

HIS GIRL FRIDAY

INT. BURNS' OFFICE LONG SHOT

as she opens the door. Burns is shaving with an electric razor and Louie is holding the mirror up in front of him.

CLOSE SHOT BURNS

shaving, Louie holding the mirror.

LOUIE

A little more round the chin, Boss.

MEDIUM SHOT

There is a sound of the door closing and Burns, without looking up, says:

BURNS

What do you want?

HILDY

Why, I'm surprised, Mr. Burns. That's no way to talk to your wife -- even if she's no longer your wife.

BURNS

(grinning)
Hello, Hildy!

HILDY

Hello, Walter.
(to Louie)
Hi, Louie -- how's the slotmachine king?

LOUIE

Oh, I ain't doing that any more. I'm retired. I'm one of you fellas now -- a newspaper man.

HILDY

Editorials?

BURNS

Get going, Louie. I got company.

The door flies open and Duffy comes busting in.

DUFFY

Walter!

BURNS

I'm busy, Duffy.

DUFFY

Well, you're not too busy to know that the Governor hasn't signed that reprieve!

BURNS

What?

DUFFY

And that means Earl Williams dies tomorrow morning and makes a sucker out of us!

BURNS

You're crazy. Where's Mac?

DUFFY

He's on my phone. He just called me.

BURNS

They can't do that to me!

He grabs the phone on his desk:

BURNS

Give me that call on Duffy's wire! Hello -- Mac? Burns. Where's the Governor? -- What do you mean, you can't locate him?

(apparently pleading
to the one man in
the world who can
help him)

Mac, you know what this means. We're the only paper in town defending Earl Williams and if he hangs tomorrow we're washed up! Find the Governor and when you find him tell him we want that reprieve!... Tell him I elected him and I can have him impeached! Sure, you can do it, Mac -- I know you can. I always said you were the greatest reporter in the country and now you can prove it. Get going! Attaboy!

He hangs up.

BURNS

(to Duffy,
sarcastically)

The greatest reporter in the country! First I gotta tell him what news to get! Gotta tell him how to get it -- then I gotta write it for him

afterward! Now if you were a decent
City Editor --

CLOSE SHOT DUFFY AND BURNS

with Louie and Hildy in the b.g.

DUFFY

Don't blame me. I'm City Editor in
name only. You do all the hiring
around here.

BURNS

Yeah! Well, I do the firing, too.
Remember that, Duffy, and Keep a
civil tongue in your head.

MEDIUM SHOT

HILDY

I don't like to interfere with
business, but would you boys pardon
us while we have a little heart-to-
heart talk?

DUFFY AND LOUIE

(together)

Well -- But I gotta --

They look at Burns.

BURNS

Scram, you guys.

They start to go.

HILDY

You won't miss anything. You'll
probably be able to hear him just as
well outside as here.

They go.

HILDY

Mind if I sit down?

Hildy sits.

CLOSE SHOT DUFFY AND LOUIE

going out of the door. They cast an interested look back
and linger a second. Over scene comes Burns' voice.

BURNS' VOICE

I said scram!

They close the door hurriedly.

MED. CLOSE SHOT BURNS AND HILDY

HILDY

May I have a cigarette, please?

Burns reaches into his pocket, extracts a cigarette and
tosses it on the desk. Hildy reaches for it.

HILDY

Thanks. A match?

Burns delves into pockets again, comes up with matchbox,
tosses it to Hildy, who catches it deftly, and strikes
the match.

BURNS

How long is it?

Hildy finishes lighting her cigarette, takes a puff, and
fans out the match.

HILDY

How long is what?

BURNS

You know what. How long since we've
seen each other?

HILDY

Let's see. I was in Reno six weeks --
then Bermuda... Oh, about four months,
I guess. Seems like yesterday to me.

CLOSEUP BURNS

BURNS

(slyly)

Maybe it was yesterday. Been seeing
me in your dreams?

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT THE TWO

HILDY

(casually)

No -- Mama doesn't dream about you
any more, Walter. You wouldn't know
the old girl now.

BURNS

(with conviction)

Oh, yes I would. I'd know you any
time --

start

He grows lyrical and, rising from his seat, is about to
toward her, as he continues:

BURNS AND HILDY

(together)

-- any place, anywhere --

He sits.

HILDY

(half-pityingly)

You're repeating yourself! That's
the speech you made the night you
proposed.

(she burlesques his
fervor)

"-- any time -- any place --
anywhere!"

CLOSE SHOT HILDY AND BURNS

BURNS

(growling)

I notice you still remember it.

HILDY

I'll always remember it. If I hadn't
remembered it, I wouldn't have
divorced you.

BURNS

You know, Hildy, I sort of wish you
hadn't done it.

HILDY

Done what?

BURNS

Divorced me. It sort of makes a fellow
lose faith in himself. It almost
gives him a feeling he wasn't wanted.

HILDY

Holy mackerel! Look, Walter, that's
what divorces are for.

