

Working Stiff

“Validation”

by

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WORKING STIFF

"Validation"

TEASER

A

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE BATHROOM - MORNING

A WALL CLOCK READS 7:55.

WE FIND OURSELVES IN A STERILE CORPORATE BATHROOM. AN AWFUL MUZAC VERSION OF A PREVIOUSLY AWFUL ROCK SONG IS PIPED IN. ERIC BROWN, 23, BRIGHT-EYED, IDEALISTIC (THINK A YOUNG MATTHEW BRODERICK OR DUSTIN HOFFMAN), IS HAVING TROUBLE TYING HIS NEWLY PURCHASED 'POWER' TIE. AFTER THREE OR FOUR ATTEMPTS, HE FINALLY NAILS THE KNOT, SPLASHES WATER ON HIS FACE, AND LOOKS AT HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR.

ERIC

(To his reflection)

Okay. You look great. The power tie was key. It stands out, but doesn't call attention to itself.
(Switches gears)

This is it. Be calm, be confident, but be humble. They'd be lucky to get you. You graduated with honors, you're hungry, you're smart, and you deserve this job. You are an individual, but an individual willing to be a team player. Like your tie, you are singular and unique.

ERIC TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND THEN EXITS FRAME.

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

ERIC STRIDES INTO THE RECEPTION ROOM CONFIDENTLY, HIS BEST 1000 WATT SMILE ON DISPLAY. AS HE ENTERS, HE STOPS SHORT, AND HIS SMILE SLOWLY FADES.

WE CUT TO THE REVERSE TO SEE HIS POV - THERE ARE TWELVE OR SO OTHER APPLICANTS THAT COULD EASILY PASS AS ERIC'S CLONES. THEY WEAR SIMILAR SHIRTS, JACKETS, AND POWER TIES. ALL TWELVE APPLICANTS SIMULTANEOUSLY LOOK UP AT ERIC WITH NERVOUS SMILES. ONE OF THE APPLICANTS ADMIRES ERIC'S WARDROBE.

APPLICANT

Nice tie!

ERIC BOBS HIS HEAD IN APPRECIATION, AND UNDER HIS BREATH IN AN ATTEMPT TO REASSURE HIMSELF, HE WEAKLY MUTTERS...

ERIC

You are singular and unique.

CUT TO:

B

OVER BLACK, WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CLOCK TICKING.

TITLE CARD: 'VALIDATION'

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - LATER

WE START TIGHT ON A WALL CLOCK. IT'S '8:15'

JIM SHARP (40'S), POLISHED, CONFIDENT, AND GLIB, SITS BEHIND HIS DESK PERUSING ERIC'S RESUME. ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM HANGS A LARGE SIGN OF THE COMPANY LOGO. IT READS, "THE GROUP. BETTER. SMARTER. FASTER. THAN YOU!" ON HIS DESK, A PLAQUE READS, "JIM SHARP - EXECUTIVE V.P.- HUMAN RESOURCES."

JIM

It says here that you graduated with honors.

ERIC
(Proudly)

Yeah I graduated Magna Cum Laude with a double degree in Comparative Literature and Business. My thesis was a cross-sectional study on the influence of...

JIM

...SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! I'm reading!

ERIC, STUNNED BY THE SHUSHING, SITS IN SILENCE FOR A FEW AWKWARD MOMENTS, BEFORE JIM BEGINS...

JIM (CONT'D)

So, tell me, son. Why?

ERIC WAITS FOR THE REST OF THE QUESTION. IT DOESN'T COME.

ERIC

Why...what?

JIM

Why do you want to work here? Why are you better than the other hundred schmucks waiting outside my office? Why am I even explaining this question to you?

ERIC THINKS FOR A MOMENT.

ERIC

Well, since I can remember, my dad always told me that the first step to becoming a success is to associate yourself with successful people. You guys are the number one consulting company in the country...

ERIC GESTURES TOWARDS THE BUSTLING OFFICE JUST OUTSIDE JIM'S GLASS WALLS.

ERIC (CONT'D)

...Working for a company like The Group...this is what I was born to do. And if you just give me the opportunity, Mr. Sharp, I promise that you won't regret the decision.

JIM STANDS AND BEGINS TO FIDDLE WITH HIS SHIRT BOTTOM.

JIM

How's my tuckage?

ERIC

Excuse me?

JIM POINTS TO HIS WAISTLINE.

JIM

My tuckage. Is the circumference of my
tuckage uniform all the way around?

ERIC

Um, I'm sorry...

JIM

Are you retarded, son?

ERIC IS THROWN FOR A LOOP.

ERIC

What...?

JIM

...because if you are, the law clearly
states that while we do have to hire
minorities, we DO NOT have to hire
retarded people. Don't get me wrong, I
like retarded people. In fact some of
my best friends are retarded people.

ERIC

No, I was just telling you about my double degree, and how I graduated Magna Cum Laude...

JIM INTERRUPTS

JIM
(Aping Eric)

...look at me, I'm a smart guy with a blah, blah, blah, blickety blah. A word of advice, Eric. Nobody likes braggarts. Remember that, it'll serve you well. And that's from the horse's mouth. I mean look at me. I pull in mid six figures, have a beautiful house on the lake, and my wife is a 25 year old ex-Playboy Centerfold who enjoys long walks on the beach and candlelight dinners in the nude. But enough about me. Listen kid, I'm not going to sugar coat this, your chances here are spotty at best. Nice tie by the way.

ERIC

Thanks. But, it's just that...when I spoke to Jenny in HR, she led me to believe that with my application...I mean, maybe I misunder...

JIM

...Eric?

ERIC

Yeah.

JIM

Now I want you to be straight with me, son. I'm talking the bottom line. The nitty gritty here. The cut and dried version. The low down dirty shame.

ERIC

Um...ok.

JIM PICKS UP A CLIPBOARD AND A PEN FROM HIS DESK.

JIM

Okay, so you're not retarded, we already covered that..

JIM CHECKS SOMETHING OFF ON HIS CLIPBOARD.

JIM (CONT'D)

Do drugs?

ERIC

No!

JIM

Too bad. We could of hung out this weekend. Okay, what's your favorite color?

ERIC
(Confused)

I don't really see the relevance of the...

JIM

Just answer the question, son!

ERIC

Umm...blue?

