

The Fierce Urgency of Now

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

TIME: October through June in the recent present.

SETTING: NYC, mostly.

LOCATIONS

Kyle's bedroom in his apartment in Greenwich Village, New York.

Kyle's office at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi and Hess, an ad agency in mid-town Manhattan.

O'Lunney's, an Irish Pub in mid-town Manhattan.

Kate's office at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi and Hess.

A conference room at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi and Hess.

The Delta Shuttle enroute to Washington D.C.

A bar in a Ballroom at the Marriott Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C.

Posh, a gay bar in Hell's Kitchen, New York.

The living room of Dodo's apartment on Central Park West, New York.

An elevator at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi and Hess.

Columbia University Medical Center, New York.

A dressing room at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York.

Kyle's desk in the "cube farm."

The cockpit of a small plane, Teterboro Airport, New Jersey.

All locations and time shifts can be suggested by two chairs, a table or desk, projections, and sound effects. The action is meant to be fluid throughout.

SYNOPSIS

"When staying the same becomes unbearable, we must burst out of our comfort zones."

– Dana P. Rowe

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

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

SCENE ONE

Total darkness. Sound of two men having sex. One stops.

NEIL

Wait.

KYLE

Is everything okay?

NEIL

No.

KYLE

What's the matter?

NEIL

I don't want to hurt you.

KYLE

You're not.

NEIL

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

KYLE

We can try something else, then.

NEIL

No.

KYLE

Really, it's okay.

NEIL

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

Lights up on Neil, 50, and Kyle, 30, in Kyle's bedroom.

KYLE

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

NEIL

... Yes.

KYLE

In the middle of sex?

NEIL

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

KYLE

But you said you did.

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Too late, Neil.

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

You're an asshole.

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

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

Neil picks up a bag, puts it back down, and stares at Kyle as if he's about to change his mind. He doesn't, picks up his bag again and goes, taking out his phone as he leaves. Lights change.

NEIL

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

SCENE TWO

Lights change. Kyle's office. Later that morning.
Kate, 40, and Kyle.

KATE

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

Kyle sobs. Kate awkwardly hugs him.

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Thanks for saving our asses, Kate.

KATE

Don't mention it.

(She lights a cigarette.)

D'ya mind?

KYLE

Actually, Kate, I do.

KATE

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

KYLE

And it's illegal.

KATE

It's Sunday. Call a cop.

KYLE

Kate, seriously, I'm allergic to smoke.

KATE

(Stubbing out her cigarette.)

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

KYLE

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

KATE

Kyle, yeah, honey...

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Shouldn't we wait for Meryl to get here?

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

You can't give it to Angela and leave me on Marriott?

KATE

She doesn't have any financial experience. Anyway, she couldn't handle both Moore and Citibank, she's not senior enough for two accounts as high volume as they are.

KYLE

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

KATE

I thought you'd like that, Moore is a fun account! Lots of good projects, some TV, too.

KYLE

But Benjamin Moore is Neil's account!

KATE

I didn't know you two were... Shouldn't shit where ya work, didn't your mother ever tell you... oh, sorry. I forgot.

KYLE

It's okay.

KATE

Well, didn't your aunt ever tell you not to screw with account execs?

KYLE

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

KATE

See? Creatives and Account Management? Mongoose/Cobra. Look, honey, if Neil gets out of line, if there's anything you can't handle, you come to me, okay? We go way back.

(Taking a deep breath.)

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

So who's my writer now? You?

KATE

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

KYLE

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

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Sorry.

KATE

It's going to be okay. I know it's all a bit rough right now, but I've got your back. Trust me. Look, why don't you just take the day to sort yourself out, try to relax a bit, calm down? Hey, you live in the village, right?

KYLE

Yeah.

KATE

Go to the Halloween Parade tonight! Party with the f... fun crowd, huh?

KYLE

No tricks, no treats, no thanks.

KATE

Then go out for a nice dinner and put in a reimbursement form. I'll sign it. I'll even approve a scotch or two, okay?

KYLE

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

KATE

/ Kyle, you're officially off the Marriott account. Go home. This is probably the last Sunday before the end of the year I'll be able to let you take off. You know our motto: You work at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi & Hess. You don't come in Sunday: Good luck and God Bless. So go. The new boss says it's okay.

KYLE

If you say so.

Kyle exits. Kate lights up and makes a call.

KATE

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

(Hanging up, she picks up Kyle's Marriott folder and thumbs through it.)

Shit. This is good stuff.

SCENE THREE

Lights change. Kyle's office, the next morning. He's spritzing Bretheezy, a Febreze-like product.

KYLE

She just can't help herself.

Kate enters with Dodo, 70.

KATE

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

KYLE

Yeah, I heard.

KATE

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

KYLE

Okay, I guess.

KATE

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

KYLE

I wouldn't call it "magic" / yet

DODO

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

KATE

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

Kate goes.

KYLE

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

DODO

You have to in this business.

(She sizes him up, and smiles.)

If I'd realized it was you they were giving me, I'd have laid in a supply of Pampers.

KYLE

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

DODO

(Impressed with his quick retort.)

Well gaga goo-goo to you, too.

KYLE

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

DODO

Keeping my job, Kyle-bird.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

I'm Dodo.

KYLE

I thought your name is Dolores?

DODO

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

KYLE

Nope. You?

DODO

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

KYLE

How about Citibank?

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

Oh. That sucketh.

KYLE

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

DODO

Deirdre Goldfarb? All true.

KYLE

I thought you didn't work on Citibank?

DODO

She was a junior account wienie on Amex back in the late 80s.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

She would have agreed with you. Not a great parental role model, but when there's no one else...

(He stops.)

I'd rather not talk about it anymore if you don't mind. It's not that big of a deal. She was what she was.

DODO

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

KYLE

What, are you a fucking English teacher too?

DODO

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

KYLE

Duly noted.

DODO

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

KYLE

She hated that nickname. But she kinda was.

DODO

I never thought of her as the maternal type.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

Who?

DODO

Classic movie with Rosalind Russell?

KYLE

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

DODO

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

Kyle's office phone rings.

KYLE

(Looking at the phone's ID bar.)

It's Goldfarb.

