

## CBC Summer Series Radio Pitch

*How To Do It: The Guide to Things You Hope You Never Need to Know*

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### THE CONCEPT

*How To Do It* is an entertaining and thoughtful half-hour program exploring answers to the questions Canadians are too afraid to ask. Structured in the form of a how-to guide, the ten-part series examines scenarios we hope we never find ourselves in – but would like to be prepared for, nevertheless.

The format is fun but the content is substantive. Each half-hour episode is based on a single how-to topic: how to exact revenge, how to steal an election, and how to make someone fall in love with you. The hosts go on a journey with the listeners to provide a series of “lessons” that answer the basic questions: how does that work and how can I do it? These lessons emerge from interviews with people who have extraordinary experiences or exceptional expertise related to the theme.

The show operates on two levels: As an instructional guide *How To Do It* is about providing our listeners with information to navigate all kinds of difficult situations that are unexpected, edgy or off the beaten path - at least on the surface. On another level the show looks at bigger, more universal questions about what it means to survive in the world today. So despite the fact that most listeners will not be planning to disappear, have an illicit love affair, or lose all their money, the content will not only be intriguing but relevant to most people's lives.

For example, the episode *How To Disappear* explores how to vanish from your life without a trace. While most listeners are likely not planning on disappearing, the topic provides a window into bigger issues of privacy in our digital world, and how tough it is to control our virtual footprint.

We will program guests and stories that represent the diversity of Canadian experiences in all senses of the word including but not limited to, race, gender, class, and geography.

### THE STRUCTURE

The episodes are structured as follows:

1. **The Intro:** An introduction to the week's episode including short-clips of highlights from the upcoming interviews. This section will also include content from our listeners on the topic who have been invited to record their questions and stories related to the episode.

2. **The Lessons:** Each episode will feature three lessons about the how-to topic drawn from real-life stories. These stories are first-hand accounts from people who have lived experience of a topic (or in some cases a biographer or writer as a surrogate). The lessons are told in a script-and-clip format with one host telling the story to other.

3. **The Field Research:** The hosts go into the field to learn about the topic first hand. This segment provides an opportunity for a creative exploration of the topic out of the studio, attending an event, shadowing a subject, conducting an experiment....

4. **The Expert:** We turn to an interview with an expert to provide concrete advice on the topic.

## **INSPIRATION**

The show draws inspirations from several sources. It shares the two-host format with radio shows such as APM's *Dinner Party Download* or *Mark Kermode and Simon Mayo's Film Review* on BBC 5. As with these shows, *How to Do It* is hosted by two lively personalities discovering the world with each other. The show maintains an inquisitive and fun tone throughout the broadcast and puts a premium on production value and creative surprises that will keep listeners engaged and entertained.

The sensibility of *How To Do It* is rooted in the dynamic between its two hosts. The two-host format allows for thinking, and debating, and exploring out loud. The hosts dive into each episode as novices, driven to expose and explore the story with their insatiable thirst for knowledge and robust senses of humour. At the close of an episode, both the hosts and the listeners will be smarter.

## **THE TEAM**

Josh is a radio journalist with a degree in philosophy. He is inquisitive, approaching matters of interest methodically. Sarah is a print journalist with a flare for adventure. Josh's earnest journalistic ambitions are the perfect foil for Sarah's irreverence. Josh wants to know the ethical implications behind buying a kidney on the black market; Sarah wants to know whether you can put something like that on your credit card. Their dynamic is one-part teasing one-part competitiveness one-part shared delight in discovering how to do everything. Both Josh and Sarah will act as hosts/producers sharing duties of chasing and booking guests, writing q-lines and scripts, and conducting field pieces. Josh will take the lead on editing and production coordinating with our sound designer. Sarah will take the lead on writing. Both Josh and Sarah will work full time. Thomas Payne – our sound designer – will work 2/5ths of a week.

