

WRITING THE SERIES
"Episode Zero"

by Jami C. Johnson

Loosely Based on Real Events
(minus the plants and Scotch)

FADE IN:

INT. PROFESSORS' OFFICE, UNIVERSITY FILM DEPT - DAY

PROFESSOR COLLIER (40, African American) opens the door to her office, laden with holiday shopping bags, which she drops on the floor.

Her office is cluttered with pictures and film nostalgia - save for a perfectly BARE DESK.

As she hangs her coat, she sees it: In the center of the desk is a pristine, brad-fastened SCRIPT titled "WRITING THE SERIES: EPISODE ZERO."

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Hey, Bo.

BO (O.S.)

Yeah?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Bo?

BO (O.S.)

Yeah?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

BO!

BO (28, Caucasian) pops into her office. He is the Film Department's young, rugged office manager. His black horn-rimmed glasses, beard, and red buffalo check shirt rep his persona. Think Clark Kent... Lumberjack.

BO

Hey Professor. What's up?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

What is this?

BO

Oh, a student dropped off a script for you.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

No, not that. What are all of these doing in my office?

Previously unseen, a wider view of the office reveals that Collier's office is packed full of GIANT RED POINSETTIAS.

BO
Oh, those. Yeah sorry. Same student.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
Same student?

BO
Yes. As the script. She left them --
sorry, I thought it was... a thing.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
This is highly irregular.

BO
Yeah. Sorry.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
No more stuff in my office when I'm
out, okay?

BO
10-4.
(hesitates a moment)
Any good?

PROFESSOR COLLIER
What?

BO
The script?

PROFESSOR COLLIER
I don't know. I'll look at it. But, we
have an understanding, yes?

BO
Yes, Professor.

Bo exits, and Professor Collier melts into her chair. Turning
her attention to the script, she scoffs. She flips the pages.

Soon, her passing interest turns into saturating captivation.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
(quietly)
This is good.
(loudly)
Hey, Bo?

BO (O.S.)
Yeah?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

BO!

BO

(appearing)

What's up?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

What does she want?

BO

Oh, she just wants to be considered
for your writing class.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Call her. Now.

BO

Will do.

Suddenly, JAMI (late 30's, BIPOC) slowly rises from her
hiding place behind a wall of poinsettias. She a vision in
red camouflage complete with a flower hat. She slightly
resembles Salma Hayek morphed with someone you want to punch
directly in the face.

JAMI

Hi Professor.

PROFESSOR COLLIER & BO

(in unison, startled)

AHHHHH!!!!

JAMI

You wanted to speak with me?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

What the hell?

BO

Sweet Baby Jesus H. Christ, you scared
the S out of us!

JAMI

I just want to thank you for reading
my script and considering me for your
class.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

This is highly irregular!

BO
Highly irregular!

PROFESSOR COLLIER
How did you even -- you have been here
this whole time?

BO
Highly irregular!

JAMI
I mean, Bo let me in.

BO
Wait, what? No! Just the script. Well,
and the plants.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
Uh-huh.
(to Bo)
You can go.
(to Jami)
You. Stay. And take off that
ridiculous-looking hat.

JAMI
It's actually a fascinator--

PROFESSOR COLLIER
Oh my god! What is everyone's DEAL
today?!
(a deep breath as Bo exits)
Sit down. Look. This isn't bad. The
treatment needs work, and I appreciate
the effort, but why all of this?

JAMI
Too much? Sorry, I know. I know. It's
just that I've emailed a couple of
times to request to join your class,
and haven't heard back. The year's
almost over, and I need your
permission to take the course... along
with the prereq for it.

Professor Collier levels a look at Jami.

PROFESSOR COLLIER
So you want to drive the car while
you're building it?

JAMI

I just want a shot. If I have any talent at all, I just want to be considered.

Bo is now hovering in the doorway, expectantly.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Bo!

BO

Yes, Professor?

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Is there still room in the class?

BO

5 seats left. I just checked.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

(to Jami)

Okay. We will vet you. But no promises.

JAMI

Thank you, Professor!

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Yes. Fine. Everybody out!

JAMI

You won't regret it!

Bo and Jami exit, but are called back.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Wait! Wait. Is there anything else in this office I should know about?

They look around. Sheepishly, Jami walks over and reaches behind a plant, pulling out a bottle of 10-YEAR-OLD SCOTCH. She starts to walk away with it.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Stop. Leave it.

Jami sets it down, turning the label towards the Professor.

JAMI

Happy Holidays, Professor.

Bo and Jami leave. Professor Collier settles in.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

(to self)

Damn plants smell like a locker room.

Professor Collier pulls a coffee cup from a cabinet and cracks open the Scotch, pouring off a dram. She inhales.

PROFESSOR COLLIER

Yes, yes, yes. That's better.

FADE OUT:

BLACK SCREEN.