

Inside **OUT**

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

January 2011

World Premiere
The Catch
by Ken Weitzman
Directed by Lou Jacob



The Catch

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SYNOPSIS

Gary Zipnik is a failed dot-comer who is living in a small apartment in Berkeley, California without his wife, Beth (who left him), but with his mantra board covered with encouraging statements such as “I’m not a worrier; I’m a warrior.” His diabetic father, Sid, comes to visit (after a sugar episode) and mocks his son’s lifestyle and affirmations. But the two discover they have a common interest in baseball and the player, Daryl Love, who is close to breaking the home run record. Then Gary gets an idea, and with boundless optimism, readies himself to execute it. In this comedy about a society pumped up on money and celebrity, we see that pie-in-the-sky schemes may not work, but sometimes father-son relationships do.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Ken Weitzman was born in Great Neck, NY. His plays include *The As If Body Loop* (Humana Festival); *Arrangements* (Atlantic Theatre Company, Pavement Group); *Spin Moves* (Arielle Tepper's Summer Play Festival); *Hominid* (Theatre Emory and Out of Hand Theatre); *Stadium 360* (Out of Hand Theatre); *Memorabilia* (Alliance Theatre); *Fire in the Garden* (Castillo Theatre). Ken's plays have also been developed and presented at, among others, New York Stage and Film, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizon, Arena Stage, the Geva Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Dad's Garage, Florida Stage and Page 73 Productions.

The Catch was developed at New Harmony and recently read at Hartford Stage and the Denver Center Theatre Company.

Commissions include Arena Stage, South Coast Repertory, The Alliance Theatre, Theatre Emory and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Currently, Ken is the Playwright-in-Residence for Out of Hand Theatre Company and on the board of the New Harmony Project.

Ken's awards include the 2003 L. Arnold Weissberger award for *Arrangements*, the McDonald Playwriting Award for *The As If Body Loop* (best new play in San Diego), Mario Fratti/Fred Newman Political Playwriting Contest for *Fire in the Garden* and the Elizabeth George Commission for an Outstanding Emerging Playwright (chosen and awarded by South Coast Repertory Theatre).

Ken received his MFA from the University of California, San Diego, and has taught playwriting at, among others, Emory University, University of California at San Diego and currently at Indiana University.

Ken likes plays "that are energetic, exuberant, vital, playful. I dislike it when plays are lazy or take shortcuts in their storytelling. I prefer simply produced plays in smaller venues."¹

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1.aszym.blogspot.com

<http://www.indiana.edu/~thtr/people/bio/kWeitzman.shtml>

<http://aszym.blogspot.com/2010/07/j-interview-playwrights-part-207-ken.html>
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THE STORY

BEHIND THE PLAY

In the 2001 baseball season, Barry Bonds hit a major league record 73 home runs, which broke the previous record of 70. When Mark McGuire set the record three years before, the record-breaking ball sold for 2.7 million dollars. The fans who waited in the bleachers for Barry's homerun were hoping for a similar "bucket of bucks" to land in their hands.

The ruckus began as soon as the ball landed in the stands. A mob of fans surrounded the ball as everyone in the park scrambled over one another in an attempt to get it. A news cameraman got a clear shot of the whole melée. The footage showed grown men pushing and shoving as the mob fought for the coveted baseball. On closer review the ball was clearly caught by Alex Popov before the mass of humanity knocked him down. Patrick Hayashi came up with the ball and was promptly whisked away by MLB officials and security. Popov and witnesses made a fuss and a complaint was launched on his behalf. Hayashi said little and secured a lawyer and a media handler. The camera footage also seemed to show Hayashi biting the leg of a boy to get in better position to grab the ball. The case over the baseball finally went to court. The judge ordered Popov and Hayashi to sell the ball and split the proceeds down the middle. Since the dispute over the ball lasted more than a year, by the time the auction finally happened, the Barry Bonds steroid scandal had broken out, which put in question his achievement as well as the value of his baseball. As a result the ball sold for much less than first expected.

