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The Wacky Horror Cyber Show

By

FINN KOBLER

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(THE WACKY HORROR CYBER SHOW)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-261-2

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The Wacky Horror Cyber Show was premiered by North Coast Repertory Theatre in Eureka, Calif., on Oct. 31, 2020. It was directed by Scott “Q” Marcus, Stephan Nieman and Calliope Weisman and produced by Calder Johnson and Scott “Q” Marcus.

CAST:

Fox Carney

Morgan Cox

Janice Crow-Christensen

Phillip-Charlie Daniell

Maria Escareno

Teal Fink

Brad Hader

Elisabeth Harrington

Danni Horwitz

Erin Jones

Daniel Marcus

Maleko McDonnell

Caroline McFarland

Lauren Murata

The Wacky Horror Cyber Show

CHARACTERS

Does It Have to Be a Raven?

WILMA (w): Smarmy, flirtatious Hollywood executive.

MORRIS (e): Another Hollywood executive; terrible ideas but pitches them confidently.

HERSH (e): Yet another Hollywood executive; nerdy and data-focused.

POE (m): Short for Edgar Allan Poe, classic horror author of the 19th century.

JANE (w): As in literary hero Jane Austen. Seen, but not heard.

Candy Lawyers

JUDGE (e): Resides over various lawsuits; underpaid and underappreciated.

EMMETT (m): Immature schoolboy on trial.

LEMUS (e): Suzy's lawyer.

BRAHAM (e): Emmett's lawyer.

SUZY (w): Equally childish schoolgirl who's suing Emmett for fraud.

TANNER (m): Another schoolboy. Lets his lawyer do the talking.

MIKA (w): Another schoolgirl. Same sensibilities as Tanner.

Pumpkin Hotline

PUMPKIN (w): Depressed orange plant trying to find meaning in a cruel world.

OPERATOR (w): Of the Official Pumpkin Mental Health Hotline.

CINNAMON (w): Spoiled but intimidatingly successful businesswoman; also a pumpkin.

CROOKNECK (m): Hardened and eccentric old squash; has seen a lot of evil things in his life.

GRANDPA (m): Pumpkin's grandfather; kind, wise and ready to go.

Bloody Mary

BRODY (m): Starry-eyed young professional trying to make it in the world.

MARY (w): Short for Bloody Mary from the classic urban legend; ghostlike and sinister on the outside, but humane and bubbly on the inside.

Tinder Box

KYLE (m): A romantic zombie with low self-esteem.

CHALYN (w): Kyle's supportive older human sister.

Lady Killer

DARCY (w): Innocent girl hiding from an intruder.

DISPATCHER (w): Emergency responder; newly single and resents it.

SLASHER (m): In Darcy's house; plans to kill her; only heard, never seen.

Howling Hannah

COUNSELOR (e): Guidance counselor of Monster High. Hannah is his/her favorite student by a long shot.

HANNAH (w): The star haunter of Monster High who doesn't want to haunt in college.

A VOICE (e): Of a righteously indignant anthropomorphic salad.

Hornet's Nest

HOST (e): Of *Hornet's Nest*, the virtual capitalist reality show; only heard, never seen.

OVERLY NICE ONE (m): Millionaire more concerned with his public image than his finances.

PRETTY ONE (w): Another millionaire; would be a billionaire if she didn't spend so much on plastic surgery.

JERK (e): Cruel, lippy billionaire with a massive ego.

SANE ONE (e): The only economically savvy billionaire keeping *Hornet's Nest* on the air.

NOTCH (e): Young businessperson hoping for an investment.

SHAWL (e): Notch's business partner.

ENTREPRENEUR (e): Another businessperson.

Sanguine

OPAL (w): Amber's friend.

AMBER (w): Melancholy high-school senior.

CELESTE (w): Amber's mom and a recently bitten vampire.

The Wacky Horror Cyber Show

Does It Have to Be a Raven?

(Cameras on. POE is on a video pitch meeting with HERSH, WILMA and MORRIS. The three latter are all Hollywood execs: plastered smiles and backhanded compliments that sit about as well with the earnest “Annabel Lee” writer as you’d think.)

WILMA. Look at him! There he is: Edgar! Eddy! Handsome as ever.

HERSH. Mr. Poe, we are delighted to be chatting with you today, though deeply disappointed you can’t be with us in person.

POE. I don’t like it either. But as I stated before, for the protection of my loved ones who have been diagnosed with chronic tuberculosis, I must keep myself quarantined.

