

Breaking Character

a short digital series
written by

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EPISODE ONE: Eugene Randolph Esquire

OVER BLACK:

JORDAN (V.O.)

Let me start off by asking the most obvious question: why?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - DAY

JORDAN, 28, instantly likable in a no-nonsense sort of way, leans into the question as it hangs between herself and EUGENE, 28, resembling a knock-off version of *Clark Gable* in some dapper attire with a pencil moustache above his lip.

EUGENE

Why? Well, why what?

His voice is high and precise in a smooth Mid-Atlantic accent. His words spread out slowly with an air of faux-snobbery like *Katharine Hepburn*.

JORDAN

Why... this?

She gestures towards the entirety of Eugene's very out-of-place and very out-of-date being.

EUGENE

Ah, I see. A loaded question! If pressed, I suppose... Well, I love acting so much, I simply decided to always do it.

JORDAN

Always act? Just pretend to be someone else at all times?

EUGENE

Precisely.

JORDAN

That sounds like schizophrenia. Don't you think?

EUGENE

My dear Jordan, what you call schizophrenia, I call commitment.

We stay on Eugene, his confidence unwavering as we CUT TO:

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - LATER

The classroom stage is filling with STUDENTS as Jordan sits with GWEN, 20 starry-eyed and high on Hollywood promise.

JORDAN

So you've been in class with Eugene for how long now?

GWEN

Well Eric's been here for I don't know, like, ten years or something like that.

JORDAN

Eric is Eugene, right?

GWEN

Yeah, *Eugene*. That's his character's stage name.

JORDAN

His character's an actor too?

GWEN

Yup. Eugene Randall something.

JORDAN

How long's he been doing this?

GWEN

Ummm... He's come to class as Eugene for the last three weeks so probably that long.

JORDAN

You think he's doing it all the time? Like, at home and when he's alone and all that?

GWEN

Yeah. It's getting kinda weird. Like, it was funny at first, but now we're all just like, *alright, we get it. The punch-line was three weeks ago*, you know? But he won't break character.

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - LATER

MONTAGE: We see Eugene performing various SCENES and MONOLOGUES.

Each one has him in a different costume and holding different props while his persona and pencil moustache distractingly remain.

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - LATER

Class is over, and the stage has been cleared and dramatically re-lit. Eugene enters the frame looking excited as he takes his seat.

EUGENE

Apologies. Just had to powder my nose. Being on camera and such.

JORDAN

Not a problem. So tell me about this character you've created. This old, classic Hollywood type.

EUGENE

I wouldn't go as far as to say that I "created" him. How can you really create a life?

JORDAN

Besides the obvious?

EUGENE

What? Oh! Yes, I get it. Good form. No, I didn't create him. Especially not in the *obvious* sense.

JORDAN

Obviously.

EUGENE

It's more like... I found him. Or rather, he found me.

JORDAN

And what's the response been? From your peers? Coworkers? Doctors?

EUGENE

Well, I am currently unemployed. At the moment. As it were.

JORDAN

Because of the sudden change in your personality and behavior?

EUGENE

They simply wanted to take the role in another direction.

JORDAN

Oh, it was an acting job?

EUGENE

No. Panera Bread. You see.

JORDAN

Has this helped your acting career at all? Certainly must make you stand out at auditions. No?

EUGENE

Oh, well, I am not alone in my endeavor. A small group of very close friends have all decided upon this life change as well.

JORDAN

Really?

EUGENE

Our practice is not unheard of. These methods are utilized by many well-regarded thespians of the stage and screen. Namely Sir Day-Lewis and, of course, the auteur himself, Jàmè Frànkò.

JORDAN

James Franco?

EUGENE

You've heard of him? Of course you have. You see? The method, it works!

JORDAN

Yeah but pardon me for saying, he's *paid* to act like a lunatic.

EUGENE

The applause is my payment.

JORDAN

Who's applauding?

EUGENE

... The stars.

Eugene gives a dramatic "Soap Opera" gaze into the distance.

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - EARLIER

Eugene, clad in a cheap-looking MEDICAL COAT, is performing a scene from the series *House MD* with an overzealous Gwen.

GWEN

It's not an infection. The gallium scan didn't reveal anything.

EUGENE

Okay. What hides from a gallium scan?

GWEN

Cardiac.

EUGENE

Right. Clot slips off, travels through the artery, and gets backed up in the eye.

GWEN

It's an infection in his heart!

EUGENE

Great. Echocardiogram for the heart and IV antibiotics for the infection, stat!

Eugene storms off the stage - annnnd scene.

INT. ACTING STUDIO - CLASSROOM - PRESENT TIME

Eugene confidently adjusts the collar of his shirt.

JORDAN

And the name?

EUGENE

Eugene Randolph Esquire.

JORDAN

Esquire. So is your character an actor or a lawyer?

EUGENE

How's that?

JORDAN

Esquire. It's lawyer-- That's used by lawyers.

EUGENE

Mostly?

JORDAN

Exclusively.

EUGENE

I see. I just thought it sounded nice if I'm being honest.

JORDAN

Well, it does. If you're a lawyer.

EUGENE

Quite so. Say 'yes and' to new information! I learned that at Juilliard whilst studying under the tutelage of Dame Judy Dench.

JORDAN

Judy Dench taught you improv at Juilliard?

EUGENE

Well... no. What I meant was that her effervescent essence is felt throughout the whole of the acting community. You see.

Jordan's eyes light up - this guy has viral-video written all over him.

JORDAN

Eugene, Mr. Esquire, I was hoping to keep this interview going. If you wouldn't mind it?

EUGENE

Splendid! You're like James Lipton. *Inside the Actor's Studio*. What else would you like to know?

JORDAN

Well, what if we just follow you around for a bit? You know, like a day in the life of *Eugene Randolph Esquire*.

EUGENE

I have to drop my new headshots with my agent, if you'd like to accompany me with that?

JORDAN
That would be great.

EUGENE
Then it shall be so! Come, we must
make haste.

Eugene stands and exits the classroom as Jordan is held back
by her cameraman, MATT, 26, always behind the scenes.

MATT (O.S.)
Jord, I can't follow this guy
around all day.

JORDAN
Come on, this is so much better
than I thought! You see this
lunatic? He's guaranteed to go
viral. Just give me a couple hours.

Matt lingers.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I'll pay you fifty bucks.

He's still not budging.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I'll give you a producer credit in
the 'About' section.

MATT (O.S.)
Deal.

Jordan excitedly runs off to catch up with Eugene as Matt
brings the camera back up to his shoulder - ACTION!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE TWO: Evelynn Singer

OVER BLACK:

EVELYNN (V.O.)
Jesus Christ, you're still doing
this character thing?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EVELYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

Eugene enters with wide arms and an even wider smile into a room cluttered with scripts, headshots, and cigarettes.

EUGENE
Evelynn! Darling! As good as ever
to see that smiling face.

EVELYNN SINGER, 56, very much *not* smiling, sits with too much makeup and not enough ashtrays as she lights yet another cigarette. She sees Jordan and Matt trailing Eugene with the camera.

EVELYNN
Who's this? Why're you filming me?

JORDAN
Oh, don't mind us. We're doing a
think-piece on Eugene here.

EVELYNN
You gonna put it online?

JORDAN
Probably.

EVELYNN
Good. Maybe it'll go viral.

JORDAN
That's the plan.

Eugene glances at Jordan with a subtle look of discord.

EVELYNN
Whaddya got for me?

EUGENE
My new headshots as per your
request.

Eugene hands over a thick MANILA ENVELOPE.

EVELYNN

What's this? Open it. Want me to get paper cuts? My skin's like a wet cocktail napkin. You know this.

Eugene embarrassingly glances into the camera as he opens the folder for Evelyn and hands over the PHOTOS. They're black and white - very traditional and completely outdated.

EVELYNN (CONT'D)

What the hell are these?

EUGENE

You like them? Of course you do.

EVELYNN

Eric--

EUGENE

-Eugene.

EVELYNN

Whatevah. I told you to get new headshots that make you look like a young Jared Leto-type, not Humphrey Bogart's asshole grandson.

EUGENE

Evelynn? I'm not sure I follow.

EVELYNN

I can't send these out!

EUGENE

But why?

EVELYNN

Cuz it's not 1942! Son of a bitch, you're holding a magnifying glass in this one for Christ's sake!

She holds up one of the photos of Eugene looking very much like a caricature of *Sherlock Holmes*.

EUGENE

Noir is making a comeback in a big way. You see.

EVELYNN

Who told you that?

EUGENE
Reddit. And... Variety.

She thumbs through the headshots and finds a very playful-looking one of Eugene on a tennis court.

EVELYNN
Okay. Maybe this one could work.
For commercials.

EUGENE
Commercials? The horror! Evelynn,
with all due respect, I did not
come to Hollywood to be a
spokesperson.

EVELYNN
And I didn't quit strippin' to
start a charity for stubborn
actors! Commercials pay, kid.

EUGENE
What about that new Martin Scorsese
picture? I'd be perfect for the
role of young Sinatra.

EVELYNN
They got an offer out to Michael
Cera.

EUGENE
Michael Cera is a ripe-splintered
ass!

JORDAN
Wow.

EUGENE
Apologies.

EVELYNN
I know it's hard, but you're close.
You're so close, kid. You gotta
help me out here, alright? You
haven't worked since that play you
did with your friends on Cahuenga.

EUGENE
I told you, that show gave me
P.D.S.D! Now if you'll excuse me, I
have to powder my nose.

Eugene, clearly getting emotional, excuses himself from the room in a hurry.

JORDAN

P-D-S-D?

EVELYNN

Post dramatic stress disorder.
These fucking actors.

JORDAN

Mind if I ask you a few questions
while he's out?

EVELYNN

If you make it quick.

JORDAN

How do you feel about Eric's new
character, Eugene?

EVELYNN

Who knows? It might actually work.
Makes him stand out, can't argue
that. It's tough to stand out in
this town nowadays. I don't know
how these kids do it.

JORDAN

Do what exactly?

EVELYNN

What they do. I'm exhausted just
sendin' them out. One after another
after another like Fagin.

JORDAN

The villain from *Oliver Twist*?

Evelynn responds by lighting another cigarette.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

So you think this might help his
career then?

EVELYNN

Ehh, probably not. From my side of
the desk, it's only a numbers game.
I've got a lot of cards on the
table and so far his ain't been
dealt. But the wheel keeps on
spinning. Right?

JORDAN

What? What game is that in
reference to?

She exhales a long cloud of smoke.

EVELYNN

You know, acting is the oldest profession in the world?

JORDAN

I'm pretty sure prostitution is.

EVELYNN

What's the difference?

Eugene reenters the room looking much more lively as he scrunches his face and wipes his nose with a tissue.

EUGENE

Well, Evelynnn, it has been a pleasure as always, but I'm afraid we must disembark. Much to do. You see.

EVELYNN

Leave the headshots. I'll see what I can do.

EUGENE

You're a gem amongst rubble, my dear.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY STREET - LATER

Eugene and Jordan walk down the street towards her car.

JORDAN

I think just having an agent puts you ahead of the game. No?

EUGENE

You see that intersection over there? The one with all of the strange and bizarre-looking people just milling about?

She looks over to find a wild assortment of PEDESTRIANS and ONLOOKERS just pacing around the street corner. Each with a crazy ensemble, snapping "selfies" and "vines" - their cellphone cameras ever-rolling.

JORDAN

Yeah.

EUGENE

That's one of the busiest intersections in Los Angeles and all of those characters are waiting for a horrific accident to occur so that they can bear witness to it on the nightly news. Truly. Each one more outlandish than the next in an effort to become a viral sensation or meme. Thus is the state of our industry. Fame mongers clawing at the teat of social media just begging to be seen. To be loved. You don't need talent anymore, all you need are followers, likes, and views. That's "the game."

JORDAN

And what about you? What about... *this* then?

EUGENE

This? Well, this is art.

JORDAN

Art?

EUGENE

Indeed. My technique stems from the inspired works of his holiness Joaquin Phoenix, the Baron Sacha Baron Cohen, and the enigmatic Shia LaBeouf!

JORDAN

But what makes any of that or this "art" exactly?

EUGENE

I'll show you.

They arrive at her car and Eugene opens the door to get in the back seat.

JORDAN

You don't have to ride in the back, you know?

EUGENE

I prefer it.

He climbs in and slams the door as we CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE THREE: Keez

OVER BLACK:

EUGENE (V.O.)
And this here is my theatre! My
studio! My palace! My humble abode!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eugene leads Jordan and the ever-filming Brett inside his
very modest, crammed, and slightly filthy studio apartment.

JORDAN
It's... nice.

EUGENE
Well, it's a work in progress. It's
not *that* bad.

JORDAN
No, no. It's just... not what I
expected for *Eugene Randolph*
Esquire is all.

EUGENE
Quite right. It simply will not do.

JORDAN
Oh hey. What's umm... What's this?

She moves towards a small CAMCORDER housed on a tripod at the
foot of his unmade bed. Eugene darts towards it with
embarrassing urgency.

EUGENE
It's not-- It isn't-- I use this to
tape my auditions. You see. I
haven't been called in for a
reading in quite some time now, so
I've taken it upon myself to record
my own auditions for various films
and plays and what have you and the
like. I simply leave the tapes at
the casting director's door. You
see.

MONTAGE: We see Eugene in a series of various taped auditions
for films we all know. Each one more outlandish and out of
character than the last.

JORDAN
Does that work?

EUGENE
Oh yes! Of course. Well, it hasn't
proven to be effective as of yet.
Personally. But... try and try
again! As they say.

JORDAN
They do say that.

EUGENE
If you'll excuse me for a moment,
I'd like to powder my nose.

Eugene retreats to his bathroom.

MATT (O.S.)
He does that a lot, huh?

JORDAN
What's that?

MATT (O.S.)
"Powder his nose."

Jordan lifts a colorful WIG and blood-splattered SHIRT into
the frame - acting props, no doubt. They hope...

JORDAN
That's what's off-putting to you
about this guy?

A KNOCK at the door interrupts Matt's response.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
What, shit. Eugene, someone's at
the door.

EUGENE (O.S.)
I... ummm... I'll be right out. Ask
who it is.

Jordan uncomfortably moves towards the door.

JORDAN
Who is it?

KEEZ (O.S.)
It's Keez, yo!

JORDAN
Keez? Your name is Keez?

KEEZ (O.S.)
I'm here for Eu-gene. Open the door.

EUGENE (O.S.)
Wait-- Did you say "Keez?"

Jordan begins to open the door when Eugene BURSTS back into the room with a powdery-white SUBSTANCE all over his face.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
No! Don't let him in!

JORDAN
What? But--

Jordan panics and shoves the door back against the man as he tries to enter but only manages to pinch him between the door and the frame.

KEEZ
What the shit?!

KEEZ, 29, very intimidating, tattooed, and most assuredly violent, SLAMS through the door.

KEEZ (CONT'D)
Why you got me waitin' on the other side o' yo door, fam?

EUGENE
Keez, my word. My apologies. She didn't know.

JORDAN
What? You said don't let --

Jordan sees the white powder all over Eugene's face.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
-Jesus, Eugene! Is that cocaine??

KEEZ
My cocaine! You still throwin' down wit-out payin' up? Nah, we bout to fix dat.

Eugene frantically wipes away the drugs.

EUGENE
Jordan-- Keez, yes. Right. Yes, your money, of course.

Eugene hands over a few crumpled DOLLAR BILLS from his now empty wallet.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Here you are.

KEEZ

You playin' me for a fool now?

EUGENE

That is all I have! As I was just explaining to dear Jordan here, I haven't had an audition in months, and those *bastards* at Panera Bread, they sent me to Ohio.

KEEZ

Ohio? Wut?

EUGENE

They gave me the can! Shipped me up the river! Fired me with little more than my name to take with me. As it were.

KEEZ

I don't know bout all dat. But you best be payin' me up fresh, son.

EUGENE

And I will! I will pay you up fresh. I just... I need more time. You see.

KEEZ

Mo time? Motha-fucka, it's been three weeks!

JORDAN

What the hell is going on?

KEEZ

(rapping)

Your boy owes Keez a fat two g's.
Best be gettin' on yo knees, motha fucka beggin' please.
Pay me out wit fresh, crispy stacks
so yo boy Keez won't be comin' backs.

EUGENE

Sensational! Really, that was quite superb. Was that all improv?

KEEZ
GIMME MY MONEY!!

EUGENE
I don't have it! How about by this week's end? I can have it for you then. Most assuredly.

Keez thinks for a moment. But not long enough.

KEEZ
How's about you have it by nine o'clock. Tonight. Heard?

EUGENE
Keez... I must implore of you.

KEEZ
Nine o'clock. Or I come back here wit my six silver friends.

EUGENE
Tony awards?

KEEZ
Bullets, mo-fo!

EUGENE
I see. But why would you need six of them?

Keez takes a tense and intimidating step towards Eugene.

KEEZ
... Overkill.

EUGENE
Nicely done. Nicely done.

Keez turns to leave but not before LUNGING at Eugene to effectively startle him before his exit.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
Well, that was unpleasant. Care for some tea?

JORDAN
You owe a drug dealer two thousand dollars?

EUGENE
Quite right. Brandy then? I could certainly go for a brandy. Huzzah!

Eugene, clearly shaken up, moves to the kitchen.

MATT (O.S.)
We should go...

JORDAN
Just give me a minute.

She follows Eugene into the kitchen area - it's not a far walk.

She finds him with his hands gripping the countertop and his eyes held tightly closed in an effort to keep the anxious tears at bay.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Eugene?

EUGENE
Yes? Oh right, the brandy-- I mean tea. Yes. I believe I have some *Roobious Oolong*.

JORDAN
What's going on?

EUGENE
I have an addiction! So what? Who in this town doesn't sniff the white lady?

JORDAN
How could you have possibly snorted two thousand dollars worth of coke in three weeks??

EUGENE
A habit of the ages, I suppose.

JORDAN
What?

EUGENE
Oh, it's for my character. You see. I must partake in the white wonder as they once did back then.

JORDAN
No, you don't!

EUGENE
But my character --

JORDAN

-Why don't you just pretend?! You know, like acting??

EUGENE

How dare you!

JORDAN

What're you gonna do?

EUGENE

I don't know! How can I get that much money by nine o'clock? I can't! I know I can't.

JORDAN

According to "Keez" you have to. So think of something.

EUGENE

Ummm... Oh... Damn it all to hell. I suppose I can request a modest loan from a few friends.

JORDAN

Your friends can give you two thousand dollars?

EUGENE

Singularly, no. But collectively, perhaps.

JORDAN

Must have some nice friends.

EUGENE

An actor is only as good as his cast.

Jordan lingers for a moment on the promise of these words.

JORDAN

We'll help you.

MATT (O.S.)

We will?

JORDAN

Shut up, Matt.

EUGENE

Yes, shut up, Matt. You wish to loan me the money?

JORDAN

I'm not paying for your drug habit.
But we will come with you. For you
know, moral support.

EUGENE

A splendid notion! Oh! And you can
even film our adventure along the
way!

JORDAN

I hadn't even thought of that, but,
yeah, I suppose we could!

EUGENE

Marvelous!

JORDAN

Who can we go to first?

EUGENE

My dear fellow Ken-- Apologies,
Wyatt. He just worked on a cowboy
western film. Big budget affair. He
can help. Most assuredly.

JORDAN

His character's a cowboy named
Wyatt?

EUGENE

Wyatt Ford. Fastest guns west of
Highland.

MATT (O.S.)

He has guns??

JORDAN

Hey, do you think he'll let me
interview him while we're there?

EUGENE

Don't you think we have more
pressing matters at hand?

JORDAN

Yeah, but I mean, I don't think
it'll hurt to ask a few questions
for the documentary while we're
with him. About the method.

EUGENE

This won't take the focus of the
piece away from me now, will it?

JORDAN
No, not at all.

EUGENE
Splendid! Do what you will.

Eugene excitedly grabs his coat and runs to the door, stopping to look through the peephole.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
Wait... Alright, yes. Keez has gone. And we're off!

He dashes into the hall, leaving Jordan behind with a scheming smile.

MATT (O.S.)
Jord, what're we doing?

JORDAN
Forget You Tube, we're gonna be able to submit this lunatic to Sundance! Just follow me and keep filming. No matter what. Don't fuck this up.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE FOUR: Wyatt Ford

OVER BLACK:

WYATT (V.O.)

Life ain't easy on the western
frontier.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY

WYATT FORD, 29, tall, lean, brawny, and sporting a thick
handlebar mustache with a look of dirty adventure upon him.

WYATT

You always gotta keep an eye out
for the *quick and the dead*, the
young and the restless. You're
never as good as you were yesterday
and there's always a rattlesnake
curled up in your boot, waiting for
you to take another step towards
the horizon.

JORDAN

Very poetic. Where in the wild west
do you make camp?

WYATT

Koreatown.

EUGENE

Wonderful restaurants. In that.
Area.

WYATT

Yes, ma'am. It's a wild time in a
wild world. I came out west lookin'
to strike gold in them hills. All's
I've come up with is a handful of
broken promises and a bucket full
of horse shit to piss in.

Wyatt SPITS a mouthful of tobacco on the ground as a pair of
casual HIKERS pass by with their dog - effectively ruining
this "Wild West" illusion.

JORDAN

Didn't you just book a western film
though?

WYATT

I went on an expedition if that's your meanin'. Me and a wild bunch of fellas had to band together to run the Bloody Bandit out of town.

JORDAN

Everything's pretty "wild" with you, isn't it?

WYATT

After we finished the job, caught wind of a hidden treasure deep in the mines of Sleepy Hills where Redtooth and Quick Jim gave their young lives to rescue the beautiful Scarlet DeLoach from the grasp of the Bloody Bandit's twin brother.

JORDAN

Is that another metaphor for Hollywood or the plot of the movie you shot?

EUGENE

Quiet! I want to hear how it ends!

WYATT

That, I cannot say. Contractually.

EUGENE

Damn! That's how they get ya! Good form. Now Wyatt, I have come to you on this fine day in a bit of a bind. I owe our friend Keez a hefty sum.

WYATT

Keez? He ain't no rodeo clown to be foolin' with. If you catch my meaning.

EUGENE

Believe you me, I catch it.

JORDAN

You know Keez?

WYATT

In a different life, under a brighter moon, I once called him friend'o.

EUGENE

Then you know the kind of trouble I am in.

WYATT

How much do you owe him?

EUGENE

Two thousand dollars.

WYATT

(breaking character)

Holy shit, man!

(back as Wyatt)

I mean... I reckon...

(breaking character)

Holy shit, man!

EUGENE

I know. And in times such as these, one must turn to their friends. Which is what brings me here to you. My friendliest of friends.

WYATT

It's on account of the treasure we scouted from Sleepy Hills, ain't it?

EUGENE

Most apologetically, yes.

WYATT

Honesty is honored among thieves. I'll tell you what. I can give you... Two hundred dollars. Any more an the deputy'll start gettin' suspicious-like.

EUGENE

My word. How gracious!

WYATT

Think nothin' of it, pardner.

EUGENE

I think everything of it! Your generosity will echo across the plains!

JORDAN

Eugene...

Jordan nudges Eugene in the camera's direction.

EUGENE

Right, yes, of course. If you would allow it, my friend here would like to ask you a few questions for her film.

WYATT

Fine by me.

He SPITS another wad of spent tobacco - fully committed.

JORDAN

Great. Now, as an actor do you find this new approach to be --

WYATT

-What'd you call me?

JORDAN

An... actor.

WYATT

I ain't no panty-waist actor! I'm a dang cowboy! A roping, spitting, gun-slinging cowboy!

EUGENE

Impressive.

WYATT

Darn tootin', I'm impressive! I give Jesse James and Billy the Kid a run for their money!

JORDAN

You know... Those two were actually outlaws and not cowboys. Cowboys never really broke the law. Their job was to herd cattle. Cows. Thus the name. The "cowboy" you're portraying is the diluted caricature of a Hollywood stereotype.

Wyatt looks to Eugene for backup - he's got nothing.

WYATT

I... I know that.

JORDAN

Great. Next question. How long are you intending on staying in this character?

EUGENE

You don't have to answer that.

Wyatt is clearly uncomfortable with these questions and is altogether unsure about how to proceed.

WYATT

Uh... How... Why... I reckon it's about time for you to get along, little doggy.

EUGENE

Right on cue. Good form. Say, do you know where I might find Bridget?

WYATT

Bridget?

EUGENE

(sotto)

Yes, well... Alena. As it were.

WYATT

Oh, *Bridget*, right! Yeah, she's been hanging in The Woods for the last few nights. You'll find her there.

EUGENE

Many thanks... pardner.

Wyatt tips his hat to the three as he sits back in his chair - another great performance.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

They move to Jordan's car as Eugene proudly stuffs the two hundred dollars into his wallet.

EUGENE

Now all we need is one thousand, eight hundred more.

JORDAN

If this were the gool ol' days, you coulda just slept your way into a picture deal and used that money to pay Keez, am I right?

EUGENE

I could never!

JORDAN

So this Bridget's in the woods? Is her character, an elf?

MATT (O.S.)

I can't go into a forest. I'm allergic to pollen.

EUGENE

If only she were an elf. No, she's a vixen. A femme fatale. A real bitch of a woman.

JORDAN

She sounds fun.

EUGENE

Hold your tongue. And listen to not a word she tells you. She's as deceptive as Mary Pickford.

JORDAN

Then why are we going to her?

EUGENE

Because somewhere, buried deep beneath her atrocious exterior and ruthless guile, there slumbers a lovely girl who would want nothing more than to help a friend in need.

JORDAN

What if she says 'no'?

EUGENE

"Aim for the moon. For if you miss, at least you'll land amongst the stars."

JORDAN

Why would you want to be on the moon?

EUGENE

Oh, forget it.

JORDAN

I thought you wanted to be a star.

EUGENE

Indeed I do.

JORDAN

But you're aiming for the moon?

EUGENE

I'm not aiming-- I just, it's a saying, alright? It's a silly actor saying.

JORDAN

Not a very good one, is it?

EUGENE

I didn't make it up.

JORDAN

But you said it.

EUGENE

I did. You're right. And an actor is only as good as his script. Good form.

Eugene and Jordan get into the car, leaving Matt and his camera outside.

