Pennies on the Dollar

by Ryan Warren FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Two men are sitting across from each other in a room. STEVE on the left. ROGER on the right.

The room is littered with empty pop cans and fast food.

They are focused intensely on their computers.

Other employees are looking through their window. They are not concerned as this usual occurrence in the office.

STEVE relaxes in his chair and lets out a boastful laugh, taunting ROGER.

STEVE

No wonder they pay me more than you.

Their BOSS walks by their office. He glances through the blinds and sees them slacking off. He opens the door to their office.

They spring to attention and try to get back to work.

Their boss walks in.

BOSS

Again STEVE?

STEVE

Oh, I was just finishing up this report here.

BOSS

Really?

STEVE

Yes. It should be done soon.

BOSS

Well I try to leave early Fridays. You know that don't you? But maybe I should wait around for your report?

STEVE

I don't think that would be necessary.

BOSS

I didn't think so. You and ROGER can be in charge of coming up with a new idea for marketing.

STEVE has a blank look on his face.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Yeah. I think the industry is getting stale.

ROGER turns around to plead his case with his BOSS.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Super Pool Shark is a two player game.

ROGER refrains from attempting to argue.

The BOSS makes his way out of the office. As he is closing the door and peeks his head in.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Have it done by Monday.

He closes the door.

ROGER is dumbfounded.

ROGER

This is your fault.

STEVE

You're lucky I'm good enough that I could beat you quickly, otherwise we'd still be playing when he came in.

ROGER

You were laying back in your chair relaxing. At least it looked like I was working.

STEVE

It looked like you were getting worked. By me.

After a short pause they face each other.

ROGER

Well?

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

The sun has set. The office is dark. Everybody has gone home.

ROGER and STEVE are sitting there in silence.

STEVE

Well?

ROGER

Do you have any brilliant ideas?

STEVE

Maybe we could make it so that pennies could be used in the vending machines.

ROGER ignores STEVE's idea.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(Defensive)

Well I think it's a pretty good idea.

ROGER

I think-

STEVE becomes excited at his idea.

STEVE

(Excitedly)

Yeah. People will love that. It'll let them get rid of their change.

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

The room is jam packed. Every seat is taken. Women and children are forced to stand.

Plants around the room are all wilted, even the plastic ones. Only a cactus is still alive in a corner.

The water cooler is all dried up. A lizard living in a skull has taken up residence inside.

The people are exhausted and getting impatient. Luckily they don't have the energy to cause and problems.

There is a man passed out in his seat.

A woman is trying to get her two babies to stop crying.

Another man is trying to get the last drop out of a can of pop. He holds the can upside down over his tongue. Nothing. He slumps back in his chair, defeated. He wipes the sweat from his forehead.

On the other side of the room there is a long line up of people.

A man walks over and stands in the line.

As he is waiting in line. He hears the sound of water coming from the washroom. He rushes into the washroom.

WASHROOM

Inside he can't help but notice the stream of bright orange urine being deposited in the urinal. He shakes off the image, puts his head down to the sink and turns on the tap hoping for a miracle.

He gets back up.

A cloud of dust comes out of the tap.

He is about to leave when he notices the stall. He looks at it keenly. Does he cross this final threshold. Dogs do it.

He slowly pushes open the stall door and peeks his head in. The toilet is empty. He leaves the washroom.

WAITING ROOM

Next to the washroom an old man in a rocking chair sits, smoking from a pipe.

OLD MAN

Already been tried sonny.

The man turns to go get back in line.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

A big one like you. I bet you even checked the dirty old toilets. Hahaha.

The man gets back in the line up.

A kid in front of him complains to his mother.

KTD

Mommy! I'm thirsty!

MOTHER

I know honey. I know.

She tries to comfort him from their uncertain future.

She gives him a hug but is worried about what will happen to them.

As we look further up the line.

A man is looking faint. He almost loses his balance. He leans up against the wall to steady himself.

Further up the line.

A MAN tries to cut into the line.

MAN #1

Hey!

The MAN cutting in line turns around acting surprised.

MAN #1 (CONT'D)

What do you think you're doing?

MAN #2

I was here all along I just went to the washroom.

They get into a heated argument.

MAN #1

I don't think so buddy. I've been here all along.

MAN #2

Ask this woman here.

He taps the WOMAN on the shoulder.

MAN #2 (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Could you please tell this gentleman that I was here in this line before.

WOMAN

I'm sorry, I don't remember seeing
you.

MAN #1

That's it.

MAN #2

That's what?

MAN #1 tries to forcefully remove MAN #2 from the line.

MAN #2 shakes him off.

MAN #1 throws a punch and they begin to fight.

They wrestle with each other for a short while and quickly tire themselves out.

As they lie there on the ground, sweating, gasping for air, a woman steps over them and up in the line.

Both men look up at her in disbelief. She stares defiantly at them.

Further up the line.

A man is sitting leaned up against the wall. He is very close to the front of the line. He looks up ahead at the vending machine. It has an inviting glow. Illuminated like it is the holy spirit.

His eyes open up wide.

The MAN second from the front of the line starts to get impatient.

JOE

(to man at front of line)
Hey, hurry the hell up!

The MAN at the front of the line presses a button on the machine. A can of pop drops out of the machine. The man picks it up.

JOE is waiting behind him eagerly.

The MAN sets the pop on a nearby table. He picks up his big bag of change and stuffs it in his backpack.

As he is doing this a MAN just enters the room and picks up the can of pop. He cracks it open and has a large gulp.

MAN #3

These are free right?

Those who can muster the energy groan. The MAN at the front of the line pulls out his bag of change.

He takes out a penny and puts it into the machine.

JOE growing ever impatient.

JOE

That's it! Get out of here!

The MAN at the machine looks back at him and continues putting his pennies in the machine.

JOE pulls out a gun.

JOE (CONT'D)

I mean it!

He waves the gun around.

The MAN at the machine drops his change and backs away.

MAN #4

Don't do anything crazy man.

ANGLE the gun being lifted and pointed.

A shot is fired.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

STEVE and ROGER are sitting in their office.

ROGER

That's a horrible idea.

STEVE gets up from the table.

STEVE

I'm gonna call it a day. We'll figure something out later.

STEVE grabs his coat and starts to pack his bag.

ROGER walks over to the vending machine. He starts to put in some quarters.

STEVE walks up behind him and waits.

ROGER puts in the last quarter. The machine gives it back. He picks it up and puts it in again. The machine gives it back. He picks it up again and puts it in. The machine gives it back.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(impatiently)

Oh, come on.

ROGER picks up the quarter and puts it in the machine. He selects his drink. He picks it up and leaves.

ROGER

See you later.

STEVE

Yeah, see you.

FADE OUT: