

Startups: Episode 1

By

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COLD OPEN

EXT. BUSINESS START BLDG. DAY

A man in his late twenties gets out of his car, walks to the front door of a large unmarked building, and pulls the handle. It's locked. Embarrassed, he looks around for people, checks his watch, and gets back in his car. He's early and is going to have to wait. This is BROWN SWEATER.

EXT. APARTMENT. DAY

A young woman in her early twenties, dressed in crafty hipster chic, locks her apartment door behind her. She hesitates, anxious; suddenly changing her mind, she unlocks the door and goes back inside, mission aborted. Minutes later, she emerges cautiously. This is FLOWER PURSE.

INT. OFFICE FOYER. DAY

A man in his mid-thirties leaves his office. He doesn't seem to fit the professional atmosphere with his leather pants, bolo tie and fu manchú. Bluetooth in one ear, iPad and briefcase in hand, he speaks with a secretary briefly before leaving. This is LEATHER PANTS.

EXT. RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTOR. DAY

A put-together saleswoman in her late thirties waves goodbye to her co-workers for the day. She gets into her car. As she checks herself in the mirror her smile fades, leaving an expression of fear - the cracks are beginning to show. (She starts the car and an ad jumps on over the radio:

"Do you have a \$10 000 idea? Join BusinessStart...)

She chugs a Redbull and lights a cigarette. This is SHOULDERPADS.

INT. MATRONLY SUBURBAN HOUSE. DAY

A young man in his early twenties, dressed like Pauly D and wearing large headphones around his neck, tries unsuccessfully to dodge his encouraging mother before leaving home. He nods and rolls his eyes as she kisses him on the forehead. This is HEADPHONES.

EXT. BUS STOP. DAY

Flower Purse stands at the bus stop. Anxious, she pulls up an email on her phone. We can see the subject line of the email:

"Join BusinessStart and compete for a \$10 000 investment."

At the same time, Leather Pants, driving his airbrushed van, pulls up before her in the intersection, eating his dinner. (We can hear the same radio ad for BusinessStart from Shoulderpads' car:

"...Prepare your business and compete for a \$10 000 investment.")

Despite not knowing Flower Purse, he shouts an indecipherable greeting through a mouthful of sandwich - he likes the large flowered bag she's carrying.

Message not received. Flower Purse shrinks away in fear.

INT. CAR. DAY

Stopped at a red light, Shoulderpads smokes and speaks aloud with a motivational CD. She doesn't notice Headphones standing on the corner, preoccupied with folding and unfolding his headphone cables.

EXT. BUSINESS START BLDG. DAY

Still waiting for others to arrive, Brown Sweater notices a man in his forties exit the building and put out a sandwich board. This is THE FACILITATOR. Brown Sweater slouches down in his seat, not wanting to be outed for arriving too early.

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

The facilitator flips on the lights in the classroom and sits down at his desk. He sighs, and puts his head down on his folded arms.

MAIN CREDITS

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

Fade up on classroom, the Facilitator slowly lifts his head from his arms. Brown Sweater smiles nervously at him from a desk.

FACILIIATOR
You're a go-getter.

BROWN SWEATER
Huh? (Not sure how to proceed)

FACILIIATOR
First in the class and all. (He then checks his watch.)

BROWN SWEATER
(Embarrassed) Oh. Yeah...I'm just nervous. I waited outside for a while, and people came in, but they must be in the hall. (A little bolder) I'm excited about this class though. I really think it's going to help-

The Facilitator chooses to ignore his budding protege by craning his neck to look for students out the doorway. Brown Sweater goes back to being nervous.

More than a dozen people stream into the room. It's like the first day of school.

On the wall, there is poster for the group, it reads:

"Do you have a \$10 000 idea? Join BusinessStart; Prepare your business and compete for a \$10 000 investment."

The room falls silent as the Facilitator addresses the class. Brown Sweater gives him an approving nod and smile.

FACILITATOR
(dripping with disdain)
Good morning, my name is Dave and I am your small business facilitator for the eight weeks of this class.

The group stares at him in silence. Brown Sweater surveys the room nervously.

FACILITATOR
I'm sure you're all very excited about your blossoming...

He starts pointing at people, and guessing their businesses.

(CONTINUED)

FACILITATOR
...gluten-free cupcake bakeries, or
band poster design agencies...

Brown Sweater can see where The Facilitator is getting these ideas, albeit stereotypically. But then is struck by fear of being the next one singled out. He slides down in his seat.

In the back of the class, a douchey student in his twenties raises his hand.

FACILIATOR
(annoyed)
What's your question, Bottle
Service Vodka Bar?

