

3 Marlenas
("Series Pilot")

by
Steve Hopstaken
&
Melissa Prusi

Steve Hopstaken & Melssa Prusi
3301 Yukon Ave S
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
(952) 931-9367

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TEASE SCENE A

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - MORNING

(MARLENA, KEVIN) MARLENA IS SITTING AT A DESK IN A WINDOWLESS, WHITE, STERILE ROOM WITH FLICKERING FLUORESCENT LIGHTS. SHE IS BETWEEN TWO LARGE STACKS OF PAPERWORK THAT ARE IN DANGER OF COLLAPSING ON HER, AND SHE IS DRESSED IN INDUSTRIAL COVERALLS WITH HER HAIR TIED IN A PONY TAIL.

MARLENA (V.O.)

A wise man once said our lives are
drained away by the mind-numbing
sameness of our daily tasks.

A CLERK WHEELS IN ANOTHER STACK OF PAPERWORK AND MARLENA LOOKS UP AT HIM AND SMILES.

MARLENA (CONT'D)

(in an Irish accent) Why, thank you,
Kevin. I thought for a moment I
wouldn't have any work to do today.

THE CLERK SMILES AND EXITS. MARLENA MAKES SURE THE CLERK IS GONE, THEN SUDDENLY JUMPS UP AND RUNS FOR THE SUPPLY CLOSET.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE B

INT. COMBINED SERVICES SUPPLY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA) SHE RUSHES TO THE BACK OF THE ROOM WHERE THERE IS A DOOR. SHE OPENS IT AND DASHES THROUGH.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE C

INT. HIDDEN STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA) SHE SPRINTS UP THE STAIRS AS SHE UNZIPS HER COVERALLS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA (V.O.)

Another wise man, I think it was
Einstein, said an object can't be in
two places at once.

SHE STOPS LONG ENOUGH TO STEP OUT OF THE COVERALLS, REVEALING
MORE PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS ATTIRE UNDERNEATH, AND UNDOES HER
PONY TAIL, SHAKING OUT HER HAIR. SHE OPENS A DOOR TO THE
FLEETER MAUSE AGENCY'S SUPPLY CLOSET.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE D

INT. THE FLEETER MAUSE AGENCY SUPPLY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA) SHE SLIPS INTO THE SUPPLY CLOSET AND EXITS OUT TO

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE E

INT. THE FLEETER MAUSE AGENCY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA) MARLENA WALKS BRISKLY BUT CALMLY OUT INTO THE
HALLWAY.

MARLENA (V.O.)

I'm living proof he was wrong.

SHE STROLLS INTO THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE F

INT. FLEETER MAUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(BRENDA, MARLENA, LARRY, TANYA) BRENDA, LARRY AND TANYA ARE
SITTING AT THE TABLE.

BRENDA

You're late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

(Southern Accent) Sorry, I was on the
phone to Hong Kong.

SHE TAKES HER SEAT WITH A SMILE.

BRENDA

Marlena, would you be a doll and get
us some coffee?

MARLENA

No problem, everyone want the usual?

LARRY

Decaf for me, thanks.

TANYA

I'll take his extra caffeine.

MARLENA EXITS AND HEADS TOWARD THE COFFEE ROOM, BUT BYPASSES
IT AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE SUPPLY ROOM.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE G

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA, CHIP) MARLENA BURSTS OUT OF THE SUPPLY CLOSET,
ZIPPING UP HER COVERALLS. SHE SITS AT HER DESK AND QUICKLY
PUTS HER HAIR BACK INTO A PONY TAIL.

MARLENA (V.O.)

Well, at the very least, you can
appear to be in two places at once.

And that's almost as good, isn't it?

CHIP THE INTERN ENTERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA (CONT'D)

(Irish Accent) Good morning, Chip.
Ready to do some work today?

CHIP

Yep. And you can have me all day
because my three-o'clock class was
canceled.

MARLENA

Excellent. (Hands him a big stack of
papers) These need to go on the
fifteenth floor bulletin boards. That
should take you most of the day.

CHIP

Right, I'm on it.

MARLENA

If you need me I'll be doing inventory
in the supply closet.

SHE WAITS FOR HIM TO EXIT THEN MAKES A MAD DASH FOR THE
SUPPLY CLOSET.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE H

INT. FLEETER MAUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

(BRENDA, MARLENA, LARRY, SECRETARY) MARLENA ENTERS CARRYING
COFFEE.

BRENDA

That was quick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

(Southern Accent) I made a fresh pot,
double strength, just how you like it.
Do you need anything else? There's a
jam in the copy room again.

