

# WE LOATHE OUR CUSTOMERS

By Bradley Walton

Copyright © 2010 by Bradley Walton, All rights reserved.

ISBN: 1-60003-574-4

**CAUTION:** Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

**RIGHTS RESERVED:** All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

**PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS:** All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

**AUTHOR CREDIT:** All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

**PUBLISHER CREDIT:** Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

*Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC*

**COPYING:** Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

## CHARACTERS

*(15 roles either gender; 4-15 actors possible)*

BAILEY	A young office supply store employee
CAMPBELL	Another young employee
JOE/JO	Another employee
CUSTOMER 1	With whom Bailey has some fun
CUSTOMER 2	With whom Campbell has some fun
CUSTOMER 3	Who needs a pencil
CUSTOMER 4	Who is shopping for a special kind of paper in a specific color
CUSTOMER 5	Who wants a good deal on a high-quality eraser
CUSTOMER 6	Who believes in the motivational power of good coffee
CUSTOMER 7	Who needs a photocopier machine that won't pick up DNA
CUSTOMER 8	Who would like to barter
CUSTOMER 9	Who has a raisin
CUSTOMER 10	Who wants to make his cubicle resemble the Death Star
CUSTOMER 11	Who is looking for cat food
CUSTOMER 12	Who needs pencils...very sharp ones

### **DOUBLING**

JOE and CUSTOMERS 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 can be played by the same actor.

CUSTOMERS 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 can be played by the same actor.

## STAGING

The play is set in an office supply store. The set may be as simple or elaborate as the director desires. A bare stage is fine. A small stand with a box should be used for the eraser bin scene.

Scenes 2-11 should alternate back and forth between the left and right sides of the stage with a simple lighting shift to keep things moving as quickly as possible.

## PROPERTIES

Pencil Wrapped in Foil

Small Stand with a Box Containing a Few Erasers

Purse

Raisin

Wallet

## COSTUMES

BAILEY, CAMPELL, and JOE wear retail vests or uniforms with name badges. The CUSTOMERS are dressed to reflect their individual personalities.

## AUTHOR NOTES

I worked in retail for several years. It was probably a good life experience. It was frequently an *interesting* experience. I'm sort of surprised it took me as long as it did to get around to writing a one-act play set in a retail environment. The people can be quite fascinating. And, occasionally, rather alarming.

## **WE LOATHE OUR CUSTOMERS**

by  
Bradley Walton

### **SCENE 1**

***AT RISE: An office supply store. The set may be as simple or elaborate as the director desires. A bare stage is fine. BAILEY is onstage. CUSTOMER 1 enters.***

CUSTOMER 1: Excuse me?

BAILEY: Yeah?

CUSTOMER 1: I'm looking for—

BAILEY: We're sold out.

CUSTOMER 1: I didn't even say...

BAILEY: We're still sold out.

CUSTOMER 1: How do you know what it is that you're sold out of?

BAILEY: I work here.

CUSTOMER 1: Obviously. You're wearing a name badge.

BAILEY: And you think this is a real name badge?

CUSTOMER 1: It's got the Maximum Office store logo on it.

BAILEY: But do you think it's real?

CUSTOMER 1: Would you be wearing it in here if it wasn't?

BAILEY: I might. Depends on what kind of person I am.

CUSTOMER 1: What kind of person are you?

BAILEY: That's for me to know and you to figure out.

CUSTOMER 1: Do you really work here?

BAILEY: Now you're wondering, aren't you?

CUSTOMER 1: Of course I'm wondering!

BAILEY: I'm not wondering. I know.

CUSTOMER 1: Well, I don't!

BAILEY: Sucks to be you. (Or "Stinks to be you.")

CUSTOMER 1: I'm going to find a manager.

BAILEY: Maybe I am the manager.

CUSTOMER 1: You're not a manager. You're too young to be a manager.

BAILEY: Maybe I ate the manager and took his place.

CUSTOMER 1: You didn't eat the manager.

BAILEY: How do you know?

CUSTOMER 1: That seems kind of far-fetched.

BAILEY: It's not like we carry groceries in case somebody gets hungry.

