

Rick Tok

SEASON 1, EPISODE 2: "PARTNERS"

Written by

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OPEN 1 FROM ELI ROWAN'S PODCAST ON TIKTOK

INT. ELI ROWAN'S PODCAST STUDIO - MORNING.

ELI ROWAN is in his podcast studio, shooting an episode of his popular podcast, "Unlearn Everything." He's handsome, hip and relatable, about 30. He has 2 million TikTok followers.

ELI ROWAN

If you're like me, you probably danced a lot as a kid. You drew a lot, and painted a lot. You did creative things. So, let me ask you something - why did you stop doing all that? You probably think you just "grew out of it," but you're wrong. You were educated out of it. You were shortchanged by an educational system designed to extinguish the fire of your imagination. Not stoke it.

CUT TO:

ACT 1, SCENE 1, BACK TO SCHOOL

INT. ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

High school guidance counselor, MR. BEN WORKMAN, is disheveled, overweight, wearing glasses, and looks ready-to-retire. He chuckles at a meme on his computer featuring a dopey looking kid.

The meme reads: "My guidance counselor warned me that if I didn't improve my grades, I'd end up being a guidance counselor."

Mr. Workman types "LOLFBA" in the comments. He looks up from his computer and sees RICK and DEWEY sitting there.

MR. WORKMAN

Oh hello. What can I do for you?

RICK

We'd like to discuss the education at Roosevelt High.

DEWEY

Or lack of it.

MR. WORKMAN

OK. What grade are your children
in?

RICK

We don't have kids yet.

MR. WORKMAN

You're partners?

RICK

We were partners.

DEWEY

We had chemistry together.

Mr. Workman is suddenly elated.

MR. WORKMAN

Chemistry. I can see that. Hold on.

Mr. Workman turns and rummages through a bunch of flags behind his desk. State flags, obscure national flags, organization flags, etc. Finally he finds the "Pride Flag." He turns back to Rick and Dewey waving the Pride Flag exuberantly.

MR. WORKMAN (CONT'D)

Love is love.

RICK

Wait, we're not...

DEWEY

(pointing to Rick)

I'm offended. Personally, I can do
way better than *this* gal.

MR. WORKMAN

So, you're trans?

RICK

Noooo.

DEWEY

Well, we're not anti-trans. In fact
we're anti anti-trans. That's for
sure. It's the anti-anti-anti-trans
people we have to watch out for.

RICK

We're just regular old school non-
trans. Is there a word for that?

MR. WORKMAN
(nervous and hushed)
That doesn't even make sense.
Listen, I'm on thin ice here. A
single misgender and I'm toast -
out on the streets - like a person
experiencing a housing insecurity
crisis.

RICK
You mean homeless?

MR. WORKMAN
Shhhh. We don't use words like that
around here. You *trying* to get me
fired?!

A stern-faced female school administrator slowly walks by Mr. Workman's open office door and peers inside. Mr. Workman avoids eye contact with her, vigorously waving his Pride Flag.

DEWEY
Again with the flag.

MR. WORKMAN
(hushed)
What was I supposed to think? You
said you were *partners* and had
chemistry together.

RICK
We were partners *in chemistry*. Lab
partners. Back in 2001.

Mr. Workman looks over his shoulder at his flags.

MR. WORKMAN
I don't have a flag for that.

DEWEY
We gotta get organized, make a
website just for chemistry
partners.

RICK
Carbon Dating dot com.

DEWEY
Now, *that* deserves a flag.

MR. WORKMAN
I'm sorry fellas. Society is
changing so fast, even the
vexillographers can't keep up.

RICK
Vexi-what?

MR. WORKMAN
Vexillographers. Flag designers.

DEWEY
I bet *they* have their own flag.

MR. WORKMAN
They do. And it's splendidiferous.

Mr. Workman turns and retrieves the Vexillology Flag: a blue flag with a weaver's knot. He waves it proudly.

RICK
(frustrated)
OK Workman that's why we're here.
Almost everything we learned in
school--including words like
splendiferous and vexillo-whatever--
are not important for life. They're
completely useless.

DEWEY
This school taught us how to be
drones - not dreamers.

RICK
There was no creativity. Why didn't
we learn anything about art, or
dance?

