

BREAKFAST WITH GOD
(EPISODE #4)

Written by
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INT. VENICE CANAL HOUSE - DAY

Maggie answers the knock at the door. It's Peter.

INT. VENICE CANAL HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Maggie brings Peter an herbal tea, and sits down at the table with him.

PETER

Skip and I had conflicting ideas about the project. When I expressed my opinion, he threw the screenplay at me and ran off. I haven't seen him since. Have you seen him?

MAGGIE

He hasn't been by here. He can be a purist, in case you haven't noticed.

PETER

If you don't mind me asking, what exactly is his problem?

Maggie takes a sip of her tea and ponders the question.

MAGGIE

It's a chemical imbalance. When we were younger, Larry and I experimented with LSD.

Peter stops mid-sip, shocked.

MAGGIE

A lot. Oh, I quit when I found out I was pregnant with Skip, but I'm afraid the damage was already done.

Maggie exhibits a twinge of guilt. Peter treads delicately.

PETER

Skip's a great writer, and really knows his way around a camera. If he could channel his talent, he'd be on top of the world. Aren't there any medications...?

MAGGIE
Sure. Phenoliptonol. But he
won't take it. He says it
blocks his creativity. Makes
him too 'normal.'

Peter's eyes go momentarily wide as he sips his tea.

INT. PETER'S GUESTHOUSE - NIGHT

Peter Googles the medication 'Phenoliptonol.' He clicks
on an online pharmacy, which promises next day delivery.

Peter goes through his desk drawer, until he finds a
glass encased Visa debit card.

On the outside of the debit card case are the words 'Use
Only in Case of Emergency. Love, Mom.'

Peter enters his information into the online pharmacy
website.

EXT. DIVE CAFÉ - DAY

Peter sits at the usual table.

The bottle of Phenoliptonol sits in a bag in front of
him. He keeps looking at the space where the teepee used
to be.

Peter trudges down the boardwalk, hoping for any clue
where Skip and Malone might be.

He barely makes out some lyrics...

Croce's 'Bad, Bad Leroy Brown.'

He starts running toward the source.

Sitting slightly apart from the maddening crowd, Skip
plays his Casio with the empty donation bucket in front
of him.

Skip pretends not to notice Peter until the last note of
the extended flourish has been played.

SKIP
Hello, Quito Bandito. Come to
apologize?

PETER
No.

SKIP
Did you come seeking an
apology?

PETER
Maybe.

SKIP
Sorry.

PETER
(surprised)
Say what?

SKIP
Sorry. Sorry, but I can't
apologize. Never could.

PETER
That's good enough for me.
Wanna make a movie? Only one
condition.

INT. TEEPEE - DAY

Peter has the pill bottle out.

SKIP
No! I do not do
Phenoliptonol!

PETER
You gotta. It's all I ask of
you.

SKIP
I can't! I lose my creativity
when I take that shit! I
don't want to be like you!

Peter allows that crack to roll off his back.

PETER
It's okay. The lighting is
mostly technical. You can
polish the screenplay before
you start taking the pills.
But remember, I know how fast
you write.

Malone has been silent, but speaks up. A welt is now
visible under her left eye.

MALONE
Sweetheart. I need you to
take the pills.

Skip looks at her as if this is the first time she has ever asked anything of him. He gently touches the welt.

Skip glowers at Peter.

SKIP
You're just so sure of
yourself, aren't you?

Peter wears a cocky grin, and pulls a sheet of paper from his rear pocket.

PETER
More than you know. This
comes out in a week.

Skip grabs the sheet of paper and reviews the proof ad Peter has placed seeking crew members for their 'no-budget' project.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

The same ad, now published in Back Stage West, is being read by Michelle at her desk in the production office.

INSIDE THE PRODUCER'S OFFICE

In his office, Mark is trying to smooth talk the dangerous looking, self-assured Russian woman seated in front of him, MIM CHERTOFF (42). Smoke fills the room from her Cohiba cigar.

MARK
In the real word, yes, I agree
with you. Five million is a
lot of money. But in
Hollywood, it's less than some
catering budgets.

MIM
I am not a stupid woman, Mr.
Producer, and this is not my
first venture into Hollywood.
I am not looking for block-
buster, I am looking to take
the money I invest returned to
me with verifiable revenue
stream.

MARK
Since we're being frank with
each other, let's call that
what it is. Money laundering.

Mim gives a cursory glance around the top of Mark's desk as if to scan for a recording device.

She tips the ash from her cigar into a Styrofoam cup as she blows out a cloud of smoke.

MIM
That term is not in my
lexicon.

Mark gives a thoughtful pause, tapping his finger on his chin.

MARK
A viable route we can take is
foreign presales.

MIM
I know little of the concept.
Please. Tell me more.

