

THE BLUE BONNETS

Written by

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Pilot episode: Play Ball

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FADE IN:

TITLE: TOP OF THE 1ST- "PLAY BALL"

EXT. BROOKLYN, NY- HIGH NOON 1887

Ahhh Brooklyn! A birds eye view shows us the young budding skyline of the city which holds the hopes and dreams of thousands of immigrants and natives alike. The playing of a tin piano can give us no doubt as to where and when our story takes place. Let's drift into the city streets where the sights and smells are intoxicating. Vendor's sell their wares, prostitutes sweat their shame into the summer heat, and children brave acts of cruelty on giant rats that know no fear. We follow one rat in particular, who seems to know the only place devoid of people in the city. As we follow the brave rodent, we hear the nostalgic voice of NELLIE HIGHTOWER.

NELLIE V.O.

Ever fallen in love with something so filthy it's wonderful? Take Brooklyn for instance, where I grew up. The stink of the horses, the crowds, even the garbage-littered stone streets. You don't love something like that because it's pure though. You love it because it's *real*. Well I can tell you that baseball's no different. Men like Albert Goodwill Spalding have spent their lives conjuring some image of a pure and American game, but you want to know the real reason we love baseball? It looks just like us- filthy and wonderful. It was played by the dregs of the earth for the dregs of the earth. And the dirtiest dregs of all were those Blue Bonnets of Brooklyn.

The rat enters a run down theater. A faded sign reads "The Magic Mankowitz Theater." We follow the rat in as the tin piano takes center stage, along with the voices of the two men on stage, JASPER MANKOWITZ, and BERNIE BUKOWSKI.

CUT TO:

INT. MANKOWITZ THEATER- DAY

JASPER and BERNIE are in the middle of their vaudeville show: "Bonny Wee Baby Follies," where they dance across the stage in blue dresses and matching bonnets crowing for mothers milk in their big finale, "The Tit is Tops!"

JASPER enthusiastically sings and dances, while BERNIE struggles to keep up.

JASPER

"Come now mother don't withhold, in my stomach sits a pit."

BERNIE

"You clean my bottom, burp my gas, when all we want is tit!"

BOTH

"Give us your tit Mother, our hungers growing strong. We deserve your creamy milk while your tits deserve a song! This tit is tops, we'll take it please. Don't make us beg down on our knees. Your tit is tops, please don't say maybe-

The music slows.

JASPER

"Dear mother, give us milk."

BERNIE

"Love always,"

BOTH

"You're beautiful babies!"

This atrocity gives way to rapturous applause. In the flood of the limelight, BERNIE and JASPER exchange a look of surprise. Could it be? Has their audience returned? Their surprise gives way to full blown joy as they jump to their feet, take exuberant bows, and blow kisses to their adoring-

Just like that roar of the crowd ends. The house gaslights flare while JASPER and BERNARD see only on man in the audience, SEAN MACECKLE, Scottish blackguard, clapping sardonically.

MACECKLE

Bravo babies! Bravo! I got a wee tit for you to suck on. I got something else for you to suck on too, you ugly babies.

From the tin piano comes the voice of MARY O'CONNOR, a hard Irish woman who is more man than most men, and the theaters lone employee.

MARY

Shut your yap Maceckle you whisky
breathed blow hard. You wouldn't
know art if you shat in the
morning.

MACECKLE

Mary, you're looking lovely this
afternoon. Would you like to go for
a stroll?

MARY

I'd rather shave my legs then go
out alone with the likes of you.

JASPER

Thanks for coming Mr. Maceckle.
It's nice to know this theater has
one loyal customer.

MACECKLE

Shut your yap baby boy. I don't
come here for you and your sad
sissy shows.

BERNIE

Watch your mouth Maceckle.

MACECKLE

Or what Bukowski? You'll hit me
will ya? You aint got the taste for
it no more. That's why your dancing
around in a little dress with your
girlfriend.

BERNIE

(ashamed)
He's right.

MARY

You never mind him boys. Twas an
excellent show you put on. The
people will come back, you'll see.
As for you, you highland scoundrel,
go spew your poisons elsewhere.

MACECKLE

Shall we meet later for dinner?

MARY

We most certainly shall not.

MACECKLE

Aye, but-

MARY

Fuck off Maceckle, you and your little pockmarked carrot.

MACECKLE

What a woman.

MACECKLE exits.

MARY

I really did think it was a wonderful show boys.

JASPER

For a moment I thought we had a full house.

BERNIE

What was the rumpus about Mary?

MARY

What do you think the rumpus was about? The same reason you got no money to pay your rent.

ALL THREE

Baseball.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANKOWITZ THEATER- DAY

Across the street from the theater lies Washington Park, home of the Brooklyn Grays, baseball playing pride of the city. A makeshift stage has been set up under a large banner which says "Welcome Chicago White Stockings". The streets are filled with people. It's as if all of Brooklyn has come out. Down the middle of the street, in their iconic uniforms, comes a parade of White Stockings, led by their owner, ALBERT SPALDING. Another cheer erupts as KAT KELLY, one of the more popular players in the game, appears on scene. He is carried on a throne by four unappreciative teammates. KAT waves down to his adoring fans, blows kisses, and winks suggestively to women and men alike- who respond with fan waving glee.

KAT is placed on stage next to the welcoming arms of his owner and employer, SPALDING, who gives him a friendly hug. ALFRED CHAPIN, mayor of Brooklyn, hushes the crowd.

CHAPIN

As Mayor of our fair city, it gives me great joy to welcome Chicago's White Stockings to Brooklyn. We all know what our Brooklyn Grays are capable of, and we look forward to a manly exhibition.

BERNIE

Baseball's about as manly as a sitting piss.

JASPER

Shhh. This is a big deal. You see Kelly? He's a living legend.

CHAPIN

It is now my pleasure to introduce you to the reason we get to see these two great forces of the game do battle, and the reason baseball is the game it is today. Albert Goodwill Spalding!

A great cheer arises, none clap harder than JASPER. BERNIE shoots him a look.

JASPER

I can't help it. Spalding is a living legend!

SPALDING

Thank you Mayor Chapin, and thank you Brooklyn, NY. It gives me great pleasure to bring my team here to Brooklyn, one of the hot beds of baseball. One day maybe, your Brooklyn team can join our National League, so we can experience the joy we feel today on a regular basis.

The crowd erupts joyously.

SPALDING (CONT'D)

I implore you all to come and see the exhibition tomorrow afternoon, and to take your son's to the nearest Spalding's sporting goods store, and supply yourself with the finest bats, balls, and gloves that America can produce. But enough about me, I know the real reason you came out here, to see King Kat Kelly!

KAT KELLY is nudged forward as the crowd erupts. Through the cheers you can hear MACECKLE.

MACECKLE

All hail the Pussy Kat King!

KAT

Thank you Brooklyn! My name is Kat Kelly!

A close up on the crowd see's men and woman alike screaming like school girls. It's like a 19th century Beatles concert. SPALDING elbows KAT, who swallows his pride.