MR. WORKMAN
You wanted to be dancers?

RICK
We certainly didn't want to be
mathematicians but you sure crammed
the Pythagorean theorem down our
throats!

DEWEY
A squared plus B squared equals C
squared. Turns out - the whole
world isn't made of fucking
triangles.

RICK

Hated math, remember fractions?

DEWEY

Never needed two-thirds of them.

RICK

And Pi?

DEWEY

3.14159265 -- it's so irrational!

RICK

And all those sines and cosines?

DEWEY

Now, I think we're on a tangent.

RICK

So yeah, a dance class would have been far more helpful. I dance all the time.

DEWEY

And he's awful. He ruined my nephew's bar mitzvah. Watch this.

Dewey shows Mr. Workman a video on his phone. The video shows Rick dancing to "Can't Touch This" by MC Hammer. Rick is jerky and arrhythmic, everyone at the party is aghast watching him dance. Mr. Workman hangs his head in shame.

MR. WORKMAN

(shielding his eyes)

Please, please make it stop.

DEWEY

Seen enough?

Dewey stops the video.

MR. WORKMAN

OK, I failed you. But it's never too late to live your dreams. Have you considered adult education? There's a dance class tonight.

Rick and Dewey shrug, nodding in agreement.

CUT TO:

INT. "INTRO TO JAZZ" DANCE CLASS - THAT EVENING.

The dance instructor, MR. ARMAND, paces in front of his students, wearing a skin tight full body black leotard. He holds a bamboo ballet stick, about 2 feet in length.

Rick and Dewey stand in a line with 20 other dancers. All wearing leotards, all the students are very stressed out.

MR. ARMAND

Let me see those jazz hands! In
five, six, seven, eight...

The music starts. The class does very jazzy jazz-hands and jazzy steps. Rick and Dewey try to keep up.

Mr. Armand cracks Rick and Dewey across their knuckles hard with his bamboo stick.

MR. ARMAND (CONT'D)

This is jazz, not an exorcism!

CUT TO:

INT. MR. WORKMAN'S OFFICE - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Rick and Dewey rub their bruised and swollen knuckles, once again seated across from Mr. Workman at his desk.

MR. WORKMAN

There's an art class tonight. Wanna
try that?

CUT TO:

INT. ART CLASS - THAT EVENING

MADAME CRÊPEPAPIER is an eccentric older woman with a French accent. She wears a beret and is splattered in paint. The room is full of students at art easels with canvases and brushes ready, including Rick and Dewey.

MADAME CRÊPEPAPIER

Today we will explore the male
nude.

A robed model struts in, his back is to the students. He drops his robe exposing his bare muscular buttocks to the class. He turns and sits on a stool. Legs akimbo.

The model is fitness guru CHET WHEATLEY, Rick's personal trainer. Chet recognizes Rick instantly.

CHET WHEATLEY
Cheddar! I didn't know you paint.

Rick slinks behind his easel.

MADAME CRÊPEPAPIER
Ok class, where does one start when
painting the male nude? What *really*
makes a man, a *man*?

Awkward silence from the class, nobody raises a hand or
answers. Finally Dewey raises his hand.

DEWEY
I'll bite - his penis?

The class laughs.

RICK
(whispering snicker)
You'll bite his penis?

MADAME CRÊPEPAPIER
Bravo, Mr. Johnson! Correct. Let's
start by painting his beautiful
penis.

Chet Wheatley winks at the cute female art student sitting
next to Rick. She and everyone else focus Chet's genitals and
start painting. Chet becomes aroused.

DEWEY
Oh no. It's moving.

MADAME CRÊPEPAPIER
Oooo-la-la. *C'est magnifique!*

CHET WHEATLEY
Boner alert!

CUT TO:

INT. MR. WORKMAN'S OFFICE - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Mr. Workman is frantically punching keys on his computer.
Rick and Dewey sit expectantly across his desk.

MR. WORKMAN
Nope. Sorry guys. The math class is
closed.

DEWEY
(disappointed)
Now what?

RICK
Listen we just need your guidance.

MR. WORKMAN
I'm not your guy.

RICK
You're a *guidance* counselor.