JIM LOOKS UP AT ERIC FROM HIS CLIPBOARD. AN INTENSE POKER FACE.

JIM

You sure about that?

ERIC
(Carefully, nervously)

Yes...?

JIM

Blue is right. Good answer. You really nailed that one.

JIM GOES BACK TO HIS CLIPBOARD.

JIM (CONT'D)

Are you gonna run with the ball, agree to disagree, practice synergy, and most importantly, be a team player?

ERIC SHAKES HIS HEAD YES TO ALL OF THE ABOVE. JIM LOOKS UP FROM HIS CHECKLIST AND SMILES BROADLY AT ERIC.

JIM (CONT'D)

Great. Well then, congratulations!

You're hired!

ERIC

That's it?

JIM

Well, to be honest, this wasn't really an interview. You actually already had the job from the strength of your application.

JIM SMILES AT A FLUSTERED ERIC.

ERIC

Oh. Wow. Well, thank you!

JIM

You, my young friend, are welcome.

ERIC

By the way, I almost forgot to ask you. I parked in the lot downstairs, and since I haven't gotten my assigned parking yet, I was wondering if I could...

JIM WINCES.

JIM

...Ooph. You want parking validation,
right?

ERIC

Yeah. Is that a problem or something?

JIM

Problem? No problem. You're just gonna
need to talk to Phyllis about that
one. That's a Phyllis thing.

AN INDUSTRIOUS ERIC PULLS OUT A MINI-NOTEBOOK FROM HIS POCKET
AND JOTS DOWN HER NAME.

ERIC

Phyllis. Okay. Will do.

JIM

Listen. One thing, alright? And maybe
you should write this down too, but
just...just be nice to her, okay?

ERIC IS BAFFLED.

ERIC

Why wouldn't I be nice to her?

JIM CONSIDERS ERIC FOR A MOMENT.

JIM

No reason. Just making sure. Let's get
you started.

END OF TEASER:

ACT ONE

C

INT. OFFICE FLOOR/ERIC'S CUBICLE - LATER

WE START ON A CLOSED PAIR OF ELEVATOR DOORS. WE HEAR THE REQUISITE DING, AND THE DOORS SLIDE OPEN TO REVEAL ERIC AND JIM.

JIM

Welcome to hell.

ERIC

Excuse me?

JIM

I said welcome to hell.

ERIC

Oh. Because I thought you just said
welcome home.

JIM

Nope. I said hell.

THE TWO WALK PAST ROWS AND ROWS OF CUBICLES. THREATENED CO-WORKERS GLOWER AT ERIC AS HE PASSES. JIM STOPS AT AN EMPTY CUBICLE. IT'S INCREDIBLY SMALL.

JIM (CONT'D)

This is your work space. You're going
to be spending a lot of time here, so
feel free to personalize it.

ERIC

I was wondering, what exactly does my
job entail? The description was sort
of vague on the application.

JIM

Beats me. Not my department. For the time being, just go ahead and make yourself comfortable. Your departmental manager should be coming by sometime in the next hour or so to get you started.

ERIC NOTICES AN OLDER MAN IN HIS 60'S STARING AT HIM ANGRILY FROM THE CUBICLE ACROSS FROM HIS. JIM NOTICES THIS, AND TURNS TO ERIC.

JIM (CONT'D)

Don't mind him. He won't be working here much longer. You just took his job.

(Beat)

Anyway, good luck, son.

JIM GIVES ERIC A PAT ON THE BACK AND WALKS OFF. THE OLD MAN PUTS HIS HANDS TO HIS HEAD, AND BEGINS TO SOB QUIETLY. ERIC SMILES WEAKLY AT THE OLD MAN AS HE BLOWS HIS NOSE LOUDLY.

ERIC PULLS THE PARKING TICKET FROM HIS POCKET.

ERIC

Hey. I'm Eric. How's it going? By any chance can you tell me where I might be able to find Phyllis?

THE OLD MAN BREAKS DOWN AGAIN AND BEGINS TO SOB.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Right.

CUT TO:

D

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

ERIC, PARKING TICKET IN HAND, WANDERS THROUGH THE MAZE OF CUBICLES ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS WHILE THE OTHER EMPLOYEES SIMPLY IGNORE HIM.

DAVID, A SMARMY MAN IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES WITH PAT RILEY HAIR, APPROACHES ERIC. DAVID IS A FAST TALKING MANIPULATOR WHO WOULD EAT HIS OWN CHILDREN IF HE THOUGHT IT WOULD GET HIM AHEAD IN BUSINESS.

DAVID

Well, if it isn't the new guy.

ERIC

Eric. My name's Eric.

ERIC EXTENDS HIS HAND TO SHAKE AND DAVID IGNORES IT.

DAVID

David. I just came on over to welcome you to the family.

ERIC

Oh. Thanks. Listen, I was wondering if you could point me towards where Phyllis sits.

DAVID

No problem, brother. She's right over there.

DAVID POINTS, AND WE CUT TO THEIR POV OF PHYLLIS - A VERY SWEET LOOKING OLDER WOMAN IN HER EARLY SIXTIES KNITTING AT HER DESK.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Just a word of advice before you go
over their, dude. Be nice to her. For
serious.

ERIC IS BAFFLED.

ERIC

Why do people keep telling me that? Of
course I'm going to be nice to her.
Why wouldn't I be nice to her. I mean,
she looks like my Grandma.

ERIC BEGINS TO WALK TOWARD PHYLLIS, BUT DAVID BLOCKS HIS
PATH.

DAVID

Quick question. How much they payin'
you?

ERIC IS A BIT TAKEN BACK BY HIS QUESTION.

ERIC

Not much really. I'm just starting.

DAVID

No, seriously. How much? Like in
dollars?

ERIC

I don't really think I should be
talking about money. Besides, I don't
even know you...

DAVID

Dude, I just told you my name. We're all family here. I'm not going to tell anybody. I promise.

ERIC

Well, okay. They're starting me at forty two thousand a year.

DAVID

Forty two thousand!
(Beat, as he lets it sink in)

GOD! That is freakin' bull...crap, man. Forty Two Thousand! Jesus!

DAVID TURNS TO THE OFFICE FLOOR AND ANNOUNCES TO EVERYONE IN PARTICULAR.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey! Get this, New Fish is starting at forty two G's!

