verse, “

McCrutchen can’t hold the baton,
His weak hand just can’t hold on.
McCrutchen’s ass is fat as shit,

That is why he likes to quit.
McCrutchen's always in last place,
He can't run a decent pace.
McCrutchen is a big disgrace,
When he runs, we lose the race.
Keep McCrutchen on the bench,
He's our team's big monkey wrench.
Keep McCrutchen off the track,
Cut his slow ass zero slack."

During each recovery lap, Braden goes on, continuing to belittle McCutchen through his running cadences. Some of the other team members join in with Braden's military cadences. Everyone is entertained by Braden's energetic chants except for, perhaps, McCutchen.

On the sidelines, referring to Braden's military cadences, Dr. Paxton tells Mr. Frazier, "they pulled this chanting stuff last year. It's not my place to say, but I think it's somewhat disrespectful." Mr. Frazier, contrary to Dr. Paxton's opinion, using Dr. Paxton's earlier phraseology, states, "from where I'm standing, it looks like some of them have a lot more energy than usual." Mr. Frazier was, of course, referring to the tribe.

After practice, in the locker room, Mitchell, who is still ticked off, tells McCutchen, "it looks like the ganglioacetic acid is now eating away at your motor cortex. Your handoff sucked big time." McCutchen tells Mitchell, "that was your fault." Braden advises Mitchell, "next time, just shove that baton between his legs! He won't mess up another handoff after that." Johnson adds, "yeah, because he'll never be able to run again." Mark corrects Johnson, telling everyone, "he never could run to begin with. And, he just proved it again today." McCutchen doesn't have much more to say, and leaves the locker room as fast as he can. McCutchen has relearned that getting into an argument with the tribe is a dead end street.

A few days later, after practice, the coaches meet to finalize the relay teams. The coaches agree on most of the relay assignments, many of which have already been decided. Getting down to business, Dr. Braun asks Mrs. Owens, "what do we have left to assign?" Mrs. Owens replies, "the men's mile medley relay team, and the 4 by 880 relay. And, we could really use another high jumper. We're not too strong in that event this year."

Mr. Frazier suggests, "Akinmola is an excellent high jumper. Perhaps he could fill that position." Rebuffing Mr. Frazier, Dr. Paxton replies, "I'm not giving up one of my distance guys to the field team." Mr. Frazier points out, "the last I knew, Akinmola can high jump almost seven feet!"

Preventing an argument that is about to break out, Dr. Braun remarks, "let's work on what we can first, and get the relay teams set."

Dr. Braun tells the coaching staff, "first, let's see what we have for the men's mile medley relay." Dr. Braun asks Mr. Frazier, "who do you have for the 220-yard and the 440-yard legs?" Mr. Frazier replies, "as we all know, Braden is the best 440 guy we have. And, Mark and Eddie are the best at the 220-yard distance. But, we can put up Johnson in either the 220-yard leg or the 440-yard leg if we need to, and expect a good performance. And, Davida would also be suited for a 220-yard leg." Dr. Braun asks Mr. Frazier, "what are your thoughts on alternates?" Mr. Frazier replies, "Jeff Anderson would be a good alternate. And, Bull looks strong in every event." Mrs. Owens makes a few notes reflecting Mr. Frazier's suggestions.

Dr. Braun asks Dr. Paxton, "who do you have for the half mile leg?" Dr. Paxton replies, "first of all, I'd like to say that Johnson is part of the distance team, and he won't be running in a sprint. And, by the way, neither will Bull, who is also on the distance team. For the half mile leg, I think McCutchen would be a good fit. He's shown remarkable improvement in that event and, during the time trials, he's delivered a few good performances."

Dr. Paxton's statement regarding Johnson irritated Mr. Frazier. Mr. Frazier was willing to let it go, until he heard Dr. Paxton's suggestion that McCutchen runs the half mile leg. Mr. Frazier is at a loss to understand why Dr. Paxton would assign McCutchen to this event, or any event for that matter. And, Johnson has previously run the 440-yard dash and other sprints before the rest of the tribe showed up.

Quite puzzled, Mr. Frazier asks, "why McCutchen? There's at least a half dozen guys who can beat him at that distance." Mr. Frazier believes Dr. Paxton is grossly overestimating McCutchen's abilities. And, Mr. Frazier was just being nice by quoting a half dozen. Everyone on the team could probably beat McCutchen at that distance. Dr. Paxton replies, "I suspect that, when you coached high school, you made all the decisions. It's not like that here at the University, so get used to it. I've got to use what I have." Mr. Frazier comments, "I thought the goal was to win. You can put Bull in there instead, and they'd at least have a chance at winning!"

