

“Bottom of the 9th“

A One-Act Play on Alzheimer's Disease

Written by

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Dedicated to the memory of my beloved aunt, Mrs. Margaret "Peggy" Wolfe, loving wife of Brewster, loving mother of 11, loving grandmother ad infinitum and a victim of Alzheimer's disease.

CAST

MAN aka "POPS" - Older man, mid 60's, as the play unfolds it becomes clear that he is an Alzheimer's patient but it is not as evident at the start.

SPECTATOR 1 - Younger person, preferably male, mid-20's. Represents better long-term memory and overall reasoning skills.

SPECTATOR 2 ó 20ø to 40's, more supportive and nurturing, can be male or female. Represents supporting of more simplistic data and short term memory. Also displays compassion and is more of a "team supporter" or cheerleader.

SPECTATOR 3 ó 20ø to 30's, more of an intellectual, can be male or female. Represents the more cognitive functions and is better at interpreting data and recalling events.

SPECTATOR 4 ó 20ø to 40's, preferably a female counterpart to SPECTATOR 5, slightly boisterous but not as crude as SPECTATOR 5. Represents our more physical responsiveness to hunger and other bodily activities.

SPECTATOR 5 ó 20ø to 40's, preferably male counterpart to SPECTATOR 4, boisterous, eats constantly, loves baseball. Represents all base human emotions and the cruder side within us all. A reactionary.

COP ó 20ø to 60ø, Typical hard working veteran policeman. If doubling is required, can be played by one of the SPECTATORS after they exit the stage.

KIMMY - The MAN's daughter, mid-30's.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Male baseball umpire.

Note: These characters are clearly defined, but as a result of the MAN's disintegrating mental capacity there may be overlapping responses which may not be representative of that particular character. These "out of character" responses are also representative of Alzheimer's disease.

Time: Present

Setting: A park bleacher in the town of Millborough. A graffiti laden bleacher, containing five or more rows, is center stage. AT START: At LIGHTS UP, SPECTATOR 1 is seated/standing in first row on SL side. SPECTATOR 2 is seated/standing on third row on SL side. SPECTATOR 3 is situated in the middle of the center row. SPECTATORS 4 and 5 are standing on the fifth row on SR side. They have a cooler full of sandwiches on the floor next to them.

(The sound of a children's baseball game is heard. Some SPECTATORS may be holding generic "Go! Team! Go!" signs and/or have picnic style snacks or foods usually associated with baseball games. A MAN in his mid-fifties wanders onto the bleacher area from stage left. He wears no shoes. He looks slightly disoriented as the SPECTATORS all stand at the sound of a cracking bat, presumably one that has just hit a fair ball.)

SPECTATOR 1 - (Cheering) Yeah! That's it! Run it! Run it! Run it!

SPECTATOR 2 - Go! Go! Go! Go!

SPECTATOR 3 - Throw it to second! Double play! Come on! Throw it to second! (Pause for a beat) Okay, throw it to third! Throw it to third!

SPECTATOR 2 - Okay, he's safe. There all safe. (SPECTATORS all clap their hands in support) All righty, guys. Good play. Good play.

SPECTATOR 4 - They're all safe. One, two and three. Good hit! Good hit!

MAN - What is this?

SPECTATORS ó (Greeting the MAN) Pops!

SPECTATOR 1 - Hey! There you are! Where have you been? Here. Sit. I saved you a spot.

SPECTATOR 2 - We've been waiting.

SPECTATOR 3 - You missed nearly half the game.

MAN ó (Sitting) Game?

SPECTATOR 5 - Man it sure is hot today. (To MAN) Did you bring any munchies there, ya old geezer? (Laughs)

SPECTATOR 4 - (Nudges SPECTATOR 5, pointing to an unseen cooler) Never mind that, you doofus. I got some sandwiches over here.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Looking around) Where?

SPECTATOR 4 - In the coolah. Here.

SPECTATOR 5 - Good. Cause I'm hungry.

SPECTATOR 4 - Big surprise.

(Sound of another cracking of a bat. SPECTATORS all react excited)

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Foul ball! (SPECTATORS all react disappointed)

SPECTATOR 3 - Figures. Just two and a half feet more and it would've been fair.

SPECTATOR 2 - That's okay. (Shouts out) That's okay, boys. You'll get 'em next batter!

MAN - What is this? Who's playing?

