

### Skanks Logline:

In religion and football obsessed Alabama, a group of actors forge a familial bond, overcoming neglect and rejection, to produce an original drag musical.

### Skanks Short Synopsis:

In the winter of 2012 a community theatre in Birmingham, Alabama mounted an original musical, "Skanks in a One Horse Town." "Skanks" follows the actors and creators from rehearsal through performance and after, at work, at their homes, and with their families. The cast of amateur performers bond to form a family of sorts while creating an unconventional show in a conservative Southern city.

### Skanks Long Synopsis:

The documentary "Skanks" follows the creation of an original musical at a community theatre in Birmingham, Alabama. The film particularly focuses on the lives of four actors in the company, Chuck Duck, Flannery Hooks, Juan Carlos Battle, and Nick Crawford, as well as the playwright Billy Ray Brewton.

Thirty year-old Billy Ray Brewton founded Theatre Downtown to produce plays that other theatres in Birmingham were unwilling to do, plays that were profane or involved issues of sex and sexuality. One of these plays, a new musical written by Billy Ray himself, is called "Skanks in a One Horse Town." The play, uproarious and ribald, is about three women, played by men, who accidentally travel from 1978 Studio 54 to 1878 Deep Hole Texas via a disco ball time machine. Along with fellow time travelers Anita Bryant, Conway Twitty, and Meatloaf, the skanks, as the women are called, must stop a local baron from demolishing the town to make room for a new railroad before they return to 1978 and New York City.

Billy Ray has assembled a cast of his favorite local actors. Chuck Duck, a hairdresser by day, plays the role of Oklahoma Jones, one of the skanks. Chuck, recently diagnosed as HIV positive, believes that theatre is the only thing in his life that brings him joy. As we meet his parents, we see the stark religious background from which he has emerged and tried to overcome. Flannery Hooks is the talented composer of the music for the play. Newly married, she balances a job selling make-up at a local department store with her desire to write music and maybe someday have a recording career. "Skanks in a One Horse Town" is Juan Carlos Battle's first play since he was in the eighth grade. Juan works for his mother's consignment shop and lives with his mentally ill father. The play provides a new social group for him and a way to escape his trying life at home. Nick Crawford is considered the best actor in Birmingham. Many wonder when he will leave Birmingham for New York or Los Angeles, but Nick is terrified of being a professional actor. He believes that the rigors and stress of such a life will lead to an early death. This group, along with the rest of the

cast of 22, work together to build the play, unsure of how the local audience will respond to the crassness and audacity of the script.

Despite city that can be unwelcoming at times and a culture that tells them in subtle and not subtle ways that they are a second-class citizens, the cast of

twenty-two bonds to form a family of sorts, and the play becomes the most successful in Theatre Downtown history. "Skanks" is about the redemptive power of theatre, about the cast's irreverent humor and attempts to find joy no matter the obstacle. As one of the actors says, "When I'm on stage, and the audience is right there... it's bliss."