REDWOOD

CLEVELAND JORDAN

AUDITION SIDES

Character Overview + Three Audition Scenes

SECTOR 7 FILMS

CLEVELAND JORDAN

Mid-to-Late 40s | Co-Founder, Vanguard Foods | Global Development

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Cleveland Jordan is one of the three men who helped build Vanguard Foods into an empire. The scripts describe him as rational, even-keeled and guided by a strong moral compass. He is a co-founder, a close friend and fraternity brother to Rod and Edwin, and the executive responsible for global development.

Cleveland is not the weak man in a room full of aggressive personalities. He is the brake pedal. He thinks about risk, debt, consequences and whether growth is still worth the price. When Rod and Edwin want to move faster, Cleveland is often the one willing to say slow down, even if it creates friction between men he considers brothers.

At home, the armor comes off. Cleveland is a husband, a father and a devoted son caring for an elderly father suffering from dementia. He carries enormous love and responsibility, while also struggling privately with anxiety, depression and increasing dependence on medication. The man who can calmly analyze a multimillion-dollar deal can also feel trapped inside his own mind.

The key to the role is RESTRAINT. Cleveland does not advertise his pain. His intelligence, morality, love and anxiety all live under the same controlled surface. When that control finally cracks, it should matter.

WHAT THE AUDITION SHOULD SHOW

- Executive intelligence - Cleveland understands the business and can challenge Rod and Edwin as an equal.
- Moral strength - his caution is not weakness. He is willing to be the unpopular voice when something feels wrong.
- Family devotion - his love for his father should feel deep, old and personal.
- Vulnerability - the anxiety is real and frightening, but he fights hard to keep functioning.
- Range - the same man must feel believable in a corporate argument, a quiet family crisis and a private emotional collapse.

DO NOT PLAY CLEVELAND AS THE WEAK PARTNER. PLAY THE MAN STRONG ENOUGH TO SAY SLOW DOWN.

SIDE 1 - THE PARTNER

SCENE: Rod, Edwin and Cleveland are discussing how Vanguard should finance its next stage of growth. Edwin and Rod favor outside capital or going public. Cleveland believes the company is moving too fast.

ACTOR OBJECTIVE: Make them hear the danger before ambition outruns judgment. Cleveland is not trying to stop Vanguard from growing; he is trying to protect what they already built.

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Start measured. Cleveland has made these arguments before. Let the frustration build only when Edwin dismisses him. The personal jab lands because these men have decades of history.

EDWIN
The other option is go public.

Cleveland enters the office behind Edwin.

CLEVELAND
So that's it? Only two options? Take cash from the bloodsuckers or go public? What about option three. We built this organically. Used Redwood to leverage loans and paid them off one restaurant at a time. Now we got cash. Lots of it. Why can't we still keep growing the company the same way? One restaurant at a time?

ROD
Cause that's not the way opportunities come at this level bro. You know that. We buy from distressed sellers. They come to us cause they're divorcing or running out of capital. It might be one location or five at a time.

EDWIN
We'd be overleveraged if we keep using our own cash. OPM. That's the name of the game.

ROD
I agree with Ed Cleve. We got two viable options to keep up the momentum.

CLEVELAND
I hear you. But we've already made it. We don't have anything to prove to nobody but us. We can take our time.

SIDE 1 - THE PARTNER (CONTINUED)

EDWIN

Bro what are you talking about? We need to cease the moment and corner the market now. While we're on top. One offs won't do it anymore.

The conversation has become intense.

CLEVELAND

You know what my pops use to say to us whenever me or my brothers were being greedy? Pigs get fat and hogs get slaughtered. So which one do you want to be Ed, the pig or the hog?

Edwin is still sitting. Cleveland is standing close to him.

EDWIN

Neither! Last time I checked your pops hadn't build a multimillion-dollar empire!

CLEVELAND

Yeah, and yours was a drunk Ed, so what else is new.

Edwin starts to rise out of his seat. Rod stops him.

ROD

Wait! Wait! Stop! Ya'll are trippin'. Cleve, we get your point. Look, I brought ya'll into this to help me build Redwood into a powerhouse restaurant. And we did it. We did it. We are the only three black men in the world who could've turned into an empire. So, what the hell are we fighting for? You both are right. Yes we want to keep growing and expanding. On the other hand we can't afford to slip up casue we're moving to fast either. Everybody take a deep breath. We'll work it out like we always do.

