

The Bottom of the Ninth
by Y York

copyright ©1994, Y York
draft December 1994

An original short play written for
Bay Package Productions
120 Corwin Street
San Francisco CA 94114
(415) 255-2254

Carl Mulert at The Gersh Agency
41 Madison Avenue 33rd floor
New York, New York 10010-2202
cmulert@gershny.com

Players:

Catcher: Canter

First base: Palmiero

Second base: Homer

Third base: Blaine

Short stop: Stoval

Right field: Boston

Center field: Connick

Left field: Sherman

Coach: Grieves

Time: It's the bottom of the ninth; the last game of the regular season for a team out of the race.

(Coach is in the dugout; the team comes in from the field. Canter, puts on walkman/earphones, leaves on catcher's gear. Boston gets batting helmet and glove, heads to the plate. Sherman, who is on deck, ditto.)

Connick: (about the walkman) What'd they say, what'd they say??

Canter: It's a commercial.

Stoval: (to Boston, about the pitcher) He lost his slider; look for the fast ball.

Blaine: He got you out on a slider.

Stoval: No, low fast ball; I was lookin' for the slider.

(Boston goes to bat; followed by Sherman on deck.)

Canter: (to Connick) They say we're down by one.

Connick: What'd they say about Himmelfarb?

Canter: Who's Himmelfarb? Anybody know a Himmelfarb?

Connick: Give me that. (puts walkman speakers in his ears)

Grieves: (about Connick) Gentleman of the year. (to Canter) Did Himmelfarb get a hit?

Canter: (smile) Yeah.

Connick: Darn. (takes off walkman, gets out calculator, figures)

(Canter puts on walkman, one ear in, one out.)

Stoval: You doing your taxes, Connick?

Canter: Nah, he's figurin' his income from endorsements.

Palmiero: You still on top?

Connick: Yeah.

(A spotlight shines on the field, Connick sees it and moves to it in dynamic, slow-motion. Homer squeezes a rubber ball in the dugout.)

Blaine: (to Homer) Don't do that; that annoys me.

Homer: Don't look.

Blaine: Squeeze rubber balls at home, in the privacy of your own workout room.

(Connick arrives at his dream; a dream crowd of thousands cheer. He quiets the crowd.)

Connick: All I ever wanted was to take my place in the historic American batting order. When I got into the majors, I never dared dream that I could summon the strength to win a batting title against the current batting greats.

(Connick waves to the crowd, then moves back into the dugout. Canter looks at him, amazed.)

Blaine: Homer, just knowing you're secretly squeezing a rubber ball annoys me.

Homer: Tell me, Blaine, is it the secretness, the rubberness, or the squeezingness that bothers you?

Blaine: It is the youness that bothers me.

Canter: Where did you go?

Connick: Wha-? Oh, I was just day dreaming.

Palmiero: How many points you up, Connick?

Connick: A few.

(Palmiero starts doing deep knee bends.)

Blaine: (deep sarcasm) You're not talking about the batting title, Connick? That's not on your mind, is it?

Stoval: Nah! Connick wouldn't be thinking about the batting title with his team down by one run in the ninth. Connick is a team player, and he only thinks about the game at hand.

Blaine: I believe I read that, myself. What was it,? Parade? Parade Magazine on Sunday?

Stoval: "I'd just like to thank the Lord-"

Connick: Can it, Stoval.

Stoval: "Thank you Lord, for taking time from Bosnia, the middle east, and the weather condition in the midwest to bless my bat and eye."

Connick: I never said anything about a weather condition.

Blaine: Palmiero, stop it. This is not a gym.

Palmiero: I'm trying to get loose; I got hurt at the hospital.

Connick: Doing what?

Palmiero: They make the father help.

Stoval: (agreeing) Oh, yeah, I hurt my back. Twenty-two hours, man.

Palmiero: Yeah, my back. Fourteen hours. I didn't think I was going to make it. How do they stand it?

