

7.4

The Ballad of Mrs. Maloney

by Daniel Nicholas Bilich

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This is true Liberty when free-born men and women
Having to advise the public
May speak free...

Character Breakdown

3 Women / 3 Men / 3 Chorus

__ MILDRED MALONEY, A poet. Age 65-75 - Timeless

__ REGGIE SPHINCTER / THE SPHYNX, Program Director at 7.4 WSTPD. Age 45–55

__ ABIGAIL THORNSWORTH, MILDRED's first follower. Age 45-55

__ VICKI PRINGLE, Receptionist at 7.4 WSTPD. Age 23–33

__ JOHNNY MALONEY, MILDRED's nephew. Age 25-33

__ BYRON BEL CANTO, Olympian God of Corporatism – 45-65 - Timeless

__ Chorus 1, 2, 3

Concerning the Chorus

A SWAT Chorus of three will be deployed to do Whatever Needs To Be Done, including embodying the NEIGHBORS, WSTPD JOCKS, FCC, etc. In the script the Choral actors are numbered (1), (2), and (3). Thus:

NEIGHBORS: (1) - CECIL
 (2) - BETTY
 (3) - MELISMA

WSTPD JOCKS: (1) - CURT THE FLIRT
 (2) - HOOTER
 (3) - JACKIE – THE LAUGH GIRL

FCC : (1) - CRANSTON
 (2) - JOHNSTON
 (3) – KITTY/DISPATCHER

ENSEMBLE parts are enacted by the ENTIRE CAST.

Settings

Mildred Maloney's Living Room.

Radio Station 7.4 WSTPD.

BELLICORP's World Headquarters high upon Corporate Olympus.

Where and When

The Tri-State Area, a medium-sized city in the United States of America, sometime in the late 20th Century.

Author's Notes

Text in CAPS is to be SUNG or otherwise Musically Heightened.

Resourceful deployment of the CHORUS as a Theatrical SWAT Team is **VITALLY IMPORTANT** to the show's execution.

The music follows the actors, who lead the dramatic wave front.

Prologue / 7.4

0/0/0

(in an indeterminate place, not yet inside the space of the play)

7.4 MILDRED

7.4? ENSEMBLE

7.4 MILDRED

.....

Act I

1/1/1

(Still outside the play)

ENSEMBLE
THIS IS THE STORY OF MILDRED MALONEY

CHORUS (1,2,3)
HER NEIGHBORS

ABIGAIL
HER NUMBER

BYRON BEL CANTO
MY NUMBER...

ABIGAIL AND JOHNNY
HER NUMBER

VICKI (looks at BEL CANTO)
A HAMMER

REGGIE (REGGIE points at himself)
A NAIL (beat x 2)

ENSEMBLE
MRS. MALONEY WROTE BEAUTIFUL POEMS

CHORUS (1,2,3)
AND WORKED AT THE CHURCH

ABIGAIL
'TILL WE THREW HER IN JAIL

MILDRED	CHORUS (1 2 3) (whispered)	BEL CANTO	ABIGAIL
7.4			
7.4	YOU SHOULD BE HEARD		
7.4	TELL THE WHOLE WORLD	42 percent...	
	TELL IT AGAIN...	63 percent...	Hoping...
	7.4	12 percent...	Hoping to advise...
			Helping to advise...

(REGGIE SPHINCTER struggles across the front of the stage wearing a six foot tall inflated promotional Bellicose Beer bottle suit.)

REGGIE (whispers and mouths the words)
WE ARE STARDUST
WE ARE GOLDEN

ENSEMBLE
OH MRS. MALONEY
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR TO DESERVE
SUCH A CRUEL FATE

(JOHNNY MALONEY is at work packing flowers into boxes. VICKI PRINGLE and REGGIE SPHINCTER are at work at 7.4 WSTPD. BYRON BEL CANTO is on Corporate Olympus)

WSTPD JOCKS (2 3)

1/1/2

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER

BOSS (1)

C'mon Johnny, let's go, let's go!

JOHNNY MALONEY (morning voice)

EIGHTEEN DOZEN ROSES
BUNDLED IN A BOX
THAT RADIO KEEPS HURTING ME
JACKASS JOCKS
CLOCK IS RUNNING BACKWARDS
WITH THREE MORE HOURS TO GO

CHORUS (123)

PICK IT UP JOHNNY BOY
YOU'RE PACKING TOO SLOW

VICKI PRINGLE (overlaps)

MOMMA CALLS ME VICKI
VICKI WITH AN "I"
MOMMA'S DARLING VICKI MAKES THE BIG BOYS CRY

WSTPD JOCKS (1 2 3)

LOTS OF US ARE CRYING

VICKI

NO ONE'S GOT IT RIGHT

WSTPD JOCKS (1 2 3)

HEY VICKI!...WHATCHA DOIN'
WHATCHA DOIN'...WHATCHA DOIN'
HEY VICKI!...LOOKIT ME!
WHATCHA DOIN'...WHATCHA DOIN'
TONIGHT?

ENSEMBLE

WE'RE HERE IN THE WORK PLACE

JOHNNY

GOD HELP ME SAVE FACE

VICKI AND REGGIE
CAN'T SPREAD MY WINGS HERE

BYRON BEL CANTO
I PULL THE STRINGS HERE

REGGIE SPHINCTER
I'M IN LOVE WITH RECORDS
I GOT THE GOLDEN EARS
I'VE BEEN PUSHING RADIO FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS

REGGIE & JOCKS
CORPORATE BOUGHT THE STATION

JOHNNY
DENTIST GOT A DRILL

REGGIE SPHINCTER
CHORUS (1 2 3)

REGGIE
CORPORATE SHILL

CHORUS (1 2 3)
VICKI PRINGLE

VICKI
SINGLE STILL

CHORUS (1 2 3)
JOHNNY MALONEY

1/1/3/1

JOHNNY

...there I was - Home - back in the Tri-State Area. I got a job with a wholesale florist - packing flowers into boxes, ridiculously early in the morning. Roses, Gerbera, Birds of Paradise, Alstroemeria, you name it, I packed it...So I brought flowers to everyone – to my mom – to my dad...One day I took a dozen red roses over to my Aunt Mildred's house. Mildred writes poems - really special poems...

MILDRED

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS MAGIC!

BETTY (2)

MAGIC!

CECIL (1)

MAGIC!

MELISMA (3)

MAGIC!

MILDRED

COLOR!

MILDRED & NEIGHBORS (123)

REDS AND BLUES AND SMILING YELLOWS

MILDRED

FILLING THE WORLD WITH MILLIONS OF COLORS

MILDRED & NEIGHBORS

MILLIONS AND BILLIONS AND TRILLIONS OF COLORS

MILDRED

HERE AND NOW AND HERE AND NOW

MILDRED AND NEIGHBORS (1 2 3)

AND HERE AND NOW AND HERE AND NOW...

JOHNNY

So one day after work I brought a dozen red roses over to my Aunt Mildred's house and there were people out front banging on the door. The phone kept ringing. It seems that Mildred's friend Abigail had convinced Mildred that she needed to share her poems with the whole world...

ABIGAIL THORNSWORTH

That's not how it happened.

JOHNNY

Me and Abby, we've got this thing...

1/1/3/2

ABIGAIL

We have not...I met Mildred at the church. She worked there in the office part time, and I had started a poetry reading group on Tuesday afternoons. One Tuesday I was there with some of the ladies, and Mildred shared one of her poems with us. Well, the ladies just loved it. Truth be told, I was a bit jealous. You see, I taught Middle School Civics and Creative Writing for 28 years and nobody ever reacted to my poems that way. Anyhow, I asked Mildred if she had any more and insisted she share them with the group. She did, and you know, the rest is history. The ladies loved them. People found out. Soon she had fans and admirers all over town, and eventually, Johnny, eventually *they* started to beg her to share her poems even more - out in public. In fact, it was actually getting to be a bit of a problem for Mildred...

(at Mildred's house)

(knock knock knock)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

...people kept knocking on her door, calling on the phone at all hours...

(knock knock knock – MILDRED opens door)

MILDRED

Cecil, Melisma...

MELISMA (3)

Mildred, we're so sorry to bother you like this, but we need to tell you about Betty Belfrey. You heard she fell down again?

MILDRED

No...!

CECIL (1)

The only thing that ever cheered her up was coming over here to listen to you and your poems...

MELISMA (3)

But now she can't, because she hurt her hip. Could you possibly let Cecil drive you over to Betty's house to visit? Maybe even write a little poem for her?

ABIGAIL

I had an idea. What if we could just get Mildred's poems onto the radio?

ENSEMBLE

ON THE RADIO

WE COULD ALL HEAR MILDRED'S POEMS ON THE RADIO!

ABIGAIL

Now - here's where I need to say something about my friend Mildred Maloney. Mildred has a favorite number - 7.4. Don't ask me why. 7.4...

CHORUS (1 2 3)

7.4?

ABIGAIL

7.4...that's where Mildred's poems come from, (beat), so when I suggested putting her poems on the radio, she said...

MILDRED

Don't radio stations have Numbers?

ABIGAIL

Numbers?

MILDRED

Numbers. You know, like...like 7.4. Of course, if I were to put my poems on the radio, it would have to be at 7.4, because that's where my poems come from.

ABIGAIL

7.4?

MILDRED

7.4.

ABIGAIL

It turns out there was a local radio station already broadcasting at 7.4. Had been for years...

WSTPD JOCKS (1 2 3)

7.4 WSTPD...

ALL OF THE HITS!
 RIGHT AFTER THIS!
 BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER
 BELLICOSE BEER HELPS THE WHOLE WORLD FEEL YOUNG
 ALCOHOL'S FUN
 SO PULL OUT YOUR WALLETS AND DRINK!
 DRINK BELLICOSE BEER!

ABIGAIL

Mildred insisted we ask...

(at WSTPD)

1/1/3/3

VICKI PRINGLE

These two ladies walked into the station. It was a busy morning. Reggie was pulling together some kind of promotion again, and I was holding down the fort.

REGGIE SPHINCTER

Vicki runs the place. I'm the boss, but these days Corporate has me bouncing around so much that Vicki is the only person who really knows what's going on.

VICKI

Reggie hired me. I think he liked my voice...

REGGIE

I did. (beat) I do.

VICKI

Anyhow, I run the place.

REGGIE

She runs the place.

VICKI

So - these two ladies walk in - straight from the Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Poetry Club - and they want to know if they can use the station a couple of times a week to broadcast poems. I'm thinking - this is 7.4 - the Classic Rock that Never Stops - and I say 'maybe this isn't the right kind of station'...

MILDRED

But you're using my number.

VICKI
Your number.

MILDRED
7.4. That's my number.

VICKI
That's our broadcast frequency. 7.4 is licensed to WSTPD.

MILDRED
Well, it's my number too, but I'm willing to share.

CURT (1)
She's willing to share...

HOOTER (2)
She's willing to share...

CURT (1)
Hey Vicki, sweetheart, are you willing to share...?

JACKIE (3)
Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw Ha Ha

VICKI (to the audience)
Just then Reggie steps into the room...

VICKI (to REGGIE)
Reggie, maybe you can help me with this one. Ladies, this is REGGIE SPHINCTER, our Program Director.

HOOTER (2) (mock trumpet)
Dah da da dut dut dut Daahhh!!!

REGGIE
What can I do for you ladies?

VICKI
Reggie, these ladies write poems, and they'd like to broadcast here at WSTPD a couple of times each week.

REGGIE
Vicki?

VICKI

Uhm..hmm...?

REGGIE

Ladies, we're a Classic Rock station, so I don't know about broadcasting poems...but if you'd like to leave a cassette with Miss Pringle, I'll take a listen. Or maybe you should just try a different station...?

MILDRED

But your number is 7.4 and that's my number too. Your station has my number.

VICKI (to the audience)

I had to send the ladies away. But I sure remembered. The guys kidded me about it.

CURT (1)

HEY VICKI
YOU GOT SOME POEMS FOR ME BABY?

HOOTER (2)

Poems for me Vicki !

JACKIE (3)

Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw Ha Ha

1/1/3/4

JOHNNY

So I showed up with the roses at my Aunt Mildred's house, and like I said, by then it was getting totally crazy...

ENSEMBLE

OH MRS. MALONEY

JOHNNY

People were knocking on the doors and windows.

(knock knock knock)

ENSEMBLE

DO TELL IT AGAIN

JOHNNY

The phone was ringing.

(ring ring)

ENSEMBLE

YES, MRS. MALONEY
YOU SHOULD BE HEARD
TELL THE WHOLE WORLD
TELL IT AGAIN

JOHNNY

I'm a musician. (beat) And I'm pretty good with amplifiers and wires and stuff and ...well... I had an idea...

ENSEMBLE

OH, MRS. MALONEY
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR TO DESERVE
SUCH A CRUEL FATE?

(In MILDRED MALONEY's living room.)

1/1/4

MILDRED

Johnny Maloney, do you mean to tell me that you can build a radio station right here in my house?

JOHNNY

That's right, Auntie Mildred. I think the guest room would be the best place...

(knock knock knock)

ABIGAIL

Mildred – your fan club is at the door again!

MILDRED

Abigail, please tell them I'm busy right now - I want to hear what Johnny has to say about the radio.

JOHNNY

Well, it won't be as powerful as WSTPD - but I'll make it work, all right.

MILDRED

And...I could broadcast at any number I choose – like 7.4?

JOHNNY

Whatever you'd like...

MILDRED

7.4...SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NUMBER...

ABIGAIL

Mildred, you shouldn't pay any attention to that Johnny – he'll be making trouble for sure.

MILDRED

But Abigail, what else am I to do? The telephone's been ringing off the hook. People keep knocking on the door. They all want to hear my poems – and when I asked for my turn to broadcast at that WSTPD, they laughed at me...told me that 7.4 was their number.

WSTPD JOCKS (1 2 3)

Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw Ha

JOHNNY

They laughed at you, did they? Auntie Mildred, if you let me help, we'll show them a thing or two...

