

Startups - Episode 1

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COLD OPEN

EXT. BUSINESS START BLDG. DAY

A man tries to open the building's door. It's locked. Looking around, he checks his watch. Then he furiously tries the door again. It's still locked and he's still early. This is BROWN SWEATER and he's going to hide in his car until other people show up.

As BROWN SWEATER gets back into his car and slinks down in his seat, a man pre-occupied with his headphone cables wanders by.

This is HEADPHONES and he's nearly hit by SHOULDERPADS as she navigates the parking lot, reciting her favourite motivational audiobook. SHOULDERPADS goes from calm to freaking out and lays on the horn.

BOLO TIE makes his way toward the building, but stops when he notices FLOWER PURSE hiding behind a tree spying on the parking lot. He admires her bag, but his mouthful of meatball sub does not do anything to reassure her leaving home was a good idea.

THE FACILITATOR comes out of the building, plants a sandwich board announcing the BusinessStart class and heads back inside, ignorant of his new students.

BROWN SWEATER takes the sandwich board as a sign it's time to make his move. He feigns confidence as he walks toward the building.

Behind him, HEADPHONES makes his way across the parking lot; SHOULDERPADS has caught her jacket in her car door; and BOLO TIE appears to be offering FLOWER PURSE some of his meatball sub.

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

THE FACILITATOR flips on the lights in the community hall 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.

FACILITATOR  
You're a go-getter.

BROWN SWEATER  
(NOT SURE HOW TO PROCEED)  
Huh?

The FACILITATOR has already lost interest in this conversation. He walks towards the door.

BROWN SWEATER  
(realizing what he meant)  
OH...I'm just nervous, I guess. I waited outside for awhile. Some other people are here...I'm excited about this class though. I really think it's going to help...

The FACILITATOR ignores his budding protege by craning his neck to look for students out the doorway. BROWN SWEATER goes back to being nervous.

One by one, 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  
(his hand still in the air,  
now pointing at the  
FACILITATOR questioningly)  
...wow, how did you know that?

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.

BOLO TIE 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)  
 SHOULDERPADS, BOLO TIE, FLOWER PURSE, HEADPHONEs, BROWN SWEATER - you're a group. Go to the mezzanine. MARGARITAVILLE, BIG GLASSES, Guy Who Looks Like My UNCLE MAURY, POOR MAN'S 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 SHOULDERPADS and BOLO TIE decide to jump in at the same moment.

SHOULDERPADS

(in unison))

I am so nervous! Don't you just hate pitching?

LEATHER PANTS

(in unison)

Join me in a world of digital pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

BROWN SWEATER, HEADPHONES, SHOULDERPADS  
(in unison)

What?

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

BOLO TIE

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.)

BOLO TIE

That is a great idea.

SHOULDERPADS turns her attention to FLOWER PURSE.

SHOULDERPADS

So what's your business?

BOLO TIE

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. BOLO TIE tries to make her comfortable.

LEATHER PANTS

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

(CONTINUED)

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 be 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, BOLO TIE leans forward and  
proclaims excitedly:

BOLO TIE  
I CREATE EROTIC RINGTONES!

HEADPHONES  
Didn't you just say you import  
leather?

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

HEADPHONES  
(unsure of how to receive  
this)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HEADPHONES (cont'd)  
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, BOLO TIE.

INT. FRONT OF CLASSROOM - MONTAGE.

Quick cuts of students pitching their businesses:

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

CUT TO

MARGARITAVILLE  
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.

CUT TO

(CONTINUED)

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-

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

(CONTINUED)

FACILITATOR  
 (to BROWN SWEATER)  
 Good job, big guy. Have a seat.  
 (to the class)  
 Phones: 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."

FACILITATOR  
 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.

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 everyone's glass, but most of it in his own.

(CONTINUED)

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?

SANDWICHES

I thought the investors were supposed to be here.

FACILITATOR

(looking around)

They're supposed to be...

INT. ELEVATOR. EVENING.

BOLO TIE 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.

BOLO TIE's sexy ringtone carries over the sound of the elevator alarm.

FADE OUT