

BARGAIN TOWN

"Trent 's Second Day"

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARGAIN TOWN DISCOUNT STORE -- DAY

A STEADY STREAM OF SHOPPERS ENTERS AND EXITS THE BUILDING. TRENT APPROACHES THE FRONT DOOR.

TRENT

(TO HIMSELF)

Here we go again.

TRENT ENTERS THE STORE AND IS GREETED BY ELIZA

ELIZA

You again? You qualify as a long-timer now. Unless you're picking up your first and last check for yesterday?

TRENT

Nope. I'm here to work.

ELIZA

Well I lost the betting pool then.
Welcome back.

TRENT

Gee- thanks.

TRENT BEGINS HIS WALK TO THE BACK OF THE STORE.
RAY APPROACHES HIM.

RAY

Wow! You're back!

TRENT

Hmm, even you didn't think I'd come back today? Thanks a lot!

RAY

Well, not many of our managers in training make it past the first hour, much less to the next day. The last Manager in Training didn't-

RAY IS INTERRUPTED BY THE PA ANNOUNCER.

PA ANNOUNCER

Manager in Training Trent, please report to the back conference room, Manager in Training Trent, please report to the back conference room.

TRENT

That is getting old.

RAY

What, the fact that they know when you've come into the front door, or the way they keep referring to you as being a 'Manager in Training'?

TRENT

Both. I'll see you later.

RAY

Yeah, sure.

RAY SCURRIES BACK TO THE BARGAIN TOWN GRILL. TRENT HURRIES TO THE BACK OF THE STORE AND RUNS INTO BRADLEY IN FRONT OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

BRADLEY

Hey there, Trent. How did your first day go?

TRENT

Well, there was training-

BRADLEY

Great. Now I hate to do this to you two days in a row, but I have to get to the District Office for a high level meeting.

TRENT

Oh. Should I tag along?

BRADLEY

Oh no. A Manager in Training at a high level meeting at the District Office? Highly irregular. There's something in the conference room for you to do.

TRENT

Not another training?

BRADLEY

Oh you didn't luck out again today. There's a meeting of all of the store management today. Well, all of the store management except for me. Take good notes!

TRENT

Are we going over training stuff?

BRADLEY

No, the notes are for me.

(MORE)

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

I just want to know what happens in
the meeting. Have fun!

BEFORE TRENT CAN SPEAK, BRADLEY HAS RUSHED OFF.
TRENT THEN ENTERS THE CONFERENCE ROOM AND SEES
LISA SITTING WITH FIVE OTHER PEOPLE, ALL DRESSED
PROFESSIONALLY.

BOB

Hey, fresh meat! We didn't think you'd
come in today.

TRENT FINDS A SEAT.

TRENT

Join the club.

LISA

Well, I guess you all know who this
is- it's our Manager in Training Trent.
Trent, this is Bob, next to him is
Fletcher, next to him is Sandra, next
to her is Monique and next to her is
Doug.

TRENT

Nice to meet you all.

FLETCHER

I wish I could say likewise, but you
cost me five hundred dollars.

TRENT

Excuse me?

LISA

He's just upset because he lost the pool when you came back from lunch yesterday.

TRENT

It is great to hear how much faith everyone has in me.

LISA

Anyway, are we ready to begin the meeting?

SANDRA STANDS UP, CLOSES THE DOOR AND LOCKS IT.

SANDRA

Now we're ready.

FLETCHER STANDS UP ON THE TABLE AND FLIPS A SWITCH LOCATED ON A SPEAKER.

FLETCHER

Now we're really ready.

TRENT TAKES OUT HIS NOTEPAD AND STARTS TO WRITE ON IT.

LISA

Not yet. What are you doing, Trent?

TRENT

Oh, don't mind me. Bradley wanted me to take notes.

MONIQUE

Oh you do have a lot to learn.

DOUG HANDS TRENT A PIECE OF PAPER.

DOUG

Do us all a favor and copy these pre-written notes in your own handwriting. We won't be discussing Bradley's topics today.

LISA

Or any day.

TRENT

Ah, I see. This sounds like it could be my kind of meeting. What do we discuss in here?

LISA

Whatever we want. We use these meetings as a gripefest away from the partners. Want to start things out or have you not been here long enough?

TRENT

Oh no, I've got plenty to say. What is the deal with Bradley anyway? He blew me off yesterday, he blew me off today. Is he ever even in the store?

FLETCHER

Um, we didn't really mean you could gripe about anything. You shouldn't say anything about Bradley. He's our manager. That borders on insubordination when you say stuff like that in front of us.

