

(The following is an excerpt from a corporate script I wrote to generate interest in careers in Customer Service.)

Synopsis

Our protagonist, 25-year-old JOSH, feels unfulfilled at his Customer Service job. He's on his way to his manager's office to give notice, when he is stopped by CARL, (mid-forties), who works in "Operations." Carl takes him on a journey through history and the future to show him what the world would have been like without Customer Service.

In this scene, Carl and Josh travel back in time to visit the astronauts on Apollo 13.

INTERIOR – APOLLO 13 SPACESHIP – 1970 – MID MISSION

JOSH AND CARL WATCH FROM THE SIDELINES AS THE THREE ASTRONAUTS (JOHN SWIGERT, FRED HAISE, JAMES HOVELL) ARE AT THE CONSOLE.

JOSH
(WHISPERING) Dude, where are we? Universal Studios?

CARL
We're on Apollo 13.

JOSH
No way. (EXCITEDLY) Where's Tom Hanks?

CARL
(ROLLING EYES) Just watch.

THE ASTRONAUTS MONITOR THE CONSOLE. THERE IS A LOUD BANG.

JAMES
(ALARMED) What was that?

FRED
I don't know, but it didn't sound good.

SOUND EFFECT – ANOTHER LARGE BANG FOLLOWED BY A HISSING SOUND.

JOHN
Okay, that was definitely bad. I'm calling in.

INT. LARGE "CUSTOMER SERVICE" ROOM, FILLED WITH PEOPLE ON HEADSETS. STEVE, MID-30'S, SITS AT HIS DESK, READING "MAD MAGAZINE."

STEVE

Hello, this is Steve at NASA. Can I help you?

JOHN

(GRAVELY) Houston, we have a problem.

STEVE

Sorry to hear that, sir. May I have your first and last name as it appears on our records?

JOHN

This is John Leonard Swigert Jr. of Apollo 13.

STEVE (O.C.)

Hold on sir. Our system is running a little slow at the moment.
(PAUSE, THEN) Ah, found you. Well, first of all, Mr. Swigert, I would like to thank you for being a valued member of NASA. We do appreciate your loyalty.

JOHN

(BEAT) Uh, okay.

STEVE (O.C.)

So, what is the problem you are experiencing?

JOHN

We had a suspicious explosion coming from the main tanks. Looks like it's the oxygen.

STEVE (O.C.)

I see. Have you tried unplugging it then plugging it back in?

JOHN

(CONFUSED) You want me to unplug the oxygen?

SOUND EFFECT – A ROARING SOUND COMING FROM THE ENGINES.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(WORRIED) Um, is there someone else I can speak with?
A supervisor? This is EXTREMELY -

STEVE (O.C.)

Please hold.

MUSIC CUE – MADDENING “HOLD” MUSIC JOHN LOOKS EXASPERATED.

STEVE (O.C.)

(ATTEMPTING TO DISGUISE VOICE) Good afternoon, this is Mark, the Office Supervisor. First of all, I'd like to thank you for being a valued member of NASA. We do appreciate –

JOHN

Wait a goddamn minute. You're not Mark, you're Steve!

STEVE (O.C.)

(COVERING) I'm sorry, who?

JOHN

Now listen to me and listen good! We're in deep trouble here. Our oxygen's dropping and we need a hard plan ASAP or we're—

STEVE (O.C.)

(MAKING THE "STATIC" SOUND) You're breaking up, sir. I think you must be going through an atmospheric change.

JOHN

Of course we're going through an atmospheric change! That's the problem! (THEN) Hello? Hello?

THE THREE ASTRONAUTS LOOK PANICKED. ANGLE ON: JOSH AND CARL.

JOSH

(TO CARL) Oh my god! What happened? Did they... ?

CARL

Nah. They just called a place with better customer service.

WE CUT TO A "NASA" TYPE OF CONTROL ROOM, BUT WITH A GIANT SOVIET UNION FLAG IN THE BACKGROUND. A SCARY LOOKING MAN PRESSES A BUTTON ON HIS HEADSET.

SCARY MAN

(THICK RUSSIAN ACCENT) Hello? How can I help you?

BACK TO: APOLLO 13

JOHN

Moscow? We have a problem.

CARL GIVES A HORRIFIED JOSH A "SEE WHAT HAPPENED?" LOOK.

END OF SCENE

