

# **ADULTS ONLY**

A play in one act

by Bruce Hoogendoorn

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**CAST**

FRANK: Forties.

JOHN: Twenties.

JULIE: Twenties.

REX: Twenties.

SHARON: Seventeen.

SCENE ONE

*Complete darkness. We hear a telephone ringing. Then another joins in, and another and another, until the sound reaches an almost deafening crescendo and stops. Lights up.*

*The majority of the stage is taken up by an ordinary office. Three desks (one large, the other two small), chairs, computers, phones, one door, etc.*

*To one side of the stage, in a small alcove, is a cheap looking desk with partitions on either side of it. A phone with a headset is the only object on the desk. This area remains in darkness when unused.*

*Back to the office. JOHN, a man in his twenties, dressed in a suit is walking around talking animatedly into a headset. FRANK, a middle-aged man dressed in a stylish suit, is also walking around the office talking into a headset.*

FRANK: You bought some products from us recently and I'd like to know if you were totally satisfied with the service you received? *(pause)* Are you sure? There's nothing you were unhappy about, nothing you'd like to complain about?

JOHN: That's great. I'm pleased to hear she treated you so well. But what did you think of her phone manner? I find her very rude. *(pause)* Really? I'm surprised.

FRANK: Surely we're not perfect? There must have been something we did to upset you?

JOHN: If you had any difficulty at all, no matter how mild, our company wants to know about it, because we're committed to stamping out poor client service. Now, in all honesty, was there anything at all?

FRANK: Are you sure you're not being shy? Due to the nature of our business?

JOHN: There's no need to be embarrassed. We're a business like any other. And anything you say will be kept completely confidential.

FRANK: Well, if you happen to remember anything, no matter how small, don't hesitate to call me and I will deal with it immediately.

*FRANK takes off his headset.*

JOHN: Well, that's great. I'm pleased to hear you were so satisfied with our service. Thanks for your time.

*JOHN tears off his head set and throws it to the ground.*

JOHN: For God's sake!

FRANK: John, what's wrong?

JOHN: No-one wants to complain! I've rung twenty people and they've all been just delighted with our products and service.

FRANK: Come on, keep your chin up, there's bound to be a shocking complaint out there somewhere.

JOHN: Frank, I've kept my chin up for the last two months, but I'm at the end of my tether. I came here to sink my teeth into some meaty cases, instead I'm begging clients to complain about anything, no matter how trivial.

FRANK: I understand your frustration. I feel it too.

JOHN: And if we don't start doing what we were set up to do it's going to be very hard to justify our section's existence to senior management, and then -

FRANK: John, don't start talking like that. You have to be positive. In fact, the shortage of complaints has been very positive because it's allowed us to do more training, making us better equipped to handle them when they arrive. Actually, now is a good opportunity to do some extra training on -

JOHN: Frank, I'm all trained out. If I have to do any more training I will become homicidal.

FRANK: I don't like the sound of that, John. Would you like some counselling?

JOHN: No, Frank, I'd like some complaints!

*Suddenly JULIE, a professionally dressed woman in her twenties, rushes in holding a piece of paper triumphantly above her head.*

JULIE: We've got one!

FRANK: What?

JULIE: Our first serious complaint!

FRANK: See, John? I told you it was only a matter of time.

*FRANK takes the letter and reads it.*

FRANK: Oh, that's disgraceful! Oh, that's sickening! Oh, that's shocking! You beauty! Battle stations, everyone, we're about to get to war!

JOHN: Frank, are you serious?

FRANK: Yes, John, and what a little beauty it is. *(he waves it in the air)* One of our mail order telephonists, our first point of contact, a person who's attitude on the phone determines how clients will regard every last one of us, called this poor woman, who was simply reporting a defective productive, a *(reads letter)* "...stupid low-life, Herpes-ridden tart."

JOHN: Incredible! Who said it to her?

FRANK: That's the beauty of it - she doesn't remember, only that it was a man! We'll be able to fully exercise our investigative abilities to weed him out. This is what we were set up for! This is why we exist! The agony you two were going through is over. And let me say, I felt for you both. Possessing the skills to scratch an itch out of existence, but no itch to scratch. It's enough to drive anyone insane. But now *(waves letter)* there's no looking back.

JOHN: Can I see it, Frank?

FRANK: Sure, enjoy, enjoy. Right, let's get started. Julie, draft a letter to the complainant and say we have gratefully, no, gleefully, no, just say we have received her complaint and will be committing all available resources to investigating it and that she will have a satisfactory resolution within...three days.

JULIE: Three days! But the policy is to reach a resolution within five days.

FRANK: I know, but if we can nail this first one, show management how bloody efficient we are by coming in under time and under budget, and on top of that have a letter of gratitude from a complainant that we can wave in their faces, we should find that come Christmas our pay packets will be fatter than most people's within this client-ridiculing organisation.

JULIE: You think so?

FRANK: Absolutely. So get stuck in!

*JULIE goes to a computer.*

FRANK: Now -

JOHN: Frank?

FRANK: Yes, John, I was about to get to you. How are you feeling? Better now?

JOHN: Yes, but -

FRANK: Good, I was getting a bit worried about you for a few minutes there. For a moment or two I even considered sending you on sick leave.

JOHN: Frank!

FRANK: Oh dear, still a bit tense?

JOHN: No! I think I know who it is.

FRANK: What?

JOHN: I'm pretty certain I know who said those terrible things.

FRANK: Julie, stop the press! We might be able to solve this in two days.

JULIE: What?

FRANK: John thinks she knows who the culprit is.

JULIE: How? Twenty men work in that area.

JOHN: It sounds like someone I used to work with.

FRANK: That's right, you used to work there, didn't you?

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: Well, take your time. It can't be pleasant reminiscing about such a place.

JOHN: No, it isn't.

FRANK: Now...who done it?

JOHN: *(pause)* Rex Barrington.

JULIE: Rex!

FRANK: You know him?

JULIE: Yes, I do.

FRANK: What are you associating with people like that for?

JULIE: He's a lovely person. Friendly, charming -

FRANK: All right, that's enough. I find it very disturbing that you have any sort of relationship with people from that section. Now I hate to pull rank, as you know, but in this case I'm going to. You are both, yes both - though I know I don't have to say this to you, John - you are both banned from socialising with anyone from the mail order section.

JULIE: But, Frank, he's a wonderful, decent -

FRANK: Julie, these are the people we have to investigate. These are the people we may be responsible for having sacked one day. It's best that we don't have any relationship with them at all so when that day comes it won't be painful to do our duty. Understood?

JULIE: Yes.

FRANK: Now, if you feel that due to personal reasons you must disqualify yourself from this investigation -

JULIE: No! I'm all right, honestly. I'll be totally professional.

FRANK: That's what I wanted to hear! Very good. Now, John, about this Rex character.

JOHN: Well, as Julie said, he *seems* very nice -

JULIE: He is very nice.

FRANK: Julie, if this keeps up I'll be forced to send you to counselling. We are investigating our first big case, and I need you tough and focused. Any emotional baggage can only hinder our progress. Now, John...

JOHN: As I said, he seems very nice, very charming. Women are always taken in by him, (*looks at JULIE*) as are the clients.

FRANK: Uh huh.

JOHN: In fact, I too was taken in.

FRANK: Not you too!

JOHN: No, not like that. But I liked him and thought he was committed to client service. In fact, I worked in the cubicle next to him and we got on quite well. But then one day...one day...

FRANK: Go on, fight through the emotion. It's useless here.

JOHN: Then one day I noticed he wasn't talking into his headset in that warm, friendly way that always won the clients over. Instead, he was whispering. And it caught my attention.

FRANK: Yes?

JOHN: So I listened closely. And he was saying, to a client, in the most sneering, patronising voice, "what the hell would you know about our products? Our products aren't defective! - you're defective! If it's broken, you broke it. That's all losers like you can do. So fuck off!"

FRANK: My God.

JOHN: I reacted the same way at the time.

FRANK: He sounds like our man.

*They stand stunned.*

JULIE: I don't believe it!

FRANK: Julie, you have to get over your prejudices.

JULIE: He won the annual client service award!

FRANK: He what!

JULIE: He won the annual client service award. Everyone who deals with him loves him. People specifically ask for him when they ring up. Some people won't deal with anyone else.

FRANK: John, is this true?

JOHN: Yes, and it still makes me sick. To think he was able to get away with his treatment of clients to the extent that he was given an award for it.

JULIE: If he treated them so badly why didn't anyone ever complain?

FRANK: Because we didn't have a Complaints Unit then. Remember, this was my brainchild.

JOHN: But most importantly, I think he chose his victims carefully. People without much self-confidence, people who wouldn't have the guts to complain.

FRANK: What a psychopath.

JOHN: Twice I heard him do it. It was most distressing.

FRANK: I bet it was.

JOHN: In fact, it's what motivated me to get out of that section into a position where I could put a stop to such things ever happening again.

FRANK: And you came to me.

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: You did the right thing. And believe me, we're going to make your dream come true. All right, that's enough for me. Let's get this weasel up here and have a talk to him.

JULIE: You're just going to bring him up here and confront him with it?

FRANK: Well, I'll worm my way around to it. Relax him, have a light-hearted sort of chat first and then, when he's least expecting it - bang - for the jugular.

JULIE: Shouldn't you hear him in action first?

FRANK: What do you mean?

JULIE: Ring him up and make a complaint. See how he handles it, see if he gets abusive.

FRANK: Good thinking, Julie! That's the way. See what happens when you rid yourself of silly emotions? Now phone the operator and get his direct number.

*JULIE goes to her desk and uses the phone. She talks, unheard, in the background.*

FRANK: I'm looking forward to this.

JOHN: Me too.

FRANK: We're going to get this little prick.

JOHN: Yep.

FRANK: And we'll be the number one section in the whole place.

JOHN: Yeah.

FRANK: And you, you I'll be singling out for special praise to senior management.

JOHN: Oh Frank, that's -

FRANK: Deserved! I'm going to the top and you're coming with me.

JOHN: Frank, I'm honoured that you think me worthy to join you at the top.

FRANK: That's all right. We'll look good up there together.

JOHN: But what about Julie?

FRANK: (*confidentially*) Look, she's got some good ideas, but her emotions tend to cloud her judgement. Don't get me wrong, she had a good idea just then, but who knows, five minutes down the track she could go off the rails again.

*JULIE comes over holding a piece of paper.*

JULIE: I've got his number.

FRANK: Great. John, you make the call.

JULIE: John? But the complaint's from a woman. I should ring up and pretend to be her. He might not respond the same way to a man.

FRANK: Julie, you're on a roll. Two wonderful ideas in a row.

JOHN: Fair enough. But remember, you won't be able to be yourself. You have to be a timid little whinger, the sort of person who gets under people's skin for being so pathetic. Don't be at all assertive. Almost beg him to help you. That's the sort of person he goes for.

FRANK: Yeah, that's good, remember that.

JULIE: Okay.

FRANK: Put it on the speaker phone so we can listen in.

*JULIE is about to dial the phone when...*

JULIE: What was the product again?

*JOHN picks up the letter off the desk*

JOHN: The Pleasure Pogo.

FRANK: The Pleasure Pogo! We never have any problems with that. How could something go wrong with that?

JOHN: I don't know.

FRANK: She can't have used it correctly. Some people just won't follow the diagram. They go off on their own little tangents, trying to be too creative before they even have the basics. And before they know it -

JOHN: Whether it's truly defective or not isn't the point. It was the way she was spoken to.

FRANK: Exactly. Thanks for getting me back on track, John. Now, Julie, let's get started.

*JULIE dials. The alcove lights up and REX is there wearing a headset, looking suave. He presses a button on his console.*

REX: Good morning, Adults Only, Rex speaking. How can I help you?

JULIE: *(timid, almost fearful)* Oh...you're the one.

REX: I'm the one? Really, I'm very flattered, but how can I help you?

JULIE: Well...

*FRANK and JOHN urge her on, miming punches. JULIE finds it hard to go through with it.*

JULIE: I'm feeling very upset at the moment because one of the products I bought from you didn't work. It's defective.

REX: I'm sorry to hear that. I'll do my best to rectify the problem. Which product is it?

JULIE: The Pleasure Pogo.

REX: The Pleasure Pogo! This is the first time anyone's ever had a problem with that. Did you follow the diagram?

JULIE: Yes. And it still didn't work. Look, I've been through this with you before, but you wouldn't help me.

REX: I'm sorry, I can't recall speaking to you before.

JULIE: Well you did! And you said some unpleasant things to me. Very unpleasant.

REX: I'm sorry, I don't like to contradict clients, but I think you have me mixed up with someone else.

JULIE: No, it was you. Remember, you called me a... (*JOHN holds the letter up for her to read.*) "stupid, low-life, Herpes-ridden tart."

REX: No!

JULIE: Yes!

REX: No, I would never speak that way to a client. And I'm absolutely horrified to think anyone within this organisation would. On behalf of Adults Only I apologise for the disgraceful way you were treated by some renegade employee. I suggest you put your complaint in writing and send it to our Complaints Unit. I assure you they will have the person counselled in the strongest possible terms.

JULIE: Oh...

REX: But please, give me a chance to help me with your Pleasure Pogo problem first. What exactly is wrong with it? - not enough thrust?

*JOHN walks away, disgusted.*

JULIE: I'm sorry, I have to go. Thanks for your help.

*JULIE hangs up the phone. The light fades on REX'S alcove.*

JULIE: You see, it couldn't possibly have been him.

JOHN: You played it wrong. You were too forceful, too confident.

JULIE: I was as timid as I could be.

JOHN: He sensed you weren't someone to be trifled with.

JULIE: Frank, you heard his excellent client service. He was horrified that one of our employees would speak to a client that way. He even suggested I write to us. What more do you need?

*FRANK considers this.*

JOHN: Frank, let me call him. I know how to do it. Just give me a chance. Please?

FRANK: *(pause)* Julie, give him the number.

*JULIE sighs and hands JOHN the piece of paper. JOHN dials. Lights up on REX in the alcove. He hits a button on his console*

REX: Good morning, Adults Only, Rex speaking. How can I help you?

JOHN: G-g-good... mor-mor-morning...Re-Re-Rex.

*JULIE shakes her head and walks away disgusted.*

REX: Good morning to you, Sir. How can I help you?

JOHN: I have a bit of a prob-prob-problem.

REX: I'm sorry to hear that. Tell me what it is and I'll do my best to rectify it for you.

JOHN: It doesn't...w-w-work.

REX: Which product is that?

JOHN: The...back-back-Backdoor tickler.

REX: The backdoor tickler! We've never had a problem with that! This is terrible. Did you follow the instructions?

JOHN: Y-y-y-yes. It's not tickling.

REX: Did you check in a mirror to see if you looked the same as the diagram?

JOHN: Yes, I did. Don't you be-be-believe me?

REX: Of course I do.

JOHN: I did it properly. I swear I did. It's de-de-defective.

REX: Well, let's just go through the steps and determine that first.

JOHN: You don't believe me. I knew it. You just want me to go away.

REX: I do believe you and I don't want you to go away. Now let's just focus on the problem. What exactly has gone wrong?

*Pause. JOHN, frustrated, changes tack.*

JOHN: You -YOU -sent me a defective product, you-you-you jerk! You -

REX: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm worried about you. The tickler, it isn't stuck anywhere, is it?

JOHN: No, you prick!

REX: Please, I don't think there's any need for -

JOHN: You asshole! You -

REX: *(getting upset)* Look, you're obviously upset so why don't you give me a call back when you've had a chance to calm down.

JOHN: Don't tell me to calm down, you bastard. I need help, but you -

REX: I'm sorry, but if you continue to speak that way I'll have to terminate the conversation.

JOHN: Don't you try it you fuckin' little -

REX: I'm sorry, but I'm hanging up now. Please call back when you're feeling calmer and I'll be happy to help you. Goodbye.

*REX, distraught, hangs up and puts his head in his hands. The alcove blacks out.*

JOHN: He hung up! He hung up! Disgraceful client service!

JULIE: I would've hung up if you'd spoken to me like that.

JOHN: Then you should keep well away from the public, because that's how it is from time to time. He should have been able to handle that situation without resorting to hanging up. It's his job.

JULIE: It's not his job to be abused like that!

JOHN: It's part of the job!

JULIE: Frank, I'm sorry, but I can't believe I'm hearing this. It's obvious that Rex is not the person we're after.

FRANK: Julie, you're not getting emotional again, aren't you?

