

DRIZZLE

An original radio drama by  
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PRODUCTION SCRIPT

November 15, 2006

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DRIZZLE

CAST

NARRATOR	The voice of reason?
MAN	A miserable business man
DJ 1	Annoying morning DJ 1
DJ 2	Annoying morning DJ 2
CAR DEALER	Car salesman on the radio
ASSHOLE	An annoyed driver during rush hour
BOSS	A mean boss
OPERATOR	Automated phone
FRIELANDER	Man's client
MOM	Man's mom
FORTUNE	Automated horoscope service
BUM	A homeless man
CLERK	Manager of a city laundromat

DRIZZLE

SCENE ONE: HOUSE - DAY

NARRATOR: That morning, it rained. It rained as it seemed to have rained on him for as long as he could remember. An ugly, bitter, pissing rain that never showed sign of abating. The last time he'd seen the sun was on a vacation two years ago, which ended three days early when his mother called him from the hospital. On this morning, a very miserable morning at the end of a miserable week, coming at the latest moment of a life which had to this moment seemed nothing except--well--miserable, the rain was not going to stop. Yet, in the life of this man, something was about to change.

SOUND: CLICK! A RADIO COMES ALIVE AND AN OBNOXIOUS

MORNING DJ COMES ON THE AIR

DJ: And did you know, Americans are 33% fatter now than they were just two years ago?

DJ 2: Bahh, that doesn't surprise me, super-size another one fatso!

DJ: I've been thinking, whenever someone 200 pounds or more gets a whopper, there should be a random chance they'll be selected to run around the Burger King.

DJ 2: We could broadcast it live!

DJ: Fat-Ass Races, people, your next spectator sport.

SOUND: SMACK! RADIO GOES QUIET AGAIN. PATTERN-  
PATTERN OF RAIN ON THE ROOFTOP. SLOW,  
AGONIZED GRUNT, THEN SOUNDS OF GETTING OUT  
OF BED. SQUEAK AS SHOWER IS TURNED ON,  
WATER FALLS...

NARRATOR: He hadn't been living this life forever, in fact, he'd hardly been living this life for a long time. The whole universe was new to this kind of life. Yet, this was the only universe he knew. A universe where he woke up every morning at 6:30 and leaned against the wall of the shower, letting the water hit him until he mustered the willpower to start his day.

SOUND: HANDLE SQUEAKED CLOSED. RAIN STOPS.

NARRATOR:

It would begin like this.

He would randomly select a set of clothes, go downstairs, and pour a go-mug of lousy coffee from the automatic brew-maker. He would get into his car, and then begin the decathlon that soured his attitude more than any other part of the entire routine: traffic.

SCENE TWO: TRAFFIC - DAY

SOUND:

HONK! HONK! INTERIOR CAR, RAIN ON ROOF, CAR STARTED, WINDSHIELD WIPERS GOING, DRIVE OFF, RADIO DJS COME BACK

DJ:

Did you hear this one? They've changed the rules on the plane again. All dildos must now be in checked baggage.

DJ 2:

Did I hear you right?

DJ:

(LAUGHS) I'm serious. Okay, I'm sorry, all "personal electronic devices for adult pleasure."

DJ 2:

Oh jeez!

DJ:

Too many people spending the whole flight in the port-a-pottie, I guess.

DJ 2: Ohh.... well, you gotta find some way to keep yourself entertained on those long cross-country flights...

DJ: Okay! (LAUGHS) Back to the music. Here's an old favorite--Stairway to Heaven.

SOUND: FIRST FEW NOTES OF "STAIRWAY" PLAYED, RADIO  
CLICKED OFF

MAN: Of all the goddamn songs to play...

SOUND: SOUND OF TRAFFIC SUDDENLY VERY CLEAR AND  
EXCRUCIATING. RAIN CONTINUES TO PATTERN DOWN  
ON THE ROOF. OCCASIONAL HONKING OF HORNS

MAN: (SIGHS)

SOUND: CLICKS RADIO BACK ON.

