

PERUSAL SCRIPT



GADIANTON

A PLAY

BY ERIC SAMUELSEN



Newport, Maine

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GADIANTON

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Cast of Characters

MAIN CHARACTERS:

(NOTE: The play requires SEVEN male and FOUR female actors. Each plays a major character, then doubles to take various minor characters. It should be noted that all the major characters, except for CYNTHIA, are Mormons. The Original Cast is listed in *italics*)

MCKAY TODD -- An LDS Bishop, early forties. Originally played by *Jason Tatom*.

KAREN TODD -- His wife. Originally played by *Katie Holsinger*.

FRED WHITMORE -- An exec with ONTI, late thirties. Originally played by *Ben Hoppe*.

CYNTHIA WHITMORE -- His wife. Originally played by *Megan Sanborn*.

MAHONRI WARD -- Owner and CEO of ONTI, late fifties. Originally played by *Tim Slover*.

BRENDA BURDETT -- Todd's assistant, late twenties. Originally played by *Colleen Baum*.

SAM SUMPTER -- Helen's assistant, early thirties. Originally played by *Josh Brady*.

HELEN BRYSON -- ONTI's head of public relations, early thirties. Originally played by *Amy Barrus*.

CHAD FIRMAGE -- FRED's administrative assistant, early twenties. Originally played by *Ryan Rauzon*.

JOHN W. COGBURN -- Former partner of HARRY JUNE's, late forties. Originally played by *Danny Stiles*.

CON BRYSON -- Helen's husband. Employed at Empasse. Originally played by *Jeremy Hoop*.

MINOR CHARACTERS:

HARRY JUNE -- Owner of Empasse, ONTI's main competitor.

WILSON HACKETT--Southern Utah sheep farmer, ca. 1948. Originally played by *Rob Gardner*.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER--St. George housewife, ca. 1953 Originally played by *Rachel Davenport*.

GADIANTON, KISHKUMEN, SEEZORAM, SEANTUM and BETHESDA--Book of Mormon characters.

COOPER and SCOTT -- two execs, silent partners of MAHONRI WARD.

THE STAKE PRESIDENT -- President of FRED WHITMORE's stake.

BIBI HALSTRUP -- KAREN TODD's sworn enemy.

Various other ONTI employees, security guards and reporters.

A note on notation

In this play, whenever an ellipsis (. . .) occurs, it is intended to represent a pause. A double dash (--) indicates an interrupted line. In other words, a double dash in the middle of a character's line indicates that the next speaking character is to begin speaking, the two characters speaking simultaneously. But an ellipsis in the middle of a line indicates a brief pause, a collecting of thoughts.

GADIANTON by *Eric Samuelsen*. 7M 4F. What makes our acts moral? Is any practice “just business”? Can Book of Mormon lessons speak to us in our high-tech world? In contexts as diverse as nuclear testing, corporate mergers, and Mormon family life, Gadianton powerfully reminds us that every decision is personal. And that it does not just connect to any one religion — or any religion at all — for its practitioners. WINNER of the Association for Mormon Letters award for Drama in 1997. **ORDER #2024.**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of

Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright. He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at Mormoniconoclast.com. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

WHY GADIANTON?

by Eric Samuelsen

Members of our audience, especially those who live in the [LDS] community and are members of the LDS Faith, may well be alarmed to see a play dealing with the issues of contemporary business ethics entitled *Gadanton*. The story of the Gadanton robbers carries with it some of the most ferocious and immoral connotations in the entire Book of Mormon. I would be appalled if anyone were to accuse me of being a Gadanton robber, and I do not and would not make such a provocative accusation against anyone else. I do not intend the title of my play to suggest that I am point fingers at any individual or institution.

Instead, I hope that this play will ask questions. The central question of any dramatic work should be a simple one: How are we to live our lives? For members of the LDS Faith, our scriptures are replete with both positive and negative examples. My task in writing this play has been to apply lessons gleaned from my reading of the Book of Mormon to a contemporary situation.

The story of the Gadanton robbers is one of particular importance to me. Although such evil characters as Nehor, Korihor, and Amalickiah were dangerous enough to Nephite society, Gadanton and his band ultimately proved lethal. As I studied Helaman and the first chapters of 3Nephi, I tried to settle in my own mind just who Gadanton was and what he might represent to us today.

In his great sermon from his garden tower, the prophet Nephi accused his Gadanton-infested people of having “set [their] hearts upon the richest and the vain things of this world” (Helaman 7:21). Elsewhere, Helaman informs us that the evil of the Gadanton robbers came about because of their pursuit of “gain.” Does this mean that a business pursuing profits is a Gadantonite business? Surely not. To seek gain to do good, as so many successful people in our Church and community have done, is not only justified but laudable.

I finally concluded that Gadanton represents any economic activity that disregards the possible human consequences of the activity. To seek gain for gain alone is the essence of Gadantonism, and at its heart is zero-sum-game economics. The idea that the world is a dog-eat-dog one of savage competition, with scarce resources fought for and won by the leanest and strongest, is incompatible with what I understand to be the gospel of peace and plenty.

A play is a work of fiction, intended to explore human conduct and the consequences of that conduct. I hope that this play will provoke a fruitful and positive discussion about the Book of Mormon, a book whose message that I take very seriously indeed.

SOURCES:

I began my work on *Gadianton* knowing next to nothing about the computer industry or the world of big business. As I tried to educate myself, the following books were particularly helpful: Daniel Ichbiah's *The Making of Microsoft*; James Wallace's *Hard Drive: Bill Gates and the Making of the Microsoft Empire*; Jacqueline Dunckel's *Good Ethics, Good Business*; Dorothy Maddox's *Ethics in Business*. For the first time in my life, I also read the business pages of the local newspapers and several weeks' worth of the *Wall Street Journal*. I also found Carole Gallagher's *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War* to be most thought-provoking and disturbing, so much so that it is largely responsible for the play's greatest flaw, its tendency to zip off into narrative tangents. And, of course, I read and reread the Books of Helaman and Mormon and the first 10 chapters of 3Nephi in the *Book of Mormon*.

On a more personal level, I am grateful to my brother, Rob Samuelson, a person who proves that business people can be ethical and moral. Rob disagrees strenuously with the specific premise of the play, but nonetheless he was enormously helpful in providing insight into the specifics of the computer industry.

ACT ONE

*(As lights come up, we see **WILSON HACKETT** and **ERMA MACKELPRANGER**.)*

WILSON HACKETT: . . . so like I said, I seen it maybe closer than most folks. That was our winter pasture anyhow, Frenchman Flats. Me, my Daddy and my brothers would drive our sheep out from Cedar. Prettiest piece a land God ever created, and 'bout the hardest to make a living off of. Daddy useta say, "only thing -- it's good for is pretty."

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: And there she was, right in front of me. Susan Heyward. All that red hair. Got her autograph that very minute. 'My friend Erma. . . .' Well, Erma Mackelpranger, actually, that's me, but she didn't rightly catch the last name, just kinda scribbled it off. My friend Erma Mcklprfflsk it says but that's okay. You can read her name real good. Right here -- on this napkin.

WILSON HACKETT: Just filled the sky. And then, a few weeks later, in come the movie people.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: We was pretty used to 'em.

WILSON HACKETT: Shop owners in town would jack up their prices ever time the movie crews come, but I couldn't get too excited. Livin' off the land, you don't develop much of a taste for movie-goin'. Except for the Duke, of course. Saw -- ever one of his.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: Said she was in town to make a movie -- with John Wayne.

WILSON HACKETT: I wondered why they was filmin' so soon after the shot, all the dust just -- startin' to settle.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: Movie called The Conquerer, about Genghis Kahn.

WILSON HACKETT: Saw the Duke once at Walgreen's, had this funny looking moustache all the way down his chin, a Fu Manchu kinda thing. John Wayne in a Chineese moustache? He just -- plain looked ridiculous.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: You'd see movie folk everywhere, the drugstore, the soda fountain. You'd hear 'em griping, onnaccounta liquor bein' hard to come by. But they found it somewheres, -- and you'd see 'em drinking.

WILSON HACKETT: I gotta say, they worked hard. You'd see 'em every day, all covered with dust. Start every morning at 5:00 -- and knock off at nine, ten, eleven.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: I saw Susan Heyward three times that summer. She rented a house in town, hired a babysitter for her two little ones. Just as -- down to earth as anything.