BRENDA

No, go ahead, I think we're fine.

MARLENA STROLLS OUT AND EXHALES A SIGH OF RELIEF.

MARLENA (V.O.)

Of course, being in two places at once
is the easy part. It's being two
different people that makes me
question my sanity.

SHE GOES INTO THE SUPPLY CLOSET AGAIN. LARRY ENTERS THE
HALLWAY AND PASSES BY A SECRETARY.

LARRY

(to Secretary) Have you seen Marlana?

SECRETARY

She just went into the supply room.

HE OPENS THE DOOR BUT THE ROOM IS EMPTY.

CUT TO:

TEASE SCENE I

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(MARLENA) MARLENA COMES BURSTING OUT LIKE BEFORE, BUT THIS
TIME INSTEAD OF PUTTING ON HER COVERALLS SHE HAS ACCIDENTLY
TAKEN OFF HER SHIRT. SHE SITS DOWN AT HER DESK AND STARTS
TO PUT HER HAIR IN A PONY TAIL. SHE LOOKS DOWN, SEES HER BRA,
JUMPS UP AND DASHES BACK TO THE SUPPLY CLOSET.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA (V.O.)

There are times when I think I might
collide with myself and spontaneously
combust, but until I do, well, a
double life has its advantages.

SHE EXITS THE SUPPLY CLOSET ZIPPING UP HER COVERALLS AND
COLLAPSES IN EXHAUSTION INTO HER CHAIR.

END TEASE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE SCENE A

EXT. STEET SIDE CAFE - AFTERNOON

(SHANNON, MARLENA) SHANNON WATCHES RESENTFULLY AS MARLENA TAKES A BITE OF BREAD.

SHANNON

Look at you. Shoving bread into your mouth like it was bacon!

MARLENA

This low-carb diet is making you crazy.

SHANNON

Crazy? I lost half an ounce yesterday. Do you call that crazy? Hey, did I tell you I found these great low-carb donuts? Nothing but lard, cream cheese and a little brown rice to hold it together.

MARLENA

Hmmm, nothing unhealthy about that at all. That reminds me, we're totally out of lard. Oh, and your boyfriend broke up with you while you were on vacation.

SHANNON

(Shocked) Just because I went to Mexico with another guy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

I know! Men.

SHANNON

So how's the job hunt going?

MARLENA

Funny story about that...

MARLENA'S CELL PHONE RINGS.

MARLENA (CONT'D)

Just a sec, it's my new boss. (In a thick Southern Accent) Hi, this is Marlena. (Listens) Yes, Brenda, I'll get right on that...

SHANNON LOOKS AT HER STRANGELY.

MARLENA (CONT'D)

...But before I call the computer repair man, you might want to try pressing that little button on the front of the monitor. (Listens) Okay, I'll hold.

SHANNON

Okay, what's with the accent?

MARLENA STARTS TO ANSWER BUT A CELL PHONE IN HER OTHER POCKET RINGS AND SHE PULLS IT OUT AND ANSWERS IT.

MARLENA

(In a bad Irish accent) Hello, this is Marlena.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA (CONT'D)

(Listens) Well, can't you just take your tie off? No? Okay I'll be right up. (Listens) No, don't hit the send button.

SHE HANGS UP THAT PHONE AND GOES BACK TO THE FIRST ONE.

MARLENA (CONT'D)

(Southern Accent again) Is the computer working now? Great. See you in bit. Bye, bye.

SHANNON

Does mom know you're a hooker?

MARLENA

I'm working two jobs.

SHANNON

So? Lots of people work two jobs.

MARLENA

For two different companies in the same building.

SHANNON

That must be convenient.

MARLENA

Except I'm working both jobs at the same time.

SHANNON

What? That doesn't sound legal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

I think it's technically fraud. But, you know, a job's a job. Or in this case two.

SHANNON

And these jobs somehow require you to use bad accents?

MARLENA

That was sort of an accident. All of this was one big accident. And hey, I think my Southern's pretty good.

MARLENA GETS UP FROM THE TABLE

MARLENA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'll explain when I get home. Right now I have to get one of my bosses unstuck from the fax machine.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE B

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(MARLENA, SHANNON) SHANNON IS BUSY AT THE KITCHEN COUNTER COATING STICKS OF BUTTER IN COCOA AND SETTING THEM ON A COOKIE SHEET.