SPECTATOR 2 ó (Points out) Next kid is up.
SPECTATOR 1 - (Shouting) Bring 'em home, batter!
MAN - Is anyone there? (Thoughtful) I was heading east on Winchester Street...
SPECTATOR 5 - (Joking) Easy out, pitcher! Easy out!
MAN - Or was it west...
SPECTATOR 4 - (To SPECTATOR 5) Shaddup, losah! (punches SPECTATOR 5, who merely laughs)
SPECTATOR 5 - Take it easy! I was just jokin'.
MAN - Do I know any of you?
SPECTATOR 3 - Three more runs we can all go home.
SPECTATOR 2 - C'mon, batter!

(The MAN just looks out to where the "field" should be but doesn't see anything)

SPECTATOR 5 - Third base is leadin'! (Shouting out) Watch it, kid! (pointing off)
Outfield has got you pegged!

(Sound of another cracking of a bat. SPECTATORS all react excited)

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Foul ball! (SPECTATORS all react disappointed)
MAN - I don't see anything.
SPECTATOR 4 - Cataracts, huh? That must suck.
SPECTATOR 1 - He doesn't have cataracts. (Looking down at the MAN's feet) He also doesn't have anything on his feet.
MAN - What?
SPECTATOR 1 - (Jokingly) What'd you do, Pops? (Coughs) Forget...those things?
MAN - What things?
SPECTATOR 1 - (Trying to recall the word) Thoseí things. The things you put on your feet. (Remembers) Shoes. Shoes.
MAN - (Looking at his bare feet) Shoes. (To SPECTATOR 1) I'm not sure. (After a beat) Have we met?

(Crack of the bat is heard again. SPECTATORS all stand in excitement)

SPECTATOR 1 - He got a piece of it!
SPECTATOR 2 - Yay! Go! Go! Go! Go!
SPECTATOR 5 - Throw it home! Throw it home! Catcher! Run for it!
SPECTATOR 4 - (To SPECTATOR 3) Hey! Maybe you should sit on the bleacher on the other side of the field!
SPECTATOR 5 - I can't.
SPECTATOR 4 - Why?
SPECTATOR 5 - Foods better over here. (Laughs, SPECTATOR 4 punches again) Ow.
OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE ó Safe!
SPECTATOR 2 - He's safe. You hear that? Heø safe. (Calling out to the player) Youø safe, Joey! Good job! Way to hustle it!
SPECTATOR 3 - Two runs scored. It's nine to nine.

SPECTATOR 1 - Runners safe at First and Third.
MAN - (Ponderous) I think I hate baseball.
SPECTATOR 1 - Good play! Good play!
MAN - (To SPECTATOR 1) Are you my son?
SPECTATOR 2 - You kids are awesome! Good goin' Joey! Good goin'!
SPECTATOR 4 - How many outs?
SPECTATOR 5 - Only one.
MAN - What inning?
SPECTATOR 1 - Huh?
MAN - What inning is it?
SPECTATOR 1 - Oh, I... (after a beat) you know, (Coughs) I'm not sure.
SPECTATOR 2 - Bottom of the ninth.
SPECTATOR 3 - (Looking at a notebook) Next kid has an RBI of 17.
SPECTATOR 2 - You keepin' track? They're seven years old.
SPECTATOR 3 - Never too early to keep good records.
SPECTATOR 2 - These boys lose track of how many times they hit the fridge or miss the toilet or vice versa. You really think they can keep track of their batting averages?
SPECTATOR 5 - That reminds me. I'm hungry.
SPECTATOR 4 - Really? That reminded you you're hungry?
SPECTATOR 5 - Shaddup and gimme a sandwich.
SPECTATOR 4 - You're always eating.
SPECTATOR 5 - And you're always a pain. Gimme.
MAN - I can't remember if I ate this morning.

(SPECTATOR 5 grabs two sandwiches out of the cooler on the bleacher next to SPECTATOR 4. SPECTATOR 5 runs down to the MAN holding out a sandwich in one hand and eating the second sandwich in the other)

SPECTATOR 5 - Hey, mistah! Hey, mistah! Ya wanna sandwich? We gots plenty over here.
SPECTATOR 4 - Like, don't go givin' away all our food.
SPECTATOR 5 - Ahh, shaddup, you. I'm bein' nice over here. Go ahead, mistah. My treat.
MAN - (Taking the sandwich) Thank you.
SPECTATOR 5 - Hey, no problem.
SPECTATOR 4 - Yeah, like he made 'em or somethin'.
(The MAN starts eating the sandwich)
SPECTATOR 5 - Hey, you want I should come back and punch you in the nose?
SPECTATOR 4 - Ha!
SPECTATOR 1 - You want a napkin, Pops? (The MAN shakes his head)
SPECTATOR 5 - (Returning to SPECTATOR 4) Whaddaya mean, "Ha!"?
SPECTATOR 4 - You can't even remember your own name and you think you're gonna take me out? Ha!
SPECTATOR 5 - I can so remember it.
SPECTATOR 4 - Oh yeah? Let's seeya.
SPECTATOR 5 - Fine.

