

PEOPLE ON ICE

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

BLACK.

The digital DING of an iPhone recording.

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA ICE OVAL - ON ICE - DAY

Standing in the center of the ice is JANET WITHERBAUM (40s, midwestern). She stares directly into camera with great conviction. Her hair is an unkempt Dorothy Hamill wedge cut.

Right now and always, she means business.

JANET

Hello. My name is Janet
Witherbaum. I'm a Bronze Level
USFSA Figure Skater. And you are
invited to a one-woman gala show
presentation benefiting my trip to
the National Championships.

ELIAS (O.S.)

"For adult amateur..."

JANET

For adult amateur skaters.
(to Elias)
I don't want to say that.

A WIDE SHOT reveals her nephew, ELIAS (21), indomitably happy but easily steamrolled. We've been watching through his phone.

ELIAS

Sorry. Are you sure though? That's
what it's called.

JANET

No, I know.

ELIAS

"National Championships for Adult
Amateur Skaters."

JANET

I go every year, Elias.

ELIAS

So wouldn't you--

JANET

I don't want to say it!

Elias holds his tongue, and hits record...DING.

JANET
Hello--

ELIAS TALKING HEAD

Elias is seated on a bench just off ice. He speaks directly to camera as if being interviewed.

ELIAS
This is my fourth year helping my aunt promote her ice skating show-gala, sorry. Usually it's just family and a couple of rando-s, but this year we're doing a whole social media thing, so...
(crossing fingers)
Her idea.

BACK TO SCENE

Elias teaches Janet a popular TikTok dance. She doesn't get it.

JANET
I got it.

ELIAS
Maybe try it skating!

JANET
What do you mean?

Elias skates away to demonstrate. He's very graceful.

JANET
You look gay.

Elias GLANCES TO OUR CAMERA, breaking the fourth wall.

ELIAS
(to Janet)
I am gay.

JANET
(as if)
Okay, sure.

ELIAS TALKING HEAD

ELIAS
Aunt Janet got me into the sport. I started skating when I was six, but around eight my parents died in a sledding accident.
(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

So I moved in with Mimah, who couldn't drive. Aunt Janet would pick me up and bring me to the rink every morning. I owe her a lot. And Mimah. I'm just grateful to have such strong women in my life.

BACK TO SCENE

Elias watches Janet's spiral sequence from the hockey box, delighted. She zooms by in a bad arabesque.

JANET

Are you even filming this?

ELIAS

Oh--

JANET

Jesus.

ELIAS TALKING HEAD

ELIAS

I don't usually perform, no. This year I worked up the courage to ask Janet if she would mind. And she said, "yes," she would mind.

BACK TO SCENE

POV ELIAS' PHONE Janet spins very slowly, spotting the camera.

JANET

(with each rotation)

...give me money...so I...can go...to Tempe...

She slips and falls on her butt, while staying completely focused on the camera. She's nothing if not committed.

JANET (CONT'D)

Arizona.

END COLD OPEN