YOU JUST SAY THE WORD!

MILDRED

IT WILL REALLY WORK?

JOHNNY

Of course it will work.

ABIGAIL

Mildred...?!!!

MILDRED AND CHORUS (1 2 3)

IF I SAY THE WORD

MILDRED

I'LL HAVE TO WRITE A LITTLE POEM FOR A QUICK INTRODUCTION
TO MY EVENING SHOW
Something about 7.4...

JOHNNY AND CHORUS (1 2 3)

IF YOU SAY THE WORD

JOHNNY
 I KNOW SOME OUT OF LUCK MUSICIANS
 WITH AN OUTRAGEOUS AMPLIFIER PRICED REAL LOW
 YOU CAN BE MY LOCAL TALENT

MILDRED
 And you...?

JOHNNY
 Your engineer!

ABIGAIL
 Johnny Maloney...an engineer?

JOHNNY
 Sure...at 7.4 W – M – I – L – D - See...

1/1/5

ANYONE CAN DO IT
 IF THEY REALLY MEAN TO DO IT
 'CAUSE IT'S EASY

MILDRED
 It seems so...complicated.

JOHNNY
 ALL THOSE FOLKS IN RADIO
 WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU THINK THAT IT'S TOO HARD

ABIGAIL
 They said that they had a license...

JOHNNY
 IF YOU LET THEM
 THEY WILL TRY TO TELL YOU IT'S THEIR NUMBER

MILDRED
 That's precisely what they told me!

JOHNNY
 ANYONE CAN DO IT
 IF YOU WANT TO, AUNTIE MILDRED
 SAY THE WORD

ABIGAIL

The word is No!

MILDRED

ABIGAIL - YOU'VE NEVER SAID 'NO' TO ME BEFORE

ABIGAIL

THE PRACTICAL THING FOR YOU TO DO
IS SIMPLY FORGET ABOUT

ABIGAIL, MILDRED & JOHNNY & CHORUS (1 2 3)

7.4!!!

MILDRED

I CAN'T FORGET MY NUMBER
7.4 IS THE SOURCE OF MY POEMS

JOHNNY

YOUR KEY TO THE COSMOS

ABIGAIL

A BOATLOAD OF TROUBLE

MILDRED

Abigail...If you had a special number
THAT BROUGHT POEMS TO YOUR HEART
Might you share them?

ABIGAIL

If they were beautiful like yours...

MILDRED

AND IF YOUR NEIGHBORS CAME A-KNOCKING
MIGHT YOU FEEL SOME OBLIGATION TO BE HEARD?

JOHNNY & CHORUS (1 2 3)

AT 7.4!

MILDRED

IF I SAY 'OK' I'LL NEED MY NEPHEW TO BE HELPFUL

JOHNNY

ON MY HONOR – DO MY BEST

ABIGAIL
Doh...!

MILDRED
TRULY I AM TEMPTED
I AM TEMPTED TO STEP UP
AND SAY THE WORD

So what was the word again?

JOHNNY
THE WORD IS "YES!"

ABIGAIL
THE WORD IS "NO!"

JOHNNY
THE WORD IS "YES!"

ABIGAIL
"NO"

(knock knock knock)

ABIGAIL AND JOHNNY
THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR AGAIN AND
DO TELL US WHAT YOUR NUMBER TELLS YOU

MILDRED
PLEASE TELL THEM THAT I'M INDISPOSED NOW

ABIGAIL & JOHNNY & CHORUS (1 2 3)
DO TELL US WHAT YOUR NUMBER TELLS YOU NOW!

(in an indeterminate space)

1/1/6

MILDRED

ALWAYS RICH
THIS GOOD LIFE
I'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH A GIFT
AND NOW IT'S TIME TO GIVE IT BACK
TO ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

I WANT THEM TO BE HAPPY
I WANT THEM TO BELIEVE IN LOVE
LET US TOUCH THE STARS...

(knock knock knock)

EVERY KNOCK
EVERY RING
THEY ALL MEAN
JUST ONE THING
FOR THESE POEMS ARE A GIFT
AND IT'S TIME TO GIVE THEM BACK
TO ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

NOW.

The Word Is 'Yes'

ENSEMBLE

OH, MRS. MALONEY
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR TO DESERVE
SUCH A CRUEL FATE?

1/2/1

(At the trendy glass offices of radio station 7.4 WSTPD, VICKI PRINGLE holds aloft his partially inflated six-foot-tall Bellicose Beer bottle costume.)

VICKI

Reggie...you need some help with the suit? We could pump it up here...

REGGIE

No time for that. I just need to get in the van and roll...

VICKI

It's just one day. Well...one week.

REGGIE

"Brews for Books"...

(The phone chirps.)

VICKI

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER!

(hangs up)

REGGIE

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

CHORUS (1 2 3)

FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT

VICKI (overlaps)

That was BookWorld. They're wondering when you'll get there...

REGGIE (overlaps)

Bookworld...

REGGIE AND CHORUS

YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH
 TURN IT UP!
 TURN IT UP!
 TURN IT UP!
 TURN IT UP!

REGGIE

There was a time - I swear there was a time, when this radio station was more than just some cookie cutter franchise. No, we had our very own style - plugged into the Tri-State like no one before or since. People listened to 7.4 WSTPD and 7.4 WSTPD listened to people. All around the Tri-State they tuned in. In their cars, at work, after school, late at night - it was magic!

REGGIE & CHORUS

I CAN FEEL IT IN MY KNEES
 TELEPHONES ARE RINGING
 RINGING
 THEY BE RINGING
 PEOPLE IN THEIR CARS
 PEOPLE IN THEIR CARS
 THEY BE SINGING
 THEY BE SINGING

ALL AROUND THE TRI-STATE
 GROOVIN' TO THE SAME BEAT
 TURN IT UP!

REGGIE

PARTY IN THE BACK SEAT

CHORUS

PARTY IN THE BACK SEAT

REGGIE

YEAH!

CHORUS

YEAH!

REGGIE

YEAH!

VICKI

YEAH!

REGGIE & VICKI & CHORUS

YEAH YEAH YEAH!!!
 TURN IT UP!
 LAY IT DOWN
 MAKE A MOVE TO THE MIDDLE
 SHAKE IT OUT
 LOCK IT IN
 TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR
 I BELIEVE THAT YOU AND ME
 WERE BORN TO RIDE THIS WAVE TOGETHER

VICKI

Momma says I was conceived in a back seat all because of the radio...

CHORUS (whispered overlap)

FEEL IT
 TOUCH IT
 FEEL IT
 TOUCH IT

REGGIE

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A DJ

VICKI AND CHORUS

HE COULD FEEL IT

REGGIE

EVERY NIGHT AT NINE
 HE SPUN THE RECORDS
 HE COULD FEEL IT

REGGIE AND VICKI

REALLY FEEL IT

REGGIE & VICKI & CHORUS

ALL AROUND THE TRI-STATE
 YOUR TOWN MY TOWN
 TURN IT UP!

REGGIE

GOTTA THROW THE GROOVE DOWN

VICKI & CHORUS

GOTTA THROW THE GROOVE DOWN

REGGIE & VICKI
ROCKIN' IN THE TRI-TOWN

CHORUS
YEAH YEAH YEAH

REGGIE & VICKI & CHORUS
TURN IT UP!
LAY IT DOWN
SHAKE IT OUT
FLIP IT OVER
TRY IT ON
TUCK IT IN
TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR
ROCK THAT SMILE ON TO YOUR OTHER SIDE
EVERYBODY'S GONNA TAKE A RIDE
GONNA TAKE A RIDE – UNTIL WE...

REGGIE
Ahhh...there was a time I swear there was a
time...when this radio station...was more...
...than just some...bullshit...cookie cutter...
corporate franchise.

CHORUS (whispered)
...FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT
FEEL IT
TOUCH IT

(REGGIE exits. JOCKS broadcast.)

1/2/1/2

CURT (1)
A salty desert...

JACKIE (3)
Parched all the way to the far horizon...

CURT and JACKIE (1 3)
A shimmering mirage.

HOOTER (2)

I see it! It's beautiful! It's wet! It's COLD! It's a beautiful cold wet bottle of Bellicose Beer!

CURT (1)

Go Hooter! Go get it! GO GET IT, HOOTER!!! GO GO GO GO GO !

HOOTER (2)

I want it! I can see it! I can taste it! Yes yes yes yes yes...

JACKIE (3)

Ha Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw Hee Haw Hee Haw...!!!

HOOTER (2)

Gulk, gulk, gulk, gulk, gulk...

CURT (1)

A message from Bellicose Breweries. Drink Responsibly.

JACKIE (3)

...Ha Ha Hee Haw!

(In MILDRED MALONEY'S living room.)

1/2/2

MILDRED

So, Abigail, what have *you* written lately?

ABIGAIL

Oh...not...not much.

MILDRED

Come on now – out with it. Surely you've written something.

I KNOW YOU

YOU KEEP IT ALL BOTTLED UP INSIDE UNTIL YOU BURST

and then, Abigail,

It's really quite good

ABIGAIL

Mildred...!!!

MILDRED

Abigail...?

ABIGAIL

PEOPLE LOVE YOUR POEMS
 THEY BEG YOU TO READ THEM ALOUD
 PEOPLE CRY, FOR GOD'S SAKE
 WITH ME THEY JUST LOOK INDULGENT FOR A WHILE
 UNTIL THEIR EYES START TO GLAZE

MILDRED

OH ABIGAIL – ABIGAIL....
 YOUR DAY

CHORUS

YOUR DAY

MILDRED

YOUR DAY WILL COME
 THERE IS A REASON
 AND I BELIEVE IN YOU
 JUST LIKE I KNOW THAT YOU BELIEVE IN ME

MILDRED & CHORUS

YOUR DAY WILL COME

MILDRED

YOU WILL BE HEARD
 AND WHEN YOUR DAY ARRIVES
 YOUR HEART WILL FIND THE WORDS

MILDRED & ABIGAIL

AND IF ONE OF US SHOULD FALTER
 THE OTHER ONE WILL BE THERE
 WITH A HAND EXTENDED

MILDRED

TAKE MY HAND
 I KNOW THERE WILL BE A CHEER FOR YOU

MILDRED & CHORUS

WHEN YOUR DAY COMES

MILDRED

I KNOW EVERY CLOUD WILL CLEAR FOR YOU

MILDRED (cont'd)

YOU HAVE A POET'S HEART
 AND WHEN THE BAD GUYS PUSH INTO YOUR CORNER
 THEN WE'LL ALL SEE
 WE'LL ALL HEAR YOUR SPECIAL VOICE
 THERE IS A REASON FOR YOUR VOICE
 OH ABIGAIL – ABIGAIL...
 YOU'RE JUST UPSET

ABIGAIL

Mildred, I'm jealous...

1/2/3

(From his office high upon Corporate Olympus, BYRON BEL CANTO looms over the world. On his luxurious desk, mounted on a low pedestal, is a curious Golden Cap. BEL CANTO addresses the AUDIENCE and ENSEMBLE.)

BEL CANTO

Thank you, friends, for joining me today at Bellicose Brewery's World Headquarters. I, of course, am Byron Bel Canto, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and Principal Shareholder of BELLICORP!

ENSEMBLE

BELLICORP!!!

BEL CANTO

Manufacturer and Distributor of Bellicose Beer, and licensee of 274 radio stations.
 TODAY, A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

ENSEMBLE

TODAY, A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

BEL CANTO

FIRST, TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ME, UP HERE
 NOW, LOOK AROUND AT YOURSELVES, DOWN THERE
 THIS IS THE NATURAL ORDER
 ME UP HERE
 AND YOU DOWN THERE

(BEL CANTO jiggles his hands. The ENSEMBLE jiggles sympathetically.)

BEL CANTO (cont'd)

BECAUSE I'M UP HERE
I MAINTAIN A GREAT DEAL OF INFLUENCE
OVER YOU
DOWN THERE

ENSEMBLE

YOU HAVE INFLUENCE DOWN HERE

BEL CANTO

OF COURSE, YOU'RE ACCUSTOMED TO THIS

ENSEMBLE

YES, WE'RE ACCUSTOMED TO THIS

BEL CANTO

IF YOU CHECK YOUR EXTREMITIES
YOU'LL FIND THAT YOU HAVE LITTLE STRINGS ATTACHED

ENSEMBLE

NO STRINGS
NO STRINGS
WE HAVE NO STRINGS

BEL CANTO

BECAUSE I'M UP HERE
LOOK AT ME
THEN LOOK AT YOUR REFLECTION IN MY BOOTS

ENSEMBLE

MY REFLECTION
YOUR REFLECTION
OUR REFLECTION IN YOUR BOOTS

BEL CANTO

NOW, I DON'T NEED TO WORK
THE WAY THAT YOU NEED TO WORK...
...But one thing I actually *do* is keep track of all my important numbers.

(BEL CANTO looks at a sheaf of papers.)

Today, Bellicose Brewery's New York sales numbers look quite good. Dallas, extraordinary. Chicago...still needs some work. The Tri-State region? Just abysmal...again. I do think I'll have to drop on down to earth to check in on my retainers at...7.4 WSTPD.

(in an indeterminate space)

1/2/3/2

MILDRED & ENSEMBLE

7.4

7.4

7.4

MILDRED

FEEL IT? TOUCH IT?

SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NUMBER

ALWAYS REACHING FURTHER

LOOKING FOR A LIMIT

THAT CAN NEVER BE TOUCHED

Seven point three...eight...nine...zero...five...six...zero...nine...eight...nine...three...one...

(in an indeterminate space)

ABIGAIL

HOPING TO ADVISE

HELPING TO ADVISE...

HOPING TO HELP THE PUBLIC...

(At the trendy glass offices of 7.4 – WSTPD.)

1/2/4

VICKI

I'M OK

JUST OK

I'M FEELING PRETTY GOOD NOW

I SHOULD KNOCK ON WOOD NOW

WHY DON'T I BELIEVE IT?

