

Bronx Ballers

Pilot

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TEASER

INT. BRAND DESIGN AGENCY - DAY

The office is a sea of sterile grays and beiges. Rows of bipedal animals in conservative corporate wear type away at their desks.

DEB WILLIAMS (Turquoise Cat) sits in her cubicle. She is wearing a sharp, navy blue New York Yankees blazer with the interlocking 'NY' subtly stitched on her lapel. She sticks out like a sore thumb. A passing Corporate Dog in a gray suit gives her blazer a weird look. Deb sighs, pulling her lapels closer together

INT. QUEENS APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Deb steps off the elevator, exhausted. The hallway smells like cheap beer. Before she can reach the door, BEN and AMY HARBINGER (Orange and Blue Raccoons) stumble out of their unit, wearing stained Mets jerseys.

BEN

Hey, look who it is! The Empire Strikes Out!

AMY

Nice blazer, Williams! Did it come with a blown save, or did you pay extra for that?

TINA WONG (Smug Orange Cat) opens her door, holding a glass of wine.

TINA

Leave her alone, guys. It's hard enough having to watch baseball on a television instead of from a luxury suite at Citi Field. Have a good night, Williams! Try not to strike out in your sleep!

They laugh obnoxiously. Deb grinds her teeth, unlocks her door, and rushes inside.

INT. DEB'S QUEENS APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Deb slams the door shut and leans against it. The muffled sound of Mets fans chanting echoes through the thin walls. She drops her bag, walks into her bedroom, and collapses onto her bed.

She looks up at the framed poster of Yankee Stadium. A tear of sheer frustration rolls down her cheek. She clasps her paws together.

DEB

Please. I can't do this anymore. Send me a guy who loves the Bronx. Send me a handsome, die-hard Yankees fan with a decent apartment so I can get the hell out of Queens. Please.

She wipes her eyes and turns off the lamp.

ACT ONE

INT. BRAND DESIGN AGENCY - NEXT DAY

Deb walks through the lobby, defiantly wearing her Yankees blazer again. She turns a corner while checking her phone and BAM - she bumps into a tall, handsome Gray and Black-Striped Cat.

DEB

Oh, shoot, I'm so sorry! I wasn't-

She stops. The cat is wearing a crisp button-down... and a subtle, navy blue New York Yankees tie. Deb blinks, rubbing her eyes as if hallucinating. The cat smiles smoothly.

JONATHAN

My fault. Gotta keep my head on a swivel. Nice blazer, by the way.

He winks and walks past her. Deb stares after him, completely stunned.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

MR. ROGER ALPINE (Stuffy White Alpaca) stands at the head of the glass table, pointing a laser pointer at a horrible new corporate logo.

MR. ALPINE

We call this dynamic color palette "Citrus and Sky." It synergizes our core values. Thoughts from our new Senior Art Director? Jonathan Moore?

Jonathan sits across from Deb. He squints at the logo.

JONATHAN

Honestly, Roger? It's completely blue and orange. It looks like a garbage can outside Citi Field after a ten-game losing streak. It communicates failure.

Mr. Alpine blinks his large, confused alpaca eyes. Deb sits up straight, her heart racing.

DEB

He's right, Mr. Alpine. You can't put those colors together. It's a tragedy. It relies way too heavily on a mediocre bullpen.

Jonathan locks eyes with Deb. A massive spark flies across the table.

JONATHAN

Exactly. Paying millions for a design that chokes in October. Hard pass.

INT. BREAKROOM - LATER

Deb is pouring coffee. Jonathan walks in.

JONATHAN

Nice assist in there. I'm Jonathan, by the way.

DEB

Deb. And honestly, it was my pleasure. I spend half my life defending the pinstripes.

JONATHAN

Tell me about it. Born and raised in the Bronx. I actually have season tickets. Third base line. Best view of the pitcher's mechanics in the stadium.

Deb's jaw drops. Her prayer was answered. Overcome with pure, unfiltered joy, she steps forward and wraps her arms around Jonathan in a tight, massive hug. Jonathan is surprised, but chuckles and hugs her back.

DEB

(Muffled, into his shirt)
You have no idea how long I've waited for you.

JONATHAN

(Smiling)
Well, since you're already hugging me... I have an extra ticket for tomorrow night. Yankees versus Orioles. Want to go on a date?

Deb pulls back, beaming.

DEB

I thought you'd never ask.

ACT TWO

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - THE NEXT DAY (EVENING)

The golden hour light hits the iconic white frieze of Yankee Stadium. Deb walks up to Gate 4, wearing a vintage Yankees tee.

Jonathan is waiting for her, looking incredibly handsome in a home pinstripe jersey. He hands her a beer.

DEB

(Looking up at the stadium)
It's like heaven, Jonathan. Actual heaven.

JONATHAN

Come on. Let's go get some overpriced encased meats.

