

CUSTOMER SERVICE

By Joseph Sorrentino

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CHARACTERS

FRANK: A well-dressed, well-spoken man, in his mid-late 30's. He's an actor. He is trim, self-possessed and just a touch pompous.

HARRY: Is not seen, only heard as the voice of the customer service rep. The voice should be one of an older (50 or 60) year-old man; a blue collar worker.

PROPS LIST

End table
Chair
Phone
Wallet
Credit cards

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: This play should be seen as a tug-of-war between HARRY, the customer service rep, and FRANK. All FRANK wants to do is cancel his credit card while HARRY will use everything in his bag of tricks to prevent that. HARRY's voice and demeanor don't change throughout the play but FRANK becomes increasingly anxious and frustrated.

SETTING: *At rise, we see FRANK sitting beside a telephone that's on a small stand. His credit card is in his hand and HE's going through an internal debate about canceling it. HE nervously sips a glass of water. Several times HE reaches for the phone only to pull back. Finally, with resolve, HE begins dialing a number for customer service and hums nervously while HE does so. We hear the phone ring on the other end and then we hear HARRY.*

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HARRY: Welcome to MystiCard's Customer Service. Please stay on the line for the next available Customer Service Professional Associate. This call may be monitored for quality assurance and training purposes. And remember, "You don't have enough money to buy what you really want. Just use your MystiCard."

(As annoying muzak-type music plays, FRANK rolls his eyes and pretends to gag.)

HARRY: Hello this is Harry, may I...are you all right, sir?

FRANK: What?

HARRY: Are you all right? Sounded as if you were choking.

FRANK: Oh...oh...no, I'm fine. Just a...little tickle in the throat is all.

HARRY: Sick?

FRANK: Hmm?

HARRY: Are you getting sick? Lots of colds and flus going around now, you know...have to be careful.

FRANK: It's nothing...Like I said, just a tickle.

HARRY: Well I'm certainly glad to hear that.

FRANK: Nice to see a company so concerned.

HARRY: Whaddya kiddin? Of course we're concerned. Now what can we do for you today Frank?

FRANK: Well actually, I'm calling because...wait...how'd you know my name?

HARRY: Computers...terrific things, aren't they? This little baby right here...I call her Betty...just a little personal touch...anyway, Betty matches incoming calls with our records and then the little gal spits out the name. Shows up right on my screen here. Terrific little things, aren't they?

FRANK: They certainly are. I'm thinking of taking a computer class once my play closes.

HARRY: Play?

FRANK: Yes...I'm an actor.

HARRY: I knew it. Son of a gun, I knew you were an actor. The way you speak, so clear and all...I was thinkin' to myself, "I bet this guy's an actor." Terrific voice you got there Frank, really terrific.

FRANK: Why thank you. That's very kind. Now if I could...

HARRY: Hey, since you're an actor, you probably could use MystiCard's unemployment insurance protection. You guys are always lookin' for work.

FRANK: I guess there have been a few times I was out there poundin' the pavement.

HARRY: A few? Let's see...whoa...Betty's tellin' me it's more than a few... that's probably why you fall behind on your payments.

FRANK: But see, that's why I'm calling. I want to....

HARRY: Now Frank, with our insurance, you lose your job—and with your track record, we know that's gonna happen, don't we—we'll pay your credit card bill for up to a month. A whole month! And at only \$89.99, you can't beat it. Sound like a good deal to ya Frank?

FRANK: Yes, but...

HARRY: Sign you up?

FRANK: Uhm...Tell you what...I'll think about it. How's that? Now the reason I called...

HARRY: Health insurance?

FRANK: Excuse me?

HARRY: How 'bout some health insurance? That may just be a little tickle in your throat right now but in a week or two who knows what it'll turn into? Cold? Flu? Cancer, even.

FRANK: Cancer? You really think..?

HARRY: Ya never know.

FRANK: No I guess not...cancer...but I already have health insurance.

HARRY: For your sake, I hope it's enough. Hey—how 'bout some travel insurance?

FRANK: Don't really go anywhere.

HARRY: Life?

FRANK: Don't think so. Look...

HARRY: Identity theft?

FRANK: Nope. What I do need...

HARRY: I know...Death and dismemberment insurance.

FRANK: Death and dismemberment insurance?

