

"DO IT YOURSELF"

"Pilot"

Created by

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&
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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. HOME TIME -- DAY

A GIANT HOME IMPROVEMENT WAREHOUSE STORE. YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE: AISLES OF TOOLS AND PAINT AND HARDWARE SUPPLIES. AT THE BACK WE CAN SEE THE BEGINNING OF THE LUMBER AREA AND AT THE OTHER SIDE, THE GARDEN SHOP. THERE'S A CASHIER'S SECTION UP FRONT, A DEMO AREA WHERE A KNOW-IT-ALL GUY WITH A HEADSET TEACHES PEOPLE HOW TO SPACKLE, AND, UP A SHORT FLIGHT OF STAIRS, THE MANAGER'S LAIR.

IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY, FROM THE SCALE OF THE PLACE TO THE NUMBER OF AISLES, IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE WE HAVE A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE ENTIRE STORE. THE STORE IS FAIRLY BUSY. THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE SHOPPING, FILLING THEIR CARTS WITH STUFF.

AT THE FRONT, DENISE, THE CASHIER, IS CHECKING A MIDDLE-AGED MAN OUT. DENISE (INDETERMINATE AGE, MAYBE A LITTLE PLUMP) IS RELENTLESSLY CHEERFUL.

WE MOVE THROUGH THE STORE...

DENISE

Kind of crazy hot today, don't you think? I had heat stroke when I was a little girl. Fainted dead away.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

I'm kind of in a hurry.

DENISE

Oh, I'm sorry. I tend to over share. I guess it's just that I'm a people person. I love the whole interaction thing. But you promise to tell me if I get too chatty!

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Okay, it's just --

DENISE

Yeah, that heat stroke knocked me out. Almost fried my brain pan. And you know, it was easy for folks to be judgemental, but I don't think my mom knew how hot it was, or she definitely would have cracked the car window for us.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Your mom locked you in a car on a summer day?

DENISE

Life is all about challenges. Something bad happens, you find the positive. For instance, that day I learned I could dislocate my own shoulder and wiggle out of my car seat. And Mom quit drinking for almost a year. (THEN, SEEING THE CUSTOMER'S CARD) Oh, good! You're a rewards member!

KATE DRIVES UP IN ONE OF THOSE HOME-DEPOT-ISH CARTS. KATE IS PARANOID, SUSPICIOUS, IRRATIONAL, AND DRUNK ON POWER. IN OTHER WORDS, A TYPICAL STORE MANAGER.

KATE

No one wants to hear your stories, Denise. (THEN, TO CUSTOMER) I'm sorry sir. Have a great day.

SHE CARTS AWAY, AND WE FOLLOW HER PAST THE KEY-MAKING AREA, WHERE A FEMALE CUSTOMER IS GETTING A KEY FROM JOHNSON, A GRIZZLED SURVIVALIST -- BUT A HELL OF A KEY COPIER. HE HANDS THE FEMALE CUSTOMER TWO KEYS ON A RING. JAVIER, THE YOUNG ASSISTANT, STANDS BY.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

I only wanted one key. It's just for the basement. Where we keep the collectibles and my jewelry safe.

JOHNSON

Sorry ma'am, I'll have this one destroyed.

HE TAKES A KEY OFF THE RING, AND HANDS HER THE RING BACK.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Thank you.

JOHNSON

God bless.

AS FEMALE CUSTOMER MOVES OFF, JOHNSON OPENS UP A GIANT LOCKER. IT'S FILLED WITH KEYS. HUNDREDS OF THEM. ALL TAGGED AND ORGANIZED.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(TO JAVIER) This country's on a collision course with destiny. It's all about to hit the fan. And when that happens, I'm going to be prepared. I'm going to know where the cars are, where the gas is, where the negotiables can be found.

HE TAPS THE LOCKER.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Some people see keys? I see survival.

AS JOHNSON GOES TO FILE THE KEY, WE CATCH UP TO KATE.

WE FOLLOW HER PAST THE DEMO AREA WHERE TYLER (HANDSOME, 30S), STANDS ON A SMALL PLATFORM WITH ONE OF THOSE IDIOTIC EARPIECE MICROPHONES, GIVING A PAINTING DEMONSTRATION TO ONE BORED CUSTOMER.

TYLER

(SEAMLESS PATTER) You're saying, 'Hey, Tyler!' What's the best way to lay down a clean, streak-free coat? Well let me tell you. Keep it 'X-rated.'

(BIG FAKE DOUBLE TAKE) Huh?! What does Tyler mean by that?!

HE PAINTS AN 'X' ON THE DEMO BOARD. AND THEN ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER.

TYLER (CONT'D)

The 'X' shape guarantees beautiful coverage without any striping.

(CALLING OUT TO KATE) Speaking of beautiful coverage, our Manager Kate, ladies and gentlemen!

KATE

(CALLING BACK) Don't do that, Tyler.

TYLER

(SHRUGGING, TO HIS SMALL AUDIENCE)

That's our little dance.

KATE CARTS AWAY AND STOPS AT A DISPLAY OF TOILETS, WHERE NICK PORTER, OUR HERO, TALKS WITH A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, MARLENE.

NICK IS YOUNG, SMART -- SOMETIMES TOO SMART -- THE KIND OF GUY THAT EVERYONE COMES TO. HE IS 'THE PROFESSOR.'

