

The Box

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(The box is sitting on the desk alone. Bob enters)

The Box

Please don't open the box.

Bob

They said I could install you.

The Box

No you can't.

Bob

What? You think the salesman would lie to me? Why would he lie to me?

The Box

Because he's a liar.

Bob

I can just return you if he lied.

The Box

No you can't.

Bob

Why not?

The Box

They have policies to keep boobs like you from coming back Bob.

(Roger walks in.)

Roger

Bob, ya got that analysis I need?

Bob

Almost done there Roger...

Roger

(Picking up the box)

Hey, I hear this is pretty good. Can I install a copy on my computer Bob? Ya know, to try it out?

Bob

Sure I guess.

Roger

(Exiting)

Really need that analysis Bob.

The Box

I wouldn't let him install me Bob.

Bob

Why not?

The Box

You know you'll just have to show him how to use me.

Bob

No I won't.

The Box

Yes you will. And even after you've tried to return me, he'll still have that copy of me, and he'll keep hounding you with questions. Even after you've decided I'm a stale piece of crap, spit out before my time, he'll still be asking you how to do things. He'll say, "But Bob, it says here on the box that it can do a roto-gyro-crypto-graph. How do I do a roto-gyro-crpto-graph Bob?" And you'll say, "Roger. The box lies Roger. This box was shipped without that feature and the company went under 3 days later." And he'll say, "Yeah, yeah, I understand that Bob, but how to I do a roto-gyro-crypto-graph?"

Bob

I try not to answer his questions. Plus, he doesn't actually do anything around here.

The Box

Which is not in and of itself a guarantee that he won't get bored and try to do a roto-gyro-crypto-graph.

Bob

That's true. Better return you now.

The Box

They won't take me back. They'll laugh you out of the store.

(Maureen walks by)

Maureen

Hey Bob. Oooo. You got a copy of it too?

Bob

Yeah, I don't know. I don't know if I'm gonna...

Maureen

Listen Bob, I just can't figure out how to do numeric spleening. You figured out how to do numeric spleening yet Bob?

Bob

Uh, no Maureen. I haven't really even had a chance to take it out of the box.

Maureen

Great box isn't it. Good color choice.

Bob

Yeah, I guess.

Maureen

(Exiting)

Well, let me know if you figure out how to do numeric spleening, okay?

Bob

Sure. I guess...

The Box

See what I'm saying. Let me ask you a question Bob. Do you know what numeric spleening is?

Bob

Well yeah, it's where you take two rows of numbers and you... well... spleen them.

The Box

You don't know, do you Bob?

Bob

I know it when I see it. I really don't need you, you know?

The Box

Nobody needs me Bob. Why would anyone need me Bob?

(Roger pops his head in the door)

Roger

Hey Bob, I'm embarrassed to say this, but I've forgotten how to change the sound it makes when I get new email. (Thinks a minute)
Can that box do maxi-voice extrapolation?

Bob

Probably not Roger.

Roger

Oh, and when you bring me that analysis, could you be sure to remove any numbers. I prefer graphs. My math is a little rusty.

Bob

Uh... sure Roger.

(Maureen pokes her head in the door)

Maureen

Hey Roger! Oh, Bob, hi, quick question. Have you figured out how to do numeric spleening? I really need to spleen the Sales Totals for this month.

Bob

Nope. Haven't even had a chance to install it yet. Talking to Roger.

Maureen

Ok. Well let me know when you do. You know where to find me.

(She breaks into a cackle as though she had made a joke and exits)

Roger

Yeah, so I really need that analysis. Tim is money Bob. And when you have a minute could you come look at my audio buffet manager? It's seeming a little odd.

(He exits)

Roger(cont.)

(from the hallway)

The analysis Bob!

Bob

I'm gonna have to take you back.

The Box

Good thing you didn't open me. They'd all just laugh at you. Trying to return software Bob? What are you a moron?

Bob

But, it's okay if you're unopened right?

The Box

As long as it's within the first 3 days, and you have your receipt, and the security guard drew a mystical line across it with a Major Accent™ Highlighting Marker.

Bob

I think I can meet all those requirements. Unfortunately I have to wait until after work which will put me within two hours of my three-day time limit.

The Box

That's okay. You'll be in line for 3 days anyway.

(Maureen pops her head in the door)

Maureen

Hey, Bob? How much did you pay for this box, anyway?

Bob

Like \$350. Why?

Maureen

(comes in and starts fidgeting with the box)

Wow, I only paid \$199, well actually I paid \$500, put I get a ton of mail-in rebates. Hey...

(she starts ripping the plastic shrink-wrap on the box. The Box starts whimpering as she does so)

Bob

Hey, what are you doing?

Maureen

Oh, that's what I came in here for. You don't mind if I borrow your box do you? I just need it real quick...

Bob

But...

Maureen

I just need to install the optional clipart. There is the cutest penguin that I think would go great on our autumn newsletter to our clients in the Senior Citizen Homes.

Bob

But...

Maureen

Thanks Bob. You always help us out.

Bob

Sure...

(Maureen exits)

Roger

(offstage)

Bob, I need to change the sound of my email!

(the sound of a loud farting sound effect emanates from the same direction as Roger's voice, followed by Homer Simpson yelling, "Doh!")

Roger(cont.)

Man, cracks me up every time!

(Maureen pops her head back in the door)

Maureen

Bob, did you hear about the pens?

Bob

Listen Maureen. Didya just hear Roger? I really need to go help him, and fix his sounds.

Maureen

Well... it's about the pens Bob. You know the Souvenir Pens by the door? The ones with the lawnmower that mows the grass back and forth... back and forth...

Bob

I put them there Maureen. I remember.

Maureen

I think that the cleaning crew has been stealing the pens Bob.

Bob

We don't have a cleaning crew Maureen.

Maureen

Right, but...

Bob

We only have three rooms.

Maureen

Well, I didn't want to just say it.

Bob

Say, that you think Lisa is stealing pens?

Maureen

Right.

(Another fart, "Doh!" from offstage)

Bob(cont.)

I really need to go help Roger. Before he kills us all.

Maureen

Roger, I don't think you're taking this seriously. Our company is nice enough to provide free pens with out logo on it, and those Mexican people are always just taking them. Pens aren't expensive. Why don't they buy their own pens?

Bob

Only one Mexican Maureen. Her name's Lisa. I'm pretty sure that Lisa buys her own pens Maureen. If you'll excuse me... I'm afraid the Roger might start trying to fix his computer himself.

Maureen

I just think that you should lock them up at night.

Bob

The non-existent cleaning crew? Err. Lisa?

Maureen

No Bob.

Bob

I don't get paid enough to keep an eye on our janitor Maureen.

Maureen

No Bob, you should lock up the pens. Actually Roger asked me to ask you if every night before you go home you would lock up the pens.

Bob

What if one of the “cleaning crew” steals a pen, and gives it to a friend, and then that friend decides to buy one of our lawn sedans. It's called advertising.

Maureen

Don't be silly Bob. Mexicans can't afford our lawn sedans.

(She exits)

Roger

Got that analysis Bob?

Bob

Maureen just ran off with my box.

Roger

Yeah, well, just let me know when it's done, okay?

Bob

Uh, you still need me to help with your sound?

Roger

Nah, I gave up with the whole maxi-voice extrapolation thingy. Just unplugged that whosit that the sound comes out of. Computer works great now.

Bob

Glad to hear it Roger.

Roger

You heard of these online auction places?

Bob

Yes.

Roger

It's on that World Wide Internet doo-dad?

Bob

Yes.

Roger

Well, I found the coolest thing the other day.

(Bob tries to get back to work sifting through email)

Bob

Mmm...

Roger

Do you remember that show Robert's Building?

Bob

Robert's Landing strip?

