



## Whose Job is it Anyways?

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The lights go up. There's a hush. The cameras are already rolling. A man from behind the main camera shouts, "We're LIVE!, in 5...4...3...2..." The non-cheesiest band I could afford kicks into it. Some saxes, a guitar solo and an ex-crooner who's now my co-host, Shakey Jake. They would have been cool maybe, 15 yrs ago, but it's good enough. I hear Shakey Jake belt out for all he's worth, "LadiesandGentleman LadiesandGentleman...LADIES AND GENNTLMAAAAAN, welcome to your FAA-vorite Game Show." His usual start. "Welcome to Whose Job is it AAAnywayszzAA?" He does a split that hits the ground right with the "zzzzAAA." Cheers, screams and various roo-haws and hee-haws commence, followed by some fist pumps. I bust out from behind the set with some fists pumps of my own and electric slide to the main podium. We're ready to start.

This whole show is pretty local. We put some kids on, quiz 'em and a few walk away with a job. No cash prizes, no Bob Barker and no beauty showing off a Kenmore. But we're in recession and jobs are hard to come by. By the time the credits roll, a local company gets some publicity, I get to act like a madman and a few contestants become gainfully employed. Everyone's happy.

"Jake! What have we got today for these boys?" I say. Co-host Shakey Jake, arches one eyebrow, then the other, then the other again. He finally pulls a curtain. Behind, a car insurance logo, Texas State Low Cost Insurance. I hear Jake start his *pitch*. He explains what the job is, what the position entails and all that jazz. And then me, you and all of your friends watching decide who deserves it. Because one of the teams we have on tonight, whoever most qualified, will walk away with a job from our featured insurance company. "Let's meet our contestants!" I say,

"Our first team is two Texas pretty boys, dukin' it for the home state! Born and raised right here in the state, contestant number one, MISTER Matt SEEEEiiiiieeerrr!!!" Contestant one strolls in. Applause is queued. This boy was *definitely* brewed locally. The belt buckle, the swagger, drawl and all. He even spit his tobacco right on the floor of the set. "His teammate ladies and gentleman, is yet another young man with potential and drive. Will he be able to prove it today? Here's Michael SIIIIIEEBererrrrrrr!!!" Contestant two strolls out to a second wave of thunderous applause.

"With team two ladies and gentleman, we decided to shake things up," I say. "Team one doesn't know it yet, but these boys are up against a few celebrities. Two *icons* of the crime fighting and automobile industry, and two close friends of mine." From behind the set, I can hear two cars, idling patiently, waiting for their cue. "With us today, holding it down for Team 2, is KITT from Knightrider and Herbie the LUUUUUUVV BUUUUG!!!"

A 1982 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am and a 60s VW Beetle roar out onto the set amidst hysteria from the crowd that makes you wonder if the building is on fire. Once the automobile smoke and older women settle down, we're *actually* ready to start.

"Let's pick on our two boys from here in state, team one." I always like to start with the underdogs. "Matt Mister Matt, tell us a little bit about yourself." Contestant one adjusts his belt buckle, which I think is an *actual* hubcap and lays down the volume thick. "I was born in a small town, Goliad, Texas. I enjoy some good hunt'in. Drink'in. But who doesn't?" A quick breath in. "Spent five years at Tex A&M in Corpus, got a Bachelor's in Business Admin, spent the past few years waitin' tables here and there, and other grunge work that's really not for me, I'm bred for more and ready to make that next step," he says with a nod and a finger to the brim of his hat. Applause queued. Nice kid. Except for the spitting. His teammate, Michael, is somewhat of the same mold, but a different texture. "Well, um, I've spent the last 6 or so months living in the back of a VW van," he starts with. Herbie interrupts with an approving \*MEEP\*. Michael nods, then continues, "As I was saying, I lived out of a van in Alaska, sort of a self-discovery

thing. I did odd-jobs before that, I have an Aeronautical engineering degree from the Embry-Riddle Daytona Beach Campus." I think to myself, who doesn't love Florida? These two boys came with a little street cred. He continues, "Originally, I'm from Austria. My father was in diplomatic service, so growing up, I spent some time in Germany, England and New York City." When he finishes, the audience rushes with applause. I notice that the 18+ female demographic is especially interested.

"Welcome back from break ladies and gentleman to Whose Job is it Anyways!" A band diddy and applause is queued. It's clear that my two automobile friends are perturbed by the lack of attention thus far. Before I can even ask, KITT offers with a digital voice from behind his grill, "*THANK-YOU HUNTER, WE'RE THRILLED TO BE ON. LIFE'S BEEN SOMEWHAT SLOW SINCE I DIDN'T GET CASTED IN BAYWAYTCH, AND THAT JERK HASSLEHOFF HUNG ME OUT TO...*" "OK then!" I interrupt. Gotta keep this classy. "Herbie you striped racer you! How have you been?" The little guy revs back and forth excitedly, flashing his lights on & off, "HONK HONK! BEEEEEOOOOWEEEEPPPPP!" Herbie can't actually talk, just various noises, but the crowd and ratings eat it up.

This episode is going pretty good so far. Michael highlighted for us some of the finer points being a pilot and landing a Cessna 172. That boy has 123 hours in the air. Not bad for someone licensed to fly planes for a little over a year now. Matt, not to be outdone, brought in a pair of antlers he took off a buck he shot a few years back. This pair is a fabled eighteen-pointer, which means this set is made up of eighteen prongs, nine on each side. Matt holds these antlers the way a mother would her only child. Apparently it's a big deal.

We've already gone around a few times to each contestant with questions as to why they're a good fit for the job at Texas State Low Cost somethingorother. Scenarios are set up and each team proposes what they'd do based on experience. The Texas boys are faring out pretty well, either because KITT is not very polite and Herbie is basically mute, or they're actually kind of qualified.

Matt is telling us, "I used to work at Water Street Oyster Bar, waiting tables, shuckin' oysters, and what I liked about it was that you never knew what a customer would be like, and..." KITT cuts in "WELL, WHEN I WAS ON THE SET WITH THE HOFF WE WOULD ALWAYS-" he stops with a pound of my fist on the podium. I smile to the crowd, reassuringly. Matt picks up where he left off, barely missing a beat, "Whether these customers were happy or pissed off, you had to serve them with a smile and make sure they left the establishment in a pleased manner. Or else, what's the point?" A quick but honest applause from the crowd, and not even queued. His teammate, Michael, our Austrian, sees an opportunity to wrap this up nicely for team one and steps up to the plate. "I used to be a team leader for FedEx, up in Massachusetts, and I was in charge of a team of drivers. I found that to manage effectively, it's important to approach the individual, and not exclusively the team as a whole to solve problems." I can see he's not afraid to address the whole audience, which is *quite* a crowd pleaser.

So we've been through the standard interview questions, a little trivia and a dance-off, jams courtesy of the house band, of which no one won. Apparently people from Texas *and* cars are pretty bad dancers. It's the end of the hour, let wrap this up. Winners of the show (thus getters of the job) think they are chosen by the public, but really I decide. That decision is often based on personal vendettas or other factors completely unrelated to the show. But I feel like these two Texas boys have earned it. They've paid some dues, gotten a little elbow grease on their pants (or chaps in Matt's case) and deserve a shot. So I give the job to Matt and Mike. Their big break. KITT is all congrats and Herbie is still really excited, all revved up, although I don't think he knows the show is actually over.

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