

ANCHOR BABY

A comedy in two acts by

D. Richard Tucker

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ANCHOR BABY

By D. Richard Tucker

SYNOPSIS: Bobby Anchor holds is a citizen of two countries: the USA and the tiny island nation of Mehlot, where Bobby lives with his wife Alita, a Mehloti native, who is pregnant with the couple's first child. Bobby's parents arrive from Philadelphia after the downturn in the US economy has left them unemployed and homeless, and after moving in with Bobby and his wife, quickly set about "Americanizing" the island nation. Now Bobby is torn between his love for his parents and his commitment to his wife, and their tiny country.

Cast of Characters

ALITA Anchor, F, (25), Mehloti native, married to Bobby, pregnant

BOBBY Anchor, M, (25), Caucasian, news anchor

JACK Anchor, M, (45+), Caucasian, Bobby's father

PHYLLIS Anchor, (45+), Caucasian, Bobby's mother

CHARLENE Anchor, (17), Caucasian, Bobby's sister

One Male native who plays the following roles:

HANDY MAN, M, any age, native

LONGO, 30+, M, native

STONER, M, 20ish, native

MR. OHNDUI, Alita's father, M, 45+, native

KABOOTAY, a factory worker, M, any age, native

REPORTER, 30+, M, native

One Female native who plays the following roles:

MAIL CARRIER, F, any age, native

MARITA, F, 25-35, native

TEEN girl, F, mid to late teens, native

ELLIE, a maid in training, F, 20 – 30, native

MRS. OHNDUI, Alita's mother, F, 45+, native

MAMOOKI, a factory worker, F, any age, native

ACCUPUNCTURIST, F, any age, native

SUSANNA Hawwaneek, political candidate, F, 45+, native

Tiny island country of Mehlot. City of Berajool.

The year 2011

ANCHOR BABY

ACT I
Scene 1

The play takes place in the city of Berajool, on the tiny island nation of Mehlot.

At one side of the stage is a small desk for a newscaster. Behind the desk may be a projection screen to show photographs of the current stories or the station logo. At the designers discretion, this part of the stage can consist only of a large screen and the newscasts in the play can be on video. The rest of the stage is the home of BOBBY and ALITA Anchor, a moderate sized apartment, consisting of a small living room and a small dining area. There is a front entrance door, a hall closet door, a door leading to the kitchen and a hallway entrance that leads to the bedrooms. The furnishings give a mixed feeling of foreign and familiar. Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

BOBBY

And continuing the trend of joblessness across the globe, the United States government announced its unemployment rate has risen 0.3 % from last month's 9.8 %, pushing the country's official unemployment rate over ten percent for the first time in more than seventy years. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home. SOUND: Doorbell. ALITA enters from the kitchen. She is a Mehlot native, dressed in casual attire, and pregnant - in her second trimester. ALITA opens the door. A HANDY MAN, another island native, sticks in his head.

HANDY MAN

Anch-or?

ALITA

Marazhabu. Lee cassay.

ALITA directs the HANDY MAN inside and closes the door.

HANDY MAN

Mo reet tu..

ALITA

Es kutah, mawa lotay.

ALITA walks to the kitchen door, followed by the HANDY MAN, who seems a bit reluctant.

HANDY MAN

Zay oko ...Eenglish?

ALITA stops and responds.

ALITA

Yes, I do.

HANDY MAN

May we then speak English, please? I wish very much my English to practice.

ALITA

If you like. This way, please. The garbage disposal is not working. You understand?

HANDY MAN

Yes. Garbage disposal. Thank you please.

ALITA and the HANDY MAN exit into the kitchen. SOUND: Phone ringing. ALITA enters and answers the phone.

ALITA

Hasoo vey.....Oh, hi, Honey. He just got here.....Right. Will you be home soon?.....No, I'm still feeling nauseous.....No, I think it's okay. The doctor said it was normal.....Well, my mom said the same thing. No need to worry..... Okay – hurry if you can....I love you, too.

ALITA hangs up. SOUND: Doorbell. ALITA answers the door. A female native MAIL CARRIER sticks her head in.

MAIL CARRIER

Hello, Alita. You have much mail today.

MAIL CARRIER hands ALITA a stack of letters.

ALITA

Thanks.

MAIL CARRIER

There is also letter from United States.

ALITA

Oh?

ALITA fumbles through the letters and finds the one in question.

MAIL CARRIER

Philadelphia.

ALITA

Oh, thanks.

MAIL CARRIER

I wonder what it might say.....

ALITA

I don't know.

(pause)

It's addressed to my husband.

MAIL CARRIER

(pause)

Are you going to open it?

ALITA

I'll wait for him.

MAIL CARRIER

(pause)

It might be good to check and see if it is bad news. That way you can make him ready for anything bad.

ALITA

I'll wait.

Are you sure? MAIL CARRIER

Yes. ALITA

(pause)
You are not going to open it? MAIL CARRIER

No. ALITA

(long pause)
Okie dokie then. I shall go now. MAIL CARRIER

Many blessings to you. ALITA

Many blessings to you. MAIL CARRIER
(pause, eyeing her stomach)
And your family.

Mo bittaaan. ALITA

ALITA closes the door and places the mail on the table, except for the letter from Philadelphia. ALITA opens this letter and begins to read. Soon, the HANDY MAN enters from the kitchen.

HANDY MAN
I found the dysfunction of the garbage disposal.

Yes? ALITA

HANDY MAN presents her with a broken plug.

HANDY MAN
It is a worn cable only, which the electricity prevented not to flow. I have the old plug away taken and then a better plug on the cable placed.

ALITA

Many thanks.

HANDY MAN

I have repaired and done so for very cheaply. Now will it work much handsomely.

ALITA

Many thanks.
(getting her purse)
How much is the repair?

HANDY MAN

A very short time.

