"DO IT YOURSELF"

"Pilot"

Created by

Rob Long
&
Walt Becker

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

I guess I'm just a person who prefers the cold. When it's hot like this I get all sweaty and I squeak when I walk. You know what I mean? When it gets all sweaty down there? And you squeak? And all the powder in the world --

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Um...

DENISE

But hey. You gotta find the positive. At least it's staying lighter these days. In the winter, when it gets so dark, I get the blues. That's why they took my cats away. (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

Well, you roll around in a cart and yell at people. I mean, I guess there's more to it.

KATE

There is. I promise you. 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

Hey, I'm employee A-7-13.

KATE

That's true, Nick.

NICK

Regional knows who I am? Wow.

KATE

Of course they do. You're a top seller. But you're more than that.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

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

Thank you. That's nice of you to say.

KATE

Nice of me to say? Nick, I just offered you a promotion.

NICK

Really? I'm sorry. I guess that's never happened to me before.

KATE

You were in graduate school too long.

NICK

Yeah. About two hundred thousand dollars too long.

KATE

This is the real world. And it's knocking at your door. 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

He spoke at a Home Time conference. Get a drink in him and it's all about his golf game. 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 -- and I like it here. I mean, I built stuff with my dad all the time. 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.

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

KATE

"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 --

KATE

Think about it.

AND SHE'S 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. I'm ready to outsource that.

MARLENE

I think it's wrong that so many young people start their lives with all of that debt. We used to invest in young people. This country has become so 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.

DALE (40’S, EMBITTERED, YOU KNOW THE TYPE) APPROACHES.

DALE

So word is you’re our new Assistant Manager?

NICK

Maybe. I’m --

TESS

Wow. Congratulations, Nick.

DALE

Makes sense. You’re single and have no managerial experience. 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? 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.

TESS

Are you kidding? Why wouldn’t you?

RAJIV REAPPEARS.

RAJIV

Hey! Mr. Assistant Manager! This is awesome!

(MORE)

RAJIV (CONT'D)

Finally, someone in charge who likes me. (THEN) You do like me, right?

NICK

I like you. But I'm thinking she should give the job to someone who is a little more passionate about Home Time.

RAJIV

You're not passionate about Home Time? This is the best job in the world. You get this terrific vest. A shoe allowance. The roof doesn't leak. I'm getting misty here.

DALE

Is it okay if I kick your ass? You want to be passionate? About your job? Listen, when I was an executive at Circuit City, I was passionate. And then it went tits up. My next job I stood out on the street, spinning an arrow. The job after that 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 and wore a stupid hat. I wasn't passionate about that hat.

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

But my kids ate. Look, at a certain point, every job makes you want to crawl up your own butt.

TESS

Nick, take the promotion.

NICK

I should, shouldn't I?

RAJIV/TESS/DALE

Yes!

NICK

Even though this really isn't what I want to do with my life?

TESS

Hey, 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.

NICK

You're right. This is just for right now. It doesn't mean I'm giving up my dream of being a math teacher.

TESS

Right.

NICK CROSSES TO MARLENE.

RAJIV
(TO DALE AND TESS)

So I understand, he is giving up his dream of being a math teacher, right?

DALE

Exactly.

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

Wow. Last time I saw a box that big, my grandfather was in it. Crazy funeral. Cute story. When they asked for words from the next of kin, Mee Maw stood up. And so did another lady we'd never seen before. And so did a little Filipino gentleman. (THEN) Debit or credit?

AS MARLENE GETS HER PURSE, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

MAIN TITLES.

A

INT. HOME TIME -- RIGHT AFTER CLOSING

THE TEAM IS WALKING TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE STORE, AD-LIBBING GOOD-NIGHTS. KATE SIDLES UP TO NICK.

KATE

Do I have something to announce?

NICK

Yeah. I'm taking the job.

KATE

Wonderful.

NICK

I mean, there's no reason I can't do this and also follow my dream of being a teacher.

KATE

Of course not!

AS NICK MOVES OFF:

KATE (CONT'D)

(SOTTO) Especially if you live in candy cane land. (THEN, CALLING OUT) Just a second, team. Did everybody clock out?

RAJIV

Yes, Kate.

KATE

Good. Home Time employee meeting! Tyler, take me up.

TYLER PUSHES A BUTTON. KATE SUDDENLY 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 at 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. Two announcements. The first, I'm happy to say that our new assistant manager is Nick Porter.

THERE IS A GENERAL CHEER. EXCEPT FROM TYLER.

TYLER

I guess it's all about eye-candy.

JOHNSON APPROACHES NICK, HANDS HIM A CARD.

