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Selling Love

by

A. D. Hasselbring

An Office-Place Comedy in Two Acts

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SETTING

The Present in the Right Bright Soap Regional Head Quarters Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In the BIGTIME world of small-time soap manufacturing and sales, two employees seek self-cleansing and find a bubbling love that is matched only by their boss's fervor for the product they market. When a corporate hatchet man descends upon them, the entire office is put on edge and no one's job is safe.

CHARACTERS

MAC; *The Boss*

ROBERTS; *A salesman and once and future writer*

LAURIE; *A sales woman and painter*

KELLY; *A loyal Assistant*

SHEILA; *A reluctant sales woman*

MS. YOUNGMAN; *A big wig from New York*

JACK; *A guy just trying to do his job.*

ETC

SELLING LOVE premiered at The Elite Theatre Company, Oxnard, CA, on August 23, 2013 (TOM EUBANKS, Artistic Director; ANDREW JAMES, Managing Director). The production was directed by ANDREW JAMES and produced by AKIRA DANN and ALLISON CHASE WILLIAMS. Sound Design by COMMON TIME SOUND. Set Design by ROGER KREVENAS. Costume Design by ALLISON CHASE WILLIAMS. The production crew and additional cast included PAT LAWLER, RYAN JOHNSON, CAMERON CROUCH, STEVEN SILVERS, AKIRA DANN, and HEATHER LINKLETTER. The cast was as follows:

MAC.....Cecil Sutton
ROBERTS.....Nathan Paul
LAURIE.....Allison Chase Williams
KELLY.....Travis Winterstein
SHEILA.....Lindsey Newell MS.
YOUNGMAN.....Sindy McKay
JACK.....Roger Krevenas

SELLING LOVE

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ACT I; SCENE ONE

(AT RISE: The office of The Right Bright Soap Corp.; Right Bright Soap Regional Head Quarters, Colorado Springs, CO. We see a typical office. There are three desks, each with a chair and a phone. Upstage is the main door to the office. Downstage right there is a door that leads to a side room. ENTER MAC. He is a boss through and through. Brash, egotistical, and at times unthinking. MAC stops and takes a clipboard hanging from a nail on the wall. He flips through the pages and replaces it on the wall, then puts his hands on his hips and looks around the room. His gaze settles on the clock that hangs on the wall. He looks at his watch, then again at the clock. ENTER KELLY. A young, eager office assistant. KELLY crosses to MAC.)

KELLY

Good morning, Mr. Mac Ryan.

MAC

Good morning, Kelly! That clock's wrong again.

KELLY

I'll fix that, sir.

MAC

Off by a couple of minutes.

KELLY

Yes, sir.

MAC

Every minute counts, Kelly.

KELLY

I know it does, sir.

MAC

Especially in sales.

KELLY

Yes, sir. Your two o'clock has been pushed back until next week. Mr. Eckelmeyer forgot about his daughter's kindergarten graduation.

MAC

Hmm. Like a man who puts family first. Always have, always will.

KELLY

I know you do, sir. Also, the Billings Corporation called. They say the new dispensers still don't fit their wall brackets like we promised and that they are switching over to Soft Soap for sure this time.

MAC

Alright. Alright. Go ahead and set up a meeting with them for 8am tomorrow. We'll see if we can't sweet talk them out of it. Tell them breakfast is on me. That usually helps. *(Pause)* You know Kelly, this office is kind of like a family.

KELLY

It is, sir?

MAC

Oh, yes.

KELLY

How?

MAC

(Long Pause) Not sure. *(Pause)* Not sure at all. Sounds right though, doesn't it?

KELLY

Yes, sir.

MAC

Damn right it does. A family! Have we heard from New York yet this morning?

KELLY

No, sir. Should I be expecting a call?

MAC

A visit. Heard from corporate yesterday just before five. They say they are trying to cut costs and they've contracted someone to evaluate all the western division offices. We're included. Sounds like it'll be some young hot shot. Lots of change up at the top right now. Surprise visit never means anything good. So we need to be on our toes. Need to put the old best foot forward here. Can't have a misstep on this one.

KELLY

Go dancing again last night, sir?

MAC

With the wife. Blasted cha-cha lessons. How could you tell?

KELLY

Just a hunch. Here are the numbers from last month that you asked for. Also, the back copier is about to give up the ghost.

MAC

Alright. Get someone in here to look at it ASAP, and let's see if we can get that Sinks and More order out by Friday, new box logos or not. I am tired of looking like a two bit operation, Kelly.

KELLY

We are a two bit operation, sir.

MAC

Now you know I don't like that kind of talk, Kelly, not even as a joke. Right Bright is an important player in the industrial and domestic soap industry. And even if we are a two bit operation, I still don't like looking that way in front of our biggest client.

KELLY

Of course, sir.

MAC

Remember where Right Bright started, Kelly?

MAC & KELLY

In a garage!

MAC

That's right! Right Bright was a small, two person Mom and Pop shop with...

MAC & KELLY

a REAL Mom and a REAL Pop!

MAC

THAT'S RIGHT. And they made two things. Toothpaste and hand soap! And people liked them, Kelly. Liked them a lot. And as it sometimes happens, those people began to talk, and they were saying good things. Good things about the Right Bright name, my boy! And even when Right Bright was forced to stop making toothpaste due to overcrowding in the marketplace and a slight miscalculation in the allowable mercury allotment, the Right Bright name stayed strong! They persevered and poured all of their resources into making the best damned wholesale soap in the country! And they didn't stop there! Right Bright began to branch out, tried new things! One thing led to another, and eventually Right Bright Soap became Bright and Clean Sanitary Supplies Unlimited - manufacturing and selling the finest cleansers, disinfectants and urinal cakes in the business. But it all started with Right Bright, Kelly. And even when mergers and downsizing threatened our little place in the Bright and Clean family of products, the name of Right Bright held on! For three decades, we have clung to a respectable share of the industrial and domestic wholesale soap market! And now we stand alone, Kelly, as...

MAC & KELLY

...the last bastion of the Right Bright name!

MAC

THAT'S RIGHT, MY LAD! That's who we are! There is history in the Right Bright name, and don't you forget it!

KELLY

I won't, sir.

MAC

Now let me take a look at these numbers.

(MAC grabs the clipboard. KELLY quickly takes it back.)

KELLY

They're not good, sir.

MAC

I'm going to tell you something, Kelly. We are the closers. We don't cold call. That task belongs to a bunch of yahoos out in Albuquerque and in Salt Lake City. They sift through thousands of hang-ups and I-don't-think-so's, and when they find a REAL buyer, they patch him through to us. New York only sends us the big leads and they expect us to reel them in, hook, line, and sinker! We deal with the big boys. And when the big dog is hungry, he eats what he wants! Right, Kelly?

KELLY

I'm not sure what that means, sir.

MAC

That's alright! I like your honesty, son! What's important is that we are Right Bright and that means something, Kelly. Got it?

KELLY

Got it.

(MAC grabs the clipboard again and slaps KELLY on the back brimming with pride. MAC loves nothing more than getting the troops ready for action.)

MAC

Alright, then! NOW. Go see if you can get New York on the line and find out when this big fish is supposed to grace us with his presence.

(MAC puts one arm around KELLY's shoulders and gazes off into the golden horizon keeping the earnest KELLY from leaving.)

KELLY

Yes, sir.

(KELLY tries in vain to go.)

MAC

Yes, sir. A FAMILY!

(KELLY tries again to leave but MAC is lost in the moment. On the third try MAC releases KELLY. EXIT KELLY. MAC looks around his office much the way Patton must have surveyed a field just before a battle.)

MAC, *Continued*

Good Morning, Right Bright. Let's sell some soap!

(EXIT MAC shutting the door behind him. SFX: MUSIC UNDERSCORES PASSAGE OF TIME. ENTER KELLY with a step ladder. He places the ladder under the clock and adjusts the time to 8:55. He moves about the office, preparing it for the day. He places call sheets on each desk, then makes a few adjustments to the sheets on the clipboard. ENTER LAURIE. She is young and understated, cute but reserved. KELLY holds the door open for her.)

KELLY

Good morning.

LAURIE

Good morning.

(KELLY EXITS, closing the door and leaving LAURIE alone in the office. She checks the clipboard and goes to her desk. She sets down her purse, places her sweater over the back of her chair. She tries her desk drawer which is stuck. With a little effort, she opens it and removes some folders. She crosses the room to the door that leads to the side room. Although we never see inside of it, this is the room that houses the copier, the filing cabinets, and miscellaneous office supplies. EXIT LAURIE into the side room. ENTER SHEILA. She is a buxom young woman somewhere between the ages of 16 and 40... it's rather hard to tell. She wears office casual with a twist. In Catholic school, she was the one who rolled her skirt up and ordered her shirts two sizes too small and her style choices have not changed much since. SHEILA makes her way to her desk and removes a mirror to begin checking her makeup. The phone on her desk begins to ring. She looks up at the clock: 8:57. She then picks the phone up and sets it down again before returning to her makeup. ENTER ROBERTS. Mid-twenties, button down shirt and slacks. He shuts the door behind him, checks the clipboard, and goes to sit at his desk, the one that is nearest the side room. SHEILA does one last check and quickly crosses to ROBERTS, where she sits on his desk and speaks to him.)

SHEILA

Hi, Roberts.

ROBERTS

Good morning, Shelia. How are you?

SHEILA

Doing alright. Would be a lot better if it weren't so HOT in the office! *(Winks)*

ROBERTS

Yeah, the temperature does seem to get a little out of control in here, doesn't it?

SHEILA

I think it's hot ANYWHERE you are, Roberts.

ROBERTS

Well, thanks.

SHEILA

Did you hear about the hatchet man?

ROBERTS

Is that a movie?

SHEILA

NO! A person! From New York. Corporate is sending in a hatchet man to cut costs.

(SHEILA makes air quotes with her fingers.)

You know what that means. Sales staff is always the first they look at. Shift - colon - dash - left parenthesis.

ROBERTS

Left parent—You're doing that thing where you talk like you're texting again, aren't you?

SHEILA

You know it! Shift, Colon, Dash, Left parenthesis. Frown-y face! Get it? Makes conversations more fun, don't you think?

ROBERTS

Yeah, I guess it does.

SHEILA

Lol! You are 2 cute! Well, watch out for the hatchet man. Don't let him get you. Semicolon - dash -right parenthesis. Wink!

