

Type A

A “Buddy” Comedy

by

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TYPE A

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

<u>ALBERT BARROWS</u>	Male, 30's. Handsome, strong.
<u>COLLETTE BARROWS</u>	Albert's sister. Female, 30's but younger than Albert. Nerdy, sickly.
<u>JODY SCHWARTZ</u>	Female, 30's. Attractive, strong.
<u>JOEL SCHWARTZ</u>	Jody's brother. Male, 30's but younger than Jody. Overweight, nerdy.
<u>MEG MORRIS</u>	Female, early 20's. Small, mousey.
<u>LARRY SCHNEIDER</u>	Male, 30's. Slick, corporate-type.
<u>KATHRYN SAUNDERS</u>	Female, 40's. Elegant and powerful.

The set is the living room of Albert and Jody's Park Avenue apartment. It SHOULD be posh and elegant, but is more unkept and sloppy. There is an archway SL which lead to the kitchen and a hallway SR which leads to Albert's bedroom, Jody's bedroom and the bathroom. Upstage center should be the door. Upstage should also be a desk or table with two telephones, both cordless. Downstage center should be a television with a VCR (or at least implied).

ACT I, Scene 1

(Lights up on the Park Avenue apartment of ALBERT BARROWS. ALBERT is peddling furiously on a home-made exercise bicycle. He is very handsome and rugged, though overtly frantic. He wears a tee-shirt and boxers. The radio is blaring a football game and the television is blaring the news. He eats while he pedals, watches and listens. We hear someone pounding on the door, but ALBERT doesn't hear it. He picks up his cordless phone and dials.)

ALBERT

Langley! What do you mean "I woke you up?"

(beat)

Yes, I know it's Sunday morning. You don't go to CHURCH or do anything stupid like that . . . oh.

(beat)

Look Langley, I've decided we're going with that new paint supplier. I know, I know, but we'll be saving the company twelve point three g's each fiscal year.

(beat)

(Impatient) Uh huh. Uh huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of COURSE we can afford it. It's the principle, Langley. You understand principle, don't you? Now make sure that paint is ordered and delivered within the week.

(As he speaks, COLLETTE lets herself in with her own key. She is nerdy, mousey and sickly - wheezy and sniffily.)

ALBERT (cont'd)

Yeah, well Kathryn Saunders and the Board of Directors pay ME to run the company so who gives a flying flip what YOU think.

(beat)

I expect that order to go out today. I want receipts on my desk first thing tomorrow morning. Better yet, fax modem them to me as soon as you get them.

(beat)

ALBERT (cont'd)

Yes, Langley, I know it's Sunday. You sound like a friggin' parrot! (mocking) "But it's Sunday -- but it's Sunday -- gimme a friggin' cracker!"

(beat)

Little League? Why the hell do you want to go to a Little League game?

(beat)

I didn't know you had kids . . . Hell, I didn't even know you were married . . .

(beat)

Look, call my secretary du jour. He, She or It can take care of the paperwork at least. Hell, they should put a revolving door on that position. Bunch o' Sallys. They don't make secretaries like they used to.

(beat)

They get paid to put up with me, Langley. That's their job, just like it's yours.

(Hangs up the phone and continues his activities.)

Come on, Giants! Kick their candy asses!

COLLETTE

Is this how you spend your Sunday?

ALBERT

Dammit, Collette! Don't you knock?

COLLETTE

I was knocking so loud the neighbors wanted to let me in. (breathes through an inhaler)

ALBERT

New inhaler. Very chic. What is it this time?

COLLETTE

Oh, who knows . . . dust mites, bacteria, chemicals . . . my eyes are running, my nose is running . . . at any given part of the day at least one orifice is leaking.

ALBERT

Damn doctors.

COLLETTE

It's okay, Albert. I'm alright.

ALBERT

Your sure? I'll give them hell if you want.

COLLETTE

That's okay. I'm under control.

(looks at ALBERT's activities)

Not bad. Television, radio, exercising and eating.
Four at once.

ALBERT

Child's play. YOU talked me out of the catheter.

COLLETTE

You don't have to live your life all at once.

ALBERT

Do I tell you how to live your life?

COLLETTE

All the time.

ALBERT

(Grumbles) Mmmm. (Oblivious) So how's mom and dad?

COLLETTE

You could call them yourself, you know.

ALBERT

Do I look like I have the time to call?

COLLETTE

They're your parents, Albert.

ALBERT

No, they're YOUR parents. I'm my own parent. I
conceived, nurtured and educated myself.

COLLETTE

And you're proud of that?

ALBERT

I have a six-figure income and over three thousand
employees working under me.

COLLETTE

And this is how you measure success?

ALBERT

How do you measure it, with a yardstick?

COLLETTE

I take it then you didn't get to look at the book I
left for you.

ALBERT

I don't have time to read books.

COLLETTE

And what about those videos I left for you?

ALBERT

Collette, you're my sister and I accept that. But I don't have the time or the interest in foolish pursuits. I have a factory to run, and without me it would fall to pieces.

COLLETTE

Okay, okay. I'm just trying to help.

ALBERT

I don't need help.

(stops peddling for a moment)

What about you? Do YOU need help?

COLLETTE

(Sighs) No. It's just that . . . well . . . I'm not getting any older and I'm always sick and I feel like . . . life is, well . . . passing me by . . .

ALBERT

(Continues peddling) Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever. Look, as long as you're here could you power up the laptop? I have some memos to write.

COLLETTE

It's Sunday. Even God rested one day.

ALBERT

And look where it got him. The batteries should be fully charged. Friggin' things are supposed to last five hours - crapped out yesterday after three. Bastards. Oh, and pour me a martini, would you? There's a pitcher in the fridge.

COLLETTE

(Turning on his laptop computer) You know you have another prospective roommate appointment coming this morning.

ALBERT

So?

COLLETTE

Don't you think you want to straighten up a little?

ALBERT

Why?

COLLETTE

Well foregoing the fact that I can't stay here more than fifteen minutes at a time before the dust stops me from breathing altogether, how about, oh, to make a good impression? You scared off the last sixteen prospects, remember?

ALBERT

'Bunch of Sallys.

COLLETTE

You know, Albert, I've been thinking. Do you really need a roommate?

ALBERT

(Finally stops peddling) Are you crazy? Of COURSE I need a roommate!

COLLETTE

Why? The apartment's rent controlled and still in grandma's name, so you pay about three hundred dollars a month . . . you make more money than God . . . you're hardly ever here . . .

ALBERT

This apartment is worth at least two thousand dollars a month. If I charge someone a grand a month for their half of the rent, that's seven hundred dollars I could be making just for letting some idiot rent the extra room. That's seven hundred dollars I'm losing EVERY MONTH by not having a roommate - PLUS the fact that they'd be paying one hundred percent of the rent, totalling a cool grand PLUS free rent.

COLLETTE

That's robbery.

ALBERT

Do I tell you how to live your life?

