

BORDERLANDS

A PLAY

By *Eric Samuelsen*

CHARACTERS

DAVE MCGREGOR . . . a salesman
 GAIL LEWIS . . . an independent business owner
 PHYLLIS WELLS . . . an office manager
 BRIAN ROENICKE . . . a mechanic

CAST

Borderlands will be first presented by Plan-B Theatre Company 31 March–10 April 2011, funded in part by an “Access to Artistic Excellence” grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and directed by Jerry Rapier. The original cast was:

DAVE MCGREGOR . . . Kirt Bateman
 GAIL LEWIS . . . Stephanie Howell
 PHYLLIS WELLS . . . Teri Cowan
 BRIAN ROENICKE . . . Topher Rasmussen

AUTHOR’S NOTE

BORDERLANDS MARKS A PLACE OF INTERSECTION, a liminal space where roads end but new paths begin, where no horizons reveal themselves but also where collisions do us harm. I’m a believing, practicing Mormon, and Mormonism is at its most essential a religion that preaches literally endless human possibilities, eternal progression, and growth. But we Mormons face tremendous pressure to conform, to fit in, to obey, to define ourselves in certain quite limited ways. It is, for many, a religious culture of public orthodoxy and quietly whispered rebellion. And so we carve out spaces for ourselves, and we meet in those spaces, and we come out to each other. We come out. SUNSTONE Magazine is one such space, where we brave the borderlands—this play came in part from reading back issues of SUNSTONE.

But where to set it? And then I thought of a used car lot, the one commercial space in American culture where prices

are contingent; the one place we still bargain. The very act of car buying is also liminal, but also sort of sleazy: the game of salesmanship, the give and take, the creating of quickly disposable narratives strikes me as quintessentially and disreputably American. Cars represent the transcendent open road, Kerouac and Hunter Thompson and Tom Wolfe. And Dale Earnhardt: go to any Christian bookstore in the South or Midwest, and see the two big displays on competing tables: the vulgar eschatology of *Left Behind*, and Dale Earnhardt—prints of him being raptured out of his wrecked #3 car. Cars represent mobility and portability and of course the possibility of instant death. And freedom, and life.

So I wrote a play about coming out, about cars and salesmanship, about death and God and sexual desire. And a space, perhaps in a mini-van, where we dare to tell ourselves the truth, and where we are appalled to find how little it sets us free.

—ERIC SAMUELSEN

ERIC SAMUELSEN, Ph.D., teaches playwriting at BYU, and until recently served as president of the Association for Mormon Letters. Others of his plays have been published in SUNSTONE, including *Accommodations*, *Gadanton*, *Peculiarities*, and *The Plan* which will be produced at the Covey Center for the Arts 18 March–2 April 2011. He is married, with four children.

NOTE ON SCRIPT

A note about notation. In this play, a dash (—) indicates an interrupted line. An ellipsis (. . .) suggests a pause, a line trailing off.

TIME: Now

PLACE: A used car lot in Provo, Utah

SCENE ONE

(A used car lot: upstage, its small office. GAIL, early forties, searches, looking for the right car. DAVE, mid-50s, stands by the office, watches her. Finally he drifts over to her.)

DAVE: You don't want that car.

GAIL: Excuse me?

DAVE: It's a lousy car. You don't want it. (She stares at him. He offers his hand.) Dave McGregor. "Can I help you?" That's how I'm supposed to start off, "Can I help you?"

GAIL: No, sorry, I really don't want to be sold anything—.

DAVE: The old dance. Used car salesman. Wary consumer.

GAIL: No. Please, I'll just look around—.

DAVE: So not today. No tricks, no sales tactics. Just truth.

GAIL: Look, I . . .

DAVE: And the truth is I don't have a car on my lot right now I'd feel good about selling you. (He holds out his hand.) As I said, I'm Dave . . .

GAIL: Gail. (Warily shaking his hand.) I don't understand. Why don't I want this car?

DAVE: It's got some things. You can't really see, but . . . just take a look.

GAIL: What?

DAVE: Underneath. (She leans down awkwardly.)

GAIL: I'm sorry, I don't even know what I'm looking . . . Is that a . . . ?

DAVE: A towel. Big ol' beach towel. Duct taped under the drive train. (She stares uncomprehendingly.) Oil leak. Big one. And you know, you can patch anything with silicon, get a few hundred extra miles out of it. But this guy, he couldn't be bothered, not even a crappy half-assed fix. Just a towel so it won't leak on your driveway.

GAIL: So, you're gonna fix it?

DAVE: What I figured, if you wanted to take it to a mechanic, I'd tell you about the towel. I'd say something like "Hey, we just got the car today. We're fixing the leak tomorrow."

GAIL: But if I didn't? If I just made you an offer?

DAVE: Caveat emptor.

GAIL: That's disgusting.

DAVE: Just the world of car sales.

GAIL: But you're what? Warning me off?

DAVE: Like I said, the truth. You ready?

GAIL: For . . . ?

DAVE: (Sudden intensity.) Don't buy this car; don't buy any of the cars on my lot. If I had a good car, I'd sell it to you. I don't.

GAIL: Who are you?

DAVE: An honest salesman. (A pause.)

GAIL: Okay, okay, I get it now. Seriously, I came *this* close to falling for it. (She starts to leave.)

DAVE: What?

GAIL: You've got this car, the towel car, you've got it priced



around what I can afford. So you tell me all these things that are wrong with it, but, *but*, there's this *other* place where you've got all the other cars, the *good* ones, but more expensive. The idea is I'll be all, "He's so honest, he's someone I can trust," and I end up getting something that's not really any better, only I paid a lot more.

DAVE: Hey, that's good. Talk down one car to sell another one for more.

GAIL: I'm in no mood for it, tricks and—. (*She gathers herself to go.*)

DAVE: I'd do it, too. Except. I don't have a better car to sell you.

GAIL: You don't?

DAVE: When you walked on the lot, I thought "Hey, I bet I can sell her that Achieva." You were interested.

GAIL: Maybe.

DAVE: Under eighty thousand miles, and the price was right. But then I couldn't.

GAIL: Why not?

DAVE: Don't know. (*Pause.*)

GAIL: My son's going on a mission.

DAVE: Good for him.

GAIL: Yeah.

DAVE: Seems to me that you'd be selling—.

GAIL: No, we are, we're selling *his* car. My daughter, she's going to college, and she needs a car. So she gets my Subaru, and I need a new car.

DAVE: Sounds good.

GAIL: (*After a pause.*) It's just . . . it's a stressful . . .

DAVE: And you're dealing with things alone.

GAIL: What?

DAVE: You're single? Divorced, widowed maybe?

GAIL: Excuse me?

DAVE: Buying a car for a daughter's usually a guy thing, so . . .

GAIL: That is absolutely none of your business!

DAVE: True enough.

GAIL: I'm leaving. You don't have a car for me anyway, so . . .

DAVE: Just thought I could help, maybe recommend a couple places . . .

GAIL: Why?

DAVE: Guys I know. Honest salesmen.

GAIL: Like you.

DAVE: Not really. You want some pointers?

GAIL: No, look, I'm just going to—.

DAVE: When a salesman sees a female customer shopping alone, it's Christmas in July. It's Mardi Gras. Commission plus maybe a sale over sticker.

GAIL: I said I don't need your help. (*But she doesn't leave.*)

DAVE: Don't ever say you like a car. See, he'll use that on you, he'll be all "But you really like this car, right?" And if you agree with him once, on anything, it's a step closer.

GAIL: To?

DAVE: Him winning. Say, "It's okay, but there's this other car . . ." "Say, "I'm looking a couple of places." His car's fine, but you're not in love.

GAIL: Who falls in love with a car?

DAVE: It's love or it's lust; it's not ever about transportation.

GAIL: It's *only* about transporta—.

DAVE: Make him meet your price; always, always be ready to say no.

GAIL: You make it sound like . . . war.

DAVE: It is. So you don't say you don't know much about cars. Nod, deflect, make him do the talking. And when it comes to price, he's gonna wanna talk sticker, you want out-the-door.

GAIL: Meaning?

DAVE: Sticker on this car here, I'm asking forty-eight hundred. Now, that's just where we start dickering. But say, forty-five, right? You add sales tax, dealer prep, licensing, you'll end up paying something around five grand. So just keep asking, "How much out the door?" Salesmen HATE that. You're LDS, right?

GAIL: In this valley, that's not much of a—.

DAVE: Some guys, they'll wear a white shirt that's sort of see-through, he wants you to see his garment line. Walk away.

GAIL: 'Cause if he's parading his Mormonness—.

DAVE: May not mean much. It may not be deliberately ostentatious. Still.

GAIL: I can't trust anyone—that's what you're saying.

DAVE: Well, you really can't trust used car salesmen. Anyway. I'll get you a coupla names. (*Walks away.*)

GAIL: Why are you doing this?

DAVE: You don't want any names?

GAIL: Why are you doing this?

DAVE: 'Cause you really don't want that Achieva.

GAIL: Why are you doing this?

DAVE: I felt like it.

GAIL: Felt like what?

DAVE: Being honest.

SCENE TWO

(*The office. PHYLLIS, mid-50s though she looks older, is working on paperwork. DAVE enters, sits.*)

PHYLLIS: That didn't take long.

DAVE: Nope.

PHYLLIS: You showed her the Achieva?

DAVE: It's not what she's looking for. Good thing too.

PHYLLIS: We didn't put that towel there.

DAVE: Nope. Anyway, it was out of her price range.

PHYLLIS: What are we asking?

DAVE: Four eight.

PHYLLIS: It should move at that price.

DAVE: Long as they don't show it to a mechanic. We got any more Diet Coke?

PHYLLIS: Dave, now, don't go soft on me.

DAVE: I've told you, I don't want that car on my lot. (*PHYLLIS glares. He gets a Diet Coke. She works on the paperwork, grimaces in pain.*) Listen. You need me to finish that up for you?

PHYLLIS: I'm fine.

DAVE: Isn't it Homemaking tonight?
 PHYLLIS: Home, Family, and Personal Enrichment.
 DAVE: When did *that* happen?
 PHYLLIS: A few years ago.
 DAVE: That's a mouthful. Anyway. It's tonight.
 PHYLLIS: Not that you'd know. Not that you'd know anything about what's going on in the Church.
 DAVE: I'm just offering to finish the paperwork for you.
 PHYLLIS: I'm fine. Twenty minutes, then I'm going. (*She looks out.*) Why aren't you out there? There's a customer on the lot.
 DAVE: Thought I'd get myself a Diet Coke first.
 PHYLLIS: There's a customer on our lot!
 DAVE: I see him.
 PHYLLIS: Dave!
 DAVE: That Dodge pickup. That's what's caught his eye. (*Working on his Coke. Burps.*)
 PHYLLIS: That's so disgusting.
 DAVE: Which is why I did it in here, instead of out there in front of a customer.
 PHYLLIS: He's looking around! "Where's the salesman," he's wondering. "Oh, gee, I guess there isn't one. Guess I'd better just leave!" Dad would have been out there.
 DAVE: Dad understood timing.
 PHYLLIS: When you get out there, don't you give the whole store away.
 DAVE: I know what I'm doing.
 PHYLLIS: You spent a long time with that woman. For a car she didn't even test drive.
 DAVE: Win some, you lose some. (*He heads out the door.*) Can I help you?
 (*He's gone. PHYLLIS looks at him exasperated. Suddenly, with a tiny cry of pain, she doubles over. She looks furtively to see if DAVE can see her. Pulls out a prescription bottle, fishes out a pill. Takes a drink from the Coke to wash it down.*)

SCENE THREE

(*GAIL looks around, a little anxiously. DAVE strolls out to her.*)

GAIL: Hey.
 DAVE: Hey. It's Gail, right?
 GAIL: Yeah. That's one of your tricks, isn't it? Remembering names.
 DAVE: I'm actually terrible at names.
 GAIL: And that's another trick. Self-deprecating . . . that's not why I'm here. I want that Achieva.
 DAVE: With the towel?
 GAIL: But you told me about the towel. So you're gonna have to fix that, the oil leak or—
 DAVE: Okay . . .
 GAIL: And you warned me; you said it was a bad car. So you'll have to drop the price. A lot.
 DAVE: Okay.
 GAIL: And that's why I came back. I can't afford something nicer. I can afford that Achieva.

DAVE: Makes sense.
 GAIL: And you're going to have to sell it to me for way less than that sticker price. You already told me about its problems, so if you try anything funny at all, *at all*, I'll report you to the Better Business Bureau.
 DAVE: I expect we can come to terms.
 GAIL: I don't trust you, and I don't know what you were up to, telling me things like you told me, but it's got to be some kind of . . . ploy. I know that. And I'm not really adept at this kind of . . . never mind. I'll give you five hundred dollars for it, and for that I fix the oil leak, or fifteen hundred and you fix it, and that's it, that's all.
 DAVE: Okay.
 GAIL: And that's it, that's as high as I can—
 DAVE: I said fine. Come into the office with me, we'll deal with the paperwork.
 GAIL: And that's it?
 DAVE: I don't want it on my lot; you're offering to take it off my hands. What I'm gambling: can I fix the oil leak for less than a thousand dollars.
 GAIL: Well, I don't care.
 DAVE: Oh, no, this is where it gets interesting. See, maybe I have to rebuild the entire engine. Could run two or three grand or more. But maybe it's just a gasket, and I make seven, eight hundred more than I was thinking. We're both gamblin' here, is what I'm saying.
 GAIL: I didn't come here to gamble.
 DAVE: Well, you don't live on a car lot. Got to have something to keep my blood pumpin'. (*They go into the office. PHYLLIS is gone.*) Nice job, by the way. (*She stares at him uncomprehending.*) The way you took charge of the sale.
 GAIL: Fine, thanks, whatever. So we have a deal, what deal?
 DAVE: So I take the gamble. Fifteen hundred. And I fix the oil leak.
 GAIL: Okay then.
 DAVE: Let's say delivery the end of this week. If it's gonna take longer, I'll give you a call. (*Pulls out paperwork.*)
 GAIL: I still don't trust you, you know.
 DAVE: Fair enough. (*Rummaging through paperwork.*)
 GAIL: I hate this. Sorry, I just hate it. Cars.
 DAVE: Hmmm?
 GAIL: Why do people give 'em female names?
 DAVE: What do you mean?
 GAIL: People who name their cars. It's always old lady names, Gladys or Florence, or . . . female names. Cars are men.
 DAVE: Why's that?
 GAIL: Temperamental, unreliable, maddening. That's why cars get girl names. Hah! Men, on the other hand . . .
 DAVE: I get it. (*PHYLLIS enters. Furious.*)
 PHYLLIS: Dave.
 DAVE: Just a sec.
 PHYLLIS: I need to talk to you.
 DAVE: I'm with a customer, Phyllis.
 PHYLLIS: I need to talk to you *right now*.
 DAVE: (*To GAIL.*) I'm sorry. Excuse me. (*Crosses a little away*)

from her.) What?
 PHYLLIS: You're selling that Achieva? With the towel?
 DAVE: She knows about the towel. Fifteen hundred—.
 PHYLLIS: Fifteen hund—!
 DAVE: Plus we fix the leak.
 PHYLLIS: I knew it! We assume all the risk, *all of it*, plus, *plus*, sell it for three hundred less than we paid for it!
 DAVE: And get a lemon off our lot.
 PHYLLIS: You want to ask her out!
 DAVE: Will you keep your voice down!
 PHYLLIS: That's the only explanation; you're giving that car away!
 DAVE: I'm in charge of sales, Phyllis. I'm getting rid of a car I don't want.
 PHYLLIS: This is *my* lot! You're *my* employee!
 DAVE: Partner.
 PHYLLIS: I know what this is; you're trying to impress her, telling her about the towel, offering to fix the car, accepting a deal like this!
 DAVE: You pay me commission; *I'm* the one taking the loss here.
 PHYLLIS: I'm keeping an eye on you. (*She exits.*)
 DAVE: (*Back to GAIL.*) Sorry about that.
 GAIL: (*Tight lipped, angry.*) Are you?
 DAVE: Am I what?
 GAIL: Going to ask me out?
 DAVE: Overheard that, did you?
 GAIL: I'm out of here, I'm here to buy a car, not get all caught up in some kind of—.
 DAVE: What if I did ask you out?
 GAIL: What?
 DAVE: Will you go out with me?
 GAIL: No!!!
 DAVE: So okay. Good, we put that behind us. I've got your check, the paperwork's in front of me. Do we make a deal?
 GAIL: Who is that woman? Why would she say that about you, about me, if—.
 DAVE: Pain pills, she doesn't like to take 'em, so she lashes out. I'm sorry you overheard that. But it's got nothing to do with this transaction.
 GAIL: I don't know.
 DAVE: So okay. You want, here's your check back.
 GAIL: (*She stares at the check for a long time. Finally shakes her head, hands it back.*) No. I still want the car.
 DAVE: And I still want to sell it to you. (*Goes back to paperwork.*)
 GAIL: I just . . . don't—.
 DAVE: You need a car, you found one you like that you think you can afford.
 GAIL: Which I can afford because you told me about the towel. But why?
 DAVE: I told you because I was, actually, hitting on you.
 GAIL: Wait a minute, wait a minute . . . !
 DAVE: I don't usually tell customers my cars suck. I had to have some reason for it.

GAIL: I am not, I'm NEVER—.
 DAVE: Okay. So that's out. I lose. No biggie, I've lost before.
 GAIL: Give me my check back.
 DAVE: Sure. (*Hands it over.*)
 GAIL: (*Gets up to leave.*) This is the most infuriating—.
 DAVE: I started off being honest with you. So I figure I'll keep on.
 GAIL: I just . . . this isn't about . . . Just finish the paperwork and let me go.
 DAVE: Almost done. (*Writes, she's fuming.*)
 GAIL: Listen, I don't know what qualifies as professional, or unprofessional conduct in your line of work, but when a woman comes to your car lot, she is there to do business, end of story, and for you to use her presence there to harbor some sordid little fantasy—.
 DAVE: Sticker price on that Achieva is forty-eight hundred.
 GAIL: I saw the sticker.
 DAVE: I was honest with you. I've been honest with you the whole time. It's cost me three thousand dollars minimum and may cost me a lot more.
 GAIL: But because you had ulterior motives, and that's—.
 DAVE: Which I also told you about, straight up.
 GAIL: That you wanted to date me.
 DAVE: And by saying that, I lost any possibility of it ever happening. I've been honest from the start, to my detriment.
 GAIL: Why?
 DAVE: Because you walked on to my lot, and all the sudden, I couldn't lie anymore. Not to you.
 GAIL: (*Pause.*) What are you doing, what are you doing now?
 DAVE: I don't know.
 GAIL: That's a . . . a *shitty* answer.
 DAVE: It's the truth. (*Another pause.*) Can we start over, maybe?
 GAIL: Why?
 DAVE: I don't know.
 GAIL: WHY?
 DAVE: I just don't want this to be . . .
 GAIL: What?
 DAVE: Ordinary. A salesman slash customer thing. (*Pause.*)
 GAIL: I'm gonna go now, okay?
 DAVE: Your car will be ready on Friday.
 GAIL: Okay.
 DAVE: I'll see you then.
 GAIL: I don't know.
 DAVE: Please.
 GAIL: I don't know. (*Pause.*)
 DAVE: Okay.

SCENE FOUR

DAVE: Hey. Your car's done.
 GAIL: Okay.
 DAVE: So I lost.
 GAIL: Excuse me?
 DAVE: I gambled and I lost. You've got a rebuilt engine in there. Should be good for a couple hundred thousand miles.

GAIL: Oh.
 DAVE: Win some, you lose some.
 GAIL: Look, we've got a contract; this was your gamble.
 DAVE: I'm not complaining. Just get you the key.
 GAIL: Listen, about . . . license, registration.
 DAVE: Took care of it. New plates should show up in a couple of weeks.
 GAIL: Oh. Great. Look, last time, I said some things—
 DAVE: Don't worry about it. We were both sort of . . . off balance.
 GAIL: Yeah.
 DAVE: Keys. (*Heads for the office.*)
 GAIL: So, you're out some money on this. Your boss okay with it?
 DAVE: My boss? Oh, my sister . . .
 GAIL: You work for your sister?
 DAVE: Yeah. I kinda crashed and burned a few years ago, ended up here.
 GAIL: So you weren't always a used car salesman.
 DAVE: No.
 GAIL: What were you before? If you don't mind me asking.
 DAVE: Attorney.
 GAIL: Seriously?
 DAVE: Yep. (*Gets her the keys.*)
 GAIL: Thanks.
 DAVE: It's no trouble.
 GAIL: So. Attorney to used car sales. What happened?
 DAVE: Long story, don't worry about it.
 GAIL: I've got time.
 DAVE: Really?
 GAIL: Oh, there's something you should be—?
 DAVE: No. There's nobody on the lot.
 GAIL: So. Tell me.
 DAVE: Why?
 GAIL: I don't know. The last time I was here, I wanted to hit

you. I wanted to smash every car window on the lot.
 DAVE: Sorry about that.
 GAIL: It's okay. I got to thinking. How it's better to feel something than nothing.
 DAVE: Sure.
 GAIL: So I want to make you a deal.
 DAVE: Okay.
 GAIL: I sell Amway.
 DAVE: No kidding. An Amway distributor.
 GAIL: I have a wide range of products available. Household items, computers and software . . .
 DAVE: Yeah. See, the thing about me is, I don't—
 GAIL: Look, you were honest before . . .
 DAVE: Okay. I hate Amway.
 GAIL: Good.
 DAVE: I think it's a scam. And I sell used cars, I know scams, and Amway's a scam.
 GAIL: Sure. You're dead wrong, but okay. Anyway. I want to see you again.
 DAVE: You do.
 GAIL: I want to ask you about men. I don't get men, and I need to and I've found something rare: a guy who tells the truth. So I'll stop by, once, maybe twice, maybe three times, and I'll ask you questions, and I'll try to sell you detergent or something, and you won't buy it, but that way I can feel okay about seeing you.
 DAVE: Fair enough.
 GAIL: I will never go out with you and I will certainly never sleep with you.
 DAVE: So what's in it for me?
 GAIL: Nothing. You were honest with me once, and maybe that was good for you, for once. So . . .
 DAVE: So, okay. It's a deal.
 GAIL: That fast?
 DAVE: Sure.
 GAIL: Okay.
 DAVE: Amway, huh?
 GAIL: Yep.
 DAVE: You good at it?
 GAIL: Building a business. Bit by bit.
 DAVE: Look, about the not-going-out part.
 GAIL: That's really non-negotiable.
 DAVE: Once, that's all I'm asking. One date. June 8th.
 GAIL: June 8th?
 DAVE: I get on your calendar; we can both spend two months anticipating.
 GAIL: June 8th. You're serious?
 DAVE: You gotta give me something to look forward to. Pleaasssee.
 GAIL: I know you probably think that was charming, but really it wasn't.
 DAVE: So, Amway. How'd you get into that?
 GAIL: Well, it's sort of a natural isn't it? For a Mormon?
 DAVE: I've heard a lot of Mormons are into it.
 GAIL: It makes sense. I mean, that's the difference between Mormons and non-Mormons, right? Non-Mormons have

So, Amway.
 How'd you
 get into that?

Well, it's sort of
 a natural isn't it?
 For a Mormon?

friends with benefits, which I think means friends you have sex with.

DAVE: But Mormons don't have sex.

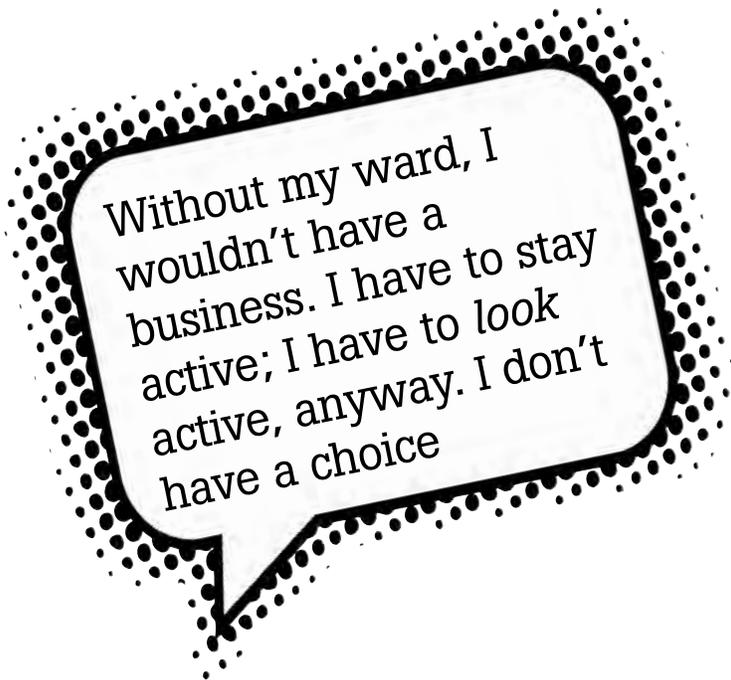
GAIL: Never. Tons of children, but no sex, ever. No, what we have are friends with agendas. I mean, you can't just have *friends*, you know. Just *friends* don't get you anywhere.

DAVE: I'm Mormon, I have friends.

GAIL: People you home teach, am I right? Where you're *friends*, but you also have to get your numbers?

DAVE: Okay.

GAIL: The member missionary thing is perfect. You're supposed to find some family, just people you pick who aren't Mormons, and you're supposed to make friends with them, so you can invite the missionaries over. They're friends, sort of, but you've got an agenda. So we have



those sorts of friendships: Amway's perfect for us. (Pause.) I can't believe I just said all that.

DAVE: It's okay.

GAIL: I've never said any of that to anyone. In my life. I've thought it, but I've never said any of it, ever.

DAVE: I've never told anyone the truth about the cars I sell.

GAIL: Isn't that illegal?

DAVE: Beats me.

GAIL: (Pause.) I've met you twice before, we talked for ten minutes.

DAVE: I know.

GAIL: June 8th?

DAVE: It's a Friday. I bet it's a nice day, not too hot, not too cold—.

GAIL: And see, right there, you're flirting again, and that's who you are, I get that, but if we're going to be friends . . . Or whatever . . . I'm sorry, I'll just . . . goodbye.

DAVE: It's just nice sometimes.

GAIL: What is?

DAVE: A little . . . honesty vacation.

GAIL: Not from, toward. It is. It's nice. (Pause.) You said "ostentatious."

DAVE: I don't remember that.

GAIL: You did. You were talking about dishonest salesmen, and you said some guys wear shirts where you can see their garments. And you said it was "ostentatious."

DAVE: Itself a pretty ostentatious use of vocabulary.

GAIL: Maybe that's why I came back today. (Pause.) Listen, your sister's gonna be back out here.

DAVE: I think she took her pills.

GAIL: What's wrong with her?

DAVE: Cancer.

GAIL: I'm so terrible. I was making fun of her, thinking, boy, does he have the boss from hell.

DAVE: It's okay.

GAIL: I feel awful. Is she in treatment, is she in remission, or . . . ?

DAVE: They don't think there's much more they can do.

GAIL: I am so sorry.

DAVE: It's okay. So. June 8th?

GAIL: I don't know.

DAVE: (Pause.) I'll settle for that.

SCENE FIVE

(GAIL and DAVE sit in a car together.)

DAVE: See, this is perfect. I'm showing the car to you. And I can see the rest of the lot; anyone comes in, I can get right up.

GAIL: How's she doing? Your sister slash boss.

DAVE: Today's not one of the good days.

GAIL: That must be tough.

DAVE: She's tough. (Pause.) Funny, I was about to say, "She's tough. She'll pull through." But it's not gonna happen.

GAIL: So, you crashed and burned. She took you in.

DAVE: She did. She didn't have to; nobody else would.

GAIL: So?

DAVE: It was . . . a whole series of things.

GAIL: Well, like what? You were an attorney; were you ever married?

DAVE: Eighteen years.

GAIL: See, I knew that. Something about you just told me you'd been married.

DAVE: But you're divorced?

GAIL: We're separated. He's been dragging his heels on the divorce the last year or so.

DAVE: I never wanted to do that. She deserved better: quick and painless.

GAIL: Not painless. It's never painless.

DAVE: No.

GAIL: It's the worst thing in the world. It's horrible.

DAVE: It is.

GAIL: It's horrible. (Pause.) So what happened?

DAVE: Well, it pissed her off that I cheated on her.
 GAIL: Oh. (*Pause, as she digests this.*) So you were the bastard.
 DAVE: I was the bastard.
 GAIL: I really don't get that. (*Insistent.*) I mean it: explain that to me.
 DAVE: What? I met someone, we had an affair, I got caught.
 GAIL: No, no, no. This is the honesty car. You tell me *everything*.
 DAVE: Maybe I don't want to.
 GAIL: Mark did the same thing to me. My soon-to-be ex. He cheated on me, too, and I don't understand it.
 DAVE: I don't know what there is to understand. I met someone; we went to a hotel together—
 GAIL: It was about sex.
 DAVE: Well, yeah.
 GAIL: No way. No way. The one thing I know is that it wasn't about sex.
 DAVE: So what was it about—?
 GAIL: Every time he asked, every time he wanted to, even when I was exhausted, even when I really really wasn't in the mood, I said yes. Every single time. Four days after *childbirth* I said yes. And maybe I'm not, you know, a swimsuit model or something. But I've kept myself in pretty good shape, three kids and all. And I've met the other woman, and she's no movie star. So you explain this, you explain how you could do this, how you could think it's okay for you to just—
 DAVE: I never thought it was okay. I even knew I'd get caught. In a way, I was looking forward to it.
 GAIL: Why?
 DAVE: The whole thing's embarrassing. It's . . . tawdry.
 GAIL: Good word. Tawdry.
 DAVE: I want you to think well of me, maybe.
 GAIL: Then explain this, I want to know. Why? How?
 DAVE: In my case, I needed to, because she knew about the embezzling. (*GAIL stares at him.*) She worked at the law firm, case management, billing. And . . . turned out she was better at her job than she looked like she'd be.
 GAIL: She caught you.
 DAVE: I was skimming money off some trusts we were managing. She wasn't even supposed to do trusts.
 GAIL: So you slept with her? To keep her mouth shut?
 DAVE: I gave her half the money to keep her mouth shut. I slept with her . . . I don't know; we were partners in felony. Seemed like the next step.
 GAIL: And you got caught.
 DAVE: It was just a matter of time. I mean, sneaking around, someone would see me, they'd tell my wife. Or the IRS, an audit. I was a stupid criminal, you know, a stupid adulterer.
 GAIL: Which one was it? Did your wife catch you, or was it the money?
 DAVE: IRS. Not that it matters.
 GAIL: No. (*A pause.*) You really did crash and burn, didn't you?
 DAVE: I stayed out of jail. I destroyed two marriages, and I was excommunicated from the Church—did I mention I was in the bishopric?
 GAIL: You didn't, no.
 DAVE: I was disbarred. Check out my ankle, my right ankle.
 GAIL: I can't see anything.
 DAVE: I wear these pants just a little baggy. Ankle bracelet.
 GAIL: When do you get it off? No, wait. June 8th?
 DAVE: Well. Yeah.
 GAIL: So you're still on probation.
 DAVE: I got five years, just two months left. Plus, I had to pay back the money, with penalties. That was all part of my plea bargain. See that shed over back behind the lot? That's where I sleep. I can't leave this lot. Well, to see my kids . . .
 GAIL: Test drives?
 DAVE: I can go on test drives. I can call. Look, it's not so bad. I stayed out of prison.
 GAIL: Why?
 DAVE: That's what you wanted to know, isn't it?
 GAIL: Yeah.
 DAVE: Because everything was perfect. Settled, and set and perfect. And it started to get a little boring. So . . .
 GAIL: What a stupid, *stupid* answer.
 DAVE: No arguments there. (*Pause.*)
 GAIL: You must have had a good lawyer.
 DAVE: An attorney friend took my case *pro bono*. That still amazes me.
 GAIL: Why?
 DAVE: For friendship, he said. When we finally signed the plea bargain, he shook my hand, and I haven't seen him since.
 GAIL: So you had this great life. Good job, good money, good marriage? And you just got *bored*?
 DAVE: Just one too many sacrament meetings.
 GAIL: Okay. I'm gone. (*She starts to get out of the car.*)
 DAVE: Come on, Gail.
 GAIL: I don't deserve flip. You can bob and weave, but if you want this, me, don't you *dare* be flip.
 DAVE: Okay. You're right. I'm sorry.
 GAIL: No! Don't do that either: don't give me that hang-dog look, don't tell me you're sorry.
 DAVE: I won't say it again.
 GAIL: Filthy cheating bastard. I should leave right this second.
 DAVE: Please. Don't. You're right, completely right. But don't.
 GAIL: (*Pause as she considers.*) Damn. A customer.
 DAVE: I see him.
 GAIL: Deal with him. It's okay, I'll still be here when you're finished.
 DAVE: Okay. (*He gets up.*) Sorry. I mean—
 GAIL: Shut up. Go sell a car. (*She watches him go. PHYLLIS comes over.*)
 PHYLLIS: You're here again.
 GAIL: I am.
 PHYLLIS: You're not in the market for a car, are you?
 GAIL: I bought a car.

PHYLLIS: I can make you leave if I want to. I can call the police.

GAIL: This is a used car lot. How often do you want the police to come by?

PHYLLIS: You're distracting him. He's my salesman.

GAIL: He's with a customer right now.

PHYLLIS: What's your name?

GAIL: Gail. And you're Phyllis.

PHYLLIS: I'm going to tell you the truth about Dave.

GAIL: I know the truth about Dave.

PHYLLIS: You can't trust him. You can't believe anything he tells you.

GAIL: I know that.

PHYLLIS: He's a liar and a thief.

GAIL: I know that too.

PHYLLIS: He's a good salesman. He doesn't have a conscience, or even a soul, so he can sell anything. But you, you're a woman, he's a tragic figure. He's told you his story?

GAIL: He has.

PHYLLIS: And so you can reform him, you think. Bring him back to humanity.

GAIL: You don't know what I want from him.

PHYLLIS: You're here. That tells me a lot. About you. (*Mocking.*) "The poor man. The poor self-destructive wretch. He has a good soul. He can still be saved." You're wrong, you're wrong, I know better.

GAIL: Why did you take him in? (*PHYLLIS glares at her.*)

PHYLLIS: Flesh and blood and pity. And you trust him. Stupid fool. (*She exits.*)

GAIL: Maybe I am.

SCENE SIX

(*GAIL sits in a car. DAVE comes up.*)

DAVE: Hey.

GAIL: He bought it, didn't he?

DAVE: That kid? Yeah.

GAIL: Such a teenage car. Grand Am.

DAVE: You're getting to know your cars.

GAIL: Can he afford it?

DAVE: That kid? Doubt it.

GAIL: So why'd you sell it to him?

DAVE: It's what I do. Nah, he has no credit; his dad co-signed the loan. He's got some shitty fast food job; he'll start asking for extra shifts. His grades will start to slide. College, it's already a distant dream.

GAIL: And you're aiding and abetting. All that.

DAVE: It's what I do. And, by the way, tell me again what great detergent Amway sells.

GAIL: So that's how the honesty car works. We sit and tell the truth about what crooks we are.

DAVE: That's what we do. (*A pause.*)

GAIL: My son's going on a mission.

DAVE: Yeah, I remember.

GAIL: He's wondering if he should or not. He doesn't want to,

doesn't even know if he believes in it. He's twenty now, and he finally got into this electrical engineering program he likes. But he gets all this pressure, you know, my parents, his father, the ward, his girlfriend.

DAVE: So *she's* supportive.

GAIL: Oh, like a rock. So I talked to him about it. You'da been proud of me, I was great.

DAVE: I had the same conversation with my son.

GAIL: Was that before or after you were excommunicated?

DAVE: After.

GAIL: 'Cause I'm sure whatever you said had a real ring of authenticity.

DAVE: I served a mission.

GAIL: Well, I haven't. But boy can I ever talk a mission up.

DAVE: So he's going. That's great.

GAIL: It's *not* great! It's not great at *all*!

DAVE: Wasn't that what you wanted?

GAIL: No. It's not. I lied about all of it. (*Pause.*) I felt so guilty, and I'd think, "That's weird, I just talked my son into going on a mission. What's with the guilt?" But I don't want him to go.

DAVE: He'll spend two years serving other people. Learning to deal with, you know, adversity.

GAIL: It's two years of his life! Two years doing something he doesn't even believe in, something I'm not even sure I believe in! I mean, if he were going to Africa to work with AIDS orphans or whatever, I'd be freaked out, but I'd be proud of him. He'd be doing something, you know, good. But a mission? You're not helping people, you're not serving anyone. You're trying to talk them into leaving their church and joining ours. You're bothering people in their homes to tell them that their beliefs aren't good enough.

DAVE: Wow.

GAIL: I never admit that to anyone.

DAVE: Why don't you tell him?

GAIL: I can't. I'm his mom, I'm active Mormon lady. His dad, he's the human cockroach; I'm the victim here, I'm the one that's strong. I can't tell him . . .

DAVE: So you'd rather . . . stay in hiding.

GAIL: Like you're hiding here? Anyway, what good would it do? To come out? My kids, they're already freaked out . . . their father . . . What good would it do to tell them: "Oh, by the way, I've been living a lie all these years, I really don't believe . . ." Besides, I really really can't afford it. Financially. I sell Amway, remember—

DAVE: Amway has a thing about you telling the truth about your religious—?

GAIL: No, look, the way Amway works is, you sell the stuff, but you also build your business. You have other people who you got into it, who also sell the stuff. You get a cut from their sales, and you send a cut to the guy above you.

DAVE: It's a pyramid scam.

GAIL: No, it's not! I hate that; it's not a pyramid. There've been . . . court cases. It's not. But you do have people under you.



DAVE: On the pyramid.

GAIL: Stop that! People who you got into it. Look, my ward members know how badly Mark treated me. They're kind, good people and they want to help, and sure it's a good deal for them too, but still. Without my ward, I wouldn't have a business. I have to stay active; I have to *look* active, anyway. I don't have a choice.

DAVE: You always have a choice.

GAIL: Yeah, and you told *me* the truth about that car. But not for that kid with the Grand Am?

DAVE: I'm just saying that the best thing I ever did was crash and burn.

GAIL: I know, it put you in touch with your real self; you were just going through the motions, now you're finally free. Such bullshit.

DAVE: I guess today would be a bad day for me to ask you out again.

GAIL: I know, I'm a total bitch today. I'm sorry. It's just, he had his bishop's interview yesterday, and I was thinking about it, watching that kid . . . buy that . . . it all came out.

DAVE: It's okay. We're in the honesty car. We can say anything.

GAIL: The thing is, I was going to ask you a favor and then I go off on this tangent, which for some reason ends up being about what a slimeball Mark is, which rubs off on you, too, you slimeball.

DAVE: So ask.

GAIL: I just called you a slimeball.

DAVE: A convicted felon turned used-car salesman? If the shoe fits . . .

GAIL: I can't ask now.

DAVE: It's nearly three; your kids are home; there's a customer. So if you're going to ask me—

GAIL: Okay okay! Will you give my nephew a job?

DAVE: I don't really have a job to offer him.

GAIL: Come on, washing cars, sweeping the lot. Just a few hours a week.

DAVE: I'll talk to Phyllis.

GAIL: Will you?

DAVE: Your nephew can't find something better than this?

GAIL: He's gay.

DAVE: Your nephew?

GAIL: Yeah. He lives in South Carolina; my sister thinks his friends are a bad influence. They're shipping him to Utah, and I'm the relative who lives here, so . . .

DAVE: And you think a job washing cars will straighten him out.

GAIL: I don't know what I think.

DAVE: Why, then?

GAIL: He likes cars. And I just think he needs a friend. A straight male adult friend. His dad's hopeless, my sister's not much better. I feel for him.

DAVE: What's his name?

GAIL: Brian. Roenicke. Will you?

DAVE: I'll talk to Phyllis. Hey, I'd still love to go out.

GAIL: Dinner and a movie, right. Small talk over surf and turf, and then, I don't know, you seem pretty cool, so probably you'd take me to a chick flick. Romantic comedy.

DAVE: Whatever you want to do.

GAIL: Like, there's Meg Ryan up there, modeling cuteness

and accessibility. I wish I were her.

DAVE: I didn't cheat on you, Gail. That was another guy.

GAIL: And you're a model of fidelity and . . . never mind, I'll stop by tomorrow. Your guy left.

DAVE: Damn.

GAIL: Look, I'm sorry about that, too. I'm just a bitch today, I got this call from my sister, and she just makes me nuts.

DAVE: My sister makes me nuts too.

GAIL: *(With a little laugh.)* Yeah. Look, I gotta run, see you tomorrow. *(And she leans up toward him and gives him a very quick kiss. And she's off.)*

SCENE SEVEN

(BRIAN and PHYLLIS sit in the office, waiting.)

PHYLLIS: I don't know why we're doing this. We don't need you.

BRIAN: Whatever.

PHYLLIS: I run this car lot. I decide who works here and who doesn't.

BRIAN: I was told to wait here for Dave. Is that Dave?

PHYLLIS: He's with a customer. He's our sales manager.

BRIAN: So is that what I'm supposed to do? Sell cars.

PHYLLIS: Oh, no. No, I don't want you selling cars. I want to be very clear about that. You're not to talk to anyone while you're here. On the clock.

BRIAN: There's a clock?

PHYLLIS: We don't really have a clock. No. While you're on the time . . . card, while you're working for us. No, we have a very careful image we want to cultivate, and a

teenage salesman is is is just not, not—.

BRIAN: Good. I don't particularly want to sell cars. I don't like sales.

PHYLLIS: Well, then. What can you do? What skills do you have?

BRIAN: Look, I was dropped off here, told to wait until I could talk to Dave.

PHYLLIS: Well, what would you like to do?

BRIAN: Get the hell back to South Carolina. Get the hell out of . . .

PHYLLIS: We don't use that kind of language!

BRIAN: Sorry.

PHYLLIS: This is a place of business!

BRIAN: I said I was sorry. Geez. *(Looks out the window.)* Okay, that guy's taking a test drive, it looks to me.

PHYLLIS: Yes. Yes, he is. That's a very good sign. Very few people buy cars they haven't test driven.

BRIAN: No kidding. *(Enter DAVE.)*

PHYLLIS: So is he interested?

DAVE: Middling. *(Offers his hand.)* You must be Brian. Dave McGregor.

BRIAN: Hi.

DAVE: I hope Phyllis has been making you feel welcome.

PHYLLIS: I don't know why you want to hire this boy; we don't know him and we don't need help.

DAVE: Looks like she has. Phyllis, I'm gonna show Brian around a little; if that guy comes back, call me. I shouldn't miss him, but just in case.

PHYLLIS: If we lose a sale because you're showing this boy around, then—.

DAVE: Just call me, okay? *(Leads BRIAN away from PHYLLIS.)* Sorry about that.

BRIAN: No, it's cool. You had to talk to the guy.

DAVE: So whaddya think?

BRIAN: Of this lot?

DAVE: Sure.

BRIAN: Look. Like I told my aunt Gail, I'm not in town for long. Just until my parents stop freaking out. I'm just waiting out my time, like any good prisoner. Meanwhile, I like cars.

DAVE: Fair enough. So?

BRIAN: What do I think of your cars?

DAVE: You can be honest.

BRIAN: Well. I think you've got some seriously shitty iron.

DAVE: True enough.

BRIAN: Beater heaven, man. It's almost funny. That LeSabre: does it even have shocks? Not one but *three* Ford Explorers. And the piece-of-shit Chevys . . .

DAVE: Look, I'm doing your aunt a favor here.

BRIAN: And don't think I don't appreciate it.

DAVE: Okay . . .

BRIAN: It's a job around cars.

DAVE: Which you're on the verge of losing.

BRIAN: And which I'd rather keep.

DAVE: So show some respect.

BRIAN: Yes sir!

Why did you
take him in?

Flesh and blood
and pity.
And you trust him.
Stupid fool.

DAVE: Okay, is there some point at which you stop being an immature asshole?

BRIAN: I thought we didn't use that kind of language. This is a place of business.

DAVE: I'm still not amused.

BRIAN: Look. What if I start there?

DAVE: What, that old Blazer?

BRIAN: Just needs a little body work.

DAVE: Look, that car really is a beater. We're selling it as is, twelve hundred, which we won't get.

BRIAN: It's worth more than that. Put me on it.

DAVE: You serious?

BRIAN: You have a stud welder?

DAVE: I can get you one.

BRIAN: A sander, some twenty-four grit paper, some eighty grit for finishing, some filler. I'll give it three coats of primer, a paint job, and I'll feather it so you'll never notice the difference.

DAVE: Too much sun damage, you'll never match the paint.

BRIAN: Wanna bet?

DAVE: Gail didn't tell me you had body shop experience.

BRIAN: Totally self taught. Okay, I'm restoring a car.

DAVE: Seriously?

BRIAN: '57 T-Bird.

DAVE: No kidding! Roadster?

BRIAN: A Baby Bird.

DAVE: That's a beautiful car. With the 292?

BRIAN: It was shot. I pulled it, put in a 312. All new chrome, all new undercarriage. It's cherry.

DAVE: The two-tone?

BRIAN: Red and white, with sidewalls. It's street legal now, but I still want to do some things.

DAVE: Don't tell me. Headers, a spoiler . . .

BRIAN: Fender skirts; they weren't on the original, but I think they're bitchin'. And I'm cheating a little, putting in ABS. With the extra muscle I want the stopping power.

DAVE: No, that makes sense.

BRIAN: Look, put me to work on that Blazer. That dent's no big deal; I can pull it out and smooth it over. You can add eight hundred easy to the sticker. And all you'll be out is whatever you're gonna pay me.

DAVE: Yeah, what am I gonna pay you? Ten an hour?

BRIAN: Can you talk the boss lady into that?

DAVE: I'll deal with her.

BRIAN: I don't think she likes me very much.

DAVE: She doesn't like anyone right now.

BRIAN: Yeah, I got that.

DAVE: Stay out of her way, she'll be fine.

BRIAN: Okay.

DAVE: Listen, your aunt, she told me, well, a few things about you.

BRIAN: She told me she told you.

DAVE: You're here because your parents are worried that you're gay.

BRIAN: Could be.

DAVE: Look, I don't care, I really don't.

BRIAN: And it also isn't any of your—

DAVE: Thing is, Phyllis *will* care.

BRIAN: Yeah.

DAVE: So, they sent you to Utah—well, that makes sense because we don't have any gay people in Utah.

BRIAN: I assumed that.

DAVE: Just . . . you're in the closet, stay there.

