

# thank you

Written by  
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Inspired by the song of the same name  
by Dido

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Third Draft

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**FADE IN**

**INT. TELEMARKETING CALL CENTER - DAY**

A small cubicle in a sea of cubicles. The sound of GREETINGS and SALES CONVERSATIONS fills the room.

DALE BURKE (60), male, white shirt and tie, sits. He stares at the telephone headset before him, discouraged.

CLARENCE DAILY (36), stops by.

CLARENCE  
That lonely headset is not going to help us meet our quota. C'mon. Let's show a little hustle. We can do this.

Clarence leaves.

Dale picks up the headset, puts it on. He looks at a computer screen, clicks his mouse.

From the headset, he hears the RINGS of an outgoing call. After three rings, a VOICEMAIL VOICE answers.

VOICEMAIL VOICE (O.S.)  
You have reached area code nine one four, five five five, seven two four six. We cannot come to --

He clicks on a red DISCONNECT button on his screen.

He clicks his mouse again.

The three RINGS of another call (O.S.) are followed by another VOICEMAIL. He disconnects the call.

He clicks his mouse again, another RINGTONE (O.S.), another outgoing call.

After two RINGS (O.S.), MIA (5) answers.

MIA (O.S.)  
Hello?

DALE  
Hello. My name is Derek and I'm calling from the ABC Home Security company. Is there an adult resident at home?

MIA (O.S.)  
A what?

DALE  
Your mother or father.

MIA (O.S.)  
My mommy is home. I'll go get her.

From the headset, he hears the CLUNK of a phone placed on a hard surface, followed by the TAP of little steps departing.

He hears the STEPS (O.S) return.

MIA (O.S.)  
My mommy says she's not home.

DALE  
Thank you. Have a nice day.

The phone call ends with a CLICK (O.S.)

Another mouse click, another call.

After three outgoing RINGS (O.S.), MIKE (42) answers.

MIKE (O.S.)  
Hi!

DALE  
Hello. My name is Derek and I'm calling from the ABC Home Security company. We're offering a dis --

MIKE (O.S.)  
-- I'm sorry but I am unable to take your call at the moment. Please leave a mess --

DALE  
-- Very funny, asshole! What, you can't afford a real answering machine?

MIKE (O.S.)  
Answering machine!  
(laughs)  
Good one. Have fun with your answering machine and your picture tube TV on the floor, boomer.

Mike hangs up.

Dale clicks his mouse again, releases a heavy sigh as the rings commence another call.

**CALL CENTER - LATER**

Dale looks at his watch. He stands and looks across the cubicle farm at a clock on the far wall. It reads 5:00.

He puts on his jacket, steps out of his cubicle.

Clarence calls out to him from his office door.

CLARENCE

Dale!

After he gets Dale's attention, he motions for him to come.

Dale takes a deep breath, marches to Clarence's office.

**CLARENCE'S OFFICE**

Clarence stands at the door.

CLARENCE

Have a seat.

Dale enters and gently drops into a nearby chair.

Clarence closes the door, takes a seat behind his desk.

CLARENCE

I'm afraid I have some bad news.  
Corporate says the numbers are down  
and that they need to trim the work  
force. I'm afraid we're going to have  
to let you go.

Dale takes a deep breath and grits his teeth. He fights to remain calm with professional dignity.

DALE

I understand. It's been nice working  
with you.

CLARENCE

It was nice working with you too. I  
wish things could be different. Feel  
free to contact me if you need a  
recommendation. Anyway, you need to  
stop by H.R. to sign some paperwork.

The two stand, shake hands at the door.

CLARENCE (cont'd)

Good luck.

DALE

Thanks.

Dale leaves.

**INT. BAR - DAY**

Dimly-lit and mostly vacant. A television plays an old show.

HAL (45) tends bar, stands nearby.

Dale, parked on a bar stool, slumps over a near-empty mug.

He listens to a YOUNG COUPLE'S SUBDUED ARGUMENT from across the room.

Dale glances over his shoulder at the couple, returns back to Hal.

DALE

What's with them?

HAL

They're breaking up.

DALE

Sad. She looks familiar. Is that Sasquatches girl?

HAL

Yup. That's Penny.

DALE

Wow. She grew up fast.

HAL

They all do. Seems like yesterday she only came up to my knee.

DALE

I used to babysit her father! In fact, I gave him the name, "Sasquatch" when I coached him in little league. Do you know how long they've been going out and why the breakup?

HAL

About three or four years and they're breaking up because she's going away.

DALE

Wow, she's headed for college already. And I thought I was feeling old before.

HAL

No, she finished college two years ago with a master's in biology. She's twenty-eight. She's only a couple of years or so younger than your daughter.

Dale flashes a look like he was punched in the gut.

DALE

So where is she going?

HAL

She got a job in San Diego. He don't want to go.

DALE

That's rough.

HAL

Speaking of your daughter, how's Mary?

DALE

We don't see much of her these days. After she divorced the Dick, She doesn't have the time for us. She don't even come into the house when she drops off the kid for one of her overnights. She's too busy being single again. Sometimes it seems like she's too busy for the kid.

HAL

That ain't right. So, how's Evelyn?

DALE

She's good. We don't spend much time together, either; mostly just church, dinner and bedtime. She has her life. Not much room for me in it.

Dale grimaces, releases a sigh.

DALE (cont'd)

So what's Sasquatch up to? Is he still a cop?

HAL

Yeah, but he's retiring this winter; after twenty-five years. Says he's going to open an electronics store.

DALE

Really! Think he'll need some sales help?

HAL

I doubt it. It's mostly going to be online.

The young couple's conversation ends.

Dale turns his head, sees them stand.

The young man looks ghostly pale.

DALE

(under his breath)

I know how you feel, kid. It's just as well you didn't go. You would have been second fiddle to her career, just like me. Welcome to not needed.

The woman gives the man a kiss on the cheek. She wipes tears from her eyes, rushes to the door.

The door opens before her. CHIP (60), almost enters, almost walks into her. He steps back, holds the door.

She leaves. Chip enters.

He approaches the bar, sits next to Dale. He is served a beer without saying a word.

CHIP

How are things?

DALE

Out of work again. After three years, a victim of voicemail and caller I.D. Nobody answers their phone anymore. I don't know what I'm going to do or how to break this to Evelyn.

CHIP

It's rough.

DALE

It's getting more rough. Last time I had to look for work, I faced a lot of age discrimination.

(MORE)

DALE (cont'd)  
They didn't come right out and say  
it, they couldn't. But it was on  
their faces. It can't be better now.

Dale releases a deep sigh.

DALE (cont'd)  
It's not like how it used to be. When  
we were at Sears, we were at the top  
of our game. We could sell anything.  
Remember?

CHIP  
Yeah, the good old days.

DALE  
You landed on your feet. You've been  
with The Dispatch ever since.

CHIP  
My days are numbered. Nobody reads  
newspapers anymore. It's getting  
harder to sell ads. It's only a  
matter of time.

DALE  
Sometimes I wish I could fly off  
someplace where I would be needed.  
Ya' know? Someplace nice.

CHIP  
If only someplace nice existed.

DALE  
Oh, well. I need to go.  
(lifts his glass)  
To someplace nice.

The two men clink glasses, sip their beer.

DALE (cont'd)  
See you around.

CHIP  
Hey! Give me a call. I'll answer.

DALE  
Thanks.

Dale waves to Hal who returns the wave.

Dale leaves.



**INT. DALE'S KITCHEN - DAY**

A small room with an efficient arrangement of appliances, shelves and cabinets.

Dale sits alone at a table for two.

EVELYN (60) stirs something on the stove.

EVELYN

Don't worry. It'll all work out. Have hope. He always sees us through times like this. Anyway, Mary is dropping off Brittany for the night. Try to stay positive.

DALE

I'll stay positive when the Good Lord shows me I'm needed.

The sound of a DOOR OPENING (O.S.) is followed by the PATTERN OF TINY, RUSHING FOOTSTEPS (O.S.).

BRITTANY (4) enters.

DALE

Look who it is! How 'bout a kiss.

He presents his cheek, She plants a kiss on it.

BRITTANY

Grampa, can you tie my shoe? Please?

DALE

Sure. Pull up a seat and give me your foot.

EVELYN

See? You are needed.

Dale looks up to the ceiling with a smile.

DALE

(whispers)  
Thank you.

**FADE OUT**