

MY RIGHT-HAND MAN
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TEASER

INT. FROLIC'S COMEDY CLUB - STAGE - NIGHT

ARNOLD FITZKEE (45), the grizzled veteran comic still chasing the dream, leans back, one foot on a faux brick wall one would see at any comedy club in America.

ARNOLD

This girl asked me to pee on her, but
I can't go with someone watching me,
so I pissed in a Dixie cup and
spritzed her.

Arnold mimes as if he's dipping his fingers into an imaginary cup and spritzing the audience.

Crickets. The only sounds in the room are the beer bottles and cocktail glasses being handled.

He wipes the sweat pooling on his forehead. A light that hangs from the ceiling in front of the stage flashes red.

ARNOLD

That's okay, I don't like you either.

He gives the audience a half-hearted wave then sulks off stage to a modicum of polite applause.

INT. FROLIC'S COMEDY CLUB - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Intermittent LAUGHTER trickles in from the showroom just on the other side of the wall.

Arnold splashes water on his face, searching for his sorry reflection in between a smattering of stickers littering the mirror.

PRE-LAP - KNOCKS ON THE DOOR

INT. MELNICK'S CLOTHING STORE - BACKROOM - NIGHT

JULIE (26), Asian, a former high school nerd turned free spirit adult, knocks on the bathroom door.

NORMAN (26), a silent film looking fellow, exuding the fragility of a freshly hatched chicken, opens the door.

JULIE

I came as soon as you called. Customer
service desk?

Norman nods. The thousand yard stare in his eyes.

JULIE

Is it like the time you had to give an oral report in Mr. Lovering's class on why birds flew in a "V" formation?

NORMAN

Worse. Like the time someone stole my favorite corduroys during gym class and I had to spend the rest of the day in gym shorts.

JULIE

That was a rough class picture day.

NORMAN

They called me thunder thighs for months.

She passes him a beige angora sweater. Norman embraces the garment lovingly. He smiles as his anxiety melts away.

JULIE

Good news, I'm putting my experience helping you all these years to use and getting my life coaching certificate.

Norman, eyes closed, lost in the sweater, doesn't notice VINCENT (32), the manager, march in. The little power he wields has gone to his head. Julie exits immediately.

VINCENT

This is the third time this week I've found you in here holding a fluffy sweater. And what'd I tell you about using the PA for personal reasons?

Norman stares down at the floor.

VINCENT

Return the merchandise then get back to your post. Think of the customers who require your service and not yourself.

BURT (PRE-LAP)

Did you hear what I said?

INT. FROLIC'S COMEDY CLUB - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

BURT (58), the bartender turned comedy booker hovers over Arnold, who's spread out on an old sofa like he owns it.

Arnold's attention is on a ventriloquist and his wooden dummy.

BURT

I'm taking you off the late show.

The ventriloquist makes the dummy look towards Arnold. When Arnold notices, he turns the dummy's head away. This continues.

ARNOLD

You're bumping me for a shitty ventriloquist act?

BURT

He's consistent. He gets laughs.

ARNOLD

That's what happens when you get your audience from a trailer park.

Burt lowers his chin, he's heard enough.

ARNOLD

I'm the last bastion of true stand-up comedy you've got!

(to ventriloquist)

If your dummy looks at me one more time, you'll be picking splinters out of your ass for a week.

The dummy holds its stare. Arnold lunges at the ventriloquist.

INT. MELNICK'S CLOTHING STORE - CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK - NIGHT

Norman stares at a long line of angry customers. He freezes like a deer in headlights.

WOMAN

I just want to return these socks.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, I was here first.

Norman attempts to use the PA system, but it screeches with feed back. Anxiety washes over him as the demands from the customers grow louder, yelling all at once.

Turning his attention to the angora sweater, he cuddles it like there's no tomorrow, ending up on the floor, dry-humping the shit out of it.

Witnessing the act is Vincent, who frowns, confirming that this is the final straw.

EXT. FROLIC'S COMEDY CLUB - ALLEY WAY - NIGHT

COMEDIANS out for a smoke return inside, passing a despondent Arnold. He doesn't notice the THUNDER and LIGHTENING, or the steady rain.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Norman gets soaked as he passes a homeless man pushing a shopping cart. A RADIO attached to it PLAYS.

RADIO ANNOUNCER(O.S.)

The intensity of the storm is causing power surges and disturbances throughout the city's electromagnetic field...

