

WOMEN WITH BALLS

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Story by

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Based on True Events

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FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

An aerial view of Pier 40 - a huge square of green AstroTurf playing fields surrounded by parking lots and the Hudson River.

EXT. PIER 40 SOCCER FIELD - DAY

It's a Sunday morning in late summer - hot and sticky.

Several groups are playing soccer. In one all-woman game, eleven players from "Downtown United" (in pale blue shirts) face the "Red-Hot Mamas" (in scarlet). Both teams are ethnically diverse.

The Downtown players are mostly in their 40s and older. Some are overweight, and most are struggling to keep up with their younger, faster opponents.

The Mamas are in their 20s and early 30s, sleek and athletic, and several are visibly pregnant.

On the sidelines, a few supporters cheer their teams. Some bored kids are glued to their smartphones, oblivious.

The Downtown coach, RUBEN (early 70s, Latino), watches the play with a critical eye.

RUBEN
(yelling)
Elly -- pass to Caroline!

ELLY (late 40s, imposing) passes to CAROLINE (50, tall, with long red hair).

RUBEN (CONT'D)
Aiko! Get down field!

AIKO (late 40s, Japanese) gamely runs down field.

Caroline passes to JULIA (50s, Black, heavy), who passes to MAGGIE (35, Black, cute).

Maggie's clearly the best player on the field. She maneuvers past the Mamas, shoots for the goal and --

-- SCORES!

The REF blows her WHISTLE, signaling the end of the game.

The teams meet midfield to shake hands.

The Downtown United players are sweat-soaked and exhausted.

The Red Hot Mamas are barely glistening.

RED-HOT MAMAS CAPTAIN
 (to Caroline)
 Great game. You even scored this
 time.

She smirks, condescendingly, as she turns away.

Caroline jogs to join her teammates gathered around Ruben.

CAROLINE
 (to herself)
 Yeah, fuck you, too...

RUBEN
 Nice assist there at the end,
 Julia.

JULIA
 We still lost six to one...

MAGGIE
 Well, they ARE the league
 champions...

RUBEN
 Maggie -- fantastic, as usual.

The other women offer Maggie high-fives.

ELLY
 (stretching her sore back)
 Must be nice to be young...

She sees Aiko looks like she's going to faint.

ELLY (CONT'D)
 You OK, sweetie?

Aiko nods, but her face is pale and drawn.

Elly rubs her shoulder, supportively.

The women put their hands into the center of the circle for a
 group cheer.

JULIA
 Downtown United!

TEAM
DOWNTOWN UNITED!

INT. COWGIRL HALL OF FAME RESTAURANT - DAY

Julia, Caroline, Maggie, Elly, and Aiko sit around a table. Balloons with "50" on them are attached to the chairs.

A SERVER arrives with a giant margarita. It's got a sparkler stuck in a half a lime.

Maggie gets up, strikes a dramatic pose, and sings the Beatles' "Birthday."

MAGGIE

They say it's your birthday...

Patrons look up; her voice is impressive.

OTHERS

Nah nah nah nah nah nah...

MAGGIE

It's my birthday too, yeah.

OTHERS

Nah nah nah nah nah nah...

MAGGIE

They say it's your birthday...

OTHERS

Nah nah nah nah nah nah...

MAGGIE

We're gonna have a good time.

OTHERS

Nah nah nah nah nah nah...

MAGGIE

I'm glad it's your birthday!

OTHERS

Nah nah nah nah nah nah...

MAGGIE

Happy birthday to you!

They boogie around the table to give Caroline a hug and a kiss before returning to their chairs.

OTHERS

Boompa boompa boompa boompa boompa
boompa boompa boompa....

The patrons and servers applaud.

Caroline sips her margarita and sighs with happiness.

CAROLINE

Oh, yeah...

ELLY

We got presents!

She hands Caroline a gift bag with "50" on it.

Caroline takes out a box and unwraps it. It's a mug that says "Bad Ass" in gold.

MAGGIE

Only the truth.

Caroline smiles her thanks. She unwraps the next package.

It's an anime-style drawing of Caroline as "SuperModel."

Caroline grins.

CAROLINE

Thank you, Aiko!

Aiko smiles.

The server sets down the rest of the margaritas.

Aiko takes only a tiny sip of hers.

Elly notices.

ELLY

(quietly)

You still not feeling well?

AIKO

(quietly, Japanese accent)

My stomach... has been hurting for
a while.

ELLY

How long?

AIKO

A few months...

ELLY

A few months?! You been to the doctor?

Aiko shakes her head.

ELLY (CONT'D)

You're goin' to the doctor if I have to carry you myself. And you know I could.

Aiko smiles, giving in.

Julia studies her phone as the server hands out menus.

JULIA

So can we schedule a practice for Labor Day?

CAROLINE AND ELLY

NO!

Julia sighs, exasperated.

JULIA

Look - we already missed two practices this month.

CAROLINE

I've been busy at work!

ELLY

Yeah, me too...

MAGGIE

And I'm doin' extra work for Heather...

JULIA

You think I'm not busy -- running a restaurant?! But if we don't make time for practice it shows on the field -- like it did today.

CAROLINE

Yeah, right -- those bitches were half our age.

MAGGIE

AND the league champions.

JULIA

Well, what's the point of playing
in a league if we're not gonna take
it seriously?

The women are quiet, looking sheepish.