### **Josh Bloch (Producer/Co-host)**

Josh is currently a producer at CBC's *The Current*. He has produced several documentaries for the program covering a range stories from the ex-gay movement to people living in the tunnels underneath Las Vegas. Josh has worked as a reporter and producer for both radio and TV at CBC, and Al Jazeera With a background in

performance, he brings a dynamism and sense of fun to his work. He is a graduate of the Circle in The Square Theatre School and worked in theatre as an actor, writer and director in New York, Toronto and Vancouver. His latest documentary play *The Trial of Jeremy Hinzman* premiered at the Summerworks Theatre Festival in Toronto in 2012. His play *Lenny and Reno* was highlighted as a Best New Play of the Year by the Montreal Mirror. He co-created *The Taxi Project* – a play based on the lives and writings of four members of PEN Canada's writers-in-exile program, published by Scirroco Drama. Josh also has extensive experience producing projects that tell the stories of ordinary Canadians. In 2010 He coordinated *The People's History of Toronto* – a live performance of primary sourced material from Toronto's history. He co-founded Art for Real Change, a human rights arts festival based in and around Toronto.

### **Sarah Treleaven (Producer/co-host)**

Sarah is a journalist and humorist who has written for a wide variety of publications, including the National Post, Globe & Mail and Toronto Star newspapers, and The Walrus, Canadian Business, Chatelaine, More, Glow, ELLE Canada, Quill & Quire and University of Toronto magazines. Her columns have appeared in the Financial Post and Ottawa Citizen, covering everything from big-money art collections to her low-rent dating life. Sarah started out her career at O, The Oprah Magazine in New York City, where she was primarily expected to sit in front of a telephone in case the eponymous one called. Sarah has tried her hand at standup comedy and raising chickens.

### **Thomas Ryder Payne – (sound design)**

Thomas Ryder Payne is a Toronto-based composer, sound designer, producer, performer and teacher. He spent 6 years recording and touring with the Juno nominated rock band Joydrop including recording two records, touring North America extensively and writing the top 20 single "Sometimes Wanna Die". As a producer, Thomas works primarily from his home studio and has produced records for Rebekah Higgs, Parker and Kathryn Rose among others. Payne is also a Dora award winning sound designer/composer for the theatre. His past theatre design works includes designing productions for Stratford, Tarragon, CanStage, LKTYP, Modern Times, NAC, GCTC, Theatre Calgary, Luminato, Volcano, Aluna, Crow's and many others

## **AUDIENCE**

*How to Do It* will appeal to the current CBC Radio audience but will focus specifically on the 25-49 year-old demographic. The topics and guests will be diverse, with particular attention paid to geographic diversity by finding contributors and stories from coast to coast to coast.

## **WEB PRESENCE**

A strong online presence is a centerpiece of *How to Do It*. A Facebook and Twitter account, and a website embedded in the CBC online presence, [cbc.ca/howtodoit](http://cbc.ca/howtodoit), will provide lots of opportunities for the listeners, guest contributors, and hosts to interact and engage with each other and the material presented in each episode. We will start

the conversation about upcoming episodes online and incorporate elements of that conversation into the show, so that each show will have an element of crowd sourcing. Listeners will be invited to submit stories, comments, and questions about upcoming episodes in the form of audio files or emails. These stories will be integrated into the episode. We will also continue the conversation from past episodes on the website. Extended interviews and additional resources on the topics covered will also be offered online.

*How To Do It* will also use social media to stay connected with our audience, tease upcoming shows, and continue the dialogue with our listeners and continually present opportunities for crowd sourcing ideas.

## **SAMPLE EPISODES**

### **How To Lose All Your Money**

Canadian consumer debt load hit a new high of \$27,000 in 2012, so we're going to assume most people know how to spend. But do they now how to lose all of their money? This week, we offer a step-by-step guide to getting rid of all of your assets. We'll start with the lessons that can be learned from the people who have done just that – from the author who stopped publishing books and the playboy prince who couldn't stop spending to the divorcing lawyers whose five-year courtroom battle can be summed up with the phrase, "I don't want the world; I just want your half." We'll also talk to a number of Canadian experts, who can comment on the best ways to reach personal bankruptcy, how to go bust in your golden years, and how to squander a windfall.

#### **The Lessons:**

##### 1. Fall prey to your own hubris

Benjamin Anastas' new book, *Too Good to Be True*, chronicles his tremendous race to the bottom. After publishing a well-received book with FSG, meeting the woman of his dreams, and supporting himself with a series of teaching and writing gigs, he proceeded to lose it all. We speak to Anastas about the mistakes he made, and how he now frequently has to visit a Coinstar machine simply to buy life's necessities.