MATT (O.S.)

Seriously guys, I can't go in the woods.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE FIVE: Bridget Basinger

OVER BLACK:

EUGENE (V.O.)

Perhaps you can edit this sequence
into black and white. Yes? It'd be
more thematically appropriate.
You'll see.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE WOODS BAR AND GRILL - DAY

In harsh BLACK AND WHITE. Sunlight slices through Venetian
blinds; dust and smoke fog the air. Despite the year, the
seedy interior of The Woods could fool anyone into thinking
it was still 1948.

EUGENE

Alright. Just let me handle this
one, okay?

He scans the room until finding her at the bar - alone.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Of all the gin joints...

BRIDGET BASINGER, 29, in a long dark dress held close against
her soft white skin. An angel wrapped in noir with come-
hither looks and a breathless voice.

BRIDGET

You got some kinda nerve showin'
your face here after what you did
to who you did it to.

EUGENE

That night. Our night. What was
that saxophone player's song?

BRIDGET

It sure as hell wasn't a love song.

He moves in close to her - real close. Eugene's persona has
slightly shifted more towards *Humphrey Bogart* than *Clark*
Gable. Bridget looks past him and sees Jordan.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Who's she?

EUGENE

Another dame worth killing for.

BRIDGET

She's a stranger. I don't like strangers.

EUGENE

Everyone's a stranger til you meet em. Jordan, this here's Bridget. Bridget Basinger.

Jordan awkwardly stifles a laugh into a snort.

JORDAN

Bridget Basinger? Clever.

BRIDGET

Not as clever as you think you are. Say, what's the big idea?

EUGENE

Put some ice on it, lovely. She don't mean nothin' by them giggles.

JORDAN

Sorry.

EUGENE

Listen, kid. I'm here because--

BRIDGET

-I know why you're here. People been asking a lot of questions.

EUGENE

What sort of questions?

BRIDGET

The ugly sort.

EUGENE

Listen to me straight. I didn't wanna get you mixed up in this.

BRIDGET

Come on, buck. You're no gentleman, so don't play one.

EUGENE

He has me over a barrel here. You see.

BRIDGET

You were always the slippery one. Never tagged or lit up in a bad spot. Well now you're dead in the center of it, aren't ya? Scraping for a way out. Well let me tell ya, there ain't one. This time you're guilty, and you know it. And he knows, and what the hell, even she knows it. Tell me, how cold is it at rock bottom?

EUGENE

How's the view from up there on your high horse?

She lights a CIGARETTE - moving like a snake in the grass.

BARTENDER (O.S.)

Can't smoke in here.

She drops it into a drink as fluidly as she lit it.

BRIDGET

Why does he wanna kill ya?

EUGENE

I did something wrong. Once. For three weeks. Got in deep. Owe a lot of money.

BRIDGET

Can't you get outta town?

EUGENE

I'm through runnin'.

BRIDGET

You ought to leave it alone.

EUGENE

You and I both know that ain't an option. You remember?

BRIDGET

Sure, sure. I remember.

MATT (O.S.)

You following any of this?

JORDAN

Shush! This is awesome!

EUGENE
I've been framed. Like an
autographed picture of Lauren
Bacall.

BRIDGET
So it's true. The drugs weren't
yours?

EUGENE
No, no. They most assuredly were.

BRIDGET
Oh.

EUGENE
Do you have what I need or not?

BRIDGET
Depends.

EUGENE
On what exactly?

BRIDGET
On... love.

EUGENE
We reached the end of that road.
It's all wet now.

BRIDGET
I've never kissed a dead man.

EUGENE
You've got your chance. Here and
now.

BRIDGET
You're drunk.

EUGENE
What of it?

Bridget pulls Eugene in for a fiery KISS - it's odd.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
You're making me dizzy.

BRIDGET
I was just curious, is all.

EUGENE
Curiosity killed the cat.

BRIDGET

Alright fine, I did it! It was me!
Pepper wasn't around to light the
fire, so I dropped the spark.
That's right! I did what needed
doing, and I'd do it again!

Eugene turns to the bar and shoots back a drink. Whose drink
was it? Doesn't really matter.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

You knew... You knew it all along?

EUGENE

Of course I knew it. Heck, deep
down, we all knew it.

BRIDGET

Oh Eugene, you shoulda killed me
for what I did to you.

EUGENE

There's still time.

BRIDGET

My watch is broken.

She closes her eyes and moves in for another kiss - he stops
her.

EUGENE

Take it easy now, I just came to
talk this over.

BRIDGET

So talk.

EUGENE

Suppose you loan me the money.

BRIDGET

Suppose you don't make it to the
car.

EUGENE

Suppose it doesn't take.

BRIDGET

Suppose you learn to mind your
manners.

EUGENE

Be careful, Angel. Your face is
showing.

BRIDGET

Fine. I can help you. But I shouldn't. But I will.

EUGENE

How much?

BRIDGET

Five.

EUGENE

Of the old man's money?

BRIDGET

The old man's dead or will be. What's it to you?

EUGENE

Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn where it comes from. Only where it's going. But five hundred ain't gonna put Keez to bed. You see.

BRIDGET

I'm afraid that's all I can afford you, darling.

EUGENE

What about Keith? He's still got all that *Nightlight* money coming in, yes?

BRIDGET

He's dead.

EUGENE

Overdose?

BRIDGET

Murder.

EUGENE

Typical.

JORDAN

I'm sorry, what is typical about your friend getting murdered?

EUGENE

The studio's covering it up, no doubt?

BRIDGET

No doubt.

JORDAN

Wait, is Keith really dead?

Bridget SLAPS Eugene across the face.

BRIDGET

Oh Eugene, you horrible good for nothin'! Tell me, was it worth it?

EUGENE

Angel, it was the stuff dreams are made of.

BRIDGET

Here. Take what you came for and leave with nothin' else.

She pulls a wad of CASH from her bra strap and hands it over.

EUGENE

So long, angel.

EXT. THE WOODS BAR AND GRILL - MOMENTS LATER

Back to FULL COLOR. Jordan leans back against the closing door - in awe of the show she just witnessed.

JORDAN

That was... wow.

EUGENE

I know. She's trying way too hard. Embarrassing really.

Eugene adds the cash to his wallet.

JORDAN

So we've got seven hundred dollars now. Where we gonna get the rest?

EUGENE

For that we must venture into... the shadows.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE SIX: Alexandra Leach

OVER BLACK:

JORDAN (V.O.)
What a nice... house.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ALEXANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Eugene and Jordan move across the littered yard of a small Los Angeles house. Shredded trash bags, a broken bicycle, and an overturned kiddie pool only add to its *charm*.

JORDAN
This girl has money?

They climb onto the peeling front porch and peer into the tall windows. Not a sign of life about the place or behind the tightly drawn curtains.

MATT (O.S.)
I don't think we should be here.

Eugene KNOCKS and the door is opened just a crack as a WOMAN peeks out with a HISS as the afternoon sun streaks across her pale face. She quickly SLAMS the door shut.

JORDAN
What the hell was that?

EUGENE
That, I'm afraid, was Alexandra.

JORDAN
Is she okay?

EUGENE
One can never be certain.

The door opens wide with a long and eerie CREAK to reveal the Pale Woman now shrouded by a BLACK BLANKET.

ALEXANDRA
Quickly, come in! Come in!

They all enter in a nervous hurry.

INT. ALEXANDRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Once inside, the Pale Woman THROWS back the blanket as if it were a cape from her shoulders, thus dramatically revealing herself. ALEXANDRA LEACH, 33, drained-looking with tired lines etched across her face. Her red shirt and unkempt white hair create a near-spitting image of Gary Oldman's *Dracula*.

ALEXANDRA

Welcome!

JORDAN

Eww-- Oh! Sorry... Hi.

ALEXANDRA

Eugene? To what do I owe the pleasure?

EUGENE

Well, I haven't seen you in a while. Just thought I'd pop in and say hello. Ask a favor-slash-check on you. And the like.

ALEXANDRA

I'm well. Although... Thirsty. Very. Thirsty.

MATT (O.S.)

Why is she looking at my neck? Tell her not to look at me!

JORDAN

Calm down, Matt.

Alexandra takes a long drink from a glass of "red wine".

ALEXANDRA

I don't go out much anymore. I prefer to stay in the shadows. Working, toiling, plotting. The midnight hour is my only accomplice; feeding me with the blood of a thousand muses. I fear the world thinks of me a monster.

JORDAN

That's a pretty good vampire.

Alexandra's entire demeanor suddenly shifts to a much more relaxed and normal state. Her voice sounds more natural.

ALEXANDRA

What're you talking about?

EUGENE

No. No, my dear Jordan. Alexandra here is no actor. She's a *writer*.

JORDAN

A writer?

There are stacks of scripts by her desk. Pens scattered about and snowballs of crumpled paper piled far and wide. Empty food containers and spent bottles of wine all around - definitely a writer.