CUSTOMER 1: Why are you acting like this?

BAILEY: Tasty brains. Yum!

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 5

*(CUSTOMER 1 exits in a fit of extreme irritation.)*

BAILEY: Man, I love messing with the customers.

*(CAMPBELL, another store employee, enters.)*

CAMPBELL: Are you being a bad employee again, Bailey?

BAILEY: Yup.

CAMPBELL: *(approvingly)* Way to go.

*(CAMPBELL and BAILEY high-five each other. CUSTOMER 2 enters.)*

BAILEY: Here comes another one.

CAMPBELL: I got this, okay?

BAILEY: Sure.

CAMPBELL: May I help you?

CUSTOMER 2: No thanks, just looking.

CAMPBELL: What are you looking for?

CUSTOMER 2: Nothing in particular, just browsing.

CAMPBELL: You're probably browsing for something.

CUSTOMER 2: Not really, no.

CAMPBELL: Sure you are. Why else would you be in an office supply store? It's not like a pet store where you come in and ooh and aah over the gerbils and bunnies. Unless you're really into paper clips and correction fluid. Which, I dunno...maybe you are.

CUSTOMER 2: I'm not.

CAMPBELL: *(plowing right on ahead)* And there's nothing wrong with that. We've got some really nice paper clips over there. Big ones...small ones...assorted colors. And they're multifunctional, too. Great for picking locks, or picking your nose. In fact, many of our fine products are ideal for picking your nose...pencils, pens, letter openers...we even carry screwdrivers in assorted small sizes. No booger is safe here at Maximum Office.

CUSTOMER 2: I did not come here to pick my nose!

CAMPBELL: It's okay. You don't have to be embarrassed. Lots of people do it. Heck, the things that come out of peoples' noses drive our bottom line.

CUSTOMER 2: Get away from me! *(Exits.)*

CAMPBELL: *(calling after CUSTOMER 2)* We carry tissues, too!

BAILEY: Not bad.

CAMPBELL: Thanks. I try.

*(JOE, another employee, enters.)*

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 6

JOE: Hey, Campbell! Bailey!

CAMPBELL: Hey, Joe. What's up?

JOE: We just got word from the Haydensville store...the district manager is making the rounds.

BAILEY: Aw, crud.

CAMPBELL: Today?

JOE: Yeah. He left there about half an hour ago.

BAILEY: Uh-oh.

JOE: He fired two cashiers and a sales floor clerk.

BAILEY: Sounds like he's on the war path again.

CAMPBELL: Did he disguise himself like last time?

JOE: No...this time he was sneaking around the store and eavesdropping on conversations from the next aisle.

BAILEY: Not good. The guy's like a ninja if he wants to sneak up on you.

CAMPBELL: Haydensville's not that far. If he left there half an hour ago and was on his way here, he could be in the store by now.

BAILEY: Double crud in a crud crust pie!

CAMPBELL: You don't think he caught any of that stuff about the boogers?

BAILEY: The heck with your boogers! What if he heard me saying I ate a manager?

JOE: You guys did what? *Again?*

BAILEY: Never mind. I'm not about to repeat it. He could be here. He could be anywhere.

JOE: I don't believe you two! Don't you have any pride in your job?

CAMPBELL: No! And keep your voice down!

JOE: You two better behave yourselves for the rest of the afternoon if you know what's good for you. If he catches you...

BAILEY: We know! We're not stupid!

JOE: You could've fooled me! *(Exits.)*

BAILEY: This afternoon is gonna suck *(or "stink")*.

CAMPBELL: And I was gonna swap out the coffee filters with toilet paper today!

BAILEY: Joe's right, you know. We're gonna have to...to... *(the words catching in his throat)* actually do our jobs.

CAMPBELL: We're gonna have to be nice to the customers.

BAILEY: I know.

CAMPBELL: I hate being nice to the customers.

BAILEY: Me too.

CAMPBELL: Messing with the customers is what makes work fun.

BAILEY: It's the little things that make life worth living.

CAMPBELL: And some of the customers are just so...so...

BAILEY: Yeah.

CAMPBELL: So...

