

The following is excerpted from

“GOING, GOING, GONE”

A Four Character Comedy

By Ken Levine

Set in the press box of a major Los Angeles baseball stadium, a hilarious yet poignant new comedy about four sports journalists whose lives are changed during the course of one game. The theme is our need to be remembered set in the world of baseball where the past is more cherished than the present.

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Contact: Jamie Kaye-Phillips

United Talent Agency, Theatre Department

New York, NY

PH: 212-991-4245

E-mail: [Jamie.KayePhillips@unitedtalent.com](mailto:Jamie.KayePhillips@unitedtalent.com)

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# **GOING, GOING, GONE**

by

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Set in the press box of a major Los Angeles baseball stadium, a hilarious yet poignant new comedy about four sports journalists whose lives are changed during the course of one game. The theme is our need to be remembered set in the world of baseball where the past is more cherished than the present.

GOING GOING GONE

SCENE ONE -- PRESSBOX -- NIGHT

LIGHTS UP. A portion of the pressbox of a big league stadium in Los Angeles, Reporters' section. Two counters, the second on a small riser. The action will center on just our group. Everyone else is o.s.

In the first row are reporters MASON YOUNG and DENNIS MINISHIAN.

Mason is early 30's, African-American, outgoing with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

Dennis is mid 30's, somewhat nerdish, carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders.

They both have laptops. Press credentials dangle from their necks. There is a small microphone on a stand near Dennis, and Styrofoam cups, binoculars, media guides, and assorted statistic sheets clutter the counters.

WE HEAR CROWD NOISE faintly in the b.g. throughout that will swell during exciting moments.

As we open they are standing, suffering through the end of the National Anthem. A woman SINGER is mangling it.

DENNIS  
Oh, Christ! Just sing the damn song!

The singer strangles a high note. They both GROAN in agony. As the anthem horribly concludes they both stagger back.

MASON  
Jesus. This is what happens when they let Idina Menzel sing at inaugurations.

DENNIS  
Who's Idina Menzel?

MASON  
You know -- from "Frozen."

DENNIS

What's "Frozen?"

MASON

You're kidding me? You've never heard of the Disney movie, "Frozen?"

DENNIS

Is that the one about the hockey team?

MASON

No, you idiot. It's about Elsa, the Snow Queen who flees her kingdom but her sister, Princess Anna sets out to save her and meets Kristoff who is handsome but... (realizing) Oh man, I spend waaaaay too much time alone on the road.

BIG JIM TABLER enters toting a laptop and hot dog. He takes a seat in the second row. Big Jim is overweight, in his 30's, a lovable curmudgeon, if there is such a thing.

BIG JIM

Evening, losers. Welcome to beautiful "U.S. Bank-slash-Milk of Magnesia Field" for another glorious evening of dot races, wedding proposals, beach balls, Kiss-Cams, bloopers, and waves. We can only pray a baseball game doesn't get in the way.

MASON

Don't sit down. We've got a moment of silence.

BIG JIM

For who?

MASON

Pedro Cordova -- the great pitcher of the '60s and '70s.

DENNIS

He still holds the modern record for least home runs allowed to lefthanders at night per nine innings.

BIG JIM

For that alone flags should be at half-mast. One minute is an insult.

The crowd silences. Dennis checks his watch. They stand solemnly for a beat, then Big Jim and Mason get out their iPhones and check for email or messages. Dennis remains solemn. Eventually, they sit back down and the crowd ambience resumes.

DENNIS  
(checks his watch) Not even a minute. Twenty-two seconds.

MASON  
Utterly disgraceful. (then) PLAY BALL!

BIG JIM  
Hey, where's that bimbo sideline reporter, Teresa? The one no one seems to notice has a lisp and can't even pronounce her own name.

DENNIS  
She's off tonight.

MASON  
I hear she's not interested, Jim. Something about you being nine hundred pounds. I dunno. Women.

BIG JIM  
(to Mason) I have one word for you. Token.

MASON  
And I have one word for you. Atkins.

BIG JIM  
This is the thanks we get for retiring Jackie Robinson's number. So who's filling in for (with lisp) Teresa?

