

GODS AND ROBOTS
An 80's Comedy for the New Millennium

by
Stephen Stanley

Stephen Stanley
1113 Jefferson St
Savannah GA 31401
(901) 289-6229
stephen@whiskeystream.com

registered, WGAw

FADE IN:

INT. ROBOT APARTMENT BUILDING, A.D. 2426

INSERT TITLE:

A.D. 2426

Xerton 364 Bravo

A typical robot apartment in the future. Or, rather, it is a simulation of how people in the 1980's would imagine a typical robot apartment of the future: it is strangely like the late 20th century but with a few robot touches. These robots still have couches, framed photos, televisions, and potted plants, for example. But the apartment nonetheless screams FUTURE with a lot of chrome, electronics, and white plastic--as if the Jetsons got a shopping spree at IKEA. The television is tuned to a robot news channel, where a robot leader is giving what seems to be a militant address to adoring throngs.

RICKY, a robot, sits in front of a small camcorder. Ricky is a metallic humanoid robot with a friendly and approachable air: more Johnny 5 than Terminator. He is speaking directly into the camera and his image is played on a nearby screen. His speech is in robot language, which, as it turns out, sounds kind of like Norwegian spoken through a Mister Microphone. When he speaks, a small panel where his mouth would be lights up. Ricky's speech is subtitled.

RICKY

I am sorry to leave you, but I have
to. I will be back... I promise.
I'm not crazy. Please believe that...
I love you, Tinker.

Ricky turns the camera off and rolls away from his desk. He takes one last look around his apartment, and then, with sudden violence, tears off his own hand and thrusts the exposed wires of his forearm into a wall outlet. Sparks fly and, after a brief hesitation, Ricky's body loses all life and collapses onto the ground. His mouth still flashes bright colors for a moment before going eerily dark.

INT. QUEEN BEE'S HOUSE -- A SUMMER AFTERNOON IN 1983

A 70's disco speaker puts on a light show reminiscent of Ricky's flashing mouth. The music is late-era disco.

INSERT TITLE:

A.D. 1983

Memphis, Tennessee

QUEEN BEE is cleaning her house, a modest but well-kept rancher. Queen Bee's clothes, hair, and home decor all tell the story of a Modern Black Woman who is struggling to make the transition from glamorous youth to suburban life.

The music obviously lifts her mood, and Queen Bee puts some funk in her cleaning routine.

As Queen Bee moves from one room to another we begin to get a feel for the interior of her house. In the living room she straightens some magazines with 1983 headlines and dusts off a large console television that is playing a rerun of Buck Rogers.

Queen Bee picks up clothes off of the back of her sofa: her own clothes are disco-fabulous, and she also picks up some abnormally small men's clothes and throws them all into a hamper in the bathroom.

In the kitchen she pours cat food into three bowls labeled "Sylvester", "Gloria", and "Donna". She picks up a trash bag and struts toward her garage, stopping along the way to look at herself in the mirror.

She may be 32, but damn she looks good.

INT. PENNY'S CAR -- AFTERNOON

PENNY, an uptight middle-aged white woman, FRITZ, her sissy lap dog, and BEN, her 12-year-old Asian-American foster child, are on their way home. They are driving through a suburban landscape of strip malls and subdivisions.

PENNY

Welcome to your new neighborhood!
You're going to love it here.

Ben looks out the window. Everything looks incredibly bland and slightly run down. Ben tries to put on a brave face.

BEN

It looks nice.

PENNY

(to herself)
Don't get too used to it, kid. You're just a foster child.

BEN

What?

PENNY

Nothing dear, nothing.

She smiles at Ben and then laughs to herself. He is a little freaked out by this strange new woman but tries not to show it.

QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Queen Bee enters her garage and sees her husband. LESTER, also 32, is a little person.

The garage serves as his electronics repair business and is littered with carcasses of televisions, cameras, and random archaic electronics. The room is also rigged with an elaborate set of steps and shelves designed to help the height-challenged Lester reach all of the parts he needs. He looks up from a TV and sees Queen Bee carrying the trash out. She is obviously Lester's pride and joy.