INT. STADIUM CONCOURSE - LATER

Deb and Jonathan are in the concession line, laughing and sweet-talking. Behind them are ADRIAN JACKSON (Orange Bird) and SHAYLA PARKS (Black Squirrel). Both in Orioles gear.

SHAYLA

(Loudly, to Adrian)
I'm just saying, the Yankees' payroll could fund a small country, and their ace still pitches like he's throwing a damp mattress!

Jonathan turns around, leaning casually against the railing.

JONATHAN

Hey, it costs a lot to buy premium disappointment. Didn't you guys finish a fifteen-year rebuild?

Adrian laughs warmly, holding his beer with feathered fingers.

ADRIAN

Fair hit, man. I'm Adrian. This loudmouth is Shayla.

DEB

Deb. And this is Jonathan. Good luck tonight. You're gonna need it.

SHAYLA

Oh, it is on, turquoise!

They all laugh, keeping the banter light, fun, and completely respectful.

INT. STADIUM SEATS (THIRD BASE LINE) - LATER

Deb and Jonathan walk down the aisle and take their seats. Deb stares out at the pristine diamond, her eyes wide, practically glowing.

DEB

Jonathan, I've never sat this close in my life. I can actually see the third base coach's five o'clock shadow.

JONATHAN

(Handing her a hot dog)
Told you. Down here, you aren't just watching the game. You're reading the pitcher's mail. Watch his release point.

On the mound, the Yankees pitcher winds up.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

He's dropping his elbow. If he throws the slider here, he's gonna hang it.

The pitcher throws. The ball crosses the plate, painting the inside corner perfectly.

HOME PLATE UMPIRE

Baaaaall!

Jonathan and Deb instantly stand up in perfect, outraged unison, spilling a couple of peanuts onto the concrete.

JONATHAN

Are you kidding me, blue?! That caught the black!

DEB

You need a seeing-eye dog, blue! That was a strike in three different time zones!

Jonathan stops yelling. He looks at Deb, his irritation melting into pure, unadulterated admiration.

JONATHAN

Wow. That was beautiful.

DEB

(Smiling, sitting back down)

I've got plenty more where that came from. Now pass the mustard.

START MONTAGE:

-Jonathan and Deb aggressively eat hot dogs and drink beer, intensely analyzing the pitcher's grip.

-They ruthlessly (but politely) heckle the Orioles batters from the third base line.

-They share a massive, jumping high-five when the Yankees turn a slick double play.

-The Jumbotron scoreboard flashes: ORIOLES WIN 5-3.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - NIGHT

The crowds pour out. Adrian and Shayla walk past, tipping their hats to Jonathan and Deb.

ADRIAN

Told you! See ya next series, guys!

Deb and Jonathan wave them off, laughing. But as they walk toward the subway, Deb's face falls.

DEB

Jonathan... I can't go back to Queens tonight. I just can't. If I have to hear my neighbors gloat about this loss, I'm going to end up on the local news.

JONATHAN

Hey. You don't have to. Come stay at my place.

INT. JONATHAN'S BRONX APARTMENT - LATER

The door clicks shut. The apartment is nice, clean, and safe. Deb looks at Jonathan. The adrenaline of the game and the relief of escaping Queens takes over. She grabs Jonathan by the collar and kisses him deeply. He doesn't hesitate,

kissing her right back.

INT. JONATHAN'S BRONX APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Deb is wearing one of Jonathan's oversized Yankees t-shirts, drinking coffee. The front door violently bursts open.

MATT BURKE (Massive Brown Bear), DELIA RIVERA (Beige Coyote), JUN CHO (Gray Snow Leopard), and JENNIFER GARCIA (White Saluki) pile into the living room.

MATT

JONATHAN! WE BOUGHT BAGELS AND-

(He stops, seeing Deb)

Oh. Oh my god. A girl. He brought a girl home.

JONATHAN

(Walking out of the bedroom, sighing)

Guys, we talked about knocking.

DEB

(Laughing)

It's okay! I'm Deb. And for the record, coming here was entirely my idea.

DELIA

Wait, are you wearing a 2009 World Series shirt? Oh, I like her. I like her a lot. Welcome to the Bronx, Deb!

JUN

(Smoothly stepping forward, handing her a fancy to-go cup)

I took the liberty of bringing a cold-brew espresso with a dash of vanilla. Helps with the post-game adrenaline crash. I'm Jun.

JENNIFER

(Pulling out a small notepad)

Jennifer. And just for the official record, this is the first time in 412 days Jonathan has brought someone home. Statistically speaking, you're a major anomaly.

DEB

(Taking the cold-brew, smiling)
I prefer to think of myself as a game-changer, Jennifer.

JONATHAN

(Rubbing his temples)
Alright, everyone out. We have to get to work.

