

Henchmen

written by

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PILOT - COLD OPEN

INT. MID-TIER CITY BANK - DAY

A clean, well-lit bank. Calm. Ordinary.

Then—

MASKED HENCHMEN pour in. Guns up. Smoke bomb *almost* goes off but just kind of fizzles.

Everyone freezes.

At the center of the chaos stands Frank (late 30s), calm, authoritative, clearly done this before. His mask is slightly nicer than the others'. Professional.

Two of them sweep the lobby, herding the bank staff and customers into a corner, guns raised but steady.

FRANK Everyone stay calm. Hands where we can see them. This is a robbery, not a massacre.

The customers comply, shaken but unharmed.

Frank turns back to his crew.

FRANK

Alright. Quick reminder before we begin—this is a *standard* smash-and-grab. In, out, nobody needs to get hurt, nobody needs to get shot, and under *no circumstances* are we killing each other.

The henchmen nod.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We're professionals.

Next to him, JOHNNY (early 20s, eyes wide, buzzing with excitement) nods HARD.

JOHNNY

Right. Yeah. Totally. No killing coworkers.

Frank gives him a look.

FRANK

Johnny, this is your third job.

JOHNNY

I know, I know, I just—my cousin worked here in Gotham once and—

FRANK

—and he's gone because he clapped during a monologue. Exactly.

Johnny nods again, scribbling mental notes.

Across the room, leaning against a pillar like he's above all this, sits RICK (30s, slick, arms crossed). He doesn't look at anyone. He's listening.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Second thing. If the boss shows up—and that's a *big if*—and he starts monologuing?

Frank raises a finger.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You run. Immediately.

Johnny's hand shoots up instinctively.

JOHNNY

Like... even if he's telling a really evil story?

Frank stares at him.

FRANK

Especially then.

From behind them, Stan (late 40s, glasses under his mask, carrying a clipboard) nods vigorously.

STAN

He's right. Monologuing correlates with a seventy-eight percent increase in capture rates and—
(checks clipboard)
—an eighty-four percent chance of blunt force trauma not covered under basic injury insurance.

A henchman winces.

STAN (CONT'D)

Unless you've opted into the premium plan. Which—
(to the group)
—I emailed about.

Nobody responds.

STAN (CONT'D)
Multiple times.

Johnny leans toward Frank, whispering loudly.

JOHNNY
Is it worth it?

FRANK
Might be preying on your fears.
Just be careful and you'll be fine

From the back of the group, ED (big guy, vacant energy) raises his gun slightly.

ED
Wait—hold on.

Everyone turns.

ED (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)When you say "injury insurance"... is that like... emotional insurance?

Stan stiffens.

STAN
No.

ED
Because I've been hit with a lot of feelings on these jobs.

Johnny nods, genuinely considering it.

JOHNNY
That makes sense. Like trauma coverage.

STAN
There is no trauma coverage.

ED
Okay, but—hypothetically—if I get thrown through a wall and feel bad about it...

Frank exhales slowly.

FRANK

Ed, insurance is for when your body breaks.

ED

Right, right.(beat)What if my spirit breaks?

Rick snorts despite himself.

Sirens faintly wail outside—closer now.

Stan flips a page on his clipboard.

STAN

For the record, spiritual damage is explicitly excluded unless caused by acid, fire, or bats.

Johnny's eyes widen.

JOHNNY

Bats are a separate category?

STAN

Very separate.

ED

So if I get hit by, like... a guy dressed as a bat?

Stan thinks.

STAN

That's a gray area.

ED

I hate gray areas.

Frank checks his watch.

FRANK

Okay, new policy: if you're unsure whether something is covered, don't stand there and let it happen.

He gestures toward the vault.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Vault team, move.

Ed hesitates, then jogs after them.

ED
So should I call someone if I get
scared?

FRANK
Run.

ED
Run first. call later. Got it.

They advance down the hallway.

Suddenly, over the bank's PA system-

A DISTANT, THEATRICAL LAUGH echoes.

Everyone freezes.

Frank slowly looks at the crew.

FRANK
...Timers off.

JOHNNY
That was-was that a monologue
laugh?

FRANK
...That was a teaser.

A beat.

Frank checks his watch.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Alright. New plan. We're burning
clock. Vault team-move, move, move.

They sprint down the hallway toward-

INT. VAULT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The MASSIVE VAULT DOOR looms. Steel. Imposing. Absolutely not
opening.

Frank taps his earpiece.

FRANK
IronHorn, you up?

A VOICE crackles back-deep, annoyed, barely holding it
together.

