

**GAME CALLED BECAUSE OF MURDER**

By Dale Ahlquist

## Cast of Characters

4 Females; 10 Males; 1 Either

<u>BIG FRANK:</u>	Frank Wazaluzski, first baseman.
<u>FLUKE:</u>	Carl “the Fluke” Jenkins, second baseman.
<u>JOSÉ:</u>	Jose Jonés, shortstop.
<u>PIG:</u>	Bart “The Pig” Hammersham, third baseman.
<u>PLUTO:</u>	Pluto “The Planet” Pulletti, center fielder.
<u>LES:</u>	Les Weatherhead, left fielder.
<u>WES:</u>	Wes Leatherhead, right fielder.
<u>RAY:</u>	Ray Gray, catcher.
<u>KREEM:</u>	Lenny “Sour” Kreem, pitcher.
<u>FLOYD:</u>	Floyd Higgins, baseball team manager.
<u>SHARON:</u>	Sharon Sellars, TV reporter for KSCS.
<u>GEORGIA:</u>	TV camera operator.
<u>MRS. BLEDSLOE:</u>	Owner of the Shell City Seagulls.
<u>HYACINTH:</u>	Hyacinth Bledsloe, daughter to Mrs. Bledsloe.
<u>BEER VENDOR*:</u>	The Beer Vendor at the baseball game.

\* denotes character that may be played by either male or female – minor editing is permitted for this purpose only

ACT I – Baseball locker room.

ACT II – Baseball locker room.

Duration  
90 minutes

Time  
During a rainy baseball game

Place  
The locker room of the Shell City Seagulls Minor League Baseball Team

ACT I

Setting: The neat baseball locker room of the Shell City Seagulls Minor League Baseball Team. There are benches and a desk.

At Rise: SHARON is getting ready to interview PLUTO, with GEORGIA, camera on shoulder, readying the shot.

GEORGIA

Ready in 5, 4, 3...

(Gestures the last two counts, then points)

SHARON

This is KCSC Reporter Sharon Sellars with the Shell Shi— oh shhhhll we start again...

GEORGIA

Again. 4, 3...

(Points)

SHARON

This is Sharon Shellars...Sellars, Sellars...

GEORGIA

Again. 4, 3...

SHARON

This is KCSC Reporter Sharon *Sellars* with the Shell Shitty...

GEORGIA

Again. 4, 3...

SHARON

This is KCSC Reporter Karen City with the Seagull Sellers...

GEORGIA

And 4, 3...

SHARON

This is Sharon Shellars *Sellars* with the Cell Sh— Shell City Seashells— *Seagulls* centerfielder ...

GEORGIA

Let's take a breath and try it again.

SHARON

Okay!

(Takes a cleansing breath)

Okay.

GEORGIA

Ready?

SHARON

Ready.

GEORGIA

And...

(Points)

SHARON

(With great concentration and consternation)

This! Is Sharon!...Sellars!...with the...centerfielder of the...Shell...City...Seagulls, Pluto Pulletti, Who!...has just broken the all-time Minor League hitting streak record If! the game resumes. Because right now! there is a rain delay and the game is not official. But Pluto, how did it feel to bet that git, I mean...get that hit?

(Before PLUTO can respond, Enter WES and LES)

WES

The Planet!

LES

The Record!

PLUTO

The Brothers Head!

WES

Way to go, Man.

LES

Nailed it. Killed it. You're the best.

PLUTO

Thanks, guys.

WES

This will get you to the Bigs for sure. Right, Les?

LES

Right, Wes.

(To camera)

He's going to the Bigs!

WES

(Also to camera)

Do you hear that? The Bigs!

SHARON

Okay, we can do it again.

GEORGIA

4, 3...

(Points)

SHARON

Sharon Sellars here. We're in a rain delay at the Gulls Stadium but Pluto "The Planet" Pulletti has pulled it off. He has wet a new record—*set* a new record—for the all-time major league—

GEORGIA

Minor league.

SHARON

Minor league major hitting streak. Tell us, Plato—I mean, Pluto—how does it feel?

GEORGIA

Nope.

SHARON

This is Sharon Sellars. And we are on Pluto—*with* Pluto—Pluto Pulletti, who has just—

(Enter PIG)

PIG

Awesome clink, Planet!

PLUTO

Thanks, Pig. Let's hope it holds, huh?

PIG

Just need a little sunshine. And I need something to eat.

