

A script from



“Welcome to the Neighborhood”

by
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- What** A real estate agency is turned upside-down when faced with the prospect of one scandalous sale. A modern-day parable illustrating the Incarnation. **Themes:** Christmas, Incarnation, Salvation, Worldliness vs. God's Wisdom
- Who** Gloria- real estate agent
Will- Gloria's assistant/trainee
John- political/governing VIP)
Secret Service agent- non-speaking role
- When** Modern day
- Wear (Props)** Gloria and Will wear professional clothing; John wears a full suit; secret service agent wears black.
Large city map
Pencils
Desks and office chairs
Laptop or desktop monitor with keyboard
Coffee pot and Styrofoam cups (optional).
- Why** Christmas celebrates that Jesus “dwelt among us” John 1:14, Phil. 2:5-11
- How** Be careful with “John” as a character; note that while his position points toward a Christ figure, he is not Jesus. Additionally, take care not to add anything (explicit or implicit) that would imply any specific political figure, past or present.
- Time** Approximately 6-7 minutes

Will is sitting at a desk, holding a desk phone to his ear and reading from a computer screen. Near him is an unoccupied work station. Behind him is a large city map; a few feet away, there is a small table containing a coffee pot and stack of Styrofoam cups.

Will: Yes. Yes, this is Royal Realty. *(Pause)* Great, let me put you through to an agent. *(Pause)* You're welcome, have a great day. Good morning, Royal Realty. Sure. Please hold.

Gloria enters with a purse and a to-go cup, and heads toward the unoccupied station.

Gloria: Morning.

Will: *(Replacing the receiver)* Oh, hey! I didn't know you were coming in today.

Gloria: Wasn't planning on it. Just running some market values and I'm heading out.

Will: Well, if you're gonna come in on a day off, this is the day to do it. It's been crazy.

Gloria: Just what I like to hear. Our team's had some killer sales this week, huh?

Will: My Christmas bonus is looking better and better, I'll tell you that.

Gloria: *(Lifting her cup in acknowledgment)* Then here's to "crazy".

Will: Cheers. *(He suddenly notices something outside a window)* What the— what's going on out there?

Gloria: *(Looking over his shoulder)* That's a lot of cars.

Will: That's not a "lot of cars". That's a motorcade.

Gloria: Okay, wait, someone's getting out. I'm trying to— hold on. That's Secret Service.

Will: What? No way. You must be— *(takes closer look)* Whoa. That's Secret Service.

Gloria: See? I told you it was—Oh my goodness. OH MY GOODNESS. Is that *him?*

Will: "Him?" Who's...oh. HIM. Yeah, that's him...coming inside.

Gloria: Inside HERE?

Will: Looks like it.

Gloria: *(Scrambling to organize her desk)* But that's crazy! Why would HE be HERE?
Will: You know—didn't his father grow up here? I think I remember some connection.

Gloria: Sure. Like, seventy years ago. I still don't see what that has to do with—
The door opens. Gloria stands and brushes an entire pile from her desk onto the floor. Will quickly adjusts his tie. John enters, along with an Agent who remains by the door.

Gloria: Sir! *(A bit flustered)* Welcome, welcome. What an...unexpected honor this is.

John: Thank you, the pleasure is mine. *(Shaking their hands in turn)* John Madison.

Gloria: I'm Gloria Regan, and this is my associate, Will Lawson. Please, make yourself comfortable. What can we get you? Whatever you'd like...

John: Well, I'd like to buy a house here in the city. I think I'm in the right place.

Gloria: You certainly are! Here, have a seat. Will can order us some lunch while we talk. *(She sits down at Will's station and begins typing. Will opens his mouth as if to ask something, then shrugs and exits)* Now. If you're thinking about a summer home, the properties on the east side of the lake are exquisite. This one here *(angles the screen in John's direction)* is designed so that three sides of the main house feature a view of the lake. Cutting-edge contemporary architecture, as you can see.

John: That's beautiful, Ma'am, but actually, I was thinking—

Gloria: Oh! Would you prefer the countryside? I've got a French-style on five acres...gorgeous exposed beams. Four bedrooms and a master suite...

John: Actually, I meant right here, in the city.

Gloria: *(Confused)* Well—we do service the greater city area, but of course you can access listings from all over the—

John: I'm sorry, Ma'am, I don't think I've made myself very clear. What I mean to say is, there's a specific house here in the city that I would like to buy. I have the address here, if you don't mind... *(Will re-enters)* The address is 1-0-0-5 South Parish Ave. Could you call that up?

Gloria starts laughing, thinking John is joking. Will joins in. John gives them a confused, slightly pained look, and Gloria and Will abruptly stop laughing.

Will: You're serious.

John: Of course. Is there a problem?
Gloria: No! I mean— Sir, I don't know how familiar you are with that area...but for one thing, it's smack-dab right in the middle of the inner city.

John: So...?

Gloria: Well—you'd be surrounded by people. Maybe two feet from these people.

John: Ms. Regan. What kind of politician doesn't want to be around people?

Gloria: Please don't make me answer that. Sir, I'm afraid you don't understand. South Parish Ave is not only densely populated, but it's populated by rather...unsavory people.

John: Unsavory.

Will: Aggressive. Inconsiderate. Belligerent. Uncouth.

John: *(A little amused)* Uncouth?

Will: Just—*NOT NICE.*

Gloria: We'll show you anything you'd like to see, but I would strongly recommend--

John: That's the house I want. 1-0-0-5 South Parish Ave.

Gloria: Well—all right. Here you go. *(Clicks on a photo and both she and Will wince)*

John: That's it! That's the one.

Will makes an exaggerated incredulous face.

Gloria: Sir, forgive me if I'm offending you, but...do you know what you're looking at?

John: I'm looking at my house.

Gloria: Oh! *(Suddenly relieved)* Are you opening a not-for-profit? That makes sense. This would be the perfect location for a community home, or an intervention...

John: I'm going to live there.

Gloria: *(Horrorified)* YOU?

John: That's the plan.

Gloria: Sir. *(Taking a deep breath)* I need you to know that I have only the highest respect for you. But this is a condemned house. It's not worth your time or your money.

John: I'm sure that's a matter of personal opinion.

Gloria: Municipal opinion, actually. Let the city knock this one down, Sir. It hasn't been maintained for years. Roof is sagging, water damage all throughout the second level...

Will: I can almost guarantee this back wall is rotted through all the way to the ground.

Gloria: He's right. Put your foot on that side deck and you'd go right through.

John: *(Shaking his head, saddened):* It wasn't built to look like that.

Gloria: No, but that's what happens. When you add up the costs to take off the roof, demolish those exterior walls, replace the siding, the windows, and the exterior doors...

Will: And, realistically? That's bare minimum.

Gloria: Of course that's not even considering aesthetic appeal.

John: Aesthetic appeal?

Will: *(Slowly and deliberately)* It's ugly.

John: That will change.

Gloria: Well, there are some things that won't change. *(Picks up a pencil)* For instance, here's the street you're looking at *(indicates a spot on the map)*, and here's the area where 58 percent of all violent crimes in the city occur *(draws a circle around that spot)*.

Will: And not to state the obvious, Sir, but someone of your standing...that is, your position...your reputation...

John: What are you getting at?

Will: *(Awkwardly)* Well, you'd be a target for— *(finally points at the circle)* for THAT.

John: I understand. I'm not concerned. I want this house.

Gloria: *(Exasperated)* I give up. Why, in the name of all that is holy, do you want to enter this hostile neighborhood and buy this condemned, forsaken stinkhole?

John: My father built that house.

Gloria: *(After a pause)* THIS house?

John: Well, yes and no, Ma'am. He designed it and framed it and hammered the nails. But he didn't make it what it is now. If you saw the original, you wouldn't recognize it.

Gloria: Oh. Well. I had no idea.

John: In fact, it was one of the first houses on this street. My dad's vision for the community was quite different from what you see today, as you might guess.

Gloria: Of course. And, Sir, I don't blame you for your disappointment. But I want to see you move on—and move IN to something appropriate.

Will: Can't you just have your father design another house for you?

John: Sure, and he has, but that's not the issue. *(Leaning in)* Bottom line, I'm here to buy back this property. I won't stand around and let my father's house be condemned.

Gloria: *(A little condescendingly)* Yes, and that's clearly admirable. But you can buy back the property without having to live in the house.

John: Second, I'm not about to give up on my father's neighborhood. If I'm going to buy a house in it, I'm going to be one of them.

Gloria: Sir, that neighborhood can't be saved. Don't put yourself in the middle of a slum.

John: Kindly don't refer to my neighborhood as a "slum".

Gloria: But would you look for just a minute? You're a brilliant man—you don't need me to tell you how ridiculous this is going to look.

John: No, Ma'am, I don't need you to tell me.

Gloria: Well, I do hope you'll reconsider. You've completely lost me. But if that's the house you want, it's yours. *(To Will)* Go ahead and start the paperwork. *(In a lower tone)* Just— don't put my name on this sale, okay? *(Grabs her coffee cup and exits.)*

Will: So... I'll, uh, start right on that paperwork. *(He pauses, then suddenly leans forward)* Can I ask you a question? *(John nods)* This is going to cost you a lot, isn't it?

John: Yes.

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Will: And we're not even talking money.
John: No.
Will: So— you're sure?
John: Mr. Lawson, nothing's going to change my mind.
Will: All right then. *(Stands; John follows his lead)* Obviously this is premature, but... *(still in disbelief, but extending a hand)* welcome to the neighborhood.

Lights out.

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