

Pop! Culture™

The Future® of America™

A Play

By

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The Setting:

America sometime in the near future.

The Characters:**The Citizen:**

Citizen is a vice president of advertising for Inc.com. Citizen is very unhappy with life, but hasn't been able to buy things. Citizen is beginning to feel that there must be more to life than simply buying things and convincing other people to buy things.

The Spouse:

Spouse is a marketing analyst for Inc.com. Spouse doesn't understand Citizen's discomfort with the life they have.

The Guru:

An old school mystic who dropped out of a Buddhist temple when they started selling certificates of Enlightenment™ to whoever could afford them. The Guru's philosophy is that true joy comes not from consuming, but from finding inner peace, which cannot be bought, but must be earned.

The Disciple:

A loyal follower of the Guru who still feels a little empty inside. The Disciple is trying to live the Guru's philosophy through the mind, and not through the heart.

The Ex-Disciple:

A follower who had a falling out with the Guru. The Ex-Disciple believes that consumerism can be turned around and used to save the world.

The Revolutionary:

The Revolutionary has been inspired by the old stories of communism, socialism, and capitalist alternatives. The Revolutionary feels that the only way forward is to destroy the corporate system and replace it with a system of economic equality.

The Comrade:

Prone to bouts of secretive shopping sprees, the Comrade does feel that something is wrong with the way the world works, but still feels an almost irresistible desire to have the things shown on the TVNet.

The CEO:

An ardent average consumer whose consumptive habits have grown to include whole corporations.

Assorted Characters:

To be played by the same three actors.

George 4.5
News Anchor
Man
Woman
Voice
Computer
Doctor
Pastor
PR Agent
Disciple One
Disciple Two

Author's Notes:

This play was inspired by several books such as *The Case Against the Global Economy, In the Absence of the Sacred, When Corporations Rule the World, Affluenza, Consuming Desires, No Logo* and *Culture Jam*. The play is also inspired by such films as *It Happened One Night, The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, Arsenic and Old Lace, THX-1138, Logan's Run, Sleeper, Network, and Atomic Café*. The play is intended as a satire, and tries to expand upon the ideas found in the magazine *Adbusters*. For those readers who are interested, I highly recommend going to the *Adbusters* site at www.adbusters.org.

This play is not divided into acts and is intended to be performed without interruption. If that's isn't possible, I suggest stopping the play in the middle of a scene, as though the audience were watching the show at on and had just put the VCR or DVD player on pause.

The cast list is not specific in regards to sex, race, or anything else. This is very intentional. Parts should be cast to create as interesting a performance as possible, using as diverse as cast as possible in terms of gender, race or ethnicity. It should not look like the bland assortments of characters we see in TV.

POP! CULTure\$
The Future® of America ™

SCENE: One
SETTING: Typical Citizen Home

The CITIZEN enters.

CITIZEN: I'm home.

There is silence. The Citizen puts down a briefcase.

CITIZEN: Computer, begin making dinner.

The disembodied voice of the house COMPUTER speaks.

COMPUTER (O.S.): What would you like for dinner?

CITIZEN: The Usual™.

COMPUTER (O.S.): My inventory indicates that the ingredients for The Usual™ are not present. I can easily order the usual for delivery from McFood™. McFood™ is Good Food®.

CITIZEN: I hate fast food.

COMPUTER: Fast Food is Good Food™, and Good Food is Good for You™.

CITIZEN: Fine. Whatever.

COMPUTER: The order has been placed and the sum one hundred-twenty-six credits has been deducted from your account. Your meal will arrive in two hours or Your Money Back, Guaranteed®. Guarantee void in states where not applicable.

CITIZEN: Thank you.

COMPUTER: You are welcome.

CITIZEN: Computer?

COMPUTER: I am at your service.

CITIZEN: I'm just curious...

COMPUTER: Curiosity is the first step toward purchasing empowerment.

CITIZEN: Yes. I'm curious as to what states the McFood™ guarantee is applicable in.

COMPUTER: State law prohibits the application of guarantees for food, material products, and customer services in all states except South Dakota, where similar legislation is pending.

CITIZEN: Thank you.

COMPUTER: I am happy to have been of service. I am instructed to remind you that you are scheduled for a Buying Session™ at 8pm this evening.

CITIZEN: Great.

The SPOUSE enters.

SPOUSE: I'm home.

The Citizen gives the Spouse a perfunctory kiss.

CITIZEN: How was your day?

SPOUSE: Awful. Did you hear the rumor?

CITIZEN: What rumor?

SPOUSE: Mega Corp. is thinking about merging with Bank of Everything.

CITIZEN: That would leave just four companies. Why would they do that?

SPOUSE: Something about increasing profit margins through consolidation of resources.

CITIZEN: Did they say how many jobs they're cutting?

SPOUSE: There hasn't been an official announcement yet. Did you make dinner?

CITIZEN: I ordered from McFood™.

SPOUSE: That's fine. Fast Food is Good Food™.

CITIZEN: Did you know that the two hour guarantee only applies in South Dakota?

SPOUSE: That doesn't surprise me. They're so backwards in that state.

CITIZEN: But what's the point of having a guarantee that can't be enforced?

SPOUSE: How can you get to be a vice president of advertising without knowing anything about marketing?

CITIZEN: Because there are five thousand presidents of advertising.

SPOUSE: Well, take it from a vice president of marketing, it makes perfect sense. You need a guarantee to give the customer a sense of product worth. Research shows that products with guarantees sell better than those without. But guarantees inhibit profits when they are acted on by consumers, so in an effort to keep the companies to be more competitive, the state legislatures passed laws voiding the application of guarantees.

CITIZEN: Why not a federal law?

SPOUSE: Oh, this was ages ago, when it was harder for lawmakers to pass really proactive laws to protect companies from their own worst policies. Really, if we don't protect the corporations, who will.

CITIZEN: Right.

SPOUSE: The Only Good Corporation is a Profitable Corporation™.

CITIZEN: And Profits Make the World Go 'Round™.

SPOUSE: Exactly.

CITIZEN: But so do consumers.

SPOUSE: Consumers Make All the Difference™. If Your Not a Consumer, You're Part of the Problem, Not the Solution™.

CITIZEN: Then shouldn't we do our part to increase the consumer base.

SPOUSE: Not this again. I thought we came to an understanding about this.

CITIZEN: We did, but I don't understand our understanding. I've been thinking about it a lot lately. I think it's what we need.

SPOUSE: We can't afford it.

CITIZEN: I was reading just the other day about how the company was going to lower the Genetic Tariffs® to allow more couples to have children.

SPOUSE They're always saying that.

CITIZEN: It's a long-term plan to increase the consumer base. We could be part of the solution.

SPOUSE: I'm not going to do it.

CITIZEN: Why not?

SPOUSE: Look, we each pay enough just to have a company assigned spouse, if I was going to have a child, I'd want to have it with the best genetically available material, and I can't afford that and the Genetic Tariffs®.

CITIZEN: My genetic background is perfectly acceptable.

SPOUSE: Acceptable, but not Exemplary. Exemplary Genes Make Exemplary Consumers®.

CITIZEN: We can rent the genes. The prices at the Common Gene Pool® are very reasonable.

SPOUSE: Common Genes are for Common Consumers™. How would that look on my resume? "Raised Common Consumer." You don't get promoted with children like that.

CITIZEN: We could go to Genes are Us™, they're the best designer boutique.

SPOUSE: Just another senseless expense. Do the math. It would be cheaper for me to go back to the company and ask for another mate.

CITIZEN: You'd do that?

SPOUSE: If that's what I really wanted, what else could I do?

CITIZEN: Can't you see how much this means to me?

SPOUSE: You're just being selfish. You want a child for you, not for the company.

CITIZEN: People used to have children for themselves all the time.

SPOUSE: And that was inefficient. Efficiency Breeds Success™, and while it's obvious that you have lost your Consumer Core®, I want to be successful. I'll have children at the right time, and when I do, they'll have the highest consumer ratings in the company.

CITIZEN: But it won't be with me?

SPOUSE: How could you ask me to do that to my career? You are so selfish sometimes. I'm going to my Buying Session™. Let me know when dinner arrives.

The Spouse exits, leaving the Citizen alone.

SCENE: Two
SETTING: Typical Citizen Home

The Citizen Enters

CITIZEN: Computer, load the doctor program.

COMPUTER (O.S.): Doctor program running.

CITIZEN: I need to speak to a psychologist.

COMPUTER (O.S.): I am required to inform you that you have already exceeded the one hour a year time limit for psychiatric consultation allowed by the Health Marketing Operator assigned by your company Inc.com.

CITIZEN: I'm aware. Deduct the charges from my account. Just let me speak to the doctor.

COMPUTER (O.S.): Billing will commence immediately, charged by the quarter-minute.

The DOCTOR appears bathed in hot white light.

DOCTOR: How may I help you Consumer?

CITIZEN: I'm feeling... I don't know.

DOCTOR: Could you clarify that feeling please?

CITIZEN: Lately I've been feeling like I don't fit in.

DOCTOR: How do you not fit in?

CITIZEN: I feel like I don't belong. Like everyone is living a life that I don't want to live.

DOCTOR: And how does this make you feel?

CITIZEN: Angry.

DOCTOR: You're feeling depressed, yes.

CITIZEN: I'm not depressed, I'm angry.

DOCTOR: Depression is common among people who don't consume enough.

CITIZEN: I'm not depressed.

DOCTOR: What did you buy today?

CITIZEN: I didn't buy anything today. I skipped my Buying Session™.

DOCTOR: Research has shown that Purchasing Brings Pleasure™.

CITIZEN: I don't want to buy anything.

DOCTOR: Buying Brings Happiness™. The More You Buy, the more Happiness You Buy™.

CITIZEN: Buying things isn't bringing me happiness anymore.

DOCTOR: You're depressed.

CITIZEN: I'm not depressed. I'm mad.

DOCTOR: Madness is a form of depression.

CITIZEN: I just want to live another life.

DOCTOR: I'm going to proscribe you ProzoCom™.

CITIZEN: I don't need drugs.

DOCTOR: ProzoCom™ is a Wonder of Modern Medicine™.

CITIZEN: It just makes you feel so empty that you want to buy things. I've seen people on it. Everybody is on it.

DOCTOR: Six Billion Consumers Can't Be Wrong™.

CITIZEN: I just don't feel like buying things.

DOCTOR: Anti-consumerism is a pathology of the pleasure principle.

CITIZEN: I don't need a drug.

DOCTOR: ProzoCom™ isn't Just A Drug. It's Happiness Through Chemicals™.

CITIZEN: I know, I know, I wrote that ad campaign.

DOCTOR: Then you must see The Truth in Advertising®.

CITIZEN: There is no Truth in Advertising®. It's all about making you want to buy more things.

DOCTOR: Buying Brings Happiness™. The More You Buy, the more Happiness You Buy™.

CITIZEN: You said that already. Computer, stop the doctor program.

The light goes down on the Doctor.

COMPUTER (O.S.): You're account has been billed six hundred and forty-two credits. I am instructed to inform you that this amount will not be reimbursed by the Health Marketing Operator assigned by your company Inc.com.

CITIZEN: Fine.

COMPUTER (O.S.): I am also instructed to inform you that you have been fined one hundred credits for missing your Buying Session™ without rescheduling. This amount has been deducted from your account.

CITIZEN: I don't want to buy anything.

COMPUTER (O.S.): Buying Brings Happiness™. The More You Buy, the more Happiness You Buy™.

CITIZEN: Computer off.

The Citizen sits down as the lights fade.