(He puts the phone on speaker.)

This is Kyle.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

KYLE

We'll be right there.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

KYLE

Duly noted.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

KYLE

/ We're on our way.

(Hanging up on her.)

Jesus!

DODO

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

SCENE FOUR

Lights change. O'Lunney's, an Irish bar. 8:00 that night.
Meryl, 32, and Kyle, shooting darts.

KYLE

Have you seen the dinosaur I got stuck with?

MERYL

Just in passing. I was hoping to really talk to her today, she's kind of a living legend around here.

KYLE

For longevity, maybe. God help us if we're still doing this when we're her age, Meryl. I can't believe Kate broke us up.

MERYL

She might not have had a choice. Did you talk to Scalo?

KYLE

Yeah. He's "happy to have us working here but he doesn't get involved in how his creative directors run their groups, we're all lucky to have jobs in this economy, Citibank is a new account and too important to trust with a less experienced art director..." blah, blah, blah.

MERYL

What else was he gonna say?

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

KYLE

Shit. It's Goldfarb.

MERYL

You gave her your cell number?

KYLE

We had to.

MERYL

Christ! It's worse than JWT!

KYLE

Yeah...

(He answers.)

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

He disconnects.

MERYL

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

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

The phone rings again. He ignores it.

KYLE

Third. All that stuff we've heard about her? Worse. And there's a new client at Citibank. Her name is Anita, and she makes every other Citi-Wanker look like a Disney Princess by comparison.

MERYL

Yikes!

KYLE

I guess I should go back. Lunch tomorrow?

MERYL

Can't this week at all.

KYLE

Then here next Monday?

MERYL

No, I can't next week either.

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

You mean our new campaign. ... I see.

MERYL

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

KYLE

/ Yeah, yeah, sure. Thanks for telling me.

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

Kate shouldn't have said anything to you.

MERYL

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

KYLE

Almost everything. Don't tell anyone.

MERYL

You know you can trust me.

KYLE

When are you leaving?

MERYL

Tomorrow afternoon.

KYLE

Maybe you should start packing.

MERYL

Yeah. Maybe I should.

KYLE

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

He exits, still holding a dart.

MERYL

Kyle? Wait!... Grow up, Jerk-Face.

SCENE FIVE

Lights change. Kyle's office, later that night. Neil enters.

NEIL

Still here, kiddo?

KYLE

Yes.

NEIL

My stuff?

KYLE

No.

NEIL

You handled yourself well this morning.

KYLE

I can work with you. If I have to.

NEIL

No F-bombs. Impressive.

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

Kate knows.

KYLE

She guessed. And she promised to keep it secret.

NEIL

And did she?

KYLE

(Quietly.)

She thought Meryl already knew.

NEIL

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

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

KYLE

I don't.

NEIL

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

KYLE

I don't believe you.

NEIL

You don't want to believe me. You've only been working with her a few months; I've known her for 10 years.

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Kate gave me a voucher already.

NEIL

Remember what I said about her.

KYLE

Why do you care?

NEIL

I'm not heartless, Kyle.

KYLE

Duly noted.

NEIL

Yesterday morning, all I could see when I looked into your eyes was a wonderful young man who was dreaming about the white picket fence, the cozy little house, the dog, the life he never had, and it was all becoming more than just a bit of fun. And that scared the crap out of me.

KYLE

Jeez, Neil, you can't even call it what it is? Maybe all I want from you is "sex" too, did ya even think about that?

NEIL

You were also falling / in love

KYLE

/ No, I / wasn't.

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

Do you really know yourself, Kyle? I'm sorry I ended it, and I'm sorry I ended it the way I did. But I had to because I care about you.

KYLE

Yeah, right.

NEIL

I do. And because I care, I have to tell you to watch yourself around Kate. She's a mother, but not the kind you want her to be. All those "honeys" and "sweeties," that "Earth Mother" thing she's got going on, don't be taken in. She's Mother Earth after the toxins have seeped deep into her soil.

KYLE

Would you please go?

NEIL

Don't say I didn't warn you.

KYLE

And just why the hell should I trust you?

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

Bullseye.

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

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

Neil exits.

SCENE SIX

Lights change. Kyle's office, December 21st. Kyle is on the phone.

KYLE

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

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

MERYL

Isn't this where I left?

KYLE

8th time in 7 weeks I've told her to fuck off. Welcome back, bitch!

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

Kate certainly loves her. How was the trip?

MERYL

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

Kyle opens the box and takes out a coffee mug.

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

Duly noted. Thanks!

MERYL

Listen, I need you to send Angela your Marriott files.

KYLE

No.

MERYL

Oh come on, Kyle, don't be a dick.

KYLE

Those are my designs.

MERYL

But it's my copy.

KYLE

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

MERYL

(Gently.)

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

KATE

(Shouting as she barges in.)

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

Who said anything about working Christmas day?

KYLE

She did! She offered to bring in Chinese food as if that was some great peace offering. You know, Kate, I have a real problem with her telling me I need to work on Christmas day. Just because I'm single too doesn't / mean

KATE

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

MERYL

Fat chance.

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

You know the Marriott account.

KYLE

Yeah, just like I know the Citibank account.

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Yeah. Fine. Whatever.

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Yeah.

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

I want to see those Citibank E-Blast revisions at 3:00.

KYLE

No problem.

KATE

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

KYLE

Yeah, she's alright.

KATE

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

MERYL

Sure.

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

KYLE

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

KATE (OFF)

I heard that.

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

Dodo enters.

DODO

When what happened?

KYLE

Never mind.

MERYL

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

DODO

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

MERYL

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

DODO

Marriott?

KYLE

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

DODO

Well ka-ka poo-poo for you!

KYLE

How about 4:30?

MERYL

Here, my office, or Starbucks?

KYLE

Panera. I'm gonna need lunch, and I like their sandwiches better.

MERYL

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

She exits.

DODO

Today's the anniversary, isn't it?

KYLE

What?

DODO

Lockerbie. ... I remembered reading something in the trades when Maryanne took you in, so I Googled you. Your parents were on that flight, weren't they?

KYLE

Yes. They were. ... You're pretty savvy for a digital immigrant. ...

