Life is Good

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL BUSINESS STOREFRONT - NIGHT

It’s raining. A neon sign reads: LIFE IS GOOD

INT. LIFE IS GOOD - NIGHT

Three of four cubicles are empty. CHARLIE, 34, jacked into the phone system via a headset, sits behind a computer terminal -- eyes bloodshot, sneezes into a wad of tissues.

CHARLIE
Oh god!

Charlie is sick, but nothing compared to his boss, TOMMY, 40, who barely has the strength to stay standing.

TOMMY
Muscles ache. Got the chills. How do I look?

Charlie thinks for a moment...

CHARLIE
Like Merle from the Walking Dead -- after he changed.

TOMMY
That bad? He was god ugly before hand.

CHARLIE
Go home, rest on up.

TOMMY
Louis is on vacation and Claire is already home with the flu, I can’t leave you here by yourself.

CHARLIE
Phones are dead. Go home before you are too.

Tommy thinks about it...

Tacked to the wall of every cubical: RULE #1: NEVER USE THE WORDS "DEAD" or "DIE."

Charlie then shakes his head at his blunder.
TOMMY
Alright, call if you need me to come back.

CHARLIE
Reckon I won’t. Feel better, Merle.

Exit Tommy. Charlie sighs while further refreshing his knowledge of the rules...

RULE #2. NEVER USE THE WORD "SUICIDE"

He hacks mucus into a wad of tissues. Reaches for the box on his desk -- it’s empty!

CHARLIE
Crap.

Telephone call-indicator chirps. Charlie into the phone...

CHARLIE
Life is good, Charlie speaking. Ask me how to make tomorrow twice as good as today.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
Fuck tomorrow. I’m fix’n ’ta kill my self now!

Charlie stiffens up in his chair, begins protocols...

CHARLIE
Oh, Mrs...?

Another CHIRP and blinking light on the call indicator...

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
Alice, if you must know.

CHARLIE
Well, um Alice, we can...
(cough, hack, sneeze)
... I think...

Blasts another sneeze -- this time fit-enough for a hippo.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
You okay?

Charlie blows nose sludge into a paper document.
CHARLIE
One sec.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
One sec? You’re not putting me on hold are you?

He switches calls...

CHARLIE
Life is good, Charlie speaking. Let me show you how bright and beautiful tomorrow can be.

CALLER #2, sounds like... who cares, actually.

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
I’m looking at the weather right now, heavy rain through Friday.

CHARLIE
Um, it’s uh... how can I help you?

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
I need to speak with Claire.

Charlie has another sneezing fit...

CHARLIE
She’s home sick.

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
I took half the bottle.

CHARLIE
Bottle of what?

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
I can’t deal with my mom anymore, so I’m fix’n ’ta take the rest of her pills.

CHARLIE
Wait. Just tell me where you are at and I’ll get you help.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
Charlie? Are you there?

He switches back to the original caller, also opens up an additional line to 911.
CHARLIE
I’m still here, I’m having a...

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
It’s a long... long... way down.

CHARLIE
Down? What do you mean? Where are you?

FEMALE 911 OPERATOR...

FEMALE 911 OPERATOR (PHONE)
Nine-one-one, state your emergency?

CHARLIE
Um, just a...
(coughs like a 4-pack-a-day smoker for 25 yrs. average even after he learns about his tumorous lung polyps.)
Hold on.

FEMALE 911 OPERATOR (PHONE)
Sir, are you alright.? Do you have an emergency at your location?

Back to original caller...

CHARLIE
Ma’am, what do you mean long way down? Where are you?

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
This ledge is rather slippery.

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
Charlie, say goodbye to Claire for me. I’m swallowing the rest.

Charlie THINKS he has switched to Caller #2, but not so. A 4th line now begins to blink.

CHARLIE
Wait! Don’t take anymore!

FEMALE 911 OPERATOR (PHONE)
Don’t take anymore what?

CHARLIE
Not you. I’ll call back!

He hangs up on 911. Switches to Caller #2...
CHARLIE
Sorry, I’m back!

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
You’re not very good at this, I wish Claire didn’t get sick.

CHARLIE
You and me both. Be right back.

Switches to line four.

CHARLIE
Life is good, what?

Charlie coughs, sneezes, farts and whatever else you can think of.

GUY ON LINE #4, middle aged sounding, very deep BROOKLYN-TYPE voice.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
You sound like shit.

CHARLIE
See’ns how I’ve been way better, I’m inclined to agree.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
The cop is right in front of me, bro. I’m gonna make him take me out.

CHARLIE
You’re what?

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Gonna pretend I got a gun under my shirt, make a fast move, and then he’s gonna shoot me. There’s a name for that...

CHARLIE
Suicide by cop?

Just as the words leave Charlie’s mouth, he catches a glimpse of RULE #2. Shutters at his mistake...

CHARLIE
I mean, um...
GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
I’ll scare the shit out of him and then he’ll have no choice but to pop me.

Charlie drops his forehead down onto the desk, grabs his temples and squeezes them with his palms.

CHARLIE
That’s not gonna work. No cop will be surprised by that.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Ya, why the flip not?

CHARLIE
Cuz see’n how this is Texas, and cops know we all have guns. I got mine on me right now.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Oh, ya. What kinda pis-sole ya got?

CHARLIE
Cross-draw, three-fifty-seven, Desert Eagle, if you must know.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Dat’s a phat piece, bro. Back in Brook, I got a one-nine-one-one.

CHARLIE
You mean nineteen-eleven?

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
I gots to rethink my plan. Any suggestions?

CHARLIE
What? I’m won’t help you commit sui...

...slaps himself on the back of his neck.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
You gotta be the expert on it.

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
Here I go, Charlie!
(muffled voice)
You hear me eating them? Crunch, crunch, crunch.

ON THE TELEPHONE CALL INDICATOR --
Two additional lines begin to pulse.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
Geronimo, Charlie.

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Chucky boy, what kinda bullet splits brains best?

CLOSER on the call indicator...
BLINKING
BEEPING
AND
BLINKING
AND
BEEPING
AND

--------> POW! -- the loudest gunshot you ever heard.

Charlies LIMP arm now pressing down onto every phone line button on the console -- INTERCOM now active.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
What was that?

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
That sounded like a gun.

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
Charlie? You still there?

GUY ON LINE #4 (PHONE)
Dang, I think chucky-boy just shot himself.

RASPY VOICE OLD LADY (PHONE)
No fucking way?!?

CALLER #2 (PHONE)
Who the hell are you guys, anyways?
FADE OUT

THE END