(SHEILA laughs at her own joke. ENTER LAURIE from the side room. She is preoccupied with the papers in her hand. She walks toward SHEILA looking frustrated.)

SHEILA

You okay, honey?

LAURIE

Yes. That stupid copier just destroyed my original and only copied one side.

SHEILA

Yeah, and the latch on the window over the filing cabinet in there is broken, too. This office is falling apart!

LAURIE

Let's hope that it doesn't rain or the files will all be ruined with that window open like that.

SHEILA

Well, that'd be alright with me! What we should really be worried about is that someone could climb through that window and try to kill us all. Lots of crazies out there, IMHO.

(SHEILA crosses to her desk. LAURIE stands confused for a moment saying the letters "IMHO?")

ROBERTS

In My Humble Opinion. *(LAURIE laughs; ROBERTS smiles.)* Good Morning.

LAURIE

Good Morning.

(ROBERTS' phone rings. ROBERTS smiles again before answering his phone.)

ROBERTS

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(LAURIE continues to watch him as he speaks for a moment, then crosses back to her desk where she shuffles the papers around in her hand and sets them on her desk. ROBERTS looks up from his call and watches LAURIE, but she does not see him. ROBERTS continues with his phone call as LAURIE's phone rings. She answers.)

LAURIE

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(LAURIE sits at her desk. ROBERTS lowers his head and gives his full attention to the caller. LAURIE looks up and sees him, but by now he is focused on the sales sheets in front of him. As LAURIE listens to the caller, SHEILA's phone rings. After some time and an annoyed sigh, she reluctantly answers.)

SHEILA

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(ROBERTS, LAURIE and SHEILA continue their calls with a series of "Yes, sir, that shouldn't be any problem." and "Can you tell me a little more about what you wish to use it for and then I can suggest a quantity that might be appropriate?" ENTER KELLY. He quickly moves about the room, placing papers on each desk. ROBERTS, LAURIE, and SHEILA all nod quick "Thank you's" as they continue with their calls. As with all the phone calls in the show, the Director may decide how much of the conversation is audible and how much is not.)

MAC

(ENTERS) Kelly.

(MAC and KELLY meet out of earshot of the others who are engrossed in their daily routine.)

MAC

Any word from New York?

KELLY

I left messages, sir. Haven't heard back yet. It's almost lunchtime there, so maybe...

MAC

Damn it. When this young buck gets here, the first thing he is going to want to see is last month's numbers and they are terrible! That's what these corporate types are like. All numbers! When he sees them Kelly, we are going to come under some heavy fire. These guys never understand that numbers just don't tell the whole story. We're going to have to fight this on all fronts. Have to dig in and stand our ground. It is trench warfare now, Kelly!

KELLY

Seen any good movies recently, sir?

MAC

There was a John Wayne marathon on last night. Why do you ask?

KELLY

No reason, sir.

MAC

Watched it while I iced my feet. Nothing better than the Duke on the small screen. As good as it gets.

KELLY

What about on the big screen, sir?

MAC

Even better, Kelly! **EVEN BETTER!** Have to fire up the troops, my boy. The time is now. This is it.

KELLY

It's D-Day, sir?

MAC

(Pleased) Well said, Kelly!

KELLY

Thank you, sir.

MAC

Now listen, my boy! We can't let this young hot shot see anything that might give him the wrong impression. Let shipping know that mum's the word on last month's unfortunate incident. Got it?

KELLY

Got it!

MAC

And that goes for the problems they've been having with the new Megaship software, too! We can't have this little corporate punk finding out that we shipped every outgoing order to ourselves for a week and a half before we noticed. Got to keep it under our hat, understand? Not our fault, but still, wouldn't make us look good, irregardless!

KELLY

Not a word, sir!

MAC

Good boy, Kelly! Now! We've got to make this place shine! Don't let him see last month's sales figures either, you understand? Or the month's before, for that matter. He might jump to some hasty and unfair conclusions. What you handed me this morning has to stay just between us. Might be right, might be wrong, but it's got to be our little secret, Kelly. You get me, young man? We don't breathe a single breath about the state of sales in this office over the past few months, understand soldier?

KELLY

Aye-Aye, sir!

MAC

Atta boy, Kelly!

(MAC starts to exit, then sees ROBERTS who has just finished his phone call and is writing up an order.)

MAC, *Continued*

Closed another sale, Roberts?

ROBERTS

Yes, sir. 28 units of 501 antibacterial.

MAC

Well done, Roberts! Keep up the good work, Pilgrim!

(EXIT MAC. ROBERTS looks to KELLY, confused.)

KELLY

John Wayne marathon.

ROBERTS

Ahhh.

(KELLY goes to the phone on the wall and picks up receive.)

KELLY

Warehouse, please.

(SHEILA has finished her phone call. She stands and EXITS into the side room, papers in hand. KELLY finishes his call and EXITS out the main door. LAURIE hangs up the phone and looks up at ROBERTS, who is focused on his paperwork. LAURIE stands, looking for an excuse to speak to ROBERTS. ENTER SHEILA.)

SHEILA

Laurie! Did you hear about the hatchet man?

LAURIE

I'm sorry?

SHEILA

Corporate is sending a hatchet man in to cut costs. I heard Kelly talking to Mac about it this morning. Sales staff is always first to go.

LAURIE

(Worried) The first to go?

SHEILA

ALWAYS!

LAURIE

When is he coming?

SHEILA

No one knows. Could be today. Mmmmmm. I hope he's cute!

(SHEILA's phone rings. She answers.)

SHEILA, *Continued*

Uuugggh! Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

LAURIE sits back down contemplating the news she has just received. ROBERTS' phone rings. He answers. LAURIE looks to ROBERTS.

ROBERTS

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(LAURIE watches him. Her phone rings. LAURIE reluctantly answers.)

LAURIE

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(ENTER MAC. He takes the clipboard off the wall and flips through a few pages. ROBERTS hangs up the phone and starts the paperwork. MAC crosses to him.)

MAC

Another one for the win column, Roberts?

ROBERTS

Yes, sir. Just a reorder, though. Twelve units of 103 Industrial.

MAC

Every little bit helps! Roberts, let me talk to you for a minute. *(ROBERTS stops; listens)* We have a challenge in front of us, Roberts. I am going to need everyone at their best. Want you to be my point man on something.

ROBERTS

Of course. What is it?

MAC

Might have a big wig looking in on us today. Need you to keep the troops at their best. Kind of give them the ol' spit and polish, you know? Lead by example.

ROBERTS

Sure.

MAC

Good. Knew I could count on you. Let's let him see what we are really all about. Kind of show him the best of the old Right Bright style if we can. Really work those phones while he's here.

ROBERTS

I'll do my best.

(SHEILA has finished her call and is working on an order form when her phone rings again. She answers.)

SHEILA

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

MAC

I know you will! Never had any doubts about that. Good, then! Oh, and see if maybe you can get Sheila to a – maybe – um – kind of, button up the ol' blouse a little bit, there. You know what I mean?

ROBERTS

Well, yes, sir. But, um, well, I'm—I'm not really sure that she—what I mean to say is that I'm probably not—

MAC

No, no, no! I see what you're saying. Alright, alright, let it be. Hell, might work to our favor. Who knows? Need every edge we can get! Good idea, Roberts!

(ENTER KELLY. He attends to the clipboard and then heads towards the side room. MAC gives ROBERTS the high sign and starts toward the door.)

ROBERTS

I wasn't saying—

MAC

Oh, Kelly!

(KELLY stops short of the side room door. MAC crosses quickly to him. ROBERTS' phone rings. He answers the phone.)

ROBERTS

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(ROBERTS, SHEILA, and LAURIE continue with their phone calls.)

MAC

KELLY! Any word yet?

(MAC and KELLY move further out of earshot of the employees again.)

KELLY

No, sir. I can't get a hold of anybody in New York...

MAC

Isn't that just like corporate to drop a bombshell on us like this and then not give us any more info? Probably trying to keep us off guard.

KELLY

Maybe he's not coming.

(LAURIE has finished her call and is working on the paperwork. She finishes and takes another folder to the side room, where she passes MAC and KELLY who both stop speaking and smile widely, looking a little suspicious. LAURIE pauses and then moves on. Looking back once at the absurd sight. EXIT LAURIE to the side room. SHEILA has also finished and, with the boss's back turned, she is focused on her pocket mirror again. Perhaps she takes a "Self-y" with her cell phone, and generally avoids doing any work. She is in her own little world.)

MAC

Can't depend on that. Can't be caught unawares, my boy. That's just what they want. This is how they work these things. They try to make it seem casual. Like it's no big deal. Just a friendly drop by to say hello, maybe make a few suggestions. They play the ol' friendly as can be, down home happy la-la dance, and then wham-o! You lose half your sales staff! Don't fall for it, my boy! Don't fall for it.

KELLY

No, sir! I won't!

MAC

Time to circle the wagons! Got to be ready for anything! Staff meeting. Get 'em rounded up!

KELLY

Yes, sir! Staff meeting! In the sales office. Gather 'round! Laurie!

(SHEILA reluctantly turns to where MAC and KELLY are standing. ENTER LAURIE from the side room. ROBERTS has finished his call and sets down his paper and pen to listen to MAC, who takes center stage while he talks to the group. ALL look at MAC.)

MAC

Alright, friends—I call you friends because that's what we are here. Friends, comrades, partners. Even more than that. Family. Family, I say. We are in this together. The whole Right Bright FAMILY. Now, some of you may have heard that we might have a bit of a visitor coming by.

SHEILA

The hatchet man.

MAC

No one said he's a hatchet man! He's an independent evaluator trying to help make the office more productive, and he just wants to stop by and say hello. Very casual, I'm sure.

(The questions come rapid-fire as MAC tries to maintain control.)

LAURIE

Do we know when he's going to be here?

MAC

No, no, we don't, Laurie. Corporate just said that this new big wig would be stopping by soon. Might have some suggestions for us to help improve how we operate.

ROBERTS

Today?

MAC

Probably.

LAURIE

Are there definitely going to be cuts?

SHEILA

Well, they're sending a hatchet man!

MAC

He's NOT a hatchet man! He's just a man. Puts his pants on one leg at a time, and takes them off the same way. Now, what I want you to remember is what the Right Bright name stands for. Why we are all here!

SHEILA

For now!

MAC

Sheila!

SHEILA

Sorry, Mac.

