

The Misadventures of Dr. Maddox

An original screenplay by
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Int, Robert's Lab -- Day

We open on a desk in the middle of the lab, displaying a name plaque that says: "Dr. Robert Maddox." Just next to it, two framed PH.Ds: one in mechanical engineering and one, curiously, in fashion design. Next to that, three framed photographs: one of Nikola Tesla, one of Stephen Hawking, and one of Miuccia Prada--standing next to Robert, who is blatantly photoshopped into the image. Scattered about the lab is a bizarre and chaotic mixture of electrical devices, strange chemicals, and unfinished women's clothing designs; some on hangers, some thrown over lab equipment, and some merely on paper. ROBERT MADDUX himself straightens out his labcoat and a small but spiffy bow tie, straightens out his hair--a messy mop simply parted down the middle--and then turns to a monitor displaying the faces of the UN's foremost leaders. In the palm of his hand, a remote.

ROBERT

(cackling)

Gentlemen! I hold in the palm of my hand the remote to a device that will spell your doom! A device so insidious, so diabolical, so fabulous that only I, Doctor Robert Maddox, could even conceive of it! Behold!

Robert gestures towards the device itself: a large apparatus consisting primarily of a satellite dish, sequins, and a small rat hooked up to it by electrodes. The rat, WILLARD, is wearing a small but spiffy bow tie. Robert strokes him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

With the help of my good companion Willard and this satellite array, all the world's vermin population will be at my command! Rats will rebel in Rhode Island! Mice shall mutiny in Moscow! The whole planet will be overcome by a rampage of rodentia, and you'll be completely helpless to stop it! Unless, of course, you give in to my demands.

BRITISH LEADER
And just what demands are those?

ROBERT
I want fifty billion helicopters
and a dollar!

The UN leaders start muttering amongst themselves,
confused.

BRITISH LEADER
But there aren't that many
helicopters!

Robert shakes his head.

ROBERT
I mean--fifty billion dollars
and a helicopter!

All the leaders gasp.

BRITISH LEADER
You're mad, Maddox! This is
preposterous! We will not be
terrorized, especially not by a
crackpot like you!

ROBERT
Is that a maroon tie?

The British leader looks down and adjusts his tie
nervously.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And you're calling me a
crackpot? I haven't heard of
anything so laughable since
Willard suggested I make clothes
out of toilet paper. Now sit
back, and enjoy your front row
seat to doomsday! Nothing can
stop me now!

Robert begins to cackle, but just then the doors to his
lab slam open. He looks up quickly, surprised as four
men in hard hats--LOU, ERIC, DANA, and CHARLIE--begin
filing in, unplugging things and collecting his
equipment in boxes. Lou is particularly overweight and
wearing a vest. Dana's face is hidden, but he is also
very big, sporting a plaid shirt. Eric is tall, thin,

has glasses and is wearing a button-down shirt and a maroon tie; he carries a clipboard, taking inventory of all the equipment. The head repo man, Charlie, a heavy-set African-American with a thick beard, steps forward and hands a piece of paper to Robert.

CHARLIE

Chase-Chicago Bank. We're here to repossess this equipment.

ROBERT

What?

Robert unfolds the piece of paper.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Repossession? This is absurd--my funding has been secured for months! I have investors, I--

CHARLIE

Well, apparently they ain't too happy with you.

As Robert starts to read the note Charlie takes the vermin-remote right out of his hand. He's too shocked to even notice. The letter reads:

NARRATOR

Mr. Robert Maddox:

ROBERT

That's doctor!

NARRATOR

We are writing to inform you that your funding for research in pest control has been withdrawn and your loans have defaulted; as such we will be forced to shut down your lab and repossess any equipment therein. We hope this hasn't caused you any inconvenience. Have a pleasant day.
-Tom,
Chase-Chicago Bank

The men from the UN begin to laugh onscreen as they witness Robert's misfortune.

ROBERT
(Stuttering)
But my moment of triumph! This
can't be!

Lou and Dana begin dismantling the satellite array for the vermin control device while Eric stands by idly, lighting up a cigarette.

ERIC
Easy, easy there...

Robert stumbles out of his chair.

ROBERT
No! Don't touch that!

Too late. The last of its wires are cut, the satellite's dismantled, and they take the dish away along with all the other equipment in the lab. Eric goes to unplug Robert's computer.

BRITISH LEADER
(Heavy sarcasm)
Yes, well, I see we stand
absolutely no chance here.
Clearly you're completely
unstoppable! Why, we should
surrender right this instant!

ROBERT
Ooh, you'll regret that cheek,
Prime Minister--mark my words! I
will have my revenge!

BRITISH LEADER
I'm sure you will, Maddox.
Toodleoo!

Eric finally unplugs the monitor and removes it. As the Charlie tosses the last of Robert's things into a box and starts to carry it off, Robert chases after him.

ROBERT
Now stop that this instant, or
I'll... I'll...!

CHARLIE
You'll what? Shoot me with this
ray gun?

The Head Repo Man pulls a ray gun out of the box and dangles it over Robert's head. He swats at it and jumps at it but can't reach. The Repo Men laugh collectively as he shoves Robert, sending him falling on his butt, then puts the gun in the box and closes it back up.

ROBERT
I'll get you for this!

CHARLIE
Save it for the bank, doc. I'm
just doing my job.

Lou scoops up Willard as they continue dismantling Robert's doomsday device. Robert scrambles over and snatches him immediately.

ROBERT
Not Willard! I've had him since
before this lab was even built!

CHARLIE
Aw, let him have it. It's just
one rat anyway. Besides, they
make a cute couple!

