

## Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend

[Transcript]

NICOLE SHERRY: We, as women, have to think outside the box. We're not just designated to being doctors or lawyers, you know, there's other things we can do.

*I want to go to the ballgame  
I'm a fall dame for a ballgame  
I wanna get the crowd going  
And root, and hoot, and shout*

*I want to go to the pastime  
Have a fast time like the last time  
And yell "Swat a single two, sacker or bingle  
But don't fan out"*

[Music cue shift]

*Baseball brains  
Shoot 'em over, kid  
It wins the game*

NICOLE: When I took the job as the Orioles' Head Groundskeeper, I got a phone call from Heather and she said to me, "I knew there would be another woman soon so congratulations. I'm happy."

MASN ANNOUNCER: Opening Day is always a special day in Baltimore and this year it was also a historic one as Baltimore became the second Major League Baseball team to employ a female Head Groundskeeper. It was a day Nicole Sherry will never forget.

NICOLE: I was worried the whole day whether it was gonna rain. I was worried about how the ball was gonna play on the infield. I was worried about how the pitcher's mound was holding up. But at that moment when the game finally took place, I relaxed and was like, "this is cool."

ORIOLES' ANNOUNCER: Let's hear it for the Head Groundskeeper, Nicole Sherry.

MARGARET SHERRY: The best part was Opening Day. Just to see them call her name and her run out onto the field I thought, "That's my baby." It was just so great to see her out there with the guys whippin' those hoses around.

PATRICK SHERRY: She always wanted to beat the boys in the neighborhood. She was always determined to outperform everyone.

NICOLE: I loved playing sports. Anytime I could get outside, digging in the dirt, playing with army men, and following my brothers around. The first thing that sparked my interest in agronomy was at Career Day in high school. A lady from the University of Delaware came to talk about these packaging peanuts that were made out of corn starch that could biodegrade so easily.

I decided to see if this was really the path I wanted to take by going to the community college aspect side of it first. Our irrigation repair and maintenance class decided to take us on a field trip to Camden Yards. Learning everything about how they took care of their field was mind-boggling, really, because it wasn't something that the normal person really thinks about once you, you know, when you look at a baseball field on TV. From there I eventually landed an internship.

AL CAPITOS: When I announced her hiring at Oriole Park, people were excited. They had never seen a female on the grounds crew staff. There's a lot of jobs in general in baseball you don't see females in.

NICOLE: They didn't have any women's uniforms. I remember walking in there and he's giving me this extra-large shirt, these huge pants, and a baseball hat. So we cut a hole in the back of the hat and I could put my ponytail through the hole because it was grounds crew dress code that you had to wear a baseball cap out onto the field.

AL CAPITOS: The whole crew would walk down and there'd be all guys and intermixed in there'd be this girl and you could hear people saying, "Ooh, look there's a girl on the crew," "Wow, I didn't know girls could work here" or "I didn't know girls were groundskeepers."

NICOLE: It was very nerve-wracking because this is the first time, you know, I'm a little bit shell-shocked and, like, oh my gosh, I'm standing on a Major League Baseball field. I love baseball and I'm like, oh, I can't believe it. And then you start seeing all the athletes coming in and you're like, oh my gosh, it's really real. It's happening.

AL CAPITOS: She was probably the best intern I ever had. She was the one who asked the most questions by far. She was the one who was there the earliest at the beginning of the day. She was the one who stayed the latest all the time. She was pretty impressive.

NICOLE: The end of the internship came, and I was really deciding whether I wanted to pursue a four-year degree.

AMY FOUTY: You see people in their 30s and 40s now with bachelor's degrees, master's degrees in turf grass management where 20 years ago, you didn't see people with any degrees at all.

NICOLE: It's more of a science than in the past where it was just, "Oh, here's a playing field. Good luck."

PAUL ZWASKA: To my knowledge, I was the first college educated in turf groundskeeper that had been in Major League Baseball. Pat Satarone, who I worked under, he learned from his father, he never had any formal training. As soon as Pat was old enough to hold a rake and a shovel, he was out there working on the fields. You know, they'd have goats out in the outfield keepin' the grass cut.

NICOLE: During my schooling, I get a phone call saying one of the assistants had left and we want to offer you a position.

AL CAPTIOS: We talked to her about her class schedule. We talked to her about our needs. We were able to balance that out just to kinda keep her on. We knew she was a huge asset.

NICOLE: Oh my gosh, it was hell. It was, you know, every day up at 7am drive to Delaware, go to class, and drive back to Baltimore, and go to work until maybe midnight sometimes.

Well, I remember specifically walking with Al one day and I'm like, "Do you have any advice at all for me, you know, if I want to stay in this career?" And he said, "If you want to get to the Major League level, I really think that you need prove yourself at the Minor Leagues."

BRAD TAYLOR: When she became the Head Groundskeeper for the Trenton Thunder, at that time she was the first female to ever be Head Groundskeeper in the Eastern League.

NICOLE: When I really absorbed the fact that I was now the Head Groundskeeper for the Trenton Thunder, I walked out onto the field and there was literally eight hundred tons of goose poo scattered on every little bit of grass surface that you could imagine out on the field. So I knew, first and foremost, that I was gonna be picking up \*\*\*\* forever.