SPECTATOR 4 - Fine.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Thinks, then after a long pause) Yeah, I got nothin'.

SPECTATOR 4 - Ha! Toldjaso.

SPECTATOR 5 - Yeah? Well, what's yours, smartass?

SPECTATOR 4 - (Long pause) Ummm...Cinderella. (If played by male: "Ummm...Willy Mays"). (SPECTATORS 4 and 5 laugh)

SPECTATOR 5 - (Taking bite of sandwich, calls out to the MAN) Hey mistah. How old are ya anyway?

MAN - (Says assuredly) 47. (Then reconsiders) 57?

SPECTATOR 1 - Don't believe him. He's 59.

SPECTATOR 3 - He's 64. (MAN finishes sandwich)

SPECTATOR 1 ó He is.

MAN - I am?

SPECTATOR 3 ó Yes. (To SPECTATOR 1) He is. (To the MAN) You are.

SPECTATOR 2 - Don't worry, mister. You look great for your age, no matter what.

SPECTATOR 5 - Ya want another sandwich there, geezer?

MAN - (Shaking his head) No. Thank you. There certainly was a lot of mayonnaise.

SPECTATOR 5 ó (To SPECTATOR 4) See? I toldja there was too much mayo.

SPECTATOR 4 ó (Sarcastic) You ainø broken. You couldø made the sandwiches.

SPECTATOR 5 ó (Feigning ignorance) Nahí I canø. I forgot the recipe.

SPECTATOR 4 ó Recipe? Itø a sandwich.

SPECTATOR 5 ó (Insecure) Anyway, you make æem better.

SPECTATOR 4 ó Aww, thanks.

MAN - (To SPECTATOR 1) I did eat, didnø I?

SPECTATOR 3 - Wow. Talk about forgetful.

MAN ó (Addressing SPECTATOR 3) Well, If

SPECTATOR 3 - Not you, old man. The umpire. He forgot to clean the plate at home. What an idiot.

SPECTATOR 5 - Why don't you write to Better Homes and Gardens about it?

SPECTATOR 2 - Now, now. We're all on the same side.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now coming to the plate number 51.

SPECTATOR 5 - Yeah. (Looks out at the field) Aw, no! Here comes that fat Walker kid.

SPECTATOR 2 - That's not very nice. What do you...

SPECTATOR 5 - Wait for it.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike one!

SPECTATOR 2 - Oh, my.

SPECTATOR 5 - See what I mean?

SPECTATOR 4 - (Calling out to SPECTATOR 3) Hey you! Record keeper. Has the kid ever gotten a hit?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Checking notebook) Let's see. In three years of playí (closes then puts book away) Nope. The only part of the ball he ever got was the breeze.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike two!

SPECTATOR 2 - Oh, dear.

SPECTATOR 4 - Then why...

SPECTATORS 3 and 5 - Wait for it.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike three!

SPECTATOR 5 - (Sighs) Man, I really hate the Mandatory Play Rule.

(Suddenly there is a momentary flickering of stage lights and the sound of an electrical power surge. ALL look around. The MAN rubs his temple as if he has a headache.)

SPECTATOR 1 - What was that?

SPECTATOR 3 - They must be having problem with the park lights.

SPECTATOR 4 - Wow. (Quietly, to SPECTATOR 5) I gotta pee.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Loudly) Again? You just went during the middle of the 3rd.

SPECTATOR 4 - So? You wanna tell the world?

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now coming up to the plate number 51.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Dread) Oh, sweet Jesus. Here we go. Now Milton's coming outta the dugout.

MAN - 51? But I thought Walkerí

SPECTATOR 4 - What's wrong with Milton?

SPECTATOR 5 - Wait for it.

OFF STAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike one!

(ALL look from SR to SL as if watching a flung baseball bat. The sound of the flung bat landing and hitting against something is heard.)

SPECTATOR 2 - Oh, my. That bat sure went quite a distance, didn't it? (Trying to be supportive) Nice throw there, umm, Milton?

SPECTATOR 5 - Yeah. If baseball was based solely on bat flinging Milton'd be an MVP.

SPECTATOR 2 - Don't worry, Milton! You're doing fine!

OFF STAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike two!