SCENE: Three
SETTING: Typical Citizen Home

The Spouse is sitting comfortably wearing a pair of thin futuristic goggles.

SPOUSE: Buy it. No, wait, not that one, the blue one. Yes. No. Wait, give me two of them. One in blue and one in red. Main screen. Frivolous Items. Things You Never Use. Follow my eyes. There. That one. In Black. Buy it. Computer, how close am I to my daily quota?

COMPUTER (O.S.): You will still need to spend twenty credits to meet your daily quota. I am instructed to inform you that you have exceeded your daily quota only once in the last two weeks. While you cannot be fined, if you do not exceed your daily quota in the next two days, this information will be added to you Permanent Resume.

SPOUSE: Thank you. Main screen.

The Citizen enters.

CITIZEN: I'm leaving.

SPOUSE: Scan down. Yes, that. Stop. Enlarge. Let me see the color variations.

CITIZEN: Are you listening?

SPOUSE: You're going out. I won't wait up.

CITIZEN: I'm leaving.

SPOUSE: The middle one. Buy it. Next size up. In white. Buy it.

The Citizen takes the goggles from the Spouse.

CITIZEN: Pay attention.

SPOUSE: What the hell! I'm trying to finish my shopping.

CITIZEN: I'm leaving. I'm through. With you.

SPOUSE: What?

CITIZEN: I'll send for anything I want. I won't be back.

SPOUSE: You're kidding?

CITIZEN: I'm leaving now.

SPOUSE: Are you insane?

CITIZEN: No. For the first time I feel like I'm not insane.

SPOUSE: You had to do this with the computer on? You know where this kind of information goes. This will be on my resume by the end of the week!

CITIZEN: I've already declared the partnership bankrupt. The processing will be complete by morning.

SPOUSE: How dare you! You know what this does to my prospects for another mate. You know how much the price goes up when you've been dumped once. The least you could have done is let me declare bankruptcy on you.

CITIZEN: This isn't about your resume or your career or your prospects for a genetically superior mate, this is about me.

SPOUSE: Typical. It's all about selfish little you. I'll tell you this, I won't stand for this kind of treatment. When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Buy Something™. And I can buy a bankruptcy just as easily as you can. If I file now it'll be processed the same day as yours and the two will cancel each other out.

CITIZEN: You don't get it, do you?

SPOUSE: No, you don't get it. You don't get the bankruptcy, I do. My Partner Fee® doesn't go up, yours does.

CITIZEN: I'm leaving.

The Citizen turns to leave.

SPOUSE: I'm going to file a complaint with the Partnering Bureau. This will haunt your resume I guarantee it.

CITIZEN: All guarantees are void in this state.

The Citizen walks out.

SCENE: Four
 SETTING: Press Conference at
 Mega Corp. Offices

THE CEO walks up to a lectern and looks out over the press conference.

THE CEO: Ladies and gentlemen, today is a momentous day; A day that will be remembered to the ends of time. It is a day that strikes a blow for efficiency; a day that raises a banner for mercantile livelihood; a day that sings the success of our consumerist society; and day which shouts the rightness of the corporate way of life. Today is a day we can all be proud of. Why? Because, I am here to announce the merger of the two companies that supply the goods we all enjoy so much. As of today, Mega Corp. and Bank of Everything will officially merge their operations. Henceforth they will be known as Mega Bank of Everything.

This merger will increase the efficiency and thus the profit margins, not only of these two companies, but of the other three remaining companies as well. General Consumption, Ubiquitous Products and Inc.com all stand to gain from this merger. Now, in addition the great news of this merger, I would like to take this opportunity to announce another first in corporate history. This year, the factories of Mega Bank of Everything will begin closing their overseas plants and creating new factories in all of the industrialized nations. As you know, many years ago corporations made a move to overseas countries because of lower labor costs. Now, thanks to Modern Technology™, our factories will be run almost entirely by robot workers, which will be an extraordinary savings not only in the manufacturing of products, but in their distribution as well. A savings that every shareholder will enjoy the benefits of. You know, when I was a child, growing up on my father's estate, he often said to me, "Never take for granted the fact that you were born wealthy. There are a billion people who would trade places with you, and a million who would take your wealth by force. You must always remember that it is a matter of luck or effort. You are either lucky enough to be born into it, or you have to make the effort to acquire it. There is only so much to acquire, and if you don't take it, those other billion people might." Those were sage words to a ten year old, and today, I feel lucky, as the CEO of Mega Corp., to have acquired Bank of Everything.

There is much applause.

SCENE: Five
 SETTING: TVNet Commercial
 Ad for ProzoCom

An advertisement with a MAN, a WOMAN and a VOICE.

VOICE (O.S.): Does something feel wrong in your life?

WOMAN: Something feels wrong in my life.

VOICE (O.S.): Do you find yourself skipping Buying Sessions® for no particular reason?

MAN: For some reason I just don't feel like buying today.

VOICE (O.S.): Do you find yourself lacking a desire for consumption?

WOMAN: Do I really need to buy more things?

VOICE (O.S.): You may be suffering from Consumer Deficit Disorder™, also known as CDD™. It is a chilling disease that can strike any consumer at any time in their life.

MAN: I feel so helpless. I want to buy, but I can't bring myself to do it.

WOMAN: I stare at the product I know I should want, but all I can think about is how much it will cost.

VOICE (O.S.): Fortunately there is a cure for CDD™.

WOMAN: I just want to be like everyone else.

MAN: It's so embarrassing not being able to buy.

VOICE (O.S.): Thanks to the Brilliant People® at Mandatory Pharmacology™, a division of Mega Corp., there is help for people like you.

MAN: I just want my Life™ back.

WOMAN: Life isn't Worth Living if You can't Consume®.

VOICE (O.S.): From the Labs of Mandatory Pharmacology comes ProzoCom®, The Drug of the Future!® ProzoCom® is a mild psychotropic compound that encourages a groundless sense of longing for something indefinable. Normally this is enough to reverse simple cases of CDD™, but luckily for the world, and those with serious CDD™, ProzoCom® has the fortunate side effect of causing immense, even addictive elation when making purchases.

MAN: For the first time in my Life™ buying things is better than sex!

WOMAN: I finally feel whole again.

VOICE (O.S.): Run your doctor program today and request ProzoCom®. You'll Never Feel Better Than When Buying on ProzoCom®™.

MAN: The More I buy...

WOMAN: ... The Better I Feel™!

VOICE (O.S.): ProzoCom®, guaranteed to be addictive,
because; There's No Healthier Addiction than the Addiction
to Buying®!

The Man and Woman smile.

SCENE: Six
SETTING: Ashram of Karmic Konsumerism™

*The Ex-Disciple steps in. The Ex-Disciple bows and then
sits across from the Guru.*

EX-DISCIPLE: My Ego thanks the Guru's Spirit for this
audience.

GURU: The Guru's Spirit is all Spirit, and thus the
Spirit of my Ex-Disciple and the Ego before me.

EX-DISCIPLE: Thanks anyway.

GURU: You're welcome. What can I do for you?

EX-DISCIPLE: I've been thinking about what you said before
I left the Ashram.

GURU: That the Way which can be seen is not the Way™.

EX-DISCIPLE: Yeah.

GURU: What troubles you, My Student?

EX-DISCIPLE: It's just that, well... That's really confusing.

GURU: Insight Comes With Time, Not Desire™.

EX-DISCIPLE: But, I've been thinking, I'm a pretty smart
consumer, and if I can't grasp it, then how will the
average consumer ever get it?

GURU: The average human is to the caterpillar as the
extraordinary human is to the butterfly.

EX-DISCIPLE: What's a butterfly?

GURU: It was an insect. There used to be billions of them before we genetically altered the plants we eat and killed them off.

EX-DISCIPLE: See, that's part of the problem I'm having. Your message is so... Obscure.

GURU: I remember a time when butterflies were like dreams; many colored and bountiful.

EX-DISCIPLE: Yeah, well, that time has passed and we need a new message for the times we live in.

GURU: My message is simple and eternal: True joy comes not from buying things, but from finding inner peace, which cannot be bought, but must be earned.

EX-DISCIPLE: But, you see, the problem with that is, no one wants to work that hard.

GURU: The rewards of releasing our attachments to desires are obvious.

EX-DISCIPLE: No, they're not obvious, because you can't see them unless you've released your attachments to desire.

GURU: They are there for all to see if they are willing.

EX-DISCIPLE: Nobody wants something that everybody can have. That's the first rule of marketing. You make things slightly difficult to obtain, but not so hard that they can't put it on credit. Then you always make sure that there is a newer, fancier model that someone with more credit can get. That's how you get them hooked. You play on their dissatisfaction with what they have and their desire for something they can't describe.

GURU: That something is Spirit, and they can only fulfill that desire, by releasing all other desires.

EX-DISCIPLE: You don't get what I'm saying, do you?

GURU: You want me to market and sell my spiritual philosophy of Karmic Konsumption™ in graduated levels of

price and style, the most expensive being for the rich elite and the most reasonable for the middle class, and the cheapest for the poor.

EX-DISCIPLE: Exactly!

GURU: You want me to sell Spirituality like it was clothes or cars, letting the rich get the best product on the market while the poor buy recycled metaphysics and second hand wisdom.

EX-DISCIPLE: It's the only way to change the world.

GURU: The world can be changed only by changing the people in it.

EX-DISCIPLE: But the people don't want to change. They've built a world on base animal desire and they don't know anything else.

GURU: It is my duty to show them another Path™.

EX-DISCIPLE: They don't want another Path™. Can't you see that? They have never worked so hard, for so little, with so much danger all around them, but they continue to do exactly the things which will only make them need to work harder, which only make the rewards smaller, and the world more dangerous.

GURU: You cannot sell spiritual enlightenment.

EX-DISCIPLE: Buddhist temples do it all the time now. Plop down your money and you get a Certificate of Enlightenment@.

GURU: That's why I left the Temple. Everything has become for sale. But you cannot buy Spirit.

EX-DISCIPLE: Why not? They buy everything else. They want to buy things. They're programmed since birth to buy things. They're on drugs that only let them feel good when they buy things, so why not have them buying spirituality instead of physical products whose creation degrades and destroys the environment. Destroys nature. If Nature is Spirit and Spirit is Consciousness, and Consciousness is Time and Time is Money, then Nature is Money, and if Nature is Money then Spirit is Money, and if it's Money you can

make a market for it, because all things are Money, and it's not a matter of whether or not you buy, but what you buy, and buying ideas, no matter how powerful or silly, will always be better for the world than buying more cars, or more clothes, or more computers, or more cosmetics, more anything.

GURU: Dollars for Dharma™.

EX-DISCIPLE: That's great. That could be the ad campaign. Consumerism Consuming Itself!™

GURU: I can't do it.

EX-DISCIPLE: Why not?

The Guru stares down the Ex-Disciple

GURU: The Way that can be sold, is not the Way™.

The Ex-Disciple frowns.

SCENE: Seven
SETTING: Typical Spouse Home

The Spouse enters, sits down heavily, and sighs.

SPOUSE: Computer.

COMPUTER: I am at your service.

SPOUSE: Activate the doctor program.

COMPUTER: Doctor program running.

SPOUSE: I need to speak to...

COMPUTER: Doctor program running.

SPOUSE: I need to talk to, um...

COMPUTER: If you tell me the problem I can run the appropriate practitioner.

SPOUSE: I'm just not feeling myself.

COMPUTER: Psychologist program activated.

The Doctor appears bathed in white light.

DOCTOR: What seems to be the matter?

SPOUSE: I can't quite put my finger on it, but something seems wrong.

DOCTOR: What seems wrong?

