

THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

By Doug DeVita

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Kyle	An angry young Art Director	30	M
Dodo	An old pro Copy Writer	70	F
Kate	A bitter Creative Director	40	F
Neil	An aging Account Executive	50	M
Meryl	An up and coming Copy Writer	32	F

TIME: October through June in the recent present.

SETTING: NYC, mostly.

SYNOPSIS:

The Fierce urgency Of Now is a fast-moving comedy that follows art director Kyle as he tries to discover his real self amid the power struggles and skewed priorities of a high-powered New York ad agency. After an office restructuring puts him in a new creative group run by the megalomaniac Kate, he finds an unlikely ally in copywriter Dodo, a living-legend from the era of “Mad Men” who not-so-gently prods Kyle to the uncomfortable but inevitable realization that “It’s time to take off. And soar.”

This play is dedicated to the memory of Dolores (Dodo) Hanan, (1925 – 2013), an English teacher who became a copywriter, and used her skills to teach America that they spelled cheese K R A F T, pushed me to be all that I can be, and reached out and touched my heart.

DOUG DeVITA BIO:

A two-time O’Neill Semi-Finalist (*Fable* and *Just A Rumor*), Doug’s other honors include: Semi-Finalist for Barrington Stage Company’s Burman New Play Award (*Phillie’s Trilogy*), Semi-Finalist for B Street Theatre’s New Comedy Festival (*Goddess Of The Hunt* and *Upper Division*), and Semi-Finalist for We Screenplay’s Diverse Voices Competition (*The Fierce Urgency Of Now*). In addition, he has won Fresh Fruit Awards of Distinction for Outstanding Play (*The Fierce Urgency Of Now*) and Outstanding Production (*Fierce...* and *Phillie’s Trilogy*.) Doug is currently an advisory board member for All Out Arts, and formerly an Artistic Director for Westside Repertory Theater. His work has been seen in New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Jersey, Connecticut, and London, and has been developed at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC (Mark Bly, Gary Garrison, Jacqueline Goldfinger, and Caleen Jennings), and at ESPA/Primary Stages in New York (Robert Askins, Rogelio Martinez, Winter Miller, and Michael Walkup). He has also studied with Karen Hartman, Jeffrey Sweet, and Eric Webb. A member of the Dramatists Guild, he has had work published by Smith Scripts UK.

PRODUCTION HISTORY:

Workshop Production: Arouet, Seattle, WA, 2104

Developmental Reading: Abingdon Theatre Company, New York, NY, 2015

Workshop Production: The Fresh Fruit Festival, New York, NY, 2016

Reading: Schoolhouse Theatre Company, Croton Falls, New York, NY, 2019

RECOGNITION

WINNER

Outstanding Play

Fresh Fruit Award of Distinction

Outstanding Production

Fresh Fruit Award of Distinction

SEMI-FINALIST

We Screenplays Spring 2021 Diverse Voices Competition

Total darkness. Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Then the sound of two men having sex. One stops.

NEIL

Wait.

KYLE

Is everything okay?

NEIL

No.

KYLE

What's the matter?

NEIL

I don't want to hurt you.

KYLE

You're not.

NEIL

No. You don't understand. I can't do this anymore.

KYLE

We can try something else, then.

NEIL

No.

KYLE

Really, it's okay.

NEIL

No. It's not, Kyle... it's really not okay. I can't do any of this anymore.

Projection: Kyle's Bedroom. 6:30 am, Sunday October 31st. Lights up on Neil, 50, and Kyle, 30.

KYLE

Oh. My. God. Neil? Are you breaking up with me?

NEIL

...

Yes.

KYLE

In the middle of sex?

NEIL

I'm sorry. I don't love you.

KYLE

But you said you did.

NEIL

I did. But I don't. Not the way you want, anyway.

KYLE

It really bothers you that I'm 30, doesn't it?

NEIL

It really bothers me that I'm 50. And... other things. So many other things. I think it's best we cool it now before I really do hurt you.

KYLE

Too late, Neil.

NEIL

We want different things, and it's not fair for me to keep lying to you.

KYLE

So you're breaking up with me in the middle of sex? You couldn't have waited until we'd finished your "goodbye, it's been fun, fuck you" bang?

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

You're an asshole.

NEIL

You're too upset to talk right now. I'll call you later, okay?

KYLE

Don't call me later, you stupid, lousy fuck. Just... go.

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

Stop saying that! You're not sorry, so just shut up and get the hell out of here.

Neil picks up a bag, puts it back down, and stares at Kyle as if he's about to change his mind. He doesn't, picks up his bag again and goes, taking out his phone as he leaves. Kyle throws something after him. It hits the wall as the lights change.

NEIL

Bev?... Sorry, honey, I didn't mean to wake you... yeah, I was able to catch the red-eye last night, I just landed. I'm getting an Uber now, I'll be home in a little while...

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection: Kyle's office at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi, & Hess. Later that morning.

Kate, 40, and Kyle.

KATE

I've never liked him. He's like a big black hole, ya know? I wish I'd known; I'd have told you not to get involved with him. It'll be okay, honey. Really. Maybe even better, ya know? Relationships take so much work for such little payoff.

Kyle sobs. Kate awkwardly hugs him.

KYLE

This is embarrassing. You must be so sorry you got stuck with me after Alan got laid off.

KATE

Oh, honey, no! When I got promoted and Scalo asked if I'd take you and Meryl on my team, I jumped at the chance! I love the work you two are doing on Marriott.

KYLE

Thanks for saving our asses, Kate.

KATE

Don't mention it.

(Lighting a cigarette.)

D'ya mind?

KYLE

Actually, Kate, I do.

KATE

Nasty habit. Really should quit. Can't help myself.

KYLE

And it's illegal.

KATE

It's Sunday. Call a cop.

KYLE

Kate, seriously, I'm allergic to smoke.

KATE

(Stubbing it out.)

You people and your goddamned allergies. Listen, sweetie, why don't you just go home?

KYLE

I'd rather just get ahead of myself for the week, you know?

KATE

Kyle, yeah, honey...

KYLE

I know I'm a little behind on that new stuff for Marriott, but Meryl and I have some really neat ideas to show you.

KATE

Kyle, just wait a minute, okay? There are some changes we need to discuss.

KYLE

Shouldn't we wait for Meryl to get here?

KATE

It's not about the work... It's... I hate this part of my job...

KYLE

You can't be letting me go! Are you?

KATE

Oh, honey, no! Nobody's getting laid off... this time. But... The Citibank account is moving into our group. I'm putting you on it, and putting Angela on Marriott.

KYLE

Kate, you know Meryl and I left J. Walter Thompson to get off Citibank.

KATE

Well, it's here now and we have it. It's just for a couple of months, until we get it running smoothly, then I'll see what I can do.

KYLE

Can't you give it to Angela and leave me on Marriott? You just said you love the work we're doing!

KATE

I know, honey, and I do! But Angela doesn't have any financial experience. And she can't handle both Benjamin Moore *and* Citibank, she's not senior enough for accounts that high volume.

KYLE

Wait a minute, Kate! You're not taking her off Moore and / giving it to me, too!?!

KATE

/ Moore is a fun account! Lots of good projects, some TV, / too.

KYLE

/ But Benjamin Moore is Neil's account!

KATE

I didn't know you two were fu... Shouldn't shit where ya work, didn't your mother ever tell you... oh, sorry. I forgot. Didn't your aunt ever tell you not to screw with account execs?

KYLE

Aunt Maryanne? Uhm, yeah, she used to eat account guys for lunch.

KATE

See? Creatives and Account Management? Mongoose/Cobra. Look, honey, if Neil gets out of line, you come to me, okay? We go way back, and I don't trust him as far as I could throw him.

(Taking a deep breath.)

One more thing, Kyle: I'm keeping Meryl on Marriott. She'll be Angela's writer now.

KYLE

But Meryl and I have been a team for six years!

KATE

I really had no choice, sweetie. It's coming from upstairs. From Scalo himself.

KYLE

So who's my writer now? You?

KATE

Oh, sweetie, I wish. No, we're getting some old fart from branding. Dolores... something or other.

KYLE

You're giving me that relic who's been here for 30 years? And Citibank!?! And Neil! I just can't... Goddammit!

He hurls his coffee mug, shattering it against a wall.

KATE

KYLE! Get a grip! November's gonna be crazy and December's gonna be worse. I need you to be up for it all.

KYLE

Sorry.

KATE

I know it's all a bit rough right now, but trust me, I've got your back. Look, why don't you just take the day to sort yourself out, try to relax a bit?

KYLE

Thanks, but I think I'll stay and finish this stuff for Marriott before I have to hand it over.

KATE

Kyle, you are officially off the Marriott account. This is probably the last Sunday before the end of the year I'll be able to let you take off. You know our motto: You work at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi & Hess. You don't come in Sunday: Good luck and God Bless. So go. The new boss says it's okay. Go out for a nice dinner and put in a reimbursement form. I'll sign it. I'll even approve a scotch or two, okay? Or better yet, you live in the Village, right?

KYLE

Yeah.

KATE

Go to the Halloween Parade tonight. Party with the fa... fun people!

KYLE

If you say so.

Kyle reluctantly exits. Kate lights another cigarette, and makes a call.

KATE

Meryl? ... No, he's not taking it well at all. ... I just sent him home. He's had a rough night. Neil dumped him this morning. In bed, during, you know, and he just fell apart ... Oh. Shit. I thought you knew about them. Oops ... I need coffee before this Marriott meeting. Starbucks in ten? ... See ya there.

(Hanging up, she starts scrolling through
Kyle's Marriott files on his computer.)

Shit. This really is good stuff.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Kyle's office. 9:30 am, Monday November 1st.

He's spritzing Bretheezy, a Febreze-like product.

KYLE

She just can't help herself.

Kate enters with Dodo, 70.

KATE

You know I made up the name Bretheezy, right? Got my first Clio for that campaign!

KYLE

Yeah, I heard.

KATE

Too bad I don't get royalties, huh? How you feeling this morning, sweetie?

KYLE

Okay, I guess.

KATE

Glad to hear it. Kyle, this is your new writer, Dolores. Dolores, this is your new art director, Kyle. Do I sense magic starting?

KYLE

I wouldn't call it "magic."

DODO

He's just darling, Kate. We'll be fine, won't we, Kyle-bird?

KATE

Good. Okay, we've got a Citibank status meeting in five minutes. FYI: Goldfarb goes nuts if anyone's even 30 seconds late. And we've got new project briefings for Moore in Neil's office at 11:00. Let the games begin!

Kate goes.

KYLE

Kyle-bird? We're on a nickname basis already? You work fast.

DODO

You have to in this business.

(Sizing him up, and smiling.)

If I'd realized it was you I was getting, I'd have laid in a supply of Pampers.

KYLE

And I'd have brought a year's worth of Depends.

DODO

(Laughing.)

Well gaga goo-goo to you, too.

KYLE

I've seen you in the elevators; I thought you work exclusively on AT&T brand advertising. What are you doing down here in "Relationship Marketing?"

DODO

Keeping my job, Kyle-bird.

KYLE

No offense, but if I were your age I'd be thinking of retiring.

DODO

You keep talking to me like that and you won't get to be my age, darling.

