

LATE ADVICE

"When your dreams turn to dust, vacuum."

Comedy Treatment

William Coronel

After starting another job at yet another backwater radio station, a host realizes he's been wasting his time trying to make it big and quits on the air.

To his surprise, this heartfelt acceptance that he doesn't have what it takes becomes a rallying cry for others to quit trying as well. Our hero quickly becomes the Guru of Giving Up, convincing a growing legion of listeners to aim lower.

How successful can he get before listeners start to feel the emperor has no clothes?

"Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."

William Feather

Rudy Cedere is 35 years-old going on 50. He's been a radio host for the past 15 years, moving from small town to small town to small town. In radio you take whatever jobs you can find, build an audience and work your way up to larger markets. You pay your dues.

Rudy never built a following for a number of reasons, all of which, he tells himself, were beyond his control -- bad time slots, horrible formats, station managers who didn't like him... But he keeps going because once he's at a decent station run by people who know what they're doing, things will surely come together. He just has to hang in there. All these moves have kept him single and poor but success comes to those who stick it out. A dozen cliches about not giving up can't all be wrong.

In the pilot, Rudy's agent calls -- a station just north of San Francisco has a 1 o'clock spot that just became available. The pay isn't great (yet again) but beggars can't be choosers and Rudy excitedly packs up his suitcase. A mid-day time spot in the San Francisco market! Finally a chance to show his potential.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

When Rudy arrives his first impressions are not good. "Just" north turns out to be a hundred miles north and the station is in a strip mall between a fried chicken joint and the Touch of

Elegance Nail Spa. Clive, the station manager informs Rudy that the owner has grand visions -- expanding into internet radio, changing from a music format to talk... Ideas that Clive feels are all stupid. But Clive is going along with these bone-headed changes because he plans to ride out his remaining 14 years until retirement without making waves. If the owner decided to turn the station into a pet store and secretly sell firearms to the rebels out the back, Clive would show up each morning and ask if they'd like their kibble and Glock ammo on separate receipts. He's all about getting through the day. And nothing more.

Rudy looks at his watch: 12:45 in the afternoon. He should probably get a tour of the studio. After all, he's on in 15 minutes. Clive gives a confused look -- Rudy's slot is 1 in the morning.

"Men's best successes come after their disappointments."

Henry Ward Beecher

Rudy drives to the apartment complex they arranged for him to stay at. It's a 2 story Mediterranean style fire-hazard surrounding a courtyard containing a couple of grayish palm trees and a pool that used to have water in it. Half the tenants keep their doors open all day and the lobby's intercom system sounds like it's intercepting Soviet military communications from somewhere outside the Ukraine. Rudy fights the instinct to get depressed. He tells himself that this isn't forever. It's a fresh chance to build a following and move to a better market. He'll take these lemons and make lemonade.

That night, Rudy returns to the station and discovers that Dougie, the owner's 22 year-old gung-ho sycophantic son, is going to be his co-host. Sidekick? Did Clive forget to mention that to Rudy? Dougie shares that when his dad told him he can do live radio with someone who's been doing it for decades, Dougie could barely help from yelling "Yeah!!" He warns Rudy that he's probably gonna be a little "green" at first but he's a super hard worker and will get super great at this talking into microphones thing in no time.

Before Rudy can find something sharp enough kill himself with, the clock strikes 1 AM. They're on the air! Dougie turns nervous and stutters his way through the intro. Not full-out stuttering but enough for Rudy to yell in his head: "It's fuckin' radio! You can't stutter on the radio!"

Rudy starts the show and gives out the number to call in. He tries to make chit-chat with Dougie but it's like swimming in molasses. Nobody is calling. They go to a commercial. It was the longest 4 minutes ever. 2 hours and 56 minutes to go.

Rudy realizes 2 things at this moment... 1) There's no way he can stay at this station and 2) Dougie and him are in different boats but they're both sailing down the same river of delusion.

"When you can't change the direction of the wind, adjust your sails."

H. Jackson Brown

When the show is back, Rudy tells the listeners (if there are any) that he gives up. He explains that all his years trying to make it in radio have only brought him this far -- an after-midnight time slot at a station in a strip mall. 15 years of work to reach this shithole! "Hey, Radio? You win. Tonight I accept that I'm not good enough to make this dream come true. I quit."

Dougie, unsure what's going on, says they have a call on line one...

"Yeah, this is Rondell. Can you play "Rumble in Brighton" by the Stray Cats?"

Rudy confesses to the listeners that he felt he wasn't good enough all along but he just refused to accept the signs. "I bought into all the pap about 'Keep going' and 'Never give up.' Well, it's bullshit. I wasted over a decade of my life."

Rudy suggests that those listening might consider doing the same. "If you're listening to talk radio in the middle of the night the chances are pretty good you're not winner material either. Embrace it. We all have to stop buying the lie that with enough hard work we all will eventually succeed. The world's filled with examples of those who failed because they're not that good."

"I mean, sure, try. Give your dream a shot. But when you keep coming in 7th at bake sales, accept the obvious -- Baking is not a world you're gonna succeed in. If you give up you'll be free to do all those fun, worthless things you didn't have time to do before -- like watch T.V. and spend more time commenting on Facebook. No more guilt that you're not working towards that dream you secretly know is never gonna pan out anyway. Do yourself a favor -- except your shortcomings and aim lower."

Rudy pushes the mic away and starts to get up. Dougie asks where he's going. Rudy: "Did you hear a word I said?" Dougie admits he didn't, he was too busy -- the phones are ringing off the hook!

"When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on."
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Rudy takes a call. One caller after another shares how they can relate to what Rudy just said. He struck a cord deep inside 'em. Finally someone on the radio has spoken truth. Someone has given them permission to give up!

Rudy knows a rideable wave when he stumbles upon one. He continues to take calls and by the end of the show it's clear that Rudy could easily be on the road to the big time with this angle. He'll give the audience what they want. He'll become the Guru of Giving Up.

"Some of us were put on Earth to hold the corporate ladders steady so winners could climb them."
Rudy Cedere

Rudy's show becomes an instant hit.

The owner is happy because more listeners means more advertising dollars. Dougie is happy because he gets to learn his craft next to a Jedi Master. Clive, the station manager is happy-- Actually, he's not happy. He's never happy. But most importantly Rudy is happy -- he's good enough after all.

Only one problem -- Rudy is telling listeners that it's acceptable to give up while simultaneously pursuing his dream. How soon before the listeners realize the emperor has no clothes on?

Additional Characters

Clara (Rudy's angry neighbor)

Clara lives in the same apartment complex as Rudy. She goes to the University of Cannabis where she plans to become a medical marijuana agent and help sick people deal with their illnesses.

Clara is slightly angry and probably has a few tattoos although we don't see any. Rudy finds her standoffishness appealing and she finds Rudy's appeal for her (despite her standoffishness) equally appealing. But she's not just some girl who Rudy can come over and fuck whenever he wants just because she lives in the building if that's what he's thinking. Of course, Rudy didn't think that but now that she brought it up, the idea does sound appealing-- It's a complicated dance.

Clara does magic at kid's parties on the weekends for extra money. The kids don't see it but any half-aware adult can tell that kid's parties are the last place she wants to be.

John Nakamira (Rudy's agent)

John is not Asian. But he uses an Asian name so people will think he's smarter. He has the attention span of...an agent ad always lets you know he has another call waiting even when he doesn't. He's just already bored with whatever the 2nd half of your sentence is gonna be. He's all about deals and connections. "You bought a leaf blower? Without running it by me first? How could you do that! I got a guy!!"

Charles (Radio station's maintenance Man)

Charles can fix almost anything with a little spit and toothpicks. Seriously. This evening he fixed 2 separate things using spit and a couple of toothpicks. It's not clear where he's from because he only says 4 words: "Yes, no, maybe," and "fuck." Maybe he took a vow of silence, maybe he can't learn to actually speak for some reason. It's a mystery. Luckily those 4 words cover practically everything he needs to say.

Schpiro

Schpiro's name is pronounced Siro. "The 'chp' is silent." He is the manager of the apartment building where Rudy and Clara live. He's good at mowing the lawn, but not so good at hygiene. His wardrobe consists of dirty "wife-beater" t-shirts, short pants and sandals. On Sundays, out of respect for the Lord, he wears his good sandals and combs his hair. His days are spent fixing stuff around the building and shouting into tenant's open doorways, "You must pay your rent. You can not stay here if you do not pay for rooms."