I had pretty much 1980 equipment to work with. I had like one hand tool that was decent, the rest were all broken and, you know, missing teeth here and there. I was like what am I doing? This is crazy. And I had no staff. It was just me. So here I am February 16<sup>th</sup> of 2004. Opening Day is April 8<sup>th</sup>. I called my dad, I was like, "Listen, I need you to come help me and just whatever you can do, I just need an extra person." And I just tried to do the best I could. Opening Day was great. It was really exciting. I got huge butterflies when they started playing the anthem.

BRAD TAYLOR: Right away fans, players, and staff people noticed like, she faced an adversity right out of the gate, overcame it, field looked great, played well, and everybody was, you know, really thrilled.

AL CAPITOS: It looked as if it was maintained for months that way. And I know for a fact it wasn't.

NICOLE: I think he was proud of me, but I don't think he wanted to pump my ego up too much because he knew what was in store for me to get through the season.

BRAD TAYLOR: I remember one specific day underneath the stadium in Trenton, that's where we had our hitting tunnel. And I don't remember the team that was in town but I remember, Nicole's a good-looking groundskeeper, and one of the team guys on the visiting team made a comment about that in an inappropriate way. And I kinda stopped, and I raised my eyes and wondered, gosh, should I say something right now? And before I could say anything, Nicole fired back in front of about twelve of his teammates in a pretty stern way, in a pretty direct way, and she never had that problem again. And that guy took a pretty good ribbing from his teammates for the rest of the series.

NICOLE: We had a really rainy season that season. And we lost seven games due to drainage issues. And then I really had to stop, take a look at what the surface was underneath as well. I had to tell the Trenton Thunder general management that, you know, your field is not in good shape and if you keep going the way we're going, you're going to lose potentially a lot a games, a lot of big games, and the Yankees' farm team will not want to send any rehab players down to your facility if your field's not up to par.

BRAD TAYLOR: Her knowledge of what we had at the time as a problem convinced everybody, hey, we need to probably replace this. If you've ever seen a field rebuild, it's not just you take the grass off and start over. It's literally going down about a foot and a half, two feet, redoing a gravel layer, a sand layer, grass, drainage pipes, and it's kind of an unglamorous job.

NICOLE: It was an incredible experience because usually you don't, as a Head Groundskeeper, ever get to see a complete gut out of a facility. And that was really something that I could put on my resume.

BRAD TAYLOR: She was the right person to oversee that project. She came in and turned that field around into one of the top fields in all of professional baseball. She became an instant celebrity in Trenton.

CHANNEL 12 NJ ANNOUNCER: One woman's work for the Thunder is making history and leaving admirers green with envy.

PICK BOY: Pick Boy here at my new summer job at the ballpark. Right now, I'm with Head Groundskeeper, Nicole. How long's it take you to get the field ready for game time?

NICOLE: About three to four hours.

*Back, back, back to the bleachers  
For mine, for mine!*

BRAD TAYLOR: One day we were just sitting around one of our sales meetings in the off-season and thinking about, who do we have at our disposal to do a popular giveaway? And we always think of players and past coaches and mascots, and we finally thought, why not Nicole? Nicole's known by everybody around here. Certainly there's a thousand people that would show up early on a night to get a bobblehead of her.

NICOLE: And I was like, "Well, if you're gonna do a bobblehead, you better make it cool-looking and have me like riding on a tractor or something. I don't just want to standin' there with a rake."

MARGARET SHERRY: They gave the bobbleheads to the first 2000 and this little boy and his dad, they missed the bobbleheads. And he says, "Daddy, why can't I get a bobblehead?" And the father said, "Oh, well they only had so many but, you know, when they have another one." "No, no, I want the one of this lady."

BRAD TAYLOR: They showed up in droves, and she spent more time with a Sharpie signing her bobblehead that night than she did taking care of the field. It was actually a lot of fun, and I still have that bobblehead doll.

NICOLE: I got a phone call from Oriole Park. "We've kept up to date with you and we really are impressed of you've handled the Minor League facility in Trenton. What are your thoughts about coming back to the Major League level?"

BRAD TAYLOR: It was no secret that if there was a chance for her to advance, I don't know that any of us ever had it in our wildest dreams that it would be that high and that fast.

NICOLE: I remember calling my mom and dad on the cell phone telling them that I got the job. And I had to pull over because I just started crying my eyes out because it was really... At that point I was 27, 28 years old, now a Head Groundskeeper at a Major League Baseball facility where I only had seven years experience, and nobody has made it to the Majors that quick before. And it just all hit me all at one time, and I was just so proud of myself and I just cried.

WJZ CHANNEL 13 ANNOUNCER: Take a look at this field. Opening Day, 2007. It looks absolutely picture perfect. And the Orioles have a new Head Groundskeeper. And she is already making her mark on Major League Baseball.