LAURIE

Is he going to want to talk to us?

MAC

Probably, Laurie. That's usually how these hatchet men work. Now, I'm not saying that you are lucky to have jobs. You're all smart people. I am sure you could get jobs anywhere. Sell anything. I'm just saying that you are lucky to have jobs here. We all are. We are all fortunate to be a part of this family. What I want you all to remember is what we do here at Right Bright that makes us so special. Just keep doing that. No matter who's in the room. Remember who we are and what we do. We are NOT selling soap. We are selling love! We are selling life. We are selling hope.

KELLY

We should raise the price.

MAC

What?

KELLY

Nothing, sir.

MAC

Some out there in the world may think that soap is a mundane thing, an unexciting thing, even boring. And maybe your average soap is. But we are selling RIGHT BRIGHT soap! Right Bright soap has soul. Now, you take Roberts here. He understands what Right Bright has done for his life. It made him a man. Just like it did for me when I was his age. Right Bright Soap has the power to change. It has the power to set things right. We are not selling tire

MAC, *Continued*

chains or bid-di-ly-boops. We are selling RIGHT BRIGHT brand industrial and domestic soaps and soap related products! *(Totally immersed; preaching)* To Right Bright clients, soap is a very personal thing. It will be the first thing to touch their body in the morning and the last things to caress their face at night. It will know every inch of them like a familiar lover who gently kisses them from head to toe. It bubbles and cleans while providing time to think and to reflect. It opens the mind and stimulates the senses. For those all-too-brief and fleeting moments while it lingers upon the skin, Right Bright Soap allows them to be whatever they want to be, until at last the warm water rushes over them and rinses away all of their worries, cares, and pains, leaving them with only the hope of what may lay ahead on the golden horizon! Right Bright Soap makes love to you while cleansing your body, mind, and heart. It takes you in its all-knowing arms and holds you in the sweet embrace of happiness. It makes all things possible as a new day dawns within each rainbow-y bubble that bursts before your eyes. Like a mama deer bathing her newborn foal with her loving tongue, it will lick you clean and set you free. Right Bright Soap strips you naked and lays you bare before the world to say, "HERE I AM, take me! Hate me! Use me! Make me your slave, you dirty, filthy planet. Do your worst! I am yours to soil because I KNOW that in the morning light, Right Bright Soap will wash my skin with joy and rinse me clean with ecstasy!"

SHEILA

I need a shower.

ROBERTS and LAURIE

I may never shower again.

(ROBERTS and LAURIE look at one another and smile. MAC's tone changes.)

MAC

We are selling a state of mind, and no matter who comes in here, THAT is what we do. So just ignore this corporate type who might drop in on us. Ignore everything and just sell the name of Right Bright! That'll show him what we're about! Be polite to him. Be friendly. But, above all, be proud of who we are, and what we sell! You're my closers and I love you guys. *(Aside to KELLY)* Gene Hackman in Hoosiers.

KELLY

Very nice, sir.

MAC

Thank you.

(MAC extends one hand and KELLY hurriedly puts his hand in the huddle. MAC gives a head nod to Roberts who reluctantly does the same and SHEILA and LAURIE follow.)

MAC, *Continued*

(To GROUP) Now get out there and SELL SOME HOPE!

(MAC breaks the huddle and moves toward the door like a coach headed toward the field of play. SHEILA, ROBERTS, and LAURIE exchange looks while KELLY follows right behind MAC. EXIT MAC and KELLY. SHEILA pauses, and then quickly chases after MAC giving Roberts a look as she leaves as if to say “you could have had this!” EXIT SHEILA. ROBERTS crosses to LAURIE who is looking quite concerned.)

ROBERTS

I wouldn't worry too much about it. Sounds like it might just be a check-in to see how the office is running. Mac gets kind of worked up.

LAURIE

Yeah. Maybe.

ROBERTS

It's probably nothing.

LAURIE

Probably. It's just—I've only been here a little while, and Mac just let me start making solo sales calls a couple of weeks ago.

ROBERTS

Yeah.

LAURIE

I sent out over a hundred resumes and Right Bright was the only company to even interview me.

ROBERTS

I'm sure it will all be fine.

LAURIE

Yeah.

ROBERTS

The only one out of a hundred?

LAURIE

Yeah.

ROBERTS

Wow.

LAURIE

I was the last one hired. Last hired, first fired. Isn't that a saying? Fired after less than six months. That really won't help my resume.

(LAURIE's phone rings. She stares at it. Then answers.)

LAURIE, *Continued*

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(ROBERTS watches LAURIE for a minute then crosses back to his own desk and sits down to finish the paperwork that he was interrupted in the middle of after the last two sales. ENTER MAC still fired up. He surveys the room and then goes straight to ROBERTS.)

MAC

Roberts!

ROBERTS

Yes?

MAC

What did you think of my speech?

ROBERTS

Very–inspiring, sir.

MAC

Thank you, my boy! Just part of leading our little army.

ROBERTS

I thought we were a family.

MAC

We are, Roberts. We're an army family! Lots of love, and on a mission!

ROBERTS

Yes, sir.

KELLY

(Entering) Mr. Mac Ryan. I need your signature on these so the orders can go out today.

MAC

Sure thing. Have to keep the ol' tanks a' rolling.

(ENTER SHEILA. She slams the office door behind her. She stretches her arms out and presses her back against the now closed door.)

SHEILA

HE'S HERE!

KELLY

THE HATCHET MAN?

SHEILA

Who else?

MAC

Everyone MAN your battle stations! Sheila, don't just stand there. Go give him a big Right Bright welcome!

SHEILA

Yes, sir!

MAC

And be sure to get his name!

(SHEILA nods and EXITS.)

MAC, *Continued*

Roberts, Laurie, work those lines. Kelly, get them some call files on the double. Look alive, Right Bright team! Remember who we are and what we stand for! And remember, STAY CALM! This is just another successful day at the Right Bright regional headquarters in beautiful Colorado Springs, Colorado! Life is good! Sales are good! And try not to think about the fact that someone's probably going to get fired today! I mean—if that were the case. Which of course, here, it is not... *(Pause)* CHARGE!

(EXIT KELLY to the side room. MAC looks around for something to do. Finding nothing, he quickly grabs the clipboard off the wall and busily flips through it. ENTER SHEILA backing into the room.)

SHEILA

Oh, isn't that just a scream! But you did find a parking spot?

(ENTER JACK. He is young for an executive. Casually dressed in slacks and a button down shirt. He is relaxed and easygoing with an air of untouchability. Down to earth, reasonable, but with something different about him.)

JACK

I sure did, Sheila! But you can bet it wasn't anywhere near a fire hydrant this time!

SHEILA

Oh! That is TOO funny! Mr. Mac Ryan! I would like you to meet Mr. Watson.

JACK

Oh, please. Jack is fine.

MAC

Well, then, Jack it is! Glad to have you here.

JACK

Glad to be here! Sorry to hear about all the problems you've been having, though.

MAC

(Somewhat taken aback) Now, Jack, I'm not sure where you heard that, but we don't have any problems around here that can't be fixed with a little bit of hard work and understanding...

JACK

Well, I guess that's why I'm here! Ha, ha, ha.

MAC

Ha, ha, ha. Well, we are always open to a little bit of help to make us better. Maybe just a small adjustment or two here or there and we will be right as rain!

JACK

Well, I sure hope so. I was just afraid that we might be looking at scrapping the whole shebang. Always hate to do that!

MAC

Well, I'll be a monkey's – scrapping the whole – What exactly do you mean there, Jack?

JACK

Oh, I see it all the time. Sometimes in a situation like this, a thing just can't be salvaged. Has to be scrapped completely.

(ENTER KELLY. He places files on the desk as everyone listens in to Jack, trying to be discreet. MAC shoos KELLY away.)

MAC

Completely? You're considering that, are you?

JACK

Oh, yes. Have to. Part of the job. Now I know that's hard to hear, but sometimes things just can't be saved and it's better just to start anew.

MAC

Well, I must say. You, uh—you sure don't pull any punches there, do you?

JACK

Ha, ha! Can't afford to! Man like me has to tell it like it is. But I don't mean to worry you. We will start with a look, of course, and we'll just go from there. But I want you to remember that everything has a shelf life. Sometimes you just have to say goodbye in order to move forward. Just want you to know all the roads that may lay ahead. Don't want you to be blindsided by anything.

MAC

Well, you certainly are a straight shooter, aren't you?

JACK

Ha-ha, always try to be!

MAC

Well, I'd have to be a fool not to respect that. Always like a straight shooter. Just don't be too quick on the trigger!

JACK

Oh, no. We'll see if we can't get things running right again. Just hate to get anyone's hopes up, in a situation like this that might be a lost cause.

MAC

A LOST CAUSE! Well, now, there I just have to disagree with you! Disagree wholeheartedly!

JACK

Well, I'm not surprised. Keep in mind I said it might be a lost cause. Might not be the case here, I can't say for sure yet. But I do have a feeling that we may just end up needing to scrap the whole shebang, unfortunately. Happens a lot.

(JACK looks around to find the whole office standing aghast listening to his every word.)

JACK, *Continued*

But we shall see what we shall see!

MAC

Indeed we shall, Jack. Indeed we shall!

(For a few moments no one speaks or moves.)

JACK

Well, I guess I should—

MAC

How about I have Sheila show you around a bit to start? Maybe get you a cup of java, how about?

SHEILA

I would be more than happy to help you with whatever your little heart desires.

JACK

Well, that really is nice of you...

MAC

Now you just let Sheila take care of you. She knows this place inside and out—you just put yourself in her capable hands.

JACK

Well, alright. I would like a cup of coffee, as a matter of fact!

SHEILA

Of course! The coffee is right out here.

JACK

Well, thank you—Sheila, was it?

(EXIT SHEILA and JACK. Tension boils over. Everyone hurries to MAC.)

KELLY

Scrap the whole thing???

LAURIE

A lost cause?

MAC

Oh, this is worse than I thought. Roberts, get over here. Laurie, Kelly, you too! We have a problem. A big problem. This little pipsqueak is coming in here looking to overhaul everything! Might just outsource the whole kit-n-caboodle to India. We are in for more than just cutbacks here.

ROBERTS

He didn't say that for sure.

MAC

He didn't have to, Roberts. I've seen this before. Always happens the same way. New blood comes in and they want to make their mark. Want to change everything just for the sake of change and prove that they can do things better. Damn it! Just when we were getting rolling.