MARLENE POINTS TO THE COMPLICATED TOP-OF-THE-LINE TOILET.

MARLENE

(POINTS TO AN OBJECT INSIDE THE TOILET) What's this?

NICK

That's what they call the "irrigation wand."

MARLENE

(INTRIGUED) I'm listening.

NICK

It's a Japanese unit. They're so forthright about this kind of thing. This toilet is saying, basically, "let's you and me get this whole area cleaned up."

KATE

Nick, do you have a moment?

NICK

(TO MARLENE) Excuse me.

HE CROSSES OVER TO KATE.

KATE

Ride with me.

NICK

Kate, I'm with a customer.

KATE

It'll just take a sec.

SHE AND NICK CART OFF. WE FOLLOW THEM THROUGH THE STORE...

NICK

I think she was going to pop for one of those expensive toilets. You know, with the commission and everything --

KATE

Nick, do you think my job is easy?

NICK

Kind of. You just roll around in a cart and yell at people.

KATE

Well, that part is easy. But regional is on my ass everyday. 'Why aren't you selling more? Why aren't the garden hoses moving? Why can't all your employees be as good as employee A-7-13?'

NICK

I'm employee A-7-13.

KATE

That's true, Nick. You're a top seller. But you're more than that. People here like you, they look up to you. You're a leader. In fact, I'd say that you have what it takes to be the assistant manager of this Home Time location.

NICK

That's the meanest thing anyone's ever said to me.

KATE

Don't run from success, Nick. Life is about grasping opportunities and exploiting your environment. Do you know who said that? The Dalai Lama.

NICK

That doesn't sound like the Dalai Lama.

KATE

Let's not play "gotcha." Nick, I'm offering you a promotion. Are you interested?

NICK

Kate, I'm flattered that you think of me as a leader -- really, I am -- but I'm a math teacher. Or supposed to be. And when the school system starts hiring again, that's what I'm going to do.

KATE

Assistant Manager of Home Time Store 903. That has a ring to it.

NICK

Not really.

KATE

Think about it, Nick.

THE CART PULLS BACK UP TO THE LINE OF TOILETS WHERE MARLENE IS STILL MULLING HER CHOICES. NICK GETS OFF.

KATE (CONT'D)

"To manage people and profits is the highest calling for man's talents."

Do you know who said that? Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

NICK

Doesn't sound like --

BUT SHE'S DRIVEN OFF. NICK HEADS TO MARLENE.

MARLENE

I still can't decide. Which one would you buy?

NICK

Honestly, they're all very good units. But if I didn't have huge student loans to pay, I'd go for the one that washes your butt automatically.

MARLENE

Oh, that's too bad. I really think it's wrong that we force young people like yourself to start their lives with all of that debt. We used to invest in young people. But you know what? This country has gotten selfish.

(MORE)

MARLENE (CONT'D)

We've become lazy and complacent.

(THEN) I'll take the one that washes
your butt automatically.

NICK

I'll go write it up.

JAVIER SPOTS NICK.

JAVIER

(CALLING OUT) Hola, Professor!

JAVIER RUNS TO CATCH UP WITH NICK. AS THEY WALK:

JAVIER (CONT'D)

(IN SPANISH, PROUDLY) Look at this!

HE SHOWS NICK A PIECE OF PAPER.

NICK

(READING) You got an 'A' on your
English exam! Keep at it. You *will*
get that GED, I promise.

JAVIER STARES BLANKLY.

NICK (CONT'D)

(IN SPANISH) Did you understand any
of that?

JAVIER

(IN SPANISH) Nope.

LAURA PASSES. LAURA IS A SMOKING HOT BUT SLIGHTLY TOMBOYISH
YOUNG WOMAN WHO WORKS IN THE GARDEN DEPARTMENT. SHE IS
CARRYING A SACK OF POTTING SOIL AND WEARS ONE OF THOSE WEIGHT-
LIFTING BELTS.

NICK

Hey Laura.

LAURA

Hey Nick.

NICK

(AS HE WRITES UP HIS SALE) How was your big date last night?

LAURA

Oh, I don't know. We didn't really click.

NICK

That's too bad.

LAURA

Is it me? Am I doing something wrong?

RAJIV (YOUNG, INDIAN) APPROACHES.

NICK

Laura, you're an attractive girl, you don't need to worry about that.

RAJIV

Totally. If you had sixteen arms and an elephant trunk, we'd be praying to you.

LAURA

I don't get it. I'll go out with a guy and we'll have an okay time. But at the end of the date I'll be like: 'meh.' What's wrong with me? What am I doing wrong?

NICK

Maybe you're just going out with the wrong kind of guy.

LAURA

That's what my roommate Annie says. She says I should I set my sights higher. She's so understanding. She gives the best back rubs. And nobody knows how to draw a bath like Annie. Sometimes I wish I could just marry *her*.

SHE MOVES OFF. THE GUYS ARE SILENT FOR A MOMENT.

RAJIV

Has anyone ever met Annie?

NICK

No, but once, after work, I saw Laura get into a Subaru with a person who looked like the actor Steve Buscemi.

TESS, AN ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR, APPROACHES.

TESS

(SOTTO) Hey Nick, your customer is gonna need someone to install that. Would you please give her my card?

