

BAD CREDIT

By Larry Mitchell

A ten minute play in support of outsourcing.

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Larry Mitchell

mygrandadsname@gmail.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHUCK/CHELSEA M/F, late twenties, customer service rep.

CHAD/CHANDRA M/F, late twenties, agitated customer.

HANK Chuck's boss, mid thirties, robotic. (played by same actor as CHUCK/CHELSEA)

SETTING

The action takes place inside a customer service rep's office.

It is late afternoon.

The time is now-ish.

NOTE:

The genders of either role may be changed. Sub names and make sure that CHUCK/CHELSEA always gives the improper gender in his greeting. (Ma'am or sir)

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AT RISE, an office: a desk, a couple of chairs, a computer screen, and a telephone connected to a headset. There's also a trash can and a plant.

CHANDRA, a young woman, simple enough, business attire, enters with a sandwich and a pint of milk, sits at the desk and begins to eat.

SFX: The phone rings

But CHANDRA ignores this, continuing with the sandwich.

Enter CHELSEA, similar to CHANDRA in appearance, but with a chip on her shoulder and a cell phone to her ear.

CHELSEA

Chandra?

CHANDRA

Oh! Hey... oh you're on the phone. Go ahead and finish your call. I'm just gonna' eat this sandwich... feel free to sit--

CHELSEA

I think I'm calling you.

CHANDRA

I seriously doubt that.

CHELSEA

Isn't that your phone?

SFX: Phone still ringing.

Pause...

CHANDRA

You know what? I think you may be right.

CHANDRA picks up the receiver and slams it back down before returning to the sandwich.

CHELSEA

(Hanging up her cell phone)

Yep, that was me.

Pause...

Look, my great aunt June died last December, and--

CHANDRA

Oh, I am so sorry about that, sir.

Pause...

CHELSEA

Thank you. I need to close her account.

CHANDRA

Who's account?

CHELSEA

My aunt June.

CHANDRA

I thought her name was December.

CHELSEA

She died in December. Her name is June... was June.

CHANDRA

I'm sorry, but only a cardholder can close an account.

CHELSEA

Well, that might prove rather difficult for her, as you might imagine.

CHANDRA

It's actually a lot easier than you might think.

CHELSEA

Even if she's dead?

CHANDRA

I don't follow.

CHELSEA

Look, this is her Social Security card, and all I need you to do is--

CHANDRA

I'm kinda' in the middle of lunch right now, so if you could come back later, that would be great. Ooh! Better yet, why not *call* later. I'm really a lot better at this over the phone. Do you have the number?

Silence...

CHANDRA (cont'd)

Well, I've got it in a business card, here, so...

CHANDRA holds out a card...

CHANDRA (cont'd)

The number's right there. On the card.

CHELSEA

I have the number.

CHANDRA

Pardon?

CHELSEA

I HAVE the number. "Chandra Mateland, customer service manager for region five." I've been calling all day.

SFX: A bell rings.

CHANDRA

Oh, I guess that's the end of lunch. Guess I'm back on the job. What can I do for you today, Mr...?

CHELSEA

Ms. Chelsea Melville. My name is Chelsea Melville.

CHANDRA

What can I do for you today, Ms. Melville?

CHELSEA

Well, you could start by--

CHANDRA

Actually, customer service bills out at seven dollars per use for a face-to-face. You sure you don't want to call? It's free if you call. Loopholes... I promise I'll pick up.

CHANDRA puts on the headset.

CHANDRA (cont'd)

Go ahead. The number's on the card.

CHELSEA calls the number. CHANDRA grabs one last bite from the sandwich and a swig from the milk before answering.

CHANDRA (cont'd)

Chandra Mateland, customer service. How may I direct your call?

CHELSEA

I need to close my great aunt's account. Her name is June Melville. She never used the card, and she's been dead for some time.

CHANDRA

I'm sorry Ms. Melville, but only cardholders can close accounts. But, she can call us back between--

CHELSEA

She is dead!

CHANDRA

Riiiiight. Let me look her up real fast. As long as there's a zero balance on the card, it shouldn't be a problem.

CHELSEA

Like I said, she never used the--

CHANDRA

Do you have an account number?

CHELSEA

You have her Social Security Card on your desk.

CHANDRA

Riiiiight... Let's check this out. I should be able to close this account over the phone if there's a zero balance, but I really need to talk to Mrs. Melville.

CHELSEA

So do I, but alas, she is dead.

Pause...

CHANDRA

(Speaking directly to CHELSEA)

Hey, Chels, you think you could pretend to be her?

CHELSEA

What?

CHANDRA

Look, she's dead. I get that. But, I still can't close this account unless we--

CHELSEA

(As JUNE)

This is June Melville. What can I do for you?