PLUTO

Pig, you always need something to eat.

PIG

So does everybody. If ya don't eat, ya die. Ya can look it up if ya don't believe me.

PLUTO

Yeah, I'll look that up.

SHARON

Should we do the whole introduction again?

GEORGIA

I don't think so. Just ask the question.

SHARON

Pluto, tell us about how it felt to get that hit.

(Enter FLUKE and JOSÉ)

FLUKE

Congratulations, Pluto!

PLUTO

Thanks, Fluke.

FLUKE

You made history! And we were there. If. If, if, if.

PLUTO

Yeah, that's right. If.

FLUKE

Next stop, the Bigs.

JOSÉ

Hazlo otra vez.

PLUTO

Um, gracias, José.

(GEORGIA motions for SHARON to keep going)

SHARON

Pluto, did you ever think back in April that today you'd be the owner of the longest hitting streak in minor league—

(Enter BIG FRANK and KREEM. BIG FRANK stops and shakes PLUTO's hand but KREEM proceeds right past them directly to his locker.)

BIG FRANK

Uh, good job on that streak, Planet.

PLUTO

Hey Big Frank, what about *you*? Three run homer. Felt good, huh?

BIG FRANK

Yeah. Felt good. It would have only been a two-run homer if you hadn't got your big hit ahead of me.

PLUTO

Just happy to be one of your RBI's, Big Frank.

BIG FRANK

No, this is your day. All the way. The Bigs will be calling you for sure.

SHARON

(To camera)

Pluto Pulletti's excited and appreciative teammates are sharing the joy of this momentous occasion...

(KREEM starts kicking his locker)

...as Pluto's base hit...

(Another kick)

...in the third inning...

(And another)

....What's going on?

BIG FRANK

Hey Sour, I think they're trying to do an interview...

(He keeps kicking the locker)

WES

Sour, what's buggin' you?

KREEM

I had a no-hitter going!

LES

Um...Sour, the first three batters you faced all got hits...

KREEM

And they were all cheap garbage hits! A bloop single off the end of the bat. Then a dumb bounce over the Fluke's glove. And what about that fly ball that dropped right between you and the Planet? Don't tell me the sun was in your eyes, because there was no sun today!

(Kicks the locker)



JOSÉ

El sol sale todas las mañanas, pero yo no me levanto todas las mañanas.

WES

Right. But hey, Sour, *you* can be sunny. You're winning.

KREEM

But we haven't completed five innings! And now with the delay, I can't go back to the mound because my arm will be all stiff and Floyd will have to put in a reliever, and he'll get the win. So not only no no-hitter, I don't even get a W. So much for my stats.

LES

How do you think the Planet feels? He might lose his streak if we're rained out.

KREEM

If we'd gotten those three outs instead of three hits we would've been out of the inning quick and gone five before it started raining!

PLUTO

(To SHARON)

Lenny Kreem. We call him Sour Kreem.

SHARON

Wonder why. So Pluto...do you think...

(Enter RAY, wearing his catcher's gear. He doesn't interrupt the interview, but nonetheless they are distracted by him, as he goes to his locker, removes his gear, and then puts on a smoking jacket and sets up a folding chair, sits down, opens a thick book, puts a pipe in his mouth and starts reading. SHARON cannot concentrate on what she is saying and consequently PLUTO can't concentrate either.)

SHARON

...Do you think that this record-breaking hitting streak is...going to improve your chances of...getting...getting called up...to the big leagues?

PLUTO

Well...if nothing else...I've shown that I'm...pretty consistent at the plate...and I'm hoping...that maybe the scouts will...take notice...and maybe I'll get the...get the call.

SHARON

(Pauses. Still distracted. To GEORGIA.)

Did we get it?

GEORGIA

Well...yeah, but it wasn't very good.

SHARON

(Hardly paying attention to her, still staring at RAY)

Okay...I suppose we should do it again.

PIG

Hey Ray, whatya readin'?

RAY

(Dryly)

A book.

PIG

Yeah, I can see that.

RAY

Then why did you ask?

PIG

What book?

RAY

You've never heard of it.

PIG

I'll've heard of it if ya tell me.

RAY

*Purgatorio.*

PIG

(Pauses)

Never heard of it.

(RAY simply looks up and gives him an expressionless glance, then returns to his book)

Is there food in it?

RAY

(Looks up again)

Do you mean is it about food or are there pieces of food stuck between the pages?