IRONHORN
(V.O.) I told you not to call me
until you needed me.

FRANK

We need you.

A SHADOW crashes into frame.

IronHorn THE RHINO—seven feet tall, armored suit, pure muscle
—steps forward.

He plants his hands on the vault door.

He GRUNTS and DRIVES HIS HORN through the door and knocks it
over. It slams to the floor forward.

Johnny's jaw drops.

JOHNNY
Oh my god.

They rush inside.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

Cash everywhere.

The crew moves with military precision—bags filled, no
hesitation.

A BOOM shakes the building.

STAN
Hero arrival estimated at.. *checks*
clock 11:17AM

CRASH.

The ceiling EXPLODES.

A SILHOUETTED HERO lands dramatically.

HERO
IronHorn!

The HERO charges. IronHorn meets him head-on.

They COLLIDE—walls shatter, marble explodes, glass rains
down.

The camera cuts away to the henchmen who are successfully sneaking away with the money as the superhero and IronHorn fight. The crew piles into two unmarked GETAWAY CARS.

Tires SCREECH.

Behind them, the building is actively being destroyed.

INT. GETAWAY CAR - MOVING - DAY

Everyone's breathing hard.

Then—

Ed starts laughing.

ED
They're still fighting.

Johnny peers out the back window.

JOHNNY
They're... definitely still fighting.

A shockwave rattles the car.

STAN
That damage alone just wiped out
three city blocks. Way costlier
than the stolen money

Frank shakes his head, grinning and laughing

FRANK
Every time.

JOHNNY
So—just to be clear—the whole point
was the money.

FRANK
Always is.

ED
Then why don't they just—

Frank cuts him off.

FRANK—because if they stopped punching each other, they'd have to admit they both lost.

They all watch as another explosion blooms in the distance.

Rick finally speaks up from the corner.

RICK

Idiots.

The car disappears into traffic.

CUT TO BLACK AND THE SHOW TITLE POPS UP "HENCHMEN"

Below is a clean next scene, keeping the tone, rhythm, and workplace-comedy DNA consistent with what you've written. I'll introduce IronHorn's assistant, handle the pay disparity joke, then cleanly transition to WeHenge with the Bernie-type henchman and the henchwoman intro.

NEXT SCENE

INT. IRONHORN'S LAIR - NIGHT

A massive, cavernous lair carved into solid rock.

Industrial metal everywhere. Lava adjacent. Way too many spikes for no reason.

The henchmen enter, lugging HEAVY DUFFEL BAGS of cash.

Frank looks around.

FRANK

Every time I forget how...
aggressively pointy this place is.

ED

Is this OSHA-compliant?

STAN

Absolutely not.

From behind a steel desk steps PAMELA HORNWORTH (40s, tightly wound, glasses, tablet in hand). She's wearing business attire with a rhino-horn logo pin.

PAMELA

You're late.

FRANK

We beat the hero here

Pamela doesn't laugh or look amused

PAMELA

(sarcastic)

haha

She gestures to the bags.

PAMELA (CONT'D)

Cash.

They drop the bags. Pamela opens one, casually rifles through stacks.

PAMELA (CONT'D)

Fifty million. Clean. No dye packs.

She taps her tablet, then hands out cash from the bags

JOHNNY

Uh... sorry—just checking—(beat)—is this... one hundred thousand dollars?

Pamela looks at him for the first time.

PAMELA

Yes.

Johnny does quick math.

JOHNNY

Because—just to clarify—we brought in fifty million.

Pamela nods.

PAMELA

Correct.

JOHNNY

And there are—

FRANK

Don't.

JOHNNY

—like eight of us—

FRANK

Johnny.

Johnny presses on.

JOHNNY

So that's... not—

Pamela cuts him off, flat.

PAMELA

It's what you agreed to.

A beat.

STAN

Page seven. Compensation subsection
C.

Johnny blinks.

JOHNNY

There were pages?

FRANK

Always are.

RICK

Still more than my last guy paid.

Pamela gestures toward the exit.

PAMELA

IronHorn sends his appreciation.
And a reminder—

She taps her tablet.

PAMELA (CONT'D)

—no photos of the lair on social
media.

Ed slowly lowers his phone.

ED

Even if it's just the lava?

PAMELA

Especially the lava.

They head out.

CUT TO:

INT. WEHENCH - NIGHT

A WeWork-style space—but criminal.

Concrete floors. Folding chairs. Coffee machine that says "DO
NOT USE DURING HEISTS."

Henchmen of all types lounge around decompressing.