ERIC TRIES TO SHUSH HIM. OTHER EMPLOYEES GROAN ANGRILY UPON HEARING THE NEWS.

ERIC

Hey, man. You said you wouldn't tell anybody.

DAVID

Just save it, dude. At forty two thousand a year, what the hell do you care!?
God, I hate this place!

DAVID STORMS AWAY, KICKING THE COPIER MACHINE IN ANGER ON HIS WAY DOWN THE HALL. ERIC ATTEMPTS TO REMAIN CALM AS THE REST OF THE EMPLOYEES ON THE FLOOR STARE DAGGERS AT HIM.

ERIC

What? I have a double degree.

THE OTHER EMPLOYEES SHAKE THEIR HEADS IN DISGUST.

CUT TO:

E

INT. OFFICE - PHYLLIS'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

ERIC APPROACHES PHYLLIS AS SHE KNITS AT HER DESK. HER CUBICLE IS DECORATED WITH AN ASSORTMENT OF CAT PICTURES. ON THE CORKBOARD ABOVE HER HANGS A HANDWRITTEN LIST OF CROSSED OUT NAMES. SENSING ERIC'S PRESENCE, PHYLLIS LOOKS UP WITH A WARM SMILE.

PHYLLIS

Well, hello there young man!

ERIC WARMS TO HER IMMEDIATELY.

ERIC

Hello! You must be Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

I am! And you must be the young man who started with us today?

ERIC

Yes Ma'am! My name's Eric. It's a pleasure to meet you. My, that's a beautiful sweater you're knitting.

PHYLLIS

Well, aren't you just a sweet thing!

I'm making it for my youngest, Mr.

Socks. It's his birthday today.

SHE POINTS TO ONE OF HER PHOTOS. IN IT, PHYLLIS AND HER CAT MR. SOCKS ARE POSED NOSE TO NOSE. ERIC BEGINS TO SING A FEW BARS OF HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN A VERY 'AW SHUCKS' SORT OF MANNER.

ERIC

Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday
to you! Happy Birthday, Mr. Socks.
Happy Birthday to you!

PHYLLIS CLAPS CHEERFULLY.

PHYLLIS

Yay! And what a beautiful singing
voice you have!

ERIC CONTINUES HIS CHARM OFFENSIVE.

ERIC

He is...

PHYLLIS

...She

ERIC

...She is just a beautiful,
beautiful...Abyssinian?

PHYLLIS

Close! Turkish Angora.

ERIC

Turkish Angora! That was going to be
my next guess.

PHYLLIS

So how can I help you, sweetie pie!

ERIC

Well, you see, it's my first day, and I don't have assigned parking so I had to park in the parking garage, and...

PHYLLIS

...you need Parking Validation.

ERIC

Yeah. That's right.

PHYLLIS

Well, why didn't say so. Now, so you know, the policy is that Validation is for clients only, but since it's your first day we can make an exception. Let me have your ticket, and I'll take care of that right away.

ERIC HANDS HER HIS TICKET, AND SHE UNLOCKS THE TOP DRAWER OF HER DESK, SLIDING IT OPEN. ERIC, AMAZED BY HER BENEVOLENCE, WATCHES PHYLLIS PULL OUT THE BOOK OF SHINY GOLD STICKERS.

ERIC

You know, you're the first person who's actually been nice to me today. I just find it so ironic. All morning everyone's warned me to be nice to the office secretary, and...

PHYLLIS'S ENTIRE BODY STIFFENS.

PHYLLIS

What did you just call me?

ERIC

What?

PHYLLIS ENUNCIATES EACH WORD SLOWLY.

PHYLLIS

What did you just call me?

ERIC

I...I called you the office secretary?

PHYLLIS

That's what I thought. Excuse me for

one second.

PHYLLIS SLAMS THE DRAWER OF PARKING STICKERS SHUT AND LOCKS IT BEFORE UNCAPPING A BLACK SHARPIE.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

What was your name again?

ERIC IS CONFUSED.

ERIC

Eric?

PHYLLIS BEGINS TO SLOWLY WRITE THE LETTERS OF ERIC'S NAME ON THE LIST HANGING ABOVE HER DESK AS A PUZZLED ERIC WATCHES. SHE FINISHES THE 'C', CAPS HER PEN, AND THEN GESTURES FOR ERIC TO COME CLOSER. ERIC COMPLIES.

PHYLLIS

Now listen to me, you little snot-

nosed-embryo-in-a-suit. I am an

Administrative Assistant, Class

Three...

ERIC ATTEMPTS TO REMEDY THE SITUATION.

ERIC

...No, no! Wait, listen...

PHYLLIS CUTS HIM OFF.

PHYLLIS

...No, you listen! You picked the wrong kitty cat to cross, Mr. Mister. Because nobody, nobody calls Phyllis a 'secretary.'

ERIC

Look, I had no idea. I swear to you, Ma'am, it won't happen again. I am so sorry.

PHYLLIS

That's right. You are sorry. And you're gonna be sorry for the rest of your natural born life. Because you made The List...

SHE GESTURES TO THE LIST OF NAMES ON THE CORKBOARD.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

...and now I have to destroy you.

ERIC

Destroy me!? It was a mistake. I apologized. Please, just take me off The List.

PHYLLIS

Off The List? Oh no! Once you make The List, there's no getting off of The List. Until the day I die, it will be my life's work to make your life here a living hell. And in case you were wondering, an invalidated ticket pays the full day rate of twenty five dollars.

ERIC OPENS UP HIS WALLET BILLFOLD. IT'S EMPTY. SUDDENLY, WE HEAR A THWACK FROM OFF-SCREEN. A STAPLE HITS ERIC IN THE FACE, PROMPTING HIM TO TURN BACK TOWARDS PHYLLIS. IN HER HAND SHE HOLDS AN OPEN SWING STAPLER. SHE PLACES HER FREE HAND OVER HER MOUTH AS IF IN SHOCK.

PHYLISS

Oh, I'm sorry. Did a stray staple accidentally discharge from my stapler and hit you in the face?

ERIC STARES AT HER INCREDULOUSLY. SHE SMIRKS BACK AT HIM.

PHYLISS (CONT'D)

I mean, what are the odds of that?

OFF ERIC'S LOOK OF MISERY, WE CUT OUT TO THE...

