

Lacking Edge

by

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INT. HALLWAY. EVENING

We open in the empty hallway of an old theatre.

We hear the distinct sound of a male's scream from the other side of one of the doors.

The door has an A4 sheet pasted onto it. It reads: "Audition in progress - External Trauma Part IV... A film by Elias Brevin"

INT. THEATRE. EVENING

We see ALEX (early 20s) on stage, smartly dressed, screaming in to midair. It appears as if he's miming a transformation scene.

The back of the theatre is empty, with the exception of one chair, in which sits ELIAS (40s to 50s). A laptop is positioned on the man's lap. On the screen there's a headshot of Alex with sparse notes.

Alex stops screaming. The man gives a few curt claps. Alex nods back in approval.

ELIAS
Good...

There's an awkward moments pause...

ALEX
(Slightly out of breath)
Do you want me to go through the transformation scene again?

Alex walks to the side of the stage to pick up his script. He flicks through the pages to a scene which has been marked with a pink post-it. His dialogue is highlighted. We see he has a few lines that only say "AAAARRGGHHHHHHHHH!"

ELIAS
No need. Tell me about your work?
I'm guessing you're new?

ALEX
Haha, not quite.

ELIAS
Do you... Have a portfolio?

ALEX
I do, but it's mainly television work-

Elias immediately starts googling Alex's name, finding his website. It is bright & colourful with various embarrassing stills of Alex on a childrens television show. Elias clicks an eye-catching video.

Through the laptop speakers, we hear an intro jingle followed by an epic voice over introducing "ALEX & BLUEY."

On stage, Alex's face drops. He stands awkwardly, patiently waiting for Elias to stop watching

On screen, we see a mouse puppet beside Alex as we cut through a highlight reel of antics Alex & Bluey have done. (Hitting balloons / getting slimed, etc.)

Elias stops the video, as Alex cringes in embarrassment. He changes tabs on his laptop, returning to his notes of Alex. He types an X next to his name.

INT. STUDIO. DAY

Alex arrives at the studio just before air-time, carrying a light backpack. The set is colourful, with a large desk and the words "ALEX & BLUEY" written in large wooden lettering behind him. Alex drops off his backpack behind the desk.

The set is full of life, with crew members frantically running about in the attempt to set up for broadcast.

Alex sits down on the edge of the studio and pulls out his script. He has written no notes beside a vague doodle and a couple of scribbles.

The producer walks in to his eyeline, startling Alex.

PRODUCER

Hey do you mind if I have a word?

ALEX

...Sure.

PRODUCER

You know the incident we had yesterday?

Alex looks confused.

PRODUCER

The ad-libbing! This is a live broadcast. We're running a tight ship here, Keith doesn't know how to respond to your nonsense! Can you not do that?

ALEX

I was just... Sure.

The producer hands him a big file of show notes.

PRODUCER

Stick to the script.

The producer promptly attends to the rest of the crew.

BLOKE WITH CLIPBOARD(O.S)

Sixty seconds!

Alex reluctantly trudges over to the desk.

As he approaches he notices the 'A' of ALEX has skewed on it's axis. He briefly examines it, nudges it back upright and continues to the desk. He sits down.

Alex looks under the desk to see a hulking man trapped under the desk. He a sock puppet-mouse.

ALEX
Alright Keith?

CUT TO WIDE:

FLOOR MANAGER (O.S)
We are live in 10, 9-

As the countdown begins, he looks over to the producer who gives him a pseudo-enthusiastic thumbs up. Alex looks away in mild annoyance.

As the count reaches zero, Alex takes a quick breath and shifts his expression to a fake smile.

FLOOR MANAGER (O.S)(CONT'D)
3, 2, 1, action!

Fade in after a show. Alex is looking intently at BLury the mouse. He's painting something.

ALEX
What are you painting there Bluey?

BLUEY
I'm painting a portrait of you
Alex...

ALEX
Aw that's very nice of you Bluey-

Bluey quickly spins the canvas around. The painting is of a stick figure.

ALEX
That doesn't look like me at ALL!

Alex throws up his arms in exaggerated anger. He nudges the loose 'A' sign and it falls to the ground with a crash.