CHANDRA

Hi, Ms. Melville, I was just talking to your niece, and she says you'd like to close your account.

CHELSEA

(As JUNE)

Yes, I was hoping that we might be able to--

CHANDRA

(Directly to Chelsea)

Uh-oh. Houston, we have a problem. You say she died in December?

CHELSEA

Yes, Christmas eve.

CHANDRA

Suicide?

CHELSEA

Bad Credit.

CHANDRA

Pardon?

CHELSEA

Cancer. Thanks.

CHANDRA

Anyway, it looks like she never closed the account...

CHELSEA

No shit...

CHANDRA

...and in January she was charged an annual service fee of forty-two dollars, then there's six months of late fees for the unpaid service charge, so that's a balance of four thousand dollars and forty-three cents.

CHELSEA

Do you think we might be able to take care of that?

CHANDRA

Oh, absolutely. I can take any major credit card... except American Express, of course cash is always nice, and we'll take a check, but we don't like to.

CHELSEA

Oh, I think you misunderstand me, Ms. Mateland.

CHANDRA

Call me Chelsea.

CHELSEA

I'm not paying.

CHANDRA

Well, she does owe us the money. Technically.

CHELSEA

Technically, she's dead, and therefore was NOT a cardholder in January, Ms. Mateland.

Pause...

CHANDRA

The charges still apply.

CHELSEA

Well, maybe you should just turn that over to collections, then.

CHANDRA

Oh, we did that last month.

CHELSEA

So, what will they do in collections when they find out she's dead?

CHANDRA

Most likely turn it over to the fraud division, or the credit bureau, or even more likely, the fraud division will turn it over to the credit bureau.

CHELSEA

Do you think that God will be mad at her?

CHANDRA

Excuse me?

CHELSEA

Are we still supposed to be on the phone?

CHANDRA puts the headset back on.

CHANDRA

Oh, yes. Almost forgot... hello? Ms. Melville? You still with us?

CHELSEA

Unfortunately.

CHANDRA

Great. So, like I said, those charges still apply.

CHELSEA

Can I speak with a supervisor?

CHANDRA

Absolutely.

*CHELSEA takes a moment, then answers
the phone as HANK.*

HANK

Yeah, this is Hank Hannerty. What can a do for you?

CHELSEA

I'd like to close my great aunt's account.

HANK

Ok, well, Chandra should have told you that we need a cardholder in order to--

CHELSEA

She did.

HANK

(Speaking directly to CHELSEA as HANK)

If you could pretend to be Ms. Melville, then I might be able to--

CHELSEA

We already tried that, but there's four thousand dollars in late fees.

HANK

Oh, yes. I see that, now. Actually, four thousand dollars and forty three cents.

CHELSEA

Can we take care of this or not?

HANK

Sure. How would you like to pay?

CHELSEA

Ghost checks.

HANK

Pardon?

CHELSEA

Ghost checks... Are we still on the phone?

HANK

Oh, yes... I'm sorry, but the charges still apply.

CHELSEA

Well, I'm not paying, and you can't sue a dead woman.

HANK

Is that a challenge?

CHELSEA

Are you planning to sue?

HANK

Are you her lawyer?

CHELSEA

I'm her niece.

HANK

Do you have a death certificate?

CHELSEA

Yes.

HANK

Could you fax that over?

*CHELSEA pulls out the death certificate,
and slaps it on the desk in front of
HANK/CHANDRA.*

CHELSEA

(Directly to HANK)

That good enough?

HANK

(Into phone.)

Yes, we are receiving that fax right now, Ms. Melville, and it appears that she is in-fact dead.

CHELSEA

So...?

HANK

Well, I don't know what else we can do from here. We're just not set up for death.

CHELSEA

And if we don't pay?

HANK

We'll keep billing her, and the charges will compound.

CHELSEA

Would you like her new billing address?

HANK

If you don't mind.

CHELSEA

Parkview Regional Cemetery, Omaha Nebraska, plot 124, row six, third from the left.

HANK

That's a cemetery!

CHELSEA

Yes, we thought she might be more comfortable there. Good-bye.

CHELSEA grabs the papers off of the desk, and turns to leave.

HANK

Hold on just a minute, Ms. Melville.

CHELSEA

What!?

HANK

On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your experience with Chandra?

CHELSEA

(Flipping the bird.)

One.

Chelsea exits.

HANK

Well, you heard her, Chandra. I'm afraid that's the last straw. We're moving the whole thing to Bangalore.

CHANDRA

Bangalore? India? I've never been there.

HANK

And you never will. You're fired.

CHANDRA

What? But this was the last call service job left in America. How will I pursue my dream?
Oh my god! What will I do now? This is all I ever wanted to be... Now I have to find a
middle management job.

CHANDRA drops to HER knees.

I am fortune's fool!

BLACKOUT