SPECTATOR 2 - Oh, dear.

SPECTATOR 4 - (To SPECTATOR 3) Hey you! Does he usually play?

SPECTATOR 3 - No. There is no Mandatory Play Rule in high school ball.

MAN - What?

SPECTATOR 5 - Yeah, his only sports related injury was a hemorrhoid from sitting in the dugout too long.

SPECTATOR 4 - Then why?

SPECTATOR 5 - Wait for it.

OFF STAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Strike three! You're outta there!

SPECTATOR 2 - That's okay, Milton. You'll get him next time!

SPECTATOR 3 - If he's still with the team next time. From what I hear Milton hasn't been õfitting inõ too well in the clubhouse.

MAN - Yes.

SPECTATOR 5 - Do we have any sandwiches left? I'm starved.

SPECTATOR 4 - You just ate.

SPECTATOR 5 - I did? (Frustrated) I did not. Just gimme a sandwich.

SPECTATOR 4 - Fine, but I still gotta pee. (Gets out another sandwich)

SPECTATOR 5 - (Takes the sandwich) Then go. Nobody's holdinøya' here.

MAN - High school? I thought this was Little League.

SPECTATOR 2 - Are you kidding mister? Just look at the size of these guys.

SPECTATOR 1 ó (Coughs) What inning is it again?

SPECTATOR 3 - Bottom of the seventh.

SPECTATOR 4 - I have to pee.

SPECTATOR 5 - You've been saying that forever.

SPECTATOR 4 - (Frustrated) I have not. I just mentioned it now.

SPECTATOR 5 - Look, if you have to go, just go already.

SPECTATOR 3 - Go where?

SPECTATOR 4 - Nothing.

MAN - Seventh? I thought it was bottom of the sixth.

SPECTATOR 1 ó You're confused, Pops. It's the final inning of the game.

MAN - (Confused) I know that. I know it is. It's just...

(Suddenly there is another momentary flickering of stage lights and the sound of an electrical power surge. ALL look around. The MAN rubs his temple again.)

SPECTATOR 1 - What was that? (To the MAN) Pops, you all right?

SPECTATOR 3 - They must be having problem with the park lights.

MAN - I'm all right.

SPECTATOR 3 - Hey look! Batter coming up to the plate now. Onakowski. Man, has he had a really great year.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now coming up to the plate number 51.

(MAN begins massaging his temple in confusion)

SPECTATOR 2 - Really? What's his batting average?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Considers) You know, I can't remember.

SPECTATOR 2 - Why don't you look at your notebook?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Giving SPECTATOR 2 a curious look) Notebook? What notebook?

SPECTATOR 2 - You just had it in your hand. (SPECTATOR 3 looks at hands) Did you put it under your seat?

SPECTATOR 3 - I don't think so. (Looks around) I don't see anything. You sure I had one?

MAN - (Looking straight out) Wait a sec. 51 was Miltoní (unsure) wasn't it?

SPECTATOR 2 - Course I'm sure. (Considers) I think I'm sure. Well, never mind. What's his RBI? You know that, at least?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Shakes head) Beats me. Why would I know that?

SPECTATOR 2 - Cause you're the guy. The guy who...Well, then how about his home run ratio?

SPECTATOR 3 - I don't know.

SPECTATOR 2 - Then how do you know Onakowski has had a really great year?

SPECTATOR 3 - Because I've seen Mrs. Onakowski. And considering the amount of bling she wears on a day to day basis, he better be doing well.

SPECTATOR 4 ó They pay crap in the minors.

MAN ó The minors? This game. I remember this game. (Stands up, excited as he recalls Onakowski's stats) .667. Onakowski. His BA is .667. That's it!

MAN AND SPECTATOR 3 - (Simultaneously) He's eight and 12, eight hits, five runs, no strikeouts.

SPECTATOR 5 ó (Stares at the two for a moment, then says) Okay, now that was just weird.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE ó You're outta there.

(MAN and SPECTATOR 3 both sit)

SPECTATOR 1 - Wow. That was amazing, Pops.

MAN - What?

SPECTATOR 1 - You called out his stats like you knew it all off the top of your head.

MAN - (After a beat) Knew what?

SPECTATOR 2 - You okay?

SPECTATOR 3 - No. My head hurts. I think I need some

Tyí Tyí Tyí somethingí (becomes very still and quiet). I'll be okay. I just need a minute.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now coming up to bat
numberí numberí numberí

SPECTATOR 4 - (To SPECTATOR 5) I really gotta pee.

MAN ó Is this still the minors? (Recalling) Something happens.