KELLY

We've been in business for more than thirty years, sir.

MAC

Damn it, Kelly! You know what I mean!

KELLY

Yes, sir!

MAC

The writing's on the wall now. This little puke is looking to take us down!

ROBERTS

He seems nice enough. Maybe we can talk to him—

MAC

Talk to him?! Not a chance! I know his type. You can't reason with them!

(ROBERTS looks to LAURIE.)

LAURIE

He did say he thought that our office might be a lost cause.

KELLY

And that he was thinking about scrapping the whole division!

ROBERTS

He was pretty laid back about it—

MAC

Of course he was, Roberts! That coldhearted snake! These guys eliminate offices like you or I change shirts! It's nothing to him!

LAURIE

Is there any way we could change his mind?

MAC

Only one way to do that! We have to find out where he stands! Got to draw him in! Have to figure out what he's about and just what he plans to do!

KELLY

They're coming, sir!

MAC

Everyone SCATTER!

(ENTER SHEILA and JACK from the main office door. JACK happily sips a cup of coffee.)

SHEILA

Oh, Jack! You are just the livin' END. I swear I haven't laughed this hard since I don't KNOW when! I mean it! R-O-T-F-L !

MAC

Jack! I sure hope that Sheila has taken good care of you.

JACK

Oh, I'd say she has!

MAC

Well, I am glad to hear that! And how's that coffee?

JACK

Fine. Just fine!

MAC

Best coffee this side of the Rocky Mountains, I always say! Why, I was just telling Roberts here—Roberts is my top man around here, ya' know?

JACK

Oh, is he?

MAC

He sure is!

JACK

Well, it is awfully nice to meet you.

ROBERTS

My pleasure, sir.

JACK

Jack! Call me Jack.

ROBERTS

Alright, Jack.

MAC

Anyway, as I was telling Roberts here, that soap is a lot like coffee. Wouldn't you agree, Roberts?

ROBERTS

Oh, uh, absolutely.

MAC

Yes, indeed. Some people like one kind of coffee, some like another. Just like soap, everyone has their own preferences.

JACK

Well, I'd say that could be said about a lot of things.

MAC

Sure could Jack, sure could. That's why Roberts and I like to take a few minutes each day like we are right now and just discuss the industry we work in and where it's headed. Changing times and the like. Just to stay current, you know?

JACK

Sounds like a serious discussion.

(ALL laugh.)

JACK, *Continued*

Well, the times they are a-changing that's for sure!

(ALL laugh again.)

MAC

That they are. That they ARE! Tell me, Jack. You are a modern businessman. A fast riser, obviously very successful out in the world. You must meet lots of different kinds of people, I would think.

JACK

I surely do that.

MAC

Of course you do. A man like you must have some interesting thoughts on what a small family business like ours needs to do to keep up. Tell me, what trends are you seeing out there right now?

JACK

Well, I'll—

MAC

What does the future hold for close knit, family-oriented offices like ours? Offices looking to better themselves and be more productive?

JACK

Well, I'll—

MAC

Not that we're not productive, you understand?

JACK

Of course, of course!

MAC

Just trying to be more so every day!

JACK

Well, aren't we all!

MAC

That's the truth!

JACK

Well, I'll tell ya'. Technological advancement. That's the key, I'd have to say.

MAC

Technological advancement!

KELLY

Technological advancement?

ROBERTS/ LAURIE/ SHEILA

Technological advancement.

JACK

Oh, yes! Way of the world! Technological advancement and automation.

LAURIE

You mean less people?

JACK

Oh, a lot less! One machine doing work that it used to take three, four, even five people to do.

SHEILA

One machine?

JACK

That's the key!

MAC

You don't say.

JACK

Yes, sireee. That's the future! These are exciting times and we are right smack in the middle of them! Exciting times!

MAC

Yes, they really are, Jack. They really, really are.

JACK

Businesses big and small, looking to automate! Machines with better, faster output and less and less for people to have to do! Out with the old and in with the new!

MAC

Did you hear that, Kelly?

KELLY

Yes, sir. I sure did.

JACK

Best way to improve productivity! Technological advancement and Aut-o-mation!

ALL OTHERS

Automation?

JACK

Without a doubt.

MAC

And you feel that concept fits in well with the up close and personal industry of domestic and industrial wholesale soap sales?

JACK

I don't see why not! Shouldn't matter what you sell. Productivity is the goal. Shouldn't be any different here!

MAC

I see, I see. Jack, let me ask you a question. Would that be alright?

JACK

Well, of course! Happy to answer it, if I can.

MAC

Do you care about soap? I mean, does soap even enter into your future plans? Does it play any important role in your business model at all?

JACK

(Laughs) Well, I guess you have me there. No. No, I can't really say that it really does. Not for me personally, that is.

(ALL gasp.)

MAC

What?

JACK

Never really has, to be honest.

MAC

So you have no investment in soap or the future of the soap industry at all.

JACK

No. I guess I can't say that I do. Only ever use hand sanitizer myself. Have for years now. Quick and easy. Have one on me right now, to be honest.

(JACK Pulls a bottle of sanitizer out of his shirt pocket. ALL gasp.)

MAC

You son of a bitch.

JACK

Say what?

MAC

What I mean is, you seem to have already made your mind up. Sounds to me like you have just out and out decided where you stand on our little family here and our product and there's no changing your mind on it. Seems like you've really thought the whole thing out.

JACK

Hardly! I don't even really care that much, to be honest. I wonder if it would be possible to get a couple more creamers before I get started tearing things apart here?

MAC

Tearing things—Ha, ha, ha. Of course, of course it would, Jack. You'll find all the creamers you need in the refrigerator right inside that little room there! By all means, use as many as you like, before you start tearing things apart!

JACK

Well, thanks!

MAC

Yes, sir! AS MANY AS YOU'D LIKE! There is no shortage of creamer in this office, or of love, or of HEART!

JACK

Well, I definitely can see that. You said, uh, just inside this room, here?

MAC

Right in there! Can't miss it. The fridge is right between the copier and the filing cabinet! The big, cold, white box!

JACK

Oh! Right by the copier. Works out just perfectly, doesn't it?

MAC

Oh, it sure does, JACK. Just PERFECTLY!

JACK

Well, alright then!

SHEILA

I'll show him...

MAC

Thank you, Sheila. Thank you VERY much! Lots of sugars and stirrers there, too! Might as well enjoy yourself before you start the dirty work!

JACK

Ha. Thank you.

MAC

And it is dirty work, Jack! Dirty, filthy, unclean work you're doing!

JACK

Ha! Don't I know it! But I guess that's what the hand sanitizer is for!

(MAC lunges at JACK. ROBERTS steps in before he gets to him.)

MAC

Why you little—

SHEILA

Right this way, Jack.

(SHEILA quickly escorts JACK out to the side room. EXIT JACK and SHEILA.)

MAC

(In a bit of a state) Oh, that superior son of a bitch! Doesn't even care—we might as well be selling used cars as far as he is concerned.

ROBERTS

Seems pretty nice for a hatchet man—

MAC

Of course he does, Roberts. That's how those slick New York types work. They come in here, dressed down, seem friendly at first, and then OUT come the five thousand dollar suits and ninety dollar cigars. They'd as soon cut your heart out as look at you!

ROBERTS

He doesn't really seem—

MAC

Damn it, Roberts! You sweet, innocent boy, you! You can't go by how a man seems! It's what's inside a man that counts!

KELLY

That's right, sir!

MAC

Thank you, Kelly!

MAC

Now listen. We are up against it here. As soon as he finishes that coffee, he is going to start looking around. And he's going to be looking for anything he can use to shut us down. We are all looking at being out of work if this little Napoleon has his way! Automation my—

LAURIE

What are we going to do?

MAC

Well, we not going to just sit here while this Jack the Ripper murders our entire office.

ROBERTS

Mac!

MAC

He is cutting off our life line, Roberts! Bringing in machines to do our jobs. We've worked too hard here to see it torn apart by some hand sanitizer using corporate shill! This man is trying to murder a family. OUR family! And I won't let it happen! KELLY!

KELLY

Right here, sir!

MAC

Get New York on the phone now! Roberts, Laurie—

(ENTER SHEILA hurriedly from the side room. KELLY rushes to make the call using the phone on the wall.)

SHEILA

MAC!

(SHEILA rushes to where MAC is standing. He meets her halfway.)

MAC

Where do we stand, Sheila? Is he still downing that coffee?

SHEILA

No, that's just it.

MAC

WHAT? He's finished it!? Well, why didn't you tell me? This is it! We are out of time! Have to move now! KELLY, give me that phone!

(MAC grabs the receiver from KELLY and rips the cord off of the phone. He moves quickly to the side room door where he wraps the cord around the door handle like he is tying up a rodeo hog, and fastens the cord to the nearby desk so the door cannot be opened.)

MAC! SHEILA

Not now, Sheila. MAC

Holy— ROBERTS

Roberts, give me a hand! MAC

What are you doing? LAURIE

Protecting my family! MAC

Mac, you can't do that. ROBERTS

We can if we work together, my boy! MAC

No, I mean you can't-- ROBERTS

(ENTER MS. YOUNGMAN. She is sharply dressed in sensible business attire. Very put together and composed.)

MS. YOUNGMAN
Hello?

(From inside the copy room JACK tries the door handle and finds it stuck. He jiggles it and tries again to open the door to no avail.)

MAC! SHEILA

NOT NOW, SHEILA! MAC

Oh, no! LAURIE

JACK (O.S.)

Oops. Uhhh...Door seems to be stuck. Sheila?

MAC

Oh, it's stuck alright. Stuck against injustice!

JACK

What?

(JACK begins to pull harder on the door now. MAC pushes hard against it and screams.)

MAC

Stuck against arrogance and corporate greed!

KELLY

You tell him, Mr. Mac Ryan!

MAC

Stuck against the oppression of the common man by the ruling class! Stuck against the axis of EVIL!

MS. YOUNGMAN

Excuse me!

MAC

You're going to have to hold your horses there, sweetheart. We are at WAR!

JACK

Hey! LET me out of here!

MAC

So you can murder my family? Not a chance, BUCK-O!!

JACK

Murder your? What?—What's going on? I just want to get my tool box. *(Pounds on door)*

SHEILA

MAC! He's not the hatchet man!