COLLETTE

I never realized how twisted you are, Albert,

(Doorbell rings.)

COLLETTE (cont'd)

Do you want me to get that?

ALBERT

You're being rhetorical, right?

(beat)

Hey, where's my martini?

(COLLETTE opens the door.
JODY SCHWARTZ bursts in.
She is very attractive and
dressed very business-like.)

JODY

(As she hands COLLETTE each item) Here's a check for first and last month's rent, my utility deposit, insurance forms, medical records and my resume. I have NYNEX coming first thing in the morning to set up a phone and fax line. Are you crying?

(COLLETTE points to ALBERT,
who has gone back to
pedaling, watching
television, listening to the
radio and eating.)

COLLETTE

Sorry, I'm allergic to your perfume. And HE'S your roommate.

JODY

Then who the hell are you? (takes out a cigarette and lights it)

COLLETTE

The sister.

JODY

You don't live here too, do you?

COLLETTE

Oh, no -- thank God.

ALBERT

Hey, hey, hey! Yes, I DO mind if you smoke.

JODY

Then I'm glad I didn't ask. Where's my room?

ALBERT

(A little taken back) Don't you think we're being a little presumptuous? I haven't allowed you to move into MY apartment yet.

JODY

The rent is one thousand dollars a month, like you said over the phone?

ALBERT

Eleven hundred.

JODY

Fine.

(takes out her checkbook, writes a check -
hands it to ALBERT)

Here's the balance. Now, I don't have time to screw around. Where's my room?

ALBERT

This way. (dismounts the bike) Do you really have to smoke?

JODY

That's a joke, right?

(Just as they exit, JOEL enters carrying a large box. JOEL is overweight and nerdy.)

JOEL

Jody! Where do you want this! Jody!

COLLETTE

Oh! Let me help you.

(COLLETTE helps JOEL put the box down.)

JOEL

Is this your apartment?

COLLETTE

No, I live in Queens with my folks. This is my brother's place.

JOEL

You're his sister?

COLLETTE

Little sister.

JOEL

Pleased to meet you. I'm the little brother.

COLLETTE

(Wipes and extends her hand) Collette Barrows.

JOEL

(Shakes her hand) Joel Schwartz.

COLLETTE

Joel Schwartz. I've heard of you, haven't I?

JOEL

I don't think so.

COLLETTE

Yes, I think I have . . . I think. The news or something.

JOEL

Must have been someone else.

COLLETTE

No . . . no, I'm sure of it. Didn't you do something or . . . or something?

JOEL

I have to warn you. My sister, she's . . . uh . . .

COLLETTE

I know. My brother's the same way.

JOEL

Lord help us.

COLLETTE

Do you think they'll get along?

JOEL

You know, I think so. Either that or they'll kill each other within the hour. Either way, we win.

COLLETTE

It's a match made in heaven.

JOEL

I wouldn't have picked there.

COLLETTE

(Laughs) You're very funny.

JOEL

Thank you. You're pretty sharp, too.

(They both pull out inhalers and laugh about it. ALBERT and JODY return. JODY is attempting to write things down on a note pad while examining every inch of the living room. ALBERT is shaving himself with an electric razor.)

ALBERT

So, what's your game?

JODY

Advertising.

ALBERT

Manufacturing. What are your numbers like?

JODY

I produced twenty commercials last year.

ALBERT

That's a poor number.

JODY

The average producer does six or seven if they're lucky. Most of our clients request me directly.

ALBERT

My plant produces eight hundred units every minute.

JODY

That's a poor number.

ALBERT

It's all by hand. We don't use big machines. All that environmental garbage.

JODY

Was that your idea?

ALBERT

HELL no. Does a good job of keeping us OUT of Fortune 500, though. Friggin' Sallys . . .

JODY

MBA from Harvard. You?

ALBERT

Yale.

JODY & ALBERT

(In unison) First in my class.

ALBERT

(Notices JOEL) Hey, fatso, get to work. You're not paid by the hour to pick up my sister.

COLLETTE

Albert!

JODY

My brother, Joel.

ALBERT

Oh yeah?

JOEL

It's a pleasure to meet you . . .

ALBERT

(Interrupting) Yeah, yeah. I'm sure it is.

JODY

We have to work out living room arrangements.

ALBERT

No we don't.

JODY

I have my Nordic Track. It can't fit in the bedroom. And then there's the bathroom.

ALBERT

The bathroom's not in the arrangement, either.

JODY

What do you expect me to do, use the kitchen sink?

COLLETTE

Albert . . .

ALBERT

Right. Right. Okay -- just keep anything "female" out of my sight.

COLLETTE

ALBERT!

ALBERT

Relax!

JODY

Fine. May I use your phone?

ALBERT

You don't have a cellular?

JODY

Don't be ridiculous. Those rates are killing me.
(dials ALBERT's phone)

ALBERT

It better be a local call.

JODY

Relax.

(beat)

Meg? Why the hell aren't you here?

(beat)

I don't care! I have to be moved in right away!
There's tons of work to do and I count on you to do the
nasty parts.

(beat)

Then GET HERE. Drop whatever you're doing and get here
now.

(beat)

I'll pretend I didn't hear that.

(hangs up)

(To the others) Day off. What a stupid concept.

ALBERT

You know, you give 'em an inch . . .

JODY

Ain't it the truth.

JOEL

You shouldn't be so hard on Meg.

JODY

Don't bother me about Meg.

JOEL

It's just that she . . .

JODY

(Interrupting) Meg is a half-rate assistant at best.
She should pay me directly for all the things I do for
her.

ALBERT

You gotta keep your thumb on those assistants. The minute you relax your grip suddenly they can't do this and they can't do that and they need off for this and they need of for that . . .

JODY

I had an assistant once -- I made the fatal mistake of telling her she did a "good job." She got so cocky I had to fire her.

ALBERT

Yeah, I've been there.

JOEL

But she's not your slave . . .

JODY

Meg is none of your damn business! I don't tell you how to program those STUPID computers of yours! (exits to bedroom area)

ALBERT

Is she always this way?

JOEL

She does sleep every now and then.

COLLETTE

(Ponderous) It's amazing. It's like Albert in a skirt.

ALBERT

I'm NOTHING like her.

COLLETTE

Oh, like you don't abuse poor Langley.

ALBERT

That's different. It's in Langley's contract to take my abuse - it's called the "Asskissing Clause."

(JODY returns.)

JODY

Boxes! Joel, get cracking! NOW!

JOEL

Oh, oh, sure, sure. Sorry.

COLLETTE

Need help?

JOEL

Not really . . .

COLLETTE

Good. Let's go.

(JOEL exits and COLLETTE
follows him.)

ALBERT

So, Judy - why is it so important that you live on Park Avenue?

JODY

My agency just won a huge retail account.

ALBERT

Oh, sure, that explains everything . . . NOT!

JODY

We almost won it by default - this client is one of the toughest around. I have to show them what I'm made of.

ALBERT

All by living on Park Avenue?

