

A LITTLE FAMILY BUSINESS

by PAUL MALEY

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: Disgruntled with his family, Paul decides to shop for a new one.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: To make this script really pay off, you need to keep the ending a secret. The audience will see where this is going: Paul figures out that his own family is better than these people he's "shopping" for, and he'll go back to his real family. The surprise is in Jeni's last line—we should have no idea until then that her business is offering families no one would want so they realize how good their own family is and go home. So you and your actors have to make the audience believe that the families Jeni is displaying are really "for hire" and want to be chosen. They don't get why Paul wouldn't choose them.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 6

TOPIC: Family, Thankfulness

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 6:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 Timothy 6:6

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service, Sermon Starter

CHARACTERS:

PAUL
JENI
DEBORAH
ROBYN
DAN
SHARON

PROPS: Chair, microphone w/ stand, two index cards, iPod, cordless phone, jean jacket, sunglasses, four folding chairs

COSTUMES: Contemporary

SOUND: Six wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: An 'underworld' shop specializing in new families

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www.DramaMinistry.com
ISSN 1084-5917

Drama Ministry is a division of
Belden Worship Resources
www.beldenworshipresources.com

Publisher: **Regi Stone**

Executive Editor: **Kimberlee Crisafulli** / Assistant Editor: **Scott Crain**

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The stage is bare except for a chair and a microphone on a stand. JENI enters, tough and stealthy broad reminiscent of dames in old detective movies. She dusts off the chair a little. There is a knock at a door upstage right. JENI looks toward the door cautiously, and goes over and opens the door a crack. She is handed a card. She looks at it carefully and nods.

JENI: What's the password?

(She is handed another card, which she reads. She lets PAUL in the door. They are careful that no one should see him, closing the door behind him. He wears a trenchcoat. The whole thing has an "underworld" feel to it.)

PAUL: *(Casing the joint)* So. This is the place.

JENI: This is it. Whattya in the market for?

PAUL: *(Looks around, then:)* You know, a family.

JENI: Our most popular item.

PAUL: Not surprised.

JENI: Me neither. Ain't they something?

PAUL: *(Bitter)* Well, uh, I suppose they can be, yeah.

JENI: Oh. Bad experience?

PAUL: Let's just say I had a lot of trouble with my last one. I been lookin' all over for a replacement.

JENI: Lookin' where?

PAUL: Hollywood, mostly.

JENI: *(Surprised he has found no success)* Huh. They used to be pretty hot stuff with families.

PAUL: Yeah, well not anymore.

JENI: I'm glad you haven't given up lookin' at least.

PAUL: That's why I'm here.

JENI: We'll see what we can do. Have a seat. Can I take your coat?

PAUL: *(Not entirely at ease yet)* No, thanks. *(He sits)*