EUGENE

Yes. She wrote the play we did on Cahuenga. You see.

JORDAN

Not an actor? Then why all the... scary props and gothic set pieces?

Jordan motions towards the Halloween-like DECORATIONS all around: rubber bats, a black light, plastic skulls, etc.

ALEXANDRA

I like to surround myself with items that are thematically relevant to my work.

JORDAN

Oh, you're writing a vampire script then?

ALEXANDRA

It's a gothic thriller about a murdered beautician who comes back from the dead to seek revenge on former clients with her nine-inch-long fingers that've been replaced with carpenter nails.

JORDAN

And the title is...

ALEXANDRA

Fingernails.

EUGENE

Spot on!

ALEXANDRA

I was thinking it'd be perfect for Alena to star in.

EUGENE
You mean Bridget.

ALEXANDRA
Who?

EUGENE
Never mind.

ALEXANDRA
This script will be my legacy.

JORDAN
Sounds ambitious.

ALEXANDRA
Hey, maybe you could read it when I'm done? I'd love some notes or feedback from a fellow filmmaker.

JORDAN
Yeah... sure.

EUGENE
You know I have nothing but the utmost respect for the written word.

ALEXANDRA
If only the rest of the industry agreed with you. Writers pour their creativity onto the page, creating the entire framework of every movie, draining their life-force into the craft only to be cast aside once the lights are plugged in.

JORDAN
How many studio projects have you worked on?

ALEXANDRA
Well... none. But have you seen *Adaptation*?

EUGENE
What of that short film you said you'd write for me to star in?

ALEXANDRA
Oh yeah, well it's taking a bit longer than I expected.

EUGENE
Writer's block?

ALEXANDRA
No, I'm writing it on a typewriter.
It's more theme-appropriate.

EUGENE
Brilliant.

JORDAN
Is it a film about hipsters?

EUGENE
Onto the business at hand.

ALEXANDRA
Gimme the elevator pitch.

EUGENE
I owe a drug dealer two thousand dollars, so I've set out to collect donations from my friends, but I'm still significantly short, and he's coming at nine o'clock tonight to either collect the money or shoot me. Six times. As it were.

ALEXANDRA
That's really good... Can I use that?

EUGENE
I suppose.

Alexandra turns to her desk and begins TYPING away - her fingers moving like pincers.

ALEXANDRA
Would you say this drug dealer is more ominous or imposing?

JORDAN
Imposing. For sure.

ALEXANDRA
Ehh... Okay, I'll make it work.

EUGENE
We've known each other for quite some time now and not once have I ever asked you for any money.

ALEXANDRA

I don't have any money to give you.

EUGENE

Well, what about that digital series that you had online last year?

ALEXANDRA

I had to spend that entire paycheck flying myself to the set in New York.

EUGENE

That's preposterous.

ALEXANDRA

You're telling me!

EUGENE

No, you're lying to me!

ALEXANDRA

I am not!

EUGENE

You most certainly are. And I for one deplore it.

ALEXANDRA

Have you considered Kickstarter? Or an IndieGoGo campaign?

EUGENE

Oh, why don't I just sell my asshole to the highest bidder on Sunset Boulevard?

ALEXANDRA

Don't be ridiculous! Something like that wouldn't happen until the end of Act Two.

EUGENE

Oh, who are you kidding? You're a hack!

ALEXANDRA

You're a lousy actor!

Everyone in the room GASPS. Silence. No one dares to move.

EUGENE

Clearly you're upset. But don't take this out on me. It's not my fault that your work's not good enough to be produced. Or even read for that matter.

ALEXANDRA

Read this: *Interior. Alexandra's House. Day. Eugene is about to get punched in the face.*

EUGENE

Exterior. The entire world. Always. Alexandra is a piece of shit!

Alexandra bares her teeth with a HISS and grabs Eugene by his collar with a look suggesting that she might *actually* bite him!

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Unhand me, you heathenous beast!

A brilliant BURST of sunlight engulfs the entire room as Jordan stands by the open curtains.

JORDAN

Run, Eugene! Run!

Alexandra releases Eugene to shield her face from the simmering light as she scurries backwards into the shadows of the room, hissing as she goes.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Back, demon! Be gone with you!

They all escape into the brightness of day outside.

EXT. ALEXANDRA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene doubles over, breathless.

EUGENE

Damn it! Damn-Damn-Double damn!

JORDAN

Calm down.

EUGENE

How can I be calm? We're running out of options.

JORDAN
Maybe Alexandra was right.

EUGENE
What did you say??

JORDAN
You haven't reached the end of Act
Two yet.

EUGENE
Are you suggesting that I sell
myself on Sunset Boulevard? Because
I won't stoop to that level!

JORDAN
No. What I'm saying is that you
still have plenty of time.

EUGENE
You're right. We mustn't lose our
wits. Good form.

JORDAN
So who's next?

EUGENE
Next we must venture north of the
hill. To a desolate place where
only the lost and loneliest souls
of the eighty-eight kingdoms dare
dwell. They call it... the Valley.
There we will find him.

JORDAN
Who?

EUGENE
The forgotten king. Drake
Houndstooth.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE SEVEN: Drake Houndstooth.

OVER BLACK:

JORDAN (V.O.)
He hasn't blinked in like, eight
minutes...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT COMPLEX GYM - DAY

We gaze upon DRAKE HOUNDSTOOTH, 31, long hair, handsome stubble, large build and a mysteriously sexy *Middle-earth* or *Westeros* air about him. He sits on a weight bench with dark, leather attire and a hand to his face, deep in thought.

EUGENE
Drake, I --

Drake lifts a single finger to silence him.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
-Oh. Well, alright.

DRAKE
How much do you still owe this
mongrel?

His voice is low and exhausted, with a deep Scottish accent.

EUGENE
One thousand two hundred.

DRAKE
I shall bequeath the rest of the
sum unto you.

EUGENE
What? Oh my god! Thank you!

DRAKE
Of course, my horse.

JORDAN
That's amazing! See, and you almost
had a panic attack for nothing.

EUGENE
Well, this entire ordeal has been a
real humdinger!

Drake tosses a FELT BAG onto the table that lands with a clattering thud.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
What's this?

DRAKE
The funds you require.

Eugene opens the bag and dumps out a pile of QUARTERS.

EUGENE
What-- What's this?

DRAKE
One thousand two hundred coins of George.

EUGENE
Quarters?

DRAKE
I only deal with currency in coin form now.

JORDAN
How... authentic.

DRAKE
I know.

EUGENE
Wait, so how much money is that then?

JORDAN
It's... three hundred dollars.

EUGENE
Do you not have the rest?

Drake seems to tense up - it's a bit scary.

DRAKE
This is what you asked; this is what I gave. If the monetary value has changed in the western world, the fault is not of mine but that of your unjust king!

JORDAN
Okay, well three hundred dollars is still pretty good.

EUGENE
Indeed. Yes. Quite right.

DRAKE
Come! Let's drink to your good
fortune and my generosity!

Drake pulls an ancient-looking bottle of WHISKEY from his gym bag and pours them each a generous shot. He quickly shoots his back like a college freshman - very uncharacteristically.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Wooo!! Yeah!!

It clicks.

JORDAN
That's where I know you from! You
were on 90210, weren't you?

Drake composes himself back into character.

DRAKE
I was.

JORDAN
You did like three seasons. Must've
made good money doing that.

DRAKE
I spent it.

JORDAN
All of it? How?

DRAKE
Errol Flynn was buried with six
bottles of whiskey.

JORDAN
Yeah...

DRAKE
(re: the bottle)
This is one of them.

Jordan places her glass back onto the table - no longer
thirsty.

EUGENE
Marvelous! You're as reckless as
Erich von Stroheim!

DRAKE

I was once a king. Loved and adored by the masses. With a great and coveted wealth. I held court with some of the kingdom's brightest stars and was ne'er seen with the likes of your struggling class. No offense.

EUGENE

Plenty taken.

DRAKE

Now, I've been banished to the north of the hill. An outcast sentenced to solitude with only my sins to keep me company. An ever-watchful eye held fast on the gilded throne.

JORDAN

Do you still audition?

DRAKE

I believe you mean trial by combat? Yes. But alas, while I am called back into the fighting pits repeatedly, each outcome is always the same. Down to myself and one other warrior, it is. I stare into his eyes. And I know, and he knows, one of our lives is about to change. And as of late, it's always been his.

JORDAN

Sounds like you're close.

EUGENE

As close as Glenn!

DRAKE

But not there. It's a villainous taunt. Constant reaffirmation, knowing you're good enough but still not getting it. Seeing the gilded throne. Standing before it. And then... Getting sent to the back of the crowd. Another blurry face in the background.

JORDAN

Oh! Have you considered doing extra work?

Drake and Eugene COUGH at the outlandish suggestion.

DRAKE

Not for all the coins of George in the entirety of the eighty-eight kingdoms would I ever subject myself to such a belittling task.

JORDAN

Elijah Wood was an extra in *Back to the Future*.

EUGENE

Elijah Wood's British accent is worse than his American one.

JORDAN

What?

Drake stands to deliver the obligatory "speech on the front lines of battle."

DRAKE

I, Drake Houndstooth shall continue to wage this war until I emerge victorious! A legend who will one day inspire a generation and lead a thousand dreamers towards their salvation! My hands, these hands will at long last find their place in stone beneath the golden dragon of Grauman's Chinese Theater! Ne'er again shall I be known as "the forgotten king." They'll call me... THE FAMOUS KING!!

Drake unsheaths his SWORD and thrusts it high above his head with a pause to give the moment a truly epic effect.

EUGENE

Chills! Bravissimo!

JORDAN

It was really nice meeting you... Your Highness.

Drake holds out his hand expecting Jordan to kiss his obnoxiously large RING. She shakes it instead and leaves.

EUGENE

Thank you again, Sir Houndstooth. Will I see you at the sitcom workshop on Sunday?

DRAKE

Yes.

EUGENE

Pleasant!

Eugene moves to leave behind Jordan but is stopped when Drake violently grabs his arm to turn and face him - very close.

DRAKE

Make ready, lad. Pilot season is coming.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE EIGHT: Franklin Miller

OVER BLACK:

EUGENE (V.O.)
We're still one thousand dollars
short and the time is... five
o'clock?!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - AFTERNOON

The sun moves ever-lower behind them as they walk down the
Sunset Strip.

EUGENE
It's hopeless.

JORDAN
That's the spirit.

EUGENE
Your confidence is waning on me. We
need a miracle. Nay, an angel!

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
Excuse me, you got a dollar?

Eugene JUMPS back from FRANKLIN MILLER, 35, filthy, homeless,
and holding a busted guitar. His costume and props are
incredibly convincing - as is the smell.

EUGENE
Mildew! Can it be??

HOMELESS MAN
Don't call me Mildew, man.

EUGENE
Frank! Franklin Miller, my old
friend! It is you!

FRANKLIN
What's with the accent? You think
you're Cary Grant something?

EUGENE
You're too kind. I didn't know you
moved to Sunset.

FRANKLIN

Yeah, I was on Hollywood for a while but that Charlie Chaplin asshole kept getting all the tips.

EUGENE

As he does. Say, you remember when I let you borrow those twenty dollars?

FRANKLIN

Yeah, I really appreciate --

EUGENE

-I kind of need them back. You see.

FRANKLIN

I... I don't have it.

EUGENE

None of them? Not even *five* of them?

FRANKLIN

No man, I'm fucking homeless.

EUGENE

Quite so. Indeed. Well then... How's everything else?

FRANKLIN

Not good!

EUGENE

I'm sorry to hear that.

Franklin turns to Jordan with an open hand.

FRANKLIN

How about you? You got a dollar?

JORDAN

Get bent.

Eugene looks momentarily surprised by Jordan's crass response while Franklin just stares at the two - speechless.

EUGENE

Well then. Take care, Franklin.

Eugene leads Jordan and Matt away from Franklin with a bit of urgency.

FRANKLIN

Assholes.

JORDAN

Gotta say, he had great commitment.
Even smelled like a real bum.

EUGENE

Due to no lesser an effect than he
is one.

JORDAN

An actor, you mean?

EUGENE

Sadly no. Well yes, he was once
upon a time an actor, but is now in
fact very much homeless. Tragic
really.

JORDAN

Jesus. And you just asked him for
money?

EUGENE

Desperate times, my dear.

JORDAN

You're unbelievable.

EUGENE

I'm not the one who just told a
beggar to "get bent."

JORDAN

I thought he was acting!

EUGENE

Aren't we all?

JORDAN

I feel awful... I'm gonna go give
him a dollar or something--

Eugene's cell phone RINGS to the tone of "*Born to Run*" by
Bruce Springsteen.

EUGENE

-Wait!

(reading the called ID)
It's Evelyn.

JORDAN

So? Answer it.

EUGENE

She never calls me. What if...

He takes a deep breath and answers the call.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Evelynn, darling! What do I-- What can I do for you?

(listening)

You're joking...

(listening)

Yes, yes, I understand.

He hangs up the phone with a look of stunned shock upon his face.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Jordan, my dear... Our prayers have been answered!

JORDAN

What?

EUGENE

Mildew wasn't our angel, but Evelyn!

JORDAN

How's that?

EUGENE

We don't need to ask for another red cent!

JORDAN

What happened??

EUGENE

All of our problems are --

JORDAN

-Oh Eugene, would you just tell me what she said?!

EUGENE

I have an audition!

JORDAN

That's it?

EUGENE

You didn't hear the best part.

JORDAN
What's the best part?

EUGENE
It's at Debbie Snyder's casting office!

JORDAN
That's it?

EUGENE
Did you not hear me? She is one of the biggest casting directors on TV!

JORDAN
No, I heard you. And that's great! Congrats. But how does that help us right now?

EUGENE
Well, because now when I book the job, I can give Keez *twice* the amount that I owe him! I can buy us more time! You see.

JORDAN
If.

EUGENE
If? If what?

JORDAN
If you book the job.

EUGENE
I don't need your God damn pessimistic negativity raining on my homecoming parade right now, Jordan! I need your support!

JORDAN
I just don't know if he'll go for that, is all.

EUGENE
He may be a subhuman drug peddler, but he's no fool. It's basic arithmetic. More money is better than less money. Of course he'll go for it!

JORDAN
What's the audition for?

EUGENE

It's a last-minute appointment for *Criminal Mastermind* on NBC! Apparently they need to replace an actor who's gone missing or something I don't know. Lucky me!

JORDAN

I don't think you should go to it.

EUGENE

What on earth do you mean? That casting office is harder to get into than the Chateau Marmont!

JORDAN

Are you even taking this seriously?

EUGENE

I assure you, I am taking this all quite seriously.

JORDAN

No, you're not!

EUGENE

How can you say that?

JORDAN

Because you're still acting like *Eugene*! You know, out of all your crazy friends that we've met, you are by far, above and beyond the absolute craziest!

EUGENE

That may be so. But no sane person has ever changed the world.

JORDAN

This guy is going to kill you if you don't get him that money.

EUGENE

Which is precisely why I must attend this audition! Oh Jordan, this is the one! I can feel it... I have never been more ready to succeed than I am right now. In this moment. I need you to believe in me. Please.

Jordan looks into Eugene's eyes and sees the desperation. He just needs to hear someone say it out loud.

JORDAN

Okay. Yeah. I believe in you.

EUGENE

Thank you.

(then)

An actor is only as good as his casting director, you know?

JORDAN

What time is the audition at?

EUGENE

Six o'clock. We must make haste! Matthew, you can help me run my lines on our way there.

MATT (O.S.)

Yay.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE NINE: The Audition

OVER BLACK:

MATT (V.O.)
I don't like it here...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CASTING OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Jordan and Matt wait outside the casting room. Famous TV show posters line the walls in an effort to either impress or intimidate whichever actor is next in line.

ACTOR 1 is feverishly reciting his lines to himself.

ACTOR 2 sits on the floor, brooding in character.

ACTOR 3 waits in complete silence, headphones in, zen-like.

ACTOR 4 looks so nervous that he might cry at any second.

We can hear Eugene on the other side of the casting room door. Then silence. The door opens to reveal a sunken Eugene.

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Next!

Actor 1 steps up to the plate but pauses next to Eugene.

ACTOR 1
I could hear you through the door,
and man, you sounded good. I should
just go home...

EUGENE
Oh fuck off!

JORDAN
Eugene!

Actor 1 scurries into the office and closes the door.

EUGENE
What a jerk.

JORDAN
He complimented you.

EUGENE

He was trying to get in my head
with his condescending horse shit.
It's an old actor trick.

JORDAN

Oh. So how'd it go in there?

EUGENE

I do not wish to discuss it.

JORDAN

Oh come on! Kiss and tell!

EUGENE

She said that my performance lacked
any semblance of genuine humanity.

JORDAN

What?

EUGENE

I believe she rolled her eyes at
one point.

JORDAN

Maybe that's a good thing.

EUGENE

She turned off the camera in the
middle of my reading.

JORDAN

Bitch.

Eugene collapses into one of the waiting room chairs.

EUGENE

Why is this so hard? I've wanted
this since I was five years old.
I've sacrificed everything for it.
And what do I have to show for my
time? For my money? For my
depressing lack of a social life?
Nothing.

JORDAN

You're being too hard on yourself.

EUGENE

You called me crazy. That what I do
is crazy, when in truth, the real
craziness lies not in what I do,
but what I've done.

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

The years I've wasted pursuing this career in an industry that doesn't want me. Now, *that's* crazy.

JORDAN

No, I didn't mean --

EUGENE

-They actually define crazy as doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results. Yet that's the life of an actor! Headshot after headshot. Class after class. Audition after audition. Always expecting the next to be different than the last.

JORDAN

That's how it is for every actor though, isn't it? It takes time.

He's not listening.

EUGENE

I've lived my life expecting each moment to be like the movies. When I played little league baseball, I used to rip the catcher's mask from my face after every hit because I saw a character do it in *The Sandlot*. I ruined my high school experience because I was expecting *American Pie* and chose my friends and relationships based on how they'd make me look to the audience of my peers. I lived in New York City for a time and genuinely got depressed when I didn't experience life as they did in *Friends*.

The persona of "Eugene" begins to wane... Revealing a little bit of Eric as he fights back the tears.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

My entire life has been dictated by films and television; it has influenced major decisions that I've made and has been the root of countless bouts of anxiety and a deeply rooted fear that I'm doing it wrong. That I'm living my life wrong. That everyone else is living the movie that I should've been cast in.

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Cinematic lies that fuel an endless cycle of jealousy and a crippling loneliness, thinking all the while that my big break is just around the corner. It's so close. It's always so close! Even now. I can't quit. I don't know anything else. I can't do anything else. So as crazy as it is, I think I'll stay in this character, thank you. If for no other reason than he's not me.

JORDAN

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

EUGENE

It's fine. Just go. I'll deal with Keez and his "*six silver friends*" on my own.

ACTOR 4 (O.S.)

I wanna go home.

Eugene looks up to find the casting office door wide open and every Actor watching - including DEBBIE SNYDER.

EUGENE

Don't worry. I was just leaving.

JORDAN

I'm coming with you.

EUGENE

What's the point?

JORDAN

It's only six thirty, and we just broke into Act Three! There's no way I'm leaving now.

EUGENE

I just wanted to be friends with James Franco...

Jordan perks up with an idea.

JORDAN

You like milkshakes?

EUGENE

Milkshakes? What on earth are you talking about?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MEL'S DRIVE IN - LATER

Jordan and Eugene sit at the counter, drinking milkshakes. Eugene looks a little better.

JORDAN

Any time I'm feeling blue, I always come here. There's nothing that cookies n' cream can't fix.

EUGENE

I must say... It is doing the trick. Thank you.

(then)

An actor is only as good as his friends.

JORDAN

Here here!

They TOAST their milkshake tins.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

And we still have an hour left on the clock. More than enough time to find a thousand dollars in Hollywood!

Eugene SLURPS up the last of the shake from his metal tin and brings the empty cup to his mouth, where he speaks into it, creating a metallic, oldie radio-like effect.

EUGENE

Operator! Operator! Orson Welles is at it again! The vexed auteur was last seen romping with nine of the Ziegfeld Follies!

Jordan can't help but laugh. They lock eyes - a tender moment between new friends.

JORDAN

Who's next?

EUGENE

The last name on the list is the one I've been dreading the most. My arch-nemesis.

JORDAN

You have an arch-nemesis? Why am I even asking? Of course you do.

EUGENE

He's the worst human on the entire earth. I was truly hoping to not have to ask him...

JORDAN

Then don't. We'll find someone else.

EUGENE

There is no one else. We've crossed into Act Three. My character must rise above himself and transform into the hero the audience needs him to be.

JORDAN

What's the name?

EUGENE

Trevor fucking Davies.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE TEN: Trevor Davies

OVER BLACK:

JORDAN (V.O.)

So who is this Trevor Davies guy
anyway?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FILM STUDIO PRODUCTION LOT - DUSK

They're handed a pair of walk-on STUDIO PASSES from the GUARD
BOOTH as they stroll onto the lot.

EUGENE

He is not a guy. He is a monster.

JORDAN

Is that his character? Cuz I don't
know what to expect from that.

EUGENE

No. He isn't in character, nor does
he have any. He is simply an actor.
An actor who inconceivably works
all-of-the-time.

JORDAN

Ahhhh, so you're jealous of this
Trevor.

EUGENE

Hold your tongue! The pursuit of an
acting career requires twenty years
of horrific pursuit along with
gallons of alcohol and indelibly
thick skin. This fellow just
happened into it! He has been
working since the day he set foot
in Hollywood and the sun hath shone
dimmer upon these hills every day
since.

JORDAN

You really don't like him.

EUGENE

He's the worst person that I've
ever met. And I met Jeremy Piven
once.

JORDAN
How do you know him?

EUGENE
He was in my drama class for a short time. With Gwen, you know. Haven't seen him since he booked this sure-to-be masterpiece. The bastard.

JORDAN
Pretty cool that he got us on the lot though, right?

EUGENE
I do love being here. Seeing all of the sound stages. The lights, the workers... Just think of all the amazing films and performances that have taken place right here? It's magical.

They pause to take it all in. Eugene stares, wide-eyed and in wonder - despite it all, still high on Hollywood promise.

JORDAN (O.S.)
We're here.

EXT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

They approach a set of small wooden stairs leading to the embodiment of every actor's dream and ambition: THE TRAILER.

EUGENE
Time to give the best performance of my entire life.

He takes a deep, calming breath and knocks on the door. As he exhales, the door is opened by TREVOR DAVIES, 14, a cute kid with glasses and a perfectly-parted hairdo. Eugene forces a huge smile onto his face.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
Trevor! There he is! My goodness, it is marvelous to see you!

JORDAN
Trevor is a child?

EUGENE
Jordan, don't be rude. Sorry about her, old chap. Trevor, this here is Jordan.

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

A journalist who's documenting my
life for... TV. Grand affair
really.

TREVOR

Hi!

INT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

They all take a seat at a small table littered with COMICS,
SNACK WRAPPERS, and VIDEO GAMES - a kid's room.

EUGENE

So how's filming?

TREVOR

It's been fun!

EUGENE

Fun? You hear that, Jordan? It's
been *fun*! It's not supposed to be
fun! It's supposed to be work. Art.
Pain. Sacrifice. I can't. I can't
do this --

JORDAN

-Eugene!

EUGENE

Right. Very well.

TREVOR

You're talking funny.

JORDAN

Eugene, didn't you want to ask
Trevor something?

EUGENE

Yes. Quite right. It pains me to
burden you with such a shameful and
deeply personal request... But I
must inquire as to if maychance
you'd be affable enough to bequeath
a modest sum of currency upon your
good fellow?

TREVOR

Huh?

EUGENE

Can I borrow some money?

TREVOR

Oh. Umm, my mom has all of my money.

EUGENE

I see... Is she on set?

TREVOR

I think she's outside. Smoking.
Ick!

Eugene lingers for a moment - eying *the trailer*.

EUGENE

Right. Well... while I have you, I must ask. How is it that you have come to acquire such a substantial amount of paid acting work? What is your approach?

TREVOR

Huh?

EUGENE

When you audition, what technique do you use? Stanislavsky? Meisner? DiCaprio?

TREVOR

I... uh... Oh, I just read the words on the paper.

EUGENE

Fuck you, Trevor.

He stands, leaving everyone in shock as he briskly exits.

TREVOR

What a loser.

JORDAN

Excuse me?

EXT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Eugene looks around the trailer yard for any sign of Trevor's mother. He turns the corner of a massive Sound Stage and finds MRS. DAVIES, 46, exhausted yet sultry as she talks on her cell phone - smoking.

EUGENE

There you are, Mrs. Davies?

MRS. DAVIES
(into the phone)
Hold on.
(to Eugene)
Yeah?

EUGENE
Hi, I'm a friend of your son's. We
actually met once, you and I at
Trevor's drama class. You see.

MRS. DAVIES
Yeah? So?

EUGENE
Yes, well I was hoping to ask a
favor of you.

INT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - SAME TIME

Trevor absentmindedly flips through one of his comic books.

TREVOR
That guy's been working at this for
like eleven years, and he's only
done a web series, some crappy You
Tube shorts, and a music video. I'm
not surprised he needs rent money.

JORDAN
For your information, he needs the
money to pay off a drug dealer!
That's not better, is it?

TREVOR
Even when we were in class, I'd see
him get up to do his scenes and
just want to tell him: *give up,*
dude. Go home before it's too late.
This is never gonna happen for you.
You know?

JORDAN
No, I don't know.

TREVOR
It's like hearing someone sing for
the first time. No matter how bad
they are, you can still tell right
away if there's anything worth
working for buried underneath all
the crap.

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

But some people don't have anything buried. They're just all crap. Like Eric.

JORDAN

Oh my God!

EXT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - SAME TIME

Eugene now has Mrs. Davies' full attention as she stomps out her cigarette.

MRS. DAVIES

So I give you a thousand dollars of my son's money, and what do you give me?

EUGENE

Well, I don't know... Umm, I... I have a fair amount of cocaine?

MRS. DAVIES

I got something else in mind.

She sensually caresses her hand down his shoulder and along his stomach until aggressively taking HOLD between his legs.

INT. TREVOR'S TRAILER - SAME TIME

Jordan's now on her feet - enraged.

JORDAN

You have no idea how many actors would *kill* to do what you're doing! I mean, to even work here at this... this... *magical* studio.

TREVOR

This studio is a dump.

JORDAN

Wow. Eugene was right, you're a monster.

TREVOR

"Eugene!" What a dumb name.

JORDAN

Who are you to judge him? Or anyone for that matter?

TREVOR

Not judging, just observing. It's what we actors do. I'm just observing a loser.

JORDAN

Oh shut the fuck up! You arrogant, self-righteous, ass! You're no actor. Just because you can memorize your lines and look cute on screen doesn't mean you're acting. You have no idea what it is to create a living, breathing character and commit yourself to them. To convey their humanity to an audience with confidence and truth.

TREVOR

And you think Eric can do that?

JORDAN

His name is Eugene! And yes, I do! He has more talent in one of his farts than you do in your entire pathetic little body!

Eugene reenters the trailer looking disheveled. Lipstick on his face and neck as he wipes at his mouth in a cloudy haze.

EUGENE

I have it. We have it.

JORDAN

What? You have it?

EUGENE

All of it. We got the money to pay Keez.

JORDAN

Really? How-- Oh.

She connects the dots between Eugene's appearance and the suddenly acquired funds -- he did it.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Oh... Oh!

EUGENE

Indeed. It's time to go. I want to go.

JORDAN
I'll meet you outside.

Eugene exits, and Jordan leans in close to the confused-looking Trevor.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
In case you're too young or stupid
to figure it out, that "pile of
crap" just banged your mom. Break a
leg!

She pats him on the head and exits.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE.

EPISODE ELEVEN: Back To One

OVER BLACK:

JORDAN (V.O.)
Run-run-run-run-run!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jordan and Eugene arrive at his front door and pause outside to catch their breath.

EUGENE
What time is it?

JORDAN
Eight forty-five.

EUGENE
We did it.

JORDAN
We did it!

They embrace in a loving and celebratory hug.

EUGENE
Lillian Gish once said --

JORDAN
-Wasn't she a *silent* film star?

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Eugene opens the door, and they step inside to find KEEZ sitting on the couch.

KEEZ
You're late.

JORDAN
No, we're not. We were actually
just discussing how we made it on
time.

EUGENE
How'd you get in here? Did I not
lock the door? That is so not like
me...

KEEZ

You got my money?

EUGENE

We most certainly do!

Eugene happily presents Keez with the collected money - including Drake's felt bag of "coins of George."

KEEZ

What's all this?

EUGENE

Two thousand dollars. And not a quarter short!

KEEZ

This here two g's?

EUGENE

Indeed.

KEEZ

Won't do.

EUGENE

What's that you say?

KEEZ

Won't do one bit.

EUGENE

But you said...

JORDAN

Now, come on. You said that he owed you two thousand dollars. Here it is. Just take it and go, man.

KEEZ

Two g's ain't enough.

EUGENE

BUT YOU SAID!

KEEZ

I say lots of thangs. Some say I got a problem.

EUGENE

I don't. I don't say that.

KEEZ

(rapping)

All day I been waitin', hatin', and
procrastinatin'. When I coulda been
out smokin' dem trees. So Ima need
you to pay up a fat four g's to
your boy Keez.

EUGENE

Well, that's double what I owe!

KEEZ

I don't cur.

EUGENE

Listen here, homie-doggie! I will
straight-up wreck your ass if you
don't take the money that we have
procured for you and flee from my
domicile with haste! You see.

JORDAN

What're you doing?

EUGENE

Improv.

Keez responds by simply laughing at Eugene's attempt at a
tough demeanor.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Stop laughing! This is not a
comedy!

Keez reaches into the back of his pants and produces a GUN.

JORDAN

Oh my God!

EUGENE

Why this is absurd! We got you the
money! See reason!

KEEZ

I see reason! I see six silver
reasons!

CHUH-CLINK! He cocks back the gun and aims it at Eugene.

EUGENE

That doesn't make any sense.

JORDAN

Okay enough is enough, Eric.

EUGENE

What?

JORDAN

Just stop pretending before you get us killed!

KEEZ

Yo, what she mean pretendin'? Who's Eric? You playin' me, playa??

EUGENE

What? No! She's daft, good boy. She speaks the ruddymuck thrice-fold! I assure you, I am wholly me.

KEEZ

Aight, I had bout enough of dis. Time's up and you half short.

EUGENE

So that's it then?

KEEZ

Dat's it.

EUGENE

Well then, if that truly is... it. Then there's something I must do.

Eugene moves in close to Jordan and takes her face in his hands.

JORDAN

What-- What're you doing?

EUGENE

Say 'yes and' to love.

JORDAN

What?

They KISS. He pulls back to find her face wide-eyed and confused. Nothing romantic here. Eugene turns to Keez.

EUGENE

Keez, my good boy, I thank you.

KEEZ

What up?

EUGENE

For my murder. You're giving me the perfect ending to a truly remarkable film. Jordan, be sure to submit this to Tribeca.

JORDAN

Eugene, stop-- Keez, please don't do this!

EUGENE

It's alright, Jordan. It has to be this. It always had to be this. Life occurs in between Action and --

BANG-BANG-BANG! Keez shoots Eugene in the back. He falls forward, crashing into the table while grasping for support.

JORDAN

No! Eugene!! What did you do?!

BANG-BANG!

JORDAN (CONT'D)

What the fuck?!?

BANG!

JORDAN (CONT'D)

STOP SHOOTING HIM!!

KEEZ

Dat's six. Now we even.

Keez grabs the bag of money and takes off down the hall, leaving Jordan with the mess of Eugene.

EUGENE

Jordan? Where are you, Jordan?

She runs to his side and takes his heavy head onto her lap.

JORDAN

I'm here. I'm right here.

EUGENE

Oh, there you are... You know what I learned from all this?

JORDAN

What?

EUGENE

I learned... how to love.

JORDAN

Don't...

EUGENE

And... Cut.

His body collapses - limp and cold.

JORDAN

Eugene? Eugene?!

MATT (O.S.)

Holy shit! Holy shit! Is he...?

Eugene is gone. Jordan begins to rightfully freak out.

JORDAN

We need-- We need to call the
police! Find a phone! Find a phone!

Just then a cellphone begins to RING to the tone of "*Born to Run*" by Bruce Springsteen - Eugene's phone. She lifts it from his pocket and reads the caller ID.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

It's Evelynnn.

EUGENE

Really??

Jordan belts out a most appropriate SCREAM as Eugene jolts back to life.

JORDAN

Oh my God!!!

Eugene snatches his cell from Jordan's hand and sits up looking slightly different than before - more... normal.

EUGENE

Holy shit, it is... It's Evelynnn!

His Mid-Atlantic accent is gone, replaced by the normal-sounding voice of ERIC HANSON as he nervously answers the phone.

ERIC

Hello? Evelynnn?

(listening)

Yeah, no it's me, Eric.

(listening)

No fucking way... No way!

(listening)

Oh, that's so great! Thank you!

He hangs up and turns to the still shocked, confused, and frozen Jordan.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I booked the role. I BOOKED THE
ROLE!!!

JORDAN
What the fuck?!

ERIC
I know! This is amazing! I knew it
was my time! I told you! Fuck you,
Trevor Davies! Ah-Ha!

JORDAN
You asshole!

ERIC
What? What are you so mad about?

JORDAN
I thought you were dead!

ERIC
Pretty good actor, right?

Just then, Keez comes running back into the room.

KEEZ
What happened??

Keez is as well, completely different. He stands differently, walks differently, even talks differently - this is BARRY.

ERIC
Barry! Yes! I booked a guest star
on *Criminal Mastermind*!!

BARRY
O-M-G! Shut your effing face up!

ERIC
I know!!

JORDAN
You're not a drug dealer...

BARRY
This is so exciting! Good for you,
beau!

JORDAN
You're an actor...

Jordan turns to Eugene-- I mean, *Eric* with a look of rage and complete betrayal in her eyes.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
You're a liar. You lied to me.

ERIC
I wasn't lying; I was acting.

JORDAN
What's the difference!?!?

ERIC
Why are you yelling?

JORDAN
I can't believe this. Actually, I can. I should've known better than to trust an actor!

ERIC
I told ya, I'm gonna be famous.

JORDAN
Oh please! You couldn't get a star east of Gower!

ERIC
Now that's just hurtful.

JORDAN
I don't know if I can call the police or not... but... I'm definitely reporting this to someone!

Jordan STORMS out of the apartment. Matt places the camera down and finally steps into the frame to give the actors the STANDING OVATION that they deserve.

MATT
Bravo!

ERIC
Oh, thank you!

BARRY
Thank you!

MATT
That was by far the best acting that I've ever seen. Incredible.

ERIC
An actor is only as good as his
audience.

Eric and Barry join hands and take a much-deserved STAGE BOW
as we

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SERIES.