Mrs. Owens makes a few more notes regarding Dr. Paxton's suggestions. Mrs. Owens also makes a few notes of Mr. Frazier's propositions. Being a statistician, Mrs. Owens will do the math later and report to the coaches the expected times in each event with the assigned runners. She will also report the expected times in each event with various substitutions. What irritates Dr. Paxton most is that Mrs. Owens

will produce a report showing the expected composite times of the mile medley relay team with each of McCutchen, Bull, and Johnson running the half-mile leg.

Moving along, Dr. Braun asks Dr. Paxton, “who do you have planned as an alternate?” Dr. Paxton replies, “Dulaney.” Mr. Frazier exclaims, “Dulaney? He’s in direct competition with McCutchen to be the slowest member of the track team!” Dr. Paxton replies, “as I said, I have to work with what I have.” Mr. Frazier, at this point, is very frustrated. Dr. Braun ends the discussion of the mile medley relay by stating, “we’ll run a few time trials tomorrow, and see what we come up with.”

Moving on, Dr. Braun asks, “what do we have for the 4 by 880 relay?” Since distance is Dr. Paxton’s territory, he replies, “I’d like to put up Mitchell, Stone, Akinmola, and McCutchen. Bailey and Dulaney will be alternates.” Mr. Frazier asks, “how about Johnson? If you put Johnson in, that team will be unstoppable.” Dr. Braun interjects, “Mr. Frazier does appear to have a point. You might want to consider what he has to say.” Getting himself out of the confrontation, Dr. Paxton replies, “I have other plans for Johnson.” Dr. Paxton’s plans appear to be keeping Johnson on the bench, as he did with Darryl Stone in the past.

Mr. Frazier, however, does not let the issue be put to rest. Mr. Frazier tells Dr. Paxton, “you have Johnson in the 880-yard run and in the mile. You don’t need him in the mile. Mitchell, Stone, and Akinmola can all beat Johnson at that distance. And, I don’t have to tell you that no points are awarded for fourth place. No one on this team can deliver a faster 880-yard run than Johnson. You’ve put him in the mile, where he’s not going to win, and you’ve kept him out of a relay race that he is sure to win!” Dr. Paxton, not appreciative of Mr. Frazier’s rebuke, replies, “I have my reasons, sir, and I’m sticking by them.”

Recalling that Officer Richard Hayes, the police officer investigating the illegal gambling ring, has evidence that sporting events in the University and high school were being rigged, Mr. Frazier replies, “what are your reasons? It sounds like you’re rigging the events to lose! It sounds to me like you’re betting against the team!” Dr. Paxton suddenly gets very irate, and exclaims, “Mr. Frazier, you are overstepping your bounds! I am in charge of the distance team, and my decisions are my decisions. You have your reasons for your assignments, and I have mine.”

To Mr. Frazier, Dr. Paxton sounds a bit like Mr. Crum. Since he is the new guy on the block, Mr. Frazier relents, and tells Dr. Paxton, “well, good luck with your assignments. I hope it works out for you. I’m sure Johnson’s going to be really happy.” Keeping the peace, Dr. Braun again suggests, “we’ll run a few time trials, and see what the relay teams can

produce.” After a few more marginally inflammatory discussions, the meeting is adjourned, and the coaches go their way.

Mr. Frazier heads to his office, and mulls over the situation, which is quite puzzling to him. If the goal is to win, putting up the most qualified athletes to accomplish that goal is in the best interest of the coaches, the team, and the individuals running in the race. To put lesser qualified individuals in a race makes no sense at all to the seasoned coach. The icing on the cake is that Mr. Frazier has heard from Johnson and others that McCutchen runs the 440-yard dash during time trials in 55 seconds. When in competition, McCutchen would run the same race in 75 or 80 seconds, and bungle two handoffs in the process. Running a 55-second quarter mile during time trials, and subsequently running a dismal time and fouling up two handoffs during competition, to Mr. Frazier, sounds like a rigged event. Mr. Frazier has also learned from Johnson that, in the past few years, several last minute substitutions were made by Dr. Paxton, which were not in the best interest of the team. Looking over some of the other event assignments, Mr. Frazier is not too happy with what he sees. Mr. Frazier tells the secretary that he'll be back in an hour or two, and leaves campus.

Taking a long break, Mr. Frazier heads to the high school, where he waits outside in the parking lot until right before class change. Hearing the five-minute warning buzzer that is broadcast out to the sports fields, Mr. Frazier walks toward the school, seeing Mr. Zunde and Mr. Chubin bringing a crowd of students in from the football field.

Mr. Zunde yells out to Mr. Frazier, “are you back so soon?” Mr. Frazier replies, “not quite. But, I need a favor.” Mr. Zunde offers, “just name it. You got it.” Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Zunde, “I need to use your phone, and I need to meet with Officer Hayes, the police officer. I was hoping that I could do that here instead of at the University.”

Mr. Zunde asks, “what’s the problem?” Mr. Frazier explains to Mr. Zunde that Dr. Paxton, the distance coach, appears to be assigning events incongruent with winning. After the long explanation, Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Zunde, “it appears that I’ve traded one set of problems for another.” Mr. Zunde replies, “well, if the grass is greener on the other side of the street, it is because the dog has visited that yard more often.” Mr. Frazier calls the police station, and is informed that Officer Hayes is en route to the school. While he is waiting, Mr. Frazier talks with Mr. Zunde, as Mr. Chubin holds down the fort.

Officer Hayes arrives at the high school and walks into the athletic area. Mr. Zunde decides to join them for the meeting, and no one objects. After they talk a bit, Mr. Frazier gets down to business. Officer Hayes asks, “so, what do you got for me?” Mr. Frazier explains, “over at the

University, the distance coach, Dr. Paxton, has assigned events and alternates to events that are clearly not in the best interest of the team. What bothers me most, however, is he's assigned the less skilled runners in some of the relay events, when he has runners that, if assigned to the event, can take the gold medal." Mr. Zunde adds, "well, that certainly makes no sense at all."

Officer Hayes asks, "can you give me an example?" Mr. Frazier explains, "Dr. Paxton assigned Mitchell, Stone, Akinmola, and McCutchen to the 4 by 880 relay. He left out Johnson, who has the best half mile times on the team." Mr. Zunde asks, "McCutchen. Isn't he the guy Mark used to mess with all the time?" Mr. Frazier replies, "yes. And, he's the guy that has very inconsistent performances. The records show that he runs much better in time trials than he does in competition." Officer Hayes looks through his notes, and comments, "this McCutchen character. Eddie told me about him last Summer. His high school relay team, which was apparently highly ranked, makes it to State every year, and then they get slaughtered." Mr. Frazier replies, "exactly! The same thing is happening over at the University."

Officer Hayes asks Mr. Frazier, "tell me about the other coaches." Mr. Frazier explains, "Dr. Braun, the head coach, is an older guy. He's probably in his upper sixties. He's still in remarkable shape. Dr. Braun allows the other coaches to do their jobs. Coach Herndon, the sprinting coach, recently resigned. My understanding is that she took the job temporarily six years ago and, now that I'm there, she's moved on. Dr. Bonamo is the field events coach. You can't tell me that Bonamo doesn't want to win. And, then there's Paxton. He seems to be the problem. His event assignments reflect poor judgement, and are all over the place. From my understanding, some of the members of the distance team have their own issues with him."

Mr. Frazier gives Officer Hayes a few more examples. During their conversation, Officer Hayes, showing Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde a 100-page spiral bound notebook, asks, "do you see this notebook?" Holding the notebook into the air, Officer Hayes explains, "these are my notes for the investigation into the drug and gambling operations. I'm now beginning to think I should have bought a bigger notebook."

Officer Hayes tells Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde, "pardon me for a moment." Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde listen as Officer Hayes radios the University on the shared channel, "County 315 to University dispatch." The dispatcher replies, "315. Go ahead." Officer Hayes replies, "is it possible to 10-25² with Officer Braden at the Northside High athletic

² 10-25: Meet With

office?” The dispatcher replies, “315 10-12³.” Officer Hayes tells Mr. Frazier, “I want Officer Braden in on this. We’ve been working with him closely on this issue. I want to see if I can get him down here.”

Almost immediately, Officer Hayes hears the University dispatcher, “University dispatch to County 315.” Officer Hayes replies, “315. Go ahead.” The dispatcher replies, “10-17⁴. 10-26⁵ in ten.” Officer Hayes replies, “315. 10-4.” Officer Hayes tells Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde, “Officer Braden is on his way. He’ll be here in ten minutes.”

While they are waiting, Officer Hayes inquires of Mr. Zunde how the athletic program is doing at the high school. Mr. Zunde points out that, now that Mr. Crum is gone, there have been no problems. But, Mr. Zunde mentions that he still has his eyes open, watching for any hint of interference from Mr. Shapiro, who Mr. Zunde considers a snake in the grass.

Driving into the school parking lot, Officer Braden sees Officer Hayes’ patrol car outside the athletic office, and decides to park in the same area. Walking into an area of the school that is all too familiar to him, Officer Braden heads straight to the athletic office.

Officer Braden is greeted by Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde by a fist bump, reminiscent of his track days at the school. After seeing who is present, Officer Braden already suspects he knows what this meeting is about. After they all say hello, Officer Hayes closes the door, alerting Officer Braden that something is definitely up.