MR. WORKMAN
Yeah exactly, why would you want *my* advice? If I knew what the hell I was doing, I wouldn't be a guidance counselor. I'd be something else, somewhere else. Instead I'm stuck here - with you guys.

RICK
What's that?

Rick points to a "Help Wanted" flyer on Mr. Workman's corkboard hanging behind his flags. It reads: "LAB ASSISTANTS WANTED: Be part of our primate language research lab." Rick reaches over Mr. Workman and rips the flyer off the board.

MR. WORKMAN
It's the university lab. They're trying to teach monkeys how to talk or something.

DEWEY
You can tell them about your talking chimpanzee idea, Ricky.

MR. WORKMAN
You have a talking chimpanzee?

RICK
No, not yet. But this could change everything.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. THE "UNLEARN EVERYTHING" PODCAST STUDIO - DAYTIME
Eli Rowan continues his TikTok post from his podcast studio.

ELI ROWAN

Great breakthroughs often come packaged in a bad idea. Ben Franklin was flying a kite during a thunderstorm with a metal key when he discovered electricity. You just have to be bold enough to believe in your idea - no matter how bad it is - and courageous enough to throw it out there. The universe rewards audacity, not accuracy. Fortune smiles on the fearless, not the flawless.

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 1 - JACKIE THE REBOUNDING QUEEN

INT. "CLUB ALIBI" AT THE BAR - NIGHT

JACKIE NIEVES, Rick's ex-girlfriend, is at "Club Alibi" with her best friend LISA. They both look great.

Jackie is wearing a bright yellow LA Lakers tube dress, with thin purple trim. The name "Chamberlain" and number "13" are printed on the back (Wilt Chamberlain).

JACKIE

I kind of miss Rick's stupid stories and ideas.

LISA

Seven years is a long time together.

JACKIE

Yeah, seven years. But it feels like I spent most of it alone.

LISA

Rick's a good person but he's not a good partner. At least not for you.

LISA (CONT'D)

Cheers to that - and to finding your perfect partner.

The women toast, clink glasses and sip from their drinks.

LISA (CONT'D)
It's your first night out, take it
slow. A lot has changed in the
dating scene.

JACKIE
I'm so out of practice.

A couple of men check out Jackie and Lisa from across the bar.

LISA
Speaking of practice: What's up
with the basketball dress? Got a
game later?

JACKIE
(straightening her dress)
Very funny. Game on girlfriend.
Here comes a player.

A tall and extremely handsome, professional appearing man approaches. He's wearing a great suit. His name is JAMES.

JAMES
(to Jackie)
Big fan of "Wilt Chamberlain"?

JACKIE
Nope.

JAMES
Lakers fan?

JACKIE
Strike 2.

LISA
That's baseball but...

JAMES
It's very yellow...you love
bananas?

Jackie spins playfully in her dress.

JACKIE
(leading James)
Come on. Wilt Chamberlain? The all-
time leading rebounder in the
NBA...

James scratches his head.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
It's my rebounding dress. I'm on
the rebound.

LISA
Love it.

JAMES
It's a slam dunk. How are your ball
handling skills?

JACKIE
I can pretty much score from any
position.

JAMES
Really? My team can use a player
like you. I'm James.

Lisa drifts not-so subtly away leaving James and Jackie
alone.

JACKIE
I'm Jackie. Nice to...

Jackie is interrupted by a very flamboyant and very obviously
gay man. His name is LARRY. He's dressed in flashy clothes, a
rainbow shawl draped over his shoulders. Wearing his Pride-
gear.

Larry drapes himself over James, he is obviously drunk.
Affectionately rubbing James's hair.

LARRY
(gasps then)
That dress is *bananas*!

JAMES
(to Jackie)
I'm sorry, he's very drunk.

LARRY
Drunk? I'm still drinking. Stop
living in the past tense, Jamesy.

JAMES
Jackie, meet Larry. He's my
partner.

JACKIE
(disappointed)
Partner?

CUT TO:

ACT 2, SCENE 2 - THE MONKEYSEXUAL

INT. UNIVERSITY PRIMATE LAB OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Rick and Dewey enter the "Primate Language Laboratory" at the University. A beautiful researcher in a white lab coat, DR. SERA VANCE, approaches and greets them. Dewey and Rick are also wearing white lab coats.

