

## Minding our own Business

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### 1 - Opening Piece

Black screen.

The following phrases are to be echoed/emphasized with digital delay – “minding our own business,” “like everyone,” “everyone else,” “don’t care.” By the end of the exchange, they echoes end up creating a sort of two-part invention.

MRS. AVERAGE CANADIAN (V.O.):

(with a touch of self-righteousness)

We’re just minding our own business.

MR. AVERAGE CANADIAN (V.O.):

(agreeing)

Like everyone else.

MRS. AVERAGE CANADIAN (V.O.)

(interrupting/overlapping)

Yes – like everyone else.

MR. AVERAGE CANADIAN (V.O.)

(with a touch of disapproval for do-gooders and busy-bodies  
who think most things/people aren’t good enough for them)

We don’t care to change the world.

## 2 - The Price is Not Quite Right!

The set is an imitation of the classic “The Price is Right!” television quiz show. The prices should be updated as required.

MC

Let’s have our first item, Danna?

A beautiful woman look-alike displays a box of six tarts from a grocery store shelf.

MC

Okay, contestants, we have half a dozen delicious tarts. Now, how much do they cost? Julie? You’re first.

JULIE

I’ll say \$1.49, Rob.

MC

Okay, let’s put Julie down for \$1.49. Next, Shirley?

SHIRLEY

Oh – I think they’re on sale this week.

(giggles)

I’m going to say \$1.29.

MC

All right, Shirley says \$1.29. And Tom?

TOM

What kind are they? It’s hard to tell from here.

MC

(looks at Tom as if he can’t believe he asked that question, then looks at audience, then looks back at Tom)

Butter tarts.

TOM

With or without raisins?

MC

(looks again at Tom, then at audience, then  
off-stage for an answer)

John? With or without raisins? No? Don't know?

Anyone there? Paul? No?

(looks back to Tom)

Tom, we don't know. Can you take a guess anyway –

TOM

Well, I don't know – without knowing that – I'll say \$2.99.

MC

(pauses, looks at audience, then looks  
back at Tom)

You don't do the grocery shopping in your house, do you Tom?

TOM

(not understanding, shakes his head)

Ah, no I don't Rob.

MC

Okay we have Julie with \$1.49, Shirley with \$1.29,  
and Tom, Tom is going with \$2.99. Danna – is anyone's  
price right?

Danna lifts up a card. It says "60¢".

MC

(reading an answer card he has)

But the plastic tray costs 23¢, the cardboard is 31¢,  
and the cellophane wrapping is 5¢, for a total of \$1.16.  
Not including waste disposal costs for the non-biodegradable  
and non-reusable packaging: site establishment, pick-up, and  
transport costs. Okay, Danana, what's next?

Danna displays a styrofoam carton of eggs.

MC

Shirley, you start us off with this one.

SHIRLEY

Um – 99¢.

MC  
Okay 99¢ for Shirley. Tom?  
(then, anticipating him)  
We don't know if they're large or extra-large.

TOM  
(not catching the joke)  
\$1.89.

MC  
Okay – Julie?

JULIE  
I'll say \$1.29.

MC  
(nods, then turns to Danna)  
Danna?

Danna lifts up the card in front of the carton. It says "\$1.49 and at least your health."

MC  
Oh-hoh! Your health!  
(he reads)  
The manufacture of styrofoam produces chlorofluorcarbons which deplete the ozone layer allowing more ultraviolet rays from the sun to get through. This increases the chances of skin cancer, cataracts, and damage to the body's immune system. Ultraviolet rays are also harmful to some grain crops and will kill ocean plankton, the base of the marine food chain.  
(looks up)  
Who knew? Danna, let's see our third item of today's game!

Danna drapes herself over a new car.

MC  
All right, we have a brand new car. Looks great, doesn't it? Tom, what's your price?

TOM  
What kind of car is it, Rob?

MC  
It doesn't really matter, Tom.

TOM

Well – I need to know –

MC

Tom, it's any car.

TOM

I'll say \$13,500.

MC

Fine - \$13,500 for Tom. And Julie?

JULIE

I'll say \$11,500.

MC

Julie says \$11,500. Shirley?

SHIRLEY

Oh I don't know anything about cars, Rob.

(giggles)

I'll say 30,000.

MC

Okay, all three contestants have their prices on the board. Danna – how much does our car cost?

Danna lifts up card in front of car. It says "\$12,000 and most of your food."

MC

Ooh – more expensive than we thought!

(he reads answer card)

The carbon dioxide from your exhaust pipe is most responsible for the greenhouse effect. Shifting deserts, droughts, hurricanes, and floods will destroy farming as and where we know it. Danna, what's next for our contestants?

Danna holds a package of coffee filters at chest level.

MC

Julie, we're back to you. How much does a package of coffee filters cost?

JULIE:

\$1.49.

MC  
Okay – and Shirley?

SHIRLEY  
\$2.49.

MC  
\$1.49 for Julie, \$2.49 for Shirley – Tom?

TOM  
How many are in the package?

MC looks at audience, doesn't say a word.

TOM (cont'd)  
It doesn't matter, right? \$4.99.

MC  
\$4.99 it is for Tom. Danna?

Danna lifts up card. It says "\$1.29 and 4 to 45 years of your life."

MC  
(reading the card)  
Chlorine bleaching to make paper products a pure white produces dioxin, a deadly chemical that causes cancer. The coffee-making process in particular almost guarantees that the dioxin will be transferred from the paper to the body. Hmm. Danna, what do you have for us next?

Danna displays a pound of ground beef.

MC  
Mmm – won't that be great on the barbecue! Shirley?

SHIRLEY  
Yes?

MC  
(looks at audience)  
How much do you think this pound of ground beef costs?

SHIRLEY  
Oh. Can I say \$2.49?

MC  
I don't know, can you?

SHIRLEY  
(giggles)  
Okay, \$2.49.

MC  
And Tom?

TOM  
89¢.

MC  
And Julie?

JULIE  
\$1.89.

MC  
Okay, we have \$2.49, 89¢, and \$1.89. Danna?

Danna holds up card. The fine print is too small to read.

MC  
(reads)  
This beef is from a cow grazing on cleared tropical rainforest land. It costs \$1.89, plus a cure for cancer and other diseases, since extracts from tropical rainforests provide many of the world's commercial drugs, several staple crops, since without access to genetic material from wild relatives, crop breeders are unable to protect against insect attack and fungal invasion, half the world's plant and animal species, and our current climate, since rainforests are the lungs and air conditioners of the planet – they consume carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, and they keep the planet cool - which makes for a total of what, Danna?

Danna shrugs. Cutely.

MC

(calls off-stage)

John? No? Paul?

(receiving no answer from off-stage, he looks  
around vaguely)

Anyone have a price on that?



### 3 - Singin' in the Rain

A tapdancer dances in the style of Gene Kelly to the song "Singin' in the Rain" using, like Gene Kelly, an umbrella. Throughout the piece, the umbrella becomes more and more decomposed and tattered, until, by the end, the dancer is dancing with the mere skeletal frame of an umbrella.

#### 4 - Adverse Reactions

Teen-aged girl talking on the phone in her room.

##### TEEN-AGED GIRL.

Yeah I have a lot of adverse reactions. Allergies. Like I took these pills once? And, like, they had way too much estrogen and my eyes went all blurry, you know? My boyfriend says I'm too sensitive. Like days when there's too much carbon dioxide in the air? I get a real headache. My friend passed out once. She passed out for good And he says I'm sensitive. And my dad, he keeps saying "You can't have everything, you're a spoiled brat, just like your mother. Bitch bitch bitch. It'd be a beautiful day and she'd say 'But the sky isn't blue! Then she'd complain about there being too much mercury in the water – who can taste mercury for god's sake! And then she'd get upset because some animal in some god-forsaken part of the world had some deformed baby!" He says I'm just like here. My boyfriend says I should learn to adapt. You know, go with the flow, get on the evolutionary survival track, and maybe these adverse reactions would like just go away. I dunno – he's been pushing that 'Two heads are better than one' thing, you know, like, too much. All my one-headed friends are way smarter than him.

## 5 - The Band-Aid Solution

There are three chairs on stage facing the audience. Three people enter single file, each carrying something folded in their hands. They stand in front of the chairs, then, at the same time, sit, hands resting on their laps. Then, all together, they each put on an over-sized band-aid; one across her eyes, another over her mouth, the third over her head and down to cover her ears. They grin.

6 - See Jane. See Dick.

Jane and Dick are walking down a garden path, their backs to us, just as on the cover of the popular children's reader. Jane and Dick turn into adolescents, then adults, then elderlies, then adults again, adolescents, then back to children.

TEACHERY VOICE (V.O.)

See Jane. See Dick. See Jane and Dick. Jane and Dick are walking. They are walking. See the garden. See the path. The path is in the garden. See the path in the garden. Jane and Dick are walking on the path. Jane and Dick are walking on the path in the garden. Jane and Dick are walking down the garden path. They are walking down the garden path. They are walking down the path of least resistance.

## 7 - Closing Piece

Black screen.

This should suggest George Carlin's famous piece on 'stuff.'

### COMEDIAN (V.O.)

Another interesting word is 'business'. I like that one. How many times have you been told to (bitchy voice) 'Mind your own business!?' Or (passive aggressive colleague voice) 'Is this any of your business?' (tough guy voice) 'What business is it of yours?' (angry voice) 'That's my own god-damned business!' (verging-on-violence) 'It's none of your fuckin' business!'

And then there's (important voice) 'Taking care of business.' Here 'business' is sort of like 'stuff,' y'know, it can include all kinds of crap – (parent voice) 'Did you do your business?' That makes me think of the phrase 'big business.'

And from that one we get 'I'm busy now.' Or just 'I'm too busy!'

What I can't figure out is if everyone's busy minding their own business, then whose business is this? I mean I can hear someone now: 'There I was, just minding my own business one day and my planet died. Surprised the hell outta me, y'know, I mean I just live here. Guess the party Saturday night is off.'