

ONLY KIDDING!

by Jim Geoghan

Nightclub basement in Brooklyn - Present - Tom (20's) - Jerry (20's)

~~Tom - A comedian
Jerry - Tom's partner~~

~~Tom and Jerry are a comedy team struggling to make it big
a very competitive market. When they see a contract
with a slick manager, Jerry balks and a manager
exists.~~

JERRY: (After a few beats, enters from the bathroom wiping his hands on a paper towel.) Where's Sal?

TOM: He just left. How do you feel?

JERRY: Terrific! I swear, I never felt better in my whole life. Where's the contract? You didn't give it back to Sal, did you?

TOM: No, it's right here.

JERRY: (Takes pen and readies to sign.) Good, good...I didn't sign it yet.

TOM: Jerry...

JERRY: (Looking at contract.) You didn't sign it either.

TOM: I know. I thought we should talk about it first.

JERRY: What's to talk about? We're going to do the Buddy King Show. Oh, man! We're gonna be rich, you know that? Rich! Tommy, I'm gonna buy you your own set of Korean twins.

TOM: Jerry...

JERRY: Uh uh uh uh... I insist.

TOM: Jerry!

JERRY: Yeah?

TOM: I think signing a management contract with Sal could be the worst mistake of our entire lives.

JERRY: I think it's the best thing that ever happened to us.

TOM: Well, at least we don't disagree by much.

JERRY: Tom, Sal's got us our shot. All we have to do is sign.

TOM: All we have to do is *not* sign...keep doing good shows, get better and better as an act. We'll get on the Buddy King Show *without*

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getting involved with Sal.

JERRY: Aw, Sal's a pussycat. So what if he's a little mobbed up?

TOM: A "little mobbed up!" He named his first born daughter Jimmy the Weasel! It's not worth it, Jerry. You should see his contract. It's for seven years. Seven years, Jerry.

JERRY: Seven's my lucky number.

TOM: Sal wants thirty percent *before* an agent takes his ten. He wants to put us in lounges...lounges! Opening for guys who sing "Feelings" and play the accordion.

JERRY: The Buddy King Show, Tommy.

TOM: Lounges don't pay more than a thousand a week. Our take-home after taxes'll be less than three hundred each. Then you've got to pay living expenses...

JERRY: I don't want to hear this!

TOM: And you get paid in chips, man. Casino chips. Sure, you can cash them in, but it's a *long* walk through the casino to the cashier's window, and I know you, Jerry. You'd never make it past the blackjack tables.

JERRY: Oh, you know me real good, don't you? So good you can fuck up the best chance of my life. Well, you don't know *shit* about me, Kelly. You don't know the way my gut *aches* to get on the Buddy King Show. "Another young comedian, and another young comedian, and a bright and funny young comedian..." but never us! *Me!* Twenty million people!

TOM: Jerry...

JERRY: Shut up! I've waited for that night all of my life it seems. Because sitting out there in America in some perfectly pathetic domestic situation...sitting in their ugly, drunken fat...is every mother fuckin' sonofabitch who ever shit on me! They're all out there! Married to each other, drowning in hopelessness. Watching *me!* On televisions that aren't even paid for yet! Watching *me!!!* The *ones* who tormented and teased and humiliated me. The bitches who giggled behind my back! Their boyfriends who stole my lunch money! The fuckheads who-called-me Jew boy! You know what's going on with them now?! Their lives add up to *zip!* There's Jerry Goldstein on the Buddy King

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Show... Their lives add up to *less* than zip. It's Jerry Goldstein.

TOM: Boy, will *they* be sorry.

JERRY: Damn right. Wonder what they'll all do.

TOM: They'll probably kill themselves.

JERRY: I could dig that. I want to do that show, Tom.

TOM: I know. And we will someday.

JERRY: I want to do it...*now!*

TOM: The price is too high.

JERRY: Don't stand in my way.

TOM: I'm right beside you. You just can't see me.

JERRY: I want you to sign this, and I want you to sign it right now.

TOM: Who are you? Have we met? You look a lot like my partner.

JERRY: Sign this.

TOM: No way.

JERRY: Your last chance. Sign it or else.

TOM: Is being pathetic an Olympic sport yet? If it is, you should try out for the team.

JERRY: You signing?

TOM: Read my lips—no fucking way!

JERRY: Get out.

TOM: What?

JERRY: I said get out.

TOM: Get out of where?

~~(JERRY throws a childish tantrum and begins throwing Tom's personal articles toward the door. Tom's hat, coat, briefcase all go flying at the door.)~~

JERRY: Get out of *here!* My dressing room! Get out of my dressing room!

TOM: You're crazy.

JERRY: We're through. I'm sick and tired of this shit! You're holding me back! We're through! Get out of here!

