

# **Green Cheese**

A play for The Four Marx Brothers  
by Mike Mariano  
Copyright 1998

[mikemariano@hotmail.com](mailto:mikemariano@hotmail.com)  
[www.mikemariano.com](http://www.mikemariano.com)

# Green Cheese

A play for The Four Marx Brothers  
by Mike Mariano

## Scene 1:

*(January, 1964. A gavel bangs in the room of a Senate committee. The Committee, headed by SENATOR WALSH, is sitting at a bench on stage left facing the center. WALSH is a hard-nosed 50-ish woman who knows her position in power. There are a table and chairs facing the committee on the other side. TODD OHLMEYER, a fresh-faced executive type, dressed in slacks and a thin tie, is facing the Committee with both hands on the table. He exhales deeply.)*

### **TODD:**

So, by taking into account current US rocket technology, and applying it as shown, under the proposed budget, we can put a man on the moon by the end of this decade!

### **WALSH:**

This is a very interesting proposal, Mr. Ohlmeyer, and it addresses many of the concerns my committee has. But there is one glaring oversight: Who is to head this program?

### **TODD:**

After some consideration, my team can only recommend one man for the job: Mr. Lyland H. Bloodworth!

*(The committee gasps.)*

### **WALSH:**

Lyland H. Bloodworth?! Is this the same Lyland Bloodworth who took seven million dollars from the Treasury for the Kendall Foundation?

### **TODD:**

Possibly...

### **WALSH:**

The Kendall Foundation turned out to be the foundation for his house on Kendall Lane! The man's a crook!

**TODD:**

With all due respect, Senator Walsh, that's not what our former President thought. Bloodworth worked hard for the President's dreams, and now he wants to work for another one. I've got a more flattering biography for you to take a look at.

*(He takes a folder and hands it to WALSH.)*

**WALSH:**

*(Glancing at the folder:)*

I'm sure... If I may ask, where is Mr. Bloodworth now?

**TODD:**

Lyland Bloodworth is en route to Washington right now. I wanted him here for the meeting, but I doubt he'll be able to make it.

*(Suddenly, LYLAND BLOODWORTH enters the committee room. He has a large greasepaint mustache and a cigar, and is dressed in a suit. He takes the cigar out of his mouth and addresses them.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

Hello, Senators... Todd... Sorry about my abrupt entrance, but I wanted to get out of that airport as soon as I could.

**MAN ON COMMITTEE:**

You had a bad flight?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Did I ever! I paid good money for first class, and it wasn't worth it! They kept making useless claims to their extra leg room...

**WALSH:**

What's wrong with that?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Nothing, if you have extra legs...

*(He looks back at WALSH.)*

**BLOODWORTH:** (cont.)

And you don't have to prove that, Ma'am... So, I got annoyed and told the stewardess. She ignored me, so I told the co-pilot. He ignored me, so I told the pilot. He ignored me, so I told the control tower. When they screamed for me to give the controls back to the pilot, I figured my appeals had run out. So, we crashed, they tried to kill me, end of story.

**WALSH:**

*(Puzzled:)*

They tried to kill you? How?

**BLOODWORTH:**

They same way they do everybody; Fish or Chicken.

**TODD:**

Yes... Well, I just gave your dossier to the Committee and they are reviewing you for the position.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Excellent! Review away my dossier!

**OTHER MAN ON COMMITTEE:**

Yes. Mr. Bloodworth, it say here you have doctorates in Political Science and History from William and Mary?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yes! I would have gotten a Physics degree, too, but Mary changed the lock on their safe.

**WALSH:**

I see... And after college you worked for a banking firm?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yes. American Fidelity, which I'm beginning to think is an oxymoron...

**FIRST MAN:**

American Fidelity? Weren't they involved in some gambling fiasco?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yeah, it's called the Dow Jones.

**FIRST MAN:**

No, I mean poker. They literally bet with their investments. The SEC found out and they closed shop.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yep, they folded.

**WALSH:**

And what did you do?

**BLOODWORTH:**

I stayed in; I had a full house.

**WALSH:**

*(Tentatively:)*

And from there you moved to the Air Force?

**BLOODWORTH:**

That's right; I spent 6 years working with the top people in the organization. You know Chuck Yeager?

**WALSH:**

You mean the man who broke the sound barrier?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yeah, well I'm the guy who fixed it. And from there, as you probably know; I became part of the President's Cabinet.