(chirp chirp - VICKI answers the phone with a smiley sunshine voice.)

7.4 - Beautiful People Drink Bellicose Beer - No, Mr. SPHINCTER is not in, but I can take a message. Yes...all right...No...I'll tell him. Yes, I'll...I'll tell him. Goodbye.

I'VE GOT A PAIR OF ACES

BUT SOMEHOW IT'S NOT ACES THAT MAKE ME FEEL OK

WHERE IS THE KNAVE OF HEARTS WHEN YOU NEED HIM?

1/2/5

(BEL CANTO enters and glances at his portrait on the wall.)

VICKI

Mr. Bel Canto, what are you doing here?

BEL CANTO

I just happened to be out jetting around the hinterlands. But I do like to check in on all of my radio stations. Where's your...Mr. Sphincter today?

VICKI

(beat) Mr. Sphincter is out of the office this morning. He took his bottle suit to a bookstore.

BEL CANTO

Ah, yes – Brews for Books...

VICKI

But he should be back anytime now...

BEL CANTO

I'll just take a quick look around...

(chirp chirp)

VICKI

7.4, WSTPD – (beat) I'll tell him. Tomorrow's bookstore...

(REGGIE SPHINCTER enters, but does not see BEL CANTO)

VICKI

Reggie, we....

REGGIE

DON'T SAY A WORD...Brews for Books!!? I show up. I finish pumping up the suit. The lady from the children's department says she'd prefer I keep the alcohol out of sight...

VICKI (overlaps)

Reggie...Mr. Sphincter – we have a...

REGGIE

Back in the day, when this station was number one, I would never ever ever...

BEL CANTO

Mr. Sphincter?

REGGIE

Mr. Bel Canto? Vicki? Why didn't...?

BEL CANTO

Number one? Do you know what number you are today, Mr. Sphincter? Bellicorp controls 263 radio stations, and your Tri-State region is number 262 in Bellicose Beer market share.

HOW MANY BELLICOSE BEER ADS DO YOU RUN THESE DAYS?

1/2/6

REGGIE

Well, the law says we can only run ten minutes every half...

BEL CANTO and WSTPD JOCKS (1 2 3)

THE LAW?

REGGIE

Of course nobody counts...

BEL CANTO

I COUNT!

WHY PLAY ANYTHING BUT ADS?

IN THE BLACK SPACE BETWEEN THE COMMERCIALS

REGGIE & WSTPD JOCKS

IN THE BLACK SPACE BETWEEN THE COMMERCIALS

BEL CANTO

IS A PROBLEM THAT WON'T GO AWAY

FOR THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH

TRUSTY FILLER AND FLUFF

TO FULFIL MY MAGNIFICANT VISION

BEL CANTO & WSTPD JOCKS

ALCOHOL FOR ONE AND ALL
ALCOHOL FOR ONE AND ALL

REGGIE

But Mr. Bel Canto, I know this Tri-State Area - just let me program the music again...

BEL CANTO (overlaps)

No! No! No! I have associates who'll take care of all that - radio scientifically calibrated to deliver an audience...

PLIABLE
FLEXIBLE
YIELDING...MALLEABLE...INTO MY HANDS

IN THE BLACK SPACE BETWEEN THE COMMERCIALS
IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY
SUCH A RUINOUS CRIME
TO TAKE VALUABLE TIME
AND ASSIGN IT TO ROGUES UNACCOUNTABLE
WHO STEP OUT OF LINE
I WANT

BEL CANTO AND ENSEMBLE

ALCOHOL FOR ONE AND ALL
ALCOHOL FOR ONE AND ALL
ALCOHOL FOR ONE AND ALL

BEL CANTO

WE'RE HERE TO SELL BEER

ENSEMBLE

WE'RE HERE TO SELL BEER

BEL CANTO

IN EVERY TOWN

BEL CANTO AND ENSEMBLE

ON EVERY STREET

BELCANTO

IN EVERY HOUSE

BEL CANTO AND ENSEMBLE

IN EVERY ROOM

IN EVERY HAND
 BEL CANTO

IN EVERY GLASS
 BEL CANTO AND ENSEMBLE

IN EVERY HEART
 IN EVERY MIND
 BEL CANTO

TO THE END OF ETERNITY!!!

TO THE END OF ETERNITY!!!
 ENSEMBLE

PEOPLE WILL WASH WITH IT
 PEOPLE WILL BRUSH WITH IT
 BEL CANTO

PEOPLE WILL WASH WITH IT
 PEOPLE WILL BRUSH WITH IT
 ENSEMBLE

PEOPLE WILL FLOSS WITH IT
 PEOPLE WILL FLUSH WITH IT
 BEL CANTO

PEOPLE WILL FLOSS WITH IT
 PEOPLE WILL FLUSH WITH IT
 ENSEMBLE

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER!
 BEL CANTO AND ENSEMBLE

(Outside MILDRED's house, JOHNNY MALONEY holds a microphone stand in one hand and an audio mixing board in the other.)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW?
 ENSEMBLE **1/2/7**

JOHNNY

We're gonna do it.

ABIGAIL

You cannot be serious.

JOHNNY

Abigail, my Aunt Mildred is special.

ABIGAIL

I know that.

JOHNNY

And her poems...

ABIGAIL

...are magnificent. Yes. Magical.

But...WHAT YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW

JOHNNY

WHAT I REALLY NEED TO KNOW...

ABIGAIL & ENSEMBLE

WHAT YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW IS IT'S ILLEGAL

JOHNNY

Illegal. Really?

ABIGAIL

Really.

JOHNNY

SO TELL ME, PLEASE

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

YOU HAVE A PLAN?

IT'S ALL ON YOU, NOW - I'M WAITING...

CHORUS (1)

CHORUS (2)

CHORUS ()

HERE ARE ALL THE VOICES
IN THE WORLD

I HAVE SOMETHING I
WOULD LIKE TO SAY

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN WE ALL SPEAK AT
THE SAME TIME

FCC (1 2 3)
WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS

ENSEMBLE
F!!!

FCC (1 2 3)
WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS

ENSEMBLE
C!!!

FCC (1 2 3)
WE ARE THE FEDS WHO WILL CLEAN UP THE MESS

ENSEMBLE
FCC!!!

FCC (1 2 3)
WE ARE THE FEDS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS
WE WILL LAY DOWN THE LAW

ENSEMBLE
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW?

ABIGAIL
Johnny, you go ask them.

JOHNNY
Ask who?

ABIGAIL
The radio station people. I don't think they took Mildred very seriously...

JOHNNY
And they'd take me seriously...?

ABIGAIL
Well...

JOHNNY

WHAT I REALLY HAVE TO SAY

ABIGAIL

WHAT YOU REALLY HAVE TO SAY

ENSEMBLE

WHAT YOU REALLY HAVE TO SAY

JOHNNY

WHAT I REALLY HAVE TO SAY
IS THEY'LL IGNORE ME

ABIGAIL

Really?

SO RAISE YOUR VOICE
TRUTH OR DARE
COME ON, JOHNNY
GROW A PAIR
NOW I'M WAITING...

CHORUS (1)

HERE ARE ALL THE VOICES
IN THE WORLD

CHORUS (2)

I HAVE SOMETHING I
WOULD LIKE TO SAY

CHORUS (3)

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN WE ALL SPEAK AT
THE SAME TIME

WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS

FCC (1 2 3)

F!!!

ENSEMBLE

WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS

FCC (1 2 3)

ENSEMBLE

C!!!

FCC (1 2 3)

WE ARE THE FEDS WHO WILL CLEAN UP THE MESS

ENSEMBLE

FCC!!!

FCC (1 2 3)

WE ARE THE FEDS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS

WE WILL LAY DOWN THE LAW

ENSEMBLE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW?

ABIGAIL

You absolutely need to ask them first.

JOHNNY

First. OK. First I'll politely introduce myself.

(at WSTPD)

REGGIE

He's gonna fire me.
That's what he wants.
I bet he's gonna fire me.

(on Corporate Olympus)

1/2/8

BEL CANTO

Eighty eight percent!...Forty four
percent...Twenty two percent?

(at BETTY's house.)

MELISMA (3)

I'm sorry Betty. Mildred told me she really wanted to come see you, but she just can't do it this week. Maybe next Monday...?

BETTY (2)

I miss Mildred's poems. I really really miss Mildred's poems.

(VICKI is in an indeterminate space On the Radio)

1/2/9

VICKI

I'VE GOT IT
LOOK AT ME
I'VE GOT IT

I LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND A GIRL LOOKS BACK AT ME
I THINK I KNOW HER BUT I KNOW THERE'S SOMETHING MORE TO SEE
I'VE GOT A STORY AND MY STORY WON'T LET GO
I SEE MY STORY IN THE MIRROR MIRROR
NOW I KNOW

THEY TRY TO TELL ME MY REFLECTION IS THE SUM OF ALL MY PARTS
I LEAVE A TRAIL OF BROKEN HEARTS
AND HERE IS WHERE THE FUTURE STARTS

(JOHNNY MALONEY is in an indeterminate space.)

1/2/10

JOHNNY

TAKE A LITTLE TEST
ONE THEY GAVE TO ME
CIRCLE ANSWER "A"
OR MAYBE ANSWER "B"

CHORUS

YEAH YEAH YEAH

JOHNNY

NOW YOU'RE QUALIFIED

CHORUS

YEAH YEAH YEAH

JOHNNY

TO BE MODIFIED
THERE IS NO PROPER ANSWER
THE MAN UPSTAIRS IS SLEEPING IN YOUR BED
NO FUN FOR YOU
YOU WORK FOR HIM INSTEAD

CHORUS
YEAH YEAH YEAH

JOHNNY
IT'S REMARKABLE

CHORUS
YEAH YEAH YEAH

JOHNNY
JUMP THE SPARKABLE
THERE IS NO PROPER ANSWER

(JOHNNY enters WSTPD and encounters VICKI at her desk.)

1/2/11

VICKI
Can I help you with something?

(in an indeterminate space)

MILDRED
TOMORROW'S GOOD CHEER
BANGS ITS HEAD AGAINST TODAY'S VERY LOW DOORWAY
CURSES THE ARCHITECT
BUT IN THE END STOOPS DOWN JUST LOW ENOUGH TO ENTER THE ROOM

(at WSTPD)

VICKI
Can I help you with something?

JOHNNY
Um – Wow – Um...I'm not sure where to start here...
My name is Johnny Maloney
I have an Aunt – my Aunt Mildred – Mildred Maloney
She writes poems - really good poems...
Her friends and neighbors just go nuts for them
And now she's finally at a point where
She feels she really needs to share them...better
I mean, people are bugging her all the time to recite her poems...
The funny thing is – she has a favorite number - 7.4

VICKI AND CHORUS (1 2 3)

7.4?

JOHNNY

Yeah, 7.4

Anyhow, she...

I mean we, because I feel this way too

We believe it would only be fair for you to share 7.4 on the radio with her.

You see - 7.4 is really special to Mildred...

VICKI

Sir, did your Aunt Mildred come to visit us just a couple of weeks ago?

JOHNNY

I believe she did.

VICKI

Our Program Director Mr. Sphincter talked to her that day. Your Aunt Mildred can send us a recording of her poems. If Mr. Sphincter likes what he hears, he'll get back to her.

JOHNNY

Do you believe that? I mean, do you honestly believe there's any chance...?

(REGGIE enters)

REGGIE

Good Morning – I'm Reggie Sphincter – How can I help you?

JOHNNY

Well, you could let my Aunt Mildred broadcast her poems here at WSTPD.

REGGIE

Ahh... the sweet little lady with the poems and a thing for 7.4...well, it is a fine number. Seven Point Four...Vicki told you our policy?

JOHNNY

She did. (beat) No chance, huh?

REGGIE

We have an audience, and they're not used to poems...

JOHNNY

Yeah.

REGGIE
So if that's all...?

(REGGIE exits)

JOHNNY
You buy that?

VICKI
Sir, I have a job here.

JOHNNY
Oh. I almost forgot... (JOHNNY reaches into a pocket and then places a cassette tape onto VICKI's desk.) I recorded my Auntie Mildred reciting a few poems...but you know, she's better in person...

(JOHNNY exits.)

VICKI (under her breath)
Wanker. (beat) (calls offstage) Reggie - look. That guy left a cassette.

REGGIE (offstage) **1/2/12**
A cassette...

VICKI
Yeah - the note just says 'Thanks for Listening.' I'll put it in your box...

REGGIE (enters)
...So I can listen to some old lady's poems and get myself all inspired? Right Right. I'll pass.

VICKI
But Reggie, you told the ladies you'd listen.

REGGIE
Vicki...

VICKI
What if they're good?

REGGIE
Right. Amateur hour. You listen.

VICKI

What?

REGGIE

I mean it. You listen...Vicki...?

YOU BE MY EARS

'CUZ I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE

YOU TAKE A HIT FOR THE HOME TEAM

CUE IT UP

PRESS THE BUTTON AND THEN

WHEN YOU'RE DONE, IF YOU LIKE

YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT I ALREADY KNOW

REGGIE & CHORUS (1 2 3)

I KNOW I KNOW

REGGIE

I KNOW THE PEOPLE OUT THERE ON THE STREET

REGGIE & CHORUS

I KNOW I KNOW

REGGIE

THEY'RE NEVER READY FOR PRIME TIME

DON'T EVEN TRY TO TELL THIS PRO

SHE'S EVEN CLOSE TO PRESENTABLE

SO TAKE IT FROM ME

THEN AGAIN

TAKE IT FROM YOURSELF

IF YOU CARE

REGGIE. (cont'd)

IF YOU DARE

LIGHT IT UP

PASS THE POPCORN

AND THEN WHEN YOU'RE DONE

YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT I ALREADY KNOW

VICKI

But what if I like them?

1/2/13

(REGGIE exits. VICKI puts the cassette into a tape player and presses the PLAY button.)

