

'The Nearly Amazing Blackstone'

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EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

3:35 P.M.

The sun is shining, birds are singing and the spirit of apple pie is cooling on each and every windowsill. The only thing missing from this idyllic picture are a few good natured children frolicking about without a care in the world.

Ahh... wait, there they are, freakin' adorable. The kids dash into a bright, lemony-yellow house leaving behind echoes of laughter.

Several LEAVES dance upon the breeze soaking up the American sun.

INT. CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY - DAY

A panic filled set of eyes quickly takes in its surroundings. A dinghy gray glove and frayed black top-hat stand at the ready. A bead of sweat races down this anxiety stricken face.

He looks at his outstretched top-hat as if it contained a grenade.

This BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN is standing in front of a group of smiling children. His hand cautiously reaches into his top-hat. He manages a weak smile and blinks more sweat out of his eyes.

It's now or never. The children lean forward. The magician leans away from his hat and closes his eyes.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN
(pleading to himself)
Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit...

In one bold movement he thrusts his hand upward showing the amazing result of his trick to his captive audience of eight-year olds.

The children's eyes become as wide as saucers and smiles fall away. The BIRTHDAY GIRL screams, the rest of the group, knowing a good idea when they hear it, scream also.

LIVING ROOM

The extremely worried MOM of the Birthday Girl places an urgent phone call and sneaks glances at the main party room. The sound of children freaking out can still be heard. A bored secretary's voice answers the phone.

INT. MAGICIANS REFERRAL OFFICE - DAY

BORED SECRETARY
 Presto. You've reached the
 Magicians Referral Service. To
 Speak to a representative press 1.
 For...

Beep!

BORED SECRETARY
 (disappointed)
 Did you press 1?

BIRTHDAY MOM
 Yes, listen I have a bit of a
 problem.

BORED SECRETARY
 So...?

BIRTHDAY MOM
 Well, you sent over this guy and I
 don't think...

The children scream again in the background.

BIRTHDAY MOM
 ...he's qualified.

BORED SECRETARY
 Lady, you asked for a magician and
 ta-dah, now you've got one.

BIRTHDAY MOM
 That's debatable. Look, this is
 serious.

BORED SECRETARY
 It'll be fine. We have a screening
 process, it's all very...
 sciencey-like. You could mail in a
 complaint form, but that's not at
 all recommended...

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A wicked black muscle-car barrels down the highway. This beast of an automobile would look at home on a Sunday drive with the four horsemen of the apocalypse; instead its interior is occupied by three very dangerous bitches.

INT. MUSCLE CAR INTERIOR - DAY

A raven-haired beauty rides in the passengers seat. Wearing a set of earphones, she eavesdrops in on the phone conversation between the Birthday Mom and the Bored Secretary.

She listens to every nuance, like a predator listens to prey. Her hands glide over a laptop computer, quickly punching in a series of numbers. Her name is MYRA.

MYRA

Signal override in 3-2-1.

A brief burst of static is heard as Myra hijacks the telephone call.

BIRTHDAY MOM

(voice over Myra's headset)

Hello???

Myra's voice becomes instantly smooth and sweet.

MYRA

I'm sorry ma'am; I sincerely apologize for the mix-up. We'll take care of the problem right away. Would you mind giving me your address again?

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The black beast of a car makes a powerful u-turn in the middle of the road and roars off in the opposite direction.

INT. CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY - DAY

The Birthday Magician sits on the staircase calming his nerves by smoking a joint. The BIRTHDAY GIRL sits beside him, head in her hands, sobbing.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

For crying out loud, come on, I'm
sorry. Look, give me another
chance, please?

The Birthday Girl shakes her head vigorously, "No". The Birthday Magician fakes a smile and pulls a quarter out from her ear. The young girl swats it out of his hand and onto the floor, she resumes crying.

The Birthday Magician calms himself by cracking his neck (instead of hers) and quickly shifts his tactics.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

What would you like better? A pony
or a kitten?

