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Crazy like a FOX
by Dale Bridges

I've always had trouble falling asleep. I'm not exactly sure why. Maybe it's because of all the caffeine I consume. Or the sugar. Or the cocaine. Or maybe it's because of the troll that lives in my closet named Tum-Tum who likes to taunt me by playing Rod Stewart's "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?" on the acoustic guitar after sunset. Who knows? It's a mystery.

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that I often lay awake late at night, staring at the 'N Sync posters on my ceiling, struggling with insomnia. When this happens, I try to take my mind off of Tum-Tum's incessant strumming by inventing new television shows for the FOX network. For some reason, this helps me relax, and I soon drift off into the dreamy world of unicorns, faeries and Lance Bass. Here are some of the shows I created this week:

1) *Bill O'Reilly Yells At A Baby*: This is actually a show that I've been working on for a long time. Sometimes O'Reilly faces off in a political debate against a newborn baby, sometimes it's a puppy, and sometimes it's just a potted plant that happens to be leaning too far to the left. In any case, the basic format of the show is always the same. O'Reilly sits at his desk across from the baby/puppy/plant with a look of utter derision on his face. His hideous turkey neck quivers in anticipation and the horns on top of his balding, liver-spotted head begin to glow bright red. "So what's your opinion on stem cell research?" O'Reilly asks. However, before the baby/puppy/plant can respond, he screams, "That's ridiculous! What are you, French or something? I am very attractive and very smart! You are a communist!" The baby cries, the puppy whines, and the potted plant photosynthesizes (but in a very distraught manner). "Oh, stop being such a wuss!" O'Reilly says. Then he sheds his skin, unhinges his jaw, and swallows his opponent whole.

2) *Former Celebrities Undergo Abject Humiliation So The Rest Of Us Can Feel Better About Ourselves*: This is a reality show that features child celebrities who are now grown up and addicted to crystal meth, or sex, or doing crystal meth while having sex. Gary Coleman is on the show, as well as Rudy Huxtable, Punky Brewster and the boring youngest brother on *Home Improvement* that no one ever liked. The producers of FOX put them all together in an insanely expensive house and force them to perform various humiliating activities, such as vacuuming and making their own beds. If the show starts to get boring, Rupert Murdoch murders one of the celebs in their sleep (presumably the kid from *Home Improvement*) and blames it on one of the other housemates. The remaining cast members hunt down the accused killer with crossbows, and then they write a hip-hop song about it.

3) *Fat Guy & Attractive Lady*: This is a sitcom that stars a dim-witted, over-weight man who is married to a beautiful, intelligent woman. The man works at some innocuous blue-collar job where he makes semi-clever jokes about his boss, while the woman pursues vague ambitions of becoming a lawyer or psychiatrist. The husband has a wacky friend who lives next door and sometimes causes trouble by convincing the husband to go bowling on his anniversary. Hijinks ensue. The wife's parents also live nearby, and they come around to belittle the husband whenever the show starts to get dull. The jokes are only funny to residents of the Midwest, but that's OK because they're the only people who watch it. Other possible names for this show include: *The King of Queens*, *The Honeymooners*, *According to Jim*, *The Flintstones*, *Grounded for Life* or *Still Standing*.

4) *Rich Horny Teenagers with Stupid Problems*: This is a high school dramedy set in California, where all the teenagers look like adults and all the adults look like teenagers and all the breasts look like beach balls. Nothing remotely interesting ever happens on this show, but the audience pretends it's interesting because, well, everyone is so darn beautiful. And as we all know, beautiful people are better than normal people, who are icky and pointless. Everyone on the show is obsessed with sex, but no one ever gets naked. Instead, the girls practice being pouty and anorexic, and the boys practice being not gay. There's one James Dean wannabe from the wrong side of the tracks and a bitchy white girl who doesn't fit in — they exist to remind the audience that poor people can be pretty, too. At the end of every show, some awful emo band sings a whiny song about how hard it is to be rich and narcissistic in America. And then everyone converts to Scientology.

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