

**BLACK AND WHITE**

written by

Billiam Coronel

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Tom Spriggs  
The Coronel Group  
(310) 689-7320

ACT ONE

**EXT. ERNEST AVE - LAST THURSDAY MORNING**

BLACK & WHITE:

NOTE: ALL BLACK AND WHITE FOOTAGE IS SHOT TO RESEMBLE  
MOVIETONE NEWSREELS FROM THE 1950s, WHEN LIFE WAS INNOCENT  
AND PEOPLE STROVE TO BE GOOD CITIZENS.

A nice residential street in PRESENT DAY America.

NARRATOR

Welcome to Ernest Avenue. Sure is a  
nice block, isn't it? Who wouldn't  
want to live on this tree-lined  
avenue with its manicured lawns and  
coats of fresh paint?

The camera stops in front of a two-story house.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

This is the Topper household where  
Jack and his wife Sally are raising  
their family. No, the Toppers  
aren't rich. But Jack wanted an  
extra nice house. He knows that  
first impressions are important and  
shopped around until he found a  
qualified licensed realtor who was  
able to get them a low rate on a No  
Points, Thirty-Year Fixed so they  
could afford this one. Let's meet  
the family, shall we?

FADE TO COLOR:

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

SALLY TOPPER (mid-40s) enters with a large tray of food.  
CINDY TOPPER (16) is already seated.

CINDY

I'm not hungry.

SALLY

What do you mean you're not hungry?

CINDY

It means I'm hungry except for the  
part about being hungry.

SALLY  
Honey, listen to me. Breakfast is  
the most important meal of the  
day...

As Sally talks the camera looks around the room...

NARRATOR  
Hold on a sec, where's the man of  
the house?

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

JACK TOPPER (40s) shaves in front of the mirror.

NARRATOR  
There he is. At the advertising  
company where Jack's employed,  
beards and unruly hairstyles are  
frowned upon. Jack doesn't mind. He  
knows that appearing well-groomed  
is an investment in himself.  
Promotions to Account Manager come  
quickest to those who look like  
Management material.

**INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER**

Jack, dressed in a suit, enters and kisses Sally.

JACK  
Good morning. Yum! Bacon!

SALLY  
(slapping his hand away)  
That's not for you, Mr. 247  
Cholesterol Count.

When Sally looks away Jack sneaks some bacon anyway.

JACK  
(to Cindy)  
How come you're not eating?

CINDY  
Cute boys hate girls who are fat.

SALLY  
(decoding)  
Her school dance is next week.

NARRATOR

Jack's instinct is to tell his daughter to eat but, according to his employer's latest in-house research, Cindy is right. Being a man of logic, Jack goes with the proven.

Jack doesn't say anything.

SALLY

(yelling upstairs)

Billy! Breakfast!

(to Jack)

What can a ten year-old boy possibly do in a bathroom for so long?

(to Cindy)

Run upstairs and get your brother.

CINDY

I'm eating.

BILLY TOPPER (10) finally enters, dressed for school. He sees the large breakfast laid out on the table.

BILLY

Can I have cereal? I only need two more box-tops to get Superman.

SALLY

We don't have money to waste on dolls.

JACK

Don't tell people we don't have money!

SALLY

People? He's our son!

JACK

The first rule of getting ahead is to give the impression you're already ahead. That includes what you say.

SALLY

(again)

He's our son!

BILLY

They're not dolls. They're action figures. And besides, they're free.

SALLY  
(knowing)  
No shipping and handling?

BILLY  
That's for the Post Office! That  
doesn't count. Cereal people don't  
get anything.

JACK  
Don't be naive, Son. They get  
something.

BLACK & WHITE:

FOOTAGE of bright-eyed kids eating cereal, smiling mailroom  
workers opening envelopes, a cereal factory...whatever fits.

NARRATOR  
Jack explains that hundreds of  
excited kids send in box-tops with  
their names and addresses from  
around the country and neighboring  
Canada. These are then sold to  
other reputable companies so they  
can mail out valuable coupons  
touting their sugar-filled  
products. It's called a marketing  
gimmick and it helps the economy  
grow. COLOR: BACK TO SCENE

JACK  
And the best part is, you already  
enjoy the cereal. This marketing  
gimmick is a win-win situation all  
around!