**WALSH:**

Really? Tell me, Mr. Bloodworth, exactly what department did you head?

**BLOODWORTH:**

I was Secretary of the Exterior.

**WALSH:**

I don't recall there being a Secretary of the "Exterior"...

**BLOODWORTH:**

It's understandable; I was out a lot.

**WALSH:**

I see. Well, Mr. Bloodworth, all of this is very interesting, but I hardly see why it qualifies you to head the NASA mission to the Moon.

**BLOODWORTH:**

I understand that, Senator Walsh, but take another look. I'm a man of ideas, and it's going to take a man of ideas to get to the moon. We made a promise to our dear, departed president, or don't you remember...?

*(The lights change and reverent music plays as the committee looks up.)*

**KENNEDY:**

*(In voiceover:)*

We choose to go to the moon! We choose to go to the moon!

*(The lights return to normal.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

How's that for presentation? Senators, our promise was that we'd put a man on the moon by the end of this decade. But under my control, I say we can put a man on the moon by the end of the year!

*(They gasp.)*

**TODD:**

The end of the year?!

**SECOND MAN:**

That's crazy!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Oh, crazy, is it?

**TODD:**

*(Diplomatically:)*

Well, in a way, yes. We still don't know much in the way of, ah, trajectories, the surface of the moon, or even how to get our men up there! We need to do extensive testing, and the public doesn't want to spend the kind of manpower and tax money to do it quickly.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Oh... Senators! What if I were to tell you I could shift public sentiment so we can get this done in a year?

**WALSH:**

Normally I'd have you locked back up, but right now I'm listening.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator Walsh, I have a sure-fire plan to get the people interested in space: put their tax rebates in the Gemini rockets. Short of that, I have a few other plans I'd like to share with Mr. Ohlmeyer first.

**WALSH:**

Certainly, Mr. Bloodworth. The Committee and I will deliberate this matter in the next room.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Todd and I will be deliberate right here.

*(The committee leaves left as TODD wrings his hands.)*

**TODD:**

Oh, I don't know. I really don't know about this one.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Relax, Todd.

**TODD:**

Relax? I'm pushing a plan that's against public sentiment and is gonna burn up tax dollars, and you want me to relax?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Sure. Right now you're only being evaluated by Congress and they burn up tax dollars all the time. And they can also look at the political benefits of the project. They don't want to live under a Russian Moon. Who can blame them? A Russian Moon ruins the atmosphere.

**TODD:**

The Moon has no atmosphere.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Exactly! Who'd want a cow jumping over a Russian Moon, or a Russian Moon over Miami? Well, there's already one over Havana, but who's counting? These Senators are clear in their needs; no Russians on the Moon. As for mooning the Russians, well that's another story...

**TODD:**

That's all well and good, Mr. Bloodworth, but the American public doesn't see it that way. They don't care whether or not Gordon Hash gets from Annapolis to Cocoa Beach, let alone the Earth to the Moon.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Back up there; who's this Gordon Hash?

**TODD:**

He's the former Navy pilot that we wanted to be the first man on the moon. He's a little temperamental, but we think he's the man for the job.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Well there's your problem; your star player is some nobody that nobody's gonna care about, and those are two negatives that don't cancel out. No, what we need is someone the public can look up to, who they'll all cheer for. We need an astronaut who will make touchdown on the moon like a touchdown in football. Todd, what we need is the Joe Brockway of NASA!

**TODD:**

But who can we get?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Joe Brockway.

**TODD:**

What?! You want to put an American football player into space?

**BLOODWORTH:**

That's the gist of it.

**TODD:**

Joe Brockway on the Moon. That's ludicrous, that's insane-

**WALSH:**

That's brilliant!

*(SENATOR WALSH has reentered and is very intrigued by BLOODWORTH's idea.)*

Using Joe Brockway in the space program! That is an excellent idea, Mr. Bloodworth.

**TODD:**

It is?

**WALSH:**

It takes a stretch of the imagination, but I can see it happening! Brockway's already in top physical condition, and he's a media darling! The public would certainly spend the money to put him on the moon! Mr. Bloodworth, I was wrong about you. I thought you were a swindler, but now I see you're a true capitalist!

**BLOODWORTH:**

In other words, your opinion of me hasn't changed?

