

# PLATFORM FOR ARCHI- TECTURE:

MAKIN' IT...

A SITUATION COMEDY

BY STUDIOAPT-

JULIA & JOHN MCMORROUGH

## OPENING CREDITS

MIXTURE OF SHOTS, SOME OF THE "PLATFORM" (FOR ARCHITECTURE) ITSELF, OTHERS OF THE ACTORS INTERACTING IN A VARIETY OF DOMESTIC AND PROFESSIONAL SCENARIOS (EATING, WORKING, RELAXING, ETC.) MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT IS "MAKIN' IT." MUSIC AND LYRICS BY FREDDIE PERREN AND DINO FEKARIS.

## ACT ONE (KITCHEN)

FADE IN:

INT. "COUNTER"—MORNING

"Makin' It" theme song fades out as HUGH stands at the counter preparing breakfast while RUTH sits on nearby step examining her phone and drinking coffee. The unexpected sound of a loud timpani startles HUGH.

HUGH looks skeptical.

HUGH

It sounded like a phone ringing.

RUTH looks at phone and sees that there is a message.

RUTH

Oh, you're right! I always forget that this is a phone!

HUGH rolls his eyes and returns to kitchen work. RUTH holds phone to ear to listen to message and makes a variety of faces while listening. HUGH looks at RUTH for feedback, but gets no indication of who has called, so he goes back to making breakfast. RUTH continues to listen and eventually hangs up the phone, but does not speak.

HUGH

Well?

RUTH

Hmm? Can I ask you a hypothetical question?

HUGH

No! The answer will be no.

RUTH

I didn't ask yet.

HUGH

You don't need to, I can already tell.

RUTH

No...it's not what you think!

HUGH

Let me guess -

A ray-gun sounding alarm goes off. HUGH sighs loudly and continues to work in the kitchen. RUTH looks timidly at the phone, then avoids HUGH's gaze.

HUGH

So, what is this hypothetical question, anyway?

RUTH

You tell me, you seem to know so much.

HUGH

Ok, let me think...someone wants us to design a whole project, in advance of getting the commission. And, if we do a good job and they like the design, they may consider hiring us, but in the meantime, they can only pay us in coupons.

RUTH

BUZZZ! Wrong!

HUGH

Really?

RUTH

There was no mention of coupons.

HUGH

(looks up) What was that?

RUTH

I got some new ringtones!

HUGH

It sounds awful!

RUTH

Well, I'm working on arranging my day by sounds.

Brings phone to show to HUGH.

RUTH

For each thing I need to do, I have a different sound—so I know immediately what it is! I'm working on a streamlined live/work balance—you know, 'meet with client,' 'drawing set due,' 'take out the trash,' and so on.

HUGH examines the phone screen.

HUGH

You have 48 alarms set for today?!

RUTH

Yes, today's an easy day. You should see Thursdays!

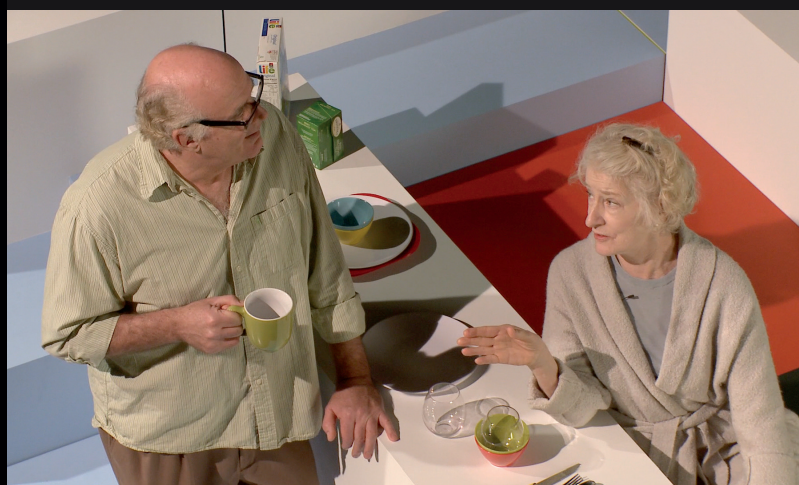
There is the sound of a ringing phone. HUGH looks expectantly at RUTH, who studies her phone quizzically, then goes back to drinking coffee.