The other Repo Men laugh again. Robert sneers at Charlie, making to hurl Willard at him out of rage for a moment before realizing what he's doing and stopping himself. One of them throws a switch, shutting off the electricity to the lab, while the others cart off the larger pieces of equipment on dollies. All that remains are the PH.Ds and framed pictures on the desk. Robert consults Willard silently for a moment.

ROBERT
Hold on! Just one moment!

Charlie rolls his eyes and turns around slowly. Dana lights up a cigarette, sighing exasperatedly while Robert starts running over, holding Willard to his ear.

CHARLIE
What is it this time, doc?

ROBERT
What's that Willard? The phone?
For me?

Robert takes his fingers and puts them to his ear to mock having a phone in his hand. He moves over to Lou.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Yes... uh-huh. Oh! It's for
you...

Robert consults Lou's name tag.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
... Lou. It's K-Mart, they want
their vest back!

Lou looks hurt and ashamed.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And as for the rest of
you--Charlie, pal, seriously,
try some Eccos for a change.
You'll thank yourself.

Charlie looks down at his boots, confused and offended.
Robert turns his eye on Eric next, who happens to be
sporting a very stylish maroon tie. Robert tips his
nose up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(Shuddering coldly)
Ugh! Death by maroon! And you!

Eric doesn't seem to get it. Robert finally comes to
Dana.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Well you're just a
cross-dresser!

Dana looks up, revealing a very butch woman underneath
her helmet.

CHARLIE
... Right. We'll keep all that in
mind, doc, thanks for the input.

The four finally exit, leaving Robert alone in the
dark.

ROBERT
You'll see. I'll show you all!
One day the tables will turn and
I'll be the one laughing--me!
You can repossess my lab. You can
repossess my equipment, my
socks, and my shoes. But you'll
never repossess my style!

Willard nips at Robert's bow tie, which causes him to look rather upset.

INT JACOB'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

There's a knock at the door. JACOB HAYNES looks up from watching a baseball game, walks over, and opens it. Robert's standing there in full mad scientist regalia with a rat cage under one arm and a suitcase under the other. Jacob is visibly perplexed.

ROBERT
Hey Jacob. Can I stay with you
for a couple of days? The bank
foreclosed on my lab.

Jacob rolls his eyes

JACOB
(Sarcastically)
What a shock.

He gestures for Robert to come inside. Robert does so, and Jacob shuts the door behind him. Robert sets his suitcase down nearby, but continues carrying the rat cage with him.

JACOB (CONT'D)
So what was it? Did your
investors finally get sick of
being defrauded?

ROBERT
They just didn't understand my
vision, that's all! ... They
didn't understand my vision in
fashion school, either...

JACOB
Typical! Of course it's not your
problem, it's always them,
always society!

Robert takes out a framed photograph of Nikola Tesla from his suitcase.

ROBERT
People just don't have the
respect for innovation that they
used to, Jacob.

JACOB

Innovation! Robert, do you remember when you tried to get money from your dad for that R&D project in industrial laser development, and you tried to build a Death Star and launch it into space?

ROBERT

That would've worked if he'd taken me seriously!

JACOB

Remember the time you tried to get the government to fund your work in internet security, and you tried to download the entire internet into a person's brain?

ROBERT

Well, yes, that venture might have been a little misguided as I experimented on a chimp first, and--

Robert moves to set the rat cage down on the kitchen table.

JACOB

Hey, don't put that thing there! It's filthy!

ROBERT

Jacob, this animal is quite sterile, I assure you.

JACOB

There's droppings in there!

ROBERT

No there aren't!

JACOB

I see droppings! ... Are those sequins in there?

Robert looks inside the cage. There are, indeed, several large droppings, which appear to contain sequins from the vermin control device. Robert eyes them for a moment, but shakes his head dismissively.

ROBERT

Well maybe a few little ones.

Jacob angrily grabs the cage and sets it on the floor.

Beat.

JACOB

You need to get a grip on reality, Rob! This is the 21st century, for God's sake--and you're not a mad scientist! You've gotta start thinking about getting a real job, if any place will accept you after all this insanity! I mean, training rats for world domination? How will that look on a resume?

Robert hangs his head sullenly and sinks into a nearby chair, pulling Willard out of the rat cage and stroking him sadly as he--again--nips at Robert's bow tie. Jacob bites his lip, takes a deep breath, and puts his hand--hesitantly--on Robert's shoulder.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Now, listen... I'll let you stay here until you get on your feet and find your own place. Okay?

Robert nods.

ROBERT

Okay.

Beat.

Robert suddenly rises out of his chair.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And then we will show them!

Jacob groans and puts his palm to his face, turning around and heading back to the couch.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'll set up a new lab! Bigger! Better! With my own funds! And then no one will be able to stop me! Now, where are the personal ads?

Jacob falls into the couch and grabs a newspaper off his coffee table, then passes it over his shoulder to Robert.

JACOB
Move your rat.

Robert snatches the newspaper and begins reading it, pacing back to the table and sitting down, Willard still under his arm. Jacob looks back over his shoulder agitatedly as Robert ignores him. He flips the channel over to the news.

CUT TO:

POV OF NEWSPAPER.

It shows a variety of want ads from Component Products, DuPage Paperstock, Kane County Water Treatment, and Sherman Hospital. There's also general ads for K-Mart, Sears, and Jewel-Osco.

NEWS ANCHOR
(in background)
Component Products has reported that four and a half tons worth of steel have been stolen from its construction yard. There's no word yet on who the perpetrators might be or whether this theft is connected with earlier thefts at Kane County Water Treatment and Sherman Hospital. More on this when we come back.

Robert circles the ad for K-Mart.

INT. K-MART -- DAY

Robert stands at a counter in the gift-wrapping department, a large T-Square in hand, carefully measuring out some wrapping paper, all the while muttering calculations to himself. Several TEENAGERS are watching him in baffled amusement. We see that he's holding up the line with his choice of precision over wrapping speed. An irritated CUSTOMER waits impatiently at the front of the line.

CUSTOMER 1

Excuse me, could you please
hurry it up?

ROBERT
Measure twice, cut once; the
first rule of science!

Robert finally finishes, taking the time to precisely measure the length of tape necessary to seal the last fold of the wrapping paper, and hands the customer the gift.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
There you go. Next!

A woman steps up and presents him with another gift.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
What's the occasion?

CUSTOMER 2
It's for my friend's wedding.

ROBERT
Ah, I know just what to do.

Robert immediately grabs the darkest, blackest roll of wrapping paper he can find and starts measuring.

CUSTOMER 2
Um. I said it's for a wedding...

Robert uses a level to determine the evenness of the plane he's set the wrapping paper on.

ROBERT
Yes, I know.

CUSTOMER 2
... I was thinking we could use
white wrapping paper? Or maybe
silver?

Robert glares at her over his glasses.

ROBERT
Black.

A K-MART HR REPRESENTATIVE calls over to Robert from across the store.

K-MART HR REP

Maddox! In my office, please?

ROBERT
Just a moment...

K-MART HR REP
Now?

Robert sighs and abandons his wrapping efforts, leaving one of the teenagers, ANGELA, to take over. She clears away all the wrapping paper he laid out.

ANGELA
Now. What color was it you wanted?

INT K-MART HR OFFICE -- DAY

Robert sits across from the HR Rep's desk, where Robert's folder lays open.

K-MART HR REP
And what is it that makes you want to be a part of the K-Mart Family, Mister Maddox?

ROBERT
That's doctor!

Robert's outburst surprises the HR Rep, who nearly falls out of his chair. Robert smiles in nervous embarrassment.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Uhh, well I really have a way with people, and I have a deep respect for the proletariat!

K-MART HR REP
(Raising an eyebrow)
The proletariat?

ROBERT
Yes!

K-MART HR REP
I see.

The HR Rep stamps "COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT" on Robert's papers.

INT K-MART COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT -- DAY

Robert sits at one of many identical cubicles as phones ring incessantly. He picks his phone up.

ROBERT
Complaint department, how may
I--

His phone nearly seems to explode in his hand as an angry customer, JOEY, starts screaming incoherently into the receiver on the other end.

JOEY
--let me tell you, I paid full
price for this lamp, and what do
I get when I take it out of the
package? Fucking dingus! That's
what I get. The lady in the store
told me it was fine--

ROBERT
Sir? Just... calm down...

JOEY
You don't tell me to calm
down--you're being paid to
listen to me complain and you're
gonna sit there and listen to me
complain, god damn it! Now, the
lady at the store tells me this
thing is just fine--don't worry,
it's just the box, she says! But
I open this thing up, and what do
I get? Fucking dingus! The
wire's shredded like a cabbage,
the bulbs're all broken--what
did you people do, drive a
forklift into this thing? And
you sold it to me?

Robert shields himself from the violent outbursts coming from his phone, but gets an idea. He grins deviously.

ROBERT
Well, if you'll hold on I'll
transfer you to the right
department...

JOEY

That would be great! Finally,
some decent goddamn service!

ROBERT
Just a moment...

Robert hits the "transfer" button and begins dialing
a very long number.

INT PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, ENGLAND -- CONTINUOUS

A secretary, IRENE, drops a tray of tea off on the Prime
Minister's desk while he deals with some paperwork.

IRENE
Call for you, sir, it sounds very
urgent.

PRIME MINISTER
Thank you, Irene.

He presses the "receive" button on the phone and picks
it up, beginning to lift his cup to his lip.

PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)
Hello?

The prime minister fumbles his tea as the phone
explodes at him with the angry customer's voice,
spilling all over himself.

INT K-MART COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Robert cackles with glee as his associates begin eying
him suspiciously from over the cubicle walls and from
over by the water cooler. The HR Rep pokes his head into
Robert's cubicle.

K-MART HR REP
Maddox?

Robert stops cackling and clears his throat.

ROBERT
Uh, yes?

K-MART HR REP
Office, now?

ROBERT

Of course.

INT K-MART HR OFFICE -- MINUTES LATER

Again, Robert sits across the desk from the HR Rep.
Again, his file is open on the desk.

K-MART HR REP

Mister Maddox, I've been reviewing your file, and you don't seem to have any prior experience working in retail. Now, you can just relax, I'm not trying to make you sweat, I just want to find... the right place for you here in the K-Mart family. Now, what qualifications would you say you have for this kind of work?

Robert cringes, visibly on the edge of exploding, but restrains himself, straightening out his shirt and taking a deep breath.

ROBERT

I have a PH.D in engineering, with minors in computer science and electrical engineering.

K-MART HR REP

Uh-huh...

ROBERT

I also have a degree in fashion design!

K-MART HR REP

Fashion. You don't say. You know, I think I know exactly the place for your unique talents.

The HR Rep stamps Robert's folder with a stamp that reads, "WOMEN'S 1X 2X 3X"

INT K-MART WOMEN'S PLUS SIZE DEPARTMENT -- MINUTES LATER

A sign reading "1X 2X 3X" hangs over the department where Robert now finds himself kneeling before an

EXTRAORDINARILY OBESE WOMAN, taking a measurement of her huge, beefy thigh.

ROBERT

I'm just saying, are you sure it's a... "snug" fit that you want? Relaxed fit is a lot more comfortable.

OBESE WOMAN

Oh yes. Guys just love my butt--it'll drive them crazy!

ROBERT

(Gritting his teeth)

The customer's always right. I suppose you'd best go back to the changing room and... try them on, then.

OBESE WOMAN

If you don't mind, could you come back with me? I might need a little help snuggling into them for the first time.

Robert cringes.

ROBERT

Very well.

OBESE WOMAN

Teehee. After you, cutie!

Robert cringes again and leads the woman back to the changing room, stopping at the door and motioning for her to go first.

ROBERT

By all means, madam. After you.

OBESE WOMAN

Oh my. A gentleman too!

She heads into the changing room and Robert, taking a deep breath and steeling himself, heads in after her. Moments later a loud, shrill scream pierces the entire department and all eyes turn on the changing room. The woman comes running out, screaming.

OBESE WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh my god--it's a rat! A rat!

Robert comes out after her, looking confused before he notices Willard poking out of his shirt pocket.

ROBERT

Oh, Willard! I thought I told you to stay in your cage! I know you get just as excited for good fashion as I do, but this simply isn't the time for your expertise!

K-MART HR REP

Maddox!

Robert looks up. The HR Rep is marching across the floor.

K-MART HR REP (CONT'D)

That does it. I've tried to be tolerant, but this is one step too far. You are no longer a part of the K-mart family! I'm terminating your contract!

Robert thinks this over for a minute, not seeming to know whether he's sad or overjoyed at this prospect.

ROBERT

Okay.

EXT. K-MART -- DAY

Robert walks glumly out of the building and looks at his newspaper again, crossing off K-Mart and having a seat on the sidewalk. He's soon joined by the bleach-blonde Angela, the teenager from earlier who took over the wrapping station. She's in her street clothes now: a pair of jeans, a hoodie, and some sneakers, all of them a little worse for the wear. She sits down next to him, frowning sympathetically.

ANGELA

Hey.

Robert doesn't respond.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You're that new guy who got fired, huh?

ROBERT

Yes, I'm afraid so. Just another in a long string of failures, I'm afraid.

ANGELA

You seem like a really smart guy. What are you doing looking for a job in a place like this?

ROBERT

Well. I had a lab, once, but then the bank foreclosed.

ANGELA

Bummer.

ROBERT

Indeed.

Beat.

ANGELA

Listen, uh. I've got this uncle who works over at DuPage Paperstock--the recycling plant out near Bartlett. He says they really need someone who's good with computers right now. I could probably talk to him and get you an interview.

ROBERT

Why would you help me?

ANGELA

(shrugging)

You cheesed off my boss.

Robert smiles.

EXT. DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK WAREHOUSE -- DAY

Robert squints in the open sunlight as he approaches the warehouse, which is bustling with the noise of the day's work. Forklifts move to and fro as workers manually sort paper into bins. The huge paper baler catches his eye as it grinds up piles and piles of paper and pushes out a long stream of bales.

INT. DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK WAREHOUSE CONTINUOUS

Robert walks over to the main office, opens the door and pokes his head in. Three extremely tired-looking middle-aged men work at desks; a fat one in huge coke bottle glasses--KENNY, a bald one with a walrus moustache--DOUG, and a sleepy-eyed one with a beard--KASEY. Kenny looks up.

KENNY
Shut that door! Unless you're an
employee you use the window!

Kenny points at a sliding window next to Kasey's desk. Robert withdraws his head, goes over to the window, and knocks at it.

KENNY (CONT'D)
(Lazily)
Just a minute.

Kenny punches a few buttons on his calculator, a small paper feeder ticking away as he continues going about his business, seeming to ignore Robert. After a few moments he tears off the slip of paper and reads it carefully, then finally gets up and opens the window for Robert.

KENNY (CONT'D)
(Lazily)
What?

ROBERT
I'm here about a job? I was told
you need someone to work with
computers?

KENNY
Must be a mistake, we don't need
those fuckin' things.

Kasey looks up, speaking in a thick Polish accent.

KASEY
Yeah, yeah, the boss put in an
ad--you the one who call
yesterday?

Kenny glares at Kasey. Robert nods. Kasey gets up and heads around to the door, opening it and motioning for Robert to come inside while Kenny sits back down at his desk and keeps ticking away at his calculator. As Kasey

leads Robert through the office and into the back, Kenny looks up to Doug, smirking.

KENNY
Mario's gonna eat that kid
alive.

Doug mutters quietly.

INT DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK OFFICE CONTINUOUS.

KASEY
What's your name, Junior?

ROBERT
Dr. Robert Maddox, world's
greatest-

Kasey stops and raises an eyebrow.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Uhh, I'm Bob.

KASEY
Nice to meet you, Bob, I'm Kasey.
I am dispatcher here. You know a
lot about computers?

ROBERT
I have a PH.D. in mechanical
engineering with dual minors in
electrical engineering and
computer science.

KASEY
... So you know a lot about
computers?

ROBERT
... Yes.

KASEY
That's good--you know how it is
these days, everything is
computers now, but us guys here,
we dinosaurs, you know? We used
to doing everything with paper.
Me, I don't mind, but Kenny--you
know, back there, guy who looks
like a big turtle--he's not so

happy. You don't mind him, you
get used to him after while.

They arrive at the door to the boss's office in back;
this part of the offices is considerably nicer, with
carpeting and fewer odd stains. Kasey knocks, and the
hoarse voice of MARIO responds.

MARIO
C'mon in.

INT MARIO'S OFFICE, CONTINUOUS

Kasey and Robert step into the office, where a balding
mustachioed man--a bit like Hulk Hogan but with no
muscles, in a tank top that exposes his weakening
arms--looks up from a lavish glass desk and a pile of
paperwork over a set of reading glasses.

KASEY
Bob, 'dis here's Mario, 'da big
boss. Mario, 'dis is Bob--he's
here 'bout the computers!

MARIO
Oh, good! You can leave, Kaiju,
I'll talk with the kid.

Kasey leans over to Robert.

KASEY
(Whispering)
Oh--and no jokes about the,
uh...

Kasey points at his mouth, gesturing to indicate the
moustache. Robert looks over to Mario, whose moustache
almost makes him the spitting image of Mario from the
Super Mario Bros. Video game series--if he were twenty
years older. Kasey winks to Robert and leaves them,
shutting the door behind himself.

MARIO
Sit down.

Robert immediately sits down, haphazardly
straightening out his pants.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Alright, kid, so what're your
qualifications?

ROBERT

I have a PH.D in mechanical engineering with dual minors in electrical engineering and computer science!

MARIO

Fuckin' college boy, eh? You think you're better than me?

ROBERT

Yes.

Beat.

Mario stares blankly at Robert for a moment.

MARIO

Well at least you're honest, I guess. Well, listen here.

Mario gets up and heads over to the window.

MARIO (CONT'D)

You know how many trucks I got out there?

Robert thinks for a moment.

ROBERT

Based on your quarterly earnings, stock price, and personal observation, I'd say... 18. Ten of them are either currently on the road or at another plant--also owned by you--three are currently in for repairs, five are in the yard this instant. You've also got four more new trucks which you've recently purchased and have currently on the way--which you purchased at a discounted rate. And you also have... four vans.

Mario stares at Robert incredulously.

MARIO

How'd you know I got a discount?

ROBERT

Lucky guess--I thought it best
to be generous in my appraisal.

MARIO

Huh...

INT. DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK WAREHOUSE CONTINUOUS

Kenny is still plinking away at his calculator. Kasey's marking off a bunch of files over on his desk. Some chatter comes in over his radio.

TRUCKER (O.S.)

Hey Kaiju! I need a receiving
number on this load I got sittin'
here at Alsip!

KASEY

Hold your fuggin' horses!

Kenny looks up at the door to Mario's office.

KENNY

I bet ya anything he's givin'
that kid the once-over right
now. Heh. Computers...

KASEY

I don't know, he seems like a
smart kid to me.

KENNY

You kidding? There ain't nothing
but air between that kid's ears.
You watch.

The door to the inner office opens and Mario and Robert emerge, laughing and shaking hands. Kenny's jaw drops in pure shock.

ROBERT

And might I say I very much
admire that tank top! Very
industrial sheik!

Mario laughs. Kasey smirks. Kenny looks like he's going to vomit.

DOUG

(Sarcastically, bored)

That's our Mario. The pinnacle
of fashionable taste.

MARIO

You got the job, son. Kenny, I
love this kid! Show him how to do
the receiving tickets, will ya?
He can get started entering 'em
into the computer.

Mario pats Robert on the shoulder and leaves.

KASEY

Hey, congratulations, junior.

TRUCKER (O.S.)

Hey Kaiju!

KASEY

Shut up!

KENNY

(Under breath)

You gotta be kiddin' me.

INT ABANDONED CHINESE RESTAURANT -- EVENING

A couple of thugs sit around a card table smoking
cigarettes. One of them--HARRY--has a beard, the
other--JOEY, the angry customer from earlier--is bald.
Both of them are wearing plaid workman's shirts. Joey
plays solitaire while the Harry is busy texting on his
phone. Joey looks up to him briefly.

JOEY

What are you doing?

HARRY

Texting my wife.

JOEY

Are you nuts? We're planning a
fucking heist here and you're
texting your wife? What the fuck
are you telling her? Oh, hey
honey, I'll be late coming
home--I gotta meet with my
hoodlum friends to do some
fucking crime!

Harry hands Joey the phone so he can look at the text message. He grimaces as if he'd just taken a bite out of a pickled eggplant.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Oh, that's just obscene.

He hands the phone back, Harry now with a smug grin on his face. The door opens and, shrouded in shadow, the mysterious BOSS enters the room. The two men immediately stand at attention as he speaks to them in a thick Russian accent.

THE BOSS

Hello, gentlemen, and what a pleasure it is to see you again. I must say you've both been doing quite well! We've nearly all the components we require, thanks to you.

JOEY

Yeah, well, I'd rather be sayin' hello to the rest of the money you owe us.

THE BOSS

Patience, my good man. It will come in due time: after the next errand I have for you.

HARRY

DuPage Paperstock?

THE BOSS

Correct.

JOEY

I don't get it. What's so special about a paper recycling company?

THE BOSS

That of course is the subject of this meeting. But first, we must address the matter of security. As I said, you've done quite well--but unfortunately it's alerted the news, the police, and even our good friends at the Bureau that something is rotten in DuPage County, and so this

particular job will require a bit more finesse.

JOEY

Hey, you want finesse, you go to Vegas and get Ocean's Eleven. You're in Chicago, that means you get me. If this job's going to be a problem...

THE BOSS

Oh, it shouldn't be a problem at all. You see, I know a man on the inside who should be all too eager to be of assistance...

INT JACOB'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Robert sits placidly on the couch, watching baseball with Jacob, smiling innocently, completely unsuspecting of the treachery that is about to unfold.

END EPISODE

INT JACOB'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Jacob yawns as he comes out of his room, wearing a nice button-down shirt and a maroon tie. The apartment is in total shambles, with the contents of Robert's briefcase thrown everywhere. Tools and implements of what could only be described as mad science are tossed on the floor in both the kitchenette and the living room.

JACOB

(Muttering)

Robert.

Robert pokes his head up from over the couch and glares at Jacob. He's already dishevelled, with a heavy five o'clock shadow and a shirt stained with grease.

ROBERT

Maroon, Jacob? Really?

Jacob stands dumbstruck by Robert's observation for a moment, adjusting his tie uncomfortably before regaining his senses.

JACOB

(Clearing throat)
Do you notice anything a bit...
off... about the apartment this
morning, Robert?

Robert looks around.

ROBERT
No.

A large Jacob's Ladder sitting on Jacob's coffee table
blitzes to life, huge bolts of electricity arcing
between its prongs.

Beat.

Robert looks around again.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Oh! Right. Well. It's like they
say. If you want to make an
omelet you need to break a few
eggs.

JACOB
(Blinking rapidly)
Did you make omelets, Robert?

ROBERT
No.

Robert turns around and goes back to tinkering with the
device he's working on.

JACOB
Did you make coffee?

ROBERT
Working on that right now, as a
matter of fact...

Jacob looks over at the counter, seeing a bare spot and
a lot of parts where his coffee machine used to be. He
double-takes on Robert, who he realizes is tinkering
with what's left of Mr. Coffee. Willard the rat sniffs
a part.

JACOB
What're you doing? That's my
coffee machine!

ROBERT

Was, Jacob! With just a few more touches...

Robert twists a few final screws before attaching the now gutted coffee machine to the Jacob's Ladder.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And a bit of my genius...

Robert places a cup labeled "JACOB" inside the machine. Willard squeaks and Robert pets him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And Willard's, of course, we will soon witness...

Robert pours a full two cups of water--carefully pre-measured in a beaker--into the machine.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
A revolution...

Robert gently sets a filter with several scoops of coffee grounds in the top of the machine.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
In caffination!

Robert pulls down some goggles over his eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Behold!

Finally, he throws the switch to the machine--a large lever installed just to the right of Jacob's coffee table. The Jacob's Ladder explodes to life, now blitzing rapidly with electricity. Pieces of the coffee machine rotate and whistle, blowing out large amounts of steam as Jacob's mug is filled to overflowing with a strange brown sludge. Robert examines it closely, sniffing it before trying to take a sip. He pauses, suddenly looking ready to vomit. He hands the cup off to Jacob as he snatches a napkin and spits it out.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(coughing)
Oh my. It seems I miscalculated the power flow in the heating matrix...

Jacob sniffs the cup himself before recoiling in disgust and setting it down.

JACOB

Rob... there's no other way I can put this, but please... please! Don't modify any more of my appliances, okay?

ROBERT

(Interrupting)

Sorry Jacob, whatever it is will have to wait. I've got to get going if I want to be on time for work!

Jacob blinks, dumbstruck again.

JACOB

You managed to find a job?

ROBERT

Indeed.

JACOB

... K-Mart? No, you don't seem utterly miserable.

Robert grabs a mirror from off the floor and straightens out his bow tie.

ROBERT

DuPage Paperstock!

JACOB

The recycling plant?

ROBERT

Indeed. I'm their new IT specialist!

JACOB

Ah. You're the guy who tells them that their CD trays aren't cupholders.

ROBERT

Yes.

JACOB

And you're... happy about this?

ROBERT

Indeed.

Robert finally finishes straightening himself out, snaps up a clipboard, lets Willard sneak into his front pocket, and heads out the door, leaving Jacob completely dumbfounded.

JACOB

(muttering)
He's up to something.

Robert pokes his head back in.

ROBERT

Uh. Could you give me a ride?

Jacob rolls his eyes and follows after.

INT DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK OFFICE -- LATER

Robert comes through the door humming merrily to an audience of two: specifically Kenny and Doug. Kenny gives Robert the evil eye, but lightens up when he notices Robert's carrying coffee from the gas station.

ROBERT

Good morning, gentlemen! I...
where's Kasey?

KENNY

He don't come in 'til ten
o'clock.

ROBERT

Ah, well. I brought coffee for
everyone! One for you...

He places a cup marked "FOR KENNY" in red marker on Kenny's desk. Kenny mutters a thanks.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And one for you!

He puts a cup on Doug's desk as well. It's not marked at all, and neither are any of the other cups Robert has with him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And one more for Mario. Be right
back in a minute!

Robert heads back to Mario's office. Kenny takes a sip from his coffee and immediately spits it out, horrified.

KENNY
This is gasoline!

INT DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK BACK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Robert continues humming merrily as he heads on his way down the hall. He stops off at an office just before Mario's and knocks on the door. The kindly voice of LUCY calls through it.

LUCY (O.S.)
Yes? Who is it?

Robert peeks through the door. Sitting at the desk inside is a woman in her 60's with white hair, heavy laugh lines, and mellow blue eyes.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Oh, you must be the new computer guy! Bob, right?

ROBERT
I actually prefer Robert, but yes, that's me. I brought some coffee!

Robert sets the coffee on her desk.

LUCY
Oh, thank you!

ROBERT
(With another cup at the ready)
Is Mario in?

LUCY
Oh, yeah, but you'd better let me give it to him. He's in the middle of dealing with a customer.

The sound of violence, mayhem, and mixed profanity begins bursting through the closed door to Mario's office.

ROBERT

Is he like that often?

LUCY
Oh, all the time.

ROBERT
Well. I'd best not waste any more
time in getting to work, then.

INT DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Robert walks back in and sits down at his desk.

KENNY
Real funny trick you pulled
there.

ROBERT
Why, Kenneth. What ever do you
mean?

KENNY
You watch it, fruitcake, I got my
eye on you.

