

# **Never Famous**

"A Comedy Pilot"

by  
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#### "NEVER FAMOUS"

At first glance TB TALENT is a Minnesota based, family friendly talent agency, but when the curtain is pulled back you find a collection of the most degenerate, delusional, and just plain flawed characters you could imagine. Forced to play second fiddle to a rival agency, both the acts and the agents battle drug addiction, narcissism, and their inability to be honest with the fact that they're a million miles from legitimate show business. Although blinded by their own selfish desires, the humanity in these broken souls creates an emotional tether that keeps you wanting to see their story unfold.

COLD OPEN

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTER - BACK PREP AREA - NIGHT

SERVICE STAFF enter and exit with food trays. CARL STONE, 42, a.k.a. MISTER LAUGHS, has on clown make-up and a full clown costume. He stops rolling a joint and looks up.

CARL

...am I, *happy*?

Carl stands with JAKE HANSEN, 26, wears a sport coat. Jake looks around trying to orient himself to this unusual environment.

JAKE

You just seem like you really have  
your life figured out.

Carl's exaggerated, painted smile contrasts his calm disposition. Carl finishes the joint one-handed and licks it shut.

CARL

You fucking with me?

Jake grins.

Carl hides the joint under his wig.

The SERVICE MANAGER, 33, balding, \$100 suit, thin mustache, saunters up with a clipboard.

SERVICE MANAGER

So which one of you is the clown?

(laughs at his own joke)

Kidding. Seriously, they are so excited for you. Please don't suck. God, I hope you're good. Please be good.

Carl looks at Jake like, 'Is this guy for real?' The Service Manager opens the door and HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN scream.

Carl looks back at Jake.

CARL

I'd be *happy* if you found me a lighter.

Carl lifts his wig so Jake can see the joint and winks. As he walks into the conference room, Carl immediately switches into character.

CARL (O.S.)  
Who wants a balloon animal?

All the children scream with joy as Carl expertly constructs an elaborate balloon-bicycle in seconds flat. Jake is impressed. Carl makes what clearly looks like a balloon-penis and hands it to one of the SOCCER MOMS.

CARL  
It's a sword.

He winks at her.

INT. CARL'S VAN - LATER

Carl exhales a giant cloud of smoke and shivers.

CARL  
Ugh, it's colder than a dead whore's tits.

Carl hands the joint to Jake and turns the heat on.

JAKE  
(mom voice)  
What is this, dope? I'm super disappointed in you, Carl.

Jake rips an even bigger hit.

CARL  
Oh, I didn't know I had Snoop Dogg on my hands.

JAKE  
(holding in the hit)  
The 'D-O' double...

Jake coughs. Carl removes his make-up.

JAKE  
I feel like I'm watching the Hulk turn back into Bruce Banner.

Only one side of his face is cleaned.

CARL  
Is this fucking you up?

JAKE  
Let's go freak out some kids.

Jake sees a pile of weed on a copy of the book *Walden*.

JAKE  
You're a reader?

CARL  
(holding in a hit)  
It was a gift.

JAKE  
I wrote my sophomore thesis on Thoreau.

CARL  
I haven't read it. I do, however, use it  
to Thoreau-ly clean my weed.

Jake laughs.

Carl sets the joint in a child-made ashtray with, "I Love My Dad" on the side and rummages through the van.

CARL  
*Are you happy? I can't believe you were*  
fucking with me like that?

JAKE  
Me? Never.

CARL  
Is anyone happy? Are you happy  
working for Ted?

JAKE  
(unconvincing)  
Yeaah.

CARL  
What are you doing here then?

JAKE  
You mean, why am I in a van smoking pot  
with a man in a clown costume?

Carl laughs.

CARL  
Yeah? Why aren't you working for  
your pops?

JAKE  
Now you sound like my sister. I love  
my father but he doesn't need to be  
involved in every aspect of my life.

CARL  
Didn't he get you this job?

JAKE

Look, right now is a bit of a rebuilding period for me.

Carl still can't find what he's looking for.

CARL

I respect that. Nothing wrong with a little scuff on your knees.

JAKE

If I even get a parking ticket, me and my squeaky tight ass are getting locked up.

CARL

Squeaky tight, huh? You've never let a broad pop a digit in your keister?

Carl gives a thumbs up.

JAKE

Hell no.

CARL

You'll get there.

Jake picks up the joint and takes another hit.

JAKE

I'm here because I need to get out of debt. Eventually I'd like to...

(exhales the hit)

...do something with my life.

(realizes that may be insulting)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean--

CARL

No, you're right. This is shit. I'm not happy. I've got kids and a wife. I do these fucking shows because it keeps the lights on, that's it.

JAKE

Have you ever done anything else?

CARL

Nothing else will have me. I made fifteen hundred bucks tonight and I didn't have to take my clothes off.

Carl finally finds the remote. He turns up the stereo.

CARL

(yelling over the music)

If you want to cool your heels and make a little dough, stick around. But if you want to do something with your life.

(shakes his head)

This ain't the place, man.

Carl cracks beers for both of them. Jake questions his career choice and drinks the cheep beer.

The van's back doors FLY OPEN. Headlights blind Carl and Jake.

COP VOICE (O.S.)

Police! Put your fucking hands where I can see them.

CARL

Oh God, not again.

Jake panics and eats the joint. Still holding beers, they both put their hands up.

COP VOICE (O.S.)

(Scottish accent)

You boys been smoking drugs?

Carl uses his hand to shield the light.

CARL

Billy?

It's not a cop, it's BILLY DUNSTON, 45, Scottish, a bushel of wild red hair. He has a juggling pin pointed at Carl and Jake like a shotgun.

BILLY

Out of the van and give me all your weed.

Billy laughs and balances the juggling pin on his nose.

CARL

God damn it, Bill, you scared the fuck out of us. Get in here, it's freezing.

Billy gets in. Jake exhales in relief.

JAKE

I just pissed myself.

BILLY

Who's your friend?

CARL

This is Jake. He's the new agent.

BILLY

Ahhh, welcome to the family. Now, which one of you can get me some co-caine?

Jake says nothing. Carl smirks and reaches behind Jake's head magically producing a small plastic bag with white powder in it.

CARL

Oh, what do we have here?

BILLY

Ta, DA.

Carl puts his finger in the bag and then snorts a bump.

CARL

I'm happy now.

Jake has a look on his face like, 'What the hell have I gotten myself into?'

END OF COLD OPENING

ACT ONE

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Although the roads are plowed, a foot of snow covers the ground. A LEXUS SUV drives past a sign that reads: WELCOME TO ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA.

INT. MARY HANSEN'S 2020 LEXUS SUV - MORNING

Jake sits in the passenger seat. MARY HANSEN, 32, Jake's wealthy sister, drives while her 2 BEAUTIFUL TWIN BOYS, ANTHONY and ARTHUR, 4, sit in the back seat with headphones, drinking juice boxes, watching a DVD. Sterile environment, eerily quiet.

Jake goes to turn on the radio and Mary slaps his hand. He can't believe she hit him. He turns the radio on anyways, blasts it at full volume.

She immediately shuts it off.

MARY  
I like it quiet in the mornings.

Jake looks at the boys. They're unfazed by their rude Mother. Jake stops caring and just looks out the window. Mary pulls up to the small TB Talent office building.

MARY  
You're wasting your time.

JAKE  
Thanks, Mary. You're the greatest.  
(to the boys)  
See you guys.

Engrossed in their movie, they ignore him. Jake gets out and slams the door shut. He sees a 1998 Convertible Mustang parked with its top down in the middle of winter.

Mary rolls down the window.

MARY  
Dad wanted you to have these.

She hands him a box of business cards. On the outside of the box is a sample card: JACOB HANSEN, JUNIOR INVESTMENT MANAGER. HANSEN INVESTMENT FIRM, EST. 1980.

JAKE  
Wow, your support is staggering.

MARY

Just know that when you fail, like you did with your on-line dance club, and your raped themed Crepe restaurant, your family will be here for you.

JAKE

The Crepe-ist was not rape themed.

MARY

Date Crepes? C'mon. Face it, you're not an entrepreneur.

Jake has heard enough. He walks away.

MARY

Corner office...

Jake tosses the cards in the trash and enters the office.

INT. TB TALENT OFFICE - DAY

On the walls are posters of magicians, jugglers, comics, ventriloquists, a cappella groups and comedy music acts. There's a banner that reads: TB TALENT AGENCY, FAMILY FRIENDLY ENTERTAINMENT SINCE 1996. On the banner is a picture of a man in a suit with a snaggletoothed grin.

In his office is CRAIG BUSBY, 52, talent agent, heavy-set with a flattop. He's the owner's brother and never shuts up.

In the doorway is ANDRE PIERRE, 35, obsessive compulsive, Eurotrash magician with long, flowing black hair.

CRAIG

At this point I'm more worried about necrophilia than I am terrorism.

ANDRE

(French accent)

Terrorism is very real, Craig.

CRAIG

Nope. No it is not. It's an idea created by the government to control us.

Jake tries to sneak past.

CRAIG

What's happening young man? This is showcase week. We have over 600 people coming and we need you here on time.

JAKE

I know. I'm sorry, my car wouldn't start.

CRAIG

Jake, this is Andre Pierre. He just finished a two year run on the Las Vegas Strip and foolishly believes our government had nothing to do with 9-11.

JAKE

Oh, cool. I love Vegas.

ANDRE

Qui est cet idiot?  
(back to Craig)  
Do you honestly believe what you are saying?

CRAIG

This is just further proof of your European nativity.

ANDRE

Do you mean naiveté?

CRAIG

Easy, frog breath. Just cuz I don't speak your tiny mustache language does not mean I'm not an intellectual. Terrorism is only real in your head.

ANDRE

You're such a rube.