JULIE: No, no I'm - yes I am! I can't help it. It's just the way he -

FRANK: I'm sorry, Julie, but you're no good to me like this. I want you go to for a walk and get the emotion out of your system. And I don't want you to come back until you're feeling rational again. Okay?

JULIE: But, Frank -

FRANK: Julie, take a walk around the factory floor. Watch the new inflatable dolls being tested. Have a laugh. But most of all - get the emotion out of your system. Okay?

JULIE: *(pause)* Okay.

*JULIE exits.)*

JOHN: I told you, Frank. I told you it was him.

FRANK: John, I have to be honest with you, I didn't sense that he was the sort of person who would say the things said to the complainant.

JOHN: All right, I agree with you. In fact, he didn't sound like he normally sounds at all. He sounded compassionate, decent, professional, prepared...oh my God!

FRANK: What is it?

JOHN: Julie!

FRANK: Julie what?

JOHN: She tipped him off! She must have phoned him right after the operator gave her his number. While we were talking.

FRANK: Oh now, come on, John.

JOHN: You saw how emotional she got before. There's obviously something going on between them.

FRANK: We can't prove that.

JOHN: But you have to admit it's possible.

FRANK: *(pause)* She did get *very* emotional...

JOHN: Very unprofessional, I thought. And it's not the first time I've seen her do it.

FRANK: She's done it before?

JOHN: A couple of times.

FRANK: Oh no. That settles it. I've got no choice but to counsel her in the strongest terms possible.

*JULIE comes back into the room.*

FRANK: Julie!

JULIE: Frank, can I have a word with you in private, please?

FRANK: Are you sure you've got the emotion out of your system? That was awfully quick.

JULIE: I'm sure.

*FRANK and JOHN look at each other.*

FRANK: John, do you mind?

JOHN: No.

*JOHN and JULIE look at each other, and then he exits.*

JULIE: Frank, I'll be up front about this. I think John has it in for Rex Barrington.

FRANK: What! Why would he?

JULIE: Jealousy.

FRANK: Jealous! Of Rex? John is in a highly prestigious position while Rex Barrington is in the mail order section. Why would he be jealous of Rex?

JULIE: Because Rex has charm and charisma. He's friendly, likeable. And he...he attracts a lot of female attention.

FRANK: I'm sure John isn't lacking in that department. I'm sure he has many a young lady fighting over him.

JULIE: Frank, no-one likes him. Women find him sleazy.

FRANK: Sleazy! John! I don't believe it. He's always a perfect gentleman. In fact, if I was a woman I'd be very attracted to him.

JULIE: That's because...to be honest, Frank, he crawls to you. You don't see the real him.

FRANK: Julie, I must warn you, you're treading on dangerous ground. I'm very fond of John, I think he has a great future. And -

JULIE: Okay, I'm sorry. But I still think he's out to get Rex Barrington.

FRANK: And he thinks you're out to protect him. That you tipped him off.

JULIE: I didn't! I wouldn't!

FRANK: I know that.

JULIE: I would never do that. I'm just trying to be fair.

FRANK: Julie, in all honesty, just between the two of us - are you in love with Rex Barrington?

JULIE: *(with some effort)* No.

FRANK: I'm sorry, I'm not convinced. Try again.

JULIE: I do not love Rex Barrington.

FRANK: Hm. Once more, just to be safe.

JULIE: I don't love Rex Barrington.

FRANK: Thata girl. You're too sensible for that.

JULIE: Thank you, Frank.

FRANK: And that's why I'm going to let you in on a little secret. I'm determined to get to the top through this section and when I do, I'm taking you with me.

JULIE: Oh, Frank, that's, -

FRANK: Deserved. You've got what it takes.

JULIE: But what about, John?

FRANK: John? He's got some good ideas, but he doesn't allow for his emotions to influence his decision making - it's all cold-hearted logic.

JULIE: But I thought you wanted me to ignore my emotions?

FRANK: Only the over-emotional ones. The ordinary emotional ones are good. You need them in management so you can empathise with staff.

JULIE: Well, taking that into account, I have an idea on how we should proceed with the case.

FRANK: That's great news, Julie, but I have even better news. I have an idea too!

JULIE: Oh. Are you going to share it?

FRANK: Oh yes, but we'll need John here first. I don't want to start playing favourites. Can you go and find him, please, then I'll announce it.

JULIE *exits.*

FRANK: This Rex Barrington has turned out to be a Godsend! He's got my team thinking more laterally than ever before. Nothing like a bit of competition to bring out the best in staff. I know some people don't believe in that sort of management style, pitting co-workers against each other, giving them incentives to spur them on. But I think if you want a productive section, you need a competitive section.

JULIE *and JOHN come back in, keeping well away from each other.*

FRANK: All right. Before we move on with this investigation I want to remind you two about teamwork. That means working co-operatively together to achieve a shared goal. At the moment you two are working against each other and I think you both, particularly you, Julie, have let your emotions get in the way. So let's just forget our prejudices and plough on with the case. Will you both give me a commitment that you will do this?

JOHN *and* JULIE *nod*.

FRANK: Good. Now shake hands.

*They do so reluctantly.*

FRANK: Excellent. Now I'd like to share my exciting new idea about where we go from here.

JOHN: Great.

JULIE: Terrific.

FRANK: I think the way to solve this Barrington issue is to have a brainstorming session. The three of us stand around here and whatever ideas come into our heads, just throw them out there, put them up for consideration. No self-consciousness, no fear of rejection, just let yourselves go. No matter how wacky it may be, I want to hear it. Then we'll discuss the ideas, play around with them and see if we can shape them into a useable form. Okay?

FRANK *and* JULIE *nod*.

FRANK: All right. Let's take a few moments to think up some ideas and then we'll get started.

*A long silence. They walk around thinking. FRANK finally loses patience.*

FRANK: Right. That should be long enough. Who wants to go first?

JULIE: I think we should start investigating other staff members in the mail order section instead of focussing solely on Rex Barrington.

JOHN: You would.

FRANK: John! For this to work we need to create an atmosphere of trust, otherwise people won't share their ideas.

JOHN: Which wouldn't be such a bad thing.

FRANK: John, you're not being a team player.

JOHN: Sorry, Frank.

FRANK: Now, do you have any ideas?

JULIE: What about my idea? We haven't discussed that yet!

FRANK: Julie, it's a good idea, and I promise we'll come back to it later on if we have time. Perhaps you could work on it in the meantime, make it a bit wackier, a bit more out there. Now, John, any ideas?

JOHN: Yes, I do have one.

FRANK: Fantastic. Let's hear it.

JOHN: Okay. But I warn you, it's pretty wacky.

FRANK: The wackier the better.

JOHN: All right, here goes... We should invite the complainant to afternoon tea.

JULIE: What?

*Blackout.*

**SCENE TWO**

*A bottle of champagne, some glasses and a tray of hors-d'oeuvres are set up on one of the desks. FRANK is picking at the hors-d'oeuvres. JULIE is standing with her arms folded. JOHN is playing a computer game, sipping champagne.*

FRANK: How late is she now?

JULIE: Ten minutes.

FRANK: Ten minutes! I know she was called a Herpes-ridden tart by one of our employees, but at least she could have the courtesy to turn up on time. I despise tardiness. John, you did agree on half-past two with her, didn't you?

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: Then she's got no excuse. She -

*There is a knock at the door.*

FRANK: She's here! On your feet, John. Both of you look as professional as possible. And remember, the key word is sympathy. And no sudden movements. Like John said, she's probably one of those lonely, shy people who have no self-confidence or social skills. So be very gentle. Okay, everyone ready?

*They nod.*

FRANK: Good.

*FRANK opens the door, revealing an attractive seventeen year old girl in a short skirt and figure-hugging top. She's chewing gum.*

FRANK: *(surprised)* Ms Davis?

SHARON: Yeah, hi.

FRANK: Why hello. I'm Frank Johnson, head of the Complaints Unit. *(he shakes her hand)* Please come in.

*She enters.*

FRANK: Let me introduce you to my staff. This is John, an irreplaceable member of my team who's working round the clock on your complaint.

JOHN: *(very gentle and sympathetic)* Hello, Ms Davis, nice to meet you.

SHARON: Hi.

*They shake hands.*

FRANK: And this is Julie, who's also devoting all of her time to investigating your complaint.

JULIE: *(as though talking to a patient)* Hello, Ms Davis, lovely to meet you. How are you feeling?

