

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE

2016-17 SEASON

PLAYGUIDE

NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 24

GOING TO SEE THE KID

THE CREATORS:

Playwright Drukman and
director Greenfield on the
“shotgun marriage” that
created *Going to See
the Kid*

THE SPLENDID SPLINTER:

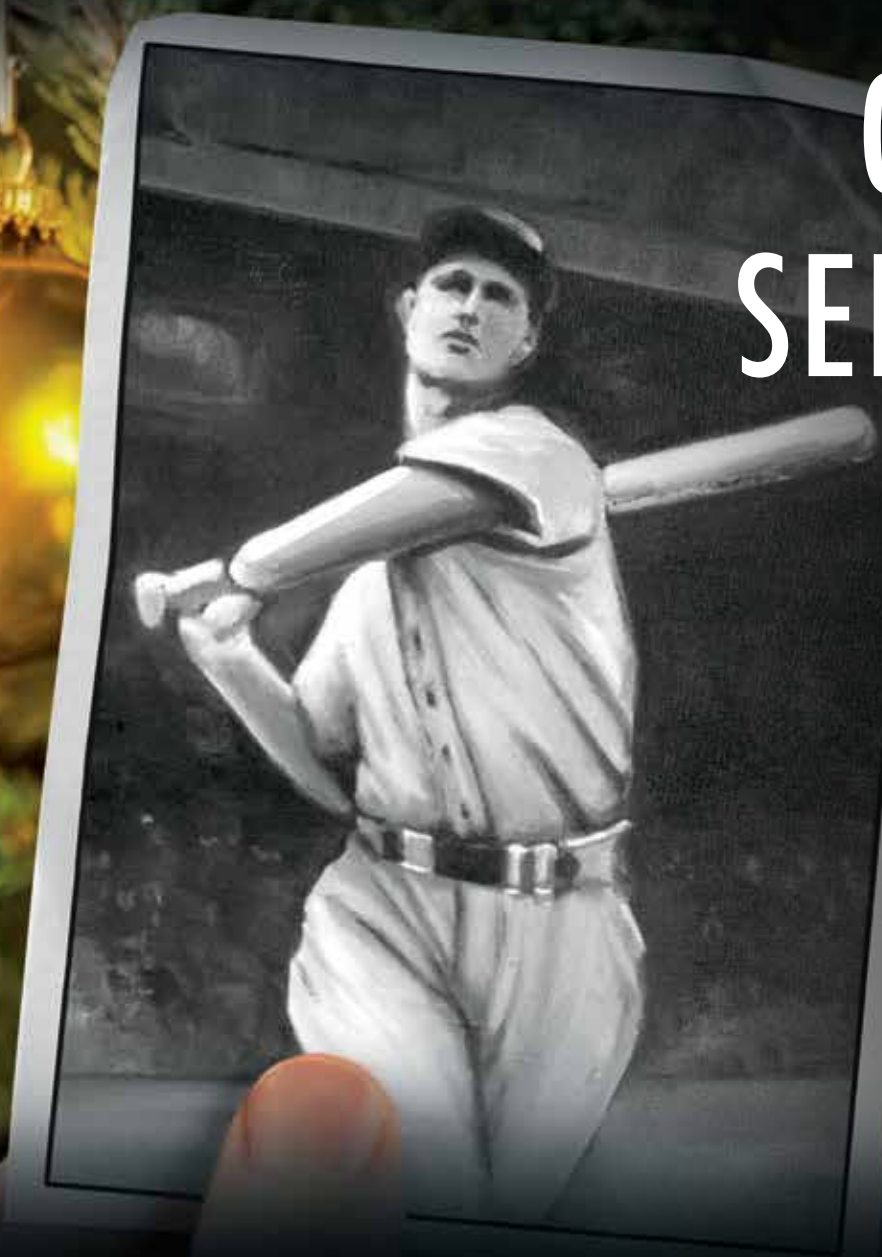
Ted Williams,
Red Sox Legend

WRITTEN BY
Steven Drukman

DIRECTED BY
Alexander Greenfield

DESIGN SCRAPBOOK:

Sets and costumes for
Going to See the Kid



SEAN DANIELS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



ELIZABETH KEGLEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

GOING TO SEE THE KID

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JOEL COLODNER†

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COSTUME DESIGNER
STEPHANIE LEVIN

JOHN GREGORIO†

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DIRECTED BY
ALEXANDER GREENFIELD

NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 24, 2016

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Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), Actors' Equity Association (AEA), Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), and United Scenic Artists Local (USA) USA-829, IATSE.