PIG

(Scratching head)

So many possibilities...

GEORGIA  
You ready to go again?

SHARON  
(Deep sigh)  
Yes.

GEORGIA  
And...

SHARON  
This is Sharon Sellars, KSCS. A historic game today at Gull Stadium. Pluto "The Planet" Puttelli has just broken the Minor League all-time hitting streak record.

GEORGIA  
Cut.

SHARON  
What was wrong with that?

GEORGIA  
Battery's dead. Sorry. Let me get a replacement.  
(Dashes to her big equipment bag on the side of the stage)

WES  
Hey Georgia, you busy after the game?

FLUKE  
She's going out to dinner with me.

WES  
Well, are you busy after that?

LES  
Hey, Georgia, I thought you were going out with the Phenom.

GEORGIA  
Hard to go out with a guy who doesn't show up.

FLUKE  
She's going out with me!

WES  
Speaking of not showing up, what happened to the Phenom today? Anybody seen him?

LES

He was here, and then...he wasn't.

GEORGIA

Ready.

SHARON

(Back to interviewing PLUTO)

Pluto, you're becoming something of a star around here. Attendance has been growing steadily because of your hitting streak.

PLUTO

Maybe. But I think everybody comes to see the Phenom.

SHARON

They didn't see him today.

PLUTO

Maybe, he'll show up after the rain delay.

SHARON

But where was he? Why wasn't he in the starting lineup?

PLUTO

You'll have to ask Floyd. I don't make the lineup.

(Enter FLOYD, the manager)

FLOYD

I'm telling you, I've seen it all, and now I've seen The Streak. That was a nice clean swing, Puttelli.

PLUTO

Thanks, Floyd.

FLOYD

But you know, when you were out in the field, you missed the cutoff man on that throw home.

PLUTO

Yeah, I know.

FLOYD

Cost us a run. How many times do I have to tell you about the cutoff man? That's a Little League mistake, Puttelli. You wanna get to the Bigs, you can't keep making those bonehead plays.

PLUTO

Sorry, Floyd.

FLOYD

But the streak's good. And don't worry about the rain delay. If we have to sit here for five hours, we will. I'll make sure play resumes. They're not going to call *this* one because of rain. I won't let them. Those umps, they owe me after that blown call yesterday. I tell you, I've seen it all. The bum was out by a mile and they called him safe.

SHARON

Floyd Higgins, manager of the Cell City Shegulls—Shell City Seagulls. Floyd, you're saying the game will resume?

FLOYD

We're going to resume come hell or high water. In this case, high water. Excuse me. Wazaluzski!

BIG FRANK

Yeah, Floyd?

FLOYD

Did you get the signal not to swing at that 2-0 pitch?

BIG FRANK

But...I hit a home run.

FLOYD

You didn't follow the signal. How am I supposed to manage a team where everybody just does his own thing?

BIG FRANK

It...it was a home run.

WES

Floyd, come on! This is a minor league team. We're all trying to do our own thing because we need stats, and stats is what will get us to the Bigs.

KREEM

That's right!!

(Kicks his locker)

FLOYD

Weatherhead, stay out of this. Now you're getting Kreem all whipped up.

WES

I'm not Weatherhead.

LES

*I'm* Weatherhead.

WES

I'm Leatherhead.

FLOYD

Make up your minds. I tell you, I've seen it all.

BIG FRANK

I don't get it, Floyd. It was a home run. And I need dingers to get to the Bigs.

FLOYD

Wazaluzski, listen to me. The more times you swing at pitches you're not supposed to swing at, the more times you're going to strike out. And with a lot of strikeouts, you're not going to go to the Bigs. You're going to go back to your job at the carwash. Where's Jones? José!

JOSÉ

Si!

FLOYD

José, how many times do I have to tell you, don't steal third base with two out! Comprende?

JOSÉ

El ladrón elogia las cosas que roba.

FLOYD

I tell you, I've seen it all. You lunkheads are going to drive me to drink.

WES

Could someone drive me, too?

LES

Yeah, I'd like to ride along.

(FLOYD moves on. WES and LES approach BIG FRANK, who sits dejectedly.)

WES

Cheer up, Big Frank.

BIG FRANK

He was mad at me for hitting a home run.

WES

He's old school. You'll get used to it. Right, Les?

LES

Right, Wes. Old school. Don't worry about it.

BIG FRANK

What do you mean, old school?

WES

He's been around a long time. Does things the old way.