NICK

Absolutely, no problem.

TESS

Thanks.

NICK

Seriously, not a problem at all.

Happy to do it.

HE LOOKS AT HER. THERE'S A MOMENT.

TESS

You're not going to ask me out again,
are you?

NICK

I was kind of thinking about it.

TESS

Nick, we've talked about this. You're
a perfectly nice guy. But you work
here. And I'm here every day. It's
just too close.

NICK

But that's because you think of me as
a Home Time guy.

TESS

You are a Home Time guy.

NICK

This is just a temporary gig until --

TESS

You start teaching. Yes. I know.
You've told me that.

NICK

Okay, but would you go out with a Home
Time *Assistant Manager* guy?

TESS

Did Kate just give you a promotion?

NICK

She offered it.

TESS

And did you take it?

NICK

I'm thinking it over.

TESS

What's to think over? It's a promotion. It's a raise.

RAJIV

(OVERHEARING) You got a promotion?
Wonderful!

NICK

I haven't said yes. I thinking it over.

RAJIV

What's to think over?

NICK

Well, I don't know. I mean, I'm only here temporarily. Maybe she should give the job to someone who plans to be here for the long haul?

RAJIV

You're talking to someone who's
grandparents lived in a corrugated
box. You'll excuse me if I'm
confused.

HE MOVES OFF.

TESS

Nick, take the promotion.

NICK

But this isn't really what I want to
do with my life.

TESS

And I thought I'd be building
skyscrapers and housing developments.
But right now, I'd be happy to install
that old lady's crapper.

NICK LAUGHS. HE TAKES HER CARD AND CROSSES TO MARLENE.
MARLENE IS FLANKED BY BEN AND JOEY. BEN (YOUNGER, SMARTER)
AND JOEY (OLDER, DUMBER) ARE THE STOCK ROOM GUYS.

NICK

Ma'am, you're all written up.

TESS AND NICK FOLLOW MARLENE, BEN AND JOEY THROUGH THE AISLES
TOWARD THE CASHIER.

NICK (CONT'D)

But that's a very complicated unit.
You're going to want a professional
contractor to install it. Tess here
is one of the most experienced
contractors in town.

MARLENE

These gentlemen said they'd install it
for me.

BEN

We're experienced.

JOEY

And we're in town.

TESS

Ma'am, this is an expensive unit. You
want two guys from the stock room to
install it?

BEN

She did not just go there.

MARLENE

Well, they're doing it for twenty-five
dollars. Can you match that?

TESS

No one can match that. That won't
even pay for the gas to your house.

JOEY

(PROUD) We don't own a car.

BEN

And we pass those savings on to you.

THEY REACH THE CASHIERS AND DENISE. DENISE WAVES TO THEM.

DENISE

I'm free! Over here!

AS THEY WHEEL THE CRATE TOWARDS HER:

DENISE (CONT'D)

Wow. Last time I saw a box that big,
my grandfather was in it. Cute story.
One of the pallbearers was drunk.
Drops the casket. Body goes flying.
You have to laugh. Pop-pop was a
funny old bird. He touched me
inappropriately. It's one of the
reasons I have trouble connecting to
people. The good news is I have a
great relationship with my cats.
Debit or credit?

AS MARLENE GETS HER PURSE, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

MAIN TITLES.

AINT. HOME TIME -- RIGHT AFTER CLOSING

THE TEAM IS WALKING TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE STORE, AD-LIBBING GOOD-NIGHTS.

DALE

Good night, Professor!

THEY STOP.

KATE

Just a second, team. Did everybody
clock out?

NICK

Yes, Kate.

KATE

Good. Home Time employee meeting!

Tyler, take me up.

TYLER PUSHES A BUTTON, AND SHE RISES UP ON A SKYWITCH.

JOHNSON

Right after we clock out, the meeting
starts? So it's on our time?

DALE

Hey, companies are always pulling crap
like that. Back when I was senior
vice president of Circuit City, I did
it all the time. We screwed employees
every chance we got. It just makes
financial sense.

RAJIV

So why did the company go broke?

DALE

(IT'S OBVIOUS) Obama.

KATE

Hello, team. This is a big day. The gang at corporate has come up with a wonderful new slogan that crystallizes the Home Time shopping experience.

(THEN) 'Home Time: We make your life better.'

SHE CUES TYLER. BANNERS DROP DOWN THAT SAY JUST THAT.

KATE (CONT'D)

Tyler, please pass out the buttons.

(THEN, AS HE DOES) This is the brand-new Home Time slogan. It's going nation-wide, on banners in every Home Time store, as a tag line on every Home Time television commercial, and on the lips of every Home Time employee. Dale, let's role-play. I'm a customer. You just sold me a wrench. What do you say?

DALE

Hope you like your wrench?

KATE

No. You didn't sell me a wrench. You just sold me something that's going to tighten the bolts on my baby's stroller, so it doesn't collapse and my baby doesn't roll into the street to be hit by a bus.

NICK

That's a hell of a wrench.

KATE

We're selling a better life. A better American life.

NICK

With tools made in China.

TYLER

Zip it, Nick.

KATE

From now on, every single customer interaction will end with a Home Time sales associate asking, "Did I make your life better today?"