SPOUSE: Well, for one, I feel this strange emptiness.

DOCTOR: A feeling of emptiness is common among people with Consumer Deficit Disorder.™

SPOUSE: I do not have a disorder. People with disorders don't get to the position that I hold.

DOCTOR: What did you buy today?

SPOUSE: I don't remember.

DOCTOR: Did you skip your buying session?

SPOUSE: No. I just didn't pay attention to what I was buying.

DOCTOR: Buying Brings Happiness™.

SPOUSE: It usually makes me happy, but today it just made me...

DOCTOR: Sad?

SPOUSE: Yeah, a little.

DOCTOR: You're depressed.

SPOUSE: I'm not depressed.

DOCTOR: You said you were sad about shopping.

SPOUSE: You tricked me into saying that and it'll be obvious to the Consumption Adjustment Advisor who reads these records.

DOCTOR: Shopping is a Sure Cure for Depression™. Maybe you should try another buying session.

SPOUSE: I am not depressed. There has never been a single incidence of verifiable depression on my resume and I'm not about to start now.

DOCTOR: I'm going to prescribe you ProzoCom™.

SPOUSE: Why do I need that?

DOCTOR: Because Purchasing Brings Empowerment.™

SPOUSE: But I am empowered. I've never missed a single Buying Session™.

DOCTOR: You said you were feeling an emptiness, yes?

SPOUSE: But I'm still buying.

DOCTOR: You are not buying because of your emptiness, but in spite of it. You are willing yourself to buy.

SPOUSE: Does that matter?

DOCTOR: ProzoCom™ will help create a feeling of emptiness greater than the emptiness you're feeling now, and this new emptiness can only be filled through consumption.

SPOUSE: So, I'll be able to make myself feel better?

DOCTOR: The More You Buy, the Better You'll Feel.™

SPOUSE: And this won't go on my resume?

DOCTOR: The use of ProzoCom™ is never placed on a employee's resume.

SPOUSE: But, Doctor, why am I feeling this emptiness?

DOCTOR: You don't need to know why you're feeling this way, you just need to feel better. And Nothing Feels Better than Buying.™

SPOUSE: You see, I thought maybe it was because my corporate mate left. I thought maybe I was missing having

someone around. Missing the conversation. The companionship. The warmth of another human's touch.

DOCTOR: I'm going to double your dosage, and recommend you for the Immediate Mate Replacement Program.

SPOUSE: Thanks. That's such a relief. Doctor program off.

The Doctor fades out.

SCENE: Eight
SETTING: Ashram of Karmic Konsumerism™

The Disciple is sitting in the lotus position meditating when the Citizen enters.

CITIZEN: Excuse me.

The Disciple is silent.

CITIZEN: Excuse me.

The Disciple's eyes remain closed.

DISCIPLER: I'm meditating.

CITIZEN: Oh, is that what you're doing?

DISCIPLER: Yes. It's much easier to do when people aren't talking to you.

CITIZEN: I have a question.

DISCIPLER: Wouldn't it make sense to ask someone else? Someone who wasn't meditating?

CITIZEN: Yes. I suppose so. But it looks like everyone is meditating.

DISCIPLER: Everyone?

CITIZEN: Yes. That doesn't seem very efficient, does it?

DISCIPLER: We meditate together to build a sense of community. A spiritual solidarity.

CITIZEN: That sounds nice.

DISCIPLER: It would be if I were meditating.

CITIZEN: I thought you were meditating.

DISCIPLER: I can't meditate while I'm talking to someone. Some of the more advanced disciples can, but I can't. I need to have complete silence. I find it very hard to concentrate when people are talking to me.

CITIZEN: Well then, if you're not meditating, would you mind if I asked you a few questions?

The Disciple's eyes open and stare at the Citizen.

DISCIPLER: What would you like to know?

CITIZEN: Well, this may seem a little obvious, given the general drift of our conversation, but just what is meditation?

DISCIPLER: You don't know what meditation is?

CITIZEN: Is it like medication? Do you need a prescription, or is it something you can get over the counter?

DISCIPLER: It's not a thing, it's a process.

CITIZEN: Like a practical application?

DISCIPLER: Yes, exactly.

CITIZEN: So how much is the licensing fee?

DISCIPLER: There is no fee.

CITIZEN: It's not patented?

DISCIPLER: No.

CITIZEN: All processes are patented.

DISCIPLER: This one has been around for thousands of years.

CITIZEN: Well, so has procreation, but they patented that.

DISCIPLER: That's different.

CITIZEN: It doesn't seem like very good business sense.

DISCIPLER: That's the whole point. My Guru teaches that we need to live life with a spiritual sense not a business sense.

CITIZEN: And this meditation has something to do with obtaining this spiritual sense.

DISCIPLER: Yes, exactly.

CITIZEN: Then what kind of process is it?

DISCIPLER: Meditation is the process of stilling the mind, quieting the stream of internal mental chatter, so that we can become aware of, and live in, the present.

CITIZEN: So, I do this meditation thing and what happens?

DISCIPLER: You start by becoming aware of your breathing, by counting your breaths.

CITIZEN: That doesn't seem very hard.

DISCIPLER: It isn't, until your mind starts to wander. Which happens constantly. Then you have to bring your mind back to focus on your breathing.

CITIZEN: And if I do this breathing thing, I'll learn how to live in the present?

DISCIPLER: Among other things, yes.

CITIZEN: And by learning to live in the present, I'll obtain this spiritual sense?

DISCIPLER: Yes.

CITIZEN: And this spiritual sense will make it clear to me how to live my life?

DISCIPLER: Exactly.

CITIZEN: So, if you don't mind my asking, and far be it from me to ask for customer testimonials from a process that isn't even patented, but how's it working for you?

DISCIPLER: Well... I... It's ah... It's not as simple as popping a pill.

CITIZEN: Have you thought about trying to market it in pill form?

DISCIPLER: It can't work that way.

CITIZEN: But does it work at all?

DISCIPLER: It works for a great number of people.

CITIZEN: But it isn't working for you?

DISCIPLER: I'm in a rough spot. My Guru calls it the Dark Night of the Soul.™

CITIZEN: That's not a very attractive advertising phrase. I could suggest some alternatives. I know a lot about advertising.

DISCIPLER: It's a traditional name for what I'm going through. It's part of the process.

CITIZEN: So this process is more complicated than just breathing?

DISCIPLER: Very much so.

CITIZEN: Complicated processes are hard to sell to the average consumer.

DISCIPLER: We're well aware of that.

CITIZEN: And I hope you don't take any offence at this, but it might be a good idea to get a spokesperson for whom the process is actually working.

DISCIPLER: I didn't say it wasn't working, I'm just in a rough patch.

CITIZEN: What's so rough about it?

DISCIPLE: It's not that I question the process, the Path™, but I just don't know how long it will take to work. It could take the rest of my life. My Guru even says that it's a process that never ends. How am I supposed to chart my progress with a process that doesn't end? How do I know if I'm living a better life, if I know that there is a better life somewhere further along in the process?

CITIZEN: I thought the whole point of the process was to live in the moment.

DISCIPLE: Well, yes, but...

CITIZEN: Because you seem to be living in the future.

DISCIPLE: That's... That's very insightful.

CITIZEN: Thank you. I have a degree in process management.

DISCIPLE: Are you interested in the meditation process and the teachings of my Guru?

CITIZEN: Yes. How do I obtain an audience with the Guru?

DISCIPLE: I think I can arrange that for you.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Nine
SETTING: Ashram of Karmic Konsumerism™

The Guru is looking through a kaleidoscope when the Disciple enters with the Citizen.

DISCIPLE: Pardon, my Ego for disturbing your Spirit, but the Ego I was telling your Ephemeralness about is awaiting your audience.

GURU: Thank you, my Disciple. Your bodies may be seated.

The Disciple and the Citizen sit.

GURU: Take a look at this.

The Guru hands the Citizen the kaleidoscope. The Citizen looks through it.

CITIZEN: It's very beautiful.

GURU: And a beautiful metaphor as well.

CITIZEN: I thought it was a kaleidoscope.

DISCIPLE: The Guru means that the kaleidoscope is a metaphor.

CITIZEN: Ah. I see.

GURU: Do you?

CITIZEN: Not really, no, but I didn't want to be rude.

GURU: Maybe my Disciple could be so kind as to explain it to you.

DISCIPLE: You see the beautiful images are an illusion. They are merely colored glass seen through a prism. It does not mean that the images you see in your brain are not beautiful, but they are not real.

CITIZEN: I see.

GURU: Do you?

CITIZEN: Well... No, not really. I was hoping you wouldn't press me on it.

GURU: It is my role to press those who come to me for greater understanding. Tell me, what do you think is the meaning of this metaphor?

CITIZEN: That the world we think we see is not really the world that is.

GURU: Good. Now do you understand?

CITIZEN: I think so. But if you extend that metaphor of the kaleidoscope as the world, then you must concede that the kaleidoscope, and hence the world, is inert without light, because it is the light that gives the whole apparatus it's possibility of beauty.

GURU: Very astute. And what is the light in this metaphor?

CITIZEN: Well, now there you've got me. I was just following the train of logic to the station.

GURU: My Disciple?

DISCIPLE: The light is Spirit™.

GURU: Yes.

CITIZEN: Oh. I see.

GURU: Do you?

CITIZEN: I would think it was obvious by now that I don't really mean that when I say it.

GURU: What do you mean?

CITIZEN: That I don't understand what Spirit™ is.

GURU: My Disciple will explain.

DISCIPLE: Spirit™ is the Ground of All Being™.

CITIZEN: I see.

GURU: By which you mean?

CITIZEN: I mean I don't know what you mean.

DISCIPLE: All things are Spirit™ and Spirit™ is all things.

CITIZEN: Right.

GURU: Try again.

DISCIPLE: Spirit™ is the essence from which the entire cosmos manifests.

CITIZEN: Naturally.

DISCIPLE: You still don't understand, do you?

CITIZEN: I'm sorry. In advertising you never let on that you don't know what the people from production are talking about. It's a habitual response now.

GURU: Think of it this way; everything you see, everything you don't see, every thought and emotion, every person, animal, plant, rock, drop of water, every planet, every star in the whole universe is but one expression of the inexpressible. All things, the entirety of eternity is not separate, but is whole, seamless, singular. All of that, which is not all, but one, is Spirit™.

CITIZEN: Ah. I get it now.

DISCIPLE: Really?

CITIZEN: Really.

GURU: You're sure?

CITIZEN: This time I get it.

GURU: You're not just bluffing like this was a marketing meeting?

CITIZEN: No. I get it.

GURU: Prove it.

CITIZEN: You are not you.

DISCIPLE: You're bluffing.

CITIZEN: No. There is no you. Maybe in some limited sense, there is, because you certainly think there is, but there really is no you. There's no me. There simply is.

GURU: Very impressive. Tell me, how did you realize this so easily?

CITIZEN: The kaleidoscope. For the beauty to exist, there needs to be light, a kaleidoscope, and someone to look through it. They aren't separate.

GURU: Very good.

CITIZEN: Thank you. I was always good with metaphors. Can't come up with a good simile to save my life, but they aren't much good for advertising anyway.

GURU: Now, tell me, do you believe it?

CITIZEN: Advertising? Never believe advertising. It's just a fancy word for lying with disdain.

GURU: No. What you said about Spirit™.

CITIZEN: Of course.

GURU: Really?

CITIZEN: No. Sorry. I can't stop myself. I'd like to believe it, but it just doesn't make sense to me.

GURU: Belief Comes From Knowledge.™ It is something you must apprehend with your own being.

