

"The Dump"

Outline For a Situation Comedy

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"The Dump" is a situation comedy about Judy, a bag-lady-made-good who lives on a dump named "Flats" near a large city in Southern California. Once an urban housewife and amateur harpist, she took a left turn coming out of the market one day to live on the streets as a preacher and free spirit before "all the trash out there now showed up." She "did her time" on the streets and alleys of North Beach in San Francisco because "you just can't get good croissants in the Haight."

Now she has it all, Judy is a honest to goodness American success story. She has a clean, clapboard house with a green, grassy front lawn and a white picket fence. Never mind it's in the middle of the largest refuse site in the state. "Home is where the Harp is" is her motto. The mat on her front porch doesn't say "Welcome," but instead says "No Tires." She has pink flamingoes and a reflection ball on her lawn, because it reminds her of her "roots" in New Jersey. She used to have a bird bath, but "the seagulls treated it like Lake Erie" so she replaced it with a jockey that looks like Tom Selleck. "When I get really crazy," she says, "I tie myself up and make him hold my reins." She's the dumpmaster, as well, and greets each visitor with a cheerful, "Dropping off or picking up?"

Her son, Wilt, is thirteen. "That's not a bad age," Judy says, "for a kid." When Wilt wanted to know why she says he was named after his father whose name was Bill, Judy tells him it was his bedroom nickname. In the bedroom "he was like a flower under a hot sun." Wilt's a sharp kid and together with the bulldozer operator, Mutton, they're always reclaiming equipment and assembling it into something that's "a little more advanced."

Mutton is his own story. He's a small, slight, aggressive man who's sensitive about his size and hides his inadequacies behind heavy machinery, particularly his pet bulldozer, "Grunt." Mutton also runs the electric incinerator, which is bad, because sometimes he and Grunt get confused about what is trash and what isn't. Grunt is a rare self-starting bulldozer that needs constant adult supervision to keep from occasionally wandering off on his own.

The only "normal" person is Leonard Puk, the county inspector whose job is to make sure the dump runs "under certain standards." Puk is a good guy, and frequently intervenes to the benefit of Flats and its inhabitants when the County Supervisor for the district tries to make life tough. When the supervisor wants to evict Judy and Wilt because they're "white trash," Puk is careful to designate them as such and then argues that because they are trash, it is only proper they should live at the dump.

The last major character is kept in the basement where Wilt's room is. He is a somewhat imaginary plaything that Wilt talks to when he's lonely or sad. It is here, where Tinseltown discards it's refuse, that this decrepit shell of a once great tv star now hides from the glare. He is bitter and cynical about his former life. His carefree spirit has become tainted with sinister dark thoughts about the "thieves and robbers who stole my luster."

It is none other than Max Headroom. Once clean shaven and revered, he now sports a scraggly three-day growth, and has a viscous addiction to DC current. He's always trying to talk Wilt into scoring him some batteries. "Get those good Duracells!" he admonishes as Wilt goes off to school in the morning. When nothing else is available, static electricity turns his rotor, "But it's a wicked hangover." Some mornings, after a particularly wild night at the incinerator, he'll look for a cat to rub the wrong way. "A little hair of the cat, as they say. Nice kitty." After each fix, Max drifts off into a reverie, punctuated by electric current dancing around his lips and ears, after which he briefly returns to his normal, jumpy high-spirited self.

Max is the reason no one can keep batteries in the house and he is forever seducing the bulldozer (whom he views as a strong mother figure) for a joy ride, "C'mon, baby. You know you want to." Max is always giving out free advice, claiming, "Hey, trust me. I'm not a doctor, but I played one on tv." Max is a secret Wilt keeps from his mother -- or so he thinks, because Max is Judy's secret friend, too.

Market Demographics

This series has been designed as a half-hour situation comedy to showcase one of the rising stars among the new female comedians such as Judy Tenuda, Paula Poundstone, et al. who are looking for a vehicle to step up from stage comedy. It is hoped this show will develop a dual audience between children and adults, much the same way the old "Bugs Bunny" cartoons -- and more recently the very successful "Mork and Mindy" series -- were able. It will primarily target the middle class, 25-44 year-old age group, with an additional expanded target to the youth market aged 7-24. The intended result will be a market appeal to a wide cross-section of the TV viewing public.

The inventive synergy between Wilt and Mutton developing hair-brained and half-baked ideas into an actual reality will provide a fruitful field for a child's imagination, while the off-beat adult humor supplied by Judy and Max should gather the attention of the adult market. The added benefit of a "visual life" such as Max Headroom, with his impish appeal to children and adult mannerisms should add considerable fuel to the creative fires.

Selected Story Lines

"Attention Earthlings"

Wilt and Mutton try to assemble pieces from broken VCRs together to make one that will even "butter your muffins in the morning. "It takes too much power for the house so they plug it into the incinerator. Little do they know that Judy's first words, "Attention Earthlings," are broadcast throughout the state over the cable tv system. After she tells them they have been conquered, she demands they report to the County office for "reassignment according to morality," and that they should bring a dish to pass "for all the little minions."

"Whoa, Gold"

Mutton shows up with gold nuggets and won't tell where he got them from. Every time someone new sees the nuggets they say the same thing, "Whoa, gold!" Word gets out to town, and a gold rush starts. Instead of people digging around "like psychotic gophers," Judy has them all dig behind the house, under "where the swimming pool's going to be."

It turns out that Mutton has found the gold in the ashes from the incinerator, and that the few pieces he has have accumulated over the last year.

"Oxnard Is A Better Place"

Wilt's father shows up and demands custody of the boy. He wants to take Wilt to a better place, which turns out to be another dump on the coast near Oxnard. "I don't want him growing up in this dump," he says self-righteously. At the beach, he'll breathe fresh air and learn to "talk like normal kids, right dude?"

"Flats, City of"

The County supervisor gets a burr under his saddle and tries to evict Judy and Wilt and fire Mutton, because his buddy wants to build a "playground around here." The playground turns out to be a golf course, with lots of condominiums around it.

The plan is thwarted when Puk discovers the dump is built over an abandoned cotton mill and factory town, and that the dump is really incorporated as a town. The county has been leasing the site, and is behind on payments.

Judy registers the inhabitants and holds an election. No one runs for mayor or sheriff, but Judy runs for City Clerk and wins by one vote, the only one cast, and Mutton becomes the Building Inspector. In the end, the city is run by second-tier administrative clerks who only know how to direct a good run-around.