



Info-Boy!

a play by Albert Fried-Cassorla

Version 14 7-19-07

© Copyright
Fried-Cassorla Communications, Inc.
7408 Woodlawn Avenue
Melrose Park, PA 19027
215-635-5189 cell 215-219-4772
albert@fried-cas.com

ACT I

SETTING

The entire play takes place at the beachside set of an infomercial show, set at The Surf Club, a nightclub featuring imported sand on the Delaware River in Philadelphia. If possible, have two director chairs, a beach umbrella, and perhaps painted ocean scenery. A cabana serves as a work office, although office-type scenes can take place directly outside it. Paperweights rest atop piles of documents, and cell phones and pagers are scattered about.

At one side of the stage is a separate cabana for props storage, which can be labeled PROPS. Action between STEPHANIE and KARI. The surf should be imagined or portrayed as in the distance, towards the back of the stage.

AT RISE

[At the beachside set. Theater audience is the studio audience]

[SFX: brassy music up.]

(JERRY strides in wearing a bathing suit and colorful Hawaiian shirt. He waves to the audience cheerfully.)

JERRY

Hi there! How're yo all doin'? Ha? I don't heeeear you!

(JERRY cups his ear to the audience.)

Ahh, that's a bit better. Welcome to the taping of the BluesBusters Infomercial. Now do you have your BluesBusters handy? ... Did you all get them when you came in? Anyone NOT get them?

(JERRY hands cheap BluesBusters to

some audience members who lack them.)

Remember, you have the less expensive versions of BluesBusters. I have the REAL babies. But don't under-estimate the power of yours to change the way you see things. In Philly, we have a positive mental AT-te-tood.... Can you say AT-tee-tood for me?

AUDIENCE (*tepidly*)

AT-tee-tood.

JERRY

... Awful! One more time?

AUDIENCE (*louder*)

AT-tee-tood!!

JERRY

Much better! Now I'd like to sing you a song to get you in the right mood! And I'm gonna ask you to sing the refrain for me "Get your cool BluesBusters!" So let's try it out, arrright??

[JERRY plays guitar to accompany himself, or a background tape plays. The following is "Get Your Cool BluesBusters!" The audience sings the refrain in bold.]

Get Your Cool BluesBusters!
Music and lyrics by Albert Fried-Cassorla

- 1) When you're down in the dumps, And your taking your lumps
A D
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
D
- 2) If you're hittin' the rocks cause you house is in hock
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- E D A
They're the quickest fixin', grin-restorin' Joy unlockers! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
A D
- 3) When de-pression got ya cracked, Can't find your Prozac --
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- A D
4) If you're down in the pits with terminal zits,
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
E D A
If your baby says good-bye, Don't drink a can of lye, Get your cool BluesBusters!
[GUITAR BREAK: A /// D /// A /// A /// D /// A /// E /// D /// A ///]
- A D
5) When they lay you off, don't get pissed off
A (Audience responds:) A
Try your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- D
6) If you can't make her sing, when you're doin' that thing
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
E D A
They're the passion-inspirin' joy restorin' -- cool BluesBusters!
- E D A
7) Better than huge new pair of plastic knockers -- cool BluesBusters!
A (Audience responds:) A
cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
[End with E /// D /// A /// (pause) D - A]

JERRY

Now before we start the program, I'd like to remind you that this is the show about the revolutionary new sunglasses that make life more enjoyable. Like Mummers Day in heaven! So it's real important that you cheer loud at the right times. Like when I hold up this sign. Can we practice once?

*(JERRY holds up the APPLAUSE sign.
AUDIENCE applauds.
JERRY puts down the sign.)*

Arr-right! That's a Philly salute that even Mayor Street can hear. Now when I first hold up this sign, I want you to applaud. But when I hold it up high, ya gotta totally blow me away. OK? You ready? Cause here we go...

*(JERRY holds up the applause sign.
AUDIENCE applauds.)*

3, 2, 1...**And NOW!!** From the sunny shores of the Delaware River in Philadelphia, it's The BluesBusters Show. The only program about feeling happier through the magic of technology. Please join me in welcoming our lovely hostess, Stephanie Winston, and the inventor of BluesBusters, the genius behind it all, Phil Man-ZONE!!!!

*(Enter STEPHANIE and PHIL.
JERRY holds up the APPLAUSE sign and AUDIENCE
applauds and whistles tumultuously)*

PHIL and STEPHANIE

Thank you!!!!

PHIL

Well, I think this audience is ready to have its blues blocked.

STEPHANIE

(smiles with admiration at the audience)

So do I!! The energy out there is just tremendous!... (*serious now*) But Phil, so many people across the country and around the world are troubled by the blues, don't you think?

PHIL

They sure are. And it goes by many names -- sadness, depression, down-in-the-dumps -- you name it!

STEPHANIE

I know I get the blues sometimes. Like when I break a nail that I just had manicured.

PHIL

Sure. Life gives us upsets big and small, Stephanie. But ya know? We grow up thinking we have to accept that.

STEPHANIE

Yeah. Just accept being miserable. Blindly taking what life dishes out.

PHIL

That *used* to be true.

STEPHANIE

Used to be true!

PHIL and STEPHANIE

But not anymore!!!!

STEPHANIE

Not since you invented BluesBusters. So Phil, what inspired you?

PHIL

I just awoke one day and decided there was no good reason why people can't be happy.

STEPHANIE

That's all it took?

PHIL

That, plus years of pain-staking research. And the rest....

PHIL and STEPHANIE

And the rest is info-history!!!

(PHIL and STEPHANIE laugh good-naturedly.)

PHIL

That's because my BluesBusters electronically block bad thoughts *before* they have a chance to get you down. You see, light enters here and gets amplified by my patented internal hyperfrazzers here... that flash as they work. They concentrate the positive energy that passes through your retina and stimulate your pineal gland, causing it to make more serotonin. It's the happiness chemical. We'll learn more about it later.

STEPHANIE

But you know, seeing is believing. So let's ask a member of our studio audience to tell us about a problem they might be having. Who would like to volunteer?

(STEPHANIE and PHIL walk out into the studio / theater audience with a portable microphone. The play's producers have pre-arranged with two audience members to present their problems a LADY and a GENT. STEPHANIE approaches GENT who has his hand raised.)

STEPHANIE

And what's your name, sir?

GENT

Hi, I'm Arnold. But you can call me Arnie.

JERRY

Where are you from?

GENT

Ardmore.

JERRY

Well, Arnie from Ardmore, what kind of problem do you have for us today?

GENT

I had this pet iguana that passed away just last Friday, see. Her name was Iggy, even though she was a girl, cause I liked that name. And she used to make the cutest faces, dontcha know? Like she just ate five lemons or something, ha ha! But I miss her terribly. And I never made a videotape to remember her by. Never!

PHIL

Now I'm sure that's troubling you -- but it doesn't sound too difficult.

STEPHANIE

Not for BluesBusters! Got yours handy? Put them on.

*(GENT puts on his cheap BluesBusters.
His expression soon changes to one of joy.)*

Feeling better yet?

(GENT nods his head and grins idiotically.)

GENT

O YEAH! Iggy, come to papa!

*(JERRY holds up APPLAUSE sign and
AUDIENCE applauds.)*

PHIL

Who else has been feeling bad lately?

(LADY raises her hand and PHIL and

*STEPHANIE approach her. PHIL places the mike
near LADY'S mouth and asks:)*

And what's your name, ma'm?

LADY

Hi, I'm Ginny.

STEPHANIE

Where are you from?

LADY

Grey's Ferry.

PHIL

What's got you down in the mouth...

STEPHANIE

...and feelin' lower than the Titanic?

LADY

My boyfriend wants to move to Florida to raise greyhounds, but I like
schnausers. I'd just love to curl up on my loveseat on the veranda with one.

STEPHANIE

Here, put on these babies!

*(STEPHANIE hands LADY cheap BluesBusters
and he puts them on. LADY smiles and sees a vision.)*

LADY

Oh my! I'm seeing a loooong pooches on my porches. All I can say,
Mister Manzone, is BOW-WOW!! I've got to go and tell my sister!

*(LADY leaves via audience's exit,
changes costumes in green room and is
ready to re-appear as KARI.
SFX: Happy, brassy music swells.*

*JERRY holds up the APPLAUSE sign
and audience applauds.)*

PHIL

Happy... Now lift the glasses, and you don't feel so good, do you?... Sad...
And now putting them back on again, you feel the difference.... Happy!!
No messin' with Mister In-Between!... Now everybody do the same.

*(STEPHANIE and PHIL focus on the
AUDIENCE, which follows along.)*

PHIL and STEPHANIE

Happy... sad...happy!... Now *you* say it!

ALL

Happy... sad... happy!

PHIL and STEPHANIE

Can we hear it louder?!!

ALL

Happy... sad... happy!

STEPHANIE

Well, I think were onto something, don't you? We'll be back in a moment
with important information about how you can order BluesBusters and
become just as happy as *we* are. Just watch this tape and see BluesBusters in
everyday action. Don't go away folks!

*(PHIL and STEPHANIE wave and smile at the crowd.
SFX: music swells. JERRY holds up APPLAUSE sign
and AUDIENCE applauds.*

JERRY

OK, folks, this taping is over. But we'll call you back soon for the next one.
Stay in touch!

(Studio-type lights fade a bit. After a beat, lights fade up.)

[At rise: STEPHANIE and PHIL are playing outside a cabana that serves as an office. Nearby are a beach chair and umbrella. Documents with paper-weights and cell phones show that this is a work place.]

STEPHANIE

Hon? You don't...

(STEPHANIE climbs into PHIL's lap, pleasing him. She is coquettish, but playful.)

...you don't mind my kind of hands-on attitude do you?

PHIL

Mind? See these hands?

(PHIL reaches out his hands to hold STEPHANIE'S, raising her hands up slightly)

STEPHANIE

Mm.

PHIL

I always want both of these hands in my work... in my life, guiding, caressing, and even scolding... whatever they need to do.

(PHIL kisses one of STEPHANIE's hands.)

STEPHANIE

Hon, you're so sweet. When I'm with you, I feel so... lucky.

PHIL

Hey, I'm the lucky one. You're my personal Aphrodite...and the Goddess of our Infomercials. I just... trust you.

STEPHANIE

Even when I wear these?

(STEPHANIE reaches to a nearby desk, and puts on her BluesBusters glasses. She smiles at PHIL. STEPHANIE leaves PHIL's lap and walks over to face the audience, as she looks out an unseen window in the audience's direction.)

STEPHANIE

Let's see how they work in direct sunlight. Hey, ya know? I bet they'll work even *better!*

(PHIL hurries over to the window to join her. He, too, dons his BluesBusters. They stand arms akimbo, facing the audience, getting excited.)

PHIL

Sure they do! I tested that two years ago. Like adding rocket fuel to your gas tank!

STEPHANIE

Is that a fact?

PHIL

It is. And when I say something's a fact, well...

STEPHANIE and PHIL

It's Info-history!

STEPHANIE

Ready?

PHIL

Ready.

PHIL and STEPHANIE

One...two...three...JOY IGNITION!

(PHIL and STEPHANIE flick a little lever on the side of the glasses.)

SFX: Spacey music plays, apparently triggered by the switch on the glasses. At first, no reaction is apparent from STEPHANIE and PHIL.

Then after about five seconds, they start smiling. They slowly sway in unison, rocking sideways forwards and backward in lockstep. Their smiles grow as the glasses' power takes effect.)

STEPHANIE

Yeah!!

(PHIL puts his arm around STEPHANIE.)

PHIL

Another great benefit! Write it down. Works even better on the psyche in direct sunlight.

(STEPHANIE goes to a writing pad.)

STEPHANIE *(writing)*

Works... even... better.... with... someone... you... love.

PHIL

Ooooh! Even better. Yeah, I want that in the script. Remind me!

STEPHANIE

I will.

(STEPHANIE embraces PHIL, who responds slowly but enthusiastically. They kiss.)

PHIL

Hey, does the fantastic woman come with *every* pair of glasses?

STEPHANIE

Rumor has it... that she only comes with a VERY special guy!

(kiss)

...that she comes with the depression-curing Bluesblocker glasses...

(kiss)

PHIL

Now *there's* a benefit! But I don't think the Christian Broadcasting Network'll let us use it.

STEPHANIE

Pity.

(PHIL and STEPHANIE remove their BluesBusters and kiss again. Enter JERRY wearing BluesBusters and flying around the room.)

JERRY

Wheee!!

(PHIL shakes his head.)

STEPH

See what we started?

PHIL (to JERRY)

Please, Jerry.

JERRY (*singing*)

Fly like an eagle, hm-hm-hm, to the sea...

PHIL

No, I don't think so.

JERRY

Fly like an eagle... let that money fly to me!

(The phone rings. PHIL answers it. While JERRY flies around the room,

*PHIL speaks on the phone.
STEPHANIE reviews some papers.)*

PHIL

Phil here.

JERRY (*singing*)

... let that money fly to me!

PHIL

U-huh.... Yes..... I see... No, we don't want to do that.... No, use the more expensive titanium reinforcers.... I don't care.... So let them bill us... Jeanette, you've got to think BIG, gapeesh?... That's right. Don't sweat the details. That's what makes us great.

JERRY (*singing the Beatles song*)

Love, love, love....

PHIL

Primo quality all the way. Understood? ... Good. Gotta go.

(PHIL hangs up. He speaks to JERRY:)

Jerry, make sure *nobody* substitutes copper for titanium on the reinforcers. Follow up, okay?

(JERRY removes his BluesBusters.)

JERRY (*pausing*)

You bet, boss. No reason to mess with success. These work just fiiiiine!!!

(JERRY pulls a small pad and pencil from his pocket and makes a note to himself.)

PHIL (*points to JERRY*)

Steph, make sure he.... you know.

STEPHANIE

Sure.

JERRY

Oh, I'll do it, Phil. Don't you worry. You're the boss.

PHIL *[with rising anger]*

Don't give me this you're-the-boss stuff, Jerry. I don't pay you to yes me!

[PHIL calms down, getting in touch with his warmer emotions.]

It's about having a vision.... That's how I'm gonna help you succeed in this business. *Find* that vision, man! Find it and trust it.

JERRY

I will. Hey, learn from the best! I never forget -- you're the guy who can sell *anything*. Steph, I once saw him sell porcelain trolls to the Louvre.

STEPHANIE

I know. And in Australia, he sold veggie wraps to aborigines.

PHIL

Trust your inner mind, Jerry. That's how you're going to make it big in this industry. So what does your inner mind say?

JERRY

(in grandiloquent, poetical style, with exaggerated acting)

...It says.... Cash is just trash. We don't itch to that rash! So let the vision come... and our blues down the drainpipe run... I say, the happiest days are yet to come!

PHIL

Ahhh, the man is acquiring vision. A noble thing!

JERRY

Hmmm. Let me put on my BluesBusters... Hey, I think you're right! I see Osaka National Bank watching the dollars accumulate on some nearer date, and paying all of us -- full freight!

[PHIL and STEPHANIE smile.]

STEPHANIE

Jerry, you're seeing Phil's vision -- you're the man!

JERRY

I can't help it. When my blues are blocked, I have...

STEPHANIE, JERRY and PHIL

...nowhere to go but up!!

(JERRY prepares to leave.)

You got it, Phil.

PHIL

Seeya right here at the Surf Club on Monday.

JERRY

Surf's up. And we'll keep it up for ya!

PHIL

Ciao.

JERRY

(trailing a MOCK-Italian phrases as he leaves the door)

Hasta la pasta!

(JERRY exits. PHIL puts a leg up on his chair. He lights a long cigar, relishing it and enjoying his thoughts.)

PHIL

That Jerry! Today, I think he's learning. Yesterday, after he interrupted my story meeting with all those invoices -- I swear, I love him, but I almost lost it.

(PHIL makes a strangling gesture and grunts as he pulls the imaginary videotape tight. It's unclear to the audience and to STEPHANIE whether PHIL is serious or goofing. While fiddling with office papers, PHIL says)

That's all it'd take.

STEPHANIE

Phil, come on! He tries his best to keep things running. Besides, you love him -- you'd never go off on him.

PHIL (*more serious*)

I know -- he's too sweet. I never really could. But all these details he bugs me about. They drive me crazy!

STEPHANIE

Jerry's just trying to keep us current!

PHIL

Yeah, but it's always at the expense of my creativity. Today, he told me we have to trash all those chia pets down in the warehouse. Something about larva.

STEPHANIE

They were disgusting!! Did you *see* them?! I was on the shipping floor. (*with disgust*) They were wriggling around like crazy. Oooh!! How could we ship something like that?

PHIL

We just massage it!

(*PHIL dances a bit to illustrate.*)

Now they're the Dancing Chia pets, see? We just change the angle, like I explained to the copywriters. Position it is as... "The hair that comes alive!" Positioning – that's the key.

(*STEPHANIE strides around in a semi-teasing manner.*)

STEPHANIE

I work hard at it every day.

[*STEPHANIE sits in PHIL's lap and kisses him.
PHIL returns the kiss with great pleasure.*]

So...

[kiss]

Do you think we should be doing this when there's so much work to do?

PHIL

Amour, it's the essential ingredient in all good business. Besides, you're just giving me a marketing refresher course.

[They kiss again.]

STEPHANIE

But it's not all... positioning.

PHIL

No? What else?

*(STEPHANIE holds up her index finger,
as if it were a branding iron. She touches
PHIL's behind with it and makes a hissing sound.)*

STEPHANIE

SSsssssss!!!... Branding.

*(They kiss again. Telephone buzzes.
PHIL presses a speaker button.)*

PHIL

Yes, Faye.

FAYE

Kari just called.

*(STEPHANIE gets up, attends to some papers.
PHIL's face lights up.)*

She had to get off the line quickly, but she said she's coming over in the next half-hour and not to go into any meetings.

PHIL (*laughing, playing darts*)

Ha! I won't! Call Jerry and Susan and tell them the manufacturing meeting's rescheduled for ten tomorrow morning. Maybe we should do it in the trailer. It's hot out here. How does it feel in there?

FAYE

Cool as a cuke. At ten in the trailer. I'll take care of it, Phil.

PHIL

Thanks.

(PHIL hangs up, pleased, excited. PHIL shoots a dart.)

STEPHANIE

Well... a pleasant surprise. How long has it been since you've heard from her?

PHIL

Too long. I think she still holds me responsible.

(PHIL shoots, misses entirely, grimaces.)

STEPHANIE

For the break-up?

PHIL

For everything.... As if we all have so many choices. Things just happen.

(STEPHANIE picks up a dart, gets in shooting position, squints, test-throws without releasing.)

STEPHANIE

Things jus thappen? That sounds rather cavalier.... the way you say it.

PHIL

PHIL Nothing like that is simple or easy... like what I'm going to ask you now.

STEPHANIE

Oh?

PHIL

Will you come live with me?.... I think it's time ... I need you, honey.

STEPHANIE

Maybe... I mostly want to... But having our own places gives us a refuge, don't you think?

PHIL

No. I don't need any refuge from you.... Will you think about it? You know I love you.

(PHIL kisses STEPHANIE)

STEPHANIE

I will... I'll think about it.

[STEPHANIE breaks away.]

STEPHANIE

And I think *you* ought to think seriously about speaking with **Ayaka Sato**. He's been trying to reach you, ya know. And I think you should respond. He called yesterday. Awfully flirtatious **about Jerry, she was. Is she** always like that?

PHIL *(surprised, miffed)*

She did? She was? And where was I?

STEPHANIE

You were right here, but tied up on another line.

(PHIL looks distressed. He gets up and walks around with anxiety.)

Well, I had to talk with her.

PHIL

How was he flirtatious? Whattaya mean?

STEPHANIE

Of, you know. How cute Jerry is, what a great smile he has, how lovely my hair is, could I arrange for her to have a cup of coffee or a drink alone with him some time on her next visit. Yadda-yadda.

PHIL

I'd like to give that woman a yadda-yadda up the--

STEPHANIE

In fact, after a **moment it wasn't about Jerry, if you want to know the truth – it was clear she wanted** to speak with *me*.... I think... he thinks... *you don't listen.*

PHIL (*striding about with agitation*)

He's right. I don't listen to **mental** pygmies. Especially cougars who hit on my staff, that--

STEPHANIE (*demurely*)

Cougars who lend you ten million bucks... maybe you should.

PHIL

Yeah, yeah. And?!

STEPHANIE

He said Osaka's CEO and he both agreed that there were two measures they were going to use to decide on extending a new line of credit. We need to gross five hundred thousand dollars in paid orders per month. *And* we have to fulfill just about every one of them on time. I think **she's** warning us, that **she's** very serious about shutting us down.

PHIL

She wouldn't dare! And besides, half a mill in orders is fine! Even if they wanted *six* hundred thousand back, we could deliver. This product's colossal!

(STEPHANIE walks over to a computer and punches some keys.)

STEPHANIE

Plus, I think there's something else going on.... If you ask me, **Ayaka Sato** thinks she's going to be the next **Info-Girl**.... Or maybe her son will be... she's always talking about him.

PHIL

Ha! As if any of them could. What a joke!

STEPHANIE

Her son's earning quite a rep as a producer... and all that chummy saki-drinking with the Board of Directors... I don't know....

PHIL

Not with our **huge** sales numbers. What a laugh!!

STEPHANIE

Phil, look at this.

(PHIL walks over.)

PHIL

What?

STEPHANIE

Look at Customer Service.

[PHIL seems not too distressed.]

PHIL

Ah. Ya make sales, ya get some complaints. It's a percentage game. Don't let that stuff worry ya.

(PHIL turns away, preoccupied.)

He retreats to his desk, starts writing.)

STEPHANIE

We've got nine-hundred-two calls on hold -- and only four hundred-seventeen customers being serviced!

PHIL

I don't have time for that stuff now. We've got the creative conference on the Ab Shaper this afternoon.... I want to get my thoughts together.

(STEPHANIE approaches PHIL's desk and sits on it, looking him in the eye. PHIL avoids her gaze.)

STEPHANIE (softly)

Hon?

PHIL (*absorbed*)

Mmm.

STEPHANIE

I'm not saying this to torment you.

PHIL (*still very absorbed. Softly:*)

You never torment me, babe.

STEPHANIE

Listen... It's just that I think we've got to get real here... Maybe we're growing too fast. Maybe this new infomercial's gonna be *too* good, ya know?

PHIL

Too good? No such thing. Never was, never *will* be with Phil Manzone! When I was a kid selling lemonade at Fifth and Tasker in South Philly, do you think I worried about running out of product?

STEPHANIE

But lemonade and BluesBusters aren't the same business, Phil!

PHIL

Hon?

STEPHANIE

Hm?

PHIL

Can... we put all of that on hold? And can we say it's settled? You'll move in with me -- just as soon as we wrap up this next infomercial?

*[STEPHANIE nods "yes" and smiles.
PHIL hugs STEPHANIE.]*

STEPHANIE

Oh sweetie, I'm so happy!