MILDRED (in VICKI's headphones)

COULD IT BE THAT YOU AND I
HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN EACH OTHER
AND THAT'S WHAT WE NOTICED WHEN WE MET?

(VICKI removes phones and hears JOCKS at WSTPD)

CURT (1) (on the radio)

Anyone for Beer Pong?

HOOTER (2)

Beer Pong??? Me!!! Me!!! Me!!!

CURT (1) and JACKIE (3)

Toss the ball in the cup!

HOOTER

Bottoms up!

JACKIE

Bottoms up!

(VICKI puts phones back on.)

MILDRED (in VICKI's headphones)

I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF BRIGHT LIGHTS
AND FORGIVENESS

(VICKI takes phones off.)

HOOTER

TOSS A FEW

JACKIE

TOSS A FEW MORE

CURT & HOOTER

KEEP YOUR SHOULDERS
OFF THE FLOOR

JACKIE (overlaps)

Ha ha ha Hee haw!

(VICKI puts phones on again.)

MILDRED (still in VICKI's headphones)

I ADMIT

I DO PERMIT MYSELF TO HOPE

AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT

AFTER ALL, WITHOUT HOPE

WHAT'S THE POINT OF EVEN OPENING OUR EYES IN THE MORNING?

(VICKI takes phones off.)

VICKI

AFTER ALL WITHOUT HOPE

WHAT'S THE POINT OF EVEN OPENING

OUR EYES IN THE MORNING?

Wow. (sniffs) My sinuses are clear...

(on Corporate Olympus)

1/2/14

BEL CANTO

IS IT PREORDAINED THAT I SHOULD OCCUPY THIS LOFTY PERCH?

I THINK SO

(In MILDRED MALONEY'S living room, JOHNNY is finishing installing a sign spelling out "7.4 - WMILD".)

1/2/15

JOHNNY

Aunt Mildred – you ready to light it up?

MILDRED

I am.

JOHNNY

I WANT YOU BOTH TO SEE HOW SIMPLE THIS IS
THIS IS THE MICROPHONE
THE MICROPHONE'S CONNECTED TO THE MICROPHONE CORD.

You try it.

MILDRED

THE MICROPHONE'S CONNECTED TO THE MICROPHONE CORD. (offers cord and microphone to Abigail) Abigail?

ABIGAIL (shakes her head "No")

(at WSTPD)

REGGIE

Why do I put up with it?

VICKI

Maybe a paycheck...?

REGGIE

MAYBE I STILL REMEMBER WHAT WE USED TO BE LIKE ON THE RADIO...

CHORUS (1 2 3)

ON THE RADIO

REGGIE

...WE WERE SOMETHING SPECIAL ON THE RADIO

BACK IN THE DAY
THE HITS WERE SO HOT HERE
IT WAS PERPETUAL MOTION
ANY RECORD WITH LEGS
HAD A GENUINE SHOT HERE

REGGIE & CHORUS

THERE WAS NO "CORPORATE" STIRRING THE POT HERE

REGGIE

I'D LISTEN TO EVERYTHING
EARS WIDE OPEN
REGGIE – THE SPHYNX

CHORUS

THE SPHYNX
THE SPHYNX

REGGIE

TRI-STATE ROCK 'N' ROLL KING
EARS TO THE GROUND
EYES ON THE GROOVE
I'D SEE THAT THE BEST WOULD RISE TO THE TOP

REGGIE & CHORUS

AT 7.4
7.4
7.4
ON THE RADIO
ON THE RADIO

REGGIE

I'VE GOT SOMETHING NEW TO SHARE WITH YOU
ON THE RADIO

CHORUS (quietly behind MILDRED and JOHNNY)

RISE UP TO THE TOP
RISE UP TO THE TOP

(JOHNNY and MILDRED and ABIGAIL are in MILDRED's living room. REGGIE AND VICKI are at WSTPD. BEL CANTO is on Corporate Olympus.)

MILDRED

Do all the parts need to be connected just so for it to work?

JOHNNY

They do indeed. Now. The microphone cord is connected to the mixing board.
Right here...

(JOHNNY clicks the cord into the mixing board)

MILDRED

...And then the mixing board is connected to the...?

JOHNNY

...transmitter. I've set all the dials just right. Now...the transmitter is connected to the antenna...

(at WSTPD)

VICKI

Reggie...you know that lady with the poems? I listened...I did...
They were really good...yeah,
You don't believe me, but they were...
and it got me thinking I should tell you...well,
I HAVE A RADIO VOICE

REGGIE

MAYBE SOME DAY IF THE CARDS ALL FALL RIGHT
YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE ON THE AIR HERE

VICKI

7.4 - ON A SATURDAY NIGHT

REGGIE & CHORUS

I'LL BET OUR VICKI COULD LIGHT UP THE LIGHTS HERE

VICKI

I LISTEN TO EVERYTHING
EARS WIDE OPEN

CHORUS

VICKI BE COOL

VICKI

TRI-STATE BE COOL

REGGIE & CHORUS

VICKI OUT OF CONTROL

REGGIE

EARS TO THE GROUND
EYES TO THE SKY

VICKI

I'D WAKE UP THE TRI-STATE
SO WIDE AWAKE

VICKI & CHORUS
 AT 7.4
 7.4
 7.4
 ON THE RADIO
 ON THE RADIO

VICKI
 I'LL BE SOMETHING SPECIAL
 SOMETHNG SPECIAL ON THE RADIO

REGGIE
 BACK IN THE DAY
 WE WERE SO HOPEFUL
 MUSIC SWEET MUSIC
 ROCK N ROLL MUSIC
 ONWARD

CHORUS
 OUTWARD

REGGIE
 THIS YEAR

VICKI
 NEXT YEAR

REGGIE
 NUMBER TEN

ENSEMBLE
 NUMBER NINE

REGGIE
 NUMBER EIGHT

ENSEMBLE
 NUMBER SEVEN

REGGIE
 NUMBER SEVEN POINT FOUR

ENSEMBLE
 NUMBER SEVEN POINT FOUR

REGGIE & ENSEMBLE

NUMBER SEVEN POINT FOUR
ON THE RADIO
ON THE RADIO
WE WERE ALL TOGETHER ON THE RADIO

REGGIE

WHO COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE?

VICKI (overlaps)

I CAN!

REGGIE & CHORUS

WHO COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE?

MILDRED

I CAN!

REGGIE & CHORUS

WHO COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE?

JOHNNY & CHORUS

ANYONE CAN DO IT
IF THEY REALLY MEAN TO DO IT

REGGIE

THE FUTURE WAS WIDE OPEN
FOR A MAN WITH EARS

VICKI

FOR A GIRL WITH EARS

CHORUS

FOR A TOWN WITH EARS

JOHNNY

FOR A WORLD WITH EARS

(BEL CANTO silently raises a toast with a Belicose Beer bottle.)

REGGIE

WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED

(In MILDRED MALONEY's living room)

1/3/1

MILDRED
It's ready?

JOHNNY
Ready.

MILDRED
Well, OK...

JOHNNY
Here goes – I'm gonna fire it up.

(Johnny presses the buttons and gives a thumbs up signal. A little red light begins to blink on the transmitter.)

ABIGAIL
Mildred, please don't.

MILDRED
Abigail, we've been through this. I have to. Johnny?

JOHNNY
It's on - you're on the air...

MILDRED
Oh...well, hello, everybody out there in radio land! This is Mildred Maloney broadcasting from 7.4 WMILD. Seven point three...eight...nine...zero...five...six...zero...

ABIGAIL (hisses)
Mildred!

MILDRED
Yes...yes...you see, all of my poems come from 7.4...anyhow...

BUBBLES

BUBBLES

RISING THROUGH THE AMBER

LIKE RAINDROPS

RAINDROPS

FALLING FROM THE SKY

JOCKS (at WSTPD) (overlapped)

HOOTER (2)

Beer beer beer

Bellicose beer beer beer...

Beautiful people

Drink Bellicose Beer...

MILDRED

I AM A RAINDROP
RISING
FALLING

JACKIE (3)
Ha Ha Hee Haw Hee Haw

FREE AS A BIRD
DANCING IN THE SUN
IN THE SUN
SWIMMING IN THE WIND
IN THE WIND
I WATCH MY HEART FLY
SCULPTER OF THE HEAVENS

CURT (1)
Hooter! Hooter! HOOTER!!!

HOOTER (2)
Beer Beer Beer Beer Beautiful People Drink
Bellicose Beer! Beer Beer Beer...

JOHNNY (overlaps MILDRED and JOCKS)

That first day Mildred went through a whole bunch of 'em, one right after another. Of course, we couldn't tell at first whether anyone was actually listening, but I did step outside to tune in on my car radio. She was coming through loud and clear.

MILDRED

YESTERDAY TUGGED AT MY SLEEVE
DROP EVERYTHING
PAY ATTENTION
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

JOHNNY

She kept it up for a solid hour at least.

MILDRED

TAKE THE NEXT STEP
NOW
NOW
NOW

JOHNNY

And then she was done.

MILDRED

That's all for today. If you want to hear more of my poems, well,
I'll be right here on the radio
TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS AT SEVEN POINT FOUR
You won't need to catch me at home any more!

(At WSTPD – the phone rings.)

VICKI

7.4 WSTPD...

A WOMAN (3)

I just wanted to tell you that the poems you broadcast this afternoon were really wonderful...

VICKI

Poems...?

WOMAN

Poems.

VICKI

Are you sure you have the right radio station?

WOMAN

7.4?

VICKI

Well yes, thank you...but poems?

WOMAN

The Poem Lady on your station. You know, the raindrops and the bubbles and all the rest of it.
She's really good!

VICKI

She's really good... I'll be sure to tell our Program Director.

WOMAN

But can you tell me when she'll be on again? I don't want to miss her. I've noticed my *neck* is feeling better.

VICKI

I...I don't know. I don't know when the poem lady will be back. But thank you.

WOMAN
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER!

(hangs up)

VICKI
Reggie...? That was odd. I just got a call from a lady who said she'd heard poems on her radio – tuned to 7.4...She *really* liked the poems...

(at BETTY BELFREY's house)

CECIL (1)
Betty, I just heard Mildred Maloney on the radio – at 7.4!

BETTY (2)
Really?

CECIL
She said she'd be back on Tuesdays and Thursdays at four o'clock – on 7.4, WMILD.

BETTY
That is such good news...!!!

(at WSTPD)

CHORUS (1)
PULL OUT YOUR WALLETS

CHORUS (23)
PULL OUT YOUR WALLETS

CHORUS (123)
PULL OUT YOUR WALLETS AND DRINK!

MILDRED (at 7.4 WMILD)

MELISMA (3) (on the telephone)

EVERGREEN
 EVER GROW
 NEVER STOP
 NO
 NEVER DIE
 ALWAYS REACHING UPWARD
 OUTWARD
 FORWARD TO TOMORROW
 EVERGREEN
 EVERGREEN
 EVERGROW
 NEVER STOP
 EVER SO GREEN

1/3/2

George?...George...remember how I told you
 about my friend Mildred Maloney's poems?
 Well, you really have to listen - she's on the
 radio right now. Right now - at 7.4 - that's
 Mildred's favorite number - remember, I told
 you. She's on right now...

(chirp chirp)

VICKI

7.4 WSTPD - Poems again...? Right now? Thank you. I'll listen.

(Vicki turns on radio monitor in office.)

MILDRED

TOUCH THE CEILING
 WITH YOUR IMAGINATION
 HOLD IT IN YOUR HEART
 IS IT SMOOTH?
 IS IT BUMPY?
 IS IT HOLDING YOU DOWN?
 REACH THROUGH THE CEILING
 OVER
 OVER AND OUT

VICKI

Wow...Reggie...listen to this. I'm tuned to
 7.4. It's poems again...

REGGIE

What's going on here? That crazy lady is
 interfering with our signal. What's the
 number for the FCC?

ENSEMBLE

OH MRS. MALONEY
 DO TELL IT AGAIN
 YES MRS. MALONEY
 YOU SHOULD BE HEARD
 TELL THE WHOLE WORLD
 TELL IT AGAIN!

(at WMILD)

MILDRED

WHISPER IN MY EAR
TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO HEAR
FRIENDLY GHOSTS HAVE THE BEST NIGHT VISION

1/3/2/2

(REGGIE dials and a phone rings at the Regional FCC office. Chirp chirp!)

KITTY (3)

Cranston - get the phone!

JOHN CRANSTON (1)

Johnston - get the phone!

KITTY (3)

CRANSTON!!!

CRANSTON (1)

All right all right...! Federal Communications Commission. Tri-State office. John Cranston here.

REGGIE

This is Reggie SPHINCTER at 7.4 WSTPD. We've got a problem. Somebody out there is broadcasting on our frequency and they're all over our signal.

CRANSTON (1)

Yes, sir, Mr. SPHINCTER. When did the problem start?

REGGIE

It's happening right now!

CRANSTON (1)

At 7.4...? Johnston – tune the radio to 7.4...

(FCC agent FRANK JOHNSTON tunes radio to 7.4.)

MILDRED (on WMILD)

OVER THE MOON
SOON TO BE GONE
WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE FLAME SHE WAS ON?

JOHNSTON (2)

She's pretty darn good...

REGGIE

Can I please get you guys to *do* something about this?

CRANSTON & JOHNSTON

We'll see if we can track her down...

MILDRED

This is Mildred Maloney, signing off from 7.4 WMILD. Tune in again next Tuesday at four.

REGGIE

7.4 WMILD...

CRANSTON (1)

Mildred Maloney?

REGGIE

I need you to stop her now.

(REGGIE hangs up)

VICKI

Wow. (sniffs) My sinuses are clear again...and you know what? I recognize that voice. That's the lady who wanted to get her poems on the radio...

REGGIE

Mildred Maloney...

VICKI

You know, maybe we should just invite her in to broadcast every now and then. It could be fun...

REGGIE

An amateur poet at WSTPD...?

(in front of Mildred's house)

1/3/2/3

ABIGAIL

It's not fair, Johnny. I'm really afraid for her.

JOHNNY

Oh Abby, you're a worry wart.

(JOHNNY exits)

(on Corporate Olympus)

BEL CANTO

TWO TIMES TWO TIMES TWO IS
EIGHT IN THE MORNING
YOU'RE ON THE FREEWAY
DRIVING TO WORK FOR ME!

(in front of Mildred's house)

ABIGAIL (calls after JOHNNY)

You are putting Mildred into a dangerous position.
And she's planning to do it again next week...Damn...

(at WSTPD)

CURT

Vicki babe, *you* want to be on the radio someday – right? I'm thinking maybe we should try a few spots with just you and me sometime...

VICKI

With me? Have you asked Reggie?

CURT

Reggie? Don't pay any attention to the old guy...

VICKI

Curt...

CURT

HEY VICKI

HOOTER and JACKIE

VICKI VICKI BABY

CURT

Whatcha think you're doin' in radio anyhow?

BEL CANTO

(on Corporate Olympus BEL CANTO picks up a sheaf of papers)

1/3/3

I just love new numbers - YES! YES! YES! - pretty much as expected...but what's this?

The Tri-State region?

Up 17 percent?

THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.

THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF FUMBLE

Some kind of upside down and backwards flip of the numbers...

BUT WHAT IF IT'S TRUE?

DOWN FROM OLYMPUS

TO MINGLE WITH THE MERE MORTALS ONCE MORE...

(in MILDRED's neighborhood)

BETTY (2)

Cecil, have you told everyone?

CECIL (1)

Everybody I know. Today at four at 7.4...

(at WSTPD)

REGGIE

Brace yourself Vicki. Today's the day.

(At WMILD, in MILDRED's living room)

MILDRED

VIOLET

INFRARED

OFF ON THE EDGE OF THE SPECTRUM

(at WSTPD)

REGGIE

We've gotta shut her down before Bel Canto gets wind of it.

VICKI

Reggie...look who's here...

(BEL CANTO enters)

REGGIE

Oh God...

(at WSTPD – a phone chirps)

MILDRED (at WMILD)

...7.4 WMILD...I'm so happy to hear that so many of you have been tuning in to my show.

VICKI (at WSTPD)

It's starting. 7.4 WSTPD – Bellicose Beer packs a bodacious buzz...

... Seven point three...eight...nine...zero...five... six...zero...nine...eight...nine...three...one...

KITTY (3) (on the FCC dispatch radio)

Have you got a bead on her?

(CRANSTON and JOHNSTON are in their FCC van.)

CRANSTON (1)

We're pretty close.

JOHNSTON (2)

Warmer...warmer...

(at WSTPD – chirp chirp)

VICKI

Pull out your wallets and drink...!

CALLER'S VOICE (3)

Thank you for the beautiful poems. I'm telling all my friends...

MILDRED
BOUNCE BOUNCE
BOUNCE
FLY FLY
FLY

Seven point three eight nine zero six five
zero three one four one five nine...

(at WSTPD – phone chirps)

VICKI
WSTPD – Alcohol's fun! No. Yes? No!!!

(chirp chirp)

REGGIE
I'll get this one.

VICKI
It's too much! IT'S TOO MUCH!
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER...!!!

(chirp chirp)

BEL CANTO (picks up the phone)
I will take this call.

(suddenly there is complete focus - no overlap)

BEL CANTO (cont'd)
Seven Point Four...Pull out your wallets and drink.

JOHNSTON (2)
Cold – warm, Warmer, HOT...

CRANSTON (1)
That's the one.

JOHNSTON (2)
Let's go in.

CURT (1)
No Hooter! – Don't do it! Don't try to
drink the whole thing...!

HOOTER (2)
Beer! Beer! Beer! Beer!

JACKIE
Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw...

HOOTER
Gulk, gulk, gulk gulk gulk

CECIL (1)

Oh, Thank You Thank You for taking my call, and Thank You for putting Mildred Maloney's poems on the radio.

BETTY (2) (overlaps behind CECIL)

Cecil...tell them I like Mildred too...

BEL CANTO

Poems...? Mildred Maloney...?

CECIL (1)

You know, for years now I've been drinking lots of tomato juice, but now I've decided to switch to Bellicose Beer...

BETTY (2)

Cecil...

CECIL (1)

...in honor of Mildred and 7.4...

MILDRED

...nine zero five six...

(knock knock knock)

MILDRED (cont'd)

...someone's at the door. Well, I was just about done anyway...

THIS IS MILDRED MALONEY AT 7.4

YOU DON'T NEED TO CALL ME AT HOME ANY MORE

(knock knock knock)

1/3/4

MILDRED

Yes, yes – I'm coming. Hello, can I help you?

CRANSTON AND JOHNSTON (1 2)

HELLO MA'AM

CRANSTON (1)

MY NAME IS JOHN CRANSTON

(on MILDRED's front porch)

CRANSTON & JOHNSTON
DO YOU UNDERSTAND BROADCAST LICENSES?

MILDRED
I DON'T THINK I DO
Can you boys come in?
You can have some milk and cookies and tell me all about licenses at the same time.

(at WSTPD)

1/3/5

BEL CANTO
AT FIRST I SAW THE NUMBERS
THE CALCULATIONS
BUT I COULD NOT BELIEVE

AGAIN I SAW THE NUMBERS
ALL BLACK AND WHITE
BUT STILL I COULD NOT BELIEVE

AND THEN I PICKED UP THAT PHONE
AND HEARD ONE OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE
AUTHENTIC
PATHETIC
NAIVE
AND OH SO EXCITED BY POEMS!

ENSEMBLE
THE BEGINNING OF THE FUTURE OF BELLICORP!!!

BEL CANTO
Sphincter, you will contact this Mildred Maloney and offer her the opportunity to broadcast her poems from a real radio station – 7.4 WSTPD – as often as she likes.

REGGIE
But...

BEL CANTO
When she broadcasts from WSTPD, you will surround her poems with Bellicose Beer ads. We will CAPITALIZE...

REGGIE

But Mr. Bel Canto, we're a Classic Rock station! I'll be a laughing stock...

BEL CANTO

When this Mildred Maloney broadcasts her poems from WSTPD, you will surround her poems with Bellicose Beer ads. This mania for poems is the beginning of the future...

BEL CANTO and ENSEMBLE

THE BEGINNING OF THE FUTURE OF BELLICORP!!!

THE BEGINNING OF THE FUTURE OF BELLICORP!!!

THE BEGINNING!!!

THE BEGINNING OF THE FUTURE!!!

BELLICORP!!!

(Lights close to a spot on REGGIE SPHINCTER's face, and then to black.)

END OF ACT I

Entr'acte

(consists of songs omitted from this Reader's Draft)

Little Green Man (Reggie)

Wild Flower (Vicki)

Fly Me Down the Rabbit Hole (Johnny)

ACT II

2/1/1

(Perched high upon Corporate Olympus, BYRON BEL CANTO looks down upon his world. At WSTPD, MILDRED MALONEY stands in front of a microphone. VICKI and ABIGAIL answer telephones.)

MILDRED

7.3 8 9 0 5 6 0 9 8 9 3 0 6 5 4 5 4 3 2 1

CHORUS (1)

CHORUS (2)

CHORUS (3)

BEER BEER BEER

WWW
WSTPD

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE
BELLICOSE BEER

BEL CANTO

MY DOMAIN

SUCH SUPREME PLEASURE TO BE OLYMPIAN GOD OF THE CORPORATE ESSENCE
PUPPETEER OF THE EMPLOYED
EMPOWERED TO TRIFLE WITH THE DESTINIES OF ALL THOSE BENEATH ME

YOU WITH STRINGS

CHORUS

WE WITH STRINGS?

BEL CANTO

YOU WITH STRINGS
RAISE YOUR VOICES

CHORUS

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER

BEL CANTO

AND REMEMBER
MY EYES ARE WIDE OPEN
AND I AM WATCHING YOU

CHORUS

BEER BEER BEER
 BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER

(Throughout the following sequence, BEL CANTO draws a large graph of Bellicose Beer's steadily mounting market share, with the sales mounting to the right of the graph.)

BEL CANTO

Week one!

(All attention is focused on MILDRED, broadcasting from WSTPD)

2/1/1/2

MILDRED

RAIN
 RAIN
 RAINDROPS
 FALL TO ME
 COME TO ME
 JOIN WITH ME
 RISE WITH ME
 LET US WASH THIS VALLEY CLEAN

BEL CANTO (continues to draw graph)

Week two!

(chirp, chirp)

VICKI

Poems and beer in the afternoon...
 Thank you. I'll certainly tell her.

ABIGAIL

Poems and beer in the afternoon...
 Thank you. I'll certainly tell her.

MILDRED
 SWEEP THIS WASTELAND
 EVER FREE
 EVER PURE
 FOREVER MORE

Week three!

BEL CANTO (continues to draw graph)

MILDRED (cont'd)
 RAINDROPS FLY TO ME
 LET US FLOW TOGETHER

ENSEMBLE
 LET US FLOW TOGETHER

MILDRED
 LET US FLOW TOGETHER

ENSEMBLE
 LET US FLOW TOGETHER

MILDRED
 TO THE SEA
 RAINDROPS
 FALL TO ME

BEL CANTO (draws a yet more steeply rising continuation
 of the line)

FOUR WEEKS
 AND STILL MY BELLICOSE BEER SALES CONTINUE TO MOUNT
 HIGHER AND HIGHER AND HIGHER AND HIGHER AND HIGHER AND SHAKING MY WORLD!

HOOTER (2)
 Shake me! Shake me!

CURT THE FLIRT (1)
 Shake you?

HOOTER
 Shake me! I am an ice-cold can of Bellicose Beer!

JACKIE (3)

Ha ha ha Hee Haw Hee Haw!

CURT

I'm gonna shake you!

HOOTER

Now Pop my Top! I'm going to spray all over you. All over the whole world!

CURT

I'm gonna pop your top...

HOOTER

WHOOOOOOOOOSH HHHHHH - KKKKKK!!!!!!

CURT & JACKIE

Bellicose Breweries. Please drink responsibly.

JACKIE

Ha Ha Hee Haw Ha Ha

(at WSTPD)

2/1/1/3

MILDRED (on the radio)

FEEL IT?

ENSEMBLE

FEEL IT

MILDRED

TOUCH IT?

ENSEMBLE

TOUCH IT

MILDRED

SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NUMBER

MILDRED & ENSEMBLE
ALWAYS REACHING FURTHER

MILDRED
STRAINING FOR A LIMIT THAT WILL NEVER BE REACHED

(CRANSTON and JOHNSTON are driving together in their FCC
van, listening to MILDRED on 7.4 WSTPD)

CRANSTON (1)
Johnston, it's so wonderful – I mean really rewarding - to see something work out so well.
There was conflict and now there's resolution.

JOHNSTON (2)
You know, Cranston, it's exactly why I got into public service in the first place...

(At WSTPD)

2/1/2

VICKI
Reggie - why so glum?

REGGIE
Glum?

VICKI
You look disgruntled. Grumpy...Resentful...What's up?

REGGIE
You really want to know?

VICKI
Um-hmm...

REGGIE
It's like this. I'm in radio for twenty-six years. I know everything there is to know about this market. I have all kinds of ideas about how to make things happen, but I don't get to try them. The powers that be have better ideas. OK. I swallow my pride. That was a Golden Age. This is now. Things have changed. Why should radio be any different than any other part of the world? Corporate runs the show. Surprise surprise. I've got a job. Beats selling cars. I can deal with it...

VICKI

And then...?

REGGIE

...and then along comes Ms. Poetry herself. No experience on the radio. Clueless about how things work. Reciting poems, no less, and yet Ms. Poetry gets to broadcast whatever she wants and I'm a grouchy old fool for not buying into it...

VICKI

Reggie - listen to her. You'll like her. Just listen. I bet your stomach will feel better...

REGGIE

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE

VICKI

YOU LIKE WHAT YOU KNOW?

REGGIE

That's not fair..

VICKI

So Reggie, what would the perfect radio station sound like?

REGGIE

That's easy. I'd just make it work for me.

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE

CHORUS

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE

REGGIE

AND WHEN I HEAR IT

CHORUS

AND WHEN I HEAR IT

REGGIE

IT MAKES ME FEEL SO GOOD

I WANNA HEAR IT SOME MORE

VICKI & CHORUS

Hear what some more?

REGGIE

I LIKE THE KICK DRUM
 I LIKE THE SAXOPHONE
 I LIKE THAT LOW DOWN FAT BACK HOT STACK RHYTHM AND BLUES (SOUTHBOUND MOTOWN)
 AND WHEN THE STARS ALL LINE UP
 THEN THE TRUTH IS ON FIRE
 AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE

REGGIE & ENSEMBLE

So Vicki, what do you like?

REGGIE

Besides poems.

VICKI

I LIKE THE BIG BEAT
 I LIKE A MELODY
 I LIKE A SINGER WHO CAN MAKE ME FEEL THE WAY SHE FEELS

VICKI & CHORUS

AND WHEN THE WORDS ALL RING TRUE
 THEN THE TRUTH IS ON FIRE

VICKI

AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE

(at WSTPD)

2/1/3

MILDRED & CHORUS (1,2,3)

I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF BRIGHT LIGHTS...AND FORGIVENESS

ABIGAIL (Steps into an indeterminate space with open
 Thesaurus)

Having to arouse the public...
 Having to awaken the public...
 Having to convince...prod...pry...coax...persuade...
 Having to wheedle the public...?
 Damn...!

(ABIGAIL snaps the Thesaurus shut)

(At WSTPD - Johnny enters with flowers.)

VICKI (speaking into the phone at her desk)
Yes. I'll certainly tell her. You know, I feel exactly the same way...

JOHNNY
Excuse me.