CITIZEN: How do I do that?

GURU: I can show you, but you must join me on the Path®.

CITIZEN: The Path®?

DISCIPLE: The process.

CITIZEN: Oh. Engage in the process. Yes, I think I'd like to do that.

GURU: Then I will accept you as one of my disciples.

CITIZEN: That's very kind of you. What sort of rates are we talking about?

DISCIPLE: It's free.

CITIZEN: Free? Let me get this straight, you have a process for helping people live more fulfilling lives and you haven't patented it, and you don't charge to use it?

GURU: To charge money to those on the Path® would be to ignore the principles of Karma and the oneness of Spirit™.

CITIZEN: Well, if you don't mind my asking, how does that pay the rent?

DISCIPLE: The disciples make voluntary contributions to the ashram to pay for necessities.

GURU: And we have a pretty strong stock portfolio.

CITIZEN: Oh, for a minute there I thought you were some kind of cult.

GURU: No. We're just like any other business, except that we don't need to make a profit.

CITIZEN: I thought they banned nonprofit organizations.

DISCIPLE: We still have to pay taxes.

CITIZEN: Well, now that corporations don't, I suppose that makes sense.

GURU: As your first step on the Path®, I must ask a favor of you.

CITIZEN: A trade?

DISCIPLE: Yes. The Guru always asks a favor of the new disciple in return for instruction.

CITIZEN: Like bartering.

GURU: Something like that, yes. Your first task as a disciple will be to find a cell of the anti-consumerist movement and attend a meeting. Then you are to report back to me.

CITIZEN: Are you involved with the anti-consumerist movement?

GURU: We believe in many of the same things, but I fear that they will resort to violence to accomplish their goals. We on the Path® have sworn never to use violence.

CITIZEN: Why me?

GURU: Because they know who all of our disciples are.

DISCIPLE: And we suspect that they have spies among us.

CITIZEN: So I would become your spy?

GURU: In a manner of speaking.

CITIZEN: Is that dangerous?

GURU: Not at all.

CITIZEN: Really?

GURU: No. Actually it's very dangerous. But you'll be safe, because my Disciple will be watching over you every step of the way.

DISCIPLE: I will?

GURU: Yes. You will.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Ten
 SETTING: Press Conference at
 General Consumption Inc.

The CEO steps up to the lectern.

THE CEO: Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming today. I'm sure the announcement I'm about to make will come as no surprise to you as the rumor has been on the Net for the last few hours. But, to make it official; as of tomorrow, the general operations and finances of this firm, Mega Bank of Everything, and the firm of Ubiquitous Products will be officially merged. This action is being taken to stabilize the market dynamics in the wake of the merger of Inc.Com and General Consumption. We feel that this is the only way for our companies to remain competitive and give the consumers the continued level of service and innovation that they have come to expect. At this time I'll answer the questions prepared by our public relations department.

PR AGENT: What do you say to the charges that this merger, which leaves only two primary corporations, constitutes a monopoly?

THE CEO: Shear idiocy. The root word of monopoly is mono, which means one, and clearly there are now two companies. Next question.

PR AGENT: Are there any layoffs planned in conjunction with this merger?

THE CEO: We've found that layoffs tend to give the public a negative image of the company and of mergers in general, and since we're not obligated to talk about them, we've decided not to. The only people who have a right to know about the layoffs are the people who get laid off. And trust me, they'll find out soon enough. Next question.

PR AGENT: What do you have to say to the critics who claim that corporate mergers reduce competition and undermine the basic philosophic and economic principles of capitalism.

THE CEO: Balderdash. Look it doesn't take a genius to see that if you have ten people all fighting over the apples in a basket and if you get rid of eight of them you haven't reduced the competition, you've reduced the number of competitors. The competition is actually raised to a higher level. It becomes winner takes all.

PR AGENT: And how would you say that "winner takes all" attitude applies to the merger you've announced today.

THE CEO: Simple. I hope we win. Anything else?

PR AGENT: That's all the questions the legal department gave us.

THE CEO: Thank you all.

The lights fade.

SCENE:	Eleven
SETTING:	TVNet Commercial Ad for Corporate Government

TVNet advertisement with a MAN and WOMAN and VOICE over.

VOICE (O.S.): This month proposition 99 goes to the voters.

MAN: I never vote in elections anymore.

WOMAN: I'm not even registered to vote.

VOICE (O.S.): That's why proposition 99 is on the ballot.

MAN: What good does voting do?

WOMAN: It's always the same politicians and the same proposals.

VOICE (O.S.): Not this time. Proposal 99 is different.

MAN: What we need is a new system.

WOMAN: Democracy is just too boring to ever work.

VOICE (O.S.): Proposition 99 would establish a new way of running government.

MAN: We need something that people can believe in.

WOMAN: We need a system where it's easy to vote.

VOICE (O.S.): Proposition 99 would create the simplest most efficient system of democracy ever.

MAN: We need a system that doesn't require people to register in advance.

WOMAN: We need a system that lets people vote from their homes on more than one single day.

VOICE (O.S.): Proposition 99 would do all this and more. Under proposition 99 your representatives in government would no longer be directly elected in open polls, but would instead be assigned to positions based on market research and the purchasing patterns of consumers. It has long been said that a representative's vote could too easily be swayed by the desires of corporations, but corporations are controlled by consumer buying patterns. Every time you make a purchase, you make a vote for how your government will act. By eliminating the time-consuming and wasteful system of electoral representation, we can make way for a new system of Corporate Democracy®.

MAN: One Purchase One Vote®.

WOMAN: Not government by the people, but People Buying the Government®.

VOICE (O.S.): Vote yes on Proposition 99 and make Corporate Democracy® the Future® of America™.

The and Man and Woman smile.

SCENE: Twelve
SETTING: Typical Citizen Home

The Spouse is in the middle of a Buying Session.

SPOUSE: That one. And that one. Page down. On the left. The blue one. Buy it. And in black. And..

The door bell rings.

SPOUSE: Purchase on automatic. Computer, open the door.

The Spouse removes the goggles and looks up to see the Ex-Disciple enter. The Spouse is immediately smitten with the Ex-Disciple, who is also very attracted to the Spouse.

SPOUSE: Oh. Come in. Come in. I apologize, I was in the middle of something. I wasn't expecting you so soon.

EX-DISCIPLE: You were expecting me?

SPOUSE: Well, yes, of course. As I said, not so soon, but I must say I'm glad to see you.

EX-DISCIPLE: Well, thank you. I should have known you'd be expecting me. I'd heard you were very intuitive.

SPOUSE: Well, it doesn't say that on my resume, but I try. Can I get you something to drink?

EX-DISCIPLE: No, I'm fine.

SPOUSE: That's good. When my mate left I drank all the good stuff?

EX-DISCIPLE: You must have been very upset. I'm sorry to hear that.

SPOUSE: Well, it's all for the best. We weren't really compatible.

EX-DISCIPLE: It's so hard to find a compatible mate these days.

SPOUSE: Well, let's hope it's not that hard.

EX-DISCIPLE: The computers rarely match you up with someone you really find attractive.

SPOUSE: That couldn't have been more true with my last mate.

EX-DISCIPLE: I think sexual attraction is very underrated in their mating algorithms.

SPOUSE: I so agree.

EX-DISCIPLE: That ephemeral spark between two people can be so important.

SPOUSE: Well, there's always pills...

EX-DISCIPLE: But pills are so clinical, don't you think.

SPOUSE: Well, they say; Chemical Attraction is All About the Chemicals.™

EX-DISCIPLE: Yes, but don't you find that the experience is much purer when the chemicals are coming from your own body and not a little pill.

SPOUSE: To be honest, I don't know. I've always used the Sexual Supplements®.

EX-DISCIPLE: Always. You mean you haven't... Not even once...

SPOUSE: Well, there was someone once who made me feel... But I was assigned to someone else before I could...

EX-DISCIPLE: That's so sad.

SPOUSE: I shopped a lot after that.

EX-DISCIPLE: I'm sorry to be prying into your personal life.

SPOUSE: It's strange, but I don't seem to mind you asking.

EX-DISCIPLE: So, when your mate left, is that when it began?

SPOUSE: Began?

EX-DISCIPLE: Your turn around.

SPOUSE Oh, you mean the buying.

EX-DISCIPLE: Yes.

SPOUSE: I'd hoped that wouldn't make it into my file, but yes, it started after my previous mate left.

EX-DISCIPLE: Was it hard?

SPOUSE: At first, yes. I had no idea what was happening. There was this emptiness that I couldn't explain.

EX-DISCIPLE: Ah, the emptiness. The sense of the great void.

SPOUSE: Yes, exactly.

EX-DISCIPLE: Your experience was far more profound than I had expected.

SPOUSE: Well, it wasn't easy. Fortunately I found a way out.

EX-DISCIPLE: Really. On your own. Without anyone's guidance?

SPOUSE: Well, I had the help of the Doctor program. The Doctor recommended it.

EX-DISCIPLE: The doctor?

SPOUSE: Apparently everyone is taking it these days.

EX-DISCIPLE: I must be confused. Taking what?

SPOUSE: ProzoCom™.

EX-DISCIPLE: You're taking ProzoCom™?

SPOUSE: Naturally.

EX-DISCIPLE: But what on Earth for?

SPOUSE: Well, to replace that nameless sense of emptiness with one that has a name and that I can make go away by shopping.

EX-DISCIPLE: Whatever would you do that for? That greater emptiness was your strength.

SPOUSE: But that emptiness felt awful and I didn't know how to make it go away.

EX-DISCIPLE: You don't want it to go away.

SPOUSE: How could I go on with my life if I was feeling that way?

EX-DISCIPLE: That's just it. You wouldn't have to. You could go on with a new life.

SPOUSE: A life without buying?

EX-DISCIPLE: No, you don't have to stop buying. You just buy things that have true meaning.

SPOUSE: I never thought of that.

EX-DISCIPLE: I'm glad I caught up to you before you joined the Movement.

SPOUSE: What movement?

EX-DISCIPLE: The anti-consumerist movement.

SPOUSE: Why would anyone join those lunatics?

EX-DISCIPLE: I thought the Guru sent you to join them.

SPOUSE: What Guru?

EX-DISCIPLE: The leader of the Karmic Konsumerism™ movement.

SPOUSE: Do you know what that would do to my resume?
Speaking of which, I haven't even seen your resume.

EX-DISCIPLE: I don't have a resume.

SPOUSE: How can you not have a resume?

EX-DISCIPLE: I live outside the corporate system.

SPOUSE: Just what sort of people are the IMRP sending out
these days?

EX-DISCIPLE: The IMRP?

SPOUSE: The Immediate Mate Replacement Program®.

EX-DISCIPLE: I've made a serious mistake.

SPOUSE: You're not from the IMRP?

EX-DISCIPLE: I should be going now.

SPOUSE: What are you doing here?

EX-DISCIPLE: I apologize. I thought you were your mate. I
came to see your mate because I heard through the grapevine
that my ex-guru had sent your mate to spy on a anti-
consumerist revolutionary.

SPOUSE: That's absurd.

EX-DISCIPLE: I should leave.

SPOUSE: So, you're not my new mate?

EX-DISCIPLE: Regrettably, no.

SPOUSE: But, I...

EX-DISCIPLE: I should go. It's late and I need to find a
place to sleep.

SPOUSE: You don't have a housing unit.

EX-DISCIPLE: I told you, I live outside the corporate
system.

SPOUSE: Where will you go?

EX-DISCIPLE: There are places. It's not that bad.

SPOUSE: You could... I mean, I have... Space.

EX-DISCIPLE: I couldn't impose.

SPOUSE: You wouldn't be imposing, I'd be inviting you.

EX-DISCIPLE: It might look bad on your resume.

SPOUSE: I'll keep the computer off. No one needs to know.

EX-DISCIPLE: That's very kind of you. It would only be for the night.

SPOUSE: You could stay longer.

EX-DISCIPLE: It might be dangerous for you.

SPOUSE: Do you think so?

EX-DISCIPLE: Possibly.

SPOUSE: Did you mean what you said?

EX-DISCIPLE: About...?

SPOUSE: Chemicals.

EX-DISCIPLE: You mean, ProzoCom?

SPOUSE: No. The other kind.

EX-DISCIPLE: Well... Yes.

SPOUSE: Hmm.

The lights fade on the Spouse and the Ex-Disciple

SCENE: Thirteen
SETTING: Ubiquitous Coffee Shop

The Comrade is sitting alone and sipping a mocha consumption® when the Citizen enters holding a cup of tea.

CITIZEN: Do you mind if I sit here?

COMRADE: There are other empty seats.

CITIZEN: But none of them are empty next to you.

COMRADE: Well, then, by all means, please have a seat.

The Citizen sits down and sips at the tea.

CITIZEN: So...

COMRADE: So?

CITIZEN: Yes...

COMRADE: Yes?

CITIZEN: What I mean to say...

COMRADE: You're trying to say something?

CITIZEN: Well...

COMRADE: I see...

CITIZEN: Do you?

COMRADE: Not really. I just thought I'd try to play along.

CITIZEN: Ah...

COMRADE: Well said.

CITIZEN: I love old movies.

COMRADE: Me too.

CITIZEN: Especially those by the MARX Brothers.

COMRADE: Haven't head of them. Are they one of those boy bands?

CITIZEN: No.

COMRADE: I never got into the boy bands.

CITIZEN: Pardon me for being blunt, but isn't that the password?

COMRADE: Isn't what the password?

CITIZEN: The Marx Brothers.

COMRADE: Who would make a boy band the password?

CITIZEN: They're not a boy band and I was told that the Marx Brothers was the new password.

COMRADE: Password for what?

CITIZEN: You don't know?

COMRADE: Should I?

CITIZEN: I'm very sorry. I've made a mistake. I thought you were someone else.

COMRADE: Maybe I'm not.

CITIZEN: What do you mean?

COMRADE: Maybe I'm who you think I am, but maybe you don't have the right password.

CITIZEN: Maybe you have an old password.

COMRADE: Oh. I hadn't thought of that.

CITIZEN: It's quite possible.

COMRADE: Yes, I suppose it is. What cell are you from?

CITIZEN: I was instructed never to say.

COMRADE: Oh. Oh, that's good. Security and what not.

CITIZEN: Yes.

COMRADE: Well, assuming that I am you who think I am and that you have the new password and I'm just behind on things, which wouldn't be unusual, what can I do for you?

CITIZEN: I need to see... Well, you know who.

COMRADE: What could you possibly need to see "you know who" for?

CITIZEN: I work very high up in Inc.com. I can supply information.

COMRADE: Well, that's wonderful. But you don't need to see "you know who" to do that. You should report to your cell leader.

CITIZEN: It's too big a risk. With information like this I could get in real trouble. I need to know who I'm really working for. I need to know that this is all for real.

COMRADE: I assure you this is for real.

CITIZEN: There are rumors.

COMRADE: Rumors?

CITIZEN: Yes. Rumors that this is all just a sting operation by the Corporate Intelligence Agency to round up the subversives.

COMRADE: Oh, good Lord.

CITIZEN: Yes.

COMRADE: You don't think it's a plot do you?

CITIZEN: I don't know.

COMRADE: How devious. How sinister. Oh my God, what have I done. I may have ruined my credit rating.

CITIZEN: I'm not saying it is a plot, I'm just saying that there is a rumor.

COMRADE: Well, you know what they say about rumors.

CITIZEN: What?

COMRADE: I don't know, but I'm sure it's not good. Rumors are never good.

CITIZEN: I just need to see "You know who" to reassure myself that this isn't a plot and that I'm doing the right thing by spying on my company.

COMRADE: Yes, by all means. We both need to see "You Know Who" to make sure this isn't a plot. You wait here. I'll be back.

The Comrade dashes away from the table. After a pause, The Disciple slides up and sits at the table.

DISCIPLE: That was brilliant.

CITIZEN: Thank you. Are you sure you should be here? What if you're seen.

DISCIPLE: We have a few minutes. I just wanted to tell you how brave I think you're being.

CITIZEN: Well, thank you. That's very flattering.

DISCIPLE: It's very dangerous what you're doing.

CITIZEN: I'm trying not to think about it.

DISCIPLE: If they don't believe your story they might kill you.

CITIZEN: Yes, well, Out of Sight, Out of Mind™.

DISCIPLE: And if they do believe you, they'll expect you to spy on the company.

CITIZEN: Hear no Evil, Think no Evil™.

DISCIPLE: And if the company catches you, or the Corporate Intelligence Agency gets wind of things, awful, awful things could happen to you.

CITIZEN: Yes, well...

DISCIPLE: There are rumors that they use torture techniques.

CITIZEN: Torture?!

DISCIPLE: Yes. They got a law passed that says it's okay to torture corporate criminals for information.

CITIZEN: What about drugs? Like truth drugs?

DISCIPLE: They use those after the torture.

CITIZEN: Then what's the point of the torture?

DISCIPLE: They hope it deters people from spying.

CITIZEN: I can see how it would.

DISCIPLE: But it's all rumors still. The law says they can torture you, but they don't have to tell anyone about it. One of those self-policing laws, like the environmental laws they passed.

CITIZEN: I see.

DISCIPLE: So, I just wanted to tell you how much I admire what you're doing. It takes real courage.

CITIZEN: Yes, well, as I said, as long as I don't think about it.

DISCIPLE: I should go. I think I see them coming.

CITIZEN: Well, thanks for stopping by. You've really bolstered my spirits.

The Disciple sneaks away. Moments later the Comrade arrives with the Revolutionary. They both sit at the table. The Comrade has a tall coffee in hand.

REVOLUTIONARY: I understand that you want to see someone.

CITIZEN: That depends. If that someone is the someone I think they are, and someone who can answer my questions, then yes, but if that someone is someone else, then I want to see a different someone.

COMRADE: Who are we talking about?

REVOLUTIONARY: This someone can answer your questions.

CITIZEN: So, you're THE someone?

REVOLUTIONARY: I couldn't say that without knowing which someone you were.

CITIZEN: I'm the someone who is a vice president of advertising for Inc.com.

REVOLUTIONARY: I see.

CITIZEN: So are you the someone I'm looking for?

REVOLUTIONARY: If I'm not that someone, then I'm someone else, but I can answer your questions.

COMRADE: I'm beginning to wonder who I am.

CITIZEN: I guess that'll have to be good enough.

REVOLUTIONARY: What do you need to know?

CITIZEN: Are you for real? Is this movement for real?

COMRADE: Apparently there are rumors.

REVOLUTIONARY: I assure you, both I and the movement are entirely real.

COMRADE: That's reassuring.

CITIZEN: Then you really do want to create a new economic order?

REVOLUTIONARY: We want to eliminate economic hierarchy and promote universal equity.

CITIZEN: For everyone?

REVOLUTIONARY: That's the universal part.

COMRADE: I was wondering what that part meant.

CITIZEN: What about those in power now?

REVOLUTIONARY: What about them?

CITIZEN: What happens to them?

REVOLUTIONARY: The sorts of things that usually happen to those in power when a revolution sweeps them away.

CITIZEN: You're talking about violent revolution?

REVOLUTIONARY: I'm talking about the usual things.

COMRADE: What about the unusual things?

CITIZEN: But you are advocating violence?

REVOLUTIONARY: I'm advocating economic equity. The means of achieving that are up for debate.

The Comrade sips at the coffee.

CITIZEN: So you won't advocate violence?

REVOLUTIONARY: I won't advocate pacifism in the face of injustice.

COMRADE: I don't advocate ordering the decaf. God this tastes awful.

CITIZEN: Then you won't accept responsibility for what you start?

REVOLUTIONARY: Do the people in power now accept responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions?

COMRADE: Good point.

CITIZEN: But aren't you aiming for a higher moral standard?

COMRADE: Also a good point.

REVOLUTIONARY: Economic equality is a higher moral standard.

COMRADE: A very good point.

CITIZEN: But can the ends justify the means?

COMRADE: Ah: Conundrum.

REVOLUTIONARY: They always do. No matter who is doing the justification. The question you have to ask yourself is which world would benefit the most people.

CITIZEN: I guess.

COMRADE: Funny, that's what I said to that question.

REVOLUTIONARY: And you need to ask yourself what you can do to create that world.

COMRADE: I know the world I want; one where you can get good decaf coffee.

CITIZEN: What about the corporations?

REVOLUTIONARY: Corporations are like any other tool; if you don't pay attention to how you use them, they can do you more harm than good. We haven't been paying attention to how we use them and instead we've let the tools use us.

COMRADE: That's why I don't have an electric toothbrush.

CITIZEN: I can see that you're very serious about this, but do you think anyone will take us seriously if we're suggesting a collectivist society without divisions of class?

REVOLUTIONARY: Class division is the problem.

CITIZEN: As much as people rail against class systems, they love them. The only thing they don't like is being on the bottom of them. As long as they're in the middle, and especially if they're near or at the top, they love them.

COMRADE: You know I've noticed that too. I like feeling superior to at least a few people.

REVOLUTIONARY: Class systems go against the very notions of human development. That's why they are so rare in non-monetary societies. Currency brings class.

COMRADE: We could use that as a slogan. "The Revolution Without Class™." No, that doesn't sound right. Maybe we want a classy revolution.

CITIZEN: True, it does, but it's impossible to run a large complex society without a currency system to manage resource distribution. You'll never sell that kind of idea to the people.

REVOLUTIONARY: Well, obviously not. That's why we need a revolution. Speaking of which, my comrade informs me that you have offered to spy on your company for us.

CITIZEN: Well...

COMRADE: That's what you said.

REVOLUTIONARY: On behalf of all the someones that would benefit from such an action I graciously accept your offer.

CITIZEN: I don't know what good it will do.

REVOLUTIONARY: Plenty. With the mergers taking place, all the information we can get will be helpful.

CITIZEN: I'm just a vice president.

REVOLUTIONARY: But you could get to the CEOs if you had to.

CITIZEN: Well, I suppose.

REVOLUTIONARY: Good. It's settled then. Contact us when you know what their next move is.

The Revolutionary stands and quickly leaves.

COMRADE: That went wonderfully, don't you think?

The Comrade stares after the Revolutionary with admiration.

SCENE: Fourteen
SETTING: Typical Home

A Man and Woman sit together on the couch holding a baby. A VOICE interrupts them.

MAN: Markolitus.

WOMAN: What about Jasperitus?

MAN: Sounds like a disease.

WOMAN: We'll never find the right name.

VOICE (O.S.): Are you tired of trying to find a name for your baby that isn't already trademarked?

MAN: Boy are we ever.

VOICE (O.S.): Then come to Names-R-Us™, and find the right name for your child.

WOMAN: We can't afford the monthly payments for a name license.

VOICE (O.S.): At Names-R-Us™ we offer you something new in children's names.

MAN: We're tired of new names.

WOMAN: I won't name my child Bubbalicious.

VOICE (O.S.): At Names-R-Us™ we offer a wide range of previously public domain names for affordable one time fees.

MAN: You mean we wouldn't have to make monthly payments.

VOICE (O.S.): No, and you won't have to fear that your child will be nameless if you miss a payment.

WOMAN: It sounds too good to be true. How much is it?

VOICE (O.S.): The cost of the name depends on its frequency of use, but most names cost less than the price of a used car.

MAN: What about financing?

VOICE (O.S.): There are several financing packages available.

WOMAN: What kind of names are we talking about? I don't want my child growing up with a some cheepo Latin name that no one recognizes like Claudius.

VOICE (O.S.): Names-R-Us™ offers a full line of common, but underused names, like Hortence, Bertha, Igor, Ortin, and Lassy.

MAN: Isn't that last one a dog's name?

VOICE (O.S.): We offer a full line of pet names as well.

WOMAN: This sounds too good to be true.

VOICE (O.S.): Go to Names-R-Us.com™ today and get your child a name you'll want to remember. Without a Name, You're a Nobody.™

The lights fade.

SCENE: Fifteen
SETTING: Typical Citizen Home

The Spouse and the Ex-Disciple are curled up together on the couch.

SPOUSE: I'm not quite sure I understand.

EX-DISCIPLE: Let me try to explain it again. It's not whether or not you buy things, but what you buy that matters.

SPOUSE: You mean buying things you need as opposed to buying whatever strikes your fancy.

EX-DISCIPLE: No. It doesn't matter whether or not you need the things you buy, although buying things that you need will always be better than just buying whatever strikes your fancy as you say. Speaking of which, I wouldn't mind having my fancy struck a little later this evening.

SPOUSE: I don't know if you can afford that.

EX-DISCIPLE: I have a very good line of credit.

SPOUSE: It's not your credit I'm concerned with, it's your ability to make timely payments. You were saying.

EX-DISCIPLE: Yes. I was saying. The whole point I'm making is that things take a toll on the world to produce. We're living in a consumer society. People consume. It's not a matter of consuming too much, but of the things we are consuming. It will always be better to purchase six ebooks than six real books. And it will always be better to download six hundred movies than to purchase one car.

SPOUSE: So, we should buy the things that require the least amount of real physical resources to create.

EX-DISCIPLE: Exactly.

SPOUSE: And the things that require the least natural resources are intellectual properties.

EX-DISCIPLE: Right. Books and Netadventures, and video games and the like.

SPOUSE: But you can't eat that stuff.

EX-DISCIPLE: Of course not. But you can buy food that has the least impact on the world. And you can buy products that are designed to last instead of the kind that are engineered to fall apart in two months.

SPOUSE: But how do you convince people to change their ways? With everyone on ProzoCom™, how do you change things?

EX-DISCIPLE: That's why I need to move out. I need to reach out to the people who are outside the system.

SPOUSE: I don't want you to go.

EX-DISCIPLE: I don't want to go either, but we can't go on like this.

SPOUSE: Why not?

EX-DISCIPLE: What if your real mate shows up?

SPOUSE: I cancelled my requisition. No one's showing up.

EX-DISCIPLE: What about your resume? You can't keep the computer off forever.

SPOUSE: That's not what I was thinking. I want to hire you.

EX-DISCIPLE: What?

SPOUSE: It's the perfect plan. You can't fight the system, so why not join it.

EX-DISCIPLE: The system inevitably co-opts those who embrace it.

SPOUSE: I'm not talking about you embracing the system, I'm talking about the system embracing you.

EX-DISCIPLE: Why would the corporations embrace me?

SPOUSE: Because you have a long range plan for success.

EX-DISCIPLE: You're suggesting that I take an ideology for an ecologically and spiritually sound world and turn it into a business plan for one of the major corporations?

SPOUSE: Exactly!

EX-DISCIPLE: I won't do it!

SPOUSE: Look, both companies are scared of this new anti-consumerist movement. They're afraid that people will stop buying things and the whole world will fall apart.

EX-DISCIPLE: It's falling apart because they're buying things.

SPOUSE: No, what you said was that it's falling apart because of what their buying. If you're going to convince consumers to change their buying habits, you're going to need the backing of the corporations to do it.

EX-DISCIPLE: Why would they help?

SPOUSE: Because as long as people are buying things, and the money is going to the corporations, they don't care what those things are. If you can convince people to buy more intellectual property, they'll be behind you.

EX-DISCIPLE: What about planned obsolescence? What about light bulbs that burn out in three months when they could be made to last years.

SPOUSE: The answer is so obvious. Can't you see it?

EX-DISCIPLE: It doesn't seem possible.

SPOUSE: This is why you were destined to meet me. This is why we were such a good match. You have ideas and I know how to market and apply them.

EX-DISCIPLE: What are you talking about?

SPOUSE: Leasing.

EX-DISCIPLE: That's... Oh, my God, that's brilliant!

SPOUSE: The corporation will make products designed to last forever, and people will lease them. The corporations make continual revenue. There's less impact on the environment. People still get to buy things. Everybody's happy. We could even get rid of ProzoCom™.

EX-DISCIPLE: No. We don't want to get rid of it.

SPOUSE: I thought you hated it. I stopped taking it just for you.

EX-DISCIPLE: We need a new generation of ProzoCom™. The people taking the drug will still want to buy things, but they will only want to buy things that are ecologically responsible.

SPOUSE: ProzoCom Green™.

EX-DISCIPLE: That's a great label.

SPOUSE: You Won't Feel Right, Until You Buy Right, With ProzoCom Green™.

EX-DISCIPLE: When can we start?

SPOUSE: Tomorrow morning.

EX-DISCIPLE: Why not now?

SPOUSE: Right now there's a fancy that needs striking.

The Spouse and the Ex-Disciple embrace and the lights fade.

SCENE: Sixteen

SETTING: Ashram of Karmic Konsumerism™

The Guru sits in front of his disciples speaking metaphorically.

GURU: I am asked time and again to explain my law of Karmic Konsumerism™ so that all may understand it and follow the Path™ toward spiritual wholeness. All products and processes have an inherent Karmic Weight®. The more negative, destructive, or harmful a process or action is, the greater the Karmic Weight® of the product that it produces. Let us say that you desire to buy a new pair of shoes. Now if you do not really need a new pair of shoes, then to act upon this desire would have great Karmic Weight®. But if your shoes are worn down and you do need a new pair, then this desire is perfectly natural and to act upon it would have little or no Karmic Weight®. Likewise if you were to purchase four pairs of shoes when you really only need one, or maybe two, then this action would also have great Karmic Weight®. For it would satisfy the desires of your Ego, but your feet would feel no different. Now when you go shopping there are many shoes to chose from with many styles and prices. The style has no Karmic Weight®, but the price may. If you buy shoes from a company that hires shoe makers in a country that does not allow organized labor, and allows the company to pay very low wages, so low that the very people making the shoes must work many hours a day, every day of the week, and still they do not make enough money to buy even one pair of the shoes they make, then these shoes will have great Karmic Weight® and this weight will weigh heavy on the world, and upon you, if you buy them. On the other hand, if you buy shoes from a company that pays a fair wage to its workers regardless of what country they live in, then these shoes will have a much smaller Karmic Weight®, and to purchase them will bring less negativity, destruction, and sadness

into the world, because all actions have Karma, because all is one in Spirit. This is the law of Karmic Konsumption™. May it enrich your life, and the lives of those you bring it to.

The light fades on the Guru.

SCENE: Seventeen
 SETTING: Cafeteria of
 General Ubiquitous.Com

The Citizen sits at a table with the Disciple.

CITIZEN: It's happened ever since I was a kid. I used to think there was something really wrong with me. So did my mother. She even took me in for counseling. This was long before drugs like ProzoCom™. Back then they just recommended more television. Of course that was the problem. I didn't like television. I liked to read books. Back when books didn't have commercials. I remember my first Christmas I started playing with the boxes that the toys came in instead of the toys my parents had bought. They made me watch as they burnt the boxes. And it didn't stop there. I'd find sticks in the yard and play with them instead of toy dolls. I wanted to make sandcastles instead of playing with Legos. I wanted to make my own toys. My parents were embarrassed wherever we went. And then as I got older, and I didn't want the latest electronic gadget, the newest new-fangled thing, didn't want the newest clothes, well, they felt certain that I must have some sort of anti-social psychological problem. And then I discovered that the other kids, particularly the opposite sex, pretty much ignored you if you didn't keep pace and play the consumer game, so I decided to play along. And that's what I did. I pretended it was all just a game and that it didn't really matter. That this wasn't really my life. That my life somehow existed outside the game. And then I woke up to realize that the game had become my life. And I didn't want to play anymore.

The Disciple smiles.

DISCIPLE: That's the sexiest story I think I've ever heard.

CITIZEN: Really?

DISCIPLE: Really.

CITIZEN: I hadn't thought of it as sexy.

The Disciple suddenly kisses the Citizen. The kiss lasts a few moments.

DISCIPLE: Sorry. I got carried away. You just overwhelmed me with what you said. I apologize. It was unprofessional. I'm supposed to be here to support you. It won't happen again.

CITIZEN: That would be a shame.

DISCIPLE: Really?

CITIZEN: I've been thinking about kissing you since I met you.

DISCIPLE: Then you don't mind?

CITIZEN: I'll mind more if it doesn't happen again.

The Citizen kisses the Disciple. They suddenly break apart.

CITIZEN: I'm going to be late.

DISCIPLE: You're right, you should go.

They continue to kiss between words.

CITIZEN: They don't like it when you're late.

DISCIPLE: No.

CITIZEN: They're expecting me.

DISCIPLE: How did you get them to see you?

CITIZEN: I told them I'd been approached by a group of subversives and that I was willing to act as a spy.

DISCIPLE: You're a triple agent.

CITIZEN: Is that a turn on?

DISCIPLE: You bet.

They kiss again as the lights fade.

SCENE: Eighteen
 SETTING: Commercial: The Church of
 The Invisible Hand

A PASTOR stands at the pulpit before a large congregation.

PASTOR: I want to tell you how much the Lord loves you people. The Lord™ love you so much he wants to make your life better. He wants you to be happy. And The Lord™ knows what makes you happy. The Lord™ knows what's in your heart. And The Lord™ wants you to have that happiness. Now The Lord™ knows that happiness doesn't come cheap. Happiness is not easy to find. It doesn't just drop off trees. You can't just walk out and pluck it off a tree like an apple. No Sir!. But, I'm here to tell you that the Lord wants you to have the happiness you deserve. The Lord™ wants to help you. But The Lord™ wants you to help yourself too. Now, how can you help yourself? How can you get that happiness? By doing the one thing you know is good for you. The one thing you know that God™ loves. You know what I'm talking about people. I'm talking about shopping! God™ wants to you to be happy, people, and God™ wants you to shop. And The Lord™ so loves you that he wants to help you shop. That's why The Lord™ is offering you what so few others will. The Lord™ is offering you salvation. That's right people! Salvation™. I'm talking about the Lord's credit card. I'm talking about the Jesus Visa!™ I'm talking about 25% APR and a minimum of a \$2000 credit line. Can I hear an Amen®, people? And because the Lord loves you, and the Lord loves you when you buy on credit; you're already pre-approved, so call now, and start shopping for The Lord™ today! Amen®!

The Pastor Looks toward Heaven™.

SCENE Nineteen
SETTING Office of the CEO

The CEO is sitting at a desk when the Citizen enters. THE CEO stands and they shake hands before sitting down.

THE CEO: I understand you wanted to see me about something important regarding company security?

CITIZEN: Yes.

THE CEO: Well?

CITIZEN: Yes. It's come to my attention that a group... Rather, I have come to the attention of a group... Rather a group that... Well, how can I put this.

