

LIVING WITH MOFFETT

"WORKING FOR A LIVING"

COLD OPENING/A

INT. MOFFETT HOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

(RICK, AARON, DEWEY)

SCRUFFY BUT NEAT, 29-YEAR-OLD **RICK** IS READING THE NEWSPAPER. HIS 29-YEAR-OLD SLOVENLY ROOMMATE **AARON** ENTERS. BOTH WEAR PAJAMAS.

RICK

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP FROM HIS PAPER)

So... how'd it go with Johansen?

AARON OPENS THE REFRIGERATOR TO GET SOME JUICE.

AARON

(DISMISSIVE)

Ah, they've got big electrical problems.

RICK

Big electrical problems, huh?

(RICK SIPS HIS COFFEE)

At an *appliance* store. That sounds plausible.

AARON

They totally fried my whirling supercharger, Rick. I'm thinking about suing.

RICK

Good for you. That's why we have a legal system...

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

(MUMBLING)

...at taxpayer expense.

AARON

What's that?

PHONE RINGS.

RICK HOLDS UP A FINGER LIKE "I'LL ANSWER YOU AFTER I GET THE PHONE."

RICK

Hello?

(BEAT)

Yeah, he's right here.

RICK HANDS THE PHONE TO AARON.

AARON

Go for Aaron.

(BEAT)

Really?!?

(BEAT)

Okay, I'll be right over!

AARON HANGS UP.

RICK

Can I assume that was a lawyer who
only takes rock solid cases?

AARON

That was Johansen. He's offering me a
job.

RICK

A job? This Johansen sounds like a shrewd evaluator of talent.

AARON

I guess so.

RICK

What's the position?

AARON

He didn't say.

RICK

(SNAPS FINGERS)

Maybe there's an opening in the explosions department.

BEAT.

AARON

The supercharger works, Rick. In fact, I'll bet he's giving me the job of the guy he had to fire for sabotaging my demonstration.

RICK

Yeah, that's probably it.

30-YEAR-OLD **DEWEY**, THE CURMUDGEONLY, BUSINESS ATTIRED THIRD ROOMATE, ENTERS QUICKLY AND POURS HIMSELF SOME COFFEE.

RICK (CONT'D)

Well, look who's all dressed up and ready for some butt kissing.

DEWEY

Please don't.

AARON

Some what?

RICK

Butt kissing. Dewey's hosting a butt kissing at his store this morning.

DEWEY

I'm not even going to *talk* to the guy, let alone kiss his butt.

RICK

How are you going to manage that?

DEWEY

Planning, my brother. I purposely avoided filling out payroll sheets all week, so now I...

(HANDS UP FOR AIR QUOTES)

"*have*" to spend all morning locked in my office getting them done.

RICK

So... you're sluffing your hosting duties onto your assistant?

DEWEY

Only if she wants to get paid.

AARON

What are you guys talking about?

RICK

Dewey's hosting a book signing for his favorite author, Zack Wheatly.

DEWEY

Stop saying I'm hosting! The corporate office is *forcing* us to let this idiot sign his books, presumably because they want his excrement off our shelves before it contaminates the other books.

AARON

Why do you hate him so much?

RICK SHAKES HIS HEAD.

RICK

Now you've done it.

DEWEY

Because he's an imbecile. Because his writing is so *simplistic* that most sixth graders would be embarrassed to hand in one of his short stories as a creative writing assignment.

AARON

So you hate him because he's not flashy?

DEWEY

I hate him because he wouldn't know the meaning of the word "flashy" because the word "flashy" contains two syllables.

AARON

So how come he's famous enough for a
book signing tour?

DEWEY GRITS HIS TEETH BUT CAN'T SPEAK.

RICK

(SMILING)

The New York Times compared him to
Hemingway. They called him, "direct
and unpretentious, a voice that cuts
through the clutter."

DEWEY

(TO RICK)

I don't know why you're okay with him.
Doesn't his lack of craft offend you
as a writer?

RICK

Ah, Dewey. Why would it offend me?
Is a Rolls Royce offended by a moped?
Is an opera singer offended by a punk
rocker's shriek? Is a filet mignon
offended by two "beef" tacos at Jack-
in-the-Box for 99 cents? You shouldn't
let it get to you.

