

BIG LEAGUE HUSTLE

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13 Page Sample

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DUSK

A **MAN** in a top hat and breeches is **SILHOUETTED** against the setting sun. The **SILHOUETTE** is explaining something to **EIGHT OTHERS** just like him. **BIRDS** and **BUGS CHIRP** around them.

THE VOICE OF BASEBALL narrates the scene.

THE VOICE

A long time ago, in America,
Baseball was the **Nation's Game**. A
sport, born out of the streets of
Brooklyn, quickly spread from one
coast to the other.

The **SILHOUETTE** points out into the field. The eight others break up and trot out away from the Silhouette, the grass **RUSTLING** beneath their feet.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

People from all walks of life,
packed wooden bleachers, wrapped
around a grassy field, with
eagerness and enthusiasm to watch
men play ball.

Each man stops when he's reached his destination on the field. They've formed a **BASEBALL DIAMOND**.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

But as the turn of the century
approached, the game became
synonymous with the gamblers,
drunks, and cheaters who played it,
and America fell out of love with
its national past-time.

The Silhouette looks out at the men spread across the field. He lifts a bat up to his shoulder and tosses a ball in the air with his other hand.

The Silhouette swings the bat. **CRACK!** The bat connects with the ball and the black circle soars through the air against the orange sky.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

Baseball was no more

POP, the ball lands squarely in the glove of the **CENTER FIELDER**. He takes the ball and tosses it to the **PITCHER**.

The men continue to play as they **FADE** out of view, leaving only the field and the **CHIRPING** of the birds and bugs.

EXT. SAME OPEN FIELD - MORNING

A Queen Anne style home FADES into view.

The paint is CHIPPING and the bushes are SLIGHTLY OVERGROWN but the house is in good shape for its age.

TITLE: CHEYENNE WYOMING, DECADES LATER

JAKE BULLOCK (39) passes the front of the house on foot, the gravel road CRUNCHES beneath his feet. He WHISTLES *Glory, Glory Hallelujah* through his sun-worn face and swings a briefcase as he saunters down the road.

Jake's suit, which at one point was stylish (although not since he put it on) fits a little too tight around his wiry frame.

EXT. TOWN - MORNING

The brick buildings rise around Jake as he continues down the dirt road.

Few townspeople are present this early in the morning. A **WOMAN** and her elderly **MOTHER** stroll down the wooden sidewalk. A **SHOPKEEPER** SWEEPS the dust outside his door. The THUD of horse hooves accompany a **DRIVER** and his buggy.

EXT. BANK - MORNING

A brick building with ornate, wood doors sits on the corner of the street.

Jake floats up the brick steps and reaches for the large brass handle.

INT. BANK - MORNING

The heavy door SLAMS against the wall as Jake BURSTS into the room. LIGHT from the doorway FLOODS the mahogany room.

Jake's footsteps LOUDLY ECHOS as he makes b-line for a **TELLER** (64) directly across the room, who's face is stuck in a somewhat frightened state. Jake notes few other BANK CUSTOMERS in his periphery.

INT. TELLER WINDOW - MORNING

Jake's face holds a big smile as he approaches the window and props his briefcase on the counter. His wide eyes meet the teller's as he leans in close to her.

JAKE

Good morning, M'am. How are you doing this fine Wednesday?

TELLER

I'm, uh, fine--

JAKE

That's great! That's *real* great. *Me?* Well, I wish I could say the same but I do find myself in a *real bind*. And, you know, I hate for it to come to this, I really do, but, unfortunately, this *is* a robbery.

TELLER

Oh, my--

JAKE

Have you ever been in one of these *situations* before, M'am?

The teller slowly nods.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Excellent. So, here's how this'll go. Without alerting anyone, you'll go into the safe, grab as many hundreds as you can fit in your hands and pockets and whatnot, bring 'em back here and place them in *this* briefcase. Understand?

TELLER

But--

JAKE

What's your name?

TELLER

Oh, Mary, bu--

JAKE

Mary. I don't like bringing this up but I *do* have a gun and I *will* use it if I have to, but I really don't want to, *Mary*.

TELLER
 (Stuttering)
 Wh-- I-- Er---

JAKE
 Mary, I'm getting impatient.

TELLER
 Well, sir, I *would* cooperate, I
really would, but I'm afraid we are
 currently, um, already *being*
 robbed.

Jake squints in disbelief.

TELLER (CONT'D)
 Right now!

The Teller's eyes DART to the right.

Jake follows them, turning his head slowly to see **WILL BERRY**
 (19) young, black and surprisingly well dressed leans on the
 counter a couple windows down.

Will stares right back at Jake, his fresh, handsome face
 rested in one hand, a REVOLVER and a FULL BURLAP SACK in the
 other which hangs limp at his side.

Jake smiles at Will.

JAKE
 Hi, fella!

WILL
 She's right. I was here first.

JAKE
 So?

WILL
 So scram.

JAKE
 Okay, Young Gun, be reasonable. I'm
 sure we can come to a compromise
 here.

Jake takes a step toward Will. Will pulls his gun up and
 points in at Jake. The hammer CLICKS.

Jake puts his hands up by his head and CHUCKLES.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Hey! C'mon, friend. You don't want to shoot me! I'm a good guy!

WILL

You're robbing a bank!

Jake wrinkles his face in thought for a moment and then looks back at Will.

JAKE

I'm a good guy in a bad situation.

WILL

I don't care about good and bad. I care about you handing over that briefcase, putting your hands on your head and walking out of here.
NOW.

Jake slowly turns back to the window and puts his hands on his briefcase. He looks up at the TELLER, her eyes wide and her mouth downturned.

JAKE

(to Teller)

I'm real sorry about this, Mary.

Jake picks up the briefcase and HURLS it at Will's head.

Will KNOCKS the briefcase midair with

The customers and tellers SCREAM and COWER near the walls.

Jake LEAPS for the BAG and grabs it mid air.

INT. BANK FLOOR - MORNING

His body THUDS as it hits the wood planks.

Will turns his gun DOWN at Jake just as Jake pulls a gun from his waist and points it UP at Will with a CLICK of the hammer. They HOLD this position.

JAKE

How many bullets you got?

WILL

What?

JAKE

There's no bullets in that gun. You spent all your money on that fancy getup.

WILL

Shut up, old man.

JAKE

How many bullets you *got*?!

WILL

ONE!

BANG! Will fires hitting the bag which TEARS open. Stacks of cash spill out.

Jake rolls to the side and covers his head.

Will HITS the floor and fills his arms with banknotes which FLUTTER around in every direction.

Will picks himself up, cash in arms, and DARTS for the door.

EXT. BANK - MORNING

Jake hurls his body through the door leaving a trail of bills that spill from his arms with every step.

Jake LEAPS and GRABS Will by the ankles, bringing him back to the ground with a SLAM to the ground, KICKING UP dirt.

The two men wrestle back and forth over the money. They become so entangled that neither of them can move.

JAKE

Next bank job, try being more *discreet*.

WILL

What can I say, I love an audience!

Jake and Will untangle themselves and continue fighting.

They only stop when they notice multiple gun barrels pointed at their heads accompanied by TEN CLICKS of hammers.

The two men look up to see TEN COPS surrounding them.

INT. JAIL - LATER

Will looks forward. His face sags as he holds up a plaque that reads that reads: **WILL BERRY 071167**

He's dressed in black and white striped pajamas.

The flash powder POPS, WHITING out the screen for a beat.

Jake does the same.

His plaque says: **JAKE BULLOCK 071168**

Jake mean mugs the camera.

Flash powder POPS.

INT. WIRLEY MANSION HALLWAY - DAY

A black and white PHOTO of Jake Bullock smiles at us. He's baby faced and sports a baseball cap. A clock TICKS off screen.

Jake is in the front row of a team photo. Nine men in uniform and one large older man in a white suit. Jake is the only one smiling.

The photo is in a glass frame and surrounded by Baseball memorabilia: framed photos and uniforms, autographed bats and balls, newspapers with headlines like: "**BLUE STOCKINGS WIN BIG**" and "**WIRLEY BETS ON BASEBALL**".

The reflection of **PHILLIP WIRLEY** (22) scurries past the team photo. His face returns to the reflection as Phillip takes a moment to fix his hair, which is already perfectly set. He pushes his circular glasses up his nose and happily SIGHS before leaving the reflection again.

EXT. WIRLEY MANSION BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

A bat connects with a ball. CRACK! The ball goes flying.

The BATTER drops his bat and TROTS along the first baseline.

NINE MEN practice plays on a well manicured diamond. Bright green grass, red dirt, and freshly laid chalk surround them.

The men sport bright white uniforms emblazoned with a swirling logo that reads **BLUE WINGS**.

EXT. WIRLEY MANSION TERRACE - DAY

The Blue Wings solo spectator, **OSWALD WIRLEY** (75), sits on the terrace of a large Italian Renaissance style mansion a few hundred feet away. His white suit **GLOWS** in direct sunlight.

Oswald is observing the game through golden binoculars, as you would an opera, when a tuxedo clad **SERVANT** approaches.

SERVANT

Mr. Wirley, Sir? You have a visitor.

Oswald turns around and is overjoyed to see **PHILLIP WIRLEY** (22), wearing the same bright, white outfit as his father, and a gigantic smile that shows teeth to match.

OSWALD

(shouting)

A learned man!

Oswald embraces Phillip.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Phillip! How was the *ceremony*? Oh! How was the trip? *How's* Cambridge?

PHILLIP

The ceremony was beautiful! Trip was great. Cambridge is... Cambridge.

Oswald **CHUCKLES** knowingly.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

But, I cannot *wait* to talk business with you.

OSWALD

Of course! Of Course! Please, sit!

Oswald gestures to the ornate chairs overlooking the balcony with little glass tables beside them. The two men sit down *identically*, as if there was one man and a mirror.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

(to the butler)

Benjamin, bring champagne, please. We're celebrating! My youngest, Phillip, a Harvard graduate! That's makes the whole set, right boy?

Phillip's smile broadens. He leans closer to his dad.

PHILLIP
How are Mark and John?

Oswald doesn't take his eyes off the game as he speaks.

OSWALD
Oh, Mark is still running the East Coast, as you know. John is overseas. Brining our candy bars to Europe, if you can believe it, he's got his work cut out for him there.

Oswald keeps his eye on the game. Phillip shifts in his chair. He leans in to say something to Oswald but then decides not to and leans back.

Phillip eyes the terrace. The birds SING through the awkward silence.

OSWALD (CONT'D)
YES! *That's* a catch!

PHILLIP
Got a little game going here, Dad?

OSWALD
More than a game, son. Business!

Phillip snorts.

PHILLIP
Baseball? As business? Is that where the market's going?

OSWALD
I decide where the market's going. You should know that. It's time for Baseball to make its *great* return as *America's Pastime*.

PHILLIP
Yeah, but last time you were in the baseball business your championship team threw the game and made more money than you did all season.

OSWALD
Damn it, Phillip!

Oswald finally turns his attention to Phillip, SLAMMING his hand on the glass table which RATTLES.

Phillip jumps in his seat at the sound of Oswald's booming voice.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

Do not mention the sins of the past. We can't change what happened. All we can do now is change the future. Candy made this family rich, sure. But baseball made us *proud*.

Oswald pulls a handkerchief from coat and whips the sweat from his forehead.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

These are good boys. Upstanding gentleman who scoff at ill gotten wages and dodgy play.

The servant returns and hands Oswald and Phillip a glass of Champagne each, leaving the bottle in a golden ice bucket between them.

Philip nervously takes a sip.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

And, I can't lose because **you** are going to be managing the team.

Philip spits his drink back into the glass.

PHILLIP

But, Dad--!!

Phillip jumps to his feet.

OSWALD

But what!? This is a *golden* opportunity! You want to be part of the family business, don't you? And you *love* baseball.

PHILLIP

I *loved* baseball, Dad. When I was a boy. I'm a *man* now. A Harvard *man*. A *businessman*.

OSWALD

So, here's your business!

Phillip leans in close to his father, pleading.

PHILLIP

I want to work for the Wirley Candy Company. *Please*. I can *do it*. My entire life I saw myself working alongside you.

OSWALD

You know what saw when I bought this team? I saw my son, in a bright blue cap, playing catch with his old man.

PHILLIP

Dad...

OSWALD

If you can make this team a success, *then* you can come work alongside me. **Deal?**

Oswald holds out his big, red hand. Phillip stares at it. He hears the CRACK of a bat in the distance.

PHILLIP

(resigned)

I'll do it.

Oswald stands and puts an arm around Phillip.

OSWALD

Excellent, excellent! Now, pack your bags. You and the team have to catch a train first thing in the morning!

PHILLIP

A train?

OSWALD

Yes! A luxury liner! To Mandeville! Upstate Illinois, not far from Chicago. Have you been?

PHILLIP

I haven't.

OSWALD

Oh, it is lovely. But first, of course you have to meet the team. Head down there and talk to the Coach Bryan and have him introduce you to the boys.

PHILLIP

Now?

Oswald puts his arms around Phillip and guides him away from the chairs

EXT. TERRACE STAIRS - DAY

Oswald walks Phillip toward the top of the stairs.

OSWALD

Now! Now! No time like the present!
These are your cohorts. You'll be
living together, eating together,
winning together!

Phillip walks down the steps. His feet THUD with each step. Halfway down he looks back up at his dad.

OSWALD (CONT'D)

These are your teammates, boy! Your
brothers! Your new family!
(to himself)
We're playing *baseball*!

EXT. WIRLEY MANSION BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The grass is freshly cut and the dirt is neatly laid. The Blue Wings run plays while **COACH BRYAN (49)** occasionally barks orders from the foul line.

BRYAN

Higgins! Watch the arm.

Phillip nervously approaches the Coach and sticks out his hand.

PHILLIP

Hi. It's a pleasure to meet you.
I'm Phillip.

Bryan doesn't even look at him.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Phillip *Wirley*.

Bryan turns to Phillip. He looks so bored his face could fall off.

BRYAN

So?

PHILLIP

So, I'm going to be the team manager.

Phillip holds his hand out further. Bryan turns his sagging face back towards the field.

BRYAN

Alright. I'll let'ch'ya know when to write the checks.

PHILLIP

For your information, Sir. You're doing business with a Harvard man, and I plan on being more involved than just writing checks, and I always shake hands with the people I'm doing business with. So...

Phillip shoots his open hand out once more.

Bryan leans over and SPITS on Phillip's shoe.

Philip is frozen in terror and disgust. A statue with its hand stuck out.

BRYAN

Hey, boys! Come shake the hand of a Harvard business man.

The team lines up in front of Philip and one by one, each spits on his shoes. Philip stands with his hand extended and just takes it.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Alright, hit the showers.

The team marches off the field, laughing and patting each other on the back.

Philip stands alone. He looks down at his empty hand and his dirty shoes. Birds CHIRP in the distance.