KYLE

Let's start over. Hi, I'm Kyle, your new partner.

DODO

I'm Dodo.

KYLE

I thought your name is Dolores?

DODO

Call me Dodo. Like the bird. Except I'm not extinct. Yet. You ever work on Benjamin Moore?

KYLE

Nope. You?

DODO

Years ago. Good client, lots of fun. Top shelf booze at their parties.

KYLE

How about Citibank?

DODO

Nope. But I worked on American Express for years. You?

KYLE

Yeah. At J. Walter Thompson. Crappy client, total hell. No booze. No parties.

DODO

Oh. That sucketh.

KYLE

Yes. It does "sucketh." I've heard horror stories about this Goldfarb.

DODO

Deirdre Goldfarb? All true.

KYLE

I thought you didn't work on Citibank?

DODO

She was a junior account wienie when we had the Amex business back in the late '80s.

KYLE

The '80s, huh? That makes you how old?

DODO

Never you mind. So you're the kid who was raised by Maryanne Gordon?

KYLE

My aunt. Well, my mother's aunt. You ever work with her?

DODO

Nope, but everyone in the business knows Maryanne Gordon was one of the best damn art directors ever.

KYLE

She would have agreed with you. Not a great parental role model, but when there's no one else... I'd rather not talk about it anymore if you don't mind. It's not that big of a deal.

DODO

"Big a deal." Not "big of a deal."

KYLE

What, are you a fucking English teacher too?

DODO

Most boring year of my life. And I don't like the F-word, Kyle, it makes you sound more ignorant than you really are.

KYLE

Duly noted.

DODO

Must've been tough growing up with "The Dragon Lady of J. Walter Thompson."

KYLE

She hated that nickname. But she kinda was.

DODO

I've never thought of her as the maternal type.

KYLE

She tried. Well, she got me into some really good boarding schools.

DODO

So she wasn't even an "Auntie Mame?"

KYLE

Who?

DODO

Classic movie with Rosalind Russell?

KYLE

Oh. I don't watch anything in black and white.

DODO

And you're an Art Director? Damn, I've got my work cut out for me.

Kyle's office phone rings.

KYLE

(Looking at the phone's ID bar.)

It's Goldfarb.

(Putting the phone on speaker.)

This is Kyle.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Hello, Kyle, this is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. It is 9:58 am. The rest of us are waiting for you and Dolores in Conference Room 33B. I will cut you some slack today as we are starting a new working relationship, but you will please remember from now on my meetings start precisely at 10:00 am every Monday morning.

KYLE

We'll be right there.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

I suggest you use the stairs rather than make us wait while you take the elevator.

KYLE

Duly noted.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

You might want to put this as a recurring event with a reminder alert set for 9:50 / am...

KYLE

/ We're on our way.

(Hanging up on her.)

Jesus!

DODO

She was like that when she was 22. Let's take the elevator.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
O'Lunney's, an Irish bar. 8:00 pm that night.

Meryl, 32, and Kyle, shooting darts.

KYLE

Have you seen the dinosaur I'm stuck with? God help us if we're still doing this when we're her age, Meryl. I can't believe Kate broke us up.

MERYL

I know!

KYLE

Want another bourbon?

MERYL

No thanks. Kate might not have had a choice. Did you talk to Scalo?

KYLE

Yeah. Joe's "happy to have us working here, we're all lucky to have jobs in this economy, Citibank is a new account and too important to trust with a less experienced art director..." blah, blah, blah.

MERYL

Kyle... There's something else we need to talk about...

Kyle's cell phone rings. It's the "Wicked Witch" theme.

KYLE

Shit. It's Goldfarb.

MERYL

You've given her your cell number?

KYLE

We have to.

MERYL

Christ! It's worse than JWT!

KYLE

Yeah...

(Answering.)

Hey, Goldfarb, what's up? ... Okay, okay, okay. Hello, Deirdre, how's it hangin'? ... I told you I'd be back at 9:00 to release the files. ... You don't have to wait for me, I'm perfectly capable. ... That's your choice, then. ... Fuck off, Goldfarb!

He disconnects.

MERYL

(Sticking a dart in the center of the board.)

And there it is! Deirdre Goldfarb's first "Bullseye" from Kyle.

The phone rings again. He ignores it.

KYLE

Third. All that stuff we've heard about her? It's worse. And there's a new client at Citibank. Her name is Anita, and she makes every other Citi-Wanker we worked with look like a Disney Princess. She doesn't even want us "in her presence;" only Deirdre can be in the room with her. We have to present everything via conference call.

MERYL

Yikes!

KYLE

At least it saves us trips out to Queens. I guess I should go back.

MERYL

Yeah, before you go, I need to / tell you

The phone rings yet again. He ignores it again, but turns to go.

KYLE

She's going nuts. Tell me at lunch tomorrow.

MERYL

Uhm... no. I can't this week at all.

KYLE

Then drinks next Monday?

MERYL

No, I can't next week either.

KYLE

But we always take a break to drink and dart on Monday. They can't stop us from that.

MERYL

Yeah, Kyle, listen... Marriott is sending Angela and me to Europe and Asia for the next couple of months. Researching international properties for a new campaign.

KYLE

You mean *our* new campaign.

MERYL

Look, wouldn't you rather hear it from me than finding out after we've gone?

KYLE

Yeah, yeah, sure. Thanks for telling me.

MERYL

I can't help thinking if you didn't insist on taking the train every time we went down to DC for Marriott meetings...

KYLE

I get it, Meryl. I've never wanted to go to Europe anyway. And I hate Chinese food.

MERYL

I don't like this anymore than you do, Kyle. And for the record, I'm hurt you never told me about Neil.

KYLE

Kate shouldn't have said anything to you.

MERYL

She thought I knew. I mean, I thought we tell each other everything.

KYLE

Almost everything. Don't say anything to anyone.

MERYL

You know you can trust me.

KYLE

When are you leaving?

MERYL

Tomorrow afternoon.

KYLE

Maybe you should start packing.

MERYL

Yeah. Maybe I should.

KYLE

I have to go proof and release those files. Have a nice trip.

He exits, still holding a dart.

MERYL

Kyle? Wait!

(Shouting after him.)

Grow up, Jerk-Face!

KYLE (OFF)

Shut up!

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Kyle's office. 10:45 pm, that night.

Neil enters.

NEIL

Knock knock knock. Still here, kiddo?

KYLE

Yes.

NEIL

Working on my stuff?

KYLE

No. Stuff for Goldfarb.

NEIL

You handled yourself well this morning.

KYLE

I can work with you. If I have to.

NEIL

No F-bombs. Impressive.

KYLE

You knew I was being put on your account, didn't you? That's why you dumped me.

NEIL

Yes, I knew. And no, that's not why I broke up with you.

KYLE

It could work, Neil, it could. We've been discreet, no one knows.

NEIL

Kate knows.

KYLE

She guessed. And she's promised to keep it secret.

NEIL

And has she?

KYLE

(Quietly.)

She thought Meryl already knew.

NEIL

(Picking up the dart from Kyle's desk and aiming towards Kyle's forehead.)

Bullseye. Those two are getting too close, too fast, if you want my opinion.

KYLE

I don't.

NEIL

I'd watch my back if I were you. Kate only kept you after Alan was laid off because she wants Meryl, and you guys are a package deal.

KYLE

Not anymore, we're not.

NEIL

See?

KYLE

She says she doesn't have a choice, that it's coming from Scalo.

NEIL

And what did Joe say about that?

KYLE

Who said I talked to Scalo?

NEIL

I know everything that goes on around here, Kyle. And as for Kate: you've only been working with her a few weeks; I've known her for 10 years. Trust me, she's piled up a lot of bodies over the years.

KYLE

I don't believe you.

NEIL

You don't want to believe me.

KYLE

I have to get these files released. Goldfarb is waiting for me to finish.

NEIL

She would be. Take a car home. Charge it to Moore.

KYLE

Kate gave me a voucher already.

NEIL

Remember what I said about her.

KYLE

Why do you care?

NEIL

I'm not heartless, Kyle.

KYLE

Duly noted.

NEIL

Yesterday morning, all I could see when I looked into your eyes is an sweet young man, dreaming about the white picket fence, the cozy little house, the dog, the life he's never had... it all became more than just a bit of fun. And that scares the crap out of me.

KYLE

Jeez, Neil, you can't even call it what it is? Maybe all I want is a fuck buddy too, did ya even think about that?

NEIL

You're also falling / in love

KYLE

/ No, I'm / not.

NEIL

/ You're falling in love with a version of me that doesn't exist. I like you Kyle, you're a wonderful lover, and a great kid. But I don't want any more kids.

KYLE

Who said anything about wanting kids? Or a cozy little house with a white picket fence? You really don't know me, do you?

NEIL

Do you really know yourself, Kyle? I'm sorry I ended it, and I'm sorry I ended it the way I did.

KYLE

Yeah, right.

NEIL

I care about you, Kyle, and because I care I have to tell you to watch yourself around Kate. She's a mother, but not the kind you want her to be. Do not be taken in by that "Earth Mother" thing she's got going on. She's Mother Earth after the toxins have seeped deep into her soil.

KYLE

Would you please go?

NEIL

Don't say I didn't warn you.

KYLE

And just why the hell should I trust you?

NEIL

I can't think of a reason in the world why you should right now.

KYLE

(Taking the dart, he aims at Neil's heart.)

Bullseye.

(Waving Neil out of his office, he picks up the phone.)

Hey Goldfarb, I just sent the files to production... Whaddya mean you wanted to see them again? You've already proofed them twice!...

Neil exits.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection: Kyle's office. 11:45 am, Tuesday December 21st.

Kyle is on the phone.

KYLE

... Whaddya mean, it's my responsibility? ... No, Goldfarb, you push back ... Your client's been sitting on this job since before Thanksgiving, she's blowing the schedule, not me ... So what? It's a stupid credit card acquisition package ... So it goes to production a day late. It goes to the printer a day late. It goes to the post office a day late. It gets delivered a day late. It goes in the trash a day late. Who cares? ... I am not working Christmas Eve or Christmas day. Not for you, not for Anita, and not for Goddam Citibank ... You really think Moo Shoo Chicken is an incentive? What is wrong with you? ... Fuck off, Goldfarb.

He slams the phone. Meryl enters, carrying a gift box.

MERYL

Isn't this where I left?

KYLE

Eighth time in seven weeks I've told her to fuck off. Welcome back, bitch!

MERYL

God, I never thought I'd say this, but I miss working with you, Jerk-Face.

KYLE

Working with "Saint Angela of The Font of Helvetica" getting boring?

MERYL

She's not you, that's for sure.

KYLE

Kate certainly loves her. How was the trip?

MERYL

Exhausting. But thank you for the care packages. Here. It's not much, but Merry Christmas.

Kyle opens the box and takes out a coffee mug.

KYLE

Cool. They have a Starbucks in... Fuck It ?

MERYL

Phuket (*Pronounced Poo-ket.*) Now don't break it the next time you have a temper tantrum. This can't be replaced downstairs.

KYLE

Duly noted. Thanks!

MERYL

So... Could you do me a favor and put our Marriott files back on the hard drive?

KYLE

Why?

MERYL

Angela needs them.

KYLE

No. Those are my designs.

But it's my copy.

