

Last Stop for the A-Train

A Play in One Act

by Jeffrey Strausser

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DEDICATION

To my wife Beth and my children, Katie and Matt.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Al Trainor hates selling cars. The former high school football star can only dream about what might have been – an exciting college football stint filled with glory and girls, and then on to a lucrative professional career. Unfortunately, a fateful knee injury ended his dream. And fate has more cards to play. The man whom Al holds responsible for his life-changing injury, Parker Robinson, his high school football coach, is walking into the dealership. Propelled in large part by Al's gridiron greatness four years ago, Parker Robinson's career has rocketed skyward. Robinson has just signed a multi-year contract to coach the city's professional football team. Now he and his new lady friend are going to spend some of his new wealth. Catalyzed by a cast of unusual characters, the confrontation between player and coach is emotional, action-packed, and unpredictable. The production time is approximately 25 minutes.

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

The Southwell Players of Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School premiered this play April 28-May 1, 2010. The cast was as follows: Chris Alm, Kirby Sokolow, Nick Grabowski, Seth Frank, Chris Gervasio, Karl Griesser, Audrey Von Borstel, and Marlee Burns. The play was directed by Greg Perin and the Stage Manager was Will Petrov.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 3 w, and 1 flexible.)

WALT MICHAELS: Sales Manager for Wilson Ford.

BIG ED (or LIZ) WILSON: Owner of Wilson Ford.

AL TRAINOR: Struggling salesman at Wilson Ford and former star high school football player.

VINCE SHOCKLEY: Top salesman at Wilson Ford.

KALLI STANTON: Trainee salesperson at Wilson Ford.

PARKER ROBINSON: Professional football coach and Al Trainor's former high school coach.

MARSHA KELLY: Parker Robinson's lady friend.

AMANDA JACKSON: Fleet Manager at Wilson Ford.

SALES STAFF: Extras.

*The character of Big Ed can be changed to a female role (*Liz Wilson*) with minor dialogue changes. Multiple extras can be used as sales staff.

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SCENE

The action takes place in the showroom of Wilson Ford, a car dealership in a metropolitan city. The action takes place on a Saturday morning in the summer.

PROPS AND SET DESIGN

The set offers opportunity for creativity because it can range from wooden mock-ups to a nearly bare set where the cars are offstage and referred to by the cast. A popular set is flats with cars painted on them. Other props include automobile brochures, chairs, tables, a whiteboard, newspapers, and other items commonly found in an automobile showroom floor.

COSTUMES

Amanda and Marsha are fashionably dressed. Big Ed can wear a sport coat. Parker can wear a golf shirt. Kalli, Al, and Vince dress casually to reflect their salesperson status. Al can use cane to highlight his condition.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Special effects include a sound recording of an automobile crash and an ambulance siren.

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(AT RISE: WALT is conducting the Saturday morning sales meeting. The SALES STAFF is gathered in front of HIM.)

WALT: All right, listen up! This month's half over and we ain't gettin' it done, boys and girls. Make your cold calls. Follow up on your walk-ins. In case you ain't noticed, these vehicles do not sell themselves. Got it? So let's get after it.

(Amid murmuring the SALES STAFF begins to exit. WALT raises his hand.)

WALT: *(Cont'd.)* Hold on, I got a couple more things. Big Ed is over talkin' to Used Cars, and then he's comin' here. He's gonna be here all morning, so look sharp. I don't wanna see nobody standin' around. You're either with a customer or workin' the phone, got it? Like Big Ed says, "Workin' on your manicures and readin' the sports pages don't sell cars." *(Pause.)* Last thing. We got a new gal. Kalli, stand up, darlin'. *(KALLI stands up.)* This is Kalli Stanton. Her old man is one of our mechanics. Vince has been helpin' her with the trainin' sessions. *(To KALLI.)* You shadow Vince. Saturdays are busy, okay. Just watch and listen. *(To VINCE.)* Show her how it's done, my man. *(To KALLI.)* Mr. Shockley is usually first on the board every month. The Shocker could sell snow to Eskimos. You're learnin' from the best, sweetheart.