HUGH

(curious) What was that one for?

RUTH

Huh? Oh, I'm not sure, I don't recognize that sound.



HUGH  
So why are you happy about that?

RUTH  
Well, I'm not happy about THAT, per se, I just wanted you to know that you were wrong.

HUGH  
Alright, fine. But what do we get out of it? Hypothetically?

RUTH  
Well, hypothetically, it's the same thing we always get—the opportunity to design something.



HUGH  
But, hypothetically speaking, don't you think it would be good to occasionally have the opportunity to pay our bills?

*Sound of a loud drum rim shot.*

HUGH  
What in the world is THAT one?

*RUTH looks at phone and turns it off.*

RUTH  
It's a reminder.

HUGH  
A reminder to what?

RUTH  
To pay our phone bill.

*A long silence follows. RUTH busies herself with checking e-mails and other things on her phone. HUGH continues to make breakfast.*

HUGH  
Ok, I'll bite. What is so great about this project that you want to do it?

RUTH  
Remember when we did that feasibility study for converting a gas station into a gastro-pub?

HUGH  
Yes, I remember. That was fun.

RUTH  
It was!

HUGH  
They're ready to move forward with the project?

RUTH  
Nooo. No way, much too expensive, as we did such a great job of pointing out in our study. But, they did give our name to another restaurant called "JIB," and they want one of us to come for an interview today.

HUGH  
Well, that doesn't sound so bad, but first let's just find out—  
*Very loud Reveille bugle call is heard.*

HUGH  
(startled) WHAT was that?

RUTH  
Just another reminder.

HUGH  
What now?

RUTH  
That we should have started working hours ago!

HUGH  
Are you sure that wasn't just for you? I mean, I started working half an hour ago. (taps forehead) In my mind.



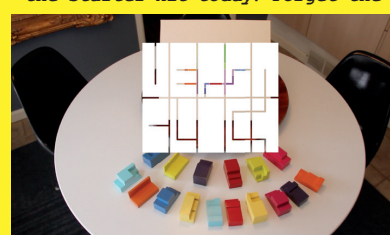
*Laughter and applause combine with an instrumental version of "Makin' It," as the camera pulls out to reveal the "kitchen" platform elevation.*

END OF ACT ONE FADE OUT:

COMMERCIAL (VERSABLOCK)-  
[IN THE STYLE OF 1950S TOY ADS LIKE WHAM-O AND HASBRO]  
Kids! Do you ever find yourselves sitting around, overwhelmed by boredom? Staring aimlessly out the window? Never fear, VersaBlock is here!



What do you say, Billy? Give them a try! VersaBlocks are expertly designed to allow for hundreds, even thousands of possible configurations. Nice job, Billy! Versatile, Colorful, Fun. It's VersaBlock. Buy the starter kit today. Forget the Clock. VersaBlock.





## ACT TWO (OFFICE)

FADE IN:  
INT. "TABLE"—DAY

*HUGH and RUTH are sitting at the table working on laptops across from each other, partner-desk style. Models and drawings are strewn about the table.*

RUTH

What exactly did you say to them?

HUGH

(looks up) Nothing much, just the typical introductory stuff.

RUTH

Like when you explain that low budgets are an opportunity for innovation? What do you call it, an "invitation to innovation"? Or did you use The Three Little Pigs to explain zoning codes?

HUGH

Please, this was a sophisticated presentation. I did not bring up The Three Little Pigs.

RUTH

Then what happened? We just got an e-mail telling us to forget about the project. What did you actually say?

HUGH

(looks mildly confused, then registers recognition) I don't remember exactly, but it's possible that communication broke down at one point.

RUTH

Oh? What did you do?

HUGH

Well, I was trying to let them know that we're interested in traversing the liminal space that seems to separate the architect as self-serving artiste and the client as demanding Philistine.

RUTH

You said those words?!

HUGH

Which ones?

RUTH

"Liminal," "Artiste," "Philistine"?

