

IF I WERE YOU

by

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FADE IN:

INT. KGEL TV STATION, STUDIO - DAY

A live ventriloquist act: DAISY, 50, operates 'TRIPPY THE WALLABY', who looks nearly as old. They perform for a couple dozen children.

TRIPPY

...and I ran and I ran and all the other animals called out 'Wait, Trippy! Wait for us!' but I didn't stop because I was going to be the first to rescue the princess and then....

DAISY

Oh no! Did something happen, Trippy? What do you think happened, children?

(silence)

Yes, I'll bet that's right! Did you fall over, Mr Trippy?

TRIPPY

Yes.

DAISY

You fell over your big trippy feet?

TRIPPY

Yes.

DAISY

And did you rescue the princess?

TRIPPY

No.

DAISY

Oh dear! Trippy fell over again and didn't rescue the princess. Children, what can we do to cheer him up?

(silence)

Yes, what a good idea! Let's all sing Mr Trippy's own special song!

Daisy and the children sing 'Trippy the Wallaby'. The singing continues in the background as we CUT TO:

INT. KGEL TV STATION, CONTROL ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Station owner ALAN J. ALLEN JNR, (29, loafers, slacks, flowery shirt) curls his lip at the music. Management exec LARRY WYE (30s, snappy business suit) hovers obsequiously.

ALAN

This show's been running for twenty-three years.

LARRY

Twenty-two years -- Um, twenty-three years, yes, that's right, sir.

ALAN

You hear this song? I was six when my father wrote it.

LARRY

Six, sir, yes.

ALAN

Six-and-a-half.

LARRY

Six-and-a-half, that's right.

ALAN

Nearly seven.

LARRY

Practically seven, to all intents and purposes.

ALAN

He wrote it to piss me off.

LARRY

He left you all the rights in his will, sir. Master recording rights in perpetuity, copyright, performance rights, licensing...

ALAN

You think people would pay money to hear this song? I'd pay money not to hear this song. I've decided to cancel this show.

LARRY

Well, that's a great idea, sir, but this is the only show that actually brings in a net profit.

ALAN

Explain that part to me again  
would you?

LARRY

Except for the community access  
programming, all our other shows  
are syndicated, which, um, we have  
to do that or else we wouldn't  
have any audience at all. But  
unfortunately the advertising  
revenues are exactly cancelled out  
by overheads and other expenses.  
Whereas this show costs us almost  
nothing to produce...

ALAN

You don't say.

LARRY

...plus there's a small but not  
insignificant cash flow from the  
parents who use it as a babysitting  
service, and the ad execs from the  
toy stores and junk food outlets  
love it because it targets a key  
demographic.

ALAN

Of course they love it. This crap  
makes their crap look good!

A hot young miniskirted SECRETARY enters. She gives Alan a  
black jacket and black clip-on tie. He puts them on.

ALAN (CONT)

Screw this. I'm in charge here  
now, and I say pull the plug.

(ogles the secretary)

It's time we targeted a new  
demographic. Larry, my father's  
gone, God rest his soul, and I've  
respected his dying wishes for  
long enough. It's been, what?

(checks his watch)

Nearly twelve hours. We have to  
move on. You coming to the funeral?

LARRY

Of course....

Larry realises that Alan was speaking to the secretary.

ALAN

Changes, Larry. New blood. That's  
what we need. This town must be

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT)

full of starving geniuses with fresh new TV ideas. Get out there and find them and bring them to my office. Nine-thirty tomorrow morning, I'll expect a line half-way round the block.

He slaps the secretary's butt and is about to leave with her, but then with a villainous sneer, he strides back to the control panel and flicks off the studio lights.

INT. KGEL-TV STATION, STUDIO - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Darkness engulfs Daisy, Trippy, and the children. The song ends in a CRASH. Angry YELLS. SOBS from the kiddies.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE, WAITING ROOM - DAY

The room is empty except for two interviewees: THADEUS OLIVER and VERNON WRIGHT, both forty-ish. In clean white shirts and nondescript dark suits, they exude innocence, optimism and goodwill.

The door to Alan's office opens a crack.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Alan peeks into the waiting room, then turns to Larry.

ALAN

What, that's it?! Just two of them?

LARRY

Yes, sir. That's all the applicants we could attract at such short notice.

ALAN

OK, fine. Send the first one in.

LARRY

They came together, sir.

Alan takes another peek.

ALAN

You sure these guys are ok? They look odd, like they're selling something.

LARRY

They are selling something, sir.

ALAN

Don't be a wise-ass, Larry. Just  
get them in here.