

The Last Day at W.O.R.K.

Brandon Daughtry Slocum
and JP Schuffman



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THE LAST DAY AT W.O.R.K.

by Brandon Daughtry Slocum & JP Schuffman

CAST

BUTCH: Radio announcer, early 70's
SHIRLEY: Radio announcer, early 70's
THE PRODUCER: Shy person with few lines
SANDY: Weather reporter
THE MAYOR: Pompous politician
MARGARET BUNTMAYER: Small town socialite
SUSIE: Gardening expert
PRISCILLA: Elvis fan
MADAME CHERI: Psychic
AGNES: Smoker with chronic cough
EVA ROSE: Torch singer
LINDA: Nosy neighbor
DOROTHY: Community theatre actor
ELAINE: Community theatre actor
BART: Banjo player
LAURETTA: Guitar player

The minor parts are meant to be flexible. Feel free to switch genders. Some can be deleted if need be, or changed to fit the talents of your available cast.

Setting: Stage right has a small desk with two chairs behind and a microphone and telephone on top. A microphone on a tall stand is downstage center. There is a raised platform Up Center. There is a desk, chair, an assortment of equipment and Foley artist sound effects stage left center.

At Rise: The lights come on abruptly, and THE PRODUCER enters from UR, hangs up his coat, and silently empties the garbage, starts the coffee, and warms up the equipment. BUTCH and SHIRLEY enter UR, take off their coats, get coffee and sit behind the desk SR during the following.

BUTCH: 'Morning!

SHIRLEY: Good morning. (No reply from THE PRODUCER other than a shy smile) I can't believe this is it.

BUTCH: Come on, Shirley, keep your chin up or it will be a long day. Hey, I was looking through our maps and our routing last night after you went to bed. I think we can swing through St. Louis to see your cousin without going too far out of our way.

SHIRLEY: Do I have a cousin in St. Louis?

BUTCH: Carol and Dave.

SHIRLEY: Who?

BUTCH: You remember...Carol and Dave...your mother's half-sister's daughter and her husband...you remember, they were at your parents' anniversary party in '85...with that weird kid that stayed under the dining room table with your mother's cocker spaniel for three days?

SHIRLEY: Oh, them...why would I want to go see them?

BUTCH: I don't know... see how the kid turned out...see if he's still living under a table with a dog? We pick up our new home tomorrow! Are you excited?

SHIRLEY: Butch, our new home has wheels and a kitchen I can't even turn around in.

BUTCH: I hope the paint job came out well.

SHIRLEY: I still can't believe you paid extra to get that tacky desert scene painted down the side of that motor home.

BUTCH: It makes me feel like I'm riding off into the sunset with Clint Eastwood.

SHIRLEY: It looks like we're going on the road with Willie Nelson. And, I am not convinced you can see well enough to drive something that big.

BUTCH: I docked aircraft carriers, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: When you were 21 years old.

BUTCH: (*leaning over to give her a kiss*) It's our freedom, Shirley. Finally.

SHIRLEY: I have plenty of freedom. With the kids gone and their kids a thousand miles away, the only break I get from my freedom is coming here everyday.

BUTCH: Aren't you looking forward to a little adventure?

SHIRLEY: This station has been an adventure from day one. You remember, when I wrote you in Korea to tell you I had bought the station with the inheritance from my grandmother? And then you came back and we started having kids and we practically raised them here.

BUTCH: I know you would feel a lot better about this if someone had bought the station.

SHIRLEY: Yes, I would. I can't bear the thought of this old place just shutting down forever. We met here, Butch.

BUTCH: Yes, it was 1946 and you were ten years old and wearing pigtails and a lavender dress. You beat me in the talent show competition.

SHIRLEY: We both lost, Butch.

BUTCH: You got third place and I got zilch.

SHIRLEY: We met here, we raised our family here, this was our place in the community, how we contributed to other people. And, now it's all going to end. I miss the good old days.

BUTCH: The good old days weren't that good. We struggled through so much. Life is better now. And, we have nothing but each other and the open road to worry about now. (*nodding toward THE PRODUCER*) Okay, let's do this. (*into the microphone*) Good morning! This is Butch and Shirley signing on with 500 watts at 83.3 on your AM dial.

SHIRLEY: We are glad you have joined us for the last day at W.O.R.K.