*This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
From home plate out past the bullpen*

*Hey, there's no flies on us  
Nicole Sherry, I got your bases covered*

NICOLE: Typical game day. We start by cutting the grass in two different directions. The checkered patterns that are seen on television are caused by directional mowing. We have two reel mowers that have rollers in the front, blades like razors that flip forward and then rollers in the back so if you're going in certain direction, the grass becomes light because you're bending it down to reflect light off the blades. And then if you're coming back in the opposite direction, it shows a darker stripe.

Having patterns in the field accomplishes two things: Number one, playability of the field, ball roll. If you're mowing from second to center, a ball may roll a little bit straighter if it's going down the pattern where it's not too much crisscrossing through it. Number two, to give the grass a healthier cut. If we cut it in the same pass in the same pattern every single time, then that grass would start to grow sideways.

At Oriole Park we pretty much stick to four different grass patterns. We're a traditional ballpark. We don't like to get too fancy with a lot of crazy designs in the outfield grass.

People always try to ask, "Hey, do you grow the grass up high for a certain team that's in town?" And the answer is no. At least at Oriole Park it's no.

PETER MORRIS: In the early years of baseball, the home field advantage was very literally a home field advantage.

GEORGE TOMA: In those days, you know, you'd raise/lower the pitching mound. You'd tip the baselines, you know. We did a lot of things, you know. Fast teams had good base stealers, we'd make it wet around first base. We'd throw a lot of sand, the pitching mounds, you know. Sometimes you psych people out.

PAUL ZWASKA: You hear some of these really strange stories that maybe were true in the old guard of the old groundskeepers back in the early part of the last century, but the groundskeepers of today, and every groundskeeper I know of in Major League

Baseball today, is really more concerned with making sure that that playing field is absolutely safe and true.

NICOLE: 90% of our game is played on dirt surfaces so it takes a lot of time to maintain it. You're spending probably about four hours out of your day on just maintaining the dirt. And they don't teach you that in school. So you have to learn that hands on working with it every day. We have to drag the infield dirt probably three different times throughout the day.

A nail drag is pretty much a five-foot board with six-inch nails spiked through the board. And that's to take out any imperfections on the infield soil from cleats, holes made from balls, you know, whatever is out there. It kind of smooths everything out and roughs it up. And then we'll come back with a finishing drag, and that would be a matted drag. It's just made out of metal with little holes throughout that grab all the dirt areas but catch the bigger chunks. Our last drag is a cocoa mat drag. A cocoa mat drag is pretty much like a welcome mat. And we use that because it mats down a lot of the wet soil so we can get out there and drag the infield if it's a little bit too wet for the metal drag.

The warehouse is a huge focal point of Oriole Park at Camden Yards. At one time Abraham Lincoln rode his train through here. So it's very historic to the Baltimore area. Our infield dirt color has to be blended to match the warehouse. We add three different colors of infield top-dressing. We make sure that the mounds are taken care of and fixed properly.

JEREMY GUTHERIE: When it comes to the pitcher's mound, of course, that's one of the bigger tasks because we dig it up every day. Every time we pitch on it there's a big hole. And so, she has to find the right clay and the right amount of moisture so that the mound holds up.

NICOLE: We make sure that the home plate area is fixed to perfection. We'll make sure the infield dirt is dragged again and watered. You have your crew holding the hose for you so you can maneuver and focus on watering the dirt down for playability of the field. If it's too muddy, you risk player injury as far as turning an ankle, blowing a knee out. If it's too dry of conditions soil-wise will make the ball bounce up a little bit harder. It's crucial for the game to make sure that everything is perfect at all times because if a player gets a bad hop caused by an imperfection that you might have missed, then that's potentially injuring him for his career or causing a bad hop that could lose a game.

PAUL ZWASKA: You know, obviously you've got millions of dollars in players are out there playing on that playing field every day, not just for your team but for the teams that are coming in to play against your team and there's a huge sense of responsibility.

I don't think people really realize the world that these people are carrying on their shoulders for fear of somebody getting hurt on their watch.

PETER MORRIS: Until fairly recently, there was no expectation that the groundkeeper had anything to do with the player's safety. I think that a field was considered, you know, there was an expectation that the field would be hazardous and that the players had to understand that the field was hazardous and behave accordingly.

NICOLE: We'll move into the bullpens and fix any repairs on mounds, plates, whatever we need to do there. We were the first of our kind to use stackable bullpens. When they were designing the ballpark, they wanted to keep it as intimate as possible. Stackable bullpens are very convenient, but they are hard to get any big equipment up there. We have to walk a lot of our equipment up there.

And then take lunch, come back out, and maintain the grass, which we'll sometimes have to water it down to cool it off during high humid, hot days.

We have probably about a hundred and six sprinklers. They're pretty much flush to the surface of the grass. No player really knows where they are when they're running for a ball. They just pop up when you need to turn 'em on.

When there are any imperfections on the field, we can go up and cut a certain square footage out from our sod farm. There wouldn't be that transition shock of coming in off of a truck from out of town rolled up and who knows what it looks like. It's pretty much just lifting up a piece of grass and putting a new piece of grass in an area and it be matching perfect.

And then get ready for batting practice. Watch batting practice. Make sure everything's going the right way for about two hours. Then break down, get ready for the game. Fix the field entirely over again.