SHARON: All right, thanks.

JULIE: That's very brave of you.

FRANK: Yes it is. Tremendously courageous. *(beat)* Ms Davis, I would like to say that all three of us are disgusted and ashamed at the treatment you received at the hands of one our organisation's employees, and we have sworn to bring that person to justice and have them sacked in disgrace.

JOHN: Hear hear!

FRANK: I hope that will satisfy you, Ms Davis?

SHARON: Um...yeah, thanks. Thanks a lot.

FRANK: And if you don't mind me asking, how have you been since the incident?  
Have  
you been able to cope day-to-day?

SHARON: Um, well...I've been a bit sad.

FRANK: Have you? Oh God. Have an hors-d'oeuvre.

FRANK *offers her the plate of hors-d'ouvres.*

SHARON: Thanks.

FRANK: Have you had any counselling to help you get over it?

SHARON: *(mouth full of food)* You mean like a school counsellor?

FRANK: Well...yes.

SHARON: No, not yet. But if I keep feeling sad I s'pose I'd better go.

FRANK: Yes, I recommend it. There is no shame in seeking professional help to overcome such a traumatic incident. So if you continue to feel sad don't hesitate to seek psychiatric help and Adults Only will meet the cost.

SHARON: *(pause)* Can I have a drink?

FRANK: Yes, of course. Champagne?

SHARON: Ooh, yes please.

FRANK: Julie.

JULIE, *with much annoyance, pours her a drink.*

FRANK: May I be so bold to say that considering what you've been through you look remarkably...well. I'm sure with youth on your side and a positive attitude you will overcome this traumatic event and go on to lead a full and happy life.

SHARON: Oh...good.

JULIE: Here's your drink.

SHARON: Yummy, I love champagne.

*She sculls most of it and then burps.*

FRANK: Tasty?

SHARON: Yep.

FRANK: Good. Now for a surprise. As part of our apology, Julie is going to take you on a tour of the factory.

JULIE: I'm what?

FRANK: Taking Ms Davis on a tour of the factory. You've been looking forward to it, haven't you?

JULIE: *(pause)* Yes.

SHARON: I'll get to see how they make all the sex stuff?

FRANK: That's right.

SHARON: *(giggling)* Even those blow-up dolls?

FRANK: Even them.

*She giggles, sculls the rest of the champagne and puts the glass on the table.*

SHARON: Okay, Jules, let's get going.

FRANK *picks up a plastic bag from a desk with "Adults Only" written on it.*

FRANK: This is for you to take on your tour to fill up with as many products as you can fit in. As part of our apology.

SHARON: Oh, gosh...thanks.

SHARON *takes the bag.*

JULIE: (*bored*) Follow me.

FRANK: Have fun.

*They exit.*

FRANK: Poor kid. But goodness me, isn't she handling it well considering what she's been through?

JOHN: Remarkably.

FRANK: Not at all what I expected. She looks so...healthy.

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: And yet there's a sadness there.

JOHN: Oh definitely. As you you'd expect after what she's been through.

FRANK: The poor little thing. I have this overwhelming desire to comfort her.

JOHN: You're a very kind man, Frank.

FRANK: Yes...yes I am.

JOHN: Right, I'll organise Barrington.

*JOHN starts to exit. FRANK stops him.*

FRANK: John, you're sure it's him, aren't you?

JOHN: Yes, Frank, I'm sure.

FRANK: Because you realise I'm taking a bit of a risk, don't you?

JOHN: As only the best managers do. Senior management will be stunned by your innovative and flamboyant methods.

FRANK: Yes, yes, they will be. Right! Let's get on with it.

*Blackout.*

**SCENE 3**

FRANK *stands drinking champagne.* JULIE *enters holding the Adult Pleasures Bag which is now overflowing with products, and a Pleasure Pogo. The Pleasure Pogo is a normal pogo stick, but with handlebars and a bike seat on the top of it. Poking through the middle of the bicycle seat is a huge dildo.*

FRANK: There you are. And where is the lovely Sharon?

JULIE: Oh. I took her on the tour and when we came to the Pleasure Pogo section she insisted on trying one out. I'm afraid she overdid it.

FRANK: Is she all right? You haven't further hurt our complainant, have you?

JULIE: No, she's fine. She should be here any second.

*SHARON comes into the office on crutches. SHARON has a big smile on her face. FRANK rushes to her.*

FRANK: Are you all right?

SHARON: Yes, fine.

FRANK: But you're on crutches!

SHARON: Only until I get my strength back. I feel a little weak in the knees at the moment.

FRANK: Well, let me help you into a seat.

*He sits her down. He picks up the Pleasure Pogo for a moment.*

FRANK: No problems with this one?

SHARON: Uh uh.

FRANK: You overdid it a bit, did you?

SHARON: Mm.

FRANK: Well, that's understandable. It's very enticing, isn't it?

SHARON: Very.

FRANK: But you do have to be careful.

SHARON: Yes.

FRANK: And I see you've filled your bag to the top.

SHARON: It wasn't big enough.

FRANK: That's wonderful. But at the same time I can't help feeling concerned because some of these products are quite complicated to use and I'd hate to think of you at home, all alone, putting your body at risk. (*confidentially, so JULIE can't hear*) That's why I, as a further way of making up for our staff member's rudeness, would be delighted to personally come to your home to ensure you're using our products correctly? What do you say?

SHARON: Well, you've been so nice already, I'd hate to put you out.

FRANK: I wouldn't be put out, I'd love to do it.

SHARON: Yes, well, I'll remember that.

FRANK: Good. Call anytime. I'll come round at a moment's notice.

SHARON: Well thanks for everything. Perhaps I should go now.

*SHARON stands on her crutches, grabs her sample bag and turns towards the door.  
FRANK blocks her path.*

FRANK: Ms Davis...Sharon. I'm sorry to have to do this to you, you've been through enough trauma as it is, but I'll need you to stay a little longer to help us with our investigation.

*FRANK takes the bag from her and puts it back on the desk.*

SHARON: Oh.

FRANK: You see, we have a suspect.

SHARON: You do?

FRANK: And if you can identify his voice over the telephone, it will lead to his sacking and improved client service from this organisation.

JULIE: This is harassment! You can't do this. It's not him.

FRANK: Julie, it's our job.

JULIE: I won't stand for this. I'm going to put in a complaint.

FRANK: Write me a letter, I'll look into it.

JULIE: I won't let this go ahead.

FRANK: Julie, if you keep this up I won't take you to the top with me any more.

JULIE: If these are the methods you have to use to get there, I don't want to go there.

FRANK: Julie, I warned you that you'd have to be tough to get through this investigation. Now, for the last time, I'm asking you to dump your emotional baggage and focus on the cold, hard facts. It's your job. Can you do that?

JULIE: *(Pause)* I'm going to the CEO.

*She moves to the door. FRANK blocks her path.*

FRANK: Julie, I wouldn't do that. You'll destroy your career.

JULIE: You don't care about my career. You're only concerned about your own.

FRANK: That's not true. I have no reason to be concerned, it's already mapped out. I'm going to the top.

JULIE: Then you don't have to worry.

*She tries to step round him, but he's too quick.*

JULIE: Frank, let me pass, please.

FRANK: Julie -

JULIE: Let me pass!

*They stare at each other. A tense pause. FRANK finally wilts.*

FRANK: You really think I'm being too hard on this Barrington character?

JULIE: Yes! I saw him in the hallway before. He was extremely stressed because of our calls to him earlier.

FRANK: You didn't tip him off, did you, Julie?

JULIE: Of course not. But I felt very sorry for him. He's already passed our tests with flying colours. Can't we leave him alone now?

*FRANK moves away from JULIE.*

FRANK: Let me think for a moment. I need to clear my head.

*FRANK, suddenly, does some quick callisthenic exercises. After a moment he stops and clutches his knee. He hobbles to the desk with the sample bag on it and leans on it.*

JULIE: Frank, are you all right?

*FRANK inconspicuously puts his hand inside the "Adults Only" bag and feels around.*

FRANK: I'll be okay in a moment. Just an old footy injury playing up.

*He takes out a product and hides it behind his back. We don't see what it is.*

FRANK: You're absolutely right. I've gone too far. It's got to stop.

JULIE: Are you serious, Frank?

FRANK: I am. The exercise cleared my head and made me realise how out of hand it was getting.

JULIE: Frank, thank you. You've done the right thing.

FRANK: I know, and thank you, Julie. Thank you for making me see the light. And please, accept my apology for the way I treated you. It was disgraceful. I am so very sorry.

*FRANK offers his hand, but remains leaning on the desk.*

FRANK: Sorry, my leg.

*JULIE walks over to him.*

JULIE: Apology accepted.

*JULIE shakes his hand. FRANK immediately whips his free arm from behind his back and snaps a handcuff over her wrist. He quickly latches the other cuff to a desk leg.*

JULIE: What are you doing? Have you gone mad!

FRANK: I'm sorry, Julie, but it's for your own good.

*He puts a chair behind her and sits her down.*

JULIE: You've really done it now. Not only will I be going to the CEO, but I'm going to press charges against you too!

*FRANK pops the key in his pocket. JULIE furiously tries to lift the desk up so she can slip the handcuff under the desk leg, but it's too heavy.*

FRANK: Julie, I know you're angry at the moment, but you were out of control. Later on, when you come to your senses, you'll realise that I actually saved your career and you'll thank me for it.

JULIE: This is assault, kidnapping!

FRANK: I hardly think so. I have a witness. Sharon, you saw how out of control she was, didn't you? And you'd be willing to stand up in a court of law and back me up, wouldn't you?

SHARON *stares at the scene mouth agape, unable to speak.*

FRANK: See what you've done, Julie? - our complainant is in shock because of you! Sharon, I'm sorry you had to see this. I know this sort of behaviour can be very distressing for someone so young. Please don't let it put you off joining the work force, because I assure you this sort of thing doesn't happen often. Once or twice a year at the most, usually at the Christmas party.

JULIE: Your career's finished, Frank!

FRANK: Shut-up!

JULIE: I will not.

FRANK: Then I'm going to have to shut you up.

*He opens the sample bag and looks through it.*

FRANK: There must be something in here that will keep you quiet.

JULIE: If you try to use any of those -

FRANK: Sharon, may I say you've made some excellent choices here! You'll have hours of pleasure with these.

JULIE: How do you know that, Frank?

FRANK: Well, from...client feedback, of course.

JULIE: Client feedback! Personal experience more like it! Every time he visits the factory floor products go missing.

FRANK: Don't listen to her, Sharon. These products are for lonely, unsatisfied people, whereas I'm married.

SHARON: (*hurt*) I'm not lonely or unsatisfied.

FRANK: Not any more you're not. You've got your free products. Uh huh!

*FRANK holds up a black leather mask that has eye and nose holes, and a zip for a mouth hole. FRANK zips up the mouth hole.*

JULIE: Don't you put that on me!

FRANK: You've left me with no choice.

*He holds it above her head, about to put it on her when she starts thrashing her head about to stop him and...*

JULIE: All right! I'll shut-up. Just don't put it on me.

*He continues to hold it over her head threateningly.*

FRANK: Only if you promise not to interrupt the voice identification test.

JULIE: I promise.

FRANK *puts the mask on the desk.*

FRANK: Good. Later on, when it's all over, we'll sit down over a cup of coffee and have a good laugh about all this. And I'll explain to you what risk management is all about.

JULIE: Okay, fine.

FRANK: And I want you to know, Julie, that no-one is out to get Barrington. If he gets through this that will be the end of it. I promise.

JULIE: Great.

FRANK: Right. Sharon, are you ready?

SHARON: Yeah, I s'pose.

FRANK: Good.

*FRANK picks up the phone and dials. Lights up on the alcove. REX is tied to the chair. He has ear muffs on and is gagged. JOHN stands behind him wearing the head set. He pushes a button on the console.*

JOHN: Frank?

FRANK: Yes, sorry it's taken so long, but Julie got emotional on me and I had to counsel her.

JOHN: Typical, you've got to get rid of her, Frank.

FRANK: Yes, well I'll take your suggestion on board and see what I can do. Are you ready to go?

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: Do you have a few of the other telephonists ready?

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: Good. How's Barrington?

JOHN: He's all right, a bit sulky. He tried to escape at first, but he's calmed down now.

FRANK: Good.

JOHN: Can you put Sharon on, please?

FRANK: Why?

JOHN: So I can explain to her how it's going to work.

FRANK: Oh, all right. Sharon, John wants a word with you to explain how this will work.

SHARON, *still on crutches, hobbles over.*

FRANK: Would you like me to hold the phone for you?

SHARON: Um...no thanks.

SHARON *takes the phone and moves as far away from FRANK as possible*

SHARON: Hello?

JOHN: Hi, it's me.

SHARON: Yes.

JOHN: The first three voices you hear won't be his, but the fourth one will be, okay?

SHARON: Yes.

JOHN: And make sure when you hear his voice you make a real song and dance about it. Tears if you can manage it. Right?

SHARON: Okay.

JOHN: Good. Put Frank back on.

SHARON: He wants to talk to you.

FRANK *puts the phone to his ear and SHARON hurries away from him.*

FRANK: Yes?

JOHN: We're ready. Put it on the speaker phone so everyone can hear.

FRANK *puts the receiver down and pushes a button on the console.*

FRANK: Right. Here we go. Sharon, If you recognise the voice, let me know. But only if you're certain.

SHARON: Okay.

JULIE: And listen very closely. A wonderful man's job is on the line.

FRANK: Julie...

FRANK *lifts up the mask. JULIE shuts up. He puts it down again.*

FRANK: Ready, John.

JOHN: *(Indian accent)* Golly gosh, you are a stupid low-life, Herpes-ridden tart!

FRANK *looks at SHARON.*

FRANK: Ring any bells?

SHARON *shakes her head.*

JOHN: Did she recognise that?

FRANK: No, put someone else on.

JOHN: Right.

FRANK: Are you okay? If you'd like to hold my hand for support, feel free.

*He offers his hand.*

SHARON: *(moving away from him a little.)* Um, that's okay.

JOHN: *(West Indian accent)* Hey man, you are a stupid low-life, Herpes-ridden tart.

FRANK: Well?

SHARON: No.

JOHN: Well?

FRANK: Nothing. And I didn't realise we had such cultural diversity in the mail order section. That's something we should push. "Adults Only, the non-discriminatory, multi-cultural employer."

JULIE: The only reason he's chosen them is to make it easier for her to pick the voice he wants her to.

FRANK: Why are you so distrustful? Were you bullied at school?

JULIE: You should at least give him a fair chance!

FRANK: *(Pause)* John, have you got anyone who sounds a little more, you know...bland? Julie thinks it's unfair.

JOHN: What a surprise.

JULIE: *(shouts at phone)* Do you have anyone who's voice isn't so blatantly different from his?

JOHN: *(pause)* I'll see what I can do. *(covers the mouthpiece with his hand.)* Fuck!

*JOHN thinks. After a moment he pinches his nostrils.*

JOHN: You are a stupid low-life, Herpes-ridden tart.

FRANK: Well?

*SHARON shakes her head.*

FRANK: John, no good either. And tell that man to have a hot lemon drink and to go straight to bed. He sounds dreadful.

JOHN: Okay.

FRANK: Right, we're ready for the next one.

*JOHN looks at REX. He takes off the ear muffs and covers the mouthpiece.*

JOHN: Right, Rex, it's your turn. All you have to say is "You are a stupid low-life, Herpes-ridden tart.", and if she doesn't recognise your voice, you're off the hook. If you don't do that, if you don't cooperate...

*From behind the desk JOHN picks up a huge, ugly vibrator and turns it on. It makes a loud, vicious buzzing noise. He rubs it threateningly against REX'S face.*

JOHN: This is as big and as nasty as they get, Rex. The family size. So don't give me a reason to use it because, believe me, I will.

FRANK: Come on, John, we can't keep Ms Davis waiting all day.

*JOHN turns the vibrator off and uncovers the mouthpiece momentarily.*

JOHN: With you in a moment, Frank.

*JOHN removes the gag from REX. REX is shaking, terrified. JOHN puts the head set on him and holds the vibrator against his head.*

JOHN: Go on!

REX: You are a....*(he pauses, pained at what he is about to say)* stupid...low-life...herpes-ridden...tart.

*SHARON gasps and puts a hand over her mouth.*

FRANK: Sharon, what is it. What's wrong?

SHARON: That's him! He's the one abused me.