PHIL

Hey, I'm the one who's getting more of you! Don't out-happy *me*, young lady!

STEPHANIE

But honey....

PHIL

Mmm?

STEPHANIE

How do I know you really love me?

PHIL

Ma-RONE! What do I have to do? Just keep your eyes open, babe. BluesBusters or not. I mean, when it counts, I'm there for you.... right?

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry, hon. Of course you are. Maybe, it's just that I don't know where all this is going for us.

PHIL

Okay, doll. Here's a picture. A possible one. You and me. We do this, infomercialize for ten more years, maybe fifteen. Then we retire in Martinique, para-sail, make love, eat plantain. Whattaya think?

[STEPHANIE hugs PHIL, gets amorous.]

STEPHANIE

I want to eat plantain now!!

PHIL *[surprised, pleased. They kiss.]*

Whoa!!

[Cell phone rings.]

STEPHANIE

Mmmm. Maybe you should be answering...

[PHIL reluctantly breaks off and answers the phone.]

PHIL

Yah?

FAYE

Phil, Kari's here.

PHIL

Great! Send her out to the set.

STEPHANIE

I'll let you two have some time by yourselves. I'll be over in the Props Cabana product testing.

(STEPHANIE goes to the Props Cabana, which should be played as out of earshot. She experiments with various products while PHIL and KARI talk in the following scene. Enter KARI, clutching a photo book on Italy.)

KARI

Hi, Dad!

PHIL

Hi, sweetie! How are you?

[PHIL kisses Kari on the cheek. KARI places the photo book on a ledge or table.]

KARI

Terrible! ...I have something to tell you.

PHIL

What?

KARI

I broke up with Brian.

PHIL

...I'm sorry.

KARI

And it wasn't easy. **I told him to get out. And he is. He's moving... this week.**

PHIL

What *happened*?

KARI

All this... stuff Brian wanted to do that **didn't** involve *me*. He **had** that awful catering business. It **kept** him up till 2, and that's all **he ever wanted** to talk about. Plus, our apartment **became** a commercial oven! It **was** hot as hell, too.... So where **did I** fit in?

PHIL

You deserve better. Sweetie, I'm sorry about this.

KARI

Anyhow, I think a lot of that, uh, magic whatever **had** gone.

(a pause)

PHIL

Couples need plenty of that magic whatever. Bushels of it. Say, it's getting late. I'm about through for the day. I'm gonna have a glass of wine. How 'bout you?

KARI

Yeah, do you have any white?

PHIL

Sure, I have a nice dry Chardonnay right here.

(PHIL gets a bottle and some glasses and pours two glasses of wine, handing one to KARI and keeping one for himself.)

.... About Brian... I don't know. I'm sorry to this day that I didn't put more **into** salvaging my relationship with your Mom. So part of me says "Don't give up so easy." Hey, **I** should give advice, huh?

KARI

Yeah.

PHIL

Whattaya mean, yeah! Come here **you!**

[PHIL chases KARI, messes up her hair, KARI giggles, he hugs her, releases her.]

So.... So chill for awhile. Then call him. Go out for a cup of coffee. Maybe you can work things out. I mean, even if he's annoying sometimes.... Does Mom know about this?

KARI

Yah. So of course she wants me to move back in with her. Can you *imagine?* I told her thanks, but no thanks.

PHIL

.... So what's next for you? Maybe find someone new... How do young people meet each other these days? I met your mother at a Church social during the Feast of San Gennaro. Do you remember?

KARI

I was a little young.

PHIL

But what about *you*? What are **we** going to do for you?

KARI

Right now, I'm so totally angry and frustrated, Daddy. NOTHING's going right!! I'm a mess, a total mess. The restaurant job barely pays enough to get cat food. I haven't kept up my friendships. **Nobody calls me.**

PHIL

Not even Claudia?

KARI

We're not on speaking terms.

PHIL

How can that be? She's been like, your closest friend and your cell phone appendage since high school.

KARI

Well, Brian was her boyfriend before he was mine... so... She thought I stole him, but I really didn't. I thought she'd let go of him emotionally, but ha! Last month she... she sure let me know she didn't, and I was this huge ratty boyfriend-stealer... It was ugly. And now that Brian and I aren't together anymore, of course that doesn't mean Claudia and I are fixed.

PHIL

I'm sorry.

KARI

Yesterday, I was so lonely and sad... I threw all my clothes out the window. I was so miserable, I was tempted to follow them... So I guess what I'm saying is I need some time... with you. **I know it's weird for a girl in her twenties to want to spend time with her dad.**

PHIL

No, it's not weird, hon'. It's a good thing!.... I think.

KARI

And if we go on that trip, we'd be in a totally different place. In every way!... Maybe it's stupid, but I think you can help me figure me out.

PHIL

Listen, I have a *great* idea!

KARI

You do? So do I!!

PHIL

Ha! Okay, yours first.

KARI

I had this dream... I saw a huge fountain -- the Trevi Fountain. I was dancing in it. **Then when I woke up, I just knew what I needed. I remembered that great Rome photo book you were always showing me when I was a kid. I borrowed it, you know.**

PHIL

Did you?

(KARI gets the book from the ledge and points out pages.)

KARI

How incredibly lovely! I mean, you and Mom saw the treasures of the Vatican and walked these endless art halls and saw Michelangelo's amazing La Pieta. You still remember, don't you?

PHIL

I remember loving at the time -- and telling you about it. If I gave you a love for *bella bella Italia*, that's a good thing. It's the real info!... But hey, my feet are reminding me that they were killing me, and there was nowhere to sit! Mom just wanted to plow on.

KARI

So you gave me this great passion! But we never went there. And it's driving me crazy.... So I was thinking you and I could go on a month's

vacation to Italy together -- in a day or two!! You could tie things up, and we'd go. Doesn't that sound great?

(PHIL looks confused.)

.... I know you're busy.

PHIL *(sarcastically)*

Ha!

KARI

But you can always make time, cause you're a big-shot executive, and you can delegate stuff. Right?

PHIL

Hm.

KARI

You know, you'll have your cell phone and all, so you can keep in touch with the office. Meanwhile, you'll help me with my problems. And we'll stroll through Rome and the countryside. We'll make me a project, and we'll get to know each other -- the way we didn't when I lived at home, Dad!

PHIL *(unsure)*

I know, I KNOW! I want to make it up to you.... I should have spent more time with you when you were growing up, instead of allowing this business thing to dominate me the way it did.

KARI

So do it now.... It's a hard thing for you, I know that.

PHIL

.... But don't you think we'd be... sort of running away from your problems if we do that?

KARI

Dad, I know you can do it! Because *I* don't even know where to begin. I've seen the way you can be with people. You care about them. You know how to talk through things.

(KARI comes around behind PHIL and hugs him from the behind. He puts his hands on hers, obviously enjoying it.)

PHIL

Thanks, sweetheart.

KARI

But really, dad, we have to go -- now! We haven't spent time together as father and daughter in so long. Not since our camping trip in Acadia National Forest.

PHIL

Marrone, Acadia! Just that word gives me agita. I don't want to spend a night in a soggy sleeping bag ever again! Or see another bear in a dumpster.

KARI

... So what do you think? ...**About Italy?**

(PHIL is torn. He walks around, not knowing how to handle it.)

PHIL

I'd love to... but, ya know sweetheart, this business is so gosh-darned demanding! There's *no way* I can manage all this with a cell phone and a laptop! Everything's happening at once. My investors. The taping. I have to be here, physically -- to orchestrate, to make a million instant decisions -- and the whole darned stromboli's at stake here. Do you understand?

KARI

No. It's always at stake. The stromboli's *always* in the fire.

PHIL

Nah, this is different. We're rolling out BluesBusters in the next few weeks. I put up my condo as collateral.... My backers, they're a nuisance. But I can't ignore 'em.

KARI

Yes, you can.

PHIL

What'm I gonna tell 'em --

*Soyonara you stupid geeks,
Phil's not here for
four whole weeks!?*

KARI

Yes you could!!

PHIL

Ouch! Nervy.

KARI

That's what you said I needed -- beauty, smarts, a good heart, and nerve.
Only you didn't say *nerve* -- you used a more colorful word.

PHIL

I did? Some father.

(PHIL sips a drink for comfort.)

KARI

Well?

*(PHIL gets up. He seats KARI
in his chair, which she accepts, amused.)*

PHIL

Okay, I listened. My turn now.... I'd like *you* to head up Michelle Pfeiffer's new Skin Care Line. I think I can sell the idea to Osaka once they see how colossal BluesBusters are. Michele's already in the talking stages with them now. Meanwhile, you can come here, and you'll work on the business plan. Jerry'll coach ya. It's a lock.

(PHIL draws closer, all excited.)

Whattya think?

(KARI grimaces.)

Don't give such a face. Not till ya hear me out, 'kay?... Imagine, Kari Manzone, President of the whole division! *You* -- supervising two hundred-thousand dollar commercials. *You* -- working with writers and producers to analyze markets, decide on key benefits, create an amazingly powerful Infomercial -- with my help, of course -- when you want it. And then *you* buying millions of dollars of air-time! Whattaya say, sweetheart!

KARI

Dad...

PHIL

Hear me out!

(PHIL moves to a display of seven jars and containers, each with Michelle Pfeiffer's face on it.)

There's your after-bath splash.... Replenishes your essential skin oils.

(PHIL splashes some on his face.)

The nighttime masque.... Should I put some of this on?

KARI

Hey, it's *your* infomercial.

PHIL

Not for long.

(PHIL applies some, then shouts)

Feels great!!! And when I wake up in the morning, my epidermis is refreshed and my soul has been totally exfoliated!

(KARI makes a "gag me with a spoon" gesture to her father, who sees it but ignores it.)

And next, Michelle's wonderful moisturizer made from rare macadamia oils and Madagascar muskrat essence.

(KARI grimaces as PHIL applies some to his face.)

KARI

Those poor muskrats!!! You *know* I'm a vegan!

PHIL

Hey, don't worry! We extract only one gland per animal -- and then they live to do their musky thing again! It's all very harmless.... And of course there's your age-vanquishing mud creme... From rare Kalahari Desert ant hill mud. Only the best.

(PHIL applies it all over his face.)

KARI

Dad!

PHIL

And to shield your beautiful peepers from the most intense ultraviolet rays, you naturally apply cool, fresh cucumber slices.

(PHIL places cucumber slices over his eyes and smiles beatifically. He tilts his head upwards to keep the slices in place.)

KARI

Dad, you look *ridiculous*!

(PHIL blinks and flicks his head, tossing The slices downwards and smiles at KARI, saying:)

PHIL

You mean, I look rich!

(PHIL uses animated hand gestures to suggest grandeur and power. PHIL approaches KARI, where she sits. PHIL crouches and speaks to her eyes, dramatically.)

Like someone who could sell anybody *anything*...

KARI

Dad, please -- can we get back to *me*?

PHIL (*crestfallen*)

I thought we could feed the people some dreams together. (*suddenly enthusiastic*) **Become poets of the possible!**

KARI

Dad, feed me some *attention!*

PHIL

Okay, let's focus... So what *do* you want? To work in that Amish-Mexican greasy spoon for pennies?! With all that refried shoofly pie? Yeeewwwh!!

KARI

Hey, I don't like don't like Hex-Mex either. But for a crummy job, it's not bad. And ya know, I'm on South Street. I meet interesting people there, and I get to go to **Condom Kingdom, Harry's Occult and the Fillmore at the TLA** as often as I like! But that's not what we're talking about.... I want to go to Italy and see the Tintoretts and Leonardo's. And we'll find *me!*

PHIL

It's just...not...a good time for me.... I can't do it.

