

**THE BEST OF THE
JEREMIAH PEOPLE #2**

by Bob Hoose & Jim Custer



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A TYPICAL DRIVE TO WORK?
by PHIL LOLLAR

A look at saying one thing and doing another.

SCENE: Takes place in an automobile (chair).

CHARACTERS: DEE-JAY is a loud, energetic radio personality.
MAN is a Christian with a dual personality.

STAGING: Simple, Center Stage, single chair.

PROPS: Perhaps a hat.

LIGHTING: Slow fade into sketch and slow fade at end. Normal spot.

SOUND EFFECTS: Car crash.

1 **AT RISE:** The stage is dark. Out of the darkness, the sound of a
 2 Robin Williams-type dee-jay fills the air. During the monolog,
 3 the lights slowly rise to reveal a MAN sitting in a chair, Center
 4 Stage. He pantomimes driving throughout the sketch.
 5

6 **DEE-JAY:** Gooooood Mooorrning Big City! This is I. B.
 7 Leave with the I. B. Leave Show here on the big KROS
 8 at 77x7 on your FM dial. I'll be with you for the next four
 9 hours, playin' the best in Christian music for your drive
 10 to work and your morning at the office. Hey, we've got
 11 some great tunes comin' up this hour from artists like
 12 Sandi Patti-cake, Glen Allen, Steve Keith Green, Petra-
 13 fied, the new a capella group, Take My Wife's Peas, and
 14 coming up a little later, I'll spin for you the latest hit
 15 from Grammy Ant — and I. B. Leave she's gonna win
 16 another Grammy for this one! It's off the "Heart in
 17 Motion, Going Straight Ahead and Never Alone from Age
 18 to Age" album and the song is called "In a Little While
 19 I'll Be So Glad I'm Walking Away with You on the
 20 Mountain Top 'Cause Look What a Difference You've
 21 Made Since Love Has Come to Our Tennessee Christmas!"
 22 But, to get the day started off right, here's a local group:
 23 It's *(Insert the name of your church PIANIST/ORGANIST here)*
 24 with a new arrangement of that old favorite, "Lord, I
 25 Want to Be a Christian."*

26 *(At this point, the PIANIST/ORGANIST should begin "Lord, I*
 27 *Want to Be a Christian." The driver is pleased with this. He*
 28 *hums along with the intro, then starts singing along with the*
 29 *opening verses.)*

30 **MAN:** That's nice . . . I like this song . . . *(Sings)* Lord, I want
 31 to be a Christian . . . *(Suddenly, he screams out the window.)*
 32 Hey, you bum! Whadda ya mean, trying to cut me off?!
 33 Learn how to drive! *(A beat, and he goes back to singing.)* In
 34 my heart, in my heart . . . *(Again, very suddenly, he screams*
 35 *out the window.)* Where's the fire, jerk?! *(To himself)* Moron . . .

1 *(Shakes his head in disgust, then starts singing again.)* **Lord,**
 2 **I want to be a Christian in my heart.** *(Looks in his rear view*
 3 *mirror and yells.)* **Aw, you maniac! Lay off the horn, will**
 4 **ya?! Sheesh!** *(And back to singing)* **In my heart,** *(Screams)*
 5 **Cork-brain!** *(Sings)* **In my heart,** *(Screams)* **You simple-**
 6 **minded gherkin! Where'd you get your license — a box**
 7 **of Cracker Jacks?!** *(Sings)* **Lord, I want to be a Christian**
 8 *(Big finish)* **in my heart —! Aaahhh!** *(He screams and lurches*
 9 *forward — and there's the sound of a crash.)*

10 **Aaagghh! Great! Just great!** *(Opens the door, storms*
 11 *out — madder than ever — and starts screaming at the person*
 12 *he just ran into.)* **What is the matter with you, you idiot!**
 13 **Stopping in the middle of the freeway?!** **Are you some**
 14 **kind of big dope or what? Don't act like it was my fault!**
 15 **I'm gonna sue you for everything you've got...** *(He*
 16 *continues ad-libbing in this fashion as he walks Off-stage Left.*
 17 *Meanwhile, the song ends, and we hear the DEE-JAY again.)*

18 **DEE-JAY:** **Ah, yes... a great message — one I know you're**
 19 **taking to heart...**

20 *(The lights slowly fade to blackout.)*

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*"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian," American folk hymn. May be found in many hymnals and songbooks, including *The Book of Hymns (Methodist)*.

SNEAK PREVIEWS
by PHIL LOLLAR

A spoof of some very famous critics who ask: "Does what we see really affect us?"

SCENE: Takes place in a studio made up to look like the balcony in a movie theatre.

CHARACTERS: **ROGER ECLAIR** is a heavy-set character who wears glasses.
GENE SPLEEN is a thin and balding character in a sweater.

STAGING: Two chairs Center Stage.

PROPS: Pencils, note cards, toy gun, shoulder holster.

LIGHTING: Normal, with a quick blackout at the end.

- 1 **ROGER:** Welcome back to “Sneak Previews at the Movies,”
 2 also known as “Two White Guys Who Sit Around and
 3 Watch a Lotta Films.” I’m Roger Eclair, critic for the Daily
 4 Skinny . . .
- 5 **GENE:** And I’m Gene Spleen, critic for the Yellow Journal.
 6 Today’s topic is: “The Effect of Violence in Movies.” And
 7 I, for one, am really glad we’re discussing this, Roger.
- 8 **ROGER:** So am I, Gene. It’s about time somebody put an end
 9 to this ridiculous notion that violence on the screen
 10 causes violence out on the street. (*Breaks his pencil.*)
- 11 **GENE:** (*Cleaning a revolver*) You’re so right, Roger. And we’re
 12 not just talking about physical violence, but so-called
 13 “verbal violence” as well — you know: insults, put-downs,
 14 that sort of thing. (*Spins the chamber on the gun and puts it*
 15 *in a shoulder holster.*)
- 16 **ROGER:** Well, you know this whole argument comes from
 17 the place where most misguided concepts come from —
 18 the Bible. Some antiquated idea about bad company
 19 corrupting good morals. I mean, who believes that piece
 20 of drivel, anyway?
- 21 **GENE:** It’s hogwash, of course! It’s just a well-orchestrated
 22 plot by a bunch of small-minded bigots to censor what
 23 we see. If you want my opinion, they all oughta be shot!
- 24 **ROGER:** Yeah, after we pull out their nose hairs one by one!
 25 The idea that fantasies you watch in the movies can
 26 somehow affect your behavior in daily life is ludicrous
 27 at best. I mean, look at me! I watch these so-called
 28 “violent” films all the time, and I can hardly be called
 29 violent.
- 30 **GENE:** That’s for sure. In fact, in the shape you’re in, you can
 31 hardly be called “active!” (*A beat*)
- 32 **ROGER:** Is that supposed to be some sorta crack about my
 33 weight?
- 34 **GENE:** Well, it didn’t start out that way, but if the clothes fit
 35 — or in your case, don’t fit . . .