CAR DEALER: That's what I said 1-800-CARS4U this weekend and this weekend only, get deals like you never imagined!

SOUND: LONG MEDLEY OF TRAFFIC SOUNDS, GROANS OF  
MAN, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK BLINKER PUT ON, CAR  
ZOOMS BY OVER WET ASPHALT. QUICK BLURT OF  
SIREN

MAN: If you people would just... not get yourselves killed! (GROAN)

SOUND: CAR REVVED ANGRILY.

NARRATOR: From his perspective, any place other than his was better. The people to the left were moving steadily. The people to the right made great progress, and the people who had decided to just drive in the breakdown lane were the smartest of all. He saw a quick opportunity and jumped to take it.

SOUND: CAR PULLS OUT BRISKLY, SMALL SQUEAK, LOUD HORN

MAN: Screw you too!

SOUND: CAR SPEEDS UP QUICKLY, JUST ABOUT REACHES CRUISING SPEED

CAR DEALER: Half off cars, half off trucks, with NO MONEY DOWN!

MAN: Now that's about enough--

SOUND: FIDDLE WITH RADIO KNOB, STATIC.

MAN: Shit!

SOUND: SCREECH OF BRAKES, PRETTY SOLID COLLISION.

NARRATOR: It was over as quickly as it happened. The car in front of him braked suddenly and the car behind rear-ended him. His coffee flew from the cupholder and into the dashboard, where it splattered across the entire car.

His seatbelt held him taut but the coffee burned his leg. He sat there as the coffee cooled, wondering what the hell to do.

CAR DEALER: (FADING IN AND OUT WITH STATIC) That's what I said, NO MONEY DOWN or 10% cash back, this weekend, and this weekend only on all cars, trucks, and SUVs. You wanna pay more, you go to the other guys. We've got the lowest priced cars at 1-800-1

SOUND: FADES TO STATIC. SOUND OF THE RAIN  
PATTERING ON THE ROOF, WIPERS STILL GOING.  
LOTS OF HONKING NOW.

NARRATOR: He took the insurance card out of the glovebox, combed his fingers through his hair, and got out of the car.

SOUND: OUTDOOR AMBIENCE--MEDIUM TO LIGHT RAIN, LOTS  
OF TRAFFIC AND CARS ZOOMING BY AND HONKING  
AND TRUCKS AND CRUISERS AND NOISE.

NARRATOR: His whole back bumper would need to be replaced; the other car, a large GM from the mid-90s had little more than a smashed headlight. He walked up to the tinted driver's side window and knocked on it.

SOUND: TIRES SQUEAL IN THE RAIN, CAR HONKS,  
RUMBLESTRIP RUBBING

MAN: Hey! Hey you!

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUSH ACROSS WET ASPHALT, CACOPHONY  
OF CAR HORNS ERUPTS. POLICE SIREN SQUAWKS,  
APPROACHES...

MAN: Hey! Hey! That guy!

SOUND: ...AND DEPARTS

NARRATOR: As far as could see, the car was long gone,  
and the cruiser was only headed for the  
nearest exit. Unsure what to do, and  
suddenly numb, he plodded back to his car.  
There, he saw something inexplicable; a  
fallen decal with the words "CITY LAUNDRY"  
and a phone number.

ASSHOLE: (PRECEDED BY SEVERAL HONKS) Hey asshole, get  
out of the road!

SOUND: FADE TO...

MUSIC: MYSTERIOUS PIANO BRIDGE

SCENE THREE: OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

SOUND: DING, DING, DING... ELEVATOR GOING UP FLOORS

NARRATOR: He couldn't avoid staring at the unfamiliar man in the mirror as he rode the twenty-one floors to his office. The dark blue bags beneath his eyes were familiar enough, but now with it was with three day's growth of beard and soaked wet hair that dripped like a dog's.

SOUND: DING! ELEVATOR ARRIVES ON A FLOOR AND DOORS  
SLIDE OPEN. OFFICE AMBIENCE--TYPING,  
COPYING, PEOPLE ON PHONES, HUSHED, ALMOST  
LIBRARY QUALITY

NARRATOR: No one greeted him at the door. They'd fired the secretary earlier that summer. He took the chair as his cubicle and began his day as if nothing had happened.

SOUND: COMPUTER BEEPS POST, HARD DRIVE STARTS  
CLICKING, LOADS...

BOSS: Hey! Look who decided to come in!

MAN: (EVASIVE) I was in an accident.

BOSS: Been in a lot of them this week, huh? How's the Frieland deal coming?

MAN: I'm still working on it.

BOSS: Really? Well I had two calls and an email from Mr. Frielander yesterday, wondering if he was going to hear from you again.

MAN: Ah-I--I'm still looking into the zoning...

BOSS: Why don't you look into that before the end of the day, before it's not worth coming in tomorrow?

MAN: Of course.

BOSS: And get yourself another shirt. Jesus!

NARRATOR: He stared at the computer screen as if it was a mass of hieroglyphics. He glanced down, irritated at a misplaced pencil and saw the blinking red light on his phone.

SOUND: HANDSET PICKED UP. BEEPS, SINGLE RING

OPERATOR: You have seven new voice messages. First message...

FRIELANDER: Hi, this is Mike Frielander calling, I was just wondering if you'd made any progress...

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: Message erased. Next message.

FRIELANDER: Yes, this is Mike Frielanders again, I still haven't heard from you and I wanted to know...

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: Message erased. Next message.

SOUND: CHI-CHUNK! PHONE HUNG UP.

OPERATOR: Next message.

MOM: Hi, this is your mom; I was just calling to see if everything is alright. Your home phone has been busy for several days now...

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: Message erased. Next message.

FORTUNE: Sagittarius. Be aware of random encounters today. Fate works through the hands of a stranger. Take a risk even if you have gambled and lost before.

OPERATOR: To save this message, press one, to erase it...

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: Message saved. Next message.

FRIELANDER: Frielanders here. Look, if I don't hear from you soon--

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: Message erased. End of new messages. To  
listen to your messages...

SOUND: BEEP!

OPERATOR: First saved message.

FORTUNE: Sagittarius. Be aware of random encounters  
today. Fate works through the hands of a  
stranger. Take a risk even if--

SOUND: CHICK! RECEIVER PRESSED DOWN.

MAN: Fine.

BEEP: PHONE NUMBER DIALED. FEW RINGS, THEN  
AUTOMATED TONE

OPERATOR: I'm sorry, but the number you have entered  
is temporarily out of service. Please try  
your call at another time.

SOUND: PHONE HUNG UP SLOWLY.

MUSIC: RISE UP MYSTERIOUS PIANO AGAIN FOR A FEW  
MOMENTS...

NARRATOR: He returned his gaze to his computer screen  
and opened a web browser. He could almost  
see through the screen to... to somewhere  
else. Somewhere behind the blue flickering

glow.

He typed "CITY LAUNDRY" into the search box. There were many results. Mid-City Laundry, Big City Laundry, Laundry City. Three were called 'City Laundry.' One was on the other side of the river, another on the far end of town, both inconvenient to reach using the parkway they'd been on. The City Laundry he felt himself drawn to was twenty-two blocks away, over in Chinatown, two-stops down on the subway line.

It was only an hour till noon, when he might disappear for a while unnoticed. But after ten minutes of fidgeting he left anyway.

SCENE FOUR: CITY EXTERIOR - DAY

SOUND: HONKING, TRAFFIC, RAIN FALLING, MACHINERY, COMMOTION. SENSATION OF WHITE NOISE.

NARRATOR: It had never occurred to him how noisy the city really was. Or how much those milling about in it pretended to ignore the cacophony. On this day, especially, he noticed how the tempo was uneven, off-

balance--as if everyone were trying to keep on the regular rhythm but the rain forced them off by a beat or two.

Having no umbrella, he dashed between shop overhangs, barely noticing the products sold within--cell phones, video cameras, sandwiches, books.

At last he reached the steps down into the subway station.

SCENE FIVE: THE SUBWAY - DAY

SOUND: SUBWAY AMBIENCE, TRAINS COMING AND GOING, ANNOUNCERS CALLING, VOICES AND BUSTLE.  
CRRRNK BODIES GOING THROUGH METAL CAROUSEL

NARRATOR: He headed through the station in a kind of daze, having hardly ridden the subway in the 8 years he'd been coming to the city. His head started to pound him now, and he had nothing to answer it. He saw a Starbucks on the way to the quay, and remembered that his morning's coffee had been obliterated across his dash. He bought a cup of dark roast from a girl in a black sweater with an eyebrow piercing. Then he walked to the appropriate place to wait, his eyes drifting

to a diorama of a seductive woman sprawled out across a Van Gogh-esque backdrop--Spain, France maybe. It was an ad for copy toner.

BUM: Hey mister, you got any change?

MAN: Uh... I don't.

BUM: I saw you in the Starbucks there. You leave it for the girl as a tip?

MAN: No... I mean, yes, ah--I don't.

BUM: Come on, you all dressed up nice like that, I'm down here, don't even have food.

MAN: Sorry.

BUM: Yeah, you sorry, they're all sorry. Not sorry enough to give me a nickel.

SOUND: TRAIN ARRIVING IN THE DISTANCE.

BUM: You know what I hate about people like you, is that you'd just as soon step on me as help me out. Hell, you'd probably bill me the 10 seconds you took to kick me.

MAN: That's not true.

BUM: The hell it ain't! Whaddya do? Insurance? Banks? Investments? You just robbing the people and get mad when the people rob back.

SOUND: TRAIN PULLS UP THE CURB, DOORS SLIDE OPEN,  
PEOPLE DISEMBARK

MAN: This is my train.

BUM: Course it is. Merry fucking Christmas!

NARRATOR: He packed into the train with a hundred others coming in the early lunchtime rush. He pressed near the back and grabbed onto an overhead bar for support as the train kicked into motion, his eyes locking one last time with the bum who reclined against the graffiti-stained wall with a look of absolute condemnation. He turned abruptly and saw the copy toner girl again, some hidden secret on her lips before the train kicked into motion and the moment was long behind them all.

SOUND: SUBWAY CAR PICKS UP SPEED, LOTS OF TALKING  
IN THE BACKGROUND, TRAIN ARRIVES BEFORE  
SCENE FADES.

SCENE SIX: EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

SOUND: THE DRIZZLE RETURNS. A MILDER AMBIENCE,  
MODERATELY BUSY, FEWER CARS, MORE TALKING.

NARRATOR:

He'd never been to this neighborhood before. It was the same city, he supposed, though he realized the people he was seeing lived in one of those private universes that exist in cities and that usually he and they would never intersect. Uncomfortable, and confused, he stumbled a few blocks in a strange daze, unsure of where he was going, realizing that though he had looked at a map and written the address down, he hadn't internalized how to get there. The graphics of the internet map had been easy to digest but the street itself was disconcerting. He didn't understand the language, for one, and no one was dressed in the business attire he was usually so comfortable in. There were open air markets with dead birds hanging, their feet wrapped in wires, whole fish sitting dead on ice. There were restaurants, too; he understood those well enough, but most of them weren't open yet. Everyone who was like him had somewhere else to be.

NARRATOR:

He stood there in the rain a moment, noticing that he was under a maze of scaffolding that reached to the sky. He wondered if standing underneath it was bad luck, like walking under a ladder. The rain dripped down the metal joints and into the gutter.

He almost laughed when he looked across the street. There were large golden and red Chinese letters with the words "CITY LAUNDRY" in a plain black and white sign underneath.

SCENE SEVEN: LAUNDROMAT - DAY

SOUND:

DRYERS AND WASHERS RUNNING,

INDISTINGUISHABLE CONVERSATIONS IN THE

BACKGROUND. A VIDEO GAME BEING PLAYED

NARRATOR:

It was his first time in a Laundromat. Until very recently, he'd always had someone else to do his laundry. Staring over a room of anonymous faces, he realized he had no clue what the driver looked like. He went to the white countertop that ran along the left side of the room.

SOUND: DING!

NARRATOR: The signs read in Chinese first, English second. They charged \$2.50 a pound for drop-off service. They didn't take checks. They didn't give change for parking meters. He was staring at a sign that read "WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE TO ANYONE" when a young man walked over.

CLERK: Yes?

MAN: Hi. Do you do pickup service?

CLERK: Hmm?

MAN: Laundry. Do you pick it up, or drop it off?

CLERK: Yes sir. Look, we have a sign there...

MAN: Listen--do you have a company car? You drive it around?

CLERK: Ahhh, yes sir, to pick up laundry.

MAN: This morning--where were you this morning!

CLERK: (UNCOMFORTABLE) Ah... Ah... I have to ask you to leave sir.

MAN: I was in an accident this morning. With your car. You took off, didn't you?

CLERK: I don't know what you're talking about.

MAN: You're lying to me!

CLERK: Look, sir, please just go.

MAN: Where the hell is that car? Where is the driver?

NARRATOR: The face of the other man teetered between understanding and anger, but the business man was furious. He stepped right around the countertop, unsure what he was doing. With furious determination, he pushed through a door that read "STAFF ONLY" and into another room altogether.

SOUND: THE UNDER-LAUNDRY AMBIENCE. DISEMBODIED  
SOUND OF DRYERS AND WASHERS, SORT OF A MIX  
BETWEEN BEING IN THE WOMB, UNDERWATER, OR IN  
THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH.

CLERK: (SLIGHT REVERB) You can't come in here! Get out!

MAN: You can't hide from me!

NARRATOR: He trotted down this strange place, where pipes ran long up as far as he could see and mildew entered his nose with mystery. The air was damp, hot, and stale. He pushed forward to a metal door and pressed out.

CLERK: Stop at once!

SOUNDS: SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE, ONE BODY THROWN ASIDE,  
STAGGERS, DOOR PUSHED OPEN WITH A MIGHTY  
SCREECH

SCENE EIGHT: EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

SOUND: AMBIENCE SHIFTS TO OUTSIDE AGAIN, WHERE THE  
DRIZZLE IS FALLING AS HEAVILY AS EVER.

CLERK: You're crazy! I'm calling the police!

MAN: Shut up, would you? Shut up!

NARRATOR: The business man stopped for a moment and saw red fury pour across the young man's face, a scar on his left cheekbone the only white left in it. He turned to look at the strange place they had come to--an asphalt parking lot surrounded by barbed wire fences, tall brick buildings on both sides, a car, yes, a car in the center of the lot, but not GM. It was a white van, with a fresh white decal just like the one he'd seen on the freeway. There were heaps of black garbage bags which another man was loading into a blue cart.

NARRATOR:

The business man looked with accusation at the man unloading, then back at the furious clerk, before staring at the van in a kind of daze. The two men said something to one another in their native language before demanding something of the business man, whose knees were suddenly weak in the drizzle.

He opened his mouth to speak, but words were strange, indescribable, impossible for him at this moment on this strange day, staring as he was with accusation at a stranger who had no more of an idea of the answer to the riddle than he.

He lifted his eyes as the rain came down harder, looking up to, through, past the vast grey clouds that enshrouded them all. And as the rain hit his cheeks and ran down his neck, it happened.

SOUND:

MAN BEGINS TO LAUGH, RELUCTANT, AT FIRST,

THEN BELLOWING INTO A RICH, MELODIOUS JOY.

MYSTERY PIANO RISES UP, OVER, AND EVENTUALLY

OUT

**THE END**