BAILEY: I know.

CAMPBELL: They can barely pass as human beings.

BAILEY: I know.

CAMPBELL: It's not fair.

BAILEY: Nobody said life was fair.

CAMPBELL: It's not like we get paid to be here.

BAILEY: Actually, we do get paid to be here.

CAMPBELL: Oh, yeah. Sorry. I'm so used to saying that from school, it just slips out sometimes.

BAILEY: Old habits die hard.

CAMPBELL: Messing with the customers is like a habit.

BAILEY: It *is* a habit.

CAMPBELL: It's gonna be really hard not to do it.

BAILEY: We've done it before.

CAMPBELL: Yeah, but that day was a couple of months ago. We hadn't been here that long. It wasn't really a habit then. Now...now it's a habit.

BAILEY: More like an addiction.

CAMPBELL: Do they have rehab for it?

BAILEY: Probably not.

CAMPBELL: I could go for some rehab right about now.

BAILEY: Suck it up. Be strong.

CAMPBELL: I am strong.

BAILEY: Think of the customers you'll send screaming out the door...tomorrow.

CAMPBELL: Tomorrow.

BAILEY: Tomorrow.

CAMPBELL: I was never good with delayed gratification.

BAILEY: Eyes on the prize, Campbell. Good luck.

CAMPBELL: You too.

## SCENE 2

***CUSTOMER 3 is facing the audience, scrutinizing a very large imaginary pegboard of pencils. BAILEY enters.***

BAILEY: May I...*(with an obvious effort to sound sincere)* may I help you?

CUSTOMER 3: I'm looking for pencils.

BAILEY: Well. You've found the right spot.

CUSTOMER 3: I dunno.

BAILEY: Pens and pencils and more pencils...all right here.

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 8

CUSTOMER 3: Is this all of the pencils?

BAILEY: It is. Yes. This is our complete selection.

CUSTOMER 3: Do you have any more at the cash registers?

BAILEY: We do...but they're the same as these pencils (*indicating several spots on the imaginary pegboard*) here, here, and here.

CUSTOMER 3: Do you have any more on an end cap?

BAILEY: We do...but those are the same as these pencils right here. (*Points at another spot on the imaginary pegboard.*)

CUSTOMER 3: Do you have any pencils on one of those displays in the middle of the aisle?

BAILEY: That would be these pencils here. (*Points at another spot on the imaginary pegboard.*)

CUSTOMER 3: Do you have any pencils in the stockroom?

BAILEY: Just more of what we have out here.

CUSTOMER 3: Are you sure?

BAILEY: I'm afraid I am.

CUSTOMER 3: How positive are you?

BAILEY: Extremely positive.

CUSTOMER 3: Could you look?

BAILEY: Look?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah.

BAILEY: You want me to go look?

CUSTOMER 3: Uh-huh.

BAILEY: In the stock room?

CUSTOMER 3: That's right.

BAILEY: You don't believe me?

CUSTOMER 3: I believe you that you *think* you know, but you might be wrong.

BAILEY: I'm very sure.

CUSTOMER 3: I'd still feel better if you checked.

BAILEY: It's a very big stock room. The pencils are spread all over. It might take me a while.

CUSTOMER 3: I can wait.

BAILEY: What kind of pencils are you looking for?

CUSTOMER 3: Pencils that write.

BAILEY: That write?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah.

BAILEY: I feel reasonably confident that these pencils—all of these pencils—that we have here...that they write.

CUSTOMER 3: Well, yeah. They write. That's kind of the least they can do, y'know? But they're not any good.

BAILEY: You've tried them?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah.

BAILEY: All of them?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah.

BAILEY: Every single different one of these pencils...you've tried them?

CUSTOMER 3: Yup.

BAILEY: You've kept track?

CUSTOMER 3: Uh-huh.

BAILEY: What kinds of problems have you been experiencing with them?

CUSTOMER 3: Different things with different pencils. Some squeak. Some slip around in my fingers when my hands get sweaty. Some write too dark. Some are too light. Some are too long and make me poke myself in the eye.

BAILEY: Really?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah. Stupid pencils.

