

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. MR. 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 TONY NICHOLS, 24. Tony looks around trying to orient himself to this unusual environment. He wears a sport coat.

TONY

(completely sarcastic)

I mean, 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 right now?

Tony mischievously smiles. Carl lifts his wig, putting the joint on top of his head.

The SERVICE MANAGER, 33, balding, \$100 suit, thin mustache, effeminate lisp, 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. I hope you're good...

(pleading)

Please be good.

Carl looks at Tony like, 'Is this guy for real?' The Service Manager opens the door and hundreds of children scream. Carl looks back at Tony.

CARL

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

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

CARL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Who wants a balloon animal?!

All the children scream with joy as Carl expertly constructs an elaborate balloon-bicycle in seconds flat. Tony is impressed. Carl then makes what clearly looks like a balloon-penis and balls and hands it to an OVERWEIGHT WHITE LADY.

CARL (CONT'D)
It's a sword.

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 Tony and turns the heat on.

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

Tony rips an even bigger hit.

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

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

Tony coughs. Carl removes his make-up.

TONY (CONT'D)
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 right now?

TONY
Let's go freak out some kids!

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

TONY (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have pegged you as a reader.

CARL

(holding in a hit)

It was a gift.

TONY

I wrote my sophomore thesis on Thoreau.

CARL

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

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

CARL (CONT'D)

'Are you happy?' You were totally fucking
with me, weren't you?

TONY

Me? Never.

CARL

Are you happy being an agent?

TONY

I wouldn't necessarily use the word
happy.

CARL

So what are you doing here?

TONY

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

CARL

(laughs)

Yeah... Ted told me your pops is some big-
wig money guy. Shouldn't you be working
for him?

TONY

Jesus, you sound like my sister. He's my
Dad, I'd kill myself before I'd let him
be my boss. It's time for me to start
putting my own shit together.

CARL

Didn't he get you this job?

Tony realizes his point.

TONY

Look, I'm on some pretty serious probation. So, right now is a bit of a rebuilding period for me.

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

CARL

Whud you do?

TONY

I... Let's just say, 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 Korean broad pop a digit in your keister?

Carl gestures with his pinky finger.

TONY

No!

CARL

Well then, you have not lived, my friend.

Tony picks up the joint and takes another hit.

TONY

I'm just here to keep my nose clean while I ride out my legal woes. Eventually I'd like to start another company. You know...

(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 a shit gig. I'm not happy. I've got kids... and a wife. I do these fucking shows because we make bank, that's it.

TONY

Why don't you do something else?

CARL

Nothing else will have me. I made fifteen hundred bucks tonight. That's fucking stripper money, son. Look at me...I'm no stripper.

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

CARL (CONT'D)
(yelling over the music)
If you want to cool your heels and make a
little scratch, stick around. But if you
want to do something with your life.
(shakes his head)
I don't know, man.

Carl cracks beers for both of them. Tony questions his
career choice, drinks the cheap beer. Suddenly, the van's
back doors fly open. Headlights blind Carl and Tony.

COP VOICE (O.S.)
Police! Put your fucking hands where I
can see them!

CARL
Oh God, not again.

Tony 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 at all; it's BILLY DUNSTON, 45, Scottish,
a bushel of wild red hair. He has a juggling pin pointed
at Carl and Tony like a shotgun.

BILLY
Get 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 cold as
balls.

Billy gets in. Tony exhales in relief.

TONY
Well, I'm pretty sure I just pissed
myself.

BILLY
Who's your friend?

CARL
This is Tony. He's the new agent Ted
hired.

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

Tony says nothing. Carl smirks and reaches behind Tony'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!

Tony 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 NICHOLS' 2012 LEXUS SUV - MORNING

Tony sits in the passenger seat. MARY NICHOLS, 32, Tony's successful 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.

Tony goes to turn on the radio and Mary slaps his hand. He can't believe she hit him. He turns the radio on anyway and blasts it at full volume. Mary immediately shuts it off.

MARY

I like it quiet in the mornings.

Tony looks at the boys. They're unfazed by their Mother. Tony stops caring and just looks out the window. Mary pulls up to an office complex.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're wasting your time.

TONY

Thanks, Mary.
(to the boys)
See you guys.

Engrossed in their movie, they ignore him. Tony 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 that reads: ANTHONY NICHOLS, JUNIOR INVESTMENT MANAGER. NICHOLS INVESTMENT FIRM, EST. 1980.

TONY

Wow, your support is staggering.

MARY

Just know that when you fail, like you did with your on-line dance club, or your idea to start fracking in Hawaii, or your raped themed Crepe restaurant, your family will be here for you.