DENNIS  
New Girl. Saw her for the first time tonight on the pre-game show. She's beautiful, sure. But there's something more -- a glow, a radiance, an ethereal quality if you will. And when she was looking straight into the camera updating Harwell's ruptured blister, I could swear she was gazing straight into my soul.

BIG JIM  
Can she talk?

MASON  
Someone is smitten here.

DENNIS  
Are you crazy? I'm happily married.

MASON  
What color was her nail polish?

DENNIS  
Aqua.

MASON  
Yep. It's love. And really really creepy.

Dennis talks into the microphone, which feeds the internal P.A. system for the pressbox.

DENNIS

Attention pressbox media: First pitch at 7:11. Game time temperature in Los Angeles: eighty-one degrees.

Dennis sets the microphone aside.

MASON

Why are you doing that? That's the official scorer's job.

DENNIS

I am the official scorer. At least tonight.

MASON

You're kidding? Where's Gordon?

DENNIS

His mom died.

BIG JIM

There'll be a moment of silence during the next foul ball.

MASON

Have you ever done this before?

DENNIS

Well... no.

MASON

Quick! How many outs in an inning?

BIG JIM

If a pitcher is caught with "Astroglide," is it legal if he's a Astro?

DENNIS

Very funny. I'm nervous enough.

BIG JIM

You should be. It's a big responsibility. Is it a hit? Is it an error? Every at-bat is Sophie's Choice.

DENNIS

And you wonder why I'm on Xanax.

Dennis pops a Xanax into his mouth.

BIG JIM

I'm warning ya -- that stuff's not healthy.

He takes a big bite of his hot dog.

SHANA SANDERS (pronounced: Shay-na) enters. She's in her late 20's/early 30's, beautiful, smart, wearing a stylish blouse and skirt. She totes a shoulder bag and holds a wireless microphone.

SHANA

Excuse me. Hi. I'm filling in for Teresa tonight. I don't know where to sit.

All three immediately say, "Here!" "Have a seat." "Join us. She sits next to Dennis and extends her hand.

SHANA (CONT'D)

Thanks. Shana Sanders from Sportsvision.

DENNIS

(shaking her hand a little vigorously) Dennis Minishian, "Sportsvision." I mean..."Daily News."

MASON

(offering his hand) Mason Young, "L.A. Times."

SHANA

(to Big Jim) And you...?

BIG JIM

Do you give a rat's ass?

SHANA

Oh. Okay. A hater.

MASON

That's Big Jim Tabler. He doesn't write for a real newspaper. He's with a website. What is it again -- "Jock Sniffers dot com?"

BIG JIM

"Balls dot com," Arsenio, and we have more readers than both of your obsolete morning rags combined.

Shana has had these encounters before. She decides to cut Jim off at the pass.

SHANA

I have a B.A. in journalism from Northwestern, a masters in communication from UCLA. And I can drink you under the table.

Mason and Dennis ad lib "whoa!" "gotcha!" "Sweet!" and applaud.



BIG JIM  
Oooh, a challenge. All right. Let's settle this right now.

SHANA  
Bring it on.

BIG JIM  
Only thing is, they don't allow alcohol in the pressbox. So we're going to have to do it with snow cones.

Mason and Dennis groan and throw Styrofoam cups and debris at him.

BIG JIM (CONT'D)  
(feigning innocence) What? What?

SHANA  
(looking around) There must be twenty/thirty empty chairs. Where are the rest of the reporters?

DENNIS  
There used to be a lot more.

MASON  
(ruefully) And now it's just us.

BIG JIM  
A moment of silence for newspapers.

LIGHTS DIM:

SCENE TWO -- PRESSBOX -- LATER

LIGHTS UP as WE HEAR:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
LA nothing, San Francisco nothing as we head to the second inning.

TECHNICAL NOTE: The announcer and Randy, the P.R. Director are always o.s. and pre-recorded.

Dennis is on his CELLPHONE.