VICKI (hangs up the phone)
Can I help you?

JOHNNY
I hope so. I've got some flowers for my Aunt Mildred...Mildred Maloney.

VICKI
You can just leave them here.

JOHNNY
I'd kinda like to hand them off in person.

VICKI
Can't do it.

JOHNNY
Please...?

VICKI
Sorry, Johnny Maloney. Yes, I know who you are. Mildred talks about you sometimes. You know, she has high hopes for you.

JOHNNY
For me...? Really?

VICKI
(beat)...it's a bit hard to see why. Maybe there's some hidden dimension?

JOHNNY
Oh...many, many dimensions...I'd still like to carry these flowers back to Mildred.

VICKI
Nope...
(chirp, chirp)

Afternoon Cheer with Poems and Beer!

2/1/4

(On Corporate Olympus, BEL CANTO looks at his graph of beer sales.)

BEL CANTO

I BELIEVE WHAT I SEE
 I BELIEVE WHAT I HEAR
 I MUST BELIEVE IT BECAUSE I SEE IT AND HEAR IT
 POEMS!!! POEMS!!! POEMS!!!
 MERE WORDS...AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE ARE TRANSFORMED
 HEARTS AND MINDS AND WALLETS OPEN TO THE WORLD

BEL CANTO AND CHORUS

HEARTS AND MINDS AND WORDS AND DEEDS

BEL CANTO

AND SERVICE WITH A SMILE
 JUSTLY HARNESSSED WITH ALL NECESSARY STRINGS ATTACHED.
 I MUST OWN THIS NEW POWER THAT HAS COME INTO MY WORLD!

(picks up phone)

SUMMON REGINALD SPHINCTER TO OLYMPUS!!!

CHORUS (1 2 3)

SUMMON REGINALD SPHINCTER TO OLYMPUS!!!

(chirp chirp)

VICKI

7.4 WSTPD...(beat)...Reggie to Olympus? I'll tell him as soon as I can.

(REGGIE SPHINCTER walks alone at night.)

2/1/5

REGGIE

I WALK ALONE AT NIGHT IN MY HOMETOWN
 I WALK THE STREETS ALONE IN MY HOMETOWN
 I SEE THE FACES OF THE STRANGERS IN THE WINDOWS
 ON THE SIDEWALKS BY THE STORE FRONTS
 I WALK THE STREETS WITH GHOSTS IN MY HOMETOWN

I WALK THE STREETS WITH GHOSTS

REGGIE (cont'd)

THERE I GO
HAND IN HAND
WITH A SOUL I HAVEN'T SEEN FOR THIRTY LONG YEARS
IN MY HOMETOWN
I WALK THE STREETS WITH GHOSTS IN MY HOMETOWN

I HAVE A SIGN TONIGHT
TWO TRAILS ACROSS THE SKY
TWO TRAILS BEFORE THE DAWN WITH NO REGRETS

(in an undefined space)

ABIGAIL

I WORRY THE SKY WILL FALL
AND THEN THE SKY JUST GETS A LITTLE HIGHER
UP UP UP GOES THE SKY
AND HOW HIGH IS UP?
AND HOW LOW IS DOWN?

2/1/6

(in an undefined place)

JOHNNY

WHY OH WHY AM I SO VERY STUPID?
LUCY PUT THE FOOTBALL ON THE TEE
IT'S VERY UNLIKELY SHE'LL EVER EVEN NOTICE ME

(in an undefined place)

VICKI

I'M OK
I'M STILL OK

WHY DON'T I BELIEVE IT?

(in an undefined place)

MILDRED & CHORUS (1,2,3)

APPROACHING A LIMIT
 ONE STEP CLOSER
 APPROACHING A LIMIT
 I REACH INTO THE GAP WITH MY HEART
 AND TOUCH MY REFLECTION
 BOUNCING BACK TO ME
 UNLIMITED

(CECIL wanders unsteadily across the stage holding an open can of Bellicose Beer.)

CECIL (1) (mumbling)

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER
 BELLICOSE BEER HELPS THE WHOLE WORLD FEEL YOUNG
 ALCOHOL'S FUN
 SO PULL OUT YOUR WALLETS AND DRINK!

(at WSTPD, VICKI is at her desk. REGGIE enters)

2.1.7

VICKI

How'd it go?

REGGIE

How'd what go?

VICKI

Your meeting on Corporate Olympus, of course! The future of radio. What was it like up there?

REGGIE

What do you think it was like up there?

VICKI

I don't know. Leather. Gold – well...brass fixtures. Floor to ceiling windows...does he chortle?

REGGIE

Picture this...

(On Corporate Olympus)

BEL CANTO & CHORUS (1 2 3)

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

VICKI

Ooooo...

REGGIE

You know what he said to me? I walked in the door...

(on Olympus)

BEL CANTO

CALL ME BYRON
CALL ME BYRON
WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME ON THE TOP
I'M A JOY

CHORUS (1 2 3)

I'M A JOY

BEL CANTO

CALL ME BYRON
CALL ME BYRON
IF YOU'VE GOT SOME THING I NEED
YOU'RE MY BOY

CHORUS

YOU'RE MY BOY

BEL CANTO

DON'T CALL ME RAY
DON'T CALL ME SUNSHINE
DON'T CALL ME ANYTHING THAT SMILES
JUST CALL ME BYRON

BEL CANTO & CHORUS

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

(at WSTPD)

VICKI

So, did you tell him your ideas for the station?

REGGIE

My ideas for the station... I show up in the lobby. Step into the elevator. Press the button for the very top.

ELEVATOR (2 3)

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO VISIT THE VERY TOP?

REGGIE

So I press it again.

ELEVATOR (2 3)

AS YOU WISH

NEXT STOP, CORPORATE OLYMPUS

(ELEVATOR begins to ascend to Olympus.)

VICKI

What were you thinking?

REGGIE

I was practicing my pitch... "Mr. Bel Canto, I have a few ideas about getting some fresh programming onto the radio... Mr. Bel Canto, I've been thinking we can capitalize on all this attention...

VICKI (interrupts)

In the elevator?

REGGIE

It took a while...

VICKI

And?

REGGIE

I should have known. He had a song and dance all ready to go...

(On Corporate Olympus, the elevator's "arrival tone" sounds the Bellicose Beer jingle theme. Moments later REGGIE SPHINCTER enters.)

BEL CANTO & CHORUS

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

REGGIE

Wow...BELLICORP World Headquarters...great view. Mr. Bel Canto, I have a few ideas...

BEL CANTO

REGGIE REGGIE!
CALL ME BYRON

REGGIE

Mr. Bel Canto...

BEL CANTO

CALL ME BYRON

REGGIE

About the station...

BEL CANTO

I'M SO THRILLED TO HAVE YOU HERE WITH ME TODAY
CALL ME BYRON

REGGIE

I've been thinking about Mrs. Maloney's poems and...

BEL CANTO

CALL ME BYRON
IF YOU WANT TO WIN THIS GAME
YOU'VE GOT TO PLAY

THEN IN THE MORNING
WHEN YOU WAKE UP
YOU'LL BE PLAYING ON MY TEAM
CALL ME BYRON
COME PLAY WITH ME

BEL CANTO & CHORUS

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

VICKI (pushes REGGIE)

Reggie! Ask him!

BEL CANTO & CHORUS

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

REGGIE

Byron, I've been thinking we can capitalize...

BEL CANTO & CHORUS

OONGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA DIGGA
 OONGA DIGGA DIG DIG

REGGIE

WHY AM I HERE...ON OLYMPUS?

CHORUS

ON OLYMPUS

(BEL CANTO steers REGGIE towards window.)

BEL CANTO

CAST YOUR EYES DOWN ACROSS THE VALLEY OF THE COMMONS
 WHAT DO YOU SEE?

REGGIE

I SEE A CITY FILLED WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE...

(BEL CANTO nods.)

REGGIE

...WHO ARE HAPPY AND SAD - AND LONELY...

BEL CANTO

...AND THIRSTY???

IN THE FOUR WEEKS SINCE YOUR MILDRED MALONEY
HAS BEEN BROADCASTING POEMS AT MY STATION

Well...Bellicose Brewery's market share in the Tri-State Area has jumped thirty seven percent!

REGGIE

Thirty seven percent?

BEL CANTO

THIS WOMAN AND HER POEMS MUST BE HARNESSSED

REGGIE (continues until BEL CANTO says the word "SPHINCTER")

I have some ideas about that. I was skeptical at first, but now I'd like to try the same inclusive approach with the music programming. You see...

BEL CANTO (overlaps, cutting off REGGIE))

NO! NO! NO!

AS A FIRST STEP YOU...SPHINCTER...Reggie...

Will enlist this Mildred Maloney

To write and record BELLICOSE BEER THEMED POEMS.

REGGIE

You mean commercials?

BEL CANTO

YOU HAVE THE COMMON TOUCH

AND THAT'S WHAT I NEED TO GET WHAT I WANT - YOU SEE...

MRS. MALONEY IS THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GOLDEN EGGS...

REGGIE

Goose...

BEL CANTO

GOLDEN EGGS

WE MUSTN'T LET HER FLY AWAY

GOLDEN EGGS

NOT UNTIL HER SECRET HAS BEEN CAPTURED

GOOD LUCK, REGGIE

Do let me know how it goes.

REGGIE

Sure thing...(beat)...Byron.

(on MILDRED's street)

2/2/1

CECIL (1)

Betty, since your hip's feeling so much better, will you come out driving with me next Tuesday when Mildred broadcasts her poems? The radio in my car works really good.

BETTY (2)

Cecil, I'm going to listen in my kitchen like always – it's relaxing that way.

(at WSTPD, MILDRED in on the radio)

MILDRED

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS MAGIC!

BETTY (2)

MAGIC!

CECIL (1)

MAGIC!

MELISMA (3)

MAGIC!

MILDRED

COLOR!

NEIGHBORS (1 2 3)

COLOR!

MILDRED & NEIGHBORS

REDS AND BLUES AND SMILING YELLOWS

MILDRED

FILLING THE WORLD WITH MILLIONS OF COLORS
MILLIONS AND BILLIONS AND TRILLIONS OF COLORS

MILDRED & NEIGHBORS

HERE AND NOW AND HERE AND NOW...

2/2/2

MILDRED

Well. That's all. This is Mildred Maloney, signing off from 7.4 WSTPD.

REGGIE

Mildred – before you go, there's something I need to talk to you about. It's about my boss, Mr. Bel Canto from BELLICORP. He wants you...he told me he wants you to write some beer themed poems for the radio.

MILDRED

Beer themed poems?

REGGIE

For the radio.

MILDRED

Beer poems?

REGGIE

I know. I know. I think you're doing just fine. Sales are up. People are tuning in. But he wants more. Maybe - maybe you can just work a little beer into a few poems...positive themes of course...just to keep the boss happy?

(JOHNNY and VICKI are seated across from each other.)

2/2/3

JOHNNY

Am I being cheap? I actually like the food here...

VICKI

It's OK, Johnny. Atmosphere...

JOHNNY

WHAT MADE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

VICKI

ABOUT WHAT?

JOHNNY

ABOUT ME

VICKI

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I CHANGED MY MIND?

JOHNNY

WELL, HERE WE ARE...TOGETHER
and you know, I didn't think I had even the slightest chance...

VICKI

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE?

JOHNNY

I MEAN A CHANCE...A CHANCE TO EVEN TALK WITH YOU

VICKI

Just to talk with me?
I GUESS I NOTICED

JOHNNY

YOU NOTICED?

VICKI

I GUESS I SAW YOU

JOHNNY

I SAW YOU TOO

VICKI

I WASN'T REALLY LOOKING

JOHNNY

YOU WERE A SURPRISE

JOHNNY & VICKI

BUT I SAW YOU...
AND EVERY TIME I TRY
I SWEAR I TRY SO VERY HARD

JOHNNY & VICKI & CHORUS (1 2 3)

HOW LONG?
HOW LONG?

JOHNNY

I GET UP IN THE MORNING

VICKI

I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR

VICKI & JOHNNY

THERE HAVE BEEN DAYS
WAY TOO MANY DAYS
I COULDN'T SEE MYSELF

BUT THE FIRST THING THAT I SEE
WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES
IS SOMEONE WHO CAN REALLY SEE ME

JOHNNY & VICKI & CHORUS (1 2 3)

HOW LONG?
HOW LONG?
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN DREAMING?
AND IF I AM ASLEEP
LET ME DREAM
LET ME DREAM
BUT IF I AM AWAKE
LET ME NOTICE
LET ME NOTICE
LET ME NOTICE

JOHNNY & VICKI

I CAN TELL
THAT YOU NOTICE
THAT I'M MORE THAN WHAT I BRING WITH ME
ON THE SURFACE

(At WSTPD, BEL CANTO enters)

2/2/4

BEL CANTO

So...progress?

REGGIE

Mr. Bel Canto, I spoke to Mrs. Maloney. She didn't go for it.

BEL CANTO

But she has to go for it.

REGGIE

I tried to move her. I suggested she start by...

BEL CANTO

Mr. Sphincter, I don't just *want* your Mrs. Maloney to broadcast beer themed poems for me. I *need* her. I *expect* her – and you – to come through for me...

IT IS TIME TO PAY MRS. MALONEY A LITTLE VISIT

(BEL CANTO and REGGIE exit)

(At MILDRED's house, ABIGAIL reads from a notebook.)

ABIGAIL

THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN...

MILDRED

...and women...

ABIGAIL

...Yes, of course,

AND WOMEN

HAVING TO...ADVISE THE PUBLIC...

(BEL CANTO and REGGIE arrive at MILDRED's house. REGGIE knocks.)

(knock knock knock knock)

BEL CANTO

I see a light in there. Keep knocking.

(knock knock knock knock)

REGGIE

Mildred? Abigail? It's Reggie SPHINCTER from WSTPD – and Mr. Bel Canto too.

ABIGAIL

Bel Canto...???

(MILDRED opens door.)