*She bursts into tears.*

FRANK: Oh no! You poor little thing.

*FRANK hugs her. She squirms out of his grip.*

FRANK: John, she recognised his voice. It's him. Get him up here.

*JOHN takes the head set off REX triumphantly.*

JOHN: You're fucked, Barrington.

*He unties REX.*

REX: But it wasn't me! I didn't do it.

JOHN: Stop lying. Now get moving.

*JOHN drags REX off stage. Lights go down on the alcove.*

JULIE: No, it can't be. Not Rex.

FRANK: Julie, she recognised his voice. It's over. Accept it.

JULIE: It's a set-up. It must be. *(to SHARON)* Why are you doing this to him?

FRANK: For God's sake, Julie, can't you see how upset she is?

*FRANK tries to hug her. SHARON pulls away.*

FRANK: You see, she's inconsolable!

*JOHN comes on dragging REX. FRANK goes over to him and slaps his face.*

FRANK: You have disgraced this organisation. And you have traumatised this lovely young lady. What have you got to say for yourself?

REX: It wasn't me.

*FRANK slaps him again.*

FRANK: For God's sake stop it! It's over. Your voice has been recognised. At least be man enough to admit what you've done and then get down on your knees and beg this young lady for forgiveness.

*Pause. Then REX moves towards SHARON.*

REX: Miss?

SHARON: Yes?

REX: I don't know who you are, or why you're doing what you're doing, but I swear to you that I did not speak to you that way.

JOHN: Just apologise!

REX: You're obviously a lovely young woman. I don't know why, but some awful person has led you astray and made you carry out their dirty work for them. Please, resist them and look into your heart, and you'll realise that I'm innocent and that I'm committed to excellent client service. All I want to do is help satisfy people. Please, I don't want to lose my job. I'm begging you.

*REX falls to his knees.*

JULIE: Oh, Rex!

*JULIE reaches for him, but the handcuffs stop her making contact.*

JOHN: This is making me sick.

FRANK: Me too. Let's get them both out of here. You're both fired.

*FRANK picks up REX and starts to drag him out and JOHN moves towards JULIE.*

SHARON: Stop it!

*They all look at her.*

FRANK: Sharon, what's wrong?

SHARON: It's true! Someone did put me up to it!

FRANK: What!

JOHN: Frank, she doesn't know what she's saying. She's too upset. Let's get her out of here.

SHARON: Rex couldn't have said those terrible things. He's obviously a beautiful person.

JOHN: Come on, Sharon, let's get you to your school counsellor.

*She gets down on her knees and begs him. JOHN tries to lift her up, but she clings to REX'S leg.*

SHARON: Rex, I'm so sorry, and so ashamed. Please forgive me.

FRANK: This is unbelievable.

JULIE: I don't think so. Who put you up to it, Sharon?

JOHN: Leave her alone. Can't you see she's insane.

SHARON: My name isn't, Sharon. It's Bridget!

JOHN: Oh no, she's developed another personality. Proud of yourself, Rex?

JULIE: Bridget, Sharon, whoever. If you don't tell us who's behind this we'll press charges against you for defaming Rex's character.

SHARON *looks up at JOHN.*

JOHN: What are you looking at me for?

SHARON: It's him! My brother!

FRANK: Your brother!

SHARON: Yes!

JOHN: Come on, let's get you a lobotomy.

SHARON: He paid me fifty bucks to pretend I was the one who complained.

*Everyone stares at JOHN. Pause.*

JOHN: You little traitor! You're out of the family. And give me my fifty bucks back!

FRANK: John, as your father-figure, I have to say -

JOHN: I didn't want to do it, Frank. But I didn't have a choice. I tried to get the real Sharon Davis to come in, but she refused. She was too afraid. I assured her we'd do everything to make her feel comfortable, but nothing would change her mind. She was so scared that in the end she withdrew her complaint.

FRANK: Withdrew it!

JOHN: Yes.

FRANK: Oh no. This is dreadful. Our first serious complaint. A great complaint! - "stupid low-life herpes-ridden tart!" It doesn't get any better than that.

FRANK *hangs his head.*

JOHN: She wouldn't even tell me if the name Rex rang a bell. He's got her terrified. I told you he chose his victims well. He preys on the weak knowing they won't stand up for themselves when it comes to the crunch. Don't you, Rex? Don't you, you low-life!

FRANK: *(regaining his composure)* All right, John, that's enough. It's time -

JOHN: Frank, I was trying to be innovative, like you. I'm positive it's Rex and thought it was worth the risk. And we can still get him. All we have to do is hire a team of top psychiatrists to convince Sharon Davis to come in and identify Rex's voice. What do you say, Frank?

FRANK: John, is your pursuit of Rex Barrington purely professional?

JOHN: Yes! Absolutely. I just want unprofessional client service practices stamped out. That's all.

FRANK: Are you sure? There's nothing personal in it at all, John?

JOHN: No.

FRANK: John, this is the last time I'll ask: in all honesty, have you got it in for Rex Barrington?

JOHN: *(long pause)* Yes!

FRANK: Why?

JOHN: Because...because he's got my client service award! He didn't deserve it. I did!

*REX laughs smugly.*

JOHN: What's so funny?

REX: Well, you couldn't even answer the phone properly.

JOHN: What rubbish! No-one did it better. Listen to this: Adults Only, John speaking, what can I do for you?

REX: You forgot to say good afternoon.

JOHN: It was the morning version!

REX: And you forgot the key word.

JOHN: What key word?

REX: How can I *help* you! *Help* is the key word. That's the word clients want to hear. Not, "what can I do for you?". It creates a totally different atmosphere. Too casual, not as positive or as professional as *help*.

FRANK: Rex, I can see why you won an award.

JOHN: Frank, he doesn't know what he's talking about.

REX: Then why did I win the award? And why did most of the clients who got you on the phone ask to speak to me?

JOHN: Because you're a con-artist! A liar! But I could knock you off any day of the week.

*REX laughs again.*

JOHN: I could!

REX: I doubt it.

JOHN: Yeah?

REX: Yeah.

JOHN: Come on then.

REX: What?

JOHN: Let's go. You and me, right now.

REX: What do you mean?

JOHN: Head to head, no holds barred, a client service show-down.

REX: Are you joking?

JOHN: Come on. Frank can be the client and we serve him. And then he can decide who gave the best client service.

REX: And then?

JOHN: The loser quits and the winner stays on. What do you say? You're not chicken, are you?

*JOHN starts to dance around him making chicken noises.*

JULIE: Frank, surely you're not going to let this happen. It's just a pathetic attempt by John to save his job.

FRANK: For once, Julie, we're in agreement. John, stop this childishness and clear your desk. You're fired.

JOHN: Fired! But I haven't even been counselled yet!

FRANK: I'm sorry, John, but I think you're beyond counselling.

JOHN: Oh God, you're just as chicken as him. How do you expect to get to the top if you keep making gutless decisions? Do you think senior management want a chicken up there with them? They'd pluck and stuff you in a second. You can't manage and he can't give client service. You're just a pair of chooks.

*JOHN starts moving around the room like a chicken harassing FRANK and REX with chicken sounds. Finally it gets to much for REX...*

REX: You're on!

JULIE: Rex, no!

REX: I can take him, I can. Frank, let me do it. No-one calls me a chicken when it comes to client service.

JULIE: Frank, don't let him do it. Don't stoop to his level.

JOHN: Ignore her, Frank. Don't stoop to *her* level. You're the manager of this section. Are you going to be told what to do by someone whose decision making is guided by her emotions? I can't believe you'd be that piss-weak.

FRANK: All right. It's on!

REX: Yes!

JULIE: Frank!

FRANK: Julie, that's enough. My mind is made up.

JOHN: That's the way, Frank. That's the Manager I used to look up to.

FRANK: Yes, yes, let's get on with it.

JOHN: All right. But let's be clear on the rules. Whoever loses quits the organisation immediately. The winner stays on. Agreed?

FRANK & REX: Agreed.

JOHN: Not only that, the winner also gets the client service award. Agreed?

FRANK: We haven't got time for that. Rex would have to go home to get it.

REX: It's all right, Frank. I've got it with me.

JOHN: You carry it with you?

REX: I'm proud of it!

*REX tears his shirt open revealing a big gold medal hanging on a ribbon around his neck. JOHN shakes his head.*

JOHN: You loser.

REX: I'm the one with it around my neck! Not you!

JOHN: It will be soon! Take it off and give it to, Frank.

*REX takes it off, gives it a kiss and then gives it to FRANK, who puts it around his neck.*

JOHN: Good. (to REX) Do you want to take the first or second call?

REX: Second.

JOHN: Fine. I'll blow you away before you even say a word.

*REX warms up doing voice exercises like an actor.*

JOHN: Frank, before we start, I want you to know I have the utmost respect for you as a manager. The things I said about you earlier were said in the heat of the moment. I did not mean one word of it. I simply found myself in a corner and acted accordingly. I hope you didn't take offence.

FRANK: No, of course not.

JOHN: And I know that when you judge the competition you will remain totally impartial and fair. Won't you?

FRANK: Yes I will. Now let's get on with it.

JOHN: Okay. I'm ready. Frank, you pretend to ring up. And be as difficult as you like.

*FRANK bows his head and breathes deeply. He walks around, psyching himself up.*

JOHN: Come on, Frank.

FRANK: Give me a moment. I'm just getting into character.

*Finally FRANK pretends to dial a mobile phone. He makes "ring ring" sounds. JOHN answers his imaginary mobile phone.*

JOHN: Good afternoon, Adults Only, John speaking. How can I help you?

FRANK: Well...I'm feeling frustrated.

JOHN: Don't worry about it a moment longer because I'll soon put a stop to that. What do you think will relieve your frustration?

FRANK: Actually, I was hoping you could tell me.

*REX smirks.*

JOHN: Well, have you heard of our new product the Pleasure Pogo?

FRANK: No. What is it?

JOHN: It's this pogo stick that you bounce up and down on to make you feel good.

FRANK: Sounds painful.

JOHN: No honestly, it's great. You'll be satisfied in no time. Take my word for it. Would you like to order one?

FRANK: Well, I don't think it's really my sort of thing.

JOHN: Give it a chance, it will be. So how about it?

FRANK: Ah, well –

JOHN: Come on, be a bit more open-minded. Let yourself go. You'll thank me for it later. What do you say?

FRANK: Well...no thanks, it's doesn't sound like -

*JOHN slams the imaginary phone down.*

JOHN: This is a conspiracy!

FRANK: *(still talking into the imaginary phone)* Hello? Hello?

JOHN: You're in on it with him, aren't you? That was great client service!

FRANK: You hung up on me!

JOHN: You were being deliberately difficult.

JULIE: You have to expect that in client service.

JOHN: Shut-up.

FRANK: And I felt pressured! Like you were trying to bully me into buying the product.

JOHN: I was not!

FRANK: That's how I felt.

JOHN: That's because you're a hopeless client. A good client would have loved me.

REX: My turn I think.

JOHN: Fine. But, Frank, you have to be as tough with him as you were with me.

FRANK: I will be, don't worry.

JOHN: All right, dial!

*The women yell encouragement to REX.*

JOHN: Shut-up, you two.

FRANK *dials*. “*ring ring*”. REX *picks up the imaginary phone*.

REX: Good afternoon, Adults Only, Rex speaking. How can I help you?

FRANK: Well, I’m feeling frustrated.

REX: I’m sorry to hear that, Sir. Why don’t you tell me about it so I can suggest a product that will relieve your frustration?

FRANK: Well, it’s a bit personal. I don’t know if I can talk about it to you.

REX: Sir, may I be so bold as to ask you your name?

FRANK: Um...my name’s Frank.

REX: Frank, I want to assure you that I’ll treat the information you share with me with the utmost respect. I’m here to help you, Frank. My only concern in the world right now is to relieve your frustration. However, the only way I can do that is to fully understand your problem. So I will ask you to trust me and to be totally open with me. What do you say, Frank? Are you with me?

*Tense pause*

FRANK: Well...my wife doesn’t fulfil my needs.

*REX sighs with relief, JOHN throws his arms up in disgust. FRANK starts to walk around the office discussing the matter on his imaginary phone as though he were in his own kitchen. He seems to forget where he is.*

REX: Tell me about it, Frank.

FRANK: Well, there are certain things I need. Things which less enlightened people would probably call sick. So for years I kept them to myself. But then one day, after I’d finished reading “Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus”, I plucked up the courage to tell my wife about them.

REX: And?

FRANK: She hasn’t touched me since.

REX: I’m sorry to hear that.

FRANK: In fact, she moved into the spare room. She barely acknowledges my existence. I’ve tried to repress my needs for the sake of my marriage, but they keep surging up in me. They won’t go away! They won’t! They...

*Suddenly FRANK sees everyone staring at him in horror - except REX.*

FRANK: I'm in character, that's all. It has nothing to do with -

REX: Frank, are you there?

FRANK: *(puts imaginary phone against ear)* Yes, Rex.

REX: I think I've got just the thing for you.

FRANK: You do?

REX: Yes, but before I tell you about it I need to know if you're a genuinely open-minded person who's willing to try things.

FRANK: I am. I'm very open-minded.

REX: Good. Then the product for you is an exciting new one we've just developed called the Pleasure Pogo.

FRANK: The Pleasure Pogo! What's that?

REX: It's a specially designed pogo stick with a luxury leather seat fitted with a special feature that you bounce up and down on. It feels absolutely fantastic.

FRANK: Sounds painful.

REX: Funny you should say that because that was my first reaction, too. So I decided to try it out and, I have to tell you, never before has my opinion been changed so quickly. I've been bouncing around the house ever since.

FRANK: Well -

REX: I tell you what. I'll personally bring one to your home so you can test drive it. I've never done that for a client before, but I couldn't stand the thought of you being out there frustrated. How about I come over tomorrow? What time would be suitable for you?

*JOHN snatches the imaginary phone from him. They struggle over it, but JOHN eventually gets it.*

JOHN: *(into imaginary phone)* Don't listen to him, Frank, he's lying. He'd never do that for a client. But I would. In fact, you can have it for a thirty day trial period and if you're still frustrated you can return it obligation free.

*REX snatches the phone back.*

REX: I'll do all that and throw in a complimentary backdoor tickler.

*JOHN snatches the phone back.*

JOHN: I'll do that, too. And give you a ten percent discount on the Pleasure Pogo!

*REX snatches it back.*

REX: I'll give you a twenty percent discount! And I'll be on call twenty-four hours a day if you need me to come round to help you.

*JOHN snatches it back.*

JOHN: So will I! And I'll stay at your house for the thirty day trial period in case you need me urgently.

*REX snatches it back.*

REX: I will too! And on top of that, every time you want to take the Pleasure Pogo for a spin I'll personally insert it for you!!!!

*Stunned silence. REX offers the phone to JOHN. JOHN turns away, beaten.*

REX: What do you say to that, Frank?

*Pause. Everyone eagerly awaits his answer.*

FRANK: Rex?

REX: Yes, Frank?

FRANK: Come forward and receive your medal.

*Everyone cheers. REX proudly walks to FRANK. They shake hands. REX bows his head and FRANK lowers the ribbon over REX'S head. JULIE and SHARON cheer. REX punches the air in triumph.*

JOHN: This is bullshit! How could you fall for that?

FRANK: It was a gold medal performance.

JOHN: He's a con-artist! And he abuses clients!

FRANK: John, it's over. Clean out your desk.

JOHN: It's not over, Frank. It'll never be over while he continues to abuse clients. He has to be stopped.

FRANK: *(Moving towards him.)* Whatever you say, John. Rex and Julie, help me subdue him.

JULIE: I can't until you take the handcuffs off.

JOHN: Frank, I wouldn't recommend it. She'll get emotional.

FRANK *takes the key out of his pocket and unlocks her. JULIE runs at JOHN screaming. Before she gets to him JOHN grabs the Pleasure Pogo off the desk and waves it around violently. JULIE stops.*

JOHN: Get back!

*He turns it on and the dildo starts to wildly thrust up and down through the bicycle seat. JULIE retreats, as do the rest of them, including SHARON who is still on her crutches.*

FRANK: John, you're highly stressed. You need counselling. If you'd like to talk to me about any unresolved childhood traumas I'd be happy to -

JOHN: Shut-up, Frank! This is between me and Barrington. I'll get a confession out of him yet.

*JOHN advances on him. He thrusts at him. REX just manages to leap out of the way.*

JULIE & SHARON: Rex!

