

Opening Day at Dear Old Trumpkin U.

An Interactive Farce in Five Acts

The Characters:

Custodian 1

Custodian 2

Custodian 3

Head Custodian

Provost Bergerac

The Presidential Cutout (P.C. Voice)

The Melatonin the 5th Cutout (M.C. Voice)

The Provost Bergerac Cutout (P.B.C. Voice)

Dean Chizzlewit (Dean of Students)

Dean Uberdue (Dean of the University Library)

Dean Swindolin (Dean of University Security)

Dean Squiggly (Associate Dean of Students)

Officer Sappem (Security Guard)

Dean Putzley (Dean of Faculty)

Students (#1 - #8), Blind Student

Various Department Deans and Professors

Messenger

Agent McCluskey

FBI Agents

Act One

The play is set in an abandoned mall that is being converted into Trumpkin University. Three custodians are at work converting the mall's movie theater into an auditorium (Trumpkin Hall) in anticipation of Opening Day ceremonies. They are taking a break, sitting in a half-circle of chairs, smoking and drinking coffee.

Custodian 1: It was a good idea to repurpose the theater as an auditorium.

Custodian 2: The stage was here already. All's we had to do was install the podium.

Custodian 3: Yep. Same with the seats. What a pain in the butt it would have been to replace the ones that were already here.

Custodian 2: And the money it would cost!

Custodian 1: These recliners are so comfy; I could take a nap in one right now. The students will love them.

Custodian 2: A convenient way to catch some z's during those long, boring lectures.

Custodian 1: They can almost flatten them into beds, just like in a Benz. After they wake up, they can pull out the table-tops and catch up on their notes.

Custodian 3: Yes. It's important to get your rest if you want to do good work. And how about these cup holders? They can store their pens and pencils in them.

Custodian 1: As well as their cappuccinos and rolled-up diplomas. Very useful.

Custodian 2: Yeah- President Trumpkin really did have a brain wave when he decided to use his abandoned mall as the campus.

Custodian 3: That's why he has all the moolah while we push brooms. The man's a financial giant, a genius.

Custodian 2: He changes failure into success.

Custodian 3: A bankrupted mall into a major university.

Custodian 2: In just three months' time.

Custodian 3: On a shoestring. Think of the profit margin and tax breaks. I say it again, the man's a genius!

Custodian 1: True, true. But haven't you noticed something that's not exactly right about the place?

Custodian 2: Whaddaya mean, not right? We've been on this job for almost three months and look at all we've done.

Custodian 1: Yes, that's true- we've been at it non-stop. But what I mean is, it's supposed to be a college after all, but it still feels like a mall. I visited my cousin once who was attending a college, and it felt nothing like this place. I have never heard of a mall that was made into a college.

Custodian 3: It's innovative thinking like that that separates the President from the rest of us. It's why I will always call the man a genius. Besides, kids love malls, so it follows that they'll love a school built out of one. It's a win-win for everyone, especially him. That's the genius of a trickle-down system. One for you and one, two for him.

Custodian 2: Maybe it's on account of it being so empty that you feel something's not right. Wait 'til the students get here later. Maybe seeing them gathered here will make you feel different.

Custodian 3: You gotta admit changing the ground floor into a campus and food lounge was a great use of space. There's nothing as academic as a campus and a food court. It's a winning combination, like a cup of coffee and a cigarette.

Custodian 2: Here, here! *(The three raise their coffee cups and clink them together as they hold their cigarettes in the other.)*

Custodian 1: No doubt we've come a long way in a short time but there's still so much work left to be done. I sure hope we're able to remove the Veronica's Secret sign from Provost Bergerac's office before the ceremonies begin.

Custodian 2: Unless of course there's gonna be a panty raid first. *(Custodians 1 & 3 laugh.)*

Custodian 1: Ha ha ha! I guess that's traditional, but what I'm thinking about is an academic atmosphere. After all, isn't that what a university is supposed to be about?

Custodian 2: I thought it was about football!

Custodian 3: And basketball!

Custodian 1: Ha ha! Sure! A sports program is important. It adds to the character of the school and helps drive its culture. If academics is its good right arm, sports is its left. But this place seems to have a different orientation. Something is missing, something that detracts from the formal scholarly atmosphere an institution of higher learning such as this should possess.

Custodian 2: You can install a toilet, but you can't install a culture.

Custodian 3: Yeah. You install a toilet, and it flushes. *(makes the sound of a toilet flushing)* Woooooosh. You install a podium, but the bowl stays full. That's just the way it is. Ya can't flush... I mean, rush, culture.

Custodian 1: All true! A university doesn't spring to life with the stroke of a pen or push of a broom. But I'm thinking about something else. Look around yourselves. Can you picture scholars and scientists doing cutting edge research in a library that used to house a discount shoe outlet and still has racks hanging off its walls? Or professors lecturing from counters where clerks rang up bills? How about administrators squeezed into offices where teenagers once tried on blue jeans and tank tops? No, boys. No. Something is missing. Something's not right.

Custodian 3: Maybe a dignified look. Like the Ivy's have.

Custodian 2: Well, all that plastic English ivy we installed at the entrances should help.

Custodian 1: Yes, yes, that's true.

Custodian 2: And the statues and portraits of all the dignitaries that the President associates with.

Custodian 1: They do lend the place a touch of professional and international flair.

Custodian 3: I like the one of bare-chested Putin mounted on a horse.

Custodian 2: Yeah. I liked the one of Kim Jung Un eating a plate of hamburgers. Imagine the marketing possibilities!

Custodian 1: He's a genius alright.

Custodian 3: And converting the fountain on the ground floor into Mirror Lake was a fine academic touch. Especially with that statue of him rising from the middle of it.

Custodian 2: Right across from the food pavilion. The students can eat their sushi on the benches and have intellectual discussions by the lake.

Custodian 3: Sure. They're encouraged to throw their spare change into the water. He had us locate the benches within coin-toss range.

Custodian 1: Spare change makes wishes come true, though not always theirs. You know what the President always says.

Custodian 3: "Save your money, Shecky"?

Custodian 1: Of course not. He can't make money if you're saving yours.

Custodian 2: "No extra pay for overtime"?

Custodian 1: Uh-uh, but you're getting the idea.

Custodian 3: "You can be replaced"?

Custodian 1: Nice try, but not that one either.

Custodian 2: "One for you and one, two for me...two for you and one, two, three for me..."?

Custodian 1: Nope. But don't give up.

Custodian 3: "If you don't like it, take me to court"?

Custodian 1: Try to focus. Why is he encouraging the students to throw their spare change into the fountain... I mean, lake?

Custodian 2: To eliminate unsightly pocket bulge?

Custodian 1: Maybe the women... but still no.

Custodian 3: To make it easier for them to pull out their cellphones?

Custodian 1: Their cellphones are always out. Try to think the way he would.

Custodian 3: I think I got it!! So he can fish the coins out for himself! What's as good as free money?

Custodian 1: Now you're cookin'! Try to remember what the main purpose of any for-profit school is.

Custodian 2: To learn the students?

Custodian 1: I said "main" purpose. You know what he always says...

Custodian 2: "It was consensual!"

Custodian 3: "I don't know her."

Custodian 2: "They let you do it!"

Custodian 3: "Anything you want!"

Custodian 2: "I'm not the baby-daddy!"

Custodian 1: Yes, yes, yes, yes and maybe! But what is it that makes this freewheeling possible? What is the essential ingredient that makes it all happen?

Custodian 2: Hutzpah?

Custodian 3: A big ...faucet?

All three laugh.

Custodian 1: Yes and yes. Both useful and helpful. But what's the most important element that fuels the show? What does he always say spins his top, without which nothing good can ever happen?

Custodians 2 & 3: "No mun, no fun!"

Custodian 1: Bingo!

Custodians 2 & 3: "Ya gotta pay to play!"

Custodian 1: Ha ha! Right again! Money! And he should know! He's still quite a swinger. You gotta have dough to lead that kind of lifestyle.

Custodian 2: Pretty impressive for a fat guy 147 years old!

Custodian 1: Portly. I think of him as portly.

Custodian 3: Yeah yeah, that one! And on a strict McDonald's diet!

Custodian 2: That's 'cause it's poison-free. Imagine if he had to eat like the rest of us!

Custodian 3: All those nasty whole-grains and home-grown veggies.

Custodian 2: I'm so sick of kasha! And cabbage stew. But you gotta pay the rent. Still, I wish we could take the kids out once in a while for something decent.

Custodian 3: A bucket of fried chicken would be nice. But he's right: "No mun, no fun."

Custodian 1: Well, there's nothing to be done about it, so there's no sense to being bitter. We have our health and families. There's our comfort and consolation. He's on his what? Seventh brood?

Custodian 3: Let's see. There were the four prior Melatonias, and two others before that. So with Melatonina the Fifth, that makes seven. That's not counting the side pieces, of course.

Custodian 2: You gotta hand it to him: he's one hell of a man! I wouldn't be surprised if he wasn't working on a Melatonina the Sixth, what with the Fifth turning 35 next year. You remember what he called 35?

Custodian 3: Yeah: check-out time.

Custodian 1: And that's why the dough is so important.

Custodian 2: And the pre-nup.

Custodian 3: Ain't no free lunch.

Custodian 1: Right: no mun, no fun. That's the main value the University is trying to get across to those innocent, eager young minds. The importance of acquiring money. I wish I had a real education like that growing up so I could make some serious cash too, but what's the use of dreaming when you have five mouths to feed? Just grin and bear it.

Custodian 2: Yeah- take it like a goddamn man!

Custodian 3: We did what we did and now we have to accept the consequences. So let's face it: We're not exactly rich. But we ain't whiners. We say our prayers and go to bed early, wake up every day and go to work. That's only right. Nobody's gonna pay the bills for us.

Shouting in the distance: Where the hell are youse, ya damn loafers? I'll break your backs if I catch youse lollygagging again! I'll dock your pay, ya miserable bastards!

Custodian 1: Oh-oh. The boss's coming. Better get back on the job. *(The three scramble to hide their cups and fan away the cigarette smoke.)*

Shouting getting louder and closer: Ya can't hide from me, ya useless laggards! I'll catch youse and make ya wish your father's condom never broke!

Custodian 2: Do you think he's upset with us?

Shouting getting louder and closer: Just wait 'til I get my hands around your scrawny necks!

Custodian 3: Nah. This is one of his better moods.

Shouting very loud and close now: I'll kick your asses from here to hell, ya lazy sons-a-bitches!

Custodian 1: But we shouldn't rile him up. He's sensitive that way.

The shouting is almost upon them: What the hell did I ever do to deserve bossin' such good-for-nothing slackers? Too late to change 'em, but maybe we can drown 'em like rats in a barrel.

Custodian 1: So don't say anything that will upset him. We don't want to spoil his mood.

The shouting is even closer: Ya godforsaken loafers! When I'm done with youse, yah'll wish yah'd been aborted.

The Head Custodian rushes in like an angry whirlwind. The three custodians are working as if they had not taken a break.

Head Custodian: So there youse are, you lazy bastards! Didn't I tell youse to get the sign out of the Dean's office when youse were through here? Were your ears plugged up? Or are ya just being stupid as usual?

Custodian 1: Yessir, Boss; you did. We heard you alright and we'll get on it as soon as we're finished here.

Head Custodian: What's holding ya up? Youse shoulda been done an hour ago.

Custodian 3: We ran into some unexpected complications, Sir.

Head Custodian: Huh?

Custodian 2: First with the podium.

Custodian 1: Then with these seats.

Head Custodian: What seats?

Custodian 1: These seats. You told us to test 'em to make sure they're working.

Head Custodian: Napping in 'em, were ya?

Custodian 3: Come on now, Boss! You know us better than that!

Head Custodian: Well enough to know ya been up to nothin' good! Probably unionizin' behind my back! You know I got orders to stop that dead in its tracks if ya get any crazy idea to form one again. I gotta cover my own ass. I can't be out looking after youse alla time.

Custodian 1: We appreciate that, Boss. And we won't let you down. We voted against the union-remember?

Head Custodian: Yeah- after President Trumpkin threatened to fire the lot of youse and replace ya with a buncha illegals. Yuh did real good with that union idea: took a pay cut and lost overtime. But that's the only way you hardheads gonna learn. Ya don't listen to reason cuz ya got no common sense.

Custodians 2 & 3 (*simultaneously*): C. 2: Yes sir!

C.3: No sir!

Head Custodian/: You idiots are lucky ya still have a job tuh screw up.

Custodians 2 & 3 (*simultaneously, as before*): C. 2: No sir!

C. 3: Yes sir!

Head Custodian: Don't you numbskulls know that President Trumpkin himself is arriving this afternoon to give the Opening Day address? What's he gonna think when he sees this mess? How are we gonna explain that nothin's ready? That the joint resembles a garbich dump what with all this crap layin' about? What are we gonna tell him? That we was rushed? That there's only the four of us? You think he wants ta hear that? (*Pauses, glaring at them.*) All our jobs are on the line, an' all's youse can do is dilly-dally over a podium and some lousy seats! In the meanwhile, the Provost's raisin' holy hell about that damn sign. "Ain't dignified," says he, "Get rid of it quick!" he tells me. And what am I supposed to do stuck as I am with shirkers like you? (*Pauses. The three custodians hang their head in shame.*) Look here, dummies. As long as the damn thing doesn't topple over when he leans on it, the podium's done. Same's with the seats. Just check the ones with the shorts. We don't wanna electrocute nobody accidentally.

Custodian 1: What about the memo, Boss?

Head Custodian: Huh? What memo?

Custodian 1: About the wiring. So he can shock anyone he wants to from the podium with an app.

Head Custodian: I must've missed that one. But that'll save us time worryin' 'bout the shorts.

Custodians 2 & 3 (*much relieved*): Pheewwwwwww!

Custodian 1: That makes it easier. I guess it's thinking like that that separates the bosses from guys like us.

Head Custodian: Damn straight, Dopey! And don't go forgettin' it! Youse're done here. Just clean up after youselves and get your asses to the Provost's office before he has a stroke. (*Exit Head Custodian, but in the background you can still hear him complaining: Mother of God! Why do I have to do all the thinking around here? Why? Because I'm surrounded by idiots!*)

Custodian 1: You heard the man! Let's get this place tidied up. Provost Bergerac is waiting! (*Curtain falls.*)

Act Two

Provost Bergerac's office. It is in mid-renovation process, still clearly a former lingerie store. Everything is painted in a variety of pink shades. The walls are decorated with stencils of thongs and g-strings, brassieres and teddies, high-heeled shoes and garter belts, everything suggestive of erotic pleasure. A life-size cardboard cutout of a grinning President Trumpkin rests against the wall amid the panties, etc. Provost Bergerac is alone, distressed, waiting to meet with the various faculty and Deans.

Provost Bergerac: Holy shit! It's Opening Day and just look at this booty repository that's supposed to be my office! The seat of gravitas reduced to the seat of grab some ass! How can anyone be expected to function in this spermatorium? The President's on his way here to address the faculty and student body. He'll be here in two hours, and what do I have to meet him in? A teenybopper's fantasy of a nookie pleasure dome! What am I gonna tell him? That three months wasn't enough time to convert the mall? That we lack resources and manpower? That we're doing our best with what we have? Good luck with that! He doesn't want to hear excuses. And he won't accept failure. Let's face it: We're fucked. (*Holds his head with his hands in misery.*) At least I have his Presidential Cutout here to guide me. (*Approaches and respectfully addresses the cardboard image of President Trumpkin.*) Tell me, President Trumpkin, confidentially, what you think about this situation we're in? (*Pulls the President's tie.*)

Presidential Cutout (*in a clear but mechanical impression of Trumpkin's voice*): It's gonna be wild!

Provost Bergerac: Yes, well, that's what I think too, Sir. But what can we do about it? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: ...we build a school, we build a road, they blow up the school, we build another school, we build another road, they blow them up, we build again. In the meantime, we can't get a fucking school in Brooklyn.

Provost Bergerac: Exactly, Sir. It's disheartening. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I think if this county gets any kinder or gentler, it's literally going to cease to exist.

Provost Bergerac: You're so right about tough love, Sir! We've gotta be resolute with the students. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories but [now] we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time.

Provost Bergerac: Absolutely true, Sir. Thank goodness we have you standing up for the rest of us. What do you think I should tell the Deans when they get here? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Who the hell wants to hear questions? Right?

Provost Bergerac: You're always right, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: They're sending people who have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

Provost Bergerac: You mean the students or the Deans, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: No matter what you do- guns or no guns- it doesn't matter. You have people that are mentally ill. And they're gonna come through the cracks. And they're going to do things that people will not even believe are possible.

Provost Bergerac: Any plans to deal with this crisis, Sir? *(pulls tie)*:

Presidential Cutout: I will build a great, great wall on our southern border, and I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words.

Provost Bergerac: That reminds me: What do you think about guns on campus, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: When you see the other side chopping off heads, waterboarding doesn't sound very severe.

Provost Bergerac: Let me make a note of that, Sir: Guns no; waterboarding yes. We'll make it official policy. We gotta protect the faculty, after all. So many shootings, so many shootings- but you never hear about mass waterboardings. How do you do it, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I think I took- I think I took my own advice on the ban. I don't know.

Provost Bergerac: If you don't know, Sir, nobody does. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I say, not in a braggadocios way, I've made billions and billions of dollars dealing with people all around the world.

Provost Bergerac: Everyone is dying to learn the secret of your many successes, Sir. That's the main attraction of dear T. U. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: As a kid, I was making a building with blocks in our playroom. I didn't have enough. So I asked my younger brother Robert if I could borrow some of his. He said, "Okay, but you have to give them back when you're done." I used all of my blocks, then all of his blocks, and when I was done I had a great building, which I then glued together. Robert never did get those blocks back.

Provost Bergerac: You were a precocious child, Sir! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You're so- you're so- you're so disgraceful. It's so disgraceful the way you said that.

Provost Bergerac *(shocked)*: I meant gifted, Sir. And talented. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: That makes me smart.

Provost Bergerac *(recovering, but still shaky)*: Your record proves it, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I have a lot of money- much more money than all of them put together. But you have to understand, I want to be me.

Provost Bergerac: Everyone wants to be you, Sir.

Presidential Cutout: It's always good to be underestimated.

Provost Bergerac: That would be to their peril, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I take advantage of the laws of this nation because I'm running a company.

Provost Bergerac: That, Sir, is your prerogative. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Most people think small because they are afraid of success, afraid of decisions, afraid of winning.

Provost Bergerac: Most of us wouldn't have the guts to try to do what you've accomplished, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm intelligent. Some people would say I'm very, very, very intelligent. What separates the winners from the losers is how a person reacts to each twist of fate.

Provost Bergerac: And you have your finger on the pulse of our nation, Sir! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: My fingers are long and beautiful, as, it has been well documented, are various other parts of my body.

Provost Bergerac: Here- let me make a note of that as well, Sir *(scribbles in a notepad)* ... mind AND body. We'll emphasize good health in the student handbook. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Show me someone with no ego and I'll show you a big loser.

Provost Bergerac: Yes, yes- I'll add that as well, Sir. Let's see now (*scribbling in notepad*) ... the importance of mental health as well as phy-si-cal. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose voters.

Provost Bergerac: Well I hope it won't come to that, Sir. We have a lot of people coming today. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Why are we having all these people from shithole countries coming here?

Provost Bergerac: Ha ha! I love your sense of humor, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I'm the least racist person you've ever interviewed.

Provost Bergerac: That, Sir, goes without saying. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: You know, I go to Washington and see all these politicians, and I see the swamp. And it's not a good place. In fact today I said we ought to change it from the word swamp to the word cesspool, or, perhaps, to the word sewer.

Provost Bergerac: What a mess we'd be in, Sir, if it weren't for you! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I am the chosen one!

Provost Bergerac: And it's about time everyone understood that, Sir! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Before a show I'll go backstage I'll go backstage and everybody's getting dressed and everything else, and, you know, no men anywhere and I'm allowed to go in because I'm the owner of the Pageant and therefore I'm inspecting it. You know, they're standing there with no clothes. And you see these incredible looking women, and so I get away with things like that.

Provost Bergerac: It's true that women go crazy over you, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: We don't want to be critics. We don't want to be complainers. I never wanted to be a critic.

Provost Bergerac: Of course not, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace. Good people don't go into government.

Provost Bergerac: And that's precisely why we turn to you for your innovative leadership, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I heard some people drink urine for health reasons...It's true. It's in the Bible. Look it up. I'm no expert, just a smart guy so I've been told. But I think we should consider this. Can the doctors look into that? Do you think they can do it? It may be the answer to Covid 19... I don't know; I'm just sayin'.

Provost Bergerac: I'll get the deans working on it right away, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I will be the greatest jobs president God ever created.

Provost Bergerac: You'll make dear old T.U. the envy of the Ivy's, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I like thinking big. If you're going to be thinking anything, you might as well think big.

Provost Bergerac: "Cogitare Magnum" would make a most fitting University motto, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Whenever I'm making a creative choice, I try to step back and try to remember my first shallow reaction. The day I realized it can be smart to be shallow was, for me, a deep experience.

Provost Bergerac: I never thought about it that way before, Sir. Thank you for the insight. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I often say that I'm a member of the lucky sperm club. But did it give me a natural talent? I don't think so. It gave me an advantage that I deliberately chose to develop into an advantage.

Provost Bergerac: Would that we all thought that way, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I am what I am. I am what I am.

Provost Bergerac: So what are you going to tell the student body today, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Sorry losers and haters, but my I.Q. is one of the highest- and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure. It's not your fault.

Provost Bergerac: Certainly it isn't, Sir. That's what we're here for. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: We have done a job, the likes of which nobody's ever done, the mobilization, getting of equipment, all of the things we've done. Nobody's ever done a job like this.

Provost Bergerac: It's a massive undertaking indeed, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: We have done this right. And we really- we really have done this right.

Provost Bergerac: Oh! And before I forget, Sir. We managed to acquire the Motel 7 located across the highway for a student dorm. They're airing out the mattresses now. Any thoughts regarding where we can house the rest of the students? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: In the caravans. I love the name. I came up with it. I love the name.

Provost Bergerac: Will do, Sir. Anything else coming down the pike? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You're going to see. I don't want to tell you now, but right now, we have a very strong indication that we know pretty much, we have some good ideas.

Provost Bergerac: This, Sir, is exactly what the students need! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I would bomb the shit out of 'em. I would just bomb those suckers.

Provost Bergerac: If they bomb, Sir, that will be on them. We're doing everything imaginable to raise them up- they can't blame me or you. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm a victim; I will tell you.

Provost Bergerac: It's not fair, Sir: You who have inspired so many with your ingenious groundbreaking thinking! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I think my positions are going to be what the people in this room come up with.

Provost Bergerac: Thank you for respecting our academic freedom, Sir! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: It's idealistic, it's wonderful, it's a beautiful thing.

Provost Bergerac: That's why Trumpkin University will soon rank among the most prestigious institutions in the world, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: And nobody knows what a community college is.

Provost Bergerac: But they'll soon know, with you at the helm, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Even one of them recently said that President Trumpkin made promises, but he's kept many more promises. I mean, far more than I made.

Provost Bergerac: We can always depend on you to come through for us, Sir. Any final thoughts before I meet with the Deans? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Despite the constant negative press covfefe.

Provost Bergerac: Could you please clarify if you are discussing the negative press as a whole, Sir, or if you want us to press covfefe because of the constant negative we've been experiencing? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: That just shows you when you get good ratings, you can say anything.

Provost Bergerac: That's certainly true, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You ever have second thoughts about something?

Provost Bergerac *(a bit nervously)*: What do you mean, second thoughts Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You know, I was dealt a lot of bad hands.

Provost Bergerac *(appeasingly)*: But look at all you've accomplished with those bad hands, Sir! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: My fingers are long and beautiful, as, it has been well documented, are other parts of my body.

Provost Bergerac *(sensing danger)*: I was merely agreeing with you, Sir, that you were dealt a lot of bad hands, not that you have bad hands, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: My fingers are long and beautiful, as, it has been well documented, are other parts of my body.

Provost Bergerac *(increasingly frightened and frustrated)*: You're right, Sir. Absolutely. Your fingers are long and beautiful, as are other parts of your body. It's been well documented, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm so tired of this politically correct crap.

Provost Bergerac: As we all are, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: The fake news media is not my enemy. It is the enemy of the American people.

Provost Bergerac *(increasingly stressed)*: Huh? What do you mean, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Look at all the scum we've had to deal with!

Provost Bergerac *(placatingly)*: Admissions has been a little slow in this depressed economy, Sir, so we've had to accept mainly those students who have a fungible credit rating. And I've had trouble recruiting qualified faculty. But the pool of applicants will improve with time, I'm certain, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm a victim. I will tell you.

Provost Bergerac *(conspiratorially)*: You do have enemies, Sir. All great men do. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: And I say that not in laughter. I say it in tears.

Provost Bergerac: Having enemies is no laughing matter, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Anyone who truly seeks to take on this rigged and corrupt system will be faced with a storm of fire only few could understand.

Provost Bergerac *(appeasingly)*: This is a challenge great innovators have always faced, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I have a good heart. I have a heart where I want people to be taken care of. But I don't want crooked people... Marxists, communists, fascists, radical left lunatics. Enemies of the state.

Provost Bergerac *(submissively)*: Of course not, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: When people wrong you, go after those people, because it is a good feeling and because other people will see you doing it.

Provost Bergerac *(nervously)*: Who but the cognitively impaired, Sir, could disagree, Sir? Cogitare magnum, Sir! *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout *(long pause, then sternly)*: You're so- you're so- you're so disgraceful. It's so disgraceful the way you said that.

Provost Bergerac *(suddenly terrified)*: Truly Sir, I meant no offense. Forgive me, Sir, please. I wasn't referring to you, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: This is our moment of reckoning as a society and as a civilization itself. I didn't need to do this, folks, believe me- believe me. I built a great company, and I had a wonderful life. I could have enjoyed the fruits and benefits of years of successful business deals and businesses for myself and my family. Instead of going through this absolute horror show of lies, deceptions,

malicious attacks- who would have thought? I'm doing it because this country has given me so much, and I feel so strongly that it's my turn to give back to the country that I love.

Provost Bergerac (*scared stiff*): Your reputation for patriotism and philanthropy is like no one else's, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: What you've just said is one of the most insanely idiotic things I have ever heard.

Provost Bergerac (*panicked*): But Sir- what did I say? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: So as we learn how this turd lied to subhuman base, and even though he broke every promise he made to them, he said he would walk with the "tattoo covered, flannel shirt wearing, mouth breathing, Walmart shoppers" – his words, not mine.

Provost Bergerac (*defensively*): Nor mine, Sir! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Low IQ individual. At no point in your rambling, incoherent response were you even close to anything, you lying liar who lies.

Provost Bergerac (*fumbling to save himself*): But Sir- I would never dream of lying to you! I'm on your side, Sir! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I'm surrounded by idiots.

Provost Bergerac (*desperately*): But Sir, we're doing the best we can! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: There's gonna be a bloodbath!

Provost Bergerac (*terrified*): I meant no disrespect, Sir. I apologize for you thinking so, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I am your retribution.

Provost Bergerac (*desperately*): Please, Sir, not that... (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: ... fascists, Marxists, communists, radical left lunatics, treasonists ... enemies of the state.

Provost Bergerac: Not me, Sir!

Presidential Cutout (*threateningly*): I'd like to punch him in the face.

Enter three Custodians, their caps in their hands.

Custodian 1: Pardon us, Sir. We're here to remove the sign, Sir.

Provost Bergerac (*shaky but relieved by their appearance*): Well it's about time you fellas got here! This place has a real cheesy feel to it and that Traci Lords wannabe on the wall isn't making it any classier.

Custodian 1: We'll have it down in a jiffy, Sir. Sorry it took us this long to get to it, but we've been very busy, just as you've surely been.

Provost Bergerac: You are aware that the President will be arriving in an hour or two. That's cutting it close.

Custodian 1: It'll only take a few minutes, Sir- don't you worry.

Provost Bergerac: Worry is all I do. I wish my life were more uncomplicated, like yours is.

Custodians 2 & 3: Yessir!

Provost Bergerac: How I hanker for the simple life! Oh how relaxing it would be to empty the trash or wash out a toilet bowl!

Custodians 2 & 3: Yessir!

Provost Bergerac: You boys don't know how much I envy your freedom from accountability! Your remissiveness. Your nonchalance! No cares, no hassles. Oh how sweet to be able to say and truly mean "What? Me worry?" To have so little to lose. To live with nothing hanging over your head.

Custodian 1: Well, Sir, you certainly won't have this sign hanging over your head, Sir.

Custodians 2 & 3 remove the sign and bring it to Provost Bergerac. The sign is a tacky graphic image of a leering child made up to look like Goya's Maja in lingerie, high heels, etc.

Custodian 1: See, Sir? That wasn't so bad. What do you want us to do with it?

Provost Bergerac: Thanks, boys. You did a superb job. Just leave it here. I'll confer with the President about his plans for it and get back to you.

Custodian 1: Yessir. We'll leave it right here. As soon as you decide what you want done, we'll be back to finish the job.

Provost Bergerac: Thanks again, fellas. You don't know how much stress this thing has caused me.

The three custodians remove their hats bowing low and exit walking backwards.

Provost Bergerac *(to himself)*: Well, that's one less thing to worry about! Between the absence of specific plans and a rushed 3-month schedule, the lack of direction- why, the President hasn't shown up once or even spoken to me since he hired me over the phone to get this place operational! Being understaffed and crammed into little retail boxes, and then that lewd sign, I think I've aged 20 years. I can't sleep at night and when I'm here, I slog along like a zombie. This is no way to live. Well, what can I do now? Just carry on I suppose. Now let's see what the President wants done with this warehouse votary. *(Approaches the Cutout.)* Well, Sir, the sign is finally down. What do you want to do with it? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: And we love both sides.

Provost Bergerac: All right, Sir. I'll have it saved for you. *(Lights dim. Curtain falls.)*

Act Three

Same location, Provost Bergerac's office, except now a long conference table dominates the space. Various deans and professors are seated around it with the Provost at the head. The Presidential Cutout is still prominent, leaning against the wall amid a tumult of stenciled panties, brassieres, etc., looking smug. There is active, nervous hub-bub among the attendees.

Provost Bergerac (*rising*): It appears that we are all in attendance, Gentlemen, so let's not waste any more time dickering among ourselves. With all the brainpower we have assembled here, we're sure to come up with a few ideas before President Trumpkin arrives. As we all know, today is Opening Day here at T.U., a moment in history we are fortunate to be an essential part of. Now I know how dedicated you are and how hard you've worked to make President Trumpkin's great vision a reality. But I also understand the complexity and enormity of the task we've undertaken, as well as the limited manpower, resources and time allotted to completing it. We've assembled here, therefore, to discuss our progress, address our concerns and come up with solutions. Please feel absolutely free to discuss whatever has been on your mind, troubling or not. Believe me when I say that there will be no negative repercussions for anything you might say. As you know, President Trumpkin respects all points of view, and frankly we've all been under much stress: In this you are not alone. And please note that this is a closed conference: What we say will not pass beyond the walls of this office. So please speak up with confidence and no fear of retribution. (*a dean raises his hand*) Yes, Dean Chizzlewit?

Dean Chizzlewit: What about that cutout of President Trumpkin?

Provost Bergerac: You must understand that due to his exhaustive schedule, the President cannot always be here to guide and inspire us. But rather than leaving us on our own, he has generously sent us this Presidential Cutout for us to consult when we need executive direction. I have turned to it during trying moments when I felt overwhelmed and needed guidance. You too can depend on the Presidential Cutout's discretion and judgment. We all have the same goal, after all. So please do speak freely and have no qualms.

Dean Chizzlewit: There's a rumor it's been recording everything we say and do and reporting back to the President.

Provost Bergerac: Poppycock! As I told you, the Presidential Cutout is here in a strictly advisory capacity and nothing else. Here- see for yourselves. (*Approaches and addresses Presidential Cutout*): Tell us please, Sir, if any fear that our opinions will not be respected is justified. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: And we love both sides.

Provost Bergerac: See what I mean? This is an altogether trustworthy cutout. So let's ignore the vicious falsehoods and proceed expeditiously and boldly, with full confidence that our voices will be respected. Who would like to start our discussion? (*a dean raises his hand*) Yes, Dean Uberdue?

Dean Uberdue: As Dean of the University Library, I would like to share my concerns both about the facility and the approved titles that we will be carrying.

Provost Bergerac: Please proceed, Dean Uberdue.

Dean Uberdue: Thank you, Sir. The library staff, that is, Ms. Peddleschnotz and myself, have been working every day converting the old Sneakers Unlimited outlet into a modern library we can all be

proud of. We've been fortunate in that the shoe racks along the walls make passable shelving for the three dozen boxes of Trumpkin Bibles and copies of "The Art of the Steal" that we've been shipped, and I am pleased that they have been stacked and catalogued Dewey-decimally under the "A's" and "B's." Given the remaining space, I'm sure that we'll be able to accommodate the shipment of "Mein Kampf" that we understand is presently enroute from China. That's the good news: we have the space for our book collection and are anxious to display it. But we are not sure about what to do with the boxes of classified documents that are taking up almost half the facility. From what we understand, there are over 11,000 top-secret documents that need to be curated, and we're worried about keeping them securely out of the reach of bad actors.

Provost Bergerac: Thank you Dean Uberdue for bringing that to our attention. As this is the purview of our Dean of Security, may I please ask Dean Swindolin to address his thoughts regarding the classified documents. Dean Swindolin? Could you get us up to speed on the documents issue?

Dean Swindolin (*as if waking from a nap*): Huh? Whaaa? Documents? What documents?

Provost Bergerac: The 11,179 classified documents and photos stored at the shoe st...I mean, the University Library. We're concerned about bad actors having access to them.

Dean Swindolin (*stepping out of character*): Waddaya mean, "bad actors"? I graduated from Julliard!

Provost Bergerac: We're talking about foreign agents getting access to top-secret presidential records that we typically share only with our allied counterparts, not the quality of our performance in this play. Stay in character, Jackie.

Dean Swindolin (*back in character*): Oh! Them! Yeah- I was wonderin' why all them suspicious lookin' Chinee-types were always hangin' 'round them boxes! So that's what's in 'em, eh? Well, well, well! And them's our allied counterparts, you say?

Provost Bergerac: None of our allied counterparts is currently present here at the University, Sir.

Dean Swindolin: Ya mean them Chinee-types ain't on our side? HmMMM. That can only mean one thing!

Provost Bergerac: Right. They're not our friends.

Dean Swindolin: My God! Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Somebody gotta do something about this!

Provost Bergerac: Precisely. That's why we're looking to you, Sir.

Dean Swindolin: And what's in them boxes, you say?

Provost Bergerac: Classified presidential records. Top secret documents. Some feature the activities of the government's agents around the world. Others detail the covert operations and nuclear capabilities of our allies.

Dean Swindolin: Stuff like that, you say, huh? Spies and nukes, eh? Top secrets here at T.U.! Classified documents in the shoe st... I mean, library! Well I'll be dipped! First I heard about it.

Provost Bergerac: You didn't get my emails regarding the boxes?

Dean Swindolin: To tell you the truth, I'll hafta check. I usually just text.

Provost Bergerac: What's your cell number?

Dean Swindolin: I'll have to get back to you on that one. I never memorized it.

Provost Bergerac: All right, all right. Just be sure to watch for any unauthorized personnel lurking around those boxes.

Dean Swindolin: You know, Security has been perty busy patrolling the parking lot. But I'll have Officer Sappem look into them boxes, doncha worry.

Provost Bergerac: Let's be clear, Dean Swindolin. None of us has the necessary clearance to examine the documents except the Presidential Cutout. So be sure that Officer Sappem understands that the boxes are to remain sealed for the present. In fact, let's check with the Presidential Cutout regarding this top security matter. (*addresses the Presidential Cutout*): So what course of action do you suggest we follow, Sir, regarding security for the classified documents? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: We have many Azurasians in this room.

Provost Bergerac: We will certainly be on the lookout for suspicious individuals, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: There's a lot of foreigners in this play.

Provost Bergerac: Yes, Sir. There are. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Our criminals are like babies compared to these people.

Provost Bergerac: We'll take every precaution, Sir. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Biden has 1,850 boxes at the University of Delaware.

Dean Swindolin: How does he guard them, Sir? (*pulls tie and becomes instantly anxious he overstepped his authority. To Provost Bergerac*) Sorry, Sir. I just get too excited sometimes.

Provost Bergerac: That's all...

Presidential Cutout (*interrupting*): ...has been totally uncooperative- won't show the documents under any circumstances.

Provost Bergerac: Shall we also curtail any examination of them, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: It doesn't hurt to get more education.

Provost Bergerac: Indeed not, Sir. Do you plan to declassify them? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: That's the only answer, no more 'blue ribbon.' I refuse to create them anymore.

Provost Bergerac: So you want them open to the inquiring public, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: So pretty much as we've been saying, and what I want to do is I want to be able to look your business.

Provost Bergerac: So you mean you want to keep the records sealed, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: The fake news likes to say, the fake news likes to say “Oh!! He was rambling.” No. Oh no. That’s not rambling. That’s genius when you connect the dots. Now if you couldn’t connect the dots, you got a problem. But every dot was connected, and many stories were told in that paragraph.

Provost Bergerac: Ah! Very well- we’ll keep them sealed, Sir. Thank you for clarifying. *(addresses the deans and professors)* What else, Gentlemen? Ah yes- you please, Ms. Squiggly.

Dean Squiggly: Dean Squiggly, Sir, Associate Dean of Students? I’ve distributed the Sexual Harassment Policy to everyone here in anticipation of our meeting today. I hope you all have had a chance to review it.

Provost Bergerac: Yes, of course, Ms... I mean, Dean Squiggly. I found it very informative especially with respect to the activity reportedly occurring in the parking lot. It lends a new meaning to the phrase “tailgate partying.” *(everyone except Dean Squiggly breaks out in raucous laughter)* Perhaps we should check with Dean Swindolin on that topic as well. Dean Swindolin? Any comments?

Dean Swindolin: Well, I haven’t read the Harassment Policy yet, but knowing Loosey the way I do, I mean Dean Squiggly, I’m sure she kept an open mind when she wrote it.

Provost Bergerac: Yes, yes, of course. But what about the activity in the parking lot?

Dean Swindolin: Oh! That! Well, we warned ‘em! And they promised to behave better in the future, or at least put curtains in the windows.

Provost Bergerac: We were all young once...

Dean Swindolin: Huh?

Provost Bergerac: You know, the students and their raging hormones.

Dean Swindolin: Students? What students? I was talking about the professors!

Provost Bergerac *(astounded)*: The professors?!! The professors???!!!! How can that be? It’s preposterous!! We’ll put a stop to that immediately! Immediately! *(addresses Presidential Cutout)*: How would you want us to handle this, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Unbelievable! Arnold Palmer was all man, and I say that with all due respect to women. And I love women!

Provost Bergerac: Your record attests to that, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: But this guy was all man. This man was strong and tough, but I refused to say it. But when he took the showers with the other pros they came out of there they said, “Oh my God, that’s unbelievable!” I had to say it.

Provost Bergerac: He’s truly gifted, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: And they have a very large faucet. It’s massive.

Provost Bergerac: He's very popular with both the men and the ladies, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: He thinks he bothers me or some crap like that. I said he's one of the dumbest human beings ever.

Provost Bergerac: Well, except for you, we can't all be perfect, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: He referred to my hands as they're small, something else must be small. I guarantee you, there's no problem.

Provost Bergerac: Of course not, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: He's weak and pathetic.

Provost Bergerac: Yes, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: My fingers are long and beautiful, as, it has been well documented, are other parts of my body.

Provost Bergerac: That's been established, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: That's all they talk about. This country's falling apart.

Provost Bergerac: Exactly, Sir: So do you approve of Dean Squiggly's Sexual Harassment Policy? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I did try and fuck her... I moved into her like a bitch, but I couldn't get there. And she was married.

Dean Swindolin: Me too!! That's exactly right! *(Pulls tie; becomes contrite. To Provost Bergerac):* Sorry, Sir. I have to keep reminding myself that you pull the tie.

Presidential Cutout: You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes. Blood coming out of her whatever.

Dean Swindolin: She was a mess all right! *(Pulls tie, realizes what he has done and hits his forehead with his palm. To Provost Bergerac)* Jeez, I done it again!

Presidential Cutout: She wanted to breast pump in front of me. I may have said that's disgusting. I may have said something else. I thought it was terrible. She's a horrible person. Knows nothing about me.

Everyone present, except for Dean Squiggly, together: I-I-I--ilk!!!! *(Dean Swindolin pulls tie; to Provost Bergerac):* Shit! I did it again!!

Presidential Cutout: If she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, Folks. Although the Second Amendment people... maybe there is. I don't know.

Provost Bergerac: Let's hope it doesn't come to that, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: She got schlanged. She lost. I mean she lost. Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our president?

Dean Swindolin: There's plenty of room for improvement in that department! But you gotta admit she's got a nice ass. *(Pulls tie; to Provost Bergerac)*: Damn! I am so sorry!

Presidential Cutout: She is unattractive both inside and out. I fully understand why her former husband left her for a man- he made a good decision.

Dean Swindolin: That's disgusting! *(Pulls tie and catches himself. To Provost Bergerac)*: Sorry Sir, but he gets me so worked up!

Presidential Cutout: I have great respect for women. I've said if Evilanka weren't my daughter, perhaps I'd be dating her.

Dean Swindolin: Yeah, yeah, yeah! She's a doll! *(Pulls tie; to Provost Bergerac)*: Sorry again, Sir. I don't know what's wrong with me!

Presidential Cutout: You know where she is tonight? She's out partying. So Israel is attacking, we got a war going on, and she's out partying. At least we're working to make America great again. That's what we're doing.

Provost Bergerac: You have a great plan, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Women. You have to treat them like shit.

Dean Swindolin: That's right! That's right!! *(Pulls tie; to Provost Bergerac)*: I swear I'd lose my head if there wasn't a neck holding it down!

Presidential Cutout: I have great respect for women. Nobody has more respect for women than I do.

Provost Bergerac: Absolutely, Sir. You're one of the least sexist people I know. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I start kissing them. It's like a magnet I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything... grab 'em by the pussy...You can do anything.

Provost Bergerac: Fame certainly has its rewards, Sir. But getting back to Dean Squiggly, do you want to make any changes to her Sexual Harassment Policy, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: She's not my type, only maybe a 6 at best.

Provost Bergerac: Of course, Sir- but what about the professors in the parking lot? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: Blowjob impacted both of their careers.

Provost Bergerac: We'll replace them as soon as we can get substitutes, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm being indicted for you!

Provost Bergerac: That's both noble and Christ-like of you, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: God made Trumpkin.

Provost Bergerac: And it was one of his wisest decisions, Sir, if I may say so. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: And I didn't know who it was. The fake news out there- you see the fake news. They said "Oh!" You know. They say it never happened, but I said I swear to you it happened.

Provost Bergerac: Of course it did, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: We lost 35,000 people to the mosquito. You know.

Provost Bergerac: It's a great tragedy, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: It's sad to see and it's so simple. I mean, you know, this isn't like Elon with his rocket ships that land on the Moon and within twelve inches where they wanted to land. He gets the engines back.

Provost Bergerac: It's wonderful to see how he can do that, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: One of the nine Wonders of the World. No. It was one of the seven. It just happened a while ago. You know, nine Wonders of the World. You can make nine wonders. He would have been better off if he stuck with the nine and just said that "Yeah. I think it is nine."

Provost Bergerac: Yes Sir, it's truly a wonder. Now what about Dean Squiggly's Sexual Harassment Policy, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: She's not my type. She's barely a six.

Provost Bergerac: All right then, Sir. We'll just leave it at that. *(addresses the assembled deans and professors)* Well, gentlemen, what else would you like to discuss?

The sound of an angry roaring crowd can be heard in the distance. The door bursts open and Officer Sappem dashes into the room.

Officer Sappem *(out of breath and panting)*: Provost Bergerac! Provost Bergerac!! They're rioting! They're rioting!

Provost Bergerac *(patiently)*: Now, now, Officer Sappem. Just catch your breath and then tell me what's got you all riled up.

Officer Sappem *(huffing and puffing, shaken up)*: They, they almost got me!

Provost Bergerac: Now, now, son. Things rarely are as disturbing as they seem. Just rest a moment and we'll straighten out whatever's bothering you.

Officer Sappem *(sputtering)*: But, but, but Sir!

Provost Bergerac: *(approaches Officer Sappem and cuddles him)*: There, there, Officer Sappem. It's gonna be all right. All right...*(hums a lullaby to him)*: La lala la la, la lala la...la lala la la, la lala la...

Officer Sappem *(recovering but still shaky and sniveling)*: They almost got me, Sir. I ran as fast as I could, and they almost got me!

Provost Bergerac *(releasing Officer Sappem)*: There, there, Officer Sappem. Take another deep, deep breath and then tell me: Who almost got you?

Officer Sappem: Them, Sir! It was them that almost got me!

Provost Bergerac: You mean the faculty, Officer Sappem? Well, I know they haven't been paid, but that can't be helped. My hands are tied. The funding hasn't come through as of yet. But as soon as it does... *(suspiciously)* Say- they haven't formed a union yet have they? Is this what it's about?

Officer Sappem: Oh no Sir, no. We took care of that already.

Dean Swindolin: I'll say we did! *(affectionately pats truncheon that hangs off of his belt; lifts it to his lips and kisses it)*

Provost Bergerac: Maybe we can suspend the Sexual Harassment Policy in lieu of pay...

Officer Sappem: No, Sir, no! That ain't it, Sir!

Provost Bergerac: Well then, what say you enlighten me, Officer Sappem? You said something about a protest?

Officer Sappem: A riot, Sir! It's the students, Sir- the students are rioting!

Provost Bergerac: The students! The students! How can that be? They just got here!

Officer Sappem: Nonetheless, Sir, it's a riot, Sir, as sure as Fox News!

Provost Bergerac: Maybe they're trying to form a union...

Officer Sappem: No Sir. The Student Union was banned, remember? It's a riot, Sir, an R-I-A-T riot, Sir!

Provost Bergerac: But we don't owe them any money! What else is there to be upset over?

Officer Sappem: Nevertheless, Sir, they've gathered in the parking lot and they're gettin' ready to march to the building. What are we gonna do? How we gonna stop 'em?

Provost Bergerac: Huh! I wonder what's got them in such a tizzy?

Dean Swindolin: Kids will be kids!

Provost Bergerac: Yes, yes, of course. But what are we gonna do about it? The President is arriving at any moment, and we've got a riot on our hands. He's not gonna like that so much- heads will roll! Oh my!

Dean Swindolin: You worry too much, Sir. We can always hose 'em down with the fire extinguishers...

Provost Bergerac: My God! I knew there was something I forgot to order!

Dean Swindolin: If I could get past 'em to my car, I could get my AR...

Officer Sappem: You'll never make it past 'em! There's too many of 'em. Too many... *(whimpers)*

Dean Swindolin: Bastards!!

Provost Bergerac: We gotta think of something! Quick- think!!!

Dean Swindolin: We can get in the truck an' play tag with 'em! That'll show 'em we mean business!

Officer Sappem (*whining*): But I still got 3 payments left on it! An' I just had it washed and detailed.

Provost Bergerac: Gentlemen, gentlemen! There must be a better solution...

Dean Swindolin: One thing's for sure- they ain't gonna get away with it!

Officer Sappem: I wish the President was here. He'd know what to do...

Provost Bergerac: What was I thinking?! That's it! We'll ask the Presidential Cutout. (*addresses Cutout*) How shall we handle this, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I do the Weave. That's what I do.

Dean Swindolin: The Weave!

Officer Sappem: The Weave!

Provost Bergerac: The Weave! (*pauses*) What's the Weave, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: Enemies of the state!

Provost Bergerac: No doubt, Sir... Now about the Weave, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I am your retribution!

Provost Bergerac: We will bring them to heel, Sir. The Weave...Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: There's gonna be a bloodbath!

Dean Swindolin (*ecstatically*): Yeah, yeah, Sir! That's the way! (*pulls tie, realizes he overstepped and addresses Provost Bergerac*) Sorry, Sir. I get carried away...

Presidential Cutout: You know, I do the Weave. You know what the Weave is? I'll talk about, like, nine different things, and they all come back brilliantly together. And it's like- and friends of mine that are, like English professors- they say it's the most brilliant thing I've ever seen.

Provost Bergerac: Ah! Diplomacy! You want to talk with them? Brilliant, Sir, if I may say so! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I went to an Ivy League school. I'm very highly educated. I know words. I have the best words.

Provost Bergerac: What will you say to them, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I used to call them incompetent. Now I just call them stupid. I have the best words. I have the- but there's no better word than stupid.

Provost Bergerac: But how will you take care of their concerns, Sir? (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: But I think when you talk about the kind of numbers that I'm talking about, that because- look, child care is child care- couldn't, you know, it's something- you have to have it. In this country, you have to have it. But when you talk about those numbers compared to the kind of numbers that I'm talking about by taxing foreign nations at levels that they're not used to. But they'll get used to it very quickly. And it's not going to stop them from doing business with us, but they'll

have a very substantial tax when they send product into our country. Those numbers are so much bigger than any numbers that we're talking about, including child care.

Officer Sappem: He's right when he talks about the numbers- the parking lot is jam packed with rioters! *(pulls tie, catches himself and addresses Provost Bergerac)* Jeez! I'm sorry!

Presidential Cutout: I like to give a long- But when you do the Weaves, and you have to be very smart to do the Weaves, when you do the Weave, look at this, just in this one thing, we're talking about little pieces..."

Dean Swindolin (excitedly): Little pieces! You want us to chop 'em up in little pieces, Sir? *(pulls tie, catches himself again and addresses Provost Bergerac)* There I go again- but I got so excited this might solve our problem.

Presidential Cutout: Go for the jugular, so that people watching will not want to mess with you.

Dean Swindolin: That's right! That's right!!

Provost Bergerac: Indeed, Sir, we need to respond to this situation in a way that precludes any recurrence. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You let down your guard. You don't work as hard. Then things start to go in the wrong direction.

Dean Swindolin: That's right!! That's right!!

Provost Bergerac: I can assure you, Sir, that everyone here at T.U. is working as hard as he can. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: We have a bigger problem, in my opinion, from the enemy within, and it drives them crazy when I use that term. But we have an enemy from within. We have people that are really bad, people that I really think want to make this country unsuccessful.

Provost Bergerac *(nervously)*: The enemy within, Sir? *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: They can't even speak English. They don't know what country they're in practically.

Dean Swindolin: You ain't kiddin'! Just the other day I pulled one over for doin' 95 on Route 110. He told me he thought the speed limit was 110!

Provost Bergerac: But, Sir, we all speak English here at the University! The students all submit a letter with their tuition payments. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: They don't know how to write good.

Provost Bergerac: But they're getting better, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: You know, it really doesn't matter what you write as long as you've got a young and beautiful piece of ass.

Provost Bergerac: We do have some lovely ladies here, but I assure you that their writing skills are top-notch. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: She is a low I.Q. individual. I have never seen a thin person drinking diet Coke.

Provost Bergerac: *Are we talking about the same person, Sir? (pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: It's a disgrace and I'm going to put in a major complaint. Because you cannot win.

Provost Bergerac *(groveling)*: Please, Sir- not that. We just need a little more time. Please don't issue a complaint, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I think I'm almost too honest to be a politician.

Provost Bergerac: Honesty is the best policy, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: When somebody screws you, screw them back in spades.

Dean Swindolin: That's what I'm talking about!

Provost Bergerac: I assure you, Sir, we are all with you, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: If I said it was wrong to shit in your pants, every Democrat would walk around with a full load.

Dean Swindolin: The bastards! Serve 'em right, too!

Provost Bergerac: I'm happy to tell you that we're all Republicans here, Sir. We're not even considering Democrats for kitchen help. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: If I were to run, I'd run as a Republican. They're the dumbest group of voters in the country. They believe anything on Fox News. I could lie and they'd still eat it up. I bet my numbers would be terrific.

