

Called

A Biographical Reverie in One Act

by
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Setting

A hunting lodge in Greene County, Alabama.

Time

Winter, 1983.

Cast of Characters

Paul "Bear" Bryant. Late 60's. Large stature, capable of a deep, gravelly voice.

Ida Kilgore Bryant. Bryant's mother. Late 30's-early 40's. Careworn country mother.

Young Paul. Bryant as a boy, tall and gangly. Age 14.

Paul as Young Man. Mid to late 20's.

Mary Harmon Bryant. Bryant's fiancée and wife. Mid to late 20's. Pretty young woman, with southern charm and grace.

Coach Frank Thomas. Bryant's coach at Alabama in the 30's. Mid 50's. Stern, old school

Joe Namath. 30's. Brash, confident, easy-going. From Pennsylvania.

Ken "Snake" Stabler. 30's-early 40's. Confident, but with rough edges. From south Alabama.

John McKay. USC coach. Mid 40's.

Ozzie Newsome. Black player from '76 squad. Late 20's. Large man.

Pat Dye. Auburn coach. Mid 40's.

Staging Notes

The set should be simple and uncluttered: Fireplace, table, a couple of chairs.

Most characters that enter do not interact with Bear at all. Namath and Dye actually come into his "space", and Stabler and Newsome actually converse with Bear at the end of their vignettes. All others are in a separate space.

The whole play is intended to be a reverie of memories. It is not even clear whether Bear is "alive" or not, nor is it supposed to be definite, one way or the other. The memories are his and ours.

ACT I

A hunting lodge in South Alabama. There is a low fire in the hearth upstage. The lights are dim, shadowed. In the foreground is a wooden table with 2-3 chairs. On the table is a bottle of whiskey and 2-3 glasses. On a hat rack hangs a hounds tooth hat. Seated at the table is PAUL "BEAR" BRYANT, dressed in hunting gear, a vest and wearing a ball cap, basically recreating the iconic scene in the photo with him and Pat Dye. A radio plays. He pours a glass of whiskey and clicks off the radio. During the play, a series of visuals appropriate to the dialogue are displayed to the side of or behind the fireplace.

BEAR

I ain't never been nothing but a winner. Folks expect that, at least they do now. Mainly because it's been true for a whole lotta years. And that's a good thing, that's the kind of life you want to have. Don't think I haven't lost along the way. I've lost plenty, believe you me.

Being a winner doesn't mean you win everything, every time. You're going to lose sometimes. The point is that you can't just cry when crying won't do you no good. Being a winner is what you do about the losses. Losing never made me want to quit, losing made me want to fight that much harder. To take another shot.

Some people might think that kind of attitude is a chip on the shoulder, the way you'd expect a man to think who started out with nothing, and not much chance of ever having anything. But I've known plenty who started out with nothing and seemed satisfied to leave it that way. Maybe I did have a chip on my shoulder. One thing's for damn sure. When I started out, I forever more didn't have anything.

VISUAL-1: Moro Bottom

I was born and raised in Moro Bottom, Arkansas.
(MORE)

BEAR (CONT'D)

I don't know where Moro Bottom got its name, but for my money they called it that because there just ain't no more bottom below it. It's the bottomest place on the face of the planet.

VISUAL-2: Bryant homeplace

But it was home. Moro Bottom was just down the road from Fordyce, where I went to school. And Fordyce was about 60 miles from Pine Bluff, which you may have heard of. And Pine Bluff was 50 miles from Little Rock, which I *know* you've heard of. So you can see that Moro Bottom was about as far off the beaten path as a fella could get.

VISUAL: fade

We were dirt poor. I worked for fifty cents a day chopping cotton and working in the fields. So, no, we didn't have anything that amounted to much, but we didn't really notice.

VISUAL-3: Bryant Family

My daddy was Wilson Monroe Bryant, a man in poor health most of my life.

**A careworn woman, IDA BRYANT,
stands in her apron in a special**

My mama was Ida Kilgore Bryant, and she took care of everybody. And we musta eaten pretty good, 'cause I for sure grew up to be a big boy, really big for my age, all my life.