JOHNSON

(SOTTO) When it all goes down, come to this address.

NICK

Thanks, Johnson.

JOHNSON

(SOTTO) That's not for sharing. It's you, me, and six wives apiece.

LAURA

Finally! Someone on our side. I'm so happy for you, Nick. Can we talk schedule? Annie and I are playing softball Thursday nights. And can we get more Tegan and Sara on the Muzak?

KATE

(CHARGING ON) Second, 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.

DALE

That's a hell of a wrench.

KATE

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

DALE

With tools made in China.

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, as our new assistant manager, could you share how you made someone's life better today?

NICK

Well, I sold an old lady a twelve-hundred-dollar butt-washer.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

I don’t know if I made her life better, but I do know I made her butt cleaner. Kate, are we supposed to say that every time we talk to a customer?

KATE

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

NICK

But didn’t last month’s focus group say that people just want to walk in, get the tool that does the thing, and be on their way?

KATE

That was last month. This is this month. We live in fluid times. Starting tomorrow, if a Home Time associate does not ask a customer ‘Have I made your life better today?’ their purchase will be free. Big day tomorrow! You all look so tiny from up here! Tyler, watch the fan!

AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

B

INT. 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.

NICK

I wish we didn’t have to say that.

DALE

Hey, I have yet to hear of a job where you are not required to say something creepy. You know what you have to say at the yogurt place across the street when you hand them their order? “Here’s your frozen deliciousness. We love you.”

NICK

You told people you love them?

DALE

I don’t tell my family I love them. But that’s probably because I’m not sure that I do.

WE HEAR A ‘BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.’ KATE GLIDES BY.

KATE

Nick, ride with me.

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

KATE (CONT'D)

We're on patrol for the new slogan.

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.

NICK

Hey, Kate, I was wondering. Do you think that maybe we could let the buttons do the talking? It feels weird to make people say certain corporate words. The employees here are good at what they do. And it feels like we're treating them like, well, slaves.

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.

HE GIVES THEM A THUMBS-UP. THEY CART ALONG.

KATE

Nick, I do hear you. Maybe this slogan is silly. But does it matter?

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

We’re middle management. As our parking spots indicate.

NICK

(HAPPY) Yeah, that was nice this morning.

KATE

Wasn’t it? Look, corporate writes the music and we make sure the little people sing it. When the crap rolls down hill, the important thing is to get out of the way. Do you know who said that? Jesus Christ.

NICK

That doesn’t sound like --

KATE

I didn’t finish the whole book.

THEY PULL UP NEXT TO DENISE, WHO IS CHECKING OUT A TOUGH CUSTOMER.

DENISE

...And so he says to me “Baby, this is a long term thing. You can leave the bathroom door open,” and I’m thinking, I’m getting to the age where there’s hair growing on me that I need to get rid of and I don’t want anybody seeing that. What made me think of that?

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

Oh! The needle nose pliers you

bought! Have a blessed day.

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

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.

NICK ARRIVES. 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.

NICK

Kate, c'mon. 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

Kate, let's talk about this.

KATE

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

NICK

Don't do this.

KATE

I am doing this.

NICK

You fire her, and I quit.

KATE

Are you threatening me?

NICK

If Denise goes, I go.

THERE'S A PAUSE. LAURA STEPS UP.

LAURA

And if Nick goes, I go.

NICK

No one’s threatening you, Kate. We’re just saying that maybe we could ease up on the slogan. Maybe we could treat everyone here with a little more respect and dignity.

DALE TAKES A STEP TOWARDS NICK.

DALE

Haven’t heard that in a long time.

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. 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’ve got a wife who likes to drink and go on Amazon.

HE MOVES TOWARDS KATE.

KATE

Anyone else?

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 AS THEY SLOWLY MOVE TOWARDS KATE. ONLY JAVIER STANDS WITH NICK.

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:

C

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

BEN AND JOEY ARE FINISHING INSTALLING THE TOILET. 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. 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. Oh my God, we screwed up.

JOEY

They put extra things in for no reason. Those Japanese 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:

D

INT. I HEART YOGURT -- DAY

A YOGURT STORE. YOU'VE BEEN THERE. NICK IS SITTING WITH TESS, EATING YOGURT.

TESS

So what now?

NICK

I don't know. I didn't actually think through all of the steps. Do you guys need anyone?

TESS

I wish. There's barely enough construction work for me and my dad.

NICK

You know what? This is a good thing. This is what I needed. I'm a teacher. I'm just going to go to the school district and take whatever they've got.

KYLE, THE SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD YOGURT STORE MANAGER, APPROACHES.

