

BE THE STAR THEY THINK YOU ARE

An *almost* true story

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Infinite, pitch-black outer-space. Endless sparkling, twinkling stars, blue ice-ringed planets, silver-tipped comets ride the ocean of darkness. The opening titles of the TV science fiction series *Stargate SG 1* play over the scene. As they fade away, Jonathan “Jack” O’Neill appears on screen, a tough, rugged, Ivy League, universal soldier. Standing with him is his brave, loyal sidekick Teal’c, dressed in futuristic battle fatigues. Teal’c is a big, bald, menacing black man, built like a football player, his forehead emblazoned with a raised double-circle insignia.

In front of the two men is a huge disc mirror, standing vertically, its surface a sheet of shimmering water. This is the *Stargate*, entrance to another dimension, shining silver, like the sun on the sea, beckoning, waiting.

“We have to go back,” says O’Neill. “I will not abandon my crew.”

“I’m with you, sir,” says Teal’c. “This could be the end of all of us.”

“I know,” replies the Commander, “but I will never surrender to fear!”

“What are we waiting for?” cheers Teal’c. *Stargate’s* signature music blasts from the picture. Picking up their weapons, the two men leap headlong into the shimmering, watery mirror. Immediately they are swallowed without a trace. They have entered another dimension. Swimming mists, stars and coloured lights fill the screen.

Somewhere else a phone rings, a jangling, old-fashioned sound, unfamiliar.

The *Stargate* montage continues.

The phone is answered.

“Hallo? Yes, hallo, stranger, how are you, Bill?” says the voice. “Long time since I heard from you. How long has it been? Two years? Three? That long? Yes, I remember the last time you called; your toilet was screwed up, and you said if I fixed it you would help me with my career, so what happened?”

Pulling back, *Stargate* is seen playing on an old TV set in the funky, art-laden Hollywood apartment of *Christopher Judges*, a writer, character actor in his early thirties. He is a big guy, six-four, dark, rugged and handsome, with thick hair, uneven features and a

three-day stubble. He puts his hand over the telephone mouthpiece and whispers to his neighbor Peter Hawkins, a thirty-year-old skateboarding computer programmer, sitting across the room. "It's Bill Kerwin, my theatrical agent from years ago."

"Hallo, Bill, what can I do for you? Toilet bunged up again?"

"I had a phone call," explains Bill, "from a woman down in Florida, working with some public relations firm. She wants you to open a sci-fi exhibition in Orlando."

"Me?" laughs Chris. "Okay, that's ridiculous. Why me?"

"She asked for you by name. It's an all-expenses-paid gig, airfare, hotel, and \$1,500.00. Do you want to go to Florida or not?"

"It's a mistake. . .it must be. . .when is it?"

"Couple of weeks' time. The weekend of the 17th and 18th."

"I'll do it. Sign her up."

"I will," moans Bill. "I'll get back to you." The phone goes dead.

"He's rude," says Chris to Pete. "He just puts the phone down. No thanks, no goodbye. He just hangs up. These agents are all the same. I don't think he ever sent me out on an audition anyway. Why do they want *me* to open an exhibition in Florida? Nobody knows *me*. All I've ever done is the odd commercial here and there. I stuck that ferret down my pants for the California Lottery, dressed up like John Travolta for AT&T. In my entire acting career I've never spent more than a minute and a half actually onscreen. How would anybody know me in Florida?"

"Who cares? Give it a go!" insists Pete. "Go to Florida, have a good time." He lounges back in the old armchair like a rock 'n' roll stick insect, his heavily tattooed arms clashing with the chair's floral upholstery. "You've been trying long enough," he yawns. "Maybe this is your big break!"

"Yeah, right, my big break's tomorrow," laughs Chris. "When I pick up the five grand from that client of mine, up on Sunset Plaza."

The next morning, the Jag is difficult to start. "It always happens when you jump on the gas too soon, it floods and you're screwed!?" This is the first time Chris has spoken to anyone this morning. He is conversing with a smiling, nodding, non-English-speaking Mexican male, a soon-to-be flier distributor, with no self-expression and very little knowledge retention. He didn't understand. It's his first day. He contorts his face to resemble "I'm considering what you said, sir."

Chris knows better, dealing with Mexican workers for ten years, he still doesn't know the language. Five or six words, maybe. Usually he communicates with his men using sign language and he hopes for the best. It's worked so far. Chris has a construction company, doing work for high achievers, gays and attorneys.

Chris got into construction years back, with a partner called Barry. They were both nice guys from the Bronx, both borderline personalities, oversensitive types, prone to crying, fits of depression and the occasional botched suicide attempt. They called themselves The Good Guys. They figured if they told the homeowner they were Good Guys, the homeowner wouldn't doubt it give them a job. They were busy, but still unsure of whether they were really good guys or con men. The homeowners often felt the same way.

On a slack day, with only one beat-up car between them, Chris drove Barry over to see his agent, Maureen Oliver, a Hollywood veteran, an old lady brimming over with theatrical enthusiasm. Barry was an actor, brought up on the New York stage by homosexuals thinly disguised as leading men. Chris was a writer, an unpublished one, but definitely not an actor.

He sat at the back of the room listening to Barry bullshit this little old lady who bullshitted him back. "Things are slowing down, Barry darling, pilot season is over, they're only using bankable names this year."

Distracted, she peers around Barry's head a couple of times. "Who are you?" she asks, breaking away from her diatribe. "You an actor?"

"I most certainly am not," came the reply like a speeding bullet from Chris's mouth. Barely able to believe what he has said, he reformulates the words, "Yes, ma'am, I am an actor."

Barry, struck dumb, his eyes crossed, a deer in the headlights, is shot dead by the remark.

"Bring me your photo and a resume," says Maureen. "I'd love to represent you."

Three days later, Chris's photo and resume were on "his agent's" desk. Two weeks later, he was signed in ready for his first Hollywood audition, as an eleventh-century peasant for a Roger Corman movie.

Chris stood there in the waiting room, not knowing what to do, with only a script and his short-term memory loss in hand, never having even stood onstage in his life. Around him were a lot of "unknown actor types" rehearsing their lines in character, performing, strutting the tiny waiting room like they were on-set, bumping into each other, apologizing profusely as "themselves," then continuing on in character again. It was all too much for Chris; he was not an actor and never would be. This was a stupid,

ridiculous occupation. He ran out as his name was called, leaving his photo and resume on the receptionist's desk.

A week later, a message on the answering machine from Maureen Oliver: "See, I was right, I can still pick 'em. The Corman studio called; they want you on a call back for the same part you auditioned for last week. Same place, Tuesday at 10 a.m. Break a leg."

Chris had gotten a *call back*. He had never auditioned for the part and yet he had gotta call back. There had been a terrible mistake. He wasn't even an actor! This was an amazing opportunity. God intervened and made this happen. Chris had to go through with it. How was he going find the courage? Sure, he was creative, but pulling this off would really be flying by the seat of his pants. Barry won't help because *he* should have gotten the part himself. He "no longer wants to be a Good Guy." Not that he was, anyway.

Outside the audition room, Chris paced up and down like a professional, script in hand, praying. He had read and reread the part over and over and he couldn't remember any of it. He was terrified and nervous, shy, mixed-up and completely freaked out. He went to the bathroom again, checked himself in the mirror again, took a well-deserved pee, again, and watched his ego drain out of him into the urinal, again. It was time for desperate measures. Chris had to dive into his inner being to find the character.

