

NARPs Pilot Pitch

written & performed by

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INT. DARREN STAR SCREENING ROOM - DAY

The UCLA Introduction to TV Writing class has been sitting in the Darren Star theater for over two hours and the air is palpable with nervous tension. The panelists this year have been digging into each pitch with tenacity, and with each passing second BECCA WATERSON (20) looks more and more nervous.

MODERATOR

Alright, last up we have Becca Waterson!

Becca gets up clutching her computer and a bottle of honey. She's dressed to match the honey bear, all yellow, and when she left home she felt confident but now she feels silly.

Walking behind the podium, Becca carefully sets down her computer, painfully aware of all the stares from the panelists and her class and how incredibly dry her mouth is.

BECCA

Hiii okay so sorry, been sitting for so long, my mouth's a little dry. I hope you don't mind if I take a little sip of this...

She pops the cap on the honey bear and takes a little sip, to the amusement of the audience.

BECCA

Phew! Alright! Hi everyone! My name is Becca Waterson, and I'm a swimmer. I've been swimming competitively for around 12 years now, first in the Lake Tahoe area, then in Sacramento for high school, and I'm on my final leg now as a member of the Division 1 varsity women's team at Brown University.

She pauses for a beat.

BECCA

As a young athlete who wasn't sure what she was doing while looking at colleges during high school, and who doesn't see much swimming representation (or women in sports representation) in media, I want to make a story that speaks to those audiences.

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BECCA (CONT'D)

One of my inspirations for writing this story is the Rick Singer college admissions scandal, which broke in 2019 during my own recruiting process. Basically, his Sacramento based company, which had deep ties within my swim team and my high school, was faking test scores and photoshopping nepo babies heads onto the bodies of athletes to help get them into top universities.

A few surprised murmurs from the panelists.

BECCA

When the story broke, I had already committed to swim and study at Brown, and I remember the **non-athletic, regular people**, or NARP, peers and teachers at school accusing me of one, using Rick Singers services, which I hadn't, and two, either not being a real swimmer or of cheating my way into Brown, both of which I could easily prove false. The anger, frustration, and hilarity of the accusations, along with the craziness of my highschool experiences in love, friendship, and finding one's own happiness, gave birth to...

Becca pauses, looking up at the audience.

BECCA

(With flourish)

NARPs! An hour-long Comedic drama following the life of fifteen-year-old high school junior Calissa, who is beginning her journey with the college swimming recruiting process. Over the course of the series, Calissa must figure out how to balance her swimming, social, and school lives before NARPs push her to sabotage her future.

Her hand shakes as she lifts it to start counting on her fingers.

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BECCA

Similar to my own experiences in juggling roles in the school newspaper, student council, and teacher's assistant slash tutor, plus a full AP course-load, roughly 3 to 5 hours 7 days a week training, and the ever-looming possibility of high school romance Calissa is drowning in responsibilities in school and in the pool.

Becca waves her hand to emphasize...

BECCA

All the while, she is also learning how to navigate relationships and goals with parents, mentors, and friends.

Holding out one hand...

BECCA

She wants to find her "dream school" but first—

Holding out the other...

BECCA

Needs to figure out what makes her happy, separate from what everyone else wants from her and their own views of what happiness is. This leads us to our core characters starting with

(In sing-songy voice)

Eric - Love-bombing NARP heart-throb. To him, happiness is having a highschool sweetheart.

(In tougher tone)

We also have Kenzie - Calissa's best friend and the effortlessly cool popular girl. To her, happiness is doing what feels good: partying hard and demolishing competition in the pool. Coach Rusty, the seasoned yet jovial swim coach, supports this competitive spirit.

(MORE)

BECCA (CONT'D)

(In southern accent)

Full of success stories of past swimmers, and other tales of pickled eggs and gas-station sushi from his youth in Alabama, Rusty has that special Southern kindness, and the accent to go with. He pushes his athletes to be the best in the pool and there is a reason some of his swimmers are called "future Olympians" in the biggest swimming newspaper, SwimSwam. I'll give you a hint, it's honey!

Becca grabs the honey bottle and does a Truman-style pose with it, flashing a winning smile.

BECCA

Finally, there is Calissa's Mom, who means well but her rules sometimes suffocate Calissa's desire to live life to the fullest—the classic mom-ager. In the pilot, Calissa proves herself to be one of the top swimmers on her high school club team, but we see how she is also unprepared and overwhelmed by college recruiting. Who knew that so many coaches wanted to know about the size of her feet?

She pulls up the leg on her yellow jumpsuit to reveal size women's 12 Nike sneakers. The audience leans forward to get a look while laughing.

BECCA

In her desire to balance academics with typical high school drama, swim practices, and new challenges with recruiting, like the coach from Princeton coming to observe a practice (!), she makes rash decisions that could potentially make or break her future career and relationships with her family and friends. At the same time, Kenzie, our naturally talented athlete who normally finds the art of swimming fast comes easy to her, fails to perform well during practice.

(MORE)

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BECCA (CONT'D)

Olympic Trial time cuts are on the line, and she must figure out how to roll with the waves and move on to the next set.

Becca pauses for a beat to catch her breath, and pretends to swoon for Eric.

BECCA

For our C story, we follow Eric, who is deeply in love with Calissa, or at least as much as a 16 year old boy can be. During the math test, he doodles images of them holding hands, and at lunch, he goes out of his way to bring Calissa her favorite snacks. Romantic, right? But there's the small, teeny tiny little issue that he **already has a girlfriend**. Still, desperate for Calissa's attention and devotion, he sends her a message that exposes his desire for her, and later shows up to her practice, boom box at the ready, to serenade Calissa with love songs.

The audience chuckles again as Calissa pretends to hold a boom box above her head.

BECCA

Looking forward into the rest of the season where Calissa is a highschool junior, the main question is Where will Calissa go to college? In season two, this shifts to Will Calissa remain eligible for university as a highschool senior? And in season three, there is the opportunity to explore how Freshman year at a prestigious university was upended by the pandemic. With her gills drying out, we watch Calissa's perspective on her personal goals and what she considers to be happiness shift as she decides to join a training bubble in San Diego and begin college online.

She looks up into audience, all shadowed silhouettes. Taking a deep breath, Becca marches through the final line...

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BECCA

Essentially, the main question I hope to explore is what journeys do people take to figure out their happiness? Thank you.

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