*Then take the bat and the ball in hand  
Let the umpire sing out "play"  
For baseball is a noble game  
And 'tis our toast today  
And 'tis our toast today*

JIM PALMER: If you're the CEO, and that's what she is of this field, you're in charge. And if anything goes wrong, I mean anything, she'd be responsible. So I can imagine that she doesn't get a lot of sleep during the baseball season.

PAUL ZWASKA: The pressure that the groundskeepers really have nowadays is that you can't have a blade of grass out of position because we're televised for every single game. And the field has to look absolutely perfect.



AMY FOUTY: I like to refer sometimes to The Augusta Effect, which is, you have this perfect golf course, and it has created an expectation that is not necessarily realistic for athletic field management.

GEORGE TOMA: You're out there trying to give the athletes a good playing field, and if you mess up on something, it's worldwide now.

NICOLE: During the game, my job is to watch the play of the game and to have a conversation with the umpires if needed for any rain situations. As soon as I see an issue popping up on the radar at all, I'll just wait 'til a break in the game, which might be in between innings or if there's a pitching change.

There's no other communication with umpires as far as any radios or walkie talkies. I have to physically go out there or have somebody go out there and update them.

When a pop up happens in play, it always seems to be the longest inning in history. There have been times when we've gone through an inning and it takes about 20-25 minutes to get through the inning and it's pouring. And then sometimes the umpire will just throw up his hands and say, you know, "What's going on? What's going on?" And then I'll be able to get word to him.

DAVE TREMBLEY: When there's high winds, it's raining like cats and dogs, there's thunder and lightning, you've got 30 people out there trying to pull a tarp and put it on, nail it down with sandbags, and then wait for the appropriate moment when the rain subsides and then pull it off. You see a lot of people, seriously, that can be physically hurt.

NICOLE: It's a lotta issues with safety of your crew pulling the tarp out, making sure that nobody gets trapped underneath of it while you're rolling it out. And there're some situations where a big gust of wind could take that tarp, even though it's so heavy, flying into the stands. So you have all these people surrounding you that you have to watch out for as well.

DAVE TREMBLEY: People in the stands kinda think it's a jovial time. It's not.

NICOLE: At the end of the third inning, we'll go out and use the cocoa mat drag to smooth out any imperfections. And we have to run from the umpire's tunnel, all the way out to the field, drag the entire field, and then go all the way back into the umpire's tunnel. We'll go again after the end of the sixth but in the opposite direction. After each game we fix the field as if we were gonna play in the next hour.

*So I won't go home 'til the last man's out  
I don't care how you pull or shout*

*I'm just crazy to see a game  
Life without it would be real tame*

*When there's two men down and a man on third  
Watch this boy give the old ball a clout*

*I'd give my last dollar to sit there and holler  
Until the last man's out*

DAVE TREMBLEY: Camden Yards is probably one of the prime venues in all of Major League Baseball. But to keep it like that, it takes a lot of effort and attention to detail.

NICOLE: Grass knows no vacation. It's an organism so it needs attending to at all times. It's very rare that I get two consecutive days off. A lot of people say halfway through the season, "You know, I didn't think it was gonna be this many hours. I didn't think it was gonna entail so much physical work. I thought that you guys just pretty much cut grass and watched the baseball game."

During the winter, it's a normal eight-hour day. We'll be out there maintaining the grass, getting it ready to go dormant for the winter season. When it actually does go dormant in mid-December, we'll stay off of it as much as possible. We won't cover it. It will be exposed to all the elements. Hopefully we'll get some snow cover so it can benefit from constant moisture getting down into the roots.

RICK DEMPSEY: Even in the winter, when I fly in here, this field is impeccable. It looks like it's ready to be played on in the middle of December.

JEREMY GUTHERIE: There's not a better place to play, but I feel like, you know, the beauty of the field is unmatched as well. It's just a great job with everything she does in keeping it ready for us and making it look nice for the fans and those on TV who get to watch our games.

RICK DEMPSEY: You've gotta look at the stadium in order to evaluate this girl and in my eyes it's the most beautiful ballpark ever in baseball. It's a very, very tough place to take care of, and she is right on top of her game.

PAUL ZWASKA: Whenever I go back now it's like, "Oh my God, this is better than when I took care of it." You know, everything is just so perfect. Every grass blade is exactly cut right. It's like playing on a sheet of glass out there. Now some of that's as a result of newer technology - being able to do things that we couldn't do back when I was there.

NICOLE: I mean, it's mind-boggling how much science has changed in the last, you know, ten years even that you can find DNA to manipulate grass to be more resilient and more resistant and more drought tolerant.

AL CAPITOS: She had talked to me initially about going back to do research in turf grass. I thought, wow, she's actually gonna probably go back and develop some sort of grass that everybody's gonna use.

NICOLE: I don't think that I could walk away from this job unless it was for another passion greater than being a Head Groundskeeper. Every morning when I arrive to work we have this huge roll up door that allows access right onto the field level, and if I get a chance to open up that door I get butterflies every day just looking around and thinking, "Man, I'm so happy that I have this opportunity to work here."

