

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR

by PAUL MALEY

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A customer feels guilty for receiving a free gift and wants to pay for it himself.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: This scene's "punch" hinges largely on the contrast between the customer's paranoia and the clerk's laid back, easygoing manner. Big physicality and mannerism choices on the part of the actors could help heighten this distinction.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 4

TOPIC: Salvation

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 2:8-10

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Easter

CHARACTERS:

Clerk

Customer

PROPS: Books, paper bag, money, receipt

COSTUMES: Casual dress

SOUND: Wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A bookstore

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SCENE: A bookstore. The CLERK is going through some books on the counter. The CUSTOMER, comically nervous and high-maintenance, comes in and looks around uncomfortably. He wears sunglasses and has a book in a paper bag tucked inside his jacket.

CLERK: Hi, can I help you?

CUSTOMER: *(Defensively)* No, I'm fine, really. *(Pause, laughs)* Actually...I have a terrible problem.

CLERK: Oh, what is it?

CUSTOMER: *(Approaches the counter stealthily, looks around, takes out the book)* A friend of mine was in here yesterday and bought this book for me as a gift.

He hands the book to her.

CLERK: This is a great one! Your friend has good taste.

CUSTOMER: But don't you see the problem?

CLERK: Oh, have you read it already?

CUSTOMER: No, I just... *(Struggles for the words)*

CLERK: Not your cup of tea? You can exchange it.

CUSTOMER: Actually, I'm really happy with the book.

CLERK: Oh.

CUSTOMER: I just...noticed the price here.

CLERK: Did we forget to take off the price tag? We're usually so thorough with that when we know it's a gift. I'm really sorry.

CUSTOMER: It's not about the price tag...it's about the price.

CLERK: Well, actually it's a very good price. *(Points inside the front page)* Your friend came to the right place. We try to be competitive with the big boys, you know, even though we don't have a Starbucks here or anything like that!

CUSTOMER: That's not it at all. I'm happy with the price. *(Suddenly holds out some money)* Here, please, take this!

CLERK: Oh, uh...didn't your friend pay for this yesterday?