

Jackie Robinson: Breaking the Melanin Barrier

By

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FADE IN

INT. BROOKLYN DODGERS STADIUM- CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Video is black and white.

A group of old white men are gathered in a conference room. Outside the window is the baseball field. BRANCH RICKEY is standing at one end of the table. The team owner, WALTER O'MALLEY, is at the other end. A fat white man, BOB, is sitting to the right of Walter.

WALTER

And you want to sign this- Jackie Robinson?

BRANCH

Yes, sir. On top of being one of the best defensive players I've ever seen, he's--

Bob is handed a folder by an assistant who quickly leaves after dropping it off. Bob is mortified

BOB

Sir, I think you should see the stats on this guy.

BRANCH

(proudly)

Ahh yes, hitting three eighty-seven through 47 games, 13 stolen bases already, which puts him on pace for nearly 40 in a full seas--

BOB

Not those stats- look. The concentration of melanin in his skin is through the roof.

The other men around the table gasp in horror.

BRANCH

I'm aware of that, but what does that have to do with anything? We were so close last year, what with tying for 1st place but losing the tie-breaker to saint lou--

RANDOM GUY 1

Branch, you *knew* about this??

RANDOM GUY 2  
My God, man!

RANDOM GUY 3  
A high concentration of melanin in  
his skin?! Are you insane?!

RANDOM GUY 1  
Oh dear God, our wives- they have  
low concentrations of melanin- he  
won't be able to help himself!

RANDOM GUY 3  
My wife ain't gettin' raped by no  
high concentration of  
melanin-haver!

BRANCH  
Did I miss something, here? I  
could've sworn we were in the  
business of winning baseball games.  
Getting over the hump and winning  
the pennant should be--

BOB  
(accusatory)  
What've you got to say for  
yourself, Branch??

In the background, Random Guy 3 runs to the phone on the  
wall to call his wife.

RANDOM GUY 3  
(into phone)  
Get my wife on the phone!... who am  
I?! There's no time for that!  
Damn it, woman, you're killing her!

BRANCH  
Mr. Robinson will be a tremendous  
asset to our team--

RANDOM GUY 1  
Them high concentration of melanin  
havers is savages!! They don't even  
talk right!

BRANCH  
Actually that's completely  
inaccurate. Mr. Robinson is right  
outside and he's a very polite  
young man- here, I'll bring'em in.

Branch goes to open the door to the conference room.

RANDOM GUY 2  
 (gradually louder, panicking)  
 No... NO... NOOOOO!!!!!!

Random Guy 2 throws himself head-first through the glass window (that overlooks the field) and plummets to the concrete below.

RANDOM GUY 3  
 (on phone)  
 Honey?! Honey?! Thank God! Listen-  
 get outta there- no, wait!! I bet  
 that's just what he wants! Lock the  
 doors, get the shotgun out of the  
 cabinet in the-- yeah, the one next  
 to the kid's toy-chest... yes, it's  
 already loaded- take Billy and  
 Johnny and get into the cellar!

JACKIE ROBINSON (28, black) enters the room. He's dressed in a very nice suit and appears both eager and nervous. He smiles and speaks to Walter. He speaks perfectly and with no slang.

JACKIE  
 Mr. O'Malley, I just wanted to  
 thank you for this wonderful  
 opportunity. I fear that words can  
 hardly do justice to the extent of  
 my gratitude.

RANDOM GUY 3  
 (phone still in hand; stunned)  
 My God- he's here...

Random Guy 3 drops the phone receiver and tries to escape; he darts towards the door, only to realize Jackie is between him and the door. He then panics and goes out the window, breaking a fresh window rather than using the one that was already broken by Random Guy 2.

RANDOM GUY 3 (CONT'D)  
 (as he leaps through window)  
 No! I'm coming Melllll-aaa-niiieee!!

Jackie is un-phased; he continues.

JACKIE  
 You can count on me to work as hard  
 as I possibly can, and know that  
 your generosity in allowing a man  
 of my concentration of melanin to  
 join this league has surely secured  
 you your place in Heaven.

A few beats; Branch hopes Walter and the others who are left see what a gentleman Jackie is. The others wait to see how Walter is going to react. Bob doesn't wait.

BOB  
I've notified security, they'll be  
here momentarily.

None of the other execs react, nor does Walter.

BRANCH  
Come on, Jackie, I'll give you a  
tour of the facilities.

Branch and Jackie leave; Branch pops his head back in.

BRANCH  
When you gentlemen get your heads  
out of your asses, please give me a  
call.

Branch leaves. Bob speaks, thinking he's making a clever comeback.

BOB  
Pfft! Hope he's not expecting a  
call anytime soon...

Walter looks at Bob as if to say, "wow, you ARE an idiot."