KAT (CONT'D)

I wouldn't be half the pitcher I am today if it weren't for Spalding's Sporting Goods. So be a man, and buy Spalding.

SPALDING

Now, are there any questions from the local press? How about you young lady?

SPALDING points into the crowd to an ambitious female reporter, NELLIE HIGHTOWER, hired by Spalding to ask certain questions.

NELLIE

Yes, Mr. Spalding, to what do you attribute baseballs popularity?

SPALDING

What a clever question. What's your name young lady?

NELLIE

Nellie Hightower sir.

SPALDING

Well Nellie Hightower, you are living proof of the potential of women in this country, as baseball is living proof of the potential of every young man in this country. Truly, there has never been a game so distinctly American, as our great game of baseball.

NELLIE

What do you say to the critics who claim baseball is for the privileged?

SPALDING

I say foey. Baseball is for everyone. It is part of the fabric of our society. Baseball is our mother and our father. It is our sister and our brother. It is our uncle and our cousin.

MACECKLE

Sounds incestuous!

The crowd erupts in laughter. For a moment, we see the real SPALDING, but he quickly covers it up.

SPALDING

Surely I don't mean literally, good sir.

NELLIE

What about those poor souls in this country with out a family?

SPALDING

Miss Hightower I am so glad you asked. It is my American dream, that those poor street rats and guttersnipes who may not enjoy the embrace of a mother, enjoy the embrace of our greatest game. Imagine a world where children everywhere grow up in the clean atmosphere of competitive sport, rather than the dark cloud of vile sin pits like-

SPALDING looks around and sees the theater, with BERNIE and JASPER, still in costume, standing outside of it.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
Like this one here.

For a painfully long moment all of Brooklyn turns to look at BERNIE and JASPER. JASPER realizing he's still in his dress, curtsies.

BERNIE
Don't do that.

For some reason the crowd is still staring. Finally, from the distance, comes a lone voice.

SPECTATOR
Boo!

It's as if BERNIE and JASPER have been slapped.

KELLY
(to himself)
Well I'll be. That's "Baby Face"
Bukowski.

SPALDING breaks the spell.

SPALDING
Thank you for your excellent
questions miss Hightower, and I'm
sure we'll be hearing much more
from you in the future. Any other
questions?

A dozen reporters hands shoot up.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
No? Then I'll see you all at the
big game tomorrow. May the best
team win.

The crowd begins to disperse. KELLY makes his way over to BERNIE and JASPER.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
Miss Hightower, a word?

NELLIE
Informative press conference Mr.
Spalding.

SPALDING
Image is everything.

SPALDING hands NELLIE an envelope.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
Keep up the good work Nellie. I trust my "American Dream" will make it's way to the front page?

NELLIE
I'll do what I can.

SPALDING
Everything is possible to him who dares Nellie. Can you be that him? Do you dare? I dare. I dare you to do as I say. Front page.

SPALDING struts off like a cock. While NELLIE watches him go, she can't help but have a bad taste in her mouth. Meanwhile, KAT KELLY has reached BERNIE.

KAT
"Baby Face" Bukowski. This is an honor.

JASPER
You know Kat Kelly?

BERNIE
Course I don't know Kat Kelly.

KAT
But I know you. Man, I must of made my first thousand betting on your fights. Lost my first thousand too. This guy could take a punch.

JASPER
I know. Growing up he was my hero.

BERNIE
I'm still your hero.

JASPER
Actually he's my hero now.

BERNIE
Well he aint putting his ass on the line by doing your shows.

KAT
Is that why your dressed like a lady?

BERNIE
We're not ladies. We're babies.

KAT

Well, whatever you are, you look dumb as hell. Why did you quit fighting anyway?

JASPER

He doesn't talk about that. He won't even tell me and I'm his best friend.

KAT

Is that so? Well, it's a damn shame you don't fight no more. You fella's excited about the game tomorrow?

BERNIE and JASPER speak at the same time.

BERNIE

No.

JASPER

Yes.

KAT seems to only hear BERNIE.

KAT

Don't you like baseball?

BERNIE

What's to like? Standing around swinging sticks? Prancing in circles? Tossing a ball back and forth? Sounds like a woman's game to me.

KAT

Ha-ha. Wait, you're serious? Baseball's no woman's game.

JASPER

No way.

KAT

It's no walk in the park.

JASPER

Yeah. It's more like a run in the park.

KAT

You're not helping boy.

JASPER
Not helping at all.

KAT
I can't believe you don't like
baseball. I would love to show you
how difficult the game is. You
know, athlete to athlete.

BERNIE
Ha! You're no athlete.

KAT
Am too! Look, you boys free
tonight?

BERNIE and JASPER speak at the same time.

BERNIE
No.

JASPER
Yes.

BERNIE shoots JASPER a look, but JASPER pleads with his eyes
so BERNIE is resigned.

BERNIE
We're free.

KAT
Hey that's great. That mayor of
yours is throwing us a welcome
banquet at uh-

JASPER
The Tura Verin Banquet Hall?

KAT
That's the one.

JASPER
I always wanted to go there.

KAT
Then you two come as my guests.

JASPER
Yes please!

KAT
Great. Just be sure to change out
of them dresses though.

(MORE)

KAT (CONT'D)

It would give Spalding a fit to see grown men dressed like ladies.

BERNIE

We're babies.

KAT

Well grow up and come get drunk with me later. Say, you boys ever heard of Cocaine?

BERNIE AND JASPER

No.

KELLY snorts a white powder up his nose.

KAT

Fucking incredible. I don't pitch a game with out it.

Takes another snort.

KAT (CONT'D)

WOO! See you boys tonight.

KELLY exits.

BERNIE

I aint going to no baseball party.

JASPER

Bernie!

BERNIE

Don't you Bernie me Jasper. We are going to lose your fathers theater. You know why? Because of baseball. No one comes to your shows no more, because of this stupid girly game. And you want to go out and celebrate that? What would your father say?

JASPER

He'd say "don't you dare pass up a free dinner."

BERNIE

That was his phrase of choice.

JASPER

Come on Bern, we'll stop by, eat some goose, drink some bubbles, have a few laughs, and we'll go home full for the first time in months. Say, maybe we can even convince some of the players to come see a show? We'll do our big dumb act.

BERNIE

Fine, I'll go to the party, but I aint doing no act.

JASPER

Fine.

BERNIE

Fine.

JASPER

Fine.

BERNIE

Fine.

JASPER

Fine. We'll see...

An orchestra version of "The Red, White, and Blue" fades in as we

FADE TO:

INT-TURA VEREIN BANQUET HALL- EVENING

A large chandelier sets the ball room up in a beautiful candled glow. An eight piece orchestra plays a set of patriotic songs, and JASPER and BERNARD entertain a group guests, including an intoxicated KAT KELLY.

JASPER

Bernard! I tell you, you are so dumb, I swear, you'd try to drown a fish.

BERNIE

Damn right I'd try to drown a fish. Especially when that fish insults my mother.