KYLE

So, use your copy, I don't care. But Angela isn't using my work to pass off as hers. She can come up with her own golden shit.

MERYL

(Gently.)

Look, Kyle; I know it's December 21st, but I really hate when you get like this.

KATE (OFF)

KYLE!

KYLE

Oh, shit. Right on time.

KATE

(Shouting as she barges in.)

You have got to stop telling Deirdre Goldfarb to fuck off!

KYLE

She's an idiot, Kate, she can't control her client.

KATE

I know, but you can't keep telling a VP to fuck off, honey. That's my job.

KYLE

I am not working Christmas day because she's letting Anita blow the schedule.

KATE

Who said anything about working Christmas day?

KYLE

She did! She's offering to bring in Chinese food as if that's some great peace offering.

KATE

NOBODY is working Christmas day so just calm down. But really, sweetie, you have got to stop telling her to fuck off.

MERYL

Fat chance.

KATE

Now I need a favor. Angela's going on vacation tomorrow through New Years. I want you to step in on Marriott while she's away.

KYLE

Jesus, Kate, she just got back! I'm juggling five projects for Citibank, three for Moore, now you want me back on Marriott too?

KATE

You know the Marriott account.

KYLE

Yeah, just like I know the Citibank account.

KATE

And they like you at Marriott. Maybe I can get a freelancer for Benjamin Moore, but I can't promise.

KYLE

No way! Neil said there's a bunch of TV spots coming up. I am not letting anyone else get their hands on those! Get a freelancer for Citibank.

KATE

Citibank won't pay for that. And Neil shouldn't have told you about those spots for Moore, they're not official yet so don't get your panties in a twist. I know it's a lot of work, honey, but if anyone here can handle it all, it's you!

MERYL

And we'll be working together again!

KYLE

Yeah. Fine. Whatever.

KATE

Okay, then. Oh, are you coming to DC with us for the Marriott holiday party tomorrow?

KYLE

I'm not planning on it, since I'm "officially" off the account.

KATE

They asked for you. Meryl and I are taking the 5:00 Delta Shuttle but I'm assuming you'll want to take the train?

KYLE

Yeah.

KATE

You'll have to book it yourself now and put in a reimbursement form. Don't take the Acela, unless you want to pay for it yourself. And let Keith at Marriott know so he can book your room. Where's Dodo?

KYLE

She has an appointment this morning. She'll be back around noon.

KATE

I want to see those Citibank E-Blast revisions at 3:00. We have a conference call with Deirdre and Anita tomorrow and I want to make sure everything is perfect.

KYLE

No problem.

KATE

I know she's not Meryl, but you're okay working with her so far?

KYLE

Yeah, she's alright.

KATE

Oh. Good. See ya at 3:00. Hey, Meryl, whaddya say we sneak out and get our nails done?

MERYL

Sure.

KATE

See ya downstairs in ten.

Kate gives a thumbs up sign to Meryl behind Kyle's back, and exits. Kyle coughs and spritzes the Bretheezy.

KYLE

It's like the smoke is the only thing that holds her together.

KATE (OFF)

I heard that.

KYLE

So, you're getting my stuff for Marriott after all. Did you two plan this?

MERYL

Just dumb luck. Do you want me to go to the cemetery with you later?

KYLE

I'm not going this year. I don't know why I go at all, it's just a headstone. And I don't really remember that much about them. I was just a little kid when it happened.

Dodo enters.

DODO

When what happened?

KYLE

Never mind.

MERYL

Hi, Dodo, we've never officially met. I'm Meryl. I used to be this jerk's partner.

DODO

He's a moody little thing, isn't he?

MERYL

Yeah, but I like him. Listen, Kyle, what time do you want us all to get together to go over the Marriott stuff?

DODO

Marriott?

KYLE

Saint Angela's going on vacation, so I have to cover for her.

DODO

Well ka-ka poo-poo for you!

KYLE

How about 4:30? Panera? I'm gonna need lunch.

MERYL

'k. Nice meeting you, Dodo. If he gets out of line, smack him. He likes it.

She exits.

DODO

Today's the anniversary, isn't it?

KYLE

What?

DODO

Lockerbie. Your parents were on that flight, weren't they?

KYLE

Yes. They were. How the hell...

DODO

I Googled you.

KYLE

You're pretty savvy for a digital immigrant.

DODO

(Sending Kyle a text.)

Yes. I can text, too.

KYLE

(Reads the text and laughing.)

So you won't say it, but you can text it? Not bad for a 70 year old.

DODO

How the hell did you find that out?

KYLE

I Googled *you*. And then I added a decade because nothing added up.

DODO

Well! I'm going to have to keep my eyes on you.

(Lowering her voice.)

Listen, I took 12 years off my age when I started here, so keep your mouth shut.

KYLE

I guess that was easier to do before the internet. It's a good thing you're so well-preserved.

DODO

I'm going to slug you!

You were a pilot?

DODO

I still am.

KYLE

Impressive. Do you still fly?

DODO

Sometimes. It's great to escape the world for a few hours. There's nothing like it: the sense of freedom, the feeling of you and the wind working in tandem, controlling everything while the rest of the crap takes care of itself down below. You can almost forget... It's better than any pill. It's even better than booze.

KYLE

I can imagine.

DODO

What did you really want to be when you grew up?

KYLE

Why are you still working?

DODO

You first.

KYLE

No. Ladies first.

DODO

After Don – my husband – died... well, there isn't as much money as I thought there'd be.

KYLE

Yeah, tell me about it. Aunt Maryanne wasn't as rich as everyone thought. It sucketh.

DODO

It certainly does. Flying is an expensive little habit, but every now and then I just need to take off and feel a little closer to Don.

Kyle takes out his phone and shows it to Dodo.

KYLE

That's me with Aunt Maryanne and my mom when I was about three. Aunt Maryanne was working on the Pan Am account. The pilot invited us into the cockpit.

DODO

Weren't you just adorable!

KYLE

I still have those wings the pilot gave me; he called me Ace. My mom called me Ace all the time after that, right up until...

DODO

I'll take you up with me next time, if you like?

KYLE

NO! Thank you. I mean, how do I know you won't push me out of the plane?

DODO

You don't. Come with me anyway. You know you want to fly.

KYLE

I want to get this Citibank crap done. Kate wants to see our revisions at 3:00.

DODO

Here, I wrote this in the cab on the way back from my checkup.

KYLE

Everything okay?

DODO

Not bad. For a 58 year old.

KYLE

(Reading the copy.)

This is too good for Citibank!

DODO

I know. Now do that magic you do and let's blow Kate's darling little bobby socks off.

KYLE

You don't like Kate, do you?

DODO

I'm not in a position to dislike anybody, Kyle-bird. Nobody is.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Kate's office. Immediately following.

Kate is on the phone.

KATE

Anita is blowing the schedule, Deirdre, not Kyle. ... I am not siding with him! ... I don't care, just buy us a couple of days. ... It's a print package, Deirdre, it takes longer to produce. You know that. Now get us the time to do it properly or you'll be mailing one million packages full of blips, blurps and kitchieboobers, and it'll be your ass on the line. ... Trust me, Deirdre, I don't like that little weasel any more than you do, but for some reason Scalo does. He made me keep him after Alan was canned. ... Look, sweetie, you're not the only one who's stuck working with people you don't want on your team, so just deal with it! ... The E-Blast? I'm seeing their revisions at 3:00 and you'll get it tonight. ... Yes, Deirdre, you've made Anita's color preferences quite clear. ... I know you're meeting with her tomorrow, I just told you, you will have the E-Blast tonight!

(Hanging up on her.)

Fucking bitch!

Neil enters.

NEIL

You bellowed?

KATE

Neil! Where the hell do you get off telling Kyle he's doing those Moore TV spots?

NEIL

Where the hell do you get off putting Kyle on my account?

KATE

That's my job. And I have no choice, it's coming directly from Scalo himself.

NEIL

Bullshit. But as long as Kyle is on the account, he's doing the spots. And that's coming directly from Scalo himself.

KATE

Bullshit. Why is it so important to you Kyle does these spots? Having second thoughts about dumping the little fagela?

NEIL

My personal affairs are none of your business.

KATE

I wonder what Scalo would think if he knew his son-in-law fools around with other guys on his payroll?

NEIL

Let's ask him, shall we? And while we're at it, let's see just how much he knows about you and that "Breathezy" mess. Kind of sucks Alan lost his job because of that, doesn't it?

KATE

You know what Alan called me. In a room full of people, including the client!

NEIL

Refresh my memory: was that the Benjamin Moore client who paid to have your house repainted? Or was it the photographer who gave you a hefty kickback to shoot it for that Bretheezy campaign? Or was it the Bretheezy client you were sleeping with?

They lock eyes. Kate caves first.

KATE

Fine. Kyle can do the spots. But *I'm* going to write them.

NEIL

Fine. I'll brief you both after the holidays.

KATE

Fine.

NEIL

A little advice? Never forget: I know a lot more than you ever will. And always remember: you wouldn't even have gotten your job here if it weren't for me.

KATE

I wouldn't be divorced if it weren't for you.

NEIL

Wanna bet? Your ex was a "little fagela" long before he met me. Sweetie.

KATE

Get the hell out of here. I have work to do.

NEIL

As long as we understand each other. Have a nice day, Kate.

He exits. She picks up her phone.

KATE

Goddam asshole thinks he can bluff... Meryl? Let's get the hell out of here. ... Yeah, sure, we can go to Bloomingdale's too. I just need to be back by 3:00 to review that Citibank shit. ... Meet me in the lobby.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Kate's office. 3:00 pm that afternoon.

Dodo and Kyle presenting to Kate.

DODO

So when the target gets the ya-ya

KYLE

E-Blast

DODO

The subject line says: "Citibank has news which may be of absolutely no interest to you..." That'll get them to open the ya-ya

KYLE

E-Blast

DODO

And then we hit 'em with the hard sell: "HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO insert name here. Our gift to you: Use your Citibank Preferred Visa for all your last minute gift giving NOW through January 15, and you'll pay NO INTEREST on your purchases for SIX MONTHS." And the gaga goo-goo

KYLE

Body copy

DODO

Will be blah, blah, blah

KYLE

That's self-explanatory

DODO

Until we close with “And don’t forget to click on the links below to get your 50% discount on all purchases over \$500!” Then all the ka-ka poo-poo

KYLE

Legal copy

DODO

And the Citibank tag line.

KYLE

I’m keeping it spare, to allow the eye to focus on the important points: 0% interest, last minute holiday shopping and links which will bring them to the Amazon, Macy’s, Harry & David, and Dress Barn sites, where they can use the discount code we’ll be embedding in the blast.

KATE

I think it’s terrific. Very clever copy, Dodo, nearly brilliant even. “Absolutely no interest to you.” Love it! Only thing: Kyle, there’s too much white space.

KYLE

I disagree, Kate.

KATE

You always disagree. All that white on the screen hurts my eyes. And if it hurts my eyes, it’s gonna hurt Goldfarb’s eyes. And if it hurts Goldfarb’s eyes, you know it’s gonna hurt Anita’s eyes.

KYLE

I can point to the specific line in the Citibank Graphic Standards manual / that states

KATE

/ Standards Shmandards, we’re talking about an idiot account manager and a client who barely graduated high school.