DEWEY

Yeah, well, I'd like to see you say
that when you're the one hosting a
book signing for a moped!

RICK DRINKS HIS COFFEE AND SMILES.

RICK

You have a nice day, Dave.

DEWEY GRABS HIS TRAVEL MUG AND EXITS.

AARON PLOPS DOWN IN FRONT OF A BOWL OF CEREAL,
SETTLES IN, AND OPENS A COMIC BOOK.

RICK (CONT'D)

So, you're not feeling any sense of
urgency to get down to Johansen's?

AARON

You gotta make 'em wait for talent,
Rick. Anticipation is half the thrill.

BEAT.

RICK

Sometimes it's more than half.

AARON

(OBLIVIOUS)

Exactly. So what do you have today?

RICK

A meeting with my editor. He's showing
me a copy of my new novel.

(BEAT)

I think I'm gonna ask him to get me on
the Zack Wheatly book signing tour.

MAIN TITLES.

ACT ONEONE

INT. KEPLER RECORDS, RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

(BONNIE, KEPLER, ROCKER ONE, ROCKER TWO, ROCKER THREE, ROCKER FOUR)

BONNIE, 27 YEARS OLD AND ONE OF RICK MOFFETT'S BEST FRIENDS, ARRIVES LATE, AND SHE RUSHES INTO THE RECEPTION AREA WEARING A SCARF AND OVERSIZED SUNGLASSES. HER HANDS ARE FULL OF PURSE, COFFEE, MAGAZINES, AND A BAGEL.

KEPLER, THE COMPANY OWNER, STANDS WITH THE LEATHER-CLAD ROCK GROUP, **EUROPE'S UMBRELLA**.

KEPLER

Bonnie, good of you to come to work
this morning.

BONNIE

(SWALLOWING A BITE OF BAGEL)

Oh, sorry I'm late. Heavy traffic...

KEPLER LOOKS AT THE FOOD IN HER HAND.

KEPLER

At the bagel shop?

BONNIE

Did we have a meeting scheduled?

KEPLER

No, just a bit of good fortune. This
is Europe's Umbrella.

BONNIE

(OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC TO MASK HER LACK OF RECOGNITION)

Oh... Europe's Umbrella, so nice to
finally meet you!

BONNIE DUMPS HER STUFF ON THE COUNTER AND STARTS SHAKING HANDS WITH THE BAND MEMBERS.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

I am a big fan.

KEPLER

So, you're familiar with them?

BONNIE

Of course.

KEPLER

Then you must have a terrific memory.

BONNIE

What's that?

KEPLER

These are the boys that played at my nephew's Bar Mitzvah... three years ago.

BONNIE SNAPS HER FINGERS.

BONNIE

Yes! You guys wore togas!

ROCKER ONE

(IMPRESSED)

That's right.

BONNIE

At a Bar Mitzvah.

(BEAT)

That was different.

KEPLER

Anyway, you may not believe it, but
these gentlemen are still unsigned...
and now my nephew is their drummer.

ROCKER TWO (KEPLER'S NEPHEW) LIMPLY RAISES A HAND.

KEPLER (CONT'D)

Why don't you take them back to your
office and see what kind of deal you
can work out for them.

BONNIE

(FAKE SMILING)

You mean, um, a *record* deal?

KEPLER

No, I want you to sell them a van.

BEAT.

KEPLER (CONT'D)

Of course I mean a record deal.

BONNIE'S FAKE SMILE REMAINS FROZEN ON HER FACE AS
SHE LOOKS FROM KEPLER TO THE BAND.

CUT TO:

TWO

INT. HAMILTON PUBLISHING -- DAY

(RICK, BANISTER)

BANISTER, RICK'S EDITOR, SITS BEHIND HIS DESK. **RICK** SITS ACROSS FROM HIM. BANISTER HOLDS UP A BOOK WITH RICK'S PICTURE ON THE COVER.

BANISTER

Well, what do you think?

RICK

I love it.

BANISTER

I hate it.

BEAT.

RICK

What?

BANISTER

I said I hate it.

RICK

I don't follow.

BANISTER

This is your sophomore novel, Rick.
If the critics find it *one iota* less
compelling than your debut, they'll
write you off as a one hit wonder.