† Member MRT Patriot Program.

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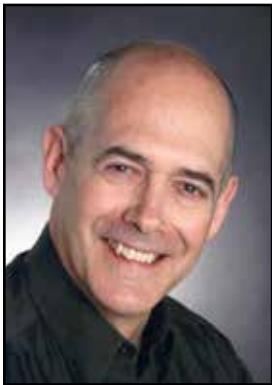


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The Cast of GOING TO SEE THE KID



JOEL COLODNER
(Simon)

MRT: *It's a Wonderful Life* (Fred die Fillmore), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Baylen), *Mrs. Whitney* (Francis). **Broadway:** *They Knew What They Wanted*, *A Memory of Two Mondays*, *The Beggar's Opera*, *Measure for Measure*. **Off-Broadway:** *How I Learned to Drive* (Uncle Peck), *Golden Boy*, *Do I Hear a Waltz?*

Regional: *Our Town* (Stage Manager), Huntington Theatre Company; *Threepenny Opera* (Macheath), Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Streamers* (Richie), *Comedians*, *Hamlet* (Horatio), Arena Stage; *The American Clock*, *Measure for Measure*, *Wild Oats*, Mark Taper Forum; *The Rainmaker* (Starbuck), Guthrie Theatre; *Da'arlin Juno*, Long Wharf; *A Christmas Carol* (Scrooge), Alliance Theatre; *The Seagull* (Konstantin), Pittsburgh Public Theatre; among many. **TV:** *L.A. Law*, *Moonlighting*, *Remington Steele*, *Cagney and Lacey*, *St. Elsewhere*, *21 Jump Street*, *Law and Order*. **Film:** *The Kirlian Witness*, *Arthur – On the Rocks*, *Who is Julia?*, *Betrayed by Innocence*, *Not My Kid*, *Malice in Wonderland*. **Education:** BA, Cornell University. MFA, Southern Methodist University.



VERONIKA DUERR
(Ellis)

MRT: *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Home of the Brave* (Marianne), *It's A Wonderful Life* (Lana Sherwood). **Regional:** *Tall Girls* (World Premiere), *Spoon Lake Blues* (World Premiere), Alliance Theatre; *Bob: A Life in Five Acts*, Geva Theatre; *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet),

As You Like It (Rosalind), *Twelfth Night* (Viola), Atlanta Shakespeare Company. **Education:**

BFA, Savannah College of Art and Design. **Other:** 2015 Alliance Theatre Artistic Fellow; Co-founder of The Weird Sisters Theatre Project, a collective of female artists in Atlanta.



JOHN GREGORIO
(David)

MRT: *Home of the Brave* (Adrian). **Off-Broadway:** *Around the World in 80 Days* (Passepartout), The New Theatre @ 45th St; *Silent Laughter* (Lionel Drippinwithit), The Lamb's Theatre; *The Nuclear Family* (founder/performer), The Belt Theatre; *Clinton the Musical* (Dick Morris),

NY Music Theatre Festival. **Regional:** *The Royale* (Max), Milwaukee Repertory; Mary Zimmerman's *Treasure Island* (Ben Gunn), Berkeley Rep; *Little Shop of Horrors* (Orin the Dentist), *The 39 Steps* (Richard Hannay), Geva Theatre Center; *A Christmas Carol* (Fred/Fezziwig), Actors Theatre of Louisville; *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Hysterium), North Shore Music Theatre; *The Legend of Pecos Bill* (Ace High), Alliance Theatre; *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Edgar/Jane/Irma), Dad's Garage Theatre Company. **Television:** *The Extended Family*, Sundance Channel; *Good Eats*, Food Network; *Smoking Gun TV*, Court TV. **Other:** John is a founding member of Dad's Garage Theatre Company (Atlanta) and the Nuclear Family (New York) with whom he teaches and performs improvisation around the country.