Sally can't help but smile. Jack sure is smart.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(checking watch)  
Oh my! New car leaves in one  
minute.

They gather their stuff to leave...

SALLY  
What about breakfast? There's kids  
starving in China.

JACK

Honey, come promotion time,  
Management will give more weight to  
my on-time record than how many  
Chinese I saved.

Sally can't argue with that.

**EXT. FRONT PORCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Billy and Jack cross to the car. Next door is JOHN SMITH (55,  
dark-haired, very Italian) in a robe, watering his lawn.

BILLY

Hi, Mister Smith.

John waves back.

NARRATOR

That's neighbor John Smith.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He recently moved here in the  
middle of the night and found a job  
as a nighttime businessman. This  
leaves his days free to do the  
things he enjoys, like watering his  
lawn and driving to the corner to  
make phone calls.

Sally waves as Jack and Billy back down the driveway.

SALLY

Good luck with your presentation to  
Mr. Anderson! Knock him dead!

**INT. JACK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Billy plays with the windows as Jack drives.

BILLY

Dad, how come Mom hates this new  
car?

JACK

She doesn't hate it, Billy. Mom  
just feels I should've waited to  
lease it until after I got a  
promotion. Normally she's a smart  
woman but when it comes to  
purchasing leverage your old man  
knows better.

BLACK & WHITE:

FOOTAGE of a car lot with colored flag banners, hungry salesmen, "LOW MILEAGE" on windshields...

NARRATOR

Jack explains that automotive dealerships dump inventory at the end of the year to make room for new models. By taking advantage of this trade secret, informed consumers like Jack can save money. Lots of money. It has to do with something called inventory flow...

COLOR: BACK TO SCENE - WIDE SHOT

We see the car drive past.

BILLY (V.O.)

Gee Dad, you sure know about cars.

**EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Cindy is walking to school with her friend STACY.

STACY

I made a list of cute guys we should try and be seen with at the dance.

CINDY

(looking)

Nobody in our grade?

STACY

You don't dance with guys from your own grade!

CINDY

(beat)

I knew that. I was kidding.

STACY

Oh, about lunch--only three Tic-Tacs from now 'til the dance. No more. And no less either. Otherwise there won't be enough in your stomach when you throw up.

Cindy nods and listens intently to her "coach."

**EXT. MUTSON AND SLOAN PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER**

Jack, now minus Billy, pulls into the parking lot.

BLACK & WHITE:  
 FOOTAGE of offices, people holding meetings, publicity  
 photos...

NARRATOR

This is where Jack works -- Mutson  
 & Sloan Advertising Worldwide,  
 where men of Science help  
 responsible corporations sell an  
 ever-widening range of goods to the  
 informed consumer. Psst. Wanna know  
 a secret? The company isn't  
 worldwide. They just put that on  
 the letterhead so John and Joan Q  
 Public will perceive them as such.  
 And what's wrong with that? This is  
 Advertising. Impressions are  
 everything. COLOR:

**INT. MUTSON & SLOAN HALLWAY- SHORT TIME LATER**

Jack walks down the busy hall, waving to co-workers.

JACK

Whatdoya know, Larry?.. Hey Sam,  
 how's everything in Personnel?

NARRATOR

Yes sir, Jack knows everyone and  
 everyone knows Jack. He always  
 finds time to connect with his co-  
 workers.

The co-worker says something and they both laugh.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Sharing a laugh lets people know  
 you find them witty and enjoy their  
 company.

Jack reaches his outer office, passing by ELLEN (25 and big-  
 breasted) wearing a tight top.

JACK

Good morning, Ellen.

NARRATOR

Ellen is Jack's helpful and yes,  
 well- endowed, secretary. Few  
 employers hire buxom assistants  
 anymore for fear that talk around  
 the water-cooler would suggest they  
 were hired for reasons other than  
 skills in the steno pool.



**INT. JACK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Jack is now in his office, settling in.

NARRATOR

But not Jack. He hired Ellen because he felt sorry for her, being a potential victim of reverse discrimination.

Jack peeks though the door-crack at Ellen's chest. He then catches himself. He shouldn't be eyeing her like that and forces himself to turn away.