1 **ROGER:** Yeah? Well, at least I don't have to tie a string
2 around my forehead to know when to quit washing my
3 face!

4 **GENE:** So it's bald jokes, now, huh?

5 **ROGER:** No, Gene, you gots lots of hair. Too bad it's all in
6 your ears.

7 **GENE:** Well, you're not exactly built like Sylvester Stallone,
8 you know?

9 **ROGER:** (*Getting angrier*) And you're no Schwarzenegger,
10 Toothpick! You'd make a great pool cue if we could only
11 chalk your head!

12 **GENE:** Oh yeah? Well, what does it feel like to make the
13 Pillsbury Dough Boy look like an anorexic gnat? Better
14 hope no one pokes you in the stomach with their finger ...
15 they'd drown in gravy!

16 **ROGER:** Now there's an intelligent statement! Now I know
17 why you don't have hair — it was offended by your face
18 and asked for a divorce!

19 **GENE:** (*Livid*) Ooo, if I wasn't a pacifist, I'd knock your block
20 off!

21 **ROGER:** Oh yeah? Well, go ahead, make my day! (*GENE lunges*
22 *at ROGER, and they start wrestling as the lights quickly fade to*
23 *black.*)

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IN THE SANHEDRIN WAITING ROOM

by PHIL LOLLAR

A sketch that looks at our own self-importance vs. God's grace in our lives.

SCENE: Takes place in a typical waiting room environment.

CHARACTERS: RECEPTIONIST is a typical abrasive receptionist, who is not very friendly and very suspicious.
 MAN is a sincere believer who is excited about being healed.
 BLIND MAN 1, BLIND MAN 2, and BLIND MAN 3 are men more interested in their own importance than in God's miracle.

STAGING and COSTUMES: A typical waiting room with sofa and coffee table Center Stage, a table and chair Stage Right, and the reception desk Stage Left. RECEPTIONIST and three MEN on stage when the lights come up, are dressed in biblical-era costumes: Long robes and cloaks, turbans, sandals — the very latest in New Testament fashions. One gent sits on the Stage Right end of the sofa reading a papyrus newspaper (if you can make one). The second sits in the center of the sofa, tapping his foot and humming along with the Middle Eastern muzak (if you can get it). The third is checking the contents of his coin purse.

PROPS: Sofa, coffee table, two tables, two chairs, papyrus newspaper (if possible), Middle Eastern muzak (if possible), coin purse, telephone, papers, pen.

LIGHTING: Normal with slow blackout at the end.

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- 1 **ATRISE:** The telephone rings and the RECEPTIONIST answers it.
2
- 3 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Answering*) **Shalom! Office of the Sanhedrin,**
4 **Mary speaking . . . Rabbi Caiaphas? No, I'm sorry, he's**
5 **not taking any calls today . . .** (*She looks up as a young MAN*
6 *enters from Stage Right.*) **No, I'm afraid none of the rabbis**
7 **are — they're only seeing people in person . . . uh-huh,**
8 **thank you.** (*She hangs up and the young MAN walks up to her.*)
- 9 **MAN:** Excuse me, Miss.
- 10 **RECEPTIONIST:** Yes?
- 11 **MAN:** I was wondering if I could see the Sanhedrin.
- 12 **RECEPTIONIST:** Well, they're very busy. They're with
13 someone right now — I don't know how long it'll take —
14 and these three gentlemen are ahead of you.
- 15 **MAN:** I'd still like to see them. I sort of have to . . . see, I was
16 *sent* here.
- 17 **RECEPTIONIST:** By who?
- 18 **MAN:** (*Pleased*) **The Messiah.**
- 19 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Rolling her eyes*) **Uh-huh . . .**
- 20 **MAN:** No, really! I've seen him.
- 21 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Ever so sweetly*) **Well, then, you're in good**
22 **company . . .** (*She motions toward the others.*)
- 23 **MAN:** You mean they —?
- 24 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Nodding*) **Mm-hmm.**
- 25 **MAN:** **Oh . . .** (*Almost pleading*) **Well, this is kind of special.**
26 **See . . . I was healed.**
- 27 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Flatly*) **You're still in good company . . .**
- 28 **MAN:** (*Can't believe it*) **No!** (*She smiles and nods.*) **Well . . . I still**
29 **want to see them.**
- 30 **RECEPTIONIST:** (*Sighs impatiently*) **Oh, all right . . .** (*She pulls*
31 *out a scroll and hands it to him.*) **Fill out this form and wait**
32 **with the others. I'll let the rabbis know you're here.** (*She*
33 *rises and exits Stage Left.*)
- 34 **MAN:** **Thank you.** (*He takes the scroll, moves over to the lounge*
35 *area, sits on the Stage Left end of the sofa, and starts filling out*

1 *the form. The PAPHYRUS READER and COIN CHECKER*
 2 *ignore him, but the FOOT TAPPER in the center watches him*
 3 *curiously for a few seconds. Finally, he leans forward and taps*
 4 *the MAN on the shoulder.)*

5 **BLIND MAN 1:** Uh, pardon me — I couldn't help overhearing
 6 **your conversation with the receptionist. You say you've**
 7 **seen the Messiah?**

8 **MAN:** Yes.

9 **BLIND MAN 1:** And he healed you?

10 **MAN:** That's right.

11 **BLIND MAN 1:** Oh . . . *(A slight pause)* Well, if it's not too much
 12 **trouble, would you mind telling me just . . . well . . . how?**
 13 *(The COIN CHECKER is listening now.)*

14 **MAN:** *(Happily)* Oh, no, I don't mind at all! See, ever since I
 15 **was small, I had a problem walking. No one knew why,**
 16 **I just did. Every day, my mother and father would take**
 17 **me to the pool of Bethesda — that's where I'm from —**
 18 **because the story says that at certain times an angel stirs**
 19 **up the water in the pool, and the first one in afterwards**
 20 **is healed of whatever disease or sickness he has. Well,**
 21 **anyway, one day, I was standing there on my crutches**
 22 **when the Messiah and his disciples walked up. I**
 23 **remember thinking how calm he seemed. Everyone knew**
 24 **who he was right away, and they all gathered around**
 25 **him — with all those people there, I didn't think he'd ever**
 26 **notice me. But, he did! He turned and looked right at**
 27 **me — and then he motioned for me to come to him! Well,**
 28 **I don't have to tell you how scared I was — so I shook my**
 29 **head no. But that didn't stop the Messiah. He said, "Put**
 30 **down your crutches and come to me."** So I slowly laid
 31 **down my crutches . . . and then took a step forward —**
 32 **and I didn't fall! And with the next step, I felt my legs**
 33 **grow stronger . . . and stronger . . . until I finally *ran* to**
 34 **him! He hugged me and . . . *(Composes himself)* . . . well . . . it**
 35 **was wonderful . . . *(A beat)***

- 1 **BLIND MAN 1:** *(With false enthusiasm)* Ah... yes... wonderful...
- 2 **MAN:** You sound like you don't believe me.
- 3 **BLIND MAN 1:** Oh, no, no — I do. I mean, I'm sure it was
- 4 wonderful in a... small sort of way, but what the Messiah
- 5 did for me, now that was *really* wonderful! *(With great*
- 6 *importance)* You see, he gave me back my sight — *(The*
- 7 *COIN CHECKER hops in.)*
- 8 **BLIND MAN 2:** Wait a minute! Wait a minute! He gave you
- 9 back your sight?
- 10 **BLIND MAN 1:** That's right, on his way out to the Mount of
- 11 Olives.
- 12 **BLIND MAN 2:** Well, that's interesting, 'cause *I'm* the one he
- 13 gave sight to!
- 14 **BLIND MAN 1:** What?!
- 15 **MAN:** Really?
- 16 **BLIND MAN 2:** Yeah — and it wasn't on the road to the
- 17 Mount of Olives, it was in Jersusalem!
- 18 **BLIND MAN 1:** Jerusalem?!
- 19 **BLIND MAN 2:** That's right — Jerusalem! I was standing by
- 20 the side of the road and as Jesus passed, I cried out,
- 21 "Have mercy on me, Son of David! Have mercy —" *(The*
- 22 *PAPYRUS READER cuts in from behind his paper.)*
- 23 **BLIND MAN 3:** *(Lowering the papyrus)* Hold it, time out,
- 24 everybody outta the pool. Whaddya tryin' to do — pad
- 25 yer part?
- 26 **BLIND MAN 2:** I beg your pardon —
- 27 **BLIND MAN 3:** I was the one who said, "Have mercy on me,
- 28 Son of David!" Me — Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus! In fact,
- 29 I made up that line! It came to me as Jesus was passing
- 30 by on the road to Jericho —
- 31 **BLIND MAN 1:** Jericho?!
- 32 **BLIND MAN 2:** Why in the world would he be going to
- 33 Jericho?
- 34 **BLIND MAN 1:** He wouldn't! The whole thing is ridiculous!
- 35 **BLIND MAN 3:** Izzat so? All right then, Mr. Mount of Olives,

- 1 **why don't you just tell us how you think it happened?**
- 2 **BLIND MAN 1:** With pleasure! Like I said, I was sitting on my
- 3 usual spot on the road out to the Mount of Olives, when
- 4 suddenly I hears this group of men come up. And one of
- 5 'em sez, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that
- 6 he should be born blind?" Well, naturally, I figgers they're
- 7 talkin' about me, so I really listen in. And I hears the
- 8 Messiah say, "It wasn't that this man or his folks sinned,
- 9 but that the works of God might be revealed in him."
- 10 After that, I hears Jesus spit on the ground, and the next
- 11 thing I know, he's puttin' some sorta mud on my eyes.
- 12 Then he tells me, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam."
- 13 So I did — and, lo and behold, I could see! Whaddya
- 14 thinka that?
- 15 **BLIND MAN 2:** I think you musta been a real hard case if he
- 16 had to put mud on your eyes and make you go wash it
- 17 off before you could see!
- 18 **BLIND MAN 1:** He didn't make mud for you?
- 19 **BLIND MAN 2:** Certainly not! Some of us have a little more
- 20 faith than that!
- 21 **BLIND MAN 1:** All right then, you're so pious, let's hear how
- 22 you think it happened to you.
- 23 **BLIND MAN 2:** Well, I caught the Messiah just as he was
- 24 leaving Jairus's house — you know, the high official.
- 25 There were a lot of people around him then, not just his
- 26 disciples. And I cried out, "Have mercy on me, Son of
- 27 David!" Well, he musta heard me, 'cause he came over
- 28 and said, "Do you believe I'm able to do this?" And I said,
- 29 "Yes, Lord!" And he said, "Let it be done according to
- 30 your faith." And he simply touched my eyes — no spitting
- 31 or mud or washing — and I could see . . . and that's how
- 32 it happened. *(A pause. BLIND MAN 2 is obviously very pleased*
- 33 *with himself. Then:)*
- 34 **BLIND MAN 3:** *(Very cocky)* He had to touch you?
- 35 **BLIND MAN 2:** *(Shocked)* What?!

1 **BLIND MAN 1:** Oh, come off it! You mean to say he healed
2 you without touching you?

3 **BLIND MAN 3:** That's exactly what I'm saying!

4 **MAN:** *(Awed)* Wow . . .

5 **BLIND MAN 2:** Oh brother . . .

6 **BLIND MAN 3:** It was on the road to Jericho. And a whole
7 mob of people passed by, crowding around the Messiah.
8 And that's when the words just flew out of my mouth. I
9 yelled out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Well, I
10 guess the crowd didn't like it, 'cause some of them turned
11 around and told me to keep quiet. But that didn't stop
12 me, no sir! We Timaeuses are made of sterner stuff! I just
13 cried out all the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on
14 me!" Well, it worked, 'cause the Messiah stopped and told
15 a coupla guys to bring me to him! And the crowd was
16 singing a different tune after that, let me tell you! As I
17 passed by, I heard them say, "Have courage! He's calling
18 for you!" Well, when I got to him, he asked me, "What do
19 you want me to do for you?" And I said, "Master, I want
20 my sight!" And he simply said, "Go your way; your faith
21 has made you well." And right then, I could see! No
22 spitting, no mud, no washing, and no touching — just one
23 little sentence. Whaddya think of them olives? *(A beat as*
24 *the young MAN looks at their faces, then:)*

25 **BLIND MAN 2:** You really expect us to believe that?

26 **BLIND MAN 3:** *(Surprised)* Well, yes!

27 **BLIND MAN 1:** That's the most far-fetched thing I've ever
28 heard! *(The three of them start arguing quite loudly. This goes*
29 *on for a few seconds, then the MAN stops it.)*

30 **MAN:** *(Above the argument)* Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! *(They*
31 *finally do.)* You should all be ashamed of yourselves,
32 arguing over which story is true and which is false! Hasn't
33 it occurred to you that the Messiah is powerful enough
34 to give sight to all three of you?

35 **ALL BLIND MEN:** *(Together: puzzled)* All three?

1 **MAN:** Yes! He is the Great Physician. He can heal any
 2 disease — whether it be of body, mind, or heart! His is
 3 the power of ultimate sacrifice, ultimate mercy, ultimate
 4 love! *(A long beat. The three MEN look at each other for a*
 5 *moment, then BLIND MAN 3 turns to the young MAN.)*

6 **BLIND MAN 3:** *(Suddenly defensive)* Whadda you know?

7 **BLIND MAN 2:** Yeah! You're just a kid got dipped in a pool!

8 **BLIND MAN 1:** Probably dipped in upside-down one too
 9 many times . . .

10 **BLIND MAN 3:** Look, Sonny, I'm the original healed blind
 11 man here! These other guys are just trying to horn in on
 12 my glory!

13 **MAN:** But —

14 **BLIND MAN 2:** "Original?!" Ha! You guys wouldn't know a
 15 healed blind man if you saw one!

16 **MAN:** Wait —

17 **BLIND MAN 1:** Well, I know I'm not looking at one when I
 18 look at you two!

19 **MAN:** Guys —

20 **BLIND MAN 3:** Oh, yeah? Well, let's go back to Jericho and
 21 I'll prove it! *(He and the other BLIND MEN start Off-stage*
 22 *right.)*

23 **BLIND MAN 2:** I've gotta better idea — let's find the Messiah!
 24 He'll tell you it was me!

25 **BLIND MAN 1:** Not if I get there first! *(They all take off running*
 26 *and exit Stage Right.)*

27 **MAN:** *(Calling after them)* Uh, guys? Wait! That's not what
 28 the Messiah told us to do! What about the Sanhedrin —?!
 29 *(But they're gone. There's a beat, and the RECEPTIONIST*
 30 *enters.)*

31 **RECEPTIONIST:** *(Coming in)* All right, the rabbis will see
 32 you now — *(She stops.)*

33 **MAN:** *(Turns to her.)* Oh, uh, thank you very much . . . *(Starts*
 34 *off right.)*

35 **RECEPTIONIST:** Um . . . what happened to the others?

1 **MAN:** *(Sadly)* **They left.**

2 **RECEPTIONIST:** *(Skeptically)* **Uh-huh — I thought so! They**
3 **didn't really receive their sight, did they?**

4 **MAN:** **Oh, they received their sight, all right — but they still**
5 **can't see . . .** *(They both exit Stage Right, as the lights slowly*
6 *fade to blackout.)*

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NOT A LEG TO STAND ON
by **BOB HOOSE**

A close look at how people might have approached helping one another if they had committees back in the days when Jesus walked among us.

SCENE: Takes place in a committee meeting 2,000 years ago.

CHARACTERS: **MARCUS** is the leader of the committee who wants to find a diplomatic solution to their problem.
JONAS is the man who pursues the best for the one in need but doesn't have the grit to do it alone.
ZEBULON is the time conscious man who needs to stick to a schedule.
JOHN is the man who recognizes the truth and follows it regardless of the cost.
SIMON is the man in need.

STAGING: First four characters are deep in discussion at one side of the stage while **SIMON** sits on the opposite side. **JOHN** enters from the same side that **SIMON** sits on and the others never see him.

PROPS: None needed.

LIGHTING: Regular wash with possible spots on two halves of stage if desired.

- 1 **MARCUS:** All right, all right! Let's pull this meeting
2 together now. As you all know, this committee was
3 gathered to work out the details of getting Simon here
4 to the rabbi Jesus.
- 5 **ELI:** Yes... I've been asking this all along and I would
6 appreciate very much your telling me, how are we
7 supposed to get him there? None of us owns a donkey,
8 though if God were to give me one, I would be happy to
9 receive it.
- 10 **JONAS:** I think the Scriptures plainly say that we should go
11 the extra mile for our afflicted brother, even if it means
12 we carry him.
- 13 **ELI:** A mile for my brother, I would go. Six miles, I stay home.
- 14 **MARCUS:** OK, OK! I think we could devise some means of
15 transportation for Simon, like a stretcher or something.
16 We could take turns carrying, maybe even create a
17 schedule so we can all carry the same length of time.
- 18 **ZEBULON:** Speaking of schedules, when are we going to be
19 making this trip? I clean the stables and my boss raises
20 a real stink when I let my work pile up.
- 21 **ELI:** Right, when? *(All of the committee members start to talk at*
22 *once. ELI speaks above the other voices.)* And another
23 thing... who's paying for lunch?
- 24 **MARCUS:** Wait! Wait! Let's put scheduling on the agenda for
25 later. There's a problem I think we should address before
26 we go any further... the crowd.
- 27 **JONAS:** Crowd?
- 28 **MARCUS:** Of course. The rabbi Jesus is so popular nowadays
29 that the place will be swamped as soon as the word gets
30 out. So, how do we get Simon in to see him?
- 31 **ELI:** Perhaps we could book him here at the local synagogue.
32 We could even sell tickets. Not that I would want to
33 appear greedy, but it couldn't hurt.
- 34 **ZEBULON:** Couldn't we just make an appointment?
- 35 **JONAS:** He doesn't keep a calendar — it's first come, first served.