THE ROAD TRIP

Simon, Ellis, and David's road trip takes them from Boston, MA to Hernando, FL. Here are the stops they hit:



Q&A: STEVEN DRUKMAN & ALEXANDER GREENFIELD



Steven Drukman, Playwright



Alexander Greenfield, Director

Steven, you're a huge Red Sox fan. How did you get hooked?

Steven Drukman: My father had season tickets to Fenway Park on the third base line. There was no way to not become a Red Sox fan.

I'd see something like a game a week, and I became a rabid fan. I memorized stats and numbers, and speculated about trades. Before fantasy baseball got big, I would construct ideal Red Sox teams that were made up of my favorite players from other teams, or historical Red Sox teams.

Is Ellis is a representation of your own fandom?

SD: Definitely. In her ardor, and extreme fandom. That's one part of me. And then Simon is another part of me: someone who reacts to that fandom with a bit of chagrin at the clannishness that team sports can excite in members of our species. While I am a Red Sox fan, I still don't lose the perspective of seeing how obnoxious Red Sox fans can be.

Alexander, on the other hand—you were recently at Fenway Park for the very first time?

Alexander Greenfield: In comparison to Steven, I feel like a complete neophyte. I grew up in Atlanta and we went to Braves games, but I never considered myself a Braves fan. Then I lived in New York for ten years, but never became a Yankees or Mets fan.

But there is something special about Fenway Park's placement at the heart of Boston. It feels more in touch

with the community. Walking to the stadium alongside the throngs of fans contextualized for me a certain New England spirit. The rabidity with which people feel dedicated to their home team was very palpable.

When David Ortiz stepped out of the dugout, everyone gave him a standing ovation. And then when he struck out, they remained on their feet and applauded him, reassuring him that their love had not swayed. In the theatre world, this is something that even our greatest divas are rarely afforded.

What has this collaboration been like for the two of you?

SD: The pairing was sort of a shotgun marriage; we knew people in common. But it's worked out really well. To speak candidly, it's been the nicest part of the experience. Alex is not only a really generous collaborator and a gentle dramaturg, but he's contributed to the script in a way that has made it what it is.

AG: As a Jewish guy who didn't grow up in Boston or as a sports fan, there seems to be a sort of perversity that I'm directing the Christmas play about the Red Sox. But in some way I see it as my greatest asset to the process.

It enables my chief interest to be making the backbone

of the play and the core of the story as strong and as interesting as possible. Because Steven and I are not identical in our extracurricular interests, I can allow my ignorance to point out ways

we can strengthen or add connective tissue, or further explanation – so we can satisfy the many who share Ellis' fandom, but also create a theatre experience that doesn't leave anyone out.

Is it a challenge to have Ted Williams, this larger-than-life icon, at the center of a play?

AG: One of the first things we instinctively agreed on when we first met, was that we didn't want to hang our hats on an emulation of Ted Williams—or of any notable Red Sox player of the past or present.

We needed an original story, with original characters. And when we do encounter Williams, there had to be

“You have to do as much research as possible – then let go of that research as you're making the play.”

some kind of theatrical conceit which makes it about our protagonists' encounter with him, through their lens, which can play on our own perceptions. People like Williams are icons and heroes to us. The efficacy of the endeavor couldn't rely on how virtuosic or precise an actor's impression was. We couldn't just rely on having auditions to find someone that looks and sounds exactly like him.

SD: To add to that: I've written a sports biography play, about the boxer Joe Louis. And I learned, in the process of rewrites and rehearsals for that play, that what always happens is that biographical minutiae are removed from the play, more and more and more, as you get closer to opening night. Because if you have intelligent people in the rehearsal room – actors, directors, dramaturgs – maybe an intelligent playwright – you're concerned about the theatrical event.

You have to do as much research as possible – then let go of that research as you're making the play.

Alexander, how much of the physical design stems from your vision?