Ah, this has got the Birthday Girl's attention. She looks up curious.

BIRTHDAY GIRL

(sniffling)

Pony.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

Alright well! Now we're talkin'.

The Birthday Magician jumps up. He hands the joint that he was smoking to a young boy in a party hat.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

Hold that for me, would ya?

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The growling, black muscle-car pulls up slowly to the lemony-yellow house that is hosting the birthday party. The brawny engine shuts off. Birds chirp away in the trees.

INT. CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY - DAY

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

Okay little ones, our Birthday Princess needs some cheering up and I really need a check from her mommy, so... let's all be real quiet and have a positive mental attitude and I will make a pony appear right before your very eyes!

The Birthday Magician looks more nervous than ever. The children look terrified. A young girl in the audience buries her face in her hands, unable to watch.

LIVING ROOM

The doorbell rings.

The Birthday Girl's Mom opens the front door and is staring at three hard-hitting, leather-clad women. Myra and her crew brush past the Mom.

The fact that they are carrying Japanese swords and a rope does not inspire confidence that they will resolve this issue peacefully.

BIRTHDAY MOM

Wait!

PARTY ROOM

The Birthday Magician stands with his hands held high. His face is a mask of perspiration as he concentrates on a pony.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

Pony, pony, pony...

Myra and her crew burst into the room, efficient as a S.W.A.T team, pulling a large canvas sack over the Birthday Magician's head. The children are dumbfounded. Myra delivers a walloping blow to the Birthday Magician's stomach.

The children scream.

One of the female thugs tries to calm the kiddies down as the unbridled violence continues.

FEMALE THUG

Hey, little guys, nothing to worry about, it's all part of the show!

The Birthday Magician wails as if he were being viciously assaulted and kidnapped... which in fact, he is. In the struggle they toss him across a table containing the cake and presents.

The kids scream again!

Still trapped in the sack the Birthday Magician charges up - blind, out of control, and covered in punch and icing. At this sight the children scatter and pandemonium ensues.

A pony runs by.

CREDITS - ANIMATED CREDITS ROLL SHOWING THREE BOLD WOMEN BREAKING INTO AN ANCIENT PYRAMID. THEY ARE ABLE TO FOIL SEVERAL COMPLICATED BOOBY-TRAPS. THE THREE GRAVE ROBBING WOMEN FLEE WITH A TINY GOLDEN COFFIN.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - MAGIC SHOW - NIGHT

7:51 P.M.

Stage Hands excitedly buzz backstage, preparing for a "Rock and Roll Magic" show.

Judging from the posters, the star of this show is a leather-clad magician, performing stupendous feats. The posters advertise "The Amazing Blackstone".

The figure on the posters is RANDALL BLACKSTONE, 30, he is indeed the star of the show... and he knows it.

BACKSTAGE HALLWAY

A steely-eyed hawk stares intensely at Randall Blackstone. Randall stares right back at the bird with a penetrating gaze. The predatory bird lunges forward savagely for his face.

Randall flinches backward, hard.

Randall takes a moment to smooth out his expensive leather jacket. He regroups and resumes trying to mesmerize the hawk. The huge bird strikes forward viciously, again. It is totally pissed off.

Randall flinches backward, even harder.

He turns to a young woman - his personal assistant, Penelope Granger. Penelope is the librarian-type who does everything a little too "by the book".

RANDALL
(pointing)
This bird-

The bird tries severing Randall's outstretched finger. He quickly puts his hand down.

RANDALL
This - is one really angry bird.

PENELOPE
That's the one you wanted sir.

RANDALL
No. The one I wanted was friendly.

The hawk screeches menacingly.

PENELOPE
The one you picked out had a hood
on it sir - it was this one.

RANDALL
A hood?

PENELOPE
Yes sir - to stop it from pecking
people's eyes out.

The dangerous animal lunges at Randall's head, he backs up a step.

RANDALL
That can't possibly be true.

The hawk opens its beak, ready for Randall to make another stupid move. Randall removes the hawk's leather face hood from his pocket and hands it to Penelope.

RANDALL
Get that back on him, would you?

The bird lunges at Penelope.

RANDALL
Walk with me.

Randall walks off. Penelope gladly drops the hood and follows.

RANDALL
Go on, I can see you're just dying
to give me more bad news.

PENELOPE
Well, besides our current financial
situation, the brand of hairspray
that you requested for the lions -
we can't find it.

RANDALL
"Can't" is a word for quitters
Penelope. Apparently you just
aren't trying hard enough.

PENELOPE
Sir, it doesn't exist.

RANDALL
The store was completely out?

PENELOPE
No, as in, it NEVER existed, - I'm
pretty sure that you made it up,
sir.

RANDALL
That doesn't sound at all like me.
Check again.

GUY WITH HEADSET
You're on in 5 minutes, Mr.
Blackstone.

INT. ABOVE THE AUDITORIUM - MAGIC SHOW - NIGHT

High up in the hidden rafters, looking over the crowd that is awaiting Randall Blackstone's magic show, sits a very capable looking woman. She is methodically piecing together a high-powered snipers rifle.

BACKSTAGE AREA

Randall and his assistant Penelope, continue on their walk to the main stage. They stop in front of two new posters that are awaiting Randall's approval.

Both posters are of the fantasy genre, they feature an overly heroic Randall, surrounded by colossal beasts.

Delighted, Penelope shifts into her geeky presentation mode.

PENELOPE
Giant Scorpion or Battle
Caterpillar?

Randall snatches Penelope's red marker from her hands. He repeatedly circles the crotch on one of the posters, disappointed with the artist's rendition of his "manliness".

RANDALL
You see that?

PENELOPE
Uh... No.

RANDALL
Then that's a problem.

Confused, Penelope steals a glance at Randall's actual crotch.

PENELOPE
(dumbfounded)
That was the original painting.

RANDALL
Not anymore.

ABOVE THE AUDITORIUM

The FEMALE ASSASSIN has completely assembled her weapon. She looks down at the stage below through the rifle's scope. She patiently waits for Randall's show to begin.

BACKSTAGE AREA

Randall and Penelope arrive in the wings of the main stage.

Randall Blackstone's big show is about to start.

PENELOPE
Sir, I don't quite know how to put this but... don't screw this up. It could put you right back on top and we could forget about that whole bankruptcy thing.

RANDALL
Penelope, you worry too much, look around, this is great. It's just like any other show, cameras or no cameras. Remember this Penelope - in life, as in magic, things are not always what they seem.

GUY WITH HEADSET
You're on, Mr. Blackstone.

Randall lifts up a GOLD KEY that hangs around his neck. The Key looks ancient and is embossed in the shape of a beautiful tree LEAF. Randall kisses it for good luck.

RANDALL
(to himself)
Don't screw this up, Randall.

Randall walks out onto the stage amidst huge applause.

ABOVE THE AUDITORIUM

The assassin smiles as she sees Randall walk on stage. She chambers a bullet into the rifle.

INT. MAIN STAGE - MAGIC SHOW - NIGHT

Well into his magic show, Randall has the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand. He is doing great.

ABOVE THE AUDITORIUM

Viewed through the rifle scope, the female assassin centers the cross-hairs directly on Randall's forehead as he prepares for his next illusion. Her breathing finds its rhythm and her finger tightens on the trigger.

Just another day at the office.

FEMALE ASSASSIN

Okay Magician, time to disappear.

She prepares to fire, but detects a presence next to her. A monstrous face looms into view, in full attack mode... but it is too late, the assassin pulls the trigger anyway.

BLACKNESS.

The distinctive crack of a rifle is heard followed by screams from the audience below.

INT. LARGE SUBTERRANEAN OCCULT CHAMBER - NIGHT

11:45 P.M.