RICK

But the critics love me.

BANISTER

Do they, Rick? Are you sure about that?

RICK

I don't understand. You told me you loved the book. You told me it was brilliant. You gave me an extra six months to finish it so that every word would be perfect.

BANISTER

Well, now I'm feeling like it's a little... over-written.

BANISTER HANDS THE BOOK TO RICK.

BANISTER (CONT'D)

I stopped the presses after the first 5,000 copies, so it's not too late for you to take another pass at it.

RICK SITS IN STUNNED SILENCE.

BANISTER (CONT'D)

It's not you, it's the market. Let me ask you, are familiar with the work of Zack Wheatly?

CUT TO:

INT. SAGIN'S BOOKSTORE -- DAY

(DEWEY, MEGAN, ZACK WHEATLY)

DEWEY IS DOING PAPERWORK IN HIS OFFICE.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

DEWEY

Come in.

MEGAN, A BOOK STORE ASSISTANT MANAGER, ENTERS WITH **ZACK WHEATLY**.

MEGAN

Mr. Dewey, this is Zack Wheatly.

DEWEY DOESN'T GET UP.

DEWEY

I see that. Isn't he supposed to be
in the front of the store?

MEGAN

It's about that, sir. I thought I had
set up the signing table according to
his specifications, but he got very
upset and insisted on speaking with my
boss.

ZACK WHEATLY

Mr. Dewey, I insist that you fire this
incompetent wench at once. If you
don't, I'll be forced to take it up
with the corporate office.

DEWEY FROWNS SILENTLY AT ZACK.

ZACK STARTS LAUGHING AND SLAPPING HIS KNEE.

DEWEY

That's hilarious, Zack.

MEGAN

What's going on?

ZACK WHEATLY

It's a joke, Honey. I was just having some fun with you.

MEGAN

Fun?

ZACK WHEATLY

I'm a joker. Didn't Dewey tell you?

MEGAN

You know Mr. Dewey?

ZACK WHEATLY

We're old friends.

DEWEY

(SIGHS)

Zack and I met in a writers workshop 10 years ago.

ZACK WHEATLY

And what a workshop it was. Me, Dewey, Rick Moffett... it's like every other guy in the room became a successful writer.

DEWEY

And the jokes keep coming.

ZACK WHEATLY

I'm just busting your pebbles.

(TURNING FATHERLY)

To be honest, I always thought you were a better writer than Moffett. You knew how to keep it simple and to the point... like me!

DEWEY JAMS HIS PENCIL INTO THE DESK AND THE LEAD SNAPS.

ZACK WHEATLY (CONT'D)

For the life of me I don't know how Moffett got published. His writing's so dense, I could hardly get through the first chapter.

DEWEY

Oh, there's a problem with denseness alright.

ZACK WHEATLY

And he was such a tag-a-long. Remember how every time I invited you to go out and do something, he'd claim that the two of you already had plans. It's like he forced us to go out as a threesome.

DEWEY

It was something like that.

ZACK WHEATLY

You don't still keep in touch with
him, do you?

DEWEY

No.

MEGAN COUGHS.

DEWEY (CONT'D)

Actually, I'm his roommate.

ZACK WHEATLY

His roommate? Fantastic! We have to
get together while I'm in town.

BEAT.

DEWEY

Ok.

ZACK WHEATLY

Do you promise? Promise?

(BEAT)

I'm not leaving your office until you
promise.

DEWEY

I promise!

ZACK WHEATLY

Alright!

(TO MEGAN)

And do you promise to come along as my
lovely companion.

MEGAN

I'm engaged.

ZACK WHEATLY

I don't see a ring.

MEGAN

I'm engaged... to be engaged.

DEWEY

You can leave, Megan.

MEGAN

(SINCERE)

Thank you.

MEGAN EXITS.

ZACK WHEATLY

Good move, buddy. You probably just saved that girl's relationship. I mean, seriously, how long was she really going to be able to resist this?

ZACK WAVES HIS HAND TO INDICATE HE'S REFERRING TO HIS OWN BODY.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHANSEN APPLIANCES -- DAY

JOHANSEN AND **AARON** STAND NEXT TO A ROW OF WASHING MACHINES.

