

casters

EPISODE 102

"The Assist"

by

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FINAL SHOOTING DRAFT 1

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TEASER

From the BLACK we HEAR--

CAL (O.S.)
Why would she do that? Why would
she cancel on us?

RONNIE (O.S.)
She's a chick? She's nutty?

TITLE:

Pre-Show Meeting. Monday. 9:12 a.m.

CAL (O.S.)
You're a chick. You're not nutty.

RONNIE (O.S.)
I'm pretty nutty.

FADE IN:

1 **INT. CAL'S HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - DAY**

1

Sitting around a table: CAL, RONNIE and OWEN. Owen quietly
jots down notes on a legal pad.

CAL
And she cancelled by text?

RONNIE
Twenty minutes ago.

CAL
That's professional.

RONNIE
Cal, we're recording a podcast in
your basement. There's not a lot
about this operation that screams
'professional'.

OWEN
I have a degree in engineering.
That's professional.

RONNIE
And you also consider Count Chocula
one of the major food groups.

OWEN

Doesn't effect my ability to engineer this rodeo.

CAL

Guys, look! We record in two days. We have no guest.

RONNIE

We can find someone.

CAL

Who?

OWEN

I can call my buddy from that improv group.

CAL

Improv people make me twitchy with their 'always on' attitude.

OWEN

This guy's cool. More 'Kids In The Hall' and less college improv group with some crap name like 'Giggles And Free Beer'.

RONNIE

'Improvopolis'.

OWEN

'Brosephine Baker'
(beat)
Black Shirley Temple'
(beat)
'Kathleen Turner Overdrive'
(beat)
'Bea Arthur's Mumu'.

RONNIE

I think I saw them at the UCB once. They sucked.

CAL

(taking control)
We'll put your buddy on the list, but we gotta keep looking. I want someone in the chair that's gonna bring listeners.

OWEN

Download stats are up, we've got a decent amount of good reviews on iTunes. People are listening.

CAL

I know, but we need...we've gotta push this show! Get it on a much bigger scale!

OWEN

Ronnie could show off her breasts.

RONNIE

Yes, because nothing sells the listening experience of a podcast like female nudity.

OWEN

Doesn't hurt Stern's ratings.

RONNIE

Thankfully, we're not him.

OWEN

Hey! I like Stern.

RONNIE

Sometimes, I want to make you cry. Through pain.

OWEN

You're cute when you play mad.

CAL

Guys, seriously. We can be better. We've got two days and we...

He trails off, leaving Ronnie and Owen to sit in silence for awhile.

RONNIE

Cal?

CAL

Hm?

RONNIE

You okay?

CAL

Yeah, I'm fine.

RONNIE
What's up?

 CAL
 (sighs)
Donna left me.

 RONNIE
Oh.
 (beat)
Crap.

CUT TO CREDITS:

ACT ONE

2

INT. CAL'S KITCHEN - DAY

2

Ronnie and Owen stand around while Cal paces the kitchen.

CAL

I know it was only an eight month thing but still...I'm pretty messed up about it. Was it love? I don't know. I felt something.

OWEN

She did this on Thursday?

CAL

Yeah.

OWEN

That explains the unanswered calls all week.

CAL

I just drew the blinds, opened the liquor and cranked the tunes.

OWEN

Costello?

CAL

Phil Collins.

OWEN

Woah.

CAL

Yeah.

OWEN

You're dropping the needle on Collins? Yeah. This must be love.

CAL

Maybe. But...

Cal looks off in to space. Ronnie and Owen look at each other. Cal leaves the room, lost in thought.

Ronnie and Owen whisper to each other.

RONNIE

Well that does it. His head isn't gonna be in the game on Wednesday. We're screwed.

OWEN

Yup.

RONNIE

We've gotta get somebody that's gonna take him out of this 'Against All Odds' headspace.

OWEN

Yup.

RONNIE

Someone who can get his attention, get him to focus.

OWEN

Yup.

RONNIE

And not your improv buddy. No. Somebody bigger.

OWEN

Like...a fat person bigger?

She gives him a look that could kill.

OWEN

I'm kidding! Look, you know who we gotta get.

RONNIE

I do?

OWEN

We gotta call in Mark.