WILSON HACKETT: All day riding horseback, stirring up that dust, rolling around in it. Right over by where they set it off --. I did wonder.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: Then a few years later, Susan Heyward died. Brain cancer. Kinda funny how it turned out, since so many here in town was going the same way. People talked about it, the St. George curse hittin' her too -- after she stayed here.

WILSON HACKETT: Saw the movie as soon as it come to town. Them writers in Hollywood shoulda been more careful what -- kinda stuff they wrote for the Duke.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: John Wayne, Susan Heyward, the director, most of the crew. They all got St. George disease.

WOMAN: Bishop?

(As she and BISHOP MCKAY TODD enter.)

WILSON HACKETT: Not a good enough movie to die for, that's for damn sure.

WOMAN: Bishop? Are you all right?

(WILSON and ERMA exit.)

BISHOP TODD: I'm fine. I'm sorry, I have a spinal -- condition, sometimes it gets . . .

WOMAN: Look, I can come back. This is just routine, temple recommend renewal.

BISHOP TODD: No, that's all right. Let me just stand, walk around. This won't take -- but a minute.

WOMAN: It wouldn't be a problem for me to --.

BISHOP TODD: I'm fine.

(Cross fade to FRED WHITMORE.)

FRED WHITMORE: I earned a BS in business from UC Santa Barbara --.

WOMAN: Honest? In all my dealings?

(With a chuckle.)

That's always a hard one for me.

FRED WHITMORE: Then my MBA in Finance from Ohio State.

WOMAN: You know how it gets. April 15th rolls around, the IRS --.

FRED WHITMORE: I was hired by Proctor and Gamble right out of graduate school, and assigned to their corporate headquarters in Cincinatti.

WOMAN: *(Outraged.)* Denied! I've had a temple recommend for twenty-five years now, no one has ever denied --.

FRED WHITMORE: Since then, I've been with twelve different companies in the last eighteen years: Microsoft. Then, Citicorp in Omaha, the Dallas office of HP, TNR Enterprises in San Diego --.

WOMAN: Isn't that just how it goes? They make some nobody Bishop--.

FRED WHITMORE: Now, ONTI. ONTI Enterprises.

WOMAN: . . . starts throwing his weight around. You listen to me, McKay Todd, if you think you're getting away with this, then you --.

FRED WHITMORE: I'm usually indispensable within a month, leave when the job starts to get too routine. Ride off into the sunset, leave the settlers to raise their crops alone.

BISHOP TODD: Next.

(A MAN enters, as the WOMAN exits.)

MAN: Bishop, what's all this about? They said you wanted to see me.

FRED WHITMORE: I've been called a hitman, a gunslinger, a hired hatchet. That's unfair.

BISHOP TODD: Is there anything in your relationship with your family that you need to tell me about?

FRED WHITMORE: If my recommendations occasionally include layoffs, that's hardly my fault. Every company has fat to trim.

BISHOP TODD: Well, for starters, your wife had a black eye in church a couple of weeks ago. Is there anything I should know about it?

FRED WHITMORE: But I'm also not a consultant.

MAN: The lying bitch . . . What did she tell you?

BISHOP TODD: Nothing. She said she slipped in the shower. . . .

MAN: Then that's exactly what happened.

FRED WHITMORE: Consultants consult. I work for the company, implement change from the inside. I take good companies . . . maybe a bit . . . screwed up . . .

(He falters momentarily.)

I establish systems, procedures, policies. . . .

(A pause. He falters, looks briefly disoriented. GADIANTON, a man wearing Biblical robes enters, looks quizzically at FRED WHITMORE.)

Sometimes . . . sometimes I sort of. . . . don't know what . . . pain right between my ears.

(The man in the Biblical robes exits. FRED WHITMORE shakes it off, back to business.)

Anyway, that's it. I see what others can't, cut where they'd rather not. And then I get restless.

MAN: *(Livid.)* A court! I just came here . . .

(Sputtering.)

You can't just . . . just take some suspicion--!

(MAHONRI WARD enters, holding a memo.)

MAHONRI WARD: *(Reading.)* "To Mahonri Ward, CEO ONTI."

FRED WHITMORE: My latest project. ONTI. ONTI Officemate, one of the great DOS spreadsheets. Ten years ago, just another start-up, today, a market share in the high teens. Part of that mid eighties software boom. Rank amateurs, of course, as business people.

MAHONRI WARD: *(Reading.)* "I began with what I perceived -- to be. . . .

FRED WHITMORE: . . . to be the company's --.

MAHONRI WARD: . . . basic operating policies --.

FRED WHITMORE: . . . and procedures, both written and unwritten.

(BISHOP TODD quickly takes off his suit coat and replaces it with an ink-stained smock.)

FRED WHITMORE: The company's unofficial management motto seems to be --.

MAHONRI WARD: Teach them correct principles, and let them govern themselves.

FRED WHITMORE: I've heard that phrase from at least four people in supervisory roles. While the phrase itself is new to me, it does have a nice Tom Peters ring to it. But this motto implies a strong commitment to training and education. I have seen little evidence of such a commitment.

(As BISHOP TODD hustles across the stage, he is met by HELEN BRYSON, an attractive young woman in her late twenties, wearing a business suit. Flashback.)

HELEN BRYSON: Hi, you must be Mr. Todd.

BISHOP TODD: McKay Todd, that's right.

HELEN BRYSON: Helen Bryson, nice to meet you. I see you worked for the postal service?

BISHOP TODD: I used to. I had to -- retire because of. . . .

HELEN BRYSON: Great, sounds perfect. Everyone in the company's been stuffing envelopes and licking stamps for weeks now.

BISHOP TODD: Everyone?

HELEN BRYSON: Everyone from programmers to custodial staff. Well, theoretically. Mostly it's a job people have been trying to duck. Drives me nuts.

BISHOP TODD: So I'll report to you?

HELEN BRYSON: Heavens no. I'm head of media relations. Well, I guess I am. Mr. Ward just decided he needed a PR person one day, hired me. But I've done a little of everything, we're kinda improvising. We

were handling a volume of 200 units a week, we come out with OfficeMate 3.0, Dataworld gives it a four star review, and suddenly our sales are through the roof.

BISHOP TODD: Wow.

HELEN BRYSON: You said it. Now we get to process all those orders.

BISHOP TODD: So I report to --.

HELEN BRYSON: I have no idea. If you have a problem, ask Mr. Ward, Mahonri Ward, he's the main boss, his office is upstairs.

BISHOP TODD: What kind of volume are you expecting?

HELEN BRYSON: Who knows? We did twenty-five hundred last week, and it's going to go way higher.

BISHOP TODD: Twenty-five . . . I'll need some help.

HELEN BRYSON: Hire anyone you want, pay 'em whatever you think. Three-and-a-halves are over there, five-and-a-quarters over there, manuals, I'm not sure, there's a box somewhere.

BISHOP TODD: Three-and-a-halves --?

HELEN BRYSON: Good luck. And listen, you get the mail going smoothly around here, and you'll be a hero.

(BISHOP TODD takes off his smock, puts on his suit jacket. A WOMAN enters his office.)

FRED WHITMORE: *(As WARD resumes reading.)* "While I certainly applaud the relaxed, informal corporate culture you've created --.

MAHONRI WARD: . . . that very informality can, at times, get in the way of productivity."

FRED WHITMORE: I have a few suggestions.

(We see in spots a series of businesspeople, all young, dressed with a kind of affluent informality.)

FIRST WOMAN: No more baby showers?

MAN: Birthday parties?

ANOTHER WOMAN: Monday night picnics?

MAN: We're not sponsoring a little league team any more?

FIRST WOMAN: Or girl scouts?

MAHONRI WARD: Oh sure we will. In the evenings, weekends. Just not on company time.

MAN: Give up rotisserie baseball?

FRED WHITMORE: Unless it has a direct bearing --.

MAHONRI WARD: . . . on the creation, manufacturing and sale of computer software, we must ask you to save it for your after-work hours.

FIRST WOMAN: After-work minutes, you mean.

(They all laugh. Enter CHAD FIRMAGE, a young man in his twenties.)