DODO

(Sending Kyle a text.)

Yes. I can text, too.

KYLE

(Reading the text, he bursts out laughing.)

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

DODO

How the hell did you find that out?

KYLE

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

DODO

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

(She lowers her voice.)

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

KYLE

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

DODO

I'm going to slug you!

KYLE

You were a pilot?

DODO

I still am.

KYLE

Impressive. Do you still fly?

DODO

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

KYLE

I can imagine.

DODO

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

KYLE

Why are you still working?

DODO

After my husband Don died there wasn't as much money as I thought there'd be.

KYLE

That sucketh.

DODO

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

Kyle takes out his phone and shows it to Dodo.

KYLE

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

DODO

Weren't you just adorable!

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

Everything okay?

DODO

Not bad. For a 58 year old.

KYLE

(Reading her copy.)

This is too good for Citibank!

DODO

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

KYLE

You don't like Kate, do you?

DODO

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

SCENE SEVEN

Lights change. Kate's office, immediately following.
She's on the phone.

KATE

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

(She hangs up on her.)

Fucking bitch.

Neil enters.

NEIL

You bellowed?

KATE

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

NEIL

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

KATE

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

NEIL

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

KATE

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

NEIL

My personal affairs are none of your business.

KATE

I wonder what Scalo would think if he knew his faggot son-in-law fooled around with one of his employees this time?

NEIL

Let's ask him, shall we?

(He picks up Kate's phone.)

And while we're at it, let's see how much he knows about you and that "Bretheezy" mess. Kind of sucks Alan lost a job because of that, doesn't it?

KATE

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

NEIL

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

They lock eyes. Kate caves first.

KATE

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

NEIL

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

KATE

Fine.

NEIL

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

KATE

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

NEIL

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

KATE

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

NEIL

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

He exits. She picks up her phone.

KATE

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

SCENE EIGHT

Lights change. Kate's office, 3:00 that afternoon.

DODO

... So when the target gets the ya-ya

KYLE

E-Blast

DODO

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

KYLE

E-Blast

DODO

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

KYLE

Body copy

DODO

Will be blah, blah, blah

KYLE

That's self-explanatory

DODO

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

KYLE

Legal copy

DODO

And the Citibank tag line.

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

I disagree, Kate.

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

For chrissakes, Kate!

KATE

Watch the tone, Kyle. I said change it.

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Whatever you say, Kate.

Kyle and Dodo exit.

KATE

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

KYLE

(Coming back.)

Yeah?

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

So that's been decided?

KATE

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

KYLE

Oh. Good.

KATE

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

KYLE

We can't shoot in New York?

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Thanks, Kate.

KATE

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

KYLE

I can send it to her.

KATE

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

KYLE

Good point. Thanks, Kate.

KATE

Don't mention it.

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

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

SCENE NINE

Lights change. A conference room, the next afternoon. A woman's voice on speaker phone, shrieking furiously.

ANITA'S VOICE

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

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

ANITA'S VOICE

Damn right I have. Change that background, Kevin!

KYLE

Kyle.

ANITA'S VOICE

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

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

ANITA'S VOICE

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

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

/ Holiday spending.

ANITA'S VOICE

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

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

ANITA'S VOICE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, font, whatevah.

KYLE

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

ANITA'S VOICE

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

KATE

Whatever you say, Anita.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

KATE

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

(She disconnects.)

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

DODO

Be my guest, darling.

KATE

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

Kate exits.

DODO

Should I be worried?

KYLE

Why?

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

I've got nothing to do now.

KYLE

Enjoy it.

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

They always find ways, especially when...

KYLE

What?

DODO

Never mind.

KYLE

Tell me!

DODO

Don't you have a train to catch?

KYLE

Are you going to be okay?

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

(As he leaves.)

Kyle?

KYLE

Yeah?

DODO

What are you doing for Christmas?

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

Red Wine.

KYLE

Oh. Okay.

DODO

And Scotch.

KYLE

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

DODO

Kyle-bird?

KYLE

Yeah?

DODO

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

KYLE

Duly noted. Just use "darling" instead, right?

(He hugs her.)

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

DODO

(Hugging him back.)

Get out of here.

SCENE TEN

Lights change. The Delta Shuttle, later that afternoon.

MERYL

I felt bad playing Kyle that way the other day.

KATE

You got the files, right?

MERYL

Yeah, but...

KATE

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

MERYL

It could have waited for her to get back.

KATE

He doesn't need to know that.

MERYL

I guess. He'll get full credit, right?

KATE

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

MERYL

Sometimes.

KATE

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

MERYL

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

KATE

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

MERYL

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

KATE

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

MERYL

That's not entirely true, Kate.

KATE

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

MERYL

C'mon, Kate, we've all used our connections. Kyle works very hard, he's always worked very hard.

KATE

Maybe. But if you ask me the only thing he got from his aunt is her ego.

MERYL

I will admit he can be an exhausting pain in the ass, but that's part of his charm.

KATE

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

MERYL

No.

KATE

I haven't asked yet!

MERYL

Keep Dodo on Citibank.

KATE

I need senior creatives with financial experience on that account.

MERYL

Dodo is senior.

KATE

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

MERYL

/ Careful, / Kate

KATE

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

MERYL

Not my problem.

KATE

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

MERYL

I told you I'd leave if I had to work on Citibank again, and I meant it.

KATE

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

MERYL

(After a stare down.)

Three months. After that I can't promise anything.

KATE

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

MERYL

That would help.

KATE

Merry Christmas. You're lucky I like you.

MERYL

I pity anyone you don't.

CAPTAIN

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

KATE

Oooh, this is the fun part!

SCENE ELEVEN

Lights change. The Marriott Hotel in Washington DC.
10:00 PM that night. Meryl and Kyle, drinks in hand.

MERYL

At least we'll be working together again. I've missed us.

KYLE

Really?

MERYL

Why wouldn't I?

KYLE

I thought no one wanted to work with me.

MERYL

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

KYLE

(Toasting.)

Alan Friedenthal. Best boss ever.

MERYL

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

KYLE

Huh?

MERYL

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

KYLE

What the hell are you babbling about?