AG: I remember Steven saying to me, "how do you do a road trip onstage?" It's gonna mean a lot of locations, but you don't wanna have to haul out naturalistic scenery for each one, which stalls the proceedings and eliminates the fleet-footedness of the play.

At the earliest stage, we didn't really know what the story was yet. We just knew it would involve two reporters—and that it was going to be a road trip of some sort. Our scenic designer Jason Sherwood and I had to cook up a space that puts us inside the world of these two journalists, but also can transform readily to recreate different locales.

And flexibly –because the play's still being written. I want to be able to go into rehearsals, and discover "Oh! It would be great to be able to have another location." Or "Oh! It would be great for this thing to be able to move here."

So it's really about creating a container that sets you up with the arsenal, so that the lighting designer Brian Lilienthal and I can go in and carve up that space with light, and if we need to add a location, Brian and I can

"We had to cook up a space that puts us inside the world of these two journalists, but also can transform readily to recreate different locales."

say "Let's use the tools we have to create a new location out of shape and light," instead of "Oh no, we didn't think to order a giant I-285 sign for when they get trapped in traffic in Atlanta for a scene that's yet to be written."

Steven, why do you write for the stage?

SD: I was a journalist before I was a playwright—and an actor before that. And I think both of those jobs were gateway jobs to playwriting, which I didn't know at the time.

To me, what playwrights are are actor-journalists. They use the body of an actor to report concerns to our species. Even if it's not factual journalism, it's emotional journalism.

Perhaps I'm lucky that I don't really have the facility to write novels and short stories – because playwriting forces me out of myself. You have to be somewhat social, which is something for a real extreme introvert like myself to be. And so I just love writing for the stage.



John Gregorio, Veronika Duerr, and Joel Colodner.
Photo by Meghan Moore

TED WILLIAMS

THEODORE SAMUEL WILLIAMS

INDUCTED TO THE HALL OF FAME IN: 1966

PRIMARY TEAM: BOSTON RED SOX

PRIMARY POSITION: LEFT FIELDER

Ted Williams always knew what he wanted. Others could debate who was the best all-around player in baseball history. Williams was a hitter. "All I want out of life is that when I walk down the street folks will say, 'There goes the greatest hitter that ever lived,'" Williams said.

He accomplished his goal. Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron may have been better power hitters. You could argue that the graceful Joe DiMaggio or Willie Mays was a better all-around player. If you're talking about the greatest hitter that ever stepped into the batters box, the discussion begins with the long-time Red Sox left fielder.

Williams wrote the book on hitting--his "The Science Of Hitting" disproves the adage that great hitters can't teach hitting.

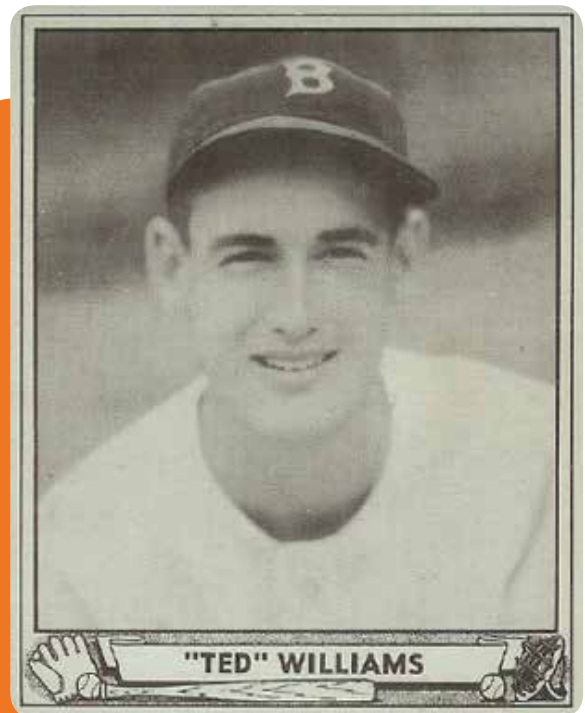
He won six batting titles, but that doesn't really explain his mastery at the plate. Thanks to an excellent batting eye, Williams led the American League in on-base percentage seven straight years and 12 times overall. His .482 career on-base percentage is the best of all time. And he wasn't just doing it with walks and singles. Williams led the AL in home runs four times, and his .634 career slugging percentage is second to only Ruth.

