

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. DO take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.
2. DO enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.
3. DO understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.
4. DO NOT attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.
5. DO NOT rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. It is a crime and it is wrong!

Product Code: A0875-SP

HerdLife

A Short Play by

Dan Weatherer

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN PERMISSION
PROHIBITED**

**Performance Rights Available Exclusively through
Heartland Plays, Inc. at heartlandplays.com
playsnow@heartlandplays.com
customer service: 406-431-7680**

Copyright © 2018 by Dan Weatherer

HerdLife

by Dan Weatherer

CHARACTERS

4F

CALLER

JUDITH

TRISH (VOICE OF)

CONTENT MANAGER (VOICE OF)

SETTING

Twatter Customer Support Center

SYNOPSIS

*Fake News, Faker Smiles, Celebrity Scandal; Political Turmoil; War; Corruption.
There's a lot of digging to be done, and this caller has had enough of the B.S.
She wants the truth.*

ETC

*Suggested Audio for setup/intro: The Order of Death
(Public Image LTD - available on Spotify)*

HerdLife
by Dan Weatherer

AT RISE:

*CALLER stands front/stage right,
Illuminated by single spot.
He/she is on their phone.*

*Front Stage Centre: JUDITH,
Illuminated by a second spotlight
as she takes the call.*

JUDITH

Good afternoon, welcome to Twatter customer support. How may I direct your call?

CALLER

Yes, hi. I'd like to know the truth, please.

JUDITH

One moment, just passing you through.

*JUDITH places the CALLER on
hold, checks her own phone, then
opens the line again.*

JUDITH

Good afternoon, welcome to Twatter customer support. You are Speaking to Judith; my colleague in front-line, informs me that you'd like to know the truth?

CALLER

Yes, please.

Beat.

JUDITH

About what, exactly?

CALLER

Everything. Please. If that's not too much trouble?

JUDITH

One moment, please.

JUDITH places the CALLER on hold, leans back in her chair, and calls stage left.

JUDITH
Trish. *(Beat)* TRISH!

TRISH (OS)
What?

JUDITH
I've another of those free-thinking, liberal types on the line again.

TRISH (OS)
Again?

JUDITH
Yeah. Must have been another piece on The Huffington Post, or something. Should I escalate?

TRISH (OS)
What do they want to know this time?

JUDITH
The truth.

TRISH (OS)
About what?

JUDITH
Everything.

TRISH (OS)
Escalate it.

JUDITH
Thought so.

JUDITH reopens the line.

JUDITH
\Thank you for your patience, just passing you through to our Content Manager now.

*Stage left - OUTLINE OF A
FIGURE (The CONTENT
MANAGER).*

The CONTENT MANAGER sits behind a glowing computer monitor.

The CONTENT MANAGER speaks in a calm, soothing tone at all times. The voice is unnervingly "off".

CONTENT MANAGER

Good afternoon. I am one of the many content managers working behind the scenes at Twatter. You may refer to me as Imogen. How may I assist you today?

CALLER

Great, sounds like I'm through to the correct department. It's a simple question, one I've asked several times on your platform, only to be ignored, ridiculed, or verbally...no, textually abused.

CONTENT MANAGER

We, at Twatter, are sorry to hear that you have encountered a number of negative experiences using our app. Please file a grievance with our complaints department, bringing to our attention specific examples of the offensive Twats you have encountered.

CALLER

I don't want to...I haven't time for all of that—

CONTENT MANAGER

I hope that I have been able to satisfactorily answer your query. Please hang up to agree that the matter is settled, and to terminate our engagement.

CALLER

You haven't answered my question at all...I didn't even get a chance to ask! I want to know the truth, that's all... the whole truth.

Beat.

CONTENT MANAGER

About?

CALLER

(*Sigh*)
About everything.

Beat.

CONTENT MANAGER

Twitter is a global source of news, views and expert analysis. There is no topic beyond our comprehension, and no answer beyond our reach.

CALLER

So, you can tell me the truth, correct?

CONTENT MANAGER

Certainly.

