

# Jack in the Box

An original play by Carli Harris

Draft #: 3

School: Spaulding High School

Email Address: 17carharri@u61.net

Mailing Address: 135 Currier st, Barre, VT, 05641

Phone: 802-595-2132

CHARACTERS:               BILL WIGGS, branch manager of BCI, 42  
                                  FRANK, employee at BCI, 47  
                                  TOM, employee at BCI, 37  
                                  JACK, employee at BCI, 35

SCENE:                     Biggleborg Computer Industries, BILL'S office

AT RISE:                   The boss, BILL WIGGS, sits at his desk, dealing with paperwork.  
                                  The phone rings.

BILL WIGGS

Good afternoon, this is Biggleborg Computer Industries, Bill Wiggs speaking.

*(short pause)*

Oh, hey, Karen! How've you been? How's the family?

*(pause, laughs)*

That's great to hear! I've always loved that kid of yours. I'm glad everything is going well. So what did you need?

*(pause, his mood shifts)*

But these are great guys we've got over here! Are you sure there isn't any other way we could-

*(pause)*

But surely we could fix the budget some other-

*(pause)*

I understand. If we have to let someone go, then that's just the way it is. When do you need my decision?

*(pause)*

Alright, I'll have it for you by then.

*(he hangs up and places his head in his hands)*

What am I going to do?

*(he gets up from his desk and walks to the side of the stage, looking as if trying to find someone, he yells offstage)*

Frank, could you come in here for a moment please?

*(FRANK enters)*

FRANK

Hey, Bill. You asked to see me?

BILL WIGGS

Yes, I did. Please take a seat.

*(FRANK sits down)*

How long have you been with us now, Frank?

FRANK

I'd say it's been about nineteen years now.

BILL WIGGS

*(quietly, looking down)*

Oh geez.

*(looking back up at FRANK)*

So how is everything? How's the wife? Is she well?

FRANK

Oh, I'm sorry... I thought you knew?

BILL WIGGS

Oh no. Knew what? What happened?

FRANK

It just wasn't working. She left me over a year ago...

BILL WIGGS

Wow, I am so sorry, Frank. I had no idea.

FRANK

That's alright, I didn't tell many people. Focusing on work helped me to get through it. You could say that this company really saved me.

BILL WIGGS

I am just so happy to hear that, Frank. We really value you, here. You're definitely one of Biggleborg's best employees.

FRANK

Well, thank you, Bill. So, why'd you call me in?

BILL WIGGS

Just doing check-ins with some of our employees, making sure everyone is doing well. It sounds like you are though, so I guess we're done here. Go back to your desk. Have a nice rest of your day, Frank.

FRANK

Thanks, you too, Bill.

*(FRANK exits)*

BILL WIGGS

*(having a bit of a tantrum)*

Divorced?! The company saved him?! Are you kidding me?! Just my luck! Now what do I do? Frank is our worst in sales.

*(BILL sits back at his desk, picks up the phone, and mutters to himself as he dials)*

Hey, it's Bill. I need some advice. There's been a decrease in sales. Corporate wants me to fire one of our employees by the end of the day.

*(pauses)*

No, I don't know who. That's why I called you. I tried to fire Frank, but I'm not sure I can. His wife left him awhile ago and-

*(pauses)*

Do you have any idea how heartless you sound right now?

*(pauses)*

Yeah, you're right, he's pretty bad too. I guess I've got to let him go, then. Thanks for the help. I'll be home in a few hours. Did you need me to pick anything up?

*(pauses)*

Alright, I'll see you later. Love you, too, Mom.

*(He hangs up that phone, walks to the edge of the stage, and yells offstage)*

Tom, can you come in here? I need to speak with you.

*(TOM enters)*

TOM

Hey, Bill. What's this about?

BILL WIGGS

We'll get to that in a second. First, fill me in on what's been going on. How are the kids?