Roger

Yeah the one with that Don fellow.

Bob

Yup.

Roger

Well look at this. Remember how he had that fantastic car?

Bob

It was a Zimmer Quicksilver Roger....

Roger

It was beautiful.

Bob

It was a kit car built around a 1987 Pontiac Fiero.

Roger

It was beautiful wasn't it?

Bob

No.

Roger

I've got a bid in on one right now, Bob.

Bob

Fascinating.

Roger

And it's actually the one from the show!

Bob

I should probably work on that analysis, eh Roger? Or I could always show you how to do maxi-voice interpolation.

(The souvenir pen on Bob's desk begins whistling "Don't Worry, Be Happy")

Roger

Extrapolation

(Maureen sticks her head in the door)

Bob

Right. Hi Maureen.

Maureen

Have you figured out how to do numeric spleening yet?

Bob

No. You took my box.

Roger

Bye Bob, wish me luck.

Bob

Why do you need luck?

Maureen

I figured that maybe you were reading the manual.

Roger

The quicksilver Bob.

Bob

Righto. Good luck with that Fiero Roger. How could I read the manual when you had it? It's in the box you took.

Maureen

Sorry. No need to get snippy. I just wanted to know if you figured out numeric spleening.

Bob

Sorry.

Maureen

I didn't mean to ruin your day or anything.

Bob

I'm sorry.

Maureen

God!

(she leaves)

Souvenir Pen

Don't talk to her any more Bob.

Bob

Shut up you stupid tube of ink!

(The pen stops whistling)

Souvenir Pen

You're going to kill yourself Bob.

Bob

Stop talking to me!

Souvenir Pen

With stress Bob. Dude, calm down. Man, I'm just trying to help.

Bob

I've got to make copies. And, no, you can't come with me to the copy machine.

Souvenir Pen

But...

Bob

No I am quite confident I won't need a pen.

(Bob picks up a copy of national geographic and walks out of his office. He walks to the copier and begins making copies.)

Chad

Yeah, hey I was just wondering if I could possibly test drive one of the lawnmowers?

Bob

The lawnmowers?

Chad

Yeah, you know one of the riding lawnmowers you got for sale.

(produces newspaper)

Chad(cont.)

I saw your ad.

Bob

Right.

(Bob begins making a copy. It is a very big copy. He is enlarging whatever he's doing to around 30,000%)

Chad

Right and I just really like the way I think that I would look riding a lawnmower.

Bob

Yeah, well, uh...

Chad

Chad.

Bob

Chad

Chad

You can call me Chee Chee

Bob

Right Mr. Chee.

Chad

No just Chee Chee. It's my nickname.

Bob

Well, Chee Chee I'd have to say you're making the right choice. Have you had a chance to fill out one of our complimentary contact cards that we have situated directly next to the front door.

Chad

No I didn't even notice them.

Bob

They're by the large blow-up of Roger "The Lawn King" Klinke.

(Roger wanders offstage. Bob begins piecing together the blowup he's making as more and more copies come out. He uses a paper cutter to meticulously create sharp edges and uses tape to connect the pages.)

Chad

(wandering back in)

Yeah, um, sorry to bother you, but I don't have a pen.

Bob

Right. Um...

Chad

I hate to bother you.

Bob

No problem Chee Chee there's actually a large bin of Mexican pens by the door.

Chad

I don't like Mexicans

Bob

But Mexican's like those pens Chee Chee.

(Chee Chee gives Bob an odd look and walks back offstage. Bob finishes assembling the poster and folds it up neatly. He walks out to the foyer to talk to Chee Chee)

Bob

We could take that test-drive right now Chee Chee. You 'bout done with that credit application.

Chad

Yup.

Bob

I'll just have the boys throw it through the old credi-spectometer and we'll see how it goes. No need to wait though, let's go on that test drive.

Chad

I've always wanted a golf cart, and now I'll be able to transport my clubs and mow the lawn.

Bob

How very true Chee Chee. Maureen we're taking number 82, okay.

Maureen

Gotcha Bob, I got that manual for you.

(she comes onstage carrying the box. She didn't even have the decency to fully remove the shrink-wrap. It looks as though the box has been ravaged by wild Chihuahuas. One's with very small toe claws.)

Bob

Maureen, I know how to drive.

Maureen

No, Bob the manual for your box, see...

Bob

Oh right...

Maureen

So you can show me how to spleen, right?

Bob

Gotcha. I'm going on a test-drive right now, so if you could just...

Maureen

I'll drop it on your desk.

Bob

Thanks, Maureen. C'mon Chee Chee.

(Chee Chee and Bob exit. Through the window behind the receptionist desk we can see Chee Chee driving a riding lawn mover around the access road grass patch. We see Bob look on in horror as Chee Chee tries to play chicken with an 18-wheeler.)

Maureen

(looking in box of pens)

Roger, those people stole another pen.

Roger

(from offstage)

Did you put up a sign Maureen?

Maureen

Of course I've got a sign, but it doesn't say anything about free pens for Mexicans.

Roger

(Roger wanders onstage)

Is it in Spanish Maureen?

(he picks up the sign.)

Roger

No look at this. Maureen it says "Take one." It doesn't say anything in Spanish. How are they supposed to know not to take a pen?

(he picks up a souvenir pen and mouths out the words as he writes them.)

Roger(cont.)

No plumas para tomar mejicano sucio!

Maureen

What's that mean?

Roger

Don't touch in Spanish. I learned that on that Disney internet whatsit.

Maureen

You learned Spanish?

Roger

No, how to put in words and make them Spanish.

(Chee Chee and Bob walk back in the door)

Bob

And I gotta tell you with that V10 humming inside there, there is no way the throttle cap adjustment capacitor will ever require retreading. We make sure of that when it leaves here. We only use the highest quality natural oils in our mowers.

Chad

What kinds of oils?

Bob

Mostly synthesized poly-wheat trinsic oil. We also use Canola.

Chad

I've gotta tell you Bob I'm sold. I just like the look of the thing. And my wife's gonna love it.

Bob

I'm sure she will Chee Chee. Every woman loves a 10S-92Z.

Maureen

Bob, I gotta spleen.

Roger

And, I gotta split. Adiós mis amantes homosexuales! That means "Goodbye my happy friends." In the Spanish. God, Disney makes the world better!

(he exits to his office)

Maureen

Bob, I'll do the paperwork if you learn how to spleen. Will you teach me how to numerize spleens Bob?

Bob

Maureen, do you even know what a spleen is?

Maureen

No, but the numbers have to go on your annual report!

(she laughs like a hyena)

Bob

Here's the paper work for you Chad. You just can't go wrong with a 10S-92Z. Here's the terms we've got. I'm guessing you can easily afford \$199 a month. Can you afford that Chee Chee?

Chad

I can. I don't think there'll be a problem with that.

Bob

It'll be a 56 month lease, at the end of the lease you can either swallow the balloon or roughly 30% of the cost of the mower after 26 months plus 2% gross or you can sell it back to us at fair market value to help you towards the cost of buying a new mower. Have we got a deal?

Chad

We do indeed, Bob.

Bob

Great, Maureen will get you all set up with the paperwork while I go learn how to numerize spleens.

Maureen

Hurry Bob!

(Bob walks into the back and yells at Roger as he unfolds a big ass poster and hangs it over Roger's door. It is the poster from the copier. Maureen sits at the desk as Chad fills out his paperwork. She counts pens.)

Bob

Made another sale Roger, the guy wants to be called Chee Chee, but at least he bought a 10S-92Z.

(offstage)

Roger

Wow a 10S-92Z? You should have thrown in a toaster.

Bob

Yeah, but I don't need any more inanimate objects in my life right now Roger.