RONNIE

Oh my God, yes! Yes! I apologize for the-the-the glaring before. Yes! Mark!

Cal walks back in.

RONNIE

Hey, you know who we should get in the guest chair for the week?

CAL

Mark?

RONNIE

(surprised)
Yeah.

Beat.

CAL
You guys are horrible whisperers.

RONNIE
Oh.

CUT TO:

3

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

3

TITLE:

Meeting With Mark. Tuesday. 3:45 pm.

Cal and Ronnie are there with MARK MALKOFF -- quirky, unique, but more importantly, funny.

CAL
So the thing with the toy store,
that's almost done?

MARK
Yeah, we just have a couple of
weeks left of filming, then editing
and then put it up on the website.

RONNIE
The stuff you did of you living on
the plane -- I always send those
links to people.

MARK
That's nice, thank you.

RONNIE
I'm a nice girl.

MARK
Yeah, sure. Okay.

CAL
You think you'd wanna come on the
show and promote what you've got
going?

MARK
Sure. When we have something put
together I'll--

CAL
I mean, this week. On Friday.

MARK

Oh.

CAL

It's--I know it's super short notice but it's just that--there's been a lot of things going on and if you could just, I mean we--

RONNIE

Donna left him.

Cal shoots her a look.

RONNIE

She left him, we had someone drop out and he's been stressing about getting the show to the 'next level'. So we thought about it and you not only bring an increased amount of listeners when you're on the show, but you also brighten up Mr. Cheerypants over here.

CAL

I can leave if you'd like to talk like I'm not here.

MARK

No, it's okay, we'll just pretend you're not here.

(to Ronnie)

Do I really bring listeners?

RONNIE

Yes! We need you to give us The Assist. You post something on your site that you're gonna be on our show, hit up the Twitter and the Facebook and yeah, we all make out.

MARK

I don't know how my wife would feel about you and I making out but okay, I'm up for it.

RONNIE

Cool. So Friday? Usual time?

(to Cal)

See? I bypass all the hemming and hawing you do and get right to it.

Cal says nothing.

RONNIE

You're sulking? Cause I got us a great guest, you're sulking?

He nods. She shakes her head.

CUT TO:

4 INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 4

TITLE:

Owen's Place. Tuesday. 10:30 p.m.

Owen's on his computer. He's browsing the 'Ain't It Cool' site. He clicks on the 'Contact Us' link and scrolls through the various e-mail addresses listed.

He picks one and opens his e-mail. He looks over to his legal pad and begins to decipher his scribbling and type.

CUT TO:

5 INT. RONNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY 5

TITLE:

Ronnie's Place. Thursday. 1:17 p.m.

Ronnie is hanging with her boyfriend, TOMMY (30s). He's playing his guitar.

RONNIE

You guys gonna come in to the bar after your gig?

TOMMY

We'll be lower West Side so, I dunno...it's a bit of a hike. We'll probably play our set, grab a beer and then head home.

RONNIE

That's cool. I'm on til close so either way, I'll see you.

TOMMY

Why do you take such crappy shifts? You've been there for two years.

RONNIE

I can't do days, sweetie.

TOMMY
Cause of the podcast?

RONNIE
Well...yeah.

TOMMY
I don't get it, the whole
podcasting thing. You record a
talk show that nobody listens to.

RONNIE
People listen.

Beat.

RONNIE
We have listeners.

TOMMY
Do you?

RONNIE
You didn't start bringing in cash
over night, did you?

TOMMY
No. We built up a fanbase.

RONNIE
Exactly. So, we're doing the same.

TOMMY
But with a band, you get the
fanbase, then you get the record
contract, you make the album and do
the tour and then you get the cash.
Where's the money in podcasting?

RONNIE
I make my money at the bar. Off
the night shifts. Good tips.

TOMMY
Yeah, but I hardly see you.

RONNIE
Then come in tonight and see me!

Beat.

RONNIE
If Cal sees something in this, then
there must be something.

TOMMY

Cal's a nice guy but do you really think this thing is gonna pay bills?

RONNIE

How long you guys been playing?

TOMMY

Four years.

RONNIE

Well, we've only been at it for under a year. Give us a break.