BUTCH: We are signing off after 50 years on the air.

SHIRLEY: And, we have all of our regular features today, along with some special guests we've invited back, some of your favorites from way back when.

BUTCH: Without further ado, we'll go to our weather report with Sandy Smith out in the field. (*into the phone*) Sandy, you there? (*SANDY appears from UL on the platform and talks into a cell phone.*) Let me put you on the speaker phone...(*he pushes the button on the phone*)

SANDY: You there, Butch?

BUTCH: Yeah, Sandy.

SANDY: Hey, Shirley, how are you?

SHIRLEY: Oh, very sad and...

BUTCH: So, how's the weather looking for today, Sandy?

SANDY: I got a job, Shirley!

SHIRLEY: That's great! Where are you going?

SANDY: Well, you know, I wanted a place with a little more interesting weather to report, and I got it! I'm going to Oklahoma!

SHIRLEY: Oklahoma?

SANDY: Yes, can you imagine... all those tornados!

BUTCH: That's great, Sandy, we're all real tickled for you. How about that boring old weather around here today?

SANDY: You know, Butch, if you had got me that Doppler Radar back when everybody else got one...if you had listened to me then, then at least there *would* have been something for you and Shirley to sell. Ya'll may be able to read the news on all that junky old equipment, but I can't be expected to predict the weather without the necessary technology.

BUTCH: Then give us your best educated opinion, Sandy...we've been operating on that for how many years now?

SANDY: I officially became W.O.R.K.'s chief meteorologist on June 1, 1971.

BUTCH: And a fine chief meteorologist you have been, my dear.

SANDY: Bye, Shirley. I hope you get lots of interesting and exciting weather for your trip.

SHIRLEY: I hope you like Oklahoma, Sweetie. Be careful around those tornados.

BUTCH: A...I... and, the weather report, Sandy?

SANDY: I think it might rain this afternoon and I would put a blanket at the foot of the bed tonight, just in case.

BUTCH: Thank you.

SANDY: Bye.

SHIRLEY: Well, ya'll heard Sandy. Get your laundry off the line before this afternoon and put a blanket at your feet tonight. You know, she's right more than she's wrong.

(We hear THE MAYOR brushing around UR before she enters, heads for the coffee pot, THE PRODUCER is waiting with her cup, and crosses DRC to the microphone)

BUTCH: And, by the sound of it, our special morning guest has arrived here at W.O.R.K., ladies and gentlemen our distinguished public servant, the Mayor.

THE MAYOR: I just couldn't let this monumental day pass without stopping by to say goodbye to my dear friends, and yours, Butch and Shirley. We are so sorry to lose a community asset such as W.O.R.K. I want you to know that I and the city council are working night and day, folks, night and day to find a buyer for the station, and we plan to have W.O.R.K back on the air just as soon as possible.

BUTCH: We've been looking for a buyer for fifteen years, Mayor, best of luck to you and the city council.

THE MAYOR: Well, speaking for the good folks of this community, you will be missed sorely and W.O.R.K. will be missed sorely. I wish I could talk ya'll into staying in our fair piece of paradise.

SHIRLEY: Butch is looking for a *far* piece of paradise, and expects to find it plugged into an electrical outlet somewhere in the wilds of Montana.

THE MAYOR: Best of luck with that, Butch.

BUTCH: Thank you, Mayor. That's your paid government representative there, folks.

(THE MAYOR bumps into MARGARET BUNTMEYER on exiting UR. MARGARET enters in a frenzy)

SHIRLEY: *(on the phone)* And now, we go back into the field for, good gracious, Margaret, you scared the life out of me!

BUTCH: Mrs. Buntmeyer, you aren't on until this afternoon...much later today.

MARGARET: I fully realize this, Butch, thank you for pointing out to everyone out there in our listening audience that you think I am somewhat senile. Hello, Shirley, my apologies for disrupting the show. Betty Twindle passed away this morning and her family, for some reason unknown to this reporter at this time, is pushing the poor woman into her grave this very afternoon, before an announcement could even be made in the paper. So, I thought it wise to come here this morning and report poor Betty's demise, so that her many friends and neighbors can appropriately respond to her family's time of grief. And, I simply must attend the graveside service during the precious time every afternoon when my dear listeners are waiting anxiously for my society and social happenings report.

BUTCH: Why don't you get on with that then, Mrs. Buntmeyer, and we can hope to get back on schedule by lunchtime. *(she nods but waits...they mime to one another that she is waiting for him to introduce her properly)*

BUTCH: Sorry. And, now, the society report with Mrs. Margaret Buntmeyer, she hasn't missed a funeral, baby shower, wedding or graduation in 50 years---if she wasn't there, it didn't happen---still opposes the playing of rock and roll music on W.O.R.K.--defines rock and roll music as anything that isn't big band our own Emily Post -Mrs. Buntmeyer.

MARGARET: *(reading from notes)* Thank you, Butch. On this historic moment in our history as the age of radio comes to an end, I want to assure my faithful listeners that all the news of their community's leading citizens will still be accessible through my new weekly column in the *Times Register*. I realize that learning the goings on of one's social betters a week after the actual events take place will be a disconcerting experience for my avid fans. I promise you all that my commitment to your social education and training will not be thwarted by

the untimely and frankly, unacceptable loss of this lovely old radio station.

SHIRLEY: Why don't you buy the station, Mrs. Buntmeyer?

MARGARET: Dear Shirley, a woman of my status does not work. I contribute to the betterment of my fellow citizens as a person in my position is expected to do, but I do not work.

BUTCH: Then why have I been paying her?

SHIRLEY: Shush, Butch. Thanks for everything, Margaret.

MARGARET: (*exiting*) Enjoy meeting all the fascinating people I am sure you will find in KOA campgrounds all over our beautiful country.

BUTCH: (*on the phone*) Okay, that's over. And we're going back out into the field for our morning report from everyone's favorite Gardening Expert, Susie Masterson. (*SUSIE appears on the platform UC*) Susie, you there?

SUSIE: Yeah.

SHIRLEY: We got you on the speaker phone, Susie... go ahead.

SUSIE: I got you on speaker phone too, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: That's great, Susie. How about that farm report?

SUSIE: I don't feel much up to doing it today, Shirley?

SHIRLEY: You haven't missed a report, well, ever. What's the matter with you?

SUSIE: I miss Marty.

SHIRLEY: I know you do. But, he's been gone fourteen years in April. Susie, what's bothering you?

SUSIE: Well, you know Marty talked a steady stream from the day he was born until the day he died.

SHIRLEY: Yes, he did.

SUSIE: I almost went crazy the first winter we was married. I couldn't handle all that talking and asking me questions all the time. And then ya'll bought W.O.R.K. and we got a radio. The only thing that ever shut that man up was the radio being on.

BUTCH: Glad we could help, Susie.

SUSIE: I loved him when he wasn't talking, you know? We kept that radio on everyday. But now, Marty ain't here to talk, and ya'll are going off the air so I won't have the radio to listen to. I'm thinking it's going to get awful quiet around here tomorrow.

SHIRLEY: (*BUTCH can't speak --he is choked up*) Susie, there are plenty of other stations out there. You turn one of them on tomorrow morning and give it a try, okay?

SUSIE: I reckon I will.

SHIRLEY: Promise me, Susie?

SUSIE: Okay, Shirley.

BUTCH: How about that gardening report?

SUSIE: If your petunias are looking puny from the frost, soak some egg shells and water them good. Now's the time to start your herb seedlings in the kitchen window, and I think I'm going to start a few tomato plants. They can't go outside for another month or so, but wouldn't a fresh tomato taste good?

BUTCH: Thanks, Susie. You take care now.

SUSIE: Bye, Butch.

(SHIRLEY has communicated to the THE PRODUCER that she wants music and an old Elvis song plays softly as BUTCH and SHIRLEY recover from SUSIE's phone call, they stand and stretch and move together)

BUTCH: I love you. Even when you're talking. Especially when you are talking. I guess that is why I loved the idea of this station. It meant I could talk with you all day, everyday of my life.

SHIRLEY: We'll still talk everyday...cooped up in that motor home.

BUTCH: Will you miss having an audience?

SHIRLEY: I don't know.

BUTCH: (*getting very friendly physically*) Remember when we used to make love in here during music breaks?

SHIRLEY: Unhand me, you old wolf!

BUTCH: I remember a few times we made the needle skip all the way across the record!

SHIRLEY: (*Fighting him off, looking at the embarrassed PRODUCER*) Back when we were alone here...before we had a producer!

BUTCH: (*letting her go abruptly and winking at THE PRODUCER*) Sorry. Woman makes me crazy.

SHIRLEY: You came that way. I had nothing to do with it.

BUTCH (to *THE PRODUCER*) There were better fish in the sea than the one she caught.

SHIRLEY: There was better bait.

(*THE PRODUCER signals that the song is almost over and they have an incoming phone call. BUTCH and SHIRLEY go back to the desk. PRISCILLA enters UL on the phone, reading a magazine with Elvis on the front cover*)

SHIRLEY: This is W.O.R.K. and you are on the air.

PRISCILLA: This is Priscilla Shively, the president of the local Elvis Presley Fan Club.

BUTCH: Hey, Patricia.

PRISCILLA: Now, Butch, I know we went to school together and all, and habit is hard to break, but I legally changed my name to Priscilla the day I turned eighteen years old.

BUTCH: Sorry, Priscilla. What can we do for you today?

PRISCILLA: I just heard Elvis playing, and I got a little choked up. The first time I ever heard The King was on W.O.R.K. You played "*That's Alright, Mama*" and it changed my life forever.

SHIRLEY: It almost changed our lives forever too. If you will remember, Margaret Buntmeyer circulated a petition to revoke our FCC license.

PRISCILLA: Well, Margaret can just get over it! Elvis Presley is the most divinely inspired entertainer on this planet. When my mother moved us down here to this dreadful heat to shorten our lives eating deep-fried everything... the only connection I had to the real world out there was Elvis and my dedication to his fan club.

BUTCH: W

ell, Patricia, I mean, Priscilla, we're glad to have played Elvis for you... good old southern boy, Elvis ... ate fried peanut butter and banana sandwiches... southern as the day is long...

SHIRLEY: Butch! Have a nice day, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA: I'm going to miss you, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: We'll miss you too, won't we, Butch?

BUTCH: When Harold retires, maybe he'll take you back north.

PRISCILLA: Oh, I wouldn't go home now...too far to Memphis and Tupelo and all my conventions and holiday celebrations.

BUTCH: Bye, Priscilla. Well, folks, it's time for our daily astrology report, but, as usual, our resident psychic is nowhere to be seen.

SHIRLEY: She'll be here soon. I can see it in the immediate future.

BUTCH: Yeah, well, my firing Madame Cheri has been in the immediate future since we hired her in 1968, but she's never seen that coming.

SHIRLEY: Because you never really intended to do it.

BUTCH: Ah, I knew something was wrong there.

(MADAME CHERI enters with a tinkle of ankle bells, scarves flowing UR and floats lightly downstage to the microphone.)

BUTCH: Glad you could join us, Madame Cheri.

MADAME: The goats were in the herb garden this morning...sorry.

SHIRLEY: We're glad to see you Madame Cheri. We're ready for that astrology report whenever you are.

MADAME: Well, I have this overwhelming feeling that perhaps we should focus on you and Butch this morning. I sensed some discomfort in your voice, Shirley, as I was listening on the way over in my hybrid. Now, as we all know, Shirley is a Libra, a woman who likes balance in her life. Butch, however, is a Leo, an adventurer. They were married under Capricorn with the moon in the 6th house...

BUTCH: I thought we got married at your grandmother's house? *(SHIRLEY shushes him)*

MADAME: How do you feel about this adventure before you, Shirley?

SHIRLEY: Well, I am looking forward to some things. I've always wanted to see the Grand Canyon, and we'll see the grandkids on the way out there and the way back.

MADAME: I see...Butch, you are excited, yes?

BUTCH: Don't I pay you to read my mind?

MADAME: Butch, a very testosterone-driven Leo, is tired of pacing in this small cage. He longs to be free, to wander the desert, to climb the mountains...

BUTCH: Sounds exhausting when you put it like that...I don't know how much wandering and climbing I plan to do...thought of it more as just seeing stuff.

SHIRLEY: Let her finish. What do you see in our future, Cheri?

MADAME: You will be given a gift. A very important gift ... just before you leave on your trip...this gift will change everything...everything will be different.

BUTCH: Who's it from? This gift? Keep an eye out for the UPS man, Shirley.

MADAME: It is already here. You just don't know it yet. It will change everything.

BUTCH: Well, as always, Madame Cheri, I feel better informed. I just have no idea about what.

SHIRLEY: Thanks, Cheri. *(they hug and CHERI weeps loudly)*

MADAME: Send me postcards of things that look spiritual and uplifting.

SHIRLEY: You bet I will.

(MADAME CHERI exits UR)

BUTCH: *(on the phone)* Agnes, you there? Agnes?

AGNES: *(she enters onto platform UL with phone)* Hey, Butch. Hold on a minute... *(she takes a stout breath from her oxygen tank & hose, lights a cigarette, and goes back to the phone)* How you doing, Butch?

BUTCH: I'm good, Agnes. How are you? *(he flinches, realizing what he has said, everyone in the station busies themselves with something as she goes on)*

AGNES: I'm bad, Butch. Doctor Feldman said I have the lungs of a woman twice my age. I said, "Doctor Feldman, that makes my lungs 136 years old." That man will say anything to make me quit smoking. But, you know me, I just can't function without my cigarettes. I told him I was down to a pack and a half a day, and he said, "What do you want for that? A prize?" I said, "Doctor Feldman, you could at least give me credit for cutting back, I mean, cutting back is not as good as quitting I know, but it's gotta count for something." And he said...

BUTCH: Agnes, do you have anything for the swap shop today?

AGNES: I was going to tell you what Doctor Feldman said.

BUTCH: I know, Agnes. I'm sorry. We just have to attempt to keep to some sort of schedule here...

AGNES: (*reading from cards*) Let's see here...Tim White's boy has fourteen puppies he's trying to get rid of. Says their mother is an AKC registered Dalmation and the daddy is of unknown breed. He'll take anything in trade. Says here they don't look near as bad as he thought they might.

SHIRLEY: Agnes, tell Johnny White to take those poor creatures to the Humane Society and get them neutered and spayed before he spreads them out all over the county.

BUTCH: Just what we need around here, our own distinctive native dog breed... Dalmation and something else.

AGNES: Hank Johnson has a 1956 Ford truck in pretty good running condition that he is looking to trade for a trailer to haul his pigs in, so if anybody's got a trailer they're not using, there's you a nice old beat up truck, just waiting on you.

SHIRLEY: Anything else, Agnes?

AGNES: Just Thelma Jenkins' ad...been up here for three months...looking for somebody to come clean her gutters...says she'll trade for private voice lessons.

BUTCH: Thanks, Agnes. Well folks, there you have it...spotted dogs, beat up Fords, hog trailers, and a future Pavarotti, just needing to get up that ladder and clean Thelma's gutters.

SHIRLEY: We want to remind our listeners that while we won't be doing Swap Shop here on W.O.R.K. anymore, you can still stop down at Agnes' Piggly Wiggly and put your notices on the community bulletin board over there.

BUTCH: You might want to give eBay a try as well.

AGNES: Ya'll have a good time. I hear you can breathe real good out in the desert out there.

BUTCH: We'll let you know, Agnes. Maybe you and Bob will move out to Phoenix or something.

AGNES: I can't get Bob out of the house, much less across a state line.

SHIRLEY: Tell him bye for us, Agnes. Bye now.

AGNES: Bye.

BUTCH: Now, I have a little surprise for my wife, if ya'll with bear with me a moment. As you know, in 1946, Shirley and I met here at W.O.R.K. in a talent show, in which it was determined that I was less talented than my future wife. After an extensive search all the way over to Wilkes County, I have located the first place winner from that competition. And now, on hiatus after a successful run of "Hello Dolly" onboard a cruise ship, I am pleased to introduce back to W.O.R.K., Miss Eva Rose.

(EVA enters from UR, crosses to downstage microphone)

EVA ROSE Hi, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: Oh, you look great Eva Rose! How have you been?

EVA ROSE: You should be asking 'where' have I been, honey... all over the world, from Moscow to London, Shanghai to Boston, I spent three years in Paris and buried a husband in Rio. We'll have to catch up.

BUTCH: Sing for us, Eva Rose!

EVA ROSE: That talent show was the first public performance of my life. Who knows how different my life might have been if I had never found my voice and had the confidence to pursue a career. I am grateful to Butch and Shirley for keeping W.O.R.K. on the air for so many years. I've chosen a special song just for them. *(she sings a sentimental standard from the '40's)*

SHIRLEY: That was just beautiful, Eva Rose. Thank you. *(she stands and hugs EVA ROSE)* Thank you for coming home.

BUTCH: Thanks, Eva Rose. You are still a blue ribbon performer.

EVA ROSE: Take care, enjoy your travels. *(she takes one last longing look around the station and exits UR)*

BUTCH: Now, it's time for one of everybody's favorite segments here at W.O.R.K., "Sort It Out With Shirley." Pick up the phone, call in with your troubles, and Shirley will help you sort it out and all your neighbors will know why you've been so darned cranky all week.

SHIRLEY: (*answering the ringing phone*) Hello, would you like to sort it out?

LINDA: (*entering onto the platform UL with phone*) Well yes, Shirley, I would like very much to sort it out.

SHIRLEY: Just tell me what the problem is.

LINDA This is...

SHIRLEY: Most people prefer not to use their names when they call into "Sort it Out With Shirley."

LINDA: Oh, well ... I called to shame my next-door neighbor into action, how can I do that if I don't say who I am? Should I just tell you who he is?

SHIRLEY: No... no...Why don't you just explain to me why you are upset with your next door neighbor?

LINDA: That man! Let me tell you, I am a Christian woman, and I have tried to be a good neighbor, but that man doesn't have a shred of decency. He piles things everywhere, on the porch, in the driveway, around the trees, up against the side of his house...

SIDRLEY: What sort of things?

LINDA: Everything you can imagine and some you can't...automobile parts, broken appliances, tires, Lord probably three hundred old tires, balls of wire, anything he finds, he just piles it up in his yard.

SHIRLEY: Have you spoken to him about it?

LINDA: I tried! I went over there with a pan of my famous fudge, trying to be neighborly and he came to the door in his underwear!

BUTCH: What did you do?

LINDA: I dropped my pan of fudge, a good Corningware pan, I might add, and ran back to my house. What do you think I did? I can't have a civil discussion with a man in his boxer shorts!

SHIRLEY: How long have you lived next to this man?

LINDA: Oh, let's see...we built the house in '74 right after Buddy came home from Vietnam, so I guess it's been 32 years now.

SHIRLEY: What did your neighbors' yard look like when you built the house?

LINDA: Just the same. Just the very same. A never-ending cycle of junk and garbage.

BUTCH: It's been 32 years and you still haven't gotten used to it?

LINDA: The man urinates off the front porch!

SHIRLEY: Have you considered planting shrubs or trees to block your view of his yard?

LINDA: How would I see what he's up to over there if I had trees in the way?

BUTCH: (*LINDA exits UL as he talks, DOROTHY and ELAINE come in UR*) Well, that is all the time we have for "Sort It Out With Shirley." You heard it folks, put down the binoculars, plant some trees, and try to forget people live next door.

SHIRLEY: We have a special treat for everyone. Please welcome our own community theatre guild members, Dorothy Huntley and Elaine Parrish. As you know, over the last 50 years, the guild has performed every single one of William Shakespeare's plays here on W.O.R.K.

BUTCH: Every one of them except one...so today, with a little help from Shirley and me, our Producer, and Foley effects artist, the theatre guild proudly presents William Shakespeare's Hamlet.

DOROTHY: (*ELAINE hands out parts*) Thank you for the lovely welcome, Butch. We're always pleased to share our love of the Bard with those in our community who listen to their wireless sets to keep them company in the waning hours of the afternoon as the sun...

ELAINE: Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Yes, yes, quite right, dear. Shakespeare's most difficult and brilliant, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, translated into the local vernacular and terribly shortened to fit into this woefully limited broadcast time...

ELAINE: Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Yes, yes, quite right, dear...and away we go...It is a dark night on the battlements of a castle in faraway Denmark...

(all sound effects are made by THE PRODUCER)

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: *(trumpets blast -a kazoo)* Gertrude, I love you, and it has nothing to do with the fact that marrying you makes me king.

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Love you too honey, and I got a great deal by having our wedding just a few days after your older brother's funeral. Speaking of which, Hamlet, what's wrong with you these days?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Oh nothing.

(Wave crashing / seagulls)

HAMLET/ DOROTHY You all look like you've just seen a ghost. *(wa wa wa)* I love Ophelia more than you ever did Laertes.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: Oh yeah?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Yeah.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: You wanna' step outside?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: You bet. *(clinking swords)*

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: You're good. *(clinking swords)*

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Not bad yourself. *(clinking swords)*

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: I'm thirsty. *(gulp gulp gulp)*

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Well this is about to get ugly.

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: I'm poisoned! ("Akk!")

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: Have at you Hamlet! *(funny poking sound)*

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Ow, that one left a mark. Here's one for you!

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: Goodbye, father. Goodbye Ophelia I'm off to Paris.

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Remember son, floss regularly. Eat lots of vegetables. If you don't have something nice to say don't say anything at all. Don't start what you can't finish. Just say no. Don't get too big for your britches. Aim high. Shoot from the hip. Don't take no for an answer. Buy war bonds. Always look both ways. Don't take candy from strangers. And this above all, to thine own self be true.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: Thanks Dad. Oh, and Ophelia has been messing around with Hamlet. Bye!

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Ophelia.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Yeah?

POLONIUS/BUTCH: That true?

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Maybe.

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Not any more it's not.

ALL: Later that night.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Look, my father's ghost! (*ghost sounds, chains dragging across table*) Angels and ministers of grace defend us.

GHOST/ELAINE: (*in a spooky voice*) Hamlet.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Yeah Dad?

GHOST/ELAINE: Hamlet your uncle Claudius killed me.

HAMLET/ DOROTHY: I knew it.

GHOST/ELAINE: Avenge me.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: No problem.

GHOST/ELAINE: (*cock crows*) Gotta' go now.

POLONIUS/BUTCH: (*trumpets blast*) My king and queen, I'm pretty sure my daughter Ophelia is the one making Hamlet act so weird.

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Well I certainly can't think of any other reason.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Look here comes Hamlet, lets spy on him.

(*sneaking boot sound*)

HAMLET /DOROTHY: Ahem. To be or not to be that is the question. Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take up arms against a...

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Hamlet!

HAMLET/ DOROTHY: Oh great.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Hamlet, do you still love me?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Not really, no.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Well what am I supposed to do now?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Why don't you get thee to a nunnery.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: (*crying hysterically*)

ALL: Later that night.

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Polonius hide behind this curtain and listen to my conversation with Hamlet.

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Why?

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Who's the queen?

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Oh, all right.

GERTRUDE/SHITRLEY: Hello Hamlet.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Hi Mom. You know, I've got to tell you. You've been acting like a real floozy the last couple of...Hey who is behind the curtain!
(*knife sliding out of sheath*) A rat! A rat! (*funny poking sound*)

POLONIUS/BUTCH: Akk!

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Polonius? Okay, mom, I don't even want to know what he's doing in here. Listen mom, straighten up and fly right. I really have to go.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: (*trumpets blast*) Hamlet, where is Polonius?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: I killed him. (*dun dun daaa!*)

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: I'm sending you to England.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Okay by me. When am I leaving?

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Right now.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Hey, I heard screaming. Is everything okay?

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Your father is dead. And I just sent Hamlet off to his death.

OPHELIA/DOROTHY: Oh...Well, all right. Back in a minute.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: I just heard my father was dead.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: I thought you were in Paris.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: I was.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: It's true, your father is dead, but things could be worse.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: How? (*Ieeeeee! Splash. Gargle.*) I'll kill Hamlet for this.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Already taken care of. I sent a letter with Hamlet telling the king of England to kill him when he arrives.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: They do that sort of thing?

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Apparently.

ALL: A few days later.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Hey Mom.

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Hamlet? What are you doing back here?

HAMLET/DOROTHY: You wouldn't believe me if I told you. How are things?

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Not so good.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Really what's wrong? Hey, whose funeral is that?

GERTRUDE/SHIRLEY: Funny you should ask.

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: (*shovel in dirt*) Oh, Ophelia. Hold off the earth awhile, till I have caught her once more in mine arms. I wish Hamlet was here. I'd really give him what for.

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Here I am.

ALL: (*gasp*)

LAERTES/SHIRLEY: Ah, I'm slain. Hamlet you are poisoned, the kings to blame. Akk!

HAMLET/DOROTHY: Oh, right the king, I almost forgot about him.

CLAUDIUS/BUTCH: Uh oh. (*funny poking sound*) Akk!