MARLENA ENTERS, EXHAUSTED, CARRYING TWO PURSES AND A GYM BAG. SHE DROPS HER STUFF AND PLOPS DOWN ON THE SOFA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

(Southern accent) I have had one heck
of day...(normal Midwest accent) Oh,
my god, I can't even keep my own voice
straight anymore.

SHANNON

I called mom. She says split-
personality disorder runs in the
family. Did you know cousin Mary's
twins were really the same person? So,
are you going to tell me what brought
on this psychotic break?

MARLENA

I had a psychotic break? You're the
one rolling sticks of butter in cocoa.

SHANNON

Which personality am I talking to now?

SHANNON DANGLES A TEA BAG IN FRONT OF MARLENA AND WAVES IT
BACK AND FORTH LIKE A HYPNOTIST.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

(Loud and slow) I need to talk to the
Marlena that is my sister.

MARLENA

(Faking trance) I hear you, oh
powerful butter-breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Yep, that's my sister. So spill. I'm dying to hear what you would consider a perfectly rational explanation for all this.

MARLENA

Well. You know how even though I changed my name back to Calloway after the divorce, I sometimes still get mail and stuff under Marlana Borden?

SHANNON

Yes, and?

MARLENA

Well, two different temp places called me for two different jobs. One place knows me as Marlana Calloway but the other one has me listed as Marlana Borden. I'd signed up with them ages ago, when Sam and I had just separated. Anyway, both the jobs were in the same high-rise. One started at eight and the other at nine. So I thought instead of calling in to cancel one right away, I'd go in and see which job I liked better.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE SCENE C

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - MORNING

(MARLENA, KATHY) MARLENA ENTERS THE STERILE-WHITE COPIER ROOM. AT ITS CENTER IS A DESK WHERE KATHY IS PACKING UP HER STUFF IN A BOX.

MARLENA

Hi, I'm Marlana. The temp agency sent me.

KATHY

I'm Kathy. Thank god you're here! I can't wait to get out of this hell-hole. (hurriedly) Not that it's a bad place to work or anything.

MARLENA

No?

KATHY

No, really. It's actually a very cushy job. It's just that I'm ready to move on to my next temp job.

MARLENA

How long have you been temping here?

KATHY

Thirteen years.

MARLENA

I guess temp is a relative term.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHY

Yeah, these open-ended assignments
will suck out your youth and leave you
a broken shell of your former self.
But there are free donuts on
Thursdays.

MARLENA

Woo hoo! Listen, be straight with me,
okay? What's it like here, really?
Because there's another assignment I
could take.

KATHY GIVES MARLENA AN APPRAISING LOOK, THEN GLANCES AROUND
TO MAKE SURE NOBODY IS LISTENING.

KATHY

(conspiratorially) Okay, here's the
deal. This used to be a big job,
really stressful, lots of overtime.
But ever since they automated the PTS
reports there's only about an hour's
worth of work a day.

MARLENA

When did they do that?

KATHY

Ten years ago. Let me tell you, it's
hard stretching one hour of work into
eight every day for ten years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

I can imagine.

KATHY

I've written two novels and started an
Amway business on the side.

MARLENA

No one has caught on that there's
nothing to do?

KATHY

No. It helps that hardly anyone ever
comes down here. I haven't seen anyone
in three months.

MARLENA

It must be lonely.

KATHY

Can be. I'd go crazy if it wasn't for
my secret stairwell.

MARLENA

Secret stairwell?

KATHY

Come on, I'll show you.

KATHY LEADS HER INTO A SUPPLY CLOSET

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE D

INT. COMBINED SERVICES SUPPLY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

(KATHY, MARLENA) AT THE BACK OF THE CLOSET THERE IS A DOOR.
KATHY TAKES OUT A KEY.

KATHY

Stan, the janitor gave me this key
years ago.

KATHY UNLOCKS THE DOOR.

KATHY (CONT'D)

This stairwell wasn't up to code, so
when they remodeled they added a new
one and closed this off. As far as I
know I'm the only one with a key. It
connects all the floors' supply
closets.

MARLENA

I see. So you sneak out for extra long
lunches.

KATHY

Actually, I'm gone most to the day. I
work from eight to nine processing the
PTS reports, then I go home and come
back at one-fifteen to process the F9
reports -- that takes ten minutes.
Then I'm off to the gym then back here
at three-forty-five to exit through
the lobby and punch out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

And you've been doing this for ten years?

KATHY

Uh huh. And every time I tried to quit they gave me a raise.

MARLENA

Sweet! So why are you leaving?