MERYL

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

KYLE

... Maybe.

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

She fought for me to do them!

MERYL

Are you really that dense? She doesn't like you. She's looking for ways to get rid of you!

KYLE

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

MERYL

Yes, but with your temper it won't be long until you just hand her one on a screaming silver platter. She's gunning for you. Just like she was gunning for Alan.

KYLE

(Not wanting to believe her.)

Duly noted.

MERYL

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

Kate enters. She may have had one too many.

KATE

There you are!

MERYL

(Adroitly changing the subject.)

So I'm going out to Commack to spend Christmas with my parents. Wanna join me?

KYLE

Christmas. On Long Island. With "The Drainers." I love ya, Meryl, but no thanks.

KATE

Oh go on, Kyle, it'll be fun. I mean, what else have you got to do? I'd have you over, but I know you're allergic to smoke, and I am allowed to light up in my own home, right?

KYLE

Thanks, Kate, but I'm going to Dodo's for an "emergency dinner party."

KATE

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

KYLE

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

Kate's phone rings.

KATE

Oh crap, it's Goldfarb.

(Answers.)

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

(She hangs up and laughs.)

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

KYLE

(Taking out his phone.)

Hold on, Kate...

KATE

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

KYLE

(He clicks something.)

Click, send, whoosh, done.

(He makes a call.)

Hey, Goldfarb. ... I just sent it to you. ... Yes, it's exactly the same, white background, red, green, and blue highlights, but with the Citibank approved fonts. ... I did two versions, 'cause I knew this would happen. ... Go home, Goldfarb.

(He disconnects and smiles at Kate.)

I knew. And it's a long train trip.

MERYL

(Under her breath.)

Well played.

KATE

(Taken aback.)

Oh. Smart. Score one for you.

(Trying to save face.)

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

Careful, Kyle.

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

SCENE TWELVE

Lights change. Posh, a gay bar in the west 50s. 10:00, Christmas Eve. Kyle on his phone.

KYLE

No, Goldfarb. ... I told you I would wait until 7:00 and then I was leaving. ... Excuse me, it's 10:00, it's Christmas Eve, and I have a date. ... You sat on those files all day. ... No, I am not coming in tomorrow. I'll be in extra early on Monday and I'll release them by 10:00. ... It's always urgent with you, Goldfarb. Merry Christmas, see ya Monday, fuck you and your Moo Shoo.

Neil enters.

NEIL

Hey, Kiddo.

KYLE

What the hell are you doing here?

NEIL

(Showing Kyle his phone.)

Zero feet away.

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

I thought you guys were "don't ask, don't tell?"

NEIL

She told.

KYLE

Well that just sucketh. For you.

NEIL

Have dinner with me?

KYLE

I'm not your boy toy anymore, remember?

NEIL

It's just dinner.

KYLE

It's 10:00, I've had dinner.

NEIL

Dessert, then?

KYLE

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

Kyle!

NEIL

What? I'm horny.

KYLE

Blow him off.

NEIL

That's the plan.

KYLE

C'mon, have a drink at least.

NEIL

That's okay.

KYLE

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

NEIL

(Showing him the guy's photo.)

If I play my cards right...

KYLE

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

NEIL

No thanks, Neil.

KYLE

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

NEIL

Kyle's phone rings.

KYLE

It's Kate.

NEIL

(Taking the phone.)

He's busy, Kate.

KYLE

(Taking the phone back.)

Give me that! Hey Kate, sorry about that. ... Neil. ... No, I just ran into him. ... I have a date. With someone else. ... No. Goldfarb sat on those damn projects all day! ... There were 15 files, I would have been there past midnight! ... Now wait a minute, Kate, you said I wouldn't have to work on Christmas. ... I don't care, you're a VP, you tell her to fuck off. ... Oh, for Christ's sake, Kate, there's nothing even remotely urgent about this. There's nothing even remotely urgent about anything Goldfarb freaks out about. ... I am not going into the office tomorrow or Sunday. I'll be in early Monday morning. ...

NEIL

(Grabbing the phone.)

Kate? From one VP to another: Fuck off.

He disconnects and hands Kyle his phone.

KYLE

(Laughing.)

You shouldn't have done that.

NEIL

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

(Moving in to kiss Kyle.)

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

(He kisses him. Long and hard.)

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

KYLE

(Pushing him away.)

I have to meet my date.

NEIL

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

Kyle turns around and stares at Neil.

SCENE THIRTEEN

Lights change. Dodo's apartment on Central Park West, late the next night. Dodo, Kyle and two scotches.

DODO

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

KYLE

/ Oh my God, you didn't!

DODO

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

KYLE

Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my / God

DODO

/ Anyway, he was so taken aback he started laughing – this big, hearty, toothless laugh. I told him I was lost and desperate to get to Kankakee, he pointed me in the right direction, I got back on the plane, took off and an hour later there I was.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

I said I'll think about it.

DODO

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

KYLE

What?

DODO

You really don't like advertising, do you?

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

Who remembers what my dream was?

DODO

You do.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

It's late. I have to go.

DODO

I saw the look on your face that day you asked me if I were still a pilot. I saw the look on that adorable little boy's face in the photo. It was the same.

KYLE

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

DODO

/ Before Lockerbie.

KYLE

Yes.

DODO

Do you hear that?

KYLE

What?

DODO

That knocking sound?

KYLE

No.

DODO

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

KYLE

Are you having a stroke? Do you smell toast?

DODO

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

KYLE

I'm calling 911.

DODO

It's the sound of your dreams beating against your heart. Like a bird batting its wings against a cage. You can pretend you've forgotten about them. You can convince yourself you're doing what you want, even that you're happy. But those dreams never die, and every now and then they fight to be heard. Knock... Knock... Knock...

KYLE

Shut up.

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

Well. ... Ka-ka poo-poo.

DODO

Ka-ka poo-poo.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

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

KYLE

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

DODO

(Singing softly.)

What are you doing New Years? New Years Eve?

We hear Ella Fitzgerald singing "What Are You Doing New Years?" over the sound of a small plane.

SCENE FOURTEEN

Lights change. Kyle and Dodo, dimly lit as from the reflected glow of a cockpit control panel.

KYLE

Wow! Just... wow!

DODO

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

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

KYLE

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

KATE'S VOICE

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

MERYL'S VOICE

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

NEIL'S VOICE

Hey, kiddo, what'cha doin' tonight?

DODO

Big winds blowing tonight. Let's fly higher.

KYLE
Higher?

DODO
Not so much bluster up there.

KYLE
Then yeah, let's fly higher.

Dodo guns the engine. A faint knocking sound begins.

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

KYLE
Higher, Dodo!

KATE'S VOICE
Kyle? Where the hell are you?

NEIL'S VOICE
Zero feet away, kiddo! You're always zero feet away.

KYLE
Higher, Dodo, higher!

NEIL'S VOICE
Kyle? Kiddo? I miss you. Come back. Let's play.

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

KATE/GOLDFARB'S VOICES
Kyle? Kyle?

KATE/GOLDFARB/NEIL/MERYL
Kyle? Kyle? KYLE? KYLE?

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

KYLE
Yes!!! Let's!!!

The knocking grows louder and louder.

SCENE FIFTEEN

Lights change. Kyle's office, Monday morning. Kyle, asleep. Kate, puffing away, knocking on the door frame.

KATE

KYLE! WAKE UP!

KYLE

(Waking with a start.)

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

KATE

(After a long, deliberate drag.)

Electronic. Christmas gift from my ex-husband.

KYLE

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

KATE

"Duly noted."

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

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

KATE

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

KYLE

Who? Me? Nope.

KATE

Uh huh.

KYLE

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

KATE

What've you got on Scalo?

KYLE

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

KATE

Oh yes, you do.

KYLE

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

KATE

Yeah. Sure. OK.

(She picks up his mug.)

When the hell were you in Phuket?

KYLE

Meryl brought it back for me.

KATE

(Carelessly dropping the mug on his desk.)

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

KYLE

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

Kate goes. A moment, then Dodo enters.

DODO

Knock. Knock. Knock.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

You bet your ass we are!

DODO

A simple "yes" would have sufficed.

KYLE

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

DODO

No.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

Well! That sucketh.

KYLE

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

DODO

Call me when you're done.

KYLE

'k. Hey, Dodo? Thanks for Christmas.

DODO

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

Neil enters.

NEIL

Oh. I'll come back.

DODO

I was just leaving. Did you have a nice Christmas, Neil?

NEIL

Santa Claus was pretty good to me. You?

DODO

(Looking at Kyle, and then Neil.)

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

She exits.

KYLE

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

NEIL

I talked to Scalo. It's all set with Dodo.

KYLE

I heard. And Citibank?

NEIL

He's digging his heels in / on that

KYLE

/ Neil! /

NEIL

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

KYLE

'k. ... Thanks.

NEIL

My pleasure.

KYLE

Mine too.

NEIL

And you're okay with just being fuck buddies?

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Nomenclature? Pulling out the big guns now. Impressive.

(His office phone rings.)

It's Goldfarb. I have to take this.

NEIL

O'Lunney's after work tonight?

KYLE

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

NEIL

After?

KYLE

Maybe.

NEIL

10:00. Your place.

KYLE

I love it when you get all butch on me.

NEIL

(As he exits.)

Answer that before Goldfarb has a stroke.

KYLE

(Picking up the phone and mimicking
Goldfarb.)

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

SCENE SIXTEEN

Lights change. An elevator. A week later.

NEIL

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

DODO

He's a funny kid, that one.

NEIL

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

DODO

Like an itch you don't mind scratching.

NEIL

You like him, don't you?

DODO

We have that in common, don't we?

NEIL

He's a good art director.

DODO

Whatever it was he did to get me those spots, and I have my ideas, I don't want to know.

NEIL

You don't need to.

DODO

Just scratch gently, Neil.

NEIL

I don't know what you mean.

DODO

Oh yes, you do.

NEIL

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

DODO

See you then. Happy New Year.

SCENE SEVENTEEN

Lights change. The conference room, later that morning..

DODO

No booze. Can you believe it?

KYLE

Forever?

DODO

For the duration.

KYLE

That sucketh. When do you begin the (mouthing the word) Chemo?

DODO

He said we can start on Friday night.

Kate enters.

KYLE

I'll be there.

KATE

What are you starting Friday night?

KYLE

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

KATE

Ha ha fucking ha!

KYLE

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

KATE

Are you serious?

DODO

You know it.

KATE

You have a plane?

DODO

I rent one every now and then.

KATE

And you're a pilot?

DODO

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

KATE

How did I not know this?

KYLE

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

KATE

Cute.

DODO

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

Neil enters, carrying a stack of thick briefs.

NEIL

Okay, kiddos, Happy New Year, blah, blah, blah, let’s get this ball rolling.

DODO

Good God, what the hell is this? “Gone With The Wind?”

NEIL

Almost. Here’s the deal: Benjamin Moore is underwriting Turner Classic Movies “Technicolor Americana Festival ” this coming July. A month of movies, all in glorious Technicolor, celebrating America’s history. Including, obviously, “Gone With The Wind.” TV spots, on air promos, banner ads for Moore’s and TCM’s websites, direct mail promotions, interactive installations, print / ads

KATE

/ It looks like an awful lot of work, Neil.

NEIL

It’s huge.

KYLE

How much time do we have for all this?

KATE

If I know them they’ll want it all tomorrow. Maybe I’d better bring in another team too, Angela and me, perhaps.

KYLE

Dodo and I can handle it, Kate.

KATE

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

NEIL

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

KATE

Seriously? A full month?

DODO

It's like the 60s / all

KYLE

/ 80s, Dodo / 80s

DODO

/ 80s all over again!

NEIL

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

KATE

Excuse me?

NEIL

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

KATE

She's not senior enough.

NEIL

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

KYLE

What!?! You're making "Saint Angela" a VP and not me?

DODO

Kyle!

KYLE

She's got one fucking client, she's always on vacation, I'm here 24/7 juggling three accounts and you're making her a Goddam VP!?!

DODO

Kyle-bird, calm down!

KATE

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

KYLE

Fuck / you

NEIL

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

KATE

Fine.

(To Kyle and Dodo.)

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

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

DODO

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

KYLE

What about Friday night?

DODO

Fuck her.

KYLE

YOU dropped the "F" bomb!?!

DODO

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

NEIL

Flying lessons?

KYLE

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

NEIL

I see.

DODO

Let's go over the brief.

Kate comes back in, carrying a few flattened boxes.

KATE

Oh, and by the way, Kyle, since technically only VPs are supposed to have private offices, Angela will be moving into yours when she gets back from her vacation next week. You can take her space with the other big shots in the cube farm, 'k sweetie?

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

KYLE

My mug! You did that on purpose!

KATE

Oops. Sorry about that. I'm sure you can get another, now that you like to fly.

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

No, Neil, don't!

NEIL

She's gone too far this / time

KYLE

/ I said DON'T! I don't want Scalo involved in this ... I know what she's doing. Aunt Maryanne used to do the same thing when she wanted to get rid of someone at JWT. I can't believe I didn't see it. I should have. I grew up with it.

(To Neil.)

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

(Shouting in Kate's direction.)

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

NEIL

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

Neil exits.

KYLE

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

DODO

(Very gently.)

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

KYLE

Please, Dodo, not now.

Meryl appears at the door and stands there quietly.

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

I didn't say you have to chuck everything, did I? You think anyone has it that easy, Kyle-bird? If it's that important, you make it happen.

KYLE

I'll think about it.

DODO

You can keep thinking about it, or you can get your head out of your ass and really live your life for once.

KYLE

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

DODO

Listen to me, you little shit. I know you're upset, but your life isn't the only one that stinks right now, okay? Life sucks; I hoped if there was at least one thing you learned from me it would be how to deal with it. Grow the fuck up, darling.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

She leaves, pushing past Meryl as she goes.

MERYL

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

(Smacking Kyle's head.)

I heard.

KYLE

(Absentmindedly piecing the mug back together.)

Already?

MERYL

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

She fishes around in her purse.

KYLE

What the hell are you looking for?

MERYL

(Taking out a bottle of gold nail polish.)

Here.

KYLE

Gold nail polish? Pretty, but what the hell?

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

It makes sense to me.

KYLE

You're as crazy as Dodo.

MERYL

I'm going to ignore that because I know you're not really thinking straight right now.

KYLE

I'm sorry.

MERYL

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

KYLE

I'm sorry about that, too.

MERYL

No, you're not.

KYLE

No, I'm not.

MERYL

I snagged an interview for us at Ogilvy tomorrow night.

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

I know.

MERYL

Then why put yourself through that?

KYLE

... The day before my parents left for my grandfather's funeral, my mom and I had a huge fight. I didn't want them to go to Europe without me. I was so mad at them, I wouldn't say goodbye when they dropped me off at Aunt Maryanne's. I just kept coloring in my book. I didn't even look up when my mom kissed me goodbye. Then right before they closed the door, I stuck my tongue out at them. My mom looked at me with this strange look on her face, half smiling, half sad, and just said "We'll be home for Christmas, Ace..." I must have really hurt her that day.

MERYL

You never told me this.

KYLE

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

MERYL

Dodo? Why?

KYLE

Can't tell you. You understand, right?

MERYL

Oh. Yeah. ... Well, then you'd better go apologize to her. She can't be bought for a bourbon or four, like me.

KYLE

I really did piss her off, didn't I?

MERYL

I'd have smacked the crap out of you if I were her. She really cares about you, Kyle. A lot of us do, you know.

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

She hands him the nail polish.

KYLE

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

MERYL

You're all heart.

KYLE

We going to be okay?

MERYL

Probably.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

Meryl? Is that you in the conference room?

MERYL

Eventually.

GOLDFARB'S VOICE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

Goldfarb's not that bad, Meryl.

MERYL

Are feeling all right?

KYLE

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

MERYL

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

KYLE

Yes, sir!

MERYL

Jerk-Face.

KYLE

That's Captain Jerk-Face to you.

MERYL

Not yet, it isn't. Get out of here!

SCENE EIGHTEEN

Lights change. Columbia University Medical Center, Friday night. Dodo attached to an IV drip, Kyle sitting next to her. His phone is ringing, he switches it to vibrate.

KYLE

Listen, what do you think of this idea: ya ever notice how colors look different in movies from different decades? Like in the '40s, they were rich and saturated, in the '50s everything was kind of cold and blue, in the '60s everything was warm and golden?

DODO

Go on.

KYLE

What if we did this thing where we named colors like "'50s Ice" or "'40s Jade..."

Kyle's phone buzzes again.

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

I want to sit here with you.

DODO

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

KYLE

Who said anything about Neil?

DODO

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

KYLE
Oh.

DODO
Are you in love with him?

KYLE
The sex is great.

DODO
Too much information, Kyle-bird.

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

DODO
Maybe you've changed?

KYLE
How?

DODO
Have you watched "Gone With The Wind" yet?

KYLE
No.

DODO
Watch it. You might figure it out.

KYLE
It has horses in it.

DODO
What's wrong with horses?

KYLE
I don't like Westerns.

The phone buzzes again.

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

KYLE

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

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

I sent you a PDF with our stuff before we left, didn't you get it? (SCREECH) Oh, you didn't like them?

(SCREECH.)

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

(SCREECH.)

Fine, we can come in tomorrow.

(SCREECH.)

Kate, you missed your daughter's birthday party last month too. We'll see you tomorrow at 10:00.

(SCREECH.)

No, 10:00.

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

I'm still angry with you.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

I'm thinking about it. ... I'll call him just as soon as we get this project under control.

DODO

Uh huh. ... So let's talk about this color by the decade idea, I'm not sure I get it. What if we named the colors after the directors, like "Minnelli Jade," or "Sirk Blue?"

KYLE

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

DODO

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

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

SCENE NINETEEN

Lights change. A dressing room at Saks Fifth Avenue, a few weeks later. Meryl and Kate.

MERYL

I don't know, Kate, it's awfully expensive. As my mother would say "Satan, get thee behind me."

KATE

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

MERYL

But \$1,000 for one night?

KATE

It's a big night, and you're a VP now.

MERYL

I guess.