BAILEY: *(trying not to laugh)* In the eye?

CUSTOMER 3: Are you laughing at me?

BAILEY: No.

CUSTOMER 3: Are you sure?

BAILEY: Positive.

CUSTOMER 3: You better not.

BAILEY: Wouldn't dream of it. I'm going to go to the stockroom now.

CUSTOMER 3: Okay. You do that. Find me one I haven't tried.

BAILEY: What haven't you tried?

CUSTOMER 3: I don't know. It's not like I know every pencil that's out there. That's your job.

BAILEY: But I don't know what you've tried.

CUSTOMER 3: Are you arguing with me?

BAILEY: No. No. I'll go look.

*(BAILEY exits and immediately returns.)*

Sorry. Didn't see anything different.

CUSTOMER 3: You didn't even look.

BAILEY: I did.

CUSTOMER 3: You were only gone a few seconds.

BAILEY: I knew exactly where the pencils were.

CUSTOMER 3: You said the stockroom was huge and the pencils were spread all over.

BAILEY: Turns out I was mistaken.

CUSTOMER 3: I think you should look again.

BAILEY: There's nothing there.

CUSTOMER 3: I don't believe you.

BAILEY: You think I'm blowing you off?

CUSTOMER 3: I think you've got something back there you're not telling me about.

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 10

BAILEY: You think I'm holding out on you?

CUSTOMER 3: That's exactly what I think.

BAILEY: You think the store employees have some hidden stash of titanium alloy rocket-powered pencils that we're keeping for ourselves?

CUSTOMER 3: If I worked here, that's what I'd do. I'm not stupid.

*(Pause. BAILEY is visibly trying very, very hard not to say something he'll regret.)*

BAILEY: *(with great restraint)* No. Of course you're not. I'll go look again.

*(BAILEY exits. CUSTOMER 3 scrutinizes the imaginary pegboard of pencils some more. BAILEY enters, carrying a pencil wrapped in foil.)*

I found something! *(Confidentially.)* These just came in. Fresh off the truck they're unloading in the back right now. I don't know if they're rocket-powered, but they're very, very shiny. Very new. Very top secret. We won't be selling them until Christmas.

CUSTOMER 3: But this is April.

BAILEY: I know. This is a store sample. Take it. On the house.

CUSTOMER 3: This looks like a mechanical pencil wrapped in aluminum foil.

BAILEY: *(looking nervously around for the district manager, but desperate to get rid of the customer)* It's insulated.

CUSTOMER 3: You know what? Never mind. I found one here I haven't tried.

BAILEY: The standard No. 2 wooden pencils?

CUSTOMER 3: Yeah.

BAILEY: You've...never tried those before?

CUSTOMER 3: Not green ones.

**SCENE 3**

CUSTOMER 4: Excuse me.

CAMPBELL: Buzz off.

CUSTOMER 4: What?

CAMPBELL: Oh...um...not you...um...there was a fly. Buzzing. Near my head.

CUSTOMER 4: Oh.

CAMPBELL: How may I help you?

CUSTOMER 4: I'm looking for paper.

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 11

CAMPBELL: Good. That's good. We sell paper. Copy paper.

Notebook paper. Colored paper. Cardstock. You name it, we got it.

CUSTOMER 4: I'm looking for paper that's guaranteed not to cause paper cuts.

CAMPBELL: No paper cuts?

CUSTOMER 4: I hate paper cuts.

CAMPBELL: Me too.

CUSTOMER 4: Can you show me where it is, please?

CAMPBELL: I don't think we have anything like that.

CUSTOMER 4: You mean you don't know for sure?

CAMPBELL: I've never heard of paper like that before. I feel very safe in saying that we don't have it.

CUSTOMER 4: I can't imagine that it doesn't exist. Paper cuts are such a common problem. Surely someone has found a solution.

CAMPBELL: Gloves.

CUSTOMER 4: Don't get smart with me.

CAMPBELL: No. No. Of course not. Didn't mean it that way. Not at all. Just that gloves would in fact keep you from getting a paper cut on your hands.

CUSTOMER 4: It's not my hands I'm worried about.