- 1 **So as I see it, after we get Simon there we only have one**
 2 **way to get him in to see Jesus.**
- 3 **ELI: What's that?**
- 4 **JONAS: Tunnel. We've got to dig under the hut. And with**
 5 **about sixty men we could . . .**
- 6 **ZEBULON: (Interrupts) No. There's got to be an easier way!**
 7 **What about the roof?**
- 8 **MARCUS: Yes! We could cut a hole and lower him down.**
- 9 **ELI: Hold it! . . . May God cause my wife to grow a nose like**
 10 **yours if I am anything but wholly committed to my**
 11 **brother . . . but! . . . do you know what it costs to repair a**
 12 **roof these days? Not to mention the price of rope which**
 13 **is like gold. I'm afraid the synagogue financial committee**
 14 **won't support this.**
- 15 **ZEBULON: Maybe we should form a rope committee. (All**
 16 *begin to talk again. Near SIMON a man walks Onstage.*
 17 *COMMITTEE freezes.)*
- 18 **JOHN: (To SIMON) Wonderful day, isn't it?**
- 19 **SIMON: I suppose.**
- 20 **JOHN: I'm going to see the rabbi Jesus in the town of**
 21 **Capernaum. Walk with me.**
- 22 **SIMON: I can't. My legs have been crippled since childhood.**
- 23 **JOHN: Then you must come with me. I've heard that this man**
 24 **is the Messiah. He can heal the lame and give you back**
 25 **your strength.**
- 26 **SIMON: (Looks over to the committee.) But I can't. (JOHN begins**
 27 *to lift him.) You'll carry me?*
- 28 **JOHN: God has given me life and health. The least I can give**
 29 **you is the strength of my back. (JOHN carries SIMON Off-**
 30 *stage. COMMITTEE comes alive again but never notices SIMON*
 31 *is gone.)*
- 32 **MARCUS: Perhaps what we need is a consultant to come in**
 33 **and show us how to work this out. (Begins to exit, others follow.)**
 34 **This isn't my job, you know — the synagogue asked me**
 35 **to do this . . . (Animated discussion begins as they exit.)**

STRESS
by PHIL LOLLAR

A sketch that examines the consequences of ignoring the cancer of the 90's.

- SCENE:** Takes place in JIM's apartment.
- CHARACTERS:** JIM is a hard-working citizen unaware that he is under incredible stress.
DR. BART MEEDLEMEYER is a TV psychiatrist a la Sigmund Freud.
- STAGING:** May be performed two ways:
1. You can stage everything Center Stage with DR. MEEDLEMEYER pre-recorded on video and shown on the TV, or
2. Build a set Stage Left with DR. MEEDLEMEYER doing his lines from there with a video camera broadcasting the scene to JIM's TV.
- PROPS:** Briefcase with papers inside, TV and remote control, couch, phone.
- LIGHTING:** Normal, with a blackout at the end.
- SOUND EFFECTS:** Taped theme music for show.

1 **AT RISE:** The lights rise on JIM's apartment. There's a sofa center,
 2 a table at one end with a telephone on it, and a TV on a stand
 3 in front of it. The place is empty, but after a few seconds, JIM
 4 walks in from a long day at work, looking like something the
 5 cat just dragged in. He mutters to himself.

6
 7 **JIM:** Boy oh boy oh boy oh boy oh boy ... *(He drops his*
 8 *briefcase on the floor and plops onto the sofa.)* What a day. I'm
 9 bushed... bushed, bushed, bushed, bushed...
 10 President Bush couldn't be more bushed than I am. I'm
 11 so bushed I may turn into a tree. Maybe I'll turn on the
 12 TV instead. *(He switches on the tube. There is a brief music*
 13 *theme, during which an announcer is heard.)*

14 **ANNOUNCER:** And now with your Mental Health Minute,
 15 here's Dr. Bart Meedlemeyer!

16 **JIM:** *(To himself)* Oh, great ... just what we need ... another
 17 TV quack head shrink ...

18 **DOCTOR:** Hello out there! And good mental health to you!
 19 Today, we want to talk about a growing problem in the
 20 United States: *stress*.

21 **JIM:** *(Snide)* Stress ... ooo, how original.

22 **DOCTOR:** You know, these days, when a big storm
 23 approaches, hardly anybody gets hurt because we have
 24 all sorts of warnings about it. Well, stress is no different!

25 **JIM:** What a load of hooley ... *(From this point on, JIM stops*
 26 *listening to what is said on the television. He wanders around,*
 27 *acting out all of the symptoms of extreme stress just prior to DR.*
 28 *MEEDLEMEYER explaining them.)*

29 **DOCTOR:** That's right! There are definite warning signs a
 30 person experiences when he is under too much stress.
 31 The first one would have to be ...

32 **JIM:** *(Stretches and yawns.)* Oh, man, am I tired.

33 **DOCTOR:** ... exhaustion. A general feeling of tiredness ...
 34 a loss of energy ...

35 **JIM:** I really should call Rita tonight.

- 1 **DOCTOR:** ... a difficulty keeping up ...
- 2 **JIM:** I haven't talked to her all week.
- 3 **DOCTOR:** This exhaustion usually leads to ...
- 4 **JIM:** (*Pained*) Aw, I don't wanna talk to her.
- 5 **DOCTOR:** ... detachment. That is, distancing one's self from
- 6 **others — especially those closest to us.**
- 7 **JIM:** Well, she is my girlfriend ... (*He picks up the phone*
- 8 *begrudgingly and dials.*)
- 9 **DOCTOR:** Victims of extreme stress have neither the time
- 10 **nor the energy to properly pursue, build and nurture**
- 11 **relationships.**
- 12 **JIM:** (*Unexcited*) Hello, Rita? It's Jim.
- 13 **DOCTOR:** All of their time and strength is spent just trying
- 14 **to keep their heads above water.**
- 15 **JIM:** (*Blasé*) Nothing's wrong, I'm just tired from work, that's
- 16 **all.**
- 17 **DOCTOR:** Of course, detachment always leads to the next
- 18 **step ...**
- 19 **JIM:** (*Extremely bored; a huge sigh*) Yes, Rita, I know you have
- 20 **lots of cures for tiredness.**
- 21 **DOCTOR:** ... boredom ...
- 22 **JIM:** (*Very bored*) I've heard them all ... oh, you've got a new
- 23 **one?**
- 24 **DOCTOR:** ... the sensation that nothing is new or fresh, and
- 25 **the feeling that nothing ever will be again. Once boredom**
- 26 **sets in, it's only a short hop to its natural companion ...**
- 27 **JIM:** (*Very cynical*) Oh, right, Rita ... I'm so sure.
- 28 **DOCTOR:** ... cynicism. One fathers the other, and they both
- 29 **feed off each other, until finally ...**
- 30 **JIM:** (*Impatiently*) Yes, yes, yes ... I understand that part,
- 31 **Rita! Get on with it.**
- 32 **DOCTOR:** ... the victim becomes impatient with those
- 33 **around him, and that soon leads to ...**
- 34 **JIM:** (*Irritably*) Rita ... get on with it!
- 35 **DOCTOR:** . . . extreme irritability. As stress takes hold ...