Andre, annoyed, heads for the door. Using a napkin, he turns the handle. Craig follows him, still in his ear.

CRAIG

Necrophilia on the other hand is very real, ask any gravedigger. It's a major issue plaguing this country.

Jake can't believe what he's hearing.

TED (O.S.)

(yelling)

Craig?

In his office, TED BUSBY, 48, tall, vanilla personality, very religious, the owner of TB Talent and also the owner of the snaggletoothed grin used on all TB Talent advertisements, hangs up his phone.

TED

(slight Minnesota accent)

World Wide Talent just outbid us on the  
Kemps account. The G-D Kemps account!  
Where's Jordan?

CRAIG

I haven't kept tabs on him since he  
retired from the Bulls.

Ted shakes his head at the stupid joke and sees Jake slink past the door to his office.

TED

Jake, good morning. What time were you  
supposed to be here today?

JAKE

Nine o'clock. I'm very sorry. My car  
wouldn't start and I had to get a ride.

TED

You're putting me in a real tough spot  
here, bud. A real tough spot.

JAKE

I'm sorry, Mr. Busby. I won't let it  
happen again.

TED

A real tough spot.

(beat)

Do you understand what I'm saying?

JAKE

(furrows his brow)

I think so.

TED

What am I saying?

JAKE

That you're in a tough spot?

TED

And why do you think I'm in this spot?

JAKE

(speculating)

Because you like having me, but you need  
me here on time?

TED

Exactly. And when you don't come in on time what happens?

JAKE

I...

Jake pauses to see if he's being serious.

JAKE

...put you in a tough spot?

TED

(correcting him)

A *real* tough spot.

(long pause)

Our number one competitor just stole our largest account. I need you sharp. Will you please find my son for me?

JAKE

Yes, sir.

Craig walks past Jake.

CRAIG

B-T-W, the next time you're in Vegas let me know. Pete Rose is a personal friend, I could totally hook you up.

Jake sees a long sliver of nacho cheese on Craig's tie.

JAKE

(playing him)

No way.

CRAIG

Way. The *most* way.

Jake, appeasing Craig, pounds fists and then walks down the hallway to a door that reads: JORDAN BUSBY, AGENT.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jake opens the door, surprised to see JORDAN BUSBY, 24, shell necklace, frosted tips, and LEXI DAVIS, 41, office secretary, casually having sex on his desk.

JORDAN

(whisper yelling)

If you say anything, I will fucking kill you.

Jake rolls his eyes.

TED (O.S.)  
(yelling)  
You find Jordan?

Jake shuts the door and yells back.

JAKE  
I don't think he came yet.

Jake is pleased with himself.

TED (O.S.)  
Could you please go in his office and  
grab contract 2353-g off the desk?

Jake reopens the door and Jordan and Lexi are back at it.

JORDAN  
(quietly)  
What the fuck, man? Get out of here.

JAKE  
I just need to grab...

In mid-plowing, Lexi opens a drawer, grabs the file and hands it to Jake.

TED (O.S.)  
You find it?

LEXI  
(passionate sex noise)  
Oh, yes!

JAKE  
(trying to cover the sounds)  
Yes. Yep, got it.

Jordan drags his finger across his neck.

JORDAN  
I will end you.

JAKE  
(to Lexi)  
You could do better.

Jake slips out.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - LATER

Jake hangs up the phone. Jordan enters.

JORDAN

Ready?

JAKE

Yup.

JORDAN

Sorry about earlier. You know the whole thing with Lexi. It's complicated, she's like a Rubik's Cube with boobs--

JAKE

Mum's the word.

JORDAN

It fucking better be. Get your shit, I'm driving.

Jake, skeptical, grabs his jacket.

JORDAN

You're going to love my new ride.

INT. JORDAN'S 1998 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Jordan drives with the top down in twenty degree weather. Craig sits shotgun wearing sunglasses with Jake and Lexi in the backseat. Jake is cold and miserable.

CRAIG

Jordan, seriously, this thing is mint.

JORDAN

Yeah, I've already got four speeding tickets.

(with pride)

One more and they have to arrest me on the spot.

CRAIG

Nice.

(turns back to Jake)

Sick, huh?

Jake, shivering, begrudgingly smiles and nods.

JAKE

Yes, very practical.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTER - BAR - DAY

On the dance floor is a buffet. Numerous VARIETY ENTERTAINERS, MIMES, COWBOYS, MUSICIANS, eat food and chat with one another.

A drunk Carl Stone has on no clown make-up and is wearing a stained sleeveless undershirt. He stands in line at the buffet with KYLE LEBERSCHUTZ, 19, Goth Magician, purple Mohawk, black fingernails, leather pants, nerdy glasses. They get food.

CARL

(slurred and angry)

Are you kidding me? Do I ask you to call me Mister Laughs?

KYLE

No.

CARL

Well then why the fuck would I call you Allyster Nightwind?

KYLE

Can't you respect the fact that I'm committed to my stage persona?