He raced out of the building. He wanted to run away, but no, he had come this far, he had to try, to give it his best shot. He had the answer in his pocket. Lighting a joint of the cheap marijuana, he inhaled its smoke like laughing gas. All at once, the half-crazed character he needed spewed out of his unconscious and flap jacked itself on his face. Back inside, Chris's name was called immediately.

Confident, stoned and not sure of who he was anymore, Chris rolled into the audition and sat at a huge oval table with eight casting inquisitors. As he read his lines, he became unable to detach himself from the character he was portraying, delivering his speech with all the drama of an Al Pacino.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" gushed the praise from Roger Corman's wife. The others nodded their agreement like chickens picking up grain from the tabletop, an activity the subservient used to ensure their continued employment.

Chris raved on, squeezing every drop of juice he could from the scripted lines. "Wait," said the director. "We want you for this part, but please refrain from including the stage direction, 'camera pans left' as your character's lines."

Six days later, Chris was dressed in medieval costume, acting his heart out in a plywood castle built in a disused timber yard in Venice, California. This time he wasn't stoned, just petrified, high on adrenalin. The director "loved him." Chris had done what he was told; performance was in his blood. Already he could see his name on the billboards

above Sunset, the talk show interviews, the adoration, the fans. This was no small part. He had done six lines in a Roger Corman movie, gotten into the Screen Actors Guild, and he, Christopher Judges, the movie star, was born.

The Jaguar was over its coughing fit. The Mexican stared straight ahead into the dashboard trying to avoid eye contact, dreaming of his senorita's doughnut-stacked figure, their four babies, and their tenement outside Mexico City.

"Such a beautiful day, look at that sky, not a cloud in sight!" cheers Chris to his passenger. The Jag takes off at high speed into the Hollywood Hills. The radio is blasting, loud. "*She lived her life like a candle in the wind,*" Chris sings along. He's Elton John, singing into the rearview mirror, playing piano on the steering wheel. There's an audience of thousands. Chris uses his "hope for the best" technique to keep the car on the road. The terrified Mexican wants out, screaming, "Me go, amigo!"

Chris pulls the car over and directs the man to pass out fliers to the homes up the hill. The man nods he understands. He walks off down the road.

Chris, doubting himself as the great communicator he thought he once was, turns the Jag toward the client and the five grand.

He laughs to himself as he races through the hills, knowing secretly inside that he is a race car driver in Italy, "Almost Andretti." He takes the bend like a pro, squealing tires like a bank robber, elbow out the window "like Bond," casual, cool, relentless, forcing dog walkers to scoop up their dogs faster than they scoop up dog poop.

Chris conquers every Mulholland curve like a real man, potent, powerful and sexy, in control. He brakes with a screech at the client's mailbox. He pulls out an envelope "with my name on it." Rip it open. "A five thousand dollar check to pay my bills. Yes sir, Mr. Dillon – what the hell is this! Two grand now and *maybe* two more at the end of the month if I tie up a few loose ends!" Chris pounds his head into the dashboard like a battering ram smashing down a castle door. "She screwed me, that lousy bitch screwed me. I should have screwed her."

Instantly, Chris is Johnny Cochran, defending himself against the tyranny of the rich, pleading for the honor of the working man, defending his right to a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. "This evil woman, your honor," Johnny points out at the caged defendant. "She lured my client into her house in the dead of night under false pretences, saying she had "a hole in her bedroom." My client tried to help her but she wanted him to work all night. My client turned her down. This woman refused to pay my client for the work he has done. It's sexual harassment, My Lord, plain and simple. My client earned his money fairly and squarely and demands justice!" The jury erupts, chanting "Justice! Justice!" The judge somberly puts on his black hat, sentencing the woman to die for her crimes. The plaintiff, thinly disguised as a medieval masked executioner, holds a huge, curved axe above his head, poised, ready to divide the petrified defendant's head from her shoulders. "Cut! Cut!"

Chris is jolted out of his dream by an old woman yelling, “Cat! Cat!” Chris is driving over the cat, turning it into an ornamental rug, a hunting trophy, with its mouth open. He swerves the car over to the side of the road and, getting out, he rushes to the side of the expired cat as it lies in the road, wearing a tire-track midriff. On his knees, Chris finds his “inner priest” and murmurs the Lord’s Prayer, praying for forgiveness and for the soul of the cat. His eyes stream tears. He is in too deep. He had killed a living thing.

At once, Chris is James Cagney, a criminal in chains and a strait jacket. “This is the only way I could go straight, Ma,” he mutters, silently weeping to the dead cat’s owner. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to do it, I’m innocent, I’m innocent, I tell you.” The cat’s owner holds its drooping body above her head. “Guilty!” she screams.

“Guilty?” mutters Chris. “Stupid name for a cat.”

It is a sober ride home in the Jag, no music except for a little Mahler playing in Chris’s frontal lobe.

At home, the phone is ringing as he walks in. It’s Bill, Chris’s agent. “That thing’s off in Florida. Apparently they thought you were some black actor on *Stargate SG 1*. He’s got the same name as you. He is called Christopher Judge too.”

“My name is *Judges!*” snaps Chris.

“Whatever,” moans Bill. “That’s show business.”

“My name is *Judges*, as in the plural of Judge, and I’m twice the man this S.G. 1 guy is. He’s a freak; he stole my name.”

“I know, I know,” soothes Bill. “But when someone asks me if I’m Christopher Judge’s agent, my answer is yes, whether it’s plural or not or you or not, right?”

Bill drones on. Chris stares at the receiver in disbelief, as if it were a dead man’s skull, “Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him well. . .,” he mutters.

Chris’s imagination has whisked him back to The Globe Theatre, London, 1680. He is on the set of *Shakespeare in Love*. He is playing a woman – there were no women actors in those days. The director needed one. Chris volunteered. He is dressed to attract himself. He thinks he’s Gwyneth Paltrow! The phone rings; it’s Bill again. “Why did you put the phone down on me? Are you crazy or what? I’m your agent, I hold your whole life in the palm of my hand. I’m out there every day plugging away, trying to get your lazy arse an acting job, and you’re putting the phone down on me!”

“You never ever got me an acting job!”

“I got another one.”

“Another one what?”

“Another phone call,” moans Bill. “Another guy looking for Christopher Judge. I’ll put him on to you. You could turn it into your big break. Give it a try at least?”

“What do they want me for this time? To open a McDonald’s in Texas? A laundrette in Tennessee?”

“No,” says Bill. “They want to photograph you for some European magazines. Apparently you’re famous over there.”

“But I’m not him! He’s black! I’m not black. They’ll notice the difference!”

“Maybe not. Maybe you’ll get away with it. What’ve you got to lose? You’re an actor, play the part. The photographer will call you direct.”

Chris puts down the phone. What is it really like to be a young black man? Reality fades into a dream. Chris is rapper Snoop Dog, living in a Long Beach ghetto, a victim of racial profiling, gangs, police brutality, street culture, drugs, prejudice, oppression, happening year after year, day in and day out, trapped endlessly in the accident of skin color and the injury of innocence, writing rap lyrics between gang-bangs.

“Guns for breakfast, death for lunch, dinner is a funeral,
Not too cool, if you’re the fool
Enough! To be made of the wrong stuff,
Like me, I am my own worst en-em-me.
I’ve had a dream not to be on drugs,
But it takes the place of my mother’s love
I wish I knew which way was up
I wanna drink from the rich man’s cup.”