ALITA

How much does it cost?

HANDY MAN

(still doesn't get it)
It lasted minutes only.

ALITA

Pratto leekoop?

HANDY MAN

Oh! It is
(slowly and quietly starts counting fingers, trying to remember the number in English)
One, two, three, four-

ALITA

In Mehlot?

HANDY MAN

(sheepishly)
Nawa keek.

ALITA

(fishing through purse)
That would be "twenty."

HANDY MAN

Twunny.

ALITA

Twenty.

Twen-tee?
HANDY MAN

(handing him a few coins)
ALITA
Yes.

Many thanks. You speak very well English.
HANDY MAN

Many thanks.
ALITA

Are you American?
HANDY MAN

No, my husband is.
ALITA

Oh! Your name – “Anch-or.” Is American, just like the news reporting man.
HANDY MAN

Yes.
ALITA

And you are Mehlotti.
HANDY MAN

Yes.
ALITA

But your husband not.
HANDY MAN

No, I mean, yes – he is a Mehlotti, but also American.
ALITA

How is...
HANDY MAN

(getting impatient)
ALITA
He was born here, but his parents are American so he is both.

HANDY MAN

That is very- so, your husband..
 (making the connection)
 He is the one! On Channel Eight?

ALITA

Yes.

HANDY MAN

He is my favorite news reporting man. I watch him very much – it helps my English.
 (in almost perfect impression)
 “This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot’s only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.”

ALITA opens the door.

ALITA

Yes, many thanks.

HANDY MAN

I wish I could English speak as good you do.

ALITA

...Thank you. You’re doing very well.

HANDY MAN

Many blessings to you.

ALITA

Many blessings to you.

HANDY MAN

(nodding at her pregnant bulge)
 And many blessings to your family.

ALITA

Mo bittaaan.

HANDY MAN exits and ALITA closes the door. ALITA looks at the letter, displeased, and suddenly feels ill. ALITA drops the letter, grabs her mouth and rushes into the hallway. SOUND: Vomiting. BOBBY enters from the front door, no longer wearing his jacket and tie.

BOBBY

(to off stage HANDY MAN)

Thank you.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

I watch you very much.

BOBBY

Thank you – that’s very kind.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

You are my favorite-

BOBBY

Many blessings to you.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

Many blessings to you.

BOBBY

Mo bittaaan.

BOBBY shuts door quickly.

BOBBY (cont’d)

Hi, Sweetie – I’m home.

BOBBY notices the letter on the floor and picks it up.

BOBBY (cont’d)

Alita? How are you, sweetie?

SOUND: Vomiting.

BOBBY (cont’d)

(feeling squeamish at the sound)

Good.

BOBBY begins reading letter. ALITA enters.

ALITA

Oh, good, you found that.

ALITA goes to BOBBY to kiss him, but as their lips come together, they remember her vomiting and BOBBY turns his head to kiss her on the cheek.

BOBBY

Are you feeling any better?

ALITA

It comes and goes. How about you?

BOBBY

More coming than going. I'm the father – I shouldn't have morning sickness.

ALITA

It's sympathy pain – nature doesn't want you to miss out on anything.

BOBBY

As long as I don't get labor pains -

ALITA

Did you read that?

BOBBY

Not yet.

ALITA (cont'd)

I didn't want to have to tell you.

BOBBY

What?

ALITA

You, know...

BOBBY

(reading, quizzical)

“It's been unseasonably warm-“

ALITA

No, read down further.

(points to paragraph)

There.

BOBBY reads.

Crap. BOBBY

I know. ALITA

They finally closed that plant. BOBBY

I can't imagine how your Dad's taking it. ALITA

Mom says- BOBBY

But is he really...or is she just saying that? ALITA

(shrugging) BOBBY
I wish they would have told us earlier. Why can't she use email like everybody else on the planet.

She doesn't say when it happened. ALITA

Probably a while ago – they would have tried to keep it quiet in hopes of things would turn around- BOBBY

SOUND: Phone ringing. ALITA answers.

Hasoo vey.....Oh, hi! How are you? Yes....yes.....we just got your letter. ALITA

Mom? BOBBY

(nodding) ALITA
Right. Well, ...um....of course.Umm yes, well, we'd love to have youSure
..... I guess it just depends on when the baby comes, I mean right now the nursery is empty – that's what we call the spare bedroom, the nursery – but it won't be long and the room will have a little occupant.

BOBBY

They're coming for a visit?

ALITA

Oh, yes....Charlene can stay in the study - we can use an air mattress.

BOBBY

Charlene, too?

ALITA

Oh, no....it won't be any trouble.....No, that's fine. We'll be happy to have you – just let us know what you're planning....What's that?Sure.

ALITA hands the phone to BOBBY.

BOBBY

Hi, Mom.....yes.....

ALITA

(talking to herself)

Okay, let's make some plans?

BOBBY

Yeah, that's...um....that's great

ALITA

Marita will lend me her air mattress – I'm sure Charlene would like that – teenagers always think that sleeping on the floor is fun.

BOBBY

Okay.....

ALITA

We can put your parents in the nursery, it may be a little crowded, but it will only be for a week or so.

BOBBY

Umm, sure....

ALITA

I mean I'm assuming it's only -

(directly to BOBBY)

How long do you think they'll stay?

BOBBY

Mom, how long are-
(pause)
Mom?.....

ALITA

(back to talking to herself)
Maybe we should move into the nursery and give our room to your parents.

BOBBY

That would be...um...sure..

ALITA

I wish they weren't coming so soon. That doesn't give us much time to get ready.

BOBBY

Well...I think that-

ALITA

Maybe they could wait a few months, maybe in the summer.

BOBBY

Mom, when were you planning on-

ALITA

Of course then we'll have the baby to deal with – it might be crowded.