END OF ACT 1:

ACT 2

F

INT. OFFICE - ERIC'S CUBICLE - LATER

ERIC SITS IN HIS CUBE, WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO DO. HE NOTICES THE PHONE ON THE DESK. OUT OF CURIOSITY HE PUSHES THE VOICE MAIL FUNCTION. THE SPEAKERPHONE IS ACTIVATED, AND A COMPUTERIZED FEMALE VOICE PURRS...

COMPUTERIZED FEMALE VOICE

You have 102 messages.

THE FIRST MESSAGE IS FROM AN EXTREMELY DISGRUNTLED MALE...

DISGRUNTLED MALE VOICE

Yeah, I've called this number like ten times in the past week... And I just want you to know that I think you are incompetent, and useless, and I hate you. Yeah, that's about it. Bye.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A MAN CLEARING HIS THROAT. ERIC LOOKS UP TO SEE KARL DANIELSON HOVERING OVER HIS CUBICLE. KARL (LATE 30'S), A STIFF MICRO-MANAGER TYPE, APPEARS AGITATED.

KARL

Problems?

ERIC

What? That?

ERIC MOTIONS TO THE PHONE.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Those aren't mine.

KARL

Right.

(Beat)

You must be Eric. I'm Karl Danielson.

I'm the department manager. Welcome to
The Group.

ERIC GESTURES TO A BOX OF OLD FILES AND SUPPLIES ON HIS DESK.

ERIC

What happened to the guy who used to
sit here?

KARL CHEWS ON THIS FOR A FEW SECONDS.

KARL

He killed himself.

ERIC

He killed him...?

KARL
(Interrupting)

...I'm going to begin your training
now.

ERIC

Oh. Okay.

ERIC GRABS HIS LEGAL PAD, AND KARL MOTORS RIGHT INTO IT...

KARL

Here at The Group, everyone is
responsible for a task. These tasks,
when combined, form a singular whole.
A body of work which defines what it
is we do here at The Group.

ERIC
(Interrupting)

I'm sorry to interrupt, but I sort of had a question about that. I mean, I think I know what our collective goal is here at The Group -- to make money and stuff, right? But I don't think I have a complete grasp of what it is exactly that we...do, or even really...sell?...here.

KARL

I'm gonna lay this out for you, Eric. You see, if you knew how everything worked around here, then you'd have my job. Problem being is that currently, I have my job...

ERIC

...oh, I wasn't trying to take your job...

KARL

...and I don't like it when my subordinates jockey for position. Do not ever cross me Eric, or the only work you'll see is at a swap meet on Sunday. Is that clear?

ERIC

Yes sir. Very.

KARL

Continuing, think of us as a living,
breathing organism. The lifeblood of
every organism is information.

Information is what flows through it's
arteries. Do you know what happens to
an artery if it clogs?

ERIC IS AT A LOSS.

ERIC

Um. It explodes? And blood gets all
over the carpet?

KARL

If an artery clogs, the whole system
collapses. Are you following me so
far, Eric?

ERIC

Yes Mr. Danielson, sir. I think I am.

KARL

Great. Then you are now ready for your
first task.

KARL WALKS OFF SCREEN FOR A MOMENT AND QUICKLY REAPPEARS
HOLDING A HUMONGOUS STACK OF DOCUMENTS. HE SLAMS THEM ON
ERIC'S DESK, AND THEN PULLS OUT A STAMP AND INK PAD FROM HIS
JACKET POCKET.

KARL (CONT'D)

These RQ-15 forms are pending approval. You are to take this stamp here, this stamp that reads "PENDING APPROVAL", and you are to stamp each of these forms approximately once. Understand?

ERIC

That's it? You just want me to stamp forms?

KARL

Do you have a problem with that?

ERIC

No. It's just...it's just that it seems like a waste of my talents, and what I can really offer the company. I hate to brag, but I did graduate Magna Cum Laude with a double degree in Business and Comparative Literature.

ERIC CONFIDENTLY CROSSES HIS LEGS AND SMILES AS HE LEANS BACK IN HIS CHAIR. JIM APPEARS GENUINELY IMPRESSED.

KARL

Oh! I had no idea. I am so sorry.

ERIC

Oh, it's fine. Not a big deal at all, really...

KARL REACHES OFF CAMERA AND GRABS A SECOND GIANT STACK OF FORMS AND SLAMS IT ONTO ERIC'S DESK.

KARL

Well, in that case, here's a second stack of forms for you. Let's put that double degree to work. And I'm sure you'll give it that old college try.

KARL LAUGHS AT HIS OWN JOKE, AND BEGINS TO WALK OFF. ERIC STOPS HIM.

ERIC

Wait! Mr. Danielson?

KARL STOPS AND TURNS BACK.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I was wondering if maybe you could...
Validate me?

KARL THINKS FOR A FEW MOMENTS. AND THEN...

KARL

Well, aside from being seemingly incompetent, dim-witted, and obsequious, you have nice taste in men's neck ties.

ERIC

Thanks.

KARL WALKS OFF.

ERIC STARES AT THE PILE OF PAPER ON HIS DESK AND SIGHS BEFORE LOOKING OVER TO THE CUBICLE NEXT TO HIS. THE OLD MAN, WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING THIS ALL UNFOLD, MAKES EYE CONTACT WITH ERIC. ERIC ATTEMPTS TO CONSOLE HIM.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Wanna help me stamp some of my forms?

THE OLD MAN BREAKS INTO TEARS.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a no.

WE CUT TO THE WALL CLOCK. IT READS "9:30."

DISSOLVE TO:

G

INT. OFFICE - ERIC'S CUBICLE - LATER

THE CLOCK NOW READS "11:15." WE TILT DOWN TO REVEAL THAT ERIC IS WORKING UP QUITE A SWEAT, FURIOUSLY STAMPING FORM AFTER FORM.

JOHN, AN OBESE MAN WHOSE WAISTLINE AND AGE ARE BOTH SOMEWHERE IN THE FIFTIES, WATCHES ERIC CURIOUSLY FROM A AFAR BEFORE APPROACHING.

JOHN

If it isn't the forty two thousand
dollar kid.

FED UP, ERIC RETORTS WHILE HE CONTINUES TO STAMP FORMS.

ERIC

Well, after taxes, video games, and
candy, it really isn't all that much.