TONY

The Crepe-ist was not rape themed.

MARY

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

Tony has heard enough. He walks away.

MARY (CONT'D)

Corner office...

Tony 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.

Sitting in his office is CRAIG BUSBY, 52, talent agent, a heavily opinionated buffoon and the owner's brother. He wears a flattop and has a tendency to say whatever comes into his mind. Standing in the doorway is ANDRE PIERRE, 35, an 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)

What?! Terrorism is very real, Craig.

CRAIG

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

Tony tries to sneak past.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

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

TONY

I know. I'm sorry, my car failed me.

CRAIG

Tony, 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.

TONY

Oh, cool. I love Vegas.

ANDRE

Qui est cet idiot?

(back to Craig)

Do you honestly believe what you are saying right now?

CRAIG

The fact that you don't is just another sign of your European nativity.

ANDRE

You mean naiveté?

CRAIG

Easy, frog breath. Just because 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 are such a rube. Why am I wasting my time at this second rate agency?

Andre 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 or mortuary attendant. It's a major issue plaguing this country and I think it's time we started addressing it as a legitimate talking point!

Tony 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, Craig's brother, and also the owner of the snaggletoothed grin used on all TB Talent advertisements, hangs up his phone.

TED (CONT'D)
 (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 in annoyance and sees Tony slink past the door to his office.

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

TONY
 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.

TONY
 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?

TONY
 (furrows his brow)
 I think so.

TED
 What am I saying?

TONY
 That you're in a tough spot?

TED

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

TONY

(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?

TONY

I...

Tony pauses to see if he's being serious.

TONY (CONT'D)

...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 right now. Will you please find Jordan for me?

TONY

Yes, sir.

Craig walks past Tony.

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.

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

TONY

(playing him)

No way.

CRAIG

Way! Uber way.

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

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tony opens the door and is surprised to see JORDAN BUSBY, 24, Ted's son, shell necklace, frosted tips, and LEXI DAVIS, 41, office secretary, casually having sex.

JORDAN
(whisper yelling)
If you say anything, I will fucking kill you.

Tony rolls his eyes.

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

Tony shuts the door and yells back.

TONY
I don't think he came yet.

Tony is pleased with a joke only he gets.

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

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

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

TONY
Despite your excellent form, I just need to grab...

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

TED (O.S.)
You find it?

LEXI
(passionate sex noise)
Oh, yes!

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

Jordan drags his finger across his neck.

JORDAN
I will end you.

TONY
(whispering to Lexi)
You can do better than him.

Tony slips out.

INT. TONY'S OFFICE - LATER

Tony hangs up the phone. Jordan enters.

JORDAN
My Dad tell you about lunch?

TONY
Yep.

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

TONY
Mum's the word.

JORDAN
(sociopath)
It fucking better be! Get your shit, I'm driving.

Tony, skeptical, grabs his jacket.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
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 Tony and Lexi in the backseat. Tony is cold and miserable.

CRAIG
Jordan, seriously, this thing is mint.

JORDAN
Yeah, I've already gotten like four speeding tickets.
(with pride)
One more and they arrest me on the spot.

CRAIG

Nice!

(turns back to Tony)

Sick, huh?

Tony, shivering, begrudgingly smiles and nods.

TONY

Yes, very practical.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTER - BAR - DAY

On the dance floor is a buffet. A MULTITUDE OF VARIETY ENTERTAINERS, MIMES, COWBOYS, MUSICIANS, etc... are getting food and chatting 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, a.k.a. Allyster Nightwind, 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 Mr. 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' sad, magical son.

KYLE

This is my look. Accept me for what I am.

CARL

No!

Ted stands at the front of the group.

TED

All right 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 comic, super cocky, talks down to everyone, beige suit, too much gold, although from Alabama he acts like a boring white guy.

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. Let's just move forward.
(beat)

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

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

TED (CONT'D)

As we all know, the annual showcase is on Thursday. Last year we booked over 400 holiday parties, and this year we're looking to top that. Now, I've got some big news.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

Stu Huffman, a manager from Goldberg, Steinberg, and Berg & Berg just agreed to fly in special for the showcase.

No one says anything. JOANIE THOMPSON, 75, comedienne, 100% Minnesota, super nice, dim-witted, eyes always wide open, awkwardly raises her hand.

TED (CONT'D)

Yes, Joanie?

JOANIE

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

(beat)

His name is Bert.

Ted doesn't even know how to respond.

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.

They ignore 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 Tony his ring.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen anything that God damn beautiful before?

TONY

Nice. Where'd you play?