BOBBY

We, you know, just wanted to make arrange-

ALITA

Though they might be able to help out – feedings and diapers and stuff.

BOBBY

Because of, you know, the baby-

ALITA

Do you think they'd mind helping out with the baby?

BOBBY

Oh. Well, that solves that problem.

ALITA

What?

Sure.....We can't wait.

BOBBY

What solves the problem?

ALITA

Love you, too, Mom.

BOBBY

BOBBY hangs up, now completely horrified.

When are they coming?

ALITA

Sooner than expected.

BOBBY

Next month?

ALITA

They're in the parking lot.

BOBBY

What?

ALITA

I am so sorry.

BOBBY

ALITA, runs to the door and opens it.

PHYLLIS (offstage)

Hello, there. We're just unpacking the cab.

ALITA exits out front door. BOBBY suddenly feels sick, grabs his mouth and quickly exits down the hall. Blackout.

ACT I, Scene 2

Later that day. JACK, PHYLLIS, and BOBBY are seated in the living room while ALITA serves them coffee. BOBBY is not enjoying is parents' company.

JACK

Thanks for all the accommodations, you two.

PHYLLIS

It's very nice of you to make room.

BOBBY

Well, after all, we're family

ALITA

In Mehlot we have a tradition of close families - it's called "rahbu."

BOBBY

That means ... "love of family."

PHYLLIS

That's very nice. It looks like the baby is coming along.

ALITA

Yes, I'm not used to having a pot belly.

JACK

You should have seen Phyllis when she was expecting.

PHYLLIS

Jack.

JACK

When she was pregnant with Charlene, Bobby walked up to her - he was only about eight years old - and he asked Phyllis why she was so fat.

PHYLLIS

Jack.

JACK

Phyllis thought she'd play it off, she said "Now, honey, remember, Mommy has a baby growing in her tummy." And Bobby looks up at her and says "Oh. Well what do you have growing in your butt?"

PHYLLIS

That's not funny, Jack.

JACK

Oh, it's funny - I know funny, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS
That was a great meal, Alita.

ALITA
Thank you.

PHYLLIS
And so fresh.

BOBBY
She's a great cook.

JACK
Good stuff – you don't get fish that fresh back in Philly.

PHYLLIS
No, not at all. You'd think we would, you know, being so close to the water and all, but never as fresh as yours.

JACK
The last time I saw a fresh fish, it was walking across the Delaware River.

JACK laughs.

PHYLLIS
That's not funny, Jack.

JACK
I thought it was.

PHYLLIS
Well, it wasn't.

JACK
Sure, it's funny. I know funny, Phyllis. I mean, think about it – “it was walking across the Delaware River.” See, that not only says something about how fresh the fish was – he was still alive, you know – but it also says a lot about the Delaware, right Alita?

ALITA
I'm sorry. I'm from Mehlot, remember? Sometimes your humor escapes me.

PHYLLIS
Lucky you.

JACK

See, it's saying that the Delaware River is so polluted, that you can walk across it, whereas most rivers, you'd have to swim across. That's funny, right?

ALITA

Actually, I find it very sad.

JACK

Plus, fish don't walk – so it puts a funny image in your head, making it even more memorable.

PHYLLIS

Though we'd like to forget.

JACK

Stop it, Phyllis. I know funny.

PHYLLIS

If you have to explain it, Jack, it's not funny.

JACK

I thought it was funny. Don't you think it was funny, Bobby?

BOBBY

Oh, sure.... So what happened at the plant, anyhow?

JACK

Oh, I don't even want to talk about it.

PHYLLIS

They threw them out – closed up shop, laid off everybody.

BOBBY

Just like that?

PHYLLIS

Filed for bankruptcy – he probably won't even get his pension.

JACK

Twenty-one years I worked for that company.

ALITA

And your house, you had to leave it?

PHYLLIS

We rented it out –

JACK

Couldn't afford the mortgage.

PHYLLIS

There's this nice Mexican family that moved in, Fernando is the father's name.

JACK

I don't think you can say that.

PHYLLIS

Say what?

JACK

"Mexican." I don't think you can say that.

PHYLLIS

Why not?

JACK

You have to say something else, like "Latino" or "Hispanic" or something.

PHYLLIS

Why can't you say "Mexican?"

JACK

Because they might not be from Mexico - they might be from Guatemala or somewhere.

PHYLLIS

What's the difference?

JACK

I don't know – probably 'cause they speak different languages. In Mexico they speak Mexican and in Guatemala they speak ...Guatelmian.

PHYLLIS

Well, what does Fernando speak?

JACK

(shrugs)

All sounds like jibber-jabber to me.

BOBBY

That's hard to believe – some one else is living in our house.

ALITA

Well, I'm sure you'll be comfortable here.

BOBBY

How long is the lease?

JACK

The what?

BOBBY

The lease. On the house?

PHYLLIS

Oh, just a year – we were advised to lease for one year at a time.

BOBBY

So Fernando and his family will be there for....

JACK

For about ..eleven more months.

PHYLLIS

We were staying with your Aunt Christine - you remember her, right Bobby?

BOBBY

Yeah.

JACK

But after a while, you know we felt like we were, you know, imposing.

PHYLLIS

It was very uncomfortable.

JACK

So I got this idea, hey – let's move – out of the country.

ALITA

And you decided to come here.

JACK

Yeah, makes perfect sense – we just leave the country – I mean it happens all the time in the US – A Mexican guy, or a Guatemala guy, or a Russian guy, or some Indian guy – he comes to the States, gets a job, settles down, and then the next thing you know he brings his whole family over and you got like thirty-seven people living in a two bedroom apartment.

BOBBY

Well, good thing you didn't bring thirty-seven people.

JACK

I mean that's the new way. If there aren't any jobs in Philly, why not move?

ALITA

Exactly.

PHYLLIS

And since we have family here, it only made sense.

