

Trade Show
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BLACK SCREEN

A DIAL TONE followed by a phone number being entered.
RINGING. An answer. A throat CLEARS, then meekly speaks.

VOICE (V.O.)
Umm, hello, is this John Collett?

FADE IN

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

RICK DINKEL (25, nerdy, baby-faced) stabs the air with his pencil as he speaks beneath a shelf lined with books like 'Six Steps to Success' and 'Selling is Easy, Dying is Hard'.

RICK
My name is Rick Dinkel...not
Tinkle...DINK-EL. With Castle
Chemicals and Converting? Did I
catch you at a good time? Oh...a
funeral? I'm sorry to hear that.
Were you two close? Mr. Collett?

Rick closes his eyes and hits his head with the receiver.

RICK
Ugh...were you two close?

Head hits the desk. But perks up when a familiar voice is heard down the hallway. The sweet sound of HER voice.

KIMBERLY KAYE, (26, sharp, cute in round glasses) CCC's junior chemist walks toward a conference room behind her overbearing boss, STANLON GRANT (63, stuffy, balding).

KIMBERLY (O.S.)
I'll need a few minutes at the end
to review the new product specs.

STANLON
We'll see. I have a lot to cover.

They pass by Rick's cubicle as he looks over the top of it, following Kimberly's every step. She notices. Smiles at him.

Direct hit.

Rick falls back into his chair. Mouth ajar.

Sweat instantly drips from his forehead, breath racing.

INT. CCC OFFICE AREA - DAY

A series of cubicles span a wall in a beige office space as workers tap on computers, answer phones, and pretend to be busier than they actually are.

At the end of the row, an over-worked, middle-aged woman with striking eyes, DARLEEN FRANKS, gazes into her monitor while she chews on a pen and talks into her headset.

DARLEEN

Yes, DAR-LEEN FRANKS! No, I ordered the black carpet...BLACK! Booth number 1-4-1-8. Castle Converting. No, not Tassel. C-A-S-T-L-E! No, I ordered BLACK CARPET!

Darleen drops her head onto the desk in surrender.

INT. CCC CORNER OFFICE - DAY

CHARLIE CASTLE (58), the half-balding, polyester-wearing, overweight VP of Sales and Marketing sits in his office reading the book 'SALES...WHAM!!' out loud.

CHARLIE

'A boat only moves forward when all of the oars paddle in the same direction at the same time.' That's brilliant!

He scribbles it down as his intercom LIGHTS up and BUZZES.

CHARLIE

Yeah, Darleen, what is it?

DARLEEN (O.S.)

Product training meeting in five.

CHARLIE

Is Fly in yet?

DARLEEN (O.S.)

Is that a trick question?

Looks down at his hand scribbled note. Sighs.

EXT. CCC PARKING LOT - DAY

Veteran salesman FLOYD 'FLY' MCGEE (38) ROARS into the parking lot in his bright red Corvette and glides into a VISITOR ONLY space. Classic rock BLARES from the speakers.

He straightens his hair in the rear-view, then licks his thumb and wets down his bushy mustache.

Soaks in his moment.

INT. CCC OFFICE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Fly struts through the front office as if 'Saturday Night Fever' plays in his head, acknowledging the ladies.

FLY
Nice hairdo, Barb.

Rick's Mom, BARB DINKEL (55), ignores him. Fly winks anyway.

FLY
Hellllo, Helllllen.

Fly 'finger shoots' in her direction, and she laughs at him. It's not flattering.

FLY
Looking good as ever, Doris.

Fly points to DORIS ACKERMAN (73), an accountant since 1967, sporting a bouffant hair-do from that period. Doris flips him off as she punches the paper-tape calculator.

Fly continues his strut into the--

SALES BULLPEN

-- and tosses his leather notebook onto the empty desk between Rick and Darleen.

DARLEEN
How's it going, Fly?

FLY
Any better and I'd be suckin' limes
in Cabo. I closed Lancaster today.

Fly leans over Darleen's cubicle and presents her with his fist, waiting for the obligatory fist bump in return. Darleen leaves him hanging.

FLY
Ka-BOOM!

Fly exaggerates his fist into a firework explosion, laughs loud, then steps into to Rick's uncomfortably small cube.

INT. RICK'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Rick looks up at Fly, who's crotch is practically in his face from where he's sitting. Leans back in his chair.

RICK
Congrats on the Lancaster account.

FLY
Someday Rook, you'll graduate from Inside Sales and cold calls and be a closer like me. Until then, pucker up and suck it.

Fly squeezes his crotch and wags his tongue.

RICK
Gotta earn my stripes, right?

Fly' turns serious, like a honey badger going in for a strike. He leans into Rick's personal space without warning, bringing his hand up for a rock-solid embrace.

FLY
One season under me, Rook, and you'll be flying solo. C'mon, put it there. You ready to fly?

Rick, surprised by this sudden wave of pseudo-seriousness, clasps hands with Fly without thinking about it.

RICK
Uh...yeah, sure. Why not?

Fly pulls him in close. Nose to nose.

FLY
Buckle up and get ready to Fly.

Fly stands up, slicks back his hair, spins on the soles of his shoes like the Temptations, and slides into his cubicle.

Rick sits in silent amazement by the last twenty-eight seconds of his life as Charlie storms out of his office.

CHARLIE
Product Training in the Conference Room.

FLY
But I just got--

CHARLIE
NOW!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Stanlon drones on in the front of the room.

The PowerPoint is on slide fifty-eight. He lost the room fifty-six slides and fifty-five minutes ago.

STANLON

...furthering the chemical breakdown between the bonds. As you can see in this next slide, compared to other products, its adhesive properties have decreased over forty percent across the same time.

Slide fifty-nine.

The most CONFUSING graph ever. Can lines even go that way?

STANLON

In conclusion, it is recommended that additional product testing be performed and analyzed. Questions?

Darleen is comatose. Rick stares ahead blankly. Fly drools in his sleep. Charlie snaps the room to attention.

CHARLIE

Thank you, Stanlon. Any literature?

Stanlon looks toward Kimberly and nods.

She sighs and passes down thick reams of paper to everyone. A small forest died for this useless presentation.

STANLON

You'll find everything from the presentation, plus the data sheets of each of the new products.

CHARLIE

Excellent. Team, I'll want this memorized by the trade show.

Moans all around.

Kimberly raises her hand at the end of the table.

CHARLIE

Yes...umm, Kathy, is it?

KIMBERLY
Kimberly. Kimberly Kaye. Junior
Chemist. If we have time, I have
some new product information, too.

Stanlon furls his brow and gives her the LOOK.

CHARLIE
I'm late to my next meeting. Not
enough time, but next one, okay?

Kimberly smiles and nods.

KIMBERLY
Of course.

CHARLIE
Team, go make your cold calls.
Sales meeting in thirty minutes.

And Charlie's out the door. Fly's not far behind as the room
begins to clear out, with Stanlon giving Kimberly another
grimace as he exits.

Rick hangs back.

RICK
So, um, what was your product info
about, anyway?

KIMBERLY
Guess you'll just have to wait
until next time, now won't you.

Kimberly smiles at him as Rick smiles back, pauses at the
door. Thinks on his feet.

RICK
I, umm, like to wait.

Rick turns to leave and SLAMS half of his shoulder on the
edge of the door frame.

So smooth.

He wishes he could burst into flames.

Kimberly's dimples emerge as she smiles and passes him.

KIMBERLY
Well, don't wait too long.

INT. ROGER'S OFFICE - LATER

ROGER CASTLE (62), CEO and Charlie's older brother, stands behind his desk, brows furrowed, serious as a heart attack.

Charlie sits nearby in a chair, as Doris stands close by.

ROGER
Tell him, Doris.

Doris looks at Charlie over the horn-rimmed glasses riding halfway down her nose.

DORIS
Unless we increase sales volume AND
sales margin by twenty percent in
the next ten weeks, it's over.
Bankruptcy. Chapter Eleven.

The words hit Charlie like a brick between the eyes.

CHARLIE
I don't get it - orders are way up.