(From a review by Courtland Jindra about the documentary *Up for Grabs*)

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<http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/3095/up-for-grabs-the-story-of-barry-bonds.html?cat=40>
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WHY BASEBALL IS

THE NATIONAL PASTIME

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*Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America
had better learn baseball, the rules and realities of the game.*

— Jacques Barzun. *God's Country and Mine*. (1954)

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Baseball has been called the national pastime of the United States since the late 1880s; in fact, its popularity grew quickly after it took root in immigrant communities of the northeastern United States. The game was adapted from a British and Irish one called “Rounders.” It spread nationwide during the American Civil War. Eleven years later, in 1878, the National League was formed, followed in 1971 by the American League. Baseball had begun its rise to a remarkable popularity on the American sports scene that would last until the 1970s when television technology helped spur a rise in its ratings.

Of the four major sports followed in America—baseball, basketball, football and hockey—baseball is the only one that starts in the spring. It coincides with our human nature because our essential instincts are celebrating the season of rising temperatures, sunny days, buds and leaves developing on the trees.

As we embrace spring, most people are pleased to be outside soaking up the sun that many have missed all winter. Therefore, what could be more enjoyable than sitting in a ballpark watching a baseball game?

Another reason baseball is seen as our national pastime is that more people see it live than other sports. Over 17 million people attended NFL regular season games in 2006 as compared to over 76 million attending major-league baseball games.

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<http://www.helium.com/items/1561532-why-is-baseball-americas-past-time>

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THE RISE OF CELEBRITY CULTURE

In our early search for identity, Americans of the Revolutionary Republic sought to derive a national character by concentrating on military heroes, romantic fictional characters and eminent statesmen who possessed the ideals of virtue and self-reliance. By the mid-20th century, the pedestal did not belong to politicians or generals, but to baseball players and movie stars. This shift reflected in part the many cultural changes brought about by the communications revolution of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the rise of immigration and urbanization between 1890 and the 1920s.

Many people look upon athletes as role models, expecting them to display the virtues of diligence, perseverance, training, fair play, sportsmanship, grace under pressure and the pursuit of excellence. Some argue that athletes, because of the public nature of their sport, automatically become role models, while others maintain that fans and the media should stop putting athletes on that pedestal, as they are as human as the rest of us.

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<http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/communication/henderson.html>

<http://thesportslawyerprofessor.blogspot.com/2007/07/athletes-as-role-models.html>

<http://www.rutherford.org/oldspeak/Articles/Art/oldspeak-celebrity2.asp>
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STEROIDS

AND OTHER SUBSTANCES IN SPORTS

Steroids are man-made drugs that mimic the effects of male sex hormones such as testosterone and dihydrotestosterone. They increase protein synthesis in the cells, which results in the buildup of cellular tissue, especially in muscles. Steroids were first isolated and identified in the 1930s by scientists in the Netherlands, Nazi Germany and Switzerland. But the history of the use of steroids goes as far back as 1889 when pitcher Pud Galvin used Brown-Sequard Elixir, a substance derived from testicles of live dogs and pigs. Even Babe Ruth supposedly injected himself with an extract made from sheep testicles; it proved to be ineffective and gave the Babe an upset stomach.

The world first took note of steroids after the 1952 Olympics. Supposedly the Russian weight lifting and wrestling teams were given “injections” before the matches and when they won numerous medals, athletes became interested in them. After those events, sports people started experimenting with the drugs. “Before the 1972 Olympics, American weight lifter Ken Patera, who was about to compete with legendary Russian Vasily Alexev, pretty much summed up reality when he admitted, ‘When I hit Munich next year we’ll see which are better—his steroids or mine.’”¹

In his book *Bases Loaded*, Kirk Radomski writes that in the late 1980s very few players knew anything about steroids, supplements or growth hormones. After the baseball strike of 1995, park attendance was down and baseball desperately needed something to spark interest in the game again. It was the home run race between Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa that restored excitement — and prompted baseball players to think about “bulking up.” Radomski, a body builder, became a supplier of steroids and other drugs. But Radomski warns that all steroids are not the same; “each steroid works differently in your body and has a range of side effects that can mess you up.”²

The source of most steroids and banned substances is the body-building gym. There the men and women use steroids, sometimes irresponsibly, and even make their own. Steroids do build muscle, but only if a person works out, eats a healthy diet and gets enough protein.