*Baseball, baseball!  
Ever exciting, always inviting  
There's nothing so near to America's heart  
As the good old game*

*Baseball, baseball  
Our team is winning  
The pennant is bringing  
So take off your hats  
And give a loud cheer  
For the grand old game*

*How happy we are in the summer  
When all is bright and gay  
We take a run out to the ballpark  
To see the home team play*

*So take off your hats  
And give a loud cheer  
For the grand old game*

### Bonus Feature: “Extra Innings”

SARAH: A lot has happened since we saw you last so you want to tell us a little bit about that?

NICOLE: Yeah. I found somebody special in my life and we just got married. We’re due to have a baby April 4<sup>th</sup> which is the day before Opening Day. So, you never go on your due date, I’m saying that we are going to have our baby on Opening Day.

We found out we were expecting in July and that was during the grind of the season. I just kept going the way like, you know, I usually did and had many visits with my doctor.

And she said, you know, “Whatever you were doing before you were pregnant, just keep with it you know. Don’t, don’t walk on eggshells too much because that’s you, that’s who you are and that’s what your body’s capable of doing.” I just kinda went with my normal job duties from July all the way through October.

And then the Orioles made the playoffs, so that was kinda fun. But, you know, at the same time, as a woman, you’re growing a baby, so there’s a lot going on ah hormonally and, and your body changes. And I was 12 weeks during that time. That didn’t change anything as far as like stress level or um the go-getter type of attitude that I have. So I kept a really, I was just more cautious about what I lifted, how heavy I lifted and know better to ask for help or assistance if anything, and to just to stay away from any chemical or pesticide that we may have used.

Then you get into November and December which is our off season. So ah four or five months pregnant, I really wasn’t doing much physical work here because we were shut down for the winter.

We have a couple big projects that happen this off season. Oriole Park had the synthetic rubber track which is rubber all the way around. It was just a little bit cleaner, we could play quickly after a rain delay. But now we want to move to more of a, a natural surface. So players are – safety-wise, they can dive on the surface and catch any balls that are in the um, the warning track area. We were the only ones that had that synthetic surface in many years.

The seventh month was hard. I had to travel a lot during that time to check out spring training facility. The players want a field to train on or practice on that’s going to mimic the field that they come and play 81 games on. So, um just going down there and conversing with the head groundskeeper and their grounds crew about, you know, what we do here, if they can incorporate anything down there.

Now that it's the ninth month of my pregnancy I had to start delegating more of the stressful type of job duties, I guess my two assistants which I have been here for a very long time.

I think they are nervous and I think they're, you know, excited at the same time. I'm sure that they have no qualms or worries about getting that field 100% playable. I think it's the, the uncertainty of weather concerns, um you know, how that's going to play out, how um, how to deal with upper management or, um you know, being the face of the grounds crew now instead of me.

Even though I have been hands on work wise out there, I mean I still had another side to me, you know dealing with management, dealing with the players, dealing with the coaching staff, corporate sales, arranging field events. So there's so many things under the umbrella as a groundskeeper not just getting that field playable.

NICK: When I first found out that I have to take over her role, I did have a lot of questions, ah mainly, what goes on behind the scenes that you don't see in the rain room.

NICOLE: The weather patterns here in Baltimore are a lot different than any other club in Major League Baseball. The only one that maybe can relate to us is ah, the Nationals in DC.

It's different than in San Diego you know, that you might have a shot of getting some rain but for the most part you're gonna be, you know, you know, sunny and dry and, you know, a temperature of 70 some degrees every single day.

Weather drives everything in Baltimore. You have the storm systems that come over the mountains that can hit you pretty hard or break up and then blow up again once they're over the water, the harbor or the Chesapeake Bay. Watching the weather from the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep is crucial here.

NICK: The behind the scenes in like the rain situations when it's raining during a game 'cause that's where it's really stressful. You know if we get the tarp on in time, everything is great.

If ah it's like a five-ten minute thing, the starter can just rest as if it's in between an inning. If it's gonna be a half hour, 45 minutes, he's gonna need a new pitcher, so he's thinking alright, now who do I have in the bull pen. I have to get him mentally prepared for the game. I have to have him at least 20 minutes to warm up so he's ready to go into the game where we have to get that that timing correct where we're gonna pull the tarp off. It's the fifth inning, it's not a complete game. So are we gonna refund tickets, is that gonna cost us money? Is it gonna cost us money with concessions? Is it gonna cost us money with the TV? Is it gonna cost us money if someone gets hurt on

our playing surface? If the game is going to be canceled we all have to gather and figure out, when are we gonna make it up? It's hard enough just reading the radar itself.

With the Opening Day, we have a brand new crew. We have one woman that's going to be on the grounds crew. Her name is Katie. Last year, we had one woman as a tarp crew member, which they just come in for game times. She won an award for being like rookie of the year, just amazing. She took direction great. Um, the physical part was not an issue whatsoever, great attitude every day. She's returning and then we also have another one.

Nicole is a big mentor to a lot of people. She just goes out and tries to show everybody every single job to get them ready to take the next step. She just knows how difficult it is in this industry.

NICOLE: Definitely, my life is gonna change as being first and foremost a parent, and that's going to be my #1 concern. My crew can get in touch with me at all times. Um, I'm never gonna not answer the phone, but I think they know better to just let me have my time.

