

Burger Time

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LIGHTS UP

CHAZ, BOB and other CUSTOMERS stand in line at Burger Joint. Though other players are on stage, the lights are focused solely on CHAZ and BOB so that others stand in shadows both in front of, and behind the two. CHAZ looks off stage to the front of the line and then to his watch.

CHAZ:

We never should have come here

BOB:

You love this place.

CHAZ:

So does half of the country, that's why we're in a line that would give Hands Across America a run for it's money.

BOB:

I don't think that actually raised any money.

CHAZ:

That's not the point. The point is we're going to spend the better part of the day in this line unless...(CHAZ sniffs at the air) do you smell that?

BOB:

Smell what?

CHAZ:

That.

BOB:

(sniffs) Fries?

CHAZ:

No.

BOB:

(sniffs again) Burgers?

CHAZ:

No.

BOB:

Cheeseburgers?

CHAZ:

No. That, (big sniff) is the smell of opportunity, Bob.

BOB:

I just smell burgers.

CHAZ:

And that is why you fail.

CHAZ begins looking around off stage to the unseen head of the line

CHAZ:

Let's see... let's see... there we go, register three, green jacket. Go up there, tell him if he orders us a bacon cheeseburger you'll give him an extra 50 cents.

BOB:

What?

CHAZ:

Just go.

BOB:

You're not supposed to cut in line, that's what separates us from animals.

CHAZ:

It's not-it's not cutting in line, it's taking advantage of the system. Hey! Green Jacket! Yeah, you! Get me a Bacon-cheese and I'll give you an extra 50 cents.

A moment or two passes before a bag is passed back to CHAZ. He opens it to reveal his order and takes a big bite.

CHAZ:

See? That is the taste of genius covered in three strips of bacon.

CUSTOMER steps into the light

CUSTOMER:

Hey, where'd you get that?

CHAZ:

Ordered it my friend. You want something?

CUSTOMER:

Sure! I've been in line 20 minutes now, I'll give you \$3 for a chicken sandwich and a fry.

CHAZ:

Sold.

BOB:

(whispered) Chaz, that only costs a buck eighty.

CHAZ:

Welcome to capitalism in action Bobby. Hey, Green Jacket!

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

CHAZ is still in his place in line. The stage now includes a sign which has "Chaz's Shortcut" hand written on it. Tacked on, as an afterthought reads "No Special Orders." CHAZ is tapping a pad of paper with a pen.

CHAZ:

Okay, I've got two chicken sandwiches, four fries, 4 burgers, 2 cheeseburgers, and 6 softdrinks. Baseball cap! I've need 2 chicks, 4 spuds, 4 cows, 2 dairied, and 6 pop rockets! Blue Jeans, where's my Salad and ice cream cone? (pause) Well hurry it up!

ENTER BOB with a pad and pen of his own.

BOB:

New couple just came in, he wants a double quarter pounder, but no mustard and extra onions.

CHAZ:

No special orders. Tell him he can scrape off the mustard, napkins on the house.

JEANETTE and BOYFRIEND step into spot light

JEANETTE:

Hi

CHAZ:
Hi there.

JEANETTE:
Let's see... ummm...

CHAZ:
We don't have all day sweetheart.

JEANETTE:
I'll have a cheeseburger no-

CHAZ:
No special orders. (gestures to sign)

JEANETTE:
Oh, then I'll just have some fries and a coke.

BOYFRIEND:
I'll have chicken strips with honey mustard.

JEANETTE:
How much?

CHAZ:
Normally that's five bucks, but for you? One kiss.

BOYFRIEND:
Hey, that's my girlfriend!

CHAZ:
Hey, no one asked you Honey Mustard. So what's it going to be-

JEANETTE:
Jeanette.

CHAZ:
What's it going to be Jeanette? Are you going to wait, what are we up to Bob?

BOB:
45 minutes.

CHAZ:

45 minutes in line? Or are you going to get with a winner and ditch the chicken dinner?

BOYFRIEND:

C'mon Jeanette, let's go.

JEANETTE:

I'm sorry, but I'm really hungry.

JEANETTE pushes BOYFRIEND back into dark as she kisses CHAZ and the
LIGHTS FADE

LIGHTS UP

Chaz's Shortcut now includes a table and a professional sign reading "Chaz's
Shortcut" On the side is the "No Special Order" sign. CHAZ hands off an order to
a departing CUSTOMER as the lights come to full.

CHAZ:

And there's your kid's meal. Come back to Chaz's Shortcut anytime.

ENTER JEANETTE holding a pamphlet. She lovingly wraps her arms around
CHAZ.

JEANETTE:

Honey look, I found this brochure in the pamphlet rack: Scenic Delaware.

