

IN THE NAME OF THE WASHING MACHINE

By Bradley Walton

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IN THE NAME OF THE WASHING MACHINE*A Ten Minute Comedic Duet***By Bradley Walton**

SYNOPSIS: Don and Fran work for an appliance company, and they have to come up with a name for a new washing machine. Unfortunately, the email attachment containing the product data won't open and everyone on the design team is playing golf with the boss. Don and Fran only know two things for sure: Their deadline is tomorrow morning and the washing machine is red.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(2 either; gender flexible)*

DON/DONNA (m/f)Office employee at an appliance company. *(78 lines)*

FRAN/FRANK (m/f)Office employee at an appliance company. *(77 lines)*

SETTING

In an office. The office may be suggested in a number of ways. There may be two desks with chairs and computers. There may also be short folding walls to suggest cubicles. Alternatively, there may simply be two chairs, with desks and computers being mimed. The play can also be performed on a bare stage, in which case Fran should check her email on her phone.

COSTUMES: Business attire.

AUTHOR NOTES

In the interest of full disclosure, I hereby admit that I know absolutely nothing about what goes into naming washing machines. I don't know who does it, when in the design process it occurs...nothing. I made up everything in this script and lots of it may be totally inaccurate. What I do know is that our washing machine died after too few years and I suspect it was manufactured with the intention of selling us a replacement within a specified period of time. I also know that when I found out its model name, I had a very hard time saying or even typing it with a straight face, because the words had no discernible relationship to washing clothes. So I decided if we had to replace our washing machine, I was going to at least milk that ridiculous name for script inspiration.

Do Not Copy

DON: Hey, Fran, did the boss send you the specs on the new washing machine?

FRAN: Yeah, they're in my email.

DON: Did you look at them, yet?

FRAN: No, why?

DON: I couldn't open the attachment.

FRAN: Let me check. No...mine won't open, either. Did you try calling and asking him to re-send?

DON: Yeah. But he's not here. He left to play golf an hour ago. And he turns his phone off when he's golfing.

FRAN: That's not good.

DON: No, it's not. We're supposed to come up with a name by tomorrow morning.

FRAN: Who else has the specs?

DON: His golf buddies.

FRAN: Who probably have their phones turned off, too?

DON: The boss takes his golf really seriously.

FRAN: Bummer.

DON: Yeah.

FRAN: So off the top of your head, what do you know about this washing machine we have to name?

DON: It's red.

FRAN: Red?

DON: Yeah.

FRAN: Why is it red?

DON: Haven't the foggiest.

FRAN: Okay. What else do you know about it?

DON: Nothing.

FRAN: What do you mean, nothing?

DON: All the information is in that email attachment we can't open.

FRAN: Wasn't there a meeting?

DON: Yeah.

FRAN: Didn't you go? It was your turn to go.

DON: Yes, I went to the meeting.

FRAN: Did you pay attention?

DON: No, because I was expecting all of the important information to be coming in an email.

FRAN: You don't remember anything besides the color?

DON: No.

FRAN: Is it high-efficiency?

DON: I don't know.

FRAN: Top load?

DON: I don't know.

FRAN: Capacity?

DON: I don't know.

FRAN: Don, how can we name a new model of washing machine if we don't know anything about it?

DON: Calm down. It's not like this is a completely insurmountable problem. We're talking about a washing machine. It cleans laundry. How much variation on that one basic theme can there be?

FRAN: You mean aside from efficiency, door location, and capacity?

DON: Yeah.

FRAN: Plenty. Every model of washing machine is unique.

DON: Not that unique.

FRAN: Each one has its own distinct personality.

DON: That's highly debatable.

FRAN: And we're supposed to convey that personality through the name.

DON: I kind of thought that we *created* the personality through the name we picked for it.

FRAN: Are you nuts? Think about all the design work that goes into creating a washing machine. The layout of the controls. The curves. The build. The figure...

DON: It's a washing machine, not a magazine centerfold.

FRAN: Depends on the magazine. A lot of thought goes into the composition of a washing machine. We can't ignore that.

DON: All we need is a name that reflects the lifestyle associated with the color red.

FRAN: That could be anything from a sports car enthusiast to an axe murderer to a fireman.

DON: So what do sports car enthusiasts, axe murderers, and firemen have in common?

FRAN: Nothing.

DON: They live exciting lives.

FRAN: Don, there are bound to be some really boring axe murderers out there. When they're not murdering people with axes, anyway.

DON: You're probably right, but there's a *perception* that axe murders and firemen lead lives filled with excitement. We need to tap into that. So...how about "Sport Wash?"

FRAN: What does the word "sport" have to do with anything?

DON: It's exciting. It conveys a sense of being on the go.

FRAN: We're talking about a washing machine. It doesn't go anywhere.

DON: The concept of mobility kind of goes with excitement. This is a washing machine for people on the go.

FRAN: Sounds too much like a mini portable washing machine.

DON: It could be, for all we know.

FRAN: Don, even if you weren't paying attention, I think that detail would have stood out.

DON: Fine. You don't like "Sport Wash," you come up with something better.

FRAN: "Laundry Buddy."

DON: That's actually not bad, but the color red conveys a sense of danger.

FRAN: "Bob the Killer Washing Machine."

DON: Be serious.

FRAN: I was trying to make a point. If people think the washing machine is dangerous, no one will buy it.

DON: I didn't mean dangerous to people, Fran...just to dirt. So maybe a name like "Dirt Destroyer," only less lame than that. (*Beat.*) "Dirt Purge 3000!"

FRAN: It's a washing machine, not a low-budget science fiction movie.

DON: Y'know, I think we might be going about this wrong. We're trying to come up with a name that will make a red washing machine appeal to everybody, and that's not going to happen. Nobody's going to choose a red washing machine over a white one just because of the name. People are going to buy a red washing machine because they want a red washing machine. What we need here is a name that will make them want *this* red washing machine.

FRAN: Why would anybody want a red washing machine in the first place?

DON: Maybe they have a red laundry room.

FRAN: Have you ever seen a red laundry room?

DON: No.

FRAN: Me, neither.

DON: Just because we've never seen one doesn't mean they don't exist.

FRAN: You could say the same thing about Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster.

DON: And your point is...?

FRAN: Red is like, this high-energy, hyperactive color. That doesn't go with washing clothes. Assuming red laundry rooms do exist...what kind of person has one?

DON: Maybe somebody who's trying to make doing their laundry exciting.

FRAN: Laundry is not exciting.

DON: It's bound to be more exciting if you have a red washing machine.

FRAN: The color of the machine doesn't affect the actual process of washing clothes.

DON: That doesn't matter. The average consumer is an emotional creature. They're going to think, "Ooh...red! Yeah! I'm gonna have some fun with this baby!"

FRAN: It's a washing machine, not a jet ski.

DON: But there may be people out there who look at a washing machine the way that you or I would look at a jet ski.

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