MARK
It's fairly straightforward.
We get a couple of B-actors,
find a decent script, shoot it
as cheap as possible, and turn
over territorial licensing
rights to the investor as a
straight-to-DVD movie.

MIM
And the downside?

MARK
If you don't deliver a viable
product, the investor gets
his, or her, money back
immediately.

MIM
Sounds risky.

MARK
(baffled)
How so?

MIM
What if movie becomes popular?
I cannot afford the attention
it would bring.

MARK
It will work. And trust me,
there has rarely ever been a
successful straight-to-DVD
movie.

MIM
Can it work at all levels of
budget?

MARK

To a degree, yes. So. No stress?

Mim ponders the idea for a moment, then retrieves a slip of paper from her bag.

MIM

The actual amount I would like to invest is five million, one hundred thousand dollars. Show me it can work...

Mark gets excited, appearing as if he already knows how he will spend his commission.

MIM

...with the one hundred thousand dollars first. If all goes well, we invest the entire five million on the next project, doing same way.

Marks face drops.

PRODUCTION OFFICE - LOBBY

Michelle can hear arguing coming from Mark's office, but acts as though this is not an uncommon occurrence.

Mark's head pops out of his office.

MARK

Michelle sweetheart, can you come in here for a moment?

MARK'S OFFICE

Michelle enters and takes a seat.

MARK

Ms. Chertoff is interested in investing in a low budget feature, and would like for us to produce it.

Michelle smiles at Mim.

MARK

She'd like for us to find a story we can produce for...one hundred thousand dollars.

Michelle looks to Mark as if to make sure she heard him correctly.

MARK
We're looking for a strong
story, and very few, cheap,
locations. Can you start
looking please?

MICHELLE
Sure.

Michelle leaves, looking at Mark to see if this is a put
on.

His stressed look assures her it is not.

PRODUCTION OFFICE LOBBY

Michelle returns to her desk, and starts going through a
mountain of screenplay coverage sheets.

LATER

An exasperated Michelle takes a break.

She pops open a diet Coke, opens the Back Stage West
magazine and relaxes. She again notices Peter's ad.

INT. PETER'S GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Peter is crashed out on his unexpanded futon.

Take-out cartons and script pages litter the small
guesthouse, evidence of a long night's work.

The phone rings.

INTERCUT: MICHELLE'S OFFICE/PETER'S GUESTHOUSE

PETER
Hello?

MICHELLE
Hi, I noticed your ad in Back
Stage West, and was wondering
if you could tell me something
about your movie?

PETER
What position were you
interested in?

MICHELLE
Uh, P.A.

PETER
Oh, okay, if you'd just fax
your resume...

MICHELLE
Actually, if I could be blunt,
I have a lot of experience and
would be an asset to any
production that hired me. But
I'm interested in only working
on films with a strong story.

PETER
Wow. I haven't heard that one
before. Okay, it's about a
geeky black guy who transfers
to an all-white school and
adopts the persona of a thug
character from a play he
wrote.

MICHELLE
Hmm. Your main locations
would be two high schools?

PETER
No, one high school. We'll
dress it to look like two.

MICHELLE
Um hmm. Are there any other
locations?

PETER
Are you sure you're not
looking for a location manager
job?

MICHELLE
No, I just don't like to
travel. It's all in L.A.,
right?

PETER
Yeah. The high school, a
couple of house locations,
street, that's about it.

MICHELLE
Can I see a copy of the
script?

PETER
Sure. You can download a copy
from myspace, back slash Skip
Peter.

MICHELLE
What does it pay?

PETER
Copy and credit only.

MICHELLE
I take it you have a small
budget?

PETER
(lying)
Fifty thousand dollars.

MICHELLE
Okay. Let me read the script,
and get back to you.

END INTERCUT

Peter pulls the pillow over his head and returns to
sleep.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Michelle has gone through the downloaded script with a
fine tooth comb, as evidenced by her notes covering the
marked-up script.

She knocks on Mark's door and enters.

IN MARK'S OFFICE

Mark is finishing up on the phone, and gestures her to
sit down.

MARK
Did you find something?

MICHELLE
Maybe. It's a script I
downloaded from Myspace. It's
pretty good. I spoke with the
guy that's trying to get it
made, and it might be what
you're looking for. Cheap
sets, unknown stars, no
budget...

MARK
How did you squeeze so much
information out of him?

MICHELLE
I told him I was interested in
being his P.A.

MARK
Oh, that's good. Tell you
what. Go check it out. Be
their P.A.

Michelle starts to object.

MARK
Just long enough to feel them
out. Let me know if it's a
viable project. No stress,
sweetheart?

MICHELLE
No. But don't you want to
know what the script's about?

MARK
Does it really matter?