“PUSH-UP”

A SHORT COMEDY BY SAM GRABER

ESTIMATED RUN TIME – 10 MINUTES

Sam Graber
2020 Norway Pine Circle, Minneapolis, MN 55305
612-695-3125
samgraber@comcast.net
SUMMARY

The assistant picture taker at the local Department of Motor Vehicles camera station searches for the perfect push-up.

CHARACTERS (2M, 1F)

CHIP, mid 20s, male

GIRLS GETTING LICENSE / OLGA / DMV LADY (all female)

DMV BOSS / GAY GUY / CHEST HUMPER (all male)

Casting note: CHIP is played by one actor while all female roles are played by one female and all male roles by one male, for a total of three players.

SETTING

The camera station at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Push-Up was first performed by Seven Collective (NYC) on October 28, 2013 as directed by Jajmi Robinson, stage managed by D. Ajane Carlton, and with cast:

CHIP – Michael Flood, Jr.

Female Roles – Rachel Russell

Male Roles – Rommel Tolentino
THE PLAY

CHIP behind the DMV counter, near a stationary mounted camera.

CHIP
I’ll admit, I took the job at the Department of Motor Vehicles camera station to meet girls.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 1
Hi, I’m here to get a new license.

CHIP
I’ve come to know everything about them. Their eye color, their hair color.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 1
Excuse me!

CHIP
But they’ve never known me.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 1
I’m here to get a new license?

CHIP
Smile.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 1
How’s it look?

CHIP
Pixelated and forlorn.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 1
Creep.

CHIP
I’ll admit, I could never get past the ‘smile’ part.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 2
Hi, I’m here to get a new license.
CHIP
What was past their smile? Their female companionship? Their wiles? Beckoning my pontoon of yearning to crash upon their shores of succulent caress?

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 2
Creep.

CHIP
I’ll admit, it’s made me forlorn.

DMV BOSS
Hey, Chip!

CHIP
‘Sup, boss.

DMV BOSS
You suck, Chip, that’s ‘sup! Licensees are complaining, and I never get complaints around here. So get it together, sucko, cuz this is the DMV.

CHIP
I was glad he called me out. I was twenty-seven years old, the new assistant picture taker at the DMV, and a long time removed from a deep, meaningful first date with a woman. So I did what anyone in my situation would do: I hired a personal trainer.

**OLGA enters, eating ice cream.**

OLGA
Privyet, hombre! You call me!

CHIP
I took your business card from the bulletin board at the Dairy Queen across the street.

OLGA
Oh, yah? It works!

CHIP
What doesn’t work is me and girls. They don’t seem to like me. Or notice me.

OLGA
Why, what you think girls like?
CHIP
I don’t know, that’s why I’m here. I’m ready to try anything.

OLGA
Hey nuts-numb, ready for secret of week?

CHIP
Okay.

OLGA
Girls like: Really. Big. Pecs.

CHIP
Really. Big. Pecs.

OLGA
The pectoralis minus, the pectoralis firmus, swelling very bulbous-like over sternum.

CHIP
So girls are drawn to a manly chest.

OLGA
In the box wine loads. For this, you need latest craze: the push-up.

CHIP
I’ve seen the push-up, of course. And I’ve heard the stories passed down by generations. But the push-up seemed so unnatural. To turn away from sky and sun, from lurking predators, putting my chin on the ground like some executioner’s block. We’re so distrustful of the earth.

OLGA
Okay, cake beef, don’t put chin on ground, just do push-up.

CHIP
How exactly?

OLGA
You clients with all the talking! Just do push-up!

CHIP tries, struggles, can’t.

CHIP
I can’t.
OLGA

CHIP again struggles, grunts, and achieves.

CHIP
I did it! Did you see that? I can do a push-up!

OLGA
Kanyeshna, of course! Step one complete. Now step two: make push-up part of life. You have bodily function, you push-up. You breathe, you blink, you get pancreatic shock from Dairy Queen, you push-up.

CHIP
Those are involuntary actions.

OLGA
And so push-ups shall be.

CHIP
It made sense. Total sense. I think, the push-up follows. I move, the push-up follows. And the girls will follow.

Sound of a toilet flushing.

CHIP
I started pushing up in secret, mostly in the unisex, astride the commode, with the door locked, and the lights off, when no one was looking. And other places at the DMV as well, like behind the camera before each picture, when no one was looking.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 3
Hi, I’m here to get a new license.

CHIP
What was it that drove me? I mean, girls, sure, but was it something deeper?

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 3
Okay, maybe someone else could take my picture.

CHIP
Self-preoccupation? Vanity? Nah. But then the most amazing thing happened.
OLGA
Bag douche, what up!

CHIP
Two! I can do two push-ups! In a row.

OLGA
You are junkie now.

CHIP
Olga was right. In the span of down and up I became obsessed, a fanatic, the journey obscuring the destination. [To OLGA] Show me more. Olga showed me the myriad of possibilities stemming from the common push-up: the vulture, the gorgon, the Wolf Blitzer. From a singular, elegant motion, the varieties of mutation. An endless road only exhilarates the traveler.

CHIP on the ground, by the DMV counter, doing push-ups.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 4
Hi, I’m here to get a new…what are you doing?

CHIP
Oh, um, the Wolf—

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 4
—your chest, is like, so big.

CHIP
Really?

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 4
My phone number.

