

BIRTH OF A HERO

by Kris Thompson

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CHARACTERS

RANDY STONE	Early 30s handsome, private, gay man applying to be a superhero
B.A.	50-60s retired female superhero, owns B.A. Hero Talent Agency
BREN	20s non-binary bored agency receptionist
RAINBOW MAN	Man in mask, colorful spandex tights, a sequin rainbow cape, and a big sequin rainbow velcroed to his colorful spandex shirt.

NOTE: To limit cast size to as little as 4, director can choose to have either or both of the following characters played by 2 characters above dressed in simple masks and costumes for walk-on, brief, roles.

TWIN #1	20s-30s Woman (can be played by RAINBOW MAN)
TWIN #2	20s-30s Woman (can be played by BREN)

SYNOPSIS

At a time when superheroes are a dime a dozen Randy Stone, who has always dreamt of being a superhero, goes to B.A. HERO talent agency to apply. He wants to help people. He's gay, but what does that have to do with anything? However B.A., the owner of the agency and a retired superhero herself, cares only that Randy is gay. She wants to use him as the poster boy for gay superheroes. They clash in hilarious ways until Randy realizes his first assignment must be to teach B.A. a lesson about the dangers of stereotypes.

SETTING

Dumpy offices of B.A. Hero Talent Agency. Reception area has front door for public and a back door to unseen locker room. Tattered posters of superheroes adorn walls. Further in is an open doorway to B.A.'s office.

TIME

Current day. Morning.

ACT I
Scene 1

At Rise: BREN sits behind reception desk, feet up, looking at cell phone, laughing to himself.)

(RANDY enters from front door hesitantly, looks around. Reception phone rings. BREN answers, RANDY approaches unnoticed and waits.)

BREN (bored)

B.A. Hero Talent Agency. It's a great day to be a hero. This is Bren. (pause) Oh. Mr. Bleuth. No, we still don't have anything for you. Yes, I know you can fly but (pause) Really? Good at? Oh. Origami. Yes, I see it notated in your file. I'll let her know you called again.

(Hangs up, writes message, notices RANDY, speaks, still bored.)

Welcome to the B.A. Talent Agency. It's a great day to be a hero.

RANDY (nervous)

Hi. I'm Randy Stone. I'm here to submit an application.

BREN

An application for...

RANDY

To be a superhero? That's what you do here, right?

BREN

It's been a bit slow. We recently branched out into construction and entertainment. Can you hold a tune?

RANDY

Oh...well no. I'd only be interested in the superhero side of things.

BREN

Well B.A. is out. You can leave your resume and she'll call you if she's interested.

(RANDY reaches in coat pocket while BA enters front door, unnoticed.)

RANDY

Well, this is embarrassing. I seem to have forgotten my resume. Perhaps I could wait and meet with this- (pause) B.A. in person? What's B.A. stand for anyhow?

B.A. (interrupting)

Bad Ass. Brilliant Arbitrator. Beautiful Avenger. Take your pick. (to BREN) Messages?

BREN (reading)

Building super called about the noise complaint. (hands over message slip) Your dry cleaning is ready. (hands over message slip) Mr. Bleuth called (hands over message slip) again.

B.A.

That's it? (sigh) (to RANDY) And you are?

RANDY

Randy Stone. Wait, Beautiful Avenger? THE Beautiful Avenger? I remember you. You were one of my childhood heroes. The way you could climb buildings. And spit fire! But I thought you died (pause) fighting that government villain, what was it, Taxusmorphus?

B.A.

Ha! Taxusmorphus was but a pimple on the face of society. He was easily defeated. No, I actually took early retirement and used my 401K to start this agency. Randy? Step into my office. Let's have a chat.

(BREN returns to cell. RANDY and B.A. go into BA'S office and sit.)

B.A.

So, Randy Stone. Why are you here?

RANDY

Well, I want to be a superhero.

B.A.

Why?

RANDY

I've always dreamt of being a superhero. I grew up reading comics about the old superheroes. You know, Superman, Batman, Spiderman. As I got older, it seemed like new superheroes were always in the news. You, Ball Buster, BAM, The Flower Girl, Little Big Man-

B.A.

So, you want to be in the news. Listen Randy there's more to it than-

RANDY

Oh no! Not me. I don't care about the publicity. I want to make a difference. Help people.

B.A.

Alright. Tell me about yourself.

(Picks up pen and takes notes during following dialogue.)

RANDY

Well, I'm 32. I'm a programmer for TCL. Been with them for 9 years-

B.A.

Any family?

RANDY

My parents moved to Florida last year, my brother is in upstate New York, and I've been married for three years.

B.A. (disappointed)

Married. Oh. Well, tell me about your superpowers.

RANDY

I can fly!

B.A. (unimpressed)

Really? Anything else?

RANDY

Superhuman strength? Cars, buildings, trains. You know. That kind of thing.

B.A.

(Puts pen down and leans back in her chair.)