**INT. BILLY'S SCHOOL HALLWAY - BETWEEN CLASSES**

Billy and his friend ROBERT stand by Robert's locker.

ROBERT

So you know how all concert albums are in stereo?

A CUTE GIRL walks by grabbing Billy's attention...

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Check this out -- I found it a The Record Barn. U2 in Dolby Digital Surround. It must be an import-- Hello?

BILLY

(refocusing)

What? I'm listening.

ROBERT

Why don't you just marry her?

BILLY

Why don't you?

ROBERT

If you really liked her you'd pull her hair. That's how you show a girl you like her.

BILLY

My dad said pulling hair is wrong.

ROBERT

Fraidy-cat.

Robert closes his locker and exits.

**INT. DEN - LATER THAT MORNING**

Sally sits in front of the family computer.

NARRATOR

Thanks to the miracle of Plastics, the breakfast leftovers are safely stored away leaving Sally time for some personal reflection. Although Jack is a good husband, Sally feels he's usually so busy figuring out how to impress others that he sometimes takes her for granted. Luckily there's Ebay.

BLACK & WHITE:

FOOTAGE of people using computers at home.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The Internet's premiere auction site, Ebay allows computer savvy housewives, agoraphobics and shut-ins to shop at home. Knowing neglected homemakers would be a among their users, Ebay's forward-thinking creators made it so other parties can leave feedback. COLOR: BACK TO PRESENT

Sally browses her feedback and smiles proudly.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Currently Sally's feedback file contains thirty-four entries. All positive! Go ahead and smile, Sally. People really do appreciate you.

**INT. JACK'S OFFICE - ONE HOUR LATER**

Jack just finished practicing his presentation in front of PETER, a co-worker.

PETER

It's great. But you know what I'd do? I'd add in this slide at the end.

Peter puts in a slide of a sexy woman in a bikini.

PETER (CONT'D)

Tell Anderson you'll give him one digit of her phone number for each new order.

They both LAUGH when suddenly the boss enters.

JACK  
Mr. Mutson!

MUTSON  
Hello, Jack. Peter. The Anderson  
presentation starts in ten minutes.  
Just stopped by to wish you luck.  
(noticing slide; shocked)  
Hey!! That's my sister!!

Jack and Peter freeze! Beat.

MUTSON (CONT'D)  
Gotcha!!

Mutson and Peter LAUGH. Jack joins in.

NARRATOR  
The joke was on him but Jack laughs  
also. He wants Mutson to know he  
finds him witty and enjoys his  
company.

MUTSON  
That slide is great. You should  
say, "Oops! How'd that get in?"  
Anderson's gonna love it.

JACK  
We were just fooling around. I'm  
not gonna include that in the  
presentation.

MUTSON  
Why not? It's funny. Leave it in.

JACK  
(uh oh)  
Uh..well...I'm not sure it would be  
appropriate in a business  
environment.

MUTSON  
(exiting)  
I'm the boss but you know better.  
Okay, fine. Your call.

Jack is worried. He has to put it in now, right?

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTER LUNCH**

Billy is seated in front of the Principal's desk.

NARRATOR

Uh oh! Looks like Billy took the wrong moral path and earned his way to the Principal's office.

PRINCIPAL

Pulling hair is a serious offense, Son. I have no choice but to expel you.

BILLY

What?!

PRINCIPAL

Touching a girl in any way can be seen as sexual harassment.

BILLY

But I didn't hurt her!

PRINCIPAL

It's not what you did, Son, it's what you might do now. Every rapist once pulled a girl's hair. We have a zero tolerance policy so we have to do what we said we'd do even when it's obviously wrong. Rules are rules.

The principal stands. This meeting is over.

NARRATOR

Sorry Billy, but in a representative republic, all citizens must follow the rules. I guess we learned a lesson today, didn't we?

**INT. OFFICE MEETING ROOM - MOMENT'S LATER**

Jack is ending of his presentation.

JACK

(hesitant)

And finally, for each order you place...

Jack goes to the next slide. Ellen suddenly enters.

ELLEN

Mr. Topper? The school just called. Your son's kicked out for sexual harassment!

Silence. Anderson's face registers disgust. He then sees the bikini slide. He's now more disgusted.

JACK  
(weak chuckle)  
Oops. How'd that get in there?