HARRY: Yeah, you die and somebody hacks you up, you're covered.

FRANK: What if they don't hack me up?

HARRY: Then we don't pay.

FRANK: That seems a little harsh.

HARRY: Rules are rules.

FRANK: You know, I think I'll skip that one as well.

HARRY: So...not interested in any of our fine services huh? Lemmee ask ya—why the heck did ya call?

FRANK: Well, actually...actually I called because...well, I want to cancel my credit card.

(We hear a dial tone as HE's disconnected.)

Hello? Hello? We've been disconnected... *(Redials.)*

HARRY: Welcome to MystiCard's Customer Service. Please stay on the line for the next available Customer Service Professional Associate.

This call may be monitored for quality assurance and training purposes. And remember, "You don't have enough money to buy what you really want. Just use your MystiCard." *(Pause)* Hello, this is Harry, may I help you?

FRANK: Harry?

HARRY: That you Frank?

FRANK: Yes, we must have been disconnected.

HARRY: Oh, I'm so sorry. Don't you just hate when that happens?

What can I do for you today, Frank?

FRANK: I told you: I want to cancel my credit...

(FRANK's disconnected again, we hear a dial tone. HE angrily re-dials.)

HARRY: Welcome to MystiCard's Customer Service. Please stay on the line for the next available Customer Service Professional Associate.

This call may be monitored for quality assurance and training purposes. And remember, "There's really nothing money can buy. Just use your MystiCard." *(Pause)* Hello, this is Harry...

FRANK: Harry, listen...

HARRY: Frank?

FRANK: Yes. We keep getting disconnected.

HARRY: I'm really sorry...Betty...you know, my computer...she can be a little temperamental at times. What were we discussing?

FRANK: We weren't discussing anything. I was telling you...we're not going to be disconnected again, are we?

HARRY: I'll make sure we're not.

FRANK: This is a little frustrating, you know.

HARRY: I understand, Frank. I'm overriding the system as we speak.

FRANK: OK. I need to cancel... *(HE's disconnected, furiously re-dials).*

All right...that's it...that's the way you want to play it, huh? No more Mister Nice-Guy...

HARRY: Welcome to MystiCard's Customer Service line. Please stay on for...

FRANK: Harry? Harry. I know you're out there.

HARRY: Frank, how are you?

FRANK: Not well, Harry. Not well at all. You disconnected me again.

HARRY: No I didn't.

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FRANK: Yes you did. You said you'd "override" the system...some
override

HARRY: No need to get snippy, Frank.

FRANK: You disconnected me.

HARRY: No I didn't.

FRANK: Yes you did.

HARRY: *(Slight pause)* All right...I did.

FRANK: You can't do that.

HARRY: Actually, I can. All I have to do is...

FRANK: No...Stop. Don't do that. I want to talk to your supervisor.
Right now.

HARRY: OK. Hold on a sec.

(Muzak plays for a moment.)

This is the supervisor. May I help you?

FRANK: Yes. I've been trying to...wait a minute...Harry?

HARRY: Hello, Frank.

FRANK: You're the supervisor?

HARRY: You betcha. I understand you have a complaint?

FRANK: Well...yes...I...I've been dealing with one of your employees,
Harry, and I'm getting nowhere. He's been difficult to deal with...he's
disconnected me several times...

HARRY: Harry? You sure it was Harry?

FRANK: No doubt.

HARRY: That's very surprising. He really is one of our best customer
service reps...maybe the best. And I'm not just saying that because
he's me. He is really sharp.

FRANK: This is insane. Why am I lodging a complaint about you with
you? Wait...these calls are monitored, aren't they? Oooh...once they
hear...

HARRY: Frank?

FRANK: Hmm?

HARRY: Know who monitors them?

FRANK: Lemmee guess: you.

HARRY: Bingo.

FRANK: Now just listen to me...please...just listen...I want to...now don't
disconnect me...let's act like two reasonable adults here...I want to...

(Speaks quickly) cancel my credit card. Harry? Harry, you still there?

HARRY: Yes Frank, I'm here.

FRANK: We weren't disconnected.

HARRY: No.

FRANK: (*Brightening*) Well, that's good. Yes, that's very good. So, I want to cancel my credit card...

HARRY: You can't do that, Frank.

FRANK: I can't? Why can't I?

HARRY: Lulubelle.

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