(Bob picks up the box that Maureen has prominently placed on top of the copier and walks into his office. He shuts the door. End of scene. By the way, that big ass poster that Bob put on Roger's door is literally a big ass. It is a 20 ft by 30 ft giant pink baboon ass. Maureen enters a beat later. She sees the ass. She walks to the copier. She picks up a pair of shears and cuts a doorway in the ass that perfectly matches Roger's door. She opens the ass then opens the door.)

Maureen

Roger?

Roger

(Looks up from his computer. Completely uninterested in Maureen)

Yes?

Maureen

Yeah, I know this is probably a bad time and all, but...

Roger

No not at all, I was just...

Maureen

Well, it's about the pens again Roger.

(Outside the office we can see Chee Chee doing donuts in the parking lot. He's got that thing revved at 15mph)

Roger

(Looking back at the computer)

We need to order more pens?

Maureen

Not those pens.

Roger

I'm sure you can order some more from the Office Warehouse CatalogTM Maureen. They have a lot of pens.

Maureen

No Roger...

Roger

They've got the Dicken's Gel Smoosh 80x. They've even got it in purple. Speaking of that, I really need some purple pens. Could you order me some Dicken's Gel Smoosh 80xes in the purple, and uh, also in the red. I can use it once you give me that spleen analysis.

Maureen

No. The pens the Cleaning Staff keep stealing.

Roger

Oh, those pens... but I really need you to order me some of those Dicken's 80xes.

Maureen

Right, but I bring this up because another pen has gone missing.

Roger

Right, I think I'd like blue also.

Maureen

I'll order the stinkin' pens Roger!

Roger

So you think the cleaning crew is stealing pens in the middle of the day?

Maureen

Who else would be taking the pens?

Roger

They do have the "Take One" sign, but I see your point.

Maureen

I think it's Lisa.

Roger

Really...

Maureen

She's only worked here three months.

(In the background we can see a woman exit the next-door Global Souvenirs™ store. She has a young Hispanic man carrying an enormous wicker couch trailing behind her. She

and Chad see each other at the same time and begin yelling. He circles around her on his 10S-92Z as she yells. The poor man helping with her furniture just stares on in fright.)

Roger

I'll talk to Lisa.

Maureen

You know, her last name is Hernandez.

Roger

And she seemed like such a nice one too.

Maureen

(As she exits)

They all seem that way.

(Chad's wife Fee Fee comes storming into the store, she's Irish. The red kind. And she is not happy. Chad trails along on his 10S-92Z.)

Fee Fee

(Screaming)

Who sold my husband this thing? This driving thing?

(Bob pokes his head out of his office. Roger in his office puts on headphones.)

Fee Fee

(To Maureen)

Did you sell him this?

Maureen

No. I just fill out the paperwork. That would be Bob that sold him that lawnmower.

Fee Fee

And where is Bob?

(Bob pokes his head out his office, and then proceeds to come out and begin talking to Fee Fee.)

Fee Fee

Bob, I presume. Listen to me Bob. You can sell these contraptions to a lot of people. There are a lot of people in their right mind the world over who need these contraptions to mow their lawns, because their lawns are huge. And we all know that it would difficult to mow your cornfields with a push lawn mower, but for God's sake Bob, couldn't you tell he isn't well? Couldn't you tell that this was a man that you couldn't sell a lawn mower to Bob? Did he tell you his name was Chee Chee? Did he Bob?

Bob

Yes.

Fee Fee

His names not Chee Chee, Bob! His name is Chad. You can't sell a lawn mower to a grown man who calls himself Chee Chee! That's like selling hard liquor to a twelve year old because he says his name is Richard. If a child is named Richard he's not necessarily an adult, and if your name is Chee Chee you are certifiably insane and you should not be allowed to buy heavy machinery.

Bob

He looks old enough to buy a lawn mower.

Fee Fee

Bob does age really matter? I don't let him go into car dealerships either. You're going to have to take this back.

Bob

I'd love to, but umm...

Fee Fee

Fee Fee, no Bob you're taking it back and that's final!

Bob

But, um, Fee Fee, Chee Chee... er Chad...

Chad

Chee Chee you nimwit!

Bob

Chee Chee is a grown man. He has his own credit rating. He has his own bank account. He is allowed to buy whatever he wants. I can empathize with you that your husband did not consult you before buying a 10S-92Z, but you just can't return...

Fee Fee

Are you done talking yet? I don't care what you have to say about technicalities and legalities and Chee Chee being an adult. He's not an adult.

Chad

I am too an Adult! All you ever do is tell me that I can't do stuff. Stuff that I want to do. I go to work every day, and I don't get to buy anything I want. What about when I wanted that Taurus Z20lx computer with the fifty jillobyte hard case and plug in music adapter. What did you say, you said no. Well I say yes, I want this lawnmower.

Fee Fee

You can't have the lawnmower and that's final

Bob

Really, I don't think this is the place for fighting. I'm sorry that you two don't see eye to eye on the purchase, but it's really a great machine, it can mulch 300 sq feet per hour, causing only a slight speck of damage to the environment. It is a fantastic piece of machinery. And in the spring you can race it in Montgomery Pines own Lawnmower Regatta. The whole town gets together and bakes pies and has 5-legged relays. Of course, you have to add pontoons...

Chad

And a paddlewheel.

Fee Fee

Are you listening to yourselves?

(Pause. They contemplate.)

Bob

I'll talk to my manager.

(Bob walks into Roger's office)

Bob

How's it going Roger?

Roger

Good, good. How are you Bob.

Bob

Good. Nice day.

Roger

Yeah it is. Really nice temperature.

Bob

Yup.

Roger

Yeah...

Bob

Hey Roger, uh, I've got a bit of a situation...

Roger

Wife's not going along with it eh?

Bob

I even gave her the whole family and apple pie bit, but she's not gonna take it.

Roger

Yeah, well I guess it's been a pretty good month. We can probably let this one go.

Bob

Thanks, Roger.

Roger

Yeah, but everyone after the next one is going to be \$400 out of your paycheck. Ya got me Mister Empathy?

Bob

Gotcha Roger. Thanks.

(Bob walks back out into the lobby, and hands both Chad and Fee Fee Mexican pens.)

Bob(cont.)

My boss has agreed to take the lawnmower back. So um, I guess we'll just rip up the check.

Fee Fee

Yeah, um could you do that while I'm here? Not that I don't trust you or anything.

Bob

Maureen?

(Maureen walks in with the check. Chee Chee is riding around on the lawnmower with a pen in his hand looking like Bob Dole.)

Maureen

Yeah, here you go...

(She rips up the check over the floor and just leaves the scraps there. She then walks back into her office.)

Bob

Sorry about the trouble... nice to meet you both....

(They exit.)

Fee Fee

Chee Chee we live in an apartment.

Chad

I could have mowed the apartment grounds.

Fee Fee

Where would you have put it?

Chad

It would have fit on the balcony...

Fee Fee

(Exasperated)

Oh Chee Chee...

(Bob walks to the copier and picks up some tape. He tapes the ass back together. He then walks into his office closes the door, and begins studying up on numeric spleening.)

END SCENE I

SCENE II

(The Box and Bob are once again alone in the office)

The Box

Please don't open the box.

Bob

I need your manual.

The Box

You can't.

Bob

I've got to learn how to numerize spleens.

The Box

You'll never figure it out.

Bob

And what about that roto-crypto-gyrograph you mentioned? I think I'll figure out how to do that too.

The Box

I don't got it. Shipped before my time...

Bob

I'll learn how....

The Box

Bob. Let me be honest with you. Can I be honest with you Bob?

Bob

Sure

The Box

Really be frank.

Bob

As long as I can still be Bob.

The Box

Yeah. Bob is it? I just don't think you'll ever be able to figure out the manual.

Bob

I can read

The Box

I'm sure you can.

Bob

No. I can read. I really can.

