

DEATH TO SMOOCHY

INT. STOKES' OFFICE - DAY

Stokes sits behind his mahogany desk, sipping a glass of wine as he goes over potential Randolph replacements with NORA BISHOP, his pretty protege.

STOKES
Bumble Bee Billy?

NORA
(reading from a list)
Wife beater.

STOKES
Square Dance Danny?

NORA
Still appealing the mail fraud
thing.

STOKES
Skippy Black and the Tippy Trolls?

NORA
Black was deported, and the
trolls... well, who gives a shit.

Nora kicks the table in frustration.

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6.

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NORA
This is impossible. If I ever see
that Rainbow Randolph again I'll
strangle him. Choke the life out
of him. Squeeze his scrawny neck
until his eyes pop out of his
skull and bounce off the walls...

STOKES
Before indulging such cheery
fantasies, let's just concentrate
on saving my job. Shall we?

NORA
Sorry, Frank.

Stokes flips through a thick stack of files. He suddenly
stops at one.

STOKES
What's going on with Sheldon Mopes
these days.

Nora laughs.

NORA

Oh my God. Have we sunk to that level already? Smoochy the Rhino? What a sap.

STOKES

Sap's just the pill we need right now. Mopes is a straight arrow. Always has been.

NORA

The guy can't get arrested, Frank. He can't even break into the birthday party circuit. Last I heard he was working hospitals and nursing homes. He's a joke.

Stokes stands up and walks around the room.

STOKES

The truth of the matter is, a successful children's show has always depended on two simple elements: a fuzzy costume and a lot of hype. Strip away the foam rubber and the network money and they're all jokes. Marginal talents.. cabaret acts... off-Broadway runoff...

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NORA

I probably have ten acts in my development file -- acts I've been cultivating -- that are more deserving than Sheldon Mopes.

STOKES

And each one a moral question mark. Something I can't risk at the moment.

NORA

(frustrated)

We can do better than this guy, Frank. He brings nothing to the table.

STOKES

Except ethics. With Mopes, there's never been a whiff of

controversy. The man's an
ethical, harmless, cornball. In
short, a glass of milk on two
legs.

Stokes stops pacing.

NORA

Don't ask me to do it. You know
I'll do anything for you, but
please... not this...

Stokes gazes out the window at the city.

STOKES

Go find Smoochy.