Norman rips off his name tag and whips it towards a trashcan at the edge of an alleyway next to the comedy club. It's a wild miss, bounces into the alley, next to

ARNOLD

sitting on a milk crate rolling up his sleeve. He takes out a syringe. Rain falls. He could give a shit.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Norman changes out of his wet clothes and into his pajamas. He jumps onto his bed and pulls out from behind him a thirteen-inch long hand puppet.

A full-bodied one that resembles a boy scout, complete with uniform. The name on the uniform reads: "ANXIETY RANGER"

NORMAN

Like you ever helped.

EXT. FROLIC'S COMEDY CLUB - STAGE DOOR/INT. BEDROOM - SPLIT SCREEN - NIGHT

Arnold pulls out the syringe from his arm. His eyes roll back in his head, then keels over.

Norman puts on the hand puppet, hugs it for comfort as the violent storm rages on outside.

A giant CLAP of THUNDER.

END TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Morning sunshine pours in through the window.

ARNOLD'S POV

A ceiling fan spins. Looking right, we see a wooden bureau next to a bookcase next to a desk. The place is spotless.

ARNOLD (V.O.)
Huh. This ain't my room.

We notice the stuffed animals strewn about the bed.

ARNOLD (V.O.)
Holy shit! I got lucky!

We look left and see Norman, who stares back at us.

ARNOLD (V.O.)
A dude? Not the first time I blacked out. Does it count as a gay experience if I don't remember it?
(laughs)
I gotta write that down. That's funny.
(then)
What the hell is in my ass?

NORMAN
That was one rough ride last night.

ARNOLD
Yeah, well, the ride's over. So, could you be a pal and take whatever it is outta my asshole? I gotta get home and feed my goldfish.

NORMAN
Did you just speak to me?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL ARNOLD'S VOICE COMES FROM THE HAND PUPPET

ARNOLD
Ah, yeah. I hope you're not expecting to get paid for this.

A moment passes, then the realization of what's happening washes over Norman's face. Norman screams.

ARNOLD
You're no Fabio in the morning either.

Norman can't get out of this bed fast enough, trying to remove Arnold in the process.

NORMAN

Damn it! Why can't I get you off?!

ARNOLD

You had all night to figure that out.
Now, I'm telling you, get ... your ...

Arnold sees Norman and the hand puppet in the dresser mirror. His words match the movement of the puppet's mouth.

ARNOLD

Hold up. That's not me. It can't be me.

Arnold waves his little puppet hand. His puppet body trembles then he lets out a SCREAM. Norm freaks out slamming Arnold against the wall.

NORMAN

Stop yelling! My mom's right across the hall.

ARNOLD

You still live with your mom? Are you serious? How old are you?

Norman runs into the

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Takes a hammer from the work bench and holds it over Arnold.

ARNOLD

Hey man, I was only joking.

Norman takes a hard whack. Ow! Norman feels the pain. Arnold laughs. He runs to the

KITCHEN -

Turns on a burner and hesitates, thinking about what he's about to do.

ARNOLD

You ain't got the guts, mama's boy.

Norman puts Arnold to the flame, but the puppet won't catch fire. Norman notices a tag.

NORMAN

Damn! You're flame retardant.

Arnold laughs. Norman runs to the

BATHROOM -

He holds Arnold over the toilet, a glint of violence in his eyes.

ARNOLD

It's a beautiful day for a swim.

Norman dunks Arnold until the air bubbles cease. Norman collapses to the floor holding a lifeless hand puppet.

Seconds later, Arnold coughs up water, he lives!

ARNOLD

You done, asshole?

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Norman, fully dressed, heads for the door.

ARNOLD

This is bullshit. If I gotta help you get dressed, you could at least put me in something that doesn't scream scoutmaster snack.

IRIS (52), the cougar who gave up the prowl to take care of her son, enters. Her blue, silk nightgown leaves nothing to the imagination.

Instinctively, Norman hides Arnold behind him.

IRIS

I heard some awful noises earlier, you okay? Was it diarrhea?

NORMAN

No mom, I'm fine. Just taking a walk.

IRIS

At seven in the morning?
(suspicious)
What's that behind you? Show me.

Norman shows her Arnold. Iris cringes.

NORMAN

I lost another job, okay.

IRIS

I thought we talked about this? When you get the worry worms or nervous nellies, you got this, right here.

Iris taps her fingers in the middle of her bosom.

NORMAN

This is different.