JOHANSEN

I've got to be honest with you, son. When you blew our electrical grid, I pretty much never wanted to see your face again. But then it dawned on me, how come I ever looked at your face in the first place? And I realized that you sold yourself like P.T. Barnum.

AARON

I believe in showmanship, sir.

JOHANSEN

Obviously. And even though your whirling supercharger was an abomination to the entire appliance community, I was ready to buy it if it hadn't turned out to be the worst product ever invented.

AARON

And I would have loved to have sold it to you.

JOHANSEN

Then it occurred to me, if this dynamo can almost sell me a steaming pile of

(MORE)

JOHANSEN (CONT'D)

wires, just think what he could do on a sales floor selling products that actually work.

AARON

So you want me to head up your sales department?

JOHANSEN

Almost. I want you to be a junior sales clerk on a one week contract. We'll reevaluate you on Friday.

AARON

Close enough, sir. Where's my uniform?

JOHANSEN

We don't have uniforms.

AARON

Don't worry about it. I'll take the job anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. KEPLER RECORDS, BONNIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

(BONNIE, ROCKER ONE, ROCKER TWO, ROCKER THREE, ROCKER FOUR)

BONNIE AND **EUROPE'S UMBRELLA** STAND IN HER OFFICE.

BONNIE

So, you've lost the togas and started
dressing like a rock band. I like
your progress.

(TAKES A DEEP BREATH)

What do you have for me... musically?

ROCKER ONE HOLDS UP A CD.

BONNIE TAKES THE CD AND PUTS IT IN THE PLAYER. HER
FACE BETRAYS HER ANXIETY.

MUSIC PLAYS.

AFTER FIVE SECONDS, BONNIE'S ANXIETY IS REPLACED BY
SHOCK.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Holy crap, it's good.

CUT TO:

INT. MOFFETT HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM -- NIGHT

(RICK, BONNIE, AARON, DEWEY, ZACK WHEATLY)

RICK SITS ON THE COUCH.

BONNIE DANCES NEXT TO HIS STEREO SYSTEM.

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA IS PLAYING.

AFTER A FEW SECONDS, BONNIE HITS A BUTTON AND THE SONG STOPS.

BONNIE

They're great, right?

RICK

Not bad.

BONNIE

Not bad?!? Aah, what do you know.

They're gonna be the next Beatles.

RICK

The next Beatles? Really? They were a toga wearing cover band three years ago.

BONNIE

I'm telling you, man, my life is looking up. I'm going to break Europe's Umbrella and then I'm writing my own ticket.

RICK

You're gonna start your own label?

BONNIE

Better, I'm gonna make Kepler give me the corner office.

RICK

Why don't you already have the corner office? Isn't it vacant?

BONNIE

Kepler's trying to make me earn it.

RICK

By *handing* you the next Beatles.

BONNIE

I'm not saying his plan is without flaws.

AARON ENTERS.

RICK

Helloooo, working man. How was your first day?

AARON

Awesome.

BONNIE

Working man? When did *you* get a job?

AARON

This morning.

BONNIE

Congratulations.

AARON

There's no need to congratulate me,
Bonnie. If you put yourself out there,
good things happen.

BONNIE

I'm right there with you.

BONNIE HIGH FIVES AARON.

AARON

(TO RICK)

So, let's see the book.

BONNIE

Yeah, I came over here to see your new
book. Where is it?

RICK

It doesn't have to be about *me* all the
time. Let's talk about you guys for a
while longer.

BONNIE

Seriously, I want to see it.

AARON

Me too.

BEAT.

RICK

I don't have it.

BONNIE

What happened?

RICK

What happened? I'll tell you what happened. Zack Wheatly happened. My publisher is so impressed with the sales volume of his new book, that he's making rewrite *my* book to be more like his.

BONNIE LAUGHS.

AARON

He wants you to go from Rolls Royce to moped?

BONNIE

Rolls Royce to moped?

AARON

It's an analogy that Rick and I came up with this morning. You don't need to worry about it?

BONNIE

I'm not worried about it.

AARON (To Rick)

I say don't do it.

RICK

What do you mean, don't do it? He's my editor. His company's advance paid my bills for the last year. If he says rewrite it, I have to rewrite it.

AARON

Don't be sellout, Rick. You just pay him back the advance and take your book across the street.