NICK: I'd love to talk to her everyday just to see how she's doing or how the child's doing. I know she is really excited about it. Um, really don't want to talk to her about the field whatsoever.

NICOLE: You know, this is my, my love, my job, but, you know, I don't know how, what my role is gonna be like moving forward. And, you know, I want to play it by ear and cross that bridge when I get to it. But, um, you know, I want to be as a part of this family as I am my own family, my own new family. And I don't know what to expect. I don't know anybody else that has been in this situation that has actually given birth and, you know, has a demanding position like this.

*Here comes the pitch  
Right down the pike  
Is it a curve?  
No, it's a strike*

*Baseball! Is the name of the game  
The name of the game  
Baseball! Is the name of the game*

## Bonus Feature: "Making of the Soundtrack"

### "'Til the Last Man's Out"

Text on screen: Director Sarah Knight envisioned all female vocals for the DIAMONDS soundtrack. However, very few women have recorded baseball songs. Nine Simone and Mabel Scott did, but those versions were beyond the film's budget. Knight researched and discovered a trove of old baseball ditties from the late 1800s-early 1900s. She sent them to musicians in all different genres and asked them to choose one to adapt to their specific style.

ERIN MCGRANE: I thought it was interesting that there was this whole subgenre of baseball songs which I'd never heard, didn't know anything about. It was a really interesting slice of life description in these songs as well. It talked about everybody going to the ballpark and riding there in a car like specifically mentioning that 'cause that was a big deal.

JEFF FRELING: The group mentality and, and the, the crowd and the cheering.

ERIN: Yeah and what a huge thing baseball was during the 20s. I mean it was the great American sport, it was what everybody was doing and, um, just the absolutely joy of it.

And I think our challenge was to take those songs somehow that are so specific to that time period and then also specific to baseball. I mean they're really niche songs, but to make that somehow um universal and that, you know, that made sense for us to do it. And still felt like something, you know, that had our stamp on it.

JEFF: We go by the name Victor & Penny. Ah, we do music from the '20s and '30s on electric guitar and ukulele. Also do a lot of material of our own sort of based on that prohibition era style jazz.

ERIN: We play music we call Antique Pop. The thing I liked about "Won't Go Home 'Til the Last Man's Out" was I just liked the lyrics of it, probably more than the tune itself. The tunes are all fairly simplistic because they're actually -- I mean they're meant to be sung along. It paints this whole picture of going to the ball park and they are going with this huge group of people and they are not leaving until -- till it's over, like they are staying all the way to the end.

JEFF: No matter what the score is.

ERIN: Do or die, doesn't matter, like we're in for the long haul. I just, I just, I just like that idea.

*So I won't go home 'til the last man's out*

*I don't care how you pull or shout  
I'm just crazy to see a game  
Life without it would be real tame*

*When there's two men down and a man on third  
Watch this boy give the old ball a clout*

*I'd give my last dollar to sit there and holler  
Until the last man's out*

JEFF: The cool thing about the recording sessions for this tune, it was actually the first recording session as Victor & Penny and ah we used a good friend of ours in Chicago named Mark Greenberg, a very successful recording engineer.

ERIN: Mark had cool equipment in his recording studio so and he was a real fan kind of, um, ribbon mics and, and just older equipment that was more authentic to the time. So he helped us kind of find that right, um, blend between modern and, and vintage, you know, sounds.

JEFF: We, we added an interesting element in the studio of using early ah drum machine basically from like the '50s or '60s so it still sounded kinda old, you know, but it kinda put kind of a modern spin, on the recording, but really in adapting it to our style we just kinda played it the way we play these tunes from that era and it just, it just fit.

ERIN: I worked in science before I did music which is also a male dominated field, and so, um, I'm always interested in working on projects that celebrate women finding their way and having success and creating space for themselves in something that is generally male dominated and especially sports. I felt proud of her for all the things that she accomplished. And if we can add a little bit to it, I think that's great. And I love that Sarah asked a lot of women to be involved in the music side of it 'cause there's a lot of women on this ah soundtrack and I think that's important as well.

### **"Back to the Bleachers for Mine"**

TANYA DONOVAN: I picked, "Back to the Bleachers for Mine." I really looked at the words and what struck me about my song that I chose was "mine, mine, mine, mine, mine."

*Back to the bleachers for mine, mine, mine!*

TANYA: If I were a woman in that time I would just wanna be screaming and expressing myself and not being so contained in a corset and having to be just so and



proper. Women didn't even have the right to vote when that song was made so they could have been thinking about suffrage at that very moment when they're hearing that song.

I took the music to a friend of mine, Josh Cop, who's a sound engineer in Brooklyn and I asked him, you know, "Can we mess around with this? Let's deconstruct it, let's make it more contemporary." He had guitar and drums first. You need the drums to get that beat for rock, that driving beat and then when he did the guitar that really informed us because it's like [Makes guitar noises] and that really, that guitar with the words mine, mine, mine we started to think maybe this is punk.