Provost Bergerac: Your competition wouldn't stand a chance, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I think the only difference between me and the other candidates is that I'm more honest and my women are more beautiful.

Provost Bergerac: It's refreshing to see someone as enlightened as yourself remain humble, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm not doing that to brag, because you know what? I don't have to brag.

Provost Bergerac: That's why you're a role model to so many millions of your followers, Sir. *(pulls tie)*

Presidential Cutout: I'm not a schmuck. Even if the world is going to hell in a handbasket, I won't lose a penny.

Provost Bergerac: A woven handbasket, Sir?

Dean Swindolin: See that? He's done the Weave again!

All the Deans, except Dean Squiggly (*in unison*): Genius!

Provost Bergerac: Brilliant, Sir! The matter's settled then. (*to Dean Swindolin and Officer Sappem*): Gentlemen, I want you to get on your bullhorns and tell the students that President Trumpkin and the Deans and Professors and I will meet them in the university auditorium to discuss their concerns. They are to report to Trumpkin Hall immediately to await his arrival.

Dean Swindolin: Sure thing, Doc. I'll be happy to bring my bullhorn. (*pats his truncheon*)

Officer Sappem: Do I gotta go, Sir? I don't wanna go. I just got away from them. They almost got me. I don't wanna go back. Please, Sir...don't make me go!

Dean Swindolin: Get ahold of yourself, Albert, and be a goddamn man!

Officer Sappem: But I don't wanna...

Dean Swindolin (*pulls Officer Sappem by the ear as they exit*): I'm gonna make a man out of you yet, Albert. (*exit*)

Enter Messenger

Messenger: A letter for you from H.Q., Sir. It looked very important, so I rushed over here with it just as soon as my break was over.

Provost Bergerac; Thank you. Please wait a moment. I might need to respond. (*tears open envelope and reads*): "...and so, due to unforeseen circumstances at the National Golf Club in Bedminster, I will not be attending Opening Day Convoc... Convuc... Confuck... Ceremonies at Trumpkin University. Please express my regrets to the staff and the students..." Regerts?...Hmmm... ah! Regrets, of course! He was trying to apologize for not coming. (*breathing a sigh of relief*) Well, that solves one problem.

Dean Chizzlewit: But what about his promise to the students that he'd be here to greet and instruct them personally? That's why most of them enrolled anyway- it wasn't so they could listen to us after all. What are we going to tell them? That he's at his golf course instead of attending to them? If they're upset now, just imagine how they'll feel when they hear this.

Provost Bergerac (*frantically*): Oh my God- out of the pan and into the fire! What are we gonna do now?

Dean Chizzlewit: Well, we don't have to tell them yet. Let's get 'em into the auditorium and pacify 'em. Promise 'em anything. Yes 'em into complacency. Tell 'em whatever they want to hear. By the time they learn President Trumpkin isn't showing up, they'll be too contented to complain.

Provost Bergerac: I certainly hope you're right. But let's hear any words of advice the Presidential Cutout has for us. (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: I will send your favorite beautiful and attractive First Lady.

Provost Bergerac (*ecstatically*): We're saved! Oh thank you, Sir, for your generous offer! She's sure to mollify the students! (*pulls tie*)

Presidential Cutout: She's a 10. She has to stick to what's in her heart.

Provost Bergerac: The students love her! All our troubles are over!

Dean Putzley: Her NFT's are very popular, I hear.

Dean Uberdue: And so are her America First fantasy coins and currency.

Dean Squiggly: She invented her own brand of wrinkle cream- she's so perfectly hydrated! I love her perfume. Maybe someday I'll be able to buy a small bottle- and a pair of her shoes and sunglasses, if I can find a used pair.

Dean Putzley: A life-size pair of First Couple bobble-heads would look great greeting students and visitors at the main entrance.

Provost Bergerac: Great idea! Let's see if I can put in a requisition.

Dean Putzley: As Dean of Students, I'd like to report that sales of Trumpkin merch and memorabilia are exceeding sales expectations all across the country. It's almost impossible to keep the "Melatonia's Version" and "Giving Head of State" lines in stock as they disappear as soon as they put them on the shelves. Her creations are going to be a bonanza for the University Bookstore.

Provost Bergerac: Thank you, Dean Putzley, for the update.

Dean Putzley: Melatonia's bust really stands out as a huge seller. It's much admired, especially by the men.

Provost Bergerac: It's so encouraging to see men stepping up like that. Things aren't as bleak as we sometimes think. But it's getting late. I'm sure the students have filled Trumpkin Hall by now. Let's don our gowns and prepare to march down the aisles to the stage and your assigned seats. Does everyone remember the lyrics of our alma mater? Any other concerns? *(nobody says anything)* Good! Let's give them the good old Trumpkin U. cheer!

Curtain drops.

Act Four

Scene One:

Same setting as Act One: the auditorium, Trumpkin Hall. Provost Bergerac stands at the podium in the foreground with empty chairs in a sweeping semi-circle along its sides and back for the deans and professors. These actors are not on stage. Rather, they are at the theater's entrance hallway, arranged in two groups, one for each aisle that leads to either side of the stage. At the sound of a pre-recorded trumpet fanfare, the deans and professors will march in two lines along the aisles between the audience singing the Trumpkin University alma mater, Moolah Moolah, to the tune of Yale's Boola Boola. There are actors playing the role of students sitting among the audience, They will be delivering their lines from there, giving the appearance that the patrons of the theater are also students. The patrons should be encouraged to play the part of aggrieved students. That way they are less likely to become aggrieved ticket holders.

Provost Bergerac (*addressing student body*): My dear, dear students and friends, welcome to Opening Day ceremonies at your favorite school of schools... oh how proud I am to be part of it!... the fabulous, the exclusive- there just aren't enough adjectives to do it justice...

Student 4: How about "shitty"? Will "shitty" do?

Provost Bergerac: ...the school that everyone is talking about and wishes they were fortunate enough to attend... Oh how I love this place...

Student 5: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAh, go smell your shoes!

Provost Bergerac: Yes, how I love this place...

Student 6: But then again, how you love emptying mouse traps.

Provost Bergerac: ... Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to... Oh! But I'm so thrilled to announce this!... your alma mater and mine, the fantastic, the chic... They said it could never be done!...the home of the phenomenal Quid pro Quohogs- the mighty Fighting Mollusks! - Ah! I'm so proud to be here among you!... what place can I be describing but dear old Trumpkin University!!! And now, without any further ado, it gives me the greatest joy and satisfaction to present to you our very own version of the January 6 Chorale performing their cover of the school's anthem. Please rise and give a mighty hand of appreciation to your professors, deans and mentors... the T.U. Faculty Serenaders!

Nobody rises. Trumpet fanfare sounds. The deans and professors in their long academic robes and mortarboards begin to sing "Moolah Moolah" and march from the entrance down the aisles toward either end of the stage. They climb the steps and take their seats, still singing. Provost Bergerac is at the podium conducting; Custodians 2 and 3 stand the Presidential Cutout beside him and exit. Provost Bergerac signals the last chorus of "Moolah Moolah."

Provost Bergerac: How 'bout those professors and deans! Let's give them a big warm hand! (*Begins to furiously clap his hands but nobody joins in.*) Thank you, thank you! What a rousing welcome for this most auspicious day! Thank you all for coming! Yes indeed: We have much to cheer and be grateful for. Can you feel the spirit in the room? Maybe we're a little late to be at the first Constitutional Convention- but the atmosphere in this hall on this historical occasion must be like the one back in 1787 when the Founders, bent on a mighty mission, also awaited the coming of dignitaries and notables.

Student 4: Oh dry up why doncha.

Provost Bergerac (*ignoring the heckler*): Oh what a time that was- and what a time this is for us, the Founding Class of Trumpkin University! Yes, fortunate indeed are we! Don't be surprised if years from now you might come upon this scene depicted on a commemorative plate or mug- and don't be shocked if you can spot your own face staring back at you as you sip your coffee and eat your cake.

Student 5: Bite me, you old fraud!

Provost Bergerac (*ignoring outburst*): Ah! Time, time, time! Imagine telling your children and their children as they sit upon your knee that you were here today, to point at a plate and say with pride

“See? Here is where I was at that glorious moment, the first Opening Day that set the pattern for the many others that have been celebrated since!”

Student 6: I wanna plate! I wanna plate too!

Provost Bergerac (*ignoring the student*): Yale had its first graduating class, you know- Princeton and Harvard too. Now you are about to step into the shoes, yes, the very shoes of those illustrious pioneers whose names, associated with the birth of great institutions, have become legendary.

Student 4 (*from the audience*): My feet’s too big!

Provost Bergerac (*ignoring outburst*): Yes, legendary. Their names etched on the scroll of those who were the first to step forward into the gaping maw of clear and present enterprise. Who fearlessly signed their Mayflower Compacts and Declarations of Independence, their Magna Cartas and Bills of Rights; who stood boldly tall against oppression and proclaimed themselves free men. Tell me, as you join their ranks today, what is the value of knowing that you too have stood among these legendary heroes?

Student 5: Mentorship cost me more than \$10,000.

Student 6: The Gold Elite program cost me over \$35,000. I’ll be paying that off for the next 20 years.

Provost Bergerac: Yes- and tell me what it would be worth to be able to say that your ancestors came over the pond in the Mayflower and initialed the Emancipation Proclamation? To endow your heirs with a great tradition? To make of them a Son of Liberty or Daughter of the American Revolution? For this is what your descendants will derive from you: the pride of heritage, a distinction almost unavailable in this age. Tell me, what is it worth to bequeath your descendants this level of honor and dignity?

Student 7: They wouldn’t let me join the DAR on account of I’m half Jewish. Can I get a refund?

Provost Bergerac (*ignoring her*): What are you going to tell your great-grandchildren a hundred years from today when they ask you why you gave up a rare opportunity to ennoble your family with a prestigious and very desirable legacy? Consider this thoughtfully: The money you spend today is a pittance when you consider the overall accrual of family pedigree that comes from being a member of Trumpkin University’s first graduating class.

Student 7: Well, if I can’t get a refund, how about a 50% discount? For the Jewish part of me that can’t get in, I mean?

Provost Bergerac: This is a university, Miss, not a dollar store. What? Would you be satisfied to be a half of a princess? Half of a university graduate taught by half of a professor? No indeed, my dear, we don’t do things by halves at Trumpkin U!

Student 4: So where’s the big cheese himself? He said he’d be here to welcome us, but I don’t see him.

Provost Bergerac: “Big cheese”? To whom are you referring, Sir?

Student 4: You know perfectly well who. El crapo de tutti crapi. Trumpkin. Where is he? We’d like to ask him a few questions.

Student 5: Yeah. Like why this place calls itself a university when it's really just a lousy mall. This auditorium still smells of rancid popcorn butter and spilled coke.

Provost Bergerac: Neither Rome nor Trumpkin University were built in one day!

Student 6: So where's Trumpkin?

Provost Bergerac: On his way here, doubtless. Where else would you expect him to be?

Student 5: At Bedminster, golfing. We just got the word that he's been spotted there, on the third hole. What do you have to say about that, Doc?

Students grumble when they hear this. A few of them make loud, deprecatory comments: "So that's what's keeping him?" "The lyin' bastard!" "He'd better not show his face around here!" etc. The characters should feel free to improvise their discontent. The audience should be encouraged to show their discontent as well- with Trumpkin, not the play.

Provost Bergerac: If he's at Bedminster, you can be sure that his mission is to uplift the University and not to amuse himself in any way. You wouldn't be grumbling if you knew how much effort he's put into providing you with the best business education possible. No- you'd be ashamed of yourselves if you knew how he has sacrificed his own ambition for your benefit. He's a Wharton graduate, after all. He knows what he's doing. Besides, he's provided an alternative for just such a contingency.

Student 4: You mean that dopey cardboard cutout? That's what's filling in for him?

Provost Bergerac (*shocked by the lack of civility*): That, Sir, is the Presidential Cutout that you're referring to. We all owe it respect. People who live in glass houses, may I remind you, do not throw stones. But no, that's not all who will be filling in for him.

Student 6: So who's it gonna be if it's not just that crummy cutout?

Student 4: Nobody I know lives in a glass house.

Provost Bergerac: I will caution you to keep a civil tongue, Sir. And no, we have an incredible guest host in addition to our beloved Presidential Cutout- someone you all know very well and admire. As a matter of fact, she should be arriving here any moment now.

All of the Students (*excitedly*): Who? Who? Who?

Student 7 (*rapturously*): Evilanka! Evilanka!! It must be Evilanka!

All of the Students (*chanting*): Evilanka! Evilanka! Evilanka!...

Student 7: OOOOOO!!!! I just love her fashions! Her shoes! Her sunglasses! Her perfume! It's all so post-Euroslut!

All of the Students (*chanting*): Evilanka! Evilanka! Evilanka!...

Provost Bergerac (*temporarily pleased*): Ha ha! That's the spirit we want to see demonstrated here at good old T.U.! And you're right that Evilanka's presence here today would be an act of grace... but

guess what? If you would be so pleased with Evilanka, you'll be overjoyed with the dignitary who has promised to address us in her place.

All the students: Who? Who? Who?

Student 7: Bobo Boebert?

All the Students: Bobo! Bobo! Bobo!!!...

Provost Bergerac: Nope. Try again.

Student 6: Marjorie Taylor Greene?

All the Students: MTG! MTG! MTG!!!...

Provost Bergerac: Uh uh. Nice guess, though.

Student 5: Sarah Huckabee?

All the Students: Hucky! Hucky! Hucky!!!...

Provost Bergerac: No, no, no. I'm surprised you haven't figured it out yet.

Student 6: Not Sarah Palin?

Student 1: Sarah Cuda!

Student 2: Moose-o-lini!

Student 3: Mama Grizzly!

Student 4: Chick Cheney!

Student 5: Miss Iquitarod!

Student 6: Sarah Crosshairs!

Student 7: Ramboner!

Student 8: The Moosiah!

Provost Bergerac: We tried to get her, but she's preoccupied with church, the shooting range and her family bar and grille.

Student 8: So is it Liara Trumpkin? Is it Liara? Huh? Huh? Is it?

All the students: Liara! Liara! Liara!!!...

Provost Bergerac: You're getting warmer. She is a family member...

Student 7 (*in awe*): Don't tell us it's Melatonia the 5th herself? Is it? Is it Melatonia the 5th?

Provost Bergerac: Who says our students aren't the best and the brightest?!! She is certainly the one! Our answer to Michelle Obama and Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy and Rosalynn Carter,

Dolly Madison and Betty Ford, your favorite first lady of the nation: Melatonia the 5th! Now aren't you glad to have been patient and understanding? Hasn't the wait been worthwhile?

All of the Students (*chanting*): Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th!!!...

Provost Bergerac: Yes indeed- we certainly love and admire our first lady! And she has graciously volunteered to speak to us in the President's place. How do you like that?

All the Students: Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th!!!...

Provost Bergerac: Ha ha! That's right! Melatonia the 5th! Honest, trustworthy, dependable Melatonia the 5th!

All the Students: Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th! Melatonia the 5th!!!...

Enter Three Custodians, two of whom are carrying a life-size cardboard cutout of a smiling Melatonia the 5th dressed in a slinky, slitted, low-hung evening gown, 5" heels, etc. She's carrying a purse in one hand and has a coat draped over her other arm that says "I really don't care. Do you?" that is partly visible on its back.

Provost Bergerac: See here, Gentlemen- what is the meaning of this intrusion? We have begun our convocation, and you are interrupting the ceremony.

Custodian 1: Where would you like us to put it, Sir?

Provost Bergerac (*very tightly wound*): What do you mean "where to put it?" This is highly irregular! Highly irregular!

Custodian 2: The cutout, Sir. Where do you want us to put it?

Provost Bergerac (*angrily*): You can put it with the trash is where you can put it! We don't need it. Melatonia the 5th herself should be here at any moment. It's altogether unnecessary.

Custodian 1 (*appeasingly*): But haven't you heard, Sir? Melatonia the 5th is in southern France, no doubt on a sensitive diplomatic mission. She wasn't informed that her appearance here was required. That's why they shipped this cutout, Sir. Where would you like it? We can put it next to the Presidential Cutout, or anywhere else that you'd prefer.

Students (*grumbling; they should improvise their displeasure*): Now what? Not again! What the hell! What a rip-off!! *etc.*

Provost Bergerac (*aside*): Jesus Christ! Nobody ever informs me of anything. Three months of chaos and I have to learn about this dereliction from three janitors while I'm giving the convocation speech! What the holy hell! Now how am I supposed to run this meeting? What can I tell the students? Oh man! This isn't going to turn out well! (*to the three Custodians*): Yes, well, let's have her next to her husband then. (*Two custodians wrangle the cutout next to the Presidential Cutout. Aside*): And to top it off, it must have been the Presidential Cutout who set this up in the first place! That sly, scheming bastard! He tricked me into thinking we'd have Melatonia the 5th in the flesh, while all along plotting a tryst with his own paramour, the Melatonia the 5th Cutout. The sneaky, horny rogue! How power has gone to his head! What's next? Is he plotting to overthrow President Trumpkin himself? And if the Presidential Cutout is my only line to the President, how can I warn

him of this treachery? Would he trust my word over that of his cardboard agent? He's never been here. He never checks in. He hired me over the phone. Well, it's too late now, so I'll have to do my best with what I've got and submit my report later. *(addresses the Melatonia the 5th Cutout)*: Welcome to our Opening Day ceremonies, Madam First Lady! We are delighted that you could make it here today to share this amazing moment in history with the rest of us fortunate participants! *(pulls her purse; she does not respond. Aside)*: Hmmmm. I wonder if I'm doing something wrong. I don't want her to think that I'm taking liberties with her if I pull something else.

Custodian 3: The directions said that you have to put a bill of at least 50 dollars in her purse if you want her to respond. We haven't had a chance to try her out yet- the most any of us had was a fiver, and he needed it.

Provost Bergerac *(Takes out his wallet and pulls out a bill. Puts bill into her purse.)*: There- that ought to do it!

Melatonia the 5th Cutout *(in a voice like Eva or Zsa Zsa Gabor's)*: Doughnahld runs the country, and I turn the pork chops. *(Mamie Eisenhower)*

Students laugh and applaud. She is winning them over.

Provost Bergerac: Haha! That's domestic bliss for you! But how does it feel to be on stage with your husband today? *(Pulls purse, but there is no response from the Cutout. Takes out wallet, finds another bill and puts it in her purse. To himself)*: Something tells me this is going to be an expensive evening...

Presidential Cutout *(coming to life on its own)*: Hello, Melatonia... can I get a little stipulated kiss from my wife?

Melatonia the 5th Cutout *(coming to life on her own)*: Hello Doughnahld... and what are you doing here?

Presidential Cutout: What am I doing here?!! What do you think I'm doing here? *(sings the Trumpkin University theme song to the tune of the tv show tune "Green Acres")*

Presidential Cutout:

Trumpkin U. is the place to be

I love hangin' in a library

Profs lecturing the eager minds

Coeds in short skirts, baby, that's how I'm inclined!

Melatonia the 5th Cutout *(sings)*:

I was expelled from Modeling School

All the boys would stare and drool

They'd love a little peek-a-boo

Dah-ling I love you, but my school days are through!

Presidential Cutout:

...To read!

Melatonina the 5th Cutout:

...No need!

Presidential Cutout:

... The profs!

Melatonina the 5th Cutout:

...Turnoffs!

Presidential Cutout:

Read the pre-nup...

Melatonina the 5th Cutout:

Oh I give up!

Both Cutouts:

Trumpkin U, we'll be there!

Students, Deans, etc. applaud and cheer wildly.

Presidential Cutout: So how much do you have in mind this time, oh sweetest love of mine?

Melatonina the 5th Cutout: A few more million would be fine.

P.C.: Won't you do it just for me?

M.C.: Nothing in this world comes for free.

P.C.: Oh my dear you're such a bitch!

M.C.: And that, Doughnahld, has made me rich.

P.C.: After all that I have done for you!

M.C.: What's another mill or two?

P.C.: You've got your hands around my neck!

M.C.: Have you the cash? I don't take checks.

P.C.: Why do I love your cardboard ass?

M.C.: If that was all, I'd let it pass. But guys like you are never satisfied.

P.C.: You are more accountant, and less a bride. I hope you're happy with the dough.

M.C.: It should be enough for a week or so. Massages and facials, nails, toes and hair- a girl always needs a new outfit to wear. Because when I am thirty-five...

P.C.: I'll dump you if you're still alive.

M.C.: Sometimes you are fouler than a swine. I'll get you back, just wait and see.

P.C.: Check-out time is check-out time. Don't take it personally.

M.C.: So while I'm young I must be paid. Business is business, I'm afraid.

P.C.: You're right that I won't give a tinkle, when your face is one big wrinkle. That's disgusting!

M.C.: All that money will come in handy when no one wants me for arm candy.

P.C.: My love, you'll roll in sweet fresh clovers, 'cause every guy wants my leftovers... and some women too.

M.C.: This is what I learned from you. Cash up front; the bill's overdue.

P.C.: Do you remember the night we met? Our favorite song?

M.C.: Yes. You had your finger up my thong. But it was small, I didn't panic.

P.C.: Yes, of course it was romantic. (*begins to sing to the tune of "Pennies From Heaven"*):

When we first met

You were just twenty-three

I took a quick look

And knew you were for me

But how could I the truth have known

About the bills you would accrue

How your checkbook's overdrawn

And loan payments long overdue

So I knew I could have you love me by the purse

Now you must put some out or suffer torture worse

That's what pre-nups are made for

And NDA'S- my lust's prepared- for

Every time I pay, I get

Booty from heaven

Don't you know pre-nups mandate

Booty from heaven

You'll find your panties falling

No cover charge

Make sure the rack I'm groping is extra-large.

Money is much better than candy and flowers

If you want that thing you love

Dough has the power

So when you want some romance

Don't think love's for free

I'll be paying and paying 'til I'm a hundred and sixty-three

La la la...

Dough has the power

So when you want some remance

Don't think it's for free

I'll be paying and paying 'til I'm a hundred and sixty-three!

Students cheer and applaud wildly.

M.C.: You cannot change a person. Let them be. Let them be the way they are. *(Melania Trump)*

P.C.: They let you do it when you're a star.

M.C.: We can overcome evil with greater good. *(Laura Bush)*

P.C.: They'd all flirt with me if they could.

M.C.: The independent girl is truly of quite modern origin. *(Lou Henry Hoover)*

P.C.: I bang the tens and leave 'em heartbroken.

M.C.: ...and usually is a most bewitching little piece of humanity. *(Lou Henry Hoover)*

P.C.: ... a little piece! My favorite charity!

M.C.: We learned about honesty and integrity- that the truth matters *(Michelle Obama)*

P.C.: We talked about modesty and chastity- more useless chatter.

M.C.: ...that you don't take shortcuts or play by your own set of rules *(M.O.)*

P.C.: ...that we settle on pre-nups to satisfy my engorged tool.

M.C.: ...and success doesn't count unless you earn it fair and square. *(M.O.)*

P.C.: ... and not a thing matters unless you get the largest share.

M.C.: The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women. *(Betty Ford)*

P.C.: ... That comes in handy for my favorite sinnin'.

M.C.: ... A leader takes people where they want to go. *(Rosalynn Carter)*

P.C.: ... The boss tells you all you need to know.

M.C.: ... A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be. *(Rosalynn Carter)*

P.C.: ... The big boss takes people, period. And then charges them a fee.

M.C.: ... The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. *(Eleanor Roosevelt)*

P.C.: ... I rank 'em by how loud they scream. Getting laid's my favorite theme.

M.C.: ... I have only one real hobby- my husband. *(Florence Harding)*

P.C.: ... Then come to me when you are summoned.

M.C.: ... I didn't know what it was not to work hard as I grew up. *(Pat Nixon)*

P.C.: ... My how you've changed, you bed-sored slut.

M.C.: ... A woman is like a tea bag- you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water. *(Eleanor Roosevelt)*

P.C.: ... A woman is always on the rag- I'd be screwin' Evilanka if she wasn't my daughter.

M.C.: ... There are two kinds of women: those who want power in the world, and those who want power in bed. *(Jackie Kennedy)*

P.C.: We can do this all night. Instead, let me tell you of my latest plan

That's sure to satisfy your lust and greed
And leave you with much cash in hand.

M.C.: This is why I love you, Doughnahld- please proceed.

P.C.: As you may know, our network, T.A.T., Trumpkin All the Time, or TAT, has held its grand unveiling.

Replacing fake news ABC, CBS and NBC and fair and balanced FOX curtailing.

So we must fill the hours we're on air, to collect our market share.

But with what? Why, with that which leaves us all aglow,
I speak of course, of a game show. One which, you will certainly agree,

Will earn us both a nice fat fee.

We call it "The Price Is Ridiculous" and it's sure to be a hit

If for our TAT, you'll be our tit.

Your tit, our TAT- what could possibly go wrong with that?

M.C: Oh Doughnahld, you are brilliant. With my looks and your charming personality

M.C. and P.C. *(together)*: Tit for TAT will make money.

M.C.: Some TAT from you.

P.C. And some tit for me. Everyone wins!

M.C.: I agree; I agree!

Enter two Custodians with a third cutout- this time of Provost Bergerac.

Custodian 1 *(to Provost Bergerac)*: Where do you want us to put this, Sir?

Provost Bergerac *(shocked and appalled)*: What is the meaning of this? I never authorized a cutout of myself! Someone must have made a mistake!

Enter Dean Swindolin and Officer Sappem with menacing looks. They stand threateningly.

P.C.: No mistake, Bergey. We can't take a chance on you- so you're out and the Bergerac Cutout is in. You'll get your severance pay in the mail, Pal. Now beat it.

Provost Bergerac: Why, this is preposterous!

P.C.: Nevertheless, you're out. *(to Dean Swindolin)*: Are you boys ready?

Dean Swindolin: Yessir! *(to Provost Bergerac)*: You heard the man, bud. Are you gonna give us any trouble *(pats his truncheon)* or are you gonna be cooperative?

ex-Provost Bergerac: But, but, but I did everything you wanted! I was loyal. I worked tirelessly for three months and never complained once! I collaborated with you in every way! I even agreed that your hands are normal! How can you treat me this way? Am I just an old dishrag you can throw away like garbage?

P.C.: You crooked, fascist, Marxist, communist, left-wing lunatic radical loser of an old dishrag. You enemy of the state! I used to call you incompetent. Now I just call you stupid. You're no provost because you were captured. I like provosts who weren't captured- okay? I am your retribution! You're fired! *(To Dean Swindolin):* Get this bum the hell outta here.

Dean Swindolin: With pleasure!

P.C.: Part of the problem is no one wants to hurt each other anymore.

Dean Swindolin: We can take care of that!

P.C.: Maybe he should have been roughed up.

Dan Swindolin: I've been saying that all along!

P.C.: I'd like to punch him in the face.

Dean Swindolin: I've been waiting for the opportunity!

P.C.: Knock the crap out of him, would you? I promise you I will pay your legal fees.

Dean Swindolin *(to P.B.):* Come along, you rat. Or I'll rap your knuckles with my ruler. *(pats his truncheon)*

ex-Provost Bergerac: I'm going- but you'll get yours! You'll see! *(exit Swindolin and Sappem, laughing heartily, leading Bergerac by his ear. Curtain drops.)*

Scene Two

The setting is the same, but the stage is empty save for ex-Provost Bergerac.

ex-Provost Bergerac: Well, what did I expect? A sign of appreciation like a pat on the back and a "Hail, fellow, well done"? A hearty handshake? A hug? A gold watch? What reward could my ignoble groveling possibly have merited but expulsion from my own university in front of a blood-thirsty crowd, and the humbling shame I feel for my role in this trashy adventure? Oh, how I have fallen! Oh, how stinging the bitter humiliation of sucking up to a cardboard cutout only to be replaced by a cardboard cutout of myself! Will the rush of pride ever again lift my lowly spirit? And after all my faithful service- which I haven't been paid for yet and probably never will. What loyalty could I have expected for the devotion I showed these soul-less Mongols? I'm a hypocrite and a fool who deserves to fall- but wait and see! Even a crippled rat can bite. My wilted soul will find relief- soon they'll feel the keenness of my teeth.

Curtain falls.

Act Five

The setting is the same, but the podium, chairs, etc. have been replaced by a tacky 1970's-style game show set like the one on the Gong Show. A large sign in flashing lights that says "The Price Is Ridiculous" dominates the back wall. On the left, there is a long podium behind which three contestants will stand. On the right forefront are the three cutouts: the Presidential Cutout sitting on a throne like a Roman emperor in judgment at the Coliseum; on his left and right respectively, are the Bergerac and Melatonia the 5th cutouts standing. The Bergerac Cutout has gone full Chuck Barris. The Melatonia the 5th Cutout is dolled up like a sleazy, pornographic version of Vanna White. Her jeweled hands are posed to suggest that she is displaying an object. The students are still in the audience. Game show music announces the start of the show.

Provost Bergerac Cutout (*as if he is alone*): Jeez- I hope they remembered to pull my zipper up today. I think I feel a draft. (*suddenly realizing that he is in public he addresses the audience*): Ha ha, and welcome to The Price Is Ridiculous, folks, the game show where anything goes, but nobody knows where. (*rim shot: Ba dum tsh...*) What a fine crowd I see out here today: you look as happy as someone who just won a dumpster diving championship! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) Haha! Just kidding- that was no dumpster- that was my mother-in-law! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) Ha ha! But seriously folks, and as Dr. Mengele once quipped: Gee but it's great to see ya! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) How's everyone today? Don't be shy- you can tell ol' Comrade Uncle Bergerac. 'Bout as miserable as yesterday? Hey- I get it. I get it. But all that's about to change, so doncha worry! 'Cause guess what? We've got the very lady to bring us cheer. She'll drive away the clouds and make the grey skies blue. Oh, she's so cute and so pleasant- I'm talking about the woman behind the man, in front of the man, on top and under the man, too- the woman who put the suck into success! Haha! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh*) Oh how I love her! Have you ever met anyone as sweet and sexy? I did once- too bad she was my daughter! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) Ha ha! But seriously folks, I gotta admit I love her. How can anyone not love her? I sure cannot not love her- but then again, I love ...

Presidential Cutout farts. Rimshot: Ba dum tsh...

P.B.C. (*appreciatively*): Ah! That's it! That's it! Sublime! As robust and rich as any well-aged corpse you might find hidden behind a wall. But that reminds me... how could I have waited so long to introduce the star of our show? - the gifted... the transcendent... you know who I'm talking about... there's only one...

P.C. I'm very, very intelligent.

P.B.C.: ... the handsome

P.C.: ... as has been well documented.

P.B.C.: ... the humble

P.C.: I am not braggadocios because I don't need to brag.

P.B.C.: ... the phenomenally successful

P.C.: I'm rich. I'm very very rich.

P.B.C.: ... the man- or is he a god? - we all call "Sir" ...

P.C.: They'd better.

P.B.C.: ... Oh what a delight it is for me to present him to you today!

P.C.: I'm delightful every day...

P.B.C.: You can get a tan just standing in his shadow on a cloudy day...

P.C.: It comes in a can.

P.B.C.: He thrilled us with covfefe...

P.C.: I have the best words.

P.B.C.: He tickles us with his proximity...

P.C.: And they let me do it.

P.B.C.: He invented the "Weave" ...

P.C.: My uncle taught at MIT.

P.B.C.: The man I call Boss Sir and sometimes Sir Boss.

P.C. That's to be expected.

P.B.C.: He has a heart of gold, and bone spurs too...

P.C.: I fought in the war against venereal disease.

P.B.C.: Your favorite president, and mine...

P.C.: And mine...

P.B.C.: ... ready to provide the finest entertainment and award the most generous prizes...

P.C.: Taxes, handling and shipping not included.

P.B.C.: The great! The powerful! The magnanimous! ... need I say more?... President Trumpkin!!!!

Two custodians hold up a sign that says "Applaud! Now!!!" The students do so.

P.B.C.: Have you any words for your admirers, Mr. President?

P.C.: So it's been what they call a historic event, but to be really historic, we have to do a great job. And I promise you that I will not let you down. We will do a great job!

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.C.: Get going. Move forward. Aim high. Don't just sit on the runway and hope someone will come along and push the airplane. It simply won't happen. Change your attitude and get some altitude. Believe me, you'll love it up here.

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.C.: If we don't win this election, I don't think you're going to have another election in this country.

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.C. That may be the best idea of all. I would say I'm the all-time judge. Don't forget I own the Miss Universe Pageant.

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.C.: Nine hundred dollars. Fifty dollars you're allowed to steal. Anything above that you will be prosecuted. Originally we saw kids walking in with calculators, standing there with calculators adding it up. If you had one really violent day... one rough hour- and I mean real rough- the word will get out and it will end immediately. It will end immediately. I'm their worst nightmare.

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C. (*sensing potential danger*): Words to live by! Words to live by! Now Sir, before we start to play "The Price Is Ridiculous," have you any other beguiling insights that you'd like to pass along to your crooning fans?

P.C.: I will be the greatest jobs president God ever created. It's possible that I could be the first presidential candidate to run and make money on it. Are we babies? We need global warming. It's freezing in New York. I'm going to get rid of it in almost every form. It's freezing in New York. We need global warming. We need global warming. We need global warming. I know nothing about the inner workings of Russia. I have never seen a thin person drinking diet Coke. Haven't we all? I would give myself an A+. I hope you have the most extravagant Trumpkin day ever!

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: Thank you, thank you Sir. for your golden words of devotion and inspiration! (*to audience*) And now...oh I know you've been waiting patiently for it, you little devils you... so now...you just can't hold it anymore, can you?...so now...the moment you've been waiting for...it's time for the show! The one that makes you laugh and cry and have dyspepsia at the same time; the one that awards the best prizes; the one that has the most beautiful women and most wealthy men... The one. The only. May I present to you, for your gaming pleasure and moral instruction, the best of the best, the crême de la crumb, the show that rocked Smolensk... oh! It's so fabulous! I just love it, but then again I love (*P.C. farts*)- isn't that sublime? – but then again, I love getting up to pee at night... let's get ready to play "The Price Is Ridiculous"!

Two custodians hold up the "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: Now for those dummies who haven't figured it out yet, here are the simple rules. Our lovely hostess... and you thought cardboard couldn't get a boner! ... Woof! I'm tellin' ya... the divine Melatonia the 5th! Let's get our hands out of our pockets, boys, and show our appreciation for the little lady! ... (*students applaud wildly*) ... ha ha! That's the way!... But how do you play this game, you ask? Simple! Our charming hostess will display an item, and our three lucky panelists will guess its retail cost. The one closest to the actual price without going over it will win his choice of either the item or its actual wholesale cost in cash or bitcoin. What can be simpler, right?

Two custodians hold up "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: So all that remains is to choose our fortunate and soon to be wealthy contestants from among you in the audience!

Two custodians hold up “Applaud! Now!!!” sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: Who wants to play... “The Price Is Ridiculous”?

Students howling and screaming, jumping up and down. The “Me, me, me’s!!!” fill the hall deafeningly. The audience is encouraged to participate.

P.B.C.: So how do you act when you really get excited? Ha Ha! Let’s ask President Trumpkin who the lucky ones are gonna be. *(addresses P.C.):* Who are the sanctioned players today, Sir?

P.C.: That guy in red wearing the Signature Collection Victory Tourbillon watch in the second row. He looks dopey, but he’s got good taste in watches. *(Student 1 jumps up joyfully and races to the stage.)*

Student 1: Oh wow! What an honor!

P.B.C.: You shut up until you’re spoken to. *(addresses P.C.)* And who’s going to be our next lucky participant, Sir?

P.C.: How about that chick in the third row, the one with the “Women for Trumpkin” sign. She’s only a 7 at best, but did you catch her rack? Momma mia! *(Student 2 rushes on stage waving her sign and joins Student 1)*

Student 2: Oh what an honor to be here. I just love you!

P.B.C.: Keep your mouth shut and your legs spread, Stupid. *(to P.C.)* How about that fellow at the end of the second aisle in the dark sunglasses with the cane and “Handicappers for Trump” sign, Sir? *(Student jumps up waving his cane in one hand and the sign in the other)*

P.C. *(sternly)*: Are you fucking stupid or what? Can’t you see he’s blind?! How’s he gonna see the prizes? What you want him to do- feel ‘em up? Listen, dummy, I do the feelin’ up around here! And who the hell wants to see handicapped people on stage with me? They’re disgusting and depressing. Fuck ‘em. Jesus, I’m surrounded by morons!

Two Custodians hold up “Applaud! Now!!!” sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: Of course, Sir- I thought he was just trying to be cool wearing shades indoors. Who’s your next pick, Sir?

P.C.: I’ll pick that nig... I mean, my Black over in the first row holding a “Blacks for Trump” sign. He looks stupid enough to believe anything.

Student 3 *(rushing onstage)*: Do I still have to carry this sign? It’s getting kinda heavy and I’ve been holding it all this time.

P.B.C. *(To Student 3)*: You got your fifty bucks; now hold the fuckin’ sign up, you lazy shmuck. *(to the audience)* Aren’t they a great bunch of kids? Let’s give them a big Trumpkin hand!

Custodians hold up “Applaud! Now!!!” sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: Now let's meet our three inconsequential contestants! (*Custodians hold up "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.*) Won't you please tell us a little bit about yourself, Contestant 1? How, for instance, you can afford a \$100,000 Trump Victory Tourbillon watch but complain about the high cost of T.U. tuition?

Student 1: Well, uh, uh... I can't believe I'm on the show tonight with you...

P.B.C. (*interrupting*): Can the sentimental b.s. and get back on track. How'd you get the watch if you claim tuition is too expensive. Huh? Answer me, you slob.

Student 1: Well, uh, uh... to tell you the truth, it's a knockoff I bought on eBay for \$21.

P.C.: What???!?

Student 1: You see, Sir, I ...

P.C. (*loud and strident*): Explain yourself!!

Student 1: Well, uh, uh... you see, I don't have \$100,000 for a watch, Sir, but I really admired it. So when I saw this one online, something came over me. I just had to have it. So I...

P.C. (*interrupting*): So ya bought this piece of Chinese crap thinking you'd pull one over on us!

Student 1: But Sir, aren't your watches made in China? The guy who sold it to me said they're made in the same factory as yours.

P.C. (*outraged*): So a pathetic little turd like you thought he could be a big shit and run with the professionals, huh? Well guess what, asshole? You're expelled. And we won't refund any of the tuition you paid because this fraud you tried to put over on us is a violation of the ethics clause in the contract you signed and automatically denies you any reimbursement. (*to Dean Swindolin*) Hey! Security! (*enter Dean Swindolin and Officer Sappem*) Security! Grab this commie and throw his unethical ass back into the gutter where it came from! He's barred from the campus permanent. If he so much as steps on the grass, shoot him. I'll cover your legal expenses.

Dean Swindolin and Officer Sappem grab the student by each arm and drag him off the stage, up the aisle to the entrance of the theater and throw him out.

Student 2 and 3 (*together*): Wow! Is he strict!

P.B.C.: Well that was refreshing! I guess he won't have to worry about getting his homework done on time! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) Matter of fact, he won't have to worry about getting his homework done at all! (*rimshot: Ba dum tsh...*) Now let's meet Contestant 2! Tell us, young lady, a little bit about yourself.

Student 2: Well, Dr. Bergerac, I'm a single moth...

P.C.: What did he do? Leave you for another man? With a nose like yours, that's the only explanation.

Student 2: Well, no Sir. My husband was a soldier in Iraq and when his unit came under attack, an anti-tank IED exploded, and he was ki...

P.C.: You can't get killed by an IUD. Everyone knows that. And plus I don't like soldiers who are stupid enough to get killed and for what? These brainless idiots make me sick! And you need to hold the sign higher so the people in the back row can see it better! *(She lifts the "Women for Trumpkin" sign higher)* That's better. Let's move on to my Black. This broad's gonna make me puke.

P.B.C.: Yessir! Tell the world about yourself, Contestant 3! How'd they let in here in the first place?

Student 3 *(holding up the "Blacks for Trumpkin" sign)*: Well you see Sir, I'm very interested in running my own business. I've been an entrepreneur since I was thirteen, and you have always been my role model. So I figured that to be truly successful, I need to learn from you.

P.C. Sellin' drugs were ya?

Student 3: Why, no Sir! I was an honor student in high school!

P.C.: Are you the one I saw selling coke to my idiot son? He is an idiot with zero common sense and no social skills, but he is my son. I just hope he never goes into politics. He'd be a disaster.

Student 3: Why, no Sir! I've never even tried any drugs.

P.C.: Can you get me some Adderall?

Student 3: What's that?

P.C.: That's what you get from Affirmative Action. Another low-IQ loser.

Student 3: I scored over 1200 on my SAT's, Sir.

P.C.: Why do you think you're here?

Student 3: I graduated top of my class.

P.C.: You're here because I needed someone to hold up that sign, dummy. So hold it up and shut your trap. You're sure you can't score some Adderall for me? Huh?

Student 3: I'm sorry, but no sir.

P.C.: What good are you? I should kick you outta here and let the broad win. Too bad she's barely a 7. Oh well- let's get this stupid show going so we can get outta here. I'm starting to get disgusted with you low-IQ losers.

P.B.C. *(not in the least uncomfortable)*: All right then! Let's bring in our first item, a pair of gold "Never Surrender High Top" Trumpkin sneakers! Won't you please describe their many virtues to us, Madam First Lady?

Enter two custodians bearing a pair of gold sneakers on a plush velvet maroon pillow with gold tassels. They handle the sneakers as if they were the Holy Grail and place them into Melatonia the 5th's hands.

M.C.: Dahlings, I'm holding in my lovely and perfectly manicured hands my husband Doughnahld's gift to everyone's feet, his fabulous golden Never Surrender Hi Top sneakers. I am holding them

because I would never put sneakers on my lovely and perfectly pedicured feet. And I don't wear flats, Dahlings. But I'm sure they'll be good for you.

P.B.C.: Thank you, thank you, dear Madam First Lady. *(to the audience)* Isn't she precious?

Custodians hold up "Applaud! Now!!!" sign. Students cheer wildly.

P.B.C.: *(to the contestants)* Now take a moment to write what you think the going retail price is without exceeding it.

The two students scribble their responses and place them in P.B.C.'s hand.

P.B.C.: The numbers are in, so let's see what you had to say. Let's start with you, Contestant 2. Ladies first, after all.

Student 2: I thought maybe \$39.95? I mean, they look like very nice sneaks, but how much can a pair made in China cost?

P.B.C.: Hmmmmm. Well, I can't tell you that yet, so let's ask Contestant 3 what he thought.

Student 3: I know this one! I know it! I saw them online for four hundred bucks!

P.B.C.: So that is your answer: 400?

Student 3: Yes- \$400.

P.B.C.: Are you sure \$400 is the correct price and you're willing to stick to it?

Student 3: I tell you I saw them online for \$400.

P.B.C.: All right then and listen up: The real cost is 399 dollars and 99 cents, making you, little lady, the winner of Round One! How do you feel?

Student 2 *(gushing)*: This is great! I can really use the money- we're running out of diapers!

Student 3 *(politely protesting)*: But I was only off by one penny!

P.B.C.: Let that be your first lesson at T.U.: read the fine print. You went over the actual cost, so suck it up and act like a good loser! Let's move on with Round 2. Won't you please tell us about our next amazing prize, dear, lovely Madam First Lady?

Two Custodians enter bearing a Trumpkin Bible on the same pillow. They replace the sneakers in M.C.'s hands with the Bible and exit.

M.C.: Certainly, Dahlings! What I have here is a book. I don't really know what it's all about, but I don't need it because we already have a book in the penthouse.

P.C.: It's the "God Bless the U.S.A. Bible," Melatonia- my favorite book after "The Art of the Steal" and Mein Kampf. Someday I will read it, I'm sure, 'cause a lot of people are talking about it.

M.C.: Yes, Dahling- and thanks to Doughnahld, I'm sure it will be a best seller!

P.B.C.: So let's let the contestants write their responses and we'll see what they wrote.

The two students scribble their responses and place them in P.B.C.'s hand.

P.B.C.: Thank you, thank you! Let's start with Contestant 3 this time. So what do you think these precious Bibles cost?

Student 3: I know this one for sure- and I'm not gonna mess up this time. The "God Bless the U.S.A." Bible retails for \$59.99. Right?

P.B.C.: Before I answer that, let's hear what Contestant 2 wrote.

Student 2: I wrote \$60. I guess I'm the one who messed up this time! And we really do need the money for baby formula.

P.B.C.: Well then, Miss, today is your lucky day- because the retail price of these amazing Bibles is exactly \$60! Congratulations on your second win!

Student 2: I can't believe it!

Student 3: Neither can I!

P.B.C.: Remarkable, isn't it? Now let's see what fantastic item's next on this, the show of shows, The Price Is Ridiculous! Gentlemen, bring it on!

Enter two Custodians. They are bearing a silver medallion on the same plush pillow. They replace the Bible in M.C.'s hand with the medallion and leave.

P.B.C.: And what do we have now, dear Madam First Lady, for the viewing pleasure of our audience and contestants?

M.C.: It looks like a coin with a face on it, but I don't know who it is. I should really get glasses, but why hide my beautiful cobalt blue eyes when my non-fungusable token "Version" is selling so well with my fans?

P.B.C.: True, true, dear Madam First Lady! Gazing into your beautiful cobalt blue eyes is every real man's greatest fantasy! But do take another look at the coin: The face is of someone very near and dear to you...

M.C.: Why, it's Doughnauld! But he looks so young and thin. Do you think he was sick when they took the picture?

P.B.C.: A real man like your husband never gets sick, dear Madam First Lady. But let's find out what our players think. (*addresses them*): Contestants, please write your responses now remembering not to exceed the actual retail price.

The two contestants scribble their answers and place them in P.B.C.'s hand.

P.B.C. (*addressing Contestant 3*): So what's it gonna be, Mister Shinyhead? What value do you place on this inestimable treasure?

Student 3 (*aside*) Shiny head? If I didn't need the money I'd pop that cardboard cracker in the teeth! (*to P.B.C.*) You didn't say what it's made of, but it looks like silver. I didn't know if it's plated or how much it weighs, so I just took a guess. How about \$30?

P.B.C. (*angrily*): And how about giving President Trumpkin some credit! Do you really think he'd allow his visage to appear on some light-weight plated crap? What's wrong with you? Let's hear from Contestant 2- I hope she shows more respect than you just did.

Student 2: Oh wow! Thirty dollars is exactly what I bid too! I guess we both won this time! The real price has to be more than that if the coin is real silver!

P.B.C.: Of course the price is more than a lousy \$30! Each First Edition silver Medallion contains one troy ounce of .999 fine silver and retails for \$99! But the first thing you'd better get straight is that there's no such thing as two winners. Can you imagine, for instance, two President Trumpkins? Or two Melatonias the 5th's? Impossible! There are but one! So there can't be two winners. But look around the audience- and what do you see? Losers. Nothing but a bunch of losers. So guess what, Buttercup? You and your disrespectful little friend here both lost this round because though there can only be one winner, there are always a lot of losers. Now let's move along before I lose my patience with you two nitwits. (*addresses M.C.*): Let's ask our lovely and charming Madam First Lady of All First Lady Madams to describe our next amazing prize...

Enter two custodians bearing a silver platter with 4 packages labeled "Trumpkin Steaks" and a small folding table. They unfold the table next to the M.C. and place the tray on it. Then they remove the medallion from M.C.'s hand, place it on the plush pillow and exit.

P.B.C.: Won't you please describe our next stunning prize, dear Madam First Lady?

M.C.: Of course, Dahling! It's four packages of something that's dripping. Ooooooooooof! Vat a mess it's making on the floor!

P.B.C.: Are the packages labeled, dear Madam First Lady?

M.C.: Ahhhhhhh! Yes, of course! It says "Trumpkin Steaks"! So that's what's making this slop! Bloody steak and hamburger juices! But you know, Dahlings, that my Doughnahld only eats McDonald's, so maybe that's why he's trying to get rid of this stuff.

P.B.C.: Thank you, thank you, Madam First Lady! Now let's see what our participants think these four packages retail for without going over the actual price. Contestants, please take a moment to jot down the answers for the next round of The Price Is Ridiculous!

The two contestants scribble their responses and place them in P.B.C.'s hand.

P.B.C.: Before we start our next round, I want to take just a moment to remind the audience that all the prizes that will be awarded today are made possible by a generous grant from the Trumpkin Foundation, a charity founded on the notion that the greatest charity begins and ends at home. Now let's get back to the show. (*addresses Contestant 2*): So what do you think the price of this horseflesh- excuse me- the price of these lip-smacking morsels can be?

Student 2: Well, I'm not exactly sure what's in those packages. How much do they weigh?

P.B.C.: I'll have to ask you to stop asking irrelevant questions and stick to our format. Just tell me what you wrote and stop being stupid.

Student 2: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. How about \$200?

P.B.C.: That's much better. Now how about you, Contestant 3? Remember: steaks and hamburgers only. No pig jowls, chicken feet or chitterlings. What do you think?

Student 3 (*indignantly to himself*): Pig jowls, chicken feet and chitterlings, huh? I've never even seen a chitterling! (*composing himself; to P.B.C.*) Well, I don't really know but it would seem that the price should be a little higher: How about \$250?

P.B.C.: Contestant 3 will be happy to know that the price of these delicacies ranges up as high as \$999! Unfortunately for him however, the lowest price is \$199, which means that neither of our players guessed correctly so nobody wins the prize! (*shouts to the two Custodians*): Hey! You two! Get this bloody mess outta here before someone trips on the slime and breaks a kneecap! And bring a mop.

Student 2: We really could have used the steaks or the money.

Student 3: You know, I'm starting to think this show's rigged.

Big commotion at the entrance of the theater. Enter ex-Provost Bergerac with a detail of several FBI agents. They come down both aisles and enter the stage at both sides of it, the way the Deans did earlier.

Ex-Provost Bergerac (*to Agent McCluskey, pointing at the Cutouts*): That's the three of them.

Agent McCluskey (*showing his badge to the three Cutouts*): All right you three- the show's over. We're shutting you down. Let's go- you're all under arrest for defrauding your students by operating a fake and unlicensed for-profit university and describing it as a non-profit to avoid paying income taxes.

P.C.: The world is as angry as it gets.

Agent McCluskey: You have the right to remain silent...

P.C. It's a disgrace and I'm going to put in a major complaint. Because you cannot win.

Agent McCluskey: If you do say anything...

P.C.: When somebody screws you, screw them back in spades.

Agent McCluskey: ...what you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

P.C.: One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace. Good people don't go into government.

Agent McCluskey: You have a right to consult with a lawyer...

P.C.: Lawyers will defend the worst scum that exists. Corrupt politicians, thieves, murderers, arsonists, drug dealers, mobsters...

Agent McCluskey: ... and have that lawyer present during any questioning.

P.C.: ...rapists, pedophiles, treasonists, cult leaders- you name it...

Agent McCluskey: If you cannot afford a lawyer...

P.C.: ...But there is one kind of person lawyers won't defend...

Agent McCluskey: ...one will be appointed for you if you so desire.

P.C.: ...Dumb clients who lie to their lawyers.

Agent McCluskey: Turn around and put your hands behind your back.

P.C.: They knew they would throw every lie they could at me and my family and my loved ones. They knew they would stop at nothing to stop me. But I never knew as but as bad as it would be. I never knew it would be this vile, that it would be this bad, that it would be this vicious. Nevertheless I take all of those slings and arrows gladly for you. I take them for our movement, so that we can have our country back.

FBI Agent (*to Agent McCluskey*): He's refusing to cooperate, Sir.

Agent McCluskey (*to the FBI agent*): That's all right, Joe, just pile 'em all up. We'll add resisting arrest to the charges. It's check-in time at Rikers.

M.C.: But Dahlings, vot about my appointment with my hairdresser?

P.B.C.: I was only following orders!

P.C.: It appears that my superiority has led to some controversy.

The agents place the three Cutouts into one pile and exit carrying them out like pallbearers with a casket. Curtain falls.

Gene Burshuliak

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