ROGER
We're losing our shirt on them.

CHARLIE
How's that possible?

Roger leans in and looks at Charlie.

ROGER
One word...Fly.

Charlie's shoulders droop at the sound of that name.

INT. FLY'S CUBICLE - SAME TIME

Fly leans back in his chair, feet up on the desk, talking into the phone.

FLY
Of course it will work. If I take
off ten percent, we got a deal?

Fly smiles. Killed another one.

INT. ROGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie pours over spreadsheets of numbers, one page after another, sweating and turning red. Doris, stands in the corner, a sour expression on her face.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Doris stares over her glasses in silence, arms crossed as Roger paces behind his desk.

ROGER

I didn't want to let Dad down. Or anyone. We're a family.

Roger puts his hand on his brother's shoulder as Charlie looks up from the bad news, overwhelmed.

CHARLIE

But bankruptcy? Really?

ROGER

Let's not go there, yet. Bradley Everest called again.

Charlie's eyes widen, glaring at Roger.

CHARLIE

What'd that shit-heel want?

ROGER

Our business. Dad's business.

They look up at the 1960's stoic portrait of their father, Lyle Castle. Roger paces behind his desk again, sullen.

CHARLIE

The hell he does! We'll stop him!
We'll raise our prices.

ROGER

Won't be enough. And we risk losing
too many customers if we do.

CHARLIE

We're fighting for every order as
it is. I can't believe this. And
just before the trade show.

Roger stops pacing.

Turns quickly toward Doris.

ROGER
Don't we get a decent spike every
year after the Vegas Trade Show?

Doris adjusts her glasses.

DORIS
Roughly five to seven percent.

Roger walks toward Charlie, intense and steel-eyed.

ROGER
Then this has to be four times
better than any trade show we've
ever done. Can we do that?

Charlie, mesmerized by his brother, nods.

CHARLIE
Yeah, hell yeah we can. The trade
show. That's it. We can do that.

Roger grasps Charlie's shoulder.

ROGER
It's our only chance.

Charlie's pumped up.

CHARLIE
Roger that!

ROGER
And reel in Fly. No more wheeling
and dealing on price. Take care of
that today.

CHARLIE
My pleasure.

INT. CCC OFFICE AREA - LATER

Charlie stops outside Darleen's cubicle.

Hovers there.

Darleen looks out of the corner of her eye and turns.
Smiles.

DARLEEN
What's up, Chuck?

CHARLIE
We all set for the trade show?

DARLEEN
I'm working out a couple of kinks,
but we're good to go for Monday.

Charlie CLAPS his hands.

CHARLIE
Sales meeting. Conference Room.
Now!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Charlie paces at the end of the table, while Darleen, Rick,
and Fly fill the seats far on the other side.

CHARLIE
ChemCon is next week and we all
have to row the boat in the same
direction. It's going to be our
best show ever!

FLY
Damn right it is. Vegas baby!

He spins in his chair as if he's dancing and rolling dice.

CHARLIE
This year needs to be extra...
rewarding. We need to get more
business than ever. Any ideas?

Fly's still got a party playing in his head. Rick chimes in.

RICK
I mean, this is my first time--

FLY
(sings)
Like a virgin...touched for the
very first time...

Charlie shoots Fly a look.

Fly shrugs...*what'd I do?*

RICK
So yeah, like, how have we done it
before? Can't we just amp that up
or something?

CHARLIE

Yes, yes. That's right. Amp it up!
Darleen, what are our options?

Darleen opens up the trade show informational pamphlet.
Peruses the list.

DARLEEN

Well, we can schedule a technical
presentation on our new products.

Fly snores LOUDLY.

FLY

Nerd Alert! Nerd Alert!

CHARLIE

(to Fly)
Enough of you!
(to Darleen)
Presentation. Good. Get our company
name out there. What else?

Darleen reads down the list.

DARLEEN

We can add last minute booth
advertising online.

CHARLIE

Okay, good. What else we got?

DARLEEN

Maybe host a networking event?
Wine, beer, finger foods.

Fly snaps to attention.

FLY

Now we're talking!

CHARLIE

Networking! That's perfect!

DARLEEN

But these are way over our budget.

CHARLIE

I'll worry about budget.

Darleen's never heard those words in her life and her
expression shows it.

DARLEEN

Alrighty, then. Which one you want?

FLY

The booze one!

RICK

The tech presentation could
be cool.

CHARLIE

All of them!

The three of them all look at Charlie in amazement. This is
a first.

DARLEEN

Wait, what?

CHARLIE

I'll do the presentation, and you
take care of the networking event.

DARLEEN

But it's kind of late to add all-

CHARLIE

Just make it happen!

Charlie whips out his wallet and several credit cards.

CHARLIE

Put it on my card.

DARLEEN

Your personal cards? Which one?

CHARLIE

All of them.

This is definitely a first. She takes the cards.

DARLEEN

Yes, sir!

FLY

I'll take one of those.

CHARLIE

Rick, help Darleen with whatever
she needs. Floyd, my office. Now!

INT. CCC OFFICE AREA - LATER

Darleen and Rick settle back into their cubicles, while Fly
follows Charlie into his office full of swagger.

Kimberly passes by the bullpen and waves at Rick.

KIMBERLY

Hey you.

Rick gets flustered, stammers. Breaks into a sweat.

RICK

Oh, um, hey! Hi...Kim. Hey there.
Um, yeah.

She chuckles at his stumble and walks on.

Darleen interrupts.

DARLEEN

Oh lover boy? Come here a minute.

Rick snaps back to reality. Heads to Darleen's desk.

DARLEEN

You really need to grow a pair and
talk to her. She's cute.

RICK

Uh, yeah. I keep trying but my
mouth gets in the way.

DARLEEN

Well, until you get that fixed, I
need your help.

Darleen hands him a stack of shipping labels and a clipboard
of papers.

DARLEEN

Go make sure all the trade show
stuff is labeled and ready to go,
you silver-tongued devil. Freddie
in shipping can help.

Rick takes the labels and clipboard and scoots out of her
cubicle.

RICK

Freddie. Got it.

She takes one of Charlie's credit cards and twirls it in her
fingers as she smiles.

DARLEEN

Time to upgrade my room.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Fly makes himself at home, his feet up on Charlie's desk.

Charlie's not at all pleased.

CHARLIE

Get your feet off my desk! We've got a serious problem.

Fly complies, nonplussed.

FLY

What problem? Not enough capacity for all the orders I'm landing? I just closed the Lancaster deal.

CHARLIE

At what price? It better start with a three.

FLY

I know these guys. There was no way we could-

CHARLIE

Floyd!

FLY

(whispering)
Two seventy five.

Charlie's eyes bulge out. SLAMS his hands on his desk.

CHARLIE

Dammit, Floyd! Just because you are my nephew-in-law doesn't mean you aren't expendable!

FLY

What?! You haven't been in the field in ten years--

CHARLIE

That's it. Your wings are clipped.

FLY

Wait, what are you saying?

CHARLIE

Listen to me very carefully. You either cancel that order or get the price we agreed to. And all pricing goes through me from now on.

FLY
What?! That is bullsh-

CHARLIE
I approve all prices! That's final!

Fly stands up. Insulted.

FLY
I've been in sales for over fifteen years and I've NEVER been leashed!

CHARLIE
There's a lot more happening here than just your ego, Floyd. Now, get on board or-

FLY
Or what, Charlie? Or what?

Sweat beads off Charlie's brow, as he calms his breath.

Looks down at the scribbled note on his desk.

CHARLIE
We are all in this boat together. And I need you on this boat. But not when you're sinking it with your ego.

FLY
But, I--

CHARLIE
So, go get that order fixed, right now, and clear all pricing through me from now on.

Fly gives Charlie an icy stare.

Charlie returns the look. He's not budging.

Fly backs down. Wipes his mustache.

FLY
Fine. I'll take care of it.

Fly turns and exits his office.

Charlie exhales and leans back in his chair, exhausted.

CHARLIE
He's going to kill me, I swear it.