



D.M.V.

by

Zalman Velvel

A Comedy in Two Acts

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Cast of Characters

Bernice Hodes- 65, manager of Fort Myers DMV, 1 day from retirement

Jimmy Rogers – 62, wealthy political power broker (**Number 5**)

Joe Hargity – 45 - Bernice's replacement, last day of training

Mayor – 54, Mayor of Ft Myers

Number 1 – Spanish man in his 30's also **Number 8**, a middle aged Spanish drunk

Number 2 – Afro-American mom & baby also **Sheriff Denise** also **Number 10**, nurse

Number 3 – attractive hooker also **Number 6** older widow also **Number 9**, waitress

Number 4 – middle aged red neck father also **Number 7** a 95 year old man also **Dick Ebersol**, Tax Collector of the County

Each Numbered actor plays multiple parts except Jimmy Rogers, Number 5

Total of 8 Actors

Time

The first act starts Friday morning, 8:45 AM. The second act starts an hour later, in real time.

Place

The Fort Myers, Florida, DMV, a small rented office in a shopping center.

The Set

Center stage is a desk where Bernice sits with her computer. Next to her is a chair for her trainee and replacement, Joe. In front of her desk are 2 chairs for applicants to sit. Off to her left is a photo screen where people stand in front of to get their picture taken for their licenses. Downstage are 3 chairs occupied by people who have numbers and are waiting to get something done, like update a driver's license, validate a vehicle title, etc.

The entrance and exit glass door to the office for customers is downstage right. The entrance and exit for DMV employees is upstage left. There is a ticket machine just inside the entrance door to give people numbers. The number they have corresponds to a illuminated sign above Bernice that gives the current number being waited on. The bathroom, stage right, is offstage.

Summary of Scenes

ACT ONE

Scene One – the present, Friday, 15 minutes before 9AM, the DMV office (**page 6**)

ACT TWO

Scene One – 10 AM, same day (**page 50**)

DEDICATION

To

My Mom

And To

David Mamet for explaining it so well.

ACT ONE

Scene One

[It is 8:45 AM on Friday morning at the DMV office in Fort Myers, Florida. **BERNICE ENTERS** upstage left, dragging herself in. She is carrying a small paper cup of water and a small wet hand towel. She sits at her desk, opens her pocketbook, takes out a bottle of Excedrin aspirin, and shakes 3 pills into her palm. She swallows the pills with the water.

Then she puts the towel over her forehead and leans back in her chair, in pain.]

[**Her cell phone rings.** She takes it out.]

BERNICE

Hi Mary Jo ...

Oh, not so loud!

Yes, I just got into work ... with a splitting headache.
Drank way too much last night at my retirement party ...

Baby girl, I lost count of the margaritas.
The only number I know is Excedrin Headache Number 99.
Don't know how I'm going to make it through the day.

[**There is a loud banging on the glass entrance door**]

Oh my God – not now!

(Calling out to the front door) **Read the sign on the door!**

We don't open until 9!

That's not for 15 minutes!

I swear, I'd like to pull them by their little ears and tug until they scream.
Hold on baby girl.
I need more Excedrin.

(She opens her pocketbook, takes out the bottle of Excedrin aspirin, and shakes out 3 more pills into her palm. She swallows the pills.)

Can you believe it's been 30 years?
30 damn years!

[There is an even louder banging on the glass entrance door]

BERNICE

**Didn't you hear me?
Not until 9.**

(points to the clock overhead) **When the little hand is on the nine and the big one is on the twelve!**

I swear, Mary Jo.
They evacuate all the mental hospitals here on Friday morning.

[There is a still louder banging on the glass entrance door]

Honey, let me call you right back.

(She turns off her cell phone and goes to front door and talks to them like they're children, enunciating every word slowly)

Do you ... see ... the sign ... on the ... door?
Yes ... that sign.

What ... does ... it ... say?

That's right ... we don't open until ... 9AM.
That's still 5 minutes from now!
PLEASE be patient!

(To herself) Jeeze Louise!

(Bernice goes back to her desk, sits down, picks up her cell phone, and redials)

I'm back, baby girl.

Enough about me ... how are you all doin' honey?

How're the kids?

If there ever was a day I couldn't wait to be over, it's this one.

Goodbye DMV -
Hello peace and quiet!

At five o'clock, I'm outa here.

Bless me Jesus!

(More pounding on the door)

BERNICE

(pointing to her wristwatch) **IT'S STILL NOT NINE O'CLOCK!**

I hate when they pound on the door!
Makes me want to put my hands around their throat ... and squeeze.

What?

Oh, the closing went fine.
Just a little disagreement about a rusty pipe.
\$100 solved that.

Where did I stay?
Now don't scold me.
I'm the mother. Scolding is my job.
Last night, I slept in my van, outside the Tax Collector's office.

What could I do? I packed everything the day before.

You can't believe all the crap I accumulated.
Your mother is now **the number one** customer of Goodwill in North Ft Myers.

Anyway, the moving van should be by you on Wednesday.
We'll put everything in that U-Store down the road.

Yes, baby girl, all except the good china and my mother's silverware.
They're in the orange and white U-Haul boxes I bought special for you.

If all goes as planned, at 5 I'll be in my car sailing down I-75.
8 hours and I'm in Atlanta.
One night at that Holiday Inn we like so much ...
and I'll see you late Saturday in St Louis.

I can't wait to see the girls ...
I really miss them ...

By the way, is that house still for sale down the block?

I know I'm welcome at your place, but ...but ... but ...

Baby girl, your Momma is used to being independent.

VOICE (offstage)

Hey, it's AFTER 9 o'clock!

BERNICE

Look, I gotta go.
The natives are getting restless.

Love ya baby girl.
Give Momma a kiss.

(Bernice hangs up her cell phone. She straightens out her desk, then rummages through her pocketbook and finds the keys. She stands up and walks to the front door, and opens it.)

Everyone take a ticket ...

(When she opens the door, 3 people rush in, **NUMBER 1, NUMBER 2, AND NUMBER 3 ENTER.** They go to the ticket machine by the front door, grab a ticket, and then sit down in the chairs.)

over there ... I guess you know that.

(Bernice walks back to her desk, sits down, and puts the monitor on number 1.)

NUMBER 1 !

(Customer number 1 stands, a Spanish man in his 30's.)

NUMBER 1

Yo soy aqui ... I mean ... I here for learner permit.

BERNICE

Unfortunately yo no hablo.

You ... have ... a ... birtho ... certificado?
Thank you.

(she enters his name in the computer)

There is a problem, Hector.

NUMBER 1

What is the problema?

BERNICE

The computer says you're dead.

NUMBER 1

Oh! I give wrong paper. Here.

BERNICE

This says Francisco Santiago?

NUMBER 1

Si, I change my name.

BERNICE

(She enters his name in the computer)

The computer says Francisco is dead, too.

NUMBER 1

No.

BERNICE

Not no.

Si.

You have any other i...dent ...i ...fi ... ca ... cion?

How about Pass ... porto?

NUMBER 1

No.

What about this?

BERNICE

No.

A credit card is not good i...dent ...i ...fi ... ca ... cion.

Anyone can get Master Charge.

Francisco ... or Hector

Do you know anyone who speaks English?

NUMBER 1

Si, mi hermosa ... my daughter ... she speak very good English.

She is ... how you say ... in grade quatro ... four grade.

BERNICE

(reaches into a box of forms on her left)

Here.

Give this to your *hermosa* and come back here with proper i...dent... i ..fic..cation.

Have your hermosa explain it to you.

NUMBER 1

Que es esto?

Sorry.

I mean, what this?

BERNICE

It explains what to do if you don't have a birtho certificado.

NUMBER 1

You explain it, pleez?

BERNICE

Just read it.

Oh, you don't read English either.

(She reaches into the box of forms on her left)

Here, these are the instructions in Spanish.

NUMBER 1

OK.

BERNICE

How long have you been in America?

NUMBER 1

Diez y cinco anos ... 15 year.

BERNICE

And you didn't learn good English yet?

NUMBER 1

No have time.

All time, working ... working ... working.

Some day 16 hour.

Mi amigo ... he drive me and I work with him.

Together we make cement around walls of casas.

Call tie beam.

BERNICE

Where is your amigo?

NUMBER 1

We juss loss jobs.

Mi amigo go to Tejas for new job –

I no can leave my family.

Now I have time to get licensio.

BERNICE

But how are you going to read road signs?

Here, take this card.

BERNICE (cont'd)

It's a friend of mine ... mi amigo ... who teaches English.
He's very good.
And not expensive.

NUMBER 1

Gracias, senora.

I go to Miami and be back tomorrow with good identification.

BERNICE

Hasta luego.

NUMBER 1

(He stops and walks back)

Uno momento.
Senora?

(He looks around suspiciously)

BERNICE

Si.

NUMBER 1

You no tell anyone about my papers, si?
I mean like immigration.

BERNICE

Yes ... I mean no ... I no tell immigration.

NUMBER 1

Gracias.
Hasta luego again.

[**NUMBER 1 EXITS** out the front door. **Number 4 ENTERS**, takes a ticket, then takes a chair among the others waiting. He is a middle aged native southerner – a red neck – wearing a straw hat.]

[**JOE HARGITY ENTERS**, Bernice's replacement/trainee. He pulls up a chair and sits next to Bernice behind her desk.]

BERNICE

Mornin' Joe.

JOE

Hi Ms. Bernice.

BERNICE

And how are we this morning?

JOE

Oh don't ask.

And don't look at me.
Your eyeballs are killin' me.

I'm dying ... I swear I'm dying.
I partied way too hearty last night.

BERNICE

(hands him her Excedrin) Here, help yourself to my Excedrin.

JOE

Thank you.
What do you think – 2 or 3?

BERNICE

The way you look – 4 or 5.

JOE (whispers)

Bernice, I have to ask you something personal.
Very personal.

BERNICE

Yes Joe ...
Last night you sang Y.M.C.A. at the top of your lungs ...
While you danced the Funky Chicken.

JOE

Did I get ... *naked*?
Someone said I got naked.

BERNICE

Completely!
(laughing) I swear, the way your tally-wacker bounced up and down.
It was *hilarious*.

JOE

Oh, I'm so embarrassed!

BERNICE

You'll get over it.

JOE

In about a hundred years.
The homophobe in D.P. is telling everyone to sing Y.M.C.A. when they see me.
And if they don't know the words - follow the bouncing balls.

BERNICE

Hey, that's funny ...
(Bernice laughs out loud ... and then holds her head)
Don't make me laugh.
It hurts my head.

JOE

It's ***not*** funny!

BERNICE

I'm sorry, sweetie.

So ... what do you think?
Are you ready to take over on Monday?

JOE

No.

BERNICE

Oh, you'll do fine, don't worry.

BERNICE

Number 2!

(NUMBER 2 stands up. It is a black woman in her late 30's holding a screaming baby.)

NUMBER 2

I got these papers in the mail.

[Bernice and Joe both put their hands over their ears, in pain.]

BERNICE
(hands over her ears)

Excuse me.
How can you expect me to hear you with your baby screaming?

NUMBER 2

Sorry, m'am.
My daughter stood me up for babysittin' this morning.
What can you expect from a dumb 14 year old?

NUMBER 2 (cont'd)

Who's pregnant!

She was bent over the toilet pukin' her lungs out when I left.

She jus' like all her frens.

Boy crazy every one of them.

Hormones running amuck in they vajayjays.

(shaking the baby gently) Come on, hush you!

Can't you see you disturbin' everyone in the place!

I'll probably be takin' care of the granchile that's comin', too.

Just like my momma did for me.

Here take these papers ... (she hands Bernice a pile of papers)

Here, let me get out these Pampers too. (she takes out a pile of baby diapers)

This one pees and dumps like a race horse.

Uh oh, smells like we got a big pile of number 2 here.

Hand me that diaper.

JOE

Oh my God!

What did you feed that baby?

Ms. Bernice, do we have any gas masks around here!

BERNICE

It's only baby poo.

Man up, Joe.

NUMBER 2

(Number 2 changes the baby on the desk and hands the dirty diaper to Joe)

You got a place to throw this?

JOE

Oh my God!

[Joe takes the dirty diaper like he's handling radioactive material. **JOE**

EXITS running to the bathroom]

NUMBER 2

Sorry 'bout that.

BERNICE

These papers say you received a ticket for running a red light on Broadway.

NUMBER 2

No way!
Can't remember any ticket.

BERNICE

It was eight months ago.

NUMBER 2

Can't be!

BERNICE

That's what it says.
See?

NUMBER 2

How the hell they know that?
Ain't no policeman stopped me.

BERNICE

They have cameras mounted on the traffic lights.
They take pictures of your license plates when you run the red one.
Then the computer looks up your plate number and sends you a ticket.
Like this one.

NUMBER 2

Damn!
Ain't that somethin'!

How much they want?

BERNICE

Let's see ... it started at \$100.

NUMBER 2

That ain't no problem
I got that in my bag.

BERNICE

But because you waited so long ...
It's going to cost you ... \$500.

NUMBER 2

\$500!
For running a red light!
I can't afford no \$500!
Oh Lord! Ain't like we live at Fort Knox.

BERNICE

If you don't pay it, they'll suspend your driver's license.
You only have 3 days left.

NUMBER 2

They cain't do that!
I gots to drive!
I got four other little uns that needs to go to school.
(the baby starts to howl again)
Hush you!
Come on, you.
You're embarassin' your Momma.
There there ... there there.

[**JOE ENTERS** holding his head and stomach. Bernice hands him the
Excedrin again when he sits back down.]

JOE

Thank you Ms. Bernice.
What do you, think 3 more?

BERNICE

Judging by your expression, 4.

NUMBER 2

So where do I pay this damn ticket?

BERNICE

You have to go down to the court house.

NUMBER 2

Maybe I can borrow somethin' from my Momma.
If she ain't already spent her check.

My man be back soon from drivin' over the road.
He'll flip his min' he see a \$500 bill.
But he's gonna pay if'n he knows what's good for him.
This little mother fucker is his!

I gots to tell you,
this is a hard way to go for a Momma with 5 chillrun.
Soon to be six ... if'n you count the grand comin'.

BERNICE

(hands her a card)

Here ... try these people. It's a church group. They help families with difficulties.

NUMBER 2

That's us all right.
One hell of a lot of difficulties.
Thank you, m'am.

[**NUMBER 2 EXITS** out the front door]

JOE

\$500 is a lot of money for a ticket.

BERNICE

She sat on that ticket for 8 months.

JOE

Still \$500?

BERNICE

Joe, stop it right now!

JOE

Stop what?

BERNICE

That sickening sound of sympathy.
Get it out of your system right now.

Otherwise you're going to go bat shit crazy here.
Be helpful – but guard your heart.

JOE

I'll try to remember that.

BERNICE

You better.

Number 3!

(**NUMBER 3** stands up. It is a young woman wearing a short skirt, tight blouse, high heels, with heavy makeup.)

[**NUMBER 5 ENTERS, Jimmy Rogers.** He takes a ticket, sits down in an empty seat and looks around. He is not a happy camper.]

BERNICE

Can I help you?

NUMBER 3

I want to register my car in Florida.
I'm told I have to do that.

BERNICE

Yes, after you've been a resident for 10 days.
How long have you been a resident of Florida?

NUMBER 3

3 years.

BERNICE

3 years!
How did you manage to drive so long with out of state plates?

NUMBER 3

(she shakes her breasts, wiggles her ass, and bats her eyelashes)
You have a very nice police force, here.

BERNICE

Yeah, I'll bet.

Well, you have to fill out this application for certificate of title.
Do you have your VIN?

NUMBER 3

What's a VIN?

JOE

Vehicle Identification Number.

(looks at Bernice) Just thought I'd help a little.

BERNICE

We also need your current license plate number.
And your out of state Registration.

NUMBER 3

Oh.
I left the reggy home.

BERNICE

Well, you'll have to get it.
After you fill out this form, we'll send it to your previous state.
They'll send back your previous title to us and we'll transfer it.
What state did you come from?

NUMBER 3

Las Vegas.

JOE

Las Vegas isn't a state – Nevada is a state.

NUMBER 3

You know what I mean.

BERNICE

Sure.

After you go home and get your “reggy” fill out this form and bring it back up here.
You'll have to take another number.

NUMBER 3

I can't wait around.

I have an early date ... I mean appointment ... with a judge.

BERNICE

A judge, huh?

Moving up in the world, are we?

Well, come back when you can.

You've made it 3 years, you can make it a few days more.

[NUMBER 3 heads to the front door. On her way out, she winks at
NUMBER 5, Jimmy Rogers, and wiggles her rear end]

NUMBER 3

Hi there, handsome.

JIMMY ROGERS

Back at ya, beautiful.

(Feels her rear end) Nice merchandise.

NUMBER 3

(hands him a business card)

Call me sometime.

I know a thousand ways to make you smile.

JIMMY ROGERS

I'll bet you do.

[NUMBER 3 EXITS giving an exaggerated wiggle now]

BERNICE

I figured she was from Nevada.

JOE

How so?

BERNICE

Everything is legal there.
And I mean *everything*.

Joe, please get me more out-of-state forms from the file over there.

JOE

Which file?

BERNICE

Never mind – I'll get them.

[NUMBER 5, JIMMY ROGERS, stands up and looks around and shakes
his head. He motions to the other man sitting and waiting.]

JIMMY ROGERS

Hey Pal.
What number do you have?

NUMBER 4

4.

JIMMY ROGERS

I got 5.
I'll give you 20 bucks to swap tickets.

NUMBER 4

Can't.
I'll be missing too much work.

JIMMY ROGERS

Okay, how about 50?

BERNICE

(comes back with forms and sits down)

Number 4!

NUMBER 4

Make it a hundred and you got a deal.

BERNICE

Number 4!

JIMMY ROGERS

Jesus.

Okay, here's a 100.

(they swap tickets and Jimmy Rogers gives him a \$100 bill)

BERNICE

Number 4!

(Jimmy Rogers goes up to the counter and hands Bernice his ticket)

JIMMY ROGERS

I'm Number 4.

BERNICE

No you're not.

JIMMY ROGERS

Sure I am.

Here's my ticket.

See.

It says 4.

BERNICE

I saw what you did.

You bribed that man to swap tickets with you.

JIMMY ROGERS

It wasn't a bribe.

It was a business transaction.

(looks at his expensive watch) Now, if you don't mind, I'm in a hurry.

BERNICE

You're in a what?

JIMMY ROGERS

I'm in a hurry.

BERNICE

Oh, you're in a HURRY?!

JIMMY ROGERS

Yes, I am.

BERNICE

You should have told me right away.
Do you know how unusual that is?
You're probably the only one who came in here - all year- that was in a hurry.

JIMMY ROGERS

Some of us are not on the government tit.

BERNICE

Meaning?

JIMMY ROGERS

Figure it out for yourself.
Now could we move this on.

BERNICE

Oh, you're just what I need on my last day of work.

JIMMY ROGERS

Like you ever put in a real day's work.
You watch the clock from Monday at 9, until Friday at 5.
Wasting taxpayers' money – my money.

Now could we PLEASE move this on?

BERNICE

Oh, that's it!
If you point at your hoidy toidy watch one more time,
I'm going to rip it off your wrist.

Give that man his ticket back.
And you, Number 4, give him his money back.

NUMBER 4

No, it's okay.
A deal is a deal.

BERNICE

In here, I say when a deal is a deal.
Give him his dirty money back.

If you don't, I'll skip over both of you, and your tickets will be worthless.

NUMBER 4

(hands Jimmy Rogers his money back)

Ah what the fuck. Here... give me back my number.

JIMMY ROGERS
(gives Number 4 back his ticket)

Yeah, yeah ...

(turns to Bernice)

Look, I'm running late.
Why don't you take this?

(hands her the \$100)

BERNICE

Tell me you just didn't do that!
Tell me you just didn't try to bribe me?
In front of witnesses, no less!
(She rips his \$100 bill into tiny pieces and puts it in an envelope)

BERNICE

Here, that's what I think of your dirty money.

JIMMY ROGERS

Who the hell do you think you're talking to?
Do you know who I am?

BERNICE

Yes, I know who you are.
You're Number 5 who tried to bribe his way to being Number 4.
And then tried to bribe me.

What is it that you are so in a rush to do today?
Come on, hand it over.

Hand it over, I said!

JIMMY ROGERS

Ok. Here.

BERNICE

Your license expired.

JIMMY ROGERS

No shit.
That's why I'm here.

BERNICE

Yesterday.

JIMMY ROGERS

Yes.
It expired yesterday. Now tell me something I don't know.

BERNICE

Let's see what the computer says about you ... James.

(Puts his information in her computer and hands his license back)

JIMMY ROGER

You can call me Jimmy.

Everyone does.

Now please, Miss.

I'm in a hurry.

BERNICE

I'm sure you are, *James*.

And I'll bet that's your brand new Lexus double parked out front.

Isn't it ... *James*?

JIMMY ROGERS

Why?

BERNICE

We'll put an end to that right away.

(she picks up her desk phone and dials)

Hello ...sheriff ... this is Bernice from the Ft Myers DMV.

We have a Lexus blocking our entrance door.

Its plate number is ...

(she stands up and looks out)

BG MONY.

I think that's supposed to stand for BIG MONEY.

Clever isn't it?

Would you send over a tow truck, please.

JIMMY ROGERS

Well, I guess I have to get going.

BERNICE

(still into the phone)

You're not going anywhere, Jimmy.

Sheriff, bring your citation book.

We have reason to believe the owner is driving with an expired license.

Thank you.

(hangs up and smiles at Jimmy Rogers, and hands him his license back)

BERNICE

NEXT!
NUMBER 4!

JIMMY ROGERS

Hey, what about me?
You cost me a hundred bucks.

BERNICE

You'll wait until I decide what to do with you.
Now sit back down and be quiet!

JIMMY ROGERS

You bitch!
You'll rue the day you did this!

BERNICE

Bitch?
You called me a bitch!
You haven't seen anything yet.

[NUMBER 4 stands up and gives Bernice a title paper. Jimmy Rogers takes his seat. **NUMBER 6 ENTERS**, an older woman, and takes a chair.]

NUMBER 4

I bought this mobile home.

BERNICE

Yes.

NUMBER 4

It's right next door to me.

BERNICE

Okay.

NUMBER 4

I want to put it in my daughter's name.
It's a gift.

BERNICE

Where is your daughter now?

NUMBER 4

At work.

BERNICE

Well, we need her here to sign the title papers in front of me.

NUMBER 4

What for?

BERNICE

Because that's the law.

NUMBER 4

Jesus! I waited here this long ... and for what?

BERNICE

Can you go get her?

NUMBER 4

No way in hell.

She works over at WalMart in Bonita Springs.

With traffic, that's an hour each way from here.

BERNICE

Well, figure out when she can come here, and we'll transfer it to her then.

NUMBER 4

When are you open?

BERNICE

Monday through Friday.

9 to 5.

NUMBER 4

She works every day, 9 to 5.

Are you open any nights?

BERNICE

Nope.

NUMBER 4

Weekends?

BERNICE

Nope.

NUMBER 4

Walmart is.

BERNICE

Yes, but they don't do title transfers, do they?

(takes out a form from her drawer)

Look, if you want, have her sign this POA.

Then she doesn't have to come here.

NUMBER 4

What's a POA?

JOE

It's a Power of Attorney.

It gives you the right to put the title in her name.

Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Bernice.

BERNICE

Please fill it out and come back.

NUMBER 4

Jeez.

What bullshit.

(Number 4 turns to leave, grumbling)

BERNICE

Sir.

NUMBER 4

Yeah?

BERNICE

Come back here a minute.

I need to ask you something.

NUMBER 4

Yeah.

BERNICE

Why did you circle both Male and Female for the new owner on the transfer paper?

NUMBER 4

I ain't sayin' it in front of him.

BERNICE

Oh?

Joe, would you mind excusing yourself?

JOE

I don't know why.
Just because I'm homosexual?
(Bernice gives him a look)
Never mind. I could use a break.

[JOE EXITS grumbling]

NUMBER 4

My daughter wants to be a man.

BERNICE

Oh.

NUMBER 4

She has an operation scheduled.
In India.
They have the cheapest rates.
Pretty soon SHE's gonna be a He.

BERNICE

Oh.

NUMBER 4

That's ain't the end of it.
Her twin brother wants to be a woman.

BERNICE

Oh.

NUMBER 4

And he's got a dick any man would be proud of.
Damn tally wacker is a foot long.
Don't know where he got it from.
My side of the family is hung like Chihuahuas.

BERNICE

Oh.

NUMBER 4

They're going to amputate his dick.

BERNICE

Oh my!

NUMBER 4

And then they're going to attach it to her.

BERNICE

Oh!

NUMBER 4

We ain't done yet.

They're going to make him a brand new vagina.

They say their genes got all mixed up in the womb.
They're fixing it with surgery.

So you tell me, what do I circle?
Male or female?

BERNICE

I don't know.
30 years and I never had a case like this.

NUMBER 4

So what is it?
Male?
Or female?

Or both, like I circled?

BERNICE

You can't do both.
The computer will kick it out.
Ask your daughter to decide.

NUMBER 4

Yeah, right.
See you later.
Who'd ever think my family would come to this?

[NUMBER 4 EXITS shaking his head]

BERNICE

NUMBER 6!

[JOE ENTERS grumbling]

JOE

Is the homophobe gone?

BERNICE

Number 4 is gone.

[JIMMY ROGERS STANDS UP along with NUMBER 6]

JIMMY ROGERS

Wait a minute!

I'm next!

I'm Number 5.

BERNICE

Yes ... but the BITCH says Number 6 is next.

Number 6 come up here.

[NUMBER 6, an elderly lady, walks over to Bernice. She gives Bernice some papers. Jimmy Rogers takes out his smart phone and calls.]

BERNICE

Well congratulations, Mrs. Kozlowski, on passing your driving test.

Why did you take so long to get a driver's license?

NUMBER 6

I was waiting for my husband to die.

BERNICE

Excuse me?

NUMBER 6

We only had 1 car, and he wouldn't let me drive it.

He hid the keys.

BERNICE

Why did he do that?

NUMBER 6

It was a collector's item – a 1954 Corvette.

He was afraid I would get into an accident and ruin it.

It's made of fiberglass, you know.

When you get into a car crash, it breaks up into a million pieces – like a jigsaw puzzle.

(whispers) It was the first car he got laid in.

I don't know how he did it with the stick shift in the way.

His stick was no good to me this last 20 years.

BERNICE

Well, be that has it may ...
It says here you went to driving school.

NUMBER 6

Yes, that bastard wouldn't teach me, neither.
Wouldn't let me near the driver's seat.
So I watched and waited.

So as soon as he went into the hospital, I started taking driving lessons.

Cancer was eating him up.
First his liver.
Then it spread to his stomach.

Then his balls.
Surgeon took them out.
Not that I cared anymore.
It didn't make no difference to me.

He passed on Monday.

BERNICE

My sympathies.

NUMBER 6

I buried him Tuesday.

BERNICE

I'm so sorry.

NUMBER 6

Took my driving test Wednesday.
Passed the first time.
The woman said I was a fine driver.
Very careful.

I called a locksmith this morning.
Made me up 2 sets of keys.

(She jiggles the keys)

My next door neighbor drove me over.
She's waiting outside for me to drive her home.

BERNICE

Well, let's get a picture of you for your new license.
Please stand over there.

BERNICE (cont'd)

(Number 6 stands up in front of a screen and a flash goes off)

There you go.

What do you think of that?

NUMBER 5

No, that will never do.

Let me take off my glasses.

[Number 6 stands again up in front of the screen and another flash goes off. **NUMBER 7 ENTERS**, a very old man with a cane.]

BERNICE

Try smiling ...

Come on ... big smile.

Show your teeth.

[NUMBER 6 takes out her false teeth]

No.

I didn't mean it that way.

Please put your teeth back in.

Now try another pose.

Try to look as happy outside as you feel inside.

You're finally driving after all these years.

(Number 6 stands in front of the screen again and another flash goes off)

I think that's better.

What do you think?

NUMBER 6

Yes, that's the one.

Thank you!

(Bernice hands her a driver's license)

(**NUMBER 6 EXITS**, ecstatic. She dances and sings "Oh What A Beautiful Morning" from "Oklahoma.")

NUMBER 6 (offstage)

HEY MAGGIE!

I GOT IT!

BERNICE

NUMBER 7!

BERNICE (cont'd)
[Jimmy Rogers stands up.]

I said NUMBER 7!
Number 5 you sit right back down!

JIMMY ROGERS

You really are a bitch.
You're going to pay for this.
(he takes out his cell phone and dials)

BUSY!
SHIT!

(Number 7 stands up. He is a very old man. He walks slowly, with a cane.
NUMBER 8 ENTERS, a middle aged Spanish man. He is holding a
bottle of Tequila, and is drunk. He takes the seat vacated by Number 7.)

BERNICE

How can I help you?

NUMBER 7

A policeman pulled me over and told me I have to come here.

BERNICE

Did he say why?

NUMBER 7

He said I was too old to drive.
I think that's prejudiced.
What do you think?

BERNICE

How old are you?

NUMBER 7

94 ...No wait a minute.
Maybe it's 95.
I forget sometimes.
What year is it?

BERNICE

2018

NUMBER 7

So, let's see ... if I was born in 1922 ...
I'm pretty sure it was '22.

NUMBER 7 (cont'd)

It was the year President Warren Harding put a radio in the White House and ...
Wait a minute ...

I think they also dedicated the Lincoln Memorial that year.
1922.
What do you think?

BERNICE

I'm not sure.
I was never good in history.

NUMBER 7

History?
Are you telling me young lady that I'm now part of history?

BERNICE

Young lady?
I haven't been called a young lady in almost half a century.

NUMBER 7

Well, to me you look young.

Okay ... so if I was born in 1922 ...

Oh what's the use.
I can't do 'rithmetic in my head anymore.
Used to be able to.
Too old now ...

Let me use my fingers ...

(uses his fingers)

That means I'm ... 95.

BERNICE

No, I think it's 96.
Let me see your driver's license.
We can double check using the computer.

NUMBER 7

(Pulls out a drivers license torn into 5 parts)

It's pretty old ... like me.
I tried taping it together ... but the tape dried out.
Just like me.

BERNICE
(uses computer)

Let's see what the computer says about you.
Here we are.
It says your license was supposed to be renewed when you were 80.

NUMBER 7

What year was that?

BERNICE

2002.
16 years ago.
So you were right – you are 95 ... going to be 96.

NUMBER 7

I'm sorry.
When was I supposed to renew again?

BERNICE

When you were 80.

NUMBER 7

What about when I was 80?

BERNICE

You were supposed to renew your license.

NUMBER 7

I thought so – but it just kept slipping my mind.
My wife hasn't been around to remind me.
She did all the reminding.

But she passed.

When did she pass?
Well, let me see.

(looks at his fingers)

My sister Sofie passed the year before ...
That was 1997 ...
No maybe it was 96.

BERNICE

Whatever ...

NUMBER 7

So my wife passed around 20 years ago.
I mean, I'm pretty sure it was 20 years ago.

But it could have been 19, though ...
Maybe 18.

BERNICE

Well, sir, either way, before you can drive again,
you are going to have to take an eye test ...
and a hearing test.

NUMBER 7

A what?

BERNICE

A hearing test.

NUMBER 7

A steering test?
I can steer the car just fine.

BERNICE

No, a hearing test!
Hearing!

NUMBER 7

Oh that I don't do so good anymore.

BERNICE

And how well do you see at night?

NUMBER 7

(whispering) Truth is, I don't see for shit after dark.

BERNICE

Well, let's get a medical opinion.
Here.
Bring these papers to your doctor, to fill out.

NUMBER 7

Can't

BERNICE

Why not?

NUMBER 7

He's dead, too.

BERNICE

Don't you have a new one?

NUMBER 6

Never had the time.

BERNICE

How long ago did your doctor pass?

NUMBER 6

I'm not sure.

Maybe 10 years ago – could be 15.

I kept forgetting to get a new doctor.

Let me see, he died right after my brother Bill.

That was ...

BERNICE

Never mind when your doctor died.

It's not important.

Here, go to my doctor.

He's very good.

Let me write down his name and phone number for you.

NUMBER 7

Write it big.

I don't see so good without my glasses.

BERNICE

Here.

Remember, you're supposed to wear your glasses when you drive.

NUMBER 7

I would ... but I lost them.

BERNICE

Well, you'll need to find them.

NUMBER 7

I tried.

Can't see well enough to find them.

I need a pair of new glasses to help me find my old glasses.

Hey, that's funny. (he chokes up laughing)

BERNICE

How did you get here today, sir?

NUMBER 7

I think I drove.

BERNICE

You think you drove?

NUMBER 7

It's hard to remember.

Wait a minute.

A policeman pulled me over,
So I must have drove part of the way.

God only knows where I left the car.
I do remember walking over here.
I think.

It was either that, or I might have grabbed a bus.
I remember smelling diesel fumes.

BERNICE

Either way, you shouldn't drive until we get your license renewed.
I'll call you a cab to take you home.

NUMBER 7

How much would that cost?

BERNICE

(Looks at computer)

Not very much.
Your license says you only live a few blocks from here.

Here, let me tape it together for you.

NUMBER 7

Never mind the cab.
I think I'll walk.
I need the exercise.

BERNICE

Be careful.
Remember what your mother told you - look both ways before you cross the street.

NUMBER 7

My mother?
Oh she's dead, too.

She got hit by a car right after the war.
WW II.
1946.
I think it was 1946.

It could have been the Korean war, though.

Thank you, young lady.

[NUMBER 7 EXITS very slowly]

BERNICE (to Joe)

Young lady.
It's better than being called bitch.

Look at him go.
He may not make it until dark at that speed.
I should have paid for his cab.

BERNICE

NUMBER 8!

[NUMBER 8 stands up and then falls down. He is helped up by Joe.]

JOE

Hold on there, partner.

NUMBER 8

I am holding on ... to you, senior.
Excuse me.

[NUMBER 8 starts making puking noises.]

JOE

Oh my God!
First baby dump.
Now drunk puke.

NO! Don't throw up here.

I can't take these smells, with a hangover, so this early in the morning!
Dear God! HOLD IT DOWN!

NUMBER 8

I am sorry senior.
My stomach is not so strong any more.
And this Tequila is cheap.
But is all I can afford.
Walk me outside and I'll puke in the bushes.

JIMMY

Hold on to me.
Let's get you out of here.

[JOE and NUMBER 8 EXIT]

[JOE ENTERS again]

BERNICE

I need a break.
Joe, you want to try a solo?

JOE

All by myself?

BERNICE

That's what solo means, doesn't it?
You'll be all by yourself starting Monday.

JIMMY ROGERS
(angry tone)

I demand someone take care of me now!
I've waited long enough!

JOE

No, I think I need a break too.

[Bernice stands, gets her pocketbook, puts up a sign saying "Will Return in 10 minutes" and **EXITS** stage left. **Joe EXITS** right after her, running.]

JIMMY ROGERS

Well, don't that beat all!
(takes out his cell phone)
Let me speak to him, please.

I'm having a problem getting over there.
Yes, I know how important our meeting is.
One of your people at DMV is giving me a hard time.
Her name is Bernice.

JIMMY ROGERS (cont'd)
(walks over to the door)

She's having my car towed away right now.

(There are noises of a tow truck raising a car up.)

HEY!

LEAVE MY CAR ALONE!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER (offstage)

SORRY BUDDY.

I GOT A JOB TO DO.

JIMMY ROGERS

No, I couldn't stop them.

She told them my license expired.

They were ready to arrest me.

[**BERNICE ENTERS**, along with **JOE**. She sees the tow truck outside.]

BERNICE

Well, it looks like you won't be using that car any time soon.

JIMMY

Would you have one of your people call this Bernice, so I can get out of here?

Thank you..

[**The phone rings on Bernice's desk. She ignores it.**]

JIMMY

Aren't you going to answer it?

BERNICE

This bitch is not going to answer to any of your lackies.

(Bernice picks up the phone and then hangs it right up.
She dawdles around and shuffles papers, and then calls out)

NUMBER 5!

(Jimmy Rogers walks over to Bernice and lays his license down)

JIMMY ROGERS

Here.

BERNICE
(examines it carefully)

You need to take another eye test.
Do you want to take it now, or go to your family-

JIMMY ROGERS

I'll take it now.
Right now.

BERNICE

Okay, then.
Lean over and look into the machine on your left.

Yes, that thing.
Now read the letters on the top row.

JIMMY ROGERS

Can I use my glasses?

BERNICE

Yes, if you want.

JIMMY ROGERS (puts on glasses)

A ... G ... M ... C ... Y ... Z.

BERNICE
(smiling)

Now read the bottom row.

JIMMY

What are you kidding me?

BERNICE

Read the bottom row please.

JIMMY ROGERS

It's too damn small.

BERNICE

Are you saying you can't read it?

JIMMY ROGERS

No.
I'm saying nobody can read it.
Even an ant couldn't read it.
Without a magnifying glass.

BERNICE

Then I'm sorry sir.
You are not eligible to renew your license.
Here's your expired license back.

NEXT!
NUMBER 8!

[**NUMBER 8 ENTERS** and opens the front door, holding his stomach]

NUMBER 8

I'm number 8.

JIMMY ROGERS

Hey, you better sit back down.
I'm not done here.

NUMBER 8

But she call my number.

JIMMY ROGERS

But she's not finished with me.

BERNICE

Oh, but I am finished with you.

JIMMY ROGERS

Oh no you're not!

BERNICE

Oh yes I am.

JIMMY ROGERS

Oh no you're not!

BERNICE

Do you want me to call a sheriff?

JIMMY ROGERS

You can call whomever you want, but we're not finished here!

BERNICE

I say we are finished.
You failed your eye exam.

JIMMY ROGERS

You're doing this on purpose!

BERNICE

Doing what sir?

JIMMY ROGERS

Purposely failing me on eye exam.

BERNICE

(picks up her phone)

Hello, Denise

I have a customer who refuses to leave,
and he's bothering everyone here.

Yes, if you can't send out an officer, then come yourself.

JIMMY ROGERS

(takes out his cell phone)

Hello.

Let me speak to him again, please.

I'm still having a problem getting over there.

Your person at DMV is still giving me a hard time.

Yes ... Bernice Hodes.

BERNICE

It's pronounced Hode --- dess.

JIMMY ROGERS

Bernice Hode ... dess.

Here.

BERNICE

What are you doing?

JIMMY ROGERS

What does it look like?

I'm handing you my phone.

BERNICE

I'm not touching that thing.

I don't know where it's been or what kind of disease is on it.

(The sound of a police siren is heard)

JIMMY ROGERS

Sir, she won't take my phone.

[**DENISE (former NUMBER 2) ENTERS** from front door. She is wearing a police uniform and a gun]

Uh oh!

Let me call you back.

DENISE

What's the trouble Bernice?

BERNICE

This man flunked his eye test and won't leave.

JIMMY ROGERS

She purposely flunked me.

Nobody can read the bottom line.

DENISE

(sticks her head into eye machine)

K – T – O – P – Q – X

BERNICE

Perfect!

JIMMY ROGERS

No way!

Let me see.

DENISE

Get your hands off of me, sir!

JIMMY ROGERS

I need you to move over so I can read the machine.

DENISE

Then ask politely.

JIMMY ROGERS

Officer, would you please give me space to read the eye test.

Thank you.

JIMMY ROGERS

Son of a bitch!

DENISE

There's no reason to use the b word in here.

I can't stand the sound of that word.

BERNICE

Me, neither.

JIMMY ROGERS

She switched the letters!

She switched the letters!

Those aren't the same God damn tiny itty bitty letters she gave me.

BERNICE

Denise, as you can see,
he's obviously lost his mind.
Please take him away.

DENISE

Come with me, sir.

JIMMY ROGERS
(dials his cell phone)

You better get over here.
This is turning into a cluster fuck.

(he hangs up)

DENISE

Put your hands behind your back, sir.

JIMMY ROGERS

What for?

DENISE

So I can get the cuffs on.

JIMMY ROGERS

Cuffs?

DENISE

Yes, you're under arrest.

JIMMY ROGERS

Under arrest!
What are you arresting me for?
Bad eyesight?!

DENISE

No. You're getting arrested for disturbing the peace in a government office.

And ... for being an asshole.

BERNICE

I'll sign a statement attesting to that!

How about you Joe?

JOE

Do I have to?

I'd rather not.

I'm going to be around here a long time after you leave.

[Bernice stares at Joe a long time without saying anything.]

Ms. Bernice ...

Bernice ...

Oh, okay ...

You know I can't refuse you when you look at me that way.

Yes, I'll be a witness he was acting like an asshole.

DENISE

Put your hands behind your back, sir!

JIMMY ROGERS

The hell I will!

DENISE

(into the microphone on her shoulder pad)

Central, I need backup over at the DMV!

We got a crazy perp here resisting arrest.

JIMMY ROGERS

You don't know who I am.

Do you?

You're all in serious trouble!

(There is a police siren off in the distance. Then another one.)

BERNICE

It seems like you're the one in trouble.

[A well dressed man in a suit ENTERS]

DENISE
(salutes)

Mayor Blackburn!

MAYOR
(salutes back)

Yes.

DENISE
Officer Denise Washington at your service.

BERNICE
Oh shit!

JOE
(Sinks under the desk)
I second that.
Oh shit!

[INTERMISSION]

ACT TWO

Scene One

MAYOR

Officer Washington, you are relieved.
Please return to your station.

DENISE

Yes, sir.

(talking into her personal speaker/microphone)

Central, cancel the backup at the DMV.
Mayor Blackburn has the situation under control.

[Denise salutes, and then **EXITS**]

MAYOR

And I assume you are Bernice Hodes, the person in charge of this office?

BERNICE

It's pronounced Hode – dess.

MAYOR

Whatever and however it is pronounced, are you in charge here?

BERNICE

Yes, sir.

MAYOR

Who's that under the desk?

JOE

(From under the desk)

Nobody.

MAYOR

Could you please come out, Mr. Nobody.

(Joe stands up)

And who are you?

JOE

Joe Hargity, manager in training.
Oh ... oh ... oh !

MAYOR

What's the matter?

JOE

I drank 15 margaritas last night and my stomach is in a shambles.
I have to go potty real bad!

MAYOR

Potty?
I haven't ever heard anyone above the age of six say that.
So go potty already.

[**JOE EXITS** on the run, stage left]

[**NUMBER 8** stands up and stumbles around drunkenly. He almost falls
but is held up by **NUMBER 9 who ENTERS**, a middle aged waitress.]

NUMBER 9

Does anyone belong to this man?

NUMBER 8

I so sick ... mucho enfermo.
I must throw up again.

MAYOR

Ms. Hodes, please send that man outside.

In fact, close the office now.

BERNICE

How many times do I have to say it?
It's pronounced Hode – dess.

NUMBER 9

Hey, what about my turn?

BERNICE

All right, you heard the Mayor.
The office is temporarily closed.

MAYOR

Hold onto to your number.
When the office re-opens, you will keep your turn.

MAYOR

Ms. Hodes, please lock the door after them.

[**NUMBERS 8 and 9 EXIT**, grumbling]
[We are left with the Mayor, Jimmy Rogers, and Bernice on stage. Joe is still in the bathroom]

MAYOR

Now what's the problem, Jimmy?
The brunch for our major donors starts in less than an hour.
What are you still doing here?