(BIG ED enters.)

WALT: *(Cont'd. Loudly.)* Big Ed! Good morning! How are ya' this fine mornin'?

BIG ED: *(Loudly. To the SALES STAFF.)* I'm doin' gr-reat 'cause we're gonna move a *bunch* of cars today, and you are gonna get a surprise. Do ya' like surprises? I sure do. *(The SALES STAFF cheers.)*

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BIG ED: *(Cont'd.)* Used Cars said they're gonna crush you guys today. Wahddya think about that?

SALES STAFF: Boo! No way! Bring 'em on!

WALT: All right! Let's hear it! *(Pumping his hands over his head.)* New cars! New cars!

SALES STAFF: New cars! New cars! New cars!

BIG ED: *(Holding up his hands for silence.)* Yeah, that's what I like to hear. And here's your surprise. I'm gonna give the salesperson who moves the most cars this week, the keys to the dealership's lake house out at Conroe. Two days outta this heat courtesy of Wilson Ford. Is that great or what?

WALT: All right! Let's give it up for Big Ed!

(The SALES STAFF claps and cheers.)

BIG ED: Okay! Okay! Now get out there!

WALT: Let's hear it again for Big Ed!

(The SALES STAFF claps and cheers as BIG ED exits.)

WALT: *(Cont'd.)* All right! Let's move some metal!

(The SALES STAFF begins to exit.)

WALT: *(Cont'd.)* Hold on! Hold on! *(Looking at AL.)* Okay, Trainor's got the ups today. *(The SALES STAFF groans.)* Hey, if the rest of you slow leaks woulda made your calls, you'd get a shot. Now get out there and show me somethin', or else I'll be showin' you the door.

(WALT exits. The SALES STAFF exits, leaving AL, VINCE, and KALLI in the empty showroom. AL begins rubbing his knee.)

AL: *(Sarcastically.)* What am I going to do with a house on Lake Conroe?

VINCE: You can take your latest lady. The ladies dig lake houses. Right, Kalli? You can rent them wave runners.

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VINCE: *(Cont'd.)* Man, she'll dig that, and by *a-so-see-a-shun*, she'll dig you. Ain't that how it works, Miss Kalli?

AL: Yeah, me on a wave runner. I can't sit in a chair for more than five minutes without feeling like somebody's hammerin' a nail into my knee.

VINCE: *(To AL.)* You know what your problem is? You don't got no self-confidence. Self-confidence is what gets you the ladies. *(To KALLI.)* And you know what else self-confidence does? It sells cars. You show me somebody who got self-confidence, and I'll show you somebody who can sell cars. I got it; Al don't. I sell lots of cars; Al don't. You know what I'm sayin'?

(KALLI nods, and AL shakes his head in disgust. AL walks over to a table, sits down, and begins reading a newspaper.)

VINCE: *(Cont'd.)* Now, let's run through it again, Kalli-gal. You gotta a husband and wife comin' through the door. What's Step Numero Uno?

KALLI: I go over to them. I introduce myself and then shake hands.

VINCE: Do ya' run over?

KALLI: Uh, no, I walk slow—

VINCE: De-lib-er-at-ely. You don't wanna scare 'em. Nobody likes a pushy salesperson. These meatheads around here ain't figured that out yet.

KALLI: Yeah. I *deliberately* walk over, introduce myself, and shake hands. And I repeat their names, so I can remember them.

VINCE: Yeah. See you're startin' to develop a rap-port. That's just a fancy way of sayin' they're getting' to know ya'. You ain't gonna be best friends or nuthin', but they're getting' to know ya', and it's a lot harder to turn down somebody you know. Then what? What's Step Numero Duo?

AL: You grab them by the ankles, hold them upside down, and shake all the money out of their pockets.

End of Freeview

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