SPECTATOR 5 - Wouldja stop it already? You've been sayin' it for hours. Just go.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Number 51.

SPECTATOR 4 - But I don't wanna miss the end of the game.

SPECTATOR 5 - Would you rather keel over and die because your bladder burst?

SPECTATOR 4 - Can it really do that?

MAN ó No. Not 51. Not again.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Exasperated sigh) Just go.

SPECTATOR 4 - (Thinks then, after a beat) Nah. I'll wait. (Starts to squirm a little)

SPECTATOR 5 - (Sighs) Sweet Jesus.

(The sound of a cracked bat then a whirring noise of a baseball hitting the bleachers is heard as ALL react to the noise by ducking out of the way. The "ball" supposedly comes closest to SPECTATOR 1 and the MAN)

SPECTATOR 2 - Whoa! That could'a killed someone. (Calling out) Watch where you're hittin'you stupid jerk! (Takes a beat) Wow. That's not like me.

SPECTATOR 3 - (To the MAN) Are you all right there, mister?

MAN - I'm fine. I'mí okay.

SPECTATOR 5 - It was like he was aimin' for ya, or somethin'.

MAN - No. He was trying to impress a girl. (Recalling) A pretty girl. Not here. (Points to offstage right) Over there.

SPECTATOR 1 ó (Looking over) Vanessa Martinelli?

SPECTATOR 5 - (Laughs) Ha! Like he would ever have a shot with her.

SPECTATOR 3 - No, he will. He'll marry her someday. He paidí

MAN - (Recalling) He paid the pitcher from the opposing team five dollars to write "Vanessa will you go out with me?" on the ball.

SPECTATOR 5 - (Laughing) Yeah. His plan was to bang it out there towards her so she'd pick it up and be so impressed that she'd go out with him.

SPECTATOR 3 - But, wait a sec. He didn't put his name on the ball. So, might not Vanessa have thought it was actually the pitcher who was asking her out?

SPECTATOR 1 - The batter thought of that, too, just before he swung at the ball. That's why it landed here.

SPECTATOR 5 ó (Scoffing) Bad idea. Mother of all bad ideas.

SPECTATOR 2 ó No. Girls are impressed by things like that.

SPECTATOR 5 - Who says?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Pointing to the MAN) He does. Or, he did, anyway. I'm not quite sure.

MAN - I wonder. Did they ever get married? Wait a minute. Martinelli. M-M...(Recalls, ominous) Milton. Something happened to Milton.

SPECTATOR 5 - You got that right.

MAN - I just remembered. (After a beat, sadly) No.

SPECTATOR 2 - (Nodding) He hung himself.

MAN - (Sadly) No.

SPECTATOR 5 - Whaddaya talkin' about? He blew his brains out.

MAN - (Sadly) No, no, no.

SPECTATOR 3 - (Now remembering) My notebook. I did have a notebook. Where is it? (Looks around)

SPECTATOR 4 - Nah. He O.D.'d. Painkillers, I think.

SPECTATOR 2 - I thought he jumped out a window cause he thought he was Superman or something.

SPECTATOR 5 - Nahh, that was George Reeves.

SPECTATOR 1 - I thought he was the guy who fell off a horse?

SPECTATOR 2 - I thought that was Chris Reeves?

SPECTATOR 3 - (Still looking for notebook, crawling around the bleachers, pops head up) Chris Reeve.

SPECTATOR 2 ó Whatever. I thought he blew his brains out?

SPECTATOR 4 ó (To SPECTATOR 5) I thought you said that was George Reeves?

SPECTATOR 5 - Who cares? We're talkin' about Milton here.

MAN - (Sadly) Milton. He died.

SPECTATOR 1 - That's right. He couldn't stand the (coughs) abuse he got from the other players and coaches.

MAN - (Struggling to remember, nods) Heí he was a kind, gentle person.

SPECTATOR 5 ó He was gay.

SPECTATOR 4 - So? A lot of players were.

SPECTATOR 2 - A lot players are. So?

SPECTATOR 1 - But he was way out in the open about it at a time when a lot of guys weren't. So a lot of the players felt threatened. So heí

MAN - They found him strung up in the bathroom.

SPECTATOR 2 - See? Toldja. Hey, batter's up. He makes the goal, we win!

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now coming up to bat number 51

SPECTATOR 3 - (Struggling to find notebook, becoming anxious) I must remember where it is. I must remember where it is.

SPECTATOR 1 - (To SPECTATOR 2) Goal? (Coughs) This isn't football, it'sí (can't remember)

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Now serving number 51

SPECTATOR 4 - I gotta pee.