NICK

I just sold an old lady a twelve-hundred-dollar butt-washer. I didn't make her life better. I just made her butt cleaner.

KATE

Focus groups say that people want an emotional experience when they shop.

NICK

Just like the focus group that decided we should be fifteen steps from the entrance, instead of twenty, because fifteen was more welcoming?

TYLER

Exactly!

NICK

And then later that it should be twenty feet instead of fifteen because fifteen is too aggressive?

TYLER

That was not a focus group, that was a market research gathering! Completely different!

NICK

Why can't people just walk in, get the tool that does the thing, and be on their way?

KATE

Because that's not emotionally fulfilling.

NICK

Really? I almost willed up saying it.

KATE

Corporate has spent millions of dollars on this re-branding.

NICK

And not on our health plan.

KATE

Starting tomorrow, if a Home Time associate does not ask 'Have I made your life better today?' their purchase will be free.

NICK

Kate, we are good at our jobs, we don't need to be told how to talk.

KATE

If Home Time's new corporate market position offends your dignity or individuality, here's a tip. Leave those in the car when you come to work. (THEN) Tyler, slow pull away while craning up.

TYLER BEGINS TO BACK UP THE SKY WITCH. IT BEEPS.

KATE (CONT'D)

Big day tomorrow! You all look so tiny from up here! Tyler, watch the fan!

AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

BINT. HOME TIME -- THE NEXT DAY

NICK WALKS IN WITH DALE.

DALE

(PRACTICING) Have I made your life better today? Have I made your life better today? Yeah, I got it. (THEN, TO NICK) So, word is you're our new Assistant Manager?

NICK

I'm thinking about it.

DALE

Makes sense. You're single and have no managerial experience.

NICK

Dale --

DALE

And I'm a former executive with thirty years experience managing people and a wife who's too good for Wal-Mart. I wonder what the difference is?

NICK

Dale --

DALE

Oh yeah. I remember now. I committed the unpardonable sin of getting old.

NICK

I'm not even sure I'm going to take it.

DALE

Don't be a dumbass.

NICK

Home Time really isn't where I want to be.

DALE

Seriously? You're seriously saying that? Is it okay if I kick your ass? Listen, compared to where I was when Circuit City went bust, this is nothing. I stood out on the street, spinning an arrow. I cleaned up old people at a rest home. You know what naked old people look like? Like piles of laundry. I even worked at that yogurt place across the street. Do you know what you have to say when you hand the customer their yogurt? "Here's your frozen deliciousness. I love you."

NICK

You told people you love them?

DALE

I have yet to hear of a job where you are not required to say something creepy. At a certain point, every job makes you want to crawl up your own butt.

WE HEAR A 'BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.' KATE GLIDES BY.

DALE (CONT'D)

Don't be a dumbshit.

KATE

Nick, ride with me.

NICK ROLLS HIS EYES AND GETS INTO THE CART. AS THEY CART ALONG:

KATE (CONT'D)

Listen up for the new slogan.

NICK

What?

THEY CART PAST JOHNSON, IN THE KEY BOOTH AS HE HANDS SOME KEYS TO A YOUNG WOMAN.

JOHNSON

Miss, did I make your life better today?

YOUNG WOMAN

Well, my boyfriend's gun rack has been making me nervous. It's nice to know it's securely locked. So yeah, you did make my life better.

SHE MOVES AWAY AS JOHNSON PUTS A DUPLICATE KEY AWAY IN THE LOCKER.

JOHNSON

And you made my life better, too.

THEY CART AWAY.

KATE

So I was a little miffed at your lack of support last night when I announced our corporate re-branding.

NICK

I think it's demeaning to treat us like puppets. Kate, when you make people dress a certain way, like in an orange vest, and then say certain words, you've actually enslaved them.

KATE

Don't be dramatic, Nick. Home Time does not enslave anybody. In the continental United States, anyway. We treat all of our employees with fairness and respect. (CALLING OUT TO JAVIER IN SPANISH) Javier, no more bathroom breaks! (THEN) Those people are in the bathroom all the time. That's 'cause they'll eat anything. Like Labradors. (THEN) Where was I?

NICK

You were talking about how you treat
all the employees with dignity and
respect.

THE CART PASSES RAJIV AND ANOTHER CUSTOMER.

RAJIV

Have I made your life better today?

CUSTOMER

(SHRUGS) It's a screen door hinge.

RAJIV

So that would be yes. Thank you.

THEY CART ALONG.

KATE

Okay, yes, you and I both know there's
a lot of silliness in this corporate
stuff. And we just have to soldier
on, and make the best of it. So? Do
I have a new Assistant Manager?

NICK

Yes. Okay. Yes. I'll do it.

KATE

Wonderful.

NICK

But the minute the high school starts
hiring again --

KATE

(SHUSHING HIM) Uh bup bup bup! Not interested in the future. Only focusing on what makes me feel good this very moment. Do you know who said that? Jesus Christ.

NICK

That doesn't sound like --

KATE

Uh bup bup bup!

THEY PULL UP AT THE CASHIER, WHERE DENISE IS IN FULL CONFESSIONAL CHECKING OUT A CUSTOMER.

DENISE

(VERY CHEERFUL) ...And it turns out, it wasn't a tumor at all. It was the stagnant, half-formed fetus of my unborn twin sister. Isn't that cutest thing you've ever heard? (THEN) Have a wonderful day!

