

"The Draft"

by  
dak

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"THE DRAFT"

dak / Fire Joe Morgan Productions

EXT. -- DOUBLEDAY FIELD, COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK.

MUSIC: A very slow rendition of "Take Me Out To The Ballgame," played on a piano and flute.

As the lights come up, we see FIFTY BASEBALL PLAYERS standing with their toes on a white line, facing the audience. Each wears an entirely white uniform.

A NARRATOR walks out to center stage, in front of the players. He is dressed as Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

NARRATOR

Good day, fans of major league baseball. The St. Louis Cardinals of the National League are no more. The Detroit Tigeres of the American Legauce cease to exist. Before you stand fifty players, waiting to be drafted by one of two new teams. These new teams will play a neutral-site best of seven series: "The Fake World Series"!

MUSIC: Trumpet fanfare.

TONY LA RUSSA, dressed in all red, walks out to the Narrator's left. He is accompanied by DAVE DUNCAN.

NARRATOR

One team will be drafted by Anthony La Russa Jr.

LA RUSSA

I've asked pitching coach Dave Duncan to help me out today.

NARRATOR

Good luck, Anthony. The other team will be drafted by the incomparable James Richard Leyland.

JIM LEYLAND, dressed in all navy, emerges from the opposite side, flanked by ANDY VAN SLYKE. He shakes La Russa's hand directly in front of NARRATOR.

LEYLAND

I have asked my dear friend Andrew Van Slyke to assist me. I consider him

(starts lighting a cigarette)

an exceptional judge of...

(sounds become indecipherable as he lights cigarette)

NARRATOR

Let the draft begin! Mr. Leyland, you have the first pick.

The NARRATOR, attached to the rafters by wires, floats to the ceiling, out of view of the audience.

LEYLAND

We'll take Pujols.

ALBERT PUJOLS emerges from the line of 50, to join Leyland.

LA RUSSA

Chris Carpenter. My Game 1 starter.

CHRIS CARPENTER gives a tip of his baseball cap and moves out next to LA RUSSA.

VAN SLYKE

(TO LEYLAND)

How about Eckstein? Guy's a winner.

LEYLAND

He is. We all agree on that. He will probably be on the winning team. . .but. . . we'll take Verlander.

JUSTIN VERLANDER joins LEYLAND.

LA RUSSA

Boy I sure would love to win. Tempted to pick Eckstein here.

LA RUSSA and DUNCAN exchange some whispers.

LA RUSSA

We'll take Nate Robertson.

NATE ROBERTSON joins LA RUSSA.

LEYLAND  
We'll take Eckstein.

ECKSTEIN starts sprinting out to join LEYLAND -- but stops in his tracks as LA RUSSA yells out:

LA RUSSA  
FUCK!

LEYLAND  
What?

LA RUSSA  
You guys got Eckstein. Probably going to win now.

DUNCAN  
I mean, we all agree, if we had to pick one player who is most likely to be on the winning team, Eckstein is first on that list. Right?

LEYLAND / VAN SLYKE  
Yes. / Yeah, that's true.

LA RUSSA  
We should've taken him.

LEYLAND  
You know what, Tony, you're a friend of mine. And I feel bad. Let's start this thing over. I'll even let you go first.

All the chosen PLAYERS return to their spot on the white line.

LA RUSSA  
You're a good man, James.

LA RUSSA and LEYLAND shake hands again, and stare at the audience for about 8 seconds.

LA RUSSA  
We'll take Eckstein.

ECKSTEIN joins LA RUSSA, the latter of whom is absolutely brimming with confidence.

LEYLAND  
We'll take Pujols.

LA RUSSA  
FUCK! ME!

LEYLAND  
What? You okay?

LA RUSSA  
We could have had Pujols.

DUNCAN  
He's the best player out there! You  
tricked us, Leyland!

LA RUSSA  
He didn't trick us. It's my own  
fault.

LEYLAND  
You wanna start again?

LA RUSSA  
Yes. I'll let you go first.

LEYLAND  
Okay, cool. I'll take Eckstein.

LA RUSSA  
FUCK IT!

DUNCAN  
You can't do that! Now we're  
probably going to lose!

LEYLAND  
Well, you guys can take Pujols now.

LA RUSSA  
I don't need the best player  
available! I need the guy who's  
going to be on the winning team.

VAN SLYKE  
You don't think Pujols will help  
you win?

LEYLAND  
(to VAN SLYKE)  
Pipe down, Van Slyke. I'll take  
care of this.  
(to LA RUSSA)  
You don't think Pujols will help  
you win?

LA RUSSA  
Of course he will, he's the best  
player.

DUNCAN  
He just won't help us much as  
Eckstein. We all agreed --  
remember?

LEYLAND  
So, wait. You guys think Eckstein's  
better than Pujols? Is that what we  
think too?

DUNCAN  
What?

LA RUSSA  
Don't try to confuse us. We want  
Eckstein and Pujols. You guys can  
have everyone else.

LEYLAND  
O...kay?

The NARRATOR descends from the rafters.

NARRATOR  
Play Ball!