MAGGIE

Maybe... we could just play a
friendly game now an' then...?

JULIA

Give up the league?!

ELLY

We been at it ten years... And
we're not so young any more...

She smiles at Maggie.

ELLY (CONT'D)

'cept for baby girl here...

AIKO

I think playing... helps me still
feel young...

CAROLINE

(to Julia)

You can find some new players to
take our places.

AIKO

It wouldn't be the same without the
five of us...

Caroline, Maggie, and Elly don't look they're going to
relent.

JULIA

Fine... if that's the way you feel,
I'll start looking.

She turns her attention to her menu, huffy.

INT. JULIA'S CONDO - DAY

Julia enters, pushing aside a bulging garbage bag as the door
opens. She wrinkles her nose at the smell.

JULIA

Dan?

No response.

She goes into the

KITCHEN

Dirty dishes are everywhere. There's a grocery delivery on the counter. She reaches into a bag and takes out a container of ice cream.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Dan!

Carrying the container, she goes into the

LIVING ROOM

Her husband DAN (mid-60s, Black) is stretched out on the sofa, still in his pajamas and robe, reading the Sunday paper.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You didn't put away the groceries!

She holds up the container.

JULIA (CONT'D)

The ice cream's melted.

DAN

Hmm?

He doesn't look up.

JULIA

I said the ice cream's melted!

DAN

Don't need it. Just makes you fat.

JULIA

(hurt)

Dan!

DAN

I meant me...

JULIA

And you didn't take out the garbage, and the kitchen's a mess.

DAN

Sorry...

JULIA

I thought you were gonna be more of
a help now you're retired...

DAN

Then what's the point of retiring?

She makes a disgusted noise.

Dan finally looks up from his paper.

DAN (CONT'D)

You're in a mood. You guys lose
another game?

Julia stares at a group photo on the wall:

10-year-younger versions of her and the other players, in
their Downtown United uniforms, with their seven- and eight-
year-old kids in their own soccer uniforms.

JULIA

I dunno if I can keep the team
going any more...

Dan reaches out his hand to her, sympathetically.

She goes to him and they cuddle on the sofa.

DAN

Well, I'll always be your number-
one fan...

He kisses her on the head.

She smiles, comforted.

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - DAY

Caroline's in bed with her boyfriend GARRETT (early 30s,
model-handsome). They've just been having sex.

GARRETT

Why does soccer make you so horny?
Is it the endorphins?

CAROLINE

That and the margaritas.

BLEEP. Her phone announces a message.

GARRETT

Do you have to? It's Sunday... AND
it's your birthday.

He strokes her back.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

I could give you a nice massage...
'til we're ready for another
round...

Caroline wriggles with pleasure but reaches for the phone.

CAROLINE

Some of us have to work for a
living...

GARRETT

(grinning)
Fuck you...

Caroline reads the screen.

CAROLINE

Shit... They're moving my meeting
up...

She gets out of bed, slipping on a robe.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Could you make us some coffee?

Garrett sighs and gets out of bed.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

Elly and her son NOAM (18) walk down the sidewalk carrying shopping bags. He's wearing a UC Santa Cruz "Banana Slugs" t-shirt and he's even taller than she is.

A WOMAN eyes Elly as she passes.

NOAM

That lady was checkin' you out.

ELLY

What? No she wasn't. Probably you.

She turns around.

ELLY (CONT'D)

Hey! Cougar! Keep your paws offa
my baby boy!

NOAM
(under his breath)
Mom....!

ELLY
Sorry. You really think she was
lookin' at me?

NOAM
Why wouldn't she? You're a catch.

ELLY
Yeah, right...

They head up the steps of their building.

NOAM
You can open your own jars, fix
your own plumbing...

INT. ELLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Elly and Noam enter.

NOAM
You really gotta do something about
this place, though. I mean, you
wouldn't wanna bring a date home to
THIS.

He gestures.

The apartment looks like a dozen different renovation
projects got started but never finished.

ELLY
Yeah, I know... but I never have
time!

NOAM
You make time for everyone else...
but never for yourself.

They head into

NOAM'S ROOM

It's a typical, messy teenage boy space with posters on the
scuffed walls.

There's a framed Aiko drawing of Noam playing soccer.

Noam sets the shopping bags next to an open suitcase.

Elly stares at the suitcase, then at her son.

ELLY

I'm gonna miss you so much!

She throws her arms around him.

He smiles and hugs her back.

NOAM

I'm gonna miss you, too...

ELLY

I'm gonna miss pizza and movie night... and Knicks games and "Game of Thrones"...

NOAM

We can still play Fortnite...

ELLY

It won't be the same...

She releases him and looks at his t-shirt.

ELLY (CONT'D)

Those girl-slugs better not break your heart. Or they're gonna have ME to reckon with.

Noam shakes his head, indulgently.

MONTAGE -- MORNING IN MANHATTAN

-- Maggie walks seven-year-old TWINS to a private school and waves goodbye to them.

-- In the alley behind her restaurant, Julia inspects a shipment of fish.

-- Elly supervises a crane lifting a load of drywall to the upper floor of a brownstone being renovated.

-- Caroline, looking stylish and confident, enters an office building.

-- Aiko enters a doctor's office, looking nervous.

INT. AIKO'S LOFT - DAY (WEEKS LATER)

Aiko enters her bare industrial loft. She looks shell-shocked.