KATHY

I found something even cushier. But I can't really talk about it, you understand. Come on I'll show you how to do the PTS reports.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE E

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(KATHY, MARLENA, ROY) MARLENA AND KATHY EXIT THE SUPPLY ROOM. THE PHONE RINGS AND KATHY ANSWERS IT.

KATHY

Combined Services, this is Kathy speaking, how may I help you?
(Listens) Oh, it's you. I told you not to call me again. This is starting to border on stalking.

KATHY SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN. THE PHONE IMMEDIATELY RINGS AGAIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHY (CONT'D)

My ex. Ignore it, he'll give up after a hundred rings or so. Okay, you'll have to process the PTS and the F9 reports and the only other duty you have is to book travel for the president, but he only travels like once a year, so that's not a big deal.

THE PHONE CONTINUES TO RING AND IRRITATES MARLENA. SHE CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE AND ANSWERS IT.

MARLENA

Stop calling here, pinhead! (Listens)
Yeah, I'm calling you a pinhead, Roy,
now get lost.

SHE HANGS UP.

KATHY

Roy? You just called Roy a pinhead?

MARLENA

Yeah. I thought you were trying to get rid of him. Wait, did I just get in the middle of some weird sex game between you and your ex?

KATHY

My ex is Frank. Roy is the vice-president in charge of paradigm shifts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

(cringes) Ooh. Do you think he'd fire me for something like that?

KATHY

Roy once fired someone for stapling wrong.

ROY ENTERS

KATHY (CONT'D)

(shocked) Roy? Mr. McBride, how nice to see you.

ROY

(emotionless, irritating monotone voice) Hellooo, Kathy. I've just come down to wish you luck in your new job.

KATHY

Thanks.

ROY

And to find out who called me a pinhead. I have a cousin who was born with an actual pinhead, so I am quite sensitive to the term. (Looks at Marlina) Was it you?

MARLENA

(Irish accent) Heavens no. I don't know who would be so cruel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY

I guess I must have dialed a wrong number. My apologies. This woman had a nasally, annoying Midwestern accent. Have we met?

MARLENA

Marlena. I'm replacing Kathy.

ROY

Do I detect an Irish accent?

MARLENA

You do indeed, Mr. McBride. And a fine ear you have.

ROY

My father is from County Clare. Where do you hail from?

MARLENA

Uh...Lorna Doone.

ROY

I thought that was in Scotland. And it was a cookie.

MARLENA

Aye, it tis, but there is also a town in Ireland, named for the cookie ... when the factory relocated there in nineteen seventy three.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA (CONT'D)

It causes quite a bit of confusion,
you can imagine.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE F

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(SHANNON, MARLENA) MARLENA AND SHANNON ARE SITTING ON THE
COUCH.

SHANNON

Heh. You're from a cookie.

MARLENA

Yeah, not one of my more brilliant
lines. But he seemed to buy it.
Pinhead.

SHANNON

And the drawl? How'd you end up with
that?

MARLENA

Well, Kathy agreed to cover for me
while I went to check out the other
job.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE G

INT. THE FLEETER MAUSE AD AGENCY - MORNING

(TEMP, MARLENA, BRENDA, LARRY, TANYA) A TEMP IS IN A CUBICLE
PACKING UP HER BELONGINGS. BEHIND HER ARE TWO GLASS-WALLED
OFFICES, LARRY & TANYA'S OFFICE AND BRENDA'S. LARRY IS BUSY
WRITING IDEAS ON A WHITE BOARD, TANYA IS SHOOTING SUCTION
DARTS ONTO THE GLASS WALL AND BRENDA IS DOING HER NAILS.
MARLENA IS STANDING NEXT TO THE TEMP'S DESK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEMP

Thank god! I can't stand another day here.

MARLENA

Well, I might not be staying.

TEMP

That's the temp agency's problem not mine. This is the worst assignment I've ever had. The bickering, the third-grade behavior that passes for office politics, the back-stabbing ... oh the back-stabbing. I've had enough!

MARLENA

How long have you been here?

TEMP

Three days.

MARLENA

What's the job like?

TEMP

Boring. (Points to Brenda) You're the dragon lady's assistant. See her filing her nails? That's her big project for the morning.

MARLENA

How does she get away with that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEMP

She's the owner, Brenda Mause. She got the ad agency in a divorce settlement a year ago. Never worked a day in her life before that. (Points to Larry & Tanya) That's Larry and Tanya. They really run the place.

MARLENA

What are they like?

TEMP

He's a rage-aholic and she's a psycho. On my first day, she zapped me with a taser gun. She said it was an accident, but I don't think so.