After Mr. Frazier again summarizes the recent events, Officer Hayes addresses Officer Braden, Mr. Frazier, and Mr. Zunde, telling them, “this may come as no surprise to some of you. But, let me point out the obvious. At the University, there are skilled athletes on both the sprinting team and on the distance team. Yet, the sprinting team delivers consistent performances at every meet, while the distance team does not, except for a few individuals. This is especially seen in the distance relay races. I’ve checked with other Universities in the area, and none of them have such a clear division between the distance and sprinting coach staff.” Mr. Frazier adds, “I experienced that first hand this morning. Dr. Paxton told me, and I quote, ‘I am in charge of the distance team, and my decisions are my decisions.’ Nothing was up for discussion.” Officer

³ 10-12: Stand By

⁴ 10-17: En Route

⁵ 10-26: Estimated Time of Arrival

Hayes apparently has done his homework, analyzing the coaching practices and outcomes of many sporting events in the region.

Officer Hayes makes a note of what Mr. Frazier just mentioned, and continues, “the department has had its eyes on this Dr. Paxton character since last Summer. He has been under surveillance, along with a few other coaches in the area. We have plans to take him in, and to do it soon. And, trust me, we have the evidence to do it. However, taking this Dr. Paxton character down will be like hitting a hornet’s nest with a baseball bat, and standing around to see what happens. That’s why I called Officer Braden in on this meeting.” Mr. Frazier, who is getting angry at what he is hearing, comments, “the faster you get rid of him, the better. The season is approaching, and I don’t like to lose!” Turning to Mr. Zunde, Mr. Frazier explains, “having Paxton coach the team is like having Mr. Crum helping to coach the track team at the high school.”

Quite curious, Mr. Frazier asks, “why is Paxton being taken in?” Braden, already knowing the answer, tells Mr. Frazier, “you’re gonna really like this one.” Officer Hayes explains, “this is considered confidential information, so please treat it that way. We have overwhelming evidence that Gerald Paxton has been distributing anabolic steroids to various sports teams in the area. Indirectly, Paxton was McCutchen’s supplier. So, we are taking him in with charges unrelated to the gambling operation, which we also have evidence he is involved in. But, as I said, it will be like hitting a hornet’s nest, and standing around to see what happens.” Mr. Frazier requests, “if you can get rid of him before January, I’d really appreciate that.” Officer Hayes reassures Mr. Frazier, telling him, “we plan to do that.”

Officer Hayes then explains, “when we take this Paxton character in, and that is imminent by the way, the University official who is behind Paxton rigging the events will undoubtedly become unhinged. So will certain team members who are in on the rigging.” Officer Braden comments, “it’s kinda obvious to me who they are.” Addressing Mr. Frazier, Officer Hayes requests, “when we do take Paxton in, I would really appreciate that no team members are cut from the team. I don’t care if you reassign anyone to be the water boy, but we need them to remain part of the team. They’re also being watched.”

Officer Braden mentions to Mr. Frazier, “don’t worry. I’m watching some of them. Don’t think I didn’t notice that shit that McCutchen pulled the other day handing off to Mitchell. And, that new guy, Dulaney, hangs out with McCutchen at night. I got my eyes on him too. Someone rolled out the red carpet for that Dulaney guy.” Mr. Frazier comments, “I’ve suspected that. Running Bull is a lot better than both of them. He could have been assigned to the mile medley or the 4 by 880 relay, and it would be a winning team.” As he is taking notes, Officer Hayes asks, “this

Running Bull, what's his real name?" Mr. Frazier replies, "that is his real name. He's a native American. And, his parents named him well."

Officer Braden announces, "now that we're all together, I have some more evidence." Officer Hayes opens his eyes wide, and replies, "what's that? I'm listening." Officer Braden explains, "Darryl Stone, the distance guy, took a year off between his freshman and sophomore years. And, he took another year off between his sophomore and junior years. But, during that time, he still practiced with the team, but he wasn't officially part of the team." Mr. Frazier adds, for those who may not know, "Darryl Stone is Athena Leighton's son. He's an excellent distance man."

Braden continues, "so, the reason he didn't run during those years is because Dr. Paxton wouldn't let him run the mile, or any other events he was good at. Dr. Paxton stuck Stone in a relay with Leggett and McCrutchen's older brother, Scott McCrutchen. So, Stone sat out that year. Any relay team with Leggett on it ain't winning nothing." Officer Hayes asks, "how did you find this out?" Officer Braden replies, "Stone told me himself." Starting a page in his notebook on Darryl Stone, Officer Hayes again makes some notes, adding to his collection of evidence.

Officer Hayes sums up the meeting, informing Mr. Frazier, "we'll be moving in very soon to bring in this Paxton character. I just want you to be aware of what is going on, and that your complaint has a lot of validity. Officer Braden is aware of the situation, and has been collecting evidence for me. But, until we move in, just let everything be status quo." Mr. Frazier, relieved to hear that he is not imagining things, replies, "I can't begin to tell you how glad I am to hear that Paxton will be gone. And, for the record, Johnson will be glad once he's gone too." Officer Hayes assures Mr. Frazier, "don't worry. He'll be gone faster than you'll know. So, start reassigning the events your way." Officer Hayes thanks Mr. Frazier for making the call, and everyone goes about their business.

Also known to Officer Hayes is that John Davies, who was denied a football scholarship years ago because of Mr. Crum, has agreed to work with the police to prosecute Mr. Crum. Quite familiar with the modus operandi of Mr. Crum, Mr. Davies has volunteered to work with the district attorney to put together all of the evidence in a presentable format. Mr. Davies has supplied a considerable amount of evidence himself. Mr. Davies' father had kept the file that was presented to the school board years ago, documenting not only John's case, but that of several other football players as well.

Monday morning arrives, and the tribe gathers in the arena on the bleachers awaiting the arrival of the coaches. Since the weather is nice today, it appears that the team will be training on the outside track and on the sand track. Dr. Braun blows his whistle, getting everyone's

attention. Dr. Braun tells everyone, “today, since the weather is nice, we are all heading out to the sand track, and running sprints with the training sled. For the first 45 minutes, the sprinters will be on the sled, and the distance group will be running the interval drill. Then, for the next 45 minutes, after a short break, we will swap.” Dr. Braun then proceeds to make a few other announcements before the team heads out to the track.

As they are listening to Dr. Braun’s announcements, Kathy whispers to Eddie, “hey! Where’s Braden?” Eddie looks around, and replies, “I haven’t seen him this morning.” Catching Kathy’s question, Mark whispers to those around, “has anyone seen Braden?” Everyone looks around, as if they are expecting to find Braden among the group. But, Braden is absent today. The tribe surmises that Braden is running late.

While Dr. Braun is addressing the team, Officer Braden, Officer Hayes, and the campus police chief, Chief Anthony Toledo, walk into the arena. Officer Braden approaches Dr. Braun, and whispers, “I’m sorry about the intrusion, sir, but we have some important business to conduct. Please continue addressing the team. We’ll be out of your way in a moment.” Paula whispers to Kathy, “oh shit. This isn’t good.” Kathy asks, “how do you know?” Paula replies, “superpowers.” Kathy replies, “I should have known.”

Officer Hayes quietly pulls Dr. Paxton aside, asking him, “are you Dr. Gerald Paxton?” Officer Hayes already knows the answer to the question because Dr. Paxton has been under surveillance. Dr. Paxton replies, “yes, I am. What seems to be the problem?” Officer Hayes replies, “please step outside with us for a moment.” Dr. Paxton exclaims, “I demand to know what the problem is!” Officer Hayes tells Dr. Paxton, “please, sir. Step outside with me for a moment.” Dr. Paxton exclaims, “I’m not going anywhere until I know what this is about!”

Realizing that Dr. Paxton is a bit on the arrogant side, Officer Hayes tells Officer Braden, “fine. We’ll just do it right here.” The officers were trying to spare Dr. Paxton the embarrassment of being arrested in front of the team. But, Dr. Paxton would rather have it his way, so the officers oblige.

Officer Hayes announces, “Gerald Paxton, you are under arrest for the sale and distribution of prescription anabolic steroids and other controlled substances without a license to do so.” As Officer Hayes reads Dr. Paxton the charges against him, and his rights, Officer Braden places Dr. Paxton in handcuffs. Dr. Paxton puts up a bit of resistance, but Braden’s arm lock is a bit too much for the coach to break.

Mr. Frazier, standing alongside Dr. Braun, knows exactly what is happening. Dr. Braun, however, is completely unaware of the investigation into his team and coaching staff. And, as expected, the team is not listening to anything Dr. Braun is saying, but watch as Dr. Paxton gets arrested.

After addressing the team, Dr. Braun asks Mr. Frazier, "what in the world is going on here?" Mr. Frazier, who is not at liberty to reveal any confidential information, replies, "I guess we'll find out soon enough." Officer Hayes and Chief Toledo remove Dr. Paxton from the arena and escort him to Officer Hayes' car. Officer Braden remains behind, and tells Dr. Braun, "I'm sorry about the intrusion. And, I'm sorry for being late for practice, sir." Meanwhile, Mr. Frazier is grinning, knowing that today is the last he'll see of the traitor to the team.

Totally in the dark about what is transpiring, Dr. Braun asks Officer Braden, "what in the world is going on here?" Officer Braden replies, "Dr. Paxton is under arrest for distribution of banned substances, and money laundering. It looks like to me that you're gonna need a new distance coach. You ain't gonna be seeing Paxton's ass for a long time." Stepping right up, Mr. Frazier tells Dr. Braun, "I'll take care of the distance team, if you don't have any objection." Relieved that Dr. Paxton is gone, Dr. Braun replies, "please, be my guest." By Mr. Frazier stepping up to handle the distance team, Dr. Braun has one less thing to worry about for the short term.

With the excitement now over, the team heads out to the track to begin their workout. Braden heads to the locker room to get dressed for practice, and will join up with the team. Aided by Chief Toledo, Officer Hayes escorts Dr. Paxton to his patrol car, where he will be taken downtown and booked.

Out on the track, the sprinters are working on the sand track, and the distance team is running the interval training drill. Fifteen minutes later, Braden arrives at the track. Braden joins the sprinters, and Dr. Braun, curious for more information, walks over to the sand track.

As Braden is waiting for his turn on the training sled, Dr. Braun tells Braden, "this comes as a big surprise. How long has this been going on?" Braden explains, "years. He's been supplying steroids and controlled substances for a long time to students at several universities. We've been watching him for a while." Dr. Braun asks the inevitable question, "is there anyone else involved?" Braden replies, "yes, sir. But, I'm not allowed to comment on an ongoing investigation." As Braden takes his turn on the training sled, Dr. Braun walks over to discuss future changes with Mr. Frazier.

Today's practice comes to an end, and the team hits the locker rooms. Braden gets dressed in his police uniform, getting ready to go to work. While they are getting dressed, Johnson asks Braden, "is Dr. Paxton gone for good?" Braden laughs, and replies, "there's enough evidence to put his ass away for a long time. He ain't coming back." Johnson, who feels as if he has been underutilized by Dr. Paxton, is glad to hear the news. So is Stone, who also feels he has been often underutilized in the past. Some team members, however, are not happy to hear the news that Dr. Paxton is gone. McCutchen, who has found his niche among the distance team, is very apprehensive.

Thanksgiving approaches, and Eddie and Kathy are looking forward to a four-day break. They have been training hard in preparation for the indoor track season. The last practice before the short break comes, and the team believes, as last year, they'll have an easy day. After the break, the athletes will all come back at their best, and work hard for another three weeks before Christmas break.

The coaching staff walks in, which now consists of Dr. Braun, Dr. Bonamo, Mrs. Owens, and Mr. Frazier. Dr. Braun addresses the team, "I hope you are all looking forward to the upcoming break. We all need this time of year to reflect upon what we have to be thankful for. I, for one, am very grateful to have been able to work with the University track team for 40 years. I am also thankful to have had the opportunity to work with every single one of you." Kathy whispers to Eddie, "when he said 'have had,' he used the past perfect tense. Something's up." Eddie whispers back, "how do you know?" Kathy replies, "he never talks this way." Resurrecting an old joke, Eddie asks, "are you sure he wasn't being superfluous or verbose?" Kathy laughs, and pokes Eddie in his side, as they continue to listen to Dr. Braun.

Eddie and Kathy listen, as Dr. Braun continues, "but, this chapter in my life is coming to an end. Today, I am announcing my retirement, which will be effective at the end of this year." The team expresses some sadness that Dr. Braun is leaving. Dr. Braun announces, "when you return in January, Mr. Frazier will be your head coach. I want you to please welcome Mr. Frazier to that position right now." The team cheers for Mr. Frazier, giving him a warm welcome.

Dr. Braun then announces, "to squelch any rumors, I am going to mention one more thing before we begin practice. I am now 68 years old, and was planning to retire a few years ago. I feel it's time to pass the baton, and move on. The time and circumstances have finally come where I feel I can confidently do that. And, let me mention this. There is no one more qualified to coach this team than Mr. George Frazier. I am very confident that you will all be in good hands. With all that said, let's hit the track and run a few drills!" The plan today is to run a few relay time

trials on the indoor track, giving the team a relatively easy workout before the break.

As they are getting on the track, Kathy asks Eddie, “how did all of this happen in the last few months?” Eddie replies, “I think it started with Richard busting Mr. Crum for drugs last year.” Kathy replies, “oh yeah! That’s right! You told Richard that Mr. Crum lives on Second Street!” Eddie smiles, and replies, “oh, yeah. I did, didn’t I?” Kathy replies, “yeah, you did.”

On the track, Mr. Frazier addresses the team, “today, we will be running a few relay time trials. Some of the relay assignments involving the distance team were not optimally decided, and some reassignments will be made! The drill will be our usual relay drill with one modification. When you are on the track, you will be on the clock!” Previously, the relay drill was focused on improving handoff skills. Today, everyone’s overall performance is being measured.