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

**INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

ATTORNEY

Let's see if I've been paying attention. Your son allegedly pulled someone's hair.

JACK

Right. A girl in his class.

ATTORNEY

Alleged girl. And that's it? He's kicked out for sexual harassment?

JACK

Exactly. The punishment's way out of proportion to the crime.

SALLY

We were hoping you can make 'em reconsider. Write a letter or something.

ATTORNEY

Sure. I could write a letter, get your son back in.

CLOSE UP on their shiny new car outside the window.

CLOSE UP of the Topper's fancy address on notepad.

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

But then what? The next "Billy" suffers the same fate. We need to sue the entire school system. Rebalance the basic fairness of American education.

(grabbing paper)

I'm going to write down a number. This is only an estimate. The final cost will definitely be more.

The Toppers look - their eyes bug out!

SALLY

We better go with just the letter. Money is a bit of an issue.

Jack shoots her a look -- don't tell strangers our personal finances!

JACK  
 (damage control)  
 It's not that we don't have money.  
 We do. Lots. It's just--

ATTORNEY  
 (playing him)  
 You want to spend it wisely. Being  
 that you already have so much.

JACK  
 Exactly.

ATTORNEY  
 Better go the letter route. This  
 other way could get you promoted  
 and you'd have even more money to  
 worry about.

JACK  
 How's that?

SALLY  
 Jack...

JACK  
 Honey! We should hear him out.

ATTORNEY  
 Well, I imagine your boss reads the  
 newspaper. Maybe there's a story on  
 the front page: "Jack Topper, proud  
 employee of..  
 (checks notepad)  
 Mutson and Sloan. Mr. Topper  
 could've taken the easy route to  
 help his son but instead this  
 dedicated employee of Mutson and  
 Sloan decided to fight for  
 everyone."

ZOOM INTO JACK'S THOUGHTS...

**INT. MUTSON & SLOAN HALLWAY**

Mutson and Jack stand in front of his new door: "Jack Topper  
 - Accounts Manager / Hero"

MUTSON  
 Topper, you did the company proud.  
 How could I not promote you?

BACK TO SCENE

JACK  
(shaking attorney's hand)  
Sue the school system.

Sally shakes her head in frustration.

**INT. MUTSON & SLOAN HALLWAY - NEXT MORNING**

Jack walks toward Mutson's office as we hear...

NARRATOR  
Is that a spring in Jack's step?  
You bet it is! Last night Sally  
suggested via the withholding of  
her wifely duties that Jack ask his  
boss for a promotion straight out.  
It's their only option to somehow  
pay the lawyer Jack insisted on  
hiring. So why's Jack so happy?  
Because it's not easy to get a  
meeting with Mr. Mutson on short  
notice. But get this -- there was a  
message on Jack's desk this morning  
that Mutson wished to see him  
immediately. How convenient! Things  
certainly have a way of working  
out.

**INT. MUTSON'S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Jack enters. The SECRETARY waves him through.

SECRETARY  
He's expecting you.

Before entering...

NARRATOR  
Jack checks his breath. He knows  
employees prefer to interact with  
those who exhibit good oral  
hygiene. Although this in-house  
research was done on salaried  
employees, Jack assumes the human  
nature of Management is no  
exception.

**INT. MUTSON'S OFFICE - MOMENT LATER**

Jack enters. Mutson is in a bad mood so Jack decides to  
lighten up the mood...



JACK  
 'Morning Sir. I heard a good joke  
 on the way over. Why'd the chicken  
 cross the road? To prove he wasn't  
 chicken.

Jack laughs but Mutson just stares, totally unamused.

NARRATOR  
 Sharing a laugh lets people know  
 you find them witty and enjoy their  
 company.

MUTSON  
 We lost the Anderson Account.

JACK  
 What?!

MUTSON  
 He says he won't do business with  
 companies that employ perverts.

JACK  
 Perverts?! We're not--

MUTSON  
 He also took offense to that girlie  
 slide. What were you thinking  
 there?

JACK  
 (flabbergasted)  
 You told me to do that!

MUTSON  
 I said it was your call. Jeez,  
 Topper! Take some responsibility.  
 Fix this. You hear me? You fix  
 this!

