

All clips for the pilot can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/huQc3n7vzos>

Title: Bizaardvark: Disney Channel's iCarly Knockoff

[editing idea, edit the following bit in the aspect ratio of a vine]

On January the 13th 2013; a social media app would launch that sent shockwaves through internet culture. Like YouTube before, it was a video social media website where users could share a brief glimpse into their personal lives and sense of humor. But it was far from a clone, as it carried a unique gimmick. The site had a set video length limit: 1/10th of a minute, 6,000 milliseconds, or simply... Six seconds.

To post on Vine, you not only had to be creative, you had to be concise. It was strange, overly restrictive, even irritating. But the results spoke for themselves.

[compilation of iconic Vine clips; Deez Nuts, what are those, Damn Daniel, etc]

Four months after launch, Vine was purchased by Twitter for 30 Million dollars and for the next five years, the site became inescapable. Not only did many celebrities flock to the platform, but it also quickly grew an ecosystem of its own, as people around the world battled for their six seconds of fame.

During this time, two specific young men would become the most remarkable and infamous celebrities to gain celebrity from the platform. Two brothers from Cleveland named Logan and Jake.

[Compilation of clips of the two brothers]

The Paul Brothers used their Vine accounts to post skits, pranks, and other content; before expanding their respective and combined brands to YouTube.

[some bit about the relationship between the brothers?]

It's here that another entity enters the picture: the Disney Channel.

To those at the network, it was easy to remember that just a decade before, they were creating some of the most influential and iconic media for children and teenagers. But changing technology had reshaped the status quo, and ratings were dropping more with each passing year as Cable TV saw their audience being g siphoned away by young, flamboyant, and loud internet personalities.

But to paraphrase an old phrase; if you can't beat them, ask them to join you.

In early 2016, Disney invited Jake Paul to become a main cast member on a network television show, where he would essentially play an exaggerated parody of himself.

Jake would later reflect that it was obvious to him then that this was not a good offer. It would do nothing to grow his online following, the pay would be an absolute compared to the millions he was preparing to make off of his YouTube career, and the work would be demanding, burdensome, and embarrassing.

[Clip of Jake Paul being hit by sausages]

And so naturally, Jake immediately accepted the offer. He would later explain that this was motivated entirely by a desire to be respected more in the culture of Southern California.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_faWNnWhcw 31:55 - 32:08]

So Disney would now have a chance to create a show about internet fame starring an actual e-celebrity. Their ultimate pitch? A show about two girls who start an online web show and suddenly become famous, as they discover the positives and negatives of their new lives; all while being aided by a third team member, a young boy with an obvious crush and ambition beyond his reach.

As the show hit the airwaves, many viewers couldn't shake the feeling that this pitch sounded oddly familiar...

[00:07 - 00:16 00:26 - 00:30 "Hey guys, I'm Frankie, I'm Paige"]

[Dingo episode: "They ripped off iCarly" "Yeah no SHIZZZ" "Are you guys watching?" "Those Dingo people are dead." "What are we gonna do?" "We're gonna go find them and kick them in their Dingos."]

[We cut to a camcorder segment, which I filmed in 2021 to mess with people]

I'm really excited to get into this, to break down this little show, and of course to solve the biggest mystery of all: is Bizaardvark and iCarly knockoff - and if it is... is it better or worse than what it's copying?

Because on one hand, it's kind of hard to imagine that it's going to be a better program... But on the other... iCarly was such a difficult, painful thing to go through that I'm actually horrified at the idea of a show taking the same premise and somehow doing it worse. So, let's figure this one out. With all waiting aside, let's get into... Bizaardvark.

So the episode starts off by introducing us to our two main characters - Frankie Wong, played by Madison Wu; and Paige Olvera, played by Olivia Rodrigo.

[Cuts to Quinton on his couch, wearing merch from her tour]

“Never heard of her!”

Paige is mostly defined by being somewhat of a living, breathing ball of anxiety; known for getting overworked and having massive mood swings. Her ability to see the best and the worst in every situation is a driving force for her struggles throughout the series.

["I need you to chop off my arms."]

Paige and Frankie first met in band class, where Paige joked how it would be funny if they smashed their instruments. Frankie then went ahead and DID smash her guitar, causing the girls to get in trouble but to also become best friends.

While Paige is empathetic, forward-thinking and kind; Frankie is abrasive, impulsive, slightly violent, and sometimes cruel.

["Do you have the receipt?"]

As you can imagine, Frankie's role as the unpredictable wildcard of Bizaardvark is something we see a lot from here on out.

["...Tie me to a chair..."]

Eventually, the girls began running a weekly comedy web show. In each episode, they talk about how their lives are going before presenting a skit. Often these skits involve cheesy songs, because for some reason Disney wanted the music of these stars to be heavily featured in the show.

You might remember that in iCarly, there was an in-universe parody of YouTube called SplashFace. Bizaardvark also features one of these, Vuuugle, which sounds like a venereal disease.