KATE

Ya gotta look the part when you go up there to accept the awards.

MERYL

From your mouth to God's ears.

KATE

You know you're going to win. Who are you taking with you?

MERYL

I thought I'd go with Kyle.

KATE

Ooh, are you sure about that?

MERYL

Why not? They're his awards to win too. Aren't they?

KATE

I don't know if he'll have the time, he and Dodo are so far behind on that Moore stuff. They've been on it three weeks now and there's still nothing I can show the client.

MERYL

Don't you think you're being just a little too hard on them?

KATE

I don't know how that little Teflon queen has bamboozled everyone from you to Scalo, but I'm not fooled. My first impression was right: without you he's a hack.

MERYL

He showed me some of their stuff and I thought it was quite good.

KATE

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

MERYL

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

KATE

I'm the Creative Director, it's my ass on the line, and I say it's crap. You'd better plan on bringing someone else to the awards banquet.

MERYL

Oh my God. You got him disqualified, didn't you?

KATE

It's at my discretion whether or not to include soon-to-be-former employees on the ballots, so yes, I called in a favor from a friend on the awards committee.

MERYL

(Stares at Kate a moment before speaking.)

I've known you don't like Kyle almost from the day you took over the group. But I really didn't think you were this, well, cunty.

KATE

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

MERYL

What decision?

KATE

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

MERYL

Oh. ... Thanks, Kate, but...

KATE

What? You mean “Thanks, but I also interviewed for that spot?” I have friends at Ogilvy, too. You think I didn’t know? Really, Meryl, I thought you were a lot sharper than that.

MERYL

They offered it to me.

KATE

Excuse me?

MERYL

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

KATE

You said you’d give me three months!

MERYL

Sue me.

KATE

I went out on a limb for you, ya know that? I kept you in my group when everyone else was getting laid off, I gave you a Holiday bonus when no one else was getting one, I got you that VP title, I was grooming you to replace me!

MERYL

And I did. Just not at Scalo.

KATE

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

MERYL

Not until they offered it to me.

KATE

And? What’d you tell them?

MERYL

I hadn’t quite decided, yet. I wanted to talk to you first. But, just so you know, I asked Kyle to come with me.

KATE

Well, thank God for that. Saves me a shitload of paperwork.

MERYL

And he turned me down. So I asked Angela. Didn't your "friends" tell you that, too?

KATE

Are you kidding me!?!

MERYL

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

KATE

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

MERYL

Thanks, Kate, for making my decision so much easier.

(She takes out her phone.)

Click. Send. Whoosh. Done. Job accepted. So I guess this it: my "official" two weeks. By the way and FYI: according to your former victims at Ogilvy, you were never seriously considered for that job. And I think I will pass on the dress.

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

KATE

GODDAMMIT ALL TO FUCKING HELL!

SCENE TWENTY

Lights change. Kyle's space in the "cube farm." Shortly after. Print outs of various campaign ideas, and open cans of paint samples everywhere. Dodo at the desk, Kyle on the floor watching a movie on an iPad. His office phone is ringing; then his cell phone buzzes. He ignores them both.

"RHETT BUTLER"

"Wear that. Nothing modest or matronly will do for this occasion. And put on plenty of rouge. I want you to look your part tonight..."

KYLE

I don't know, I don't know, I don't know... The red or the green?

DODO

Look at the green one again, although you know what I think.

KYLE

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He goes back to an earlier scene in the movie.

“RHETT BUTLER”

“You want something from me, and you want it badly enough to put on quite a show in your velvets.”

KYLE

I'm not sure. I mean, I know the green drapes are iconic, but I think if we used Vivien Leigh in that red dress we'd make more impact.

DODO

(Continuing to type as she speaks.)

I told you. The dress from the drapes is a cliché. Just cut it after he says the “rouge” line.

KYLE

I was thinking of using the clip when she's walking into the room with everyone staring at her, and dubbing just “Nothing modest or matronly” over that. Then we'll cut to a really cool kitchen with stainless steel appliances, gleaming white subway tiles, sexy black granite counter tops, and show the homeowners painting the old white cabinets a fresh, vivid “O'Hara Scarlett.”

DODO

Love it! Do it!

KYLE

You know, this is a pretty good movie.

DODO

I told you. One of the best damn movies ever. ... Oooh! Whaddya think of this? “How does America spell color? M double O R E.”

Meryl enters.

MERYL

Wow, great line! I LOVE that!

DODO

Thanks, but not now, Meryl, we're crazy busy.

MERYL

I just need to steal jerk-face here for a minute.

KYLE

Can it wait? Kate wants to see this stuff before we show it to Neil; she's killed everything we've done so far.

MERYL

I'm afraid it can't, Kyle.

Dodo's cell phone rings.

DODO

Crap. Hello, Dr. Shetak.

KYLE

Fine, what is it!?!

DODO

Wait, what? I can't hear you.

MERYL

Let's get some coffee. You want anything, Dodo?

DODO

Hold on. No, thanks.

MERYL

C'mon, Kyle.

KYLE

This better be worth it, I'm right in the middle / of

DODO

/ Will you two get the hell out of here?

Kyle's phone buzzes.

MERYL

It's Kate, isn't it?

KYLE

Yeah.

MERYL

Don't answer it.

KYLE

I never do.

DODO

Yes, Doctor? ... I see ... Well ka-ka poo-poo ... When?

KYLE

Wait a minute. WHAT?

DODO

I can't take a day from work.

KYLE

ARE YOU SERIOUS? SHE GOT MY NAME TAKEN OFF THE BALLOT!?!

MERYL

(Pulling him off.)

Shhh...

DODO

Yes, I know. Leukemia is a very inconvenient disease, you say that all the time ... I can do Saturday ... Well, if you can't be there, then make sure I get a cute intern.

Dodo returns to her work. Kate storms in, startling her.

KATE

Where the hell is Kyle?

DODO

GAH! ... He went for coffee with Meryl.

KATE

(To herself.)

Goddammit, Meryl!

(To Dodo.)

Let me see that.

(She reads.)

No! No, no, no!

DODO

What's wrong now?

KATE

I told you I didn't like this naming the colors shit!

DODO

Neil approved it.