ALITA

Did you get visas?

JACK

Oh, don't need to worry about that.

PHYLLIS

We've got family here, remember, that whole dual citizenship thing.

BOBBY

Oh. Well, yeah.

JACK

Good thing we got off that cruise ship at just the right time.

ALITA

And how long will you stay?

JACK

Oh, who knows?

PHYLLIS

Who knows?

JACK

We might retire here.

BOBBY

What about a job?

JACK

I'll find something. They can probably use me in upper management. I mean, I'm not the white collar type, but hey, what kind of competition can they have here? You know what they say – on an island of blind people, the one-eyed man is king.

BOBBY

Dad, you might find it a little different.

ALITA

Are you planning on learning the language? You can enroll in some classes.

JACK

Oh, no need for that – it takes too long. Besides, people won't expect that from us.

PHYLLIS

I can pick it up, I'm good with languages. I once went to Atlanta – in Georgia - and I could understand almost everything they said...well, kind of.

CHARLENE enters from the front door and slams it shut.

CHARLENE

God, this place is a dump.

PHYLLIS

Charlene, don't slam the door.

CHARLENE

There is like so nothing to do here.

CHARLENE exits into hallway.

ALITA

What about school for Charlene?

CHARLENE enters quickly.

CHARLENE

No school!

JACK

You're going to school.

CHARLENE

No way! I am not going to school with a bunch of pygmies.

CHARLENE exits down the hallway

PHYLLIS

She's still trying to adjust.

JACK

We thought we could enroll her in the local high school. I mean she's only a junior, but these kids aren't ...well, you know, she should be able to graduate pretty quick, right?

CHARLENE (offstage)

No way!

PHYLLIS

(yelling)

Think about it, Charlene, you'd be going to school with a bunch of island kids. Wouldn't you like to be the smart one for once?

CHARLENE sticks her head out.

CHARLENE

How do you figure?

PHYLLIS

It wouldn't matter that you'd been put back a grade, you'll automatically be at the top of the class.

CHARLENE

So I could be the brainiac? This might work.

CHARLENE exits.

BOBBY

Hasn't changed a bit, has she?

JACK

She totally hates school.

PHYLLIS

We were hoping a new school system might help.

SOUND: Doorbell. BOBBY answers door and MARITA enters, carrying a deflated air mattress.

MARITA

(without a trace of accent)

Hi, Bobby. Hi, Alita. I brought over the mattress.

ALITA

Oh, thank you Marita.

ALITA goes to her and takes the mattress.

ALITA (cont'd)

This is my mother-in-law Phyllis, and my father-in-law, Jack. This is my neighbor, Marita.

They shake hands.

PHYLLIS

Nice to meet you.

MARITA

Nice to meet you, too.

JACK

Hello.

ALITA

They just arrived today.

MARITA

Well, I hope you enjoy your stay.

PHYLLIS

Thank you very much. Your English is very good.

MARITA

Thank you.

PHYLLIS

Did you learn to speak English from listening to Alita and Bobby?

MARITA

Well, no...actually I took English classes when I was a child and then, of course more classes at boarding school in Australia. My professors at Stanford felt I would make a good language instructor, but once I got tenure at the University, I decided to concentrate on European History.

JACK

Well, you seemed to have picked it up pretty good.

MARITA

Thanks.

(to ALITA)

I'd better get going.

MARITA (cont'd)

(to JACK and PHYLLIS)
Enjoy your stay.

PHYLLIS

Thank you.

MARITA

Mo bittaaan

ALITA and BOBBY

Mo bittaaan.

MARITA exits.

JACK

She's very nice.

BOBBY

Yes.

PHYLLIS

What does that mean "Mo bittaaan.?"

ALITA

"Good bye."

JACK

You know, I'm beat. This jet lag really takes its toll on me.

PHYLLIS

It's horrible. I feel like I've been up for a full week.

JACK

I'm going to unpack in the morning. I just need to get my machine out.

BOBBY

Machine?

JACK

My breathing machine. "Mo bittaaan."

JACK exits down hallway.

PHYLLIS

His doctor gave him this breathing apparatus – a CPAP machine. Your father has the sleep apnea, so he stops breathing when he sleeps.

JACK (offstage)

Which bag is it in?

PHYLLIS

(yelling)

The big one I think.

(to BOBBY and ALITA)

He used to snore something terrible and he was always cranky, but now he wears a mask when he sleeps and it breathes for him so he's much more rested in the morning.

JACK (offstage)

I can't find it.

PHYLLIS

I'd better go help him look. Thanks for a lovely dinner, Alita.

ALITA

You're welcome.

PHYLLIS

We'll see you two in the morning. Sleep tight.

PHYLLIS kisses BOBBY on the forehead and exits.

BOBBY

(pause)

I am so sorry.

ALITA

What for?

BOBBY does a head jerk toward the hallway.

ALITA (cont'd)

Oh, no, they're fine.

BOBBY

No they're not.

ALITA

Yes, they are, they're just...a little...quaint.

(pause)

Why aren't you happy to see them?

BOBBY

You've forgotten what they're like. Remember the wedding? Remember the weekend we spent at the house?

ALITA

It wasn't that bad.

BOBBY

Just wait. You'll be begging them to leave.

ALITA

I don't think-

JACK (offstage)

Hey, Bobby! I'm using your toothbrush – hope you don't mind.

BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks. Black out.

ACT I, scene 3

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing a sportcoat.

BOBBY

And lastly, city officials are alarmed at the increasing rate of graffiti appearing in the Berajool suburbs. Neighborhoods which previously had little or no issues with vandalism are experiencing the marking of signs and structures with aerosol spray paint. Citizens are asked to alert the authorities if they witness any such acts. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home a week later. JACK, very tired, sits at the dining room table sipping a cup of coffee. ALITA enters with coffee pot.