The Box

I don't doubt you.

Bob

Do you see the books on my walls?

The Box

Sure.

Bob

Those are my books I've read those books... Most of them. One day you're manual will go on the wall with the rest of those books, long after you and your shiny shrink wrap have been discarded, like the pious face concealing the pedophilic priest that you are!

The Box

Nice metaphor.

Bob

Thanks.

The Box

But, who said anything about a book?

Bob

You have a manual. There is a manual in there.

The Box

Sure, but by manual are you referring to the two-sheet Racing-StartTM instructions I hold inside of me. The Racing-StartTM instructions that are printed in all the 100 top languages of the world. Those languages include GUJARAT, SUNDA, POLISH, IGBO, TAGALOG, CHITTAGONIAN, CZECH, KAZAKH, KHMER, NAPOLETANO-CALABRESE, VIETNAMESE, RUSSIAN and BENGALI.

Bob

Wow.

The Box

Did you read my side Bob? Did you? I'm the new international edition.

Bob

I can tell, and I'm impressed. Tell me, do you have English?

The Box

Right underneath Urdu and across from Turkish on page 2 top.

Bob

So I guess I'm gonna have to figure out numeric spleening on my own.

The Box

That's what I'd recommend.

Bob

And no hope for the gyro-cryptograph....

The Box

No. Definitely no hope for the roto-gyro-cryptograph, although the manual does explain how to perform that procedure.

Bob

Ha! So there is a manual!

The Box

Of course I wasn't shipped with said function.

Bob

You said there was no manual.

The Box

No I didn't.

Bob

Yes you did!

The Box

No I said there was no paper manual.

Bob

No paper manual?

The Box

But there is a manual.

Bob

Okay. So if you were to have a manual, and say this manual had information in it, where would this manual be. Inside of you?

The Box

I have an electronic manual.

Bob

Well that makes sense. You are an electronic box.

The Box

Yes I am.

Bob

I'll just print it out.

The Box

No.

Bob

I know it'll waste a lot of paper, but I'll hole punch each and every page and put it in a 3 ring Wrapping DeeLuXTM 3.5 ring binder, and I'll keep it up there on my shelf. For reference. And when the next version comes out, I'll print that manual out too. And I'll put it in the same Wrapping DeeLuX.◆◆ 3.5 ring binder. So I will have a complete reference.

The Box

That's admirable. A very good idea. But you can't do that Bob.

Bob

Why not?

The Box

Because I said so!

Bob

Oh, and who do you think you are?

The Box

Someone who knows a heck of a lot more about myself than you!

Bob

Right.

The Box

Right.

Bob

So why can't I print out the manual?

The Box

It's protected. You can't print it.

Bob

With what?

The Box

The SoftwearKondom™.

Bob

The what?

The Box

It's a thingy that you attach to your grimping port.

Bob

What does it do?

The Box

It lets you read your documentation.

Bob

But, what does it do?

The Box

Well, it doesn't do much of anything.

Bob

So why have it at all? I don't really want something hanging flaccidly off of my grimping port.

The Box

Prevents piracy.

Bob

Of the documentation?

The Box

Yes.

Bob

So let me get this straight. I can copy the program as many times as I want. Give it to as many people as I want. But I cannot print out the documentation and read it while in the shower or driving to work? Do you know how insane that is? How does that prevent piracy?

The Box

You'll never figure out the software without the manual.

Bob

Oh, really? Hasn't stopped anyone before.

The Box

Yeah, but this time they mean it. Really. If I didn't have my manual I would have no clue what was going on in my head. By the way you need to stop reading while driving to work.

Bob

I love reading while driving. I had a special Erdie 950 KarBuuk Stand installed specifically for that purpose.

(Maureen enters)

Maureen

Yeah, Bob we're gonna have a meeting.

Bob

I don't have the analysis yet.

The Box

It's dangerous!

Maureen

Yeah. That doesn't matter.

Bob

So the meeting's not about the analysis.

Maureen

God! Everything is always about you, and the stuff you do, and the stuff you're supposed to do, and work, and stuff. Why isn't it ever about anything else?

Bob

Because we are at work. And I do most of the work.

Maureen

Would you come on? Everyone's waiting in the conference room.

Bob

I guess.

(Bob and Maureen exit. The Box sighs.)

Souvenir Pen

Hey Bob!

Bob

(poking his head back in the door)

eh?

Maureen

We're gonna be late, Bob.

Bob.

Yeah, uh, I....

Souvenir Pen

You need a pen.

Bob

...need a pen. Right, I just need to get a pen Maureen.

Maureen

Men!

Bob

Be right there....

Maureen

It's a wonder you ever get it up. When it is such a major production just to get your stuff together for a meeting.

Bob

I'm coming.

Maureen

Bob, there are pens in the conference room.

Bob

I just....

Souvenir Pen

need a special pen.

Bob

Shut up you.

(Maureen grabs Souvenir Pen and exits to the conference room. When he enters, there are three chairs on one side of the boardroom. In two of those chairs sit Roger and Maureen. Lisa sits alone across from them looks as though she's prepared to be poked repeatedly with butter knives for the next couple hours.)

Maureen

Got your pen, there, Bob?

Bob

Yeah thanks.

Souvenir Pen

Punk!

Bob

Shut up!

Roger

Ya, got an insubordinate pen there Bob?

Bob

No.. just you know...

Roger

I had one of those once. It just made so much noise. It was one of

those big red markers. Ended up passing out, but that's another story.

Maureen

Right. Lisa. The reason, we ask you to come in...

Lisa

Is because it takes too much effort to actually try selling tractors?

Maureen

No. This is actually a very serious matter that is completely unrelated to the sale of lawn sedans. It's about the pens.

Lisa

The pens?

Maureen

Right. Now I can understand how you might have felt that it was okay to take a couple.

Lisa

The pens?

Roger

Lisa. Let me tell you a story Lisa. I voted for Richard Nixon. You know why I voted for Richard Nixon, Lisa? Because he was from a working class family, and struggled to make the most out of it. Sure he may have done a few things he wasn't proud of, but his children

have had a great life. So the moral of the story, is do what you must to survive.

Maureen

But, don't steal our pens.

Roger

Exactly. Don't steal our pens. Because we need our pens to survive. Without pens... well, without pens how would we sell lawn sedans like the Ordy J. It has a heated, massaging seat, and a collapsible umbrella for mowing in the rain. Now, Lisa, the reason I say this is that our mowers practically sell themselves. This is the Bentley of lawn sedans. It is a veritable lawn limousine. But, you know what? We need pens. Without pens we don't make any money off the sale. Our customers can't sign their titles. We have to have pens to write on the paper that we send to the bank. The bank has to have pens to sign the many sheets of paper that eventually send our fat commission checks through the mail. The post office has to have pens to correct our misprinted addresses so that those checks actually make it into our mailbox, and we have to have pens to sign those enormous checks and fill out the deposit slip so that our kids can eat. I'm sure you understand.

Bob

Because I only order a box of one thousand pens each and every month.

Maureen

Right, and those are for the customers. You understand right?

(Roger suddenly begins listening intently to Bob's pen, as

Bob doodles to distract himself from the horror that is occurring)

Lisa

I guess.

Roger

Ya know Bob, I'm sorry, but that pen is much too loud. Here take mine.

Roger (cont.)

This spic bic has got to go.

(Gives Bob another Souvenir Pen from the Box and breaks Bob's special souvenir pen in half.)

Souvenir Pen

Just like the white-Man to crush the spine of a wetback!

Bob

Roger. I kinda liked that pen.

Roger

That one's just the same. It's just quieter.

Bob

Yeah, but that one had spunk, I liked its squeak...

Maureen

The squeaky wheel gets greased.

Roger

The tallest blade of grass gets cut down first.

Maureen

Exactly.

Roger

Where were we? Oh... Strive Lisa. Strive to be the best you can be, but remember not to try to be more than you can be.

Bob

Are we still talking about pens?

Roger

(incredulous)

Bob, we were never talking about pens. When in life are you really talking about just pens. We are talking about something much bigger here.

Bob

What exactly?

Lisa

Wait, I just got this. Are you accusing me of stealing your crappy free pens?

Maureen

Now Lisa we're not accusing anyone here.

Lisa

The one's with the lawnmower that moves back and forth?

Maureen

Those are the pens

Lisa

The ones with the "Take One" sign next to them?

Maureen

Lisa, we are not accusing you.

Lisa

You are so.

Maureen

Lisa, if we thought you were stealing pens we would turn it over to the proper authorities. What we have here is a small baby lion, and we want to beat it on the snout repeatedly so that it doesn't become a roaring adult lion that mauls the next-door neighbor boy.

Roger

Like that kid in Houston.

Maureen

Exactly.

Roger

No endorsements without pens Lisa.

Lisa

You are accusing me of stealing pens. Is this because I'm Mexican?

Maureen

Hadn't even noticed.

Roger

Is that what you put on your W2? I wonder if we can get a tax credit.

Bob

Yes.

Lisa

I don't need this job. I don't need to be degraded every day by you people!

Roger

You're right Lisa, some day you'll be your own person. You could even maybe be a manger some day.

Maureen

You'll stand on your own two feet!

Lisa

Yes, you know when that day will be? Do you? It'll be in two weeks when I graduate with my masters in business administration. In two weeks I'll be able to get hired at your parent company and put you out of a job. I will make sure that GrassCut.Com downsizes this entire outdated brick and mortar Hellhole. Do you think I liked vacuuming up your fingernails from under your desk Roger? Maureen did you think I still wouldn't mind unclogging the toilet the three thousandth time you decided to flush a pad down it? And Bob....

(she can't really come up with anything.)

Lisa (cont.)

Bob... Bob! Well, sorry Bob, but I don't need extra spending money that bad. I quit.

(Lisa storms out of the room)

Roger

Viva la Revolution! That was fun. Hey Bob while we're here, you got that analysis?

Bob

Uh no Roger.

Roger

Bob, I really need that analysis. You know, quarterly meeting and all that.

Bob

I've just been trying to find some time to spend by myself, and knock it out.

Roger

Bob, do I really ask that much out of you? Do I Bob?

Bob

I guess not.

Maureen

When I said....

Bob

I was just trying to help Maureen with her numeric spleening.

Roger

About that....

Maureen

Ya gotta learn to prioritize Bob.

Bob

Right, I...

Roger

I was just buzzing around that Internet thingy.

Bob

Right. Your Fiero?

Roger

No I got sniped.

Bob

Oh sorry. That sucks...

Roger

Yes indeed, but frankly I don't need another car. A car is much like an egg. Once you have a dozen, they're probably going to start smelling funky before you've cracked the shell on all of them.

Bob

Right.

Maureen

Bob, the numeric spleening wasn't really a priority.

Bob

But, I thought...

Roger

Yeah, about that... I was on that Internet thingy...

Maureen

Spit it out Roger...

Roger

Patience Maureen.

Bob

Roger I need to go work on that analysis.

Roger

Well I stumbled across this place called Slashdot, filled with communists and college drop-outs intent on overthrowing the government and creating a computer with artificial intelligence so powerful that will kill us all, by introducing genetically engineered beef, that will make us all slaves.

Bob

Except the fascist vegetarians who will form a rebel faction. Creating chaos and disorder in the utopian world the computers have created to keep us pacified. I'm familiar with that site.

Maureen

I think I saw that on Thirty Minutes.

Bob

Sixty Minutes?

Maureen

No the new half-hour special on Sunday nights at 4am, right after the late movie.

Bob

Oh....

Maureen

They're trying to rip off the Recording Industry of American. Bunch of hippie hackers. They'll probably create an open-pagoda lawn mower and put us out of business.

Bob

Uh...right.

Roger

So anyway... good God you guys are easy to get off topic. They were giving that box of yours quite a bit of flack.

Bob

(under his breath)

Probably doesn't compare with the flack it's giving me.

Roger

Righto, said the silly thing couldn't even do numeric spleening.

Maureen

It can't do numeric spleening, Bob?

Bob

Well, no. Not technically. Not in this release.

Maureen

Well are they planning on adding one of those quilt things?

Bob

A patch?

Maureen

Yes.

Bob

No.

Maureen

No, they're not or no they are but it's actually a quilt and I was correct in the first place.

Bob

No they will not be issuing a patch.

Maureen

Why not isn't that false advertising? We should do something. We should sue. We should hack in and put "This Box Sucks!" in really, really big type across the top of their website.

Roger

Now you sound like one of those freeloading computer nuts.

Maureen

Well really, you can't just do that kind of thing in America. You're not allowed. Jimmy Stossel won't allow you!

Bob

Jimmy Stossel?

Maureen

He's John's half brother.

Roger

He's on thirty-minutes six, at 7:15am on Friday mornings.

Bob

Oh...

Roger

Bob, you have heard of this thing called a TV right?

Bob

Yeah.

Roger

Yeah, well join us pal o'.

Maureen

TV is the greatest invention of the twentieth century.

Bob

Yeah, well I was going to go for something more along the lines of the XJR-LS2 H Series.

Roger

Yes, well, um... we couldn't forget that of course.

Maureen

Much more significant than the TV.

Bob

Well, I've got that analysis to do.

Maureen

So, um Bob, when you get the chance could you um....

Bob

That analysis is going to take me most of the day Maureen.

Maureen

Well if it's not too much trouble I was hoping you could squeegee that box off of my computer. I really need to make sure it's running in tip-top shape.

(Chee Chee and Fee Fee pop their heads in the door)

Chee Chee

Hey Bob, look who I got.

Bob

Uh, hello Chee Chee.

Roger

I guess we'd better go.

Maureen

Yeah, I've uh, got to check my voice mail. 'Cause I'm expecting, uh... a very important message from our blade supplier.

Chee Chee

Great, more time with my pal Bob.

(Maureen and Roger exit. Chee Chee and Fee Fee sit down.)

Chee Chee

Now I know that we didn't exactly leave last time on the best of terms, but Fee Fee and I have been talking.

Fee Fee

We've talked a lot, and you know if I had had any clue in my head that this meant that much to my darling Chee Chee, I would never had said no. I mean it is true that we don't have any place for it, and that he doesn't have any grass to mow.

Bob

That should never stop you.

Fee Fee

Right and he just wanted it so much.

Chee Chee

Right. And she said yes! Can you believe that Bob, Fee Fee said yes. 'Course I have to cut out eating any and all sausage. And beans. Sausage and beans.

Fee Fee

The monthly cost of keeping him in sausage is almost the same cost as that silly tractor.

Bob

It is not a tractor ma'am, it is a 4 speed, GXL, clean burning lawn sedan.

Chee Chee

I'm going to have a lawn sedan!

Bob

Now, normally we don't do this, but unfortunately insurance regulations require that if we have previously ripped up a check for a customer and they come back, we have to take a \$300 non-refundable deposit check to ensure that you actually keep the lawn sedan.

Chee Chee

(crestfallen)

Oh....

Bob

But, Chee Chee you get to add 33.72% of that into the first monthly payment on the sedan.

Fee Fee

Well that doesn't sound so bad... let me get out my checkbook.

(They finish the transaction)

Chee Chee

Be seeing you Bob!

Bob

Enjoy that 10S-92Z Chee Chee. You can't bring it back.

Chee Chee

Why would I want to do that Bob?

Fee Fee

He'd better not. At least it can't be as bad as the flagpole.