CHAD FIRMAGE: Mr. Whitmore?

FRED WHITMORE: You must be my new assistant.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yes sir. Chad Firmage.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad, my pleasure.

BISHOP TODD: *(Enter an older woman, SISTER GUINNESS)* Sister Guinness.

FRED WHITMORE: *(They shake hands.)* Sit down, take it easy. Call me Fred. Drink?

CHAD FIRMAGE: I'm not --.

FRED WHITMORE: Coke, Sprite?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Uh, a Sprite'd be --.

FRED WHITMORE: Bill Gates always keeps a fridge full of cold Diet Coke, I figure'd I'd follow suit. Ice?

BISHOP TODD: Sister Guinness. As you may have guessed, we have a calling in mind for you.

SISTER GUINNESS: (*Chuckling.*) I've never turned down a calling in my life; I don't expect to start now.

FRED WHITMORE: So you've been married what? Three months?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Just three months ago yesterday.

SISTER GUINNESS: The nursery?

FRED WHITMORE: Been a good three months?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yes sir.

FRED WHITMORE: Good. Because three months from now, you'll barely remember her name.

SISTER GUINNESS: Bishop Todd, I'm sixty-one years old!

FRED WHITMORE: If I were to say to you that this job requires an eighty-hour work week, what would you say?

SISTER GUINNESS: My childrearing days are over!

(*She exits in a huff. The BISHOP sighs, follows.*)

FRED WHITMORE: Basically, we're talking fourteen-hour days, six days a week. Say seven a.m. to nine p.m.

CHAD FIRMAGE: It sounds -- like a pretty heavy . . .

FRED WHITMORE: Well, what I think, eighty hours, that's for wimps. Eighty hours strikes me as a minimum commitment.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Minimum commitment --.

FRED WHITMORE: Six months with me, Chad, and you'll wish you never heard the name Fred Whitmore.

You'll want to quit ten times a day. You'll fantasize killing me.

CHAD FIRMAGE: I really don't think --.

FRED WHITMORE: I'll give you fifty jobs at once, and expect them all yesterday. Anything you do that's just slightly not the way I want it, and you'll wish you were never born. I'll expect you to sweat blood, I'll steal every idea you think of, and I never, ever say thanks. You still with me?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yes sir.

FRED WHITMORE: Don't call me sir. You want out?

CHAD FIRMAGE: No, si . . . No--.

FRED WHITMORE: Only fair to warn you, that three of my last five assistants had nervous breakdowns.

One's still in the hospital. Took sleeping pills, some kinda brain damage.

CHAD FIRMAGE: I was raised on a ranch. I've never been afraid of hard work.

FRED WHITMORE: Good. Because the other two recovered, and both made their first million before their thirtieth birthdays.

CHAD FIRMAGE: You've got your man!

FRED WHITMORE: Good. Finish your coke.

(*CHAD hurriedly swallows it. The Man in Biblical Robes reenters, smiling enigmatically.*)

So, cowboy, whaddya say? Let's head 'em up and move 'em out!

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yes --.

FRED WHITMORE: I said, let's head 'em up and move 'em out!

CHAD FIRMAGE: Okay.

FRED WHITMORE: I thought you were a cowboy! Head 'em up and mooooooove em out!

CHAD FIRMAGE: *(Without much enthusiasm.)* Eeehah!

FRED WHITMORE: HEAD 'EM UP AND MOOOOOOOOVE 'EM OUT!

CHAD FIRMAGE: EEEHAH!

FRED WHITMORE: That just got you a raise.

(The Man with Biblical robes exits. Lights up on MAHONRI WARD.)

MAHONRI WARD: Look, we've had a lot of fun and we've had a lot of success. But we can't treat this like a hobby any more. We're in the big leagues now.

(BISHOP TODD takes off his suit coat, puts on the smock.)

FRED WHITMORE: Having made these few broader suggestions, I will proceed with a more in-depth examination of specific operations.

(He crosses to BISHOP TODD, with CHAD.)

Hi. Fred Whitmore.

BISHOP TODD: McKay Todd.

FRED WHITMORE: My assistant, Chad Firmage. So, you're head of the mail room operation?

BISHOP TODD: That's right.

FRED WHITMORE: Been here two years?

BISHOP TODD: Two years, eight -- months. . .

FRED WHITMORE: Helen Bryson says you're a miracle worker.

BISHOP TODD: That's nice of her.

(Twists his back and winces.)

FRED WHITMORE: Are you okay?

BISHOP TODD: I just have an intermittant spinal -- problem. . . .

FRED WHITMORE: Gosh, that's a shame. I've had some back problems myself, know what you're going through. Okay, here's what I don't get. You have how many employees in this area? Sixty-five, seventy?

BISHOP TODD: Good heavens no. I supervise six workers.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad?

CHAD FIRMAGE: *(Shuffling through records.)* Uh . . . company records say you've hired a total of . . . sixty-seven employees.

BISHOP TODD: But I don't supervise them.

FRED WHITMORE: Explain that to me.

BISHOP TODD: When I was hired, my job was to fill customers' orders, not just supervise the mail operation.

I hired people to package, to copy data onto disks, to stuff envelopes; most of them were moved to manufacturing. And, I hired in other areas of the company; customer support --.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Impatiently.)* Uh-huh. And now you're down to six?

BISHOP TODD: Just the mailroom, here.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad?

CHAD FIRMAGE: These sixty-seven people. How did you go about hiring them?

BISHOP TODD: Well, I just--.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Our records show no evidence of compliance with Equal Opportunity guidelines, no apps on file--.

BISHOP TODD: I wasn't told I had to. I just--.

FRED WHITMORE: Uh-huh?

BISHOP TODD: . . . looked for people who needed work. I'm a bishop, I see a lot of people who really need a break.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad, a bishop. That's a church thing?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Head of a local congregation. Bishop, you hired your ward members?

BISHOP TODD: Am I in some kind of trouble?

FRED WHITMORE: Don't sweat it. We're just trying to get our act together upstairs.

BISHOP TODD: So I don't . . . report to you?

FRED WHITMORE: You don't know who you report to?

BISHOP TODD: So far, it hasn't really mattered.

FRED WHITMORE: For now, go ahead and report to me. Or to Chad. Now, let me see if I've got this straight. The mail goes out when?

BISHOP TODD: The truck's usually here between two and two-thirty.

FRED WHITMORE: So your big rush is in the mornings. And you sort and deliver incoming in the afternoons?

BISHOP TODD: Yes.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad?

CHAD FIRMAGE: One possibility might be to stagger hours to use your employees more efficiently?

FRED WHITMORE: I am a great believer in delegation.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Say if four of them came in at, six or seven, worked until two or three, the other two could work nine to five and handle the incoming in the afternoon?

BISHOP TODD: I suppose --.

CHAD FIRMAGE: And you're salaried, right? Not hourly? So you could supervise the morning rush, stay 'til five, and it wouldn't cost the company any more money.

FRED WHITMORE: Just hypothetically.

BISHOP TODD: But I can't.

FRED WHITMORE: Oh?

BISHOP TODD: My wife has to go to work early to be home when the kids come home at three. So I have to get them off to school. I can't get here --.

FRED WHITMORE: If you had to, you could work all that out, couldn't you?

BISHOP TODD: Well, I --.

FRED WHITMORE: For an extra five grand a year?

BISHOP TODD: Five grand?

FRED WHITMORE: We'd still come out ahead. You ever finish an entire morning's rush before the incoming?

BISHOP TODD: Generally we . . . Is this an order?

FRED WHITMORE: What?

BISHOP TODD: Are you telling me I'm supposed to come in earlier? From now on? As my boss?

FRED WHITMORE: No, I don't do that. This is all just hypothetical.

BISHOP TODD: I see.

FRED WHITMORE: But you could, right? I can put that on my report?

BISHOP TODD: *(Pause.)* I suppose. If I had to.

FRED WHITMORE: Good.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Good.

FRED WHITMORE: Good to talk to you, McKay is it? Or do I call you Bishop?

BISHOP TODD: McKay is fine.

FRED WHITMORE: You'll have to forgive me. I'm a new convert, still a little shaky on Mormon protocol.

(To the audience.)