ALITA

Should I save some coffee for Phyllis?

JACK

No, I don't know when she'll get back.

ALITA

You seem tired, Jack. Are you sleeping all right?

JACK

No, I'm not sleeping at all. My CPAP machine broke.

ALITA

I'm sorry. I guess that's why you were snoring so loudly.

JACK

Oh, was it noticeable?

ALITA

Oh, hardly, just ...a little bit.

JACK

I'm sorry. I justcan't get to sleep without that blasted machine. I told Phyllis we should have carried it on.

ALITA

You know, there's a little appliance shop down at the corner. Do you think they might be able to fix it?

JACK

I don't know - it's a pretty sensitive piece of machinery.

ALITA

Well, I'm sure they'd look at it if you took it down. If they fix it, you could get some rest.

JACK

Yeah, I feel like crap.

ALITA

And you wouldn't have to worry about snoring anymore and waking up any one in the house.

JACK

Am I doing that?

ALITA

Oh, no. I just thought itmight, you know, get worse.

JACK

I don't know.

ALITA

If you like, I'll take it down to the shop for you? It's not very heavy, is it?

JACK

Umm...no it's not – you know, that's okay. I can take it down.

ALITA

I mean, you don't have to, it's just...

JACK

No, that's probably a good idea. I should probably do that.

JACK exits into hallway. BOBBY enters from hallway.

ALITA

(quietly)
Are you?

BOBBY

What?

ALITA

Going to tell them?

BOBBY

Oh, yeah, I just.....

PHYLLIS enters from front door.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Hi, Mom.

PHYLLIS reaches into her purse, pulls out a wad of local currency, and holds it out to ALITA.

PHYLLIS

Alita, how much is this?

ALITA takes the money and counts.

ALITA
It's a total of -

PHYLLIS
Like, in American.

ALITA
It's abouttwo hundred dollars.

PHYLLIS
Holy crap.

BOBBY
Where'd you get that?

ALITA
Is that good?

PHYLLIS
Two hundred dollars is a lot of money. I mean, maybe not in Philly, but in this place you could live for a month on two hundred dollars.

JACK enters with CPAP machine in its case.

ALITA
Yes, that's probably-

JACK
Where'd you get all the money?

PHYLLIS
I got a job.

JACK
Really. What kind of work can you do?

PHYLLIS
I'm a housekeeper.

JACK
You're a maid?

PHYLLIS
Housekeeper. For a very rich lady.

ALITA

Who, Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

This lady. I was walking down the street and I saw this giant house – absolutely gorgeous – and I stopped to look at it when this lady pulled up in a limousine, and so I made a little chit-chat, you know, asked her about the place and all, and I said something like “It must be difficult to keep the dust out in this climate.” And she said “Yes, it is, the maid I have is never able to keep things dusted well.” And I said “Well, I would fire her, because a maid who can’t dust like having no help at all.” And she said that she had already fired three maids, but nobody knows how to dust on this island. And I explained to her how you should use the static cling dryer sheets on your lamp shades because it picks up the dust but the chemical won’t hurt your shades, and how you should dust every day because a little comes up easily, but if you wait too long, you’ve got a mess on your hands.

JACK

(to ALITA)

Phyllis would know. She runs a very tight household.

PHYLLIS

I’m talking, Jack. And so the next thing you know, she’s offering me a job – five days a week for this much money.

ALITA

That much - every week?

PHYLLIS

Every day. She paid me a day in advance because she was afraid I wouldn’t come back. Four hours a day, five days a week, for this much money.

JACK

That’s great stuff.

BOBBY

Were you able to get a worker’s permit?

PHYLLIS

No, she said she’d pay me in cash, so I don’t think I have to worry about it.

ALITA

But you have to have a worker’s permit to accept a job in Mehlot.

PHYLLIS

I’m sure it’s okay.

JACK

Here, give me some of that. I have to take my CPAP down and get it fixed.

JACK takes half of the cash.

PHYLLIS

Here, take it all if it'll keep you from snoring.

PHYLLIS gives him the rest of the cash.
JACK takes the money. ALITA nudges
BOBBY, egging him on.

BOBBY

Um, Mom, Dad....I was thinking.

PHYLLIS

What about?

BOBBY

It just seems that, you know, now that you're living here....in this country....that you should get to know it....you know the culture. That you should get out and get involved...with the people here.

PHYLLIS

I just got a job, Bobby, what more do you want?

BOBBY

Well, I just think it's important to assimilate. Into the community.

JACK and PHYLLIS exchange looks.

JACK

Sure, whatever. Hey can you give me a ride down to the appliance store? Alita said there was one on the corner.

BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks.

BOBBY

Umm.. sure.

JACK

Later.

JACK exits with his CPAP machine.
BOBBY kisses ALITA goodbye and follows
JACK out.

ALITA

That's very fortunate that you found work so quickly.

PHYLLIS

It's perfect. I know housework.

ALITA

Don't you think you should get your worker's permit, though?

PHYLLIS

Well, I suppose that - Do you have taxes in this country?

ALITA

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Oh. Well, we'll see. I'm going to take a nap while he's gone. Maybe I can sleep without that snoring.

PHYLLIS exits into hallway. ALITA exits into kitchen. The front door slowly opens part way and CHARLENE's head appears, looking around. Now that the coast is clear, CHARLENE and TEEN enter. The TEEN wears baggy clothes, a hat, and sunglasses. CHARLENE is carrying a bag. From the bag CHARLENE takes out two cans of spray paint and hands one to TEEN. CHARLENE begins shaking the can.

CHARLENE

Okay, shake it up really good.

TEEN

Like this?

TEEN shakes the can.

CHARLENE

Pretty much. You've got to mix it up or it'll come out in splooges.

TEEN

Okay.

CHARLENE

Now, pop the cap.