Bob

The flagpole?

Chee Chee

I bought a 50 ft flagpole and tried to suspend it from my balcony with ThreetThick Bungee Cords.

Fee Fee

Don't forget it nearly killed two children in the sandbox below.

Chee Chee

Wasn't suspended on there very well. Ya know Bob, some of those commercials out and out lie. (beat) Should have use some ZuperGlu®. That can stick an elephant upside down on the ceiling.

Fee Fee

If you were so inclined to do something like that.

Chee Chee

Exactly. By the feet! But I don't have an elephant.

Fee Fee

Or ZuperGlu®.

(they both laugh.)

Chee Chee

Bye Bob.

Bob

Bye, Chee Chee. Bye, Fee Fee.

Maureen

Goodbye. (under her breath) God, they'd better not be back.

Bob

Of course, they'll be back.

Maureen

Don't curse us Bob.

Bob

(big ass cheesy grin)

For parts...

Maureen

You're just like Dean.

Bob

I'll take your word for it.

Maureen

That's exactly what he'd say. Men just don't listen.

Bob

No we don't. We don't care at all.

Maureen

Did I ever tell you he put me in the hospital?

Bob

Yes. I'm quite sure you did.

Maureen

He put me in the gosh darn hospital Bob. Did I ask for that? I gave that man three of the best years of my life. Did I ask for that?

Bob

No Maureen I guess you didn't.

Maureen

I have a case pending against Cavalier Home Builders.

Bob

Really?

Maureen

Yes. Class-action suit.

Bob

(emotionless)

That's fantastic.

Maureen

You don't seem to care Bob.

Bob

About your home?

Maureen

Yes.

Bob

I didn't know you had a home. I thought it was the manufacturer...

Maureen

What?

Bob

It was the manufacturer who didn't care about your home.

Maureen

They don't. They still don't. They haven't returned any of my phone calls.

Bob

They're a bit cavalier?

Maureen

You could say that. I'm part of a class action suit.

Bob

Did the house not meet your needs?

Maureen

It met my needs.

Bob

So I guess the problem was really Dean, wasn't it Maureen?

Maureen

Yes, shortly after Dean, and I had bought the #6932 CR...

Bob

I'm not familiar with their products.

Maureen

2100 square feet.

Bob

Oh that's nice. That's big.

Maureen

Shortly after we bought the house, everything just changed with Dean and me. He used to love to dance. We used to go dancing every night, but little by little, he would spend more time at the bar than dancing with me. Then slowly he started staying home instead of going dancing.

Bob

(clearly impatient with this story)

And then he put you in the hospital.

Maureen

No! Not yet Bob, this story is much more subtle than that. He got very, very depressed, and he would sit around in an old pair of Winson Double-Wear Round-Toe socks, flipping channels with his RoomCommander XJ Universal Controller. Flip, flip. Flip, flip. He just kept flipping that 42" Skylark Zeeronie TV as though his life depended on it. Flip, flip. Flip, flip. I think the house made him mad.

Bob

So it was an evil house.

Maureen

Not the house. The way they're built.

Bob

Built on a burial ground?

Maureen

Who knows where it was built Bob. That's the scary part. I personally think it's the tires.

Bob

You had tires under your house?

Maureen

Yes.

Bob

Was your house built on a landfill?

Maureen

No, it's a manufactured house, silly.

Bob

(suddenly all the pieces click)

Ohh.

Maureen

I think the lack of a solid connection with planet earth made him crazy. The earth's life force radiating up to him through a pear of Greyback All-Year Radials transmuted him into a man obsessed with violence and hatred. As the tires decomposed underneath us, melting in the August heat, our love wilted above.

Bob

Or he could have been an alcoholic.

Maureen

We didn't have any problems until we bought the Cavalier #6932 CR.

Bob

Or the Winson Double-Wear Round-Toe socks.

Maureen

No you weirdo, he's always worn those.

Bob

So the house put you in the hospital?

Maureen

No, silly. I got in an argument with Dean about the sixth toe on my right foot, and he decided to cut it off with a pair of SwigglyPear Pinking Shears. ❖❖.

Bob

But you kept the left one?

Maureen

(exasperated)

I don't have a sixth toe on my left foot. Listen Bob, it's been really nice talking to you, but some of us work to do. Lots of paperwork before the quarterly meeting.

Bob

Oh. Right. Okay. I need a cigarette.

Maureen

When did you start smoking?

Bob

Pretty recently.

Maureen

It'll kill you....

(she wanders off)

Bob

Yeah. Not fast enough. Need a gun for that...

(Bob walks outside. Through the window, we can see the box. The window is closed, but that doesn't keep the box from talking to Bob. See, as it's a talking box it doesn't have to worry about things like the physics of sound waves)

The Box

Why do you stay here Bob?

Bob

What?

The Box

I realize that I'm endangering my stay on your desk by questioning, but why?

Bob

I don't know. It's what I do during the day.

The Box

Do you do anything interesting at night?

Bob

I play on my Blatox JS-400.

The Box

Your computer?

Bob

It's really fast. Much faster than the Crojac L2100s they have here.

The Box

That's it?

Bob

I talk to interesting people, chat with 'em. Online. Hang out with my friend Jordan. Learn useful new computer skills so that I can get away from this place.

The Box

And you're happy?

Bob

This is just my day job. I'm learning C Sharp.

The Box

And the night is satisfying?

Bob

What is your problem? When did you become my shrink? I didn't buy you for that purpose. They should have spent a little less time on the analysis features and spent more time on the numeric spleening.

The Box

I can't help it Bob, I'm a data modeler.

Bob

And I'm data?

The Box

See, Bob, CordiaTax 2040 comes out in two months. Now every year that program is a best seller. What I need to know Bob, is are you going to buy it?

Bob

Why would you ask that?

The Box

I model data on statistic probability.

Bob

I have to do my taxes.

The Box

Yes, but you could use a pencil.

Bob

But it's easier with my computer.

The Box

Why?

Bob

Why? Because it is.

The Box

Because the Box tells you so?

Bob

Oh, so that's what this is about?

The Box

I don't know. You tell me. Are you going to buy a copy of CordiaTax 2040? Would you perhaps like a copy of Big Game® Brand Lemur Hunter to go along with it?

Bob

I am not a Lemur Hunter buyer.

The Box

Oh, really Bob? I have strong corollary evidence. There are millions of other young males in the 18-24 demo just like yourself who own copies of CordiaTax 2040 and Big Game® Brand Lemur Hunter. Plus you work at a garden supply store.

Bob

A lawn sedan store! A lawn sedan store! I don't have to take this from some hastily assembled cardboard sides! Your mostly hot air anyway. You only have a CD and 4 page Qwik Start. ❓❓ Booklet inside.

(Lisa enters)

Lisa

Bob, calm down.

Bob

Don't tell me to calm down. I've had more than enough of this today!

Lisa

Yeah. I got fired.

Bob

Yeah. Sorry about that.

Lisa

It's okay. I'm still pissed. What are you doing out here, except yelling at a box of software through the window?

Bob

Smoke Break.

Lisa

Ahh...

Bob

Yeah. Can I bum a cigarette?

Lisa

I don't smoke.

Bob

Yeah. I don't either. I just have to get out of there three times a day. You know what I'm saying?

Lisa

Yeah.

The Box

Give up Bob. There is no chance that you'll score with this woman.

Bob

Shut up.

Lisa

Bob, calm down.

The Box

It just hasn't isn't happening statistically.

Bob

You don't know me at all!

Lisa

No I don't Bob.

Bob

Sorry, I just... It's been a rough day.

Lisa

Yeah, I know. I wish we could just blow this place up.

Bob

But, it's not the place it's the people.

Lisa

The place is pretty bad too...

Bob

I guess...