##### 2. Self-destruct in a very public way

Four years after his album went double Platinum, Ashley Maclsaac declared bankruptcy. The fiddler transitioned from famous to infamous, burning through his tremendous media exposure and social capital through a series of questionable and overly revealing public statements. Maclsaac explains the connection between social and literal currency, and how he lost his spot on top by saying the wrong things.

### 3. Accept that money can't buy happiness

Most tales of going broke involve loss and regret, not steely determination. But in the case of Jeffrey Skoll, he has resolved to give away much of his vast fortune. The only Canadian billionaire to have signed The Giving Pledge proposed by Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, Skoll is committed to use his dot-com riches for good. Skoll explains how his humble background has shaped his perspective on being rich, and why it feels great to get rid of his billions.

#### **The Field Research:**

We go into the field to talk to three experts, who can all shed some light on how Canadians end up losing all of their money: first, a bankruptcy officer to explain the best ways to go broke; second, Nora Spinks, CEO of the Vanier Institute, to explain why Canadians over 65 are now have the highest bankruptcy and insolvency rates in the country and how to go bust in your golden years; and third, Anthony Maiorino, vice president and head, RBC Wealth Management, on how to squander a windfall, like so many lottery winners before you.

#### **The Main Interview:**

Did you know that you can go broke simply by being middle class? Helaine Olen, author of *Pound Foolish: Exposing the Dark Side of the Personal Finance Industry*, explains why Susie Orman and other self-styled financial gurus are wrong about your money. You're not losing it because you buy yourself the occasional latte and like to spend your two weeks of annual vacation on a beach. You're losing it because wages have stagnated over the last 30 years while the costs of everything – from food to housing and education – have increased. Olen explains how hard it is to hold onto your money by simply working and saving.

#### **How To Brainwash**

You want to believe you are the master of your own thoughts and behaviour, but could a talented persuader control your mind? Billions of dollars are spent on advertising each year is premised on that hope. Brainwashing and mind control sit on the far end of that same spectrum and have sometimes been used to more nefarious ends. So just how vulnerable are we to this kind of mental manipulation and just how easy is it to employ the tools of mind control. This week's show: How to brainwash.

#### **The Lessons**

##### 1. Be charismatic

For our first lesson, we take a page from corporate America. Walmart has been the subject of many lawsuits related to their alleged toxic workplace culture – including allegations of brainwashing. We speak to Adrian Montgomery, a former Walmart

manager, about the company's "indoctrination program" – including anti-union propaganda, verboten vocabulary, fear-mongering about job security and even the "Walmart cheer."

## 2. Don't bother with the red pill or the blue pill

The subject of mind control has long been an obsession of military and spy agencies as a possible weapon of war. In the 1950's and 60s CIA funded experiments into brainwashing were conducted at McGill University under their MK Ultra program. It turns out that the US military has continued its experimentation and one of its biggest defenders is Colonel (and doctor) James Ketchum who defends the research as a means of achieving war without killing. Or Dominic Streafield, author of *The Secret History of Mind Control*.

## 3. Make people feel special

Hermann Delorme is a former member of the Quebec-based Order of the Solar Temple – a cult that believed in the continuing existence of the Knights Templar. Delorme left the cult in 1994 just before a spate of murders and suicides saw 74 members of the cult die in the late 1990s. Delorme describes the psychology of being belonging to a cult and how he helps people deprogram from their brain washing.

## The Field Research

Peter Reveen, aka "The Man They Call Reveen," is a world-famous performer living in Canada who has spent sixty years perfecting the science of hypnotism. We want to find out who is susceptible to hypnotism? What does it take to become a hypnotist? What does hypnotism say about how impressionable our minds are. We look into his eyes and follow his swinging pocket watch to find out first-hand what it's like to have our minds controlled.

## The Main interview:

So just how vulnerable are we to being brainwashed? Well Steven Pinker is a renowned Canadian psychologist, cognitive scientist and linguist named by Time Magazine as one of the top 100 scientists and thinkers. Dr Pinker explains what exactly happens in our minds that make us vulnerable to coercion and mind control.

## Other Episodes include:

- How to make someone fall in love with you
- How to have a secret affair
- How to make money as a human guinea pig
- How to steal an election
- How to survive a job you hate
- How to be a con artist
- How to exact revenge