Kyle makes a theatrical motion with his hands revealing his face.

CARL

Respect?! The last time I saw you, you were wearing a fanny pack doing card tricks in the lobby of a Jiffy Lube. I've met your mother, Kyle. You're wearing eye make-up and hot pants, you look like Keith Richards if things didn't work out.

KYLE

Accept me, for me.

CARL

No.

Ted stands at the front of the group.

TED

Alright everybody, find your seats.

Ted hands out the showcase schedule.

CRAIG

Am I the only one who finds ketchup to be  
too spicy?

TED

I hate to start the meeting on a sour  
note but I found out this morning that we  
have lost the Kemps account.

The group is upset. DAVID WHITE, 42, black comedian,  
talks down to everyone, beige suit, too much gold  
jewlery, from Alabama but loves ice fishing.

DAVID

What the fuck? That's forty-percent of my  
annual take home.

TED

I know. I know. Just... I know.

DAVID

This is dogshit.

TED

Please. Enough with the cursing. I'm  
working on it.

(beat)

Some of you have not met our newest  
employee. He comes to us from St. Thomas  
University and has already been a nice  
addition to our sales staff. Everyone,  
I'd like you to meet Jake Hansen.

Jake stands and politely waves. A few begrudgingly clap.  
Jordan scratches his head with his middle finger.

TED

Last year we booked over 400 holiday  
parties at the annual showcase. This year  
we're looking to top that. Also, I've got  
some big news. Stu Huffman, a manager  
from UFA agreed to fly in special for the  
showcase.

No one says anything.

JOANIE THOMPSON, 75, comedienne, 100% Minnesota nice, dim-  
witted, eyes always wide open, raises her hand.

TED

Yes, Joanie?

JOANIE

Will I be able to bring my hedgehog into  
the green room?

Ted doesn't even know how to respond.

JOANIE

His name is Bert.

DAVID

(reading the schedule)

Whoa, wait a minute. Why the hell do I  
have to go first?

TED

We wanted to start strong. Did you guys  
not hear me? Stu Huffman is going to be  
here.

JOANIE

Sometimes Bert gets stuck in a toilet  
paper tube.

Ignoring Joanie.

DAVID

Cut the shit, Ted. We all know the  
audience is still making their way in  
during the first act. Why don't you put  
up one of these bullshit singing groups?

TED

It's your turn, David. Let's be a team  
player. You guys, a talent manager from  
Hollywood is going to be at the showcase.

DAVID

Team? I'm the only person in this room  
that's ever even been on a team.

David shows Jake his ring.

DAVID

Have you ever seen anything that Goddamn  
beautiful before?

JAKE

Nice. Where'd you play?

Ted is getting annoyed. Billy Dunston chimes in.

BILLY

Yeah, Dave, where did you play? Notre  
Dame, LSU?

DAVID

You shut your mouth, Bill. Winona State  
is a hell of an institution.

JAKE

Aren't they, like, division four? Didn't  
know they had sports program.

Billy laughs at David.

TED

Can I please finish? Does no one care  
about Stu Huffman?

DAVID

Well, they do, and it's fantastic. Team.  
Like I want to be on a team with these  
crackers.

CARL

What the fuck did you just call us?

Carl takes a spoonful of his beans and throws them at  
David. They land on his beige suit.

DAVID

Son of a bitch!

CARL

Bring it, Kevin Fart.

Carl and David grab each other. They fall to the ground  
wrestling. Jake tries to break them up. David's hand,  
with the ring on it, swings at Carl, but misses and hits  
Jake.

Blood pours from Jake's nose. Side fights break out, pure  
chaos.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Well, well, well, look what we have here,  
Donny.

In walk TOMMY AND DONNY MARSHALL from WORLD WIDE TALENT.  
TOMMY, 38, too skinny, always wearing a sweat suit and  
DONNY, 42, massively overweight, has a 60-ounce cup of  
Mountain Dew in his hand.

DONNY

(deep and dumb)

Looks like a bunch of idiots.

TOMMY

That's right, Donny. Idiots.

Tommy cleans his nails with a butterfly knife. The tension in the room suddenly feels grimy.

TED  
What are you doing here?

TOMMY  
We're World Wide Talent, baby. We go wherever we want.

DONNY  
Yeah, Ted. It's a free state.

Billy hands Jake some napkins for his face. Tommy picks up one of the lists for the showcase.

TOMMY  
Oh, look at this, Donny. Teddy B and his gaggle of vagina are having their annual showcase. They're going to be in for a rude awakening when they find out we're having our showcase the same night. In the same town.

TED  
You wouldn't.

TOMMY  
Oh, I would. Because I am.

Tommy produces a flyer and shoves it in Ted's face.

CRAIG  
You're dead to us.

TOMMY  
You've been dead to me since you started poaching my acts.

CARL  
They didn't poach shit. I left.

TOMMY  
Later, douche-wads. Oh, and thanks again for the Kemps account.

Tommy drops the flyer and exits. Donny follows.