The most popular steroid in baseball is Deca-Durabolin because it builds muscle slowly while increasing joint fluid. It also relieves soreness in shoulders and joints. Though steroids may increase one’s self-confidence, there are physical and psychological side effects. Elevated blood pressure, high cholesterol, acne and bloating are some physical problems, while mood swings and bursts of violence are psychological ones.

Radomski is a supporter of HGH (Human Growth Hormone) because it is not a performance enhancing drug. Instead, it stimulates the production of a natural growth factor produced by the pituitary gland, which causes metabolism to speed up. That fact means the immune system gets stronger allowing injured tissue to heal more quickly. Apparently it also slows the aging process. The AIDS epidemic made HGH affordable to athletes because doctors prescribed the drug for AIDS patients to impede muscle wasting. The patients would sell the excess HGH to players or bodybuilders. However, HGH can cause diabetes and is banned by sports organizations.

Continued on next page

In 2004 baseball officials began paying attention to steroid use, and drug testing began. In 2005 José Canseco published a book, *Juiced*, which identified certain players using steroids. In 2007 the government sanctioned Mitchell Report was released; its 409 pages contained testimonies of baseball players and named individuals involved with drugs. But many sportswriters and critics argue that testing is only a cover-up and really doesn't work. "There are too many ways to beat the tests and too much money involved not to do it."³ In 2007 Kirk Radomski pleaded guilty to one count of distributing steroids and one count of money laundering and is on probation for his actions.

As of 2007 numerous players were accused of using performance enhancing drugs. They include: Barry Bonds, Ken Caminiti, Jose Canseco, Lenny Dykstra, Eric Gagne, Jason Grimsley, Mark McGuire, Denny Neagle, Andy Pettite, Alex Rodriguez and Sammy Sosa.

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1. Radomski, p. 60.
 2. Ibid, p. 54.
 3. Ibid, p. 236.

Radomski, Kirk. *Bases Loaded: The Inside Story of the Steroid Era in Baseball by the Central Figure in the Mitchell Report*. New York: Hudson Street Press, 2009.

Thompson, Teri; Vinton, Nathaniel; O'Keefe, Michael and Red, Christina. *American Icon: The Fall of Roger Clemens and the Rise of Steroids in America's Pastime*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/anabolic_steroids

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/banned-substances-in_baseball

<http://baseball.about.com/od/majorleagueplayers/a/drugplayers.htm>

JAPANESE-AMERICAN INTERNMENT

Japanese-American internment was the forced relocation and internment by the United States government in 1942 of approximately 110,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese residing along the Pacific Coast and Southwest United States. In the wake of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, these people were sent to "War Relocation Camps" leaving behind their farms, homes, businesses and possessions.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt authorized the internment with Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which allowed local military commanders to designate military areas as exclusion zones. In 1944, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of these exclusive orders.

In 1988, Congress passed and President Ronald Reagan signed legislation that apologized for the internment on behalf of the United States government.

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese-American-internment>
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DIABETES

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GARY: Still, you're a diabetic, Dad, with a sweet tooth.

—*The Catch*

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Diabetes is a condition in which a person has high blood sugar, either because the body does not produce enough insulin or because cells do not respond to the insulin that is produced. Insulin is essential to maintain the structure of bodily tissues and prevent them from being broken down in an uncontrolled manner. “Without any insulin present, our tissues literally melt away into simple compounds that leave our bodies when we urinate.”¹

The symptoms of diabetes are frequent urination, urgent thirst because of dehydration caused by the urination, weight loss, hunger and blurred vision. When the condition becomes severe the symptoms are dizziness, weakness, drowsiness and eventually coma.

If diabetes is not inherited, one can prevent it by taking some very simple actions. Regular exercise improves insulin resistance and makes insulin more effective at removing glucose from the blood. Eating a healthy diet can help keep one’s weight in check. It is also important to control blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Finally, diabetics should avoid steroids because they interfere with medications.

The treatment of diabetes depends on the severity of the illness. Diet and exercise are important, as well as limiting the amount of sugar and starch consumed. Some patients can control the condition by taking oral antidiabetic drugs. Most diabetics need to take insulin by injection or pump, allowing them to lead active, fulfilling lives.

According to a CNN news report on October 22, 2010, if current obesity trends continue, one in three American adults will have diabetes by 2050. Currently one in ten adults has diabetes; the Center for Disease Control estimates about 23.6 million people in the United States are living with the disease. “The condition is the top cause of blindness, lower limb amputations, heart attack, stroke, dementia and cancer.”²

But there is good news in the report. People are living longer than they used to with diabetes and doctors are diagnosing it earlier.

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1. Bryer-Ash, p. 3.
 2. pagingdrgupta.blogs.cnn.com

Bryer-Ash, Michael, Dr. *100 Questions and Answers about Diabetes*.
Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2009.

<http://pagingdrgupta.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/22/diabetes-numbers-expected-to-triple-by-2050>

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MANTRAS & AFFIRMATIONS

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GARY: *Setbacks are opportunities to go back and do things better.*

—*The Catch*

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“**M**antra is a Sanskrit word with many shades of meaning: ‘tool of the mind,’ ‘divine speech’ and ‘language of the human spiritual physiology’ are just a few of these.”¹ The practice of mantra (repeating a sound) can help one feel more peaceful or energized, deal with difficult or unpleasant circumstances and can alter mood and improve the state of general well being.

Affirmations are positive thoughts or statements about some outcome one wishes to achieve such as wealth, success or better health. Self-composed affirmations are the best and should begin with “I am” not “I will be.” Affirmations should be written in the present tense and in a positive mood. Most importantly, one has to say them daily. They are meant to increase self-esteem: for example, “I deserve to be happy and successful” or “I create abundance in all that I say and do.”²

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1. Ashley-Farrand, p. 8.
 2. [www. moreself-esteem.com](http://www.moreself-esteem.com)

Ashley-Farrand, Thomas. *Healing Mantras*. New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1999.

<http://www.moreself-esteem.com/affirmations> htm.

<http://hubpages.com/hub/list-of-positive-daily-affirmations>

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Dot-comer: A person who owns or works for an Internet business.

PILATES

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BETH: *It's pilates. It's a job.*

— *The Catch*

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Pilates is a physical fitness system developed in the early 20th century by Joseph Pilates in Germany, the UK and the USA. As of 2005, there are 11 million people who practice this discipline regularly and 14,000 instructors in the United States.

Pilates believed his method used the mind to control the muscles. The program focuses on the core postural muscles which help keep the body balanced and which are essential to providing support for the spine. In addition, Pilates teaches awareness of breath control and alignment of the spine.

Pilates uses several pieces of apparatus to help people with the method. Each piece of equipment has its own repertoire of exercises; most of the exercises are resistance training since they make use of springs to provide extra resistance. In addition, other items are used such as small weighted balls, foam rollers, large exercise balls and rotating disks.

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<http://www.pilates.com/BBAPP/V/about/what-pilates>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilates>

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NAMES, PHRASES

AND MORE INFORMATION

Yogi Berra: Catcher for the New York Yankees and later manager of the team.

Chicago Cubs: A baseball team that has not won a World Series in 102 years.

Koinobori: Carp-shaped kites flown on Children's Day in Japan.

Candlestick Park: Sports and entertainment stadium in San Francisco. It was home to the San Francisco Giants until 2000.

Mark McGuire: Baseball player who played for the St. Louis Cardinals and broke Roger Maris' homerun record with 70 in 1998.

Sammy Sosa: Pursued Roger Maris's homerun record in 1998.

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

Note to Teachers: It takes more than 50 trained professionals to bring you any single production at the Denver Center Theatre Company. Did you know that Colorado has over 186,000 people employed in what are called the Creative Industries? Career Exploration and ICAPs (Individual Career and Academic Plans) are part of the new Post Secondary and Workforce Readiness Standards adopted by the State Board of Education <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/downloads/PWRdescription.pdf>. Creative Careers are “front and center” in this conversation. Your students can find out more about themselves and the career pathways open to them at Colorado’s free online Career and College Planning Tool, www.CollegeinColorado.org. They will find out about trends and salaries for thousands of jobs across the state. They can explore colleges and courses that will prepare them for successful careers and learn what they need to know about paying for college, applying for grants, loans and scholarships.

College in Colorado is pleased to offer your students a free Career Exploration Workshop in your classroom. For more information, please contact Gully Stanford, Director of Partnerships at 720-264-8563 or gully.stanford@cic.state.co.us

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