Mr. Frazier continues, “today, I want to see your best performance! I want every handoff to be done as if a gold medal is at stake! I will be watching your handoff closely, so everyone better be at their best! I am also looking for consistency in your transitions. And, I want the transitions to be done at a full competitive speed! The Timekeepers will be clocking you, and I will be taking notes.” The Timekeepers and Mrs. Owens will also be compiling statistics, which Mr. Frazier will use to revise the relay teams. At the high school, Mr. Frazier was not used to such luxury. He performed all the calculations himself.

Stone whispers to Johnson, “maybe we’ll get a winning relay team out of this.” Johnson whispers back, “we will. McCrutchen’s going back to being a bench warmer by the time the season starts. And, Dulaney will be the water boy.” Stone asks, “how do you know?” Johnson replies, “trust me. Mr. Frazier isn’t putting up with any of McCrutchen’s shit, or anyone else’s shit either.” Stone, like Johnson, is glad to see Dr. Paxton gone, and for the same reason. Stone was underutilized in the past. Stone would be just as glad to see McCrutchen gone.

Mr. Frazier has the distance team running the drill in the inside lane, and the sprinting team running the drill in the outside lane. Initially, the sprinters will be running a 220-yard leg, and the distance team will be running an 880-yard leg. Now that Dr. Paxton is gone, Mr. Frazier will be paying very close attention to the distance team during today’s drill. Confident that the sprinting team’s relay assignments have been optimized, Mr. Frazier lets them run the drill on their own. Sitting in a chair near the transition zone along with Dr. Braun, Mr. Frazier takes notes as the drill is underway. Mrs. Owens and the Timekeepers frantically collect performance statistics, really earning their salary today.

Halfway through the drill, Dr. Braun mentions to Mr. Frazier, “a few of their handoff skills have remarkably improved.” Mr. Frazier asks Dr. Braun, “you know why, don’t you?” Dr. Braun replies, “why do you think?” Mr. Frazier explains, “the Timekeepers have them on the clock. They see me sitting here, with two stopwatches clocking them, and taking notes. They all know that they’re under the microscope. And, on top of that, I told them that I was going to reassign some of the events. In their minds, they are now competing for a place in an event.” Dr. Braun confesses, “I’ve never seen some of them put this much energy into a workout.”

Dean Grimsby walks into the arena, and approaches Dr. Braun and Mr. Frazier. In a demanding tone, Dean Grimsby asks, “where is Dr. Paxton? What happened to him?” Mr. Frazier bluntly tells Dean Grimsby, “I fired him.” Dean Grimsby brashly replies, “just what gives you the right to fire him?” Mr. Frazier pumps his right biceps, pointing to it with his left hand, and exclaims, “this does!” Dean Grimsby tells Mr. Frazier, “you had no right to fire him!” Mr. Frazier calmly replies, “so what. I fired him anyway.” Dean Grimsby has much conflicting information regarding Dr. Paxton’s whereabouts. Mr. Frazier just added to Dean Grimsby’s confusion.

Not getting anywhere with Mr. Frazier, Dean Grimsby informs Dr. Braun, “sir, I have been charged with the task of making sure that Todd McCutchen runs in at least one, preferably two, events. I’m sure that you are aware that his father donates a considerable sum of money to this University. I have previously assigned that task to Dr. Paxton. Now that Dr. Paxton is reported to me as being on administrative leave, I would like to know to whom I can charge that task.” Dr. Braun, seeing that Mr. Frazier was handling the situation well, replies, “you can work with Mr. Frazier on that issue.”

Apparently, Dean Grimsby has not received the memo that Dr. Paxton has been arrested, not that he was ever on the distribution list. Instead, the dean got the news through the grapevine that Dr. Paxton is on temporary administrative leave. And, Dean Grimsby has not gotten the memo that Dr. Braun is planning to retire. The dean will not get that memo either.

Turning to Mr. Frazier, Dean Grimsby informs him, “sir, we need to have a discussion regarding this matter.” Learning from Mr. Zunde, Mr. Frazier tells the dean, “Grimsby, get your ass out of my arena.” As expected, Dean Grimsby replies, “you can’t tell me what to do!” Now sounding like Kathy, Mr. Frazier replies, “I just told you what to do, so apparently I can. So, get your ass out of my arena before I have my team carry you out! Now!” Dean Grimsby exclaims, “I can assure you, sir. You haven’t heard the last of this!” Mr. Frazier laughs, and replies, “do I sound like I care?” Dean Grimsby leaves, but Mr. Frazier is sure this is not the

last he will see of the dean. Mr. Frazier has certainly gained a lot of unconventional expertise in dealing with crazy people over the last few years at the high school.

As the dean leaves, Dr. Braun tells Mr. Frazier, “well, you handled that satisfactorily.” Mr. Frazier replies, “thank you.” Dr. Braun asks, “why didn’t you tell him that Dr. Paxton got arrested?” Mr. Frazier explains, “that would take the fun out of it. Let him wonder. He’ll be frantically running around all day, trying to figure out where Paxton is. He’ll be asking everyone except for Dr. Karakova. That will keep him away from us. And, he’ll be less likely to barge in here again and disrupt practice.” Dr. Karakova, aware that Dr. Paxton has been arrested, will not likely give Dean Grimsby the time of day.

Practice comes to an end, and Dr. Braun instructs the team that practice will resume on Monday. On the way to the lockers, Kathy asks Eddie, “I wonder what that asshole wanted.” Eddie asks, “do you mean Dean Grimsby?” Kathy replies, “yeah, him.” Eddie laughs, and tells Kathy, “Mr. Frazier sounded a lot like Mr. Zunde when he said, ‘Grimsby, get your ass out of my arena.’” Paula and Mark walk up, and Kathy mentions, “when we get back from break, everything is really going to get interesting.” Paula comments, “I can’t wait!” They all head to the locker rooms, almost ready for Thanksgiving break.

As they are getting dressed, the tribe celebrates that Mr. Frazier will now be the head coach. There is a lot of talk in the locker rooms, with many athletes wondering what kind of head coach Mr. Frazier will be. To most of the team, Mr. Frazier is an unknown. Although Mr. Frazier has been at all the practice sessions, he did not take a leading role. With Dr. Braun, Coach Herndon, and Dr. Paxton not returning for the Winter track season, Mr. Frazier will now be at the helm.

Seeing McCutchen sitting on the bench, Mark announces, “it looks like McCutchen found his new place on the team.” Braden replies, “I can see that.” Mark’s innuendo suggesting that McCutchen will be sitting on the bench flies right over McCutchen’s head. McCutchen proudly informs Mark, “yeah. I’m running distance now. So, you can get out of my hair.” Braden exclaims, “junior! You ain’t got no hair!” Everyone in the locker room laughs at McCutchen, who walked right into that one. But, nevertheless, McCutchen still thinks there will be a place for him on the team.

Officer Richard Hayes, the officer who arrested Dr. Paxton, comes by the service station right before the University lets out for Christmas break. Eddie sees Officer Hayes drive up, which is a common occurrence. Walking into the service bay, Officer Hayes yells out, “hey, Eddie! What’s up?” Eddie replies, “just working, and getting ready for the track season.”

Richard asks, “how’s it going over there at the University?” Eddie explains, “Mr. Frazier reassigned some of the relay teams. It looks like the team is now going to have a good season. And, as far as the distance team goes, a lot of the events have been reassigned. Everyone’s a lot happier now.”

Richard asks Eddie, “is there any interesting news?” Richard is carefully building his case, leaving no stone unturned. Eddie replies, “not too much. The only interesting news that I’ve heard is that Dr. Paxton is on temporary leave.” Richard laughs, and replies, “I can see their point. I guess they don’t want the bad publicity, so that’s their official statement.” Eddie mentions, “other than that, it’s been quiet. But, all hell is going to break loose in January.”

Richard asks, “what happens in January?” Eddie explains, “the twelve-team divisional track meet is the first competition of the season. We’re going to do great. But, McCrutchin is not going to be running in any of the events.” Richard asks, “how do you know this?” Eddie explains, “Mr. Frazier wins. McCrutchin is that guy I told you about who runs the 440-yard dash one day in the mid-50 second range and, during competition, he would run it in 75 seconds. You can’t win with McCrutchin on the track. McCrutchin’s father is the one who supposedly gives a lot of money to the University. Because of that, Dean Grimsby wants McCrutchin to run in at least two events. Now that Dr. Paxton is gone, that ain’t happening.”

Richard tells Eddie, “speaking of Dr. Paxton, I have some news.” Eddie asks, “really? What’s that?” Richard explains, “we think Dr. Paxton has jumped bail. A very large sum of money has been transferred from his bank accounts to the Cayman Islands. Paxton, and his wife, can’t be found anywhere. We think they’ve left the country. They were out of here fast. The bank transfer happened the day after he posted bail.” Eddie replies, “wow!” Richard adds, “innocent men just don’t jump bail and leave the country.” Eddie replies, “well, in a way, that’s good news.” Richard asks, “how is that good news?” Eddie tells Richard, “now you know whose bank accounts to take a close look at.” Richard replies, “we’ll be issuing warrants for that information. It’s coming.”

Eddie tells Richard when the first meet of the season is, and Richard indicates he will attend, if not to get a better idea of exactly what goes on during a meet. Eddie also tells Richard to watch the 40-yard dash, for that is the event that Eddie is expected to win. Richard heads out, waiting for the shit to hit the fan at the University once the season is underway.