In south Philly, all those Italians, I went to mass every Sunday. In San Diego, I took up golf. Here, it's Mormon country, so I took the lessons and took the bath. I figure, to get along, go along.

(To TODD.)

Nice operation you have here.

BISHOP TODD: Thanks.

(Wearily, peels off smock, puts on suit jacket.)

FRED WHITMORE: Chad? You got all that?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Comes in earlier, reports to you, raise. Got it.

FRED WHITMORE: Okay, next we look at programming.

(Enter BRENDA BURDETT to BISHOP TODD's office.)

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop.

BISHOP TODD: Sister Burdett. Please sit down.

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop, it's . . .

(She breaks down briefly.)

I'm sorry. I didn't think I was going to do that.

BISHOP TODD: Is it Brian?

BRENDA BURDETT: It's over, Bishop. It's all over.

FRED WHITMORE: *(To CHAD.)* Then user support afterwards.

(To audience.)

Something else, too, a project of my own. The very fact I'm here says something. Big secrecy, mysterious holes in Mr. Ward's schedule. Big secrets equal big money. And since I am here, maybe some of it can trickle down my way. . . .

(He shrugs, exits.)

BRENDA BURDETT: All that time, he lost all that weight, started working out, grew that little moustache, I thought it was for me. You know? Talking about spending more time with the kids, maybe quit smoking. I thought it was for me, for the family. All the time, it was someone else. Someone named M. M. McGinn. I lost my man to an initial.

BISHOP TODD: M.?

BRENDA BURDETT: That's the name on the mailbox. Outside the mobile home where I caught him. M. Mary Jane? Margaret? Martha? Megan?

BISHOP TODD: Brenda, an initial doesn't seem that . . . conclusive to me.

BRENDA BURDETT: Oh, it's plenty conclusive. Looked right in the window, caught 'em in the act. I could see part of her face, even. Black hair. Except he was still wearing his cowboy boots, you know? A guy with cowboy boots, is that supposed to be some kind of turn-on?

BISHOP TODD: When was this?

BRENDA BURDETT: Last night.

BISHOP TODD: Oh, my.

BRENDA BURDETT: Yeah, it was a great night, all right.

BISHOP TODD: You say you looked in. Did you talk to him? Is everything --?

BRENDA BURDETT: I didn't exactly talk to him.

BISHOP TODD: I think you should, don't you?

BRENDA BURDETT: It's not necessary, Bishop. He knows that I know and he knows that it's over. Next time we talk, it'll be in court.

BISHOP TODD: How do you --?

BRENDA BURDETT: Went back to the house and got all his stuff. His clothes, his shoes, his guns, that two-point trophy buck he was so proud of, everything. Took two trips, but I loaded it all in the bed of his pickup, there in her driveway. Then . . . well, Bishop, I have a little confession to make.

BISHOP TODD: A confession?

BRENDA BURDETT: I was about to leave, then I saw the hose goin' out from the trailer. She has this little pathetic patch of lawn out in front she was watering. So she was used to the sound of water runnin'. So I just stuck that hose in the back of the truck with all his things. Oh, he knows all right.

BISHOP TODD: Oh, my.

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop, I know I'm supposed to forgive him. I know I'm supposed to ask Heavenly Father for forgiveness for ruining all his stuff and all. And I will. When I'm good and ready.

BISHOP TODD: I understand. In the meantime --

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop, you know me. I'm not a whiner and I'm not a taker. But I got three kids, a brand new mortgage, and I just lost 80% of my family income.

BISHOP TODD: The Church will help.

(FRED WHITMORE and CHAD enter, with MAHONRI WARD.)

FRED WHITMORE: So that's my report, Mr. Ward.

BISHOP TODD: We'll help with the mortgage, if you need us to. I'll call Sister Marchant to assess your food needs.

BRENDA BURDETT: I'm gonna get a better job, that'll help.

BISHOP TODD: We have an opening in my department at ONTI, actually.

FRED WHITMORE: I tried to fudge together an organizational flow chart --

BRENDA BURDETT: Well, that would be great. ONTI, they pay good. And I'll be able to get child support when the divorce comes through, not that I figure to collect it real often.

BISHOP TODD: Good. I know how traumatic this must be for you --

BRENDA BURDETT: No, Bishop. I'm okay.

(Sudden emotion)

I would like to claw the bastard's eyeballs out.

(Takes a deep breath.)

But I'm gonna be okay.

MAHONRI WARD: A flow chart?

FRED WHITMORE: Who reports to who.

BISHOP TODD: And I promise, the Church will take action on this, too.

BRENDA BURDETT: Well, that's up to you. Won't mean much to Brian either way. But there is one more thing.

BISHOP TODD: Yes?

BRENDA BURDETT: Well, I mean, you had all those talks with us, and he wasn't working nights as much, and I started thinking things were getting better. I had some hope, you know, and it's dangerous, hope is.

BISHOP TODD: So?

BRENDA BURDETT: Well, on top of everything . . . I think I'm pregnant.

(Pause.)

FRED WHITMORE: You can see the result; just a total mess.

BISHOP TODD: We'll see if we can help there too.

(He and BRENDA BURDETT exit.)

MAHONRI WARD: We've never needed anything like a flow chart before.

CHAD FIRMAGE: We've basically identified a three-tiered structure.

MAHONRI WARD: Look, I don't want to lose our flexibility, make things so rigid good ideas don't get listened to. That's the problem with these top-down structures.

FRED WHITMORE: I understand.

MAHONRI WARD: Our approach, if we have a problem, we send out for lunch and sit around a table 'til we've worked things out.

FRED WHITMORE: That kind of chaos can yield creative dividends.

MAHONRI WARD: That's what we've found.

FRED WHITMORE: Right, back when you had 35 employees. Right now you have over six thousand.

MAHONRI WARD: Well, okay. That's what you're supposed to do for us, help us get better organized.

FRED WHITMORE: Chad?

CHAD FIRMAGE: We've roughed out a little tighter organization.

MAHONRI WARD: *(Looking at a chart.)* Very impressive.

FRED WHITMORE: We could implement the whole thing in a matter of months.

MAHONRI WARD: You said something about layoffs --.

FRED WHITMORE: Mr. Ward, layoffs is not a word we use. That's for outsiders, people who don't know a business cycle from a Schwinn. Rightsizing, that's the term for it.

MAHONRI WARD: Rightsizing.

FRED WHITMORE: And that's not a recommendation I'm necessarily making. I don't know your plans: expansion, acquisition, a merger. With your liquidity--.

MAHONRI WARD: I understand.

FRED WHITMORE: . . . your market share . . . you're an attractive target. Lean and mean, right? That's how you survive.

MAHONRI WARD: Yes.

FRED WHITMORE: All I'm saying, if rightsizing turns out to be necessary --.

MAHONRI WARD: I'm not going to lay anyone off.

FRED WHITMORE: I understand that.

MAHONRI WARD: I don't believe in it.

FRED WHITMORE: It can often lead to feelings of hostility and bitterness, absolutely.

MAHONRI WARD: We're not that desperate, not yet, not by a long shot.

FRED WHITMORE: Then I'll just file this part of my report?

MAHONRI WARD: Pitch it, delete the program. We're not laying people off, and that's final.

CHAD FIRMAGE: So our restructuring proposal --?

MAHONRI WARD: I agree we need a tighter organization. Minus layoffs.

FRED WHITMORE: You're the boss.

(A buzzing sound.)

My phone.

CHAD FIRMAGE: *(Takes cell phone from pocket.)* I got it. Fred Whitmore's office.

MAHONRI WARD: Go ahead and take it.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yeah, he's here. Fred, I think it's your stake president.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Taking phone.)* My what? Fred Whitmore? Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah?

MAHONRI WARD: Problems?

FRED WHITMORE: *(Shakes his head.)* Okay, I guess. Say about seven? Yeah.

(Hangs up.)

Weird.

MAHONRI WARD: Anything important?

FRED WHITMORE: I don't know. Chad?

CHAD FIRMAGE: Yes?

FRED WHITMORE: What's a stake president?

(He, CHAD and MAHONRI WARD exit. SAM SAM SUMPTER:, unkempt, with his head on his desk. Enter HELEN BRYSON.)

SAM SUMPTER: Hello, Helen.

HELEN BRYSON: Oh, Sam.