I have to be honest Randy. You're a young nondescript male. You can fly. You have super strength. That describes 95 percent of the people who walk through my door. The public is looking for something different. Something new. Unique. You know? Don't get me wrong. You're good looking, articulate. That works well despite your lackluster superpowers. Back in the day you would have been a shoo-in. But in the here and now you're nothing new, and married, which is boring.

(During following dialogue BREN answers reception phone, has an unheard conversation, exits front door, returns with RANDY'S resume.)

RANDY

I don't see how marital status relates to-

B.A.

Perception is everything. How the public sees you. How relatable you are. If you're going to get anything done as a superhero, you must have representation, an adoring fan base, endorsements, liability insurance-

(BREN enters B.A.'S office with resume.)

B.A. (Cont)

Bren! I'm in the middle of an interview!

BREN

Oh, you're gonna want to hear this.

(BREN whispers in B.A.'S ear, hands resume, returns to reception.)

B.A. (pleased)

Mr. Stone. Your resume! Apparently, your (emphasizes) *husband* delivered it!

RANDY

Aww. He's so awesome. I left it on the kitchen table and-

B.A.

Why didn't you tell me you're gay? This changes everything! B.A. Hero's first gay superhero! It's timely. It's hip. It's totally relatable. The world has been clamoring for LGBTQ superheroes. So many possibilities. Your superhero name, for instance. (wistfully) By what name will the world know you?

RANDY

I was thinking Power House or perhaps-

B.A.

No, no, no. We'll need to play up the gay aspect. Something like (pause) Homo Man!

RANDY

Homo Man? No!

B.A.

Or The Gay-A-Nater.

RANDY

What? No! That sounds like I have the power to make people gay.

B.A. (quick interest)

Do you?

RANDY

Of course not!

B.A.

Well we can't help what people read into a name, can we? Gay-A-Nater. Has a nice ring to it-

RANDY
Absolutely not!

B.A.
How about...Agent Queen!

RANDY
That is extremely insulting!

B.A.
Captain Gayhab?

RANDY
What is wrong with you?

B.A.
OK. How 'bout something simple. (pause) Gay Man! And the costumes. I'm thinking a rainbow cape. (yelling) Bren! Send in Rainbow Man!

(BREN exits to locker room.)

RANDY
Rainbow Man? I've never heard of him.

B.A. (wistfully)
One of my early recruits. I really thought there would be more of a demand for rainbows.

(BREN and RAINBOW MAN enter from locker room and into office.)

BREN
Presenting Rainbow Man!

RAINBOW MAN
Boss! You finally have an assignment for me? Just tell me where you need a rainbow!

B.A.
Sorry George. I'm going to have to retire you. I need the costume for our first gay superhero!

RAINBOW MAN (critically sizes up RANDY)
What? This guy?

RANDY (extending hand)
Nice to meet you, Rainbow Man.

RAINBOW MAN (ignoring)

(To B.A.) I can be gay!

BREN

You can't just be gay, George. (pause) (To Randy) Can he?

RAINBOW MAN

Well this is just great. What am I going to tell the wife?

(Turns to leave, head hung low.)

B.A.

George, before you go...

RAINBOW MAN

Yea?

B.A.

The cape?

RAINBOW MAN

For real? (pause) Ok fine!

(Removes cape, holds reverently, hands to B.A., and turns to leave.)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll go clear out my locker.

B.A.

Oh, George? The applique?

RAINBOW MAN

(gasps) Not my rainbow!

B.A.

Technically, it belongs to the agency.

RAINBOW MAN (angry)

(Removes rainbow applique from shirt with Velcro sound., hands to B.A.)

Fine. Here. Now I'm leaving before you take my dignity as well.

(Turns to leave.)

B.A.

George?

RAINBOW MAN

What now?!?

B.A.

The tights?

RAINBOW MAN

And so goes the dignity.

(Pulls down his tights.)

RANDY

Nope. Stop. That's ok. I can get my own tights. I prefer to get my own tights.

RAINBOW MAN

What? Don't wanna see what's at the end of my rainbow? Makes me think you're not even gay.

(Indignantly pulls up tights, exits to reception, and exits to locker room with a consoling BREN.)

RANDY

I feel so bad.

B.A.

Forget him. Let's get you into this cape!

(Puts cape on RANDY, puts rainbow applique on his chest. It falls off.)

Needs a little Velcro.

(Picks up rainbow applique and hands to RANDY.)

Oh, you could have sidekicks! (shouting) BREN! Send in the twins! (to RANDY) They're the best sidekick team on the market. We'll need a name for them-

(From locker room TWIN #1 and TWIN #2 enter and parade around reception singing and dancing to the tune of Beatles Birthday (or other) song while RANDY and B.A. stand in office doorway watching.)

TWIN #1 and TWIN #2

You say you're a gay man! (point at RANDY) Well we can be gay too! They say you're a gay man. (point at RANDY) We're gonna be so gay with you!