HUGH

(sheepishly) I may have.

RUTH

You do realize the irony of sounding so pompous while trying to convince someone how down to earth you are? Why didn't you just say that we're interested in common ground?

HUGH

I don't know! I got a little nervous, and the only words that came quickly to mind were either pretentious or profane. I must have panicked—after all, I only had a few minutes to put together a decent proposal.

RUTH

So you made an indecent proposal? Just like the movie!

HUGH

Oh, you know that movie drives me crazy! Especially when Woody Harrelson's architect character sits on his bathroom floor sketching his dream house!

RUTH

Yes, that was pretty bad.

HUGH

Though not as bad as the lecture he gave to students about Louis Kahn.

RUTH

You mean the "what does a brick want" speech?

HUGH

Yes, but I wish they hadn't got it wrong.

RUTH

What's the real quote? Doesn't Kahn say he asked a brick what it wanted, and it wants to be an arch?

HUGH

More or less, specifically meaning that one needs to understand the nature of materials.

RUTH

What does he say in the movie?

HUGH

Something about a common ordinary brick wanting to be MORE than what it is, and that, like the humble brick, we should try to make more of ourselves! But that's not what Kahn meant!

RUTH

I think they were going more for dramatic effect than strict adherence to architectural principles...

HUGH

(becomes increasingly agitated) For God's sake, the brick doesn't suffer from low self esteem—the brick knows what it is. It's a brick, and it CAN be an arch, not by denying itself, but by UNDERSTANDING itself!

RUTH

Well, I guess it's not so easy to portray architecture faithfully in movies. Complex issues tend to come off as extremes—too good or too bad; too ridiculous or too serious, which is what makes it legible to an audience.

HUGH

I guess you're right, but surely there are more subtle depictions of architects out there?

RUTH

Can you name one?

HUGH

(looks triumphant) Yes! *Death Wish!*



RUTH

(snorts) With Charles Bronson as a hard-boiled loner fueled by vengeance and rage?

HUGH

But also an architect, I think it's a uniquely nuanced portrayal.

RUTH

(dismissively) I don't know if blood-thirsty lunatic counts as nuanced.

HUGH

Yes, he was a vigilante, but he was also the architect of some surprisingly sensitive buildings, low slung desert houses with passive solar orientation. Anyway, better architect as maniac than as uptight lothario, like the architect in *Hannah and Her Sisters* who cries at the opera in order to get dates.

RUTH

Ok, you're right, but that movie did give us a few lines about Adolf Loos and organic form.

HUGH

Yes, it did, by playing them for a cheap laugh.

RUTH

Aha! You've proved my point.



HUGH

How?

RUTH

By putting both Adolf Loos and organic form in the context of a lovesick woman trying to impress a narcissistic architect, ipso facto, these are pretentious and laughable issues that architects care about. It's an extreme of being too serious, and as a result, becomes ridiculous to an audience.

HUGH

What about *The Towering Inferno*? That was the best of all worlds: macho architect and exciting disaster movie!

RUTH

Sure, but what if *The Towering Inferno* were all about Paul Newman having meetings with electrical consultants and code officials? Sure, I could watch three hours of Paul Newman doing anything, but most people aren't interested in a movie that might have avoided the inferno in the first place!

HUGH

So you really think people wouldn't want to watch a realistic depiction of architects engaged in actual design efforts, the way they actually happen?



*Both become quiet as they settle back into working. The work is a steady clicking of computer keys, shuffling of papers, sketching, etc., with very little drama.*

*Laughter and applause combine with an instrumental version of "Makin' It," as the camera pulls out to reveal the "office" platform elevation.*

FADE OUT:

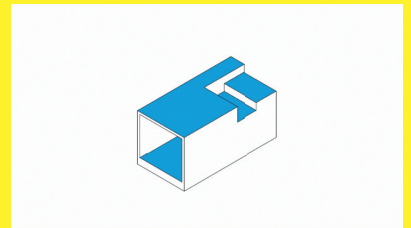
END OF ACT TWO

-COMMERCIAL (UNITS)-  
[IN THE STYLE OF IKEA, SUPERSTUDIO'S "SUPERSURFACE",  
AND CHARLES WILP'S AFRI-COLA ADS.]