He did all of it despite missing most of five seasons due to military service. He learned to fly fighter planes during World War II, working as an instructor from 1943-1945. He was recalled to duty in 1952 during the height of the Korean War, and he served in Korea for more than a year, flying combat missions in a Marine fighter jet.

That missed time explains why the game's greatest

Ted Williams - Career Stats

Games 2292			
At Bats 7706		Runs 1798	
Hits 2654	Doubles 525	Triples 71	
Home Runs 521	RBI 1839	Stolen Bases 24	Walks 2021
Batting Average .344	OPS 1.116	On Base % .482	Slugging % .634



hitter didn't reach 3,000 hits. After missing the all-star game as a rookie, Williams was an all-star in every non-military interrupted season of the rest of his career. He wasn't just being grandfathered in. In his final season, 1960, as a 41-year-old, he hit .316 with 29 home runs. His body may have been failing him, but his ability to hit never left.

Williams' goal was never to be beloved. He took his hitting into the outfield early in his career--he'd practice swings between pitches. Those kind of quirks and some signs of defensive indifference didn't always endear him to Red Sox' fans. His relationship with the Boston community wasn't helped by a long-running feud between Williams and much of the Boston media. The newspapermen didn't make Williams' life any easier, but Williams didn't help himself with his legendary stubbornness. The same personality that ensured he could remember a pitch that struck him out three months before was not going to forget any slights inflicted by a hostile press.

After his retirement, the memories of his difficulties with fans slowly retreated, while the memories of his amazing career, and his honorable military service became more and more prominent. By the time he threw out the first pitch for the 1999 all-star game, he was revered as a baseball treasure, as the game's best current players mobbed Williams to touch and talk to the game's biggest star.



Ted Williams

Narrative courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, with more information available at www.baseballhall.org.



John Gregorio, Veronika Duerr, and Joel Colodner. Photo by Meghan Moore

DRESSED FOR THE JOB



Stephanie Levin's research images for costume designing Going to See the Kid

Shira Springer covers sports and society for NPR and WBUR, and writes a column on women's sports for the Boston Globe. She was on the Globe staff in 2001, when *Going to See the Kid* takes place. Shira was an invaluable consultant for our costume designer Stephanie Levin, who used Shira's descriptions of her professional wardrobe to design Ellis' look in the show:

“What was it like to be a young female sports reporter in 2001? Well, I was given a lot of great opportunities and lot of responsibility. I covered the Red Sox, Celtics, Bruins and Patriots and traveled a lot. (I always prided myself in never checking bags. I could pack everything I needed in a carry-on, whether I was gone for two days or two weeks. Obviously, I'd repeat a lot of clothes over two-weeks.)

I don't know if I felt I had to act differently than my male counterparts, but I took my job seriously and wanted to be respected for my work. With that in mind, I dressed pretty conservatively. Most of my clothes came from Ann Taylor or Banana Republic or J. Crew. I tend to either go preppy-ish or athletic (at home, I'm a t-shirt and jeans or t-shirt and yoga pants type person, always have been). Nothing ever tight-fitting or low cut. Not my style and, in my book, not appropriate ”

SHAPE, TEXT, AND LIGHT

MRT's set for *Going to See the Kid* takes an unusual approach: it is made of LED lights encased in plexiglass boxes, printed with actual text from *Boston Globe* articles.



Drawings from designer Jason Sherwood



Lighting and Sound Apprentice, Taylor Ovca, mounts the color-changing LEDs at BeNT Productions in Clinton, MA

Follow Jason's work on Facebook and Instagram, @JasonSherwoodDesign

GLOSSARY OF TERMS IN *GOING TO SEE THE KID*

AAA: The American Automobile Association, a not-for-profit service organization offering roadside assistance and other services since 1902.

AAA: The highest tier of Minor League Baseball in the United States and Mexico. Boston's AAA affiliate are the Pawtucket Red Sox.

