

## 15. The News Broadcast

(In a news studio. #1, a newscaster, is preparing for the evening news.)

- #1: Well, bringing you back to life is a complicated procedure.
- #2: Obviously more complicated than it was to kill me. So, what am I supposed to do in the meantime for money?
- #1: You might try getting a job.
- #2: I HAVE A JOB! How do you think the money got in this bank in the first place? The Salary Elf?!
- #1: You're getting snippy again.
- #2: Look, I have been a good customer here. I work hard, pay my bills, my credit card charges, so there is no reason why I should have to be inconvenienced because you and your stupid computer decided to commit premeditated murder!
- #1: OK, you can say what you like about me, but you leave Wang out of it. You have no idea how hard he works. He works 24 hours a day without so much as a "thank you." He is just following orders.
- #2: "Following orders"? It's a machine!
- #1: How dare you call Wang a machine. That's it! You just take your forms and go upstairs. I don't have to listen to this. Let them take care of you.
- #2: FINE! I'd rather be talking to someone who lives on the planet Earth anyway. (Starts to exit, stops and turns back to #1.) I hope you and Wang will be very happy together. You deserve each other. (Storms out.)
- #1: (Turns back to the computer and starts to type.) Don't worry Wang, that mean old customer is gone. I hope you didn't hear any of that. You just...

- #1: Testing, testing...1, 2, 3. Is that enough? (Off-stage voice: Yeah, it's fine.) Then can we get this show on the road? (Off-stage voice: Actually, we've got a small problem, Liz/Jim. You're going to have to anchor the show by yourself...again.) Forget it! No way! I know what the "little problem" is. Frank/Jane fell off the wagon again, right? (No answer.) I take your silence as a yes. Well, this amateur stuff has to stop! You all wonder why this station is number five in a three station town. Look, I don't care where you find someone. Just get me a co-anchor.
- #2: (Enters carrying papers. He/she goes to #1 and hands him/her the papers.) Here you go, Ms./Mr. Nance. These are the latest news updates.
- #1: (Looks #2 up and down.) Who are you?
- #2: I'm Lisa/Larry. I'm the new newsroom intern.
- #1: (Pause) Tell me newsroom intern...can you read?
- #2: Of course I can read.
- #1: (Rips the papers out of #2's hand.) Congratulations. You've just been promoted. Sit down.
- #2: (Sits.) Wow, things move pretty quickly around here. So what do I get to do? Write the news, I hope? See that's what I really want to be. A writer. I studied writing in college and...
- #1: Yeah, yeah, that's a moving story, but you're not going to be a writer.
- #2: Oh, then what am I going to do?
- #1: You're going to report the news.
- #2: You mean I go and get the stories, bring them back so you can report on them?

- #1: *(To his/her self)* Interns. *(To Lisa/Larry)* No, you are going report the news with me.
- #2: *(Pause)* Report the news with you? *(Panicked)* From here? *(Even more panicked)* ON THE AIR?!
- #1: *(Clips a microphone onto #2.)* You got it, Ace. *(#2 turns front, starts to hyperventilate, pulls out a little brown paper bag and starts to breath into it.)* What are you doing?!
- #2: *(Taking the bag away)* Hyperventilating.
- #1: I can see that. Does this sort of thing go on long? See, we're on the air in about two minutes. *(This causes #2 to hyperventilate faster.)*
- #2: *(Takes the bag away.)* I'll be OK. Give me a few seconds. *(Breathes into the bag and finally calms down and takes the bag away.)*
- #1: Are we calm now? *(#2 nods.)* Good. Can we get on with this?
- #2: Mr./Ms. Nance...I...I can't do this. I can't perform in front of people.
- #1: Look...Lisa/Larry right? *(#2 Shakes his/her head.)* No one is asking you to get up and sing the aria from *Carmen*. All I'm asking you to do is read.
- #2: Read?
- #1: Yes, you know what reading is. You told me yourself you could read.
- #2: I know I said that, but...
- #1: No, no buts, just read. Do you see that monitor, right in front of us?
- #2: Yes.
- #1: Well words are going to appear on that and all you have to do is...
- #2: ...read them?
- #1: EXACTLY! See, you're a natural. *(To off camera)* Joe, throw the first story up there for me. *(Pause)* Thanks. See the nice pretty words. *(#2 nods, yes.)* I want you to read them for me. Can we do that?
- #2: I think so.