**INT. JACK'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER**

JACK  
 (into phone)  
 Jack Topper calling for Mr.  
 Anderson...

ELLEN  
 Wow! He was our most valuable  
 client. And now he's gone, all  
 because of you?

He shoots her a look.

NARRATOR

Proper etiquette states it's never acceptable to hit a woman. Even one who interrupts important meetings with damaging news of a sexual nature.

ELLEN

This is definitely gonna be a black mark on your record here.

NARRATOR

And then unwittingly pours gas on the resulting fire. Many bosses would dismiss their assistants for this. But not Jack.

CLOSE UP on Ellen's tightly-sweatered breasts.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Being a man with compassion, he finds it in his heart to let her stay.

JACK

(then; into phone)

I know he doesn't want to talk to me. That's why I'm calling...  
Hello?

Jack slams down the phone.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, there goes my promotion. This sucks! We can barely afford our car. How are we supposed to pay for a big legal defense on top of that?

ELLEN

Maybe the lawyer will lower his fee.

**INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

We see the lawyer on the phone, LAUGHING wildly.

**INT. TOPPER KITCHEN - THAT EVENING**

Sally prepares dinner.

NARRATOR

Do you know dinner is the second most important meal of the day?  
Sally does.

BLACK & WHITE:

GRAPHIC OF FOOD PYRAMID

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Nourishing meals are constructed by  
rules illustrated in the  
Nutritional Food Pyramid. At the  
base are whole grains--

SFX: DOOR SLAM

COLOR:

SLAM CUT BACK TO SCENE

Jack enters and stares at Sally.

SALLY

(excited)

How'd it go with Mutson?

JACK

Our savings account is almost  
empty. Know anything about that?

SALLY

I bought a couple hats on Ebay.  
Why?

JACK

How can you empty our savings  
account without telling me?

SALLY

There wasn't a lot in it--

(realizing)

He said no, didn't he? There's no  
promotion?

(before Jack can speak)

Great work, Jack. I knew your  
spending was gonna catch up to us.  
First a house we can't afford, then  
a car--

JACK

Those are investments--

SALLY

Yeah, yeah, I know. They tell the  
world we're a family of winners.  
When they go looking for Account  
Manager material we better hope  
they're sniffing around Bankruptcy  
Court.

JACK

Can we stay on topic? How are we gonna pay for the lawyer now that you've drained our savings?

SALLY

You mean the lawyer you shouldn't have hired in the first place? You know your problem, Jack? You think we have a unlimited line of credit. "Once I get the promotion. Once I get the promotion..." Well guess what, Jack? The bill's now due and there's no promotion. We're screwed and it's your fault. Your little plan hasn't worked, has it?--

JACK

I got it!! Okay? I got the promotion.

Beat. Suddenly it's all better.

NARRATOR

Jack knows fibbery is wrong but experts in problem resolution suggest it's best to deal with one issue at a time. Jack makes a mental note to clarify the exact status of his promotion at a later date.

SALLY

Why didn't say that before?

JACK

It's gonna take a while before it clicks in. Some..accounting thing so I didn't want to say anything.

SALLY

This is great! How much?

JACK

I..don't remember.  
(off her look)  
There was a lot of excitement, okay? All I remember is they said it could take weeks. Maybe months. Right now we should just worry about the lawyer.

SALLY

We can borrow from our IRAs. Pay it back when the raise comes.

BLACK & WHITE:

Banks, people depositing money...

NARRATOR

Individual Retirement Accounts, are government sanctioned savings vehicles that accrue interest tax-free until retirement age. Unfortunately they carry a large penalty for early withdrawal. For this reason, Congress approved a variation called the ROTH IRA which does allow for penalty-free borrowing. COLOR: BACK TO SCENE

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Good thing Jack converted their IRAs to Roths like Sally told him to.

Jack looks worried.

**INT. CINDY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Cindy lies on her bed reading.

NARRATOR

Knowing education is the key to success, Cindy busies herself with homework.

She flips the page. It's a magazine.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

INTERCUT with STACY at the mall.

STACY

Get over here. There's like a ton of guys in the mall parking lot. If they don't see you hang out they'll think you don't like hanging out.

CINDY

I have to study.

