"PRIVATE LINES"

an episode for Seinfeld

Written By

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(I wrote this script after only maybe three episodes of the show had aired—without the book typically prepared by a TV show for outside writers that details information on the show about the characters, etc. Some of what's here actually ended up in later episodes—what's known to writers as parallel development, when two people independently come up with the same idea. Other stuff might be inconsistent with what came later in the show, but that's typical of early free-lance TV scripts.

Remember, this was written back when the show had three stand-up routines per episode—at the beginning, middle and end of the show, as the original idea for the show was that what happened in the show would inspire his stand-up routines.)
FADE IN:

INT. NIGHT. COMEDY CLUB

Jerry on stage.

JERRY
Why do they put pictures of 'America's Most Wanted' on the wall at the post office? Nobody looks at them anymore. With so much crime, there just isn't room on the walls for all the posters anyway, even if you have all day, waiting in line, to read. If they wanted to get our attention, they should put photos of dangerous criminals right on the stamps... and the postage could be a percentage of the reward. Really dangerous criminals go on the express mail stamp. Fifteen bucks to mail, a hundred fifty thousand dollars for catching them. No so bad guys, ten thousand reward, go on the ten cent stamp. People wanted for robbing the post office, they could go on the 'do not bend' stickers-- no postage, no reward. Actually, last week somebody tried to rob the post office. By the time the clerk finished stuffing all the money into a bag, it was closing time, and they accidentally locked him inside. I've got a great new slogan-- help lick crime.

INT. DAY. JERRY'S APARTMENT

Jerry and George sit on the couch, watching a sporting event on the television.

GEORGE
Let's call and get some Chinese food.

JERRY
I don't want Chinese food.

GEORGE
Sure you do.

ANNOUNCER
(O.S., from television)
He shoots! He scores!

Kramer, waving a piece of paper in his hand, enters the apartment.

JERRY
Hi Kramer.

GEORGE
Hi. Bring anything to eat?

KRAMER
So did you see it?

JERRY
The goal?

KRAMER
No, channel three.

JERRY
What's on three?

GEORGE
Isn't that the municipal channel, the one with the garbage collection schedules?

KRAMER
No, it's the building's new security camera. (waves the paper in his hand)
Didn't you get the tenants memo?

JERRY
Yeah, I saw that. They put a camera in the lobby.

Jerry clicks his remote control.

GEORGE
(unenthusiastic)
Look at that. The lobby.
(pause)
This is the nineties. Why is it only in black and white?

KRAMER
They're cheap. It's a cheap camera.

GEORGE
Hey, look at that.

KRAMER
It's only a dog.

GEORGE
I'm allowed to look at dogs. I happen to be quite fond of spaniels.

KRAMER
You're not supposed to look at other people's dogs.

GEORGE
Why not? Jerry, can't I look at dogs? What's wrong with admiring a pretty puppy?

JERRY
Don't get me involved with your petty disagreements.

GEORGE
So now what? You're saying that we can't even talk about dogs?

JERRY
Actually, what I'm saying is that a producer is coming here
in fifteen minutes, and you
guys have to go.

KRAMER
You're meeting a producer here?
At your apartment?

JERRY
She's from L.A., and her
company's New York office is
being repainted. We thought it
might be nicer to meet here
than her hotel room; they're so
impersonal. And she said she
wanted to see how I live.

GEORGE
What's this about?

JERRY
A TV show. They're thinking of
doing a show, a sit-com about a
stand-up comedian.

KRAMER
And they want you to play one?

JERRY
No, they want me to fly the
company helicopter. Of course
to play a comedian.

KRAMER
Maybe she was looking for a
writer.

GEORGE
He's got you there, Jerry.

JERRY
Maybe you guys should go.

KRAMER
Come on, George, mister big-
shot TV star doesn't need his
friends anymore.

JERRY
It's not like that at all... It's just that I don't like you little people anymore.

GEORGE
Oh, sure, now we're not even good enough to be ignored.

The doorbell buzzer SOUNDS.

JERRY
She's early.

GEORGE
Come on, Kramer, let's get something to eat.

Kramer and George leave.