BURNS

Nonsense. You've got the old-fashioned
idea that divorces are something
that last forever -- till 'death us
do part'. Why, a divorce doesn't
mean anything today. It's only a few
words mumbled over you by a judge.
We've got something between us nothing
can change.

HILDY

I suppose that's true in a way. I am fond of you, Walter. I often wish you weren't such a stinker.

BURNS

Now, that's a nice thing to say.

HILDY

Well, why did you promise me you wouldn't fight the divorce and then try and gum up the whole works?

BURNS

Well, I meant to let you go -- but, you know, you never miss the water till the well runs dry.

ANOTHER ANGLE

HILDY

A fellow your age, hiring an airplane to write:

(she gestures above
to indicate sky-
writing)

'Hildy: Don't be hasty -- remember my dimple. Walter.! It held things up twenty minutes while the Judge ran out to watch it.

BURNS

Well, I don't want to brag, but I've still got the dimple -- and in the same place -- I just acted like any husband who doesn't want to see his home broken up.

HILDY

What home?

WALTER

What home? Don't you remember the home I promised you?

HILDY

Oh, yes -- we were to have it right after our honeymoon -- honeymoon!

BURNS

Was it my fault? Did I know that coal mine was going to have another cave-in? I meant to be with you on our honeymoon, Hildy -- honest I did.

HILDY

All I know is that instead of two weeks in Atlantic City with my bridegroom, I spent two weeks in a coal mine with John Kruptzky -- age sixty-three -- getting food and air out of a tube! You don't deny that. Do you?

BURNS

Deny it! I'm proud of it! We beat the whole country on that story.

HILDY

Well, suppose we did? That isn't what I got married for. What's the good of -- Look, Walter, I came up here to tell you that you'll have to stop phoning me a dozen times a day -- sending twenty telegrams -- all the rest of it, because I'm --

BURNS

Let's not fight, Hildy. Tell you what. You come back to work on the paper and if we find we can't get along in a friendly way, we'll get married again.

HILDY

What?!!

BURNS

I haven't any hard feelings.

HILDY

Walter, you're wonderful in a loathesome sort of way. Now, would you mind keeping quiet long enough for me to tell you what I came up here for?

BURNS

(rising, reaching for his hat)

Sure, come on. We'll have some lunch and you can tell me everything.

HILDY

(also rising)

I have a lunch date. I just want --

BURNS

You can break it, can't you?

HILDY

No, I can't.

BURNS

Sure you can. Come on.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

HILDY

Don't tell me what to do! We're divorced -- I'm a free woman. You're not my husband and you're not my boss! And what's more, you're not going to be my boss.

BURNS

What do you mean by that?

HILDY

Just what I said. That's what I --

BURNS

You mean you're not coming back to work here?

HILDY

That's the first time you've been right today. That's what I --

BURNS

(still interrupting)

You've had a better offer, eh?

HILDY

You bet I've got a better offer.

BURNS

Well, go on and take it. Work for somebody else! That's the gratitude I get for --

HILDY

I know, Walter, but I --

BURNS

(ignoring her)

What were you when you came here five years ago? A little college girl from a School of Journalism! I took a little doll-faced mugg --

HILDY

You wouldn't have taken me if I hadn't been doll-faced!

BURNS

Why should I? I thought it would be a novelty to have a face around here a man could look at without shuddering.

HILDY

Listen, Walter --

BURNS

(going right on)

I made a great reporter out of you, Hildy, but you won't be half as good on any other paper, and you know it. You need me and I need you -- and the paper needs both of us.

HILDY

Well, the paper'll have to learn to do without me. And so will you. It just didn't work out, Walter.

WIDER ANGLE

BURNS

It would have worked if you'd been satisfied with just being editor and reporter. But no! You had to marry me and spoil everything.

HILDY

(indignantly)

I wasn't satisfied! I suppose I proposed to you!

BURNS

Well, you practically did! Making goo-goo eyes at me for two years till I broke down. And I still claim I was tight the night I proposed. If you'd been a gentleman you'd have forgotten all about it. But not you!

HILDY

(speechless)

You -- you --

phone She grabs something and chucks it at him. He ducks. The rings.

BURNS

(to Hildy)

You're losing your eye. You used to be able to pitch better than that.

(he reaches for phone)

Hello... Yeah... What? Sweeney? Well, what can I do for you?

CLOSE SHOT DUFFY

seated at his desk, talking into phone.

DUFFY

What's the matter with you? Are you drunk? This is Duffy, not Sweeney!

CLOSE SHOT BURNS AND HILDY

Burns into phone:

BURNS

Sweeney! You can't do that to me! Not today, of all days! Jumping Jehosophat! Oh, no, Sweeney... Well, I suppose so... All right. If you have to, you have to.

(he hangs up)

How do you like that? Everything happens to me -- with 365 days in the year -- this has to be the day.

HILDY

What's the matter?

BURNS

Sweeney.

HILDY

Dead?

BURNS

Not yet. Might just as well be. The only man on the paper who can write -- and his wife picks this morning to have a baby!

CLOSE SHOT HILDY

HILDY

Sweeney?