STACY

You think Gordon Tetterman's gonna ask you to dance 'cause you did well on the English midterm? He needs to see how hot you look.

Cindy considers this.

CINDY

I'll be right there.

Cindy puts on her shoes and sneaks out the window.

**INT. DEN - EARLY EVENING**

Jack sits at the table covered with papers. He's on the phone.

PHONE (O.S.)

If you're calling about our five cents a minute rate, press one.

Jack presses one and waits.

NARRATOR

Jack pours over the family budget looking to pare down expenses. Caring husbands are willing to take these secretive steps to save their wives from financial worry. Not finding any savings in the gas or electric bill, Jack has moved on to the telephone.

BLACK & WHITE:

SIMPLE MATH GRAPHIC:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A few cents savings isn't much but, according to the laws of Addition and Subtraction, small amounts when added together become large amounts. COLOR: BACK TO SCENE

PHONE (V.O.)

If you live in America, press one.

Jack does and continues to wait.

PHONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you want your bill printed on yellow paper, press one.

Jack, impatient and frustrated, does and waits.

**INT. DINING ROOM - DINNER TIME**

The entire family is eating dinner in silence.

NARRATOR

The evening meal is a time for members of the family to reconnect and discuss group concerns and interests. Perhaps debate current events.

Still no talking. Finally...

JACK

Okay, here's the deal. We need to pay the lawyer so, starting now, no more spending money on anything until further notice.

SALLY

(realizing)

You didn't convert the IRAS, did you?

Jack doesn't answer.

CINDY

I need a new dress for the dance.

(Jack shrugs)

That's not fair? I have to suffer 'cause of Billy? Can't we just sell his kidneys or something?

BILLY

How about we sell your stupid head?

CINDY

Good one.

JACK

We're a family. Family members make sacrifices. Let's remember that Billy's not to blame here. The real culprit is today's litigious society. Our sacrifices to hire this lawyer are not only to protect Billy's rights but that rights of all Americans.

SALLY  
 (knowing)  
 And not because it might get us in  
 the paper?

JACK  
 Fine. Be cynical.

After a beat...

SALLY  
 (getting idea)  
 I know what we can do.

JACK  
 I already said what we're gonna do.

SALLY  
 We only need enough cash to pay the  
 lawyer's retainer until your raise  
 kicks in, right?

JACK  
 Who knows when that's gonna be?  
 What with the paperwork.. Could be  
 months--

SALLY  
 I say we do what white people in  
 need of quick cash have done for  
 decades.

JACK  
 Kidnap some rich kid?

CINDY / BILLY  
 (realizing)  
 Garage sale!!

SALLY  
 We can finally clean out that  
 garage. Get rid of some of those  
 lawn mowers, that old motorcycle--

JACK  
 Whoa! We're not selling that!

SALLY  
 When was the last time you even  
 rode that thing? Five years ago?

JACK  
 That's not the point. It's a  
 classic--



SALLY

What happened to sacrificing for family?

JACK

Honey, they only made eight-thousand of those models--

SALLY

Jack! You want a motorcycle when your raise gets here, we'll buy you a new one. In the meantime, we're gonna have a little fun.

(to kids)

Garage sale this weekend.

The kids jump up and down excitedly as Jack mopes at the situation he's gotten himself into.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

BLACK & WHITE:

FOOTAGE of upbeat, crowded garage sales around the country...

NARRATOR

The garage sale! Is any event more American? Aside from county fairs, beauty pageants and pancake breakfasts.

FOOTAGE of people making signs and hanging them.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Using nontoxic markers, family members and recruited friends create attention- getting signs readable from vehicles moving at the standard speed of 35 miles per hour. Check with your local Department of Motor Vehicles for speed limits in your area.

FOOTAGE of various garage sales in progress.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Once buyers arrive the work isn't over. Uncomfortable situations arise when browsers are quoted different amounts for the same item. The goal is to create a pleasant experience so some families find it helpful to elect a Price Captain whose decision is final. COLOR:

**INT. TOPPER FRONT LAWN AND DRIVEWAY**

People are buying and browsing at the Toppers.

NARRATOR

Some items go fast--Sally's old non-stick cookware and Jack's classic 1972 motorcycle.

Jack weeps as a buyer pays Sally a few hundred dollars and rolls the cycle away. Then Jack notices.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 Not to mention his stack of  
 collector Playboys, years 83 thru  
 87.

Jack will not have this! He grabs them away from a customer,  
 puts them back into the box and defiantly heads to store them  
 away again, Sally be damned.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)  
 Other items are slower to start  
 bidding wars such as Billy's box of  
 dirt rocks. A good Price Captain  
 will notice these dips in consumer  
 interest and lower prices  
 according. But not too much!  
 Wouldn't want to sell something for  
 less than it's worth.

We see Cindy and a BOY return from the backyard. He hands her  
 a dollar. She keeps her hand out waiting for more. The boy  
 hands over an additional dollar and exits.

REVEAL a line of boys. The next one takes Cindy's hand and  
 goes with her into the backyard.

**INT. DRIVEWAY - END OF DAY**

The sale is over. Sally counts the day's take.

SALLY  
 (told you so; to Jack)  
 Seven hundred and forty-five  
 dollars. More than enough.

Jack forces a smile.

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - LATER**

Jack pulls up in the new car. He parks and walks across the  
 lot toward the showroom. A SALESPERSON intercepts him.

SALESMAN  
 Welcome to EZ Auto Sales. Will this  
 car be for you or a loved on?

Jack ignores him and keeps walking.

SALESMAN (CONT'D)  
 Perhaps you'd like to hear about  
 our factory options and available  
 financing?

Jack keeps walking.

**INT. SALES FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Jack walks up to the RECEPTIONIST.

JACK  
Is the manager around?

RECEPTIONIST  
I'll call him. There's coffee and donuts over there while you wait.

BLACK AND WHITE:  
The busy sales floors of various car dealerships

NARRATOR  
By offering refreshments, a receptionist does her part to help create a carefree, relaxed atmosphere. When all the members of the employment roster do their part, customers are more susceptible to high-profit add-ons such as rust proofing and extended tire warranties.

COLOR:

BACK TO SCENE

MANAGER  
Hello, Sir. What can I do for you?

NARRATOR  
Notice how polite the manager is? He knows that customers who are treated politely are more apt to return to purchase additional quality vehicles in the future.

JACK  
I leased a car here last week. I'd like to exchange it for a cheaper one.

MANAGER  
Yo no entiendo lo que usted dice.

JACK  
Excuse me? I don't speak Spanish.

MANAGER  
Yo no entiendo lo que usted dice.

Confused, Jack turns to the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

Schauen Sie mich nicht an. Ich kann Ihnen nicht helfen.

JACK

What is that, German? Oh, I get it. Suddenly nobody here speaks English. Is that it?

**EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER**

Jack walks back to his car examining the small print in his lease contract. He's obviously pissed.

NARRATOR

Jack feels no animosity toward the dealership. Rules are rules after all. The lease clearly states the vehicle must be kept three years and, sure enough, nowhere is it specified they couldn't change languages.

**INT. BAR - A FEW HOURS LATER**

Jack is shit-faced drunk.

JACK

(to bartender)  
Hit me again.

NARRATOR

Uh oh. Looks like Jack accidentally wandered into a saloon and allowed his blood alcohol to rise above the point- oh-eight legal limit. Unfortunately, as much as he'd like to return home, Jack now has the obligation to stay put.

The BARTENDER brings Jack another drink. At the door to the back room we see JOHN SMITH, the Topper's neighbor take an envelope from the owner. He enters and sees Jack.

JOHN

Little early to drink, isn't it Jack?

JACK

(very drunk)  
John! Johnnie! John, John! Drink with me. Drink with you old neighbor buddy pal guy next store guy.

JOHN

Let me give you a ride home, Jack.

**INT. JOHN'S CADILLAC - SHORT TIME LATER**

Jack is still very drunk. He rubs his cheeks on the upholstery as John drives.

JACK

(rambling)

I love this car. I'd marry it. But Sally won't let me. Noooooo. She never lets me marry cars...

JOHN

So I heard about what you guys are going through. You know, I got some friends in the business world. Maybe I'll have 'em put in a good word with the principal and this Anderson guy.

JACK

I have an idea! I have an idea! Okay. Here it is. Ready? Loan money to me.

JOHN

You don't wanna borrow money from me.