MARLENA

Ouch. Well, I'm trying to decide between this and another job. It doesn't sound like this one is going anywhere good.

TEMP

Well they're looking to hire a junior copywriter. Play your cards right and it might lead to a full-time position.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEMP (CONT'D)

(Picks up her box of stuff) I'd stay around to introduce you, but I'm afraid she'll come out any minute and want me to paint her toes. Good luck.

THE TEMP RUSHES OUT AS BRENDA COMES OUT OF HER OFFICE WITH A BOTTLE OF NAIL POLISH.

BRENDA

(Southern Accent) Now where is she running off to? I need her to paint my toe nails. (Looks Marlina over) You from the temp agency?

MARLENA

Yes, I...

BRENDA

I told them I wanted a male assistant. You know, one of those efficient effeminate gay men? I think Northern women find me intimidating.

MARLENA

(Southern accent) I know what you mean. Yankees can be so... uppity.

BRENDA

Exactly! (Excited) Don't tell me you're from the South!

MARLENA

Atlanta.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENDA

I'm from Savannah!

MARLENA

Why, my daddy's daddy was from
Savannah!

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE H

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(MARLENA, SHANNON)

MARLENA

...And that's how I got my second
accidental accent.

SHE PUSHES UP HER LEFT SLEEVE AND TAKES OFF A WRISTWATCH.

SHANNON

Technically, it's a regional dialect.

MARLENA

That doesn't make it any easier to
keep up all day.

SHE PUSHES UP HER RIGHT SLEEVE AND TAKES OFF ANOTHER WATCH.

SHANNON

Two watches? One to match each accent?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

Well, the clock at Combined Services is six minutes slow and the one at The Fleeter Mause Agency is seven minutes fast, and it was getting too hard to do the math in my head. Timing is everything.

SHANNON

Is this the same person who was late for school every morning?

MARLENA

(talking fast) I have my schedule worked out to the second. I work Combined Services from eight until nine, Fleeter Mause from nine until one fifteen, when I take a late lunch and go back down to Combined Services to process the F9 reports, then it's back up to Fleeter Mause from one-thirty until my coffee break at three-forty-five, when I sneak back down to Combined Services, exit through the lobby and back up to Fleeter Mause until six. I work late because I do feel a little guilty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Can't imagine why. You know you can't
keep this up. Someone's bound to find
out.

MARLENA

Well, I've been doing it for a week
and none's the wiser. Trust me, I've
got it all worked out. What could
possibly go wrong?

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE I

INT. COMBINED SERVICES LOBBY

(MARLENA) MARLENA PUNCHES OUT AND MAKES A BEELINE FOR THE
ELEVATOR. THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS AND SHE STEPS IN.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE SCENE J

INT. ELEVATOR

(ROY, MARLENA, BRENDA) MARLENA PUNCHES HER FLOOR BUTTON, BUT
JUST AS THE ELEVATOR DOOR STARTS TO CLOSE A HAND REACHES IN
TO STOP IT. ROY STEPS INSIDE.

ROY

Oh. Hello Marlena.

MARLENA

(Irish Accent) Hello Mr. McBride.

ROY

Another day another dollar, eh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

Mmm-hmmm.

ROY GLANCES OVER AT THE ELEVATOR PANEL.

ROY

You accidentally pushed the button for
the thirty seventh floor. Don't you
want the ground floor?

MARLENA

(nervously) Oh, did I? I'm sorry.

ROY

That's okay. I like my elevator time.

THEY RIDE IN AWKWARD SILENCE FOR A MOMENT, THEN THE ELEVATOR
DOOR OPENS ON THE THIRTY SEVENTH FLOOR. MARLENA LOOKS
HORRIFIED AS BRENDA GETS ON THE ELEVATOR.

BRENDA

Marlena! There you are. Ride down with
me.

BRENDA STANDS NEXT TO MARLENA. ROY LOOKS FROM BRENDA TO
MARLENA. MARLENA LOOKS FROM BRENDA TO ROY. BRENDA GLANCES AT
ROY, THEN BACK AT MARLENA. THE ELEVATOR DOOR CLOSES ON
MARLENA'S PANICKED LOOK.

END ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT TWO SCENE A

INT. ELEVATOR

(BRENDA, MARLENA, ROY) ROY, MARLENA AND BRENDA ARE STILL IN THE ELEVATOR, ROY AND BRENDA OBLIVIOUS TO MARLENA'S NERVOUSNESS.

BRENDA

Where have you been?

MARLENA SMILES AND SHRUGS NONCOMMITTALLY.