SPECTATOR 2 ó (To SPECTATOR 1) It's what?

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Number 51. Pee.

SPECTATOR 5 - So go. No one's stoppin' ya'.

SPECTATOR 1 - It'sí (still can't recall)

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Sesame Street was brought to you today by the number 51 and the letter P.

SPECTATOR 4 - Come with me.

SPECTATOR 3 - (As if performing a mental exercise) One. Two. Three. Three.

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - The letter 51 and the number P.

SPECTATOR 5 - I ain't goin'. Sides, it's the bottom of the ninth.

SPECTATOR 3 - Fourí fiveí sixí (becoming exceedingly stressed) No. Fiveí fiveí fiveí .51í 51í

SPECTATOR 4 - But I forget where it is. The bathrooms, I mean.

MAN - (Rising, becoming increasingly anxious) What's wrong? What's happening?

SPECTATOR 4 - (Crosses to sl side of bleacher then returns to SPECTATOR 5) Please! I gotta go!

SPECTATOR 1 - You okay there, Pops?

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - The letter P.

SPECTATOR 5 - So go!

SPECTATOR 2 - Who's up at bat?

SPECTATOR 3 - 51í 51í 51í

SPECTATOR 4 - Butí butí I don't know where they are!

SPECTATOR 3 ó Threeí threeí threeí

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - The letter P. The letter P.

SPECTATOR 1- Pops, you don't look so good.

SPECTATOR 3 ó Threeí threeí threeí

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE - Pee. Pee. Pee.

MAN - I thinkí I'm gonnaí .

SPECTATOR 5 - Just go!!

SPECTATOR 2 - Go! Go! Go! Go!!

(The MAN grimaces and "pees" his pants as all SPECTATORS freeze, staring at him in shock. This is simultaneous with another power surge on stage. Note: Whether the actor somehow able to make it look as if he is wetting himself or the act is merely implied is at the discretion of the director. After a long awkward pause it is SPECTATOR 5 who finally breaks the silence)

SPECTATOR 5 - (To SPECTATOR 4) See what you did?

SPECTATOR 4 - Me? What'd I do?

SPECTATOR 2 - ÍÍ ÍÍ I can't do this anymore. I have to leave, now. (Exits off the bleacher stage left as if defeated)

SPECTATOR 1 - (Compassionately) Pops, you all right?

(There is another long awkward pause as all the remaining SPECTATORS stare at the MAN who just stands motionless, embarrassed)

SPECTATOR 5 - I'm hungry.

SPECTATOR 4 - You just ate.

SPECTATOR 5 - No I didn't. Gimme a sandwich.

SPECTATOR 4 - (Checks the cooler) See? You ate 'em all. There ain't no more sandwiches.

SPECTATOR 5 - Fine. Games practically over anyway. Let's grab a couple a' dogs on the way out. C'mon, let's go.

(SPECTATOR 4 and SPECTATOR 5 pick up the cooler and exit stage right off the bleachers.)

SPECTATOR 3 ó (Slowly rises and exits off the bleacher stage left, mumbling)

51í 51í 51í 51í

(MAN and SPECTATOR 1 are now left alone on stage. There is a long awkward pause)

SPECTATOR 1 ó (Gradually becomes more ill in appearance, sits on stage right side in the front row of bleacher) Do you want to sit?

MAN - No! (Anxious) Íf can'tí sit. Need to walkí dry off a little. (Begins to walk up to the third level of the bleachers, then turns back to speak to SPECTATOR 1) I know who you are.

SPECTATOR 1 - You do? Oh, good. What a relief. I thought for a momentí

MAN ó Donø do that. Donø try to be funny. Thereø nothing funny about this.

SPECTATOR 1 ó Sorry.

MAN - You're not my son.

SPECTATOR 1 - I never said I was. Iøm sincerelyí

MAN - (Angry) Stop that! Stopí beingí soí pleasant. For this one brief moment of lucidity, at least let me have the dignity of the truth, wet pants and all. (After a beat) I know who you are now. All of you. (Takes a step down closer to SPECTATOR 1) Why did you leave me?

SPECTATOR 1 - (Shaking his head) Itø not by choice. See, memories are like those guy's sandwiches.

MAN - Too much mayonnaise?

SPECTATOR 1 - No, not the mayonnaise. Now whoø trying to be funny? (Coughs) If shared, they are terrific. But, regardless of whether they're shared or not, once they're gone, they're gone.