KARI

You're such a--- ooohhh!!!

(KARI is stifling herself from saying something very mean.)

I came to you looking for a little help. And all I get is a massive sell job!

PHIL (*pointing, accusing*)

The business offer of a lifetime -- *which* you reject without thought.

*(KARI begins walks towards the door
in a huff. PHIL races to her, kneels before her.
He reaches for her hand and holds it.)*

KARI

What now?

PHIL

I know I did this all wrong. I want to help you... I just don't know how.

KARI

Neither do I. Good-bye!!

(Lights slowly UP on STEPHANIE, who opens a box of headsets labeled SUPERSETS. She puts them on, and apparently enjoys the loud, isolating music, tapping along. Then she puts on her BluesBusters. She turns them on and becomes aroused. She sways and moans. Strokes the sides of her thighs and her breasts. STEPHANIE keeps turning up the lever on the side of the BluesBusters, to get even more excited.)

PHIL *(aggressive, insulted)*

And don't think this opportunity will be here tomorrow, because--

(KARI leaves PHIL's cabana. She walks towards the beach, quietly watching the surf. PHIL continues glumly, admitting his failure to himself. PHIL pours himself a drink of whiskey.)

...it will be. Or another one even more enticing... if I can get the info.

(PHIL shambles over to the window facing the audience, puts on his BluesBusters and but does not look too happy. PHIL notices KARI watching the surf. PHIL takes off the Blockers and approaches KARI gently. He tries to touch her hand and says:]

PHIL

Kar?

*[KARI does not want to be approached,
and she walks away in the direction of the Props Cabana, where
STEPHANIE is. PHIL follows KARI,
who comes upon STEPHANIE, unobserved by her.]*

STEPHANIE

Oh...

*(STEPHANIE stops her arousal.
Enter PHIL and KARI, who stop, uncertain
as to what they have seen.)*

...Hmm. THIS'd better wait for another time. Too darned powerful.

KARI

Daddy, I think I'm gonna be sick.

PHIL

Don't be. Stephanie's just, er --

STEPHANIE *(more aroused)*

Oh!

PHIL

-- product testing.

STEPHANIE

Oh... Oh...Oh... Oh... Oh... OHHH! These are way too powerful!

(PHIL tries to alert STEPHANIE as to their presence.)

PHIL *(loudly)*

It's amazing how HOT it gets at this beach!

KARI *(sarcastically)*

YES. IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ONE LOSE CONTROL!!

*(STEPHANIE continues in her rapture
through to the end of this Act. At first, befuddled:*

PHIL calls out to the departing KARI.)

PHIL

Come by tomorrow for the shoot?... Please?

*[KARI leaves. STEPHANIE continues her orgasm.
PHIL dons his BluesBusters and stares at the river, apparently
trying to make sense of it all. Sound of river water lapping rises,
STEPHANIE's moans are amplified and distorted
as lights fade to black.]*

End of Act I

ACT II

SCENE:

(At Stephanie's Props Cabana. STEPHANIE is seated there, working on some papers. An empty beach chair is next to hers)

AT RISE:

(KARI rushes by in front of STEPHANIE, who rises and calls to KARI..)

STEPHANIE

Kari!

(KARI keeps running.)

Kari! I just want to *talk* to you!

(KARI stops abruptly, having passed STEPHANIE. KARI sounds exasperated.)

KARI

About what?!

STEPHANIE

About...things.

(KARI approaches Stephanie's cabana.)

KARI

I'm kind of in a rush.

STEPHANIE

Just come in and talk with me... for a minute. Please.

(KARI steps closer to STEPHANIE.)

Listen, about the way I was behaving when you saw me a few minutes ago. You must think I'm awfully strange. But I was product testing. It just got a little out of hand.

KARI

You are, well, strange.... I really should be going.

STEPHANIE

Ya know, with me it's honestly not just about the BluesBusters.

KARI

No.

STEPHANIE

Well, it's never just about whatever your Dad and I are promoting at the time... It's more about *him*. Don't you see? His enthusiasm, his ability to dream -- that's what's so thrilling. But I'm still very embarrassed. And I'm sorry.

KARI

Whatever gets ya off. Hey, and I gotta head off to Bala Cynwyd and visit my Mom. Excuse me!

(KARI turns to go, but STEPHANIE stops her with her arm.)

STEPHANIE

Don't go just yet. Please... Look, I had exactly the same kind of problems with my parents when I was younger. I wanted to wear bouffant hair-do's and push-ups bras, and they wouldn't let me.

(KARI rolls her eyes.)

KARI

God, that's so similar to my situation, isn't it? Gee, why don't we call it *deja you*.

STEPHANIE

I'm just trying to help out, you know, with what's going on between you and your Dad. ... I couldn't help but overhear, since you two were yelling.

KARI

Yelling?!!! We were thirty frigging feet down the beach, and we didn't raise our voices till the end!

(STEPHANIE fusses with papers.)

STEPHANIE

You know, I could take an attitude of, "Well this is something that'll blow over. Kari'll go away, and that'll be the end of it." But... if you're asking for something big from your Dad right now, it could really hurt him. And I care about your father.

KARI

I'm sure. Can I go?

(STEPHANIE puts down her papers.)

STEPHANIE

You should be aware -- he's in a very tight situation. A lot depends on all the pieces of this business falling into place the way they have to in the next few weeks, even days.

KARI

Or giant Ginsu Knives'll fall from the sky and cut us all to shreds, right?

STEPHANIE

No... Or Osaka National Bank pulls the plug.

KARI

So? Then what?

STEPHANIE

Glug. Glug. GLUG.

KARI

So?... So he might have to start over. Big friggin' deal. He does that every year.

STEPHANIE

You make it sound so *easy*! Your Dad has **ten** entire years of his life and every last cent he owns tied up in this company. Even your college money!

KARI (*irate*)

I'm not *going* to college! And besides, my Dad'll land on his feet. He always does, so don't give me any of that... stuff. All of the direct marketing execs love him.

STEPHANIE

Sure, he's the darling of the industry. He was the first Info-Boy! But do you know how many of his projects have gone sour in the past few years?

KARI

I said get off, Stephanie! My Dad's a winner. That's not one of his problems. I gotta split.

(KARI tries to leave. STEPHANIE blocks her path.)

Why don't you let me *go*?!!

STEPHANIE

We're not done yet. There are some things you should know.... People respect your father, but fewer and fewer will trust their money to him.

(STEPHANIE gets suddenly angrier.)

It's easy for you to say: "Sure he could start over." But the older you get, the harder it is. But what would you know about that? Why the heck would you care!!

KARI

Well, I don't see how I'm part of the problem -- which is what you're saying, not so subtly.

STEPHANIE

I know you want him to go away with you.

(KARI is livid)

KARI

God, you have big ears. They're like satellite dishes!!

STEPHANIE

If he leaves, then---

KARI

Then glug-glug-glug, right? Is that the B.S. you're gonna give me? Isn't it *odd* how everything around here depends on my dad being hard at it twenty-four hours a day. Isn't it freaking *strange* that without him, so many things would go wrong -- the financial boys'll pull the plug, the show won't go on, yadda, yadda?!!

STEPHANIE

... Well.... It's true.... But maybe I'm over-involved. I don't know. Sorry for shouting.

*(KARI walks around STEPHANIE's Props Cabana.
She picks up a strange-looking brassiere
or bikini top with a leopard or zebra-skin print and
jumbo silicone inserts.)*

KARI

What's this? Something Pamela Anderson left behind?

(STEPHANIE holds the bra up against her own chest

STEPHANIE

They're in development. Our new line of Boob Blasters! They'd flatter any woman's figure, dontcha think?

(KARI rolls her eyes.)

KARI

Tell me. Why can't my father delegate, like any other big-time executive? And be freed up to go away with me? Maybe it's because the people around him don't want him to...Maybe it's because they want him to stay around until they've sunk their claws a little deeper into him?

STEPHANIE

You may not believe this, but I love Phil. Do you hear me? I love him. And that is not a word I use loosely. Your father is a dear, dear man.

KARI

I'm sure you love him just as much as my mother does, right?

STEPHANIE

That's not for me to say. I'll never be like your mother. I only know what I love about your Dad. I've worked with him for over two years now. And I've come to care for him deeply. It's the honest truth.

KARI

Yeah. About as honest as BluesBusters.

STEPHANIE (defensively)

And they *do work!*

KARI

Ah-hah. Hey, go have yourself another climax. This one's on me.

(KARI leaves. STEPHANIE stands pondering the river, holding her BluesBusters by their arms, apparently wondering whether to put them on. The intercom rings.)

PHIL (voice only)

Stephanie, I need to talk with you.

STEPHANIE

I think you can say *Arrivederci, Roma.*

PHIL

I can?

STEPHANIE

Mm-hm. Come over to my cabana.

(Enter PHIL)

I caught Kari on her way out. I think she understands now... there's no way you can go with her on that absurd trip!

PHIL

Really? You talked sense into her??

STEPHANIE

Well, not quite. And I think she hates me. But I laid it on the line about how you couldn't go off gallivanting with her just now -- like *you* shoulda told her, Phil.

PHIL

...I tried. But hey, maybe she just needed to hear it from somebody else.... I'd love to go with her. If only things weren't so darned intense around here! Hey, thanks for speaking with her.

STEPHANIE

Don't think I'm so altruistic, please. I have my own reasons for not wanting you to go.

(STEPHANIE embraces PHIL.)

PHIL

Everyone has their own reasons.... Nothing to be ashamed of.

(A beeping page is heard on the P.A. system, followed by Faye's voice.)

FAYE

Phil, Ayaka Sato is here to see you. He's in the trailer.

(PHIL hits the line 3 button and the speakerphone button.)

PHIL

Ayaka's here?

FAYE

Yes, he says he needs to see you. And sweetie, may I say something?

PHIL

Sure, Faye. What is it?

FAYE

I've never seen such a nice man. Last visit, he brought me the fanciest Dutch Chocolates. Imagine!

PHIL

Faye, the man's a walking bomb.

FAYE

You are so wrong, sweetie. He'll be right at the beach front in a minute.

PHIL

Thanks, doll.... I got my bomb defusing kit ready. Send the torpedo right through.

(Worried, angry, PHIL says to STEPHANIE:)

What's *he* doing in town?! I don't like these pleasant little surprise visits.

*[STEPHANIE and PHIL go to PHIL's office.
PHIL sings "A Rivaderci Roma"
Enter AYAKA. JERRY follows.
PHIL greets AYAKA effusively.]*

PHIL

Ayaka! Heyyyy! So good to see you! Come in, sit down. Can I get you a soda? Coffee?

AYAKA

Hello, Phil! Hey, Stephanie, great to see you.

STEPHANIE

Hey, Ayaka. How are you?

[AYAKA and STEPHANIE shake hands.]

AYAKA

Good, but busy these days. Too darned busy. How long has it been since we've all seen each other?

STEPHANIE (*pondering*)

Ohhh....

(AYAKA looks lustfully at JERRY.)

AYAKA

Well, I'd remember if I saw you recently, Jerry! That'd burn a hole in my mind.

JERRY

What? Li'l ole me? Aww!.. Truth is, you haven't seen any of us since the NIMA Convention in Vegas.

STEPHANIE

Ayaka, did you come in straight from Osaka?

AYAKA

You bet. Caught one red-eye to L.A. then another here to Philly. But I think you have better surf here in Philadelphia than they do in L.A.! So Jerry here has been telling me about this beach set-up for weeks. **The real club you have going...** And now I finally get to see it. **Even imported sand trucked in, Jerry told me, from lovely Avalon, New Jersey.** How very impressive!

JERRY (to PHIL)

Yeah, and I know she likes the young guys that hang out here. So I've been telling her that the hunks at our club are buff and purely local. Cheese-steak fed Philly guys like me! And on the low-fat side.

(JERRY grabs his belly and shows "no fat" with a smile.)

You'll like them, Ayaka!

[AYAKA sidles up to JERRY. STEPHANIE seems preoccupied with other items in the Props Cabana and seems not to hear when JERRY whispers:]

AYAKA

I'm sure I will, **with you as my guide...** Are you going to, ah, arrange a meeting, like last time? Ha! Ha!

JERRY (*whispering*)

Well, you can never tell what'll happen here on the funky shores of the Del-a-ware.

PHIL (*nervous*)

So what's up, Ayaka? You also stopping by National Infomedia this time? I hear they're launching Titanium Cookware this month and they need an Asian partner **to reach the Pacific rim markets.**

AYAKA

No.... In fact, this is a one-trip mission for me. Listen, could we, uh... speak alone? This is some pretty sensitive information, and I think it'd be best if--

PHIL

Nah - Nah - Nah!... There's nothing I want to hide from my top staff. These are my people. Just go ahead.

(AYAKA fidgets before continuing.)

AYAKA

Frankly, I'm here because our Board of Directors has become very concerned about your production schedule, and the way that ties in with our Return on Investment time-line. You know short-term R-O-I is king with us.

PHIL

Not to worry! We're shooting next week and we'll be on the air in sixty markets in fifteen countries two weeks later. Sales'll boom in three weeks, profits back to investors in five or six. It's all *under control*, Ayaka!!... Care for some Chivas?

AYAKA

Sure, if you'll join me.

PHIL

Jerry?

JERRY

Thanks, but I'll pass.

AYAKA (to Jerry)

Come on, you'll look so elegant with a glass of scotch in your hands!

PHIL

Steph?

STEPHANIE

Sure!

(PHIL pours and serves drinks with ice in tumblers.)

AYAKA

Yes, well. Unfortunately, we don't have any room for error. Not any longer, I'm afraid....Phil, that new spot absolutely has to pull ten thousand orders a

week in its first three weeks. That will put us over the five-hundred thousand dollars sales mark for this month. Just as we agreed we had to. Otherwise, the tent...

(AYAKA makes a pointed tent with his fingers.)

folds.

(AYAKA collapses his fingers together, folding the tent)

PHIL

Listen to me, Ayaka... I've got half a million of my own money tied up in this venture. It's all I've got -- my retirement money. Plus I borrowed and put up my condo as collateral, everything. Do you think I'd risk it on a project that could have delays and flop? I'm tellin' ya, this is as close to a sure thing as I've ever seen in my career. And you know that goes back to the Ronko Vegematic.

JERRY *(happily)*

When Phil says a product's a winner, Wall Street can bet on it!.. I know I do. Hey, the down payment on our new home in Villanova came from my profit-sharing on the Amazing Secrets of UFO's video series. That was a smasheroo, wasn't it, Steph?

STEPHANIE

Absolutely! It paid for my mother's nursing home, my spa membership, the roof on my home in Avalon -- and that's just the beginning.

(STEPHANIE strokes PHIL's cheek.)

Phil has the golden touch -- no, the platinum touch in direct response!

JERRY

I've got a hundred-forty-thousand of my money in this, too. May not be much, but....

AYAKA

Jerry, I understand! It's a lot to *you*.

JERRY

But it's supposed to be my kids' college money. They're six and eight now!

*(JERRY pulls out his wallet and shows
AYAKA his kids' photos.)*

AYAKA

Very cute. I like your daughter's pigtails. My daughter has them, too.
And she has your unbelievable brown eyes!

PHIL

You know, Ayaka, ten thousand orders a week for the first three weeks... we
never discussed figures like those going into the project. If you expand my
media budget, we might be able to do it, but...

AYAKA

**No media budget expansion, Phil. We're already way over budget. The
Board is adamant. Phil, I hate to say this, but they want quick results,
or they want you out. Info-boy or no Info-boy.**

PHIL

Oh, is that how the Board feels? Well, you tell your board that I'm very
bored with their threats. Got me? Bored to *hell!* **This is my show! I know
what pulls and this baby pulls. Do you understand what I'm saying,
Ayaka?!**

AYAKA

Yes.... But face up to it -- nobody in this industry is going to throw money
into a hole for you anymore.... And I say that as a friend, Phil.

PHIL

Do you?

AYAKA

That hurts.... *Certainly* I do! *Sure* I'm a fan! I have been since from the
start. But this is reality talking! Other production and media companies can
handle this product for us, Phil. My Yokio is developing quite a reputation,
you know.

STEPHANIE

Yes, you were telling me all about your son on the phone.

AYAKA

The boy's a serious talent. He just graduated from the University of Tokyo last year, and already he's got a twenty-four-person shop!

STEPHANIE

That's tremendous. What shows has he produced?

AYAKA

Well, he pioneered Ninja Soap Dispensers, the Collector Series. Ahhh... He did the opening credits for the Ginseng Rejuvenator. And he conceptualized the Sexual Stealing audiocassette series. Have you read about it in the trades?

JERRY

Must've missed it.

AYAKA

It's about stealing sexual energy from the weather. Very creative and going gangbusters on Philippine TV! What a concept!

JERRY (*dead-pan:*)

That's terrible – err, *terrific*.

(JERRY shakes his head and looks downwards with disgust and dismay.)

AYAKA

Yes! And good work gets good work!... Is that not a universally understood principle? And frankly, Phil, your results at Info-Boy Productions have been less than spectacular lately.

(PHIL stands and approaches AYAKA.)

PHIL

Ayaka, Ayaka!! Wasn't Inti brand Car Polish a smash in Indonesia? Didn't I bring in millions in pure profit for National Infomedia when I was marketing director?

AYAKA

Sure you did! But that was two years ago. Ha, ha. You know that's a long time. Twenty product cycles ago, my friend -- *at least!*

STEPHANIE

What about our Nectar Tiger? You know it's still raking in the Deutchemarks in Germany for Osaka. Come *on*, Ayaka!

AYAKA

Of course it is! It'll probably out-roar the Juice Lion. In its first year. But the knock-offs are killing that product for us. Gunther-Tenken adapts everything we do that's successful. You know that.

JERRY

But how is that our fault?! We pioneer, stoke the creative juices, and make a success. And then those, those darned leeches come in and suck off our energy. It isn't right!!

(AYAKA springs to his feet, appalled. He turns to PHIL.)

AYAKA

Ha! Did I really hear that? Phil, what are you feeding your staff? You know it's not a matter of *fault!* It's a matter of the damned *results*, man! Everybody knocks off everybody! It doesn't matter if your BluesBusters work or they're some cockamamie thing. Who cares?

(AYAKA lights a cigarette.)

PHIL

Well they *do* work. And *results* are what we've always delivered. Just look at this...

*(PHIL pulls out a sales chart mounted on cardboard.
It shows sales rising dramatically.)*

Those numbers speak loud and clear!

AYAKA

You need to do more. That's all.

(PHIL gets angrier. AYAKA rises, as if to leave.)

PHIL

And don't you think that with all I've got on the line this time, that I'm doing all I can? Do you think I'm an idiot!? I know what's at stake here! And you're not giving me the support I need!!

AYAKA

Sure, go ahead, treat me like the enemy.

(AYAKA points a finger at PHIL.)

All I'm telling you are the facts. Today's the last of the month.... And I don't think you're gonna hit the half-a-mil mark.

STEPHANIE

Ayaka, relax! The Info-boy always has a way of getting things done. You and I both know that.

(JERRY steps over to that a chart which displays sales figures. Sales are shown to have climbed quickly.)

JERRY

Ayaka, take another look at these sales figures! We didn't make them up. BluesBusters have *legs!* Walking, skipping legs!

(JERRY does a little jig.)

AYAKA

Enchanting.

PHIL

Ayaka, I'll deal with it.

(AYAKA prepares to leave.)

AYAKA

I... don't, ahhh, mean to be the bearer of ill tidings. Just trying to add some realism here. I want this to succeed as much as anyone. **I've told you what you need to do. And it has to happen... Have a nice day.**

PHIL

Good-bye, Ayaka!

(AYAKA leaves.)

JERRY

Can he really shut us down, Phil?

PHIL

Hey, you know, Jerry. Anything is possible in love and business. You're on top one day, selling floor wax door-to-door the next. We've both been there before.

JERRY

What's that supposed to mean for *me*, Phil? What about my mortgage, and my kids?

STEPHANIE

Jerry, please! He never promised you security. You want that, go work for *Reader's Digest*. All Phil ever promised us is fun, excitement, and good pay during the ride.

PHIL

Come on, everybody. Let's go home. We got a spot to shoot tomorrow.

(Exit PHIL.

STEPHANIE and JERRY stay behind.)

JERRY

Do ya think they'll yank it on us, Steph?

STEPHANIE

No. Though I've been wrong before. But what disturbs me is the way you're acting -- like a cub scout on his first camping trip.

(STEPHANIE pokes JERRY in the ribs.)

I don't think you're made for this lifestyle.

JERRY (*contritely*)

I just got some jitters, that's all.

STEPHANIE

Well, spare us, will ya?! I got to get some rest. Good night.

[STEPHANIE exits. JERRY sits in PHIL's chaise, frets and holds his head in his hand. He puts on the BluesBusters. They seem at first not to work for him. Lights fade. Then JERRY is hoisted slowly up by unseen wires, apparently hovering. He smiles. Slides of beautiful natural scenes, and faces are projected on beach umbrellas, tent sides, or other surfaces visible to the audience. They each brighten and fade in turn. Spacey, atmospheric music plays.]

JERRY

Wow! These things work even better than last time! Must be that titanium!

[PHIL's deep booming voice, laden with echoes, emerges off-stage, disembodied.]

PHIL

Of course, they work well. So, did you take me for a shyster?

JERRY (*shocked, looking around*)

Phil? Where are you? No! I think you're clever, not a shyster. Phil, you mean a lot to me. You're... a leader.

PHIL (*calm*)

Jerry, that's flattering, and thank you.... But it doesn't help you get to where you need to be going. Tell me... What do you *want*?

JERRY

Phil, I want to be happy! And I am, thanks to your BluesBusters. They work! I feel *terrific*!

PHIL

Of course you do.... They make you feel better, especially when you bring along the right energy. But if you want *true happiness*, well you're going to have to master that on a different level.... What do you truly desire, Jerry?

JERRY

Hmm. A big house in a terrific school district. My children still smiling. Remarriage to a very sexy wife. Long-term care insurance. Self-sharpening knives. You know – the American dream!!

PHIL

Not good enough, Jerry.

JERRY

What do you mean, “not good enough?!” Who are you to judge?

PHIL

I'm the Info-Boy.... I gave you the desires... I can take them away.

JERRY

Are you against those things now? You're not goin' spiritual on us, are you?

PHIL

I've always been spiritual about my materialism.... That's what you have to learn, too.

JERRY

Spiritual about my materialism? What are you TALKING about? How many units is *that* gonna move for us?

PHIL

Can it!!!

JERRY

Okay.

PHIL

Now think.... imagine what you truly want, at your deepest level.

JERRY

I want... mmm, health. Yup, I want my wife and daughter and myself. And everybody I love to be healthy.

PHIL

Yes. That's good. Go on.

JERRY

I want the sun to shine tomorrow morning, and I want to see it!

PHIL

You won't complain, even if you have sun glare as you drive?

JERRY

I won't complain, Phil. Honest!

PHIL

Go on.... You might die, you know.

JERRY (*looking at the BluesBusters*)

Can these things kill you? You didn't say that!

PHIL

I never reveal everything... at once. You might die... so what do you want?

JERRY (*increasingly desperate*)

I want people to love me!

PHIL

Bingo, Jerry.

JERRY

And I want to love them back... better than I do. Better than I know how!!

PHIL

That's what you have to think about... every day, every moment. Do you understand? Live as if you were enjoying your last breath, dying man.

JERRY

Am I really dying? What's going on?

PHIL

We're all dying. Life... the longer it is, the shorter it grows. Use it well. Buy lots of stuff. But only buy into the best wisdom, Jerry. That is my gift to you... and possibly the subject of my next 12-part audiotape series.... Good-bye, Jerry.

JERRY

But?!

*[JERRY swims, fish play on the surfaces or scirms.
Music or sea sounds rise. Fade to black.]*

... But how do I know what I really want to buy?.... Phil?!???...Phil?

End of Act II, Scene 1

INTERMISSION

Act II, Scene 2

SCENE:

(PHIL's cabana)

AT RISE:

(PHIL is back at his desk. The lighting is stark, papers are strewn helter-skelter. PHIL is distraught, and he has been working late. PHIL crumples a piece of paper and tosses it down in disgust. He stands, showing his exasperation and sense of pressure, He calls KARI on the speakerphone.)

Kari? PHIL

Dad? KARI

Yeah. It's me. *(more excited)* PHIL Listen, I was--

(Phone clicks as KARI hangs up. A dial tone is heard. PHIL slowly hangs up, crushed. After a few seconds the phone rings.)

Dad? KARI

Yes? PHIL

I'm sorry I hung up on you. KARI

PHIL

That's... Okay, sweetie. I probably deserved it. I know how caught up I get. Listen, I just want to do anything for you short of taking that trip right now, OK? ... (*an awkward pause*) Kari?

KARI

Thanks, Daddy. I should really try to help *you* sometimes, too.

PHIL (*slowly, choked up*)

Ahhh... Precious. You know, that means so much to me, for you to say that... So listen... I have an idea.

KARI

Not the Do-It-Yourself Liposuction Kit! All that blood, I could never handle it.

PHIL

Nah. I gave up on that when I saw the infection rates... I just...

KARI

What?

PHIL

I just want you to spend time with me, to talk about your life, your problems, your future.... You know, anything that's on your mind...

KARI

When?... Now?

PHIL

Right here in Philadelphia. Down by the Surf Club on the Delaware. I'd like it very much if you'd just keep me company on the set.

KARI

Won't I get in the way?

PHIL

Well, I'm going to be busy -- very hectic for sure. Still, if you don't mind just hanging or being a gopher... whatever's your pleasure.

KARI

But Daddy, you're not going to start a pressure campaign to get me to work for you, are you? Now even Mom is saying I should work for you. Are you two in cahoots?

PHIL

No way! I just want you there, to spend time with me. Maybe we'll take a train to Manhattan together on the weeAyakad, stay at the Plaza, see *Hairspray!* Whattaya think?

KARI

...That's supposed to help me figure out what's next in life?

PHIL

No... but I know where we can get terrific scungilli! We'll have great lunches together.

KARI

And we'll get re-acquainted between takes and cell phone calls, right?

PHIL

What can I say? I can't pretend I won't be busy. But somehow. I'll find time for you, especially if you're right here.

KARI

... I ... don't know. Maybe. But Dad, why can't you ask Stephanie to handle everything, so we can go away?

PHIL

I – just can't right now. But will you come? Come now! We'll play darts, talk. What the heck. Jerry left his dart board up on an umbrella pole here and I'm getting better at it.

KARI

..... I have to go now. I might call Bryan, and I'm kind of nervous about it.. Good-night, Dad.

[KARI hangs up.]

PHIL

Good-night, sweetheart.

(PHIL picks up some darts. The dartboard is presumed to be mounted UNSEEN to the audience on a beach umbrella pole offstage. PHIL pronounces a phrase before each toss:)

Hmmm. I think I can hit that.

(Offstage, presumably dart hits edge of board.)

Close!... Talented salesman.

(Offstage, presumably, dart hits closer to center.)

Closer!.. Successful entrepreneur.

(Offstage, presumably, dart hits bulls-eye.)

Bulls eye!... Master target marketer.

(Prepares to throw.)

Go.. for... Loving husband.

(Throws. Winces as he misses.)

Darn!... Okay... Go... for...Caring father.

(Dart flies too far. PHIL steps forward and cranes to see what it hit. He hears a voice:)

OFSTAGE MAN ON BEACH

Owww!!! Watch what the heck you're doin'!

PHIL

Sorry!!

End of Act II, Scene 2

ACT III, Scene 1

AT RISE

(The next day, at the Surf Club nightclub. Sounds of crashing surf piped in. PHIL has his back to the audience as he peruses a script. He wears Bermuda shorts or wild swim trunks. He is shoeless and either bare-chested, or wearing a wild shirt. Two directors' chairs figure prominently in the set. One is for PHIL and one will be for STEPHANIE. KARI sits off the side, observing and sipping a fruit drink. SFX: Waves crashing.)

JERRY *(offstage)*

We'll be shooting in five.

PHIL

IF Stephanie ever gets here!

KARI

I think her eyelash extenders got glued to her BluesBusters!..

[PHIL checks his watch, seems alarmed.]

PHIL

She'll be here soon.... Hey, thanks for coming.... It means a lot to me.... I know what you're going through. Have you called Bryan?

KARI

I have... He wants me to go to Mexico with him.

PHIL

Well that's great! I mean, maybe I shouldn't be so enthusiastic. And? So?

KARI

So I might go to the Mexican Cantina with him. But you can drop all of this right now, you know, and we can still go!

PHIL (exasperated)

I just - can't - do it right now! Excuse me, sweetie.

*[PHIL leaves the beach set, as if to check on
STEPHANIE's whereabouts.]*

KARI

Jerry.

JERRY

Yeah babe.

KARI

I want to ask you something.

JERRY

Hit me.

KARI

Is this Ayaka Sato guy for real?

JERRY

You know about him?

KARI

Stephanie gave me an earful. I mean, I try to stay OUT of this stuff!!... I was gonna hang up on her, but she had this... God this *mournful* tone.

JERRY

You mean all this pressure from the Board and stuff?

KARI

Yeah. I mean, it's all B.S., right?

JERRY

I can't tell -- Phil's always been able to pull us out before. But it's been driving us all crazy. That's why I grabbed this fax before anybody could see it.

*[JERRY pulls a crumpled fax from his pocket.
JERRY hands it to KARI, who reads it with concern.]*

JERRY

How can they expect anybody to work, I mean to do the beautiful art we create to sell stuff?!! That's why I canned it.

KARI

But this says he's giving us just the rest of the day to get sales up to projections. How's my father supposed to do that?! What a *jerk* that Sato is!

JERRY

Exactly what I thought, myself. This way, we play it like a straight shot – no pressure, no evil vibes.

*[JERRY folds the fax and tucks it into his pocket.
Enter PHIL. He speaks to JERRY:]*

PHIL

Ready?

JERRY

You bet, boss. I'll warm up the audience.

PHIL

Good idea.

JERRY (*to the audience*)

Hi there, everybody. Hey, you came back! Fan-tastic!! I hoped you would. Hey, remember? I'm Jerry. Would you mind saying, "Hi, Jerry!!"?

(*JERRY motions for the crowd to greet him.*)

AUDIENCE

Hi, Jerry!

JERRY

Can we do that with a little more enthusiasm? One-two-three...

(*JERRY cocks an ear towards the audience.*)

AUDIENCE

Hi, JERRY!!!

JERRY

Good! That's much, much better!! Now forgive me if I review from last time. There's not much you have to do. But we'd appreciate it if when I hold up this applause sign...

(*JERRY holds up the APPLAUSE sign*)

...you applaud wildly.

(*JERRY nods encouragement and the audience claps enthusiastically.*)

Good! Good!! Cheer too, if ya feel like it, what the heck! Now let's put on our BluesBusters. Remember, you've got the 50 cent models, I've got the real ones. We couldn't afford to give away the real babies to every one of you. So try to imagine that you're as happy as I am when you wear them. Okay?!! The biggest smiler of the day wins an all-expense paid trip to Marcus Hook. (*points to an audience member*) Sorry sir, you're from Marcus Hook? Then excuse me. Ha!! Well, I'll have to re-tell that one

when *I'm* wearing the blockers.... Now we'll practice the BluesBusters salute. Ya put the Blockers on, flip them up above your eyes and back down again, saying "Happy-Sad-Happy!" as you do it. Like this...

(JERRY flips his glasses up and down.)

Happy-sad-happy!... Now *you* try! Ready? One, two three...

AUDIENCE

Happy-sad-happy!!

JERRY

Great!! I'm going to make you guys all Official Tourist Greeters at Independence Hall! And they say Philadelphians have an *atty-tood*. Ha! Whatta they know! Hey, thanks again. We'll be starting in just a few minutes.

(Enter STEPHANIE in a smashing bikini, and wearing a flower in her hair.)

STEPHANIE

Hiya, Phil.

PHIL

Oh hi, Steph.

STEPHANIE

Howarya, Kari?

(KARI holds her BluesBusters, now twirling them.)

KARI

Not so great. I'm going through *stuff*, you know.

STEPHANIE

Yes, I do, through your dad. We've gotten a lot closer in the past few months, you know. In fact, I'll probably be moving in with him.... soon. I'm pretty happy about that. But I think I'd be even happier if all of us...ah, got

along... God, I probably should get into all that now. Why -- what brings you here?

KARI

I thought I'd help my Dad out. This Ayaka Sato guy sounds totally horrible. Why didn't you keep him out of my father's business?

STEPHANIE

You think it's so darned easy to run a business! What's wrong with you?
(KARI looks hurt.)

PHIL

Ladies! Please. My head is exploding!

KARI

Well, maybe I'll try these Blockers and give you a testimonial Dad! Really!

STEPHANIE *(stopping mid-motion)*

Better do it fast -- we're ready to roll. I shudder to ask -- but why?

KARI

I don't know... It's creepy what they're doing to my Dad.

STEPHANIE

Phil, distribution just called. We're out of BluesBusters. Hong Kong says they won't be back in stock for three weeks.

PHIL

Mar-rone!.... Just what I need.

(PHIL storms around, agitated. KARI puts on BluesBusters.)

JERRY *(shouting)*

First take starts in two minutes, everybody!

PHIL

All right, places, everyone. Glasses off.

(To STEPHANIE.)

Remember, happy-sad-happy.

STEPHANIE (*enthusiastically*)

Happy-sad-happy!

(STEPHANIE and PHIL take their glasses off and then sit in their directors' chairs, facing the camera, which means they are facing the audience.

KARI sits on a chaise off to the side, but facing the infomercial set. KARI smiles more often, as the glasses work their effect.)

JERRY

Five...four...three...two...one....

(SFX: musical build-up, seashore sounds, then fade under. JERRY holds up the APPLAUSE sign.)

Welcome to the show about becoming happy! The *only* program that shows you how to do it *naturally*. And now, coming to you from the sunny beach at the riverfront in Philadelphia, here are your hosts, Phil Manzone and Stephanie Winston!

(SFX: Music and applause up again, then under.

STEPHANIE speaks to the camera/audience.)

STEPHANIE

Have you ever had sad feelings that you can't explain? *Sure* you have -- everybody has. Until now, it's seemed to be a part of living you couldn't avoid. The only cure for a case of the blahs was taking some questionable medicine. And then you'd worry, wouldn't you Phil?