JODY

If I can tame this client I could become an Executive Producer.

ALBERT

Hmm. And then what?

JODY

Head of Production.

ALBERT

Hmm. And then what?

JODY

Full partner in the agency, and if you say "hmm, and then what" one more time I'll cut off your tongue.

ALBERT

So . . . Park Avenue?

JODY

No client of any worth will respect a producer who lives at home with mom and dad in Flushing.

ALBERT

But . . . Park Av-

JODY

(Interrupting) By living on Park Avenue I can show any client that they're dealing with the toughest, the BEST producer in the business. No coddling here. I mean business.

ALBERT

Sounds exciting.

JODY

Don't mock me, Alvin.

ALBERT

Oh, never.

JODY

So, why do you need a roommate? Surely you make enough to support yourself here.

ALBERT

I have my reasons.

JODY

I'll bet.

ALBERT

I do.

JODY

Good.

ALBERT

Hey, if you're Miss Powerful Producer, how come YOU can't get your own place?

JODY

That's the misconception of Advertising. You can command tons of power but unless you've got that window office on the Executive floor the pay sucks.

ALBERT

(Revelling) Oh, too bad! (laughs to himself)

JODY

At least I work in the City. Where's this fabulous manufacturing plant of yours? New Jersey?

ALBERT

It's accessible by MetroNorth.

JODY

So, you have to scramble for the train while I can just ROLL out of bed and be at the office.

ALBERT

I wouldn't call it a "scramble."

JODY

Still, you're up and out while I'm enjoying coffee and a smoke in the comfort of my own bed.

ALBERT

I guess that just makes you superior.

JODY

I guess it does.

ALBERT

I feel it important to let you know that I keep very odd hours. Sometimes I don't get home until one or two in the morning.

JODY

So? Sometimes I don't even come home. I have to catch a nap at the office.

ALBERT

And I go on long business trips.

JODY

My commercial shoots take me all over the world.

ALBERT

I'm supposed to be impressed? Do you have a window office?

JODY

Don't be ridiculous. Thirty-seventh floor, overlooking midtown Manhattan. You?

ALBERT

The factory's upstate. I overlook the parking lot.

JODY

Pity.

ALBERT

I have over three thousand employees under me.

JODY

My work is seen all over the world.

ALBERT

My product is in stores all over the world.

JODY

I have six Cleo awards.

ALBERT

Did you win them or rush the stage and grab 'em?

JODY

Have YOU ever won any honors?

ALBERT

Why? Honors have nothing to do with numbers.

JODY

In my field honors can get you the numbers.

ALBERT

Numbers are number one.

JODY

So, what does your plant manufacture?

ALBERT

Something stupid. What does your client do?

JODY

Something equally stupid, I'm sure.

(They both get a good laugh
out of this.)

JODY (cont'd)

GOD I hate my client.

ALBERT

I hate my boss.

JODY

I hate MY boss, too.

ALBERT

I hate my parents.

JODY

(Still whimsical) I hate what you've done with this
place.

ALBERT

(A little put-off) I hate your attitude.

JODY

(Clearly pissed) I hate YOUR attitude.

ALBERT

I hate the stench from your cigarettes.

JODY

I hate the empty liquor bottles all over the place.

ALBERT

I hate your wanting to just MOVE on in here and disrupt my otherwise FUNCTIONAL life.

JODY

I'm starting to hate you.

ALBERT

You're not winning any popularity contests with me, either, Toots.

JODY

Fine. JOEL! JOEL, WE'RE LEAVING!

(JOEL rushes in with another box. COLLETTE is in tow, also carrying a box.)

JOEL

What!

ALBERT

Fine! Go!

COLLETTE

Albert!

ALBERT

Don't "Albert" me. I'm not a child, Collette.

COLLETTE

Good. Then don't act like one.

ALBERT

But she started it!

COLLETTE

Oh, God.

JODY

Joel, take me home.

JOEL

No way!

COLLETTE

(To JOEL) Quick.

(JOEL and COLLETTE quickly
leave.)

JODY

Cowards.

ALBERT

So. I guess it's you and me.

JODY

I guess so.

ALBERT

What do we plan on doing about it?

JODY

Well, I have a furniture delivery at two, a facial and
manicure at four, a TON of director's reels to look at
and a shooting budget to do.

ALBERT

I have to convince my CEO that we could save twelve
point three g's each fiscal year just by using a
different kind of paint.

JODY

So.

ALBERT

So.

JODY

Got any coffee? My Espresso-Magic 300 is coming with
the furniture.

ALBERT

I have instant.

JODY

INSTANT?!!

Blackout

SCENE 2

(Sunday again, one week later. The room looks similar, except JODY's NordicTrack is on the opposite side of the living room from ALBERT's bicycle. ALBERT pedals on his bike, doing as many things as possible. He wears his trademark tee-shirt and boxers and is drinking a beer. Lights fade up as his phone rings.)

ALBERT

Barrows. What is it?

(beat)

Don't be ridiculous, Langley, you can always bother me. I don't care if it's friggin' Sunday or not - I'm at work 24-7.

(beat)

I KNEW Saunders would have a problem with the paint we ordered! We saved her a ton of money! Stupid CEO . . . she should be on her knees hailing me as a god!

(beat)

What do you mean "lesser quality?" What kind of horseshit is that?

(beat)

Well, yeah, I know we saved a ton of money. You'd expect to have to surrender some quality. What do you think I am, an idiot?

(beat)

Look, if Kathryn Saunders has a problem with this, she knows my number. She can call me herself. She doesn't need to get some second-rate, underpaid, brown-nosed lackey to do her bidding . . . nothing personal, Langley.

(As he speaks, ALBERT exits to his bedroom. MEG opens the door to the apartment with a huge wad of keys. She carries many bags and dry-cleaning. She lays everything down and darts into the kitchen.)

ALBERT (cont'd)

Biggest waste of time -- going to the bathroom. That and eating. Hell, our stupid digestive tract wastes more time . . . that and reading.

(beat)

No, no, no . . . too much beer last night. Goes through me like, well, beer.

(beat)

What's that? A ballet recital? Why the hell do you want to go to a ballet recital?

(beat)

I didn't know you had kids . . . Hell, I didn't even know you were married . . .

(beat)

Look, you tell Kathryn Saunders if she has a problem she can call me directly.

(ALBERT hangs up and commences peddling. He gets annoyed.)

ALBERT (cont'd)

Friggin' beer.

(ALBERT exits to the bathroom again. MEG exits the kitchen area, picks up the dry cleaning and delivers it to JODY'S room. She quickly re-emerges with a hamper of laundry. She starts unloading videotapes from one of her bags. When finished, she heads back toward the kitchen. JUST before she disappears, ALBERT comes out of his bedroom and sees her.)

ALBERT
FREEZE!

(MEG hysterically hits the floor.)

MEG
Oh my God! Oh my God! Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

ALBERT
(Interrogating) Who the hell are you?!!

MEG

Meg Morris, Jody Schwartz's assistant.