Later, Cleveland sits alone in his parked Bentley. He takes a prescription bottle from his pocket, swallows two pills and stares straight ahead.

SIDE 2 - THE SON

SCENE: Cleveland is at home with Nurse Elaine and his father, Mr. Jordan, whose dementia is progressing. Cleveland is searching for anything that might help him hold on to the man who raised him.

ACTOR OBJECTIVE: Reach your father. Cleveland knows the medical facts, but emotionally he is still fighting for one more moment of recognition.

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Do not begin sad. Cleveland is problem-solving first. Let the pain arrive when his father mistakes him for someone else and asks for a wife who is no longer alive.

NURSE ELAINE
Doctor Kim is the best specialist in the state. He lives and breathes this work.

CLEVELAND
Yeah. That's why we chose him. But my pops been on this new medication for six weeks and he seems worse than he was six weeks ago. Look at him.

NURSE ELAINE
The medication is meant to slow his cognitive decline. But we both know the disease is incurable. Play memory games, stimulate his brain, show him old photos to force him to remember things.

CLEVELAND
They've spend tens of millions of dollars on researching a cure for what. What about experimental treatment? Can we check with the doctor about that?

NURSE ELAINE
Sure. I'll ask him.

SIDE 2 - THE SON (CONTINUED)

Cleveland picks up old family photographs and kneels next to his father.

MR. JORDAN
I've lookin' for you James. Where you been all day?

CLEVELAND
Pops it's Cleveland. James isn't...

Cleveland looks back at Anne and Elaine with a discouraged stare, then shows his father a photograph.

CLEVELAND
Pops you remember this? It was our first trip to Ocean City. That was James and that was me getting on the ferris wheel.

Mr. Jordan studies the picture. His smile broadens.

MR. JORDAN
Is your moma still in the kitchen? Get her for me.

CLEVELAND
Moma's not in the kitchen. She's not with us. But I'm here.

MR. JORDAN
Tell her I said to hurry home.

Cleveland places his arms around his father and holds him tightly.

PERFORMANCE BUTTON:

The scene ends on the embrace. Do not force tears. The heartbreak is that Cleveland is still here, loving a father who is increasingly somewhere else.

SIDE 3 - THE PRESSURE

SCENE: Cleveland has returned home from work. In the bathroom, Anne catches him taking more anxiety medication than prescribed. This is one of the rare moments when Cleveland cannot hide behind business, humor or control.

ACTOR OBJECTIVE: Try to make your wife understand something you cannot fully explain yourself. Cleveland is ashamed, frightened and exhausted by what is happening inside him.

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Do not play the anxiety as panic from the first line. He tries sarcasm first. The confession should feel like something he has been holding back for a long time.

Cleveland stands at the bathroom mirror and swallows several pills. Anne is behind him.

ANNE
How many have you taken today?

Cleveland looks up, startled, and replies sarcastically.

CLEVELAND
Hey sweetheart, it's wonderful to see you too.

ANNE
Don't play with me.

Anne picks up the prescription bottle and inspects it.

ANNE
You had this filled last week and it's almost empty. What is going on baby?

CLEVELAND
I don't know. I asked them to up the dosage, but they wouldn't. I'm doin' everything I can. I swear. One minute I'm perfectly fine and the next minute it's like I'm locked in a dark closet tryin' to claw my way out. That's the anxiety I feel. I can't control it.

SIDE 3 - THE PRESSURE (CONTINUED)

Anne pulls Cleveland into her arms and holds him.

ANNE

Listen here black man. You are the best version of yourself right now and I love every once of you. You're a beautiful husband and phenomenal father. And we need you. I need you. So, you and me are gonna do whatever it takes to fix this. We're in it together. You hear me?

Cleveland stares at her for a moment.

CLEVELAND

I hear you.

AUDITION REMINDER

Across these three sides, we should see the same man under three different kinds of pressure: the co-founder willing to challenge his partners, the son desperately trying to hold on to his father, and the husband finally admitting that he cannot control what is happening inside him. Cleveland's strength is not that he never struggles. It is that he keeps showing up while carrying more than most people know.

THAT'S CLEVELAND JORDAN. NOW SHOW US YOUR VERSION OF HIM.