WILMA. Sure, I’ll bet. *(Wink.)* I remember I caught a case of bad “tuberculosis” too after a party at that cutie Charles Dickens’ house. *(Another wink.)*

POE. That’s not me putting it coyly. My wife has been coughing blood for the past three days. It’s very hard to—

MORRIS. Yeah. Yeah. You’re busy. We’re busy. We get it. Let’s get down to brass tax and crass facts: we love your new poem “The Raven.”

WILMA. The way you write is so brooding and intimate. It’s not plot heavy. That’s what makes it WONDERFUL.

POE. Thank you.

MORRIS. Poe, we see a big future for you: a million-dollar movie deal, your name on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

We just have one question before we go ahead and publish this poem. Who's your audience?

POE. I'm not sure what you mean.

HERSH. According to our focus groups, fifty percent of readers loved your work, but the other fifty percent found this piece to be *(Pulls out a binder of data. Reads.)* "A pretentious little poopoo kaka dumpster fire that they never want to read again." *(Closes binder.)* Their words, not mine.

POE. They actually said that?

WILMA. I mean, I can't say I'm surprised. The way you write is so brooding and intimate. It's not plot heavy. That's what makes it TERRIBLE.

MORRIS. Look, we're cool. We're hip. We know what's bully, what's lit, what's yasss.

POE. I don't think two of those words have been invented yet—

MORRIS. DID I INTERRUPT WHEN YOU WERE TALKING?! My point is we know what kids like.

HERSH *(pulls out binder again)*. According to data from 1836 to 1840, there was a negative correlation between children's attention spans and narrative poetry. And this is a narrative poem. Meaning if we want to reach our target demographic, revisions need to be made.

POE. I'm not sure I agree with that.

MORRIS. So you hate children? Is that what you're saying?

POE. N—no. I just think that my writing style is fine as is.

HERSH. Well, as I just stated, fifty percent of people don't, so are you gonna be a team player and help bump up that number or walk away like the gangly pathetic twerp you are?

POE. Excuse me! You have no right to speak to me that way!

HERSH. I'm just quoting how two-thirds of men aged eighteen to thirty-five described you in our first-impressions, multiple-choice survey.

POE. Multiple choice? So you MADE THAT an option people could describe me as?

WILMA. Eddie, you gorgeous, tortured little soul. We're on the same team here, man. Before you come for us, we just have a few teensy-weensy little changes we want to make to your piece.

POE (*sigh*). What did you have in mind?

MORRIS. So, idea—and you may hate this—does it HAVE to be a raven?

POE. It's the titular character.

MORRIS. But ravens are dumb.

HERSH. Yeah. (*Pulling out binder.*) Research has shown that people found ravens to be “hostile and off-putting.”

POE. That's ... literally the entire point of—

MORRIS. Idea—and you may hate this—but what if you replaced the raven with a parakeet? Could this poem be about a parakeet?

WILMA. I LOVE parakeets! They're cute. They're goofy. Who knows what they're gonna say next?

MORRIS. It's flyin' around repeatin' everything the guy says. “Squaaaaawk! Nice weather, huh? Squaaaaawk! I hope we can annex Texas! Squaaaaawk! I miss my dead lover Lenore!”—which is, honestly, not a name I'm sold on, but hey, you're the writer, right?!

WILMA. Lenore is the name of a fat, ugly hag. I'm glad she died.

HERSH. You're not alone. When we compared people who read this poem to people who didn't, the readers showed a much higher likelihood of wanting to scissor-kick that hideous cow right in her stupid mouth.

POE. WHAT?! That's—how would you even measure that?!

MORRIS. Speaking of hating uggos, Poe, another idea—and you may hate this—we really think that you should focus on making the narrator more attractive.

WILMA. Yeah! If I don't know he's hot, how can I know if I'm rooting for him?

POE. Because physical attractiveness doesn't determine literary merit!

MORRIS. HA! Yeah right. Idea—and you may hate this—but what if we put a whole stanza in at the beginning describing this guy physically? “As I sat at night, hunky and shredded, devastated since I'm still unwedded ... ”

WILMA. Love it!

POE. You guys are IDIOTS! You're RUINING the greatest thing I've ever written!

MORRIS (*completely tuning him out*). We could get some dreamy, sensitive type to play the narrator like that e-boy composer, Franz Liszt?

WILMA. HUBBA! HUBBA! Momma's on board with that.

HERSH. Plus, he appeals to women in just about every demographic. And his saturation-level is so low.

POE. This piece provided me an outlet as I watch all the people I care about be consumed by the Red Death! BUT ALL YOU MONSTERS CARE ABOUT IS MEETING YOUR QUARTERLIES!

HERSH. Good point. Our quarterlies are actually fine in October. It's July where we have trouble.

POE. ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?!

MORRIS. Then, idea—and you may hate this—but what if we switched gears and, instead of marketing this for Halloween, changed the weird, horror tone into a summer blockbuster?

WILMA. I like that. Chic. Sexy.

MORRIS. Another idea—and you may hate this—but it doesn't even have to be a real parakeet. What if it's like a robot parakeet from an alien planet and our smokin' hot narrator has to fight it off to save Earth? "The Parakeet: Operation Doomsday" by Edgar Allan Poe.

POE. I DO HATE THAT!

WILMA. I LOVE THAT! I'll make some calls.

POE. DON'T! DON'T MAKE CALLS! *I AM NO LONGER INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH YOU ON THIS PROJECT!*

(That finally gets them to shut up. The execs soften, slightly humiliated.)

HERSH. Woowooow. I'm gonna be honest. That really hurts my feelings.

POE. You literally called my work a "poopoo kaka dumpster fire."

HERSH. That was business. You're making this personal.

WILMA. Yeah. I'm no longer attracted to you. I used to think you were cute in an unhinged, depressed sociopathic kinda way. But now you're just depressed, unhinged and—what's the word I'm looking for?

MORRIS. Sociopathic?

WILMA. Right.

MORRIS. Idea—and you may hate this—get out of our sight. We never want to see you again. You're wasting your life, and I hope your career is over from this day forward.

POE. How am I the mean one after you say things like—
MORRIS. Bye.

(They hang up on POE. A new person enters the video chat: JANE—very regal.)

WILMA. There she is! The beautiful Jane Austen!

MORRIS. Jane, we LOVED *Pride and Prejudice*. We can't wait to get it on shelves. We just have one teeny tiny note: does the main character have to be a woman?

(Cameras off.)

Candy Lawyers

(Cameras on. SUZY and EMMETT, their lawyers, LEMUS and BRAHAM, respectively, and a slightly impatient JUDGE with a gavel are all online, and, judging by their expressions, this is a pretty serious litigation.)

JUDGE. OK, I officially call this lawsuit of Suzy from Surrey Street v. Emmett from Wally Way back to order! As we all know, Emmett, the defendant, has been accused of doing some illegal candy trading. However, this may be a short meeting because the plaintiff made me aware a deal was brokered during the recess.

EMMETT *(under his breath)*. Hardly a recess. There wasn't even a kickball.

LEMUS. That is correct, your honor. We are prepared to scrub this whole thing off of Emmett's record in exchange for ... *(Reading off a paper.)* "four York peppermint patties, a full set of Dum Dums, and all the homemade peanut brittle from Mrs. Chayefsky's house.

BRAHAM. Pfft. We reject this insultingly low offer.

EMMETT. I can give you two packs of Smarties and all my black licorice. That's it.

SUZY (*whiny in that way only children are*). Whaaaaaat??
Noooooooo!!! You're being so unfair!

EMMETT. Parker told me on the playground last week that you liked black licorice!

SUZY. I do like black licorice! But I'm the only one in Mrs. Van Geldren's class who does. You're not losing anything of value.

LEMUS. Your honor, as my client has stated, she is greatly misfortuned with a taste for black licorice.

JUDGE. I understand, plaintiff. Black licorice sucks, but what's your point?

LEMUS. The defendant is taking advantage of her less-evolved taste buds. This is a clear display of ableism—

BRAHAM. Objection! That is a grossly large leap of logic. We are not the ACLU.

JUDGE. Sustained.

EMMETT (*to SUZY*). You accused me of ableism?

SUZY. You traded candy unfairly. Don't be a butt-chewer.

EMMETT. If I'm a butt-chewer, you're a turd-smeller!

SUZY. SHUT UP!

EMMETT. I DON'T SHUT UP, I GROW UP. AND WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I THROW UP! AND THEN YOUR MOMMA COMES AND LICKS IT UP—

JUDGE. ORDER! ORDER! Can we please just keep this moving? Plaintiff ...

LEMUS. Permission to question the defendant, your honor? (*The JUDGE nods affirmatively.*) Mr. Quinn, you made a trade with my client at 9:58 p.m. this Halloween: her full-sized Snickers for three small boxes of grape Nerds ...

BRAHAM. Objection! Your honor, we know the stakes. This is a waste of everyone's time.

JUDGE. Overruled!

LEMUS. So, being the noble, generous young lady she is, my client let you devour her bar, TRUSTING that you would give her the Nerds when she asked ... but when that moment came, you didn't give her grape Nerds, did you? You gave her three boxes of RAISINS! That weren't even chocolate-covered!

(SUZY starts sobbing immediately, as if reliving a horrid trauma.)

BRAHAM. Objection! Your honor, my client has already refuted these points. He thought raisins fit into the grape-tasting sweets category. He didn't know any better and without documentation of the candy-trading constitution in front of him, it is unjust to assume he would've understood this.

JUDGE. Sustained!

LEMUS. Emmett. Your parents and I hire the same cleaning service ...

EMMETT. So?

LEMUS. Olga, employee of the month at "You Have It Maid" said she found THESE in your parents' wastebasket ...

(LEMUS holds up two Almond Joy wrappers. EMMETT's brows start to furrow. Gasps from the peanut gallery.)

EMMETT. S—so what? Those are two candy bar wrappers. Big whoop. I don't care.

LEMUS. Precisely! You DON'T care. Emmett, you would say you were tantrum-free this Halloween, correct?

EMMETT. Y—yeah. And?

LEMUS. Every year, millions of kids start trading candy with their friends after trick-or-treating. And every year, novice candy traders are devastated that their Mounds and Almond Joys are taken away by their mothers and fathers. It's the mother and fathers' commission check for walking their stupid kids and their ugly friends all around the neighborhood. In certain Wisconsin counties, it's even legal for peanut M&M's to be covered under the mom and dad service fee. Luckily, that's not a federal law thanks to *(Pulling out a notebook.)* this petition. The link was shared through Club Penguin to children across the country. It has over sixty-thousand signatures. Including ... Emmett. Quinn. From Wally Way.

EMMETT *(panicking)*. I—it's another Emmett from Wally Way! He lives in Canada with my girlfriend! It's all a lie! The dog ate my homework!

LEMUS. The mom and dad service fee is a very complex legislative rule. Most nonunion candy traders wouldn't even have known it existed. Did you lie about how much you knew when it came to candy trading, Emmett?

EMMETT. Only a little.

LEMUS. So you DID know that grape Nerds are several tiers over raisins! You probably even knew that some places don't even keep raisins on the candy trading bracket!

EMMETT. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, OK?! I grew up on the wrong side of Summit Park! Yes. I lied about the raisins! But Surrey Street's right next to Peachland Estates. Before I met up with Suzy and her brother, she had already gone to all the big houses. She had four Charleston Chews in her pillowcase by the time I arrived! FOUR! You know what I got? Nothing more than unwrapped candy corn and a carton of candy cigarettes! My stepdad said, "Ayyyyy smoke up, Johnny!" *(Off everyone's looks.)* John's my middle name.

EVERYONE ELSE. Ohhhhhhhhhhh.

EMMETT. Maybe I am a monster. Or maybe I'm just a kid who wants candy trading to be fair for everyone! Not just the kids with the Scooby-Doo lunchboxes whose parents buy them *Sherlock Gnomes* on Blu-Ray. But for the hand-me-down kids who play four square until the ball pops and the street lights go on.

LEMUS (*softly, almost regretfully*). No further questions, your honor.

JUDGE. Thank you, plaintiff. I've come to a decision. Emmett Quinn, for the crime of fraudulent candy trading, is found ... GUILTY.

SUZY. YES!

BRAHAM (*to EMMETT*). Sorry, kid.

EMMETT. It's OK. I know you tried your best.

JUDGE. However ... (*EMMETT's eyes light up again.*) Emmett Quinn is correct. The candy-trading system IS unjust. And, before any union candy trading may take place in the future, the chart must be reconstructed! This meeting is adjourned!

EMMETT. Thank you, your honor.

(Cameras off for SUZY and EMMETT. Two new children, TANNER and MIKA, appear on the screen.)

JUDGE. All right, next, we have a defamation case. Plaintiff Tanner from Boris Boulevard has accused defendant Mika of public humiliation.

BRAHAM. Your honor, this is a huge misunderstanding. My client simply came up to Tanner during lunch and asked him to spell iCup.

(Cameras off.)