IRIS

Shh shh shh. You bring it in right now, Normy.

Norman hesitates then walks over and hugs her. It's weird as fuck as Iris buries Norman's face into her ample bosom.

Norman looks down just in time to see Arnold's puppet mouth ready to latch onto Iris's ass. Norman breaks away.

NORMAN

That's good. Thank you. Much better.

Iris, proud of her work, eyes him lovingly and struts out.

ARNOLD

What. The fuck. Was that?! Your mom's a freak!

NORMAN

I'd appreciate it if you don't talk to, about, and definitely not touch my mother.

ARNOLD

I wouldn't mind getting in on some of that bosom action.

NORMAN

You're supposed to help my anxiety, not cause it.

ARNOLD

Whatever. What now, Oedipus?

NORMAN

I know someone who'll know what to do.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SIDE DOOR - DAY

GARY CLARIDGE (55), a bachelor by choice, you know he smells good, opens the door.

Norman thrusts himself past Gary and stands in the middle of the kitchen.

GARY

Norman? You know I'm not your therapist anymore.

NORMAN

I know Dr. Claridge, you told me never to come to your house again, but this isn't like the time --

GARY

You thought you had osteoporosis but it turned out your backpack was just too heavy?

Norman shakes his head.

GARY

Or the time you thought you developed Human Werewolf Syndrome but it turned out you were just a late bloomer?

Norman shows him, Arnold. Gary adjusts his bathrobe, tightening the belt, regretting answering the door.

GARY

Ah, yes, the anxiety ranger. Your mother and I picked it out for you.

NORMAN

I woke up with him stuck to my hand. Seriously. Give him a tug. And, he talks. He's making fun of me.

GARY

How is she, by the way? Your mom. Has she, by chance, ever mentioned me?

NORMAN

Did you hear what I said? He talks!

Resisting Norman's urgency is futile. Gary softens.

GARY

I heard you, big guy. Communicating with it is normal. It's called anthropomorphizing. Embrace it. What's the puppet's name?

Norman shrugs.

GARY

Don't you think you should know?
Remember, he's your buddy.

Norman hesitates but doesn't want to disappoint Gary.

NORMAN

(to Arnold)
What's your name?

Arnold turns to Norman, opens his mouth then flops over.
Norman shakes him. Nothing.

NORMAN

He was just talking a mile a minute.

GARY

What you heard, was yourself.

NORMAN

It wasn't me.

Gary waves him off, he's seen this before.

GARY

The human mind is complex. It can be
very convincing.

(beat)

Remember your A-B-C's?

NORMAN

Acknowledge it, breath through it,
conquer it.

GARY

Bingo! Do those things, take a nice
hot bubble bath, your hand will
unclench, and the puppet will slide
right off.

NORMAN

And if it doesn't?

GARY

You may be experiencing psychosis.

Gary puts one hand on Norman's shoulder in a fatherly fashion
and eases him outside and closes the door.

EXT. GARY'S HOUSE - SIDEWALK - DAY

Norman, still trying make sense of what just happened, walks a few steps and stops when Arnold bursts out laughing.

NORMAN

This is funny to you?

ARNOLD

I almost lost it when you said 'give him a tug', holy shit.

NORMAN

I'm going back in, and you're going to talk.

ARNOLD

No, I'm not. Gary's full of shit. All that lame ass advice, then rushing you out like that.

NORMAN

Not true. He's helped me in the past.

ARNOLD

By suggesting to take a bath? C'mon dude, all he wants to do is help himself to your mom.

NORMAN

What?! Take that back. And for your information, they haven't seen each other in six years.

ARNOLD

I wouldn't be surprised if he weren't giving it a tug right now thinking about her.

Norman, incredulous, crosses his arms, so he doesn't have to look at Arnold.

ARNOLD (O.S.)

He was right about one thing.

Norman uncrosses his arms, so he's face to face with Arnold.

ARNOLD

You don't know me. My name is Arnold.
Arnold Fitzkee.

(then)

Take me to my condo. I got a plan.

INT. ARNOLD'S CONDO - DAY

A small space, crammed with notebooks, stacks of videotapes, CDs and Quentin Tarantino movie posters on the wall.

ARNOLD

Grandma kicked the bucket a few years ago and left me a little something.

NORMAN

Where's your goldfish?

On the wall, above a desk, several framed photos of Arnold, in human form, on stage or with other comedians. Lots of 90's fashion happening in them.

NORMAN

I'm guessing you were a photographer of some sort?