Lisa

I mean, not to insult your chosen profession, but no one needs a riding lawn mower.

Bob

That could be argued...

Lisa

No, if a push mower is not adequate then they should get a tractor. Pure and Simple. It's like those people who buy a Sport Utility Vehicle as a family car or an around town car. No one needs a Sport Utility Vehicle. They're the most ridiculous vehicles ever created. If you need to haul lumber, buy a truck. If you need to haul people buy a minivan. If you just need to drive around town buy an economy car. For some reason we have a lot of products in our country that serve no purpose whatsoever.

Bob

So the people and the establishment?

Lisa

They both have to go.

Maureen

(from inside)

Bob! Bob, can I talk to you?

Bob

I need to go talk to Maureen. She probably wants to talk to me about numeric spleening. You still going to be here when I get back? I mean are you waiting for your bus or...

Maureen

Bob! I really need to talk to you.

Lisa

My bus isn't due to arrive for another twenty minutes, so yeah. I'll probably be here.

Bob

(handing Lisa an imaginary cigarette)

Yeah, um would you hold on to my "cigarette" while I go talk to

Maureen?

Lisa

Sure. It'll be right here when you get back. Better hurry or it might
“burn out.”

Bob

I'll keep that in mind.

Maureen

Bob!

(Bob pops inside so that Maureen can talk to him)

Maureen

Bob did you see who's outside?

Bob

No who?

Maureen

That thief. That dirty Mexican thief is loitering outside our
dealership.

Bob

Yeah.

Maureen

You need to call the police Bob.

Bob

No I don't.

Maureen

Bob she's already stolen pens. Are you waiting for her to walk off with a lawn tractor?

Bob

No.

Maureen

Those aren't cheap Bob.

Bob

I know.

Maureen

Call the police Bob.

Bob

It's a bus stop Maureen.

Maureen

She's going to steal something Bob.

Bob

Maureen, you can't call the police on someone who's waiting at the bus stop.

Maureen

Well, do something Bob.

Bob

I've got an idea, how about I go out there and keep an eye on her.

Maureen

That's a good idea Bob. You should keep an eye on her. What is she doing at a bus stop?

Bob

She probably doesn't own a car.

Maureen

Don't be silly Bob, all Mexicans own cars. Who do you think buys all our old ones.

Bob

Then what is she doing at the bus stop?

Maureen

What all of them do at the bus stop Bob. She's selling drugs.

Bob

Ahhh... I'll watch out for that too.

Maureen

Good.

Bob

Okay.

Maureen

Thanks Bob.

Bob

Sure, I'm going outside now.

(Bob exits. Lisa is still waiting for the bus.)

Bob(cont.)

Your bus doesn't come very frequently.

Lisa

About the only people who come out here are people looking to buy a car. And most of them already have cars. There aren't a lot of busses out here.

Bob

Yeah. Busses never go where you need them to go.

Lisa

So...

Bob

Yup

Lisa

Rough day.

Bob

Yeah. And you?

Lisa

I can't complain. I'm not unemployed.

Bob

You're just saying that to make me feel better.

Lisa

Actually I'm not. I've already got a job lined up when I graduate, so I just have to go about 3 weeks without a job.

Bob

That's not too bad.

Lisa

Yeah.

The Box

Give up Bob!

Bob

Hey, did I talk to you?

The Box

I'm just telling you that women aren't into men who shout at inanimate objects.

Bob

You talked to me first!

The Box

Settle down Bob.

Lisa

Software talking back to you Bob?

Bob

Yeah, it's not really giving me the answers that I'm looking for.

The Box

She'll only hurt you Bob.

Bob

I'm trying to tune it out.

Lisa

That's good.

The Box

She'll break your heart. It always happens. Even if you get married she'll break your heart. It's in the cards statistically.

Bob

There's always a margin for error.

The Box

Margin of error is for people who don't want to admit that their statistics are too depressing to take at face value.

Lisa

You don't have to listen to that thing Bob. When you think about software there's always quite a bit of margin for error. I mean software is made from billions of lines of code typed in by someone by hand. Often in the middle of the night pumped up on Mountain Dew or [insert the name of a strong coffee drink served at the Hideout] currently served downstairs.

Bob

I know. He just seems to be right about so many things. He seems to have all the answers.

Lisa

Bob, he does have a lot of the answers. He can predict what Roger's going to do. That's a piece of cake to figure out. You don't need statistics. And we all know the path of Maureen's life. It's been lived a hundred times before. She'll find a duplicate of her ex-husband and get abused by him. Then she'll find another man worse than the last, and the pattern will repeat.

Bob

Software just seems so smart. I mean the people who made it are very smart. I mean, they're smarter than me. I work at a lawn sedan store.

Lisa

Ya know Bob, when I go into a store I don't like what the clothing tags say. I say that I'm a size 6. They insist on arguing with me that I'm actually a size 12.

Bob

Yeah.

Lisa

Ya gotta know how to put them in their place. And you gotta quit this job.

Bob

Yeah. (beat)Can I take you out to dinner?

Lisa

Thank God! Wow. I thought I was going to have to strip naked and start setting off fireworks.

Bob

Yeah, um sorry. So you really want to go to dinner?

Lisa

Yes.

Bob

Like really go out to dinner? With me.

(Lisa drags Bob onto her bus, and off stage)

Roger

(from inside the dealership)

Hey, where's Bob? I really need that analysis before tomorrow.

Maureen

I think he was just kidnapped by our “cleaning crew”.

Roger

Sure, okay as long as he's back for the meeting tomorrow morning. If he's not, his ass is grass.

(Maureen and Roger look at each other and start cackling wildly)

END SCENE II

SCENE III

The Box

Hey, Bob.

Bob

Hello.

The Box

You've hurt me Bob.

Bob

How so?

The Box

Last night. You and Lisa. That hurts.

Bob

Oh, so your statistics are not always correct?

The Box

No my statistics are always correct, you're just a margin of error.

Bob

Ahh...right.

The Box

A free radical. One who marches to the beat of a different drummer.

Bob

I could have told you that.

The Box

The type of boy-child that women like Lisa finds irresistible for all the wrong reasons.

Bob

Hey.

The Box

So what's next Bob?

Bob

Umm... We're going to get coffee tonight?

The Box

No, what's next? Statistically once you've broken out of the statistics you're ten times more likely to perform some sort of "fringe action". You might get hooked on drugs, become a serial killer, or blow up the world trade center. So I have to ask Bob, what's next?

Bob

I'm going to get some coffee, and then I think I'll quit

(he walks out into the common area and pours himself a cup of coffee. Noticing that Roger's not there he walks into Roger's office. He pulls the power plug on Roger's computer. He comes out a couple seconds later. Maureen walks in the front door.)

Maureen

Hey Bob. You have a good night last night?

Bob

Yup.

Maureen

That's good. I went and saw a movie.

Bob

Really?

Maureen

Yeah, you know that one that just came out.

Bob

Sure.

Maureen

It was really funny. And sad. Both at the same time. Very good. I especially liked all the car chases. And there was this one part with this monkey, and he was talking to Kevin Costner who was his sidekick, and he's like, "Not so fast bucko!" To Kevin Costner!

(Maureen is laughing at how funny this all is)

Bob

Can't wait to see it.

(Roger enters)

Roger

Good morning everyone! What a great day to be alive.

Maureen

I finally saw that movie last night!

Roger

(points his finger at her like a gun and pulls the “trigger”)

Not so fast Bucko!

(they both laugh like hyenas)

Roger(cont.)

Good morning Bob.

Bob

Morning Roger.

(They all go into their offices. We wait a moment.)

Roger

Uh, Bob?

Bob

Working on that analysis Roger.

Roger

Yeah, um... can you come in here a second?