JOHN

Spunky. I like that. You should slow
down there, Chief. At that pace,
you're gonna have a heart attack by
3:30.

ERIC TAKES A BREATHER AND WIPES HIS BROW.

ERIC

I want to get this stack done. It's my
first day, and I need to make a good
impression.

JOHN

That's admirable, really. But, you
think this stuff ever goes away?

There will always be plenty of work
that means nothing to nobody piling up
on your desk. The faster you do it,
the faster it appears.

A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES CARRYING FORMS IN THEIR HANDS BEGIN TO
GATHER NEAR ERIC'S CUBICLE, EYEBALLING HIM. ERIC NOTICES.

ERIC

Why are those people all looking at me
funny?

JOHN SHAKES HIS HEAD KNOWINGLY.

JOHN

I told you that you were working too
fast. The sharks are already starting
to circle.

A RANDOM EMPLOYEE APPROACHES ERIC'S DESK, STACK OF FORMS IN
HAND.

RANDOM EMPLOYEE

Um...hey, new guy. Would you mind
stamping my forms for...

JOHN COMES TO ERIC'S RESCUE, STEPPING IN FRONT OF HIM.

JOHN

...he would! Now scram, Bolosky!

THE EMPLOYEE SHUFFLES AWAY. JOHN FACES THE GROUP AND RAISES
HIS VOICE FOR ALL TO HEAR.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Just so we're all clear, New Fish here
is mine.

I already got his sweet white ass
doing my RQ10's and PO20's. Anybody
try to move in on my property, and
I'll shank them with a paperclip.

JOHN JABS A TWISTED OUT PAPERCLIP AT THEM FOR EFFECT, AND
THEY ALL SCATTER IN VARIOUS DIRECTIONS. ERIC LOOKS AT JOHN
APPRECIATIVELY, EXTENDING HIS HAND TO SHAKE.

ERIC

My name's Eric.

JOHN

John. Don't mention it. You'll just do
some of my work for me later.

ERIC

Thanks?
(Beat)

JOHN

My pleasure.

ERIC

You seem to really know how things
work around here.

JOHN

I, my young friend, am the eyes and
ears of this institution. You need
something done inside this place, I
can make it happen.

You ever see that movie, 'The Shawshank Redemption?' I'm just like that black guy with the funny hat and the freckly face.

ERIC

You mean Morgan Freeman -- the Academy Award winning actor?

JOHN

Whatever. Point is, I got this place wired.

A THOUGHT SPREADS ACROSS ERIC'S FACE.

ERIC

Hey John, do you think you might be able to help me with my Validation problem?

JOHN

Hmmm. Well, sometimes when I'm down on myself, there's this rub and tug on Fourth...

ERIC

(Disgusted)

...No! I meant for my parking.

JOHN

Ah. Parking. Got it. Just, um, do me a favor and forget I ever mentioned that whole rub and tug thing, cool?

ERIC

Cool.

JOHN

Well, here's the skinny, slim. Parking stickers are in high demand around here. I can help you score, but I'm gonna need you to bring me something of equivalent worth so I can do the deal. In this case, say, six bottles of Wite Out.

ERIC

Why would you need six bottles of Wite Out?

JOHN STARES DOWN ERIC FOR A FEW AWKWARD MOMENTS AS IF DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN BE TRUSTED. FINALLY, JOHN SAYS...

JOHN

Let's just say I make a lot of mistakes. In the meantime, since nobody's bothered to properly train you, I'm gonna do it myself.

ERIC

Wow, that's really nice of you. Should I take notes?

JOHN

Don't bother, I wrote a textbook.

JOHN HANDS ERIC A HANDOUT TITLED, 'HOW TO GET OUT OF DOING STUFF.'

ERIC

How to get out of doing stuff?

JOHN

Let's begin, shall we?

AN APPROPRIATE AND INSPIRED T.B.D. SONG TAKES US INTO A VISUALLY FUN TRAINING SEQUENCE...

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "LESSON #1: HOW TO GO TO THE BATHROOM."

INT. OFFICE BATHROOM - LATER

JOHN CHECKS UNDER THE STALLS TO ENSURE THE TWO ARE ALONE. MUZAC BLARES FROM THE CEILING.

JOHN

Lesson one incorporates a little exploited fact of human psychology. No one will ever question a bodily function. I figure you're allowed up to 7 or 8 bathroom runs without ever raising an eyebrow.

ERIC

But what if I don't have to go to the bathroom?

JOHN

You aren't listening. The bathroom is a safe haven.

A toilet stall has four enclosed walls, a beautiful white throne shaped to the contours of your ass, and a PA system that pumps out only the best and most soothing Muzac. I like to think of the bathroom as akin to a relaxing Japanese Garden. A relaxing Japanese Garden with toilet paper and hand soap.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "LESSON #2 - BECOME A CREATURE OF HABIT."

EXT. BUILDING - SMOKING AREA

JOHN AND ERIC STAND OUTSIDE. BEHIND THEM, A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES SMOKE AND TALK AMONGST THEMSELVES.

JOHN

Lesson two. Become a creature of habit. Do you smoke?

ERIC

No.

JOHN

Starting today, you do.

JOHN HANDS ERIC A PACK OF CIGARETTES AND A LIGHTER. ERIC CONSIDERS THE PACK.

ERIC

But it's a disgusting habit.

JOHN

You're right, it is. But did you know that smoking alone is responsible for killing over forty five minutes of stuff I have to do in a day?

ERIC SHAKES HIS HEAD 'NO.'

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's a fact.

ERIC

I don't think I even know how to inhale.

JOHN

Inhale? Who said inhale? Are you kidding? These things will kill you.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "LESSON #3 - HOW TO USE YOUR COMPUTER TO BE LESS PRODUCTIVE."

INT. OFFICE - ERIC'S CUBICLE - LATER

WE START ON A COMPUTER MONITOR, AND PULL OUT AS JOHN PLACES A GLARE PROTECTOR ON THE FRONT OF ERIC'S MONITOR.

JOHN

Lesson three. How to use your computer to be less productive. This is a glare protector. This, coupled with the proper angling of your monitor...

JOHN ADJUSTS ERIC'S MONITOR.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...there we go...will prevent anyone standing further than five feet from your computer to see what's on your screen.

ERIC

I don't get it?

