

A CLOWN NAMED TREMAINE

"Pilot" OR "The Hard Sell"

Written by

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Tremaine, a recent parolee and wannabe actor tries to persuade the head of a failing children's entertainment company to hire him.

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TEASER

EXT. LA SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

A CHILD wearing a party hat and food on her face cries with her whole body but not sound. MORE CHILDREN pour into a house through one back door. They are terrified of something in the backyard.

The Chaos unfolds in slow motion. "Send in the Clowns" by Frank Sinatra is the only thing heard.

INT. LA SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

SCREAMING CHILDREN with red faces and puffy eyes push past each other and CONFUSED PARENTS in the kitchen of a birthday party. A CRYING BOY runs into a full punch bowl and knocks it off the counter. SMASH.

One MOTHER, 50's, pushes through the commotion with a child in each arm. She stops at the gifts table, awkwardly takes back her present, and moves toward the exit with her children.

JOHN, 40's, a father wearing a Baby Bjorn with a CHILD (>2) in it, emerges from the basement. Charging against the panicking traffic towards the source of their fear, HE MOVES OUTSIDE-

EXT. THE BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

John comes through the door and passes TWO CRYING CHILDREN hugging and trying to comfort one another.

He runs through his yard moving toward smoke. John slips on spilt cake in the grass.

John sturdies himself, apologizes to the baby on his chest, and then looks up-

REVEAL: CLARK, a 35 year old entertainer dressed in an IRONMAN COSTUME, is fully ENGULFED IN FLAMES. He waves his arms and runs around in agonizing pain.

John chases Clark with the extinguisher. Clark resists being sprayed at first, but quickly collapses and is covered in the safety foam.

FROM CLARK'S PERSPECTIVE: The foam flows freely, and darkness swallows everything.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - EARLIER THAT MORNING

Hands cover a low quality phone camera, and then reveal TREMAINE, 24 & underweight, trying to make his phone stand on its own. He takes a few steps backwards to stand against the wall of his room, and takes a deep breath.

TREMAINE
(to himself)
This is gonna be fine.

Tremaine looks at the camera just in time to see the phone fall to the ground.

MOMENTS LATER

TREMAINE
Hi. Tremaine Campbell, 5'7". Los Angeles, California.

Tremaine transitions into character, but the phone camera begins to slowly tilt upward...

TREMAINE (CONT'D)
Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my-

The phone falls on its back with only the ceiling in view. Out of frame, we hear Tremaine click his tongue.

MOMENTS LATER

Just as he is about to speak, loud music begins playing from another room of the house. Tremaine drops his head.

TREMAINE
(Yelling to another room)
Jammal, man, can you turn that down?!
I'm trying to do a self tape!

JAMMAL (O.S.)
(shouting back)
Close the door then!

OFF: Tremaine's open door way. A removed door rests against the wall next to it.

Tremaine sucks his teeth. He waits for a moment and then approaches his phone.

INT. TREMAINE'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JAMMAL, 17 and muscular, sits on the couch, rolling a blunt. Tremaine enters in a collared shirt, stepping over a mess of children's toys.

Tremaine walks over to the front door and stands against it.

TREMAINE
(to Jammal)
Can you take a picture of me?

JAMMAL
I'm not helping you with some wack ass
Tinder profile.

TREMAINE
It's not Tinder. It's a head shot.

JAMMAL
I thought you was doing a self tape?

TREMAINE
You're too loud.

JAMMAL
Wouldn't be a problem if you stopped
taking doors off of shit.

TREMAINE
Can you take a photo of me or-

JAMMAL
(dumbfounded)
Bruh, do you not see me working here?
Come. On.

Tremaine shakes this off and positions himself to take a selfie. He takes two, and then stops to look around.

Tremaine leaves the room, but quickly returns with a lamp. He positions the lamp by the door, but doesn't take the photo.

Instead, he considers the room around him, walks over to Jammal, and unplugs the lamp by him.

JAMMAL (CONT'D)
Are you serious right now?

Tremaine brings the lamp closer to him & plugs it back in. Jammal stares at him for a moment.

Tremaine positions himself for the photo, smiles, and right as he takes it - the door behind him pushes open.

AMANDA, 60 & Tremaine's Grandmother, enters in scrubs with bags under her eyes. Jammal immediately hides his weed.

