

MY NAME ISN'T BRO

By Jerry Rabushka

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CAST: *one male*

I wanted to be pierced. I kept telling myself I couldn't afford it, but it got cheaper and cheaper until I needed a new excuse. Okay, so I was tired of myself. I was *good* – a... **(not overly pleased)** good boy... tasteful, classy, pleasant hold-the-door type, rode a 10-speed. But I wanted more.

I wasn't necessarily fitting in. It was Jake. Jake wore enough metal to make a chain link fence. He had so many tattoos his skin was almost alien green. I kept thinking he had a third eye somewhere.

He was popular because he was adventurous – because everyone wanted to know what he was going to do next. We lived our nonconformist dreams through Jake. When his eyebrow ring lost attention, he moved to the lip, or the upper ear. He got a bald eagle tattooed over his back – it was flying over the Rockies. He was a thin but muscular canvas, sort of like living art, and when he'd do pull-ups, it would fly across him like a hologram. It would probably look good as long as he worked out. Frankly a lot of us were getting grossed out over the whole thing, but we didn't dare say it. Not in public, anyway.

We weren't really friends, him and me. Well not at first. I didn't even want to be like him – I just wanted people to *think* I was. "I got potential!" Then all the people I didn't want to be friends with would like me! It wasn't a very good goal, but it was *mine*!

(as Jake, who speaks "cool", but also a bit lightly with a lisp) Bro, if you're gonna do it, you have to do it all the way. Don't stop for society's sake," he lisped.

(as in, deal with it!) Yeah, Jake lisped. He never could figure out how to stop, but as long as his tongue and lips had more holes in it than the plotline of *Friday the 13th Part Seven*, we all gave him the benefit of the doubt. If it bothered people, he just didn't say much around them – his look said plenty.

There was this girl named Reena hanging on him all the time and she *never* shut up. We weren't sure if she liked Jake; we always said she just

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wanted everyone to think she was his girlfriend for the social benefits. We couldn't admit either of them had a heart.

Well, he was "in," she was "in", and I was working for a very conservative legal firm where a woman with... uh... pierced ears told me, "If you pierce your eyebrow, we'll have to suggest that you seek employment elsewhere."

(as Jake) Bro, you gotta be who you are! You can't let the establishment push you around.

The establishment pays me, Jake.

"Bro," he says. "Someone else will pay ya!"

Jake, my name isn't Bro.

(as Jake) "You need to find your own establishment, Bro. You need to be the establishment!"

So Reena butts in. **(as Reena, who speaks haltingly and stutters)** "Jjjake – he dddoesn't let anyone ttell him what ttto do – except me!" **(laughs a bit)**

Reena stuttered. That's why Jake took her on. They made the whole speech defect thing look cool. After years of misery and taunts, it all came together. They weren't freaky. They were special. We all wanted to be... like that.

Of course, her family got into it. **(as Reena's mother)** "If you get your tongue pierced, you'll never be able to talk at all!" Her mom was dead set against Reena's newfound popularity. Jake was a bad boy. Reena was a good girl. Wrong side of the tracks and all.

(as Reena) "Mom. I lllove him. Besssides, he likes to hear me ttalk."

Jake had an inordinate amount of patience. Anyone who could get the entire state of Arizona tattooed on his thigh – with a "get your kicks on Route 66 tag line – he could put up with anything. He never cared how long it took her to say something.

(as Jake) "Bro! It's everything or nothing!"

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(speaking to Jake) Jake, you're going to get old one day.

(to the audience) I told him that eventually we were going to give half of Arizona back to the Mexicans, and he was going to look out of date. "All that stuff is just gonna hang on you. If you don't watch it, Flagstaff is gonna fall into Sedona."

(as Jake) "Old is a state of mind, Bro!"

If you call me Bro once more, I'm gonna call you lightning rod.

(as Reena) "Bbbro mmmeans he thinks your ccccool."

(in awe!) Cool! But I work in a law office and I haven't mutilated myself! I'm a boy of the establishment.

(as Jake) "But if you're living life the way you want to, then you're cool!"

"You cccan't bbbe like Jjjake," Reena says. "No one cccan be lllike Jake."

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