*Her sweetheart said, girlie  
Let's get married early  
If you'll be my bride in July*

TANYA: The song is very contained and very pretty so punk was a great genre to just bust outta that mold. And it gave me permission to scream, to talk, to have all that breathy like [Make heavy breathing sounds], do all that emotional stuff. It, it gave us permission to do those gang vocals. And we got a neighbor to come in and sing, "Back, back, back!" and then he tracks it all together so it sounds like, like a little mini-crowd going, you know repeating the "Back, back!"

*Back, back, back to the bleachers  
For mine, for mine!*

TANYA: I felt like we were blessed by the spirit of Ramones or something. I thought, oh ok, this is gonna work, this gonna work. When you go into record you take a bunch of takes and then you can edit the best ones or if you find some kinda melody that's for color he can add it in.

Josh took some takes that I thought were like so stupid. I was like, "We can't use that! I'm too breathy!" Or even in the beginning where I go, "Okay!" I don't even remember doing that.

*Okay!*

TANYA: We just had some drinks and just sang the heck out of it.

### **"I Want to Go to the Ball Game"**

ROBERTA SCHULTZ: We really liked that it was a woman's point-of-view of going to the ball game. Even though it was from the early 1900s, it's all about going to the ball game, being an involved fan, watching her man be real excited about the game. And

since ah, the whole documentary was about a woman in baseball, we wanted to start right at the very beginning with a woman in baseball.

VIOLET RAE WEBSTER: We were performing for an Old West Festival at the time. And they have a Vintage Baseball Weekend. We decided we would break the song out to see how it flew and if the audiences liked it. We started working on the arrangement and organically coming up with a three-part harmony. We were doing it at that time in ah three-four just like "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," but the director suggested that um, maybe we put our swing style on it.

ROBERTA: We ended up working with Jump 'n Jive Swing Band. They tried out several arrangements, but the arrangement they really liked was one by Jim Pelz who's a local musician. Ah, he used to play with the Tommy Dorsey Band.

VICKIE ELLIS: I think it was a really interesting process for us as well because we hadn't worked with a big band before either, although it's something that we always wanted to do.

ROBERTA: I can tell you that they've very loud to sing with.

VIOLET: Yes, they are.

VICKIE: When we were in the rehearsal hall, and we're facing them and singing, I, I almost felt like the commercial where the wind is blowing your hair back. That, that's the way the sound felt when it was coming straight at us.

VIOLET: It was pretty exhilarating. I mean you have that much sound and those many different instruments in one session. It, it's really exciting. Ah, I mean, we get excited over creating wonderful three-part harmony a cappella but to have all of that sound together, was pretty amazing.

*I want to go to the ballgame  
I'm a fall dame for a ballgame  
I wanna get the crowd going  
And root, and hoot, and shout*

*I want to go to the pastime  
Have a fast time like the last time  
And yell "Swat a single two, sacker or bingle  
But don't fan out"*

VICKIE: We did record separately. So we rehearsed together, they practiced, we practiced, we'd come back together, we rehearsed together again, but then when we got

into the recording process, we were in the studio after they had been in the studio recording.

VIOLET: With headphones and just singing it like we were around a, a single mic um singing as the front women or the chirps, if you will, for a big band.

VICKIE: The old time baseball players have really enjoyed it, because it's something that harkens back to their era. And, um it's, it's just something that people tend to take notice of, because it is from a female perspective.

### **"The Grand Old Game"**

LISA BIALES: The song just spoke to me. I could just imagine people at an old time ball field kinda swaying back and forth, to a waltz and singing along.

I knew that ah, one of the other groups was doing a song with a big band and that other people were doing it with more ah instrument. So I thought, well I think I'd just like to do this one with just me and my guitar, as simply as possible and kinda capture that old time baseball feel.

It was written for piano and ah, just adapting it to guitar I sort of modernized the melody. The chorus goes, "Baseball, baseball" and I thought that the song was so delightful, I wanted to change it a bit, so I made it...

*Baseball, baseball!  
Ever exciting, always inviting  
There's nothing so near to America's heart  
As the good old game*

LISA: I recorded the song in my home studio. I just sat quietly and ah, imagined a ball diamond full of people in their beautiful gowns and their parasols. And I imagined the team and I sat here with my guitar and I sang right into the microphone. It was one take basically.

### **"Baseball Song"**

MICHAL TOWBER: I found out about this project through Jamahl Richardson, um, who is the one that produced the track. Um, and we have a mutual friend, Dave Liang, who is the mastermind behind Shanghai Restoration Project.

The song is very, very old. It has like a very specific kind of period piece kind of sound and Jamahl really um, he does very modern kind of electronic music. And, so it was

very exciting to kind of see his, his vision take shape. I couldn't really imagine how he would adapt it into a more modern sound.

When I originally went in to sing it, I was singing it very straight, because you know in, in these old timey songs it was like, you know, very straight delivery and he wanted me to swing it a little bit more to make it more modern. So, he just added a little bit of syncopation.

Let's take like the um, "Star Spangled Banner" or something, right? If you're singing it very, very straight it'd be like, "O say can you see" and if you're trying to do it more syncopated it would be like, "O say...can you see...by...the dawn's...early light..." so kind of like playing around with the rhythm, playing around with the melody, making it more of a, I don't know, a living piece rather than like a historical kind of set interpretation.