ARNOLD

No stupid, that's me. I do stand-up. I have a set on tape you can watch.

Norman looks on the desk. He picks up a business card. It reads: "ARNOLD FITZEE - STAND-UP COMIC" and underneath the phrase, "BAD TO THE BONE"

ARNOLD

Toss that. I don't have bones anymore.

NORMAN

Or keep it. Irony. That's funny.

ARNOLD

What' ya some kind of alternative comedian? What do you know, anyway?

NORMAN

I'm not really into stand-up, I'm more of an improv guy.

Arnold slumps over, lifeless.

NORMAN

What? They make stuff up right on the spot. It's cool.

ARNOLD

Alright, stop, just shut up.

NORMAN

You're offended?

ARNOLD

You know what offends me? Shitty comics leading the life I thought I was going to lead. I see 'em on Instagram, playing at clubs all over the world, getting respect from other big-time comedians. That should be me!

NORMAN

Maybe we should talk about your plan?

ARNOLD

You're right. Fuck comedy.

(beat)

I'm thinking, we gotta retrace our steps. Do what we did last night and maybe we reverse whatever happened.

NORMAN

So, that's a no on the hot bath then?

ARNOLD

I'm not taking a bath with you. Now, what were you doing?

NORMAN

I was in the middle of an anxiety attack. You?

ARNOLD

Chasing the dragon. In fact, you gotta help me find it. Check under the couch cushions, under the bed, inside the mattress, definitely the kitchen cabinets.

Norman scurries over to the couch but stops.

NORMAN

Find what? What am I looking for?

ARNOLD

My heroin.

NORMAN

Oh boy, I'm having another anxiety attack.

ARNOLD

Heroin will help that.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOEXT. NORMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Norman bounds up the walkway towards the front steps.

NORMAN

I told you, after the nervous nellies
my mom makes me num-nums.

ARNOLD

And after little Normy gets his num-
nums can he take me to buy some smack-
smack?

NORMAN

That will be impossible.

ARNOLD

You're right. You buy it.

NORMAN

Me? No way. I can't buy cough syrup
without feeling guilty. Besides, how
would you even do it?

ARNOLD

It's like riding a bike.

Norman stops and catches Julie by surprise. Her arm is elbow
deep in his mailbox.

NORMAN

I am so glad you're here. I need --

Julie pauses, the look of apology washes across her face,
pulls out the angora sweater.

JULIE

I'm sorry. Vincent said he couldn't
sell it on account of the, you hump
it, you buy it policy. Said he'll take
it out of your last paycheck.

NORMAN

That guy's such a dick. There's no
such policy.

Julie studies Arnold, who seemingly studies her back.

ARNOLD

Where I'm from, if you stare at someone like that you're either about to fight or fuck.

NORMAN

Arnold, what the hell!?

ARNOLD

She keeps looking at me, and it's pissing me off, man.

JULIE

Holy shit. Are you making it speak?

NORMAN

Nope. Meet Arnold Fitzkee, the spirit of a dead comedian residing inside this puppet, and currently, somehow fused to my hand.

ARNOLD

Pleased to meet ya.

Arnold holds out his puppet hand, but Julie keeps him hanging.

JULIE

Are you messing with me?

ARNOLD

Okay. Be like that. I see how it is.

JULIE

That's not your voice, and it's freaking me out.

Julie turns to leave.

NORMAN

Wait! You can't go! I really need your help getting him off of me.

JULIE

I was there when you needed help overcoming your fear of blimps, and when you didn't know why your fingers smelled like rubber bands. But this is way beyond my scope.

Arnold pleads with his eyes. Julie can't resist. She relents.

JULIE

Ugh, fine.

They walk towards the front door.

NORMAN

Yes! Okay, come in, but don't mention anything about Arnold in front of my mother.

(to Arnold)

You. Don't talk.

INT. NORMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Norman and Julie sit as Iris, in an impeccable tennis outfit, places pancakes on their respective plates.

IRIS

While you were on your extended walk, I was on the phone setting up a job interview for you.

NORMAN

Ma, I can get my own job.

Norman places a fork in Arnold's mouth, but Arnold rejects it. This dance continues.

IRIS

My friend Carmen is the branch manager at the savings bank.

Norman tries to eat with his left hand but has a hard time.

NORMAN

I don't want to work at a bank.

IRIS

(to Julie)

Why aren't you eating?

JULIE

Gluten allergy.

(beat)

Truth be told, Norman would be best suited for something that promotes independence, free from public interference.

IRIS

Oh, Julie, my dear, you're hardly qualified to --

NORMAN

Actually, she's getting her life coaching certification.

The look of betrayal washes across Iris' face. The tension is palpable.

IRIS

Putting ideas in people's heads, is that what life coaching is?

JULIE

Not for a while, there's a lot of courses I need to do online first.

IRIS

Is this like the time you were going to light the world on fire with your candle selling scheme? Or, the upholstery biz? There's still an unfinished recliner sitting in the garage.

JULIE

This is sure to work this time. After all, I have a motto.

Iris waits.

JULIE

That's it.

IRIS

That's it, is the motto?

JULIE

No. Have a motto is my motto.

IRIS

Norman, your interview is at four.

JULIE

My philosophy is we all have our own motto. As your life coach, I will help you find and define it.

Arnold trembles as his two little puppet hands raise to cover his mouth as if trying to stifle a laugh.

IRIS

(to Julie)

Well, as Norman's original life coach, my motto is - I don't need one because I'm his mother.

Iris swaggers out, victorious. A beat, then

JULIE

Damn, that's a good one.

ARNOLD

You know what my motto is? Don't be a cunt.

NORMAN

Tell me you're not going to talk like that at the job interview?

Julie takes out her smartphone and punches some buttons.

ARNOLD

Not if you get me what I want. I'm jonesing here!

JULIE

(reading from her phone)

It says an Arnold Fitzkee overdosed outside Frolic's comedy club last night.

ARNOLD

That's all it says? No mention about me being a comedian?

Julie shakes her head.

ARNOLD

Son-of-a-bitch! I was a regular. Even got paid sometimes.

JULIE

Now inside a puppet stuck to your hand. How?

NORMAN

That's what we need to figure out so I can get rid of him.

ARNOLD

Huh. I died twice in one night. That's fucking funny.

JULIE

I can help. Do some research, oh, maybe I can be... no, stick to the plan, Julie. Life coach.

NORMAN

What do I do about this job interview?

JULIE

I have an idea.

ARNOLD

I opened for Dave Coulier once.

INT. TENNIS CLUB - DAY

Iris hits an approach shot, camps out at the net and waits. Her opponent counters with a lob.

Iris shanks the overhead onto the neighboring court. A man WAILS in AGONY seconds later.

NEIGHBORING COURT

Iris runs over to the fallen man just as he's being helped to his feet.

IRIS

Oh my God, I'm am so sorry. I need a lesson on -- Gary?

GARY

Iris.

IRIS

You alright? I hope I didn't...

Gary holds up his left hand to signify an inch.

IRIS

No ring?

GARY

Not anymore.

The two lock eyes like they do in a steamy Rom-Com.

IRIS

I've never forgotten our wonderful weekend. I hope that wasn't --

GARY

It was inevitable.

(beat)

It's been too long, Iris.

IRIS

I agree.

GARY

It's funny I ran into you, Norman came to see me this morning. How's he looked to you lately?

IRIS

The same. He's been fine. Why?

INT. WOBURN SAVINGS BANK - DAY

Norman drips with sweat. He drapes his jacket, so it covers Arnold, who's, entirely wrapped in an ace bandage.

His sunglasses slip off his sweaty forehead onto the bridge of his nose, covering his eyes. CUSTOMERS stare.

He walks up to a TELLER, a fidgeting mess.

NORMAN

I. Need for you. To --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Oh my God, he's robbing the bank!

An ALARM RINGS, chaos erupts behind him. He realizes it's him everyone's talking about.

NORMAN

No! No! I'm here for a --

Out of nowhere, an elderly SECURITY GUARD tackles him.

INT. WOBURN SAVINGS BANK - OFFICE - LATER

CARMEN (55), serious, wearing gray business attire. A colorful broach marks her playful side.

CARMEN

Again, I am so sorry about that. People are so on edge these days, lots of anxiety going around.

Norman nods in an over-exaggerated manner.

CARMEN

Let me tell you more about the position. We're looking for a teller --

NORMAN

Like to deal with customers?

Carmen nods. Her words become inaudible as Norman experiences a panic attack.

He closes his eyes and holds his breath until the episode subsides. He opens his eyes when he hears

CARMEN

So, tell me a little about yourself
and why you'd be a good fit here.

Norman averts his eyes, opens his mouth but before he talks, Arnold MUMBLES.

CARMEN

Do you hear that?

NORMAN

I heard nothing.

Carmen waits. This time, Arnold MUMBLES louder. Norman's arm shakes violently.

CARMEN

Are you okay? Is that your phone
vibrating?

Norman gets up and sits on Arnold. Norman takes a long breath, he's ready for the interview, until, Arnold acts like a bucking bronco.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Norman unwraps the ace bandage. Finally free, Arnold gasps for breath. Inhaling deeply for air.

NORMAN

Thanks a lot for making me look like
an ass. She's going to tell my mom no
doubt.

ARNOLD

You ever do that to me again, I'll --

NORMAN

What?

Arnold pelts Norman's face with his little puppet hands.

NORMAN

Stop it!

Norman brings up his left hand. His fingers attack Arnold making it look like he's violently thumb wrestling himself.

ARNOLD

Alright, alright! I give up. Fuck.

Norman walks through the parking lot to a

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Norman and Arnold wait in silence until Arnold notices someone waiting at the bus stop across the street.

ARNOLD

Holy shit. That's Kev, my drug dealer.

Arnold points towards KEV (37), an imposing, massive hippy with a big bushy beard.

ARNOLD

Let's go talk to him, and you know, score.

NORMAN

The crosswalk is at least fifty yards away.

KEV'S POV

Norman argues with a hand puppet and intermittently looks in his direction.

BACK TO SCENE

ARNOLD

Just go over there. Wait. Forget it, he's coming this way.

Within seconds, Kev and Norman are nose to nose.

KEV

Hey man, you and your puppet keep looking at me, is there something you need?

Arnold shimmies his way in between the two.

ARNOLD

I'm looking for some "H".

KEV

Oh yeah? You a puppet cop? If you are, you gotta tell me.

ARNOLD

How many cops you know buy smack with a fucking hand puppet?

Kev thinks for a moment, yeah, it makes sense.

KEV
 (to Norman)
 No offense, limp dick, you don't look like the type.

NORMAN
 (points to Arnold)
 It's not for me, it's for my buddy.

KEV
 Who's your wittle buddy?

NORMAN
 Arnold Fitzkee.

Kev steps up into Norman's personal space.

KEV
 That prick owes me a lot of money. If he wants anything, he's gotta pay.

NORMAN
 That's kind of a problem. Technically he's dead.

Kev pulls out a knife, alternates his gaze from Norman to Arnold.

KEV
 That's what he said the last time he owed me money.

NORMAN
 No, he's really dead. Honest.

Kev studies Norman for a long beat. He nods, then ends the tension by putting his knife away.

KEV
 Let's hope so. That guy was a fuckin' no talent jerk, a loser who thought he was better than everyone else.

ARNOLD
 No talent? Fuck you! You never had any good shit anyway.

Kev grabs for Arnold's throat, but Arnold pulls away. FABRIC RIPS as Norman sprints off leaving Kev holding a pair of puppet pants.

EXT. NORMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Norman bursts in, locks the door, and peers out the window.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Norman sprints to his bed and dives on top of a pile of plush stuffed animals. Ah, this is what he needs.

Arnold gives it a try, rubbing his puppet crotch against a plush stuffed giraffe. He moans.

ARNOLD

I get it now. This doesn't suck.

NORMAN

Don't get off on them, sicko.

Another faint MOAN.

NORMAN

Did you hear what I said?

ARNOLD

That wasn't me.

Another MOAN.

INT. MOM'S ROOM - DAY

Norman knocks as he enters. Gary and Iris are in full coitus. Betrayal washes over Norman's face.

NORMAN

Oh my, God! Mom! Dr. Claridge! What are you doing?

ARNOLD

Oh Jesus, you never got the talk.

Iris frantically covers herself with the bedsheets while Gary calmly pulls up his tennis shorts. Gary's engorged member creates a teepee effect. Norman stares at it.

IRIS

Dr. Claridge told me you came to see him this morning. You know, because of your brain butterflies.

ARNOLD (O.S.)

So much for patient-client confidentiality.

IRIS

We were going over some new kinds of treatment. Very involved, very modern, and well, one thing led to another.

GARY

No reason to lie about this again.
He's an adult.

NORMAN

Again?

(thinks, then it clicks)

Oh my God, when I was in high school.
Is that why you ended my therapy
because your fling was over?

ARNOLD (O.S.)

So many crossed boundaries.

IRIS

It wasn't a fling.

NORMAN

But, I trusted you. How could you do
this to me?

GARY

You're not the only one with issues.

NORMAN

(points to Arnold)

This is the real issue.

IRIS

What, the stupid hand puppet?

NORMAN

His name is Arnold.

GARY

Good name.

NORMAN

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to
procure some heroin.

Norman exits, slamming the door behind him.

IRIS

What?! Norman, wait, I'll make you
pancakes!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. CHINA BLOSSOM - TIKI BAR - NIGHT

A Polynesian paradise. Norman sits at the bar underneath a thatched overhang and is already three sheets to the wind.

NORMAN

I can't get the image of his
whatchamacallit out of my mind.

ARNOLD

What I want to know is why he's
wasting that talent on being a
psychologist.

NORMAN

Let's change the subject.

ARNOLD

That topped any porn I've ever seen,
and I've seen a lot of porn.

As soon as Norman finishes his Mai Tai, the BARTENDER replaces it with another.

ARNOLD

Ease up. I need you to have your wits.

NORMAN

Oh, yes, for the big heroin score!

ARNOLD

Pipe down, numb nuts. Nobody's gonna
sell to us if you keep that up.

Norman turns his stool to face out into a nearly empty room. Gary shuffles up, out of breath, still in his tennis duds.

NORMAN

How'd you find me?

GARY

I'm a psychologist. I know where
people go to feed their addictions.
Come on, I'm taking you home.

ARNOLD

Fuck off, Gary, we're not leaving
until we got what we came for.

Gary does a double take.

GARY

Jesus, when did you learn how to do that?

NORMAN

Do what?

Norman and Gary watch Arnold sip from the straw of Norman's full drink. It's like a magic show as the liquid disappears from the glass.

ARNOLD

Hey, doctor moose cock, you think I can get a selfie with that Howitzer you call a dick?

GARY

That!

Norman puts the empty glass on the bar, and grabs another. NINA (37), bohemian type with a clipboard, sidles up.

NINA

Cool trick with the drink. Super impressive. We've never met. You're a comedian, right?

She points to a side room off the bar. A sign perched on an easel reads: "FREE STAND-UP COMEDY"

ARNOLD

Honey, I'm a professional.

NINA

This is more of an open mic, but I can offer you a guest spot.

ARNOLD

Okay.

NORMAN

Wait. No. What are you doing? I'm not going up there. No way!

ARNOLD

Yeah we are.

NINA

Hilarious. I'll put you up next.

Nina makes her way into the side room while Gary, mouth agape, tries to make sense of it.

NORMAN

Next?! Excuse me. Cancel that, please.

Too late. Nina is a ghost.

GARY

You're doing stand-up?!

Norman shakes his head. Arnold nods.

GARY

I got to see this.

Gary walks into the side room.

NORMAN

Not happening, Arnold. Here are all the things that could go wrong --

ARNOLD

I need this, asshole. I died, remember? In the last twenty-four hours, you hammered me, burned me, drowned me, suffocated me, and I watched your mother get railed by a human ramrod! Well, that wasn't bad, but to top it off, I've done all of it fucking sober! And I'm not wearing pants. So, you're doing it!

INT. CHINA BLOSSOM - SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

An AUDIENCE, packed into the room like sardines, claps enthusiastically.

NINA

You guys ready for more show? Alright, your next comedian...

NORMAN'S POV

Like out of a dream, Nina's words become inaudible, the faces in the crowd become blurry as he ambles towards the stage.

ANGLE ON STAGE

Norman shuffles to the mic stand. And in what seems deliberate, places his full drink on a stool directly underneath Arnold.

The scene resembles a fucked-up hostage situation, Arnold clearly the one in charge. Norman, the underling, averting his eyes at all costs. A long pause, then

ARNOLD
 Anybody got any heroin?
 (waits, then)
 Seriously, me and my friend need a
 little help.

Norman looks up, eyes wide, a look of horror pasted on his
 face. CHUCKLES from the audience.

ARNOLD
 No? Okay, he's Norman. I'm Arnold his
 anxiety puppet. Which is pretty fucked
 up because he's got issues, but I got
 problems. Namely, heroin.

NORMAN
 Can you not talk about me in your act.

ARNOLD
 Why? You're part of it now.
 (loud whisper)
 You're inside me.

Audience laughs.

NORMAN
 They're gonna think it's me that
 wants, you know what.

ARNOLD
 What? Heroin? You can say it.

