

the beginning of

## MERCURY'S IN RETROGRADE, AND YOU SUCK

(from **SINFULLY RICH**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

*Time:* The present

*Place:* The Oval Office in the White House

*Characters:* GLOF-IL-GLILP, space alien, probably female  
RER-GLIK-TER-GLUK, space alien, probably male  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
male or female (well, maybe someday)

(*Note:* The space aliens speak one of the more common languages on Mercury. A key to what they mean is in the parenthetical comment before their speech. The secret to making the speeches easier to memorize is at the play's end.)

As the play begins, the PRESIDENT is behind his desk, on the phone. RER-GLIK-TER-GLUK, a space alien, points a menacing ray gun at him. GLOF-IL-GLILP, another space alien, holds a clip board.

PRESIDENT

(on the phone:)

What do you *mean*, you don't have a contingency plan for this! You're the Secretary of Defense; you're supposed to have contingency plans for *everything*... Well, get back to me with a plan... *quickly*.

GLOFILGLILP

Stupid Earthlings. You spent trillions against terrorism and almost nothing against interplanetary *invasion*.

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("What an idiot!")

Beff eeg *namnerdak!*

GLOFILGLILP

("They're *all* idiots")

Vlim *fleem namnerdaker*.

PRESIDENT

Who *are* you, and what do you want?

GLOFILGLILP

I am Glofilglilp, noted scientist from the planet Mercury, and the author of *Earthlings for Dummies*.

This is my fellow emissary Rergliktergluk, Secretary of Defense and Entertainment.

RERGLIKTERGLUK

Hut's wappening, bwo?

GLOFILGLILP

His English isn't very good, but he understands *everything*.\*

(\*Or "Her" and "she" if Rergliktergluk is female.)

Rergliktergluk points two fingers (or the Mercurian equivalent) at his eyes and then points them at the President.

PRESIDENT

What do you want?

GLOFILGLILP

Because of a miscalculation made 56 years ago by one of our thermonuclear scientists, the core of Mercury has been heating up for decades.

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("There's *no* evidence of a miscalculation.")

Kilg *ool riznerbip dulk irgdeeflepgib*.

GLOFILGLILP

("Yes there is!")

Alk eeg salv!

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("No, there isn't!!")

Ool eeg *sa/verk!!*

GLOFILGLILP

("Yes, there is!!!")

Alk eeg salv!!!

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("No, there isn't!!!!")

Ool eeg *sa/verk!!!!*

PRESIDENT

What's going on?

GLOFILGLILP

Rergliktergluk's a little sensitive;  
his uncle made the miscalculation.

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("Tell him about the benefits!")

Leek blenuck af *tizpurijker!*

GLOFILGLILP

The planet *did* save on heating bills for over  
five decades. But recently half the year the  
surface of our planet has become unbearably hot.

PRESIDENT

How hot is it?

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("It's *so* hot, we'd rather be  
in Florida in August.")

Quoper *gluuuuuuurg* shtoop, niz libbly  
pooz Florida pooz August.

PRESIDENT

What'd he say?

GLOFILGLILP

It's *soooo* hot we'd rather be in Florida  
in August. In fact, we want to take over  
your planet for six months a year.

PRESIDENT

That's impossible!

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("Don't worry; we're big tippers.")

Hig *nolkwik*; niz murg *grekshlimper*.

GLOFILGLILP

(to the President:)

Don't worry; we're big tippers.

PRESIDENT

I am not going to let you take over our planet!

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("Please?")

Plurz?

GLOFILGLILP

Please?

PRESIDENT

Now I *think* I can convince Congress to give you some foreign aid, provided you open your markets to us. We make great air conditioners.

GLOFILGLILP

We don't trust Congress.

PRESIDENT

So what? Even Congress doesn't trust Congress. But air conditioners have a very powerful lobby.

Glofilglilp and Rergliktergluk laugh, then stop abruptly. Then:

GLOFILGLILP

Don't treat us like fools. We know air conditioners don't have lobbies; lobbies have air conditioners.

RERGLIKTERGLUK

("High five!")

Blee gork!

GLOFILGLILP

("High five!")

Blee gork!

The aliens give each other the "high five".

PRESIDENT

What do you even know about our planet?

GLOFILGLILP

We know everything. For years we have intercepted TV signals from your satellites.

PRESIDENT

(stunned in horror:)

You mean –

GLOFILGLILP

Yes. We pirated reception without paying. We have watched all of your reality shows: *Survivor*, *American Idol*, Congress.

PRESIDENT

That's not really a –

GLOFILGLILP

Congress is the worst reality show on TV.  
They never accomplish anything,  
and hardly anybody gets voted off.

PRESIDENT

I still don't understand. What exactly do you want?

GLOFILGLILP

I told you. We plan to take over your planet  
six months a year.

PRESIDENT

We will not let you –

GLOFILGLILP

Think of it as a time share.

*(Note about the Mercurian dialogue: The Mercurian dialogue has basically the same number of syllables and the same meter as the parenthetical comments. Often a few small words are omitted, and plurals end in "er". If said with the same attitude as the English translation, Mercurian dialogue will be easy to say with conviction. It's worked so far!)*