TOMMY

I'm just saying--

RONNIE

I know what you're saying, and I'm saying have some patience.

TOMMY

Alright.

Ronnie's phone rings, just in time for Tommy to give up.

RONNIE

Hello?

CUT TO:

6

EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

6

Ronnie and Mark are sitting on the stoop of Mark's building.

MARK

Donna called my wife today. She wanted to talk to somebody about the break-up, about what happened.

RONNIE

Why'd she call your wife?

MARK

They worked together on a couple of plays and my wife knows Cal...

RONNIE

(uneasy)
Right, right. Go on.

Beat.

MARK

Donna said Cal was...

RONNIE

What? What was Cal doing?

Mark hesitates.

RONNIE

Look, if this is gonna stop you from being comfortable on our show, let's resolve it. Let's get this taken care of so you can go full funny on us.

MARK

(sighs)

Okay...according to Donna, Cal was spending an awful amount of time on the internet. Not so much the ebay, but more the...

RONNIE

You talking about porn sites?

Mark nods. Ronnie takes it in and thinks. Mark almost looks embarrassed by what he just told Ronnie.

RONNIE

Okay, here's what I'm gonna do: I'm gonna go straighten it out with Cal. Don't even think about it. It's done and you need to be 'on' for the show. I want you to be able to sit across from Cal tomorrow without thinking about him in front of his computer...looking at stuff. Pantless.

MARK

You've made that incredibly impossible now.

RONNIE

I'm not perfect.

MARK

Don't tell him that I told you.

RONNIE

I'm not eleven years old, dude!
(beat)
I'm gonna tell him your wife told me.

MARK

What!?

RONNIE

Kidding! Joke! You just be ready
for the show, okay?

MARK

Yeah. Okay.

Ronnie leaves and we...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**FADE IN:****INT. CAL'S HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - DAY**

Cal is on the computer, pointing and clicking -- typing in some things. There's a KNOCK and Ronnie enters.

CAL

Hey.

RONNIE

Hey.

CAL

Just going through the last draft of the play which someday I will finish and may or may not put up. Or may. Or not. It's anyone's guess at this point.

RONNIE

Uh-huh.

Ronnie is facing the back of the computer screen -- she's thinking about what's on the other side of it.

RONNIE

Wanna ask you a question.

CAL

Shoot.

RONNIE

Why'd Donna leave you?

CAL

She said our relationship had run aground.

RONNIE

She used those words?

CAL

Yeah.

RONNIE

Wow. She's like a ship captain.

CAL

She always did love the sea.

Beat.

RONNIE
Why are you lying to me?

CAL
What?

RONNIE
We know each other too well. And I know that you're lying.

CAL
I...no. I'm not.
(off her look)
I'm not!

RONNIE
Look, you're the guy that finally got me to see that my ex was a controlling idiot. You're the guy that got me to talk to my sister again even after she'd written me off. You got me my job at the bar. Took me to that club where I met Tommy. And you're the guy who brought me in on this crazy idea of yours to do a podcast that could be a total bust. But you wanna know something? I'm having the time of my life doing it and it's because of you. That's how much of an impact you've had on me and my life. So I'm gonna ask you again, Cal: Why are you lying?

Beat.

CAL
I started going to the websites again. A lot. And she found out and she left.

RONNIE
I thought you'd stopped.
(pause)
I don't understand you. Why do you...you have all this talent, all of this potential...and you screw it up with stupid actions--

CAL
I wish I could understand it! I really do.

RONNIE
You're addicted to this stuff, you
know that, right?

CAL
Yeah, I am. And I do know.

Beat.

RONNIE
Okay...way I see it, you've got two
choices. You stop going to the
sites on your own. You just do it.

CAL
And the second choice?

RONNIE
You get something for your
computer, something that stops you
from going to these sites. But you
do something. Otherwise, I'm off
the show.

Cal looks at his computer, then back up at Ronnie.

CAL
Ronnie, look, I just kinda lost
myself a bit and I won't--

RONNIE
Cal.

CAL
--I'm gonna stop going to the
sites. But I don't need you to--

RONNIE
CAL!

Beat.

RONNIE
What is more important?

He looks at her, then at his computer.