Frank's crew enters.

JOHNNY

Wow.

ED

This is still nicer than my apartment.

STAN

That's because your apartment doesn't have liability waivers.

At a long communal table stands MURRAY (70s, wild hair, thick Brooklyn accent), pacing passionately in front of a bored crowd.

MURRAY

I am once again asking why the millionaire and billionaire supervillains keep all the profits—

Scattered claps.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

while WE take the punches, the concussions, the emotional scars—

ED

He's talking about my spirit again.

MURRAY

—and get paid crumbs!

Johnny's ears perk up.

JOHNNY

He makes a good point.

FRANK

He makes that point every Tuesday.

Across the room, A HENCHWOMAN (late 20s, sharp, confident) is setting her gear down. Tactical. Efficient.

Rick clocks her immediately.

Ed nudges Johnny.

ED

Go talk to her.

JOHNNY

What? No—why me?

ED

You're new. You're expendable.

Johnny steels himself and approaches.

JOHNNY

Hey—uh—hi. I'm Johnny.

She looks him up and down.

HENCHWOMAN

You new?

JOHNNY

I... yes *gulps*

She smirks.

HENCHWOMAN

Ok.

She walks past him.

Johnny turns back to the group, dazed.

JOHNNY

I think that went... okay?

Frank claps him on the shoulder.

FRANK

Congratulations. You didn't die or
embarrass yourself.

Murray's voice rises again.

MURRAY

The system is broken!

The henchmen settle in.

Coffee pours. Remote henching (online crimes) and
discussions begin

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. WEHENG - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT

Johnny sits on a beat-up couch, phone in hand, nervous energy
through the roof.

Frank, Ed, Rick, and Stan hover nearby with varying levels of
interest.

JOHNNY

Okay. Henge profile. This is... a lot of pressure.

FRANK

It's a dating app for henchmen, not a confession.

Johnny scrolls.

JOHNNY

Profile photo. Uh—this one?

He holds up a SKI MASK SELFIE. Poor lighting. Thumb partially covering the lens.

ED

That's mysterious.

RICK

That's a ransom photo.

Johnny swipes.

JOHNNY

What about this?

A GRAINY SURVEILLANCE CAM STILL of Johnny mid-run, arms flailing.

FRANK

You look like you're stealing yourself.

STAN

Also... very candid.

Johnny nods, encouraged.

JOHNNY

Candid is good, right?

Frank sighs.

FRANK

Sure. If you're trying to date the security department.

Johnny types.

JOHNNY

Bio: "Young professional. Team player—"

FRANK

Remove "team player." That's a red flag. We're evil, remember

Johnny deletes it immediately.

JOHNNY

Okay. Interests... uh... long walks through dark alleys... efficient get-aways...

He scrolls to preferences.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

There's a checkbox that says "Role play?"

Ed leans in.

ED

Oh yeah. That's huge on here.

JOHNNY

It says examples include "being tied up" or "being beat up."

Johnny looks up, unsure.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Is that-like-normal?

RICK

For this job? That's foreplay.

Johnny hurriedly checks a box, then another.

JOHNNY

There's one that says "No mind control pls."

STAN

Smart.

Everyone nods solemnly.

ED

Learned that one the hard way.

Johnny freezes.

JOHNNY

...What?

ED

Swipe.

Johnny swipes. MATCH!

His phone lights up.

JOHNNY

Oh—oh wow. I matched.

Frank peers over.

FRANK

Profile.

Johnny turns the phone.

A profile photo: sleek black gloves. Tactical boots. No face.

Username: "SidekickEnergy."

JOHNNY

She works... for a hero.

A beat.

ED

Ooooh.

STAN

That feels... complicated.

FRANK

It's technically crossing a line.

Johnny thinks.

JOHNNY

But... like... in a hot way?

Rick smirks.

RICK

That's not a dealbreaker. That's a
kink.

Johnny's phone buzzes.

SIDEKICKENERGY (TEXT)

"So... you ever been punched by my
boss?"

Johnny lights up.

JOHNNY
She knows my work.

Frank shakes his head, smiling despite himself.

FRANK
Just don't bring it to the job.

Suddenly—FRANK'S PHONE RINGS.

He answers.

FRANK (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Yeah.

A shrill, overly enthusiastic VOICE blasts through.

LAME VILLAIN (V.O.)
Great! You're the henchmen, right?
Awesome. So excited to collaborate.

Frank winces.

FRANK
What's the job?

LAME VILLAIN (V.O.)
Okay, so—full transparency—I'm pre-revenue.

Everyone groans.

