

BERNOULLI EFFECT

By Patrick Gabridge

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CAST: DAVIS and NIKKI

****If performed for competition, props may easily be mimed.***

SETTING: Living room of a house. Bare stage with a single chair.

AT RISE: DAVIS BECKMAN, about 30 (though the characters may be played by actors of any age), is sleeping in a chair, a pile of papers in his lap. HE'S dressed in a suit and loosened tie. One wrist and one ankle are each handcuffed or tied to the chair.

(Suddenly DAVIS snorts awake. HE rubs his eyes with his free hand, and then tries to stand, clearly unaware that HE is shackled. HE claws at his restraints for a few moments then calls out.)

DAVIS: Nikki... Nikki... Nikki! (No response. HE struggles harder, writhing in the chair, but only manages to tip the chair and himself over with a hard thud.) Nikki! Help! (NIKKI BECKMAN enters, not in a rush, and pulls DAVIS upright.) We need to have a serious talk with those kids. Jokes are fine, but this is unsafe.

NIKKI: It wasn't the kids.

DAVIS: (thinks HE'S catching on) Ooooh. I see. It's a nice thought, Honey, but I can't tonight. I have a ton of work to do for my presentation tomorrow. Maybe...

NIKKI: That's not what I had in mind.

DAVIS: Oh.

NIKKI: Not directly, anyway.

DAVIS: Whether it is or isn't doesn't really matter. I don't have time to deal with it tonight.

NIKKI: My point exactly.

DAVIS: So let me go.

NIKKI: Davis, we need to talk.

DAVIS: I don't need to be handcuffed for us to have a conversation.

NIKKI: So if I let you go, we'll have a talk?

DAVIS: First I need to prepare for tomorrow, then—

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NIKKI: Then we'll be asleep.

DAVIS: We'll get to it.

NIKKI: We'll get to it now.

DAVIS: This is ridiculous.

NIKKI: But necessary.

DAVIS: Let me go.

NIKKI: No.

DAVIS: Nikki.

NIKKI: No.

DAVIS: Unlock me this instant!

NIKKI: I don't take orders from you.

DAVIS: This is childish.

NIKKI: I don't care.

DAVIS: You can't do this.

NIKKI: Already have.

DAVIS: It's against the law.

NIKKI: Then call the police.

DAVIS: This is crazy.

NIKKI: Hardly.

DAVIS: Let me go. Let me go. ***(HE struggles and strains and manages to tip himself over again.)*** Ow.

NIKKI: Not accomplishing much, are you?

DAVIS: Pick me up, Please? ***(SHE rights him again.)*** All right. We'll do it your way.

NIKKI: Thank you.

DAVIS: Can you please explain yourself?

NIKKI: I'm worried about you.

DAVIS: Me? I'm fine.

NIKKI: And about us. You and me. Our family.

DAVIS: That's a lot to worry about.

NIKKI: It's not just your fault. I should have paid more attention. Maybe society is to blame...a thought that's awfully convenient. Certainly your parents should take some responsibility—of course they won't. In the end, I suppose blame and responsibility are important, but not necessary for a solution.

DAVIS: Solution to what?

NIKKI: You work too hard.

DAVIS: This is an important product. We'll revolutionize the toothpaste industry. This stuff actually kills plaque. There are millions of dollars at stake. If we pull this off, let's just say I'll be noticed. It could mean big things for our family.

NIKKI: More money.

DAVIS: Exactly.

NIKKI: More money for what?

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DAVIS: Our nice house, better stuff, college tuition, vacations.

NIKKI: We don't go on vacations anymore.

DAVIS: We'll schedule some.

NIKKI: You'll be busier than ever.

DAVIS: Think about college for Wendy and Jimmy.

NIKKI: Timmy.

DAVIS: Ivy league, all the way.

NIKKI: Wendy's a "C" student.

DAVIS: We'll hire a tutor.

NIKKI: Why did we get married?

DAVIS: We were in love.

NIKKI: And now?

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