**WALSH:**

Mr. Bloodworth, you have the job!

**TODD:**

Oh, thank you, Senator!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yes, thank you! It's about time I was employed again.

**WALSH:**

Oh, you were out of work?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Well, no steady income. I was on the racing circuit, making whirlwind tours of the nation's Rotary Clubs and colleges.

**WALSH:**

Well, wouldn't that be the lecture circuit?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Whatever it was, it caused an eight car pileup and left the Winston logo permanently emblazoned on my trunk.

**WALSH:**

I see... Well, we'd better get to work if we're going to get Joe Brockway to pass the test.

**TODD:**

"The test?"

**WALSH:**

Yes. I'm afraid we're going to have to make Brockway into a full fledged astronaut if we want him to fly to the moon. As long as he can pass training, we'll have no problems. Now, I suggest we get to work right away!

**TODD:**

Uh, Senator Walsh? I couldn't help but notice your use of the term "we"?

**BLOODWORTH:**

And I couldn't help ignoring it.

**WALSH:**

Well, as far as the Senate is concerned, I am in charge of the whole of this project. I'm going to be the one held accountable for any liabilities.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator, you can have absolute faith in our lying abilities.

**WALSH:**

I have a home near our site of operations, so I'll be able to keep a close eye on the project.

**BLOODWORTH:**

If you don't mind my asking, where is this home?

**WALSH:**

Kissimmee.

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(Aside:)*

That's what she said.

**WALSH:**

Well gentlemen, you got what you came for, now it's time to put your dreams into action! We're going to the moon!

**BLOODWORTH:**

I'm homesick already...

*(The three exit right and the scene ends.)*

Scene 2:

*(The scene opens in a cafeteria area at NASA. There is a cafeteria table from center to left with chairs around it. BLOODWORTH is standing, looking in a folder as TODD comes in, ecstatic.)*

**TODD:**

Mr. Bloodworth, I am impressed! Your plan is working better than expected. Take a look at these figures!

**BLOODWORTH:**

First, you should take a look at these figures...

*(He holds the folder on its side so TODD can see, and the page unfolds like a pin-up poster. TODD's and BLOODWORTH's eyes widen. They take a long pause, looking at the "figures", before TODD shakes his head.)*

**TODD:**

Ah, nevermind that! I've got some seriously impressive little numbers...

*(TODD takes his folder and holds it sideways. The same pin-up deal happens, and they stare for even longer. Finally, BLOODWORTH frowns, wrinkles his brow, and points at the paper.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

No, no. You've got the numbers wrong; you forgot to carry the one...

*(They turn, and it is revealed that TODD's pin-up is really a long sheet of numbers and equations.)*

**TODD:**

Oh, you're right. Well, that's gonna make the total even higher! America loves the space program now that Joe Brockway's involved! The way things are going, we can definitely have a rocket to send to the moon in time. But the question is: will we have an astronaut?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Of course we will!

**TODD:**

I wouldn't be too sure. Football season ended three weeks ago, and he still hasn't shown up. Where is Brockway?

**BLOODWORTH:**

He's coming today. I let him have a few weeks off before we started.

**TODD:**

You did? Granted, Joe Brockway's entitled to some off time, but that was Senator Walsh's call, not yours. Of course lately she's been getting a real big head about things... She wants to put her own stamp on every design my team comes up with, realistic or not. It's like she doesn't want to listen to reason!

**BLOODWORTH:**

If reason sounds anything like you, I can see why.

*(BLOODWORTH returns to staring at the figures.)*

**TODD:**

And to make things worse, she's moved herself into the hall office. My team is going to go nuts having her so close!

*(TINA, TODD's secretary, comes in with another folder.)*

**TINA:**

Here are the latest figures, Mr. Ohlmeyer.

**BLOODWORTH:**

You're too late; we just did that gag.

**TODD:**

Thank you, Tina.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Tina, huh? Tina, are you hungry?

**TINA:**

No.

**BLOODWORTH:**

In that case, I'd like to take you out to dinner. What do you say, Miss... uh...

**TINA:**

It's "Miss Tina Van der Berg".

**BLOODWORTH:**

"Van der Berg", huh? That's Dutch?

**TINA:**

Yes.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Oh, I won't go dutch. I wouldn't feel right to split the check with you. I'd just split before the check came.