Two women drag a heavy, limp body across the extensive chamber floor. With the canvas sack still pulled tightly over him, the Birthday Magician is dropped to the ground. His assailants give him a kick for good measure.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

(muffled)

Owwwww! You're hurting me!!!!

MYRA

Easy! Only glancing blows!

Myra emerges from the darkness. Her hands trace along the strange symbols carved into the archaic stone walls. Her huntress eyes are locked on her tuxedoed victim.

MYRA

Get him into the circle.

Her fellow abductors snap to it and forcefully push the Birthday Magician into a kneeling position at the center of a strange, mystical symbol.

One of the assailants unceremoniously pulls the bag off of the magician's head. He quickly takes in his surroundings and realizes that the shit he's in can get no deeper.

BIRTHDAY MAGICIAN

Whoa! Hey! Ladies, if this is about that rabbit thing, I'm sorry!

Myra gulps down a vial of black liquid, a potion of sorts. Her pupils dilate and begin to gently glow an unearthly green as she approaches her captive.

MYRA

Silence.

The Birthday Magician's head drops down and his eyes roll backward. A trance overtakes him.

MYRA

Bring forth the evil one.

A cloaked being produces a miniature coffin-shaped box emblazoned with a golden LEAF and a grinning skull. The dark figure places it in Myra's hands.

Myra raises the golden coffin above her head. Her eyes glow more intensely.

MYRA

The time has come for evil to reawaken. Unlocked and unleashed into this world once again. This golden prison can no longer bind you.

She lets go of the box and lowers her hands, yet the small gold coffin remains suspended in mid-air. Myra's eyes widen with a mix of fear and awe as the relic takes on a life of its own.

The box floats slowly towards the Birthday Magician.

MYRA

Magic flows through the body and blood of this host offering. Come nourish your dark spirit, Ancient One. This vessel is yours to take.

A sickly green illumination fills the room. Cold wind blows in from an unseen place. The kidnappers and cloaked figure exchange nervous glances, as you do in these situations.

The box begins to generate heat, glowing to a white-hot radiance.

Floating forward still the small coffin burns itself onto the chest of the bound magician.

The Magician's eyes open and he screams (who wouldn't?). The wind suddenly stops and the Magician falls limply to the ground.

The glow fades from the small golden box, yet it still sizzles lightly, burned into his chest.

The earth begins to tremble and a low grumble issues from the Magician's body on the floor; building into a growl, the body gets to its feet.

DRAY is reborn!

Dray stands up proudly and releases a shout of freedom.

DRAY

Rrrrrrrraaaaaaaarrrrrrrggggghhhh!

A shock wave explodes from this maniac, sending everyone off their feet.

The earth stops shaking and the villains collect themselves, not a one taking an eye off the new creature before them.

Dray's evil is as pure as rain.

Taking stock of his new body, Dray begins to pat himself down gently, almost nervously, as though he were looking for a lighter.

He makes his way down to his crotch, and slowly pulls open his pants, one eye squinting with another shut, afraid of what he will find.

DRAY

Hmmm... Ok, ok! Not bad, not bad at all. We're good to go!

He seems overly proud to have discovered that he owns a penis. Myra boldly approaches him.

MYRA
Welcome back, Dray.

Noticing Myra's beauty, Dray quickly straightens himself out, pushes back his hair. He takes a looong look at her skintight leathers and ample cleavage.

DRAY
Well, hello there!
(to the others)
They sure don't make virgin offerings like they used to, huh? I like.

MYRA
(disgusted)
Ugh.

DRAY
Wait, you haven't known the pleasures of a man have you? That would ruin it for me.

Myra's disgust starts simmering into anger.

DRAY
Ahh, who am I kidding? I haven't had some in so long that I don't even care. Tell ya' what, I'm in a good mood so it's your choice, you can play the husband or the wife.

Myra glances to her cohorts, who can only shrug in reply.

INT. RANDALL'S MODERN BACHELOR PAD - MORNING

8:00 A.M.

