

WE LOATHE OUR CUSTOMERS - TEN MINUTE VERSION

By Bradley Walton

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WE LOATHE OUR CUSTOMERS - TEN MINUTE VERSION

A Ten Minute Comedy Duet

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SYNOPSIS: Bailey and Campbell work at an office supply store, and they both love the customers. Specifically, they love to torment them. But when word comes of an impending visit from the district manager, Campbell and Bailey are forced to try and behave themselves as they deal with the most obnoxious bunch of customers they've ever encountered.

This 10-minute version of the popular one-act play *We Loathe Our Customers* is perfect for forensics duos looking to showcase their talents with a hilarious piece that gives both performers the opportunity to play multiple roles.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 Either)

CHARACTERS TO BE PLAYED BY ACTOR #1

BAILEY (m/f)	An office supply store employee. <i>(41 lines)</i>
CUSTOMER 2	Who wants a good deal on a high-quality eraser. <i>(13 lines)</i>
CUSTOMER 4	Who would like to barter. <i>(1 line)</i>
CUSTOMER 6	Who wants to make his cubicle resemble the Death Star. <i>(6 lines)</i>
CUSTOMER 8	Who needs pencils...very sharp ones. <i>(10 lines)</i>

CHARACTERS TO BE PLAYED BY ACTOR #2

- CAMPBELL (m/f).....An office supply store employee. (47 lines)
- CUSTOMER 1Who is shopping for a special kind of paper in a specific color. (10 lines)
- CUSTOMER 3Who needs a photocopy machine that won't pick up DNA. (7 lines)
- CUSTOMER 5Who has a raisin. (4 lines)
- CUSTOMER 7Who is looking for cat food. (2 lines)

CASTING NOTE: This script is a 10-minute version of the one-act play *We Loathe Our Customers*. Although it could be performed with a cast of ten, it is designed for two actors to each play five characters. In the first and last scenes, the actors play office supply store employees. In the scenes in between, the actors alternate between playing their respective employee characters and customers in the store. This gives each performer a chance to show off a wide comedic range. All characters may be either gender.

STAGING: If performed onstage, a minimal set or bare stage is suggested.

If performed for forensics competition, and if permitted by the rules, it is suggested (But by no means required.) that the actors stand a few feet apart and switch places for each exchange so that the employee is always on the right and the customer is always on the left. When performed for competition, all props may be mimed.

AUTHOR NOTES: I have a one-act play called *Caution: Librarians Ahead* that I shortened into a forensics script. Two of my students had great success performing it—they were finalists at our state competition. The original one-act version of *We Loathe Our Customers* looked like it might have similar potential for forensics, so I created this 10-minute version. Enjoy!

SCENE 1

BAILEY: Hey, Campbell?

CAMPBELL: Yeah, Bailey?

BAILEY: The customer who just stormed out the door...she looked pretty worked up. Did you have anything to do with that?

CAMPBELL: Probably.

BAILEY: What'd you say to her?

CAMPBELL: That I assumed she was buying paper clips.

BAILEY: That's all?

CAMPBELL: Well, said she was just browsing. But this is an office supply store, and I pointed out that people don't generally come into an office supply store to browse. But she insisted she was browsing, so I figured it must be for paper clips, and I assured her that this was perfectly okay. That lots of people used paper clips to pick their noses, and that we had pens, pencils, letter openers, and other fine assorted products that would serve her equally well in her nose-picking needs.

BAILEY: Way to go.

CAMPBELL: Thank you.

BAILEY: I had a lady a few minutes ago ask me if I work here. I asked her if she thought I was wearing a real Maximum Office name badge or if I was trying to pull a fast one. That got her wondering. She demanded to see a manager, so I told her I ate him.

CAMPBELL: Good one!

BAILEY: It's so much fun messing with the customers.

CAMPBELL: I love this job.

BAILEY: Me, too.

CAMPBELL'S phone buzzes.

CAMPBELL: I hear a phone. Is that yours or mine?

BAILEY: Yours.

CAMPBELL: *(Pulling out and looking at phone.)* Yup. Looks like a text from my cousin who works at the Haydensville store. *(Frowns while looking at the screen.)* Uh-oh.

BAILEY: What?