PHIL

Sure! About everything. What were the side effects?

STEPHANIE

Would you become addicted?

PHIL

It was enough to make you miserable all over again!...

(STEPHANIE looks at PHIL.)

Well, what good is that?!

STEPHANIE and PHIL

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*(STEPHANIE and PHIL quickly
become miserable again.)*

Hi, I'm Stephanie Winston. And I have good news about happiness. We're here to tell you about a new invention that can make a **BIG DIFFERENCE** in your life. They're called BluesBusters, the revolutionary new sunglasses that are unlike others you've ever tried! The next half-hour will be totally unlike any program, any idea you've heard of. Plus, you'll learn about a new, better way of life. Here to tell you all about it is the inventor of BluesBusters, Phil Manzone!

PHIL

Thank you, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Phil, I'm sure our audience is wondering by now... exactly what *are* BluesBusters?

PHIL

Stephanie, these amazing glasses take advantage of a little-known scientific fact -- namely that the right kind of light can dramatically affect our moods. You see, each pair of BluesBusters incorporates a set of miniature solar-spectrum lights. They mimic the sun's natural light.

STEPHANIE

Does sunlight really improve your mood, or do people just *think* it does?

PHIL

Well, you know Steph, people have enjoyed the sun for centuries. That's why they've come to beautiful places like this.

(PHIL stands, walks about, showing he is enjoying the sun and air.)

Sunlight makes ya feel good. It's a fact that sunlight affects an important little organ in the body known as the pineal gland. As I said, that's your happiness gland.

STEPHANIE

Happiness, I'm all for that!

PHIL

Me, too. Most people are. In fact, the only people who don't think they need to be happier are blissful lovers and Buddhists in Nirvana.

STEPHANIE

And I bet there *aren't* any Buddhists in Nevada! Oh you're a scream! And even if there are, what do *they* know??

PHIL and STEPHANIE

Not much!!! Ha, ha, ha! Ha!

PHIL

No they don't. For sure, they don't understand the roles of the sun and the pineal gland. Ya know, the more sun, the more serotonin it produces.

STEPHANIE

Serotonin? That's an unusual word. What is it?

PHIL

It's the happy chemical, Steph. The more our bodies produce of it, the better we feel!

STEPHANIE

But is it *natural*?

PHIL

You bet! As organic as God's sunshine. And it's produced by our own bodies, so it's not even regulated by the government.

STEPHANIE

And how many feel-good chemicals can make that claim?!

PHIL

Not many. Most chemicals don't make any claims. That's the beauty!

STEPHANIE

Phil, I'm curious. When you first got the idea for BluesBusters, were you on the beach?

PHIL

Yes, I sure was! I don't mind telling you that I was feeling *not-too-good* before I arrived at the at the beach that day.... like I was a few minutes ago, in fact. You see, just before this show I was inside a dark trailer, totally deprived of natural light.

STEPHANIE

I bet you were thinking bad thoughts.

PHIL

How did you know?... I was worried about some things that were going on in my business life, and my personal life. JUST like I was the day I dreamed up BluesBusters. I was totally miserable. So I returned to my lab, where I had been puttering for months. I worked through the night, trying different combinations of rare gases, electricity, and special lenses and staring at this poster of Naomi Campbell. Until I found a combo that just *felt* different, ya know?

STEPHANIE

So did Naomi look any different then?

PHIL (*coyly at first*)

No... (*barely containing his excitement*) But she did look back at me and say, 'Heeeeeeey, bay-beeee!!'

STEPHANIE and PHIL

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!!

STEPHANIE

Hey, would it work on a Denzel poster too?

PHIL

Ha, ha! Yeah, but it's not part of our guarantee, Steph!... So anyhow, that morning I walked on the beach. And I found my troubles disappearing. "What was so special about that moment?" I wondered. The sand? The surf? The pretty women of South Philly... fetching ladies like yourself?

STEPHANIE

(pretending to be embarrassed)

Oh, *Phil!* Ha! Ha!

PHIL

So I read up on the subject.

STEPHANIE

And what did you find?

PHIL

I found that only sunlight could make a person consistently happy.

STEPHANIE

Not even women in bikinis? Or cute guys in thongs for us ladies?

PHIL

Well, everything helps, Steph!

PHIL and STEPHANIE

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

PHIL

So I asked myself, how can I take this powerful force of nature, sunlight--

(STEPHANIE gets up, walks around.)

STEPHANIE

Which elevates peoples' moods...

PHIL

That's right -- and transform it into something that we can use anywhere!
Anytime the blues hits us! And then I saw something that inspired me.

*(STEPHANIE removes a hair clip
and bends down to place it on a
small table, exposing most of her bosom.)*

STEPHANIE

What was it, Phil? What *was* it?

PHIL

Hm?...Oh, it was a battery-illuminated Frisbee. I thought, why can't battery-
power bring the benefits of natural sunlight to the people?

(STEPHANIE hugs PHIL.)

STEPHANIE

Up close, where it could do the most good!

PHIL

My thoughts exactly!

STEPHANIE

Then what happened?

PHIL

I had trouble thinking of anything else once I got that inspiration.
IMMEDIATELY I set my team of scientists to work on the challenge. One
year and three months later, my team and I came up with the first pair of
BluesBusters.

PHIL and STEPHANIE

And the rest...

*(PHIL and STEPHANIE put on their
BluesBusters and smile broadly.)*

...is Info-history!!

STEPHANIE

Ya know, it's not easy to understand what's going on inside the mind -- as natural spectrum sunlight works its magic. That's why we've prepared this special animated sequence that shows exactly how it happens. Let's watch!

*[PHIL steps to a coffee table off to the side,
pours himself some coffee.]*

JERRY

The sequence is rolling. Back in two minutes, guys.

[PHIL kisses STEPHANIE]

PHIL

You were great, sweetie!!

[JERRY approaches PHIL.]

JERRY

Phil, something strange happened to me last night.

PHIL

Oh?

JERRY (*pensively*)

I was in your office... I put on the BluesBusters, and before I knew it I was floating in space. And you were giving advice to me... from somewhere.

PHIL

Was I?

JERRY (*happier*)

Yes, you were!

PHIL

Good advice, I hope?

JERRY

The best! The kind that put me in touch with my real life! You sold me on my true inner values. That was *you* last night, wasn't it?

PHIL

Well, I don't remember it. But you see, I'm always selling something. I have been all my life. Now I just sell the best things, the cream of what life has to offer. So it's entirely possible it *was* me!

*[PHIL pounds JERRY encouragingly
on the upper arm.]*

PHIL

But we'd best get ready now.

*(STEPHANIE and PHIL act more
relaxed. STEPHANIE picks up a
mixed drink and hands it to
PHIL, with a coquettish smile.)*

STEPHANIE

This is so exhausting. I can't wait till we're all relaxed back at my place.

PHIL *(a little disturbed)*

Yeah. That's right. Actually, I've been meaning to--

JERRY

Phil, first caller is set up on line one.

PHIL

Good. *(To KARI)* What do you think so far?

KARI

I like this infomercial, Daddy. Trouble is, I don't know that BluesBusters work. I mean, I felt great while I wore them. But maybe that's because I'd like to *think* they work.

STEPHANIE

Well, that's at least *part* of their power. (*sarcastically*) Even you should be able to figure that out.

PHIL (*furiously, to STEPHANIE*)

But you and I know that's not all.

STEPHANIE

Of course not. We both saw the double-blind studies from the University of Pennsylvania.

PHIL (*To KARI.*)

That's right. I *tested* this product. I believe in this product because I financed independent tests, and I saw the results with my own eyes. I matched them against plain old sunglasses, infra-reds, magnesium-coated, you name it! And these babies came up first on standard psychological tests. They won't pull somebody out of a serious depression, but they will lift almost anyone's mood. And that's means a lot!

KARI (*not in a mean way*)

Daddy, okay. I mean, maybe I was blocked or something!

(*PHIL hugs KARI.*)

PHIL

I love you, doll!

(*PHIL hugs STEPHANIE*)

And you, too.... I want you two...ladies to get along. Please... That's all I ask. You're my life. And this...is my work. I've put everything I own into it, my last thousand bucks, my soul! So please!!!

JERRY

Places...five seconds.

(*STEPHANIE and PHIL resume their seated positions. A buzzer sounds, apparently from some other unseen staff members.*)

I'll get it. First, you guys get started....Three, two, one.

*(JERRY signals “go” with his index
finger. Exit JERRY.)*

STEPHANIE

And now, let's hear from some real people who've successfully used BluesBusters. Our first caller, Phil, is Morgana Seton, of Biloxi, Mississippi.

PHIL

Hello, Morgana!

MORGANA *(offstage voice)*

Oh, Mister Manzone! I can't tell you what a genuine pleasure it is for me to speak to the man who made my life whole!

PHIL

Please, Morgana, don't give too much credit to me alone. I have an entire team of professionals behind me.

MORGANA

But it's you who enabled me to get off Prozac...and lithium...and Elevil... and Xanax... and valium... and ludiamil and thorazine...*and* Johnny Walker Red!

PHIL

Thank you, Morgana. Because of people like you, we have a shot at a truly drug-free America. In fact, the President called me about that the other day. He said, “Phil, I think America needs a special assist from the Info-Boy and I'd like you to head up a— “.

*(Enter JERRY, who is concerned.
He acts abruptly.)*

JERRY

Cut!! Phil, we have Ayaka Sato here in the trailer. **She says she has to speak to you.**

PHIL

What?! In the middle of a shoot!! Give me a friggin' break!.... (To STEPHANIE) On to the next caller.

JERRY

Okay, five to air. Four, three, two, one!

STEPHANIE

Our next totally satisfied BluesBusters customer is Larry Krakowski of Cleveland, Ohio. Larry says that BluesBusters helped him with the opposite sex... Let's hear why...

PHIL

Larry, you single?

LARRY

So far, Phil. But probably not for long.

PHIL

What's making the difference for ya, Lar? Is it BluesBusters' stylish design?

LARRY

Could be -- but I don't think so. Here's the skinny. I'm so happy when I wear my Blues that women just feed on muh vibes. Know what I mean?

STEPHANIE

Sure he does! I'm living proof!

(STEPHANIE jumps into PHIL's lap. PHIL enjoys it.)

LARRY

It's like, they know you're into some good stuff, and they want in on that special feeling! Phil, I used to be a *dork*. I mean I had all the sex appeal of a trash can in mid-July. But ya oughta give out a *stick* with these BluesBusters, cause, man, I got to beat the ladies away!

PHIL

Thanks Larry! And hey -- invite me to your wedding, will ya?

LARRY

You'll come? Honest?

PHIL

I will. And when I say something's a fact, well...

STEPHANIE and PHIL

It's Info-history!

*[JERRY apparently hears
something on his headset.]*

JERRY

CUT!!... Phil, I hate to do this to you again, but--

[JERRY speaks to the audience.]

Folks, there's been a problem. That's it for today's taping. Thanks, you've been great.

[JERRY waves good-bye to the audience.]

Bye now, folks! We'll let you know about the next one. Watch those BluesBusters when you're driving. Red lights look green, ya know. Bye all!

PHIL *(standing)*

I don't want you to *ever* cut off a taping -- EVER! **EVER!!!** Do you understand that?!!!

JERRY

You don't understand, Phil. It's Ayaka Sato again. He's here. And he says he's yanking the plug. He says we won't even get paid for today's shoot!

PHIL

That idiot is still in town!??

(Enter AYAKA.)

AYAKA

That idiot is talking now.

PHIL

What's your problem, Ayaka! I *told* you what to tell your Board!

