

BAGEL BOYS

By Jerry Rabushka

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CAST: HAL and BRENT

HAL: **(to the audience, as if speaking to a television camera)**

Here at the Bagel Barn, bagels are my life. I wake up bagels, I eat bagels, and I go to bed bagels. When I see someone bite into a bagel and his face lights up, it's like a stream of sunshine smiling at me from my conscious mind. Oh, that's subconscious. Anyway, when Dad gave us the store – well, I knew I was set for life.

BRENT: Oh, that is so gross! We had this guy in here yesterday, and he ate this asiago-cheese-festival-sprout-creation-melt-thing with a whole wad of salmon flavored cream cheese on it and it just stuck in his mustache for an hour while he sat there reading a copy of "GQ".

HAL: Brent wanted to say something, but I reminded him the customer is always right. Always. Everyone should be allowed to enjoy a bagel in their own way. And when someone is enjoying a bagel in their own private universe, I'm happy.

BRENT: It looked like dried blood. **(to audience)** My brother, Hal, is a real simpleton. I wanted to start a rock band. I wanted to make something of myself. Now the only choices I have in my life are plain, onion, and blueberry.

HAL: **(jolly)** No you don't. There's cherry, garlic, herb, herb and onion, sun-dried tomato...

BRENT: Oh, he's back and he's doing it again. Hey you! You with that big hairy catacomb on your lip. **(mimes holding up a napkin)** Ever thought of using one of these, pal?

HAL: Brent! You'll scare him away! **(to audience)** My brother tends to overreact sometimes. You'll have to forgive him. **(quietly)** He was disturbed as a child.

BRENT: You make him clean that off or I'm going home!

HAL: Oh, like your life is such a sparkling *tour de France*! Like I can't tell what you had for dinner just by looking under the couch pillows.

BRENT: I always know what you have for dinner. A bloody bagel. It's always a bagel. **(to audience)** When I was younger, they would always eat the bagels and I would get the hole. And now look at this hole they gave me to work in. **(points to brother)** And with!

HAL: We've always had trouble with him. He was squeamish growing up. We'd lick bagel batter off our fingers and he'd run from room to room screaming bloody murder.

BRENT: You stuck your fingers from your mouth back in the bowl. You still do. **(to audience)** I'll be right back.

HAL: What are you doing? You can't do that to a...

BRENT: **(mimes assisting a customer, and mimes wiping something off the customer's face)** Now if I have to do that again, I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

HAL: **(talking to imaginary customer)** I'm sorry, sir. No, he's not an employee. He's just a homeless tramp that comes in frequently. I don't have the heart to turn him away. Lots of mental problems, you know. **(to Brent)** Oh great, he's leaving now. We've just lost a good customer, thanks to you.

BRENT: He'll come back. That type always does.

HAL: You can't just go cleaning off our customer's faces like that.

BRENT: **(threatening)** Oh, yes I can. And don't you try to stop me. **(to audience)** Did Hal tell you about the time we got a poor rating from the health department? We had a larvae colony on the floor because he didn't want to throw out a stale batch of bagels. He said it was like murder. Well, I can tell you about murder. That e-coli disease is a real killer! Probably more victims than Charlie Manson.

HAL: Brent! **(to audience)** He gets so uptight that I don't want to toss away perfectly good bagels. I have a natural fear of trash cans. If you throw something away today, it won't be there tomorrow when you need it. It's perfectly rational.

BRENT: Don't mind him. Hal has this fantasy of never throwing anything away. Unfortunately, for him, it's a reality. He never wants to trash anything, while I'd chunk everything if I had my choice.

HAL: Our entire business would be in a garbage dump in the middle of Jersey if it weren't for me.

BRENT: **(sarcastically)** Wouldn't that be a shame.

HAL: **(to audience)** It's not difficult to see who keeps this business afloat...who truly loves these precious bagels with all his heart! Who...

BRENT: There was a guy in here once who kept chewing with his mouth open.

HAL: Didn't Mom and Dad ever teach you about forgiveness?

BRENT: He licked his lips and smiled at me with bagel stuff in his mouth! **(to audience)** This is such a gross place to work. I wanted to make something of myself. I wasn't kidding before. I wanted to be in a band. I would have been excellent. I could have learned to play an instrument. But no. They made me stay here. They took my guitar and gave me a spatula. They took my drum set and –

HAL: Thank goodness they took your drum set.

BRENT: They took my drum set and made me knead bagel batter. I should have kneaded them all in the-

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