(She sighs, and sits next to him.)

What is it this time? Let's see. Trilateral Commission? Area 51? The Kennedy assassin--

SAM SUMPTER: I can't do it. Can't can't can't can't, not any longer.

HELEN BRYSON: Okay, it's work related. What can't you do?

SAM SUMPTER: The job, this place, this job --.

HELEN BRYSON: Specifically, Sam.

SAM SUMPTER: Specifically?

(Nods.)

All right. All right, all right, you asked for it. We work at a computer company, we make computer software, our product is used in offices across the country.

HELEN BRYSON: So far I'm with you.

SAM SUMPTER: Mostly women, right? Mostly secretaries, women, single parents, blue collar wives. Typing at a PC. For hours. Every day. The same repeated movements, the same muscles worked, hour after hour.

You see them, don't you? You see them? Elastic bandages on their wrists.

HELEN BRYSON: Sam--.

SAM SUMPTER: Carpal tunnel. Carpal tunnel syndrome, bandages on their wrists. Any office in the . . . And

they keep working, ruining their hands and their arms and and and their health and and and --.

HELEN BRYSON: Sam, this is Helen.

SAM SUMPTER: And I'm party to it. Me. To an an an an increase in the sum total of human misery. I'm party to it.

HELEN BRYSON: Sam, you've got to stay away from those web sites --.

SAM SUMPTER: Carpal tunnel and and and ozone depletion, sometimes I feel like I'm the only one --

HELEN BRYSON: Frankly, Sam--.

SAM SUMPTER: . . . who bothers to look, who bothers to read and think, and instead of just just just just nailing my ninety-five theses to the door --.

HELEN BRYSON: (*Wearily.*) You nail anything to our door and I'll have you arrested.

SAM SUMPTER: I chicken out. Bwaack bwaack bwaack. I chicken. Right? Bwaaack bwaaaack. Every time. For a paycheck. A lousy few hundred shekels a week.

HELEN BRYSON: Sam, the point is, if you want to continue getting that paycheck . . . you with me?

SAM SUMPTER: I know I know I let you down I know -- .

HELEN BRYSON: Look, I won't fire you, Sam.

SAM SUMPTER: You should.

HELEN BRYSON: Probably I should. But I won't. Okay?

SAM SUMPTER: Okay.

HELEN BRYSON: Just . . . It's not enough to just . . . just overcome your moral scruples enough to walk in the door. You know?

SAM SUMPTER: I know.

HELEN BRYSON: There's a little matter of a press release I needed yesterday.

SAM SUMPTER: Yes . . . yes, I'll get right . . . right on it.

HELEN BRYSON: All right.

(Starts to go, then turns back.)

We have this conversation nearly every week, you know.

SAM SUMPTER: I know I'm sorry, it's just that -- .

HELEN BRYSON: Sam, why not give it up? I mean, it's not like we make . . . missiles, or cigarettes or, I don't know, crack cocaine. . . Are we really so awful?

SAM SUMPTER: "All is well in Zion, yea -- Zion prospereth."

HELEN BRYSON: Give me a--.

SAM SUMPTER: "ALL IS WELL --.

HELEN BRYSON: I need that press release by this afternoon.

(BISHOP TODD, wearing his work jacket. Enter BRENDA BURDETT.)

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop? I got it!

BISHOP TODD: Brenda. I'm so delighted.

BRENDA BURDETT: Bishop, I can't thank you enough for this.

BISHOP TODD: Did you ask about the insurance?

BRENDA BURDETT: They say I'm covered. Twelve hundred dollar deductible, and I'll get that from Brian, the judge said.

BISHOP TODD: This is great news.

BRENDA BURDETT: So, what do I do?

(Enter HARRY JUNE, affable, friendly, ruthless, owner of EMPASSE.)

BISHOP TODD: Excuse me.

(Crosses to him.)

Can I help you?

HARRY HARRY JUNE: Actually, I'm waiting for someone.

(They shake hands.)

Harry June. Pleasure to meet you.

BISHOP TODD: *(A bit in awe.)* Mr. Harry June. I mean, Brother . . . President . . . uh, McKay Todd. It's my pleasure.

HARRY JUNE: McKay Todd. Do I know you from somewhere?

BISHOP TODD: I don't . . . think --.

HARRY JUNE: You gave a talk at regional conference didn't you? Last summer?

BISHOP TODD: *(Beaming.)* As a matter of fact . . . you remember my --.

HARRY JUNE: I always remember a good talk. Let's see, you talked about. . .

BISHOP TODD: Hope.

HARRY JUNE: Hope, right. Well, it's good to see you again.

BISHOP TODD: Likewise.

HARRY JUNE: *(Enter MAHONRI WARD.)* Nice operation you have down here.

BISHOP TODD: Thanks.

MAHONRI WARD: Harry.

BISHOP TODD: Mr. Ward.

MAHONRI WARD: The elevator's down the hall.

(He and HARRY JUNE start to exit together. He turns back to BISHOP TODD.)

Your name is Todd, isn't it?

BISHOP TODD: McKay Todd, yessir.

MAHONRI WARD: Well, just go on . . . with what you were doing.

BISHOP TODD: Yes sir.

(They exit.)

BRENDA BURDETT: Wow. The Mahonri Ward?

BISHOP TODD: And the Harry June. Both of them.

BRENDA BURDETT: Two of the richest guys in the Church.

BISHOP TODD: Probably a billion dollars, right here in our mail room.

BRENDA BURDETT: Be great, wouldn't it?

BISHOP TODD: Yep.

BRENDA BURDETT: How often do they come down here?

BISHOP TODD: Never. This is a first.

BRENDA BURDETT: I'm impressed. My first day, too.

BISHOP TODD: Amazing.

BRENDA BURDETT: So why are those two guys sneakin' around our mail room?

BISHOP TODD: I have no idea.

(Pause.)

BRENDA BURDETT: Well. None of my business. What do I do?

BISHOP TODD: You start working. Address labels are there, work orders over there.

BRENDA BURDETT: Great. And Bishop?

BISHOP TODD: Yes, Sister Burdett.

BRENDA BURDETT: Thanks.

*(Lights down. Up on HARRY JUNE and MAHONRI WARD in MAHONRI WARD's office.
Two other execs, SCOTT and COOPER, are with them.)*

HARRY JUNE: Seventeen a share.

SCOTT: *(Depressed.)* Seventeen.

HARRY JUNE: Right now, that's it. Fair market value.

MAHONRI WARD: *(Pause.)* Look, Harry, we'll have to think about it.

HARRY JUNE: You do that.

(Checks his watch.)

Meantime, I have stake meetings.

(With genuine affection.)

It's great to see you again, Mahonri. You're a good man.

MAHONRI WARD: So are you.

HARRY JUNE: Mr. Scott, Mr. Cooper.

(Nods affably, exits. A longish pause.)

SCOTT: Seventeen.

COOPER: It's not like it's news to us.

SCOTT: It's what we warned you, Mahonri.

MAHONRI WARD: I know, Randy.

(Pacing.)

We're still profitable; that doesn't matter. We have no debt at all, doesn't matter. Market share, irrelevant.

COOPER: Wall Street doesn't like us.

SCOTT: That's what it comes down to.

MAHONRI WARD: Remember when we were at thirty?

COOPER: Not that long ago, either.

MAHONRI WARD: Okay, at seventeen, where does that leave us?

SCOTT: One-and-three quarters for you, close to three divided between Coop and me.

MAHONRI WARD: Not so bad, when you think of where we started.

COOPER: It's not enough.

MAHONRI WARD: Coop, Randy. I want out. I can't put it any simpler than that.

COOPER: It's what we've been talking about.

MAHONRI WARD: I'm not cut out for this. I've been doing some soul searching, wondering how suddenly, I came to run this . . . monster of a company. That was never my dream.

SCOTT: I know. We've talked --.

MAHONRI WARD: I'm a guy with an itch for making things simpler. That's all. I liked playing with software, I came up with a new application, then when we needed financing, I took us public. One thing led to

another, and --.

SCOTT: And here we are.

MAHONRI WARD: Here we are.

COOPER: The fact is, Mahonri, I want this merger as badly as you do.

SCOTT: Both of us do.

MAHONRI WARD: I know.

