

STORM WATCH

Written by

20-DE01-W06

LOGLINE:

A TV weatherman's self-respect plummets when he loses his job.



FADE IN:

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

SONNY DAY, jovial 60ish weatherman, stands in front of a weather map.

SONNY  
...and that's your Wacky Weekend weather,  
partly cloudy with a high in the  
70's...sounds like me.

He spins a bright yellow pinwheel with his picture in the center.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
Whoo hoo! You remember the 70's,  
Steffy?

STEFFY, the stone faced News Anchor, tries to remain professional.

STEFFY  
Actually, no.

SONNY  
Right, you're a Millennial. Anyway,  
Monday will be mellow, but grease up your  
pompadors, cause the 50s are back the  
rest of the week. Now, let's give a shout  
out to Edna Larson, who turns 101 today!

A silly birthday graphic flashes on the green screen.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
(singing)  
Happy birthday to you, Hap-

JOE, the Stage Manager, frantically signals "Cut!"

SONNY (CONT'D)  
Oops, out of time! This is Sonny Day,  
wishing you all...Sunny days!

The monitor cuts to commercial. Sonny unhooks his microphone and corners Joe.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
Why'd you cut me off, Joe?

JOE  
You ran over. Again.

SONNY

Edna doesn't have many more birthdays.

JOE

Neither will we if we don't keep on track.

Another angle in the studio. ALEX, the producer, is giving a tour of the studio to a well-dressed stranger (ELLIS BRISBANE).

SONNY

Hey, who's that getting the VIP treatment? Must be important.

JOE

(Uncomfortable)h

Uh, I don't know. Maybe.

Joe scurries away, dropping script pages as he goes.

SONNY

Oughta lay off the caffeine, Joe.

INT SONNY'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The walls are covered with highlights from Sonny's career, wearing funny costumes, accepting awards, and hugging seniors. As Sonny changes from his work clothes, ALEX the Producer ENTERS.

ALEX

We need to talk.

SONNY

Uh-oh. It's about that high in the 70's line, isn't it? Steffy needs to lighten up.

ALEX

Not that. The network thinks weather isn't funny anymore. They want a real meteorologist.

SONNY

Okay. We can team up.

ALEX

You're not getting it. We're letting you go.

SONNY

Where?

ALEX  
Sonny, you're fired.

SONNY  
(Laughs)  
Now who's the comedian!

ALEX  
This isn't a joke.

SONNY  
But I've been on the air for over twenty five years! Will this new guy let the folks know about National Pickle Day or Squirrel Awareness Month? Will he visit sick kids? And what about all those forgotten grannies in nursing homes?

ALEX  
Yes, you've had a colorful career. I'm sure you'll find another slot.

SONNY  
That's it? I'm out? When is my last day?

ALEX  
You just had it.

SONNY  
I don't even get to say goodbye? That really stinks, Alex.

ALEX  
It's better this way.

Alex quickly leaves. Sonny stares in the mirror.

SONNY  
Better for who?

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny sits on his recliner in front of his big screen TV.

STEFFY (VO)  
Now, here's meteorologist Ellis Brisbane with the forecast!

SONNY  
Lainie, come in here!

LAINIE, Sonny's wife enters,

LAINIE

He's very handsome. Who is he?

SONNY

My replacement.

LAINIE

Oh...Sorry.

Lainie sits beside Sonny.

LAINIE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.  
You've been working nonstop. You should  
take this time to relax.

She waits for a response, but he's a million miles away.

SONNY

What a stiff! Doesn't crack a smile.  
What were they thinking?

Lainie sighs.

LAINIE

Let's go away somewhere, just the two of  
us. It's been years since we took a  
vacation.

SONNY

Yeah, but then what? We come home  
to-nothing.

LAINIE

That's flattering.

SONNY

You know what I mean. I need my job! It's  
not just what I do, it's who I am.

LAINIE

You've brought joy to so many people.  
Surely something will open up.

INT SONNY'S HOME OFFICE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Sonny sits at his desk, talking on his cell phone.

SONNY

I understand. Thanks anyway.

He crosses off another name on his list of contacts. We see the half the names and numbers have already been crossed off. Lainie ENTERS.

LAINIE

How's it going?

Sonny quickly turns the paper over.

SONNY

Good. Got a couple of prospects.

LAINIE

See? Told you they'd come through.

SONNY

Yes, you did.

He watches as Lainie leaves the room, then opens a desk drawer and takes out a bottle of Scotch. He's about to drink, when his phone RINGS. He quickly hides the bottle.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Thanks for calling back, Harvey. No, I'm fine, just taking a little break...I heard there's an opening at Channel 11, and I was wondering...No, no, I understand. Great talking to you, too.

Sonny takes out the bottle again.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Sonny is greeted by DR. SEIDMAN.

DR SEIDMAN

Sonny! Great to see you again.

SONNY

You, too, doc. Miss the kids.

DOCTOR SEIDMAN

Yeah, they loved when your Earl the Eagle stopped by.

SONNY

So...any chance I can continue those visits, you know, like a good will ambassador?

DOCTOR SEIDMAN

(Hesitant)

Times have changed, Sonny.

(MORE)

DOCTOR SEIDMAN (CONT'D)

Frankly, even the sickest kids don't care about funny costumes anymore. It's all about Minecraft.

SONNY

So that's a no.

DOCTOR SEIDMAN

Afraid so. But good luck to you.

Sonny heads for the exit just as a camera crew, followed by Ellis Brisbane, enters. They lock eyes.

SONNY

Meteorologist Brisbane!

BRISBANE

And you are..?

SONNY

(Deflated)

Apparently nobody.

Sonny makes a hasty exit.

INT SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - A WEEK LATER

Sonny sits in his recliner, remote in hand, clicking through the channels. Lainie enters with the day's mail.

SONNY

How can these guys stay on the air?

LAINIE

I don't know, honey. Here's the mail.

Sonny sifts through the pile of envelopes.

SONNY

Bills, junk mail, bills...here's something.

He rips open an envelope. It's a handwritten note.

LAINIE

What's that?

SONNY

A thank you note. A 101 year old lady says she misses me.

LAINIE

That's sweet.



SONNY

That's my demographic. 65-to-dead.

LAINIE

I wish you'd stop feeling sorry for yourself.

Sonny's phone rings.

SONNY

It's the station!

He grabs the phone expectantly.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Yes! Alex? Change your mind?...oh, Nancy. Alex too chicken to call himself?

NANCY (ALEX'S SECRETARY)

Sonny, we need you to empty your mailbox and change your email address. It's full and Ellis needs it.

SONNY

Of course he does.

INT SONNY'S HOME OFFICE

Sonny checks his computer.

SONNY

"We're sorry", "we miss you", blah blah...delete, delete, delete.

He stares at the blank screen, disgusted, and takes a drink from the bottle on his desk. He doesn't notice Lainie watching from the doorway.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Sonny is back on his recliner, visibly tipsy as he clicks through the channels.

TV (OS)

Now, Ellis Brisbane with the weather...

SONNY

Are you on every channel?  
Get off my TV, you phony--

Lainie ENTERS, holding the bottle of Scotch.

LAINIE  
Found this in your desk drawer.

SONNY  
I told you to keep out of my office.

LAINIE  
I was looking for tape.

SONNY  
So you found it. Scotch tape. Get it?

LAINIE  
I'm worried about you, Sonny. You never drank like this before.

SONNY  
I was never irreverlent, er,  
irrelevant...before.

Lainie SIGHS in exasperation and heads out.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
Hey! That's my bottle!

Lainie whirls around.

LAINIE  
I'm pouring it down the sink!

SONNY  
Not the good stuff!

Sonny stumbles off the recliner, catches himself and heads after her.

INT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lainie stands by the sink, about to pour. Sonny bursts in, pushes Lainie out of the way and grabs the bottle. As she fights back tears, Sonny chugs what's left in the bottle, then hands it back to her.

SONNY  
We're out of Scotch.

INT ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex is on speaker, as Nancy looks on.

ALEX  
What can I do for you, Sonny?

SONNY

(Slurring)

Give me my job back! Fire that mannequin jerk you replaced me with. Sure he's pretty to look at, and went to weather school, but he's boring. Borrrrrrrring!

ALEX

I'm in a meeting--

SONNY

Don't you cut me off! I want my job back! I need my job back, you hear me?

ALEX

We all hear you, but there's nothing more I can do.

Alex hangs up, looking sadly at Nancy.

INT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lainie stands by the door, holding a suitcase.

LAINIE

This can't go on. I'll be at my sister's.

Sonny doesn't look away from the TV.

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Sonny has passed out on the recliner. There's a KNOCK at the door. Sonny, startled and groggy, jumps up.

SONNY

Lainie! Door!

No answer. Then he remembers she left. The knocking gets more insistent.

SONNY (CONT'D)

All right, all right, I'm coming.

ANGLE ON the front door. Through the window, we see a clean cut young man, CHRIS HARRIS.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Go away! We don't need solar panels.

CHRIS

Mr. Day, I need to talk to you. It's me, Chris Harris.

SONNY

That's supposed to mean something to me?

CHRIS

I was in the hospital when you--as Earl the Eagle--came to visit.

SONNY

That was years ago.

CHRIS

You saved my life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER

Sonny, wearing a garish eagle costume "flies" in.

SONNY/EARL

Earl the Eagle has landed!

Young Chris lies in bed, unimpressed.

YOUNG CHRIS

Ah, you're just the weatherman in a dumb bird suit.

SONNY/EARL

Not true. What's your name, kid?

YOUNG CHRIS

Chris. And I'm dying, so don't waste your time.

SONNY/EARL

You gotta have faith, Chris. We all go through storms in life. Want to know what eagles do when a storm hits?

CHRIS

Not really.

SONNY/EARL

I'm telling you anyway.

(Pantomiming)

We climb up to the top of the tallest tree, spread out our wings and let the wind carry us above the storm to safety.

YOUNG CHRIS

For real?

Sonny/Earl NODS.

SONNY (VO)  
I can't believe you remember that!

BACK TO

INT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CHRIS  
Never forgot it. So when I read about  
your recent troubles, I knew God was  
calling me to return the favor.

SONNY  
You found God because of me?

CHRIS  
Yes. Now I'm a Youth pastor.

SONNY  
Aha! So you want a donation. How much?

CHRIS  
Nothing. I'm just paying it forward. I  
was hoping Earl could come talk to the  
kids I work with. It would mean so much.

SONNY  
Sorry, but Earl's been grounded.

CHRIS  
Please? Kids hate it when I preach to  
them, but Earl can show them if they keep  
their eyes on Jesus, He'll lift them  
above the storm. Like you did for me.

SONNY  
I did that? Wow.

CHRIS  
Most people never know how many lives  
they've touched. You're one of the lucky  
ones.

SONNY  
Guess I am. Thank you.

Lainie enters the living room.

LAINIE  
That was beautiful.

SONNY

Lainie!

He HUGS her.

INT MEETING ROOM - DAY

Lainie zips up the back of Earl the Eagle's costume.

LAINIE

Ready for take-off?

SONNY

Can't believe it still fits!

He tries to kiss her, but the beak gets in the way. Lainie lightly pushes him toward the door, and Sonny "flaps" out into a room full of waiting children.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Earl the Eagle has landed!

CHEERS and APPLAUSE as we

FADE OUT

THE END