VISUAL: fade

And I was strong, too. Strong enough to... well, you may have heard the story. When I was 12... or was it when I was 14? Things get a little harder to remember as the years go by. I'm pretty sure I had started playing football for the Fordyce Redbugs.

**A large boy, preteen YOUNG PAUL,
enters. His overalls are torn &
there is dried blood on his shirt**

MAMA

What in the world have you been up to, Paul? Your clothes are just about ruint. Can't you take care of 'em, just once?

YOUNG PAUL

Mama, you won't believe it! I wrestled a bear,
Mama!

MAMA

You what?

YOUNG PAUL

Wrestled a bear. This man in town, he had a
bear he trapped, and he said if anybody could
beat that bear wrestling, he'd pay 'em five
dollars!

MAMA

What foolishness are you talking, Paul? A bear?

YOUNG PAUL

Yes'm. A big ole bear, almost big as me. And I
wrestled him, and I won!

MAMA

Are you serious, child? Why you coulda been
killed!

YOUNG PAUL

But I wasn't. I just grabbed him from behind,
and pinned his arms, and then I held on for
dear life. Except he kinda ripped up my
overalls.

MAMA

I should say he did! Paul William Bryant, what
am I gonna do with you? It's not bad enough you
grow outta your clothes fast as I can get 'em,
now you've gone and let a bear tear 'em to
pieces.

YOUNG PAUL

I'm sorry, mama.

MAMA

Well, I suppose we can use that five dollars
and buy you some new britches.

YOUNG PAUL

Uh, I don't have the five dollars, mama.

MAMA

What? I thought you said-

YOUNG PAUL

The man kinda forgot to pay me. But I did get a
new name!

MAMA

What new name?

YOUNG PAUL

Everybody stated calling me "Bear". Slapping me on the back and hollering, "Here he is. This boy's a Bear!"

MAMA

Well, you can forget about being called "Bear." That's not a fit name for a preacher.

BEAR

She wanted me to be a preacher.

MAMA

I expect we've had enough excitement for one evening. You go on inside and get cleaned up. It's supper time. And put those overalls on my chair. I'll have to sew 'em up. Again.

Lights fade on MAMA & YOUNG PAUL

BEAR

I always told her coaching was a lot like preaching, but she never believed it. Like I said, I was a big boy. We moved into town at Fordyce about the time I was 12 or 13. I remember watching the Fordyce football team practicing one afternoon, and trying to figure out what this game was all about.

VISUAL-4: Rose Bowl parade. SOUND: McNamee on radio with winning play

The only thing I knew about football was hearing Graham MacNamee call the 1926 Rose Bowl over the radio.

VISUAL-5: Rose Bowl game

Alabama beat Washington 20-19 to win their very first national championship, and even though I didn't understand a thing I was hearing, the way MacNamee described it, I was hooked for good.

YOUNG PAUL in special, looking at something in the distance. VISUAL-6: Fordyce football squad

So here I am, watching this Arkansas high school team practice, and Coach Cowan came over and looked me up and down and said, "Son, would you like to play football?" I said,

YOUNG PAUL

(enthusiastically)

Yessir, I sure would!

(unsure)

Uh, how do you play?

He said, "You see that feller down there catching the ball?" I said,

YOUNG PAUL

Yessir.

BEAR

He said, "Whenever he catches it, you run down there and try to kill him. That's all there is to it."

**YOUNG PAUL nods, runs off. VISUAL:
fade**

So I played for the Fordyce Redbugs. I've had exactly two head coaches, Coach Cowan was the first. I was fortunate. The two men who coached me were both straight up, they taught me more about the value of working hard and learning the basics than I got anywhere else. Good men, men who knew what they wanted to achieve and how to go about getting it. I was lucky for having that taught to me.

**VISUAL-7: Bryant in football
uniform**

So we won a couple of state championships, and I guess I did my share to make that happen. Then somehow, and I think Coach Cowan had a lot to do with it, I got the attention of the coaches way over in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

VISUAL: fade

Football has been a way out of poverty for many a young man. It was for me. When you don't have anything to go back to, then, by gosh, you're going to work a little harder. It's never been just a game for me. Never. I knew it from the moment I left Moro Bottom.