JASPER

Bernard! Why you're so dumb, you
threw a rock at the ground and
missed!

BERNIE

We were standing on a cliff!

JASPER

BERNARD! YOU'RE SO DUMB, YOU CAN'T
CONVERT ZERO FEET TO METERS!

BERNIE takes a moment to think about that.

BERNIE

Who can?

The group erupts in laughter. Hilarious! JASPER and BERNIE
take their bows. Moments later KELLY erupts with hysterical
laughter. Almost immediately, he gets deathly serious.

KAT

We can do it you know? Drown a
fish? We should do it. I need to do
it.

This makes everyone very uncomfortable. Which makes Kelly
explode in laughter again. Which makes everyone even more
uncomfortable, which makes KELLY laugh even harder. He begins
to sense his act has grown old here and moves on to a new
audience, the food table. BERNIE turns to CAP ANSON, the real
leader of the White Stockings.

BERNIE

Is he always this drunk?

CAP ANSON

He aint drunk. That there is an
ether binge.

JASPER

Ether? What does that do?

CAP ANSON

It's like your drunk in the body,
but not in the mind. He can
actually watch himself behaving in
that terrible way, but he can't
control it. Shoot, probably
wouldn't control it if he could.

They look over to see KELLY flowing and flailing like paper
in the wind.

He unsteadily rips a turkey leg from the carcass and takes off on the dance floor, gliding and sliding like he was on ice. He looks a complete fool. CAP ANSON sneers in his direction.

CAP ANSON (CONT'D)

Look at him. If Spalding catches him like this, he's gone for good. It'd be about time too. King Kelly there, is a nigger lover.

JASPER and BERNIE don't know how to respond to this.

JASPER

Gross.

CAP ANSON

I know right? He used to play with one. Real uppity nigger calls himself Moses. You believe that? A nigger Moses?

JASPER

I can't even begin to believe that. Bernie, you believe that?

BERNIE has little patience for southern racists but is stopped from saying something by a pleading look from JASPER.

BERNIE

No sir. Can't imagine that. Can you excuse us?

BERNIE pulls JASPER aside.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Why are we appeasing this racist son of bitch?

JASPER

Bernie, that's Cap Anson. He's a living legend.

BERNIE

They're all living legends. Aint none of them died that anyone cares about yet. Let's get out of here while everybody's focused on that fool.

JASPER looks around to see the whole party is enthralled with KAT. JASPER has an epiphany.

JASPER
A natural showman.

BERNIE
What'd you say?

JASPER
Kat Kelly. He's a natural showman.
Look at these people. They can't
look away.

BERNIE
He's a drugged fool.

JASPER
A drugged fool who can captivate an
audience. That's just what we need.

BERNIE
That's the opposite of what we
need.

JASPER
He's the key. He can save our
theater. We need to get him on our
stage.

BERNIE
No, I'm sorry Jasper, but look at
him. We can't trust that.

JASPER
With Kat Kelly on our stage, we'll
pack the house. We can pay the bank
what we owe in no time. We need to
get him alone. Convince him while
he's vulnerable.

BERNIE
How do you plan to get *that* out of
here.

JASPER
Follow my lead.

JASPER takes all the bones out of his body and flops. He takes one floppy step after another, moving his way to the FOOD TABLE. He sways up on the table, grabs a turkey leg of his own and joins KAT KELLY in his ridiculous actions. The two of them dance and laugh with their beloved turkey legs.

BERNIE, seeing this, does his best to do the same. Flopping up to the FOOD TABLE, he see's there are no more turkey legs, so he takes the whole carcass.

He saunters on to the dance floor and the three "grown" men have a little three way Turkey Dance. At one point KAT starts chanting.

KAT
Turkey! Turkey!

BERNIE and JASPER join in, and they begin to lead KAT KELLY towards the door.

ALL THREE
Turkey! Turkey! Turkey!

They're almost at the door. BERNIE and JASPER wave good bye, open the door, and turn to see SPALDING standing in the doorway. It has started to storm outside, and by the looks of a soaked SPALDING, it has started to storm inside too.

As SPALDING'S thick mustache drips on the floor, his fiery eyes lock onto KAT'S glazed ones.

SPALDING
Kelly! How many times-

KELLY throws up on himself. The orchestra stops playing and the whole party is looking towards BERNIE and JASPER.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
You must be his local dealers. You enjoy ruining other peoples property? Get them out of here.

SPALDING'S GOONS approach, see how big BERNIE is, and decide to throw out JASPER first. As they put their hands on JASPER, BERNIE see's red, rears back, and punches both GOONS in one swing. In slow motion we see the GOONS teeth fly out of their mouth. BERNIE is stunned. He looks at his hand, and swallows a quiet fury.

BERNIE
We're leaving.

JASPER
(whisper)
Okay.

BERNIE grabs JASPER and they exit. SPALDING, angrier then ever, turns his attention back to KELLY.

CUT TO:

INT. KAT KELLY'S HEAD- IMMEDIATELY AFTER

We are seeing everything from KAT KELLY'S perspective. The sound is muffled. We can hear his breath quite clearly though. We are in his head. The room appears from a fish eyed view. SPALDING is in his face. We can't here what he is saying yet because KAT KELLY'S thoughts are too loud.

KAT V.O.

What in God's name is that thing on his lip? It looks like a comb. Or a spider. Oh my god. I better kill that spider.

KAT looks dangerous for a moment.

KAT V.O. (CONT'D)

Wait, no, its just a mustache. An angry giant spider mustache. Dancing up and down. Chomp, chomp, chomp.

KAT chomps his jaw up and down. Meanwhile SPALDING'S words are understood.

SPALDING

You have embarrassed me for the last time. You are exactly what is wrong with this game: Drinking, and gambling, and drugs. What kind of man would do drugs and play baseball? What kind of world do you live in Kelly? Are you hearing me? I made you boy, I will break you.

KAT V.O.

Good Lord he talks a lot. He's like a chirpy bird. Hush little chirpy bird.

KAT

Chirpy birdy.

SPALDING

What did you say?

SPALDING'S voice gets faded out again.

KAT

Man I need to pee. How long has it been? Think of something dry Kat: Desert, the infield, Niagara falls?

Spalding looks down to see KAT peeing on his favorite shoes. SPALDING gets quiet. The whole banquet hall is in a shocked silence.

SPALDING
You're done.

KAT
No there's a few more drops.

SPALDING
WITH BASEBALL! You, will never
pitch another game, for the rest of
your life. FOR THE REST OF YOUR
LIFE! Get out of my sight.

KAT doesn't move for a moment, then ducks out of SPALDING'S sight.

KAT
Okay. I'm out of your sight.

SPALDING roars and throws KELLY out on the streets.

CUT TO:

EXT. TURA VEREIN BANQUET HALL- MOMENTS LATER

A sobering KAT stumbles outside, where JASPER and BERNIE are smoking cigarettes, lost in his their own thoughts.

KAT
Take me to the park.

JASPER
Which park Kat Kelly?

KAT
The baseball park. You know where
it is right?

JASPER
Of course. It's right across our
theater.