The phone wakes Chris out of his reverie and thrusts him back into the real world. “Glen Le Furman here, the photographer, your agent told me to call you direct?”

“Great, but I’m off to the studio soon,” says Chris, pretending impatience.

“I’ve got a great opportunity for you. A chance for you to spread your fame in Europe.”

“I’m famous over there?” Chris is incredulous.

“You sure are! I’ve been asked to photograph a lot of famous people and your name was on the list, right next to Brad Pitt’s. I’m sorry I don’t know your work, but you must be well-known in Europe because five European magazines want your photo. It’s great publicity – it will get you more exposure and increase your fan base. I’m sure you’ve

done lots of good stuff, you must have. This is my first time photographing actors. I'm a rock 'n' roll photographer, twenty years, watching scruffy little rednecks turn into millionaire tycoons. I know nothing about movie stars like you. Are you in a series?"

"Me, oh, I do a lot of different things," says Chris.

The photographer's persistent drivel comes right back. "Listen, I'll keep right on talking, if you put the phone down, go to the bathroom, whatever, no problem. When you get back, I'll just give you a summary of what I said. . . You'll be all over Europe. . ." Chris sees himself as President Clinton getting off the plane in Paris, thousands of young women waiting for him, wanting him, waving to him, adoring him, wishing him well, blowing kisses, like the Beatles at Shea Stadium, Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! He feels the excitement rushing through his veins. He wants it all, the fame, the adoration, the love. He stands on a podium, staring down at the cheering French masses through a forest of microphones. He cries out in passion, "I love *all* French people!" The French National anthem plays. . .

The voice of Glen the photographer cuts into the scene in Chris's head. "These magazines are calling me daily from Europe. They want these photos for publication and they want them now!"

Chris's brain rushes into lying hyper drive. He knows he's not black. He knows he isn't the right guy. He knows he's going to get found out. He knows he wants fame and recognition like other people want air. He has to try it! This is the best shot Chris has ever had at making it, even if it *is* fraud. This could be his "greatest role;" he will play it through to the end.

"Sounds good, Glen," enthuses Chris, playing the movie star down the phone. "When do you want to meet? . . . Lunch? Yeah, er, er. Glen, I really want to get together with you, but I'm really busy at the studio all week. Sure, I'd love to take you on the set, but it's a closed set. Yes, I do want to tell you all about it, but the producers are keeping it a big secret. It's so secret; even I don't know what the full story is. No, Glen, just kidding. Le Dome. Sounds great, okay, Wednesday, 1 p.m. See you there." Chris puts down the phone his brain is fried.

"What have I done? I can't go Wednesday." He says. Chris is scared, moaning away to Pete. "Sitting through a lunch with some guy who wants to know my entire life story over his steak tartar. I can't do it."

"You call yourself an actor?" taunts Pete. "You've got more personalities than an Oscar party. Pick one and go get your photo taken."

"Listen, this photographer isn't paying me, I'm doing him a favor. He's ready to bend over backwards to shoot with me."

“And we know you like that,” teases Pete.

Chris visualizes the lunch.

Pete and three women friends are well-dressed, deeply involved in conversation, eating lunch, sitting at a table at Le Dome on Sunset. Across the room Pete “recognizes” Chris sitting with Glen. Enthused and excited, chattering and nervous, Pete and his women come over to their table, asking for Chris’ autograph, ignoring Glen who’s fumbling for a pen. “Congratulations on your new HBO project!” swoons the woman, plunging her neckline right in Glen’s face.

Chris the movie star is flattered, proud, beaming, laughing and embarrassed at “all the fuss.” He is signing everything in sight, book matches, napkins, the tablecloth. He’s looking around for more fans. Everyone in the place is craning their necks trying to see Chris. “Who is he? I know his face. He’s on TV all the time.”

Lunch was going to be too stressful to deal with. Chris would never pull it off. He cancels. “Sorry, Glen, another change in the shooting schedule at the studio, let’s skip lunch and take the photographs tomorrow afternoon. I can give you my best then” The men agree they will shoot the next day in some flashy studio behind Hollywood Boulevard. It had to be done quickly, before Glen changed his mind or realized his mistake. Chris wanted to get his photo in the magazines, but surely Glen would find out before he does – he must. Chris’s mind is working overtime, trying to concoct his nonexistent resume into a cocktail of untraceable credits, recognition and greatness. It’s racing faster than a computer on acid, trying to weave together the rich tangle of lies chasing around his head, like the Spinning Teacups at Disneyland. Chris knows he’s a great actor; if he can convince himself to be any famous celebrity, this photographer will be easy.

Hollywood Boulevard, looking like a pale copy of New York’s 42nd Street, fills the Jag’s windshield. Park round the back, Glen had said. Behind *Fingers* strip joint.

Chris slides the Jag into the sordid parking lot, feeling like he is John Gotti, the tough Mafia gangster. He gives an appropriate sneer of lust to a fat Mexican cleaning woman entering the back of the club. “Anytime, bay-bee,” he coos, mocking her. The woman turns and smiles her toothless smile, raising her skirt high, showing off her blue spider-veined thighs.

“Twenty bucks, baby,” she tempts. The woman’s come-on unsettles the demeanor of he “faking it” gangster. At once, Chris feels sick, realizing the image of himself he has shoved on the woman has brought him face to face with a reality that has further numbed his own sensitivity. She had believed in his facade and ridden it home, back into his heart.

Chris pulls himself together and rings the doorbell marked "Celebrity Photo." A smiling face opens the door. "Allo, I'm Glen," he says. "Follow me, you can change in the back." He's shaking his head as he walks down the corridor to the makeup room.

"I don't recognize you, but then I don't watch TV. I've been photographing these long-haired super groups for years." He points casually at dozens of framed rock stars' photos on the walls. "They're dying off like dinosaurs," he says. "Jeanie, our makeup girl, will be with you in a minute."

In the full-length mirror Chris sees himself as a full-on glam Aerosmith rocker in a smoky New York dirt bag club. Picking up an old broom, thrusting it into his groin, he's on stage "giving it to the audience like there's no tomorrow." His air guitar screams out over an audience of screaming girls. The pretty makeup girl ruptures his perfect machismo "cool".

"Hey, what's your name? Who are you?"

The girl is in her mid-twenties, really cute, a bleach-blonde short-haired punker, her left ear pierced so many times it looks like a shower rail with rings and no curtain. Chris is wildly attracted to her. She is dressed kind of sexy, a little cleavage, a short skirt, no rings, nice figure. "You're English?" spurts Chris nervously.

"Sure I am. What you here for? You ain't no rocker."

"No, I'm an actor, you know, movies, TV, commercials."

"No you ain't! Are you putting me on? I watch TV day and night. I never forget a face, it's me job and I ain't *never* seen you before."

"I wear a lot of disguises."

"You wearing one now?"

"No! Look, I don't have much time. Glen thinks I'm an actor on the *Stargate SG 1* series."

"Glen thinks you're Richard Dean Anderson?"

"No! He thinks I'm that black guy with a disc on his forehead, Christopher Judge, you know, the Teal'c character!"

"You ain't black! You don't even vaguely resemble the guy."

"Look, my name is Christopher *Judges*. Glen got me mixed up with the other guy. He's never seen the series. Play along, will you? My photo could get in five European magazines."

"It'll cost you."

"What are you talking about?"

"I've seen this great dress down on Melrose," says Jeanie deliberately. "It's only sixty bucks and it makes me look like a famous actress, which of course I am, right?"

"Right, all right, I get the picture. I'll buy the dress. Now, play along, will you?"

Glen bundles into the room. "You two met? Chris, this is Jeanie, Jeanie, this is Chris, star of stage, screen and TV."

"Yeah, I know. He's great. I've seen him loads of times."

Relief floods over Chris's face. He resumes his TV star pose as he climbs up into the makeup chair. "Ready for your close up, Mr. De Mille?" chides Jeanie.

Chris closes his eyes. Jeanie wipes the wisps of peach-coloured foundation onto his face.

"The roar of greasepaint, the smell of the crowd." In the mirror, the face of the entertainer peers back at him. It's 1959. Vaudeville, the grey bowler hat, the broad-striped jacket, thick makeup disguises his seventy years. It's the old performer's last show. He's been fired, it's over, he's all washed up. After fifty years giving his all to an ungrateful public, it's over. Tears roll down his face, washing away his makeup. He looks old, washed-up, finished.

"What the hell you up to?" chirps Jeanie, pulling Chris back into the real world.

"I just drifted off," Chris replies, wiping away his tears.

"You're a bit of a nut case, if you ask me," says Jeanie, repairing Chris's makeup.

"Don't worry," replies Chris. "It happens, I just kind of fell into being someone else."

"But your whole face changed, your look, your vibe, everything."

"Yeah, it must have been the makeup lights."

"No," insists Jeanie, excited. "You changed; where did you go?"

"Okay," Chris soothes, "I briefly got into a favorite Sir Laurence Olivier film character of mine called Archie, The Entertainer. He's an old boy doing his last show in vaudeville in the 1950s."

“And you get into him that much?” says Jeanie incredulously.

“Keep it down, will you Jeanie?” pleads Chris. “I don’t want Glen hearing this.”

“Sorry,” says Jeanie, lowering her voice to a whisper. “This is fascinating. What’s it like? Do you go back? Can you see anything? I mean, do you go there? Really go there?”

“Yeah, I do,” Chris sighs, explaining. “It’s like I go into the character’s world. It feels just like real life. I can smell the flowers, feel the feelings, live the life.”

“So you’re a natural actor, I guess?”

“Yeah, I suppose you’re right. I can go in and out of character just like that. Sometimes I’ve got very little control over it, especially when I get nervous or excited. If I can’t deal with a situation, I just become the person who *can* deal with it. I’ve ‘been’ everyone you can imagine, from James Bond to Houdini, from Michael Jackson to King Arthur. I can become anyone I can imagine from the movies, TV, history, politics, fiction, music. I build up a real strong picture of exactly who the person is, everything about them. It can take a moment or an hour to find the character, but once I do it’s easy. I learn from every person I impersonate. It’s great fun. I get right inside them, find out who they are, what makes them tick, and how they do what they do.”

“Blimey!” says Jeanie. “So you can be any star you think you are?”

“Yeah,” says Chris with a smile, “within reason.”

“You two having a love affair in there?” interrupts Glen, popping his head around the door.

“Ready,” Jeanie calls out, a bit embarrassed and surprised she had gotten so involved with Chris and his story.

In a couple of minutes, Chris is under the studio lights, sweating up a storm, being the star Glen thinks he is. Glen is snapping away, giving posing instructions. “Chin up, lick your lips, give me attitude, baby. Hold it. Wonderful! Cool!”

This photographer has been working with geriatric rockers since they were cavemen. You know it because the music he’s shooting to is way out of date. Herman’s Hermits’ greatest hits blasts through the studio. Glen is engrossed, shooting up a storm, singing along in his own world. “Mrs. Brown, you’ve got a lovely daughter.”

Chris is having a great time being photographed, acting suave and superior one minute, and dancing and hilarious the next. Between shots Jeanie comes rushing up with a

tissue, wiping Chris's brow, whispering encouragement. "You look great, aren't you that star of *Stargate SG 1*?"

Chris grimaces "shut up," clenching his teeth.

"I love shooting this man," says Glen looking up, preoccupied, and putting in another roll of film. "You're so relaxed, so cool, Chris. Most celebrities are stuck on themselves. They're idolized by the public, it all goes to their head, and they become a nightmare to deal with. You're not like that; you're so natural, so easy. You're a rare treat for me. You obviously never let the fans or the celebrity ruin you. I gotta say, it's a pleasure working with you, Chris."

"You're pretty cool yourself, Glen," flatters Chris. "Most photographers I work with are a pain, real cold, they just want the shot. You, you're a people person, it's great working with you!"

"Thanks, Chris," says Glen. "I gotta tell you, you must be pretty big in Europe; these TV magazines are desperate to get your picture."

Glen holds up a fistful of glossy fan magazines, flicking through the brightly-coloured pages full of the stars of all kinds of American TV shows: *The Practice*, *CSI*, *Friends*, *Seinfeld*, *ER*, glossy pictures of the *Stargate SG 1* crew flash by. Photos of the black Christopher Judge peer out of two of the magazines! Glen doesn't notice because he doesn't know. Jeanie does! She leaps in, diverting Glen's attention. "You need a beer, Glen?"

"Thanks, Jeanie, I'd love one," he replies, "but what I *really* want is to know what series Chris is in."

"Okay," sighs Chris reluctantly, "I'll tell you. I'm starring in a new comedy-drama series for HBO. It's been kept under wraps – it's a big secret. The show isn't due to be released here in the U.S. for a month or two. Maybe if I could get you a publicity exclusive about the new series? It would do us both good. A couple of episodes have been shown over there in Europe already, under another title, when they test-marketed it. I suppose that's how I got known over there. If I can get some kind of 'press release,' I can't see how it will affect HBO's secrecy trip. Your magazines probably won't be published 'til after the series U.S. release date anyway. I'll do some homework; I'll talk with the public relations guys. You never know. See what I can do."

"So what's this secret show of yours called?" asks Glen.

"*Hollywood Private Eye*," whispers Chris, like he's sharing a secret. "I'd love to tell you about it, Glen, but I can't, I'd be in breach of my contract."

Glen looks impressed. "No problem, I understand," he mutters reverently. "*Hollywood Private Eye*, such a great idea. Brings back visions of *Chinatown* and *L. A. Confidential*."

"Isn't it great, Glen?" enthuses Jeanie. "My friend Mike over at HBO mentioned something about a closed set for some detective series they're shooting on the back lot. Sounded like the one you're in, Chris." She winks and nods at Chris, while Glen fiddles with his camera.

"Cool," says Glen. "Please if your people feel it's okay for me to get some publicity material to go with the photos, Chris, I'd love it. If I could give these European magazines a publicity bonus it would do me a lot of good. It's my first assignment for them and I want to make a good impression."

"I'm going to do my best for you," says Chris. "I can't promise anything," he says, smiling broadly. He puts his arm around Jeanie; she's giggling, she snuggles in close. He whispers in her ear, "Now all I've got to do is go home and fabricate a 'press release' for a nonexistent TV series."

"You can do it!" encourages Jeanie. "Just imagine you're the bloke on TV that does that late-night National Enquirer show. He's a writer for the magazine. Become him for a while and then write the publicity."

When the shoot was over Chris made a "phony" call to his empty voice mail, giving himself a quick excuse to leave, trying to get out of there before any more difficult questions were asked. He calls Pete; he's glad it's over. "My God, I was stressed. If this charade were to fly and the photos this guy took of me got published? What a mind blower that would be. I'd be famous!"

