

those, and so is the world of team athletics. These are two very defined, distinct and different male communities. And it's the playful way in which the playwright has them collide and interact that gives the play its momentum and its rhythm and its pulse.

TK: Why does Darren jeopardize his celebrity status to come out?

DM: He's looking to complete himself, and he gets sort-of permission from this good friend who's another superstar to try and look for himself. He's been leading a sheltered life because he is a superstar. He's the franchise player. Everybody's in awe of him—

MBW: He's never suffered.

DM: And he doesn't expect to suffer. I think he might be, like, "Yeah, there might be consequences," but he doesn't think they're going to faze him. He's above that. This just happens to be, "You know what? I made this decision and that's the way it's going to go because I'm yadda, yadda, yadda—a superstar."

TK: Yet everyday types of coming-out issues do happen to him.

DM: Yeah. He becomes more human instead of this godlike player. He tries so hard to maintain what he had that, in trying that hard, I think he crumbles more. He doesn't really let anyone into his life. His weak-

ness is his strength, the fact that he puts up these walls.

TK: It's been said this play is as much about hubris as it is about baseball or coming out as a gay man.

MBW: I told Dennis to look up the Icarus myth. That's what gets [Darren] into trouble, that hubris. Anyone playing at the major leagues is dealing with a great deal of justifiable pride in being there, in playing at the highest levels and being on a team with a great winning tradition.

TK: Some characters, such as Shane Mungitt, represent stereotypes, but he's really not all that black-and-white, is he?

MBW: Mungitt has a great deal of things that he's enraged about and that he's tense about. But he's locked them up. They're in a Pandora's box.

And when he starts to come unhinged in a couple of places, it's because some of that starts to creep out.

He has a very fragile grasp on his own sense of balance. He always gets into trouble when he talks because that part of his personality comes from a very damaged place. He is a ball of barely contained rage. He has found an outlet in baseball, and when that door starts to close is when he really starts to lose it—and does.

CM: Everyone loves playing the bad guy, but there's always the challenge of making him not

just the stereotype. If he doesn't have anything redeeming or interesting about him, no one cares. When you hear someone saying, "He's a jerk because he had a hard childhood," my instincts will always be like, well, boo-fucking-hoo. I'm kind of hypercritical about people using their own history as an excuse to behave in a certain way.

But, at the same time, if you don't construct an incredibly realistic place that that person came from, you can't understand why he does and says the things he does.

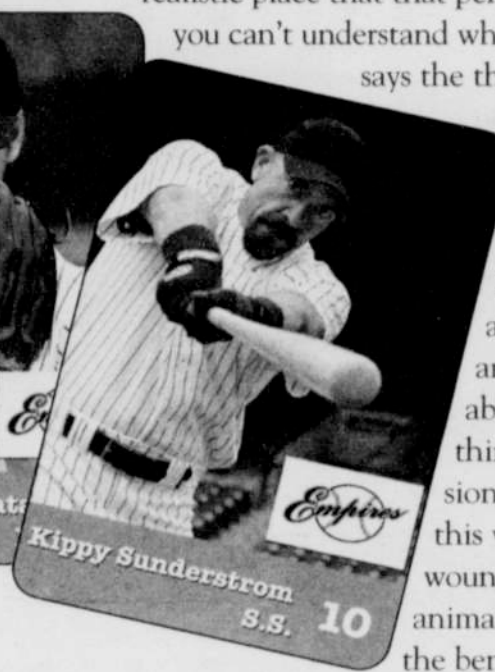
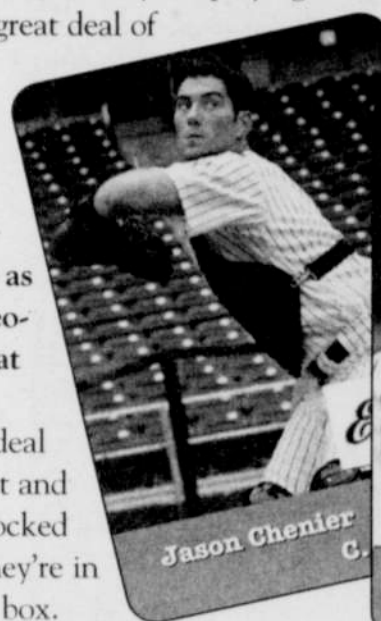
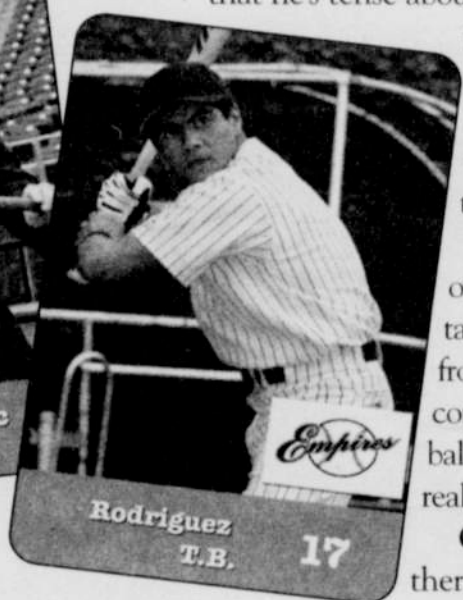
They actually do come from his heart, even if it's really nasty. He's very passionate in this play, and maybe it's about the wrong things. Anger is passion, and he's kind of this wounded—not wounded, but caged—animal that didn't have the benefit of a good

education and proper upbringing and, really, friends.

So he's kind of playing with what he's got, and he's managed to make it into something successful. It all does tumble down for him, which is sad. I think that sadness is a great place to start from in making the character.

I pity his character. And I think pity is kind of a crappy feeling to have for someone.

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