At the back of the room is a large rectangular window, where you can see into the primate area - it's filled with chimpanzees in cages.

DR. SERA VANCE
Thanks for coming. We could use
your help. I'm Dr. Sera Vance, and
you're doctor?...

RICK
Oh, we're not doctors.

DR. SERA VANCE
What's with the lab coats?

DEWEY
(sheepish)
I stole mine from the Clinique
counter at the mall.

RICK
This is an old Halloween costume.

DR. SERA VANCE
You were a doctor on Halloween?

RICK
No, I was also dressed as a
Clinique counter girl.

DR. SERA VANCE
Terrific. We're having a costume
party.

DEWEY

Now that I think about it, when I see someone wearing a white lab coat, I don't know if they're a brain surgeon or a beautician.

RICK

The brain surgeons look less refreshed.

DEWEY

They're probably using Maybelline. The cheap stuff.

Dewey looks intently at Dr. Vance's face.

DEWEY (CONT'D)

Do you exfoliate?

DR. SERA VANCE

Is this a joke? You said you had important information you want to share.

Dewey walks over to the window looking into the primate area.

RICK

I do. I have a great idea that can help your research.

DR. SERA VANCE

Great. A tip from the Clinique counter. Can't wait to hear it.

RICK

Follow me for a sec. Why can't chimpanzees talk?

DR. SERA VANCE

We don't really know why. Nobody is sure. Chimps can understand human speech, but they can't produce it. They *almost* get it. Because the speech centers of their brains are not well-connected to their throat muscles.

RICK

So it's like they have the software for speech, but their software is not connected to their hardware.

DR. SERA VANCE

Exactly. That's a good way to put it.

RICK

But humans start learning language in the womb, right?

DR. SERA VANCE

Correct. Human babies acquire language during fetal development, *in utero*. The baby eavesdrops on the mother for nine months, learning the rhythm and tone of her voice.

RICK

That's it. That's the difference.

DR. SERA VANCE

You lost me.

RICK

That's what scientists have been missing. Chimps get no exposure to human speech while in the womb. But what would happen if you exposed chimpanzee babies to human speech while they're growing *inside* the womb? Using those little baby belly speakers or something.

DR. SERA VANCE

Like the ones they use for classical music?

RICK

Yes. Maybe that exposure to human speech in the womb is what triggers the brains to connect to the voice-boxes in humans. Maybe it would do the same in chimps.

DR. SERA VANCE

You may be onto something. We scientists have only been trying to teach chimpanzees and gorillas to speak *after* they're born. We've been neglecting the entire gestational period, and by then...

RICK

It's probably too late.

Dr. Sera Vance looks annoyed, mouth open, but she's actually in shock. Dewey ambles back over.

RICK (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. It's just a stupid idea
I've been thinking about for a long
time.

DEWEY
He's been talking about this ever
since he saw "Planet of the Apes."
I keep telling him, it doesn't end
well.

RICK
You think it's stupid?

DR. SERA VANCE
Stupid? No. Simple yes, for sure.
But it's so simple, it's genius.
(now flirty)
You're a fascinating guy, Ricky
Prince.

There is a sudden commotion in the primate lab. Rick, Dewey and Dr. Vance hurry to the window of the primate area.

One of the chimpanzee cages is open and an odd looking primate is on the rampage. The primate is actually a woman, wearing a hairy chimp costume on her torso, but she is completely naked on the bottom. Legs and private parts exposed and unshaved.

DEWEY
Looks like one of the chimps is on
the rampage.

DR. SERA VANCE
Don't worry. That's just my
partner, Dr. Jane Allgood.

RICK
Why is she dressed like that?

DR. SERA VANCE
She's embedded with the chimps. She
observes the animals from inside
the lab. She sleeps in a cage,
shares the same lessons and
struggles as our laboratory
animals. It builds trust with the
other animals - they see her as the
alpha of the troop.

(MORE)

DR. SERA VANCE (CONT'D)
She's unorthodox but a pioneer in
the field.
(sigh)
She's just amazing - and beautiful.

Dr. Allgood is hooting wildly, and rattling the other cages.
The other chimps are excited. She bounces up and down.
Asserting her dominance.

Rick and Dewey exchange awkward glances.

DR. SERA VANCE (CONT'D)
And courageous.
(now flirty)
She's gonna love this idea. It's
brilliant. I must say, it's not bad
for a team of fake Clinique counter
girls. Now if you could only fix my
pores.

Rick and Dewey pick up on Dr. Vance's flirtatiousness. Dewey
nudges Rick, suggesting he make a move.

RICK
Hey Doc. I'm newly single and
trying to get out. Would you want
to grab a coffee or a drink with me
sometime?

DR. SERA VANCE
Are you asking me out on a date?

RICK
Yeah, I guess I am.

DR. SERA VANCE
I'm very flattered, thank you. But
I'm dating someone already.

RICK
Of course you are. I should have
known. No worries. He's a lucky
man.

DR. SERA VANCE
It's not a man. She's a woman. Dr.
Allgood is my partner.

DEWEY
The monkey lady? I thought you
meant *lab partners*.

DR. SERA VANCE
We're lab partners and we're life
partners. We're both.

CUT TO:

INT. "CLUB ALIBI" AT THE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jackie turns to leave. James politely tries to stop her.

JAMES
Wait, don't leave. Larry's a little
drunk. We're celebrating tonight,
we won a huge case.

LISA
Case?

JAMES
We're partners at Kelly and Kline.
The law firm. I'm James Kelly.

JACKIE
(laughing)
Oh, you're law partners! I thought
you were, you know...

JAMES
Life partners?

JACKIE
Yeah, gay.

Larry is dancing his heart out nearby. He's eavesdropping on James and Jackie's conversation while dancing.

JAMES
Oh I'm definitely not gay. But
Larry? He's gay all day.

LARRY
And all night.

JAMES
Larry has a partner.

LARRY
Jamesy is the worst kind of
partner. The kind I don't have sex
with.

JACKIE
So you're single?

JAMES

Yes but not exactly.

JACKIE

Married?

JAMES

Not married. I live with my principle.

JACKIE

Principle? You mean like a school principal?

JAMES

No. That'd be weird.

JACKIE

(laughing playfully)

So weird.

JAMES

I live with my principle partner, Chrissy. We're polyamorous - consensual non-monogamy.

JACKIE

(sarcasm)

Ok, well that's not weird at all.

JAMES

I'm in an open relationship.

JACKIE

Sounds like consensual cheating to me.

JAMES

It's only cheating if somebody cries. It's more like networking, connecting by spreading love.

JACKIE

(under her breath)

And chlamydia.

JAMES

What?

JACKIE

Nothing. Sounds complicated.

JAMES

It really isn't. Our love is so strong, we allow each other to have other romantic partners. We want each other to experience as much pleasure as possible.

JACKIE

So how many partners do you have?

JAMES

Five. Six counting Chrissy. You'd be lucky number seven.

JACKIE

Lucky me.

JAMES

Eight if you count Rachel. My pickleball partner.

JACKIE

Why would you count your pickleball partner?

JAMES

We have sex every third Saturday. After matches.

Jackie raises her arm and points her index finger at James' face. She swipes his face to the left. Then does it over and over.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

What are you doing?

JACKIE

I'm trying to swipe left, but you won't disappear. This app really sucks.

Jackie swipes James' face a few more times, and finally James takes the hint and walks away. Lisa slinks back over.

LISA

No love match?

JACKIE

Nope. He's polyamorous - a swinger.

LISA

Ewww, yuck. It's like being in a relationship timeshare.

JACKIE

I don't even share my French fries,
I'm definitely not sharing my man.

LISA

That gives me an idea. Wanna split
and go get some fries?

JACKIE

Yes, please get me out of here.
(walking arm and arm)
Touch my fries you're a dead woman.

Jackie and Lisa exit "Club Alibi."

FADE TO BLACK.

OPEN 3: FROM ELI ROWAN'S PODCAST ON TIKTOK.

INT. THE "UNLEARN EVERYTHING" PODCAST STUDIO - DAYTIME

ELI ROWAN

Stop waiting for permission to
launch. NASA doesn't ask the moon
if it's ready. It just goes for it.
Your dreams don't need approval,
they need ignition. Light your
engines, step onto the launch pad
and get those dreams off the
ground.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - NIGHT, AFTER "CLUB ALIBI"

Lisa and Jackie are laughing at the diner sitting in a booth.
The table is full of half-empty plates. They're stuffing
their faces with French fries.