(MORE)

BEAR (CONT'D)

I was never going back to plowing and driving those mules and chopping cotton for fifty cents a day.

VISUAL-8: University of Alabama buildings

For some reason, the University of Alabama decided to offer me a chance to play football, and you can bet your bottom dollar I jumped at that chance.

Coach FRANK THOMAS in special, wearing a sweater, whistle around his neck, with a clipboard, motioning to his team. VISUAL-9: Bryant as college player.

I went to Tuscaloosa in 1931 and started as tight end for three years under Coach Frank Thomas. He was the other head coach I was talking about.

VISUAL-10: Coach Thomas

Coach Thomas always knew what to say, and when to say it, and that's the secret. Timing is everything. I learned almost everything I know about coaching from Frank Thomas, and I believe he learned it from Knute Rockne.

Special out on THOMAS. VISUAL: fade. VISUAL-11: Knute Rockne

He played quarterback for Rockne, and he knew how to be a leader. I'll tell you this, you always want your quarterback to be a leader. It don't always work out that way, but when it does, you're starting out ahead of the game.

Not too long after I got to Tuscaloosa, my father died. That kinda shook me up, and I considered pretty strong to go back home. I was already pretty homesick. But I had a cousin, Collins Kilgore, and he sat me down and made me understand that if I quit on this chance, I'd never get another. That was my first real lesson about the dangers of quitting, and it must have been a good one, because the idea never occurred to me again.

(MORE)

BEAR (CONT'D)

Much as I learned about football in Tuscaloosa, and as much as that made me who I am today, there was one thing that happened to me there that was more important than anything else that ever happened to me. And that includes every kind of championship we ever won, or award they ever gave me, or meeting Presidents, or anything else that ever came into my life.

MARY HARMON Black, a lovely young woman dressed in 30's style, appears in special.

Because in 1932, that's where Mary Harmon Black walked into my life, and she was worth ten times all the rest of it put together. Mary Harmon Black was best looking gal you or I have ever laid eyes on.

YOUNG BRYANT as a young man, joins her in special

MARY HARMON

Paul Bryant. I like that name, it's a nice name. So why does everybody call you "Bear"?

YOUNG BRYANT

When I was boy, I wrestled a bear.

MARY HARMON

You didn't!

YOUNG BRYANT

I won, too.

MARY HARMON

You're trying to impress me, aren't you? You're making that up.

YOUNG BRYANT

I wish I could impress you. But I ain't making it up. I wrestled a bear.

MARY HARMON

But nobody can wrestle a bear!

YOUNG BRYANT

Nobody ever told me I couldn't. So I wrestled him. I won, too.

MARY HARMON

You said that already.

YOUNG BRYANT

Oh, yeah. I did say that, didn't I?

MARY HARMON

Can't you think of anything else to say?

YOUNG BRYANT

Yes, ma'am, I sure can. Mary Harmon Black, you're the best looking gal me or anybody else ever laid eyes on.

MARY HARMON

My, I guess you *can* say something, *Paul* Bryant.

YOUNG BRYANT

They call me Bear.

BEAR

Mary Harmon and I got married in secret in 1935. Coach Thomas didn't want his players married, and honestly, I wasn't sure whether I might lose my scholarship over it.

YOUNG BRYANT

Mary Harmon, I want you to be my wife.

MARY HARMON

I've been wondering when you would get around to asking me that.

YOUNG BRYANT

But we'll have to keep it a secret. Coach Thomas is dead set against players being married.

MARY HARMON

If that's the way it has to be, then that's how we'll do it, Paul. It's probably for the best for me, too.

YOUNG BRYANT

You? You don't have Coach Thomas to worry about.

MARY HARMON

No, but I've got my family down in Troy. They wouldn't look too favorably on my getting married. If Daddy was still alive, he'd probably drive up here and shoot you.

YOUNG BRYANT

They don't want some plowboy from Moro Bottom in the family, that what you mean?

MARY HARMON

What I mean is it doesn't matter a fig what they want, Paul Bear Bryant. The only thing that matters is how I feel about you.

YOUNG BRYANT

And how is that, Mary Harmon Black?