Reggie. Mr. Bel Canto. Do come in...

(BEL CANTO and REGGIE enter MILDRED's house. BEL CANTO looks at the microphone and transmitter of the dormant and partially disassembled WMILD.)

BEL CANTO

SO THIS IS THE SCENE OF THE CRIME?

ABIGAIL

That's not a nice thing to say.

BEL CANTO (overlaps)

Mildred, I've stopped by your house tonight because I just had to tell you in person how impressed I am with your ability to bring an audience to the radio. You really are quite a find.

MILDRED

Thank you, Mr. Bel Canto, but it's not me. My number 7.4 brings me the poems, and then the poems bring the people. But thank you just the same.

BEL CANTO

Now, Reggie here tells me that he asked you on my behalf to try writing a few poems about Bellicose Beer - and it hasn't happened yet. It hurts my feelings.

MILDRED

It hurts my feelings too. Like I told you, 7.4 brings me my poems...but I'm afraid there's nothing there for beer...

BEL CANTO (cuts her off)

Oh, I'm sure you'll find something.

WRITERS WRITE WHAT THEY HAVE TO WRITE

ABIGAIL

WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'WHAT THEY HAVE TO WRITE'?

BEL CANTO (overlaps, ignoring Abigail)
 HOW MUCH MORE POWERFUL WOULD THESE POEMS BE...if they actually had
 Bellicose Beer written right into their very bones?

MILDRED
 Mr. Bel Canto, I'm so glad you stopped by. But the answer is still no.

BEL CANTO (overlaps)
 Surely you understand that you're not in a position to say no. 7.4 is my number. I paid for it..
 Good night.

(BEL CANTO and REGGIE exit)

(at WSTPD)

JACKIE (3) (mocks MILDRED)
 7 point 3 point 7 point 4 point 7 point 2 point 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1...

HOOTER (2) (in mocking high pitched voice)
 It's my number! It's my number! And I'm much too proud to talk about beer. I'd rather talk
 about...raindrops...butterflies...love love love...

CURT (1)
 But Bellicose Beer is good for you. Strengthens your roots. Lots of fiber.

HOOTER
 No No No. I'm too good for beer.

JACKIE
 Ha Ha Ha Hee Haw Hee Haw

(at MILDRED's house)

2/2/5

MILDRED (overlaps)
 I WANT THEM TO BE HAPPY
 I WANT THEM TO BELIEVE IN LOVE
 ...LET US TOUCH THE STARS...

ABIGAIL

Well, you're not going to start writing 'beer-themed poems.'

MILDRED

No, I suppose not. But then I won't be welcome at WSTPD anymore. Which leaves only...

ABIGAIL

WMILD? Of course, another option is to simply give up on radio altogether...

MILDRED

But Abigail, they need me...

(knock knock) (beat)

(knock knock knock)

JOHNNY (from outside)

Mildred! Abigail! We know you're in there.

MILDRED

Johnny!

(MILDRED hurries to the door. JOHNNY and VICKI enter.)

MILDRED

Vicki...welcome...

VICKI

Oh, Mildred...

(VICKI looks at the dormant and partially disassembled WMILD.)

VICKI (cont'd)

...is this where you went on the radio?

JOHNNY

7.4 WMILD – Maybe I should pack it up?

MILDRED

I don't think so. We've just had a visit from Mr. Bel Canto.

VICKI

Bel Canto here?

ABIGAIL

Mr. Bel Canto told Mildred that if she wanted to continue on the radio, she would have to recite beer themed poems.

MILDRED

SO WHAT AM I TO DO?

JOHNNY & CHORUS (3) (as if entranced)

STARING AT THE CENTER OF THE VORTEX
EMPTY SPACE FOCUSED UPON CONCENTRATED EMPTY SPACE

VICKI & CHORUS (1) (as if entranced)

IT'S NOT YOUR JOB TO UNLOCK THE WORLD
SURELY YOU'VE ALREADY GIVEN US THE KEY

ABIGAIL & CHORUS (2) (as if entranced)

WE ARE ALL FREE BORN MEN AND WOMEN
LET US BE FREE

MILDRED

ALL I CAN DO IS TELL THE TRUTH
There will be no beer poems. But I will broadcast at WSTPD one last time...

MILDRED & JOHNNY & VICKI & ABIGAIL

ONE LAST
ONE LAST
ONE LAST TIME

(in an indeterminate space)

CECIL (1) (mumbling as he crosses the stage)

Today's the day. Today's the day. Today's the day. Tomorrow's the day after the day. (beat)
Today's the day. Today's the day. Today's the day.

(In BETTY's kitchen.)

BETTY (2)

Today is Mildred's radio day...

2/2/6

MELISMA (3)

I know I know

We are so lucky to have someone like Mildred - my good friend Mildred...

ON THE RADIO

BETTY (2)

ON THE RADIO

ENSEMBLE

WE ARE ALL TOGETHER ON THE RADIO

CHORUS (123)

NOW THAT SHE'S ALWAYS ON THE RADIO

WE'RE TOGETHER

WE KNOW WHERE TO GO TO FIND MILDRED

RIGHT IN FRONT OF US

WE'RE CONNECTED

WE HAVE MILDRED BETWEEN US

SO OPEN YOUR WINDOWS AND REACH FOR THE STARS

EVERYONE UP OFF THE FLOOR

TELL US SOME MORE

TOGETHER AT SEVEN POINT FOUR!

BETTY

WHEN I WAS YOUNG

ENSEMBLE

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG WE WERE YOUNG

BETTY

OUR DREAMS WERE STRONG

ENSEMBLE

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG WE WERE YOUNG

BETTY

BUT NOW WE'RE OLDER

ENSEMBLE

IN THIS WORLD FULL OF WOMEN AND MEN

WE ALL NEED A NEW DREAM NOW AND THEN

OH MRS. MALONEY

DO TELL IT AGAIN!

REGGIE

NOW THAT SHE'S ALWAYS ON THE RADIO
I'M A WRECK

ABIGAIL

ME TOO

REGGIE

I CAN'T SEEM TO CATCH MY BREATH

REGGIE & ABIGAIL & VICKI

AND MY LIFE...IT'S A FREE FALL

CHORUS

BUCKLE YOUR BUCKLES AND HOOK YOUR HOOKS

VICKI

MILDRED IS ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

CHORUS

TURN ON YOUR RADIO
TIME TO GET ON WITH THE SHOW

(at WSTPD, MILDRED, ABIGAIL, JOHNNY, VICKI, REGGIE, BEL CANTO, CURT, HOOTER, and JACKIE are all present.)

Good luck, Mildred. 2/2/7

Seven point three eight nine...zero...five six...zero...nine eight nine...three...one...

Dear God, let this not explode in my face. Let this not melt into a radioactive puddle of recriminations. Let this day be over...

POEMS SUCK!

BEER IS GOOD!

TRUTH COMES KNOCKING

Tell the truth!

BEER!

THE TRUTH

TELL THE TRUTH

TRUTH COMES KNOCKING

TRUTH COMES KNOCKING

INSISTENT

BEL CANTO
BEER THEMED

CHORUS (1 2 3)
TRUTH COMES KNOCKING

MILDRED
TRUTH COMES KNOCKING
A BIT FULL OF ITSELF
YET DUTY BOUND TO SPEAK

(chirp)

VICKI (overlaps)
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DRINK BELLICOSE BEER

MILDRED (broadcasts)
LET US CUT TO THE QUICK
HE WHO HOLDS THE STRINGS PULLS THE STRINGS
AND THOSE WITH STRINGS ATTACHED
FIND THEMSELVES INEXPLICABLY IN MOTION

BEL CANTO
I'm waiting to hear beer themed poems!

ENSEMBLE
TRUTH COMES KNOCKING

MILDRED
THIS POEM IS FALSE

ENSEMBLE
THIS POEM IS FALSE

MILDRED
AND FURTHERMORE...
...This poem cannot be broadcast at 7.4 WSTPD...

BEL CANTO
...AND FURTHERMORE?

MILDRED
...AND FURTHERMORE
This poem...is not about a bulldozer.

BULLDOZER	ENSEMBLE
BULLDOZER	BEL CANTO
PUSHY	MILDRED & JOHNNY & VICKI & ABIGAIL
IRRESISTABLE	BEL CANTO
GET OUT OF MY WAY	MILDRED & JOHNNY & VICKI & ABIGAIL
BEER POEMS NOW!	BEL CANTO
WHIRLIGIG WHIRLIGIG BRAND NEW SPRINGTIME GREEN ROUND AND ROUND CATCH THE WIND RIDE THE SPRINGTIME BREEZE UNTIL GOD WILLING	MILDRED
Mildred Maloney...	BEL CANTO (overlaps)
FERTILE GROUND ROOTS, LEAVES AND LOOK – YOU ARE NOT ALONE OTHER SAPLINGS	MILDRED
ONE ...TWO...THREE...	MILDRED & JOHNNY & ABIGAIL & VICKI

MILDRED

...STAND BESIDE YOU ON YOUR HILLSIDE
 ALL REACHING FOR THE SUN
 THIRSTING FOR THE RAIN
 AGAINST ALL ODDS
 A SHADY GROVE
 A NEIGHBORHOOD OF GREEN
 ROOTS AND LEAVES AND SPIRIT

REGGIE & JOHNNY & ABIGAIL & VICKI

BULLDOZER

MILDRED

AN ORDER FROM ON HIGH
 STAKES ARE STRUCK INTO THE EARTH
 JUST BEFORE THE DOZER CRAWLS
 TO CRASH
 TO CRUSH
 TO MAKE WAY FOR THE LUCRATIVE NEW

(BEL CANTO stomps over to a control panel.)

BEL CANTO (overlaps)

I WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS

MILDRED (overlaps)

THE WHIRLIGIG HAS FLOWN
 GROWN
 REACHED FOR THE SUN
 THIRSTED FOR THE RAIN...

BEL CANTO (overlaps)

SINCE YOU CANNOT CONDESCEND TO HONOR A SIMPLE REQUEST FROM YOUR HOST
 THEN YOU DO NOT BELONG HERE ON THE RADIO
 AND INDEED, YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN BROADCAST...

(BEL CANTO flips a switch to interrupt MILDRED's broadcast.)

(At MILDRED's word "RAIN", there is a loud CRASH outside WSTPD.
 JOHNNY runs toward the sound.)

VICKI

What was that?

REGGIE

AHHHHHHHHH!!!!...

JOHNNY (from offstage)

Oh man – are you OK?

(CECIL, followed by JOHNNY, stumbles into WSTPD
holding an open can of Bellicose Beer.)

CECIL (1)

Wow...I was just driving through the neighborhood when I heard Mildred's poem. I know that bulldozer. I was like the little tree. I used to stand in the rain with my friends. It was me on that hillside. It was me...

JOHNNY

Cecil crashed into the wall out front. (beat) Seven empties in the front seat.

MILDRED

Johnny, can you take me home?

ABIGAIL

I'll go with you.

(MILDRED, ABIGAIL & JOHNNY exit)

(in an undefined space)

BEL CANTO

2/2/8

WHAT COULD BE MORE JUST?
I GAVE HER A CHANCE
AN OPPORTUNITY
DOES SHE THINK THAT POEMS
EXIST IN ANOTHER WORLD
DIVORCED FROM ALL ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS?

(BEL CANTO looks at the AUDIENCE and *thinks...*)

(WORSHIP ME!)

(Bel Canto exits.)

(At MILDRED's house, MILDRED reassembles WMILD.)

2/3/1

MILDRED

...THE MICROPHONE'S CONNECTED TO THE MICROPHONE CORD

ABIGAIL

MILDRED, YOU CAN'T

MILDRED

ABIGAIL, I MUST

I HAVE TO APPOLOGIZE

(ABIGAIL exits Downstage Right, walks several paces into the Audience, and remains facing away from the stage until MILDRED begins to broadcast. ABIGAIL then turns towards MILDRED and observes all that follows.)

MILDRED

...THE MICROPHONE'S CONNECTED TO THE MICROPHONE CORD

It's all plugged in. One, two, three red buttons...the little red light is blinking...

Hello everyone. This is Mildred Maloney broadcasting from 7.4 WMILD...

(at WSTPD, REGGIE and VICKI listen to WMILD)

REGGIE (overlaps)

Wow.

VICKI (overlaps)

Yikes.

(on the radio)

MILDRED

I'M SORRY

I MEANT NOTHING BUT THE BEST

SO SORRY

CURT (1) (at WSTPD) (overlaps)

Oh! My! God!

I do believe I hear a Pirate

MILDRED (overlaps)

I HOPED THAT I MIGHT SHARE
SOME LITTLE PIECE OF BEAUTY
IN A WAY THAT MIGHT HURT NO ONE

HOOTER (2) (overlaps)

Hardy har har and shiver me timbers...

JACKIE (3) (overlaps)

Ha ha ha Hee Haw ha ha ha

MILDRED

BUT NOW I SEE IT WAS NOT TO BE...

VICKI (overlaps MILDRED and CHORUS)

Bel Canto's gonna crucify her.

REGGIE

I know. (beat) I gotta go over there. I don't want anyone to get hurt.

MILDRED

WHAT WAS THAT THEY SAID?
A BRAIN
A HEART
COURAGE?

VICKI

What are you going to say?

REGGIE

I'll think of something...

(REGGIE exits)

(On Corporate Olympus, BYRON BEL CANTO turns on a radio.)

MILDRED (on the radio at WMILD)

GOD BLESS THE MONKEYS
GOD BLESS THE SAND
GOD BLESS THE GREEN GLASSES

(BEL CANTO takes the curious Golden Cap from his desk and puts it on his head.
The FCC Chorus snaps to Attention.)

BEL CANTO

SERVANTS OF THE GOLDEN CAP
SCULLIONS OF THE FCC
COME TO ME
PIRATES ARE ABROAD IN THE LAND

MILDRED (on the radio)

WHISPER IN MY EAR
TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO HEAR
FRIENDLY GHOSTS HAVE THE BEST NIGHT VISION

(knock knock knock) (overlaps)

FRIENDLY GHOSTS HAVE THE BEST NIGHT VISION
FRIENDLY GHOSTS...