MAN ó (Scolding) Donø you dare. Donø you dare try to simplify this. Youøre not just how I put shoes on. For Christø sake youøre everything. Youøre my parents, grandparents, my first home run, my first girlfriendí

SPECTATOR 1 ó Wilton, Onakowski, Miltoní

MAN - My wedding day, my children. My Godí my grandkids. You want to take away my grandkids?

SPECTATOR 1 ó I don't mean to take anything away. (Coughs) I'm sick. (After a beat) I'm dying.

MAN ó (Long pause as he tries to understand) This is cruel.

SPECTATOR 1 ó Yes, it is. You know what else it is?

MAN - What?

SPECTATOR 1 ó (Coughs again) Biological.

MAN - What the hell does that mean?

SPECTATOR 1 - It means I can't change the way things are. (Rising) Look, you may have an occasional accident or inconvenience but I'm still the one who's dying.

MAN ó "Accident"? "Inconvenience"? Are you serious? I'm supposed to just accept and feel sorry for you? Well I don't. I don't accept. Go ahead. Die. But do you know what happens next, after you're long outta the picture? (Furious) I'm still here! You get that? (Screaming) I'm still here! (Moves from anger to pleading) Don't you realize what that means? You're everything that I have, everything that I am. (Welling up) You son of a bitch! How am I supposed to go on without you? Without you, I'm nothing, just an empty shell where once stood a human being.

SPECTATOR 1 - (Looking more ill, speaks tenderly, almost apologetic) I'm sorry. (Coughs) I have to leave you, now.

MAN - (After a beat, defiant) You can't leave. I'm still here.

SPECTATOR 1 - (Curious) Where?

MAN - (After a beat, becomes excited) Ah! I know this. I know this. I...I'm, uh, I...(Wanders around the bleachers for a moment, becomes disoriented and then returns to SPECTATOR 1 shouting, angry at the disease) I hate you!

SPECTATOR 1 - (Understanding) I know. (Almost at the point of oblivion, collapses into the arms of the MAN who supports him back to his feet)

MAN - (Becoming calm, gentler, warming at the thought of his memories) I loved you.

SPECTATOR 1 - (Smiles) And I loved you. (More steady now, hugs MAN and begins to exit off the bleacher stage right, perhaps supported by any railings in place)

MAN - Wait. (SPECTATOR 1 turns back) Before you go...(quiet desperation) what's my name?

SPECTATOR 1 - (Shaking head) I'm sorry. I can't help you anymore. (Exits)

MAN - (Disappointed) But, that's not fair. (After a long pause, screams) That's not fair! I'm still here! I'm still here! I'm still here! I'm still here! I'm still here!

(Another power surge. The bleachers become more dimly lit and isolated. There is a long pause as he regains composure, then his anger turns to fear)

MAN - I'm alone. (A beat, then screams in terror) I'm alone! (Another beat, then begins to become more like a lost child) I'm scared. I'm scared. I'm scared.

(Breaking down, the MAN slowly sits down, curls up and cries, almost like a sobbing toddler. After a moment, he becomes quieter as flashing red and blue lights illuminate from behind the bleachers, indicating the arrival of a police car. Police radio sounds are also heard as a COP enters onto the bleacher area and approaches the MAN. The COP wears a uniform flight jacket with an insignia that reads "MILLBOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT")

COP ó Mister? Hey, mister! (Looks at the MAN who, startled, looks back up at the COP with a dazed expression) What's your name, sir? (No response) You got any i.d.?

MAN ó (Thinks) Yes, I thinkí (searching his pockets) no. No, I don't. (To COP) Can I go home?

COP ó Sure. Where do you live? (Into his two-way radio) Unit 6, on site, 10-84.

MAN ó I liveí (stops. Canøt recall)

COP ó (Looks around, changing the subject) Boy. It's freezing out here. Where's your jacketí and your shoes? Gotta be close to 20 degrees. You think its July or something? (Into his two-way radio) This is Unit 6. Found the old man. He's at the Millborough Park bleachers, east side. Waiting on transport. (To the MAN) So, just what are you doing out here? You know what time it is?

KIMMY - (Arriving on the scene, enters from stage left carrying a bag with a jacket and shoes for the MAN) There you are. (Runs up to the MAN on the bleachers) Iøve been looking for you for hours. (To COP) Iøll take care of him officer.

COP ó Sure, lady. You with the nursing home?

KIMMY - No. I'm his daughter. (To MAN) Pop? It's me, Kimmy.