ED
Nope.

STAN
We've been burned by pre-revenue.

LAME VILLAIN (V.O.)
But the vision is huge.

Frank rubs his temples.

FRANK
Where's the lair?

LAME VILLAIN (V.O.)
Right now? Storage unit. But like—conceptually—

Frank hangs up.

The room is silent.

JOHNNY
 ...So are we doing it?

Frank sighs.

FRANK
 Get your masks.

ED
 Which ones?

FRANK
 The embarrassing ones.

Johnny looks back at his phone—another message waiting.
 He smiles.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - "THE LAIR" - NIGHT

A single folding table. Three mismatched office chairs. A whiteboard that says in giant red letters:

COUNT SKULLINGTON - STEALTH MODE

Below that:

Brand Awareness

Fear Pipeline

Pre-Revenue (for now)

The COUNT SKULLINGTON stands at the front in a cape that still has the tag on it. He clicks a remote. Nothing happens. He clicks again.

A bedsheet drops off the wall revealing a hand-drawn logo:

A skull wearing a monocle.

COUNT SKULLINGTON
 Gentlemen. Tonight... we activate.

We are building brand awareness.

He flips the whiteboard.

Now it says:

PHASE 1: HIGH-VISIBILITY VANDALISM

Underneath:

Spread Skullington brand

Replace "Welcome to Brookdale" sign with "WELCOME TO DOOM"

Fog machine in sewer grate (optional, budget permitting)

COUNT SKULLINGTON (CONT'D)

We create uncertainty. Confusion.
Mystique. No one knows when we'll
strike.

JOHNNY

Are we stealing anything?

COUNT SKULLINGTON

No. Too early. We're pre-revenue.

He circles PRE-REVENUE aggressively.

COUNT SKULLINGTON (CONT'D)

We're in stealth.

Johnny looks around the warehouse.

JOHNNY

We're in a warehouse with the door
open.

COUNT SKULLINGTON

That's physical stealth. Different
vertical.

He clicks to the next slide – it's just written in Sharpie on
cardboard:

FEAR FUNNEL

Top: Mild Confusion

Middle: Unease

Bottom: Full Civic Panic

COUNT SKULLINGTON

We start by tagging city hall with
our logo. Not overdoing it. Clean
lines. Professional menace.

STAN

So... graffiti.

COUNT SKULLINGTON

Brand placement.

JOHNNY
What's the endgame?

The villain smiles like he's about to say something historic.

COUNT SKULLINGTON
When the city finally asks, "Who is
behind this?" – we don't answer.

That's power.

Beat.

STAN
Or they think it's teenagers.

The villain ignores him.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

The henchmen are spread across a dimly lit block. The skull-and-monocle logo is spray-painted on a lamppost, a trashcan, and a hot dog stand. A faint fog rolls in from a misfired fog machine.

STAN is crouched with his clipboard, counting meticulously.

STAN
Block 12: three logos, two double-
takes, one probable viral post...
(checks watch)
Efficiency: 87.3%. We could improve
corner visibility by 2.1%.

FRANK
Stop overthinking it. Just... paint,
run, repeat.

JOHNNY
I mean... we're actually scaring
people, right?

FRANK
No. We're "building brand
awareness." Fear comes later.

Suddenly, a phone flashes in the dark. A figure steps forward: TRENT, mid-20s, wearing a neon hoodie, holding a giant ring light and gimbal.

TRENT

Yo. Yo. Yo! Wait... is that... that logo? The skull with a monocle? That's sick!

He points his phone at the hot dog stand, framing the logo.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I gotta post this. My followers are gonna freak.

ED

Who's that?

RICK

Another civilian.

FRANK

(shrugging)
Probably harmless.

TRENT

Hold up... are you guys... a team? I can collab. I can make content with you. Big clicks.

JOHNNY

Uh... no sorry, we're actually henchmen. Doing it for... Skullington.

TRENT

Skullington? Like... an evil Skull guy? Wait, you're... evil?

FRANK

Technically... pre-revenue evil.

TRENT

Cool. Cool. I can post behind-the-scenes. "Street-level villainy." I can do TikTok, Instagram, Reel... it's viral for sure.

ED

He just wants to be evil for followers?

FRANK

Yes. That is literally the point.

STAN

(looking at clipboard)
Adding him as an engagement
variable. Potential viral post
multiplier: 1.43x.

TRENT

Perfect. Okay, so... can I join the
evil team too? I'll bring lights,
angles, dramatic sound effects.

JOHNNY

Uh... sure. I guess he can help
spread awareness

STAN

Note: influencer adoption
confirmed. We are now tracking:
logos, double-takes, viral posts,
and "influencer amplification."

TRENT

(to the group)
Guys, we need a hashtag.
#SkullMonocleTakeover?
#BrandOfFear? Something edgy,
scary, but shareable.

FRANK

If you say 'link in bio', I'm
quitting

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - MONTAGE

Johnny spray-paints a wall. Trent films it with dramatic
close-ups, overlaying spooky music.

Stan checks his clipboard, furiously tallying:

Logos visible: 6

Pedestrian double-takes: 4

Viral potential: trending

Ed tries to tape small logos to trashcans. One falls into a
storm drain.

Rick tosses a fog machine over his shoulder dramatically.

Trent livestreams to hundreds of followers, narrating in a
whisper: "Witness street-level evil before it blows up.
#SkullMonocleTakeover"

STAN

Update: Instagram live is up. Reach estimate: 4.2k impressions per block. Evil KPI goal exceeded.

TRENT

(grinning)

Wait... you mean we're actually building an evil empire? With content? Awesome.

ED

...Does this mean we get paid in followers?

FRANK

Not exactly but history shows if you get enough followers it pays, and hopefully ours will be activated, with pitchforks

FADE OUT

The group piles into the van, Skullington cape flapping in the wind, Trent filming the getaway like it's a music video.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Skullington stands in front of his "Skull & Monocle" graffiti wall, trying to look intimidating. His startup-tech gadget — a combo fog machine, flashing LED lights, and a mechanical claw — sputters, sparks, and hisses. Smoke puffs out like a sad little chimney.

SKULLINGTON

Tonight... fear will... activate!

The mechanical claw twitches and bonks a trash can. Skullington flails, stepping on the fog cord. Sparks fly; the lights spin uncontrollably.

ED

(laughing hysterically)

He's... uh... activating! Like... really activating!

FRANK

(deadpan)

Pre-revenue evil.. And apparently Pre-talent.

STAN

(scanning street)

The hazard radius of gadget failure is now officially... unsafe. Also, the smoke is triggering a low-level city alarm.

TRENT (livestreaming, hyped)

Oh my god! This is gold! Skull & Monocle, up close! Quick-smile for the content!

SKULLINGTON

(to Trent)

You... will fear-

The mechanical claw snaps upward and smacks Skullington in the forehead. He spins, trips over the fog hose, and lands awkwardly in a trash can. Smoke hisses from his gadget.

ED

See? Content! People are totally gonna think this is... high-tech evil!

RICK

(leaning against wall,
deadpan)

High-tech disaster, maybe. Evil, no.

Suddenly, ECHO SENTINEL arrives, serious, composed, sonic visor glowing. He steps forward confidently, hands on hips.

ECHO SENTINEL

Skullington. End of line.

He notices Trent livestreaming.

ECHO SENTINEL (CONT'D)

...Wait... are you Trent Viralstein.
Can I get a selfie with you first?
Big fan

TRENT

Absolutely! Great crossover content! Quick-smile!

They awkwardly pose. Skullington groans from the trash can, trying to look menacing.

SKULLINGTON

(through smoke, flustered)

I... will... destroy-

Skullington fires his gadget's mechanical claw at Echo Sentinel. It sputters, whirs, and promptly flops uselessly to the ground. Fog puffs into his own face. Sparks pop.

ECHO SENTINEL
(activating sonic pulse)
Time to neutralize you.

A focused sonic wave hits Skullington. He stiffens in mid-flail, covers his ears and goes to his knees. The gadget sputters one last pathetic puff and dies.

RICK
(deadpan)
I've seen better intimidation from
a cat poster.

FRANK
(to the crew, rolling
eyes)
Step one: gather evil followers.
Step two: activate. Step three:
don't design gadgets that fail.

JOHNNY
So... what happens now?

FRANK
Cops show up. Skullington gets
arrested. Let's ... leave. In a
perfect, or basic world,
Skullington could have avoid defeat
by having... earplugs. Pre-revenue
evilf Pre-talent, And apparently...
pre-headphones

The henchmen pile into the van, watching Echo Sentinel escort Skullington to the arriving police.

ED
Or maybe we need... evil tech
insurance? Like... coverage for
villain fails!

STAN
(grinning slightly)
Actuarial nightmare. I'll draft the
proposal anyway.

FRANK

(sighs)

The van drives off as Skullington
groans in the police cruiser,
sparks still faintly popping from
his dead gadget.

FADE OUT to... a banner across the screen reading "HENCHMEN"