MARLENA

Hmmmm?

BRENDA

Well, would you be a sweetheart and pick up my dry cleaning for me?

MARLENA SMILES AND NODS.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

What's the matter, hon, cat got your tongue?

MARLENA COUGHS AND PATS HER CHEST.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Oh, not feeling well?

MARLENA COUGHS AGAIN AND WAVES AWAY BRENDA'S CONCERN.

ROY

I think I have a cough drop if that would help.

HE FISHES A COUGH DROP OUT OF HIS POCKET AND HANDS IT TO MARLENA, WHO SMILES NERVOUSLY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY (CONT'D)

Aren't you going to introduce me to
your friend with the charming accent?

MARLENA QUICKLY POPS THE COUGH DROP IN HER MOUTH, MUTTERING
INDISTINCTLY. BRENDA SMILES FLIRTATIIOUSLY AND HOLDS OUT HER
HAND TO ROY.

BRENDA

Brenda Mause. And you are?

ROY

Roy McBride.

BRENDA

And how do you two know each other?

ROY

She works . . .

AT THAT MOMENT MARLENA PRETENDS TO FAINT. ROY CATCHES HER.

ROY (CONT'D)

Well, my goodness.

BRENDA

Marlena! Heavens, child, are you
alright?

SHE FANS MARLENA. THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS ONTO THE LOBBY AND
ROY HELPS MARLENA OUT.

ROY

(to Brenda) It was nice meeting you,
Ms. Mause. Perhaps I'd better put her
in a cab.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENDA

Yes. Hope you're feeling better, hon.

Don't forget that dry cleaning.

MARLENA NODS AS SHE ALLOWS ROY TO STEER HER THROUGH THE LOBBY.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE B

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(MARLENA, SHANNON) SHANNON IS SITTING ON THE COUCH WHEN MARLENA ENTERS, FRAZZLED.

MARLENA

Okay. Remember when I said nothing could go wrong?

SHANNON

I told you to never say that.

MARLENA

I'm definitely quitting one of these jobs tomorrow. I almost got caught today!

SHANNON

Maybe you could get them both to fire you and collect two unemployment checks.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE C

INT. FLEETER MAUSE AGENCY, LARRY & TANYA'S OFFICE - DAY

(LARRY, MARLENA, TANYA) TANYA IS SITTING AT HER DESK, SQUEEZING A BIG RUBBER BRAIN. LARRY IS PACING AND RUNNING HIS HANDS THROUGH HIS HAIR. MARLENA ENTERS THE OFFICE AND LARRY TURNS TO HER.

LARRY

Quick, what's the first thing you think of when I say "abstinence."

MARLENA

(Southern Accent) Sex.

LARRY

Dammit! See, I told you.

TANYA HOLDS THE RUBBER BRAIN OUT TO HIM.

TANYA

Do you want to squeeze my brain?

LARRY

Yes.

HE TAKES THE BRAIN AND STARTS SQUEEZING IT AS HE CONTINUES TO PACE. TANYA PICKS UP A BASEBALL CAP WITH A PICTURE OF A BRAIN ON IT AND STICKS IT ON HER HEAD.

TANYA

Okay, think.

MARLENA

Uh, what are you guys doing?

TANYA

Brainstorming. We're trying to sell abstinence.

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

People buy that? I get mine for free.

LARRY

Hey, that's good. "Abstinence: it's free."

TANYA

People do like the word free.

MARLENA

Call me crazy, but I always thought advertising was all about the sex.

LARRY

Exactly. This goes against every instinct I have as an ad man.

TANYA

Not to mention as a man.

LARRY

Yeah, that too. This is hard. Hey, how about, "Abstinence: it's not hard."

TANYA

We're not allowed to use the word hard, remember?

SHE PICKS UP A SHEET OF PAPER FROM HER DESK.

TANYA (CONT'D)

It's on the list.

MARLENA

So, why are we selling abstinence?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

The Parental Council for Ain't Gettin'
None hired us.

MARLENA

The what?

TANYA

Okay, it's really the Parental Council
for Abstinence and . . . Something
something, I don't remember.

LARRY

Aaaagh. I need to clear my head. Give
me a rant.

TANYA

Garbage bags that leak.

LARRY

No, we did that yesterday.

TANYA

People talking at the movies.

LARRY

(instantly angry) What is up with
that? Why? Why would you go to a movie
and then . . . Not watch the movie!
It's like people are spending ten
bucks apiece to rent a conversation
space.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY (CONT'D)

Last weekend these two women behind me had a lengthy chat about George Clooney, and he wasn't even in the movie!