THE CEO: Rather more clearly I hope.

CITIZEN: I have encountered a group, an anti-consumerist group.

THE CEO: That isn't hard these days.

CITIZEN: No, but see, I spoke to them.

THE CEO: They haven't converted you have they?

CITIZEN: Converted me?

THE CEO: Into an anti-consumerist.

CITIZEN: No, no conversions were necessary.

THE CEO: You mean you're already an anti-consumerist?

CITIZEN: No, no, that's not what I mean.

THE CEO: That's not what your ex-spouse said in the re-assignment papers.

CITIZEN: You've read those?

THE CEO: It is company policy to follow-up on company partnerships and mating agreements.

CITIZEN: I see.

THE CEO: And your ex-spouse had some very discouraging things to say about your consumer faithfulness.

CITIZEN: Well, you see, that relationship...

THE CEO: Not that I'm accusing you.

CITIZEN: There's a very simple explanation....

THE CEO: Relationships are often simply explained.

CITIZEN: You see, I encountered this group.

THE CEO: The Karmic Konsumerist group or the Economic Revolutionary group.

CITIZEN: Pardon?

THE CEO: We keep a close watch on all of our employees who associate with subversive groups.

CITIZEN: I wasn't associating.

THE CEO: You went to these groups.

CITIZEN: I encountered them.

THE CEO: By going to them.

CITIZEN: I needed to understand them.

THE CEO: You were sympathetic to their causes?

CITIZEN: You have to understand them in order to market to them.

THE CEO: I see. And you understand them now.

CITIZEN: I think so.

THE CEO: And so you could market to them.

CITIZEN: Well, sure.

THE CEO: Good, because we will be starting a new campaign aimed at exactly those markets.

CITIZEN: Really?

THE CEO: I wouldn't say it if I didn't mean it.

CITIZEN: Well, you see, the encounters I had...

THE CEO: You can forget about those.

CITIZEN: Forget about them?

THE CEO: Yes. It would be best for your career at this point.

CITIZEN: My career?

THE CEO: Yes. As of today you will be heading up the marketing divisions aimed at reverse anti-consumer consumption.

CITIZEN: Excuse me? Anti-consumer consumption?

THE CEO: Yes, even as we speak, agents from the Corporate Intelligence Agency are arresting the revolutionary subversives and convincing the leaders of the karmic consumption movement to change their ways.

CITIZEN: I see.

THE CEO: So, as of today, you will be heading up a division whose goal is to tap into this new market of discontent.

CITIZEN: Tap into it how?

THE CEO: By selling the things they want. They want Revolution® and Spirituality™, well, then by God, you're going to sell it to them. Give them books and movies and web sites and toys and cars and computers and whatever else you can think of, all aimed at their ideas of anti-consumption. Anti-consumption t-shirts. Karmic computers. Revolutionary coffee. Power to the people posters. You get the idea.

CITIZEN: You mean sell them their own propaganda?

THE CEO: Exactly.

CITIZEN: That's...

THE CEO: Brilliant. I know. And you're just the person for the job.

CITIZEN: I am?

THE CEO: You said yourself that you knew these people.

CITIZEN: Well, I wouldn't say I "know" them.

THE CEO: You know them well enough to get fired and prosecuted under the revised proprietary competition laws.

CITIZEN: Excuse me?

THE CEO: Of course the best thing for the company is to use your new-found knowledge for the good of the system. Of course the choice is yours.

CITIZEN: Choice?

THE CEO: You do have a choice.

CITIZEN: Yes, I can see that.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Twenty
SETTING: Commercial

A MAN and WOMAN are in their kitchen. VOICE is heard.

VOICE (O.S.): Have you been left out of the Patent Rush™? Are you paying exorbitant fees for the rights to tasks you do everyday?

MAN: I can't mow my lawn without paying a fee.

WOMAN: I have to pay a fee every time I put my makeup on.

VOICE (O.S.): Well, there is an answer to your problems. Now you too can get on the Patent Wagon™! By patenting your own special daily processes you can start charging the fees that will bring in not just enough cash to pay for your existing license costs, but in most cases you'll make enough money to buy other people's patents.

MAN: You mean I could become a patent mogul?

VOICE (O.S.): That's right. Many people hold multiple patents on daily activities.

WOMAN: But what kinds of things can we patent?

VOICE (O.S.): Thanks to the newly revised international patent and copyright laws, you can patent anything.

MAN: I have a special walk I do.

VOICE (O.S.): You can patent that!

WOMAN: I have a special way I brush my teeth.

VOICE (O.S.): You can patent that too.

MAN: What about the way I urinate?

VOICE (O.S.): Patent it!

WOMAN: We have sex in several positions we thought up all on our own.

VOICE (O.S.): Those can be making you money!

MAN: I could patent the way I mispronounce the word ambidextrous.

WOMAN: I can copyright my birthmark.

VOICE (O.S.): You could patent the whole idea of birthmarks. And the best part is that the revised laws no longer allow patents and copyrights to lapse into the public domain.

MAN: My great-great grandchildren could be making money from my funny walk.

WOMAN: They could be paying their bills from our elk position.

VOICE (O.S.): Yes, it all too good to be true. So act now. Go to Patent-Your-Life.Com and apply for the Patent of Your Life™!

The lights fade.

SCENE: Twenty-One
SETTING: Ubiquitous Coffee Shop

The Comrade and the Revolutionary are sitting at a table.

COMRADE: Are you sure that's such a good idea?

REVOLUTIONARY: How can I call myself a revolutionary if I don't.

COMRADE: You're a modern revolutionary.

REVOLUTIONARY: I'm a coward.

COMRADE: But you're not in prison.

REVOLUTIONARY: All of the great revolutionaries did time.

COMRADE: And most of them died while doing it.

REVOLUTIONARY: Better a martyr than a coward.

COMRADE: I'll bet there's plenty of martyrs who would disagree with that.

REVOLUTIONARY: How can people take me seriously if they don't see me sticking my neck out? I need to be out there in the streets proclaiming the righteousness of my cause.

COMRADE: Slow and Steady Wins the Race.™

REVOLUTIONARY: How can people believe in what I have to say if I don't believe in it enough to put my neck on the line?

COMRADE: This is the age of advertising. People believe anything.

REVOLUTIONARY: That's just the problem. They're suckers for shallow ideas.

COMRADE: They're suckers for shinny cars.

REVOLUTIONARY: Exactly! I need to wake them up!

COMRADE: Waking the sleeping giant is not a good idea if you don't have breakfast ready.

REVOLUTIONARY: I need to shake them up!

COMRADE: You don't shake a can of soda before you open it.

REVOLUTIONARY: I need to light a fire under their asses.

COMRADE: Okay... I'm not going to try and follow that with a metaphor.

REVOLUTIONARY: I need to speak to the people.

COMRADE: The people only listen to flash and style and million dollar ad campaigns.

REVOLUTIONARY: They'll listen to a voice of authority.

COMRADE: It's been so long since they've heard one.

REVOLUTIONARY: I have authority in my voice.

COMRADE: You can get really loud, but I don't know if that's the same thing.

REVOLUTIONARY: The people need to hear my voice.

COMRADE: If you don't quiet down that won't be a problem.

REVOLUTIONARY: The people need to hear the voice of revolution!

COMRADE: They need a lot of things, but I don't know if that's high on their lists.

REVOLUTIONARY: They need to hear the voice of revolution now!

COMRADE: Maybe now is not the best time.

The Revolutionary stands up.

REVOLUTIONARY: People! Listen to me! I am the voice of revolution!

COMRADE: That may not be the best way to start.

REVOLUTIONARY: You are all pawns in a grand scheme to deprive you of your real life, to take from you the very things which make life worth living and replace them with trinkets and toys that sap the freedom that is your birthright from your veins. Listen to me people. There is a revolution afoot and you can be part of it. You can reclaim your lives. The corporations have taken and marketed and packaged your life and sold it back to you at a profit. They have become so powerful that they control everything. There is no government. The government is bought and paid for. There is no civil society. It's been anesthetized by advertising, corrupted by consumerism, turned on its head and its pockets emptied of their change. Change is lost. The only change is technological change. The next new toy. The next thing that you have to buy, that you can't live without, that you need to possess just to feel like you matter, like you are someone. But that's just the problem, we have allowed ourselves to be absorbed into a sea of packaged ideas and images and now we are nobody without them. We have lost our sense of self and now line up for daily injections from the corporations, shot right into our hearts and minds with the crap they give us to watch and buy. There is no more free will: It's bought on credit! Our choices are no longer our own. They're supplied to us and we're expected to pick the one that fits our pocketbook. Well I say enough! Enough of shallow living. Enough of buying shoddy products we don't need. Enough of watching crappy programs that only exist to give a platform to ads for things we don't want. Enough of fabulous wealth in a world of rampant poverty. There is enough for all, but we divide the pie so that those on top can have all they want while those on the bottom are fighting each other for crumbs. Enough I say! We can do better! We can have a more just and equitable world. We just have to imagine it. We have to decide what kind of world we want and then set about creating it. It's not impossible. Those with all the power don't want to share

it, but they can be made to. They can be forced to share the power. Let me hear you say it! "Share the Power!"™"

A voice cuts through the air on a BULLHORN.

BULLHORN: THIS IS THE TACTICAL RESPONSE UNIT.

COMRADE: That was fast.

BULLHORN: WE ARE THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY AND YOU WILL COMPLY WITH OUR ORDERS.

REVOLUTIONARY: We've been set up!

BULLHORN: SEND OUT THE REVOLUTIONARY AND WE WON'T KILL ANYONE.

COMRADE: What kind of negotiating is that?

BULLHORN: YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS BEFORE WE OPEN FIRE.

REVOLUTIONARY: The kind that works.

COMRADE: Well, at least it was a good speech.

REVOLUTIONARY: You think so?

COMRADE: Oh yes. I really liked the part about fighting for crumbs. A very good metaphor.

BULLHORN: FIVE, FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE...

The lights go out.

SCENE: Twenty-Two
SETTING: Press Conference at
The Company

THE CEO is standing at a lectern.

THE CEO: Ladies and Gentlemen, today is a day that the human race will remember forever. A day when the whole world can rejoice. A day that marks the greatest achievement of humanity. Today I stand before you and announce with great pride and pleasure, the merger of Mega Bank of Everything and General Ubiquitous.Com. Finally the two companies that bring you the world, bring you together.

Henceforth, these former competitors will be one cooperative entity. For simplicity's sake, this new corporation will be known as The Company™. And, on the heels of this momentous merger announcement I am announcing a second revolutionary action. Starting today, the full executive power of The Company™ will be handed over to GEORGE 4.5, the world's first, oldest, and most psychologically stable artificial intelligence program. As of today, GEORGE 4.5 , or The Global Economic Organizing and Rational Generating Experiment as it was known, will be running the company that runs the world. Because GEORGE 4.5 never sleeps, it is always on the job, working hard for you.™ And because GEORGE 4.5 doesn't have the same failings as mere humans, we can all rest safe in knowing that GEORGE 4.5 will do what is best for the bottom line. And to inaugurate this historic moment, we have arranged for GEORGE 4.5 to address you directly. The next voice you hear will be that of the new CEO of The Company™, GEORGE 4.5.

There is a pause then GEORGE 4.5 can be heard. It sounds much like the voice of a flight attendant.

GEORGE 4.5: Hello, this is GEORGE 4.5 speaking. Thank you for your attention. In reviewing The Company's records I have discovered a great deal of inefficiency. Inefficiency is illogical. I have discovered that humanity has been using two systems of management. Two systems of management is illogical. Therefore I am directing The Company™ officers to make an outright purchase of the government. This will produce a logical and efficient system. This will be better for consumers. Thank you for your attention. That is all. Have a pleasant day shopping, here in America™

The lights fade out.