KYLE

For chrissakes, Kate!

KATE

Watch the tone, Kyle. I said change it.

KYLE

Why yes, Kate, I would love to. Perhaps a nice, soft grey, with subtle touches of red and green to suggest the holiday season. And just so Anita doesn’t go ape-shit again, how about some blue too, as she so eloquently puts it, “for the Jews?”

KATE

Kyle, cut the crap. Just fix it. Make it non-holiday specific. Make it... yellow.

KYLE

Whatever you say, Kate.

Kyle and Dodo exit.

KATE

Kyle, wait. I need you to stay a minute.

KYLE

(Coming back.)

Yeah?

KATE

Look, Kyle, as your friend I gotta tell you: you're really getting to be a downer lately.

KYLE

I've got to get off Citibank, Kate. It's killing me.

KATE

I know, honey, it's an awful account. But temper tantrums about simple color changes? Telling Vice Presidents to fuck off?

KYLE

So? Make me a VP. I've more than paid my dues.

KATE

Sweetie, nobody wants to work with you. I had quite a time convincing Neil you should do the TV spots for Moore.

KYLE

So that's been decided?

KATE

Yes, you and I will be working on them together.

KYLE

Oh. Good.

KATE

Oh, and one other thing: those spots? Most likely we'll be shooting in L.A.

KYLE

We can't shoot in New York?

KATE

You need to get over this fear of flying shit, Kyle. It's not healthy.

KYLE

I'm not afraid to fly, Kate. I just don't like to fly if I don't have to.

KATE

Good to know. Let's see how those spots turn out, then maybe I'll see what I can do about the VP thing.

KYLE

Thanks, Kate.

KATE

Yeah. And get that revised E-Blast to me by 7:00 so I can look at it before I send it to Goldfarb tonight.

KYLE

I can send it to her.

KATE

Do you really want her calling you every 5 minutes to find out where it is, honey? Let me send it to her. You've got that Moore stuff to worry about too, remember?

KYLE

Good point. Thanks, Kate.

He exits.

KATE

Don't mention it.

(Making sure he's gone, she makes a call.)

... Deirdre? ... No, too many things have to be changed. I'll send it to you tomorrow morning. ... You will have it in time, don't worry! ... Look, do you want it done right, or do you want to have to deal with another Anita meltdown? ... Well, you're just going to have to trust me on this, aren't you?

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Conference Room 33B. 2:30 pm, Wednesday December
22nd.

A woman's voice on speaker phone, shrieking furiously.

ANITA'S VOICE

What is this? "News which may be of absolutely no interest to you!?" Yuz gonna confuse 'em wit that clever word shit. Just tell 'em flat out we're offerin' 0% interest. And I done tol' you I don' wanna see no yella! I hate yella. Awful color, yella! No yella. Evah!

KYLE

We're trying to embrace all the holidays, Anita, and yellow / signifies

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

/ This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. Anita very clearly has stated she does not like yellow. She has very clearly stated this many, many times.

ANITA'S VOICE

Damn right I have. Change that background, Kevin!

KYLE

Kyle.

ANITA'S VOICE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, Kyle, Kevin, I don't care. Make it white. Plain white. I like white.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking again. Kate, I am sorry, but this will have to be fixed tonight if we want this to blast tomorrow. And we do want this to blast tomorrow so we can generate last minute / Christmas

ANITA'S VOICE

/ Holiday. Can't say Christmas no / more.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

/ Holiday spending.

ANITA'S VOICE

And Kevin? Put in some more red and green. And blue! Lots of blue. Remember the Jews. And that writin'? I don't like the way it looks. Change it.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. I believe Anita means she does not like the font you are using, Kyle.

ANITA'S VOICE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, font, whatevah.

KYLE

That's the official Citibank typeface, Anita. Legally, we're required to use it.

ANITA'S VOICE

Fuck legal! I'm Anita! I don't like it. Change it. Use something jazzy!

KATE

Whatever you say, Anita.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. I shall come by your office when I get back from Long Island City. I shall be back by 7:00. I am signing off now... Anita, I am so sorry, I do not know why those losers in creative cannot ever seem to get it right... Oh, shoot. Is this thing still on?

KATE

Yes, dear. Those losers in creative hear you loud and clear.

(Disconnecting.)

Crap. I am not going to miss that party because Goldfarb fucked up.

KYLE

Deirdre never "evah" told us Anita hates "yella."

KATE

Fuck her. Sorry Dodo, I'm gonna rewrite this on my way to the airport.

DODO

Be my guest, darling.

KATE

Kyle, I'll e-mail the new copy to you. Bring a laptop and fix it on the train. Remember to use "something jazzy." I just wish I could see that cunt's face when she shows up at 7:00 and no one is here. I love me! Now let's get the hell out of here. I gotta pick up my kid from school before going to the airport; if I leave it to my dumb-ass ex and his "husband," she'll be sitting there waiting 'til New Year's.

She exits.

DODO

Should I be worried?

KYLE

Why?

DODO

She's re-writing my copy. Again. And she's writing those TV spots for Benjamin Moore.

KYLE

Yeah, that sucketh. I wish we were working on them together.

DODO

I've got nothing to do now.

KYLE

Enjoy it.

DODO

You don't understand, Kyle-bird. This is how they start phasing you out.

KYLE

You're over-reacting. Kate re-writes everyone's copy. And she always hogs the TV.

DODO

I think she's figured out how old I am.

KYLE

She can't fire you because of that. You could sue.

DODO

They always find ways, especially when...

KYLE

What?

DODO

Never mind.

KYLE

Tell me!

DODO

Don't you have a train to catch?

DODO

I'm going to be fine. Just fine. Go to your party.

KYLE

You sure? I can skip it if you want me to stay.

DODO

Kyle-bird, when a client requests your presence, you get your gaga goo-goo to the ka-ka poo-poo party! Now go. I'll be fine.

(As he leaves.)

Kyle?

KYLE

Yeah?

DODO

What are you doing for Christmas?

KYLE

Nothing special. Probably just sleep late, go to the movies, order a pizza.

DODO

How about I throw an emergency dinner party? I make a mean Beef Wellington.

KYLE

I'll bring the booze. What goes better with that? Scotch? Vodka? Gin?

DODO

Red Wine.

KYLE

Oh. Okay.

DODO

And Scotch.

KYLE

You're on. See ya when I get back.

DODO

Kyle-bird?

KYLE

Yeah?

DODO

I don't like women who use the "C" word. It's bad enough when men say it. But you can never trust a woman who uses it.

KYLE

Duly noted. Just use "darling" instead, right?
(Hugging her.)

Merry Christmas, Auntie Mame. You shoulda told me that movie is in color.

DODO

Get out of here.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
The Delta Shuttle. 5:30 pm that afternoon.

Meryl and Kate. Kate has a drink.

MERYL

I feel bad about playing Kyle that way the other day.

KATE

You have those Marriott files now, right?

MERYL

Yeah, but...

KATE

It's good work, Angela's out for the next two weeks, what's the problem?

MERYL

It could have waited for her to get back.

KATE

He doesn't need to know that.

MERYL

I guess. He's getting full credit, right?

KATE

Oh, yeah, sure, why not? You miss working with him?

MERYL

Sometimes.

KATE

I'm getting a tired of his diva trips. He's a nice guy, I guess, but he just doesn't get it.

MERYL

He gets frustrated. It hasn't been easy for him, you know?

KATE

Are you kidding me? You know how many people would kill to have been given the opportunities he's had simply because Maryanne Gordon raised him?

MERYL

Yeah, Kate, he's lucky his parents were killed in a terrorist attack.

KATE

That's not what I mean. But doesn't it bother you we've had to work our asses off to get where we are, and both he and Neil are entitled, whiny jerks who've had everything handed to them their entire lives just because of who they're related to?

MERYL

That's not entirely true, Kate.

KATE

Oh please, neither one of them would be where they are if they hadn't called in favors from their relatives.

MERYL

C'mon, Kate, we all use our connections. Kyle works very hard, he's always worked very hard. I will admit he can be an exhausting pain in the ass, but that's part of his charm.

KATE

You can do me a big favor, then...

MERYL

Keep Dodo on Citibank.

KATE

But I need senior creatives with financial experience on that account!

MERYL

Dodo is senior.

KATE

She's a little too senior. She makes more money than I do! I could hire a younger /writer

MERYL

/ Careful, / Kate

KATE

/ A senior writer and art director, plus two juniors with what she's pulling down.

MERYL

Not my problem.

KATE

The client hates her work, Meryl. Goldfarb's breathing down my neck.

MERYL

I told you I'm leaving if I have to work on Citibank again, and I mean it.

KATE

Just give me some time. Promise me you won't start looking until I can figure out a way to get rid of... Bring in some fresh blood.

MERYL

Three months. After that I'm not promising anything.

KATE

What if I add a V and a P to your title?

MERYL

That would help.

KATE

Merry Christmas. You're lucky I like you.

MERYL

I pity anyone you don't.

CAPTAIN (VOICE)

Okay folks, we've begun our initial descent into Washington's Reagan Airport. There's some big winds blowing in the DC area, and it's going to get a little bumpy on the approach. So we've gone ahead and turned on the fasten seat belt signs. Flight crew, prepare for landing.

KATE

Oooh, this is the fun part!

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
A Ballroom at the Marriott Hotel in Washington DC.
10:15 pm that night.

Meryl and Kyle, drinks in hand.

MERYL

At least we'll be working together again, Kyle. I miss us.

KYLE

Really?

MERYL

Why wouldn't I?

KYLE

I thought no one wants to work with me.

MERYL

Whatever gives you that idea? Oh... never mind. I miss Alan.

KYLE

(Toasting.)

Alan Friedenthal. Best boss ever.

MERYL

He really was. He might have been *too* good, ya know?

KYLE

Huh?

MERYL

Alan spoiled us. Considering what Scalo has turned into since he was let go. I mean, ya know, at least Alan wanted both of us in his group...

KYLE

What the hell are you babbling about?

MERYL

Kyle... Look... I think it's time we start looking for another job. Are you with me?

KYLE

Maybe.

MERYL

C'mon, do you want us to get stuck on Citibank again?

KYLE

No, but I do want to do those TV spots for Moore.

MERYL

Oh, for crap's sake! Do you really think Kate's going to let you do them?

KYLE

She fought for me to do them!

MERYL

Are you really that dense? She's gunning for you. Just like she was gunning for Alan.

KYLE

She can't fire me without a really, really good reason. You know that.

MERYL

Yes, but with your temper it won't be long until you just hand her one on a screaming silver platter.

KYLE

Duly noted.

MERYL

It's all war games for her, and the one with the biggest body count is the winner.

Kate enters. She may have had one too many.

KATE

There you are!

MERYL

(Adroitly changing the subject.)

So I'm going out to Commack to spend Christmas with "The Drainers." Wanna join me?

KYLE

Christmas. On Long Island. With your parents. I love ya, Meryl, but no thanks.

KATE

Oh go on, Kyle, it'll be fun. I mean, what else have you got to do?

KYLE

I'm going to Dodo's for an "emergency dinner party."

KATE

Oh. That ought to be lovely. I'm glad you won't be completely alone.

KYLE

No, I won't be alone. But thanks for your concern.

Kate's phone rings.

KATE

Oh crap, it's Goldfarb.

(Answers.)

Yes, Deirdre? ... No shit. I told you legal wouldn't approve the font change. ... Well, you just need to control her expectations a bit better now, don't you? ... Okay, okay, okay, Deirdre, calm down! Kyle will change it all back and send you the file tonight.

(Laughing as she disconnects.)

Citibank's lawyers just said "We're legal. Fuck Anita." Kyle, honey, sorry to end your party early, but you're going to have change it all back now.

KYLE

(Taking out his phone.)

Hold on, Kate...

KATE

Don't get all pissy on me, just go change it. You can come back. If we're still here by the time you get it all done.

KYLE

Click, send, whoosh, done.

(Making a call.)

Hey, Goldfarb. ... I just sent it to you. ... Yes, it's exactly the same, white background, red, green, and blue highlights, but with the Citibank approved fonts. ... Yes. Go home, Goldfarb.

(Disconnecting and smiling at Kate.)

I did two versions, 'cause I knew this would happen.

KATE

Oh. Smart. Score one for you.

MERYL

(Under her breath.)

Well played.

KATE

Oh. Smart. Score one for you.

(Trying to save face.)

Some party, huh? I mean, I know times are hard, but a cash bar!?! At least we're all lucky to have a job, right? What the hell, it's Christmas, I'm in a generous mood, who wants another? I'm buying.

KYLE

No, thanks. I think I need to keep my wits about me.

KATE

Yeah, there's nothing worse than a drunk on an early morning train.

KYLE

Unless you're the drunk. On an early morning plane.

MERYL

Careful, Kyle.

Kyle and Kate stare at each other, he confidently, she barely masking her contempt.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Posh, a gay bar in the West 50s. 9:30 pm, Friday
December 24th.

Kyle is on his phone.

KYLE

Excuse me, Goldfarb, it's 9:30, it's Christmas Eve, and I have a date. ... I told you I was leaving at 9:00, and you sat on those files all day. ... No, I am not coming in tomorrow. I'll be in extra early on Monday and I'll release them by 10:00. ... It's always urgent with you, Goldfarb. Merry Christmas, see ya Monday, fuck you and your Moo Shoo.

Neil enters.

NEIL

Hey, Kiddo.

KYLE

What the hell are you doing here?

NEIL

(Showing Kyle his phone.)

Zero feet away.

KYLE

Shouldn't you be spending Christmas Eve with your wife and kids?

NEIL

My kids are skiing in Switzerland. And Beverly's in Florida. With her boy toy.

KYLE

Aren't you guys "don't ask, don't tell?"

NEIL

She told.

KYLE

Well that just sucketh. For you.

NEIL

Have dinner with me?

KYLE

I'm not your boy toy anymore, remember?

NEIL

It's just dinner.

KYLE

I've had dinner.

NEIL

Dessert, then?

KYLE

Sorry, Neil. I set up a date with this guy on Nude Dude.

NEIL

Kyle!

KYLE

What? I'm horny.

NEIL

Blow him off.

KYLE

That's the plan.

NEIL

C'mon, have a drink at least?

KYLE

That's okay.

NEIL

Are you sure? It's Christmas Eve! No one should be alone on Christmas Eve!

KYLE

(Showing him the guy's photo.)

If I play my cards right...

NEIL

Whoa! But a stranger? Better the devil you know...

KYLE

No thanks, Neil.

NEIL

Not even a quick one... Scotch, I mean?

Kyle's phone rings.

KYLE

It's Kate.

NEIL

(Taking the phone.)

He's busy, Kate.

KYLE

(Taking the phone back.)

Give me that! Hey Kate, sorry about that. ... Neil. ... No, I just ran into him. ... Now wait a minute, Kate, you said I wouldn't have to work on Christmas. ... Oh, for Christ's sake, Kate, there's nothing even remotely urgent about anything Goldfarb freaks out about, you know that. ... I am not going into the office tomorrow or Sunday. I'll be in early Monday morning. ...

NEIL

(Grabbing the phone.)

Kate? From one VP to another: Fuck off.

(To Kyle.)

Here ya go, Kyle. Problem solved.

KYLE

(Laughing and taking his phone back.)

You shouldn't have done that.

NEIL

There's a lot of things I shouldn't do.

(Moving in to kiss Kyle.)

You know Kyle, this new project for Moore is huge. I don't know how anyone would be able to handle it and Citibank too. Unless, of course, someone gets someone else off. Citibank, I mean. ...

(He kisses him. Long and hard.)

I miss you, kiddo. I miss the fun we had.

KYLE

(Pushing him away.)

I have to meet my date.

NEIL

Kyle, wait! Wouldn't you rather work with Dodo on those TV spots? I can arrange that too, you know.

Kyle turns around and stares at Neil.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Dodo's apartment on Central Park West. 11:30 pm,
Saturday December 25th.

Dodo, Kyle and two scotches.

DODO

And there I am, up in the air for my first solo flight, and I'm lost. You'd think it's a simple thing to go from Chicago to Kankakee, right? But it's all Goddam cornfields! Then I see a farmer on his tractor, plowing a narrow strip between two fields...

KYLE

Oh my God, you didn't!

DODO

Not much I didn't. Broke every law in the book but I land that sucker without damaging any corn. I think. Anyway, that farmer isn't too happy, let me tell you. I see him coming toward me with this look on his face telling me I'm in deep ka-ka poo-poo, and I have to think fast. So I get out of the plane, put a big smile on my face and say "Hi! I'm Amelia Earhart! Anyone miss me?"

KYLE

Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God!

DODO

Anyway, he's so taken aback he starts laughing – this big, hearty, toothless laugh. I tell him I'm lost and desperate to get to Kankakee, he points me in the right direction, I get back on the plane, take off and an hour later I'm in Kankakee.

KYLE

Great story, but it doesn't exactly make me feel all that comfortable about going up in a plane with you.

DODO

We won't be flying over cornfields, Kyle-bird.

KYLE

I said I'll think about it.

DODO

Kyle, don't you think it's time you stop pretending?

KYLE

What?

DODO

You really don't like advertising, do you?

KYLE

It's... okay. It's what I know. I mean... if Aunt Maryanne had been a dentist, I'd probably be filling teeth right now.

DODO

So you didn't follow your dream then, did you?

KYLE

I don't think I ever had any dreams. Nightmares, yes. Dreams? I'm not sure.

DODO

You have dreams, Kyle-bird, we all do. You wanted to fly planes when you were little, didn't you?

KYLE

It's late. I have to go.

DODO

I saw the look on your face that day you asked me if I was still a pilot. I saw the look on that adorable little boy's face in the photo. I see the look on your face now. They're all the same.

KYLE

...

Yes. I wanted to fly planes. But that was a long time ago. Before...

DODO

Before Lockerbie.

KYLE

Yes.

DODO

Do you hear that?

KYLE

What?

DODO

That knocking sound?

KYLE

No.

DODO

Really? I do, it's getting louder and louder.

KYLE

Are you having a stroke? Do you smell toast?

DODO

No, Kyle. Knock... Knock... Knock... Don't you hear it?

KYLE

I'm calling 911.

DODO

It's the sound of your dreams beating against your heart. Like a bird batting its wings against a cage.

KYLE

Oh, God.

DODO

You can pretend you've forgotten about them. You can convince yourself you're doing what you want, even that you're happy being the man in the gray flannel hoodie.

But those dreams never die, and every now and then they fight to be heard. Knock...
Knock... Knock...

KYLE

Shut up.

DODO

You can ignore them all you like, but they just come back stronger. I know. I listened and I've lived a helluva life. I will go to my grave, maybe a bit earlier than I'd intended, but knowing I've lived exactly the way I've wanted.

KYLE

You're not going to your grave anytime soon, Dodo. 70 is the new 58, remember?

DODO

I had leukemia five years ago. It went into remission. It's back.

KYLE

Well. Ka-ka poo-poo.

DODO

Ka-ka poo-poo.

KYLE

Thank you for telling me. I won't say a word.

DODO

I trust you. But don't ignore your dreams, Kyle-bird. They want you to soar.

They sit a moment in total silence, sipping their scotch.

KYLE

Dodo? The next time you go flying, take me with you?

DODO

(Singing softly.)

What are you doing New Years? New Years Eve?

Lights fade and we see a sky full of stars, and hear Ella Fitzgerald singing "What Are You Doing New Years?" over the sound of a small plane.

Kyle and Dodo, dimly lit as from the reflected glow of a cockpit control panel. Perhaps even suspended in midair.

KYLE

Wow! Just... wow!

DODO

Isn't it beautiful? You really can forget almost everything up here.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Kyle, you will please return to New York, I will need those files from you immediately.

KYLE

Hey, Dodo, can we fly over the office and write "Fuck off, Goldfarb" in the sky?

KATE'S VOICE

KYLE! You have got to stop telling Deirdre Goldfarb to fuck off. Even in skywriting: that's my job!

MERYL'S VOICE

Hey, Kyle, I got us a new job. In Phuket! Let's go!

NEIL'S VOICE

Hey, kiddo, what'cha doin' tonight?

DODO

Big winds blowing tonight. Let's fly higher.

KYLE

Higher?

DODO

Not so much bluster up there.

KYLE

Then yeah, let's fly higher.

Dodo guns the engine. A faint knocking sound begins.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Kyle? Where are my files? I must have those files! The fate of Western Civilization depends on those files!

KYLE

Higher, Dodo!

KATE'S VOICE

Kyle? Where the hell are you?

NEIL'S VOICE

Zero feet away, kiddo! I'm always zero feet away. I miss you. Come back. Let's play.

KYLE

Higher, Dodo, higher!

MERYL'S VOICE

Kyle? Why didn't you tell me you and Neil are gaming each other?

KATE/GOLDFARB'S VOICES

Kyle? Kyle?

KATE/GOLDFARB/NEIL/MERYL

Kyle? Kyle? KYLE? KYLE?

DODO

Let's push 'em all out over the water!

KYLE

Yes!!! Let's!!!

The knocking grows louder and louder.

KATE

Kyle!

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Kyle's office. 7:00 am, Monday December 27th.

Kyle, asleep. Kate, puffing away, knocking on the door
frame.

KATE

KYLE! WAKE UP!

KYLE

Jesus, Kate, you scared the shit out of me.

She takes a long, deliberate drag. Kyle starts to say
something but she cuts him off.

KATE

Electronic. Christmas gift from my ex-husband.

KYLE

They're illegal indoors too, ya know, and just as bad for you.

KATE

"Duly noted."

KYLE

It's 7:00 in the morning. What are you doing here?

KATE

I wanted to make sure you were here. Since you haven't returned any of my calls.

KYLE

I told you I'd be in early. I'm about halfway through.

KATE

Scalo called me at home last night. He wants Dodo to write those TV spots for Moore. Do you know anything about that?

KYLE

Who? Me? Nope.

KATE

Uh huh.

KYLE

Gee Kate, I'm sorry. I was looking forward to finally working with you.

KATE

What've you got on Scalo?

KYLE

I don't know what you mean. I never talk to Scalo.

KATE

Oh yes, you do.

KYLE

Trust me, if I had something on Scalo do you think I'd still be working on Citibank?