MARY HARMON

Like you're the best thing I've ever seen. And like you and I are going to have a life together that'll make everyone in Troy, Alabama, and Moro Bottom, Arkansas, turn green.

YOUNG BRYANT

That'll be all right. Won't bother me if they turn a little crimson, too.

He kisses her, then exits. Special on MAMA.

MAMA

I never saw Paul play. I'd come to Tuscaloosa some times for the games but I would stay in the hotel room. I couldn't bear to watch. Though I surely prayed for him, that he wouldn't get hurt. And of course I prayed they'd beat Tennessee. Which they did.

MARY HARMON

I loved to watch Paul play, even when it got rambunctious, which was all the time. I prayed that he wouldn't get hurt. And of course I prayed they'd beat Tennessee. Which they did.

Specials out.

BEAR

Which we did. Tennessee was *the* rival in the 30's, always had been. We didn't even play Auburn back then, hadn't played them since a 7-7 tie back in 1907. Only tie Alabama and Auburn ever had.

That was the game in Birmingham where Alabama picked up the name "the Crimson Tide." Alabama wore white uniforms, but it was red clay mud they played in, and some sportswriter nicknamed 'em the Crimson Tide, I guess on account of all the rain and red mud. And the white uniforms that weren't white anymore.

VISUAL-12: old Auburn program and ticket

Auburn wasn't even Auburn, they were Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Institute! Hell, that's as close to an institute as that Cow College ever got. They didn't officially change the name to "Auburn" until 1960, which is hard to believe.

No, Bama didn't start back to playing Auburn until 1948.

VISUAL-13: Tennessee program

It was Tennessee we wanted to beat on the third Saturday in October. Still do. There was one Tennessee game, when I was a senior, when I did have one small complication. It seems my leg was broke. I had broken it the week before against Mississippi State.

Light up on MAMA & MARY HARMON:
VISUAL: fade

MAMA

I knew it!

MARY HARMON

So much for praying for Paul Bryant.

MAMA

What is wrong with that boy? He's been hard-headed as mule his whole life.

Light down on MAMA & MARY HARMON

BEAR

For any normal fool, having a broken leg is a pretty good reason not to play. But a fool who'll wrestle a bear is that special kind of fool who'll play, broken leg or not.

The year before, in 1934, we didn't lose a single game. We beat the Volunteers 13-6 that year. I guess I should admit I was ejected from the game in the second quarter. Something about unsportsmanlike conduct. I'll be the first to tell you that I played pretty rough back then. Hell, I was always a rough player, always a rough and tumble guy. It's a good thing I took to football, or I might've ended up in jail.

VISUAL-14: Beat Stanford headline

We went on to win the SEC championship and then upset Stanford in the Rose Bowl to win the national championship.

VISUAL-15: Don Hutson

Don Hutson played on that team. He was a great tight end, great pass catcher. Second best man to play tight end I ever knew.

VISUAL: fade

After graduation, it never occurred to me to try and play in the pros. To tell the truth, I've never had much affection for professional football. Somehow, when they pay you to do it, whatever good you get out of it pretty much comes down to a paycheck. But it's *always* been more than a paycheck. Not saying you can't live without one, but if you're living only for a paycheck, then you're not living for very much.

(chuckles)

I always told mama coaching was like preaching, and I sure sound like a preacher, don't I? But a person is called to be a preacher, and I was called to be a coach.

VISUAL-16: Bryant with Thomas and other coaches

Called by Frank Thomas. After I graduated, Coach Thomas asked me to stay on and be an assistant coach.

Coach FRANK THOMAS, now dressed in suit and vest, in special. VISUAL: fade

THOMAS

Bear never knew it, but I had my eye on him for a coach from his sophomore year. I used to draw up plays and formations on the chalk board, and then the next day, have one of the players step up and explain what I had showed 'em the day before. Most of 'em dreaded that, and couldn't come up with a thing. But Bryant already knew every aspect of the offense and defense from top to bottom, he never hesitated. I offered Bryant \$1250 a year, plus housing and transportation, to be my line coach.

BEAR

Not exactly getting rich.