CHARLENE takes off the cap from her can of paint. TEEN struggles with hers.

TEEN

Like this?

CHARLENE

No, not really. Here.

CHARLENE trades paint cans with the TEEN and takes the cap off the other one. CHARLENE throws the paint cap on the floor. TEEN throws her paint cap on the floor.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

Okay, now put your finger on the top, and then as you press down with your finger, the paint comes out. Watch.

CHARLENE paints a streak on the wall.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

You try.

TEEN points at the wall, but because her can is facing the wrong direction, she sprays her own hand.

TEEN

Oh! Shoo-BAH-koo!

CHARLENE

Point the hole in the can where you want to paint – that's where the paint comes out.

TEEN sprays a spot on the wall.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

Better. Now try this.

CHARLENE sprays a line. TEEN sprays a line. CHARLENE sprays a curving line. TEEN sprays a curving line.

You're getting the hang of it.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

ALITA enters and sees the spray paint on the wall.

ALITA

What are you doing?!

CHARLENE

Practicing.

ALITA

You can't paint my walls.

CHARLENE

Looks like we did.

TEEN

It's not hard.

TEEN sprays another line.

ALITA

Stop that!

ALITA snatches the can from TEEN.

CHARLENE

Hey! Chill out, lady. Give us back the paint.

ALITA

You can't do this!

CHARLENE

(to TEEN)

She's like that 'cause she's pregnant – her hormones make her all wooby wooby.

ALITA

Give me the paint, Charlene.

CHARLENE

No, bitch!

TEEN

(to CHARLENE)
Is she really pregnant?

CHARLENE

(to TEEN)
Sure, right there.

CHARLENE sprays a circle of paint on ALITA's midsection denoting her pregnant bulge.

ALITA

Charlene! You are...you are.....

ALITA drops the paint and breaks down crying and exits into kitchen.

CHARLENE

(picking up the paint)
It's hormones. Don't ever get knocked up – it'll screw up your head.

TEEN

Word.

CHARLENE

Don't say that – it's so yesterday.

CHARLENE and TEEN exit out front door.
Blackout.

ACT I, scene 4

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

BOBBY

Unemployment has hit hard across the globe and is even finding its way to Mehlot. Berajool mayor, Kun Lawatooshinno is concerned that crime rates may increase as employment becomes harder to find. He strongly recommends job applicants get additional training, and hopes to establish a community training center to increase occupational skills and opportunities. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast.
Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on

family home. JACK is putting a fresh coat of paint over the graffiti. LONGO is sitting thumbing through a document. PHYLLIS is sitting on the sofa with her feet up, drinking a beverage. There is a stack of coasters on the coffee table and a vacuum cleaner standing in one corner of the room.

PHYLLIS

I think it's a very wise choice, Mr. Longo. It's an investment. Ellie has great potential.

LONGO

You think it's a good idea, huh?

PHYLLIS

Oh, yes. You see how much improvement she's already made – in just one hour of instruction.

LONGO

She does seem to be a lot better.

PHYLLIS

Consider how much better she'll be once she graduates.

LONGO

But will it help her get a better job?

PHYLLIS

I guarantee it. All graduates of the Phyllis Anchor Housekeeping Academy go on to much better positions in the domestic care industry, and Ellie shows amazing progress. Just sign that, and I'll get Ellie into the next available class. She'll have a new, better paying job in just three weeks.

LONGO continues reading the contract while JACK speaks with PHYLLIS.

JACK

I'm going down to appliance repair to pick up my machine.

PHYLLIS

Make sure you put away that paint.

JACK grabs the paint can and roller and exits out the front door.

LONGO

That's a lot of money.

PHYLLIS

It's an investment, Mr. Longo. Or, you can just continue with your current path, that's always an option.

LONGO

Well, I-

PHYLLIS

Ellie!

ELLIE enters from the kitchen wearing
maid's attire.

ELLIE

Yes, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Did you finish the silver?

ELLIE

Almost. I still have the butter knives.

PHYLLIS

Let's show your husband what you've learned.

ELLIE moves over to PHYLLIS's side.

ELLIE

Yes, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Ellie, what is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number four?

ELLIE

Always dust from top to bottom. That way the dust that falls will not soil the surface that has already been dusted.

PHYLLIS

Impressive, isn't she?

LONGO

Well

PHYLLIS

Ellie, what is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number five?

ELLIE

Take out the trash daily to prevent unwanted odors in your living space.

PHYLLIS

You hear that, Mr. Longo? That's the sound of a qualified professional.

LONGO

I don't know.

PHYLLIS

Mr. Longo. I am the personal housekeeper for Susanna Hawwaneek – do you know who she is?

LONGO

Oh, yes.

PHYLLIS

And you've seen her house?

LONGO

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Do you know how many housekeepers she's fired?

LONGO shakes his head "no."

PHYLLIS (cont'd)

Too may to count. Now, if she's happy with my abilities, don't you think I might help your Ellie learn a thing or two?

LONGO

Okay, I'll sign.

LONGO picks up the thick contract and starts to sign. PHYLLIS gets up and places her drink on the table.

PHYLLIS

Now what do you do, Ellie?

ELLIE quickly picks up the glass, wipes the condensation off the coaster, places it on the table and darts into the kitchen. LONGO hands over the signed contract.

LONGO

Tell Ellie, I'll be out by the car. I need a smoke.

LONGO exits as ELLIE peeks her head out of the kitchen.

ELLIE

Is that okay, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Not quite. What did we forget?

ELLIE comes out warily looking around the room.

ELLIE

I forgot to smooth out the sofa?

ELLIE smooths out the sofa where PHYLLIS has been sitting.

PHYLLIS

That's one.

ELLIE continues looking around the room.

ELLIE

I forgot to put away the coaster?

ELLIE places the coaster in the stack with the others.

PHYLLIS

That's two.