LESTER

Hey Queenie! How is the sexiest woman in Memphis doing?

QUEEN BEE

I'm all right, Lester.

LESTER

I'm sorry about the trash, baby... leave it there and I'll take it out.

QUEEN BEE

I don't mind. You keep at your work.

LESTER

You're the best, Queen Bee.

QUEEN BEE

I'm so proud of you, Lester!

EXT. QUEEN BEE'S HOUSE

Queen Bee exits the garage and struts toward the street. There is a truck rig parked in the driveway with the names "QUEEN BEE and MO'LESTA" airbrushed on the hood. It is ridiculously out of place in the otherwise uniform environment.

Queen Bee puts the trash at the curb. She looks up and down the street-- for as far as she can see in either direction every house looks exactly the same. The only thing breaking up the absolute monotony is her truck.

Queen Bee sighs, walks back over to the truck, and climbs in. The feeling of the seat and the smells and sights of the cab transport her back to the road. On the visor is her CB postcard: the "business card" of truckers that contains their handle, location, and usually a caricatured drawing. Queen Bee's card has a picture of a large bee with a crown and her face. A small Lester is riding on the Bee's back. The card, like the truck, reads "Queen Bee and Mo'Lesta."

Queen Bee strokes the leather and rubs the steering wheel with a true sense of longing. She picks up the CB receiver and tries it out.

QUEEN BEE

Breaker 1-9... breaker 1-9... this is Queen Bee, do you copy?

No response.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)
This is Queen Bee, over... anybody
out there got your ears on? Lil'
Larry? You rollin' today?

Another long pause. Finally, a faint crackle indicates a response.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)
Is anyone there?

CB VOICE
What color are your panties?

Queen Bee hears adolescent laughter in the background. Disgusted, she turns of the CB

QUEEN BEE
Damn kids...

PENNY'S DRIVEWAY

Penny is pulling into her driveway, which is directly across the street from Queen Bee's house. Ben sees Queen Bee getting out of her truck as Penny parks the car.

PENNY
Here we are! Your new home! Now
let's get your things!

Ben steps out of the car but is so preoccupied with the sight of Queen Bee that he stares for a moment.

PENNY (CONT'D)
What do you think you're looking at?

Queen Bee waves, but Penny declines to wave back, offering instead complete condescension.

PENNY (CONT'D)
You can't park that thing here! I'm
calling the city!
(to her dog)
Oh, Fritzie. Mommy's sorry you have
to look at that awful truck. I
promise it will be gone soon.

She turns back to Ben who is pulling his things out of the car.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Now get your bags... and hurry up
about it!

They go inside, leaving a hurt Queen Bee alone on the street.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE

PENNY

Put those down, Ben, and come meet
your new temporary grandparents...

Ben and Penny enter the living room where they find her mother GERT and her father TOM, who are both quite old and sitting in La-Z-Boy recliners in front of the television. They seem to have been sitting there for a long, long time.

GERT

Hello dear!

Tom is awakened by his wife's talking. He appears to be senile and nearly blind.

TOM

What is it?
(he squints)
Penny. Is that you? Hello?

PENNY

Look what I got!

GERT

Well, aren't you cunning! A new
foster child. And an Oriental to
boot!

TOM

Oh heavenly days!

GERT

Arigato little Chinaman! What's
your name?

BEN

My name is Ben.

GERT

Well hello Chen!

BEN

It's Ben. And I'm not Chinese. I'm
American.

Penny smacks him on the back of the head.

PENNY

Don't contradict your temporary
grandmother!

Tom reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small red box of raisins.

TOM
Well, young man, I bet you'd like
some raisins!

BEN
Um, sure.

TOM
Gives you energy!

Ben goes over, cautiously takes the crumpled box, and puts
it in his pocket.

GERT
Don't mind him. He's an imbecile.

PENNY
Invalid, mother! Be nice.