MARLENA

(to Tanya) I don't think abstinence when I think of George Clooney.

TANYA

Give him a minute to build up steam.

LARRY

If you want to talk, go get a cup of coffee! It's cheaper and you won't be subjected to my patented "shut the hell up" glare.

HE DEMONSTRATES. MARLENA AND TANYA LOOK SUITABLY IMPRESSED.

TANYA

Does that work?

LARRY

Not usually. Oh, (More angry) and then there are the people who leave their cell phones on. What, you're soooo important that you can't be unreachable for two lousy hours? And babies. Don't even get me started on people who bring babies.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY (CONT'D)

Nothing kills the moment like a crying
baby whose parents won't . . .

HE TRAILS OFF, LOOKING INTO THE DISTANCE FOR A MOMENT.

TANYA

And we have a winner.

LARRY

Fade in. A baby lying in a crib,
screaming. Not just crying, screaming
at the top of its lungs. For a full 30
seconds. It just. Won't. Stop. Then an
announcer says . . .

TANYA

"Sex has consequences. Choose
abstinence."

MARLENA

Ooh, or we cut to a young couple
making out in the back seat of a car.
Are they going to do it or aren't
they? Suddenly they stop, like they
both just had the same vision of the
crying baby. Then the tagline.

LARRY

Hey, I like it.

TANYA

Excellent! Plus, we get to show a
couple making out, which is hot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

(Looks at watch) I have to go, I have a lunch appointment. Do you two need anything.

LARRY

No, but come back later and we'll work some more on your idea.

MARLENA

(Proud) Okay.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE D

INT. COMBINED SERVICES COPIER ROOM - AFTERNOON

(ROY, MARLENA) MARLENA IS ALONE AT HER DESK PROCESSING REPORTS. ROY ENTERS WITH A FOLDER.

ROY

Good afternoon, Marlena. I hope you're feeling better today.

MARLENA

(Irish Accent) Oh, hello Mr. McBride. Yes, fit as a fiddle, thank you very much. But I need to talk to you. I'm afraid I won't be able to . . .

ROY

(interrupting) Good news. The request Kathy put in to upgrade this position has just gone through.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARLENA

Oh?

ROY

Yes, she put in the request five years ago and it just flew through the system. That means we can make you permanent.

MARLENA

Oh, well that's kind of what I wanted to talk to you about. I don't think I'll be able to . . .

ROY

There is a big pay increase, of course. Four weeks vacation, 401K and all that.

MARLENA

Pay increase? Really? And vacation you say?

ROY

By the by, I just found out that we have been breaking OSHA regulations. You'll need to wear steel-toe boots and coveralls and keep your hair in a pony tail.

MARLENA

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY

This room houses industrial equipment.

MARLENA

It does?

ROY

No, not really, but it used to and we're still trying to get it reclassified. Until we do you must follow all OSHA regulations. Don't worry, there's a hundred-dollar a month bonus for shoes and overall expenses.

MARLENA

Why that will be fine, Mr. McBride. What new duties will I have?

ROY

In addition to daily reports, you'll update the bulletin boards on each floor with posted regulations. And you'll need to fill in for my personal assistant when she's gone.

MARLENA

And...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY

That's it. You want more? Why you
really are a go-getter aren't you?
I'm feeling good about hiring you.

A CLERK WHEELS IN TWO LARGE BOXES ON A DOLLY AND EXITS.

ROY (CONT'D)

These need to go up by Friday. Oh,
and be sure to pull down the old ones
and file them with the proper F9
forms.

MARLENA

Right, I'm on it. (Beat) Mr. McBride,
what exactly does Combined Services
do?

ROY

We Combine Services to maximize
efficiencies.

MARLENA

That's what I thought we did.

ROY

It all has to do with leveraging the
paradigm shift. That's our bread and
butter.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE E

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(SHANNON, MARLENA) MARLENA AND SHANNON ARE TALKING IN THE KITCHEN AS THEY MAKE DINNER.

SHANNON

So you're definitely quitting the
Fleeter Mause job.

MARLENA

I guess. I don't want to. It is more
interesting, but I can't afford to
turn down the offer at Combined
Services. Financially it just makes
more sense, with the benefits and the
pay raise, not to mention the generous
overall allowance.

SHANNON

Plus, overalls are a good look for you
I think.

MARLENA

Yeah, thanks. I just wish the boss
wasn't so creepy.

SHANNON

Are we talking pervert creepy?

