

the beginning of

**WORD PLAY** (from **OY!**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

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*Place:* A firm's coffee break lounge.

*Time:* The present.

*Characters:* KRAVITSKY, an executive assistant  
MILLER, a new executive  
WEXLER, an executive  
FRIEDMAN, an executive  
SCHEINMAN, the boss

Before the scene begins, we hear:

KRAVITSKY (v.o.)  
Hirschhorn, Scheinman, Wexler, Friedman,  
Cohen, Elias, Elkoff, Schwartz, Schwartz,  
Schwartz, Schwartz, Schwartz, Schwartz,  
Schwartz, Schwartz, Schwartz and McCormick,  
an equal opportunity employer... He's  
about to enter a meeting. Can I take  
a message?... Thank you.

As the scene begins, KRAVITSKY is pouring a cup of coffee. MILLER enters.

MILLER  
Hi, Rachel\*.

(\*or Robert, if Kravitsky is male.)

KRAVITSKY  
Hi, Mr. Miller\*. How's your first week been?

(\*or Ms., if Miller is female.)

MILLER  
(hiding the truth)  
Fine, perfectly fine.

KRAVITSKY  
I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Miller.

MILLER

Everyone here is very welcoming and friendly.

KRAVITSKY

It's a very haimish company, isn't it?

Miller just stares at Kravitsky.

KRAVITSKY (cont'd)

Mr. Miller?

MILLER

Oh, yeah, it's, it's, totally haimish.

WEXLER enters.

WEXLER

Hey, Miller. Kravitsky.

MILLER

Hi, Wexler.

WEXLER

So how's your first week been?  
Have you found most of our clients  
to be gonifs, shnorrers or shmendricks?

MILLER

(faking it)

A, a little of each, I think.

FRIEDMAN enters.

FRIEDMAN

Hya, Miller.

MILLER

Hi, Friedman.

FRIEDMAN

So how are you dealing with all the chazzerai  
with this meshuggeneh bunch of shnooks?

MILLER

Well, uh –

WEXLER

At least he hasn't plotzed yet.

MILLER

Not that I've noticed.

SCHEINMAN enters.

SCHEINMAN

Morning, everyone.

Everyone replies to Scheinman, who's their boss.

SCHEINMAN (cont'd)

So Miller, how're you doing?

MILLER

Just fine, Mr. Scheinman.

SCHEINMAN

Great. I wouldn't want any of our mishigoss to royal your kishkes.

MILLER

Thank you.

SCHEINMAN

You have no idea what I just said, do you?

MILLER

No, but I'm really trying to –

SCHEINMAN

Don't shvitz.

MILLER

I won't.

SCHEINMAN

You know what means "shvitz"?

MILLER

Yes. You see, I've bought a dictionary and every night –

SCHEINMAN

Use it in a sentence.

MILLER

Ummm. "If tomorrow is as hot and humid as the weatherman says, I might shvitz."

SCHEINMAN

Wexler, use "shvitz" in a sentence.

WEXLER

(a kvetch)

"My wife's about to have triplets,  
and I'm shvitzing."

SCHEINMAN

(to Miller:)

You see the difference?

MILLER

No, not really.

FRIEDMAN

Your sentence was technically  
correct, but it lacked chhhhhuh.\*

(\*the guttural "chh" sound, as in chutzpah)

MILLER

Hhhuhhh?

FRIEDMAN

Not Hhhuhhh; chhhhhuh.\*

MILLER

Chuh?

SCHEINMAN

Chhhuh. The sound that's responsible  
for the survival of the Jewish people.

KRAVITSKY

It energizes you.

WEXLER

It strengthens you.

FRIEDMAN

It loosens phlegm.

MILLER

I don't get it.

SCHEINMAN

Yiddish is a rich, vibrant language.  
You can't just learn it from a dictionary.

MILLER

Look, you've all been very, very Amish –

KRAVITSKY

Haimish.

SCHEINMAN

It means "like family".

FRIEDMAN

To Jews, there's nothing more important  
than family.

MILLER

But you all criticize your families constantly.

SCHEINMAN

I *never* criticize my family.

I criticize my *relatives*.

MILLER

What's the difference?

WEXLER

Family is above reproach. Relatives are shmucks.