NORMAN
 I'd rather not.

ARNOLD
 What about horse, smack, skag, black
 tar, brown sugar, hell dust, Aunt
 Hazel, Mexican Mud, sweet China White.

NORMAN
 I don't think any of those will solve
 my issues.

ARNOLD
 Heroin won't solve your issues. It
 just makes you forget you have any.

Audience laughs.

ARNOLD
 It'll also make you forget your
 address, how to chew food, and the
 baby in your backseat.

NORMAN

I think I'm all set, thanks.

ARNOLD

You're lucky, at least you got veins.
I don't even have pants.

The audience laughs.

ARNOLD

And if you hadn't noticed, I'm missing something else. Something important.

NORMAN

It didn't stop you from humping my stuffed giraffe earlier.

ARNOLD

At least your penis isn't part of an old lady's throw pillow somewhere in Toledo.

Audience laughs.

ARNOLD

That's right, folks. Your pillows, cushions, you name it - all stuffed with puppet dicks.

Audience laughs.

ARNOLD

There is an upside though. I'm super absorbent!

Arnold bends and sucks on the straw, draining Norman's drink of all the liquid. The crowd applauds. A YOUNG WOMAN approaches and sets another drink upon the stool.

Arnold does it again. This time, a stream of liquid shoots out from where his pee hole is and onto the young woman.

ARNOLD

Oh no, I must be full!

Audience laughs.

ANGLE ON NINA

NINA

He could be the next Gallagher but with a hand puppet.

ANGLE ON STAGE

ARNOLD
 (puppet hands to his face)
 Oppsy whoospie doo!

NORMAN
 Arnold! No! Stop! Sorry, everybody.

Norman puts his finger over Arnold's pee hole stopping the torrent as the audience continues to laugh.

ARNOLD
 Yo, buddy, watch the finger. Can you me too a puppet?

INT. CHINA BLOSSOM - TIKI BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Norman collapses into a chair. He puts an empty glass on the table and holds Arnold over it.

Arnold continues to empty his remaining liquid into the glass as Gary arrives.

GARY
 That was sensational! Get yourself a proper dummy, and you've got something.

ARNOLD
 Fuck off, Gary.

Norman laughs and takes a large sip from the glass Arnold just emptied into.

GARY
 Maybe it's time you take Arnold off and I take you home.

NORMAN
 Nah. I'm staying at Arnold's.

Gary reacts, time to roll up the sleeves and go to work.

GARY
 If you need a friend, let me be your friend. You can always talk to me.

ARNOLD
 A little liquid courage and some laughs is all he needs.

GARY
 Take him off.

NORMAN
No.

GARY
Do it.

NORMAN
Eat a dick.

ARNOLD
Fuck a mom!

Gary pounces, struggling with Norman, attempting to take Arnold off but to no avail.

GARY
You can't continue to speak through the puppet forever. At some point, you'll need to let it go.

NORMAN
Not tonight.

Gary nods, always the psychologist, he knows when to stop pushing and heads for the exit.

ARNOLD
Arrivederci, donkey dick.

Norman looks down at his drink, that was tough.

NORMAN
If you don't mind, I'm not up for getting heroin anymore.

ARNOLD
That's okay, kid. There's something better than heroin, and you just had a taste of it.

NORMAN
Did you put something in my drink?

ARNOLD
Comedy. I did all new shit, and it was primo. Plus I finally got to pee on someone.

NORMAN
I didn't pass out or cry. Holy shit. I can't wait to tell Julie.

The young woman that got peed on saunters up to Norman.

ARNOLD

Back for more, eh? Sorry, I'm empty.

YOUNG WOMAN

(to Norman)

You're so funny. Are you on social media? Where can I see you perform?

All Norman can do is stare, sweat and grunt.

ARNOLD

Why are you talking to him?

YOUNG WOMAN

When you do, let me know.

The young woman writes down her info on a napkin, hands it to Norman and struts off.

ARNOLD

If we hit that, is it considered a threesome?

A YOUNG MAN approaches.

YOUNG MAN

(to Norman)

That was amaze balls what you did up there. Amaze. Balls.

ARNOLD

It was me, man. All me!

Young Man hands Norman his card.

YOUNG MAN

I run an open mic across town at The Comedy Studio. Why don't you come by? You just need to bring ten people.

The Young Man exits.

ARNOLD

We're on our way, baby.

NORMAN

Great. Now I gotta get ten friends.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW