

TACO GOD

A One-Act Play By Stan Sinberg

(God is sitting in his office, dressed in business attire, although he's not wearing a tie. He looks like an accountant, but there is something about him – longish hair perhaps, or a ponytail – that hints at wilder days. He is a good looking man, probably around 60, with sharp features. He is hunched over a desk, wearing a headset. He is overwrought, frenzied, even besieged. Over an intercom, we hear a constant buzz of voices. It sounds something like a beehive, but the sounds are unmistakably voices – a cacophony of people asking for things: gifts for Christmas, for good health, etc. This is mixed in with the wailing songs of prayers and the sounds of intercourse and gunshot fire and newborn babies crying and someone taking HIS name in vain. This starts out loud as God is talking to someone, and then gets lower).

GOD

Hello, Mrs. Belmont. Yes, I heard you earlier. Yes, you've been waiting 25 minutes for the number 7 bus. Mrs. Belmont, I'd like to help you, but there are some things even God can't do anything about.

Angela, answer Mr. Peters prayer, willya? Mary, we got a depressive on line 2. Give him a sign, ok? Hello, Mrs. Jenkins. Yes, I remember you: how could I forget? You ask me for something every twenty minutes. What is it now? No, I didn't forget: but you don't get everything you wished for just because you never had sex outside of marriage, like that whore Cher.

What's that? Henderson's heading down the sideline for a game-winning touchdown and the fans are praying to me that he makes it? What's the other side doing? Praying to me that he DOESN'T make it. Well, what's at stake? The playoffs? Oh, geez. Either team have the higher moral ground? (Pause) Criminal deviance?) (Pause) Listen, have someone knock him out of bounds at the goal line and let the referees decide it. Ok? That way, the winning team will thank me, and the losing team will blame the refs.

Sheila, who's got the list of today's sins? Have them send it up here. (Pulls out paper. While he reads the list he's rapidly typing on a calculator type device with one hand) Adultery, adultery, murder, taking my name in vain, adultery, stealing, pillaging – pillaging? - what is this – the Middle Ages?, rape, embezzlement, eating meat on Friday, adulter – say, Sheila. Who made up today's list? Well, tell Simon that eating meat on Fridays hasn't been a sin in forty years. I thought we talked about mistakes not being acceptable. People expect Me to be infallible! (Continuing to read) Adultery, taking name in vain, not respecting parents, stealing a loaf of bread, attempted murder – Hey Sheila, what'd we decide about “attempted” murder? Is it as bad as “completed” murder? (shrugs) Well, I STILL say we're rewarding the perpetrator for his own incompetence.

(To self) Ok, what've we got? 37 million eight hundred forty two thousand nine hundred nineteen mortal sins, 241 million three hundred ninety three thousand five hundred eleven venals, these people are going to be punished by the law, these folks are getting away with their actions, these peop –

What is it? Mrs. Jenkins? What is it now? Yes, yes, I know you've been a good woman. No, it's NOT true that you don't ask for much. No – no- yes, yes, Mrs. Jenkins – Mrs. Jenkins – yes I know the hooker down the block seems to have more happiness than you do – yes, I'm aware that if you're going to keep praying you need to have your prayers answered every ONCE in awhile – yes, no, no – oh, okay, Mrs. Jenkins. I understand. Goodbye. (Hangs up) Charlie, could you see about smiting Mrs. Jenkins, please? As soon as possible?

(Buzzing hum starts to get louder, pick up frequency). What time is it? Ten minutes till the Muslims pray for the second time today. Are we ready? (rolls eyes) “ Oh great and glorious god, king of the universe who has made all the forests and trees” – c'mon, c'mon, I know this part already – I don't have all day – I hear this a billion times a day - I'll come back when you finish the fawning part (New call) Mrs. Jenkins! What? You just narrowly avoided a falling bank safe? Sorry to hear it.

(Aside) Sheila, get me Charlie. Charlie– why is Mrs. Jenkins still alive? Yes, I know she's probably a nice woman – Charlie, she ALREADY has the fear of God in her. No. No. No. She needs to be taken out right NOW. Sin, prayers, sin, prayers, sin, sin, sin, - (Slams fist on

desk. Takes off headphones. Slams on table) Ok, that's it! I've had it! I'm done! No more of listing all this crap. I'm done! Finished, you hear! I, God, quit! I have just entered my last sin, catalogued my last offense, answered my last pleading entreaty, fulfilled my last request. (Gets up) I'm God, for Me's sake. Not some freakin' desk jockey transcriber. I, who created the cosmos, have become a slave to my creation. I now have the dullest, mind-stultifying job in the universe – keeping a non-stop ledger of the world's transgressions, good deeds, and wishes. And you know what? Do I need this? Writing up wankers? I don't think so! (Takes deep breath)

(To audience) Look, I'm sorry. It must be a little scary for you. You know, to see God explode like that. You're probably thinking "Uh oh. Last time He got this pissed, animals were boarding an ark two by two." Don't worry. I made a pact – I think we called it a covenant back then – that I wouldn't go off like that again. But we need to talk. Ok – I had need to talk. You've been talking non-fucking-stop for thousands of years. I hear from you constantly. You only think I talk back. I've mainly been holding my tongue up until now because I keep thinking you're young, you need me, you'll grow out of it, but it's getting worse. The older you get, the more you ask me for. And I've become your co-dependent. Besides, I'm 15 billion years old. I'm not getting any younger. It's time to make some changes.