Ted is getting annoyed. Billy Dunston chimes in.

BILLY

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

DAVID

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

TONY

Aren't they, like, division four? I didn't even know they played sports.

Billy laughs at David.

TED

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

DAVID

Well, they do, and they have a fantastic program. Team. Like I want to be on a team with these degenerates.

CARL

What the fuck did you just call me?

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, Uncle Jemima.

Carl and David grab each other. They fall on the ground wrestling. Tony tries to break them up. David's hand, with the ring on it, swings at Carl, but misses and hits Tony. Blood pours from his nose. Side fights break out. It's complete chaos.

TOMMY (O.S.)

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, talks like a '30s gangster mixed with a ferret, 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.

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 Tony 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 faces are having their annual showcase. They're going to be in for a rude awakening when they find out we are having our showcase the same night...In the same town.

TED
You wouldn't.

TOMMY
Oh, I would. Because I have.

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

CRAIG
You are dead to us!

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

CARL
They didn't poach shit. We both know why 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 Tony.

JOANIE

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

EXT. OFFICE COMPLEX - ENTRANCE - DAY

Jordan and Lexi walk in. Tony follows behind, holding a tissue to his bloody nose. Jordan pulls the door shut, leaving Tony in the cold. Jordan laughs and walks into the office. Tony, annoyed, sees the garbage can where he threw away the business cards. He takes the cards out of the trash. He considers how much easier things would be if he took his fathers offer.

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

MR. GEORGIO

(has a stutter)

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

The Goon punches Tony in the gut three consecutive times.

TONY

(spitting up blood)

Naw, I was looking forward to it.

MR. GEORGIO

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

TONY

You know gambling is illegal, right?

The Goon gives Tony a shot to the kidneys.

MR. GEORGIO

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

TONY

You should just kill me now.

Now, Mr. Georgio punches Tony.

MR. GEORGIO

T-t-t-t-two weeks.

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

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TB TALENT OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Tony 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. Tony listens to Craig babble.

CRAIG

...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?

TONY

Right.
(beat)
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.

TONY

What would you do with the old puppies?

CRAIG

We hadn't thought it that far through yet. Almost immediately, we found out we had a competitor, so we abandoned the entire project. 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, smoking hot for her age, although she's wearing a business suit, her hair is unbrushed and she seems like she's on too many prescription meds.

TED

(depressed)

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

Craig can't contain himself.

CRAIG

Just tell 'um. Just tell 'um about the twenty percent!

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!

JORDAN

What?! They're clearly being dicks.

Ted looks at Evelyn with a fake smile, embarrassed.

TED

(deep breath)

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

TONY

(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.

Tony 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
(dodgey)
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 (CONT'D)
Any suggestions about how we can combat the twenty percent?

EVELYN
Ahhh...
(needing to say anything)
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 already see why you brought her in.

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

The room collectively processes the idea for a moment. Tony's about to say something, but gets cut off.

TED
(slowly)
That-may-actually-work.

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 (CONT'D)

MAN, we are lucky to have you here.

EVELYN

(preoccupied)

I need to make a call.

TED

(applauding)

Take all the time you need.

Evelyn leaves in a hurry.

TED (CONT'D)

Amazing work today, guys.

Andre stands up unnaturally fast. Flop sweat on his brow.

ANDRE

I gotta go.

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, but then everyone but Tony immediately stops caring and goes on with their day.

Now Tony 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.

Tony looks out the window and sees Andre jump in his 1982 Camaro and peel out of the parking lot. Tony shakes his head. Andre is clearly up to no good.

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tony is sleeping. His cell phone vibrates.

TONY

Hello?

CARL (V.O.)

(wasted)

Tony! Tony, I need you to come get me.

TONY

What?! Carl? Where are you?

CARL

Hahaha... Narnia, I mean jail.

TONY

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. Tony 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.

TONY

Was he undercover?

CARL

Oh, no. He was in full uniform.

TONY

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 not out of line to barter for some of it back.

TONY

(re: Carl's costume)

Did you have a gig?

CARL

No, there's this Asian broad I met on Craigslist who has a clown fetish. I don't fuck her. 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 whippits, next thing you know, I'm calling you for a ride.

Tony stops. Carl stops.

TONY

Are you sure you're okay?

CARL

I'm fine.

TONY

You sure?

CARL

Don't do it. Just don't, okay? I'm fine. I don't need you busting my balls.

TONY

I'm just saying you have the showcase tomorrow night and you're going all Hunter S. Thompson on me. Plus, I'm sure your wife is wondering where the hell you are.