- 1 **JIM:** That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard! What are you
2 talking about?
- 3 **DOCTOR:** ... impatience grows and flare-ups occur.
- 4 **JIM:** (*Cutting*) Oh, really? Well listen, it's not my fault this
5 thing isn't working out.
- 6 **DOCTOR:** They blame those closest to them for things that
7 are their own fault ...
- 8 **JIM:** All right, all right ... fine! If that's the way you want it,
9 fine! (*He slams down the receiver.*)
- 10 **DOCTOR:** ... resulting in a breaking off of the relationship.
- 11 **JIM:** (*Heavy sigh*) Well, it looks like the private life is in the
12 toilet. (*He sits for a second.*)
- 13 **DOCTOR:** Of course, these are just the preliminary
14 symptoms. (*JIM picks up his briefcase and starts taking papers*
15 *out of it.*)
- 16 **JIM:** Oh, well, there's always work.
- 17 **DOCTOR:** Once these preliminaries take hold, they move
18 quickly to the more serious symptoms, the first one
19 being ...
- 20 **JIM:** After all, I'm the best at what I do.
- 21 **DOCTOR:** ... a feeling of omnipotence. Many stress victims
22 say to themselves ...
- 23 **JIM:** Nobody can do my job like me.
- 24 **DOCTOR:** "Nobody can do my job like me," and ...
- 25 **JIM:** In fact, I'm the only one who can do it.
- 26 **DOCTOR:** "I'm the only one who can do it." And sometimes,
27 they may even think ...
- 28 **JIM:** Not even God can do this job ...
- 29 **DOCTOR:** ... "Not even God can do this job ..."
- 30 **JIM:** ... just me ...
- 31 **DOCTOR:** "...just me." Now, while these feelings are
32 completely involuntary, it goes without saying that this
33 subliminal mindset borders on the delusional.
- 34 **JIM:** (*Suddenly stops working.*) Wait a minute ... what am I
35 doing?

- 1 **DOCTOR:** From here, we move on to the next sign of extreme
 2 stress.
- 3 **JIM:** I just came off a hard day of work . . . *(He stands.)*
- 4 **DOCTOR:** It's a very significant sign.
- 5 **JIM:** Not that those slave drivers I work for care at all. *(He*
 6 *begins pacing about the room.)*
- 7 **DOCTOR:** It's the belief that he is unappreciated. The
 8 stressed out person runs through a maze of feelings.
- 9 **JIM:** *(Bitterly)* Those lousy . . .
- 10 **DOCTOR:** They include bitterness . . .
- 11 **JIM:** *(Angry)* . . . stinking . . .
- 12 **DOCTOR:** . . . anger . . .
- 13 **JIM:** *(Resentful)* How dare they?!
- 14 **DOCTOR:** . . . offense . . .
- 15 **JIM:** *(Anxious)* Ooo, I'm so on the edge!
- 16 **DOCTOR:** . . . and anxiety because he feels his work is not
 17 appreciated.
- 18 **JIM:** *(Puts his papers back into his briefcase.)* Well, I may have
 19 put in long hours before, but not now!
- 20 **DOCTOR:** This belief usually results in a deviation from his
 21 normal work pattern.
- 22 **JIM:** If they thought I was hard to work with before, they
 23 ain't seen nothin' yet!
- 24 **DOCTOR:** He becomes more tyrannical, demanding, and
 25 inflexible . . . from here, it's a very small step to the next
 26 stage's symptom . . .
- 27 **JIM:** They're all out to get me anyway!
- 28 **DOCTOR:** . . . paranoia. This, of course, is a very serious
 29 condition that can have many long-term and damaging
 30 side effects.
- 31 **JIM:** *(Suddenly confused)* What was I thinking about?
- 32 **DOCTOR:** The stress victim will become disoriented, and his
 33 thought processes will wander.
- 34 **JIM:** I thought I had . . . I was going . . . what was the . . . when
 35 I . . .

- 1 **DOCTOR:** He will have increasing difficulty communicating.
- 2 **JIM:** C'mon . . . think, think, think . . .
- 3 **DOCTOR:** He will lose the ability to concentrate.
- 4 **JIM:** Oh, yeah! It was about, uh, what's-her-flibber?
- 5 **DOCTOR:** His memory for names, dates, and even what he
6 started to say will dwindle.
- 7 **JIM:** (*Chortles to himself.*) Huh . . . guess creeping senility is
8 taking its toll on the ol' noodle.
- 9 **DOCTOR:** He will joke about increasing old age . . . and,
10 thus, try to cover his problems further. This is a very
11 unattractive explanation for his poor performances, so
12 another reason must be found . . .
- 13 **JIM:** (*Stretches and suddenly looks very pained.*) Ooww . . . it's not
14 my mind that's falling apart . . . it's my body . . .
- 15 **DOCTOR:** . . . physical ailments. These bodily complaints
16 can appear and flourish anywhere on the victim . . .
- 17 **JIM:** (*Grabs his head.*) What a headache.
- 18 **DOCTOR:** . . . the head . . .
- 19 **JIM:** (*Feels his back.*) Ow . . . my back's not doing too good
20 either . . .
- 21 **DOCTOR:** . . . the back . . . (*JIM lets out a head-splitting sneeze.*)
22 the sinuses . . . (*JIM goes completely limp and plops onto the*
23 *couch again.*) . . . even the entire musculature structure.
24 (*JIM moans very loudly . . . a depressed moan.*) Although these
25 problems may be real, they are usually brought on by
26 the extreme emotional stress the person is suffering. (*JIM*
27 *moans even deeper.*) And of course, all of these things can
28 lead to one of the most devastating stages of all . . .
- 29 **JIM:** (*Another moan*) I hate my life.
- 30 **DOCTOR:** . . . depression. This is the worst stage because it
31 can springboard into even more serious behavior later
32 on.
- 33 **JIM:** (*Looks at the television cynically.*) What is this nonsense?
- 34 **DOCTOR:** So those are just a few of the warning signs that a
35 person is suffering from extreme stress.