When the pilot starts, Paige and Frankie are trying to get to 10k subscribers, because when they do they'll be allowed to use the Vuuugle studio, a production space that exists only to be used by popular Vuuugle content creators.

Now that might sound preposterous and worth of thoughtless ridicule... But... it's actually based on a real thing.

Back in the mid-2010s, YouTube had a production studio called YouTube Space in a few cities but most famously in LA. They had professionals on-site and pre-built sets of things like the Oval Office, and the only prerequisite for application was that you have 10,000 subscribers.

But unlike the fictional Vuuugle studios, YouTube did not guarantee that you would even get a physical tour. To get through those doors even once you had to have a very good, one-off pitch for a production, not to mention a good amount of clout to even earn a response.

The idea pitched in Bizaardvark, that simply having 10,000 subscribers is enough for you to not only have access to this studio but to directly meet some of the biggest Vuuuglers on the platform, is absurd.

The thing is... 10k subscribers isn't a lot of followers. And I know there will be hundreds of small creators in the comment section saying that they'd kill to have that many followers, but the practical reality is that the average creator with 10,000 subscribers can't afford to do YouTube full-time.

There are probably hundreds, if not thousands of people who cross that barrier every single day. YouTube doesn't have the staff to even personally correspond with that many people. And no production space in the world could find enough real estate.

Ironically, I'd argue that the actual depiction we see of Vuuugle studios in-the-show is an accurate representation of what this would be like. And it's a fucking nightmare.

[Oh look it's the bagpipe ninja]

A haphazard, unsafe environment of far too many people doing far too many things. Not relaxing, not fitting for recording content, and, again, HEAVILY unsafe, just waiting for a horrible accident to happen.

One interesting difference between this show and the grave it's robbing is that on iCarly, the characters go to a normal high school where they're surrounded by like-minded peers who LOVE their videos. But in this show, Frankie and Paige go to a private school where they're surrounded by preppy nerd kids who don't get them.

["I find your sense of humor Banal."]

Damn, I've been sayin it B-anal all these years!

As they pass the 10,000 subscriber threshold and enter Vuugle Studios, they hope that this is where they will find *their people*.

We soon meet our two main supporting characters. First is Dirk, played by either Logan or Jake Paul, I've already forgotten.

Dirk runs a prank challenge channel, where he has to do outrageous things recommended by his audience, especially if they're unsafe. He's presented as very slow and stupid but with a heart of gold that often shines through.

["I had no idea you guys were such funny chick dudes! I'd give you a High Five, but you know... Bear trap!"]

When the girls first meet Dirk, he has a cake and Frankie believes he's filming a cake destruction video, so she throws it on the ground. However, it turns out it's his birthday cake, causing him to tear up.

Next the girls meet Amelia, a fashion and makeup YouTuber who is a southern belle and a raging narcissist, constantly absorbed in her own self-worth.

["You've been talking a long time and you haven't said one thing about me. Bye!"]

Paige is a closeted fan of Amelia but makes a bad impression after accidentally deleting her latest video off her laptop. Amelia is dumb and doesn't know how to export something more than once, so she blows up at the girls.

It's social suicide.

By the end of their first day, Paige and Frankie are social pariahs, becoming even less popular than they are at school.

But they soon learn that there is going to be a Vuuugle viewing party where the various Vuuuglers will show off the latest videos they've produced in the studio. They decide to record a song about being bad at thinking of comebacks, but psych themselves out and cycle between other ideas.

Around here we are also introduced to Bernie, a 12-year-old who has been trying to convince the girls to hire him as their manager. He has snuck into the Vuuugle production studio and they jokingly tell him that they will hire him if he finds other talent to represent.

So Bernie starts running around trying to impress the various Vuuuglers. He gets his neck waxed by Alemia and Dirk attempts to film a video where he unleashes a Ram to fight him.

Yes, Dirk is trying to film a video where a wild, enraged animal will battle a 12-year-old boy.

But remember, you're not allowed to criticize him because he donates to charity. Have I... Have I done that one before? That... Felt familiar...

In the end, the girls fail to make a video for the party, causing them to be rejected even further by their peers.

[clip]

The girls go home and decide to quit making internet content, convinced that they'll never find "their people." But Bernie soon arrives and tells them they're too talented to quit, and that they HAVE found their people. As he pulls up clips of strangers doing cringy TikTok dances to their bad meme songs, they realize that their FANS are their people. They finally make the comeback song skit and are accepted by their fellow Vuuuglers.

One part of this music video depicts the girls trying to think of a comeback to an insult, and it takes so long that their entire lives go by. And this is how we find out that Paige graduated college this past summer! Congratulations Doctor Olvera!

I know that's not how Doctorates work...

As the credits roll, the girls hire Bernie as their full-time manager, also though he still struggles to fit in at the studio.