AYAKA (*with quiet anger*)

That's just the difficulty, Phil... I did, and it's all over.

PHIL

What!?!

AYAKA

We're shutting you down. Osaka National Bank is assuming all of your assets, including accounts receivable.

[PHIL lurches up, knocks over his director's chair in anger.]

PHIL

What the-- you can't do that!!! I've got my whole life, my savings, my reputation – everything I've ever worked for!!

[PHIL pounds his fist into his palm.]

STEPHANIE

This is too weird.

PHIL

It's impossible, it's totally *impossible!*

[PHIL begins to cry. KARI runs up to hug and comfort him.]

KARI

Don't worry, Daddy. You'll pull it together again. You always have! Remember!

JERRY

You know, Ayaka, there's a lot more than a production in the balance here. A lot more! I think you and the Board ought to reconsider!

AYAKA

Oh, we've considered. The Board considers everything Phil tells them to... he's so good at telling people *things*...Like where to get off. And equally good at ignoring my faxes.... So guess who's the new President of Info-Boy Productions, Phil? Ha, ha, ha. This is going to be interesting.

(KARI stands and accuses AYAKA.)

KARI

Listen, you idiot! You may own Info-Boy Productions, but you don't own the Info-Boy!

AYAKA

I know, what a loss... But my son is very talented, believe me. He's wanted this account for a long time. But I kept him away.... And do you know why? Because I was loyal.... I actually liked and respected your father. But how does he repay that respect? By ignoring totally that I must be responsible to my Board, a Board that entrusts me to look after the business. He repays me by trampling upon me...

*[AYAKA twists his toe back and forth on the floor,
as if crushing a bug or a cigarette.]*

...like I am a little, annoying bug that interferes with his fancy dancing.... Well, it doesn't work that way at the turn of the century. Things have changed just -a - bit. Stephanie?

[AYAKA adopts a more charming demeanor.]

Steph, you can come work for me. You can start at 130K. Full perks, expense account. We'll be shooting next month in Hawaii. What do you say?

STEPHANIE *(delighted)*

Would you really hire me?

[PHIL is aghast at STEPHANIE.]

PHIL

Would you consider it?? Would you really consider it??!

STEPHANIE

I don't know... This is all happening too fast. I think I need a drink.

[STEPHANIE pulls a flask from her purse.]

KARI

No, she won't consider it, not if she wants to *live*, she won't.

STEPHANIE

I have to think about it.

AYAKA (*smiling*)

The offer stands....

(AYAKA looks around, sees the grim faces.)

Hey, what's the worry?

*[AYAKA puts on a pair of BluesBusters
and smiles at the group.]*

Happy-sad-happy!

*[KARI stomps over to AYAKA, knocks the
glasses off his face, and pushes him over backwards.]*

KARI

Listen up, you creep! My father has more inspiration in his little pinkie-toe than you have in your entire body, you understand! And he can *always* get backing! Worms like you ought to crawl back into the ground where you come from, you got that straight?!

*[AYAKA straightens himself out, sits
on a director's chair, props up his
feet and lights up a cigar.]*

AYAKA

Please, all of you – you're frightening me! Ha, ha, ha!

JERRY

Phil, do something. We're gonna lose everything!

PHIL

And here's something else you and Osaka should know, Ayaka. BluesBusters may be owned by Info-Boy. But without my endorsing them full-tilt, they'll never fly. And I believe in the product, but I won't – I repeat I won't put my heart into something I can't control!

AYAKA

What an inflated little blow-fish you are, Phil! Hey, you're *obligated*. You *have* to support the product.

PHIL

Why would I?

AYAKA

Read your contract. Check it out. And if you still won't come along, things can get... shall we say, nasty?

*[AYAKA points at PHIL with his cigar.
PHIL mopes, head in hand. KARI
Crouches beside PHIL, consoling him.
JERRY and STEPHANIE act distraught.]*

Our lawyers are very smart -- smarter than what you can afford, I'm sure... We can tie you up in court for months, years – hell, even decades.... But I'm sorry I've been so rude.

[To KARI]

You know, young one, that I really care for your father.

KARI

Please!

*[AYAKA prepares to leave. He holds his
hat, toys with its bring, reflectively.]*

AYAKA

If he were not so good, I wouldn't take the trouble to do this personally Why are you all making it so hard on yourselves? You people are very strange.... I know. So tired! Phil, you can come work for me. Osaka'll own your ideas, but you'll get a steady paycheck. What do you think? Get a good night's sleep. Call me when... your alpha waves are strong.

[Exit AYAKA. Nothing is heard but waves crashing, Which come from a tape.]

[A pause takes place where nobody knows what to do. PHIL sits, shattered, holding his head.]

JERRY

What a mess this is! How am I going to pay my mortgage?! How can I tell my wife I don't have a job?!!

STEPHANIE

A J-O-B? Is that all you need? Phil can fix that with one phone call, if that's what you really want.

JERRY (*excited*)

Really? I suppose he can. What kind of J-O-B? You're always going to all those NIMA conventions and hob-nobbing. So who's hiring, Steph?

STEPHANIE

Well, ya know National Infomedia's looking for an experienced Assistant Producer for Smilex. That product's gonna be BIG.

JERRY

Smilex?

STEPHANIE

Really, Jerry. Someone as insecure as you should read the trades... It's an oral implant. Goes right here.

[STEPHANIE taps spots on each of JERRY's cheeks, pincer-like.]

JERRY

What's it do?

STEPHANIE

Makes you smile. A tiny electric motor, attached to a battery-driven mini-computer. It tightens your cheeks till you smile. Wipes away the blues... they say.

[JERRY suddenly realizes what a great opportunity this is. He snaps his fingers with delight and flashes a big grin.]

JERRY

Hey!! I'm a natural for it, with all my BluesBusters experience! Phil, will ya make the call to National Infomedia for me?

[PHIL emerges from his funk only for a moment, flashes a dismal head-nod of OK to JERRY, who becomes ever more ecstatic.]

JERRY:

I'm outta-here!

(JERRY turns to leave, then all character freeze. Then Blackout. In darkness, exit STEPHANIE, JERRY and KARI. PHIL floats aloft, which may be shown by him standing on a chair with a spotlight on his upper body only. He swims in this dream-like sequence.)

PHIL

Where am I? Where the heck am I?! It doesn't look like Philly!

JERRY (*offstage echoing voice*)

You're in limbo, Phil.

PHIL

Jerry, is that you? Jerry?... What am I going to do?

JERRY

...You're going to figure out what life is all about.... Now is the time....

PHIL

But *I'm* the teacher. You're the student!

JERRY

Chilllll, Phillll.... and you will learn still.

PHIL

I, I don't think I'm ready for this!

(PHIL wades in the air. Fade to Black. When lights rise, STEPHANIE and KARI are in beds in their apartments. These can be shown by chairs and footstools. KARI reads a book. STEPHANIE looks worried. She dials KARI. The phone rings. KARI puts down her book and answers it.)

STEPHANIE

Kari?

KARI

Yes. Stephanie?

STEPHANIE

Yeah. Listen.... your dad didn't show up at my apartment tonight.... That's unusual.

KARI

When did you see him last?

STEPHANIE

Down at the set. He wanted to clean out some stuff. Wanted to be alone. So I let him be.

KARI

I bet he's still there. Oh... I hope he doesn't do anything nuts.... I'm going down.

STEPHANIE

See you there.

(KARI and STEPHANIE rise to go. Fade to black. Light fade up on a beach scene. PHIL, seated on the sand, faces the water, which is now towards the audience. His feet are bare. He digs with his feet in the sand.)

STEPHANIE

PHIL?

PHIL

Oh! Hi, Stephanie.

(STEPHANIE approaches.)

STEPHANIE

Are you okay?

PHIL

No, not really.

(STEPHANIE sits next to PHIL.)

STEPHANIE

You know, it was a *business*... A J-O-B. I know you were totally wrapped up in it. So was I... But it was just a job!

PHIL:

Yeah right... Come on. It was more than that. It was *life* to me.... But that just shows how foolish I am.... Why can't I get things right?

(STEPHANIE shakes her head.)

STEPHANIE

... Most of us spend a *lifetime* trying to get it right...

(STEPHANIE crouches behind PHIL now, holds PHIL's head and points his face towards the water.)

Listen to the water... What's it's telling you?

PHIL:

...I dunno.

STEPHANIE

Listen harder!

PHIL:

.... Everything washes away.

STEPHANIE

Yeah... All things good.... All things bad.

PHIL:

So?

STEPHANIE

So what should we cling to?

(PHIL picks up sand and lets it drip through his hand.)

PHIL:

Sand?

STEPHANIE

You're my favorite idiot....

(Enter KARI, slowly and unseen at first.)

KARI:

Dad?

(PHIL turns towards KARI.)

PHIL:

Hi.

(KARI it sits next to PHIL, gingerly.)

KARI: *(to STEPHANIE, in a whisper)*

How's he doing?

STEPHANIE

I've never seen him so... like this.

*(KARI, suddenly delighted by what she sees, points towards the river,
in the direction of the audience.)*

KARI:

Whoa.... Look at the Ben Franklin Bridge over there, Dad!... Those lights...

STEPHANIE

It's pretty!

(The wind picks up. It comes from left and right alternating.)

And feel that wind... it's lovely.

*(KARI, PHIL and STEPHANIE shift in unison,
left to right then back again.)*

PHIL: *(still not cheered)*

Mmmm....

STEPHANIE

Ya know, someone I respect once talked a lot about changing your mood...
by *willing*... to see things differently.

KARI:

Yeah, that *does* sound familiar, Stephanie.

(KARI reaches behind her and pulls out three pairs of BluesBusters.)

Oh, look what I found here!

STEPHANIE

Here, let us help you...

(KARI gives STEPHANIE a pair. KARI and STEPHANIE put on the BluesBusters.

Then, each takes an arm of one pair, and they put that pair on PHIL.)

KARI:

Dad, am I gonna have to drag a deadhead around Italy with me? Come on!

PHIL:

...I'll try...

(KARI, STEPHANIE, and PHIL turn on the lights on their BluesBusters. KARI and STEPHANIE put their arms around PHIL. They all sway left, and sway right and keep isolating. They begin to smile. Their smiles grow larger. The sound of the waves on the riverbank increases.

Lights gradually to fade to black as the waves and get louder. A singer-guitarist and joins them onstage. All the actors join in the Get the Your New BluesBusters song, encouraging the audience to join in.)

Get Your Cool BluesBusters!

Music and lyrics by Albert Fried-Cassorla

- 1) When you're down in the dumps, And your taking your lumps
A D
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
D
- 2) If you're hittin' the rocks cause you house is in hock
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- E D A
They're the quickest fixin', grin-restorin' Joy unlockers! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
A D
- 3) When de-pression got ya cracked, Can't find your Prozac --
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- A D
4) If you're down in the pits with terminal zits,
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
E D A
If your baby says good-bye, Don't drink a can of lye, Get your cool BluesBusters!
[GUITAR BREAK: A /// D /// A /// A /// D /// A /// E /// D /// A ///]
- A D
5) When they lay you off, don't get pissed off
A (Audience responds:) A
Try your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
- D
6) If you can't make her sing, when you're doin ' that thing
A (Audience responds:) A
Get your cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
E D A
They're the passion-inspirin' joy restorin' -- cool BluesBusters!
- E D A
7) Better than huge new pair of plastic knockers -- cool BluesBusters!
A (Audience responds:) A
cool BluesBusters! **COOL BLUESBUSTERS!**
[End with E /// D /// A /// (pause) D - A]

*[The CAST waves at the audience.
Fade to black.]*

THE END