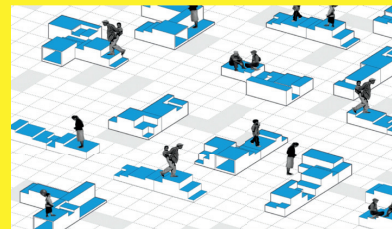
COMPUTERIZED FEMALE NARRATOR

*Units, Units, Units. Why pay for all the extras?*

*Through our careful analysis of the way people occupy space, we here at studioAPT have developed the UNITS system to maximize the conditions of life within a small area.*



*Each of the UNITS has both character and use. The table, the steps, the bed, the bar, the climber, the landing, the ziggurat, and the utility infielder.*



*In isolation, or in combination, these UNITS provide flexibility, efficiency, and design. UNITS, more than furniture, less than a house...just what you need.*



### ACT THREE (LIVING ROOM)

FADE IN:

INT. "COUCH"—NIGHT

*RUTH comes to sit on couch while HUGH sits reading and enjoying a drink.*

HUGH

Where've you been?

RUTH

Sorry, I was just watching *The Towering Inferno*...again. Why, what's up?

HUGH

We just got a message!

RUTH

Oh, from who?

HUGH

The JIB group.

RUTH

What? I thought we were out of the running.

HUGH

We're back in! Actually, we got the job!

RUTH

You're kidding. What happened?

HUGH

They said they loved what we sent them, and can't wait to work with us.

RUTH

But what about when they e-mailed earlier saying to forget it?

HUGH

It was a mistake. Somebody put the wrong address in. I have a really good feeling about this. The main guy, Steve, said he could tell we'd be a good fit. AND he's interested in seeing what he can do about hooking us up higher in the corporate structure.

RUTH

(looks relieved and excited) That's great! He sounds like he could be our patron!

HUGH

(looks satisfied with himself) Yes! This could be big for us!

RUTH

I'm sorry I got after you for using fancy words. I underestimated Steve and the JIB Group.

HUGH

Well, obviously he's pretty sharp, and incredibly intelligent for liking our work.

RUTH

So what's next?

HUGH

We're meeting tomorrow, on site.

RUTH

Oh! Do you think we get to eat there? I can't believe I've never even heard of this place! It must be very exclusive!

HUGH

Hang on, let me look up the address.

*HUGH pages through computer tablet in search of address on map.*

RUTH

Is it downtown?

HUGH

(confused) No. Wait, I don't think this is right.

RUTH

Where is it?

HUGH

Next to the mattress place on Frontage Road.

RUTH

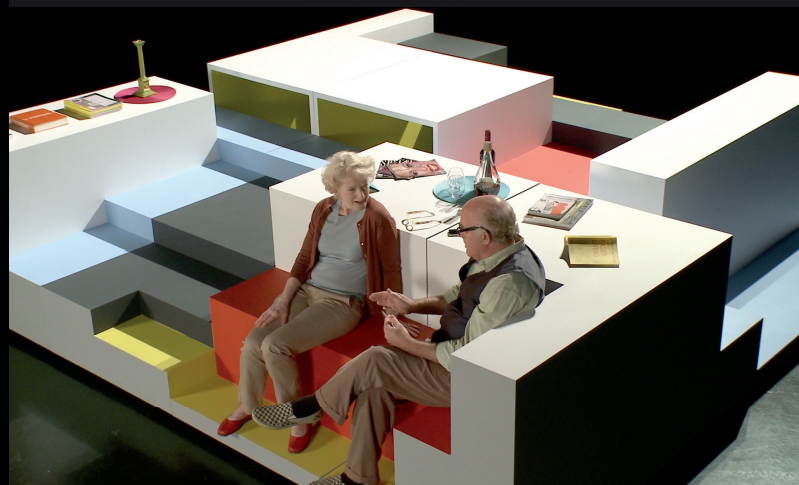
(confused) What's it called again?

HUGH

JIB.