[We cut to Quinton, standing by the pinboard]

So that was the Bizaardvark pilot episode, which is titled "First." That's pretty funny.

So of course it's now time for me to give you some of my initial reactions. So naturally I've come to the pinboard. Last time we were here-

[Quinton is stopped as he falls over in shock. The pinboard "infinity" effect is being projected as usual, but now has audio; the audio of every pinboard gag going back to 2016 plays at once. Quinton reacts in shock and tries to figure out how to fix it. Eventually, the moment passes, and Quinton looks stunned.]

I uh... That's never happened before. Or at least I hope that's never happened before? Is that what that usually sounds like? Have I just never noticed before? I feel like I would have noticed that... Well, whatever.

So based entirely on the pilot episode of this show, is it fair to say that Bizaardvark is an iCarly knock-off? Well... The short answer is "Yes."

But the long answer is... It's a little complicated.

I don't want to stand up here and say that for every idea in the world there can only be one person to attempt that premise. The idea that there can only be one sitcom about therapy and only one sitcom set in a bar - that would be an insane standard. Saying that every kids show about the internet is TRYING to be iCarly is like saying that every racist gamer is trying to be JonTron. Wait, that one feels familiar too.

I think it's worth pointing out that in some ways, Bizaardvark is doing some new ideas that we didn't see on iCarly. iCarly didn't have this group of internet stars working in the

same communal space. And certainly some of the edgier and extreme aspects of the iCarly gang are not present here.

But I think it's undeniable that our two main leads do share more than a superficial similarity to Carly and Sam from iCarly.

For instance, Bernie is a little up in the air. I do think he's very similar to season 1 Freddie, and maybe a bit of Spencer. But he doesn't have a crush on Paige or Frankie, he's a talent agent and not a producer, and for the rest of the season he actually gets paired up with Jake Paul more than anyone else.

In fact, I think you could argue that if there's any character Bernie resembles, it's Dice. You know, the 12-year-old business-savvy kid who becomes best friends with a future professional boxer.

But the thing is, I don't know if Sam & Cat was popular enough in 2016 to rip off. So some of this stuff might be coincidence or parallel thinking.

But if there's any particular detail that seals the fate of this judgement, it's the in-universe webshow. Because I would pause to say that Bizaardvark the TV show is a complete rip-off of iCarly the TV show... But Bizaardvark the web show, is a complete rip-off of iCarly the web show.

It's presented the same way, a lot of the jokes feel similar, the skits sometimes feel identical. But the biggest thing is the cadence. The way the characters talk in these segments gets so uncanny because of how obvious it is that they're basing their performances on Miranda and Jennette.

[clip]

And I think that ends up being the most important thing as you watch the show. The literal plot isn't a line-by-line copy of iCarly. But when you're watching the show, it becomes so easy to imagine Miranda Cosgrove and Jennette McCurdy delivering this material almost identically while still being in character.

[clip]

Another thing I want to mention is that when they first go to Vuuugle and you see the big hallway with all the creative people, I felt like I had seen this before.

And the reason is that it's a very similar sequence to when we first see Hollywood Arts in the Victorious pilot episode.

I mean, it's just so uncanny. The Deja Vu was so strong I could almost taste the Strawberry Icecream.

And in the end, this episode was just so... Alright. It was okay.

And that kind of shocked me I think. The jokes were good, the performances were great, and the mushy parts were exactly as mushy as they wanted to be. I've watched a lot of bad movies and TV for this channel over the last 9-and-a-half years, and this was... fine.

I'm very relieved that Jake Paul's role in the show is very limited. Instead of being this show's Carly, he's this show's... Gibby. And... He's good. But he's expendable. And with time, this will prove to be a very smart choice by the production team.

With the pilot behind us, let's try to tackle the rest of what you need to know about Bizaardvark season 1.

One thing you might want to know about is the opening theme song, where Frankie and Paige physically pop out of a gigantic laptop to sing a catchy ballad about the internet and all their friends at Vuuggle.

["Do you have constant foot odor?"]

[We cut to Quinton, still sitting on his couch. He stares forward, saying nothing and doing nothing. Eventually, he slowly stands up. We see him walk forwards, eventually moving towards the door to his apartment patio.]

[We cut to outside the apartment, where the camera zooms in on Quinton's door. He opens it and calmly walks outside, again saying nothing. Eventually he finds one of the benches and sits down.]

[We cut to the camera, now on the balcony, showing Quinton sitting on the chair, expressionless. After a few more moments of silence, he begins streaming.

[Here we cut back to the analysis]

After the pilot episode, we see Frankie and Paige explored further, most notably as we discover how the two unbalanced teens react to becoming a part of internet culture.

["I love being at Vuuggle. It's like the entire internet is spread out before me."]

That's how I feel about OnlyFans

In season 1 episode 2, Amelia attempts to learn more about the girls by challenging them to do a 'Draw My Life' video. This was a common YouTube trend back in the early 2010s. You get a

whiteboard, tell a funny feel-good story about how you got bullied in middle school, speed up some drawings, badabing badaboom.