**YOUNG BRYANT & MARY HARMON in
special**

THOMAS

But not doing too badly. And for a *married* man
with a baby on the way

(looks pointedly at YOUNG BRYANT)

Nothing to sneeze at either. Do you want the
job?

YOUNG BRYANT

Yessir, I do!

THOMAS

Good thing I never found out about you being
married, Bear.

YOUNG BRYANT

Yessir, it is.

THOMAS

Although, on balance, I think it did you more
good than bad. I've always worried that a
married football player might lose sight of the
football in favor of the being married. But it
just seemed to help you settle down and stay on
the ball.

MARY HARMON

Thank you so much, Coach Thomas. This means a
lot to us.

THOMAS

Just make sure you have a boy. We can always
use another football player like this one.

YOUNG BRYANT

As long as he's smarter than me.

THOMAS

He will be. He's got a smart mother.

**Specials down on THOMAS, MARY
HARMON and YOUNG BRYANT**

BEAR

But it wasn't a boy, at least the first one
wasn't. Mae Martin Bryant came into the world
even more beautiful than her mother. We named
her after my momma.

**VISUAL-17: Bear, Mary, baby Paul
Bryant, Jr.**

A few years later, during the war, Coach Thomas got his wish, and Paul Bryant, Jr. came into the world. And he was smart. And he did get it from his momma.

VISUAL-18: Vanderbilt logo and Bear coaching at Vanderbilt

I was an assistant at Alabama until 1940, and then I took a job at Vanderbilt for a year. But that didn't work out. Nobody at Vanderbilt seemed to take football seriously. Lot of smart people at Vanderbilt. Just not football smart.

VISUAL-19: Bryant in navy uniform

Anyway, I went to Arkansas in '41, but after Pearl Harbor, I joined the Navy. They made me a lieutenant commander, on account of my being a college graduate. On my first assignment, I served on the troop ship USS Uruguay.

VISUAL-20: USS Uruguay

On a trip to Morocco in 1943, she was accidentally rammed by one of our own tankers.

**VISUAL-21: troop ship sinking.
SOUND: ship alarms, men shout**

They ordered us to abandon ship, but I stayed on board to make sure my men got off safe.

VISUAL: fade

After that they put me to coaching football on a base in North Carolina. That worked out all right for me. When the war was over, I got the head coaching job at Maryland, and I brought along a lot of those Navy players.

VISUAL-22: Bryant as Maryland coach

So I kinda had a little head start at Maryland. Which I surely needed. Maryland had been having losing seasons for years. I got 'em to 6-2-1 the one year I was there, but President Byrd and I got crossways. For some reason, he thought he could re-instate a player I had put off the team for a rules violation. I guess he didn't understand that there's only one head coach, and that was me.

VISUAL: fade

And that rules are there for a reason. I believe if you have rules, you abide by them. So that was the end of my association with Maryland. But that was a good thing, because I went straight to Kentucky.

VISUAL-23: Bryant at Kentucky

BEAR (CONT'D)

Now, I'm not sure Kentucky deserves to be called a "southern" school, being right on the border and all. And they forever more liked basketball a whole lot more than they ever cared for football. But then they hired me, and somebody with football sense finally came to Lexington.

VISUAL: fade

There's two things a coach starting out needs. One is a wife willing to put up with you and a lot of neglect. The other is a five year contract. I had both when I went to Kentucky. You need five years to get anything done. Don't forget: that first year, you're playing with another man's team. So it took me a year before I got Kentucky into its first bowl game. Ever. And three more years before Kentucky won the SEC championship. For the first time. Ever.

That 1950 team beat Bud Wilkinson's Oklahoma Sooners in the Sugar Bowl. They had been number one, and on account of us beating the number one team, a least one ranking outfit made us out to be national champions. But it didn't really count, and I sure never claimed it.

MARY HARMON & YOUNG BRYANT enter

MARY HARMON

Eight years at Kentucky, before they chased you off. They really never got used to being good at football, did they?

YOUNG BRYANT

They just didn't like football that much. And I didn't like that they didn't like it.

BEAR

I don't think Kentucky will ever care much about football. Not as long as they can play basketball. But they didn't chase me off. I chased myself off. Never did feel right with football playing second fiddle.

VISUAL-24: Bryant & Rupp

YOUNG BRYANT

It wasn't so much Coach Rupp that was the problem. He was a great coach. But you remember that time I was talking to the reporters before the Texas A&M game, and he stuck his head in the door and told 'em, "Don't forget, boys, the real show starts on Monday."

VISUAL: fade

MARY HARMON

That was tacky.

YOUNG BRYANT

He just assumed basketball was king at Kentucky. Which it was. The place just wasn't big enough for both me and Rupp, and Rupp wasn't going anywhere.

MARY HARMON

So you got a divorce from Kentucky.

YOUNG BRYANT

I didn't have to talk much to get out of that contract. I just told 'em I was leaving, and they knew better than to try and make me stay.

BEAR

Thing was, it really couldn't have happened at a worse time. I had just turned down offers from Arkansas, Southern Cal, even Alabama, and there weren't that many schools looking for a new head coach.

MARY HARMON

They offered you the job at Green Bay.

YOUNG BRYANT

But I didn't want the pros. I wanted college.

MARY HARMON

So you dragged me out to the Texas desert.

YOUNG BRYANT

Texas A&M is not in the desert, Mary Harmon. It might get a little hot in the summer-

MARY HARMON

A little hot!? You just about killed those poor boys it was so hot. No wonder so many left you high and dry.

YOUNG BRYANT

But not you.

MARY HARMON

No, not me.

**MARY HARMON & YOUNG BRYANT exit.
VISUAL-25: Bryant at Texas A&M**

BEAR

Yeah, in 1954 they offered me the job as Aggie coach. We got there, and I gotta tell you, there just ain't no there *there* in College Station, Texas. Looked like military barracks for dorms. That and a lot of dust everywhere. And they didn't have squat for a football team. So I got the bright idea of putting everybody on a bus and hauling 'em out to Junction City, which was even hotter, and even less to look at, and even more dust.

VISUAL: fade

That was a hell of a summer. Everybody thinks I must of been trying to kill off the team, survival of the fittest or some such nonsense. I just wanted to see who had the guts to win. A third of 'em did leave me after that little summer "workout". But every man I had left on the team felt he could whip Joe Louis on a Saturday night.

The difference between winning and losing is attitude. I've always tried to teach my players to be fighters, and that summer in Junction City was the best classroom I ever had. And I didn't mean putting up your dukes, though I've done my share of that. I'm talking about facing adversity.

I tell 'em that what I mean is when your house burns down, and your wife runs off with the drummer, and you've lost your job, and the odds are against you, what are you going to do? Most people would just lay down and quit. Well, I want my people to fight back. And that's what those Aggie boys did. They got to believing they were good enough to win and by damn, they went out and won.

Well, except for that first season. They didn't do worth a shit that first year. We went 1-9, the only losing season I ever had.

(snorts, shakes his head)

(MORE)

BEAR (CONT'D)

Another coach's team. And I'd managed to chase off half of *them*. But after that, they got to winning so well they won the Southwestern Conference championship in 1956. That was the only time I ever beat Texas.

VISUAL-26: J.D. Crow winning Heisman

And we came *that* close to winning it again in '57, when John David Crow won the Heisman. Only Heisman Trophy winner ever played for me. You know, I was trying even then, even there, to get black players on the team.

VISUAL: fade

Some hotshot newspaperman told me A&M would be the last place on earth to ever be integrated. I told him then that's where we'd end up in the rankings: last place. But then, in 1958... 1958, that's when everything fell into place. That was the year mama called.

Special on MAMA

MAMA

Paul! Paul Bryant, come on to the house! It's time for dinner! Paul!

Special out on MAMA.

BEAR

It's like you're out working in the field, and you hear your mama calling you home. That's what it was like when they offered me the job at Alabama. Mama called. And when mama calls, you have to come running.

Alabama had gone straight downhill after Frank Thomas left. Terrible seasons, only four wins in the last three years. Like they'd forgotten what it was like to be a winner. Well, I never had. We went 5-4-1 that first year, and the next year we beat Auburn and went to a bowl game, first time in six years for either one to happen.

VISUAL-27: Pat Trammel, Billy Neighbors, Lee Roy Jordan

And in 1961, with Pat Trammel, one of the best quarterbacks I ever had, and Billy Neighbors at guard and Lee Roy Jordan leading the defense, we were 11-0.

VISUAL-28: 1961 Team

BEAR (CONT'D)

And national champs. My first time as a coach. That team had everything you want in a team: guts, courage, heart. *Confidence*. And leadership.

VISUAL: fade

You know something? You don't have to talk a lot to be a leader. Lee Roy Jordan was a great leader and he never said a word. But if he grunted, everybody listened.

VISUAL-29: 1962 team

The next year was just the same kind of young men, and they came pert near to pulling it off twice in a row, except we slipped up and let Georgia Tech beat us by a point. That 1962 squad played like it was a sin to even give up a point.

VISUAL: fade

There was this one young man who came to Tuscaloosa in '62 who did make quite a name for himself. Fella called Joe Namath.

JOE NAMATH appears in a special, drinking a highball. VISUAL-30: Namath

Joe Namath was a great leader, too. He had his problems, everybody knows that. But a man without problems is a man without a challenge. If you don't have something to rise above, how do you expect to rise at all?

VISUAL: fade

NAMATH

How you been, Coach?

BEAR

Tolerable. Still kicking. Here, have a seat. It's really good to see you, Joe. What brings you to Greene County?

NAMATH

(sitting)

Just in the area. They told me you were down here at the lodge and here I am.

BEAR

Well, how you been, Joe? You still ruling the roost on Broadway? "Broadway Joe"! Why in the world anybody decided you were a "Broadway Joe", I'll never understand. Helluva nickname.

NAMATH

And this from a man they call "Bear". Nicknames. People get nicknames. Hard to lose one once you get it. But "Bear"? People should just think a minute about the kind of person who can carry around a nickname like "Bear".

BEAR

Gotta live up to it. I been growling around this world long enough, most people think I really am as tough as an old bear.

NAMATH

Think!? There's no think about it. You've had to be tough. They've given you enough guff over the years. Accusing you of playing too hard, getting us to hit too hard.

BEAR

Joe, it ain't possible to hit too hard. I've taught 'em to go a hundred percent for five seconds, that's what I ask. Go a hundred percent for five seconds, you can make things happen.

JOE

Try telling that to that Georgia Tech player after Darwin almost took his head off.

BEAR

Sometimes that kind of concentrated effort can lead to a mistake. I certainly never told Holt to smash that boy in the face. That was a bad hit, and I'm sorry for it.

NAMATH

Man! They splashed that all over the papers, all over the country. Called your style of play "vicious" and "dirty".

BEAR

They want vicious and dirty, come down to Moro Bottom. We wrestle-

NAMATH

Yes, I know. You wrestle bears. The worst thing I remember was the Georgia game. When they claimed you and that Georgia Athletic director-

BEAR

Wally Butts.

NAMATH

Yeah, Wally Butts. That the two of you had gotten together to make sure Georgia lost big. Killing the point spread.

BEAR

Saturday Evening Post ran the story In 1963. Never been more hogwash on the printed page in the history of reporting. But even if it was hogwash, the whole deal 'bout tore me up. That was my *name* they were slopping around, my reputation at stake. I couldn't sleep the whole time that was going on, I'd wake up in a cold sweat. I had to go sleep in another room so Mary Harmon wouldn't see what I was going through. But she knew.

NAMATH

The Georgia game was the opener that season. I should know-

BEAR

You should. First start for you as quarterback.

NAMATH

(grinning)

Now that you mention it. The Post said Butts had given you the whole offensive plan for Georgia. And that was why we won thirty-five to nothing. My God, we didn't give up but 22 points the whole season. If there was a defense that ever needed less help to shut you down-

BEAR

That was Lee Roy's defense! Hell no, they didn't need any help. They had everything they needed deep down, where it counts.

NAMATH

The whole business never amounted to a hill of beans. Well, except that the Post had to pay you a half a million bucks.

BEAR

\$360,000. I don't know how much Butts got. The whole deal pretty much drove the Saturday Evening Post out of business. And good riddance to bad rubbish.