RUTH

Gib? Like giblets? Do you think it's like locally-sourced artisanal chicken?



HUGH

No. It's J.I.B. All caps.

RUTH

Hmmm.

*HUGH continues to consult tablet, looking increasingly distressed.*

HUGH

I think I've been here before.

RUTH

I thought you said you hadn't.



HUGH

Well, when I thought it was a place called JIB, I hadn't.

RUTH

If it's not JIB, what is it?

HUGH

Jack. In. the. Box. J.I.B.

RUTH

You ATE there?

HUGH

That's where the meeting was today.

RUTH

It didn't occur to you that the meeting was there because they are the clients?

HUGH

I thought they were being ironic.

RUTH

Hold on, do you even know what the actual project is?

*HUGH consults tablet again.*

HUGH

Well, the e-mail was titled "A Vision for Universal Design in Dining."

RUTH

I know that. I spent all morning preparing a presentation on culinary advancements in terms of the Vitruvian ideals of commodity, firmness, and delight. But what is the ACTUAL project?

RUTH

Or maybe we should go back to trying to get projects by doing competitions.

HUGH

Don't you think that's a step back?

*RUTH holds up tablet.*

RUTH

A step back from this? From handrail replacements in a fast food restaurant bathroom?

HUGH

Ok, you're right. I guess competitions can be fun—they're like open mic night for architects.

RUTH

Exactly! You get to try out new material while trying to win over an audience.

HUGH

You know, it was my childhood dream to be a comedian.

RUTH

Oh, yeah?

HUGH

I even brought it up with my guidance counselor in high school. I said I wanted to be either an architect or a comedian, and he advised me that I wasn't smart enough.

RUTH

To be an architect?

HUGH

No, a comedian.

RUTH

Ouch. Well, anyway, we should get to bed. After all, we do have that invitation tomorrow.

HUGH

To what?

RUTH

To innovation! Those handrails aren't going to recognize the potentials within their limitations without our help.

*A startling gong alarm sounds. HUGH and RUTH look at RUTH's phone and then each other.*

*Laughter and applause combine with a karaoke version (backing, but no lead vocals) of "Makin' It," as the camera pulls out to reveal the set elevation and the actors turn to face the camera.*

*FADE OUT:*

END OF ACT THREE

*HUGH thumbs through tablet some more.*

HUGH

Let me just open this attachment.

*HUGH hands computer tablet to RUTH, who sighs heavily.*

RUTH

Handrails to the restrooms? That's it? Replace the handrails?

HUGH

(sheepish) You know, I asked a handrail what it wanted to be, and -

*RUTH glares at him, and a brief silence ensues.*

HUGH

Maybe we should stop answering Requests for Proposals. Or stop answering the phones.



CLOSING CREDITS

CONTINUOUS OVERHEAD JIB SHOT OVER THE  
WIDTH OF THE PLATFORM, ACCOMPANIED BY THE  
INSTRUMENTAL VERSION OF 'MAKIN' IT'

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION, SCRIPT, AND DIRECTION  
STUDIOAPT

RUTH CRAWFORD  
AS RUTH

HUGH MAGUIRE  
AS HUGH

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MANAGING PRODUCER  
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LIGHTING  
JEFFREY ALDER

AUDIO  
DAVID GREENSPAN

CAMERA OPERATORS  
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WITH  
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ENGINEERING AND BUILDING  
AL MCWATERS, SKYSHIPS DESIGN

PAINTING  
DAN ERICKSON

FABRICATION FACILITY  
MAKER WORKS, ANN ARBOR

RECORDED AT  
DUDERSTADT CENTER VIDEO STUDIO  
AT THE  
DIGITAL MEDIA COMMONS  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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RESEARCH THROUGH MAKING GRANT  
FROM THE  
TAUBMAN COLLEGE  
OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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*Makin' It joins a distinguished lineage of  
workplace sitcoms—extending from WKRP in  
Cincinnati to The Office—that see the humor  
in the anxieties and exasperations of  
gainful employment. It is appointment  
television for anyone who needs an antidote  
to our discipline's contemporary fascination  
with the real.*

—TIMOTHY HYDE