BRIAN: Look, I have friends my parents hate. I'm also seventeen and going to college in a few months, at which point they can go to hell. Meanwhile, I went along with this, for entirely mercenary reasons of my own.

DAVE: You want them to pay your tuition.

BRIAN: Plus, they got onto my computer, and they found some things. So, I need a vacation from them as much as they need one from me. And I like my aunt Gail. I like her a lot.

DAVE: Another point where we agree.

BRIAN: So what's the deal there? You and her?

DAVE: What's she told you?

BRIAN: Not a thing.

DAVE: Fair enough. (*Looking out at the lot.*) Damn. That guy's back.

BRIAN: What, the Previa? He was only gone five minutes.

DAVE: Yeah, he's not gonna buy it. Ah well.

BRIAN: Show him that Outback.

DAVE: He doesn't want an SUV.

BRIAN: It's worth a try. And that's the best car on your lot.

DAVE: I will. (*Starts to head off.*) '57 T-Bird? Sweet ride. (*He's gone.*) BRIAN *looks at the cars in the lot. Chuckles to himself.*)

SCENE EIGHT

(GAIL *and* DAVE *in a car.*)

GAIL: We bought his suits. The big shopping trip.

DAVE: Mr. Mac's? Boy, does that store have a racket.

GAIL: Hey, they've found their niche market, I take my hat off. You could stand to wear a suit once in awhile, you know.

DAVE: I'm a used car salesman. Sports coat, short sleeve colored shirt—that's the uniform.

GAIL: It makes you look cheap.

DAVE: That's the idea.

GAIL: You're supposed to look cheap?

DAVE: Sports coat says he's trying to look professional, but he can't afford a suit. My profit margins are so low, I'm barely making ends meet. Which means, you, the consumer, are paying my rock bottom price.

GAIL: I had no idea.

DAVE: I buy a jacket, first thing I do, I take a steel brush to the elbows, wear 'em down a little.

GAIL: But. I wouldn't want to do that, would I?

DAVE: No, not for Amway. You're trying to get people to join your pyramid. You have to look successful, like you have money to burn.

GAIL: It's not a pyramid.

DAVE: Okay.

GAIL: Is that guy gonna stop?
 DAVE: They do that sometimes. Park in front of the lot, check the cars out without getting out.
 GAIL: When you have to go, you just go.
 DAVE: I'm keeping an eye out.
 GAIL: Where's Phyllis?
 DAVE: DMV.
 GAIL: Where are we, Dave? What are we?
 DAVE: Sitting in one of my cars.
 GAIL: Every time we try to define it . . . coming out to each other: "I'm lying to my family," "I'm an adulterer and felon."
 DAVE: That seems to be our relationship. Okay, he's getting out.
 GAIL: Go.
 DAVE: So far.
 GAIL: Go!
 DAVE: That's our relationship so far. It could grow, it could change.
 GAIL: Go! (*He goes. She waits, checks her watch, waits some more. He comes back.*) Fifty-eight minutes you were gone.
 DAVE: Sorry about that.
 GAIL: No, it's great; he must have really been interested.
 DAVE: Couldn't quite close it. Said he's price comparing.
 GAIL: It's still a possible.
 DAVE: I don't know. Something's off. I'm usually a good closer.
 GAIL: See, what I think is, we have one of those situations where one of the people likes the other person more than the other person likes the other person—oh never mind. You like me more than I like you, is what I'm saying.
 DAVE: Oh, that's nice.
 GAIL: Where?
 DAVE: Over by that little Geo. Looks like a father/daughter.
 GAIL: Could be. That's a cute little car for a college girl.
 DAVE: Exactly what I'm thinking. (*He gets up. Leans in.*) If we liked each other the same, how would we know that? (*He goes. She waits. He comes back.*)
 GAIL: We'd know.
 DAVE: We'd know what?
 GAIL: If we liked each other the same. That was the last thing you asked me before—.
 DAVE: Sorry. I think I got that sale.
 GAIL: They seemed interested.
 DAVE: The daughter loves the car. He's gotta talk to his bank.
 GAIL: Anyway. We'd know.
 DAVE: I don't think we would. Off balance like this, our reactions off?
 GAIL: Plus I'm still married. Plus I hate men. Plus plus plus.
 DAVE: I just think we should date.
 GAIL: Starting June 8th, right? Look, I've been sitting in this car for two and a half hours—.
 DAVE: For maybe five minutes total conversa—.
 GAIL: Well, see, doesn't that count as at least a sort of—.
 DAVE: We should go out, see where we are. I could get permission to leave the lot. Before the 8th.

GAIL: I'm sitting in this car.
 DAVE: I know. And what do we do with that, these days, you sitting there, me jumping up every five minutes to deal with—.
 GAIL: This is what I'm up for. There's a guy.
 DAVE: Will you go out with me?
 GAIL: There's a guy. Over by the SUVs.
 DAVE: Can we go out?
 GAIL: When you're finished, come back to the car. I'll still be here.
 DAVE: (*Pause.*) Okay. (*He exits. She sits in the car.*)

SCENE NINE

(*BRIAN stands back, admiring his work. DAVE ambles up to him.*)

DAVE: Looks great.
 BRIAN: Not too bad. (*Points.*) Those bubbles are driving me batty. Door frames are tough.
 DAVE: Hey, Phyllis! Check this out!
 BRIAN: That side panel was a little trickier than I thought. But I was finally able to pull it out.
 DAVE: I think it looks great.
 PHYLLIS: (*Enters.*) I was dealing with that loan app; I can't just come at your beck and call, Dave.
 DAVE: Look what Brian did with that Blazer.
 PHYLLIS: I can't see anything.
 DAVE: Exactly.
 PHYLLIS: You called me out here to see a perfectly normal Chevy—.
 DAVE: This is the one with that dent in, remember?
 PHYLLIS: I don't see a dent.
 DAVE: That's what I'm saying.
 PHYLLIS: Well. You pulled that dent out?
 BRIAN: Yes, ma'am.
 PHYLLIS: Well. We'll have to adjust the sticker price.
 DAVE: I think so, too.
 PHYLLIS: Well. More work for me. (*She exits.*)
 DAVE: See. She loves it as much as I do.
 BRIAN: I can tell.
 DAVE: So what do you want to work on next?
 BRIAN: I was thinking maybe that Tercel.
 DAVE: Good luck. I was gonna junk it.
 BRIAN: I think maybe it's just a suspension problem.
 DAVE: I don't know. It's gonna need a lot more than new shocks.
 BRIAN: Well, I'll take a look. I've got some ideas.
 DAVE: Go wild. Listen, I gotta ask you something.
 BRIAN: I know what you're going to say.
 DAVE: That Civic.
 BRIAN: It's not a good car, Dave. Whoever owned it—.
 DAVE: It's a Honda Civic, it's on my lot, and I hope to sell it.
 BRIAN: Okay.
 DAVE: That kid yesterday, the college kid. He was ready to buy it. Test drive, I had my fingers crossed, but he said it

handled just fine.
 BRIAN: It's a bad car.
 DAVE: That kid liked it. Right up to the point I'm putting away the key, my one employee is having this nice chat with the kid.
 BRIAN: I did talk to him.
 DAVE: You told him not to buy the car!
 BRIAN: I suggested—
 DAVE: We're a car lot! We sell cars.
 BRIAN: That car's a piece of shit.
 DAVE: Don't do it again, okay?
 BRIAN: I'm never ever to tell a customer not to buy a car. I'm never to warn someone—
 DAVE: I can't believe I'm having this conversation.
 BRIAN: He's a nice guy. I like him.
 DAVE: I like lots of people. I still sell to 'em. And the Gail situation isn't any kind of precedent. Don't do it again.
 BRIAN: Fine.
 DAVE: Look. Okay. Your Aunt Gail, she, I don't know. I don't know what that's about. She's important. Somehow. And . . . it's a one-time thing is all I'm saying.
 BRIAN: What if I had some of the same feelings, though?
 DAVE: Please, the way I feel about Gail is not the same thing as you—!
 BRIAN: Actually, Dave, I like that kid, as you call him, in pretty much the same identical way that you like Aunt Gail. Pretty much exactly the same way.
 DAVE: Come on, you can't possibly have . . . *(Stops himself.)* You serious?
 BRIAN: Exactly the same feelings. His name's Jake; he's not "that kid."
 DAVE: I had no idea. I sat with him on that test drive; I got no weird vibes at all.

BRIAN: Then I'd say your gay-dar kinda sucks.
 DAVE: Well. Whaddya know. You guys going out?
 BRIAN: You're just gonna freak out about this now, aren't you?
 DAVE: No, of course not.
 BRIAN: If it was a girl, and I got her phone number, you'd be all cool with it, probably teasing me about whatever. Am I gonna get some action? Little sump'in sump'in?
 DAVE: Okay.
 BRIAN: But this is a gay thing, so you're freaked out. Right?
 DAVE: Not at all. I'm happy for you. I hope it works out.
 BRIAN: Yeah, okay.
 DAVE: I am. I'm glad you met someone.
 BRIAN: Okay.
 DAVE: Okay. *(Leaves, a little unsettled, despite his protestations. PHYLLIS watches them.)*

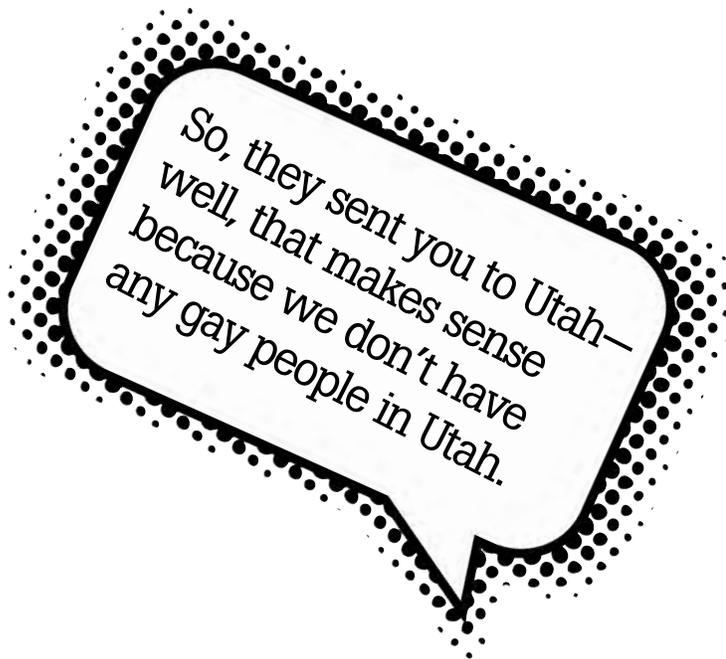
SCENE TEN

(GAIL and DAVE sit in a car. BRIAN is in the office, on the computer. GAIL and DAVE sit for moment in a companionable silence.)

GAIL: I love a good storm.
 DAVE: Sure.
 GAIL: I'm sorry. A rainstorm like this? Bad for your business, right?



If it ends and there's nothing,
 then it ended and there was
 nothing. But if there's a forever,
 then I will do what I need to so
 I can spend it with them.
 Restore what God took from me.
 And so I go, every Sunday.



DAVE: While it's raining, sure. But the cars sure look great when it clears up.

GAIL: I can imagine.

DAVE: And when it quits, we get a lot of customers. I don't know, maybe they're restless, in the back of their mind: "Hey, I've been wanting to look for a new car."

GAIL: So what's this? That we're sitting in.

DAVE: Pontiac Montana.

GAIL: Seriously? They named a car after a state?

DAVE: That or the 49ers quarterback.

GAIL: I love car names. All those fake, made up names: Acura, Previa, Accord.

DAVE: Or the number/letter combinations: S-10, A-4, TSX.

GAIL: Bingo!

DAVE: As long as it's fairly cool sounding . . .

GAIL: Prius.

DAVE: Sure.

GAIL: What's a prius?

DAVE: Beats me.

GAIL: (*Jokingly.*) It's not another word for penis?

DAVE: I don't think so.

GAIL: I saw one the other day, and I remembered this
Okay, Mark, he had this thing, he had a . . . sorry, this is embarrassing.

DAVE: It's okay.

GAIL: An erection. Like permanent.

DAVE: Seriously?

GAIL: Yeah, it lasted like three days. I had to take him to the doctor. They called it priapism. So priapic, prius? It could be.

DAVE: You can get that, seriously?

GAIL: Oh, now you're worried. He'd gotten this stuff off the internet, not Viagra or Cialis, he was too cheap for the good stuff, but

DAVE: There's things you could do to help him with that.

GAIL: Oh, believe me. But no, we'd finish, and there it'd still be. Poking out. He said it was really painful. Not to mention embarrassing.

DAVE: What'd they do?

GAIL: They gave him some other drugs.

DAVE: Well, I'll never look at a Prius the same way again.

GAIL: I know what you're thinking. I'm talking about penises, must be a good sign.

DAVE: Not really.

GAIL: And we could go out. I guess. June 8th. But why? What would the point be?

DAVE: Get to know each other better.

GAIL: We know each other. The thing is, we have nothing in common.

DAVE: Well, I think we do.

GAIL: A mutual penchant for dishonesty?

DAVE: It's a starting point. (*Pause.*)

GAIL: How's Brian working out for you?

DAVE: He's great. I like him.

GAIL: I know you like him. How is he as an employee?

DAVE: Great. He really knows his stuff.

GAIL: Where is he?

DAVE: He can't work in this rain. Phyllis is out, so I said he could use the office computer. I promise you cannot access porn on that computer.

GAIL: Okay. (*Pause.*) See, though, that's what I mean, that's what I'm talking about.

DAVE: What?

GAIL: You're not saying it, but you don't actually think it's a big deal if Brian looks at porn. You think it's a normal, healthy—

DAVE: Well, what I've seen of it, it's boring as hell, but—

GAIL: You've gone to those sites, then, you look at porn.

DAVE: Not on that computer, I don't.

GAIL: But you don't think it's bad for him? You don't think it's damaging, porn addiction?

DAVE: Gail, I don't even know what that means.

GAIL: See. We have nothing in common.

DAVE: And you're jumping to conclusions.

GAIL: Am I? You just said you didn't like it. You didn't say you're against it.

DAVE: Okay. I am.

GAIL: This is a real basic kind of issue, Dave, this is important, how we feel about pornography.

DAVE: And I told you. I'm against it.

GAIL: I don't believe you. I bet it was even a factor, your fall from grace.

DAVE: No, come on, that's silly.
(*We see PHYLLIS coming toward the office. BRIAN unhurriedly closes his computer files, exits. He sees the rain, looks around, covers his head and heads out to the van. A moment later, PHYLLIS sits at her desk.*)

BRIAN: You mind if I join you guys?

DAVE: Not at all.

BRIAN: Thought I'd let Phyllis have her computer back. (*He*

gets in.) That's one thing about this piece-of-shit mini-van. Plenty of room.

GAIL: I wish you wouldn't use language like that, Brian.

BRIAN: Sorry.

DAVE: I'm glad you joined us, Brian. Your aunt's being ridiculous.

BRIAN: Oh?

GAIL: (*Awkward now that BRIAN's there.*) I don't want to talk about it. Hey, you guys mind if I invite Phyllis to join us?

DAVE: We could go in the office.

GAIL: No, I like this car.

BRIAN: Aunt Gail, you serious? Have you actually talked to Phyllis?

GAIL: I know she's difficult.

BRIAN: She's practically psychotic.

DAVE: You know she was married once?

GAIL: Really?

BRIAN: Hard to believe.

DAVE: Oh, yeah. For about five years. They had two kids.

GAIL: So she has children.

DAVE: Not anymore. They were killed in a head-on, all three. Some old geezer fell asleep at the wheel, crossed the median, wham.

GAIL: Oh my gosh.

DAVE: Yeah. It must have been twenty-five years ago. Phyllis never talks about it, never.

GAIL: Was she in the car?

DAVE: No. She was working, here. She was my father's bookkeeper. This was his lot.

GAIL: That's awful.

DAVE: Yeah.

GAIL: What was his name? Her husband?

DAVE: His name was Harlan. The kids were Emily and Amanda.

GAIL: Two little girls.

BRIAN: So she's had it rough.

DAVE: Rough, and no fault of hers. You should have known her before, her sense of humor.

GAIL: Phyllis, funny?

DAVE: I remember the three of us were driving this one time, sort of out in the country, and we saw this sign up, "comp post for sale." And she saw it first, and all she said was "Hey!" Like, wow, what a deal. I laughed 'til it hurt.

GAIL: Do you ever still see, you know, that side of her?

DAVE: No. Never.

GAIL: Okay, I'm inviting her in. (*She gets out, runs to the office.*)

DAVE: Bad idea.

BRIAN: She just took her meds. She'll probably just be all loopy and weird.

DAVE: Hope so. She hates those pills, but they do cut the pain. (*They wait. GAIL and PHYLLIS run in from the office in the rain.*)

PHYLLIS: I don't know what I'm doing here. I have so much paperwork. (*But it's clear the drugs have kicked in.*)

GAIL: We're just having a nice conversation, and we thought we'd like you to join us.

PHYLLIS: Foolish and unnecessary.

GAIL: I just hated the thought of you in there alone.

PHYLLIS: I'm perfectly fine alone.

GAIL: Just a little break.

PHYLLIS: Well. It's not like we're going to be selling any cars in this weather.

DAVE: That's what I was saying.

GAIL: So. This is nice, what were we talking about? Where were we?

DAVE: We're all Mormons.

BRIAN: What?

DAVE: Before you came in. Your Aunt Gail thinks she and I have nothing in common.

GAIL: And we don't.

DAVE: And I'm saying we're both Mormons. Everyone in this car's Mormon. We have that.

PHYLLIS: Not you.

DAVE: I'm a Mormon.

PHYLLIS: Ex Mormon. Excommunicated Mor—

DAVE: Okay. Technically—

PHYLLIS: You're not actually Mormon at all. You might as well be Catholic, or . . . Shinto.

BRIAN: Shinto?

GAIL: She's right, Dave. You're not really Mormon.

DAVE: My attitudes, my beliefs, my whole way of looking at the world, at God—

PHYLLIS: But none of that matters; you're not a member of the Church.

GAIL: She's right.

DAVE: Okay. (*Pause.*) Your son leaves when?

GAIL: That's a cheap shot.

DAVE: You're Mormon, okay. So how excited are you about your son's mission?

GAIL: Okay. Not very.

BRIAN: Seriously?

DAVE: Not *at all*. You don't even believe in the missionary program of the Church.

BRIAN: Wait, you don't want Andy to go?

GAIL: Thanks a lot, Dave, now everyone in my family's gonna know.

DAVE: And that would be a bad thing?

BRIAN: We've talked about it; he isn't all that excited either. He's mostly going because he thinks you want him to.

GAIL: No, I do want him to. I do. I just—

DAVE: That's not what you told me.

GAIL: Will you shut up?

DAVE: We're just bothering people, telling them their beliefs aren't good enough. That's what you told me.

PHYLLIS: And that's true. (*They stare at her, amazed.*)

GAIL: You think so?

PHYLLIS: They believe in false doctrines, don't they? People in the world. Worldly people.

BRIAN: If he doesn't want to go, and you don't want him to go—

PHYLLIS: All manner of falsehood.

GAIL: It'll be good for him to go; I'm not against him going.
 PHYLLIS: Falsehood and wickedness! (*They stare at her.*) So that's why we need missionaries!

DAVE: Well put, sis. (*Phyllis nods, satisfied.*)

GAIL: Brian, you can't tell Andy any of this, okay?

BRIAN: He's my cousin, he's my friend. This is two years of his *life* we're talking about. If you really don't want him to go—

GAIL: I want to talk to him myself about it, okay? Will you just let me do that?

BRIAN: I guess.

GAIL: Brother.

PHYLLIS: You should be ashamed of yourself, you know.

GAIL: I am.

PHYLLIS: Not supporting your missionary. You're as bad as Dave, and he's a criminal.

DAVE: More things in common, see.

GAIL: I support him! I'm the one who basically talked him into going.

BRIAN: Lied him into going.

GAIL: Mind your own business.

BRIAN: You need to tell him the truth.

GAIL: Oh, you make it sound so easy. The truth. Straightforward and clean.

DAVE: You can't let him do something he really doesn't—

GAIL: Oh oh oh so I just smile and say, "Hey, son, here's what I really feel, what say you don't go after all." It's not . . . all this tangled mess of contradicting feelings, and fear, and what are we gonna do and why did that bastard have to leave me alone to deal with all this? (*Pause.*)

PHYLLIS: Yes. Why did he? Just left us alone, nothing but pain and loneliness, and no answers. None. And absolutely nothing to look forward to.

GAIL: No.

PHYLLIS: So unfair. How long we have to wait. (*A long pause.*)

GAIL: But you still go? To church: you still believe.

PHYLLIS: I don't want to hurt forever.

BRIAN: No.

GAIL: Of course not.

PHYLLIS: *If* there's a forever. If it ends and there's nothing, then it ended and there was nothing. But if there's a forever, then I will do what I need to so I can spend it with them. Restore what God took from me. And so I go, every Sunday.

GAIL: Oh Phyllis. (*She embraces her.*) You're better than I am. That's for sure. (*Pause.*) You're right, Dave. I'm a terrible person.

DAVE: My son's out. He's in Fiji, I write him once a week. He's having a great time. I supported him going, and I support him financially.

PHYLLIS: *We* support him.

DAVE: Yeah, we. I guess officially I'm not a Mormon, though, you're right about that.

BRIAN: Well, I'm not a Mormon.

GAIL: You most certainly are.

BRIAN: I'm gay. There's no room for me in Mormonism.



So I can stay Mormon as long as I stay lonely. And a second-class citizen. As long as I give up on, what, everything: meeting someone, being with someone. Sex—no, not just sex—holding hands, hugging, any kind of closeness. That's all out. Even hoping for it: out.

GAIL: There are lots of young people who suffer from same-sex attraction, and they—.

BRIAN: First of all, I'm not *suffering* from anything.

GAIL: You could serve a mission, you could serve—.

BRIAN: They'd let me go on a mission?

PHYLLIS: Lots of young men who are struggling with feelings of—.

BRIAN: I'm not really struggling either. I'm just gay.

PHYLLIS: And damned.

BRIAN: Could be. (*Pause.*) The thing is, I probably believe in more of it than either of you two. But there's no room for me in Mormonism and we all know it.

DAVE: You have a . . . a testimony?

BRIAN: We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately practice unrighteous dominion.

GAIL: I love that scripture.

BRIAN: Welcome to the life of every gay man in America. Unrighteous dominion, right? Homophobia? Joseph knew it. His sex life, it was *way* out there.

PHYLLIS: Joseph Smith wasn't gay!

BRIAN: No. But how many wives were there, thirty, forty? Daughters of his best friends, women who were already married to someone else even. And they shot him for it. For having a weird sex life. Which probably felt perfectly normal to him.

GAIL: Brian. Honey. There's nothing really all that different from your situation and the situation of single straight guys in the Church. The law of chastity applies to everyone, just the same.

BRIAN: You're kidding, right?

GAIL: The requirements—.

BRIAN: Single straight guys, they can date, right? Go out, hold hands, kiss. And that's not even . . . Straight guys are allowed to hope!

GAIL: But many terrific people never marry, live celibate lives, and serve in the Church and they're wonderful people.

DAVE: And Orthodox Girl is back.

GAIL: Shut up.

BRIAN: Straight singles, they have all kinds of activities, chances to meet people, right?

DAVE: And some of them never do.

BRIAN: But they're *supposed* to keep trying. And there are callings they'll never get. Like bishop?

DAVE: That's true.

BRIAN: So I can stay Mormon as long as I stay lonely. And a second-class citizen. As long as I give up on, what, everything: meeting someone, being with someone. Sex—no, not just sex—holding hands, hugging, any kind of closeness. That's all out. Even hoping for it: out.

GAIL: I'm afraid—.

BRIAN: Well, screw that. I'm sorry, Aunt Gail, Phyllis, I want to meet someone. I want to be with someone. I don't see why that should be denied me.

GAIL: Brian, honey . . .

BRIAN: In fact, what if I were to tell you that I've met someone wonderful? And it's like I said to you, Dave, the other day, "You're not happy for me, and you would be if it was a girl." Right?

GAIL: *I'm* happy for you.

BRIAN: Are you really?

GAIL: I'm . . . (*Pause.*)

BRIAN: His name is Jake, he's taller than I am, he's a year older, he's a great kisser, he's got a great singing voice and a wonderful sense of humor, he's—.

PHYLLIS: Like I said. Damned for all eternity!

GAIL: You've made your point!

BRIAN: Just so we're clear.

GAIL: Brian, I'm sorry.

BRIAN: I love you, you're my favorite aunt, and . . . and . . . that's not right. You not accepting me.

GAIL: If God commands us to do something, even something hard, even something that looks impossible, shouldn't we at least try—.

BRIAN: My folks found gay porn on my computer.

GAIL: We heard that.

BRIAN: They were old files. I quit. I hadn't gone to any of those websites for months.

DAVE: Why?

BRIAN: Because having those thoughts in my mind made it harder for me to pray. I couldn't get through. It was making me . . . think of people as things.

PHYLLIS: Good for you, young man.

BRIAN: Jesus loves me fine. I feel it when I pray.

PHYLLIS: So all you have to do now is fight those feelings. Sing a hymn when you start to feel attracted to someone. Works wonders.

BRIAN: Aunt Gail. Three years ago, I guess it was, Dad took me to a car show. And I couldn't get enough of it, especially this one '32 Ford.

DAVE: A Deuce.

BRIAN: They'd loaded it up, Dave, it was cherry. They'd messed with it, but in good ways: a-beam front axle, hair-pins instead of a four-link up front, headers, a five-speed, and a big-block Chevy under the hood. I spent an hour talking to the guy. I was totally hooked.

GAIL: Your Mom told me.

BRIAN: Some people, they fall in love with baseball, or bass fishing, or musical theatre. Me, I love cars. That's my thing. I don't know why. That car show grabbed me, that's all I know.

GAIL: Sure.

BRIAN: You don't understand at all. Being gay isn't like that, not even a little bit. It isn't what I'm *into*. It's who I *am*. I could still fight it? Fight what?

GAIL: Again, Brian. I'm sorry.

DAVE: So there we are. Three Mormons in this car. And, maybe, none.

GAIL: Either way, you and I don't have anything in common.

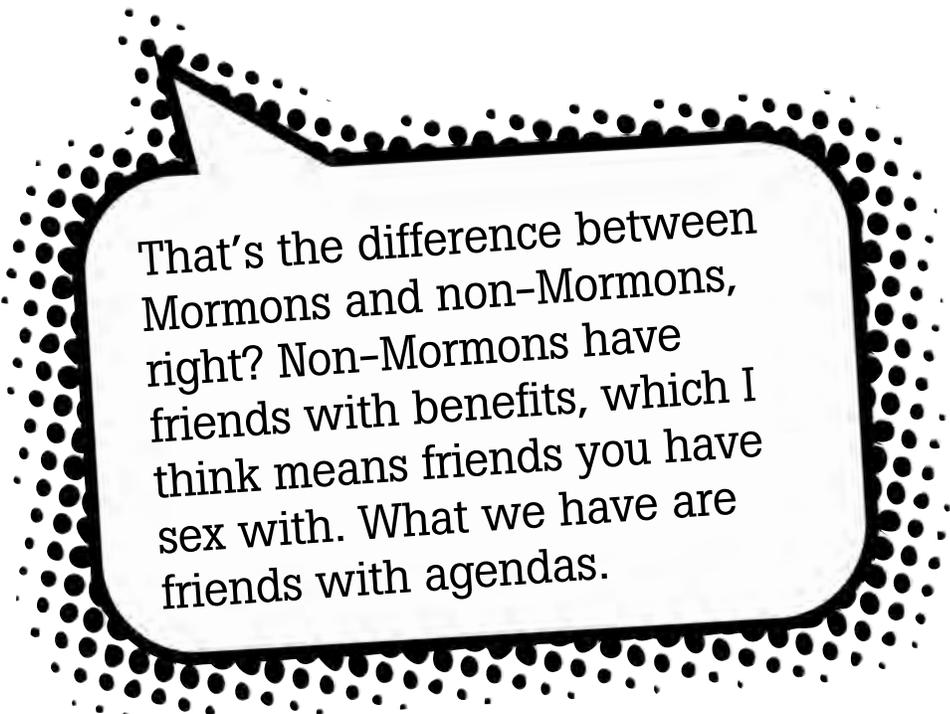
BRIAN: What about, you, Phyllis?

PHYLLIS: What about me?
 BRIAN: Do you count? As a Mormon?
 PHYLLIS: I attend all my meetings; I fulfill all my callings; I go to the temple weekly. I read my scriptures and I pray. I am certainly a Mormon. In nearly every way that matters.
 BRIAN: So okay.
 PHYLLIS: But I never have forgiven him. I'm sorry, this rain seems to have gotten to me, I don't usually talk like this. But he took them all. I did not deserve that.
 DAVE: You took me in.
 PHYLLIS: You needed a job and I needed a salesman.
 BRIAN: So you're like us too. A sort-of Mormon.
 DAVE: Welcome to the sort-of Mormon car.
 GAIL: Our honesty car.
 BRIAN: Just another crappy GM minivan.
 GAIL: I don't want to talk to my son, Dave. About his mission. I don't know what to tell him.
 DAVE: I know. *(They sit and watch the rain.)*

SCENE ELEVEN

(PHYLLIS and DAVE in the office.)

DAVE: So I think we want bids on, lets see, the Audi, the Chrysler, the Escort, what else?
 PHYLLIS: What about that Mitsubishi, the Lancer?
 DAVE: Yeah, it's pretty clean. So we're okay? You up to this?
 PHYLLIS: It's just an auction. How many auctions have I done over the years?
 DAVE: You just look tired.
 PHYLLIS: I'm fine. Just . . . hay fever, it's hard to sleep.
 DAVE: Well, hay fever, that's not so bad.
 PHYLLIS: You've never had hay fever, you don't know.
 DAVE: When do you see the doctor again?
 PHYLLIS: Now, Dave, you stop fussing. I'm fine, I really am.
 DAVE: Okay. *(Looks out window.)* There he is. Not like Brian to be late, I was starting to—
 PHYLLIS: Don't let him in here!
 DAVE: What?
 PHYLLIS: This is our office, he's just the boy who does odd jobs, you keep him out!
 DAVE: Phyllis, come on. *(Enter BRIAN, fuming.)* Hey, we were just getting worried.
 BRIAN: Were you. Sorry. *(He's glaring at PHYLLIS.)*
 PHYLLIS: You you just stay out of here. This is our business office, you have no reason—
 BRIAN: Oh is it? So you'd object if I just—*(With his arm, sweeps all the papers off the desk.)*
 DAVE: Brian!
 BRIAN: It goes both ways, lady!
 PHYLLIS: I'm your boss!
 DAVE: Brian, calm down!
 BRIAN: It goes both ways!
 PHYLLIS: Dave, get him out of here!
 BRIAN: Oh, you don't want me doing this? *(He grabs a file cabinet, rips it down. DAVE's got his arms, but BRIAN kicks at the papers on the floor.)* You want me to stay out of the office, out of your life?
 PHYLLIS: Dave!
 BRIAN: It goes both ways! *(DAVE manhandles BRIAN out of the office.)*
 PHYLLIS: I'm calling the police!
 BRIAN: Interfering bitch!
 DAVE: Will you just . . . *(He flings BRIAN to the ground. BRIAN lies there, his head in his hands.)* What the hell is this?
 BRIAN: She told his bishop.
 DAVE: What?
 BRIAN: She got into my Hotmail account. She found my emails to Jake.
 DAVE: Calm down. Just tell me what happened.
 BRIAN: She figured out who he is. She called his bishop, and she called his parents. *(A cell phone goes off.)*
 DAVE: Great. *(He answers.)* Dave McGregor. Gail? *(He listens.)*
 BRIAN: He isn't out.
 DAVE: Yeah, he's here.
 BRIAN: We talked about it. He was looking for the right moment, you know?
 DAVE: Look, you're probably gonna need to come get him. Phyllis called the cops.
 BRIAN: No one knew. Now everyone knows, and everything's wrong.
 DAVE: *(Hanging up.)* That was your aunt.
 BRIAN: Yeah, I left her a note.
 DAVE: Scary note.
 BRIAN: I wasn't really gonna do it.
 DAVE: I'm glad. *(Pause.)* Thing is, if you really did kill her, being my sister and all, I'd probably have to let you go. *(BRIAN laughs harshly.)*
 BRIAN: Good to know.
 PHYLLIS: *(Pokes her head out.)* The police are coming, young man! I won't allow you to come into my office—
 DAVE: Phyllis, he's upset.
 PHYLLIS: He he he vandalized my entire . . .
 DAVE: Phyllis. You made some phone calls yesterday. Didn't you?
 PHYLLIS: Well. What if I did! What if I found some things on my computer, some filthy perverted—
 BRIAN: They were emails to a friend—
 PHYLLIS: You're you're a homosexual predator, a vicious filthy . . .
 BRIAN: We were friends!
 PHYLLIS: Not from what I read!
 BRIAN: You've wrecked his life.
 DAVE: Brian has a point.
 PHYLLIS: You're taking his side?
 DAVE: Phyllis, I think you'd better go home.
 PHYLLIS: I I can't. I have an office to clean up. It's been vandalized.
 DAVE: I'll take care of it.
 PHYLLIS: We're not keeping him on the payroll!
 BRIAN: Like I'd stay!



That's the difference between Mormons and non-Mormons, right? Non-Mormons have friends with benefits, which I think means friends you have sex with. What we have are friends with agendas.

DAVE: We'll talk about it later.

BRIAN: You've, you've—I don't even know what you've done! For sure he's not allowed—.

PHYLLIS: Good! Good!

DAVE: Phyllis! Go home.

PHYLLIS: He goes first! He goes first!

DAVE: Phyllis, I will deal with this.

PHYLLIS: My office!

DAVE: I will clean everything up. You look terrible. Go home, let me deal with this.

PHYLLIS: I'm fine.

DAVE: You're not fine. And Brian's my responsibility.

PHYLLIS: Yes! You brought him here! You hired him. *(She holds her side.)*

DAVE: Phyllis?

PHYLLIS: I'm fine. I'll go. *(Turns before she leaves.)* I want him gone.

DAVE: You don't look well.

PHYLLIS: Need my pills.

DAVE: I'll get 'em. Brian get me some water. *(BRIAN runs off.)*

PHYLLIS: I heard what he called me, Dave.

DAVE: Well, you outed his friend.

PHYLLIS: I saved that boy!

DAVE: Not how he sees it.

PHYLLIS: He's a filthy pervert! I did the right thing!

DAVE: Phyllis, I'm worried about you, I'm gonna call in, drive you to the hospital. *(Dialing his cell.)*

BRIAN: *(Brings a glass of water.)* Dave. Customers.

DAVE: Talk to 'em.

PHYLLIS: No!

BRIAN: Do I even work here?

DAVE: *(On phone.)* Yeah, I need to leave the lot. My sister's

sick. You bet.

BRIAN: I'm not a salesman.

PHYLLIS: You're certainly not!

DAVE: Can you both just calm down? *(Pointing to each of them.)* You're mad at her; you're mad at him. Meanwhile, Phyllis, you need to see a doctor. Can we deal with being pissed off later? *(They both grudgingly shrug assent.)*

PHYLLIS: The hospital's useless. They can't help me.

DAVE: We'll see. *(On phone.)* Yeah, thanks.

BRIAN: What do I do?

DAVE: Sell 'em a car. Phyllis, let's go. *(He exits with PHYLLIS. BRIAN watches them go.)*

BRIAN: Shit. Shit! *(He straightens his shoulders, smiles.)* Hi. Can I help you with something? *(He exits.)*

SCENE TWELVE

(DAVE, BRIAN and GAIL sit in a car. A pause.)

GAIL: Not to complain, Dave. But do we have to sit in this car?

DAVE: It's got the best view of the rest of the lot.

GAIL: What happened to that Montana?

DAVE: Sold it.

BRIAN: Poor suckers who bought that piece of . . . crap.

DAVE: It's not so bad.

GAIL: I'm sorry, Dave. A day like today, and I complain about the car we're sitting in.

DAVE: It's okay.

BRIAN: They can't do anything?

DAVE: They said something about chemo again. She was pretty adamant. No.

GAIL: Even if it saves her life?

DAVE: It won't. And she hates it.
 GAIL: Surely her cancer is worse than the chemo.
 DAVE: It has to be.
 BRIAN: I'm glad it's painful.
 GAIL: Don't say that.
 BRIAN: Interfering bitch.
 GAIL: Don't say that!
 BRIAN: I thought this was the honesty car.
 GAIL: Well, I'm tired of the honesty car. Can it not be the honesty car today?
 BRIAN: Jake didn't hurt her!
 GAIL: Brian. Honey. She's dying.
 BRIAN: Good.
 DAVE: If you can't talk about my sister respectfully, I'd just as soon you left.
 BRIAN: *(After a pause.)* Sorry.
 GAIL: How's Jake?
 BRIAN: I got one email from him.
 GAIL: What did it say?
 BRIAN: "Can't meet you, they're watching me, shouldn't even write, I'm sorry about the."

GAIL: About the what?
 BRIAN: That's it. "About the." I'm imagining he just had time to hit send.
 DAVE: Well, I am sorry about that.
 GAIL: Do you want to get out of here?
 DAVE: In a bit.
 GAIL: Did you get the office cleaned up?
 DAVE: The thing is, Phyllis won't let anyone near our files. She has her own system, she says. I did the best I could, but I have no idea where everything goes.
 GAIL: *(To BRIAN.)* You freaked me out, you know.
 BRIAN: I know. I really wouldn't have, you know, killed her.
 DAVE: It was a rhetorical death threat.
 BRIAN: *(Mutters.)* Something like that. *(Pause.)*
 GAIL: I just keeping thinking, you know, she gave you a job.
 DAVE: Yeah, you keep going back to that.



GAIL: It just seems so out of character.

DAVE: It was. I'll never forget the phone call. I was living in a crummy little motel then. No money. Drinking—I'd never touched the stuff before, I was in the bishopric. But I thought, "Hey, when people hit rock bottom, they're usually drunk, let's try that." And the phone rang. She said: "Dave, I have no use for someone who could do what you did. But I just lost a salesman. You can never touch my books, and I'll watch you like a hawk when it comes to money. But I'm in a bind. You can sell cars for me if you want to."

BRIAN: That sounds like her. World's most amazing bitch. *(They laugh.)*

DAVE: "We'll have to change the sticker price. More work for me." *(They laugh again.)*

GAIL: Well, we should go.

DAVE: Yeah.

GAIL: Can you come too?

DAVE: One phone call—it'll be okay. Just let me lock up.

GAIL: Okay. *(Trying for a light tone.)* But this doesn't count as a date.

DAVE: Sure it does.

GAIL: Visiting a dying woman in the hospital? I don't think so.

BRIAN: Dave? Aunt Gail?

DAVE: Yeah?

BRIAN: What am I gonna do?

DAVE: About what?

BRIAN: A job. This job.

DAVE: Brian, this really isn't the time to talk about—

BRIAN: I trashed your office, I know. But I was provoked.

DAVE: I'm not denying that.

GAIL: Dave, is this really so impossible? She won't be here.

DAVE: She's so damn tough.

GAIL: But they did say, Dave. This is it.

DAVE: I know. It's just hard to think about.

BRIAN: So there's a chance I could come back and work for you?

DAVE: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

BRIAN: I nearly sold 'em, Dave. That couple, yesterday. I nearly sold that car.

DAVE: Yeah.

BRIAN: I like this job. I don't want to lose it.

DAVE: Brian, look. I know what this is about.

BRIAN: I like this job, and I think I'm pretty good at it, so—

DAVE: This is the one place Jake might come back to.

BRIAN: *(Pause.)* Yeah.

DAVE: You can't call him, and you can't email him. But someday, he might stop by.

BRIAN: I think I'm in love with him.

GAIL: I know.

BRIAN: "I'm sorry about the . . ." "That's the last thing I'm ever going to hear from him. I hate her." *(Pause.)*

DAVE: I don't believe it.

GAIL: What?

DAVE: She's back. *(He points to the office. PHYLLIS is there,*

looking terrible. DAVE sprints over. The others follow.)

Phyllis, what the hell—?

PHYLLIS: Where's my checkbook?

DAVE: Phyllis, what are you doing here?

PHYLLIS: Those doctors. They don't know me. They don't know anything.

DAVE: You left the hospital?

PHYLLIS: I want my checkbook!

DAVE: Phyllis, how did you get here?

PHYLLIS: Pump me full of drugs, knock me half asleep. I need to go to work, I told 'em! Dave can't manage. He's useless; Dave, he's a crook. Would they listen? Would they listen at all to me?

DAVE: How did you get here!

PHYLLIS: I had some money. You thought I didn't have any money, but I had some—cab fare.

DAVE: I'm calling the hospital.

GAIL: Give me your cell, I'll do it.

DAVE: Yeah, good. *(Hands her his cell.)*

PHYLLIS: *(Finally sees BRIAN.)* You!

DAVE: Phyllis.

PHYLLIS: *(Pointing a shaking finger at BRIAN.)* You're the one! Filthy pervert came in here and *stole my checkbook.*

BRIAN: I did not!

PHYLLIS: I've called the police! You get away from that car!

DAVE: Phyllis, you need to calm down.

PHYLLIS: I work here! I am your boss!

GAIL: Dave, they say she left AMA.

BRIAN: What does that . . . ?

DAVE: Against medical advice. Great.

PHYLLIS: Don't you lie to me. You took my checkbook; the police will be here any second!

BRIAN: Look, I didn't touch—. *(Suddenly PHYLLIS screams. DAVE holds her.)*

PHYLLIS: *(Pointing.)* You're a crook, and you're a whore, and you're a filthy pervert!

GAIL: They're sending an ambulance; it may be a few minutes.

PHYLLIS: Let go of me! Give me back my checkbook! Let me go!

GAIL: Phyllis, I have your checkbook. It's okay. *(A pause. Then PHYLLIS points at GAIL.)*

PHYLLIS: You filthy thieving whore!

DAVE: Phyllis! This is Dave.

PHYLLIS: I don't know any Dave.

DAVE: I'm your brother. I work for you!

PHYLLIS: I work for my father! *(She's thrashing about wildly.)*

GAIL: She's hurting herself.

DAVE: Phyllis, please! Calm down. It's okay, everything's okay!

PHYLLIS: It's not okay!

DAVE: Yes, Phyllis, everything's going to be fine!

PHYLLIS: They're dead! They're dead they're dead they're dead they're dead.

DAVE: Phyllis, it's me.

PHYLLIS: It's my fault and they're all dead! *(She's weeping un-*

controllably.)

GAIL: Dave, you've got to stop this.

DAVE: I don't know what to—

BRIAN: Phyllis? Would you like a blessing? (*A pause. PHYLLIS calms down a little.*)

PHYLLIS: A blessing?

BRIAN: I have the priesthood, Phyllis. Can I give you a blessing? (*A pause. PHYLLIS looks at him suspiciously.*)

PHYLLIS: Do I know you?

BRIAN: I worked with you.

PHYLLIS: I don't remember.

BRIAN: Would you like a blessing?

DAVE: Maybe I should do this.

GAIL: You're not a member of the Church anymore.

DAVE: He's seventeen, he's got the Aaronic priesthood, that's all.

GAIL: That's more than you have.

DAVE: He can't give blessings.

GAIL: If it gives her some comfort, what does it matter?

PHYLLIS: I killed my babies! (*She's weeping.*)

BRIAN: You didn't kill them, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS: I did, I let them go with Harlan, I had to work.

BRIAN: God says you're not responsible.

PHYLLIS: I could have gone with them. I let them go alone.

BRIAN: God says it's okay.

PHYLLIS: You've talked to God?

BRIAN: I did.

PHYLLIS: Well, it can't just be you.

DAVE: No, it's okay. I'll help.

GAIL: Me too.

PHYLLIS: You're a woman.

GAIL: Sometimes women can help.

PHYLLIS: I never heard that before.

BRIAN: It's true. (*Pause.*)

PHYLLIS: Then I guess it's okay.

BRIAN: Okay, um. Let's lay our hands . . . on her head.

DAVE: I should be the mouthpiece.

BRIAN: She trusts me.

GAIL: It's okay Dave. (*They gather around PHYLLIS. They lay their hands on her head.*)

DAVE: You address the person, you use her full name. Phyllis Marjorie McGregor Wells.

BRIAN: Just let me do this, okay? (*They bow their heads.*)

Dear God. Heavenly Father. We're asking you to bring peace to the soul of our, um, of Phyllis, um, Wells. Heavenly Father. Some of us here don't have the most perfect feelings for this woman. Some of us . . . don't care for her much. Forgive us. And forgive her. And give her peace. She's had a lot of pain in her life. And we don't understand. But we know, through it all, that you're, you know, there for us: that you love us. And, Phyllis, you know? I think maybe you haven't had a lot of people love you in this life. Maybe only one man, plus two little girls. But God loves you. That's what He's telling me now. So please, Heavenly Father. Please. Give us peace. Bring peace to the soul of this woman, our . . . yeah . . . our

sister. In Jesus' name. Amen.

GAIL and DAVE: Amen.

PHYLLIS: Amen. (*She closes her eyes. They all stand. PHYLLIS lies quietly, a tiny smile on her face.*)

GAIL: Okay.

DAVE: Yeah. Did the trick.

GAIL: Brian, honey, that was beautiful. (*A pause. DAVE and GAIL hold hands. BRIAN strokes PHYLLIS' forehead.*)

BRIAN: Aunt Gail.

GAIL: What?

BRIAN: He's never coming back here, is he? Jake?

DAVE: No, Brian. Probably not.

BRIAN: They'll never let him call or email again. They'll send him away.

GAIL: They might.

BRIAN: They'll turn him against me. They'll make me the villain. The cause. And there's nothing I can do about it.

GAIL: No.

BRIAN: And you, Aunt Gail. You still haven't talked to Andy.

GAIL: Not yet. I will.

DAVE: We'll talk with him together. (*GAIL nods.*)

BRIAN: (*Nods. Crying a little, but calm.*) And he'll go, or not go, and it'll be fine either way. And you, Gail and Dave, you guys are going to end up together. Aren't you? (*GAIL nods a little, sadly. DAVE can't look at BRIAN.*) And I'm the only one who doesn't get a happy ending. (*They aren't sure what to say.*) It's okay. That's just how things are.

GAIL: Brian . . .

BRIAN: I'm okay. Dave, if you'll let me have your sports coat. Let's see if we can make her a little more comfortable. (*Slow final blackout as they gather around her again.*)

END

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