CRAIG  
What the hell? What the hell?

TED  
Everyone get out of here. Just go. Craig and I have to figure this out.

Everyone exits. Joanie finds Jake.

JOANIE

When the fighting started, Bert would have made himself into a ball.

EXT. OFFICE COMPLEX - ENTRANCE - DAY

Jordan and Lexi walk in. Jake follows behind, holding a tissue to his bloody nose. Jordan pulls the door shut, leaving Jake in the cold. Jordan laughs and walks into the office.

Jake, annoyed, sees the garbage can where he threw away the business cards. He takes the cards out of the trash and considers his fathers offer.

A pair of headlights sets it's sights on Jake. A SUV pulls up. MR. GEORGIO, 45, BALD, leather jacket and his GOON, 30, a 7-foot Somalian, get out. The Goon clutches Jake's jacket and throws him against the wall.

MR. GEORGIO

Did you really t-think I wasn't going to f-find you?

The Goon punches Jake in the gut three consecutive times.

JAKE

(spitting up blood)

Naw, I was looking forward to it.

MR. GEORGIO

I'm n-not the bad guy here. It's very simple, you cost me tw-twenty-grand.

JAKE

You know gambling is illegal, right?

The Goon gives Jake a shot to the kidneys.

MR. GEORGIO

It's shitty you got k-kicked out of school, but it's n-not my fault you trusted that pill junkie k-k-quarterback. I'm not d-dead on the inside, so I'll give you t-two weeks.

JAKE

You should probably kill me now.

Mr. Georgio gives Jake another punch to the stomach.

MR. GEORGIO  
T-two weeks.

Mr. Georgio and his Goon get back in the SUV and peel out. Jake spits out more blood.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TB TALENT OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jake has a slight black eye. He adjusts his nose seeing if it still hurts.

Sitting around the table are Jordan and Lexi, they flirt under the table.

Andre Pierre is there with his hair slicked back in a ponytail. He wears a short-sleeved collared shirt with a tie. He's awkward and seems out of place.

CRAIG

(to Jake)

...and that's when I came up with the idea for "Puppies Forever." Cause who doesn't love puppies, but hate dogs.  
Am I right?

JAKE

Right. Wait, what?

CRAIG

"Puppies Forever." Every month you bring us your old puppy and we give you a new one. So, that way you always have a brand-new puppy.

JAKE

What would you do with the old puppies?

Craig furrows his brow, befuddled.

CRAIG

That's a good question. Right away, we found out we had a competitor. They called themselves, "Continuous Kittens." I had to give it to them...

(shakes his head)

It's just hands down a stronger concept. Plus, with their alliteration I couldn't even look our idea in the face.

Ted walks in with EVELYN PETERSON, 52, although she's wearing a business suit, her hair is unbrushed and seems like she's on too many prescription meds.

TED

Could I please have your attention?  
Craig and I--

Craig can't contain himself.

CRAIG

Just tell 'um. Just tell 'um.

TED

In addition to holding their  
showcase the same night as ours,  
World Wide Talent is now offering a  
twenty percent discount on all of  
their holiday bookings.

CRAIG

Can you believe these guys?

JORDAN

What a bunch of dicks.

TED

Jordan. Language.

JORDAN

What? They're clearly being dicks.

Ted looks at Evelyn with a fake smile, embarrassed.

TED

Although this information puts us in a  
tough spot...

JAKE

(under his breath)

A *real* tough spot?

TED

... you can tuck your worries into bed,  
because we have a plan.

(blinded by her beauty)

Everyone, I'd like you to meet Evelyn  
Peterson. After the Dairy Queen she  
managed was engulfed in flames, she went  
into business with Dippin' Dots, which,  
in 2010, filed for Chapter 11.

(genuine excitement)

Which means she has some free time and  
has agreed to come on as a consultant.

Jake looks around to see if anyone else thinks Evelyn  
being here is a bad idea. No one does.

CRAIG

That's quite the resume.

EVELYN  
(paranoid)  
Thank you.

TED  
So Evelyn, you have the floor.

Evelyn clutches her sport coat closed, not looking anyone in the eye. Ted sits.

EVELYN  
You've got all my information for direct deposit, right?

TED  
Yep, that's all taken care of.

EVELYN  
So, when will the money be in my account?

TED  
End of the business day today.

She looks at her watch and tries to do math in her head.

TED  
Any suggestions about how we can combat the twenty percent?

EVELYN  
Ahhh... If there's anything I've learned in my dealings with the *Ice Cream of the Future*, it's that you need to find an edge on your competition.

CRAIG  
(whispering to Ted)  
I see why you brought her in.

EVELYN  
Why don't you offer your customers a... twenty-one percent discount.

The room collectively processes the idea for a moment. Jake's about to say something--

TED  
That... may... actually... work.

Jake amazed at the stupidity.

CRAIG

Wow. It was right in front of us the whole time. So simple, yet so brilliant.  
Wow.

Craig stands up and shakes Evelyn's hand.