However, due to Amelia's backhanded compliments, both girls become independently insecure about being boring, and they attempt to compensate by injecting random gimmicks into their personalities.

[What are those?]

But in the end, the girls overcome these doubts and do a video presenting an authentic story of how the Bizaardvark channel came to be.

In episode 2, Bernie excitedly comes to the girls to explain that they've reached a new milestone: they have a hater, who leaves negative comments about Paige on all their videos.

[If people are hating on you it means you're cool enough to be hated on!]

[cuts to Quinton on couch, raising hand]

How cool are you if people find your parent's address and send them weird stuff in the mail

Eventually, Paige learns to handle the anxieties of having a hater. But when Frankie gains her own comment section detractor, she becomes obsessed and filled with self-doubt. Soon she decides to find the commenter in real life, but after tracking their IP address to its source, they find out their hater is a little girl.

The girls use this adventure as an inspiration to write a song about haters, where we see the girls continue to change the format of Bizaardvark more and more as hate comments flood in.

[This comment says girls stink! We're dudes now.]

Another great episode that highlights the oddities of internet fame is season 1 episode 15. In the story, the girls struggle to think of a new idea for a video. They eventually give up and record a low-effort random skit with old costume. Thus, they create Moostachio, the lamest skit they've ever made.

But soon enough, they become a viral success on the Elsegate side of Vuugle, as they are swarmed by obsessed kids who want to worship their golden idol. But the kids don't care about the girls or Bizaardvark, they only want to be entertained by Moostachio. The girls initially feed into this but find they just can't live with making bad content just for easy money. So they record a video where Moostachio is shot into space on a rocket and dies.

This causes the little boys and girls in their audience to become despondent and traumatized, so they decide to reveal that Moostachio is okay, but he has to return to his home planet. I'm not making a Simpsons reference that's actually what they say.

[clip]

But the show also explores Paige and Frankie's relationship in stories that have little to do with the internet.

In season 1 episode 6; Paige, Frankie, Bernie, and Amelia discover Dirk's biggest secret: that on the side, he makes ASMR unboxing videos where he pretends to be a faceless princess. In exchange for this, Dirk says that they all need to reveal their own secrets in a cultic ceremony.

Here we find out that Frankie loves to go to her neighbor's house to watch Russian soap operas. But she explains that she only does it on certain nights where Paige mysteriously claims to be busy.

[I like the smell of my own feet]

[Quinton screaming]

Paige eventually owns up to the fact that she has enrolled in an MMA class. Frankie says she would love to do something like that, and asks why it was kept a secret. Paige deflects but later admits to Dirk in private that she sometimes feels smothered by Frankie. Their constant co-dependence causes her distress at times, and she enrolled in the MMA class in order to have some "Paige time."

But of course, Frankie then shows up to the class and tensions build before Paige admits the truth, causing the two to fight.

In the end, Frankie accepts her need for "Paige time," and Paige even manages to earn her green belt.

A similar storyline is explored in season 1, episode 18; Mom! Stop!

In the story, Paige is embarrassed because her mother often embarrassed her, first by sending letters in her school lunch daily which causes her to be lightly bullied. Additionally, Paige's mom is out in public anyone in the vicinity is subjected to her most embarrassing stories and photos.

This is a common problem, because Paige's mom constantly has to drive Paige around because she doesn't have her driver's license yet.

[We cut to Quinton on the couch]

I got nothin.

In one part of the episode, it's implied that Paige was born with hypertrichosis, which is basically where hair grows all over your body, and Frankie even mistakes a baby photo of her for a picture of a puppy.

Paige's Mom runs a successful restaurant but suddenly has two waiters quit. As a remedy, she offers to hire Paige and Frankie to replace them. In exchange, she'll allow Bizaardvark to perform in front of her packed room of customers.

Paige has reservations about this but accepts at Frankie's insistence.

[How much of this is about free food?]

Predictably, Paige is constantly embarrassed by her mother, and eventually they get into a fight, where Paige asks her mom to stop being so clingy. But when the letters stop appearing in her school lunch, she feels ironically let down by this. So the girls make a Vuugle video all about her mother's love, and the two reconcile. Paige's Mom admits that the girls spending all their time on internet videos has made her miss her little girl, and she agrees to be less clingy, while Paige agrees that she needs to appreciate her Mom more and spend time with her.

So far I've mostly been describing some of the storylines in this show, but there is a one-off joke that they do towards the end of the season that has such massive implications that I can't stop thinking about it.

In season 1 episode 13, Paige runs into Vuugle exclaiming that she has terrible news.

[oh no! Your parents found that stuffed animal you use to practice kissing? His name is Kissy Koala, and we don't practice anymore.]

