STREET PERFORMER

A Comedy Sketch by
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Street Performer
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EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAYTIME
BEN stands outside a subway station, playing guitar. Guitar case open in front of him with change in it. He’s playing a song on the guitar as people are walking past, some people are putting change in his case. One GUY walks past without putting change in the case.

BEN
HEY! Hey you! Get back here, you owe me a dollar!

GUY
What?

BEN
You heard my music, so you owe me some change. That’s the rule, so cough up a dollar.

GUY
What? Where is that a rule?

BEN
If you were walking by with headphones on you wouldn’t be able to hear me play, right?

GUY
Right.

BEN
So that behoves you to buy headphones so you don’t have to give street performers, like me, you change. So, if you were to say, break your headphones, you have to give me your change every time you

(more)
BEN (CONT’D)
hear me playing music, until you buy new headphones. Now give me a dollar.

GUY
But my headphones aren’t broken.

BEN
Well where are they?

GUY
I left them at home.

BEN
Same thing, now give me a dollar.

GUY
NO! I’m not “giving you a dollar” just because of some made-up rule about forgetting my headphones.

BEN
Okay, fine, watch this.

MAN walking past without headphones on, Ben strums his guitar at him. Man stops, has a defeated look on his face. He reaches into his pocket and throws some change into the guitar case.

BEN
SEE!

GUY
Whoa, wait a second. You didn’t give him change because you have to

(more)

GUY
because you heard him playing did you?

MAN
Yeah, of course I did. That’s the rule, bro.

Man continues on his way.

BEN
See! I told you. Now give me a dollar.

GUY
(Sighs in defeat)
Fine, all I have is a twenty, can you give me change?

BEN
I can’t break a twenty. I play a guitar on the street, I don’t have that kind of money. Tell you what, I’ll give you twenty passes without your headphones.

GUY
Fine. Whatever. I just need to get to work. Here.

BEN
Thank you.

(more)

Ben starts playing song again. Stops abruptly.
BEN (CONT’D)
HEY! HEY YOU! GET BACK HERE! You
can’t fool me! Those headphones
aren’t even plugged in!

Ben runs off screen after him.

FADE OUT:

TITLE CARD: DON’T GIVE MONEY TO STREET PERFORMERS. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR HEADPHONES.

FADE IN:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM
Ben sitting in a chair across from DIRECTOR who is interviewing him.

BEN
Being an artist is all about
freedom. Ya know? It's like I'm
this big bird, and I won't be tied
down. I roam man, I roam around
and around and around. Like
wherever I lay my head is my home.

DIRECTOR
And how long have you been
homeless?

BEN
Three years.
BEN
Music is love. It's the only way I know how to express my feelings.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Ben violently strumming acoustic guitar, while yelling:

BEN
FUCK ME FUCK ME FUCK ME FUCK ME! I AM ERNIE'S RUBBER DUCKY!

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

BEN
No, I usually don't get mad at people who don't tip. I just feel sad for them. Like they just can't appreciate good art.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

COMMUTER #1 walks past Ben, but doesn't give any change. Ben stops playing, looks angrily at him, then raises guitar over his head, and chases after Commuter #1.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

BEN
Yes I've been arrested before.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM
BEN
Like I really enjoy collaborating with other artist. Like there's this one guy I play with Keith, (more)

BEN (CONT’D)
he's a percussionist. And it's just like when we're performing a gig together it's magical. Because he's so good, it's just makes me want to be that much better.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

BEN
I'd like to bring up a friend to do this next song with me.

KEITH walks up next to Ben. Ben begins playing a song, Keith pulls a set of keys out of his pocket, and begins plays them like a tambourine.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

BEN
No we don't know who's car the keys belong to. But if we find it we could do so many more gigs together.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

BEN
Having this talent isn't easy. I've been called upon by a higher power to bring the gift of music to the masses. It's like a tiger
ya know? A tiger doesn't want to go out and kill a gazelle, it's wants to lay back and do cute tiger cat things.
(more)

BEN (CONT’D)
But that mamma tiger has to bring food back to her back to her cubs. And that's what Yahweh has charged her to do. She's responsible for taking care of these cubs, it's her duty to to use the gift of claws and teeth, to bring a dead bloody gazelle to her cubs. And that's how I feel when it comes to music. The guitar is my claws and my teeth. And the music is a helpless gazelle. And everyone around me are my cubs... It's just meta. Ya know?

FADE OUT:

Notes:
Ben is an innovating artist in his own mind. His passion is talking about his music, but not necessarily playing it. His words are images that flow like a babbling brook, but usually never make sense.