We hear an audible shout of pain as the puppeteer of Bluey slowly emerges from the table. As his head rises, he smacks it off the top of the table, causing a carton of liquid to fall over.

Alex stands up and moves over to the spillage.

ALEX
Next Program, Next Program-

Alex slips on the liquid and lands on his back.

As the crew begin to rush over, we abruptly cut to the intro of children's program.

INT. ALEX'S HOME. NIGHT.

Alex sits at his desk, behind him are a couple of framed Elias Brevin posters. He is scrolling through his emails, constantly refreshing the page.

He gives up and begins to write a new message, addressing it to Elias. He types into the title box "Verdict on audition?"

His phone vibrates. He picks it up quickly, but it was only a Twitter mention. He returns to his email.

His phone vibrates again, but now with more consistency. Alex ignores it at first before reluctantly seeing what people want from him. His mentions are now in the fifties.

He taps on his phone which brings him to a clip from the accident. He looks at the view count: 900,000 views. He sees one of the top comments: "This is just an act"

Alex looks back at his email draft, then back at the view count. He refreshes to see the number's increased.

Alex deletes his email draft. He has an idea.

INT. STUDIO. DAY

Alex hurriedly walks in to studio, his backpack notably heavier. He drops it behind the desk, landing beside a box of building materials. Alex starts to empty the bag's contents.

CUT TO WIDE:

FLOOR MANAGER (O.S)

Two Minutes!

The producer quickly approaches Alex's desk. Greeting him with a wry smile

PRODUCER

Hey, I know we had a rough show the other day, but don't let it get you down. It wasn't anything anyone could've predicted.

ALEX

Ah don't worry, I've put it behind me, today'll be a show like any other.

PRODUCER

You alright down there Keith.

The puppeteer grunts, He is bandaged up, looking like Mr Bump. The producer starts to leave.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
 Careful with your hands.

FLOOR MANAGER(O.S)
 We are live in 10, 9-

The producer hurries off set and the countdown reaches zero. The titles roll. The camera swoops in to Alex's face, he is behind the desk alone.

ALEX
 Hello everyone, this is meant to be the Alex & Bluey show, but it appears that my co-star is running late.

We cut to a wide where we see Bluey chug into frame, in a badly constructed model train. He is wearing a conductor hat.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Bluey! You're a genius, you've reminded me of todays pain related competition! Pause for effect.

We cut to the Floor Manager off camera, holding cue-cards we see that Alex has misread them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Today's competition we are going to be making model trains and the corporate tycoons who privatised the railway pause for effect...Stay teach you exactly what to do.

BLUEY
 Hey Alex!

ALEX
 Yes, my fictional friend

BLUEY
 Do YOU know what time it is?

ALEX
 How's your wife Bluey?

Alex looks underneath the table. The puppeteer glares at Alex.

BLUEY
 -It's time to read all the mail that was sent in by all the lovely girls and b-

ALEX

I talked to her recently, she misses you, you can't just shirk your personal responsibilities, you need to be a man, or a mouse.

BLUEY

Alex, you... Can't keep the boys and girls waiting, open the mail!

ALEX

Oh sorry Bluey! I just had a mix of priorities there. You need to sort your out.

Alex reaches under the desk to bring out a sack full of letters, he pours them on to the table. And randomly picks one up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

This one is from Jerry aged ten. He asks: how many tigers would you need to fill The Isle of Wight?

A graphic is put on the screen with the letter's text.

ALEX

Well, its good to see you covering the big issues here, Jerry. What an excellent question...

Alex aggressively throws the letter behind him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

At least 5.

Alex goes for another letter.

ALEX

Oh this one's from Bluey's Son, he says Where did you go? Why did you leave?

Another graphic comes up on screen but the letter's text is completely different to what Alex is saying.

Alex turns toward the sock puppet.

ALEX

What do you have to say for yourself Bluey?

Bluey doesn't respond.

We smash cut to the opening title of a kids show.

Alex turns to a monitor to see that he's no longer being filmed. He looks over to the control room window and notices the producer is no longer there.

The crew is quiet. An ominous silence hangs over the set.

Alex stands up and positions himself at the edge of the desk. He braces himself.

The studio door slams opens and the producer enters, striding towards Alex with violent tendency.

PRODUCER

What are you doing?

ALEX

What do you mean?

PRODUCER

Alex. If you keep going on this road, you're jobs on the line, as well as mine... And Keith's

Keith pokes his bandaged head out from under the desk.

Alex gives the producer a distant stare.

ALEX

MmmHmm

PRODUCER

You have a responsibility to me and the crew. And if you can't manage that, at least think of your reputation.

Alex and the Producer turn their backs on each other. A clock in the background displays 20 minutes until broadcast Alex sits down at the desk.

FLOOR MANAGER (O.S)

Guys, we're back on in 30 seconds, get back in position.

Alex looks up to see the clock on 00:29

The VT ends and we fade back in to the studio.

ALEX

Before we leave your screens, we are finally going to be showing you how to make these model trains for tomorrow, so listen in very closely, follow the rules exactly, creativity isn't welcome here...firstly

Alex pulls out a tray with a bunch of card and milk cartons. He begins to build.

INT. CONTROL ROOM. DAY

We see the producer staring avidly at the studio monitor.

ALEX (O.S)

And then take the flaps and glue
the tabs to the side of the
train... Then all you need is one
of these...

We see on the monitor, Alex reach under the desk to pick up
a four-pack of beer cans, and slams it on the table.
Followed quickly by a plane saw.

The producer's face falls. Cold sweat.

INT. STUDIO. DAY

ALEX (CONT'D)

So all you need to do, is rumage
around your cupboards, or sneak in
to your dad's stash and find a can
like this.

Alex opens it and pours the contents on the floor.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Then all you need is a saw from
your garage. No one will mind you
borrowing it. Then just cut the can
in to four equal chunks.

Alex powers up the saw, to an eruptive noise and starts
hacking at the can.

The can splits in half and crashes to the floor.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Then once youve done that, go in to
the interior of the train and stick
these reinforcements on the side.

Alex glues the can to the train's interior, he slightly
whices as he does so. His hands emerge, with a couple of
bleeding cuts.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And there you have it, the most
wasteful use of anyones time...
Especially mine. This isnt art.
This is shit. I'm an artist, and a
great one.

Alex climbs over the desk and starts to walk towards the
camera, out of the studio's light.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Im stuck here because people like
Elias Brevin think I'm not good
enough! Who are you to decide? I'm
better than... this

Alex gestures at the childish looking set. And starts walking back.

ALEX (CONT'D)

This isn't what life is like! I
have been at this for five years.
And do I have anything to be proud
of? This job is a prison.

Alex violently grabs Bluey the mouse and reveals the puppeteer's hand underneath. He raises it just out of reach from the hand, which keeps trying to grab it back. Alex pauses.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Listen up kids, all of this, is a
fucking lie.

Alex catches the glimpse of a monitor in the corner of his eye. It is showing coloured bars. He raises the microphone to his mouth.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Did that go out?

Alex looks over to the control room, the producer shakes his head. Alex starts to remove his microphone. The monitors go black and the lights turn off.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. CONTROL ROOM. DAY

PRODUCER

What have you done?

ALEX

Done what?

The producer simply stares at Alex in disbelief.

ALEX

Just telling the truth.

PRODUCER

What truth? This is a childrens
show...
Going viral has got to your head,
hasn't it?

ALEX

Uh, no I-

PRODUCER

It did. And you decided to play it
up to the cameras.

Alex is annoyed that the producer found his act so
predictable.

ALEX

That wasn't what-

PRODUCER

(Blunt)

We're done... And for what?

ALEX

I'm just sick of doing the same
shit over and over. I deserve more!

PRODUCER

You deserve nothing!!

Silence.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)

I'm going to hand in my
resignation. I suggest you do the
same. You owe everyone that much.

The producer and Alex looks in to the studio. It's empty.

INT. ALEX'S HOME. NIGHT.

Alex is sat on his sofa, with another Brevin film in the
background. Alex is watching back a clip of todays show on a
twitter thread. The view count is significantly lower than
before.

Alex sends the clip, from his phone, to Elias. "My
masterpiece"

He sends them off and starts to watch the rest of the
violent film on his television. His phone buzzes, Alex
immediately reacts just to find out it is a useless
notification. He puts it down. Waiting for a response.