JACK

Right. Dumb idea. Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb-- Wait! I know! I know! You can loan us money.

Jack falls asleep.

**INT. BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Jack is in bed, staring at the ceiling, defeated.

NARRATOR

Jack can't sleep. Having spent the afternoon napping face-down on his neighbor's lawn, that's no surprise. But there's another reason. The man of the house provides for his family and in this regard Jack has failed. For all his efforts trying to impress others, what has it got him? A hangover and a mouthful of grass shavings. Sally was right.

Jack checks that Sally is asleep and won't see this..

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The odds of a miracle happening by itself being against him, Jack decides to hedge his bet and offer a deal to the alleged Almighty -- Get him out of this jam and he'll stop focusing on trying to impress others and instead will redouble his efforts to live by the straight and narrow.

Jack forces himself into a quick prayer. Then..

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

With that taken care of, he decides to wake Sally and confess his failures.

FADE TO:

**INT. BEDROOM - EARLY NEXT MORNING**

Exactly as before. Jack was up all night. Finally, he nudges Sally but she continues to sleep. He nudges her again. Nothing. Finally he hits her.

JACK

Oh, you're awake. I have to tell you something--

SALLY

(half asleep)  
You just hit me.

JACK

Listen--

SALLY

Why would you hit me when I'm sleeping?

SFX: PHONE RING

SALLY (CONT'D)

(answering phone)  
Hello?.. Great. I'll tell him.  
(hanging up)  
That was the lawyer. The Principal reconsidered. Billy can stay in school.

JACK  
Really? That's great!

SALLY  
Now why'd you wake me?

JACK  
(beat)  
'Cause you snore. Quit it.

**INT. JACK'S CAR - LATER THAT MORNING**

Jack is smiling as he drops Billy off at school. Billy kisses his dad, jumps out and runs to meet up with his friends. Jack starts to drive away when he notices the principal, MR. COWEN.

JACK  
Mr. Cowen!

The principal has his arm in a sling and a black eye. Jack navigates his car to the curb and rolls down the passenger window but the principal sees Jack and quickly runs away.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Wait! I wanted to say thanks.  
(to himself)  
Must be late to a meeting.

**INT. HALLWAY - MUTSON AND SLOAN - LATER**

Jack walks down the hall towards his office.

NARRATOR  
With the lawyer's retainer no longer a concern, Jack can now focus on rebuilding his reputation at the company.

Just then Mr. Anderson comes around the corner on crutches, spots Jack and quickly hightails it in the other direction.

Before Jack can say anything, Mutson crosses in.

MUTSON  
Jack! I was just coming to see you.

JACK  
(confused)  
Was that Anderson? What happened?



MUTSON

Terrible accident. Tripped on his yacht or something. Anyway, he's back. Whatever you said to him worked.

Jack is confused but holds his tongue.

NARRATOR

One of the traits of a good-mannered individual is their ability to accept a compliment gracefully.

MUTSON

I think it's time we gave you a promotion. We'll talk more tomorrow when you move into your bigger office.

Mutson slaps Jack on the back and crosses out.

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - SHORT TIME LATER**

Jack drives home, smiling broadly.

NARRATOR

It seems that Jack's prayer has been answered. So why is he smiling? Sure, he got his promotion but doesn't this mystical answering of a prayer go against everything a man of logic holds dear? Not for Jack. True, he can't explain how it works but, bottom line, it did indeed work. He made a promise and got rewarded -- cause and effect. We don't know how aspirin works. Should a man of logic not take aspirin?

As Jack's car rounds the corner...

SLOW FADE INTO

BLACK & WHITE:

**EXT. ERNEST AVE - CONTINUOUS**

We're now in front of the Topper house -- the same shot at the start of the show.

BILLY and ROBERT, in swim trunks, play in the sprinklers. THE MAILMAN delivers a packages for Cindy -- a new, low-cut dress.

Jack parks, exits the car and hands flowers to Sally. They kiss.

NARRATOR

So there you have it. Jack Topper has decided to give up trying to impress others to get ahead in this modern world. He has a new system now. A better system -- live by the straight and narrow and have faith that someone, somewhere, unseen will look out for you.

PAN next door--John is watering the lawn in his robe.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It all seems pretty black and white.

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW