

ARTISTIC LICENSE - The series
Created by Nate Cohen, Divi Crockett & Michael Wohl

30 minute single-camera comedy

Alternate Titles: Drive Me Crazy, Line Forms Here, The Waiting Game

A long line forms outside a sterile stone structure. People are arriving by the handful and patiently waiting to enter. Suddenly the bolt on the door comes free and the cattle call begins. No, this is not a casting session for reality TV, This is the Department of Motor Vehicles: paragon of government beurocracy and inefficiency.

Inside are hundreds of three-part, double-sided forms and an endless supply of half pencils. Numbered windows and Tensa barriers form an unnavigable maze, decorated with nothing but eye charts and drunk driving statistics. But it's not the turgid environment that earns the DMV its formidable reputation. It's the staff.

At the appointment desk sits DON HAAS, 18, queer as a three-dollar bill and inexplicably smiling ear to ear. Of course, he would rather work in a Koreatown manicure shop, or study French cooking in Provence.

At Station 7 is ice queen JULIE FROST, A man-hating hetero girl, Julie made it to the 3rd round of American Idol, was kicked out of the house in week one of Big Brother 2, and would have been on the Real World LA, that is until the restraining order was filed, though she swears she was just delivering thank you cards... She's currently waiting on a job as a Stewardess on Jet Blue, but in the meantime, she offers her chilling stare to the drivers-to-be at the DMV.

If you make it past stations 18, 26 and 37 you might just run into a strange man dressed like a 20's movie director. This is DAVID MILKEN, 27 who mans the ID photo station. David is prepared to transform you from exhausted and irritable to exquisite and irresistible. With powder, props and the magic of light, David strives to make each ID photo a masterpiece.

By day, CHANG NGYUEN administers the written driving tests, but by night he is a hip-hop MC at a popular Karaoke bar. Unfortunately, sometimes he forgets which job is which. CHANG is actually working illegally, but always has an excuse about his papers.

Outside, at the driving test line, two instructors spar over who gets the next victim, but it's unclear who is worse; the always nervous and at a loss for words, coke-bottle glasses wearing JOHN SMECKLER, or drill instructor-turned-driving coach, cigar-chomping vixen BILLIE Mc GRUE.

Overseeing all of these nitwits (and quite a few others) is BRIANCA VINCENT (50), at 5'10" and more than 300 pounds, everyone knows better than to cross the Mean Queen of San Joaquin. (her semi-pro wrestling monicker) Ironically, Brianca doesn't drive at all, she's a bus person and its her mission in life to make sure no one gets a license unless they really, really, really need it.

Welcome to the DMV. Please take your ticket and get comfortable; you are going to be here for a very long time. These people have the power to grant you one of the greatest and most necessary privileges in our society. Now if they could only figure out how to change the copier toner, you might be on your merry way.

Don't count on it though, because while you're waiting for your renewal forms and registration papers, the burning question on their minds is what's for lunch and who's winning the Curse Word Under Their Breath contest (for which you need at least one witness). They are finding all sorts of fun ways to make their day seem half as long, and the easiest way to do that is to make your day seem twice as long.

Sure there is the occasional Vietnam flashback at the copy machine and the case of the half eaten, and rewrapped, sandwich in the refrigerator marked Don't Eat Me. But don't be fooled, Public Service was never so miserable. Or funny.

PILOT SYNOPSIS “SUITING UP”

Longtime DMV Manager RANDY PLIMPTON is retiring today but has not yet named his replacement and the staff is in gossip heaven predicting who will take over and how the rest of the crew will be reorganized. Odds-on favorite is Plimpton’s nephew, librarian DUSTIN BRIGHT (50’s, quiet, deliberate, and slow as a tortoise) and so he is being alternately sucked up to and sabotaged as folks jockey for position after the shakeup.

JULIE FROST doesn’t care, as she’s certain she’s got a part on the latest reality TV show (in a later episode she’ll bring some reality producers to the DMV to consider setting a show in the DMV). She openly mocks Dustin, which only fans his secret and unrequited adoration for her.

Meanwhile, BRIANCA VINCENT, who deserves the promotion more than anyone, (based on seniority and the seemingly unique ability to get anything done), decides to take matters into her own hands and confronts RANDY, threatening a discrimination *suit* if she is overlooked.

Throughout the day, the DMV is getting hotter and hotter, as the air conditioning unit is broken. This exacerbates the tension, and makes the customers especially irritable.

As DUSTIN starts to believe the hype, he begins acting the part and making outrageous demands from his co-workers. While most everyone cow-tows to his idiotic edicts (which includes a new dress code requiring men and women to wear *suits* to work) someone plants a rumor that if Dustin is promoted, he’s going to close the place down and turn it into a 7-11.

DAVID MILKEN (ID Photographer) who refuses to partake in the gossip and wagering about the re-org, nearly elicits a sexual harassment *suit* when he accidentally exposes a woman’s breast when trying to primp her for her I.D. picture.

DUSTIN, feeling invincible, decides to break the final taboo and enter the ULTRA-SECRET Call Center area on the second floor. This area is STRICTLY OFF LIMITS to DMV employees. Dustin is stopped before he can get inside and Randy has to take him aside and reprimand him.

Sensing the shifting tides, JULIE, still convinced she’s on the way out, lashes out at BRIANCA, egging her on to start a brawl, and thereby sabotage her chances of promotion. Brianca refrains from beating her, but only barely.

The Air conditioning repair is completed. The repairman blames the failure on an abundance of *soot* clogging the intake filters.