Alright, so here's why that clip melts my brain. At first you think what Paige is saying is that she stopped kissing her Koala bear. But the way Olivia delivers this line, it's almost as if she's saying that her relationship with Kissy Koala has evolved past it being "practice." Like, as if they still make out, but now it means something.

["We don't practice anymore."]

Maybe that's just in my head, but I kinda think that was the intention?

Anyways, I'd argue one of the most memorable Paige episodes comes in season 1, episode 19, "Paige's Birthday Is Gonna Be Great".

At the beginning of the episode, there is a raffle being held at the girl's school where the winner gets a day off from school. Paige announces that she's decided they're going to win and that

they'll take her birthday off to have the best day ever. However, one of the nerdy bully kids wins, announcing he will use his free day to go to school.

Paige ends up dejected about this outcome and Frankie points out a trend. Paige will hype herself up about something, set incredibly high expectations, and will always be dejected by extreme disappointment. Frankie never has this issue because she coasts through life with no ambition or dreams. Paige thus decides she wants to start living like that.

But quickly this turns out to be a horrible outcome, as the young artist ends up more depressed and lifeless than she ever has been before. Frankie fears that she's broken her best friend, and attempts to fix things by making a series of outrageous promises.

Frankie is going throw Paige a surprise party, it's going to be held at a Vuugle HQ, and EVERYONE that Paige loves is going to be there.

[Even my most favorite person in the whole world? / oh yeah / LILLY SINGH IS COMING TO MY PARTY]

Yep, Frankie has boldly promised that famous internet supercelebrity Lilly Sing is going to be coming. But Frankie naturally becomes anxious that Lilly Sing is too famous to come to Olivia Rodrigo's birthday party. So she sets out trying to find her.

Have you tried the unemployment office?

Eventually, everything in the party is set into motion, with Paige's expectations only growing higher. Frankie becomes convinced that if this party is a failure, Paige will be broken emotionally forever, and so Frankie and Amelia decide to stalk Lilly Singh to an LA hotel room.

Lilly says that she's only interested in talking if they can get her into a big movie, and so Frankie begins pitching an improv film, shot live, where she is playing a guest invited to a teenage girl's birthday. Here we get a brief sample of Lilly's comedic talents.

[clip]

I've done worse. That's all I care to say.

Eventually, Lilly figures out this ruse and kicks the pair out of her room. With the party looking like a flop, Frankie prepares to let Paige down before it all clicks into place at the last second. Not only are the decorations perfect, but Lilly Singh even decides to show up after finding the girls' videos online.

Paige not only has an awesome party but artistic validation from the greatest internet celebrity of all time.

Frankie realizes that she was able to do it all by living like Paige, aiming for the best possible outcome until everything fell into place.

Now, I sorta glossed over Amelia's presence in a couple of those episodes. By the end of season 1, Amelia actually considers Paige and Frankie her best friends. This is a stark difference to where we were a few minutes ago. So let's go ahead and talk about how the show fleshes out Amelia.

In episode 2, the "Draw My Life" episode, we learn that Amelia started doing beauty content on Vuugle when she was just 8 years old. This probably means that she started around 2009, possibly making her one of the earliest people to have a career on the platform.

In the early episodes of the show, Amelia has an assistant, a mute man named Angelo who started off being her biggest fan before she coerced him into being her servant.

[Can you believe this fella was in his third year of medical school before I rescued him?]

But after a few episodes, the writers have Angelo return to medical school off-screen, forcing Amelia to become more self-sufficient and to interact more with the rest of the cast.

[We all need our beauty sleep]

Amelia's age is a little ambiguous by the way. The actor who plays the character was 14 when the show started recording, but they never depict the character going to school or dealing with their parents, at least in season 1. She's written to have full autonomy and independence but is also implied to be the same age as the girls, who are said to be 13 or 14.

One of her biggest B-plots this season is all about her financial stability. In the episode where the group exchange secrets, Amelia admits that due to her Vuugle career lasting almost a decade, she is now worth more than 1 million dollars.

As soon as she tells the group this, Bernie and Dirk become obsessed with this fact, treating Amelia entirely differently and expecting to be lavished with grand experiences. Eventually, she offers them both a check for \$10,000 in exchange for letting the topic go, but Dirk decides to rip up the check because their friendship is worth even more. We'll talk about what Bernie does a little bit later.

Of course, it's entirely possible that Amelia sued her parents for Emancipation, or that she already has her GED or something like that. But I'm not committed to making wild theories like that when I'm only a third of the way through the show.

Oh also, I forgot to mention this earlier - Paige only has one parent so far, so I think she's a test-tube baby.

Much of Amelia's storylines in this season deal with her attempting to reconcile with her reputation as something like a Vuugle spinster. In episode 9, Amelia is shocked to discover a new social media app that isn't on her radar.

[I was just watching horse-face-guys new Glink.]