MARLENA

No, more like Addams Family creepy.
Kind of like Lurch on downers.

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

(shrugging) Could be worse.

MARLENA

I suppose I'll tell Brenda tomorrow.

At least I'll be down to one accent.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE F

INT. THE FLEETER MAUSE AGENCY - DAY

(MARLENA, KELLY, BRENDA) MARLENA IS SITTING AT HER DESK WHEN KELLY EXITS BRENDA'S OFFICE IN TEARS.

MARLENA

(Southern Accent) What's wrong, Kelly?

KELLY

I've just been fired. I worked here for six years and that witch fired me for getting a coffee order wrong.

KELLY RUSHES OFF. MARLENA GLARES DISGUSTEDLY AT BRENDA'S DOOR.

MARLENA

(muttering) Well, I might as well go out in a blaze of glory.

SHE GETS UP AND STORMS INTO BRENDA'S OFFICE.

MARLENA (CONT'D)

(Southern Accent, angry) Did you just fire Kelly for getting a coffee order wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENDA

Yes. Does this look like a decaf?

MARLENA

That's a horrible thing to do! You know, no one here likes you, because you're a self-centered, spoiled child! I quit. I can't work for someone like you!

BRENDA

(Frightened) I'm sorry I'll hire her back.

MARLENA

You will? (finds anger again) Good! But I'm still quitting!

URNS FOR THE DOOR. BRENDA LEAPS UP AND STOPS HER.

BRENDA

No, wait! I need your help. I don't know how to be a boss! Stay and I'll give you a raise and hire you on full time.

MARLENA

I want the junior copywriter job.
(beat) And four weeks vacation a year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENDA

Done. Please. I don't fit in with these people at all. You're the first person to discover my secret.

MARLENA

No, I'm not. No one here thinks you know what you're doing. You're a weasel in the hen house, as my daddy used to say.

BRENDA

See! You've got that Southern honesty I need, like my mamma taking a hairbrush to my backside. Tell me you'll stay.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE G

INT. SHANNON & MARLENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

(SHANNON, MARLENA)

SHANNON

So now you're working two jobs at twice the pay and with twice the benefits.

MARLENA

It's like a nightmare with a 401-K.
Two 401-Ks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

The IRS might have something to say about that. How long do you think you can keep this up?

MARLENA

Eleven weeks, I hope. If I can last that long, I can pay you back the money you lent me to move here, and pay off my divorce.

SHANNON

Well as long as I'm getting something for living with a crazy person. You know I should charge you three times the rent.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO SCENE H

INT. FLEETER MAUSE HALLWAY - MORNING

(TANYA, MARLENA, LARRY) MARLENA SLIPS OUT OF THE SUPPLY CLOSET AND CALMLY WALKS DOWN THE HALL. TANYA EMERGES FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM, SMILING SLYLY, HER HANDS BEHIND HER BACK.

TANYA

You're late.

MARLENA

(Southern Accent) Oh no, I've just been . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

And I hear you're going to be our new junior copywriter. That means we get to play our little initiation game. Guess what I have behind my back.

MARLENA TAKES A STEP BACK.

MARLENA

Is it a taser gun?

TANYA LOOKS DISAPPOINTED, THEN IMPRESSED.

TANYA

Oh, you're good. Damn.

SHE HOLDS OUT HER ARM, CLOSES HER EYES AND TASERS HERSELF.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Yoww! Man that makes my piercings tingle!

MARLENA

Isn't that dangerous?

TANYA

Naw, this is a really wimpy taser. It's not like my one at home.

LARRY ENTERS.

TANYA (CONT'D)

(to Larry) She's going to fit in here just fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY

Good. Because we've got a new account
we can have you start on.

MARLENA

Really? That's great.

LARRY

Yeah, we just landed the Combined
Services account.

MARLENA LOOKS STUNNED.

MARLENA

Uh...

LARRY

(To Tanya) You didn't give her one of
your brownies, did you?

TANYA

Not yet, thank-you-very-much-for-
spoiling-the-surprise.

MARLENA

The Combined Services that's in this
building?

LARRY

Yeah, isn't that great?

MARLENA

(forcing a smile) Uh, huh. Should
be...fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

(to Larry) Hey, guess what I have
behind my back.

LARRY

(thinks a moment) A water balloon.

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD NO, SMILING.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(Cringing) Not the taser gun.

SHE NODS HER HEAD YES AND HE HOLDS OUT HIS ARM

FADE TO BLACK.

LARRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Oww! Sweet Nelly that hurts!

END ACT II