

THE APPOINTMENT

An office,
CLEO, a secretary sits at her desk,
answering phones, then typing notes,
answering phones, etc.
HAL walks in, a portfolio under his
arm. He is very nervous, anxious
about this appointment, but tries to
hide it with a front of bravado,
devil-may-care, of self-importance.)

Hi, Cleo.

HAL

Oh, hi, Mr. Orman.

CLEO

Oh, come on ... Hal ... Forget the formality. Just plain old Hal.

HAL

Sure, Mr. Or ... Hal ...

CLEO

It feels a lot better that way. How are you?
(Before she can answer.)
You look gorgeous today. Change your hair.

HAL

Well, I did make a few ...

CLEO

It looks great. You ought to wear it that way always.

HAL

You think so?

CLEO

Without question. Really nice.

HAL

Well ... thank you. Would like something to drink ... coffee..?

HAL

No, I'm fine, thank you Cleo.

CLEO

Why don't you have a seat and I'll let him know you're here.

HAL

Sure, thanks.

(He sits.)

CLEO

(CLEO presses a number on the phone.)

Mr Orman is here yes ... I will ... certainly Mr. Frank.

(She hangs up and turns to HAL.)

It'll be a few minutes. He has a call he has to make.

HAL

(He sits.)

Oh, sure. Go ahead ... I've got plenty of time.

CLEO

(She dials a number on the phone.)

This is Lou Frank's office for Mr. Steward ... yes, thank you ...

(She holds a few moments and smiles at HAL. He responds, with a smile and thumb and middle finger O.)

Mr. Steward ... ? One moment, please.

(She buzzes.)

Mr. Steward ... yes... I will.

(Hangs up. To HAL.)

He'll be with you shortly. Important call, you know.

HAL

No problem. Don't worry about a thing. I've been working on this a long time so a few minutes more or less doesn't mean a thing.

CLEO

(Smiles.)

That's good..

(CLEO turns back to typing. HAL checks his watch and waits. CLOE looks up again.)

CLEO

You sure I can't get you anything?

HAL

No, thanks, Cleo. I'm wired from top to bottom. Any more coffee this morning, I'll start sparking.

CLEO

(Laughs at his little joke.)

You drink that much coffee, do you?

HAL

From the minute I get up. First thing I do is turn the switch on the pot. I prep it the night before.

CLEO

You don't.

HAL

Yup, I'm afraid I do. Helps me think. You know how it is in this business. Have to think ahead all the time.

CLEO

(Laughs slightly, just as the phone RINGS. She answers.)

Mr. Frank's office ... Oh, yes, Mr. Aimsforth ... he's on right now but I'll tell him just as soon as he gets off ... yes sir. I won't ... yes ...

(As she hangs up, the phone RINGS again. She answers.)

Mr. Frank's office ... Eric, oh, good ... he wanted me to tell you to make it at one fifteen ... yes ... yes, I'll tell him ... oh, that's naughty but sweet ... yes, I will ... yes Eric. Bye.

(She hangs up. Checks her watch. Smiles at HAL, starts typing copying from papers on her desk.)

(The phone RINGS, she answers)

Mr. Frank's office ... yes, Jessica ... is that so?... When was that? ... Oh, I see. Yes, I'll tell him.

(Scribbles a note on a pad.)

Well, do you think he can hold off for a little while. He's got lunch with Mr. You-know-Who at one-fifteen ... yes ... had to push it back fifteen ... all right, I'll bring it to his attention.

(She hangs up. Adds a note to her pad then looks up at HAL and smiles.)

HAL

He's really a busy man.

CLEO

Yes, he is.

HAL

He's certainly lucky to have you. How long have you been with him?