CAMPBELL: It's not?

CUSTOMER 4: It's my left ear.

CAMPBELL: You get paper cuts on your left ear?

CUSTOMER 4: All the time. Doesn't everyone?

*(Pause. CAMPBELL is bewildered, but decides to agree to keep the customer happy.)*

CAMPBELL: They do. Every day. Very common problem.

CUSTOMER 4: Oh good, I'm glad it's not just me.

CAMPBELL: No. Not you at all. Nothing remotely strange or unusual about you. Or your left ear. My left ear was in bandages just last week. Had a mishap with some sticky notes. Nasty business.

CUSTOMER 4: Sticky notes are the work of the devil. I keep telling my preacher he should write a sermon about them. For some reason he hasn't, though.

CAMPBELL: I can't imagine why.

CUSTOMER 4: I'm sure you don't carry protective ear covers, do you?

CAMPBELL: No, we sure don't.

CUSTOMER 4: That's why I need the no-cut paper.

CAMPBELL: I feel your pain. I do. I know exactly what you've been going through. But the truth is, paper manufacturers are out of touch with the plight of the common person.

CUSTOMER 4: Those despicable corporate paper-making monsters!

CAMPBELL: They are. Definitely. I'm afraid the best I can offer you is red paper that won't show blood stains as obviously.

CUSTOMER 4: But I was looking some something in sort of a brownish color.

CAMPBELL: No-cut paper...in brownish?

CUSTOMER 4: So it doesn't show ear wax so much.

CAMPBELL: I am so...sorry.

CUSTOMER 4: That's okay. Thanks for trying. It's so good to know that I'm not the only person this happens to. My friends think I'm nuts. I can't wait to tell them about you...*(looks at CAMPBELL's name badge)* Campbell.

#### SCENE 4

***For this scene, there should be small stand with a box containing some erasers. "Erasers 25¢" is written on the box.***

CUSTOMER 5: Hi.

BAILEY: Good afternoon. How may I help you?

CUSTOMER 5: Erasers.

BAILEY: We've got those. As a matter of fact, there's a whole bin of rubber erasers right here. Just a quarter each. It's one of our everyday specials.

CUSTOMER 5: What kind of warranty do they have?

BAILEY: They're erasers.

CUSTOMER 5: I know.

BAILEY: Erasers don't have warranties.

CUSTOMER 5: You mean this store doesn't stand behind its products?

BAILEY: They cost twenty-five cents.

CUSTOMER 5: And you're willing to take my money but not back up what you're selling me?

BAILEY: If there's something wrong, I'm sure you could bring them back.

CUSTOMER 5: Is there something wrong?

BAILEY: There shouldn't be.

CUSTOMER 5: Of course there shouldn't be, but is there? Answer the question.

BAILEY: No.

CUSTOMER 5: No there isn't, or no you're not going to answer my question?

BAILEY: There isn't anything wrong. They work fine.

CUSTOMER 5: Are you sure about that?

BAILEY: Positive.

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 13

CUSTOMER 5: How do you know?

BAILEY: If they didn't erase, it wouldn't say "erasers" on the bin.

CUSTOMER 5: Hm. That's true.

BAILEY: If you're not satisfied for any reason...if these don't live up to your standards...if you have to rub five times to erase and you feel you should only have to rub four, we will take them back.

CUSTOMER 5: Regardless of how many I buy?

BAILEY: Regardless. We want you to be happy.

CUSTOMER 5: Okay. I'll give them a try.

BAILEY: Great. Thank you for your business. *(Starts to exit.)*

CUSTOMER 5: *(taking an eraser out of the bin)* This one here has a little piece missing out of it. Will you give me a discount?

BAILEY: A discount?

CUSTOMER 5: Look. Right here. See that? Little chip missing off the corner.

BAILEY: Yup. Little chip. Very little. Good eyes.

CUSTOMER 5: I pay attention to stuff.

BAILEY: You do indeed.

CUSTOMER 5: You can't possibly expect me to pay full price for this eraser.

BAILEY: No. I guess not.