CHIP
Already have it. Along with your VIN, date of birth, and weight.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 4
Creep.
CHIP
I’ll admit, it was affecting my work. I couldn’t focus on taking pictures, on getting heads to fit in some predetermined frame. The camera takes pictures of faces, the neck up, while the world craves chest. Before my chest was a rudderless, nebulous, shapeless, formless, fitnessless detritus of purposelessness. Now my life had new meaning, the push-up!, which never rejected my advances, taking me down towards the lie and pushing me up towards the truth. [Push-up down] The sit-up. [up] Truth. [down] The Stairmaster. [up] Truth. [down] Men’s yoga pants. [up] Truth. I had become enlightened.

OLGA
Muffin stud! I got incredible fantastic milestone for you. The marathon. Twenty six point two freaking push-ups.

CHIP
Point two.

OLGA
In place where chaos and mayhem swirl like vanilla soft serve.

CHIP
Show me this place.

Sounds of a nightclub, music, GAY GUY dances nearby.

CHIP
Twenty five, twenty six…point two! [Collapses]

GAY GUY
God, DMV, you’re like my superhero. You think you could snap a picture, outside?

CHIP
And with that I was pectorally liberated. My personal trainer told me! And personal trainers have more control over me than anyone else, except maybe my boss.

DMV BOSS
Hey suckmeister! Where the hell have you been? I’m getting more complaints!

BOSS freezes.
CHIP

Look at his arms. Are they not disproportionate? Are we not all disproportionate? What it could mean for the world if we all gathered at one location on this disproportionate planet and pushed-up, all of us pushing at the same time from the same place, in one motion pushing the world into another orbit, another plane of being, where triceps never tire, forearms never falter, pectorals never peter, where these crude amphibious legs could evolve into another set of arms, so that four limbs unite in pushing us to the highest heavens of space and time.

DMV BOSS

Complaints, suckenstein! Listen to this: man bras, shoulder pads, neck meggings? You don’t need all that to take a picture, do you? So let’s go! We got someone renewing a Class C!

CHIP

These chest-challenged picturees, masquerading as souls, they don’t even know.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 5

Hi, I’m here to get a new license.

CHIP

You ever ride on the back of a man doing twenty six point two freaking push-ups while eating your expired license?

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 5

My ex-boyfriend, and he was a creep.

Outside, the sounds of crickets.

CHIP

I’ll admit, in the warm summer evenings I’d stalk the Dairy Queen, watching lovers lick the charged air between them. I couldn’t relate. These people took walks and rode their bikes. There had to be someplace where all my push-uppingness would pay off. So I did what anyone in my situation would do. I consulted the internet.

CHEST HUMPER is on, doing the perfect push-up.
CHIP
There were thousands of them, from all over the world, posting videos of their private push-up routines, glamorizing their chests. But one raised the push-up to a calling, who reached the end of that endless road with the perfect push-up. I messaged him: Chest-Humper, I love you! You’re everything I strive to be.

CHEST-HUMPER
Come to me.

CHIP
Where are you?

CHEST-HUMPER
Seaside Heights, New Jersey.

CHIP back at the DMV counter.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 6
Hi, I’m here to get a new—

CHIP
I’m raising money to travel all the way to Seaside Heights, New Jersey to meet the Chest Humper, and as part of my campaign all you have to do is check off next to the organ donor box that for every push-up I do you’ll donate a dollar to this very important cause.

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 6
Why, yes. I will.

CHIP
It was a long, long journey. I’ll admit, I’d never left Trenton before.

At the DMV counter, now DMV LADY.

DMV LADY
Welcome to Seaside Heights DMV, just take a number, we’ll—

CHIP
[Conspiratorially] I’m here…to see…the Chest Humper.

DMV LADY
Ay! Jerome!
“Push-Up”

CHEST HUMPER appears, by the camera.

CHIP

I messaged you.

CHEST HUMPER

I know.

CHIP

I didn’t take a number.

CHEST HUMPER

Neither does anyone else. [Circling CHIP] Impressive. Answer me this: why do you push-up?

CHIP

Because I no longer believe in fear.

CHEST HUMPER

You are ready. Go to the boardwalk. Once there, take off your shirt, and all will become clear.

CHIP

Yes, your Chest Humeriness.

Sounds of an ocean boardwalk.

CHIP

The boardwalk. Saturday. A gaggle of unwashed Jerseyites. I tremble in wild anticipation as I unbutton my custom Ed Hardy, from bottom to top, slowly saving the reveal for last. I slip off one shoulder, the other shoulder!...and then!...nothing. Nothing at all. No girls, no panting, no clawing, not even a seagull excreting its sentiment. Like I wasn’t even there.

Sounds of an angry mob.

DMV BOSS

Hey, sucksack! Where the effing eff have you been? I’ve got complaints AND a line! You believe that? A LINE! So aim and click and don’t give no shtick!

GIRL GETTING LICENSE 7

Whew! Hi! I’m here to get—
CHIP
A license, I know. Was it all for nothing? Some malicious lie? Torment is seeing
the answer, believing in the answer and then having it disappear like an unspoken
whisper in the hot summer night. I’m just a man with a dream. Smile.

OLGA
Daddy mack! Where you been?

CHIP
Seaside Heights.

OLGA
The hell what for?

CHIP
I’m not sure anymore. I thought I knew, but…all those push-ups and not one girl.

OLGA
Kanyeshna, of course! The push-up was so last week.

CHIP
What do you mean?

OLGA
The push-up is pushed *out*.

CHIP
*Out*? Well, what’s in?

OLGA
The pull-up.

CHIP
…the pull up!

*Music rises as…*

*Blackout.*

**END OF PLAY.**