COP - Got a dispatch about a guy wandering off. Lady named Vanessaí

KIMMY - That's my mother. (Begins to put the jacket and shoes on the MAN) He does this from time to time. He has his good and bad days but lately his Alzheimer's has been getting progressively worse. Mom can't care for him anymore so we agreed to put him up at Saint Patrickø Elder Care.

COP ó (Surprised) Why thatø gotta be eight miles from here. He walked all the way by himself barefoot in the snow at three o'clock in the morning?

KIMMY ó Unfortunately, like I said, itø not the first time heø wandered off.

COP - (Into his two-way radio) Unit 6 again. Cancel transport. Daughter on site. Sheøll take him. (Looking at the bleachers) Man, they should tear this place down and put it out of its misery. These bleachers ainø safe. Been rotting away for years. Nobody hangs out here anymore. Why'd he come, I wonder?

KIMMY - Pop practically grew up on this field. Used to play little league here before they built the new field over on Grove.

COP ó Yeah, boy, that was awhile ago.

KIMMY - Twenty-three years.

COP ó Holy cow. Hey, I follow some baseball. Was this guy any good?

KIMMY - (Nodding) Oh sure. He played on the Sox for almost 13 years. They retired his number just last year. Number 51. (Completed dressing the MAN) There. All better, Pop.

COP - Retired his number. (Realizing) 51? Really? You mean heøsí (Takes a closer look) Oh, yeah! Now I recognize him. Man, he doesnøt look anything like I remember him.

KIMMY ó All part of the disease. It does a real number on a person.

COP - (Noticing the MAN's pants) Hey, uh, better be careful with him, Miss. Looks like he's had an...accident or...somethin'.

KIMMY - (Tenderly speaks to the MAN) We'll get you home and cleaned up, Pop. Have you eaten?

MAN - What?

KIMMY - Have you eaten?

MAN - Yes. I think so. I had a...(recalling) I was eating a sandwich.

KIMMY - When was that?

MAN - (Considers then after a beat) I don't recall. (Sad, like a shamed child) If I had an accident. I'm sorry.

KIMMY - (Helping the MAN down) No-no-no. It's all right. It's all right. Come on, Pop. Let's get you home and put to bed.

MAN - Okay. (Gently tugging on her arm, turning her towards him) Miss?

KIMMY - Yes, Pop?

MAN ó Can you tell meí (confused, tired) do I like...baseball?

KIMMY - Yes, Pop. You like baseball.

MAN - (Considers, then after a beat) Good. (Looks back at the bleachers) Good. (Looks at KIMMY) That's good.

(KIMMY takes the MAN by the arm and gently leads him off stage left as the COP watches. The COP turns back to look at the bleachers)

COP ó (Into his two-way radio) Unit 6. Cle-

(Before the COP can finish there is another power surge and the bleachers become brighter again. The COP then hears/sees something drop down to the bottom row of the bleacher seats. He climbs up into the bleachers and reaches underneath the seat where the MAN had been sitting. He pulls out a shiny, brand new baseball. He reads the inscription on the ball)

COP - "Vanessa, will you go out with me?"

(The power surge happens one final time, returning the bleachers to a more darkened and isolated state. The COP thinks, then shrugs his shoulders)

COP - Huh. (Into his two-way radio) Unit 6. Clear. (Gently tosses and catches the ball in the air as he walks off. The radio chatter from the police car fades into)

OFFSTAGE VOICE OF UMPIRE ó You're outta there!

(Followed by the sound of cheering crowd as the LIGHTS FADE)

THE END

Author's note:

This play came about several months after the death of my aunt who lived with Alzheimer's disease for many years. At the calling hours for her funeral service I remember many family members remarked how virtually unrecognizable she appeared. If you were to view pictures of her prior to the year 2000 you'd be aghast at how her appearance ultimately changed, not just from the normal process of aging but from the ravages of this cruel disease. So I began to read more on the effects of the disease and its breakdown of the various "compartments" (my word usage, not a technical term) encompassing the human brain.

Each of the Spectators in this play represents the Man's brain and those "compartments" directly supporting memory are breaking down as the MAN's mind advances toward oblivion. It occurred to me that no one truly has the ability to experience a proper goodbye to one's own memory. So, I envisioned personifying such a meeting, having it run a wide range of emotions from initially feeling angered and betrayed, ultimately ending in both grief and acceptance.

Research continues but there is still no cure for AD as of this writing. The play is not intended to answer the many questions people may have about the disease. There is a multitude of much more reliable resources. This is only intended as a work of fiction with the concept being one man's "physicalized" encounter (my word usage, not a technical term) with that which makes him who he is.

I sincerely hope you enjoy.