

To Be Announced

Series Proposal

Created by Arran McDermott

Format:

To Be Announced (TBA) is a 1/2-hour live-action anthology comedy for teen and adult audiences.

The Short Version

TBA is a comedy anthology series with a difference. Each episode the main character, Ernie, finds himself playing a different role in a different genre, essentially jumping into a brand new TV show each week.

The Big Picture

TBA features an ambitious premise that has never been done before in an anthology format. The reason most anthology shows don't succeed is because there's no thread running through the whole series to keep viewers hooked, but in this show we get to know the main character even as his role changes. In every episode, he finds himself in a different series and playing by different rules.

The reason behind this will be gradually revealed over the course of the series. Recurring characters will appear and offer the protagonist clues as to why he is trapped in this constantly changing artificial reality. We will also slowly learn more about the real world Ernie came from throughout the show.

Main Character

Ernie – The channel hopper. Mid-20's. He is a perpetually cheerful joker. He will never waste an opportunity to make a quip or play a practical joke. Even though he's often the comic relief, he's also highly ambitious and competitive. He's the kind of guy who flirts with every girl he meets, but he does it with charm. Although he can't remember much about his real life (apart from his name) he does remember what happens in each episode, allowing him to question the absurdity around him often.

Recurring Characters (typically only a few of them appear each episode):

George – Early-30's. A regular guy who's somewhat of a technophobe. He doesn't stand out in a crowd, but he has a quiet strength to him. Slightly conservative, and easy to rile up.

Joan – Late 20's. She is a serious, somewhat neurotic woman. Can seem aloof at first but is kind at heart, once you get to know her. Doesn't let her hair down often, but when she does – watch out!

Britney – Early-20's. She is a fun-loving babe who never stops talking, giving some the impression that she is an airhead. Most people think that she pretty much only cares about herself, but that's because she hasn't met many people she can trust. She has a very liberal attitude to sex, and will pursue anyone she's attracted to.

Pete – Late teens. He’s slightly nerdy and sometimes loses his temper, but is basically likeable. Extremely smart and likes to make pop culture references. Doesn’t make friends easily, but he is very loyal.

Rachel – Mid-teens. She is a quiet girl with a rather morbid sense of humor. She likes to dress like a hipster and act like a tomboy. People think she is anti-social, but she just distrusts people in general because of all the jerks in the world.

What We Will Deliver Every 1/2 Hour

Each episode will have a standalone story in a different genre, complete with new theme music and credits. They won’t necessarily be straight spoofs – if one episode is say, a police procedural, the crime story will be genuinely gripping. The humor will come from playing with the conventions and Ernie pointing out the absurdities and clichés.

What the Series Will Deliver

This show has the best of both worlds – an exciting and different scenario each week but there’s also the opportunity for complex arcs as the series progresses. As the truth behind the experiment is revealed, the theme of artificial reality will be used as a satire on our own society’s need to constantly escape the real world and assume a different online identity. There could also be a running gag of celebrities cameoing in the series as characters very similar to ones they have played in other shows.

Tone

Due to the nature of the show, the tone will vary widely from episode to episode. While all of the episodes will have comedic elements, the tone could be similar to anything from an episode of Friends to Monty Python to an Evil Dead movie. The show can be comedy-horror, sci-fi spoof, action-comedy or sitcom; there could even be an animated episode. The fact that the star remains constant will keep the audience grounded even while the show goes off into wild flights of fantasy.

Pilot

Ernie, suffering from amnesia, arrives at a mysterious mansion on a dark and stormy night. The butler shows him inside for a party that Ernie knows nothing about. One by one he meets the other guests: Princess Langwidere, who has a habit of switching heads; Herbert West, with his serum for reanimating the dead (wonder if that will come in handy later?), the sorceress Morgan le Fay, Long John Silver, Count Dracula (Scott Bakula, if we can get him) and his undead wife, Mina. Ernie is the only one aware that all the others are public domain characters. He also has flashbacks to another life that may be his real one. After dinner, the butler turns up dead with teeth marks in his neck. Of course they accuse Dracula, but he protests his innocence. They try and escape but realize they are trapped. A confrontation between the guests leads to le Fay losing her head, literally. More murders follow. They have until dawn to discover the identity of killer and the true reason for their gathering. The survivor, who may not be Ernie, will meet their host and more will be revealed. But for Ernie, a different adventure is just around the corner.

First Season

In the first season Ernie will gradually learn that he is part of some kind of artificial reality that constantly transports him to different worlds. He will also slowly remember his real life and the reasons for the experiment. Though the characters around him change each episode, certain people will reappear and remind him of the real world. These characters are virtual versions of people he knew in real life, trying to either help or hinder him in his escape from the false reality. At the end of season one, Ernie will discover one of the secrets behind his channel hopping adventures and how to bring in other characters. But escape will still seem far away.

Episodes

My Evil Twin – Ernie is about to marry Joan when discovers he has a twin brother he never knew about, who may or may not be evil.

Time Tourists – Ernie enters a show where tourists from the future regularly travel back and cause chaos in the past.

Dream Cops – Ernie is a rookie cop forced to team up with seasoned officer to try and catch nightmare characters that have escaped into the real world.

The Barbarian Family - schmaltzy family sitcom with laugh track, but set in ancient times. Rachel is a Greek goddess trying to educate a family of savages led by Ernie.

The Superhero Musical Comedy Show – 60's style variety show, with superheroes. Ernie is the only one who doesn't sing and thinks all the others are crazy.

Inter-planetary Welcome Wagon – Star Trek style spoof where the last human alive (Ernie) is stuck on an exploratory spaceship with robots and aliens who don't respect him.

Amazing Zombie Robot Warriors – Ernie leads a wacky group of undead Power Rangers style heroes against George, the Evil Overlord of All Evil.

My Pet Demon - Ernie has a demon living in his home who possesses people and does other random, disgusting, stuff.

Britney the Werewolf Hunter - supernatural spoof with Britney as a girl hunting demonic wolves who hide in human clothing. Ernie is the werewolf with a soul she falls for.

Chucky Abramowitz: Attorney at Play - LA Law meets Doogie Howser with Pete as a young attorney who no one takes seriously until he starts winning cases. Ernie is another lawyer who hates him.

Animal Hospital – the heartbreak and hijinks of working in a hospital treating sick pets. Feature hilarious accidents that could have been easily avoided. Ernie is the prankster young vet who loves to stress out the hospital director.

Izzie and the Bubble Dimensions – Ernie enters a cartoon world and meets a girl scientist who can travel to other worlds through bubbles.

About the Creator

Arran McDermott is a screenwriter and novelist who was born in England and now lives in the U.S. His fiction has been published in the *The Rejected Quarterly* literary magazine and the anthology series *Demonic Visions*. He wrote, directed and edited the short film, *The Party*, released in 2010.