GERT
Whatever... now come give your new
Grandma a kiss!

PENNY
Temporary Grandma, mom! I never
said he could stay.

Ben hesitates.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Do it!

Ben leans in and Gert puts her mustachioed lips on his.

GERT
Welcome to America!

INT -- QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Deflated, Queen Bee walks back into the garage and has a
seat.

LESTER
What's wrong, Queenie?

QUEEN BEE
Nothing.

LESTER
Oh shit...

QUEEN BEE
What?

LESTER
Whenever you tell me nothing's wrong
then all hell is about to break loose.

Lester walks over to Queen Bee, jumps up on one of his ramps, and puts his arm around her shoulder.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Talk to me, baby.

QUEEN BEE

Lester, did you ever think that maybe we don't belong here?

LESTER

Queenie, we've talked about this. This is a nice neighborhood. We're nice people. We belong here as much as anyone else.

QUEEN BEE

Well, the neighbors don't think so. That tight-assed bitch across the street was yelling about our truck again.

LESTER

You know I'm trying to sell it.

QUEEN BEE

Well that's just it. Why are you selling it? We had some good times in that truck. I miss the road, Lester. Me and you. Queen Bee and Mo'Lesta. Hitting the roads by day and the dance floor by night.

LESTER

Those were good times. No doubt about it.

QUEEN BEE

And now we're gonna act like it never happened so Debbie Boone and the Dumplin' Gang think we fit in... it just don't seem right.

LESTER

Give it a chance, baby. You know you might even make friends here.

QUEEN BEE

That'll be the day. Hell, I can't even get anybody on the CB except for some stupid kids who just want to know what color panties I got on.

LESTER

I got a business here. I'm building it for us.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

I want us to be normal, Queenie.
And damnit, this is a normal
neighborhood so let's try to fit in.

QUEEN BEE

We're a disco queen and a midget,
Lester. We ain't ever gonna fit in
the middle of Honkeytown USA.

Queen Bee exits the garage, leaving behind a worried Lester.

INT. PENNY'S DINING ROOM -- EVENING

Gert, Tom, Penny, and Ben are all gathered around the table.
They are having fried chicken and mashed potatoes. Everyone
has a full place setting except for Ben, who has been given
chopsticks.

GERT

God bless this food to our bodies'
use and thank you, Lord, for sending
one of your hard-working, cunning
Orientals to help us around the house.

TOM AND PENNY

Amen.

PENNY

Dig in! This food wasn't free you
know.

Ben ponders his chopsticks and tries to eat the mashed
potatoes with them. Penny begins cutting up a steak she has
cooked for Fritz, who is wearing a cute little sweater. Tom
is trying to poke at his food with a fork but keeps missing.

BEN

How is this supposed to work?

PENNY

Your people are the ones who use
them!

GERT

Yeah, I would think you could tell
us how it works.

BEN

You ladies are crazy!

PENNY

One more word out of you and I am
calling immigration, young man.

BEN

But I'm an American.

GERT

These foster kids never appreciate what we do for them.

PENNY

It's hard. It's hard, I tell you. I mean, I've already got Fritz to take care of.

She hands Fritz a piece of steak.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Ben, when you're done eating I need you to fix my computer.

GERT

That's right! He can fix our electronics! You are so smart, Penny!

PENNY

Why do you think I got him? They tried to give me a Mexican, but you know how they are. Lay around all day wanting handouts! Remember Carlos?

BEN

(in mock Chinese accent)
Oh yeah, get Asian boy fix computer. They so smart!

Tom muffles a laugh. For a brief instant, there seems to be a real person under his mask of senility, but that person quickly vanishes.

PENNY

Well for your sake, mister, I hope you're better with electronics than you are with chopsticks.

INT. QUEEN BEE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Queen Bee and Lester are in the living room watching the episode of Diff'rent Strokes where Arnold befriends Kathy, the young girl in a wheelchair.

KATHY

(on television)
I'm not handicapped, I'm handicapable.

LESTER

That's right girl. You know that's right.