AMANDA

Boy, what are you standing there for?

JAMMAL

It's for his head shot.

Tremaine gives him a look.

AMANDA

What's wrong with your room?

TREMAINE

I just liked the look of the door.

AMANDA

Yea, I bet you do. You find a job?

TREMAINE

Anthony is picking me up soon to meet with my P.O. Gonna try after that.

AMANDA

(to Jammal)

The next time I see your butt out of school, I'ma see you as a patient.

INT. TREMAINE'S ROOM - LATER

Back in his room, Tremaine is packing a book bag. Amanda walks in and knocks on the door leaning against the wall.

TREMAINE

Anthony should be here in ten minutes.

AMANDA

I thought your meeting was this afternoon?

TREMAINE

You're right. But Anthony has to open at the bar today, so that's when he could give me a ride.

AMANDA

So before that?

TREMAINE

I'm gonna go to the library. Fill out some applications online.

AMANDA

Job applications?

TREMAINE

Yes. Job applications.

AMANDA

I've never applied for a job that needed a photo.

TREMAINE

Grandma, look-

AMANDA

Don't. I told you when you called me, and I told you when I drove all the way out there to pick you up. You can't stay here Tremaine. I know you don't wanna hear that, but I can't have you around the kids.

TREMAINE

I'm not into anything illegal-

AMANDA

Doesn't matter. You being here, means more police. We know your cousin stays running around, I'm not gonna risk it.

TREMAINE

...you said I could have the week.

AMANDA

That's two more days. Are you about to waste one of them?

EXT. AMANDA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Tremaine walks out with a bag on his shoulder, now wearing slacks and a tie. He is greeted with a handshake and hug from ANTHONY, 24 tall and thin, outside of a Mustang.

ANTHONY

What's good, fam?

TREMAINE

Ready to get up out.

ANTHONY

I feel that.

TREMAINE

(about the car)

Look at you out here.

They both get in the vehicle.

INT. ANTHONY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

ANTHONY

I went to a police auction,. This was a repossession, so I got it for less than two grand.

TREMAINE

Come on, that is like some debtors prison shit. Just drive.

Anthony starts the car, and reaches beside his seat.

ANTHONY

You wanna spark this blunt on the way?

TREMAINE

On the way to my drug test?

ANTHONY

You're a sucker if you think they actually test those things. All the people they got on parole in this broke ass system - those cups just sit in a garage to mess with you.

TREMAINE

I can't with you right now.

ANTHONY

You can't with me? Bitch, I rolled this blunt for you. I'm trying to celebrate my mans.

TREMAINE

You're trying to get me shipped back up there. I'm not doing any of that anymore. I am done.

ANTHONY

Fine. My bad.

A pause; Anthony sees something different in his friend. Then-

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Can I still smoke it?

TREMAINE

You got time to take the back way?

CUT TO:

Tremaine is now behind the wheel of the car; he is diligently adjusting each mirror.

He carefully pulls into the road, REVEALING: Anthony sitting in the open trunk of the car, with music playing, and a blunt in his hand. The pair drive off.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATER

A small, stale room with computers huddled together. Tremaine sits at one. No one sits next to him.

Tremaine is uploading the picture he took to a website.

He types away at the keyboard filling out information, until one question: **"Have you ever been convicted of a felony?"**

Tremaine slowly drags his mouse towards no; hovering over it.

He moves back to yes, checks the box and the page turns red.

A notice reads: **"Your application has been terminated."** Tremaine stares at his reflection on the screen.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - LATER

Tremaine sits tensely in a chair while a TODDLER behind him wails and thrashes on the ground.

Across the desk, CHANCE, 40, wearing a short sleeve button up & visibly depressed, holds papers.

TREMAINE

Well, I looked into some common actor jobs like dog walking, waiting tables, but most of those won't hire felons.

The crying toddler behind Tremaine makes his way over to a filing cabinet and begins flinging files in the air.

TREMAINE (CONT'D)

Should he-

CHANCE

Eh eh eh!

He moves in closer to whisper

CHANCE (CONT'D)

You can't acknowledge this stuff. When kids cry like this, you have to ignore them. Otherwise they learn it works. Just like his mother...

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)
(making a show of ignoring the
child)

The kind of acting you should be doing
is acting desperate. I'd try and think
of some jobs no one wants and apply
there. They're probably desperate.
Desperate people always find each
other.

TREMAINE
Thanks.

CHANCE
Let's meet again next week. Since
you've got the permanent address
figured out, that should buy you some
time.

The crying toddler runs up to Chance and throws a stack of
files at him. He pounds against the chair as papers drift
down onto the two men and the desk between them.

TREMAINE
Should you be worried about these
getting out of order?

CHANCE
Most of the people who come here are
back in prison by the second visit.
I'm not too worried about the order.

Chance realizes what he has said.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
But not you! Of course... of course...

Chance tries to lift the paperwork enough to see Tremaine's
name without being noticed.

TREMAINE
Tremaine.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
(right after him)
Tremaine! My man, Tremaine.

INT. SCHOONERS BAR - LATER

Tremaine sits at the bar of an almost empty Bar & Grill.
Anthony is behind the bar.

TREMAINE
I swear to god I don't think I can
physically handle hearing the word
'no' again today.

ANTHONY

No shit, I feel you man.

Tremaine looks at him. Anthony doesn't notice.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

So what are you gonna tell Mandy?

TREMAINE

Nobody wants to give me the time of day. Let alone a job.

ANTHONY

(with hesitation)

I mean, have you gone to Jabari?

TREMAINE

I don't wanna get involved with that. Those security gigs aren't real jobs. I want her to know I'm done with shady shit. Could you talk to somebody here?

ANTHONY

Man-

TREMAINE

Big ask, I know. But if there is any-

ANTHONY

I wish I could bruh, but I told you. They're not comfortable having felons back here with the money.

Tremaine puts his head down. Anthony leans in to say quietly:

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Plus, I'm on thin ice right now. Mixed up the day of my drug test, so...

Anthony walks off to tend to another patron at the bar.

Tremaine stares at his beer. He begins to overhear the conversation going on down the bar between a customer and the manager STEFAN, 30, fit in a tight shirt.

STEFAN

I don't think it's the kind of thing we're looking for.

MITCH

Come on, dude, just hear me out.

MITCH, 33, intense in a cheap suit, stands with JAMIE, 27, & RUTH, 24, in "Sexy" Clown costumes.

MITCH (CONT'D)

We get a bunch of girls like this in here - we got all kinds of characters. They make some jokes, take the orders, end of the night, someone drops a plate of pies. It's classic stuff!

STEFAN

It's an entire new wait staff I'd need to train.

MITCH

Write down the orders and give them to the cook? I can put that in an e-mail.

STEFAN

My people would lose shifts and money.

MITCH

But think about the ambience. It's a real experience. Here ju-just watch.

Mitch leads the ladies over to Tremaine.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(to Jamie)

Show him what we're talking about!

STEFAN

Please don't bother-

JAMIE

Hey - hey, stranger! What can I get you to eat?

TREMAINE

(confused)

I'm not hungry, sorry-

JAMIE

That's 'cause you're not looking at the menu!

With slight of hand, Jamie pulls a menu out from behind Tremaine's head. Tremaine flinches sharply.

TREMAINE

(concerned)

What are you doing?

JAMIE

Sorry! You, you just look like you've been working up quite an appetite.

TREMAINE
I can't eat bar food.

RUTH
(butting in)
Well how bout some nuts then?

She hands him a "DEEZ" brand can of packaged nuts.

TREMAINE
This is filled with snakes right?

JAMIE
No more than the rest of the menu.

Tremaine smiles; he goes to open it when Stefan physically stops him, and gives the can back to Jamie.

STEFAN
Okay, stop. I'm not interested.

MITCH
You didn't even let her get into it!
Look how much this guy liked it.

STEFAN
I need you to leave.

MITCH
Hear me out for-
STEFAN (CONT'D)
NOW.

Mitch looks to Tremaine for support, but he puts his head down. Mitch throws his hands in the air.

MITCH (CONT'D)
This place sucks anyway. Wouldn't be enough customers to be worth my time. Let's get out of here!

STEFAN
(calling after them)
And don't harass anyone in the parking lot either!
(to Anthony)
Can you believe that pendejo? How desperate can you get?

OFF: Tremaine eyes the door Mitch left through.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jamie stands next to the car, while Mitch and Ruth engage in a screaming match.

RUTH

I'm sick of this! I'm sick of being treated like shit, I deserve better than this Mitch, & you may not think I know that, but I know you think about that. So don't THINK I don't know that

MITCH

Everyone is getting paid, there's no reason to freak out right now.

RUTH

I'M NOT FREAKING OUT! I am done being humiliated for free though! I'm done showing up for jobs you didn't actually book, and I am done doing "one more solid for the company."

MITCH

What do you mean one more, you've never done me a solid.

Ruth wants to explode, but she thinks better of it.

RUTH

You are a terrible boss, and I hope you lose this company. It is the only thing I have confidence in you to do. And I see why your Dad fired you.

Ruth storms off with her bag.

MITCH

(to Jamie)

And thank you for all of the support.

JAMIE

How am I suppose to back you up in this? Do you think this outfit screams voice-of-reason?

MITCH

That's just close minded on your end.

Exasperated, Mitch rest his weight on the trunk of the car.

MITCH (CONT'D)

She's probably gonna keep that costume too, huh?

TREMAINE

(calling after them)

Hey!

They both turn to see Tremaine behind them, surprisingly out of breath after a short run.

TREMAINE (CONT'D)

I'm Tremaine. I was inside at the bar.
The guy you did the, the improv with.

The pair share a confused look.

JAMIE

Yea, I remember. Did you decide on
your order?

TREMAINE

Wha- OH! That's funny! You're funny.
Listen, I just wanted to say-

Mitch cuts in quickly.

MITCH

OK kid, thanks, She's not interested.
(to Jamie)
Let's get away from this nutcase.

TREMAINE

(as they are leaving)
I really liked your idea!

MITCH

What'd you just say to me?

TREMAINE

I liked your idea. Dropping pies is
always funny.

MITCH

That point aside, it's not a good
idea. Were you listening to anything
your boss said in there?

TREMAINE

He's not my boss.

Mitch's phone begins to ring

MITCH

(disinterested to Tremaine)

Cool story.

(answering the phone)

Mitch Shape Entertainment. I'm sorry
what? Wha- hold on one second.

(to Jamie)

You good?

She gives him a thumbs up and Mitch walks off to speak with a clearly hostile caller. Tremaine and Jamie stand together awkwardly for a moment in the parking lot.

TREMAINE

Are you a clown or an actress?

JAMIE

More a performer, I guess? It's an entertainment company.

TREMAINE

I was in a theatre troupe once.

JAMIE

That's cool...

TREMAINE

Do you work with... um-

JAMIE

Mitch. Yea, I do. Odd jobs, but better than a lot of work out here.

TREMAINE

Is it a lot of acting?

JAMIE

Character work I guess.

TREMAINE

Got any tips?

JAMIE

It's all 1099s.

TREMAINE

I mean like suggestions.

Jamie looks to Mitch on an intense phone call. She doesn't want to keep talking, but sees Tremaine is desperate.

JAMIE

OK, okay. Um, OK. So good rule of thumb, if somebody makes a suggestion - generally just go with it. Say yes.

TREMAINE

What if it's not good?

JAMIE

Don't worry if it's good. Just try to add on to their suggestion.

Mitch returns from his phone call shaken.

MITCH

Jamie, we gotta run. Clark hosed me.

TREMAINE

What happened?

JAMIE

What's wrong with Clark?

MITCH

He bailed on the party. Something with the costume, so we gotta cover it now.

JAMIE

Do we have another Ironman costume?

MITCH

All I have with me is that stupid Warmachine suit I can't wear.

TREMAINE

Aren't those guys basically the same?

MITCH

It's *none* of your business, but they're exactly nothing alike! That's why they have different names!

JAMIE

I can't fit into that thing either, it's too small.

MITCH

Be Pepper Potts then! Who wouldn't want to meet a superhero's girlfriend?

JAMIE

I'm not ruining another kid's birthday by showing up as a fictional character they didn't ask for.

TREMAINE

Uh, guys...

MITCH

Christ, can you take the hint?

They simultaneously notice how much smaller Tremaine is.

TREMAINE

What size is the costume?

END OF ACT 1