

# **Bob' s Shirt**

a screenplay by Francis McGrath

**INT. Office - Day**

A typical office building full of people working. The walls are a montage of motivational posters that have the CREDITS written on them. ie: "TEAM WORK: Casting by Blah Blah."

**INT. Bob's Office - Day**

A little placard on the front of a desk reads,

Bob xxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
Director of Accounting

The last name is covered by a piece of paper is draped over it.

BOB is sitting behind the placard, listening to someone.

Bob is large and plain. He is in his mid fifties, very overweight, out of shape, and looks uncomfortable most of the time. He moves very little and when he does, he moves slowly. He's wearing a pair of blue slacks with a white short sleeve shirt and an out-of-style tie. His clothes are old and don't fit him well. There are some stains on Bob's shirt and sweat stains under his arms.

Bob's office is small and plain. It is on an exterior wall so there is a small window behind him. The wall in front of him has the door to one side but the rest is glass. On the other side of the glass is a large room full of cubicles. The glass wall keeps the sound out, but the visual plane is unbroken.

Bob is listening to ED. Ed, in many ways is the opposite of Bob. He is young, trim and in shape. He wears tailored clothes right out of the latest men's magazines and glasses that make him look undeniably intelligent. (It has been wondered if they are prescription glasses or if he just wears them for effect.) He paces the room while he talks, making sudden movements and gestures to emphasize what he says.

ED

I gave him a simple task to do and he blew it. I have too much invested in this project and in this company. Do you realize how it would make me look to have this screwed up now? We're a team here. If he can't play his position, then he should be put on the

bench. I want him off the project,  
better yet, I want you to fire him.

BOB

He's new and...

ED

That's no excuse. We hire the best.  
We shouldn't have to put up with this.

BOB

(continuing as if Ed had never  
interrupted)  
...he's never worked on anything like  
this. I had hoped you were going to  
train him.

ED

I'm not here to nurture. I treated him  
the same way I'd treat any of my  
resources.

BOB

But he works for me and had no idea how  
to do what you asked.

ED

(exasperated)  
Somebody needs to tell him that he's  
incompetent.

BOB

(calmly)  
I think you just did.

A slow pan reveals that the KID they are talking about has been sitting there all along. He is very anxious, wanting to say something but he's smart enough to keep his mouth shut and let Bob defend him.

**INT. Main office near coffee pot - Day**

NED is pouring himself a cup of coffee while FRED is walking up. Ned fills Fred's mug and they both lean against the table, facing Bob's office. This is obviously a common ritual for them. They are both in their thirties, both still working their

way up the ladder. They don't have the high-powered look that Ed has, but they're dressed professionally.

NED

So, Bob, what did you have for lunch today?

**INT. Bob's Office - Day**

A close-up of Bob's shirt reveals several stains on it, in particular, something red.

NED (V.O.)

Is that Bar-B-Q sauce?

FRED (V.O.)

I don't think so. Ketchup?

NED (V.O.)

No, it's too dark for Ketchup?

FRED (V.O.)

Wait a minute; what's that near his shoulder?

Camera pans to Bob's shoulder to reveal something yellow.

NED (V.O.)

That has to be mustard.

FRED (V.O.)

And look at that little white dot on his tie...

Camera pans to Bob's tie.

...that has to be a chopped onion.

NED (V.O.)

Then the red stuff is chili, oh my God!

**INT. Main office near coffee pot - Day**

NED and FRED

(at the same time)

Chilidog!

FRED

(speaking towards the office)

Ed, you better get out of there.

Right at that moment Ed walks out of Bob's office and slams the door. Fred and Ned spin around. They try to look busy and hold back their laughter. Ed gives them an evil look and walks away. Meanwhile in Bob's office, the Kid gets up and starts pacing the room while he talks to Bob.

**INT. Bob's Office - Day**

KID

It's not fair. I didn't do anything.  
Ed's gonna fuck me over.

BOB

Calm down. You just need to stay out of his way, become invisible. He's so busy that he won't have time to think about you. It's like a cat, you move and he'll pounce, you stay still and he'll forget you're there. I've been doing that for 25 years.

KID

I don't think I can stay quiet, not after what he said. I don't take that from anyone.

BOB

You're just going to make it worse. Everything is magnified in this place. Look at my office. I have a whole wall of windows that look into at the company and only a small one to the rest of the world. Apparently, what goes on in here is much more important than what goes on in the rest of the world. So if you do something stupid, it's going to get magnified ten times.

**INT. Main office near coffee pot - Day**

NED

Did I ever tell you about the time I saw Bob at the gym?

FRED

Bob goes to the gym?

NED

Well, about 2 years ago, right at the beginning of January, I was in the locker room getting ready for my workout, when in walks Bob. It must have been a New Year's resolution. Anyway, he comes in and starts getting changed.

FRED

Oh no, don't tell me you saw him naked.

NED

No, not really. He took off his shirt... (Ned shakes his head, still disturbed by the memory.) ...not only is he fat, not only is he pale, he's also very...very...hairy.

Fred busts out laughing.

NED

So I get out of there, I don't want to see anymore. I go do a quick weight routine, but I never see Bob come out. I finish up, go back in the locker room and there's Bob, exactly as I left him, except now he's pulled this tank top over himself and it's 4 sizes too small! He's trying to get it off but he's stuck. He never made it out of the locker room.

To his credit, he must have burned 1000 calories trying to get out of that shirt.

FRED

Maybe he never got it off. Maybe he just wears it under his clothes.

NED

Nah, I'm sure he's cut it off by now. I wonder where the poor slob buys his clothes.

FRED

Oh, I know exactly where he buys them. Once, by accident, I got this Big and Tall catalog in the mail. Everybody in that catalog looked like Bob and all the clothes were the same butt-ugly ones he wears.

**INT. Bob's Office - Day**

Bob and the Kid continue their discussion. After a few minutes Fred and Ned wander off to wherever it is they are supposed to be.

BOB

It's all about appearances. My dad was a photographer. He worked mostly with executives from large companies, you know, taking their pictures for brochures, mailings, lobby portraits. Every time they would call, Dad would always ask them the same questions, like, "How's you head? Still got some hair up there?" The amazing thing was this never upset those guys. Sure they were balding, and sure no one else in the world would talk about it, but their primary concern was trying to look good. When Dad asked so bluntly, they knew he was on their side.

KID

But I've never seen you talk so bluntly to anyone.

BOB

(Thoughtfully)  
Dad wasn't employed by them. I find saying nothing or very little works better for me. I have nothing to prove.

While they're talking, the office has erupted into a blur of activity. People are running around frantic. Bob takes no notice and the Kid has his back to the window.

KID

It doesn't matter what I say or do,  
Ed's going to have me fired. I've got  
rent, a car payment, my college loan...

BOB

Ed can't fire you and I'm not going to  
fire you. He only cares about how he  
looks. Within six months he'll be  
gone, moving on to better things and  
better money. Until then, you'll stay  
with me. You'll have a chance to prove  
yourself. After he's gone I'll start  
bragging about you.

The Kid looks at him. He's certain that he trusts Bob but not  
certain why.

A SECRETARY knocks on the door and enters without waiting for a  
reply.

SECRETARY

J.P. has called an emergency meeting of  
all the directors.

Bob sighs and slowly gets up from his desk. The Kid and the  
secretary are gone before he's on his feet.

**INT. Hallway - Day**

As battle music plays, Bob lumbers down the middle of the hall.  
People are scurrying around him in all directions. They are  
going three times faster than he is. Some are on their way to  
the meeting, some are "putting out fires" but most are nervous  
and just trying to look busy. A very tall bike messenger with  
long, curly brown hair passes through.

Bob lumbers down the hallway till he turns suddenly into the  
men's room. The music quietly counts the time it takes Bob to  
use the facilities. When he comes out, the charge resumes and  
Bob enters the conference room.

**INT. Conference room - Day**

The conference room is large, with the usual large, expensive  
meeting table down the middle. In the center of the table is a  
speakerphone. The room is equipped with the latest in  
conference room gadgetry.

Bob walks into the conference room and takes a seat near the middle of the table. Some are already seated, some get seated in the time it takes Bob to walk from the door to his seat and the rest are just a few seconds behind him.

Ed takes a seat near the head of the table by the window. Fred, Ned and the Kid are NOT here, this meeting is above their pay scale. Among the people present are MARGIE (from marketing and the only woman), THE COLONEL, (a former colonel who is now an executive. He still has a crew cut and a military attitude), a LAWYER, EXEC 1 and EXEC 2. There are a few more men in the room but they remain silent during the meeting.

Everyone talks with the same overemphasis that Ed and the Kid use. Bob keeps a low profile at these meetings. He doesn't say a word and is happy to remain in the background.

J.P. comes in and half the room straightens up. He walks right to the head of the table and starts talking.

J.P.

Thank you for coming. We have a situation we need to take care of today. We are not leaving this room until...

He stops talking as SECRETARY 2 brings in a tray that holds a pitcher of water and glasses. She sets it in the middle of the table. Everyone ignores the water but glares at her.

MARGIE

(Disgusted)

Why don't you just keep cold water on the table at all times so you don't have to interrupt us?

The secretary backs out of the room.

J.P.

(As if giving a speech he's given many times)

When Preston founded this company, he decided that the two most important things overlooked by other companies were integrity and image. We are in

jeopardy of losing both. Preston is still on vacation in Hawaii, but I have him on the line. He's been advised of the situation and wants to say a few words.

He presses a button at the head of table.

J.P.

Preston, can you hear me?

PRESTON

Yes, is everyone there?

J.P.

Yes Sir.

PRESTON

Good. Now listen up everyone. I may be on vacation, but I want you all to know that I will do everything I can on this end. Keep me advised as things progress and feel free to contact me with any questions.

The directors exchange worried glances. What's going on?

PRESTON

I'm about to eat breakfast and then I have to go see that damned Pearl Harbor monument with my family. But I'll keep my phone with me. Don't hesitate to call if you need anything. I have full confidence that J.P. can get us through this. Get out there and score us a touch down. I'll be waiting to hear some good news.

Various director's who want their voices heard say good-bye or offer encouraging words like "Don't worry, we'll take care of it."

The room turns eerily silent. All eyes are on J.P.

J.P.

A few hours ago my wife was having lunch with several other ladies. With

her were some close personal friends and Mrs. Henson. If you haven't guessed, Mrs. Henson's husband is Brad Henson, President and CEO of Teletech. Ed, how are the negotiations with Teletech going?

ED

They are going fine sir. I'd say we're two weeks out from closing the deal with them.

J.P.

(nods to Ed)

Keep at it. Hit that one out of the park for us.

(continuing with story)

On their way to lunch, they were stopped at a light and a homeless man approached the car.

The room is now incredibly tense. What tragedy was about to come?

J.P.

He began cleaning their windshield.

ED

J.P., I hate to interrupt, but is your wife OK? Did she get out of there?

J.P.

Yes she did Ed. Physically she's fine, but she is humiliated. Most of you know how much she has given to this company. My question to you is what kind of image are we giving the public? Mrs. Henson pointed out that the man was wearing one of our T-shirts. It turns out that it wasn't just any T-shirt; it was from our private "World Wide Welcome" party we had last spring for our internet partners, including Teletech.

The room is silent for a while.

MARGIE

(Slowly at first, but picks up speed as she goes)

Well, the damage is done. We don't know how many people saw him, but if your wife did, we know there must be others. So let's put a spin on this. Let's do a press release on how we give away our extra shirts to the homeless. That way if anyone sees a homeless man in one of our shirts, they'll think of us and our generosity.

EXEC 1

I don't think that will work. They'll still see a drunk, homeless, dirty bum.

LAWYER

Besides, we might run into a human rights issue if we use the homeless as billboards.

COLONEL

I think you all are missing the point. Let's first figure out how this hobo got it in the first place. Maybe someone had his house broken into.

EXEC 1 (pulls out his phone and sends the following text)

Bring me a list of all who attended the World Wide Web kickoff. And see if you can find out if any of them were robbed since then.

EXEC 2

How do we know someone didn't give their shirt away?

MARGIE

Why would someone give away their shirt? We hired a top artist to design that. They were over \$8 each.

ED

Disrespect. It shows a lack of devotion to the company.

THE COLONEL

It's easy to figure out who trashed their shirt, let's just make everyone bring theirs in.

LAWYER

I don't know about that. The shirts were gifts right? People won't like having to bring them in and prove that they still have them. Now we risk invasion of privacy charges.

MARGIE (sending text)

Pull the records on last years "World Wide Welcome". I want a complete history of the T-shirts we gave out. How many did we make, how many did we give away, were there any extras, who was at the party? Bring it to me right away.

ED

How about this? This Friday instead of regular casual Friday, we tell everyone to wear his or her "World Wide Welcome" T-shirts.

MARGIE

*(just putting down her phone but not missing a beat)*

We could make the whole day a revisit to the theme. We could whip together a lunch similar to the party, we still have the decorations...

*(she has just seen the light)*

I don't know why I didn't think of this before, but we could invite representatives from Teletec. It puts a nice PR spin on this. Who knows, maybe this could work out in our favor

LAWYER

But not everyone that works here was at the party, what are they supposed to wear?

MARGIE

(checks something on her phone)  
We could give them our new "World Tour"  
T-shirts.

(pause while she reads her notes)  
They are supposed to be ready on  
Thursday, that's perfect. We were  
going to give those out next week  
anyway.

EXEC 2

But there were lots of people at that  
party who don't work for us, and we've  
had at least three people leave the  
company since then.

ED

But this way we can see if our people  
still have their shirts. We can  
eliminate them from the list. Let's  
see who really has team spirit.

While they are talking a woman comes in with a few sheets of  
paper and hands them to Margie. She glances around the room  
quickly, trying to discern what's going on before leaving again.

J.P.

I like this. Let's go with it. We  
aren't going to be able to check all  
the guests, but it will give us a nice  
breakdown of our own people.

LAWYER

We need to have a better checks and  
balances on these shirts.

COLONEL

Maybe we shouldn't give them out at  
all.

Margie sets the papers she's been given to the side without  
looking at them. They've moved on to a new problem.

MARGIE

These types of gifts help make people  
feel more like family.

EXEC 2

But after you give someone a gift, you can't tell them what to do with it.

COLONEL

So we check them out to people and let them know that they must return them when they leave the company.

Fred walks in and hands Exec 1 some papers. He too is looking around, trying to get some information.

EXEC 1

People won't like that.

(Turns to Fred and hands back the papers.)

Could you make copies for everyone?

Fred turns and leaves the room.

J.P.

We can deal with this later. Right now we need to deal with the situation at hand. What are we going to do now?

COLONEL

Why don't we try to find this guy and see if we can get the shirt back?

ED

If we get the shirt back, we can see what size it is. That will help us track down whose it is.

LAWYER

You can't go take a shirt from a homeless man.

COLONEL

It shouldn't cost much to get it from him.

EXEC 2

We could always barter for it with booze.

LAWYER

No alcohol. We could be held liable.  
We give him cash.

EXEC 1

Or we could get him a \$5 shirt from Wal Mart.

LAWYER

Whatever we give him, we have to get our shirt  
from him first!

COLONEL

We could send out people in teams to  
look for him near the area of the  
incident.  
(practically jumping out of his seat)  
The longer we wait, the larger the  
search area will be.

J.P.

Hold it. I'm not going to have my  
people risk their necks over this.

EXEC 1

We could take security guards with us.

MARGIE

I'll see if we can get some of the guys  
we used for...

She flips open her cell phone but stops short. The room falls  
silent and still. Something is happening that has never  
happened before. Bob is taking the floor. He stands up slowly  
and starts talking.

BOB

You are actually considering hunting  
this man down to take his shirt from  
him.

He pulls off his tie.

BOB

He's homeless for god's sake. It's  
probably the only shirt he has.  
Whoever gave it to him did him a favor.

Bob drops his tie on the floor and starts unbuttoning his shirt. He is not wearing an under-shirt so we see his fat, pale, hairy chest.

BOB

When you find him and do whatever it is you are going to do to him, try and remember that he's a man and deserves some dignity. And when you take his only shirt from him, you can give him this.

Bob tosses his shirt to the center of the table. He turns to walk out just as Fred enters with his copies. Fred freezes when he sees a half-naked Bob coming towards him.

Bob exits.

The room is silent. Everyone has stunned expressions on their faces.

After a few minutes, J. P. zips up his stuff and leaves the room. The meeting is over.

Exec 1 and Exec 2 follow him, taking Fred with them wordlessly.

END CREDITS START ROLLING

Slowly the others exit, leaving Bob's shirt on the table.

FADE TO BLACK

CREDITS CONTINUE