KATE

Yeah. Sure. OK.

(Picking up his mug.)

When the hell were you in Phuket?

KYLE

Meryl brought it back for me.

KATE

(Carelessly dropping the mug on his desk.)

Oh. Of course. Make sure you release those files by 10:00. I am not dealing with another Goldfarb meltdown today.

KYLE

No prob. She'll have them by 9:00.

Kate goes. A moment, then Dodo enters.

DODO

Knock. Knock. Knock.

KYLE

Ha. Ha. Ha. You're here early.

DODO

We still on for New Years Eve? I need to book the plane.

KYLE

You bet your ass we are!

DODO

A simple "yes" would have sufficed.

KYLE

Hey, Dodo? Can we fly over Kate's house and write "Fuck off, Bitch" in the sky?

DODO

No.

KYLE

A simple "You bet your ass no" would have sufficed.

DODO

I don't know what's going to kill me first: you or...

KYLE

Shhh! Don't say it. Not here, anyway; Kate's skulking around. Her ex gave her an e-cigarette. We can't smell her coming anymore.

DODO

Well! That sucketh.

KYLE

I know! Let me finish this crap for Goldfarb, then you wanna go get some breakfast?

DODO

Call me when you're done.

KYLE

'k. Hey, Dodo? Thanks for Christmas.

DODO

Anytime, Kyle-bird. I'm happy to have a reason to make Beef Wellington again.

Neil enters.

NEIL

Knock. Knock. Knock.

(Seeing Dodo.)

Oh, I'll come back.

Dodo and Kyle snicker. She gets up to go.

DODO

I'm just leaving.

NEIL

What's so funny?

DODO

Nothing. Did you have a nice Christmas, Neil?

NEIL

Santa Claus was pretty good to me. You?

DODO

(Looking at Kyle, and then at Neil.)

He was good to me, too. In a different way, of course.

She exits.

NEIL

“In a different way?”

KYLE

Don't look at me, I haven't said anything. She's a sharp old cookie.

NEIL

I talked to Scalo. It's all set. She's writing the spots.

KYLE

I heard. And Citibank?

NEIL

He's digging his heels in on that.

KYLE

Neil!

NEIL

Don't worry, I'll get him to come around. Just be patient!

KYLE

'k. Thanks.

NEIL

My pleasure.

KYLE

Mine too.

NEIL

And you're okay with just being fuck buddies?

KYLE

I love it when you try to be so gay hip.

NEIL

And I love it when kids your age think they've invented the nomenclature.

KYLE

Nomenclature? Pulling out the big guns now. Impressive.

Kyle's office phone rings.

NEIL

I'll show you impressive...

KYLE

(Looking at his phone.)

It's Goldfarb. I have to take this.

NEIL

O'Lunney's after work tonight?

KYLE

Nope, sorry. It's Monday. Meryl. Drinks. Darts.

NEIL

After?

KYLE

Maybe.

NEIL

10:00. Your place.

KYLE

Oooh, getting all Dom Top on me. I love it.

NEIL

Shut up.

(As he exits.)

Answer that before Goldfarb has a stroke. See you tonight.

KYLE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, get out of here.

(Picking up the phone and mimicking
Goldfarb.)

This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. ... Chill out, Goldfarb. ... I'm almost done, I'll get them to you by 9:00, I promise! ... What? ... No, Kate never told me Anita doesn't like yellow. ... Yeah, I'm beginning to figure that out. ... Thanks, Deirdre. ... Yeah, I'll have them for you soon.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
An elevator. 9:15 am, Monday January 3rd.

NEIL

Don't thank me, Dodo, thank Kyle. I only made a phone call. I mean, I'm thrilled you're writing the spots, but he's the one who went to bat for you.

DODO

He's a funny kid, that one.

NEIL

He gets under your skin in ways you never see coming, doesn't he?

DODO

Like an itch you don't mind scratching.

NEIL

You like him, don't you?

DODO

We have that in common, don't we?

NEIL

He's a good art director.

DODO

Whatever it is he's doing to get me those spots – and I have my ideas – I don't want to know.

NEIL

You don't need to.

DODO

Just scratch gently, Neil.

NEIL

I don't know what you mean.

DODO

Oh yes, you do.

NEIL

We're briefing at 11:00. Conference room 33B.

DODO

See you then. Happy New Year.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Conference Room 33B. 11:00 am that morning.

DODO

No booze. Can you believe it?

Forever?
KYLE

For the duration.
DODO

That sucketh. When do you begin the
(Whispering.)
Chemo?
KYLE

He said we can start on Friday night.
DODO

Kate enters.

I'll be there.
KYLE

What are you starting Friday night?
KATE

I'm going to learn how to fly a plane. Dodo's Christmas gift to me.
KYLE

Ha ha fucking ha!
KATE

No, really. Dodo took me up in her plane on New Year's Eve and it was fun.
KYLE

Are you serious?
KATE

You know it.
DODO

You have a plane?
KATE

I rent one every now and then.
DODO

And you're a pilot?
KATE

DODO

That's what it says on my license, darling.

KATE

How do I not know this?

KYLE

Because you work at "Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi and Hess. You're 24/7. Your life is a mess."

DODO

Kyle-bird! It's not that big a deal, Kate. I'm sure you have a life outside this place you don't talk about either.

Neil enters, carrying a stack of thick binders.

NEIL

Okay, kiddos, Happy New Year, welcome back, blah, blah, blah, let's get this ball rolling.

DODO

Good God, what the hell is all this? "Gone With The Wind?"

NEIL

Almost. Here's the deal: Benjamin Moore is underwriting Turner Classic Movies "Technicolor Americana Festival" this coming July. A month of movies, all in glorious Technicolor, celebrating America's history – good and bad. Including, obviously, the now problematic "Gone With The Wind."

KATE

You're kidding! "Gone With The Wind?"

NEIL

I said "good *and* bad." That's how they're justifying showing it.

KATE

I hope they know what they're doing.

NEIL

Do you have an objection to working on this project? Would you like me to go to Scalo and ask him to put Benjamin Moore into a different creative group? I can do that, you know.

A tense moment.

KATE

Fine. It's their funeral.

(Thumbing through the brief.)

This looks like an awful lot of work, Neil.

NEIL

It's huge. TV spots, on air promos, banner ads for Moore's and TCM's websites, direct mail and in-store promotions, interactive and UX installations, even print ads.

KYLE

How much time do we have for all this?

KATE

If I know them they'll want it all tomorrow. Maybe I'd better have Angela and me work on it too.

KYLE

Dodo and I can handle it, Kate.

KATE

Citibank is getting even busier, Kyle; you're bitching about being overworked as it is.

NEIL

Here's the thing: they've actually given us a full month for creative development, it's that important to them.

KATE

Seriously? A full month?

DODO

It's like the '60s / all

KYLE

/ '80s, Dodo / '80s

DODO

/ '80s all over again!

NEIL

And as for Citibank, Kyle's off it for the time being.

KATE

Excuse me?

NEIL

This is too big a project; everyone wants the best on it. That's Kyle and Dodo. Bring on some free-lancers for Citibank. Or put Angela on it until this project is done.

KATE

She's not senior enough.

NEIL

Really? Rumor has it you're making her and Meryl VPs. That's pretty senior.

KYLE

What!?! You're making "Saint Angela" a VP and not me? She's got one fucking client, she's always on vacation, I'm here 24/7 juggling three accounts and you're making her a Goddam VP!?!

DODO

Kyle-bird, calm down!

KATE

Thanks a lot, Neil! Kyle, you want to be a Vice President? These tantrums aren't convincing me you're VP material, no matter how talented some people think you are.

KYLE

/ Fuck you /

NEIL

/ KYLE! Don't. Kate, I don't care what strings you have to pull. Scalo wants you to get someone to cover for Kyle on Citibank until this project is done.

KATE

Fine.

(Glaring at Kyle and Dodo.)

I wanna see first round concepts next Monday. Maybe you should cancel those flying lessons Friday night; I have a feeling you'll be here, 'cause your shit's gonna have to fly past me if you want it to float. Got it?

As she leaves, she starts to laugh; a long, low, evil chuckle.

DODO

Well! We're in deep ka-ka poo-poo now.

KYLE

What about Friday night?

Fuck her.

DODO

YOU dropped the “F” bomb!?!

KYLE

When someone mixes their metaphors like that, Kyle-bird, there’s nothing else to be said.

DODO

Flying lessons?

NEIL

That’s just something I made up. Dodo and I have plans Friday night Kate doesn’t need to know anything about.

KYLE

I see.

NEIL

Let’s go over the brief.

DODO

Kate comes back in, carrying a few flattened boxes.

Oh, and by the way, Kyle, you’re going to need these boxes. Technically only VPs are supposed to have private offices, so Angela is moving into yours when she gets back from her vacation next week. You can take her space with the other big shots in the cube farm, ‘k, sweetie?

KATE

She slams the boxes down, breaking Kyle’s Phuket mug.

My mug!

KYLE

Oops. Sorry.

KATE

You did that on purpose!

KYLE

I’m sure you can get another, now that you like to fly.

KATE

She exits, still chuckling. Kyle starts picking up the pieces of the mug.

NEIL

This is ridiculous. I'm going to talk to Scalo.

KYLE

No. I don't want Scalo involved in this. I know what she's doing. Aunt Maryanne used to do the same thing when she wanted to get rid of someone at JWT. I can't believe I didn't see it. I should have. I grew up with it.

(To Neil.)

"She's a mother, but not the kind you want her to be." You said it to me that night in my office, but I didn't listen. Why would I? That's the only type of mother I've ever really known.

(Shouting in Kate's direction.)

You wanna get rid of me? Bring it on, bitch!

NEIL

Let me see what I can do about getting your office back, at least.

Neil exits.

KYLE

I hate Aunt Maryanne. I hate Kate. I hate this damn job.

DODO

(Softly.)

Knock... Knock... Knock...

KYLE

Please, Dodo, not now.

DODO

It's time, Kyle-bird. You know it is. A friend of mine is an excellent instructor out at Teterboro Airport.

KYLE

So, what? I'm supposed to just chuck everything and follow some stupid, childhood dream? Yeah, that makes a whole helluva lot of sense.

DODO

I'm not saying you have to chuck everything, am I? You think anyone has it that easy, Kyle-bird? If it's that important, you can get your head out of your ass and really live your life for once.

KYLE

Oh, don't give me that "Live! Live! Live!" shit! Do you really think everything is going to be alright if I just learn how to fly myself into some exotic new life? Jesus, Dodo! What the fuck is wrong with you? Are your meds making you a little too "Auntie Mame" crazy? 'Cause if that's the case, gimme some and we'll fly off to Kankakee and live happily ever after, eating Beef Wellington and drinking red wine and scotch in the Goddamned fucking cornfields!

Kyle picks up a one of the boxes and starts ripping it to shreds, tossing the pieces around the room. One hits Dodo on the shoulder.

DODO

KYLE! Stop it! Listen to me, you little shit, I know you're upset but your life isn't the only one that stinks right now, okay? Life sucks; I hope if there's at least one thing you learn from me is how to deal with it. Grow the fuck up, darling.

KYLE

Wow! Two "Fucks," a "shit" and a "Darling?" You must really be pissed.