(Continue to dance and hum during following dialogue.)

RANDY

Oh. My. God.

B.A.

I know, right? How about Gay Man and the Lebitian Twins?

RANDY

You can't be serious!

B.A.

Well they're not really twins, of course. Oh! How about Homo Man and the Dyke-Namic Duo! It's like dynamic, but it's Dyke-Namic. Get it?

RANDY

Oh, I get it. I just don't believe it.

B.A.

Right. Right. We'll need to focus-group-it. (To TWIN #1 and TWIN #2) Girls, you can go.

(TWIN #1 and TWIN #2 exit to locker room.)

RANDY

Look, I don't think this is going to work out. Your whole attitude about my being gay. It's so-

B.A.

Oh good lord. Gay men are soooo overly sensitive.

RANDY

There. That right there. We're done here.

(RANDY slams rainbow applique on desk, takes off rainbow cape, tosses it at B.A., turns to leave as B.A. quickly opens drawer, pulls out and opens a red folder with a stack of papers inside, begins reading loudly.)

B.A.

Dear B.A. Hero Agency. My name is Zack. I'm 10 years old. I want to be a superhero one day but I like boys and kids at school make fun of me, say I could never be a superhero. Is that true?

(RANDY stops and listens but does not turn around.)

B.A. (Cont)

Dear B.A. Hero Agency. My Dad laughed when I told him I want to be a superhero. He says no one wants to be saved by a sissy boy. What should I do? Christopher. 12 years old.

(RANDY turns around still listening.)

B.A. (Cont)

Dear B.A. Hero Agency. Why aren't there many gay superheroes? My teacher said it's because people are afraid it's catching. She said I probably caught it from Tommy. Billy, age-

RANDY

Enough. I get it.

B.A.

Do you? (closes folder) I may not be eloquent in my approach but I think you'll agree (taps folder) the children of this world need you. They need you, Randy Stone, to lead by example.

RANDY (humble)

Perhaps I was too hasty.

B.A.

(Hands cape and applique to RANDY.)

Good. Now that we're back on track...what about your superhero name?

RANDY

I'll think about it.

B.A.

Think fast Mr. Stone. I'm sure we'll have an assignment for you in no time. Home decorating disasters. Musical Theatre recommendations needed! Bad fashion rescue emergencies!

RANDY

That's it! I'm done. Gay men are more than stereotypes. We are people. And if you can't get that through your thick, retired-superhero-head, then there's nothing more I can say!

B.A.

Kidding! I was just rousing you. I think it's your sense of humor that needs rescuing! Now, you'll need to fill out the standard contract. The agency cut is 20% off the top. Endorsements, action figures, movies. Please, God, a movie! Comic books, graphic novels, trading cards, toys.

(BREN enters running from locker room, yelling as they enter office.)

BREN

You'd better come quick before we have another fire. The Torcher and Tree Man are at it again!

(OS a loud scream.)

B.A.

Oh, for heaven's sake! Bren, have Mr. Stone fill out the 20% contract. I'll be right back.

(B.A. exits to reception and to locker room. As BREN sits and pulls contract out of drawer RANDY tries rainbow applique on chest. It falls off. He picks up. BREN offers contract/pen. RANDY doesn't take.)

BREN

(Puts contract and pen on desk.)

Having second thoughts?

RANDY

Maybe.

(RANDY sits, thinking, fussing with the rainbow applique. BREN picks up the red folder and starts to put it in a drawer.)

RANDY (Cont)

Wait. Before you put those letters away, may I look at them for a moment?

BREN

Letters?

RANDY

Those. The letters from the kids?

BREN

From the kids?

(Opens folder and looks at papers.)

These are parking tickets.

RANDY

Parking tickets? May I?

(BREN shrugs, hands folder to RANDY who puts rainbow applique on contract and begins to shuffle thru papers in red folder during following.)

RANDY (Cont)

Ticket. Ticket. Ticket. All tickets.

BREN

She just keeps stuffing 'em in her drawer. One day she's gonna get herself arrested.

RANDY

Or worse.

(Strikes heroic pose and adopts superhero voice)

RANDY (Cont)

It's clear, now, how I must use my superpowers. (regular voice) Wait. Where's my cape?

(BREN helps RANDY put on cape and tries to stick rainbow applique to his chest. It falls off.)

BREN

Needs a little Velcro. But you look good! Rainbow is definitely your color.

RANDY

Thanks. Now, where was I?

BREN

(mimicking superhero voice) It's clear, now, how I must use my superpowers.

RANDY

Right. Thanks. (superhero voice) It's clear, now, how I must use my superpowers. I, Gay Man, will fight dangerous stereotypes that permeate our society. I will obliterate those who oppress and repress people they do not understand. And I will seek justice for those who've been marginalized, used, and abused!

BREN

Wow. My hero!

RANDY

And I'm going to start by kicking some Beautiful Avenger butt!

(The End.)

BLACKOUT