RICK

It's not that simple. I've got a contract.

AARON

Of course it's that simple. I'd never let my boss treat me like that.

RICK

Well, of course you wouldn't. You wouldn't have to. After all, you've had an...

(RICK GLANCES AT HIS WATCH)

... eight hour relationship with your boss. No way he'd ever violate that kind of trust.

AARON

Joke if you must, but there's no time frame for mutual respect, Buddy.

BONNIE

Is he really making you rewrite your book?

RICK

He gave me a Zack Wheatly novel and I have to read it this week, then explain why I can or can't tweak my novel to be a little more Wheatly-esque.

AARON

He's making you do a book report? Oh man, is he gonna spank you if you don't do it?

RICK PULLS THE ZACK WHEATLY BOOK OUT OF A BAG AND HANDS IT TO AARON.

RICK

I've got an idea. Why don't you do the book report for me, in exchange for all the free rent you've been getting.

DEWEY ENTERS.

DEWEY

Knock, knock. Guess who I brought home.

ZACK WHEATLEY ENTERS.

RICK

(DAZED)

Zack Wheatly?

BONNIE

(AMUSED)

Zack Wheatly?

AARON

(ANGRY)

Zack Wheatly?

ZACK WHEATLY

(OFF AARON)

Hey, my book.

End Act One

ACT TWO

INT. MOFFETT HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

(RICK, BONNIE, AARON, DEWEY, ZACK WHEATLY)

RICK IS SITTING NEXT TO ZACK WHEATLY AT THE TABLE.
BONNIE, AARON, AND DEWEY SIT AROUND THEM.

ZACK WHEATLY IS LOOKING AT A TYPED PAGE AND
SCRIBBLING FURIOUSLY IN A NOTEBOOK.

ZACK WHEATLY

There!

ZACK WHEATLY HANDS THE TYPED PAGE TO RICK.

ZACK WHEATLY (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

BEAT.

RICK

I don't want to do this.

ZACK WHEATLY

It'll be fun. I promise.

BONNIE

It can't hurt to listen.

RICK

Fine.

(READING THE PAGE)

"As she strode past me, I breathed in
the scent of orchids, and I wondered
if it was perfume or an actual flower
in her hair. Then it struck me.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

I had reached a point where I so took her for granted, that I no longer lifted my head when she walked by. The words in my newspaper suddenly became blurry, but if she came back now and caught me crying, I would lie to her, and blame my tears on a sentimental article."

RICK LOOKS UP FROM THE PAPER.

ZACK WHEATLY

Does everybody see the problem?

BLANK STARES.

ZACK WHEATLY (CONT'D)

It's too wordy! You're all, "I don't appreciate her, blah blah blah."

There's so many words, I almost missed the point.

AARON NODS IN AGREEMENT.

ZACK WHEATLY (CONT'D)

Here's what I changed it to...

READING.

ZACK WHEATLY (CONT'D)

"She smelled good, and I felt sad."

(BEAT)

Do you see that? It's the same thing in half the time.

AARON

I see it.

RICK

Come on! Are you joking?

ZACK WHEATLY

What do you mean?

RICK

I mean, this is ridiculous. "She smelled good, and I felt sad?" That doesn't even make sense.

ZACK WHEATLY

Doesn't it? Or are you just too mule-headed to admit that there's a better way to tell your story?

RICK

How is what you wrote a story?

ZACK WHEATLY

You can't be afraid to let the reader fill in the blanks, Rick.

RICK

You didn't leave any blanks to fill in, Zack. You just stripped away everything that made the passage interesting until the entire story disappeared.

AARON

That's also true.

ZACK WHEATLY

Au contraire, mon frer. My version is
nothing but story!

(MOTIONING WITH HIS HANDS)

"She did something. I did something."
And we move on.

RICK

Good idea. Let's move on.

RICK CRUMPLES UP THE PAPER.

ZACK WHEATLY

Don't be a baby, Rick.

AARON

You know, I see both points. If you're
going for touchy-feely, Rick's way is
better. But Zack's way lets you know
that the guy is sad without making him
sound like so much of a sissy.

RICK

(TURNS TO DAVE)

Will you help me out here?

DEWEY

Hey man, I can't even believe you let
him rewrite your stuff in the first
place. I only brought him here because
you gave me such a hard time this
morning.

