

My name is Dave Arena and the comedy I wrote is a true story based on my life.

After 8 years as a road comic, my goal was to star in a sitcom and my wife wanted to attend a top make-up school. So, already in our late 30's (*when hopes and dreams should long be dead*), we abruptly up and moved our family of 5 from a 5,000 square foot house in the 'burbs of Cleveland, Ohio to a 900 square foot apartment in New York City to pursue our passions (*which is a very midwestern thing to do, we just listen to Tony Robbins in the car until we snap and do something crazy*).

What I didn't count on was her becoming the *Forrest Gump* of make-up artists, who in an unbelievable chain of events only a few months after graduating, gets a full time gig on *The Tonight Show*. And meanwhile, I've just completed my four thousandth open mic and have to take care of the kids on top of it.

And that's what the series is about. It follows DAVE and TORI CATALANO (*and fam*). Dave has to live vicariously through Tori since she's now in a world he wants to be in, rubbing elbows with A-listers all day. He struggles between still pursuing comedy as a small fish in a big pond and his new role as full time Dad in helicopter parent filled Park Slope, Brooklyn. The title is *Livin' The Dream* (*which for one is literal and for the other sarcastic*).

Dave's biggest challenge is CARLY aka Bontz, his 6 year old and youngest daughter. The doctors have no clue what's wrong with her. She's not autistic, she just does weird, random stuff (*which makes Dave a little proud cause he feels everyone nowadays has an autistic kid, but his has baffled medical science*). Psychologists, neurologists, other parents and even Tori want to put her in a box and try to fix her. Dave wants Carly to be herself. Carly being herself is great for Dave's comedy act but not for their home life. For example, in the cold open of the pilot, Dave wakes up to find Carly, sometime in the middle of the night, has torn a hole in their window screen and threw all their stuff 4 stories down (*the salad bowl from the night before, scissors, cinnamon, it all went down. She wanted to see if things could fly*).

So, it's fresh and edgy but also heartwarming. I take a serious topic like raising a child with a mental disability and bring people into that world with a lot of humor and lightness. It's like a male version of *Odd Mom Out*. Tori's world in the make-up room is behind the scenes like a *30 Rock* feel.

The other kids are SUNNY, 7, a master manipulator who knows how to push everyone's buttons probably because Carly gets so much attention. She'll do anything for a laugh even if it means throwing someone under the bus (like always volunteering Dave for stuff she knows he'll hate). And ROSE, 12, a drama filled, "type A", Jekyll and Hyde, tween hormonal mess. If one little thing goes wrong, her whole world crumbles. However, she is the "Bontz Whisperer", the only one who can control Carly at times.

Our way into the show is through DAVE, 38, big dreamer, hates situations where he has to do something or where he'll be uncomfortable, so this new role is his worst nightmare. Plus, he feels like time is running out on making it big and he's now furthest away from his dream as possible. He seems over his head with parenting at times but he's actually teaching his kids

valuable life lessons like going for what they want, being themselves no matter what and not taking life too seriously.

TORI is 36, she has her dream job as she's always been into everything celebrity (*hoarding years of Us Weekly mags*), but struggles with having to hide her celeb stalker tendencies because it's unprofessional and she doesn't want to get fired. She's everything Dave's not: outgoing, social, confrontational, life of the party. Literally wears her heart on her sleeve with shirts that have sayings on them like "I don't care what you think about me, I don't think about you at all" –Coco Chanel. She struggles between living her passion and losing control at home especially with Carly who she's always been an advocate for. She's in a position to help Dave professionally if he can ever see the forest for the trees.

The pilot is a slice of life, could be episode 8. Dave has 2 days to prepare for an audition that he's waited a year to get. If he does well it means consistent paid work and if not, he promised Tori he'd put comedy on the back burner to focus on the kids. Tori suddenly switches her day off so she can work with her celebrity crush, James Franco, which now means Dave has extra duty when he's trying to find time to prepare for his big shot. He has to take Carly to the neurologist where he decides to leave her off meds, a decision he'll soon regret. Unmedicated Carly causes chaos including bringing home a live pigeon in her book bag and getting Dave accused of being a kidnapper by a helicopter Mom. When Carly runs away from school and gets hit by a bike messenger right before Dave has to leave for his audition, a trip to a busy Brooklyn ER may cause him to blow his opportunity.

So week by week, Dave must learn to trust that he's exactly where he's meant to be in life (challenging when your spouse is already living a life you dream of). That the struggles, situations and opportunities that come into his path are preparing him for something bigger (unless Bontz offs him in his sleep first). That his new role gives him a fresh perspective on life that he learns to use to form a unique comedic voice that drives him closer to his goal.

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something—your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever." **-Steve Jobs**

By the end of the series, we can look back at seemingly random episodes and see how the dots connected for Dave as the universe conspired through chance encounters, situations and relationships to fulfill Dave's intention (none of which happens if they don't move to NYC, Tori doesn't get this job and he didn't become a full time Dad). We will clearly see how maybe a person he meets in episode 3 gets him an opportunity in episode 8 which opens a new door for him in episode 14, etc. Something "bad" or disappointing may happen but that actually spun Dave in a direction closer to his dream without him realizing it at the time.