

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
He's really smart.

TOM PETTY
I understand.

BUD
Sc. 1

INT. LIGGETTS FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP ON TV: Abraham Lincoln is on his death bed, surrounded by his wife, the doctor, assorted others. The doctor takes Lincoln's pulse, turns to the gathered.

THE DOCTOR
I'm afraid that President Lincoln
has passed away.

The room is shocked, silent. A man next to Mrs. Lincoln grins, fails to suppress a giggle. He turns to Mrs. Lincoln.

GRINNING MAN
Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how
did you enjoy the play?

(FYI)

Mrs. Lincoln glares, the others gasp. The man looks around.

GRINNING MAN (CONT'D)
What, too soon?

The title "THE STUNTED SHOW" fills the screen.

BACK TO THE ROOM: Highston sits between brother Bud and Uncle Billy. They're all smiling.

UNCLE BILLY
I love "The Stunted Show." I used
to write for television, you know.

HIGHSTON
I didn't know that, Uncle Billy.
What shows?

UNCLE BILLY
Not for that television.
(pointing to his head)
The one up here.

Bud makes a face as he changes the channel to horse racing.

UNCLE BILLY (CONT'D)
I always wanted to write a novel,
but I never had enough paper.



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HIGHSTON
I can get you some.

UNCLE BILLY
Nah, it's too late.

Uncle Billy points at the TV.

UNCLE BILLY (CONT'D)
I don't care for horse racing.
Cruelty to animals.

BUD
Hey, you don't think they'd ride us
if they could?

UNCLE BILLY
That's the stupidest thing I've
ever heard. Where's a horse going
to get a human saddle? Come on,
think!

BUD
I'm just saying animals are
assholes. If you think horses
wouldn't have us breeding in
unheated sheds and racing in the
mud if they could then you're god
damn kidding yourself.

UNCLE BILLY
I've never cared for mud but I
wouldn't mind breeding in a shed.

Highston turns to Uncle Billy.

HIGHSTON
So, Uncle Billy, what do you think
I should do?

UNCLE BILLY
I think you're fine.

BUD
Billy, he sees ghosts.

HIGHSTON
They're not ghosts, they're my
friends.

BUD
Bono is your friend. Chris Rock is
your friend. Bill Gates is your
friend.

← START

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HIGHSTON
We hang out. Talk about girls.

BUD
For crying out loud.

UNCLE BILLY
What is Bill Gates like?

HIGHSTON
He's very intelligent.

UNCLE BILLY
I knew it!

HIGHSTON
He eats more than I would have thought.

UNCLE BILLY
Sure, thinking makes you hungry.
That's what I've always found.

HIGHSTON
I have to go to my room. Tom's giving me a guitar lesson.

UNCLE BILLY
Ask Mr. Petty if you should commit yourself.

HIGHSTON
I did. He says I should make that decision myself.

UNCLE BILLY
Well there you go. Always trust a rock guitarist, I say.

INT. HIGHSTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Highston's room is meticulous and austere, full of books but no computer. He and Tom sit with guitars facing each other.

TOM PETTY
Okay, now slide your hand down,
that's it, strum up...

Highston stops and looks sincerely at Tom.

HIGHSTON
Tom -- is there something wrong
with me? Am I a freak?

END

3/4

BUD
S. 2

WILBUR

Sure he's not, sure he's not.
Here's the thing, son. If you
don't have a job within a week, we
want you to enter the treatment
center for your sickness.

JEAN

You're ill, Highston. It's not
your fault, and it's nothing to be
ashamed of, but you should hide it
and if anyone asks about it you
should lie and run away.

HIGHSTON

I feel fine. I'm very happy.

WILBUR

See right there, that's crazy talk.

JEAN

Nobody's really happy, Highston.

TOM PETTY

I'm happy.

HIGHSTON

Tom Petty says he's happy.

BUD

I'd be happy too if I were still
getting royalties for writing
something as stupid as "Zero From
Outer Space."

Tom holds the guitar in front of Bud's face with his middle
finger across the fret and bangs the strings.

TOM PETTY

I just made another ten thousand
dollars while you were saying that.

JEAN

Well, that's enough for now. We'll
leave you and your little friend.

WILBUR

It's time to grow up, son.

Pam emerges between her parents and hugs Highston.

PAM

I don't want you to leave Highston.

← START

← END

4/4