

second. Still, you've got a better shot at that than that car loan you applied for.

CLIENT: How do you know about that?!

MEDIUM: The universe is a strange place.

CLIENT: Tell me more! Tell me more!

MEDIUM: I can't. I have another appointment now.

CLIENT: When?!

MEDIUM: Later. Come back later.

(The detective starts to head out.)

CLIENT: I'm off at six. I'll be back then.

(The detective heads out. The MEDIUM says after he leaves.)

MEDIUM: Fine. Bring money.

(The MEDIUM reaches under the table and pulls out a phone and dials.) Hey, it's me. Thanks for the info. *(Pause)* Yeah, the cop looked just like you said. *(Pause)* Your friend at the police department isn't going to tell him you were asking, will he? *(Pause)* Good. *(Pause)* Yeah, yeah, you can pick up your money at the usual time. *(Pause)* Nice doing business with you, too.

14. The Mistake

(In a bank. #1 is a bank manager. He/She is seated behind a desk finishing some work. #1 pushes the intercom.)

#1: You can send in the customer now. *(#2 enters. He/she seems a bit frazzled. Actually irritated would be a better word.)* Please sit down. I'm sorry you had to wait.

#2: Me, too, it's been over an hour.

#1: Well, you know how it is. Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork, makes the world go 'round.

#2: Excuse me?

#1: That's just a little motto we like to use here at the bank.

#2: Really. How nice for you.

#1: I see. You're a bit on the edge today, aren't you?

#2: Just a tad.

#1: Let's see if we can make life a little nicer for you, Mr./Ms....

#2: Collins.

#1: Mr./Ms. Collins, now, what seems to be the problem?

#2: Like I told the other five people this morning, I went to use the ATM and it said to see a teller.

#1: Did you?

#2: Yes. She wouldn't give me any money either. From there I was sent to the sub-assistant manager. Then to the day manager, the afternoon manager, the lunch manager, the upstairs manager, and finally you.

#1: You didn't see Ms. Bickford?

#2: Who is she?

#1: The lobby manager.

#2: *(Pause)* No. *(Pause)* She was sick.

#1: Then I guess "the buck stops here." Now, what seems to be the problem?

#2: OK, once again, I can't get any money from this bank.

- #1:** Do you have an account with us?
- #2:** No, I heard that you all just gave away money. Of course I have an account!
- #1:** Now, let's try and stay calm. Getting snippy won't help anything.
- #2:** "Snippy"? I passed "snippy" a long time ago.
- #1:** Then let's get you some answers. What is your full name?
- #2:** Terry Collins.
- #1:** *(Types it in the computer.)* Your account number?
- #2:** 375-282-116
- #1:** *(Types it in.)* Your address.
- #2:** 1425 N. Camden
- #1:** *(Types it in.)* Your mother's maiden name.
- #2:** Why?
- #1:** It's for security. We have to make sure this is you.
- #2:** Caplan. C-A-P-L-A-N
- #1:** *(Types it in.)* What's your shoe size?
- #2:** What?!
- #1:** *(Senses #2 is getting more "snippy.")* Maybe we don't need that. *(Pushes enter.)* Here we are. Oh, I see why you can't make a withdrawal. It's very simple.
- #2:** Great. What's the problem?
- #1:** You're dead! I'm glad I could clear that up for you. Have a nice day.
- #2:** WAIT! What do you mean I'm dead?
- #1:** According to the computer, you passed away last week. My condolences.
- #2:** At the risk of sounding "snippy," do I look dead to you?!
- #1:** It doesn't matter what I see. According to the computer...
- #2:** It's wrong!
- #1:** *(Finds this amusing.)* Obviously you don't know the Wang Central Banking Program. It's used worldwide, including Geneva. It's never wrong.
- #2:** And obviously you're an idiot! I'm sitting here. How can I be dead?

- #1:** That's really none of my concern. According to Wang, you are.
- #2:** Well, you can kiss my Wang! Do you know how much money I have in this bank?
- #1:** *(Checks the screen.)* Yes, I do, but I can only release it to the next of kin.
- #2:** I'M THE KIN! Release it to me!
- #1:** I CAN'T. YOU'RE DEAD!
- #2:** *(Pause)* If you say that one more time, you and everyone in this bank are going to join me in the hereafter.
- #1:** Are you threatening us?
- #2:** No, I'm promising you. Besides what can you do to me? You can't arrest a corpse. I'm dead. Remember?
- #1:** Please, Mr./Ms. Collins. Let's try and stay calm. You can catch more flies with sugar than vinegar.
- #2:** You give me one more cliché and even an apple a day won't keep the doctor away. For you or Wang. Capice?
- #1:** Look, Mr./Ms. Collins you have to understand. In the banking world there are two types of dead. Reality dead and computer dead. You unfortunately are the worse of the two. Computer dead.
- #2:** How is that worse?
- #1:** If you were reality dead you wouldn't need any money, would you?
- #2:** *(Pause)* You know, that's the first thing I've heard today that makes any sense. *(Pause)* So what do we do now?
- #1:** Bring you back to life, I suppose.
- #2:** Great, and who's in charge of that, the Resurrection Manager?
- #1:** Who? *(Pause)* Oh, that's a joke. Very good. No, you have to fill out these forms and take them to Mrs. Shearer on the third floor.
- (#1 hands #2 a large stack of forms.)*
- #2:** All of these!? By the time I'm done it won't matter. I really will be dead.

- #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...

15. The News Broadcast

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

- #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?