

LOVE OF THE GAME

"Zero Tolerance"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. HACKNEY MARSHES FOOTBALL GROUNDS - MORNING

An old, red Ford Focus blaring 'Three Lions on a Shirt' pulls up in a car park next to swathes of football pitches. DES MILLER, 44, steps out wearing an Adidas calf-length winter sports coat.

DES  
(continuing the song)  
...thirty years of hurt...

He looks up at a large sign which reads 'Hackney Marshes - The Home of Sunday League Football' then stares wistfully across the seemingly endless pitches.

DES (CONT'D)  
(still singing)  
...never stopped me dreaming.

A ball rolls to his feet from a nearby match. A PLAYER beckons insistently, wanting to take the throw in quickly.

PLAYER  
Pass the ball, mate!

Des boots it enthusiastically but it slices off the side of his foot and sails away in the opposite direction.

PLAYER (CONT'D)  
Wanker!

Des shakes his head and unzips his coat, revealing a referee kit beneath. He blows the whistle round his neck, takes a red card from his pocket and holds it up.

DES  
Off!

PLAYER  
What?!? You can't do that.

DES  
The Referee's Association has been very clear about its policy to abuse this season. Zero tolerance. And you, son, are in contravention of Law 12.

(MORE)

DES (CONT'D)  
Using offensive, insulting or  
abusive language and/or gestures.

PLAYER  
But you're not reffing this game.

The Player turns to GAVIN BUCKLE, 31, who's the actual referee for the game.

PLAYER (CONT'D)  
He can't do this, can he?

Gavin shrugs. Des points to the card.

DES  
Zero tolerance.

The other players start to gather round, making protestations. Even those from the opposing team. Des waves the card around.

DES (CONT'D)  
Anyone else want one of these?

The noise abates and they grumble under their breath.

DES (CONT'D)  
Didn't think so.

Des turns and walks away towards the Hackney Marshes Centre, an industrial unit in the middle of the pitches.

DES (CONT'D)  
(calling back)  
Zero tolerance, lads!

With his back turned all of the players make 'wanker' gestures in his direction. Gavin laughs to himself then blows his whistle. He beckons the Player back on to the pitch.

GAVIN  
Play on!

END OF COLD OPEN