

ROCK BOTTOM

At the bottom of the planet,
there's no place to go but up. Maybe.



WRITTEN BY SCOTT VAN BEEVER

SERIES overview

Rock Bottom is a story about lost love, maddening bureaucracy, and quirky friendships set in the most isolated place on Earth, **McMurdo Station in Antarctica**. With a comedic mix of aging veterans and Fingys (Fucking New Guys), this science research station is at a constant boiling point.

Our characters are irritable blue-collar workers, scientists with something to prove, and government bureaucrats looking for a promotion. Set in a time when America's funding for climate change has never been lower, the station struggles to maintain working order and purpose.

In this series, the workplace comedy gets gritty, resourceful, and dark with all the characters having their own reasons for choosing to work here. The story will explore how they all cope with life in a test tube as they drink, screw, fight, and help each other through their time on the ice. From annoying tourist visits and a surprise photo op from top U.S. officials, to cases of growing insanity and attempted suicide, the station is never far enough away from the real world.



THE PILOT

Jack is a newly-graduated doctor who, in a hasty decision to propose to his on-again, off-again girlfriend, signs up to work for 6 months at **McMurdo Station** in Antarctica where she told him she would be. When he arrives, he discovers that she was never there to begin with. Because **Jack** hates traveling and being out of the safe confines of his home and work, she never thought he would make the trip, and so lied in order to break up with him.

The reality that he's stuck in a binding government contract in a place he has no desire to be in comes crashing down on **Jack**. In a fit of drunken rage, he kicks a truck which ends up careening downhill into some propane tanks on the loading dock. With a glorious explosion, the station's only resupply of booze goes up in flames. With a gnarly hangover, **Jack** awakens to a hostage-like meeting with the furious station manager, **May**. Because he is the only physician at **McMurdo**, **May** must figure out what to do with him while **Jack** tries to make it right with the entire crew of the station who rely on alcohol to keep tempers calm and the edge off.

With some help from a budding friendship with a pretty scientist, **Stella**, and his grizzly roommate, **Ned**, **Jack** heads out onto the ice to steal a cache of booze from a Russian supply station not too far away. After coming to terms with his inability to see his doomed relationship for what it was, **Jack** and **Ned** load the stash onto his sled and escape just as a Russian truck approaches.

With the modest supply of alcohol back in **McMurdo**, a slightly relieved **Jack** momentarily sees the crumbling station and crew in a different light. The station manager reluctantly offers him a chance to go home on a supply ship if he still wants to leave. The only thing is, he must pay back the large cost of the destroyed shipment. Or he can stay and work for free with his salary going to the repayment. **Jack**, having hit rock bottom, must make a decision.



KD7 PPL CN87

SETTING

No cell service. No wifi. Cold enough to turn boiling water into mist. Welcome to **McMurdo Station**; America's base for scientific research at the bottom of the planet. Reeling from a dramatically cut budget, the station is literally falling apart. Begrudgingly, the crew's resourcefulness keeps this place running.

Looking more like a mining town than a shiny science hub, the station has everything the crew needs to stay moderately happy: its own radio station where one can sign up to guest DJ, barely functioning saunas, and most importantly, The Pole Hole, the lone bar at **McMurdo** that is dangerously under-stocked.

Crew typically bunk with a roommate during the summer months. However, the more "ice time" one works, the more luxuries one is given; like a toilet in the room, or not having to share a room altogether as an incentive to keep experienced crew coming back year after year.

With an exploration history dating back only to the early 1900's, Antarctica remains a mysterious continent. The average temperature during the "warm season" is 24° F with the sun barely setting at that time. It goes without saying that Antarctica is the coldest, driest, and harshest place on Earth.

As climate change continues to raise fears around the world, this place is ground zero for tracking the largest chunk of ice on the planet. But you wouldn't know it amid the loud diesel trucks, barrels of waste to be shipped back to the states, and oil soaked ice that make **McMurdo** stand out from the otherwise pristine yet menacing white.



THE PROGRAM AND DENVER

The United States Antarctic Program (USAP), known as “The Program,” represents America’s interests in the Antarctic. **The National Science Foundation (NSF)**, the U.S. agency that promotes the progress of science, funds and manages the program. The prime contractor for the NSF’s program is **Leidos**, a large company based out of **Denver** that manages everything from who gets hired and fired, to research vessels and construction projects. Many of the clocks in **McMurdo** are set to **Denver** time. “Denver” is also the term employees use when talking about who they work for; thus where all the headaches and HR bureaucracy comes from.



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SEASON ONE

In the pilot episode, **Jack** is left with a choice to leave **McMurdo** and pay back his debt after destroying the alcohol shipment, or stay and work it off. In episode 2, we see that he has indeed chosen to stay, although he's not happy about it. While beginning to see patients and work alongside his overly-eager nurse, **Huey**, he slowly begins to learn the ropes of the station and the idiosyncrasies of the different groups of people that work here.

May's desire for a promotion pushes the station to cut corners in order to save money. As safety makes way for productivity, the crew make plans to undercut her authority.

While **Stella** studies the biology of this continent, her friendship with **Jack** grows. They trauma bond as she explains that she used to be married and it didn't end well. As Jack's affection for her develops, her boyfriend, **Terry**, makes **Jack** doubt himself and their chances together.

Dave is where the fun is. He quickly gains popularity with his parties, scavenger hunts, and karaoke nights. When **May** attempts to shut down his activities, some view it as anti-LGBTQ.

With the alcohol flowing once more, **Ned** becomes a father figure to **Jack** as he regales him with stories of **McMurdo** from times gone by.

In the middle of the season, the station gets really busy when a tourist goes missing during a cruise ship stopover while preparations are being made for a visit from a United States Senator who is there for a photo op to promote a bill to increase funding to the station. Meanwhile, during a drunken night of partying, **Jack** and **Stella** sleep together, adding awkwardness to their friendship.



SEASON ONE

By the end of the season, **Jack** has grown to be more adventurous than he ever thought possible. He loves the station and the oddballs who call it home. May's plan for promotion fails after her iron-fisted rule put too many lives at risk. **Dave** is crowned Ice Queen and **Ned** finally says good-bye to his wife at the volcano. With their contracts coming to an end, the crew say farewell with questions of who will be returning for the winter season. **Jack** and **Stella**, not quite a couple, ask each other if they would be willing to endure the harsh, dark winter together. We end before they answer.



SEASON TWO AND BEYOND

While season 1 takes place during the summer months when the sun hardly sets, season 2 plunges the show into darkness during the long, and un-Godly cold of the winter. From the normal summer population of about 1,200 people, the winter crew dwindle down to about 300. These are the days that people get “toasty,” a polite term for losing one’s thought, attention, and at times, plain ol’ sanity.

Jack decides to stay on as a “winter over” because of his growing relationship with **Stella**, who also remains for the winter. But with a shift in crew, tensions build when **Gus** sleeps with a young, adventure-seeking reporter who is writing an article about life at **McMurdo** during the winter months. As things heat up between the two, the station’s heating system malfunctions, causing total chaos. With the threat of freezing to death, the crew must get creative to see another day.



C H A R A C T E R S

JACK

DOCTOR

Jack hates the outdoors. He's not big into adventure. After finishing his residency, he wants nothing more than to put his medical degree to use. But finding himself stuck in Antarctica to serve a 6 month position as the only doctor on the station, **Jack** will have to come to terms with his new reality. Young and without a lot of real life experiences, he will be forced to adapt to this small community. Getting up close and personal with the crew he is now stuck with, **Jack** will learn to take more risks, rise from his depression and start to see life in a new, more adventurous way.



JACK

C H A R A C T E R S

STELLA SCIENTIST

Stella is a marine biologist whose choice to work in Antarctica isn't by chance. After her husband had an affair, she wanted to get as far away as possible. She ended up loving Antarctica and comes back year after year. She hopes that her work down here will help her transition to becoming a professor back in the states. The last thing she wants is another serious relationship that she can't rely on. But as her friendship with **Jack** grows, she soon discovers that what she may need is something a one night stand can't give her.



C H A R A C T E R S

NED MECHANIC

Ned has worked on the ice for 14 years. Always in a Hawaiian shirt and a scotch close by, he maintains the various transportation vehicles at the station. A functioning alcoholic, **Ned** is well read, witty, and an overall nice guy. As Jack's roommate, **Ned** will be a mentor in the ways of the station and help **Jack** discover his inner tiger. But because he's drunk half the time, **Ned** also makes Jack's living condition harder than it needs to be.



C H A R A C T E R S

DAVE

BARTENDER

Dave is the maestro of The Pole Hole; keeping its patrons happy with his easy-going attitude. As one of a handful of gay employees at the station, he is the only gay African American there. With the station already under heavy restrictions due to lack of funding, **Dave** comes up with creative ways to keep the crew entertained, all at the risk of going against management's strict rules.



HI 5000
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17.75 - Billings in circles

5084
1.10
5.2.17

C H A R A C T E R S

MAY

STATION MANAGER

May has been the station manager for 5 years now and is ready to move ahead with her career. Her eyes are set on an opening position in the NSF, where a larger office comes with bigger perks and more power. As she tries to tighten her grip on the crew, who are already upset with all the bureaucratic nonsense, she discovers that this job isn't going to make her any friends.



SLANG TERMS

ONLY USED IN ANTARCTICA

1. TOASTY

Antarctica's climate puts a wrench in one's mental faculties. Crew stationed there often experience a loss of words, forgetfulness, and overall fogginess brought on by the dark, cold, and altitude.

2. GREENOUT

The emotion felt on seeing and smelling green things (plants) again after an extended period on the ice.

3. THE ICE

Speaking of the ice, this is how Antarcticans refer to the whole ice-covered continent.

4. ICE-HUSBAND / ICE-WIFE

Nothing beats boredom and loneliness like screwing. One's ice-husband or ice-wife is like a fling for crew down in Antarctica for the season.

5. FINGY

This pejorative term for a newbie that derives from "fucking new guy," or FNG.

6. BEAKER

A nickname for scientists. Some personnel also have nicknames like fuelie (responsible for fueling various equipment) and wastie (who deal with waste).

7. WINTER-OVER

When crew bravely stay in Antarctica over the entire brutal winter.

8. SKUA

Large scavenger birds - a bit like seagulls but the size of a turkey. A skua pile or bin is a sort of rummage bin. Crew can leave and pick over unwanted items there. As a verb: to appropriate goods by means that are not quite stealing, but also not quite not-stealing.

9. FRESHIES

Shipments of these fresh fruits and vegetables are quite welcome to the cuisine-deprived Antarctica researchers and personnel.

10. GRUMBLE BUCKET

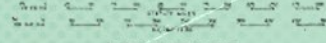
Coffee/tea cup.

A N T A R C T I C A

MAJOR RESEARCH STATIONS



Stereographic Projection Scale at Latitude 71°: 1:6,000,000



- Contour interval 50 meters
- Contours at 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, 1200, 1400, 1600, 1800, 2000, 2500, 3000, 3500, 4000, 4500, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, 9000, 10000, 12000, 15000, 20000, 25000, 30000, 40000, 50000, 60000, 70000, 80000, 90000, 100000 meters
- 0 to 100 kilometers
- 0 to 60 miles
- 0 to 100 nautical miles