At the end of the day, RANDY calls a meeting and announces that BRIANCA will be the new Manager. JULIE gets turned down for her reality TV gig and Dustin shuffles back to the catalog library. The last number is called, license issued, and the doors are locked. The end of another day at the DMV.

STORY ARCS

Over time, several long-running threads will serve as subplots that will carry the story and develop the characters and their relationships. These elements will comprise the storylines of the first season.

1. BRIANCA/JULIE FEUD

As set up in the pilot, Julie is number one on Brianca's shit-list. Although she has authority to fire her, Brianca finds it more sadistic to keep her on and torture her slowly. In one instance, she forces her to work side by side with Dustin (who is painfully in love with her). Another time she creates a fictional elaborate Reality TV show to lure Julie to audition for. Not to be outdone, Julie has her own ways of torturing Brianca in return. Playing on Brianca's fear of driving, she falsifies a memo from the State demanding that Brianca get her license renewed. Playing on Brianca's weight problem, Julie pays a man to come on to Brianca and then reject her for being too fat. Their feud escalates until everyone else knows better than to get in between them. Finally, at the season finale, they arrange a shaky truce, which is only made possible by the arrival of a common enemy...

2. THE PHOTO BOOTH

David is determined to make the best photographic experience for the bewildered DMV patrons. In this effort, he is constantly lobbying Brianca for enhancements and new equipment that will improve the photo station. His demands range from the understandable to the inane. First he just wants some lights and a better camera, but soon he's adding props, backdrops, and eventually he is demanding a window be built near the photo station so he can light his subjects with natural sunlight.

3. BRIANCA HATES DRIVERS

It's an ironic fact that Brianca doesn't drive. She takes the bus and prefers that everyone else does to. She institutes a mandatory "take-the-bus-to-work" day, but when everyone is horribly late, she rescinds it. She modifies the written tests to insure that more people fail. She tweaks the eye charts so some of the letters are plain illegible, encouraging more and more drivers to require glasses. She is constantly working to slow down the never-ending rush of new drivers. But why? In a rare moment of seriousness, she reveals a fatal accident that changed her life forever, and sent her on the path to insuring that whoever does get a license, really does know how to drive safely.

4. DUSTIN LOVES JULIE

Julie hates men. She's not gay; in fact, she dates new guys frequently (especially reality TV producers, but that's a different episode). She doesn't trust men, thinks they're all cads and perverts. Dustin is the sweetest, dopest, most innocuous guy around, and he is hopelessly in love with Julie. She knows it, everyone knows it, and everyone knows that she will never go out with him. But he doesn't care. He takes her abuse (sometimes even reveling in it), he buys her flowers (which at one point are mysteriously responsible for a clogged toilet that causes a building-wide flood), He remembers her birthday. And to all this kindness, she just grows crueler and crueler. She theorizes (over a cigarette break with David) that secretly Dustin loves her *because* she is mean to him. If she turns around and is nice, he will be turned off. And so, David dares her to try it. And she does. She leads Dustin on, but instead of losing interest, he gets more and more into her. She pushes

it further and agrees to go on a date. Dustin gets so happy that everyone at the DMV is begging her to stop before she completely destroys him, but she is enjoying it all too much. It all comes to a head when Dustin surprises her on their date and asks her to marry him. You'll have to watch the show to find out what she does.

5. THE SECRET CALL CENTER

On the second floor, above the DMV is a locked room staffed by a special government crew. None of the DMV employees is allowed in and no one knows exactly what goes on there, but everyone has their theories: A federal spying facility, secretly monitoring who comes in and out of the DMV. An INS/FBI data center, a prison-labor camp making license plates... The theories get wilder and wilder, and every so often a clue is found: A telephone repairman comes and reveals that there are 200 phone lines wired into the facility. The building is surrounded by Police and shut down because a security breach upstairs may be of importance to national security... At one point or another, everyone attempts to sneak in, just to see what it is that goes on there, but they are always thwarted. Except once, when JOHN SMECKLER accidentally gets trapped inside for two days. When he comes out he's totally changed. But still, won't speak about what's inside. Even Brianca has only very limited knowledge of what goes on up there, and she's not telling.

OTHER EPISODE IDEAS:

Celebrity Visit

Celebrities need driver's licenses just like everyone else. Unfortunately they also have private security firms to keep away the autograph seeking masses. When a secret celeb is planning to come in to have her license renewed, the whole crew gets up in arms. Brianca can barely control them, but all hell breaks loose when David finds out that the celebrity is bringing her own photographer.

Handicapped Drivers

A new law requires the DMV to issue license to a new class of handicapped drivers. This requires a change of all the tests and they even need to retrofit some of the doorways to improve access for new kinds of wheelchairs, etc. Brianca worries that it's going to mean more unsafe drivers on the road, and begins constructing obstacles (both physical and procedural) to prevent the change. Despite her efforts, the law passes and when she is faced with meeting the new drivers, she realizes that one's physical abilities often don't determine what kind of driver they'll be.

Secret Shopper

The State Board of Motor Vehicles sends a spy to check that the DMV branches are following conduct and code, and reviews the local branch. The "secret shopper" finds loads of ways that they are not following the rules, though in many cases, the changes are for the better. Still the State Board demands that they change their policies to better follow the rules, which sparks outrage from the employees. Brianca is stuck in between, wanting to defend her peeps, but must also execute the laws from on high. In the end, while they do have to give up some of their "customizations" to the process, one of their ideas makes its way into the state run rules, vindicating their maverick spirit.