ALBERT

Who let you in?!

MEG

Jody gave me a set of keys.

ALBERT

What the hell are you doing here?!

MEG

Jody gave me some things to do. Please, oh please don't shoot me!

ALBERT

Get up.

MEG

What?

ALBERT

Off the floor! Get up!

(MEG rises. She is quite terrified.)

MEG

(Realizing) You're not armed.

ALBERT

Of course not! I never was! Friggin' mental midget . . .

MEG

Oh, my God. (giggles nervously) Jody, that's a great disguise . . .

ALBERT

What the HELL are you talking about?!

MEG

It's okay, Jody. It'll be our little secret. The makeup is astounding. I hardly recognized you. If it wasn't for that "mental midget" thing I never would have. And how do you do that voice?

ALBERT

Jesus! What a flake!

MEG

(Laughs) That's so funny! I never knew you were so funny!

ALBERT

(Picks up his cordless phone) You'll see how funny I can be when I call the police and have you locked up for breaking and entering.

MEG

You're not Jody?

ALBERT

Give the girl a prize!

MEG

Oh my God! You're her roommate! Oh, I'm sorry! It's just that you sound exactly like her.

ALBERT

That's it. Get out of my apartment.

MEG

I'm sorry, I can't. Jody gave me some errands to run. This is a real nice apartment. What was your name again?

ALBERT

She didn't tell you my name?

MEG

Nope. She just told me she had a roommate - and a few adjectives I'd rather not repeat.

ALBERT

What's she got you doing?

MEG

Oh, this and that. Dry cleaning . . . laundry . . . minor shopping . . . a few deliveries . . .

ALBERT

And you LET her?

MEG

Oh, yes. Jody is the most powerful producer in the agency. If she gets promoted to Executive Producer it'll mean a leg-up for me, too.

ALBERT

You mean you don't want to kill her? You don't want to take a knife and just SLIT that little tobacco-stenched throat of hers?

MEG

(Laughs) You're very funny.

ALBERT

I'm serious.

MEG

(Laughs) You're not at all like Jody described you.

ALBERT

Is that a fact.

MEG

No. She said you were a real ogre. But you're not. You're a lot like her, only a lot funnier.

ALBERT

Please stop comparing me to her.

MEG

You should take it as a compliment. Jody is an amazing woman. She's commands a lot of respect. So, what was your name again?

ALBERT

(Shakes MEG's hand so hard that it jars her) Albert Barrows. Call me "Al."

MEG

(Laughs nervously) Okay . . . Al. Well, I have a few more things I have to so do . . .

ALBERT

(With lots of sarcasm) Of course. Of course. Don't let me disturb you.

MEG

Thanks. You're a peach.

(MEG scurries into the kitchen while ALBERT starts peddling again.)

ALBERT

Hey Mike, while you're in there could you get me a beer.

MEG

(Appearing almost instantly with the beer) No problem.

(Without missing a beat, MEG floats back into the kitchen. ALBERT is a little surprised, stunned and impressed. He takes a drink and JODY comes in from the front door.)

JODY

ME-E-E-E-E-EG!

(MEG makes a sweep from the kitchen again, this time with a mug of coffee in her hand, a cigarette behind her ear and a folder under her arm. She hands JODY the mug and the cigarette, which she lights.)

MEG

The dry-cleaning is in your closet. I have four new director's reels for you to look at and your ten-o'clock appointment tomorrow rescheduled to next Tuesday.

JODY

Budget analysis.

MEG

(Hands JODY the folder from under her arm) Right here. I worked all night on it.

JODY

(Examining the report)

Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yes . . .

(takes a pencil and starts editing)

Went to bed early, I see.

MEG

How many mistakes did I make this time?

JODY

Four. (gives MEG the folder back) Fix it. (quietly)
Friggin' mental midget . . .

MEG

(A little deflated) Yes, Jody.

JODY

Where are the reels?

MEG

(Indicating one of the bags she brought in) On the sofa.

JODY

Good. Get started on laundry. I need to view these reels.

MEG

Yes, Jody. (exits)

(JODY takes the reels and pops one in the VCR.)

ALBERT

Yes, I WAS watching that show.

JODY

Then I'm glad I didn't ask.

ALBERT

Ever think of splurging on your own television?

JODY

Why? Is yours inferior . . . like everything else in here?

ALBERT

You know, you don't always have to have a friggin' chip on your shoulder.

JODY

You have no idea what hell my client is putting me through.

ALBERT

You have no idea of the hell my boss is putting ME through.

JODY

The woman has NO concept. She's such a child sometimes. She has this huge company at her fingertips and she squabbles over the stupidest details.

ALBERT

My CEO will willingly turn down thousands of dollars JUST for a stupid shade of orange paint.

JODY

(Beat) What the hell are you talking about?

ALBERT

I saved the woman twelve point three g's for a lesser quality of paint and SHE's getting all upset about it.

JODY

Twelve point three g's?

ALBERT

Impressive, isn't it.

JODY

Damn straight. She should hail you as a god.

ALBERT

(Noticing the tapes) Aren't you supposed to be watching this?

JODY

What, this? It's crap. All crap.

ALBERT

Looks pretty good to me. I love that commercial.

JODY

Shows what you know. The style is amateurish. The product is never plainly in sight. As a matter of fact, the commercial itself stands out more than the product. Do you know what the commercial is advertising?

ALBERT

Ee . . . aa . . . ur . . . you know, I can't remember. But I love that dog . . .

JODY

Don't try to do my job, Albert.

(JODY pops out the tape and changes it.)

ALBERT

Hey, I've seen that one, too!

JODY

Would you like a prize?

ALBERT

You know, you don't have to be such a . . .

JODY

(Interrupting) ME-E-E-E-E-E-E-EG!

(MEG swoops out again.)

MEG

Yes, Jody?

JODY

(Takes out the tape, hands it to MEG) Fix the budget analysis as I've indicated, fax it to the client and attach a memo stating that this tape will follow. Call the director's agent and fax him the budget analysis as well.

MEG

But the laundry . . .

JODY

. . . can wait. Has the fax machine I've ordered arrived yet?

MEG

Wednesday.

JODY

Then take this to the office. Call the artist's rep, have them FedEx a copy of this tape out for nine-a.m. delivery tomorrow morning. Call the client to alert them to the fax and the impending tape delivery, call me to tell me you've done it, then come back here.

MEG

Yes, Jody.

JODY

And get me a carton of cigarettes.

MEG

Anything else, Jody?

ALBERT

Let's see . . . I'm out of beer, my shoes need shining, my ass needs kissing . . .

JODY

What do I look like for the rest of the day?

MEG

(Annoyed) Now?

JODY

Yes, now.

(MEG fishes through her things to pull out an overstuffed filofax. Numerous papers fall out, to which she picks them up quickly. She flips through the pages.)

MEG

Let's see. Six o'clock, see your parents . . .

JODY

Cancel.

MEG

Seven thirty fitting . . .

JODY

Fitting? For what?

MEG

You're in Dianna's bridal party.

JODY

Who the hell's Dianna?

MEG

Your best friend from grade school?

JODY

She's getting married?

MEG

Your in the bridal party.

JODY

Okay. What's next?

MEG

Eight o'clock with Larry . . .

JODY

Dinner and sex, or just dinner?

MEG

(Checks the appointment) Dinner and sex.

JODY

Hmm. Call Larry, cancel dinner and see if he'll re-schedule sex for ten-thirty. Push up the fitting to six. Then book some edit time and start pulling reels for an animatic. Also get one of the creatives there -
- I don't care which one.

MEG

Yes, Jody.

JODY

Anything else?

MEG

You wash your hair tonight.

JODY

Right. That will be all, Meg.

(MEG stands waiting for a
"thank you.")

JODY (cont'd)

What!

MEG

Nothing, Jody.

(MEG gathers up her bags,
accidentally forgetting the
filofax.)

JODY

Meg . . . the book?

(MEG snatches up the filofax
and exits promptly.)

ALBERT

Lincoln freed the slaves, you know.

JODY

Meg worships me.

ALBERT

I think your brother was right. You abuse that poor girl.

JODY

What do you mean by that?!

ALBERT

Which part? Your brother being right, your abusing her or referring to her as "that poor girl?"

JODY

You like her, don't you.

ALBERT

WHAT?!

JODY

(Confrontationally) Come on. You find her attractive.

ALBERT

She's a child!

JODY

You want to screw her.

ALBERT

You're sick.

JODY

Come on, Albert.

ALBERT

Okay, I admit in some twisted part of my brain I kind of like the idea of a personal slave, but at LEAST I give Langley his own life to live.

JODY

Langley also lives upstate.

ALBERT

Langley has integrity. Langley has guts.

JODY

Does Langley shine your shoes and kiss your ass?

ALBERT

Only when necessary.

JODY

(Laughs a little) Same with Meg . . . only when necessary. It's just necessary SO much!

(A phone rings. Both of them look around to see if it's theirs.)

ALBERT

Mine.

JODY

Enjoy. (Exits to her bedroom)

ALBERT

(Answers the phone) Barrows. What is it?

(beat)

Yes, Kathryn. I sanctioned the deal.

(beat)

By going with a different paint distributor I saved the company twelve point three g's!

(beat)

It's my JOB, isn't it? You PAY me to save you money!

(beat)

But we're talking twelve point three g's! Can't we compromise a little quality for twelve point three g's?

(heads off to the bathroom)

. . . friggin' beer . . . no, Kathryn. Not you.

(ALBERT exits as JODY enters. She picks up her own cordless phone and dials.)

JODY

Kathryn Saunders, please.

(beat)

Jody Schwartz from McGrath and Schribman.

(beat)

Hello, Kathryn. My assistant is about to fax you the updated budget analysis. I just wanted to warn you myself in case she screws up.

(beat)

Yes, it is. I found a director I think you'll like. His name is Kirk Campion. He directed the Sugar-O's Breakfast Cereal commercials.

(beat)

It's a brilliant commercial. It won three Cleos.

(beat)

Well, I think he's the one for the job. View the tape for yourself.

(beat)

Kathryn? . . . Kathryn? . . . Yes, I'll hold.

(JODY heads off to the kitchen. ALBERT re-enters from the bedroom. He is also still talking on his cordless. As he talks he re-mounts his bike and pedals.)

ALBERT

What's the worst that could happen, Kathryn?

(beat)

Oh, that's not going to happen.

(beat)

It did? When?

(beat)

Well, it's not going to happen this time.

(beat)

Yes, I'll hold.

(JODY re-enters from the kitchen and mounts her NordicTrack as she talks on the phone. ALBERT goes into the kitchen.)

JODY

Yes, Katherine, I'm still here. Now about that casting session. I think the boy we chose was perfect . . .

(beat)

In what way? What EXACTLY was it that you didn't like?

(beat)

Because if we knew what it was we could NOT look for it later.

(beat)

Yes, I'll hold.

(ALBERT returns from the kitchen with a beer. He mounts his bike.)

ALBERT

Yes, I'm still here.

(beat)

I stake my JOB on it. Nothing will happen.

(beat)

When. It's your company, you name the time. I'll be there and I'll show you the numbers.

(beat)

Yes, I'll hold.

JODY

Yes, I'm still here.

(beat)

It'll take me at least three days to organize it.

(beat)

Thursday would be best. I could tell my assistant to re-organize the casting session.

(beat)

Yes, I'll hold.

ALBERT

I'm still here.

(beat)

Wednesday? Thursday would be better.

(beat)

Casting session? Alright, Wednesday it is. I'll tell Langley.

(beat)

No problem. Call me here anytime. Goodbye.

(hangs up)

JODY

Okay? Then Thursday it is.

(beat)

Fine. And if you can figure out exactly what it was you didn't like . . .

(beat)

I know . . . I know . . .

(beat)

Very well. I'll tell my assistant. Call me here anytime. Goodbye.

(hangs up)

(Long pause as they exercise more furiously.)

JODY & ALBERT

(in unison)

GOD, I HATE HER!!!

Blackout.

SCENE 3

(The in-house phone rings and rings and rings.
ALBERT, robed and half-asleep, seethes across the apartment to the phone.)

ALBERT

(Into the phone - calmly but intense, ready to blow)
Do you know what time it is?

(beat)

It was a rhetorical question, you flake. Shit - two-thirty in the morning. Some of us work for a living, you know.

(beat)

Yes, I know. Look, now that you've disturbed my alcohol-induced slumber WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT!

(beat)

Oh? Oh really. No, no, no trouble at all. I'll let her know. (hangs up)

(ALBERT coyly picks up a police whistle, saunters over to the archway to JODY's room and commences to blow the whistle long and loud. After a few seconds, JODY - in a total disheveled state - bolts into the living room.)

JODY

(Frantic) What! What is it! What! What!

(Stops suddenly, leers at ALBERT)

Is this some twisted idea of a joke?

ALBERT

I never joke. You know that. You have a visitor.

JODY

It's two thirty in the FRIGGIN' MORNING!

ALBERT

Is it? Oh, my.

JODY

(Turns to go back to bed) I'm going back to bed. Tell whoever to go away.

(Doorbell rings)

ALBERT

Oh, silly me. I must have let him up. Ta ta, princess. (laughs as he exits)

JODY

(Looking around the room) Smoke. Smoke. I need smoke.

(Finds her cigarettes and lights one. Doorbell rings again. JODY opens the door to reveal LARRY, who wears a fine suit.)

LARRY

Hello, Jody.

JODY

Goodnight, Larry.

(She closes the door, which LARRY catches, reopens and lets himself in.)

LARRY

You stood me up.

JODY

I work for a living.

LARRY

You could have called.

JODY

I was busy.

LARRY

It doesn't excuse such flagrant inconsideration.