"Keep your fingers crossed!" cheers Pete.

Chris hadn't gone four blocks before his cell phone was ringing 'Ode to Joy.' It was Jeanie, anxious to talk. "What happened to you? You walked out and left me, all you guys are all the same, perfetik."

"The word is *pathetic*," Chris insists. "And I'm not pathetic. I didn't hang out because I didn't want Glen asking any more questions that I'd have to lie about."

"What about me dress?" reminds Jeanie. "I need it for tonight, I'm going dancing at The Whisky, it's Golden Slam Night. Come on, keep your promise or do I have to go back and see Glen?"

"Blackmail, eh? Typical. Okay," says Chris, "see you at Melrose and Curzon in about fifteen minutes."

By the time Chris hits Melrose he is somebody else, having transformed himself into Jon Galliano, Fashion Designer to the Stars. Slithering out of the Jag like an elegant gay reptile, he poises and poses with every step, wearing wrap-around mirrored sunglasses, his jacket hanging loosely off his broad 'butch' shoulders. He swaggers, preening his beauty, turning his head, first one way then the other, smirking his casual elegance for all to see, radiating feminine sexual confidence, waving his hands around, a Regency don smelling his fingertips. Aroused by the attention he is getting, he stops at a jeweller's shop window to adjust his image still further and to bathe in the reflected jewelled glory that was his by birthright.

"Chris!" Jeanie's hollering voice fills the street. Deaf to her shouting, Chris walks on embracing in his fantasy world, unfazed. He looks with disdain and disgust at the cheap shoddy goods in the Melrose shop windows. He remembers Paris, the Champs Élysées, the charm of The West Bank, the endless boutiques, dress racks alive with couture, colorful and exquisite. He's there, fine silks passing through his fingers, as he puts the final touches to his most precious creation of the season, the sweeping organza bridal ensemble, "All the sweetness of a springtime love, captured in a single breathtaking vision of white lace and Chinese silk."

"Are you deaf or what?" Jeanie is nearly hoarse. "I've been yelling at you from across the street for the last five minutes and all you do is gaze in shop windows. The whole street heard me, I was nearly arrested for disturbing the peace. What were you doing?"

"So I lost it for a while." Chris is defensive. "I was thinking of you and you getting a new dress. I just fell into this fashion designer thing."

"You were parading around the street like a super poof. Snap out of it. Let's get me dress and no more drifting off to 'la la land' when you're with me or I'll give you a kick. Here's one I owe you." Jeanie kicks out, but Chris is too fast for her, dancing away with a two-step flourish, like Fred Astaire. She chases him down the street.

In a shop called "Nothing at All," Chris and Jeanie play like school kids, flirting, touching, holding hands, exploring fake fur, leopard skin, hot neon, shocking pink and lime green-coloured everything, entwined in the loud pounding noises of industrial trance music and girls' lingerie. Shop assistants, like Gothic creatures of the night, distracted by the sound and fury of their own merchandise, ponder their lives in the smoke rings that drift in through the open back door. Above it all, a big hand-painted pink sign proclaims "The Maddest Swank Gear In All The World."

Jeanie bounces around in the dressing room, trying on new dresses of fashion strangeness and vivid sexuality. Through the crack in the door, her woman parts flash like gold in the river of Chris's erotic nature, tempting him to a fantasy unrealized. She darts in and out of the 'ready to reveal all stall' to share her latest 'find' with Chris. "What do you think?" she says. "Help me, will you?" She wants him to do her up, undo strategic straps and zippers, until Chris's head spins in a cocktail of sexual anticipation,

beauty, charm and loving innocence. Enraptured, he marvels at her 'everything' and compliments her, like a new drug addict who has found the mother lode of his dreams.

Eventually, Jeanie finds the garment that will transport her to today's limit of her fashion expectation, it's a little red and black chenille number. Short enough to get her admirers arrested and low enough to display her perfect breasts like jewels on her chest. "It will go with my red heels and the fishnet stockings at home."

Chris pays the bill. "Eighty bucks? I thought you said it was sixty?"

Jeanie tosses him a twenty. "Don't want to put your nose out of joint, do we?"

Chris walks Jeanie back to her car. "See you tonight maybe?" she says.

"Maybe, if you're good," Chris says as he reaches across to kiss her. Her mouth is where he hoped it would be. It is a momentary kiss; their moistened lips play together, a tender second of exhilaration, enough for them both to know heaven waits. . .

Chris watches Jeanie's Plymouth Valiant drive off and disappear at the corner. He remains quiet until her car is out of sight. In the moment she is gone, he is wild and crazy, skipping, happy, a big kid, dancing on top of the world. "Yes! Yes! Too much! Too cool! All right!" he shouts, for everyone to hear. He's jumping, running, spinning round, cheering, laughing. "It must be love, it's got to be love, it's love, love, beautiful, fantastic LOVE! I *am* in love!"

Something had happened – even though Chris was happy and excited to the extreme, he had not fallen into any new characters in the last four hours, since he had 'fallen for' Jeanie. Usually, he would have had at least a couple of personality changes in a period like that, but he was filled with her smell in his nostrils, her voice in his head, her face in his mind and her lips, 'her lips' still sent shivers down his spine. There was no room for anyone else.

At The Whisky on Sunset that night, there were crowds of young people, smoking, drinking, milling around in gaggles, dressed in the regalia of Pop, Gothic, S&M, Heavy Metal, Punk – every type of musical genre was expressed, harnessed and realized in crazy 'freaked out' clothing, anti-establishment attitudes and weird body adornment. These lifestyle distinctions, cherished as they were, dissolved around a shared 40-ounce beer or two, as everyone closed in for a chance to get inebriated. The differences between the sexes seemed to blur or disappear as girls swooned over girls and young men eyed each other with lust or provocative aggravation.

The line to get inside the club is guarded by Herman the bouncer, brutality personified in the largest black man you ever saw, repeating the only two words he ever knew, "IN" and "OUT." His dominance, dumb and threatening, freezes every hopeful young smile, as they cross over from the bright streetlights and flashing neon into the decadent

vacuum of the club. Here, the color is black, the music is power, the desire is 'cool,' the perfume is sex and the drug is alcohol. Every person is a gargoyle, a tease, a sparkling obnoxious event, high on anger and power, swarming in packs, young vultures ready to pull the flesh off any tourist from Iowa. This is The Whisky's Golden Slam Night. Chris is ready for anything, and it is coming right at him.

Jeanie's joyful enthusiasm cuts through the crowd like a banshee. "Chris, over here! Over here!" She is radiant, wild, standing out of the crowd like a vision of a superstar, a Raggedy Ann, Tinkerbelle, deserving accolades, wealth and the attention of millions.

Dressed in the red and black chenille dress Chris had bought her, Jeanie was much more beautiful than he had ever dreamed of, the essence of femininity, unassuming, beautiful. She waved, a flash of her breasts, tantalizing, hidden. Black fishnet stockings. Her long, slim legs, a climbing frame, a "lover's assault course" to her most intimate parts. Red heels, so high she is projected forward, poised ready to fall into the arms of the man she loves. Desire rushed through Chris's veins as he touched her, a hurricane of expectation and excitement filled his every pore. In his arms, he caressed her while she kissed his neck. "It's so good to see you," she whispered. "I was frightened you might not come; I really thought you might not come."

"Don't worry, Chris whispered back to her like a Texas oil man. "I always come."

"You're cheeky, you are," laughs Jeanie, nuzzling still deeper into Chris's neck. The couple wrap themselves deep into each other, oblivious of those around them. They kiss, gently at first, like six-year-olds stealing kisses at Christmas, but it sparks locked lips, thrusting hips and small moaning gasps of pleasure.

At the front of the line Herman the bouncer lets the next few people into the club. The line surges forward, forcing Chris and Jeanie to move with them. Their love disturbed, they follow the crowd, embracing.

Jeanie sees someone coming toward her she doesn't want to see. She hides in Chris's shoulder again, but it is too late. The rough grasp of an angry, tattooed skinhead punk, in torn black leathers, silver rings and piercings, pulls Jeanie out of Chris's arms.

"What d'you think you're doin', Jean?" the punk moans, seething, angry, indignant that his 'property' should be anywhere but on *his* arm.

"I told you weeks ago it's over, Tommy!" Jeanie fired back at him, angry and defiant. "I don't want you or your violence. Piss off and leave me alone."

Chris's power rises through his frame. "The lady is with me," he says matter-of-factly, like a Sergio Leone gunfighter.

Tommy, ready to kill, grimaces nastily, “Oh, yeah, lover boy? Want some of this?” His fist glances the side of Chris’ face, barely touching him. Jeanie pushes between the two men, trying to stop a fight but is brushed aside by Tommy as he tries to get past her to Chris. Jeanie’s lovely face jags to anguish and fear as she topples back into the crowd. At once, Chris is changed – a vision of Jackie Chan races through his brain, into his arms and legs, into his heart, and Chris *is* Jackie Chan, defending himself and “the pretty lady from the man who is no good.”

Assuming the stance of a praying mantis, he jumps sideways, avoiding Tommy’s murderous fists and hate-filled kicking boots. Leaping forward, kicking high like a chorus-line dancer, Chris’s foot lands in the centre of Tommy’s chest with a thud, winding him, knocking backwards. Chris leaps forward. He is smiling, making animal noises, dancing from foot to foot.

Tommy, infuriated, propelled by humiliation and wounded pride, is a brute force frustration projectile, striking air where Chris once stood. Tommy’s own inertia pushes him onward, headfirst, into the gutter, helped and bruised by Jackie Chan’s blows of “gliding swan with beating wings.”

Tommy gets up, shaky. Chris’s hands, raised like choppers, cut through the wood of Tommy’s shoulders and he falls again. One huge drop kick to Tommy’s chin and he hits the ground for the last time. In pain, exhausted by his own anger and deflated ego, Tommy lies in the road, dazed and surprised.

Chris stands over his prey, ready for more, fists of steel, concentrated will, staring like a tiger eager for the kill. Jeanie, her face relieved, smiling and beautiful, throws her arms around Chris, kissing him passionately. Immediately Chris is Chris again, happy, sweet and victorious. Jackie Chan has vaporized.

Up between Chris’s legs comes a street fighter’s tour de force, Tommy’s steel-capped right boot smashes up into Chris’s testicles, hitting them like cue balls on a billiard table. Chris’s knees buckle, he falls through Jeanie’s arms, clenching himself, gasping, wincing in pain to the floor, and rolls over moaning into the fetal position.

Tommy is up on his feet sniggering, giggling, laughing aloud, proud of himself, kicking Chris twice before he swaggers off through the crowd.

Jeanie helps Chris to his feet. “Let’s go back to my place,” she whispers. “It’s not far, I’ll take care of you and we can get that ‘press release’ together for Glen.” Chris gets in her car, enhancing his reaction to the pain, enjoying Jeanie’s obvious concern. In a few minutes Chris is in Jeanie’s back-door apartment overlooking the city lights of Hollywood. She suggests he rest on the waterbed. He takes her advice, feeling the stress of the evening flow out of him. Jeanie puts a couple of glasses of Merlot on the bedside table and changes into a kimono behind the bathroom door.

Candlelight and incense fill the room. Chris feels Jeanie beside him, close and personal. Her warm body radiates through his clothes, rushing blood to his groin, forcing him to twist and turn to adjust himself. Jeanie's lips purr on his neck and her breath warms her perfume to a vortex as she unbuttons his shirt. "I'll try not to hurt you," she whispers. She unbuckles Chris's Levi's, and the love begins.

When Chris awakes, Jeanie is serving coffee with a slice of toast and a radiant smile. Chris looks up at her, sleepy-eyed, sultry, wanton, the curve of her thigh draped in white silk, the visible curve of her breast, her nipples pressing eagerly through her robe like dark flesh fingers. Chris pulls Jeanie onto the bed, smothering her in kisses and love; sighing, her body opens and she is his to do with, as he wants.

Later, Chris and Jeanie work together to create a "Press Release" for Glen. They write out a story line for *Hollywood Private Eye*, printing it on sheets of HBO letterhead that Jeanie's friend Mike has "found" on the back lot of the HBO studios.

Chris and Jeanie register the story with the Writers Guild of America. Chris phones Glen, saying his producers will fax him with an exclusive "Press Release" about the new secret series. He impresses upon him that "this is privileged information, not for general publication, and certainly not for publication in the U.S." Glen swears he will only use it for his presentation to the European magazines he has been assigned to take photographs for. He is touched that he has been entrusted with such a responsibility and rises to the occasion. "I realize you didn't have to do this for me, Chris," he says. "I appreciate all your effort on my behalf. Don't worry, your secrets are safe with me."

Chris feels bad leading Glen on, but he faxes him the "press release" anyway.

Glen reads the press release, smiling and shaking his head with amusement. "This is a funny show," he tells Chris on the phone. "Congratulations – this is great! You'll be all over Europe." He proudly parcels up his photographs of Chris and the "press release" and sends them overnight to the five major European magazines.

"Glen bought it," Chris tells Jeanie. "He sent the photos and the "press release" to those five magazines in Europe. I just need one of them to make the same mistake Glen made and publish the stuff and I'll be a household name before the end of the week."

The next day Chris is racing to a job on Sunset Plaza in the Jag. His cell phone rings; it's Glen. "Did you know there's two of you? The other guy's black, he's got the same name as you, Christopher Judge."

"Somebody has stolen my name!" yells Chris. "I'll see them in court!"

"No baby, this guy's legit. Apparently he's all over HBO and Channel 11 in some sci-fi series called *Stargate SG 1*. He's a black guy, he's got a raised double circle motif on his forehead."

“I know him!” raves Chris. “He ain’t me!”

“I know he ain’t you!” screams Glen. “More to the point, you ain’t him! I should have done more research. That black guy, that’s the guy those magazines wanted me to photograph, not you!”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“Four out of five of the magazines I sent the stuff to have called back pissed off because I’ve sent them photos of the wrong man.” Glen is hysterical. “Nobody knows your face over there! You took advantage of me. They’ll never give me another assignment. I get paid for delivering the right photos of the right person. I blew it and I really needed that money bad and I put so much effort in –”

Luckily for Chris the cell phone dropped out of range. “What a pity,” says Chris, shaking his head, slipping into Stallone. “I could have been a contender.”

An hour later the cell rings; it’s Glen again. “Are you sitting down?” he asks.

“Well I can’t drive standing up, can I?” mocks Chris.

“You’ll never guess,” Glen is near ecstatic. “*Series TV*, the last of the five European magazines, the one with the largest circulation and international distribution, called me a few minutes ago saying they will publish a huge spread featuring my photos of you and full details about your original new series *and* I’m getting paid! They’re wiring the money; it’s a done deal!”

Chris pulls the Jag over. He is speechless; his mind and emotions explode in his head. A lifetime’s dreams of fame and prosperity rush to fill his expectations like a Biblical flood filling a landscape.

“I didn’t mention the other magazines,” says Glen, breathlessly apologetic, “or that slight misunderstanding about your identity. There was no way, I needed the money.”

“Thank you, God!” Chris raves. “Glen, my son, you are an absolute genius.”

“Thanks, Chris,” cheers Glen, adding “we can check the Internet Sunday night, the new issue of *Series TV* goes online then.”

Sunday night, Chris, Jeanie, Glen and Pete crowd around Pete’s huge computer setup, beers in hand. You can hear each one of them hold their breath as Pete pumps in the web address for *Series TV*.

The website banner headline reads “Welcome to Series TV, The Premier Fan Magazine of European and American Television.”

Chris's face fills the magazine's cover. "Oh my good Almighty God, look at this!" yells Pete. "You're famous, Chris! You made it!"

Chris is flabbergasted, speechless. Jeanie is kissing him all over his face. "You did it, you did it, you're amazing, baby!"

Glen is blown away and boggled, looking scared and apprehensive. "What have I done?" he moans. "My reputation, I'm finished." He falls back into his chair. Pete passes him a half-bottle of beer; he drinks it down like lemonade.

Under Chris's photo it says "Christopher Judge, Star of *Stargate SG 1*, the phenomenal American sci-fi series breaking popularity records with audiences worldwide! Look inside for details of his crazy new series!"

"Jesus Christ, look at this!" screams Chris. "How many languages does this go out in?"

"Six," moans Glen apologetically, almost in tears. "It's published in forty-four countries, with a circulation of well over a million, a readership of three million, *and I'm ruined.*"

"Far from it, Glen, my son," says Chris. "We are all going to benefit from this one. Come on, Jeanie, let's see how much of our press release they published.

"It's all there, every last word of it," says Jeanie. "What a writer you are, Chris, they fell for it, every line!"

"You lying bastards! You had me over!" says Glen, all upset. "You knew about the other guy all along."

"Forget it!" orders Chris. "Look at the number of hits this site is generating. Is that three hundred thousand?"

"Sure is," says Pete, "and climbing by the minute."

"Look at the poll here," says Chris. "These people are logging on either pissed off about the Stargate mistaken identity thing or they want to see my new series. Please, Peter, download every relevant bit of that magazine."

Chris "becomes" Elmer Gantry, the movie's famous preacher man. "Spread the word, let it ring out all across the land, to all people in need, whether crippled by pain or crippled by circumstance. Receive the word of the Lord in Jesus' name, and your life will turn from water into wine. You are abundant and you are prosperous, in Jesus' name! Give your love through generous donations to this church and I will save those poor souls in need, in Jesus' name. Fill your pledge plate with your financial offerings, pile it high to heaven"

“You’ll be going to heaven if you don’t snap out of it,” laughs Jeanie.

“I’m going,” says Elmer, falling asleep on the couch, like someone switched out his light.

Monday morning, Chris is still on the couch. He’s watching a taped edition of *Sixty Minutes* featuring Ed Bradley. Using the remote, he plays the tape forward and backwards repeatedly over the segment. As he watches, he moves around, gestures, twitches, stretches and talks aloud, mimicking the figure on the screen. When Chris gets off the sofa, he has “become” his own version of Ed Bradley. Reaching for the phone, Ed calls the president of HBO, Dennis Trembell. “According to information we received this morning, a black actor, Christopher Judge, a series regular starring in your *Stargate SG 1* series, has been replaced midseason, for no reason, by an unknown white actor with the same name. You know about this?” asks Ed. “There’s a huge public uproar. You can’t just dump a man like this – he’s a role model, a hero to black people all over the globe. Dang it, Dennis, I like the man, do you hear me, Dennis?” “I don’t know what you’re talking about, Ed!” moans Trembell.

“You need to see what’s happening. Better check out the web immediately,” suggests Ed. “*Series TV Magazine*, the largest teen fanzine in the world, launched the story. Presently their website is receiving over three hundred thousand hits a day, protesting the loss of their beloved Teal’c to this inexperienced white actor. Is this some kind of racial profiling? Please, Dennis, check it out. I’ll call back later. And congratulations on that new series of yours, a Hollywood private eye with a multiple personality disorder. That’s a good one, Dennis. You guys are great – *The Sopranos*, *Deadwood*, I don’t know how you come up with such great ideas.”

Dennis Trembell, confused and concerned, puts down the phone and logs onto *Series TV*. As he does, he calls James Whitmore, his Director of Programming.

“Yes, sir, I hear you. I’ve just gotten off the phone with Jeanie, a reporter from *People Magazine*, and she told me much the same scenario. Yes, sir,” he laughs, “I saw the *Series TV* website; looks like we’ve got another hit series on our hands, eh?”

“That’s not funny, Whitmore!”

Glen burns up the phone lines repeating the “Ed Bradley story” to a line producer he knows at *That’s Hollywood*. The man seems very interested. He will check into it more and get back to him.

Pete is exhausted, having worked all night tracking down every possible entertainment, TV and media company he could find. Using his programming and hacking abilities, he sends email into each company’s computerized internal mailbox distribution center, instructing it to send the *Series TV* article to every member of the company. In a matter of hours, everyone who is anyone in Hollywood is aware of the new HBO series and the

uproar over the “replacement” of Teal’c by the white Christopher Judge. Who *is* this white guy, anyway?

Late morning, Bill Kerwin phones. He gets the machine. “Hey, baby, what the fuck is happening? My office is swamped. I’ve got people up the kazoo, in my face, up my nose, all raving on about Christopher Judge and *Stargate*. I tell ‘em I don’t know the guy. They ignore me and start through my filing cabinet. They want his home address and telephone number and I keep telling ‘em it’s a mistake, I don’t represent no black Chris Judge, only a white Christopher Judges, and they go berserk saying that it’s you they want and they show me this magazine and your face is all over fucking Europe! Last I heard, some photographer wanted to take your picture. Now you’re starring in a new HBO series and I know nothing about any of it! Where’s your fucking loyalty? I’m your agent. I’ve worked hard for you, Chris. Just today, I’ve had calls from producers, directors, casting agents and a few girls. I even had a death threat; thank God it was a wrong number!” The machine cuts him off.

A gaggle of news reporters with microphones and cameras push and jostle, attempting to get through Chris’s apartment door. They call to him through the bathroom window. “Just a couple of questions, Mr. Judge?” Chris’s answering machine takes message after message. Glen is on his cellular. “*That’s Hollywood!*” he yells, nodding to the others. “Yes, sir, *That’s Hollywood* wants to put you on national TV, Chrissy Baby. You’ll be a celebrity tonight. Instant fame! They’re on their way over, Leeza Gibbons and the whole crew.”

“Who shall I be?” Chris moans in panic. “Bogart? Nixon? Tootsie? Bond? Jerry Maguire? It’s show business; they’re going to want me to ‘be’ someone special.”

“You *are* special,” interrupts Jeanie, all dewy-eyed. “You’re amazing. You’re the one that created this whole charade, and you WON! Don’t you ever say you’re not special. Your passion got all of us going, you made us the stars you think we are.”

“Cool, dude,” says Pete, offering Chris his hand. “You’s the star, dude.”

“And you’re a lying son of a bitch,” says Glen, laughing, happy all over his face.

The *That’s Hollywood* team burst through the front door of the apartment. “Here comes the Cavalry,” cheers Glen. Rolling up a magazine, he “sounds the charge,” using the magazine like a bugle.

Immediately, Chris becomes Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*. “I’m not taking any more from you, lassie,” he yells in a Scottish brogue. In front of him is a fabulous vision of American beauty. She is a true friend you know so well, who doesn’t know you from Adam.

“Hi, I’m Leeza Gibbons, pleased to meet you. . . You are?”

“My name is Wallace, ma’am, William Wallace.”

Jeanie jumps between Wallace and Leeza, trying to laugh it off. “He’s rehearsing, he really gets into his characters, doesn’t he?” She ushers Chris into the bathroom, smiling back at Leeza as she goes.

Glen leaps in. “Right this way, Leeza. I’m Glen Le Furman. I started this whole thing.”

“So you’re the one responsible?” says Leeza.

“Not really, Leeza,” Glen says timidly.

“It was me,” says Chris proudly, walking out of the bathroom as himself. “I take full responsibility.”

The next night, *That’s Hollywood* plays on Chris’s television. Leeza Gibbons, television’s most glamorous announcer, in a ‘take me seriously, I’m really a slut’ dress, speaks directly into the camera. Behind her are several large photos, one of a black man the others of a white man.

“These photographs,” says Leeza, pointing to the photos of the white man, “are of Christopher *Judges*, an unknown character actor living in Hollywood. They were sent to five European glossy magazines by a U.S. photographer as publicity photos of *this* man,” she points to the photo of the black man. “This is Christopher Judge, who stars as Teal’c in the fabulously successful HBO TV series *Stargate SG 1*. In Europe, this series is as popular as *Star Trek*.

“Four of the magazines spotted the mistake and rejected the photos out of hand. However, the publishing editor at *Series TV*, Europe’s largest-selling fan magazine, made the same mistake as the photographer who originally took the photos. She had not seen the show and assumed the white actor was Christopher Judge, star of the *Stargate SG 1* series,. She published the wrong photos throughout Europe, both in *Series TV* magazine and on its very popular website. To make matters worse, *Series TV* also published with the photos a three-page article about a nonexistent new HBO comedy-drama series starring Christopher Judge called *Hollywood Private Eye*.

“The article was actually a hoax created and written by Christopher *Judges*, the white actor, as a means of authenticating and capitalizing on ‘his opportunity of a lifetime’ brought about by the photographer’s mistake in not properly identifying the *Stargate* star when he shot the original photos.

“In writing the article, Christopher *Judges* hoped one of he magazines would make the same mistake as the photographer and publish everything, *and they did*. Now, not only

is Christopher *Judges'* face as famous as the man whose identity he 'borrowed,' but the new 'series' he created has fans worldwide crying out to see it!

"There has been a huge public uproar amongst *Stargate* fans throughout Europe. Fans of the black actor, several black civil rights groups, and the actor himself are alleging racial discrimination. HBO is suing *Series TV* magazine and trying to shut down their website, which is presently receiving almost one million hits a day. European and American entertainment media are both 'hot' on the story. For further coverage, let's go over to our Paris correspondent, Alicia St. Croix."

Alicia steps out of the evening shadows of a misty alleyway wrapped in a patent-leather trench coat, clicking her high heels on the cobbled Parisian street. Her throaty existential voice echoes in the cold night air. "There is only one question in Paris tonight. How did a completely unknown American actor find instant fame and fortune throughout Europe and America without ever leaving his apartment in Hollywood? The answers tonight come from the offices of the internationally famous French magazine *Series TV*, where everyone is talking about a huge publicity mistake made by the magazine regarding Christopher Judge, star of the weekly science fiction series *Stargate SG 1*."

A video clip of a stern French woman with "Lorette Marceau – Publishing Editor, *Series TV*" written under her red, embarrassed face, speaks angrily to the camera. "Zis magazine's starff 'ad 'eard very much about ze 'it show *Stargate SG 1*, but no one had ever zeen ze show. We 'ad to 'ave ze story immediately, so we publish ze article from zefalse HBO press release sent to our offices by ze American photographer. We did zis wizout checking on what Christopher Judge and ze Teal'c character was like, and wizout checking if ze 'press release' was credible. We have been 'oaxed and made a fool of.

"We publish' ze wrong photographs of ze wrong man. We are so very sorry, we make ze incorrect assumption that zeactor waz white, when he waz black. It was our mistake, terrible, and we 'umbly apologize to ze actor, ze *Stargate SG 1* series, and ze HBO. But we 'ave 'ad ze marvelous response for zer false article about ze *Hollywood Private Eye*, a million 'its on our website in four days, everyone is thrilled to see it soon we hope. .and oo la la, ze the ladies, they love ze Christopher *Judges*."

"And the black Christopher Judge, what about him?" Alicia chimes in.

"I do not know him," says the editor. "I never zaw ze *Stargate SG 1*."

"This is Alicia St. Croix, Paris, France, returning you to Leeza in Hollywood."

"We asked HBO for comment," reports Leeza, "they confirmed their intention to sue *Series TV* and assured us they had no *Hollywood Private Eye* series in production or planning. When we requested an interview with Christopher Judge it was denied, but his publicist made the following statement:"

“Mr. Judge has been misrepresented, both by these photographs and the published magazine article. He feels that both undermine his race and reputation, and he will not enhance this unknown actor’s claim to fame by dignifying this matter with any further response.”

The TV in Chris’s living room blasts out commercials. Chris is cracking up, laughing hysterically. He’s holding onto himself so as not to fall off the sofa. Jeanie, Pete and Glen are hysterical, and their joint reactions and congratulatory contortions push a celebratory bottle of champagne off the sofa, exploding it in a cascading, sparkling geyser across the hardwood floor of Chris’ apartment.

Leeza is back on the screen. “The one man who would speak to us was Christopher *Judges*, the man whose photos and phony ‘Hollywood Private Eye press release’ were published all across Europe.”

Chris *Judges*, smiling and relaxed, stands outside his apartment, peering into the camera. “It’s been a good day for you,” says Leeza.

“Sure has,” Chris replies. “The phone hasn’t stopped ringing. I’ve had all kinds of offers from agents, producers and fans alike. Everyone wants to know when the *Hollywood Private Eye* series is going to air. I tell them it’s in the planning stages but they say they want to see it now! Moments ago I got a call from the people at the William Morris Agency. They want to represent me as a writer and an actor. It’s funny when you think about it. I’ve become famous for being someone I’m not, not because I’ve got *almost* the same name as a star of a TV series. This world is crazy.”

“That’s Hollywood!” says Leeza as the show goes to its final commercial.

The headline in *Variety* reads: “*Bidding war over Hollywood Private Eye series. Today Dennis Trembell, president of HBO, bought the rights to the controversial Hollywood Private Eye series for \$1.5 million. Christopher Judges, creator of the series, and his team will both perform in the show and act as script consultants. The show will go into immediate production, with a feature film planned for the fall of next year.*”

Overnight, Chris, Jeanie, Glen and Pete are international celebrities featured in every tabloid and entertainment TV show in America.

When *Hollywood Private Eye* premieres it is an instant success, both in the U.S. and throughout Europe.

Once again, Chris’s face fills the cover of *Series TV* magazine and, of course, Glen took the photo. The banner headline reads:

“Christopher Judges says, “Be the Star They Think You Are!”

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