(There is silence.)

MAC

What?

SHEILA

He's here to repair the copier. He's the copier repairman.

MAC

Alright, I'm listening.

SHEILA

He's here to repair the copier that was on the fritz. He showed me the work order. That's what I was trying to tell you!

MAC

You might have tried a little harder.

KELLY

So he's not the corporate hatchet man?

LAURIE

The copier repairman?

ROBERTS

Oh, no.

SHEILA

Then who's coming from New York?

MS. YOUNGMAN

I am. My name is Joan Youngman and I am here at the request of the New York office to evaluate this branch.

MAC

It's a great pleasure to meet you.

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)

ACT II; SCENE ONE

(AT RISE: The Same office; later that day. The door to the side room is now open. The phone cord is no longer an impediment but hangs still attached to the doorknob. ROBERTS, LAURIE, KELLY and SHEILA have gathered around and MS. YOUNGMAN stands near the main door to the office while MAC stands in the middle of the room. He has his coat and hat on and his briefcase in hand. His head is hung low as he begins the walk of shame towards the door. He stops and looks up toward Ms. Youngman. The clock now reads 12:45 PM.)

MAC

So that's that. A big man knows when to admit that he's made a big mistake. And that's what I did here. Not too proud to say it. But, what say we just put it all behind us and start over fresh?

MS. YOUNGMAN

You shut up a man in a room, against his will, and screamed like a howling monkey that we were at war. AND you cut a company phone cord off at the neck to use as the instrument of detention.

MAC

Which I, of course, am happy to replace, if necessary.

MS. YOUNGMAN

It's a felony. You committed a felony on company property.

MAC

And I hope we can move past that.

MS. YOUNGMAN

You kidnapped and unlawfully detained a copier repairman. In front of all of your employees and you did it on COMPANY TIME! There is NO moving past that!

MAC

I can see where you're coming from. Perhaps—

MS. YOUNGMAN

You are terminated, Mr. Mac Ryan. Effective immediately. There is no perhaps. And you are fortunate that there are no charges being levied against you. It appears that as far as kidnapping victims go, you have a talent for selecting remarkably well. I surely would not have been so forgiving! Now get out!

MAC

Well, then. Done is done. Like I always say—

MS. YOUNGMAN

No speeches, Mr. Mac Ryan. Goodbye.

(MAC hangs his head again and leaves. At the door he looks to KELLY and puts one finger against his nose. EXIT MAC.)

MS. YOUNGMAN, *Continued*

Now. This unfortunate incident is over. It is only the most recent in a long line of unfortunate incidents that have occurred in this office, but in this case, it may provide one of you with an opportunity for advancement, such as it is.

SHEILA

Advancement?

MS. YOUNGMAN

I was asked to choose how to best reduce this office staff. Since Mr. Mac Ryan kindly took care of that himself, I no longer have that burden. However, now the management chair in

this office has been left vacant. I will fill it with one of you.

ROBERTS

One of us?

MS. YOUNGMAN

That's correct. It is the most cost effective way for a division such as Right Bright to move forward without a period of adjustment that it can ill afford given that this branch is barely profitable now. I have always believed in the spirit of competition, so one of you will be promoted as soon as I have made a determination based off of your sales history and management potential.

LAURIE

Sales history?

MS. YOUNGMAN

Yes. And your potential to effectively run this office. Which, I am sure, from what I have seen in this case, can only be a net gain.

SHEILA

You mean really run this office?

MS. YOUNGMAN

A task that I am sure any of you are more than capable of doing far better than your predecessor.

ROBERTS

You are going to appoint one of us to replace Mac?

MS. YOUNGMAN

That is correct. Right Bright has been a succubus on the fresh supple skin that is the youthful visage of the Bright and Clean name. I am confident that one of you will heal the puss-laden, gaping sore that this office has become.

KELLY

Eww. *(MS. YOUNGMAN looks at KELLY)* Sorry.

MS. YOUNGMAN

The position comes with a twenty percent raise in salary and a company car.

(ROBERTS, LAURIE, and SHEILA look at one another.)

SHEILA

A company car?

LAURIE

And a raise.

MS. YOUNGMAN

Twenty percent.

ROBERTS

And you think that one of us can just step in and do Mac's job?

MS. YOUNGMAN

You certainly could not do any worse. Now. Which one of you is Mr. Kelly?

(MS. YOUNGMAN looks to ROBERTS and KELLY. There is no answer. Everyone turns to KELLY who stares blankly back at them.)

SHEILA

Kelly!

KELLY

Oh! ME! I'm Mr. Kelly, Mrs.—

MS. YOUNGMAN

It is MS. Youngman. Or Joan is fine, if any of you prefer, though I do not plan to be here long, as it is my hope that one of you will prove more than ready to take over this position and I can make my selection by end of day today. It is not a complicated endeavor. And I am sure that one of you will rise to the occasion and show yourself to be the obvious choice. Alright then, Mr. Kelly, follow me. I want to see a comprehensive breakdown of each staff member's performance to date and I'll need each sales report over the last year, starting with last month's and working backwards.

KELLY

Mac said that—

MS. YOUNGMAN

Mr. Mac Ryan no longer has any influence over this office whatsoever! You would do well to recognize that and conduct yourself accordingly! Is that clear?

KELLY

Yes, sir!

(MS. YOUNGMAN glares at KELLY, who cowers sheepishly. EXIT MS. YOUNGMAN. KELLY lags behind and gives a helpless look to his coworkers. EXIT KELLY. ROBERTS, LAURIE, and SHEILA stand looking at one another. There is stunned silence at what has just transpired. ROBERTS' phone rings. He goes to answer it.)

ROBERTS

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

SHEILA

I can't believe Mac is gone!

LAURIE

I know!

SHEILA

And one of us is going to take over for him? I'll bet Roberts thinks he has it all locked up!

LAURIE

Well, he does have the best sales numbers.

SHEILA

Right, but Joan is a powerful woman. And you know the thing about powerful women?

LAURIE

What?

SHEILA

Powerful woman like to promote other women. Sound like anyone you know? Semicolon - dash - right parenthesis!

LAURIE

You?

SHEILA

That's right, sweetheart! Looks to me like Roberts is in for a big surprise! I have a new order coming in probably this afternoon. One hundred and fifty units of C-203 domestic for that new hotel going in down the street. The manager there just moved in next to me!

LAURIE

That's great. One hundred and fifty units?

SHEILA

Yeah. Roberts has no idea how good I'll look in that company car! And I sure as heck am going to enjoy that twenty percent raise!

LAURIE

Yeah.

SHEILA

Hey! I had better get to work. Have to give her a reason to hire me, ha-ha!

LAURIE

(Weakly) Ha-ha. Right.

SHEILA

Hmmm. I wonder if Jack fixed the copier while Mac had him locked up back there, with the phone cord. Say, he was a cutie, huh? Didn't you think so? I mean not super-hot, but without a doubt a cutie! Ugggh, I hope he fixed it! Cute or not, I mean, you still have to do your job. Right? Right? Okay! TTYL.

(EXIT SHEILA to the side room, shutting the door.)

LAURIE

Yeah, TTYL.

(ENTER KELLY.)

KELLY

LAURIE! Ms. Youngman wants to see this week's updated sales numbers from you by the end of the day. You, too, Roberts. Better get to work.

(ROBERTS has just hung up the phone and is working on the paperwork. He nods in the affirmative to KELLY.)

KELLY

Is that a new sale?

ROBERTS

It is. Two hundred units of 203 industrial and twenty boxes of dispensers.

KELLY

Ms. Youngman wants to know about any new clients right away. I'll take that paperwork when it's done. Where is Sheila?

LAURIE

Pulling files.

KELLY

Sheila!

(EXIT KELLY to side room.)

LAURIE

Two hundred units?

ROBERTS

Yeah. New client. First order.

LAURIE

Wow.

ROBERTS

Yeah.

(ROBERTS stands and removes a stack of papers from his desk, organizing them on his desk.)

LAURIE

Are ALL of those new accounts?

ROBERTS

They are. That new call center in Utah has been sending me some good leads. I guess I'd rather be lucky than good. These just kind of fell in my lap today, although I wish that—

LAURIE

Today? Those are all from today?

(ROBERTS stands and walks toward LAURIE, holding the papers.)

ROBERTS

Most of them. Well, a little over half of them are—

(LAURIE's consternation has been building. As ROBERTS approaches her, she suddenly swats the papers out of his hands in frustration.)

ROBERTS

What the—

LAURIE

I take the bus to work. THE BUS! The stop is six blocks away from my house and this is COLORADO, where is SNOWS, A LOT! That company car means I don't have to wake up an hour early any more. It means I don't have to sit on a cold bench in the snow all next winter waiting for that stupid bus, which is ALWAYS late. It means that I don't have to walk two and a half blocks to work after I get off of the bus in more than a foot of snow and carry my work shoes in a plastic bag for half the year. Do you KNOW how much I hate doing that? I need that company car! It would change my life. It would mean that I won't ever again have to hear the bus driver tell me that I would be pretty if I wore more makeup.

(ENTER KELLY. HE stops in his tracks.)

LAURIE, *Continued*

It would mean that I won't ever again have to sit down on a seat that may or may not be covered in honey. Ho-ney. Do you understand??? HONEY!?! And THAT's the best case scenario! So BACK OFF!

(ROBERTS stands in stunned silence as LAURIE storms off toward the side room. ENTER SHEILA just as LAURIE crosses towards the door. They nearly collide as LAURIE EXITS, slamming the door behind her. KELLY and ROBERTS stare after her.)

SHEILA

What's the matter with her?

KELLY

She doesn't like honey.

(KELLY shrugs and helps ROBERTS as he begins to gather up his papers. SHEILA's phone rings. She answers.)

SHEILA

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

(ROBERTS gathers up the rest of the scattered papers and hands them to KELLY. EXIT KELLY out the main door of the office. ROBERTS starts toward the side room door and hesitates. SHEILA sees him and puts her hand over the receiver.)

SHEILA

Copier's still broken. Let me tell you, the cute ones almost never finish the job. *(Winks; turns attention to call)* Well of course! I am always happy to help a new client. *(Laughs)*

(ROBERTS looks to the side door and is about to open it when MS. YOUNGMAN ENTERS holding the pile of order forms in her hand. She flips through the papers without looking up.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

Roberts! Are these all from this week?

ROBERTS

Yes, ma'am.