KAT
Take me there.

BERNIE
Why?

KAT
(infuriated)
Take me there!

JASPER
Of course. May we make a
proposition to you on the way?

KAT
No.

JASPER
I'm going to make a proposition
anyway.

KAT
Fine. Lets go.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON PARK- MIDNIGHT

JASPER is yapping KAT'S ear off, but KAT doesn't hear and
doesn't care. He is a man on a mission.

JASPER
So you see Kat Kelly, we could
easily work you in to "Bonny Wee
Baby Follies!" With you there, we
can draw 140-150 people a night. At
a nickle a head, we could pay off
the bank in six months. After that,
all profit. I tell you, you think
baseball is profitable, just wait
till you see theater. They're going
to love you.

BERNIE
Here's the park.

KAT
Where's the dressing room?

BERNIE
It's the old stone house right
there.

KAT
Don't wait up for me.

JASPER
Where are you going?

KAT
I'm going to say goodbye to my
team.

BERNIE
But no one's in there.

KAT
I'm going to leave them a message.

JASPER
Like a "Thanks for the memories?"

KAT
Something like that.

JASPER
Can we come?

BERNIE
That's okay.

KAT
No, you can come.

It's as if KAT see's them for the first time. He has a sick
smile on his face.

KAT (CONT'D)
Come.

In slow motion, we see a demonic KELLY approaching the STONE
HOUSE, where the White Stockings equipment is kept. In tow is
an eager JASPER, and a wary BERNIE. The image we see says
much about our now bound and bonded heroes.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON PARK- NEXT DAY

The day of the big game has arrived. A sell out crowd begins
to flood into the gates. If you listen carefully though,
you'll hear the distress call of spoiled ball players coming
from the STONE HOUSE.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE- SAME TIME

The dressing room is in a tizzy. Most of the bats have been crudely painted to look like penises, or have the word "penis" written on them. One bat is labelled "Stink Stick." One is labeled "Wife Beater."

CAP ANSON

What in god's name happened here?

GEORGE VAN HALTREN

Hey Cap! My bat looks just like-

CAP ANSON

All of them George. If they expect us to swing these dicks they got another thing coming.

TOM DALY

Look at my mitt. It says "Fart Catcher."

JOCKO FLYNN

Mine say's "Poop Here." Why would some one poop here?

FRED PFEFFER

I can't tell what's on mine.

It's a crude drawing of a vagina.

TOM BURNS

I think it's a gorilla.

BOB PETTIT

That ain't no gorilla. It's a lady part.

BILLY SUNDAY

Which part?

BOB PETTIT

Which part do you think?

BILLY SUNDAY

I can't rightly tell. Armpit?

BOB PETTIT

Armpit? Here, give me that bat. Hold out that glove.

FRED PFEFFER holds out the glove while BOB PETTIT takes a penis bat and pushes and pulls it in and out of the glove.

BILLY SUNDAY

I don't... you feeding a baby?

BOB PETTIT

Feeding a baby?!

Enter SPALDING.

SPALDING

What the hell is going on here? Why aren't you all in uniforms. Cap?

CAP ANSON

We aint got no uniforms boss.

SPALDING

Of course there are uniforms.

CAP ANSON

Not no more. We aint got equipment neither, not unless you want us teaching anatomy.

SPALDING is livid. He takes a bat. It was his model, his design. He may have even made this one with his own hands. He caresses it the way he would a baby, but is snapped out of his reverie by the snickering of players. He turns the bat over to see the image he was caressing. He swallows his fire.

SPALDING

We'll borrow Brooklyn's equipment.

CAP ANSON

Boss, we should forfeit.

SPALDING

We will borrow Brooklyn's equipment.

JOCKO FLYNN

We aint got uniforms.

SPALDING

No? You'll play in your suits then. Wool is wool.

The dressing room erupts in protest.

CAP ANSON

These are expensive suits sir. Cost a years salary to some. It aint worth it. We'll just forfeit.

SPALDING

You don't forfeit. I forfeit. And I never forfeit. You hear me? Never! I have invested too much to just walk away from this. Now you will play ball today, in your suits, in your underwear, naked as the day you were born, I don't care. But you will. Play. Ball. Today. Or you will never play ball again.

Chided, the team looks like a bunch of pouty school boys.

CAP ANSON

Okay, okay. We'll play ball.

CUT TO:

INT. WASHINGTON PARK- 1 HOUR LATER

The teams are lined up on the first base line and third base line respectively as they stand for the national anthem. You might think people would have more respect for our nations anthem but a majority of the crowd is laughing. We travel down the 1st base line where we see the noble uniforms of the Brooklyn Grays. They are a team anxious to be taken seriously against the best of competition.

The end of the Grays gives way to the reasons for the laughter. The White Stockings are lined up in their off-white and oft-stained undergarments. To a man, each is embarrassed in his own way, except for JOCKO FLYNN, who, when the camera pans down we see has a distinct erection. Standing next to him is CAP ANSON, who shoots him a questioning look.

JOCKO FLYNN

(prideful shame)

What? It's exciting.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE OF THE GAME-

For the White Stockings, this is a comedy of errors. Too distracted and uncomfortable for the basics, they drop balls, swing and miss, have butt flaps fly open sliding into bases. We see SPALDING who looks like he's living his nightmare. He tries to hide his face, hide his mere existence. Meanwhile, Brooklyn runs circles around them, tallying a score of 36 to Chicago's 2. Amongst the laughter of the fans we can here the powerful insults of SEAN MACECKLE.

MACECKLE

You'd run faster without all them
dingle berries Pfeffer. Hey Billy
Sunday, looks like your Sunday
White's aint so white. Hey Cap
Anson, look at your dirty bum. In
fact, you all look like dirty bums!
Bums! Bums! Bums!

The whole crowd starts chanting Bums! Bums! Bums! SPALDING
has had enough and exits. You'd think he would be foaming at
the mouth, and while he certainly wants to, a close look
tells us he has something else on his mind. Determination.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANKOWITZ THEATER- THAT NIGHT

The streets are filled with the jubilation of the local club
making a mockery out of the pride of the National League. As
if on cue, a banner falls from the front of the Mankowitz
Theater that reads "Chicago's Follies!" KAT KELLY, in his
White Stockings uniform, steps out of the theatre and cups
his hands to his mouth.

KAT

Ladies and Gentleman, if you
thought Spalding and his "White"
Stockings embarrassed themselves
today you have seen nothing yet.
Enter this theater of wonder and
behold a sight yet to be seen. Me,
Kat Kelly, star of the field, now
to be star of the stage. For only a
quarter a man and a dime a dame,
see the true story behind what it's
like to be a terrible White
Stocking. Come one, come all, come
in.

MARY

Well done handsome, quite a natural
you are.

KAT

Honey, you have no idea.

KAT grabs onto the MARY O'CONNOR'S buttocks. Though she's
twice his age, MARY has a few things she'd like to do to KAT.

MARY

Careful what you wish for boy. I
make dreams come true.

KELLY winks.

KAT
Here they come.

A crowd begins to fight into the theater.

MARY
And where do you think you're all
going? Pay the lady. Come now.
Quarter a piece.

FADE TO:

INT. MANKOWITZ THEATER- LATER

JASPER, BERNIE, and KAT, are singing and dancing across the stage. In the middle of the stage is an effigy of SPALDING, who the boys keep taking turns urinating on in the closing number "Strain Your Tater" a song done to the same tune of "The Tit is Tops."

KAT
"Come now Spalding you've been
told, that baseball is divine."

JASPER
"But don't confuse the facts good
sir your mustache aint no spine"

ALL THREE
"Hee-Haw Spalding, you whine just
like a girl, if wisdom lived down
in the sea, you'd never find that
pearl. Hee-haw Spalding, Don't
treat us like your waiter."

BERNIE
"If we don't like what you say."

JASPER
"On you-"

KAT
"I'll strain my tater."

The number gives way to rapturous applause, and this time we have no doubt that it comes from inside the theater. JASPER, BERNARD, and KAT take an exuberant bow. They've just saved themselves. As we pan through the standing ovation, near the door is one man who is not amused. He doesn't clap, he doesn't laugh, and he doesn't holler.

What we do see is a man hungry for vengeance, because he's looking at an effigy of himself in the center of the stage.

END ACT I

TITLE: BOTTOM OF THE 1ST

EXT. MANKOWITZ THEATER- NEXT DAY

After a heavy night of celebration, JASPER, BERNIE, and KAT, carouse up to their theater to prepare for another successful night. What they see stops them in their tracks.

A stage has been set up outside the theater under a banner which reads: "Spalding's Orphanage for Boys." A press conference is already underway.

SPALDING

As I visited the bank this morning to scout prospective properties, I was made aware of a building, right near the ball park, which had nearly defaulted on its mortgage. I thought to myself, here is an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. I can provide a home for the motherless boys of Brooklyn, while at the same time snuff out one of the truly disgusting sin dens of this fair city. A wise man once said, a ticket to Vaudeville, is a ticket to Hell.

JASPER looks sick to his stomach.

JASPER

What is this?

KAT

Looks like we're out of business boys.

JASPER

We can't be out of business. This theater is our home. It was trusted to me by my father.

BERNIE

I'm sorry Jasper.

JASPER

No. This can't be. There's got to be something we can do.

BERNIE

Kat, you know this Spalding, can we reason with him?

KELLY

Spalding is a proud man. We embarrassed him. He won't see reason.

JASPER

We'll challenge him.

BERNIE

To what?

JASPER

A fight! His best against you in an all or nothing death match for the theater.

BERNIE

I don't fight no more.

JASPER

You wont fight for me?

BERNIE

Don't give me that. I've been fighting for you since the day your daddy died. Every thing I've done, I've done for you.

JASPER

Why?

BERNIE

You know Jasper? I'm starting to wonder that myself.

KAT

Hey! I said Spalding is a proud man. It may be his strength, but it's also his weakness.

SPALDING

When these young orphan boys grow up to be functioning members of society, people will look back on me and say: Albert Goodwill Spalding, now he was a giant-

KAT

Coward!

There's a shocked intake of breath. The crowd looks back and see's KAT.

KAT (CONT'D)

(to Bernie)

Get me to the front will you?

BERNIE begins to plow through the crowd, KAT in tow, JASPER in the rear.

SPALDING

Well, if it isn't Kat Kelly ladies and gentleman. Scourge of the game. Detriment to society. How are the drugs, alcohol, and unemployment treating you Kat?

KAT

Just fine, thank you for asking. My compliments on buying this here theater. A fine establishment if I do say so myself. Have you met the gentleman you'll be putting out on the street?

SPALDING

I'd happily put two grown men out on the street to get 4 dozen boys off it.

KAT

You would coward.

SPALDING

Here he is ladies and gentlemen, the embarrassment of baseball, embarrassing himself further by trying to deny a home to helpless little boys.

KAT

Quit hiding behind the orphan thing Al. We all know you just want to open a factory for kids to make your balls.

SPALDING

That is categorically false. Don't write any of that down.

KAT

No but write this down. I, "King"
Kat Kelly, hereby challenge you,
Albert "Coward" Spalding, to a
baseball game.

JASPER catches on.

JASPER

That's right. An all or nothing
death match for the rights of this
theater. Starring Kat Kelly!

SPALDING

Don't be ridiculous.

KAT

The words of a true cow-

SPALDING

I am no coward sir! You'd like to
play my team? With whom? The
Knickerbockers?

KAT

Don't you worry about my team.

SPALDING

I will not put my White Stockings-

KAT

I heard their stockings aint so
white.

SPALDING

I will not put my nine on the field
against anything but a real
baseball team. This national game
of ours is no joke sir.

KAT

Mr. Spalding I'm shocked. How dare
you insinuate that I would ever
desecrate the game that has given
me so much? I've got a team.

SPALDING

Is that so? Very well, if you play
my team you play by my rules. You
will have 9 nine men, provide your
own equipment, and be dressed in
your own uniforms. And I have taken
my uniforms out of my theater, so
good luck with that boys.

(MORE)

SPALDING (CONT'D)

But fear not, for everything is possible to him who dares.

KAT

Fine. Shall we say tomorrow? One of the clock?

SPALDING

Four. Four of the clock. That way the night may save you.

KAT

Good idea. I usually don't wake up till one anyway. Tomorrow then.

Spalding waves stiffly, barely covering up his fury. Things did not go as planned, and little else upsets him more. He fights through the pulsating press throngs as he makes his way back to his hotel. Running into NELLIE HIGHTOWER, he pulls her aside.

NELLIE

That was an interesting turn of events. Did you *dare* for that to happen?

SPALDING

Never mind that. I want an article in the evening post advertising tomorrows game. "White Stockings take revenge on Brooklyn All-Star team. Free tickets."

JASPER, BERNIE, and KAT walk away from the theater.

JASPER

I can't thank you enough Kat Kelly.

BERNIE

How do you plan on beating that team? You must have some powerful friends here.

KAT

Nope, just you. You boys like baseball?

JASPER

Love it!

BERNIE

I do not love baseball. It's womanly.

KAT

Well, like it or not, if you want your theater back you'll be playing out there tomorrow.

BERNIE AND JASPER

Us?

KAT

Don't worry, with me pitching you won't have much to do. As for hitting, I got a secret weapon living over in Manhattan. Between the two of us, we should be just fine.

JASPER

Well that gives us four. What about the other five?

KAT

Well that's on you. As for the equipment, I think you'll find all we need in the bin outside the Stone House.

BERNIE

What about uniforms?

KAT

As long as their uniform I don't much give a damn. Hey Bernie, guess you'll see how manly baseball is after all! Good luck boys.

KAT, enthused with another opportunity to stick it to SPALDING, exits. JASPER and BERNARD are left, stuck between a theater and a ball park. Their past, and their future.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE-

JASPER and BERNIE are scouring the streets for potential players. Every fit young man they approach however, turns them down. No one is willing to embarrass themselves against the White Stockings. Our heroes have no choice but to take whatever they can get.