JOHN: You may have fooled everyone else, Barrington, but you haven't fooled me. I know what you are.

*He lunges and REX ducks under the Pleasure Pogo. JOHN passes by him. While JOHN is wheeling around, REX goes to the desk and, out of the "Adult Pleasures" bag, he hurriedly pulls a long, flexible fluorescent green tube with a feather duster on the end. He turns it on and the feather duster starts spinning around.*

FRANK: The Backdoor Tickler!

JOHN: Don't make me laugh.

*JOHN lunges at REX, but REX leaps out of the way like a bullfighter. As JOHN passes by REX tickles him on the buttocks with the backdoor tickler and JOHN leaps in the air and laughs hysterically. He quickly gets himself under control. Enraged, he charges at REX and knocks the Backdoor tickler out of his hand.*

JULIE & SHARON: Rex!

*REX tries to pick it up, but JOHN thrusts the Pleasure Pogo at him and he has to leap away.*

JOHN: Now you're mine.

*JOHN advances on him. REX looks around for an escape route, but there are none available to him.*

FRANK: John, for God's sake, show some mercy.

JOHN: I'm about to. I'm going to put him out of his misery.

*JOHN thrusts the Pleasure Pogo right at REX'S face. REX grabs the bike seat, but the power of the thrust forces him to his knees. The dildo thrusts wildly at his face. JULIE screams. JOHN pushes harder and the dildo gets closer and closer to REX'S face. It looks like it's all over for REX.*

JOHN: Prepare to talk with a lisp for the rest of your life.

REX: Funny, I was about to say the same thing to you.

*REX starts to fight back! Slowly he pushes it away from his face back towards JOHN. FRANK, SHARON and JULIE cheer REX on. Finally REX gets to his feet and he and JOHN face each other breathing hard, both with an equal grip of the Pleasure Pogo, which thrusts up and down between them. There is a stalemate and they finally both fall, and disappear behind a desk. There is a scream of pain. The suspense ends when REX leaps up into view. SHARON hurries towards him.*

SHARON: Rex!

*JULIE pushes her out of the way. SHARON crashes out of sight behind a desk and lets out a scream. JULIE hugs him.*

JULIE: Well done, Rex!

FRANK: Are you all right?

REX: Fine.

FRANK: What about John?

*They look behind the desk. They all wince and groan in horror.*

FRANK: It doesn't look like the diagram, does it?

REX: Better call an ambulance.

*FRANK picks up a phone and dials. He speaks on unheard in the background.*

JULIE: Rex, you were wonderful.

REX: Thanks, Julie.

JULIE: I always believed in you. I never doubted for one moment that you were innocent.

REX: I know. That's what kept me going. And thank you for warning me. I don't think I could have coped if you hadn't.

JULIE: That's all right. *(beat)* Rex...

REX: Yes, Julie?

JULIE: Are you... seeing anyone at the moment?

REX: No.

JULIE: So you're single?

REX: Yes, I am.

JULIE: In that case, the research area has developed a new product and they've asked me to test it, but I need a partner. Would you like to come over tonight and test it with me?

REX: What is it?

JULIE: The pleasure pogo...for two

REX: I'd love to.

JULIE: Oh Rex.

*They have a long kiss. In the background FRANK puts down the phone and watches them for a moment, beaming.*

FRANK: The ambulance is on it's way.

*He puts his arms around their shoulders.*

FRANK: Rex, I was very impressed with your client service. How would you like to come and work here in the Complaints Unit with Julie and me?

REX: Are you serious?

FRANK: Absolutely. A man like you is wasted in the mail order section.

JULIE: Sorry, but do you still expect me to work here after what happened?

FRANK: Of course. That was just a bit of fun, no harm done. Neither of us meant what we said, did we? *(pause)* Did we?

JULIE: That depends.

FRANK: On what?

JULIE: On whether you're sorry for what you did to Rex and me?

FRANK: Yes I am. Very sorry.

JULIE: Hmm. I'm not convinced. Try again.

FRANK: I'm as sorry as sorry can be. I'm truly sorry.

JULIE: No, I still don't quite believe you. Let's hear it once more, just to be safe.

FRANK: *(emotional)* Julie, I'm sorry. Rex, I'm sorry. I'll never do it again. Now that John won't be here to throw me off track, you two can keep me on the straight and narrow. I swear, it'll be a fresh start. We'll be the best section in the whole place. What do you say? *(Pause)* Please!

JULIE: *(surprised)* Frank, you're emotional.

FRANK: Am I? Well...I'm sorry. It was un-managerial of me.

JULIE: No, don't be sorry - you need emotion in management, so you can empathise with staff.

FRANK: That's right, you do, I remember now. Did you feel empathy coming from me?

JULIE: Yes, I did. I'm convinced that you're truly sorry.

FRANK: Good. So are you with us, Rex?

JULIE: Say yes, Rex. Please say yes.

*(REX looks at them both.*

REX: Yes! Thank you, Frank.

FRANK: Welcome aboard, Rex.

*JULIE hugs him. FRANK hugs them both.*

FRANK: We'll make a great team, I know it. And just between the three of us, I intend to go all the way to the top through this section and when I do, I'll be taking both of you with me.

JULIE & REX: Oh Frank -

FRANK: Please, you both deserve it. And try not to get depressed because John scared off our first serious complainant. I'm sure our mail order telephonists will be calling our clients all sort of disgusting names in no time. So chins up, all right?

*JULIE and REX nod.*

FRANK: Good. Now let's get these two out of here.

REX: Right.

FRANK: No, Rex. You've been through enough today. Julie and I will do it. Come on, Julie.

FRANK *goes to JOHN and JULIE goes to SHARON.*

FRANK: Right, John, let's get that out of there. On the count of three. One, two, three!

*A scream from JOHN. FRANK pulls up the Pleasure Pogo and puts it on the table.*

FRANK: Now up you get. There's an ambulance waiting for you downstairs.

*FRANK pulls JOHN to his feet. JOHN stands hunched over Neanderthal-like, looking very uncomfortable. He points at REX and yells....*

JULIE: *(stutters)* Frank...just....give... me....one...m-m-m-more...shot...I-I-I swear -

*FRANK puts the black leather mask over JOHN's head and zips the mouth hole up. He can no longer talk. He thrashes around.*

FRANK: That's better.

*JULIE pulls SHARON to her feet.*

JULIE: Come on, to your feet.

SHARON: Can I still have my free products?

*She tries to grab them, but JULIE pulls her hand away from them.*

JULIE: No you can't. Get moving.

FRANK: *(to SHARON, confidentially)* You know, I could sneak some around to you, if you like.

SHARON: Piss off, you old pervert.

FRANK: *(pause)* Let's get these criminals out of here.

*FRANK and JOHN disappear out the door and as JULIE drags SHARON through the door...*

SHARON: Rex, call me!

*REX is alone on stage. He surveys the scene and then the phone rings. REX answers it.*

REX: Good afternoon, Complaints Unit, Rex speaking. How can I help you? *(pause)* I'm sorry, John no longer works here. Can I help you? *(pause)* You *would* like to proceed with the complaint? Well I'm happy to inform you - *(pause)* No, I don't work in the mail order section. *(pause)* No, I've never worked there. I think you must have me mixed up with someone else. But I do know about your complaint and I'm happy to say the person who insulted you has been identified and sacked.

*He picks up the “Adult Pleasures” Bag.*

REX: As an apology you’ll soon be receiving a bag of free products worth hundreds of dollars. *(pause)* Yes, a Pleasure Pogo too. *(pause)* No, it’s not defective. In fact, we’ve just finished testing it and we’re very pleased with the results. *(pause)* No problem at all. Thanks for calling. Have a nice day.

*REX puts the phone down. He picks up the pleasure pogo and scoffs.*

REX: Pleasure Pogo defective! If it’s broken you broke it, you stupid, low-life Herpes-ridden tart.

*REX turns it on and the dildo starts thrusting in and out of the bicycle seat. REX gives it a lascivious look and glances around furtively.*

BLACKOUT

*Recorded sound of a zipper opening and then a Pogo stick bouncing across the stage accompanied by REX’S moans of sexual pleasure. Suddenly there is a electrical zapping sound, a flame-like flash, a cry of agony from REX and a huge crash on the stage. LIGHTS UP. The end of the Pleasure Pogo is sticking straight up behind a desk. REX is nowhere to be seen.*

**THE END**