ELLIE

How many more?

PHYLLIS

Just one.

ELLIE canvases the room looking for the third offense, but can't find it.

ELLIE

I give up.

PHYLLIS

The vacuum cleaner...you should have taken that with you into the kitchen.... remember? What is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number seven?

ELLIE

(slapping her forehead)

When moving from room to room, always take something with you for the next task. Never make two trips when one is sufficient.

PHYLLIS

Exactly.

ELLIE

Oh, Mrs. Phyllis I have so much to learn.

PHYLLIS

Don't beat yourself up about it. It takes lots of hard work, but here at the Anchor Housekeeping Academy, we promise to stand by you until you meet our standards in excellence.

ELLIE

What next, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

That's all for today, Ellie. We don't want to overwhelm your little mind. Come back on Tuesday and don't forget – payment is due at that time.

ELLIE

Many blessings to your family.

PHYLLIS

Many blessings.

ELLIE

Mo bittaaan.

ELLIE exits. BOBBY enters from the hallway.

BOBBY

Mom, can we talk for a second?

PHYLLIS

If it's quick, honey, I have to go to work soon.

BOBBY

Well, I was just thinking....you guys have been here – how long now?

PHYLLIS

Oh, the time just flies by.

BOBBY

Well, I was wondering – I mean Alita and I were wondering-

PHYLLIS

Oh, she is just the sweetest thing, Bobby. You two are so great together.

BOBBY

Well, we wondered if you – and Dad and Charlene...um, if you were going to stay much longer, I mean-

PHYLLIS

Bobby, what are we supposed to do? We can't go back to Philly – we have no home. I'm trying to get your father a job. We want to pull our weight, but I think you should be a little more considerate in these trying times.

BOBBY

Oh, Mom, it's just –

PHYLLIS

Look, Bobby, I'm even assimilating into the community, just like you wanted. I already have seven students.

BOBBY

I know, Mom, I was just –

PHYLLIS

Family is family, Bobby – never forget that. What was that word? “Rahbu?” We never turn our back on family. Your father and I appreciate those work permits - I just wish you'd asked first, because we now have to figure out how to avoid the taxes. You two have been so wonderful to us and we appreciate it. You're just so sweet.

PHYLLIS grabs her purse, kisses BOBBY on the cheek and exits out front door.
BOBBY stares at the closed door for a

second and then retreats through the hallway. Seconds later, the front door opens and CHARLENE enters. STONER looks in hesitantly.

CHARLENE

C'mon. We don't have all day.

STONER enters.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

And close the door. Geez, dude, were you born in a grass hut?

CHARLENE and STONER sit at the table.
CHARLENE produces a small pack.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

You got the cash?

STONER

...yes?

CHARLENE

The cash?

STONER gives CHARLENE quizzical look.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

The bucks – moolah.

STONER

Moo...

CHARLENE

Dollars, you know – money.

STONER

Money...yes.

Awkward pause.

CHARLENE

Okay, look here, Jackie Chan. This is the part where you show me the money....so I will know if you really have it - that you're serious, and that you're on the up and up.

Up? Where?
STONER

Put the money on the table!
(pointing)
Here!
CHARLENE

Yes ...yes.
STONER

STONER places money on table.
CHARLENE opens fanny pack and takes
out a small bag of dried leaves.

Okay, this stuff is the best. Medicinal grade, nurtured under artificial light in a controlled
climate, with a mean temperature of seventy-four degrees, grown under government
control.
CHARLENE

Your government grows-
STONER

It's medicinal, okay. This will cost you...
(looking through STONER's money)
hmm, pretty much everything you've got here.
CHARLENE

STONER gives her a blank stare.

Not sure, huh? Okay, this
(producing another bag)
Is a high grade specimen specimen, grown in the wild. It comes from a larger leaf, but
it's grown in arid conditions to increase potency. Not exactly as strong as the premium
government batch, but a great high, all the same. It will cost you....
CHARLENE

CHARLENE picks up money, removes a
few bills, places them on the table, and
places the rest in a pile in front of the bag.

This much.
CHARLENE (cont'd)

CHARLENE waits in anticipation as
STONER stares at it blankly.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

And last, and definitely least,
(producing another bag)

Is this batch of rooftop pot, directly from the inner city of Franklinville, watered with acid rain and fertilized with an occasional shower of cat piss. It's not a good high, but it beats being sober. It will cost you....

CHARLENE takes two bills and returns the rest to STONER, throwing the two remaining bills in front of the bag on the table.

CHARLENE

This much.

STONER

(nodding)

Okay.

CHARLENE

That figures - lowest common denominator.

STONER takes the bag and money, leaving the two bills. CHARLENE grabs the two bills and pockets them as ALITA enters from the kitchen.

ALITA

What's going on here?

CHARLENE

Nothing! Nothing at all. Now get your ass back in that kitchen.

ALITA

What?

CHARLENE produces a switchblade and flicks it open.

CHARLENE

Don't give me any mouth, bitch. Get back in there and mind your pots and pans – I'm doing business here.

ALITA

I'm not –

CHARLENE

I will cut you! Understand? I will slice you. I will dice you. I will make you Julienne fries. Do not mess with me while I'm doing business!

ALITA

(pause)

You are a very angry child.

ALITA exits into kitchen. CHARLENE puts away knife.

CHARLENE

Okay, dude. You know where to get it. You need any more, call me.

STONER

I...umm..

CHARLENE

What?

STONER

Do you have a light?

CHARLENE

You're not smoking it here! Now get out.

CHARLENE escorts STONER to front door and opens it.

STONER

You have a least.....matches?

CHARLENE

Do I look like a Quickie Mart?Okay...

CHARLENE produces a book of matches and hands it to STONER.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

Here, but that's it - you're cutting into my profit margin. Now, get out.

CHARLENE pushes STONER out the door as JACK enters from front door carrying a cardboard box.

Who was that? JACK

(shrugging)
Some foreigner. CHARLENE

I smell pot. You doing drugs? JACK

No, not really. CHARLENE

You're selling drugs aren't you? Where did you get the pot? JACK

Dad. CHARLENE

Where from? JACK

Russell. CHARLENE

Who? JACK

Russell Gray, in Omaha. CHARLENE

How did you know him? JACK

We're friends on Facebook. CHARLENE

(not sure what to do, then yelling)
Phyllis, your kid is selling drugs. JACK

CHARLENE exits out front door.
ALITA enters from hallway.

Phyllis isn't here. ALITA

JACK pulls a mechanical apparatus from the cardboard box.

JACK
Look at this, Alita. You know what this is?

ALITA
No.

JACK
It's a CPAP machine.

ALITA
Did they fix your-

JACK
No it was toast, but they looked over the design and created one in the shop. It has everything – adjustable pressure gage, adjustable ramp time, humidifier, the works. You know how much this thing costs on the open market? MSRP is eighteen hundred dollars. Sometimes you can find them for as little as eight maybe nine hundred. You know how much this cost me?

ALITA
I'm guessing less.

JACK
Thirty-five bucks. Thirty-five. Can you believe that?

ALITA
That's less.

JACK
No kidding. If I put these on the market, I could make a fortune. I could build a whole plant. Jack's CPAP factory. I could bring industrialization to this island. Imagine that – huge warehouses, giant smoke stacks, it would be just like home.

ALITA
Yes, I suppose it would.

JACK
This little baby is going to make us rich. Maybe we should call Aunt Christine. She could quit her job at the doughnut shop and move over here.

ALITA exits into kitchen. BOBBY enters from the front door.

BOBBY
Dad, have you been barbecuing?

JACK
Huh?

BOBBY
Have you?

JACK
Whatta you mean?

BOBBY
Mr. Ahtroki said he had an issue with smoke on the balcony.

JACK
Who is...Ahtroki?

BOBBY
The landlord.

JACK
Oh, well ... you'll have to introduce me to him sometime. Look, I was thinking-

BOBBY
Dad, were you grilling on the balcony?

JACK
(caught)
Aw, Bobby....

BOBBY
You know we've talked about this.

JACK
I just wanted a couple of pork chops. I got some beauties down at the market, that guy with the hair lip-

BOBBY
No, Dad. You're not in Philly anymore, Dorothy. You don't grill on the balcony.

JACK
It was just a couple of chops-

BOBBY

Not pork chops, not ribs, not even kielbasa – if you want to barbecue, how are you supposed to do it?

JACK

Bobby –

BOBBY

I've asked you to try and assimilate into the culture. What did I tell you?

JACK

(sheepishly)

No grilling on the balcony.

BOBBY

And why is that?

JACK

Becausethe people of Mehlot ,,,,don't grill on the balcony.

BOBBY

And that's important because....?

JACK

Becausewe need tofit into the local culture.

BOBBY

And why?

JACK

So the frickin' natives don't think we're some kind of savages.

BOBBY

I think you're catching on.

(a little more assertive)

So Dad, how are you supposed to grill your pork chops?

JACK

Bobby-

BOBBY

Dad.

JACK

I ...go down to the end of the block.

And? BOBBY

Dig a hole. JACK

And? BOBBY

Build a fire. JACK

And? BOBBY

Wrap the chops in ... some kind of frickin' leaf. JACK

Ebuki leaves, Dad. BOBBY

Yeah, those. JACK

ALITA enters.

And why didn't you? BOBBY

Because....because.....because I'm a lazy American fat ass and I cook on a grill not in a hole. JACK

I've told you, Dad, when in Rome, do as the- BOBBY

I'm pretty sure the Romans would be okay with a hibachi on the balcony. JACK

(snapping)
Listen, Mister –As long as you are under my roof, you play by my rules. Got it? BOBBY

Yeah, okay. JACK

BOBBY

Now go to your room!

JACK nods and exits submissively.

ALITA

Are you okay?

BOBBY

I...um...I justMr. Atrohki mentioned...you know....smoke.

ALITA

Honey, I think you're losing your cool.

BOBBY

Alita, it's been like this my whole life. They have been involved in everything I did, and everything they touched they screwed up. It was like this in Cub Scouts, Little League, High School – why do you think I suggested we move to Mehlot after college?

ALITA

I thought you liked the lifestyle.

BOBBY

I do! It's quiet, it's relaxing, and it's seventy-three hundred miles away from my parents. Or it used to be.

ALITA

I think you need to be a little more patient.

BOBBY

What's wrong with you? Why aren't you upset? – I mean, Charlene actually spray painted you!

ALITA

She's going through a tough time right now. She's had a lot of change in her life and it's not easy adapting to a new culture. And your dad – the poor guy lost his job, he had to give up his home. He's just trying to fit in, you know, he's trying to make himself at home here, and that's the only way he knows.

BOBBY

They're not adapting at all.

ALITA

Look, it's okay. I'll put together a little ...lesson or something, to teach them about our culture.

A class?

BOBBY

They're just not familiar with -

ALITA

The front door swings open and CHARLENE, brandishing a hand gun, enters, spins quickly and fires three shots out the door. CHARLENE then slams the door closed, and leaning against the door notices ALITA and BOBBY, and slips the gun back into her waistband behind her back. There is an awkward pause.

CHARLENE

Youmight not want to go out there.

CHARLENE exits into hallway. BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks. SOUND: Police siren in distance. Feeling sick, ALITA and BOBBY put their hands to their mouths and simultaneously exit, ALITA through the kitchen door and BOBBY down the hallway. Lights fade out.

To read the rest of this script, you may contact the author for a full copy. Please contact him at WriteDaveTucker@yahoo.com.