(knock knock knock)

There's someone at the door. I'll be right back.

Who is it?

REGGIE

2/3/2

It's me – Reggie...Reggie Sphincter from the radio station.

MILDRED

Reggie. Come in...What are you doing here? I thought you disapproved of my WMILD.

REGGIE (enters MILDRED's house)

I do. I mean I should. I mean...I don't know anymore. But I knew I needed to warn you.

MILDRED

Warn me?

REGGIE

Bel Canto. When he left the station he was angry, and...

(BEL CANTO, on Corporate Olympus, listens to REGGIE on the radio
and visibly swells up.)

REGGIE (cont'd)

WHEN HE'S ANGRY
 YOU SHOULD SEE HIM
 FIRST HE GETS ALL HUNKERED DOWN
 GRINDS HIS TEETH
 SHAKES HIS SHOULDERS
 PUFFS UP LIKE SOME KIND OF A PORCUPINE
 OR A SKUNK
 OR A GROUCHY OLD RACCOON.

(MILDRED notices WMILD's little red light blinking.)

MILDRED

Oh dear...

REGGIE

And then it's too late! Because he will never ever let go until he's absolutely crushed whoever or whatever has got him going...Believe me, you've never seen anything half so ugly...I mean really...is that a red light blinking over there...?

MILDRED

Oh dear, I forgot I was in the middle of my broadcast when you knocked on the door...

REGGIE

And what I just said...?

MILDRED

Probably.

REGGIE

I bet he was listening.
 He probably heard.
 He will hear.
 Now he's gonna fire me for sure.

MILDRED (overlaps)

Reginald – is that such a bad thing? You know, I've been watching you, and you just don't seem very happy. How long have you been with that radio station anyhow?

REGGIE

Oh, I don't know.

MILDRED

Yes you do...how long?

REGGIE

I started when I was 27 - now I'm 53...it's been 26 years.

MILDRED

And...?

REGGIE

It was really good at the start.

I SWEEPED THE FLOORS

I SCRUBBED THE TOILETS

I WAS A GOFER

IT WAS GLORIOUS

I WORKED AND I WORKED AND I WORKED

...AND EVENTUALLY...

FINALLY

FINALLY THEY LET ME SPIN RECORDS AT NIGHT

WHEN THEY THOUGHT NO ONE WAS LISTENING...

...I WAS THE SPHYNX.

MILDRED

You were the Sphynx?

(CRANSTON and JOHNSTON arrive at Corporate Olympus. The Golden Cap remains on BEL CANTO's head.)

CRANSTON (1)

2/3/3

Hail Byron Bel Canto!

JOHNSTON (2)

Keeper of the Golden Cap....

BEL CANTO

TO THE LAIR OF THE PIRATE MALONEY

AND THE TRAITOR SPHINCTER!!!

CRANSTON & JOHNSTON

YOUR WISH IS OUR COMMAND!

BEL CANTO

YOU WILL DESTROY THEM!

JOHNSTON (2)

We can arrest them...

CRANSTON

Confiscate their equipment...

BEL CANTO

YOU WILL DESTROY THEM!

Sphincter and the Maloney woman too.

CUT MY STRINGS?

LAND IN JAIL!!!

(BEL CANTO & CRANSTON & JOHNSTON exit.)

(at WMILD)

2/3/4

REGGIE

You mean you remember the Sphynx?

MILDRED

I loved the Sphynx! When my Michael was still with us, he used to listen to the radio late at night, and sometimes I'd lie awake and listen too. Anyhow, there was a rock 'n' roll show. The Sphynx was pretty silly...

REGGIE

SILLY...?

I WAS OUTRAGEOUS

CONTAGEOUS

I WAS CRAZY

I WAS IN HEAVEN!

MILDRED

DO IT AGAIN

CHORUS

DO IT AGAIN

MILDRED

This is what you've been waiting for!

QUIT THAT JOB

CHORUS

QUIT THAT JOB

MILDRED

HE'S PROBABLY GOING TO FIRE YOU ANYWAY...

REGGIE

He's probably going to...

MILDRED

You're welcome to use WMILD. Oh...it's still on, isn't it?

REGGIE

Oh my God...

MILDRED

Ladies and Gentlemen. Citizens of the Tri-State Area - 7.4 WMILD is proud to bring you, at long last, returned from the almost expired, Reggie Sphincter – The Sphynx! - Go Reggie Go!

REGGIE

Oh Brothers and Sisters it's been a day it's been a day it's been a day...

ENSEMBLE

IT'S BEEN A DAY

REGGIE

WHO HAS THE QUESTIONS TO ALL OF LIFE'S ANSWERS?

THE MYSTERIES OF THE WILD NIGHT

HANGIN' BY THE STREET LIGHTS

DOWN BY THE RIVER

WHERE THE TRAIN TRACKS BOIL?

WHO IS THAT MAN?

THAT MAN WITH A SECRET?

I'LL TELL YOU

I AM THAT MAN

I'VE GOT A SECRET

ENSEMBLE

CONFUSED!

REGGIE

I AM THAT MAN

I AM ON FIRE!

ENSEMBLE

ON FIRE!

REGGIE / THE SPHYNX

I AM THAT MAN
I AM I AM....
I AM...
I AM THE SPHYNX!!!

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

ENSEMBLE

WE BELIEVE IT

THE SPHYNX

THE HOTTEST
THE GREATEST

ENSEMBLE

THE COOLEST
THE LATEST

THE SPHYNX

I AM I AM
I AM THE SPHYNX!!!

ENSEMBLE

THE SPHYNX

THE SPHYNX

THE TOP OF THE ANGLE
THE PINNACLE OF POP
A ROCKIN' REVOLUTION AT THE DROP OF A MOP

MILDRED

Reggie, can I add a word?

THE SPHYNX

By all means... Speak up, my dear...

MILDRED

Well, I just want to say...Johnny...Vicki...Abigail...if you can hear us...

THE SPHYNX

I'VE BEEN ASLEEP

MILDRED

Don't forget this. This - this BOOM is why we get up in the morning. It's why we dream at night.

THE SPHYNX

I'VE BEEN A COG IN A MACHINE

MILRED

Remember remember how it feels to know that people are listening.

THE SPHYNX

I'VE BEEN A DOORMAT
A LOSER
A POODLE ON A LEASH

MILDRED

Remember how it feels to notice...

THE SPHYNX

BUT NOW I'M BACK

MILDRED

Remember!

THE SPHYNX

I'M BACK
ON THE RADIO

MILDRED

ON THE RADIO

THE SPHYNX & MILDRED

WE ARE ALL TOGETHER ON THE RADIO

(In the FCC van, BEL CANTO, still wearing his Golden Cap,
rides in the back seat as the siren wails.)

BEL CANTO

Faster, faster - fly, flyyyy...

CRANSTON (1)

Yes sir, Mr. Bel Canto...

JOHNSTON (2)

Golden wings for a Golden Cap...

BEL CANTO

No time to lose! No time to waste! We will ANIALATE them!!!

(Johnny arrives back at WSTPD.)

JOHNNY (sees VICKI)

Vicki. You've been listening...? I'm going back over to Mildred's. I don't know what I can do but...well...if you want to come with me...? (beat) Your call.

VICKI

My call...

(JOHNNY exits)

VICKI (glances over at Jocks)

???!!!!!!...

(VICKI exits)

(at WMILD)

2/3/5

THE SPHINX

YOU ASK THE SPHYNX WHAT'S NEXT?

NEXT IS THE TIP

THE BLOW OFF

THE TOPPERMOST OF THE POPPERMOST

THE MOST FEARSOME RADIO GROOVE THAT EVER RAISED A ROOF

IN THIS TOWN OR ANY OTHER

THE SPHYNX & ENSEMBLE

I CAN FEEL IT

TOUCH IT

IT'S COMING

MILDRED

Seven point three eight nine zero five
four...

THE SPHYNX
 RIDDLE ME THIS
 WHAT IS THE FASTEST WAY TO LIGHT A FIRE
 IN SOMEONE'S HEART?

MILDRED & ENSEMBLE
 SHOW US A FIRE

THE SPHYNX
 SHOW YOU A FIRE?

MILDRED & ENSEMBLE
 SHOW US A FIRE

2/3/6

THE SPHYNX
 SHOW YOU A FIRE?

FEEL IT
 TOUCH IT

MILDRED & ENSEMBLE
 FEEL IT
 TOUCH IT

THE SPHYNX (overlaps)
 5...4...3...2...
 1, 2, 3, 4.....
 I'VE GOT A GREAT IDEA
 WE'RE GONNA TRY IT OUT

ENSEMBLE
 WE'RE GONNA TRY IT OUT

THE SPHYNX
 A PINCH OF WOOLY BULLY
 A LITTLE TWIST AND SHOUT

MILDRED
 THROW IT ALL TOGETHER?

THE SPHYNX & ENSEMBLE

MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP

AH AH AH AH
 AH AH AH AH

(BEL CANTO & CRANSTON & JOHNSTON cross the stage, lights flashing)

THE SPHYNX

WE'RE GONNA FLEX OUR ELBOWS

MILDRED

WE'RE GONNA BEND OUR KNEES

ENSEMBLE (overlaps)

AH AH AH AH
 AH AH AH AH

THE SPHYNX

WE'RE GONNA SAY SOME PRAYERS
 WE'RE GONNA SLUG SOME TREES

THE SPHYNX & MILDRED

THROW IT ALL TOGETHER

THE SPHYNX, MILDRED & ENSEMBLE

MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP
 MIX IT UP

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

BEL CANTO

OPEN THE DOOR!

THE SPHYNX & CHORUS (overlap)

AH AH AH AH
 AH AH AH AH

MILDRED
 GOD BLESS YOU REGGIE SPHINCTER
 YOU ARE FOREVER REDEEMED!!!

AH AH AH AH
 AH AH AH AH

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

BEL CANTO
 OPEN THE DOOR NOW!

MILDRED
 ALL YOU FANS...

THE SPHINX
 OUT IN RADIO LAND...

MILDRED
 I'M AFRAID ALL GOOD THINGS...

THE SPHINX
 HAVE A SECOND COMING...

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK - Mildred goes to the door and opens it.)

MILDRED
 Come in...Mr. Cranston, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Bel Canto...

(BEL CANTO, CRANSTON & JOHNSTON enter.)

BEL CANTO
 Pull the plug!

CRANSTON (1)
 Yes Sir – Johnston, pull the plug!

BEL CANTO
 Pull the plug!

JOHNSTON (2)

Where's the plug?

BEL CANTO

I'll get it!

(BEL CANTO pulls the plug. WMILD goes black. MILDRED and REGGIE glow and glitter and freeze in place, invisible.)

(in an indeterminate place outside the play)

2/3/7

BEL CANTO (addresses the audience)

YOU SEE
 I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT NOW YOU SEE
 YOU HAVE NO HOPE
 IF YOU SET YOURSELVES UP IN OPPOSITION
 TO THE POWERS THAT BE
 AND IN THIS DAY AND AGE
 I AM THE POWER THAT IS
 AS THE PHAROH WAS THE POWER THAT WAS
 IN THE TIME THAT WAS HIS
 I WIN EVERY TIME
 LADIES WITH POEMS?
 DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP
 LET THIS LITTLE STORY BE A REMINDER
 A LESSON
 A DAMPER
 DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE...
 FOR 7.4 IS MY NUMBER
 MY NUMBER IS 7.4
 7.4 IS MY NUMBER...

(BEL CANTO exits.)

(ABIGAIL arrives back at MILDRED's house. She stands outside, alone.)

ABIGAIL

2/3/8

I WANT A HAPPY ENDING
 I WANT A HAPPY ENDING
 IF YOU'RE OUT THERE SOMEWHERE
 You...
 God...
 Whoever or whatever has put me in this place
 I WANT A HAPPY ENDING
 If there is an Author who has a say in the matter
 I'm at your disposal
 BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

ENSEMBLE

OH MRS. MALONEY
 DO TELL IT AGAIN

(VICKI & JOHNNY arrive outside MILDRED's house and see ABIGAIL.)

ENSEMBLE

YES MRS. MALONEY
 YOU SHOULD BE HEARD
 TELL THE WHOLE WORLD
 TELL IT AGAIN

JOHNNY

We heard the end of the broadcast.

VICKI

Where are they?

ABIGAIL

I WANT A HAPPY ENDING

JOHNNY

Did they take the transmitter?

ABIGAIL

I don't know...I don't think so...

JOHNNY

I'm going to fire up WMILD for Aunt Mildred and the Sphynx - and then tell Mr. Byron Bel Canto just exactly where...

VICKI

Johnny...

ABIGAIL

No Johnny. He would step on you like a bug. This is my time. My time. Vicki, take him home. Away from here.

JOHNNY

But you don't know how to make it work.

ABIGAIL

Oh, yes I do.

(ABIGAIL turns toward MILDRED's house.)

ENSEMBLE

YOU SHOULD BE HEARD
TELL THE WHOLE WORLD
TELL IT AGAIN

(VICKI takes JOHNNY's hand and leads him downstage right, where they turn and look back towards MILDRED's house. ABIGAIL enters the house, plugs in WMILD's power cord and reaches for the microphone, still attached to the microphone cord.)

2/3/9

ABIGAIL

The microphone cord is connected to the mixing board. The mixing board is connected to the amplifier is connected to the transmitter is connected to the antenna. Three red buttons. 1, 2, 3...little red blinking light...

(ABIGAIL takes a deep breath)

Mildred...Mildred Maloney, wherever you are, we are with you, for this...

ABIGAIL & ENSEMBLE

THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREE BORN MEN AND WOMEN
HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC
MAY SPEAK FREE

(Sirens sound and grow closer. Lights fade to black.)

THE END