MS. YOUNGMAN

This is excellent.

ROBERTS

Thank you.

MS. YOUNGMAN

I'd like to hear your thoughts on this office and how it could function at a higher level.

ROBERTS

I don't really think that I am—

MS. YOUNGMAN

Do you have anyone else on your morning call list?

ROBERTS

No, but—

MS. YOUNGMAN

Wonderful. Then let's talk for a few moments, in my office.

ROBERTS

If it's alright, I'd prefer—

MS. YOUNGMAN

Now, please.

(EXIT MS. YOUNGMAN. ROBERTS looks to the side door then follows out the front door. EXIT ROBERTS.)

SHEILA

(On the phone) Well, I'm sure if you have just a few more minutes we can find a solution to your needs. Hello? Hello? JERK!

(SHEILA hangs up the phone and crosses over to the other desks in the room. She quickly searches the surface and the top drawers for anything worth seeing. ENTER KELLY. He sees her and stops. SHEILA looks up and shuts the drawer to the desk.)

SHEILA

Is Roberts with Joan?

KELLY

Umm, yes.

SHEILA

She's interviewing him for the job, isn't she?!

KELLY

I don't know. Umm, were you just—

SHEILA

Oh, shut up, Kelly!

KELLY

Okay.

SHEILA

She's going to make him our new boss, isn't she?

KELLY

I really don't know—

SHEILA

Oh, sure she is! She's a powerful woman. And you know the thing about powerful women

don't you?

KELLY

What?

SHEILA

They always promote men! So they don't have any real competition at the top! I knew this was going to happen! I wonder if I can hear what they're saying.

KELLY

I'm not sure that—

SHEILA

Out of my way, Kelly!

(EXIT SHEILA quickly, slamming the main office door behind her. ENTER LAURIE, slamming the side room door behind her. LAURIE goes directly to her desk and sits with a determined look about her. She crosses as if KELLY isn't even in the room.)

KELLY

Do you by any chance—

LAURIE

Not now, Kelly!

KELLY

Okay.

(LAURIE picks up her phone and a call sheet and dials. KELLY slowly slinks out of the office main door.)

LAURIE

(On phone with previous unseen aggression) Hello. I'm returning a call for your purchasing department. Please transfer me. Thank you. *(Pause)* Hello. My name is Laurie with Right Bright Soap. You recently expressed interest in some of our Right Bright products and I would like take care of your order for you today. Now how can I help you keep it clean?!

(SHEILA's phone rings. ENTER SHEILA on the run to catch the phone before the caller hangs up. She flings herself across the desk and grabs the phone on the third ring.)

SHEILA

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

LAURIE

I see. I would think that...No, I am sure that you will be quite happy with the service we provide. *(Pause)* Well, perhaps you could, but I am sure in the end that they won't provide you with the satisfaction that we here at Right Bright are so proud to offer.

SHEILA

Well, of course! I would be more than happy to help you with that! Now you just let me know what you are looking for and I can make a few suggestions about what quantity might best fit your needs. *(Pause; laughs)* Well, we do aim to please!

(ENTER ROBERTS. He crosses to his desk, pausing to look at LAURIE. SHEILA gets out an order sheet and begins to fill it out. SHEILA and LAURIE continue their phone calls with a series of "yes," "well, that would be our most popular product – the 506 antibacterial" and "I would probably order about twice that much." ROBERTS' phone rings. He answers.)

ROBERTS

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

SHEILA

No, sir. Thank you! Bye-bye, now!

(SHEILA hangs up the phone and goes to work on the order form.)

ROBERTS

Yes, Mr. Davis. I would think that would be sufficient for your needs. Absolutely. I can have that shipped out for you immediately. No, sir. No trouble at all. Thank you.

(ROBERTS hangs up his phone and begins work on the order form.)

LAURIE

Thank you. And we look forward to serving you. *(Pause)* It has been my pleasure. Thank you and goodbye.

(LAURIE hangs up the phone and takes a moment to revel in a moment of supreme self-satisfaction. SHE looks over at ROBERTS, who is hard at work at his desk. LAURIE stands and crosses to him. SHEILA's phone rings. She answers.)

SHEILA

Right Bright Soap. How can I help you keep it clean?

LAURIE

Roberts?

ROBERTS

(Looks up playfully) This isn't a new client, I swear... just a reorder.... I can prove it if you need me to. See? Just a reorder.

(ROBERTS holds up the order form in front of his face. LAURIE laughs.)

LAURIE

Well then, I guess it's alright.

ROBERTS

It's a small one! But I can short them on it or accidentally send it to China or something if you would like me to.

(LAURIE laughs as ROBERTS lowers the sheet and smiles. SHEILA hangs up the phone and leaps to her feet.)

SHEILA

Another new client, Roberts! You'd better watch out! Oh, Joan!

(With great joy, SHEILA hurries toward the front door, order forms in hand. EXIT SHEILA.)

LAURIE

I just wanted to say that I'm sorry. For knocking your—for...for everything.

ROBERTS

Thank you. I'm glad to know I haven't made a permanent enemy in this office.

LAURIE

You think I'm awful.

ROBERTS

No. I'm only kidding. I make jokes when I'm terrified. *(LAURIE laughs.)* Just tell me you're not going to hit me and I'll settle down.

LAURIE

I promise.

ROBERTS

Good, then! Alright if we call a truce?

(ROBERTS extends his hand which LAURIE shakes. They linger there for a moment.)

LAURIE

Of course.

ROBERTS

Excellent, because any more distractions, and we will both end up working for Sheila.

LAURIE

Mac never looked so good.

ROBERTS

Yeah.

LAURIE

I should get back to work. I just made a sale. A good sale. To a new client.

ROBERTS

Congratulations. And how did it feel? Did you love it?

LAURIE

No. No. I didn't. It was terrifying. I think that I've discovered that talking to people I don't know on the phone and trying to convince them to buy something is about the worst feeling in the world to me. And I'm pretty sure I had to say some things that are probably only about half true to make the sale, so that makes me a little nauseous. But I got a new client and they bought what I told them to, and I did it all on my own. So that makes me feel good. I think.

ROBERTS

Well, congratulations. Next, "Salesperson of the Year".

LAURIE

Hardly.

ROBERTS

(Laughs) Well, at least the start of a promising sales career, right?

LAURIE

A career? I hope not!

ROBERTS

What?

LAURIE

I only took this job because I have a lot of student loans that I have to start paying on. I think I would go crazy selling soap for the rest of my life! No offense, but I just really don't like it. At all.

ROBERTS

You mean selling wholesale soap isn't your dream job?

LAURIE

Not at all.

ROBERTS

Mac would cry if he heard that.

LAURIE

Yes, he would. But I really need the money. And that company car might make it more bearable, too.

ROBERTS

So long as it comes with the "No Honey Package."

LAURIE

Yes. That would be a necessity.

ROBERTS

What do you want to do? Wait – let me guess. Ultimate fighting professional circuit?

LAURIE

Close. I'm a painter.

ROBERTS

A painter?

LAURIE

Yes.

ROBERTS

Portraits or houses?

LAURIE

(Laughs) Landscapes, actually. It's what I've always wanted to do, ever since finger paints.

ROBERTS

Really? Landscapes, huh? So no people with three noses?

LAURIE

No. I have been known to place the occasional out of season deciduous foliage in a traditional evergreen climate, though.

ROBERTS

Picasso be damned!

LAURIE

I really am sorry about the papers.

ROBERTS

We'll chalk it up to your rebel spirit. I've heard about you artists. Just remind me not to cross you again.

LAURIE

Thank you, Roberts.

ROBERTS

Robert.

LAURIE

What?

ROBERTS

My name is Robert.

LAURIE

Your name is Robert Roberts?

ROBERTS

No, no. When I came in for my interview here, Kelly brought me in and started to hand Mac my resume. He said, "Mr. Mac Ryan this is Roberts—" and I'm pretty sure he was going to say "Robert's resume" or something but he sneezed one of those real quiet, hold me in sneezes, right after the word "Robert's," and Mac kind of got the wrong idea. He seemed to like it, and while Kelly was recovering from his incredible imploding sneeze—well, Mac was off and running. He said, "Hello, Roberts, nice to meet you! Don't like resumes, never have, never will, but you look like a man who can learn on the fly, so grab a chair and we will see how it goes today." And then, every hour or so, he kept coming by and slapping me on the back and saying "Good job, Roberts," no matter what I was doing. By the end of the day, Shelia started calling me Roberts and... well, it just kind of stuck. I guess I missed my chance to head it off at the pass.

LAURIE

So your name isn't Robert Roberts.

ROBERTS

No. That would be silly.

LAURIE

What is it, then?

ROBERTS

It's Robert Robertson.

LAURIE

Really?

ROBERTS

No, I'm joking.

LAURIE

So you just let us all call you Roberts this whole time.

ROBERTS

At first I thought that it would all be cleared up when my first paycheck came through and they saw my name on it, but I didn't know that the checks come from corporate and they go straight to your house, and by the time I realized that, I was pretty much all in as Roberts. I kind of like it now. Besides. I never thought I would be here this long.

LAURIE

Not your dream job either?

ROBERTS

Ha! No. Not by a long shot. I'm a writer, or at least I was until I started working here. Still hope to be, I guess.

LAURIE

Ever since finger paints?

ROBERTS

(Laughs) College. But now all I write is order forms.

LAURIE

Not quite what you had in mind, I would imagine?

ROBERTS

Not at all, but I do write a mean order form.

(LAURIE laughs and then her phone rings. She goes to answer it. ROBERTS returns to his desk, smiles and goes back to work on the order form. The side room door slowly opens a few inches.)

MAC *(O.S.)*

Psst. Psst. Roberts. ROBERTS.

(ROBERTS jumps a bit and looks around a bit confused.)

ROBERTS

What the—

MAC *(O.S.)*

Roberts, my boy!

ROBERTS

Mac?

(ROBERTS looks towards the voice coming from the doorway to the side room.)

MAC

Shhhhh! Don't look at me!

ROBERTS

Alright. What – uh – what should I look at?

MAC

Look at your desk. Pick up the phone! Pretend to be talking to someone.

ROBERTS

Okay.

(ROBERTS does. He continues to talk into the phone while speaking to the partially open door.)

ROBERTS, *Continued*

How did you get in there?

