

RED TAPE LTD

by

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Satirical short play

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INT. COMPANY BOARDROOM. DAY.

**PRESENT ARE 3 "SUITS." CHAIRMAN NO BULL,
MISS UNDERVALUED AND SNIDEY SUCK-UP.**

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Ladies. Gentleman. Red Tape Ltd is in big trouble. The Government has announced its latest financial streamlining plan. Bureaucratic admin posts will suffer the majority of the cuts.

MISS UNDERVALUED: But sir. Isn't that a good thing?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: It most certainly is not! Our company is Britain's most successful distributor of red tape. We've won the coveted Bureaucratic Product Award every year since its inception. And how do you think we've earned such prestige?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Um. Because we supply all of this country's public services?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Correct. However, cuts in bureaucracy will lead to less red tape. And what will less red tape mean?

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (PUTS HIS HAND UP) Less profits for us, sir.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Exactly.

MISS UNDERVALUED: But isn't that the problem with today's society? Too much red tape?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: (SIGHS) You haven't been with us very long, have you?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Just over three weeks, sir. But you'll find I'm perfectly qualified.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (SARCASTIC) Yeah. To do the dishes.

MISS UNDERVALUED: (ANNOYED) I beg your pardon.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: It's a skill to which women are better suited. Along with cooking, cleaning and childcare.

MISS UNDERVALUED: You sexist pig. Do you speak like that to your wife?

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Not anymore. She left me.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Why doesn't that surprise me?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: The point is! (WAITS FOR SILENCE, THEN) There could never be enough red tape. You need to realise, every slow and inept decision, every unnecessary delay, every stubborn inflexibility of modus operandi. None of these traits would be possible without the inclusion of a roll of red tape in one's desk drawer.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Here, here.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: And let us not forget. Without bureaucracy, services would run way too smoothly. Legislation would be passed in a matter of days. And our trains... they'd all run on time, dammit. We simply cannot let such organised un-chaos darken the corridors of power.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Hold on. Why not?

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Isn't it obvious? We human beings aren't ready for common sense to prevail in governmental departments. Evolution simply isn't that advanced yet.

MISS UNDERVALUED: All right then. How about we allow the company itself to evolve?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: And how do you suggest we do that?

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Yeah, that's what I'd like to know.

MISS UNDERVALUED: It's quite simple. All we need to do is launch a new product.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Is that right? So tell me, what have you got in mind?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Well. How about blue tape?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Blue tape?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Yes. Everybody likes blue. It's a much prettier colour. And not quite so in-your-face as red.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: As much as I hate to admit it... she has got a point.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Totally out of the question. Blue tape? Pah! What a ridiculous notion.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (CHANGES HIS MIND, SNEERY) Yeah. Ridiculous notion. Typical woman.

SHE SCOWLS AT THE SNEERY IDIOT.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Dear God, my father would turn in his grave.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: But he's still alive, sir.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Shut up!

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Sorry, Mr Chairman, sir.

MISS UNDERVALUED: All right. If blue's not your preferred choice, we could always go for the more environmentally friendly approach.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Which is?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Green tape.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: No, thank you. Next.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Black tape?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Ugh. Way too Emu.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Um. Sir, I think you'll find the phrase you're looking for is Emo.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Shut up!

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Sorry, Your Majesty.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Anybody in favour of orange tape?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Way too orangey.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Beige?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Too plain.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Silver?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: No, thank you.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Purple?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Certainly not.

MISS UNDERVALUED: Pink with blue spots?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: No, no, no, no, no! We need to think outside the box.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Oh, I know. Parcel tape.

A WEIGHTY GROAN FROM CHAIRMAN NO BULL.

MISS UNDERVALUED: I've got it. Sticky tape. A new range might land us the lucrative Blue Peter contract.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Impossible. The deal they've got with that rival firm is watertight.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL BANGS HIS FIST ON THE
TABLE.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Damn them for inventing stickiness on both sides.

- SNIDEY SUCK-UP: This is getting us nowhere.
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Exactly. We'll stick with what we're good at. It's Red Tape Ltd's flagship product.
- MISS UNDERVALUED: Flagship product? Red tape is our only product. Which is why we're in this mess.
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: But it's one of Britain's national treasures. Right up there with London buses. The Royal Family. And... um...
- SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (ENTHUSIASTIC) Binge drinkers. (THEN THINKS ABOUT IT) Um. Maybe that's not such a good example.
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: We need to show the government that Red Tape Ltd is not happy with the cuts. Any suggestions?
- SNIDEY SUCK-UP: We could write a letter to our MP.
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: (WITH A GROAN) Any proper suggestions?
- MISS UNDERVALUED: A protest march perhaps?
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: No, no, no. Way too hippy. And we'd never pass as students.
- MISS UNDERVALUED: How about organising a flash mob?
- CHAIRMAN NO BULL: What on earth is a flash mob?
- MISS UNDERVALUED: It's where crowds of planted people suddenly start dancing in a public place.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Crowds of plastered people dancing in a public place?
Sounds to me like a wedding reception.

MISS UNDEVALUED: Planted, not plastered. Don't you see? It's a tried and tested method for raising public awareness of a company in a fun way. Which is exactly what we need here.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: I can see what you're saying. It's not a bad idea. But our flagship product would hinder its organisation.

MISS UNDERVALUED: In what way?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Planning permission would be a nightmare. Too much red tape.

MISS UNDERVALUED GROANS.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Think, people, think. We need to save our market. Red tape and bureaucracy go hand in hand. Like Laurel and Hardy. Fred and Ginger. Or... um...

MISS UNDERVALUED: Fish and chips?

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Dammit, woman, this is no time to think of your stomach.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (SNEERY) Yeah. Food is for wimps.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: On second thoughts, maybe lunch is a good idea after all.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Yeah. Food is good.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: I'm afraid it's tasteless takeaway rubbish on the cards again. They still haven't reopened the canteen.

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: (A TUT) Oh, typical. Why not?

MISS UNDERVALUED: It failed that Health and Safety inspection last week, remember?

SNIDEY SUCK-UP: Yes, but they've cleaned it up since. We could eat our dinners off the floor now.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: Exactly. What's taking them so long?

MISS UNDERVALUED: Red tape.

GROANS OF DISAPPROVAL FROM CHAIRMAN NO
BULL AND SNIDEY SUCK-UP.

CHAIRMAN NO BULL: What is the world coming to?

END