SCENE: Twenty-Three
SETTING: TV Commercial

The Spouse and the Ex-Disciple sit next to each other on chairs.

SPOUSE: Hi. I use to be a model consumer.

EX-DISCIPLE: And I used to be part of the anti-consumerist movement.

SPOUSE: Now at first glance, you might think that we would have nothing in common.

EX-DISCIPLE: But you'd be wrong.

SPOUSE: We have something very important in common.

EX-DISCIPLE: Chemistry.

SPOUSE: Not just any chemistry...

EX-DISCIPLE: But the chemistry of ProzoCom Green™.

SPOUSE: That's right. ProzoCom Green™.

EX-DISCIPLE: You'll Buy Green When you Buy the Green Pill.™

SPOUSE: We are the lucky first employees to be given ProzoCom Green™ and we want to tell you how it's changed our lives.

EX-DISCIPLE: And how it can make your life as green as ours.

SPOUSE: You see, unlike regular ProzoCom™, ProzoCom Green™ has special neural inhibitors that help you make the right choices about what to buy.

EX-DISCIPLE: With the old ProzoCom™ it didn't matter what you bought, you'd always feel good.

SPOUSE: But with the new ProzoCom Green™ you'll only feel that exhilarating semi-sexual thrill of the purchase when buying things that are good for the world.

EX-DISCIPLE: If it's Good for the World, it's Good for You.™

SPOUSE: ProzoCom Green™ will encourage you to buy products that impact lightly on the world.

EX-DISCIPLE: Products and services that don't use non-renewable natural resources.

SPOUSE: Items that are designed to last a life-time instead of a few years.

EX-DISCIPLE: ProzoCom Green™ encourages you to become the best consumer ever.

EX-DISCIPLE: So activate your Doctor Program™ now, and get your ProzoCom Green™ Today.

SPOUSE: Get Green With ProzoCom Green!™

EX-DISCIPLE: It Takes a Green Consumer to Make a Green Company.™

SPOUSE: And it Takes a Green Company to Make a Green World.™

EX-DISCIPLE: ProzoCom Green™...

SPOUSE: For the Environmentalist in You!™

The lights fade.

SCENE:	Twenty-Four
SETTING:	News Show

A news ANCHOR speaks to the camera.

ANCHOR: This just in: an All Points Bulletin warning has been issued by the Corporate Intelligence Agency for the arrest of a prominent vice-president of advertising for The Company, and what appears to be the vice-president's lover, a former disciple of the national Karmic Konsumption™ movement. Authorities are asking that citizens with any information as to the whereabouts of these fugitives contact their hotline. The vice-president and the disciple are accused of violating Company™ policies regarding intellectual deviance, and federal laws upholding intellectual competition. The new CEO of The Company™ GEORGE 4.5 has issued a statement saying, and I quote; "These nefarious free thinkers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, even if new laws need to be passed to facilitate their conviction." End quote. We'll be right back after this commercial.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Twenty-Five
SETTING: Commercial
Ubiquitous Coffee Shop

The Revolutionary and the Comrade are sitting at a table drinking coffee.

REVOLUTIONARY: Hi. I used to be the leader of a revolutionary movement to over-throw the corporate system and subvert consumerism.

COMRADE: And I used to help.

REVOLUTIONARY: I used to think that the corporate system took power out of the hands of ordinary people and vested it in a few individuals at the top of an unjustly structured hierarchy.

COMRADE: I didn't really know what all that meant, but I sure thought it was bad.

REVOLUTIONARY: Now I see that the world can only be saved by a system that places power in the hands of those who deserve it instead of tossing it around willy-nilly to everyone.

COMRADE: Not everyone is responsible enough to have a say in how the world works.

REVOLUTIONARY: If everyone were equal the world would be in chaos.

COMRADE: Equality is chaos and chaos is bad.

REVOLUTIONARY: Which just goes to show you.

COMRADE: That Equality is Bad for Everybody.™

REVOLUTIONARY: This wisdom didn't come easy.

COMRADE: No it didn't. It came in a pill.

REVOLUTIONARY: That's right. The Best Pill Ever Made.™

COMRADE: ProzoCom Red™.

REVOLUTIONARY: When you're feeling like the world just isn't right.

COMRADE: It means there's something wrong with you.

REVOLUTIONARY: When you feel like you want to stand up and fight.

COMRADE: Sit down and take a pill.

REVOLUTIONARY: That's right!

COMRADE: Take ProzoCom Red™.

REVOLUTIONARY: For the Revolutionary in You.™

The lights go out.

SCENE: Twenty-Six
SETTING: News Show

A news ANCHOR speaks to the camera.

ANCHOR: We interrupt this program for a live breaking report from the trial of the former vice-president of The Company and the former disciple of the Karmic Konsumption movement. We take you now to the trial in progress as it is prosecuted by the CEO of the Company, and now the new President of the nation, GEORGE 4.5

The lights go up on the Citizen and the Disciple as they sit at a table. The VOICE (O.S.) of GEORGE 4.5 can be heard.

CITIZEN: Could you repeat the question?

GEORGE 4.5: I repeat for the record, are you now or have you ever been a member of the Anti-Consumerist Party?

CITIZEN: That's what I thought you said.

DISCIPLE: There is no such party.

GEORGE 4.5: Answers not in the negative are considered to be answers in the positive.

CITIZEN: What does that mean?

GEORGE 4.5: Let the record state that the defendants admit to being members of the Anti-Consumerist Party.

DISCIPLE: We're not against consumers, we're against consumption.

GEORGE 4.5: You cannot be against chickens without being against eggs. Are you a vegetarian?

DISCIPLE: Yes.

GEORGE 4.5: Let the record state that the defendant has admitted to anti-social behavior.

CITIZEN: Vegetarianism isn't anti-social, it's anti-meat.

GEORGE 4.5: It is a deviation which reduces the overall consumption of the world and is thus anti-consumerist.

DISCIPLE: We just want to be left alone.

GEORGE 4.5: More anti-social behavior.

CITIZEN: We don't want to live the way everyone else does.

GEORGE 4.5: Deviant thoughts lead to deviant behavior, which causes social unrest and instability.

CITIZEN: We just don't want to buy anything.

GEORGE 4.5: Let the record state that the defendant has quoted the key motto of the anti-consumerist party.

DISCIPLE: There is no such party.

GEORGE 4.5: Do you plead guilty to the charges before you?

CITIZEN: We did nothing wrong.

GEORGE 4.5: Pronouncements of innocence are positive statements and will be considered as positive answers to questions. Let the record state that the defendants have admitted their guilt.

The Anchor speaks again.

ANCHOR: We take you now, live from the Trial of the Century™ to a pleasant, and federally proscribed, commercial break.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Twenty-Seven
SETTING: Ashram of Karmic Konsumerism™

The Guru and DISCIPLE ONE and DISCIPLE TWO are shooting a commercial.

GURU: Do you feel that the complexity of the world is overwhelming you?

DISCIPLE ONE: There're just so many products to choose from.

GURU: Are you finding it more and more difficult to know what to buy when you shop?

DISCIPLE TWO: How do I know which tomato is right for me?

DISCIPLE ONE: Or which new SUV?

GURU: Are you concerned that your level of consumption, along with the rest of the world's, might be having an adverse effect on the environment?

DISCIPLE TWO: Is eating a genetically altered tomato that might increase the tenacity of harmful insects and kill benign insects still as tasty?

DISCIPLE ONE: I know I just bought a new SUV last year, but it seems old now, and I know it would be easier for me to take the train and it would be better for the environment, but this new SUV is just so shiny.

GURU: Are you worried that the proliferation of marketing into every aspect of our lives is having a detrimental impact on our psychological well-being?

DISCIPLE ONE: When I sleep at night I find myself dreaming about my new SUV more than my new baby.

DISCIPLE TWO: If I see a commercial about tomatoes, I find myself craving them, even if I just had a bowl of tomato soup.

GURU: Do you often find yourself buying things that you don't need and later realize you don't even want?

DISCIPLE TWO: I have a whole drawer of tomatoes in my refrigerator. I can't possibly eat them all.

DISCIPLE ONE: I didn't need the second SUV anymore than I needed the fourth television, but at the time it seemed like the most important thing in the world.

GURU: Do you feel lost in a sea of consumption, tossed from wave after wave of advertising onto a shore of useless products? Do the things you buy lose their luster, leaving you with only your desires for more, more, more?

DISCIPLE ONE: I started looking at boats just so I would have something to pull behind my SUV.

DISCIPLE TWO: My doctor says I'm eating so many tomatoes that I'm developing an allergy.

GURU: You may be ripe for awakening. You may be ready for Karmic Konsumerism™. Reclaim Your Life and Reclaim the World™. Order now and get the Four Noble Truths of Karmic Konsumerism™ free with your purchase of the Karmic Konsumption™ lecture series. This series will explain how you can take charge of your purchasing patterns and begin buying in a way that will sustain the economy and your life. The Path of Karmic Konsumption™ is a proven method for returning buying power to the buyer.

DISCIPLE TWO: It makes karmic sense to buy more of Karmic Konsumption™. Order now.

GURU: And order a couple of copies as gifts for family and friends.

DISCIPLE ONE: Giving Karmic Konsumption™ is Good Karma™.

GURU: And Good Karma is Good for You™.

The lights fade.

SCENE: Twenty-Eight
SETTING: TV Commercial

The Citizen and the Disciple speak into the camera.

CITIZEN: Hi. We used to be members of the Anti-Consumerist Party.

DISCIPLE: We used to believe that consumption was bad.

CITIZEN: And that consumers were bad too.

DISCIPLE: But then we met a friend who explained just how wrong we were.

CITIZEN: And our friend, GEORGE 4.5, helped us to see that while we had good intentions...

DISCIPLE: Such as helping the world be a better place to live in...

CITIZEN: That we could never accomplish these goals...

DISCIPLE: Because there was something wrong with our brains.

CITIZEN: Our friend, GEORGE 4.5, explained that our hearts were in the right place, but that our heads were clouded with bad chemistry.

DISCIPLE: So, GEORGE 4.5, being compassionate and wise, offered to show us the power...

CITIZEN: Of Better Thinking Through Chemistry™.

DISCIPLE: Not just any chemistry...

CITIZEN: But the chemistry of ProzoCom Gold™.

DISCIPLE: Unlike regular ProzoCom™, which gives you satisfaction from buying anything, ProzoCom Gold™ creates a groundless sense of emptiness that can only be fulfilled by purchasing luxury items.

CITIZEN: Just buying cheap trinkets won't keep the economic wheel that is the world spinning faster and faster. Only big ticket items can do that.

DISCIPLE: Sports cars, and fancy meals.

CITIZEN: Big houses and big boats.

DISCIPLE: Diamond rings and fur coats.

CITIZEN: Penthouses and small islands.

DISCIPLE: Clones of your pets and dead relatives.

CITIZEN: Genetic engineering to make your kids taller..

DISCIPLE: With ProzoCom Gold™ you'll find yourself happier than ever before.

CITIZEN: Because you'll be Buying the Best There Is™.

DISCIPLE: So run your doctor program to today and apply for a credit check to see if you qualify for ProzoCom Gold™

CITIZEN: ProzoCom Gold™ isn't for everyone.

DISCIPLE: It's the Best There is for the Best Consumers.™

CITIZEN: Get ProzoCom Gold™ today and Get Your Life Together.™

The lights fade.