JODY

Excuse me for having a life.

LARRY

I have a life too, you know.

JODY

(Mumbles to herself) That's debatable.

LARRY

Excuse me?

JODY

Look, can't this wait?

LARRY

Until when? Morning? Tomorrow? Next week sometime if you pencil me in for a phone call?

JODY

I just don't have the time to waste like you do.

LARRY

I don't waste my time, Jody. (Frustrated) I'm tired of always competing with you.

JODY

What do you want, Larry?

LARRY

I want to know if we still have a relationship.

JODY

Sure. Why wouldn't we?

LARRY

Well - we're a slave to YOUR schedule, I see you once a month at best and then only for a few hours, we can't agree on anything, you constantly belittle me and you won't make a commitment.

JODY

So what's the problem?

LARRY

Things have changed . . . between us.

JODY

No they haven't.

LARRY

You never even came to visit me and your brother.

JODY

Not so loud!

LARRY

Why? Your roommate doesn't know?

JODY

No, and he won't. It took me long enough to get a Park Avenue apartment and I'm not about to blow it because my nerdy brother and STUPID boyfriend spent six lousy months in a minimum security prison for Whacking. Was I supposed to feel sorry for you?

LARRY

Hacking. It was a computer hack.

JODY

I still don't know why you got involved with my brother. He's a loser.

LARRY

Joel is one of the finest, most genuine people I've ever known.

JODY

Even though he got you put in Club Med prison for six months?

LARRY

It was a brilliant opportunity. If you had the business sense you would have done it, too.

JODY

So now you're mocking me?

LARRY

No, it's nothing like that at all.

JODY

Then why have you woken me up and why are you standing in my wonderfully new Park Avenue living room at two thirty in the morning?!

LARRY

Do you love me?

JODY

Don't start, Larry.

LARRY

I don't think you love me.

JODY

You're talking like a crazy person. What's the problem?

LARRY

This relationship is the problem, Jody.

JODY

I don't know why you put so much effort into this thing. I don't have time in my life for love, I don't have time for commitment -- I don't have time for this . . . this "relationship" you seem to want. What we have is fine.

LARRY

What we have is an occasional free dinner and sex whenever YOU want it.

JODY

Now that we understand each other, it's time to say "goodnight."

LARRY

No!

JODY

Then what do you want?

LARRY

I want you, Jody.

JODY

You have me, Larry. You have me as much as anyone can have me.

LARRY

It's not enough.

JODY

I'm sorry, but that's all there is.

LARRY

Is it . . . can I . . . is it me?

JODY

No. Well, maybe. Oh, I don't know. It's not like you're not handsome enough. Getting fired from the marketing firm and all . . .

LARRY

I don't blame them. They've freed me.

JODY

But now your income is unstable. This whole freelance concept is a little too free-spirited for me. It makes you sound like a drifter.

LARRY

It's good work. Plus it's flexible, which should be PERFECT for you.

JODY

Which is perfect for you so you can jump when ever I have a spare minute, right?

LARRY

Yes, but not that hostile.

JODY

Goodnight, Larry.

LARRY

So what about us?

JODY

I see no reason to change what's already working fine.

LARRY

But it's not working fine.

JODY

Good. So dump me.

LARRY

What? I don't think that's . . .

JODY

(Interrupting) What's the matter, Larry. Don't have the balls to fire me?

LARRY

Fire you?

JODY

Relationships are like business partnerships. If I'm not up to company standard it's your duty to fire me. Come on Larry, fire me.

LARRY

I can't fire you, Jody.

JODY

You could before you went to jail.

LARRY

I know, but I can't now.

JODY

(Opens the door) Fine. Goodnight, Larry.

LARRY

But . . .

JODY

Goodnight, Larry. Call me when you grow a spine.

(Larry exits. JODY sits on the sofa and lights another cigarette. ALBERT stands in the archway.)

ALBERT

Upset?

JODY

Why do you ask?

ALBERT

The fog's rolling in.

JODY

It's been three hours since my last cigarette. I have to make up for lost time.

ALBERT

Right. (crosses to the kitchen)

JODY

How much did you hear?

ALBERT

Only the last part. It was enough to figure the score.

JODY

(After a beat) Albert, what do men want?

ALBERT

(Returns with a martini) Excuse me?

JODY

What do men want?

ALBERT

You're joking, right? You're trying to make me look stupid?

JODY

No, I mean it.

ALBERT

This is like one of those "opening up" things, right? What do they call it . . . bonding?

JODY

Are you gonna to answer the question are you gonna be an asshole.

ALBERT

I pride myself at being an asshole, Jane. I have three thousand employees counting on me to be an asshole. I owe my entire success to my . . . assholeness.

JODY

You don't know, do you.

ALBERT

Know what?

JODY

What men want.

ALBERT

(Sits) Men want what women want.

JODY

(Beat) That's it?

ALBERT

Come on, Jill. People like us are better than this.

JODY

I have this knot in the pit of my stomach.

ALBERT

(Indicating his martini) I got the medicine.

JODY

No thanks. I'd rather take this straight up.

ALBERT

You really like that bozo?

JODY

Larry? Not really. He's gone soft. He seems to like me, though. I don't know why.

ALBERT

Are you kidding? Why wouldn't he? Hell, he should ENVY you! You've got guts, you've got power, you've got spirit . . . besides, you've a knockout!

(JODY flashes ALBERT a panicked look.)

ALBERT (cont'd)
. . . for a girl. I guess.

JODY
Why, Albert Barrows, was that almost a compliment?

ALBERT
It's the middle of the night. My guard is down.

JODY
(Beat) We'd make a hell of a pair.

ALBERT
Sure. Like vinegar and baking soda.

JODY
More like nytro and glycerine.

ALBERT
We'd kill each other in a minute.

JODY
I know. (beat) Albert?

ALBERT
What?

JODY
Did you mean that? About being a knockout?

ALBERT
Well . . .

JODY
Don't get me wrong - it wouldn't mean anything to me, except you really have to look the part to make it the Ad world. I try to keep appearances up and all. Nobody would respect a slob . . .

ALBERT
(Interrupting) Okay, okay. I meant it. Hell, I'm not BLIND. It still doesn't mean you're in any way appealing.

JODY
Thank you, Albert. I hate you, too.

ALBERT
Good. As long as that's settled. Can I get you a beer?

JODY

No thanks. I have a casting session in the morning. I have to be sharp.

ALBERT

I hope it goes better than my meeting with my boss went.

JODY

Bad, huh?

ALBERT

She reamed me a new asshole, as expected. 'Gave me a speech about responsibility and quality and all that crap. After all the money I saved her . . . She hires me to save her money, and now she crawls my hide because I did just that!

JODY

She doesn't appreciate what she's got.

ALBERT

She's afraid we might have to recall the product if the paint chips off.

JODY

What is it your factory makes again?

ALBERT

Something stupid.

JODY

Your boss sounds like my client. First she wants this and then she wants that. 'Says I don't know what I'm talking about.

ALBERT

The nerve . . .

JODY

She says the actors aren't right, but she doesn't know what's not right about them.

ALBERT

She sounds just like my boss. 'Likes to keep us guessing. Keeps us on our toes.

JODY

How do you deal with her?

ALBERT

Ever go bass fishing?

JODY
What?

ALBERT
Neither have I, but I've seen those stupid fishing shows. Treat that client like a fish . . . let the line out every now and then, tug on it a little just to let you know you're there, and just when they think they've got their way you give it all you've got and blindsides her.

JODY
And this works?

ALBERT
She usually respects me for it . . . compliments me for my strength and convictions. She likes confrontations.

JODY
You work for a woman?

ALBERT
Yeah. Drives me up the FRIGGIN' WALL!

JODY
That's great!

ALBERT
Look, I don't care if I work for an orangutan. As long as they can maintain the numbers I'm happy. True ruthless power has no gender.

JODY
That's because you're a man. Women have to work twice as hard.

ALBERT
I know, I know. Don't lecture me, okay? I may be an asshole but I treat everyone with the respect they deserve.

JODY
Oh, come on.

ALBERT
Okay, I treat everyone like the pathetic plebe that they are.

JODY
That's better.

ALBERT

'Ever tell you about the time I was served with Sexual Harassment charges? What a fiasco. Some good-for-nothing plebe girl gets canned because she's a screw-up and takes ME to court because I treated her like dirt.

JODY

Did you?

ALBERT

Sure I did, but I treat all idiots like dirt. So, not only did I win but I sued HER for defamation of character. THAT I lost.

JODY

You're a piece of work, Albert Barrows.

ALBERT

You can call me "Al."

JODY

Just like the song!

ALBERT

(Annoyed) You know, I bet you think you're the first person to think of that.

JODY

Okay, okay. Don't be such an asshole.

ALBERT

Sorry. It's a reflex response.

JODY

That's okay. You can call me "Jody," you know.

ALBERT

I do, don't I?

JODY

No. You call me anything BUT.

ALBERT

I don't pay attention.

JODY

That's okay.

ALBERT

Look, I'm goin' to bed. You should do the same.

JODY
Al?

ALBERT
What?

JODY
I think we just did that bonding thing.

ALBERT
That'll be our little secret, deal?

JODY
Deal.

ALBERT
Go to bed. You've got a casting session in the morning.

JODY
In a minute.

ALBERT
I said NOW, plebe! Move! Move! Move!

(JODY feigns being startled as she jumps up and runs to her bedroom, laughing all the way.)

Fadeout.

SCENE 4

(ALBERT, wearing his signature t-shirt and boxers, sits intensely on the sofa. COLLETTE sits on the opposite side of the sofa, wearing an air filter mask and reading a magazine. JODY is dressed for a meeting and is attempting to apply make-up with a small mirror.)

ALBERT

. . . when you shake hands twist your hand a little so your palm is pointing down.

JODY

That works?

ALBERT

Always. They'll know you're in charge.

JODY

What else?

ALBERT

Lean into conversations. They'll know you mean business.

JODY

I appreciate this, Al.

ALBERT

Hey, no prob. I hope you totally kick ass.

JODY

I mean you didn't have to stay home.

ALBERT

Hey, its no big deal. My CEO has to attend to some sort of meeting in the city today, so I cashed in a favor and scored me and Collette some Giants tickets. Right Collette?

(COLLETTE gives a non-committal wave to acknowledge ALBERT's comment but knowing fully well he's paying no attention to her.)

JODY

I hope this goes well. My client is driving me nuts.
ME-E-E-E-E-E-EG!

(MEG comes from the bathroom
area. She wears rubber
gloves and holds a plunger.)

MEG

Yes, Jody?

JODY

Can I use the bathroom yet?

MEG

Only a couple more minutes. I think I got it. (exits
to bathroom again)

ALBERT

Y'know, I hate to bring this up, but about the bathroom
. . . .

JODY

I had nowhere to hang them! They had to dry!

ALBERT

I know, but after all it IS my apartment . . .

JODY

You're being ridiculous.

ALBERT

MY wet underthings don't hit you in the face when you
go in for a late-night pee.

JODY

Then you shouldn't drink so much beer.

ALBERT

I also didn't mention how the apartment STINKS from
your cigarettes.

JODY

It STINKS from your clothes hamper.

ALBERT

Remember whose apartment this is.

(MEG enters.)

MEG

Done.

JODY

Thank God. (bolts to the bathroom)

ALBERT

(To MEG) How are you with auto repairs?

MEG

Foreign or domestic?

ALBERT

Foreign, of course.

COLLETTE

He doesn't have a car.

MEG

(Annoyed) Oh. (exits to kitchen)

ALBERT

I was just curious.

(JODY re-enters.)

JODY

I'm sorry about getting all riled about the apartment.
I really am glad to be here.

ALBERT

It's cool. Don't worry about it.

JODY

Y'know, my client was telling me about one of her
employees the other day -- seems he has this luxury
apartment he's getting for peanuts -- a relative left
it to him or something -- and he's got a roommate who's
paying more than TWICE the rent.

ALBERT

Meaning . . .

JODY

That I'm just thankful you're on the level. Thanks
again for letting me live here. I'll watch the panties
in the shower.

ALBERT

(A little flustered) Uh . . . good. Good. It's okay.
Really.

JODY

(Straightens herself) Okay Meg, what do I look like
today?

MEG
Now?

JODY
Yes, now.

(MEG fishes for the filofax.
A few pages fall out again,
and she picks them up.)

MEG
Ten thirty meeting with the client . . .

JODY
. . . check . . .

MEG
Eleven thirty casting session . . .

JODY
. . . check . . .

MEG
One o'clock lunch . . .

JODY
Going out or catered?

MEG
Catered.

JODY
By who?

MEG
Holton.

JODY
Cancel. Sign Alexander.

MEG
I think it's too late . . .

JODY
I didn't ask. Just do it.

MEG
(Fumbles) Two thirty edit session . . .

JODY
What for?

MEG
Soupy Soup?

JODY
That damn thing isn't done yet?

MEG
I don't think so.

JODY
Keep going.

MEG
Four o'clock music department . . .

JODY
. . . check . . .

MEG
Five o'clock client meeting -- Soupy Soup . . .

JODY
. . . cancel . . .

MEG
Six o'clock with your parents -- I know, cancel. Seven
fifteen phone call from Larry . . .

JODY
. . . intercept . . .

MEG
And eight o'clock bridal shower.

JODY
For who?

MEG
Dianna.

JODY
Who the hell is Dianna?

MEG
Your best friend from grade school?

JODY
She's getting married?

ALBERT
WILL YOU GO ALREADY?!!!

JODY

Right. Meg, get my coat.

MEG

What about the shower?

JODY

Meg, we're late!

(MEG turns and a pile of pages fall out of her filofax.)

MEG

Oh, damn!

ALBERT

You should get a computer.

JODY

My brother keeps hocking me about that, too.

ALBERT

I keep all my appointments on my laptop. Couldn't live without it.

JODY

That's what my brother says.

COLLETTE

Wait, your brother works with computers, right?

JODY

Yeah. He's a programmer or something.

COLLETTE

Didn't I see him in the news or something?

JODY

No.

COLLETTE

I could have sworn it was him.

JODY

(A little nervous) You know these nerds -- they all look alike. Meg . . .

(MEG, in her haste, leaves most of the papers on the floor.)

MEG
Right behind you.

(JODY and MEG exit.)

ALBERT
Will you take the surgical mask off?

COLLETTE
Not until your roommate quits smoking.

ALBERT
THAT'll never happen.

COLLETTE
Then it stays or I get terrible headaches.

ALBERT
Why don't you just ask her not to smoke?

COLLETTE
Because she lives here and I don't.

ALBERT
I really don't understand your reasoning sometimes.

COLLETTE
(Beat) She still doesn't know, does she.

ALBERT
(Coyly) I don't know what you mean.

COLLETTE
Yes you do. She doesn't know you're making a profit off her.

ALBERT
Oh, that. SHOULD she know?

COLLETTE
Albert, you're despicable.

ALBERT
Good. Football time.

COLLETTE
You met Joel, didn't you?

ALBERT
Who?

COLLETTE

Joel, Jody's brother? We're in love, you know.

ALBERT

You mean the fat nerd?

COLLETTE

We've been dating since we met the day Jody moved in. He's really very kind and very sweet.

ALBERT

Good. Stop seeing him. No sister of mine should be seen with a nerd . . .

COLLETTE

(Not listening to him) I always got the feeling I've seen him before. Then when Jody mentioned the works with computers . . .

ALBERT

Come on! I can hear those dirty-water dogs calling my name.

COLLETTE

Albert, this is serious!

ALBERT

I'm sorry. What the hell is bothering you SO much that it's getting in the way of football?

COLLETTE

Remember about a year ago when that real bad computer virus was going wild?

ALBERT

The Brainiac Virus? Sure -- totally trashed my laptop. Had to get a new one.

COLLETTE

I think Joel had something to do with it.

ALBERT

(Suddenly VERY interested) They went to jail, didn't they? -- the people who started it?

COLLETTE

I think so. Oh my God . . .

ALBERT

(Elated) Oh my God . . .

COLLETTE

Albert, I really love Joel . . .

ALBERT

Now I have ammunition!

COLLETTE

What?!

ALBERT

They'd NEVER let the sibling of an ex-con into a building like this. If her brother went to jail, I'd have so much dirt on her she'd NEVER give me any trouble -- and I can charge her as much rent as I want and she won't be able to do anything about it!

COLLETTE

I can't believe you're being so cold-hearted about this!

ALBERT

Does it bother you that your so-called boyfriend is an ex-con?

COLLETTE

Yes, but you have no right to judge him. I love Joel. What do you know about love? When was the last time you went out on a date?

ALBERT

Oh, I go on plenty of dates.

COLLETTE

When was the last one?

ALBERT

I don't know . . . I think Reagan was in office . . .

COLLETTE

Albert, face it. I look at myself in the mirror every morning. I'm not the most attractive girl, I'm always getting sick and I'm not very interesting.

ALBERT

That's not true. Just because you bore ME to tears doesn't mean you're not interesting.

COLLETTE

Joel makes me happy. I feel comfortable with him.

ALBERT

I'm glad you have time in your life for that kind of stuff.

COLLETTE

You're jealous.

ALBERT

Okay, sure, I wouldn't mind having somebody. But it's not that easy. I'd rip 'em to shreds.

COLLETTE

What about Jody?

ALBERT

I'm sure she'd like having somebody, too. She sees this Larry idiot, but I don't think she likes him very much . . .

COLLETTE

I mean what about DATING Jody.

ALBERT

You mean ME and IT?! Come on, just because we're talking to each other doesn't mean there's anything . . . you know . . .

COLLETTE

Think about it. You two get along . . . you're both lunatics . . .

(Phone rings.)

ALBERT

Hold that thought . . .

(answers phone)

Barrows. What is it?

(beat)

What is it, Langley?

(beat)

What are you telling me, Langley?

(beat)

What are you telling me, Langley?

(beat)

Do you realize what you're telling me?

(beat)

What are you telling me?

COLLETTE

What's he telling you?!

ALBERT

This is terrible. No, no, sit tight. Nothing should happen for the rest of the day.

(MEG returns, panicked.)

COLLETTE

What's the matter?

MEG

Did you see a whole bunch of little papers anywhere?

ALBERT

I don't give a rats patootie about any stupid Child Safety Commission.

COLLETTE

You mean the ones that fell out of your filofax?
(points to them on the floor)

MEG

(Gathering them up) Jody is FURIOUS about this. All of the contacts for the casting session were on those notes.

ALBERT

Don't we pay lawyers to take care of that?

MEG

Jody's gonna kill me. She's just gonna kill me.

COLLETTE

Oh, come on.

MEG

No, she's really pissed.

(JODY enters.)

JODY

Damn right I'm pissed.

ALBERT

(To the people in the room) Dammit! Will you people be quiet?!

(into the phone)

I'm back, Langley.

MEG

How's she taking it?

JODY

Lucky for you, better than I expected. She's waiting in the lobby.

(House phone rings. JODY answers it.)

JODY (cont'd)

Now. Absolutely. (to MEG) Correction -- she'll be right up.

MEG

The client is coming up here?!

JODY

Do you think I'd live in a Park Avenue apartment and miss the opportunity to show it off to the client?

COLLETTE

I'll pick up.

(COLLETTE starts picking up things, attempting to clean - sneezing and coughing along the way.)

MEG

So you're not mad?

JODY

Sure I am.

ALBERT

(Into the phone) What do you mean I ordered the paint? I distinctly remember that YOU ordered the paint. If someone's going down, pal, it's you.

JODY

Albert, the client's coming up. Can you take that in your room?

(KATHRYN SAUNDERS enters, unnoticed by everybody.)

ALBERT

(Ignoring her) She said that, did she? Well, you can tell Kathryn Saunders to kiss my red, rosy butt -- that's what you can tell her. And here's another thing -- if that MORON Kathryn Saunders doesn't like the decisions I make for HER stupid company, then Kathryn Saunders can TELL me HERSELF that she doesn't like the decisions I make for her stupid company!

KATHRYN

Fine. I don't like the decisions you make for my stupid company.

ALBERT

(To KATHRYN) Oh yeah?
(beat as does a triple-take)
OH MY GOD!!!

JODY

Albert?!

KATHRYN

Jody?!

ALBERT

Kathryn . . .

MEG

(To ALBERT) Your boss?!

COLLETTE

(To JODY) Your client?!

ALBERT

(Into the phone - quite terrified) Langley . . . I'll call you later. Something just came up. (hangs up)

Blackout

** END OF ACT I **