Queen Bee gets up to leave.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Where you going baby? You're gonna miss the show.

QUEEN BEE

Lester, did you ever think there's more to life than watching television?

LESTER

Baby, I been working hard all day, and I just want to relax. Besides, it's the episode where Arnold gets appendicitis!

QUEEN BEE

Exactly! You've seen it before! I'm gonna go out to the garage.

Lester turns back to the TV and begins laughing at the zany hijinks.

LESTER

You tell him, Willis!

QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Queen Bee walks out to the garage and flips on one of the many CB's.

QUEEN BEE

Hello world, this is Queen Bee. You got your ears on?

A long silence.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)

Hello world, this is Queen Bee. Do you copy?

No response.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)

World, I know you're out there. You gotta remember me... this is Queen Bee. Do you copy?

Queen Bee waits a long time. She starts to leave but tries again.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)

Come on, world. I just know you didn't forget. Me and Lester been crisscrossing your roads for years. Now I'm all alone out here in the middle of a place where I don't know anybody, and no one understands what

(MORE)

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)
 it's like to be me. World, please
 tell me somebody's out there...

A long pause. Queen Bee is very alone.

CB RECEIVER
 How big are your boobies?

Queen Bee hears kids giggling in the background.

QUEEN BEE
 You goddamn kids! If I ever find
 out who you are I'm gonna knock you
 into the middle of next week!

CB RECEIVER
 Is your refrigerator running?

QUEEN BEE
 It's about to be runnin' over your
 ass! Now get off the goddamn radio!

Queen Bee turns off the CB console and slams her fist down.

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)
 LESTER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM

Lester is still watching Diff'rent Strokes.

LESTER
 Uh-oh.

ARNOLD (O.S.)
 What you talkin' about Willis?

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben is sitting in his room with Penny's computer, a bulky
 1983 version Commodore.

BEN
 I told you already-- I don't know
 how to do this.

PENNY
 I want this fixed, and no funny
 business, mister!

Penny leaves, and Ben is left staring at the computer. When
 he is sure Penny is gone, he moves the computer out of the
 way and begins unpacking his stuff. He pulls some clothes
 out and puts them in the dresser.

He then pulls out a faded picture of an American woman and a Korean man. Looking at them, Ben becomes introspective. After a moment, he sighs and sets the picture down. As Ben sorts through his belongings, Tom knocks and opens the door. He is carrying a large box.

TOM

Hello? Ben?

BEN

Over here, Temporary Grandpa.

Tom enters the room.

TOM

Is the coast clear?

BEN

(a little confused)

Yeah, it's clear. I guess. Why?

TOM

The warden doesn't like me being up at night.

Tom feels his way over to the bed and has a seat, setting his box down next to him.

TOM (CONT'D)

Ah yes. Well, welcome to the house.

BEN

Yeah, um, thanks. It's kind of a weird place.

TOM

You can say that again. I've been trying to escape for years. Raisin?

Tom pulls more raisins out of his pocket.

BEN

No thanks. I've still got some from earlier. Why are you being nice to me?

TOM

Oh, I don't know. Lonely, I guess. And, between you and me, those bitches are crazy. If you'll have me, I'd be honored to have the company.

BEN

Well, I guess you've got it. So what's in the box?

TOM
 Something I thought you might like.

Tom reaches in the box and pulls out an Atari gaming system. For the first time since he got to the house, Ben smiles a real smile.

TOM (CONT'D)
 This was leftover from Carlos... our last foster child. Do you play?

BEN
 Are you kidding? I'm only, like, the best player I know.

TOM
 Watch what you say, little man. I play a pretty mean round of Donkey Kong.

Ben stops and looks over at Tom, obviously confused.

BEN
 I thought you were blind.

Tom straightens himself up, opens his eyes, and assumes a distinctly normal air. He grabs a joystick.

TOM
 We all have our secrets, son. Now let's get it on.

QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE -- LATER

Lester walks out to the garage. Queen Bee is tearing the place apart.