THE CUSTOMER EXITS. KATE TURNS TO NICK.

KATE

First task today: can we get Denise to shut the freak up?

DISSOLVE TO:

C

INT. THE WORLD'S MOST OPULENT BATHROOM -- THAT DAY

A STEAM SHOWER. TWO SINKS. BEAUTIFUL FIXTURES.

THE DOOR OPENS, AND MARLENE ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY JOEY AND BEN, WHO DOLLY IN A LARGE CRATE.

JOEY

(RE: BATHROOM) Holy moly. This room is too nice to take a dump in.

MARLENE

Well thank you. That's kind of what we were going for. (THEN, RE: OLD TOILET) It goes over there.

BEN

Yeah. I figured. Rule one of toilet install: "Put it where the old one was."

MARLENE

I'll be downstairs. Will you two be okay in here?

BEN

Ma'am, we'll have this installed in no time at all.

SHE EXITS. THEY SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND HER. BEN BEGINS TO UN-CRATE THE TOILET.

BEN (CONT'D)

This crate is actually larger than the bathroom I have at home. Will you hand me the pry bar?

BUT JOEY'S AT THE MEDICINE CABINET, RIFLING THROUGH THE MEDICATIONS.

JOEY

So the man of the house's got constipation and boner trouble. One thing's too hard and one thing's too soft. Rich people problems, huh?

BEN

Don't go through their stuff.

JOEY

It's fine. They expect it.

JOEY POKETS A FEW VIAGRA.

BEN

Don't do that. Be professional!

JOEY

Hey, my wife's got a birthday coming up. It can be intimidating for a man my age. (RE: ANOTHER BOTTLE OF PILLS) Anti-anxieties? A lot going on in this house. Then again, if I couldn't poop or pop, I'd be anxious too.

BEN

Come on, man. Get over here and help me out. We do good on this job, this could be our future.

JOEY

I'm here, I'm here.

BEN

(READING MANUAL) Uh oh.

JOEY

What?

BEN

Do you speak Japanese?

JOEY

(THINKING) Um..... no.

BEN

'Cause these instructions are in
Japanese.

JOEY

Oh, man.

BEN

We're going to have to figure this
thing out by ourselves.

JOEY

I'm getting anxious.

JOEY SWALLOWS A PILL.

BEN

Did you take one of his anxiety pills?

JOEY

I hope so. Either that or our
relationship may go to a whole new
level.

THE GUYS BEGIN TO INSTALL THE TOILET AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

D

INT. HOME TIME -- LATER THAT DAY

DENISE IS CHECKING OUT A TOUGH CUSTOMER. NICK STANDS BY.

DENISE

Epoxy! Reminds me of my first
boyfriend. He loved to huff this.

NICK

Denise...

DENISE

(CHARGING ON) But he was a smoker, so,
one day: BOOM! He still has the most
beautiful eyes. Well, eye. Receipt
in the bag?

SHE HANDS THE CUSTOMER HIS BAG AND RECEIPT. AS HE WALKS OFF,
HE CHECKS THE RECEIPT.

DENISE (CONT'D)

(TO NICK) How was that?

NICK

Honestly? A lot better.

THE TOUGH CUSTOMER RETURNS.

TOUGH CUSTOMER

Uh, Miss?

DENISE

Yes?

TOUGH CUSTOMER

You didn't ask me if you made my life
better.

DENISE

Yes, I did.

TOUGH CUSTOMER

No, you didn't.

KATE APPROACHES. A CROWD GATHERS.

KATE

Is there a problem?

TOUGH CUSTOMER

Well, it says on the receipt that if I'm not asked if my life is better, I get my purchase free.

KATE

(TO DENISE) Did you ask this gentleman if you made his life better?

DENISE

(FRANTICALLY, TO THE CUSTOMER) Did I make your life better today?

TOUGH CUSTOMER

Too late. I'm beyond the register.

SHE TAKES THE RECEIPT. ALL THE EMPLOYEES ARE NOW GATHERED.

KATE

Is your purchase in this bag?

TOUGH CUSTOMER

Those are just the connectors I bought. For the washer and dryer waiting for me on the loading dock.

DENISE BEGINS TO SOB. KATE STOICALLY TAPS ON THE REGISTER. SHE TURNS TO THE CUSTOMER.

KATE

Well, as we promised, your entire purchase today is free. Have I made your life better today?

TOUGH CUSTOMER

I'll say. You just gave me a free washer and dryer.

HE EXITS. A SILENCE.

KATE

Denise, get your things. You're terminated.

DENISE SHRIEKS IN PAIN.

DENISE

Oh my God, this is the worst day of my life!

DALE

This is the worst day of your life?

NICK

Kate, it's not fair. It's the first day of the policy, she's going to make some mistakes. We all make mistakes.

KATE

Objection duly noted from the new assistant manager who wasn't asked.
(BEAT) Denise, get your stuff.

NICK

Denise, don't move. Kate, let's talk about this.

KATE

Nick, this is not a debate. This is heads-on-a-stick time.

A BEAT.

NICK

You fire her, and I quit.

KATE

Are you threatening me?

NICK

If Denise goes, I go. And we're going to take everybody here with us. (TO THE GROUP) Right?

THERE'S A PAUSE.

NICK (CONT'D)

Right? We're not robots, are we? We're people. With dignity.

RAJIV TAKES A STEP TOWARDS NICK.

RAJIV

Right, I'm with you. I don't like being told what to say.

LAURA STEPS FORWARD.

LAURA

I'm with you, too.

THE REST OF THE GROUP MOVES TOWARDS NICK.

NICK

What's it gonna be, Kate? You can't fire all of us.

KATE

I can't? Look outside. There's a parking lot filled with people who would love to work here. This isn't NASA. This is Home Time. Anyone can do this job. The only requirement is that you say 'Have I made your life better today?' Which she didn't say, so she's fired. Anybody else want to be fired?

A LONG PAUSE.

DALE

(TO NICK) I'm sorry. I can't lose this job. I've got two kids who like Apple products.

HE MOVES TOWARDS KATE.

KATE

Anyone else? Rajiv?

HE LOOKS AT NICK.

RAJIV

I'm sorry. I have two four-year-olds at home. Maybe if this were next year, when they're old enough to work...

HE MOVES WITH THE REST OF THEM. ALL SLOWLY MOVE TOWARDS KATE, MUMBLING APOLOGIES TO NICK AND DENISE. ONLY JAVIER STANDS WITH NICK. THEY EXCHANGE A SMILE. IT LOOKS LIKE JAVIER IS STANDING FIRM.

NICK

(IN SPANISH) They're firing everyone
who stands next to me.

JAVIER LOOKS STARTLED, AND QUICKLY DASHES TO THE OTHER SIDE.

KATE

Okay, then. Looks like we've all made
our choice.

AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

EINT. THE WORLD'S MOST OPULENT BATHROOM -- LATER

THERE ARE TOOLS AND PACKAGING ALL OVER THE PLACE. BEN IS FINISHING CONNECTING THE TOILET TO THE FLOOR.

JOEY

(EATING WHAT LOOKS LIKE CHIPS FROM A BOWL) Rich people are weird. But these are the world's worst chips.

BEN

Those aren't chips. They put it in the bathroom so it smells nice.

JOEY

My bathroom smells like poop and loneliness, like a normal person.

BEN

That's what it's like to be rich. You've got options. Do I take a shower, or do I use the jacuzzi? Do I use the paper, or do I use the jets? What sensations do I wanna have? (THEN, RE: OBJECT) What the hell is this?

JOEY

I dunno. Some piece we had left over.

BEN

There's no such thing as a piece left over. Everything's gotta go in the unit. Oh my God, we screwed up.

JOEY

Sometimes they put extra things in for no reason. Those little guys are thoughtful.

BEN

Joey, we've got to do this right. This woman is paying us twenty. Five. Dollars.

JOEY

You know, if you say it another way, it sounds different. (SHRUGGING) This woman is paying us twenty-five dollars.

BEN

Alright, let's take this apart.

JOEY

Ben, relax. This thing works. I'll prove it to you.

HE STARTS TO LOOK AROUND THE BATHROOM.

BEN

What are you doing?

JOEY

Looking for something to read.

DISSOLVE TO:

HINT. I HEART YOGURT -- LATER

A YOGURT STORE. NICK IS THERE, IN AN ABSURD YOGURT OUTFIT WITH A PUFFY HAT, SERVING A LARGE CUSTOMER. IT IS A HUMILIATING SPECTACLE.

LARGE CUSTOMER

Could you make an indentation in the top of the yogurt, to hold the Heath Bar? Cause otherwise it falls off.

NICK

That's a good idea.

LARGE CUSTOMER

Yeah. I invented that.

NICK

Good use of a concave void. Another way to do it is, I create a cylinder of yogurt and fill the cavity with toppings.

LARGE CUSTOMER

You and I are going to be best friends.

RAJIV, LAURA AND JAVIER ENTER. THEY SEE NICK AND STOP.

NICK

What?

JAVIER

(IN SPANISH) Oh my God.

LAURA

I think I'm going to cry.

NICK

There's nothing to cry about. This is a perfectly fine place to work.

RAJIV

Oh, come on. You're wearing a poofy hat.

LAURA

You don't belong here, Nick. I know Kate will give you your job back if you ask her.

NICK

I'm not going to ask her.

RAJIV

All this because you don't want to say a stupid slogan?

NICK

Hey, I've got pride, okay? Integrity.

HE HANDS THE LARGE CUSTOMER HIS YOGURT.

NICK (CONT'D)

Here's your frozen deliciousness. We thank you for coming to I Heart Yogurt. I love you.

LARGE CUSTOMER

And I love you.

NICK

You don't really have to say that.

LARGE CUSTOMER

I wasn't talking to you. (THEN, TO
YOGURT, SWEETLY) Let's go.

RAJIV, LAURA AND JAVIER LOOK AT NICK. NICK LOOKS AT THEM,
REALIZING HE'S BEEN DEFEATED.

RAJIV

My father has a saying, "Hara kama
karata hi apa apane khuda ke bata
krola cahate."

A BEAT.

RAJIV (CONT'D)

"Every job makes you want to crawl up
your own butt."

CUT TO:

JINT. HOME TIME -- KATE'S OFFICE LAIR -- LATER

KATE IS LOOKING OUT OF HER WINDOW, BROODING. TYLER APPEARS AT THE DOOR, WITH A TRAY.

TYLER

Babe?

KATE

Don't call me that.

TYLER

I just finished my demonstration of our travel hibachi. I brought you some chicken skewers.

KATE

I'm not hungry.

TYLER

Please. I just want to see your mouth move.

KATE

I'm busy, Tyler.

SHE STARES OUT THE WINDOW. HE STANDS BEHIND HER.

TYLER

What are you looking at? (THEN, SEEING) Oh, Nick. What's he doing here?

KATE

I don't know. He's swanning around with all his friends.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

(THEN) Regional screamed at me on the phone today, 'Nick Porter is your top seller! Get him back!' 'Nick Porter is management material!'

TYLER

What about me? I do twelve shows a week.

KATE

They're not shows, Tyler.

TYLER

They are too. I play a character.

I'm integrating music and movement.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM SHARPLY, AND HE EXITS. SHE PICKS UP THE PUBLIC ADDRESS MICROPHONE.

KATE

(TO HERSELF) Nick Porter, please come to the office. No, that sounds too conciliatory. Nick Porter to the office. No, too sexy. Wrong message.

KATE TAKES A BREATH, AND TURNS ON THE MICROPHONE.

KATE (CONT'D)

Nick Porter. Please, come to the office, please. (THEN, OFF MIC) Damn it, that sounded stupid.

RESET TO:

INT. HOME TIME -- COFFEE AREA -- CONTINUOUS

NICK IS STARING UP AT KATE'S LAIR. TESS AND THE GANG ARE BEHIND HIM.

DALE

You can do this.

NICK

It's just a job, right? I'll suck it up, I'll do it, I'll pay down my student loans. It's not permanent. It's just 'til the high school's hiring again.

DALE LAUGHS.

DALE

You think the public school system doesn't make you say bullshit things?

TESS

Listen, if you go get your job back, I'll have that dinner with you.

KATE (O.S.)

I didn't mean please, Nick. Just come to the office. No please. Just office.

NICK

Better be a good dinner.

NICK MOVES OFF TOWARDS KATE'S LAIR. JOEY AND BEN APPROACH.

JOEY

You'll be happy to know that we installed that broad's fancy toilet.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

Plus which, I copped a few boner pills.

TESS

Congratulations, fellas.

BEN

But we forgot this. (HE HOLDS UP A PART) Is this bad?

TESS

You guys didn't install the pressure valve?

JOEY

Will she even notice that?

TESS

I don't know. Would you notice if someone shot a fire hose up your butt?

JOEY

Maybe twenty years ago.

RESET TO:

INT. HOME TIME -- KATE'S OFFICE LAIR -- CONTINUOUS

AS NICK WALKS UP THE SHORT STAIRCASE, KATE ARRANGES HERSELF IN A STUDIOUSLY CASUAL POSE. NICK KNOCKS ON THE OPEN DOORWAY.

NICK

You summoned me?

KATE

(PRETENDING TO BE SURPRISED) Oh, Nick, hello. Come in.

HE ENTERS.

KATE (CONT'D)

(HOLDING UP THE TRAY) Chicken skewer?

NICK

No, thanks.

KATE

I'll get right to it. I was perhaps hasty when I terminated employee A-7-13. That has been brought to my attention by the gang at corporate.

NICK

Really?

KATE

Yes, they were very upset with me. So, I'd like to have you back.

NICK

Great, I accept.

KATE

The assistant manager position is something we'll have to think about... (STOPPING HERSELF) Wait a minute. Did you just say you accept?

NICK

Did you just say you were making me assistant manager again?

KATE

(COVERING) No.

NICK

Then, no.

KATE

Fine. You're assistant manager.

NICK

Plus I get to ride around in the cart.

KATE

But no elevation.

NICK

And Denise gets to come back. And she can talk all she wants.

KATE

(DEFEATED) Fine. But you're going to have to say the phrase. That's out of my hands.

NICK

I know.

KATE STARES OUT THE WINDOWS MOODILY.

KATE

You know what the problem with American business is? Everyone's in their own silos. The people at corporate HQ don't talk to the people in management. The people in management don't talk to the people on the floor.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Everybody's giving everybody else orders, and nobody's listening to anybody.

AS NICK BEGINS TO EXIT, HE STOPS, TURNS:

NICK

You know, sometimes after work we all go out and have a beer. Why don't you join us?

KATE

Oh God. How awful. Pass.

NICK

Okay then.

WE FOLLOW HIM DOWN THE STAIRS. AS RAJIV, LAURA, AND DALE AD-LIB CONGRATULATIONS, A HARRIED DAD APPROACHES WITH A YOUNG BOY.

HARRIED DAD

Can one of you guys help me? My kid here is competing in a soap-box derby tomorrow, and I think we got the plans kind of screwed up.

NICK

Let me take a look.

DISSOLVE TO:

KINT. WORLD'S MOST OPULENT HALLWAY -- LATER

TESS, JOEY, BEN, AND MARLENE'S HUSBAND WALK DOWN THE HALL TO THE CLOSED BATHROOM DOOR.

MARLENE'S HUSBAND

She's been in there for hours. She
won't come out.

HE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

MARLENE'S HUSBAND (CONT'D)

(CALLING) Marlene? Honey? They're
here to fix the toilet.

THE DOOR OPENS A CRACK. MARLENE'S FACE APPEARS. SHE'S
MESSED UP AND GLOWING.

MARLENE

There's nothing wrong with the toilet.
It's magnificent.

TESS HOLDS UP THE VALVE.

TESS

It's missing the pressure valve. They
installed it wrong.

MARLENE

If this is wrong, I don't want to be
right.

SHE SLAMS THE DOOR AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

LINT. HOME TIME -- LATER

NICK IS WALKING DOWN THE AISLE WITH THE HARRIED DAD AND HIS SON. THEY ARE PUSHING A CART FILLED WITH ALL THE THINGS YOU NEED TO BUILD A SOAP BOX DERBY CAR.

NICK

...So this is all you need for the soap box derby. Two things to keep in mind. In terms of weight distribution, you want to front load it as much as you can. The nose of the car is what gives you momentum.

HARRIED DAD

Thanks.

NICK

And I tweaked your plans. Some of the ratios were off.

HARRIED DAD

You really know this stuff.

NICK

I've got a Ph. D. In Applied Math I can't use.

HARRIED DAD

(TO KID) Hear that, Son? We've got a scientist working for us.

NICK

But the most important thing to remember: paint some skulls on the body of the car. Preferably with flames shooting out of the eyes. It won't make you go any faster, but it will freak the other kids out.

KID

(PUMPING FIST IN THE AIR) Yes!

HARRIED DAD

I cannot thank you enough.

NICK

Anytime.

HE TURNS TO GO, AND FINDS HIMSELF FACE TO FACE WITH KATE.

KATE

Forgetting something?

NICK SIGHS, TURNS.

NICK

Have I made your life better today?

HARRIED DAD IS SILENT FOR A MOMENT.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know it's a stupid question.

HARRIED DAD

(FIGHTING BACK EMOTION) Are you kidding?

HE PULLS NICK SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM HIS SON.

HARRIED DAD (CONT'D)

I'm never home these days. My wife works, I work. I've got a supervisor on my ass all the time.

NICK

I know the feeling.

HARRIED DAD

(RE: KID) I leave before he's awake, I come home, he's asleep. I'm never there for this kid, and it kills me. You just helped me make up for some of that. So, yeah. You made my life a lot better.

HARRIED DAD TURNS AND ENTERS THE CASHIER LINE. NICK STANDS, TAKING IT ALL IN.

THE EMPLOYEES DRIFT OVER.

NICK

You know what? I think there's a strong possibility that I am an asshole. I mean, maybe we do make people's lives better. Not every day, of course, and not for every aisle. But it's probably something to shoot for.

KATE

Good. Glad to hear it. (TO EVERYONE)
People, this is exactly the attitude I'm looking for. Follow Nick's lead.

HER BLACKBERRY BUZZES AND SHE CHECKS IT.

NICK

I don't know what my problem was.

'Have I made your life better today?'

What's wrong with asking people that?

KATE LOOKS UP FROM HER BLACKBERRY.

KATE

Actually, a lot. People, don't listen to Nick. Nick *is* an asshole. I just heard from corporate. There's a tires-and-lube place in Tampa, Florida, that has trademarked the phrase 'Have I made your life better today?'

RAJIV

What a joke. Tires-and-lube people don't make your life better. Not like hardware people.

KATE

Doesn't matter. They've sent us a cease-and-desist letter, so we must cease and desist. Tyler, collect the buttons.

AS HE DOES SO:

TYLER

That's mine, that's mine, that's mine...

NICK

I don't care, I'm saying it.

KATE

You can't.

TYLER REACHES FOR NICK'S BUTTON. NICK SWATS HIS HAND AWAY.

NICK

I'm saying it. I believe in it, and
I'm saying it.

KATE

Corporate policy is now that we don't
believe in it and we don't say it.

NICK

Well, Nick Porter policy is that he
does say it.

JAVIER

Ironic.

NICK

What was that?

JAVIER

(COVERING) Nada.

KATE

Back to work, people!

AS NICK AND KATE FACE OFF, WE:

FADE OUT.

TAGINT. HOME TIME -- LATER

WE'RE IN THE COFFEE AREA. TESS HANDS NICK A SANDWICH SEALED IN PLASTIC.

NICK

What's this?

TESS

I told you I'd buy you dinner.

NICK

I was thinking Houston's or Ruby Tuesday's.

TESS

What am I, made of money?

NICK

This does not count. A ham sandwich from a vending machine is not a meal.

TESS

Ham? I thought it was roast beef.

NICK

(CHECKING THE LABEL) Actually, the label says 'tuna.'

HE STARES AT IT, DISGUSTED.

TESS

Wow. That's disgusting. That's probably been in there for three years. (THEN) If you eat it, I'll go out for a real dinner with you.

NICK

You know, I'm not buying it. I don't even know why I'm eating this. You already said you don't go out with anyone that works at Home Time.

TESS

I don't know. I'm thinking of breaking that rule, for assistant managers.

NICK

Really?

TESS

You and I kind of get along. You're funny. You're different from everybody else here. Plus you looked kind of cute in that puffy hat.

NICK

I still have that hat.

TESS

Maybe I'll make an exception.
Eat it and find out.

AS NICK DEFIANTLY EATS THE SANDWICH, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW