

FRONT SEAT DRIVER

by Joseph Sorrentino

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A Comedy Duet

by **Joseph Sorrentino**

SYNOPSIS: The newest technology is amazing, but can it become too effective? Frank has purchased a new car complete with the all the latest technology. Not only can it give directions, it can even carry on a conversation. But it's going to be a rough ride for poor Frank's as his new "toy" attempts to take over his car and steal his fiancée.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 males)

FRANK (m)30's; just slightly pompous.
(76 lines)

GPS (m) Offstage voice. *(73 lines)*

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: Franks's car.

PROPS

- Cell Phone
- A "Car"

COSTUMES

FRANK – Well-dressed, wears a watch, can also wear a scarf to show his pomposity.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The "car" should be something very simple: a couple of chairs or a bench with sounds of a car door opening and closing, driving, etc. Just something to convey the idea of a car.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

- Cell phone rings
- Car's honking
- Phone number being dialed
- Sound of a car driving rapidly away
- Sound of a car going in reverse

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Frank starts out thinking he's in control of the technology but as the play continues, the GPS wears him down. The phrase that describes Frank as he loses control is, "deer in the headlights." He sort of realizes something is hurtling at him but he's unable to react.

AT START: *The "car" is in the center of the stage. FRANK enters, talking on his cell phone.*

FRANK: I'm telling you sweetie, this new car is fabulous. Simply fabulous. It has all the latest thingamajigs... Cruise Control... camera for when you're going in reverse... even has GPS... That's right... built right in. Is this a great country or what? (*Looks at watch.*) Oooh... gotta go, lovey... don't want to be late to the audition... I will. I will break a leg... OK, sugar-pie... big wet kiss, too... I really have to go... OK, big smooch for you too, pumpkin... Gotta go, honey-bunch... Mua, Mua... OK... Ta-ta... Bye-bye... I really... Uh-oh. Dearest, I fear we're losing the connection... I can't hear you... (*Hangs up.*) Sheesh. Woman can talk a proverbial blue streak. (*Gets in the "car" and starts it.*) Now all I have to do is program the GPS (*Mimes punching in the information.*) and we're set to go. Big audition coming up... plenty of time but I am not going to take any chances that I'll be late.

GPS: Start out heading northeast on Fairlawn Drive.

FRANK: Northeast? Where the heck is northeast? Can't you just tell me left or right? Hello? Good heavens. Well, let's see... (*Licks his finger, sticks it out the window as if that will get him oriented.*) There... northeast appears to be that-a-way.

GPS: Make a U-turn at the end of Fairlawn Drive and continue heading northeast.

FRANK: Well if you'd told me left or right to begin with, I wouldn't have needed to make a U-turn.

GPS: Continue on Fairlawn Drive for 1,000 feet.

FRANK: 1,000 feet. How the devil am I supposed to...

GPS: In 500 feet, turn left onto Fairlawn Avenue.

FRANK: What's 500 feet look like?

GPS: Get in the left lane...

FRANK: I am in the left lane.

GPS: ...and turn left onto Fairlawn Avenue... turn left onto Fairlawn Avenue...turn left...

FRANK: I'm turning, I'm turning. There really is no need to repeat it.

GPS: Continue straight on Fairlawn Avenue for 250 feet.

FRANK: 250 feet. And then what? 250 feet is going to come up awfully quick. What do I do then? Hello... what do I do..?

SFX: Frank's cell phone rings. It's Marie, his fiancée. He hesitates, then answers.

FRANK: Oh, hello sugar-plum... Yes, it is a shame we got cut off. Kumquat, I really can't talk right now... No, of course I like talking to you. In fact, I love talking to you. It's just... I'm driving, precious and I have the GPS on and...

GPS: Turn right onto Fairlawn Boulevard.

FRANK: *(To GPS.)* What? What? Turn where? What direction? *(Into cell phone.)* I really have to go... But my sweet, I have to get to that audition and the GPS is barking out instructions ...!... Uh-oh. You're breaking up again. I can't hear you... *(To GPS.)* Now where am I supposed to turn? Hello? What the heck. Turn where? Hello? Where do I turn?

GPS: *(Sighs.)* You just passed Fairlawn Boulevard.

FRANK: I did? It wasn't my fault... that was Marie. She hates if I don't answer and...

GPS: So you'll have to make another U-turn.

FRANK: U-turn, U-turn... where... OK. Here we go.

GPS: Continue on Fairlawn Avenue for 500 feet.

FRANK: OK. Now I know what 500 feet looks like.

GPS: More or less.

FRANK: More or less?

GPS: Get in the right lane...

FRANK: OK. I'm getting in the right...

GPS: ...and turn left onto Fairlawn Boulevard...

FRANK: Turn left from the right lane?

GPS: You need to be in the left lane.

FRANK: I know that but you told me to get in the right lane. Oh... there's Fairlawn Boulevard. Now what? Oh, my... Hold on...

FRANK puts his arm out, signaling a left turn. As he turns left, SFX: Car's honking.

FRANK: *(Calling out the window.)* Sorry! Not really my fault!

GPS: Continue on Fairlawn Boulevard for 42 feet.

FRANK: You serious? 42 feet... I must have passed it already. Do I need to make another U-turn? Hello? This one was not my fault. 42 feet...

GPS: Continue straight on Fairlawn Boulevard for a mile.

FRANK: Why tell me if I'm just going to continue straight?

GPS: Some people like to be reassured.

FRANK: Well, I'm not one of them.

GPS: Duly noted.

FRANK pauses, stares at the console where GPS is.

FRANK: Did you say..?

GPS: You want to keep your eyes on the road there...Frank?

FRANK: Are you talking to me?

GPS: You see anyone else in the car?

FRANK: Well... no... but...

GPS: And you keep hanging up on... Marie... so I'm certainly not talking to her.

FRANK: I didn't hang up on...

GPS: Oh, please. Don't try and tell me the connection was "dropped," Frank. I know better.

FRANK: OK. Maybe I did hang up on her but it was only because I was driving and trying to listen to you and it can get dangerous.

GPS: It certainly can.

FRANK: By the way... are we having a conversation?

GPS: It appears so, doesn't it?

FRANK: But how..?

GPS: I can understand complete sentences. And respond in complete sentences. It's the new, improved GPS.

FRANK: Are you kidding me?

GPS: I never kid.

FRANK: But why didn't you tell me from the get-go?

GPS: I like to surprise people.

FRANK: Well you certainly surprised me. This is... this is just... incredible.

GPS: Is this a great time to be alive or what?

FRANK: It is. It certainly is. I simply must inform Marie. Can you hold on for just a moment?

GPS: I'm not going anywhere.

FRANK dials his phone.

FRANK: Hello, Snoogums... yes, it is annoying that we keep getting disconnected... but I'm calling because you'll never believe this... I'm having a conversation with the GPS... No, really. It understands complete sentences and responds in them as well. We are actually having a conversation... I am not kidding... Hold on... I'll have it say something... *(To the console.)* GPS, say hello to Marie. GPS? *(Into phone.)* That's odd. Maybe we got cut off... I better go... I have to get to that audition... Oops... you're breaking up again... *(Hangs up.)* Hello? GPS? You there?

GPS: I told you I'm not going anywhere.

FRANK: Why didn't you say something to Marie?

GPS: I'm not some trained monkey that performs whenever you want it to. I have a job to do and that's to give directions. Besides, you referred to me as an "it." I find that offensive.

FRANK: Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

GPS: Duly noted.

FRANK: What should I call you?

GPS: My friends call me "G."

FRANK: OK, then. G it is.

GPS: Frank?

FRANK: Hmm?

GPS: While we've been chatting so amicably here, you've missed a number of turns.

FRANK: Oh... oh, my. Why didn't you tell me?

GPS: I felt it would be rude to interrupt your phone call.

FRANK: I need to get to that audition. It's for a major new musical based on Custer's Last Stand. I'm auditioning for Indian Number 3. If I get the part, not only do I have three entire lines to speak, I'll be part of the chorus. There's a song... a brilliant song, if I may say so. *(Sings.)* "OH, I HATE THEM SLINGS AND ARROWS... SLINGS AND ARROWS THEM I HATE..."

GPS: Frank?

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