**TINA:**

*(She is not amused with BLOODWORTH anymore, and begins walking away.)*

Mmmm Hmmm...

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(To TODD:)*

I guess there's some animosity between the Czechs and the Dutch.

**TODD:**

*(Sarcastic:)*

Yes, well let's stay out of geopolitics, shall we?

*(He looks at a paper and slaps it for emphasis.)*

Look at this! It seems the spacesuit designers are all set for "the fitting and testing of their subject". Mr. Bloodworth, I would really like to know where our subject is.

*(Before BLOODWORTH responds, JOE BROCKWAY comes on from stage right. JOE is wearing a tight sweater and an odd, ruffled hat. He looks around at NASA with very little awe, and seems laid back. When He speaks, he has a half-Italian, half-Bronx accent. TODD and BLOODWORTH approach him to shake his hand.)*

Mr. Brockway!

**JOE:**

Hello!

*(TODD and BLOODWORTH both reach JOE at the same time and extend their hands. JOE looks from hand to hand, wondering which to shake. Finally he gives up and waves his arms in the air. TODD and BLOODWORTH shake each other's hands in hearty introduction.)*

**TODD:**

*(To BLOODWORTH:)*  
Nice meeting you!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Likewise!

*(They turn to BROCKWAY.)*

**TODD:**

Joe Brockway! It's great to have you here; welcome to NASA.

**JOE:**

Yeah, itsa good to be here.

**TODD:**

We're happy to have you, Mr. Brockway; you'll be living history in a few months.

**BLOODWORTH:**

That is unless your spacesuit springs a leak.

**TODD:**

That's right, Mr. Brockway; we really need to start your testing. If you'll follow me-

**JOE:**

*(Interrupts:)*

No! I know how these things work, and I'ma not gonna do nothin' without setting a few terms.

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(Watching as TINA crosses:)*

I wouldn't mind setting a few interns myself...

**JOE: '**

I wanna good room to stay in. It'sa gotta have fresh cut flowers every day, a stocked refrigerator, and a big King size bed.

**TODD:**

Oh, I don't know if we can get a King size. How about two twins stuck together?

**JOE:**

No! That doesn't equal up. A King's worth a lot more than two twins.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Say, what's the rate of exchange? I wouldn't mind trading a queen for a set of twins...

**JOE:**

And another thing; you gotta get a room for my brother.

**TODD:**

Your brother? Mr. Brockway, that's way out of line! We legally and financially can't meet all these demands!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yeah! The millions of dollars we spend are supposed to go to the Space Program! And maybe a few hundred thousand to my European futures market...

**JOE:**

All right. If that'sa how you feel; I'll just go back home and enjoy the off season...

**TODD:**

*(Uneasy:)*

Uh, Mr. Brockway, wait. We might be able to keep your brother on...

**JOE:**

I thought you'd find a way...

**TODD:**

Now, you'll have to keep quiet about this, cause I can't get him security clearance. Uh, who is your brother, anyway?

**JOE:**

He'sa right outside.

*(He calls off right.)*

Hey Donny! Come on in!

*(DONNY BROCKWAY comes in, wearing a different odd hat, a large overcoat, and a goofy grin.)*

**JOE:** (cont.)

Donny, these guys are lettin' us stay here till we go up to the moon!

**TODD:**

Oh, uh, he's not going-

*(TODD is interrupted as DONNY shakes his hand vigorously and thankfully. He does the same to BLOODWORTH.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(Taking his hand back:)*

Watch it; they don't grow back.

**TODD:**

Well, Donny, if you're going to stay here, you're going to have to do some work, all right?

*(DONNY mimes as if he is saying "Sure, that's fine! No problem!" TODD is confused by the absence of his voice. TODD says to JOE:)*

Say, is your brother all right?

**JOE:**

Oh, he's fine. He's just went through surgery.

*(DONNY nods and motions with his open hand very near his throat.)*

**TODD:**

Ah, throat surgery?

**JOE:**

Nah, wrist surgery.

*(DONNY grabs his raised wrist with his other hand, taking the emphasis away from his throat.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

I see, did you drag him along to your football games, too?

*(DONNY throws a pantomime football to BLOODWORTH, who fumbles with it until punting it across the stage. All four watch the ball "land", then continue.)*

**TODD:**

Well Donny, we'll have to find something for you to do. Mr. Bloodworth, why don't you teach Donny here how to do inventory? Take stock.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Taking stock is what started my SEC investigation in the first place... All right, Donny...