Brattle Street: Street running through Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts; site of numerous historic buildings. Samuel Atkins Eliot wrote, "As a fashionable address it is doubtful if any other residential street in this country has enjoyed such long and uninterrupted prestige."

Bill Buckner/Mookie Wilson: In Game 6 of the 1986 World Series, with the Red Sox up three games to two, Wilson hit an easy grounder to Buckner, who let the ball slip between his legs, paving the way for the Red Sox' defeat.

Carbuncle: Cluster of boils that drain pus onto the skin.

Cavorting: Jumping or dancing around excitedly

Ty Cobb: Major League baseball player from Georgia; widely considered the best all-around baseball player to ever live.

Columbia Graduate School of Journalism



Columbia J School: Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; one of the oldest journalism schools in the United States, and the only one in the Ivy Leagues.

Congestive Heart Failure:

Condition of the heart being unable to pump blood sufficiently to meet the body's needs; symptoms include shortness of breath and excessive fatigue.

Curse of the Bambino: Curse afflicting the Boston Red Sox with an 86-year championship losing streak, brought about by the trade of Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees.

Dateline: In journalism, the line at the head of the article showing the date and place of writing.

T.S. Eliot: 20th century Modernist British poet, writer, and intellectual whose works include "The Wasteland" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

Grew up in Missouri and Massachusetts before expatriating to Great Britain and renouncing his American citizenship.



T.S. Eliot

Wrigley Field





Monticello

Enron: Former Texas-based energy company, whose bankruptcy in 2001 opened an enormous scandal in which multiple executives were charged and found guilty of a slew of crimes including bank fraud, money laundering, insider trading, conspiracy, and more.

Fustilarian: A low fellow, stinkard, or scoundrel

Carroll Hardy: Major League outfielder from 1958-1967; the only player to ever pinch-hit for Ted Williams

Hypertrophic: Characterized by excessive growth

Jimmy Fund: Foundation which raises funds to support cancer care and research at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, the treatment and research center in Boston and principle teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Ted Williams' support for the organization helped propel its success.

Oconee River



Junket: A free trip for a member of a press to cover a promoted event.

Monticello: The 5,000-acre plantation and home of Thomas Jefferson outside Charlottesville, Virginia.

Oconee River: 220-mile river running through Georgia; notorious for pollution from fecal coliform bacteria, fertilizer runoff, and sedimentation.

Salubrious: Giving of good health

Saugus: Largely industrial town in Essex County, Massachusetts.

Sciatica: Medical condition of pain going down the leg from the lower back.

Sweet Caroline:

Soft rock song penned by Neil Diamond in the late 60s and played at Fenway Park since at least 1997. Red Sox employee Amy Tobey started playing the song to send a good vibe into the crowd, especially if the team was ahead by the 7th inning. The anthem quickly became beloved by fans, and since 2002 it has been played in the eighth inning of every game.

Tanglewood: Music venue in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts

Sweet Caroline album cover



Timon of Athens: Tragedy by William Shakespeare, published in the First Folio, about the fortunes of a beloved citizen whose generosity is exploited by the corrupt.

Triple Crown: In baseball, when a player leads the league in three specific statistics in the same season: batting average, home runs, and runs batted in RBI. Roger Hornsby and Ted Williams are the only players in history to have won the Triple Crown twice.

Ralph Vaughn Williams/

Tennessee Williams: English classical composer, noted for his embracing of English folk music in composition; and American playwright, widely considered one of the greatest dramatic writers of the 20th century.

Wrigley Field: Home ballpark of the Chicago Cubs; the second-oldest stadium in Major League Baseball.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

1. Did you know anything about Ted Williams before seeing this play? What about Williams do you think makes him a **good subject for a play**?
2. At the end of the play, Ellis is surprised to learn certain things about Simon which **defied her expectations**. Have you ever been surprised by something you learned about someone?
3. Which one of the **“characters” played by David** was most interesting to you?
4. If you were a reporter, **what famous person** would you like to interview? What would you ask them?

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

- *The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams* by Ben Bradlee, Jr.
- *The Science of Hitting* by Ted Williams and John Underwood
- *The Teammates: a Portrait of Friendship* by David Halberstam