NELLIE V.O.

When creating a baseball team over night in 1887, two things happen.

(MORE)

NELLIE V.O. (CONT'D)

First, you get desperate, then you get lucky. You see fate is like losing your watch. It's when you give up searching that you find it. Unless it got stolen. In which case it's gone for good.

In a bar, an arm wrestling competition ensues. JASPER and BERNIE see in the center of the crowd sits Kilawhight Runninknife, a muscular Native American who looks like a living nightmare for the frontier cowboy. Impressed with his size and heft, JASPER knows he can be an asset. BERNIE sits down, makes the giant KILLAWHIGHT a proposition. Bernie offers to shake hands, but KILLAWHIGHT instead offers his arm to wrestle. BERNIE looks over to JASPER, who gives him an enthusiastic thumbs up. BERNIE reluctantly agrees to arm wrestle, beating KILLAWHIGHT, who impressed with BERNIE'S strength, joins the ranks.

As the three are walking down the street, a blur of a man speeds by them, being chased quite pathetically by a FAT FRUIT VENDOR. JASPER is in awe of that speed, and they rush in the direction of the human lightning bolt. Our heroes catch up to SKINNY MCCOY, a starving hobo with a banjo tied to his back who is scarfing down an apple. He looks feral. JASPER exits for a moment and comes back with a bag apples to entice SKINNY. Using the apples as bait they take SKINNY with them. Just like that, they have one more.

In the nicer part of Brooklyn, a cricket exhibition is mid-way. The four take a rest to watch the game, and it becomes clear that there is one player dominating: MILES CHADWICK. After the game they approach the cricket star to gage his interest in playing baseball. Convincing him is a strange thing for the four, as what MILES demands of them is that they all kiss him on his cheek. JASPER doesn't mind and BERNIE'S done worse. SKINNY is enjoying the adventure but KILLAWHIGHT needs to be swayed. With a little ribbing and a lot of prodding, the deal is sealed with a kiss. They have one more.

Back towards the city, we see a group of STREET URCHIN harassing a one armed man with a Union Army cap and a wool shirt with a Knickerbocker patch. The new friends chase the STREET URCHIN away, and help the elder gentleman up. This is SERGEANT F. ABBOTT. JASPER recognizes the Knickerbocker patch, as the Knickerbockers first wrote the rules of baseball. ABBOTT is indebted, and only too happy to try to play baseball, even if he has only one arm.

Out of luck with finding another man, we next see our new team pleading with MARY O'CONNOR, the theaters soon to be out of work employee.

She knows nothing of baseball, is a woman besides, but desperation makes a strange bed fellow, and she allows these men to shave her legs and glue the hair to her face.

Having acquired the five extra players needed to field a team, JASPER and BERNIE congratulate themselves. The new team sits down to celebrate with whiskey, and with song. SKINNY MCCOY plays an original song of his on the banjo, entitled "We are the Champions." It's simple and catchy enough where everyone joins in.

FADE TO:

INT. WASHINGTON PARK- NEXT DAY

The sun is blaring right into the crusted eyes of our new-found team. They're lined up like a sad army of a clown opera. JASPER, like a general, moves down the line passing out the White Stocking's discarded equipment.

JASPER

Gentlemen. We are here to play baseball. What I am giving you now are bats. These bats, are for hitting balls. You must cherish your bats, for each one is yours, as there are none like it.

MARY O'CONNOR caresses her bat expertly.

JASPER (CONT'D)

These, gentlemen, are balls. We will hit, catch, and throw them expertly to each other. Keep your balls with the bats, let them never be separate. Without your balls, your bats are nothing.

KILAWHIGHT RUNNINKNIFE innocently plays with his penis shaped bat and ball shaped balls.

JASPER (CONT'D)

These, are your gloves. They are like your hands, only bigger.

MARY

Because you know what they say about bigger hands-

JASPER

That's right. The bigger the hands, the better the ball player.

ABBOT

That's true.

JASPER

Now, we have our equipment. The tools to which we do battle.

KILAWHIGHT

No more battle. Kilawhight Eager to live in peace.

BERNIE

We're not going to actually do battle Runningknife. He was just being dramatic.

KILAWHIGHT

Kilawhight no like drama.

JASPER

Sorry.

BERNIE

Look people, we appreciate you all coming out to help us but this game decides our future, so please tell someone knows how to play.

MILES

The game is easy. It's basically the English schoolboy game of rounders. Except more boring.

ABBOT

Ha! Rounders is about as close to baseball as Neanderthals are to the modern man.

A pan out reveals JASPER to be picking his nose, SKINNY is trying to start a fire, KILAWHIGHT is doing a cave drawing in the dirt, MARY is scratching the lice in her head, and BERNIE is somehow eating a giant roast of meat.

JASPER

Mr. Abbot is right.

ABBOT

Sergeant Abbot. I didn't lose my arm to be called a mister.

JASPER

Sergeant Abbot is right. Baseball is a special game.

(MORE)

JASPER (CONT'D)

And we're privileged to be playing against the Chicago White Stockings. The greatest team ever.

SKINNY

If they's so good, how we gonna beat them?

JASPER

Because we've got Kat Kelly.

ABBOT

A pitcher? What's a pitcher got to do with winning. All he's got to do is lay it in there. Put it where the batter wants it. We always had the shitty players pitch.

JASPER

The games changed a bit since then Mr. Sergeant Abbot.

ABBOT

The game changed?

MARY

What changed?

SKINNY

We can change?

MILES

Look, in cricket-

Everyone is instantly bored.

MILES (CONT'D)

What, you don't like cricket? It's actually quite similar to base ball in many respects-

Everyone is now vocalizing their boredom.

MILES (CONT'D)

Fine. Forget it.

JASPER

We have a chance not just because of Kat Kelly, but because Kat Kelly is bringing the best hitter he knows.

MOSES

(off screen)

You want me to play ball with this?

SKINNY starts playing a funk riff on his banjo as we see KAT KELLY walking shoulder to shoulder with MOSES JEFFERSON, the most skilled and swaggering black player ever to swing a bat. KELLY is looking plum proud of himself. While MOSES inspects his new teammates, it's as if his nose is filled with an epic fart. As for the team themselves, it's the 19th century, so Moses skin color is a bit of a shock.

WHOLE TEAM

A nigger?

MOSES

Me? A nigger? I'm wearing a tailored suit and have a belly full of morning bacon. It looks like the only niggers on the field this morning, is you niggers.

The team is ashamed.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Don't feel so good when it gets turned around on you, does it?

WHOLE TEAM

No sir.

MOSES

No sir is right. Kat, what the fuck am I doing here?

KAT

This is the team I was telling you about. Team? This here is Moses Jefferson, first black professional baseball player in history.

MOSES

This aint no team Kat. This is a circus act.

KAT

Well, that may be, but we're playing the White Stockings this afternoon, and they've got themselves a new captain. Happens to be an old friend of yours.