INT. BRAND DESIGN AGENCY - LATER THAT DAY

MONTAGE: Deb and Jonathan are at work, glowing. They share knowing smiles across the boardroom table. Mr. Alpine is talking, but they aren't listening at all.

INT. QUEENS APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Deb returns to her old apartment to pack a bag. JORGE DIAZ (Toucan, her landlord) is waiting by her door, beak snapping angrily.

JORGE

Deborah Williams! Rent is due! And because the Yankees lost last night, I'm instituting a 15% "Pinstripe Penalty" fee to your monthly bill!

DEB

You can't do that, Jorge! That's illegal!

JORGE

In Queens, Mets fans make the laws! Pay up!

Deb slams her door in his face.

INT. DEB'S QUEENS APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Deb is hyperventilating. She pulls out her phone and calls Jonathan.

DEB

Jonathan, it's a hostage situation down here. He's hiking the rent just to torture me.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

Deb, listen to me. I've got your back. I'll help you. But you have to stand
(MORE)

JONATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
up to them. No more hiding.

Deb looks at her Yankee Stadium poster. She takes a deep breath. Her eyes narrow with determination.

DEB
You're right.

ACT THREE

INT. DEB'S QUEENS APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Upbeat, triumphant music plays. Deb is aggressively and happily tossing items into cardboard boxes. She is whistling "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" melody.

INT. QUEENS APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door kicks open. Jonathan is there, effortlessly rolling a hand-truck loaded with Deb's boxes. Deb struts out behind him.

Ben, Amy, Tina, and Jorge all step out of their apartments, shocked.

JORGE

What is the meaning of this?!

DEB

The meaning, Jorge Diaz, is that I signed a lease with Jonathan's landlord this morning! I'm moving to the Bronx!

Deb walks right in the middle of the hallway. She looks at her toxic neighbors.

DEB (CONT'D)

And on behalf of the twenty-seven-time World Champions...

Deb raises both paws high in the air and flips them all a massive, glorious middle finger.

DEB (CONT'D)

Read between the pinstripes, Queens!
Let's go, Jonathan.

Jonathan chuckles, tipping his hat to the furious Mets fans, and rolls the cart toward the elevator.

INT. BRONX APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Jonathan rolls the boxes down his clean, quiet hallway. He stops at Unit 4D. He points two doors down to unit 4B.

JONATHAN

Two doors down. Close enough to share
pizza, far enough away that I don't
have to hear you dry your hair.
Welcome home, Deb.

Deb unlocks 4B. It's beautiful. She smiles, tearing up
happily.

EXT. BRONX APARTMENT ROOFTOP - NIGHT

String lights glow. Matt is grilling burgers. Jun is shaking
margaritas. Delia and Jennifer are arguing about pitching
stats.

Deb stands at the edge of the roof with Jonathan, looking out
over the Bronx skyline. The stadium lights glow in the
distance.

MATT

(Raising a spatula)

A toast! To Deb! The newest member of
the crew! Escaped enemy territory and
lived to tell the tale!

Everyone cheers. Deb clinks her beer bottle against
Jonathan's.

DEB

I am never leaving this borough as
long as I live.

TAG

INT. DEB'S NEW BRONX APARTMENT - NIGHT

Deb is unpacking boxes in her new bedroom, humming happily. Her Yankee Stadium poster is already proudly hung on the wall.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

INT. BRONX APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Deb opens her door. Standing there are SARAH SANTANA and RACHEL ELLIOTT (The Yellow and Red Rabbits from the agency). They are holding a welcome basket full of cookies and wine.

DEB

Sarah? Rachel? What are you guys doing here?

SARAH

Surprise! We live in 3B! Right beneath you! We saw you moving in today and wanted to bring a welcome gift!

Deb is overjoyed.

DEB

Oh my gosh, you guys are the best! Come in, come in! I'll grab some glasses!

Deb turns and heads into the kitchen.

In the hallway, Rachel pulls a bright orange and blue Mets lanyard out of her pocket.

RACHEL

(Calling after Deb)
And we actually bought a little-

Sarah's eyes go wide in panic. She smacks Rachel's arm and violently shoves the Mets lanyard back into Rachel's pocket.

SARAH

(Harsh whisper)
Are you crazy?! Hide that! She hates Mets fans! She has severe trauma! We take this secret to our graves, Rachel!

RACHEL

(Rubbing her arm, harsh whisper
back)

Ow! I was just gonna be friendly! I
didn't realize she had actual Queens
PTSD!

SARAH

(Through gritted teeth)
Graves. Rachel.

Rachel nods frantically, zipping her pocket shut.

RACHEL

(Whispering)

Okay, okay! We're just... really
enthusiastic baseball neutrals now.

They paste on huge, innocent smiles just as Deb returns to
the doorway.

DEB

I'm so glad we're neighbors!

Sarah and Rachel laugh nervously as they step inside.

FADE OUT

END OF EPISODE