1 **JIM:** *(Cynical)* Oh, brother . . .

2 **DOCTOR:** The truly alarming thing is that most people
3 refuse to recognize the symptoms, even when they're
4 confronted with them face to face. They tend to want to
5 shut out any potential help. This has been Dr. Bart
6 Meedlemeyer with your Mental Health Minute.

7 **JIM:** *(Disgusted)* Aw, get outa here! *(He reaches out and abruptly*
8 *snaps off the TV, cutting off the doctor midsentence.)* **Just what**
9 **we need . . . another quack TV head shrink . . .** *(He rises,*
10 *drags himself Off-stage, mumbling the whole way as the lights*
11 *slowly fade to blackout.)*

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ENGAGED
by **JIM CUSTER**

When is a couple "married" in the eyes of God — before or after the ceremony? This sketch asks that question and more.

SCENE: This sketch takes place in an apartment at night.

CHARACTERS: **TEDDY** is an over-anxious young man counting the minutes 'till he hears wedding bells.
LAURA is his more sensible and patient wife to be.
BERNIE FETTERS is a man in his sixties, a comic "Newhart"-like character.
IRT is **BERNIE**'s faithful and quiet wife.

STAGING: Basic. Should be done Center Stage with outside door either Stage Left or Right.

PROPS: The stage should look like a small apartment with a couch and chairs. If you want to go simpler, some folding chairs put together will give you the same effect.

LIGHTING: Normal, with a blackout at the end.

SOUND EFFECTS: Telephone, doorbell.

- 1 **AT RISE:** TEDDY and LAURA are sitting on the couch.
 2
- 3 **TEDDY:** (*Looking around*) The place looks great, Sweetie.
- 4 **LAURA:** Thanks. Mom and I spent the whole day putting up
 5 wallpaper. If I ever see another blue goose . . . I'll shoot it.
- 6 **TEDDY:** Well, it looks very nice.
- 7 **LAURA:** Can you believe, Teddy, that in one week we'll be
 8 married? No more invitations to send out, or rehearsals,
 9 or saying goodbye at night, or . . .
- 10 **TEDDY:** (*Interrupting*) Or cold showers.
- 11 **LAURA:** It'll be you and me against the world, kiddo. Here
 12 in our little love nest . . . (*Phone rings.*) Hold that thought.
 13 (*Starts to go but Teddy pulls her back.*)
- 14 **TEDDY:** Forget the phone.
- 15 **LAURA:** I can't. What if it's important?
- 16 **TEDDY:** It's not, trust me.
- 17 **LAURA:** How do you know?
- 18 **TEDDY:** Men's intuition.
- 19 **LAURA:** There's no such thing.
- 20 **TEDDY:** There is and it's scary.
- 21 **LAURA:** You're scary. (*Phone stops ringing.*) See there, I
 22 missed it. It could have been Ed McMahon with my ten
 23 million.
- 24 **TEDDY:** Who cares? We don't need money, we've got love —
 25 now come here and give me a kiss. (*Puckers up.*)
- 26 **LAURA:** (*Eludes his puckered lips.*) I know that look, Teddy,
 27 and we've got lots of preparations for the wedding yet,
 28 so let's not get sidetracked.
- 29 **TEDDY:** I know we have to get things done, but Hon, for the
 30 past four months it's been nothing but plans, dresses,
 31 invitations, songs, relatives, and every thing or body else.
 32 At this point, I feel like I know the flower man better
 33 than you. I just want a little time with you. Is that too
 34 much to ask?
- 35 **LAURA:** It has been a little overwhelming, hasn't it?

- 1 **TEDDY:** Yeah, but we can slow down. It's just us, alone,
 2 *(He takes her hand and pulls her onto the couch) in our little*
 3 *love nest . . .*
- 4 **LAURA:** *(Interrupting)* But there are so many details to think
 5 of.
- 6 **TEDDY:** *(Putting his finger to her lips) Shhh.* *(Just as he leans*
 7 *over to kiss her, the doorbell rings. She immediately gets up and*
 8 *he falls over on the couch.)* There's got to be sin in my life.
- 9 **LAURA:** *(Answering the door)* Hello.
- 10 **BERNIE:** Well, howdy. *(Grabs her hand and shakes vigorously.)*
 11 You're the new neighbors, huh?
- 12 **LAURA:** Yes, I'm Laura and *(Pointing to TEDDY)* this is Teddy.
 13 *(TEDDY's head is buried in the couch. He raises his hand and*
 14 *limply waves.)*
- 15 **BERNIE:** He sick?
- 16 **LAURA:** No, just a little exhausted planning for the wedding.
- 17 **BERNIE:** Oh, I know how that is.
- 18 **LAURA:** You do?
- 19 **BERNIE:** No, not really, but it seemed like a good thing to
 20 say. Well, we're the Fetters. I'm Bernie and this is my
 21 wife Irt. *(Grabs her hand and starts to shake vigorously again.)*
- 22 **LAURA:** Well, nice to meet you.
- 23 **BERNIE:** Oh no, the pleasure is ours. It's good to have
 24 neighbors again.
- 25 **LAURA:** You haven't had any for awhile?
- 26 **BERNIE:** No, not since the Pods.
- 27 **LAURA:** The Pods?
- 28 **BERNIE:** Yeah, Peter and his wife Patty.
- 29 **LAURA:** Peter Pod and Patty Pod?
- 30 **IRT:** And their two pets, Po and Pungy.
- 31 **LAURA:** Po and Pungy?
- 32 **BERNIE:** They were penguins.
- 33 **LAURA:** You're pulling my leg, aren't you, Mr. Fetters?
- 34 **BERNIE:** *(Confused)* No, you're standing there. I'm over here.
 35 Besides, Irt wouldn't like that. Well, listen, if there is