ZACK WHEATLY

(TO DEWEY)

You've always been jealous of me. I'd like to know what my lovely lady thinks.

BONNIE

Is that your foot on my leg?

ZACK WHEATLY

Maybe.

BONNIE

How'd you get your sock off?

RICK

Ok, I think we're done here.

ZACK WHEATLY

Perfect timing.

(TO BONNIE)

So, do you want to give me a "lift" back to my hotel room? I promise to return the favor once we get there.

BONNIE

Did you guys reveal the secret to getting me turned on?

ZACK WHEATLY

I should warn you though, I'm not as quick with the sword as I am with the pen, so you might be a few minutes late getting home to watch Letterman.

BONNIE

Did you just imply that I'm not even invited to stay the night?

ZACK WHEATLY

Hey, I have an early flight, and if I don't sleep alone, I don't feel well rested.

RICK

Planning to write a couple more novels on the plane ride home?

ZACK WHEATLY

(TO BONNIE)

Shall we?

BONNIE

Would it be alright if I picked up a couple of girlfriends and met you at your hotel?

ZACK WHEATLY

Yeah!

BONNIE

That way I don't have worry about leaving you unsatisfied if you wear me out. I don't know if I have your stamina.

ZACK WHEATLY

The more the merrier!

BONNIE

Plus, I won't have to drive home alone afterwards.

ZACK LOOKS EXCITEDLY AT BONNIE, THEN READS HER GLARE.

ZACK WHEATLY

That's a no, right?

BONNIE

And you guys said he was stupid.

DEWEY

I never said he was stupid. I said he was illiterate.

RICK

I said he was stupid.

ZACK WHEATLY

(TO DEWEY)

You know, you really should watch what you say. I could get you in a lot of trouble with corporate.

DEWEY

And Megan and Bonnie could get you in a lot of trouble with your wife.

ZACK WHEATLY

Ah, you got me.

(BIG SMILE)

You're alright Dewey. You are all right! Hey, you want to stop for a beer on the way back to my hotel?

ZACK PUTS AN ARM AROUND DEWEY AND THEY WALK TOWARD THE DOOR.

DEWEY

How about a strip club?

ZACK WHEATLY

(EXCITED)

Now you're talking!

(BEAT)

Wait, are you planning to ditch me
there?

DEWEY TURNS BACK TO FACE THE OTHERS.

DEWEY

You see? Not stupid.

(TO ZACK)

Guess I better just drop you off at
the hotel.

ZACK WHEATLY

Good idea. Your company picks up the
tab for my in-room entertainment and
mini-bar.

DEWEY

Not the least bit stupid.

DEWEY AND ZACK WHEATLY EXIT.

BONNIE

So, what are you going to tell your
editor?

RICK

What can I tell him? I'm stuck.

AARON

So, you're going to rewrite it like that guy?

RICK

I'd rather work in a toll booth for the rest of my life than rewrite it like that guy. I'm telling Banister that my book is finished. He can take it or leave it.

AARON

Yeah!

BONNIE

Will that work?

RICK

If it doesn't, can we come live with you?

BONNIE

I was planning on moving in with Zack.

RICK

Please, don't even mention his name in jest. If I never see that guy again it'll be too soon.

DEWEY AND ZACK RE-ENTER.

DEWEY

My battery's dead, Rick. You need to
give Zack a ride. Goodnight.

DEWEY DISAPPEARS UPSTAIRS.

ZACK WHEATLY

Unless the little lady has changed her
mind.

BONNIE ROLLS HER EYES.

RICK GRABS HIS KEYS OFF THE COUNTER.

RICK

Let's go.

RICK WALKS TOWARDS THE DOOR.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

(RICK, ZACK WHEATLY)

RICK AND **ZACK** SLAM THEIR DOORS AND BUCKLE UP.

ZACK WHEATLY

Did I ever tell you about the time I
almost nailed Dewey's mom.

RICK

Do you mind if we listen to radio?

RICK TURNS ON THE RADIO.

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA SONG PLAYS.

RICK (CONT'D)

(SUSPICIOUS)

I know this song.