JOHN
(Patronizingly)

Of course you don't. Is it pornography, is it Internet Scrabble, is it work? As long as you sit in front of your computer moving the mouse around and looking busy, no one's the wiser. If anyone calls to you from down the hall, just scowl, and furrow your brow like this...

JOHN DEMONSTRATES, ERIC FOLLOWS HIS LEAD.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And for the love of god, don't take your eyes off the screen. They'll assume you're too busy to even acknowledge them.

ERIC

And what if somebody gets closer than
five feet?

JOHN

Two words for you. Alt and Tab.

JOHN DEMONSTRATES USING THE ALT/TAB KEYS IN TANDEM TO SWITCH
ERIC'S SCREEN FROM A WEB BROWSER TO A SPREADSHEET.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't care who it is coming down
that hallway, always ALT/TAB to a safe
spreadsheet screen. Remember, in
business, there are no friends. And if
all else fails and you get caught, use
the Bill O'Reilly method.

OFF ERIC'S CONFUSED LOOK...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Smirk, deny any wrongdoing, pass the
blame, and then accuse your accuser of
being an idiot.

SUDDENLY, KARL COMES BOUNDING TOWARDS ERIC'S DESK. JOHN SPOTS
HIM FIRST.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Quick! Alt/Tab!

ERIC DOES, AND AS KARL GETS UP TO HIS DESK, HE EYES THE TWO
SUSPICIOUSLY.

KARL

Are you two wasting my time?

ERIC ATTEMPTS TO SPEAK, BUT JOHN SIGNALS FOR HIM TO STOP.

JOHN
(Smirking)

No! We were doing stuff. Important
stuff. That's more than I can say for
Michaels in marketing. He plays on the
Internet all day long.

KARL LOOKS AT JOHN STRANGELY.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Why are you even questioning me? Are
you some kind of idiot!?

KARL IS STUNNED BY HIS COMMENT.

KARL

No...I...I was just making sure
everything was okay with the new guy.

JOHN

It is. Okay, Karl!?

KARL SHAKES HIS HEAD IN AGREEMENT AND WALKS OFF. ERIC IS IN
AWE.

JOHN (CONT'D)

God, I'm good. Now, go fetch me some
Wite Out.

JOHN WALKS AWAY, LEAVING ERIC NONPLUSSED.

CUT TO:

H

INT. SUPPLY ROOM - LATER

ERIC FRANTICALLY SEARCHES THE SUPPLY CABINETS FOR WITE OUT. HE SPOTS A CABINET LABELED, "CORRECTION FLUID." HE YANKS ON ITS HANDLE, BUT THE CABINET DOESN'T BUDGE.

PETER (O.C.)

What you look for?

ERIC TURNS TO FIND PETER MAKHANIAN (30's), AN ARMENIAN PROGRAMMER WHOSE PARANOIA AND PERSECUTION COMPLEX ARE AS THICK AS HIS ACCENT.

ERIC

I was wondering if you know where the key to this cabinet is?

PETER

There were past abuses. Now, that cabinet is under lockdown. If you require correctional fluids, you must register your request with Phyllis.

ERIC'S HEART SINKS.

ERIC

Phyllis.

PETER

But I must warn you. You should really be nice...

ERIC

...I should really be nice to her. I know. I got it. I got it.

PETER

My name is Peter Makhanian. I am
Armenian. I come from Armenia.

ERIC

Eric. I'm from...

PETER CUTS HIM OFF.

PETER

...My parents were killed by Turks.

ERIC DOESN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS.

ERIC

Oh. I'm...I'm really sorry.

PETER SPITS ON THE GROUND.

PETER

I spit on the Turks. Are you Turkish?

ERIC

Oh no. Not a big fan. Not a big fan at
all.

PETER EXAMINES ERIC'S FACE FOR VERACITY. TO SHOW PETER HE'S
SERIOUS, ERIC MAKES A POOR ATTEMPT TO SPIT. SALIVA DRIBBLES
FROM HIS MOUTH.

PETER

You, I like. I will tell you
something.

PETER LOOKS AROUND CAREFULLY TO CHECK FOR EAVESDROPPERS.

PETER (CONT'D)

The eyes are the windows to the soul.
You know Microsoft Windows, yes?

ERIC NERVOUSLY SHAKES HIS HEAD 'YES.' PETER CONTINUES.

PETER (CONT'D)

I have recently discovered that Mr.
Bill Gates has secretly coded the
Microsoft Windows to slowly suck out
our souls.

PETER MAKES HANNIBAL LECTER-ESQUE SUCKING NOISES AS HE POINTS
AT HIS OWN EYES, BACKING UP ERIC AGAINST THE CABINET.

PETER (CONT'D)

Right through the eyes!

ERIC

You've been working here awhile,
haven't you?

PETER IGNORES THE QUESTION.

PETER

Now I must go. I have defrag on the
third floor. But if you see any
Turks...

ERIC

...I will be sure to spit on them.
Thanks.

PETER SHAKES HIS HEAD APPRECIATIVELY BEFORE LEAVING.

ERIC TURNS HIS ATTENTION BACK TO THE CABINET. HE GIVES IT A
FEW MORE HARD YANKS, BUT TO NO AVAIL. SUDDENLY, A METAL RULER
CATCHES HIS EYE. ERIC LOOKS BACK AT THE CABINET, BEFORE
GRABBING THE RULER AND VIOLENTLY WEDGING IT IN BETWEEN THE
LOCK.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Come on you little piece of...

FROM O.C., WE HEAR PHYLLIS SAY...

PHYLISS (O.S.)

...Say 'Secretary.'

ERIC, STILL IN THE ACT OF BREAKING IN TO THE CABINET TURNS HIS HEAD TO SEE A SMILING PHYLLIS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY WITH A CAMERA PHONE. CLICK! PHYLLIS LOOK AT THE PHOTO AND CHUCKLES.

PHYLISS (CONT'D)

You might want to start thinking about

other lines of work.

AS PHYLISS LEAVES, ERIC LIGHTLY BANGS HIS HEAD AGAINST THE CABINET DOOR, MUMBLING TO HIMSELF.

ERIC

(Sotto)

And you were in such a rush to

graduate.

END OF ACT 2:

ACT 3

I

INT. OFFICE - ERIC'S CUBICLE LATER - LATER

ERIC'S PHONE IS CRADLED TO HIS EAR AS HE SEARCHES HIS DESK DRAWERS FRANTICALLY FOR SOME WITE OUT. HE FINDS A BOTTLE OF CORRECTION TAPE INSTEAD, AND EXAMINES IT AS HE TALKS INTO THE PHONE.

ERIC

So, listen, I was wondering if parking services might consider letting me pay tomorrow because I'm...hello? Hello?

AS ERIC HANGS UP THE PHONE AND POCKETS THE CORRECTION TAPE, SOMETHING ON HIS COMPUTER MONITOR CATCHES HIS EYE.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh no!

WE CUT TO HIS POV OF THE MONITOR - THE JPEG OF ERIC ATTEMPTING TO BREAK INTO THE WITE OUT CABINET HAS BEEN E-MAILED TO THE ENTIRE COMPANY DIRECTORY.

ERIC VERY CAUTIOUSLY POPS HIS HEAD OUTSIDE HIS CUBE. EVERY COMPUTER SCREEN IN THE DEPARTMENT HAS HIS PICTURE ON IT.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh my god! No!

ERIC RUSHES BACK TO HIS COMPUTER IN ATTEMPT TO REMEDY THE SITUATION. AS HE TYPES AWAY IN PANIC, WE SUDDENLY HEAR SOMEONE O.C. CLEAR THEIR THROAT.

ERIC QUICKLY ALT/TABS BEFORE SPINNING AROUND TO FIND LISA, A STUNNING BLONDE IN HER TWENTIES STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM. AS THE ONLY FEMALE CONSULTANT IN THE GROUP, LISA'S BITING SARCASM HAS BEEN SHARPENED TO A POINT. IN HER HANDS, SHE HOLDS AN ENVELOPE.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hi. Can I help you with something?

LISA

I don't know. Can you write code?

ERIC ATTEMPTS TO CHARM HER.

ERIC

No. But I can do sign language.

ERIC SIGNS 'I LIKE YOU.' LISA STARES AT HIM FOR A FEW MOMENTS, STUPEFIED.

LISA

That's so weird. You see, because Jim told me you weren't retarded. I guess 42,000 dollars isn't what it used to be. You know, with inflation and all.

ERIC TURNS BEET RED. HE ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE TOPIC.

ERIC

I'm uh, the new guy.

LISA

You don't say? Well, uh, new guy, the reason I came over is that it's a custom around here that whenever someone has a birthday we all sign a card, and everyone pitches in money.

LISA PUTS THE ENVELOPE ON ERIC'S DESK.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'll just leave this with you. If you could sign it, put a couple bucks in, and then pass it on, that'd be great.

ERIC

Yeah. Sure thing.

LISA TURNS TO LEAVE, BUT SUDDENLY STOPS SHORT AND TURNS BACK.

LISA

By the way, if you're going to

Alt/Tab, you should probably make sure

you don't have Internet Porn running

in the background.

ERIC TURNS TO HIS MONITOR IN PANIC. ON IT IS AN EXCEL SPREADSHEET. LISA WEARS A SHIT-EATING GRIN.

LISA (CONT'D)

Welcome to the Group, Fish.

LISA LEAVES. ERIC SITS DOWN AND LOOKS AT THE ENVELOPE. THE OUTSIDE IS ADDRESSED TO, "MR. SOCKS."

ERIC

(Sotto)

Mr. Socks!?

ERIC QUICKLY OPENS UP THE ENVELOPE, AND PULLS OUT A BIRTHDAY CARD WITH THE SAME PHOTO OF MR. SOCKS AND PHYLLIS WE SAW EARLIER. HE OPENS UP THE CARD TO REVEAL THAT IT IS STUFFED TO BRIM WITH MONEY.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(Sotto)

A birthday card for a cat? There must

be like a hundred dollars in here.

ERIC PULLS HIS PARKING TICKET OUT AND HOLDS IT UP. A DEVIOUS SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HIS FACE. ERIC LOOKS AROUND APPREHENSIVELY, AND THEN COUNTS OUT TWENTY FIVE DOLLARS.

UNBEKNOWNST TO ERIC, DAVID POPS HIS HEAD OVER THE CUBICLE WALL BEHIND HIM, SPYING. AS ERIC POKETS THE MONEY. DAVID VERY PUBLICLY PROCLAIMS...

DAVID

Hey everybody! Check it out! New Fish
just stole Birthday Money!

AND WITHIN SECONDS DAVID, PETER, LISA, AND THE ENTIRE BULLPEN
OF CONSULTANTS SURROUND ERIC'S CUBE, AD-LIBBING DISGUST.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Stealing money from an old woman's
cat!? Dude, what the hell's wrong with
you!

ERIC TRIES TO KEEP DAVID'S VOICE DOWN.

ERIC

Shhh. Please!

LISA

New guy, is it true? Did you just
steal from Mr. Socks?

PHYLISS (O.S.)

You!!!

EVERYONE TURNS TO SEE PHYLLIS, RAGE BURNING IN HER EYES,
APPROACHING FROM DOWN THE HALL.

DAVID

Dude, you are so freaking dead.
(Beat)

Can I have your monitor?

PHYLLIS NEARS ERIC'S CUBE AND STOPS. THE CROWD FORMS A CIRCLE
AROUND THE TWO AS IF A JAILHOUSE FIGHT HAS JUST BROKEN OUT.
HER EYES FIXATED ON ERIC, PHYLLIS CALLS OUT TO DAVID.

PHYLISS

David! Here! Now!

DAVID RUNS BEHIND HER.

DAVID

Yes, ma'am.

PHYLISS

Talk to me.

DAVID

Well, I was just minding my own
business, spying on fish, when I saw
him steal from Mr. Sock's birthday
kitty. By the way, that pun was
totally intended.

ERIC

No, no. That's not what happened. I
wasn't stealing. I swear.

KARL AND JIM SUDDENLY JOIN THE FRAY.

KARL

What's going on here!? Why aren't you
working?

LISA

The new guy's a thief.

PETER

He try to steal from supply room. And
now he steal from Phyllis. I spit on
him!

PETER SPITS.

JIM

Eric, is this true? Because, we have a zero tolerance policy here when it comes to employee theft.

ERIC GOES INTO COMPLETE PANIC MODE.

ERIC

No. It's not true. I was...I was just exchanging the singles with a bigger bill.

DAVID

Oh, really? Prove it. Pull out your wallet.

ERIC

Fine.

ERIC RELUCTANTLY PULLS OUT HIS WALLET AND OPENS IT TO SHOW EVERYONE. IT'S EMPTY. THERE ARE AUDIBLE GASPS.

LISA

(Appalled)

That is so low.

KARL

Pack up your things, son. You're fired.

PHYLLIS SMIRKS AT ERIC. ERIC BOWS HIS HEAD IN SHAME. SUDDENLY, JOHN CALLS FROM OFF CAMERA.

JOHN (O.C.)

Eric, buddy. The surprise is ruined. You can tell them the truth now.

A birthday isn't worth getting fired
over.

EVERYONE TURNS TO FIND JOHN.

PHYLISS

What are you talking about?

JOHN

Well, after your little run in today,
Eric felt bad, and asked me how he
could make it up to you. I told him he
should buy a really great present, so
he decided to take everyone out to
lunch at Morton's.

THE GROUP EXCHANGE DISTRUSTING LOOKS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I told him I couldn't let him pay for
the entire lunch on his own, so I had
him take my twenty five bucks back and
put it towards lunch.

LISA ISN'T BUYING IT.

LISA

Well, then how do you explain the
supply room?

JOHN

Oh, that? I put him up to that as a
joke. I was just messing with him.
Sorry, Fish.

JIM LOOKS AT ERIC.

JIM

Eric? Is all this true?

ERIC LOOKS OVER TO JOHN, WHO SHAKES HIS HEAD IN SUPPORT.

ERIC

Yeah. It's true. I...uh, didn't want
to say anything, because I didn't want
to ruin the surprise for Phyllis.

JIM TURNS TO PHYLLIS.

JIM

So, there you have it. It was a
misunderstanding.

PHYLLIS GLARES AT ERIC. ERIC SMILES BACK AT HER BEFORE
PHYLLIS WALKS OFF IN DISGUST.

KARL

Everybody get back to work!

LISA AND DAVID CROSS TO ERIC.

LISA

I'm sorry for jumping to conclusions
new guy. And thanks for lunch!

DAVID

Wow, dude. You're a-ight. Morton's is
pricey. This lunch is probably gonna
cost you like five hundy.

ERIC SWALLOWS HARD. THE REST OF THE GROUP AD-LIB THANKS, AND
SLAP ERIC ON THE BACK, ETC., BEFORE GOING BACK TO THEIR DESKS
AND OFFICES.

BEFORE LEAVING, PETER BENDS DOWN AND PICKS UP SOMETHING WITH
A HANDKERCHIEF. HE LOOKS UP AT THE PUZZLED ERIC AND JOHN,
BEFORE SAYING...

PETER

I take back my spit.

PETER SCURRIES OFF LEAVING JOHN AND ERIC ALONE. ERIC LETS OUT
A DEEP SIGH OF RELIEF.

ERIC

That was close. Thanks, John!

SUDDENLY, A REALIZATION HITS ERIC.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Wait. You told everybody that I'm
taking them to a five hundred dollar
lunch. I can't afford that!

JOHN

You're not. Relax. Your Uncle John is
gonna take care of everything.

JOHN HOLDS UP HIS CREDIT CARD. ERIC IS MOVED BY JOHN'S
GESTURE, AND GIVES HIM A HUG. JOHN IS CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You got my Wite Out?

ERIC

No, but I got something just as good.

ERIC DIGS INTO HIS POCKET, PULLS OUT THE CORRECTION TAPE, AND HANDS IT TO JOHN.

JOHN

What's this?

ERIC

It's correction tape. It does the same thing.

JOHN UNSPOOLS SOME OF THE TAPE AND PROCEEDS TO SNORT IT VIOLENTLY. GAUGING ITS EFFECTS, HE TURNS BACK TO ERIC.

JOHN

No. No, it doesn't.

JOHN LOOKS AT ERIC AS IF HE IS A PATHETIC WET PUPPY DOG.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know what? I like you, kid, and although you were a complete and total failure, you do get an A for effort.

JOHN LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY BEFORE PLACING HIS HANDS DOWN HIS PANTS. HE RUMBLES AROUND FOR A BIT BEFORE FISHING OUT A BOOKLET OF GOLDEN VALIDATION STICKERS.

ERIC

Validation!

JOHN

Shhh! Put it away, quick. What is this amateur hour?

And don't go telling people about
this. I got a rep to protect.

ERIC

Wow. John, I don't know what to say.
Thank you. Thank you for everything. I
don't know how I can every repay you.

JOHN SMILES.

JOHN

I do. You're going to work it off. You
see, New Fish, I just bought me my
first office bitch.

JOHN SLAPS ERIC ON THE ASS AND WINKS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

After lunch, when you're done with
those forms, come by my cube. I got
some stapling for you to do.

JOHN HANDS ERIC A DRY CLEANING RECEIPT.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And when you're done with that, be a
sweetheart and pick up my dry cleaning
for me, would you?

JOHN WALKS AWAY, LEAVING ERIC IS IN ABSOLUTE SHOCK. ERIC
STANDS ALONE FOR A FEW MOMENTS BEFORE SAYING TO HIMSELF...

ERIC

God, I hate this place!

ERIC TURNS AND WALKS OFF. WE HOLD ON HIM FOR A FEW BEATS
BEFORE HE SUDDENLY KICKS THE COPIER MACHINE.

END OF ACT 3:

TAG

INT. BATHROOM STALL - AFTERNOON

ERIC, FULLY DRESSED, SITS ON THE TOILET STALL STARING AHEAD IN MISERY WHILE UPBEAT MUZAC PLAYS.

WE SUDDENLY HEAR JOHN YELL OUT FROM THE ADJACENT STALL...

JOHN (O.S.)

Gammon! Yes!

ERIC LOOKS OVER TO THE WALL NEXT TO HIM.

ERIC

John?

AN AWKWARD PAUSE, BEFORE...

JOHN (O.S.)

Eric?

(Beat)

What are your feelings on deep tissue
massage?

ERIC TURNS HIS HEAD BACK TOWARDS CAMERA AND CONTINUES TO STARE AHEAD DESPONDENTLY.

END OF SHOW