KYLE

Dude, are you looking for work? I've got some slots here.

NICK

Um, thanks, but I think I'm okay.

KYLE

(SCOFFING) Too good for yogurt, huh? That's the problem with your generation. Entitled. Not willing to start at the bottom.

NICK

What are you, seventeen?

KYLE

And a half. And I started here, low man on the totem pole. You think the toppings come pre-chunked? New guy's got to chunk 'em.

DENISE ENTERS FROM THE BACK IN AN "I HEART YOGURT" UNIFORM, COMPLETE WITH ABSURD HAT. SHE'S CARRYING A VAT OF TOPPINGS.

DENISE

Hey Kyle, I smushed up the Heath Bar. What's next? (SEES NICK AND TESS) Hey guys!

KYLE

You know her? This one's a keeper. (THEN, SOTTO) But she talks a lot.

DENISE

You know what's good for a urinary tract infection? These dried cranberries! I just peed and it didn't hurt!

CUT TO:

E

INT. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE -- LATER THAT DAY

NICK PLEADS FOR A JOB WITH ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JOHN DAVIES.

DAVIES

The only thing we have budget for is 'Practical Math.' That's for students whose dreams we need to curtail.

NICK

You're curtailing dreams?

DAVIES

We used to tell kids, 'Hey, if you follow your dreams, you can do anything.' But they can't really.

NICK

I'll take it. But I warn you: I may end up telling them to follow their dreams.

DAVIES

Okay. How's Thursday for your class?

NICK

Just one class?

DAVIES

That's all we have the budget for.

NICK

But that's less than a hundred dollars a week.

DAVIES

Wow. You are good at math.

NICK

How does anyone live on that?

DAVIES

Well, most of our part-time teachers have other jobs. Mrs. Lewis in Music wears a gorilla suit and spins an arrow on Lincoln Blvd.

NICK

Well, I guess she's outdoors.

DAVIES

The lucky ones work for Kyle at I Heart Yogurt.

NICK

You know Kyle?

DAVIES

He's president of the student body. Impressive young man.

A YOUNG MAN POKES HIS HEAD INTO THE OFFICE.

YOUNG MAN

Davies! Don't be late!

DAVIES

Sorry. Got to go. That's my boss at Starbucks.

CUT TO:

H

INT. I HEART YOGURT -- LATER

NICK IS IN THE ABSURD YOGURT OUTFIT AND 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. I could create a cylinder of yogurt and fill the cavity with toppings.

LARGE CUSTOMER

We're going to be best friends.

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

NICK

(DEFENSIVE) This is a perfectly fine place to work.

JAVIER

(IN SPANISH) I want to cry.

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 beg. I've got pride, okay?

HE HANDS THE LARGE CUSTOMER HIS YOGURT.

NICK (CONT'D)

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

LARGE CUSTOMER

And I love you.

NICK

You don't have to say it back.

LARGE CUSTOMER

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

HE EXITS. THE GUYS LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

RAJIV

My father has a saying, "Hara kama karata hi apa apane khuda ke bata krola cahate." (BEAT) "Every job makes you want to crawl up your own butt."

DALE

They say that in India?

RAJIV

They *invented* that in India.

LAURA

C'mon, Nick. We want you back. Even though you were only assistant manager for one day, it was a great day. You stood up for us. No one else is doing that.

JAVIER

(IN SPANISH) Who's going to teach me English?

DALE

You were on our side and we hung you out to dry. And that's on us. But if you come back, I for one swear to stand with you no matter what. Unless it's about money. Because I've got two kids who love Apple products.

NICK

That's nice of you guys to say. And listen, no hard feelings. We all have bills to pay. I'm just looking for that thing that I love to do, that I'm passionate about, and that also pays me a living wage. Is that too much to ask?

A BEAT.

DALE/LAURA/RAJIV

Yes.

JAVIER

Si.

KYLE

Yes.

RAJIV

Maybe it's because I spent my childhood living in a shipping container and that gives you perspective--and rage--but what I try to do is find that one moment in every day that's good. Every day has one. Even the crappiest days. It's amazing what you can put up with for that one good moment.

KYLE

Say goodbye to your pals and shave the coconut.

NICK

Kyle, I quit. (THEN) Hey! There's my moment!

DISSOLVE TO:

J

INT. 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) What's Nick doing here?

KATE

I don't know. Swanning around with all his friends.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Regional screamed at me on the phone today, “Nick Porter is your top seller! Nick Porter is management material!”

TYLER

What about me? I do twelve shows a week.

KATE

They’re not shows, Tyler.