JERRY
(into intercom)
Come on up, elevator's to your left.

Jerry looks at the TV, seeing the lobby.

JERRY
So THAT'S what she looks like.

He turns off the television and straightens a few things on the coffee table.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Jerry goes to the door and opens it, finding MADELEINE, an elegant-looking forty-year old.

They shake hands, Madeleine's grip on Jerry's hand lingering.

MADELEINE
It's nice to meet you.

JERRY
Come on in, have a seat. Can I get you anything to drink?

MADELEINE
No, thanks, but I appreciate
the opportunity to get to know you after seeing your live routine and speaking with you on the phone.

JERRY
Where did you catch my act?

MADELEINE
San Fran, around two weeks ago, on a Thursday.

JERRY
So tell me about the TV show--my agent didn't really give me any details...

INT. DAY. THE DINER

Jerry, Elaine and George are at breakfast.

GEORGE
Hey, how'd the meeting go?

ELAINE
What meeting?

GEORGE
Jerry's gonna be on a TV show.

JERRY
Don't say that. I haven't been cast, and even if I get offered the part I'm not sure I'll take it. Plus, most new shows never get off the ground anyway.

ELAINE
You're gonna be on TV! That sounds so exciting.

JERRY
I've been on TV before.

ELAINE
Yeah, but you've never been exciting.
INT. NIGHT. JERRY'S APARTMENT

Jerry and George are standing at the counter, eating Chinese food, right out of the containers, with chopsticks. The bag the food came in, with a menu stapled to it, rests on the counter between George and Jerry.

GEORGE
Last week for lunch I had Chinese FAST food... five minutes later I was hungry again.

JERRY
Leave comedy to the professionals.

GEORGE
Do not attempt this at home.

Jerry puts his container down and turns the bag upside down. Fortune cookies and a dozen little sauce packets slide out onto the counter.

George picks up a packet of duck sauce.

GEORGE
What are you supposed to do with all these?

JERRY
You're supposed to eat them; I think they're food.

GEORGE
I know, but they give you so many. Nobody could use ten packages of soy sauce on eight dollars worth of food.

JERRY
(examining a packet)
China Pack Noodle Company. These aren't noodles.

GEORGE
I guess they're not very
expensive, or they wouldn't
give you so many. What do you
do with them?

JERRY
I throw them out. What do you
do with them?

GEORGE
I save them.

JERRY
Save them? What for?

GEORGE
Not FOR anything. I just don't
like to throw food away. Some
day I'll find a use for them.

JERRY
Like what?

GEORGE
I don't know. Maybe
somebody'll invent a recipe
that calls for duck sauce, soy
sauce and Chinese mustard.
He'd be famous.

JERRY
Who?

GEORGE
The guy who invented the
recipe. Everybody'd use it.

JERRY
I wouldn't.

GEORGE
How do you know? You don't
even know what it's for yet.

JERRY
I can be pretty sure I don't
want to eat anything that has
that combination. I don't even
put that stuff on my noodles.
There is a KNOCK at the door.

    JERRY
    Who are you?

Kramer enters, carrying a videotape and one end of a coaxial cable fed into a signal splitter.

    KRAMER
    I'm Kramer, who do you think I was?

    GEORGE
    What do you do with the leftover sauce packages from Chinese food?

    KRAMER
    I save them.

    GEORGE
    See! What for?

    KRAMER
    I have a recipe that calls for them. I call it rice a la Kramer.

    JERRY
    Never heard of it. What's with the tape and wire?

    KRAMER
    (hands tape to Jerry)
    Play this.

    JERRY
    What is it?

    KRAMER
    'Bambi and the Beast'. It's a porn movie.

    JERRY
    I don't want to watch 'Bambi and the Beast'. Or even 'Beauty and the Beast'. I don't want to see a beast at
all.

KRAMER
You don't have to watch, just
play the tape.

Kramer takes the output of the splitter and plugs it into
the back of Jerry's VCR.

JERRY
What are you doing?

KRAMER
I don't have a VCR, but the
other end of this wire runs,
through an amplifier I built,
into the master antenna in my
apartment.

GEORGE
Why?

KRAMER
So when people turn on the
security channel three, instead
of seeing the lobby, they'll
see the more powerful signal
coming out of my apartment.
The videotape of...

KRAMER AND GEORGE
'Bambi and the Beast'.

Kramer, sitting down on the couch, turns on the
television and VCR, inserts the tape and pushes the start
button on the remote control.

The sound of MOANING comes from Jerry's television.

George walks around behind the couch to get a better look
at the television.

JERRY
I'm not sure I like this
concept.

KRAMER
Is that a complaint?

I hired someone to do my complaining for me. (pause) But he doesn't do a very good job.

Kramer picks up the remote control and turns down the sound. George slowly tilts his head as he watches 'Bambi and the Beast', following some unexplained action on the television.

Kramer, this is brilliant. Where did you get the idea?

Geniuses frequently don't reveal the sources of their inspiration. (pause) I saw two kids kissing in the lobby.

(still watching the movie) How can she do that with her legs?

(looks up at television) Those aren't her legs.

Oh.

There is a KNOCK on Jerry's door.

Who is it?

VOICE
Mrs. Weinstock, from down the hall.

JERRY
Come on in, it's open.

MRS. WEINSTOCK enters; she's in her eighties.

MRS. WEINSTOCK
Have you seen what they're doing in the lobby? They're having sex right in the lobby. In our building, right in the lobby! Oh, hi Mr. Kramer.

KRAMER
Hi. I'm really sorry about your cat.

MRS. WEINSTOCK
Everybody forgets things. I'll get someone else to look after her next time I go away.
(notices Jerry's TV)
Oh, I see you're getting it too.
(pause)
How come yours is in color?

INT. NIGHT. COMEDY CLUB

Jerry on stage.

JERRY
Who here has a pet? I love pets, but it's tough keeping an animal in the city. Dogs have to be walked and cleaned up after. Cats are okay, I guess. But New York City has been a bad influence on my cat. Instead of scratching furniture like other cats do, he uses spray paint. I don't even understand why people bother to name their cats? I mean, a dog'll come running when you call its name. But not a cat.
The cat thinks...
   (in a deeper voice)
-You want me, buddy, you come
   over here-
   (pause)
The only thing my cat responds
to is the sound of the electric
can opener. So I named him
Buzz.

INT. DAY.  JERRY'S APARTMENT

Jerry and Elaine are sitting on the couch; Kramer,
wearing a baseball jacket, paces back and forth next to
the kitchenette.

A box of chocolates on the table is slowly being devoured
by Elaine, who, every time she takes a piece, pushes the
box farther away from her. Eventually she's reaching all
the way across the table, but she continues to eat.

   KRAMER
   ...So I said to the judge, hey
   judge, if she were a real
   psychic, she would have known I
didn't have any money.

Elaine bites into a piece of chocolate and examines its
insides before eating the other half.

   ELAINE
   Isn't there something more
   normal in your life you'd
   rather share with us?

Jerry gives Elaine a dirty look, then closes the box of
chocolates.

   KRAMER
   Well, I have been having this
   recurring nightmare lately...
   I've been dreaming that my arms
   are stuck in these long, thin
tubes and it keeps getting
hotter and hotter and I can't
do anything about it.

Kramer tries to take his jacket off over his head. He's
unsuccessful, and gets his arms tangled in the sleeves. With his arms over his head, he whips his upper torso around, banging into the furniture, waving back and forth.

In mortal fear that his friend will destroy the apartment and all its human inhabitants, Jerry stands up and helps Kramer off with the jacket.

The door BUZZER sounds; Jerry goes to answer.

JERRY
Who is it?

MADELEINE
It's Madeleine.

JERRY
(engaging buzzer)
Come on up.

KRAMER
Well, I'm off.

ELAINE
I'll say.

Kramer leaves. Jerry goes into the kitchen.

ELAINE
Who's Madeleine?

JERRY
The TV producer.

KNOCK.

JERRY
Come on in.

Madeleine enters.

JERRY
Madeleine, this is my friend Elaine.

ELAINE
(standing up)
Nice to meet you.

MADELEINE
(looks Elaine over)
Oh, don't get up.
(goes into the kitchen)
Jerry, I ran the tape you gave me past my partner, and she's interested.

JERRY
Great. What's the next step?

MADELEINE
Come out to L.A. for a few days-
(fingers Jerry's lapel)
I can put you up if you want.

Elaine, not liking what she's seeing, gets up and walks into the kitchen, standing behind Jerry.

MADELEINE
(seductively)
I've been a fan of stand-up comedy from way back...

In a refined, crafty motion, Madeleine reaches behind Jerry and opens a kitchen cabinet, interposing the cabinet door between Elaine and Madeleine/Jerry. This done, she puts her arm around Jerry, pulls him close, and kisses him passionately.

Jerry, caught by surprise, neither pushes away nor kisses back. Eventually Madeleine stops kissing Jerry, but continues to press herself against him.

MADELEINE
My friends in Beverly Hills and I have slept with most of the big name comedians in the industry.

JERRY
(freeing himself)
What about your husband?

MADELEINE
Of course not, he doesn't sleep with comics...

ELAINE
I think what Jerry means is-

MADELEINE
-Of course, not the older ones, I mean, I wouldn't sleep with George Burns, or Jack Benny. But the younger comics...

ELAINE
What Jerry meant-

MADELEINE
Oh, are you two...

Elaine shakes her head up and down violently. Jerry is still facing Madeleine, so he doesn't see this.

MADELEINE
Well, if that's the case, Elaine, you're welcome to join us; my bed has room for six if need be.

ELAINE
That's disgusting!

JERRY
I don't think it's so disgusting... but it's not what would be best for my relationship with Elaine right now.

INT. DAY. THE DINER

Elaine, George and Jerry.

A gorgeous WAITRESS serves bagels and lox.

ELAINE
What did you mean it wouldn't be best for our relationship right now?
JERRY
It would put a strain on our friendship if I slept with her... because you'd never let me hear the end of it.

GEORGE
Sure she would.

ELAINE
How can you be so sure?

GEORGE
Because the producer lady would cast him in a show and he'd move to LA... end of story.

The gorgeous waitress refills Jerry's water glass and walks away as Jerry and George watch.

ELAINE
(indicating the waitress)
You like her, don't you?

JERRY
I don't know her.

ELAINE
Why don't you ask her out and get to know her?

GEORGE
She'd never go out with him.

JERRY
I could get her to go out with me. If I wanted to.

ELAINE
He's going to be a TV star.

GEORGE
I'll bet you twenty bucks you couldn't get her to go out with you.

JERRY
That's not right, gambling about a date.

GEORGE
Ten to one odds. Two hundred bucks if you win.

ELAINE
Go on, Jerry. You like her. And two hundred bucks could pay for quite a night on the town.

JERRY
Make it twenty to one.

GEORGE
Fifteen to one. Three hundred if you win.

JERRY
Done.

Jerry and George shake hands.

The waitress approaches with a pitcher of water.

WAITRESS
May I get you anything el...

Before she has finished her sentence, George quickly interrupts.

GEORGE
-Will you go out with me?

WAITRESS
I'm sorry, but I really don't think that would be a good idea. Can I get any of you anything else to eat?

ELAINE
No thank you.

The waitress leaves.

ELAINE
(in announcer's voice)
George, in a pre-emptive first strike, attacks without mercy, swiftly destroying the opposition's chances for any type of victory.

JERRY
(standing up)
Excuse me.

Jerry leaves the table and approaches the waitress.

ELAINE
I don't think what you did to Jerry was fair... but it was clever.

Jerry whispers in the waitress's ear for a few seconds; she nods yes.

Jerry gets change from the cashier and returns to the table.

JERRY
We all done here?

ELAINE
I'm finished eating.

GEORGE
(proudly)
My work is done.

JERRY
(to waitress)
Could we get the check, please?

The waitress returns to the table, totals the check, and places it in front of Jerry.

JERRY
Thank you.

WAITRESS
(hands Jerry a piece of paper)
Here's my address and number.
See you tonight, then?
JERRY
(smiling)
I'm looking forward to it.

Jerry leaves a twenty dollar tip as he, Elaine and George leave.

INT. DAY. JERRY'S APARTMENT

George and Jerry are standing around the kitchen counter, soda cans in hand.

GEORGE
So what's the problem?

JERRY
I'm not even sure there is a television show. I think there's a chance that she made the whole thing up just to come on to me.

GEORGE
Why would she do that?

JERRY
She and her friends collect comics.

GEORGE
Some people collect baseball cards, or porcelain cats. She collects comics. So what?

JERRY
Not comic books. Comedians. She told me, right in front of Elaine, too, that she's slept with some of the biggest names in the stand-up comedy business. I called a couple of guys I know who work in television, and they say that except for 'Beverly Hills Orthodontist', she's never produced anything, that she's all talk.
GEORGE
I cried when they canceled 'Orthodontist'. So what are you going to do?

JERRY
I'm letting my agent handle everything.

GEORGE
I've heard that he's slept with some of the biggest names in the producer business.

JERRY
He has screwed a lot of people, but I think mostly using the telephone.

GEORGE
Long distance... it's the-

Kramer enters, carrying bread slices on a large cutting board.

KRAMER
(to George)
Taste this.

GEORGE
What is it?

KRAMER
Taste it first.

GEORGE
No thanks. I make it a rule not to eat anything unless I know what it is first.

JERRY
Where's your sense of culinary adventure?

GEORGE
It went away when I ate sheep intestine pudding in Scotland.
KRAMER
What did they taste like?

GEORGE
Breaded sheep intestines.

JERRY
I'll try the bread.

KRAMER
It's freshly baked, right out of the oven.

JERRY
Who made it?

KRAMER
I did.

JERRY
You baked it yourself? Since when do you make bread?

KRAMER
Since I got a machine that does all the work.

JERRY
(tasting bread)
This is good, really good.

KRAMER
It's cinnamon apple honey bread.

GEORGE
You could have told me that; I would have tried it.

KRAMER
Try this.

Kramer hands George a slice of bread, which George tastes.

GEORGE
It's stale. How could it be fresh and already be stale?
That's from yesterday's loaf, whole wheat potato zucchini bread.

GEORGE
(putting back the rest of the slice)
No thanks. I don't need any stale zucchini bread. I don't like zucchini.

That is one problem with the machine. Without using preservatives, the bread does get stale very quickly.

What's the point of having a machine?

You can have hot bread anytime you want it; you just pour in the ingredients, and it takes only a few hours to make. It's no work at all.

So? I can buy fresh bread anytime I want it. We have food stores in New York, and unlike some places, you don't even have to wait on long food lines.

But when you buy it in a store, the bread's not warm anymore.

How much was your machine?

A hundred forty nine dollars.
Well, I have a better machine. Fifteen dollars, it's called a toaster.

   JERRY
   What kind of bread it can make?

   KRAMER
   Anything-- rye, whole wheat, peanut chocolate chip potato pickle bread, anything you want.

   JERRY
   Well, I can be pretty sure I won't ever want chocolate chip pickle bread, with or without the nuts.

   KRAMER
   How can you be so sure?

   JERRY
   The marketing people at food companies are pretty sophisticated, and I'm sure that if ANYONE wanted something like that, anywhere in the country, that they would have tried to sell it to us.

   GEORGE
   Forgive him, mister conservative, he's still getting used to the concept of cherry cola, so don't even think about giving Jerry bread with nuts or chips in it.

INT. NIGHT. COMEDY CLUB

Jerry on stage.

   JERRY
   So my girlfriend sent me to the supermarket to buy tampons. Now when a guy's in a store, alone, buying tampons,
everybody, all the other men in the store, they look at him—what a wimp, his lady makes him buy that for him. Is she really worth all the embarrassment? I found a way out. With every box of tampons, I'll also buy five HUNDRED condoms.

(pause)
Speaking about condoms, I heard that Trojan and Baskin-Robbins are working on a joint venture to produce ice cream cones that don't leak.

(pause)
So anyway, if anybody here needs any condoms, see me after the show. I have HUNDREDS of them.

FADE.