MOSES

Cap Anson.

KAT
That's right.

MARY
Who's Cap Anson when he's at home?

MOSES
He's the reason I don't play pro ball no more. Says if we ban color folk from the game? Nobody gets hurt. But letting us play, well, that might hurt some feelings.

SKINNY
Makes sense to me.

MOSES
Boy, don't look like nothing makes sense to you.

SKINNY
Oh that's true too.

KAT
Look Moses, you play with us, you play against Cap. You can get your revenge, and help us get ours.

JASPER
Please Mr. Moses?

BERNIE
If you don't want to I completely understand. I don't want to.

MOSES
Alright y'all. Lets play ball.

The team cheers.

BERNIE
God damn it.

KAT
All-right, here's how it's going to be. Big giant guy, what's your name?

KILAWHIGHT
Kilawhight Runninknife.

KAT
Kilawhight eh? Apache?

KILAWHIGHT

Uh...yes?

KAT

Yeah, you Apaches are some tough son's of bitches. I played a whole team of you once in Kansas. You'll be our first baseman. That means you'll be catching all the balls we throw to you, and you keep your foot that bag. Got it?

KILAWHIGHT

Stand tall like tree, grow roots, and don't budge.

KAT

Yeah, something just like that. Okay, you boy, what do you do?

SKINNY

I play banjo.

KAT

Okay, what else?

SKINNY

I'm pinching my buffalo pennies so I can start a whisky business back home.

KAT

Sounds delicious, but what do you do physically? What are your strengths?

SKINNY

Hmm, I'm mighty nice, have a big appetite...Oh! I'm fast as they come.

KAT

See? That wasn't so hard was it?

SKINNY

It was pretty hard.

KAT

Speed we want in the outfield. In center is where you'll cover the most ground, so that's where you'll play.

SKINNY starts playing "Center Field" on his banjo.

KAT (CONT'D)

Okay, let's see, fancy boy, what's your name?

MILES

Miles sir. Miles Chadwick.

KAT

What do you do?

MILES

I play cricket.

KAT

You ever play baseball?

MILES

I've played rounders.

KAT

What the fuck is a rounder?

MILES

It's baseball.

ABBOT

Is not.

KAT

Anyway, what's your specialty in cricket?

MILES

Bowling.

KAT

What the fuck?

MILES

I believe you call it "pitching."

KAT

Well I'm the pitcher here so what else can you do? Can you catch?

MILES

Of course I can catch. I love catching.

KAT and MILES stare at each other for a few seconds. They seem to silently make an agreement.

KAT

Good, your right field then. Who's next?

BERNIE raises his hand, as does JASPER, MARY, and ABBOT, who startles KAT with his one arm.

KAT (CONT'D)

Where's your other arm Pa?

ABBOT

I sacrificed it so unappreciative scum like yourself can make money playing a game I helped invent.

KAT

You're a Knickerbocker?

ABBOT

An original.

KAT

And you can still play with one arm?

ABBOT

It's a good arm.

KAT

Where do you want to play Knickerbocker?

ABBOT

Left field.

KAT

Yes sir. Left field. Mister-

ABBOT

Sergeant. Sergeant Abbot.

KAT

Good to have you aboard Sergeant.

ABBOT

Good to be back on the battlefield of joy sir.

They take an instant liking to each other.

KAT

Okay you-

KAT is stopped in his tracks by MARY and her leg hair mustache.

KAT (CONT'D)
What in God's name? Mary?

MARY
Hello Kat. Care to take a mustache ride?

KAT
You boys have that much trouble finding five men?

BERNIE
Mary's the manliest man we know.

JASPER
No offense Mary.

MARY spits, then farts.

MARY
None taken.

KAT
All right then. Mary, where do you see yourself?

MARY
Close to where you are Kat, so I can keep my eye on you, you naughty boy.

MARY winks, MILES gets jealous.

JASPER
Mary has fast hands. She catches all the rats that come into our theater.

MILES
What? With her bare hands?

MARY looks at MILES and mimes snapping a rat in half. MILES is horrified.

KAT
Reflexes eh? Third baseman if I ever saw one.

MARY
So I'm to go to third base?

KAT

That's right. Just think of these balls as rats, and don't let any of them by you. But be careful, they come at you quick.

MARY

When it comes to Mary they all come quick.

The team laughs, except for MILES.

MILES

That's revolting.

KAT

All right. That leaves our two heroes, the men we all came here to save. Bernard "Baby Face" Bukowski, and Jasper "Jew Boy" Mankowitz. What to do with you. Well I think its clear, Bernie, your the catcher.

BERNIE

I thought everybody catches.

KAT

Everybody does, but you catch my pitches.

MILES

Lucky.

BERNIE

So what do I do?

KAT

It's easy, you just squat down, catch the balls, and throw em back. Kids stuff.

BERNIE

(grumbling)

It's all kids stuff.

KAT

And Jasper, that leaves shortstop for you.

JASPER

Wow. Shortstop.

KAT

That's right. Might be the most important position on the field. You're the captain of the infield. The bridge to the outfield. Can you handle this responsibility?

JASPER

Yes sir. It's an honor.

ABBOT

Good for you boy. In my day, we didn't even have a short stop.

KAT

All right then- I'll throw some pitches to Moses and we'll see what you got. Everyone take your positions.

JASPER and ABBOT take the field immediately, leaving everyone else lost in their ignorance.

KAT (CONT'D)

Damn. It's gonna be a long day.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF THE PRACTICE-

The sound of a tin piano plays to the baseball follies we are witness to:

A hard hit grounder to JASPER is fielded cleanly. He throws it over to first base where KILAWHIGHT is standing tall and stoically. The ball bounces off of his broad chest. He bends down, picks it up, and holds it out reverently.

KILAWHIGHT

Ball!

KAT AND MOSES

God damn it.

A pop fly is hit towards MARY, she loses it in the sun.

KAT

Catch the ball Mary.

MARY

I can't.

KAT

Pretend it's a rat! Catch the rat!

MARY

Rats don't fly!

The ball lands in MARY'S face. She picks up the ball and looks at it in fury. Her mind's eye turns it into a rat, which she crushes. Her fist opens to reveal a crushed baseball.

KAT

Okay then. New ball!

The next few balls hit towards MARY'S way get scooped up hungrily, all the while muttering-

MARY

Dirty bloody rodents.

KAT

Okay outfield, go!

The balls begin to fly into the outfield. ABBOT is slow and has a distinct limp but catches the ball cleanly and smoothly throws it into second base.

MOSES

Well I'll be...

SKINNY

Oh! Hit it to me!

MOSES tees off a deep shot, and SKINNY chases it down. His speed is superhuman. He gets to the ball in plenty of time, puts out his hands, and then thinks better of it. But he's already half committed, and the ball glances off of his fingers. He squeals in pain.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

No! Not my banjo fingers!

MILES

You might want to try opening your hands to catch the ball.

SKINNY

What would you know about it pretty boy?