COOPER: For you, this was a dream, a crusade even. For me, it was an investment.

SCOTT: Me too. And it's time to cash in.

COOPER: But not at seventeen dollars a share. Not for stock I bought at fifteen-and-a-quarter, some of it.

SCOTT: That one block, I bought at sixteen.

COOPER: That's ridiculous.

MAHONRI WARD: It's still a great deal of money.

COOPER: If it's worth nineteen, I want nineteen. If it's worth twenty- five, I want twenty-five.

SCOTT: It's been as high as thirty. Wish I'd sold then.

COOPER: Me too. Figured I'd keep riding it up.

MAHONRI WARD: Realistically --.

COOPER: Realistically, there's no reason we can't get twenty five.

SCOTT: We want what's ours.

COOPER: That's just how business works.

MAHONRI WARD: I know you've been talking to Con Bryson --.

SCOTT: The logistics are in place.

COOPER: We'll stock split two for one. . . .

SCOTT: . . . trade shares to make up the balance.

COOPER: We have a three week window, and we pick the day, based on Nasdaq closing price.

SCOTT: Harry June doesn't set the price. The market will.

MAHONRI WARD: But that puts the price out of our hands, doesn't it?

SCOTT: Mahonri, weren't you listening? Harry couldn't have made it clearer.

HARRY JUNE: (*Reappears in light.*) Windows hurt you.

MAHONRI WARD: We're recovering from Windows, look at our books.

HARRY JUNE: Your stock's down to seventeen.

(*A pause. Then, baiting the hook.*)

Of course, if you could reduce costs substantially over the next few weeks --.

MAHONRI WARD: No.

HARRY JUNE: You're fat in engineering. And customer support, well--

MAHONRI WARD: User support is our trademark.

HARRY JUNE: Not cost effective.

MAHONRI WARD: Harry, people are afraid of computers. They like having a helpline--

HARRY JUNE: Officemate wholesales at forty dollars per unit. Each customer call costs you twelve --.

MAHONRI WARD: It's why we have customer loyalty--.

HARRY JUNE: I'm telling you what Wall Street's telling you. Unless you can reduce costs substantially over the next four months, the selling price is seventeen dollars a share.

(Lights out on him.)

MAHONRI WARD: Windows wasn't our fault.

SCOTT: It's Bill Gates, Mahonri.

MAHONRI WARD: When you have to buy the operating system from Microsoft and they're your main competitor --

COOPER: The justice department -- .

SCOTT: They did investigate--.

MAHONRI WARD: But how they . . . I mean, no major . . . come on--.

SCOTT: No major violations of antitrust. It's Bill Gates. They'll never catch him.

COOPER: It's also irrelevant. We've all read Fred Whitmore's memo on layoffs.

MAHONRI WARD: How did you get hold of that?

COOPER: Mahonri--.

MAHONRI WARD: I told him to throw that report away!

COOPER: Calm down.

SCOTT: It was my idea to hire him. Remember?

MAHONRI WARD: An efficiency consultant, you said.

COOPER: That's right. Reporting to the four of us, as majority stockholders.

MAHONRI WARD: Reporting to me, as CEO!

SCOTT: What, you think we're not going to check with him?

COOPER: You think we're not going to ask for his recommendations?

SCOTT: It's all laid out for us.

COOPER: Wall Street will fall right back in love.

MAHONRI WARD: Absolutely not.

COOPER: We can get twenty-five, minimum.

MAHONRI WARD: Or we can sell now at seventeen. And that's good enough for me.

(Pause.)

SCOTT: Not me.

COOPER: No way.

MAHONRI WARD: I am CEO of this company, gentlemen.

COOPER: Yes--.

MAHONRI WARD: I founded this company, I run this company!

COOPER: That's right. You do. And you're the biggest shareholder. With thirty-eight percent of the stock. Mahonri, you're outvoted.

*(Lights down as they exit. Lights come up on **CHAD** and **FRED WHITMORE**.)*

FRED WHITMORE: Well, seven o'clock. I've got an appointment.

CHAD FIRMAGE: *(He starts to pick up.)* Right.

FRED WHITMORE: You going somewhere?

CHAD FIRMAGE: *(A pause. Sits.)* No.

FRED WHITMORE: There's a programming report and Windows update. I'll need those first thing tomorrow.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Okay.

FRED WHITMORE: Seven o'clock, Chad, is when I go home.

CHAD FIRMAGE: Right.

(FRED WHITMORE exits. CHAD picks up phone with a sigh.)

Honey? Yeah. Gee, that sounds great. No. No, I'm still going to be another couple of hours. I dunno, maybe midnight. I know. I know. I know.

(Pause.)

Because I have to.

(Lights up on CYNTHIA WHITMORE. She is talking over a tape recorder, looking over some photographs.)

CYNTHIA: Search for America, chapter seven. continuing. Grocery shopping.

(With breathless enthusiasm.)

A supermarket! Such a carefully constructed maze, herding us all, like mice, towards our water bottles and seed trays. Today, a bonus; older women smiling at you, handing out free samples of foods on special. Insert Photo Seven.

(Turns over a photograph.)

We're all collectors of persons, searchers for faces and hands and impressions. This is St. George, Utah, white America, variations are subtler, but patience, patience, more refined pleasures are often their own reward. Insert Photo Eight. A tattooed man, wearing a Harley Davidson jacket and a stained tee-shirt glowered, daring us all to comment, as he laid just five things on the conveyer: cigarettes, chewing tobacco, beef jerky, beer, and a box of Lucky Charms. Insert Photo Nine. Two of the checkout ladies had bandaged wrists: carpal tunnel, they said. Photo Ten. And there was an Indian woman, tall and fat and proud, and when she would approach, everyone would make such an exaggerated show of nonchalance, checking their wristwatches. Insert Photos Eleven through Thirteen, sequence. The contempt on a checker's face as a man paid with food stamps. Photo Fourteen. And I saw one very young looking woman, with unwashed hair shining in the fluorescence. Photo Fifteen. She had two small children with her. Photo Sixteen, closeup. One of them was crying and you could see the streaks the tears made in the brown and gray of her cheeks.

(Enter FRED WHITMORE. She gestures for him to sit. He does, smiling.)

And each of the free sample stations was like a point of the True Cross, and the mother was feeding them cookies and punch and smoked sausage, the Body and Blood of Christ. Then she left, her children fed, without making a single purchase, and the baggers smiled at her kindly as she went out the door. Photo Seventeen, actually make that before that last sentence, then Eighteen now. And in the parking lot, a dispute over a parking space very nearly led to a fistfight! Nineteen and Twenty. Shouts, threats, obscenities;

(Turns off the tape recorder.)

Oh, it was marvelous, glorious! I'm going back again tomorrow. Hello, darling.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Kisses her absently.)* Hi, Cinny. Nice stuff. Kiss?

CYNTHIA: I thought we'd do Chinese tonight. Take-out?

(We see MAHONRI WARD enter, ring a doorbell.)

FRED WHITMORE: Fine.

(JOHN WAYNE COGBURN answers his door. Alcoholic, nasty.)

COGBURN: Yeah?

MAHONRI WARD: Brother Cogburn. My name is Mahonri Ward, and --

COGBURN: Get lost.

(Slams the door closed. MAHONRI WARD stares at it a moment, exits.)

CYNTHIA: Did you give Mahonri your report?

FRED WHITMORE: Wouldn't take it. Had to slip it through the back door to Coop. He'll know what to do with it. Something else, too.

CYNTHIA: Oh?

FRED WHITMORE: I had a meeting with a stake president.

(The STAKE PRESIDENT enters. FRED WHITMORE turns, acts out the scene while CYNTHIA watches.)

STAKE PRESIDENT: Brother Whitmore? You're probably wondering why I called you in this evening.

FRED WHITMORE: As a matter of fact--.

STAKE PRESIDENT: I'm here to extend you a calling.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Turns to CYNTHIA.)* You remember anything about callings?

CYNTHIA: They told us about it. It's a lay ministry, so everyone has a job to do, but it's like hierarchical; they call you, you don't get to choose.

FRED WHITMORE: You remember all that stuff better than me.

STAKE PRESIDENT: You are an elder, isn't that correct?

FRED WHITMORE: I honestly . . . I don't rememb --.

CYNTHIA: You are.