KYLE
...wow, how did you know that? (his
hand still in the air, now pointing
at the Facilitator questioningly)

FACILITATOR
It's not my first day, chappy.
What's your question?

KYLE
When do we get the \$10 000?

The facilitator sighs. He should never have expected anything different.

FACILITATOR
(exasperated)
I do this with you dummies every
two months. Some hotshot thinks he
shows up here, hand out, and gets a
free ride. Well you know what,
popped collar? Owning your own
business is not a free ride. It is
an endless dehumanizing parade of
thankless servitude, financial
insecurity and THEN, you get a bad
yelp review because somebody didn't
like your moustache.

Leather Pants looks worried.

FACILITATOR
It is a HARD ROAD, so if you aren't
here for passion, and for love,
then you can get out right now.

The class stares at him in silence.

(CONTINUED)

FACILITATOR

(sighs, getting back on track)
 ...yes, at the end this course, you will have the opportunity to pitch to investors who may choose to give you ten thousand dollars. But today, we're starting at square one. You will be doing a 15 second elevator pitch to sell me your business concept. I AM CONFIDENT I WILL BE WOWED. Break into groups of 5, the best group wins tickets to tonight's BusinessStart networking event.

The class looks around awkwardly. No one wants to start.

FACILITATOR

Fine, I'll do it.

He uses no names, but instead calls people by distinguishing features or accessories.

FACILITATOR

(making groups)
 Shoulder pads, Leather Pants, Flower Purse, Headphones, Brown Sweater - you're a group. Go to the mezzanine. Goatee, Big Glasses, Old Guy, Mexican Stallone and 80s Bon Jovi, you're a group.

EXT. MEZZANINE. DAY

The five group mates stare at each other awkwardly and in silence.

Brown Sweater wants to jump in, but is paralyzed by insecurity.

Flower Purse is trying her best to be invisible.

Headphones sizes up his teammates.

After waiting a beat, both Shoulder pads and Leather Pants decide to jump in at the same moment.

SHOULDERPADS

(in unison with Leather Pants)
 I am so nervous! Don't you just hate pitching?

(CONTINUED)

LEATHER PANTS
(in unison with ShoulderPads)
Join me in a world of digital
pleasure.

BROWN SWEATER AND SHOULDERPADS
(IN UNISON)
What?

Leather Pants speaks in a gruff, Batman monotone that, like his appearance, doesn't reflect his demeanor.

LEATHER PANTS
It's my pitch. I've been working on it quite a bit. Actually, I'm excellent at elevator pitches. I've read several books on pitching and I practice all the time. I'm happy to go first if you want.

SHOULDERPADS
Sure, that sounds great. But maybe first, let's introduce ourselves? (She appears confident, but is scared to make the wrong move.)

LEATHER PANTS
That is a great idea.

Shoulderpads turns her attention to Flower Purse.

SHOULDERPADS
So what's your business?

LEATHER PANTS
Well, currently I'm in leather importing...

SHOULDERPADS
(interrupting him)
Oh sorry, we're starting on this side of the circle. I was talking to...

She motions to Flower Purse, who says nothing.

SHOULDERPADS
Did you make that bag? Is that your business?

Flower Purse sits mute with terror. Leather Pants tries to make her comfortable.

(CONTINUED)

LEATHER PANTS

It's great. I bet it would do
really well on Etsy.

FLOWER PURSE

(quietly, surprised)

Thank you.

Headphones, who has grown annoyed with the chitchat,
interrupts.

HEADPHONES

Hey! Enough with feelings time. We
need to have good pitches, because
we want to go to that networking
event.

SHOULDERPADS

Now that's, that's a winner's
attitude! Yeah. We need this!
Right?! (so desperate to have this
plan work out)

HEADPHONES

No, you don't get it! We have to go
because the investors will be
there. And I don't know about you
chumps, but I'm here for the ten
grand.

BROWN SWEATER

How do you know they'll there?

HEADPHONES

I've taken this class four times.
It's always the same drill. The
buttholes I was with last time sank
me, but this time I'm here to win.
So you better have good businesses.

Swept up in Headphones' vigor, Leather Pants leans forward
and proclaims excitedly

LEATHER PANTS

I CREATE EROTIC RINGTONES!

HEADPHONES

Didn't you just say you import
leather?

LEATHER PANTS

That's my family's business. But
this is MY dream.

HEADPHONES

(unsure of how to receive
this)

Okay. I like the passion.

The facilitator emerges from the class.

FACILITATOR

Alright, geniuses, time to dazzle
me.

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

The room is silent.

FACILITATOR

(claps his hands)

Alright, let's go. Who's first?

No one volunteers.

FACILITATOR

What, I'm picking again? Alright,
let's see whatcha got, Leather
Pants.

INT. FRONT OF CLASSROOM - MONTAGE.

Quick cuts of students pitching their businesses:

LEATHER PANTS

Join me in a world of digital
pleasure. EROTIC. RINGTONES.

CUT TO

MEXICAN STALLONE

Exotic juice bar.

CUT TO

KYLE

Dark lights. Pumping vibes. Full
bottles. Sweaty bodies.

CUT TO

SHOULDERPADS

...and THAT's why the "Just Enough
Real Knowldge" sales system will be
sure to improve your bottom line.
(JERK)

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO

BIG GLASSES

(next to giant poster of baby
in a butcher's outfit)
It's like Anne Geddes, but instead
of flower pots and bee outfits,
they work the trades.

CUT TO

HEADPHONES

Don't you hate when you go out in
the cold and your headphone cables
freeze?

KYLE

no

HEADPHONES

So do I. That's why I invented
these - HOT CABLES. They'll always
stay loose.

CUT TO

Flower Purse stands terrified before the class, extending
the purse in front of her face.

FACILITATOR

Are you alright up there,
sweetheart?

Flower Purse nods.

INT. GROUP TABLE. DAY.

Flower Purse is still in front of the room. Back at the
table, Headphones is panicking.

HEADPHONES

We are LOSING this, you guys. We
can't let them beat us. You! What
do you do again?

BROWN SWEATER

...I make sandwiches.

HEADPHONES

What? My MOM makes sandwiches. What
does that mean? What's your
business?

(CONTINUED)

BROWN SWEATER

(flustered)

A sandwich truck. A gourmet sandwich truck.

HEADPHONES

Ugh...I don't know if there's time between here and the front of the room for you to change your business, but you really need to bring it.

We can see the Facilitator lead a traumatized Flower Purse back to her seat during this discussion. She continues to hold her purse in front of her at her desk. The Facilitator then calls on Brown Sweater.

FACILITATOR

Brown Sweater, look sharp.

Brown Sweater moves to the front of the room to give his pitch.

BROWN SWEATER

(nervous, clears throat)

Uh, hello. My, uh, business is, uh, a gourmet sandwich truck called 'Sal's'. When I was a kid, my mom...err, anyway... I wound up living with my grandparents - they owned a deli. They were the best! (his confidence starts to build) And really passionate about the importance of connecting with their customers and real, local food. They closed the deli back in 2005; they were just too old to keep running it...and I was at university. But now, I want to do something for them. Bring back their idea. In food truck form. They both passed away last year, and Sal, that was my grandfather's name. So it's taking what they gave me and continuing their legacy. And I guess I feel like this is the time to do it, like this is my last chance to make something happen. I just want to-

(CONTINUED)

He is interrupted suddenly by loud sexual moaning from the back of the classroom - it is the erotic ringtone from Leather Pants' cell phone. He stands up, interrupting Brown Sweater's speech and walks out, motioning that he's on the phone.

FACILITATOR

(to Brown Sweater)

Good job, big guy. Have a seat.

to the class)Keep them silent and in your pants. Common courtesy, people. Anyway, I think we can all agree that SANDWICHES was the best of you dummies, so his group will be attending tonight's event.

Their group cheers; Brown Sweater beams. He has just become "SANDWICHES."

FACILIATOR

Now get out of here. I'll see you all next week for profits, assets and liabilities.

(answering the blank stares) Money!

They file out of the room.

FADE TO BLACK

TAG

INT. NETWORKING EVENT. EVENING.

A poster on the wall reads: Welcome to the Edmonton Business Association's Networking Event.

Shoulderpads is dressed to the nines, working the room.

Sandwiches, Headphones and Flower Purse stand at a table. The three watch Shoulderpads as she chats up an older, well-dressed businessman.

SANDWICHES

She's pretty good at this.

Shoulderpads lets out a big fake laugh.

(CONTINUED)

HEADPHONES

Of course she is. I'd be killing it if anyone here had headphones or earbuds.

The Facilitator walks over with a bottle of wine. He pours some in everyones glass, but most of it in his own.

FACILITATOR

Ah, don't worry about it. These things are for bottomfeeders anyway.

He clinks glasses with Sandwiches, who is still unsure what to make of their friendship? mentorship?

SANDWICHES

I thought the investors were supposed to be here.

FACILITATOR

(looking around)
They're supposed to be...

INT. ELEVATOR. EVENING.

Leather Pants is in a stopped elevator with four bewildered business people; these are THE INVESTORS. The emergency stop alarm rings.

LEATHER PANTS

Join me in a world of digital pleasure...

EXT. ELEVATOR. EVENING.

Leather Pants' sexy ringtone carries over the sound of the elevator alarm.

FADE OUT