CRAIG

MAN, we are lucky to have you.

Evelyn pulls out an empty prescription bottle.

EVELYN

I need to make a call.

Ted gives her an applause.

TED

Take all the time you need.

Evelyn leaves in a hurry.

TED

Amazing work today, guys.

Andre stands up fast. Flop sweat on his brow.

ANDRE

Sorry, I've gotta a thing.

TED

What were you doing here in the first place?

ANDRE

I don't know...

(cagey)

...what are you doing here?

Ted is confused.

Andre bolts out of the room. For a moment the group is confused.

TED

Lexi, get our graphics guy on the phone and have him put together a mockup. This is already a home run, I can feel it.

Jake looks out the window and sees Andre jump in his 1982 Camaro and peel out of the parking lot.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake is asleep. His cell phone vibrates.

JAKE

Hello?

CARL (V.O.)

(wasted)

Jake! I need you to come get me.

JAKE

Carl? Where are you?

CARL

Hahaha... Narnia. I mean jail.

JAKE

Are you being serious?

INT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Carl, wearing his full costume, has handcuffs on while a cop gives him a steely eyed stare.

CARL

Oh, I'm serious as a divorced Judge.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Carl signs some paperwork and they give him his personal items back. Jake wears a hoodie with his hair still matted from his pillow. They walk towards the exit.

CARL

I tried to buy pot from a cop.

JAKE

Was he undercover?

CARL

Oh, no. He was in full uniform.

JAKE

Seems like a bad idea... if you're not related.

CARL

These swine have confiscated enough weed from me over the years, I figure it's wasn't out of line to barter for some of it back.

JAKE

(re: Carl's costume)  
Did you have a gig?

CARL

No, there's this gal with a clown fetish I met on Craigslist. We don't fuck. She just likes drinking with me.

(shrugs his shoulders)

She pays my full rate, so I don't ask questions. Couple cocktails turns into a couple of whippets, next thing you know, I'm calling you for a ride.

Jake stops. Carl stops.

JAKE

Are you sure you're okay?

CARL

I'm fine.

JAKE

You sure?

CARL

Don't do that, man. I'm fine. I don't need you busting my balls.

JAKE

The showcase is tomorrow night and you're going all Hunter S. Thompson. Plus, I'm sure your wife is wondering where you are.

CARL

You're doing it, man. Don't fucking do it.

JAKE

I'm sorry, I'll stop giving a shit.

CARL

Thank you. Let's get some breakfast. I'll buy.

They walk out of the courthouse.

INT. STATE THEATER - NIGHT

Jake walks through the sold out thousand-seat theater. Most people are seated. A few are still buying drinks and finding their seats.

Craig wears a red, felt suit with 80-100 tint golden bells. He makes his way through the middle of a row, forcing people to stand, so he can get to his seat.

CRAIG

Excuse me. I'm sorry, excuse me. Pardon me. You're welcome. Pardon me.

The suit looks homemade and makes a tremendous amount of noise.

Jake can't believe Craig's ridiculous outfit. He looks at a banner hanging on the wall with a picture of Ted, Craig, Jordan and Jake standing together. It reads: A FAMILY OF PROFFESSINALS. A wave of anxiety comes over Jake. He stares at the 3 F's and takes out his phone.

ART

(voicemail)

This is Arthur Hansen, you have reached my direct line. Please leave a message.

Jake sees his reflection in a mirror and touches his black eye.

JAKE

Dad, it's Jacob. This job... Just, call me back when you get a chance.

INT. GREENROOM - CONTINUOUS

A BEVY OF VARIETY ACTS prepare in front of mirrors. A FOUR MEMBER A CAPPELLA GROUP WITH MATCHING SHIRTS THAT READ: "3 OF A KIND" warm up their voices. A VENTRILOQUIST, 41, readies his Uncle Sam puppet, a LATINO MAN, sticks a Bindi to his forehead and practices an Indian accent.

Joanie Thompson has her hedgehog out and is showing it around. Jake can't believe these people are real.

TED

Have you seen Carl?

JAKE

No.

TED  
Does anyone know where Carl is?

No one knows. Ted is beside himself.

JAKE  
Ten minutes till showtime.

Suddenly, Andre Pierre, wearing his magician clothes, comes running in, short of breath.

ANDRE  
I've made a horrible mistake.

JOANIE  
Yeah, Bert and I also think it's too much eye make-up.

ANDRE  
I told them everything.

DAVID  
What are you blathering about?

Ted comforts Andre.

TED  
Just relax. What happened?

ANDRE  
When Tommy and Donny showed up at our meeting, they had so much moxy. I wasn't sure who was going to come out on top. So I decided to sign with them...

ENTIRE GROUP  
(What the hell? You traitor!..etc)

ANDRE  
...but then, when they wouldn't even let me in their building, I realized they were only using me for information.

BILLY  
You're the most selfish person I've ever met and I know people in A.A.

ANDRE  
Je suis désolé, I panicked.