Robert flips through the papers on his clipboard to a chart with a spot for each day of the week. It says "SUBJECT: Ken Stanek" at the top. Robert marks off "mildly irritated" next to "DAY 2 - GASOLINE." Next to "DAY 1 - COFFEE" it also says "mildly irritated."

Kenny reaches for a thick stack of papers and drops them on Robert's desk.

KENNY (CONT'D)
Here, college boy. You can get to
work on these receiving tickets.
That oughta' keep you busy for a
while!

Robert pages through the receiving tickets briefly. They're organized in incomprehensible columns of numbers with bad labels at the top. "OCC," "Corrigated," "OCC2," and "Office Pak" just to name a few. In a corner there's a mini-column marked "garbage." One of the tickets lists metal plates on one of the columns. Robert scratches his head in confusion.

ROBERT
What do I do with these?

KENNY

Add 'em up. Then enter 'em into
the computer.

ROBERT

Where in the computer? Just
"in?"

KENNY

The spreadsheet.

Robert examines the computer's desktop. Sure enough there's an excel spreadsheet labeled "receiving tickets." He opens it up, revealing a huge record of receiving tickets kept day by day and month by month.

KENNY (CONT'D)

And don't screw that shit up!
Mario needs that for billing the
customers! Oh. And here.

Kenny places his old-fashioned paper-feeder calculator on Robert's desk.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Use that. Do every one of 'em
three times. Got it? Three
times! And no usin' the
computer. Can't trust that
stupid thing.

Robert sighs and looks up at the clock. It reads 8:35. He gets to work immediately, snatching up a pen and plinking away at the calculator as fast as his fingers can take him.

INT DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK OFFICE -- LATER

The clock now reads 10:30. Robert's only gotten through five of the dozens of receiving tickets piled on his desk. Kasey opens the door to the office and steps inside.

DOUG

(Lazily)
Hey Kasey.

KENNY

Hey Kaiju.

KASEY

Hey guys. How is first day on
job, doodoo?

He pats Robert on the shoulder. Robert is visibly
confused.

ROBERT
(Frustrated)
Fine! Just swell.

KASEY
Kenny treatin' you alright?

ROBERT
(Heavy sarcasm)
Yes. He's been a big help.

KASEY
Good! Glad to know you two are
getting along.

Robert pages through the receiving tickets some more
as Kasey sits down. He finally throws up his arms in
frustration.

ROBERT
Just what are all of these
columns anyway? I mean,
what's... OCC stand for? What's
the difference between OCC1 and
OCC2? What's "Mixed?"

KENNY
You don't need to know that. Just
do your--

DOUG
(Interrupting)
Come on. I'll take you out to the
plant and show you.

Kenny glares at them both as Robert, shrugging, gets
up and follows Doug out to the plant.

KENNY
Somethin' about that kid don't
sit right with me, Kasey.

EXT. DUPAGE PAPERSTOCK WAREHOUSE -- DAY

Robert walks alongside Doug as they take a tour of the warehouse.

DOUG

Figured you could use a little fresh air after a couple of hours working those receiving tickets. It's a little dull but you'll get used to it. You get used to Kenny eventually, too. He's a real sweetheart once you get past the bitterness and hatred for all that lives. Step right through here.

Doug opens a door for Robert, ushering him into the main floor of the plant. The baler is in full swing as several WORKERS--Polish and Mexican alike--toss garbage messily onto a conveyor belt and sweep it across the floor with brooms. It's a disorganized mess, with the workers tossing in soda cans alongside discarded magazines, a huge length of barbed wire, and a ton of AOL CDs.

DOUG (CONT'D)

This, my friend, is "Mix."

ROBERT

And this qualifies as paper.

DOUG

In most states, yeah.

The two are approached by the foreman, EFFRAN, a stocky Mexican man with a well-trimmed beard.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Hey Effran.

EFFRAN

Como es tas, Douggie? This the new guy?

Robert, distracted, picks up one of the magazines on the floor, marveling at it in perfect disgust.

DOUG

Yep. This here's Bob. Bob, Effran.

Effran peers over Robert's shoulder. The magazine sports the obese woman from the first episode on the cover, in nothing but a thong.

EFFRAN

Ooh, you got taste, primo! Love the booty on that one!

Robert immediately throws the obscene publication on the ground as if it had cooties. Effran and Doug both laugh it off. Doug pats Robert on the shoulder.

DOUG

That would be Magazine Stock.

ROBERT

You get a lot of that, huh?

EFFRAN

You bet, primo. By the truckload! The perks of the job, huh?

A forklift dumps a huge bin full of smutty magazines next to the conveyor belt. Several of the workers start rummaging through them. Robert looks disgusted.

EFFRAN (CONT'D)

Hey, don't be like that. Women are beautiful in all shapes and sizes!

DOUG

Come on, I'll introduce you to the wonderful world of OCC.

ROBERT

Good! Nice meeting you, sir!

Robert quickly shakes hands with Effran.

EFFRAN

Nice meeting you too, eh?

As Doug and Robert begin to head down the plant and Effran goes back to work, a lone figure stalks by behind one of the trucks lined up outside. It's none other than Harry, the bearded thug from the Chinese restaurant. He looks one way, then the next before pulling a cap over his head and wandering into the plant. He pretends to be texting on his phone while he snaps pictures of the inside.

INT JACOB'S CAR -- LATE AFTERNOON

Robert practically dives into the passenger's side seat of Jacob's Oldsmobile. It's definitely not a new car, but Jacob's kept it spick and span over the years. Robert remains completely silent as Jacob shifts into "drive" and the car begins to move.

JACOB

So. Good first day at the office?

ROBERT

Oh, yes, quite! I must say, Jacob, it feels fantastic to be doing an honest day's work!

Jacob looks at Robert in disbelief.

JACOB

Uh... huh. What did you like best about it?

ROBERT

(Manically)

Well, Doug--that's the walrus-looking chap I told you about before--introduced me to the magical land of cardboard. You know, I see it getting very big! It could make a bold statement given the right designer. Perhaps I could contract Ralph Lorend--I've so been meaning to get back in touch with old Ralphie, you know!

JACOB

Oh dear. You're talking fashion. You're going to have an episode, aren't you?

ROBERT

He's always looking for a challenge. Cardboard is just the thing, I think! And they had the most charming magazines! Oh, I got so many ideas, Jacob!

JACOB

Porno mags?

ROBERT
The worst kind of smut! Jacob,
it's just so... so...

JACOB
(Grinning
triumphantly)
Disgusting? Disorganized?
Humiliating?

ROBERT
Boring!

JACOB
(Surprised)
Boring?

ROBERT
Yes! There's just nothing going
on! It's like an episode of
Family Guy without the
cut-aways.

Beat.

JACOB
Really?

ROBERT
Yep.

Beat.

Jacob shivers as if realizing that this is a TV show
and there wasn't a cut-away when there really should
have been. Something is definitely wrong with the
universe.

JACOB
Wow, that's pretty awful.

ROBERT
You see! You see what
Chase-Chicago Bank has reduced
me to? The only thing that I can
find to keep things interesting
is the ongoing experiments I've
been conducting on that dolt
Kenneth, and that only holds me
over for so long, Jacob!

JACOB

Well, why don't you find a project?

ROBERT
What?

JACOB
You know, like those shows you watch on Lifetime. The place isn't exciting, so... give it a make-over!

ROBERT
Who do I look like, Rachel Zowe?

JACOB
... On some days...

Beat.

ROBERT
Actually... Now that you mention it, I think I know just what to do!

EXT JACOB'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Jacob and Robert arrive home and head inside. The light to Jacob's apartment comes on.

JACOB
G'nite Rob.

ROBERT
G'nite, Jacob.

The lights turn out. We timelapse through the evening to sunrise and early morning. The light in Jacob's window turns on briefly. Then, the window suddenly explodes. The shock is enough to set off a series of car alarms on the street.

JACOB
(Calmly)
Well. I don't know what I expected.

END EPISODE

INT. JACOB'S APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Jacob enters the apartment from the hallway outside, carrying a briefcase. He's horrified to find Robert meddling with his bigscreen TV, Willard sitting on top of it and exposed wires and circuits splayed everywhere.

ROBERT
(Muttering)
I'll show you who cares about
your fiber, you miserable
little...

Jacob appears on the edge of an aneurism.

JACOB
Rob... What did I tell you about
modifying my appliances?

ROBERT
Fiber.

JACOB
What?

ROBERT
(Stammering)
Fiber. I'm done with it.

Robert goes back to re-wiring the television.

JACOB
(Shrugging)
Well. We all need fiber, don't
we? For digestion and not
getting constipated?

ROBERT
Oh of course, but we don't need
this worthless idiot box
yammering at us about it all day!
But, with the help of my good
friend Willard I've discovered a
way to send an electrical
discharge, a... pulse... if you
will, straight through the power
line and into the studio
broadcasting this pathetic
tripe, electrocuting everyone
responsible for these obnoxious
and overbearing advertisements!

JACOB
Seems rational.

ROBERT
And then the Madden
guys--they're next. Oh, they'll
be putting *their* hands up...
along with everything else...

Sparks fly threateningly from the TV's exposed
circuitry. Jacob shields himself with his briefcase.

JACOB
Shouldn't you be at work or
something?

ROBERT
It's the weekend!

JACOB
You don't say. So soon.

ROBERT
Indeed. And I get weekends off!
Which means time for relaxation.
Time for side projects.

Robert holds up a particularly live wire.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Time... for revenge!

Beat.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
What about you? Why are you so
dressed up today? ... And why are
you still wearing that god-awful
maroon tie?

JACOB
Meeting at the college. You
know, some people spend their
weekends doing pleasant things
like biking or seeing movies or
going on dates. Seeing as you've
got a job now, you could... I
don't know, give that a try
instead of turning my television
into a deadly weapon? Surely
you've met someone nice at work.

ROBERT

(Laughing)

No, no. Not a single woman at work, let alone one I'd want to date. Besides, who has time to date when there's so much science to be done? I'm on the verge of a new advancement in electronic warfare, and you're telling me to go date! Ha!

JACOB

... You're not gay?

Robert glares at Jacob over a pair of wires. Sparks bolt violently between them. Willard gives an outrageous squeak, whiskers curling in abject disgust. Jacob holds up a hand in surrender, as if to say "never mind!"

JACOB (CONT'D)

I'm just saying, you should try and get out more. See the city. Enjoy life. It's what... normal people do.

Robert pauses.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Who knows? You might even enjoy yourself!

Robert's gaze falls sullenly. He takes a deep breath, nodding.

ROBERT

You know what? You're right.

Jacob smiles.

Beat.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

There's dozens of people and establishments in this city that I've been meaning to take revenge on! Why am I wasting my time with this trivial nonsense? Here.

Robert hands a yet again dumbstruck, frozen, and horrified Jacob the remote control to his brutally

guttled television and stands up, pulling on his coat and scooping up Willard, who squeaks in excited approval.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Ta-tah, now!

With that, Robert leaves and slams the door behind him, leaving Jacob standing in the middle of the electronic catastrophe he left behind. He takes a seat on the couch and tries flipping the TV on. Much to his surprise it still works. He eyes the remote, spotting a huge red button Robert appears to have installed hastily.

JACOB
Hmph.