LESTER
 Calm down baby! It's all right... everything's gonna be fine. Mo'Lesta's here baby. Just calm down. Oh god, not the shelves!

Queen Bee starts pulling apart some of Lester's shelves and throwing them in the pile.

QUEEN BEE
 Goddamn kids! Wantin' to talk about my boobies.

LESTER
 Ain't nothing wrong with your boobies, baby.

QUEEN BEE
 I've had it Lester! I've had it!
 (MORE)

QUEEN BEE (CONT'D)

I can't take this place anymore.
And if we can't move I'll be damned
if I can't at least talk on the radio.

LESTER

On the radio, that's right... now
put the shelves down...ain't nothin'
wrong... um, by the way, what's goin'
on Queenie?

QUEEN BEE

I'll tell you what's going on. I'm
building an antenna. A big, huge
goddamn antenna. The biggest antenna
you've ever seen and I'm putting it
on the roof and that bitch across
the street can stick it up her ass
if she don't like it.

A rather awkward pause as Lester tries to figure out what is
happening.

LESTER

Why do we need an antenna baby?

QUEEN BEE

Lester, do you listen to a word I
say? I want to talk to somebody,
okay? I'm sick of this place. I
want a conversation, with adults,
and I want to use the CB without
getting interrupted by some pimply
faced twelve year old. Now get your
welding torch and start putting some
of this metal together before I really
get pissed off!

Lester is thoroughly disheartened but gets to work.

LESTER

Damn, it's gonna be a long night.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Ben and Tom are playing Atari Pac Man. They seem to have
relaxed a bit around each other.

TOM

In your face, Blinky!

BEN

So what happened to Carlos, anyway?

TOM

Penny just got him because she thought he'd be a good landscaper. Turns out he didn't know the first thing about it.

BEN

Oh...

TOM

Don't worry. You've got some time here. Carlos made it six months.

BEN

(defensive)

I don't care... I've been through so many homes I can't even count them. I'm just biding my time.

Tom looks over at Ben. He knows the boy is bluffing.

TOM

Is that right?

BEN

It is. I don't need anyone but myself.

TOM

Whatever you say.

BEN

So we can hang out but don't go getting all mushy about it. You should pay more attention to your game anyway.

TOM

I guess I should, seeing as how you are fine and all.

BEN

That's right.

As Tom looks at Ben, one of his men dies.

TOM

Darn it! That was my last man!

BEN

This game sucks anyway.

TOM

I thought you liked Pac Man.

BEN

I like the real Pac Man-- you should see the arcade game. This is nothing like it. The screens don't change. The characters are blocky. Even the music is wrong. Atari is just lucky there is nothing better out there yet. No offense... I appreciate the thought and all.

Tom starts playing again.

TOM

Well, I'm sure they're doing the best they can.

BEN

That's just it... they're not. They skimped on RAM to save money. There's only one hundred twenty eight bytes of memory in these things, even though they knew they needed more to keep up with the rapidly advancing graphics in the gaming industry. These machines need eight or ten times the memory they have to have a chance of being fun. And they could have it, too.

A long silence. Tom nudges him in the ribs.

TOM

I thought you didn't know anything about computers?

BEN

You've got your secrets... I've got mine. It's sad, though; a little more memory and these babies would fly.

TOM

Well, how about you quit complaining and do something about it?

Ben's cockiness is thrown off Tom's challenge.

BEN

What am I supposed to do? I'm a kid.

TOM

Oh, you're just a kid. Boo oho. When I was your age, we used to take our automobiles and soup them up so that they would perform like we wanted them to.

BEN

You did?

TOM

Believe it or not, I got my first date with Gert because I won a street race.

BEN

Some prize.

TOM

Hey now. She used to have her charms. Girlish figure. Smooth upper lip... she always was mean, though.

BEN

Why did you marry her then?

TOM

Well, let's just say that you're a little young for that conversation.

BEN

I'll take your word on it.

TOM

So?

BEN

So, what?

TOM

How about souping this baby up and see if you can make it any more interesting.