CUT TO:

INT. KEPLER RECORDS, BONNIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

(BONNIE, ROCKER ONE, ROCKER TWO, ROCKER THREE, ROCKER FOUR)

BONNIE SITS AT HER DESK. THE ROCK GROUP HUDDLES AROUND THE OTHER SIDE.

BONNIE

Here's the agenda, boys. Three weeks in the studio to professionally re-record these brilliant songs...

(BONNIE HOLDS UP THEIR CD)

... and then nine months on the road opening for The Foo Fighters. How's that sound?

ROCKER ONE

Who?

BONNIE

I know, right? I know it sounds intimidating, but we think you guys can handle it.

THE GUYS LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SHRUG. ROCKER TWO SNAPS HIS FINGERS.

ROCKER TWO

The Nirvana guy.

THE REST OF THE BAND NODS

BONNIE

You guys seriously don't know The Foo Fighters?

(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Ah, doesn't matter. Just sign your names on the dotted lines and we'll get started.

ROCKER ONE

What's this blank line for publishing?

BONNIE

Ha ha, hilarious.

ROCKER ONE LOOKS GENUINELY CONFUSED.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

You know, songwriting credit?

MORE BLANK STARES.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Royalties?

BLANK STARES ALL AROUND.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Wow. You are new. Everytime your song plays, whoever wrote the song gets publishing money. So we need to know which members wrote the songs.

ROCKER ONE

Oh, that doesn't apply to us.

BONNIE

Wow, that is totally cool. Some of the best bands in the world share writing credits. R.E.M. is famous for sharing credit.

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA

Who?

BONNIE LOOKS LESS AMUSED.

ROCKER TWO

Must be another American band.

ROCKER ONE

Anyway it really doesn't apply to us.

We don't write the songs.

BONNIE

But... what about this?

BONNIE HOLDS UP THE CD.

ROCKER ONE

Nothing but rock. No more toga songs.

ROCKER THREE

Yeah, we *used* to be a *toga* cover band,

but *now* we're a *rock* cover band...

only.

BONNIE

(IN DISBELIEF)

You're still a cover band?

BONNIE (CONT'D)

But...

BONNIE WAVES THEIR CD.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

...how can you be a cover band? I

haven't heard any of these songs!

ROCKER ONE

That's probably because we *only* cover songs we hear on Radio Europe.

ROCKER THREE

That's our niche, get it? Europe's Umbrella. We only cover European Bands.

LONG BEAT.

BONNIE

Um Neal, does your uncle know that you don't write your own songs?

ROCKER TWO

I never talk shop with him. I don't want people thinking we got famous just because of nepotism.

BEAT.

BONNIE

I don't think you're going to have to have that problem.

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA

Alright. Yeah. Cool.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHANSEN APPLIANCES -- DAY

(AARON, CUSTOMER, JOHANSEN)

AARON APPROACHES A **CUSTOMER** AT A WASHING MACHINE.

AARON

So, you like washing machines?

THE CUSTOMER GIVES HIM A FUNNY LOOK.

CUSTOMER

(OFF STICKER)

I see this model is energy efficient.

Does it qualify for the subsidy from
the energy company.

AARON LOOKS LIKE A DEER IN HEADLIGHTS.

AARON

It certainly should, shouldn't it?

Let me just take a look at this.

AARON LEANS DOWN AND STARTS READING THE STICKER ON
THE FRONT OF THE MACHINE.

AARON (CONT'D)

Ok. "Rinse. Spin.

(BEAT)

Soak."

CUSTOMER

Can I talk to another salesman?

AARON KEEPS READING THE STICKER.

AARON

No need for that.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

(BEAT)

This model just came in this morning
and nobody knows more about it than I
do. I'm the guy who put on this sticker.

(NOT LOOKING UP)

Do you have any blender questions?

CUSTOMER

What?

AARON

Blender questions? Questions about
blenders. That's my other specialty.
Washing machines and blenders. They
were like my major and minor at
appliance college.

CUSTOMER

Appliance college?

JOHANSEN ENTERS. AARON KEEPS READING THE STICKER.

JOHANSEN

Is everything ok, here?

CUSTOMER

Does this man actually work here?

JOHANSEN

He's new. Can I help you with
something?

CUSTOMER

I just wanted to know if this machine
qualifies for the subsidy from the
energy company.