CUSTOMER 5: What do you mean, you guess not? This should be pretty black and white. There's a defect in this eraser. There's no way it could possibly be full price.

BAILEY: We generally offer a 10% discount on slightly imperfect merchandise.

CUSTOMER 5: That's better. So. The eraser originally cost—

BAILEY: Twenty-five cents.

CUSTOMER 5: And ten percent off would be two and a half cents.

BAILEY: So the eraser would be twenty-three cents.

CUSTOMER 5: Whoa. Wait. Hold on. Whatta you mean, twenty-three cents?

BAILEY: We can't charge you half a cent, so the price rounds up.

CUSTOMER 5: I don't think so.

BAILEY: You don't?

CUSTOMER 5: What kind of fool do you take me for?

*(Pause.)*

BAILEY: That's generally the way the way things work in math if you're going to round something...if it's less than half, you round down. If it's half or more, you round up.

CUSTOMER 5: I'm not paying you an extra half cent for a defective eraser. I demand to see a manager! I'll have your job for this!

BAILEY: That's not necessary! I'll tell the cashier to round down. We'll do a special price override, just for you.

CUSTOMER 5: Just for me?

BAILEY: Just for you.

CUSTOMER 5: So you're going to screw over (or "cheat") everybody else who tries to buy one of your crappy (or "junk") cheap erasers. You're on the brink of initiating a class action lawsuit against your company here, you know that (*looks at BAILEY's name badge*)...Bailey?

BAILEY: There's no need for a lawsuit, sir. You're absolutely right. The store should always round down on the odd penny. I'll bring this up with the managers and we'll spread the word through the company.

CUSTOMER 5: You'd better.

BAILEY: I promise.

CUSTOMER 5: Okay.

BAILEY: Is there anything else I can help you with?

CUSTOMER 5: No. Just the eraser.

BAILEY: How many would you like to get?

(*Beat.*)

CUSTOMER 5: One.

BAILEY: One?

CUSTOMER 5: One's all I need.

BAILEY: Okay. Sure. Great.

CUSTOMER 5: But I wanna see if there's any more scratch-and-dent erasers that are less scratch-and-dent than this one. Help me look. I wanna get my twenty-two cents worth.

## SCENE 5

CUSTOMER 6: Could you please tell me if you carry French presses?

CAMPBELL: What the—(*catches himself*) A French press? I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I don't know exactly what that is.

CUSTOMER 6: You don't know what a French press is?

CAMPBELL: Didn't I just— (*catches himself again*) No. I'm so sorry, but I'm afraid that I don't.

CUSTOMER 6: You brew coffee in it.

CAMPBELL: Ah. Coffee makers are right over here.

CUSTOMER 6: I looked there and I didn't see any.

CAMPBELL: Then it's possible that we don't carry them.

CUSTOMER 6: That seems really hard to believe.

CAMPBELL: Oh. Why so?

We Loathe Our Customers – Page 15

CUSTOMER 6: You sell stuff for offices. And coffee is a major part of office culture. Now, it used to be that crummy coffee maker coffee was the coffee that constituted the coffee part of office culture, but more and more, it's changing over to good coffee that constitutes the coffee part of office culture.

CAMPBELL: *(not really understanding what CUSTOMER 6 just said)*  
Uh-huh.

CUSTOMER 6: You look confused.

CAMPBELL: Not at all.

CUSTOMER 6: It's not that difficult.

CAMPBELL: Of course not.

CUSTOMER 6: *(as if speaking to a child)* Office workers expect better coffee than they used to.

CAMPBELL: Why didn't you just—*(catches himself)* Of course they do.

CUSTOMER 6: So it would only make sense for an office supply store that wants to be competitive in today's market to stock French presses.

CAMPBELL: Which you didn't see.

CUSTOMER 6: Correct.

CAMPBELL: I am extremely embarrassed by my ignorance, and I do apologize for it, but exactly what kind of coffee maker is a French press?

CUSTOMER 6: Your apology is accepted and your ignorance is perfectly understandable. You do work in retail, after all. A French press is a kind of pitcher. You grind your coffee, put it in the pitcher, add hot water, let it brew, and then plunge a form-fitting strainer down through the pitcher to push the coffee grounds to the bottom, leaving you with a pitcher of excellent-tasting coffee, assuming you were using good beans to start with, and that you ground them yourself.

