the beginning of

THE TOTAL SPIRITUAL (from POOL PARTY)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

Time:The present.Place:Above and beyond.Characters:INTERVIEWERAPPLICANTA member(s) of the BUCKET BRIGADE*(*This can be one person, or someone different with each entrance.)

A simple set: a table or desk, a couple of chairs, a swimming pool. As the play begins, the INTERVIEWER is making notes at his/her desk. A member of the BUCKET BRIGADE enters, carrying a large bucket of water.

INTERVIEWER

Need any help?

BUCKET BRIGADE

No, I got it.

INTERVIEWER

Looks like a heavy one.

BUCKET BRIGADE

Yeah, well, there's been a slew of people hearing bad medical news, and a couple of natural disasters, and a lot of people touched by unexpected acts of kindness.

The BUCKET BRIGADE pours the bucket into the pool.

INTERVIEWER Send the next one in, okay?

BUCKET BRIGADE

Will do.

The BUCKET BRIGADE exits. A moment later, the APPLICANT enters.

INTERVIEWER

Have a seat.

APPLICANT Wow, this is, this is – I didn't expect it to be so –

INTERVIEWER

Don't be nervous.

APPLICANT

It's just all so -

INTERVIEWER I know. It's a big adjustment. Have a seat.

APPLICANT I mean, it's not every day –

INTERVIEWER

Relax. Breathe.

APPLICANT

Are, uh, are you -

INTERVIEWER

I just help out.

APPLICANT How long have you been helping out?

INTERVIEWER Not long. Eighteen hundred years.

APPLICANT

Wow.

INTERVIEWER I'm one of the new kids.

APPLICANT

I see.

INTERVIEWER So... how was the funeral?

APPLICANT It was, it was – good, I guess. Huge turnout.

INTERVIEWER

I'm glad.

APPLICANT I was amazed at some of the things people said. I never realized people liked me so much.

INTERVIEWER

I know. Sometimes I think we'd enjoy funerals a lot more if we could have them before we dropped dead. Now then, about your life –

APPLICANT I know I made a lot of mistakes.

INTERVIEWER

Everybod-

APPLICANT I was selfish, and I covetted a few things I should've never covetted–

INTERVIEWER

Relax.

APPLICANT I know it's late, but I swear I'm willing to atone for anything and everything –

INTERVIEWER

If people were angels when alive, then heaven would feel like a rerun.

APPLICANT It's just, if I could only –

INTERVIEWER

Relax.

APPLICANT

But –

INTERVIEWER

Inhale... exhale.

APPLICANT

lt's –

INTERVIEWER We have all the time in the world.

APPLICANT

I just –

INTERVIEWER

One of the best parts of heaven is that nobody's in a hurry.

APPLICANT

Really?

INTERVIEWER

It changes the quality of supermarket lines considerably.

APPLICANT There are supermarkets in heaven?

INTERVIEWER And they're never out of stock.

APPLICANT

Wow.

INTERVIEWER

Clothing stores always have your size. And you can return things without a receipt.

APPLICANT

So, so you mean like you don't just lie around on clouds all day and strum harps?

INTERVIEWER

I'd rather go to hell. No, we have the complete range of activities here: golf, bowling, disco.

APPLICANT

Wow.

INTERVIEWER Heaven is simply life without the stress.

APPLICANT

Sign me up.

INTERVIEWER

WellIIIIIIIIII...

APPLICANT

Uh-oh.

INTERVIEWER

It's not like that.

APPLICANT I really planned to pay that money back.

INTERVIEWER You should've lived so long.