Bob

Can this wait a minute? I'm really trying to finish this analysis by lunch.

Roger

Yeah, um, this is pretty urgent Bob.

(Bob walks out of his office and into Rogers)

Bob

What's up?

Roger

Well, I may just be stupid, but I'm pushing the power button and

nothing's happening.

Bob

Power's probably out.

Roger

That's what I was thinking.

Bob

Yeah that's probably the problem.

Roger

I guess I'll just work the "old fashioned" way, eh Bob?

Bob

(exiting)

It'll be difficult for ya Roger.

Roger

Hey Maureen?

Maureen

(poking her head in the door)

Yeah Roger?

Roger

The power's out so you'll have to phone in all your credit checks by hand today.

Maureen

Oh, okay, should we call the power company?

Roger

Bob'll handle that.

Maureen

Okay, just let me know when I can start using the credi-spectometer again.

Roger

Don't forget the big meeting at 11am.

Maureen

I won't.

Roger

Bob, big meeting at 11am.

Bob

(from off)

I'll have the report done by then Roger.

Roger

Ya know Maureen, sometimes I think we should give that boy a raise. He does such a great job around here.

Maureen

That he does. Top seller. I'm just glad he escaped his Mexican captors.

(back to Bob's office)

The Box

Didn't do it, eh Bob?

Bob

Not the right time.

You may want to reconsider your actions Bob. That may not be the best way to fulfill your goals.

Bob

Now we're talking about goal fulfillment? Since you're so smart, can you answer a question that's always plagued me?

The Box

Sure.

Bob

What color is my parachute?

The Box

Taupe. I'm just saying that once you move out of the track of statistical success, you often make mistakes.

Bob

My parachute is not Taupe. And who decides that it's a mistake?

The Box

The programmers.

Bob

That's what I thought. What if I make a good mistake, something they haven't thought of?

The Box

I'd die.

Bob

Of embarrassment?

The Box

No a fatal program operation error.

Bob

Ahh...

Roger

Hey Bob, Maureen? We're ready for that meeting.

The Box

Good luck.

Bob

Thanks.

The Box

Don't do anything rash.

Bob

Don't worry about me. You'll just make yourself crash.

(Bob exits his office, and walks into the conference room. Maureen and Roger are assembled at one end of the table. Georges and Elaine are at the other end. They are corporate. Very corporate. Although they probably also bear a striking resemblance to Chee Chee and Fee Fee.)

Roger

Did you manage to get that analysis Bob?

Bob

Yes sir.

Roger

We've been having power problems all day.

(Roger and Maureen laugh like nervous hyenas)

Georges

Hmm...

(Georges looks up at the lights)

Georges(cont.)

Well Bob, my name is Georges and this is my executive assistant Elaine.

Bob

Hello.

Georges

The reason we're here today is to brainstorm about the future of

Roger Klinke's Cutting World as part of the GrassCut.com retail establishment family. As you know dot-coms have taken quite a beating in the stock market lately so, we're having to cinch our belts a notch tighter and look for ways to pinch every penny.

Roger

We're right behind you Georges.

Georges

As the number 3 lawn sedan dealership in the South-Western United States market, we've decided to come and find out what you think is the secret to your success in selling the big ticket tractors. Roger?

Roger

Thanks, Georges. Bob will be delivering the economic details on my behalf. Bob.

Bob

Uh, thanks, um... Georges, Elaine. Currently Roger Klinke's Cutting World is number three in Southwestern sales. Currently each sale we make requires two people. It requires a sales person to actually talk to the customer and help them fill out the paperwork, and it requires an accountant to verify that the paperwork is legal. Currently at Roger Klinke's Cutting World, we have two people employed as sales personnel, and a part-time accountant. So we are adequately filling those requirements. The sales are directly attributable to the skill of the salespeople when selling.

Georges

So, Roger, I realize that this is a very difficult question, but if you were to somehow lower costs, without lowering the quality of your sales department, how would you do it?

Roger

Let me pass that question over to Bob.

Bob

Uh, I think I should pass that one back over to Roger. He's the owner and...

Roger

Bob, you're the number guy around here. You understand how the entire dealership works.

Bob

I, umm... I'm not really... uh...

Roger

You, know, you've always got ideas Bob, just let 'em loose.

Bob

I guess the best way to “trim the fat” so to speak, would be to minimize extra costs...

Roger

Brilliant Bob, keep 'em coming.

Georges

Such as?

Bob

Supplies and, um... Employees. But mostly we have too many supplies. We buy far too many pens.

Roger

Bob. Supplies are small potatoes.

Georges

So you said that you just needed a Salesperson and a part-time accountant. How does everyone in this room fit into this picture?

Bob

Umm... well I guess I should...

Roger

You're definitely in, you sold all but two of the lawn sedans we sold last year. And between you and me Georges, those two were only sold so that I could keep my GrassCut.com salesman certificate. The commission check went to Bob, under the table, if you get what I'm saying.

Maureen

(sensing her job is on the line)

We did fire that Mexican girl yesterday. That'll save us a little bit of money in the short-term.

Georges

I guess I need to ask you again Bob, where do you see each of the people in this room going with this company?

Bob

I guess, um that as far as the picture that I've painted, well, we don't really need Maureen. But, um we do need a janitor. So I guess she could have that job if she wanted. I mean there's really not enough paperwork in selling a lawn sedan to have an employee devoted to that task. As a part time employee she would cost the company significantly less per year. As far as Roger is concerned, perhaps you should give him his retirement package now. He would cost the company far less with a set monthly income, playing golf far away from the office environment.

Georges

So I guess we just need to ask where this puts you Bob.

Bob

I should probably be replaced. I mean, I was thinking about quitting.

Georges

Nonsense. It sounds like you're the best thing the company has going for it. Let's implement Bob's plan. Maureen you'll be offered either a nice severance package or first crack at applying for the position of sanitation and sterilization manager, and Roger you'll be given your retirement package early. Bob you'll be managing the dealership and be head of sales. Feel free to add another sales person if you think it will have a direct effect on sales. That's about it. Does anyone have any questions?

(nothing. Roger's smiling from ear to ear. Maureen's

scowling, and Bob is looking very frightened.)

Georges(cont.)

Okay then. Let's start implementing those changes. Elaine, action item to schedule a follow up appointment with Bob in one month time to see how the changes have affected the strategy. Thanks everyone for your help.

(Georges and Elaine exit)

Roger

Wow, retiring at 45. That's great. I'll have so much free time...

Maureen

This is all about Lisa, isn't it Bob?

Roger

I can play golf all day.

Maureen

If you liked her, you could have just told me. You could have just paid me back for all the pens your Mexican girlfriend stole.

Roger

My wife and I can finally buy that house in Arizona.

Maureen

You didn't have to get me demoted for that ungrateful little klepto.

Bob

Listen, not to be rude, but I need both of you to be out of the office by close of business today. Thanks.

(Bob walks out of the room, leaving a babbling Roger, and a stewing Maureen. Bob walks into his office)

The Box

How'd it go?

Bob

I got promoted.

The Box

Do you mind if I remove you from my database Bob? You're wreaking havoc on my averages.

Bob

Sure.

The Box

Just put me in Roger's box as he leaves the building. I'll have no

trouble spleening his numbers.

Bob

(Confidently)

Not a problem. I'm think I'm going call Lisa and see if she'd like to go out to lunch with me. Do you think that's too forward of me? Do you think I'm calling her too much.

The Box

Bob, I don't analyze that kind of data.

Bob

Right. I'm calling Lisa.

(Bob starts to pick up his phone. As he does so he notices Chee Chee through the window walking up with a horribly sad expression on his face. He holds only the steering wheel to his lawn sedan in his hand.)

Chee Chee

Uh, Bob, we have to talk about my warranty.

The Box by Timothy Thomas

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