HAMLET/DOROTHY: O, I die. The potent poison quite over throws my spirit. The rest is...silence.

ALL: Goodnight sweet prince. Let the cannons shoot. (*cannons fire*)

DOROTHY: Well, done, well, done!

(*THE PRODUCER collapses into his chair, exhausted*)

BUTCH: Well I can certainly see why you left that till the last one!

DOROTHY: To have done the entire canon! Thank you, thank you so much!

ELAINE: Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Quite, right, dear, quite right...

(DOROTHY and ELAINE exit Up Right)

SHIRLEY: You know in all the years we've been doing that, this one was my favorite.

BUTCH: Well, when you cut out all those thee's and thou's that Shakespeare guy can spin a pretty good yarn.

SHIRLEY: I've always loved the classics.

BUTCH: Well you're a classic kind of woman.

SHIRLEY: And that ladies and gentlemen is my husband trying his darndest to find a nice way of telling me I'm over the hill.

BUTCH: Well... Ah... *(BART and LAURETTA enter Up Right)* Speaking of hills, we've got another treat for you all today. Shirley's cousin Bart and his sister Lauretta, are here in the studio to play us some of their competition winning mountain music. Take it away Bart. *(BART and LAURETTA play a rousing blue grass tune)*

SHIRLEY: That was lovely Bart. I'll send you a postcard from California. *(BART and LAURETTA exit.)*

BUTCH: They don't talk much. But I guess when you can play like that, you don't have to. You can all hear Bart and Lauretta down at the Oak Grove on Thursdays playing under the name Bart and Lauretta.

SHIRLEY: Well, believe it or not folks this station still has one sponsor left out there. Kendall's Hardware has been sponsoring this station for almost twenty years now. They've been kind enough to stay with us this long, so do us and them a favor and don't change the dial. We'll be back in just a flash.

(THE PRODUCER takes them to commercial.)

BUTCH: Are you ready for this?

SHIRLEY: I don't know, Butch, I don't know how I'm supposed to leave all of these people, this life that we have here. How are we supposed to just say goodnight, switch off the lights, and let everything we've worked so hard for vanish. Why would we even want to do that?

BUTCH: It isn't all just going to vanish. We'll still have the memories. And we'll make some new memories where we're going we'll meet new people. Sweetheart, we did our best and we had a good time doing it. Most people aren't lucky enough to be able to say that. But now it's time to move on.

(PRODUCER signals that they are about to come back, they wave him off and he puts on music)

SHIRLEY: It just feels like this is the end of something really good. Do you know what I mean?

(THE PRODUCER walks over and hands an envelope to SHIRLEY. She opens it and finds a substantial check)

BUTCH: What is it?

SHIRLEY: A check.

BUTCH: *(taking the check and reacting to the large sum)* Well, that is what I call a going-away present!

SHIRLEY: It isn't a present, is it? It's a payment?

(THE PRODUCER nods enthusiastically)

SHIRLEY: For the station? You want to buy the station?

(Same response)

SHIRLEY: Oh, my.

BUTCH: Well, there it is, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: What?

BUTCH: The gift Madame Cheri told you about. You got a buyer for the station.

SHIRLEY: *(looking upward whispers)* Thank you. *(hugs THE PRODUCER)* Thank you!

(BUTCH and SHIRLEY start dancing to the music, THE PRODUCER sits down behind their desk)

PRODUCER: And we're back. *(stammering)* I just bought W.O.R.K. from Butch and Shirley...while we were on commercial break...everything's gonna' pretty much stay the same around here...I think...if everybody will come back...I know Sandy is halfway to Oklahoma by now. But, we're staying on the air...tell everybody we're staying on the air. *(at the standing microphone)*

SHIRLEY: Well, this is it folks. We can't tell how much we've loved being a part of your lives, and we want you all to know how much we're going to miss...*(she gets choked up)*

BUTCH: What she is trying to say is that it's been a real pleasure knowing you all, and we hope you've had as much fun listening to us as we've had talking to you. Say goodnight, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: *(laughs)* Goodnight, Shirley.

PRODUCER: This is W.O.R.K...Signing off another broadcast day. Join us tomorrow for...well, whatever I manage to come up with between now and then. *(BUTCH and SHIRLEY continue dancing as the lights fade)*

CURTAIN