Oop. I sense some skepticism. You don't believe I'm God. You sure don't look like God, you're saying. Well, exactly my point. I used to look a lot more majestic and awe-inspiring. But you spend a few thousand years behind a desk listening to people's prayers all the time and cataloguing their petty transgressions, and see what YOU look like. Some of you people have a passage that says "God made man in His image." But it's really the opposite. "Man made God in his image." When you were barbarians, I was a wild-haired avenger with a loincloth. When you were striking out in the world in dangerous directions, I was the father-figure, the protector. Now that you're living in a post-industrial capitalist society, I'm this: a mild-mannered tabulator. A keeper of lists. Well I say: No more!

Oh. But now you're thinking, Oh, come on. You're not God: God doesn't talk to people. That's just nuts. See – this is the thing I don't get. Anybody today claims God is talking to them, you automatically think they're delusional. Institutionalize 'em, more likely than not. But if someone two or five thousand years ago made the same claim, you believe them. More

than believe them. Anoint them to positions of prophets, messengers and emissaries. If I could talk to individuals five thousand years ago, why can't I do it today? I mean, for me, five thousand years ago is like this morning.

In any case - I know I should be able to handle it, but for whatever reason, there are more people praying to me than ever before. For all sorts of things. A new sweater. World peace. A new husband. A job. You know what I've become? Santa Claus for adults. Same old, white-bearded personage, rewarding the good with gifts, punishing the bad. When you're a kid you stop believing in Santa when you realize one guy in a sled couldn't possibly slip down all the world's chimneys in a single night, bearing gifts. But then you pray to Me, expecting me to answer four billion folks' prayers, around the clock.

I don't know if you can imagine it –no, of course you can't – what am I thinking – the tedium. Are you aware that at any given moment there are at least a hundred million of you worldwide bending my ear with requests? All the time. So basically, I've turned into: an accountant. Me. God. Most powerful entity in existence. I gotta spend my entire time recording who wants me to cure their cancer and who wants my help so they can go see Barry Manilow in Branson. And then I have to keep track of the millions of sins and crimes being committed each moment, from murders to thievery to who's eating milk and meat together at the same meal, to make sure that the unjust get theirs.

And if keeping track of my messages wasn't enough, you people keep changing the language: you make up new words and change meanings of old ones constantly. Hip-hop alone is responsible for an entire new dialect. (examples) Well, that's all well and good, but how am I supposed to answer your prayers when I have no idea what the fuck you're talking about? You get some rapper who wins a Grammy and says "(example) And I'm like, "Du-uude. I'd like to help out, but I only know 3,079 languages." Not to mention of course, that you've probably broken like, six of the ten Commandments even as you're publicly thanking me for your award. What does helping you make me? An accessory to the crime?

Or you go and slang up the language, changing the meaning of words. Remember a few years ago, when suddenly, out of the blue, 'bad' meant 'good?' *She* bad – *he* bad – *they* bad. Do you have any idea how many people I screwed over before I learned that "bad" was

meant as a *character reference*? I ask you, how the hell was I expected to know that? It took months to go back and straighten out all the damage from that one

And then there's this thing with people faxing messages to be inserted into the Wailing Wall in Israel so that they'll get to me quicker. This is the equivalent of writing a big "Urgent" on the envelope. God, this is URGENT. Yeah. Like there aren't 35 million other people every second with urgent pleas. Besides, this is a private correspondence. I'm God for Me's sake, not John Ashcroft. I don't go peeping into your mail. And what – I'm going to try to decipher your handwriting? And your spelling mistakes? "Let's see, is Amir praying for a car, or a cow?" Or "Lord, why did you let me lose my position as a bank executive and become a night watchman?" Because instead of writing that you wanted "job security" you wrote that you wanted "security, comma, job." So I got you a security job!" I missed the comma! So sue me!

Now, apparently, some "modernists" e-mail prayers to me, although last time I looked, I hadn't opened up an internet account. Actually AOL approached me about spreading my message through them - so when you log on, you'd hear me say, "You've got God Mail." I almost agreed to do it, until one of my assistants pointed out that if I was hooked up with AOL, there's no way anyone would really believe I was God.

I blame myself. It wasn't supposed to be this way. I can't take it any more. For 15 billion years, this gig was a piece of cake. All I did was watch the universe expand. But was I satisfied? No-oooo. I got it into my fool head that I should try something new.