TYLER

I play a character. I’m integrating music and movement.

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

I'm just going to go up there and beg.

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

Hey, Tess, we installed that broad's

fancy toilet.

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. HE ENTERS.

KATE

(HOLDING UP THE TRAY) Chicken skewer?

NICK

No, thanks.

KATE

So is this a social visit?

NICK

No, actually. I'm here to see you.

KATE

Interesting. I wanted to see you,

too.

NICK

Really? Why?

KATE

Why do you want to see me?

NICK

Because I need my job back. Why did

you want to see me?

KATE

Because corporate has ordered me to rehire you. Wait. I misplayed that.

NICK

You have to hire me back?

KATE

Apparently I was hasty when I terminated employee A-7-13.

NICK

So, I'm assistant manager again?

KATE

Yes.

NICK

And Denise can come back?

KATE

Fine. But you're going to have to start showing leadership. And that may mean you're going to have to fire someone, at some point.

NICK

Can we agree not to fire people for no good reason?

A BEAT. KATE STARES OUT THE WINDOWS MOODILY.

KATE

You know what the problem with American business is? Everyone's in their own silos.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

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. 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.

HE SHRUGS. 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:

K

INT. 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:

L

INT. 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. 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.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

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. SUDDENLY HE HEADS UP TO KATE'S LAIR.

RESET TO:

INT. KATE'S OFFICE LAIR -- CONTINUOUS

NICK BARGES IN. KATE IS AT HER DESK. HE HEADS TO THE P.A. MICROPHONE.

KATE

What are you doing?

NICK CLICKS THE MIC ON.

NICK

(INTO MIC) Can I have your attention, please? This is Nick Porter, the newly reinstated assistant manager of Home Time.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

And I'd like to say that Home Time employee Rajiv, whose last name I can't pronounce --

INTERCUT WITH: HOME TIME SALES FLOOR, WHERE RAJIV AND THE REST OF THE GANG ARE LOOKING UP AT THE LAIR...

RAJIV

(CALLING OUT) It's Bhattacarajivariti!

What's so hard about that?

IN THE LAIR:

NICK

...he is the Home Time Employee of the Month.

THERE IS SCATTERED APPLAUSE FROM THE FLOOR. KATE LEANS INTO THE MIC.

KATE

We don't have that.

NICK

We do now.

ON THE FLOOR:

RAJIV

(TEARFUL) This is all too much for me.

IN THE LAIR:

NICK

He told me to find the one moment of the day that was really and truly good. And you know what? I just had it.

KATE'S COMPUTER DINGS. SHE HEADS OVER TO THE DESK TO CHECK.

NICK (CONT'D)

I just made someone's life better. And I know I had trouble with that phrase, but I was wrong. I mean, maybe we do make people's lives better. Not every day, of course, and not for every aisle. But it's something to shoot for. 'Have I made your life better today?' What's wrong with asking people that?

KATE SNATCHES THE MIC AWAY.

KATE

Actually, a lot. 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?' They've sent us a cease-and-desist letter, so we must cease and desist. Tyler, collect the buttons.

ON THE FLOOR, HE DOES SO:

TYLER

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

IN THE LAIR:

NICK

(LEANING INTO MIC) I don't care, 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.

HE HEADS DOWNSTAIRS. WE FOLLOW HIM ONTO THE FLOOR.

JOHNSON

Do I have to say it?

NICK

You can say anything you want, Johnson, but maybe not so much about the Jews.

JOHNSON

You're tying my hands, but okay.

WE FOLLOW NICK AS HE MOVES THROUGH THE GROUP:

LAURA

Nick, really need Thursday nights. Annie's art class needs a model. She was adamant. Something about the curve of my back.

NICK

I'll do my best.

LAURA STOPS TO HELP A CUSTOMER AS NICK MOVES ON.

RAJIV

Nick, this “Employee of the Month” honor. Does it require that I slay the previous “Employee of the Month?”

NICK

No.

RAJIV STOPS FOR A CUSTOMER.

MALE CUSTOMER

Excuse me. I’m putting in sprinklers. Where do you keep the pipe?

NICK

PVC? Follow me.

AS THEY WALK:

NICK (CONT’D)

The thing to remember is, it’s all about sprinkler placement. You thought about timers?

MALE CUSTOMER

Not yet.

NICK

Follow me.

THEY WALK OFF. MORE CUSTOMERS ENTER. ALL OF OUR REGULARS ARE BUSY HELPING PEOPLE. WE PULL BACK AND SEE THE WHOLE STORE, A HIVE OF ACTIVITY.

KATE STANDS IN HER LAIR, WATCHING. AS WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW