

**Action News:
Now With 10% More Action!**
by Jonathan Rand

jonathanrand.com
jr@jonathanrand.com
@MrJonathanRand

Cast of Characters

VOICEOVER

BABS

JIM

SOLOMON

DORIS

JAY

PHONE HUSBAND

PHONE WIFE

KEVIN

OLIVIA

TERRY

BRODY

GRETCHEN

AVERY

ZELDA

JEREMIAH

BROKE PERSON

PETER

TABITHA

PANTS MODEL

JOSH

NADIA

JOSEPH

OLD MAN

Casting Note: The play can be performed with four actors – Jim, Babs, and two actors who play all other characters (perhaps with simple costume changes, like a hat or fake mustache).

Place

A news desk and various remote locations – all can be suggested minimally

Author notes

- The pace should be fast – really fast.
- The more the anchors and correspondents sound like actual vapid TV personalities, the better.
- If anything seems so technical that it's out of your budget, fake it.
- Shrink or expand the cast however you like, and assign any gender to any role.

Dedication

For CFR - one for the Thumb

Action News: Now With 10% More Action!

by Jonathan Rand

(Newscast intro music plays.)

VOICEOVER. It's 5:59 and you're watching WOMG¹ Action News, Crazytown's News Leader. And now, *your* Action News news team.

BABS. Good evening, I'm Babs Buttlebee.

JIM. And I'm Jim Pickles. Thanks for joining us at WOMG Action News – Crazytown's *only* newscast that starts at 5:59, therefore delivering *your* news...*first*.

BABS. We are coming to you live from our new home here at Studio Nine, a brand-new facility that features state-of-the art weather systems, world-class touchscreen technology, and a mini-fridge.

JIM. Tonight's top story: Puppies. They can be adorable, but also deadly.

BABS. For more on this exclusive story we bring you *live* to South Crazytown with Solomon Spraytan. Solomon?

(SOLOMON holds a puppy.)

SOLOMON. Thanks, Babs. This little fella's name is Patches, and he is just as sweet as it gets. His little button nose alone could make a grown man – MY FACE!!! IT'S MAULING MY BEAUTIFUL FACE!!!

(The puppy suddenly began mauling him.)

BABS. Terrific report, Solomon.

JIM. And now it's time for World Wide Weather with meteorologist Doris Doppleflop.

DORIS. Thanks, Jim. With our brand-new, state-of-the-art weather system, you'll notice that not only do all the cartoon suns now wear high-def sunglasses, but all our forecasting has become *one hundred percent* accurate.

JIM. That's a relatively high percentage, Doris.

DORIS. Jim, it's almost the highest. *(Indicating on the screen:)* Now if you'll look right here in the area where our studio is located, you'll see the system telling us with one hundred percent accuracy that right now it's 85 degrees with sunny skies. Well, Jim – I guess we should hit the beach!!

JIM. Doris, you *do* realize our building is in the middle of the worst snowstorm in years.

DORIS. No, that's impossible.

JIM. Doris, the snow has literally trapped us in the building.

¹ For U.S. productions west of the Mississippi, change WOMG to KOMG. Outside the U.S., use an aptly formatted local news call name.

DORIS. No, it says here it's 85 degrees.

JIM. Doris, you came to work in a sled.

DORIS. I am bad at my job.

JIM. Doris Doppelflop with World Wide Weather!

DORIS. Don't forget your sunscreen!!

BABS. Breaking news in religion: A source by the name of Uncle Gary tells us that a priest, a rabbi, and a minister have walked into a bar. We'll reveal the shocking conclusion at eleven.

DEEP-VOICED VOICEOVER. CRIME WATCH!

JIM. That deep voice that just said Crime Watch means it's time...for *Crime Watch*.

BABS. For the latest on crime in *your* neighborhood, we take you *live* to our crime specialist, Jay Walker.

JAY. Okay you guys: Like ten minutes ago I was watching a rerun of "Cops"? – I'm not watching it right now 'cause I'm watching "Real Housewives" – but ten minutes ago on "Cops" they were chasing this dude down the street, and he had a mullet, and it was awesome.

DEEP-VOICED VOICEOVER. CRIME WATCH!

JIM. Thanks, Deep Voice.

BABS. And now a word from our sponsor.

(Cell phone rings; PHONE HUSBAND answers it.²)

PHONE HUSBAND. Hey, honey!

PHONE WIFE. I want a divorce.

VOICEOVER. AT&T – Never miss a call.

JIM. And we're back!

BABS. Now for the latest on the Apocalypse, we bring you *live* to Kevin O'Geddon from his living room couch.

KEVIN. It's a futon.

BABS. Kevin, what can you tell us about your brand-new, state-of-the-art Apocalypse Machine?

(The Apocalypse Machine is a homemade, hastily thrown together assortment of random, interconnected items.)

KEVIN. Well, it's...quite sophisticated... it uh... this red light here connects to uhh, this thing over here, which sort of links over here to this doodad, which connects tooooo...the Bible.

BABS. Kevin, any word yet on whether the end of the days is upon us?

(KEVIN lifts a wire or pokes at something.)

KEVIN. No.

BABS. Thanks, Kevin. We'll check back in with you later in the broadcast.

² This ad or any of the others can happen entirely in voiceover.

JIM. Next up: According to some scientists in long white lab coats, there is a groundbreaking new way to cut down on cavities. Our own Olivia Flossboss filed this report.

(OLIVIA holds up a microphone to TERRY's mouth as he nonchalantly brushes his teeth as anyone would. OLIVIA is focused and fascinated.)

JIM. Remarkable.

BABS. Turning to Crazytown politics: the election is heating up faster than you can say McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act.

JIM. *(Fast:)* McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act!

BABS. Even faster than that.

JIM. *(So fast it's barely understandable:)* Mccainfeingoldbipartisancampaignreformact!

BABS. Precisely that fast.

JIM. Wow.

BABS. For an exclusive analysis of the latest polls, we take you to *live* to Brody Pollman who is standing by with WOMG's brand-new, state-of-the-art Touchscreen of Technology.

(BRODY stands by a digital screen – or a projection or poster – that displays a colorful map.)

BRODY. Thanks, Babs. Here at WOMG Action News, we take a great deal of pride in being on the forefront of innovation, which is why we are the only Crazytown news station with this amazing new Touchscreen of Technology. Jim may have mentioned that it's state-of-the-art, but it also happens to be world-class. Now watch closely: First I'll double-tap here on the map to zoom in on voters from the eighth district and then drag and drop here... *(Nothing happens on the screen. Then simply:)* Yeah, it doesn't work.

BABS. Thanks, Brody!

JIM. Now, to see first-hand what the people are saying about this political *firestorm*, we take you *live* to Pickwick Park with our very own Gretchen Reporterface.

(GRETCHEN is standing by AVERY, who holds a baseball bat.)

GRETCHEN. Thanks, Jim. I'm here with members of the community to take the *pulse* of what historically could be an historic day in history. *(To AVERY:)* Excuse me, do you mind telling us who you voted for in today's election?

AVERY. I'm seven.

GRETCHEN. Back to you.

BABS. Breaking news in fashion: this year's hottest trend: skinny jeans for newborns. *(A bell rings.)*

JIM. You know what that sound is – it's the WOMG Dinner Bell! Which means I've got a question for our viewers: Whoooooo's hungry?

BABS. Does that mean what I *think* it means?

JIM. It *should*, since you've worked here for years and ought to know by now!

BABS. I was being rhetorical!

JIM. I don't know what that word means!

BABS. Neither do I!

JIM. The dinner bell means it's time for Cook Or Be Cooked with our very own Zelda Chickenfoot.

(ZELDA and JEREMIAH wear aprons and chef hats and stand at a table with bowls and other cooking prep tools.)

ZELDA. Thanks, Jim! I'm here with world-renowned gourmet chef, Jeremiah Crockpot. Now, I'm told you'll be preparing a very special treat for us today.

JEREMIAH. That's right.

ZELDA. It says here the dish is called – and I hope I'm pronouncing this correctly – BahgOHVsheeps?

JEREMIAH. Actually, it's pronounced "bag of chips."

ZELDA. Wonderful. So now you're going to show us how to prepare this exotic delicacy.

JEREMIAH. That's right. So first you start with this? *(Produces a bag of chips.)* And then you do this. *(Opens bag.)*

ZELDA. Back to you, Jim.

JIM. Babs, I would *not* be able to handle that recipe. In *my* house, little miss *wifey* does all the cooking.

BABS. That's because you're a loathsome misogynist.

JIM. And how.

BABS. *(Hand to earpiece:)* This just in: we have some alarming news from Crazytown Station. Apparently a nuclear warhead has been found on the train platform. *(Hand back to earpiece:)* Uhp, I'm now being informed that it is actually a half-eaten chicken sandwich.

JIM. We now check back in with our Apocalypse Expert, Kevin O'Geddon. Kevin, anything new to report?

(KEVIN, who was playing video games, glances at the Apocalypse Machine.)

KEVIN. No.

JIM. Thanks, Kevin! And now a word from our sponsor.

VOICEOVER. Have you hit financial rock bottom?

BROKE PERSON. I am flat broke.

VOICEOVER. Crazytown Casinos: where winning is mathematically possible.

BROKE PERSON. Yayyyyy!

JIM. And we're back! Now we turn to the Short Sport Report with our very own Peter Pitstains.

PETER. Well, folks, earlier today the world of golf was ROCKED when ten-time world-champion Panther Shrubs made it an entire *twenty-four hours* without cheating on his wife. Also, the world of baseball was ROCKED when some guy scored without performance-enhancing drugs. Also, the world of professional ping pong was ROCKED when it was discovered there is such a thing as professional ping pong.

JIM. Thanks, Peter!

BABS. In entertainment news: a new study reveals that celebrities are just like *us*, in that they sometimes shop for groceries or walk their dogs or breathe oxygen followed by a release of carbon dioxide.

JIM. Now for the latest on your ride home from work, we take you *live* to our Eye-in-the-Sky Trafficopter and our very own Tabitha Speedbump.

TABITHA. The Eye-in-the-Sky Trafficopter has landed here at the airport to refuel, so I can't see anything, but according to my phone, there's some traffic.

JIM. Thanks, Tabitha! We'll be right back, after this word from our sponsor.

(PANTS MODEL is pointing to his or her pants.)

VOICEOVER. Pants, Incorporated: Buy pants.

JIM. And we're back!

BABS. Now for our newest segment, Michael on Music, we take you *live* to our music correspondent, Josh. What have you got for us, Josh?

(JOSH is listening to a music player with headphones. We can't hear the music, but he certainly can. He's jamming away to it, really getting into it, air-drumming while making different kinds of drum noises – maybe some hi-hats; maybe some snares. He might unintelligibly sing a part of the song mostly to himself.)

BABS. That was Josh, with Michael on Music.

JIM. We now bring you *live* to Nadia Kneejerk and her award-ineligible segment:

"Shame On You. Shame On You Times A Thousand."

(If possible, a very brief theme song plays with the segment's name being sung. NADIA stands with a microphone next to JOSEPH, who holds an oversized novelty check.

Optional orphans are gathered.)

NADIA. I'm here *live* at Crazytown Orphanage, where philanthropist billionaire Joseph Santo is about to donate a check for one million dollars.

JOSEPH. As a fellow orphan, it was the least I could do to give back.

NADIA. But tell me, Mr. Santo – if you were so intent on helping these children, why give an oversized, fake check that would be invalid at any bank? Are you pretending to be charitable, when in reality you're donating zero dollars?

JOSEPH. The actual money was donated this morning with a real check.

NADIA. Was it?

JOSEPH. Yes.

NADIA. But *was* it?

JOSEPH. Yes.

NADIA. Well you heard it here, folks. Joseph Santo hates orphans.

(Theme song again.)

BABS. Thanks, Nadia. Way to smoke out the truth. We now check back in with our Apocalypse Expert. Kevin, anything new to report?

KEVIN. No.

BABS. All right, Kevin, be sure to keep us posted.

(The Apocalypse Machine's red light turns on.)

KEVIN. Wait a second. Oh no –

BABS. Thanks, Kevin! And now for our weekly opinion piece, we bring you: an old man.

OLD MAN. (*Gruff and curt:*)

I'm old.

I hate everything:

Sunshine... fax machines... happiness...

In conclusion, get off my lawn.

BABS. Thanks, Old Man!

JIM. Well, we are just seconds away from half past the hour, which means we won't have time to cover the following stories: the city will run out of oxygen by midnight, several thousand zombies have risen from a local cemetery, and the Cleveland Browns have won the Super Bowl.³

(*Newscast music plays.*)

BABS. From everyone here at WOMG Action News, I'm Babs Buttlebee.

JIM. And I'm Jim Pickles. Goodnight.

End of Play

³ If the Cleveland Browns have since won the Super Bowl or have come close, pick the next most unlikely championship news.