



*From left to right:
Playing a local
weather man, re-
porting from a “live
earthquake” with
my brother, per-
forming in my own
music video, acting
as the evil villain in
our own black-and-
white movie*

After the episode aired in which we ranked the top three pizza places in town (the perfect service journalism piece, in my opinion), I walked into the pizza spot that I went to every day for lunch because of its proximity to my high school—only to be refused service.

“If we weren’t good enough to make your list, then I don’t think you should eat here,” one of the big Italian brothers told me after I tried to order a slice.

The guy was kicking me out of his pizza place, and I never felt cooler. *People are actually watching I.I.!* I tried to play it off like it was no big deal, but the pizza man wouldn’t hear it.

“If you want to talk about it more, come back tomorrow and we’ll talk in the parking lot,” he said.

He cared enough to threaten me.

This was big. I headed straight from the pizza place to see Dan Zinn, one of my best friends and *I.I.* colleagues, and gave him my plan.



The next day I returned to the pizza place and told the guys, “I’d love to enjoy your pizza as I always do, but if you want to talk outside, let’s talk outside.” Zinn had gone to the restaurant a half hour beforehand and was sitting with a piece of pizza by the big picture window—a perfect spot to film the action in the parking lot. I followed the guy outside, holding a sweater in my hand that hid a small tape recorder.

“What’s up?” I said loudly into my sweater.

“What’s up?” The guy turned red. “What’s up? I’m running a business. That’s what’s up. Who do you think you are, doing some show about how my pizza blows? I’ve got customers coming in saying I wasn’t even rated on this thing. . . .” This was pure TV gold. I was a tenth-grade Mike Wallace. The guy went off while I secretly recorded him and my buddy got the visuals. Despite the verbal abuse, I didn’t get a single scratch, which I was pretty conflicted about.

After editing our piece of strange, outlandish investigative journalism, we were pumped and ready to air the most explosive episode of *I./I.* yet. If the pizza ratings had made a stir, I couldn’t imagine what this would elicit.

Too bad I never got to find out.