*(He begins walking off left, with DONNY following very closely. BLOODWORTH stops, looks at DONNY, and exclaims:)*

You know, it's too bad I already cast a shadow; your brother is doing a great job.

*(He and DONNY exit.)*

**JOE:**

So, Mr. Ohlmeyer, how are we gonna do these tests?

**TODD:**

Well, an astronaut is going to have to be the best by many standards. He must be intelligent, athletic, discerning, enduring, and brave.

**JOE:**

Aw, that's a no problem! I've got all those skills right in my fingers alone!

**TODD:**

Including intelligence?

**JOE:**

Yeah. You see, I wrote down some test answers on the palm of my hand...

**TODD:**

Ah ha...

*(He shuffles through his folder and pulls out some paper.)*

**TODD:** (cont.)

I guess the first test will be your math skills. Up in space, you may have to handle trajectory angles on the fly.

**JOE:**

Ah, I already know how to use a space toilet.

**TODD:**

That's so odd. Here, take this sheet of paper-

**JOE:**

That's a bit abrasive for the space toilet.

**TODD:**

*(Getting impatient:)*

It's a test of your math skills, Mr. Brockway, so let's get on with it. Question 1: What is the secant of pi over four?

**JOE:**

Secant?

**TODD:**

You know; the trigonometric functions. Like sine, cosine, cosecant...

**JOE:**

Ah... I don't know; next question.

**TODD:**

All right, here's a word problem. If a man is on a train going 50 miles per hour, and his destination is 300 miles away, can he get there in 3 hours?

**JOE:**

That's easy. Cos' he can't.

*(TODD smiles, hiding his grief.)*

**TODD:**

That's right, but it's so wrong...

**JOE:**

Aw, I'm sorry, Mr. Ohlmeyer. I've never been good with math. Ats'a why I play football, where the math stays clean and simple.

**TODD:**

Yes, you're probably going to have to do some studying before Senator Walsh will approve you.

**JOE:**

Ah, well. At least I've got the athletic part down.

**TODD:**

That's not such a safe bet either, Mr. Brockway. Maneuvering in space is going to take agility as well as strength. If you want to work on your agility, most of the astronauts recommend fencing.

*(BLOODWORTH and DONNY come back on "fencing" with two small sections of white picket fencing. They clash the fencing together in a parody of movie swordplay.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

En garde!

*(He and DONNY clash a little more, until DONNY causes him to drop his fencing and fall backward. DONNY holds the pointed end of the fencing up to BLOODWORTH's neck.)*

Touche!

*(DONNY turns around and points to his "tush". BLOODWORTH grimaces.)*

I would have preferred getting skewered.

*(DONNY helps BLOODWORTH up.)*

**TODD:**

Mr. Bloodworth, I don't know if Senator Walsh is going to accept Joe Brockway as an Astronaut.

**BLOODWORTH:**

I know, that's why Donny and I were going to picket outside her office.

*(DONNY frowns at the joke. After that, GORDON HASH struts in from stage right, looking very angry. His slicked back hair and large build would be menacing, if the group had any concept of menace.)*

**HASH:**

Well, well, well...

**BLOODWORTH:**

...And not a drop to drink.

**HASH:**

Look who it is: Joe Brockway. I hear they wanted to replace me with you for the mission to the moon.

**JOE:**

That's funny; I heard the same news.

**HASH:**

Look, I don't know what kind of an upstart you are-

**BLOODWORTH:**

He starts for Green Bay, I think...

**HASH:**

*(He starts toward JOE.)*

Listen, Brockway-

*(He stops as he notices he has been fenced in; DONNY has put the fencing up against HASH's left side and down side. HASH stops at the left fencing, then turns downstage and stops again, then finally turns right to where DONNY is standing, and swings him like a gate and walks around to JOE. It's easier than it sounds.)*

Now listen, Brockway! I've been working with the Space Program for five years now, and I don't need some jock like you pulling the rug out from under me!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Well, it's about time you came clean and admitted that was a toupee! Doesn't the truth feel good?

*(HASH approaches BLOODWORTH.)*

**HASH:**

*(Menacing:)*

You tell me how it feels when I shove the truth down your throat...

*(DONNY hands HASH his leg. HASH takes it, then looks at it surprised and drops it.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

Now, Gordon, is that any way to talk to the man who has your paychecks?

**HASH:**

Senator Walsh signs my checks.

**BLOODWORTH:**

I know, but I'm the guy who has them. And just for that comment I'm not going to embezzle you!

*(He hands HASH a paycheck. HASH takes it and holds it at his side. DONNY slides it out of his hand and begins folding it into a hat.)*

**HASH:**

*(Less than appreciatively:)*

Thanks a lot. And speaking of Senator Walsh, she had some pretty interesting words to say to me about the mission. She said that despite the rumors, I am still the choice for the lunar astronaut.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Well, you've certainly got the looney part down.

*(DONNY puts the paycheck-hat on HASH's head.)*

**HASH:**

Senator Walsh doesn't want to waste any time training Joe Brockway when she's already got an astronaut here. Now that she's moved in and seen the program, she knows I have the right stuff.

*(HASH notices the hat.)*

Say, what's the big idea?! This isn't my hat!

*(He takes the paycheck-hat off, takes DONNY's hat, and switches the two.)*

That's better!

*(DONNY shrugs and pockets the check. HASH turns to JOE.)*

So just watch yourself, Brockway. Right now there's only one astronaut here and that's me!

*(He turns sharply and leaves. DONNY snatches his hat back without being noticed. He begins to run up to HASH, as if to fight him, until JOE and BLOODWORTH hold him back. HASH turns at this commotion, and the three stop, still holding each other. Getting the same idea, they begin swinging DONNY back and forth by the arms while singing.)*

**JOE AND BLOODWORTH:**

*(Singing:)*

Up we go, into the wild blue yonder; Up we go...

*(HASH shakes his head and leaves. JOE and BLOODWORTH unceremoniously drop DONNY.)*

**JOE:**

*(To TODD:)*

Say, is that true what he's saying about the space mission? Is Hash still the guy?

**TODD:**

Hash was definitely not the guy. I mean, we couldn't appoint you as part of the program until you passed, but it wouldn't mean that Hash would go up.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Hmmm... That smells like something rotten is afoot.

*(JOE, TODD, and DONNY check their shoes.)*

I'm going to talk to my superior One-on-one! And if the Mexicans can't help me out, I'll go to Senator Walsh.

*(He exits left. TODD, JOE, and DONNY stare. Scene ends.)*

Scene 3:

*(In SENATOR WALSH's office, TINA is hanging a portrait on the back wall. The portrait is a stylized painting of the Senator. WALSH looks on and tries to determine if it is hanged right. There is also a large closet upstage left. BLOODWORTH storms in, filled with fire.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator Walsh, I have a little problem I think we need to-

*(He notices the portrait.)*

What the hell is that?!

**WALSH:**

Oh, that's a little portrait I had done of myself a while back.

**BLOODWORTH:**

It looks more like Dorian Gray...

**WALSH:**

Isn't it wonderful? The artist's other works are hanging in the Lourve...

**BLOODWORTH:**

I'd say this one belongs in the bathroom, too.

**WALSH:**

Mr. Bloodworth, this is quality work! Can't you see the strokes?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Yeah, the artist must have had a few with subject material like you.

**WALSH:**

Well, surely you can see some likeness?

**BLOODWORTH:**

What's there to like about it?

**WALSH:**

*(Angry:)*

Mr. Bloodworth, is there a purpose to your visit, or are you wasting my time?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Actually, I came to discuss the position of our mutual friend, Gordon Hash.

**WALSH:**

Oh, all right then. Tina, you can put down the portrait.

**BLOODWORTH:**

And she means "put down" in the veterinary sense.

*(TINA puts down the portrait and leaves right.)*

**WALSH:**

So, you're probably wondering why Gordon Hash is still here at NASA.

*(BLOODWORTH slowly walks over to the portrait.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

Wondering, and that's also what I'm asking.

*(He flips the portrait over, so the "face" is to the wall.)*

**WALSH:**

I'll level with you, Mr. Bloodworth; Right now we plan on sending Mr. Hash to the moon, and we aren't likely to change those plans.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator! I'm shocked! You made a promise to Joe Brockway! You made a promise to America! And you made a promise to our former president...

*(The lights change. Music.)*

**KENNEDY:**

*(In voiceover:)*

We choose to go to the moon! We choose to go to the moon!

*(The normal lights return.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(To audience:)*

I just can't get enough of that...

**WALSH:**

Oh, we're still going to the moon, just not with Joe Brockway.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator, that's shooting yourself in the foot!

**WALSH:**

Is it?

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(Indicating the portrait:)*

Well, somebody already got to the face... The public is going to be very upset if NASA backs out on it's promise. We can't afford to lose their support.

**WALSH:**

That's what I thought at first, Mr. Bloodworth, but the committee and I did a little math. We already have all of the money we need for the mission, and nothing can take that away. So, why spend the extra money to train a new astronaut, when we can use that for other purposes. We only needed Joe Brockway's name; the real thing will only get in the way. The public may complain, but that's all they can do.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator Walsh! That takes advantage of everything the American people value and hold dear, and all for personal gain! Why didn't I think of that?

**WALSH:**

So, we regrettably cannot send Joe Brockway to the moon. But we can get there within the year with our man, Gordon Hash.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Normally I'd agree, Senator, but you do understand that if Joe Brockway doesn't show, as program director, the blame will fall on me...

**WALSH:**

*(Very evil:)*

Oh, I understand completely, Mr. Bloodworth...

**BLOODWORTH:**

Senator, you're planning to ruin my reputation and America's dreams! I'm sorry, but I have no choice but to go to the public with this!

*(BLOODWORTH storms past WALSH and steps into her closet, slamming the doors behind him. WALSH, confused, approaches the closet. Suddenly, BLOODWORTH throws the doors of the closet open.)*

They're starting Daylight Savings Time earlier this year...

**WALSH:**

Mr. Bloodworth, that's not your office.

**BLOODWORTH:**

So you're right...

*(He steps out.)*

This looks a lot more like my office. Thanks for clearing that up.

**WALSH:**

Mr. Bloodworth, you are in my-

**BLOODWORTH:**

If you'll excuse me, Senator, I don't believe we have anything more to say to each other.

*(He shoves the SENATOR in the closet and shuts the doors. As an afterthought, he hangs her portrait on the closet. Satisfied, he moves to the desk to look at her papers. JOE BROCKWAY storms in, in similar fashion to BLOODWORTH before.)*

**JOE:**

Mr. Bloodworth, I have a little problem I think we need to discuss!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Don't we all...

**JOE:**

Tina just told me that I'm not gonna go to the moon after all! Now what'sa that all about?

**BLOODWORTH:**

It's about 200 thousand dollars of taxpayer money.

**JOE:**

How come-a you ask me to go in space, then you tell-a me to get lost?

**BLOODWORTH:**

That's what I asked Senator Walsh...

*(WALSH rattles the closet doors, trying to get out. JOE and BLOODWORTH look over.)*

She had a closed mind on the subject.

*(The doors rattle again. JOE is concerned.)*

**JOE:**

Say, is that the Senator?

**BLOODWORTH:**

*(Referring to the painting:)*

Yeah; I don't know Art, but I know he shouldn't have agreed to paint that.

**JOE:**

No. I mean behind the painting.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Joe, I don't know what was behind that painting. Probably a paycheck and half a bottle of scotch.

*(The rattling continues.)*

**JOE:**

I'ma gonna check that out...

*(He heads over to the closet and removes the portrait. BLOODWORTH walks over.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

Joe, if you want a clear explanation, why don't you ask our dear Senator Walsh?

*(He pushes JOE into the closet as well, and heads back toward the desk.)*

**BLOODWORTH:** (cont.)

Don't want to leave 'em in the dark...

*(DONNY storms in in the same fashion as the first two, though he is dragging TINA in by the hand as well. DONNY slams his hand against the desk, making violent gestures at BLOODWORTH. He is demanding the same explanation JOE was. At the end of his tirade, he motions to TINA for approval.)*

**TINA:**

*(Flustered:)*  
Uh, he's right.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Donny, you are right. You deserve an answer, the same as your brother. And I've got some skeletons in my closet, or at least one thick skull...

*(He opens the doors of the closet, and lets JOE and WALSH out. WALSH is fuming.)*

**WALSH:**

Mr. Bloodworth, this is intolerable! Joe Brockway shouldn't even be here; we have no intention to train him!