CHAZ:

I didn't know that would fill a pamphlet.

JEANETTE:

I was thinking we could go there this weekend, if you could get some time off from work.
Maybe rent a cottage, drink some wine...

CHAZ:

Hold that thought babe, Nirvana Backpack, I see my fries, where my pies? Don't roll your
eyes at me kid!

JEANETTE:

Humpf. I'm starting to think this place is more important to you than our relationship.

CHAZ:

Baby, nothing could be further than the truth. I still feel as strongly about you as I did
when you first walked into my life, 10 minutes ago.

JEANETTE:

Well, maybe if you got me a ring.

CHAZ:

Oh not the ring talk again! Backpack, I need two weepers while you're up there!

ENTER BOB carrying a large cardboard box.

BOB:

Box for you Chaz.

CHAZ:

Sweet.

CHAZ opens the box and pulls out a dark green t-shirt with "Chaz's Shortcut" printed on the front. CHAZ holds it to himself to check the size.

CHAZ:

Check it out you two. Now the customer will have something to remember us by. Throw one on Bob.

BOB puts on a t-shirt over his normal clothes. ENTER AGENT DAVE. He carries a pen and a clipboard

AGENT DAVE:

You the operator of this establishment?

CHAZ:

Yes indeedy. What can I getcha? Don't tell me, you look like a bacon quarter pounder, fish sandwich, hot fudge sundae kinda guy.

AGENT DAVE:

Actually I look like a Food and Health Inspector kinda guy. What's your name?

CHAZ:

Chaz.

AGENT DAVE:

How long you been running this place?

CHAZ:

20-25 minutes.

AGENT DAVE:

(scribbles on his board) You got an oven?

HAZ:

No, I get my food from the front of the store.

AGENT DAVE:

No oven. (scribbles) I see you three ain't wearing hairnets.

HAZ:

Hairnets?

AGENT DAVE:

No hairnets. (scribbles) This guy work for you?

HAZ:

Yes sir.

AGENT DAVE:

He got papers?

BOB:

Papers?

AGENT DAVE:

Hablo English? Sprechen sie English? Parlay vous English?

BOB:

I don't understand a word you're saying.

AGENT DAVE:

Close enough. (scribbles) You got a cooler?

HAZ:

A cooler? Up here?

AGENT DAVE:

Just answer the question funny guy.

HAZ:

No, it's back there... by the oven... where they make the food.

AGENT DAVE:

No cooler. (scribbles) All right rooster, time to talk turkey.

AGENT DAVE pulls the sheet off his clipboard and hands it to CHAZ

AGENT DAVE:

This is a list of code violations. When I come back I want to see these taken care of, or I'm gonna board this place up so tight a mouse fart wouldn't get out. (beat) You got mice here?

CHAZ:

No sir.

AGENT DAVE:

Mmmhmm.

AGENT DAVE scribbles one more thing on his clipboard. He then pulls out a t-shirt from the box.

AGENT DAVE:

For the wife.

EXIT AGENT DAVE

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

CHAZ looks much more haggard by now. He is wearing a "Chaz's Shortcut" t-shirt and a hairnet. He is talking on a phone. The phone number has been added on the opposite side of the "No Special Orders" sign.

CHAZ:

No, I'm sorry, we don't do pizza sticks. (pause) Because this place doesn't make pizza. (pause) Tell you what, I'll get you a cheeseburger, ditch the burger, tell your kid it's a mini-pizza, okay? Good? (pause) Good.

CHAZ hangs up phone only to have it ring immediately. Sighing, he answers it.

CHAZ:

Hello The Original Chaz's Shortcut. (pause) No we don't deliver. Well who ever told you that is a liar. (pause) I don't know, and I don't really care. I've got a line you can see from Mars buddy, so unless you wanna order something? (pause) Okay, that'll be ten minutes. (pause) Hey you know what? It just become 15. (hangs up) Bob! 15 fish, a dozen weepers, 2 chicks deep, 2 chicks naked, 20 spuds, a ranch of cows, a gaggle of pop rockets, 4 greeneries and tell sunglasses to get off her cell and get me those pies!

BOB is standing off to the side relaying orders to the front. JEANETTE enters during his line and begins to speak as well.

BOB:

15 fish sandwiches, 12 onion rings, 2 fried chicken sandwiches, 2 grilled chicken sandwiches, 20 fries, 12 hamburgers, 20 sodas and 4 salads. Mary, love, where are those pies?!

JEANETTE:

Honey?

HAZ:

Yes babe?

JEANETTE:

Good news.

HAZ:

You got register 2 to finally give me some dipping sauces?

JEANETTE:

No. I think I'm pregnant!

HAZ:

(looking at watch) That's... Surprising news.

JEANETTE:

Oh honey, we're going to be so happy just the three of us. Speaking of which, could you get me another refill? All this baby talk has made me thirsty.

HAZ:

(incredulous) Baby, there's no line for refills. You can just walk up and get them.

JEANETTE:

I know, but I like it better when you do it. All tough and commanding.

HAZ:

Honey, I've got 20 orders staring me in the face. One of my best guys just went off to the ball pit with his kids. I'm wearing a hairnet. I don't have time for refills.

JEANETTE:

Please? For the baby?

CHAZ:

(sigh) Spiky Hair! I need a refill! (pause) Yeah, I know.

ENTER DRAGO, a stereotypical Russian mobster.

DRAGO:

You are Mr. Chaz?

CHAZ:

Yes indeedy, what can I get you? Large shake and a salad?

DRAGO:

Very amusing. I am Drago Vavonovitch. I would like word with you.

CHAZ:

Honey, can you give us a moment?

JEANETTE EXITS. DRAGO looks stand over approvingly.

DRAGO:

This is lovely little business you have here.

CHAZ:

Thank you. Would you like to buy a t-shirt to remember your time here? Or maybe a hat?

DRAGO:

Nyet. Yes, quite lovely. Woman is quite lovely too. Be shame if anything unfortunate happen to either one.

CHAZ:

Unfortunate?

DRAGO:

Oh yes, you know how things are. Shoddy construction, worker carelessness. Maybe someone slip and fall on wet floor. Maybe window get broken. Maybe girlfriend spontaneously combust, jump into pile of bullets and explode taking stand with her.

CHAZ:

That's really unfortunate.

DRAGO:

Da. Fortunately there is easy way to insure this does not happen. \$500 a month or... well you experience how imperfect world is first hand.

CHAZ:

I'll see what I can do.

DRAGO:

Good. (picks up t-shirt) For wife.

LIGHTS DOWN

LIGHTS UP

The scene is the same except there is a framed picture of CHAZ and BOB on the wall. CHAZ is disheveled and beat-down. Pulling a bottle of Pepto-Bismal out, he takes a long swig. ENTER BOB

BOB:

Chaz, we've got a problem.

CHAZ:

We've got a problem? Oh we've got problems all right, we've got big problems.

BOB:

The guy in line 6 won't deliver on the kid's meals. He says the cashier is giving him funny looks the bigger his order gets.

CHAZ:

They can look at him sideways, crossed eyed and up his skirt just so long as he gets me those kid's meals. He thinks he's got problems? I've got Food and Health crawling up my butt, the Russian Mob jammed down my throat, a pregnant fiancée on my back about picking out baby names, not to mention I'm 15 hamburgers in the hole because PIGTAILS CAN'T CHOSE A SIDE DISH ALREADY! It's not a charity walk Blondie, let's show a little hustle out there.

CHAZ takes another long pull from the Pepto before offering it to BOB who takes a smaller swig

BOB:

I think we might have gotten in over our head here Chaz.

CHAZ:

Buddy boy, we've been in over our head for an hour now.

BOB:

We've only been here 45 minutes.

CHAZ:

For 45 minutes then. But I think we're almost through this thing. With a little faith and a good friend at my side, I think Chaz's Shortcut is going to stand the test of time.

BOB:

Yeah, I've been meaning to talk to you about that.

CASHIER

Number 97, your order is up.

CHAZ looks towards counter, then back at BOB who is checking his slip.
Realization slowly turns to anger. BOB puts up his hands in self defense.

BOB:

I got hungry okay? Don't look at me like that. I'm just a man.

EXIT BOB

CHAZ:

JUDAS!

CHAZ stands alone and deflated. ENTER RICKY:

RICKY:

Hey. Little help here? Wow, are you The Chaz? I mean, the guy Chaz's Shortcut is named after?

CHAZ:

The one and only kid.

CHAZ takes picture off the wall and looks at he and BOB in happier times, then looks to where BOB has exited. An idea comes to him suddenly and a smile crosses his face.

CHAZ:

Say, what's your name?

RICKY:

Ricky.

CHAZ:

Well Ricky, today is your lucky day. Because today I leave Chaz's Shortcut to you.

RICKY:

Wow, really?

CHAZ:

Yes indeedy.

CHAZ piles t-shirt, hat, hairnet and phone all in RICKY'S arms and kisses him on the forehead.

CHAZ:

Good luck Ricky, keep your chin up and keep reaching for the stars. Hey Bob! Let me have some of your fries brother!

EXIT CHAZ.

LIGHTS DOWN