JIMMY ROGERS

My license expired yesterday.

MAYOR

So?
Renew it!

JIMMY ROGERS

I want to!
She won't let me.

MAYOR

And why won't you let him?

BERNICE

Because he failed the eye test.

JIMMY ROGERS

Nobody could pass that eye test.

MAYOR

Where is the eye test?

JIMMY ROGERS

It's in that machine.

MAYOR

(stoops down and reads)

A ... G ... M ... C ... Y ... Z.

JIMMY ROGERS

Now read the bottom line.

MAYOR

K – T – O – P – Q – X
What's the problem?

JIMMY ROGERS
(stoops over and then stands up and commands Bernice)

Let me see that!

Hey you, Hodes!
Step back!

BERNICE

Okay. Okay.
You don't have to shout at me.

JIMMY ROGERS

K – T – O – P – Q – X

MAYOR
(stoops over again)

K – T – O – P – Q – X
That's right. So what's the problem?

JIMMY ROGERS

She switched the letters before.
They were impossible to read without a microscope.

MAYOR

Is that true Ms. Hodes?

BERNICE

That's pronounced Hode – dess.

MAYOR

God damn it!
Stop telling me how to pronounce it.

BERNICE

I will when you do it correctly!

MAYOR

One more correction out of you and you'll be terminated.
Immediately!

Now did you switch the letters around?

BERNICE

None of your damn business!

MAYOR

None of my damn business!
I'm the Mayor and it is my damn business.

BERNICE

Listen Buster - you can tell the police officer what to do.
You sign their checks.
The Police work for you.

I don't work for you!

I work for the County Tax Collector.
He signs my checks.

You don't have the right to *terminate* me.

MAYOR

Oh, really.

BERNICE

Yes, really.

MAYOR

(gets out his cell phone)

Let's see what the County Tax Collector has to say about this.

Sherrill, is Dick in?

Can I speak to him, please.
It's important.

Hi, Dick.
How's the wife?
Kids okay?
Is the oldest still on the wrestling team?

Dick, we have a situation here at the DMV.
It's seems you have a Bernice Hodes in charge here.

BERNICE

That's pronounced Hode – dess.

MAYOR

Dick, she pronounces it Hode – dess.

Well, she purposely failed Jimmy Rogers on the eye test to renew his license.

MAYOR (cont'd)

I don't know why.

Look, I need Jimmy downtown for a brunch with my big donors.
I don't have to remind you how important donations are in this election year.

Yes, I heard Jimmy raised money for you, too.

Well, would you please order Ms Hodes – excuse me – Hode – dess to renew his license.
His eyesight is fine.
I watched him pass the test myself ... with my own eyes – which are 20/20.

Thank you, Dick.

(hands his cell phone over to Bernice)

Here, your boss wants to speak to you.

BERNICE

Yes, sir, Mr. Ebersol.

Yes, Mr. Ebersol.

Yes, sir.

I'm sorry, but no, sir.
I can NOT do that, sir.

Why?
Because he has been arrogant and obnoxious the whole time he has been here.
He even tried to bribe me.

Yes, you heard me right.
He tried to bribe me with a 100 dollar bill.

Why, I ripped it up and gave it back to him.

Sir, listen to me please.
This is my last day working here.
At 5PM, I'm going into retirement, a retirement I sorely deserve.

For 30 years I have been taking shit –
excuse my language –
from every crazy bastard that walked in the DMV.
And sir, we have some real crazy bastards in this county.

How crazy?
You can't imagine how crazy.

BERNICE (cont'd)

The normal human mind cannot fathom the craziness that exists here.

We had a woman go into the restroom, and then come running out naked.
Naked as a jaybird – and it was NOT a pretty sight,

I've had old men pee on the floor when they got tired of waiting their turn.
That was not a pretty smell.

Why just the other morning, I had someone rip the name tag off my neck and chew on it.

We get people that should be put in straight jackets and tossed into rubber rooms.
Why we let them drive is a mystery to me –

But they all need to drive.

So, sir, this is the first day of the rest of my life.
And I decided I will not take any more shit –
excuse my language again –
as long as I live.
30 years is enough already.

Benice Hode – dess has taken the last shit from anyone ...
And you don't have to excuse my language any more!

Sorry, sir – I did not mean to interrupt, but know this also.
Along with not taking any more shit is ...
I'm not following any more stupid orders.

Excuse me?
Excuse me!
EXCUSE ME!!!

You want to fire me on my last day?

You can't fire me on my last day!

Oh yeah?
Oh yeah!

Let's see what our Union representative has to say about that!
Okay, sir.

(Hands phone back to Mayor)

Here.
He wants to speak to you again.

MAYOR

Yes, I heard.

(whispers) Can you do that?

Well, yes.

That's fine with me.

Bernice, your boss is saying either you pass Jimmy, and renew his license right now-
or ...

You will be fired right now ...

and ...

You will lose your pension.

BERNICE

I will **what**?

MAYOR

You heard me.

You will lose your pension.

BERNICE

He can't do that!

MAYOR

Your boss, the Tax Collector, says we can.

Here.

(he hands her his cell phone and she takes it)

BERNICE

Yes sir, please tell me you are not serious.

What?

No you can NOT ...

What?

No way in hell!

(she hands back the Mayor's cell phone)

Here, take this back.

MAYOR

Bernice, let me explain it the way your boss explained it.

There is a clause in your employment agreement that says ...

You can be terminated for criminal actions on your job.

MAYOR (cont'd)

and ...

Putting in the wrong viewing slide is criminally negligent.

and

You will lose all rights to your pension.

BERNICE

I'm calling my union representative!

MAYOR

He's already been called by your boss.

BERNICE

The hell you say.

(takes out her cell phone and dials)

In an hour there will be 5,000 government employees picketing outside.

They will be carrying signs.

The signs will say "Impeach the Mayor" and "Impeach the Tax Collector."

There will be tv cameras and reporters there.

The people at your "brunch" will see this.

Then you'll see how generous they will be with campaign donations.

Hello ... (talking into her own cellphone)

MAYOR

(talking into his own cell phone)

Hold on Dick.

I think she's calling her union rep now.

BERNICE

This is Bernice Hodes at the DMV.

I need to speak to Mr. Bonamo right away!

What do you mean he's out of town?!

This is an emergency!

Well, who steps in when he's out of town?

Then let me speak to her.

What do you mean she's also out of town?!

Who can I speak to then?

What do you mean nobody?!

BERNICE (cont'd)

No, I can NOT wait until next week – I need someone right now!
I'm about to get fired and lose my pension!

Look I've been paying union dues for 30 years -
And now there's no one around when I need them!

Look, Missy, you call your bosses wherever they are in this world,
And you tell them to call me.
This is an emergency!

Yes, this is Bernice Hodes at the DMV.

Hello? Hello! Hello!!

How the hell are they going to call me back if they don't have my phone number?
(she redials the union rep)

Vociemail!
Wouldn't you know it.

MAYOR

Are you ready now to re-test Jimmy and renew his license?

BERNICE

And if I don't?

MAYOR

Then you're fired.

You heard your boss.

BERNICE

Yes.

MAYOR

So what are you going to do?

BERNICE

Hold on!
I'm thinking!

MAYOR

Could you come up with an answer while we're all young.

BERNICE

Okay.
You got me.

MAYOR
(into his cell phone)

She's going to comply, Dick.
I'll speak to you later.
Thanks for your help.

(he hangs up)

BERNICE
(She fiddles with the eye testing machine)
Go ahead, read the top line.

JIMMY ROGERS
(stoops down and reads)
A ... G ... M ... C ... Y ... Z.

BERNICE
And now the bottom line.

JIMMY ROGERS
God damn it!
She changed the bottom line back to the tiny letters.

Here!
Look, Mayor.

MAYOR
(stoops down and then stands up)
We're running out of time here!
Ms. Hodes are you finished playing games?

BERNICE
It's pronounce Hode – dess.

MAYOR
You're going to be pronounced FIRED if you don't obey this direct order.

BERNICE
You can't fire me.
I already told you that.
Only the Tax Collector can.

MAYOR
Easy enough.
I'll get him back on the line.
(he redials his cell phone)
Dick, she won't comply.

[**JOE ENTERS** looking scared out of his wits. He sits down next to Bernice]

MAYOR (cont'd)

You know, Dick, she has a trainee sitting next to her.

I'll tell him.

(to Joe) Hey, you.

Yeah, you.

JOE

Yes, Your Honor?

MAYOR

Can't you administer the eye test?

JOE

Ah ... ah ... ah ... I don't know.

BERNICE

No.

He can't give it while I'm here.

Only one person is authorized to give the eye test.

Right, Joe?

JOE

I guess so.

MAYOR

Dick, would you please fire her now, so Joe can replace her.

(he hands Bernice his cell phone again)

BERNICE

I'm not going to let him fire me over your dirty filthy cell phone.

MAYOR

Take the phone.

BERNICE

No.

MAYOR

Take the phone Damn it!

BERNICE

No.

MAYOR

She won't take the phone, Dick.

(Bernice's desk phone rings.)

BERNICE

I'm not answering.

MAYOR

She refuses to answer her desk phone, too.

Whoop!

Now she just turned off her ringer.

BERNICE

You tell Mr. Ebersol he has to come here in person to fire me.
30 years of service demands that respect.

MAYOR

She says you have to come here in person, Dick.

Can't you postpone your meeting?

I postponed mine.

Look, Dick, we have to do something fast.

I have my brunch in a half hour.

We're talking about 500 plates at \$2,000 a plate, Dick.

That's a million dollars.

That can buy an awful lot of advertising ...

Which can buy an awful lot of votes ...

Especially when the Tax Collector needs his budget increased.

Yes, that's right.

You wash my back, I'll wash yours Dick.

Good, see you in ten minutes.

[The people that were waiting for a turn, and then were sent outside,
KNOCK on the door with irritation. **NUMBER 8 and NUMBER 9 are**
joined by NUMBER 10, a nurse wearing a nurse's uniform.]

BERNICE

The natives are getting restless, your *Honor*.

MAYOR

Stop banging on the door!

NUMBER 8 and 9 and 10

WE HAVE TO GET TO WORK!

MAYOR

So do I!
Just be patient.

BERNICE

(picks up her cell phone and dials)

Mary Jo, it's me sweetie.

Well ... I ran into some last minute trouble here.
I may not make it there tomorrow.

It's a long story and I don't have time to –

Okay, it's a long sad story.

Okay, I think I'm getting fired.
(she fights to hold back her tears)

And losing my pension.
(she blows her nose)

Yes, I know all my furniture is on its way to you.

Yes, I know I have no place to live here anymore.

Yes, I know I have no job and no money coming in.

**(Bernice breaks down and cries hysterically.
Then she wipes away her tears and collects herself)**

Look at me.
Crying like a little woos.

I took care of you and your two brothers, all by myself, after your father died.
I didn't go on welfare, and I didn't go into hock.

I just bit my lip and did what I had to do to survive.
Working here is what I had to do, and I did it.
And now I'll do what I have to do, again, to survive.

[There is the sound of sirens in the background, getting closer]

JIMMY

Look, smarten up!
Don't let it get to this.
Let me renew my license, for God's sake!

BERNICE

Hold on a sec, Mary Jo.
(she holds her hand over her cell phone)
You mind your business, you!
This *bitch* is not taking shit anymore from the likes of you and people like you!

JIMMY

Of all the licensing places to go to, I went to this one.
Wish a stubborn crazy woman in charge ...
having a nervous breakdown

BERNICE

Mary Jo, I'll let you know how it turns out.

Don't you worry about your old momma.
She'll get through it.
I always get through it.

You just set a place for me at your dinner table tomorrow.

(she puts her phone away)

[**DICK EBERSOL**, the tax collector, taps on the door.
The Mayor goes over and unlocks it and **DICK ENTERS**]

DICK

Your Honor, Mayor Blackburn

MAYOR

Honorable Tax Collector Ebersol.
(they shake hands)

DICK

Ms Hodes?

BERNICE

It's pronounced Hode – dess.

JIMMY

Here we go with the Hode – desses again.

MAYOR

I told her it would be pronounced FIRED if she didn't stop this nonsense.

BERNICE

It's not nonsense, sir.
He does not deserve a license.

DICK

Which he?

BERNICE

That he.

DICK

Jimmy Rogers?

BERNICE

Yes.

DICK

I know Jimmy.
He's a fine man.

BERNICE

He wasn't acting that way in here.

First, he strutted in like he owned the place.
After he double parked his fancy new Lexus out front,
With his fancy license plate BG MONY.

Then he bribed one of the people waiting to switch numbers with him

When I caught him doing that, he tried to bribe me.

But I wouldn't let him!
Then when it was time for his real turn, he flunked the eye test.

JIMMY

She rigged the test.

DICK

What do you mean she rigged the test?

JIMMY

Here, look at the eye test machine and read the first line.

DICK

A ... G ... M ... C ... Y ... Z.
(stands up) That's easy.

JIMMY

Now read the last line.

Step back from the machine, Hode – dess!

DICK
(bends down again)

What are you kidding me?

K... no E ... no P ... then D ... no F ...
What the hell!
It's impossible to read the last line without a microscope!

JIMMY

Now you got it.

DICK
Ms. Hodes – why did you switch the last line?

BERNICE
How many times do I have to correct you?
It's Hode – dess.

DICK
However the hell you pronounce it, why did you do it?

BERNICE
Because after 30 years of working in this torment -
Holding my head up high -
there was no way I was going to allow that bastard to push me around.

Especially after he called me a bitch.
A **BITCH!**

MAYOR
(points to his watch)

We have a deadline, Dick.

DICK
I can see this is getting nowhere.
Where is his old license?
I'll renew it myself.

BERNICE

It's right here.

Uh oh ...

(we hear the sound of a paper shredding machine)

DICK

Tell me you didn't just shred it?

BERNICE

Yes, I had it ready to shred and the shredder just accidentally went on, ... all by itself.

DICK

Well, move away from the computer.

I'll redo ...

What happened to your computer?

BERNICE

It went down.

It does that sometimes, doesn't it Joe?

JOE

I'm not sure ... I mean ... I don't know.

I've only been here 3 weeks Mr. Ebersol ... in training.

DICK

Well, someone fix it!

BERNICE

We'll have to call the IT guy from the main office.

I hope you're not in a hurry.

It will take the rest of today ... or Monday.

DICK

No it won't!

Not when I'm in charge!

Get him on the phone!

BERNICE

Okay.

Don't say I didn't warn you.

(she picks up the office phone)

Hi ... this is Bernice Hodes from the DMV office in Fort Myers.

Yes, how are you Wilamena?

BERNICE (cont'd)

Were you at my retirement party last night?
Why didn't you come up and say howdy doo?

It was some party, wasn't it?

Yeah, me too.
Terrible hangover.

The dancer?
That was my replacement, Joe Hargity?

Yes, he can sure shake that thing, can't he?
It's a shame he only likes men.

JOE

Please, Bernice!

DICK

Would you *please* stop this talk of tally wackers and get the IT guy on the phone!

BERNICE
(covers phone)

Okay, already!
Wilamena, would you please connect me with Phil in IT?

Oh, I see.

(to Dick)

Phil is out sick.
He has gout.

DICK

Then get the person who backs him up!

BERNICE
Wilamena, who covers for Phil when he's out?

Oh, I see. Sammy.

DICK

Then get Sammy, for God's sake!

BERNICE
We can't get Sammy.
After the last cut back, you let Sammy go.
Phil has no one covering for him, Mr. Ebersol.

DICK

Ask Wilamena, how with over 500 employees in the Tax Collector's Office,
we don't have anyone available to fix your computer?!

(What Dick Ebersol doesn't know is Bernice only unplugged her computer.)

BERNICE

Wilamena is there anyone around who knows how to fix our terminal?

Oh ... I see.

Yes, I see.

Okay ...

Sorry, Mr. Ebersol, there is no one.

Wilamena said you were told this could happen, but you let Sammy go anyway.

MAYOR

Well, Jimmy, jump in my car.

I'll scoot you over to the brunch.

I still have time to give the opening speech.

Dick, what do you want to do with Bernice here?

DICK

That's easy.

Bernice, you're fired!

Pack up your things and leave **Ms. Hode - dess.**

BERNICE

Mr. Tax Collector, what is the official reason for my being let go ...

My attorney will need it when we sue you for a million dollars for *wrongful termination*.

DICK

Sue me?

You have to be kidding.

You have been insubordinate ... incompetent ... and criminally negligent.

JIMMY

I'll testify to that.

MAYOR

So will I.

And you can forget about working for any part of the government ever again.

JIMMY

Like they say in Hollywood, you'll never work in this town again.
We're going to see to that.
Right Mayor?
I have a list of friends in government, all over Florida.

MAYOR

Absolutely

BERNICE

(starting to box up her things)

Oh, you haven't seen the last of me.
Old Bernice Hodes.
They'll be picket lines around your offices on Monday going around the block.

DICK

(Looks around Bernice's computer, sees a loose plug)

What is this plug to?
Ms. Hodes, straighten out that plug before you leave.

[there is the sound of the computer coming back on]

DICK

What was that?

BERNICE

The computer came back on.
(she turns to wink at Joe)
It does that sometimes.
Just turns off ... then turns back on.
Make a note of that, Joe.
(she steps away from the computer)
Well, have at it, Mr. Tax Collector.

DICK

Have at what?

BERNICE

Renewing Jimmy Rogers's license.

DICK

(he sits down at computer, checks his wallet, and then freezes)
I don't have my id and password.

I lost the card I kept it on in my wallet.

BERNICE

Well, don't look at me.
I can't let you use mine.
It's a breach of security.

DICK

You work for me – how can it be a breach of security?

BERNICE

No. I don't work for you anymore.
You terminated me.

DICK

Okay, how about you, Joe?

JOE

I was supposed to get a new ID from Phil, at the end of the day.
But as you know, he's out ... with the gout ...
and Sammy doesn't work for us anymore.

Oh my, my tummy hurts.
I have to go potty again.
Y'all have to excuse me.

[JOE EXITS running to the bathroom]

DICK

Jimmy, how important is it to get your license right now?

JIMMY

Very important.
I have appointments with our major donors after the brunch, for the rest of the day.

DICK

All right, Bernice.
You renew Jimmy's license and I'll rehire you.

BERNICE

Do I keep my 30 years of seniority?

DICK

Yes.

BERNICE

And get to retire at the end of the day with full pension?

Mayor? DICK

It's okay by me. MAYOR

Jimmy? DICK

It's okay by me ... if ... JIMMY
(Bernice sits back down in her chair)
She apologizes for all the *shit* she put me through.
(Bernice stands up)

No how! BERNICE
No way!

I'm not apologizing to that snake.

Jimmy? DICK

I demand an apology! JIMMY

Oh you demand, do you? BERNICE

Do you see this little finger?
Do you see how small it is?
Well, as small as it is, I wouldn't lift it one bit to help you ... ever again.

Oh, you are one smug little bitch aren't you?
Well stuff the license up your ass!
I'll get a new one later. JIMMY

I can't stuff it up my ass.
It's all in shreds. BERNICE
(holds up the shredded license)

But wait a minute.
This is something I can do.

JIMMY

I don't like the way she's smiling.

(BERNICE sits down at the computer, makes a few key strokes, and stands up smiling)

BERNICE

Yeah, well I'm smiling because this smug little bitch just fixed you.
You won't have a license in this state – Ever! Ever! EVER!
I put a FF on your name.

JIMMY

What's an FF, Dick?

DICK

It's a Felon Flag.
A secret code we invented to keep escaped felons from getting a license.

We created it after a clerk was held up at gunpoint.
By an escaped convict from Charlotte Correctional.

JIMMY

So remove the FF damn it!

DICK

The are only two people who can remove.
The clerk who put it on initially ...

BERNICE

And that's me, yours truly ... Bernice Hodes.
Pronounced Hode – dess.

JIMMY

And who else?

BERNICE

Do you have anything you want to say, Mr. Tax Collector?

DICK

Well ...

JIMMY

Dick?

DICK

I can also remove it.

JIMMY
Well, then remove the fucking Felon Flag, Dick.

DICK
I want to.

JIMMY
And I want you to.
We all want you to.

DICK
(clearing his throat)
But ... I ... uh ... can't.

JIMMY
What do you mean you can't?

DICK
Well, I have a special ID and password to remove it ...

MAYOR
So remove it!

DICK
It was on the same card ...
I kept my regular id and password on.

BERNICE
Which you lost ...

DICK
I never needed it until now.

MAYOR
Why is this turning into a major monster cluster fuck?

BERNICE
(clears her throat)
Oh ... but I can still remove the flag.

DICK & JIMMY
Yes?

BERNICE
After you reinstate my job ... and ... my seniority ...

JIMMY

Dick, I need to be able to drive.
I shouldn't have to explain that.

BERNICE

But first I need one more thing for putting me through this.

DICK, JIMMY and MAYOR

Yes?

BERNICE

I want an apology.

DICK, JIMMY and MAYOR

A what?

BERNICE

You heard me,
The smug little bitch wants an apology.
From all of you ...

From the Mayor ...
And ...the Tax Collector
and ...most of all ... Jimmy Rogers.

That's in order of assholeness,
You have all been total assholes to me today.
Jimmy being the biggest asshole of all.

JIMMY

Oh, that tears it!
I am NOT apologizing.
Never!
No never!

BERNICE

Then you will never drive again in Florida.

Oh by the way, when Florida Felon Flags you, so will every other state.
We all have reciprocity on this.

JIMMY

Yeah ... well then you won't retire with a pension.

BERNICE
(packs up)

That's okay. I can live without it.

DICK

You'll get a terrible reference from me.
You'll never work in this county again.

BERNICE

That's okay.
I can live without it.

MAYOR

I can make sure you never work in any government job in the state of Florida again.

BERNICE

That's okay.
I can live without that, too.

[BERNICE EXITS stage left]

JIMMY

God damn it!
BERNICE!

[BERNICE speaks offstage until noted]

BERNICE

Yes, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Get back here.

BERNICE

Say please.

JIMMY

Please.

BERNICE

I don't like the way you said please.
Now you have to say pretty please.

JIMMY

Oh for Christ's sake.
Pretty please.

BERNICE

With sugar on top?

JIMMY
(whispers)

Go to hell.

BERNICE

I heard that.

JIMMY

Okay.
Pretty please with sugar on top.

BERNICE

And a cherry.

JIMMY

And a cherry for Christ's sake.
Is this kindergarten?

[BERNICE ENTERS stage left]

BERNICE

Do you all have something to say to me?

MAYOR

I apologize.

DICK

I'm sorry.

JIMMY

Me, too.

BERNICE

Me, too?
What's with this 'me too' stuff?
That's not good enough.

MAYOR
(hits Jimmy on the shoulder)

Come on, Jimmy, let's get this going.
We have 500 people waiting!
And a million dollars in party donations!

JIMMY

Ok already.
I apologize.

BERNICE
(sits down and types up a letter)

Here, you two sign this.

MAYOR

What is it?

DICK
(reading the paper)

She wants to be sure we don't renege.
Proof positive she gets her job back

BERNICE
Along with 30 years of seniority for my pension.

(Dick and Mayor sign and hand it back to Bernice)

BERNICE
Thank you.
You can go now.
I'll give Jimmy back his license.

JIMMY
(looks at his watch)

How much longer?

BERNICE
Just five or ten minutes.

MAYOR
Fine.
Jimmy, grab an Uber if you don't mind.
I'll meet you back at the brunch.
I have a few important things to take care of before.

DICK
What are you serving, Mayor?

MAYOR
Fresh Maine lobster.
We flew it down this morning.

DICK
In that case, set a place for me.
You owe me.

[The MAYOR and The Tax Collector EXIT]

BERNICE
(Sits at computer and enters info)

Sit down.

I don't like you peering down over me.

(There is tapping on the front door from impatient customers)

HOLD YOUR HORSES!
I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.

JIMMY
You got some nerve, lady.

BERNICE
(stops entering info into computer)
You have no idea who you were messing with.
Do you?

Well, do you?

You think I'm just some tired old bimbo doing a dumb government job.
Staring at the clock from Monday at 9 until Friday at 5.
Don't you?

Well don't you!

JIMMY
I'd rather not say.

BERNICE
Grow a set of balls and man up.

JIMMY
Not yet.

BERNICE
Here.
I promised you your license back, and there it is.

Go ahead.
Take it.

That should grow some hair on your testicles.

NOW you can say whatever you want.

JIMMY

(examines it and then puts it in his wallet)

You are some piece of work.

BERNICE

(stands up, grabs her keys, and heads toward front door)

Yes, I am.

A great deal of work.

Do you know how many people I help in an average day?

JIMMY

I don't know.

Ten or twenty.

BERNICE

Try at least fifty.

And I work 5 days a week,

50 weeks a year.

Do you know how many people I help in an average year?

Do the math,

It's more than 10,000 people each year.

And how many years have I been doing this?

JIMMY

You said 30.

BERNICE

That's right.

30 years.

Times 10,000 people each year, comes out to ...

(takes out a calculator)

300,000 people.

JIMMY

That's a lot of people.

BERNICE

Yes it is!

Three hundred thousand people have sat in front of me.

Everyone had a story.

All sorts of bullshit.

BERNICE (cont'd)

Many lied ...

Many almost drove me crazy.

But I helped every one of them get a license, or a title.

Until you.

How many people have you helped in your lifetime, Jimmy Rogers?
How many crooked politicians did you help get elected?

JIMMY

A few.

BERNICE

Probably not more than 10 or 20, I'll bet.

I've done thousands of times the amount of good that you have.
This dumb old bimbo who works in the DMV
Staring at the clock for 40 hours a week.
The one you called a smug *little* bitch.

And you wanted to push me around?

No way.

No how.

You were out gunned and out maneuvered.

(People are tapping on the door outside)

I'm coming!

I'm coming!

BERNICE

Here's the number of the county impound to get your car.

And here's the number of a good Uber.

Try to have a good life, Jimmy Rogers.

(She unlocks the door. **JIMMY EXITS** and then 3 people rush in,
NUMBER 8, NUMBER 9, and NUMBER 10 ENTER.)

THE END