LES

They used to do things different.

WES

He's been around since...before...since before there were bats.

BIG FRANK

You mean they didn't used to use bats?

LES

That's right. You'd have to hit the ball with your hands.

BIG FRANK

Really?

LES

Oldschool.

BIG FRANK

Wouldn't that kinda hurt?

WES

Men were men.

LES

And vice versa.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

(Entering)

Language!

LES

Oh, Mrs. Bledsloe! We weren't cussing. Right, Wes?

WES

Right, Les.

And you are...?  
MRS. BLEDSLOE

Les Weatherhead.  
LES

Wes Leatherhead.  
WES

Don't try to be confusing. At any rate, I heard what you said.  
MRS. BLEDSLOE

I said ... "Men were men."  
WES

Yes. And that implies things. I don't approve of talking about things that imply things. I take pride in the fact that my team has the cleanest locker room in professional baseball in every respect.  
MRS. BLEDSLOE

(Noticing RAY)  
You can't smoke in here!

I'm not smoking.  
RAY  
(Calmly)

You have a pipe in your mouth!  
MRS. BLEDSLOE

But I'm not smoking it. It's just in my mouth. If I had a pull rope in my mouth would that make me a lawn mower?  
RAY

I don't know what that means, but I'm sure it's insubordination. I should fire you.  
MRS. BLEDSLOE  
(Pauses)

If you're going to fire me, let me put some tobacco in my pipe first. Then I really *will* be smoking.  
RAY

Nonsense, I can't fire you if it means you're going to smoke in here.  
MRS. BLEDSLOE

(RAY goes back to reading)



Les, how did he just do that?  
WES

He made her back off.  
LES

Just like that.  
WES

Did it so easy.  
LES

We've got to learn to do that. Right, Les?  
WES

Right, Wes.  
LES

MRS. BLEDSLOE  
And which one of you had the famous hitting streak?

FLOYD  
Still has it, Mrs. Bledsloe. Pluto Puttelli here.

MRS. BLEDSLOE  
(Makes a sort of "carry on" motion with her hand)  
Keep doing that, won't you.  
(It wasn't a question)

PLUTO  
Sure thing, Mrs. Bledsloe. Simple as that.

MRS. BLEDSLOE  
I should think so. I'm surprised the rest of you don't do the same thing.

FLUKE  
Would if I could.

MRS. BLEDSLOE  
Now which of you is Number 22?

BIG FRANK  
That would be me, Mrs. Bledsloe.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

What's your name?

BIG FRANK

Big Frank Wazaluzski.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

In the third inning, I saw you scratch yourself.

BIG FRANK

I must've itched.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

You scratched yourself in the region of your person about which I will not be explicit but around which I have given explicit instructions that no one shall ever let his hands wander during a game.

BIG FRANK

(Looks around for help. No one offers any.)

Um...I...uh...

MRS. BLEDSLOE

It will be a \$25 fine, Mr. Wazaluzski. You can save yourself some money by never doing it again.

BIG FRANK

But...I hit a three run homer!

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Oh, was that you? Good job. And which of you is Number 6?

PLUTO

That's me, Mrs. Bledsloe.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Mr. Puttelli?

PLUTO

Actually, it's Pulletti.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Pulletti.

PLUTO

Yes, we spoke just now.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

You spit during your second at bat today.

PLUTO

Mrs. Bledsloe! That was right before my hit. The one that broke the record!

MRS. BLEDSLOE

We have very strict rules against spitting.

PLUTO

I must have forgotten.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Well, perhaps a \$50 fine will jar your memory next time.

PLUTO

Mrs. Bledsloe! I was nervous! My hitting streak was on the line!

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Mr. Pulletti, were you really nervous?

PLUTO

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Then your mouth would have been dry. It's a \$50 fine. Deducted from your paycheck. Now where's the so-called Phenom?

(Pause)

FLOYD

Uhh...we don't know...

MRS. BLEDSLOE

We? You mean *you*. You're the manager, Mr. Higgins. Can't you keep track of your players? I realize they're undisciplined canines, but that's what leashes are for.

FLOYD

I tell you, I've seen it all...

HYACINTH

(Enters wearing a big fluffy sun dress)

I dress for sunshine, and look what we get: rain.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Hyacinth, darling, you shouldn't be in a man's locker room. It's not an appropriate place for a proper young lady.

HYACINTH

But Mother Dearest, it's raining horribly outside, and it seems *you're* in here, unless you are implying that you are not proper—or not young—or not...