JACKIE

And know what was even more gross
than the polyamory?

LISA

What?

JACKIE

The pickleball.

LISA

It's like bad-badminton.

JACKIE

Nothing dries a vagina faster than
a man playing pickleball.

LISA

Those pickleballers are a strange
crowd. A group activity with
swinging, paddling, and balls.

JACKIE

It's the gateway drug to the
swinger lifestyle. That's how
swingers start. In pickleball.

LISA

One minute you're playing doubles,
the next minute you're getting
double-teamed.

CUT TO:

INT. THE UNIVERSITY LAB - DAYTIME - A FEW DAYS LATER.

Rick and Dewey sit in the office of Dr. Sera Vance, looking
at the photos on her desk and walls.

Sometimes the photos feature Dr. Allgood dressed as a woman -
receiving awards with celebrities and dignitaries. But in
many others Dr. Allgood is in her bottomless chimpanzee
outfit. Dr. Vance is dressed normally in all the photos.

DEWEY

The pictures are creeping me out.

RICK

She's hot. Too bad she's gay.

DEWEY

She's not gay.

RICK

I mean lesbian.

DEWEY

She's not that either.

RICK

She said they're life partners.

DEWEY

She's not gay or lesbian. She's a
monkeysexual.

RICK

Stop it. She's in love with a woman. That makes her gay.

DEWEY

And that woman she loves acts like a monkey. Trust me, I know them when I see them. It's like being a furry, only weird.

RICK

Maybe she has a zookeeper fetish.

DEWEY

She's bi-pedal curious.

They laugh.

RICK

Bi-Curious George.

DEWEY

Wait for it...Kinky Kong.

RICK

Ooo, good one. I just hope one day she finds the "gorilla her dreams."

DEWEY

Touché.

Rick and Dewey fist bump.

The door to Dr. Vance's office opens and Dr. Jane Allgood comes storming in. She is in her full chimpanzee regalia (no pants). Rick and Dewey jump out of their chairs, frightened.

DEWEY (CONT'D)

Holy mother of God!

Dr. Allgood jumps onto the desk, squatting. Legs spread. It's clear that Rick and Dewey can see *everything*. But they look away.

RICK

(quietly)

No sudden moves, Dew. Don't make direct eye contact. It's a sign of aggression.

Dr. Vance enters and sits at her desk. She gives Dr. Allgood a banana and Dr. Allgood scarfs it down, hooting and grunting happily like a chimp as she eats it.

DR. SERA VANCE
Thanks for coming guys. We have
some terrific news.

Dr. Allgood shrieks and jumps up and down on the desk, like an excited chimpanzee.

DR. SERA VANCE (CONT'D)
A few weeks before you walked in our door, we received a twenty-million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Allgood shrieks and jumps up and down on the desk again, excited about the sum of money. She gets another banana from Dr. Vance.

DR. SERA VANCE (CONT'D)
And we both thought your idea could be revolutionary. We were so excited about your idea, that we decided to apply all the new funds to this experiment. We are going to make your talking chimpanzees. We're calling it, "Project Ricky." That is, if that's ok with you.

RICKY
I'm speechless. I came in here half joking...I don't know what to say.

DR. SERA VANCE
You will be collaborating with us. We'll be conducting the day-to-day science. But you guys can do some of our more custodial work, you know. The monkey business.

DEWEY
You mean poop.

DR. SERA VANCE
Yes. Poop, among other things. I know it's not glamorous, but you'll be part of a very exciting experiment and we'd make you full paid members of our research team. If we win the Nobel Prize, so will you.

Dr. Allgood, still squatting on the desk, finally breaks character and extends her furry hand to Rick and Dewey. She speaks, with a voice deeper than expected.

DR. JANE ALLGOOD
So what do you say? Wanna be
partners?

Rick extends a hand, still not avoiding eye contact and trying not to look into her widespread legs. He shakes Dr. Allgood's hand. Dewey does the same.

RICK AND DEWEY
(happily, in unison)
Partners.