KATE

Neil is not a creative director! And this!?! "How does America spell color? M double O R E?" What is this garbage!?! Jesus! Move over!

Kate brusquely pushes Dodo as Kyle and Meryl enter.

KYLE

DODO!

MERYL

Oh my God, are you okay?

DODO

I'm fine, I'll be fine.

KYLE

(Pulling Kate away from the desk.)

What the hell were you thinking, Kate?

KATE

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

KYLE

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

MERYL

Kyle, stop it, she's not worth it!

Neil enters.

NEIL

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

KYLE

(To Kate.)

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

DODO

(To Kate.)

You knew about that!?!

Kate laughs. Kyle picks up a can of paint. Yellow paint.

NEIL

KYLE! DON’T!

KYLE

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

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

KATE

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

MERYL

What was it you just said to me, Kate? Oh, right: There is no loyalty among whores.

NEIL

Cocksuckers too, apparently.

Totally humiliated, Kate races out. We hear the film, still playing on the iPad.

“MAMMY”

It ain’t fittin’, it jest ain’t fittin’. ... Hmmph. ... It ain’t fittin’.

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

Lights change. Columbia University Medical Center. Early morning a week later. Dodo and Kyle.

DODO

Well here we go again. Ka-ka poo-poo. At least the intern is cute.

KYLE

I like his gaga goo-goo.

DODO

I think he likes yours, too.

KYLE

No way.

DODO

I told him to keep me alive for your wedding.

KYLE

You didn't!

DODO

I did! He smiled.

KYLE

I'm going to kill you.

DODO

If this procedure doesn't kill me first.

KYLE

You're going to be fine. They'll take out the lump, and it'll be benign. I know it will.

DODO

Transformed? What the hell does that even mean?

KYLE

That's why they're doing the procedure, to find out.

DODO

I don't want to die, Kyle. Not yet.

KYLE

Well, I don't want you to die either, so shut up. You have to be in the plane with me when I take the controls for the first time.

DODO

Oh?

KYLE

Yes, I called him. I'm going out to Teterboro tomorrow.

DODO

Well! That gives me something to live for.

KYLE

See! But if I find out you really did say something to my future Doctor Hot over there, I will push you out. Over a cornfield.

DODO

If I don't push you out first.

KYLE

I think they're ready for you, Dodo.

DODO

Okay, fellas, let's get this ka-ka poo-poo crap over with. And don't mess it up, this brat here needs me. He thinks Scotch goes with Beef Wellington, can you believe it?

SCENE TWENTY-TWO

Lights change. O'Lunney's. That afternoon.

NEIL

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

KYLE

With the wind. So to speak. I wonder who leaked that video of Kate flailing paint all over the place?

NEIL

Yeah, I wonder.

KYLE

Poor yellow thing.

NEIL

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

KYLE

Yeah, sorry, I've been a little crazy trying to get everything sorted out.

NEIL

This came for you.

(He takes a plastic "Phuket" Starbucks
tumbler from his briefcase.)

From the Phuket Marriott. Unbreakable.

KYLE

Oh. I don't know what to say. That's very sweet of them.

NEIL

So, what are you going to do?

KYLE

For now, I think I'm just going to take some time off.

NEIL

You have to work, Kyle.

KYLE

I could be a Barista.

NEIL

With your temper?

KYLE

Maybe not. I don't know. ... With everything that's happened, and now Dodo...

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

I will be, starting tomorrow.

NEIL

You're kidding!

KYLE

Thanks to Dodo. She kicked my ass right out to Teterboro.

NEIL

They don't make 'em like her anymore. Here's to Dodo.

They toast.

KYLE

Yeah. To Dodo. Look out, JetBlue, here I come!

(He tears up.)

What if it really has transformed into Lymphoma? As they took her to the O.R. this morning, she watched me until she couldn't see me anymore. There was this look in her eyes I haven't seen since the last time I saw my mother...

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Oh. Is that gonna hurt you with Scalo?

NEIL

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

KYLE

Do you know who it was?

NEIL

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

KYLE

I know.

Kyle stares at Neil until he gets it.

NEIL

No! Oh, my God. Joe Scalo and Maryanne Gordon?

KYLE

(Nodding.)

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Literally. He's paying for my anger management therapy, though.

NEIL

He's good that way. But why didn't you just go directly to him and avoid all this crap?

KYLE

I did, at first. But you know Joe: he never gets involved in the day-to-day shit. And I wasn't married to his daughter.

NEIL

I keep telling him he needs to know more about what actually goes on but he never listens until the day-to-day shit hits the fan.

KYLE

Or the paint hits the press.

NEIL

So? No other comments about me and Bev?

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

Good.

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

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

KYLE

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

NEIL

I really did underestimate you.

KYLE

Yes, you did.

NEIL

I'm sorry.

KYLE

I'm sorry too. ... I have to get back to the hospital. I want to be there when Dodo wakes up. I'll call you, 'k?

He kisses Neil and exits.

NEIL

Okay. I'll be...

(He picks up a dart, and drops it.)

... Here.

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

Lights change. The cockpit of a plane on the runway at Teterboro Airport, New Jersey. June. Dodo and Kyle.

KYLE

Are you sure you're up for this?

DODO

Of course I am!

KYLE

I don't want you to over do it.

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

Jesus, you're a pest.

KYLE

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

DODO

I wish you'd reconsider Meryl's offer.

KYLE

I'm done with advertising. I just... don't care.

DODO

You're really not meant to be "The Man in the Gray Flannel Hoodie," are you?

KYLE

I'm really going to fly a plane!

DODO

Yes, Kyle-bird, you are.

KYLE

I'm scared.

DODO

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

KYLE

You don't have the strength.

DODO

(Punching his arm.)

Wanna bet?

KYLE

Ow!

DODO

Wimp.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

That cute intern.

KYLE

He's too busy holding my hand.

DODO

He's got two hands.

KYLE

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

DODO

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

KYLE

I "wuv" you.

DODO

Yeah. Ka-ka poo-poo.

KYLE

And ya love me, too.

DODO

You know it.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

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

DODO

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

KYLE

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

DODO

It's time to take off. And soar.

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

END OF PLAY.