BEN

Well, for starters, I don't really know how.

TOM

Well, you said it needed more memory. Surely there's some in that thing.

He looks over at Penny's computer. Ben stops playing and thinks about it.

BEN

You know what, old man? You just may be on to something. Are you up for a little experiment?

TOM

Do I look like I have anything better to do?

BEN

Now if this doesn't work out we both
take the heat. Deal?

Tom thinks about it.

TOM

Deal. But for the record, I'm blind
if anyone asks.

Cue 80'S STYLE "GETTING SHIT DONE MUSIC" for 80's STYLE
"GETTING SHIT DONE MUSICAL MONTAGE". Tom and Ben begin
disassembling Penny's computer.

TOM (CONT'D)

Well, here goes nothing...

BEN

This machine is gonna fly!

QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Queen Bee and Lester have begun building their antenna.
Lester welds while she gathers metal.

LESTER

How big is this gonna be, baby?

QUEEN BEE

The bigger, the better.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM -- INTERCUT

Ben and Grandpa are pulling apart Penny's computer and
rewiring it. Show construction of both antenna and Ben's
computer for the length of musical segment, along with
exaggerated actions and overdone facial expressions as befits
an 80's Musical Montage. Both Queen Bee and Ben's moods
visibly lift as they see their new creations start to take
shape. Queen Bee gets a groove back and Ben and Tom are
obviously having a good time. As the antenna takes shape,
Queen Bee and Lester open the garage door and let it extend
out into the driveway.

EXT. QUEEN BEE'S HOUSE -- DAWN

Sequence ends as day breaks. Queen Bee has just finished
her antenna. It is strapped to the side of the house and is
ridiculously, garishly large. Lester is asleep on one of
his few remaining shelves. Queen Bee is outside looking up
at her creation.

Penny and Gert are across the street staring at the antenna
with expressions of horror. Queen Bee smiles and waves.

QUEEN BEE

Good morning Betty Cracker!

PENNY
You won't get away with this!

Penny goes inside in a huff.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Ben! Come down here and make
breakfast! Ben!

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben is in his room with Tom, who has fallen asleep on the bed. He is putting the case back on Penny's computer

INT. QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Queen Bee goes back in and kisses Lester on the forehead.

QUEEN BEE
I love you so much, Lester. Thank
you!

LESTER
Is my baby happy now?

QUEEN BEE
Yes, I'm happy. Now why don't you
get on off to bed?

Lester starts to love on Queen Bee.

LESTER
You should come with me, baby.
There's more than one big antenna
around here you know.

QUEEN BEE
I'll be there in a little while,
Lester. I want to try this out.

LESTER
Okay, but don't be too long...

Lester smacks Queen Bee on the butt and heads into the house. Queen Bee sits down in front of the CB and puts her hand on the power switch.

QUEEN BEE
Okay world, let's see what you have
to say now.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ben is finishing up the wiring on his new super game system.

PENNY (O.S.)
Ben! What the hell are you doing!

BEN
 I'm coming!
 (back to computer)
 Okay, here goes...

QUEEN BEE'S HOUSE -- INTERCUT

Queen Bee and Ben both put their hands on the ON buttons of their machines at the same time. As each hits ON the power flickers. Strange noises come from each contraption, and then the power goes out to the entire neighborhood.

PENNY'S HOUSE-KITCHEN

Penny looks up toward Ben's room with suspicion.

PENNY
 Ben? Ben!

QUEEN BEE'S BEDROOM

Lester looks up in alarm.

LESTER
 Queenie?

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben knows he has screwed up big time.

BEN
 Uh-oh.

QUEEN BEE'S GARAGE

Queen Bee is freaked out.

QUEEN BEE
 Oh, shit.

She looks around the room in panic.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ben's power comes back on. Ben looks over at his computer which is smoking and lightly glowing.

TOM
 If I was you I would play dumb.

Penny bursts into the room. Tom jumps off the bed.

PENNY
 What the hell is going on in here?