Glink, we find out, is a video social media platform where everyone can only upload in one-second increments. Amelia attempts to adapt to this growing trend but finds she just can't condense herself to the size of a thumbnail, and after frantically trying as hard as possible to be try hard, she admits that she just can't wrap her head around the Glink phenomenon.

Hey don't worry Amelia, that bitch is gonna sink like the Titanic, just you wait. In January 2017, you're gonna feel like Seth McFarlane did on 9/11.

In episode 3, Amelia discovers that she has a hater, much like Paige and Frankie in the same story. Her hater, however, is a journalist who has made the claim that her content is vapid and empty and that she is a bad role model for young girls.

To try and rectify this, she begins pretending to be a student at the middle school Frankie and Paige go to. She sneaks into a science club, where she makes a massive mess out of a bad chemical reaction. But she then learns that the science club are also her fan club at the school, causing her to learn that she IS a good role model after all.

But her own self-worth can also be her undoing in some cases. In episode 8, Amelia has been dared to do a best friend challenge, which she intends to do with her childhood bestie. But as she describes said person more, Paige becomes convinced that Amelia is making her up. The girls invite her to a sleepover in an attempt to bond, but she ends up being obsessive, controlling, and exhausting; controlling what the girls can do, say and eat.

Eventually, the three get into a big fight just as we find out that Amelia's childhood best friend IS real after all. But she eventually admits that they've drifted apart and couldn't film the collab. So Amelia asks Paige and Frankie to film the video instead, cementing them as her best friends.

Finally, we have season 1 episode 10, "Pretty Con." The story is all about the Vuugle studios being rented out by a yearly convention of beauty influencers. When Amanda asks the girls to help at her booth, Paige accepts for them as she is a closeted beauty influencer stan.

[Meredith Foster]

You know, I had never heard of Meredith Foster before this, but I like to keep a positive relationship with other influencers. So Meredith, if you're watching this, I think it's pretty cool that you cameo'd in this show. Thank you for years of creating insightful content and congratulations on your mother's recent pardon.

But anyways. When Prettycon isn't pretty enough. What do you do? The answer, apparently, is you add in a child influencer, who Amelia discovers has taken the reigns as the most popular creator at the convention.

[clip]

[Quinton screaming]

This is Didi, a child influencer who some in the beauty guru scene have described as the "New Amelia." Amelia is anxious and insulted at the idea of the community needing a "new her," and takes to a fast grudge against the child. The two initially both win the Pretty Con contest by a tie in the votes, but Amelia asserts her Pretty Con conquest by declaring a Beauty Battle.

But when Didi's butterfly makeup kit breaks and she begins crying, Amelia offers to help her finish the competition with HER makeup, as she realizes there are more important things than being the best. In the end, Didi gives Amelia the award, saying that all she ever wanted was to work with her idol.

Now that we've all contracted type 2 diabetes, I think it's time to switch to our OTHER supporting lead, Dirk.

[clip]

Dirk runs a Vuugle channel called DareMeBro, where he essentially has to do anything that his audience challenges him to. In episode 2, we find out that this stems back to his childhood fear of snapping turtles. He began taking dares to compensate for his fear, but he nearly quits the game when he's given a dare involving a turtle.

In another episode, we learn that he has always done his dares while wearing his grandpa's lucky bandage. But after it's lost when Amelia cleans his den, he becomes convinced that he's lost the magic. Only to realize that his DareBro talents have been inside him all along - and also the bandage has been under his shoe this whole time.

Dirk's dares are often reckless, dangerous, and explosive; this has caused him to be injured many times throughout his career in many ways.

[The Doctors gave me brand new blood! / Again]

In episode 7, Paige becomes concerned that Dirk's career will one day lead to his doom, inspiring her to try and find another thing that he's good at. Eventually, she pieces together that Dirk has an amazing understanding of advanced physics, learned through the brute force of doing the most outrageous, impractical stunts.

She introduces him to a club of people who study Physics, and he eventually confirms that his next big stunt is too dangerous to attempt. Because of this, he quits dares and falls into a depression - much to the frustration of his brother Kirk, played by Logan Paul.

[clip]?

So I have watched both of the Thinninning movies and now the entire first season of Bizaardvark. So please take me as an *informed* resource when I say... Jake Paul is the talented one. Logan Paul just sucks at everything, he's a charisma vacuum. I thank the lord every day that he's only in one episode of this show.

Eventually Paige of course convinces Dirk to do the dare anyway, and it's a massive success.

Now the truth is to understand Dirk's characterization past this, you must first know a little bit about Bernie Shotts.

At the start of episode 9, we see Paige and Frankie using pyrotechnics despite them being banned at Vuugle studios. This is all done with the help of Pyro Steve, who I suspect might be an angel in disguise. They do all of this without the input of Bernie, who they explicitly treat as an annoyance and not part of the Bizaardvark team.

The girls get caught by Liam, who gives them a two-week ban for breaking the rules. Oh, right. Liam is the head boss at Vuugle, his Dad owns the company and forces him to work there, but he works remotely and has a computer monitor drive around the studio.