TRENT STARTS BLUSHING.

TRENT

Oh, well I didn't mean- I guess what I meant was-

FLETCHER

No worries. I was joking. Actually, Bradley is number one on our lists of gripes.

TRENT

Is number two Alex?

FLETCHER

Well, he's not really around here much either. He's the Personnel guy for our entire region. He really only comes around when he's training new partners.

MONIQUE

Yeah, and his so called training is a riot. I bet we could train a monkey to pop in video tapes and rewind them when they're finished.

TRENT

So who would be number two? There's someone around here worse than Alex?

LISA

Believe it or not, there is. Have you been over to the appliance department?

TRENT

Yes. I was quite impressed by how tidy it was and how well organized everything is over there.

LISA

That's all due to our very own Hardlines Tyrant, Lydia. She keeps her department in tip top shape, mostly at the expense of everyone else.

FLETCHER

I'm the assistant manager over her area and I should be thrilled at how good she makes things look over there, but even I despise her.

TRENT

So she's someone to avoid?

FLETCHER

You can try to avoid her, but you won't succeed. Trust me, even if you are assigned to an area clear on the opposite side of the store from appliances, you'll still get burned.

TRENT

So will Bradley ever get around to actually training me?

EVERYONE LAUGHS.

DOUG

You might as well get used to learning things on your own. And the blame doesn't just rest on Bradley's shoulders. They don't really train anyone for anything here at Bargain Town.

LISA

Yes. We all just got thrown into the middle of everything, regardless of which store we initially got trained at.

FLETCHER

That's myth number one around here.

TRENT

That everyone gets trained?

FLETCHER

Nope. That if you have a bad experience at a Bargain Town it is just a localized problem. I've worked at five Bargain Towns and they've all been the same.

TRENT

Well that's just great. Why can't Bradley be expected to do his job?

LISA

You should consider yourself lucky.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

Bradley doesn't know a thing about how this store runs. Computers are a mystery to him. Well, all the computers except for the punch in system. Of course, he had an incentive to learn that one.

TRENT

That's another thing. Why are we punching in? Aren't we exempt?

FLETCHER

The punch in system isn't there for us so that we can get paid for our hours- it's just so that they can keep track of us at the home office.

MONIQUE

I'm sure they'd outfit us with GPS ankle bracelets if they could.

DOUG

Shh! Don't give them any ideas.

TRENT

So what's the deal then? how do they get anyone to work here?

MONIQUE

Well we do get paid in actual cash money. That's more than enough to get me through the door. There are worse places to work, I guess.

TRENT

So we're all here as a last resort,
then?

SANDRA

I didn't start out that way. Bargain
Town was my employer of choice- but
then I had my first week here and
well, you know...

TRENT

What is really so bad about this place?

DOUG

I don't think we have enough time to
go over everything.

SANDRA

For me, it's the fact that we aren't
anything. We're not number one, we're
not trendy . . . heck, we aren't even
K-Mart!

FLETCHER

How does this company stay in business
anyway?

LISA

That's a question we'd all like to
know the answer to.

DOUG

As long as the checks keep coming and the bank honors them, I could care less. Besides, it isn't too bad on a management meeting day like this.

TRENT

How long do these meetings go on for anyway? Not very long, I'd imagine.

LISA

What makes you say that?

TRENT

Well, we can't stay in here too long. What about the store?

DOUG

Well, the partners keep saying that we don't do anything and that the store could run by itself . . .

LISA

And this conference room does have its own bathroom and vending machines. So we stay in here as long as we can.

DOUG

But enough about us. My biggest complaint about this store is that we can't fire anyone.

TRENT

What?

DOUG

With wages this low, we get like one application for every twenty jobs. Since many jobs just need a warm body, we don't fire anyone for anything. Well, unless they steal.

MONIQUE

You mean unless we catch them stealing. Remember that old grandma lady who cursed out the customers?

LISA

She used just about every foul word you can think of right in front of the customers and stormed out of the store.

TRENT

They didn't fire her for that?

LISA

You kidding? Alex was on the phone within minutes of finding out what had happened to beg her to come back to work because they didn't have someone to cover all of her shifts.

TRENT

That's crazy!

LISA

That's not even the craziest thing I've ever seen happen here.

TRENT

Really? What you think was the craziest thing you've seen happen?

LISA

You've only been here two days. I'll save that little tidbit for later. Maybe it will give you some incentive to stick around.

MONIQUE

Yeah, it's not like the pay or a sense of job satisfaction will be enough to keep you here anyway.