RONNIE
Okay, I do tomorrow's show, then
I'm gone.

She leaves and Cal sits there. He stares at his computer and
shuts the laptop closed.

He stands, paces, cursing to himself under his breath.

CUT TO:

8

INT. CAL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

8

TITLE:

Show Day. Friday. 4:00 pm.

Cal on one end of the table, Ronnie on the other -- both with their game faces on. Mark's in the middle. Owen works the small engineering console.

CAL

Hello everyone and welcome to 'Bring It Up', the podcast that begs the eternal question, 'What the hell is the white part of an Oreo made out of?'

RONNIE

I'm gonna say it's magical pixie phlegm.

CAL

Right out of the gate people, Ronnie mentions phlegm. That happens? You're guaranteed a good show.

RONNIE

Indeed.

CAL

Our guest today is a favorite of the podcast. Somebody who is creative, inventive, who is, um...the word I'm looking for is...

MARK

Cuddly?

CAL

No.

RONNIE

Handsome?

CAL

No.

MARK

Dashing? I get called dashing a lot.

CAL

No, you know what it is? He's wanted. He's a wanted man in five states. That's what I was trying to remember.

MARK

Well, the thing about killing hobos is that it's always gonna get back to you.

CAL

You can't just kill hobos and not leave some sort of trail.

MARK

Usually it's a trail of empty cans of beans.

RONNIE

Or those sticks with a kerchief tied to one end. Just dozens of those across the country with your prints on them.

MARK

Yeah. And if O.J. taught us anything, it's 'always wear gloves'.

CAL

Did he really teach us that?

RONNIE

I'm gonna say, no he didn't.

CAL

And there you have it, listeners! The great Hobo Killing Confession!

DISSOLVE TO:

9

LATER

9

Show's over and they're packing up. Owen works on his laptop. Ronnie is off to the side.

CAL

Thanks again for coming in at the last minute and helping us out.

MARK

Oh sure, it was a lot of fun.

CAL

And when your video is up, we'll have you back in.

MARK

That's a lot of me in such a short period of time.

OWEN

Mark, give me a couple more minutes and I'll have that mp3 of the show for you.

MARK

Okay.

Ronnie walks to Mark.

RONNIE

(very broad)

Well, today was awesome and it sucks that I won't be around for your next appearance.

MARK

You won't?

CAL

Ronnie, hold on a second.

RONNIE

Yeah, I'm leaving the show.

OWEN

You--what!?

MARK

Leaving?

CAL

She's not leaving the show.

RONNIE

Yeah, I've been giving up day shifts at the bar and I need to start bringing in some extra cash, so I--

CAL

You don't need day shifts at the--

RONNIE

Oh no? Then why, pray tell, would
I leave the show?

She stares at Cal, and the tension is pretty high. Mark
looks at the two of them, then over to Owen...

MARK

You can e-mail that mp3 to me,
right?

OWEN

Yeah, sure.

MARK

So...I'm gonna go--

RONNIE

I'll go!

CAL

No!
(to Mark)
You, stay!
(to Ronnie)
You, come!

Cal storms out, Ronnie right behind. Mark and Owen look at
each other.

OWEN

I love it when Cal goes all Tarzan
in his communication skills.

MARK

He's Tarzan, she's Jane...does that
make you Cheetah?

Beat.

OWEN

Why would you call a chimpanzee
'Cheetah'?

MARK

It's a good question.

OWEN

There's no logic behind it.

CUT TO:

10

INT. CAL'S HOUSE - HOME OFFICE

10

Cal and Ronnie march in.

He walks back and forth, goes to say something but can't...he tries again...Ronnie waits but her patience is wearing thin...

RONNIE

I know you, Cal. I know you made your choice, so I'm gone. I'm sure my replacement will be a joy. And the beauty is, whoever you get in won't care about you as much as I do so you can keep going on to your little websites, getting your kicks!

CAL

Will you shut the hell up?!

RONNIE

Excuse me?!

CAL

Please! Shut up! God, you yammer on and on. Just...shut it.

CAL

If you leave the show then there is no show. You understand?

She shrugs.

CAL

There is no show.

RONNIE

Yes, you've said that.

CAL

No, you're not--what I'm saying is that this isn't just about you and it's not about me. It's about all of us. You and me and Owen...

(considering)

Well, less Owen than you and me.

RONNIE

Cal, if you have a point, please get to it cause I've gotta get my resume online pronto.

He looks at his computer for moment.

CAL

This thing is my blessing and it is my curse. It helps me say the things that I'm unable to say in the moment. Much like this one. But at the same time, it chains me to a part of me that I don't want.

RONNIE

Then let it go.

CAL

And if it were that easy, I would've done it a long time ago. But, I've made it pretty clear that it's not something I can do alone.

He reaches down, picks up a piece of paper.

RONNIE

What's that.

CAL

A receipt. For software I bought.

He leans over to the computer, clicks a few things.

CAL

I need you to get it started. I've written down key words you can enter that'll hopefully block me--

RONNIE

Hold on. You wrote down words?

CAL

Yes. Saying the things that I look at out loud to you is not something I'm ready for yet. I wrote down some words and websites. This will be tough for me to look you in the eye after it's done so...just...

(beat)

I need you. I need your help.

Beat.

RONNIE

You're not gonna confess some sort of deep-seeded love for me, are you?

CAL

No. No! You're like a sister.

RONNIE

So that time I full on kissed you while you were recovering in sick bay after a snow monster attack and nearly freezing to death didn't make you feel...anything?

CAL

See, any other girl makes an Empire Strikes Back reference and I'm all over it. You do it and...nothing.

RONNIE

Good.

CAL

(heads for the door)
Let me know when you're done, okay?

RONNIE

Cal?

He turns.

RONNIE

You don't even know how much I believe in you.

He smiles at her and leaves. Ronnie opens the list and turns to the computer to get to work.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CAL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT

11

Cal enters. Mark and Owen are talking...

MARK

Just keep sending them e-mails every couple of weeks.

OWEN

Oh, I plan on it.

CAL

What's up?

OWEN

Every so often I get what I like to call, a crazy idea. Then I like to do what I call, following through.

CAL

Okay.

OWEN

So, I got to thinking about our audience: the audience we cater to doesn't know where to look for us. And since we supply food for thought for nerds and geeks around the world, what's the best place to reach them?

Owen leans over to his laptop, clicks on to 'Ain't It Cool'.

OWEN

I went to Nerd Mecca and I sent them an e-mail, asking them if they would review our show.

CAL

You did that?

OWEN

Yeah.

CAL

Huh.

MARK

I like it.

CAL

I'm sure they get e-mails like this all the time.

Owen just stares at Cal.

CAL

Hey, I hate to be 'that guy', but we should be realistic about this.

OWEN

Yeah, but we should at least try everything, right? Eventually something's gonna stick to the wall.

CAL

As long as you're not comparing the podcast to crap, then I could possibly be behind this idea.

MARK

It's a great idea, Cal.

CAL
 (thinks)
 Yeah, go for it. Lets see what happens.

Ronnie enters the room, glances at Cal and nods -- 'It's done.' He half smiles and then sags in his chair.

OWEN
 You leaving or not?

RONNIE
 No. You're stuck with me.

OWEN
 Okay. Cool.

Owen and Mark resume a conversation.

OWEN
 So, that ferris wheel bit. That's really Brian Dennehy?

MARK
 It's him. He was so nice.

Ronnie walk to Cal, puts a hand on his shoulder reassuringly. He looks at her and she smiles.

RONNIE
 So you're in to chicks that dress like Eskimos?

CAL
 What?! That's not--

He realizes she's joking, he puts his hands up in surrender. Embarrassed, he looks away.

She nudges him, gets him to look at her.

RONNIE
 You know I've gotta bust your chops about this until you get over it.

CAL
 Yeah, yeah.
 (stands, then to the room)
 Alright, well we gotta start planning for next week's show.

MARK
 I should split.

CAL

Not if you don't want to. We could
always use an extra brain around
here.

RONNIE

Owen's only works at half capacity
anyway.

OWEN

She's lying.

(beat)

It's probably less than that. I
don't know, I'm not good with the
math

MARK

Oh, well then I can stay.

Cal looks around the room. At his friends...

CAL

Alright...let's get to work.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE