

Feng Shui for Cubists

by Terry Dugan

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On the web:
terrydugan.com

Plays by Terry Dugan:
Mary Courage & Her Children
Dies
The Fog People
Jsem Robot
The Dilettantes
The Closest Distance
Tis Better to be Vile than Vile Esteem'd

Cast of characters

TRUST, CEO of The Trust Corporation

HLAVA, the head of advertising

LEACH, the advertising manager

PULATER, a senior copywriter

McDONALDS, a senior copywriter

COX, a junior copywriter

GRUEN, a new copywriter

SCENE: An advertising office meeting room.

AT RISE: GRUEN is sitting at a table, taking part in an orientation. COX, who has only a middle finger on his left hand, is lecturing him. There is a box sitting on the table.

COX

...Advertising is bullshit. Marketing is bullshit!

(Pause. COX cackles and points at GRUEN with his middle fingers.)

You believe me. You believe me.

(GRUEN shrugs his shoulders to agree without commitment. COX cackles again.)

Oh, I am good! You can't escape my control! You should have seen the look on your face -- on your face! I made you believe that, even for a second, the possibility existed that marketing was bullshit, that advertising was bullshit. That one second is all I need to plant my seed. Give me 15 seconds ... if I had 15 seconds, I'd show you one commercial: A good-looking man wearing a fashionable shirt walks down the street. He looks at the camera and says "Advertising works." Then BAM! A boy with a baseball bat swings and crushes his balls. The kid laughs as the man drops to the ground, inhaling in pain. As the boy smiles triumphant into the camera, a deep-voiced announcer says, "Advertising is bullshit!" as the words fill the screen. One second later, this young-looking 18-year-old blonde, dressed up in a pleasantly low-cut school uniform says with a smile, "Marketing is bullshit!" Boom! I have you; you don't know it yet, but I've got you. Later that night, my message subconsciously resurfaces at your weakest, most vulnerable moment: in bed, where you think you're safe, walled up in your palace. But you already let my Trojan horse inside your castle gate. When your subconscious takes over, the girl, the boy and the man climb out of that horse and replay their scenes in the theatre of your mind. The way she looks changes to be the way you want her to look; the boy and the

COX (cont.)

man go through similar motions that always result in those balls being the target of youthful wrath. Yet, one thing doesn't change: "Advertising is bullshit! Marketing is bullshit!" When you see a man in real life take one below the equator, you don't think about easing his comfort. You think about how "advertising is bullshit," and you laugh at him. When you see the girls in their uniforms get out of school, you think "marketing is bullshit," and you get hard. This is what I do, Gruen. I give people something to think about in their otherwise empty minds in their equally empty lives. All I need is a few seconds.

GRUEN

Advertising and marketing are bullshit.

COX

Jesus, Gruen, that's a stupid thing to say. I understand why you would say it because I made you believe it. I made you feel something that you cannot rationally decipher as a truth or a lie so you rely on your fallback emotion: trust. I gave you no reason not to trust me. I made you laugh. I made you sexually stir. My vision brought you at least momentary joy which only naturally occurs with your first bite of any given food. The marketers and advertisers: We're the reason why people smile, why civilization is civilized. We make you feel right, feel whole, like a part of something in this world. Without us, we'd live in a world of mass suicide, lower birth rates, eternal wars of attrition that have only one outcome: the end of humanity. My work helps ensure that man will endure another generation. Marketers have the most important jobs in the world.

GRUEN

I know.

COX

Oh, I don't think you know.

GRUEN

Oh, I do know.

COX

You couldn't possibly know.

GRUEN

This is what I do. I'm good at it.

COX (*laughs*)

I'm sure you think you're good, but let me tell you: Your middle-American, "Aw, shucks, will you buy this," style might sell a couple all-weather tires in that Podunk town you're from, that village. Maybe your tribe would even want to appoint you as chief because of your way with words and your ability to keep "great mountain lion" at bay. But you're not in Los Angeles anymore. This is New York City. This is where the future happens now, not three hours from now. This is where tourists come to see advertising, and without it, Times Square would be nothing more than another ring of hell. But at least we have it. In Los Angeles, you have some beat-up old sign that tells you that some place interesting is the other way.

