

cheerful, brash smartass and the eager apprentice hoping to absorb the decades of collective car experience surrounding him. Rose, it just so happens, is also married to Worman's daughter, which is just too perfect, exponentially upping the comic quotient by adding a kind of Archie-and-Meathead repartee to the proceedings.

And then there's Daren Kirkpatrick, who is ... well, actually, I have yet to discern just exactly what purpose Kirkpatrick serves or what he does, though apparently, by some vague consensus, his glowering, sniping presence is regarded as essential to the shop's operation.

Worman jokes that Kirkpatrick is a jack-of-most-trades who knows a little bit about everything but not a lot about anything. *MCG Magazine* called him "the ultimate villain" of *Graveyard Carz*. Certainly, there's something ominously instigating in his well-honed nabob-of-sarcasm routine — which is not to imply that Kirkpatrick lacks charm. It's just that his sense of humor is so dry as to be nearly vaporous.

"You've got issues," Kirkpatrick tells me during my second

visit to Welby's. It's a Saturday, and I'm there to observe a day of filming. Kirkpatrick leans into me and suggests, in a conspiratorial whisper, that I focus this entire article on him else he'll mess me up. "I'm serious," he says, and I laugh, but he never relaxes the pinched, threatening look he's beaming at me, like he's the world champion of contest staring. The guy is good.

Not long after filming begins, Worman accuses Kirkpatrick of being a "closet Vega driver"; Worman then lets everyone know that his daughter is mad at Rose because "Josh is immature and plays video games all day" when he should be helping out around the house.

"You've got a crooked mouth like Stallone," Worman tells Rose, "but it isn't sexy."

Rose, who often parrots his father-in-law's sentences back at him in a constipated, high-pitched cartoon voice, refers to Worman as "vertically challenged" and then observes, à la that old Randy Newman song, that short people always seem to be untalented and unattractive.

"I'll let Robert Deniro know," Worman replies. "Al Pacino. Tom Cruise."

And around and around it goes. This incessant verbal bastinado seems to function almost like an emotional release valve — a preemptive vent that prevents bad feelings from bottling up and exploding. Which is to say, there is absolutely nothing passive-aggressive about these guys. In fact, it seems to me their barbed but benign back-and-forth presents us with a wonderful antidote and refreshing corrective to the insidious passive-aggressive big smiley of Northwest politesse.

First *Twin Peaks*, now *Graveyard Carz*.

Because, really, there's nothing wrong with a little smack talk and rowdy horseplay, especially when it gives shape and structure and pace to a successful workplace. A good roast is hard to find — about as hard to find as an OEM-standard rebuilt '71 'Cuda convertible. *Graveyard Carz* offers both: hazing without end, as a means to renovating Mopar masterpieces. It's a riot. It's a fast ride.

And it makes for great TV.

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