MRS. BLEDSLOE

That's quite enough, Hyacinth darling. And please don't try to maintain the pretense of that affected way of speaking. You did not finish finishing school.

HYACINTH

I'm sure I don't know what you are referring to which.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

(In the general direction of SHARON and GEORGIA)

And I don't approve of female reporters and female cameramen in the men's locker room either.

GEORGIA

Female cameramen?

MRS. BLEDSLOE

In fact, I don't approve of them at all.

SHARON

Just doing my job, Mrs. Bledsloe, which means I need to interview you.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

I'm not completely against the idea, but we need to discuss which questions are off limits.

(They begin to have the discussion, which we do not hear)

HYACINTH

(To LES)

Hiya Wes.

LES

Les.

HYACINTH

Oh.

(Softly and more sneakily)

Hiya Wes.

LES

No. I'm Les. That's Wes.

HYACINTH

Oh, *you're* Wes.

WES

Yes.

HYACINTH

Weatherhead.

WES

No, Leatherhead. That's Weatherhead.

HYACINTH

Oh, forget you two. Hiya Pluto.

PLUTO

Hiya Cinth.

HYACINTH

Oh, that's good. When ya gonna explain the infield fly rule to me again?

PLUTO

Whenever there's less than two outs.

HYACINTH

Oh, that's good, too. Hiya José.

JOSÉ

Hola.

HYACINTH

When ya gonna teach me some more Spanish?

JOSÉ

Satanás cayó por la fuerza de la gravedad.

HYACINTH

Ooo! I'll have to learn that one. Sounds exotic. Where's the Phenom?

PLUTO

Everybody's looking for him.

HYACINTH

Not here?

PLUTO

Not here.

HYACINTH

Oh. He promised to take me to dinner. What if he doesn't show up?

GEORGIA

Join the club.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

(Suddenly turning away from SHARON)

Hyacinth, I thought I told you not to date the players.

HYACINTH

You thought you told me that, Mother Dearest? Apparently, you thought wrong because I don't know what you are referring to which.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Well, I'm telling you now.

HYACINTH

But Mother Dearest, don't you trust me? I can't imagine you don't trust your players. After all, you sign contracts with them, so you must consider them worthwhile gentlemen and honorable which.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Until I have to fire them. Or better yet, fine them.

HYACINTH

Mother Dearest, will I own the team when you die?

MRS. BLEDSLOE

What a *horrible* thing to bring up or even *think* about...you owning the team.

(Enter BEER VENDOR)

BEER VENDOR

Wow! It's really coming down out there. You don't mind if I wait it out in here, do you? If I try to get back to my stand I might drown.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

(Reluctantly)

I suppose.

BEER VENDOR

(Looking around)

So this is the Seagulls Locker Room. Never been in here before. It's...neat. I mean...neat!

(Sniffs)

Doesn't even smell like a locker room.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Thank you. It's not easy with young men.

PIG

Ya got some hot dogs?

BEER VENDOR

No, just beer.

PIG

What? The only thing ya have to eat is beer?

BEER VENDOR

Just beer.

WES

Suits me.

LES

Good for me, too.

BIG FRANK

Yeah, beer is good.

PLUTO

I'll take one.

(The players start to gather around the BEER VENDOR to make a purchase)

MRS. BLEDSLOE

You can't drink beer in the locker room! It's forbidden!

BIG FRANK

But...there's a beer vendor here.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

Only because of my generous hospitality.

PIG

Couldn't we get a hot dog vendor instead?

MRS. BLEDSLOE

You can't eat hot dogs here, either.

PIG

Mrs. Bledsloe, we really should be able to have food in the locker room.

MRS. BLEDSLOE

It draws pests. In fact, food is a pest. It requires salaries. Just think of how simple baseball would be if players didn't have to eat.

JOSÉ

Morirse es todavia mas tragico que morirse de hambre.

PIG

It sounds like Mrs. Bledsloe has a grudge against professional baseball.

PLUTO

Or maybe against those who profess to be professional ballplayers.

PIG

But we *are* professionals!

SOUR

But we're not in the Bigs.

PIG

But we're still professionals.

SOUR

Define professional.

(PIG can't think of what to say. He looks around for help.)

RAY

Doing what you do for a paycheck.

PIG

Yeah, that's it.

PLUTO

We're playing a game for pay. There's something wrong with that.