JOHANSEN GOES BLANK. JOHANSEN LEANS DOWN NEXT TO
AARON AND STARTS READING THE STICKER.

JOHANSEN

Let's see here.

(BEAT)

"Rinse, spin..."

CUSTOMER

Oh, come on!

THE CUSTOMER WALKS OFF. JOHANSEN AND AARON STAND
UP.

AARON

I don't think that guy was a serious
buyer. I mean, does he want clean
clothes or a handout from the electric
company?

JOHANSEN

(NOT REALLY LISTENING)

If the energy company's really giving
away money for washing machines, they
ought to put that on the sticker.

AARON AND JOHANSEN LEAN BACK DOWN AND START READING
THE STICKER AGAIN.

AARON

You know, that guy wouldn't have had
to ask if I work here if we had
uniforms.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMILTON PUBLISHING -- DAY

(RICK, SHANAHAN)

RICK ENTERS HIS EDITOR'S OFFICE. **SHANAHAN** SITS BEHIND THE DESK.

RICK

Hi, is Mr. Banister here?

SHANAHAN GETS UP TO SHAKE RICK'S HAND.

SHANAHAN

Mike doesn't work here anymore.

RICK

(BEAMING)

Really?

SHANAHAN

I'm your new editor, Ron Shanahan.

RICK

Well, I must say that it's *good* to meet you, Ron. Really good to meet you.

SHANAHAN

The pleasure's all mine, Rick. I was a big fan of your first book and I love the second one even more. I can't wait to edit your third.

RICK

So, everything's ok with my new novel?

SHANAHAN

It ships nationally next Wednesday.
It would have shipped sooner, but for
some reason, Mike stopped the pressing.

RICK

Is that why you fired him?

SHANAHAN

We didn't fire him. We came in
yesterday and found his office cleaned
out. From what we can surmise, he
just snapped. His secretary said he
spent most of last week locked in his
office shouting, "Hemingway! Where's
my Hemingway?"

RICK

Strange.

SHANAHAN

It is, isn't it?

BEAT.

RICK

Well, if you ever find out where he
went, give him my regards.

SHANAHAN

Oh, we know where he went. He left a
note saying he was moving to New York
to edit Zack Wheatly.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHANSEN APPLIANCES -- NIGHT

(AARON, JOHANSEN, NICK, HAROLD, AMY)

AARON, JOHANSEN, NICK, AND AMY STAND NEXT TO A ROW OF WASHING MACHINES. **HAROLD** ENTERS.

JOHANSEN

Now that we're all here, let's begin.

AARON

The reason we've asked you all to stay late, and for Harold to come in on his day off, thanks Harold...

HAROLD SHRUGS HALFHEARTEDLY.

AARON (CONT'D)

... is because we have a crisis. Rumor has it that the government is giving away money for washing machines, and if we don't figure out how to get our customers their share, we're not going to have any customers.

JOHANSEN

It's a matter of survival, people.

AARON

So, Mr. Johansen and I have spent the last several hours dividing the sales force into teams, teams that can research the "government washing machine free money situation," and make sure that we get what's coming to us.

NICK

It took you *hours* to divide up four people?

AARON

And to assign responsibilities.

NICK

What are the responsibilities?

AARON

We're leaving that up to the groups.

AMY

Excuse me, are you talking about the fifty dollar energy credit that you get on all the new washing machines?

AARON

Where did you learn about that?

HAROLD

It's on the signs that come with the machines.

AARON

What signs?

JOHANSEN

Wait. Are you talking about those semi-billboards that the washing machine companies want us to plaster our windows with? Do they really think that we'd put those up?

AMY

I'm pretty sure they expect the salesmen to at least read them.

AARON

Alright then. It appears that the mystery's solved. Let's go ahead and call this a successful meeting. From this point forward, sales team members will not hide information from other sales team members... or from Mr. Johansen. Meeting adjourned.

NICK

Why didn't you just ask somebody?

AARON

No more questions, guys. I said meeting adjourned.

HAROLD

You know, your text said "urgent."

AARON

That's because it was. Seriously, no more questions.

HAROLD

I left my kid's playoff game for this.

HAROLD STOMPS OFF.

AARON

(TO JOHANSEN)

So, how do you want to handle Harold's
lousy attitude?

END SHOW