A telephone answering machine sits on magician Randall Blackstone's desk screening an incoming call.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(A Man's Voice)
Good Morning Mr. Blackstone, my name is William Barnett of Barnett and Lampenstein's Law Firm. Boy, do we have a lot to talk about. That was quite a performance that you put on last night. I'm looking here at a list of my new clients... all 22 of them. They are filing several class action lawsuits against you
(MORE)

ANSWERING MACHINE (cont'd)
and pretty much everyone you know,
Mr. Blackstone, including your
parents. Frankly, we are in
uncharted waters here. Give me a
call as soon as possible. Oh, and
have a nice day.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(Beep!)
You have 93 unheard messages.

Randall sits in his bathrobe looking completely crushed and defeated.

RANDALL
(to Penelope)
Ruined! I'm ruined!! Lawyers, those
blood sucking vampires! The news
said that last night's show was the
worst entertainment disaster in
recorded history! They are showing
sound bytes and interviewing
witnesses, the traitors! This is
bad, Penelope.

Penelope, who arrived at Randall's house just minutes before, seems very fidgety and is trying to prod Randall to get up and get his ass in gear.

PENELOPE
I know that it looks bad now, but
things could be worse, sir.

Penelope eases back the curtain on the front door slightly and peeks out. She is a nervous ball of energy.

PENELOPE
Let's just get out of here. Doesn't
that sound like fun? We'll rent a
couple of cabins down by the
beach...

RANDALL
Beach? The closest beach is 300
miles from here.

PENELOPE
Exactly, that's perfect, what a
great idea, sir! The beach. I love
it.

RANDALL

What?

PENELOPE

Yeah, I can sort through all of this legal mumbo-jumbo for you, and you can... uhh... you can start writing that great book about yourself that you've always wanted. I can't wait to read it!

RANDALL

A book! No one's gonna' buy a book about me now! My career is over, my magic is over, my life is over! The sad thing is that I don't even know what happened, Penelope. One minute I was on stage being awesome, as usual, and the next thing I knew, there were screams, and the 'Wheel of Death' was off its axis and really living up to its name.

Penelope is hurriedly gathering up Randall's stuff and shoving it into a duffel bag.

PENELOPE

Yeah, that's nice sir... come on, let's go. Here, I'll help you pack!

RANDALL

What's gotten into you? I'm not going anywhere. Aren't you listening? It was utter mayhem. Fire, destruction, and worse! I don't even want to know how the lions got loose!

PENELOPE

(still packing furiously)
 Yep, I've never seen old ladies run quite so fast.

RANDALL

Not fast enough! Plus, I told you that bird was nothing but trouble.

PENELOPE

Come on, sir. Up, up, up! We've got a long drive ahead; we'll talk about it on the way.

RANDALL
On the way where?

PENELOPE
The beach, remember? It was your idea.

RANDALL
The beach! Are you crazy! I'm not going to the stupid beach. I'm not going anywhere! Don't you have some work to do or something? Go out and rent some movies for me... something depressing.

With Herculean effort Randall peels himself up off the sofa. He is wearing a frumpy bathrobe and a lone black sock that is barely still on. He walks off headed to the bathroom.

RANDALL
(louder - walking away)
Should I take up a drug habit or become an alcoholic? I haven't decided yet. It could go either way.

PENELOPE
(from the living room)
Once we get out of state we can start you off slowly with cigarettes and then work you right up to self-mutilation sir, but we need to get moving! Grab your stuff from the bathroom and I will meet you out front with the car.

Inside the bathroom Randall picks up his toothbrush and puts it directly in his mouth without toothpaste. He begins brushing. Aggravated with Penelope's constant nagging, Randall puts down his coffee cup.

RANDALL
You know Penelope, you are a royal pain in the ass sometimes. Take "right now" for example.

Penelope peeks out of the front window again. A black, muscle-car pulls up across the street. This is bad.

PENELOPE
(shouting)
Okay, time to go! Let's move it, Blackstone!

RANDALL

(off-screen)

You see. This is exactly what I mean. You're being crazy. Hold your horses little lady. You just expect...

Penelope kicks open the bathroom door sending small splinters flying. Randall is completely shocked. He is sitting on the toilet holding his coffee mug and doing god knows what else.

The toothbrush falls from his slackened jaw into the toilet bowl below... yet there are two distinct plops.

RANDALL

(child-like)

I... I don't understand.

PENELOPE

(animal-like)

Well, let me understand it for you!
We're leaving!!

RANDALL'S LIVING ROOM

The lock on Randall's front door clicks sharply. The door slowly swings open.

BATHROOM HALLWAY

Penelope comes hauling-ass out of the bathroom with Randall in tow. They make it as far as the living room, only to come face-to-face with the barrel of a very large shotgun.

FREEZE FRAME: Female assassin - ready to shoot.

FREEZE FRAME: Penelope surprised.

FREEZE FRAME: Randall, hands over his face, waiting to be blasted away.

RANDALL

(Voice Over)

This was not a good morning for me. As a matter of fact the past 24 hours have been complete shit. What a way for it to end. I'm sure that, to you, the whole "Rock Star Magician" thing seems full of glamour and glitz. Okay, I'll

(MORE)

RANDALL (cont'd)
 admit, there is a bit of glamour
 and tons of glitz, but it isn't as
 great as it seems. In truth, I am a
 poser, a hack, a wanna-be.

Various scenes of Randall feeling out of place with being a
 "star".

RANDALL
 (Voice Over)
 My Grandfather was a magician... I
 mean a REAL magician. World Class,
 Grade A, Top-Notch and also a great
 guy. I am none of those things. All
 that I have accomplished in my life
 is to cheapen the Blackstone name
 and even magic in general. All
 spectacle and no substance, that is
 me to a tee.

Pictures of crappy magic products with Randall's name and
 image on it.

RANDALL
 (Voice Over)
 My career had been on a decline for
 quite a while now, and last night
 the bottom fell completely out. I
 have no real friends, and no
 real-life skills. I never thought
 that I would need them. Take women
 for example...

FLASHBACK: INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Riding in the back of his limousine, Randall shouts out of
 the window to a beautiful woman walking on the street.

RANDALL
 Rhonda, you makin' me hurt baby!

As he is shouting, the tinted window rolls up, pinning his
 neck to the roof. While choking, Randall doesn't realize
 that his hand is resting on the electric window button.

RANDALL
 (Voice Over)
 Plus, I was kinda' out of touch
 with reality...

FLASHBACK: EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

A police officer shines a flashlight directly at Randall and his intoxicated lady-friend.

POLICE OFFICER
 Son, have y'all taken any illegal
 substances tonight?

Both Randall and the girl have suspiciously large amounts of white powder around their noses.

RANDALL
 Absolutely not, Officer.

Randall reassuringly puts his hand on the cop's shoulder, leaving a big white hand print on the dark uniform.

RANDALL
 (Voice Over)
 Even my magic was a constant uphill
 battle...

FLASHBACK: INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Randall stares intensely at an unlit candle. He flicks his wrist magically to light it. Nothing happens. He tries again... still nothing.

In back of Randall a curtain begins burning brightly. He never notices the giant inferno behind him.

RANDALL
 (Voice Over)
 I guess this is the kind of stuff
 that people think about before they
 die. Wow, so this is my life
 flashing before my eyes? That's
 depressing. As the final seconds of
 my crappy life tick away, the thing
 that truly saddens me is Penelope.
 That poor helpless girl is even
 more unprepared for this than I am.

FREEZE FRAME: Female assassin - ready to shoot.

Without fear or hesitation, Penelope reaches out and grabs the barrel of the shotgun forcing the weapon backward into her attacker's face.

The would-be assassin falls to the ground like a Caucasian boxer.