He had laid down some keyboards and a beat at that point. So it was something that was very simple but it gave definitely a vibe and something that I could sing to. Um, and then he actually layered and looped things later of my performance as well, so I think I sang it through a couple of times um just with the syncopated rhythms and then he kind of took it and made it into a whole other animal.

*Then take the bat and the ball in hand  
Let the umpire sing out "play"  
For baseball is a noble game  
And 'tis our toast today  
And 'tis our toast today*

### **"Nicole's Baseball Boogie"**

Text on screen: Director Sarah Knight also wanted to create an anthem specifically for Nicole, so she approached blues musician, Gaye Adegbalola, about whom she had made a documentary in 2008.

GAYE ADEGBALOLA: When Sarah told me that it was about Nicole and that it was going to be called "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend," I knew I could write that song.

We started out with the alliteration, "Nicole's Baseball Boogie." I also knew that I wanted it up tempo and a boogie-woogie if you really do it well it's up tempo. I had an idea that I used in the bridge because she works for the Orioles. So right away I thought about "Rockin' Robin." "Started going steady and a bless my soul, out-bopped the buzzard and the oriole."

*...proud of Camden Yards and the Orioles.*

*Now the weather's foul...*

GAYE: I had that little bit of musical hook and then I started playing with all the terms. I knew that just me and guitar wasn't going to be a good enough rendition. So I know someone who is perhaps the best boogie-woogie player anywhere around these parts and that's Roddy Barnes, and I often work with a young man named Jeff Covert. Jeff can play lead guitar and bass and drums. So I wanted drums and guitar and my vocal, and so that's how we put it together.

*This girl is a diamond's best friend,  
This girl is a diamond's best friend,  
This girl is a diamond's best friend,  
From home plate out past the bullpen*

*Hey, there's no flies on us  
Nicole Sherry, I got your bases covered*

### **"Sports Baseball"**

Text on screen: The only music pieces not recorded originally for the film were created by Parisian composer, Jean-Pascal Viefmaure.

JEAN-PASCAL VIELFAURE: I create music which is used in radio and TV and so my idea was to have a whole series on sports. Sarah must have done a search on baseball and came across the jingle I had just done to be used in a movie about baseball.

For the baseball jingle, before everything it starts from a big selection of sound effects. So, there's a first track with a stopwatch so each touch corresponds to a little sound. There you go. The second track is a swing so I lower it, then slow it down, there we go. And another track with a whistle. So afterwards I'm going to create a little rhythm.

I'll dedicate the new baseball piece to Nicole.

I have another sound of an air horn to use. And I can potentially put in the National Anthem.

I discovered a totally unknown world. In France you almost never see baseball on TV so I discovered a universe that, well, that's fascinating.

**Bonus Feature: "Nicole's Baseball Boogie"**

*Hey, batter! Hey, batter! Hey, batter!*

*Hey, batter! Hey, batter!  
I ain't throwing you a curve  
I'm a tarp-tossin' woman  
Haven't you heard?*

*Hey, pitcher! Hey, pitcher!  
The mound is tamped just right  
So wind it up and change it up  
This ground is fine all night*

*It's extraordinary  
Tended by me, Miss Sherry  
Yeah, it's a beautiful site*

*This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
From home plate out past the bull pen*

*Hey, Mr. Umpire  
You can clearly see my chalk  
Whether they swing and run  
Or whether they walk*

*Out there in the outfield  
It's the smoothest warning track  
No bad hops on my infield  
We don't drag it like that*

*Camden Yards gets commentaries  
From our fans and adversaries  
I'm so proud of my habitat*

*This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
From home plate out past the bull pen*

*You know there's nothin' artificial  
Just real good sod  
A team of willing workers  
My hard workin' squad*

*No divots, no roughs  
No uneven holes  
Proud of Camden Yards  
And the Orioles!*

*Now if the weather's foul  
A nasty cloudburst  
Yeah we've got it covered  
There's no need to curse*

*No need to squawk and balk  
It could be worse  
But everything will be fine  
'Cuz you're on my turf*

*I'll know what to do  
What to say to the crew  
Keepin' this ground is my artwork*

*Yeah, this girl is a diamond's best friend  
I said, this girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
From home plate out past the bull pen*

*Nothin' artificial  
Real good sod  
A crew of willing workers  
My hard workin' squad*

*No divots, no roughs  
No uneven holes  
Proud of Camden Yards  
And the Orioles!*

*Now if the weather's foul  
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It could be worse  
But everything will be fine  
'Cuz you're on my turf*

*I'll know what to do  
What to say to the crew  
Keepin' this ground is my artwork*

*This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
This girl is a diamond's best friend  
From home plate out past the bull pen*

*Hey, there's no flies on us  
I'm havin' a ball  
Just call me the clean-up woman  
Or just call me Doctor Fieldgood*

*Hey, this is major  
I have stepped out of the box  
And I can catch anything you throw my way*

*You know, this is me, it's Miss Sherry  
Something extraordinary, Miss Sherry  
Extraordinary, oh yeah  
Oh, yeah, Nicole Sherry  
I got your bases covered*

[END]