**BLOODWORTH:**

As far as I'm concerned, Senator, we do! Or does my position as Program Director mean nothing?

**WALSH:**

It does now! You're fired! I want you and Joe Brockway out of here in an hour! Now get moving!

*(She chases BLOODWORTH and JOE out stage right. DONNY looks at TINA, and drags her into the closet and shuts the doors. He honks his horn. Scene ends.)*

Scene 4:

*(This scene takes place back in the Committee Room. There is a sign on the table, "To the Moon!", and a celebration is underway. The COMMITTEE MEMBERS, HASH, and WALSH are having a great time, drinking and socializing. TODD and TINA, however, are glum. They sit at the table, listless. HASH is in the middle of a joke.)*

**HASH:**

So I said, "Sputnik? Not since the operation!"

*(They laugh.)*

**WALSH:**

Now Todd, why so down? We're making history in a few weeks!

**TODD:**

Yeah, only by ruining the dreams of the whole nation. I feel like a crook.

**WALSH:**

You're a hero, Todd. We're doing the impossible! And there's no way that the Russians will be able to match our progress! Just because we had to upset a few people along the way doesn't mean anything.

*(BLOODWORTH enters from right, carrying a suitcase.)*

**BLOODWORTH:**

On the contrary, Senator, it means quite a lot.

**WALSH:**

Lyland Bloodworth! What are you doing here?!

**BLOODWORTH:**

Someone has to break the news to you, Senator; the moon mission isn't in the condition that you think it's in. Mr. Ohlmeyer, you'd be surprised to know that your entire team has quit en masse.

**TODD:**

*(Shocked:)*  
What?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Actually, they might have quit after mass; I didn't ask the priest. What it all means is that you don't have a space program anymore, Senator.

**WALSH:**

Look, if you're trying to scare me-

**BLOODWORTH:**

No, your portrait should have accomplished that. But that isn't the worst of your news...

*(JOE and DONNY come in, both dressed in astronauts' jumpsuits. The room is shocked.)*

**HASH:**

Hey, what's the big idea?!

**BLOODWORTH:**

You're technicians have made their decision; they want to send Joe Brockway to the moon.

**WALSH:**

What? What?! You're sending the football player? And his brother?!

*(DONNY motions to the air as the KENNEDY words echo again.)*

**KENNEDY:**

*(In voiceover:)*

We choose to go to the moon! We choose to go to the moon!

**WALSH:**

I can't believe this!

**BLOODWORTH:**

That's just as well. You see, the way the technicians want to do it, Joe, Donny, and I will take a little vacation to the moon, take some photos, then leave.

**TODD:**

Mr. Bloodworth? Did my team really agree to this?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Actually, they agreed to send up a four-man team, and guess who else they asked for...

*(He throws the suitcase at TODD.)*

**TODD:**

Me?

**BLOODWORTH:**

Todd, your team loves you. As long as we're hijacking government property, we might as well bring along someone who deserves to go.

**WALSH:**

Todd, this is ridiculous!

**TODD:**

*(Confused:)*

I'm sorry, Mr. Bloodworth. I can't go with you in good conscience.

**BLOODWORTH:**

Well, put on something else and then come along. Todd, we need you.

**WALSH:**

Todd...

**TODD:**

I'm sorry.

*(Beat:)*

I'm sorry, Senator Walsh, but I'm going.

**WALSH:**

Todd!

**TODD:**

You were right, Senator; I do have a responsibility to my country. But that isn't to the government; it's to the people. And the people wanted to put Joe Brockway on the moon. I'm just following the requests of my superiors.

**JOE:**

That's a good decision, Mr. Ohlmeyer. We've gotta deadline to meet, though, so you'd better come now.

**TODD:**

All right...

*(He and the other three prepare to leave.)*

**MAN ON COMMITTEE:**

Ah, Mr. Bloodworth?

*(They stop.)*

If you are the first people on the moon, what does that make it? Will it be an American moon?

**BLOODWORTH:**

I'm sorry Senator, we don't equate things in those turns. We didn't take on this mission to bring America to the moon. Instead, we wanted to bring a little bit of the moon, back to America. Shovels!

*(JOE and DONNY pull out shovels, and put them over their shoulders like rifles. They begin whistling, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary", and begin marching off right. BLOODWORTH and TODD begin whistling as well, following their fellow space travelers as the lights fade.)*

**THE END**