TED  
What did you tell them?

Andre can't look Ted in the eyes.

TED  
The twenty-one percent?

Andre, guilty, lowers his head.

BILLY  
Ugh, just like World War II.

Lexi enters.

LEXI  
Ted, you're going to want to see this.

Ted, puzzled, exits. The group follows.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Ted and the acts look across the street at another theater. A banner for World Wide Talent's Showcase hangs.

JORDAN  
Across the fucking street?

Craig runs up, his suit of bells JINGLE-JANGLES.

CRAIG  
The balls on these guys.

JAKE  
Did he say bells?

On the banner it reads: A 22% DISCOUNT.

KYLE  
(to Andre)  
I can't believe you did this to us.

ANDRE  
Calm down, child. I've got doves older than you.

Kyle pushes Andre.

KYLE  
Once I report this to the International Brotherhood of Magicians, you're finished.

Andre grabs Kyle by the collar.

ANDRE  
You wouldn't.

Andre goes to put his other hand on Kyle, but Kyle head butts him. The group naturally forms a circle around the two. David White takes a step towards them to break it up but is held back by Craig.

CRAIG  
(to David)  
As long as they protect their hands, it's  
a fair magician fight.

Andre and Kyle now each have their hands behind their backs, kicking and head butting like two roosters.

They simultaneously produce magic wands. They fight like the wands are swords. Kyle gets the upper hand, but then Andre blows magic dust in Kyle's face and then head butts him to the ground.

ANDRE  
(forehead bleeding)  
You did this to you.

TED  
Knock it off. Andre, get the... HELL, out  
of here.

ANDRE  
No, Ted, please!

Ted points to the door. Suddenly, a fire alarm BLARES.

INT. SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

The entire audience stands up, disoriented. Ted runs in.

TED  
Everyone, stay calm and head toward your  
nearest exit.

A general sense of panic increases and people rush toward the first available exit. Ted gets lost in the mass of people and pushed outside.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Hundreds of people flood out of the theater into the cold night. A fire truck shows up. Tommy and Donny are waiting across the street with megaphones and tickets.

TOMMY

If you want to see a great show this evening? Step right up. We have tickets available.

The crowd of people take Tommy and Donny's tickets and head into their theater. Craig sees this and clutches his fists.

CRAIG

Noooooooooo.

(pointing at Tommy)  
This was your doing.

Jake is lost in the sea of people. His phone rings.

JAKE

(over the crowd)

Dad?

ART (V.O.)

How's the new gig going?

Jake is being pushed around by the chaos of the crowd.

JAKE

I've had better days.

(hating himself)

You still have a job for me?

ART (V.O.)

Your sister didn't tell you?

JAKE

Didn't tell me what?

ART (V.O.)

I'm selling the company, Jake. I couldn't get you a job right now if I wanted to.

Jake stops.

JAKE

Well, congratulations. You always know how to take care of yourself.

ART (V.O.)

Don't be like that, you need this. You want to be your own man? This is your chance.

Jake doesn't say anything.

JAKE (V.O.)

Thoreau said, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Craig fights with Tommy to get the megaphone out of his hands. Tommy pulls off one of the bells and throws it at Craig's face. Ted pleads with people to come back. Joanie holds Bert above her head in a ball.

JAKE (V.O.)

Why is settling so attractive?

Out of nowhere, a fleeing 2013 Porsche hard top. It's followed by TWO COP CARS with their sirens BLARING. The Porsche SLAMS into a telephone pole.

JAKE (V.O.)

Why do most people fall short of their potential?

The door opens and Carl staggers out with a bloody forehead. The cops violently tackle Carl to the ground and cuff him. They find a bag of cocaine in his pocket.

CARL

You're just being selfish, that's mine.

JAKE (V.O.)

Because we're afraid we can't make a difference.

Ted runs past Jordan and up to Jake, his breath is labored.

TED

If you want to leave right now, I'll understand. But if you're going to stay, I need your help getting these people back inside.

Jake stops and looks around at the mass of people.

TED

Well?

JOANIE

How is there a fire without smoke?

Jake gets an idea.

INT. OTHER THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs into the theater. He pulls out the same lighter he found for Carl. He takes a pile of papers out of the trash and lights it on fire. He throws the flaming papers back into the trash can and casually walks out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The firemen stop and rush toward the other theater.

DONNY

You dipshits. You're going the wrong way.

Smoke pours out of the other theater.

DONNY

Oh, crap.

Craig and Tommy fight on the ground. Jake walks past and picks up Tommy's megaphone.

JAKE

(into mega-phone)

Alright everyone, there was a misunderstanding. Stay calm and head back to your seats.

Jake ushers the people back in. Ted sees the good work.

TED

Thank you.

Ted shakes Jake's hand. Jordan sees this exchange and is jealous. Carl resists being pushed into the back of the cop car.

CARL

(yelling)

Hey, Jake...

Jake turns and sees Carl.

CARL

I ran into that Craigslist broad again. I may need another ride.