MAC

I climbed through the window in here. The one with the broken latch. Listen. Right Bright is finished. I am going to start my own company. What I need to know is, are you in?

ROBERTS

In?

MAC

Good boy, Roberts!

ROBERTS

No! No. I mean—what do you mean "in?"

MAC

I mean, will you come with me, on the greatest adventure of your life?

ROBERTS

I – I don't really –

MAC

I understand you are hesitant. But we can do this, my boy. We just need to—

(ENTER SHEILA, who is very excited.)

SHEILA

Roberts! Guess who just had a FANTASTIC meeting with Joan about the new client I just booked and their initial order of two hundred units? ME! Isn't that amazing? I mean, I never knew how motivated I could be! But a company car and a twenty percent raise!?! Oh, wowie! 2G2BT!

(Pause. ROBERTS suddenly gets it.)

ROBERTS

Too Good To Be True!

SHEILA

Oh, you get me! You really get me! It will be an honor to be your boss!

ROBERTS

That's great, Sheila.

(ROBERTS looks worriedly at the now closed side room door.)

SHEILA

Oh! Sweetie! Don't be jealous! I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to rub it in your face. Your handsome, sad, little face!

ROBERTS

It's alright, Sheila. Really. I mean it. Congratulations. That's a great sale!

SHEILA

Oh! It breaks my heart! I hate these silly competitions. I wish we could all just be one big boss! You know? You keep your chin up. Sell, sell, sell!

ROBERTS

Alright, Sheila. I will, will, will!

SHEILA

Ha! Good boy, Roberts! *(Slaps ROBERTS on the back)* Hey! Look at me! I'm Mac!

(SHEILA laughs and crosses back to her desk.)

ROBERTS

Mac? MAC???

(There is no answer. ENTER MS. YOUNGMAN.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

Has anyone seen Mr. Kelly?

SHEILA

Sure haven't, Joan.

ROBERTS

Not for a while.

MS. YOUNGMAN

When he turns up, please have him see me immediately. This just arrived. It is a list of new leads that I want you all to follow up on. The book stays here. Take one sheet at a time.

(EXIT MS. YOUNGMAN. ROBERTS, LAURIE, and SHEILA stare at each other for a moment. Then at the book. Then ALL rush to the book. SHEILA gets there first and grabs a page. Then another and another. ROBERTS and LAURIE look at each other and smile. Once SHEILA is done feeding on the leads and scurries back to her desk to begin making calls, ROBERTS motions for LAURIE to go ahead. LAURIE takes the next page out of the book, smiles at ROBERTS, and returns to her desk. ROBERTS takes the next page and goes back to his desk. Over the next scene, LAURIE and SHEILA continue to make and answer calls. They each make another trip back to the book. ROBERTS starts to make a call, when from the side room near his desk MAC whispers out to him.)

MAC (O.S.)

Psst. Roberts!

ROBERTS

Yeah, Mac. What can I do for you?

MAC (O.S.)

Listen, my boy! I know that you want to be sure you are getting on board a ship that won't sink. So I got us a little security! Say hello, Kelly!

(KELLY waves through the partially opened door.)

KELLY (O.S.)

Hello, Roberts.

ROBERTS

Hi, Kelly.

MAC (O.S.)

Listen, Roberts. Kelly says that corporate is sending a book of leads.

ROBERTS

Yeah. Joan just brought it in.

MAC (O.S.)

What?

ROBERTS

The book of leads. We are already making calls from it.

(MAC is very hurt by this.)

MAC (O.S.)

No. Joan? You call her Joan?

ROBERTS

That's her name, Mac.

MAC (*O.S.*)

Alright. Never mind. The book is in the office? Right now?

ROBERTS

Yeah. We each just got the new—

(ENTER MAC waddling in, crouching, like a duck towards ROBERTS' desk. HE reaches the desk and hides out of sight of LAURIE and SHEILA.)

ROBERTS

What are you doing?

MAC

Taking a chance on love, my boy. Taking a chance that you love this company as much as I do!

ROBERTS

What?

MAC

Listen! With you, me, Kelly, and that book, we can start anew!

ROBERTS

Mac, if Joan sees you here, you're going to get put in jail for trespassing.

MAC

You really call her Joan, Roberts? Just like she's your best friend?

ROBERTS

Mac!

MAC

Alright. Alright. You're right. I've got an idea.

(MAC waddles off to the side room. EXIT MAC.)

ROBERTS

MAC? Mac! Where are you going—?

(ENTER KELLY waddling quickly.)

KELLY

Hi, Roberts.

ROBERTS

Kelly. What are you doing?

KELLY

Mac says that with that book, the three of us can forever change the soap world and revolutionize the entire industry.

ROBERTS

How?

KELLY

I'm not sure. Hold on.

(KELLY EXITS, waddling off. SHEILA again rushes over and pulls pages from the sales book. ROBERTS smiles at her as if nothing is going on. She rushes back to her desk as KELLY ENTERS, once again waddling towards ROBERTS.)

KELLY, *Continued*

Mac says it's a good question, my boy!

ROBERTS

And?

KELLY

That's all he said.

ROBERTS

Kelly, what are you doing?

KELLY

Hold on.

(KELLY EXITS waddling off.)

ROBERTS

No! Kelly!

(LAURIE gets up, takes another page from the book and acknowledges ROBERTS. HE smiles awkwardly. LAURIE returns to her desk and picks up the phone. ENTER KELLY, waddling.)

KELLY

Mac says I'm his eyes, ears, and lips. His eyes, ears, and lips, m'lad!

ROBERTS

That's pretty creepy, Kelly.

KELLY

I'm aware of that.

ROBERTS

What I mean is, why are you hiding down there?

KELLY

Mac said to stay hidden so we don't get caught.

ROBERTS

But you didn't do anything wrong. And you still work here.

KELLY

Hold on.

(KELLY once again begins to waddle off.)

ROBERTS

No! Wait. Kelly, WAIT! Ugggh!

(EXIT KELLY. ROBERTS' frustration grows considerably. SHEILA crosses to ROBERTS, whose head is now in his hands.)

SHEILA

You okay, honey? *(ROBERTS leaps to his feet and blocks the door to the side room.)*
Ahhh. Still upset?

ROBERTS

I was never – I mean, yes. Yes, Sheila, I am still very upset. *(Notices the file in her hand)*
Where – uh – where are you headed?

SHEILA

Just to file these call sheets that I finished. ALL of them! While you still haven't done even one!

ROBERTS

I can do that for you.

SHEILA

Really?

ROBERTS

Yeah, yeah, of course. I mean, I'd be happy to file that for you. We're a team after all, right?

SHEILA

Oh, Roberts. That's nice. Of course we are! *(Thinks she gets it)* But I can't show favoritism once I'm in charge, no matter how nice you are to me now.

ROBERTS

I understand. I'm still happy to do it.

SHEILA

You're sweet.

(SHEILA hands ROBERTS the file and crosses back to her desk. ROBERTS quickly opens the door to the side room and steps partway in. He looks around the room and crosses back to his desk, bewildered and still holding the file. He closes the door to the side room again.)

SHEILA, *Continued*

(Seeing the files still in his hand) Something wrong, Roberts?

ROBERTS

(Realizing has files) Nope. Just making sure it's all in order and ready to be filed.

SHEILA

You're sweet. But remember, Roberts. Noooooo favors. Even if you are the cutest thing EVER!

(EXIT ROBERTS into the side room. He RE-ENTERS without the file. He sits at his desk, shaking his head. LAURIE finishes her work at her desk and crosses to the side door. When she gets to ROBERTS' desk, she pauses for a moment. SHEILA is hard at work.)

LAURIE

Are you alright?

ROBERTS

I really—I really couldn't say right now.

LAURIE

Alright. *(Laughs)* I'm just going to go file these.

ROBERTS

NO! *(LAURIE is taken aback.)* I mean – I don't know what I mean. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

LAURIE

Okay. Thank you.

(LAURIE EXITS into the side room. ROBERTS watches with hesitation. LAURIE RE-ENTERS and smiles at ROBERTS. SHE stops and puts a hand on his shoulder.)

LAURIE, *Continued*

You don't look very well.

ROBERTS

Things seem to be going a little more off the rails than normal around here for me today.

LAURIE

Yeah. This competition is bringing out the worst in all of us, I guess. It's kind of a cabin day for me.

ROBERTS

A what?

LAURIE

My sister married a doctor and they have a cabin. Days like this, I like to imagine myself up there, by the fireplace, looking out the back window of that little cabin while I work. Makes the day go by a little quicker.

ROBERTS

Ah. A cabin day.

LAURIE

Yeah.

ROBERTS

I like that.

LAURIE

We used to go there for reunions sometimes when my grandparents were alive. The cabin backs right up to this wonderful lonely mountain. And every time I visit, that mountain looks different. Sometimes, it's a deep, shadowed purple, and sometimes it's kind of a grey. Other times, it's all capped with snow. In the winter months, now and then, the clouds cover it, and keep you from seeing the top. But my favorite is when the sun is shining and you can see every detail: the tree line...even the lake near the top.

ROBERTS

That sounds almost unbelievable.

LAURIE

It is. I always thought how much I would love to spend an entire year painting that mountain from a different point of view every day. Three hundred and sixty five paintings of the most inspiring sight I have ever seen. Each one a completely different kind of beautiful, depending on how my mountain looked that day and from where I choose to paint it.

ROBERTS

I can't really imagine anything better.

(SHEILA hangs up the phone and leaps out of her chair.)

SHEILA

Another one! Another new client! Joan! Oh, and I guess that it's alright for you two to chat it up right now. But once Joan is gone, you are both really going to have to buckle down. I loved Mac, but the man was marshmallow. You hear me? Marshmallow! Oh, Joan!

(EXIT SHEILA out the main door. ROBERTS and LAURIE look at each other.)

LAURIE

Sheila is not allowed at the cabin.

ROBERTS

It sounds like a wonderful place.

LAURIE

It really is.

KELLY and MAC *(O.S.)*

(Opening side room door) ROBERTS!

(LAURIE lets out a considerable scream and leaps back in fright. MAC and KELLY scream at her scream, and slam the side room door shut.)

LAURIE

WHAT WAS THAT?

ROBERTS

It's Mac and Kelly. They—

(ENTER MS. YOUNGMAN and SHEILA. ROBERTS leaps in front of the side room door.)

ROBERTS, *Continued*

(Quickly) I can't explain. Please cover.

MS. YOUNGMAN

What is going on?

LAURIE

On? Nothing. Nothing— I was just – very, VERY excited – about this – sale I just made!

SHEILA

A sale?

LAURIE

Yes. To a new client.

SHEILA

A new account?

LAURIE

Yes. Fifteen units—Yea!

(There is a long pause.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

Well, congratulations. Please bring me the paperwork as soon as you have it completed.

LAURIE

Oh, I will!

MS. YOUNGMAN

Where is Mr. Kelly?

ROBERTS

I think he took lunch, probably.

MS. YOUNGMAN

Alright. Sheila, please come with me. I need some assistance with something.

SHEILA

Of course, Joan! I'd be happy to!

(EXIT MS. YOUNGMAN out the main door to the office. SHEILA approaches LAURIE.)

SHEILA

Fifteen units?

LAURIE

Yea!

(EXIT SHEILA.)

LAURIE

What on earth?

(ROBERTS opens the side room door.)

ROBERTS

(To MAC and KELLY) Get out of there!

(ENTER MAC and KELLY from the side room.)

MAC

Well done there, Laurie! Well done!

ROBERTS

What do you think you are doing?

MAC

Starting anew, my boy! Starting anew!

ROBERTS

What does that mean?

MAC

New company, new soap, new opportunity for success!

ROBERTS

With what? You don't have an office, or any customers, or a supplier!

MAC

Going to work out of my home. Had Kelly run these off on the ol' computer as soon as I resigned.

(MAC hands ROBERTS a business card.)

ROBERTS

You were fired. And Joan will have your head if she finds you here.

MAC

Have to take some risks now and again. That's the world of domestic and industrial wholesale soaps, my boy. But the risk is very well worth it! We clean the faces of all the world's children, scrub the grease off of hands of working men from Denver to Tokyo. We are in the bathtubs of women everywhere! Not literally, of course. Come with us, Roberts! You too, Laurie. The four of us would make a great team! We can do it!

ROBERTS

No, we can't! You have no product and no one to sell it to.

MAC

I know everything there is to know about industrial and domestic soaps. Don't I, Kelly?

KELLY

That's what you told me, sir!

MAC

That's right! And as for clients...that book right there is our Holy Grail. Kelly tells me there are more than two hundred buyers in that book primed and ready! After that, the others will follow. Just need a quick look to copy down four or five names, and then we will be off and running!

ROBERTS

This is insane.

LAURIE

That book belongs to the company.

MAC

I worked with corporate to develop every one of those leads! Went to shows in Las Vegas, Montreal, San Francisco, even Pueblo. Handed out thousands of cards and shook a million hands!

ROBERTS

Mac—

MAC

Roberts. Soap is my life. I have lived every day of my adult existence for this company. I have more than thirty years of experience selling a product that does nothing but good. It cleans little kids' faces, it makes cars look shiny and new, it keeps away disease and that stuff – what's it called – on the inside of your bathtub?

KELLY

Soap scum, sir?

MAC

Forget that last one. But everything else; that's the beauty of soap. That's what I do. I make beauty and you have to do what you love, my boy! Soap is a part of me, and it's a part that they can never take away. Oh, they may be able to take my job, my paycheck, my company car. Maybe they can even take away a little bit of my dignity. But they cannot take my heart, they cannot take my determination, and they will never take my freedom! *(Aside to Kelly)* Mel Gibson. Braveheart.

KELLY

He's very good, sir.

(MAC dismisses this assertion.)

ROBERTS

Look. I don't care if you look at the book. But, Mac, you're going to get in trouble if you hang around here!

MAC

Roberts. I like you. Always have, and that's why. You think of others. You think ahead. You use the old coconut. No time to waste. We'll talk about the details later! Kelly, one quick look and let's get out of here.

(KELLY starts toward the book.)

LAURIE

Someone is coming!

(MAC dives behind ROBERTS' desk. KELLY is left standing. MAC crawls into the side room. EXIT MAC.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

(ENTERS) Could I please have every—Oh, you're back, Mr. Kelly. Good.

(KELLY does not move. He stands somewhat stunned, then passes out and drops to the floor with a thud. BLACK OUT.)

ACT II; SCENE TWO

(AT RISE: Same Office; 4:39 PM. KELLY has been laid out across ROBERTS' desk. He is awake, but groggy. LAURIE tends to him. SHEILA works feverishly at her desk. She is on the phone and writing at the same time. ENTER ROBERTS. Ice pack in hand. LAURIE takes it.)

ROBERTS

I picked up another ice pack. Is he still out?

LAURIE

Finally awake.

ROBERTS

How is he?

LAURIE

I think he'll be alright. He says he can sit up now.

KELLY

(Waves) I really think I can.

ROBERTS

Alright. Let's give it a try. One, two, three.

(ROBERTS and LAURIE lift KELLY into a seated position.)

ROBERTS, *Continued*

How do you feel?

KELLY

I'm okay. I don't really know what happened. When Ms. Youngman saw me, I just kind of froze, and the next thing I remember is seeing the floor coming up at me really fast.

ROBERTS

Don't worry, Kelly. She has that effect on all of us.

KELLY

She's just so scary.

(ROBERTS and LAURIE look at each other and smile.)

ROBERTS

I know, Kelly. I know.

KELLY

Did Mac make it out in time?

LAURIE

Yes.

ROBERTS

He belly crawled past my desk and must have gone out the same window you came in from.

KELLY

Thank goodness. How long was I out?

ROBERTS

Not long the first time, but then you fell asleep once we got you up on the desk. You've been asleep for a while. Laurie looked after you.

LAURIE

You seemed really tired.

KELLY

Thank you. Yeah. Mac had me doing a lot of work to get us ready to launch the new company. It's hard being an executive!

LAURIE

An executive?

KELLY

Yeah. Mac made me vice president in charge of things that needed to be done. So I was pretty busy this morning.

ROBERTS

I'll bet. Joan said she wanted to see you as soon as you were awake. Do you think you're ready for that?

KELLY

About what?

ROBERTS

She's trying to decide who will run the office after she leaves...

KELLY

But I work for Mac now. I'm vice president in charge of things—

ROBERTS

Kelly. Mac can't pay you. He doesn't have any costumers. You work here. This is your job. You need to go talk to Joan.

KELLY

I didn't really think about that. I got so caught up in climbing the corporate ladder. Could one of you come with me?

ROBERTS

No, Kelly. No one can go with you. It'll be alright. Just talk to her.

KELLY

(Worried) I don't know.

LAURIE

You know what I like to do when I feel a little overwhelmed? I like to pretend that I'm somewhere else. Some place far away.

KELLY

Like Bermuda?

LAURIE

Sure. Bermuda might work. I like to choose somewhere special, kind of personal. Some place that makes you feel warm and safe and able to accomplish anything.

KELLY

Yeah. Like Bermuda.

(ENTER MS. YOUNGMAN.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

KELLY!

(KELLY lets out a horrified, yelp of fear.)

ROBERTS

Bermuda, Kelly. Bermuda.

(KELLY is somewhat reassured.)

MS. YOUNGMAN

I am glad that you seem to have recovered. Now, if you have fully rejoined the ranks of the living, I need your signature on this incident report. And you should plan to stay late to make up for the lost time.

KELLY

Yes, ma'am.

MS. YOUNGMAN

And I will need to speak with you in my office.

(EXIT MS. YOUNGMAN.)

LAURIE

It's alright, Kelly.

ROBERTS

Go get 'em, Kelly.

LAURIE

Yeah?

ROBERTS

Yeah.

(KELLY EXITS with an attempt at newfound confidence into the main office. ROBERTS watches LAURIE as she gathers up the cold compress and the scattered items.)

ROBERTS, *Continued*

That cabin you were talking about sounds pretty nice right about now.

LAURIE

I am going to go there. Today is going to be my last day at Right Bright. I'm going to tell Joan before the day ends.

ROBERTS

But you just got your first new client. You've been on the phones all day. You're on a roll!

LAURIE

And I hated every minute of it. I think spending the commission from the new account might make me forget that. And that thought terrifies me. I know who I am. I am a painter. Not a salesperson. Painters paint. And that's what I intend to do. *(Pause)* The question is—Are you a salesperson...or a writer?

(LAURIE smiles at ROBERTS and EXITS out the main office door. ROBERTS crosses back to his desk and sits down. He looks over at SHEILA, who is hard at work, then stares at the main office door. The door to the side room slowly opens.)

MAC *(O.S.)*

(Whispering loudly) Psst. Roberts!

(ROBERTS hangs down his head, half in laughter, half in despair.)

ROBERTS

Yeah, Mac.

MAC (O.S.)

Pick up the phone. Pretend to be talking.

ROBERTS

You can't be here, Mac. I told you—

MAC

The phone, the phone! Is Kelly alright?

(ROBERTS reluctantly picks up the phone, but does not speak into it this time.)

ROBERTS

Yeah, yeah. He's okay. He'll be just fine.

MAC (O.S.)

Good, good!

ROBERTS

Now, you've got to—

MAC (O.S.)

I know, I know. I have to get out of here. Not safe anymore. Enemy territory. Roberts?

ROBERTS

Yeah, Mac.

MAC (O.S.)

Come with me, my boy. Let's take the soap world by storm. Revolutionize the business of clean! We'll be the Johnson and Johnson of soap!

ROBERTS

Mac, *(Laughs)* Johnson and Johnson sells soap.

MAC

Knew you'd understand! GOOD BOY, ROBERTS! The time is nigh, my boy! Come with me. Let's start something special together.

(ENTER LAURIE from the main office door. She smiles at ROBERTS and dusts her hands off as if to say the deed has been done. ROBERTS smiles back, then turns his attention to MAC. LAURIE watches with a knowing grin as ROBERTS talks to the partially open door. SHEILA is unaware.)

ROBERTS

No, Mac. I can't. I can't go with you on this one. I only took this job for the money. I can't just run off and start a new company for the love of soap. I just don't feel the same way about it that you do. I'm sorry, Mac. I really am.

(There is a pause.)

MAC (O.S.)

I know that, son. I know you are. Just one last thing then. Like to shake your hand.

(MAC extends his hand out of the partially opened door. ROBERTS reaches down and shakes it.)

MAN, (O.S., Continued)

That-a-boy, Roberts!

(MAC gives ROBERTS a big thumbs up, then slams the side room door. SHEILA looks up, startled by the noise.)

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