- 1 anything we can do, just let us know. We don't have a
 2 phone but we can hear real good. Just plant your feet
 3 out here and yell (*Yells*) "Bernie, Irt!" We'll come running.
- 4 LAURA: Thanks! (*BERNIE and IRT exit. LAURA closes door and*
 5 *sits back down on the couch.*) What a nice couple. Sort of
 6 like *The Beverly Hillbillies*, don't you think?
- 7 TEDDY: Huh? (*Head still in couch*)
- 8 LAURA: What is the matter with you?
- 9 TEDDY: Oh, nothing. Nothing that a good marriage won't
 10 fix. Laura, you love me, right?
- 11 LAURA: No, I'm gonna marry you now and love you later.
- 12 TEDDY: I'm being serious.
- 13 LAURA: Of course I love you.
- 14 TEDDY: Well, when you love someone you want the best for
 15 them, right?
- 16 LAURA: Right.
- 17 TEDDY: And there's only one more week, right?
- 18 LAURA: Right.
- 19 TEDDY: And technically a week from right now we'll be on
 20 our honeymoon, right?
- 21 LAURA: Right.
- 22 TEDDY: Did you open your presents on Christmas Eve or
 23 Christmas?
- 24 LAURA: (*Confused*) Huh?
- 25 TEDDY: Answer the question.
- 26 LAURA: Christmas Eve.
- 27 TEDDY: Good, so did I. (*Starts to sing "Jingle Bells" with a smile*
 28 *on his face.*)
- 29 LAURA: You're weird. This is not Christmas and we don't
 30 have any . . . (*Dawns on her what he wants.*) Teddy, no . . . we
 31 have . . .
- 32 TEDDY: (*Interrupts*) It is only seven days, Laura — a speck of
 33 sand in eternity, a drop in the ocean of time, a small tick
 34 on the big clock of life.
- 35 LAURA: Your clock's stopped. We promised ourselves and

- 1 the Lord we would wait.
- 2 **TEDDY:** I know, but I'm a forgiving kind of guy and I know
- 3 God is, so . . .
- 4 **LAURA:** So *what?* You're being dumb.
- 5 **TEDDY:** It comes from too many cold showers. (*Sweetly*)
- 6 Laura . . .
- 7 **LAURA:** (*Interrupts*) No. I can't believe we're discussing this.
- 8 We decided on this a long time ago! We have one more
- 9 week.
- 10 **TEDDY:** Laura, we have vowed our love for each other.
- 11 Waiting is a technicality.
- 12 **LAURA:** A technicality? If we break this vow now . . .
- 13 **TEDDY:** (*Being cute, interrupting*) Vow now brown cow.
- 14 **LAURA:** Teddy, if we break our vow now, who's to say we
- 15 won't break our wedding vows later? "Little foxes spoil
- 16 the vines."
- 17 **TEDDY:** "America, love it or leave it."
- 18 **LAURA:** What?
- 19 **TEDDY:** I don't know, I couldn't think of anything fast
- 20 enough. Laura, in the eyes of God we are already married.
- 21 I'm — I'm sure it's OK.
- 22 **LAURA:** Teddy . . .
- 23 **TEDDY:** No, listen — if I had any doubts this was wrong or
- 24 would jeopardize our marriage, would I ask you to do
- 25 this?
- 26 **LAURA:** Yes.
- 27 **TEDDY:** We love each other! In seven days, a mere 185 hours,
- 28 11,100 minutes, 666,000 seconds we'll be one. If we love
- 29 each other, the time isn't important.
- 30 **LAURA:** Teddy, if we truly love each other, then the time
- 31 doesn't matter — love will be there in seven days, 185
- 32 hours, 11,100 minutes, 666,000 seconds. We can wait.
- 33 **TEDDY:** Sounds so long.
- 34 **LAURA:** Take a cold shower.
- 35 **TEDDY:** I've taken so many my feet are starting to web.

- 1 **LAURA:** You're funny and cute.
- 2 **TEDDY:** Great, I'm funny and cute. Me and Mickey Mouse
3 should have it so lucky.
- 4 **LAURA:** Hang in there, pilgrim, we can do it! (*Gives him a short*
5 *kiss.*) There, isn't that better?
- 6 **TEDDY:** Compared to what? Are you sure there's no way?
- 7 **LAURA:** Teddy, when we stand in front of the pastor, I want
8 to stand there pure. It's important to me. Do you
9 understand?
- 10 **TEDDY:** A month ago I understood, last week I understood,
11 today I'm not so sure, but OK.
- 12 **LAURA:** I knew I could count on you. (*TEDDY starts to exit.*)
13 Where are you going?
- 14 **TEDDY:** Home. I'm gonna take my cute, funny, dependable
15 body home, and go to bed. Who knows, maybe the rapture
16 will come. With my luck, God will ask me to wait a week.
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CAR CRASH

Car Crash takes place at the scene of an accident between two young married couples. In the heat of their argument over whose fault it was, they discover another "accident" they have made . . . both are on their way to church.

- SCENE:** This sketch takes place at the scene of a car accident (obviously). Chuck and Jeannie's car has just hit Mick and Vicki's.
- CHARACTERS:** MICK and VICKI are a fairly normal, young married couple. MICK is a generally non-excitabile type but this accident has pushed him to the limit. VICKI is the "unable to cope" weeping type in this situation. CHUCK and JEANNIE are an "interesting" duo. CHUCK is a very henpecked person and would probably have to gain a lot more respect and weight to dominate his wife. JEANNIE wears the pants in the family and has a tendency to come on like a marauding elephant when she is upset.
- STAGING:** Four chairs should be placed at about forty-five degree angles opposite from the audience. The side chairs should be no more than five feet apart. A minimum of one microphone per car should be placed between each couple. Two microphones should be placed Center Stage. Conversation begins with CHUCK and JEANNIE collecting themselves from the collision. JEANNIE then verbally assaults CHUCK.
- PROPS:** Four chairs, a sport hat and sunglasses for MICK and a Sunday hat for JEANNIE.
- LIGHTING:** Normal. Lights come up after sound of the crash. Blackout at the end.
- SOUND EFFECTS:** During set-up of the sketch, while the chairs and mikes are being positioned in the dark, it might be good to have someone Off-stage making the sound of passing cars and then the crash. If no one is able to do that, you might make a recording of a crash from any typical TV action show.



*Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:
BEST OF THE JEREMIAH PEOPLE VOL. 2
by Jim Custer and Bob Hoose.*

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