TOM: What are you doing?

JERRY: *Out!!! Get outta here!!! Get...out!!!*

TOM: Stop!!!

JERRY: ~~Do this to me!!! Do a thing like this to me?!!!!~~ Who the fuck

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you think you are?!! You are *no one!!!*

(TOM lunges at Jerry and pins him against the wall. JERRY loses none of his rage.)

TOM: Stop it!!!

JERRY: *Get out!!!*

TOM: Stop!!!

JERRY: ~~*Ain't shit!!!*~~

TOM: Stop!!!—

JERRY: *Hate your fuckin' guts!!!*

(TOM Slaps Jerry hard across the face. It stops JERRY cold.)

TOM: What are you, crazy? Who sat up with you in Atlanta when you thought you were going to die? Who? You so coked up you can't remember? You remember a hundred and five fever? Who stayed up with you for two days and nights? Was it Buddy King? Was it Sal? Who got his jaw broke in Pittsburgh? You thought it'd be funny to call some guy a "dumb fuckin' Pollack!" Turns out he was! Who got his jaw broke?!! Who was it!!! A few minutes ago you were ready to burn Sal forever! Work the city, find a new agent. Burn the old one! Now you want to burn me? Just like that? Is it that easy? Is it? Is it?!! Are you in there? Are you in there somewhere?

~~*(TOM waits for a reply. There is none. After several beats he lets go of Jerry. JERRY gathers himself and crosses to the table where HE takes a drink and sits down. HE takes one of the pens and finds a napkin on the floor, picks it up and prepares to make notes on the napkin.)*~~

JERRY: Okay. No problem here. I'm going to do the Buddy King Show on my own. That's what I'll do. I'm going to take all the bits I thought up...do 'em on my own. Make a list here. Write them down just like you do. "Tom's a writer...the brains of the team..." Hah! You don't write. You *type!* Make a list...all our bits. Work solo and do the bits I thought up. I'm takin' my bits, Kelly. And I'm writing new ones. Brand new bits...make a list...yeah.

TOM: You didn't forget.

JERRY: What?

TOM: On stage tonight. You didn't forget the new material?

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JERRY: I'll write funnier stuff than *that*.

TOM: You were scared. I saw it in your eyes, Jerry. It was time to launch into the new material on stage. You took a beat, stammered around, then jumped into the old material. The safe stuff. The stuff we've done a million times. And I said to myself, "Holy shit! He's scared..." It was all over your face, man. You had the same expression you have right now.

JERRY: I'm going to send you a color TV. Kelly. A great big one. You can watch me kill on the Buddy King Show. Alone. Without you.

TOM: Yeah, sure. You do that.

JERRY: I will.

TOM: Looks like you've got everything you need. Your paper, your pencil, yourself... (*Indicates bottle.*) Your inspiration. Oops, almost forgot. Your reason. Gotta have a reason, Jer. (*Finds the cassette recorder and brings it to the table where he sets it down in front of Jerry.*) Can't do comedy without a good, solid, realistic reason. Here. (*TOM presses the play button on the recorder. We hear the same wild audience APPLAUSE and WHISTLES we heard before. JERRY listens to the machine, expressionless. TOM surveys Jerry for a few beats, then sadly exits. The LIGHT slowly fades to black.*)

PVT. WARS

by James McLure

A VA hospital - 1970's - Silvio (20's-30's) - Woodruff (30's)

Silvio - An Italian American. Street-wise, tough, but not cruel
Woodruff Gately - A young southerner, childlike

Gately and Silvio are fellow VA hospital residents. Silvio is a slick ladies' man who has lost his manhood in an explosion in Vietnam. His irrespressible nature helps to keep his spirits high, however, and here he takes it upon himself to tutor Gately, a slow literal fellow, in the ways of romance.

SILVIO: Did you ever ask yourself the secret of incredible sexual power over women?

GATELY: No.

SILVIO: Why the nurses can't resist me?

GATELY: The nurses hate you, Silvio.

SILVIO: Ah. That's what they would have you believe.

GATELY: They got me believin' it.

SILVIO: You wanna hear a great line for picking girls up?

GATELY: Sure.

SILVIO: Now this works best for Catholic girls.

GATELY: OK.

SILVIO: You tell 'em you're a priest.

GATELY: A priest.

SILVIO: OK. Look, we'll set the scene. This is what they call settin' the scene. Now you're sitting there. At the table. What can this table be?

GATELY: A table.

SILVIO: OK. We'll make it a table. We're in a night club.

GATELY: Can it be a single's joint?

SILVIO: Gately, you been to a single joint?

GATELY: No.

SILVIO: OK, I tell you what. In settin' the scene we'll make this a single's joint.

GATELY: (*Awed.*) Where'd you learn all this?