CARL

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

TONY

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

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

Craig is wearing a RED, FELT SUIT WITH 80-100 TINY GOLDEN BELLS on it. He makes his way through the middle of a row, making people stand so he can get to his seat. The suit looks homemade and makes a tremendous amount of noise.

CRAIG

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

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

ART (V.O.)

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

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

TONY

Dad, it's Tony.

(pause)

I think I'm in the middle of making a mistake. Call me back.

INT. GREENROOM - CONTINUOUS

A BEVY OF 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 red Hindu dot (a Bindi) to his forehead and practices an Indian accent. Sadly, no one in Minnesota can tell the difference. Joanie Thompson has her hedgehog out and is showing it around. Tony can't believe these people. He skeptically examines them all.

TED

Have you seen Carl?

TONY

No.

TED

Does anyone know where Carl is?

No one knows. Ted is beside himself.

TONY

Ten minutes till showtime.

Suddenly, Andre Pierre, wearing his normal 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

(still catching his breath)
When Tommy and Donny showed up at our meeting, they had so much confidence. I just 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 on their showcase, I realized they were just using me for information.

BILLY

You are the most selfish person I have ever met, and I know people in A.A.

ANDRE

I'm sorry, I panicked.

TED
What did you tell them?

Andre can't look Ted in the eyes.

TED (CONT'D)
Please not about 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 all the acts look across the street at another theater and see a banner for World Wide Talent's Annual Showcase.

JORDAN
Across the fucking street?

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

CRAIG
The balls on these guys.

TONY
(to no one in particular)
Did he say bells?

On the banner it also reads: OUR DISCOUNT IS NOW 22%.

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 drunk roosters.

They simultaneously produce magic wands and duel. Kyle has 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 towards your nearest exit.

A general sense of panic increases and people rush towards 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 still want to see a great show
this evening, we still have tickets
available.

People are taking Tommy and Donny's tickets and heading into their theater. Craig sees this and clutches his fists.

CRAIG

Nooooooooooooo.
(pointing at Tommy)
This was your doing!

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

TONY

(over the crowd)
Dad?

ART (V.O.)

How's the new gig going?

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

TONY

I've had better days.
(hating himself)
You still have a job for me?

ART (V.O.)

Your sister didn't tell you?

TONY

Didn't tell me what?

ART (V.O.)

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

Tony stops.

TONY

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.

Tony doesn't say anything.

TONY (V.O.)

Thoreau said, "The mass of 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.

TONY (V.O.)

Why is that? Why do most people settle for the path of least resistance?

Out of nowhere comes a fleeing 2013 Porsche hard top. It's being followed by 2 cop cars with their sirens going. The Porsche SLAMS into a telephone pole.

TONY (V.O.)

Why don't most people have the courage to live the lives they were meant to?

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 pot in his pocket.

CARL

You're just being selfish, that's my weed.

TONY (V.O.)

I think it's because on some level we're all afraid that we can't make a difference.

Ted runs past Jordan and up to Tony, 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.

Tony stops and looks around at the mass of people.

TED (CONT'D)

Well?

JOANIE

How is there a fire without smoke?

Tony gets an idea.

INT. OTHER THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Tony 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.

BACK TO STREET.

The firemen stop and rush towards the other theater.

DONNY

You dipshits. You're going the wrong way.

Smoke starts to pour out of the other theater.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Oh, crap.

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

TONY

(into mega-phone)

All right everyone, there was a misunderstanding. Stay calm and head back into our theater.

Tony ushers the people back in.

TED

Thank you.

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

CARL

(yelling)

Hey, Tony...

Tony turns and sees Carl.

CARL (CONT'D)

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

Tony grins.

TONY
(yelling back)
I'll be there, man.

Carl is violently forced into the cop car. Off in the distance Tony notices an SUV parked and Mr. Georgio's Goon standing next to it. The Goon makes eye contact with Tony. Message received. Tony walks back inside. He looks back and sees the other theater still billowing out smoke.

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Someone is POUNDING on Tony's door.

TONY
Just chill out, I'll be right there.

Puts on pants. Pounding continues. He opens the door.

TONY (CONT'D)
What?!

JANICE HOUSER, 40, heavysset 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?

TONY
Why are you at my house?

JANICE
Did you light that fire?

TONY
What?! What are you talking about?

JANICE
I'm going to ask you one more time and this time you're going to dig inside of that feeble brain of yours and tell me the truth, OR you and your tiny little ass are coming with me.
(beat)
Now, don't waste my God damn time. Did you or did you not start that fire?

Tony tries to find the words. Just as he's about to speak...

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 Tony 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: TONY 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, Tony 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," Tony 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.