[Vuugle is my #1 priority]

He's been in the show since episode 1, I never brought him up by name because it wasn't important at the time.

I am famous for being concise!

So we find out that Liam wants desperately to go on vacation, but can't because he has no second in command to take over. Bernie offers his own talents to get the job done, which is such a funny idea that Liam accepts.

Soon enough, Bernie is running the studio and doing a fine job at it, being a far more understanding boss than Liam. Naturally, the girls use this to their advantage, manipulating Bernie into lifting their ban. They then call upon the talents of Pyro Steve once again. Bernie chews them out, but overhears the girls say that they can do WHATEVER they want because they'll always be able to push Bernie to their side.

This causes Bernie to become despondent, and as he stops doing his job Vuugle descends into utter hell. The girls find him and apologize for not respecting him. He pulls himself together and

takes back control of the studio by emulating Liam. But the real Liam suddenly tunes in and announces his vacation is over because Bernie has ruined the studio.

The themes of the girls not appreciating Bernie until it's too late are next seen in season 1, episode 11, Puff and Frankie. In the story, Bernie is upset that he still doesn't have any clients other than Frankie and Paige. The girls suggest he try to be the manager of a meme animal, and he starts seeing potential talent.

[Grumpy Cat clip]

In my opinion, this clip is the closest thing this show has to Fred appearing on iCarly. Yes, Bizaardvark is stocked full of internet celebrity cameos. But none of the absolute "OH MY CHRIST" factor of Grumpy Cat sitting next to Bernie Shotts.

Bernie eventually rescues two stray cats with the hopes of making them meme stars on the cheap. But sadly, the wild cats are not trained to be handled, and they both attack Bernie.

[Bernie I'm so sorry]

This abuse continues all around the studio, with all of it being filmed by onlookers. Paige and Frankie say that they probably should help, but instead they start filming themselves because they're ambivalent to thiiiiissss

[Family Guy: "AH! AH! He said it!"]

But much to the girl's surprise, this plan actually WORKS, and as the cat become viral celebrities due to footage of Bernie's attack, he books them a gig on Paige's FAVORITE online talk show.

[And of course I'll be bringing my pickle launcher]

It's at this point that Frankie reveals to Paige another big secret: she is a Cat whisperer. Due to being around them often, she actually understands how to talk to cats, train them, and make them docile.

The girls use this talent to come up with a plan: if they train Bernie's cats to be non-violent and affectionate, he won't be able to use them on the talk show and will have to bring out Bizaardvark instead. So Frankie sets out trying to teach Paige how to speak cat.

["MEOW" "Paige, that's their word"]

HAHA! I have footage of Olivia Rodrigo saying a racial slur!! Wait until X.com hears. This'll be the biggest headline since people found out that Sabrina Carpenter has a fetish for eating men's clothing.

Soon enough, it works and the cats are calm and loving. Paige asks why she had to use that giant litter box and Frankie says it was just to mess with her.

Coolcoolcoolcool normal show, normal show

The girls think Bernie will now put Bizaardvark on the show, but instead he improvises in a different way - by having his NEW stars completely rip-off Bizaardvark.
[This is the Meow-Meow song]

Soon enough, the girls confront Bernie about what he's done.

[Your stupid cat act is a copy of Bizaardvark]

Now, isn't this being the plot of this episode a little ironic? An entire story about how it's wrong to steal an idea from your peers, even if you're doing it out of some sense of admiration. I think that's just deplorable and something they should be ashamed of

Long-hair Quinton: Hey Quinton did you hear that [name] died?

Now is not a good time man

The girls decide to get pay-back by letting the strays lose, but just then they're approached by Bernie who apologizes and says he wants to go back to Bizaardvark being his main clients. He wants to give the cats away to a little kid for good publicity, but as the cats have escaped Paige and Frankie replace them with identical strays.

[clip]

Throughout the series, Bernie is often given grief by Liam for hanging around the studio when he isn't a real Vuugler with 10,000 subscribers. In episode 17, the CHRISTMAS episode, Bernie is denied entry to the Vuugle Christmas party because of this.

Paige and Frankie come up with a plan to get Bernie to 10,000 subscribers by helping him making Vuugle videos. To do this, they invite, quote, "the internet's favorite baker..."

[Rosana Pansino]

WOW! I'm a big fan of Rosana Pansino! I don't know anything about her except that she hates Mr. Beast, but these days that's all I need!

[Ah! Ah! He said it!]

It turns out that Bernie isn't good at making baking videos. So he attempts several other genres, discovering he's a failure at everything. Eventually, Rosana takes a shine to him and asks him to help her bake during a live stream. But after doing one small thing wrong, Bernie snaps and begins trashing her kitchen in a complete mental breakdown.

This ends up being just enough to get him to 10k subscribers, which gains him an invite. But when he starts responding to subscriber comments with negative reactions, he loses enough to get him under the threshold again.