DENNIS  
Look, Kathy, I want that house too, but not if it means a bidding war. (beat) Stop crying. (sighs) All right. Go over there. But I'm not buying unless I'm comfortable... Huh? I think it's still no score. (hangs up)

MASON  
You think? Our official scorer, ladies and gentlemen.

SHANA

(to Dennis) You're buying a house?

BIG JIM

With what? Your Delta Frequent Flier miles?

MASON

At least he can fit in a plane.

BIG JIM

Even the best rappers are white.

DENNIS

We saw this cute place in Mar Vista, but someone else is making a bid tonight. And you know Kathy when she gets her heart set on something. It's like trying to hold back the Pacific Ocean with a broom.

MASON

How much are they asking?

DENNIS

Isn't that a little personal?

BIG JIM

You tell us about your Xanex, but you won't tell us this?

SHANA

You're on Xanex?

DENNIS

I'm under a lot of stress. Everyone thinks being a baseball reporter is a dream job.

BIG JIM

They do?

DENNIS

We have constant deadlines, we're at the mercy of everyone for information, and the travel is grueling. We don't take the team charters. We fly commercial, coach, always with stops. Missed flights, delayed flights, O'Hare -- which is Calcutta with a food court. And someday they'll discover those TSA body scanners aren't safe after all and because I'll have gone through them nine times a week for fifteen years I will glow in the dark and bleed out of my eyes. We stay in second rate hotels, editors tamper with our work, we're now forced to have a social media presence -- what the hell is Pin-interest anyway? We eat nothing but hot dogs and funnel cakes. And all of that I could handle if I wasn't also married to "the Terminator!"

SHANA

Wow. And I thought TV was bad.

BIG JIM

Yeah, about that -- how did you get your job, Shana Sanders of Sportsvision? What tipped it, the degree from Northwestern or UCLA?

DENNIS

You're an ass.

SHANA

It could be my looks. Or the fact that I was on the NCAA National Championship softball team in 2010. Have any of you played competitive sports professionally or even in college?

They sheepishly mumble "No" "Not me."

SHANA (CONT'D)

Uh huh. And even then the best I can do is sideline reporter, telling a breathless fanbase just when Dogget's knee will be drained.

BIG JIM

Yeah, well, you could always marry some rich guy and be set for the rest of your life.

SHANA

I'm not about money. Like all girls, I'm looking for an honest relationship. One that will endure long after looks are gone.

BIG JIM

Well, hurry. Because once those looks do go your choices narrow from every guy in the world to someone who looks like us.

SHANA

I'll take my chances.

MASON

Pomerantz has retired his first six batters.

DENNIS

Stick to your guns, Shana. Don't just settle for some loser billionaire.

SHANA

Thank you, Dennis.

DENNIS

Even if it does mean someone like me (quickly correcting) Us. Someone like us. (changing the subject fast) So... when are they draining Dogget's knee?

SHANA

Tuesday.

MASON

Tuesday.

BIG JIM

At least he suffered the injury during a baseball game.  
Unlike Mr. Joel Zamaya.

The guys chuckle.

SHANA

What happened to him?

MASON

True story. Joel Zamaya was a pitcher for the Tigers who went on the Disabled List a few years ago with a sore wrist he sustained from playing "Guitar Hero."

BIG JIM

And then you had Pedro Guerrero who wrenched his back hauling his big screen TV into the yard. He was evacuating during an earthquake and that was his one irreplaceable keepsake.

DENNIS

Or the great Rickey Henderson who missed a couple of games because of frostbite.

BIG JIM

Yep. These are the rocket scientists you want to give fifteen million dollars a year to.

SHANA

Not photos? Not precious documents? His TV?

MASON

(checking his phone) Oh shit. My paper just laid off one of our movie critics.

DENNIS

You're kidding?

BIG JIM

You're next, my diversity-privileged friend.

MASON

(calling out to the field) Win, you sons of bitches! If you don't get to the World Series I'm going to be living in an empty Maytag box!

DENNIS

(to Shana) Yes, there used to be a lot more of us.

SHANA

Was Guerrero aware that here in America we have stores?

No.

BIG JIM

LIGHTS SLOWLY DIM:

END OF SAMPLE

SAMPLE