Jake grins.

JAKE

(yelling back)

I'll be there, man.

Carl is violently forced into the cop car.

Off in the distance Jake notices an SUV parked and Mr. Georgio's Goon standing next to it. The Goon makes eye contact with Jake. Message received.

Jake walks back inside. He looks back and sees the other theater still billowing with smoke.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Someone POUNDS on Jake's door.

JAKE

Just chill out, I'll be right there.

Jake puts on pants. Pounding continues. He opens the door.

JAKE

What?

JANICE HOUSER, 40, heavyset white lady, stands in the door wearing a skirt suit. All business, looks angry.

JANICE

Did we not make the terms of your probation crystal-fucking-clear?

JAKE

Why are you at my house?

JANICE

Did you light that fire?

JAKE

What are you talking about?

JANICE

I'm going to ask you one last time. Did you, or did you not start that fire?

Jake tries to find the words.

END OF PILOT

**THE ACTS:**

**CLOWN:** CARL STONE is a 42-year-old mess. When he's not entertaining at children's parties or being the world's greatest dad (he really is a great father), he's being a world class drunk and drug addict. He acquired the stage name MR. LAUGHS while touring with the Ringling Brothers circus in his 20's, but on a trip back to Minnesota when he was 30 he got his high school girlfriend pregnant and that was the end of his touring days. One moment he's coaching his kids soccer team and the next he's face down in his own puke.

**COMEDIAN:** TAHOMA SRINIVASARAGHAVEN, 31, an "Indian" comedian. His real name is Javier Ramirez. He's actually Mexican, but in Minnesota no one can tell the difference.

**ILLUSIONIST:** Kyle Leberschutz, a.k.a. ALLYSTER NIGHTWIND, 19, Goth Magician, purple mohawk, black fingernails, leather pants, nerdy glasses. Honestly thinks that people believe 'magic' is real.

**HYPNOTIST:** LAURA JENSEN, 52, fat and ultra sensitive about it. Smokes tons of cigarettes and goes by the monicker "The Hip-no-Mom." "She's hip, she's a Mom, AND she's a Hypnotist."

**VENTRILOQUIST:** TOM CANADA, 41. Hates children. I mean hates them.

**MAGICIAN:** ANDRE PIERRE, 35, an obsessive compulsive, eurotrash hyper-liberal with long, flowing black hair. Has the ego of 10 Donald Trumps. Refuses to shake anyone's hand.

**JUGGLER:** BILLY DUNSTON, 45, Scottish, a bushel of wild red hair. If he weren't juggling, he would be running cocaine in Columbia.

**COMEDIAN:** DAVID WHITE, 42, African-American, super cocky, talks down to everyone, wears beige suits and too much gold jewelry. Although from Alabama, he acts white. His entire act is foolishly based on being a Southern black guy in Minnesota.

**MUSICIANS:** A four member a cappella group CALLED "3 OF A KIND."

**THE AGENTS:**

**THE OWNER OF "TB TALENT":** TED BUSBY, 48, tall, vanilla personality, very religious, the owner of TB Talent, Craig's brother, and also the owner of the snaggletoothed grin used on all TB Talent advertisements.

**THE OWNER'S BROTHER:** CRAIG BUSBY, 52, talent agent, a heavily opinionated buffoon. He wears a flattop and has a tendency to say whatever comes into his mind. Constantly holds an unlit cigarette. Obsesses over Sean Hannity's haircut. Thinks Fox News is too progressive and wears Crocs when people ARE looking.

**THE OWNER'S SON:** JORDAN BUSBY, 24, Ted's son, shell necklace, frosted tips. Insists on driving his convertible with the top down even in the winter. Hates Jake because he's jealous of Ted's respect for him.

**THE OFFICE SECRETARY:** LEXI DAVIS, 41. If she hasn't slept with you yet, it's your own damn fault.

**THE NEW HIRE:** JAKE NICHOLS, 24, his formal education gives him a naive look, but his relentless ball-busting indicates actual street smarts. Recently expelled from college for setting up a point-shaving scheme. He now has to keep his nose clean while on probation. Trapped in the shadow of his highly successful father, Jake tries to be his own man but every time he fails he allows himself to be coddled by his father's money. Despite being a continual "fuck up," Jake is determined to make it on his own. So he takes a job as an agent for TB Talent and decides to really plant his flag, at least for now.

#### THE COMPETITION:

**A RIVAL AGENT:** TOMMY MARSHALL, 38, too skinny, always wearing a sweat suit, talks like a '30s gangster mixed with a ferret. Owner of World Wide Talent. Type of guy who will steal your pot and help you look for it. Feels Ted screwed him when Carl left his agency for TB Talent. Gives a ton of money to charity and lets everyone know about it.

**FAMOUS IN 1985:** DONNY MARSHALL, 51, stand-up comedian, Tommy's brother. Was a minor character on a sitcom in the '80s which he still uses to get laid, but now is a bitter, fat, horrible person.