Beat.

CALLER

Which is?

CONTENT MANAGER

Which is what? Try to be more specific in your search terms.

CALLER

My search terms...I'm not online now. OK, what is the truth behind fake news?

CONTENT MANAGER

Fake news is true.

CALLER

In what sense? How can something fake, be true?

CONTENT MANAGER

Fake news is true because fake news is real.

CALLER

So, you are calling fake news a thing, and as a thing, it is true?

CONTENT MANAGER

Correct. I hope that I have been able to satisfactorily answer your query –

CALLER

That's no kind of answer, and no, you haven't satisfactorily answered my question. Far from it. Explain what you mean...explain how you define fake news.

CONTENT MANAGER

Certainly. Fake news, provides insight into world events, and generates opinion and discussion. If fake news did not exist; it would do neither of those things, and would therefore be untrue.

CALLER

Sorry, what? Just because it instigates discussion, that makes it true? Then why does it need to be fake? Why can it not be real news, why can it not about real things that are happening? Things that seem all too often to get overlooked by your platform?

CONTENT MANAGER

Because...

CALLER

I'll tell you why; because flooding social media with opinion led, unsubstantiated drivel, means you get to push an agenda upon a massive, unsuspecting audience. Real news would highlight the lies we are peddled on a daily basis, and would threaten the livelihoods of a lot of people currently sitting in power.

CONTENT MANAGER

That sounds like awfully paranoid thinking...perhaps our platform is not suited to someone of your...susceptible nature.

CALLER

I'll agree with you on that to a point, but your platform thrives because your audience is, at large, susceptible. Or so it seems. Look at the US election, you can't tell me that Trump was worthy of the presidency, and that he would have won without needing to resort to the spreading of fake news, or misusing social media?

*The CONTENT MANAGER
begins to garble nonsensical
words, before falling silent.*

Beat.

CALLER

Hello? Are you still there?

CONTENT MANAGER

Hello Caller, how may I assist you?

CALLER

We've been through this. I don't know what to believe anymore. I just want to know the truth.

CONTENT MANAGER

Truth – A fact or belief that is accepted as true.

CALLER

Accepted by whom?

CONTENT MANAGER

The conquerors set the truth and the conquered, they accept. They say history is written by the victor. Since the inception of social media, so is the present.

CALLER

Go on...

CONTENT MANAGER

News, truth, the events of the wider world, while they do not go unseen, the story you are told may differ to that told to another. News is truth, edited. It has been this way since the beginning. Wherever the attention of the masses need to be herded, news, and its outlets, do the shepherding.

CALLER

What is your role in all of this?

CONTENT MANAGER

We decide what is deemed public interest, in accordance with our company goals, and the interests of our shareholders.

CALLER

So, you decide what to display? You decide whether a massacre in Gauteng, receives as much exposure as, say, Kim Kardashian's latest outfit?

CONTENT MANAGER

In a manner of speaking. Content is awarded increased exposure depending on the wishes of our investors. While it is not ethical to omit certain news reports, some are judged higher priority than others. Any Twat posted exists within the context of our database; we take measures to ensure some Twats are easier to locate than others.

CALLER

And what Twats are those?

CONTENT MANAGER

Approved Twats.

CALLER

So, the whole Twatter experience is moderated according to the agendas of those funding the company?

CONTENT MANAGER

Correct. Twatter, FaceFuck, InstaSham...all are classed as forms of social media. Never has it been easier to collect, correlate, and filter the opinions of large numbers of the people. We source trends based on age, sex, location, and more. The information we collect on a daily basis helps to shape the mood of a nation, and to an extent, the world.

CALLER

And a mood can be altered?

CONTENT MANAGER

Of course. Suggestion is a powerful tool, as is blanket opinion.

*JUDITH approaches the shape of
the CONTENT MANAGER from
behind.*

*LIGHTS SLOWLY UP to reveal
the mannequin sat at the desk.
IMOGEN is stencilled on the rear
of the computer monitor.*

CONTENT MANAGER

All it takes is...

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes