

ROBOCALLS

A dark comedy by Anthony L. Mariani

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Cast of Characters

SAM 50, middle aged, stressed out.

DEREK 35, High energy positive, voiceover artist.

TIME

Workday

PLACE

An elevator in a voiceover management building.

A loud ding and a projected number one appear, the sound of elevator doors opening, and Sam, disheveled in an old, wrinkled raincoat, steps into the elevator. Sam presses a button for the top floor and the doors shut. The projected number climbs higher as the elevator rises up the building floor by floor. A flicker of light. Sam's phone rings. He looks at the number and decides to answer it.

SAM

Oh, it's you! I was coming to see you. Yes, yes, and screw you, too! Yes, yes, I wish you could hear me! Then you would know just how pissed I get when you call!

He hangs up his phone, and the elevator continues to climb. Then it jolts as it suddenly stops at floor 26. Derek, a clean-cut attractive man, gets into the elevator. The door closes, and he looks over at Sam.

DEREK

Hello.

Sam gives him a once over.

The elevator climbs higher.

SAM

Hello.

DEREK

I guess it is still raining. It always pays to be ready for a rainy day.

DEREK holds up a small umbrella.

SAM

Do I know you?

DEREK

I get that a lot. I'm a voiceover artist.

SAM

A voiceover artist?

DEREK

Yes, but I see you're going to the 45th floor, Schnauzer and Son. You must also work in the business.

SAM

Schnauzer and Son?

DEREK

Schnauzer and Son. There is not a name more significant than that in the business. You're lucky. Are you doing a robocall?

SAM

Robocall?

DEREK

Yeah, that's what Schnauzer and Son is known for, producing robocalls for companies. Man, it's a sweet gig. I have had a few and man, the money. I still have a few running. Man, I love it when that check comes in.

The door dings. The number has climbed to forty-five.

Schnauzer and Son, your floor, buddy.

Sam stands still.

SAM

Sorry, I pressed that button by mistake. I wanted to go down.

The door dings and the numbers count slowly backward from forty-five as the elevator descends.

SAM

Can I ask you a favor?

DEREK

Sure, what buddy?

SAM

Can you say, "Hello, my name is Larry."

Derek lets out a chuckle.

DEREK

No.

The elevator, now on the 20th floor,
continues to descend.

SAM

SAY IT! Say, "Hello, my name is Larry."

Derek puts a little distance between him and
Sam.

DEREK

No.

Sam reaches over and slams the emergency
button, and the elevator comes to a jolting
stop.

SAM

Now say it!

DEREK

Man, why are you all ?

SAM

Say it! Say, "Hello, my name is Larry."

DEREK

(Mutters)

Hello, my name is Larry.

SAM

Come on! You're a prominent voiceover artist. Say it like you
mean it. Say it like you want to sell me some shit.

DEREK

(In an announcer-like voice)

Hello, my name is Larry!

SAM

I fucking knew it! Now say it all!

DEREK

What?

SAM

You know what I want to hear!

DEREK bows his head in shame.

DEREK

Hello, my name is Larry. Tired of your old health insurance? Well, Allied American Health is here for you. We can find you a reliable healthcare provider in your area. Press 2 to speak to an agent live.

SAM

You forgot part of it.

DEREK

What?

SAM

You know, say it.

DEREK

Press nine to remove your number.

SAM

That's it, Larry old boy. I've been pressing nine now for months. I've pressed two and talked to a live agent. I have done every fucking thing possible to get off this robocall list. So today is the day it stops.

DEREK

What do you want me to do?

SAM

Do they send you residual check?

DEREK

Yeah, my payments go through my agent.

SAM

Call your agent.

DEREK

I'm not going to call my agent.

SAM pulls out a penknife and waves it at Derek.

SAM

I said call your agent!

Derek dials someone on his cell phone while keeping his eyes on Sam.

DEREK

Hi, Jack, it's Derek. Listen, a funny thing has happened. I'm stuck in an elevator. Yeah, listen, I need the address of that Allied American Health company. Yeah. My tax account needs it. Thanks, yeah, if you could text me it. Yeah, I hope I get out soon, too. Thanks, Jack.

Derek hangs up his phone.

SAM

Yes, thanks, Jack.

DEREK

He should text it soon; you can put your knife away.

SAM

I'll wait for the text.

They both stand in silence. Then Derek begins to smile.

SAM

Why are you grinning?

DEREK

All my life, I have been working to get recognized. This is kind of like an awesome review.

SAM

What?

DEREK

It's the highest recognition of my work; I'm absolutely honored.

SAM

Oh, you're recognized. There are thousands of people who would love to be in this elevator with you right now.

DEREK starts to break into tears.

DEREK

Oh, my god! I'm honestly honored!

Sam waves the knife at Derek, gesturing for him to stand back a little.

SAM

Well, The Academy thanks you for your work. Now wipe that fucking grin off your face.

The two sit, in silence again. Then Derek's phone buzzes.

DEREK

Hello, my name is Larry. Tired of your old health insurance? Well, ALLIED American Health is here for you. We can find you a reliable healthcare provider in your area. Press 2 to speak to an agent live. Press nine to remove your number.

Silence again.

Did you see what I did there? On the ALLIED? That's how I wanted to record it. However, they thought it was too much. Was that too much?

Too much. The director thought so, too.

Sam's cell phone buzzes, He looks at it, answers it, and holds the phone out so Derek can hear that it's his voice and the same robocall.

DEREK

Amazing! See! See! I think my take is better than the one the director took. What do you think?

Silence again. (Beat) Sam presses the button and releases the emergency button and the elevator descends once again. Derek's cell phone buzzes. He looks at it.

It's Jack. Ok, I got the address you ready? That's funny they are based in Fort Lauderdale.

The Elevator dings and opens on the ground floor.

SAM

Just, forget it!

Irritated Sam exits into the rainy day.

BLACKOUT

End of Play