TOM

They're doing well. They're growing up too fast though. Brian got braces and Jenny was just accepted into Columbia University. She can't wait for college. She won't talk about anything else.

BILL WIGGS

Oh wow, Columbia? That's impressive. That's an ivy league, right?

TOM

Sure is! I always knew she'd be able to do it.

BILL WIGGS

That's got to be pretty pricey sending her there.

TOM

Oh, absolutely, but there isn't anything more important to me than her education. At least her mother and I have decent jobs. We should get by with the student loan debt.

BILL WIGGS

*(awkwardly)*

Yeah, right! Thank God for that!

TOM

So, why did you need to see me?

BILL WIGGS

I just wanted to check in and see how everything was. You know how much I love to hear about Brian and Penny.

TOM

And Jenny, you mean?

BILL WIGGS

You have a third daughter named Jenny? Why would you give your daughters rhyming names?

TOM

I didn't-

BILL WIGGS

Your wife?

TOM

No, you misunderstood. I-

BILL WIGGS

You can go back to your desk, Tom. We're done here.

*(TOM begins to exit, but turns back to BILL)*

TOM

I really only have two children... you know that, right?

BILL WIGGS

Yeah, of course. Now, get back to work before I fire you.

*(he laughs and TOM exits)*

Damn it, I should have. What was I thinking? I only have...

*(he checks his watch)*

Okay, two hours left. Not too bad. I can do this. Maybe if I look over some of their work.

*(he shuffles through some of the papers on his desk and soon gives up angrily)*

Who am I kidding? I'll need a miracle to make this decision.

*(JACK enters)*

JACK

Bill! I. Am. Done.

*(slams a paper down on the desk)*

Here's my resignation. I quit!

BILL WIGGS

Jack, I don't understand. You're one of our most promising salesmen. Why leave? Why now?

JACK

Bill, you just don't get it, do you? I am going no where in this company. I took this job straight out of college and, all of these years later, I'm 35 and miserable. I mean, what does my future look like right now? Look at you! Sure, you have a management position, but you're 42 and you still live with your mother. I've never heard you speak of any girlfriend or any children. I don't want to end up like you. I want life's Disney package. I want to live "happily ever after" with a wife, a few kids, and a job that I don't dread going to every day. I'm sorry, Bill, but I just won't get there if I continue working here at Biggleborg.

BILL WIGGS

Jack, are you sure you aren't just having a midlife crisis? There can be a lot of pressure at your age to settle down and have a family. Quitting your job isn't the answer though. You don't seem to be thinking clearly. Maybe you should just join a dating website, or try speed dating, or something? That seems like a much better alternative.



JACK

I know what I'm doing. The world has never been clearer to me. I need to quit now. If I don't then I'll be trapped in this job for the rest of my life.

BILL WIGGS

Wait a minute, Jack. I just think-

*(sudden realization)*

I think you're right. This job clearly isn't right for you. You should quit! What are you waiting for? Go clean out your desk. Hell, steal a few staplers for all I care. It doesn't matter, right? You're done. Thank you for the time that you put in, here. The company greatly appreciates it.

*(they shake hands)*

JACK

Thank you, Bill. I'd say it was a pleasure to work here... but I think you know where I stand.

BILL WIGGS

Please just leave, Jack... before you change your mind.

*(Jack nods and exits, BILL looks up to the ceiling)*

Thank you!

*(he picks up the phone and dials, there is a pause)*

Hey, Karen. I have great news for you! We didn't have to fire anyone after all, Jack just quit.

*(pause)*

I know, right? He said something along the lines of having no purpose.

*(pause)*

Yeah, well I'd better go. I have a ton of work to get back to. Have a great day, Karen.

*(he hangs up the phone, but begins dialing again, talking to himself)*

Is Karen still married? I could totally date Karen. Make my own Disney package. She'd go for me.

*(pause as the other end of the line answers)*

Hey Mom, you'll never guess what happened at work today.

*End of play*