SANDRA

Let's see- they don't pay us well, we get treated like crap, I say we'd need something else to get us here every morning.

TRENT

Hmm, I'm beginning to get a bad feeling about this.

MONIQUE

Great! If you quit in the next two hours, I win the pool.

TRENT

The feeling isn't that bad. I don't have a choice- I have to stay here.

LISA

But of course, you dream about that great day when you can just walk into Bradley's office and tell him where he can take his lousy job.

TRENT

Seeing as how I've only been here a day and a half, I can't say that I've thought about that.

ALL

Yet.

EVERYONE LAUGHS.

JACK

This has to be our best meeting ever.

TRENT

What makes you say that?

JACK

The staff hasn't come and broken the door down.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BARGAIN TOWN MEETING ROOM - DAY

THE MANAGEMENT STAFF HAS BEEN MEETING FOR QUITE SOME TIME. LISA LOOKS AT HER WATCH.

LISA

Okay, I think we've dragged this out long enough. It's back to the salt mines, I guess.

TRENT

Hmm, what if Bradley hasn't come back yet?

LISA

Then you get to take Sullivan's areas.

TRENT

Sullivan?

LISA

Yeah, he's the assistant manager who just quit last week. Bradley has been overseeing his departments since then.

TRENT

But I haven't been trained- wait a minute, is this Sullivan real or is this just a game?

MONIQUE

Oh he was real alright. Stormed out of here like he'd just won the lottery when he quit last week.

TRENT

Okay, but how do I-

LISA

Don't worry. Sullivan had a partner over there who pretty much ran everything. Just meet with him and act interested in what he says and let him do everything.

TRENT

Okay. What departments was Sullivan
in charge of?

LISA

Tire and Lube, automotive, guns, toys,
hardware and women's lingerie.

TRENT

Now I know you're kidding me-

LISA

I wish I was. To tell you why women's
lingerie is included would take up
too much time. We have to get out
there and make sure that our customers
are buying cheap, imported foreign
crap.

THEY OPEN THE DOOR AND BEGIN TO SCATTER.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'll take you to Ryan. He's the genius
who will run things for you.

TRENT

If he's such a genius, why is he still
a grunt? Shouldn't they have promoted
him to management already?

LISA

Shh! He might hear you.

TRENT

But-

LISA

We like Ryan right where he's at. He doesn't seem to mind being taken advantage of, so what's the big deal?

TRENT

Okay.

THEY WALK OVER TO THE HARDWARE DEPARTMENT, WHERE A YOUNGISH LOOKING ASSOCIATE IS SCANNING ITEMS WITH A HANDHELD SCANNER.

LISA

Trent, here is one of our best partners- Ryan.

RYAN LOOKS UP AND SHAKES HANDS WITH TRENT.

RYAN

Well, second best. I bet Lydia is the best.

LISA

Well, that's debatable. In any case, Trent is going to be your assistant manager today. Maybe for the week or more depending on what Bradley decides. I'll leave you two alone.

TRENT

Thanks, Lisa.

LISA WALKS OFF.

RYAN

She sure is nice- and nice to look at. I was a bit distracted when I had to train her.

TRENT

Wait a minute- you trained her? An assistant manager?

RYAN

Sure, we all pitch in here.

TRENT

But that's beyond the call of duty.

RYAN SCANS SOME MORE ITEMS.

RYAN

What do you mean?

TRENT

Well, I'd have a hard time training someone who was going into a higher position than mine.

RYAN

Really? I just like helping new folks out.

TRENT

That's great to a point, but sometimes you have to wonder when it's your turn.

RYAN

My turn?

TRENT

Yeah, your turn to get promoted.

RYAN

But they appreciate the job that I do.

TRENT

Do they really? I equate appreciation with promotion; if they really appreciate what I do here, then they'd better promote me to the next level.

RYAN

I never saw it that way. I suppose that I just feel safe here.

TRENT

Well I'd think you have nothing to worry about. The way they talk about you, I'd think you'd be able to get a job anywhere you applied. So what is it you're doing there?

RYAN

I'm, um, scanning for merchandise that might be out of stock.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BARGAIN TOWN DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

TRENT WALKS INTO THE FRONT DOOR.

TRENT

Hello, Eliza!

ELIZA

Hello. You sure are in for it.

TRENT

What did I do? I just got back from lunch.

PA ANNOUNCER

Manager in training Trent, please
come back to personnel.

TRENT

Wait, they didn't repeat that twice.

ELIZA

I told you that you were in for it.

TRENT BEGINS WALKING TO THE BACK OF THE STORE AND
RUNS INTO LISA.

LISA

What did you tell him?

TRENT

Who? What did I tell who?

LISA

Our former best partner, Ryan.

TRENT

Former? He didn't-

LISA

Yes. He ran out of here saying that
he could get a better job elsewhere.
There's a rumor going around the store
that Wal-Mart has already hired him-
in a management position!

TRENT

Good for him!

LISA

Bad for you. Bradley wants to see
you.

TRENT

But I didn't say- much. In any case,
this isn't my fault- it is Bradley
and Sullivan's fault.

LISA

I don't understand-

TRENT

If they appreciated the hard work of
a dedicated employee, this would have
never happened. Where else does hard
work go unappreciated?

LISA

Well I-

PA ANNOUNCER

Manager in training Trent, please
come back to personnel- now.

LISA

We can discuss this later.

TRENT SHEEPISHLY BEGINS WALKING TO THE BACK OF THE
STORE WHILE VARIOUS PARTNERS PRETEND TO NOT SEE
HIM. TRENT GOES BACK TO THE PERSONNEL OFFICE AND
SEES ALEX AND BRADLEY HAVING A HEATED DISCUSSION.

BRADLEY

Oh, there you are. It seems we have a
bit of a problem here.

TRENT

Is this about Ryan?

ALEX

Yes, could you please tell us what
you told him this morning?

TRENT

Nothing. I wanted to get to know him, he told me about his job. Stuff like that.

BRADLEY

Hmm. For some reason, a few folks in the store seem to have gotten the crazy idea that you told him that he could find a better job elsewhere.

TRENT

That's crazy. I never told him that he could find a better job elsewhere.

ALEX

Well, we wanted to give you the benefit of the doubt, but Ryan has been working here for a long time and never once expressed a desire to work elsewhere. Then we discover that you worked with him this morning, so we made an assumption. I'm glad that we were wrong.

TRENT

Well... not completely wrong...

BRADLEY

What do you mean? Did you tell him to leave or didn't you?

TRENT

I just told him how valuable his skills were.

BRADLEY

So you did tell him to leave?

TRENT

Yes. No. I mean, what is the harm in telling someone how important they are to the organization?

BRADLEY

I think we've seen what the harm is. He left!

TRENT

Yes, but maybe he wouldn't have left if he had felt appreciated all along. You should know all about that Alex. Isn't that your job?

ALEX

Well. . . My job is to make sure we keep our employees here. And hire new ones . . . and fill out forms-

TRENT

Yes, but don't you keep people here longer if you value them? Promote them?

ALEX

Yes, but-

BRADLEY

That has nothing to do with Ryan.

TRENT

May I speak openly here for a second?

BRADLEY

Of course.

TRENT

Ryan was a great worker, but we took him for granted. Everyone needs to hear that he or she is doing a great job every now and then. Sadly, I'm afraid that we were also taking advantage of him. He put in a lot of hard work and never got any real reward in return.

BRADLEY

Well, he did get a twenty five dollar gift certificate awhile back . . .

TRENT

Yes, but he deserved more. If our staff is truly our most valuable resource, as Sir Jim says, we need to recognize and promote them. I hope that you don't fire me for speaking out, but I really feel that we treated Ryan poorly.

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

So, while his departure will be a terrible loss, I am happy that someone at the Wal-Mart saw his value and acted accordingly.

BRADLEY

Are you finished?

TRENT

Yes? This doesn't mean I'm fired, does it?

BRADLEY

Well, you might have a point there. Besides, we don't really fire anyone around here all that often.

TRENT

(BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF)

That's great.

BRADLEY FROWNS.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Isn't it?

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BARGAIN TOWN DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

TRENT IS AT THE FRONT OF THE STORE DRESSED IN A REGULAR STAFF VEST WHILE ELIZA SNAPS A PICTURE.

ELIZA

This one is going on the bulletin board.

TRENT SMILES WEAKLY AND TURNS TO THE NEXT CUSTOMER WHO WALKS IN THE DOOR.

TRENT

Welcome to Bargain Town!

MR. BURKE

Thank- Trent?

TRENT

(EMBARRASSED)

Oh, hello Mr. Burke.

MR. BURKE WALKS INTO THE STORE.

ELIZA

Who was that guy?

TRENT

(STILL REDFACED)

My college guidance counselor.

ELIZA SNAPS ANOTHER PICTURE.

ELIZA

Now this is the one that's going on
the board.

FADE OUT:

THE END