GRUEN

Being myopic is a prerequisite for living in New York.

COX

If I knew what that word meant, I'd tell you you were wrong.

GRUEN

You know "myopic"; you've heard people say it. Just like any word you don't know, it means what you think it means.

COX

I'm sure I know what it means, then.

GRUEN

It's OK to be ignorant to words. That's what makes my campaigns so successful, like my famous Myopia campaign. To some people, myopia is a short-sighted mindset in people who can't see the sky for the buildings. But when Myopia, with a capital M, is the name I give to a refreshing, mostly corn-syrup-based fruit drink from a powdered concentrate, then it's a state of euphoria you enter when a drop of this liquid stings your tongue. "That's Myopia."

COX

Myopia.

GRUEN

Myopia.

COX

And I'm sure the brain power you invested in Myopia was well worth the two chickens and a goat that client traded you for it. In New York, people pay big money for big ideas, to subvert civilization; societal shifts don't happen by accident. They're carefully arranged and marketed, introduced to the public at a highly coordinated moment. This firm, we developed the concepts of sex tapes, HMOs, punitive damages, school shootings --

GRUEN

That's just not true.

COX

When you need to sell more guns, create an event that makes people think the government is going to take away all guns. Guns, bullets: they go flying off the shelves. The Y2K bug: that was us. Our client had so many warehouses of duct tape, you could have filled Rhode Island with them, now they're collecting dust in people's homes. So let me tell you, Huckleberry, your Myopia is nice, it's cute, it's fun, but people don't pay us the big bucks to come up with slogans and jingles. They pay us to change the world.

(McDONALDS enters. He is missing an arm.)

McDONALDS

Good morning, idiot.

(McDONALDS and COX touch heads.)

COX

Good morning, sir.

Feng Shui for Cubists

McDONALDS

And you're the new kid from Los Francisco. I'm your boss, McDonalds.

(McDONALDS grabs GRUEN by the head, and they touch heads)

GRUEN

I thought he was my boss.

McDONALDS

You are a hillbilly. If you can't recognize a turd when you see one, you won't even last a week in New York. Cox is the office afterbirth. Well, he was until you came. Congratulations on your promotion to second-worst copywriter in this agency.

COX

Thank you, sir!

(They touch heads again.)

McDONALDS

So, I assume you're getting oriented here, Jim Bob, slowly getting to that point where you feel like you even have half a clue what we're about.

GRUEN

I think it's pretty apparent.

McDONALDS

I find it hard to believe anything is apparent to an inbred.

GRUEN

You don't create advertising here. You're cultural anarchists, looking to destroy the status quo so that you can create your own status quo.

McDONALDS

No, we create advertising here.

COX

That's right.

McDONALDS

We come up with slogans, catchy jungles and fun names for products no one wants to buy.

COX

Boy, you're stupid.

McDONALDS

I thought you were the kid who created Myopia. That was one of the worst fruit-like drinks we've ever tasted, but not only did we try it a second time, we bought it again and again and hated it every time. We stock it in the vending machine in the lobby; everyone buys it and no one drinks it. I can't even begin to wonder where you got the impression that we were "cultural anarchists," whatever that means.

GRUEN

From him.

(McDONALDS and COX laugh)

McDONALDS

Hey little boy, I have these magic beans. I would like to sell them to you.

COX

Only if you take all my money in exchange for them.

(McDONALDS and COX laugh again.)

GRUEN

You'll note that Jack turned those magic beans into a goose that laid golden eggs, which turned out to be a pretty good trade for him.

McDONALDS

That's right. I was just testing you.

GRUEN

Of course you were.

McDONALDS

I'd like to tell you where that story came from.

McDONALDS and COX

An ad agency.

COX

There were a lot of discolored beans in the harvest that year, and they needed to find a way to sell them fast. The copywriter said, "Those beans aren't spoiled; they're magic." The rest is history.

McDONALDS

But more importantly, the message that you take from the story is "buy things." Take a chance. We give something a good name, an interesting backstory, talking points to tell people why they need it, and people buy it because sometimes their purchase leads to a golden goose. That one ticket could win you the lottery. That drink called Myopia could make me feel different about myself. It's because of the name. A name creates irrational desire.

GRUEN

All desire is irrational.

McDONALDS

Whoa! Listen to you go. Put a few thousand more of those together, and you can write a book about how clever you think you are.

GRUEN

That's exactly what I'm going to do.

McDONALDS

That's a new one: a copywriter wants to write books.

COX

Real original.

GRUEN

I'll spit out a couple genius ad campaigns, make the big money I was promised, and move to Brazil and live like a king as I finish my novels.

(McDONALDS and COX laugh)

Laugh at me if you want, if you're jealous.

McDONALDS

We're laughing at you.

GRUEN

I have a plan.

COX

Oh, he has a plan.

McDONALDS *(still laughing)*

It's good to have a plan.

GRUEN

It's a good plan. My future is mapped out.

McDONALDS

"One day do what I really want to do in life." Really sounds like a plan.

GRUEN

I think you're just jealous of my plan.

McDONALDS

I just don't think your plan will work. It lacks commitment. At this point, it sounds like you don't know what you're committed to. It's not your silly book writing because you're here, and it's not money because you're talking about this silly book writing. Commitment -- not talent, not luck -- is how a man gets what he wants.

COX

You don't know what you want.

McDONALDS

You don't know what you want.

GRUEN

I know what I can do, and I do it.

McDONALDS

You're committed to doing what you're doing at any given moment.

GRUEN

It's gotten me this far.

McDONALDS

Hold that thought . . . until you've actually gone somewhere.

GRUEN

I get it. This is another subversive motivational technique. Cutting me down, questioning my commitment to put into my work that extra 10% that doesn't exist.

COX

We came up with that, too.

McDONALDS

No, no. I'm just trying to get to know you so I can find a way to keep you from failing at your job, which, according to your plan, is really a way for me to help you write books. Unlike you, I'm trying to develop a real plan and discover something redeeming about you.

GRUEN

I'm here because I'm good with words.

McDONALDS

My gut tells me you won't be able to deliver when everything's on the line. Myopia is fun. It's cute. It's nice. But here, we can convince you that the ability to talk to another person is the least important aspect of your mobile phone. Here, we will convince people that implanting GPS chips in their heads is an essential part of life, then we'll tell their brains that if they turn right there's

McDONALDS (cont.)

a 50% discount on \$1,000 worth of goods. We'll do it through a jingle. We'll do it through a catch phrase, a slogan. If you want a taste of that, you got to show commitment. You can't be noncommittal when you need to convince people that things made in China are American. It will fuck your chi!

COX

Fuck it straight up.

McDONALDS

You got to go all in. People want to be led. They want to be told what to do in an individual way. And they, in turn, want you to know that they've done what you said. That they're good. You can't do that when you're sitting on a fence. Your words will sound disingenuous. Doesn't matter how good with words you think you are. They might sound good in your head where your little book is trapped, but words never come out the way you think you say them.

COX

I'm sure those love scenes in your romance novel won't sound like they were written by a chronic masturbator. Not at all.

GRUEN

I don't write that trash. I write about things that are real.

McDONALDS

Sounds impressive. Reality. We would love to hear what your impressive real novel is about, if you would share.

GRUEN

My book is about rushes to judgment, society's secrets and the falsehood of second chances.

COX

I fell asleep already.

GRUEN

The main character is an effeminate kindergarten sex therapist who is accused of raping and beating a boy, putting him in

GRUEN (*Cont.*)

a coma. But the true perpetrator is the principal's mentally handicapped son, who works as a maintenance man at the school.

COX

So you're going for that pedophile market. Aggressive.

McDONALDS

It's a bigger market than you think.

COX

That's a good market.

GRUEN

Mock me now, but once it's published, everyone will be talking about it.

McDONALDS

Listen, there are things in life that we're good at and things in life that we do. If you were good at writing books, someone would have already given you money to do it. You standing here and talking about someone you're not insults me, like you think this very high paying job doing this noble profession – advertising – is second-rate. That I am second-rate because I want to be here instead of writing books. Fact is, this is the best place for a writer to be. We give you a chance to have your writing read all around the world, but you've got to get committed. You can't market through your irony and cynicism. You have to market HOPE, sell a better life because as far as we know, it can happen. You will be happier, safer, more secure, sexier, desired. Bodies are sexy. Confidence is salesmanship. People don't want smart-ass; they want hope. We give them hope. That is our magic, our order. Our hope is this mysterious spirit that blows through the Internet, through TV, on newsprint, on billboards, on trains and busses, over the airwaves, in mediums that haven't been invented yet. Hope is life. We give people a chance to be reborn.

GRUEN

Marketing is not the work of gods.

McDONALDS

Funny thing about god. Marketing created God and Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Buddah. Not god but God, with a big G to protect our brand recognition. These prophets, these deities, without marketing are footnotes in a long, long line of history. The apostle Paul wasn't the first marketer, but he was damn good at it. He even changed his name from Saul to more effectively market his ideals, to become one with what he was marketing and fully engulf himself in his product. That is commitment.

(The sound of a siren from someone's mouth comes from off-stage. LEACH, who is confined to a wheelchair; wheels himself on-stage. His legs are cut off at the knees.)

LEACH

Grand Entrance!

(COX and McDONALDS touch their heads to his.)

Show me the very best!

(COX and McDONALDS make jerking movements with their necks to tell GRUEN to move toward LEACH. GRUEN gradually shuffles to him.)

Give It To Me!

(LEACH points at his own head.)

Come On Baby!

(GRUEN and LEACH touch heads. COX and McDONALDS make clicking/clomping sounds with their mouths to simulate clapping.)

Simplify your life! McDonalds, Cox: You deserve a break today!

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McDONALDS

Thank you, Mr. Leach

COX

Yes, thank you, Mr. Leach.

LEACH

Say It Proud!

McDONALDS and COX

Yes!

LEACH

Gruen: Care enough to send the very best!

(GRUEN pauses, is confused)

McDONALDS

Greet a man when he comes into the room. Touch your head with his. Develop a bond with those superior to you.

LEACH

Find yourself by helping others!

GRUEN

Sorry, Mr. Leach

(LEACH waits for more sentiment.)

Very sorry, Mr. Leach.

(LEACH still waits, in getting disappointed.)

COX

Yes, Mr. Leach. Yes.

GRUEN

Yes. I mean, yes, Mr. Leach.

LEACH

A child's smile will brighten your day! Where's The Beef!

Feng Shui for Cubists

McDONALDS

We haven't briefed Gruen on the Trust project yet.

LEACH

Show your man you love him! Buy a gun this holiday season!

McDONALDS

We really are sorry. It's completely Cox's fault.

COX

Yes, sir.

McDONALDS

He is a complete waste of space.

COX

Oh, yes.

LEACH

Just Do It!

McDONALDS

The Trust Corporation is preparing to launch a new ice-cream-flavored, food-like product worldwide, geared toward low-end consumers without legal resources. The company is giving us an exclusive window to pitch and secure a \$500 million campaign – and you're going to do it.

GRUEN

I get to make a pitch for a \$500 million campaign as my first assignment. That's crazy.

LEACH

That's Myopia!

McDONALDS

The Trust Corporation owns one of the world's largest natural gas suppliers. All their hydraulic fracturing of shale has produced millions of gallons of undrinkable, flammable water, but they discovered that you can take that water, combine it with high-fructose corn syrup, artificial natural strawberry flavoring, flour

Feng Shui for Cubists

McDONALDS (*Cont.*)

and arsenic, freeze it and make millions of children's mouths water, with flavorful happiness.

GRUEN

They're giving poison to children.

McDONALDS

Not in levels the FDA finds unacceptable.

LEACH

The Name You Trust!

McDONALDS

The product needs a name, trademark, design, storyboard, slogan: the whole package.

LEACH

Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life!

GRUEN

You want me to do this by tomorrow. I can't do that.

LEACH

That's Myopia!

McDONALDS

Listen, Huckleberry, have faith in yourself. We believe in you. Everyone here believes in you, against all common sense and good judgment. First thing you learn here is you have to work under pressure. That's when true inspiration leaps forth. It'll be easier than you think. We'll just lock you in your office for the next 20 hours, throw a couple snakes in there, give you 10 minutes with the art department – they're very busy, you know – and come tomorrow morning, you'll completely blow us, and the Trust Corporation, away with your idea. You'll collect your \$2 million bonus, we'll cut your finger off and your work will finally be read by the whole world.

GRUEN (*soaking it in*)

Sorry, I thought you said you are going to cut my finger off.

(They look at GRUEN stoically. COX raises his remaining middle finger as an example.)

McDONALDS

Why did you think we were all missing limbs?

COX

Stupid hick.

McDONALDS

It's not your fault, Gruen. I've heard about this Midwestern fatalism. Someone tells you you're going to make \$2 million and all you hear is that you're going to lose a finger.

(Pause. GRUEN is speechless.)

LEACH

A Cut Above The Rest!

(McDONALDS pulls GRUEN aside)

McDONALDS

Listen, Kid, in advertising a man has to be committed to his ideals, committed to his work. We have to know you belong here; that you're one of us. Ideas don't come from a happy, middle-class existence. They come from pain, trauma, loss. When you have millions of dollars to your name, those are the only things that make you feel anything anymore.

GRUEN

A good idea gets me \$2 million and the loss of a finger. A bad idea gets me a kick in the ass out the door.

McDONALDS

We don't like to talk about bad ideas here. That kind of negative thinking will fuck your chi.

COX

Fuck it straight up.

McDONALDS

Bad ideas are a cancer, developing tumors of clouded thought, preventing you from unlocking the potential of your brain.

GRUEN

You can't prevent yourself from having bad ideas. You can't protect against objectivity.

McDONALDS

People have bad ideas because they don't understand the impact a good idea can have. When someone has a good idea, society treats him like a dog, patting him on the head, pleasantly surprised that anything useful would ever fart itself out of that brain.

LEACH

Show your dog you love him!

McDONALDS

Society expects all its members to have bad ideas, and that's why it doesn't advance. It spends all its resources protecting against bad ideas. That's why society needs us. We know how to get the good ideas out of a man. We know how to move forward. We hold the keys to the good life – in our heads. All other parts of our bodies are useless, meaningless ... give me a fancy word for useless.

GRUEN

Vestigial.

McDONALDS

That's a big word. See, I unlocked your mind by just talking to you, putting you on the spot. You are going to love what starts to flow from your mind when you free yourself from these pounds of flesh weighing down your head. Look at us. We've had real ideas. Good ideas. And we've got more to give.

GRUEN

Your secretary must have had a couple great ideas herself ... because she has no boobs.

(GRUEN's joke falls very flat.)

Feng Shui for Cubists

McDONALDS

She had breast cancer, you idiot.

LEACH

Uh oh!

COX

Oh my god.

McDONALDS

She had a life-saving mastectomy.

COX

Holy Jesus.

McDONALDS

She's a mother of 3, a widower, and completely worthless in your world because she has no breasts.

COX

What a pig!

GRUEN

I didn't say or imply she was worthless.

McDONALDS

No, in your rush to objectify her, you stopped when you noticed her shirt had no bumps.

COX

Misogynistic hick.

McDONALDS

You have to go apologize to her or your chi will self-destruct.

LEACH

Say It With Flowers!

(A greeting come from just offstage.)

PULATER

Hello everybody!

*(PULATER enters. He has no arms
and is more mentally disabled than not.)*

COX, McDONALDS and LEACH

Hi Pulater.

(They touch heads as a group.)

COX

We have a new boy here for you, Pulater.

PULATER

Yea!!!!!!

COX

This is Gruen. He's going to be your new friend.

PULATER

Yea!!!!!!

*(PULATER makes the clicking/clomping
noise with his mouth. The other three
join him. PULATER goes to touch heads
with GRUEN.)*

Hi, I'm Manny. What's your name?

(PULATER headbutts GRUEN.)

GRUEN

Ow!

PULATER

Sorry, Ow!

McDONALDS

He's the new copywriter.

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PULATER

Really! Ow! We are going to have lots of fun!

GRUEN

Great.

LEACH

The fun never ends!

McDONALDS

Pulater is our most senior ad man. No one in the company has had more success with campaigns than him.

COX

McDonalds said he likes you.

PULATER

I like him, too!

COX

He works on all our campaigns relating to tobacco, oil and gun lobbies.

LEACH

Marlboro tastes like hot, smoky candy!

PULATER

I wrote that. Ha ha.

(They all click/clomp with their mouths.)

LEACH

Drive Faster, Mommy!

PULATER

Ha ha ha ha. I make words.

LEACH

Yeah.

Feng Shui for Cubists

(They stare at each other with mutual admiration, sharing a moment. LEACH then turns to GRUEN.)

Suck his dick!

COX

That will fix your chi, Gruen.

(PULATER clicks/clomps; they all click/clomp.)

PULATER

Time for fun!

GRUEN

I'm not going to do that.

(Everyone groans.)

McDONALDS

Jesus, Gruen, can't you see he doesn't have any arms? I thought you dirt farmers were supposed to be salt-of-the-earth people. Never turn your back on someone in need.

LEACH

Do a good deed daily!

PULATER

Maybe later. I have an NRA meeting.

(PULATER makes gun noises with his mouth and laughs.)

Bye Bye!

(PULATER exits.)

LEACH

A New World Awaits! That's Myopia!

(LEACH exits.)

McDONALDS

Listen, and I'm only going to tell you this because I like you and want you to do well here: When someone with a higher standing than you tells you to do something, you do it. You smile, you say "Yes," and you do it. If someone ever gets to the point where they trust you enough to ask you a question, the answer to that question is YES. If it's not a yes-or-no question, the answer you give is the answer you think the asker wants to hear. That's called respect. That's something we earned. A man tells you to do something, you do it. You've got plenty of other opportunities during the day to think. Now get to work. Go be a hillbilly genius.

(McDONALDS exits.)

COX

Nice first impression.

GRUEN

Tell me what happens if I fail.

COX

Don't confide in me. I'm not your friend. You're not like me, yet. We'll be best friends, and you'll feel eternally grateful that I shared the gift that is me with you, but not yet. (Pause) Truth is, I've never seen anybody fail here. Maybe it's too hard to fully let all this soak in at first, but I tell you, it works. You'll never feel freer. I'll go get the snakes.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

SCENE: The conference room, the next morning.

AT RISE: A projector and screen are set up at the side of the stage – though one could use an easel and drawings/pictures on cardboard. The exact location of the display is not as important as the need for the audience to see the presentation. COX, GRUEN, PULATER and McDONALDS are sitting around the table, which still has a box sitting on it. GRUEN is disheveled.

PULATER

They were mean. I don't like them anymore. They think I'm retarded. I'm not. I know the difference between Russian wild-sturgeon caviar and caviar from an Iranian fishery. I might sue them. That would be fun.

(LEACH makes his siren sound and enters with TRUST.)

LEACH

A Name You Can Trust!

(TRUST goes around and touches peoples' heads with his.)

TRUST

Hello gentlemen. It's lovely to see you all again. You're looking great.

McDONALDS

Mr. Trust, this is Gruen. He'll be giving the presentation today.

(TRUST touches his head with his to greet him.)

TRUST

New blood! I love it when you assign my important projects to new people.

GRUEN

I'll do my best.

TRUST

I'm sure you will. I know exactly what's going on at all times.

LEACH

Time Is Endless!

TRUST

I hope this pitch is very long because I have nothing better to do.

LEACH

There is no time like the present to give presents!

TRUST

I completely understand what you're saying at all times.

PULATER

I want to ride a pony!

(pause)

GRUEN

I guess we'll get started then.

LEACH

Be Your Own Boss!

McDONALDS

Sheesh, we almost forgot Mr. Hlava. He wanted to hear your first pitch.

(McDONALDS lifts up the box from the table to reveal HLAVA, the head of the company.)

GRUEN

Jesus Christ!

HLAVA

Mrrraah!

TRUST

Good to see you again, Richard.

(They touch heads.)

HLAVA

Blugah.

*(The others talk over themselves asking
“how are you, Mr. Hlava.”)*

LEACH

Say Hello To A Good Buy!

*(Lizard-like, HLAVA assesses the
situation in silence.)*

HLAVA

Mulahgubuuur-urghbur-ur ur urrrr.

(Everyone clicks/clomps to cheer his speech.)

McDONALDS

Go ahead.

GRUEN

Thank you, Mr. Trust, for giving us the opportunity to help The Trust Corporation nurture your new product, from inception to market, from market to icon, from icon to addiction.

TRUST

I like this so far.

GRUEN

When I think about your product, I don't think of the flammable water or arsenic or high-fructose corn syrup. I think of flavor. I think of fun. I think of something technically edible.

(These three things could be part of a slide.)

So as I stood on the table in my brand-new office, trying desperately to keep track of where both snakes are at all times, I thought about the possibilities, about the things in this world that form union with flavor, fun, edibility based on a technicality.

TRUST

This kid is good.

GRUEN

Then, I considered the market, the low-end consumer who has nothing left to lose. Since that's most of the world, it was difficult to narrow down what our ideal customer – a brand leader who can make your product go viral in his village or tribe – looks like, what he acts like. With all that in mind, I want you to meet him.

(Slide shows picture or cartoon of a short/ underdeveloped, dirty Mexican child who is wearing a sombrero and a poncho and holding a burrito.)

This is Pablo.

PULATER

Hi Pablo!

GRUEN

He is a dirty Mexican. He has no future, no hope. He'll die of type-2 diabetes if he doesn't catch an errant bullet from a shootout between rival drug cartels or find his head sitting next to him one day. With his world and sense of reality collapsing around him, there's one thing he finds comfort in: ice cream. Or he would, if he could afford ice cream. After all, he is a dirty Mexican child who might be lucky enough to earn a peso or two from mining mercury from the mouths of cartel victims strewn across his local

GRUEN (Cont.)

roads. But thanks to The Trust Corporation, Pablo can get his ice-cream-like substance and re-energize himself before a long night of scavenging. May I introduce:

(A slide reveals a mock up of packaging for the product: a caricatured Mexican boy holds a cat by its still tail and licks its ass hole.)

Mother Pucker.

HLAVA

Brlrb-000000.

GRUEN

Thanks to Mother Pucker, children of all ages can enjoy the cool, numbing sensation of licking a cat's ass hole anytime, day or night. Its undeniable faux-strawberry aftertaste and unique shape will give Mother Pucker instant brand recognition in all developing nations.

(The next slide shows the shape of the food item. It looks like a Y. It's shown side-by-side with the upside-down back profile of a cat with its tail up in the air.)

Notice the shape. Mother Pucker is the only ice-cream-like substance that you can eat out from the middle. Imagine the stick is the cat's tail. The treat then forks like the cat's legs, leaving a tart, creamy delicious brown center that you eat first.

PULATER

I like kitties.

GRUEN

Well, you'll love this:

(The last slide shows a slogan with a smiling, dirty Pablo and one happy cat.)

GRUEN (Cont.)

Mother Pucker: Lick it clean.

(pause)

You're welcome.

(GRUEN sits. The ending hangs in the air until HLAVA speaks.)

HLAVA

Mrlagle prbbbt-plwupls-nyuck-nya-nya

(Silence. TRUST then stands up, puts his hands on the table and slowly makes the clicking/clomping sound, with crescendo, as the others slowly join in the applause, building into an aggressive standing ovation.)

GRUEN (over the applause)

No! No! No!

COX

Good try, you dumb hick. I told you I've never seen anyone fail.

(Applause dies down.)

PULATER

Ice cream tastes good!

LEACH

A Taste Of The Old World!

McDONALDS

You got taste, kid. I'm proud of you.

COX

Yes! Yes! Yes!

HLAVA

Gru-nebra-ra-ra blechal

TRUST

Speaking of taste, let me say that this is the classiest pitch I've ever been to. I've enjoyed every minute of it, and I think Mother Pucker will be a huge success. Now.

(TRUST pulls out a meat cleaver.)

I'm really going to hate doing this.

(COX and McDONALDS flank GRUEN)

GRUEN

Let's be reasonable here.

TRUST

I'm always reasonable.

GRUEN

There's no way you possibly could have liked this. It's racist, disgusting and immoral.

TRUST

I hate all those things you just said, but your idea is just so good that I don't have any other choice but to go forward with it. Now, come get your reward.

(COX and McDONALDS pull GRUEN over to the table between HLAVA and TRUST.)

GRUEN

Really, this is completely unnecessary. Your approval is reward enough.

TRUST

It is for me, too. Put your hand on the table.

PULATER

Chop chop!

McDONALDS

Let me talk to him for a minute.

TRUST

Take as long as you want. I'll wait all day.

(COX and McDonalds pull GRUEN to the side.)

McDONALDS

Listen, you stupid hick, you're focusing on the wrong thing again. You just landed a multi-multi-multi-million-dollar ad campaign.

COX

Without breaking a sweat.

McDONALDS

Without breaking a sweat. You are about to be \$2 million richer because of it.

COX

That's like a billion dollars where you're from.

McDONALDS

You're going to get published. You're going to get read. Millions, maybe a billion people around the world will know your work. Every time they see a cat licking it ass, their mouths will start to water for a sweet frozen treat, and they'll think of you and your vision. Most importantly, you're going to become one of us. You'll finally have one place in this world where you will fit in, where you'll belong. We will never, ever turn our backs on you, not once you commit to us. *(pause)* Or, you can go back to your life of nothingness, where you have nothing, convince yourself that you're content looking for an answer that doesn't exist. I know you don't want to hear it, or don't want to believe it, but money is what matters in your life. When you have it, you can do anything in this world you want; when you don't, you're its slave. If you want to spend your life wandering aimlessly, looking for answers, there's the door. It's your chi; it's not mine. You want to spend your life living it, put your hand on that table, son.

(COX and McDonalds back off. The stage is still.)

HLAVA

Grablebrah?

(GRUEN walks behind the table, stands near HLAVA, looks at all of them. He then, with authority, puts his left hand on the table. Everyone shouts with joy and then click/clomp.)

TRUTH

You made the right choice, Mr. Gruen.

GRUEN

I hope I don't regret this.

TRUTH

You won't regret this.

McDONALDS

Don't close your eyes. Watch it happen.

TRUTH

You won't feel a thing.

(PULATER starts howling like a dog. This distracts GRUEN who looks away as TRUTH brings the cleaver down on GRUEN's finger. GRUEN recoils, screaming as blood begins to spill from his hand. His little finger lay on the table. McDONALDS and COX hold GRUEN up as TRUTH grabs his hand and starts sucking on the open wound. After a few second, TRUTH takes GRUEN's hand and feeds the blood to HLAVA. The whole time, everyone is celebrating as GRUEN goes into shock.)

COX

How's your chi, buddy?

(GRUEN screams louder. Blackout.)