

From Current Economic Conditions

By Don Zolidis

Act One

(The barest suggestion of an office. A desk, maybe a few things on top of it. At rise, LILY, 26, is typing on a laptop computer. A PROJECTION shows her facebook status updating: "Bored bored bored someone kill me now." ANGELA, mid 30s, approaches.)

Hey there. ANGELA

Hey.
(LILY minimizes her screen.)

How are you doing? ANGELA

I am awesome, actually. LILY

Wonderful. Can I talk you for a moment? ANGELA

Can't stop you. LILY

You're so funny. ANGELA

It's a curse. LILY

So... How are you? ANGELA *(sitting on top of her desk)*

Good. LILY

ANGELA

Uh-huh. You're happy?

LILY

Yeah. I guess.

ANGELA

Anything bothering you?

LILY

No I'm – you know, doing my thing. Rocking the database.

ANGELA

I love the way you handle that database.

LILY

I know it's pretty spectacular. And I've like ascended to queen of the office machines. I can almost get the copy machine to work. And I totally own the fax machine.

ANGELA

How long have you worked here now?

LILY

Year and a half.

ANGELA

Wow.

LILY

I know. I figured I wouldn't make it two weeks.

ANGELA

You weren't the only one. Well I mean – you know – we thought you'd move on to bigger and better things. I didn't believe the rumors.

LILY

What rumors?

ANGELA

No rumors!

LILY

Were there rumors about me?

ANGELA

Don't get defensive. There aren't any rumors any more. It's all been cleared up.

LILY

What's been cleared up?

ANGELA

You're kind of obsessed about that, aren't you?

LILY

No I'm not I just –

ANGELA

Let's just agree to drop the subject, okay? Okay. We'll all be happier that way. Lily. Gosh. Let's talk, okay? We never talk any more.

LILY

Did we ever – um...

ANGELA

We talked a lot when you first got hired. I learned all about your aspirations in the publishing industry and about your other stuff and your um... but I feel like we don't talk enough any more.

LILY

Okay.

ANGELA

What do you want from this job?

LILY

Um... like... like what?

ANGELA

Like what do you want to be doing?

LILY

I guess I'd like to work more closely with the authors. And maybe use my degree a little bit.

ANGELA

You don't have a degree in faxes?

LILY

Anthropology, actually.

ANGELA

So you're unhappy.

LILY

No I'm not unhappy.

ANGELA

You can be honest with me. You're unhappy. You're miserable. We can all see it.

LILY

No I'm totally fine with this job!

ANGELA

Well... I have an opportunity for you.

LILY

Really?

ANGELA

An amazing opportunity. I mean, if I was really at the bottom of the company, like you, just starting out, I would be like all over this.

LILY

I've been here a year and a half –

ANGELA

You know what I mean.

LILY

There have been like four people hired since I started.

ANGELA

Can I just tell you what it is? There is an opening... for a hospitality internship. What do you think?

LILY

It's an internship?

ANGELA

It's an internship. And I think you would be the right person for it. I'm putting your name in.

LILY

Why is it an internship?

ANGELA

Cause it's part of the name. Hospitality intern. This is like a stunning opportunity, Lily. You would be working with the writers and you would have your foot in the door at this publishing house.

LILY

Isn't my foot already in the door? I mean I kinda work here already.

ANGELA

But this is a different department.

LILY

Right.

ANGELA

It would be hard to stay the same level if you switch departments. This opportunity is not going to be available for long –

LILY

Yeah, but –

ANGELA

I've already got like thirty resumes –

LILY

I know but –

ANGELA

What do you think?

LILY

Is it paid?

ANGELA

There's a travel stipend.

LILY

Wait –

ANGELA

We're trying to find some more funding for it – but it's hard –

LILY

So it's an unpaid internship?

ANGELA

It might become paid if everything works out. I'm definitely rooting for that to happen.

LILY

How long does this internship last?

ANGELA

We haven't defined that yet.

LILY

So you want me to move from my paid job to an unpaid indefinite internship?

ANGELA

In a different department.

LILY

That would be crazy.

ANGELA

Sometimes you have to take risks in order to get ahead. I mean I don't think there's a whole lot of possibilities for you to move up from where you are right now – Especially, um... well... your current position is being eliminated.

LILY

What?

ANGELA

We're going to miss you.

LILY

Why?

ANGELA

We like you. Most of us did.

LILY

No why is my position being eliminated?

ANGELA

Budget cuts. But think about all the windows this opens up – Lily, this is going to be such a good thing for you –

LILY

So let me get this straight: My choice is between basically getting fired or taking an indefinite unpaid internship?

ANGELA

Yeah. Gosh I wish I was you.

(Lights shift. JEFFERS, an author enters.)

JEFFERS

When I do a book signing I will only enter through the back door. I want that in the contract.

(LILY takes out a notepad and rushes over to his side.)

LILY

Okay, we'll make sure that's in there –

JEFFERS

Last store I went into, they didn't even have a back door. What the fuck am I supposed to do then? The fans can't see me.

LILY

We do have an invisibility cloak if you want to use that.

JEFFERS

What?

LILY

We got it from the Harry Potter books.

JEFFERS

Do you guys publish Harry Potter?

LILY

No but sometimes they let us borrow their shit.

JEFFERS

Do you think this is some kind of a joke?

LILY

You don't want to be seen by your legions of fans because you're so totally famous. I understand that. You're like Napoleon.

JEFFERS

Are you mocking me?

LILY

I would never mock someone who thought they were as important as you.

JEFFERS

Who the hell are you?

LILY

I'm the hospitality intern. The unpaid hospitality intern. I have a candy bar later for you if you're interested. Mounds. I was pushing for Snickers but I was outvoted in committee.

JEFFERS

It's a simple request. I enter through the back door.

LILY

Some stores don't have back doors.

JEFFERS

Then I'm not going in those stores. That fucking simple.

LILY

What if we like roped off the entrance or something?

JEFFERS

No back door. I do not go in. Period. Why are you creating problems?

LILY

I'm not creating problems, I'm just saying that their might be stores that don't have –

JEFFERS

Then I'm not going in them! Do you understand English?

LILY

The point of a book tour, as I understand it, is to allow the fans to meet the author –

JEFFERS

I know what the point of a fucking book tour is, okay? I've been on them before.

LILY

Did you have some kind of experience where you were liked mobbed and now you're liked scarred or whatever?

JEFFERS

You think I'm not famous?

LILY

Do you think you're famous?

JEFFERS

Try googling me and find out, okay? Six hundred thousand pages.

LILY

I'm ecstatic for you, but –

JEFFERS

What about you? You ever google yourself?

LILY

In the dark sometimes. But then I feel bad.

JEFFERS

You think this is funny?

LILY

I'm just saying I'm not a fucking carpenter okay? If there's no door I can't make a door. They don't pay enough to make doors – in fact I'm not paid at all!

JEFFERS

Not my problem. My problem is –

LILY

Your problem is you can't walk through the front door of a goddamn book signing, I understand your problem – no I don't understand your problem –

JEFFERS

I want a new hospitality intern. I'm not working with you.

LILY

Oh come on.

JEFFERS

Get me a new chick.

LILY

A new *chick*? You want a new *chick*? I went to college all right –

JEFFERS

I don't give a fuck! I want a new hospitality intern –

LILY

I'll check our roster for all the unpaid hospitality interns – oh wait there's only one!

JEFFERS

I'm not working with you. I want someone pleasant.

LILY

I'm not *pleasant* enough for you?

JEFFERS

I give you a simple request –

LILY

To build doors in every bookstore in America!

JEFFERS

Just the ones we're visiting!

LILY

Oh great!

JEFFERS

I'm not doing this. I quit.

LILY

You can't quit! You signed a contract!

JEFFERS

Not with you I didn't. I'm not doing the book tour now. Fuck it.

LILY

Kiss my back door!

(Lights down. A Facebook update is projected. Lily is exploring new possibilities for employment.)

(Lights up on Lily's childhood bedroom. A twin bed, girlishly decorated, nearly drowned in stuffed animals. A small desk. LILY struggles to enter, carrying two boxes. ELAINE, 50s, is right behind her, lugging a heavy suitcase.)

ELAINE

Here we are: Hotel Mom.

LILY

It's like a shrine.

ELAINE

We didn't have any reason to use the room so we just kept it like you left it. I think it's adorable.

LILY

It's something.

ELAINE

You're the one who decorated it.

LILY

When I was like thirteen.

ELAINE

I happen to know for a fact you put up some of these posters when you were in college. That Justin Bieber one for example.

LILY

That's ironic commentary on the desires of young girls.

ELAINE

Uh huh. Real ironic. It's good to have you home.

LILY

Thanks.

ELAINE

And you're not the only one in this family who's been fired. Your uncle Greg couldn't hold a job either. But then again he was always stealing things. You didn't steal anything, did you?

LILY

I wasn't fired. I quit.

ELAINE

Was it sexual harassment?

LILY

Not really. I think it was just plain old harassment.

ELAINE

That's good.

(ELAINE slaps the suitcase on the bed and opens it up.)

LILY

What are you doing?

ELAINE

I'm helping you unpack.

LILY

I can unpack myself.

ELAINE

It's no trouble.

LILY

Mom can I just – can you just leave that alone?

ELAINE

I'm just trying to be helpful.

LILY

And I appreciate that –

ELAINE *(still unpacking)*

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There's not like contraband in here or something, is there?

LILY

Yeah, Mom, my last job was a drug mule.

ELAINE

How did you fold these?

LILY

Stop. Stop what you're doing.

(JIM, her father, 50ish, enters, also lugging suitcases.)

JIM

Here we are: Hotel Dad.

ELAINE *(taking out something)*

This is nice.

JIM *(holding out his hand)*

I require a tip.

ELAINE

Where did you get this?

(LILY tries to close the suitcase.)

JIM

Every time we think you're out, they push you back in.

ELAINE

Jim! Could you stop it with the Scarface?

JIM

That was Godfather Three. I'm joking, honey! We love supporting you. It gives your mother purpose in life.

LILY

This is just temporary.

ELAINE *(finding lingerie)*

Lily what is this?!

LILY

Mom stop that!

ELAINE

Some of these things are in questionable taste.

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LILY

Can I unpack in peace please? Can I just appreciate the failure of my life so far and be done with it?

ELAINE

You're not a failure, sweetheart.

JIM

Just because you failed, doesn't mean you're a failure.

To read more of this script, please contact me at donzolidis@yahoo.com.