(she laughs)

Well, after all, he didn't do it on purpose, did he?

CLOSE SHOT BURNS AND HILDY

BURNS

I don't care whether he did or not. He's supposed to be covering the Earl Williams case and there he is -- waiting at the hospital! Is there no sense of honor left in this country?

HILDY

(practically)

Well, haven't you got anybody else?

BURNS

There's nobody else on the paper who
can write! This'll break me, unless --
 (he stares at Hildy;
 then a light breaks)
Hildy!

HILDY

No!

BURNS

You've got to help me, Hildy.

HILDY

Keep away --

BURNS

It'll bring us together again, Hildy --
just the way we used to be.

HILDY

That's what I'm afraid of. "Any time --
any place -- anywhere!"

BURNS

Don't mock, Hildy, this is bigger
than anything that's happened to us.
Don't do it for me! Do it for the
paper.

HILDY

Get away, Svengali.

BURNS

If you won't do it for love, how
about money? Forget the other offer
and I'll raise you twenty-five bucks
a week.

HILDY

Listen, you bumble-headed baboon --

BURNS

All right -- thirty-five, and not a
cent more!

HILDY

Please! Will you just --

BURNS

Great grief! What's that other paper
going to give you?

HILDY

I'm not working for any other paper!

BURNS

Oh! In that case, the raise is off

and you go back to your old salary
and like it. Trying to blackjack --

HILDY

Look at this!
(pulling her glove
off her left hand)

CLOSEUP HILDY

ring
She gets glove off left hand and holds up an engagement
for him to see.

HILDY

Do you see this? Do you know what an
engagement ring is?

CLOSEUP BURNS

He looks at ring, swallows, then:

MED. SHOT

Burns and Hildy.

HILDY

I tried to tell you right away but
you started reminiscing. I'm getting
married, Walter, and also getting as
far away from the newspaper business
as I can get! I'm through.

BURNS

(himself again)
Get married all you want to, Hildy,
but you can't quit the newspaper
business.

HILDY

You can't sell me that, Walter.

BURNS

Who says I can't? You're a newspaper
man.

HILDY

That's why I'm quitting. I want to
go some place where I can be a woman.

BURNS

I know you, Hildy, and I know what
it would mean. It would kill you.

CLOSER SHOT

HILDY

(bitterly)

A journalist! Peeking through keyholes -- running after fire engines -- waking people up in the middle of the night to ask them if they think Hitler's going to start a war -- stealing pictures off old ladies of their daughters that got chased by apemen! I know all about reporters -- a lot of daffy buttinskies going around without a nickel in their pockets, and for what? So a million hired girls and motormen's wives will know what's going on! No, Walter, I'm through.

BURNS

Where'd you meet this man?

HILDY

Bermuda.

BURNS

Bermuda... Rich, eh?

HILDY

Not what you'd call rich. Makes about five thousand a year.

BURNS

What's his line?

HILDY

He's in the insurance business.

BURNS

(looks up)

The insurance business?

HILDY

(on the defensive)

It's a good, honest business, isn't it?

ANOTHER ANGLE

BURNS

Oh sure, it's honest. But somehow, I can't picture you with a guy who sells policies.

HILDY

Well, I can, and I love it! He forgets the office when he's with me. He doesn't treat me like an errand-boy -- he treats me like a woman.

BURNS

He does, does he? How did I treat you -- like a water buffalo?

HILDY

I don't know about water buffaloes, but I know about him. He's kind and sweet and considerate. He wants a home -- and children.

BURNS

Say, sounds more like a guy I ought to marry. What's his name?

HILDY

Well, I'll give you a hint. By tomorrow they'll be calling me Mrs. Bruce Baldwin.

BURNS

Tomorrow? Tomorrow... as quick as that?

HILDY

The quicker the better. Well -- I finally got out what I came in to tell you.

(she extends her hand)

So long, Walter, and better luck next time.

BURNS

(taking her hand)

I wish you everything I couldn't give you, Hildy.

HILDY

Thanks...

BURNS

Too bad I couldn't see this guy first. I'm pretty particular about whom my wife marries.

HILDY

(laughing)

Well, he's waiting in the anteroom for me now.

BURNS

Say, could I meet him?

HILDY

Oh, better not, Walter. Wouldn't do any good.

BURNS

You're not afraid, are you?

HILDY

Afraid? I should say not!

BURNS

All right then, come on and let's see this paragon.

(gets hat)

Is he as good as you say?

HILDY

Better.

MED. SHOT OFFICE

Burns has his hat. They start toward the door.

BURNS

Then what does he want with you?

HILDY

(laughing)

Now you got me.

BURNS

Nothing personal. I was just asking.

At the door, Burns walks ahead, opens door and walks out.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BURNS' OFFICE MED. CLOSE SHOT

BURNS

BURNS

After all --

He stops as he realizes she's not there. The door opens. Hildy comes out.

HILDY

You wouldn't believe this, Walter, but Bruce holds the door open for me.

BURNS

(incredulous)

No kidding?