A ball appears out of the sky and falls into MILES hand. MILES has not taken his eyes off of skinny.

MILES

It's all in the reflexes.
Impressed?

SKINNY

Maybe.

MILES

Keep your eye on the ball.

KAT

Miles, throw in the ball!

MILES throws the ball. It appears he throws with the wrong arm as the ball goes nowhere.

SKINNY

Damn, you throw like a girl. Try shifting your weight and throwing from your shoulder. Like your casting a line-

SKINNY picks up the ball and throws it. It takes a direct line, long and hard, right to the pitchers mounds.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

Impressed.

MILES

Maybe.

KAT

All right Bernie, I'm gonna throw you a real pitch. Moses, sit back.

MOSES

(to Bernie)
Good luck big boy.

The scene slows as KAT stares down BERNIE. KAT looks determined, focused, even mean. BERNIE looks wary, confused, alarmed. KAT winds up and lets one loose. In super slow motion BERNIE tracks the ball with shock, wonder, and awe, as this speeding bullet heads directly for, and connects with his right eye.

BERNIE hasn't felt this way in years. This is a dormant warrior. But being hit in the eye like that wakes up the animal inside. The monster. The athlete. He lets out a blood curdling battle cry.

The others don't know why he's screaming, but all get caught up in the moment and start screaming too. Everyone is letting out their battle cry.

We see the face of each, and in each we see their personal demons, their ghosts that they will fight, armed with the game of baseball. Eventually, they run out of breath, but scream goes on longer than is comfortable.

MOSES (CONT'D)
Batting practice?

SPALDING
No time for that.

Somewhere during the battle cry SPALDING made his way onto the field.

SPALDING (CONT'D)
It's our turn to take the field.
Although judging by what I see here before me, that may be a waste of our time. This is your "team" Kat?

KAT
Baseballs a strange game Al. It loves herself an underdog.

SPALDING
Moses Jefferson. You're a true ball player, why stoop to this level?

MOSES
You going to let me play on your team?

SPALDING
You know I can't do that.

MOSES
Well I'd rather play, then not play.

SPALDING
There's a healthy Negro League set up to foster the talents of ones like yourselves.

MOSES
Nigger baseball zoo? No thanks. I'll take my chances with the circus.

SPALDING
Well I'm happy to relieve you of this field, as to allow you to get into your uniforms. You do have uniforms do you not?

(MORE)

SPALDING (CONT'D)
That is part of this "gentlemen's"
agreement is it not?

JASPER
It is. We got our uniforms.

BERNIE looks confused.

SPALDING
Well then, I'll see you in two
hours time. May the best team win.

BERNIE
Says you...

SPALDING
Yes. Says me.

The WHITE STOCKINGS take the field as the yet to be named
team collects their phallic equipment and exit the stadium,
making their way to the Stone House.

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE HOUSE- MOMENTS LATER

JASPER
Kat? Bernie? Can I talk to you two
alone for a moment?

He opens the Stone House door for them and follows them in.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE- MOMENT LATER

KAT
So what color uniforms did you ring
in for us?

JASPER
I'll show you.

KAT
Red? Brown? Gray?

JASPER
Blue.

KAT
I love blue.

JASPER is holding up a blue Mother Hubbard.

JASPER
And these for hats.

He ties on a matching blue bonnet.

KAT
What in god's name.

BERNIE
Jasper what are you thinking? We'll
be a laughing stock.

JASPER
It's all we have. But more than
that Bernie, it's who we are. We're
showmen, and so are you Kat. Now we
can forfeit and give up on my
fathers theater, or we can win
doing what we do best...Putting on
one hell of a show.

BERNIE
Yeah.

KAT
Well you got me, but how are you
gonna convince that group of mostly
grown ass men to wear this women
wear.

JASPER
I'm not worried. They'll
understand.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE- MOMENTS LATER

They don't understand. The team is in an uproar.

KILAWHIGHT
Looking like woman make ancestors
weep with shame.

He runs his hands through his thick, long, silky hair.

MOSES
I knew y'all were from the circus.
It doesn't matter where I go or
what I do, I somehow end up knee
deep in clown shit.

MARY

What's the point of gluing the hair to my face only to throw me in a dress?

ABBOT

I'm all for a relaxing game but this goes a bit far.

SKINNY

People gonna laugh at us.

MILES

I say we chin up and give them a try.

JASPER

Look, I know it's strange, and it may feel funny, it may even look funny, but my father always said-

These people have no patience for family talk and begin to drown him out with groans and mockery.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Rude.

BERNIE

Why don't you all just lay off Jasper?

They start mocking JASPER again. BERNIE becomes furious.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

That's enough!

ABBOT

This is nothing personal to you boys. But your asking us to go out and play the best team this game has ever seen, and in dresses no less.

SKINNY

People gonna laugh at us.

KAT

Are they?

WHOLE TEAM

Yes.

KAT

Or will they laugh at them?

This confuses everyone.

KAT (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something about Albert Goodwill Spalding. This is a man who cherishes baseball. A man who see's the pure American spirit in the game.

KILAWHIGHT

Spirit.

KAT

That's right Kilawhight. Spirit. But you know what the true American spirit is? It's us. It's you. We are what America is really about. America aint white, or clean, or pure. It's brown, and filthy, and it stinks.

MARY

Sorry boys. That'll teach me to have cabbage for breakfast.

KAT

It will drive Spalding mad to play a team of misfits like us. It'll make him positively maniacal to play us in these dresses and these bonnets. But it will drive him to very his death when he loses our brave team.

KAT holds up the dresses.

KAT (CONT'D)

It's not about the dress you wear, by god, men. It's about the size and heft and density of the balls under that dress. This uniform isn't a ladies frock-

SKINNY

Then whyfor does it have them frills on the hem?

KAT

I'm coming to that.

SKINNY

Because I seen someone once wearin' a getup jest like it, and I'm almost sure it were a lady.

KAT

This uniform, my comrades, is not a dress. No! It is a privilege. And a privilege you'll wear as a badge of honor until the day the earth is shoveled over your lifeless carcasses! You arrived here mice. But do battle with me in these dresses, and you will leave here as men! Even you Mary! You heard that tyrant Spalding! Everything is possible to him who dares!

The team bursts into mighty applause. KAT looks over to JASPER, who mouths the words "Thank you." Kat winks mischievously.

In an over dramatic fashion, with the faces of focused warriors, our team drapes the dresses over their clothes, and tie the bonnets to their heads with a flourish. We pan out to see the whole team lined up in dresses and bonnets. It's quite a scene.

KAT (CONT'D)

Jasper? Would you like to do the honor of naming this fair team.

JASPER

I was thinking...The Blue Bonnets.

BERNIE

The Blue Bonnets.

MOSES

The Blue Bonnets.

KAT

Yes. Let today live on in the annals of history. That today, the Blue Bonnets are born.

BERNIE leads the battle cry to which everyone joins in.

The camera pans out to reveal a huge crowd entering Washington Park. Whatever the outcome of the game, the whole city of Brooklyn has come out to see it.

FADE TO BLACK.