

EXT. CHICAGO BALLPARK - DAY

OUTSIDE the ballpark a SIGN reads: "Double-header vs. Milwaukee" and in LARGER LETTERS "WADDELL PITCHING"

INSIDE the ballpark spectators jam the stands. A roped-off section in the outfield allows for additional standing room. Mack sits at the end of the Brewers' bench, nervously checking his watch.

THE OUTFIELD

Like the Red Sea parting, an opening forms among the fans. Laughter ripples through the crowd and builds as Rube emerges.

Rube, wearing a fireman's hat and coat with his baseball pants and shoes, marches across the outfield to the pitcher's mound. He waves to the horde of admirers who cheer and call his name.

From the bench, a slight nod from Mack serves as a signal to another player, who dashes to Waddell. He tosses a baseball glove to Rube, who simultaneously flips his fireman's hat to the player.

A second player catches up with Rube and exchanges a baseball jersey for the fireman's coat. Rube slips the jersey over his red undershirt and begins to button it, his glove tucked under his arm.

Rube arrives on the mound where the catcher and infielders await. One infielder hands Rube his baseball cap. After Rube puts on his cap and glove, the catcher plops a baseball into Rube's mitt.

CATCHER

We need both games today. We're counting on you for the first

Rube nods and rubs the ball in his glove as the catcher takes his place.

RUBE

What's everybody waiting fr? Let's play ball.

UMPIRE

Don't you want any warm-ups?

RUBE

Can't get any warmer. Just came from a fire. Batter up!

UMPIRE (TO BATTER)

Well, you heard him.

As the hitter steps into the batter's box, Rube greets him with a wink. He readies to pitch, his arms swinging loosely. Rube goes into his motion, his hands coming together above his left ear. His right foot kicks out violently, his left arm shuddering across his body to deliver his pitch.

Rube strikes out the batter on three successive pitches, each POP of the catcher's glove growing progressively louder. Rube bows and doffs his cap and then announces to the cheering throng.

RUBE

This won't take long.

LATER

The shadows have longer across the infield. Rube looks nearly the same but his on-field teammates are showing signs of wear, the front of their uniform shirts drenched in sweat.

The manual SCOREBOARD rising above the left field wall indicates the score is tied, 2-2, after 12 innings, the maximum number of innings the scoreboard allows.

A pair of teenage boys operate the board. One sits wearily on the platform in front of the scoreboard. The other stands on a ladder, holding up the numeral "1" for Milwaukee somewhere beyond inning 12. Milwaukee has the lead.

Rube beams as a bushed Chicago hitter steps into the batter's box.

RUBE (CONT'D)

Ah, you ain't tired yet, are ya?

As the hitter digs in, catcher BILLY DIGGINS crouches down in front of the UMPIRE, flashes the sign and calls out to Rube.

BILLY DIGGINS

Come on, Rube. One more. One more
and we're outta here.

(to himself)

Seventeen innings is enough.

The umpire, sweat beads dripping from his mask, leans into Diggins.

UMPIRE

Amen.

Rube bellows to the ump.

RUBE

Hey ump, how many outs?

UMPIRE

Two.

RUBE

And how many strikes?

UMPIRE

Two.

RUBE

Nope.

Rube rears back and as he launches his next pitch, proclaims:

RUBE (CONT'D)

Three!!!

The hitter barely gets the bat off his shoulder.

UMPIRE

Strike three!!!

Rube performs several perfect cartwheels off the mound to utter delight of the crowd. Rube then ambles over to the grandstand and begins to hold court as if he were the hometown favorite.

As Rube's post-game celebration continues Mack is near home plate, in conference with the umpire and a delegate from the Chicago team. After the meeting breaks, Mack heads back to dugout, observing the still-fresh Waddell.

YOUNG CONNIE MACK

Eddie, come over here, please.

Rube bounds over to Mack.

RUBE

Hey, Connie. What can I do for ya?

YOUNG CONNIE MACK

We can't get in another nine innings in before dark. So, the next game will only go five innings. If you pitch that for me, you can skip our road trip to Kansas City. Take a few days off. I hear they're biting at Pewaukee Lake.

Rube extends his glove hand.

RUBE

Gimme the ball and pack my pole.