- #1: Good. Go ahead. *(There is a few seconds of silence. #1 looks at #2. #2 is mouthing the words and #1 realizes that he/she is reading to him/herself.)* No, you genius, not to yourself! OUT LOUD!
- #2: Oh. *(Pause)* You don't have to yell. OK, *(Clears throat - then reads)* today in Twain, students rioted for five...
- #1: Stop, stop! Today in Twain? So much for being able to read. I think if you check that again, you'll find that it's TAIWAN. You know...the island...off the coast of China.
- #2: I know where Taiwan is. I told you I can't do this. All these people make me too nervous.
- #1: You can do this! Just forget the people.
- #2: I can't.
- #1: Look, do you want to be a sniveling, kowtowing, subservient, little nobody of an intern your whole life?!
- #2: No.
- #1: Then I want you to suck it up, and look straight ahead at the monitor. *(Pause)* No crying!
- #2: I'm not.
- #1: Now, look at nothing else in the room. Are you doing that?
- #2: Yes.
- #1: Good. Take a deep breath. *(#2 does)* and READ THAT STORY!
- #2: Today in Taiwan, students rioted for over five hours in opposition to the government's enforced curfew. There were three fatalities and hundreds of people were injured. *(Pause)* I DID IT! I really did it. I read that in front of all these people.
- #1: I told you, you could do it. So, how do you feel about doing it for real?
- #2: You know, I think I can. I really think I can. This is going to be a piece of cake, a cinch. You know, I bet I could do this in my sleep. I bet...
- #1: Whoa, Ace. You wanna calm down? How about we

concentrate on not throwing up on camera for a start, huh?

#2: **OK. Whatever you say...Liz/Jim.**

#1: *(Just shakes, his/her head.)* **Look, Frank's/Jane's jacket is on the back of the chair. Put it on.**

*(#2 puts on the jacket.)*

#1: **Clip the microphone here. *(Pause)* So, you ready?**

#2: **You bet! Let's do it!**

#1: *(To the booth)* **How are we doing? Is it about time? *(Off-stage: Ten seconds.)* Remember. When that little light goes on, we're on the air. *(Off-stage: And in 5, 4, 3, 2, ...#1 Smiles.)* Good evening. I'm Liz/Jim Nance.**

#2: *(Horrified)* **And...I'm...Lisa/Larry.**

*(#2 faints dead away and falls off camera. #1 watches, then looks back into the camera.)*

#1: **Welcome to the six o'clock news.**

## 16. The Order

*(In a restaurant. #1 is at a table looking over the menu. #2, the waiter/waitress, comes over. #2 doesn't really pay much attention to #1.)*

#2: **Have you decided what you want?**

#1: **Not really. I'd like to know...**

#2: **Fine, what'll it be?**

#1: **I'm not sure. I was about to say I'd like to hear about your specials.**

#2: **Why?**

#1: **Why? Because I might like to have one?**

#2: **And you want me to explain them?**

#1: **Well, since I don't know what they are and you're the only one at this table who does, by process of elimination...**

#2: **I get it. The specials today are... *(Checks his/her pad)* ...fish and meat.**

#1: **Fish and meat?**

#2: **You need that defined?**

#1: **No, I've got a grasp of the basics, but you might want to fill me in on some of the details.**

#2: **Like what?**

#1: **Oh, I don't know. Maybe what kind of fish or what kind of meat.**

#2: **My, but you just want the moon, don't you? OK, we have... *(Checks his/her pad again)* ...white fish, and red meat. Happy?**

#1: *(Hands #2 his/her menu.)* **Ecstatic. Know what, just bring me a Chinese Chicken salad, please.**

#2: **If you wanted a Chinese Chicken Salad, why did you ask me about the specials?**

#1: **I don't know. I guess deep down I'm just evil.**