

BRUNO – A SCREENPLAY WRITING SAMPLE

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FROM *BRUNO*, A FILM ABOUT ARTIE FISHBEIN, AN OLDER MAN WHO BELIEVES HE IS THE BIOLOGICAL FATHER OF COMEDIAN, BRUNO POINDEXTER. DESPITE ARTIE'S PASSIONATE ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT BRUNO, HE IS CONSTANTLY DEFEATED. HERE, HIS UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO THE FAMOUS FILM COMEDIAN CONTINUES TO HAUNT HIM.

INT. PALM SPRINGS ANTIQUES- DAY

Palm Springs Antiques is a beautiful, rambling house, set in the middle of a colorful, commercial area of Palm Springs. The collection of antiques and Fine Art is vast- ranging from Orientalia to African- jewelry, baskets, Victorian furniture, old instruments, an antique store for browsers and treasure hunters.

It is also the residence of the proprietor, Artie Fishbein, who we have met earlier as a member of Peter's Stunt Team, with horned-rimmed glasses, suspenders and a striped shirt. We find Artie hiding behind a huge Grecian urn. Customer, PHILIP, enters store. When he does, CHIMES JANGLE every which way. After he's gotten a few feet, Artie leaps in front of Philip.

ARTIE

Hello, can I help you?

PHILIP

No- You know, you look familiar.

ARTIE

It's hard to believe. But this is a \$26 million dollar collection, right here.

PHILIP

You're an actor or something like that,
maybe on commercials.

ARTIE

I've done a few movies. Many in fact. More
than i can remember. Short parts-

PHILIP

Good God alive! You're the comedian, Bruno
Poindexter. Let me go and get my wife.

Philip runs outside and yells at wife, MARILYN.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Marilyn! Marilyn! Look whose store this
is. It's Bruno Poindexter, the comedian.

Marilyn enters store.

MARILYN

Could we have your autograph? Not for us-
for our daughter. She collects autographs.
She has Clint Eastwood's. She wants yours.
I know she does.

CLOSE-UP ON Artie's BUSINESS CARD, "PALM SPRINGS
ANTIQUES." He signs the back of it.

PHILIP

What's this? ARTIE FISHBEIN! Is this some
kind of a joke? I thought you said you were
an actor?

ARTIE

Sure. "Planet of the Apes," "Altered States
of Consciousness," "Love at First Bite,"
"China Syndrome," "Dirty Harry-"

MARILYN

What about "Chicago Rhapsody," "Petunias,"
"Night, Death and Darkness- the Sequel?"

PHILIP

It's too bad you don't make any funny movies
anymore. All your last films are like that
boring Swedish director--

ARTIE

That's Bruno Poindexter. I'm Artie
Fishbein. I've been in movies, too.

MARILYN

You look exactly like him!

ARTIE

I was the guard Jack Lemmon held hostage in China Syndrome!

PHILIP

I remember that.

ARTIE

See.

MARILYN

I'm really sorry to have disturbed you, Mr. Poin- I mean Mr. Fishbein. Come to think of it, you do look a little older in person. I just figured it was the movie makeup...

ARTIE

Hey, don't worry. I still have a \$26 million dollar antique collection. You could browse here for years. Sometimes I find skeletons, a browser here and there, who got lost. They just get so fascinated.

PHILIP

That's very nice. But we don't collect antiques. In fact, we don't collect anything.

MARILYN

(laughing)

Except dust.

ARTIE

I'm making another movie right now. I'm right in the middle of it. Its called, "ZOMBIE PARTY!" Richard Carus is in it!

PHILIP

Oh, I remember him. He was in all those biker movies. But he's matured since then.

ARTIE

I hope so. That was thirty years ago. He's done other things. He's still a big name.

PHILIP

(condescendingly)
I'll bet he is.

MARILYN
You have a good part, Mr. Fishbein-?

ARTIE
I play a janitor who gets eaten by a zombie.
Its small, but its a good part.

MARILYN
That's very nice. Do you taste good?

She laughs loudly.

ARTIE
Would like to see some art deco? I have a
superb-

CUSTOMER
The truth is, Mr. Fishbein, the reason I
originally came in was to ask directions to
oasis waterpark-

ARTIE
I see.

2. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STUDIO- DAY.

This is a SET OF ZOMBIE MOVIE, located on a VERY
FAKE CARIBBEAN ISLAND. It is obviously some kind of
comedy. PEOPLE are laughing and joking on the set,
as ridiculous-looking ZOMBIES troop back and forth.
As Artie, who is carrying a fiddle, approaches the
area where they are shooting the actors, he passes
by the LIGHTING ASSISTANT.

LIGHTING ASSISTANT
Good morning, Bruno. You're a trifle late,
Bruno.

ARTIE
My name is Arthur. You can call me Artie.

LIGHTING ASSISTANT
You look exactly like Bruno Poindexter.

ARTIE
I do not. I just look a little bit like
him.

LIGHTING ASSISTANT

OK, Artie, go break a leg now if the director don't break it for you.

Lighting Assistant guffaws as Artie continues to stroll towards the area where the actors are being filmed.

3. INT. MASTER MOVIE SET- DAY.

It's a tropical party scene, with DANCERS and JUGGLERS and A BIG BIRTHDAY CAKE in the middle of a BANQUET TABLE.

DIRECTOR

Artie, where were you ten minutes ago?

ARTIE

I was playing my violin.

DIRECTOR

You were supposed to be on the set, dummy. You know, for your big three minute walk-on.

ARTIE

I was listening to the piano music. You know when the zombie comes out of the cake box.

DIRECTOR

Yeah, it's supposed to be a joke.

ARTIE

Well, I thought I could do better with my fiddle.

DIRECTOR

Look, Artie, you see those guys near the camera- some of them get paid over \$30 an hour. Even two minutes costs me my ass.

A tall, handsome, somewhat older actor, RICHARD CARUS, hearing the conversation, walks over.

CARUS

Come on, Chuck. I've known artie for twenty years. He was in the planet of the apes. He's got good ideas. Listen to his fiddle-

DIRECTOR

It's your show, Richard. Definitely your show. Well, Artie, if I had known you were in the Planet of the Apes- for Christ's sakes, Artie, by all means, let's stop shooting altogether. You go get your fiddle and-

ARTIE

I've got it right here- (PLAYS FIDDLE)

DIRECTOR

OK, OK. It's not bad. Should we hire him for special effects, Richard?

ARTIE

It's not necessary.

DIRECTOR

Well, thank you Artie for saving me another two thousand dollars. We can use it, but only if you don't go screwing up my shooting anymore? A compromise between a great veteran cameo actor and the little, unknown director that I am.

ARTIE

Of course.

DIRECTOR

Thank you, Artie. Now get on the damn set and do your goddamn walk-in.