CAMPBELL: The district manager is making the rounds. He left Haydensville about half an hour ago. He was sneaking around the store and eavesdropping on employees. Fired two cashiers and a sales floor clerk.

BAILEY: Bummer.

CAMPBELL: Haydensville's not that far. If he left there half an hour ago and was on his way here... *(Looking around nervously.)* he could be in this store already.

BAILEY: *(Also looking around nervously.)* Crud.

CAMPBELL: We're gonna have to behave ourselves for the rest of the afternoon. We're gonna have to...to... *(The words catching in his throat.)* actually do our jobs. We're gonna have to be nice to the customers.

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

CAMPBELL: I was never good with delayed gratification.

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

CAMPBELL: You, too.

SCENE 2

BAILEY: May I help you?

CUSTOMER 1: I'm looking for paper that's guaranteed not to cause paper cuts.

BAILEY: I've never heard of paper like that.

CUSTOMER 1: I can't imagine it doesn't exist. Paper cuts are such a common problem. Surely someone has found a solution.

BAILEY: Gloves.

CUSTOMER 1: It's not my hands I'm worried about. It's my left ear.

BAILEY: You get paper cuts on your left ear?

CUSTOMER 1: All the time. Doesn't everyone?

Pause. BAILEY is bewildered, but decides to agree to keep the customer happy.

BAILEY: They do. Every day.

CUSTOMER 1: Oh good, I'm glad it's not just me.

BAILEY: Nope. Nothing remotely strange 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 1: 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.

BAILEY: I can't imagine why.

CUSTOMER 1: You don't carry protective ear covers, do you?

BAILEY: No, we sure don't. I'm afraid the best I can offer you is red paper that won't show blood as obviously.

CUSTOMER 1: But I was looking some something in sort of a brownish color.

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

CUSTOMER 1: So it doesn't show ear wax so much.

BAILEY: I am so...sorry.

CUSTOMER 1: That's okay. Thanks for trying. It's good to know 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 BAILEY's name badge.) Bailey.

SCENE 3

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

CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. How may I help you?

CUSTOMER 2: Erasers.

CAMPBELL: We've got those. There's a whole bin of rubber erasers right here. Just a quarter each. It's one of our everyday specials.

CUSTOMER 2: What kind of warranty do they have?

CAMPBELL: Erasers don't have warranties.

CUSTOMER 2: You mean this store doesn't stand behind its products?

CAMPBELL: They cost twenty-five cents.

CUSTOMER 2: And you're willing to take my money but not back up what you're selling me?

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

CUSTOMER 2: Is there something wrong?

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

CUSTOMER 2: Hm. That's true. Okay. I'll give them a try.

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

CUSTOMER 2: *(Taking an eraser out of the bin.)* This one has a piece missing out of it. Will you give me a discount?

CAMPBELL: A discount?

CUSTOMER 2: Look. See this? Little chip missing off the corner. There's a defect in this eraser. There's no way it could possibly be full price.

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

CUSTOMER 2: That's better.

CAMPBELL: It would be twenty-three cents.

CUSTOMER 2: Whoa. Whatta you mean, twenty-three cents?

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

CUSTOMER 2: What kind of fool do you take me for?

Pause.

CAMPBELL: That's generally the way things work when you round numbers. If it's half or more, you round up.

CUSTOMER 2: 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!

CAMPBELL: That's not necessary! I'll tell the cashier to round down. We'll do a price override.

CUSTOMER 2: Okay. 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 4

CUSTOMER 3: I'm looking for a new copy machine for our office.

BAILEY: What kind of copier do you need?

CUSTOMER 3: Well, heh...it needs to make copies, of course. 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 3: Something that can collate and staple?

BAILEY: No problem.

CUSTOMER 3: How about a copier that won't pick up DNA?

BAILEY: I'm sorry...what?

CUSTOMER 3: Like say...just hypothetically...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 could be traced back to you and...ruin the surprise. 'Cause you know...we wouldn't want that. *(Laughs uncomfortably.)*

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

CUSTOMER 3: Huh. I guess I could...I mean...I guess you could.

BAILEY: We have glass cleaner.

CUSTOMER 3: Great. Great. And it completely obliterates DNA?

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