Stoval: They're tough; they're tougher than us.

Palmiero: Yeah, that's how come they can be married to us.

Canter: It's not that big a deal.

Stoval: You want to know how it feels, Canter?

Canter: If it were a big deal, they wouldn't do it.

Stoval: Take a hold of your lip like this here. Now take your lip and pull it back over your head.

Palmiero: Let me help you, Canter. I know how.

Blaine: Stop it with the knee bends.

Palmiero: I gotta do something.

Stoval: Hey, do this.

(Stoval rolls his head slowly. Palmiero tries.)

Palmiero: You're trying to kill me.

Grieves: Don't listen to Stoval. Mr. Injury.

Stoval: That's how come I know so much.

Palmiero: I don't want my kid to play ball. First thing I thought when I saw him, don't be a ball player, guy. Play the piano, like your granpa.

(Homer does isometric arm exercises.)

Blaine: If you want him to play piano, put one in the living room and don't let him touch it. Believe me, he'll figure out a way. (to Homer) Now what? Don't do that.

Homer: This is not about you, Blaine.

Blaine: How is somebody supposed to concentrate on baseball?

(Moan from the crowd.)

Canter: "He swings and misses."

Stoval: What was that?

Canter: Slider.

Stoval: He lost his slider!

Canter: Well, I guess he found it.

Grievess: He hasn't lost anything. The guy's a robot. I mean, who pitches like that?

Canter: "Ball one."

Stoval: (optimistic) Here we go.

Grievess: Here we go nothing. He's playing with him.

Canter: "Steerike two."

Grievess: (to Stoval, see!) Cat and mouse.

Stoval: Was that a fast ball?

Canter: They didn't say.

Grievess: Didn't look like it.

(Crowd moan.)

Canter: Strike three.

Stoval: What was that?

Canter: Slider.

Grievess: (because he's frustrated) How come you have to listen to the game on the radio?

Canter: Because they won't let me have a tv.

Grievess: Couldn't you watch the field?

Canter: Are you kidding? Why?

Grievess: I don't know. I'm getting old.

(Boston returns from the plate. Gives Stoval a glance. Blaine goes on deck. Homer gets out rubber ball and squeezes it, thinking it's safe.)

Stoval:(an excuse) Hey, I'm a shortstop; what do you expect?

Boston: I expected a fastball.

Grievess: A whole year, you're taking batting advice from him?

Boston: My parents are here.

Grievess: So, you've had a good game.

Boston: Parents don't care about fielding.

(Connick surges to his dream, spotlight and imaginary crowd.)

Boston: (to Homer) What are you doing? Don't do that.

Homer: This isn't hurting anybody.

Boston: It's annoying me.

(In the dream.)

Connick: I'd like to thank my Dad and my Mom for all those years they drove me to baseball games around the state. First it was T-ball, where I made the first out-of-the-park homerun ever seen in the tots' division.

(In the dugout.)

Grieves: Where did he go?

Canter: I don't know. It happened before. He disappeared.

Grieves: Palmiero, look around.

(Palmiero looks around outside the dugout, spies Connick's day dream. Advances in dynamic slow motion to Connick's side. Meanwhile:)

Boston: (to Homer) What are you doing now?

Homer: I'm breathing, okay?!

Boston: You're not just breathing; you're doing something else with your breath - what is it? yoga? channeling? Coach, tell him to lay off.

Homer: I was breathing.

Boston: Breathing exercises.

(Palmiero enters the dream, looks around, waves to the crowd, who cheers him.)

Palmiero: (waves) Wow, what's all the cheers?

Connick: For the batting title.

Palmiero: Oh, great. (arm around Connick) Yeah, he's my friend. Mi amigo. He's got a great bat. Come on, amigo, we gotta go to work.

(Palmiero, punches Connick in the arm and motions him back to the dugout. Connick and Palmiero head back to the dugout; Boston tosses his helmet down.)

Boston: I didn't get a hit.