CAMPBELL: That sounds like a lot of work.

CUSTOMER 6: It's really not.

CAMPBELL: What happens if you use bad beans, or you don't grind the coffee yourself?

CUSTOMER 6: Then you might as well be drinking any old coffee.

CAMPBELL: And why is any old coffee undesirable?

CUSTOMER 6: Because it doesn't come from a French press.

CAMPBELL: So a French press justifies its own existence?

CUSTOMER 6: Oh, absolutely.

CAMPBELL: No wonder Jean-Paul Sartre was born in France.

CUSTOMER 6: Does any of this sound familiar?

CAMPBELL: Only the parts that didn't have anything to do with coffee.

CUSTOMER 6: You're a lowly a retail worker. It's to be expected.

CAMPBELL: If you don't like just "any old coffee" might I recommend you try our special "Maximum Office" house blend of coffee. We sell it in bulk quantities at a remarkably affordable price.

CUSTOMER 6: I wouldn't drink that garbage if my cat's thyroid glands depended on it.

CAMPBELL: Have you tried it?

CUSTOMER 6: Are you out of your mind? I only drink good coffee.

CAMPBELL: I'm told that it's very good coffee.

CUSTOMER 6: So you haven't tried it yourself?

CAMPBELL: I'm not really a coffee drinker.

CUSTOMER 6: And even if you were, you probably wouldn't know good coffee if it snuck through your kidneys and stabbed your bladder in your sleep. Oh well. Ignorance is bliss and you probably live a very happy life. I'm a little jealous, I admit.

*(CAMPBELL makes a snarling noise.)*

What was that noise you just made?

CAMPBELL: Just clearing my throat. Sorry.

CUSTOMER 6: You look like you want to say something.

CAMPBELL: No. No. Nothing.

CUSTOMER 6: Are you sure?

CAMPBELL: Well...

CUSTOMER 6: Go on. Spit it out.

CAMPBELL: You...you...

CUSTOMER 6: Yes?

CAMPBELL: *(getting a grip on himself)*...the French press thing you described...it doesn't sound like something that would make a lot of coffee....

CUSTOMER 6: It makes about four cups.

CAMPBELL: That doesn't seem like it would be enough coffee to satisfy a whole office.

CUSTOMER 6: It's not. Fighting over the coffee keeps the workers competitive. It's good for the company.

CAMPBELL: I see.

CUSTOMER 6: If you don't carry French presses, do you think you could order some?

CAMPBELL: If they're not something we stock already, then I'm afraid we wouldn't be able to order them from our warehouse.

CUSTOMER 6: That's very sad.

CAMPBELL: Have you tried going to a coffee shop? They might sell them there.

CUSTOMER 6: Oh, sure. They have them at coffee shops all over town. I just think that you should carry them, too.

CAMPBELL: So you weren't actually going to buy one?

CUSTOMER 6: No, I own six already.

CAMPBELL: Six?

CUSTOMER 6: We drink a lot of coffee at my house.

CAMPBELL: But what about work?

CUSTOMER 6: I have one in my own office, and then there's a second one that's shared by my fifty-five employees, which is just about a perfect ratio.

CAMPBELL: You don't need to buy one, but you think it's something we should carry here?

CUSTOMER 6: Definitely.

CAMPBELL: Do you think people would buy them here?

CUSTOMER 6: No, not really.

CAMPBELL: Then why...

CUSTOMER 6: I just like knowing French presses are around wherever I go.

### SCENE 6

CUSTOMER 7: My boss told me—I mean, *asked* me—to shop for a new copy machine for our office.

BAILEY: I can help you with that. What kind of copier do you need?

CUSTOMER 7: Well, heh...it needs to make copies, of course.

BAILEY: Of course.

CUSTOMER 7: And it needs to stand up to constant use.

BAILEY: We've got quite a few copiers built to stand up to heavy copying.

CUSTOMER 7: Something that can collate and staple?

BAILEY: No problem.

CUSTOMER 7: How about a copier that won't pick up any DNA?

BAILEY: I'm sorry...what?

CUSTOMER 7: Like say...just hypothetically speaking, mind you...if you were to photocopy your hand, as a...a surprise birthday present for your boss...you wouldn't leave fingerprints or skin cells on the glass that it could be traced back to you and ruin the boss' birthday surprise. 'Cause you know...we wouldn't want that. (*Laughs uncomfortably.*)

BAILEY: Couldn't you just wipe off the glass?

CUSTOMER 7: Huh. I guess I could...I mean...I guess you could.

BAILEY: We have glass cleaner.

CUSTOMER 7: Great. Great. And it completely obliterates DNA?

**SCENE 7**

CUSTOMER 8: I have a used washing machine in excellent condition, eight cans of hairspray, a 10-pound bag of potting soil, a litter of kittens, and a stick of spearmint gum. Are you *sure* your store doesn't barter?

**SCENE 8**

CUSTOMER 9: There's a raisin in my purse. (*Or "pocket" if CUSTOMER 9 is male.*)

BAILEY: (*feigning polite interest*) Really?

CUSTOMER 9: Yeah. That's weird. How did that get there?

BAILEY: I don't know.

CUSTOMER 9: I haven't eaten any raisins in forever. I don't think we even have any in the house.

BAILEY: Weird.

CUSTOMER 9: Yeah. (*Hands BAILEY the raisin.*) Hey, could you throw this away for me, please?

BAILEY: Sure. I'd be happy to.

CUSTOMER 9: (*rummaging through purse or pocket*) That is just so strange...hey! What happened to my wallet? It looks like something's been chewing on it. Did my son let his Chinchilla run around the house again? I bet he did. Huh. I guess that's not a raisin after all.

**SCENE 9**

CUSTOMER 10: I'm hunting for lighting fixtures to make my cubicle look like the inside of the Death Star.

CAMPBELL: Which part of the Death Star did you have in mind?

CUSTOMER 10: What do you mean, which part?

CAMPBELL: The Death Star was pretty big, and cubicles generally have a somewhat limited amount of space...

CUSTOMER 10: Are you implying that I have a small cubicle? That I'm not important? That I'm some kind of drone...like a...a Stormtrooper, or a...a Battle Droid?

CAMPBELL: No! No! It's just that cubicles, by their nature are...compact and they...

CUSTOMER 10: Compact? So you think my cubicle looks like the trash compactor? Are you calling me a slob? Are you making assumptions about me just because I like *Star Wars*?

CAMPBELL: Of course not.

CUSTOMER 10: Don't lie! Don't you go lying to me like a liar! I'm not stupid! I know the names of every single Ewok in *Return of the Jedi*! I can tell you, with absolute certainty, the number of teeth in the Sarlacc's mouth! And do you know how I know? I had the patience to put the movie on pause and count every last one of them! And then I remembered that number! So don't go treating me like some kind of fool!

CAMPBELL: We have swivel chairs that look a lot like the ones from the Death Star briefing room.

CUSTOMER 10: *(completely forgetting his rant)* Oooh! Show me!

### SCENE 10

CUSTOMER 11: What do you mean you don't carry cat food? What kind of a store is this?

BAILEY: An office supply store.

CUSTOMER 11: Is that supposed to be some sort of excuse?!

### SCENE 11

CUSTOMER 12: Pardon me. Do you carry pencils?

CAMPBELL: Pencils?

CUSTOMER 12: Yeah. Pencils. Y'know...pencils.

CAMPBELL: Are you serious? This is an office supply store. Of course we—I mean...yes. Yes, we do carry pencils. They're right over here.

CUSTOMER 12: Thank you. And of course I'm serious. I'm very serious. I'm in a very serious line of work.

CAMPBELL: Oh? *(Pretending to be politely interested.)* What sort of work do you do?

CUSTOMER 12: Serious work.

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from WE LOATH OUR CUSTOMERS by Bradley Walton. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC**

**P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406**

**Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011**

**[www.brookpub.com](http://www.brookpub.com)**

Do Not Copy