

The Pitch

A comedy in one act

By Bryan Starchman

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to all you writers out there who can admit that not every idea is a homerun but you still don't give up and keep on writing.

*The Playwright,
Bryan Starchman*

STORY OF THE PLAY

A young, hungry writer in Hollywood finally has his chance to pitch his original ideas for movies, television shows, and commercials to a major producer. The writer's ideas come to life on stage as he tries to sell one -- *just one* -- of his many wacky ideas. Consider (and laugh) as the writer presents previews of a mega-budget movie entitled "Thumb Wars"; a reality show about mailmen called "Going Postal"; a game show with the revolting title "Guess What I Just Ate for Dinner"; and even a commercial for a new sports drink called "H₂MayO: The First Drinkable Mayonnaise."

This fast-paced comedic one act will put your audience in the producer's shoes as they watch pitch after hilarious pitch go down in flames. With a very simple set, a flexible cast, basic costumes, and household props, this is also the perfect one act for competitions and traveling.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Maximum of 20 actors: 4 m, 2 w, 14 flexible

**Minimum of 4 actors: 1 m, 1 w, 2 flexible*

BRYAN OR BRENDA - A struggling writer full of ideas

PRODUCER - Major Hollywood producer, cynical

SECRETARY TO PRODUCER

SILENT MAN (*Male*)

STAGEHAND IN SILENT SCENE

DOCUMENTARY ACTOR OR ACTRESS

STALIN VON ADOLF (*A thumb*)

THUMBO (*Another thumb*)

PINKY (*You guessed it...a pinky*)

POSTAL WORKER (*ARLENE or ARNIE*)

POSTMASTER

TV GAME SHOW HOST

FILM NOIR DETECTIVE (*Male*)

FILM NOIR BLONDE IN DISTRESS (*Female*)

SPORTS DRINK COMMERCIAL ACTOR OR ACTRESS

SPORTS DRINK COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCER

FATHER PAPERCLIP (*Male*)

MOTHER PAPERCLIP (*Female*)

KID PAPERCLIP (*Male*)

CHEF

**With only 4 actors, there will be some quick changes backstage, so you'll need at least one very competent stage manager helping out. Also, with 4 actors the same male actor will play both Thumbo and Pinky as well as Father Paperclip and Billy Paperclip by just using both arms to enter the spotlight at the appropriate times. These characters are all figments of the writer's mind so they don't have to be perfect; in fact, they are intentionally written to allow the actors to appear as if they are improvising at times.*

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(AT RISE: A nervous young writer, BRYAN or BRENDA, is standing on the apron in front of a closed curtain. He or she is captured in a spotlight and holds a large binder full of ideas for a new movie or TV show to pitch to a producer.)

BRYAN: *(Pumping himself up.)* All right! Here I am at Megapix Productions. I've been working on spec scripts for the past decade and finally I have convinced a major producer to meet with me. *(Thumbing through binder.)* There's got to be something in this binder full of ideas that the producer will like. I've made it this far -- all I've got to do is pitch one good idea that he *(or she)* wants to give the green light to and I'll have it made! *(BRYAN starts to dream, counting his eggs before they've hatched.)* First, I'll get into the Writers Guild. Then I'll get a screen credit as "creator," my name will be up on Internet Movie Database and then, who knows? The Emmys, the Golden Globes, the... *(Takes a deep breath.)* the Academy Awards! *(BRYAN snaps back into reality, well, sort of.)* And I already know that if I *do* win an award, I will need to keep my speech short so that darn orchestra doesn't play me off before I've finished. *(Beat.)* Maybe I'll make a grand entrance, like Roberto Benigni did when he won best actor for "Life Is Beautiful." Once I receive the nomination, I'll be sure to practice walking on top of the theatre chairs so I don't become an embarrassing YouTube sensation by face planting into Jack Nicholson's lap. And then...I'll give a speech about my humble beginnings: the short films I made in the backyard using my parents' old VHS camera and how sometimes I would dress my little brother up in my mother's clothes if I was in desperate need for another actress.... I'll move the audience to tears! *(Dramatic pause.)* But one thing at a time...first I've got to deliver the perfect pitch.

(A SECRETARY enters the spotlight.)

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SECRETARY: Bryan, the producer will see you now.
(*SECRETARY exits.*)

BRYAN: Ok! It's "Go Time."

(LIGHTS come up, but the curtain is still closed as BRYAN crosses far down right where a PRODUCER sits at a desk with another empty chair placed across from him/her. This setup needs to be very simple and hopefully placed well in front of the main curtain so when Bryan pitches his ideas, the curtain will open easily for the actors who will perform whatever he is pitching.)

(The Producer is never given a name; he or she is more of an all powerful dreammaker than just a lowly human being.)

BRYAN: Good morning! It is a pleasure to meet you.

(BRYAN shakes PRODUCER'S hand. Producer's hand is limp and he quickly releases himself from Bryan's grasp. Producer pulls out a little bottle of hand sanitizer and cleans his hand.)

PRODUCER: *(With almost no emotion.)* Take a seat.

(BRYAN sits, obviously nervous.)

PRODUCER: You've sent me 22 query letters in the past week.

BRYAN: I'm very persistent.

PRODUCER: Persistent...annoying...whatever you want to call it. But I also got a call from your screenwriting professor over at UCLA and he told me that you have some of the most original ideas for film and TV he's ever heard. I owe him a favor for getting me on board to co-produce *Avatar*...so I thought I'd give you a chance.

BRYAN: Thank you so much for your time; you really don't know how much I appreciate —

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PRODUCER: *(Cutting him off, already looking at his watch.)*
And time is money, so I'll give you a Hollywood Minute to sell me on one of your projects.

BRYAN: You won't regret this. I promise!

PRODUCER: *(Doubtful, leans back in chair, very cocky.)*
What have you got to pitch me?

BRYAN: Well, for starters. I was thinking why not go back to the origin of movies: The Silent Picture.

PRODUCER: Hmmmmm. Sounds a bit risky. But go ahead, sometimes art films sell. The 2011 film *The Artist* did very well. *(Beat.)* What's the plot?

BRYAN: Well... *(Flipping through his binder.)*

(The CURTAIN opens although a SPOTLIGHT remains on Bryan and Producer throughout the play.)

BRYAN: It all starts off in a Hollywood mailroom where a young go-getter is trying to make a name for himself in this rat race of a world we call "Life."

(LIGHTS come up on the stage. Enter SILENT MAN. He is sorting mail very dramatically as he wipes his brow.)

BRYAN: He's just a lowly mail clerk at a production company, but he has dreams. Much, much bigger dreams. Someday, he's going to be a star!

(SILENT MAN sorts the mail as speedy instrumental MUSIC plays in the background.)

PRODUCER: A silent film about a guy sorting mail. *(Sarcastic.)* Sounds riveting.

BRYAN: Well...it's not long until he comes across a letter addressed to him.

(SILENT MAN stops, very dramatically looks at the letter and is in shock.)

BRYAN: It's a letter from his father!

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PRODUCER: *(Trying to rush Bryan.)* You're putting me to sleep.

BRYAN: *(Quickening the pace.)* But his father died on the *Titanic*...or so he thought!

(SILENT MAN reads the letter and looks up, again, shocked! STAGEHAND runs on and holds a sign over SILENT MAN's head that reads "I thought my father died on the Titanic!" as SILENT MAN mouths the words.)

PRODUCER: *(Cutting the legs out from his idea.)* The *Titanic* has been done to death.

BRYAN: *(Trying not to lose the momentum of the pitch.)* Did I say *Titanic*? I mean, the *Lusitania*.

(STAGEHAND turns over sign and it reads "I thought my father died on the Lusitania." Again, SILENT MAN mouths the words.)

PRODUCER: World War I doesn't sell. World War II is where the money is...but again...it's been overdone.

BRYAN: *(Total shot in the dark.)* Actually his father died in a golfing accident!

(STAGEHAND stares at Bryan as if to say "Really?" He then crosses out "on the Lusitania" and writes "in a golfing accident.")

PRODUCER: *(A bit intrigued, a bit baffled.)* Golfing accident?

BRYAN: Yep! He hit a ball into the water hazard and went in to retrieve it, but he was eaten by an alligator.

PRODUCER: *(Confused.)* What?

BRYAN: *(Searching.)* It was a golf course in the Florida Everglades.

PRODUCER: Were there witnesses? I mean, how do they know his father died?

End of Freeview

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