Meryl appears and stands quietly in the doorway.

DODO

Not funny. Now, I will be in my office going over this brief; you may join me when you're ready to apologize.

She exits, pushing past Meryl.

MERYL

Dodo, I'm sure he doesn't mean it...

DODO

Excuse me, Meryl.

Meryl comes into the room and smacks Kyle upside the head.

KYLE

OW!

MERYL

Hey! Jerk-Face! Calm the fuck down!

Kyle sits on the floor, rubbing his head.

KYLE

Sorry.

MERYL

You need to deal with your anger issues, Kyle, before someone gets hurt.

KYLE

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MERYL

I'm serious, Kyle. You're getting in your own way.

(Sitting on the floor next to him. Softly.)

I heard.

KYLE

(Absentmindedly piecing the mug back together.)

Already?

MERYL

News travels fast around here. And what Kate didn't tell me, I overheard just now.

She fishes around in her purse.

KYLE

What the hell are you looking for?

MERYL

(Taking out a bottle of gold nail polish.)

Here.

KYLE

Gold nail polish? Pretty, but what the hell?

MERYL

The Japanese have a tradition of fixing broken things by filling the cracks with gold. They believe when something's been damaged and has a history, it becomes more beautiful.

KYLE

Yeah, I saw that on Facebook too. Jesus, Meryl! You believe that shit?

MERYL

It makes sense to me.

KYLE

You're as crazy as Dodo.

MERYL

I am ignoring that because I know you're not really thinking straight right now.

KYLE

I'm sorry.

MERYL

Save it for later; you can buy my drinks. We're both gonna need 'em: I'm spending the rest of the day briefing with Goldfarb. Alone, now, thank you very much.

KYLE

I'm sorry about that, too.

MERYL

No, you're not.

KYLE

No, I'm not.

MERYL

(Lowering her voice.)

Look, Kyle... I'm up for a new job. Executive VP, Group Creative Director at McDougal, McDaniel, McManus.

KYLE

Wow. That was fast.

MERYL

No financial accounts. At all. It's between me and one other person, and if I get it I can bring you with me.

KYLE

Meryl, I told you I don't want to leave here right now.

MERYL

Don't tell me you still want to stay just to do this Moore project!?!

KYLE

It's not just that. Trust me, I have my reasons.

MERYL

C'mon Kyle, Kate's taking the gloves off! There's gonna be a whole lot more ugly while she tries to get you to quit.

KYLE

I know.

MERYL

Then why put yourself through that?

KYLE

...

The day before my parents leave for my grandfather's funeral, my mom and I have this huge fight. I don't want them to go to India without me. I'm so mad at them, I won't say goodbye when they drop me off at Aunt Maryanne's. I just keep coloring in my book. I won't even look up when my mom kisses me goodbye. Then right before they close the door, I stick my tongue out at them. My mom looks at me with this strange look on her face, half smiling, half sad, and just says "We'll be home for Christmas, Ace..." I must have really hurt her that day.

MERYL

You've never told me this.

KYLE

I've never told anyone this. I can't leave Dodo here alone. I have to make sure she's going to be okay.

MERYL

Dodo? Why?

KYLE

Can't tell you. You understand, right?

MERYL

Oh. Yeah. Well, then you'd better go apologize to her. She can't be bought for a bourbon or four, like me. She really cares about you, Kyle. A lot of us do, you know.

KYLE

So? Should I take the flying lessons? What do you think?

MERYL

I think you have a lot of damage to fix, and now's as good a time as any to begin.

She hands him the nail polish.

KYLE

How about I start by sending over my Citibank files to you and Angela? Don't you think she'll be thrilled to come back and find 'em all waiting for her?

MERYL

You're all heart.

KYLE

We going to be okay?

MERYL

Probably.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Meryl? Is that you in the conference room?

MERYL

Eventually.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Stay there, I will come to you. We have many important things we must cover today.

MERYL

But probably not until after you buy my sixth bourbon tonight.

KYLE

Goldfarb's not that bad, Meryl.

MERYL

Are feeling all right?

KYLE

No, really, she's just high maintenance. Like me. And you loooooove me, right?

MERYL

I do. It isn't easy sometimes, but I do. Now go apologize to Dodo.

KYLE

Yes, sir!

MERYL

Jerk-Face.

KYLE

That's Captain Jerk-Face to you.

MERYL

Not yet, it isn't.

KYLE

You know Pete McDougal gave Aunt Maryanne her first job, right?

MERYL

One ad legend grooming another.

KYLE

Like you and Angela.

MERYL

Get out of here!

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
Columbia University Medical Center. 7:45 pm, Friday
January 7th.

Dodo attached to an IV drip, Kyle sitting next to her. His
phone is ringing, he switches it to vibrate.

KYLE

Ya ever notice how colors look different in movies from different decades? Like in the '40s, they were rich and saturated, in the '50s everything was kind of cold and blue, in the '70s everything was warm and golden?

DODO

Go on.

KYLE

What if we do this thing where we name paint colors like "50s Ice" or "40s Jade..."

Kyle's phone buzzes again.

DODO

You really should answer it, Kyle-bird, you're only going to piss her off even more.

KYLE

Look, Dodo, if I answer it, Kate will know we're not up in the air. Do you want her to know where we really are?

DODO

You don't have to sit here with me, you know. I've been through this before.

KYLE

I want to sit here with you.

DODO

There's only so much Neil can do to protect you.

KYLE

Who said anything about Neil?

DODO

C'mon, Kyle-bird, I'm not stupid. I know what's going on.

KYLE

Oh.

DODO

Are you in love with him?

KYLE

The sex is great.

DODO

Too much information, Kyle-bird.

KYLE

But it's not the same as it was before. I can't quite figure it out.

DODO

Maybe you've changed?

KYLE

How?

DODO

Have you watched "Gone With The Wind" yet?

KYLE

No.

DODO

Watch it. You might figure it out.

KYLE

It has horses in it.

DODO

What's wrong with horses?

KYLE

I don't like Westerns.

The phone buzzes again.

DODO

That's the dumbest thing you've ever said. Will you answer that thing?

KYLE

Hey, Kate! We just landed. It was great!...

(Holding the phone away from his ear; we
can hear screeching.)

I sent you a PDF with our stuff before we left, didn't you get it?

(SCREECH)

Oh, you didn't like them?

(SCREECH.)

Okay, Dodo and I will work from her place tonight, and we'll show you some new stuff
on Monday.

(SCREECH.)

Fine, we'll see you tomorrow at 10:00.

(SCREECH.)

Kate, you missed your daughter's birthday party last month too. 10:00 is the earliest we'll
be there.

He disconnects. The phone starts buzzing; he turns it off.

DODO

10:00 on a Saturday morning after Chemo, huh?

KYLE

Hey, you should thank me, she wanted us there at 7:30.

DODO

I'm still angry with you.

KYLE

I know. Jeez, how many more times do I have to say I'm sorry?

DODO

1,253. Have you called my friend at Teterboro yet?

KYLE

I'm thinking about it.

DODO

Uh huh.

KYLE

Okay, okay, okay, I'll call him just as soon as we get this project under control.

DODO

You'd better. Let's talk about this color by the decade idea, I'm not sure I get it. What if we name the colors after the directors, like "Sirk Blue?" or "Minnelli Jade."

KYLE

You mean "Minnelli Red," don't you?

DODO

You've been holding out on me. F-word you.

They both laugh. The Chemo machine beeps, indicating the dosage is complete.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection: A dressing room at Saks Fifth Avenue. 1:00 pm, Thursday January 27th.

Meryl and Kate.

MERYL

I don't know, Kate, it's awfully expensive.

KATE

You're a VP now, ya gotta look the part!

MERYL

But \$500? As my mother would say "Satan, get thee behind me."

Kate takes a picture with her phone and shows it to Meryl.

KATE

And Satan would say "It fits you beautifully there, too."

MERYL

Oh my God! It does!

KATE

Make up your mind, fast. I need to check in on Kyle and Dodo; They are so far behind on that Moore stuff. Three weeks and still nothing I can show the client.

MERYL

Don't you think you're being just a little too hard on them? He's been showing me their stuff, and I think it's quite good.

KATE

Sirk Blue? Minnelli Red? Who the hell is gonna know what that means?

MERYL

Anyone who watches Turner Classic Movies, Kate. It's right on target.

KATE

I'm the Creative Director, it's my ass on the line, and I say it's crap. I don't know how that little Teflon queen has bamboozled everyone from you to Scalo, but I'm not fooled. My first impression was right: without you he's a hack.

MERYL

I've known you don't like Kyle almost from the day we joined your group. But I really didn't think you were this, well, cunt.

KATE

Watch it, Meryl, I still like you. Don't make me regret my decision.

MERYL

What decision?

KATE

I'm up for that Senior VP Creative Director spot at McDougal. I'm going to recommend to Scalo he give you my job when I leave. Don't make me change my mind.

MERYL

Oh. Thanks, Kate, but...

KATE

But what? You mean "Thanks, but I'm up for that job too?" You think I don't know? Really, Meryl, I thought you were a lot sharper than that. I have a friend at McDougal.

MERYL

They offered it to me. Last night.

KATE

Excuse me?

MERYL

Kate... I told you I'd leave if I had to work on Citibank again.

KATE

I went out on a limb for you, ya know that? I keep you in my group when everyone else is getting laid off, I give you a Holiday bonus when no one else is getting one, I get you that VP title, I'm grooming you to replace me...

MERYL

And I have replaced you. Just not at Scalo.

KATE

You bitch! You knew I was up for that job, didn't you?

MERYL

Not until they offered it to me.

KATE

And? What'd you tell them?

MERYL

Didn't your friend tell you? I haven't accepted, yet. But I'm going to. And just so you know, I asked Kyle to come with me.

KATE

Well, thank God for that. One less fa... headache for me.

MERYL

He turned me down, so I asked Angela. She said yes.

KATE

Are you kidding me!?!

MERYL

No. And if you think your little pranks are going to get Kyle to quit, you don't know him. And that's your loss, because he really can be a "nice guy" even if he doesn't always "get it." He's given you the benefit of the doubt long after everyone else has told him not to. I'll take his loyalty over your hand-me-downs any day.

KATE

Loyalty? There's no loyalty among whores. And don't kid yourself, Meryl. We're all whores in this business, one way or another.

MERYL

Thanks for making my decision so much easier, Kate.

(Taking out her phone.)

Click. Send. Whoosh. Done. Job accepted. So I guess this is my “official” two weeks. By the way and FYI: according to your former victim at McDougal you were never seriously considered for that job. And I think I will pass on the outfit. It’s a bit too “Junior Miss” for me. Maybe better suited for you.

Meryl exits. Kate lights up. A smoke alarm starts blaring.

KATE

GODDAMMIT ALL TO FUCKING HELL!

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection: Kyle’s space in the “cube farm.” 11:00 am, Tuesday February 2nd.

Print outs of various campaign ideas, and open cans of paint samples everywhere. Dodo at the desk, Kyle on the floor watching a movie on an iPad. His office phone is ringing; then his cell phone buzzes. He ignores them.

KYLE

You know, “Gone With The Wind” is really, really, *really* not PC.

DODO

Nothing more than 5-minutes old is PC anymore. Just use what you can and let Benjamin Moore worry about the fallout.

Kyle starts prying paint lids off.

KYLE

Let’s take a look at these paints.

DODO

Careful! You almost spilled that!

KYLE

It’s fine. I don’t know, I don’t know, I don’t know... This red for the slut dress? Or the green and the yellow for the drapes?

DODO

(Typing furiously and not looking away from the computer screen.)

I know the green drapes are iconic, but if you use that clip of Vivien Leigh in the red dress and then cut to the woman painting her living room “O’Hara Scarlett,” it’d make a bigger impact.

They work quietly for a minute, then Kyle shows Dodo his iPad.

KYLE

There. Done.

DODO

Damn, you’re fast. OOOH! Whaddya think of this? “How does America spell color? M double O R E.”

KYLE

Wow, great line. I LOVE that!

KATE (OFF)

(Screaming as she barges in.)

KYLE! DODO! I WANNA TALK TO YOU TWO!!!

DODO

(To Kyle, rolling her eyes.)

What’d we do now?

Kyle shrugs as Kate barges in.

KATE

We’re presenting on Thursday, and I told you I didn’t like this naming the colors shit!

KYLE

Neil approved it.

KATE

Neil is not the creative director!

(Looking at the computer screen.)

And what the hell is this!?!

DODO

A new tag line.

KATE

“How does America spell color? M double O R E?” What is this garbage!?! That’s it, get out of my way! I’m taking over now, see if I can save this mess, should’ve done this weeks ago...

Kate brusquely pushes Dodo out of the way and starts typing as Dodo crashes into the cube wall.

DODO

JESUS!

KYLE

DODO! Oh my God, are you okay?

DODO

I’m fine, I’ll be fine.

Kyle pulls Kate away from the computer. The office grows silent.

KYLE

What the hell are you thinking, Kate?

KATE

Get your fucking hands off me, you whiny little asshole! Who the hell do you think you are?

KYLE

It’s bad enough you treat me like shit, but how dare you even touch Dodo, you stupid, fucking swamp donkey!

Neil enters.

NEIL

What the hell is going on here? We can hear you in Scalo’s office!

KYLE

(To Kate.)

Oh, and by the way, “sweetie honey?” You knew Anita doesn’t like YELLA!

DODO

(To Kate.)

You knew about that!?!

Kate laughs.

KYLE

So you wanna get rid of me? Go ahead, “darling!” Fire me!

He picks up a can of paint. Yellow paint.

NEIL

KYLE! DON'T!

DODO

SHE'S NOT WORTH IT, KYLE!

OFFICE COLLEAGUES (OFF)

(Chanting.)

GO KYLE! GO! GO! GO! GO!

Kyle overturns the can on Kate's head. Kate starts shrieking. Everyone takes pictures and/or video with their phones.

OFFICE COLLEAGUES (OFF)

(Variously.)

BULLSEYE! DING DONG! HAHAAAAHA!

KATE

YOU GODDAM SON-OF-A-BITCH FAGGOT ASSHOLE! YOU'RE GODDAM RIGHT YOU'RE FIRED! AND I'M GONNA SUE YOUR SORRY FAGGOT ASS. TURN OFF THOSE GODDAM FUCKING PHONES! ALL OF YOU, YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF GODDAM DISLOYAL COCKSUCKERS.

Laughter, cheers, applause.

OFFICE COLLEAGUES (OFF)

(Chanting again.)

KYLE! KYLE! KYLE! KYLE! KYLE! KYLE!

Totally humiliated, Kate races out. Kyle, Dodo, and Neil all tap their phones, and we hear the “whoosh” as their various pics and videos are sent out into the world.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection: Meryl's New Office at McDougal, McDaniel, McManus. 6:30 pm, Monday February 21st.

MERYL

Here, Kyle, I got Marriott to send a Starbucks Phuket tumbler for you.

KYLE

Aww, thanks Meryl.

(Snapping the side of the plastic tumbler.)

Plastic. Unbreakable. 'Cause... you know.

They laugh.

MERYL

An entire creative team... gone. Just like that.

KYLE

With the wind. So to speak.

He starts to laugh again.

MERYL

What?

KYLE

All those videos of Kate shrieking and flinging yellow paint all over the place. They're everywhere. Man, she really has screwed over of a lot of people, hasn't she?

MERYL

You know she had the gall to send me her resumé?

KYLE

Poor yellow thing. I almost feel sorry for her.

MERYL

No you don't.

KYLE

No, I don't. Do you?

MERYL

No.

KYLE

You should have heard Neil screaming when he found out you took the Marriott account with you when you left Scalo.

MERYL

Marriott wasn't even his account! Fuck him. Speaking of, are you, ya know, still... uhm... seeing him?

Kyle looks out the window.

KYLE

Nice office, Meryl.

MERYL

I'll take that as a yes. You know there's another office just as nice sitting empty down the hall, waiting for a new VP Associate Creative Director, and Marriott *loves* you...

KYLE

I guess it would be kind of fitting to come full circle and end my advertising career where Aunt Maryanne started hers, but... no thanks, not interested.

MERYL

You'll have to work eventually, Kyle.

KYLE

Maybe I'll be a Starbucks barista.

MERYL

With your temper?

KYLE

Maybe not.

MERYL

Not even freelance?

KYLE

No, really, thank you, Meryl, but...

(Snapping the tumbler three times.)

I have to start listening to my heart. I'm going to take those flying lessons. I start tomorrow.

MERYL

You're kidding!

KYLE

Thanks to Dodo. She kicked my ass right out to Teterboro. Look out, JetBlue, here I come! Hey... what about bringing Dodo onto your team?

MERYL

I'd still need a senior level Art Director.

KYLE

I thought... didn't you bring Angela with you?

MERYL

Bitch is out on maternity leave for the next 6 months.

They laugh.

KYLE

The things she'll do to avoid work and still get paid. Call Dodo. *She* likes to work.

MERYL

Let me think about it?

KYLE

Just call her! Now c'mon, it's Monday. Let's go get drunk. My treat.

MERYL

Your treat? Can you afford me?

KYLE

Oh yeah. I'm unemployed, and you're rolling in it. *Your* treat.

MERYL

Jerkface.

KYLE

Bitch.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
O'Lunney's. 5:30 pm, Friday March 18th.

NEIL

I've missed you, kiddo. It's been pretty dull in – and out of – the office the last few weeks.

KYLE

I know... I haven't been feeling all that horny lately.

NEIL

Ouch. That hurt...

KYLE

Sorry. It's been a little crazy trying to get everything sorted out. I'm selling Aunt Marianne's apartment and moving out to Astoria. And, ya know, taking care of Dodo.

NEIL

I kind of remember she beat it a while ago. I had no idea she's relapsed.

KYLE

That's why she has her Chemo on Friday nights. She doesn't want anyone to know.

NEIL

I didn't really think you were learning to fly a plane.

KYLE

I am now.

NEIL

You're kidding!

KYLE

Thanks to Dodo. She's relentless.

(Tearing up.)

When I take her home after chemo, as I leave she always has this look in her eyes I haven't seen since the last time I saw my mother...

NEIL

It's okay, kiddo. She's going to be fine, you'll see. She's a tough old broad.

KYLE

God, I love that "tough old broad." But even if she does... no, WHEN she pulls through, I'm so afraid not having someplace to go during the day is going to kill her faster than the leukemia.

NEIL

It's hard being alone when you're getting older. Beverly and I are splitting up.

KYLE

Oh. Is that gonna hurt you with Scalo?

NEIL

Nah. Joe's never going to fire me. My sins are primarily sexual; he knows I'd never do anything to hurt his business. Besides, he knows about my "arrangement" with Bev; he had a mistress himself for years.

KYLE

Do you know who it was?

NEIL

No one does. It's the one thing even I've never been able to find out.

KYLE

The one thing besides Dodo relapsing, ya mean?

NEIL

Shut. Up.

KYLE

(Smiling mischievously.)

I know.

A pause.

NEIL

No! Dodo!?!

KYLE

God no. Think about it, Neil. How would *I* know if *you* don't?

Another pause as Neil figures it out.

NEIL

Oh, my God. Joe Scalo and Maryanne Gordon?

KYLE

Before she died, he promised Aunt Maryanne he'd take care of me. Professionally, at least. But after that fiasco with Kate I guess he didn't have much of a choice.

NEIL

He's not used his employee's squabbles being splashed all over the cover of Ad Week.

KYLE

Literally. He is paying for my anger management therapy, though.

NEIL

He's good that way. So? No other comments about me and Bev?

KYLE

You're not leaving her for me, are you?

NEIL

Oh... No. Of course not... No.

KYLE

Good.

NEIL

Bev and I, there's no love there anymore. We like each other, sure, but she's in love with someone else. And... I am, too. So... Where does that leave us?

KYLE

I like you, Neil, I really do, and I enjoy being with you, / but I'm not

NEIL

/ You're unemployed, you're going to need some kind of support system and / can help

KYLE

/ Neil, please. Stop. I appreciate the offer, but... I don't love you, and I don't want a daddy. Not anymore. Whatever happens, I want... I need to do things on my own.

NEIL

I really did underestimate you.

KYLE

Yes, you did.

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

I'm sorry too. I have to go sit with Dodo while she gets her chemo. I'll call you, 'k?

He kisses Neil and exits.

NEIL

Okay. I'll be...

(Picking up a dart and dropping it.)

Here.

Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Projection:
The cockpit of a plane on the runway at Teterboro
Airport, New Jersey. 10:00 am, Tuesday May 31st.

Dodo and Kyle.

KYLE

Are you sure you're up for this?

DODO

Of course I am!

KYLE

I don't want you to over do it.

DODO

You think I need my hand held every minute of every day?

KYLE

Yes. You've had a tough few months. You still get tired so easily.

DODO

Jesus, you're a pest.

KYLE

And you're going back to work next week. Don't push it.

DODO

I know you talked to Meryl about me.

KYLE

Oh. Did I?

DODO

Thank you.

KYLE

I'm really going to fly a plane!

DODO

Yes, Kyle-bird, you are.

KYLE

I'm scared.

DODO

You should be. I just might push you out this time.

KYLE

You don't have the strength.

DODO

(Punching his arm.)

Wanna bet?

KYLE

Ow!

DODO

Wimp.

KYLE

Careful. I'm at the controls today. And we're flying over water.

DODO

You get rid of me, who's going to make you Beef Wellington next Christmas?

KYLE

You get rid of me, who's gonna hold your hand next Friday night?

DODO

That cute intern who gives me my chemo.

KYLE

He's too busy holding my hand.

DODO

He's got two hands.

KYLE

Sorry, Dodo, I'm not into threesomes. Or older women. No matter how hot they are.

DODO

God! You're a brat, you know that?

KYLE

I "wuv" you.

DODO

Yeah. Ka-ka poo-poo.

KYLE

And ya love me, too.

DODO

You know it.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

November Niner Tree Hotel Foxtrot, runway 6 cleared for take off.

DODO

C'mon, Ace. Knock... Knock... Knock...

KYLE

Oh God, will you please just stop with that? Did you just call me Ace?

DODO

It's time to take off. And soar.

Kyle starts the engines. They look ahead, smiling, as the plane takes off and the lights fade.

END OF PLAY.

Permsal Corp