And thus Bernie instead has to go to his boring family's Christmas party. But eventually everyone at Vuugle decides the night isn't right without him, as they come to his party instead.

Now, pretty much anytime Bernie isn't helping the girls or having some B-plot involving the Bizaardvark channel, he is usually hanging out with Dirk. He plans Dirk's videos, talks him out of his funks, and advises him on important issues. It would be natural for you to assume that he has become the manager of Jake Paul's character.

But in actuality, he has not become Jake Paul's manager. He has become Jake Paul's best friend.

A fate worse than death

Dirk and Bernie quickly become like peas in a pod, often forced to share a single brain cell through their antics. There's even an episode where Bernie tries to get Dirk to move in with him and his grandmother, but it soon becomes obvious that Dirk isn't ready for the responsibility of owning a frat boy.

In episode 19, Frankie puts Dirk and Bernie in charge of getting ice for the party, something they both read as her giving them an easy job because she thinks they'll still screw it up.

Sure enough, they end up buying a LOT of ice at once while frantically attempting to stop it from melting. Eventually, they leave in search of more ice while putting the Will It Melt girl in charge of their pile. They then steal an ice maker from a hotel, only for it to not work when detached from the wall.

But if there's any Bernie / Dirk plot that leaves an impression on the mind, it's season 1, episode 8. In the story, Bernie and Dirk are attempting to test a dare involving a bowling ball, only for Liam to get in the way while chewing them out - destroying his monitor system.

The boys realize they've killed Liam, and while Dirk attempts CPR, Bernie tries to come up with a plan to cover up what they've done.

At Bernie's direction, the boys dismember Liam's body piece-by-piece, sneaking it out in a carpet and throwing it into a dumpster.

Their mission has been successful, but as the night turns to day, Dirk admits to Bernie that his heart is ridden with guilt and he's considering telling the police the truth. Bernie refuses to accept this.

["Looks like it might be a 'get rid of two bodies' kind of day."]

Yep, Bernie has decided he has to kill Dirk. And he decides to do this the only way he knows how: by putting him in a big crate and shipping him to Abu Dubai.

But just when he's about to do the deed, Liam shows back up with a whole new computer. He claims to have no idea what happened, and he and Dirk go off to socialize. In the chaos of it all, Bernie is the one trapped in the shipping crate.

Now, before you're too judgemental about Bernie's immediate impulse about wanting to orchestrate premeditated murder against one of the Paul brothers, I think you need to hear about this next episode.

In the b-plot of episode 10, Bernie learns that every year, Dirk and some of his shady bro friends hold what is called "DUDE Con," a direct competitor to Pretty Con. Bernie is insistent upon joining, but is told that to be one of the team, he has to do a long string of dares and hazing rituals. He starts with wresting a cactus before moving on to such things as smelling the belches of all the bros and trying to guess what order they're standing in.

But the worst is probably his dare to eat spaghetti and meatballs out of Sweaty Phil's boot.

[At least the mushrooms added flavor / there were no mushrooms/looks at Phil's feet]

[shot of Quinton screaming]

Going from watching Sam & Cat to watching Bizaardvark is like going from Purgatory to Hell. Like, yeah things aren't GREAT right now, but at least I'm not BORED anymore

So yeah, the basic gist is I think Bernie should be allowed to kill Dirk with no repercussions.

While Bernie's relationships with Dirk and the girls can be a little bumpy, his relationship with Amelia is a whole other beast.

Everything starts off in season 1 episode 4, when Bernie is attempting to impress his judgemental grandma only for her to accidentally believe that he and Amelia are an item. He decides to keep this ruse going, even pretending to be on a date with her when the group go out to see a live Bizaardvark show.

However, Amelia immediately knows what's up.

[I know about fake dates. I'm on 3 right now!]

Amelia becomes addicted to this routine, loving the attention and passion that comes with fake-dating Bernie but without the dedication or commitment that comes with a real relationship. After getting fed up, Bernie ends up breaking up with Amelia, before his grandma admits that she knew it was fake all along.

In the grand scheme of things, that might sound like a quick and fun plotline. But somehow after a few more episodes, the whole thing gets telephoned into a completely different status quo - where Bernie is now in LOVE with Amelia and is desperate to get her to see him as a man.

His attraction grows even stronger when he learns about her status as a millionaire.

[I love you Amelia whatever your last name is]

And for the rest of season 1, this is one of Bernie's most consistent running jokes and plotlines.

So at this point, we've talked about episodes that are inspired by internet culture, episodes that teach us about Paige and Frankie, and even storylines that focus more on Bernie, Dirk and Amelia. But I think most of you came here for a different category... That being... EPISODES THAT ARE CLEARLY RIPPING OFF ICARLY.

OH MY GOD HE'S SHANE DAWSON

WHAT? That's a war crime! We're not allowed to do that to TERRORISTS