FRED WHITMORE: I thought I was a priest.

CYNTHIA: That was at first. Remember? It goes deacon, priest, elder, bishop, something like that?

FRED WHITMORE: I'm second to the top?

CYNTHIA: I think. The guys in the circle, hands on your head?

FRED WHITMORE: Oh, yeah.

STAKE PRESIDENT: You come very highly recommended for this present calling, and I'm very happy to extend to you

FRED WHITMORE: *(Raising his hand, like a kid in school.)* Uh, President?

STAKE PRESIDENT: Yes, Brother Whitmore?

FRED WHITMORE: Who are you? And what's a calling?

CYNTHIA: You didn't.

FRED WHITMORE: Well, I didn't know.

CYNTHIA: You said, who are you? He's the stake president. That's like the head of a diocese, like a bishop in most churches.

FRED WHITMORE: I found that out.

STAKE PRESIDENT: Look, maybe we should take this a little more slowly.

CYNTHIA: Thank heavens.

STAKE PRESIDENT: A calling is . . . an opportunity. An opportunity for service.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Nodding.)* Gotcha.

STAKE PRESIDENT: Yes. An opportunity to serve your fellow man, while also serving the Lord.

FRED WHITMORE: Uh-huh.

STAKE PRESIDENT: Precisely. As, for example, I'm doing.

FRED WHITMORE: So you want me to take over your job?

STAKE PRESIDENT: I beg pardon?

FRED WHITMORE: This President stuff. You want me to take it on?

CYNTHIA: Fred!

STAKE PRESIDENT: No, no, I don't have the authority -- .

FRED WHITMORE: Hey, organizational I can handle. That's what I do at work, supervise over six thousand people. Get people working together, that's my kinda gig.

(Stands to shake his hand.)

You got your man.

CYNTHIA: Oh, Fred. Don't you remember anything they told you?

FRED WHITMORE: Not much, frankly.

STAKE PRESIDENT: Brother Whitmore, you don't understand. Believe me, I would love to have you take over my job. But that's not . . . I have a different calling in mind.

FRED WHITMORE: I don't know. I mean, I'm like everyone. Good at some things. Not good at others.

STAKE PRESIDENT: Certainly.

FRED WHITMORE: What if you give me something I'm no good at?

(Turns to CYNTHIA.)

And so, of course, that's exactly what he did.

STAKE PRESIDENT: We want you to be stake drama specialist.

CYNTHIA: Drama? Did he say drama?

STAKE PRESIDENT: Specifically, we want you to direct the stake play.

(The STAKE PRESIDENT exits.)

CYNTHIA: You're kidding.

FRED WHITMORE: Wish I was. A play. Like that thing we saw that one time with all the cats?

CYNTHIA: I know what a play is, Fred. They have a theater?

FRED WHITMORE: In the stake building, he said. Anyway, every other year or so they do a dramatic thing, and this year, I'm in charge.

CYNTHIA: That's just insane.

FRED WHITMORE: Tell me about it.

CYNTHIA: You're a businessman, you don't know anything about drama.

FRED WHITMORE: Actually, I think it'll be okay. It's more organizational than anything. Every ward has a drama person called, and they get the people to be in it, I just have to coordinate it all.

CYNTHIA: Well, you can do that, I guess.

FRED WHITMORE: That's what I figured.

CYNTHIA: So what play are you doing? Do you get to choose?

FRED WHITMORE: Kinda. They gave me three scripts, I'm supposed to read them, let them know. They're all real Mormon.

CYNTHIA: Figures.

(Looking them over.)

Man of Thunder: The Orrin Porter Rockwell Story. Who's he?

FRED WHITMORE: Mountain man, pioneer guy. It's a musical. Whaddya think?

CYNTHIA: I can see it now. All these guys in furs leaping around singing. Next. No Greater Crown. That's got

to be some Eastery . . .

(Opens script.)

Nope. Joseph Smith. Check this one off.

FRED WHITMORE: Why?

CYNTHIA: Cast of characters. Forty-one men, three women. That leaves one.

FRED WHITMORE: Gadianton! With an exclamation point, no less.

CYNTHIA: I remember him, he was a bad guy in that book they had us read.

(A cassette tape falls out of the script.)

Looks like it's a musical too.

FRED WHITMORE: "An ancient American musical." What do you think?

CYNTHIA: Nice mix of men's and women's roles.

FRED WHITMORE: *(Clowning.)* We may have a winner --

CYNTHIA: Sounds dorky.

FRED WHITMORE: Who cares? They all sound dorky. You know, Cinny, this could be fun.

CYNTHIA: If you think so.

FRED WHITMORE: Hey, I've run everything else in my life. Why not a stake musical?

(Opens the script. Lights down. Enter MAHONRI WARD. He knocks again on COGBURN's door.)

COGBURN: *(Drunk.)* Uh-huh.

FRED WHITMORE: All right, act one, scene one. The prophet Nephi surveys his people --.

MAHONRI WARD: Brother Cogburn. My name is Mahonri Ward. I've been assigned as your home teacher.

COGBURN: Tomorrow.

MAHONRI WARD: Very well. I think I can clear some time in the evening. Would seven be convenient?

COGBURN: Tomorrow.

MAHONRI WARD: Very well. I'll see you at seven.

COGBURN: Tomorrow.

(He shuts the door. Exit MAHONRI WARD. Enter HELEN BRYSON and CON BRYSON. He is listening to music.)

HELEN BRYSON: Hi, honey.

CON: Shhh.

(Enter BISHOP TODD and his wife KAREN, other side of the stage.)

BISHOP TODD: Hey.

KAREN: Shhh, I'm watching this.

HELEN BRYSON: What is it?

CON: Vaughan Williams. Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis. Shh.

(They listen together.)

BISHOP TODD: Any messages?

KAREN: Your brother called.

BISHOP TODD: Dave?

KAREN: He said call him back. Now quiet.

(BISHOP TODD crosses to the kitchen, pours himself a glass of milk, goes back to the sofa, sits

with *KAREN*.)

CON: Exquisite. I love those soaring violins.

HELEN BRYSON: It's beautiful.

CON: So how was life in the salt mines?

HELEN BRYSON: Not bad. Same old same old.

CON: More problems with your pet lunatic?

ELEN BRYSON: Oh, Sam's always got an ax to grind. You know, some people play solitaire, surf the 'net. Sam complains about the world.

CON: Why don't you just can him?

HELEN BRYSON: Well, when he wants to be, he's very very good.

CON: Oh, listen, listen, this is my favorite part.

BISHOP TODD: What're you watching?

KAREN: They're making like jewelry cases out of wall paper and these little boxes.

BISHOP TODD: For homemaking?

KAREN: It's something Bibi Halstrup doesn't know how to do. Maybe.

BISHOP TODD: This is about Sister Halstrup? Again?

KAREN: Just once, I want my ideas to be as good as her ideas.

BISHOP TODD: You don't have to compete with Bibi Halstrup.

KAREN: Shut up, I do too. All right, you go under the lid, and glue it . . . there. This whole darn thing's gonna end up stuck to my fingers, I just know it.

HELEN BRYSON: You know anything about . . . well, what's going on?

CON: Where?

HELEN BRYSON: Harry June dropped by Mahonri's office today. Cooper and Scott were seen in the building, first time in eight months.

CON: No kidding.

HELEN BRYSON: You know anything about any of this?

(CON makes a gesture "my lips are sealed.")

I figured you would. You can't tell me anything?

CON: I can't even tell you that I can't tell you. Please don't ask about this.

HELEN BRYSON: The SEC does not have a bug in our living room.

CON: Did I say anything about the SEC?

HELEN BRYSON: We're married, Con. We can't even exchange a little pillow talk?

CON: About our jobs? No.

HELEN BRYSON: *(Defeated.)* All right.

CON: Listen to this. The pianissimo just crystal clear.

BISHOP TODD: It looks good.

KAREN: You're just saying that. She drives me crazy, McKay. Makes me feel like such a slug.

BISHOP TODD: Why?

KAREN: Hush. Okay, make a seam with the wallpaper, glue around the edges . . . got it.

HELEN BRYSON: Rumor is that we've got a big layoff coming.

CON: No kidding?

HELEN BRYSON: Cut it out, all right? I know you can't say anything.

CON: Given what's happened to your stock, is it such a big surprise? That's why Mahonri hired Fred Whitmore.

HELEN BRYSON: I figured. He's working that assistant of his to death.

CON: That's one of his trademarks. He's the best, a real assassin.

HELEN BRYSON: Mahonri says he's just a consultant. You know him?

CON: I know of him. We nearly hired him two years ago.

HELEN BRYSON: So the rumors are true.

CON: What's to worry? You're head of your department. You're no target for the likes of him.

HELEN BRYSON: Cold comfort, if friends are getting it right and left.

CON: Downsizing, riffing--.

HELEN BRYSON: I heard another one today. Involuntary reduction of payroll.

CON: Yeah, whatever. It's normal business practice.

HELEN BRYSON: I know, I know.

CON: People who don't know anything about market economics get all hot under the collar every time a company lays people off. Ignore them. It's just part of staying competitive. Just one more necessary evil --.

HELEN BRYSON: Like lawyers --.

CON: Right. Or accountants --.

HELEN BRYSON: OSHA.

CON: The SEC.

HELEN BRYSON: The EEOC.

CON: The NLRB.

HELEN BRYSON: The EPA.

CON: Ralph Nader.

HELEN BRYSON: Sam Sumpter.

(They share a laugh.)

CON: Listen to this, will you? Exquisite.

KAREN: All right, I think I've got it now.

BISHOP TODD: Any mail?

KAREN: On the piano.

BISHOP TODD: Anything from the twins?

KAREN: Kimball wrote. Says the Swiss winters are getting to him, needs a new overcoat.

BISHOP TODD: What about Spence?

KAREN: You know the Guatemalan mail. Nothing for three weeks and then four all at once.

(Finishes the lid.)

Ta Da!

BISHOP TODD: It looks good. Better than anything Bibi Halstrup could ever dream of making.

KAREN: MacKay, you're not taking this seriously.

BISHOP TODD: No, I guess I'm not.

KAREN: You don't have any idea what a woman like that does to your psyche. You know she irons her sheets?

BISHOP TODD: Karen, she's just another sister in the ward. I don't see anything special about her.

KAREN: PLUS she volunteers at the hospital, PLUS she takes night classes, PLUS she cans, not to mention

genealogy, emergency preparedness, makes her own clothes --

BISHOP TODD: You make your own clothes.

KAREN: You don't have a clue, do you? You know what she is? She's the kind of person who never makes jello with ice cubes.

BISHOP TODD: What?

KAREN: You know. There's a fast way and a slow way to make jello, you don't use ice cubes the slow way and it tastes better but it takes like two days. Well, how'm I supposed to know I'm gonna wanna eat something two days from now that jello would be good with? So I always make jello at the last second, and that takes ice cubes and ends up watery. Well, not her. She's got her menus and her shopping lined up three weeks in advance. Knows exactly when she's gonna want jello, gets little shredded carrots in there, pineapple, marshmallows, I'm serving up this soupy glop and hoping the kids won't notice. Hush, I'm trying to get this all down.

BISHOP TODD: I'll call Dave.

KAREN: Quietly.

(Muttering.)

Okay, let the glue dry and . . . the flap comes up. They said thirty seconds, I held it at least forty-five, and the flap still -- .

BISHOP TODD: Hi, Sally, it's McKay. Is Dave . . . Sally? Are you all right?

KAREN: . . . I don't believe it. Look at that, flapping like some kind of bird.

BISHOP TODD: Sally . . . please, can you . . . I know, I know, but I can't understand --.

KAREN: Maybe if I use a little more glue. . . .

BISHOP TODD: Sally . . . please. I don't know anything . . . that's why I called.

KAREN: Something wrong?

BISHOP TODD: I don't know, Sally seems pretty . . . Hi, Dave, what in the world is . . . No, she didn't . . .

(Long pause.)

Oh no.

KAREN: What is it?

BISHOP TODD: Dave, I don't know . . . I see. The biopsy's when?

KAREN: Dave?

BISHOP TODD: *(Nodding.)* The point is, you don't know that. The doctors don't even . . . That's what they said, huh? Well, what about the blood tes. . . Oh. Uh-huh. Look, maybe Karen and I ought to . . . yeah, maybe next week-end. Meanwhile, keep your spirits up, okay? It may not be. . . I know. . . I know, but still. Okay? It may not be as bad . . . I know. I love you too. Give Sally a hug. Yeah, what a mess.

(Hangs up.)

KAREN: So what's going on?

BISHOP TODD: They found a lump on his testicle. They're having a biopsy tomorrow.

KAREN: Oh no. How's Sally doing? Maybe I should call her?

BISHOP TODD: She's got company, friends from the ward. I think we should drive up there next week-end.

KAREN: Of course.

BISHOP TODD: That makes six.

KAREN: McKay --.

BISHOP TODD: Six in our family, if Dave goes too. Six.

KAREN: McKay Todd, I'm not going to listen to this.

BISHOP TODD: You think it's coincidence, Karen?

KAREN: Coincidence, accident -- bad luck.

BISHOP TODD: (*Overlapping.*) It's this town, it's St. George, we were all living here when it happened, and now --.

KAREN: (*Furious.*) Now you just shut your mouth!

(*He looks at her, startled.*)

You shut up and listen to me! Your family has had some bad luck, some real health problems, and that's too bad and I'm sorry. But that's all it is! Bad luck! You're paranoid about this, you overreact, that's why you got fired at the post office, and I won't have it happen again!

BISHOP TODD: The Postal service --.

KAREN: Shut up! It is not going to happen to you, it is not going to effect you, I will not listen to any more about it.

(*Gently.*)

I love you, McKay. I can't live without you.

(*Frightened again.*)

And all this, it's just a lot of nonsense, and I'm tired of it, tired of it! Do you hear me!

BISHOP TODD: I'm sorry.

KAREN: (*Pause.*) Next week-end is not good. We'll drive up to Boise in a couple of weeks.

BISHOP TODD: All right.

(*Slow blackout on them. Lights up on MAHONRI WARD, visiting COGBURN.*)

MAHONRI WARD: Brother Cogburn. I've been assigned as your home teacher.

COGBURN: Uh-huh.

MAHONRI WARD: My name is Mahonri Ward.

COGBURN: No kidding.

MAHONRI WARD: I thought perhaps for my first visit today, we could just get acquainted. Get to know each other a little.

COGBURN: Oh, I think that's a very good idea. Get acquainted.

MAHONRI WARD: Yes. Good.

COGBURN: Three hundred. At twenty-five a share. More like one seventy five at seventeen, but you'll get twenty-five, have no fear.

MAHONRI WARD: Excuse me?

COGBURN: Stock split, trade, merger, your take in the neighborhood of three. Right?

MAHONRI WARD: (*A long pause, utterly shocked.*) How did you know that?

COGBURN: I know a lot of things, Mahonri Ward. I think our visits are going to be very interesting.

(*Blackout. Lights up on BRENDA BURDETT, holding herself, her hand bloody.*)

BRENDA BURDETT: Oh great. This is just great.

(*Enter WILSON HACKETT and ERMA MACKELPRANGER.*)

WILSON HACKETT: It was the shot they called Dirty Harry.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: The biggest of the bunch, they said.

WILSON HACKETT: You could just see the size of it. Lit up the sky--.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: Grey ash everywhere.

WILSON HACKETT: Army personnel come up to our camp. They had masks on their faces, gloves on their hands, and they told us, you boys better high-tail it outta here--. This here's a hot spot.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: My sister Edna was picking peas when it happened. Was seventeen year old. Met Wayne Garrett couple years later; got married spring of '55. She got pregnant right away, but the baby never did develop, just formed a mass like a buncha grapes inside her.

WILSON HACKETT: Since it hit, what with ever'thing that happened . . . never could hold down a job. I do handyman work here and there, mend a fence or paint a stable. No family left anymore, so just try -- to get by, day to day.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: She died three years later of -- cervical cancer.

WILSON HACKETT: Dirty Harry, they called it.

ERMA MACKELPRANGER: Biggest shot they ever tried.

WILSON HACKETT: Took the heart right out of me and mine, sure enough.

(BLACKOUT. END ACT ONE.)

Act Two contains an additional 36 pages